



SIGMA

A joint initiative of the OECD and the EU, principally financed by the EU



Creating Change Together

Conference on Relations between Supreme Audit Institutions of EU Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries and the European Court of Auditors

Budva 18-19 November 2013

Welcome address – SIGMA

Dear Mr President
Dear Mr Ambassador
Dear Heads of Supreme Audit Institutions
Dear Members of Parliament
Dear Colleagues
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen

I am Karen Hill, the Head of the SIGMA Programme and I would like to welcome you to this important event.

Supreme Audit Institutions and parliaments play an important role in the public financial accountability system and good governance. And constructive co-operation between the SAI and the parliament, taking their different constitutional or legal roles into account, can be beneficial to both.

In the 21st century, SAIs face new challenges to improve national governance and financial discipline. In response to this, there is increasing interest in mutual support among the SAI community, to promote the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experience to help them to meet this challenge.

This Conference is organised under the auspices of the Network of SAIs of EU Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries and the European Court of Auditors, recognising the importance of effective co-operation between SAIs and Parliaments in the context of the EU accession negotiations.

It has been prepared by the preparatory working group, which comprises the Liaison Officers of the host, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Supreme Audit Office of Poland and the European Court of Auditors. SIGMA has provided coordination, technical and financial support to this meeting.

The topic of the Conference was identified as being of common interest and strategic importance at the last meeting of Heads of Supreme Audit Institutions of EU Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries in March 2011.

The long-term sustainability of effective financial policies is an undeniable pre-requisite for good public governance. SAIs, through independent professional auditing, can help decision-makers to safeguard the long-term sustainability of and adherence to financial policies by enhancing transparency, reporting on the performance of public finance management and controls and highlighting systemic risks.

Acting in the public interest places a responsibility on SAIs to demonstrate their relevance to Parliament and other stakeholders. They need to respond appropriately to the expectations of different stakeholders, and the emerging risks and changing environments in which audits are conducted. Furthermore, it is important that SAIs have a meaningful and effective dialogue with stakeholders about how their work facilitates improvements in public sector administration and demonstrate that they are a credible source of independent and objective insight, supporting beneficial reforms.

The objective of the Conference is to share experiences of building constructive relations between the SAI and Parliament; to discuss and identify factors influencing such relations that could be used by individual SAIs and Parliaments to strengthen their mutually beneficial co-operation.

Tomorrow afternoon there will be a meeting of Heads of Presidents' of SAIs of the Network. On the agenda for that meeting is a draft resolution statement which will be discussed, amended in the light of this Conference and, if agreed, adopted. For information purposes, you all have a draft copy of this document in your folders.

I hope that the discussions today and tomorrow will inspire you to further build a constructive relationship between your own SAI and Parliament.

In addition to the Montenegrin organising team, the SIGMA project co-ordinators Lisa Ball, Annes McGoogan and Susannah Mevel will be happy to answer any logistical questions that you may have.

Finally, I can inform you that minutes will be taken of this meeting and to facilitate this task, the meeting will be recorded.

Thank you and I look forward to the discussions.