

For more information

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IPA 2014 "International
Cooperation in Criminal
Justice: Prosecutors' Network
of the Western Balkans"

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"The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms.

The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".

The European Commission is the EU's executive body.

International Cooperation in Criminal Justice: Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans

This programme is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the Dutch Center for International Legal Cooperation (CILC) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.



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International Cooperation in Criminal Justice: Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans

The background

One of the most crucial problems of the Western Balkans and hence for all of Europe is the serious and trans-border organised crime. For centuries, the Balkans have served as a bridge connecting Europe and Asia and as such have always served as an important transit route. However, organized crime rose to a predominant business on the Western Balkans during the last decades of the 20th century. Until today, the trafficking routes through the Western Balkan countries remain essential for moving illicit goods into the EU. The Balkans provide not only transit for opium from Afghanistan and refugees from the Middle East, but for example are also a major source of firearms in the international weapons market.

The fight against organised crime is a challenge that obviously cannot be met at the national level only. Hence, the prosecutors-general in the region signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the prosecutorial cooperation and networking in the Western Balkans against organised crime on 30th of March 2005 in Skopje and marked the establishment of the **Prosecutors' Network**.

This laid the groundwork for current, as also the previous project, IPA 2010 Project "Fight against organised crime and corruption: Strengthening the Prosecutors' Network", which was implemented from November 2011 to April 2014, focussing on the development of cross-border capacities for joint

investigations, collection of evidence and requests for mutual legal assistance. Continuing the progress already achieved, experienced **Prosecutors from EU member states** will be seconded to each Beneficiary and included in the day-to-day work of the respective prosecutors' services to combat serious and trans-border organised crime according to European standards.

Objectives

The **overall objective** of the project is to prevent and combat serious and trans-border organised crime and linked corruption cases with cross-border implications, as well as to dismantle criminal organisations involved in illicit trafficking destined to the EU, in particular trafficking in firearms, drugs and human beings. The specific objectives of the project are:

1. To support investigations and prosecutions in serious and trans-border organised crimes
2. To strengthen the institutional capacities as well as coordination and cooperation mechanisms among the beneficiaries
3. To increase judicial cooperation between the Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans and the relevant European institutions

Project outline

The project is implemented by a consortium consisting of the **German Development Cooperation** (lead partner; www.giz.de), the Netherlands **Center for International Legal Cooperation** (www.cilc.nl) and the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime** (www.unodc.org), and covers the countries of the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia.

The project has a duration of 35 months (from December 2014 to October 2017) and an overall budget of approximately 5.9 Mio EUR contributed by the European Union, represented by the European Commission – "Directorate General European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations" and the German Government, represented by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

