NEWSLETTER 02 23

Dear EPAC/EACN members and observers,
Dear colleagues and friends,

With great pleasure, we present the second newsletter for this year informing you of the latest developments and upcoming events.

Thank you for the impressive number of newsletter contributions you have provided us with.

As always, we would appreciate your contributions about future or past events, conferences, seminars, training courses, studies, project findings, so that we can include them in the next newsletter.

Your EPAC/EACN Secretariat

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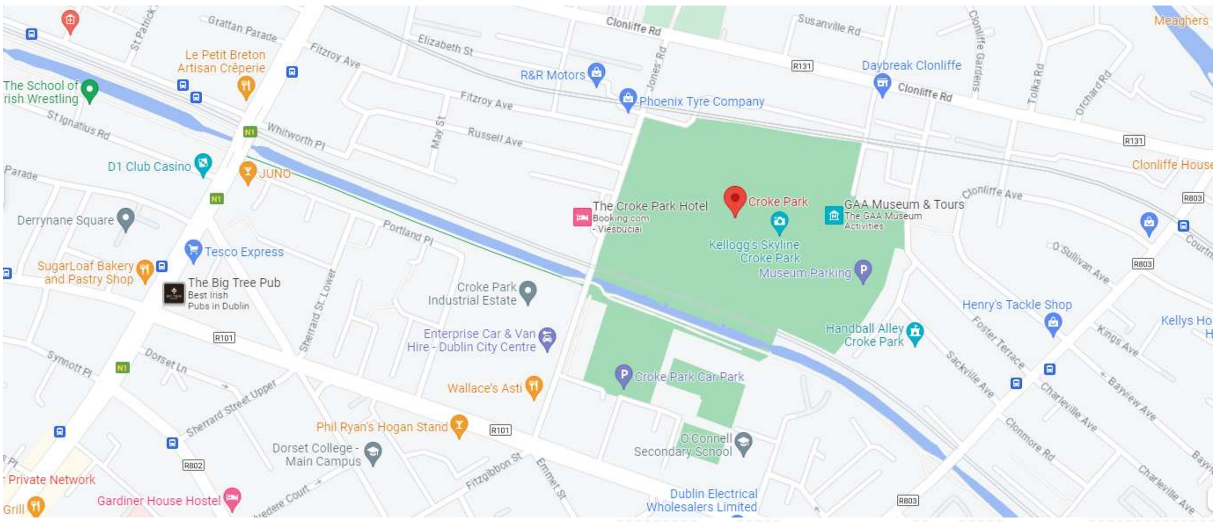
EPAC/EACN BOARD NEWS

22nd EPAC/EACN Annual Professional Conference and General Assembly

From **2 to 3 of November, 2023, the 22nd EPAC/EACN Annual Professional Conference and General Assembly** will take place at the **Croke Park** in Dublin, Ireland. The annual event is hosted by the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) and other EPAC/EACN members from the Republic of Ireland. Police oversight and anti-corruption issues will be addressed within the framework of plenary sessions and smaller group meetings. A detailed programme and other practical information on relevant issues for this Conference can be found at the EPAC/EACN homepage www.epac-eacn.org. For more specific questions, please contact the hosts of the Conference at events@gsoc.ie or the EPAC/EACN Secretariat at secretariat@epac-eacn.org.

Please note that the working language will be English only and no interpretation service will be provided at the conference.



4th EPAC/EACN Board meeting

SOURCE: EPAC/EACN. Left To Right: Darius Mickevičius, Louise-Marie Petrovic, Koralia Kontou, Lucile Rolland, Traian Mihăiţă Bârlici, Ernst Schmid, Hugh Hume.

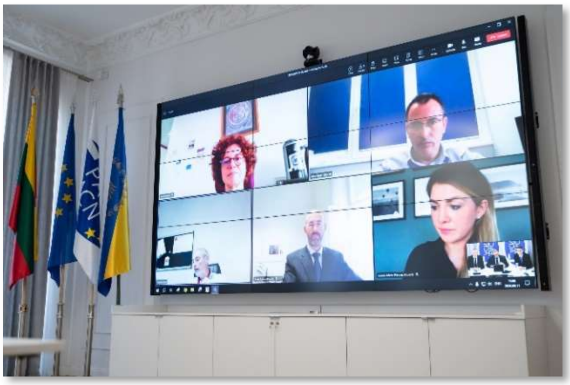
On the 28th of June, 2023 EPAC/EACN Board members and Secretariat team met at the premises of the Irish Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission in Dublin, Ireland to discuss the preparations for the upcoming Annual Conference and General Assembly.

