



STABILITY PACT
FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE
REGIONAL SECRETARIAT LIAISON OFFICE

Organized with the support of:



Republic of Montenegro
Directorate for Anti-corruption Initiative

11th SPAI STEERING GROUP MEETING

Conclusions and Decisions

Podgorica, Republic of Montenegro
October 09-10, 2007



Opening remarks

Mr. Igor Luksic, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Montenegro addressed opening and welcoming speech emphasizing the importance of fighting corruption in the region. Minister Luksic underlined that SPAI RSLO activities are evaluated as highly important on national and regional level. He also stressed necessity of regional cooperation in fighting corruption as well as continuing reform of legal, economic and financial systems as the main precondition for accession to European Union. Minister Luksic praised the new strategy of SPAI along with its role, management and implementation of its program.

Mr. Sorin Sterie, Expert Coordinator of the Stability Pact Office in Brussels, welcomed the offer of the Montenegrin Government to host the 11th SPAI Steering Group meeting. Mr. Sterie also stressed the importance of the support received by the Initiative from the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact and Working Table III. He underlined that SPAI is one of the most important initiatives launched in the region and very close to the full regional ownership phase as its main goal. Mr. Sterie opened the Start-up Session and made general presentation of the Meeting and the Agenda with the short overview of the RSLO's vision, mission and strategic directions as well as the future of SPAI and RSLO.

Mr. Sterie expressed his gratitude to Republic of Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and for their contribution of 24 000 euros in that regard, and asked all other members of the Steering Group to lobby for the very same issue and to undertake further steps in applying the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in order to make a Budget for 2008 and to inform the Chairman through the Secretariat on the precise time of the future eventual payment. It was mentioned that Macedonia and Serbia give extremely strong support for signing the MoU, and that Greece and Turkey expressed their intention to join the Initiative too.

Furthermore, Mr. Sterie explained all relevant details on transformation of the Stability Pact to the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) emphasizing that this is a clear message to the International Community that region can take full responsibility in fighting corruption. He also stressed necessity of coordination of activities among the countries in the region in fighting organized crime and corruption. Mr. Sterie read the letter of Mr. Veselin Sukovic (please find it attached), former Head of the RSLO and expressed gratitude of RAI Secretariat staff to Mr. Sukovic for the excellent leading of the RSLO Office in the past few years. Mr. Sterie also briefed the members of the SPAI Steering Group about what RSLO has done from the last Steering Group Meeting.

Discussion part

After those introductory remarks discussion began. First issue was the new name of the Initiative. After different proposals and discussion, Steering Group members agreed to rename the Initiative as Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI).

Having in mind that the mandate of **Professor Ugo Draetta, Chairman of SPAI RSLO**, is over the next issue was to elect the next Chairman. After discussion about proposed candidates, presentation of their CVs, the Steering Group elected with general consensus **Vesna Ratkovic, Director of Directorate for Anti-Corruption Initiative of the Republic of Montenegro** as the **new Chairman**. Mrs. Ratkovic expressed her gratitude to



everybody for her new position emphasizing that this is a great honour for her and continuation of Montenegrin efforts and involvement in fighting against corruption in the region. She also underlined that she will be completely dedicated to coordination of anti-corruption activities in the region and totally devoted to the regional cooperation.

Mr. Edmond Dunga, as a new **Head of the RAI Secretariat** and **Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov**, as a new **Anti-corruption Expert** introduced themselves to all participants as a new staff of the Sarajevo based Office. Mr. Sterie reported that the selection for the second Anti-corruption Expert position is reopened, as well as for the Internship Program.

Mr. Goran Vujovic, Anti-corruption Expert, on behalf of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia, informed the Steering Group that Serbia's representative could not participate in 11th Steering Group Meeting due to previously taken engagements regarding Serbian presidency of the Council of Europe.

Mr. Sorin Sterie highlighted the main objectives of 11th SPAI Steering Group, inviting all participants to approach the agenda in a very concrete manner and to take part in discussion of all envisaged topics. Participants agreed to streamline the agenda and to jointly analyze the two topics:

- The Work Plan for 2008-2009;
- Adoption of the Strategic document, Chairman Terms of Reference (ToR), Secretariat ToR, and Office Policies Manual.

