**SUMMARY OF THE PAPER**

As stated in the Work Plan (2016-2017) of Regional Anti‐corruption Initiative (RAI), the Organisation plans for the next two years to research and pursue a potential project in the field of money laundering[[1]](#footnote-1), as a part of execution of RAI`s commitments expressed in the Strategic Document[[2]](#footnote-2). The following report presents one of the steps in achieving of this ambition long‐run aim, as its purpose is to give a general overview and assessment of the progress in implementation of anti‐money laundering standards by RAI member countries.

The main international standards on money laundering prevention were adopted at the end of 1980s, giving the start to the corresponding review mechanism that was established several years later – with the launch of MONEYVAL initiative in 1997. RAI member states were involved in the evaluation process since the earliest years, and the first assessment reports on this Region were published in 2001. However, till now no up‐to‐date comprehensive regional evaluation was provided with respect to the implementation progress of one of the most important aspects of Anti‐Money Laundering (AML) legislation – **control measures over Politically Exposed Persons** (PEPs).

This study reviews and analyses information provided by different evaluations prepared by international organisations, such as CoE‐Moneyval and International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as the texts of national legislative acts regulating the PEPs’ issue. As a result of this examination, the main common challenges that RAI members encountered in their efforts to introduce international standards in PEPs in legislation and practice have been identified and analysed, as well as solutions provided. The detection of main difficulties in this sphere can be helpful in understanding the nature of actions that AML actors have to take in order to establish a working control mechanism over PEPs.

The conclusions drawn in the paper show that to date countries representing RAI`s region are still in the process of elaboration of the effective legislative measures with regard to the Politically Exposed Persons and their involvement in money laundering. One of the common recommendation is that more efforts should be made by national authorities to contribute in raising awareness about PEPs institute and corresponding issues, including regular provision of publicly available statistical data, as well as periodical self‐assessments and relevant research papers. In this regard the suggestion was expressed that countries of the focus group should delegate the duties of preparation of these materials to an independent anti‐corruption organisation specialising on RAI`s region. Whilst recognised as the main source of expertise in the field of AML, this body should be given the following mandate:

* to serve as a meeting point for AML experts to exchange ideas on the issue of ML prevention;
* to maintain a legal library of national AML legislation (both in English and national languages);
* to organise trainings and awareness raising initiatives;
* to prepare standard guidance on the different issues of ML prevention in the Region (for example, guidelines on the implementation of ECDD measures with regard to PEPs and BO);
* to provide regular review of countries` progress in different spheres of AML and develop detailed individual recommendations;
* to issue analytical papers on the topics connected to ML issues in the Region;

Regional Anti‐Corruption Initiate is a regional organisation leading anticorruption efforts in the South Eastern Europe. As an intergovernmental body which for many years serves as a platform for exchanging ideas and as an expertise and educational centre providing quality guidance and research on anti‐corruption, RAI thus has all the capacities to be a significant contributor to anti‐money laundering movement in the Region. The following paper therefore is to be considered as an opening page for the future RAIs` activities in the field of money laundering prevention.

1. URL: http://rai‐see.org/wp‐content/uploads/2015/10/RAI‐Work‐Plan‐2016‐2017.pdf; [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. URL: http://rai‐see.org/wp‐content/uploads/2016/04/Strategic‐document.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)