ANNUAL REPORT 2025

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL- MACEDONIA

Mission

Focused on analyzing national legislation, conducting comparative legal analyses, and providing recommendations for improving the legal framework; identifying vulnerabilities in laws and the legal system that may potentially enable corruption; assessing the National Integrity System of the Republic of North Macedonia through an analysis of anti-corruption pillars; and fostering cooperation with key stakeholders, including state institutions, civil society organizations, the business community, the media, and citizens.

Main goal

To establish a system of good governance for the effective prevention of and fight against corruption.

Vision

To eradicate corruption from Macedonian society and establish a system based on the rule of law, fostering a society in which citizens and institutions actively oppose corruption and unlawful practices.

INTRODUCTION

Transparency International-Macedonia is the national chapter of Transparency International, the global civil society organization leading the fight against corruption, with more than 100 national chapters worldwide. The organization is dedicated to combating corruption and promoting policies that support key political and social reforms. It plays a significant role in raising public awareness about corruption and the importance of whistleblowing as an effective measure for strengthening anti-corruption efforts.

The successful achievement of our objectives is made possible through the effective implementation of projects.

We continuously strengthen our cooperation with domestic and international institutions, non-governmental organizations and bodies, individuals and groups, as well as with media organizations committed to combating corruption.

As a result of these efforts, the organization is a member of the following coalitions and networks: Transparency International, the Platform of Civil Society Organizations Fighting Corruption, the Southeast Europe Coalition for Whistleblower Protection, and the UNCAC Coalition (United Nations Convention against Corruption Coalition).

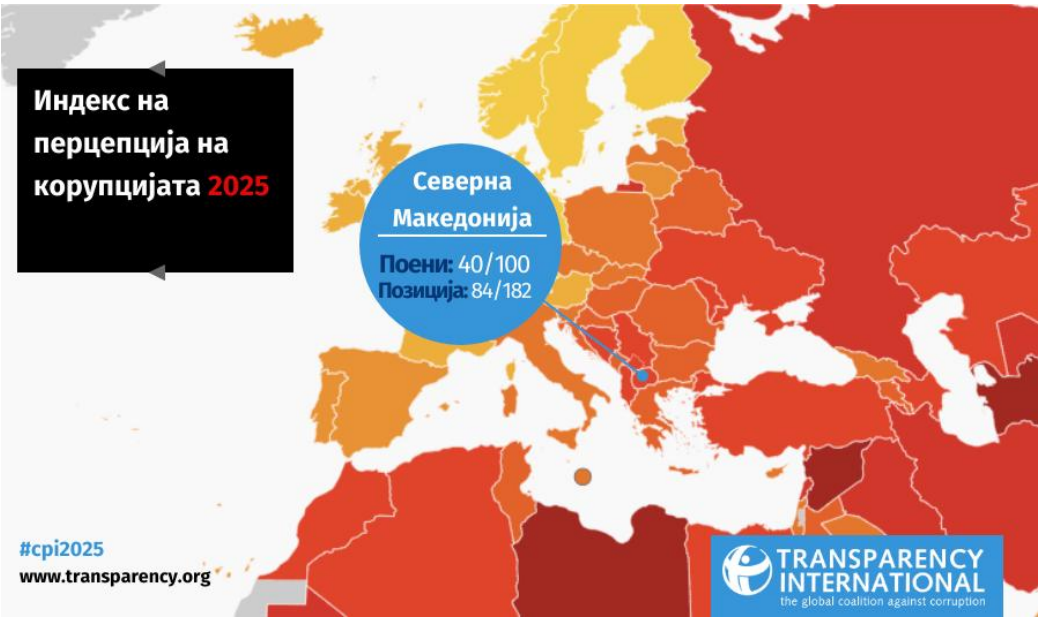
Projects

- Monitoring Integrity in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Civil Society Organizations Combating Corruption through Political Integrity Data
- Empowering Whistleblowers in the Fight Against Corruption
- Strengthening Regional Mechanisms for Combating Corruption and Impunity
- Smart Balkans Programme: Operational Grant
- Research on the Local Transparency Index in North Macedonia
- EU4 Rule of Law: Citizen Engagement for Public Integrity (CEPI) in the Western Balkans and Turkey

Coalitions

- Transparency International
- Platform of Civil Society Organizations Fighting Corruption
- Southeast Europe Coalition for Whistleblower Protection
- UNCAC Coalition (United Nations Convention against Corruption Coalition)

Corruption Perceptions Index



At the beginning of the year, the results of the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2025 were published. Transparency International-Macedonia held a press conference at which the findings were presented.

