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No progress in fighting corruption

According to TI BiH findings, BiH has not achieved any progress in implementing anti-corruption reforms, and activities in this field are carried out without true political will and systematic approach. According to citizens' views, corruption is still most present in privatization process and in political parties, and bribes are most often given to doctors and police officers.

Sarajevo, September 3, 2009 — Transparency International Bosnia and Herzegovina (TI BiH) presented in Sarajevo the results of research carried out within the project "Promoting anti-corruption reforms". In this occasion, the first Monitoring of implementation and advocacy of anticorruption standards, as well as the results of the second Quarterly corruption perceptions research were presented, and compared with the results gained from the first quarterly research. At the presentation, the attendants were addressed by H.E. Jan Braathu, the ambassador of Kingdom of Norway, under whose support the project is being implemented, as well as TI BiH representatives, together with the experts who participated in the research and the study, that resulted from the research.

Within the Monitoring of implementation and advocacy of anti-corruption standards, TI BiH has monitored anti-corruption activities in most sensitive areas, above all through following the progress of legislative and executive authorities in implementing anti-corruption activities, processing of corruption in courts and prosecution, changes in legal framework and the implementation of Law on conflict of interests, financing of political parties and the Election Law, functioning of public sector auditing agencies, as well as the police and intelligence-security agencies, and the changes in Public Procurement Law.

The main findings indicate that BiH has not accomplished any progress in fighting against corruption, and that anti-corruption activities are still uncoordinated and with no real political will and systematic approach. Processing corruption in courts and prosecution in BiH is difficult and with no significant effect, since the criminal acts of corruption remain unpunished or end up with probation. The Election Law does not have adequate mechanisms for revealing unlawful benefication of elected representatives, while the Law on conflict of interests allows the officials who broke the Law to continue with their mandate through the whole election period, which is a clear indication that in BiH there is still enough space for corruption on highest levels. These are some of the findings which, together with more detailed facts and analyses can be found in the study named "Monitoring of implementation of anti-corruption reforms in BiH", which was also presented to the public.

"BiH has not achieved progress in implementing anti-corruption reforms and, unfortunately, according to a number of relevant research, it is perceived as the most corrupt country in the region", emphasised Mr. Emir Djikic, the Chair of TI BiH Board of Directors, and added that "although in the last period there has been some action in adopting laws on

anti-corruption agency and adopting an anti-corruption strategy, considering that a lot of time has been lost, it is necessary to invest additional efforts in order for these processes to be completed as soon as possible.”

Citizens' views, according to the results of the second Quarterly corruption perceptions research in BiH, which was carried out on a representative sample across the whole country, do not defer much from the Monitoring findings. BiH citizens, as was the case in the first research interval, still think that corruption is most present in the privatization process and in political parties, while they see SIPA as an institution which is least corrupt. The citizens still point out to doctors or other members of medical staff as those who most often ask for bribe (money, gifts or a favour) for solving a problem, while the second place is taken by police officers. An interesting fact is that, for these purposes, citizens in average gave 247 KM to a doctor or other member of medical staff, and 27 KM to a police officer. The average sum of bribe is the highest in cases of bribing university professors (437 KM).

The majority of citizens included in the survey think that the Law on conflict of interests is inefficient, while only half of them heard of the Law on freedom of access to information, of which the overwhelming majority had never referred to and never asked for information from the authorities. Additionally, a great majority of citizens emphasise the problem of corruption in employment procedures, and what is alarming is the fact that more than half of those questioned (57%) personally knows a person of which they are certain that they were employed through connections or nepotism in some municipal, cantonal, entity or state institutions, organisations or public companies.

The results of the second Quarterly research clearly show that citizens are still dissatisfied by the efforts that the authorities invest in fighting against corruption, that they do not see any progress in this field, and that they are surely aware of the presence of corruption in all spheres of social life in BiH, as well as its consequences to the society. TI BiH expressed their hope at the presentation that the findings of this research, i.e. citizens' views, will finally influence the government representatives in BiH to take the problem of corruption more seriously and truly engage in solving this problem, led by the voice of public.