

# Journalists against Corruption

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by

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## **INTRODUCTION**

I am honored to convey the **greetings of the National Association of Italian Journalists and its president Lorenzo Del Boca** to this important seminar being held in Sophia. **I would like to thank JAC Club (Journalists against Corruption) and Ms Reneta Nikolova** for organizing this meeting. Our hope is that **this meeting will lead to others**, so that together we can continue to reflect on how to promote the culture of legality in our society.

## **ILLEGALITY: ENEMY OF THE COMMON GOOD**

The National Association of Italian Journalists is well aware of the **importance vested in the culture and practice of legality**: here we have to highlight the positive work carried out – from 1999 to the present - by the European anti-fraud office (*Olaf*).

As emphasized in the latest report (2008) issued by Olaf, activities like tax evasion, the improper use of public funding and **all other types of illegal activities**, including information technology-based crimes, **cause damage to all taxpayers and produce injustices**, and therefore must be fought with every means at our disposal: every Euro of the Community budget that is used inappropriately and every information technology crime represent **a step backwards from the pact of solidarity and harmony among the peoples of Europe**, signed more than 50 years ago in Italy.

## **INSTITUTIONS AND JOURNALISTS UNITE TO PROMOTE LEGALITY**

In this context, the title of today's seminar poses a fundamental question that lies close to the heart of all public institutions: **how can we promote the legality of institutions to reduce their vulnerability to criminal actions? And what can the media do to promote the culture of legality?**

My response is a brief review of two macro-objectives.

1) *The first objective is to develop the control functions:* to identify who (as Olaf does) is sapping public resources and committing illicit acts is a priority task for the institutions. Controls do not reflect mistrust of the people in administration: **on the contrary, it is a right of those who govern processes** and a guarantee for the beneficiaries of the services. This dimension requires the **institution of an integrated system** that will serve as the basis for controlling strategic, administrative, legitimacy/regularity and auditing procedures. This control function must receive the most comprehensive attention from the media: citizens need to know that institutions never lower their guard and how they are intensifying controls and punishing illicit acts;

2) *The second objective is the promotion of legality:* institutions and the media must realize that illegality **can be fought by promoting the culture of legality**. The big responsibility of the media, in this respect, is to turn the spotlights towards the virtuous behaviors as they work for the common good. Corruption can also be counteracted by **focusing the attention of the citizens on who, on a daily basis, is working for the sake of legality**. I have in mind the Forces of Order themselves, for example, but also the many businesses and individual citizens who know no illegality, having already chosen legality as the measuring stone for their actions. I am well aware – and I say this as a journalist – that evil makes more news than good, but legality needs to be built by pointing out models of virtue in order to help educate younger generations. **In Bulgaria just as in the rest of Europe, public and private institutions live and work for the common good:** positive examples must be brought to the attention of the citizens, so that everyone is clear about the fact that

legality is a common good and represents the way of progress for individuals, societies and the entire European Union.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

**I would like to conclude by reiterating my heartfelt thanks to JAC** for having invited the National Association of Italian Journalists to this prestigious event. **Let this be the time to spread the seeds of legality: seeds that** – thanks also to the admirable work of Olaf in Europe as well as all European institutions – **always lead to a good harvest.**

Thank you, and best of luck to everyone.