

**FEATURED
IN THIS
EDITION:**

**Historic vote over-
turns NGO objections**
p. 1-2

**Calls to action to
strengthen the UNCAC**
IRM p. 2

**Civil society insights
on the whistleblower
resolution** p. 2-3

COSP OBSERVER

**NEWS AND VIEWS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS
OBSERVING THE 10TH COSP**



UNCAC Coalition Managing Director Mathias Huter Speaking at the Opening of the first ever Civil Society Forum at CoSP10.

Historic vote overturns NGO objections

The UNCAC CoSP10 took a historic decision on Monday, voting to allow all NGOs that had expressed interest to participate in the Conference. In the first ever such vote in the UNCAC, 61 States Parties voted for inclusion of the organizations in the Conference, and 3 States Parties voted against. 7 leading NGOs had not been invited to UNCAC CoSP10 due to objections by Turkey and Azerbaijan, with Turkey dropping 2 of the objections in the past weeks, and another 2 in the morning of the first day of the Conference.

Azerbaijan continued to object to the participation of 3 Armenian NGOs: Transparency International Anticorruption Center (TIAC), Freedom of Information Center of Armenia (FOICA) and Armavir Development Center. Mathias Huter, managing director of the UNCAC Coalition stated that the objections:



The Observer is a publication by the UNCAC Coalition, a global network of almost 400 civil society organizations in over 100 countries, committed to promoting the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

Established in August 2006, the Coalition mobilizes civil society action for UNCAC at international, regional and national levels.

What are your country's best anti-corruption practices?

Visit our stand and write your best practices on the world map outside the NGO lounge. Pick up copies of our submissions and some prizes!

“...are a stark reminder of the pressure and persecution many brave reporters, whistleblowers, and civil society representatives face when they speak up against corruption.”

The objection was overturned by voting. Before the vote, the UNCAC Coalition issued a joint statement with Transparency International, strongly condemning the move to exclude specific organizations from participating in the CoSP. We call on States Parties to reform the objection procedures for future CoSPs to prevent their abuse and ensure a timely decision that safeguards civil society participation.

Calls to action to strengthen the UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism

With its IRM Initiative, supported by the UNCAC Coalition and the Open Government Partnership, the UK government is asking that other States Parties join their commitments to enhancing the effectiveness of the UNCAC's Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM), recognizing that **the wider participation from national civil society in the UNCAC review process and promoting transparency in the UNCAC IRM are fundamental to fighting corruption.**

Today, the UK, together with more than 50 other States Parties (and counting) commit to the following actions:

- Publishing timelines for our country review and keeping country focal point details updated
- Publishing the full peer-reviewed IRM country report

- Publishing how civil society and non-state actors can engage in the review and follow up process.

States Parties may wish to deliver these actions in different ways, such as sharing these documents on their UNODC country profile page, through domestic platforms, and for countries that are members of the Open Government Partnership, including commitments within their OGP National Action Plans.

This commitment aligns with the principles of the UNCAC Coalition's Transparency Pledge, which equally aims to enhance transparency and inclusiveness of the UNCAC IRM. To date, 37 States Parties have signed the Transparency Pledge. This reflects a commitment to the principles of transparency and inclusiveness, by publishing the UNCAC review self-assessment checklist and publicly supporting the participation of civil society observers in UNCAC subsidiary bodies. We call on more States Parties to sign up to our Pledge! For more information, please contact the UNCAC Coalition team at info@uncaccoalition.org.

Civil society insights on the whistleblower resolution

By Vladimir Radomirović, Editor in Chief of Pištaljka

Pištaljka (The Whistle) is a whistleblowing platform established in Serbia in 2010 by journalists-turned-whistleblowers. Pištaljka publishes articles based on tips from whistleblowers and provides free legal aid, including court representation, to hundreds of whistleblowers.

Let's go back some 10 years. Pištaljka was the driving force behind the adoption of Serbia's Law on the Protection of Whistleblowers and its efficient implementation, which led to the law being called a gold

standard and becoming an inspiration for the EU's whistleblowing directive. In a process not dissimilar to advocating for an UNCAC resolution, we garnered support from the country's leaders and made sure that the working group to draft the law included a wide range of experts and practitioners. Most importantly, the working group included whistleblowers. This endeavor was a success and the law has since improved the lives of many whistleblowers by giving them a strong shield against retaliation.

Looking to replicate this experience in the international arena, we first went to the Serbian president, a longtime champion of whistleblowing. He was very supportive and made sure that the government backs our initiative. We were then involved in the informal consultations in Vienna as part of the Serbian delegation, providing information and support to the delegates.

What have we learned from this process?

It's difficult to navigate different interests and find common ground. This goes not just for all the countries in the room negotiating the text but for the internal politics as well. You may be pleasantly surprised by some people and let down by others you thought were your allies. One of the allies we could rely on all throughout was the UNCAC Coalition. We are now certain that this collective effort will pay off and that we'll get a quality resolution on the protection of whistleblowers at CoSP10.

*The Governments of Serbia and the State of Palestine decided to join forces in tabling a first-ever dedicated CoSP resolution on Protection of Reporting Persons.

Check out the UNCAC Coalition's Open Letter to UNCAC States Parties to enhance the protection of people who report corruption. The letter calls for specific measures to prioritize and strengthen whistleblower protection, among them: technical and emergency assistance, increasing public awareness and reporting in crisis. Additionally, Transparency International and Government Accountability Project's written submission to the 10th UNCAC CoSP outlines the most critical issues that need to be addressed to enhance the protection of whistleblowers. You can find these documents in our shared google drive with civil society resources for CoSP10.

Upcoming Special Events

Wednesday 13 December:

- **13.00-14.50: Seattle Room, A302**
Action Now: Combating Corruption to Protect the Environment
- **18.00-18.50: Philadelphia, A312**
Implementing Beneficial Ownership Reforms: National Progress

Thursday 14 December:

- **09.00-09.50: Boston Room, A311**
Anti-Corruption & Human Rights: Exploring Synergies
- **13.00-13.50: Dallas Room, A314**
From Education to Action: Curbing Corruption in Eurasia
- **14.00-14.50: Dallas Room, A314**
Defending Civic Space in the Fight against Corruption
- **18.00-18.50: Philadelphia Room, A312**
International Perspectives on Whistle-Blower Protection



Check out one of Transparency International's billboards outside the conference center, urging global action to pick up the pace in the fight against corruption.

Photo credit: Transparency International on Twitter/X

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You can find the UNCAC Coalition team outside the NGO Lounge during CoSP10.

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