



**Skopje, 10 September 2019**

**CLOSING CEREMONY**

**Twinning project**

**“Further improvement of administrative capacities and external audit efficiency of the State Audit Office”**

**MK 13 IPA FI 01 17 R**

**Welcome address**

**Tzvetan Tzvetkov, President BNAO**

YOUR EXCELLENCES,

DEAR MR. JANMAAT,

DEAR AUDITOR GENERAL (MR. KLESIC), DEPUTY AUDITOR  
GENERAL (MR. ADEMI)

DEAR MINISTERS,

DEAR COLLEAGUES AND GUESTS,

Today we are gathered at the end of our exciting and enriching journey. The goal of the journey was to improve the administrative and external audit capacity of the State Audit Office of North Macedonia.

During this journey we were joined by our respected colleagues from our partner Croatia, as well as from Germany, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, Portugal and the European Court of Auditors. As a result this Twinning project became a truly European project. All of our partners were actively involved in sharing their knowledge and professional skills, and participated in interactive trainings, seminars, workshops and pilot audits.

The input and the contributions of all Member States (MS) experts who participated in the project have been highly appreciated and warmly received. All activities were carefully planned and SAO management and auditors showed professionalism and commitment to the achievement the goals of each activity. MS experts have found their participation in the project as both personally and professionally rewarding.

In addition, study visits and internships were held in order SAO auditors and Members of Parliament to get acquainted on the spot with best European practices in external audit and parliamentary oversight.

I am delighted to share with you today that significant and sustainable progress regarding all set goals under the 4 project components has been achieved.

I strongly believe that the results achieved under the project have contributed positively to the improvement of the overall performance of the SAO. This will support the modernisation of the public administration in the country in order to provide citizen-oriented and highly professional services.

I would like to mention 3 important /the main achievements of the project: improved audit methodology, more effective cooperation with Parliament and better transparency in SAO audit activities. These achievements will be the fundamental for further goal setting and development of SAO.

The legal and methodological framework of SAO was improved and its institutional capacity was further enhanced. I am confident the SAO could be considered as a positive example for successful reforms in the pre-accession process.

One of the most important outcomes of the implementation of the project was the improvement of the co-ordination with National Parliament.

Special attention was paid to parliamentary scrutiny of audit reports and follow-up. We were glad to meet members of the Parliament of North Macedonia who were warmly welcomed in the Bulgarian National Assembly. The Bulgarian MPs were very keen to share their experience and expressed their firm commitment to continue the dialogue at parliamentary level. In addition, the round table on the audit of political parties and election campaigns was well received by the Parliament and public organisations. The financing of political parties and election campaigns is a complex issue that is important for the democratic processes in the country. I am strongly convinced that the fruitful discussions held and important conclusions reached serve as a good basis for further improvement of the audit of political parties.

Dear Colleagues,

Finally, I would like to raise to your attention the need for further strengthening the transparency in the work of SAO. SAO should play a key role in ensuring integrity in the public administration. It does not function in isolation. It provides data and evidence-based findings to the Parliament and to society. It is therefore essential that the SAO is open to its stakeholders - the Parliament, the government and the citizens.

Further efforts should be invested in raising public awareness on role and work of SAO especially through improving the digital environment, i.e. establishing modern IT systems and tools that can provide sufficient and timely information to the people.

The SAO should continue to ensure transparency in its audit activity by publishing its audit reports and having an open and transparent dialogue with the auditees and the citizens.

I would like to thank all SAO colleagues for being a committed and competent partner who equally contributed for the achievement of the project's objectives.

As a leading EU Member State Partner and on behalf of the Bulgarian NAO I would like to express once again our sincere gratitude to the management and auditors of SAO of North Macedonia and SAO of Croatia as well as to the other EU Member States representatives that made this project a great success.

I would like to extend my gratitude towards the European Union Delegation, and especially to Ms. Paulina Stanoeva who supported the project implementation with valuable advice and EU related expertise.

I would also like to thank the Contracting Authority, the Central Finance and Contracting Unit and personally, to Ms. Marija Arsovska, who was always available for solving issues during the project implementation.

Last, but not least, I would like to express sincere gratitude to the Project leaders Vyara Angelova, Tanja Janevska and Bozo Vuletic-Antic and the Resident Twinning Advisor Ms. Roumiana Tchoukova and her counterpart Aleksandar Popovski for the excellent guidance and coordination of the complex project activities.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that the successful implementation of this project contributed significantly to the improved cooperation among our countries and helped strengthen the relations between North Macedonia and the European Union.

Bulgaria and North Macedonia marked the second anniversary of signing of the Good Neighbourly Relations Agreement on 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2019. The prime ministers of Bulgaria and North Macedonia will host a meeting of the Berlin Process next year in July. Along with the Prespa agreement all these joint efforts of the Governments of our countries create a feasible perspective for the country on the road to the European Union and NATO membership.

I believe that with the EU financial support, the MS expertise provided and the SAO responsiveness, this Twinning project significantly contributes to paving the way for the accession of North Macedonia to the European Union.

Let me assure you that the Bulgarian National Audit Office is committed to continue the fruitful professional and friendly relations that have been established in the framework of this Twinning Project. We stand ready to continue our mutual cooperation and joint efforts to develop our Supreme

Audit Institutions, as modern and strong guardians of the public interest and working effectively for the public good.

Today we are attending the closing ceremony of the Twinning but this project is only a milestone in the long journey that our institutions have embarked upon and will continue to walk together for a better future.

Thank you!