During the meeting, the attendees also engaged in conversations regarding the recent developments in the EU's anti-corruption package, collaborative initiatives with other networks, and the progress of EU-funded projects currently underway.

5th EPAC/EACN Board meeting

On the 12th of September the EPAC/EACN Board had an online meeting to discuss preparations for the upcoming 22nd EPAC/EACN Annual Conference and General Assembly, including the upcoming election of the new Board of EPAC/EACN.

SOURCE: EPAC/EACN. Left to right: Darius Mickevičius, Linas Pernavas, Egidijus Radzevičius.



SOURCE: EPAC/EACN. Left to right: Lucile Rolland, Traian Mihăiţă Bârlici, Hugh Hume, Ernst Schmid, Louise-Marie Petrovic.

Joint EPAC/EACN webinar with IAACA: "Corruption without borders. How to cooperate to tackle it?"

SOURCE: EPAC/EACN. Left to right: Adil Abilov, Fikrat Mammadov, Kenneth Wong Kwok-hung, Traian Mihăiţă Bârlici, Egidijus Radzevičius, Darius Mickevičius.

On July 13th, EPAC/EACN together with the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA) organised a joint webinar on the topic of "Corruption without borders. How to cooperate to tackle it?".

The aim of the webinar was to share the latest global anti-corruption practices and lessons learned to improve the knowledge and skills of anti-corruption practitioners to effectively prevent and combat corruption. This event gathered more than 400 participants from more than 50 countries from all over the world.

The webinar was opened with the remarks from Mr Fikrat Mammadov, Vice-President of IAACA, Mr Traian Mihaita Barlici, Deputy Vice-President of EPAC/EACN, Dr Egidijus Radzevičius, Deputy Director of the Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania and Mr Kenneth Wong Kwok-hung, Secretary-General of IAACA.

“Standing against criminal offences such as corruption means standing united because the threat of corruption persists and knows no borders. This webinar is one of the examples of cooperation when EPAC/EACN and IAACA brings us together to step up our work against corruption,” said ***Mr Traian Mihaita Barlici****, Vice-President of EPAC/EACN.*

“This webinar is one of many opportunities to draw on the lessons of our global struggle against corruption, so that we can do better. Our biggest lesson is that achieving results requires collective and coordinated action. We have strong examples of joint work that we can expand and replicate in partnership with our alliances, such as the IAACA, as well as with foreign institutions not only of EPAC/EACN Member States, but also beyond the borders of European Union” said ***Mr Egidijus Radzevičius****, Deputy Director of Special Investigation Service.*

Mr Lawrence Chung, Assistant Director of the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) presented Hong Kong's experience in conducting international anti-corruption trainings for various countries and its plans for the future. Mrs Alexandra Lancranjan, Chief Prosecutor of the Liaison Bureau of National Anticorruption Directorate of Romania shared experience about the practical aspects of international mutual legal assistance and extradition on corruption crime cases. At the end of the webinar, Mr Darius Mickevičius, Head of Secretariat of EPAC/EACN presented activities of EPAC/EACN and, in particular, introduced its new project for EPAC/EACN Members – “Best anti-corruption practice exchange”.

BEST ANTI-CORRUPTION PRACTICE EXCHANGE PROJECT (BACPE)

The Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania (STT), on behalf of the EPAC/EACN Secretariat, with assistance of the EPAC/EACN Task force for Developing and Implementing Project Activities (DIPA), is implementing a EU funded project called “Best Anti-Corruption Practice Exchange (BACPE)”. The project allows to fund study visits between EPAC/EACN member organisations for the best practice exchange in fighting corruption and fraud. It provides with an opportunity to visit other EPAC/EACN members, personally meet colleagues, learn from one another, and collaborate to prevent and combat corruption in Europe.

The best practice exchange visits is organised in two cycles. The first cycle, which covers topics of Whistleblower protection, Asset recovery, and Corruption risk assessment and management, has already begun.

