

**PANEL IV:**

**OPENING UP OR CORDONING OFF – THE  
EUROPEAN UNION AND SOUTH EAST  
EUROPE – A STRUGGLE OVER ORGANISED  
CRIME**



**Josip Kregar**

## **ORGANISED CRIME AS A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY**

It was the 12<sup>th</sup> of December of the year 1999 and I was in Zakopane in a hotel at a conference regarding, organised crime! We had been discussing for a few days – mainly academically – organised crime in society. The next day a man by the nickname Ersik was assassinated in the lobby of the hotel. It looks like he was one of the hotel's guests but in fact he was the head of organised crime in Poland. The killers were never found. He looked like a businessman; he had a family, he had interests in hotels in Poland, he had some property in Slovakia. I am telling you this story as an introduction because at that time for us, simply because of the assassination, organised crime as an issue was not academic. Not at all. It was a serious problem in our society.

Indeed organised crime is a threat for the new democracies. Even consolidated democracies, such as Poland, or Hungary, or Croatia, or Slovakia do have some problems with organised crime. From time to time they do have scandals and affairs about organised crime. Reports about the transitional economies are showing us very clearly that organised crime is one specific part of their economies. If you look at the Freedom House reports, you will find out how mafia ties and organised crime money is penetrating the new economies actually legalizing the activities of organised crime.

In other issues, we are faced with a new wave of organised crime, or new types of crime such as trafficking, organised prostitution, drug trafficking and so on. All those phenomenon are relatively new to us. Also what is a problematic with organised crime is the fact that it is very much influencing political decisions. "Very much" is difficult to measure but in any case the leaders of the criminal organizations do have influence. For instance, investing money in elections, having permanent contact with judges and police officers.

Government studies are showing us that the problem and that will be my point today of organised crime in transitional democracies is just not the problem of criminality and deviance. It is a problem of the weak States. It is not a problem that *they* [criminals] are doing something, it is the problem of what the weak States *are not doing*. What has to be done?

All States have organised crime, but in some cases, organised crime has a State. There is no efficient police, prosecution or judiciary system to fight against it. That is connected with the topic of today's discussion. Weak States are the most dangerous element of instability and the most likely the source of new trouble spots in decades to come. Well, today I will talk mainly about Croatia. This is my country, and I know the situation. But it seems to me that many of the conclusions we can extend to other countries.

First of all, roughly about 10 to 15 years ago, we didn't have organised crime. The detection of organised crime started with some media scandals. The journalists discovered that there is a connection between gangs and competing organizations. Organizations competing for let's say market, for power, for connections with politicians and so on. The police denied for a long time that there is organised crime, but in the early 90s, the police recognized or somehow found out the connections of something they called the Albanian Mafia in Croatia. The first signal of organised crime. But that was just the tip of the iceberg. They actually failed to find out the full extent of organised crime. Politicians only recognized the problem in the *late* 90s when opposition leaders started to discuss and talk openly about connections between the top of organised crime and the top of the State. Top politicians were part of and included in some criminal activities, maybe just protecting some of the persons organizing crime because of different reasons.

I must say courts still did not recognize the problem. In spite of the fact that we had some changes in our legislation, we had just a few cases against organised criminals in the courts, unfortunately unsuccessful. There was no proof of organization but in the two biggest cases the gangsters were released or sentenced for minor offenses. I think somebody who recognized very early that Croatia had a problem with organised crime were foreign investors. They discovered that they

cannot compete with local organised “investors” or “entrepreneurs” but connected to organised crime and politics.

That was the reason that we are formulating a strategy of change to fight organised crime. First of all, in two instances, Croatia changed the Penal Code and the criminal procedures acts. Actually the last change was in May 2002, trying to speed up the procedures and in the end to introduced some measures to fight organised crime. One of the main events was organization of the so-called USKOK, the Office of Prevention of Corruption and Organised Crime in October 2001. I will talk about it more specifically.

Croatia is continuously accepting international instruments regarding impartial legal assistance and let's say some conventions and legal standards regarding organised crime, especially the fight against organised crime in the region.

I think something that was successfully done, mainly by journalists and the media, was a kind of alert or mobilization of the public against the problem of organised crime. Nobody denies anymore the existence and the danger of organised crime in Croatia anymore.

