

On the basis of the first and second paragraphs of Article 51 of the Integrity and Prevention of Corruption Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 69/11 – official consolidated text, 158/20, 3/22 – ZDeb and 16/23 – ZZPri), and Article 109 of the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 92/07 – official consolidated text, 105/10, 80/13, 38/17, 46/20, 105/21 – decision of the Constitutional Court, 111/21, 58/23 and 35/24), the National Assembly, at its session of 28 March 2025, adopted the

RESOLUTION ON THE PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA (REPKRS-1)

(unofficial translation- translated with artificial intelligence)

I. INTRODUCTION

Zero tolerance of corruption as a fundamental principle of social development

In 2004, the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the first *Resolution on the Prevention of Corruption in the Republic of Slovenia* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 85/04; hereinafter: RePKRS 2004). This represented an important systemic step in the fight against corruption, providing a strategic framework and defining the necessary measures. Based on action plans, many of the measures set out in RePKRS 2004 were implemented, and numerous recommendations of the Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe (GRECO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the European Commission were taken into account.

With the adoption of the *Integrity and Prevention of Corruption Act* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 69/11 – official consolidated text, 158/20, 3/22 – ZDeb and 16/23 – ZZPri; hereinafter: ZIntPK) in 2010, new and more comprehensive legal bases were established for the fight against and prevention of corruption (e.g. reporting lobbying contacts, asset disclosure, avoidance of conflicts of interest, and restrictions on business transactions), as well as systemic solutions in other sectoral regulations (e.g. strengthening transparency in the use of public funds under public procurement rules). Nevertheless, it has been established that in certain areas the legal bases remain incomplete or do not achieve the desired results in practice. It is also necessary to raise awareness of the harmfulness of corruption, to prevent it, and to prosecute corruption offences.

Corruption as a social phenomenon undermines the rule of law, erodes trust in state institutions, reduces political stability, threatens social peace and integrity, and hampers economic development by restricting free competition and reducing the effective allocation of resources. It enables the unjustified predominance of private interests over the public interest, causing not only economic but also social harm. Only an effective rule of law that ensures legal certainty and predictability in resolving social relations, and is based on zero tolerance of corruption, can provide its citizens with security and stability. Zero tolerance of corruption is in the interest of all residents, and must also be reflected in the legal order through appropriate regulation, adequate powers of law enforcement authorities, and effective preventive mechanisms.

Integrity, transparency and accountability – society's immune system against corruption

A systemic framework for combating corruption exists in the Republic of Slovenia, but its effective implementation depends on all stakeholders who carry it out and thereby influence the functioning of the rule of law. Zero tolerance of corruption must be established at the level of society as a whole, as a social consensus and a value to which all stakeholders can and must contribute. Both in Slovenia and elsewhere in Europe, increasing importance is attached to strengthening the integrity and transparency of all actors, including those in the public and private sectors as well as in civil society.

According to ZIntPK, corruption is defined as *any violation of the duty of conduct of officials and responsible persons in the public or private sector, as well as the conduct of persons who instigate violations or who may benefit from them, due to a directly or indirectly promised, offered or given – or demanded, accepted or expected – benefit for themselves or for another*. Legislation can define corruption but cannot fully describe the harmful social consequences it causes. Corruption is not only about someone unjustifiably obtaining private gain, but also about the cumulative negative impact when individual cases grow into systemic corruption. In such an environment, the public interest ceases to exist, as corrupt systems abuse public assets and power to such an extent that society no longer realises its development potential – ultimately harming everyone, including those who (seemingly) benefit. Corruption is thus a set of unlawful, harmful and reprehensible behaviours.

Many of these behaviours constitute corruption-related criminal offences, usually characterised by the giving and taking of bribes, the unlawful giving and acceptance of gifts, the acceptance of benefits and gifts for unlawful intermediation, and the violation of voters' free will. Corruption-related offences also more broadly include the criminal offence of abuse of official position or official rights, and to some extent the offence of abuse of position or trust in business activity. In addition to these offences, there are also behaviours commonly referred to as broader corruption acts, which may not be criminal but are nevertheless unacceptable or unlawful.

The prevention of corruption in the broadest sense is the foundation of the fight against corruption

In addition to the direct prosecution of corruption-related criminal offences, prevention of corruption in the broadest sense is crucial for an effective fight against corruption. In this context, alongside integrity and transparency, other instruments defined in legislation aimed at building integrity and preventing corruption also play an important role. These are considered systemic mechanisms for preventing corruption, while breaches in these areas represent corruption risks.

For the purposes of this Resolution, the concept of corruption therefore also encompasses corruption risks and breaches in the areas of integrity, conflicts of interest, non-compliance with restrictions on accepting gifts, restrictions on business transactions, incompatibility of functions, lobbying rules, obligations to submit asset declarations, failure to include an anti-corruption clause in contracts, and failure to obtain ownership declarations from contractual partners. Slovenian legislation also provides other instruments to strengthen integrity and transparency (e.g. access to public information), which contribute significantly to the prevention of corruption.

Integrity as the key to trust in institutions and individuals

In addition to defining corruption, ZIntPK also defines integrity and regulates measures and methods for strengthening it. Integrity is defined as *the expected conduct and responsibility of individuals and organisations in preventing and eliminating risks that power, functions, authority or other decision-making competence could be used contrary to the law, legally permissible objectives and ethical codes*.

Integrity – the opposite of corruption – means wholeness, consistency, authenticity, honesty and credibility. A person of integrity is one who says what they mean and does what they say, in line with moral norms and applicable law. Legislation also provides for proceedings in cases of breaches of integrity, thereby equating many expected behaviours with duties to act, including those laid down in ethical codes and other internal documents. Strengthening integrity is therefore one of the fundamental tools for preventing corruption. An effective fight against corruption requires the cooperation of both the state and society, both the public and private sectors, which means that strengthening the integrity of all stakeholders is essential.

Integrity in society is ensured through leadership by example

Individuals with integrity create a society with integrity. Therefore, both the state and individuals must act in accordance with the ethical norms set out in codes of ethics and with the law. Integrity among people is fostered through example – employees act as their leaders act. If leadership acts with integrity and develops an ethical culture within an organisation, employees will follow suit. If this occurs at the highest levels of society, in politics, the effect is felt throughout society. Leading by example, fostering an ethical culture and acting with integrity are the foundations for developing zero tolerance of corruption and for effective management of corruption risks.

Effective tackling of corruption requires the cooperation of the entire society

The effective fight against corruption is not the task of a single institution; it requires deeply internalised awareness of the importance of each stakeholder's role and an active approach to detecting and preventing corruption. Achieving the objectives of this Resolution requires the cooperation of all three branches of power in the Republic of Slovenia (legislative, executive and judicial), of all institutions and of every individual in the public and private sectors, civil society, the media and society at large.

When everyone is aware of their role and the importance of their conduct in establishing and maintaining zero tolerance of corruption, this goal can be achieved. From the perspective of oversight and sanctioning of corruption, it is essential that sanctions are appropriate, thus providing a clear signal of general prevention. Decision-makers (in supervisory, disciplinary and other proceedings) set a standard and send a message with their choice of sanction that even the intention of corruption is harmful to society.

If each stakeholder accepts and performs their role and powers in the chain of ensuring zero tolerance of corruption, this is established through the interconnected influence among

stakeholders. Preventive institutions, often disparagingly labelled as “toothless”, also have an important place and role in this, as do supervisory and law enforcement authorities.

Integrity as a standard of Slovenian society

Reported cases of breaches show that violations and circumventions in the field of corruption still occur, and consequently integrity in the Republic of Slovenia is not yet present to the extent required for a successful state and society. In practice, integrity is still too often perceived as an added value, even though it was established as a standard as early as 2010 with ZIntPK. For this reason, it is necessary to regularly incorporate further preventive systemic safeguards into the legal framework to limit corruption risks and prevent the spread of corruption at all levels of society.

When RePKRS 2004 was adopted, the *Prevention of Corruption Act* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 2/04, 97/05 – CC decision, 20/06 – ZNOJF-1 and 33/07 – CC decision) was in force, later replaced by ZIntPK in 2010. The new legal basis was one of the reasons for revising RePKRS 2004. Articles 51–55 of ZIntPK regulate the basic procedural and substantive aspects of the Resolution. According to ZIntPK, this is a strategic document focused on preventive objectives, with specific measures set out in a separate Action Plan for its implementation. The Resolution must aim at realistic, gradual and well-considered objectives for eliminating corruption, establishing transparency and strengthening integrity in the public sector.

In terms of content, the Resolution is also linked to other strategic documents of the Republic of Slovenia, such as the resolution regulating the national programme for the prevention and suppression of crime, forming a unified whole together with them.

At the national level, RePKRS 2004 comprehensively addressed both strategic orientations and important concrete measures for the fight against corruption, which were also implemented through the Action Plan. It dealt with seven areas then considered strategic for an effective fight against corruption: politics, public administration, bodies for detection, prosecution and adjudication, the economy, NGOs, the media and the general public. In each of these areas, the orientations for the fight against corruption were translated into legislative, institutional and practical measures.

Since its adoption, RePKRS 2004 has not been amended and mostly no longer reflects the challenges posed by social developments. Most of its measures have been implemented, while some have become obsolete, which led to the decision to comprehensively amend or revise it and to adopt it on the basis of the new legal framework now provided by ZIntPK. Of the 172 measures contained in RePKRS 2004, 91 have been implemented (53%), 50 remain at least partly relevant (29%), and 31 have become obsolete (18%) due to changing circumstances in the functioning of the state and society.

The implemented measures were mostly translated into changes in legal frameworks (e.g. adoption of the Access to Public Information Act, ZIntPK, the Whistleblower Protection Act, amendments or adoption of regulations in the fields of public procurement, tax procedures, concessions, management of state assets, systemic laws on the functioning of courts, prosecution services and the police) and changes in the structure and functioning of individual institutions. In some of these areas, further changes are necessary due to developments, and these are covered by the revised Resolution, with measures specified more precisely in the Action Plan.

The revised Resolution thus deepens the anti-corruption strategy by including individual areas of state and local self-government activities in the public sector, while also maintaining the areas of the economy, NGOs and the general public, as contained in RePKRS 2004.

Many stakeholders from various fields in the public and private sectors, civil society, the media and the public participated in the drafting of the Resolution. Given its broad scope, the document should be understood as a living text that reflects the current social reality and will be updated as necessary in response to risks identified in practice.

II. ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RESOLUTION

General provisions

The Resolution is a national strategic act that contains the general objectives the Republic of Slovenia seeks to achieve in the fight against corruption. The concrete measures on how to achieve these objectives, and the specific risks to which the measures apply, are addressed in the Action Plan.