We express our gratitude to the highly engaged participants who have expressed their interest to visit fellow EPAC/EACN members, fostering opportunities for mutual learning and the exchange of best practices in the ongoing battle against corruption. The project team received 20 applications for the first cycle. The exchange visits are organised between the 1st of August, 2023, and 31st of March, 2024. A total of 24 visits are planned for the first year and most of the visits are already booked, but there are still a few visit possibilities available. We strongly encourage all EPAC/EACN members to participate!

The aim of this project is to assist EPAC/EACN members – European national anti-corruption authorities in sharing their best practices and expertise in the field of fighting corruption and related phenomena, including fraud that affects EU financial interests.

FIRST CYCLE

Whistleblower protection			Corruption risk assessment and management			Asset recovery		
Slovenia Commission for the Prevention of Corruption	→	**Netherlands** Dutch Whistleblowers Authority	**Romania** Ministry of Justice	→	**Italy** Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority	**Azerbaijan** Anti-Corruption Directorate with the Prosecutor General	→	**Estonia** Corruption Crimes Bureau of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board
North Macedonia Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations and Professional Standards in the MoI	→	**Bulgaria** Internal Security Directorate	**Lithuania** Special Investigation Service	→	**France** Agence Française Anticorruption	**Kosovo** Police Inspectorate of Kosovo	→	**Belgium** Federal Judicial Police Directorate Serious and Organized Crime, Central Office for the Fight Against Corr.
Kosovo Police Inspectorate	→	**Netherlands** Dutch Whistleblowers Authority	**Montenegro** Agency for Prevention of Corruption	→	**Lithuania** Special Investigation Service	**Ukraine** National Anti-Corruption Bureau	→	**United Kingdom** Anti-Corruption Unit of National Crime Agency
Spain Agency for the prevention and fight against fraud and corruption of the Valencian Community	→	**Italy** Autorità Nazionale Anticorruzione	**Kosovo** Police Inspectorate	→	**Ireland** Policing Authority	**Lithuania** Special Investigation Service	→	**Portugal** Policia Judiciária
Italy Italian anticorruption authority	→	**Spain** Agency for the prevention and fight against fraud and corruption of the Valencian Community	**Estonia** Estonian Police and Border Guard Board	→	**Greece** Hellenic Police Internal Affairs Agency of Law Enforcement Bodies			
Lithuania Special Investigation Service	→	**Netherlands** Dutch Whistleblowers Authority	**Latvia** Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau	→	**Lithuania** Special Investigation Service			
Bulgaria Internal Security Directorate – Ministry of Interior	→	**Italy** Ministry of Interior, Department for Public Security, Central Directorate of Criminal Police	**Bulgaria** Internal Security Directorate Ministry of Interior	→	**Italy** Ministry of Interior, Department for Public Security Central Directorate of Criminal Police			
Moldova National Anti-corruption Centre	→	**Romania** Ministry of Justice (Department for Crime Prevention						

EPAC/EACN Workshop on Whistleblowing

Source: Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAK)

Members of the European Partners against Corruption (EPAC) and the European contact-point network against corruption (EACN) convened for a workshop dedicated to the topic of whistleblowing. The workshop took place in Vienna, Austria, and was hosted by the Austrian Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bundesamt zur Korruptionsprävention und Korruptionsbekämpfung - BAK). With 25 participants and five experts from 12 countries and 19 anti-corruption agencies and police oversight bodies, the event spanned a day and a half, filled with intense discussion, knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Funded by the European Union's Internal Security Fund-Police

Additional Information: https://t.ly/1FYc3

Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania

NEW MANAGEMENT STARTS WORK AT THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATION SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

Source: STT. Left to Right: Elanas Jablonskas, Linas Pernavas, His Excellency President Gitanas Nausėda, Jovitas Raškevičius, Egidijus Radzevičius.

On June 19, 2023, Linas Pernavas, the Director of the Special Investigation Service (STT), took an oath to the President of the Republic and officially started his duties. The new head of STT was appointed for a five-year term of office together with his team of Deputy Directors. Jovitas Raškevičius, who is responsible for coordinating corruption-related crimes investigations, has been appointed as the First Deputy Director of the STT for a second term. Deputy Director Egidijus Radzevičius has been also appointed for a new term to oversee anti-corruption education and administration. The newly appointed Deputy Director Elanas Jablonskas will be responsible for the areas of corruption prevention and analytical anti-corruption intelligence.

