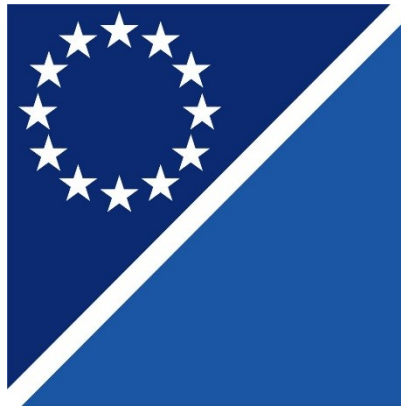


**REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION
INITIATIVE**

30th STEERING GROUP MEETING



Summary, Conclusions and Decisions

Skopje, North Macedonia

September 24 and 25, 2019

30th Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) Steering Group (SG) Meeting took place in Skopje, North Macedonia, March 24 and 25, 2019. The meeting was organized by the RAI Secretariat in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice of North Macedonia.

Participants

30th RAI Steering Group Meeting was chaired by the Head of RAI Secretariat, Mr. Vladan Joksimovic. It was attended by 9 member countries' representatives:

Albania – Ms. Najada Shundi - Delegated Representative, Head of the Integration, Coordination, Agreements and Assistance Unit, 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 International Legal Affairs Unit, EU and International Co-operation Directorate, Ministry of Interior;

Croatia – Mr. Tomislav Matoc – Deputy Senior Representative, Legal counsellor, Anti-Corruption Sector, Ministry of Justice;

Moldova – Ms. Natalia Rosa – Delegated Representative, Main Inspector of the International Cooperation Division, National Anti-corruption Centre;

Montenegro – Ms. Mirela Bakalbasic - Delegated Representative, Senior Advisor on International Cooperation, Agency for Prevention of Corruption;

North Macedonia – Ms. Elena Sazdov – Delegated Representative, Unit for Coordination of the Activities Against Corruption, Ministry of Justice;

Romania – Ms. Anca Luminita Stroe – Senior Representative, Legal Counsellor, Crime Prevention Department, 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;

Ms. Aneta Arnaudovska – Anti-corruption Expert;

Ms. Irma Podzic Halilovic – Finance and Administrative Officer;

Ms. Jasna Panjeta – Programme and Outreach Officer;

Ms. Desislava Gotskova – Project Manager.

Guests:

Ms Renata Deskoska, Minister of Justice, North Macedonia (for opening remarks only)

Ms Biljana Ivanovska, President, State Commission Against Corruption, North Macedonia (for Exchange of views session, day 2)

Mr Vladimir Georgijev, Member, State Commission Against Corruption, North Macedonia (for Exchange of views session, day 2)

Summary of Discussions

Head of RAI Secretariat, Mr. Vladan Joksimovic opened the meeting and welcomed all the members of the Steering Group, introducing all delegates and Ms Renata Deskoska, Minister of Justice of North Macedonia.

Ms. Deskoska greeted the member countries and welcomed to the North Macedonia. Minister Deskoska gave an overview of the current situation and recent developments in North Macedonia. Minister briefly referred to the adopted a law on protection of whistleblowers. She stressed that the Ministry of Finance also has a set of new laws aimed at strengthening the legal framework in the financial sector. This all indicates that there is a sincere commitment by the Government of North Macedonia to work on addressing corruption. Also, Implementation of GRECO recommendations are at the forefront of international commitments as well as European integration. Ms. Deskoska concluded by praising the importance of RAI since the regional experiences are important, particularly when learning what went well and what went not so well.

1. Adoption of Agenda

Head of the Secretariat presented the draft Agenda. There were no objections to the draft Agenda by the Steering Group members and it is therefore adopted.

Head of Secretariat highlighted the agenda item Election of RAI Chairperson. He referred to the role of the Chairperson – possible amendments and ways forward in regards to the function.

Head of the Secretariat presented the new members in the RAI Team: Ms. Aneta Arnaudovska, the new Anti-corruption Expert and Ms. Irma Podzic-Halilovic the new Finance and Administrative Officer in the Secretariat.

