



**TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL
BULGARIA**

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL - BULGARIA

2017

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

In 2017, Transparency International - Bulgaria celebrated its 19th anniversary. The organisation was established in 1998 as Transparency International's first national office in South-Eastern Europe. During this period, the association gained the capacity to create and implement projects to combat corruption, promoted higher standards for good governance in public institutions, and managed to build a reputation of a highly professional, politically impartial and active civil society organisation.

In recent years, Transparency International - Bulgaria has gained a wide range of supporters and has worked with a large number of independent experts from various spheres of scientific and public life to implement its projects and initiatives. Established ties with national and international institutions were extended towards civil society structures and the media, and the association earned its name as a respectable and reliable organisation.

In 2017, Transparency International – Bulgaria continued to actively carry out activities to counter corruption at a national, regional and international level. All implemented programs and initiatives of the association were focused on the realisation of its mission and main priorities, as well as the objectives and tasks laid out in the charter. ¹

The team of Transparency International - Bulgaria continued to successfully realise its full range of goals and objectives by planning and implementing specific projects and initiatives under two main programs.

¹ The mission of Transparency International – Bulgaria, deriving from its status as a Bulgarian representation of the greater body: uniting the efforts of state institutions, local authorities, representatives of civil society, the private sector and the media in order to introduce systemic reforms and concrete actions against corruption in the country.

The main priorities in the work of the association: the initiation and implementation of projects and programs for combating corruption at both a national and regional level.

The main goals and tasks set out in the charter of the association:

- Conducting research initiatives on corruption issues by mobilising efforts of scientists, public figures and experts in the relevant fields;
- Collecting, presenting and disseminating the necessary analytical information among state institutions and civil society organisations.
- Developing, testing and implementing various citizens' initiatives aimed at anti-corruption;
- Offering expert and technical assistance for various citizens' initiatives aimed at anti-corruption;
- Building and maintaining a contact network of international and national partner and donor organisations dealing with similar issues;
- Long-term cooperation with central and local authorities, experts in the state administration and non-governmental organisations with a similar focus in order to create a stable network of public coalitions working on fighting corruption.

The NATIONAL PROGRAM aimed at:

- The application of effective models for independent expert monitoring and civil control over the legislation and processes of governance in relation to transparency principles and accountability;
- Initiating advocacy campaigns in support of important public causes and issues related to preventing and tackling corruption, as well as the protection of individual victims of corruption;
- Increasing public awareness on the topics of integrity, transparency and accountability in the work of public institutions;
- Carrying out analytical activities on the problems related to anti-corruption and the enforcement of good management practices through mobilising the expertise of the organisation as well as of foreign experts in the field.

The REGIONAL PROGRAM aimed at:

- The implementation of international projects in partnership with the Transparency International – Secretariat, along with the national representatives of the organisation.
- The exchange of experience and the creation of regional networks for the implementation of anti-corruption initiatives.

The ACHIEVEMENTS of the association during 2017:

- Developed Index of the Local Integrity System - 2017, a tool for the comparative assessment of contributions of key sectors and institutions in combating corruption at a local level. The index was published for a second year and provides a comparative assessment of 27 municipalities included in the survey. It can serve as an investment guide for businesses at a regional level, as well as to indicate to local institutions what necessary reforms need to be made. In the long term, the Index will be useful for analysing the trend of development across the municipalities included in the survey, as well as for any necessary investigations.
- An initiative to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of European funds spent through public procurement. Transparency International – Bulgaria participates in an international project supported by the European commission, within which the organisation offered its expertise on the application of integrity pacts in the public procurement of organizations from 10 other European countries, while also monitoring the

construction of important infrastructure elements of the domestic highway 'Struma'.

