

## **International Law Enforcement Coordination Units (ILECUs)**

### **Background**

The establishment of international law enforcement coordination units (ILECUs) is an important milestone in Austria's engagement in South Eastern Europe (SEE). In the framework of two projects — ILECUs and DET-ILECUs II — a network of eight units has been established in the region. The ILECUs operate as a hub for coordination, communication and information between various units and institutions for national and international law enforcement in SEE, making a significant contribution to their close networking. As a result, the effectiveness and efficiency of the fight against organised cross-border crime in SEE have clearly increased.

### **The current project**

However successful previous projects have been, improvements are still needed in order to counter international organised crime. The Criminal Intelligence Service Austria therefore developed the follow-up project Strengthening Legal Principles and Good Governance in SEE by Enlarging the International Law Enforcement Coordination Units (ILECUs) Network to Combat Transnational Organised Crime (ILECUs III), in order to build on the successes already achieved. The project will also help to ensure the sustainability of results by supporting the ILECUs network and the Southeast Europe Police Chiefs Association (SEPCA). The beneficiaries of this regional project are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kosovo\*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine.

The project is financed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and jointly implemented by the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria (.BK) and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (BIM). The project will maintain the ILECUs network, enlarging it to include the three additional countries (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The BIM leads project activities in the areas of human rights, victim and data protection, and professional ethics.

The overall objective of the project is the sustainable improvement of national, international and regional cooperation in the fight against transnational organised crime by strengthening the rule of law and good governance in SEE. The overall goal is to strengthen legal certainty in the target countries by the stabilisation and enlargement of the ILECUs network and the implementation of common EU standards. All activities will be supported by the implementation of the PEP (police-equal-performance) strategy, methods and instruments, with a focus on topics such as professional ethics, human rights, trafficking in human beings, cross-border information exchange, and victim and data protection.

The focus will be on:

- the geographical expansion of ILECUs to the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. On December 18, 2013 (Day of Police in Moldova), the official opening of the project took place in Chisinau, while in Georgia and Ukraine the implementation of feasibility studies for the establishment of an ILECU is under way;
- the establishment of a regional ILECU education system, whereby unique training measures will be secured for the long and medium term and continuous know-how and information exchange will take place at both strategic and operational level;

- strengthening and safeguarding the ILECU network, for example through joint initiatives with the Police Cooperation Convention for Southeast Europe (PCC SEE ) and SEPCA; and
- strengthening regional capacities and developing appropriate strategies for an autonomous network of general directors for SEE.

On the basis of the excellent cooperation between SEPCA and the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria in all ongoing projects, it can be stated that an enormous step has been taken in terms of combating organised crime and terrorism. In the scope of meetings with SEPCA national coordinators, a future task will be to define the new strategic orientation of the network in order to guarantee regional cooperation at a high strategic level.

### **Complementary project**

The project Further Development of ILECU network and Strengthening the Strategic Approach of SEPCA within SEE to Combat Transnational Crime, which is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), is closely linked to the ADA initiative and is based on an agreement between the Swiss Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria. It focuses on the organisational enlargement of the existing ILECU network and on synergies with SEPCA and PCC SEE. The objective is to improve the strategic performance of target countries, especially in the existing SEPCA network that currently operates as a non-profit organisation. The development of SEPCA and its strategic direction are of primary importance to the project: including the SEPCA network in relevant project activities ensures sustainability and supports the autonomous status of the ILECU network at the highest political level, since SEPCA is an association of directors general in the target countries.

*\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*