



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СОЦИАЛЕН ФОНД



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА
АДМИНИСТРАТИВЕН КАПАЦИТЕТ



CLUB JOURNALISTS AGAINST CORRUPTION

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PRESENTATION

Honourable Mr. Butice,
Dear Colleagues,

The project - subject of this presentation, is the natural sequel of a years long, fruitful cooperation between OLAF and the Club “Journalists Against Corruption” – just like the cooperation which the Club maintains with FIIAPP – the Spanish Foundation which in 2005 supported the realization of a series of documentaries on the best known magistrates of Spain, including the heads of the specialized prosecutor’s office „Антидрога” and Audiencia Nacional – the specialized Penal Court of Spain, where the most serious cases are tried. In 2006 Mr. Butice together with Mr. Aidan White – the Secretary General of the world organization International Federation of Journalists visited our Club, and in September 2007 we jointly carried out our first mutual seminar – „Prevention of fraud with Eurofunds through media control”. Lecturers were Mr. Thierry Cretin – Head of the Investigation Directorate of OLAF, and the main adviser of Mr. Bruner in the anticorruption matters – Mr. Wolfgang Hetzer

In his lecture, Mr. Alessandro Butice said: „The fight against corruption and fraud with Eurofunds is extremely complicated. Difficulties persist not only for the investigators and prosecutors, but most of all for the journalists who have to explain to the public the complex matter in a relatively simple and understandable language. The media have a key role in the fight against fraud.

It is beyond dispute that informing of the public society is essential, because the citizens have the right to know how their money is spent – it is a part of the democracy. The awareness is very helpful for preventing of fraud and protect the community from it, because prevention is always better than medication. Today we do not Finish our work – we just lay the beginnings. The fight against fraud and corruption is not a thing that can

be finished within a year or two, so that there are many things to be done, but the most important one is to start.” At that time we were at the beginning – in 2007. Now, with this project - „Acquiring the experience of OLAF’s Communication Network and the new European models of partnership with the judiciary” we shall extend our cooperation. The project encompasses a training seminar for investigating journalists, spokesmen and representatives of the media units of the judiciary and NGOs, where this time the accent will be put on the audio-visual communication.

In September 2007 in Vienna and Bratislava the Communication Network held a conference „A vision for fraud countering”.

The conclusion of the forum was that the audio-vision is a powerful instrument for attracting the attention of millions of audiences on the fight against fraud and corruption, hence it has to be actively used by the European Commission, all its bodies and other weighty organisations in the EU and in Bulgaria, and we do dare to say, that the Club “Journalists Against Corruption” is such one.

At the seminar planned we shall present a special documentary on OLAF to answer the most frequently asked questions, like What is OLAF? What part of the European Commission is it? Who are OLAF’s partners? Whom and how works in the Office? How can we inform OLAF on our suspicions and when we have signals for corruption and fraud with European money? The film will show how OLAF communicates with the media. Interviews will be made with representatives of the International Federation of Journalists, leading editions reflecting the work of the European Institutions, representatives of the European Commission.

The second part of the project refers to a study of the good practices of the Spanish judicial system and partnership models with the non-government sector and the media. The Club offered partnership to the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Bulgaria for the implementation of the project. The reasons are following: on the one hand, for a long time the Prosecutor’s Office has been closed to the media and its work was not transparent to the public society. Now, the Prosecutor’s Office has a new communication policy, based on the best European practice and innovative means for achievement of a maximum awareness of the public society in consideration of the law and the specific character of the prosecutor’s work. „I think that, however much important it is to punish every crime related to violation on the European Funds, more important is not to allow such violations happen, and this can only be done through maximum mobilization of the control system of the state. An element of the control system is the public control, which to the largest extent is materialized by the media control”, so the Prosecutor General Boris Velchev during the opening of the seminar, of which I mentioned. On the other hand, the Prosecutor’s Office is one of the priority partners of OLAF in the counteraction against fraud and misuse with the Funds. The Prosecutor’s Office is an important participant in the

activities of AFCOS-Bulgaria, which is the Bulgarian Council for Fight against infringements with the European Union Funds. The Prosecutor's Office and the Club "Journalists Against Corruption" have signed an agreement for interaction and information exchange, including mutual projects implementation and participation in programmes. The present project will give a strong start impulse for a change in the interaction, cooperation and communication of the judiciary and the non-government sector. In this way the awareness of the Bulgarian citizens will be raised as well.

Since its founding in 2004 till now the Club has walked a rather long way and succeeded to establish itself as one of the most valid NGOs in Bulgaria. However, every organisation needs strengthening of its capacity, training and development. The objective of this project is namely this: to enhance the capacity of the Club for interaction and partnership with the judiciary, through studying European best practices for more efficient realization of our main goal – building of public intolerance to corruption and fraud with the European Funds.