

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues and Friends,



As our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Manchester is approaching, it is my great pleasure to share with you, already at this stage, good news about important recent international developments. After quite an extensive negotiation process, the Council Decision on the setting up of the European Anti-Corruption Network was finally adopted last Friday, 24 October 2008, by the Council of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers of the EU.

The idea for this initiative was born and discussed during our 2004 Annual Conference and, consequently, laid down in the 2004 Vienna Declaration. Therein we stated that we [quote] “would welcome the idea of a European Anti-Corruption Network (EACN) based upon the existing structures and would also welcome appropriate steps in this direction by incoming Presidencies of the European Union” [unquote].

Following this recommendation and also observing the goals set out in the Union’s The Hague Programme and other important EU strategy papers, seven EU Member States (Austria, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Slovakia) launched a joint initiative to establish a more formalized network of operational units dealing with the prevention of and the fight against corruption in the broadest possible sense. In 2007, the German EU Presidency took over the initiative and was able to add momentum. In similar vein, EPAC’s Annual Conferences in Budapest as well as in Helsinki reinforced the common commitment to this process.

Thus, we are very pleased to have now achieved the final breakthrough in this mutually supported project. It will strengthen and broaden the basis of our successful cooperation, offer great opportunities for all our organizations, and promote the further development of our collaboration within EPAC and beyond.

In this context, I would again like to invite and even urge all EPAC partners to participate in the upcoming Manchester Conference and to make sure that delegates are mandated to contribute to a substantial discussion. It will be our pleasure to provide all delegations with detailed information on the a.m. achievements and the way ahead.

Once again, I would like to express my special and sincere thanks to all of you, to all EPAC partner organizations for their constant commitment and dedication as well as for their lasting support for this initiative at various levels and through numerous channels.

I am looking forward to seeing you all in Manchester.

Yours sincerely and with kind personal regards,



Martin Kreutner, Chair