



ASSISTANCE TO CITIZENS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

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USAID
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA



CENTRI CIVILNIH AKCIJA I
CENTRI GRAĐANINSKIH INICIJATIVA



TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL
BOSNA I HERCEGOVINA



CRM



Description of the Project

The program “Assistance to Citizens in the Fight against Corruption (ACFC)” is implemented by the Centers for Civic Initiatives, the lead implementer, and Transparency International (TI BiH) and the Center for Media Development and Research (CRMA), the implementing partners. The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The implementation period is from September 2019 to September 2024.

The program aims to increase citizens’ participation in combating corruption, and all of its activities are designed to encourage strong and sustainable anti-corruption activism across the country and across all levels. The purpose of the ACFC project is to help civil society become representative and credible in the fight against corruption.

The following activities are realized within the project:

- Monitoring and advocacy for anti-corruption legislation in the following areas: conflict of interest, whistleblower protection, public procurement, and abuse of public resources in election campaigns;
- Engagement of citizens and building a culture that rejects corruption;
- Coordination and building capacities of organizations involved.



CORRUPTION IS NOT AN INDIVIDUAL PROBLEM !!!



Are you a group of citizens facing corruption in your community and because of that you cannot exercise your own right or that of a broader group of people?

Do you suffer the consequences of bad decisions made amid the misuse of power or unlawful government conduct?

More information about how to receive assistance for your anti-corruption initiatives is available at the following link:


063 396 536

protivkorupcije@ccibh.org

Map of anti-corruption activities across Bosnia and Herzegovina



 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS
 INFORMAL GROUP OF CITIZENS

 Contact them via their FB pages!

Find our more at antikorupcija.info

- Banja Luka**
- CA “Restart Srpska”
 - Union of the Employers’ Association of Republika Srpska
 - Association “Think good”
 - CA “Road of Justice”
 - ICG “Save Karanovac”
 - Center for Education “Pro Educa”
 - The Association “Perpetuum Mobile – Institute for Youth and Community Development”

- Bijeljina**
- Helsinki Committee for Human Rights
 - ICG “Stop illegal exploitation of gravel in Bijeljina”

- Bjelašnica**
- ICG “To Stop Illegal Construction on Bjelašnica and Igman”

- Brčko**
- ICG “For Transparent Financing of Non-Profit Organizations from the Budget of the Brčko District”
 - Youth Center Vermont
 - CA “Demos”
 - ICG “For recognized diplomas from accredited higher education institutions in the Brčko District of BiH”

- Breza**
- ICG “To Remove an Illegal Waste Dump in Nedići, Breza”

- Bugojno**
- ICG “Poriče”

- Bužim**
- The Association of Dystrophics Bužim

- Doboj**
- ICG “For the legal exploitation of minerals from the Bosna river”
 - ICG “STOP to unaccredited universities in the RS”
 - ICG “Remove Hexane from Kotorsko”
 - Center for Humane Politics
 - Citizens Association Tolerance of Diversity (ToPeer)

- Drvar**
- ICG “Drvar Without Italian Waste”

- Foča**
- ICG “Drvar Without Italian Waste”

- Goražde**
- ICG “Save Drina”
 - ICG „Goražde Without Pesticide“

- EastSarajevo**
- NGG “Stop izgradnji mHE na ICG “STOP to the Construction of mHps on the river Kasindolska”
 - Women’s Interactive Rural Center (ŽIR)

- Jablanica**
- ICG “For Doljanku”

- Konjic**
- ICG “Neretvica - Let Me Flow”

- Kozarska Dubica**
- ICG “React Against Irregularities Threatening the Health and Environment”

- Kreševo**
- ICG “Stop Quarries Without Permits”

- Kakanj**
- ICG “Nature Park Trstionica and Boriva”

- Livno**
- CA “the Center for Citizens’ Cooperation”

- Maglaj**
- ICG “For Legal Exploitation of Minerals in the Upper Section of the river Bosna”

- Mostar**
- CA “Because We Care”
 - ICG “Initiative against the construction of Buna 1 and 2 mHp”
 - ICG “Stop to illegal construction in Bijeli Brijeg”
 - ICG “No to construction on Buna and in my Blagaj”
 - ICG “Citizens’ Initiative Kuti”
 - The Association for Improving Quality of Living – Futura Mostar

- Petrovo**
- ICG “Keepers of Ozren”

- Prijedor**
- Consumer Protection Association “DON Prijedor”
 - ICG „Be My Voice“

- Sarajevo**
- ICG “Hastahana park”
 - ICG “Initiative KCUS”
 - ICG “Zgrada”
 - Association „Ja BiH u EU“
 - Employers’ Association in the Federation of BiH
 - BIRN BiH
 - Association “Baby Steps”
 - Association Union of the Fund’s Employees
 - Forestry and Environment Action
 - Aarhus centa
 - ICG “Last minute rescue – Let’s save Dobrinja”
 - The Union for Sustainable Return and Integrations in BiH
 - Association of Public Procurement Professionals, Trainers and Officers in BiH (UPTIS)

- Šipovo**
- ICG “Farmeri”

- Tešanj**
- ICG “Non-transparent spending of budget funds for water supply to citizens”

- Trebinje**
- CA “Stop mobbing”
 - ICG “Movement for Restitution Trebinje”

- Trnovo**
- ICG “Stop to Disposal of Illegal Waste at the Krupačke stijene Waste Dump”

- Tuzla**
- The civic movement “Waking Up”
 - ICG “Initiative against the landfill for slag and ash from the thermal power plant in local community Šićki Brod”
 - The Association “Forum of Tuzla Citizens”

- Visoko**
- ICG “To Prevent Abuse in Issuing Operation Permits to Organizers of Games of Chance (betting, lotteries, etc).”