A few words about some elements of the effort against crime. In the penal code, at the end of 90s and last year, we increased sanctions against organised crime offenses. Even before we had relatively rigid sanctions, but now Croatia is introducing long term imprisonment sanctions (over 20 years) which is actually a kind of replacement for a life sentence. We didn't have enough specific details and definition regarding white-collar crimes or economic crimes and these are categories of crime which are expanding tremendously in the 1990s. And it is very difficult to find a balance between say, freedom of entrepreneurship and the protection of legality and honesty in the economic sphere.

Croatia has a kind of national strategy to fight corruption and also similar acts regarding the prevention of drug use and all those acts are determining a lot of interventions and the changes regard more prevention than sanction of such activities. According to some

international obligations, Croatia introduced in the penal code suppression of the financing of terrorism and similar types of organizations. Very problematic, but very efficient are the new tools that are introduced in the criminal procedure act, introducing a kind of new let's say new forms to investigate and find proofs of organised crime. For instance witness protection. We didn't have such a program and this is a crucial measure against organised crime. Also according to some international obligations we have introduced the responsibility of legal persons.

A few words about USKOK. I can talk a lot about it, but I will summarize in two parts. First of all, we had very great expectations regarding the introduction of an independent body to fight against organised crime. Actually activities started with NGO initiatives proposing to the government the organization of an independent body. The government and the Ministry of Justice accepted something that was not proposed; actually the proposal tended to imitate the Hong Kong agency to fight corruption, but they actually wanted to imitate the Italian model of some semi-military organization to fight the mafia.

In the end, because of many compromises, the final version of the law was not accepted by everybody. First of all this institution is somehow too strongly connected with the State Attorney Office, which promotes the efficiency of prosecution, but definitely focus the activities of this independent body only the court cases. The Office of Prevention of Corruption and Organised Crime has authority only on activities emanating from criminal organizations. They have the possibilities to discretely and with a great span of different tools to investigate organised crime. They have specialists for bank transactions, specialists for the investigation of financial aspects of crime, they have research and public relations departments and so on.

But in reality, I think I share the opinions of my colleagues. The results are not brilliant. First of all there is a lack of real political will to support the activities of USKOK. USKOK right now has only few of those specialists, and near the end of 2002, we had few hundreds of cases, and we see quite clearly a selection or filtering of the cases. A lot of pre investigative procedures, leading in the end to only 150 accusations. The

main part of the activity of USKOK is the fight against organised crime. 244 persons were accused of conspiracy to commit punishable acts.

The next part of activity of international instruments, but I will not delve in that too much. Suffice it to say that there is a big effort from the international community to mount a kind of new legislation and new legal instruments in the area of South Eastern Europe, and Croatia adopted almost all of them.

To me, one of the biggest effort and success is the adaptation of some bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries, especially regarding assistance in legal matters and police investigations.

Well to conclude, I think Croatia is not a case of a country in which organised crime is the most serious danger for democracy. There are many other dangers. But if we look at statistics of convictions and sentences, we shall find out that it is very dangerous to ignore the fact that organised crime is appearing and becoming from time to time the decisive element in economic and political competition. Extremely important is the warning from the big cases. We had two big cases against mafia; small mafia and big mafia. Unfortunately, after two and a half years of proceedings, almost all of the accused were released. Only a few of them, and not the organizers and the leaders, were sentenced because of some serious offences, but received minimal punishment.

In the big cases, we discovered that attorneys are not capable of fighting against the big money of organised crime, good lawyers which they are able to pay and the possibility of the manipulation of public, because organised crime is not just one company; it is a very active group of people willing and able to influence public opinion. We are very much aware that organised crime as some support in culture. Celebrities and leading politicians are having coffee with persons of the milieu. Even the leading public servants accept with a great smile the people publicly accused or denounced by the media as the organizers of crime. There is certainly the influence of public officials. Just recently USKOK discovered the relations of the Chief Attorney of Croatia, some lawyers with the people at the top of organised crime.

It is for our interest very important to note that there is an international dimension. We are importing not just criminals; we are importing the methods of organised crime and Croatia is one of the countries in which organised crime from other countries is trying to legalize the money and the profit from their criminal activities by investing in attractive ventures, such as tourism and other areas.

