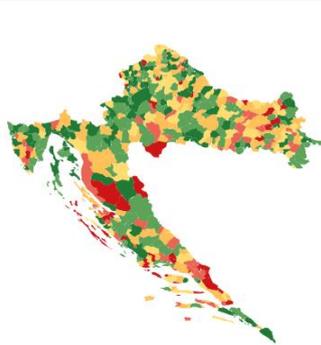


News by SELDI members

Montenegro: Low Number of Bidders Indicates Corruption Risks in Public Procurement

According to analysis by SELDI's member, Institut Alternativa, in 2016, 52 private companies earned more than a half of the total amount spent on public procurement. Last year 616 state institutions and state-owned enterprises concluded 7,653 contracts for the total value of EUR 447,739,222 or 11.77% of the GDP. A concern poses the fact that the average number of bids per tender was 2.21 in 2016. This number is in constant decline and is twice as low compared to 2011 when it was 4.34. Institut Alternativa warns that the low number of bidders per tender can be an indicator of the existence of corruption in public procurement, i.e. writing of "too specific" tender specifications, intended for a specific company. Moreover, since 13.6% of the contracting authorities conduct more than 90% of public procurement procedures, and the remaining 86.4% implement less than 10%, then it is necessary to urgently start the process of centralisation of the public procurement system. **Institut Alternativa, 27 July 2017**

Budget Transparency in Croatian Counties, Cities and Municipalities



Source: Institute of Public Finance

Transparent budgets enable citizens to obtain complete, accurate, timely and understandable information about the budget. Thus, citizens can get informed and advocate for the more efficient collection of public funds and supply of public goods and services, increased accountability of local authorities and reduced opportunities for corruption. In August 2017, SELDI's member, Institute of Public Finance, presented the results of an analysis on the budget transparency of local government units measured by the number of budget documents published on their official

websites. The average budget transparency of local government units has improved year by year. In the current research cycle, it averages 3.1 (the maximum rank is 5), with counties already being very transparent (4.6 on average), cities fairly good (3.7 on average), but municipalities still lagging behind (2.8 on average). The results can be searched in more detail on an [interactive map](#). **Institute of Public Finance, 9 August 2017**

Watchdog Team Formed to Monitor Public Administration Reform in BiH Municipalities

On 27 July 2017, Watch Dog team for Public Administration Reform was formed to monitor the BiH municipalities Doboje, Tešanj, Doboje Istok and Gracanica. The team was established in the framework of the #EU_WeBER project by representatives of six non-governmental organizations: Center for Development of Civil Society in BiH from Doboje (CRCDBIH); Youth Chess Club Doboje Istok (OŠK); Association Balans from Doboje (Balans); Association Development, Ecology and Community from Tešanj (REZ); Radio Club Gracanica (RC Gracanica) and Radio Antena Jelah-Tešanj (RAJ). The tasks of the informal Watch Dog team are to observe and assess the status of the Public Administration Reform in these municipalities, report on the state of transparency and accountability of local government units, provide legal assistance to individuals and legal entities whose rights are violated. **Center for Civil Society Development in BiH, July 2017**

Introducing Corruption Proofing of Legislation in Montenegro



Photo: RAI

The Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) Secretariat held a workshop for the representatives of the Agency for Prevention of Corruption in Montenegro under the Regional Programme on Strengthening the Capacity of Anti-corruption Authorities and Civil Society to Combat Corruption and Contribute to the UNCAC Review Process, funded by the Austrian Development Agency. The participants discussed the outline of the Methodology on Corruption Proofing of Legislation

for Montenegro. They also engaged in practical exercises provided by RAI's expert on Corruption Proofing. **RAI, 20-21 July 2017**

Budget Transparency Promoted in 15 Towns and Municipalities of Serbia

The town of Kruševac is one of the 15 towns and municipalities in Serbia, in which a budget transparency project is currently implemented. The aim of the initiative is to establish a continuous cooperation, understanding and constructive dialogue between local self-government and non-state actors in local communities in the field of public finance management. With the support of SELDI's member, the Educational centre – Kruševac, boxes were placed at three locations where citizens can ask anonymously questions about the local budget. Experts on city services offered answers to the most common questions and the answers were presented to the general public through the programs of Radio Television Kruševac. In August 2017, Educational centre – Kruševac will prepare posters, thus making basic budget information available to a large number of citizens. **Educational centre – Kruševac, 25 July 2017**

The Trust in CSOs in Montenegro Slowly Increases



Photo: Center for Democratic Transition

SELDI's member, the Center for Democratic Transition (CDT), presented the 2016 CSO Sustainability Index report for Montenegro. The research showed that 39.8% of respondents has had trust in CSOs, compared to 35.7% from November 2015. According to Anđelija Lučić, Program Coordinator in CDT, "The public generally acknowledges services provided by civil sector. On the other side, due to unsafe financial sustainability these organizations apply for all possible types of funding, even if it does not fit into their missions, which endangers their capability to answer to real needs and priorities of the

community". **Center for Democratic Transition, 8 August 2017**

CSOs Warn Against Light Sentences for Corruption Offenses in Kosovo*

SELDI's partner ÇOHU!, in collaboration with NGO Communication for Social Development, presented 2015 and 2016 data findings, which identify discrepancies between the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council's data on corruption cases and the low penalties issued by the courts. Different violations have been identified in the monitored 102 cases and 214 court hearings in the Courts in Pristina, Gjilan and Mitrovica, ranging from technical and procedural ones to substantive ones. ÇOHU! warns that light sentences for corruption offenses are predominant, while there is general lack of substantial penalties for organized crime cases. **Organization for Democracy, Anti-corruption and Dignity - ÇOHU!, 12 July 2017**

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

European Commission: BiH Needs a New Law on Judiciary

The rule of law is at the heart of the European integration process, according to a statement from the Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina, sent to a Ministerial Meeting in the framework of the Structured Dialogue on Justice. The Ministerial Meeting discussed an EU Member States experts' proposal for the new Law on BiH Courts that is expected to ensure effective functioning of the judiciary in line with the EU standards and the domestic legal order. **European Western Balkans, 21 July 2017**

Croatia's Ruling Party Supporting Corruption at the Country's National Broadcaster?