Gradual and long-term approach

Corruption is a system conditioned by the social, cultural and political characteristics of each individual state, including the Republic of Slovenia, and the elimination of such a system is not possible within a short period of time or all at once. Effective action is only possible by setting priorities and realistically planning their resolution over time. Understanding the sequence of causes and consequences, as well as gradualism, are absolute prerequisites for drawing up the Action Plan and for implementing the Resolution.

Respect for human rights and freedoms and strengthening of the rule of law

Measures for the prevention, detection and prosecution of corruption under this Resolution must take into account the public interest, strengthen the rule of law, and ensure respect for human rights and freedoms. Arbitrary action is not permitted. All measures must be implemented in accordance with the legal order, and all must be legitimate and lawful.

Strengthening transparency and integrity

Exclusively repressive responses to corruption merely eliminate harmful consequences in individual cases, while the causes, motives and circumstances that give rise to corruption remain untouched. The fundamental starting point of anti-corruption mechanisms is the use of preventive measures and methods that include establishing transparency and strengthening integrity, identifying causes and conditions for the emergence of corruption, and eliminating them. At the same time, repressive action remains a necessary corrective for sanctioning unlawful conduct.

Political will

Prevention, detection and prosecution of corruption are only possible with broad and clearly expressed political support. Planning and effectively implementing long-term changes is only possible with the broadest social consensus on the dangerous consequences of corruption, the advantages of an attitude and conduct based on integrity, and the importance of measures and methods for prosecuting and preventing corruption and strengthening integrity, without division between governing and opposition political parties.

Cooperation of all stakeholders from the public and private sectors and civil society in the implementation of the Resolution

Corruption is a social phenomenon. Corrupt acts cause harm to the public and private sectors, to civil society and to individual citizens, which requires the involvement of all of them in the preparation and implementation of national anti-corruption policy. Only through the cooperation of all stakeholders, and the synergistic effect of their combined efforts, can an effective fight against corruption be achieved. Limiting corruption solely within public sector institutions is insufficient for effective containment.

All stakeholders must act with the goal of ensuring zero tolerance for corruption, which cannot be imposed by the state but must develop within society and become part of the ethics of individuals who make up that society. Public sector institutions can only encourage the development of zero tolerance and strengthen the integrity of individuals, but the ultimate effect and success of these measures depend on each individual.

Monitoring the implementation of the Resolution

In accordance with ZIntPK, the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (hereinafter: CPC) monitors the implementation of the Resolution through the adoption and execution of the Action Plan as its implementing act. Among other things, this plan contains specific identified corruption risks in the broader sense, as well as risks of breaches of integrity, and measures for their mitigation.

Sustainability of the Resolution and its amendments

Every document reflects the time in which it is adopted, while corruption is a phenomenon that is not only permanent but also constantly changing in its manifestations. Complete eradication of corruption is impossible; only persistent and continuous prevention, detection and suppression of its ever-new manifestations is possible. This necessarily requires the sustainability of the Resolution and the adaptation of anti-corruption activities. The Resolution is therefore a permanent but living document, with most changes and adjustments to social reality being implemented through amendments to the Action Plan.

Action Plan

The Resolution is implemented through the measures set out in the Action Plan, which is developed in cooperation with other stakeholders. These measures include, inter alia, proposals or initiatives for changes to legal bases, awareness-raising activities (such as training and information campaigns), measures and methods for strengthening the integrity of individuals and organisations, measures and methods for establishing transparency in the functioning of the public sector, and the establishment of effective whistleblower protection, among others.

The Resolution itself does not contain concrete measures with timelines and the responsible organisations for their implementation. Such openness of the Resolution is of key importance for responding in practice to risks that cannot be fully foreseen in advance. The absence of measures in the text of the Resolution not only allows but also requires regular verification of the actual situation and identified risks, so that the content of the objectives is regularly updated. Risks will thus be addressed, as necessary, with new measures through amendments to the Action Plan.

Stakeholders are therefore not merely passive observers of the situation (the adopted text of the Resolution or the implementation of already defined measures), but always have the opportunity – and indeed the duty – to verify the actual situation and propose the development of new, more effective measures. In this way, stakeholders become regular co-creators of the Resolution and of the daily effort to strengthen integrity and prevent corruption.

III. ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION

The level of corruption is measured by various indicators that are based either on measuring the perception of corruption (surveys of the general or expert public), comparisons of annual statistics of detected corrupt acts, or on measuring indirect signs that affect the level of corruption (e.g., the effectiveness of the rule of law—the more present and effective the rule of law is in a country, the lower the level of corruption), the degree of media exposure, stakeholder analysis, international comparison of indices, court proceedings, and comparisons of annual statistical data. In the absence of more detailed analyses and research into the state of corruption in the Republic of Slovenia, these indicators are only a limited source of information.

On the basis of indicators and examined cases of corrupt conduct in the Republic of Slovenia, we observe different manifestations of corruption (e.g., systemic corruption, corruption in public procurement procedures). The extent of corruption in a given country is difficult to measure, as it is impossible to determine what proportion of corrupt acts are detected and dealt with. Disclosure most often occurs upon reports by third parties who learned of the act but were not involved in it, in cases of disagreements among perpetrators, or due to “penitents,” i.e., perpetrators who wish to confess the act. Certain conduct is, of course, also uncovered by supervisory and law enforcement authorities in their procedures.

III/1. Findings of the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption

As the lead authority, the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (KPK) implements the Integrity and Prevention of Corruption Act (ZIntPK), supervises compliance with its provisions, and strives to strengthen the functioning of the rule of law.

In the fight against corruption, KPK is only as successful and effective as the quality and clarity of the legal basis for its operation and the extent to which its decisions are respected by addressees

and by the broader public. In recent years, non-observance and disregard of KPK's final findings and its recommendations have negatively affected its effectiveness. Therefore, effectiveness can improve only when all addressees unconditionally respect its findings and recommendations.

Across society as a whole, there are areas or institutions that are particularly prone to pronounced corruption risks. The risks in these areas or institutions have been highlighted repeatedly in KPK's situation assessments and annual reports, and KPK has already issued a large number of recommendations regarding them. These are major clusters of systemic risks, listed below.

Public procurement

Public procurement is one of the areas exposed to pronounced corruption risks, as it often involves the expenditure of substantial public funds, which in itself creates conditions for the emergence of corruption.

At the systemic level, the public procurement system provides for a high degree of transparency and several procedural safeguards: notices of public procurement procedures and tender documentation must be available online free of charge to all interested bidders; the opening of bids is, as a rule, public; decisions on contract awards must also be publicly accessible; unsuccessful bidders are informed of non-selection and may request review of the procedure; concluded contracts and annexes are publicly accessible online; and so on.

KPK considers especially risky those procurements for which no precise statutory award procedure is prescribed and which fall under exceptions where the law governing public procurement does not apply. In these statutory exceptions, ensuring transparency and equal treatment of bidders—i.e., ensuring competition—is more difficult. Such cases include, for example, negotiated procedures without prior publication (including urgent procurements to ensure the basic conditions for survival or life, or to immediately prevent imminent damage in a natural or other disaster); procurements carried out under Article 346 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Consolidated version, OJ C No 202 of 7.6.2016, p. 47; hereinafter: TFEU); and procurements for the performance of intelligence and counter-intelligence activities; as well as procurements where the amount of funds does not exceed the threshold for the application of statutory procurement procedures (so-called “recorded”/registry procurements), with the threshold having been raised in 2021. These procedures are not rare and present a high risk of damage to public funds.

— Public procurement in healthcare

Corruption risks in public procurement are particularly pronounced in healthcare due to the sector's complexity, ramification, and weak transparency, coupled with the large volume of financial resources managed by healthcare. Public procurement in healthcare is especially exposed to conflicts of interest due to links between healthcare employees and suppliers. Safeguards concerning simultaneous performance of public service and private medical practice are also systemically under-regulated, which further increases corruption risks.

— Public procurement and management in infrastructure

Similarly pronounced corruption risks appear in major public investment projects in infrastructure supported by large financial resources. These projects pose significant risks of tailoring

procurement in favor of a particular bidder, illicit influence in the award process, cartel agreements among bidders, bribery and prohibited, unreported gifts, as well as abuses.

Appointments to the bodies of companies in which the state or a local community has a majority share or a controlling influence

In the management of public assets via state-owned and municipally owned companies, there are risks of political appointments of supervisory and management board members without appropriate professional competence. Such an approach affects the efficiency of managing these companies, reduces their value, and thus the scope of state assets.

Conflict of interest

Due to the small size of the country (colloquially “everyone knows everyone”), the Republic of Slovenia often faces the risk of conflicts of interest. These are circumstances in which the private interest of an official or a person appointed by a public-sector entity as an external member of a committee, council, working group, or comparable body affects, or creates the appearance of affecting, the impartial and objective performance of their public duties. In this respect, a proven conflict of interest is often only a step away from corruption.

A conflict of interest is not unlawful per se. Legislation regulates how to act when a conflict of interest may arise—namely, by recusing the official from the procedure in which a conflict of interest could occur. Despite long-standing regulation of the area and ongoing efforts to increase officials' awareness of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest, violations still occur in practice. The dispersion of conflict-of-interest rules across several sectoral laws also causes awareness problems and infringements.

KPK most often detects challenges in avoiding conflicts of interest in the appointment of management and supervisory boards of companies majority-owned by the state or local communities, where political or personal and family ties are frequent factors in decision-making instead of professional competence, which does not ensure optimal management of public assets. Conflicts of interest are also frequent in the appointment of school heads (principals), where the opinions of teachers' councils and a public institution's council are often heavily burdened by conflicts of interest.

Lobbying

The lobbying framework is established to strengthen the transparency and legality of the influence exerted by interest organisations on the decisions of public-sector decision-makers.

A lack of reporting on lobbying contacts remains a challenge, as media reports and notifications show that a part of lobbying contacts in Slovenia remains unreported. There are at least two main reasons for this. The first is poor understanding of the lobbying institute: many public-sector employees, despite numerous trainings, still do not know what constitutes lobbying and what their duties are regarding the reporting of lobbying contacts. The second reason is that these are contacts the parties involved do not wish to disclose publicly and which, aside from specific information provided by whistleblowers, are extremely difficult to prove. Here, the integrity of the

individual official comes to the fore. Reporting a lobbying contact in a situation where no one else knows about the specific contact and no one would find out about it is the expected and due conduct, and is thus entirely dependent on the integrity of the parties to the contact.

The current systemic regulation of lobbying does not allow for comprehensive substantive oversight of lobbying and allows bypasses for unlawful influence. One reason is the differing statutory reporting deadlines for lobbyists and for lobbied officials. Registered lobbyists and interest organisations must submit a report on lobbying contacts for the previous year (by the end of January for the preceding year), with interest organisations able to report contacts on a rolling basis, whereas lobbied officials must record a lobbying contact within eight days of the contact. With deadlines so far apart, real-time oversight is not feasible. A second reason is the immediate public disclosure of lobbied officials' records of lobbying contacts, which in itself undoubtedly ensures the desired maximum transparency of lobbying, but in combination with the above-mentioned differing reporting deadlines enables a bypass in lobbyists' reporting: they can fully adapt their reports to the already published record of the lobbied official they contacted.

