



RAI Secretariat's

NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

January – March 2008

Sarajevo, BiH

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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 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.

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

II. RAI SECRETARIAT'S PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES

During the observed period of 3 months 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 by the 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 is going to organize for a third consecutive year the Summer School for Junior Magistrates from South – Eastern European 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 is going to be dedicated to “International Standards in Anti-corruption – the Implementation of Relevant Conventions of United Nations and Council of Europe”. The international instrument on focus will be 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. It will be also stressed on the use of special investigative techniques supporting the efficient combat against corruption.

The anti-corruption expert contacted Mr. Erik Larson – crime prevention expert in UNODC and received approval for their participation in the Summer School. As UNODC serves as the Secretariat for the Conference of State Parties to UNCAC, RAI Secretariat made the relevant efforts to secure the participation of an expert from UNODC – the organization in charge with the implementation of UNCAC. The Convention is already signed and ratified in 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.

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 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 that 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. 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 the first quarter of 2008, the staff of RAI Secretariat started to work on the 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 South – Eastern Europe. Each RAI member country will have a separate web page providing relevant anti-corruption information about the country. Projects like Anti-corruption Consultancy Rooster, 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 will take 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 will support 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.



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

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. It 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 South Eastern Europe. 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.

In order to stay in touch with the current needs of the member states on the anti-corruption field, the Secretariat sent requests for support to the Senior Representatives. First to react was the Montenegrin Directorate for Anti-corruption Initiative with a proposal for cooperation in organization of a national event - Conference on “Implementation of Council of Europe Civil Law Convention on Corruption”. RAI Secretariat will contribute by presenting some case studies related to the topic, as well as by supporting 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.

In parallel with the requests sent by e-mails, direct meetings with some of the Senior Representatives were arranged too. On February 11, 2008, the Anti-corruption Expert met in Sofia Ms. Desislava Sitarska, acting as deputy Senior Representative of Bulgaria and discussed possible assistance and involvement of RAI Secretariat in the implementation of some national anti-corruption measures and activities, applied by the Bulgarian authorities. Two days later, RAI Secretariat’s staff had a meeting in Sarajevo with Mr. Damir Vejo – Senior Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the discussion raised the possible interest of the Bosnian side to host an event dedicated to financing of political parties and electoral campaigns in relation to the upcoming local elections in the country.

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.

Although RAI Secretariat is set to serve as a center for facilitation and cooperation in the fight against corruption for the member countries from South – Eastern Europe, the scope of activity of the Sarajevo based office is broader and goes beyond the border lines of the region. In March 2008, RAI Secretariat responded to a request made by Catherine Newcombe – Acting Regional Director for Eurasia, US Department of Justice. In regard to the request, The Head of the Office and the Anti-corruption Expert reviewed and made comments on the draft Law on financial disclosure and conflict of interest of Ukraine in order to make this legal act compliant to the EU standards.



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, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Romania already made their annual contribution of 24 000 Euro for 2008, thus financing the operational and programmatic budget of RAI Secretariat.

The financial sustainability of the Secretariat, 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. In January and February, Mr. Edmond Dunga - the Head of the Office and Mr. Veselin Jovanovic the Outreach and Fundraising Assistant undertook a series of bilateral meetings with representatives of the donor society in Bosnia and Herzegovina involved in anti-corruption and/or good governance activities.

- On January 23, 2008, RAI Secretariat members met with Mr. Orhan Niksic, Senior Economist of the World Bank Country Office to Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- On January 24, 2008, the Head of the Office and the Outreach and Fundraising Assistant met with representatives of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to Bosnia and Herzegovina:
 - Mr. Thomas Ruegg, Country Director, and
 - Mrs. Alma Zukorlic, National Program Officer - Good governance;
- On January 24, 2008, Mr. Edmond Dunga and Mr. Veselin Jovanovic met with representatives of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA):
 - Mr. Bruce Steen, Counselor and Head of Technical Cooperation, and
 - Mr. Almir Tanovic, Program Officer;
- On January 31, 2008, RAI Secretariat members met Mr. Eric Litver, Second Secretary of Royal Netherland's Embassy in Sarajevo;
- On February 4, 2008, the Head of the Office and the Outreach and Fundraising Assistant had a meeting Mr. Damir Hadzic, Governance Coordinator of DFID in Sarajevo;
- On February 5, 2008, RAI Secretariat members met Mr. Mervan Mirascija, Program Coordinator/Law of Open Society Fund in Sarajevo;
- On February 7, 2008, Mr. Edmond Dunga and Mr. Veselin Jovanovic held a meeting with representatives of the Delegation of the European Commission to Bosnia and Herzegovina:
 - Mr. Ferdinand Kopp, Counselor, Head of Operations, Section I;
 - Mr. Luc Steeman, Attaché;
 - Mrs. Isabel Royo Pla, Cooperation Section and,



- Ms. Irena Sotra, Task Manager.