Is organised crime really organised? When we discuss organised crime, we always have in our mind the picture of a really big Weberian type of organization, with hierarchy, with rules, with wages, with promotion and career. Organised crime is not such a type of organization. Mafias are not bureaucratic organizations, they are not even companies. They are groups who are surviving because they are very closely connected. This is the reason why we have a so-called mafia connected by ethnicity, origin or national identification. We are talking about the Russian mafia, about Croatian and Serbian mafia, we are talking about Italian mafia. They are not organizations. The point here is that we cannot fight against organised crime by eliminating just the top of the groups. They are a big group, and very easily are able to replace the top with newcomers, with the new people who are using the opportunity to become the leaders.

Eliminating just a few of them will not be the solution. I think one of the good examples from the Serbian case, even if I worry very much about the final result, is that they eliminated not just the top, but the substance of the organization. They are like a hydra; when you eliminate one head, two heads or organizations arise. But let's keep in mind that the definitions of what is crime and what is not are changeable. In countries in transition, the line between legal and illegal business activities is very flexible. In many cases legal activity has to be supported by disobedience to the law. The people are investing a lot of efforts in order to avoid some rules, trying to bribe officers, courts or some important politicians. They do perceive as necessary such type of behaviour. This is illegal, but sometimes they are using a behaviour or tools which are completely legal but not acceptable. Not just from the moral point of view but also because of open and honest competition in the market.

With some distance of ten years, we can discuss almost all of the economic change in Croatia also from the perspective of organised



crime. The days of privatization, denationalization, return of property and transformation of social and legal categories in the new capitalist system can be described as the days of semi-legal activity. Formally, legalistically, that was not against the law, but in reality this produced a lot of risky situations which are actually opportunities for organised crime which has some capital to invest, influence to use, to get some advantages. Organised crime is the answer, actually organised crime has some advantages against the uncertainties we face in transition.

I would emphasize that the fight against organised crime is not just a fight against individuals or individual criminal behaviour; it is a fight to increase the efficiency of the government. We can better understand the problem of organised crime if we approach it from the point of view of good governance. The precondition to fight against organised crime or parallel activity requires increased efficiency and capacity of governmental institutions.

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## **CONTEXTUALIZING CRIMINALITY AND SECURITY IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE**

In contextualizing one must not forget that

1) The region's heterogeneity is an omnipresent fact. If one looks at the national level of the various states in the region as well as on their individual pace of transformation it is very difficult to present a regional South East European perspective at all. This is the case in several aspects but also the one of criminality and other security issues. This does not mean, however that we do not see criminal activities organised on a transnational European and international level. On the contrary: organised criminality functions exactly this way - but we should delve into national characteristics and look whether and how politics and crime have joined ranks on a nation-state level. This is what I see as the prevalent danger in SEE because of weak political, societal and economic institutions and the lack of public trust in them.

2) By analysing criminality on a state level as well as on an international level we look at a transnational and a global phenomenon and one that is as transnationalizing as it is globalizing. It has to be looked and acted upon as such in SEE while keeping in mind its local effects and roots. What we should not do is to treat SEE as a region that is somehow naturally inclined to crime and mafia style activities – in the same way as we treated SEE a decade ago as an area prone to conflict and war. In both cases such a kind of stigmatisation seldom leads to accurate analysis.

3) The phenomenon of criminality could develop and threaten both (inter)national security and the rule of law in SEE due to dramatic changes in the international system. The break up of the Former Yugoslavia and the collapse of the Communist bloc as a firm ideological system of control both contributed to this or rather were the most

important elements in these changes. There was an ideological vacuum that led to a vacuum of legitimacy.

4) Due to the need for analytical clarity as well as because the successor States of the Former Yugoslavia form an important part of SEE, the Former Yugoslavia and other SEE states have to be dealt with separately. I would argue that the break-up of Yugoslavia and the resulting wars remain the central political events of and in the region. Last but not least as this is the subject of the paper they should be identified as grand-strategic state-instigated criminal manoeuvres and have to be analysed accordingly. Not only this – the wars and the way they were led fundamentally changed what was legal and illegal, what was part of civil politics and what was a military affair – or rather blurred the fine line between those two areas. The wars and organised violence in itself could be read and interpreted as acts of state and (para-) military terrorism against a largely unprotected civilian population. What could the ethnic cleansing campaigns be but organised crime? What else the sieges of Vukovar or Sarajevo were than terrorism? It is due to the Yugoslav wars that this area was and to a very unequal degree still is one of immense insecurity. Not only did the Yugoslav wars bring with them “conventional” war-induced security problems i.e. death and destruction, flights of civilians we came to know as ethnic cleansing, etc. it also brought about -and this is an issue we are dealing with here which is even more important- the break-down of State authority and public order not only in the war afflicted regions, but in areas where actual combat had not spilled over.

