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**NEWS BY
SELDI
MEMBERS**



SELDI CSO TRAINING: CORRUPTION AND STATE CAPTURE MONITORING, ADVOCACY AND IMPACT IN A WORLD OF HYBRID THREATS

The 3-day training, organised by the SELDI anti-corruption initiative on 12-14 June 2019 in Sarajevo, will have as key objectives to inspire CSOs and grassroots organisations to engage in anti-corruption initiatives, instruct them how to apply corruption and state capture monitoring methodologies, and encourage them to collaborate among themselves and with the public institutions in order to achieve positive impact over the national and regional policies. SELDI's member, the Center for Civic Initiative will be the host of the event. A special session will be dedicated the SELDI's Small Grant Program.

Source: SELDI, 30 May 2019

BIH LAUNCHES A NEW INITIATIVE: "LET'S CURE THE HEALTH SYSTEM"

"Curing the unhealthy health system in Bosnia and Herzegovina" is a new initiative, implemented by Transparency International BiH (IT BiH) in partnership with the Center for Civic Initiatives (CCI). The project is designed to advocate for the improvement of legal regulations and practices in health care institutions with the goal of building a corruption-prevention system, focusing on public procurement, conflicts of interest, human resources and financial management. Five grants will be awarded to civil society organizations for local research, monitoring of health care facilities and the improvement of the system of corruption prevention through a public call.

Source: Center for the Civic Initiatives (CCI), May 2019

PRESENTATION OF A NEW DATABASE FOR PUBLIC OFFICIAL ASSETS DECLARATION

Ms. Aneta Arnaudovska, RAI Anti-Corruption Expert shared the latest news about the International Treaty on Exchange of Data for the Verification of Asset Declarations, during a Round Table in Sarajevo titled "The Right of Public to Know: Asset declarations of public officials in judiciary". Ms. Arnaudovska pointed out the importance of improving the transparency and effectiveness of the judiciary in the entire Southeast Europe.

Source: RAI, 16 May 2019



LAW ON REPORTING OF THE PROPERTY OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS



The adoption of the Law on Reporting and the Procedure for Data Validation of the Property of Public Position Holders in Canton Sarajevo has been officially passed on 17 April 2019. The financial assets of public office holders are of legitimate public interest. Therefore, the adoption of asset disclosure laws is of crucial importance to the country's fight against corruption. Measures to improve transparency and accountability are necessary throughout the country to boost public confidence in the various administrations, legislatures, and executive offices.

Source: RAI, 18 April 2019

TRAINING JUDGES AND PROSECUTORS ON EFFECTIVE ASSET RECOVERY



REGIONAL
ANTI-CORRUPTION
INITIATIVE



THE AIRE CENTRE
Advice on Individual Rights in Europe

The Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) and AIRE Centre (Advice on Individual Rights in Europe) organised a regional event for judges and prosecutors on effective asset recovery as part of a wider project to bolster the fight against corruption and organised crime in the South East Europe. The two-day event included training sessions conducted by regional and international experts, by academic experts on criminology and security studies, a former judge on the European Court of Human Rights, and a judge of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Serbia. Over thirty participants includes senior judges and prosecutors from the Western Balkans and across South East Europe.

Source: RAI, 12 April 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.

ROMANIA'S RULING PARTY CHIEF IMPRISONED FOR CORRUPTION

Liviu Dragnea, who led the social-democrats to the victory during the legislative election of 2016, was condemned to three years and a half of prison by the Supreme Court following allegations of embezzlement and fake jobs creation for party workers. Liviu Dragnea had appealed the previous decision in 2018 and, after the final ruling was pronounced, was taken to Rahova's prison, in Bucharest. This is considered the most important incarceration of a public official in Romania in the last 30 years. The sentence was pronounced the day after a historic loss of his party in the European Election. Liviu Dragnea is the first public official to have received a jail sentence while still being in office.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MEDIA AND ANTI-CORRUPTION BODIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



The IPAK project (Institutional Support to Anti-Corruption) held a round table in Sarajevo on "Communication of Anti-Corruption Authorities with the Public and Media" Creating an environment that does not tolerate corruption" on May 14, 2019. Analyses made during the initiative have shown that the anti-corruption bodies and institutions are not communicating well enough the results of their activities, either due to lack of independence, lack of capacity and skills, or lack of readiness to speak publicly on sensitive issues.

The initiative is planned to ensure harmonised work within and among institutions, the private sector, civil society organisations, citizens, and the media, in order to help and improve the implementation of anti-corruption measures.

