



REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Following a period of transformation in the leadership and ownership of the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative, as well as the change inside the Stability Pact for South – Eastern Europe (SEE) and the launch of the Regional Co-operation Council in Sarajevo, RAI Secretariat started the implementation of the new Work Plan for 2008 – 2009 by conducting activities in several key areas:

- providing Secretariat services for the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative;
- executing and implementing RAI specific decisions, policies and strategies;
- assessing the individual country needs and priorities on the anti-corruption field and enhancing the regional cooperation in the fight against corruption;
- assisting the member countries in the process of adopting and implementing the international standards related to the fight against corruption;
- consolidating the relations with partner organizations;
- organizing training activities, seminars, workshops;
- supporting the process of setting up working networks of practitioners in various areas vulnerable to corruption;
- maintaining an on-line Anti-corruption Resource Center.

The current report is analyzing the main activities conducted by RAI Secretariat in the course of 2008.

II. RAI SECRETARIAT'S PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

During 2008 RAI Secretariat carried out activities on the following programmatic objectives, envisaged within the Work Plan for 2008 – 2009:

Objective I – Supporting the process of adoption and implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) by RAI countries

INCLUDING A TRAINING MODULE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION IN THE THIRD EDITION OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL FOR JUNIOR MAGISTRATES

In June 2008, RAI Secretariat organized for a third consecutive year the Summer School for Junior Magistrates from SEE countries. It is a forum, where young judges and prosecutors from the region meet, share experience on anti-corruption issues and gain knowledge from honorable lecturers from relevant national bodies, international organizations and civil society.

The first training module of the event was dedicated to “International Standards in Anti-corruption – the Implementation of Relevant Conventions of United Nations and Council of Europe”. The international instrument on focus was UNCAC and especially chapter IV – “International Cooperation” and chapter V – “Asset Recovery”, underlining the fundamental role of this convention to the unified fight against corruption.

As United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) undertakes the Secretariat service for the Conference of State Parties to UNCAC and is in charge with the implementation of this convention, RAI Secretariat made efforts to secure participation of an expert from UNODC headquarters in Vienna. Finally, it was decided and Mr. Demosthenes Chryssikos – UNODC expert, Division for Treaty Affairs, Corruption and Economic Crime Section – took part in the event presenting UNCAC and particularly the up-mentioned two chapters of the convention.

UNCAC has been already signed and ratified by all RAI member countries. The next challenge is the implementation of the Convention, to which the junior magistrates could contribute, as they are expected in the near future to lead the fight against corruption in their countries.

STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP WITH UNODC – THE ORGANIZATION THAT SERVES AS SECRETARIAT TO UNCAC

During the second half of 2008, RAI Secretariat made significant steps to set up closer relations with UNODC, which serves as a Secretariat to UNCAC, building upon the already established partnership between the two organizations. Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov – RAI Secretariat Anti-corruption Expert held a meeting with Ms. Carla Ciavarella – Regional Program Coordinator in UNODC Regional Project Office for South Eastern Europe (SEE) in Sofia, Bulgaria, on September 1, 2008. It was followed by a return visit to Sarajevo paid by Ms. Ciavarella on September 17, 2008. The main topic discussed was related to the strengthening the partnership between UNODC and RAI Secretariat and in particular the

application for common projects in front of the donor community. The two offices have already started to apply for mutual projects. The first awarded one is “Development of Monitoring Instruments for Judicial and Law Enforcement Institutions in the Western Balkans” supported by European Commission.

In November 2008, representative of RAI Secretariat attended the Conference on “Using Communication Approaches and Techniques to Support Anti-corruption Efforts”, which took place in UNODC headquarters in Vienna, Austria. The forum represented a learning event for anti-corruption agencies co-organized by World Bank's Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP) and UNODC.

MARKING THE INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY

Since December 9, 2003, the date of signing of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), that day has been declared as International Anti-corruption Day. RAI Secretariat joined the efforts of the major stakeholders in the area to use the occasion to raise the public awareness on the negative impact of corruption both on the society and on the democratic state institutions. Mr. Edmond Dunga – Head of the Office and Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov attended two events in marking the International Anti-corruption Day.

