

# GRECO: Fifth Round Evaluation Report on Ireland



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## News

On 16 February 2023 GRECO published its [fifth round evaluation report on Ireland](#). The country joined GRECO in 1999 and has implemented 75% of the recommendations of the first evaluation round, 85% of the second evaluation round, and 70% of the third evaluation round. Following the fourth evaluation round, only 45% of the recommendations were fully implemented, 20% partly implemented, and 35% not at all yet. According to the report, some aspects of the recommendations that remain to be addressed concern members of parliament and are also problematic for persons with top executive functions (PTEFs).

The perceived level of corruption in the country is low and stable. According to the Corruption Perception Index published by Transparency International, Ireland ranked 13th out of 180 countries in 2021.

The Standards in Public Office Commission (Standards Commission) is an independent body that plays a central role in the promotion of integrity standards and the prevention of conflicts of interest in respect of a wide range of public officials, including ministers, the Attorney General, special advisers, and senior civil servants. The Standards Commission has published guidance in several relevant areas such as conflicts of interest, gifts, and lobbying after leaving government. Due to the unique position of this body, GRECO calls for reinforced resources and powers to supervise the implementation of integrity standards.

The report states that, although there are a number of prevention policy documents, they lack the necessary focus on the specific exposure of PTEFs to corruption. It underlines that any risk assessment and subsequent policy should pay particular attention to PTEFs, that integrity checks should be carried out before they join government, and that systematic briefings and/or training on integrity should be organised after their appointments.

There are already integrity standards in legislation and guidance on them, but the report calls for codes of conduct geared towards PTEFs, covering relevant topics such as conflicts of interest, secondary activities, gifts, and post-employment restrictions. There should be more transparency when it comes to contacts with lobbyists and third parties, including regular, publicly available meeting reports by the PTEFs themselves.

Regarding the Irish police service (*An Garda Síochána*), the report calls for the already existing code of ethics to be supplemented to cover all relevant integrity topics – illustrated by real-life examples – , in particular conflicts of interest, gifts, contacts with third parties, secondary activities, and confidential information. The Garda information technology systems need to be further strengthened to better monitor integrity breaches by Garda members, and regular checks on authorized secondary activities are necessary to prevent the occurrence of conflicts of interest over time.

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