



## CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

International and Regional Cooperation with focus on Euro-Atlantic Integration Pillar

Regional Conference

„Trends and Challenges in Implementing Anti-Corruption Strategies”

25<sup>th</sup> November 2014, Skopje, MK

IRC-02-CF



### INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to RACVIAC 2014 Programme, on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014, the International and Regional Cooperation with focus on Euro-Atlantic Integration (IRC) Pillar carried out the Regional Conference „Trends and Challenges in Implementing Anti-Corruption Strategies”.

The partnership that was initiated by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation to enhance regional and international efforts to build integrity and fight corruption resulted in establishing close cooperation between the Ministry of Justice of MK, the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) and RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation. The plan is to organize two conferences within the framework of this cooperation. The first event was this Conference, which was an expert-level event that will be followed by

a regional Conference at the level of ministers, which is planned for May 2015. These events are part of a Building Integrity and Fighting Corruption project.

Having in mind that fighting corruption requires well thought out and comprehensive strategic planning, this event tackled the question of a proper approach that needs to be taken in establishing, implementing and evaluating Anti-corruption Strategies (ACSs) and Action Plans (APs).

As there is neither a single approach nor a single-handed solution, having in mind numerous factors involved in fighting corruption, this event gathered relevant actors from the South-Eastern Europe region, who presented their countries' solutions and experiences.

Considering that most of the current ACSs and APs of the states in SEE expire in 2014 or 2015 the issue of formulating an efficient ACS and AP and determining the key ingredients for successful implementation and monitoring is becoming very important for the states in the forthcoming period.

This Conference was an opportunity for countries from the region and all parties dealing with challenges of putting efficient ACSs and APs in place to exchange ideas on issues of mutual concern and to try a comparative approach and share the lessons learned so far.



The lessons drawn from the experiences of implementing National ACSs and APs worldwide indicate that key features for a successful anti-corruption policymaking include national ownership, knowledge-based design, stakeholder participation, strategic priority planning, effective coordination and monitoring and evaluation. All of these key factors were discussed during the event with special emphasis on monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring and evaluation represent the key dimensions of anti-corruption interventions in general. They require precise and fact-based data on corruption as well as appropriate data collection mechanisms. An effective monitoring mechanism should be comprehensive, allowing for civil society's input while still remaining simple and manageable for public institutions with lower data collection and processing capacities.

All of these factors indicate the importance of monitoring mechanisms and stipulate that special attention should be given to the development of a comprehensive monitoring mechanism in order to have successful implementation of the ACSs.

## ORGANIZATION

The Regional Conference „Trends and Challenges in Implementing Anti-Corruption Strategies” was organized by the Ministry of Justice of MK, the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) and RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation.



The event took place on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014, in Hotel Arka, Skopje, MK. It lasted one day and consisted of an opening session, two working and closing sessions.

The purpose of the event was to identify the states' priorities and needs in terms of efficient implementation of ACSs and APs, with a potential emphasis on monitoring mechanisms.

The objective was to provide a common platform for the presentation of country-specific experiences, lessons learned and success stories related to the formulation of an efficient ACS and AP and identification of elements and factors that can lead to success.

The outcomes included recommendations for successful implementation and enhancement of ACSs and APs with focus on reaching a Conference Conclusion on the need to improve the monitoring mechanisms.

The Conference gathered 51 anti-corruption practitioners coming from the ministries of justice and anti-corruption agencies dealing with drafting, implementation and monitoring of anti-corruption strategies and their action plans. The participants came from AL, BA, BG, HR, Kosovo\*, MK, MD, ME, RO, RS and TR.

The Conference recommendations and conclusions will serve as a starting point for organizing a second event on a ministerial level. The second event will be a promotional platform for the Methodology on a monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the national anti-corruption strategies. The Methodology produced by the RAI Secretariat between the events should set a recommended mechanism for efficient monitoring of anti-corruption strategies and action plans and their evaluation.

