

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT 2015 – ROMANIA

SUMMARY REPORT ON CORRUPTION AND LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

Achievements:

The Superior Council of Magistrates maintained transparency of operations and acted to suspend judges and prosecutors under suspicion of legal violations; the number of corruption trials involving high-ranking public officials remained steady throughout the year; the media reported sensitive information from ongoing trials prompting some judges and rule-of-law advocates to complain; there are investigations against politicians, judges and administrative officials; ministers, members of parliament and judges were among those convicted in 2014.

Key issues:

Corruption among government officials remains a widespread problem; corruption among police officers contributed to a lack of respect from citizens and a corresponding disregard for their authority; bribery was common in the public sector including health care; protests erupted when 64 people died and 151 were injured in the Colectiv nightclub fire; protesters blamed the entire political class for allowing rampant corruption in all spheres of life and use the slogan “Corruption Kills!”; also this accident led to the government’s resignation; the confiscation of corruption proceeds remains very low since it was irregularly imposed by judges and prosecutors coupled with the authorities’ inability to track assets; the mechanism for non-declared property is not functionally effective and there are considerable delays.

Statistics:

As of September, courts issued 197 final convictions to 661 defendants; in the same period in 2014, there were 228 final convictions against 895 defendants. The National Anticorruption Directorate requested lifting parliamentary immunity for 8 current and former MPs, the parliament approved 6 and denied 2.

Public access to information:

There is a significant problem vis-à-vis the application of the FOIA law . It is reported that the principle of the separation of power is being breached by the government which increased its legislative powers at the expense of the parliament. The government is also criticized on the application of the law requiring transparency in decision making. A positive development is the Open Government Partnership action plan and the government’s with NGOs. It contributes to increase the amount of open data and to teach citizens how to use it. Although the National College for the Study of the Securitate Archives holds the majority of the Securitate’s communist-era files, its powers are limited since it cannot issue binding verdicts on individuals’ part records as Securitate collaborators.

Source: U.S. Department of State

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015