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In 2016 investigators of the Bureau initiated 19 criminal proceedings – eight of these criminal cases were opened on the basis of operational information received from the Criminal Intelligence Division of the Bureau. In total 14 cases against 35 persons were sent for criminal prosecution. The Bureau is involved in complex corruption investigations which go beyond the borders of Latvia. In order to investigate these cases in 2016 the Bureau executed 30 mutual legal assistance requests from such countries as USA, Germany, Italy, Ukraine, Estonia, Lithuania and other. In 2016 the Bureau prepared 10 mutual legal assistance requests.

On 11 May 2016 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) took a final decision on the accession of Latvia extending OECD's membership to 35 countries. During nearly three years of accession discussions Latvia has been reviewed by 21 OECD Committees. In order to receive an invitation to become a member one of pre-requests is to ratify and successfully implement OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (Anti-corruption Convention) and here an important contribution was given by experts of the Bureau. Intense work of Bureau's experts together with representatives from other state authorities assured Latvia's compliance with the OECD Anti-corruption Convention. In second half of 2016 the Bureau's officials participated in OECD Working Group on Bribery where Oral Follow-Up to Phase 2 Report was presented to all OECD members. During Latvia's accession process the Bureau has demonstrated clear commitment to implement Anti-corruption Convention's requirements at the highest level.

In September 2016 the compliance report was developed and sent to the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) informing about the progress made regarding implementation of recommendations given by GRECO in the IV evaluation round. Additionally Latvia was nominated to be one of the first countries to enter the V evaluation round of GRECO.

In November 2016 the Bureau organized an international conference for anti-corruption institutions – the yearly Professional conference and general assembly of European Partners against Corruption/ European contact-point network against corruption (EPAC/EACN). At the closure of the conference participants signed a declaration inviting to adopt a comprehensive policy on national and international level in order to fight corruption in healthcare system.

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On 16 July 2015 the Cabinet of Ministers approved a new mid-term policy planning document "[The Corruption Prevention and Combating Guidelines for 2015-2020](#)" (further – Guidelines 2015-2020) describing the current situation of Latvia's anti-corruption policy, defining problems and stipulating tasks to be executed by various state institutions, implementation time frame for individual assignments, justification of the assignment and overall policy results to be expected in certain period of time. The Guidelines will replace the National Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2009-2013. To elaborate the Guidelines the Bureau considered proposals of various expert working groups arranged during the elaboration of the document, as well as recommendations expressed in international evaluations and reviews regarding corruption prevention and combating, public inquiries, surveys researches and reports on the improvement of the anti-corruption policy in Latvia. The results of inspections and criminal cases of the Bureau were also taken into account.

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In order to address corruption in an effective and comprehensive manner a single institution was set up in Latvia through the Law on Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (the Bureau) adopted on 18 April 2002. The Bureau was established in October 2002 and its work is threefold: prevention of corruption, countering of corruption and education of the society on anti- corruption matters.

In 2014 the Bureau continued to elaborate the Corruption Prevention and Combating Guidelines for 2015-2020 (the Guidelines) that have to be approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. It is a medium term anti-corruption policy document describing the current situation of Latvia's anticorruption policy, defining problems and stipulating tasks to be executed by various state institutions, implementation time frame for individual assignments, justification of the assignment and overall policy results to be expected in certain period of time. The Guidelines will replace the National Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2009-2013.

In order to implement a unite approach to the country's anti-corruption policy in the coordination meeting (24th October 2014) of the national anti-fraud coordination service AFCOS it was decided to include tasks for preventing and combating fraud in the activities and of European Structural and Investment Funds as well as other foreign financial assistance instruments in the Guidelines.

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In order to address corruption in an effective and comprehensive manner a single institution was set up in Latvia through the Law on Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (KNAB) adopted on 18 April 2002. KNAB was established in October 2002 and its work is threefold: prevention of corruption, countering of corruption and education of the society on anti- corruption matters.

In June Latvia was invited to join the OECD Working Group on Bribery. This was accomplished during several years of intense activities. For the implementation of addressed recommendations KNAB in cooperation with other institutions has developed improvements of legal framework regarding the liability of legal persons for criminal offences, including foreign bribery. Corporate liability may be imposed for offences resulting not only from a natural person's actions but also from a lack of supervision or control within the company, including state owned/controlled companies.

