



News by SELDI members

Standing Up to State Capture: Innovative Methods to Investigate Fraud and Corruption in EU Funding for Agriculture



Photo: Center for the Study of Democracy

The Center for the Study of Democracy organized a high-profile two-day conference on State Capture and the innovative methods for detection of fraud and corruption with EU funds in the agricultural sector. The conference brought together academics, practitioners and innovators to showcase and discuss methods for assessing and measuring the state capture phenomenon and demonstrate the current and up-and-coming tools and techniques in detecting, preventing and investigating fraud and corruption in the EU funding for agriculture. In addition, the event tackled the potential impacts of organized crime and the state capture phenomenon on the rural

and agriculture sectors in the EU and explored key aspects of the risks for the EU's financial interests posed by white collar crime in the agricultural sector. Representative from SELDI's associated member, the Romanian Academic Society presented a recent study conducted in Romania, demonstrating that despite its evident economic growth, the country is still affected by pervasive corruption and overall poor governance. **CSD, 13-14 September 2018**

Implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)



Photo: Macedonian Center for International Cooperation

The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) and the Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) organized a conference on the topic: "UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and Integrity, Transparency and Anti-Corruption Preventive Policies" which upgraded knowledge about the mechanisms for revision of this Convention and its significance in the Macedonian anti-corruption legislation. The conference brought together representatives of the state, civil and private sector and provided possibility for a discussion on the implementation of anti-corruption measures focusing on five main areas: corruption

prevention, law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, technical assistance and exchange of information. The Conference emphasized the importance of this international instrument and stakeholders' commitment for consistent inclusion and implementation. It was concluded that Macedonia on the road to the EU integration should fully devote to creating a legislation and institutions dedicated to the fight against corruption and that the civil sector can be a valuable partner to the state institutions in this field. **MCIC, 5 July 2018**

Three-day Workshop for Inclusion of All Stakeholders in the Process of Revision and Implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)

The Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) in partnership with the Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) for the first time in Macedonia organized a three-day "Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on Inclusion of the Stakeholders in the Review Process of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)", aimed at bringing together representatives of the civil society, the state and private sectors. The focus of this workshop was to deepen the cooperation between governments, civil society organizations and the private sector in the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the second cycle of its review. A total of 28 participants discussed the importance of cooperation between them in the development of the country and the fight against corruption, and pointed out that the UN Convention against Corruption is the only legally binding, universal instrument for fighting against corruption, and its Article 13 calls for the whole community to actively engage in the fight against it.



Photo: Macedonian Center for International Cooperation

The representative of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime welcomed the initiative to organize a workshop of this nature for the first time in the country and stressed out that consistent involvement of civil society in the revision process is a significant thread in the proper implementation of UNCAC. Through the elaboration of the provisions of Chapters 2 and 5 of the Convention and through group work, the participants recognized the opportunities for their involvement in the monitoring and preparation of the Shadow report that will go in parallel with the preparation of the official country assessment report on UNCAC implementation. **MCIC, 3-5 December 2018**

Promoting Inclusive Legal Reform for Good Administration in Bosna and Herzegovina

SELDI's partner, the Center for Civil Initiatives promoted the Inclusive Legal Reform for Good Administration through a conference, held in Sarajevo on 27 September 2018. The event focused on the challenges and perspectives in the context of the current local government reforms in the Sarajevo Canton in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It aimed at contributing towards reforms that would improve the services provided to citizens of Sarajevo and enable broader public participation within the city as part of the project "Better Sarajevo for All of Us" conducted in cooperation with Ministry of Justice and Administration: Canton Sarajevo and the support of the Government of Switzerland. **CCI, 27 September 2018**

Western Balkans and the Rule of Law: How Close to the EU?

SELDI's member, the Center for Democratic Transition (CDT), in cooperation with the Balkan Trust for Democracy (BTD) and the Royal Norwegian Embassy, organized open discussion on topic "Western Balkans and the Rule of Law: How Close to the EU?" on 29 November 2018 in Podgorica (Montenegro). The event was part of the platform for exchange of experiences about advancement of Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia in accomplishing political requirements in Chapters 23 and 24. It gathered representatives of the public institutions, political parties, civil society, media and diplomatic community. Welcome remarks were made by Ms. Gordana Delic, Director of the Balkan Trust for Democracy and opening remarks were made by H.E. Mr. Arne Sannes Bjørnstad, Ambassador, Royal Norwegian Embassy to Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro and Mr. Aleksandar Drljevic, Chief Negotiator (Montenegro). **CDT, 29 November, 2018**

