

JOINT DECLARATION



Joint Declaration (Skopje, 1 April 2005)

We, the representatives of the governments and administrations from the South-eastern European region:

Participating in this High-Level Meeting on Anti-corruption Services in South-eastern Europe held in Skopje (1 April 2005);

In cooperation with the Council of Europe and other European and international organisations;

In our official capacity;

Recognising the importance of Council of Europe resolution (97) 24 on "The twenty Guiding Principles for the fight against corruption";

Building on the previous commitments and efforts and the lessons learned and experiences derived from them;

Taking into account the proposals for the improvement of anti-corruption strategies and for the strengthening of anti-corruption services elaborated at the PACO Impact Seminar in Skopje on 1 April;

Taking into account recommendations from GRECO evaluations;

Considering the requirements of European and other international instruments, in particular the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption of the Council of Europe, as well as the United Nations Convention on Corruption;

Acknowledging the good practice shared at the Octopus Interface conference on specialised anti-corruption services (Strasbourg, November 2003);

Being aware of the critical role of independent anti-corruption services in the planning, coordination, monitoring and implementation of comprehensive anti-corruption strategies;

Recognising the pressing need to further enhance our capacities in the fight against corruption and therefore to invest adequate national resources in that effort;

Acknowledging the commonalities and the regional character of the challenges we face, but also considering that the particularities of our problems require specific solutions;

Acknowledging that in all our efforts and policies we have to strive towards accountability, transparency and the participation of the public.

WE

Commit ourselves to:

Continue our efforts to support initiatives aimed at establishing and strengthening anti-corruption bodies as specialised independent services;

Strengthen the role of anti-corruption services to contribute to the effective and efficient implementation and monitoring of compliance with relevant legislation against corruption;

Strengthen the institutional capacities of anti-corruption services to ensure coordination at all levels, including regional and international, with a view to minimising the duplication of efforts and maximising the use of existing resources to meet the challenges ahead;

Support further networking and experience exchange among anti-corruption services;

Strengthen the institutional capacities of anti-corruption services to enable them to monitor and evaluate the results of existing anti-corruption strategies, to implement appropriate follow-up, and to communicate results to the public;

Ensure that anti-corruption services carry out regular and credible public consultations;

Continue and strengthen corruption prevention efforts in parallel with public education and participation;

Strengthen the capacities of the anti-corruption services to deal with preventive aspects of the fight against corruption;

Explore the possibility of seconding specialised law enforcement officers to anti-corruption services;

Advocate that adequate resources are allocated to assure the continuation and effective implementation of such reforms.

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