**Slovenian Commission for the Prevention of Corruption calls for establishment of an anti-corruption body at the level of the EU**

The Commission for the Prevention of Corruption of the Republic of Slovenia (CPC) calls for the establishment of an independent, comprehensive anti-corruption body with the mandate to investigate suspicions of corruption and breaches of integrity in the institutions and bodies of the European Union (EU), including the European Parliament and the European Commission, and to promote the transparency and integrity of their operations. The great concentration of decision-making power held by the said institutions and bodies engenders higher risks of corruption and breaches of integrity; thus, an efficient and independent oversight of potential violations of this nature is required.

The CPC acknowledges and welcomes EU's endeavours in this area, such as the establishment of the Advisory Committee on the Conduct of Members of the European Parliament and the Independent Ethical Committee of the European Commission. However, the CPC considers that in their present form, the said bodies are unable to effectively address the violations on the ground that upon its detection, a violation is not subject to automatic assessment, and any further steps to be taken depend on the supervisors' discretion, and the transparency of any procedure is not sufficiently ensured.

Being that integrity and transparency are the pillars of the functioning of the EU, and hence also of all its institutions and bodies, it seems appropriate to establish an autonomous independent body to oversee their implementation. Oversight bodies operating individually within each institution or body do not represent a comprehensive solution as doubts regarding their motivation for considering such conduct, and the independence and objectivity of their assessment of suspected violations, may arise. The CPC proposes that their endeavours be complemented by a central independent body.

The proposed EU anti-corruption body is envisaged to perform a complementary role to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). OLAF focuses on combatting fraud, corruption, and other illegal conduct harming the financial interests of the EU, and on investigating serious breaches of obligations within EU institutions and bodies. An EU anti-corruption body would therefore perform both a preventive role as well as hold the competence to investigate violations which do not necessarily constitute a criminal offence, but which must be addressed in order to preserve the integrity and reputation of the EU institutions and bodies. In doing that, the integrity and reputation of the EU as an organisation would be duly strengthened, as well.

The need for the introduction of oversight of the efficiency of the EU integrity framework has been recognised also by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) of the Council of Europe. In discussions with the EU regarding its potential membership in GRECO, GRECO stressed the importance that the EU, analogous to the GRECO member states, should submit itself to periodical oversight so as to enable assessment of the compliance of the EU representatives' conduct with the ethical norms of the EU. The establishment of an anti-corruption body at the level of the EU would therefore represent a clear step in this direction, but would, in addition to the potential periodical oversight of individual areas of EU's functioning by GRECO, make possible a constant, uninterrupted and comprehensive oversight of the transparency and the strengthening of integrity within the EU.