



REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION

INITIATIVE

Table of Contents

RAI: A Framework for Regional Coordination and Dialogue	3
2007 Program Highlights	3
Programmatic Objective I: Supporting the Process of Adoption and Implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)	4
Programmatic Objective II: Supporting the Process of Developing and Implementing Regional and National Anti-Corruption Programs for Raising Public Awareness	7
Programmatic Objective III: Sharing Best Practices in Investigating, Prosecuting and Adjudicating High – Level Corruption Cases in RAI Countries	8
Programmatic Objective IV: Assessment of Regional Anti-Corruption Needs and Specific Requirements.....	10
Other Programs:	11
Training for Junior Officials	11
Summer School for Junior Magistrates	11
RAI Secretariat’s Internship Program	12
Other 2007 Events in which RAI Secretariat Participated.....	12

RAI: A Framework for Regional Coordination and Dialogue

The Regional Anti-corruption Initiative was initially adopted in Sarajevo in February 2000, as Stability Pact Anti-corruption Initiative, to address corruption - one of the most serious threats to the recovery and development of South East European (SEE) countries. In September 2003, the Steering Group of the Initiative agreed to establish the Regional Secretariat Liaison Office (RSLO) in Sarajevo to promote regional ownership of the Initiative and enhance regional capabilities to lead the fight against corruption in SEE. Six months later, RSLO became operational.

2007 was an year of transformation and setting new challenges for the Anti-corruption Initiative. Since October 9, 2007, through a decision of the member countries, approved at the 11th Steering Group Meeting in Podgorica, the Anti-corruption Initiative of the Stability Pact was renamed as Regional Anti-corruption Initiative, in line with the transformation of the Stability Pact for SEE into Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and RSLO became simply RAI Secretariat. In order to be more convenient, in the report below the Anti-corruption Initiative and its Sarajevo based office will be recognized by their new names – RAI and RAI Secretariat respectively.

RAI Secretariat is currently the only international center in SEE devoted solely to fight corruption at a regional level. Staffed by experts from the region, the Secretariat tailors its goals, objectives and activities to directly support the efforts of RAI member countries to meet the standards and requirements related to the European Union accession process.

The rhythm of reforms is now stronger, as Romania and Bulgaria joined EU on January 1, 2007. Croatia already started the accession negotiations, while the other SEE member countries focus their efforts towards the same goal.

2007 Program Highlights

During 2007, RAI Secretariat built upon its earlier successes in promoting the best practices and tools in the fight against corruption and supported the final steps to the full regional ownership and leadership of the Initiative. Through its organization, co-sponsorship or attendance at more than 20 events during 2007, RAI Secretariat conveyed the continued importance of fighting corruption to more than 300 people in SEE. Since its operations began in 2004, the Secretariat's anti-corruption message has reached over 4800 people in more than 120 events. With every training, workshop, conference or high-level meeting, RAI Secretariat has helped the member countries to assess the real dimensions of corruption and to take the needed measures to oppose this threat.

The following pages summarize some of the highlights of the activities in which RAI Secretariat played a leading role and are organized according to the objectives deemed most crucial by the RAI countries as memorialized in the Work Plan for 2006 – 2007.

Programmatic Objective I: Supporting the Process of Adoption and Implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)

The UNCAC is the first truly global legally binding instrument in the fight against corruption and it provides a set of standards that helps countries design legislation and improve practices in accordance with good governance principles. The convention encompasses several fundamental principles necessary in the fight against corruption, including the criminalization and prevention of, and international cooperation on, corrupt behavior and activities, and provisions for recovering assets.

The ultimate goal for all RAI member countries is to sign, ratify and fully implement the Convention. In this respect, the RAI countries have made considerable progress since 2004 – 2006: all of them signed and ratified the UNCAC. The last two countries to ratify the Convention in 2007 were FYR of Macedonia - on April 13 and Moldova - on October 1. RAI Secretariat's efforts in 2007 focused on supporting the RAI countries in ensuring that national legislation complied with UNCAC requirements and that countries were making progress towards full implementation.

