
Press release

Transparency International sustains the blocking of European funds for Bulgaria and militates the reforms acceleration for Romania, but also for other EU member states

Bruxelles / Berlin, 23 July 2008 – Transparency International (TI) expresses its deep concern regarding the high level corruption, the organized crime and the deficient administration of the public funds in Bulgaria and sustains the European Commission decision of putting off the financial aids for this country, consequently to the monitoring reports published today.

The inconsistency characteristic to the Bulgarian and Romanian anticorruption reforms after the EU adhesion in January 2007 shows that the EU membership it is not a panacea. The European Commission Reports are severely critique both for Romania and Bulgaria, even though only Bulgaria will be financially sanctioned. Romania enjoyed a relatively clement treatment at this evaluation round, but urgently needs to accelerate the anticorruption reforms.

The deficiencies pointed out by the European Commission Reports are in the same line with TI's evaluations for the two countries. "The lack of administrative capacity and of political will to adopt substantial anticorruption measures negatively reflects in their implementation and success. Immediate measures are needed in order to stop the European funds fraud and to investigate the corruption transgressions" declares Diana Kovatcheva, Executive Director of TI Bulgaria.

"The biggest problem in Romania is that the fight against corruption became an instrument in the political parties' struggle/fight for power", explained Victor Alistar, Executive Director of TI Romania. "This is the reason for which it could not be assured a national consent over the anticorruption policies and which also explains the lack of condemnations within the high level corruption cases. We consider that the new anticorruption reforms must be conceived on an exclusively technical basis and that they must be sustained by a strong political will."

TI recommends performing similar monitoring reports for all the EU member states. Romania and Bulgaria are not the only states to have scored low points in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which reveals the need for solid anticorruption control and monitoring systems extended at the whole Union level.

In order to prevent this type of problems in the future, Transparency International interceded to the European Commission to allow a more substantial involvement on behalf of the civil society within the adhesion process – an action that has an immediate relevance for Croatia and other candidate countries. This measure will facilitate the augmentation of the transparency and participation in the adhesion process, ensuring in the same time a solid base on which the civil society's organizations could sanction the authorities before and after the European adhesion.

"A European Union working in the citizen's service must be free of corruption" declared Jana Mittermaier, Chief of the Bruxelles Office of Transparency International. "The fight against corruption in any EU member state, Romania and Bulgaria included, is relevant for the public integrity at the entire Union's level, and has an incidence over the citizens' right to benefit of open, predictable, just institutions".

###

Transparency International is the civil society's organization leading the fight against corruption.