



Mrs Vera Jourova

01.10.2018

Our ref. 7-1/6236

**Competence of the European Public
Prosecutor's Office**

Dear Vera

The European Union is strong together and we have to use this joint strength to combat crimes that undermine the very existence of the Union and neglect our fundamental values.

In his State of the Union speech on September 12 this year, President Juncker stressed the importance of ensuring safety and security of our people. Terrorism is undoubtedly one of the biggest threats we face and we need strong and efficient measures to protect the European Union from terrorist attacks.

As we know, terrorism knows no borders. Our response to terrorism shall be even closer and stronger cooperation between the countries. Combatting terrorism shall be the priority and we shall join our efforts in this fight. This is why, while the official position of the Estonian Parliament is yet to be adopted, I can personally express my strong support for the proposal put by the Commission to extend powers of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) to cross-border terrorist offences.

However, I would like to underline that terrorist organizations and organized crime in general can only function when there is sufficient financing. It is our obligation to eradicate any sources of terrorist financing. Illegal money is laundered through complicated schemes involving different countries and companies, both in the EU and outside, before infiltrating legal economy. Financial sector is very cross-border in nature and it gives fertile soil for money laundering.

There shall be zero-tolerance towards money laundering and financial crime in general in the EU. Cutting through financing channels of criminal organizations we will deprive them from their income, making it easier to fight against terrorism and serious crime.

Dear Vera, establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) last year is great step towards more efficient fight against serious crimes. We shall use the unique possibilities that the EPPO brings in the area of cross-border judicial cooperation.

Article 86 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU gives the European Council a possibility to extend the powers of the EPPO to include serious crime having a cross-border dimension. I know is a difficult and strenuous path, and Communication presented on September 12 is just a first step in this lengthy process. However, I would like to ask you to look into possibility to give EPPO the powers to lead the investigations in cases of cross-border financial crimes, most notably money laundering.

Once established, the EPPO will have the most competent prosecutors in the area of financial crime. I believe we shall make use of their knowledge and expertise and ensure that no country in the EU could be a comfortable place for money laundering. Extending EPPO powers is not something that would happen overnight, but I think we shall explore all the options and use

all the possibilities to fight against terrorism and serious crime, including eradication of financing possibilities.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Urmas Reinsalu', written in a cursive style.

Urmas Reinsalu
Minister of Justice