

Empowering EU against State Capture through a New Monitoring Tool: SCEMAPS - State Capture Estimation and Monitoring of Anticorruption Policies at the Sectoral Level

SCEMAPS held an experts' online discussion

On the 26 March 2020, the developments of the SceMaps project have been discussed at the **“Online Discussion Meeting: State Capture Diagnostics and Monitoring for Improving the Rule of Law in the EU”**. Experts from several EU Member States shared their experiences and discussed on employment of new approaches to monitor corruption and state capture phenomena, based on big-data analytics, media monitoring, expert-opinion and investigative journalism.

Some of the conclusions included:

- Numerous organizations across Europe developed novel analytical and monitoring tools for assessing state capture and corruption risks. However, public institutions responsible for the fight against corruption and financial frauds have been slow in adopting these tools, on both national and EU level. The same applies for the implementation of open data and interoperability standards in important public IT systems, such as public procurement, integrity registers, etc.
- Journalistic investigations concerning domestic or international cases of suspected grand corruption and large misuse of public money very rarely have come under the scrutiny of law enforcement authorities.
- The EU needs to further develop its capabilities to work together with the relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations, researchers and investigative journalists. The EU also needs to speed up the accommodation of novel approaches and data-driven monitoring tools into the design and implementation of its policies.

Major details on the meeting, including video recording, is available on the SceMaps website, [here](#).

Update on the projects' achievements and next steps

The implementation of the State Capture Assessment Diagnostics (SCAD) methodology is continuing in the four countries object of analysis: Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Spain.

The partners are also preparing to launch the second SceMaps tool – the Monitoring Anticorruption Policy Implementation (MACPI) – at two public institutions, regulating the free competition or the analysed sectors in each of the four countries.

NEWS ON CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Regional news

The current corona-virus emergency is putting serious pressure on the health-care systems worldwide. Some newspapers in Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Spain argue that the situation is even worse because of the **alleged corruption that for years has affected politics and hospitals in these countries** ([Aljazeera, 18 March 2020](#); [Il Fatto Quotidiano, 30 March 2020](#); [Emerging Europe, 4 April 2020](#); [El Nacional.Cat, 9 April 2020](#)).



BULGARIA

- **Sofia City Court can proceed with confiscation case against the former chair of Corporate Commercial Bank** ([Sofia Globe, 19 March 2020](#))

The European Court of Justice validated the forfeiture of the property of Tsvetan Vassilev, a former chair of the supervisory board of the Corporate Commercial Bank. He is accused of having participated in the misappropriation of the bank's funds (approximately €105 million).

- **Uncovered large scale investments fraud ([Eurojust, 7 April 2020](#))**

Four people involved in a criminal network were arrested in Sofia following Europol and Eurojust investigations in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany and Serbia. They are suspected of having offered fictitious investments in commercial financial products on online trading platforms.



- **Fraudulent public contracts for the supply of protective equipment ([ANSA, 3 April 2020](#); [OCCRP, 4 April 2020](#))**

A suspected fraudulent contract worth €64 million was concluded as part of a public procurement to meet the urgent needs of hospitals of protective equipment in the context of the COVID-19 spread. Two of the men involved are already known to have falsified documents to obtain state contracts in the past.

- **Coronavirus and corruption for cleaning and sanitation public contracts ([Il Sole 24 Ore, 18 March 2020](#))**

The Finance Guard, within the "Linda" operation, arrested one public official of the Nichelino municipality (Turin) and one employee of a cleaning enterprise accused of corruptive relations regarding tenders for cleaning and sanitation activities during the coronavirus emergency.



- **Former Romanian health minister arrested with the charge of bribery ([Romania Insider, 2 March 2020](#))**

The former minister of health in the Social Democrat (PSD) cabinet was arrested with the charge of receiving €35,000 from a private company as part of a procurement contract signed in 2019.



- **Coronavirus places Spain's Royal Family and some alleged corrupted finances in the public opinion's sights ([New York Times, 20 March 2020](#); [Forbes, 21 March 2020](#))**

Spaniards in lockdown are asking Spain's former King Juan Carlos to donate the millions of dollars he is accused to have received in bribes from the former King of Saudi Arabia to the hospitals struck by the health-emergency.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES

- **The Bulgarian Anti-corruption Fund issued the handbook "Prevention of Conflicts of Interest and Abuse of Public Procurements" ([Bulgarian Anti-corruption Fund, 11 March 2020](#))**

The Bulgarian Anti-corruption Fund issued a handbook on prevention of conflicts of interest and abuse of public procurements. It includes key definitions, practical examples and available IT and legal solutions.

- **The Italian Anti-Corruption Authority published the results of its first cognitive survey on the administrative transparency ([ANAC, February 2020](#)).**

The survey has been administered to transparency managers and independent assessment bodies in 20 project will contribute to the simplification and standardisation of the current legislative framework and eventually propose new interventions to the legislator in the future.

- **Growing risks of corruption in health systems ([Transparency international, 18 March 2020](#))**

Transparency International warns of growing risks of corruption in the health systems during the current health crisis situation. Governments are called upon to promote the open and transparent contracts during the procurement of drugs and medical equipment.

- **Delay in implementing the EU's 5th Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Directive** ([The Guardian, 22 March 2020](#))

EU's 5th Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Directive gave a period of two years for the publication of the beneficial owners of firms registered in the Member States' jurisdictions, in order to combat corruption and money laundering in the aftermath of the Panama papers scandal. Currently, however, only six Member States comply with the directive, whereas the other (including Italy, Spain and Romania) either did not create the registers or impose artificial hurdles to limit public access.

- **Few anti-bribery enforcement and investigations of transnational bribery cases** ([Emerging Europe, 27 March 2020](#))

In most of the Central and Eastern European countries the implemented investigations or enforcement actions for tackling large-scale cases involving the bribery of foreign officials seems to be few, despite the high risk in this region. The corrupt soviet past is one of the explanations put forward by Trace International.

EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS BY SCEMAPS MEMBERS:

- **Civio won the first major battle for transparency in Spain** ([CIVIO, 5 March 2020](#))

After five years of judicial struggle, Civio won its fight for transparency and access to information. Citizens can now ask public administrations for access to all the information they have produced, without any time limit - even before 2014 when the Transparency Law was not in force.

Project members:



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