Local self-government

In local self-government, pronounced risks have existed for years in appointing members to the bodies of companies in which a local community has a majority share or controlling influence, or in municipal employment (appointments not based on selecting the most professionally qualified persons, and conflicts of interest arise), in the field of lobbying (virtually non-existent reporting on lobbying contacts), and in restrictions on doing business.

In addition to KPK, other stakeholders warn of risks in the local environment. In 2016, Transparency International Slovenia also carried out a dedicated study,⁴ stressing that Slovenian municipalities adopt various rules and integrity plans but do not implement them in practice. Thus, the formal legal requirements of legislation, by-laws and guidelines are met, but the purpose is not achieved.

Consolidating transparency, integrity and responsibility remains a challenge for most Slovenian municipalities, where mayors have considerable power in allocating budget funds, especially those for which public procurement procedures are not required. Municipal councillors—particularly where the mayor's coalition holds a majority—usually merely confirm the mayor's decisions. Municipal audit committees, which are supposed to oversee the prudent use of municipal funds, are often staffed by people with insufficient expertise. External oversight is also deficient. Major risks also arise in the employment of staff within the municipal administration and in public procurement.

III/2. Findings of other institutions

Statistics of the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Slovenia regarding corruption offences handled

Corruption offences are generally harder to prove, as they are often based exclusively on interpersonal agreements among the direct perpetrators. Obtaining evidence is therefore not straightforward, and good cooperation among law-enforcement authorities is essential. In their annual reports, state prosecutor's offices cite anonymous reports, which make proving cases in

court more difficult; they point to statutes of limitations that were too short for cases whose handling began before the entry into force of the Act Amending the Criminal Code (KZ-1C) (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 54/2015), which extended limitation periods to 20 years; and they stress the complexity of proceedings dealing with corruption offences.

Data from the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Slovenia for 2022⁵ show a decrease in the number of criminal complaints for corruption offences compared to previous years. In 2022, state prosecutor's offices received 152 criminal complaints related to corruption offences, of which 67 concerned the acceptance or giving of unlawful gifts, 58 the acceptance or giving of bribes, and 26 the conferral of benefits or acceptance of gifts for unlawful intermediation. One complaint concerned a violation of the free will of voters. In 2022, ten convictions and one acquittal were issued in cases of corruption offences. Over the last ten years, the number of criminal complaints received for corruption offences was as follows:

Corruption offences—criminal complaints received (Supreme State Prosecutor's Office of the RS)

Year: **2022 / 2021 / 2020 / 2019 / 2018 / 2017 / 2016 / 2015 / 2014 / 2013**
Number of complaints: **152 / 365 / 121 / 222 / 229 / 170 / 197 / 148 / 159 / 161**

The Specialized State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Slovenia notes⁶ that, within corruption-related crime, systemic corruption is a major problem: it cripples the efficiency of the public sector, the market and competition, directly affects damage to the budget, and is associated with failure to manage conflicts of interest, a lack of acceptance of responsibility for one's own conduct, an over-regulated public procurement system, non-transparent lobbying, a lack of sensitivity to the damage to public funds, and excessive influence of politics and narrow interest groups on the management of state assets.

In 2022, the prosecution handled the most corruption cases in areas related to public procurement and public calls, with a special group of corrupt acts tied to the provision of healthcare services (e.g., procurement of materials, payment for healthcare services, supply of rapid antigen tests, ventilators, protective equipment, etc.). It also treats as priority cases those connected to the provision of banking services, where unlawful conduct is seen primarily in the form of abuses by bank employees and damage to banks through the granting of loans that are then not repaid (the loan as an unlawful pecuniary benefit), as well as corruption offences by bank employees in connection with external intermediaries who influenced decisions to grant loans and received bribes and unlawful rewards for that purpose. In recent years, the prosecution has also dealt with a large number of corruption offences in the area of traffic safety.

Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International)

Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is based on measuring perceived corruption in the public sector. According to the CPI, in 2022 the Republic of Slovenia scored **56 points** and ranked **41st**, its lowest ranking in the past ten years.⁷ The index is compiled by

aggregating data and analyses from international sources and surveys of both experts and business leaders. Results are shown on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

CPI—Slovenia	by	year
Year:	2022 / 2021 / 2020 / 2019 / 2018 / 2017 / 2016 / 2015 / 2014 / 2013 / 2012	
Score:	56 / 57 / 60 / 60 / 60 / 61 / 61 / 60 / 58 / 57 / 61	

CPI—best-ranked European countries in 2022

Denmark **90**; Finland **87**; Norway **84**; Sweden **83**; Switzerland **82**; Netherlands **80**; Germany **79**; Ireland **77**; Luxembourg **77**; Estonia **74**; Iceland **74**.

Eurobarometer

In April and May 2022, the European Commission carried out a Eurobarometer survey⁸ to review public opinion on the state of corruption in all 27 EU Member States. The results show that in 2022 Slovenia was one of three countries with the largest share of respondents who believe that the level of corruption in their country had increased over the previous three years (Slovenia **65%**, Cyprus **66%**, Croatia **67%**). In May 2023 the European Commission repeated the survey.⁹ The 2023 results show that in Slovenia the share of respondents who believe the level of corruption increased over the previous three years decreased to **54%** (down 11 percentage points compared to 2022), while the share of those who say the level of corruption remained the same increased by the same amount to **37%** (up 11 points from 2022). This indicates that respondents perceive a stabilization of conditions, but not a reduction in the level of corruption.

In the 2023 survey, **83%** of respondents in Slovenia believed that corruption is widespread (87% in 2022), while only **14%** believed it is not widespread (11% in 2022). For comparison: in Finland, **82%** of respondents believe corruption is **not** widespread, and **13%** believe it **is**. In Slovenia, most respondents believe that corruption (in the form of bribery and abuse of office) is most common among political parties (**64%**, 65% in 2022), politicians (**60%**, 67% in 2022), and officials awarding public contracts in public tenders (**50%**, 59% in 2022) and issuing building permits (**50%**, 52% in 2022).

Regarding the effectiveness of Slovenia's fight against corruption, the prevailing view among respondents was that the prosecution of corruption offences is not sufficiently successful to deter people from corruption. As many as **69%** think so (76% in 2022), while only **26%** (20% in 2022) believe prosecution in Slovenia is sufficiently successful. Similar views prevail in Greece (72% vs 25%), the Czech Republic (69% vs 23%), Bulgaria (61% vs 18%) and Spain (64% vs 28%). In the best-performing countries, a majority still agrees that the fight against corruption deters further corruption, but the ratio is closer to evenly split (e.g., in the Netherlands **51%** said prosecution is successful, **42%** unsuccessful).

The same holds for the prosecution of corruption cases involving high-profile individuals: **71%** of respondents (81% in 2022) agree that such prosecution is not sufficiently effective in Slovenia. Roughly the same shares hold in Italy and Bulgaria (72%) and in Slovakia and Latvia (68%).

At the EU level, as many as **15** countries saw a decline in the share of those who agree that anti-corruption measures are applied impartially. The Eurobarometer also detected such a decline in Slovenia—by **7 percentage points**. The total share of respondents who agree that anti-corruption measures are applied impartially is only **27%**.

In Slovenia, **16%** of respondents (23% in 2022) said they personally know someone who accepts bribes. Similar results were recorded in Hungary (16%), Bulgaria and Malta (17%), and Luxembourg (15%).

In Slovenia, **36%** of respondents (46% in 2022) believe that reporting corruption is pointless because the perpetrators would not be sanctioned. Similar views were recorded in Bulgaria (36%) and Latvia (35%). **47%** believe people do not report corruption because it is difficult to prove—similar to Hungary (46%) and Germany (48%). At the same time, Slovenia ranks among the top countries where the largest share of respondents (**62%**) said they know where to report corruption. Malta reported a similar result (**63%**).

Rule of Law Index: World Justice Project

The Rule of Law Index¹⁰ is a survey conducted among experts from various fields, civil society, other stakeholders, and the general public, based on 44 indicators. It is produced by the international civil society organisation World Justice Project.

On the index, the Republic of Slovenia, with a score of **0.68**, ranks **31st**, where 0 denotes the absence of the rule of law and 1 denotes effective rule of law. Similar values to Slovenia were achieved by Malta, Costa Rica, Cyprus and Italy (**0.67**), while slightly lower results were recorded by Chile, Barbados and Slovakia (all **0.66**).

Compared to previous years, Slovenia has recorded approximately the same result on the Rule of Law Index since 2015.

Rule	of		Law	Index		results,		2015–2022		(Slovenia)			
Year:	2015	/	2016	/	2017–2018	/	2019	/	2020	/	2021	/	2022
Index:	0.66 / 0.67 / 0.67 / 0.67 / 0.69 / 0.68 / 0.68												

The Rule of Law Index also includes a “**absence of corruption**” factor, where countries are assessed based on respondents’ views of the presence of corruption in the country. On this scale, Slovenia, compared to all **140** countries surveyed, ranks **38th** with a score of **0.65**. This also places Slovenia **24th** among the **31** countries in the EU, EFTA and North America group.

Slovenia achieved the following results on the “absence of corruption” factor in 2015–2022:

Rule of Law Index—Absence of Corruption, Slovenia 2015–2022
 Year: **2015 / 2016 / 2017–2018 / 2019 / 2020 / 2021 / 2022**
 Index: **0.60 / 0.60 / 0.63 / 0.66 / 0.66 / 0.66 / 0.65**

For 2022 in Slovenia, the results by individual survey items under “absence of corruption” were quite varied. For the statements:

- **“High-ranking government officials do not abuse office for private gain” — 0.61;**
- **“Judicial officers do not abuse office for private gain” — 0.76;**
- **“Officials in the police and the military do not abuse office for private gain” — 0.76;**
- **“Officials in the legislative branch do not abuse office for private gain” — 0.45.**

The results indicate that respondents believe there is more corruption in the operation of the **legislative** branch, and less in the **judicial** branch and in the **police and military**.

The index also measures views on the effectiveness of **criminal justice**. Here Slovenia, with **0.55**, ranks **44th**, a worse position. Over seven years its score declined by **0.8**, from **0.63** in 2015.

On specific statements, Slovenia recorded:

- **“The criminal investigation system is effective” — 0.44;**
- **“The criminal justice system is free of improper government influence” — 0.44;**
- **“The criminal justice system is impartial” — 0.51.**

Within the **constraints on government powers** factor, where Slovenia scores **0.65**, Slovenia recorded **0.51** on the statement **“Government officials are sanctioned for misconduct”** (while the average score for its peer-country group is **0.65**).