“The Republic of North Macedonia has once again scored 40 points on the Corruption Perceptions Index, indicating that there has been no substantial progress in the fight against corruption. Rather, the score reflects a continued stagnation, serving as a baseline from which improvements must begin. Formally, we are ranked four places higher than last year and now occupy the 84th position. This improvement suggests that, over the past year, our performance in combating corruption was better than that of four other countries.

The key systemic challenges remain the unsuccessful and incomplete reforms in the judiciary and the prosecution service, which continue to fall short of ensuring an effective, independent, and accountable justice system. Furthermore, developments involving the former President of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption have seriously undermined public trust in the institutions responsible for combating corruption.

There is also concern regarding the non-transparent process of drafting the amendments to the Criminal Code, as well as their content, which not only failed to strengthen the anti-corruption framework but, in certain aspects, weakened it. In addition, the new Whistleblower Protection Law and the amendments to the Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest—two of the most important pieces of legislation in the fight against corruption—have still not been adopted.”

Legal Advice Center for Victims and Witnesses of Corruption, with a Special Focus on Whistleblowers

Advocacy and Legal Advice Centers (ALACs) have been present for more than two decades in over 60 countries. Their primary objective is to encourage individuals, as well as private and public organizations, to report cases of corruption and to support them in seeking justice.

In 2025, the Legal Advice Center of Transparency International Macedonia received 184 reports from citizens who courageously opposed various forms of corrupt practices. The engagement of citizens will undoubtedly contribute to a more transparent and fairer society. Citizens most commonly accessed the ALAC center through the *Report Corruption* platform, followed by telephone contact and in-person visits to our office. Additional reporting channels included GlobaLeaks, the Ukazuvac.mk platform, our website and Facebook page, as well as postal submissions.

By city, Skopje recorded the highest number of reports, followed by Gostivar, Ohrid, Shtip, and Veles. Other cities accounted for significantly fewer reports.Throughout the year, the highest number of reports was received in July, followed by December, October, and September, while the lowest numbers were recorded in March and May.

Traditionally, the largest number of complaints and reports relate to the judiciary sector, followed by finance, education, healthcare, and local self-government. Customs, service activities, and public procurement also feature prominently. Other sectors account for a smaller share of reports; however, this does not diminish their importance, as they indicate that citizens are increasingly encouraged to report corruption across all areas.

