

GRECO: The Link between Environmental Crimes and Corruption

News

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On 8 December 2023, in the run-up to the annual International Anti-Corruption Day, GRECO President *Marin Mrčela* issued a [statement](#) in which he highlighted the links between environmental crimes (e.g., illegal forestry, illegal fishery, illegal wildlife trade, illegal mining, illegal dumping, and illegal transport of hazardous waste) and corrupt practices. Such practices target high-ranking public officials, politicians, and members of law enforcement. They include bribery and undue influence in order to gain financial benefits from environmental wrongdoings.

As these crimes cause irreparable damage to natural resources, every citizen's right to a healthy environment, and the rights of future generations, *Mrčela* called on all states to ensure transparency in the relevant decision-making and law-making processes. His concern is directed at the circum-spect use of environmental resources, issuing permits and concessions, certification and enforcement, and environmental inspections. He also emphasized that GRECO's recommendations to its member states are also fully applicable to environment-related corruption, including the adequate regulation of lobbying and public procurement, the protection of whistleblowers, and the effective implementation of the recommendations.

Mrčela also pointed out that corruption prevention measures are an essential part of the "green transition" in view of the large amounts of money being invested in European Green Deal policy initiatives. Ensuring the transparency of the legislative process helps prevent abuse. The convention on the protection of the environment through criminal law, which is currently being prepared by the Council of Europe, will also allow states to better protect their environmental resources.

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