

**The role of the National Anti-Corruption Coordinator**

The State Minister for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption, in the role of National Coordinator Against Corruption, coordinates the work on drafting policies and preparing legislative and sub-legislative acts for the prevention and fight against corruption.

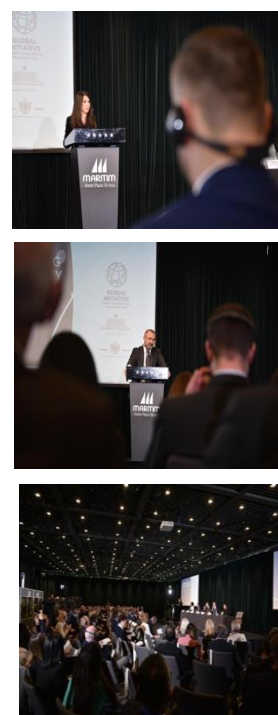
The National Coordinator Against Corruption is responsible for conducting verification (administrative investigation) of complaints/allegations regarding abusive, corrupt, or arbitrary practices in law enforcement, as well as identifying employees of institutions, part of the Anti-Corruption Coordinator Network, who, through actions or inactions, have violated current legislative/sub-legislative acts, as well as simultaneously developing projects and programs in the field of anti-corruption, planning, coordinating, and determining necessary tools for the implementation of anti-corruption policies.

The electronic bulletin is a broad communication tool aimed at informing through the reflection of a summary of the main activities carried out by the State Minister for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption and the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption in the field of anti-corruption, on a monthly basis.

**Activities during March, 2024**

**Tirana hosts an international conference for public and non-public leaders and professionals in the fight against corruption**

**04-05.03.2024:** In Tirana, the regional international conference "Strengthening Accountability: Empowering Efforts Against Corruption in the Western Balkans" is taking place. The Ministry of Justice, the State Minister for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption of Albania, together with the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC), welcomed high-level political officials, justice field officials, police officers, policy makers and researchers on anti-corruption policies, professionals from anti-corruption agencies, professors and academic university staff, as well as staff from civil society organizations for two full days. The conference focused on discussing anti-corruption policy and jointly discussing state and non-state initiatives and mechanisms, bringing together the 6 countries of the Western Balkans and Croatia. This conference, the second of its kind, held after a two-year period, precisely selected Tirana as the center of the region. 150 officials and professional participants in the field sat in 8 technical discussion panels for two days, coordinating the orientation of anti-corruption policies for the region's future. Speakers at the conference presented cases of political will and leadership to promote a culture of integrity (panel 1); promoting transparency in political party finances (panel 2); national strategies and experiences in corruption prevention (panel 3); international commitments against corruption in the Balkan countries (panel 4); improving the integrity of prosecutors in the fight against corruption (panel 5); improving the integrity of police in the fight against corruption (panel 6); the role of women in strengthening integrity in public institutions (panel 7); and civil society and education in the fight against corruption (panel 8).



You can find more information at: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/88693364/admin/feed/posts/>

**Albania - United States of America in a strategic partnership against corruption**

**18.03.2024:** The fight against corruption remains a bridge of cooperation between Albania and the United States Department of State. The State Minister for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption, Ms. Adea Pirdeni, confirmed the commitments of the Albanian government, now also with the establishment of a governmental anti-corruption portfolio, in the fight against corruption as part of the state agenda. The anti-corruption strategic framework, ongoing cooperation with the Justice Reform institutions, and intensification of interventions to end impunity in the fight against corruption were institutional discussion topics during the meeting held on this occasion, during the state visit to Tirana by Assistant Secretary Mr. Todd Robinson. The strategic partnership in strengthening accountability and consolidating the country's democratic institutions remain issues of mutual interest between the two countries, Albania and the United States of America. The fight against corruption remains the strategy guiding the country's priority policies, already entering a phase of secure implementation and justice system and public sector reform.