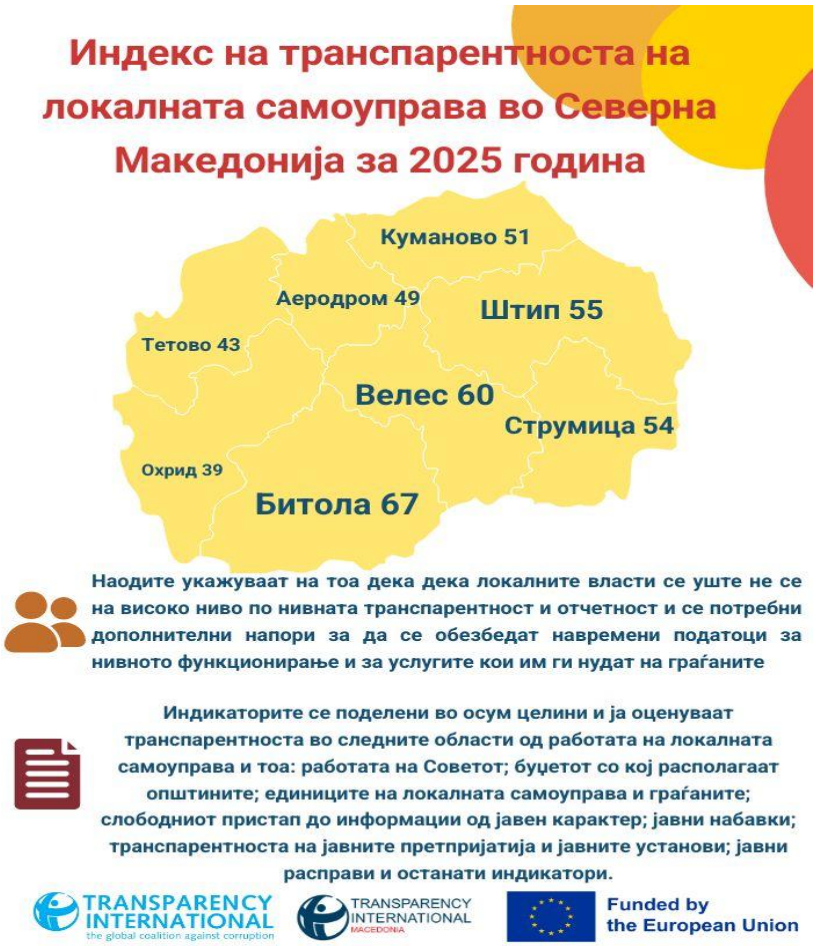
Smart Balkans Programme: Core Grant

Corruption Barometer - Transparency International Macedonia continuously monitors cases and actions related to corrupt practices and the fight against corruption. As a result of this work, Transparency International Macedonia has begun preparing a monthly *Corruption Barometer*.

In the *Corruption Barometer*, cases related to the fight against corruption and the rule of law are categorized as “light” and “bleak” events. Monitoring these developments has received significant public attention, as well as interest from domestic and international institutions. Over time, it has evolved into a relevant alternative barometer of corruption and an indicator of the state’s willingness to address this issue.

During the implementation of the project, several documents were produced across different areas: Political Integrity Rules Assessment in North Macedonia; Strengthening Political Integrity Through the Use of Open Data; Corruption and Poor Environmental Governance in the Diversion and Restoration Projects of the Sateska River

Research on the Local Transparency Index in North Macedonia



In 2025, Transparency International-Macedonia conducted a pilot assessment of the Local Government Transparency Index, based on Transparency International's methodology, with the aim of determining the level of transparency of municipalities towards citizens. The assessment examined how municipalities publish information about their work, how accessible this information is to citizens, and the ways in which citizens can access institutions and municipal services.

The evaluation covered a sample of the largest municipality by population in each planning region, namely the municipalities of Aerodrom, Bitola, Veles, Kumanovo, Ohrid, Strumica, Tetovo, and Shtip. They were assessed based on a questionnaire consisting of 91 questions covering multiple areas of municipal governance.

This index is a composite of positive scores derived from indicators that include analysis of official websites and documents, responses to freedom of information requests, direct insight into administrative functioning (including service centers), and data obtained from other relevant institutions. The indicators are grouped into eight categories, assessing transparency in the following areas: the work of the Municipal Council; municipal budgets; relations between local self-government units and citizens; access to public information; public procurement; transparency of public enterprises and public institutions; public hearings; and other related indicators.

The findings indicate that local authorities still do not achieve a high level of transparency and accountability, and that additional efforts are needed to ensure timely availability of data on their operations and the services they provide to citizens.

The highest-ranked municipality is Bitola with 67 points, followed by Veles with 60, Shtip with 55, Strumica with 54, Kumanovo with 51, Aerodrom with 49, Tetovo with 43, and the lowest-ranked municipality is Ohrid with 39 points. The average score is 52 points.

Empowering whistleblowers against corruption (EWAC)

During the project, two tools were developed to support the effective establishment of internal reporting systems for whistleblowers:
Internal Whistleblowing Systems: Best practice principles for public and private organizations and Internal whistleblowing systems: Self-assessment framework for public and private organizations

Strengthening Regional Mechanisms for Combating Corruption and Impunity
Protected internal reporting refers to the process in which a whistleblower submits a report within an institution or legal entity where there is suspicion or knowledge that a punishable act has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed, or any other unlawful or prohibited conduct that violates or threatens the public interest.
Transparency International Macedonia has updated the list of authorized persons for internal reporting, which can be accessed at the following link.

Integrity Watch in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Civil society combating corruption with political integrity data

Within the project "Integrity Watch in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Civil society combating corruption with political integrity data", a meeting of the Regional Community of Practice was held in Skopje, where discussions focused on political integrity and the importance of open data in the fight against corruption in the Western Balkans and Turkey.
The meeting took place on 27–28 February 2025. Discussions among professionals from institutions, civil society, and academia were organized into three thematic panels covering: asset and interest declarations, political financing, and public procurement.

