

COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED AP- PROACH IN PREVENTION AND FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE DANUBE REGION

BUCHAREST, 24TH APRIL 2015

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the opening conference of our project on a "Comprehensive and integrated Approach in Prevention and fight against Organized Crime in the Danube Region" on behalf of the Rule of Law Program South East Europe of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

In the forthcoming months experts and specialized police officers from five countries will meet and exchange expertise and information.

It is our objective to encourage cooperation between law enforcement agencies responsible for policy development, coordination of the implementation, impact assessment in fighting against organized crime and the development of innovative tools for an active and effective fight against organized crime. We want to exchange best practices and share information on professional standards between selected bodies from the participating states particularly with regards to smuggling, intra-communitarian trading, migrant and human trafficking, cybercrime, child pornography and drug trafficking.

I wish to express my profound thank to the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police which immediately after we had come up with a project proposal declared their full support. The officers of the General Directorate have worked hard, professionally and effectively to prepare this conference and the workshops that will take place and it is a great honour for us that both Superintendent Claudiu Cucu, the Director of the Directorate for Combating Organized Crime and Superintendent Virgil Spiridon, the Deputy General Inspector of the Romanian Police, are with us today.

But I also wish to extend these thanks to the authorities and representatives of the other participating countries which are Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bulgaria, Republic of Moldova, and the German Land of Baden Württemberg.

[...]

Organized crime, corruption and money laundering are now global phenomena needing a response on the same scale. As there is a high dark figure and as there are several definitions of "organized crime" we

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

RULE OF LAW PROGRAM
SOUTH EAST EUROPE
 THORSTEN GEISSLER

April 2015

www.kas.de/rspsoe
www.kas.de

do not have clear statistics. But it is estimated by EUROPOL that in 2013 approximately 3,600 organized crime Groups were active in the EU at a cost to business estimated at more than 670 billion Euros. The EU therefore knows that it will have to face these challenges with the appropriate tools, based on the most advanced laws in the Member States.

A special parliamentary committee was therefore set up in March 2012 with the objective of studying and analyzing criminal activities, to then come up with a comprehensive and structured plan to combat them at EU level.

In his final report the committee called for the implementation of a European Action Plan for 2014-2019 to eradicate organized crime, corruption and money laundering. The roadmap includes some positive priorities, such as:

- defining criminal acts, including involvement in mafia-style organisations and self-laundering (where the offender of the predicate offence hides the illicit origins of the proceeds that he got by the predicate offence);
- abolishing bank secrecy;
- eliminating tax havens;
- promoting the seizure and confiscation of criminal assets;
- criminalising sports-rigging;
- introducing appropriate penalties for cybercrime;
- eradicating trafficking in human beings and forced labour, especially when they concern minors and women;
- introducing a Europe-wide corporate taxation that is as uniform, equal and homogeneous as possible;
- strengthening the fight against environmental crimes and drug trafficking;
- ensuring swift mutual recognition of judicial measures;

- establishing and launching a European Public Prosecutor's Office;
- recognising the relevant role of investigative journalism in identifying serious crimes.

Among the measures to be taken in the fight against organised crime, the mid-term and final reports highlighted:

- making participation in Mafia-type organisations a crime in all EU Member States;
- harmonising national legislation;
- promoting the seizure and confiscation of criminal assets and their re-use for social purposes in compliance with the subsidiarity principle;
- provisions for economic players convicted by final judgment of organised crime, corruption or money laundering to be excluded from public procurement procedures anywhere in the European Union;
- the establishment and launch of a European Public Prosecutor's Office, equipped with the necessary human and financial resources.

All the work carried out by the Special Committee on Organised Crime is only a start, and has provided an opportunity to raise the issue at European level.

Now a coherent legal framework at European level is needed, as well as, for example:

- strengthening transparency mechanisms in public administration;
- promoting self-regulation of companies in the field of corruption;
- adopting specific rules on vote-buying;
- strengthening cooperation with the banking system and the European agencies and international organisations.
- supporting European Agencies such as the Joint Investigation Teams (set up to carry out criminal investigations in one or more Member States in the areas of trafficking in drugs and human beings as well as terrorism) and the Asset Recovery Offices (Member-State authorities responsible for recovering the proceeds of crime).

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

RULE OF LAW PROGRAM
SOUTH EAST EUROPE
 THORSTEN GEISLER

April 2015

www.kas.de/rspsoe
www.kas.de

And, indeed, concrete measures were taken. Let me give you a few examples:

- the European Police Office (Europol) is the law enforcement agency that successfully handles criminal intelligence and combats serious international organised crime by means of cooperation between the relevant authorities of the member states, including those tasked with customs, immigration services, border and financial police etc.
- At the end of 2013, the European border surveillance system (Eurosur) was established, representing a surveillance system tracking illegal immigration into the EU member states by using state of the art technology, such as drones, reconnaissance aircraft, offshore sensors and satellite remote sensing.
- Eurojust was established in 2002 to improve handling of serious cross-border and organized crime by stimulating investigative and prosecutorial coordination among agencies of the EU Member States.
- The Schengen Information System represents a highly efficient large-scale information system that supports external border control and law enforcement cooperation in the Schengen States. Bulgaria and Romania currently operate the SIS only for the purpose of law enforcement cooperation. They will start using the SIS for the purpose of external border control as soon as the decision for lifting the internal border checks has entered into effect.

It is the general objective of the EU to create an area of Freedom, Security and Justice. In this context it is important that EU member countries and countries that are not or not yet members of the European Union cooperate and share information and expertise.

Networks between specialists from police and other law enforcement bodies do already exist but they must be permanently renewed and extended.

That is the key reason why we happily support this project.

Let me once again thank each of you who has prepared this project and or participates. I am convinced it will be beneficial for your professional work.