Additional Information: https://www.stt.lt/en/structure-and-contacts/the-heads-of-stt/4963

MAP OF CORRUPTION IN LITHUANIA 2022/2023: PUBLIC ANTI-CORRUPTION STANCE IS STRENGTHENING, THOUGH THE WILLINGNESS TO REPORT CASES OF CORRUPTION REMAINS A CHALLENGE

According to the data of the study "Map of Corruption in Lithuania 2022/2023" initiated by the Special Investigation Service (STT), the main challenge remains the willingness of residents and business leaders to report corruption crimes. The results of the survey revealed a worsening rating of certain areas of local government, with public procurement, construction, land management, and spatial planning seen as the most corrupt areas. However, there are some positive developments: the public is increasingly aware of the importance of their contribution to creating an anti-corruption environment.

The survey "Map of Corruption in Lithuania 2022/2023", initiated by STT, was carried out by the Vilmorus Centre for Public Opinion and Market Research in December 2022–March 2023. A total of 1001 Lithuanian residents, 500 business executives and 740 civil servants were interviewed.

SOURCE: STT

The purpose of the study is to assess the corruption situation in Lithuania and compare it with the results of previous years. Research objectives: to assess the attitude of target groups towards corruption, the prevalence of corruption in various institutions, to determine the corruption experience of respondents, to assess the anti-corruption potential, the openness of decision-making in Lithuania. The questionnaires also included a special block of questions about the image of STT, public procurement, work evaluation of municipal institutions, civil asset confiscation, democracy in Lithuania, trust in the most important state institutions.

Additional Information: More information can be found HERE.

STT PRESENTS A SOCIAL CAMPAIGN TO RAISE ANTI-CORRUPTION AWARENESS IN HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

According to the data of the study "Map of Corruption in Lithuania 2022/2023", one of the most corrupt areas in Lithuania is health care, as named by every second surveyed resident. Nevertheless, significantly fewer interviewees claim to have given bribes. This shows that there are gang stereotypes in society that bribes can solve problems. The STT presents the social campaign "To Give or not to give?" in order to refute established stereotypes in this field and draw attention to the topics of transparency in the health sector.

Patients and doctors need to get more information about the damage of corruption in health sector. Taking into account the fact that the health care system is still considered one of the areas of the public sector most affected by corruption and the expressed need of medical institutions for educational anti-corruption information for patients, the creation of the social advertisement "To Give or not to give?" was initiated.

SOURCE: STT

Social advertising aims to help visitors and employees of health institutions to more clearly understand the harm of bribery and nepotism, to change the erroneous attitude of patients that they have to pay extra for the services provided to the attitude that such payments are not needed, and to encourage employees of health institutions to refuse gifts and money provided by patients, not to feel making it uncomfortable and educating patients by explaining the reasons for refusing gifts.

The video clip was shared with all public sector institutions. Institutions are suggested to share this video clip on the used information channels.

This social advertise is also shown during anti-corruption education trainings, lectures and classes, in order to strengthen public awareness and the desire to contribute to increasing the transparency of the health sector.

Additional Information: The Video clip can be found HERE.

THE IMMUNITY BOARD OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT UNDER THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

ICIN (INTERNAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS NETWORK) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

In 2023 on May 9-10, a meeting of the ICIN Executive Committee members with colleagues from Sweden and the Netherlands took place at the Lithuanian Police Department in Vilnius.

SOURCE: Immunity Board of the Police Department. The ICIN Executive Committee. From the left to right: Žydrūnas Butkevičius (LT), Martin Valfridsson (SE) and Willem-Jan de Koning (NL).

ICIN was established in March 2020. The ICIN Executive Commitee consists of Sweden (Special Investigations Department Swedish Police, Martin Valfridsson), the Netherlands (Rijksrecherche, Willem-Jan de Koning) and Lithuania (The Immunity Board, Žydrūnas Butkevičius). The primary purpose of the network is to share methods on how to detect and investigate corruption within police organisations.

The Immunity Board of the Police Department has been officially approved as a member of the Executive Committee from 2022. During the meeting in Vilnius were discussed the perspectives and directions of the network.