- Produced a comparative institutional analysis of the reasons for the bankruptcy of the fourth largest bank in the country - CCB, as well as a book titled 'Assessment of the integrity system in the banking sector in Bulgaria' was published. In 2017, an expert team of the association applied the analytical approach of Transparency International's 'National Integrity System', based on the original methodology for assessing the integrity system in the banking sector, to carry out an in-depth study of issues in legislation and in the work of institutions with control powers in the banking system. In the future, research results could serve both as a universal analysis tool of the control system as well as for identifying potential risks to the banking sector.
- Implemented civic initiative for monitoring the election process. The organisation conducted civil monitoring of the parliamentary elections held on March 26 2017 with the assistance of a wide network of civil society organizations. Based on the conducted civil observation of the election and analysis of obtained results, a monitoring report was developed and published, as well as a package of proposals for changes in the electoral legislation and its implementation practices. An expert team of Transparency International - Bulgaria also developed a policy paper titled 'Integrity in Politics and Effective Counteraction of Corruption in Bulgaria,' which analytically examines the key factors that determine problems in the electoral process and the main anti corruption priorities included in the election programs of political parties.
- Conducted conferences, training seminars, round tables and public discussions, both in the country and abroad, dedicated to the system of integrity of public institutions on a local level, transparency and integrity within the electoral process, as well as mechanisms for civil control over the management of public resources spent through public procurement.
- Published publications, information and training materials that present the analysis and research of Transparency International - Bulgaria in connection with its implemented projects and initiatives.

FIELDS OF ACTIVITY

I COUNTERING POLITICAL CORRUPTION. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH DEMOCRATIC STANDARDS DURING THE ELECTION PROCESSES. MONITORING THE FINANCING OF POLITICAL PARTIES.

The troubling impact of corruption on political life, as well as on the overall governance model of the country, is one of the main topics of focus for the association since its inception to present day.

In 2001, Transparency International-Bulgaria monitored the transparency of an election campaign for the very first time (the 2001 presidential election), and created a methodology for measuring the level of transparency in the financing of political parties and election campaigns in 2003, using as a basis Transparency International's well-established Corruption Perceptions Index. For sixteen consecutive years, the association has been conducting research which it uses to develop and publish indices for transparency in the financing of election campaigns, prepare reports on the observation of the election process, and formulate proposals for changes in legislation that are the subject of attention not only for Bulgarian audiences, but also to other international organisations and national representations of Transparency International.

In recent years, the issue of transparency and accountability in the financing of campaigns has been displaced by other issues that have a significant negative impact on the electoral process - vote buying, various forms of control and illegal pressure on voters, as well as organisational preparation and improper conduct of the election. The accumulating problems in the election process provoked Transparency International - Bulgaria to expand the scope of its observation and evaluation and since 2009, the main focus of observation has been two main problematic areas: 1) democratic standards, integrity and transparency in the election process; including limiting irregularities and abuses of citizens' voting rights; 2) transparency and accountability in relation to the financing of the election campaigns of candidates.

Monitoring of the parliamentary elections

In the spring of 2017, Transparency International - Bulgaria launched another initiative to monitor election campaigns ². As part of this, the organisation mobilised the support of more than 100 volunteers and 26 non-governmental organisations and observed the electoral process.

² See Decision of the CEC № 4337-HC / 21.02.2017 on registration of observers from the association 'Transparency International' for participation in the elections for Members of Parliament on March 26 2017

The monitoring initiative was based on the following actions:

Creation of a wide advocacy network made up of volunteers and 26 non-governmental organisations working at a local level in all regions of the country, united as the National Network for Election Observation;

Training of observers of the election process, which is aimed at identifying violations and reporting to institutions in order to limit violations on election day;

Monitoring all key stages of the election process:

1) the election campaign;
2) compliance with the anti-corruption commitments of the political parties and coalitions included in the election program; 3) activity of the institutions for preparation of the elections; 4) the course of the election process on March 26 2017;

Participation in various television and radio broadcasts, as well as discussions aimed at disseminating information on the issues discussed in the referendum;

Detecting violations of the election process and reporting to the institutions if there are irregularities in order to take actions to limit / sanction them.

An important aspect of the initiative is the fact that the organisation not only succeeded to mobilise volunteers, but also to facilitate practical training in application of civil monitoring methods, which is an important part of the training of the political science students at the Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski.

Significant emphasis of the initiative in 2017 was placed on anti-corruption proposals included in the election platforms of political parties and coalitions. The reasons for this emphasis are the need to make a breakthrough in the fight against corruption and increase public pressure on parties to make commitments in this area. In this regard, the expert team of the organisation conducted a pre-election study of the candidates and in particular - of the anti-corruption proposals on their political platforms.

Based on the performed monitoring and subsequent analysis, Transparency International - Bulgaria has developed and published two analytical documents:

- 'Electoral Process and Policies for Prevention of Corruption: State and Prospects for Development' - monitoring report from the observation of the elections for the 44th National Assembly held on March 26 2017, which consists of two parts: part one, reflecting findings from the observation of

the election campaign and election day, assessment of trends in the election violation process and recommendations for overcoming issues in the election process; and part two, reflecting on the pre-election commitments of the parties with a main focus on the proposals for countering corruption.

