



REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE
◦ SECRETARIAT ◦

RAI STEERING GROUP PRELIMINARY MEETING

Summary, Conclusions and Decisions

*Cavtat, Croatia
September 24 – 25, 2009*



The Preliminary Meeting of the 13th RAI Steering Group (SG) Meeting was envisaged as a preparatory forum, where the ideas for the future functioning of the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative should be raised in order to be transformed into decisions a month later in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Participants

RAI Steering Group Preliminary Meeting was attended by 5 member states. The countries were represented by:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina – Mr. Tomislav Curic – Expert Associate, Department for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption, Ministry of Security;
- Bulgaria – Mr. Rosen Kukushev – Expert, EU and International Cooperation Directorate, Ministry of Interior;
- Croatia – Mr. Davor Dubravica – Head of Anti-corruption Sector, Department for Strategic Development, Ministry of Justice;
- Montenegro – Ms. Marija Novkovic – Deputy Director, Directorate for Anti-corruption Initiative (DACI); Ms. Mirela Bakalbasic – Senior Advisor, Department for International Cooperation, DACI;
- Romania – Mrs. Oana Schmidt-Haineala – State Counsellor for Anti-corruption Matters within the Office of the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration, Government of Romania; Lavinia Daciana Miclea – Legal Advisor, Department for the Relation with the Public Ministry, Prevention of Criminality and Corruption, Ministry of Justice and Citizens

RAI Secretariat was represented by:

- Mr. Edmond Dunga – Head of Office;
- Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov – Anti-corruption Expert;
- Ms. Dajana Stajic – Executive Assistant;
- Mr. Veselin Jovanovic – Fundraising and Outreach Assistant.

Summary of Discussion Part

The Preliminary Meeting was opened by Mr. Edmond Dunga, who welcomed the participants and briefly explained the idea to have such meeting as a precondition and important step towards reaching final decisions on the most essential issues related to

the work of RAI. It was the fourth consecutive SG Preliminary Meeting organized by RAI Secretariat, following the example of the previous ones that proved to be successful.

The Head of RAI Secretariat shortly described the work done by the office since the last RAI SG Meeting in 2008 and gave the floor to Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov to present the agenda of the event.

Mr. Aleksandrov pointed out that the main topic, on which the participants should focus, was the elaboration of a draft version of the new *RAI Work Plan for 2010 – 2011*. The Anti-Corruption Expert presented the draft version of the document prepared by the Secretariat. He expressed the opinion that the structure of the current Work Plan was good, but the content needed to be amended in regard to the current trends and needs on the anti-corruption field in South – Eastern Europe (SEE). The major change proposed was to merge the 10 joint measures to curb corruption from Brussels' Ministerial Declaration from 2005 and to underline them as guiding principles in the Work Plan, instead of selecting 3 priority areas for each one RAI member state. Mr. Aleksandrov stressed on the practical approach in filling with content the Work Plan. He explained that each country should fill its part in the chapter entitled "National Priorities" with reasonable and reachable items, which reflected the real needs and areas to improve in the up-coming 2 year period. It was pointed out that each country would have the chance to provide its inputs on the thematic dimension of respective national priorities, project proposals, ideas for trainings, workshops, seminars and conferences, as well as a detailed table with concrete proposals for the organization of national and regional events in the member states. During the following discussions the Senior Representatives expressed their general approval for the structure and the content of the draft Work Plan for 2010 – 2011 submitted by the Secretariat. Ms. Marija Novkovic expressed the intention of Montenegro to organize on national level a public opinion poll on DACI's functions and performance, as a basis for further targeting of DACI's public awareness campaigns. She also said that the revision of the national Code of Ethics for Civil Servants and State Employees is likely to take place in the following two years, and explained it would entail several events, such as workshops and trainings. As for regional events, Montenegro would organize a regional event on the protection of whistleblowers, as most of the countries in the region had already adopted such legislation or were in the process of adoption of legal amendments in that regard. *Finally, it was agreed that all RAI member countries would send to the Secretariat in written form their proposals for the content of "National Priorities" and table of events of the Work Plan till October 15, 2009.* Based on these inputs RAI Secretariat will prepare the final draft version of the document and will submit it for adoption to the SG Meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The discussions during the afternoon session had as main topic the idea to re-launch an *Anti-corruption Internship Program*. The Secretariat presented its view on possibilities to reactivate this program, from which several interns from SEE had already benefited 2-3 years ago. As location of the internship, it was underlined that it could be

the office of RAI Secretariat, but also, that it could be e-internship with a short study visit to the Secretariat premises at the end of the internship period. The countries showed their interest and discussed the idea. The representatives of Montenegro explained that they had the practice to have interns in DACI, as well as students who have expressed an academic interest in the anti-corruption related documents. *The Senior Representatives agreed to exchange opinion about the Internship Program in their respective institutions and to come up with concrete ideas regarding the areas of work, selection of candidates and duration of the program at the SG Meeting in Sofia.*

At the end of the first meeting day, it was agreed that the **annual country reports** presenting the progress achieved by member states on the anti-corruption field during the last year would be presented at the SG Meeting in Bulgaria. It was assumed that only Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro had already sent their reports to the Secretariat, while the other states were expected to do the same in the up-coming weeks before the SG Meeting.