Establishment of a Committee for Electoral and Other Legislation Reform in Montenegro

The Montenegrin Parliament adopted a decision establishing the Committee for Reform of Electoral and Other Legislation at the end of October 2018. Dragan Koprivica, CDT's Executive Director is a member of the Committee. The Committee has seven working groups, tasked with preparing proposals for amendments to laws and other legal acts, as well as other solutions in the areas of the laws on the election of committee members and MPs, the electoral register, the election campaigns, the media, the financing of political parties, etc. Their focus will also be placed on the activities of the judicial council, the State Election Commission and the Anti-Corruption Agency. **CDT, November 2018**

Increasing the Role of the Civil Society in the Fight against Corruption at Local Level in Albania



Photo: Institute for Democracy and Mediation

The Institute for Democracy and Mediation and Risk Monitor held a conference on 14 September 2018 in Tirana, aimed at improving the capacities and role of civil society at promoting good governance and the fight against corruption at local level. The conference commemorated the completion of the "CIVILSC – Civil Society Instruments against Corruption" project and served as a discussion platform among state and non-state stakeholders from Albania and Bulgaria. The need for further joint efforts, where both local governments and civil society actors undertake actions at improving good-governance at local level, was clearly expressed. The event also focused on the challenges related to the future development of local government units to deal with the fight against corruption and the role of youth mobilization at a local level. **IDM, 14 September 2018**

Procurement for the Security Sector in the Legal Vacuum in Montenegro until 2020



Photo: Institut Alternatva

SELDI's member, Institute Alternativa organised a panel discussion "Towards Better Regulation of Public and Secret Procurement in the Security Sector" on 23 November 2018. The event followed the proposed new Law on Public Procurement in Montenegro, and the response of the European Commission on it. According to the Head of the Public Procurement Directorate at the Ministry of Defence of Montenegro, the new Law on Public Procurement will be corrected and adopted in 2020. The panellists recommended the holding of similar panel discussions and consultations that prior to the final changes and adoption of the new procurement law. **Institut Alternativa, 23 November, 2018**

Enhancing the Open Government Partnership in Montenegro

Institute Alternativa has developed 15 proposals, comments and suggestions on the National Action Plan for implementation of initiative Open Government Partnership in Montenegro (2018-2020) prepared by the Ministry of Public Administration. The key proposals include the abolition of tax and business secrecy as the base for limiting the access to information. Institute Alternativa notes that the current practice of state authorities is to declare information of public interest as tax or business secret. Thus, bodies, primarily in the service of citizens, are equated with private companies, and the public remains deprived of information that is important for assessing the effectiveness of these bodies. Another proposal claims that the openness of the public policy making process is also an important element of the transparency of the work of the public administration. According to Institute Alternativa, opinion of the European Commission experts on

all drafts of Montenegrin laws should be available to the citizens and members of the Parliament, who ultimately adopt the laws. The most relevant anti-corruption proposal is the one for publication of the decisions related to the allocation of budgetary reserve funds. Currently around 20 million euro are spent annually from the budgetary reserve without informing the citizens on what is their purpose. **Institute Alternativa, November 2018**

Corruption Risk Assessment in the Healthcare Institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Photo: Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative

SELDI's associated member, the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) together with the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight Against Corruption (APIK) and the Secretariat and Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) organised a Training on Corruption Risk Assessment in Healthcare Institutions in BiH. The event aimed at strengthening the capacities of health care institutions to identify healthcare-related corruption risks in order to carry out self-assessment effectively and develop their integrity plans. **RAI, October, 2018**

IT Tools in Prevention of Corruption



Photo: Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative

The Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative encouraged the exchange best practices and models of existing IT solutions in the field of corruption risk assessment and corruption proofing of legislation through a workshop, organized in Chisinau, Moldova on 12-13 September 2018. The event aimed to define and agree on the final IT models, which will be developed by RAI and delivered to respective national institutions.

RAI, September 2018

Anti-Corruption News from the SEE Region

The current section of the Newsletter presents a summary of the latest anti-corruption news from the SEE region, based on consolidated information from multiple sources, such as media outlets and narratives received by the SELDI project partners.