- Višegrad:**
- ICG “Defend the Rivers of Višegrad”
 - ICG “Remove Illegal Waste Dump on the Outskirts of a Tourist Town”

- Vitez**
- ICG “Courageous Women of Kruščica”
 - Initiative “Illegality of Spending the Building Maintenance Funds in Vitez”

- Zenica**
- ICG “Air guards”
 - ICG “Movement for change”
 - ICG “The Illegible Unemployed”

- Zvornik**
- ICG “STOP to illegal gravel pits on the Drina river”
 - ICG “Stop the Construction of an Asphalt Base in Tršić”

- Žepče**
- ICG “Stop illegal exploitation of gravel in the area of Žepče and Zavidovići”



MARKING INTERNATIONAL RIVER DAY AND WORLD WATER DAY



In the week of International Rivers Day and World Water Day, informal groups of citizens engaged in various activities (performances, cleaning of rivers, round table conferences, street actions) to remind the public of irregularities and abuses in their local communities that threaten water as one of the most important natural resources. In several locations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, activists distributed leaflets informing citizens about corruption fought against by informal groups of citizens. Activists from eight towns in BiH sent a single message to the citizens - to engage in preserving water and rivers and protecting them against irregularities that threaten them.

“It is evident that rivers and waterways are becoming more and more polluted every day and that we will soon face a lack of drinking water,” activists say. For years the activists have been speaking up to protect one of the fundamental elements of life and survival of the living world, a special treasure of this country. Persistence and courage help activists win many battles, move borders, revoke damaging permits, and continue their fight to achieve the goal that requires collective awareness of the importance of the fight and mass public involvement.

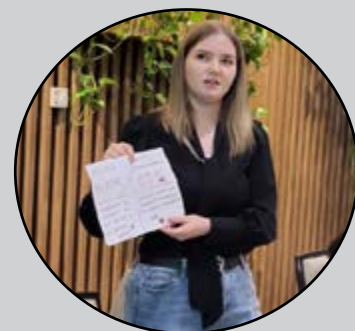




ANTI-CORRUPTION ACTIVISM TRAINING FOR LEADERS

On March 15 and 16 in Sarajevo, the Centers for Civic Initiatives (CCI) organized a two-day anti-corruption training for leaders. Sixteen individuals from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina interested in fighting corruption in their local communities and positive changes in their environment received training in advocacy and PR campaigns as part of the anti-corruption activism program for leaders. In addition, the participants had the opportunity to talk with activists who have been fighting corruption in their local environment for years and hear about their experiences

Medina Bejtović, a training participant who comes from Prijedor, says: *“It is a pleasure to work with people who are aware of the importance of corruption in BiH society. Through the modules, we commented on specific examples and gave an overview of this phenomenon in our society. Active association of citizens is key to solving the corruption that has entered every pore of society.”*



After the training, Harun Porča from Zenica points out: *“At the training for leaders I learned about the work and activities of the CCI.” One of the most important things that I can single out is that I can make changes in my environment and that I have people behind me, and I can say that this is the wind at my back.”*



“Given that the two-day training has just ended, impressions are many and it will take time for them to fall into place. I feel excellent, excited, and ready for future work thanks to the organizer’s team, the interaction they created, and the relaxed atmosphere. The training has made clear what corruption is and it is easier to detect problems in local communities. We are also much more aware of the number of irregularities that go unnoticed while citizens’ attention has been distracted by some trivial issues. Once more, we say thank you to the organizer and participants,

hoping that our cooperation will continue and that we will fight for a more just and better society in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” Sevda Muratović from Velika Kladuša says.

“The training offered me new perspectives on corruption in a local community. I realized that corruption is around us and that we are aware of numerous examples at the local and state level, as well as many successfully implemented campaigns supported by the Center for Civic Initiatives. This training helped me to target problems in the local community and through future engagement I am working on the implementation of campaigns that will point out some of the problems. The personal stories and struggles of people who were faced with solving a social issue of importance for the the wider community served as a wind at my back that all obstacles are possible to overcome, and that social engagement is the greater good that we put before personal interest,” Elma Hasanspahić, a training participant from Zenica pointed out.



“The lectures were professional; I liked the introduction as well as the introduction of participants and the importance given to each participant. The lectures were relaxed, but informational and with plenty of concrete examples; it was not tiring considering the length, and it was very informational. The arrival of the activists and their experiences were interesting,” said training participant Adem Kahrmanović from Sarajevo.

After the training, the participants of this program will have the opportunity for practical work in their local communities, which will be aimed at identifying local problems and running public campaigns.

To participate in this training, interested individuals ready to contribute to the fight against corruption through active involvement in the local communities, applied through a public call issued by the Centers for Civic Initiatives in February.





Civil Society Organizations and Informal Groups of Citizens Undergo Training on How to Win the Media as Allies in Public Advocacy

In mid-March, the Centers for Civil Initiatives organized the training “How to Win the Media as Allies in Public Advocacy?” for civil society organizations – grantees and representatives of informal groups that implement anti-corruption campaigns.

