

Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE)



Caserta (Italy) 8-10 September 2000

“Protecting society from organised crime”

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First Pan-European Conference for Public Prosecutors specialising in cases relating to organised crime organised by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the National Antimafia Directorate and the 2nd University of Naples

Conclusions

The first Pan-European Conference for Public Prosecutors specialising in cases relating to organised crime met at Caserta (Italy) from 8 to 10 September 2000.

It was attended by Prosecutors from Albania, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

It was organised by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the Italian National Antimafia Directorate and the Second University of Naples.

The President of the Republic of Malta, Mr Guido De Marco, honoured the Conference with his presence and presented a keynote address on “Organised crime and Human Rights”.

The Italian Minister of the Interior, Mr Enzo Bianco, and his colleague the Secretary of State for Justice, Mr Franco Corleone, also honoured the Conference with their presence.

Mr Guy De Vel, Director General of Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe, presented an opening address.

Mr Piero Luigi Vigna, Director of the National Antimafia Directorate, presented a report on “Transnational crime and judicial co-operation”.

Mr Lajos Korona, Public Prosecutor, Hungary, presented a report on “The role of Public Prosecutors in the fight against money laundering”.

Mr Enrico Fontana, Journalist, Director of Legambiente’s Environmental and Law Observatory, presented a report on “Ecomafia: environmental damage caused by organised crime”.

Mrs Gisèle Vernimmen, for the European Commission, and Mr Hans Nilsson, for the Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union, presented the views and the work of their respective institutions in the fields covered by the Conference.

Mr Giovanni Verde, Deputy Chairman of the Service Commission for the Judiciary of Italy, presented a consolidated report at the end of the Conference.

The Conference expressed its appreciation at the excellent hospitality offered by the Italian authorities.

The Conference:

- recalled and supported the conclusions of the Pan-European Conference “What Public Prosecution in Europe in the XX¹st Century” organised by the Council of Europe at Strasbourg from 22 to 24 May 2000, in particular the part concerning international co-operation;
- recognised that the fight against organised crime requires international co-operation at pan-European level;
- acknowledged that international legal co-operation in criminal matters is carried out, in a formal way, under legally binding instruments and took note of efforts being undertaken at different levels in Europe in order to improve the effectiveness of such instruments, in particular the all-embracing reflection exercise that the Council of Europe plans to carry out in order to shed new light on the sense and the purpose of international legal co-operation in criminal matters in Europe;
- highlighted the role that Public Prosecutors have in international co-operation;
- considered that closer personal contacts between Public Prosecutors in different countries efficiently contributes to improving international co-operation;
- and consequently considered that Public Prosecutors from all European States, in particular Public Prosecutors specialising in cases involving organised crime, should meet regularly, at high level;
- called upon the Council of Europe to organise such meetings;
- took note with appreciation of the fact that plans already existed to organise another such meeting at Bucarest in May 2001;
- underlined that there was a further need to organise contacts and exchanges of information between Public Prosecutors, in a more structured way, and to that end
- called on the Council of Europe to set up a Liaison Group, made up of a small number of Public Prosecutors, informally to organise contacts and exchanges of information between Public Prosecutors in general, supplementing existing arrangements, and, in particular, between Public Prosecutors specialising in cases involving organised crime;
- considered that contacts should be established between the Council of Europe’s Liaison Group and EUROJUST, when the latter becomes operational;
- furthermore, deemed that the fight against organised crime also required that each European State organised a central data bank where information supported by evidence obtained in the course of criminal, administrative or other legally based proceedings would be gathered;
- held the view that the Liaison Group of Public Prosecutors should inter alia be active in ensuring that information kept in such central data banks (or/and in other data banks of the same nature) could serve all Council of Europe member States in their common purpose of fighting against organised crime all over Europe;
- recognised that the safeguard of individual rights, in particular rules on data protection, rightly impose limitations on international exchanges of information and thus called on the Council of Europe to set up a committee of experts to study such questions and make recommendations;
- expressed its support to the Council of Europe activities relating to international legal co-operation in criminal matters in general, as well as the activities relating to organised crime, corruption and crime in cyber-space;
- realized the growing incidence of environment-related criminality within organised crime in general and thus called for speedy action leading to the ratification by as many States as possible of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law.

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