



HORIZONTAL FACILITY FOR WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

Action against Economic Crime

Within the European Union and Council of Europe “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey” (Horizontal Facility), the Council of Europe is implementing the “Action against Economic Crime” in North Macedonia, in close partnership with the Financial Intelligence Office (FIO); Specialised structures within the Ministries of Justice, Interior and Finance; Judicial and Prosecutorial Services; Supervisory bodies and Specialised agencies or commissions involved in the prevention and fight against corruption and economic crime.

The Action interventions and activities have been designed in close consultation with relevant stakeholders in such way as to address recent key recommendations of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) and the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). The aim is to improve the implementation of those recommendations and to support tailored reform processes in the country. The Action works with a wide range of beneficiaries, including civil society and the private sector, to achieve its objectives and to produce tangible and sustainable results and deliverables.

The Action will run for 36 months starting from 24 May 2016. The total budget for the Action is €1,350,000 and is co-funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe.

The objectives of the Action

The **overall objective** of the action is to contribute to democracy and the rule of law through prevention and control of economic crimes in accordance with European and other international standards.

The Action aims at accomplishing the following **specific objectives**:

- ✓ The regulatory framework and guidance for whistle-blower protection and reporting is reviewed and implemented
- ✓ Improved legislation and adoption of anti-money laundering and countering terrorism financing (AML/CFT) national strategy
- ✓ Capacity building for the Financial Intelligence Office (FIO)
- ✓ Strengthen the capacities of the judiciary, prosecution and law enforcement agencies to fight ML and TF
- ✓ Improved AML/CFT preventive system
- ✓ Enhanced international cooperation capacities for law enforcement, FIO and supervisors.

Accordingly, the outcomes of the project will be achieved through realisation of the following **expected results**:

- ✓ The regulatory framework and guidance for whistleblower protection and reporting is reviewed and implemented, and capacities of authorities and NGOs to monitor its implementation are enhanced;
- ✓ The AML/CFT system is reinforced through improved legal and regulatory framework;

- ✓ The AML/CFT Strategy observing the new international standard is adopted;
- ✓ Legal powers, analytical and technical capacities of the Financial Intelligence Office (FIO) are improved;
- ✓ Capacity of the judiciary, prosecution and law enforcement agencies to fight money laundering and terrorism financing are strengthened;
- ✓ The AML/CFT supervisory and regulatory framework (preventative measures) is reinforced;
- ✓ The AML/CFT supervisory skills of the designated supervisors are increased;
- ✓ Beneficial ownership related preventive measures and transparency of legal persons are enhanced;
- ✓ International cooperation capacities of law enforcement, FIO and supervisors are enhanced.

Background information

On 11 April 2016, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, and the European Union's Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, announced a new co-operation initiative of the two organisations aimed at supporting South-East Europe and Turkey in their efforts to comply with European standards. The initiative is called the European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey (Horizontal Facility). It is a three-year programme (May 2016 – May 2019), focusing on three themes: ensuring justice, fighting economic crime as well as combating discrimination and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups. It has a budget of €25 million, of which €20 million has been provided by the European Union and €5 million by the Council of Europe. Through the Horizontal Facility, the European Union and the Council of Europe will assist beneficiary countries to comply with Council of Europe standards and the European Union *acquis* in the framework of the enlargement process, through a complementary two-fold approach of technical co-operation and the provision of expertise. The Horizontal Facility relies on the Council of Europe's unique working methods, whereby tailor-made technical co-operation activities are based on conclusions and recommendations of the Council of Europe's monitoring bodies, which highlight areas where improvements are needed in legislation and policies of the beneficiaries to comply with the Organisation's treaties and other standards.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

The Member States of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

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