

"The 2024-2028 Parliament: New commitments in the fight against corruption"

The Institute for Democracy hosted a discussion between MPs, relevant institutions and the civil sector aimed at strengthening the role of the Parliament in the fight against corruption in the next period of four years. The discussion was organized around the main topics and priorities in fighting corruption, including instruments for providing assistance to the Parliament and the accountability from the institutions that answer to the Parliament.

Introductory speeches were given by **Misha Popović**, head of the Center for Good Governance at the Institute for Democracy, **Ljupco Prendzov**, Member of Parliament and President of the Committee for Political System and Relations Between Communities, **Maksim Acevski**, Chief State Auditor and **Servet Demiri**, member of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption. There were also speeches from the representatives of non-governmental organizations and a fruitful discussion followed afterwards.

Main conclusions from the event:

1. Constructive guidelines for the new parliamentary majority:

- The new parliamentary majority is expected to be fully transparent to the public and organize public hearings when adopting new laws. It is necessary for the new parliamentary composition to demand improved regulatory impact assessment (RIA) which are prepared by the Government when proposing laws. At the same time, the MPs should request that the materials accompanying the laws proposals include an anti-corruption assessment of the legislation (which is under the mandate of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption).

2. Need for quality legislation:

- More attention is required when adopting new laws, especially in areas where there are serious risks of corruption. The discussion mentioned the need to reduce the adoption of laws using fast track procedure and the abuse of the European flag.

3. Inter-party Parliamentary Group on combating corruption:

- The fight against corruption requires a general consensus and cross-party effort and engagement of all MPs. It is therefore important, in the new mandate, to raise above the disagreements between the political parties and for the MPs to proactively participate in the newly established Inter-Party Group on combating corruption in order to promote the role of the Parliament in preventing corruption.

4. Active follow-up on the initiatives raised by the State Audit Office (SAO) and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC):

- It is necessary to intensify the initiatives for organizing supervisory debates after the findings of the SAO and the SCPC in the future.
- Taking into account the importance of the State Audit Office reports, which analyze the spending of public funds and identify the potential risk of corruption, it is important to establish a practice for continuous discussion on all audit reports in the plenary sessions and in the working bodies of the Parliament.

- Similar to the above, it is necessary to organize supervisory hearings per cases, risks and weaknesses of corruption, as identified by the SCPC. This may also include findings on the poor implementation of the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption.

Final conclusions from the extensive discussion were the need for exceptional political will from both the Government and the opposition, inter-party efforts, as well as restoring trust in the judiciary, the Parliament and other institutions in order to achieve effect in the fight against corruption.

The event is organized as part of the project "**Fostering debate on accountability and anti-corruption**" which aims to contribute to reform processes in North Macedonia by strengthening the role of the Parliament in the fight against corruption and creating reforms in the rule of law, enabling dialogue between the political parties and youth wings, as well as between MPs and the civil society. The project is supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

The 2024-2028 Parliament: New commitments in the fight against corruption discussion can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5FhNElgj4M>