

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH



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ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD



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INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

Ulrich Busch, senior public prosecutor, Germany

By Nadja Kostka and Mike Sidwell

Ulrich Busch heads a newly founded department for prosecution of bribery and crimes against competition at the Prosecutor's Office in Frankfurt, Germany. As a senior prosecutor he has been involved in the investigative proceedings of numerous corruption, business offences and organised crime cases. This month *Transparency Watch* spoke with him about his work and his experience as the chief prosecutor of the SIEMENS/ENEL international bribery case.



Transparency Watch (TW): *What challenges do prosecutors like you face in carrying out their work?*

Ulrich Busch (UB): The requirements of this profession go beyond the prosecution of criminal offences and include tasks like dealing with the media and politics, staff management, instructing judicial trainees, continually struggling to secure personnel and material resources, further vocational training and many more. And on top of all this, trying to keep one's personal independence.

TW: *Have you ever faced any intimidation or threats?*

UB: Even in Germany it's not unusual for prosecutors to be threatened, especially by accused or convicted people. Just two days ago I received an anonymous letter concerning a former colleague who was threatened with attacks against him, his friends and family. I have had to face such threats myself sometimes. Fortunately, in most cases threats are not meant seriously. But from time to time they can cause a grave intrusion to one's privacy.

TW: *What kind of bribery have you uncovered most often?*

UB: In the past, the prosecutors in Frankfurt mainly had to deal with the bribing of public officials, but there has been a change over the last few years. Nowadays, the majority of cases concern a bribe being offered to employees or managers in business transactions. In comparison, the number of cases of bribery in international business transactions is still small – I have personally dealt with around 10-12 cases in the past 5 years. With regard to this number, it must be considered a disadvantage that we have no central investigating authority for international cases of corruption in Germany and that it is down to the competence of regional or even local prosecuting authorities of the 16 federal states (*Bundesländer*) to handle such cases.

TW: *In your speech at the 10th anniversary of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention you note that in your opinion the SIEMENS/ENEL case is an excellent example of good cooperation between the prosecuting authorities fighting bribery on an international level. What has been your experience with mutual legal assistance?*

UB: In the last few years the cooperation between prosecuting authorities has improved significantly, especially within Europe. However, the quality of the assistance given depends on immediate and personal contacts between the prosecuting authorities involved. Furthermore, there are still serious problems with countries where corruption is an integral part of the political system, or with countries where money laundering and concealment of assets are regarded as profitable business activities.

TW: *You mentioned in the same speech that it took three years to receive a response to your request for mutual assistance from Liechtenstein. Why did it take so long?*

UB: To be accurate, we had a quick response to our request which informed us about the seizure of the requested documents. But it then took nearly three years until the documents were handed over to us. This delay could have resulted from lengthy appeals being lodged by trustees in Liechtenstein who function as front men for third-party assets. These people are in a position to prolong the granting of mutual assistance for a long time by lodging a variety of appeals. Therefore it can be a lengthy process till a decision is taken by the Supreme Court on whether to grant mutual assistance.

TW: *Considering your experience with Liechtenstein, what kind of difficulties do you think a developing country might face if they made a similar request?*

UB: I would not expect any problems different from the ones mentioned before. I have the impression that the judicial authorities in Liechtenstein are working with correctness and do not violate the principle

of equal treatment. This doesn't change the fact that from our point of view the legal situation is unsatisfactory in the respect of how many possible appeals can be lodged.

TW: Do you think there is a danger that national security concerns could be cited in order to avoid enforcing the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention in Germany?

UB: Not from my experience. On the whole the implementation of the OECD Convention and its basic ideas are well on their way in Germany. There is one big exception: the shameful situation concerning elected representatives and members of parliaments in our country, who are still largely exempted from punishment for bribe-taking.

TW: From a prosecutor's point of view, what can be done for the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention to be fully implemented?