Old and established norms and forms of legitimacy were purposefully destroyed, they were erased by highly skilful bureaucratic and organizational means and were for a time almost non-existent. These manoeuvres were successful to a large degree and had a devastating effect on established norms of legality, rule of law and accountability which cannot be overestimated. When the most criminal actors – many of whom are now in The Hague– should be considered a huge progress and success in crime fighting. For years these were the actors that were legitimized internally by elections and externally by international diplomacy. How could the citizenry understand that they were criminals? By which means are they to understand that paramilitaries

that were politically and in some cases also physically responsible for the most atrocious crimes against civilians could be deputies in national parliaments like Seselj and Arkan and thereby embody and symbolise legitimate authority? Arkan is a good example to illustrate the mechanism in action: in order to destroy the old system that was simply in the way of his political plans, criminals were needed instead of competing fellow politicians, a competent police force or judiciary. A criminal is cheap labour as he is already outside any form of legality, has nothing to lose but everything to win by serving his political master. The politician is the one who gives him credit, protection and immunity. When his services become obsolete and his actions become a threat to the master, he gets laid off – and that is exactly what happened to Arkan and several others that operated in the tightly knit net between politics and criminality. One could evaluate this in two ways: either the political system is a criminal one, or the criminal element in society has overtaken the political. For both, evidence could be found easily, the recent murder of Zoran Djindjic being only the most prominent example.

5) A deep transformation of the political power structure took place in another sense: The shift from civilian to military power made control over the means of violence and not legality the most crucial precondition for getting and holding on to power. The general dispersion of the State's control transferred the monopoly of power to regional and local war-lords and substituted formal political activities and procedures by mafia activities in many forms and variations. One could not say that this was a sheer outcome of the war. Rather were these metamorphoses carried out in the "form" of war. Or to put it even more bluntly: these wars have to be seen as organised political efforts to undermine legitimate political structures, state sovereignty, national security and to eventually break them.

6) Having this in mind we should track down the phenomenon that we think is central to explaining insecurity and the obstacle to reducing criminality and illegal activities in the region. I would argue that it is the lack of state and institution building – whether as a legacy of wars or as a legacy of totalitarianism party – that made for a lasting security vacuum. The main dilemma at work here is that on the one hand we ask for legitimacy and the rule of law, on the other the International

Community recognized and legitimized warlords and their success (e.g. with the Dayton Peace Accord).

In the post-war phase efforts were slow to repair war damages. Slower still is the reconstruction of the political and social fabric of war-ridden and almost destroyed societies. This is done, however, within a system of parallel levels of various sovereignties which have a lasting effect on post-war reconstruction efforts and are re-produced in a much more civil and well-intentioned way by the national-international division of power, especially in places under international protection like Bosnia, Kosovo or the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Not only do we see at times a rather chaotic and divided response to the national-international division of power and authority, we are also confronted with the fact that often the formal political structure is rather powerless unless it responds to the informal and hidden power base that was built during the war. That norms like accountability and trust in public offices could not develop and take root has therefore a domestic war-time dimension to it as well as one that has to do with the fact that office holders are internationals who don't owe their position to the local electorate nor have to legitimise their actions and policies before them and in this way contribute to a sovereignty and legality dilemma.

In order to conclude I think a political plan for all kinds of international or solely European intervention in SEE is important and its perspective should be the achievement of European integration while we recognise as well as remind ourselves of the fact that within the criminal realm, Europeanization has already taken place.

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## **SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AS A CONTRIBUTION TO CRIME PREVENTION IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE**

Being the last speaker of this seminar, which is a good news in itself, I will try to take a step back and put this in a broader perspective, because I think that the changes that are happening in the world, the radical changes in the world order make this issue of dealing with organised crime more important and at the same time so much more difficult.

All that is happening against this background is tied to September 11<sup>th</sup>, just like the emergence of the previous world order was tied to the Treaty of Westphalia which is basically a good tool to illustrate what these changes really were. Organised crime really fits into these changes unfortunately and we cannot deal with it without addressing the changes in general.

The New World Order is mainly characterised by the appearance of such non-State actors who do not look like States, don't behave like States and don't want to behave like States and therefore all the instruments at our disposal who were geared to deal with States do not work.