As a part of this effort, in April 2007 RAI Secretariat, in cooperation with OSCE, organized a two – day conference in Tirana, Albania, April 03–04, 2007. It was a regional event on implementing the UN Convention against Corruption – Chapter 2 – Preventive measures, mainly for policy makers, representatives of the agencies with competences in preventing corruption and civil society. The main overall objective of the event consisted in discussing the current status of implementation of the provisions of Chapter 2 of the UNCAC and to disseminate the lessons learned and existing best practices in this area. In this context, each country delivered a brief report on the legislative and institutional measures adopted in implementing the preventive measures envisaged by the UNCAC and presented the recent activities conducted by bodies in charge for fighting corruption. The specific objectives of the conference were to build and raise awareness at the regional level regarding the new standards set forth by the UNCAC, as well as to further extend the existing network of anti-corruption agencies and anti-corruption experts in SEE. This should help to speed up the process of harmonizing national legislation with the standards of the UN Convention against Corruption. The conference was attended by 50 participants from RAI member countries, UNMIK, OSCE, USAID, Council of Europe, local NGOs etc.

A regional Conference on Curbing Corruption in SEE was organized by RAI Secretariat in close cooperation with the European Center for Security Studies on May 2 – 4, 2007, in Bucharest, Romania. The event was attended by 58 participants including representatives of the locally based embassies, participants from the RAI member countries (among them representatives of the respective parliaments, ministries, agencies involved in fighting corruption and prosecutors offices), NGO representatives etc.

The Conference focused on countering corruption, the greatest threat to stability and sustainable development in the Western Balkans. The main overall objective of the event consisted of assessing status of national anticorruption strategies adopted by the SEE countries and discussing and identifying the best practices and lessons learned in following key areas: role of law enforcement agencies; impact of anti-corruption preventive measures; raising awareness, promoting transparency and building partnership with the civil society. The specific objectives of the Conference were to extend the existing network of anti-corruption agencies and anti-corruption experts in SEE in order to share lessons learned and to speed up the process of harmonizing national legislation with the international standards.

The Conference consisted of four panels (I- Law enforcement, II – Prevention, III – Awareness, IV – Outbrief Preparation) followed by working group sessions. The participants provided focused responses on key issues such as existing anti-corruption institutional framework, mandate and mission, available means and techniques for investigating and prosecuting high-level corruption cases, and interagency cooperation. It was also emphasized that in order to improve the situation, where still many people are able to escape prosecution, more convictions and dissuasive sentences are needed, because it will have the effect of corruption becoming more risky. The key element is to secure full implementation of all anticorruption laws. Although the progress was significant – it is not enough to make a law. It is more important to create law implementing mechanism and mechanism to monitor this implementation mechanism.

As far as prevention is concerned, it was stressed on the regulating preventive measures, challenges with implementing specific measures on managing conflict of interest, incompatibilities, assets disclosure, public procurement. It was underlined that preventive measures are crucial and that whole system of preventive measures is needed, as well as teaching people that prevention is equal to, or even more important than law enforcement.

During the event a special attention was given to the fact that Romanian and Bulgarian capability for fighting corruption, especially high-level corruption, was important in the EU accession and that the EU still monitors the anti-corruption process in those countries.

It was also stated that fighting corruption is a political criteria and precondition for EU accession and in order to speed up the process of accession to the EU, the SEE countries must change constitutions, laws and establish wide range of institutions. The fact, that major steps have been made in the last few years, was also underlined. Taking into consideration, that SEE region is severely hit by corruption, it is still a long way in fighting corruption. In this respect, it is very important to secure national collaboration among all state authorities involved in fighting corruption, cooperation with the wide scope of other state bodies, as well as the international cooperation on the basis of the multilateral agreements and conventions.

Participants also highlighted the need of promoting high integrity standards for judiciary as a pillar of society, as well as the importance of respecting international regulations and standards; developing public ethics values; establishing conditions that will make it more difficult for public officials to take advantage of their position; avoiding concentration on petty corruption and solving high profile and complex cases; finding loopholes and failures as aspects to improve; strengthening anti-corruption policies; and securing necessary independence of anti-corruption agencies and prosecutor's offices. The partnership between government and civil society, involvement and close cooperation between international/regional organizations and initiatives were underlined as a key element.

The Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative Secretariat co-organized together with Transparency International, Open Society Fund and American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative the commemoration of the International Anti-corruption Day. The event took place on December 10, 2007, in the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH and was attended by representatives from the local state institutions, civil society, private sector, academic community and the media. The head of the office and the anti-corruption expert took part in the meeting on behalf of the Secretariat. The anti-corruption expert delivered a power point presentation on the "Role and Importance of the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative". The following presentations were made by other co-organizers and participants: "Findings and recommendation of the project "Improvement of the National Integrity System", "The 2007 Global Corruption Barometer" and "Presentation of project law on anti-corruption agency". After the official part, a comprehensive discussion was held on the draft law on anti-corruption body. BiH has the obligation to adopt this law under United Nations Convention against corruption (UNCAC).

The event was also used by the new staff of RAI Secretariat for establishing close professional relations with the representatives of Transparency International, Open Society Fund and American Bar Association - Rule of Law Initiative, looking for fruitful future cooperation on the anti-corruption field.

Programmatic Objective II: Supporting the Process of Developing and Implementing Regional and National Anti-Corruption Programs for Raising Public Awareness

The awareness - raising is an important way to involve individual citizens in the fight against corruption, thereby involving the participation of multiple actors in society in the reform process. It promotes debate and helps create an environment, in which remedies for far-reaching social problems such as corruption can be discussed freely.

RAI Secretariat's goal is to enhance public awareness, both at regional and national levels, about the costs and consequences of corruption. Based on its experience in the area, the Secretariat reformulated this programmatic objective included in the Work plan for 2006 – 2007. Having in mind that RAI Secretariat has no resource to finance the expensive public awareness campaigns, as well as that, it is impossible to persuade donors for their support in this regard, national resources for public awareness should be identified and ensured by member countries. RAI Secretariat will focus more on supporting existing initiatives and involving the national counterparts in developing further activities as video clips, posters, banners etc.

As a major pillar in its raising public awareness activity, RAI Secretariat maintained and regularly updated its official web site (www.spai-rslo.org). The web site serves as comprehensive Resource Center for all the people who show interest in the fight against corruption.

In addition to the awareness – raising generated by its Online Resource Center, RAI activities in support of this objective focused on two major directions. Every event, which was (co)organized by RAI Secretariat, had a panel on raising public awareness. In the scope of the Regional Conference on implementing the UN Convention against Corruption – Chapter 2 – Preventive measures, Tirana, Albania, April 03–04, 2007, a working group session was organized, where the awareness campaigns were presented from the countries of the region, ranging from ones with general approach and finishing with dedicated and focused ones on conflict of interest, hot lines, corruption in judiciary, customs corruption etc.

In this line, one of the key issues, discussed during the Regional Conference on curbing Corruption in SEE, Bucharest, Romania, May 03–04, 2007, was the impact of corruption on public perception, successes and failures in raising public awareness, identifying the key message to address the public perception, cost and impact of awareness raising campaigns.

The role of the media and investigative journalism in detecting and disseminating information regarding corruption cases was also emphasized. In this aspect, attention was given to the needs of using the energy that comes from the media and to the importance of giving people evidence about fighting corruption, which proves that institutions are dealing with this matter.

As a follow-up of the RAI activities the Secretariat prepared, printed and disseminated Flash SPAI grams. They are available on the official web site of the Secretariat.

Programmatic Objective III: Sharing Best Practices in Investigating, Prosecuting and Adjudicating High – Level Corruption Cases in RAI Countries

Governments and international institutions have placed a fresh emphasis on the fight against high-level corruption, following continued incidents in countries around the world. The European Commission has focused on curbing high-level corruption in particular, as a precondition for countries to join the European Union. Given the membership ambitions of many of the RAI member countries, significant, committed actions in the fight against high-level corruption are imperative.

RAI Secretariat's goal is to build a national framework for sharing and exchanging information on the available tools, techniques and means of investigation and prosecution, specific court procedures, case studies, and best practices in fighting high-level corruption. As such, Objective III complements and reinforces Objective I.

Programmatic Objective III also represents one of the defining principles of the Stability Pact, the idea that countries of a region that face similar challenges as well as cross-border issues can better address them through a common approach.

Supporting this objective, RAI Secretariat and ABA CEELI – Sarajevo, in cooperation with the Slovenian Agency for Preventing Corruption coorganized on February 5 – 8, 2007, in Ljubljana, Slovenia, a Twinning type activity for anti-corruption prosecutors and investigators from Bosnia and Herzegovina, who are in the same time members of the Working group for drafting the Law on Anti-corruption Agency. On behalf of the Secretariat, it was the Head of the office, who took part in the event.