- Policy Paper ‘Integrity in Politics and Effective Counteraction to Corruption in Bulgaria’ - an analytical document that addresses the problem of violations in the electoral process and the proposals of political parties to combat such corruption.

The results of the monitoring and the prepared analytical documents were presented at the discussion ‘Elections 2017: Integrity in Politics and Effective Counteraction to Corruption in Management’, held on May 18 2017 in Sofia.

II. REFORM IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. MONITORING THE ACTIVITY OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

Local Integrity System Index Project

The Local Integrity System Index project is a three-year initiative of Transparency International - Bulgaria, which has been implemented since the beginning of November 2014 thanks to the financial support of the America for Bulgaria Foundation. The initiative is an expression of the assessment of Transparency International-Bulgaria that an effective fight against corruption in the country cannot be carried out without the participation of key institutions and social actors at the local level.

The initiative is implemented through three main types of activity:

- assessment of the capacity of local public institutions and other actors to implement sustainable anti-corruption policies; building an annual Local Integrity System Index;
- strengthening the integrity of local communities: developing the capacity of local authorities to implement long-term sustainable anti-corruption policies;
- advocacy for reforms in local anti-corruption policies.

In 2017, the organisation focused its attention in two key directions:

- conducting a survey of the institutions of the local integrity system and promoting the results of the survey;

- conducting a series of expert discussions, work meetings and training seminars with representatives of the surveyed institutions, which are aimed at developing the capacity of the least represented municipalities to tackle corruption.

The survey of the institutions of the local integrity system was conducted in cooperation with a wide network of local NGOs that are partners of the association in implementing the initiative in the 27 municipalities surveyed.

The expert team of the organisation, together with non-governmental organisations from the 27 regional centres of the country, conducted a study and evaluation of the activities of institutions and social actors at the local level, in which their efforts were focused on the following areas:

- conducting in-depth interviews and surveys with members of municipal councils, secretaries in the municipalities, journalists from local and regional media, representatives of local business, political parties and non-governmental organizations;
- analysis of documented sources, reflecting the work of the surveyed institutions from the 27 municipalities;
- processing the statistics and analysis of the results of the survey, which served to develop a Local Integrity System Index for 2017;
- development of the project website - an internet platform which builds awareness of the survey results and provides opportunities for analytical searches and comparative analysis of data from the 2015, 2016 and 2017 indexes.

As a result of the application of monitoring methodology, the 2017 Local Integrity System Index was compiled. It is the third annual survey of key institutions and social actors that are constructing a system of integrity and responsible governance at a local level. The index presents a comparative picture of their capacity to fight corruption, as well as the role and importance of the municipal council, mayor, municipal administration, political parties, judiciary, police, business, media and civil society in the 27 municipalities – considered to be regional centres in Bulgaria.

The results of the survey for 2017 were announced at a forum that took place on December 8, 2017 - just before International Anti-Corruption Day. The discussion was attended by mayors, chairmen of municipal councils, district governors, local public mediators, civil society experts and the media. The results of the Local Integrity System Index are also published on an individual page on the initiative: <http://lisi.transparency.bg/>.

The second area of work on the 2017 project was focused around developing the capacity to tackle corruption of institutions and social actors from the

municipalities which rank at the bottom of the index. In this regard, efforts were aimed at conducting:

- work meetings with the local authorities - during a series of meetings with the local authorities in Varna, the research results on the local government institutions were presented, as well as good practices established by the research team. This format of cooperation served as a tool for overcoming the identified problems and for introducing a set of measures to develop the capacity of local authorities;
- public forums and regional round tables with the participation of the members of the regional anti-corruption councils - in the period July to November 2017 in Ruse, Silistra, Kyustendil, Plovdiv, Sofia and Veliko Tarnovo, discussion forums were held with the participation of the members of the regional councils for the prevention and counteraction of corruption, during which the results of the studies of the respective regions were presented and support for adoption of good practices in the work of the institutions was mobilised.
- A key conclusion that can be made is that both local and self-governing authorities are now well familiarised with the index. Its third edition has shown that they attach importance to their ranking not only in relation to other regional cities but in terms of development, which is reported in comparison to their own achievements in previous years. This explains the invitations that the team receives for meetings to discuss and identify measures to improve their activity with regards to accountability, transparency and clarity for citizens.