The participants underwent training in communication tools and communication skills with the media to better promote the public advocacy campaigns that they implement! They also shared their experiences regarding their communication with the media during the campaign.





THE FBiH GOVERNMENT'S MAKE-UP EXAM ON THE TOPIC OF THE SOLIDARITY FUND

The Committee for Economic and Financial Policy of the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament recognized the importance of the initiative to improve the financing of the FBiH Solidarity Fund. The initiative was submitted to the Committee by the Centers for Civic Initiatives and civil society organizations of beneficiaries of the FBiH Solidarity Fund services in January 2023. The Committee included the initiative in the agenda of its session, which was the first step toward returning the financing of the FBiH Solidarity Fund to the framework prescribed by law. At the Committee's session, support for the initiative was unequivocally expressed by the participants, as reflected in the Committee's conclusion to task the FBiH Government to adopt the budget request submitted by the FBiH Health Insurance and Reinsurance Fund during the rebalancing of the FBiH Budget for 2023 and secure additional 40 million KM for the Fund's operation. The second part of the conclusion addresses the need to start respecting the provisions of the FBiH Health Insurance Act, which prescribes the obligation of the FBiH Government to finance the work of the Fund. In this way, the income of the Fund would increase by more than 100 million KM, which would significantly improve the healthcare service for the beneficiaries of the Fund's services. Also, the additional income would open space for introducing other patients into legal health care through the Fund, for which there is an undeniable need.

The board session was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Health FBiH, the Ministry of Finance FBiH, the Institute of Health Insurance and Reinsurance FBiH, and representatives of the Centers for Civic Initiatives. On January 20 of this year, the CCI, with the support of several other civil society organizations, filed with the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament, the Collegium, political party caucuses participating in the House of Representatives, and MPs the Initiative for Harmonization of the Budget Proposal of the Federation of BiH for 2023 with the Law on Health Insurance in the part concerning the financing of the Solidarity Fund. In early March, the CCI, with the support of several civil society organizations, submitted to the Ministry of Finance of the FBiH a request for the application of the provisions of the Law on Health Insurance of the FBiH in the preparing the Framework Budget Document of the FBiH 2024 - 2026 and the draft Budget of the Federation of BiH for 2024. In addition, a request was sent to the FBiH Ministry of Health for the application of the provisions of the FBiH Health Insurance Law when planning the current transfer for the Health Insurance and Reinsurance Fund of FBiH in the process of preparing the FBiH Framework Budget Document for the period 2024 - 2026 and the draft Budget of the Federation of BiH for the following year.



CANTONAL COURT IN SARAJEVO REVOKES ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF SMALL DAM ON NERETVICA!

The Cantonal Court in Sarajevo accepted the lawsuit filed by the Association “Neretvica - Let me flow” and annulled the renewed environmental permits the FBiH Ministry of Environment and Tourism granted to the Public Enterprise “Elektroprivreda BiH” for the construction of a small dam on the Neretvica River. On May 29, 2020, at the very beginning of the fight for Neretvica, the coalition of associations gathered in the Neretvica – Let me Flow movement, led by the association “Zeleni Neretva” from Konjic, launched an administrative dispute against the environmental permits for the construction of two small dams on the Neretvica River, Sirijanski most and Gorovnik because the FBiH Environmental Protection Law was not properly applied in the case of renewal/issuance of environmental permits for the two mentioned HPPs. Environmental permits for these small hydroelectric plants were issued in a Decision by the FBiH Ministry of Environment and Tourism on February 17, 2017. Although this ruling comes almost three years following the filing of the lawsuit and that permits for the mentioned small dams on the Neretvica River expired last year, on June 8, 2022, activists say they are satisfied because another institution proved that the fight for the Neretvica River has been justified from the beginning.

“We are satisfied because we have always claimed and argued that the permits were invalid,” which is now proven. We continue our efforts and call on the City of Konjic and Elektroprivreda BiH to terminate the contract for the construction of small dams on Neretvica. Now they no longer have any reasonable reason not to do it” – activists said.

Find out more at antikorupcija.info



TERMINATION OF CONCESSION CONTRACT FOR SMALL DAM ON BUNA CANALS IS PENDING

The citizens' initiative "STOP the Construction of Small Dams on Buna" has put before the new composition of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Assembly the task of terminating the concession contract for the construction of MHP on the Buna canals. After the City Council of Mostar deleted from the Spatial Plan of the City of Mostar two locations for the construction of MHP on the Buna canals, the residents of Buna appealed to the composition of the Assembly demanding an initiative to terminate the concession contract. In the letter addressed to all members of the Assembly, they explained the problem and expressed their expectations regarding the further steps that need to be taken in order to permanently protect this site from the construction of small dams. They also met with councilors, who, following the meetings, filed three initiatives to terminate the concession contract. One of the items on the agenda at one of the sessions of the Assembly was Information on the implementation of the signed concession contracts ending in 2021. As the key changes in the City Council of Mostar (amendments to the Spatial Plan of the City of Mostar) took place in 2022, the relevant ministry announced that the latest information would reach MPs representatives very soon, which would open the opportunity to launch a parliamentary initiative to terminate the concession contract.