According to the head of the Immunity Board Žydrūnas Butkevičius, ICIN's activities aim to ensure that there is no place for corruption in European law enforcement institutions, and cooperation at the international level would be an even greater key to success.

SOURCE: Immunity Board of the Police Department.

Contact: Ms. Dalia Lombardero Chartuni, Chief investigator of Corruption Prevention and Analysis Division of Immunity Board of the Police Department under the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, e-mail dalia.chartuni@policija.lt

ANTI-CORRUPTION GENERAL DIRECTORATE ROMANIA

"DETECTING ANTI-COMPETITIVE PRACTICES - DACCC" CODE 101082310

The DACCC project is financed by the Single Market Programme - SMP Competition and is carried out in the field of detecting anti-competitive practices.

As part of the DACCC project, the Anti-corruption General Directorate organised a training session for 30 anti-corruption specialists in Pitesti - Argeș, which aimed to improve the participants' ability to detect anti-competitive practices during their daily investigative activities and report them to the European Union and the Romanian Competition Council, as well as facilitating cooperation between the AGD and the EU/Competition Council to improve the ex officio application of EU competition rules. The training session was supported by two specialists from the European Commission, who presented EU competition rules, aspects related to the procedure before the European Commission, the anatomy of a cartel, digital investigation methods and organised practical exercises.

SOURCE: Anti-Corruption General Directorate

Representatives of the Romanian Competition Council were also present and brought to the specialists' attention issues related to the legislation applicable at the national level in the field of competition and the procedure before the Competition Council, as well as ways of cooperation.

Additional Information:

1. https://www.mai-dga.ro/arhive/61203
2. https://www.bursa.ro/30-de-specialisti-dga-instruiti-de-comisia-europeana-sa-detecteze-practicile-anticoncurentiale-48496052

"EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP FOR ETHICS AND INTEGRITY", FINANCED BY THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME, KEY ACTION

The project is implemented in partnership with Schengen Multifunctional Training Center from Romania, Institut de Seguretat Pública de Catalunya from Spain, Internal Security Directorate from Bulgaria, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore from Italy and Valsts administrācijas skola from Latvia

The aim of the project is to increase the capacity of anti-corruption agencies and training institutions to manage and carry out changes in the process and methods of ethics and integrity training, including through digital education.

SOURCE: Anti-corruption General Directorate

SOURCE: Anti-corruption General Directorate

Project results:

- training curriculum in the field of anti-corruption, ethics, integrity for the initial training of employees with an emphasis on the non-formal context of the training;
- training curriculum in the field of anti-corruption, ethics and integrity to be used in dedicated anti-corruption courses for public officials or civil society;
- training curriculum/guide for anti-corruption trainers in order to support training activities in the academic environment or in the field of continuing education: integrity advisor, anti-corruption trainers.

Within the project, 3 experience exchanges were organised in order to facilitate the sharing of best practices and the critical evaluation regarding the training in the field of ethics and integrity - Italy, Latvia and Bulgaria;

Two pilot trainings were also organised using the training curriculum in the field of corruption prevention, ethics and integrity for the training of trainers and the initial training of employees, with an emphasis on non-formal methods - in Spain and Romania, followed by the third in Italy. The project also provides for the organization of 3 events to multiply the results obtained.

SOURCE: Anti-corruption General Directorate

Additional Information: prevenire.dga@mai.gov.ro

National Integrity Agency Romania

STRENGTHENING THE DIGITIZATION TOOLS OF THE INTEGRITY SYSTEM IN ROMANIA

The National Integrity Agency (ANI) kicked-off the development of an intelligent platform that offers real-time clarifications on the legal integrity framework

As one of ANI's earliest prevention measures, providing clarifications on the applicability of the legal integrity requirements remains thus far a critical tool in ensuring that the public officials do not fail to breach the statutory provisions.

With over 2.000 requests for legal clarifications per year, ANI envisioned the development of an intelligent platform that shall allow all interested persons to determine in real-time the integrity requirements applicable to their public office.

Within this framework, the platform will access hundreds of data information points, concerning both incompatibilities and conflicts of interest, as well as the legal regime of submitting asset and interest disclosures.

Through this project, ANI aims at increasing the level of anti-corruption education amongst the public administration personnel, thus reducing the number of integrity incidents that may arise from the lack of legal framework knowledge and understanding.