Eyebrows have been raised after a Croatian parliamentary committee demanded the removal of the supervisory board of the Croatian Radio-Television (HRT), following warnings by the board that corruption and other illegal activities may be taking place at the broadcaster. A majority of the committee, made up of MPs from the ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and their junior coalition partners, voted to remove the board, although this decision will have to be supported by a majority in parliament in order to come into force. According to Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, the supervisory board pointed out numerous irregularities in its report on the legality of HRT's activities in 2016, referencing "cases that may have been the result of possible corrupt actions and illegal activities by individual persons". **The Calvert Journal and Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, 13 July 2017**

Bulgaria: The Prosecutor's Office Accused Miroslav Borshosh in Corrupt Management of National Palace of Culture

The former director of the National Palace of Culture has been accused of misappropriation of funds and lack of care. In his work as director of the National Palace of Culture, Miroslav Borshosh grossly violated the Law on Public Procurement (PPL) and the Commerce Act. This is the conclusion after the inspections of the Chief Inspectorate at the Council of Ministers, the National Construction Control Directorate (DNSK) and the external audit firm Semper Fortis OOD, which discovered many violations in the National Palace of Culture's management. The report of the commission states that the award of nearly 100 supply and service contracts was made without applying the relevant PPL procedures. **Novinite.com, 19 July 2017**

Anti-corruption among the Key Topics of the Trieste Western Balkans Summit

In the framework of the Western Balkans Process, Italy welcomed in Trieste on 12th July 2017 the Heads of Government, Foreign Ministers and the Ministers of Economy of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Slovenia, United Kingdom and representatives of the European Union and the International Financial Institutions. According to the Declaration of the Italian Chair, "Improving governance and the rule of law is an essential requirements for EU accession and for building a sound economic fabric. In order to contribute to these developments and mainstream the anticorruption dimension, the Italian National Anticorruption Authority (ANAC) chaired in Trieste a workshop with partner institutions from the Western Balkans and the Regional Anticorruption Initiative (RAI), working on five issues: prevention of corruption; transparency; public procurement; whistleblowing and conflict of interest." **Europa.rs, 12 July 2017**

** This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

[Key Points of Security Service Reform, 28 September 2017, Belgrade, Serbia](#)

The Belgrade Center for Security Policy (BCBP) is organizing a public debate on "Key Security Reform Points", which will be held on 28 September 2017. The BCSP is continuously conducting research into the legal framework that regulates Serbia's security and intelligence system and its impact. The main topic of the discussion will be the legislative reform of the security and intelligence system of the Republic of Serbia in order to build mechanisms of accountability and strengthening the rule of law. The event will bring together representatives of security services, independent state institutions, academia, civil society and the media. **Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, 28 September 2017**

Reports and Analyses

[Policy Brief: Balkan corruption – the China connection \(2017\)](#)



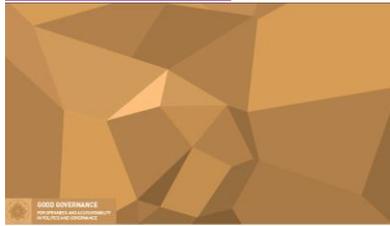
The policy brief reveals the acute governance problems besetting the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as the role of Chinese infrastructure projects in fuelling corruption in the wider Western Balkan region. The analysis comes after the block of the completion of the China-financed Kicevo-Ohrid highway by the Ministry of Transport and Communication amid allegations of losses amounting to €155 million. **The Institute of Democracy "Societas Civilis" – Skopje, July 2017**

[Six Years of Prosecutorial Investigation in Montenegro - Cooperation between the Police and the Prosecution Service](#)



The shift to prosecutorial investigation was the most turbulent change experienced by the Police Directorate and the State Prosecution Service in the course of several decades of reforms in Montenegro. The authors of the publication identify the advantages and disadvantages of court-led vs. prosecutorial investigations and whether there is an adequate division of powers among the police, prosecution, courts and attorneys. They also analyse the application of the Criminal Procedure Code, and provide practical examples on the obstacles encountered and the ways to overcome them. **Institut Alternativa, July 2017**

Openness of Judicial Bodies in the Region and Montenegro



authors: Dragan Keprivica / Biljana Papovic

OPENNESS OF JUDICIAL BODIES IN THE REGION AND MONTENEGRO



ActionSEE

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In cooperation with partners from the regional network CSO “ActionSEE”, SELDI’s member CDT prepared a policy paper, analysing the level of transparency, openness and accountability of judiciary in the region of the Western Balkans. The authors give recommendations for improvement in the judiciary system. According to the analysis, on average, courts meet 48% of the performance indicators while prosecutor’s offices meet only 40%. **Center for Democratic Transition, 9 August 2017**

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