

International Conference on Enhancing Cooperation in the Anti-Corruption Area

28 October 2014

A. Forde

Dear Ms. Pula, Mr Preteni, Ms. Agani, esteemed colleagues from local institutions and authorities, Council of Europe experts, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to welcome you here to this **International Conference on Enhancing Cooperation in the Anti-Corruption Area**.

Our purpose today is to exchange practical experiences, including what has worked and perhaps could be improved, based on your lessons learned here in Kosovo and other jurisdictions, in the field of Anti-Corruption.

Around the table we have the key local authorities represented along with a select group of officials from peer institutions from other Council of Europe member states. I reiterate my thanks to all of you who have taken time out of your busy schedules to be with us here today. For those of you who have travelled, you are very welcome to Kosovo and your participation is most appreciated.

Today's forum provides us with an opportunity to have an interesting exchange, as colleagues and equal partners, that is based rather on practice than on principle. The discussion, as noted, will revolve around two broad themes – The Impact of Law Enforcement in curbing

corruption and Corruption prevention experiences and practices. If I may suggest, let's aim to move from **abstract** to **action**. Let's avoid generalizing and try to focus and concretise our examples to expand and corroborate our discussion points.

Why we are considering this issue may seem rather self-evident, but I think nevertheless worthy of reflection.

Successful efforts in tackling anti-corruption will not only reap tangible results for the very democratic fabric of our societies, but will have a profound impact on foreign direct investment into Kosovo – which is the single most important macro-economic objective for this country; fair and equitable access to services; and public perception (and satisfaction) of governance.

Freedom of movement and European integration, including into the Council of Europe, relies on determined, coordinated and effective action in this field too, of course.

The Council of Europe is a standards-based organization, which relies on the reinforcing cycle of setting standards, reviewing the implementation of those standards and working practically and technically to support the improvement of the situation. The current project Against Economic Crime – which we are grateful to be jointly funding and implementing with the European Union, thank you again Edis - embodies this unique approach.

Colleagues, you, as the Kosovo authorities have elected to subscribe to the highest standards in this field, and considerable efforts are being invested to realize these standards. Much has improved in terms of the legal and policy frameworks. We have almost at the end of two cycles

of implementing our GRECO-like methodology here. Coordination between organisations is improving – but more needs to be done.

This is no easy task for any of our member states – but the priority should be to garner new energy from the established institutional knowledge of your own authorities and the mature experience of our other European peers.

I encourage you to seize this interesting opportunity today.

I shall not take more of your time, and unfortunately I will need to excuse myself after this session to leave you in the hands of the real experts, but as a final remark I would like to mention that the Council of Europe is broadening and deepening its long-standing engagement in Kosovo with every passing day, and we look forward to accompanying and supporting you in these, and other efforts in the Rule of Law field, long into the future – or at least so long as we can be of assistance.

I wish you a most interesting and engaging day and look forward to hearing the outcomes.

Thank you.