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*\* MAG invited Kosovo\* to participate on a permanent basis, at all levels and on equal terms, in all activities and meetings of RACVIAC/MAG.*

*\* This designation is without prejudice on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence. (In accordance with Arrangements regarding regional representation and cooperation.)*

*The Republic of Serbia stated that the participation of Kosovo should be in accordance with the agreement on principles governing the normalization of relations and Arrangements regarding regional representation and cooperation and in compliance with the Gymnich formula and UNSCR 1244. The participation will not apply to the security forces.*

## SUMMARY

During the opening session welcome addresses by the Minister of Justice of MK, Mr Adnan Jashari, PhD, President of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption, Mr Gjorgji Slamkov, Chairman of the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative, Mr Davor Dubravica and the Director of RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, Ambassador Branimir Mandić, were given.

„Our expectations for further successes in the fight against corruption are based solely on our commitment to invest efforts in maintaining and comparing the anti-corruption policy and overcoming this devastating phenomenon“, said Mr. Adnan Jashari, Minister of Justice of



MK. Minister Jashari thanked RACVIAC and RAI for the actions taken to promote regional cooperation to support the implementation of anti-corruption events and activities in the member countries, as well as for organizing this event in MK.

Ambassador Branimir Mandić, Director of RACVIAC, said: „Being confident that through cooperation and synergy in action we can do more for our countries and beyond, RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation has raised this partnership to a prominent level, the result of which is the today's Regional Conference. We believe in multi-stakeholder cooperation, in cooperation between the countries, civil society and businesses. It's one of the preconditions in the promotion of successful policies and mechanisms in all respects, the fight against corruption included.“ He went on to say: “It is important to speak about problematic issues and find proper solutions. Problems do not go away if you ignore them. We have the necessary tools at our disposal and we have to improve them to enforce our capacities, with the aim to address these problems and to deliver more concrete results. We must understand that this is one of the most important conditions for transforming our region into an area of prosperity and welfare states.”

Mr Gjorgji Slamkov, President of the State Commission for prevention of Corruption in MK emphasized that the fight against corruption should be constant and permanent, directed towards eliminating the causes that generate it, quick in disclosing its emergent forms with more effective treatment of its sanctioning institutions, in order

to close the valve through which the vital values of the social system are being threatened.

Mr Davor Dubravica, Chairman of the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative, stressed the importance of the implementation of the strategic documents: „On the one hand there is the process of strategic planning and on the other hand the process of implementation. Both of these components must be strongly related and adapted to each other. Even the best strategy without an efficient implementation is not a story we need.“

The working sessions included presentations by speakers / experts on anti-corruption issues as well as discussions, questions and answers. The work of the session moderators, Mr Davor Dubravica and Ms Marija Žužek, who initiated and summarized the



discussions on different aspects of the topic, gave impetus to the Conference sessions.

A set of presentations constituted the two focal points of this Conference: Anti-Corruption Strategies Development and Fulfillment; and Anti-Corruption Strategies Monitoring and Evaluation. Apart from the national presentations, over the course of the event, the following speakers/experts also gave presentations: Mr Kiro Cvetkov (Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI)), Mr Borjan Gjuzelov (Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (NGO)), Mr Ruslan Stefanov, Coordinator (South-East European Leadership for Development and Integrity), Mr Ronan O’Laoire (UNODC) and Mr Tilman Hoppe, Anti-Corruption Expert.

A common denominator of these presentations was that there is a lot of room for improvement of the existing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for anti-corruption strategies and action plans. It is important to include the civil society as an external observer as well in order to ensure additional transparency in the implementation of anti-corruption strategies and to raise political accountability which should serve as a check for the failed implementation of the anti-corruption strategies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The rapporteur, Mr. Ruslan Stefanov, concluded that the objectives of this Regional Conference were achieved and summarized the presentations and discussions with the following recommendations and conclusions, which were unanimously accepted:

1. The political will is an important precondition when it comes to the implementation of a National Anti-Corruption Strategy. By political will participants understand the recurring cycle of action – monitoring - evaluation – action, i.e., a sustained effort for progress on an informed anti-corruption agenda.
2. By sharing their national practices, participants concluded that there is room for improvement of the existing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) commits to developing a tool, which would help countries in the process.
3. Besides its importance as an external monitor the civil society should be given a role within the monitoring commissions. Regional initiatives, such as the South East Leadership for Development and Integrity, should be considered to be involved as a partner in this process.
4. Progress and evaluation reports should be made publicly available.
5. The countries should consider moving towards non-paper based reporting, which should also ensure higher transparency and publicity.
6. The political accountability should serve as a check for failing implementation of the anti-corruption strategy.

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