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Best Anti-Corruption Practices and Approaches in Europe

An E-Publication by EPAC/EACN



This E-Publication by EPAC/EACN „Best Anti-Corruption Practices and Approaches in Europe“ is based on joint efforts of the EPAC/EACN members. The Project working group collected information about the best practices and approaches to tackle corruption and fraud over all Europe, which was provided by participants in the reports and presentations. This information was systemized and formed a basis for preparation of this e-publication, which contain the best and most relevant examples of anti-corruption practices under all 6 topics that have been presented throughout the project.

The project was funded by the European Union and implemented with the aim of ensuring the dissemination of best practices and promoting international cooperation in the fight against corruption throughout Europe.

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@ European Partners against Corruption (EPAC) and European contact-point network against corruption (EACN), 2025

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Foreword

Corruption erodes trust, weakens democracy, hampers economic development and further exacerbates inequality, poverty, social division and the environmental crisis. It also acts as a drag on economic growth, by creating business uncertainty, slowing processes, and imposing additional costs. Although the nature and scope of corruption may differ from one EU State to another, it harms the EU as a whole by lowering investment levels, hampering the fair operation of the Internal Market and reducing public finances.

Corruption is also affecting EU financial interests as often bribery and abuse of office schemes are used as an instrument in fraudulent activities in misappropriating or misusing EU funds. Corrupt environment may also be an enabler of fraud and abuse as institutions or mechanisms created to protect public funds simply fail. Therefore, targeting corruption is equally important in protecting EU financial interests as combating fraud.

There are significant divergences in anti-corruption framework across European countries and even within EU Member States. Anti-corruption authorities differ from each other in terms of their appointment, independence, set-up, functions, and competences. Not all authorities or even countries have institutions that would cover fully the classical anti-corruption system that is based on these pillars – investigation, prevention and education. Moreover, there are no harmonised EU legal rules how effective anti-corruption framework should be set up (e.g. in comparison to anti-money laundering framework).

The majority of institutions responsible for fighting corruption in Europe are members of the European Partners against Corruption (EPAC) and European contact-point network against corruption (EACN) - two oldest and biggest anti-corruption networks in Europe currently comprising of more than 100 anti-corruption and police oversight bodies from 38 European countries.

EPAC/EACN Board adopted its Work Programme for 2022-2023¹. It sets out the key activities that will help EPAC/EACN members/observers to learn from each other and act together to further preventing and combating corruption phenomena in Europe. The Work Programme is organised along three main thematic clusters. One of them is Transfer of knowledge – exchange of expertise and best practices shall be further strengthened to ensure independence, trust and professionalism of EPAC/EACN members for reducing corruption and delivering high-quality services to citizens and societies in their respective countries. It is planned to be achieved through series of dedicated conferences, webinars, study visits and joint training sessions for all EPAC/EACN members, as well as other interested parties.

For more than twenty years, EPAC/EACN serves as a platform for practitioners to exchange expertise and information in the sphere of anti-corruption and police oversight, assist each other and cooperate across national borders, both on a practical and professional level.

The fight against corruption is an ongoing challenge that requires collective effort, collaboration, and the sharing of best practices among European anti-corruption and police oversight institutions.

Recognizing this, the EPAC/EACN Task Force for Developing and Implementing Project Activities successfully applied for the EU grant agreement, funding study visits for best practice exchanges in fighting corruption and fraud. The Special Investigation Service (STT) of the Republic of Lithuania has taken the lead in implementing and partly funding this EPAC/EACN best anti-corruption practice exchange project (BACPE), fostering international cooperation among EPAC/EACN members.

The aim of this project is to assist EPAC/EACN members – European national anti-corruption authorities in sharing their best practices and expertise in the field of fighting corruption and related phenomena, including fraud affecting EU financial interests. This will create a chain of best practice dissemination and each participant will not only share, but also extend and improve their own knowledge in combating corruption and fraud.

This e-publication serves as a comprehensive collection of the best and most relevant anti-corruption practices shared and exchanged during the project. It highlights key strategies, methodologies, and approaches developed across six essential topics discussed during study visits and conferences throughout 2023 and 2024.