LAWSUIT IN PROTEST OF NEW ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT FOR THE UBORAK WASTE DUMP



The Civic Initiative “Because We Care” marks the beginning of 2023 by filing a lawsuit in protest of the new environmental permit for the Uborak waste dump issued by the FBiH Ministry of the Environment and Tourism. In less than a month, after the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo ruled in favor of the Association, the ministry issued a new environmental permit for this waste dump. At the same time, the Association filed a request with the City of Mostar to abandon the Adaptation Plan and close, rehabilitate, and relocate the existing waste dump. Street activities and the distribution of leaflets and posters around the city accompanied the group’s efforts. On the day the new environmental permit was issued, the Association organized a press conference, repeated its demands, and emphasized that it would not give up until the demands were met.



Residents of Holijaci Demand Criminal Liability for Illegal Waste Dump in front of their homes

The informal group “To Remove the Illegal Waste Dump on the Outskirts of the Tourist Town, Višegrad” filed criminal charges against those responsible in the case of the illegal waste dump in Holijaci, Višegrad. The application was submitted on January 11, 2023, to the District Prosecutor’s Office in East Sarajevo.

A criminal complaint was filed against responsible persons in the utility company “Komunalac” a.d. Višegrad and the Municipality of Višegrad, as well as other public authorities, on the ground of suspicion of abuse of official position or authority, pollution of the environment, pollution of the environment with waste materials, and causing general danger and other criminal offenses prescribed by the Criminal Code of the RS according to the well-founded suspicions of the Prosecutor’s Office.



“We, the locals, witness the disposal of hazardous and animal waste every day; rodents and abandoned animals gather, and sometimes we cannot reach our houses when the garbage catches fire or when the underground water rises and creates a flood,” Ramiza Karačić, a member of the group says and adds: *“Because of all this, we filed a criminal complaint against those responsible within the utility company “Komunalac” a.d. Višegrad, the municipal administration of Višegrad, and others, and we expect the East Sarajevo District Prosecutor’s Office to act on our report as soon as possible.”*



Citizens Demand the Closing and Rehabilitation of the Illegal Waste Dump in Nedići, Breza Municipality

On the occasion of World Water Day, the activists of the “Remove the Illegal Waste Dump in Nedići” initiative organized a clean-up action in Nedići, in the municipality of Breza and along the banks of the river Stavnja, which runs by the illegal dump. Activists used the opportunity to point out this long-standing problem in their community. Activists say that citizens of Breza Municipality have been facing the problem of waste management in this municipality for years because Breza Municipality has not yet regulated the issue of waste removal; however, the utility company “Komunalno” d.o.o. and the municipal authorities use the location in Nedići which is not intended for waste disposal. The waste dump is located on the border of Breza Municipality and Vareš Municipality, on the left side of the regional road R-444 (Podlugovi - Breza - Vareš), next to the river Stavnja, which flows only a few meters from the garbage site itself.

Garbage has been taken to this location intermittently for the past ten years, and for some time the location served as a transfer station. The re-dumping of waste started three years ago, and since then, the site has again been covered with huge amounts of waste.

“It became clear to us that Nedići is no longer a transfer facility, and according to the decision of the municipal sanitary inspector, Nedići is a deliberately created illegal dump, where the situation is alarming in terms of the sanitary and hygienic conditions of the entire area and which represents a danger to the life and health of people and the environment.”

Citizens are demanding that the competent authorities solve the problem of waste management in Breza Municipality, which means closing and rehabilitating the illegal waste dump in Nedići, and finding a new and suitable location for depositing waste in compliance with legal regulations.



Charges filed against those responsible for the Decision to approve exploration and exploitation of dolomite in the Poriče Local Community because of suspected abuse of official position or authority

In the first three months of 2023, informal civic groups intensified the pressure on the municipal and cantonal authorities urging them to annul the disputed Decision of the Municipality of Bugojno granting prior consent for the exploitation of dolomite in the Poriče local community and review and annul the concession agreement for the Bukovački potok site in the Poriče community. In early February, an open letter was sent to the Government of Central Bosnia Canton calling on those responsible to review and terminate the contract for the planned quarry in Poriče, Bugojno. After that, a request was sent to the Prime Minister of the Central Bosnia Cantonal Government to hold a meeting where the activists would present their findings on irregularities and demand that Government holds a session to discuss the disputed concession. Despite sending an urgent request to the Prime Minister and the Head of the Cabinet, the date for the meeting was not scheduled, but the request was redirected to the Ministry of Economy, which also did not respond. Activists organized three protests in front of the Bugojno municipality building, before every session of the Bugojno Municipal Council. On three occasions, the opposition parties in the municipal government put the issue on the agenda but never had the required majority. The Municipal Council at the session held on March 16, 2023, rejected the requests of the opposition councilors to put on the agenda a discussion on the disputed Decision, the recommendation of the Institution of the Ombudsman for Human Rights of BiH submitted to the Municipal Council for inspection, and the statement about the failure of the Municipal Council to respond to the Initiative of the residents of Poriče. The Municipal Department of Economy and Social Affairs, at the request of the investor, scheduled a public hearing with the residents of the Poriče community for March 13, 2023. Many locals, the media, and Bugojno citizens gathered in the hall of the Bugojno municipality, but the discussion ended without any conclusion because the representatives of the Municipality did not come or send any explanation for their absence. At the end of March, the representatives of the ICG Poriče filed with the Cantonal Prosecutor's Office of Central Bosnia Canton criminal charges against the municipal mayor, the Head of the Department of Economy, and other responsible persons in the Municipal Council on suspicion of committing criminal acts of abuse of position or authority and other criminal offenses prescribed by the FBiH Criminal Code.



