



[Last Update: January 2025]

STRATEGIC DOCUMENT

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative, building on objectives initially identified by the participants in the Sarajevo Summit February 2000 and subsequently by Senior Representatives in the Steering Group meetings:

Taking into account the Declaration on 10 joint measures to Curb Corruption in South Eastern Europe, signed on May 2005, in Brussels, by the ministers of justice;

Taking into consideration the obligations we took over by signing the Memorandum of Understanding concerning cooperation in Fighting Corruption through the South Eastern European Anti-Corruption Initiative (MoU) at the SEECP Meeting in Zagreb on April 2007;

Recall the 2002 London Declaration on fighting organized crime and corruption, the 2003 EU – Western Balkans Thessaloniki Declaration, and the 2004 SEECP Joint JHA Declaration.

[Amended at the 22nd RAI Steering Group Meeting]

By acknowledging that corruption and other fraudulent and criminal activities,

- are highly detrimental to the stability of all democratic institutions, erode the rule of law, and undermine the trust and confidence of citizens in the fairness and impartiality of public administration;
- breach fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and other internationally recognized standards, increase discrimination of all citizens, in particular those socially excluded based on gender, disability and poverty;
- undermine the business climate, discourage domestic and foreign investment, constitute a waste of economic resources and hamper economic growth and, therefore:

COMMITMENTS

We, the members of the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative:

Agree on the necessity to fight fraud and all types of corruption on all levels, including the international dimension of corruption, organized crime and money laundering.

Agree that priority measures to fight corruption include:

- *Taking effective measures on the basis of existing relevant international instruments*, in particular those of the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Organization for Economic Co-



operation and Development, the United Nations and the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering;

- *Promoting good governance*, through legal, structural and management reforms for better transparency and accountability of public administrations, through development of institutional capacities and through establishment of high standards of public service ethics for public officials;
- *Strengthening legislation and promoting the rule of law*, by ensuring effective separation of executive, legislative and judiciary powers and the independence of investigative and judiciary bodies and by enhancing investigative capacities;
- *Promoting transparency and integrity in business operations*, through inter alia, enactment and effective enforcement of laws on accepting and soliciting bribes, ensuring open and transparent conditions for domestic and foreign investment, establishing corporate responsibility and internationally accepted accounting standards.
- *Promoting an active civil society* by empowering civil society and independent media to galvanize community action, generate political commitment, creating a pattern of honesty in business transactions and a culture of lawfulness throughout society.

Agree in particular that building private/public and government/civil society partnerships is critical to developing and sustaining reform measures and to monitor anti-corruption activities;

Are firmly resolved to ensure the reliability and integrity of the public institutions to fight against corruption with high political determination.

Are committed to work with donor community for providing technical assistance and for developing synergies in program design and implementation on the basis of long-term partnership.

Without prejudice to existing international commitments, including those deriving from EU membership status or EU accession and EU candidate status, the Governments will undertake the following steps:

Adoption and implementation of universal and other European legal instruments

- Implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption;
- Sign, ratify and implement the Council of Europe Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, the Civil Law Convention on Corruption, the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime, and the Additional Protocol to the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption;



- Apply the Twenty Guiding Principles for the fight against corruption adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and participate actively in the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption – GRECO;
- Implement the 40 recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) and participate actively in the Council of Europe's Select Committee for the evaluation of anti-money laundering measures (PC-R-EV);
- Take measures to apply the principles proposed in the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions and the recommendations of the OECD;
- Implement the Guiding Principles for Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity among Justice and Security Officials signed at the 1999 Global Forum on Fighting Corruption held in the United States of America;
- Ratify and implement the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime;
- Adopt and implement any other legal instruments, standards and best practices of the EU acquis whenever is necessary;

Implementation of multilateral/regional agreements

- Declaration on 10 Joint Measures to Curb Corruption in South Eastern Europe¹;
- Memorandum of Understanding concerning Cooperation in Fighting Corruption through the South Eastern European Anti-Corruption Initiative (MoU)².

