Anti-Corruption Training and Education

The Serious Fraud Office and other leading UK law enforcement and judicial institutions hosted a study visit from June 24-29 by judicial and law enforcement representatives from BiH. The aim of this study visit was to improve the ability of BiH officials to fight more effectively bank fraud and money laundering, which are serious crimes closely linked to corruption and organized crime. It study visit focused on international exchange of police and judicial information in case of fraud and money laundering, as well as the roles of different law enforcement, judicial and financial institutions in preventing money laundering and financial fraud.

Economic crime, of which corruption, fraud and money laundering are inseparable parts, poses a great obstacle to economic reform and democratic progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The increasingly global nature of economic crime means that BiH must pursue closer regional collaboration, the harmonization of its domestic legislation with European and international legal instruments and institutional reform in order to be able to protect its citizens. Only well trained and educated law enforcement agencies and an independent judiciary can successfully fight these crimes and ensure that these crimes are uncovered and punished, and that illegal profits are confiscated.

In addition to the London study visit, the Anti-Fraud Unit of the Office of the High Representative facilitated the participation of law enforcement and judicial representatives from both Entities in the Council of Europe’s Octopus II Program designed to promote ongoing as well as new and anti-corruption projects in East and Southeast Europe. These seminars have resulted in a set of recommendations on how to

more effectively combat corruption, money laundering and organized crime. BiH delegates recommended, amongst other things, that the authorities take urgent action in the following two fields:

Legislation: Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to sign the European Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure, and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime, thus embracing international standards in fighting serious economic crime. Money laundering must be fully criminalised and the Civil and Criminal Law Conventions on Corruption, signed in March, must be urgently ratified.

Institutions: The authorities need to vigorously support inter-agency task forces which include law enforcement agencies and prosecutors in order to fight economic crime and corruption more effectively. Finally, all obstacles to inter-Entity and international exchange of information between law enforcement agencies and the judiciary need to be immediately removed in order to more effectively combat and prevent economic crime and corruption.

Such positive actions by the BiH authorities would be an indication that BiH is taking the fight against corruption seriously.

These are the most recent anti-corruption efforts that the OHR's Anti Fraud Unit has facilitated and helped organize in close collaboration with other members of the International Community. The OHR will continue to support law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, and any other genuine anti – corruption efforts and commitments that could come out of Entities' government recent anti – corruption programs.