



Press release - 334/05/2020

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New scam targeting NRW-Soforthilfe 2020: criminals try to get their hands on payments

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Minister Pinkwart: Fraud at the expense of small businesses, freelancers and independent workers whose livelihood is threatened is particularly reprehensible in these times, and will be determinedly prosecuted.

The state government has issued the following statement:

New attempt to defraud NRW-Soforthilfe: using a false e-mail address, criminals are trying to obtain data from Soforthilfe recipients. The message, disguised as an e-mail from the "Landesregierung Nordrhein-Westfalen", asks recipients to submit personal data to the finance office via an alleged state government form. The message also contains supposed legal instructions, which also includes inaccurate information on NRW-Soforthilfe repayments. The goal is to direct these payments at the recipient's expense. Similar cases of fraud have also been reported in other states.

The message with the subject line "Corona Zuschuss – Bestätigung und Belehrung" prompts the recipient to fill out an alleged certification for the finance office. The fraudsters also use the "legal information" to ask for a response in order to obtain bank information for the payment. Companies who have not even applied for or received the NRW-Soforthilfe have also been targeted.

"Fraud at the expense of small businesses, freelancers and independent workers whose livelihood is threatened is particularly reprehensible in these times," says Minister for Economic Affairs Dr. Andreas Pinkwart. "I ask all citizens, in their own interest, not to recklessly disclose sensitive information or even conduct transfers. Investigations are underway, and the fraudsters must be brought to justice with the full force of the law."

The Ministry for Economic Affairs immediately notified the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Office of Criminal Investigations, and asks recipients not to respond to the e-mail. The sender is the counterfeit e-mail address corona-zuschuss@nrw.de.com. Official mailing addresses of the state government always end in *nrw.de*.

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This press text is also available online on the state government website at www.land.nrw

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