

Joint declaration against corruption

Today's Anticorruption workshop, with the participation of the Italian and the Western Balkans Anticorruption Authorities, **reconfirmed the joint willingness of Italy and the Western Balkans to step up the efforts to prevent and tackle the plague of corruption and to improve the overall rule of law and business environment.**

Corruption and maladministration divert the efficient allocation of economic resources which could have a far better use; more importantly, they affect the fabric of society, rewarding the perpetrator while penalizing the compliant. An effective fight of corruption is essential to reduce poverty and address serious and organised crime. In this respect, economic reforms, the strengthening of the rule of law and reform of the public administration produce mutually reinforcing benefits.

Corruption is a challenge for all societies. Addressing corruption requires first and foremost strong political will. We deem time is ripe for an enhanced effort to meet the vast demand for integrity, respect for and predictability of the rule of law in our Countries.

In the framework of the provisions of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and those of other international anticorruption instruments to which our Countries are party, we are determined to make the fight against corruption **a top priority.**

Experiences, in our systems, of creating a normative and administrative system capable not only to repress corruption, but also to effectively prevent the phenomenon, proved successful. Together, in close cooperation with Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) and the European Commission, we are resolved to widen and deepen these experiences.

Together, we acknowledge the devastating effects of corruption and express a strong political will to:

- **strengthen our systems of preventing corruption**, coupling the repressive approach in the fight to corruption with the pre-emptive one and respecting the full autonomy of bodies in charge.
- **deepen and widen transparency** more and more, considering that increased transparency enhances the control of citizenship over the behavior of public officials, especially in local Governments;

- **strengthen the professionalization of public procurement staff in order to improve the performance of the public procurement systems**, which are significant part of national economies but also highly vulnerable to corruption and the infiltration of organised crime; encourage the adoption of e-procurement systems;
- **improve our legislative systems on whistleblowing and conflict of interests**, to shed light on phenomena of maladministration in the working place and on the behavior of public officers.
- Western Balkans Governments are encouraged to endorse and adopt Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative's International Treaty on Data Exchange on Asset Disclosure and Conflict of Interest. The establishment of mechanism for exchange of data between national oversight bodies in Western Balkans will further strengthen accountability of public officials and advance curbing corruption at the regional level.

To achieve these objectives, we want to make extensive use of the wide array of existing tools and methodologies to prevent corruption based on the best international practice, providing education and training, encouraging civic involvement and awareness in anticorruption practices, organizing closer cooperation and study visits, drafting concrete recommendations and providing guidelines to improve the creation and the enforcement of common legislative and administrative measures on corruption and the better implementation of anticorruption policies.

Actions envisaged will improve the overall efficiency of our anticorruption systems, putting in place effective mechanisms that will limit the opportunities to corrupt and to be corrupted. In addition the actions should make citizens more aware of the devastating effects of corruption and help creating a zero tolerance culture on corruption.