
Activity Overview

“Regional Workshop on Whistleblowing in the Security Sector”

IRC-L1-W-19

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Venue Podgorica, Montenegro

Background Southeast European countries continue to face a number of challenges including corruption, lack of independence and impartiality of the judiciary and the prioritization of business interests over political integrity. The security sector is particularly vulnerable since it has to address corruption but ensure that security is not at risk. One of the measures that addresses the process of integrity building and related issues is protection of whistleblowers. Although considered a controversial topic according to a recent publication of the Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector¹ the restriction of the ‘right to know’ on the grounds of confidentiality of state secrets sets the democratic legitimacy of secrecy against the democratic legitimacy of transparency which is more inherent to the notion of representative democracy.

Furthermore, the latest publication produced by the Southeast Coalition on Protection of Whistleblowers confirms the survey findings and claims that evidence shows that new laws do not always protect citizens and employees from being fired, demoted, harassed, sued or even prosecuted. These findings are being leveraged to close dangerous legislative gaps that expose whistleblowers to career, personal and financial ruin. Therefore, strengthened protection mechanisms are needed to bring about solutions to these and other challenges. Developing stronger rights of and protection for whistleblowers have been recognized and cited by Transparency International, EU, OECD and many others as essential elements of curbing corruption in the SEE region.

Being aware of the fact that integrity building in defence and security areas presents one of the common challenges in the region, and considering that this specific topic needs to be treated in a multi-disciplinary fashion, RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) and the Ministry of Defence of Montenegro have been implementing joint activities in the last couple of years. In 2016 RACVIAC partnered with the Regional Anti-corruption Initiative (RAI) and RCC in order to look into the emerging trends and experiences in the field of whistleblowing with the attempt to increase the capacity of relevant public institutions regarding the protection of whistleblowers, as well as to increase

¹ The Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector (CIDS) was established in 2012 upon the initiative of the Norwegian Ministry of Defence. The Centre seeks to promote and enhance professional integrity and good governance in the defence and security domains.

awareness about available legal solutions in Southeast Europe. The main focus of this year's event would be continuation of dialogue and exchange of experiences from 2016.

Purpose and Objectives The objective of the Workshop is to increase the capacity of relevant entities in the security sector (defence, internal affairs) in the field of integrity and corruption prevention especially in regard to whistleblower protection.

The Workshop aims to increase awareness about innovative anti-corruption mechanisms and tools but also the needed legal solutions and regulatory measures. It is anticipated that participants will gain a better understanding of the specific elements related to institutional measures on whistleblower protection.

The participants will:

- acquire additional knowledge about the relevant international standards and useful tools;
- get an overview of the main regional stakeholders and actors, competent bodies and institutions;
- elaborate relevant case studies and address common challenges and problems;
- exchange good practices and lessons learned;
- develop mutual contacts and a network among participants from South East Europe;
- outline the most demanding common challenges in South East Europe and future actions in this field.

Participation The target audience of the Workshop are mid-level representatives of the ministries of interior and defence (border police, officials dealing with integrity measures, prevention and detection of conflict of interest and classified data protection). The participants are also expected to take an active part in delivering and deliberating on case studies.

The event will gather national professionals in the security sector (more specifically, in the defence sector) who manage whistleblowing cases and implement whistleblowing policies at a national level.

Methodology The Workshop is envisaged as an active and vibrant environment that will enable all participants to share their knowledge and experience and to learn about the topics from peers in the region. The event will last two days and will comprise lectures, presentations and discussions. The working language will be English.

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