

International Monitoring Operation – International Observers

Mr Ferdinando Buatier de Mongeot has been the International Observer appointed by the European Commission to the International Monitoring Operation since March 2017. Previously, he served as a criminal judge for preliminary investigations in the Court of Como in Italy. Mr Buatier de Mongeot has been a member of his national judiciary since 1999, where he has served in various posts as a judge, most recently in the Courts of Aosta and Como. Mr Buatier de Mongeot is also qualified as an attorney at law. Mr Buatier de Mongeot has been involved in number of international activities and cooperation initiatives in third countries, including by contributing to EU initiatives as an international judge at District Court Level for EULEX Kosovo and as a Resident Twinning Adviser in the framework of an EU CARDS Project aimed at fighting organized crime and corruption within the State Prosecutor's Office in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Mr Buatier de Mongeot holds a degree in law from the University of Genova.

Mr Francesco Ciardi has been the International Observer appointed by the European Commission to the International Monitoring Operation since December 2020. He is a prosecutor at Milan District Prosecution Office. Mr Ciardi has a career of 22 years of active service as a prosecutor, during which he has served in various posts dealing mostly with economic crime, corruption, organized crime and related fields, including confiscation of illicit assets, as well as supervisor/inspector of the Bank of Italy. From September 2004 up to 2013, he was assigned to “Crimes against economy” specialized group, dealing with investigations on bankruptcy and money laundering offences, involving financial investigations of national and transnational nature. From November 2017, Mr Ciardi was assigned to the Department “International Affairs and Transnational Economic Crimes”, specialised in in the area of international judicial cooperation and economic crimes with a transnational nature, such as international corruption or international money laundering offences. He has also been the contact Point of the EJM (European Judicial Network). Mr Ciardi has an extensive international experience, as the Deputy Team Leader of the EU Project “Pameca IV” in Albania, resident long-term expert assisting the Prosecution service and the State Police of Albania in the area of corruption, financial and economic crimes, organized crimes and as the Italian Liaison Magistrate to Albania, from November 2016 - 2017.

Ms Elka Ermenkova has been the International Observer appointed by the European Commission to the International Monitoring Operation since November 2017. She was an international judge in the Supreme Court of Kosovo from January 2012 till November 2017, where she was deciding on appeals and extraordinary legal remedies on high profile criminal cases (corruption, organized crime and war crimes). In 2012-2013 she was also engaged with war related property disputes, arising from the Kosovo conflict from 1998-1999. During her tenure in Kosovo she was a member of the Human Rights Review Panel of the EU Rule of Law Mission EULEX. The Panel is an accountability mechanism for alleged human rights violations committed by mission members in execution of their executive mandate. Ms Ermenkova has been a national judge in Bulgaria, since 1998, where she used to work on various subject matters from criminal, civil and administrative law in consecutive positions of junior judge, first instance regional judge, President of first instance court and district (appellate) judge. Between 2008 and 2011, as a Rule of Law expert, she was engaged in the conduct of the civilian crisis management operations of the EU in a number of geographical areas: BiH, the

Palestinian territories, Kosovo, Congo Kinshasa, Guinea Bissau. In the past, she was also involved in election observation missions of the EU in Mozambique and Guinea Conakry. Ms Ermenkova holds a master Degree in Court Administration from Denver University in Denver, Colorado, USA and Master Degree in Law from the South Western University Neophit Rilski in Bulgaria.

Mr Branko Hrvatin has been the International Observer appointed by the European Commission to the International Monitoring Operation since November 2017. He completed his twelve-year term as the President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Croatia. After graduation from the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, he worked as a Municipal Court Judge and County Court Judge in Zagreb. In 2004 he was appointed the Supreme Court Justice. In 2005 he was appointed President of the Supreme Court and reappointed to that post in 2009 and 2013. From 2001 to 2004 he was a member and the Vice-President of the State Judicial Council. Since 2005 he has been the President of the State Election Commission. He is a lecturer and a moderator at various local and international seminars, workshops and symposia. Since 1994 he conducts practical courses for students at the Faculty of Law in Zagreb within the Chair for Civil Substantive Law, Civil Procedure Law and Family Law. Mr Hrvatin is an author of articles in the area of civil procedure, execution and property law. In June 2014 he was elected the Vice-President of the Network of Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union.

