

GRECO: Fifth Round Evaluation Report on Iceland

András Csúri

News

On 12 April 2018, GRECO published its fifth round evaluation report on Iceland. Corruption was in the centre of recent controversies in Iceland, especially after the financial crisis in 2008 and following the resignation of two successive governments and other senior government officials.

GRECO states that the Icelandic society's increasing intolerance towards such misconduct is well reflected in these resignations, but this should not remain the sole response to serious misbehaviour. The government established an anti-corruption steering group in 2014, but no strategic action or overarching policy was elaborated to promote integrity in state institutions. Therefore, GRECO calls for more robust conduct of rules concerning gifts, other benefits, and contacts to third parties seeking to influence government work. Additional measures should be taken concerning revolving doors and parallel activities. The system for periodic declaration of assets should be strengthened, taking into account the risk that assets may be deliberately registered under someone else's name.

The Police and Icelandic Coast Guard are the most trusted public institutions in the country. That said, the report recommends increasing overall resources of the police and reviewing the current organisation, which places all district commissioners under the direct authority of the respective Minister. The report also finds that the widespread system of renewable five-year contracts generates additional risks of political pressure and that filling of vacancies should, as a rule, be based on open competition and objective criteria. With regard to law enforcement officers, Iceland should introduce also more robust rules of conduct regarding gifts, conflicts of interest, and political activities.

AUTHOR

András Csúri

Vienna University of Economics and Business

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