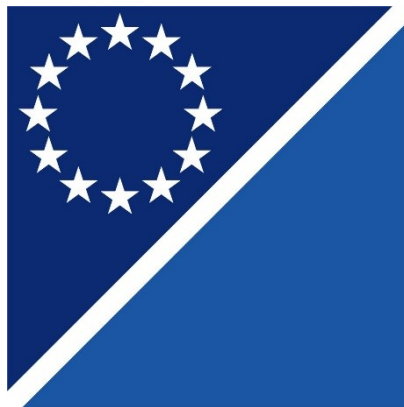


**REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION  
INITIATIVE**

**28<sup>th</sup> STEERING GROUP MEETING**



***Summary, Conclusions and Decisions***

*Tirana, Albania*

*November 19, 2018*

28th Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) Steering Group (SG) Meeting took place in Tirana, Albania on November 18, 2018. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Justice of Albania and it was organized by RAI Secretariat.

## ***Participants***

27th RAI Steering Group Meeting was chaired by the Chairperson Mr. Todor Kolarov. It was attended by 9 member states' representatives:

**Albania** – Ms. Vilma Petro – Deputy Senior Representative, Advisor of the Minister, Ministry of Justice;

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

**Bulgaria** – Ms. Dora Zgurovska – Deputy Senior Representative, Head of Internal Security and Police Cooperation at the EU and International Co-operation Directorate, Ministry of Interior;

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

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

**Moldova** – Mr. Olga Pojtitov – Delegated Representative, Inspector, International Cooperation Division, National Anti-Corruption Centre;

**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, legal personnel with the status of judges and prosecutors, Department for Crime Prevention, Ministry of Justice;

**Serbia** – Ms. Katarina Nikolic, Senior Representative, Advisor on International Co-operation Matters, Ministry of Justice.

RAI Secretariat was represented by:

Mr. Vladan Joksimovic – Head of Secretariat;

Mr. Tomislav Curic – Anti-corruption Expert;

Ms. Aida Bulbul – Finance and Administrative Officer;

Ms. Jasna Panjeta – Programme and Outreach Officer.

## *Summary of Discussions*

Welcome note by Mr Todor Kolarov, the Chairperson, thanking the countries for electing him to this honorary position and thanking the hosting country for its hospitality and support in the organization of the meeting.

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

Chairperson presented the agenda items and opened floor for comments. Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina proposed to have Information from the Secretariat as the first item, Amendments to Internal documents to follow. Then to move to RAI Budget for 2019 and Mandate of the Head of Secretariat. Final point to be exchange of views with Albania. All participants accepted the proposed order of business.

### **Information from the Secretariat**

Head of Secretariat highlighted only key activities and outcomes in the past period. Core RAI activities: Summer School for Junior Anti-corruption Professionals in Belgrade, successfully organised in cooperation with Ministry of Justice of Republic of Serbia, with support of the OLAF and the OSCE.

Project activities: Granted extension for an additional project year of the Regional Programme funded by the Austrian Development Agency; development of IT Tools for corruption proofing of legislation and corruption risk assessment, corruption risk assessment trainings in health sector, and the most important item - International Treaty Negotiations Meeting in IACA Vienna, first negotiation meeting on the Draft Treaty successfully organised in cooperation with the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Laxenburg, Austria. The Chairperson informed the Steering Group about the RAI communication with the European Commission Legal Department. It was concluded that the latest e-mail communication will be shared with the Steering Group.

Head of Secretariat also briefly presented the new Asset Recovery Regional Project implemented in partnership with AIRE Centre as well as the potential new project with the EU Commission.

Highlighting the importance of partnership building, the Head of Secretariat referred to continued communication and coordination with RCC, ReSPA, EPAC, GRECO and Anti-Corruption Academic Network – ACAD. Secretariat participated in the regional ACAD Meeting, whereby parties expressed readiness cooperate in the RAI Summer School as well as corruption proofing of legislation.

He also informed the Steering Group on his meeting with Mr. Boris Stefanec, President of the Slovenian Commission for Prevention of Corruption acknowledging very good cooperation and exploring the avenues for having Slovenia as a full member of RAI.

### **Amendments to Internal Documents**

Chairperson opened the session with highlights of the presented amendments such as new organisational chart, upgraded and modernized terms of references (ToR) for all positions as well as more transparent procedures.

Head of Secretariat presented the key objectives of the exercise: To demonstrate more transparency of RAI work, to enable expansion of the Secretariat, to modernize the 20+ years old policies and reflect increase in responsibilities for the existing core staff through changes in terms of references.

