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## **HOW CROATIA IS FIGHTING WITH CORRUPTION AND ORGANIZED CRIME?**

Many factors contribute to crimes, including need or want for money, feelings of anger, envy or vengeance. the decay of family values. and the desire for control. In some cases. people commit crimes for self-serving reasons. At other times. crimes are committed to do harm to others. That is why fighting with corruption and organized crime is a question which is still being urgent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Every country all over the world is trying to find its proper and effective means of prevention.

Nowadays. Croatia is a quiet and peaceful European country with a very low crime rate. as well as property theft is surprisingly rare. But it does not mean that corruption and crime are absent there. Of course. it exists; furthermore there is an effective way of fighting. In 1991. Croatia's independence war and post-communist transition opened new opportunities for high-level defence against crimes [1].

USKOK (Croatian: Ured za suzbijanje korupcije i organiziranog kriminaliteta. English: Croatian State Prosecutor's Office for the Suppression of Organized Crime and Corruption) is a special body within the Public Prosecutor's Office with a mandate to direct police investigations and conduct prosecutions in corruption and organized crime cases. USKOK was formed in December 2001 and its headquarters are located in Zagreb. The bureau's name is a bacronym from "uskok". a term used for a type of Croatian militia men. who had fought against the Ottoman Empire between the early 16th and 17th century [2].

The criminal offences under the USKOK's jurisdiction are strictly enumerated by the Law. The USKOK has intelligence. investigative. prosecutorial and preventive functions and is

responsible for international cooperation and exchange of information in complex investigations. The formal structure and competencies of the USKOK were designed in a way to make this institution the leading state authority in the prevention and repression of corruption in Croatia [3].

The USKOK's investigative powers have been strengthened since its establishment. In this view, it should also be noted that the USKOK is a prosecution body that doesn't employ its own investigators or police officers, but directs and supervises criminal investigations conducted by regular criminal police officers.

During last ten years USKOK has been successfully pursuing more than two thousands defendants and as a conclusion it has reached 95% of conviction for those crimes. One of the most sensational and great victory of Croatian's USKOK was the case against their Prime Minister Ivo Sanader. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison on corruption crime charges, including taking bribes from two foreign companies, becoming the most senior official in the former Yugoslavia to face jail time for graft. He wasn't overthrown by popular uprising or political witch-hunting, contrary, he was prosecuted in court by his own government, represented by USKOK [4].

Another huge case with code-name "Maestro" in which officers of USKOK have been envisaging bribery in Croatian privatization fund.

According to the head of the investigation, Cvitan: "Nothing left the room, no papers or thumb drives. We worked 14- to 15-hour days. We had wild mood swings, from euphoria to depression [5]." Consequently, the vice president of the privatization office was sentenced to 11 years in prison, an unprecedented corruption sentence. From then on, things weren't the same at USKOK, it sets the highest possible standard.

So what contributed to USKOK's string of high-profile successes?

Firstly, with foreign training, prosecutors had become skilled at asset tracking and special surveillance methods and were cooperating better with police counterparts. Secondly, USKOK recruited talented and trusted prosecutors from a range of backgrounds. Thirdly, it built strong relations with other public agencies, the media, civil society, and international community. USKOK's board honed in on its core functions of investigation and

prosecution. Moreover, professionalism, effectiveness, and - true to its namesake folk heroes - patriotism became three main qualities of this agency.

During the research, we find out that this USKOK's experience is very useful for us and for National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine. And the most important thing is that our officials shouldn't be afraid of powerful persons in Ukrainian society. We ought to retain strength even after charge top-end policies. So, political will should be the key for making Ukrainian's reforms possible.

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