

National Strategy for Combating Organized Crime

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Introduction

Organized crime, considering its scale and influence, has become a real threat to the humanity. Fight against organized crime is essential in the modern world as it undermines the fundamental values of the society. Potential offenders are attracted to organized crime areas quickly and easily. Particularly, members of the society who are in difficult social conditions may become involved in this crime to gain material benefits.

One of the main priorities of the Georgian government is to fight against organized crime and all its manifestations. Serious progress regarding the fight against organized crime has been achieved in Georgia. Legislative amendments such as “The Law on Organized Crime and Racketeering”, the new Criminal Procedure Code, amendments to the Criminal Code and other legislative acts represent the effective legal basis for preventing and combating organized crime. Georgia is a Party to the UN Convention on the Transnational Organized Crime (“Palermo” Convention) and its two additional protocols. Certain amendments have been made in the national legislation in accordance with these international legal instruments.

In order to maintain and improve the results already achieved in the fight against organized crime, to enhance the existing mechanisms thereof, and in consideration of international recommendations, the decision has been made to elaborate the National Strategy for Combating Organized Crime.

The objective of this document is to promote the prevention of organized crime and increase the effectiveness in the fight against it.

National Strategy for Combating Organized Crime is an updateable document which can lead to effecting appropriate changes on the basis of experience deriving from its implementation. On the basis of the present strategy, the Interagency Coordinating Council for Combating Organized Crime will elaborate and adopt the action plan reflecting main directions, goals, objectives, activities, indicators, expected results, responsible agencies, timelines, and necessary financial resources in the fight against organized crime. Respective agencies shall allocate contact persons, who will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of obligations assumed by those agencies.

Organized crime forms, such as corruption, drug trafficking, human trafficking, are subject to separate strategies or, in some cases, action plans which elaborate on respective matters at some length.

Therefore, this Strategy refers to the fight against “community of thieves in law” and other organized criminal groups, detection of stolen vehicles and the fight against cybercrime, the current situation and challenges, as well as goals, objectives and measures to be implemented in each of these fields.

1. Main Directions for Combating Organized Crime

1.1. Combating “Community of Thieves in Law” and Other Organized Criminal Groups

Organized crime has various manifestations including but not limited to illicit trade in drugs, firearms, explosives, and antiques, smuggling, human trafficking, fraud, kidnapping, etc. with the purpose to gain material profit. Organized criminal groups are also involved in corruption and in money laundering.

One of the types of organized criminal groups is the “community of thieves in law”, which contains various criminal activities. For achieving its ends, the latter resorts to such measures as threat, intimidation, coercion, involvement of juveniles in criminal activities, etc. Also, one of the manifestations of organized crime is racketeering, which is often regarded as one of the main activities of the “community of thieves in law”.

Notable success has been achieved in combating the “community of thieves in law”. The Georgian government has implemented number of measures in combating organized crime, including the “community of thieves in law”. The law on “Organized Crime and Racketeering” was adopted, the Criminal Code of Georgia was amended. The aim of the abovementioned is to fight the “community of thieves in law”, its members and racketeering. It foresees criminal liability for “thieves in law” and racketeering, as well as for the membership in the “community of thieves in law” and racketeer groups. The Criminal Code of Georgia provides for the seizure of the criminally obtained and/or illegal property. Besides, the Law on “Organized Crime and Racketeering” defines the notion of the property of the member of the “community of thieves in law” and property obtained from racketeering activities. According to this law, the above mentioned property is subject to seizure and transfer to the lawful owner. If the lawful owner is undetermined, property will be transferred to the state. Significant amendments have also been made to the Civil Procedure Code, which sets out the procedures of transferring property of racketeers and “thieves in law”, as well as other criminally obtained and/or illegal property to the state.

Legislative changes have also been made to protect from criminal offenders organized crime victims, witnesses, other persons participating in court proceedings and their family members.