Source: Agency for the Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption (BiH), May 14, 2019.

SUPPORTING THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION IN BOSNIA-AND-HERZEGOVINA



Within the scope of the continuous EU support to Bosnia and Herzegovina's the Rule of Law sector, the European Union officially launched the new project 'EU4Justice: Support to the Fight against Organised Crime and Corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)' in the amount of EUR 2.2 million. Mr. Khaldoun Sinno, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to BiH noted during the launching event that "Corruption and organised crime in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a big problem that needs to be tackled, and you do not really need the European Union to tell you so. This is a top priority for the European Union, not only in BiH but in the whole region."

Source: EU4Justice, May 16, 2019.

TRANSPARENCY OF POLITICAL PARTIES FINANCING IN KOSOVO FACING DETERIORATION

Financing, spending and auditing of political parties are a sine qua non for political transparency, especially for states in which political parties are funded by citizens' taxes, such as Kosovo. For several years in Kosovo, political parties did not publish their financial reports and were therefore not audited. On April 24, 2019, the Budget and Finance Committee approved the Report on Amendments to the Law on Financing of Political Entities. These amendments not only degrade the draft law submitted by the government working group but also present a regression in comparison to the current law in force. Reading the amendments shows that the provisions that provide transparency and financial control of the political entities are deformed. If the draft law is adopted with the current proposed amendments, the recommendations of the Venice Commission will be completely disregarded.

The Kosovar Democratic Institute (KDI), Democracy for Development (D4D), Lëvizja FOL, Çohu, Democracy Plus (D+), BIRN, The Westminster Foundation for Democracy and the Group for Legal and Political Studies stressed that the Assembly needs to refuse the amendments made by the respective Committees and to approve the version of the government working group or, as a last option, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, to withdraw this draft law from the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo.

Source: Lëvizja FOL, Kosovo, May 14, 2019

INCREASING TRANSPARENCY ON PUBLIC MONEY EXPENDITURES IN ALBANIA

Only 24 out of 38 districts have been demonstrated to be straightforward in distributing spending on lunches and official dinners. The Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) editor, Kreshnik Gashi featured an activity which began around 2013 when BIRN explored the costs for the lunch and dinner of government officials and ministers and was met with a great resistance from the government at that time. BIRN then found out the amount of expensive wines and food consumed at that time by the Albanian Government. In 2018, the Government opened those records which demonstrated a large number of bills.

BJELOVAR: THE FIRST FULLY TRANSPARENT CITY IN CROATIA

In May 15, 2019 the Mayor Dario Hrebak satisfied the most significant promise of his battle: the open-access to all Bjelovar's account and spending exchanges. As a result, Bjelovar has turned into the first transparent city in the whole country. All arrangements and testing of the framework's usefulness have been finished for the arrival of another application, which enables residents to follow current investing and past exchanges dating back to January 2018. For instance, while searching "Dario Hrebak", every single individual will almost certainly observe precisely what the Mayor has finished utilising his official card. An internet search permits to channel the official instalments by time-spans, organisations and CSO, from huge, costly buys, down to office materials, for example, coffee and toilet paper.

AN ANIMATED FILM TO ADDRESS CORRUPTION IN BOSNIA

The first episode of the animated film “Family Grabo” was premiered in Mostar, the first of the ten animated films produced by the portal Bljesak.info, which presents a unique way to talk about corruption in BiH society. “Since the public is rather fatigued by corruption news, we decided to approach this issue in a different way,” said Berislav Jurič, editor of the portal Bljesak.info.

Source: Bljesak.info, May 23, 2019.



ASSESSMENT OF CROATIA'S INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

The German-Croatian Chamber of Industry carried out a survey from February to April 2019 among 150 of their members. Compared to 2018, the level of organisations which reinvest in the Republic of Croatia dropped from 68 down to 54 percent. In the event that they were approached to do so again today, practically 50% of the German organisations working in the nation would quit reinvestment, while more than 60% of them depict the economic situation in Croatia as poor. Despite these survey results, Croatia is as yet considered “relatively attractive” and ranked 8th among CEE countries. Siemens’ leader Medeja Lončar however says that “more adaptability and speed in Croatia for a better economic situation and investment climate are required”. Most of the companies in the German-Croatian Chamber of Commerce criticise similar, well-known problems for the country, including insufficient fight against corruption and crime, high taxes, and general disappointment with the tax authorities, and the absence of legitimate security and reforms of the public administration.