Taking into account that Latvia has implemented addressed recommendations and confirmed its commitment to adhere OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions, in September 2013 OECD Council adopted the decision to invite Latvia to adhere OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions as a full-fledged member and Anti-Bribery Convention. Those are important preconditions for Latvia to receive member state status in this international organization.

In line with the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption recommendation amendments to the Criminal Law were drafted on active bribery in the public service and on commercial bribery respectively enabling the criminalisation of the promise or offer of an undue advantage as a completed offence, without taking into consideration the acceptance or refusal of the advantage.

Draft Law on the Transparency of Lobbying was submitted to the Government for approval in December 2013. The main objective of the draft Law on Transparency of Lobbying is to ensure public confidence that the decision making process is free from unlawful influences by disclosure of information on lobbying activities.

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Exposure of corruption in nowadays is not considered as disturbing as it was in daily life of population, for example, ten years ago, but in certain areas it is still observed. However, it has to be taken into account that manifestation of corruption changes and corruptive offences are more sophisticated.

In 2012 KNAB continued its dedicated work towards eradication of corruption in Latvia, as well as internationally both by investigating international bribery cases and by participating in different international and regional endeavours aimed at common fight against corruption.

Since the adoption of the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions on 17 December 1997, Latvia has demonstrated consistent interest and readiness to join the Convention and become a full member of the OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions (WGB). Latvia continued to participate at the WGB meetings in 2012 during which the member states were informed about Latvia's efforts to join the Convention and WGB.

In October 2012 KNAB celebrated its 10th Anniversary. On this occasion an international conference was organised which addressed two important issues: criminal liability of legal persons and assessment of how effective has been our model of prevention of conflicts of interests in activities of public officials. The conference served as a forum for local and foreign experts to discuss the current problems and to find the possible solutions.

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After evaluating KNAB results in 2011 in conjunction with overall economic situation in the country and taking into account an average salary level of population, KNAB has concluded that corruption risks on administrative and on political levels are remaining relatively high. In circumstances when public officials have rights to perform control and monitoring functions unilaterally but their salaries has been cut, it creates a corruption risk and increases possibility of situational corruption. The economic crisis has made the competition among businesses more aggressive and in these conditions they might chose illegal activities such as bribery to obtain state contracts. Therefore the limited availability of financial resources is also increasing corruption risks.

Lately KNAB is increasingly involved in some of the most complex corruption investigations which go beyond the borders of Latvia. During the first half of 2011 KNAB has sent more than 20 requests for mutual legal assistance on criminal matters to 16 countries.

Membership in OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions and joining the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions is one of the country's priorities. In December, 2010 Latvia in the capacity of ad-hoc observer for the first time participated in the law enforcement meeting organised for members of OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions (Working Group) and in the regular meeting of the Working Group. At the same time representatives of the KNAB continues to participate in various activities of the OECD, for example, at the meetings of the Anti-corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including 10th Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan Meeting and 12th ACN Steering Group meeting which was co-chaired by a representative of the KNAB.

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According to the Government decision from October 12, 2010 starting from 2012 Bureau will check information provided in asset declarations of public officials and will apply administrative sanctions for false statements. Currently this is responsibility of the State Revenue Service.

Compliance report on Latvia "Incriminations and Party Funding" was adopted by the GRECO (Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption) at its 48<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting held in Strasbourg September 27 - October 1, 2010. It was concluded that eight of thirteen recommendations from the Third Evaluation Round were implemented or dealt with in satisfactory manner. Substantial amendments were adopted in the Criminal Law regarding provisions on private and public sector bribery, for example, range of subjects of criminal liability for private sector bribery is expanded, acceptance of an offer of undue advantage is criminalized, public sector bribery in favour of third persons is criminalized, etc. [Complete compliance report](#).

In December, 2010 Latvia in the capacity of *ad-hoc* observer for the first time participated in the law enforcement meeting organised for members of the OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions (Working Group) and in the regular meeting of the Working Group. Representative of KNAB briefed about implementation of anti-corruption policy since 2002.

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Year 2009 marked beginning of new anti-corruption policy planning period for the next five years. National Corruption Prevention and Combating Strategy and Programme for 2009-2013 were elaborated by KNAB taking into account new realities of corruption. Both documents were adopted by the Government last year.

Last year KNAB initiated introduction of a clearly stipulated obligation to every public official to report on possible conflict of interest situations and other corruptive offences in a respective institution (*whistleblowing*) and providing adequate legal protection of *whistleblowers*. In 2009 KNAB also developed several draft legal regulations with the purpose to ensure that information about lobbying activities is publicly disclosed.