**Minister Pirdeni reports in Brussels on the implementation of justice reforms and anti-corruption efforts**

**20 - 21.3.2024:** Albania reports on the progress of justice reform, the effectiveness and efficiency of the anti-corruption reform as part of the consolidation of the rule of law, before the technical structures of the European Commission in Brussels. The State Minister for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption, Ms. Adea Pirdeni, led the Albanian state delegation, composed of senior officials from the country's public administration, in technical meetings aimed at presenting the work done and the progress of key reforms in the country. At the first meeting of the 15th Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom, and Security, Albania provided a comprehensive report on the implementation of priority justice policies (focusing on the activities of judicial bodies), the fight against corruption (focusing on the numbers of given sentences), the improvement of the legislative and strategic framework to meet EU and GRECO requirements (focusing on legislative packages in the field and specific objectives of the anti-corruption strategy), as well as measures to prevent corruption in high-risk sectors. Alignment with EU standards to ensure fundamental human rights, as part of the Chapter 23 guideline: Rule of Law, was also discussed in meetings.



**The plenary session of GRECO continues the assessment of countries on the integrity of public authorities.**

**18 - 22.03.2024:** The Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe - GRECO, held the proceedings of the second plenary session for the year 2024. The weekly plenary session, held at the Council of Europe's headquarters in Strasbourg, France, gathered representatives of state delegations from member countries, where the agenda of discussions was the assessment of countries on the maintenance and their state standards on the principles of integrity by public authorities at the governmental level and those of law enforcement agencies (police). Italy, Lithuania, Armenia, Georgia, Greece, France, and Belgium continued with the assessments for their Round V: Prevention of corruption and promotion of integrity among high-level officials and law enforcement agencies. Meanwhile, there are still countries reporting to GRECO on the progress of implementing recommendations for Rounds 2 and 4, such as Kazakhstan, Switzerland, as well as Belgium and Germany. Albania was represented in the plenary session proceedings by the Director of Anti-Corruption Programs and Projects, Ms. Rovena Pregja. Albania has so far only completed the first cycle of assessment for Round V Assessment, while the assessment continues. In the coming months, the next reporting to GRECO is expected, aiming to conclude this round by Albania. Additionally, GRECO is expected to announce Round VI of the Assessment in 2025, focusing on the organization and functioning of local government authorities.



**Transparency International finds a reliable partner in analyzing anti-corruption initiatives in Albania.**

**05 - 06.03.2024:** Cooperation and internationalization of anti-corruption measures have encouraged coordination and formalization of state relations with non-governmental organizations as well. The State Minister for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption, Ms. Adea Pirdeni, as well as the Minister of Justice, in his capacity as former National Coordinator Against Corruption, Mr. Ulsi Manja, have held working meetings with the executive director of Transparency International, Mr. Daniel Eriksson. The methods and ways of cooperation of the Albanian Government to strengthen defenses against corruption through integrity enhancement tools and embracing digitalization, transparency in decision-making, and structural reforms in high-risk corruption areas, as the right path to having a society immune to corruption, were



discussed in meetings. In the Corruption Perceptions Index published by Transparency International in recent years, Albania has seen slight improvements, ranking higher among the 180 countries worldwide.



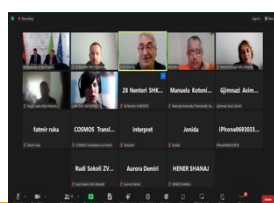
### The package of anti-corruption measures, as part of the Reform Agenda for the EU enlargement plan in the Balkans.

