

RESPECTED MINISTERS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ALLOW ME TO GREET YOU ON THE BEHALF OF THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, WHO WAS NOT ABLE TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE OUT OF OBJECTIVE REASONS AND IN THE SAME TIME TO THANK YOU FOR THE INVITATION.

IT IS A TRUE PLEASURE TO BE PRESENT AT THIS IMPORTANT CONFERENCE DISCUSSING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME. THESE ARE CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TO WHICH NOT ONLY THE BALKAN, BUT ALSO THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND THE WORLD IN GENERAL ARE FACED WITH. THERE IS NO SOCIETY LEFT OUT WITHOUT BEING ATTACKED FROM THE MOST LINGERING FORM OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY – THE ORGANIZED CRIME.

THIS CONFERENCE IS ONE OF THE INITIATIVES IN THIS AREA DEMONSTRATING OPENNESS AND READINESS TO SET UP FRAMEWORK AND SETTING UP OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND CONCEPTS AT REGIONAL LEVEL FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THIS TRANSNATIONAL PHENOMENON, BEING A GLOBAL THREAT. THIS IN FACT IS A PRESUMPTION FOR EFFICIENT FIGHT.

I WILL NOT TALK ABOUT THE ETHNOLOGICAL ASPECT AND THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA DUE TO THE MERE FACT THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES INFLUENCING ALL COUNTRIES FROM THE REGION ARE THE SAME OR SIMILAR.

I WILL HOWEVER, EMPHASIZE THE STRONG POLITICAL WILL IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA AND THE PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR THE NEED OF INTENSIVE AND CONTINUOUS FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME AS RESPONSE TO ITS PERMANENCE, CHANGEABILITY AND UNPREDICTABILITY. IN THIS CONTEXT, I WILL HIGHLIGHT THE EFFORTS WE UNDERTAKE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS IN DEVELOPING EFFICIENT LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND SETTING UP SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS TO FIGHT THIS TYPE OF CRIME.

BEING AWARE THAT THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE ORGANIZED CRIME, WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT AND EVALUATING ITS FUTURE TRENDS, IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA AND IN THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, THERE ARE INTENSIVE PROCESSES UNDERWAY TO STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED UNITS, BY WAY OF DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING METHODOLOGIES OF WORK, STANDARDS AND CONTINUOUS TRAINING.

IN VIEW OF THIS, I WOULD SPECIFICALLY EMPHASIZE THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND BEST EUROPEAN PRACTICES IN THIS AREA, THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA INTRODUCED AND ALREADY APPLIES NEW METHODOLOGIES OF WORK BASED ON: 1. GATHERING CRIMINAL-INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION ON ORGANIZED CRIME USING THE CRIMINAL-INTELLIGENCE PROCESS; 2. CONDUCTING PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS; AND 3. LEGITIMATE USE OF THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE MEASURES.

SUCH SYSTEMATIC APPROACH BRINGS RESULTS ALREADY SEEN IN THE EFFICIENT BREAKING UP OF CRIMINAL GROUPS OF INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER, BUT IT IS ALSO A GUARANTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

THE BASIS OF THESE PROCESSES IS THE AWARENESS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION AND THEIR EXCHANGE AT NATIONAL REGIONAL AND WIDER, INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, AS WELL AS THE NEED OF INTER-INSTITUTIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL APPROACH IN INITIATING AND CONDUCTING INVESTIGATIONS ON ORGANIZED CRIME. THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA ACCOMPLISHED A LOT IN THIS AREA IN NATIONAL FRAMEWORK, BUT ALSO AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL BY ITS ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN ALL REGIONAL AND EUROPEAN INITIATIVES.

AT NATIONAL LEVEL, GUIDED BY THE NEED OF INTEGRATING THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME AND FOR EFFICIENT AND TIMELY EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS, I WOULD LIKE TO INFORM YOU THAT A PROJECT IS UNDERWAY TO SET UP A NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DATABASE AND TO ONCE AGAIN EXPRESS OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR ANOTHER LAYER OF STRENGTH IN THE NATIONAL CAPACITIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME.

THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DATA BASE AND THE INFORMATION-TECHNICAL CONNECTION OF ALL INSTITUTIONS COMPETENT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME, CORRUPTION AND OTHER FORMS OF CRIME, WE WILL ACHIEVE: STANDARDIZED MANNER OF GATHERING INFORMATION AND DATA, ACCORDING TO EUROPEAN STANDARDS, AS WELL AS ENABLING ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION BY USE OF CONTEMPORARY ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES AND DEVELOPING ANALYTICAL PRODUCTS ON THE TRENDS IN THE ORGANIZED CRIME AND IDENTIFIED CRIMINAL GROUPS.

AS FOR THE STATE OF PLAY AT REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PLAN, THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND IN THE CONDUCT OF INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS ON ORGANIZED CRIME WITH ITS OWN INITIATIVES, AND ALSO PARTICIPATING IN INITIATIVES OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE PROCESS, THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, THIS YEAR TOOK PART IN REALIZATION OF 7 INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INVESTIGATIONS ON ORGANIZED CRIME, BREAKING DOWN 4 CRIMINAL GROUPS DEALING WITH TRAFFICKING IN DRUGS, 2 GROUPS FOR SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS AND ONE CRIMINAL GROUP IN THE AREA OF COMPUTER CRIME.

AT THE END, I WOULD LIKE TO UNDERLINE THAT WE STILL HAVE A LOT TO WORK ON INTENSIFICATION AND ON THE QUALITY OF THE COOPERATION IN EXCHANGING INFORMATION AND CONDUCTING INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS. THIS WILL NOT BE ACHIEVED, UNLESS SUPPORTED BY IMPLEMENTING SAME METHODOLOGIES AND STANDARDS FOR INVESTIGATING ORGANIZED CRIME.

I AM CONVINCED THAT IN NEAR FUTURE WE WILL JOINTLY BUILD GENUINE CAPACITIES TO DEVELOP QUALITATIVE AND COMMON EVALUATIONS OF THE ORGANIZED CRIME THREATS AT REGIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF ORGANIZED CRIME – ITS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS, AND USING THIS UNDERSTANDING TO BE IN A POSITION TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT QUALITY STRATEGIES FOR CONTROL OF ORGANIZED CRIME. THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA WILL ENDURE ON THIS PATH.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.