UPCOMING EVENTS



REGIONAL CONFERENCE: THE EU POLITICAL CRITERIA IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The Center for Democratic Transition, in cooperation with the Parliament of Montenegro and with the support of the Balkan Trust for Democracy and the Royal Norwegian Embassy, is organising a regional conference on the following topic: “EU accession of the Western Balkans: Application of political criteria”. The conference will be held on Thursday, 30 May 2019 in the Parliament of Montenegro. The event will gather representatives of the parliaments, executive power, media and civil society from the whole region. This conference will also serve as a forum to discuss the advancement of the Western Balkans in the EU accession process, with a special focus on the application of EU political criteria — creating stable institutions that can guarantee democracy, rule of law and the respect of Human Rights.

Source: Center for Democratic Transition, 2019

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY FOR DEVELOPMENT IN PODGORICA



An executive-level training program, offered in partnership with Stanford University's Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (CDDRL), Faculty of Economics at the University of Montenegro (FE Podgorica) and the Center for Democratic Transition (CDT) will take place in Podgorica, between the 1 and 5 July 2019. „The How of Policy Reform“ workshop will be an intensive, five-day, executive-level training program. It will examine the question why policy reform initiatives often have disappointing results, and try to provide policy implementers tools that can be useful in anticipating, addressing and overcoming policy reform challenges. The Leadership Academy for Development (LAD) Program in Montenegro will be led by CDDRL Mosbacher Director, Francis Fukuyama of Stanford University, Kent Weaver and Elena Panaritis.

Source: Center for Democratic Transition (CDT), 2019

INVESTIGATING AND PROSECUTING CORRUPTION IN KOSOVO, ALBANIA AND IN NORTH MACEDONIA



Representatives of the justice institutions and civil society from Kosovo, Albania and North Macedonia started their two-day seminar work on the topic “Criminal Investigation and Prosecution of Corruption in Kosovo, Albania and North Macedonia”. The topics for presentation at the seminar will be, the practice of financial investigations of the three countries, investigation of complex cases of corruption, the issue of ensuring effective cooperation, and exchange of information between competent authorities among others.

Source: Kosovo Democratic Institute, 2019



**REPORTS
AND
ANALYSIS**



DEMOCRACY WITHOUT INSTITUTIONS: A NEW BALKANS INVENTION

The Center for the Democratic Transition, along with the Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability, Metamorphosis Foundation and the citizens association “Why not?”, provided a progress assessment of the Western Balkans in meeting the EU political criteria for membership. Their work consisted of analysing the fulfilment of criteria in the areas of elections, judiciary, fight against corruption and crime, media and public administration reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia and Serbia.

Despite formal progress, the fight against corruption is selective, slow and often hindered by the action of different forces and interests. Uncontrolled use of resources provides initial advantage to the ruling parties and casts shadow on the quality of elections and trust in the electoral process. The judiciary is still not essentially independent from other branches of government, and in some countries not even formally. There is room for state administrations to dominantly become the bulky habitats of party-selected and incompetent staff, instead of being efficient services to citizens. These problems obstruct the development of better-quality journalism as a barrier for abuse and a protector of public interest. The policy paper will be available on the CDT website in Montenegrin and English soon.

Source: Center for Democratic Transition, May 7, 2019



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW ON FINANCING OF POLITICAL ENTITIES AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS (2016 – 2018)

The Network for the Affirmation of the NGO sector published a report on the implementation of the law on Financing of Political Entities and Election Campaigns (2016 – 2018). The aim of this publication is to contribute to a better overview of the problem of electoral campaign financing, leading to amendments to electoral laws that will precede the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Source: Network for Affirmation of NGO Sector – MANS, April, 2019



ANALYSIS OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND PRACTICES OF HEALTH INSTITUTIONS ON CORRUPTION PREVENTIONS



In the framework of the project “Let’s Cure Health System”, CCI will publish a report on the Legal Framework and Practices of Health Institutions on Corruption Prevention with recommendations, which aims at the improvement of the current situation. The analysis will also offer a Legal Framework for the introduction of transparent waiting lists, as the legal basis and the roadmap for the introduction of waiting lists for medical examinations and medical interventions.

Source: Center for Civic Initiatives, May 2019.

INTEGRITY POLICY: ANTI-CORRUPTION OR ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT?



The Center for Democratic Transition released a policy brief with recommendations in the field of integrity policy to the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption. The purpose of this policy paper is to inspire the construction of better-quality institutions in Montenegro, as well as to increase the trust of citizens in their work.

Source: Center for Democratic Transition, April 2019



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