



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**The Secretary General**

**Vienna, 7 October 1998**

To All Delegations

**re: OSCE/OECD Conference on 'National and International Approaches to Improving Integrity and Transparency in Government', Paris, 15/16 July 1998**

I attach, for the information of Delegations, the Executive Summary for the above Conference. Other papers can be found on the joint OSCE/OECD website for the Conference under <http://www.oecd.org/cmisis/bribery/pariscon.htm>

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**Organisation for Economic  
Co-operation and  
Development**

**Organisation for Security  
and Co-operation in  
Europe**



**OECD-OSCE CONFERENCE - Paris, 15/16 July 1998**

## **National and International Approaches to Improve Integrity and Transparency in Government**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Recognising the importance of fighting corruption and organised crime to the development of strong democracies and healthy market economies, the Paris conference focused on national and international measures that have been taken -- and can be taken -- to help. Participants agreed on the importance of follow-up (sharing information transnationally, seeking new legislation and better enforcement of existing legislation, and instituting relevant educational programs) and have set up a joint web site to this end.

For two days in mid-July, some 175 people from Governments, NGO's, international organisations, and the private sector -- coming from more than 35 countries -- met in Paris to discuss ways to improve integrity and transparency in government, fight corruption and organised crime, promote good governance, and mobilise civil society to join in these efforts. Many of the countries represented were "countries in transition" from one-party systems with centrally managed economies to pluralistic, democratic systems with market economies. There was enormous diversity among the participants, who came from countries as far apart as Morocco and New Zealand, as Kyrgyzstan and the United States.

Several themes emerged repeatedly during the course of the conference. One of the principal points was that the legitimacy of the state -- characterised by the rule of law, by accountable political figures and institutions, and by transparent governmental and bureaucratic processes -- is fundamental to the establishment of a democracy with strong social cohesion. Clearly stated and equitably applied competitive policies also have important economic consequences: more effective allocation of resources, increased growth, and improved trade and investment figures.

After opening remarks by the Deputy Secretary General of the OECD and the Co-ordinator for OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, the conference was divided into three sessions:

- Tools and Strategies
- From Learning to Doing
- Conclusions

Each of these sessions was divided into three main areas: (a) Instruments to Fight the International Dimensions of Corruption and Organised Crime, (b) Building Government Institutions, and (c) Mobilising Civil Society. The first session consisted of expert speakers representing the entire range of participants; the second of discussion groups organised around the same themes; and the third of presentations of summaries of the work that went on in each discussion group followed by a synthesis delivered by Tana de Zulueta who is a member of the Italian Senate and an active participant in Italy's bicameral parliamentary Anti-Mafia committee as well as Vice President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The paragraphs below briefly summarise the findings of each discussion group as presented in the concluding session and then present an abstract of the Chair's closing remarks.

The first discussion group found a strong link between corruption in general and organised crime in particular. Disruptive political and economic changes can provide fertile ground for organised crime and corruption to develop even in societies historically free of these plagues. All countries share "co-responsibility" for fighting organised crime and corruption; no country is completely "clean" in these areas. All countries can do more to strengthen their own legislation and enforcement practices, and the increasingly international scope of these problems, as well as of the related phenomenon of money-laundering, means that they must also do more to establish the means of taking effective action across national borders. Some new international instruments already exist to help in this fight; others are being (or will soon be) negotiated. But there can also be tension between the reinforcement of legal structures and protecting civil liberties. Participation in these efforts therefore poses challenges to all countries. The OECD countries are so concerned about these problems that they have agreed to submit their performance in meeting the obligations of these new instruments to evaluation by all other participants in the given instrument, in much the same way that the OSCE engages in periodic country-by-country reviews of the implementation of various other commitments.

The second group, which organised its work around three "A"s -- assess, act, and assist --, noted that corruption is an important and sensitive issue, but often shrouded in myth and secrecy. Getting the facts and reporting them is important in itself; analysing, presenting, and reflecting on the facts is equally important, and should be done as "cool reflection on a hot issue." Corruption is often a symptom of a weak state, although it is not present in every weak state nor is it limited to those states which are weak. Reform, in terms of strengthening the state and its ability to combat corruption, must centre on values such as transparency, accountability, predictability, fairness, and independence. But what do these words mean? Many languages of OECD/OSCE countries do not even have a word for "accountability." Each of these words must be translated into something concrete -- where someone has to sign legislation, employ a public servant, or check a record. Several high-risk areas for corruption were identified: procurement, business licensing, public personnel practices, etc. In providing assistance, IFI's and other IGO's have an important role in fighting corruption, since they support (consciously or unconsciously) specific political, economic, institutional, and individual actors. International institutions should integrate the strengthening of the State and fighting corruption more systematically into their work, and should do their utmost to ensure that they are models of anti-corruption policies and practices. And all of our countries should find ways to ensure that corruption is seen as a public problem -- not as an accepted way of life.

The third group noted that "civil society" is not a unified block, but a wide range of different interest groups which can build on shared concerns and choose to ignore differences. They can forge alliances not only with each other, but also with similar groups in other countries, with inter-governmental organisations, and with their own national governments. These groups can monitor the implementation of specific projects (such as tendering for public procurement or major civil engineering projects) and of anti-corruption programs. They can publish the results of their findings, share information with IGO's and IFI's (and insist that these institutions be more transparent), use the Internet to publicise their activities, etc. They can quantify the impact of corruption on individuals, and raise awareness of the degree to which individuals or groups are victims of corrupt practices. They can publish blacklists of corrupt companies, campaign for greater freedom of information, demand better training for public interest journalists, sponsor national anti-corruption days (or other awareness-raising activities), monitor the implementation of the OECD anti-bribery convention and other international instruments in much the same way as Helsinki Watch Groups used to monitor the implementation of older OSCE commitments, and insist on greater conditionality of outside assistance as a means of building greater accountability.

In her closing remarks, Tana de Zulueta noted that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly had just passed a resolution treating organised crime and corruption as problems relating to security. There is a growing awareness among parliamentarians of the importance of these issues, and parliamentarians should be included in discussions of them -- "not just because we write the laws; we also amend the laws that are laboriously negotiated..." by individual ministries and in international bodies.

Parliamentarians talk to their constituencies on a regular basis, and are a useful channel for helping to mobilise civil society. It might be helpful to create parliamentary committees elsewhere which are similar to Italy's Anti-Mafia Committee in order to address these problems on a more regular and more nearly universal basis. Italy now understands that it cannot solve these problems solely within its borders, but must do so on an international basis. We should make a commitment to pool our resources and our information. In this regard, "co-responsibility" is a very important concept. The problems discussed in Paris concern us all, and can only be solved by concerted, co-operative effort on the part of us all.

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