Initiative ‘CCB - what happened?’

Since the beginning of 2016, three Bulgarian non-governmental organisations - the Centre for Liberal Strategies, Transparency International - Bulgaria and the Access to Information Program, have joined forces to implement a joint initiative aimed at increasing transparency with regards to the functioning of the banking system, the identification of problems in the work of banks and institutions with supervisory powers and, last but not least - the creation of conditions for stability in the banking system and the development of mechanisms for integrity and efficiency in the work of public institutions regulating the banking sector.

The specific cause behind the creation of this civic initiative is one of the most significant scandals in the country in recent years - the bankruptcy of Corporate Commercial Bank. The initiative’s strategic goal is to make an impartial assessment of the reasons behind it, which will then serve as a starting point for

change in the way of functioning of the banking system, as well as for the development of the capacity of the supervisory institutions to effectively implement the control functions and protect the public interest.

Transparency International's contribution to this initiative consists of (1) developing an analytical tool to assess the capacity, role and governance of institutions with supervisory powers in the banking system, and (2) implementing this tool to carry out assessments.

In 2016, an expert team of Transparency International - Bulgaria developed a 'Methodology for Assessing the Integrity System in the Banking Sector', which served as an analytical tool for the research and evaluation of institutions that play a key role in determining the rules for the functioning of the banking system, monitor their implementation and imposes sanctions.

- Produced a comparative institutional analysis of the reasons for the bankruptcy of the fourth largest bank in the country - CCB, as well as a book titled 'Assessment of the integrity system in the banking sector in Bulgaria' was published. In 2017, an expert team of the association applied the analytical approach of Transparency International's 'National Integrity System', based on the original methodology for assessing the integrity system in the banking sector, to carry out an in-depth study of issues in legislation and in the work of institutions with control powers in the banking system. In the future, research results could serve both as a universal analysis tool of the control system as well as for identifying potential risks to the banking sector.

In 2017, organisation's team of experts conducted an in-depth study of the Corporate Commercial Bank, including the institutions which make up the integrity system of the banking sector – the Bulgarian National Bank, Financial Supervision Commission, Commission for Public Supervision of Registered Auditors, banks, audit companies, parliament. Amongst those listed, it also looked at the role of the Ministry of Finance, the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, the State Agency for National Security, the President and the National Audit Office in connection with the draining and bankruptcy of the bank.

As already highlighted, the study is based on the analytical approach of Transparency International and is a comparative institutional analysis of the capacity, role and governance of institutions that have direct supervisory control over the banking sector in the country. In this regard, an analysis of the legislation and the practical actions of the surveyed institutions, a wide range of documented sources, reports, assessments, media publications, interviews with experts and public figures who made direct observations and had been connected with the "CCB case".

As a result of the survey, Transparency International - Bulgaria published the book 'Assessment of the Integrity System in the Banking Sector in Bulgaria'. The publication reflects an attempt for an impartial and objective assessment of the functioning of the system of supervisory institutions in the banking sector in the period 2009 - 2014 and is designed to serve as a starting point for policies and strategic actions that provide adequate and systematic responses to identified problems. On November 29 2017, it was presented to the general public in a public discussion, and it was subsequently presented to the surveyed institutions and to experts working in the field of finance.

Project 'Development and advocacy for the introduction of standards for the publicity and transparency in the work of courts – a guarantor of public trust and civil control of the justice system'

This project is an 18-month initiative of the association and has been implemented since the beginning of September 2017 thanks to the financial support of the European Union through the European Social Fund and the 'Good Governance' Operational Program. It was implemented in response to a number of issues identified in recent years in the European Commission's reports on Bulgaria under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism, as well as in the research of the international anti-corruption organisation Transparency International. Examples include unsatisfactory levels of public awareness in the workings of the judiciary, low level of citizen confidence in the justice system, public perceptions of corruption and inefficient and unsystematic practices for providing information from courts, all of which make life and work difficult for citizens, businesses, the media and public organisations.

The project focused on formulating a proposal for uniform standards for making information from courts publicly available for citizens through their websites in order to encourage effective civil control and increase public confidence. The initiative was implemented through several ways:

- Carrying out studies of the leading standards for transparency and publicity of the courts in the Member States of the European Union and international organisations to allow the development of similar standards for publicity and transparency in the work of the courts in Bulgaria.
- Assessing the transparency of the courts in Bulgaria through the lens of the information published on their internet pages and creating the first of its kind map of the transparency of the courts through evaluation of their compliance with the standard for publicity and transparency.

