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ANTI-CORRUPTION NEWSLETTER

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**NEWS BY
SELDI
MEMBERS**



FROM ROMANIA TO FINLAND – DISTANCE DOES (NOT) MATTER

The Centre for Contemporary Politics and the EU Info Centre organised the seventh panel discussion in a series of events in the framework of the new EU Council Presidency. Panellists including Sem Fabrizi (ambassador and the head of the EU Delegation to Serbia), Oana Cristina Popa (Ambassador of Romania to Serbia), Kimmo Lähdevirta (Ambassador of Finland to Serbia) and Tanja Mišćević (head of the team conducting negotiations on Serbia's accession to the EU) discussed Romanian achievements during its presidency of the Council of European Union, priorities for the Finnish presidency, and the future of the Western Balkans in the coming six months. The panel was moderated by CEP's Programme Director, Milena Lazarević. "The progress within the 23rd and 24th chapters have a crucial importance for the overall advancement – no one should be surprised that Serbia has opened just one chapter this year," noted Fabrizi.

(Centre for Contemporary Politics, 4 July 2019)



INCREASING THE TRANSPARENCY AND CIVIL CONFIDENCE IN SERBIAN JUDICIARY

"Open Doors of Justice" goal is to strengthen citizens' confidence in the work of judicial institutions in the Republic of Serbia. The project seeks to increase citizens' confidence in the judiciary through: developing dialogue and communication between citizens and representatives of the judiciary as well as strengthening the accountability of their work. To this end a digital education portal has been created. The purpose of this portal is to inform citizens on judiciary, for all the project resources including booklets, infographics, blogs, etc. (Centre for Contemporary Politics, August 2019)

OTVORENA VRATA PRAVOSUDA

Pratite nas
Prijavite se i dobijajte obaveštenja
Mesto *
Izaberite mesto...
E-mail *
Dobijite

NAJNOVIJI BLOGOVI
Zašto je tužilaštvo bitno?
Predrag Blagojević

UKLUČI SE
Dijalog je način kako da se bolje razumemo.
Uključite se u komunikaciju o pravosuđu u Srbiji.

Nejave događaja
Tematska otvorena vrata u Pančevu - Zašto suđenja dugo traju? September 26 @ 14:00 - 15:30 **PRIJAVI SE**
Tematska otvorena vrata u Vranju - Zašto suđenja dugo traju? October 3 @ 17:00 - 18:30 **PRIJAVI SE**
Tematska otvorena vrata u Knjaževcu - Zašto suđenja dugo traju? October 7 @ 17:00 - 18:30 **PRIJAVI SE**
Tematska otvorena vrata u Somboru - Zašto suđenja dugo traju?

Početna O nama Blogovi Moja prava U mom mestu Uključite se Reforma Kontakt

SERBIAN MINISTRY OF FINANCE ADOPTS CIVIL PARTNERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

SELDI partner Center for European Policies and the European Western Balkans Portal analysed the current situation in the State Aid Control Commission and provided a set of recommendations for improving its work. The analysis indicates that the existing structure of the State Aid Control Commission opens up room for influencing the (in) work of the Commission. Recommendations given from civil society organisation for drafting the new State Aid Control Act were adopted by the Ministry of Finance.

This serves as a success story that advocacy has an important effect in combating corruption. **(Centre for Contemporary Politics, 17 July 2019)**



MACEDONIAN AND KOSOVO ANTI-CORRUPTION BODIES FORMALIZED THEIR COOPERATION BY SIGNING MOU

Representative from Macedonian and Kosovo Anticorruption agency held meeting in order to exchange experiences and best practices on topics related to prevention of corruption in reporting of asset, as well as dealing with conflicts of interest of elected and appointed persons. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed to formalize and establish the manner of cooperation, exchange of experiences and good practices primarily in the areas of prevention and fight against corruption, property and gift reporting, conflict prevention of interests in the performance of public office and the prevention of corruption in public procurement. **(State commission for prevention of corruption, 19 July 2019)**



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.

EXTORTION AFFAIR REVEALED IN NORTH MACEDONIA - THE CHIEF SPECIAL PROSECUTOR ONE OF THE MAIN ACTORS

Four years later, a bomb from the other side of the field shakes the government of Zoran Zaev. The “Extortion” affair began on July 15, when Bojan Jovanovski, also known as Boki 13, the owner of Macedonian TV 1TV and ex-reality star, along with accomplice Zoran Milevski, were arrested on suspicion of racketeering Jordan Kamchev. According to Forbes’ list, Kamchev is the richest man in the North Macedonia.

