

## News by SELDI members

### **SELDI Advocacy Workshop: Reducing Corruption and State Capture Vulnerabilities in Southeast Europe**

The past year has vividly exposed governance vulnerabilities in Southeast Europe and how they threaten to undermine the region's European perspective. The migration crisis, the economic stagnation, and the Russia-EU geopolitical stand-off have shown the need to reinvigorate the European Union's engagement with the region. A critical part of this engagement remains the need to reduce corruption and state-capture vulnerabilities in Southeast Europe, in particular in the energy sector. At a policy workshop on 19-20 April 2016, SELDI, the largest anti-corruption coalition of civil society organizations in the region will present to the policy community in Brussels the results of its 2016 corruption monitoring in SEE and its ideas for counter-measures.

### **Chapters 23 and 24 are the Key for Reforms in Serbia**

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the EU-Serbia Civil Society Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) held in Brussels on 4 February 2016, members debated Chapter 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights- and Chapter 24 - Justice, Freedom and Security - with a special focus on the rule of law and the fight against corruption. The basis for discussion was the Joint Report *Rule of law, anti-corruption in the EU and negotiations with Serbia*. The conclusion that was reached was that keeping Chapters 23 and 24 open during accession negotiations can be beneficial to Serbia and it will provide a strong initiative for reforms in the areas of judiciary, protection, promotion of fundamental human rights and the fight against organized crime.

**Belgrade Center for Security Policy, 04 February 2016**

### **Notary Public Service is Public, Notaries are Obligated to be Accountable to the Public**

By law, the notary service is a public service and notaries perform tasks entrusted to them by the courts of Montenegro, while notarial acts are public documents. Furthermore, notaries are appointed by the Ministry of Justice, jurisdiction is determined according to official jurisdiction of the courts and they perform activities of public interest. The conclusion of the Anti-Corruption Agency that notaries are not public officials is another in a series of scandalous decisions of its Director, showing insufficient efforts to install meaningful attempt to fight corruption in Montenegro. According to SELDI's partner MANS, the decision of the Director is definitely a step backwards when it comes to the efforts of the whole society to make public positions in Montenegro less susceptible to corruption.

**MANS, 15 February 2016.**

### **Harmful Job "Grahovo" Revealed after Report of Citizens**

Criminal charge in the case "Grahovo" is filed to the Special Prosecutor's Office on 30 July 2015, against Milivoje Zivkovic – a former executive director of the Agricultural Cooperative "Grahovo" and Zdravko Boskovic – an executive director of the company "Grahovo Medical Center" from Herceg Novi. Both individuals in a criminal complaint are charged as responsible for abusing the position in economy signing harmful contract based on which agricultural cooperative and its huge assets were sold to "Grahovo Medical Center" below market value. MANS welcomes the recent action of the Special Prosecution for Organized Crime and Corruption in the case of "Grahovo" which shows that this institution may, when there is a political will, efficiently process evidence in a very short time and carry out an effective investigation.

**MANS, 03 February 2016**

## Indictment Filed against the Leader of the Opposition in BiH



Photo: CIN

The State Prosecution of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) filed an indictment against Fahrudin Radoncic, president of the Alliance for a Better Future (SBB) and delegates of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH. The indictment also includes the Secretary of the Ministry of Security and candidate SBB for the State Transport and Communications Minister Bakir Dautbašić, Bilsen Šahman and Zijad Hadžijahić. Prosecution charges all of them for being members of an organized group that committed several crimes. Radoncic is accused of being the organizer and manager of the group; he had obstructed justice and pushed state institutions to adopt an official decision. He was arrested on the 25th January 2016, when he was taken into custody.

**Center for Investigative Reporting, 05 February 2016**

## **Anti-Corruption News from the SEE Region**

### John Kerry Pushes for Albanian Judicial Reform



Photo: RAI

During his visit in Tirana on Sunday 15 February 2016, the US Secretary of State John Kerry urged both government and opposition to back a judicial reform initiative intended to boost the fight against corruption in Albania. Kerry acknowledged that the fight against corruption was a tough one but said it was a necessary step for the future of Albania in Europe. Kerry also emphasized the need to uphold the rule of law, saying that Albania could be a prosperous country if law was applied to everyone in the same way, “no matter

what political party is in power and no matter who belongs to what party, no matter what your politics are”. Prime Minister Edi Rama responded by promising that he would quickly move forward with the judiciary reform and other efforts against corruption. **RAI, 15 February 2016.**

