

TI-AC PRESS RELEASE
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Exchange meeting between TI-AC, the Vice Chancellor of Austria and the Minister of Justice regarding a new transparency package

Vienna, 29.06.2020: Transparency International - Austrian Chapter took part in an exchange meeting today, with the Minister of Justice Dr.in Alma Zadić LL.M., and Vice Chancellor Mag. Werner Kogler, regarding a new transparency package, as well as an improvement of the law for political parties. TI-AC was represented by Prof. Eva Geiblinger, Chair of the Board, Mag. Georg Krakow, Member of the Board and the Vice President of the Advisory Board DDr. Hubert Sickinger.

“We welcome the fact that the federal government is now seriously addressing the issues of transparency and freedom of information. After a long time and extensive efforts, the demands of TI-AC were taken into account. Aspects for which TI-AC has been fighting for years will be reflected in the transparency package. “, says Prof. Eva Geiblinger.

The core elements of the new legislative package include the ban on mandate purchases and the expansion of the audit competences of the Court of Auditors:

- Corruption will therefore also be punishable if candidates for official positions make the corresponding commitments, even though he / she has not yet held the political function. The criminal law is also to be expanded to the effect that the mandate purchase is prohibited both for prospective mandataries and for the party accepting the benefit.
- In order to limit circumvention possibilities, the regulations for party financing in the law for political parties is to be expanded in the interest of transparency and the fight against corruption. The Court of Auditors should be authorized to check parties for compliance with the law for political parties.
- The law enforcement agencies responsible for combating corruption should be preserved and strengthened.
- The **International Anti-Corruption Academy**, as Austria's international figurehead in corruption prevention, has to be supported.
- The **Freedom of Information** Act must provide information for the public in a short period of time, 14 days are sufficient.

- The **lobbying law** needs to be revised and aggravated. A cooling-off period has to be implemented.

This is the first big step in the right direction. Mag. Georg Krakow particularly points out that "the exception in the penal code, to donate money to a charitable institution in order to obtain an official act, should be deleted."

"The (direct) audit right of the Court of Auditors for the finances of political parties is essential to eliminate weaknesses in the law for political parties. This specifically applies to the control of the accountability reports and if there are reasonable grounds to suspect violations.", says DDr. Sickinger.

Link for the TI-AC position paper : <https://www.ti-austria.at/was-wir-tun/forderungspapiere/>

Contact:

Luca Mak LL.M.

Executive Director

Tel.: +43 (0)1 960 760

E-Mail: office@ti-austria.at