The first one was the Regional Conference “Anti-corruption Policies and Practices in South Eastern Europe”, that took place on December 9, 2008, in Sofia, Bulgaria. The event was co-organized by UNODC, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat, the Center for Study of Democracy and RAI Secretariat under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria. The motto of the Conference was “Your **No** Counts”, underlining the importance of the involvement of every single citizen in the fight against corruption. The event brought together politicians, members of parliament, public officials, practitioners and representatives of civil society dealing with anti-corruption issues. It consisted of three main panels: “Anti-corruption Infrastructure”, “Anti-corruption Policies” and “Regional Cooperation”.

The second event was a National Conference co-organized by the Transparency International and Open Society Fund offices in B&H. The Conference took place on December 11, 2008, in Sarajevo, in the premises of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event tackled anti-corruption related issues such as the challenges of processing corruption: obstacles and perspectives; implementation of the national strategy for the fight against organized crime and corruption in B&H; the role of the Parliament; the compatibility of the domestic legislation with UNCAC, etc. Mr. Edmond Dunga delivered a presentation on “Implementation of GRECO Recommendations and GRECO Experiences”.

Objective 2 - Supporting the process of developing and implementing Regional and National Anticorruption Programs for Raising Public Awareness

Based on its experience in this area, RAI Secretariat reformulated this programmatic objective included in the Work plan for 2008 – 2009. Having in mind that the Secretariat has no resources to finance the expensive public awareness campaigns, as well as that, it is impossible to persuade donors for their support in that regard, national resources for public awareness should be identified and ensured by member countries. RAI Secretariat focused

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. The web site is set to serve as comprehensive Resource Center for all the people, who show interest in the fight against corruption. It contains information about relevant events, publications, anti-corruption country resources and library, etc. In 2008, the staff of RAI Secretariat developed a new web site of the Initiative, which can be found on www.rai-see.org. A new design, content and conception are envisaged in order to match the changes within the Initiative and the Secretariat and to respond to certain anti-corruption needs in SEE. Each RAI member country has a separate web page providing relevant anti-corruption information about the country. Projects like Anti-corruption Consultancy Project, On-line News Center and Forum will be implemented in the new web site as well.

On April 21-22, 2008, in Podgorica, Montenegro, the Head of the Office and the Anti-corruption Expert took part in a Conference on “Implementation of Council of Europe Civil Law Convention on Corruption”. In parallel, as an effort to bring the Convention to the awareness of the society, the Secretariat supported the publishing of 500 copies of a brochure consisting of the Civil Law Convention on Corruption and the Explanatory Report both in English and Montenegrin languages. The brochure was also disseminated among the participants in the Summer School for Junior Magistrates from South – Eastern Europe.

Objective 3 - Assessment of the regional anti-corruption needs and specific requirements

The activities undertaken by RAI Secretariat have been always based on precise assessment of the member states’ concrete needs and requirements. This philosophy was implemented in the preparation of the Work Plan for 2008 – 2009, which was established after comprehensive inputs made by SEE countries.

As a further step in following this principle, RAI Secretariat organized a **Preliminary Meeting** to the Steering Group (SG) Meeting envisaged to take place in the end of October, in Moldova. National representatives from 8 member states took part in the Preliminary Meeting on September 11 – 12, in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. This event was attended also by Mr. Ivan Virgil - Justice and Home Affairs senior expert of the recently established RCC Secretariat. The meeting was envisaged as preparatory forum, where the ideas for the future functioning of the Initiative should be raised in order to be transformed into decisions two months later in the 12th Steering Group Meeting.

The Preliminary Meeting consisted of 3 sessions dealing on the following topics: Promotion and support to the Anti-corruption Resource Center maintained by RAI Secretariat including two web projects – On-line News Center and Anti-corruption Consultancy Project; Presentation of the project on Justice Integrity and High Level Corruption Survey; Implementation of MoU; Reporting Process; RAI Annual Events; Planned or ongoing anti-corruption activities, etc.

RAI Senior Representatives discussed the proposed issues and agreed on reaching final decisions in the following Steering Group Meeting at the latest.

The **12th Regional Anti-corruption Initiative Steering Group Meeting** took place in Chisinau, Moldova, on October 30 – 31, 2008. It was organized by RAI Secretariat in cooperation with the hosting Center for Combating Economic Crimes and Corruption and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova. The SG Meeting is the main forum that provides ground for the decision- making body of the Initiative to discuss and to take the relevant decisions in response to the challenges that face the countries in South Eastern Europe in their efforts to fight corruption. The event was attended by national representatives of 7 out of 9 member countries. RAI Senior Representatives discussed and reached final decisions on the following essential issues: Promotion and support to the Anti-corruption Resource Center, including the projects – On-line News Center and Anti-corruption Consultancy Project; Support for the Survey on “Integrity and Resistance to Corruption of the Judicial System in SEE”; Optimization of Reporting Process; Amendment of RAI Work Plan for 2008 – 2009; Submission of RAI’s candidature to act as observer in GRECO; Planned or on-going anti-corruption activities; RAI annual events.