The development of the platform began in 2023 and is implemented through the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Romania.

Contact: ani@integritate.eu

Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau of the Republic of Latvia

KNAB LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN "CORRUPTION SUFFOCATES! REPORT BY USING THE KNAB APP"

Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau of Latvia (KNAB) launched an information campaign "CORRUPTION SUFFOCATES! Report by using the KNAB app". The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the impact of corruption on the rule of law and the country's well-being, as well as to encourage society to report corruption on the newly-developed KNAB online reporting platform or its mobile app, "Report to KNAB!"

To promote the newly-developed platform, KNAB carries out an information campaign "CORRUPTION SUFFOCATES! Report by using the KNAB app". The target audience of the campaign is the general public, and the campaign consists of several elements. Materials, including posters and video, are advertised on television, radio, the Internet, and in the urban environment. With the support of the state and local governments, and public organizations, takeaway coffee mugs with a QR code taking its users to the campaign website are distributed.

Furthermore, an interactive video has been created – an educational tool that builds the audience's understanding of corruption and encourages to think about the risks of corruption and the negative effects of corrupt decisions, both on a personal and national level.

To inform about the actions to be taken in corruption situations, an informative poster "Encountered corruption?", as well as an informative postcard have been developed.

The campaign is active from 8 until 29 September 2023. More information on the campaign is available on the website of KNAB: https://www.knab.gov.lv/lv/korupcija-smace.

The campaign is carried out within the project "Support for the establishment of a whistle-blowing system in Latvia", where KNAB receives European Economic Area grants from Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway.

Additional Information: https://www.knab.gov.lv/en/korupcija-smace

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CORRUPTION PREVENTION AND COMBATING BUREAU DEVELOPS A NEW REPORTING PLATFORM

Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau of Latvia (KNAB) has developed a new reporting platform and its mobile app "Report to KNAB!" (in Latvian – "*Ziņo KNAB!*"). The aim of the platform is to provide a reporting channel that is convenient, modern and at the same time safe for communication with the anti-corruption agency.

Survey data on the perception of corruption shows 78% of Latvians believe that corruption is widespread in the country, and 42% are ready to report cases of corruption if anonymity was ensured. Younger audiences are more willing to report corruption.

"It is important to understand that corruption is not something abstract. People can encounter corrupt behaviour even in everyday situations where they have to make personally responsible decisions. We want to promote the right choices. Therefore, after evaluating public demand, we developed a fast, convenient and safe reporting platform and its mobile app "Report to KNAB!"," says Mr. Jēkabs Straume, the head of KNAB.

On the platform, it is possible to submit a report on alleged corruption as a natural or legal person, by authorizing and revealing one's identity, or anonymously. It is also possible to submit whistle-blower reports in accordance with the Whistleblowing Law of Latvia. In all cases, after submitting the application, the reporter receives a unique identification number that allows to follow the progress of the submitted information and provides both feedback and an opportunity to further communicate with KNAB on the respective matter.

The platform, as well as its mobile app is only available in Latvian. The platform is developed within the project "Support for the establishment of a whistle-blowing system in Latvia", where KNAB receives European Economic Area grants from Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway.

Additional Information: https://www.knab.gov.lv/lv/zinosanas-platforma-zino-knab

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DUTCH WHISTLEBLOWERS AUTHORITY

HUIS VOOR KLOKKENLUIDERS

8 TIPS FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION ABOUT INTEGRITY

Communicating about integrity is important but far from easy. That is why the Dutch Whistleblowers Authority sets out some insights and tips for you. This overview is primarily intended for integrity and compliance officers as support in (better) communicating about integrity within their own organisation. To effectively promote integrity in organisations, it is important to communicate about it properly. However, integrity is not an easy or obvious topic of conversation. It is quite often seen as a vague, redundant, moralistic and difficult concept to operationalise. Therefore, it is important to clarify exactly what integrity means and how it translates into everyday actions. Integrity is encouraged through open communication and good example behaviour and is thus also non-verbal in nature. In addition, integrity is not merely an internal issue. Integrity issues can have a major social impact. Apart from that, the outside world also attaches increasing importance to integrity and ethics in organisations. This requires organisations to think carefully about integrity promotion and how to communicate about it effectively. Below, we set out some insights and tips on communicating integrity in eight steps. This brochure came about on the basis of conversations and interviews with communication and integrity professionals from various private and public sector organisations

In this brochure, we provide eight tips that are important for good integrity communication. The outlines of these, you can see listed here:

1. Start at the top: management is an important culture carrier of the organisation. Communication on integrity therefore starts with management expressing, with commitment in word and deed, the importance of integrity

.2. Be clear: decide in advance what you want to talk about specifically, who the target audience is and what you want to achieve with your communication.

