



**THE 7TH ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE
POLICE OVERSIGHT BODIES & ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITIES
OF THE EU MEMBER STATES**

HELSINKI, 12 – 14 DECEMBER 2007

Helsinki Declaration 2007

The Heads and key representatives of the national Police Oversight Bodies (POBs) as well as the Heads and key representatives of the national Anti-Corruption Authorities (ACAs) of the EU Member States and observer states met in Helsinki on 12 - 14 December 2007 for their 7th Annual Professional Conference. The Heads and key representatives of the national POBs as well as the Heads and key representatives of the national ACAs of the EU Member States warmly welcome the achievements that have been made in previous years and declare as follows:

Expressing their gratitude to the Finnish Ministry of the Interior for having taken the initiative for hosting the Conference as well as *stating their deepest thanks* for its gracious hospitality that has made the Conference a resounding success;

Recalling the Vienna Declaration 2004, the Lisbon Declaration 2005, and the Budapest Declaration 2006;

Welcoming the fact that EPAC has developed a comprehensive structure during the last years, which culminated in the working year 2006/2007 when European POBs

and ACAs have actively participated throughout the year in a variety of activities within the Network, including in four different working groups, which have also added to the success of this Conference;

Appreciating the participation as observers of the relevant organisations from Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia and looking forward to intensifying their fruitful cooperation with these organisations;

1. *Emphasize* the necessity that POBs as well as ACAs are given the necessary independence, in accordance with the fundamental principles of the respective national legal systems. That independence may be developed and maintained, inter alia, through sufficient separation from the hierarchy of the structures that are subject to the POBs' or ACAs' remit;
2. *Promote* coordination between working groups engaged in developing minimum standards for police oversight and anti-corruption common standards and best practices, working to ensure that views expressed about independence, accountability, funding and resources are mirrored in both pieces of work to ensure consistency and synergies;
3. *State* furthermore that specific legislation, adequate budgetary means and full accessibility by the general public are a valuable way to improve the performance as well as the accountability and credibility of POBs and ACAs;
4. *Continue* to support the development of minimum standards for POBs with a focus in 2008 on promotion and adoption of the standards by member organisations, and, thus, *highlight* inter alia the following important goals for POBs:
 - Secure the respect for the rule of law and human rights in all policing activities;
 - Ensure openness, transparency, impartiality and integrity in all systems created for the oversight of policing;

- Protect and safeguard the rights and legitimate interests of all stakeholders;
 - Positively influence policing practices through the preparation and communication of “lessons learned” during PO cases;
5. *Continue* to support the development of common standards and best practises for ACAs with a focus in 2008 on promotion and adoption of the standards by member organisations, and, thus, *highlight* inter alia the following important goals for ACAs:
- Ensure openness, transparency, impartiality and integrity in all systems created for anti-corruption work;
 - Develop a comprehensive “three-pillar” approach in the fight against corruption, i.e. education, prevention, repression. Where these functions are not combined in one institution, commitment to cooperation with other competent authorities is of utmost importance;
 - Lobby for national anti-corruption strategies, programmes as well as enhanced national dialogue and cooperation between all stakeholders as a means to unite all anti-corruption forces and create synergies;
 - *Education*: Reinforce awareness raising among risk groups as well as the general public;
 - *Prevention*: Prepare and communicate practical AC experience to the legislature and the executive;
 - *Repression*: Enhance effectiveness through specialisation and training;
6. *Agree* to cooperate on identifying circumstances in which common working principles can evolve between POBs and ACAs across Europe;
7. *Highly welcome* the launch of the International Network for the Independent Oversight of Policing (INIOP), including the pro-active involvement of EPAC member organisations in this endeavour, through a series of international media launches taking place during 2008 and its inaugural conference;

8. *Encourage* once more all ACAs to make every possible effort to participate in the delegations of their respective countries to the 2nd session of the Conference of the States Parties to the UNCAC in Indonesia, 28 January to 1 February 2008, to ensure concrete outcomes of this important worldwide process;
9. *Reconfirm* their full commitment to establishing a more formal European contact-point network;
10. *Welcome* the success of the first International Anti-Corruption Summer School (IACSS) 2007 in Alt Lengbach/Austria, which was also promoted through the use of EPAC channels and *welcome* the IACSS 2008, which will provide another opportunity for knowledge transfer between the scientific and the law enforcement anti-corruption community within the EU and beyond;
11. *Continue* to further observe the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA), recalling EPAC's participation as observer to the 2nd Annual Conference and General Meeting of IAACA in Indonesia from 21 to 24 November 2007;
12. *Acknowledge and welcome* the work and the results of the "Conference 2007", the "PO principles", the "AC standards" and the "EPAC strategy" working groups and agree to maintain or set-up the following working groups for 2008: 'PO principles' (Chair: England & Wales), 'AC standards' (Chair: Latvia and Lithuania), '2008 Conference' (Chair: England & Wales), 'EPAC Transnational Cooperation & Staff Exchange' (Chair: Belgium), 'EPAC Communication' (Chair: Austria). These working groups shall present their results to the next conference in 2008 at the latest;
13. *Acknowledge and welcome* the efforts and contributions of the Austrian and Belgium members, BIA and Committee P, in providing the secretariat and acting as Chairs to the Network;

14. *Welcome* that the 8th EPAC Annual Professional Conference of the EU Member States' Police Oversight Bodies and Anti-Corruption Authorities will be organised by the United Kingdom in autumn of 2008. The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) of England & Wales has kindly agreed to host this 2008 Conference. Members that have already organized conferences as well as the two Chairs will gladly offer their experience and assistance;

15. *Recommend* that the text of this Declaration be widely circulated by the relevant Police Oversight Bodies and Anti-Corruption Authorities in their respective countries and that it be submitted by the Secretariat and the host of this Conference to the EU-Presidency and the European Commission.