¹https://www.epac-eacn.org/fileadmin/Documents/EPAC-EACN_Work_Programme_2022-2023_-_adopted.pdf



The BACPE Project

One of the main priorities that was included in the EPAC/EACN Work Programme 2022-2023 was to offer attractive and convenient forms for transfer of knowledge and experience. Therefore in April, 2023 the EPAC/EACN Task force for Developing and Implementing Project Activities signed EU grant agreement for funding study visits for best practice exchange in fighting corruption and fraud.

The aim of this project was to assist EPAC/EACN members – European national anticorruption authorities and police oversight bodies – in sharing their best practices and expertise in the field of fighting corruption and related phenomena, including fraud affecting EU financial interests. Therefore the project create a chain of best practice dissemination and each participant not only share, but also extend and improve their own knowledge in combating corruption and fraud.

The two year project consisted of two components:

- 1) Series of thematic study visits between national anti-corruption authorities;
- 2) Two conferences for EPAC/EACN members and other willing participants.

The Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania, acting as the Secretariat of EPAC/EACN, was responsible for implementing the BACPE activities. The target group were EPAC/EACN members – national anti-corruption and police oversight authorities in 38 European countries.

All anti-corruption institutions and police oversight authorities in Europe need to cooperate and share information and best

practices. Best way to do this is through bilateral study visits and conferences.

The thematic study visits between national anti-corruption authorities were be divided into two parts:

- The first one started on 8th May, 2023 with 3 topics: Whistle-blower protection, Asset recovery, Corruption risk assessment and management.
- The second part was implemented in 2024-2025 with 3 more topics: Anti-Corruption awareness raising, Criminal investigation of corruption and fraud and Big Data analysis.

For each topic EPAC/EACN members had to nominate 3 employees with not less than 5 years of experience in the selected topic and to indicate an EPAC/EACN member which will be visited.

Because of the significant participation from EPAC/EACN members, the BACPE deadline has been extended to accommodate the increased volume of submissions and requests.

Over the past two years, this initiative has facilitated:

- **49** study visits across Europe
- **145** experts from **25** countries exchanging best practices

Phase 1: Lithuania was the most active participant, with Italy as the most frequently visited country. The key focus – Whistle-blower protection.

Phase 2: Ukraine took the lead in participation, with most visits taking place in Lithuania and Italy, while the discussions centered around anti-corruption awareness.

The project also included international conferences in Dublin and Bucharest, bringing together experts to share insights on transparency, legislative challenges, and effective anti-corruption strategies.

In addition to the study visits, two international conferences were organised in Dublin and Bucharest, bringing together experts to share insights and experiences in the field of anti-corruption. These conferences showcased the latest tools and methodologies for enhancing transparency in both the public and private sectors, addressed legislative

challenges, and explored effective anti-corruption strategies.

The project was funded by the European Union and implemented with the aim of ensuring the dissemination of best practices and promoting international cooperation in the fight against corruption throughout Europe.



The main objectives of the project:

- learning about the latest advancements in tackling fraud and, in particular, corruption affecting
- EU financial interests;
- strengthening professional skills of employees of institutions fighting corruption and fraud;
- developing new ways to fight corruption and fraud;
- creating long-term partnership between institutions in common goal to fight corruption;
- ensuring speedier and more efficient detection, investigation and prevention of fraud and corruption schemes at national and international levels;
- better understanding of Union's and national mechanisms, in particular, related to combating fraud and corruption affecting EU financial interests.

The objectives of the project will be achieved by:

- sharing best practices in fighting corruption by organising study visits in different countries on 6 different topics;
- organising 2 conferences to share information on latest developments and best practices;
- distribution of project results in an official publication to ensure dissemination of best anticorruption practice after the project ends.



Short-term impact:

