

Action Summary

Action against Economic Crime in Albania (AEC-Albania)

Action title	Action against Economic Crime in Albania (AEC-Albania)
Action area	Albania
Budget	€800.000
Funding	European Union / Council of Europe
Implementation	Economic Crime and Cooperation Division, DGI, Council of Europe
Duration	36 Months

I. Background

The European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey (also referred to as: Horizontal Facility phase II or HF II) is a co-operation initiative of the European Union and Council of Europe for South East Europe. The first phase of the Horizontal Facility ran from May 2016 to May 2019, and was succeeded by Horizontal Facility phase II, which will be implemented from May 2019 to May 2022. The second phase of the Horizontal Facility will continue to build on the Statement of Intent signed on 1 April 2014 by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the European Union Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, in which both Organisations agreed to further strengthen their co-operation in key areas of joint interest.

The Horizontal Facility includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. Beneficiaries and counterparts include governmental bodies at all levels, notably specialised structures within the Ministries of Justice, Interior and Finance; anti-corruption bodies; Judicial and Prosecutorial Services, supervisory bodies; Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), and representatives of civil society.

According to reports issued by Council of Europe monitoring bodies (GRECO and MONEYVAL), as well as EU Progress Reports, all countries in the region continue to suffer from weaknesses in their respective corruption/money laundering/terrorist financing prevention and suppression systems. Identified shortcomings have resulted in 2 participating jurisdictions being listed by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as jurisdictions with significant systemic deficiencies. Identified shortcomings have resulted in 2 participating jurisdictions being listed by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as jurisdictions with significant systemic deficiencies.

II. Action approach in Albania

The Action against Economic Crime in Albania (AEC-AL) aims at enhancing the rule of law and governance by strengthening economic crime prevention and enforcement tools. It builds upon the results achieved in the implementation of Phase I of the Horizontal Facility by continuing its support to effective implementation of key recommendations of the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL). The Action aims to achieve this by further strengthening institutional capacities to counter

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

and prevent corruption; money laundering; and the financing of terrorism in accordance with European standards.

The action will focus on supporting the authorities in several directions including:

1. Support for the strengthening of legislation and institutional framework to prevent and combat corruption;
2. Enhanced criminal asset recovery and asset management;
3. Enhanced mechanisms to prevent and suppress ML/TF; and
4. Fostered inter- institutional cooperation in combating economic crime.

III. Action's Objectives and Outcomes

The overall objective of the action is to contribute to and increase the trust in the rule of law and democracy in Albania through prevention and control of economic crimes in accordance with European and other international standards. The specific objectives of the action are:

Asset disclosure and internal control mechanism	Intermediate Outcome 1	Improved legal and institutional framework to prevent corruption
	Immediate Outcome 1	Strengthened Regulatory and institutional frameworks of the conflict of interest and asset disclosure
	Immediate Outcome 2	Strengthened institutional frameworks on internal control mechanisms to improve the oversight capacities on prevention of corruption
Asset recovery and management	Intermediate Outcome 2	Strengthened asset recovery and management practices
	Immediate Outcome 1	Improved Institutional framework for asset seizure and management
	Immediate Outcome 2	Strengthened capacities of authorities to trace and manage criminal assets
	Immediate Outcome 3	International good practices on Non-conviction-based confiscation are promoted and made available
Anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism	Intermediate Outcome 3	Enhanced mechanisms to prevent and suppress ML/TF
	Immediate Outcome 1	Capacity and institutional building for AML Risk-based compliance and supervision concerning financial and non-financial sector
	Immediate Outcome 2	Improved regulatory framework and operational policies on the financing of terrorism
	Immediate Outcome 3	Enhanced capacity to apply targeted financial sanctions to counter financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
	Immediate Outcome 4	Enhance the regulatory framework and capacities of competent authorities on Transparency of Beneficial Ownership
Inter-agency cooperation	Intermediate Outcome 4	Fostered inter-agency cooperation in combating economic crime
	Immediate Outcome 1	Enhance tools of inter-agency cooperation concerning investigation and prosecution of money laundering and terrorism financing

	Immediate Outcome 2	Capacities to record and share statistical data relating to criminal investigations strengthened
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IV. Implementation Arrangements

As a key actor in this thematic area, the Council of Europe's Economic Crime and Cooperation Division (ECCD) is in charge of implementing the activities under HF II-AEC-REG.

For the purpose of implementing various specific activities, the Action engages international experts with demonstrated experience in the field of fighting against economic crime as well as local experts from Horizontal Facility countries in order to ensure that the project delivers high quality assistance to the beneficiaries.

V. Contacts

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