3. Connect to natural moments: drawing attention to the issue of integrity in different ways and at different times helps make it part of the culture. A tip is to do this by connecting to 'natural moments' such as when employees start working, during team meetings or when employees take up a new position.

4. Attention to direct and indirect communication: non-verbal or indirect communication is at least as important as direct (verbal) communication. Employees' behaviour is therefore largely determined by what the organisation really values. Make sure this matches what is said in words.

5. Internal and external communication: communicating about integrity is not only important for the organisation's employees but also beyond. External stakeholders such as citizens and customers also attach increasing importance to the integrity of organisations and it is therefore good to communicate about it proactively.

6. Communicating about incidents: how to communicate during a crisis and how an incident can be a reason to re-emphasise agreements or to further strengthen the integrity approach. This brochure provides some rules of thumb.

7. Communicating in a nuanced and balanced way: if integrity is only discussed when things go wrong, integrity, which is essentially a positive concept, gets a negative connotation. This can result in people associating integrity purely with what it is not: violations, problems and wrongdoings and they prefer to shut themselves off from it. So it is important to communicate in a nuanced and balanced way.

8. Good information transfer is based on the principles of repetition and targeted communication. The trick is to repeat without people losing interest and dropping out. Make sure it stays engaging, for example by responding to current events and engaging your target audience.

Contact: Kristien Verbraeken, Senior integrity advisor, Kristien.verbraeken@huisvoorklokkenluiders.nl

Additional Information: The brochure can be found HERE.

NATIONAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE
DEPARTMENT FOR PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION
HUNGARY

AWARENESS-RAISING TRAINING PACKAGE AT THE NATIONAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE

The National Protective Service pays particular attention to close cooperation and regular contact with protected bodies, constantly seeking more direct contact in order to strengthen and build trust. The organisation places great emphasis on communicating its activities and objectives, and on ensuring that protected staff members understand that its professional activities are not carried out against the service and its staff, but in their interest.

In recent years, the National Protective Service of Hungary has made use of its campaign and professional video films on a number of occasions in its education, training and presentations on various topics. The use of video material has proven that films on various corruption situations contribute greatly to the success of training activities and to experiential learning with long-term results.

In the light of this, in order to implement point 18 of the Action Plan of the Medium-Term National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2020-2022, training, education and media content to support the integrity development processes of public bodies were developed by the Department of Prevention of Corruption of the National Protective Service, in cooperation with partner bodies, by producing educational films, biographical films, presentations and interview booklets (hereinafter: training package).

The Department of Prevention of Corruption of the National Protective Service carries out its tasks along two lines of prevention. This two-line prevention work is increasingly focused on the value-based prevention. An important element of this is awareness-raising. The training films deal with corruption situations, which are typified by the service branches of the protected services. The biographical films cover 10 different topics and open the viewer's horizon to specific acts of corruption, such as a bad decision, peer pressure, drifting in, recognition, leader’s responsibility, survival, etc. This is why our training package can be considered an innovative product, as corruption situations presented in it are based on the real personal experience of former staff members (law-enforcement), who are currently serving their prison sentences. The interview booklet accompanying the biographical films serves as an academic commentary, while the presentations (for new recruits, current staff and management staff) are supported by expert opinions (leaders, psychologists, senior trainers, military prosecutors, military judges).

The approach and design of the training package was pioneering work. Its aim is to provide the younger generation with cases/situations that can serve as a model to follow or avoid, which can help to build an ethical behaviour and organisational culture, to raise awareness among newly recruited professionals and existing staff, and to create an organisational culture in which each staff member recognises his/her individual responsibility to take decisions against corruption and to protect his/her integrity, work, conscience and honour.

A further aim was to prepare the training package according to the needs of “protection officers” and protected personnel. The short videos and informative materials can be flexibly integrated and adapted to the methodology of the practical presentations.

