

GRECO: 2019 General Activity Report



András Csúri

News

On 3 June 2020, GRECO published its twentieth [general activity report](#). GRECO President *Marin Mrčela* stressed that public office holders are expected to set an example in complying with anti-corruption measures and transparency standards. As no person, state, or institution is immune from corruption, the President urges the Member States not to wait for the next major scandal before implementing reforms, but to proactively implement GRECO's recommendations instead. The President also emphasised that the rapid-reaction mechanism under the new Rule 34 (concerning the ad-hoc evaluation procedure) is working well and has enabled GRECO to intervene in a timely and effective manner wherever necessary (see [euCRIM 1/2020](#), p. 32).

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In relation to political financing, – an issue that was evaluated under the third evaluation round of GRECO, – *Mrčela* recalls that most Member States have put in place a legal and regulatory system that provides for some form of transparency in this area. That said, new challenges are also arising, the development of which needs a follow-up in the future. These include the (mis)use of new technologies in order to escape transparency requirements or providing political support through fake political advertising online, as well as unregulated foreign funding.

The annual report reviews the measures taken to prevent corruption in GRECO's Member States in 2019 in respect of parliamentarians, judges and prosecutors, as well as in central governments – including top executive functions – and law enforcement agencies.

Accordingly, in 2019, compliance with GRECO recommendations under the fourth evaluation round increased slightly as 35 % of recommendations had been fully implemented by the end of the year. The recommendations with the lowest level of compliance continued to be those issued in respect of MPs (26 %), whilst it was higher in respect of judges (36 %) and prosecutors (47 %). Therefore, the President calls politicians to step up their compliance with integrity standards. The report underlines that since the [fourth evaluation round](#) began in 2012, nearly half of GRECO's Member States have carried out constitutional reforms following its recommendations, while 150 concrete legislative, regulatory or institutional reforms were carried out to implement GRECO recommendations.

18 countries had been evaluated by the end of 2019 in relation to the prevention of corruption in governments and law enforcement agencies. GRECO often found shortcomings insofar as countries dealt with lobbying, conflicts of interest, and “revolving doors” in central governments, including the need to extend anti-corruption measures to advisers. GRECO's recommendations on law enforcement agencies referred mostly to codes of conduct, promotion and dismissal, conflicts of interest, post-employment restrictions, and the protection of whistle-blowers (see also [euCRIM 1/2019](#), pp. 43-45; [3/2019](#), pp. 182-184; [4/2019](#), pp. 249-251; [1/2020](#), pp. 30-32).[AC1]

At the end of 2019, Armenia, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Monaco, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Turkey were subject to GRECO's fourth-round non-compliance procedure, and Belarus was the only country in the non-compliance procedure under the joint first, second and third round (as reported in [eucrim 1/2019](#), pp. 44-45).

GRECO recognises the need for further support to its members. Therefore, it decided to take on a new advisory role in 2019, coinciding with its 20th anniversary. In response to requests by one or more Member States or by a Council of Europe body, GRECO is now able to discuss and adopt expertise reports compiling lessons learned and good practices focusing on particular areas or topics covered by a prior GRECO evaluation. Depending on budgetary availability, GRECO could adopt one or two such expertise reports every year.

The annual activity report contains a feature article on the imminent European Public Prosecutor's Office by *Laura Kövesi*, the first Chief European Public Prosecutor. It also highlights that GRECO reports are now available for search on the European Union Fundamental Rights Information System (EFRIS).

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