**29.03.2024:** The Reform Agenda as part of the enlargement plan for Western Balkan countries was consulted during a meeting of the Platform Partnership for European Integration, for chapters 23 and 24. An essential part of the Reform Agenda is the dimension of anti-corruption measures. Cooperation with local Civil Society Organizations has already included group measures of the enlargement package, as inputs and direct proposals from civil society actors are important for development and implementation. The Reform Agenda - the anti-corruption package contains measures for which several steps for action (qualitative and quantitative) are planned, mainly as part of preventive reforms, but among them, there are also initiatives that touch and aim at the operational performance of law enforcement authorities in the fight against corruption. The measures are the result of a coordination of proposals made by the Albanian side under the mentorship of the European Commission, with implementation deadlines until 2027 and for which outcome indicators with increasing trends are foreseen. The measures of the anti-corruption package are divided into measures with legal effects and disruption (1) and measures for establishing anti-corruption mechanisms (2). As part of group 1, the following are mentioned: Approximation of the law for whistleblowers; Legal framework for donations and sponsorships amended in line with European standards and GRECO; General guidelines for financial investigations approved by SPAK as well as the establishment of a platform for collecting data on corruption and other serious crimes, regularly updated, aimed at identifying corruption trends. As part of group 2, the following are mentioned: Strengthening public transparency of the Albanian administration including the creation of an open data platform for the national and local budget and public expenditures in partnership with civil society; Publication of all asset declarations on the website of the High Inspectorate of Declaration and Control of Assets and Conflict of Interest and increasing controls and verifications of asset declarations annually, based on cases and evidence for checks taken; Investigations and criminal proceedings for corruption cases, including for high-level officials (increasing trend).



### The "Anti-Corruption Education" project gathers teachers from 12 schools across the country to prepare a work plan for students and the curriculum.

**06 - 28.03.2024:** The General Directorate of Anti-Corruption has initiated a series of training meetings with high school teachers, who will be part of the "Anti-Corruption Education" project. Experts in anti-corruption policies, experts from the General Directorate of Pre-University Education and the Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education, within the Ministry of Education and Sports, experts in the field of justice, public administration, and with a focus on increasing civic vigilance contracted by the Embassy of Italy in Tirana, joined teachers of the subject "Citizenship" from 6 high schools in Tirana and 6 schools from the districts of Shkodra, Vlora, Durres, Korça, and Gjirokastra. Two meetings dedicated to teachers in Tirana and online for those in the districts were held as part of the cooperation project signed between the ministers of Justice, Education, and Sports of Albania and the Embassy of Italy in Albania, on December 4, 2023. The aim of the training was to introduce "Citizenship" teachers to the concepts and methods of fighting corruption in society, forms of civic engagement towards the fundamental principles of the rule of law, and the preparation of informative materials for use by 10th-grade students. The project is expected to proceed to small meetings in schools to increase cooperation with students up close.



### Political advisors to the ministers, recipients of the HELP training program of the Council of Europe, for the integrity curriculum.

**01.03.2024:** Regular and continuous information on integrity and the framework for combating corruption for the public administration of the country has been added to the HELP program of the Council of Europe. As a result of efficient cooperation with the Council of Europe Office in Tirana, Albanian legislation in force and the practices of responsible public institutions for strengthening integrity have been incorporated into contemporary online education courses on integrity. This training module, in Albanian language, was added to the curriculum of the Albanian School of Public Administration-ASPA. The module was presented at a public event by the State Minister for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption, Ms. Adea Pirdeni, the head of the Council of Europe Office in Tirana, Ms. Giulia Re, together with the head of the Albanian School of Public Administration, the Department of Public Administration, the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption, and the Council of Europe Program for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals - HELP. The curriculum helps raise awareness about the forms of corruption and its prevention tools, ethics, and how codes of conduct promote ethical behavior, conflicts of interest, and ways to manage these situations, the purpose and implementation of post-employment restrictions, regulation of gift management, goals of asset declaration systems, the role of free access to information in corruption prevention, regulation of lobbying activities, transparency of political financing, protection of whistleblowers, corruption risks in public procurement, measures to reduce these risks, and the role of auditing in the fight against corruption. Through examples and practical scenarios, the curriculum focuses on ethical dilemmas and challenges in implementing anti-corruption measures. Upon completion of the course, political advisors will receive a certificate issued by the Council of Europe and ASPA.

