

**News by SELDI members****Institute Alternativa Calls for Strengthening the Capacities of the Special Prosecutor's Office and Ensuring Independence of the Anti-Corruption Agency**

SELDI's partner Institute Alternativa welcomes the European Parliament's Resolution on the 2015 Report on Montenegro that criticizes the Montenegrin government for its lack of progress in strengthening the rule of law and the fight against corruption. According to the European Parliament, increased effective financial investigations related to high-level corruption cases and the further establishment of the Anti-Corruption Agency's independence are key measures to achieve these goals. Fundamental democratic values, such as having fair and transparent elections and media freedom, along with efforts to support the role of civil society need to continue be developed for the democratic future of Montenegro. **Institute Alternativa, 15 March 2016.**



Photo: Institut Alternativa and  
Belgrade Center for Security Policy

**Belgrade Center for Security Policy and Institute Alternativa Criticize the Media Capture, Controlled Security Services and Politicized State Administration**

Corruption, media capture and controlled security services were identified as a formula for pervasive collapse of the rule of law at a meeting organized by SELDI's member, the Belgrade Center for Security Policy, with the participation of civil society organizations from Macedonia, Croatian and Montenegro. "There are social forces that undermine democratic processes and prevent progress on the rule of law", said Sonja Stojanovic Gajic, director of the Belgrade

Centre for Security Policy. Furthermore, Jovana Marovic from Institute Alternativa in Podgorica, noted that the major problem in is the politicized state administration, especially supernumerary employment in local governments. **Institute Alternativa, 14 March 2016.**

**Evidence-Based Integrity Policies Are Not Only Desirable, But Within Reach**

On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the SELDI's partner, the Academic Society of Romania (SAR), along with the Ministry of Justice and the Prime Minister held a conference to discuss the state of public integrity in Romania and what can be done to improve control over corruption. They noted that punitive measures are not enough to really reduce corruption and that good governance requires a comprehensive approach, focused on administrative reform. Emphasis should therefore fall to accurately measure the level of corruption in a country, identifying what has already resulted in its reduction and finding measures that would lead to improvements authentic score of "public integrity". Prof. Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, SELDI International Advisory Board member and Chair, European Research Centre for Anti-Corruption and State Building Research, HERTIE School of Governance presented the report Public Integrity and Trust in Europe. The report notes that evidence-based integrity policies are not only desirable, but within reach, if the trends are captured, understood and explained. **Romanian Academic Society, 01 March 2016.**

**The Difficulties in Fighting High-level Corruption: Former Foreign Affairs Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Acquitted**

The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) acquitted today a former foreign affairs minister Sven Alkalaj of misconduct in office. Last March 2015, the state prosecutor's office charged Alkalaj for signing off on a cash award of 13,418 KM to his then deputy Ana Trišić Babić for her work at the BiH Council of Ministers NATO coordination team. In this way Alkalaj violated the Council of Ministers' resolution that prohibits cash awards to managers and their deputies heading government agencies. Hence, Alkalaj damaged the budget for the aforementioned amount. However, justice Tatjana Kosović said that the Court established that there was no conscious violation of the law. **Center for Investigative Reporting, 26 February 2016.**

### **Three SELDI Members are Part of the Newly Established Balkan Security Platform**

Three SELDI members (Institute Alternativa, Montenegro, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, Serbia and Institute for Democracy and Mediation, Albania), as well as Analytica, Macedonia, Centre for Security Studies, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovar Center for Security Studies - KCSS, Kosovo signed the founding act of the "Balkan Security Platform". The main objectives of the platform are to increase the role of civil society and citizens by strengthening external oversight of the security sector in the Balkans. Moreover, it aims at expanding the civil network in order to reinforce cooperation when analyzing, monitoring and advocating good governance. Thus, it is possible to ensure a greater commitment to integrity in the Balkans. **Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, 07 March 2016**