Other organisations and institutions

The World Bank annually publishes the **Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)**,¹¹ based on research and data processing by research institutes, expert groups, NGOs and private companies for more than 200 countries. The research covers six dimensions of governance, including **control of corruption**.

On control of corruption, Slovenia in **2021** scored **75.9** (where 0 means no control of corruption and 100 means effective control). Since 2018 the score has been steadily decreasing (2018 — **80.29%**; 2019 — **80.77%**; 2020 — **78.85%**; 2021 — **75.96%**).

In addition to the above, there are other indirect mechanisms for monitoring the level of corruption, such as calculating the **cost of corruption** in relation to national GDP. Such a study—**The Costs of Corruption in the EU**—was conducted in 2018 by the Green/EFA group in the European Parliament.¹² It estimated the cost of corruption in Slovenia at **8.5%** of annual GDP, which in 2018 was about **EUR 3.5 billion**, and by early 2023, recalculated to GDP, would already amount to **EUR 4.4 billion**.

Other international organisations also assess specific aspects of the rule of law and the state of corruption in Slovenia, meaning that the field is under scrutiny at all levels. **GRECO** has an evaluation mechanism that assesses countries’ legislation, institutional arrangements for

combating corruption, and practical achievements in this area; evaluation reports are publicly available. The **United Nations** has a self-assessment mechanism with somewhat different emphases, reviewing implementation of the **UN Convention against Corruption** (Official Gazette of the RS—International Treaties, Nos. 22/08 and 51/09). The **European Commission** also prepares an **annual Rule of Law Report**, examining Member States' progress on rule-of-law indicators. Within the **OECD**, the **Working Group on Bribery** was established to combat the bribery of foreign public officials in international business transactions; through mutual evaluations, members assess compliance with the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and related recommendations. The OECD has also formed a **Public Integrity Network** that examines the presence of integrity indicators in the public sectors of OECD countries.

III/3. Conclusion

The indicators described show that the situation in the field of preventing corruption is **not satisfactory**, in particular because Slovenia is regressing on some rankings instead of advancing. It is also worrying that, on the rankings presented, Slovenia is not converging—on many indicators—towards those countries that are more successful and exemplary in preventing corruption and strengthening integrity (for example, certain Western European and Scandinavian countries). The Resolution and its Action Plan are key steps through which the Republic of Slovenia will be able to **effectively prevent corruption** and **strengthen integrity**, and thus join the countries with the highest reputation in this field.

What follows are **strategic objectives** aimed at improving the situation, which will be specified with concrete measures in the Action Plan.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESOLUTION

The fundamental purpose and general objectives of the Resolution, as envisaged by the Integrity and Prevention of Corruption Act (ZIntPK), are:

- the long-term and lasting containment of the conditions for the emergence and development of corruption, as well as the risks of corruption and breaches of integrity;
- the establishment of an appropriate legal and institutional environment for preventing corruption and strengthening transparency;
- the consistent enforcement of accountability (both personal and legal) for unlawful acts.

In addition to the general objectives, efforts must also be made to achieve the following key goals:

1. strengthening the transparency of the state's operations, including the transparency of the use of budgetary funds;
2. strengthening integrity and the acceptance of responsibility, and reinforcing zero tolerance for corruption in the state and society;
3. reducing political influence and strengthening professionalism in decision-making on matters of public interest, including appointments to key positions in the public sector

and to the bodies of companies in which the state or a local community holds a majority share or dominant influence;

4. strengthening mutual cooperation among supervisory institutions;
5. strengthening cooperation between the public sector and civil society;
6. increasing the effectiveness of prosecuting corrupt conduct and thereby the effectiveness of the police, prosecution service, and judiciary;
7. effectively identifying and containing corruption risks, including risks of integrity breaches in the public and private sectors—particularly in healthcare, political-party financing, environmental protection and spatial planning, major investment projects, and the management of public funds and public assets, including before and during public procurement procedures and in their execution;
8. strengthening ethical culture and leading by example in organisations in both the public and private sectors, and reinforcing integrity in society;
9. ensuring respect for and implementation of the measures and decisions of all independent state bodies and oversight procedures, and providing the conditions for these bodies to operate effectively and with quality;
10. establishing an enabling environment in the economy for compliance in business operations and for zero tolerance for corruption by the business sector, including foreign companies operating with the Republic of Slovenia.

The Resolution covers numerous fields in the fight against corruption. With such a detailed structure, it emphasises that combating and preventing corruption must take place across all areas of operation in the public and private sectors and society at large, so that effective action and cooperation can generate the necessary momentum to bring the principle of zero tolerance for corruption to the level of societal consensus. This must become a shared value in the Republic of Slovenia.

The Resolution's detailed structure also provides clear strategic frameworks for developing the Action Plan, identifying specific corruption risks and setting out concrete measures planned for their containment.

V. DEFINITION OF OBJECTIVES BY STAKEHOLDERS AND AREAS

In this chapter, the objectives are defined on four levels.

The first level of objectives applies to everyone: entities in the public and private sectors and the general public. The second level applies to entities in the public and private sectors. The third level refers only to public-sector entities, while the fourth level covers objectives in specific areas (priority areas in subchapter V/4 and individual areas in subchapter V/5), regardless of whether they relate to the public or private sector, civil society, or the general public.

For the purposes of understanding the Resolution, the term “public sector” below means state authorities and self-governing local communities (hereinafter: local community or local self-government), public agencies, public funds, public institutes, public economic institutes, the Bank of Slovenia, other public-law entities that are indirect users of the state or local budgets, legal

persons established by the state or a local community, public enterprises, commercial companies, and other legal persons in which the state or a local community has a majority share or a controlling influence. The term “employees in the public sector” covers civil servants and office-holders.

V/1. OBJECTIVES common to all stakeholders, i.e., entities in the public and private sectors and the general public

OBJECTIVE 1: Everyone must report any suspicion of corrupt conduct (in the broader sense of the term corruption) to the competent institutions.

Reporting corrupt conduct (and not only criminal offences related to corruption) is an act of integrity. Consistent reporting of suspected violations is one of the key factors in reducing the incidence of corruption in the Republic of Slovenia. Only with this kind of responsible approach will law-enforcement and prevention bodies be able to cope with the societal challenges posed by corruption.

OBJECTIVE 2: For corruption prevention to be effective, society as a whole must provide mechanisms for raising awareness and strengthening the integrity of residents, private-sector employees, civil servants and office-holders. The public and private sectors must co-create an environment that encourages responsible conduct by all residents, not just by the public sector when performing public tasks.

The integrity of individuals is essential to prevent the emergence of risks of corruption and integrity breaches across the entire social sphere, not only in the operation of the public sector and the performance of public tasks. The public sector must be a point where the integrity of all who come into contact with it can be strengthened, thus influencing conduct in the private sector as well. Raising awareness among residents, private-sector employees, civil servants and office-holders about integrity and the identification of corruption risks in the operation of both the public and private sectors is the first prerequisite for effectively preventing corruption in society.

OBJECTIVE 3: Public awareness-raising on corruption prevention must also include awareness of the importance of reporting and of the channels and methods for reporting violations. Consistent reporting of violations is an important mechanism for establishing zero tolerance for corruption and integrity breaches in society.

Reporting violations is still often perceived by the general public as “snitching.” Conversely, individuals also refrain from reporting violations for fear of retaliation or out of the belief that a report will not lead to an adequate investigation and corrective measures. All of these concerns must be effectively addressed through awareness-raising and measures to prevent retaliation and by ensuring conditions for proper handling of received reports, including addressing identified violations and implementing corrective measures.

OBJECTIVE 4: The general public must be aware of the negative effects of corruption and the positive effects of strengthening integrity at all levels of state and societal activity. Integrity is the immune resistance against corruption. Because effective anti-corruption efforts require the participation of everyone—state and society alike—integrity must be strengthened in society at large in addition to all prevention mechanisms in the public and private sectors. The active role of (organized) civil society is particularly important here.

OBJECTIVE 5: Social media should become a useful tool for strengthening integrity and preventing corruption.

Public opinion is shaped by media reporting and, for several years now, heavily by social-media posts. With the help of visible individuals who set a good example, social media can become an important channel for raising awareness of the importance of integrity and corruption prevention.

V/2. OBJECTIVES common to entities in the public and private sectors

INTEGRITY-BASED CONDUCT

OBJECTIVE 6: All employees in the public sector must act with integrity and fully internalize that the purpose of the public sector is to regulate and facilitate the lives of the residents of the Republic of Slovenia on an equal basis. This is the foundation for defining the public interest. Integrity-based conduct by all public-sector employees primarily derives from acting in the public interest. This must guide all their actions. The Republic of Slovenia operates under the principle of democracy, which stipulates that all power comes from the people, for the people, and is exercised in their name. The executive branch, which the people indirectly elect in each election, must—through the public administration (which implements decisions)—represent solely the broader common interest of the people, i.e., the public interest, in managing public affairs. The pursuit of the public interest is therefore the basis of all integrity in the public sector and the basis of integrity-based conduct by its employees.

A second foundation of public-sector integrity is each employee's (personal) integrity—honesty, fairness, and alignment of thought, word, and deed—which are the primary requirement for preventing corruption in the public sector, upholding the rule of law, and building trust in its institutions.

OBJECTIVE 7: Ensure consistent compliance with statutory provisions on avoiding conflicts of interest, on restrictions on concurrent activities or memberships in addition to regular employment 14, and on restrictions on business dealings applicable to public-sector employees. Public-sector employees must act impartially in their work and must not grant undue benefits and advantages to individuals, legal persons, or interest groups. Slovenia is a small country; thus, the risk of conflicts of interest is one of the more frequent risks. In procedures before authorities, there is a likelihood of connections between an official and a party (family, business, friendship), whereby conducting such a procedure may lead to a conflict of interest (or the appearance of one). Public-sector employees have a duty to avoid conflicts of interest, thereby enabling impartiality and equal treatment in all procedures.

Public-sector work must be exclusively in the public interest. Additional activities or memberships may create risks of undue influence or of public-sector employees prioritizing their private interests over the public interest.

Doing business with entities to which public-sector employees are directly or indirectly connected (e.g., via family members; by ownership or founding ties) poses a real corruption risk. The legislation therefore contains explicit rules to address these risks in order to prevent harm to public funds.

OBJECTIVE 8: Private-sector operations must also be based on integrity and compliance. Within business structures, the private sector must establish and ensure integrity-based conduct,

including through internal compliance structures. Beyond formally ensuring integrity, the personal integrity of private-sector employees is also important for preventing corrupt practices. Private interests (of both owners and employees) must not produce undesirable corrupt effects or undermine the public interest in a given area.