The on-line Resource Center contains sections with information on internal reports on the implementation of the respective anti-corruption strategies and monitoring reports made by structures like European Commission, GRECO, World Bank and SIGMA, as an integrated part in the web page of each RAI member country. Collecting all the relevant information on anti-corruption makes easier the process of analyzing the data and the assessment of the real needs of the countries.

III. FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF RAI SECRETARIAT

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on April 13, 2007 in Zagreb, Croatia, and its implementation secured the financial sustainability of RAI Secretariat. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro and Romania already made their annual contribution of 24 000 Euro for 2008, thus financing the operational budget, as well as some programmatic activities of RAI Secretariat.

The recent good news in 2008 was the fact that Macedonia also joined the MoU and started to contribute financially to RAI Secretariat's budget.

Meanwhile, the American grant awarded by USAID through ABA-ROLI ended in November 2007. The American support was decisive for the strengthening of the Secretariat in the period 2004 – 2008.

The financial sustainability of the Secretariat at the end of 2008, as the member states took full responsibility and covered entirely its operational budget, ensured the normal functioning of the office, which gives the opportunity for the staff to undertake some fundraising activities and concentrate on making efforts for attracting additional donors for support of its programmatic objectives.

IV. TRAINING ACTIVITIES

I. Twinning Type Activity

“Co-operation and Exchange of Best Practices in the Fight against Corruption”

RAI Secretariat and the Albanian High Inspectorate for Declaration and Audit of Assets (HIDAA) co-organized on May 25 – 28, 2008, in Tirana, Albania, a twinning type activity between the up-mentioned High Inspectorate and the newly established National Integrity Agency (NIA) in Romania. The twinning was initiated by RAI Secretariat following a request by the Romanian agency, which is set to act as an independently operating institution, with administrative control, specialized in verifying the assets got during the practice of a public function, conflicts of interest and incompatibilities. RAI Secretariat supported the funding for covering the traveling and accommodation costs of NIA representatives. The Romanian delegation included Mr. Alexandru Catalin Macovei – President of the Agency, Mr. Ilie Ene – General Director and the Integrity Inspectors – Ms. Ana – Luisa Badiu, Ms. Ioana Barabas – Pricop and Mr. Silviu Soroceanu. They were warmly welcome by Mrs. Fatmira Laska – HIDAA General Inspector and the whole team of the Inspectorate.

The main goal of this activity was to provide initial support for NIA, to allow the Romanian representatives to gain from the experience and the knowledge of their Albanian colleagues and to establish the basis for future partnership between the two homologue bodies.

The beginning of the twinning was marked by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between HIDAA and NIA, thus drawing the route for the future exchange of ideas, knowledge and best practices, as well as setting a certain frames for co-operation in the field of declaration and audit of assets and in the fight against corruption in general.

During the days of the event the scope of HIDAA activities was fully introduced to the Romanian delegation. The random selection for persons to pass a full audit was presented in the presence of local media representatives. As a part of the presentation of the HIDAA organization and functioning, NIA inspectors visited all the premises of the Inspectorate. Lecturers from HIDAA staff delivered presentations on the main topics related to their daily work including:

1. Status, powers, legal and organizational framework of HIDAA;
2. Declaration of assets and private interests – types and forms of declarations, categories of declarants;
3. Case studies on prevention of conflict of interest and incompatibilities;
4. Auditing process – procedures and types of audit;
5. Administrative and criminal procedures;
6. Sanctions – administrative, criminal and disciplinary ones;
7. Cooperation and exchange of information with other bodies;
8. Training capacities, assistance and support to the public institutions and officials.

On behalf of RAI Secretariat the event was attended by Mr. Edmond Dunga – Head of the Office and Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov – Anti-corruption Expert.

