



INCREASE THE INTEGRITY OF PROSECUTORS AND PROSECUTING THE NEW CHALLENGES IN ORGANIZED CRIME



Organized crime has a significant impact on socio-economic situation and development of Bulgarian society. Through the reports under the Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification (CVM), the European Commission constantly calls on the Bulgarian authorities to enforce a strategy combating organized crime, a major challenge in Bulgaria. The project is directly targeting judiciary reforms and priorities entailed from the EC Reports on the Progress under the CVM. It derives directly from Action plan of the Prosecutors Office of Republic of Bulgaria (PORB) for the period 2013 to 2015, in particular the elements targeting capacity building and the efficiency of the PORB in investigating and prosecuting criminal offenses related to organized crime. Enhancing the prosecution of organized crime is one of the key approaches in improving public security, fighting corruption and organized crime and delivering on the Schengen related issues.

The project complements a parallel cooperation initiative supported in Bulgaria, namely the programme on the Prevention of THB and the Identification, Protection, Support, Return and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking. Specific aspects related to the prosecution of THB cases are integrated in the present project including

collection of evidences and protection of witnesses, because they are crucial elements of the entire system in countering THB.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SWISS SUPPORT

The objective of the project is to increase the capacity and efficiency of the PORB in investigating and prosecuting organized crime through:

- Increased general managerial and operational capacity of the PORB;
- Empowered PORB in independent collection of evidence for the needs of investigation and prosecution through upgraded technical equipment;
- Improved capacities of the PORB to investigate financial crime and recover assets;
- Increased capability of the PORB to prosecute organized crime and improved international collaboration of the PORB by setting up Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) with Switzerland;
- Improved capacities of the PORB in investigating and prosecuting cases of Human Trafficking (protection of witnesses).

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The main results of the project are as follows:

- Increased management and operational capacity at the PORB: 100 prosecutors with leadership potential have been trained, 50 more to be trained;
- Established and equipped Operational Duty Center securing the technical capacity of PORB for independent investigations;
- Elaborated database and guidelines for tracing and confiscation of assets from criminal activities;

- Enhanced Swiss-Bulgarian prosecution cooperation regarding asset forfeiture and combating THB after the conduct of a coordination visit of Bulgarian prosecutors to Switzerland;
- Enhanced knowledge on JIT operation, good practices and the relevant legislation, particularly concerning the Swiss Confederation;
- Created conditions for speedy, smooth, efficient and effective JIT creation and operation on future particular cases with Switzerland through an elaborated JIT template and established pilot JIT;
- Elaborated analysis of the Bulgarian and foreign legislation related to THB;
- Enhanced awareness and capacity for prosecuting THB cases.

ACTIVITIES

In order to reach the project objectives, the following implementation activities are being carried out:

- Identification and training of potential future leaders ;
- Performing research and analysis on the PORB operation with respect to tracing assets acquired through criminal activity;
- Establishing guidelines on the organization of the work of the PORB on the identification and seizure of illegally acquired assets;
- Creation of a data base of the illegally acquired assets;
- Specialized training on asset forfeiture;
- Creation of a competence network within the PORB on asset forfeiture;
- Establishment of a specialized unit for tracing assets acquired through criminal activity;
- Building prosecution cooperation between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Swiss Confederation with respect to asset forfeiture;
- Research and analysis of JIT experiences and good practices and the development of guidelines on JIT application;
- Development of a Bulgarian - Swiss JIT protocol and JIT agreement template.

KEY INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

FOCUS AREA

Prosecution/Anti-corruption/Combating organized crime

COUNTRY

Bulgaria

GOALS

Increase the capacity and efficiency of the PORB to investigate and prosecute organized crime

EXPECTED RESULTS

Increased management, operational and technical capacity of the PORB in combating organized crime;

Created conditions for establishment of joint investigation teams with Swiss colleagues

TARGET GROUP

- Prosecutors
- Magistrates
- Law enforcement officials working in the field of organized crime

EXECUTING AGENCY

Prosecutors Office of the Republic of Bulgaria

PARTNERS

- Federal Office of Justice, Switzerland
- Basel Institute on Governance, Switzerland

BUDGET

CHF 1'024'632

(Swiss contribution CHF 878'437)

DURATION

2014-2018

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For further details on the Swiss-Bulgarian Cooperation Programme, please visit:
<http://www.swiss-contribution.bg/>

