



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
MISSION IN KOSOVO

**Remarks of Ambassador Werner Wnendt,
Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo,**

Launch of the Anti-Corruption Campaign

Prishtinë/Priština, 11 December 2006

The following are opening remarks given at a press conference that launched a public information campaign calling on people to help increase transparency and fight corruption in Kosovo. The campaign's aim – sponsored by the OSCE Mission, the United Nations Development Programme and the Kosovo Anti-Corruption Agency – is to motivate the public to report corruption to the Agency and change the negative perception that not much can be done to counter corruption in Kosovo.

Corruption is a plague anywhere in the world and not only in Kosovo. No country can claim that they are free from corruption, not even the so-called old democracies like my country – Germany. But it is important to look at what countries are doing to combat it.

Transparency International's perception index reveals the problem quite well.

In the region, the disparities are great. Far ahead of the rest of the region you find Slovenia with an honourable 28 rank out of 163 countries. Another country in the region, which I will not mention, is 111-th.

It is not about pinpointing who is good or who is bad. It is about looking into the future.

For example, the two next countries joining the EU, Bulgaria and Romania, are respectively in 57th and 84th place. As you know, corruption was one of the main reservations the EU had on the accession of these countries. There is no need to stress the importance of taking this issue seriously.

The first step in fighting corruption is recognizing it as a problem. And this step, a difficult one indeed, Kosovo already took back in 2004 with the adoption of an Anti-Corruption Strategy.

The next steps in Kosovo were the adoption of the Anti-Corruption Action Plan and the Law on Suppression of Corruption in 2005.

Since corruption affects all sectors of society, public services, as well as the private sector; economic developments as much as the health and education sectors, such a strategy and such an action plan were needed as only a comprehensive strategy can be efficient in tackling this affliction.

And now, it is time to implement it.

For this you needed a committed government. Prime Minister Çeku, by making it his priority upon his appointment in March, took a strong and positive step in that direction.

Another important step in fighting corruption is the creation of the Anti-Corruption Agency, whose role we are helping to promote today.

The Agency is a new institution and it needs to be visible at the highest political level - because political support and commitment is essential.

However, we must not forget that it is also an independent institution that will review governmental practices and offer advice on how to increase accountability and transparency, not only to the Assembly but also to the Office of the Prosecutor.

As the Head of UNMIK's Institution-Building Pillar, I cannot stress enough the importance of having functional institutions and institutionalizing the fight against corruption. I wish Mr. Preteni much success in his important work.

The Anti-Corruption Agency, though, perhaps more than any other, also requires public support.

Apart from the Government, the people of Kosovo also have an important role to play in fight against corruption. They are the ones who experience it and suffer from it the most.

With the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Agency, the public has received an instrument it can use to report cases of corruption and take the first steps. The media campaign, that I am very proud to launch today with my colleagues, aims at motivating to public to do that.

A Riinvest survey shows that much of Kosovo's population perceives corruption as a fact of life; that there is no remedy and that therefore it is better to live with it and even to accommodate it.

This kind of perception in return strengthens corruption.

The Anti-Corruption Agency is also here to fight against this perception of impunity. With its hotline, it gives the opportunity but also a responsibility to each individual to fight against corruption by reporting cases:

"Corruption ends with you!" goes the slogan of this campaign.

The OSCE is dedicated to support the fight against corruption, to support the Agency and to support the Government. In my view, every Euro invested in the fight against corruption is worth it. There are beneficial multiplying effects.

Effectively fighting this fight requires the energy of all, all the people of Kosovo but also the international community too. By joining efforts in this campaign I am confident that cooperation between international actors is on good track. In the future I hope to see other international actors joining resources to help the authorities and the people of Kosovo to make the fight against corruption a joint priority.