The flywheel of the affair comes as Italian Newspaper La Verita, close to the party of Mateo Salvini, published a video that showed Jovanovski and Milevski exiting Kamchev’s house and carrying a million and a half euros in a Louis Vuitton bag. The answer to the question why the Italian newspaper deals with the North Macedonia affair could be found in Hungary and its Prime Minister – Viktor Orban. The new star of the Macedonian reality show “Extortion Affair” is the Chief Special Prosecutor Katica Janeva. Handcuffed and with allegations for abuse of authority and obtaining illegal property gain for herself and two other “partners”, she was taken to a one-month detention in Skopje. **(BalkanInsight, 20 July 2019)**

NEW ANTI-CORRUPTION TEAM FORMED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN NORTH MACEDONIA

North Macedonia’s government said that it was decided to form an “operational” anti-corruption team headed by Interior Minister Oliver Spasovski and other top officials. The team will “work uncompromisingly and through a coordinated approach in the fight against crime and corruption”, said the government in the statement.

Justice Minister Renata Deskoska and the heads of the Public Safety Bureau, the Financial Police, the Customs Office and the Public Revenue Office are also going to be part of the team. The team “is fully prepared to put itself at disposal of the Public Prosecution and the courts” so that it can assist them in fulfilling their legal duties, was added to the statement. **(BIRN, 13 August 2019)**



ANTI-CORRUPTION AND ANTI-ORGANIZED CRIME SPECIAL STRUCTURE CREATED IN ALBANIA

Albania's justice reforms are progressing consistently. Spearheading this progress is SPAK (Anti Corruption and Anti Organized Crime Special Structure), tasked with investigating high forms of power corruption in state such as accusations against President of the Republic, Parliament Chairman, Prime Minister, Judges of Prime Court and Constitutional Court, General Prosecutor etc. SPAK is scheduled to commence its work in a few weeks. The U.S embassy in Albania has published a video on how it works. SPAK is independent from politics, composed of Special Prosecution and the National Bureau of Investigation, which will prosecute "the untouchables" of Albania (present officials and formal high officials). The members of SPAK are appointed by Supreme Prosecutorial Council and all the members should pass vetting. The Constitution gives SPAK the power and independence to fight corruption at high levels.

In addition to SPAK expected to crack down on corrupt officials, citizens are also projected to be included as informers. A law of "whistleblowers" in public administration has been published at the same time as the adoption of the justice reform, to curb the abuse of power in the public and private sectors. A total of 166 responsible units have been set up and 332 civil servants have been hired who are obliged to take notes of suspected corruption acts. The High Inspectorate of Declaration and Audit of Assets and Conflict of Interests report that there have been cases of abuse of power in the National Food Authority, the Social Insurance Institute and the Port Authority of Durres. These cases have subsequently been referred to the prosecution. Meanwhile, in a monitoring report by the Albanian Helsinki Committee, it was noted that despite signalling to various departments, no official dared to signal to 11 ministries. **(ACER, August 2019)**

FORMER CROATIAN MINISTER OF STATE PROPERTY UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR CORRUPTION



According to unofficial information the Office for Prevention of Corruption and Organized Crime (USKOK) is investigating former Minister of State Property Goran Marić. Just before minister Goran Marić resigned, the government approved his proposal to sell 85 hectares of state-owned property in Brodski Varoš near the City Slavonski Brod to the Marsonia Glas company owned by the minister's friend Dragan Marić. One of the founders of that company is the Drinus Company run by Marić's son Alen. Marsonia Glas has just two employees and in 2018 it recorded a financial loss in business activities, while it bought the state-owned land for HRK 36.5 million (€ 4.9 million). **(PSD, August 2019)**



INCREASE OF CITIZEN'S CONFIDENCE IN JUSTICE REFORM IN ALBANIA

The introduction of a vetting process in the reassessment of judges and prosecutors is the most vital aspect of the judicial reform in Albania. There are about 800 prosecutors and judges in the country. All of them have been subject to the vetting process, resulting in 74 prosecutors and judges being removed and 39 resigning. This is a clear indication of the success of the reform. However, as a result of the reform, the lack of judges present difficulties for the ongoing actions of the Constitutional and High Court. The responsible institutions are eager to resolve this situation within a few months.