CONSISTENT COMPLIANCE WITH LOBBYING RULES

OBJECTIVE 9: To ensure transparency of influence on public-sector decisions, lobbying rules must be strictly observed. Lobbyists and those lobbied must consistently report lobbying contacts. Unlawful influence must be reported to the competent supervisory authorities. Publication of lobbying contacts is an important element of transparency in the public sector. Its purpose is to inform the public of all influences on a given decision of public importance. The private sector must recognize that transparency of its lobbying is important so that the public is clearly informed about permissible lobbying, which is only possible with strict compliance with legislation.

RESPECT FOR PUBLIC-SECTOR DECISIONS

OBJECTIVE 10: Respect for the decisions of all public-sector institutions—especially independent state bodies—must be strengthened, and conditions must be ensured for their effective operation.

Independent state bodies are the immune system of the rule of law. Their decisions, as well as those of all public-sector institutions, must be respected and implemented, and the state must provide optimal conditions for their effective operation by ensuring a sound legal framework, operational capacity (financial and human resources), and appropriate remuneration for work performed.

PROTECTION OF WHISTLEBLOWERS

OBJECTIVE 11: Protection of whistleblowers of violations—including corruption and other illegalities and irregularities—must be effective and consistently applied for external and internal reports, as well as for public disclosure of violations, in accordance with regulations. Effective protection must also be ensured for intermediaries and related persons who are entitled to such protection under the law governing whistleblower protection.

Protecting those who report suspected violations is essential to prevent retaliation, which is one of the fundamental factors deterring individuals from reporting. Because reporting suspected corruption is key to an effective fight against corruption, consistent implementation of effective whistleblower protection is extremely important.

A necessary precondition for effective protection is to provide mechanisms or reporting channels that allow reports to be made safely and effectively, including protection of the whistleblower's identity.

Public- and private-sector organizations must ensure appropriate and effective handling of the violation reported and take timely, fair, and proportionate action where violations are established.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

OBJECTIVE 12: Professional associations must encourage their members to act with integrity. Chambers and other professional associations must provide their members with assistance and support in ensuring integrity-based conduct through educational programs, counselling, awareness-raising, and other forms of support.

V/3. OBJECTIVES common to public-sector entities

ACTING IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

OBJECTIVE 13: The public sector and its employees must act exclusively in the public interest and prevent unlawful influence and the pursuit of private interests.

In each election, citizens entrust the “management” of the state to elected representatives with the expectation that they will act for the broad common good—the public interest. To this end, citizens pay taxes and other charges, thereby providing funds for activities in the public interest.

PROACTIVE ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

OBJECTIVE 14: Employees in the public and private sectors must (proactively) assume responsibility for their conduct at the time of the conduct, not only once (legal) consequences arise. All public- and private-law legal persons must enable clear attribution of individual responsibility, strengthen employee awareness of the importance of responsibility, and foster an organizational culture that promotes a positive attitude toward accepting responsibility. Accepting responsibility is an important aspect of integrity-based conduct. By taking responsibility for mistakes or irregularities when they occur, the likelihood of recurrence is reduced—while ensuring that the purpose of accepting responsibility is not merely to punish individuals, but to strengthen awareness and knowledge. Mistakes are part of work processes and can happen without fault or despite adherence to standards. The approach to responsibility should not be based solely on threats and intimidation; responsibility is a positive value with which employees can identify. This is especially true for the public sector, which sets an example for society as a whole. By assuming responsibility and responding to mistakes, the integrity of operations of both public- and private-law entities improves, as do their credibility and reputation, which helps build trust in their operations.

Public office rests on public trust; therefore, in assuming responsibility, one cannot insist on the presumption of innocence that applies to criminal liability. Responsibility should be asserted or accepted already on the basis of a sufficient likelihood of a breach. Conversely, the system must not become a mechanism where even unverified rumours or accusations lead to sanctions, as such a system is particularly prone to manipulation and undermines the independent operation of institutions.

TRANSPARENCY

OBJECTIVE 15: Public-sector institutions and employees must ensure the greatest possible transparency of their procedures and operations, as well as effective communication and cooperation with the public.

Transparency is a fundamental anti-corruption tool. Transparent publication and public access to information (e.g., on the content of public procurement, the use of public funds and the finances of public-sector business entities, disclosure of asset holdings), together with engagement and cooperation with the public, reduce the risk of covert violations and create an additional safeguard—an additional opportunity for oversight—since the public can also exercise scrutiny. Transparency also strengthens citizens' trust in the state's operations and empowers citizens to become actively involved in public-sector processes.

The public sector must proactively strive to ensure appropriate public information about its work and to ensure the effective exercise of the public's right of access to information of public nature.

OBJECTIVE 16: All public-sector institutions must act transparently when making decisions, including with respect to regulations, by involving and engaging interested publics. In drafting regulations, they must be guided by the principles of transparency, quality, and clarity. Transparency in decision-making—especially at the level of local self-government, including consistent reporting of lobbying contacts—builds trust in each sitting government (state and local). Together with inclusive communication and citizen participation, it helps to limit corruption risks in decision-making. Transparency, quality, and clarity of regulations also play an important role in limiting corruption risks.

ENSURING APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS FOR PUBLIC-SECTOR OPERATION

OBJECTIVE 17: To effectively prevent corruption and ensure integrity-based conduct in the public sector, sufficient resources must be provided for public-sector institutions, including hiring enough staff. Employees must be provided with appropriate remuneration and working conditions.

Public-sector integrity depends on the integrity of its employees. Public-sector employees are more prone to corruption risks if they are not adequately paid—especially if their pay does not enable a decent living. The same applies to inadequate working conditions that do not allow for professional and consistent performance of duties, including staff shortages. Major staffing deficits lead to overload, which causes errors, burnout, and general dissatisfaction. Dissatisfied employees are more susceptible to integrity breaches and corruption risks. This is even more important for certain professional groups or institutions that are key to the functioning of the rule of law and have a direct impact on the fight against corruption and must be independent and autonomous in their work. Independence and autonomy also entail a pronounced personal responsibility to prevent other corruption risks, such as conflicts of interest, acceptance of prohibited gifts, and integrity breaches.

EFFECTIVENESS AND INDEPENDENCE OF SUPERVISORY PROCEDURES

OBJECTIVE 18: All supervisory procedures in the public sector must be effective, timely, independent, transparent, and professional and must not be subject to unlawful external or internal influence. Private interests must not prevail over the public interest in supervisory

procedures.

An important part of public-sector functioning is the supervision of consistent implementation of the public interest by institutions and employees, and oversight of the use of budget funds. As in all public-sector tasks, the guiding principle in all supervisory procedures must be the public interest (e.g., in procedures in the fields of labour relations and co-management, employment, social affairs, occupational safety and health, in supervision of forest management, agricultural land, and hunting and fishing grounds, procedures in spatial planning, settlements and construction, environmental protection and nature conservation, water and waste management). Particularly careful, effective and objective oversight must be carried out in areas of great public interest or systemic risks (e.g., food control, public procurement procedures). For major and complex procurements or processes, oversight should preferably be exercised already during the procurement procedure and during contract execution. If processes significantly affect the environment, implementation and supervision should ensure respect for the principles of sustainable development.

Persons performing oversight must be professionally qualified for the field they supervise and must not be placed in a position where unlawful influence prevails in their decision and private interest is realized. It is important that oversight personnel effectively avoid external influences or pressures, including political pressures, as well as internal pressures within the authority, including influence or pressure from superiors. Only in this way can oversight ensure consistency of decision-making and management in the public interest.

Ineffective work by supervisory authorities can give rise to corruption risks—for example, when, due to excessive workload and insufficient staffing, an authority cannot review all entities within its remit or all received reports. This can result in overlooking corrupt conduct or integrity breaches by officials, rather than steering findings toward better governance.

OBJECTIVE 19: In areas that directly affect people's lives, the public must be consistently informed about supervisory procedures and findings.

Transparency and accessibility of findings and procedures in overseeing the realization of the public interest contribute to the effectiveness of oversight, among other things by enabling the active participation of interested publics. This is particularly true in the areas of the environment and food, where state activities can have a direct impact on the health of residents. Given the direct effect on the population, it is of paramount importance that corruption risks and integrity-breach risks in the areas of environment and food (such as unlawful influence) are contained—both in market operations and in state oversight.

V/4. OBJECTIVES in priority areas

APPOINTMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT

OBJECTIVE 20: All phases of appointment and recruitment procedures in the public sector must be transparent, independent of unlawful influence, and must ensure equal treatment of persons in the procedures.

Appointment procedures to the bodies of companies in which the state or a local community has a majority share or controlling influence, to international organizations, and to other institutions

must pursue the same objectives. A similar level of responsibility is required of private-law legal persons in line with the standard of a prudent manager.

Staffing procedures that are not conducted with integrity (non-transparent, non-objective, and unprofessional) and therefore do not constitute integrity-based conduct cannot lead to hiring individuals with integrity. To represent the citizens/residents of the Republic of Slovenia well in running the state, positions must be filled with persons competent to perform specific tasks. Just as recruitment procedures must respect these objectives, so must appointment procedures to positions.

The guiding principle in appointments to leadership positions in the public sector must be candidates' professional suitability—not any affiliation to interest or political groups. Only in this way can public functions and public-asset management be carried out effectively and professionally in the public interest, thereby strengthening the institution's reputation and Slovenia's standing in international organizations and other institutions. Appointments based on political influence create risks of unlawful political influence on the appointee's decisions, conflicts of interest, and the predominance of private over public interests (noting that, in this context, the public interest also includes effective operation of a private-law legal person). Unprofessional appointments (e.g., based on political or other interest-group influence) may pose a risk of unlawful influence on the decisions of appointees, conflicts of interest, and the pursuit of interests other than the public interest (with the public interest here again including effective operation of a private-law legal person).

OBJECTIVE 21: Leadership positions must be filled by persons with a high level of integrity who are also professionally qualified and have appropriate management experience. Leadership positions must be held by people with the knowledge, skills, and experience to lead and who also possess a high level of integrity, since the organization's reputation depends on their conduct.

ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS

OBJECTIVE 22: Public funds must be granted to beneficiaries correctly and transparently on the basis of appropriate legal grounds and clearly developed objective and professional criteria, with the effects of the funds spent being assessed against the adopted criteria. Distribution must not be subject to political influence or private interests.

In allocating public funds, oversight must be established over the lawfulness and transparency of their use, including clear objective criteria for distribution and for determining the effectiveness (measurability) of their use. This applies, among other things, to procedures for granting state aid, donations, subsidies, and the like. Political influence over final selection (e.g., in relation to civil-society projects, funding for disability and sports organizations) is not permissible. Funds for certain areas (e.g., for disability organizations, cultural activities, media, research and development) are provided directly and indirectly from the assets of the Republic of Slovenia, through institutions established for this purpose and based on the public interest. For many stakeholders in key areas, these funds are the only source of income, which is an additional reason why they must be awarded transparently, based on objective professional criteria, while considering the efficiency and economy of spending, including avoidance of double funding. Experience with funding awards has shown that, to effectively manage corruption and integrity-

breach risks, award criteria must be set by law and the functioning of the awarding institution must also be regulated by law.