UB: In my opinion, one of the most important points is to improve the cooperation in practice between prosecuting authorities of the involved countries. Another point is to define more clearly and to standardise the group of people to be punished for bribing in international business transactions, e.g. who is regarded as a 'public official' and who shall be treated alike? The SIEMENS/ENEL case highlighted this problem as 'public official' has a different meaning according to the individual definitions of the OECD Convention, German law and Italian law.

TW: The SIEMENS case was very well covered by the media. Would you say that the publicity has had a positive effect on the German exporting industries in regard to fighting corruption? And, have you noticed an increase in complaints since the trial?

UB: With regard to the first question: the answer is a definite yes, as far as preventive efforts are concerned. The first important cause for general awareness of the problem was the implementation of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention in 1998 and, following it, the ban to acknowledge bribe payments in foreign countries as tax deductible. The publicity of the SIEMENS case has increased this effect. On the other hand, this doesn't mean that the willingness of exporting companies to uncover any former criminal offences of their own has increased. So, as far as the second question is concerned, we haven't noticed any more complaints than before.

TW: What is your opinion on the amnesty programme that Siemens has offered to their employees?

UB: It is important to mention that the privileges Siemens can offer with this programme to employees who give a voluntary statement are limited to measures concerning civil law, e.g. to omit making them liable for compensation and to refrain from dismissing them. It does not affect the prosecution of criminal offences committed by them. Under these conditions the programme is a good thing, as long as it does not lead to preferential treatment of principal offenders like involved managers. And from what I hear, the programme seems to be quite successful.

TW: Do you think some companies harbour a 'culture' of corruption?

UB: Yes. Everything we know from the SIEMENS case is proof of it, at least with regard to the past. Defendants and witnesses have told us how a system was in place to pay bribe money to managers in foreign countries using slush funds, foundations in Liechtenstein, money transfers via "cash breaks" and other methods usually connected with organised crime.

Aside from the SIEMENS/ENEL case, we have learnt in the last two years that such practices have been evident not only in the Power Generation unit, but also in other divisions of the Siemens group and that Siemens was not the only company to bribe in the power generation business.

In my opinion, it is beyond reasonable doubt that there are many other cases of companies employing corrupt practices, however many of these will unfortunately remain undetected.

TW: As head of the newly established department for prosecution of bribery and crimes against competition at the Prosecutor's office in Frankfurt, what are your long term goals?

UB: With the newly established department in Frankfurt we now have two departments with eleven prosecutors, including two senior state prosecutors, to fight bribery and crimes against competition. And for the first time we have an explicitly mentioned responsibility for cases concerning the implementation of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention. We will use this strengthening to accelerate investigations and push for public charges in the face of a large amount of ongoing proceedings. Besides this, we are striving to further improve cooperation with various institutions like the revenue and cartel authorities, local administrations, compliance officers and the auditing departments of authorities and companies to uncover new cases of corruption. At present there are several hundred cases waiting to be finalised.

TW: What role do you think whistle-blowers play in the cases you've uncovered?

UB: According to past experiences they play an essential role. In contrast to other crimes, there are no direct victims with an interest in detection and prosecution in corruption cases. So many cases would not have been uncovered without the help of insiders.

TW: What do you consider to be real, effective deterrents to bribery? Why?

UB: An effective and swift prosecution, the public unmasking of involved managers and a complete forfeiture of illegal profits. White-collar criminals can only be impressed by detection, imprisonment, negative publicity and a lack of commercial success.

TW: *What motivates you to fight corruption?*

UB: To realise that it is an almost invisible and for a long time underestimated phenomenon in our society, which nevertheless can cause serious economic loss as well as immeasurable non-pecuniary damage, especially to the economic, political and social system of a country. Furthermore, the experience that a criminal who commits acts of economic offences like bribery or bribe-taking still comes off better than a dim thief or robber.