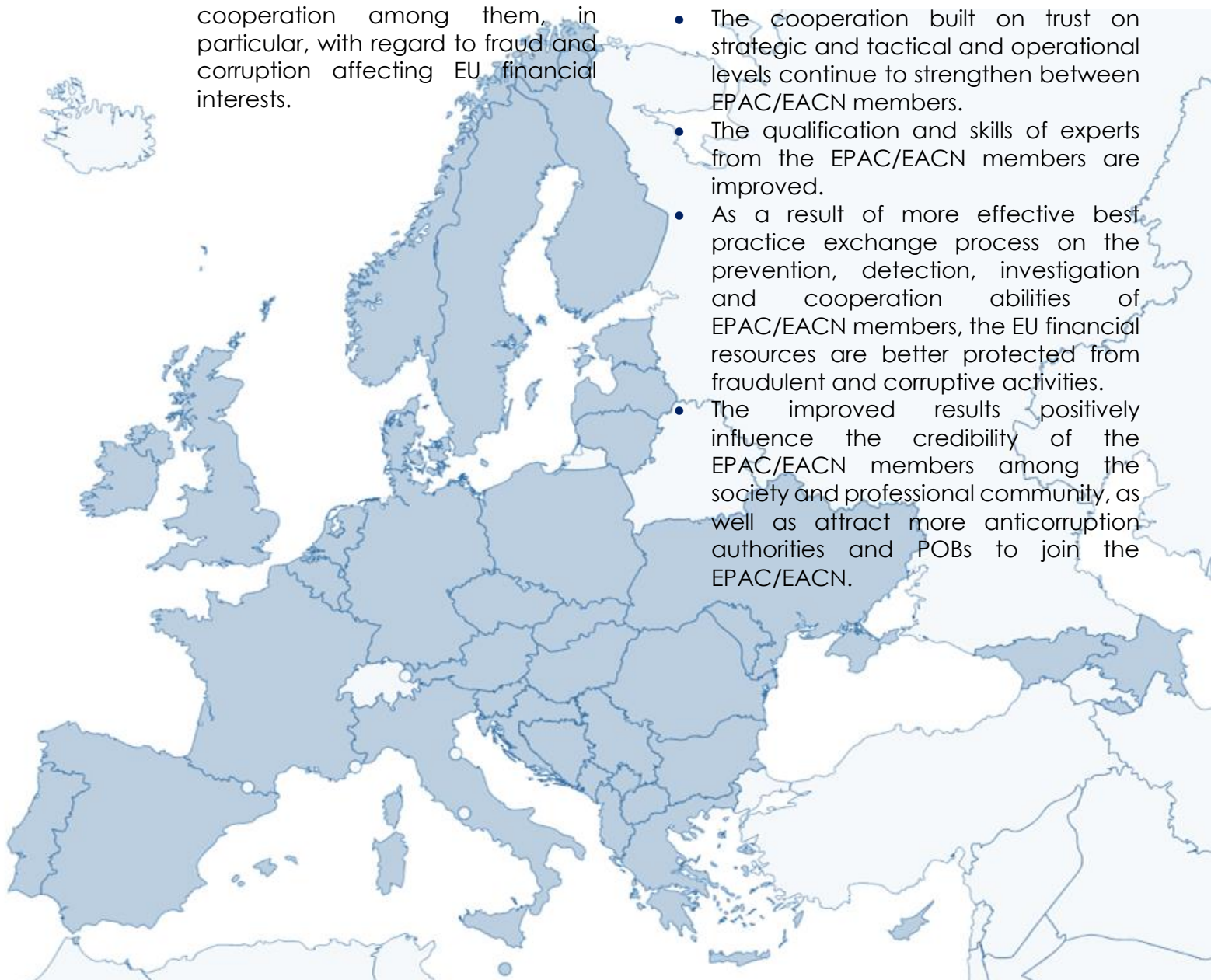
- Experts and officials of the EPAC/EACN members have a better understanding of the newest practices on fighting corruption and fraud, newest measures and mechanisms to prevent such crimes.
- EPAC/EACN members have a better understanding of each other's roles and functions, capabilities and priorities with regard to tackling fraud and corruption, in particular, affecting EU financial interests.
- Experts and officials of the EPAC/EACN build and/or maintain their professional ties with their national and regional counterparts, which contribute to better trust, swifter and more successful cooperation among them, in particular, with regard to fraud and corruption affecting EU financial interests.

Medium-term impact:

- Presentations under selected topics and sharing of the best anti-corruption practices provided a material for academics to further explore and develop these topics through an academic lens.
- Potential fraud and corruption risks are better targeted as a result of the better sharing of best practices on fighting corruption and fraud.
- Sharing best practices in the fight against corruption and fraud improve the effectiveness of investigations and prevention, which significantly help to avoid losses to national and EU budgets.