The media strongly influence public opinion; therefore, there are risks of (political) misuse. Allocation procedures must, for media, all the more ensure transparent funding based solely on objective professional criteria. The greatest possible transparency must also be ensured for any other forms of state support to the media.

OBJECTIVE 23: Selection committees for awarding funds must be composed of subject-matter experts or otherwise highly qualified members. Procedures for allocating funds and implementing funded projects must be independent, professional, and transparent, without unlawful influence on designing call conditions to fit specific implementers or on the selection of beneficiaries.

A core risk in funding with public money is the predominance of private interests over the public interest, which can occur through unlawful influence, conflicts of interest, corruption, and other risks of corruption and integrity breaches. In key areas—often more exposed in the media—there is considerable risk of unlawful influence on the allocation of funds; therefore, selection-committee members must be highly trained and professional. Risks of unlawful influence can also be effectively reduced by obtaining opinions from external experts, which exert informal pressure on decision-makers to award funds solely on the basis of actual (professional) quality. To achieve maximum transparency, it is important that decisions are clearly reasoned and verifiable.

OBJECTIVE 24: Independent and effective oversight must be exercised over the allocation and use of public funds, successfully avoiding unlawful pressures.

A key part of prudent management of funds is oversight of their allocation—especially in public procurement, public calls, and the granting of public funds in the form of support or aid—and of their use. In doing so, the standard of a prudent manager must be observed in managing the tangible assets of the state and local communities, and the measurability of spending effects must be considered.

MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC ASSETS

OBJECTIVE 25: The public sector must make its decisions in the public interest, independently of any influence by structures of financial power.

Every structure of financial power seeks to influence decision-makers to advance its own interests. This applies to banks, insurers, and other financial institutions as well as non-financial companies, which can use financial power to strengthen influence over decision-makers in implementing public policies. Public-sector decision-makers must make all their decisions solely in the public interest. When receiving initiatives from financial-power centres, they must decide objectively on the substance of the initiative, regardless of who proposed it.

OBJECTIVE 26: Procedures for managing public assets—especially where they involve direct contact with clients—must be carried out lawfully, with limitations on potential unlawful influence, conflicts of interest, prohibited gifts, and other risks of corruption and integrity breaches.

In procedures involving direct contact with clients, corruption risks of unlawful influence and

prohibited gifts are more pronounced; special attention must therefore be paid to establishing mechanisms to contain them.

OBJECTIVE 27: Employees who participate in or decide on procedures for managing public assets, or who exercise oversight over such procedures, must be persons with a high level of integrity. Containing corruption and integrity-breach risks in procedures for managing public assets or supervising such procedures largely depends on the personal integrity of officials; it is therefore essential to establish mechanisms to verify and strengthen their integrity and to ensure working conditions that encourage integrity-based conduct.

OBJECTIVE 28: Management of public assets—including in public-procurement procedures and the awarding of public funds—must be transparent and economical and must respect the principle of equal treatment while limiting risks of corruption and integrity breaches, conflicts of interest, and unlawful influences, including political influence. Public funds must be allocated on the basis of pre-defined objective criteria.

Public assets—both financial and tangible—are entrusted to public-sector employees to manage. Because, in managing public funds, they also represent the citizens of the Republic of Slovenia, they must handle them prudently, as a good manager would, and manage them in a manner that serves the public interest.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

OBJECTIVE 29: Public-procurement procedures in the Republic of Slovenia must be conducted lawfully and effectively, with limitations on risks of corruption and integrity breaches, conflicts of interest, and unlawful influence. These risks must be addressed already before the procurement procedure begins—at the needs-definition stage—to avoid unjustified favouring of a specific supplier.

Effective and lawful procurement procedures are the foundation of efficient and economical use of public funds. Risks of corruption and integrity breaches must be limited in all forms of procurement, especially low-value (records-only) procurements. These risks must also be consistently limited when defining needs and when designing and implementing the procurement.

OBJECTIVE 30: Risks must be limited in special forms of procurement procedures, including low-value (records-only) procurements, including the unjustified use of such procedures where there is a risk of splitting procurements to fit the permissible value for execution without a public call. Exceptions to procurement procedures and special forms of procurement have statutory frameworks specifying when such procedures are allowed. Contracting authorities must not avoid procurement procedures by tailoring needs and purchasing circumstances to fit one of these procedures. Low-value (records-only) procurements are considered more prone to such tailoring, since up to a certain statutory threshold there is no requirement to conduct a public procurement procedure. This enables the splitting of procurements and other irregularities.

OBJECTIVE 31: Regular, timely, and independent oversight must be ensured over procurement procedures and contract execution. Effective controls must be established for risk management in the procurement of goods and services and for internal channels to report unethical or unlawful demands and conduct by employees, suppliers, potential candidates, and providers of goods and services.

A large share of public funds is spent on purchasing goods and services; therefore, effective risk management and oversight are essential at all stages, including the establishment of internal channels for reporting unethical or unlawful conduct. For major and complex procurements, oversight should preferably be exercised already during the procurement procedure and during execution.

OBJECTIVE 32: For major projects of the state or local communities involving substantial financial resources, real-time, independent oversight must be ensured over the procurement procedure, and strict transparency of influences on needs-definition prior to the procedure must be guaranteed, including via reporting of lobbying contacts. Independent oversight over contract execution must also be ensured.

Oversight of procurement procedures is key to ensuring effective use of public funds. The large amounts involved further increase risks of unlawful influence and corruption; therefore, to ensure efficient and economical spending, it is appropriate to include real-time independent oversight in the procedure to ensure that all corruption risks are effectively managed and that the procedure is lawful.

Because the needs-definition phase is critical for influencing a procurement procedure, the greatest possible transparency of influences must be ensured in this phase. Independent, real-time oversight of contract execution is also necessary to ensure that implementation follows the tendered offer and that any additional costs are justified.

OBJECTIVE 33: Legislation governing procurement procedures must be clear, unambiguous, and practicable.

With numerous amendments to sectoral legislation, hasty solutions often arise that are not applied in practice, and procedures become over-regulated.

HEALTHCARE

OBJECTIVE 34: All risks of corruption, unlawful influence, and predominance of private over public interests must be effectively managed in the healthcare system—especially in the procurement of medical equipment and devices, in relations between private suppliers and public-sector employees, in cases of physicians working both in public institutions and private practices, and in addressing waiting lists. Working conditions must be established that enable or strengthen integrity-based conduct by employees, including sufficient resources for optimal operation of public healthcare organizations and adequate staffing.

The above-mentioned risks in healthcare often arise in relations between employees and suppliers—through the funding of employee training and promotion of medical equipment at such events, and through purchases of medical equipment in public-sector healthcare organizations. A specific example is free leasing or donations of medical equipment to healthcare institutions, which often lead to spending considerable budget funds on consumables as well as maintenance and repairs without prior selection of a supplier. Management of these risks is not yet sufficiently effective in practice, nor sufficiently defined legally. Risks also arise with waiting lists (enabled particularly by outdated lists) and with physicians working both in public institutions and private practices.

OBJECTIVE 35: Public-procurement procedures and other forms of public purchasing in healthcare must be carried out effectively; selection decisions must be based solely on professional criteria and the public interest and must not be subject to unlawful influences and private interests. Procurement of materials and equipment must take place under conditions of a free market and fair competition, and the state must avoid entering monopoly relationships to the greatest extent possible.

Effective procurement is the basis for sound spending of public funds. In healthcare, due to specific connections between suppliers and healthcare institutions or their employees, risks of conflicts of interest, unlawful influence, and corruption arise also in procurement. The market situation for medical equipment and devices, due to the way business is conducted and agreements among suppliers, does not fully ensure a free market and fair competition. The state must strive to ensure, in healthcare—where spending of public funds is relatively large and where procurement has a direct impact on the health and lives of residents—conditions of fair competition that allow a free relationship between quality and price.

INFRASTRUCTURE

OBJECTIVE 36: Procedures for planning, construction, maintenance, renovation, and potential sale of public infrastructure at the state and local levels must be based on professional grounds, regardless of political influence beyond legally permitted guidance. They must be carried out to a high standard—effectively, economically, and transparently—while actively limiting and preventing risks of corruption and integrity breaches.

Poor planning, spatial siting, construction, maintenance, renovation, and sale of public infrastructure lead to opportunities for abuse and numerous risks of corruption and integrity breaches, and to risks of an impaired public interest. Poorly planned projects increase the risk that the effect of the investment will be lower and thus suboptimal for the state, that costs will be higher, and that the optimal functioning of the infrastructure—and thus the direct benefit to citizens—will be questionable.

OBJECTIVE 37: The greatest possible transparency must be ensured in procedures for building and managing infrastructure, and the predominance of private interests over the public interest must be avoided.

Only complete transparency and professionalism in all procedures can prevent risks of corrupt conduct. Only on this basis can the public interest be achieved—namely, that infrastructure projects are optimally designed and implemented and that available resources are optimized relative to identified needs.

OBJECTIVE 38: The effectiveness and independence of oversight over public-private partnerships and public utilities must be increased, especially at the local level.

Oversight of public-private partnerships and of public utilities at the local level is often inadequate and lacks independence, particularly in smaller municipalities.

OBJECTIVE 39: Infrastructure projects must be carried out independently of unlawful influence. Large investment projects require real-time, independent, and effective oversight already during the procurement procedure and during project implementation.

Because of investment values in infrastructure, public procurement represents one of the greater corruption risks. Oversight—also by civil society—must therefore be ensured throughout the preparation and implementation of procurement and over the use of earmarked funds at all levels, including local public utilities. For large investment projects, effective, independent, real-time oversight must be exercised over the entire procurement process, from needs-definition prior to tender design through to contract execution.

OBJECTIVE 40: Companies managing major or systemic infrastructure investments must ensure lawful, responsible, and integrity-based operation and conduct.

Companies managing major or systemic infrastructure investments must ensure their operations are lawful, responsible, and integrity-based, as they are constantly under public scrutiny and operate in the public interest. These companies must be aware of risks at every step and actively manage them. Integrity must not be a mere formality, but the foundation and *modus operandi* of their business.

OBJECTIVE 41: Public infrastructure must be managed as a prudent owner would; among other things, the system of granting concessions must be made effective, with strengthened transparency of procedures and consistent equal treatment of candidates for concessions, and the effectiveness of concession management must be improved. Public infrastructure must be managed prudently—both in maintenance and in disposition—and its management must primarily ensure the realization of the public interest. This is especially pressing for concessions, where procedures for granting and managing them must be transparent, ensure equal treatment of candidates, and allow effective and prudent management.

