



Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues and Friends,



In my capacity as Chair of the European Partners Against Corruption (EPAC) I would like to express my sincere appreciation regarding Croatia's efforts to organize the 5th Regional Central European Forum of the Internal Protection Services.

As EPAC has been supportive of this initiative right from its beginning in Budapest in 2005, we are pleased to continue backing this special regional platform for cooperation.

Fighting corruption has become more urgent than ever. As our knowledge of the phenomenon grows, we realize the dimension of the harm it causes. Corruption undermines democratic institutions and the rule of law, impoverishes the national as well as the global economy, and facilitates and promotes the development of other threats to human security, such as organized crime and terrorism.

This year's forum, themed "The Importance of Complaints in the Protection of Human Rights and Suppression of Corruption", emphasizes the necessity to improve and develop collaboration, consider best practices, and promote and use trans-national legislative solutions and legal instruments. Furthermore, the forum offers a platform for the exchange of experience of operational units, especially within the special regional context of the initiative. Methods of receiving and recording complaints of illegal and unprofessional conduct of public officers as well as their role in the development of democratic standards and the protection of human rights shall be discussed with a focus on operational needs.

The organization of this forum contributes to the sustainability in the international fight against corruption and any kind of abuse of power and seeks to find "tailor-made" solutions for a region with particular common interests.

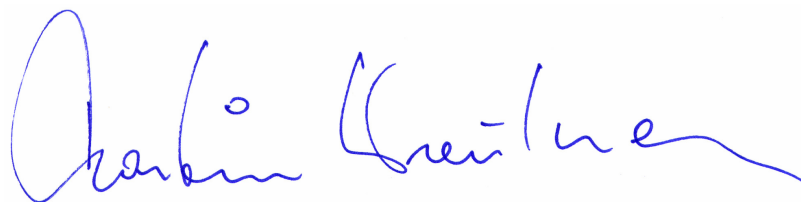
The key to success for joint action within Europe and beyond is to look for common grounds and interests at all levels and to act in a concerted and synergetic manner. Therefore,

regional initiatives in the wider framework of EPAC, such as the Regional Central European Forum of the Internal Protection Services, are of great significance in order to identify and respond to specific regional problems and needs.

Recalling the positive development of cooperation in recent years, it is a great pleasure for me to support the proactive endeavours made by Croatia in a truly European spirit.

We, thus, are looking forward to continuing our important mutual assistance in the fight against and the prevention of corruption. For corruption hits – all of us.

I wish both the Forum as well as all its distinguished participants all the best and a convention of resounding success.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Martin Kreutner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail.

Martin Kreutner
EPAC Chair