



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION TO THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Head of Delegation

Belgrade, 14 March 2013
VD-D (2013) 5437

Mr. Miroslav Petrović
Chairman of the Association "Right to Health"
Pravo.zdravlje@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Petrović,

Thank you for your email of 20 February 2013 which follows up on our previous correspondence on a number of issues.

In reply to your points please consider the following:

1. The competence of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) lies with *the protection of financial interests of the European Union by combating fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities*. This includes investigations into suspected misuse of EU funds in Serbia. The project mentioned by you concerns an EIB loan that has in fact been successfully implemented, with the result of 20 hospitals that have been refurbished. OLAF indeed saw no grounds to investigate this project after they analysed the information provided by you.
2. As regards our project with the Ministry of Health namely "Implementation of the National screening programme for colorectal, cervical and breast cancer", this assistance is provided to the Serbian authorities to train and equip their staff and help organise an office to manage cancer screenings in the coming years. The first tenders for equipment from IPA funds were concluded in February 2011 to set up a mechanism for cancer screening and the project is ongoing. During this time, we have already procured and distributed equipment for over 3.5 million Euros (15 analogous and 6 digital mammography machines and 28 mammography working stations, 18 colonoscopy video systems, adding on to the existing 31 Serbia had until this time) and are expecting to still equip 15 laboratories for cervical cancer screening in the next year. The technical assistance project supported the creation of the National Cancer Screening Office in the National Institute of Public Health and has trained over 400 physicians and technicians in the techniques of screening for breast, colon and cervical cancer. The project is therefore well under way to achieve important results even if it remains to be completed. The information we have is that it took much more than 6 months to set up such a programme in Slovenia.
3. I have already replied to your letter regarding the engagement of experts in our project implemented by UNOPS to introduce an information system linked to the Ministry of Health in 19 large Serbian hospitals. We have not identified a conflict of interest in the recruitment of the Project Leader and you have not provided further evidence to substantiate your claim of conflict of interest.

4. Similarly, we replied to your letter concerning the confiscated assets project clarifying that the tender was carried out in a transparent manner and in line with personal data protection requirements. We would ask you to substantiate your accusations on this tender concerning both its fair competition and safety standards. Please make reference to our letters no. 04820 of 29 November 2012 and no. 02549 of 28 May 2012. With regard to the IPA 2007 project "Support to the Establishment of the Ombudsman Office", the twinning contract and all tendered supply lots were duly delivered and results achieved and we have contributed to the functioning of the Ombudsman office in Serbia.
5. The EU Delegation is not responsible for public statements made by Serbian officials and the EU has no role in the formal approval and adoption process of laws in Serbia. We would ask you to specify why you assume that these laws stimulate corruption or infringe on basic rights.

We have forwarded all the correspondence with you to the relevant institutions in the EU. Should you be aware of any irregularities or fraud concerning EU funds, we would welcome it if you could submit evidence of these to us or directly to the European Anti-fraud office (OLAF).


Vincent DEGERT

Cc: M. Ferran, A. Martins, M. Kern, R. Henoumont, S. Hudolin, A. Beikos (EIB), OLAF