Long-term impact:

- The cooperation built on trust on strategic and tactical and operational levels continue to strengthen between EPAC/EACN members.
- The qualification and skills of experts from the EPAC/EACN members are improved.
- As a result of more effective best practice exchange process on the prevention, detection, investigation and cooperation abilities of EPAC/EACN members, the EU financial resources are better protected from fraudulent and corruptive activities.
- The improved results positively influence the credibility of the EPAC/EACN members among the society and professional community, as well as attract more anticorruption authorities and POBs to join the EPAC/EACN.



Best Practices by Topic

Whistle-blower Protection

Whistle-blowers are vital for maintaining an open and transparent society, as they expose misconduct or hidden threats as corruption and fraud. Furthermore, the protection of the financial interests of the EU, which is related to the fight against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activity affecting EU expenditure, the collection of EU revenues and funds or EU assets, is a core area in which enforcement of EU law needs to be strengthened.

For that purpose, the importance of providing effective whistle-blower

protection is increasingly acknowledged by the EU Directive 2019/1937 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law, which came into force on 16 December 2019. Nevertheless, methods and practices to encourage and protect whistle-blowers among EU countries differ and competent authorities responsible for whistle-blower protection have developed their own approaches on this matter, which could be relevant and useful for others.

Key Practices

- Anonymous, secure reporting channels
- Legal protection aligned with EU Directive 2019/1937
- Independent institutions dedicated to whistle-blower cases
- Awareness campaigns to encourage reporting

Throughout the first year of project's implementation, the whistle-blower protection consistently ranked among the most prevalent and engaging topics. Several prominent anti-corruption and oversight institutions from across Europe have shared their best practices and expertise in this field.

These include the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption of the Republic of Slovenia, the Dutch Whistle-blowers Authority, the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo, the Agency for the Prevention and Fight Against Fraud and Corruption of the Valencian Community, Italy's Autorità Nazionale Anticorruzione (ANAC), the

Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania (STT), the National Anti-Corruption Centre of Moldova (CNA), the Ministry of Justice of Romania, the Andalusian Anti Fraud Office (OAAF), the International Cooperation Unit of the General Directorate of Internal Protection at the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Polish Central Anticorruption Bureau (CBA).

Together, these institutions have exchanged knowledge and best practices to enhance anti-corruption efforts and strengthen integrity frameworks across their respective regions.

Best Practices Identified

The **Dutch Whistle-blowers Authority** presented a comprehensive approach that not only ensures secure reporting, but also includes protective measures, legal aid, psychological support, and preventive actions. The integration of international cooperation provides a broader perspective and best practices from multiple countries. The Dutch Whistle-blowers Authority ensure confidential treatment of all information regarding advice seekers and their identity.

Inspiring examples:

- **Establishment of Safe and Effective Reporting Channels.** Internal and external reporting mechanisms that ensure the security and confidentiality of whistle-blowers. Best practices in communication and interaction with whistle-blowers to build trust.
- **Protection Measures for Whistle-blowers.** Administrative measures to protect the identity of whistle-blowers. Use of specialized software that ensures anonymity. Persons who first contact the Dutch Whistleblowers Authority about reporting a suspected wrongdoing, can choose to do so anonymously. An intake interview that follows a request for advice can still take place anonymously. To provide follow-up advice one will have to make oneself known to the Dutch Whistleblowers Authority, but it will always be treated confidentially.
- **Protection against Retaliation.** Provision of legal aid and judicial protection. Psychological support services to help whistle-blowers cope with the stress of reporting.
- **Prevention and Awareness-Raising.** Activities aimed at improving workplace integrity and fostering a culture of ethical behaviour. Organization of workshops and training sessions for various stakeholders.
- **International Cooperation.** Participation in the **NEIWA network**, a European-wide cooperation on whistle-blower protection. Gathering and sharing statistical data with the European Commission. Collaboration with international organizations focused on whistle-blower issues.

Asset Recovery

Asset recovery is one of the key elements of the fight against corruption, fraud and money laundering. It makes crime less lucrative, deprives criminals of "seed money" and provides resources to social reuse or compensate victims. PIF Directive requires that EU Member States shall ensure freezing and confiscation of instrumentalities and proceeds from the criminal offences under this Directive, as well as the prompt recovery of sums and their transfer to the Union budget.

Sharing practices and cooperation between law enforcement agencies involved in the asset recovery process is critical, especially in cases of investigation and repatriation of confiscated assets to the country of origin where multiple EU jurisdictions are involved. Establishing EU-level sharing of practices and information exchange ensure better financial return of assets from corruption and fraud offence to the states and the Union.