Regarding the **Work Plan for 2008-2009**, discussion was focused on identification of countries needs and the expected results of the Work Plan. It was emphasized the importance of identifying if the expected results will reflect the national priorities and countries needs, as well as areas for focused trainings within the Work Plan. The following issues were underlined:

- *Public Procurement event* – This important event will be organized in next few months in cooperation with OECD.
- *Web site* – Further updating will be accompanied by translation of, at least, home page in every regional language. It was proposed to reinsert restricted area were member countries will have access.
- *Public awareness issue* – Having in mind that RSLO has no money for financing the expensive Public Awareness Campaigns, as well as that it is impossible to persuade donors for their support in that regard, national resources for Public Awareness should be identified and ensured by member countries.
- *Twining activities* – It is necessary to continue organizing of those events and to use RSLO Network for it (updating the List of Experts of all member countries in different institutions and for specific areas of expertise such as Money Laundering, Political financing...). Steering Group members will send List of Experts to RAI Secretariat. It was underlined that duplicating of Networking and overlapping of efforts should be avoided.
- *Internship Program* – Member countries are encouraged to send junior experts to RAI Secretariat. A possible extension of internship period from 3 to 6 months should be considered in the future.
- *Summer school* – It was emphasized the great interest for this event and very good experience gained by organizing the Summer school. Having in mind that Romania hosted two times this event it was proposed the rotation principle for hosting summer schools in the future. Secretariat will collect proposals from other member states.



- *Training and conferences* - It is necessary that countries propose concrete topics on this issue in order to enable the RAI Secretariat to find common trends and needs especially on the regional level.
- *Quarterly reporting* – It is necessary to continue and use it as an important tool for permanent learning.

Discussion on the **Strategic Documents** was mainly focused on:

- *Membership and voting system* – Steering Group discussed and agreed that among South East European members which are core members of the Initiative, associate members may join the Initiative by supporting and contributing to the prevention and fight against corruption in the region. On the other hand, Steering Group may invite other interested parties as observers. It was underlined that membership in RAI does not automatically mean membership in RCC.
- *Strategic document* - It was emphasized that the adopted Strategic Document is “live document” that may be changed in accordance to context and circumstances via e-mail through the RAI Secretariat.

Ms. Dajana Stajic, Executive Assistant, presented the **Office Policies Manual** which was developed by RAI Secretariat according to the EU rules. After discussions, the document was adopted.

Mr. Sterie expressed his gratitude to US Government for supporting the Initiative, as well as the Secretariat during the transitional phase till countries will be able to take over in full the ownership of the Initiative.

It was underlined that progress achieved by RAI Secretariat encourages the member countries to enhance their efforts in reducing corruption in SEE. Furthermore, it will be important that members of the Initiative make a better use of the future RCC framework for promoting their activities and success stories. In this regard more transparency and exchange of information should be encouraged through RAI Secretariat in Sarajevo.

As a key element of process of transferring the ownership of SPAI to the regional partners it was 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 the Stability Pact and/or EU requirements.

Furthermore, all RAI Senior Representatives highlighted the importance of RSLO in promoting regional cooperation in the field of fighting corruption and related crimes. Senior Representatives urged the RAI Secretariat to organize new Steering Group Meeting in April, a year after signing the MoU, or follow-up strategic planning sessions as the one organized in Sarajevo in June this year, in order to further improve cooperation and strengthen the anti-corruption efforts in the region.

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

USAID noted that continued funding by the region will surely be taken as a positive sign by other donors of ownership and the value of the initiative.



Decisions of the SPAI Steering Group

The Steering Group:

1. adopted the new name of the Initiative as Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) in accordance with the transformation of the Stability Pact to the Regional Cooperation Council;
2. agreed that SPAI RSLO as the Secretariat of the Initiative, based in Sarajevo, would accordingly become the RAI Secretariat;
3. elected Mrs. Vesna Ratkovic as the new Chairman of the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative;
4. approved the appointment of Mr. Edmond Dunga as the new Head of the Office and Mr. Stanislav Aleksandrov as the new Anti-corruption Expert of the RAI Secretariat;
5. adopted the new Strategic document of the Initiative, Chairman Terms of Reference (ToR), Secretariat ToR, Office Policies Manual, Work Plan 2008-2009 (chapter related to Steering Group in Annex I – Strategic document will be adopted through electronic procedure);
6. decided that Public Awareness Campaigns would be identified and ensured through member countries means;
7. decided to continue and strengthen further important initiatives and activities such as Twinning and Internship Program, and Summer school;
8. noted and urged countries to propose concrete topics for trainings and conferences;
9. noted and urged countries in order to quickly and fully implement MoU, to inform RAI Chairman and Secretariat on eventual future timing of payments, as well as to notify to Croatia, as a depositary state, the fulfilment of obligations deriving from MoU;
10. agreed that selection procedure for the second Anti-corruption Expert from the region will be launched;
11. agreed that RAI Secretariat, with the support of the Secretary General of RCC, would undertake further necessary steps with Bosnia and Herzegovina Government in order to amend SPAI RSLO Headquarters Agreement and to negotiate finding new RAI Secretariat premises;
12. agreed that under the RAI Chairman guidance, RAI Secretariat would initiate discussions with the RAI Senior Representatives in order to identify the host country of the 12th RAI Steering Group during 2008.

Podgorica, 10th October, 2007

RAI Chairman

Vesna RATKOVIC, LLM