

Second day of the Twenty-Seventh Meeting
MC(27) Journal, Agenda item 7

DECISION No. 6/20
PREVENTING AND COMBATING CORRUPTION THROUGH
DIGITALIZATION AND INCREASED TRANSPARENCY

The Ministerial Council,

Recalling the importance of promoting good governance, including through increased transparency, and preventing and combating corruption in enhancing security, stability and economic growth and reaffirming the respective OSCE commitments, which contribute to the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and co-operation, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act,

Recalling also the Ministerial Council Declaration on the Digital Economy as a Driver for Promoting Co-operation, Security and Growth (MC.DOC/2/18), and acknowledging the opportunities offered by digital transformation to prevent and combat corruption, and address new challenges in this field,

Welcoming the fact that almost all participating States have ratified or acceded to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and are working towards fulfilling the obligations deriving from the Convention,

Acknowledging the important work on anti-corruption done by other international organizations, in particular by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),

Recognizing the risks posed by corruption to security, stability, democracy, effective governance and economic and social development and the need to prevent and combat corruption at international and national levels in a comprehensive way, including by addressing the links between corruption and money laundering, and through the effective implementation of asset recovery measures and improved international and regional co-operation in this regard,

Acknowledging the need to increase efforts to effectively prevent and combat corruption, including through digitalization, while upholding the rule of law and protecting human rights,

Recognizing the role of the OSCE in supporting the efforts of the participating States to prevent and combat corruption,

Acknowledging that a public sector based on integrity, openness, transparency, accountability, responsiveness and the rule of law, is crucial to prevent and combat corruption, and achieve sustainable economic growth and development, improve the business and investment climate and help facilitate participating States' efforts to promote social integration and opportunities for all, including for women as well as youth,

Recognizing the importance of the participation of the private sector, civil society and media, as well as academia, in efforts to prevent and combat corruption and enhance good governance, including the realization of the principles of transparency and accountability,

Acknowledging that accessible, secure and reliable e-government services that are user-centric can play a key role in increasing the efficiency and transparency of, and promoting trust in, public administration,

Recognizing the importance of open government data as a tool that can help to prevent and combat corruption by increasing accountability and transparency, allowing citizens, in accordance with domestic law, to better monitor the use of public funds and the policy-making process,

Recognizing the importance of developing and using methodologies and objective indicators and disaggregated data to measure corruption and the concrete impact of anti-corruption measures, in accordance with domestic law, and to adopt better evidence-based anti-corruption policies,

Being mindful of the Parliamentary Assembly's contribution to promoting dialogue among OSCE parliamentarians with a view to strengthening legislation essential in preventing and combating corruption,

Building on the substantial discussions held in the framework of the 28th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum on "Promoting security, stability and economic growth in the OSCE area by preventing and combating corruption through innovation, increased transparency and digitalization" and of the OSCE Chairmanship High-Level Conference on "Good Governance and the Fight against Corruption in the Digital Era", as well as in the work of the Economic and Environmental Committee,

1. Calls upon participating States to prevent and combat corruption by:
 - (a) Enhancing good governance, including the principles of transparency and accountability, and promoting integrity and oversight;
 - (b) Employing digital tools to strengthen integrity and accountability of public service providers with the view to help prevent and combat corruption as well as to achieve sustainable economic growth and development, improve the business and investment climate and to facilitate participating States' efforts to contribute to the social inclusion and equitable economic participation of women as well as young people;

- (c) Enhancing transparency in public administration through digitalizing paper-based and other analogue systems, particularly in public procurement as well as, where appropriate, in existing mechanisms for income and asset declarations of public officials and politically exposed persons, to the extent permitted by domestic law, with due respect to classified and personal data;
- (d) Promoting the use of digital tools for early detection and prevention of corruption through enhancing national and international secure electronic identification processes consistent with applicable domestic law;
- (e) Introducing digital tools, where appropriate, to reduce administrative barriers and burdens, and facilitating interaction between citizens, businesses, enterprises and public administration;
- (f) Promoting more transparent, accountable, reliable and accessible e-government portals with the aim to facilitate open access to information and effective delivery of public services;
- (g) Promoting and using digital technologies to strengthen and extend anti-corruption training in co-operation, where appropriate, with relevant international organizations in this field;
- (h) Encouraging the establishment and improvement of mechanisms aimed at ensuring transparency of beneficial ownership information, in accordance with domestic law;
- (i) Supporting the education of youth, in accordance with domestic education systems, on the importance of good governance, including transparency, and preventing and combating corruption as well as through fostering digital skills, and strengthening awareness-raising measures, including promoting collective action and collaboration between public and private sectors and civil society;
- (j) Reducing existing digital divides by promoting and supporting digital literacy and improving the accessibility of public administration online resources and applications;
- (k) Taking appropriate measures to ensure that easily accessible and safe reporting channels are available to whistle-blowers, to put in place and implement legal mechanisms for the effective protection of whistle-blowers against retaliation, and to encourage relevant organizations to establish and implement necessary protections, in accordance with domestic law;
- (l) Adopting, in accordance with domestic law, a holistic multi-stakeholder approach to increase effectiveness and improve co-ordination of anti-corruption measures and initiatives, including promoting the implementation of corporate social responsibility;
- (m) Promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the development and implementation of relevant anti-corruption activities, with the view to achieving gender equality, and taking into account that corruption disproportionately affects women and the vulnerable;

- (n) Enhancing interaction and international co-operation among relevant authorities and stakeholders in the anti-corruption field, with the aim to foster the exchange of information, experiences, best practices and lessons learnt;
2. Encourages those OSCE participating States that have not yet done so to become States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and to effectively implement it;
 3. Encourages participating States to make the best use of the OSCE as a platform for dialogue, co-operation, exchange of information and sharing of best practices in the area of preventing and combating corruption through digitalization and increased transparency;
 4. Tasks relevant OSCE executive structures, including field operations, within their mandates and available resources, to assist participating States, upon their request, in implementing the provisions of this decision, including by co-operating with relevant regional and international organizations;
 5. Encourages the OSCE Partners for Co-operation to voluntarily implement the provisions of this decision.