Key Practices

- Financial intelligence units to trace illicit proceeds
- Cross-border cooperation and information exchange
- Legislation enabling swift asset confiscation and restitution
- Specialized asset management agencies

Through the BACPE project, law-enforcement institutions were able to explore new and innovative ways of recovering illicit assets. This project fostered stronger international collaboration, tackling the complex issues of asset recovery more effectively.

Furthermore, law-enforcement institutions addressed modern challenges relevant to countries' efforts to effectively recover illicit assets. Such challenges include those related to the seizure and confiscation of virtual currencies such as Bitcoins, and the need to extend the forensic financial analysis capacity of agencies involved in the detection of illicit assets.

The institutions' willingness to share their expertise is greatly appreciated: the Anti-Corruption Directorate with the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Estonian Corruption Crimes Bureau of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo, the Federal Judicial Police Directorate, Serious and Organized Crime, Central Office for the Fight Against Corruption of Belgium, the Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania (STT), the Policia Judiciária of Portugal, the National Anticorruption Centre of the Republic of Moldova (CNA), the National Agency on Corruption Prevention of Ukraine (NACP) and the Guardia Civil, Criminal Investigation Division of Spain.

Best Practices Identified

The **Polícia Judiciária of Portugal** incorporates an effective, fast and coordinated approach to asset recovery. **Polícia Judiciária's** successfully cooperates with other institution's criminal investigation units in carrying out support functions, providing them with assistance in analysing financial transactions, investigating assets and providing various data for the criminal investigation file.

Inspiring examples

- **Institutional Integration in Asset Recovery**

Effective asset recovery requires seamless integration between tax authorities, financial intelligence units and law enforcement agencies. By granting investigators access to comprehensive databases and financial records, illicit assets can be identified and confiscated more efficiently. Portugal's approach serves as a model that can be adapted in other countries through enhanced inter-agency cooperation, real-time access to financial and asset data, and the use of advanced technological tools for financial investigations.

- **Inter-Agency Collaboration and Financial Intelligence**

Portugal's Asset Recovery Unit exemplifies institutional cooperation by incorporating experts from the Portuguese Tax Office and the Institute of Registers and Notaries. This collaboration facilitates swift access to crucial financial and asset-related data, minimizing delays in tracing and confiscation efforts. Additionally, direct support from financial experts within criminal investigation units strengthens the analysis of financial transactions, improves asset tracing, and enhances evidence collection.

- **Technology and Data Utilization in Asset Tracing**

The use of specialized tools and direct access to financial and property databases significantly enhance investigators' ability to trace illicit assets. By merging financial intelligence with criminal investigations, authorities can adopt a more data-driven and efficient asset recovery strategy. The incorporation of technology not only expedites asset identification, but also ensures greater accuracy and coordination across agencies.

Corruption Risk Assessment and Management

Respect for the rule of law remains a fundamental precondition for the proper usage and management of EU funds. Corruption risk assessment and management helps to identify and address specific institutional structures, systems and processes, which may be more vulnerable to corruption. Many different approaches exist with various elements for corruption risk assessment and management, which are applied in

different countries, and there is no one-size-fits-all methodology. Learning new methods and practices by various anticorruption institutions help to increase effectiveness of risks controls and the development of cost-effective approaches, including determining fraud risks and comparing control strategies. That help EPAC/EACN countries to become more resistant to corruption and fraud.

Key Practices

- Regular risk assessments in government agencies
- Sector-specific mitigation plans
- Transparent public procurement systems
- Digital solutions for monitoring financial transactions

As part of the BACPE project, several leading anti-corruption institutions shared their expertise and best practices in corruption risk assessment and management.

Participants included the Romanian Ministry of Justice, the Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC), the Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania (STT), the French Anticorruption Agency (AFA), the Agency for Prevention of Corruption of Montenegro, the Estonian

Police and Border Guard Board, the Hellenic Police Internal Affairs Agency of Law Enforcement Bodies, the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau of the Republic of Latvia, the Internal Security Directorate of the Ministry of Interior of Bulgaria, the Department for Public Security of the Central Directorate of the Criminal Police of Italy, the Commission for Anti-Corruption and Illegal Assets Forfeiture (CACIAF) of Bulgaria, and the General Directorate of Internal Protection of Romania.