As a part of very intensive program, participants of the Twinning type activity visited the Commission for prevention of corruption, the Ministry of Justice, the Police Office, the Election Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman and the State Prosecutorial office.

During this Twinning type activity participants gained a valuable knowledge and experience and were able to find answers to their questions regarding the setting up of an Anti-corruption agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the police office, members of the Working group were informed about the police structure in Slovenia and their special department for fighting corruption. It was useful to see, which mechanism in concrete case they can use in investigating the corruptive behavior. During the visit of State Prosecutorial office two meetings were organized. Those meetings provided the participants with relevant information about the advantages and disadvantages of the anti-corruption agency set up within the governmental system.

Away from its public awareness-raising function, RAI's Resource Center (www.spai-rslo.org) supports this objective as well by providing examples from one country that may be useful to another country. Established in May 2005, the Center has been developed with several goals in mind. First, as RAI countries share similar historic backgrounds and face common challenges in their reforms, a thematic resource center is an excellent way to provide policymakers and experts with relevant centralized information from the region. Second, numerous bilateral donors and international organizations have established publications and database to illustrate best practices in combating corruption. These illustrations are not tool kits designed to offer step-by-step solutions, but rather narrative examples of what has worked in specific places at specific times. Housing these illustrative case studies online allows users to review global solutions to combating corruption that may be applicable to countries in the RAI region. During 2007 the Secretariat, with the support of RAI Senior Representatives, continued to update existing components of the Center, and to develop new ones, including:

- Anti-corruption Library
- Anti-corruption Network
- Anti-corruption Project Database
- Anti-corruption Calendar
- Anti-corruption Links

A new design and address of the web site are envisaged in order to match the changes within the Initiative and the Secretariat. Further updating will also be accompanied by translation of, at least, the home page in every regional language.

Programmatic Objective IV: Assessment of Regional Anti-Corruption Needs and Specific Requirements

Since its establishment RAI Secretariat serves as a focal point for the SEE countries leading a fight against corruption in the region. In order to provide all member countries and other partners with a general framework for coordination and optimization of their efforts in this area, the Secretariat has the objective to identify, based on inputs from national level, the regional priorities and needs in combating corruption.

In this line, among the main decisions taken at the 11th Steering Group Meeting of the Initiative was the adoption of the new Work Plan for 2008 – 2009. The elaboration of the new Work Plan had begun during the Strategic Planning Meeting in Sarajevo, June 21-22, 2007, which had been envisaged as a preparatory discussion for the 11th Steering Group Meeting, held in the first half of October, 2007. The SPAI senior representatives had shared the latest information about the current status in anti-corruption activities and national priorities, out of which the types of activities in which RAI Secretariat could provide assistance had been identified. Following the meeting, the Sarajevo based office had been in permanent contact with the Senior Representatives aiming to provide substantial input and suggestions on the regional/countries needs and specific requirements. Finally the Secretariat had delivered the Initiative's draft Work plan for 2008 – 2009 to the SPAI senior representatives. This document was improved with inputs from member countries before, during and after the Steering Group Meeting.

The adopted RAI Work plan for 2008 – 2009 contains information about the regional trends and expectations on the anti-corruption field, as well as a chapter dedicated to the member states' national priorities, based on the challenging calendar set forth within the Ministerial Declaration on 10 joint measures to curb corruption in SEE. The Senior Representatives - in cooperation with all national stakeholders and in consultation with the Secretariat - envisaged the practical steps to be taken in order to ensure the implementation of the commitments endorsed by the Ministers of Justice in Brussels, May 2005. Every member state defined at least three measures to take up and relevant envisaged actions. In a tabular form inserted in the Work plan, the RAI countries also formulated their focus areas for trainings and conferences for 2008 – 2009, both on national and regional level.

Other Programs:

Training for Junior Officials

Many anti-corruption trainings are aimed at senior-level officials and staff in the hopes that they are in a position to influence and implement anti-corruption policies. While this is important, equally significant is providing training to the leaders of tomorrow. These junior staff, if provided with tools to fight corruption early in their careers, may become champions of reform and bring a fresh breath and enthusiasm to the fight against corruption. Training junior officials can build a cadre of professionals with a strong sense of public service ethics, helping to break cycles of corruption sometimes found within senior levels of government.