Former Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski Escapes Jails Sentence and Receives Asylum in Hungary

The former Prime Minister of Macedonia was set to serve a two-year jail sentence for the illicit purchase of a luxury limousine estimated at EUR 580,000. On the day he was set to serve his sentence, Gruevski has fled to Hungary where he has received political asylum. Gruevski was prime minister of Macedonia for the period 2006 to 2016 with his party VMRO DPMNE. His party is a member of the European People's Party EPP, together with Orbán's leading party Fidesz. After Gruevski fled Macedonia, some of his former associates were detained. Figures like former transport minister, Mile Janakieski, former government secretary general Kiril Bozinovski, and former Secret Police Chief Saso Mijalkov face a 30-day detention. Gruevski and his associates are all facing several court trials, the main one, codenamed "Titanik" in which they are accused of election fraud.

Arrests in Bulgaria over Citizenship-selling Corrupt Scheme

Over 20 people have been arrested, including the head of the Bulgarian State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad for participating in a corrupt scheme for the granting of Bulgarian citizenship to foreigners.

In addition to the arrest of the head and some of the staff of the agency, detained were middle-men who contacted people from Macedonia, Moldova and Ukraine to pay a bribe in order to receive proof documents for Bulgarian heritage. Only for the first half of 2018, 18 thousand people have claimed Bulgarian heritage, and around 10 thousand of these people were with fraudulent documents.

Trainings in Proactive Transparency

Transparency International in Bosnia and Herzegovina (TI BiH) organized in Sarajevo the first of six training courses for the state institutions of the Federation in the field of proactive transparency. The research conducted by TI suggests that it is necessary for the country to amend its laws on free access of information, develop guidelines and requirements of proactive transparency for administrative organs and establish mechanisms for the cooperation of institutions and civil society in the decision-making process, among others.

Montenegro Opposition Leader Jailed on Corruption Charges

The Montenegrin pro-Russian opposition leader was arrested for refusing to testify in a corruption case against Montenegro's special prosecutor Milivoje Katnic. Nebojsa Medojevic is a lawmaker and an opposition leader of the pro-Russian party, Democratic Front.

European Commission's Non-Paper on Rule of Law in Montenegro

European Commission's non-paper on rule of law in Montenegro was presented at a press conference in Podgorica. Montenegro has achieved continuous progress in legislative reform and institution building, and has an initial track record in the fight against high-level corruption and organised crime, money laundering and temporary seizures of assets, but has only limited results in some other areas, according to the latest [European Commission's non-paper on the rule of law](#). The non-paper is part of the Commission's six-monthly reporting on chapters 23 and 24 for Montenegro.

Employment in the Public Sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina Should be First Subject to Public Announcement

Public companies and institutions in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina will no longer be able to employ workers without the process of public announcements. This is prescribed by amendments of the Labor Act that came into effect on 17 November 2018. According to the Transparency International (TI) reports, citizens in BiH are most often faced with corruption in employment. The previous legislative framework allowed employment in public companies and institutions on the basis of recommendations, political eligibility without transparency, nor implementation of public competition procedures. The amendments to the Act that came into effect provide that state entities and public companies must organize a procedure, based on competition rules and including public announcement.

Upcoming events

XII National Conference Dedicated to the Fight Against Corruption

SELDI's associated partner, the Network for Affirmation of NGO Sector – MANS will organize the XII National Conference dedicated to the fight against corruption on 7 December 2018 in Podgorica, Montenegro. The conference will be open by Ms. Suzana Pribilović, Minister of Public Administration, H.E. Ambassador Aivo Orav, Head of EU Delegation to Montenegro and H.E. Robert Hajnrh Veber, German ambassador to Montenegro. **MANS, December 2018**

Peer-to-Peer Exchange of Experience on Asset Recovery Measures

The Associated SELDI partner Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) will organise, together with the Advice on Individual Rights in Europe (AIRE), a Peer-to-Peer visit to Romania. The purpose of

the visit is to learn first-hand about the best practices and experiences of the Romanian authorities and the share expertise on the implementation of asset recovery measures. The event will allow participants to gain more comprehensive understanding on the mechanisms in the field of asset recovery and increase awareness about available legal and practical solutions. **RAI, 07 November 2018**

Balkan Tender Watch's Regional Conference on the State of Affairs in Public Procurement

Balkan Tender Watch's Regional Conference on the State of Affairs in Public Procurement will be organized in Skopje on 13 December 2018, that will gather over 100 participants from all over the Western Balkans (CSOs, government institutions, private sector and the media) to express their opinion, experience, best practices, and concerns, and foster new ideas for a more effective role of various stakeholders in the fight against corruption in public procurement. For each of the countries comprehensive and timely information on the state of affairs in the public procurement related to the EU integration will be provided in a form of shadow reports so the participants can detect current obstacles to the efficient fight against corruption and future challenges in that regard; point to the areas where stakeholders can play better roles and recommend next steps and activities for improvements.