Promotion of good governance and reliable public administrations

- Strengthen national procurement legislation and procedures so as to promote an efficient, open and transparent procurement process that is in line with European and other international standards;

[Amended at the 22nd RAI Steering Group Meeting]

- Improve effectiveness, transparency, accountability and gender awareness in budget preparation, execution, and control so as to conform with good international practice including standards laid down by international organizations and, if relevant, by the European community;
- Establish professional and stable public services with staff selected on merit and safeguard legality, integrity, transparency and accountability through effective legal frameworks as well as judicial review of administrative decisions in line with good international practice; and promote the implementation of recommendations on Public Service Ethics and Codes of Conduct;

¹ Signed on May 12, 2005, in Brussels, by ministers of 8 member countries of SPAI.

² Signed in Zagreb on April 13, 2007 by ministers of 7 member countries of SPAI.



- Establish efficient external Audit institutions and practices in line with good international practice and with standards developed jointly by the European Court of Auditors and EU Member States; strengthen parliamentary oversight, e.g. through Ombudsman institutions, allow investigative bodies to be backed by sufficient human and financial resources, and secure transparency in the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns.

Strengthening of legislation and promotion of the rule of law

- Ensure that corruption and money laundering are criminalized in accordance with International standards. Legislation should clearly typify and punish corrupt behavior in elected bodies, public administration, business and society at large; ensure that appropriate remedies are available for victims of corruption and that anti-corruption legislation is enforced effectively;
- Set up specialized anti-corruption units, providing them with sufficiently trained staff and legal and budgetary means to effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of corruption. Members of these units should enjoy appropriate independence, autonomy and protection in the exercise of their functions, be free from improper influence and have effective means for gathering evidence and protecting those persons helping the authorities in combating corruption;
- Further strengthen investigative capacities of criminal justice institutions by fostering interagency co-operation and joint investigations, focusing on financial investigations, taking into account links to fraud, tax evasion and economic crime, creating the conditions for the use of special investigative methods while respecting fundamental human rights and freedoms, and by providing appropriate training and resources.

Promotion of transparency and integrity in business operations

- Take effective measures to combat active and passive bribery, including corruption of public officials, through inter alia enactment and effective enforcement of laws on accepting and soliciting bribes, taking into account OECD, EU and Council of Europe instruments;
- Provide for open and transparent conditions for domestic and foreign investment in line with the principles set out in the Investment Compact of the Stability Pact;
- Promote corporate responsibility and liability on the basis of international standards and principles, including inter alia the development and implementation of modern accounting standards, adoption of adequate internal company controls, such as codes of conduct, and the establishment of channels for communication, and protection of employees reporting on corruption.
- Encourage private/public sector partnerships to develop and sustain reform measures.

Promotion of an active civil society and raising public awareness



- Develop appropriate regional/country and local anti-corruption actions with public officials, private sector and civil society representatives to share information and experience; Conduct surveys of businesses, consumers and public opinion to provide feedback for delivery of public services and fostering competition;
- Agree to organize, in co-operation with non-governmental and media organizations and the private sector, campaigns to raise public awareness about the economic and social harms of corruption;
- Develop measures aimed at encouraging public officials, victims of corruption, business and members of the public to co-operate with the authorities in preventing corrupt practices and extortion;
- Implement education programs aimed at fostering an anti-corruption culture in society;
- Strengthen media oversight through freedom of information laws, improve ethical and professional standards of journalists and promote training in investigative journalism and provide access to public information;

[Added at the 22nd RAI Steering Group Meeting]

MISSION STATEMENT

Regional Anti-corruption Initiative's mission is to lead regional cooperation to support anti-corruption efforts by providing a common platform for discussions through sharing knowledge and best practices. RAI's motto is: "We look for better anti-corruption solutions together".

IMPLEMENTATION

Concrete implementation of the above mentioned commitments will be done through the RAI Programme developed every three years and approved by the Steering Group.