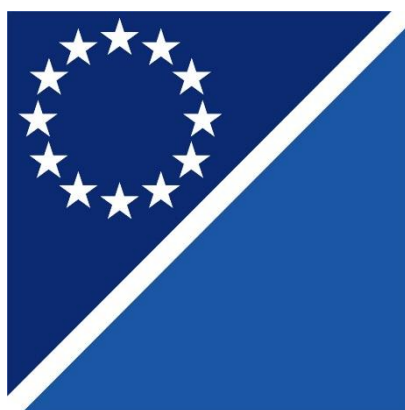


REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

26th STEERING GROUP MEETING



Summary, Conclusions and Decisions

Ljubljana, Slovenia

24 October, 2017

26th Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) Steering Group Meeting took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 24th October, 2017, organized by RAI Secretariat.

Participants

26th RAI Steering Group Meeting was chaired by the RAI Chairperson Mr. Davor Dubravica. It was attended by 7 member states' representatives:

Bosnia and Herzegovina – Mr. Adnan Dlakic – Senior Representative, Expert Adviser, Department for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption, Ministry of Security;

Croatia – Ms. Maja Baricevic - Senior Representative, Head of Anti-corruption Sector, Ministry of Justice;

Macedonia – Ms. Elena Dimovska – Deputy Senior Representative, Associate, Unit for Coordination of Anti-corruption Activities, Ministry of Justice;

Moldova – Ms. Cristina Tarna – Delegated Representative, Deputy Director, National Anti-corruption Center;

Montenegro – Ms. Marina Micunovic – Senior Representative, Head of Department for International Relations and Standards, Agency for Prevention of Corruption;

Romania – Ms. Ruxandra A. Banica – Delegated Representative, Department for Crime Prevention, Ministry of Justice;

Serbia – Ms. Katarina Nikolic, Senior Representative, Advisor, International Co-operation Department, Ministry of Justice;

The Ministry of Justice of Georgia, as an observer to RAI, was represented by Ms. Lana Morgoshia, Legal Adviser in the Analytical Department.

RAI Secretariat was represented by:

Mr. Vladan Joksimovic – Head of Secretariat;

Mr. Tomislav Curic – Anti-corruption Expert;

Ms. Jasna Panjeta – Programme and Outreach Officer;

Ms. Aida Bulbul – Finance and Administrative Officer.

Not present at the 26th RAI Steering Group Meeting:

Member Country Delegation from Albania

Member Country Delegation from Bulgaria

Observer Country Delegation from Poland

Summary of Discussions

RAI Chairperson Mr. Davor Dubravica welcomed and greeted all members of the Steering Group. He emphasized the fact that the Steering Group meeting is organized back-to-back with the Regional Forum on Effective Prevention of Corruption through Risk Assessment taking place on October 25-26, 2017 in Ljubljana. Mr. Dubravica stressed the fact that, although Slovenia is not a member of RAI, there is a lot done in the field of cooperation and Slovenia's involvement in RAI.

Following introductory, RAI Chairperson presented the Agenda which was adopted by the members of the Steering Group.

1. Adoption of Evaluation Report on implementation of the Work Plan 2016-2017

Head of RAI Secretariat, Mr. Vladan Joksimovic gave a brief overview of the most important segments of the Evaluation report. He emphasized that in the 2016-2017 period RAI has had more projects, built more partnership, gained more visibility, and built internal capacities. The previous two years are the most successful in RAI history in this respect and it will be challenging to continue the same growth trend. Mr. Joksimovic concluded his presentation by informing the Steering Group that there are more activities pending until the end of the year. As soon as these activities are implemented, the Evaluation Report will be updated accordingly.

Following the presentation, Senior Representatives gave their comments on the Evaluation Report.

Representative of Macedonia proposed to have Evaluation Report prepared and sent to the Steering Group before the new Work Plan is prepared. The member countries need to have a more detailed evaluation of the previous period before adopting and talking about the new Work Plan. Also, Ms. Dimovska, proposed development a methodology for the preparation of the evaluation, as there need to be clear indicators on how to measure effects of the activities.

