The UNCAC Coalition Newsletter for the SEE Region highlights the major developments in the area of anti-corruption and good governance in Southeast Europe (SEE). It gathers information from multiple sources to provide you with the most relevant news and updates on the region.

UNCAC Coalition News

UNCAC Coalition, December 2017
Asset Recovery Information Published
In December 2017, UNCAC Coalition introduced a new web page on asset recovery to provide experts and practitioners with more information on the topic. Asset recovery – as outlined in the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC chapter V) – refers to the process by which the proceeds of corruption transferred abroad are recovered and repatriated to the country from which they were taken or to their rightful owners. A precise account of the proceeds of corruption circulating the globe is not possible, but the World Bank estimates that developing countries lose US$20-40 billion each year due to corruption. This money could be spent on tackling poverty, providing decent public services and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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UNODC News

UNODC, 17 January 2018
UNODC Advances Efforts to Measure Organized Crime
A comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of organized crime is lacking in almost every region of the world. With a view to addressing this challenge, UNODC initiated the development of a framework for measuring and assessing organized crime in the Western Balkans. Measuring progress at the regional and national levels has proved to be a difficult one given the lack of comparable data analysis on the dynamics of organised crime. In this regard, UNODC’s new framework will present a clear way forward for States to assess the volume of organized crime and their responses to it. The framework will focus on a set of indicators to collect and analyse data on activities and modus operandi of organized criminal groups; organized crime enablers such as corruption, obstruction of justice and technology; States’ responses; and the size of illegal markets. The analysis of such data will lead to more focused prevention methods and monitoring of policy interventions.

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News by SELDI members

Serbian Anti-Corruption Council Warns about Illegal Appropriation of State Land
The government-run Anti-Corruption Council warns about dozens of thousands of hectares of state-owned land being given away to private entities without compensation, i.e. just based on a note issued by the Privatization Agency which says that the land buyer has settled its obligations stemming from a contract. “Even if the buyer did fulfil its obligations, that could not imply buying land because the seller only had the right to use the land, so they could have not transferred the ownership rights to the buyer”, the report compiled by the Privatization Council states. The report has been published on the official website of the Anti-Corruption Council, and has also been sent to the Serbian government, the National
Parliament, the ministries of economy, agriculture and interior affairs, and the State Prosecutor. RAI, 12 January 2018

Civil Society Calls on the Government Not to Restrict Public Discussions
The EU-Montenegro Civil Society Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) has called on state institutions to reconsider the adoption of provisions that would seriously restrict the conduct of public discussions. During the JCC meeting Milena Milošević, Institute Alternativa researcher presented key findings and suggestions for improving public administration reform, including citizens’ participation in decision-making. She reminded that the Government prepared draft Amendments to the Law on State Administration at its sitting of November 16, 2017, although these were not planned by the Strategy on the Public Administration Reform. The proposal provides that no public discussion shall be conducted “when the law, i.e. the strategy regulates issues in the field of defense and security and annual budget; in emergency, urgent or unforeseeable circumstances; when a matter is not differently regulated by law”. The proposed legal amendments were also drafted without a public discussion. Institute Alternativa, 10 January 2018

Training on Corruption Risk Assessment in Macedonian Public Authorities
Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) Secretariat, in cooperation with the Public Internal Financial Control Department (PIFCD) of Ministry of Finance of Republic of Macedonia, supported by the Austrian Development Agency, organized a Training on Corruption Risk Assessment in Public Authorities in Skopje. The training was organized under the Southeast Europe Regional Programme on Strengthening the Capacity of Anti-corruption Authorities and Civil Society to Combat Corruption and Contribute to the UNCAC Review Process, which is implemented by RAI in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The objective of the Training is to build and strengthen the capacity of governmental institutions in conducting corruption risk assessment on national level. RAI, 21-22 December 2017

Measurement of the Clientelism in the Media
The Third Measurement of the Clientelism Index in the Media was presented simultaneously in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Romania. The analysis identifies as burning issues in all countries the lack of transparency of media policy and law adoption, the entry of people from the organized crime circles into the media ownership, non-transparent ownership and existence of unregistered contracts in the media. The advertising agencies apply non-transparent influence, particularly in digital marketing. PSD/Integrity Observers, 15 December 2017

Integrity Pacts in Public Procurement: the Results So Far
Transparency International Secretariat presented in Bucharest, Romania the results of the European project “Integrity Pacts”. The Integrity Pact is a civic control mechanism created by Transparency International in the 1990s to ensure integrity and transparency in public procurement. Representatives from the Romanian authorities and civil society partners from Italy, Poland, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal and Slovenia took part in the event. SAR, 14 December 2017
Promoting Integrity and Professional Standards in Law Enforcement

Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI), in cooperation with the Anti-Corruption General Directorate within the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Romania, with support of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) organized a Regional Workshop on Integrity and Professional Standards in Law Enforcement, held in Bucharest, Romania, on 13 – 14 December 2017. The event strengthened the regional cooperation in the field of integrity and professional standards in law enforcement and enabled participants to have better understanding of the modalities and mechanisms in the field of integrity and professional standards applied in the region, increased awareness about available legal and practical solutions, and identifies the main challenges in this field. RAI, 14 December 2017

Assessment of the Internal and External Control Mechanisms in the State Police

In December 2017, IDM held a roundtable in Tirana, Albania, in the framework of the regional project “Western Balkan Pulse for Police Integrity and Trust (POINTPULSE)”. During the event, the participants discussed how operative are police internal control mechanisms; what is the impact of parliamentary oversight in building police integrity; how effective are independent regulatory institutions in overseeing the policing; and what can be done in order to improve police internal control and oversight. IDM, 12 December 2017

Upcoming Events

Winter School on Fighting Corruption with Administrative Measures and Supporting Development of New Anti-Corruption Policies

The Department of Political Science, University of Perugia, in collaboration with the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI), European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and Italian National Anticorruption Authority (ANAC) or organizing an international Winter School on Fighting Corruption with Administrative Measures and Supporting Development of New Anti-Corruption Policies, which will take place in Rome and the Province of Perugia (Umbria), Italy, from 22 January to 2 February, 2018.

RAI, 22 January – 2 February 2018
The President of the European Commission has announced 2025 as the target year for the next EU Enlargement in the Western Balkans. The EU would need to carefully balance the desire to provide actionable commitment for enlargement with the reality of slow progress in anticorruption. At 26% of the population, corruption levels in the Western Balkans remain high, despite the fact that EU aided efforts have resulted in a stable decline. Next to improving technical capacities and restructuring bureaucratic frameworks, the EU should focus on further commitment and engagement on political level. Effective prosecution of high-level corruption is the only way to send a strong and immediate message that corruption in the Western Balkans would not be tolerated. **SELDI, 14 December 2017**

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