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Report on the 16th European Regional Conference of the International Association of Prosecutors

“New Investigative Approaches to Tackle Criminal Organizations using the Internet”
held on 22 – 24 May 2017, in Tirana, Albania.

By Gentjana Kalia

The General Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Albania hosted the 16th European Regional Conference of the International Association of Prosecutors to learn and exchange experiences in the area of investigation and prosecution of internet based organized ***“New investigative Approaches to Tackle Criminal Organizations using the Internet”***, May 22-24, 2017, in Tirana, Albania. This was the first IAP conference in Albania and provided the opportunity for prosecutors across Europe and around the world to be informed on new investigative measure in investigating and prosecuting internet based organized crime, to exchange best practices, and to build strong professional partnerships for further the international cooperation between our agencies.

The conference met its goals and was a success; both for the General Prosecutor’s Office and for the International Association of Prosecutors. More than 100 participants from 15 different countries, representing Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Ireland, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Slovenia, Sweden, Scotland, Austria, Hungary, The Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo and of course Albania. The conference was also a great opportunity for the fifty prosecutors from district prosecution offices in Albania, who were also invited to participate in the conference.

The topic of the conference reflects one of the most significant challenges facing prosecution services and the many engaging sessions went far to address these challenges. 13 speakers from nine different countries contributed with unique perspectives to the issues, ranging from ransomware, investigation techniques through internet sources, including dark web sources and how to investigate e-currencies. Two sessions dived into the technicalities of digital evidence and using web-based technologies for mutual legal assistance, and one session discussed important challenges around cross-agency collaboration into internet-based crime.

It was a clear outcome of the conference that technological developments require prosecution services to adapt in fundamental ways, from standard knowledge and expert education to international crossborder networks and collaboration with private tech-companies. Although the challenges we face in the global community in this age of technology are real and significant, they are not insurmountable, and that being a part of this global network gives us

significant leverage and comfort that with effective networking and collaboration among each other we can make significant strides in the fight against cybercrime and other transnational crimes.

During the stay in Albania the participants were exposed to a unique mix of social programs. Following the first day's welcome reception at the 23rd floor of the Hotel Plaza Tirana overlooking the City Center, the second day took the participants to Kruja City for a visit to the Skanderbeg's Museum, enjoying the Albanian hospitality and friendship through a cultural presentation of songs with live music and a folk concert from the Opera and Ballet Theatre in Tirana representing the Albanian tradition. At the Conference Dinner the participants tasted the traditional Albanian food in very warm atmosphere.

In concluding the Conference was, indeed, a successful event and this is emphasized by the participants sending their very positive appreciations and thanks to the General Prosecutor's Office of Albania.

With love from Tirana!