

Workshop on Corruption, Organized Crime and Money Laundering

The Council of Europe and the Office of the High Representative jointly organized a Workshop on Corruption, Organized Crime and Money Laundering in Banja Luka on December 16 and 17. The seminar reviewed existing and planned measures against corruption, organized crime and money laundering, as well as priority actions needed to strengthen judiciary and law enforcement agencies to more successfully investigate and prosecute fraud, corruption and organized crime.

Representatives from both Entities participated in the seminar: the Federation and RS Public Prosecutors, Presidents of the Supreme Courts, representatives of the Ministries of Interior, Ministries of Finance, Ministries of Justice, and Customs and Tax Administration, as well as representatives of the Council of Europe, OHR, CAFAO, UNJSAP, UNIPTF, UNCICP, and OSCE.

The workshop called for comprehensive systemic and institutional changes that would bring Bosnia and Herzegovina closer to Europe and lead to sustainable social and economic progress and a stable environment for domestic and foreign investment. The participants agreed that it will be necessary to create a package of anti-corruption laws, such as laws on money laundering, on budget transparency, as well as laws that would strengthen the independence of the judiciary and enhance the efficiency of law enforcement agencies in both Entities. To ensure the implementation of European standards, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to accede to the Criminal and Civil Law Conventions on Corruption, the Convention on Money Laundering, OECD's Bribery Convention, as well as the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure, and Confiscation of

the Proceeds of Crime.

Participants discussed a variety of preventive measures to eliminate opportunities for fraud and corruption that include legislation on political party financing, transparency in government decision-making and financial procedures, as well as a depoliticized, independent and accountable civil service.

Representatives of local institutions recognized the need to enhance inter-entity and regional co-operation in combating organized crime, fraud and corruption, and committed themselves to close cooperation with the International Community in this fight.