We had similar non-State actors before, but the non State actors before, like the Catholic Church, or lately the entities which tried to gain independence, like the Nagorno Karabakhs, the Kosovos and the Abkhazias of this world always had a desire to be seen and treated as if they were States and that is what we were basically doing which created tremendous problems at the end, but at least we had some tools to deal with them.

With new non-State actors, organised crime, terrorism, we do not have these instruments. They are against these instruments. The desire of Kosovos and Nagorno Karabakhs was to fit into the existing order of

States to be recognized as one of them. The new actors do not want to fit, they want to destroy it, and it is a tremendous difference. There is a difference between organised crime and terrorism because global terrorism wants to destroy the system as it is. Organised crime wants to destroy the system by using it to its advantage, but they are natural allies because they have very similar features and very similar objectives.

The collapse of the old world order –the Westphalian order if you wish– has lots of consequences, which I don't want to discuss here, but which we will have to face in the decades to come. Just to name a few, the collapse of the Non Proliferation regime, which we do not want to recognize, but which is a fact, the crisis in Transatlantic relations, the growing gap between public opinion and Governments all over Europe if not in all countries, but there is one more which is also maybe more important. The total crisis of international law and international institutions, because international law and institutions were invented to deal with States, we now have to deal with non State actors who don't care about legal constraints and we don't tend to remain without remedies in front of actors who love to violate legal constraints, especially when they have powers which rival those of States, and will become even more powerful by acquiring weapons of mass destruction when we talk about international terrorism.

So we have to face these new threats by non State actors and organised crime is one of them. There is I think a competition between organised crime and terrorism which I think is more dangerous but I don't think we need to decide, ultimately, they do not compete, they are basically allies who provide support for international terrorism.

Organised crime is a threat to the stability of any one State, especially to weak States. We have heard it before, and actually weak States are the targets of organised crime for very understandable reasons. It is much less dangerous for them, it is much more profitable for them, and last but not least, they have a chance to hijack the State or State institutions, which they always do more or less easily. The process of institution building, in transition States, even more in new States, in States which are not yet nation-States, where the nation-building process has not been



concluded, it is very easy for organised crime to be part of the institution-building process and become part of the institutions. And we see the results that if organised crime has penetrated or taken over the police or judiciary, intelligence or customs, it is extremely difficult to fight, because we fight the organised crime by the criminals, it is very difficult to offer cooperation with institutions, because you offer information to the targets. In most cases, if you provide information from the intelligence services to the police or the intelligence services of those countries, you know that in the next day or the next hour the information will end up in the hands of those who are the target of investigation.

It is of course a tremendous danger to democracy. It not only undermines democracy and democratic institutions, it undermines the belief of the public in democracy. It looks then like democracy equals chaos, equals crime. And therefore the nostalgia for a more stable, regulated, safe regime, even at the cost of some political concessions, can grow.

Transitional economies produce basically the labour force for organised crime. If you have tens of thousands of soldiers –trained soldiers–policemen, border guards unemployed, that of course is where organised crime can recruit everybody and everything they need. And there is no way to avoid it. In the transition, tens of thousands of policemen, soldiers and border guards *will become unemployed*.

Weak States, poor States, have serious difficulties dealing with that problem. And finally, there is the threat to the EU itself, because the more the enlargement is progressing, the more organised crime will become a part of the EU. With the first enlargement – it will already happen I can tell you unfortunately, coming from a country which will be part of the first enlargement. But the more enlargement will progress, especially if it is going fast, as we all wish, the more the Schengen regime will become irrelevant. It will be much less difficult for the criminals to commute inside Schengen and outside Schengen as State institutions which are already corrupted will then be part of it.

I think there is an absolutely new approach needed which I don't see emerging, frankly. A new approach because organised crime – especially combined with international terrorism, and sooner or later, rest assured that it will happen also in SEE – cannot be combatted with police alone. And we are of course moving against very basic principles of democracy as we knew it until now; that intelligence and army are not for internal use. But we will have to recognize and the Americans are starting to recognize and they misuse it to some extent, as will always be the case, that organised crime is not a police issue alone. Intelligence is extremely important, maybe even more important than police. Intelligence cooperation is very important. Cooperation between different agencies is very important. At some point paramilitary forces or even the military will be needed and this is extremely dangerous to democracy as we know it and to human rights as we know them. And it is very difficult to find the right balance.

We can only hope that we will be able to do it. But we can make two mistakes and *we are making two mistakes*. Human rights activists are fighting against extending the powers of intelligence services and of course State bureaucrats are fighting for extending it for different reasons and there is no real compromise between the two.