Despite the Court's verdict in favor of citizens, the Kuti quarry has not yet been deleted from the City of Mostar Spatial Plan

After the ruling in favor of the Kuti Citizens' Initiative, the activists undertook a series of activities demanding the realization of the adopted Conclusion of the Mostar City Council on the deletion of the Kuti quarry from the Spatial Plan of the City of Mostar. However, the Chairman of the City Council Salem Marić stated in his response that the court case has not yet been completed and that the implementation of the Conclusion would wait for the final verdict. He demonstrated a lack of understanding of the difference between a court case and an administrative procedure because he interpreted the part of the verdict that said that the environmental permit was cancelled and the case was returned for retrial as a new court case, and not as a new administrative procedure in which the investor, if they express the intention to renew the proceedings, would request a new environmental permit from the competent ministry, which means that the court has nothing to do with further proceedings. The investor filed an application using earlier documentation (the same application that had been submitted when obtaining the previous environmental permit) to which the activists, after having publicly inspected the documentation, submitted written comments and remarks within the legal deadline. After some time, the Public Call for Inspection of the submitted application was taken down from the Ministry's official website, after which the activists filed an official inquiry into why the application was taken down. In addition to these activities, representatives of the Kuti initiative also met with the deputy chairman and some of the opposition representatives in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Assembly demanding that the cantonal Ministry of Economy terminate the concession contract, which the Ministry refused. Some councilors from the opposition parties in the City Council of Mostar expressed their interest and visited the site of the quarry where they witnessed the veracity of all allegations made by representatives of the Kuti initiative.



ACTIVISTS FROM NATURE PARK TRSTIONICA AND BORIVA LAUNCH ACTION TO PROTECT THESE LOCATIONS WHOSE PROTECTION IS ANTICIPATED IN THE ZENICA-DOBOJ CANTONAL SPATIAL PLAN 2009 -2029

In early 2023, the activists directed their activities in two directions: the first, to continue sending requests to the cantonal and municipal inspection to remediate the consequences on the ground after the departure of the workers, and the second, to launch an Initiative for the legal protection of the wider area of Trstionica and Boriva. The citizens sent requests to the inspection bodies of the Municipality of Kakanj - the municipal inspector and the Cantonal Administration for Inspection Affairs - Sector for Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry. In their response, the authorities say that they visited the site and that the rehabilitation of the area of the former concrete plant was mostly completed, and that the remaining consequences were not posing any danger to the environment as they are more aesthetic in nature.

In January, the group filed a petition with the Municipal Department of Economy and the chairman of the Municipal Council of Kakanj to launch the Initiative for the legal protection of Trstionica and Boriva. The request to launch the Initiative was discussed by the Kakanj Municipal Council Collegium, and a conclusion was reached that the ICG's Initiative should be sent to the Ministry of Spatial Planning of Zenica Doboje Canton through the Department for Economy, Urbanism and Environmental Protection of the Municipality of Kakanj.

At the request of citizens, a meeting was held with the chairman of the Municipal Council of Kakanj and the head of the Department for Economy, Urban Planning, and Environmental Protection on February 16, 2023, who endorsed the group's initiative, and it was agreed that the Department would send a request to the cantonal ministry for their position on the Citizens' Initiative to start a legal procedure for the protection of the location. On March 7, 2023, the municipal department sent the request and text of the Initiative to the Zenica Doboje Canton Ministry of Spatial Planning, Transport, Communication, and Environmental Protection for a review and the official position.



INSUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR WATER PROTECTION PROJECTS IN FBIH

For the past year, the financial plan of the Agency for the Water Area of the Sava River in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has planned ten million KM for the regulation of riverbeds and flood defense works. That the needs are significantly greater is indicated by the fact that only the proposals for riverbed regulation projects of category 1 submitted to the Agency in 2023 amount to between 70 and 80 million KM. In summing up the previous year, the director of the Agency for Watercourse Management in FBiH, Sejad Delić, emphasizes that according to the Agency's Plan and Financial Plan, the Agency can allocate significantly less funding for preventive flood protection activities compared to the requests from the field. This could mean that citizens can expect new misfortunes and dangers from floods this year, as seen in the last month of the past year.

In researching the problems faced by the Agency for the Sava River Water Area, whose public calls are less and less answered by companies engaged in the exploitation of gravel, activists in the Bosna River basin are advocating for the regulation of this watercourse and fighting against illegal gravel mining, and are claiming that the lack of interest of local gravel miners in these works is precisely due to the corrupt exploitation of minerals in the neighboring entity. "Gravel miners from Maglaj, Zavidovići, Žepče, and even Zenica admitted, saying that as far as they are concerned, their interest in gravel and sand is only for the purpose of resale and other production needs and that they do not care at all about Public calls and bidding on tenders. This confirms the lack of their concern for the citizens and the protection of the city from possible flooding through cleaning the riverbed and deepening and increasing the flow of water," activists say at the roundtable conference in Žepče on March 21 under the title "Protect the watercourse of the rivers Bosna and Krivaja - STOP illegal gravel extraction."