During the project, several documents were produced in different areas: Управување со и обезбедување на ресурсите на судската власт; Проблемите во правосудството и последиците по корупцијата; Предизвиците за унапредување на транспарентност во финансирањето на политичките партии во Северна Македонија; Годишниот извештај за работата на јавните обвинителства: клуч за зголемување на транспарентноста и интегритетот на обвинителството; Почитување на принципот на еднаквост и недискриминација:Улогата на Народниот правобранител на РСМ и Комисијата за спречување и заштита од дискриминација.

Awarding of Sub-Grants within the Project: "Integrity Watch in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Civil society combating corruption with political integrity data"
On 29 September 2025, at the Civil Society Resource Center, agreements were signed for the implementation of five sub-grants awarded by Transparency International Macedonia within the framework of the project *"Integrity Watch in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Civil*

society combating corruption with political integrity data," supported by the European Union.

Platform www.integritywatch.mk – Data on Political Party Financing, Public Procurement, and the Exploitation of Mineral Resources and Hydropower Plants - The Integrity Watch platform for North Macedonia is an open data platform that enables citizens to explore how money and power intersect in public decision-making processes. Developed by Transparency International Macedonia, the platform brings together key datasets on political party financing, public procurement, and the exploitation of mineral resources and hydropower plants—three areas that are most vulnerable to corruption and abuse of public office.



Publications

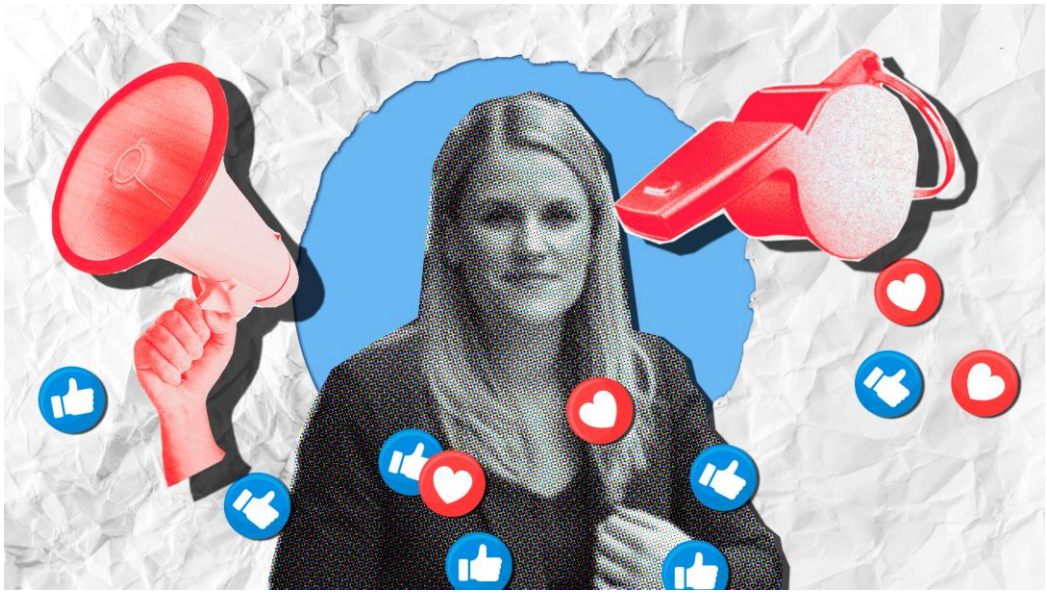
Political Integrity Rules Assessment in North Macedonia - Within the project *"Integrity Watch in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Civil society combating corruption with political integrity data,"* the report "Political Integrity Rules Assessment in North Macedonia" was prepared. This study analyzes the accessibility of open data that ensures political integrity.

Internal Whistleblowing Systems: Best practice principles for public and private organizations Whistleblowing refers to the disclosure of information regarding suspected irregularities involving individuals or entities that are believed to be taking, or may take, unlawful or improper actions. Organizations are often in the best position to address misconduct occurring within their jurisdiction, and in practice, the majority of whistleblowers first report such concerns internally within their organization.Therefore, it is essential that organizations whether private companies or public institutions establish safe and effective mechanisms for receiving and addressing such reports, as well as robust protection for whistleblowers.