## **Anti-Corruption News from the SEE Region**

### **Bulgarian Cabinet Adopts the Draft of the Long-Awaited Anti-Corruption Act**

On 31 March 2016 the Bulgarian government adopted the long-awaited draft law on the prevention of corruption and forfeiture of illegally acquired property. The draft law proposes the creation of a national bureau for the prevention of corruption and forfeiture of illegally acquired property that unifies four already existing institutions that deal anti-corruption, illegal assets, and conflict of interests. The bureau will closely collaborate with citizens, local and state institutions and will have direct access to the country's central credit register. It will also be able to request the lifting a bank or tax secrecy. People subjected to investigations by the bureau will be high-level state officials, officers from the high-level command of the armed forces, and people involved with expenditure of public funding. According to the European Commission, the creation of this body is a key test in Bulgaria's fight against corruption for 2016. **RAI, 31 March 2016.**

### **Kosovo's Prime Minister Presented the Results in the Fight Against Organized Crime and Corruption**

On a press conference, Kosovo's Prime Minister Isa Mustafa presented concrete results of Kosovo's fight against corruption and organized crime. More specifically, for last year there have been more than 1640 cases of corruption, organized crime, and economic crime, from which Kosovo indicted 1561 people. The country is also persistent in its fight against human trafficking, which resulted in 165 investigations, the tacking down of 6 criminal groups and the arrest of 178 people. It was also mentioned that public security and order have improved compared to 2014. In the same vain, the Prime Minister emphasized that Kosovo has a clear strategy against terrorism and is, according to the Prime Minister, the only country that effectively forbids its citizens to join foreign conflicts. **RAI, 29 March 2016.**

### **RAND Europe Survey Lists Croatia, Bulgaria and Roomania Among the Most Corrupt EU Countries and Suggests CVM Expansion**

According to a survey conducted by RAND Europe, Croatia is the member of the European Union, along with Bulgaria and Romania, with the most corruption in public procurement. The country is considered to lose about 15 percent of its GDP to corruption and cost the EU between EUR 179 billion and EUR 990 billion in GDP terms per year. Moreover, the survey suggests that corruption's effects could also be socio-political – higher levels of organized crime, weaker rule of law, less trust in the EU institutions. The report proposes that national government should adopt regulatory measures and extend the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) to more EU members, which if applied, could significantly reduce the costs of corruption in GDP terms. **RAI, 23 March 2016.**

### **OECD Requests Exporters and Foreign Investors to Accede to the Anti-Bribery Convention**

Ministers and representatives from the 41 State Parties to the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention have reaffirmed their commitment to continued implementation of the Convention and called for robust enforcement of their anti-foreign bribery laws. They also formally launched the fourth phase of country evaluations by the OECD Working Group on Bribery at the OECD Anti-Bribery Ministerial meeting, chaired by Andrea Orlando, Italian Minister of Justice, in Paris on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016. Representatives from the signatory countries noted the need for enhancing enforcement of their laws implementing the foreign bribery offence against legal persons, including state-owned or controlled enterprises. **RAI, 16 March 2016.**

### **Montenegro: EUR 4.8m Allocates for the Fight against Corruption, However Political Will is Still a Prerequisite**

During the conference “The price of corruption – analysis of the anti-corruption policy effectiveness”, it has been announced that in 2016 Montenegro has allocated €4.8m for the fight against corruption, which is twice the amount of 2015. The participants of the conference have agreed that political will is the only prerequisite for this policy to produce concrete results. Director of the Centre for Monitoring and Research’s (CEMI) department for public policy research, Ana Selic, said that there were notable changes to the legislative framework and budgetary investments between 2015 and 2016. **RAI, 15 March 2016.**

### **Romania’s Anti-Corruption Prosecutors Again Announced Record Results in 2015**

The National Anti-Corruption Directorate DNA indicted over 1,250 people for high and medium-level corruption crimes, and 970 defendants received final convictions. Five times more ministers – including one prime minister – and members of parliament were sent to trial in 2015 compared to 2013. While in 2014, Romania and Bulgaria were the lowest ranked EU countries on Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index alongside Greece and Italy, on the 2015 index, Romania was in 58th place – 11 places higher than Bulgaria and two above Italy. However while the arrests have a deterrent effect, fully cleaning up Romania’s state institutions will be a slow process. **RAI, 06 March 2016.**

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina: GRECO Highlights the Need of Placing the Concept of Judicial Independence Beyond Doubt**

