



News by SELDI members

[SELDI Presented the Results of the 2016 Corruption Monitoring System at Policy Workshop: Strengthening Resilience to Corruption and State Capture in Southeast Europe](#)



Photo: SELDI

Systemic corruption remains a problem in Southeast Europe in 2016, with many of the countries exhibiting at least some characteristics of state capture. This has been one of the key messages agreed upon by the participants at a policy workshop on 14 June 2016 in Brussels, when SELDI presented to the European policy community the results of its *2016 Corruption Monitoring System in SEE*. The countries from Southeast Europe need to focus not only on the fight against corruption, but also on making institutions efficient, as recommended by Mr. Andrey Kovatchev, Member of the European Parliament, Committee on Foreign Affairs. Mr. Boris Divjak, Director, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, Bergen maintained that the EU accession process is key to removing the county-level monopolies, while Ms Sabine Zwaenepoel, Chapter Coordinator, Accession negotiations to the EU, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission underlined the recent trend of using soft preventive tools and lack of effective enforcement. The Special Public Prosecutor of the Republic of Macedonia, Ms. Katica Janeva noted that her work is hindered by the refusal of cooperation and access to information from other public bodies. Ms. Milica Bozanic, Assistant Director for International Cooperation at the Serbian Anti-Corruption Agency highlighted that anti-corruption strategies do not truly drive or guarantee results. All institutions should have the necessary political will in order to achieve the desired change, with a key focus on tackling high-level corruption and ensuring whistleblower protection. **SELDI, 14 June 2016**

[Empowering Civil Society Efforts for Good Governance and Anti-Corruption: Meeting for the Memorandum of Understanding](#)



Photo: ACER

On 1 June 2016, SELDI's partner Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER) organized a meeting with seven Albanian civil society organizations (CSOs) to sign Memoranda of Understanding for future anti-corruption collaboration with ACER and SELDI, thus ensuring sustainability of mutual efforts. The discussion involved a presentation of the mission, objectives, and main work of SELDI, along with an explanation of the main pillars of the *Civil Society Strategy Joint Strategic Programme for Good Governance and Anti-Corruption in 2020* as a future milestone for the initiative. CSO participants suggested sharing information and studies of interest, and insisted on a mutual CSO engagement in initiatives for a better governance and effective anti-corruption policies in Albania. **ACER, 01 June 2016.**

[Regression in Public Participation in the Process of Drafting Laws in Macedonia: Government Mirror 2015 Results](#)



Photo: MCIC

On 1 June 2016 SELDI's partner, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) presented the results of its annual report, *Government Mirror 2015: Public Participation in the Process of Drafting Laws*, at a policy conference held in Skopje. The results for 2015 indicate that institutions have become more closed, with declining or stagnating indicators in their openness of the state bodies in communicating with the public, support of civil society organizations, and the in the preparation of specific legislative proposals. The results from the monitoring of the

Corruption, its Measurement, and Derived Policy Implications in a Complex Multi-Country Context

On 28 April 2016 in Brussels, the president of SELDI's partner Romanian Academic Society (SAR), prof. Alina Mungiu-Pippidi took part in an event showing the findings of the ANTICORRP and DIGIWHIST research projects, titled *Fighting Corruption: from headlines to real impact*. The study relies on objective indicators for measuring corruption which reveal how it may harm the society. In the EU, it shows how trust in the EU, innovation activity and government effectiveness positively correlate with a decreased level of corruption. This holds true when corruption is measured in various ways, such as the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures, control of corruption and public integrity. **SAR, 04 May 2016.**

Encouraging Good Governance at Local Level: Strengthening of Cooperation and Strategic Development between Municipalities and Communities



Photo: Riinvest Institute

On 31 May 2016, SELDI's partner Riinvest Institute, in collaboration with Development Group and Community Development Institute, held a forum on the published report *Management of Markets in 16 Municipalities – Opportunities for Inter-Municipal Cooperation*. The goal was to encourage municipalities in Kosovo to create partnerships and regional networks to address issues of common interest, consolidating and improving the standards of good governance, and the development of new approaches to addressing current challenges and the future of local governance. **Riinvest Institute, 31 May 2016.**

Anti-Corruption News from the SEE Region

Albania: Police Chief Suspended During Illegal Wiretapping Probe

Haki Cako, the head of Albanian police, was suspended on 7 June 2016 at the request of prosecutors that are investigating him for abuse of office, under the suspicion that police are illegally using a wiretapping device. Albania's main opposition party, the Democratic Party (PD), accused the Interior Ministry of illegally monitoring Socialist Party Prime Minister Edi Rama's "political rivals, the opposition, journalists and important ambassadors." The Albanian president agreed that the device for interception was "illegal" and "anti-constitutional". Police deny that the device is for wiretapping, claiming it was brought to them by the Italian police and is only used for identifying phone numbers in given areas. However, prosecutors say the device entered the country without the necessary authorization from the prosecutor general, and have found the device to be capable of intercepting telephone conversations. **RAI, 08 June 2016.**

Croatia: Vice Prime Minister Found in Conflict of Interest

The Croatian parliament's Commission for Conflicts of Interest ruled that Vice Prime Minister Tomislav Karamarko was in conflict of interest over relations with a lobbyist for the Hungarian energy company MOL. The commission stated that Karamarko broke Article 2 and Article 5 of the law on preventing conflicts of interest, due to his involvement of personal views and proposals in arbitrations and failure to declare the relationship between his wife's company and the MOL lobbyist in question. This case is currently contributing to a wider political crisis in Croatia, where a dissolved parliament and early elections later this year are a real possibility. **RAI, 15 June 2016.**

Kosovo MP Goes on Trial for Property Scams

Azem Sylja, a prominent politician from the ruling Democratic Party of Kosovo, is accused of being the head of a crime syndicate involved in property scams and money laundering. He surrendered to the authorities and was placed in detention on 29 April 2016, with six other subjects arrested so far, including Nuhi Uka, the former chairman of the Pristina Municipal Court. Fifty other suspects are also under investigation, with the Kosovo prosecution claiming that the group had ties with Serbian criminals and "deprived Kosovo of public property worth around 30 million euros." Sylja appeared before a Pristina court on May 31.