SPOTLIGHT STORY

Under attack: attempts to suppress the media

By Mike Sidwell



The end of 2008 will mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Enshrined in this declaration is the guarantee that freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. The reality of media freedom today though, reveals that in many countries around the world this right is often abused by the very people who are in a position to help safeguard it.

A free and independent media is essential for democracy. By investigating and reporting any abuses of entrusted power for private gains, journalists encourage good governance by holding governments, public officials and the private sector to account. However, there are many factors which can prevent the media from functioning as an effective public watchdog and simultaneously expose journalists to extreme danger.

Risky business

In its 'Attacks on the Press in 2007' world survey, the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) (CPJ), an independent non-profit organisation dedicated to protecting press freedom, reports that 65 journalists were killed in 2007; the highest number of fatalities since 1994. Among the 44 killed outside war zones, 13 are believed to have been murdered because of reporting on corruption. The [International News Safety Institute](#) (INSI), a non-governmental organisation dedicated to the safety of the media, believes that: "One thousand journalists and support staff have died trying to report the news around the world in the past 10 years: an average of two a week." And the immediate future looks bleak - [Reporters Without Borders](#), another organisation that monitors violence against journalists, predicts that 2008 "will be an even tougher year for the media."

Incidents of physical violence against journalists, even murder, are in some countries rarely investigated or prosecuted. Journalists who seek to expose economic and political corruption often do so at great personal risk. High stake political and business interests combined with corrupt judges and police, mean that violence against journalists is often carried out with impunity. According to [CPJ figures](#) from October 2007, the conviction rate for murdered journalists is about 15%. Such conditions can easily result in self-censorship as other journalists decide not to investigate or criticise for fear of violent reprisals.

Means to an end

The repressive laws and regulations existing in some countries are state sanctioned hazards that jeopardise not only the independence of journalists, but often their freedom - adding to a climate of intimidation. Ambiguous laws can be manipulated to result in criminal libel and defamation suits. Other political tactics to deter critical journalism include freezing bank accounts and revoking licenses.

The advent of the internet has ushered in a new phenomenon – citizen journalists. But in countries where the governments are intent on controlling the media, the World Wide Web does not afford anymore freedom than its traditional counterpart. In these countries governments have been quick to crack down on any blogs, chatrooms and websites that they deem subversive, censoring content and imprisoning contributors.

Financial concerns also greatly compromise journalists' independence. Journalists and editors are in a position to receive bribes in return for influence over editorial content or simply for not investigating or publishing a story. Similarly, advertisers can wield influence over media owners and editorial boards. These problems are exacerbated when media ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few.

Despite the odds

The central role that investigative journalists play in fighting corruption is clear. Reports can prompt official investigations to be launched into corruption allegations and trigger the resignation and prosecution of those implicated. One of the most famous cases is the Watergate scandal, which was uncovered by the Washington Post and led to then US President Richard Nixon stepping down from office. Another example is the series of reports published by the [Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism](#) that revealed the unexplained wealth of President Joseph Estrada and were used as part of the impeachment suit filed against him in November 2000.

More recently, David Leigh and Rob Evans of the [Guardian](#) newspaper won the [Paul Foot Award for Campaigning Journalism 2007](#) for their campaign to expose the issue of bribery in the British arms

trade. The awarding judges credited their work with: "Four parliamentary debates, the removal of an Attorney-General, criminal investigations on three continents, another investigation by the United States Department of Justice and a special investigation of the United Kingdom by the OECD under an international bribery treaty."

Supporting media freedom

"Without the men and women of a free and plural press willing to risk reporting and investigating, and editors and publishers willing to stand by them, injustice and corruption flourish - within and across national boundaries." ([INSI](#))

The challenges that journalists contend with in their line of work are formidable, but they are obstacles that need to be overcome. One of the most pressing concerns is to ensure that the rights of journalists are not abused. [Reporters Without Borders](#) stresses the need for "democratic countries and major international institutions to defend these rights around the world." For its part, CPJ launched a global campaign in November 2007 to combat impunity (www.cpj.org/impunity/). The INSI Safety Code for journalists can be accessed [here](#).