2. Summer School for Junior Magistrates from South - Eastern Europe

“International Standards and Cooperation in the Fight against Corruption”

RAI Secretariat, in cooperation with the hosting Montenegrin Directorate for Anti-corruption Initiative, co-organized the annual Summer School for Junior Magistrates from SEE on June 9 – 15, in Kotor, Montenegro. The event was organized for a third consecutive time and was dedicated to the “International Standards and Cooperation in the Fight against Corruption”. It consisted of four main training modules:

1. International standards in anti-corruption - the implementation of relevant conventions of United Nations and Council of Europe.
2. Anti-corruption policies and preventive measures - available tools and best practices.
3. EU experience regarding the international judicial cooperation in criminal matters stressing on the activity of structures like OLAF, EUROPOL, INTERPOL and EUROJUST.
4. Reform of the judiciary and anti-corruption, as challenges of the EU accession process.

The Summer School for Junior Magistrates was opened by Mr. Miras Radovic – Minister of Justice of Montenegro. The junior magistrates spent one week in academic environment in the beautiful Bay of Kotor gaining from the knowledge and experience of honorable lecturers from relevant state anti-corruption bodies, international organizations and civil society. The young prosecutors and judges were given the opportunity to exchange ideas and good practices on the anti-corruption field, to comment the weak and the strong points of their daily work, thus building bridges between the people in South – Eastern Europe.

The framework of the Summer School included presentations by experts from UNODC, Council of Europe, Slovenian Anti-corruption Commission, Vienna University of Economics and Business, EULEX mission in Kosovo, Bulgarian Prosecutor’s Office and Romanian Ministry of Justice. During the special outdoor session, the junior magistrates visited the Basic Court and the municipality of Kotor, holding meetings with Mr. Branko Vuckovic – president of the court and Mrs. Marija Maja Ćatović – president of the municipality.

The event was closed with a certificate ceremony lead by Mrs. Vesna Ratkovic – RAI Chairperson and Director of the hosting Directorate for Anti-corruption Initiative and Mr. Edmond Dunga – Head of RAI Secretariat, following the final written evaluation of the attendants.

V. THEMATICAL EVENTS ORGANIZED BY RAI SECRETARIAT

Apart from the twinning type activity in Tirana and the Summer School for Junior Magistrates from SEE dedicated respectively to “Conflict of Interest and Declaration of Assets” and “International Standards and Cooperation in the Fight against Corruption”, RAI Secretariat organized two events in addition, exploring the other anti-corruption related issues.

The first one was the **South-East European Regional Conference on “Suppression of Corruption in Public Procurement Systems”** on November 12 – 13, 2008, in Cavtat, Croatia. The event was financially supported by USAID through ABA – ROLI. It was attended by more than 30 participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and UNMIK/Kosovo, as well as by experts representing OLAF, OECD and SIGMA.

The Conference consisted of two main components. The first one was dedicated to the European standards in the area of Public Procurement (PP). The experts from OECD, SIGMA and OLAF intervened in topics related to assessment of the existing PP systems and tools to detect and investigate corruption in PP. New issues in the area such as the application of “red flags” and OECD Recommendation on enhancing integrity in PP were introduced and attracted the interest of the participants. The second component gave floor to the national representatives to present and discuss the strong and the weak points of the respective national PP systems, as well as some current issues like e-procurement, implementation of new PP laws, etc. Finally, all the participants agreed on the benefits of the Conference providing them with a more detailed view of the status of the PP systems, gaining from the experience of experts coming from OECD, SIGMA and OLAF, and enriching them with more ideas applicable in the area of PP. The national representatives also stated, they would continue with their efforts in setting up transparent and efficient PP systems in SEE towards the main goal – EU accession.

The second one was the **Regional South - Eastern European Workshop on “Challenges of Preventing and Prosecuting VAT Fraud in the Enlarging EU Market”**. The organization of the event was supported by RAI Secretariat and the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and hosted by the Governance Monitoring Association and the Bulgarian National Revenue Agency on November 27-28, 2008, in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The anti-fraud workshop brought together business managers and tax experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey, directly involved in the fight against VAT fraud in South – Eastern Europe. The general purpose of the event was to educate and to support the revenue and law – enforcement officers from the region in risk management and prevention, investigation and prosecution of cross – border VAT fraud. The workshop pursued the following specific objectives: review of the effect of various prevention and risk – management instruments; exchange of the best practices and lessons learned in the area; monitoring and evaluation of the impact of anti – fraud policies with an emphasis on measuring the losses; studying the feasibility of launching an anti – fraud exchange of information network in South – Eastern Europe tailored towards data on companies already suspected or involved in VAT fraud in some countries in the region.

