

Strategizing from the future: A new way of planning the fight against corruption in North Macedonia

The process from design to production of a new car takes about ten years. For engineers and designers, the trick is to make a car not for consumers today but for the market, as it could be a decade from now. This process is usually called foresight. The objective is not to predict the future absolutely but to imagine several possible futures through thinking.

The strategic planning process is an essential and indispensable part of good governance. In North Macedonia, when it comes to creating public policies, the development of strategic plans starts from today. The analysis includes the current issues, situations and capacities based on which activities are created. Making decisions outside the strategic framework introduces a dose of arbitrariness and unpredictability to the planning.

However, the strategic planning rooted in today hardly anticipates problems that do not exist today or problems that we sense but are difficult to predict. They are, therefore, often absent from the strategic plans. Foresight, as a method of planning, does not deal with forecasting - on the contrary, the richness of foresight is the inclusion of possible scenarios and the probable ones to enable the adaptability of organizations to multiple scenarios. For example, if in 2019 we planned how the foreign investment in the Western Balkans would develop if we had considered the probable scenarios, none of them would have contained the global pandemic or a similar event that causes fundamental disruptions. But with good foresight, one might likely include radical disruption events so that such a vision for the future would be more plausible today. That is why foresight planning is vital in creating public policies because it provides an additional dimension and responsible policy-making for the benefit of future generations.

However, the strategizing from a position of the future does have added value when applied to the anti-corruption area. Not only does it start from the future capacities, but the anti-corruption action must be prepared for the future forms the corruption can have. In that sense, the fight against corruption must be prepared for a number of possible scenarios, such as the success or failure of the Open Balkans and the positive and negative effects of that market integration and deregulation, the success or failure of cryptocurrencies, migration and human capital, successes or failures in the fight against organized crime and many other factors, domestic and foreign, that affect corruption and the institutional development in the country.

The project Anti-Corruption Talk in Parliament (ACT in Parliament) includes research and advocacy activities with main purpose of supporting the reform process in North Macedonia, by reinforcing the supervisory role of the Parliament in relation to the fight against corruption.

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