Georgian law on “Operative - Investigative Activities”, which provides for the possibility of gathering overtly or covertly criminal intelligence information, conducting visual control,

personal identification and other forms of operative-search measures is also important in terms of combating organized crime. Following the implementation these legislative amendments, “thieves in law” and other criminal “authorities” - found culpable for committing different serious crimes – were arrested. Due to the mentioned tendency, the great bulk of criminals left the country.

In the context of different preventive measures adopted within the Georgian penitentiary system, first of all, the fact has to be mentioned that “thieves in law” are isolated from other prisoners, the members of the “community of thieves in law” are subjected to the permanent operative observation in a manner prescribed by the law. With the purpose of prevention, the chain of their criminal connections is being intensively investigated. Georgia’s law enforcement agencies are actively cooperating with the relevant authorities of foreign countries in fighting “the community of thieves in law” and organized crime in general.

As an outcome of those changes, tangible results have been achieved in the fight against organized crime. Though this is only the beginning and it is necessary to maintain and further improve these results.

Challenges

Georgia’s geographic location and the existence of occupied territories are attractive factors to transnational organized criminal groups. In addition to that, high unemployment rate and unfavorable social conditions may also facilitate organized crime.

There is also an attempt to restore the influence of “community of thieves in law” from outside the country. Georgian “community of thieves in law” groups are considered to be one of the most powerful criminal syndicates in the Russian Federation and in other countries, the factor which may influence existing criminal and political situation in Georgia.

One of the facilitating factors of organized crime is the lack of public awareness. “Community of thieves in law” continues to be popular in some society circles. In this regard, most vulnerable groups of the society are juveniles and people in difficult social conditions, who are easily subjected to the influence of criminal “authorities” and the criminal world in general. Therefore, one of the most important objectives of the state is to raise public awareness on these issues.

After the successful defeat of a large part of the “community of thieves in law”, criminals stay in the penitentiary system, however, their views and attitude towards “community of thieves in law” remain unchanged and they try to keep criminal traditions and control criminal world from prison. Therefore, it is important, within the penitentiary system, to maintain control over the situation therein. It is of overwhelming importance that criminals are not given

the possibility to control the criminal world from the prison. For this purpose, the control over the communication between the prisoners and the outer world is decisive. Namely, preventing and suppressing the penetration of prohibited items, including mobile phones, in prisons is of the utmost importance. Members of the “community of thieves in law” and various organized criminal groups benefit from existence of prohibited items in penitentiary for committing criminal acts. In addition, prohibited items in prisons increase the risk of corruption.

For effective fight against organized crime capacity building and coordinated work of relevant institutions are essential.

Goals

- **Increasing the Public Awareness**

- **Informing the Public**

Preventing and combating organized crime is effective only when the public, together with the law enforcement agencies, is involved in a respective process as well. It is necessary that relevant agencies, within their competence, carry out necessary programs and information campaigns for raising public awareness about the dangers of and issues concerning the fight against organized crime. Informing the public about the progress achieved in the fight against organized crime is also important.

- **Training Teachers and School Resource Officers**

In order to prevent crime at schools and to raise the awareness of juveniles on the matters of justice, the trainings shall be conducted for teachers and school resource officers.

- **Raising Civic and Legal Awareness of Schoolchildren**

It is necessary that teaching of subjects “Civil Education” and “Legal Culture” continues at public schools, which address the issues about the dangers of organized crime.

It is necessary to hold information meetings at public schools with the representatives of law enforcement agencies and/or other competent persons on the dangers of, and issues concerning the fight against organized crime, as well as various legal topics.

Information visits of schoolchildren to the law enforcement agencies are also important, during which their work with regard to combating organized crime will be presented.

- **Psycho-Social Rehabilitation of at-risk Juveniles**

Within the framework of the school resource officers service, psychological centers are established and undergoing the process of improvement. The centers offer qualified psycho-social service to the risk groups of the age 6-18, juveniles with emotional and behavioral problems and their families. It is highly recommended to establish similar additional centers.