This publication aims to support organizations in implementing effective internal whistleblowing systems. It also seeks to assist organizations in fulfilling their obligations under the EU Whistleblower Protection Directive.

Internal whistleblowing systems: Self-assessment framework for public and private organizations Transparency International developed this self-assessment framework to assist organizations in the process of establishing, implementing, and reviewing their internal whistleblowing systems, ensuring that they are effective and aligned with best practices and international standards. The framework is also aligned with the ISO guidelines for whistleblowing management systems. Although it is referred to as a "self-assessment" framework, this tool can also be used by third parties, such as civil society organizations, public institutions, and consulting bodies.

Campaign for World Whistleblower Day



Whistleblowers as a Valuable Tool in the Fight Against Corruption From Policy to Practice: How to Build Effective Whistleblowing Systems World Whistleblower Day: The Cost of Truth-Telling in the Era of Disinformation
The Importance of Hearing the Voices of Whistleblowers

Public Reactions – Highlighted

The Platform of Civil Society Organizations for the Fight against Corruption and the Blueprint Group for Justice System Reforms reacted to the amendments to the Criminal Code, stating that they create legal uncertainty and a risk of institutional confusion during the transitional period - While welcoming the initiative to amend the Criminal Code, they consider that the proposed changes, in their current form, do not represent a genuine return to the pre-2023 state of affairs, but instead introduce new solutions with serious consequences for legal certainty and the fight against corruption.

The Platform of Civil Society Organizations for the Fight against Corruption also calls for the urgent adoption of the Draft Law on Whistleblower Protection as a key step in the fight against corruption - The Platform expresses serious concern over the slow process of adopting this legislation. Although it actively participated in the working group established by the Ministry of Justice, with 15 meetings and two public debates held as early as December 2023, the process continues to be unjustifiably delayed.

Events – Highlighted

International Conference "Strengthening Integrity and Independence of Criminal Justice in the Western Balkans" - The President of Transparency International Macedonia, Blagoja Pandovski, participated in the high-level international conference *"Strengthening Integrity and Independence of Criminal Justice in the Western Balkans,"* held in Ljubljana from 10–11 March. The conference was organized by the Ministry of Justice of Slovenia and the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC). It brought together representatives of government institutions, anti-corruption bodies from Western Balkan countries, judicial authorities, international and regional organizations, and civil society, with the aim of strengthening a culture of integrity in criminal justice. Special emphasis was placed on the exchange of experiences, strategies, and innovative approaches for systematic corruption prevention and the application of anti-corruption tools.

Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in Southeast Europe - A representative of Transparency International Macedonia, Viktorija Mileska-Cvetanoska, participated in a multi-stakeholder workshop on the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in Southeast Europe, held from 8 to 10 April 2025 in Vrdnik, Serbia. The workshop aimed to strengthen participants' understanding of the UNCAC, its Implementation Review Mechanism, as well as the broader links between corruption and organized crime, including the importance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC).

Workshop on the Opportunities, Use, and Challenges of Beneficial Ownership Data in the Fight Against Corruption - On 21 May 2025, a workshop was held at Hotel Solun on the opportunities, use, and challenges related to the use of data from the Register of Beneficial Owners in the country's fight against corruption. The event was organized by the Center for Civil Communications (CCC). During the workshop, the analysis *"Use of Beneficial Ownership Data in the Fight Against Corruption in North Macedonia"* prepared by the organization was presented.

The Effectiveness of the Institutional Response in the Republic of North Macedonia to EU Recommendations on Confiscation and Management of Criminal Assets - The National Convention on the European Union in North Macedonia, organized by the European Movement, hosted the 17th session of Working Group 4 – Justice, Freedom and Security (Chapter 24), dedicated to the topic *"The Effectiveness of the Institutional Response in the Republic of North Macedonia to EU Recommendations on Confiscation and Management of Assets Acquired through Crime."*

Signed Memorandum of Cooperation between the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia and Transparency International Macedonia - The Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of North Macedonia and Transparency International Macedonia signed a Memorandum of Cooperation aimed at strengthening collaboration in the field of combating corruption and organized crime.

Signed Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Transparency International Macedonia - The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Transparency International Macedonia signed a Memorandum of Cooperation aimed at enhancing their partnership in the fight against corruption and organized crime.

