

LIGHT

DARK



CORRUPTION BAROMETER

January 2024

“DARK” OCCURRENCES FOR JANUARY 2024

It is high time for the institutions to function properly !

The Anti-Corruption Commission will supplement the initiative for the criminal offense of “Transmet”



The State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption decided to amend the initiative for the criminal offense it submitted in July last year for the “Transmet” case. The Commission, as stated by member Shemsi Salai, suspects that the damage to the Republic of North Macedonia’s budget from the unsuccessful confiscation of “Transnet’s” equipment is at least 26.5 million euros. The facts indicate money laundering suspicions and other criminal activities, abuse of public procurement, unethical conduct, and misuse and exploitation of official positions and authorities by public officials. The Anti-Corruption Commission will provide an analysis to the Public Prosecutor’s Office.

The State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption presented an analysis of decisions related to the construction contract for corridors 8 and 10D



The Commission, during its 99 session, presented an analysis of decisions made during the negotiation and conclusion of the construction contract for corridors 8 and 10D with Bechtel and Enka. It decided to forward the analysis to the Public Prosecutor’s Office for further action. The analysis, after presentation, indicates corruption risk, but currently, there is nothing concrete, and relevant institutions should continue monitoring.

The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption: The director of the Film Agency persistently conceals documents on how state funds were allocated for projects

Bojan Lazarevski paid a fine for not submitting the requested documents to the Anti-Corruption Commission. The director of the Film Agency, for whom the Commission seeks criminal responsibility, refuses to hand over the minutes specifying how state funds were allocated for projects. Since the required documents were not received, the Anti-Corruption Commission was forced to stop the investigation into conflict of interest among reviewers, financial advisors, and members of the Board of Directors.



"It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable." - Moliere

Games without boundaries threatening judicial cases

The Judicial Council, through a tied vote, did not decide to delegate Judge Osman Shabani from the Court of Appeals to the Criminal Court



“Good luck to the cases “Talir” and “Titanic 1”. I hope they will not be allowed to expire” commented the president of the Judicial Council with a hint of revolt on the outcome of the vote at the extraordinary session for delegating Judge Osman Shabani from the Court of Appeals in Skopje to the Basic Criminal Court in Skopje to complete the work on these two high-profile court cases, facing the threat of expiration. “The Judicial Council of North Macedonia informs that at the 475th extraordinary session held on January 25, 2024, it discussed the need for the temporary assignment of Judge Osman Shabani from the Court of Appeals in Skopje to the Basic Criminal Court in Skopje. Due to the public interest nature of the case and the lack of a necessary majority with 6 votes “for” and 6 votes “against” no decision was made for the temporary assignment of Judge Osman Shabani from the Court of Appeals in Skopje to the Basic Criminal Court“.



The promotion would have sunk the “Laskarci” case

Judge Aleksandra Ristovska from the Criminal Court Skopje took the oath as an Appellate Judge but omitted to inform the Judicial Council that there was a verdict in the “Laskarci” case on January 25, where she was the second judge. If she is not in the judicial council and the composition changes then the case itself will return to the beginning. The president of the Judicial Council, Vesna Dameva, convened an extraordinary session to delegate Judge Ristovska now from the Court of Appeals to the Criminal Court until the verdict. Dameva said that Ristovska did not mention during the oath that the “Laskarci” case which is of sensitive importance could be jeopardized if she moves to the Court of Appeals.



This infographic is produced within the framework of the project: EU4 Rule of Law: Citizen Engagement for Public Integrity (CEPI) in the Western Balkans and Turkey supported by the European Union. The statements in this infographic do not represent the statements of the European Union and the Government of Switzerland.



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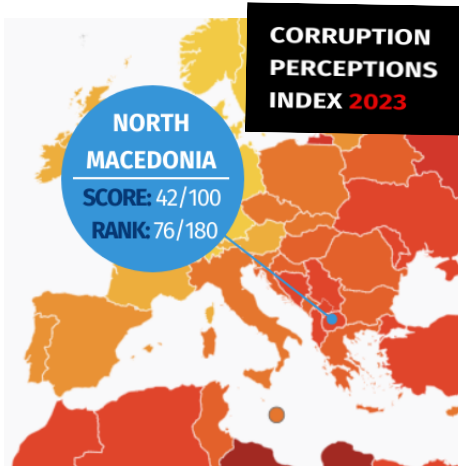
Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Corruption still persist

The Parliament of North Macedonia undermined the judiciary in 2023, according to Transparency International

On the **Corruption Perceptions Index**, the Republic of North Macedonia is ranked 76th out of 180 countries with 42 index points. This is still far below the top positions on the index to join the group of countries that are somewhat successful in fighting corruption.



In September 2023, the Parliament of North Macedonia significantly undermined the judiciary, according to Transparency International in its latest report on corruption perception in the public sector in 2023. “In the non-transparent and swift procedure, parliamentarians amended the Criminal Code by reducing prison sentence and shortened the statute of limitations for abuse of official position”, the report states. It emphasizes that this “will lead to the dismissal of about 200 suspicious corruption cases, many involving former high-ranking officials”. The index uses a point scale from zero, indicating a highly corrupt country, to 100, representing a non-corrupt country.”