Balkan Tender Watch is a EU founded project under Consolidating Regional Thematic Networks of Civil Society Organizations Programme. The lead implementing organization of the project is Open Society Foundation, Serbia, and the partners of the project are: Open Society Fund, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo Foundation for Open Society, Center for Civil Communications, Macedonia and The Network for Affirmation of the NGO Sector – MANS, Montenegro. **Balkan Tender Watch** www.balkantenderwatch.eu, **December 2018**

Reports and Analyses

Corruption Assessment Report of Macedonia



MCIC produced the Corruption Assessment Report of Macedonia. The Report is an overview of the state and dynamics of corruption in the Republic of Macedonia. The basis of this report is the Corruption Monitoring System (CMS) developed by the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) from Bulgaria. The CMS relies on diverse sources of information and combines quantitative and qualitative methods for monitoring and assessment of corruption. The report focuses only on the level of corruption, without any special overview of the anticorruption policies, institutional practices and the implementation of laws, the role of judiciary in tackling corruption, the impact of effects of corruptive acts on the development of the economy, etc. **Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, March 2018**

Shadow Report: The State of Democracy in Serbia 2018



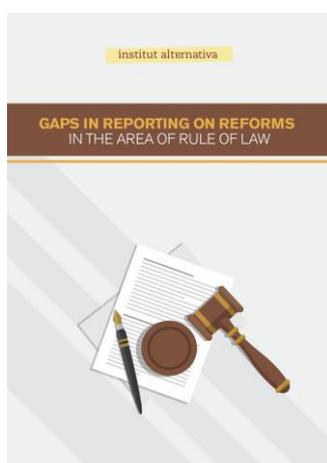
SELDI's member, the Centre for Contemporary Politics, produced a shadow report on the State of Democracy in Serbia 2018. The report draws from the "democracy" section in the European Commission's reports on Serbia, and it covers five areas: elections, parliamentary work, governance, civil society and freedom of expression. The authors aim to provide the public with more insight on the current condition of democracy and the five areas of study. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the condition of democracy in Serbia during the period November 2017–September 2018 and is a continuation from the previous report "Democracy in Progress: Shadow Report on Political Copenhagen Criteria in Western Balkans EU Candidate States". **Centre for Contemporary Politics, November, 2018**

Macedonia's Model of Inclusion of CSOs in the Accession Negotiations



The aim of the paper is to incite a discussion between the Macedonian government and the civil society over the model of inclusion of civil society organizations in the EU accession process. Based on data analysis and semi-structured interviews with CSO representative from Serbia and Montenegro it analyzes the currently implemented models in Montenegro and Serbia for CSOs' inclusion. It concludes with a discussion on the possible options and solutions in this area. **Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis – Skopje, September 2018**

Gaps in Reporting on Reforms in the Area of Rule of Law



SELDI's member Institut Alternativa published an analysis which aims to point out to the gaps and omissions in the rule of law reporting that make monitoring difficult and hamper the efforts towards reform processes attaining full impacts and expected effects. In addition, the analysis tends to provide an incentive for a shift in reporting from rigorously formalized (at the level of activities - "realized/ unrealized") towards reporting focused on the impact and results. The authors focus on chapters 23 and 24, as well as the monitoring process of reform in a number of key areas, such as judicial reform, repression and preventive anti-corruption, all human rights, migration, asylum, border protection, the fight against organized crime, etc. **Institut Alternativa, November 2018**

Policy paper "After Three Big Election Cycles: How to Electoral Integrity?"



The Center for Democratic Transition (CDT), Montenegro has issued a policy paper, including recommendations for improving of the work of the Agency for Prevention of Corruption in the field of observing the implementation of the Law on the Financing of Political Entities and Electoral Campaigns through the use of state resources. **Center for Democratic Transition, November, 2018**

Inclusion of the Private Sector in the fight Against Corruption, Possibilities and forms of Cooperation between Institutions in the Anti-corruption System in BiH

The current report, issued by the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight Against Corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina, focuses on the need for improvement of the procedural and legal framework for more active participation of the private sector in anti-corruption activities. Given the fact that corruption can pose an obstacle to private and foreign investment and economic development, the general goal of this document is to launch an



initiative, aiming to build anti-corruption policies within the companies, and encourage them to use corruption preventive tools. The ultimate objective of the initiative will be the strengthening of the integrity and transparency of the business sector.

Agency for the Prevention of Corruption and the Coordination of the Fight Against Corruption, Bosnia and Herzegovina, January 2018

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