

Press release

A premiere in the Romanian fight against corruption: Under the Auspices of the German Ambassador to Bucharest,

The state's anticorruption authorities collaborate with Transparency International—Romania

The Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centre, inaugurated today in Bucharest, by Transparency International—Romania, assists and counsels the victims and the witnesses of the corruption facts from the public sector, guiding them through the specific legislation, the procedures and the institutions relevant for preventing, combating, and sanctioning corruption, including the procedures for the witnesses protection.

The Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centre of Transparency International—Romania has no objective in providing any other type of legal assistance.

The assistants and the counselors of the Center do not represent the assisted citizens in the instance or in front of the public authorities.

The Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centre counsels and educates the citizens that are aware of some sort of a corruption fact, in order for their demarches to be efficient.

Transparency International—Romania considers that, in the majority of the situations, the citizens do not know how to present a corruption case; as a consequence, the public authorities cannot act efficiently in their interest.

For this reason, The Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centre of Transparency International—Romania will explain the differences between the acts of corruption and those of duty oversight, of legal error, of administrative abuse, or of simple incompetence.

The Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centre of Transparency International—Romania functions in Horatiu street, no. 12, Bucharest, sector 1 (near Piata Matache/Gara de Nord), from Monday to Thursday, between 10:00—12:00 and 16:00—18:00.

The appointments are made through phone/fax, at (021) 222-2812.

The Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centers from Bucharest, Skopje, and Banja-Luka are coordinated by the Transparency International Secretary from Berlin and were founded with the financial support of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs, within the Anticorruption Initiative of Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

His Excellency Ambassador Wilfried Gruber declared, within the press conference for the inauguration of the Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centre from Bucharest: “On an international plan there is the Transparency International society, which is involved in the fight against the global corruption. Germany is glad/happy/proud to offer a country to [the Secretary of] this society.”

The amount allocated by the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs rises to 350.000 Euros for 2 years, from which Transparency International Romania already benefited of 32.000 Euros and it follows to receive for the next year another 50.000 Euros.

The collaboration of The Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centre of Transparency International—Romania with the National Anticorruption Directorate and with the National Authority for Control responds to the objective of preventing corruption through the partnership between the state’s specialized authorities with the civil society, in conformity with the National Anticorruption Strategy from October 2001.

The Minister of Control, Ionel Blanculescu, appreciates that “the Protocol signed today creates the premises for making the activity of the National Authority for Control more efficient, through a constructive relation with Transparency International Romania.”

The Chief Prosecutor for the Anticorruption Ioan Amarie underlined that “Today’s agreement comes to cover a void zone: the assistance and the counseling for the victims of the corruption infractions, where neither the prosecutors, nor other institutions have the time and the instruments for action.”

The education and the information components of the Center’s activity are carried on with the support of the Romanian Radio Society, which programmed a series of transmissions inspired from the Center’s activity, by respecting though the confidentiality clauses regarding the relations between TI—Romania’s assistants and counselors and the assisted citizens.

The president of Transparency International Romania, Marian Popa, underlined that “the partnership with the Radio, besides the specialized anticorruption authorities, probably represents a global premiere” and certainly the specific difference of The Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centre of Bucharest from the other similar centers.

Romania obtained in 2003 a score of only 2,8 points from a maximum of 10, according to the Corruption Perception Index published by the global anticorruption coalition Transparency International, at 7 October.

Romania’s score within this Index constantly decreased in the last 5 years, pointing out that the situation from our country becomes closer to the institutionalized corruption state.

Romania occupies, from this point of view, the last position within the European Union member and candidate states.

The signatories of the partnership agreements inaugurating the activity of The Advocacy and Legal Assistance Centre hope that this will make a contribution to the consolidation of the Romanian public integrity system and to the facilitation of the European integration process.

Transparency International—Romania is a Romanian nongovernmental, non-political, and non-profit association, founded in 1999 by a group of citizens and organizations preoccupied by the corruption problem from Romania. In the same year, the association was accredited as the Romanian branch of the global coalition against corruption, Transparency International.

The corruption prevention is the common goal of the collaboration between Transparency International—Romania, the National Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office, the National Authority for Control, and the Romanian Radio Society.