

Helsinki, 16 October 2006

Dear Colleague,

As the Presidency of the Justice and Home Affairs Council, we have the pleasure, together with the Commission, to invite you to the Justice and Home Affairs EU – Western Balkans Ministerial Forum to be held in Tirana, Albania, on 17 November 2006.

This is the first time that the JHA EU -Western Balkans Forum agreed upon in the Thessaloniki agenda will be held in the Western Balkan region. This, we hope, will raise public awareness of the importance of JHA issues and foster local commitment. We further hope that the meeting will provide us with an opportunity to strengthen our cooperation on a number of crucial issues. The need for an effective response to organised crime is a common concern for all of us, and the annual assessment of the Specific Action Oriented Measures against Organised Crime is on the agenda. Effective protection of witnesses, another common concern, will be among the topics to be raised.

In order to get acquainted with recent developments, the Western Balkan countries are asked to prepare a short case report on a specific achievement in the fight against organized crime and corruption.

The Ministerial Forum will take place at the Tirana International Hotel on Friday, 17 November from 9:00 until 15:30. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided. For the sake of an effective working environment, we ask you to limit your participation to two persons (excluding protection officers).

A draft agenda and practical information are attached. We would be grateful if you would complete and return the enclosed registration forms by 6 November at the latest.

We hereby also convey to you the kind invitation of Prime Minister Sali Berisha to a welcoming reception commencing at 20:00 at the Tirana International Hotel on Thursday, 16 November.

We look forward to welcoming you to Tirana.

Yours sincerely

KARI RAJAMÄKI
Minister of Interior
Finland

LEENA LUHTANEN
Minister of Justice
Finland

FRANCO FRATTINI
Vice President of the
European
Commission