• **Preventing the Involvement of Risk Groups in Organized Crime**

- **Informing Socially Vulnerable Groups, Petty Crime Offenders and Probationers with the Purpose of Preventing their Involvement in Organized Crime**

Informing of risk groups, including socially vulnerable groups about the threats and consequences connected with organized crime is of the utmost importance. Also, raising the consciousness of petty crime offenders and probationers is necessary in order to avoid their criminal career.

• **Enhancing Psycho-social Service and Psycho-social Rehabilitation of Convicts in the Penitentiary System**

- **Enhancing the Psychologist Service in the Penitentiary System**

For the full socialization/rehabilitation and integration into the society of the convicts after release, the development and improvement of the psychologist service within the penitentiary institutions is necessary.

- **Enhancing the Social Worker Service in the Penitentiary System**

For the effective implementation of the individual sentence planning, the maximum involvement of the social workers – as a significant part of multidisciplinary team – in convicts' needs assessment and risk identification process is necessary.

- **Expanding Spheres of Interest of Prisoners and Increasing the Degree of their Engagement**

Introduction/implementation of professional and handicraft programs is necessary in semi-open penitentiary facilities. This will contribute to expanding spheres of interest of prisoners, increase the degree of their engagement and decrease the degree of their dependence on various harmful addictions. This in turn, will contribute to avoiding their criminal career after leaving the penitentiary institutions.

- **Introducing the Individual Approaches**

Gradual introduction of individual approaches in all penitentiary institutions in relation with convicts is recommended. During this process their individual difficulties, skills and needs shall maximally be taken into account. In case of need, for the purpose of the convicts' needs assessment and psycho-social rehabilitation, it is necessary to elaborate the individual plans and involve the convicts in various programs.

• **Psycho-social Rehabilitation of Probationers within the Probation System**

- **Enhancing the Psychologist and the Social Worker Services within the Probation System**

For the purpose of reducing the number of repeat crime offenders among probationers, it is of utmost importance that National Probation Agency enhances the services of psychologist and social worker.

For the purpose of rehabilitation and re-socialization of probationers, a psychologist is engaged at the Tbilisi Probation Bureau. It is necessary to introduce psychologist services, on a gradual basis, in all regional bureaus.

With the aim of rehabilitation of juveniles, the social workers service is introduced in the Probation Agency. Training the probation officers along with social workers, for acquiring appropriate skills, is necessary.

- **Introducing the Individual Approaches**

For the purpose of psycho-social rehabilitation of probationers, elaboration of individual sentence plans and involvement of probationers in various programs are important.

- **Preventing Organized Crime in the Penitentiary Institutions**

- **Maintaining/Improving the Degree of Control on the Checkpoints of Penitentiary Institutions**

In order to prevent penetration of prohibited items (including mobile phones) and means in prisons, inspection of entrants, parcels, packages, etc. at checkpoint is of the utmost importance.

- **Permanent Observation on Members of “Community of Thieves in Law” and “Thieves in Law”**

For crime prevention purposes, it is necessary to conduct permanent observation - in accordance with law - on the activities of the members of “community of thieves in law” and “thieves in law”, in order to reveal their possible criminal connections.

- **Monitoring the Activities of Personnel at Penitentiary Institutions**

It is equally important to control the activities of personnel at penitentiary institutions in order to prevent and suppress their possible corrupt agreements with prisoners.

- **Weakening the Material and Financial Situation of Organized Criminal Groups**

- **Seizure of Criminally and/or Illegally Obtained Assets**

Financial and material resources are necessary for the development of organized criminal groups and their activities. One of the most important aspects in the fight against organized crime is seizure of criminally and/or illegally obtained assets. For this purpose it is important to detect illegally obtained assets and implement measures prescribed by the law.

- **Developing the Institutional Capacities for Combating Organized Crime**

- **Developing Professional Skills of Personnel of the Agencies Involved in the Fight Against Organized Crime**

In order to obtain the knowledge on new forms of organized crime, the innovative methods of preventing and fighting the latter (including investigation), it is necessary to train the staff of the responsible agencies (including the trainings for the staff of the penitentiary system in avoiding penetration of prohibited items in prisons).