The Agency for the Sava River Water Area - Sarajevo has extended until September 30, 2023 water permits issued by December 31, 2022, and the contracts concluded with business companies in the locations in the sub-basins of rivers in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Cantonal Government Disregards Activists' Demands and Correspondence while the Livno City Administration Supports a Dialogue about the Contested Concession

The citizens of Livno repeated their requests to meet with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Economy; they filed requests for information and called for a dialogue, but the group never received any response or a date for the meeting. In February, the ICG representatives met with the mayor and representatives of the Livno Municipality Construction and Geodetic Department who supported the group's goals, and a conclusion was reached that the competent City Department would send to the Ministry of Economy an official request for information on concessions concerning the municipality of Livno, including the concession for the Mandek springs. The City Department sent a request to the ministry, but no response has been received, even though the legal deadline of 15 days has expired.

The group has collected all the available documentation regarding the disputed concession in the Vidoši community. At the end of January, a round table conference was held in Livno called "Arguments for the initiation of a request for the review and annulment of the concession contract for the exploitation of underground mineral water in the Vidoši community." The conference was attended by the residents of the Vidoši community, members of the ICG, and a representative of the City of Livno. Representatives of the Canton 10 Government and the competent Ministry of Economy did not respond to the invitation. After the presentation of the group's goals, activities, and relevant documentation, the majority of those present supported the conclusion that an official initiative should be filed to demand a review and invalidation of the Concession Agreement for Mandek Springs. The initiative with the demands of an informal group of citizens and the signatures of 170 locals was sent in early March to the Cantonal government and the Ministry of Economy. Still, the informal group of citizens has not received any response from the Government or the Ministry or any comments or opinions about the Initiative. In parallel with the launch of the Initiative, the group started a media campaign to promote the demands of the Initiative and put pressure on those responsible in the cantonal government to open a dialogue and review the disputed procedure for awarding a concession for the exploitation of water near the sources of drinking water.

Find out more at antikorupcija.info



Following Citizens' Protests, the Assembly of Sarajevo Canton Decides not to have a Hearing on a Draft of a Temporary Decision on the Protection of the drinking water source "Sarajevsko Polje" and Reduction of Water Protection Measures

The informal group of citizens "We Want Drinking Water and Clean Air - against illegal construction in Bjelašnica and Igman" organized a peaceful gathering in front of the Sarajevo Canton Assembly on the occasion of the session scheduled for January 27, 2023, when members of the Sarajevo Canton Assembly were supposed to discuss the Draft of the temporary decision on the protection of the source of drinking water "Sarajevsko polje." After a peaceful gathering, the citizens sent an open letter asking members of the Sarajevo Canton Assembly to reject the draft of the temporary decision that would significantly reduce the water protection zones.

"If the temporary decision is adopted, it would inevitably contribute to the permanent destruction of part of the source of drinking water in the future. At the same time, we draw your attention to the continuous and conscious deception of the public by individuals from cantonal institutions who claim that there is no legal protection for the sources of drinking water. This is not true. The decision from 1987 protects the sources of drinking water, but the problem is that the cantonal institutions in the last few mandates have not implemented the protection in accordance with their legal obligations," the citizens point out in this Open Letter.

As a result, the Cantonal Assembly decided not to discuss the subject of the Draft of the temporary decision on the protection of drinking water source "Sarajevo Polje" at that session of the Assembly, and this topic was not discussed at subsequent sessions either.



Trebinje Citizens in Peaceful Protests Demonstrate Determination Not to Allow Construction on Agricultural Land!

At the beginning of the year, the Republika Srpska institutions transferred the ownership of the land at Pridvorci in Trebinje from the Republika Srpska level to the General Hospital of Trebinje, and it was announced that the construction permit would soon be obtained and the works would begin. Activists responded to this action with peaceful protests in the city center where they repeated their demands and once again expressed their determination to fight for their civil rights. At the same time, at the activists' request, the RS Administration for Inspection Affairs, Department of East Sarajevo, carried out an inspection at the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction, and Ecology and found irregularities in the procedure for granting the urban permit. A Decision was issued ordering the Ministry to harmonize the urban permit requirements with the Law or to declare them invalid. Because of these irregularities, in 2022 the Movement for Restitution, Trebinje, filed an appeal with the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As the appeal is pending, in March 2023, a request was sent to this institution. At the beginning of February, the group initiated criminal charges against: Officials and responsible persons of the City of Trebinje, the Government of Republika Srpska, the Attorney General's Office of Republika Srpska, and the Republic Administration for Geodetic and Property Law Affairs of Republika Srpska, on the grounds of suspicion that the abovementioned have committed criminal offenses under Article 315 (Misuse official position or authority) and 322 (Misconduct) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Srpska.



Find out more at antikorupcija.info



Visoko Hosts a Forum Discussion on “Why are Games of Chance Facilities so close to Schools and Religious Buildings?”

On March 21, 2023, the “Ticket to ZIS” initiative, which warns against non-compliance with the FBiH Law on Games of Chance, organized in Visoko a forum discussion on the topic of “Why are the games of chance facilities near schools and religious buildings?” It was pointed out that in the City of Visoko, there are at least 14 facilities for games of chance, such as betting shops and payment places, which are located less than 100 meters from educational institutions and religious buildings, which is not in accordance with the law, and which made it possible easy access to games of chance for minors in the City of Visoko. The Forum was attended by Belmin Zukan, President of the Legislative and Legal Committee of the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament, Amra Pajt, President of Active Principals of Primary and Secondary Schools in the City of Visoko, Nedžla Čolo, President of the FBiH Student Council Network and Adi Zahirović, representative of the “Ticket to ZIS” Initiative. The “Ticket to ZIS” Initiative stated that they sent an invitation for participation to the Ministry of Finance of FBiH and representatives of the City of Visoko because they are key institutions in the process of issuing work permits to organizers of games of chance. They did not respond to the invitation.