V/5. OBJECTIVES SPECIFIC TO INDIVIDUAL AREAS

CIVIL SOCIETY

Objective 42: The state, i.e. each government in office, must recognize the importance of non-governmental organizations and the broader civil society, and encourage their development and activities, including in the field of combating corruption and strengthening integrity. Integrity, transparency and social responsibility must be guiding principles in the organization and functioning of NGOs.

An active and strong civil society is one of the foundations of democracy. Since effective prevention of corruption and the strengthening of integrity in society can only be achieved with the cooperation of all its parts, the active role of (organized) civil society is particularly important. Transparency and integrity of NGOs' activities should also be encouraged. The state may support the emergence and strengthening of civil society through financial resources and other mechanisms.

LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Objective 43: Procedures for granting rights and benefits to families, other groups of vulnerable persons, and unemployed persons must be carried out effectively, limiting risks of corruption, particularly conflicts of interest in procedures, undue influence, and thereby the enforcement of private interests and violations of integrity.

As with other procedures involving direct contact with clients, the allocation of rights in the field of employment and social protection is exposed to corruption risks and violations of integrity. These risks are particularly present at the local level, where the small size of local offices and communities increases the likelihood of conflicts of interest, and thus of private interests prevailing over the public interest. At the same time, the smallness of local communities usually increases interconnectedness and thereby reduces people's willingness to report violations to competent authorities.

ECONOMY

Objective 44: Integrity, social responsibility and compliance must become guiding principles of business conduct of companies in the Republic of Slovenia. Companies must actively implement these principles throughout their activities on the basis of a planned and established system of compliance and integrity management.

Achieving mere business success is no longer sufficient as the fundamental goal of companies. With growing awareness of the negative effects of industry and harmful impacts of human activity on the environment and living beings, including other people, social responsibility and sustainable development have increasingly become norms. The same trend is visible in business, where corporate social responsibility has become a competitive advantage, ensuring long-term success of companies and overall social well-being. Social responsibility is directly linked to integrity, as both introduce ethical principles, good governance standards and transparency into companies' internal and external relations. For this purpose, compliance and integrity management systems have been established.

Objective 45: The state must encourage companies committed to integrity in order to ensure that businesses incorporate standards of active prevention of corrupt practices and other prohibited practices, and management of related risks, including effective early detection of irregularities and action through their own internal governance and control systems. Companies without established compliance and integrity systems are more vulnerable to depletion of public funds and bribery of public officials, increasing public distrust in the public sector and its institutions. This also leads to negative perceptions of companies, even when they are economically successful and engaged in large (state) projects. An ethical business environment also means less corruption, which is why the existence of ethically oriented companies is in the public interest. The state must encourage the strengthening of such an environment through various mechanisms, supporting companies that make clear and concrete commitments to ethical principles and act with integrity in daily operations.

Objective 46: Assets of companies in which the state or local communities hold a majority share or dominant influence, as well as assets of privately owned companies, must be managed responsibly and transparently.

The management of companies (whether private or state-owned) must be lawful, professional, transparent and in line with the highest standards of business ethics based on integrity. Responsible management of assets is also reflected in enforcing criminal and liability responsibilities of management board members if they neglect their legal and ethical duties.

Objective 47: There must be effective enforcement of responsibility for violations in the supervision of company management.

Enforcement of accountability is one of the fundamental pillars of establishing zero tolerance for corruption and strengthening integrity in society, and must be consistently implemented in practice. Slovenian law allows accountability for violations in supervision, but this option is rarely exercised. The state or local communities may initiate procedures for establishing criminal and liability responsibility in cases of intentional or negligent failure to perform supervision with due care.

Objective 48: The effectiveness of sanctioning corporate corruption offences must be strengthened. This requires continuous enhancement of knowledge on corruption in the economy among law enforcement authorities and courts. Motivation for change in companies may be internal or external. Awareness-raising, counselling and support in setting up compliance systems and socially responsible, integrity-driven operations influence internal motivation, while effective sanctions serve as external motivation, deterring potential offenders. General prevention in corporate crime requires clear and decisive use of sufficiently strict sanctions, proportionate to the seriousness, nature and social harm of such crimes. Only a clear, consistent and decisive sanctioning policy will send society a strong message on the inadmissibility of corruption.

INSPECTION AUTHORITIES

Objective 49: Inspection authorities and inspectors must be autonomous in their work, and the specific procedures they conduct must not be exposed to internal or external improper influence. To effectively limit improper influence, the autonomy of inspections must be strengthened. Autonomy—and thus independence from influence in carrying out their work—is a fundamental principle for an inspector when conducting inspection procedures. There are real risks of improper influence on individual procedures arising from external or internal factors. These risks can be effectively managed by strengthening the institutional autonomy of inspections to ensure greater systemic independence and reduce the risks of improper influence, as well as by strengthening the autonomy of inspectors in conducting proceedings.

Objective 50: Inspection procedures must be carried out efficiently, impartially, transparently and promptly, with corruption and integrity risks in these procedures being contained. In the event of staff shortages or a high volume of cases, prioritization of reports must be based on pre-defined objective criteria.

Inefficiency in inspection procedures (e.g. failure to conduct oversight, absence of criteria for exercising oversight, ordering inappropriate measures, failure to respond to alleged violations, lengthy proceedings) can create risks of corruption and integrity breaches. Proper (timely, proportionate and consistent) detection and sanctioning of violations is an important factor in strengthening the rule of law, through which the integrity and impartiality of state action for the common good is actively demonstrated. Risks may also arise due to staffing deficits. Conditions must be ensured for the effective initiation and conduct of inspection procedures while respecting the constitutional principle of equal protection of rights—not only as regards decision-making in inspection procedures but also their initiation. When handling inspection cases, inspectors must pay attention to implementation problems and inform the competent line authorities of inconsistencies in legal rules.

Objective 51: There must be a clear separation between inspections and their supervisory and appellate bodies. Oversight of inspection procedures must be effective, timely and impartial. From this perspective too, strengthening the autonomy of inspection authorities is appropriate. The legal order of the Republic of Slovenia provides that supervisory and appellate bodies in inspection procedures are the authorities responsible for the policy area in which the inspection operates (mostly ministries). As with all other procedures, these must be conducted impartially and effectively. Since inspections are mostly bodies within ministries and in some places co-located with them, the risk of conflicts of interest and improper ministerial influence on procedures may exist already at the systemic level.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

Objective 52: The state must manage forests, agricultural land, and hunting and fishing grounds as a good steward, including a systematic inventory of all real estate designated as agricultural land and forest. Management must be effective, transparent and in the public interest. Managing corruption risks—including conflicts of interest and improper influence—is especially important in spatial-planning procedures (e.g. specific procedures for changing the designated use of agricultural land). Decisions on transferring the management of agricultural land or forests to private entities must be based on clear criteria and taken through transparent procedures. Improvements are needed in Slovenia regarding the effective management of forests, agricultural land, and hunting and fishing grounds, as corruption and integrity risks are not yet adequately managed in some areas. Inefficiency of procedures in the public sector often creates risks of corruption and integrity breaches. In agriculture, the most pronounced risks arise in spatial-planning procedures, including changes in the designated use of agricultural land. These can lead to damage to state assets and the acquisition of undue private benefits; such procedures (especially at the local level) also frequently involve conflicts of interest. Maximum possible transparency in management—and thus the possibility of public oversight—must be established.

CULTURE

Objective 53: It is necessary to strengthen the consideration of the public interest in ensuring conditions for the creation, dissemination and protection of cultural goods in the field of public media. Cultural content must receive adequate funding and space in programme schedules. Culture serves as a critical observer of social developments and, with a plurality of opinions, strengthens the democratic character of society. Media play a key role as carriers of public opinion and the primary channel for conveying information to the public; information appearing in the media is therefore socially prominent. Reduced media coverage of cultural activities diminishes the public exposure of plural views.

In doing so, the independence and autonomy of public media (including RTV) in allocating financial resources and placing content within programme schedules is respected.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Objective 54: Local public matters managed autonomously by local self-government authorities (such as spatial planning, construction of local roads and paths, provision of public utilities,

construction of facilities, pre-school and primary school childcare, municipal wardens, enabling conditions for economic development, and housing construction) must be based on expert considerations and consistent respect for the public interest of the local community. In decision-making, the dominance of private interests over the public interest must be prevented. As at the national level, decisions at local self-government level must be made exclusively on professional grounds, in the public interest and with full transparency of decision-makers.

MEDIA

Objective 55: State financial support for ensuring media plurality and democracy and for achieving the public interest in the media must be allocated transparently, on the basis of objective and expert assessment.

The media have a strong influence on shaping public opinion, which creates risks of their (political) misuse. Allocation procedures must therefore ensure that funding is granted exclusively on the basis of objective and professional criteria, and in a transparent manner. Maximum transparency must also be ensured in any other forms of state support to the media.

Objective 56: To strengthen the integrity of society as a whole, the state must support media that guarantee editorial autonomy and the autonomy of journalists and other authors in producing content.

One of the foundations of a democratic and integrity-based society is the existence of critical thought. This also underpins the principles of freedom of expression, free flow of information and media openness to diverse opinions and content. To ensure the existence of critical thinking, circumstances must be created that allow and guarantee the autonomy of content creators while respecting journalistic ethics.

Objective 57: Journalists must be persons with a high level of integrity, who maintain their autonomy and objectivity and are not susceptible to undue influence or gifts in their work. Journalists fulfil the public interest by reporting truthfully and presenting objective facts; their reporting must not be subject to private interests. This principle is also important when interacting with private companies and in distinguishing between advertising and news content.

Objective 58: The state must effectively supervise the preservation of media plurality and effectively prevent the concentration of power through ownership. The media in the Republic of Slovenia are owned by a relatively narrow circle of persons or entities, which poses a risk to media plurality, the free flow of information and media openness to diverse opinions, as well as worsening conditions for the existence of critical thought, and thus for democracy and integrity in society.

Objective 59: Media must maintain operational autonomy irrespective of their sources of financing, including financing through the sale of advertising space and other commercial activities. Media reporting on politics must be independent of the interests of political parties or holders of political office.

The media have a strong influence on shaping public opinion and, through their reporting and integrity, can significantly contribute to strengthening societal integrity. Political parties (at both state and local level) may attempt to influence editorial policy through various means, which can blur the line between editorial content and advertising.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Objective 60: Employees in the Police and in the inspectorate responsible for internal affairs must be persons with a high degree of integrity, consistently implementing measures to limit corruption risks.

A large share of corruption risks in the Police and the internal affairs inspectorate stem from individuals and their ability to act lawfully (e.g. conflicts of interest, gifts, secondary employment, disclosure of the identity of protected whistleblowers, etc.). Activities to strengthen the integrity of all employees are necessary to reduce these risks.