- Upgrading Material and Technical Base of Agencies Involved in the Fight Against Organized Crime

Because of complexity of organized crime, it is necessary that the agencies involved in preventing and fighting the latter, have modern equipment and technologies at their disposal and enjoy proper working environment.

• Increasing the Awareness of Business Sector Concerning Organized Crime and the Threats Related Thereto

- Informing the Business Sector

With the purpose of informing the business sector about organized crime and the threats related with it, it is necessary to elaborate respective recommendations. Also, in case of need, conducting information meetings with business circles on the abovementioned issues is important.

• Strengthening the Fight Against Organized Crime at the State Border

For strengthening the fight against organized crime at the state border, the implementation of the activities provided for by the Action Plan of the Georgian Border Management Strategy is of the utmost importance.

1.2. Detection of Stolen Vehicles

Organized theft of vehicles represents one of the forms of organized crime. As a result of preventive measures implemented in this field vehicle theft no more represents the problem of current importance in Georgia. However, import and transit through the territory of Georgia of vehicles stolen in foreign countries is likely. Combating this type of crime requires refined data base and advanced detection methods.

Since January 2012, the FIND project has enabled Service Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to access the Interpol General Secretariat database of stolen vehicles. It enables

the Agency to check in the automatic mode the vehicles registered in Georgia, those foreseen for customs clearance and re-exportation.

Goal

- **Identification of Stolen Vehicles**

- **Expert Inspection**

With the purpose of detecting stolen vehicles, it is necessary to continue to inspect them and their accompanying documents. Equally important is examining vehicle identification data.

- **Checking Data in the Database of the Ministry of Internal Affairs**

Checking vehicles during initial registration as well as after each subsequent reregistration, on whether they are stolen, in the information database of the Ministry of Internal Affairs shall continue.

- **Checking through Interpol Information Network in the Stolen Motor Vehicle Database**

Checking the vehicles in the stolen motor vehicle database through the Interpol network has been conducted since 2012. Conducting this activity is of the utmost importance for detecting the stolen transportation means.

1.3. Combating Cybercrime

Cybercrime is a serious challenge in the 21st century and considering its scale, it requires a specific approach. The latter requires active cooperation between governmental, non-governmental and private sectors. It is important to implement correct state policy in this field, that will significantly decrease economic, political and social threats caused by cybercrime and will contribute to creating more secure environment for the development of state and society.

The development of modern technologies made doing business more efficient and accessible. It has become easier for companies to offer products and services to consumers, however, the growing dependence on cyberspace, increased the threat of cybercrime. Intellectual property and commercially sensitive information are attractive targets for organized criminal groups. Therefore, cybercrime can inflict serious damage on private business.

A Number of factors hinder timely response to cybercrime by law enforcement agencies. Cyberspace has no borders, complicating the identification and legal prosecution of offenders.

For effective fight against cybercrime, joint efforts of citizens, private and public sector, improvement of coordination mechanisms, raising awareness of the society and the private sector on the risks and threats caused therefrom are necessary.

The objective of fighting cybercrime is to promote proper functioning of the state agencies and the private sector in the cyberspace, secure the safe operation of electronic transactions and unhindered economic and business development in the country.

Since 2008, concrete steps have been made in the fight against cybercrime. “Georgian Information Security Act” entered into force in 2012. Georgia ratified the Council of Europe “Convention on Cybercrime.” Chapter XXXV of the Criminal Code has been completely modified. Procedural legislation was amended. Specific investigative actions, the definition of terms, etc. were added. Criminal liability of a legal entity for committing cybercrime has been introduced. Intellectual property article has been refined (infringement of the right of the copyright and neighboring right holder, and right of database author). Article on child pornography has been refined. Amendments were made to the laws on “Operative-Investigative Activities” and “Electronic Communications”. Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) was established and is authorized to monitor the cyberspace in order to identify and manage computer incidents. It is also authorized to determine and implement cyber security policy, as well as conduct other activities prescribed by the Georgian legislation. Fight against cybercrime is the competence of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Division of the Fight against Cybercrime, which includes international cybercrime contact point 24/7, was established within the Central Criminal Police Department.