In 2007 RAI Secretariat continued the implementation of the two projects for the professional development of junior officials engaged in anti-corruption activities: Summer School for Junior Magistrates and Internship Program. Summer School is intended to be an annual event, while the Internship Program is established as an ongoing component based on a three-month rotation system.

Summer School for Junior Magistrates

The Summer School for Junior Magistrates, held for a second consecutive year in Romania in July 2007, was organized by RAI Secretariat in cooperation with the Romanian Ministry of Justice and with the support of SPOC Secretariat, SEEPAG and USAID. The venue of the event was the training center of the National Institute for Magistracy in Sovata. All nine RAI member countries, as well as UNMIK, were represented, and participants included 25 magistrates in addition to experts from other European countries and international organizations. Summer School theme, "International and Regional Cooperation in the Fight against Corruption and Organized Crime", incorporated modules on:

- International standards on anti-corruption: the implementation of UN, Council of Europe and OECD conventions;
- Anti-corruption policies and preventive measures: available tools and best practices;
- EU experience regarding the international judicial cooperation in criminal matters (EUROJUST, European Judicial Network, EUROPOL, OLAF);
- Reform of the judiciary and anticorruption as challenges of the EU accession process.

The specific objectives of the Summer School were:

- To provide junior magistrates from the SEE with basic information about the EU accession process and mandatory requirements within the JHA field;
- To design flexible and suitable training modules and curricula based on the needs expressed by the junior magistrates – areas in focus: EU institutional framework in the JHA field, connection between corruption and various forms of serious crimes, especially fraud, organized crime, money laundering and terrorism financing;
- To enhance regional cooperation capacity by establishing a direct contact among junior magistrates;
- To identify legislative loopholes and overlapping procedures and formulate proposals for improving the legislative and institutional framework;
- To provide inputs for updating the RAI Resource Center.

All the participants successfully passed the final written exam. The graduation ceremony was honored by the presence of Romanian Minister of Justice, Tudor Chiuariu, who personally handed in the certificates to the young magistrates and continued the graduation ceremony with an official dinner.

The Summer School reaffirmed the success of the first edition of this training event held in 2006 and provided impetus for organizing further similar annual events. A third edition of the Summer School is envisaged to take place in July, 2008.

RAI Secretariat's Internship Program

RAI Secretariat's Internship Program, sponsored by the government of Norway, offers valuable three-month on-the-job learning opportunities for young lawyers or political scientists from RAI countries. The internship benefits both the intern and the Secretariat: the intern, working under the overall guidance of the Secretariat's staff, provides substantive input (including country-specific information) and assistance in the implementation of RAI activities.

Two interns, one from UNMIK and one from Croatia, worked for RAI Secretariat in Sarajevo in 2007. Key activities undertaken by them included the updating of the Anti-corruption Resource Center, assisting in the organization of events and the completing, as a requirement of the Internship Program participation.

Other 2007 Events in which RAI Secretariat Participated

Under the coordination of the RAI Chairman and with the support of the WT III coordinator expert, RAI Secretariat organized in Brussels, on January 23, 2007 the Friends of the SPAI Chair meeting. The meeting brought together potential donors for RAI programmatic activities and focused mainly on reviewing the package of project proposals developed by RAI Secretariat based on the objectives set within the Work Plan for 2006 - 2007.

RAI Secretariat's Executive Secretary and Anti-corruption Expert organized on January 25, 2007, a meeting with Mr. Joakim Molander - SIDA's first secretary in charge with implementation of projects. They presented the programmatic portfolio of the office as well as detailed information about the current status within Stability Pact and RAI.

On the same day, RAI Secretariat's Executive Secretary and Anti-corruption Expert held another meeting with representatives of the Delegation of the European Commission in BiH. Mr. Luc Steeman - attaché, Mr. Ferdinand Kopp - Counsellor, Head of Operations Section 1, Ms. Dina Karic - Task Manager and Ms. Paraskevi Nazou - Task Manager were made familiar with and expressed their interest in RAI Secretariat's activities, especially in those related to training anti-corruption prosecutors and investigators. They stressed on the possibility, trainings that combine topics as anticorruption, organized crime and money laundering to be developed and executed by the Secretariat. Furthermore, a special interest for potential cooperation in training border officers was expressed. In regard to that, RAI Secretariat offered support in developing such activity by also involving the SECI Center, SPOC and SEEPAG.