Intelligence cooperation, vertical cooperation and international cooperation will be a must. This of course challenges a lot of principles and practices we've had before; we have to give up additional parts of our sovereignty, but it is very difficult not only for political reasons; it is very difficult for newly emerged countries who have regained or gained independence ten years ago to immediately give up important parts of sovereignty. And it's the best place for nationalist forces to use against those governments.

But it is also difficult for the others, for the EU countries, the other democracies to make it a two-way street. And in most cases they keep it a one-way street; which will not work in the long run. They have good reasons to keep it a one-way street, because as I said, information flowing to the institutions of another State has a direct way to organised crime. But keeping it a one-way street will soon raise questions about

the whole process in the eyes of those who only give information and don't also receive.

It is also a threat to privacy as we knew it because if you have databases of different agencies or of different countries connected, privacy will be basically gone. It is also very difficult to fight organised crime because States do not like to admit the problem, and society even less. We saw that most societies are in a state of denial regarding concrete forms of organised crime, and this is not typical only to SEE, the new member States of the EU always take pride in the fact that they are different from the SEE; they do not have organised crime at all, and I quote you examples where organised crime has penetrated governments in those countries. Not to mention old members of the EU, where on a different scale of course you also have organised crime.

It's also difficult for those countries to detect organised crime because it is hiding in State institutions and those institutions will be the last to admit that organised crime is a problem, and they are part of the problem, not part of the solution. And as soon as State institutions are dominated by criminals, the fight against them will be difficult for very understandable reasons.

There is also a huge contradiction between the legal situation and the reality on the ground. Most of these countries are hastily introducing legislation which is in accordance or even better than the EU, but if you look at the reality on the ground, the implementation of those laws and regulations. There little has changed. There is a culture in those countries of not implementing laws, which comes from history, which comes from the Ottoman Empire, which comes from the Communist Empire where you said one thing and did another. This is not seen as something bad, this is normal, this is part of life. And in many countries, you see beautiful legislation, and terrible implementation. With all the problems mentioned before, implementation will be extremely difficult, and I think the EU is making a huge mistake by looking only at legislation and not implementation when deciding about cooperation, about enlargement and other such things.

Last but not least: corruption. Corruption is the door opener to organised crime, because once you have corrupted a politician, there is no way he or she can fight against organised crime; basically this is the way to receive political support and nobody can deny that corruption has penetrated very high in the political life of these countries. And so it is very difficult to fight.

When I don't know the answers to all my questions, I always quote Albert Einstein who said that "the right question is already 50% of the answer" so I can take pride that I gave you 50% of the answer, and the other 50% should come from the rest of the world.

But that is not enough: we should find *some* answers. And I think the only answer is finding a much more coherent, much more rigid approach of the EU not only inside, but also with regards to the countries concerned. It is in the interest of the rest of those countries. It might delay their accession to the EU by a few years, but I think it will do much more good than harm to them if it's done very coherently.

Institution-building should be the focus of cooperation. And institution-building in very strict terms; controlling if and how much these institutions are penetrated by criminals. It can be done. In most cases countries know this; intelligence services from the outside basically know that too, but out of politeness and out of misinterpretation of equality, they do not tell it, or tell it in such a way that there are no consequences.

The other side of the coin is that we shouldn't try to build many Netherlands in Bosnia and we shouldn't try to build a mini EU in SEE. These countries have a very special histories, very special cultures which are to some extent different from the rest of Europe, and this must be taken into account. I am not suggesting that low levels of salaries are a justification for corruption, but we have to understand that as long as policemen cannot live on their salary, he or she will always be more vulnerable to corruption and to supporting organised crime. And as long as politicians and ministers in these countries make 300 Euros a month, they will always be more vulnerable to corruption than those who make a little bit more. Transparency is also very important, which is not in the

traditions of these countries. I am not suggesting that increasing the salaries of policemen from 50 Euros to 500 Euros will immediately solve the problem, but this and salaries, very strong institutions, sincere cooperation from the outside, more transparency and conditionality not in terms of what we had before which are conditions which are impossible to meet and easily forgotten –this is what the EU used to do– but real conditions for help and then delivering the help once the conditions are met. I think that the combination of all this in a long term strategy is what could be very helpful to these countries and to Western Europe as well, because if we don't win the war in SEE we will lose the war at home.

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