

GRECO: 2020 General Activity Report



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News

On 3 June 2021, GRECO published its [21st general activity report](#) for the year 2020. The report finds that governments must rigorously manage the corruption risks that have arisen from the extraordinary measures needed to combat the COVID-19 epidemic, including the large influx of money into the economy to mitigate the economic and social impact of the epidemic. The report also features an article by the EU Commissioner for Justice *Didier Reynders*.

GRECO stresses that governments have had to introduce emergency measures for more than a year; they have led to concentration of powers and derogations from fundamental rights. This also entails certain risks of corruption, particularly in public procurement systems, in terms of conflicts of interest and lobbying, which should not be underestimated. In his introduction to the report, GRECO President *Marin Mrčela* stresses that the creation of special institutions or the adoption of new laws alone will not improve the fight against corruption, but their effective implementation will. He also calls on states to follow closely the [guidelines](#) issued by GRECO in 2020 (→ [euclid 2/2020, 116-117](#)) to prevent corruption risks in the context of the pandemic. The fight against corruption and the independence of the judiciary are interlinked and equally important, underlining that in some CoE Member States there are attempts by other branches of power to attack, intimidate or subjugate the judiciary.

The pandemic has undeniably had an impact on GRECO's work, as it was not possible to carry out any on-site visits in 2020. Nevertheless, the body adopted six evaluation reports. The annual report reviews the measures taken to prevent corruption in GRECO Member States in 2020 in the 4th evaluation round, which covers parliamentarians, judges and prosecutors, and in the 5th evaluation round, which focuses on central governments, including the highest executive functions, and law enforcement agencies. Regarding GRECO Member States' implementation efforts, the report stated that, by the end of 2020, States had fully implemented almost 40% of its recommendations to prevent corruption in respect of MPs, judges and prosecutors. The recommendations with the lowest compliance were those issued in respect of MPs (only 30% fully implemented), followed by judges (41%) and prosecutors (47%). Regarding the 5th evaluation round specifically, GRECO importantly agreed to apply a slightly different compliance procedure, which will give Member States time for in-depth reforms. The report also calls to mind that, in 2020, Kazakhstan became the 50th member state to join GRECO, with the EU now participating as an observer.

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