Representative of Moldova supported the idea of having clear indicators to measure effectiveness of work, as this is very important for all countries and respective institutions.

Representative of Georgia proposed introduction of mid-term evaluation as a way to measure effectiveness not only at the end of the reporting period, but in the interim period as well.

Representative of Montenegro proposed further update of the Evaluation Report with a country-based appendix. This segment would be prepared by the RAI Secretariat, and also updated by the Senior Representatives in order to see the impact of RAI work and products on all respective countries.

Mr. Chairperson concluded that Secretariat shall prepare another appendix with country-based activities, activities which will happen by the end of 2017 shall be added to the Evaluation Report. The updated version of the Evaluation report is to be prepared and adopted by the end of the year.

2. Adoption of RAI Work Plan 2018-2020

Head of RAI Secretariat gave overview of the objectives of Work Plan for 2018-2020, underlining the fact that it was already discussed at the previous SG meeting which took place in Sofia, in June. He also emphasized the fact that there is a strong interest of donors for most of the Work Plan activities and that the Secretariat will invest time to fundraise. He went through all comments submitted by the SG members prior to the meeting.

Representative of Macedonia suggested to add “prevention of corruption in health care sector” to the Work Plan under other objectives. She mentioned that RAI should not miss the opportunity to build synergies with other organizations that will be working on this topic in the upcoming period. Representative of Montenegro agreed that, although there are 5-6 risky sectors in Montenegro, health sector is very important and on top of the priority list.

Representative of Croatia emphasized the importance of working in the education sector. RAI should invest efforts in developing programs/curricula to be presented through education.

Speaking about what sectors to focus on, representative of Moldova emphasized the fact that RAI has introduced a human rights based approach in the organization, so the sectors we are pursuing are along these lines as well, as they affect human rights directly.

Mr. Chairperson suggested that local governance is added to the Work Plan as a potential beneficiary, as well as the anti-corruption surveys in RAI member countries, as potential activities.

The Secretariat informed the Steering Group that, following wider consultations with partners and stakeholders, Secretariat received substantial feedback regarding the draft Work Plan. It was agreed that they should be taken on board and that any overlapping should be avoided. In this sense, it was also agreed that action Integrity in business sector is to be added to the Work Plan under Other Objectives.

Mr. Chairperson stressed the importance of having all RAI member countries involved in all activities, despite the fact that many donors and projects are targeted to Western Balkans.

Touching upon the 20 years of RAI anniversary, it was agreed that preparations need to be made in the future, and that getting the status of international organization is one of priorities in this sense.

3. RAI Budget for 2018

In the introduction made by the Head of Secretariat, it was highlighted that:

- Total RAI budget for 2018 is lower than in 2017 due to two reasons – due to timely payment of country contributions, there are no outstanding payments from previous years that could be budgeted for 2018; and 2017 was very dynamic in terms of implementation of activities, budget utilization will be around 95% (contrary to 2016), so there will be only small portion of saving to be transferred into 2018 budget;
- Most of the RAI activities will be project based funded.

Ms. Aida Bulbul, Finance and Administrative Officer, presented RAI Budget for 2018, *inter alia*, pointed out that:

- Operational expenses, although forming the majority of the budget, mainly include fixed expenses;
- RAI Programmatic budget for 2018 is much lower than in 2017, but this segment will be backed-up with other donors’ secured funds for 2018.

Following discussion session, Steering Group expressed their opinion that the current budget format is not informative enough, and that there should be another version prepared, where other donors’ secured and planned funds would be included. This would enable the Steering Group to have better understanding on the ratio between operational and programmatic expenses, as well as the total budget available for 2018 (core funding plus other project funded activities), which will also enable easier understanding of the overall budget to the third parties.

It was concluded that RAI Secretariat will prepare and send the compiled budget for 2018 in the upcoming period for adoption.