The vetting process is also being helped by citizen denunciations. Since the beginning of the vetting process, nearly 4,200 citizen complaints have been received. This is a sign that the process has encouraged more civil confidence in the government. There have been several complaints from opposition parties that the system is controlled by the ruling party but these accusations have been rejected by Ruiz Calavera, Director for Western Balkans at the European Commission and Chair of the International Monitoring Operation (IMO). Calavera said: "The increasing attacks on the justice reform, vetting and the IMO, international observers and our EU assistance missions in this regard, are very significant. These claims are unfounded and inadmissible, but we see them as confirmation that vetting is shaking the foundation of a corrupt system. We hope that the change in the judiciary will strengthen the professionalism, ability and courage of the newly appointed magistrates to fight corruption". (ACER, 8 August 2019 and Albanian Dayly News, 10 August 2019)

THE AGENCY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION IN MONTENEGRO INVESTIGATES FLATS OR CREDITS PROVIDED ON FAVOURABLE TERMS



The Council of the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption in Montenegro will consider information on public officials to whom flats or credits on favourable terms have been given, in the current and previous convocations of the Government. The Council of the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption will also consider information on the actions of the Director of the Anti-Corruption Agency in relation to the credits obtained on favourable terms from the Government. **Centre for Democratic Transition, August, 2019**



AUTHORITIES CONFIRM REPORTS ON POLICE SEARCH OF CROATIA'S EX-MINISTER PROPERTY

The Office for Suppression of Corruption and Organised Crime (USKOK) on August 21, 2019 confirmed media reports that it together with the relevant police services is investigating the case of former Public Administration Minister Lovro Kuščević. He resigned on 8 July, 2019 due to reported involvement in murky real estate deals and corruption. USKOK will decide on further steps in this case after the collection of all necessary evidence and the public will be informed in a timely fashion. The web portals reported that Kuščević's house on the island of Brač had been searched by the police. Various mass media, particularly web portals, claim that Kuščević is suspected of wrongdoing in real estate transactions and of abuse of office and that some more suspects were involved in the affairs. Prime Minister and Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) leader Andrej Plenković said on August 20, 2019 that an USKOK investigation and search of the property of former Public Administration Minister Lovro Kuščević was being conducted following a warrant issued by the court and that he had no other comments. **(PSD, July 2019)**



SERBIAN ANTI-CORRUPTION PLAN UNDER REVISION

Main policy documents in the anti-corruption Action Plan for the Chapter 23, is currently under revision and the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, the former being under revision and the latter officially expired end of last year. The Ministry has published the first draft of the revised Action Plan for Chapter 23 in June 2019. Latest GRECO Interim Compliance Report on Serbia indicates that Serbia did not implement in a satisfactory manner none of the thirteen recommendations (ten partially, three have not been implemented). At the same time, the European Commission's Non-paper on the state of play regarding chapters 23 and 24 for Serbia from November 2018 indicates that although steps have been taken to repress corruption "Serbia's anti-corruption policy continues to lack effective coordination and monitoring, and constructive engagement with stakeholders". There has been a delay in the adoption of or changes to anti-corruption legislation (e.g. the Law on Political Activities Financing, the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, and the Public Procurement Law), however the Law on the Prevention of Corruption (amending the Law on the Anti-Corruption Agency) was adopted in May 2019, and the Parliament appointed a new Commissioner For Information of Public Importance And Personal Data Protection in July 2019, after a series of delays. **(Centre for Contemporary Politics, August 2019)**



UPCOMING EVENTS



CONFERENCE “OPENNESS OF INSTITUTIONS OF EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY IN MONTENEGRO AND THE REGION”

On the occasion of International Freedom of Information Day, CDT will organise a conference “Openness of institutions of executive authority in Montenegro and the Region”. Conference will be held on September 27th, 2019 in Podgorica. The conference will present the results of a survey on the level of openness of institutions of executive authority in the region and Montenegro. The research is part of a regional project supported by the European Commission and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).





**REPORTS
AND
ANALYSIS**



EUROBAROMETER: CROATIANS HAVE LOWEST TRUST IN STATE INSTITUTIONS

The latest findings of Eurobarometer show that in the European Union, the Croatians have the lowest trust in state institutions. Only 13% of the Croatians covered by surveys conducted for the Spring 2019 Standard Eurobarometer trust the government and the parliament, and the next to the last is Britain, where citizens' trust in state institutions have been affected by the developments surrounding the Brexit. Only 19% of U.K. citizens place confidence in the country's authorities. Throughout the European Union trust in the EU remains higher than trust in national governments or parliaments and is at its highest level since 2014. The European Commission has reported that the trust in the EU has increased in 20 Member States, with the highest scores in Lithuania (72%), Denmark (68%) and Estonia (60%). Vecernji list from Zagreb deems that the overwhelming mistrust in Croatia should be ascribed to a high perception of corruption in the country. When it comes to trust in EU institutions, 46% of those polled in Croatia say they trust them, which is almost three times higher than the percentage of those who trust national authorities. **(PSD, July)**





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