



STABILITY PACT
FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

ANTICORRUPTION INITIATIVE
REGIONAL SECRETARIAT LIAISON OFFICE

10th SPAI STEERING GROUP MEETING

SPAI Chairman's Conclusions and Decisions of the SPAI Steering Group

***Belgrade, Serbia
May 30, 2006***



SPAI Chairman's Conclusions

SPAI Chairman, Professor Ugo Draetta, welcomed the offer of the Serbian Government to host the 10th SPAI steering Group meeting back to back with the Regional Table and Working table III meetings of the Stability Pact. SPAI Chairman also stressed the importance of the support received by the Initiative from the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact and Working Table III.

t. In his intervention, Dr. Erhard Busek, Special Coordinator of the Stability, commended the Initiative and its Regional Secretariat for the progress achieved in the last two years and encouraged the member countries to enhance their efforts in reducing corruption in SEE. He encouraged the members of the Initiative to make a better use of the Stability Pact's framework for promoting their activities and success stories. In this regard more transparency and exchange of information should be encouraged.

Furthermore, the Special Coordinator invited the SPAI Steering Group members to identify practical solutions for ensuring the sustainability of the Initiative and its Regional Secretariat.

The SPAI Chairman briefed the members of the SPAI Steering Group about the outcomes of the Working Table III meeting that had as a key topic the lessons learned in the process of transferring the ownership of SPAI to the regional partners. As a key element of this process SPAI Chairman stressed that since 2002 the regional partners were placed on an equal footing in SPAI and that now is the time for the countries to provide full support to their own representatives, with staff dedicated to regional cooperation, not merely as a creation of Stability Pact and/or EU requirements.

Professor Draetta highlighted RSLO's achievements by noting that the Ministerial Declaration of May 2005 had become a self-monitoring tool on anti-corruption for the region, with RSLO key to this peer-review process. In just two years, the engine behind this, RSLO, had become a recognized entity. Key accomplishments: process of signing and ratifying the UN Convention against Corruption by SPAI countries, a series of workshops on high-level corruption, and formation of a network of anti-corruption agencies.

SPAI Chairman also stressed that the funding from the United States Government will cease as of December 2006 – and so will RSLO if follow-on funding is not secured in time.

SPAI Chairman also mentioned the supporting remarks provided during the Working Table III meeting by the high representatives of the member countries, as well as the official offer of Montenegro to host, from 2007 the Regional Secretariat and to cover a percentage of its operational costs.

SPAI Chairman highlighted the main objectives of 10th SPAI Steering Group, inviting all participants to approach the agenda in a very concrete and focussed manner. Participants agreed to streamline the agenda and to jointly analyze the two topics:

- The future of the Initiative and the role of its main stakeholders;
- The regional ownership responsibility for the SPAI RSLO.

SPAI Steering Group members approved the revised agenda and focused their attention on the need for follow-on funding starting January 2007 as well on Montenegro's offer to host the RSLO from January 2007.



In line with the revised agenda SPAI senior representatives and the partner countries organizations represented within the Steering Group took note of the proposal made by the Montenegrin Senior representative: “that each of the regional countries should contribute with minimum 24,000 Euros per year to maintain the RSLO’s operations (that means 2000 Euros per month, and when it comes to cooperate regionally in fighting corruption this means almost nothing in terms of national financial efforts) (). This amount would cover the center’s overhead and ensure that it continues to serve the region”. All SPAI Senior representatives present (Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia) expressed their agreement with this proposal and promised to advocate with their governments toward this goal.

As a practical way of putting into practice this proposal, members of the SPAI Steering Group asked for the support of the Special Coordinator in sending an official letter to the Prime Minister of each country outlining this appeal, with a request for a prompt response given the urgency.

Furthermore, SPAI Chairman took note of the additional comments made by all SPAI Senior Representatives highlighting the importance of RSLO in promoting regional cooperation in the field of fighting corruption and related crimes. SPAI senior representatives urged the Regional Secretariat to organize follow-up strategic planning sessions as the one organized in Sarajevo last October, in order to identify together national and regional priorities in anti-corruption

OSCE representative noted that they see RSLO as the main coordinator of anti-corruption activities in the region and are interested in further cooperation.

Council of Europe representative highlighted the cooperation and involvement of the Regional Secretariat in organizing joint events as the one in Albania, June 2005 or the forthcoming Regional Conference of PACO Impact in France, July 2006.

USAID noted that if the region would fund the operational costs of the SPAI Regional Secretariat it would surely be taken by the donor community as a positive sign of ownership and commitment to obtain results in fighting corruption!

OECD representative highlighted the importance of the peer review process that SPAI is coordinating.

Decisions of the SPAI Steering Group

1. SPAI Senior representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia expressed their agreement with the proposal of identifying national resources to contribute to the operational costs of SPAI RSLO. SPAI Senior representatives promised to advocate with their governments toward this goal.
2. SPAI RSLO will provide the Working Table III Director and expert coordinator with all necessary inputs for drafting the official request for assistance addressed by the Special Coordinator to the prime-ministers from SEE;
3. A decision on Montenegro’s offer to host the SPAI Regional Secretariat will be taken when funding is secured for its operational costs ;
4. SPAI RSLO will analyze the possibility of hosting a follow up strategic planning session with the participation of the SPAI Senior Representatives in order to better identify the short and medium term national and regional priorities.