

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In my capacity of project leader it is an honour and a pleasure to inform you on the following EU project, which started on 15 November 2011. It is called:

**“Fight against organised crime and corruption:  
Strengthening the Prosecutors' Network”**

Within the framework of the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) Regional Programme 2010, the European Commission (Directorate-General Enlargement) has provided a **considerable Grant** to a **consortium** consisting of the *German Development Cooperation* (GIZ, lead partner), and the Netherlands *Center for International Legal Cooperation* (CILC) for implementation of the project ‘*Fight against organized crime and corruption: Strengthening the Prosecutor’s Network*’.

In the implementation of the project the two consortium partners will also closely cooperate with the *German, Netherlands and Slovenian Prosecution Services, the International Association of Prosecutors* (IAP), as well as *EUROJUST* and *EJN*, the *European Judicial Network in Criminal Matters* (both based in the Hague). Additionally through the Prosecutors Office of Slovenia, which is member to the **Southeast European Prosecutors Advisory Group (SEEPAG)**, close cooperation and linkage to the SEEPAG network is secured.

This regional project will cover the **Western Balkans** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia as well as Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99) and has a duration of **24 months**.

The **overall objective** of the project will be

- to improve and promote cross-border and international judicial cooperation in the Beneficiaries to investigate and prosecute cross border crime, in particular organised crime and corruption.

The **specific objective** will be

- to strengthen the operational capacity and capabilities of the General/State Prosecutors' Offices in the Beneficiaries to prosecute and investigate cross-border organised crime and linked cases of economic and financial crime and corruption.

**Estimated results** of the project are:

- Capacity Development of the beneficiaries' Prosecutorial offices by ongoing advisory services through seconded Prosecutors of EU Member states, with regard to investigating and prosecuting cross-border cases of organised crime, economic and financial crime, corruption and terrorism;
- Increased and institutionalized cross border capacities for joint investigations, collection of evidence and requests for mutual legal assistance;
- Increased integration of the Beneficiaries in International Networks and fostered cooperation with Eurojust and European Judicial Network.

The estimated results of the project will be achieved *among others* through the following **activities**:

- Selection of Prosecutors from EU Member States to be seconded to Beneficiaries;
- Regional and national assessments with regard to the needs for further development and regional harmonization of structures and proceedings at General/State Prosecutors Offices, drafting of respective recommendations and assistance with their implementation;
- Training needs assessment;
- Provide experts input and monitoring with regard to joint operations, exchange of evidences and requests for mutual assistance in selected pilot cross-border cases;
- Developing of a training methodology and conduct of trainings for cross-border cooperation and investigations;

- Administrative and logistic support to the Prosecutors Network, their annual meetings and to further regional conferences on actual developments;
- Study tours to European Member countries, EJM and Eurojust;
- Providing advice and support for technical equipment as needed.

To improve the cooperation of the General / State Prosecutors' offices on the Western Balkans the **Prosecutors' Network** has been founded by signing a respective Memorandum of Understanding on 30 March 2005 in Skopje (established in the course of the CARDS 2003 regional project *'The establishment of an independent, reliable and functioning judiciary and enhancing of the judicial cooperation in the Western Balkans'*).

A revised **MoU for regional cooperation against organised crime and other forms of serious crime**, signed on 25 January 2010 in Rome in the frame of the CARDS 2006 regional project *'Support to the Prosecutors' Network'*, aims at further strengthening international cooperation in fighting cross-border crime through supporting the Western Balkans Prosecutors' Network and its National Contact Points (NCPs). **This cooperation now needs to be deepened.**

**CARDS 2006 recommendations for future actions** mentioned inter alia the absolute need of the presence of a project team or coordinator on the ground as well as a need for continuous support to human capacity building in particular in the form of training.

In the present projects these requirements are met and it is foreseen that these implementation arrangements will greatly contribute to the success of the project..

The **project** will be supervised and steered by a **management board** assuring the efficient and coherent implementation of the contributions of the partners and associates with the contribution of the Contracting Authority.

On an operational and administrative level the Action's team shall be headed by the **Senior Project Leader**, Mr. Henk Marquart Scholtz (recently retired senior prosecutor from the Netherlands and former Secretary-General of the International Association of Prosecutors).

The Senior Project Leader will be supported by a small, but efficient coordination team consisting of the **Project Manager Western Balkans** (Mr. Thomas Meyer; manager of the GIZ ORF for Legal Reforms), the **Project Manager International** (Mr. Eric Vincken, Senior Project Manager Europe and Asia of CILC) and a **local team**.

#### EU Seconded Public Prosecutor

For each of the Beneficiaries' countries (except for Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99 where a prosecutor from EULEX shall be involved) an **EU Seconded Public Prosecutor** shall be selected. The EU Seconded prosecutors will be accommodated and integrated in the Beneficiaries' specialised Agencies / Departments responsible for the prosecution and investigation of cross-border crime and other forms of serious crime.

#### Personal Assistant to the EU Seconded Prosecutor

In order to guarantee a smooth functioning of the EU seconded prosecutors in the countries in the region, it is intended that each EU seconded prosecutor will also have a personal legal assistant, who will closely work with the prosecutor on a daily basis. To fill in these positions, a recruitment procedure will start soon.

#### Office Space for the EU Seconded Prosecutor and Personal Assistant

The idea is that both the EU seconded prosecutor as well as his/her personal assistant will be working with the staff of the General/State Prosecutors Office on a daily basis and on a permanent basis for at least 20 months. Basic equipment will be provided to the two experts by the project as well as costs for office operations will be provided.

#### Project Contact Person within national institution

For a smooth implementation of the project and particularly at the operational level with the central project team and later the EU seconded prosecutor and her personal assistant, it is necessary that a National Contact

Point for the Prosecutors' Network is nominated by the Beneficiary, who would have a sufficiently high standing in its organization and who also has decision making powers, to be the contact person for the project in each country. It would make coordination easier if the same person would also represent each country in SEEPAG.

#### Representative in the Steering Committee

Each Beneficiary should appoint a high-level representative in the steering committee of the project. The steering committee will consist of 14 persons + the chairman, representing the 7 Beneficiaries in the region, GIZ, CILC, European Commission, Eurojust, EJM, RCC and SEEPAG. The steering committee will meet every six months to discuss the progress in the project and discuss possible problems, hampering a smooth implementation of the project. A first meeting of the Steering Committee is planned for February 2012.

#### Inventory of equipment

One of the aims of the project is to facilitate an efficient cross-border exchange of information between the participating beneficiaries. In this exchange of information on the one side and issues of data protection will be considered and on the other side it should be assured this exchange is done in a secured manner. As such there is a facility to fund the procurement and installation of equipment in all Beneficiaries.