Best Practices Identified

The **Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC)** approach is viewed as a standard in data-driven, structured and institutionalized corruption risk assessment and management, making it the among the best practice identified in the reports. A key best practice identified from the exchange was the first phase of corruption risk assessment, focusing on external context analysis and process mapping, integrating cultural and socio-economic factors improve risk prevention strategies. Moreover, process mapping offers practical insights and a clearer understanding of an entity's operations.

Inspiring examples

- **The Italian ANAC Approach to Corruption Risk Management**

The ANAC has established a structured and data-driven approach to corruption risk assessment. Its methodology, based on context analysis, process mapping, risk assessment and prevention, provides a systematic framework that is both adaptable and effective. By integrating real-time public procurement data, ANAC enhances transparency and mitigates the risk of contract manipulation. Additionally, its territorial approach ensures that corruption risk measurement is localized and data-driven, allowing for tailored anti-corruption strategies

- **Key Components of the ANAC Model**

ANAC's approach follows a two-phase corruption risk monitoring system. The first phase involves context analysis and process mapping to assess institutional vulnerabilities and identify corruption-prone areas. The second phase focuses on risk management by evaluating risks based on probability and impact, implementing preventive measures such as staff rotation and control mechanisms and establishing monitoring indicators to assess effectiveness. Additionally, the National Database of Public Contracts (BNDCP) plays a crucial role in this framework by consolidating public procurement data, ensuring transparency, and allowing authorities to monitor corruption risks. The system's interoperability with financial, tax, and corporate registries further enhances real-time monitoring capabilities.

- **Territorial Corruption Risk Measurement and Adaptability**

ANAC's corruption risk assessment extends beyond national oversight by incorporating a territorial dimension. Supported by the European Commission, this initiative develops region-specific corruption risk indicators based on detailed statistical data, allowing authorities to refine their anti-corruption strategies based on localized insights. By periodically updating data, this approach ensures continuous improvement in corruption prevention measures. The ANAC model can be effectively adapted in other countries by implementing a national-level corruption risk assessment framework, creating centralized and interoperable databases and developing region-specific indicators to tailor anti-corruption efforts. Its structured and data-driven methodology positions it as a gold standard in institutionalized corruption risk management.

Anti-Corruption Awareness Raising

Anti-corruption awareness is essential to curb corruption and restore a strong trustworthy relationship between citizens and the state, based on democratic principles and the rule of law. The active and numerous involvements of citizens in strengthening the anti-corruption environment can lead to greater success in effectively reducing the corruption and other relevant illegal activities affecting EU's financial interests.

The goal of anti-corruption awareness is strengthening anti-corruption attitudes of

citizens and widespread intolerance of corruption, as well as to enhance reporting about the breaches, such as related to the usage and management of EU funds.

It has been observed, however, that public and private sector institutions and the public are learning more actively and voluntarily in cooperation with institutions, organisations or citizens of a similar nature (level) who have successfully strengthened the anti-corruption and are clearly seeing positive results.

Key Practices

- School and university programs
- Media campaigns emphasizing corruption's negative impacts
- Partnerships with civil society for broader outreach
- Open government initiatives to foster transparency

During the implementation of the BACPE project, the topic of Anti-Corruption Awareness Raising emerged as the most popular, with a total of 14 visits conducted. Various institutions actively participated in these visits, demonstrating a strong commitment to strengthening anti-corruption measures across Europe.

The participating institutions included the Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations, and Professional Standards in the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Internal Security Directorate of Bulgaria, the Immunity Board of Lithuania Police, the General Inspectorate of the French Police (IGPN), the Ministry of Justice of Romania, the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption of Slovenia, the Oficina Andaluza contra el Fraude y la Corrupción

of Spain, the Austria Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAK), the Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania, the Immunity Board of Lithuania Police, the Greece Internal Affairs Agency of Law Enforcement Bodies, the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo, the Czech National Centre against Organized Crime (NCOZ), the Department for Internal Control, Criminal Investigations, and Professional Standards in the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption of Slovenia, the Agency for Prevention of Corruption of Montenegro, the Agency for Prevention of Corruption (APC) of Kosovo, the Portugal MENAC, the National Agency on Corruption Prevention (Ukraine), the Italian ANAC, the French AFA, the Spanish Sevilla Oficina Andaluza Antifraude (OAAF).

