

Opening statement  
Mr. Marin **Mrčela**, President of GRECO  
Training for GRECO evaluators - 5<sup>th</sup> evaluation round, 3-5 May 2017  
Opening plenary, 3 May, 10 am (room G3, Agora building)

- Welcome all participants and evaluators to this training.
- I am glad to see so many of you here today. Over 100...The investment countries decided to make by sending several evaluators to this event - even beyond the "one-evaluator-per-country" funded by GRECO budget - is a sign of the interest and commitment they have in our work. I am particularly happy about it.
- I would also like to welcome the colleagues from our Observer organisations who joined us today, as well as those coming from other parts of the Council of Europe Secretariat. This is excellent for cooperation and cross-fertilisation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- We are to train you – GRECO’s evaluators – as we embark in our new evaluation round. You are key to the proper functioning of GRECO. You are not here to represent your country. You may have different profiles and specialties: yet, the quality of your work and your commitment to the process are directly proportional to the quality and consistency of our reports. You contribute to the credibility of GRECO’s work. So you can see that the expectations are high!
- This is not going to be a "talk-shop". Instead, we have designed it as a practical, hands-on training with a series of interactive exercises. You are actors in this training, not passive recipient. While a number of speakers and moderators will introduce the various issues under discussions, you will be called upon to share your views and experiences and to raise any question – including critical questions - you may have.
- I know that you are all seasoned professionals, but we are here to learn new issues. GRECO’s 5<sup>th</sup> evaluation round which, as you know, focuses on "preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments (top executive functions) and law enforcement agencies", is very demanding on substance and is politically sensitive.
- It is substantially demanding because it requires extensive knowledge of the subject matter and a deep understanding of the relevant international standards. It is politically sensitive because we are reaching the core of the functioning of the State.
- However, this new round doesn’t start in a vacuum. It is notably the natural extension of the previous, 4<sup>th</sup> evaluation round, which focused on the prevention of corruption in the other branches of power, notably the legislative and judicial powers. A number of

elements GRECO discussed and decided in the previous rounds may be relevant to the new round as well.

- Continuity and novelty, therefore, go hand-in-hand in this new round. I count on those of you who have been involved in previous rounds and who know GRECO well, to link the various pieces of the puzzle and build on GRECO's jurisprudence. At the same time, we have many new colleagues who bring valuable experience and knowledge: we should bring this to fruition and use the new round as an opportunity to better our work even further.
- For me, GRECO reports are professional, not political reports. They have to be "to-the-point" and even-handed.
  - "To-the-point" because our reports are not a theoretical dissertation about the legal and policy issues under discussion; they are, instead, a pointed analysis of the specific situation in a given country. We not only "tick-the-box" of compliance with the relevant standards, but also look at how these standards are effectively implemented in practice.
  - Our reports also have to be even-handed. This is may be due to my "judge-professional-deformation", but I attach a lot of importance to this aspect. The fairness and impartiality of our reports is key to our credibility, especially in this round.
- Besides the two set topics for the round, there may be a number of transversal issues which are relevant to them. Some of these transversal issues were also raised by the speakers at the High-Level launch event for this round which GRECO organized on 20 March. I am thinking about the role of legal persons and of family members in hiding corruption proceeds, the political pressure which may be illegitimately exercised on law enforcement, and so on. I would welcome your thoughts on these issues as well, as we go through this training.
- Finally, on a practical level and for those of you who are new to our work, our evaluations are ambitious. They include collection and analysis of a lot of information, on-site country visits, drafting of evaluation reports and formulation of targeted recommendations, consideration and adoption of reports in plenary. Here again, your commitment and contribution throughout the process will be very important.
- As in previous rounds, the first few evaluations will be key "to set the tone" for the new round. I would therefore encourage the evaluators who have been selected for the first few evaluations and who are here today, to play a particularly active role. At the end of this training, we will draw up a set of guidance for evaluators for the whole round so that those evaluators who have not been able to join us today may benefit, to some extent, from these 3-days discussions we will be having.

- I told you before that this was not going to be a “talk-shop”, so I should stop talking. The Secretariat will provide you with some practical information about how the training will be conducted.
- Before I do that, let me also take the opportunity to thank the authorities of Monaco for their generous financial contribution in supporting this event.
- For my part, I would like to conclude by thanking you all for being here today and wish you all a successful training!