VI. MULTILATERAL EVENTS ATTENDED BY RAI REPRESENTATIVES

I. International Conference: “Together we are stronger? Harmonizing the fight against fraud and corruption in Europe”

The Head of RAI Secretariat, Mr. Edmond DUNGA participated in the International Conference: “Together we are stronger? Harmonizing the fight against fraud and corruption in Europe” on February 25 - 26, in Cologne, Germany. This conference was co-organized and co-financed by European Anti-Fraud Office and DBB Akademie – Bonn, which represents German Civil Servants Training and Research Academy.

The event met together 350 international participants from around 40 European countries representing different interested stakeholders involved in areas covering the fight against fraud and corruption. During the plenary of the first day, Mr. Edmond Dunga delivered a presentation on “Regional co-operation in fighting corruption in South Eastern Europe”.

2. 14th meeting of the Stability Pact’s Regional Table and inaugural meeting of the Regional Co-operation Council

The 14th and final meeting of the Stability Pact’s Regional Table took place together with the inaugural meeting of the Regional Co-operation Council on February 27, 2008 in Sofia. With a symbolic handshake, the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (SP) Erhard Busek handed over the responsibility for regional cooperation in South - Eastern Europe to the Regional Cooperation Council and its Secretary General Hido Biscevic. The meeting was organized and hosted by the Bulgarian SEECP Chairmanship in Office back to back with the South-East European Co-operation Process (SEECP) Meeting of Foreign Ministers. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia Dimitrij Rupel addressed the meeting on behalf of the presidency of the European Union by praising the Stability Pact and underlining the necessity of regional co-operation in the future in the framework of the RCC. Ministers, ambassadors, other high level officials from SEECP countries, other countries and international organizations addressed their commitment to support and foster regional co-operation. The representative of USA, Mr. Thomas ADAMS, Assistance Coordinator for Europe and Eurasia, underlined that “the United States will remain engaged in the region” and will continue their support as they have done in the past. He also stated that considerable emphasis should remain on the Justice and Home affairs agenda; the struggle against organized crime and against corruption would continue on the basis of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) Center in Bucharest and the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative, both supported by the U.S. government.

Participants adopted conclusions of the Stability Pact’s Regional Table as well as the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of the Regional Co-operation Council.

Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative was represented in this event by Mrs. Vesna RATKOVIC - Chairperson and Mr. Edmond DUNGA - Head of the Secretariat.

3. Conference on “Implementation of the Council of Europe Civil Law Convention on Corruption” – April 21 – 22, 2008, Podgorica, Montenegro

Mr. Edmond Dunga – Head of the Office and Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov – Anti-corruption Expert took part in the Conference on the “Implementation of the Council of Europe Civil Law Convention on Corruption” that took place on April 21-22, 2008, in Podgorica, Montenegro. The event was organized by the Montenegrin Directorate for Anti-corruption Initiative and Council of Europe. It was envisaged as a national promotion of the Civil Law Convention on Corruption in the Montenegrin society focusing on the mechanisms, applied by this only international instrument aiming at utilizing civil law remedies in the overall strategy to suppress corruption, such as requiring compensation to victims who suffered damage as a result of corruption, providing for the State’s civil liability and responsibility for negligent omissions of supervisory bodies that resulted in corrupt acts of public officials, for the nullity of contracts and clauses providing for corruption, for the protection of employees – whistleblowers, etc.

The Conference was attended by representatives of the police, state courts, ministries and other administrative bodies, civil society. The leading speaker of the event was Mr. Bostjan Penko – Council of Europe expert, who presented the Civil Law Convention on Corruption article by article.

The representatives of RAI Secretariat presented to the participants two practical issues during the second day of the Conference. Mr. Edmond Dunga delivered a presentation on the implementation of the Convention in Albania with a brief remark about its status in France and Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov made an overview of the relevant experience regarding Bulgaria.

In parallel, as an effort to bring the Convention to the awareness of the society, the Secretariat supported the publishing of 500 copies of a brochure consisting of the Civil Law Convention on Corruption and the Explanatory Report both in English and Montenegrin languages. It was disseminated during the Conference.

4. 7th General Meeting of the Anti-corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, June 25 – 27, 2008, Tbilisi, Georgia

The 7th General Meeting of the Anti-corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ACN) took place in Tbilisi, Georgia, on June 25 – 27, 2008. Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov attended the event on the behalf of RAI Secretariat. The staff of the Secretariat supported the organization of the meeting by using its contacts in the region and providing some quality participants to the event representing the relevant national authorities in South–Eastern Europe, as well as the NGO sector.