Best Practices Identified

According to reports from participants involved in exchange visits, the most effective approach to raising awareness about anti-corruption originates from **Austrian Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAK)**, where a set of best practices was identified that significantly contribute to fostering integrity and transparency in society.

Inspiring examples

- **Implementation of educational training programs for high school students**

These programs employ interactive learning methods, such as symbolic games and role-playing exercises, to illustrate ethical dilemmas and real-world integrity challenges. By engaging students in these activities, they develop an early understanding of corruption-related issues, encouraging a culture of ethical behavior from a young age. Complementing this initiative, Austria's **"Train the Trainers" program for teachers** ensures that educators receive specialized training in anti-corruption topics. By equipping teachers with the necessary tools to integrate integrity education into their teaching, this program establishes a long-term framework for fostering ethical awareness among students.

- **Network of Integrity Officers (NIO)**

NIO is aimed at providing ongoing training and capacity-building opportunities for civil servants and employees of state-related companies. This initiative enhances professional development through peer-to-peer learning and national cooperation, reinforcing ethical standards.

- **Comprehensive and multi-faceted strategy**

The strategy integrates education for youth, professional training for educators, capacity-building for public officials and the exchange of knowledge in the field of research. By utilizing interactive teaching methods, such as role-playing, the model ensures that corruption awareness is engaging and impactful. Furthermore, the development of a structured network for integrity officers guarantees the sustainability of training initiatives within public institutions.

Criminal Investigation of Corruption and Fraud

Criminal investigation is one of the main pillars fighting corruption and fraud in particular affecting EU financial interests. Regardless of robust corruption prevention and awareness-raising, corruption related crimes are unavoidable. Different anti-corruption agencies around Europe have adopted different approaches, methods and strategies in the way they manage

enforcement and investigation work, which can be valuable for others to use and refine their system and likewise. Understanding of different investigation approaches and strategies can further enhance the basis for interinstitutional co-operation and assistance, especially in the fight against corruption and fraud affecting EU financial interests.

Key Practices

- Specialized prosecution units
- Inter-agency and international collaboration
- Digital forensic tools for evidence gathering
- Witness protection for high-risk cases

During the implementation of the second year of the BACPE project, the topic of Criminal Investigation of Corruption and Fraud emerged as the most frequently selected subject for the institutional visits.

The following institutions played a key role in these discussions:

- National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU)
- Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania
- Romanian National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA)
- National Center for Combating Organized Crime (NCOZ), Czech Republic
- Italian Central Directorate of Criminal Police
- State Bureau of Investigation, Ukraine
- National Police Board, Finland.

The high level of engagement in this topic demonstrates a shared commitment among European and international institutions to enhance the effectiveness of criminal investigations related to corruption and fraud. These discussions have contributed significantly to strengthening cross-border cooperation and developing more robust strategies to combat corruption.

Best Practices Identified

The **Special Investigation Service (STT)** of the Republic of Lithuania has adopted a data-driven and technology-enhanced approach to combat corruption and fraud. By integrating modern technological tools with traditional investigative methods, the STT has established a best-practice model for preventing and prosecuting corruption-related crimes.

Inspiring examples

- A key component of STT's strategy is the combination of **artificial intelligence (AI), open-source intelligence (OSINT) and data analytics** to improve investigative outcomes. The use of AI-driven tools significantly enhances investigators' ability to detect fraudulent schemes, while geospatial and financial data analysis provide evidence-based insights that strengthen case development.
- One of the most effective strategies employed by the STT is the **advanced use of data analytics in criminal investigations**. Geospatial analysis, for example, has been instrumental in detecting anomalies in road reconstruction projects, potentially uncovering fraudulent activities. Additionally, financial data visualization tools, such as **Tableau**, enable the identification of irregular transactions within bank statements and procurement records. The integration of OSINT tools, including ARACHNE and Maltego, has further enhanced the ability to track hidden assets and investigate financial crimes.
- The STT is also exploring and currently implementing the **use of artificial intelligence and various automation tools to streamline investigations**. AI-powered systems are being evaluated for their potential to assist in analyzing large datasets related to public procurement, with the aim of more rapidly identifying potential red flags. Automated analytical tools further enhance corruption detection by identifying recurring patterns, thereby reducing manual workloads and improving investigative accuracy.
- Moreover, the STT has implemented a **structured vetting process for civil servants to mitigate corruption risks within government institutions**. This process involves multi-layered risk assessments to ensure that individuals with potential integrity concerns do not enter public service.