Access to information laws need to be adopted in countries that lack them and rigorously enforced in countries where they are already in existence. According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, access to information is a basic human right. It is crucial for maintaining a balance between citizens and state; when citizens are denied their right to know, corrupt officials can act with impunity. The media is a prism through which the public can be made aware of the actions and news that can affect their lives but could otherwise remain inaccessible to them. For this reason, it is crucial that a wide diversity of private media is present in society so that the public is in a position to make an informed decision.

Transparency International's efforts

A number of Transparency International (TI) programmes support investigative journalists, including awards, journalist training, and activities promoting access to information.

- In 2004, TI joined with the [International Public Relations Association](#) (IPRA) to determine a set of principles intended to end bribes for media coverage and cultivate greater transparency in the dealings between public relations professionals and the media. Since then, [The Media Transparency Charter](#) has been adopted by media organisations worldwide representing at least half a million editors, media executives and journalists.

- The TI Integrity Awards, established in 2000, recognise the efforts of individuals and organisations who work to investigate and unmask corruption, often at great personal risk. Since the award's beginning seven journalists have received the award, five of them posthumously; a testimony to their courage in the face of grave personal danger.

- The annual TI Latin America and the Caribbean and [Instituto Prensa y Sociedad](#) (Press and Society Institute) Journalism Award, worth US \$25,000, recognises an outstanding investigative report on corruption in the Latin American or Caribbean media. For further information on the award and 2008 applications please click [here](#).

- In August 2007, [Transparencia Venezuela](#), the TI national chapter in Venezuela, in cooperation with the Venezuelan Institute for Social Politics Investigation, the Social Organisation CESAP (Grupo Social CESAP) and the Peru-based [Instituto Prensa y Sociedad](#), launched the group 'Coalition Pro Access: Venezuelan Movement for the Right to Public Information.' Last month the coalition launched the first national competition for investigative reports based on solicited public information. For more information on the competition please click [here](#).

- During 2007, TI national chapters worldwide organised an array of activities and initiatives - from a rock concert in Croatia, to the drafting of an access to information law in the Palestinian Territories - aimed at firmly establishing the public's right to access to information. In addition, many national chapters were involved in monitoring elections and raising the awareness of voters on election issues.

TI's Key Recommendations

Over 60 countries have passed legislation that recognises and protects a citizen's right to access information held by public bodies. This is an important component in any efforts to fight corruption, but the mere existence of legal instruments is not enough. Habits and cultures on both sides of the information demand and supply relationship must be changed. While public bodies change their attitudes of secrecy to a climate of openness to prevent potentially corrupt situations, citizens also need to echo the media and capture the spirit of demanding information.

- An enabling legal framework is required that provides strong guarantees of freedom of expression and access to information. Separate legislation should be considered for specific media sectors to avoid inappropriate generalisations.
- New or revised legislation, relating in particular to national security and personal/corporate privacy, should be carefully reviewed for its implications for media freedom.
- National laws should not interfere with matters that are the proper responsibility of media professionals: namely, the gathering, preparation, selection and transmission of information.
- Media pluralism should be strengthened by encouraging a wide diversity of private media

ownership enforced through specific media ownership laws.

- The independence of public service broadcasters should be strengthened via specific public media laws.
- Safeguards to maintain the independence of broadcasting authorities should be introduced, including public and civil society monitoring of their activities.
- Where appropriate, independent press monitoring groups should be established to ensure self-regulation of the media.
- The role of independent journalist associations and unions, independent media organisations, media foundations, consumer groups and civil society organisations should be strengthened by involving them in the development of national media frameworks.
- Appropriate and home-grown journalist codes of conduct should be developed in partnership between media professionals and the general public.
- Accessible and affordable journalist training programmes should be developed at national and local level.

