



**THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE EUROPEAN PARTNERS AGAINST CORRUPTION (EPAC/EACN)**

AUSTRIA, 22-25 November 2011

LAXENBURG DECLARATION 2011

We, the Heads and key representatives of the national Police Oversight Bodies (POB) and national Anti-Corruption Authorities (ACA) of the Member States of the Council of Europe and the European Union, who met in Laxenburg, Austria from 22 to 25 November 2011 for the Eleventh Annual Professional Conference of the European Partners Against Corruption (EPAC), including the EU's Anti-Corruption Contact-point Network (EACN), warmly welcome the developments and achievements that have been accomplished in recent years and declare as follows:

Expressing our sincere gratitude to the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) for the initiative to generously host this Conference and *commending* the organizers for the warm hospitality and excellent planning that has made the Conference a resounding success;

Also commending the organizers of the Transparency International 2011 Integrity Awards Ceremony for holding this important event in parallel with the EPAC/EACN Conference, thus enabling the representatives from both sides to seize the opportunity for networking and exchange of best practices;

Seriously concerned about the significance of threats posed by corruption to the stability and security of societies, undermining the institutions and values of

democracy, ethical values, justice and public trust, and jeopardizing sustainable development, social and economic prosperity, and the rule of law;

Taking into serious consideration that developments on the international scene, including the worldwide effects of the economic crisis, part of which are related to the adverse effects of corruption not only on governments but also on societies and the quality of life of the citizens, have turned the promotion of good governance and respect for the rule of law into an even more demanding task;

Reiterating the need to ensure transparency, accessibility, accountability, legitimacy, impartiality and integrity in all systems created for the police oversight as well as anti-corruption work;

Promoting the respect for the rule of law and human rights through and within all police oversight activities as well as in the overall spectrum of anti-corruption activities;

Being aware that the mobilization of civil society is a significant factor contributing to the fulfilment of this task, and thus calling for strong civil society participation in police oversight and anti-corruption work;

Recalling numerous international conventions, instruments and mechanisms, such as the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC); the Council of Europe Civil and Criminal Law Conventions on Corruption; the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions; the EU Hague Programme; the EU Stockholm Programme of 2009, which called for the development of a comprehensive EU anti-corruption policy, and the European Commission's Decision on "Establishing an EU Anti-corruption reporting mechanism for periodic assessment", adopted in June 2011; as well as the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the UN principles relating to the status and functioning of national institutions for

protection and promotion of human rights (Paris Principles); the European Convention on Human Rights; the Council of Europe European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT); and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;

Noting the relevant decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and the publication on 12 March 2009 of the opinion of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights concerning the independent and effective determination of complaints against the police;

Calling on all stakeholders to base the fight against corruption on a holistic and comprehensive approach, which includes, inter alia, prevention, education, law enforcement and cooperation;

Recalling the EPAC Vienna 2004, Lisbon 2005, Budapest 2006, Helsinki 2007, Manchester 2008, Nova Gorica 2009, Oradea 2010, and Budapest 2011 Declarations;

Acknowledging the substantial efforts made at the international level by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Republic of Austria, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and a growing family of other international stakeholders that led to the establishment IACA, seated in Laxenburg, Austria, with a constituency of 55 UN Member States and two International Organizations from all corners of the globe, which shall function as an international, inter-cultural, inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary centre of excellence in the fields of anti-corruption education, training, cooperation and academic research;

Welcoming with satisfaction the results and progress made at the 4th Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, held in Marrakech, Morocco, 24-28 October 2011;

Welcoming also the finalization of evaluation Rounds I, II, and III of the GRECO evaluation process and looking forward to the upcoming Round IV;

Endorsing the participation of authorities of the EACN and acknowledging EPAC's, including EACN's, achievements which reflect the determination of the Parties to consolidate and provide sustainability to this long-standing cooperation;

1. *Reiterate* strong commitment and the importance of safeguarding the independence of both POBs and ACAs in accordance with the fundamental principles of the respective national systems.
2. *Warmly welcome* the significant work undertaken within the PO Principles Working Group and the ACA Standards Working Group, supported by the EPAC/EACN Secretariat.
3. *Welcome* with satisfaction the unanimous adoption of the PO Principles and the ACA Standards, including the EPAC/EACN 10 Guidelines and Parameters on the Notion of Independence of AC Authorities.
4. *Recommend* that the adopted principles, standards and guidelines be fully implemented and translated into reality and that EPAC/EACN members *undertake strong efforts* for their operationalization and widespread dissemination throughout the community.
5. *Promote* an effective system of policing, *ensure* respect for the rule of law and *welcome* efforts aiming at the inclusion of human rights values and ethical approaches in all policing and anti-corruption activities.
6. *Strengthen* other forms of international cooperation, in particular by promoting the above-mentioned international conventions and mechanisms, thus also strengthening the European approach in these instruments on the operational level.

7. *Reiterate* the importance of EACN as a significant and most fruitful platform for the nominated organizations in the collaboration of European POBs and ACAs, which successfully achieved all tasks as set out in Council Decision 2008/852/JHA of 24 October 2008 and even progressed beyond, by – inter alia – building upon constructive cooperation with EPAC over the last ten years, and expanding links of cooperation to the European Neighbourhood.
8. *Welcome* the achievements and progress generated by IACA so far in building on a holistic and comprehensive approach in the prevention of and fight against corruption, and *acknowledge* the facilitating role that IACA could play in the operationalization of EPAC/EACN's goals and objectives, especially in relation to the implementation of international anti-corruption instruments as well as in the fields of exchange of experience and networking.
9. *Welcome with gratitude* the offer by IACA to support and host the EPAC/EACN Secretariat and *commend* her efforts in this respect.
10. *Renew the invitation* to the European Commission to support EPAC/EACN in concrete and practical terms.
11. Invite the President and the VicePresidents to make proposals for the future strategies of the two strands of EPAC/EACN, POBs and ACAs, and to present them to the next Annual Professional Conference.
12. *Encourage and welcome* voluntary contributions from members with a view to support the Secretariat in carrying out its functions in an effective and timely manner.
13. *Recommend* that the text of the Declaration be widely circulated by the POBs and the ACAs in their respective countries and that it be submitted by the

EPAC/EACN Secretariat to the EU Presidency, the European Commission, and the Council of Europe's GRECO.