Political Integrity Camp: "Protecting Democracy: Addressing Strategic Corruption and Advancing Political Integrity" - On 12–13 November 2025, the 7th Political Integrity Camp was held in Warsaw, Poland. This year's event was dedicated to the theme *"Protecting Democracy: Addressing Strategic Corruption and Advancing Political Integrity."* The main objective of the camp was to provide a regional platform for dialogue and exchange of experiences regarding the growing threat that strategic corruption poses to democratic governance, institutional resilience, and political integrity across the OSCE region.

Signed Memorandum of Cooperation between the Directorate for Execution of Sanctions and Transparency International Macedonia - The Directorate for Execution of Sanctions and Transparency International Macedonia signed a Memorandum of Cooperation aimed at strengthening their partnership in implementing activities in the field of combating corruption, improving integrity and professional standards of employees in the penitentiary system, and enhancing whistleblower protection and reporting mechanisms.

Workshop on Testing the Integrity Watch Platform - As part of the two-day activities of the Platform of Organizations for the Fight against Corruption, the Integrity Watch Platform was presented and tested. The platform was developed by Transparency International Macedonia within the project *"Monitoring Integrity in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Civil Society Organizations Fighting Corruption with Political Integrity Data,"* funded by the European Union and the regional project *SMART Balkans – Civil Society for a Connected Western Balkans*, financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway.

Marking International Anti-Corruption Day and Launching the Integrity Watch Platform – http://www.integritywatch.mk/ - Transparency International Macedonia marked International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December 2025 by organizing a conference titled *"Integrity as a Tool in the Fight against Corruption."*
The event brought together representatives from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, the civil society sector, and international organizations. It served as an opportunity to discuss institutional integrity and the integrity of public office holders as a powerful tool in combating corruption.

Regional Forum on Advancing Integrity and Institutional Reforms in the Western Balkans Held in Skopje - On 10 December 2025, a regional forum was held in Skopje on the theme *"From Policy to Impact: Advancing Integrity and Institutional Reforms in the Western Balkans."* The forum brought together representatives of institutions, international and civil society organizations, as well as ambassadors from the region, with the aim of discussing regional perspectives, opportunities, and actions needed to strengthen the fight against corruption not only at the national level but also across the region.

Presentation of the Integrity Watch Platform Functionalities in Prilep - On 12 December 2025 in Prilep, a training session titled *"Monitoring Public Procurement in Municipalities"* was organized for representatives of civil society organizations, public institutions, local media, and interested citizens from the municipalities of Prilep and Krushevo.

Interviews / TV Debates – Highlighted

"Slow Prosecution Service does not act on reports from anti-corruption bodies and auditors, while it proceeds with pre-investigations on police submissions" – A slow and inefficient prosecution service that not only fails to act on referrals submitted through official channels, but also ignores reports from the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and findings from the State Audit Office. This is cited as one of the main reasons why citizens do not trust the institutions responsible for prosecuting crime, which, in recent years, have shown zero results in the fight against corruption. This assessment was shared by the President of Transparency International Macedonia, Blagoja Pandovski, in an interview/TV debate. He further stated that although the prosecution service faces staffing shortages, it remains a key institution in the fight against corruption, and its slow and inefficient performance cannot be justified.

Participation of the President of Transparency International Macedonia in the TV Programme "For or Against" - As in many instances before, issues in the judiciary remain a key topic affecting society. This was also the central theme of the TV programme *"For or Against"* in which the President of Transparency International Macedonia, Blagoja Pandovski, took part. During the programme, discussions focused on court rulings with elements of political corruption, judicial reforms, the fight against corruption, legislative amendments, and other topics of significant importance for strengthening the rule of law. Mr. Pandovski also presented the National Integrity System assessment, which includes an analysis of 15 pillars forming part of the overall anti-corruption framework. He emphasized the importance of integrity and accountability within institutions in order to ensure the effective implementation of anti-corruption policies.

Guest Appearance of the President of Transparency International Macedonia on TV 24 - The President of Transparency International Macedonia, Blagoja Pandovski, appeared as a guest on the programme *"Argument Plus"* on TV 24. The discussion focused on issues related to non-compliance with the obligation to declare assets, the resignation of the Public Prosecutor, the failure to adopt amendments to the Criminal Code, and the insufficient transparency of institutions.