

21st EPAC/EACN ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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CHIȘINĂU DECLARATION 2022

We, the heads and key representatives of the national Police Oversight Bodies (POBs) and Anti-Corruption Authorities (ACAs) of the Member States of the Council of Europe and the European Union,

Expressing our gratitude to the National Anticorruption Centre of the Republic of Moldova for generously hosting and efficiently and successfully organizing this conference;

Recalling international conventions, instruments and mechanisms, in particular the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and relevant Council of Europe conventions, as well as the GRECO monitoring mechanism and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, as well as the EU Rule of Law reporting mechanism;

Acknowledging that an effective anti-corruption framework is one of the main pillars of the rule of law principle;

Recalling the EPAC/EACN Declarations adopted in Vilnius (2021), Stockholm (2019), Rust (2018), Lisbon (2017), Riga (2016), Paris (2015), Sofia (2014), Krakow (2013), Barcelona (2012), Laxenburg (2011), Oradea (2010), Nova Gorica (2009), Manchester (2008), Helsinki (2007), Budapest (2006), Lisbon (2005) and Vienna (2004);

Acknowledging that corruption in all forms is a serious threat to the development, security and stability of states, which has harmful and detrimental consequences, undermining justice, ethical and democracy values and jeopardizing sustainable development and the rule of law;

Understanding the cross-border dimension of high-level corruption and its destructive repercussions;

Acknowledging the importance of joint efforts to prevent and combat high-level corruption;

Bearing in mind the significance of international cooperation and exchange of information through relevant international, regional and national organizations;

Acknowledging that criminal assets recovery is one of the main objectives and a fundamental principle of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and that States have the obligation to afford one another the widest measure of cooperation in this regard;

Encouraging POBs and ACAs to share examples of good practice taken to combat and prevent corruption and to actively participate in the networks' activities;

Recommend participating members to

- continue enhancing international cooperation and exchange of information and intensifying knowledge transfer by using already existing tools, such as the Europol Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA), the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE), the Europol Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC), the EPAC/EACN Contact Catalogue and the EPAC/EACN Newsletter;

- take leadership in their respective countries and/or regions by initiating and participating in experience exchange projects, workshops and capacity building initiatives, including organized by EPAC/EACN Task force for Training and Transfer of Knowledge, to raise awareness and knowledge on creation of anti-corruption and integrity environment and on sharing best practices;
- afford one another, international cooperation, including mutual legal assistance as appropriate, in criminal, civil and administrative proceedings for the identification, freezing and confiscation of assets;
- seek enhanced international cooperation with the European Prosecutors Office (EPPO) in criminal proceedings within the mandate of the EPPO, including mutual legal assistance as appropriate for the identification, freezing and confiscation of assets;
- ensure that POBs and ACAs adhere to high integrity standards in order to strengthen trust in the respective authority.

Furthermore, call on states to actively

- consider corruption as a significant risk to the prosperity, stability and national security of a country due to its negative impact and disruptive character on the social environment, economic development, trust in public institutions, health and safety of the general population and, particularly, its most vulnerable groups; continue developing or adapting national legal and institutional frameworks with a view of establishing a clear and coordinated anti-corruption system covering detection, investigation, prevention and awareness-raising, as well as effective police oversight elements;
- harmonize national legal frameworks, in the case of non-EU states, with European Union legislation in areas related to combating and preventing corruption, protection of whistleblowers, asset recovery and other relevant fields of concern;
- develop effective legal and institutional frameworks for tracing, seizing, freezing and confiscating assets of corruption offences, as well as for the effective management of frozen and confiscated assets,
- support the development of and utilize existing secure information-sharing tools, in order to enhance information exchange within the international law enforcement community;
- commit to promote greater cooperation between ACAs and POBs and other public, as well as private and non-governmental organizations through collection, management and exchange of information, know-how and best practices, in partnership with interested international institutions, in order to ensure an effective corruption prevention and anti-corruption awareness-raising;
- promote greater availability and openness of various datasets to ensure a targeted and effective prevention of corruption and transparency of public governance.

Furthermore, call on EU institutions and international organizations to

- continue monitoring EU member states and non-EU states with European aspirations, in the field of combating and preventing corruption, as well as criminal assets recovery;
- facilitate access to personal data required for the detection, investigation, prevention and analysis of corruption, in accordance with applicable data protection regulations;

- consider introducing common minimum rules concerning the establishment of national anticorruption authorities or equivalent mechanisms, as well as EU anti-corruption agency and/or anti-corruption coordinator, taking also into account previously developed standards by EPAC/EACN for anti-corruption authorities;
- consider developing or harmonizing regulation requiring states to collect and publish data on asset recovery efforts, and, in particular, information on assets frozen or confiscated, compensations or restitutions ordered, assets returned, and other relevant information.

The Declaration will be widely circulated by the members in their respective countries and submitted to relevant EU institutions and bodies, the Council of Europe's GRECO, the OECD WGB, and UNODC.

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Centre
of the Republic of Moldova

Žydrūnas BARTKUS

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