Mr Theo Jacobs has been the International Observer appointed by the European Commission to the International Monitoring Operation since March 2017. He completed his tenure as the director of the Central Office for Seizure and Confiscation in 2017 and is working as a prosecutor at the Court of Appeal of Brussels. Mr Jacobs has been a member of his national judiciary since 1982, where he has worked in various roles, including as a Prosecutor at the District Court of Leuven, Vice-Director of the Cabinet of the Belgian Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General at the Court of Appeal of Brussels. He has been involved in a number of international activities and cooperation initiatives in third countries, including by contributing to EU initiatives as Head of the Rule of Law section in the EUPOLCOPPS mission in the occupied Palestinian territories, Chief Prosecutor in the EULEX mission in Kosovo and as Member of the Justice Team of the European Planning Team for Kosovo. Mr Jacobs holds a Master's degree in Law from the Free University of Brussels.

Mr Steven H. Kessler has been the International Observer appointed by the United States to the International Monitoring Operation since April 2020. He is seconded to the IMO from his post as a Resident Legal Advisor, US Department of Justice, Office of Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT). In that position he previously served at the US Embassies in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina (2003-07), Yerevan, Armenia (2007-12), and Jakarta, Indonesia (2012-16). He came to the US Department of Justice after serving over twenty years as a prosecutor with the Offices of the Kings County District Attorney and the Saratoga County District Attorney, in, respectively, Brooklyn and Saratoga, New York. Mr. Kessler also served as a teacher on the law at Bryan & Stratton College, in Albany, New York, and he taught reading and comprehension skills to younger students while serving with the Institute of Reading Development. Mr. Kessler is a graduate of the George Washington University, Washington, D.C. (B.A., economics, 1978; Juris Doctor, 1981), and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. Mr. Kessler is admitted to practice law in the District of Columbia (1981), New York State (1983), the United States District Courts, Eastern and Southern Districts of New York (1984), and the United States Court of Appeals, Second Circuit (1986).

Mr Tonci Petkovic has been the International Observer appointed by the European Commission to the International Monitoring Operation since June 2020. He works in the State Attorney's Office of

the Republic of Croatia since 2003. Prior to that, he worked in the Croatian Army. In 2010, by the decision of the State Attorney General of the Republic of Croatia, he was assigned to work in the Office for the Suppression of Corruption and Organised Crime (USKOK) in the capacity of a Deputy Head. During his work at USKOK, Mr. Petković was the lead prosecutor on some of the most complex cases under USKOK's jurisdiction, particularly high-level corruption and organised crime cases in Republic of Croatia. In 2013 and 2018 he was awarded the National State Attorney's Office Award for his prosecutorial work, which is award by the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia for demonstrated expertise and exceptional contribution to the work and reputation of the State Attorney's Office. In the period from 2018 till the end of May 2020 Mr. Petković has been a member in the Ethics Committee of the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia. As a lecturer and expert, he has participated in several projects in Southeast European countries aimed at strengthening the capacity of these countries in the fight against organized crime and corruption. At the same time, since 2014, he has been a lecturer at the Faculty of Law in Zagreb in the subject of Criminal Procedure Law. Mr. Petkovic holds Master Degree in Criminal law sciences from the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb.

Mr Gerrit Sprenger has been the International Observer appointed by the European Commission to the International Monitoring Operation since July 2020. He has more than 30 years of work experience as a judge within the German judiciary system, having started his career in 1993 in Thuringia/Germany. He has also gained work experience as a public prosecutor at the public prosecutor's office in Gera. Mr Sprenger has an extensive international experience having held the position of judicial affairs officer of the United Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNIMK), EULEX judge in 2008, the position of Vice President of the Assembly of EULEX Judges in 2012, in addition to his tasks as a Supreme Court judge until the end of his duty in summer 2014, and took the responsibility of Acting President of the Assembly of EULEX judges from November 2013 until July 2014. From 2010 until Mid-2014, he was appointed as one of two EULEX members to the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) by the European High Representative in Kosovo.

Ms Marie Tuma has been the International Observer appointed by the European Commission to the International Monitoring Operation since November 2017. She was a criminal judge within the EULEX Rule of Law mission in Kosovo, where she presided high-level cases. Prior to this posting, she was the Director of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI), Sweden, where she managed the international human rights organisation with field offices around the world. One of the major achievements of that organization was to educate judges, prosecutors, and other law officials in developing countries on a global scale, and during her director post at RWI, Ms Tuma managed and executed international justice mission-programs in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe to strengthen international legal standards in these regions' judiciary. At the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), she was an international war crimes appeal judge, seconded by Sweden, contributing to the establishment of a sustainable justice system in BiH. She worked as a prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Hague, in political, high level and high sensitivity cases. Throughout her international career, spanning over 17 years, Ms Tuma has been, and still is, a teacher and mentor in EU-law at Lund University as well as in criminal-law at various universities in Beijing, Los Angeles and New York. Ms Tuma has been a Swedish judiciary since 1982 and holds a master of law degree from Lund University, Sweden.