

WELCOME SPEECH OF THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

First of all, I would like to greet Mr Mato Palić, Envoy of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Mr Dražen Bošnjaković, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Croatia, Mr Dražen Tripalo, Judge of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Croatia, Professor Igor Gliha, Dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of Zagreb, Professor Zlata Đurđević, President of the Croatian Association of Criminal Sciences and Practice, as well as all colleagues here present.

I would like to thank the organisers for inviting me to briefly address the audience at the opening of this Conference, for allowing the representatives of the Office of the State Attorney General to participate as presenters, and, most importantly for the State Attorney organisation, for providing the opportunity for a large number of state attorneys to take part in the work of the conference, because its content and what will be discussed here is of utmost importance for our future work.

According to the Programme of this Conference, what will be discussed over these two days strongly suggests that the opportunities provided by the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, in spite of the obvious challenges that need to be resolved in the best possible manner before it begins to operate, will be worth the invested effort.

In order to overcome these challenges, we primarily need motivated prosecutors, both in Luxembourg and in Croatia, as well as in all other participating Member States. These prosecutors must breathe life into this new supranational prosecution institution. However, we also need the motivation of colleagues who are prosecutors and investigators in those Members States that are not participating in the EPPO, because, whether they participate or not, they will also bear part of the burden of responsibility for the efficient prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against the Union's financial interests, as a common, all-encompassing EU interest.

As a decision-making authority creating positive criminal prosecution practice in these types of criminal cases, the EPPO should build a new layer of connection, uniformity and independence among prosecutors, which will rise above the limitations and obstacles in any single national prosecution system.

However, all other parties involved in the criminal prosecution of these types of crimes, and I am thinking first of all of our colleagues in the role of judges and defence attorneys, who, by processing or representing the injured party, and regardless of the fact that they will proceed according to domestic rules of

criminal procedure, must be aware that never before have they been involved in the more direct application and creation of legal standards that are valid in the EU as a single area of justice and freedom.

There is a big chance that, after the Office affirms itself as an efficient organisation in the fight against crimes that affect the Union's financial interests, and proves itself in its first successfully completed cases, the time will come for its competence to be extended to other types of transnational crimes which threaten the vital interests of the EU, such as terrorism.¹

I wish you successful and fruitful work, which I hope will result in new ideas about how to incorporate the work of the European Public Prosecutor's Office into the Croatian system of criminal law, given that, with the exception of the election of the European prosecutor from Croatia, our task has only just begun.

Dražen Jelenić
State Attorney General of the Republic of Croatia

¹ Article 86 paragraph 4 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union lays down the possibility for the European Council to adopt a decision amending paragraph 1 of this Treaty Article in order to extend the powers of the European Public Prosecutor's Office to include serious crimes having a cross-border dimension.