



**22ND EPAC/EACN ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
2-3 NOVEMBER 2023, DUBLIN (IRELAND)**

DUBLIN DECLARATION 2023

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 Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) and other Irish authorities for having taken the initiative to generously host this Conference and *commending* the organisers for the warm hospitality and excellent planning that has made the Conference a resounding success;

Commemorating and recalling the 20th anniversary of the United Nation Convention against Corruption (UNCAC);

Recalling numerous other international conventions, instruments and mechanisms, in particular Council of Europe Civil and Criminal Law Conventions on Corruption and the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions;

Condemning acts of aggression by the Russian Federation against territorial integrity and rule of law in Ukraine and *expressing* support to Ukrainian anti-corruption authorities for their efforts in curbing corruption despite ongoing atrocities of war.

Welcoming the adoption of the Rule of Law Reports in 2023 by the European Commission, and *acknowledging* that an effective anti-corruption framework is one of the main pillars of the rule of law principle;

Welcoming the recent decisive steps taken by the European Commission to fight corruption in the EU and worldwide and *endorsing* discussions within the EU Council and European Parliament on the proposed new instruments to curb corruption, in particular, the Proposal for Directive on combatting corruption.

Welcoming the results and progress made during the second cycle of the UNCAC implementation review mechanism;

Welcoming the finalisation of evaluation Rounds I-V of the GRECO evaluation process and looking forward to the upcoming Round VI;

Welcoming achievements and progress of the Member States in respect of implementation and enforcement of the OECD the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions;

Recalling the EPAC/EACN Declarations adopted in Chisinau (2022), 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 and undermines ethical and democratic values and the administration of justice and the rule of law;

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;

Continuing to support the development of common standards and best practices for POBs and ACAs, and thus to strengthen the exchange of best practices between POBs and ACAs and promote cross-sector cooperation;

Welcoming active exchange of best practice between POBs and ACAs through dedicated workshops, webinars and exchange visits, including the recent EU financed project on Best Anti-Corruption Practice Exchange;

Welcoming new member organisations from Georgia, Hungary, Spain, Ukraine and *encouraging* further POBs and ACAs to actively participate in the networks' activities;

Recommend participating members to



- continue exchange of best practices in order to develop general guidelines including the following topics: the fight against bribery in international business transactions, corruption within government agencies, prevention of abuse of office, including for a sexual purpose, electoral fraud, promoting anti-corruption compliance in the business sector, ensuring well-resourced and efficient police oversight to high professional standards, strengthening and guarding the independence and quality of POBs and ACAs;
 - guarantee strong standards in the protection of whistle-blowers in line with current international legislation;
 - develop and implement codes of conduct, integrity management systems and guidelines regarding positions within government agencies, in particular law enforcement agencies, in their respective countries;
 - make use of existing handbooks and guidelines developed by EPAC/EACN working groups and continue developing new standards;
 - by utilising already available tools such as Europol Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA), the Europol Platform for Experts (EPE), the Europol Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC), as well as the EPAC/EACN Contact Catalogue and the EPAC/EACN Newsletters, strengthen the existing and develop new methods of international cooperation and exchange of information in order to intensify knowledge transfer;
 - actively pursue anti-corruption initiatives as a crucial element of broad national security agendas,
 - ensure that POBs and ACAs establish high integrity standards in order to increase trust in their respective authorities and thereby take on a leading role in public administration;
 - pay closer attention to new forms of corruption and abuse of office such as third actors interference in elections and political parties financing, trading in influence, abuse of police data and powers to resort to sexual extortion and gender-based violence, use of cryptocurrencies, new fin-tech instruments and dark-web for rendering bribe payments or laundering proceeds of bribery.

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;
 - prevent any undue influence on the course of the criminal proceedings and ensure the independence and credibility of ACAs and POBs;
 - ensure that there are effective systems and legislation in place to prevent those in authority misusing their position, authority or powers, including for a sexual purpose or an improper emotional relationship with any other person;
 - work on a strong whistle-blower protection system, accessible to all, highly protective and backed by sufficient resources;
 - develop and implement mechanisms for tracing, seizing, freezing and confiscating assets of corruption offences, as well as for the effective management of frozen and confiscated assets;
 - strengthen practical cooperation among ACAs, Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) and financial institutions to detect, investigate and prevent the laundering of assets derived from corruption offences;
 - ensure that POBs and ACAs have sufficient human and financial resources in order to fulfil their mission independently, to prevent corruption, share their expertise with other relevant agencies, and support them in developing corruption risk mitigation measures;
 - promote the innovative usage of information and communication technology, such as big data technology, in combatting corruption, as smarter and more proactive investigative strategies may save resources and reduce costs of traditional ways of detecting, investigating and analysing corruption;
 - develop handbooks and guidelines for the use of big data analysis methods and, without prejudice to EU or international legislation on personal data protection, facilitate access to personal data required for the detection, investigation and analysis of corruption through the use of advanced data analytics models;



- promote greater availability and openness of various public registers data to ensure a targeted and effective prevention of corruption;
- encourage to develop and share more and better data, measuring and communicating on the impact of their work, and engaging more strategically with partners and stakeholders in shared efforts to combat corruption.

Furthermore, call on EU institutions and international organizations to

- promote effective digital governance as well as open data, information and communication technology to ensure a higher level of general transparency and accountability of government institutions;
- promote the usage of information and communication technology, such as big data technology, in preventing and combating fraud and corruption;
- facilitate access to personal data required for the detection, investigation, and analysis of corruption, in accordance with applicable data protection regulations, by developing handbooks and guidelines for the use of big data analysis methods;
- facilitate and support activities of national anti-corruption and police oversight authorities of the EU Member States by fostering cooperation and creating synergies for sharing expertise and best practices.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Schmid'.

Ernst Schmid
Vice-President of EPAC/EACN

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lucile Rolland'.

Lucile Rolland
Vice-President of EPAC/EACN