Implementing intensive control of financing of political parties from the time KNAB was established up to date nearly 2,4 million lats of illegal funding was discovered from which parties have reimbursed 294 637 LVL including 9 000 lats during the last year. Role of private funding in Latvia is very important as the only public funding provided for political parties is a very short time in public broadcasting companies allocated for pre-election advertisement. In order to reduce impact of private funding KNAB initiated state funding for political parties which would apply to parties having passed threshold of 2 %. Currently amendments in the Law on Financing of Political Parties stipulating introduction of state funding are adopted by the Saeima in the second reading.

From the time KNAB was established until the end of last year 119 criminal cases against 250 persons initiated by KNAB are forwarded to the court and 106 persons are convicted for corruption related offences. Among public officials against whom the Bureau has initiated criminal proceedings there are prosecutors, judges, senior level officials of state institutions and several municipalities including of the Riga city council as well as law enforcement officials.

Substantial amendments were adopted in the Criminal Law regarding provisions on private and public sector bribery, for example, range of subjects of criminal liability for private sector bribery is expanded, acceptance of an offer of undue advantage is criminalized, public sector bribery in favour of third persons is criminalized, etc. Amendments were elaborated in line with the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) recommendations.

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Year 2007 was significant in the history of the Bureau in at least three ways: first, as a result of control of political parties' finances, serious violations were disclosed in pre-election campaigning of two political parties, which caused great reaction in the society, second, within the framework of corruption combating activities, corruptive criminal offences committed by officials of law enforcement customs and border control institutions were detected, that, hopefully, will allow the institutions to improve their performance considerably in the future; third – the Director of the Bureau was temporarily suspended from his duties, that received protests among the society, and as a result the Director was restored in his position.



Research and examinations made by the officials of the Bureau in 2007 confirm that the spread of administrative corruption in Latvia is diminishing every year, and it is largely the effect of successful work of the Bureau in corruption combating and prevention. On the one hand, the control of activities of public officials has become more efficient by strengthening the inevitability of punishment. On the other hand, according to the initiative of the Bureau, government and local government authorities have started introduction of their own internal organisational anticorruption measures. Thus, the impact of arbitrariness and misuse of authority by officials on the administrative decision making process becomes less possible, demanding of bribes – one of the most dangerous types of corruptive act – becomes less occasional or is not that open and direct. Studies show that the situation with corruption of top level public officials has not improved and the desire to acquire wealth at the expense of public resources in the act of individual officials is still remaining however implemented in more hidden way.

Due to increasing professionalism of investigators of the Bureau and the capacity of the investigation branch, more and more complicated criminal offences are detected in the public service. The number of detected criminal offences increases where top level public officials are involved. These crimes are characterised by high conspiracy level, sophisticated bribery schemes with various intermediaries who are well acquainted among themselves for a long time. Individuals with high level of education and professional skills are involved in planning and committing of such crimes, which makes the detection of a criminal offence utmost difficult. More often, several episodes of criminal offences committed by the same individuals are established and detected. Criminal cases investigated by the Bureau are of large scope and demand great time and human resources for gathering and fixing the base of evidences.

In 2007, the Investigation Division of the Bureau started 30 criminal proceedings. For initiation of prosecution, 18 criminal cases against 46 individuals were sent to the prosecutor's office, 14 criminal proceedings were terminated. 5 criminal cases were sent to other investigation authorities according to their competence. 6 criminal cases were received from other investigation authorities. 56 decisions as resolutions were made on rejection to initiate criminal proceedings. Majority of the criminal offences were related to bribery, receiving of a bribe and misappropriation of bribes.

One of the largest fields of operation of the Bureau is the control of activities of public officials and prevention of conflict of interest. Identifying of corruptive administrative violations is very complicated. In order to detect it a voluminous analysis of documents must be made by studying the process of decision making. At the same time quality of administrative decision making performed by the Bureau is confirmed by the fact that approximately 90% of decisions made remain valid in the process of appeal to the Director of the Bureau.

In general, the number of complaints and applications received since 2005 is decreasing. At the same time the number of individuals hold administratively liable has remained in the previous level.

During 2007, the Bureau has made 691 examinations in relation to conflict of interest situations. 131 administrative examination cases were started in 2007 for violation of the restrictions set to public officials under Law "On Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Activities of Public Officials". 91 public officials were hold administratively liable by applying fines for a total amount of 7,756 lats.