For a complete overview of the media in countering corruption, please see TI's Anti-Corruption Handbook, available online at: www.transparency.org/ach

ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD

French election candidates to commit to fighting corruption

By Georg Neumann



Ahead of France's local elections on 9 March, Transparence-International (France) gave candidates an opportunity to commit themselves to preventing corruption.

On 21 January TI (France) sent out short questionnaires to the candidates in 38 cities with populations above 100,000 inhabitants. The questionnaire contained seven recommendations for improving transparency and preventing corruption risks in city administration. The recommendations addressed issues of elective mandates after corruption convictions, conflicts of interest, public procurement using TI's *Integrity Pacts*, decisions on town-planning, asset declarations by elected officials, and whistle blowing mechanisms, including whistle blowers protection. The questionnaire also included an open section for the candidates' own comments and initiatives.

TI (France) is confident that the majority of elected representatives in France fulfil their mandates with integrity and accountability, and make decisions in everyone's interest. However, current anti-corruption mechanisms can be improved and the project is an opportunity for the candidates to sign up for integrity and transparency. Citizens' expectations on these issues, often left out of electoral campaigns, are usually high; according to TI's 2007 *Global Corruption Barometer*, the French perceive political parties as the sector most affected by corruption in France. Visit the new TI (France) website at: <http://www.transparence-france.org> for further information and to see the questionnaire and the candidates' responses.

ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD

Czech ALAC handled 1,000 corruption cases in past 15 months

By Georg Neumann



The Legal Advice Centre run by Transparency International Czech Republic (TIC) has dealt with around 1000 cases of alleged corruption since October 2006. The free national anti-corruption hotline 199, enables citizens to report cases and complaints about alleged corruption to the centre.

The majority of complaints concern the work of the Czech courts, the alleged manipulation of public and state property, public contracting, and possible corruption in the private sector. Many complaints centre on land planning and construction proceedings, where local and regional representatives and civil servants are allegedly under pressure from construction and development companies. This is apparently very evident in municipalities where the decisions made by local authorities are generally not supervised.

The law on free access to information is key to dealing with the cases. However, according to TIC director David Ondracka, the law is problematic since it does not set any fine for officers or companies that refuse to provide information. More information can be found at:

<http://www.transparency.cz/index.php?lan=uk&id=2804>.

ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD

Corruption research mapping in Sub-Saharan Africa

By Georg Neumann



In January, TI released a report that identifies both in-country and cross-country tools for measuring corruption and governance in Sub-Saharan Africa. The mapping exercise covers 42 types of tools in 28 countries - a diverse range of tools, both in type as well as in objectives and impact. The focus is on quantitative measurement tools that have been employed in the last decade, with the vast majority developed and implemented after 2004.

In recent years, many organisations have focused on creating governance and corruption measurement tools that can meet the demand for diagnostic data on the issues. The report takes stock of such tools in Sub-Saharan Africa, an area that presents considerable challenges in terms of governance and data gathering. Yet developing countries are among those most in need of these tools, since they can provide essential information about how a country is governed and how well the public sector is fulfilling its role, often in difficult circumstances. The availability of empirical research and diagnostic data in the region is very heterogeneous in nature. Some countries do not have dedicated or tailored measurement tools yet, except from those developed by international organisations, such as the World Bank, while others have implemented several governance and corruption measurement exercises.

The success of governance and corruption measurement tools depend greatly on who commissions the measurement exercise, which type of instrument is used and who uses the information collected. Impact also depends on the frequency with which a tool is implemented. Tools that track changes over time such as the *Kenya Bribery Index*, carried out by TI's chapter in Kenya, or the report *Etat de la corruption au Burkina Faso* (State of corruption in Burkina Faso) are helpful sources of information for authorities to use in order to improve their policy and reform efforts more effectively.

[Download the report](#)

CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS

World Bank funded projects in India tainted by corruption

By Nadja Kostka



An internal report by the World Bank discloses serious incidents of fraud and corruption in a review of five World Bank-funded health projects in India dealing with tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS.