RAI, 01 June 2016.

[Romania: Former President's Brother Sentenced to Four Years in Prison](#)

Mircea Basescu, the brother of former president Traian Basescu, received a final sentence from the Constanta Court of Appeals of four years in prison, for influence peddling. He was sent to court in June 2014 by the National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA), accused of receiving €250,000 from Florin Anghel, member of the Bercea Mondial family, in exchange for the promise to intervene for a more favourable decision on a case involving Anghel's father, Sandu Anghel. **ActMedia, 17 June 2016.**

Upcoming Events

[Multi-stakeholder Workshop on UNCAC and its Review Mechanism – Austria](#)

The Multi-stakeholder workshop to Strengthen Civil Society Capacity on the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and its review mechanism will take place at the International Anti-corruption Academy, located near to Vienna in Austria. **UNCAC, 19-22 September 2016, Vienna**

Reports and Analyses

[Audit Finding: Evidence and Indication – Cooperation Between the SAI and Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro](#)

SELDI's partner Institute Alternativa (IA) produced a report that assesses cooperation between the State Audit Institution (SAI) and Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro. IA concluded that the cooperation does not produce desired results in the fight against corruption and sanctioning of those responsible for misuse of budget funds. The assessment is based on the lack of criminal liability arising from the SAI's findings, complete and timely information on actions taken by the Prosecutor's Office based on the SAI's negative findings, and criminal charges filed by the SAI. IA recommends that the SAI and Prosecutor's Office must make amendments to the Criminal Code and define a special framework for cooperation that includes specific obligations for meetings, task forces, and joint training sessions. **IA, 06 May 2016.**

[GRECO 16th General Activity Report \(2015\)](#)

The annual report identifies key findings in *Prevention of Corruption in Respect of Members of Parliament, Judges and Prosecutors*, drawn from GRECO's 2015 evaluation reports in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey. An overview is provided of the impact of GRECO's recommendations concerning the legislation, practices, and institutional framework in the evaluated states in 2015. **Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), 14-18 March 2016.**

[Press Freedom in 2015: The Battle for the Dominant Message](#)

Freedom House's *Freedom of the Press* is an annual report that assesses the degree of media freedom through evaluation of the legal environment for the media, political pressures that influence reporting, and economic factors that affect access to information. Attacks against journalists in the Western Balkans contributed to an overall decline in media freedom there, with concerns noted in Serbia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The government in Turkey took advantage of real and perceived security threats to intensify its crackdown on the media. Key findings for 2015 indicate that worldwide press freedom declined to its lowest point in twelve years, with Turkey and Macedonia among the countries suffering the largest declines. **Freedom House, April 2016.**

[Integrity Scan of the Institutions of Kosovo 2016](#)

SELDI's associate partner, Lëvizja FOL published results of a quantitative study on integrity in Kosovo's public institutions, conducted with 1000 officials from public institutions at the central

and local level. Integrity is identified as a key concept in building effective and quality driven public administrations. The main findings include results of the survey about aspects of the guiding legal framework for integrity, application of the Code of Conduct, the leadership and management of institutions, and professional advancement. Regarding the frequency of involvement in corruption cases, a large part of the respondents refused to answer, particularly at the local level (49%), with 25% of respondents answering “very often” or “often”. **Lëvizja FOL, June 2016.**

Fourth Work Report of the Anti-Corruption Committee of the Parliament of Montenegro

The Network for Affirmation of the NGO Sector (MANS), an associate partner of SELDI, released their Fourth Work Report in their monitoring of the Anti-Corruption Committee of the Parliament of Montenegro. The report includes the results of monitoring over the time period December 2012 to February 2016, outlining information on the Committee and its work, activities of the Members of the Committee, and data on the fulfilment of the Work Plan adopted by the Committee. It also includes control mechanisms used by the Committee, analysis on the Committee’s acting on petitions, as well as the degree of realization of conclusions, decisions, reviews, and positions adopted by the Committee. MANS makes a number of specific conclusions and recommendations for the improvement of the Committee’s work. **MANS, 28 April 2016.**

Serbia: Testing the Integrity of Police Officers

SELDI’s associate partner, Belgrade Center for Security Policy, analysed integrity tests designed to identify police officers who are prone to corrupt practices, to initiate disciplinary proceedings, gather evidence for the prosecutor’s office, and identify police officers that are trustworthy. The study includes an explanation and discussion of the integrity test, the possibilities and limitations of testing the integrity of police officers in Serbia, and observation of the legal frameworks used for the application of the integrity test in various police forces in the world. Recommendations include that the details of the integrity test must be further regulated by law, and that the authority that conducts the testing should be fully autonomous and financially independent. **Belgrade Center for Security Policy, 2016.**

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