The goal of this Forum was to inform the public about the problem of legislative violations in the segment of betting shops and payment points being located at distance smaller than that prescribed by law but also to discuss potential solutions.





No other Solution to the Problem of Unrecognized Degrees from BiH but Membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance?

Because of the problems that students educated at higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina may have, and already have, it is becoming clear that it is necessary to engage both political and educational authorities. The activists of the informal group of students called “Accredited Higher Education Institutions - Recognized Degrees” were the first to raise this issue publicly after learning that neighboring Croatia and Slovenia do not recognize degrees obtained at higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Currently, there are no indications that the problem with the non-recognition of diplomas obtained at higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the competent authorities in the Republic of Croatia and Slovenia could be resolved soon. It is increasingly certain, as indirectly recognized by the Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance in BiH (HEA BiH), that the problem could be overcome by the membership of the BiH Agency for Higher Education in the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA), which is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

The problem with the degrees and higher education in our country finally began to be dealt with by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, formally responsible for the field of higher education. In early February, a delegation from the HEA BiH led by Prof. Dr. Enes Hašić, and deputy directors, Irena Šiško and Stevo Škrbić visited the newly appointed minister of Civil Affairs Dubravka Bošnjak and her



Zenica Citizens Demand Responsibility for the Unpaid One-Time Unemployment Compensation in Zenica Dobož Canton

A group of Zenica citizens organized several protests in front of the Zenica Dobož Cantonal Employment Agency building in Zenica to protest against unpaid one-time compensation in the amount of 100 KM which, according to the Decision of the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina of December 8, 2022, should have been paid by the end of 2022. The last protest on January 16, 2023, gathered about a hundred citizens who did not receive money even though they had timely registered and submitted requested documents and were on the list of the Employment Agency. According to the collected information, about 2,500 persons did not receive one-time compensation even though they submitted all the requested information within the deadline and met all the conditions for exercising their right to monetary compensation.

At the end of March, the citizens met with representatives of the cantonal Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and gained the ministry's support. Parties agreed that the Ministry would officially send to the Employment Agency a request for information about the number of beneficiaries and clarification of why they were not paid one-time compensation in the amount of 100 KM. Also, in mid-March, the Technical Service of the Zenica Dobož Canton Assembly initiated a parliamentary initiative asking the Employment Agency to clarify unpaid benefits for part of the unemployed persons was requested and ordering the Agency to bear the costs of maintaining bank accounts for unemployed persons who did not exercise their rights.

SUCCESSFUL ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGNS



TOGETHER FOR ORTHOPEDIC AND OTHER AID WITHOUT CORRUPTION

After more than 8 months of intensive work and numerous activities on the project “Together for orthopedic and other aids without corruption,” implemented by the Dystrophy Association of Bužim in partnership with the Association of Amputees Bužim, in February the group achieved success on this project. In late February, in response to all initiatives and letters submitted to the Institute, the group received an official notification from the Institute that the group’s most important initiative was implemented. It was the group’s initiative for the adoption of anti-corruption acts to fight corruption within the Institute. By adopting these acts, the Institute for the first time formally and legally regulated all issues regarding the anti-corruption work of the Institute, where now for the first time the Institute regulates the method of reporting corruption and abuses by beneficiaries and insured persons and the method, as well as the procedures for submitted reports. These acts provide for the formation of an anti-corruption team within the Institute, which will be in charge of implementing the adopted regulation and will be required to report on the state of corruption through annual reports. This will allow for the first time to obtain precise data on the state of corruption within the Institute at the annual level. With the adoption of these acts, the Institute’s work has been raised to a higher public level, where procedures will be more transparent and safer for users. Also, the Institute informed the Association that the procedure for amending the Decision on the Single List of Orthopedic and other Aids is in progress. The final adoption of this amendment will mean the implementation of the Association’s second most important initiative -- to increase the quality of orthopedic and other aids for users. The Association additionally asked the Institute to analyze the market for orthopedic and other aids due to the current inflation, and that, in accordance with the price increase, the Institute plans greater participation in the financing of aids on the new list to preserve the achieved quality of the aids. The Institute fully accepted this request and informed us that it is currently analyzing the prices on the market, and based on the analysis, a new revised list of orthopedic and other aid will be created. By adopting the two initiatives, all current and future users of orthopedic and other aid will receive better quality orthopedic and other aid in more transparent procedures. The Association will try to advocate with the Institute the adoption of the remaining two initiatives - the amendment of the instructions on the procedures for obtaining orthopedic and other aid, and the inclusion of civil society organizations in the competent commissions for issuing orthopedic and other aid.

TOGETHER AGAINST CORRUPTION IN MATERNITY CARE

At the beginning of 2023, the focus of the campaign “Together against corruption in maternity hospitals” was on strengthening established cooperation with institutions through dialogue, implementing a system for reporting corruption, and conducting training for maternity hospital staff. On March 9, 2023, a round table conference was held on the topic of “Cooperation for maternity hospitals without corruption.” It was attended by representatives of institutions, the Sarajevo Canton Prosecutor’s Office, members of the Committee for Gender Equality and the Health Commission of the FBiH Parliament and the Sarajevo Canton Assembly, as well as the FBiH Police Administration and the FBiH Ministry of Health. Those present expressed their willingness to cooperate and provide all necessary resources to eradicate corruption from maternity care or reduce it to a minimum. Effective work to eliminate this problem implies a systematic approach, where at the same time there is the education of patients and medical staff, the adoption of relevant acts and mechanisms of prevention, reporting and sanctioning of corruption, and the establishment and control of healthcare standards.