- Encouraging public support for the introduction of the standard by consulting stakeholders and mobilising expert and public support for its implementation;
- Training of representatives of civil society organizations from regional centres in the country in order to build civil monitoring skills for control over the publicity and transparency of the work of the courts in Bulgaria.

III TRANSPARENCY AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS - COUNTERACTION OF CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

The initiative is part of a four-year international project 'Integrity Pacts - a preventive civil mechanism for the protection of EU funds', which has been implemented since the beginning of January 2016 with the financial support of the European Commission. It is part of a joint initiative involving 11 countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic) and is coordinated by the Transparency International Secretariat.

The main goal of the initiative is to study the Integrity Pacts model as a tool to increase transparency and accountability in public procurement and to promote implementation in the European Union to prevent fraud and corruption in the spending of European funds. The specific objectives of the project are:

- To mobilise the expertise of organisations implementing integrity pacts and to facilitate the exchange of experience and expertise between EU Member States in relation to the governance of European funds;
- To contribute to transparency and accountability in 17 selected areas of public procurement in 11 EU Member States, co-financed by European funds;
- To provide transparency and access to information on issues related to the process of arranging and implementing public procurement;
- To evaluate the implementation of integrity pacts by deriving good practices and formulating recommendations for wider distribution of this as well.

In 2017, the efforts of the Transparency International team were focused on several areas:

- Providing expertise on the Integrity Pact model in the area of public procurement and exchanging experience in its practical application - in this regard, a series of work meetings were held, during which the team of experts implementing the project exchanged their expertise and practical experience on the nature of the integrity pacts, practical aspects of their

application, critical analysis and evaluations of achievements and difficulties in implementation.

Further to this, in May and December 2017 a series of meetings and trainings were held for the teams implementing the project in the 11 aforementioned European countries. On 14 December 2017, a meeting involving all participating stakeholders – including observers, representatives of the contracting authorities as well as of businesses and representatives of the European Commission – took place in Bucharest, Romania.

- Monitoring public procurement of significant public interest - Transparency International-Bulgaria took over monitoring the implementation of public procurement orders in which a significant level of public interest is held and a large amount of European funds will be spent. The construction of the ‘Zhelenitsa’ tunnel on the Struma highway was chosen as an object for monitoring.

In this regard, a cooperation agreement was signed with the contracting authority (National Company ‘Strategic Infrastructure Projects’ and later, the Road Infrastructure Agency) and an Integrity Pact was developed and used as a starting point for monitoring the tunnel construction procedure.

In order to join the initiative, a series of work meetings and discussions were held with representatives of construction companies - candidates, as well as branch organisations of the construction business. Given the need for specialised expertise in the monitored area, in the first half of 2017 Transparency International-Bulgaria conducted an open procedure for the selection of external experts to join the the monitoring team.

Based on the concluded agreements and expertise, the Transparency International – Bulgaria monitored two procedures for the selection of the contractor used for the construction of the tunnel, which took place in 2017. With regards to the first procedure, an analysis of the tender documentation and stage of conducting the tender procedure was performed. Due to significant violations in the stage of bidding, it was terminated by the contracting authority. The organisation’s team of experts prepared two monitoring reports, reflecting evaluations and recommendations from the analysis of the tender documentation and the second stage of the procedure - evaluation of the bids.

After restarting the procedure in the autumn of 2017, the team once again took action to monitor and evaluate the procurement process. The team prepared another monitoring report focusing on the evaluation of the tender documentation. Given the attempt of the contracting authority to change the tender documentation during the tendering phase, the Public Procurement Agency recommended the termination of this procedure as well.

The third procedure for selection of a contractor used to design and construct the Zheleznitsa tunnel was announced on October 17, 2017, and the work on its monitoring continues in 2018.

In order to ensure transparency, Transparency International - Bulgaria maintains a webpage of the initiative <http://integrity.transparency.bg/>, where it publishes information about the project. All reports produced from the monitoring that has taken place since the start of the project to the present day are published at the given web address.

IV RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS – CARRYING OUT ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

Project ‘Centre for Legal Consultation of Victims of Corruption’

The Centre for Legal Consultation of Victims of Corruption was established in 2006 at the initiative of Transparency International (Bulgaria).³ Since then, under the direction of the TI- Secretariat and national representative offices, over 15 centres have been created in countries across Europe, Asia and Africa.