In general, the Division of Control of Public Officials Activities of the Bureau detected 154 administrative violations in 2007. From those, 71% or in 109 cases (66% in the last year), administrative violation was related to violation of restrictions and prohibitions imposed on public officials. The second most common type of administrative violations is non-reporting by public officials about being in situation of conflict of interest.



Considerable burden in daily work of the Bureau is the still unsolved division of competences between the Bureau and the State Revenue Service (SRS) in the matter related to examination of declarations submitted by officials. The SRS must verify the authenticity of submitted declarations but the Bureau must examine whether the details provided therein do not give evidence about conflict of interest. However, the SRS does not support such a position.

Violations by some political parties in the pre-election period, which have been established by the Bureau, have contributed to dissatisfaction of representatives of such political parties with the work of the Bureau. However, the Bureau is persistent in continuation of its duty: to follow scrupulously the observance of law in activities of all political parties regardless of their size or participation in the government. The society appreciates it: the population poll at the end of 2007 showed that the society had a positive opinion about the Bureau (45% of the respondents expressed trust in its activities).

Due to the effect of financial audits performed by the Bureau, accounting of political parties is mainly organized according to the provisions of law, however – since the regulations do not provide several important aspects in detail – the Bureau must take into account that political parties will appeal against decisions made by the Bureau in cases of administrative violations and thus more resources must be invested in gathering of evidences.

The results of control of political parties' finances by the Bureau during the accounting period showed voluminous violations in pre-election expenditure of some political parties. 17 administrative decisions were made regarding such established violations in the reporting period, by applying the maximum administrative penalty of LVL 5,000 to two political parties. In 2007, political parties were instructed to repay any funding which had been received in contrary to the Law on Financing of Political Organisations (Political Parties), totally LVL 30,223.72. 390 reports on gifts (donations) received by political parties were examined in 2007.

Stricter parliamentary supervision of internal anti-corruption measures in institutions has promoted the strengthening of corruption prevention capacities of many public administration bodies. However, in general, anti-corruption measures receive insufficient political support and the legislation initiatives submitted by the Bureau and directed to decreasing or exclusion of the corruption risk are not supported in many cases.

Unfortunately, corruption risk mitigation with new regulations has not been particularly successfully. Amendments to regulations, which have been suggested by the Bureau, often remain in the Cabinet of Ministers or the Saeima without further progress. For instance, amendments to the Criminal Law and the Administrative Violations Code of Latvia (AVCL), which were proposed by the Bureau in relation to financing of political parties were submitted to the government at the same time however only the AVCL have had some progress so far. There are still some fields where there is no regulation at all or it has been insufficient: leasing out of the state and municipal property, criminal liability for serious violations in financing of political parties, protection of individuals who report about conflicts of interest or corruptive criminal offences, control of income of inhabitants, etc.

Social factors like distrust of population to the state administration, disloyal attitude towards adopted laws, comparatively high tolerance to corruption and to non paying tax strengthens the assurance among a part of the society that bribery can solve all the matters in the state administration. Important factor is also lack of knowledge about the negative outcome of corruption and liability for corruptive activities, as well as public official's being in conflict of interest situation. The self-interested action and readiness to abuse the authority by public officials is also influenced by the economic situation in the state and inflation, which decreases the value of legally earned income. Thus, informing and educating of the society and public officials is of special importance. In 2007 for the first time the Bureau addressed the general public by implementing a striking social advertisement campaign. The aim of this campaign was to raise the society's legal awareness and to explain that corruption diminishes the opportunities for inhabitants to participate in policy making and the state administration on fair and legal grounds to a minimum, thus it also threatens the right of citizens to enforce their political will. For the purpose of drawing attention with the available modest resources, parallels were made between corruption and another type of amoral action – prostitution, in associative and unusual way.

By taking into account the great interest of the society about detected corruptive violations, the Bureau ensures

provision of information to the press and provides the link with the society by involving representatives from the non-governmental sector and by organizing various discussions. In order to prevent violations falling under competence of the Bureau, training seminars are organized for various target audiences of public officials. In 2007, about 1,400 public officials were trained in general.

Officials of the Bureau have improved their professional qualification in several fields and according to their work duties: legal matters, management, communication, information technologies, finance and accounting, internal audit, quality management, foreign languages (English and French). Several officials of the Bureau are continuing their studies in higher education establishments in Master's and Doctor's programmes.