Big Data Analysis

As more and more governments digitalise their operations and public services, there is an increased demand to develop anti-corruption tools based on big data analysis. The EPAC/EACN members will strengthen analytical capacities through the acquisition of new skills, knowledge of specialised methodologies and techniques, as well as through provision and sharing of best examples and best practices on advanced data analytics for the purposes of detecting and preventing

fraud and corruption risks, in particular, affecting EU financial interests. To ensure sustainability of best practice sharing in usage of Big Data analysis, this topic will be, to some extent, a continuation of the Project No. 878557 ACBDA "Strengthening law-enforcement analytical capacity in Big Data Analysis to prevent and detect fraud and corruption affecting EU financial interests" under OLAF Hercule III programme.

Key Practices

- AI-driven tools to spot unusual transactions
- Blockchain for transparent public contracting
- Centralized databases for corruption-related intelligence
- Data-sharing agreements among EU anti-corruption bodies

As the BACPE project has successfully entered its second year of implementation, fostering international cooperation in the fight against corruption, as part of this initiative, leading European anti-corruption and law enforcement institutions have shared their expertise and best practices under the topic of Big Data Analysis, exploring innovative ways to enhance the detection and prevention of corruption-related offenses.

The Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board (Central Criminal Police, Corruption Crime Bureau), the Agency for the Prevention and Fight against Fraud and Corruption of Spain, the Chief Official Ethics Commission (COEC) of

Lithuania, the Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC), the Slovenian Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, and the General Directorate of Internal Protection within the Romanian Ministry of Internal Affairs, collaborated to exchange knowledge and methodologies in leveraging Big Data for corruption risk assessment, fraud detection, and policy development.

Through this cooperation, institutions have strengthened their analytical capabilities, utilizing advanced data-driven approaches to enhance transparency and integrity in the public sector. The BACPE project continues to play a crucial role in uniting European anti-corruption efforts and fostering the use of cutting-edge technologies in tackling corruption.

Best Practices Identified

The State Office of Criminal Investigation in North-Rhine-Westphalia (LKA NRW) has established an advanced, technology-driven approach to analysing Big Data in corruption investigations. This model stands out as a best practice due to its structured data collection, sophisticated analytics and inter-agency collaboration.

Inspiring examples

- **Comprehensive and Standardized Data Collection**

To ensure consistency across different district police authorities the LKA NRW uses uniform data collection forms for reporting corruption cases. LKA officers maintain direct contact with case officers and access general police databases, allowing them to gather supplementary intelligence for ongoing investigations.

- **Advanced Data Management and Processing**

Corruption-related data is stored within specialized software environments before being transferred to analytical systems that generate the annual Situational Report on Corruption NRW. Simultaneously the Data is sent to the centralized database which is overseen and analysed by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA), facilitating seamless cooperation and datasharing across Germany.

- **Big Data-supported evaluation of financial crime**

The State Office of Criminal Investigation (LKA NRW) uses a software provided by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) to compile statistics on the provisional confiscation of assets by the financial investigators of the state. The data collected in the application is statistically evaluated and used to present a situational overview. The data will then be analysed and can provide indications of criminal trends and focal points. The complete and quality-assured recording can be used to track the development of the asset recovery by various authorities over the years. Analysis is possible based on the individual offense, the type of assets, and the legal norm.

Conclusion

The EPAC/EACN project has been instrumental in uniting European anti-corruption and police oversight institutions to share cutting-edge strategies, enhance collaboration and build trust across borders. By focusing on six practical and forward-looking topics — Whistle-blower Protection, Asset Recovery, Corruption Risk Assessment and Management, Anti-Corruption Awareness Raising, Criminal Investigation, and Big Data Analysis — participants collectively strengthen their capacity to safeguard public finances and uphold the integrity of democratic institutions.

As this project reached its end, the lessons and methods exchanged will remain readily accessible through conferences, study visits, and e-publications.

We encourage all stakeholders — governments, agencies, civil society, and citizens — to use these best practices, fostering a more transparent and resilient environment that benefits every European country and the European Union as a whole.



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