By developing this training package, we have chosen a direction that is expected to have a positive impact on the ability of all staff members to take decisions on corruption and to protect their integrity, conscience and honour in their responsible work, while recognising their individual responsibility.

Contact: kmf@nvsz.hu

III INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)

2022 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PROTECTION OF THE EU'S FINANCIAL INTERESTS

The Annual Report on the protection of the EU's financial interests highlights measures at EU and national level to protect the EU budget, and presents data on irregularities and fraud reported by EU Member States. Authorities are encouraged to increase digitalisation of the fight against fraud. In parallel, the European Commission has launched a revised Anti-Fraud Strategy Action Plan.

Each year the European Commission, in cooperation with the EU Member States publishes a report on the measures taken to protect the financial interests of the EU.

A total of 12 455 irregularities related to EU expenditure and revenue were reported by the Member States in 2022, amounting to EUR 1.77 billion. This is an increase of 7 percent compared to 2021. At the same time, the amounts concerned by these irregularities have decreased by 13 percent.

According to the report, while a lot of progress has been made in recent years, detection, reporting and follow-up of suspected fraud and irregularities could still be improved in the Member States. 15 of them have a national anti-fraud strategy in place, 5 are about to finalise such a strategy and 4 Member States have in place an alternative strategy covering also the EU's financial interests.

To make better use of digital tools to fight fraud is one of the recommendations that the report addresses to the Member States. The Commission has recently launched its revised Anti-Fraud Strategy Action Plan with focus on digitalisation and plans to better exploit the synergies between policies against fraud and corruption, notably by identifying and addressing common areas of high risk.

Another important theme of the report is the protection of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the centrepiece of NextGenerationEU – the EU's plan to emerge from the crisis caused by COVID-19. The report notes that the Commission has taken action to ensure that national recovery and resilience plans are implemented correctly and that the funds are protected against fraud. With its revised Anti-Fraud Strategy Action Plan, the Commission aims to improve the prevention and detection of fraud, corruption and conflict of interest affecting the RRF.

Additional Information: For more information, you can read the full press release and the PIF Report.

OLAF IN 2022 – INVESTIGATIONS UNCOVER OVER EUR 600 MILLION OF EU TAXPAYERS' MONEY AFFECTED BY FRAUD AND IRREGULARITIES

In 2022 the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) concluded over 250 cases, recommending the recovery of over EUR 426 million to the EU budget and safeguarded a further EUR 200 million. The OLAF Report 2022 provides insight into the main trends and operations, ranging from the protection of EU funds – including the RRF – to the fight against counterfeiting and smuggling.

OLAF's accumulated knowledge, expertise and operations provide tangible results in protecting both the EU budget and EU citizens. The fight against counterfeiting remained a central part of OLAF's operations, ensuring that millions of counterfeit and dangerous items were seized before they could be used. Some examples include: fake medicines, counterfeit and potentially dangerous toys, 531 million illicitly traded cigarettes and 14.7 million litres of illicit wine, beer and spirits.

As in previous years, OLAF continued to investigate the misuse of EU funds, confirming an increase in fraud committed digitally - a pattern observed in recent years. Furthermore, OLAF increased its focus on the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), setting up an ad hoc expert group focusing on anti-fraud IT tools and starting to investigate cases of potential misuse of RRF funding.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing unprecedented financial assistance to Ukraine, OLAF intensified its long-standing cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities to assist the country's anti-fraud agencies to strengthen and improve their structures to deal with fraud and corruption and to protect current and future EU funding. OLAF has also played an important role in countering the circumvention of sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia and Belarus.

Furthermore, during 2022 OLAF continued to work on its mandate to investigate any serious misconduct by EU staff and members of European institutions. OLAF concluded 40 such investigations into fraudulent or irregular behaviour. These cases ensure that EU taxpayers' money is properly spent and, by ensuring the highest standards of conduct, help defend the reputation of the EU as a whole.

Additional Information: For more information, you are invited to read the OLAF Report 2022 in the digital and interactive version.

IV PUBLICATIONS & EVENTS

EPAC/EACN CONTACT CATALOGUE 2023

The EPAC/EACN Secretariat is in the process of updating the 19th edition of the EPAC/EACN Contact Catalogue. The latest version of the Contact Catalogue will be available for download from our website www.epac-eacn.org