Computer-Digital Expertise Subdivision of the Forensic-Criminalistics Main Division operates at the Ministry responsible for conducting the expertise of the digital evidence obtained from investigative activities.

Challenges

Along with the introduction of modern technologies, cyber threats and related criminal activities also increase. Cybercriminals quickly find shortcomings of new technologies and carry out their illegal exploitation. Unlike a traditional crime, cybercrime has a global character, and the victim may be anywhere on the planet. Thus, fight against cybercrime, cybercrime detection, investigation and prosecution of cybercriminals is problematic.

Cybercriminals often apply such types of criminal activities as illegal access, illegal interception, data interference, system interference, misuse of devices, computer related forgery, computer related fraud, offences related to child pornography, offences related to infringement of copyright and related rights, non-financial crimes such as threats, insults etc. Criminals also target private life of individuals.

In this regard, the need to improve the legal framework, low public awareness and lack of coordination between the public and private sectors and the need to increase the role of the government in the fight against cybercrime are still the challenges.

Goals

- **Increasing the Public Awareness**

- **Informing the Public About Cyber Threats and Damages Caused Therefrom**

Cybercriminals not only damage critical information systems, but also use cyberspace for different criminal activities. In order to enhance the effectiveness of combating cybercrime, it is necessary to conduct information campaigns (social networks, webpages of respective agencies etc.) on cyber threats and damages caused therefrom. Informing the pupils at schools by the representatives of law enforcement agencies and the Ministry of Education and Science about the abovementioned is also important. The society shall be aware on how to protect itself from the cybercrime, how to identify and respond to potential threats.

- **Refining the Legislative Framework**

- **Periodic Review of the Legislative Framework on Combating Cybercrime and Making Amendments, if Necessary**

The need for reviewing and updating the legal framework on the fight against cybercrime derives from the irreversible technological progress in the modern world. The latter increases the risk of committing unprecedented scale crimes using the cyberspace. Therefore, it is important that the legal framework is improved in accordance with technological progress, in order to ensure legal response to cybercrime. Otherwise, the situation may arise, where specific cybercrimes cannot be addressed due to legislative gaps.

It is necessary that Criminal Code is supplemented with a further classification of crimes committed in cyberspace. Also a number of procedural measures related to digital evidence shall

be incorporated into the Criminal Procedure Code. In addition, the Ministry of Internal Affairs shall elaborate internal document regulating the collection, primary treatment and further examination of digital evidence. The abovementioned will enable the determination at the legal level of the rules for collecting and processing digital evidence. This in turn will also reduce the risk of damage and/or falsification of digital evidence. It is not less important to revise the obligations of internet service providers in the legislation, to conduct analysis and initiate respective legal amendments. The above mentioned will further deepen the cooperation between internet providers and the state in combating cybercrime.

- **Strengthening the Role of the State in Combating Cybercrime**

- **Capacity-building of the Agencies involved in Combating Cybercrime**

It is necessary to further develop material and technical base of the agencies involved in the fight against cybercrime. With the purpose to improve the qualification of their personnel, conducting trainings and carrying out study visits are also important. The state should enhance the security of critical information systems, capabilities of detection of and responding to the cybercrime. It is necessary to further develop material and technical base of the Cybercrime Division at the Central Criminal Police Department. Capacity building of the Forensics Main Division in the field of digital evidence (cyber-forensics) is equally important.

- **Deepening Cooperation between Law Enforcement Agencies and the Private Sector**

- **Increasing the Awareness of the Private Sector**

The fight against cybercrime requires cooperation between law enforcement agencies and business sector. Considerable part of critical infrastructure is owned and operated by the private sector. It is necessary to inform companies on how to protect commercially sensitive information, intellectual property, consumer data, and how to respond to this type of crime. It is necessary to run business-oriented information campaigns. In case of need, conducting information meetings with the business sector representatives is also necessary.