The Council of Europe’s Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) has published today its Fourth Round Evaluation Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, which focuses on the prevention of corruption amongst members of parliament, judges and prosecutors. GRECO remains critical about the delays experienced in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s anticorruption agenda, noting that “the complexity of the four judicial systems, threats to judicial independence, the lack of certainty about available resources, as well as a large judicial backlog and poor case management are fuelling a very negative public perception of judges and prosecutors”. The implementation of the 15 recommendations addressed to Bosnia and Herzegovina will be assessed by GRECO in the second half of 2017 through its compliance procedure. **RAI, 22 February 2016.**

## **Upcoming Events**

### **OECD Integrity Forum “Fighting the Hidden Tariff: Global Trade without Corruption”**

The Integrity Forum has become a premium global platform on integrity and anti-corruption, bringing together different policy communities, private sector, civil society, and academia. The Integrity and Trade Track will address integrity and trade from different angles and perspectives, including trade facilitation, counterfeits and illicit trade, due diligence, and integrity in customs. The event will focus on pressing integrity issues, such as the refugee crisis, climate change, extractive industries and state-owned enterprises. Innovative features of the Integrity Forum include poster sessions, book presentations and an art exhibition. **19 and 20 April 2016, Paris, France**

### **Combating Fraud and Corruption in and by the Public Sector**

The European Structural and Investment Funds Journal (EStIF) is organizing a summer course on identifying and preventing corruption. The events will last for four days, where different angles of the crime will be assessed. The academic director is Jo Kremers, who is a Senior Audit Manager in the Ministry of Finance in Hague. He will elaborate on fraud detection in order to build a successful management control and effective ways to handle corruption cases.

**5-8 July 2016, Lake Starnberg, Germany**

### **Leadership in Anti-Corruption**

The Basel Institute/Geneva Centre for Security Policy international course on Leadership in Anti-Corruption will provide participants with the tools to enhance their capacity in effectively navigating the threats and challenges that corruption poses. The course will present techniques and anti-corruption reforms in order to develop a network of fellow experts and practitioners.

**Basel Institute on Governance/GCSP, 21-23 March 2016, Geneva, Switzerland**

## Anti-Bribery Workshop

The workshop is an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the steps to prevent corruption and improve compliance. The main focus is on anti-bribery and anti-money laundering legislation in Romania and the US. The event will further elucidate the best practices for third party due diligence and actions to mitigate the damage of fall-out in compliance.

**TRACE, 24 March 2016, Bucharest, Romania.**

## Reports and Analyses

### The Cost of Non-Europe in the area of Organised Crime and Corruption

The report examines the cost of non-Europe in relation to corruption and more specifically whether there could be added benefits of a wider implementation of EU anti-corruption policies. The study shows that corruption has economic costs to the European Union - between EUR 179 billion and EUR 990 billion per year – but also social and political costs – more unequal societies, weaker rule of law, higher levels of organized crime and lower trust in EU institutions. The report recommends that the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) and a full EU-wide procurement system be applied to member states, which will reduce corruption costs significantly. **RAND Europe, March 2016.**

### Turkey: Lack of Openness in Parliamentary Process and Independence of Judiciary are Sources of Concern

On 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the Group of States against Corruption publishes a report on corruption, where it urges Turkey to pursue reforms and curb corruption. The report includes a large number of recommendations to improve anti-corruption measures in the groups of parliamentarians, judges and prosecutors, in respect of institutional settings and practices as well as with regard to the conduct of the officials concerned. **Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), 17 March 2016.**

### Mapping Anti-Corruption Tools in the Judicial Sector

This U4 analysis examines whether and how the judicial sector could benefit from anti-corruption measures that have proved to be useful in other sectors in improving the quality of the services they provide to users. The report states that there is a remarkable absence of support for the use of tough control, oversight and procurement tools to prevent and detect corruption in the judicial sector. **U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, February 2016**

### Reporting on Corruption at High Level: Between the Public Interest and the Captive Media

The report investigates whether the Macedonian media protects the public interest from high level of governmental corruption. It examines whether and how often the print media informed the public of such violations. The research combines qualitative and quantitative techniques in order to accurately monitor media content. **Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), March 2016.**

## Contacts

[Click here to Unsubscribe](#)

SELDI Secretariat  
Center for the Study of  
Democracy  
5 Alexander Zhendov str.  
1113 Sofia, Bulgaria  
Tel: (+359 2) 971 3000  
Fax: (+359 2) 971 2233  
Email: [seldi@online.bg](mailto:seldi@online.bg)



This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the SELDI initiative and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.