

# Combating Corruption

~~CORRUPTION~~

In line with its mandate and relevant OSCE commitments, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina contributes to the fight against corruption by supporting the development, adoption, and promotion of anti-corruption regulations at all authority levels as well as their implementation by relevant governmental bodies. Corruption is costly: politically, in terms of eroding democracy and the rule of law; economically, by wasting public resources and deterring investment; and socially, by diminishing citizens' trust in the political system and its leadership.

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index ranked BiH at 110th place out of 180 surveyed countries in 2021, highlighting long-standing

stagnation and the erosion of the country's democratic system. Reports issued by the European Commission and the Group of States against

Corruption (GRECO) have also repeatedly stated that BiH has to invest efforts that go beyond declarative commitments.

With the Mission's support, BiH authorities have taken some initial steps in this direction, including by adopting key anti-corruption regulations, establishing independent anti-corruption offices, advancing the use of digital tools in corruption prevention, and strengthening domestic co-ordination in combatting corruption across all levels of government. However, the complexity of the institutional framework and the consequent difficulties in implementing anti-corruption legislation continue to obstruct the country's progress.

The Mission works with relevant anti-corruption stakeholders and international community on advancing

the anti-corruption system, focusing on the development, adoption and implementation of key regulations, such as anti-corruption strategic documents, and priority legislation, such as conflict of interest and asset declaration laws. The Mission's activities also comprise the capacity-building of relevant anti-corruption stakeholders, strengthening institutional status of anti-corruption teams as independent governmental bodies, and the replication of the best IT-based practices across the country and government levels to ensure transparency and accountability.

## **Normative and institutional framework for corruption prevention**

The Mission is involved in providing expert legal and technical support to the

participatory development of key anti-corruption regulations, together with international community partners in BiH. For example, the Mission has so far provided comments, legal solutions and support to the development of, inter alia, the Law on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest at the State level and in Brčko District BiH (BD), cantonal legislation on asset declaration and draft legislation on corruption prevention and anti-corruption strategies, and decrees on the establishment of cantonal anti-corruption offices. In all instances of providing expert legal and technical support to the development of anti-corruption regulations, the Mission ensures their compliance with relevant international standards, such as GRECO standards.

The Mission advocates and provides support for strengthening the role and independence of anti-corruption teams at entity and cantonal levels and donates IT equipment to strengthen their technical capacities. Building on the successes achieved in Canton Sarajevo with the support provided to the establishment of the first cantonal Anti-corruption Office in the country in 2018, the Mission facilitated the establishment/operationalization of two new anti-corruption offices – in Tuzla Canton and BD. The Mission provided legislative and technical support to the establishment of anti-corruption offices in five other cantons, which are expected to soon follow suit.

### Co-ordination and capacity building

The Mission supports co-ordination of anti-corruption bodies, given the complexity of the institutional framework and

weak co-ordination capacities of institutions.

The Mission's efforts aim to provide an opportunity for discussion for anti-corruption bodies, define a common approach to the prevention of corruption, and ensure the efficient implementation of such strategic measures. In order to address the different needs of anti-corruption bodies (e.g., parliamentarians, civil servants, and professional anti-corruption teams), the Mission designs tailor-made capacity building activities.

The Mission continuously organizes capacity-building events for public sector employees in BiH. The training sessions cover the most pertinent anti-corruption topics including conflict of interest; public procurement; ethics and integrity; financial management and control; freedom of access to information and protection of personal data; development of integrity plans; assessment of impact of corruption risks in regulations, and the use of ICT tools to monitor the implementation of anti-corruption strategies.

### Digital tools for corruption prevention

In line with regional and international anti-corruption trends, the Mission supports innovative anti-corruption ICT practices, such as developing databases and software for identifying conflicts of interests and irregularities or increasing institutional transparency. Also, the Mission donates IT equipment to anti-corruption teams and offices to strengthen their technical capacities.

In Canton Sarajevo, the Mission supported the development of the Antikorrupiks platform (<https://www.anticorrupiks.com/>) where public registers provide data on appointed officials, employees in the cantonal public institutions, allocated subsidies to small businesses, and public officials' property and assets, among other. The platform enables detection of conflicts of interests, increases institutional transparency, and offers a wide range of analytical options and comparisons that are important tools for all interested parties, such as journalists, researchers, and NGOs. These public registers are replicable, as a result other cantons have started preparatory work to introduce similar mechanisms in their jurisdictions.

### Combating corruption at local level

At local level, the Mission closely monitors anti-corruption practices and trends in public financial management in local self-governance units (LGUs), in order to inform future strategic planning and policy development of both BiH authorities and the Mission.

The Municipal Anti-corruption Initiative (MAI) of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, launched in 2018 as part of the Mission's programmatic focus to fight corruption at all government levels, included monitoring anti-corruption trends and processes within the sector of public management in local governance units (LGUs) across Bosnia and Herzegovina, and presenting the main findings and recommendations in the form of thematic reports. [The first report](#), completed in 2019, assessed spaces for corruption in the provision of grants and

in-kind support to civil society organizations. [The second one](#), published in 2022, presented the key features of asset management system at the local level and identified corruption risks in current procedures and practices in the management of immovable assets in selected LGUs. The report provides a set of implementable recommendations aimed at improving the performance of local governments in this field and mitigating the identified corruption risks.

### Implementation of the project Informed citizens and efficient mechanisms to prevent and fight corruption

To complement the Mission's efforts in combatting corruption, the Mission started in 2021 a three-year long project funded by the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). The aim of the project is to support BiH's efforts in diminishing corruption by raising awareness of the consequences of corruption for BiH citizens and strengthening the technical capacity and public outreach efforts of anti-corruption bodies in corruption prevention.

For more information, scan the QR code.