[Bloomberg](#) reports that the abuses first came to public attention in September 2007, when previous World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz decided to suspend funding for the projects until better anti-graft measures were put in place.

The report, published on 11 January after a two-year inquiry, contains "sharp criticism of the bank itself failing to set up adequate measures to ensure that the large loans [US \$568 million] were properly spent," according to the [International Herald Tribune](#) (IHT). The same article quotes the new World Bank President Robert Zoellick who commented that, "there were weaknesses in project design, supervision and evaluation."

According to the [BBC](#), the projects included a "[US] \$193.7m programme to tackle HIV/Aids, a [US] \$124.8m tuberculosis scheme and a [US] \$144m malaria programme." The [IHT](#) writes that the inquiry found that the corruption in the procurement process of the HIV/AIDS prevention programme meant that "poorly performing test kits" had been supplied, "producing erroneous or invalid results, potentially resulting in the further spread of disease."

In response to this detailed report, Zoellick says that "we [The World Bank] must keep up the pressure to eradicate corruption from our projects and make sure the money gets to the poor", adding that he is prepared to "punish any staff found to be negligent in spotting and reporting abuses" ([Bloomberg](#)). According to a [World Bank press release](#), Zoellick said that, "the [World] Bank's governance and anticorruption work from now on would be placed before the scrutiny of independent and external reviewers to ensure that the institution was making tangible progress in its fight against corruption."

For its part, the Indian government has promised to take "exemplary" action against those found guilty, the [Times of India](#) reports.

CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS

BAE review: campaign groups critical of the British government

By Mike Sidwell



On 14 February, Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) and Corner House Research told the British High Court that: "The Serious Fraud Office [SFO] unlawfully ended a graft probe into arms deals between BAE Systems and Saudi Arabia because of pressure from members of the Saudi royal family", reports [Reuters](#).

The SFO discontinued its investigation into arms deals between BAE systems and the Saudi Arabian royal family in December 2006. In November 2007, CAAT and Corner House Research succeeded in winning the right for a judicial review.

For its part, the SFO claims, "it acted lawfully in deciding to drop the probe and is contesting the court challenge," writes the [Financial Times](#). Robert Wardle, the director of the SFO, told the court in a witness statement: "The idea of discontinuing the investigation went against my every instinct as a prosecutor. I wanted to see where the evidence led," ([Guardian](#)). In a press statement on 14 December, 2006, Wardle declared that ending the inquiry was necessary "to safeguard national and international security," ([The Times](#)).

The [Financial Times](#) writes that the campaign groups claim that, "Tony Blair, the former prime minister, and his government caved in to intense lobbying from BAE...after senior members of the Saudi royal family threatened to cancel a £10 bn (US \$19bn) aircraft contract and to withdraw security cooperation if the investigation was not halted." The groups' lawyer, Dinah Rose QC, has argued that the real reason for dropping the investigation, "was not national security but the commercial situation", writes the [Guardian](#). If this is the case she said, then the decision would therefore be seen as a violation of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, notes [The Times](#). According to the [Guardian](#), Lord Justice Moses, one of Britain's most senior judges, commented: "It is no good just waving the flag of national security. If (its use) is so wide, it undermines the [OECD] treaty."

Lord Justice Moses also expressed surprise that, "the government did not seem to consider alternative solutions in the face of such threats" and accused the British government of "rolling over to Saudi threats" ([Financial Times](#)).

The judges' ruling has still to be announced.

CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS

Bangladesh: New graft charges filed against former Prime Minister
Khaleda Zia

By Mike Sidwell



The former Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has had new graft charges filed against her by the country's anti-corruption commission.

According to the BBC: "The charges relate to the awarding in 2004 of a contract to operate a coal mine in northern Bangladesh to a Chinese firm." The assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Shamsul Alam, told [AFP](#) that: "irregularities over the awarding of a contract to run a coal mine in northern Bangladesh in 2004 led to state losses of [US] 23 million dollars."

