

THE LONDON STATEMENT

DEFEATING ORGANISED CRIME IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

LANCASTER HOUSE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE, LONDON 25 NOVEMBER 2002

The rule of law is the foundation for democracy, prosperity and long-term stability. Organised crime threatens all of this. It is an enemy we must defeat, or it will defeat us.

Today we therefore place this at the top of our agenda and agree on a strategic partnership – for freedom, security and justice. In the past, organised crime has been more organised than national and international efforts to defeat it. We now undertake to shift the balance.

Our Joint Commitment

We will, in close co-ordination with each other:

- **fight crime at source**, by targeting criminals on their home territory, and fighting corruption
- **fight crime in transit**, by cutting the networks that run across Europe and beyond, and tracking weaponry, other materials and illicit money
- **fight crime at its destination**, by targeting criminals operating on foreign territory and confiscating the proceeds of crime

The international community will continue to provide assistance to support the delivery of the commitments made today by the countries of the region. In return, the region's governments will sustain their efforts to produce measurable results.

The joint, co-ordinated effort by the international community and the region will devote special attention to **technical and operational efforts against the most important aspects of organised crime**, notably:

- ◆ **illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings**
- ◆ **trafficking in drugs and weapons**
- ◆ **major, trans-border crime of other kinds**
- ◆ **corruption**

Concrete, steady progress will be key to the countries of south eastern Europe coming closer to the EU. The EU's engagement and assistance remain central to the international community's efforts, in which the UN, OSCE and their member states play an important role. We will co-ordinate better the current initiatives related to the fight against organised crime.

Priority Actions

The countries of south eastern Europe, at their different stages of development and engagement with the EU, will:

Work to meet European crime-fighting standards by:

- fulfilling their crime-fighting commitments made to the EU, for example in the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP)
- getting institutions and laws up to European standards, so that, for example, improvements in policing are not undermined by inadequate judicial systems
- implementing anti-corruption strategies, working together with the public, and enforcing anti-corruption laws
- strengthening capacity for financial investigations, control of money laundering and the seizure and confiscation of the proceeds of crime

Crime and the rule of law in south eastern Europe

- * The countries of the region are at differing stages of development.
- * But they are all potential or actual candidates for EU membership, and are therefore working towards EU standards.
- * All regional countries face major challenges – some more than others – in establishing the rule of law and combating criminal activity to these standards, and dealing with the underlying causes of crime.
- * The greatest criminal threats are illegal immigration and the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and human beings. Also, corruption is intimately linked to organised crime. In the most serious cases it corrodes the state from within and allows crime to become acceptable and remain unpunished.
- * Exposure to crime and lack of legal security are key factors hindering investment, and therefore economic development, in the region.
- * Organised crime provides sources of financing and protection for war criminals at large, and has links to terrorists.

The impact on international partners

- * Criminal activity, facilitated through or originating in south eastern Europe, hits partners on the rest of the continent and beyond.
- * Home-grown crime is almost always much greater than imported crime, in any given country. But the threat to the EU and other

- making sure law enforcement agencies and government departments have the practical and technical means to tackle individual criminals and gangs
- ensuring that these measures are reinforced by better co-operation, information exchange and co-ordination within each country
- supporting this with laws which help crime-fighting agencies work better together

Build public support for action against crime by:

- fighting corruption, wherever it occurs, in state institutions; and helping strong independent news media to develop
- promoting a consistent public message on the benefits of defeating crime

Crime deprives governments of revenue. It restricts international trade and investment. It costs jobs and income. Tackling crime will help bring the living standards of the region's citizens closer to those of the EU. Accurate and realistic information will help maximise public support for sometimes painful anti-crime measures.

Improve regional co-operation by:

- sharing best practice on meeting EU obligations, and lessons learned on improving internal co-operation, exchange of information and co-ordination between crime-fighting agencies
- making sure new legislation across the region is in line with European standards
- working to develop further the capacity of south eastern European crime-fighting institutions, to a common European standard across the whole region
- developing operational mechanisms to EU standards; and co-operating across borders to mount joint anti-crime operations, promote judicial networking and mutual legal assistance, and exchange information to tackle crime at a regional level

Regional co-operation will help the countries of south eastern Europe develop a common approach, and join forces with the wider international community. This will in turn help the region progress.

The Way Ahead

We will all carry forward the political momentum generated today. The EU will make full use of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) review mechanisms to follow up on its commitments and co-ordinate its fight against organised crime, ensuring coherence with Community and Member State assistance.

Full use will be made of the Zagreb Process. A summit will be held on 21 June 2003 in Thessaloniki. A key focus will be how far concrete actions have been taken against organised crime, including the commitments made today. And it will look ahead to the next practical steps that will need to follow.

We will draw on the wide range of regional initiatives, including the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the South Eastern Europe Co-operation Process, the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, the Central European Initiative, and others.

This London Statement, and the attached, individual areas for priority action, commit us to the necessary measures. Taking them is now the key to defeating organised crime in south eastern Europe.

international partners from south eastern European organised crime is serious and growing.

- * The result for ordinary citizens is greater exposure to violence or the threat of violence, and the loss of income or jobs.

Engagement by the EU and partners

- * The EU has varying kinds of engagement with the countries of south eastern Europe.
- * Some are candidate countries and are subject to a pre-accession process. Others aspire to that status and are working closely with the EU to achieve closer integration. These include, in the western part of the region, a group of potential candidates subject to the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP), the EU's principal instrument in working with them.
- * The SAP, and other relevant processes, are accompanied by EU assistance programmes, both Community and Member State, significant parts of which are directed at establishing the rule of law and combating crime.
- * International partner countries and institutions outside the EU have significant engagement in the region, often providing important expertise and assistance programmes.
- * The EU's Member States and institutions work in close co-operation with these partners.
- * The Zagreb Process was launched in November 2000. The participants are the EU Member States, the European Commission and the Stabilisation and Association Process countries. All are represented at the London Conference.