Forecast about the eventual developments in the area of anti-corruption

It is not expected that the implemented educational activities would have comprehensive long-term effect in prevention of corruption unless training about anti-corruption measures in institutions, the ethics of public administration and prevention of conflict of interest is not introduced as obligatory and systematic discipline in the whole state administration.

When preparing the next strategic document for the state policy in the field of corruption prevention and combating, the awareness must be raised that efficient state administration is not possible if costs caused by corruption are not decreased.

Corruptive practice on administrative level of the state administration will diminish however it will also remain in some areas. Due to the recent case law, public officials have lost the feeling of legal indemnity; institutions are more often implementing various mechanisms of internal control in order to prevent illegal action.

At the same time, there are areas where the corruption risk will be still considerable, for instance, public procurements, operations with government and local government property and funds, in the field of law enforcement and supervision of activities of entrepreneurs. Mass media plays certainly an important role in corruption prevention by reporting about detected offences and thus preventing public officials from admitting similar violations. However, simultaneously with such publicity, investigation activities and evidence gathering methods of the Bureau are made public. Together with development of modern technologies, it certainly affects the possibilities of detection of crimes. Also the Bureau must improve its capacities by each newly detected case. Investigators must improve their skills and have the necessary capacities in order to meet the future challenges in successfully investigating criminal offences.

Thanks to the great trust and support from the society, the Bureau accumulates more and more information each year. However, due to this increase of the data, the question about the capacity of the Bureau's officials is also becoming urgent. By taking into account the high requirements and certain deficiencies in provision of social guarantees (term of service, salary), the Bureau meets more difficulties in recruiting sufficiently qualified staff.

[Read more: Public Report 2007](#)

In 2006 the work of the Corruption Preventing and Combating Bureau (hereinafter – the Bureau) in the field of preventing and combating of corruption has been more efficient than in previous years. Compared to 2005, more cases were sent for criminal prosecution as well as the number of persons suggested to be held criminally liable increased.

Also all-time high number is noted in criminal cases initiated by the Bureau and tried in various court instances. For example, in the first instance only eight criminal cases were tried in 2005 while in 2006 - already 26 criminal cases. In two cases that were associated with commitment of a criminal offence or a less serious violation there have been made up settlements with the victim (a local government or a private person) while in all other cases the court has found the accused persons guilty in committing an illegal act. Till the end of the year only one verdict of "not guilty" has come into force while in other cases the verdicts of "not guilty" have been contested by offices of public prosecutor by entering their protests both under appeal procedure or cassation procedure.



Declarations of 1,518 public officials have been checked, which is by 518 more than it was planned. 19 draft legal acts have been prepared, and 123 opinions have been provided on other draft legal acts. The Bureau staff members examined 1 240 applications and complaints, participated in 43 intergovernmental working groups and meetings, which is by 33 more than it was planned, organized 52 events in the field of public education with total audience of about 1,060 persons. In last year 167 decisions were taken on holding public officials administratively liable, which is by 27 more than it was planned. 51 criminal procedures in 2006 were initiated, of which 41 were sent for criminal prosecution against 65 persons in total.

With growing awareness of population about the essence of corruptive violations as well as their awareness of problems within the Bureau's competence, each year shows a little reduction in number of applications received in the Bureau, but their content, in its turn, has become more substantiated and gives more detailed information about corruptive violations.

The year 2006 is also notable with establishment of elements of criminal offences in actions of high-ranking public officials. Case with bribery at elections of Jurmala city mayor has stimulated a public discussion on political corruption, its consequences and responsibility of elected officials before the electorate.

In 2006 a great work has been carried out on improvement of legal regulation in the sphere of financing of political parties, prevention of conflict of interest of public officials, leasing of public property as well as development of the policy document on most suitable solution for legal regulation of lobbying in Latvia.

[More information](#)

Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (henceforth – the Bureau) has been able to identify a number of important problems during the three years of its existence, which distort fair use of the power entrusted in the officials for the interests of the State and the society, has taken measures to fight against the consequences caused by corruption and has facilitated the introduction of corruption prevention systems in state and municipal institutions. The Bureau has been very active also in drawing up of various legislative initiatives and promoting their adoption both in the field of financing of political parties and monitoring of income of public officials.

