Public-private partnerships in criminal investigations - a Belgian approach

Public-private partnership in the sphere of investigations is often associated with private detectives cooperating with police services in specific criminal investigations. Although much can be said about these forms of cooperation, it is not the only and certainly not the most prevailing expression of public–private partnership. In this presentation, we would like to broaden the scope of the combination of public and private efforts to a less known joint effort of public and private: the public-private alliance in the battle against anti money laundering.

The current anti money laundering battle has resulted in the emergence of a complex of actors consisting of both public and private institutions, all involved in the prevention and detection of money laundering. The nature of this anti money laundering complex supposes a cooperation between the institutions present within the complex. Private institutions represent the gatekeepers of this anti money laundering system, as they are responsible for investigating and subsequently reporting potential money laundering activities. After these reporting efforts by private institutions, public authorities (if necessary) take over the investigation. A minimum amount of cooperation is therefore needed to allow for an efficient and effective process.

This presentation will focus on the extent to which we can actually speak of cooperation in this respect. Is there a common goal that can serve as an impetus for cooperation? Do public and private institutions consider each other as partners in the battle against money laundering?