REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

THE REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE (RAI)

FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION AND SHARING BEST PRACTICES IN FIGHTING CORRUTION IN SEE

Sofia, December 2 - 4, 2009

HOW DID IT START?

RAI was initially adopted *in Sarajevo, in February 2000*, as *Stability Pact Anti-corruption Initiative (SPAI)* and represented an intergovernmental mechanism to address corruption as one of the most serious threats to the recovery and development of SEE countries.

RAI mission to curb corruption is based on the following five pillars of the Initiative:

1. Adoption and implementation of the international anti-corruption instruments;

2. Promotion of good governance and reliable public administration;

3. Strengthening of national legislation and the rule of law;

4. Promotion of integrity in business operations;

5. Promotion of an active civil society.

RAI members and observers

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RAI

Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) Secretariat

- Launched 2003 as Regional Secretariat Liaison Office, operational since 2004
- Main goal – to promote regional ownership of the Initiative and enhance regional capabilities to lead the fight against corruption in SEE

Signing the Memorandum of Understanding

- April 13, 2007, Zagreb, Croatia;
- The signatory countries ensured the financial sustainability of RAI Secretariat by providing certain annual grants and decided for the first time to raise a Chairperson of the Initiative from the region ;
- Important step towards a full regional ownership and leadership of the Anti-corruption Initiative.

Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI)

- October 9, 2007, Podgorica, Montenegro;
- Complete transformation of the Initiative to full regional ownership and leadership

RAI INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

- RAI Chairperson – *overall coordination*
- RAI Steering Group – *the decision making body* – in principle composed of 9 Senior representatives, representing the member countries; in some issues observers, partner countries and international organizations are also included
- RAI Secretariat – *the executive body*, based in Sarajevo, staffed with experts from the region, operational since March 2004
- Head of the office
- Anti – corruption expert
- Finance and Administration Assistant
- Outreach and Fundraising Assistant
- Interns

RAI Partners on the Anti-corruption Field

On national level:

- Focal points;
- Other representatives of state institutions;
- Representatives of civil society.

On international level:

- Regional Cooperation Council and the existing regional initiatives;
- UNODC, OLAF, OECD/SIGMA, TI, COUNCIL of EUROPE, OESC, etc.

RAI ACTIVITIES

Supporting the process of adoption and implementation of the international anti-corruption instruments

- Instruments on focus: United Nations Convention Against Corruption, CoE Civil Law Convention on Corruption & CoE Criminal Law Convention on Corruption;

- Why are they so important?

- All RAI member states have already signed and ratified these international tools;

- Next step – full implementation in practice of the standards applied by the conventions

RAI ACTIVITIES

MAINTAINING AN ANTI-CORRUPTION RESOURCE CENTER

WWW.RAI-SEE.ORG

- Legal library
- Publications
- Anti-corruption network
- Separate page for each member – state
- On-line projects – Consultants Rooster, On-line News Center, Forum

  etc.

Regional Anti-corruption Resource Center

RAI ACTIVITIES

Assessment of the regional anti-corruption needs and specific requirements

3 stages:

- Inputs from national counterparts

- Assessment of their specific needs and requests

- Planning of the Secretariat activities based on the identified priorities

RAI ACTIVITIES

Sharing best practices in investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating high level corruption

- **Summer School for Junior Magistrates**

- **Twining type activities**

- **Organization / Co-organization of conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.**

- **Internship programs**

RAI ACTIVITIES

Launching Anti-corruption Networks

Two stages of support:

- Studying the feasibility for setting up brand new networks;
- Supporting and elaborating upon already existing networks of practitioners involved in anti-corruption activities.

Practical examples:

- Establishing a network of young judges and prosecutors as a follow-up to the annual Summer School for Junior Magistrates;
- Support for the ACN for Eastern Europe and Central Asia launched by OECD;
- Promotion of the idea for setting up networks of experts dealing with conflict of interest issues and declaration of assets on one hand and VAT fraud on the other hand.

The achievements of RAI

- All the RAI member countries approved National Anti-corruption Strategies and Action Plans, that underline their political commitment to address the issue of corruption and state capture.

- The member states' legal framework has largely been harmonized with European standards set by international conventions, and sensitive areas such as conflict of interest, assets disclosure, free access to information, financing of the political parties, public procurement and money laundering, have been regulated.

- In each RAI member country specialized anti-corruption bodies have been created or are in the process of being established.

AFTER 9 YEARS...
STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

Current challenges for the countries of SEE:

- reform of judiciary and public administration;

- the negative perception regarding the levels of corruption both from public and business community;

- lack of sufficient efforts dealing with education and raising public awareness;

- understaffed anticorruption structures and low salaries;

- role of the prevention is still underestimated, while the repression is seen as the only feasible solution.

The future of the Initiative

In close cooperation with all partners and major stakeholders in the area, the Anti-corruption Initiative and its Secretariat in Sarajevo will continue, for a long term, to provide a regional framework for cooperation among the SEE countries on the anti-corruption field, as a prerequisite for achieving the overall goal of **European and Euro – Atlantic integration**.

Our perception is that tackling with corruption is a question of mutual interest to SEE countries and should be addressed on *regional level*.

QUESTIONS ?

THANK YOU!

For further information about RAI Secretariat and its activities please do not hesitate to contact us:

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