- **Deepening the International Cooperation**

Active participation in international initiatives in the field of cyber security, the initiation of bi- and multilateral cooperation with other countries, further deepening of cooperation with respective international organizations (OECD, EU, OSCE, NATO, UN, ITU, CoE) and state agencies, are important prerequisites for combating cybercrime.

24/7 international cooperation is of the utmost importance in investigating cybercrime. All other procedures are protracted. Within this period it is possible to destroy digital evidence. 24/7 international cooperation, provided for by the Convention on Cybercrime enables to investigate the crimes committed in the cyberspace on hot trails.

2. Deepening International Cooperation in the Field of Combating Organized Crime

Taking into account Georgia's national interests, the government of Georgia considers result oriented, close cooperation with the EU and NATO as a matter of overwhelming importance.

In terms of combating organized crime, Georgia is a party to the 2000 United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention) and its two additional protocols, the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime of 2001, the Council of Europe Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and its additional protocol.

- **Enhancing Bilateral Cooperation**

Until recently the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia has signed bilateral international agreements with 20 countries in the field of fight against crime/the sphere of police activities (including combating organized crime). In the field of international cooperation, one of the main priorities for the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia is to develop and expand respective bilateral international legal base. Therefore, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has drafted a model cooperation agreement on combating crime. It has been submitted to the partner countries for consideration, including all NATO and EU member states and relevant Arab countries. Agreements have already been prepared to be signed with certain countries whereas other documents are subject to negotiations and consideration.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia deems it important to maintain, develop and

enhance existing cooperation with neighboring countries within the framework of bilateral working groups. Respective meetings are conducted annually or according to need, in order to address problematic issues within the field of combating organized crime, to exchange information and contact details.

It is also important, in terms of bilateral cooperation, to maintain, develop and enhance the cooperation within the framework of police attachés/liaison officers. Respective cooperation is quite rapid, flexible and effective in the field of combating organized crime.

• **Enhancing Multilateral Cooperation**

Ministry of Internal Affairs plans, in the future, to consider the possibility of declaring respective international legal UN and the CoE documents - regulating issues connected with organized crime - as being binding.

The Ministry, within its competence, periodically prepares the reports on the implementation of conventions in relation to which the consent of Georgia, to be bound, was established.

At the same time, it is important to regulate, on the basis of domestic legislation, the issues of international cooperation provided for by the international legal instruments. In this sense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs plans to commence the work on the preparation of amendments to the already existing legislation or the new legislative acts or/and sub-legislative normative acts in order to implement the obligations provided for by respective international legal instruments.

• **Enhancing Regional Cooperation**

Active use and development of regional cooperation mechanisms is of significant importance for the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia in the field of combating organized crime.

- **Maintaining, Expanding and Strengthening the Existing Cooperation within the GUAM Framework (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova)**

A working group on combating terrorism, organized and other serious crimes was established under July 20, 2002 agreement within the framework of GUAM. This group consists

of working subgroups on combating money laundering and corruption, trafficking in human beings and illegal migration, illicit drug circulation and terrorism. A working subgroup on combating cybercrime is in the establishing process. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is actively involved in the working process of these subgroups through the MoIA-GUAM Law Enforcement Center.

Moreover, on the basis of 2003 agreement signed in Yalta, national virtual centers are established in the law enforcement agencies in the GUAM member states. These centers are equipped with technical means that can be used for rapid exchange of operational information through secure channels. This equipment can also be used for direct communication during joint operations and for conducting joint online video conferences.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia attaches utmost importance to preserving effectiveness of existing cooperation within the framework of GUAM, to its development and enhancement.

- Maintaining and Developing the Existing Cooperation within the Framework of “BSEC” (Black Sea Economic Cooperation)

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia actively cooperates with relevant law enforcement agencies of other BSEC member states within the framework of 1998 agreement and its additional protocols, in the field of combating organized crime.

