



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**  
**MISSION IN KOSOVO**

**Remarks of Ambassador Werner Wnendt,  
Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo,**

***Implementation of the Anti-Corruption Action Plan:  
a social and economic priority for Kosovo***

**Prishtinë/Priština, 12 September 2006**

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Minister Salihaj, Members of the Assembly, representatives of the ministries, institutions, civil society and the international community. It is my pleasure to welcome you to this first workshop on the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Action Plan that OSCE has helped to organize.

It is my firm belief, and one that I share with many, that the fight against corruption must be a top priority for all Kosovo Institutions.

I remember while reading through the latest UNDP early warning report that I was struck by the lack of confidence the people in Kosovo have in their institutions; one of the main reasons being a wide spread *perception* of corruption. It is of course not only the public institutions that are seen in such a way, but also the private sector.

Without trust in the institutions, there cannot be any sustainable democratic development. The fight against corruption is, therefore, a healthy and a necessary exercise. And it is your responsibility as representatives of society and the institutions of Kosovo to prove to the public that you are committed to combating this plague.

The fact that all Prime Ministers since the establishment of the PISG have committed to developing a long term strategy is an encouraging sign. And it shows that the fight against corruption is and will be a priority.

As you are well aware, the first phase of the strategy concluded with the adoption and proclamation of the Kosovo Anti-Corruption Strategy on 17 March 2004. In my view, this first stage was essential because it signified the official recognition by public authorities that corruption existed in Kosovo, but also its consequences for society.

After this important phase of recognition, came the time to develop a detailed framework to fight corruption. It happened on 7 February this year with the proclamation of the Anti-Corruption Action Plan (ACAP).

Since February, we have entered the implementation phase of the strategy in which the OSCE is very proud to participate with the organization today a workshop on the implementation of the

Action Plan as a social and economic priority for Kosovo. And I would add that it is also a political priority as well.

Our aim, in close co-operation with the Prime Minister (and his Office), is to assist you in implementing the Action Plan by providing adequate capacities to combat corruption.

At this workshop, you will have an opportunity to familiarise yourselves with the action plan itself and with the situation in Kosovo, thanks to the expertise from RIINVEST.

You will also receive first hand information on best practices in the region – *thanks to Mr. Fron Nazhi from the East-West Management Institute* – as well as best practices in the European Union – *thanks to the participation of Mr. Andre Vandoren, Prosecutor General of Belgium*. You will agree with me that such an event is also an important step towards regional and European integration.

For the first time, all institutional actors and important figures involved in implementing the Action Plan are sitting around this table together with representatives of the civil society. Civil participation and involvement in implementation is also one of the most important dimensions that must be taken into account.

The struggle against corruption is a permanent concern for all governments and all societies. In a weak economy in transition, such as Kosovo, a strategy is even more crucial as corruption constantly erodes the social and economic fabric of society.

Generally speaking, the root causes of corruption are manifold: totalitarianism, conflicts in the past, weak democratic institutions, high unemployment combined with a large public sector and low salaries. All these elements play to a various degree in creating an environment favourable to corruption.

But let me be clear. This is not a fatality. The reasons are known and they can be addressed and this is exactly what the Action Plan is aiming at. And I am confident, looking at the level of attendance and interests, that it will be seriously endorsed and that necessary efforts will be made by all to cooperate in implementing the strategy and combating corruption.

I wish you a productive workshop and I will be at your disposal whenever you believe that the organization I represent can be of any help to support you in your endeavour.