The activities of the centre include the provision of practical legal assistance and expert advice for citizens who have suffered or become witnesses to corruption and wish to inform state authorities. For this purpose, they have been provided with access to the contact number 0800 11 224 (no costs apply), through which reports can be submitted for cases of corruption. Reports can also be submitted electronically by email (alac@transparency.bg) or by the continuously maintained website (<http://alac.transparency.bg/bg/signals-corruption.html>)

The centre aims to provide an opportunity for citizens to take an active part in the fight against corruption through providing free legal aid in support of their efforts to report crimes of corruption committed by public institutions or their fellow employees. In this regard, the main focus of the activity of the centre in 2017 was the reports made by citizens for expected and/or already conducted violations during the election process. The majority of the 94 received reports involved violations and crimes against citizens' political rights in connection to the election process. As in previous election campaigns (2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016) the centre's team assisted the citizens by providing information about their rights as voters, sending reports to competent institutions, and processing and organising the information of the reported infringements in order to support the work of the institutions as well as our own work on the prevention and countering of violations tied to the election process.

Based on the results of the centre's work in 2017, the expert team of the organisation has formulated a series of recommended changes in the electoral legislation in relation to the preparation and conduct of elections, as well as the implementation

³ Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC).

of more effective policy for sanctioning confirmed cases of crimes against the political rights of citizens. The recommendations were presented both in work meetings and at public forums with the participation of representatives of the institutions.

As part of the spring advocacy campaign of 2017, Transparency International initiated the training of observers aimed at building knowledge and skills to monitor the electoral process and the protection of the voting rights of citizens. The conducted training served as a starting point for carrying out civil monitoring of the election process and for the identification of issues and trends within the electoral process of the country.

The election process was monitored with the assistance of a coalition of 26 NGOs from across the country, as well as more than 103 volunteers. With their help, the organisation confirmed violations of the voting rights of citizens. A key role in their detection played the association's team of experts, who assessed each received report and sought assistance from the institutions to protect victims and carry out sanctions for the crimes and violations taken place.

National Anti-Corruption Resource Centre Project

Transparency International-Bulgaria continues to support the Anti-Corruption Centre, which was established with the financial support of the European Commission. The library of the centre contains a significant volume of books, periodicals and analytical resources reviewing the nature of the problem of corruption both nationally and globally. Along with the publications by experts, international institutions and other non-governmental organisations, the centre shall make available all publications of Transparency International in both English and Bulgarian, which is the outcome of over 19 years of work.

The built capacity of the centre allows the team to continue carrying out activities in the following three main areas:

- Processing and filling in the information archive which is also being completed by several other different sources for information. The archive is updated by the daily press review of the national press and electronic publications providing information on corruption cases and analysis dedicated to the topic. In addition, the archive is filled with publications, analysis and research published on the internet. Therefore, the archive is also being supplemented by conference materials provided by state institutions as well as by Bulgarian and international non-governmental organisations;
- The team at the association continues providing information on its library, processing submissions on a daily basis and accepting electronic requests for information from the library;
- The activity of the Anti-Corruption Resource Centre is supported by interns - students of political science, European studies and public administration at

the Sofia University, NBU and foreign universities as well. Transparency International has an established practice of providing students with the opportunity to conduct an internship. Alongside informing them on how the organisation operates, the team strives to promote TI's fight against tolerating corruption. The trainees provide assistance both in the current work of the team and in the activities of the centre.

Monitoring government anti-corruption commitments made at the Anti-Corruption Summit in London.

In 2017, Transparency International-Bulgaria continued to monitor the implementation of the commitments made by the government of Bulgaria during the Anti-Corruption Summit in London, which took place in 2016. The monitoring, carried out under the initiative of Transparency International UK, includes an assessment of the implementation process of commitments made by the governments of the states which participated in the forum. Bulgaria's official commitments are in connection to improving the national regulatory framework in the field of anti-corruption as well as its effective implementation, active participation in the process of international cooperation, and the exchange of expertise and good practices.

In relation to this, Transparency International - Bulgaria has been monitoring Bulgaria's progress, addressing a number of institutions with questions about specific actions taken or planned, as well as discussing interim monitoring results in a number of meetings with representatives of the administration. The first monitoring results were published in September 2017 on a website dedicated specifically to this initiative <https://www.anticorruptionpledgetracker.com/>.