4. Tour d' table

All member country representatives and the observer country representative shared recent developments and relevant activities in their respective countries. The Secretariat took note of all the information, which are useful in terms of planning and implementing of future RAI activities.

5. Slovenia joining RAI as an Observer

Chairperson welcomed representatives of the Commission for Prevention of Corruption to the meeting and informed the Steering Group that RAI received an official letter informing that the Government of Slovenia has given a consent to the Commission for seeking the Observer status in RAI.

Mr Boris Stefanec, Chief Commissioner used the opportunity to welcome everyone to Slovenia. He informed the Steering Group that Government of Slovenia approved and authorised Commission for Prevention of Corruption to send and sign letter of initiation to join RAI as an observer. Mr. Stefanec emphasized that Slovenia plans to contribute and be involved in the work of RAI, and that the Regional Forum on Effective Prevention of Corruption through Risk Assessment, hosted by the Commission is just a start of the joint cooperation.

Mr. Jure Skrbec, Senior European and International Relations Advisor in the Commission for Prevention of Corruption made a brief presentation of the Commission. He emphasized the fact that the Commission is the only institution authorized for prevention of corruption in Slovenia and that it was formed as a consequence of a GRECO recommendation. Mr. Skrbec focused on presenting the IT tool that the Commission is utilizing – Erar. This tool enables the Commission to track all financial transactions from public institution towards private entities.

Steering Group Members were invited to vote and all countries were in favour of the submitted motion. Steering Group members welcomed Slovenia's request to join RAI as an Observer, and expressed hope that it will lead to a full membership in the future. They also expressed readiness to cooperate with Slovenia in the future and learn more about IT tools and other topics that would further develop the cooperation. Following the discussions, the Steering Group agreed to grant the Observer status to Slovenia in RAI.

6. Exchange of views with the Center of Excellence in Finance

Mr. Chairperson welcomed Ms. Jana Repansek, Director of the Center of Excellence in Finance (CEF) to the meeting and mentioned the cooperation that has had with CEF in the past, and expressed hope that the cooperation will be strengthened in the future.

Ms. Repansek presented the work of the Center, the donor structure and gave overview of its membership structure. She expressed readiness to link CEF events to RAI mandate, organize joint sessions, or cooperate in other ways. She underlined their openness for cooperation.

Following a brief discussion, the presentation was concluded by commitment to further development of the partnership between the two organisations.

7. Information from the Secretariat

Head of Secretariat informed the Steering Group about the most important upcoming events and activities, which will be used for the further promotion of International Treaty on Data Exchange, such as GRECO Conference to be held in Prague, Check Republic, 7th session of the Conference of the State Parties to the UNCAC and Annual Conference of the European Partners against Corruption (EPAC).

In addition, he informed the Steering Group on:

- An event on “Use of special investigative measures in corruption cases”, which will be organized in cooperation with Academia in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Regional Workshop on Integrity in Law Enforcement in Bucharest, Romania, on 13th and 14th December. The Regional event will serve as a starting point for further work in integrity in Law Enforcement;
- Workshop on Integrity on Local Level, which will be held in Tirana, Albania, on 7th and 8th of December. The event will be organized in cooperation with OECD and UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub

8. Any Other Business

Mr. Chairperson thanked all Steering Group Members for their valuable inputs and active discussions that took place.

Conclusions and Decisions

- ✓ The RAI Steering Group agreed that the Evaluation Report for 2016-2017 needs to be updated with country-specific appendix, and that pending activities for 2017 should be added to the Report. The updated version of the Report will be sent by the Secretariat to the Steering Group by mid-December 2017;
- ✓ The Steering Group adopted the Work Plan for 2018-2020, with the remark that additional comments and proposals made by the Steering Group members need to be integrated and that the updated version is to be sent by the Secretariat in the upcoming period;
- ✓ The Steering Group concluded that a compiled budget including both, the RAI member countries’ funding and other donors’ funding, is to be prepared for 2018, and sent by the Secretariat along with the updated Evaluation Report;
- ✓ RAI Steering Group accepted Slovenia’s request for Observer status in RAI.