



12TH ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN PARTNERS AGAINST CORRUPTION (EPAC/EACN)

SPAIN, 21-23 NOVEMBER 2012

BARCELONA DECLARATION 2012

We, the heads and key representatives of the national Police Oversight Bodies and Anti-Corruption Authorities of the Member States of the Council of Europe and the European Union, having met in Barcelona, Spain, from 21 to 23 November 2012 for the 12th Annual Professional Conference and General Assembly of the European Partners against Corruption (EPAC), including the European contact-point network against corruption (EACN), welcome the achievements of recent years and declare as follows:

Expressing our gratitude to the Mossos d'Esquadra and the Anti-Fraud Office of Catalonia, Spain, for generously hosting this conference and for greeting us with such warm hospitality;

Seriously concerned about the significant effects of the economic crisis on the work of police oversight bodies and anti-corruption authorities, potentially jeopardizing previous achievements and rendering current tasks more challenging;

Reiterating the imperative need to ensure transparency, legitimacy, accessibility, accountability, impartiality, and integrity in all systems guiding police oversight and anti-corruption work;

Promoting respect for the rule of law and human rights in all police oversight and anti-corruption activities;

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 Combatting Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, the EU Hague Programme and EU Stockholm Programme of 2009 which call for the development of a comprehensive EU anti-corruption policy, the European Commission's Decision on establishing an EU anti-corruption reporting mechanism for periodic assessment, adopted in June 2011; also recalling the Universal Declaration on 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 protecting and promoting human rights (Paris Principles), the European Convention on Human Rights, the Council of Europe's 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;

Recalling as well the EPAC/EACN Declarations adopted in Laxenburg 2011, Oradea 2010, Nova Gorica 2009, Manchester 2008, Helsinki 2007, Budapest 2006, Lisbon 2005, and Vienna 2004;

Acknowledging perceived deficiencies, as expressed through public opinion, in the fight against corruption and at the same time particularly calling on our anti-corruption authority members to live up to public expectations to provide effective remedies against corruption;

Welcoming the achievements of the first three sessions of the Conference of the States Parties to the UNCAC, and particularly the progress made during the fourth session held in Marrakech in October 2011;

Calling on stakeholders to follow a holistic and comprehensive approach in the fight against corruption, which shall be based on, inter alia, prevention, education, (law) enforcement, and international cooperation;

- **Welcome** the High-Level Panel on the Rule of Law preceding the UN General Assembly, the relevant resolutions previously adopted by this organ, and stress the importance of fighting corruption in the context of the rule of law and good governance;
- **Commend** the increased number of ratifications of UNCAC, nearing universal applicability, and urging States which have not yet done so to ratify this vital legal instrument at their earliest convenience;
- **Call for** the implementation of the principles agreed upon at the G20 and B20 Summit in Los Cabos, Mexico 2012, especially urging all stakeholders to foster and enhance collective action with the corporate business community;
- **Welcome** and call for the robust national implementation of the findings and recommendations of the GRECO Evaluation Round reports, including the ongoing 4th round, and the recommendations stemming from the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention;
- **Recognize** the valuable achievements made in the process of the UNCAC Implementation Review Group, the Working Groups on Asset Recovery and Prevention, as well as the establishment of the Expert Meeting on International Cooperation;
- **Welcome** the achievements of the seminar on fraud and public procurement, organized by the Romanian National Anticorruption Directorate in cooperation with the German Foundation on International Legal Cooperation in June, and the broad distribution of its report;

- **Encourage** members to take a proactive approach to international cooperation by initiating working groups or expertise exchange meetings in-between the annual conferences;
- **Invite** all members to reflect upon the possibilities of integrating IT in their work and applying those technologies in order to make better use of available resources and in helping render their work more effective;
- **Recognize** legal and practical challenges concerning whistleblowing, its value and importance in fighting corruption, and call for an analysis of factors which either hinder or could be used to encourage it;
- **Welcome** the successful development of the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), and call upon States which have not yet done so to accede to its founding treaty and pledge their support to this important initiative ;
- **Also welcome** the programmes and trainings offered by IACA, in particular the International Anti-Corruption Summer Academy (IACSA) as well as the first inter-disciplinary Master in Anti-Corruption Studies (MACS) programme;
- **Strongly call** for the implementation of the *Anti-corruption Authority Standards* and *Police Oversight Principles*, unanimously adopted by the EPAC/EACN General Assembly in 2011, and commend their broad dissemination;
- **Express** our sincere thanks to IACA for hosting the Secretariat and providing it with the necessary resources to effectively carry out its mission;
- **Commend** the Secretariat on the improvement of the networks' web presence by developing a new website and thus facilitating access to information for members, partners and the interested public, and call on all members to make broad use of the resources it offers;
- **Take note**, with sincere appreciation, of the generous offer by our Polish friends to host the 2013 Annual Professional Conference and General Assembly in Krakow, and accept this proposal with gratitude;
- **Recommend** that the text of the Declaration be widely circulated by the members 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.