



Week of Integrity in Albania

3-11 February 2020

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTIONS
FOR INTEGRITY & FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION**

INTRODUCTION

ICC Albania in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Albania and the Delegation of the European Union to Albania organized the “Week of Integrity in Albania” which took place from 3 to 11 February 2020. This first edition of the Week of Integrity was joined by twenty eight partners who introduced their initiatives focusing on the raising of awareness and promotion of ethical behavior, transparency, accountability, responsible business conduct and any effort in the fight against corruption. A closing Conference was held on 11 February 2020 in Tirana where multi stakeholder cooperation and dialogue was the focus of the discussions and showed that more efforts need to be incurred in the fight against corruption.

As the initiator of the Week of Integrity 2019-2020, ICC Albania played an active role in shaping the conversation and mobilizing different stakeholders throughout the week. It was a fruitful week of multi stakeholder discussions and we would like to share a few insights on the key themes of engagement and related recommendations focusing on the perspective of stakeholder groups.

PUBLIC SECTOR

According to the OECD , a leading organization for issues of integrity and fight against corruption, traditional approaches oriented towards more severe rules, higher compliance and tighter enforcement are of limited effectiveness. One strategic and sustainable response to corruption would be public integrity as one among the key pillars of policy, economic and social structures, and hence imperative for the economic, social well-being and prosperity of both individuals and societies. Transparency and ethics are the main components contributing to good governance.

Hence, we call upon the public institutions to:

- Commit to create a higher level of transparency openness and public participation on the policies, strategies and

¹ www.oecd.org

services – equally provided to its citizens.

- Refer to international best practices instruments and tools produced by international organizations such as OECD, UN, ICC on integrity in the public sector, including lobbying, conflict of interest, whistle-blower protection, political party finance, public procurement and other areas.
- Build a stronger cooperation with other stakeholders such as the private sector, NGO's and universities in order to promote the values of rule of law, anticorruption and human rights in a society struggling to build democratic institutions towards its path to EU full membership.
- Improve international negotiation skills for public administration.
- Add an "Anti-corruption clause" to all public contracts of strategic interest. We suggest to that the ICC anti-corruption clause be considered as an option that is inserted in the related contracts.
- Make possible that the public consultations undergo a proper, transparent and inclusive process. Monitoring of the public consultation processes need to be introduced as a tool to measure the transparency of the public sector with regard to the introduction of new acts.
- Incur awareness raising activities in cooperation with other stakeholders in terms of fight against corruption and promote integrity.
- Cooperate with private sector organizations, universities and other stakeholder in delivering capacity building activities related to anti-corruption, ethical behavior and other related topics.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT


The operation of an effective system of integrity in the municipality requires and begins with the political will of the local elected to foster a culture of institutional integrity. The will articulates and finds expression starting from the preparation of a political, strategic and regulatory framework that enables, facilitates, and promotes integrity, public interest, transparency, and institutional performance.

Municipality councils play an instrumental role in the approval of municipality strategies and acts by ensuring that they have been drafted and approved by an inclusive and transparent consultation process.

All values, principles and standards for high institutional integrity must be embraced and implemented by all stakeholders involved in the process. At the core of these efforts will be information, guided by example, and compliance with legal requirements and regulations as well as the highest professional standards.

Hence, we call upon the local government institutions to:

- Improve the institutional framework at the level of local integrity-building policies and strategies, with the aim of establishing and operating an effective institutional integrity risk management system and performance improvement.
- Strengthen the integrity mechanisms in the processes and functional areas of the municipalities, as well as the institutional capacity to maintain and consolidate the mechanisms.
- Increase the trust of citizens and various stakeholders in local government through improved transparency, accountability and participatory local decision-making.
- Strengthen internal capacities related to topics such as transparency, accountability and anti-corruption.
- Ensure through available tools and instruments that



the implementation of strategies and acts is done in a fair manner. This is valid for municipality councils.

ACADEMIA

The role of academia is crucial to the fight against corruption. If corruption is not fully understood, it is very difficult to effectively tackle it. Through scientific research on integrity and anti-corruption, the roots of the problems can be traced for the right solution to be reached. However, anti-corruption studies and research remain in their infancy in the Albanian academic institutions.


Hence, we call upon the academic institutions to:

- Develop more scientific research in the area of ethical behavior, integrity and the fight against corruption;
- Encourage more constructive debates including academic staff and the students in academic aulas, on topics related to anti-corruption and integrity.
- Review the curricula of higher education by inserting more courses related to ethics, anticorruption, integrity and other related course within each major.
- Consider the development of an ethics and integrity institute within the universities;
- Encourage the engagement of collective action and collaboration of academia with the public and private sectors.

PRIVATE SECTOR

The International Chamber of Commerce for several decades now has been actively engaged in denouncing corruption, while developing measures to combat it. Where business transactions meet bribes payments, this is when transparency is lost and the sound competitive environment is disrupted.

Having integrity in business means one is doing business



the right way. When enterprises embrace integrity business practices are more likely to attract and retain motivated employees, while attracting investors who have to put at stake their goodwill. The corruption combat process in the private sector is a progressive and gradual one. This requires stable commitment from top management. It also requires high-quality and systematic organization to ensure that anti-corruption efforts become an integral part of the corporate culture, at all levels. Companies must take a step further than corporate social responsibility (CSR) and take the lead in anti-corruption initiative to making inclusive growth for all possible.

Hence, we call upon the private sector entities to:

- Foster public-private dialogue via roundtables that gather representatives of business organizations and chambers of commerce in Albania and the National Coordinator against corruption on a continuous term.
- Encourage corporate cultures of transparency. An effective way of stamping out corruption is by fostering a culture of integrity that goes beyond the remit of the compliance function. Such a culture is all the more important given that workers are shown to be increasingly conscious of the social and ethical values of the companies they choose to work for.
- Ensure a thorough and pragmatic implementation of ethics and anti-corruption standards within companies is needed. This entails a great deal of integrity awareness-raising in the private sector and all other sectors of society.
- Raise awareness with the public, media and government about the costs of corruption for key public services (such as health, education, public procurement etc.).



CONCLUSIONS

The contribution of all stakeholders, the public and private sector, national and international organizations, civil society, academia, students, media, and the society as a whole in the fight against corruption is pivotal and must be fully encouraged and utilised.

Addressing corruption is crucial for fostering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), concretely Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

We are fully aware of the main issues of concern in Albania such as widespread corruption, lack of collective action, the weak justice system, lack of trust between the private sector and the government. Fighting corruption requires a strong commitment and a high-quality and systematic organization to ensure that anti-corruption efforts become an integral part of the culture.

To address these fundamental issues, all stakeholders must commit to actively participate in coordinated efforts by promoting integrity and ethical behaviour and adequately addressing all forms of corruption and its enabling factors.

The youth should be encouraged to join more actively in debates and supported to take its role in the discussion table and in any related action.

PARTNERS



This project is funded by the European Union



ABOUT THE WEEK OF INTEGRITY

In 2016, ICC Netherlands initiated the national Week of Integrity, a multi-stakeholder initiative, each year taking place in the Netherlands from 1 to 9 December, prior to the UN Anti-corruption day. The aim of the Week of Integrity is to promote ethical behavior in both the workplace and in the boardroom, exchanging best practices across sectors.

In Albania, the Week of Integrity comes as an initiative of ICC Albania, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Albania and the Delegation of the European Union to Albania. During the first edition of the Week of Integrity in Albania that took place 3-11 February 2020, 28 partners joined with their ideas, projects, events and solutions to promote integrity and in the fight against corruption.

For more information visit www.weekofintegrity.al

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This project is funded by the European Union