The year 2005 will be definitely marked in the history of combating the corruption with the first detected case of political corruption, which was related to bribery during the election of the mayor of Jurmala City. Revealing of the circumstances in the case to the public showed the strong disapproval of such illegal action among the citizens and, hopefully, has raised awareness also among representatives of the political elite.



In general, the scope of work of the Bureau has increased considerably. The progress achieved by our officers in charge of investigations in detecting an increasing number of cases of corruption or conflict of interest, fosters the trust of the society in the work of the Bureau and reaching a common understanding that the impunity of law breakers is not possible anymore.

The opinion poll of the population of Latvia in 2005 witnesses a strong increase in the confidence in the work of the Bureau. The public mentions the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau among the ten fairest institutions in Latvia.

Scope of work has increased considerably also with regard to disputing and appealing of decisions made by the officials of the Bureau in administrative violation matters. Taking into account the fact that activity of persons found administratively liable in defending their legal interests in a higher institution and in court is only increasing, the amount of work in this area will most probably not decrease.

By evaluating the amount of work of the Bureau, it must be also taken into account that the number of public officials is constantly increasing in our country. Subsequently, is increasing the number of those persons monitoring and supervision of whom is in the competence of the Bureau. Currently, it has risen almost to 70,000 public officials.

Meanwhile, it is recognised that the level of legal awareness in the Latvian public administration and the society is quite low, as well as unawareness of own rights or responsibilities. There are examples of negligent attitude by some officials towards the duties that they are entrusted to perform, insufficient control of their work, lack of knowledge about legal and regulatory norms, as well as sometimes unwillingness to get better acquainted with them. As result, often public officials carry out their duties in a situation of conflict of interest out of lack of knowledge or due to negligence. It is also caused by weak internal control of institutions and the fact that heads of many institutions do not fulfil their duties established by the law in the area of prevention of conflict of interest, thus slowing down the prevention of conflict of interest and corruption.

The tasks set out in the National Programme for Corruption Prevention and Combating for 2004-2008 envisage assessment of possible corruption risks in each state and municipal institution and implementation of internal anti-

corruption plans. However, the Bureau has found out that there are still a number of institutions that are negligent to the implementation of these tasks and such plans have been elaborated formally in some cases and they have not become efficient internal control mechanisms. Heads of institutions stress insufficient financial resources as one of the obstacles for introduction of an efficient internal system: establishing of an internal control system is creating additional workload in their institution and need for new job vacancies.

























Drawing on its experience, the Bureau has identified several legal provisions that have become obsolete and insufficient in the current situation, for instance, in Law “On Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Actions of Public officials”. There are cases when due to insufficient legal regulation, it is not possible to charge public officials found guilty with liability for their violations, allowing them to avoid being sanctioned.

Besides, application and enforcement in practice of particular provisions of the Criminal Law, the Law on Financing of Political Organisations (Parties), and Laws “On Pre-election Campaigning before the Election of Saeima (Parliament) and the Election of the European Parliament” and “On Pre-election Campaigning before the Election of Local Governments” cause important problems, and the public gets an impression that activities of officials remain unpunished and that only the poor and the weak rather than wealthy and strong ones are brought to trial. Therefore, in order to diminish such risks as much as possible, the Bureau is drafting amendments to the existing legal acts and develops new draft laws that could create sound and sufficient rules in the areas, which have been not regulated until now.

Since the beginning of operation of the Bureau in 2003, the monitoring of political organisations (parties) financing has improved considerably both in terms of its legal and regulatory basis and the practical application. Work in the area of monitoring of financial activities of political parties has been one of the priorities for our Bureau. Recent studies indicate that there is a comparatively high level of “state capture” in Latvia: a situation when political organisations, as a result of necessary financing, become closely dependant of various economic groups. In this light, important amendments to the Law on Financing of Political Organisations (Parties) were adopted prohibiting donations of legal persons to parties and restrictions in respect to pre-election expenses of parties were stated. Due to the above-mentioned reasons, the year 2005 has been significant for the monitoring of political organisations financing, since the first elections after adoption of the said amendments were held in March.

Another important step for improvement of the financing of parties could be the adoption of the new Law “On Pre-election Campaigning”, but it is still being delayed. The draft law provides a procedure in accordance with which mass media shall ensure free campaigning of candidates to election, place campaigning materials in the media during the pre-election period, and – a particularly essential provision for the Bureau – includes a list of indicators of pre-election agitation and provides for the monitoring.

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