These different meetings and contacts aimed to:

- establish contacts with relevant international organizations which are resident in Sarajevo and some potential donors and/or partners;
- inform respective counterparts on different developments related to Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative in the framework of strengthening regional ownership and leadership and present the current status within RAI and about transition from Stability Pact to Regional Co-operation Council;
- present strategic priorities and programmatic portfolio for 2008-2009 and consider the possibility of concrete cooperation and partnership;
- discuss modalities of potential funding for specific projects that are to be developed and presented latter on by RAI Secretariat.

Representatives of the above - mentioned institutions and organizations expressed interest regarding all recent changes that marked increase of ownership and leadership by SEE countries even in the anti-corruption area. They also presented their current status and strategic priorities. They offered the possibility to further analyze RAI strategic and programmatic portfolio aiming at improvement of partnership in future activities.

EC Delegation representatives suggested the idea to explore in the future the support of EU bodies such as TAIEX. Representatives of some organizations (SDC, DFID, Royal Netherland's Embassy) expressed their interest in efforts and vision of RAI Secretariat regarding Anti-Corruption Resource Center. They offered the opportunity to consider concrete projects in the future without deadline constraints.

Further meetings and contacts are envisaged in the future with other partners in Sarajevo as well as in other member countries when RAI Secretariat members may travel during future activities.

IV. TRAINING ACTIVITIES

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

RAI Secretariat already started the preparations for the Summer School for Junior Magistrates from SEE, which will take place in Kotor, Montenegro, on June 9 – 15, 2008. The third edition of the event is going to be co-organized with the Directorate for Anti-corruption Initiative of Montenegro. The Summer School proves to be a useful annual forum, where young judges and prosecutors from the region meet with the idea to establish a comprehensive network of perspective junior officials involved in the fight against corruption and to gain from the knowledge and experience of some honorable lecturers from the relevant national anti-corruption bodies, international organizations and civil society. This year's edition of the Summer School will consist of four training modules:

1. International standards in anti-corruption - the implementation of relevant conventions of United Nations and Council of Europe. The international instrument on focus



will be the UN Convention against Corruption and especially chapter IV - "International Cooperation" and chapter V - "Asset Recovery".

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.

It is expected the Summer School to be attended with speakers from UNODC, Council of Europe, OLAF, Vienna University of Economics, Bulgarian Prosecutor's Office, Romanian Ministry of Justice, Slovenian Commission for Prevention of Corruption and Montenegrin Directorate for Anti-corruption Initiative.

2. Twinning Type Activities

In February, 2008, RAI Secretariat received a request for assistance from the newly established Romanian National Integrity Agency. This body is envisaged 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. The concrete request of assistance was on the following levels:

1. Fast, efficient and transparent organization of activity by promoting the international experience on the field (know-how transfer, good practice etc.);
2. In drawing up procedure manuals for the activity of the integrity inspectors;
3. Training / specialization in the field of investigations made in relation to the declaration of assets, conflicts of interest and incompatibility cases.

In regard to the request, RAI Secretariat submitted its proposal to the Romanian National Integrity Agency to support the strengthening and the organizational development of the administrative body in two aspects:

1. By organizing a twinning type training activity between Romanian National Integrity Agency and the respective Albanian agency including visits of Romanian officials in Tirana and vice versa;
2. By supporting the drawing up of procedure manuals for the Romanian integrity inspectors.

The success of the twinning activity is very much guaranteed by the direct involvement of the Head of RAI Secretariat in the support and the development of the Albanian body on declaration of assets, which through the years reached some visible achievements in the area.

RAI Secretariat's proposal is already approved by the Romanian National Integrity Agency. The program of the project is going to be drafted following consultations with the both sides.

V. BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH RAI PARTNERS

The Head of the Office and the Anti-corruption Expert attended several meetings with RAI partner organizations in order to coordinate and avoid overlapping of activities on



the anti-corruption field, as well as to establish ground for further partnership and conduct of some common relevant activities.

On January 18, 2008, the staff of RAI Secretariat held a meeting in its office with Mrs. Leila Bicacic and Svetlana Celic – managers of a team of investigative journalist making researches on corruption issues and organized crime. Since the beginning of 2007 RAI Secretariat stressed very much in its activities on the importance of the investigative journalism for discovering corruption cases and serving as an initial signal for the state bodies in charge that somewhere something wrong is going on. Mrs. Bicacic and Mrs. Celic explained that they are more practically oriented investigating different level of corruption cases in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their team has already established close relations with similar structures from Bulgaria and Romania. They expressed their willingness to take part in RAI activities promoting the role of the investigative journalism.

One month later, on February 28, 2008, RAI Anti-corruption Expert had a second meeting with Mrs. Bicacic and Mrs. Celic, during which the consent for cooperation reached at the first meeting was reaffirmed.

On February 20, 2008, the Head of the Office and the Anti-corruption Expert had a meeting in the European Commission's office in Sarajevo with Mr. Francisco Cardona – Principle Administrator in OECD and Senior Adviser in SIGMA, to discuss possible cooperation between RAI Secretariat and SIGMA. As main areas of assistance were identified:

- Civil service reform, administrative reform and especially the reform inside the administration of the judicial system;
- Mr. Francisco Cardona offered SIGMA expert support for the activities which RAI Secretariat will undertake in the future.

On March 4, 2008, the Head of the Office and the Anti-corruption Expert met with a group of representatives of OSCE mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina: Mrs. Ans Zwerver – Chief of the Cabinet and Director of Policy and Planning, Ms. and an expert from OSCE's Democratization Department. During the meeting both sides presented their focus points in order to find out a cross points that can be used as a basic ground for cooperation. OSCE members stressed on their activities in following areas:

- Working with municipalities in ensuring timely and realistic budget planning and transparent reporting including increase in non-tax revenues, expenditure control and dept management;
- Building the capacity of local authorities to be engaged in good democratic practices in both economic and social aspect of local governance;
- Providing parliamentary support through legislative support (draft Law on conflict of interest; Law on financing of political parties, etc.) and different programs designed to enhance Parliament's institutional capacity and to increase public awareness of legislative process.

Both parties agreed to submit to each other general support and to participate in activities on the anti-corruption field under request.

On March 19, 2008, RAI Secretariat's staff had a meeting in the Secretariat's office with Mr. Srdjan Blagovcanin – executive director and project manager in Transparency International, Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the meeting, both sides reaffirmed the



traditionally close relations between them and expressed their willingness for further cooperation.

Mr. Blagovcanin presented TI's ongoing project "Improvement of the National Integrity System". The aim of the project is to identify lacks and needs for corrections of legal framework, enhancements in organization, functioning and international cooperation between institutions in fighting corruption, through workshops of social integrity. Reaching this wide consensus among representatives of institutions, civil society and public, through common work in workshops of social integrity, should enable that quality of presented solutions will contribute to real improvement in combating corruption. On the other hand, comprehension of wide range actors in process should allow wider support and simplified implementation of anti-corruption measures. Mr. Srdjan Blagovcanin explained that, as a part of the project, TI is working with the National Assembly for the adoption of a new national anti-corruption strategy. He mentioned the idea of a possible workshop on the topic and invited RAI Secretariat to participate to the event. Mr. Blagovcanin also talked about TI's efforts to monitor the growing privatization process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, having in mind that some of the major companies are still a public property.

Respectively, the staff of RAI Secretariat presented the main activities in which they are involved. The new tendencies in the region on the ant-corruption field, related to the launch of the Regional Cooperation Council, were also introduced. It was stressed that under the Justice and Home Affairs Department will continue to operate only the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative and SECI Center in Bucharest merged with SPOC.

In addition to this, in February 2008, RAI Secretariat re-established its relations with traditional partners such as Marshall Center in Germany and OSCE Office in Vienna. Relevant information on possible future partnership was exchanged through e-mails.

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 in the European Commission (OLAF) 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 (RCC) 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 (RCC).

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