A network of liaison officers of the BSEC member states’ relevant law enforcement agencies has been established on the basis of an additional protocol of 2002 to the BSEC Agreement. This network facilitates interchange of cooperation requests and information exchange among law enforcement agencies. The Ministry of Internal Affairs actively uses the mentioned communication means for the exchange of cooperation requests and relevant information, the latter circumstance facilitating the honoring of requests in a reasonable timeframe.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia attaches utmost importance to preserving effectiveness of existing cooperation within the framework of BSEC, to its development and enhancement.

- **Maintaining and Developing the Cooperation with “SELEC” (Southeast European Law Enforcement Center)**

Currently, Georgia has the status of an observer in the SELEC, which enables the Ministry of Internal Affairs to participate in meetings, seminars and trainings organized within its framework. In the nearest future it is possible to consider a higher level of cooperation with the SELEC.

- **Deepening Cooperation with the Interpol General Secretariat**

Further deepening of cooperation with the Interpol General Secretariat is of utmost importance in order to secure the assistance and coordination in the fight against organized crime at the international level.

- **Establishing and Developing the Cooperation with "Europol" (the European Union's Law Enforcement Agency)**

Cooperation with European institutions, especially close cooperation with the European Union's law enforcement agency (Europol) is one of the top priorities in the field of international relations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. There are two main forms of cooperation with Europol: strategic and operational-level cooperation. Currently, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia is in the process of negotiations regarding the conclusion of a strategic partnership agreement with Europol, expected to be signed in the near future.

- **Maintaining and Enhancing the Close Cooperation with “CEPOL” (European Police College)**

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia has signed a cooperation agreement with the European Police College (CEPOL) in 2011. This agreement foresees exchange of experience and best practices between the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the CEPOL, cooperation in the capacity building field of police officers by organizing trainings, seminars and workshops. In the future, it is important to deepen and enhance cooperation in this field and to fully implement the mentioned agreement in terms of combating organized crime.

3. Interagency Coordination at the National Level

- **Improving Coordination and Cooperation Between Agencies Involved in Combating Organized Crime**

- **Deepening Interagency Cooperation in Combating Organized Crime**

For effectively combating organized crime it is important that law enforcement agencies exchange information and periodically conduct meetings. In case of need, for effective and timely investigation and/or suppression of organized crime it is necessary to establish joint *ad hoc* investigative groups.

- **Institutional Strengthening of the Interagency Coordinating Council for Combating Organized Crime**

Skills development of personnel of the Secretariat of the Interagency Coordinating Council for Combating Organized Crime is important. For this purpose conducting trainings and study visits, as well as cooperating with similar institutions at the international level for sharing their best practices are necessary.

- **Transparency of the Activities of the Interagency Coordinating Council for Combating Organized Crime**

It is important to upload on the Webpage of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia the protocols of the Council meetings and the information concerning the activities of the Council and to update the latter on the regular basis. Involvement of the non-governmental organizations in the Council activities is also significant. It is equally important to hold conferences on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Strategy.

4. Final Provisions

The present Strategy has been elaborated with the purpose to maintain and improve the results already achieved in the fight against organized crime, to enhance the existing mechanisms thereof, and in consideration of international recommendations. It addresses the fight against “community of thieves in law” and other organized criminal groups, detection of stolen vehicles, combating cybercrime, and deepening international cooperation in the fight against organized crime. Based on the Strategy, respective action plan shall be elaborated

reflecting main directions, goals, objectives, activities, indicators, expected results, responsible agencies, timelines, and necessary financial resources in the fight against organized crime.

Agencies provided for by the Action plan of the present Strategy shall be responsible for implementation of the Action Plan. Control over the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan shall be exercised by the Interagency Coordinating Council for Combating Organized Crime.

The responsible agencies will submit the reports on implementation of the Action Plan to the Interagency Coordinating Council.