Non-governmental organizations call for accountability

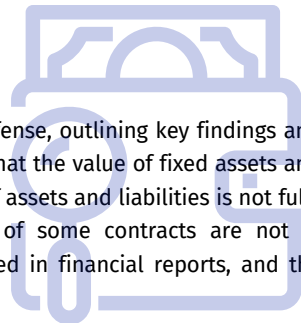
Open letter: Request for a thorough investigation of the violent incident in the Premises of M-NAV and protection of all those who indicate or report possible corruption risks

The platform of civil organizations against corruption calls on the institutions of the system to fully investigate the details surrounding the violent incident at M-NAV, which occurred on January 4, 2024. “We believe that all those who, especially in the public sector, advocate and act against partisan appointments, regardless of national affiliation in employment, should be protected. Any attack on those who have chosen to stand up for legality in employment represents a serious threat to good governance, the fight against corruption, and clientelism, and will act as a discouragement for future similar potential natives by work collectives in the public sector. The fight against corruption is everyone’s duty, and therefore initiatives coming from the public sector should be protected and encouraged.”

The trend of negative reports continues institutions reaction....

Auditors in the Ministry of Defense identify systemic weaknesses, weak financial transparency, and incomplete inventory

The State Audit Office has published the final audit reports on the Ministry of Defense, outlining key findings and systemic weaknesses. In the section on key findings, the State Audit Office notes that the value of fixed assets and material reserves in financial reports is not realistic and objective, the inventory of assets and liabilities is not fully executed, some procedures for public procurement and the implementation of some contracts are not in accordance with legal regulations, obligations to suppliers are not fully disclosed in financial reports, and the operation of the Military Medical Center is financed from the Ministry’s account.”



Who controls nepotism, cronyism and clientelism in employment?



Former director of M-NAV, Midhjet Selmani, rehired through a weekend job advertisement, this time as an accountant – Midhjet Selmani the former director and member of the Board of Directors of M-NAV, despite the guarantee given by Minister Blagoj Bocharovski to the Traffic Air Controllers Union, has been employed there, this time through an advertisement that lasted only two days in December last year. For this advertisement the former director Fahrudin Hamidi claimed that it was an error by the Employment Agency. Selmani like many other party-affiliated individuals is now employed an M-NAV as an accountant. Huge salaries are taken for the fictitious and non-essential positions created for accommodating party-affiliated individuals.



M-NAV: Family connections also come to light

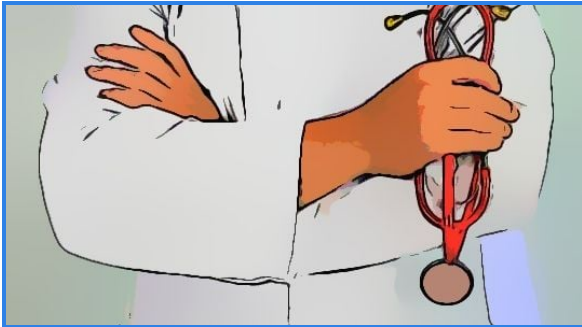
The network of family connections among employees of M-NAV with current and former ministers and politicians is expanding. Relatives of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bujar Osmani, the sister – in law of Deputy Prime Minister Artan Grubi and the grandson of the Minister of Agriculture, Ljupcho Nikolovski are employed in M-NAV, along with relatives of former ministers and deputies, as reported by “KOD” on Telma. Among the employees of M-NAV are relatives of other officials and politicians. The daughter-in-law and son of former DUI deputy, Ejup Alimi, the grandson of the director’s advisor in M-NAV, Bekim Neziri, who is one of the suspects in the air traffic control intrusion, and sources from “Kod” claim that the grandson of the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Nazim Bushi is also employed. Nikolovski’s and Nezoro’s relatives are employed as assistant controllers and the sister of Minister Bujar Osmani works in the operational part. Other relatives work in the administration of M-NAV.

These pieces of information have not been denied!

The question of the legitimacy and legality of these employments remains.

“LIGHT” OCCURRENCES FOR JANUARY 2024

Five individuals are suspects in the “Oncology” case, three oncology doctors assisted in the fraud



After a 5 month preliminary investigation, the “Oncology” case moves into the investigative phase. This involves the former medical and former organizational director of the Clinic for Radiotherapy and Oncology, as well as three doctors – oncologists. Officially, names were not mentioned, but based on the period when the medical director committed the acts, the primary suspect is the former medical director of Oncology, Nino Vasev. According to the prosecution, he is charged with seven criminal offenses of ‘abuse of official position and authority’, and one criminal offense of ‘fraud in office’. The organizational director is also a suspect for ‘fraud in office’. The three doctors are suspected of the same offense but as accomplices.

The police Union filed a criminal complaint against the commander of the Police Department in Mirkovci

The Police Union claims that there are suspicions of abuse of official position and authority for personal gain, to the detriment of others (employees). The reported leader acted beyond the limits of his authority and through unprofessional actions and misuse of his function the commander acted contrary to Articles 7, 10 and 14 of the Law on Internal Affairs, announced the Police Union.



Criminal complaint against the director of a high school for 'abuse of official position and authority'



The Internal Affairs Department in Kochani filed a criminal complaint with the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Kochani against S.Z. (35) from Kochani due to reasonable suspicion of committing the criminal offense of "Abuse of official position and authority". The reported individual in his capacity as the acting director of the municipal high school in Kochani, in April 2023, contrary to Article 40, paragraph 1 of the Law on Public Procurement, engaged a travel agency for a school robotics team to travel to the World Robotics Championship in Morocco without conducting a public procurement procedure. He paid the agency an amount of 296.960 denars, thus enabling the unlawful financial gain for 296.960 denars.

Ohrid's resident attempted to bribe police officers, and receives a criminal report



The Ohrid Police Department filed a criminal report against a 60-year-old Ohrid resident due to reasonable suspicion of committing the criminal offense of 'bribery'.

During a traffic control on the highway in Kichevo, police officers stopped a freight vehicle 'Mercedes' with Ohrid license plates, which the reported individual was driving. During this, he left money in the traffic documents for the police officers intending to avoid official measures against him.