Monitoring of national electronic and print media

Our team carries out regular media monitoring of national print and electronic publications. Information about corruption cases, abuse of power and public resources, as well as analysis and comments on the various dimensions of the problem of corruption in various public spheres, is subject to necessary reorganisation. This allows information to be used within various project activities and to help identify problem areas in the fight against corruption.

Permanent Activities

Presentation of Transparency International's comparative research

As national representatives of the global anti-corruption organisation Transparency International, our team annually releases the results of comparative international research and analysis, some of which has been established as key sources for information and assessments on the level of corruption, economic and political development of the studied countries. Most notable among them is:

- The Corruption Perception Index, measuring the level of political and administrative corruption according to the assessments of business representatives, economic and political risk analysts from around the world and surveyed experts from relevant countries. The study allows for comparative assessments on both a regional and sub-regional scale, which can provide businesses with a general indication of which countries carry a greater risk of corruption and, as a result, where the environment for the conduct of business is most suitable.

Public events and forums organised by Transparency International - Bulgaria

Within the framework of implemented initiatives and projects held in 2017, Transparency International - Bulgaria made a number of public appearances. The main goal of the team is to increase media interest and coverage of all of its initiatives. The association actively works with a wide range of people from both national and regional print and electronic media networks. As a result of the establishment of lasting contacts with them, the events organised by the association were widely covered in the media. Amongst the forums organised in 2017 were:

- Discussion 'Elections 2017: Integrity in Politics and Effective Counteraction to Corruption in Government', held on May 18 2017 in Sofia.
- Regional Anti-Corruption Forum, organised jointly with the Regional Public Council for Transparency and Civil Oversight and Anti-Corruption Structures from Romania, held on July 3, 2017 in Ruse.
- Discussion organised jointly with the Regional Public Council for Prevention and Counteraction to Corruption held on July 6 2017 in the town of Silistra.
- Discussion organised jointly with the Public Council for Prevention and Counteraction of Corruption in the town of Kyustendil, held on July 20 2017.
- Regional round table 'Good practices and success stories in the Local Integrity System', held on October 27 2017 in Sofia.
- Regional round table 'Good practices and success stories in the Local Integrity System', held on November 8 2017 in Veliko Tarnovo.
- Regional round table 'Good practices and success stories in the Local Integrity System', held on November 23 2017 in Plovdiv.

- Discussion on the presentation of the book ‘Assessment of the integrity system of the banking sector in Bulgaria.’ held on November 29 2017 in Sofia.
- Forum ‘Local Integrity System Index – 2017’, held on December 8 2017 in Sofia.

NEW PUBLICATIONS BY TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL - BULGARIA

As a result of conducted research, analysis and monitoring in 2017, the following publications were made:

- Publication ‘Assessment of the Integrity System in the Banking Sector in Bulgaria’ (analysis of deficits in the supervisory system that led to the bankruptcy of CCB)
- ‘Electoral Process and Policies for Prevention of Corruption: State and Prospects for Development’ (report from the observation of the elections for the 44th National Assembly, held on March 26 2017)
- Integrity in politics and effective counteraction of corruption in Bulgaria" (policy paper)
- Report of the open procedure for awarding a public procurement on the subject of the ‘Design and Construction of the Struma Motorway Lot 3.1 Tunnel “Zheleznitsa” STAGE I, Analysis of the preparation of the procedure and the documentation for participation.
- Report of the open procedure for awarding a public procurement on the subject of the ‘Design and Construction of the Struma Motorway Lot 3.1 Tunnel “Zheleznitsa”: STAGE II. Monitoring the work of the evaluation committee and termination of the procedure.

Information on the activities of Transparency International - Bulgaria, under Article 40 from the Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities

As a non-profit organisation, Transparency International - Bulgaria carries out its activity in support of the development of civil society. The main priority in the work of the association is the initiation and implementation of prevention projects and programs counteracting corruption at a national, regional and local level.

According to the association's charter, its mission is to unite the efforts of state institutions, local authorities, representatives of civil society, the private sector and the media - carrying out systemic reforms and sanctions which prevent the spread of corruption in the country.

All implemented programs and initiatives of the association in 2017 were directly tied to the implementation of the priorities outlined above. All income received within the past year has been used in alignment with the requirements of Article 38 and the charter of the organisation, as well as in agreement with the organisation’s efforts to support public activity for the development and continuity of civil society.