Objective 61: The Police and the inspectorate responsible for internal affairs must operate autonomously and must not be subject to improper influence.

Ensuring the autonomy of the Police and the inspectorate responsible for internal affairs is a cornerstone of the rule of law. Any political influence on decision-making by the leadership of the Police or improper internal influence in procedures violates organisational autonomy and represents a serious corruption risk. One possible way to mitigate this risk is to amend the appointment system for the heads of the Police and the inspectorate responsible for internal affairs so that appointments are based solely on professional competence.

Objective 62: The Police and other state authorities in the field of internal affairs must consistently ensure the protection of human rights and freedoms in their procedures and must not violate them.

Equal access and legal protection of all constitutionally and legally guaranteed rights are fundamental to the rule of law. Improper influence and bribery can lead to unequal treatment and/or restricted access to these rights, e.g. in procedures concerning breaches of public order and peace, international protection of foreigners, handling of migrants, etc.

DEFENCE

Objective 63: Procurement procedures in the field of defence and security must consistently comply with the adopted strategic guidelines and strategic documents, which must be coherent in substance. Procurement must be carried out lawfully, economically and efficiently, while limiting corruption and integrity risks, especially undue influence. Supervision of procurement procedures and contract implementation must be carried out regularly and continuously. When planning and performing procurement under the law governing public procurement in the field of defence and security — except for procurements based on Article 346 of the TFEU (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) or for intelligence and counterintelligence activities — the principles of transparency and safeguarding the public interest must be consistently respected. Likewise, in cases where procurements are conducted outside the scope of the aforementioned law, based on prior investment documentation, economic and efficient use of budgetary resources must be ensured. This field is particularly exposed to the risk of undue influence, which can result in the unacceptable dominance of private interests over the public interest.

Supervision of procurement procedures and contract implementation in the field of defence must

be regular, and in large and complex procurements, such oversight should preferably be conducted already during the procurement procedure and during contract execution.

Objective 64: The inter-ministerial commission that grants prior consent for procurements conducted under Article 346 of the TFEU and for procurements for intelligence and counterintelligence activities must ensure lawful use of public funds in the public interest even in procurement procedures where an exemption from the principle of transparency applies. Due to the confidentiality of procurement procedures where exemptions from transparency apply on grounds of essential state interests and national security, legal provisions establish an inter-ministerial commission that gives prior consent for procurements under Article 346 of the TFEU and for those related to intelligence and counterintelligence activities. Members of the commission must be professionally qualified experts in procurement with a high level of integrity.

ENVIRONMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING

Objective 65: For sustainable development and to ensure a quality environment for future generations, the public interest must be observed and respected at all stages of spatial and construction procedures, as well as in environmental protection procedures. Undue influence and corruption must be restricted both during the preparation of systemic documents and in individual spatial planning procedures, environmental permit procedures and environmental impact assessments. Particular attention must be given to managing conflict-of-interest risks, which are especially present at the local level.

From a corruption and integrity risk management perspective, it is essential to ensure transparency of all procedures related to the environment and spatial planning, as well as public participation, which can serve as an additional safeguard through public oversight. Part of the integrity of a society and its individuals is accepting responsibility for environmental conduct. A sustainable attitude towards the environment means accepting responsibility for it. The state and local communities must ensure, when regulating space and protecting the environment, that the principles of sustainable development are respected. This includes transparent operations — for example, consistent application of the principle of public disclosure — while effectively limiting corruption and integrity risks in environmental and spatial procedures. If environmental documents are not publicly accessible, public participation is hindered, which increases the possibility of advancing private interests instead of the public interest of environmental protection.

POLITICS

Objective 66: The highest political representatives at national and local level must be persons who perform their functions exclusively in the public interest and in accordance with the principle of separation of powers. In performing their duties, they must act transparently and with integrity and refrain from accepting or exerting undue influence.

Office holders at national and local level must continuously strive to ensure that their entire conduct serves the public interest exclusively, in accordance with the principle of separation of powers. The highest political representatives serve the people, who grant them a mandate in democratic and secret elections to pursue the public interest based on political objectives.

To ensure the public interest, transparency of lobbying contacts must be guaranteed, private interests must be barred from influencing decision-making, conflicts of interest must be restricted, and all necessary measures must be taken to enable political representatives to effectively carry out their mission of representing voters.

Objective 67: Transparency of political party financing must be strengthened. The operation of political parties must not be subordinated solely to the interests of their actual or potential supporters.

To ensure the public interest in the functioning of the state, transparency of political party financing is essential, as it limits the risk of undue influence by centres of power over party operations. If financing occurs informally, covertly or indirectly (e.g. through financing of legal entities owned by political parties), there is a risk that the party's financing will (implicitly) be conditioned on reciprocal favours in the exercise of public functions. This is particularly relevant for parties that are part of the government.

JUDICIARY

Objective 68: Independence and autonomy of the judiciary must be ensured. Judges must be independent and impartial in performing their judicial function. The autonomy of public prosecutors in performing prosecutorial duties must also be guaranteed. The Slovenian legal system guarantees the independence of the judiciary. The judiciary must be independent in order to responsibly and fully fulfil its role in relation to the other two branches of government, to society as a whole, and to parties in judicial proceedings. Judicial authority is essential for effectively limiting state power and for the functioning of the state as a constitutional democracy. Independent and autonomous judiciary is also a prerequisite for the rule of law. Public prosecutors perform their function independently and impartially. Independence and autonomy are also crucial for preventing corruption risks related to undue influence on the decisions of judges or prosecutors. At the same time, independence and autonomy require individual responsibility to prevent other corruption risks, such as conflicts of interest, accepting prohibited gifts, or other risks to integrity.

Due to their independence and autonomy, it is equally necessary that judges and prosecutors be persons with a high level of integrity, so that they can perform their function impartially. Their material independence must also be ensured.

The autonomy of state attorneys in performing their duties must likewise be guaranteed.

Objective 69: A normative framework must be ensured that enables effective prosecution of corruption offences and efficient judicial proceedings.

Corruption-related offences are complex, and proving them is often difficult. Prescribed penalties must correspond to their social gravity, and procedural rules must allow adequate tools for detecting and proving such offences. Due to the complexity of criminal proceedings and trials, appropriate specialisation of judges and proper organisation of trials are needed.

Objective 70: Lawyers, notaries, insolvency administrators, court experts, court valuers, court interpreters, enforcement agents and other judicial stakeholders must be persons with a high level of integrity. Professional chambers or other competent bodies must address deviant conduct, such as violations of regulations and codes, and sanction them accordingly.

Like other stakeholders in the judiciary, lawyers, notaries, administrators, experts, valuers, interpreters, enforcement agents and others must, due to the nature of their work, be persons with high integrity and must consistently act in accordance with their duties. Strengthening integrity also enhances public trust in their work. Professional chambers and ethical commissions play a key role and must respond in cases of established violations.

SPORT

Objective 71: Sports activities must be based on openness and the importance of participation for all, respect for rules and ethical principles, and the strengthening of personal integrity — including the prohibition of manipulating sports results and other conduct leading to undue gain. Decision-making procedures in sport must be conducted with integrity and independently of private interests. Any conflict of interest must be disclosed transparently and without delay, and superiors (such as national sports federations) must decide on it immediately. The handling of gifts, including invitations and other benefits, must be transparent and in accordance with regulations. If a situation is not legally regulated, decisions must be made in line with established practices acceptable for the specific case and in accordance with the highest standards of integrity. Irregularities and violations must be consistently reported.

Objective 72: Sports officials and workers in sport must be persons with a high level of integrity. They must not exploit their position for private gain and must not succumb to undue influence or pressure in their decisions.

The foundation of sport is fairness and justice, which require integrity from all stakeholders — athletes, professionals, referees, officials, financiers and others — and proper management of corruption risks through appropriate safeguards.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Objective 73: Integrity and autonomy of educational institutions must be ensured and strengthened, including in relation to their founders. A key element is limiting corruption risks such as conflicts of interest and undue influence, especially in appointment procedures to management and supervisory bodies of educational institutions. These procedures must be transparent. In their functioning and decision-making, these bodies must minimise risks of conflicts of interest and undue influence while ensuring high competence and integrity of their members.

Any dominance of private (including local) interests within the education system undermines the public interest and jeopardises the optimal development of individuals.

Integrity and autonomy of educational institutions are fundamental conditions for effectively limiting undue influence. Institutional integrity means integrity in all its processes, starting with the appointment of the head. To ensure integrity-based governance and autonomy, the head must also possess professional competence, meaning the appointment must be based solely on expertise, not political or other affiliations.

Objective 74: Educational institutions must provide training and awareness-raising for professional staff and ensure working conditions that promote their autonomy and strengthen integrity-based conduct.

The functioning of an educational institution must be based on integrity in both its staff and processes. The integrity and autonomy of educators are not only essential for maintaining institutional integrity but are also the foundation for fostering integrity among children and adolescents in the learning process.

Objective 75: Fairness and equal opportunities must be ensured in education — both in the learning process and in granting concessions for educational and higher education services. Fairness and equality of educational opportunities are fundamental to social justice, allowing equal chances for success in life and thus forming the basis of the public interest in education. Any dominance of private interests over the public interest in ensuring fairness and equal opportunities sets the stage for injustice in society.

To ensure equal educational and higher education opportunities, the granting of concessions — especially in higher education — must be based on the highest possible level of professionalism and transparency in decision-making.

Objective 76: Educational programmes must include content aimed at strengthening the integrity of children and adolescents.

Strengthening individual and societal integrity is a long-term process that is most effective when started in childhood, while values and beliefs are still being formed. Since beliefs develop over time, integrity-related content must be incorporated throughout the child's development and across the entire vertical of the education system.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Objective 77: Ambassadors must be appointed based on their professional competence. Employees working in foreign affairs must consistently represent the interests of the Republic of Slovenia in both domestic and international environments, regardless of any political party affiliation.

Only appointments based on professionalism minimise the risks of corruption and integrity violations in the performance of duties. Ambassadorial appointments based on political affiliation may damage credibility when representing Slovenia's interests abroad. Similarly, ambassadors lacking sufficient competence may harm the country's reputation internationally. The purpose of foreign policy is to represent national interests in the international community. Slovenian representatives must not be susceptible to influence that would lead to the promotion of interests of other states, private entities or political parties instead of those of the Republic of Slovenia. Such a situation could result in conflicts of interest or corruption.

VI. ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION

The Resolution shall be adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia upon the proposal of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia.

The objectives of the Resolution will be achieved through the implementation of measures set out in the Action Plan, which must be adopted within three months of its adoption.

The Action Plan shall, among other things, specify in more detail the risks in the areas covered by the Resolution, the measures for their mitigation, and the responsible entities for implementing these measures.

Upon the publication of this Resolution, **RePKRS 2004** shall cease to apply.