

Thirty-fifth
Cambridge International Symposium
on Economic Crime

Keynote Address by

Elena Helmer

Director of Academic Programmes
International Anti-Corruption Academy

Jesus College, University of Cambridge, UK
4 September 2017

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mister Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the invitation to address this distinguished gathering. The International Anti-Corruption Academy, or IACA, has been a supporter and partner of this symposium for several years, **and it's a pleasure to be with you all today in such a wonderful setting.**

In case you're not familiar with IACA, we were established in 2011 to help prevent and fight corruption around the world through education and training, research, and technical assistance.

Like this symposium, IACA has a global outlook - **we're an** international organization with more than 70 member states, and we have an alumni network of anti-corruption and compliance professionals in about 150 countries.

From our anti-corruption perspective **I'd like to make two points** that might help to shape some of our economic crime discussions here this week.

First, preventing and controlling corruption is central to preventing and controlling economic crime. And second, combating these twin problems requires a whole menu of approaches.

It's increasingly clear that corruption is a major driver of economic crimes such as human trafficking, organized crime, corporate bribery, trade in illicit drugs and weapons, money-laundering, and financing of terrorism. Corruption destroys lives and wrecks nations. And corruption threatens to undermine the **United Nations' 2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development, with its 17 goals including no poverty, zero hunger, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and quality education.

Goal 16 of this UN agenda, on **"Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions"**, includes the explicit target to **"substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms"**. Meeting this would also have a significant impact on economic crime, but what practical steps can we take?

Until fairly recently, the main approach was criminal law and enforcement. **That's certainly** important, but now there are several other elements such as prevention, education and awareness, and international cooperation.

There's also a growing consensus that effectively fighting corruption and economic crime requires insights from many perspectives - not only law and regulation but also psychology, political science, ethics, and sociology, for example.

At IACA we apply this multidisciplinary approach to our two academic degree programmes - the well-established Master in Anti-Corruption Studies and a new **master's programme** starting later this year for practitioners involved with the business sector in anti-corruption, compliance, and collective action. We also deliver numerous shorter trainings and are preparing to introduce a new PhD programme in the near future.

International cooperation and networking are vital too, so we're proud that IACA was acknowledged **as a "centre of excellence"** for anti-corruption education, training, and academic research by UN General Assembly Resolution 71/208 of 19 December 2016. Likewise, all of you in this room are also doing excellent work in your respective fields to counter economic crimes in their many forms.

So given the wealth of expertise and experience here, may I propose that each of us sets a personal or organizational goal based on our discussions in Cambridge this week? That goal is to decide on one practical step towards preventing and controlling economic crime that we can implement when we return to our offices.

This doesn't need to be a huge step. Drago Kos, the Chair of the OECD Working Group on Bribery, often talks about making progress against corruption in millimetres, and I think **that's a very realistic** point of view.

With this realism in mind, let's **look at** the overall title of this event. It asks two questions about the prevention and control of economic crime, and these apply just as much to the fight against corruption.

First question: "Whose **responsibility?**" I'd say that **we're all responsible.**

Second question: "**Are they really up to it?**" Well, fighting corruption and economic crime needs strong and sustained leadership from the very top, both nationally and internationally. It also needs financial resources to back up verbal commitments and expressions of support.

What's more, it requires us to constantly challenge our thinking so that we can develop better practices. **That's why this** symposium is such an important forum, and why I very much look forward to the discussions to come.

Thank you.