

Commission and HR Set Out EU Action against Corruption



Thomas Wahl

News

As part of the anti-corruption package presented on 3 May 2023, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) outlined the risks of corruption to society, democracies, economy and individuals. In their [Joint Communication on the fight against corruption \(JOIN\(2023\) 12\)](#), they point out that even conservative estimates suggest that corruption costs the EU economy at least €120 billion per year. 69% of EU citizens believe that high-level corruption is not pursued sufficiently by national authorities and around half of businesses think it is unlikely that police or prosecutors will catch those engaged in corruption activities. The Communication stresses that the EU is constantly committed to prevention, maintaining a culture of integrity and the active enforcement of anti-corruption legislation, including effective prosecution of corruption crimes. This approach is also reflected in the EU' external action on anti-corruption underpinned by support to the rule of law and public financial management of partner countries. The latter aspect is to be reinforced in the future, including the [HR's proposal](#) for establishing a dedicated CFSP sanctions regime to fight corruption when and where acts of corruption seriously affect or risk affecting the fundamental interests of the Union and the objectives of the CFSP as set out in Art. 21 TEU.

AUTHOR

Thomas Wahl

Senior Researcher
Max Planck Institute for the
Study of Crime, Security and
Law

ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://euclid.eu>



The Communication provides an overview of the EU anti-corruption framework and how anti-corruption can be further mainstreamed into EU policy design. Several workstreams are identified, which represent major EU commitments to further make efforts in the prevention of and fight against corruption. These include:

- Building a culture of transparency and integrity;
- Preventive policies to address corruption risks;
- Detecting corruption;
- Cracking down on corruption.

Furthermore, the Communication outlines how the EU supports the fight against corruption in the EU Member States and within the EU institutions. It reflects on the "whole-of-society" approach, where close and regular coordination with all relevant public authorities, multilateral organisations, civil society, media and the private sector is deemed essential. The last section of the Communication is dedicated to anti-corruption in the EU's external policies. Next to the aforementioned use of CFSP sanctions to target corruption, details are explained on anti-corruption in the EU's enlargement and neighbourhood policies, the promotion of anti-corruption reforms in the EU's external action and trade relations, and the support of anti-corruption work in multilateral fora.

One of the most important future steps is the extension and deepening of the EU network against corruption. The network will be designed as a catalyst for corruption prevention efforts across the EU. It will be tasked to

develop best practices and practical guidance in various areas of common interest. In addition, it is to support a more systematic gathering of data and evidence that can serve as a solid basis for anti-corruption actions and for monitoring the success of these actions. The network is also invited to map common high-risk areas of corruption by 2024.

The Joint Communication is not yet a new, comprehensive EU strategy against corruption. However, the Communication and the work of the EU network against corruption will feed into this strategy. According to the Communication, the EU strategy against corruption "needs to be developed on a strong foundation of consensus and broad consultation, in particular with the European Parliament and Member States."

About eucrim

eucrim is the leading journal which regularly informs about current developments in European criminal and "criministrative" law.

All news items are freely accessible at: <https://eucrim.eu/news/>

Stay informed by emailing to eucrim-subscribe@csl.mpg.de to receive alerts for new releases of issues.

The project is co-financed by the Union Anti-Fraud Programme (UAFP), managed by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).



**Co-funded by
the European Union**