The second day started with discussions on the **On-line Anti-corruption Resource Center** maintained by RAI Secretariat. Mr. Edmond Dunga explained that it was meeting huge interest among different types of users – not only practitioners, but common users as well. He pointed out as main difficulty, which the staff of RAI Secretariat was meeting maintaining the web site, the update of information (news, legislation, projects, events) on regular basis. In that regard, Mr. Dunga presented to the participants methodological sheet that covered all areas of anti-corruption activity and proposed to Senior Representatives to fill the sheet during certain periods of time and to submit it to the Secretariat in order to facilitate and to guarantee the sustainability of the Resource Center. The Head of the Secretariat also mentioned that it would be a good idea if the web pages of the respective institutions in the member states could add a link to RAI web site. In addition, he asked the national representatives to check the possibility to cooperate with relevant PR departments of different national institutions, which should have as final result submission of data directly to RAI Secretariat. The Senior Representatives agreed that the Resource Center was a huge information tool in the area of fight against corruption and, as such, should be properly maintained. They raised the question of having all the materials on the country web pages both in English and local language in order to reach broader audience. *The national representatives approved in principle the content and the function of the methodological sheet and agreed to define their support about the Anti-corruption Resource Center at the up-coming RAI SG Meeting.*

The next topic subject to discussions was **the Survey on “Integrity and Resistance to Corruption of the Criminal Judicial System in SEE”** implemented by Regional Cooperation Council, Transparency International – Romania and RAI Secretariat. Mr. Edmond Dunga described briefly current state of things in regard to that project stressing on the difficulties met by the implementers. It was particularly commented with Mr. Davor Dubravica the status of the survey in Croatia and the specific problems observed in that country regarding translation of the questionnaires. It

was concluded that the best way to overcome the difficulties in Croatia would be the forming of a Focus Group Meeting by representatives of stakeholders, implementers, focal points and target groups. The problems met in Bosnia and Herzegovina were discussed with Mr. Tomislav Curic, who would undertake the necessary steps to find replacement of the focal point inside the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who had left the judicial body. *In principle, all Senior Representatives agreed to support the full implementation of the project with all means at their disposal.*

Furthermore, the staff of Secretariat presented its ideas about the most important **RAI events in 2010**. Mr. Edmond Dunga announced that RAI Secretariat would undertake negotiations with Albanian academy for training of judges and prosecutors with the idea to organize the *5th edition of the Summer School for Junior Magistrates in 2010 in Durres, Albania.*

Next point of discussions was related to the occasion of the *10th anniversary of RAI*, which would be marked in 2010. Mr. Dunga invited the Senior Representatives to submit any kind of proposals concerning the organization of this event. In that regard, Mrs. Oana Schmidt-Haineala officially proposed Romania to be host country of the forum, which will mark 10 years of existence of the Anti-corruption Initiative.

Finally, the floor was taken by Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov, who presented the **upcoming RAI events till the end of 2009**. All of them will be organized in Sofia, Bulgaria. The first one is a *regional seminar "Detection and Repression of Illicit Enrichment"* organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France and the French Embassy in Sofia in cooperation with the other French embassies in SEE on October 19 – 20. The event will tackle the issue of illicit enrichment presenting the French experience in the area, making liaison with forfeiture and seizure of assets acquired from criminal activity. RAI Secretariat has been invited to take part in the seminar as the only center in SEE devoted solely to fighting corruption, but also as the major driving force in the efforts to establish a network of practitioners in the area of asset recovery.

In regard to the *13th SG Meeting*, Mr. Aleksandrov announced that it would take place in Sofia, in the last week of October. It was reminded that due to submitted candidatures and undertaken voting, Senior Representatives from RAI member states had given the hosting of the 13th SG Meeting to Bulgaria, while the *14th Meeting of the Steering Committee would be organized in 2010 by Romania.*

The third event is a *workshop on "Asset Recovery"* on November 9 - 10, which will be financed by TAIEX. The event was initiated and supported by RAI Secretariat in cooperation with the Bulgarian Commission for Establishing of Property Acquired from Criminal Activity. It will gather experts dealing with asset recovery representing homologue bodies from SEE. The workshop will be used as initial phase for exploring the possibility to launch a network of practitioners in this area.

The up-mentioned idea is expected to be elaborated at the **Regional Asset Recovery Conference** organized by UNODC, STAR Initiative, OLAF, the Commission for Establishing of Property Acquired from Criminal Activity of Bulgaria and RAI

Secretariat on December 2 – 4. The event will bring together practitioners from all SEE countries, including Greece and Kosovo (under UN Resolution 1244).

The final event will take place in Sofia on December 9 – 10 on the *occasion of the International Day for Fight against Corruption*. It will be co-organized by UNODC and RAI Secretariat. The program of this event will be developed in the up-coming weeks.

The results achieved at RAI Steering Group Preliminary Meeting are summarized in the following

Conclusions and Decisions

RAI Senior Representatives agreed to:

1. Send to RAI Secretariat in written form their proposals for the content of “National Priorities” and table of events of the draft Work Plan for 2010 – 2011 till October 15, 2009;

2. Exchange opinion about the Anti-corruption Internship Program in their respective institutions and to come up with concrete ideas regarding the areas of work, selection of candidates and duration of the program at RAI SG Meeting;

3. Prepare, send to RAI Secretariat and present at the SG Meeting the country reports for the progress achieved on the anti-corruption field in 2009;

4. Explore the possibility to promote the on-line Anti-corruption Resource Center among the national stakeholders, to adopt the proposed methodological sheet and to fully support the regular update of the information on the respective countries’ pages part of the Resource Center;

5. Facilitate and support by all means at their disposal the full implementation of the Anti-corruption Survey.

It was underlined that the final decisions on the discussed issues should be reached during the Steering Group Meeting end of October, 2009, in Sofia, Bulgaria at the latest.

Cavtat, September 25, 2009