Head of Secretariat provided the reasons for Secretariat being moved to the new office space.

2. Election of RAI Chairperson

The Interview was contacted by the Steering Group members, which was led by the Head of Secretariat that presented the internal provisions regulating the process. There were no predefined questions, but SG members reached the general consensus that SG must learn about Ms. Stefan's general motivation for applying for the non-paid Chairperson honorary position within RAI.

Consequently, Ms. Stefan has briefly presented herself, her motivation to apply for the position and her vision of RAI. Following the short discussion, SG members have unanimously elected Ms Laura Stefan for the new RAI Chairperson and agreed to offer her the mandate as of 1 November 2019.

3. Amendments to RAI Internal Documents

Documents were discussed in details and the amendments were presented on the screen. Amendments in track changes and clean version of documents will be shared separately. SG unanimously adopted the proposed amendments with interventions raised during the SG Meeting.

4. 2019 RAI Core Budget Reallocation

Head of RAI Secretariat and Finance and Administrative Officer presented the amendments to the 2019 Budget. The budget amendments were adopted unanimously.

5. RAI Core Budget for 2020

Head of RAI Secretariat and Finance and Administrative Officer presented the new RAI Budget for 2020. Budget is cumulative and also indicates the other sources of funding for RAI projects. The contributions of member countries has been distributed in the same manner as previous years. The extra budgetary funding will amount to over 500,000 EUR.

Montenegro representative suggested to amend the unit description in budget line *RAI Steering Group Meetings* to refer to meetings not years. Proposed amendment was agreed and the Core Budget for 2020 was adopted unanimously.

6. News from the Secretariat

Head of the Secretariat presented most significant activities since last SG Meeting and most important prospective in the coming period, such as the signing event of the International Treaty on Exchange Data for the Verification of Asset Declarations, which will be organised in March next year in Vienna.

The discussion was followed and it was pointed out that identification of candidates for RAI Summer School has proven to be difficult for some member countries. It was concluded that for the next SG Meeting the Secretariat shall propose options and members will opt the approach to be used without an obligation upon the member state to adopt any one of the proposed options.

Head of Secretariat proposed that the next SG meeting takes place in Romania and that the next Summer School takes place in Croatia. This was noted by the SG Members.

Ms. Desislava Gotskova - Project Manager on the Regional Asset Recovery Project briefly presented the ongoing and future project activities, and especially the Tools and Best Practices for International Asset Recovery Cooperation Handbook. Copies of the Handbook in English have been distributed to the SG Members.

7. Exchange of views with the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption

Ms. Biljana Ivanovska, President of the State Commission and Mr. Vlado Georgiev, Member of the State Commission presented the main legislative prerogatives of the Commission and the current state of affairs in the Commission. Their presentation was followed by questions posed by several SG Members.

8. Tour de Table

SG members presented recent anti-corruption developments in their respective countries and most of them underlined the importance of UNCAC Review Mechanism and GRECO Evaluation Procedures.

9. Any Other Business

Head of RAI Secretariat presented the main provisions and the rationale of the Memorandum of Understanding between RAI Secretariat and Central European Initiative – Executive Secretariat (CEI-ES). Programme and Outreach Officer answered number of questions regarding the context and the implications of the MoU for the future Work Plan.

It has been agreed that SG members will submit the technical inputs by October 9th 2019. The draft MoU was approved in principle.

Conclusions and Decisions

- Ms Laura Stefan has been unanimously elected for the RAI Chairperson for a one year mandate. SG instructs the Secretariat to inform Ms. Stefan and offer the mandate as of November 1st;
- Amendments to RAI internal documents – Office Policies Manual and Secretariat Terms of Reference have been adopted with amendments incorporated at the SG Meeting;
- 2019 RAI Core Budget reallocation proposal is adopted without comments;
- RAI Core Budget for 2020 is adopted unanimously;
- Draft MoU with CEI – approved in principle, with additional technical comments to be submitted by SG members by 9 October 2019.