"This is the third graft case against the Bangladesh National Party [BNP] chief [Zia], who ruled the country from 2001 to 2006 and is in jail since September last year," notes the [Hindustan Times](#). Rizvi Ahmad, spokesperson for the BNP, has declared that: "The charges which have been framed against the BNP chief are false, fabricated and are designed to taint her political image, banning her from future general elections," reports [The Earth Times](#).

According to [Reuters](#): "More than 170 key political figures have been detained since the interim authority took charge in January last year, following months of political violence." Sheikh Hasina, who leads the Awami League party and was prime minister of Bangladesh from 1996 to 2001, is also in custody on corruption and other charges ([Associated Press](#)).

Khandaker Delwar Hossain, the Khaleda Zia-nominated BNP secretary general, has stated: "Holding elections while Hasina and Ms. Zia are both in jail would be unacceptable", reports the [Bangladesh Independent](#).

The [BBC](#) writes that instead of organising elections within three months as laid down by the constitution, the caretaker government has said it first needs "to clean up Bangladesh's corrupt political system."

NEWS FROM THE ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT

Transparencia por Colombia launches new website

The TI chapter in Colombia, Transparencia por Colombia, refreshed the look of its website at www.transparenciacolombia.org.co and re-organised its content to make navigation more intuitive and allow the chapter's work to be accessed quickly. The revised website also offers new sections, such as an area for opinions where users can consult transparency and corruption related articles authored by members of the chapter or by experts in the field of work of transparency; the latest opinion piece looks at the issue of state capture.

Investigative reports competition launched in Venezuela

The first national competition for investigative reports based on solicited public information was launched in January. The competition is being run by the Press and Society Institute (IPYS) in Venezuela within the framework of Coalition Pro Acceso, a coalition of five civil society organisations, including the TI chapter in Venezuela, fighting for the right to access public information. The coalition aims to promote legal instruments and activities which facilitate the public's right to access information.

Reports need to include the usage of solicited public information from the relevant authorities. The deadline for submissions is 4 April. Texts may be presented in any form of media and in any format, published between December 2006 and March 2008. For more information please click [here](#).

TI Chair speaks at Annual Siwatibau Memorial Lecture, Fiji

In February, Transparency International Fiji organised with the University of the South Pacific its 5th Annual Siwatibau Memorial Lecture on Transparency and Accountability in Political Party Financing. TI Chair Huguette Labelle highlighted that people place their trust in those they have elected into government to manage their money and to provide public services, and therefore government must have integrity, transparency and accountability. For ensuring this, a law and a regulatory frame-work on financing of political parties are essential. The topic is of special relevance in regard to Fiji's forthcoming general election set for early 2009. Labelle also met with the Interim Attorney General and Minister for Justice Mr Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum and highlighted the importance of conducting proper elections within the timeframe agreed and following through on anti-corruption commitments made. Mr Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum is now working on a proposed legislation on political party financing.

Nomination of TI Pakistan on Board of Directors Sindh Public Procurement Authority

In January, the government of Sindh province in Pakistan has nominated Transparency International Pakistan's representative as a member of the Board of the Sindh Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA). The Sindh PPRA aims to improve governance and management of public procurement of goods, services and works in the public sector. It will monitor public procurement practices and the performance of procurement agencies, and evaluate the implementation of laws and regulations relating. Based on these findings, the body will develop recommendations, as well as a code of ethics.

New TI contact group in Kosovo

In January TI began to work with a new partner in Kosovo, the Kosova Democratic Institute (www.kdi-kosova.org). Under the leadership of Ismet Kryezu the team of eleven has already achieved national recognition by publishing a bi-annual detailed report card on participation in, and the activity and output of the National Assembly of Kosovo, as well as several municipalities since January 2006. Having worked on citizen participation, the monitoring of political processes, democratic governance and the provision of trainings on those topics, the institute will now also focus on transparency and anti-corruption work. We invite everybody to welcome KDI to the TI movement.

