

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Caucasus must do more to fight corruption

New reports show Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia need greater transparency and accountability in anti-corruption efforts

Brussels/Berlin, 4 May 2011 – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have made little progress in the past year adopting or implementing anti-corruption measures, according to the latest assessment reports released today by Transparency International, which calls on the governments of these countries to introduce greater transparency and accountability in all areas of government.

The reports, which were compiled by TI chapters in each country, focus on reforms in the judiciary and in the public sector and they assess whether each country is complying with international anti-corruption conventions and implementing recommendations made by the [Group of States against Corruption \(GRECO\)](#), the Council of Europe body that monitors anti-corruption efforts.

Now in their second edition, the TI reports show that there has been some improvement in Georgia with the introduction of an electronic procurement system but neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan has successfully implemented anti-corruption reforms. However, in Azerbaijan, which has seen significant street protests, in early 2011 there was a new wave of legislation.

“These new reports show that not enough is being done. Countries in the region should move quickly to strengthen anti-corruption policies and good governance. They should take note that citizens are no longer willing to be passive spectators; they are increasingly showing that they are tired of mismanagement and corruption,” said Jana Mittermaier, Head of TI’s Liaison Office to the European Union.

Each *European Neighbourhood Policy: monitoring anti-corruption* report evaluates whether the countries are delivering on commitments made in their 2006 Action Plans signed as part of the European Union’s European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The policy is designed to strengthen a shared commitment to common values, including good governance and sustainable practices guaranteeing the rule of law, between the European Union and its neighbouring countries by land and sea.

The TI reports are issued ahead of the European Commission’s Action Plan annual reviews for the three countries, slated for 10 May, as well as a long-awaited statement about the status of the ENP Review. They offer a solid, indicator-based framework for benchmarking progress in the ENP area related to anti-corruption policies and practices. TI’s approach, which is more detailed and critical than the Commission’s own review mechanism, highlights the importance of independent input in the long-term move towards greater transparency and accountability in government.

Key findings and recommendations of the reports include:

Armenia: The report notes only little change in Armenia throughout 2010, particularly in the areas concerning judicial reform and civil service administration, which are seen to lack independence and transparency and in the case of the civil service administration is highly

politicised. Some progress has been made regarding the implementation of some of GRECO recommendations, in particular, the adoption of guidelines for the detection of corruption offences, the abolition of parliamentary immunity and a way to handle complaints about breaches of ethical rules within the public administration. However, in all three areas implementation remains the main challenge. On a positive note a Law on Procurement entered into effect on January 1, 2011.

Azerbaijan: The justice sector suffers from weak enforcement, lack of transparency and limited independence as the executive branch exerts strong control over judicial appointments. The civil service has made some progress regarding recruitment of young professionals and has increased the ethics and integrity training but lack of managerial skills continues to weaken the public sector. The government introduced a new financial intelligence unit, a requirement of GRECO, and in early 2011 it introduced a series of anti-bribery laws in the penal code aimed at quelling dissent and regaining citizen trust.

Georgia: Insufficient independence of the judiciary and the civil service is a key factor weakening Georgia's good governance potential. Especially in the civil service, high politicisation remains a major stumbling block, although some progress in technical areas looks promising, such as the recent adoption of an electronic procurement system. The report recommends that for Georgia to continue making progress in its fight against corruption it must improve transparency and impartiality in both its laws and the enforcement of those laws.

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Transparency International is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption.

Note to editors: The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 and now covers 16 countries that surround the EU, [12](#) of which have Action Plans in place. The current review of the ENP is expected to introduce performance-based benchmarking criteria. (Russia is not part of the ENP; it has a strategic partnership with the EU).

The 2009 assessment reports on Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia released in May 2010 can be accessed [here](#). Interviews can be arranged in Armenian, Azerbaijani, English, Georgian, German and Russian.

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