The Executive Secretary of RAI Secretariat took part in the presentation of Transparency International Publication – National Integrity System Study in Sarajevo on February 13, 2007. At the event he addressed to the participants emphasizing inter alia the need of continuation of further cooperation between RAI Secretariat and Transparency International.

The Executive Secretary also attended the Celebration of 10th Anniversary of ABA - CEELI Office in Sarajevo on February 14, 2007. As all partner organizations of ABA - CEELI Office in Sarajevo were presented, he used the opportunity to inform their representatives about RAI Secretariat's activities, as well as about the joint activities with ABA - CEELI in last three years.

RAI Secretariat's Executive Secretary held a meeting with Mr. Martin Harvey, representative of EU Commission in Podgorica, Montenegro, on February 28, 2007.

The meeting was organized in order to discuss the possibility of cooperation between RAI Secretariat and EU Commission, emphasizing on activities related to raising public awareness regarding negative consequences of corruption.

CEELI Institute organized USAID SEED ROL Networking Meeting in Prague on March 26 - 28, 2007, that focused on the Rule of Law development in South Eastern Europe. To ensure that the training programs effectively target the needs of the region, the Institute and USAID hosted the networking meeting of regional professionals. The meeting conducted training for legal professionals and judges from the region in the area of anti-corruption, judicial integrity and commercial law. Regarding the participants' requirements to learn more about the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative, Mr. Sorin Sterie, an expert in justice and home affairs, was invited to participate on behalf of RAI Secretariat and delivered a presentation on RAI's role and mission in the region.

RAI Secretariat's staff attended the Meeting of Ministers of Justice and Ministers of Interior of the SEECP that took place in Zagreb, Croatia on April 12 - 13, 2007. This event was organized by the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Foreign affairs of Croatia. The main achievement for RAI at the Conference was the signing of Memorandum of Understanding concerning Cooperation in Fighting Corruption through the South Eastern European Anti-corruption Initiative. The signatory countries ensured the financial sustainability of the Sarajevo based Secretariat of the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative by providing certain annual contribution and decided for the first time to raise a Chairman of the Initiative from the region. It was the final step towards a full regional ownership and leadership of the Anti-corruption Initiative, thus demonstrating the involvement of the SEE countries in the fight against corruption.

A meeting with Mr. Ljubinko Lekovic - Transparency International program manager, was held in the Sarajevo based office of RAI Secretariat on November 8, 2007. It was a preparatory meeting for the marking of the International Anti-corruption Day. A big event on the occasion was envisaged and later co-organized by RAI Secretariat, Transparency International (TI), Open Society Fund and American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA-ROLI).

The head of RAI Secretariat participated in the OECD roundtable on the checklist for Enhancing Integrity in Public Procurement on November 22 - 23, 2007, in Turin, Italy.

It was a follow up of OECD Symposium and Global Forum on Integrity in Public Procurement in 2006, where experts had called for a non – binding instrument at the international level for reforming public procurement systems to reinforce integrity and public trust in how public funds are managed. In order to respond to this demand, a checklist for Enhancing Integrity in Public Procurement had been developed. RAI Secretariat's head of the office participated actively on the second day of the event as a part of the Focus Group on integrity in public procurement. He delivered a power point presentation on OECD checklist stressing at its goals, applicability, target groups and possible users.

The meeting of the three Working Tables of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, hosted by the Albanian government, took place on December 3 – 4 in Tirana International Hotel. The meetings marked the next milestone in the transformation process of the Stability Pact into Regional Co-operation Council (RCC). RAI chairperson, Mrs. Vesna Ratkovic , took an active role as one of the panelists during the Working Table III meeting focused on Justice and Home Affairs issues. During her speech Mrs. Ratkovic made an overview of the up to date work on the achievements of RAI along with the future steps and envisaged activities in the field of strengthening the regional capacities and co-operation in the fight against corruption through the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the RAI member countries on April 13, 2007, in Zagreb, Croatia. In this context, the representative of Austria informed the participants about the Anti-Corruption Academy, which has been established on the basis of the Cooperation Agreement signed between Interpol and Austria. As he also underlined, RAI could serve as a regional contact point for the future activities of the Anti-corruption Academy.