Amendment to Serbian budget finance law

The TI chapter in Serbia, Transparency Serbia, has been successfully working on uncovering irregularities in the law on political party financing, regulating state funding for regular activities of parliamentary political parties. In a press conference in September 2007 the chapter highlighted deficiencies in the mechanisms to calculate the political party's budget funds, resulting in more than 750,000 Euro (US \$1.1 million) paid to political parties contrary to the provisions of the law. In a dialogue with the Ministry of Finance, Transparency Serbia's suggestions to adjust the Ministry's 2008 draft budget were accepted by the National Parliament in December 2007. Beside the reimbursement of money by the parties, Transparency Serbia is now preparing, together with a group of partner

organisations, recommendations for the Ministry of Finance to make the necessary amendments to the law on political party financing.

NGOs to conduct anti-corruption monitoring in Moldova

From January 2008 to February 2009, Moldovan non-governmental organisations, including TI Moldova, will monitor the efforts to combat corruption in the judiciary system, customs service, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health Protection, the Main State Fiscal Inspectorate and the Centre for Combating Economic Crime and Corruption. The organisations will present monitoring reports each quarter aiming at an objective assessment of the transparency and public institutions' ability to prevent corruption and to combat it.

TI scales-up its advocacy work at EU level

The global coalition against corruption, Transparency International, moved into a new office in Brussels to strengthen its advocacy work against corruption at EU level. The Brussels Office aims to promote the establishment of a permanent anti-corruption monitoring system in accession candidate countries and beyond at a later stage, the transparent management of internal and external EU spending, transparent lobbying and procurement rules at EU level, the development of an EU-wide debarment system, the fight against corruption through EU's judicial/police cooperation, transparency efforts by the European Prosecutor, whistle blowing, a corruption-free export credit insurance, the implementation of international anti-corruption conventions and access to public information. For more information please see: www.transparencyinternational.eu or contact Jana Mittermaier at jmittermaier@transparency.org.

TI launches anti-bribery tool for small and medium-sized enterprises

TI has published a tool designed specifically to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) develop policies and procedures to address bribery. The *Business Principles for Countering Bribery - Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Edition* was announced on 30 January at the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption in Bali as part of an SME session at a private sector Special Event. More than 95% of the world's business is carried out by SMEs, and although they may not have the same human and financial resources as larger companies, they are just as vulnerable to the risks of bribery. Based on the *Business Principles for Countering Bribery*, but tailored to the needs of small and medium-sized businesses, the new *Business Principles for Countering Bribery - SME Edition* sets out the principles which should underpin anti-bribery programmes for smaller companies. It was developed through a process of consultation which involved smaller businesses and reflects their needs and challenges. Please click [here](#) to download the tool.

CORRUPTION IN QUOTES

"The idea of discontinuing the investigation went against my every instinct as a prosecutor. I wanted to see where the evidence led."

Robert Wardle, director of the British Serious Fraud Office, told the British High Court at BAE review.
[Guardian](#), UK 14 February 2008

"I'll just put it bluntly: America doesn't want to spend money on people who steal the money"

U.S. President George W. Bush, during a press conference given with Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete.

[Inter Press Service](#), Africa, 17 February 2008

"The Norwegian sovereign wealth fund is exemplary in terms of transparency, governance and accountability"

EU executive's president, Jose Manuel Barroso, announces that the EU will use Norway's sovereign wealth fund as a benchmark for establishing a voluntary EU code to regulate the funds.

[Reuters](#), Belgium, 25 February 2008

"The state apparatus is to a considerable extent a bureaucratized, corrupt system that does not support positive changes or dynamic development."

Russian President Vladimir Putin in a speech to the Russian State Council.

[The Moscow Times](#), Russia, February 2008

"We consider corruption a challenge to the existence of the Vietnamese government"

Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung at a business roundtable between key cabinet members and international business leaders in Hanoi.

[People's Day Online](#), China, 13 February 2008