The meeting was organized by the OECD, in cooperation with the OSCE and the ABA ROLI and hosted by the Government of Georgia. It provided a unique regional multi-stakeholder forum for the transition economies, with flexible structure and high-level political attendance, which allowed for an open discussion between national governments, civil society, donors and international organizations and gave valuable networking opportunities.

The participants in the 7th ACN General Meeting made a review progress achieved by its members in fighting corruption and provided a forum for the ACN members to

exchange experiences and good practices on the key priority areas of fighting corruption in the region, such as:

1. International anti-corruption conventions and monitoring mechanisms: prioritises for the ACN region;
2. Role of business in preventing and fighting corruption;
3. Investigation and prosecution of complex and high level corruption cases;
4. Prevention of corruption: management of conflict of interest and asset declarations for public officials;
5. Ways to mobilise societal support to anti-corruption political agenda.

5. 1st Coordination Conference of SEE Initiatives on Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)

The 1st Coordination Conference of South - East European Initiatives on Justice and Home Affairs and their international partners was organized by the newly established Regional Cooperation Council's Secretariat on September 15 – 16, 2008, in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event was envisaged as a forum for strengthening the coordination between the regional initiatives and international organizations acting in SEE on the implementation of JHA projects and reforms.

In his opening words, RCC Secretary General Mr. Hido Bisevic presented the mission of the new organization in setting up bridge between EU and countries of the region in five priority areas: Justice and Home Affairs, Economic and Social Development, Infrastructure and Energy, Security Cooperation and Building Human Capital and Cross-cutting Issues.

The first session of the event was dedicated to the current status of the regional initiatives. The representatives of the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative, the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), the South-East Europe Cooperative Initiative Regional Center for Combating Trans-border Crime (SECI Center), the Secretariat of the South-East Europe Police Cooperation Convention (PCC Secretariat), the South-East European Prosecutors Advisory Group (SEPAG) and the South East Europe Police Chiefs Association (SEPCA) presented the structure and the activity of each initiative and discussed the necessary steps to be taken in order to improve the coordination and cooperation process in their work. RAI was represented by Ms. Vesna Ratkovic - Chairperson, Mr. Edmond Dunga – Head of the Secretariat, Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov – Anti-corruption Expert and Mr. Dusan Drakic – Advisor in Montenegrin DACI.

During the second session of the meeting the initiatives and the international organizations tried to identify common points of interest in order to combine and make efficient their efforts on JHA field avoiding overlapping or unnecessary competition.

Among the main conclusions of the forum were:

- JHA regional initiatives and RCC should continue to work on improving cooperation and coordination of activities;
- RCC will support the initiatives and will assist the implementation of joint regional projects;
- The Coordination Conference will be developed to an annual event, etc.

Recognizing EU membership as a priority for all the countries in SEE, the participants agreed on the fact that establishing efficient cooperation mechanisms in the region would show they could work inside EU as well.

6. “Using Communication Approaches and Techniques to Support Anti-Corruption Efforts: A Learning Event for Anti-Corruption Agencies”

The World Bank's Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime co-organized a learning event for anti-corruption agencies on “Using Communication Approaches and Techniques to Support Anti-corruption Efforts” on November 17 – 19, 2008, in Vienna, Austria.

The event brought together officials of anti-corruption bodies and senior decision-makers from all over the world. During the three-day workshop, participants were engaged in discussions and debates on the contributions, which effective communication approaches and techniques make to anti-corruption initiatives. The focus was put on identifying the good practices in the area through the presentation of related case studies and practical solutions. The Conference addressed the challenge of building political will in support of anti-corruption efforts within state institutions, followed by building public pressure and demand for accountability among citizens in line with the main learning objectives of the event: developing an appreciation for the integral role and relevance of communication approaches and techniques on the anti-corruption field; information about the services of communication specialists and consultants; identifying the need for each agency to build its communication capacity; practicing the skills in framing anti-corruption messages for multiple stakeholders.

Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov – Anti-corruption Expert – attended the Conference on behalf of Regional Anti-corruption Initiative Secretariat.

As the focal point and the regional center devoted solely to curb corruption, the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative Secretariat promotes regional anti-corruption co-operation in South East Europe through interaction, coordination, facilitation and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned.



REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE
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