

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you here in Budapest at the Headquarters of the State Audit Office of Hungary on the occasion of the Seminar on Independence of Supreme Audit Institutions.

*“Take active steps to strengthen and support SAI independence”* –this is one of the objectives in the current EUROSAI Strategic Plan. It indicates the importance of the independence of Supreme Audit Institutions. I think that a modern, efficient Supreme Audit Institution that is able to effect tangible changes in everyday life of citizens can operate only based on these two pillars. Our clients are the taxpayer citizens who have the right to expect us to perform useful, professionally substantiated and objective work and to account in an exemplary way for the money we are provided from the budget. Independence and transparent operation in broad sense are essential conditions for that.

You must have noticed on your way here that the city centre, including the neighbourhood of your hotel and the promenade along the Danube has been currently renewed – just like the act on our organisation 3 years ago. The former Act on State Audit Office of Hungary of 1989 included the independence of the SAO as well, but in the detailed rules some loopholes remained, which had to be eliminated by the new Act. In spring 2011, the National Assembly adopted the new Act on the State Audit Office of Hungary as the first of the cardinal acts right after the adoption of the new Fundamental Law. Thereby, the legal mandate made it clear that the issue of public finances is considered a primary task of the SAO. We can proudly declare that the new act on SAO put an end to the era of audits without consequences. In addition, it is a very important result that the new Act strengthened the personal, legal, organisational and financial guarantees for the independence of SAO as well.

Why can we say that the new act has eliminated the loopholes concerning independence? For example the new rules make impossible to put pressure on the SAO for political or other reasons through its budget.

The other key element of our organisation is transparency. As you can see on the screen, today’s meeting is already communicated on the News Portal of the State Audit Office of Hungary, which is a very active tool for reaching our stakeholders – professionals and citizens alike. Our News Portal operating since 2011 provides up-to-date information on ongoing audit work and internal processes, professional events organised in Hungary and abroad as well as other topics related to our activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

I am sure that this seminar is a great opportunity to share any thoughts and experience with each other on this topic. The issue of independence is not an end in itself but it serves to strengthen the use of public funds and suggests further tasks for the more efficient organisation of audits. The aim is that the result of the audit has an influence on the establishment and development of good governance, which opens the path to innovations.

And now it is time to pass the floor to the Chair of the Goal Team 1 on Capacity Building, the representative of the SAI of France. Should you need any kind of assistance during the meeting, my colleagues are at your disposal.

Let me now thank you for your attention and wish you a fruitful, productive Seminar.

Thank you.