

GRECO: Fifth-Round Evaluation Report on Latvia



András Csúri

News

On 21 August 2018, GRECO published its [fifth-round evaluation report on Latvia](#). The country has a fluctuating position – between less favorable and more favorable – in corruption perception surveys. Many of Latvia’s institutions forming the national integrity system suffered drastic budgetary cuts because of the 2009-2010 financial crisis. Parts of the population are still affected by the precarious economic environment, multiple employment has become commonplace, and a certain tolerance of corruption has developed. That said, a decrease in corruption perception has been registered since 2012.

The report assesses Latvia’s integrity and corruption prevention framework, which is applicable to persons who are entrusted with top executive functions (PTEFs) and to law enforcement agencies, as being comprehensive. This includes Guidelines for the Prevention and Combatting of Corruption, the Law on Prevention of Conflicts of Interest in Activities of Public Officials, and the Criminal Code (for a summary, see the [press release](#)). There are, however, still shortcomings to address.

The report recommends strengthening the integrity of PTEFs through regular integrity risk assessments; by elaborating codes of conduct for Cabinet members, other political officials in the Offices of the Prime Minister, and unpaid advisors in central government; and by introducing an obligation to report conflicts of interest as they arise.

GRECO calls for all political officials to obtain permission when exercising ancillary activities and to stop the practice of engaging “advisory officials” in the central government, who may give orders to civil servants without proper authorisation

As regards transparency, information on those attending meetings of the Cabinet of Ministers and State Secretaries is not fully open to the public. The legal requirements on publication of the outcome of public participation procedures are not systematic and enforce in a timely manner.

From the perspective of accountability, GRECO recommends legislative amendments to ensure systematic and independent scrutiny of the accuracy of asset declarations and to ensure that they are publicly accessible online as provided for by law.

With regard to law enforcement agencies, the report focuses on the State Police (SP) and the State Border Guard (SBG) and praises the commitment to integrity and corruption prevention values. Both services have adopted codes of ethics and established ethics committees. However, objective and transparent criteria to assess compliance with the codes still need to be developed. The report recommends allocating more resources to both services, *inter alia* adopting and implementing whistleblowing protection mechanisms.

AUTHOR

András Csúri

Vienna University of Economics
and Business

ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://euclid.eu>



Lastly, the report states that both services could further enhance transparency by means of specific legal provisions on public advertisement of vacant posts.

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 (UAFB), managed by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).



**Co-funded by
the European Union**