

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**

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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**

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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**

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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

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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**

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Promoting Integrity and Professional Standards in Law Enforcement



Photo: RAI

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**

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



Photo: IDM

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**

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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) is 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

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Useful Resources

SELDI Policy Brief 7: Getting EU Enlargement 2025 Right on Anti-Corruption: a Civil Society View



GETTING EU ENLARGEMENT 2025 RIGHT ON ANTI-CORRUPTION: A CIVIL SOCIETY VIEW

Policy Brief No. 7, December 2017

The context for further enlargement: economic rationale or political aspiration?

On January 1st 2018, the European Union (EU) leadership makes a six-month stop in Southeast Europe (SEE), as Bulgaria will, for the first time in its history, hold the EU Council presidency. Austria takes the second half of the year, which renders 2018 a key period for the aspirations of the Western Balkan (WB) countries, pursuing further integration and ultimately EU membership. The region has not been this close to a **breakthrough** in its bid to join the Union since the Thessaloniki promise of membership from 2003, which gradually moved beyond reach as internal and external crises forced the EU to focus inwards, and local elites to steer away from EU membership priorities.

During the State of the Union address in 2017 the European Commission (EC) President spoke of the need for inclusion, both inside and outside of the EU, maintaining credible enlargement perspective for the WB and reassuring that "thereafter the European Union will be greater than 27 in number". Considered from the perspective of the WB, the address could be interpreted as a **change of attitudes in Brussels**, a shifting focus to the region or even to signal a step

KEY POINTS

- 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.
- In 2018, the European Commission is expected to introduce a reinforced Enlargement Strategy and a new Progress Monitoring Mechanism. It will seek to leverage the pledged additional support from the EU for the Western Balkans and to ensure EU conditionality works better. However, local political elites from the Western Balkans, have signalled their preference for quick engagement with less conditionality.
- As a leader of change in the region, the EU should create more tailored policy instruments and engage directly with local civil society groups for an effective fight against corruption. 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.
- In parallel, anti-corruption efforts should be zoomed in at the level of public organisations, to follow up on the quality of implementation of the numerous formally adopted anticorruption policies and plans and close the implementation and efficiency gaps.
- An independent corruption and anti-corruption monitoring mechanism needs to be introduced on national and regional level in order to provide robust data and analysis and integrate both corruption diagnostics and anticorruption policy evaluation.



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Contacts

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