### Bulgaria: Money-Laundering Case Dropped against Hristo Bisserov – a Former MP

The Sofia City Court (SSC) has closed a money-laundering case against Hristo Bisserov, a former Bulgarian Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and long-time lawmaker. In November 2013, Bisserov and his stepson, Ivaylo Glavinkov, were charged with laundering US\$ 446,426 between December 2012 and February 2013. Late last year, the suspects had asked that charges to be dismissed as prosecutors had not act for two years. The prosecution said it failed to obtain information on the former lawmaker’s Swiss bank accounts because the Swiss authorities rejected its request. The court had given prosecutors a three-month deadline on Dec. 21 to either prosecute the case or drop it. On Wednesday Feb. 3, prosecutors indicated they did not have enough evidence to bring charges, and the court issued its ruling on February 10th. **RAI, 15 February 2016.**

### NATO Chief Urges Montenegro to Tackle Corruption



Photo: RAI

According to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, Montenegro has to continue to implement reforms in order to become a member, but the Western alliance will not interfere in the internal affairs of the country concerning how such decisions are made. Stoltenberg said that Montenegro had already conducted a lot of reforms, which is why it earned its invitation to join the alliance – but it now has to deliver additional results. **RAI, 09 February 2016.**

### **Corruption Hindering Serbian Justice, BIRN Report**

New research conducted by the SELDI's partner, the Belgrade Center for Security Policy and BIRN says that major branches of the Serbian justice system, police and judiciary remain influenced by corruption. In the judiciary, only ten out of 20 measures for curbing corruption have been implemented, as set by the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. Some of the unimplemented measures require a lot of resources, such as linking and securing exchanges of information between the police, the prosecution and the courts. The main reasons for not battling corruption in the police department is put down to the former lack of a proper Law on the Police. For the judiciary, the main problems are the overwhelming number of unsolved cases and political influence over the election of prosecutors. As for the media reporting on corruption, the report says that media reports are too upbeat when talking about anti-corruption measures.

**RAI, 04 February 2016.**

### **Problems in Bulgaria are Systemic, in Romania – Political**

The content of the European Commission reports under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM), published on 27 January 2016, could be summarized into two sentences: In Bulgaria something could start to happen and in Romania something is happening and is gaining speed, it should not stop. Although the EC stresses in its report on Bulgaria that there is no change in the recommendations from last year, there still is a change. At the same time, the EC spares no compliments on Romania's achievements, outlining the main engine of reform: "The track record of the key judicial and integrity institutions to address high-level corruption has remained impressive". **RAI, 29 January 2016.**

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Basic Human Rights**

TACSO Resource Centre run by the SELDI's partner, the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation and TACSO project office are organizing a workshop on Basic Human Rights. The event is intended for representatives of civil society organizations that are actively working on topics dealing with discrimination and children's rights with a focus on Roma children. **Institute for Democracy, 25-26 February 2016, Macedonia**

### **2016 The Decisive Year for the Reform of Public Integrity**

Academic Society of Romania (SAR) in partnership with the Prime Minister, Ministry of Justice and the Competition Council are organizing a conference to present measurement of corruption in public procurement, the integrity of the public, and the connection between corruption and quality or investment in infrastructure. **SAR, 25 February 2016, Bucharest, Romania**

### **Advanced Strategies to Minimise Third Party Anti-Corruption Risks**

The programme will provide an opportunity to get under the hood and into the nuts and bolts of vetting, on-boarding, monitoring and auditing third parties. It will further focus on the depth of practical insight and knowhow for navigating this critical area of compliance, while also offering practical solutions to the complex challenges within those high risk markets. **C5(UK), 24 February 2016, London**

## **Reports and Analyses**

### **Making Development Work: The Quality of Government Approach**

The report elucidates the issue on why some countries have developed into prosperous societies while others have not, and it further exposes arguments for a better development policy. Professor Bo Rothstein, SELDI International Advisory Board member, and Marcus Tannenberg from the University of Gothenburg, analyze the quality of government and the control of corruption in order to address the major concerns and promote transformative change.

**Expert Group for Aid Studies, 15 December 2015.**

**Foreign Bribery Offence  
and its Enforcement**

The report is based on a cross-country analysis of the legislation on foreign bribery and its enforcement in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The purpose is to emphasize good national mechanisms that may be promoted as good practices and to expose common problems. It further serves as a valuable reference for legal reforms and recommendations for authorities in this region.  
**OECD, 2016.**

**MCIC Published the Eight  
Quarterly Report  
“Government Mirror”**

SELDI’s partner, the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation published a report that monitors and analyzes the Single Register of Regulations (ENER-[www.ener.gov.mk](http://www.ener.gov.mk)) for the period of 1<sup>st</sup> of October to 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2015. The analysis sheds lights on the practices of ministries in publishing, updating and ensuring feedback to the public on draft laws published in ENER. The report is part of monitoring the openness of the process of drafting laws within the project “Government Mirror” which is part of the USAID’s anti-corruption.  
**MCIM, 25 January 2016.**

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