Representative of Macedonia commended the work of the Secretariat stating that this is the most ambitious Secretariat so far and might serve as an excellent example for other organizations.

Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina proposed to start the review of the Documents with the ToR for the Secretariat and the Chairperson. All participants agreed.

Head of RAI Secretariat presented that the Chairperson ToR did not suffer any major changes other than the ones agreed at the last SG meeting in Zagreb.

Chairperson commented its term underlining the fact that since the position is honorary, and elected every year, it should be considered for a longer period.

Representative of Montenegro proposed to work on the Chairperson ToR for the next SG meeting.

Representative of Macedonia supported changes proposed by the Secretariat related to the introduction of the interview.

Representative of Romania also suggested to discuss this matter during the next SG meeting.

Head of Secretariat presented the overview of the amendments made to the ToR for the Secretariat.

The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina pointed out that there are three new positions, that operational positions are transferred to managerial positions. In his opinion, this is a promotion without public competition simply promoting existing staff to these positions and it is not possible because isn't in accordance with RAI Terms of Reference, also it is in opposition to basic anti-corruption principles. He has also commented that managerial positions may not be permanent, it should be mandated and candidates from each of member state countries should get an equal chance of employment in these positions.

The Senior Representative of Serbia emphasised that particular care and vigilance must be afforded, in order to ensure RAI does not create unequal or discriminatory regulations regarding the employment procedures concerning managerial positions within RAI.

Chairperson and Head of Secretariat further argued that full-time project staff need to be a part of the organization systematization.

Chairperson proposed to the SG to submit their inputs by mid-December and to finalize the discussion and adoption of the proposed set of documents at the next Steering Group meeting.

### **Approval of the RAI Budget for 2019**

Head of Secretariat presented the overall budget and introduced the Finance and Administrative Officer who presented the budget in more details. It was pointed out that RAI is becoming project-oriented organization, and that the budget for programmatic activities is exponentially growing thanks to the project funds. Discussion followed regarding the ratio of operational and programmatic budget lines as well as the upcoming EU Commission funding.

Budget for 2019 was approved by the Steering Group.

## **Mandate of the Head of Secretariat**

Chairperson opened the session with complementary words about the Head of Secretariat performance and opened floor for discussion. Representative of Serbia intervened by praising the work of Mr. Joksimovic and supporting the extension of the Mandate.

The Steering Group unanimously agreed to extend his mandate.

## **Exchange of Views – *Tour de Table***

All member country representatives shared recent developments and relevant activities in their respective countries.

Senior Representative of Serbia pointed out that the process of ratification of RAI MoU by Serbia shall be finalized in due course.

## **Exchange of Views Minister of Justice of Albania**

Minister of Justice of Albania Ms. Etilda Gjonaj welcomed RAI representatives and the Secretariat to the Ministry. She stressed that Albania has shown courage and commitment to policy development related to prevention of corruption, as well as in repression side. Minister of Justice informed that Albania is undergoing, in line with the EU standards, the most comprehensive reform up to date.

Chairperson reflected on the presentation by the Minister and declared the support of RAI for new Albanian goals in anti-corruption.

Head of Secretariat expressed the readiness of the Secretariat to provide assistance to the Ministry within the relevant RAI project activities, in particular related to corruption proofing of legislation.

## **Any other business**

RAI Secretariat informed about the discussion on potential role of RAI and its member states in organising 2019 EPAC annual conference.

The Steering Group touched upon RAI future role in the implementation of the International Treaty on Data Exchange and agreed that Secretariat shall serve as a hub for its implementation. Senior Representative of Serbia fully supports the future role of RAI, nonetheless, recalling that the Serbian Delegation, at the 1<sup>st</sup> Negotiation Meeting on International Treaty on Exchange of Data for the Verification of Asset Declarations, has nominated Serbia as a potential depository of the Treaty.

## **Conclusions and Decisions**

1. Steering Group took note of the information provided by the Secretariat and expressed support to the Secretariat to move forward with reaching to Slovenia about the Membership in RAI.
2. Updated internal documents with comments incorporated to be sent to the Steering Group. By 15 December SG Representatives will provide their comments. One month prior to the next

Steering Group meeting, the Secretariat will provide with the updated and consolidated documents;

3. Steering Group unanimously approved 2019 RAI Budget;
4. Steering Group unanimously extended the mandate of Head of Secretariat, Mr. Vladan Joksimovic;
5. Steering Group supported RAI Secretariat to perform as a hub and Secretariat for the implementation of Treaty;
6. Steering Group supported and welcomed further cooperation with EPAC.