“It is important that we act within our jurisdiction, that everyone has access to us, and that in the event of a criminal act, we react immediately,” said the Chief Cantonal Prosecutor of Sarajevo Canton Sabina Sarajlija.

At the press conference held on March 9, 2023, the group announced the launch of a web-based system with the rating of maternity hospitals and anonymous reporting of corruption. Since the beginning of March, the system has been available in four maternity hospitals in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Women in Tuzla, Banja Luka, and Bijeljina can access the portal using a one-time code they receive at the maternity ward, while women in the General Hospital in Sarajevo access the portal without an access code. Also, education on corruption was held for the medical staff and management of maternity hospitals. Education was held by Prof. Ph.D. sc. Borislav Petrović, a professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of Sarajevo and an expert in criminal law. Through education, the staff is familiarized with different forms of corruption in health care, the Criminal Code that treats corruption, and ways to deal with different situations and accusations of corruption.





Transparent Financing of Non-profit Organizations from the Budget of Brčko District

During the period January - March 2023, Vermont organized street actions where its activists learned through a conversation with the citizens that the citizens were concerned about the state of sports in the Brčko District of BiH and that they feared that if the current situation continued in a period of one year, almost all sports and most cultural associations would have to close. The fact that many sports and cultural groups that received funds from the local community budget during the reporting period received a negative opinion from the Commission followed by a request to return part or all of the approved funding supports the citizens' claims. In some cases, amounts up to 40,000.00 KM are involved. The reasons for rejecting the report were, among other things, of a technical nature, the least of which was the suspicion of misuse of approved funds.

In February, "Vermont" had an interactive debate with sports and cultural groups and representatives of the executive and legislative authorities and presented the results of a survey on the state of sports in the Brčko District of BiH, as well as the semi-annual report.

The beginning of the year, and especially the month of March, saw a series of developments as a result of Vermont's initiatives. All five observed departments introduced funding exclusively through a public call; they monitor approved projects or programs in the field, and jointly plan and implement some of the activities with the beneficiaries using their funds, which was not the case in previous years. Also, some Departments have introduced the public opening of received project proposals, so that the public can immediately have information about the reasons for not considering certain proposals, i.e. their rejection for technical reasons.



The Department for Economic Development, Sports and Culture of the Government of the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina introduced public consultations for the first time. This was done for the public call announced in March, where potential users could ask questions in writing, and the answers were published on the Department's official website. The Department published new financial reporting rules, which are available on the website, and the rules show several proposals that came from the "Vermont" Youth Center. Moreover, a new regulation on donations is being drafted by the Department for Economic Development, Sports and Culture to define the withdrawal of funds. The institution of the Ombudsman in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been involved in the implementation of the campaign since the middle of last year recommended to the Department for Economic Development, Sports and Culture to provide Vermont with the requested information and inform the Ombudsman Institution of such doing within no longer than 15 days. It is important to note that Vermont members met with the new Mayor of the Brčko District of BiH, Dr. Zijad Nišić. The working meeting helped define the steps the local government needs to assume to solve the situation that sports and cultural associations in the Brčko District of BiH are in and adopt new regulations and amendments to by-laws to prevent corruption at the local level.





**NE DAMO
RIJEKU BOSNU!**
Stop MHE Bilješevo!

CONSTRUCTION OF SMALL DAMS ON THE BOSNA RIVER WILL NOT BE ALLOWED?

This year, the Aarhus Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina continued the story of the ban on the construction of the Bilješevo HPP on the Bosna River and reminded the public that last year the Center filed an Initiative signed by 2,000 citizens of Kakanj, demanding the rejection of the Proposal for a Decision on Granting Consent for the implementation of concessions for the construction of the MHP “Bilješevo” on the Bosna River. Further, the citizens demanded the adoption of the Conclusion on the prohibition of the planning and construction of small hydropower plants on the territory of the municipality of Kakanj. The Municipal Council was obligated to consider the mentioned Initiative within 60 days. This deadline was not met, so the Aarhus Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina sent a series of urgent memos. Unfortunately, until today the Kakanj Municipal Council has not yet considered the initiative, which it is obligated to do in accordance with the Statute of this Municipality. A year later, the presidents of the local communities of Bilješevo and Modrinje, Eldin Gađun and Rašid Šahinović, confirmed to us that, in a verbal conversation, the mayor of Kakanj Municipality, Mirnes Bajtarević, promised them that the construction of the small dams on the Bosna River would not take place. The mayor informed them at the meeting, which he organized, that the will of the citizens would be respected and that no permits would be issued, and especially that the construction on the Bosna River would not be allowed. “As an Association, we are glad to hear and even see that local authorities cooperate directly with citizens and respect their will. We certainly continue to monitor the situation and wait for the official rejection of the Proposal for the Decision on granting consent for the implementation of concessions for the construction of the Bilješevo dam on the Bosna River, as well as the adoption of the Conclusion on the prohibition of the planning and construction of small dams on the territory of the municipality of Kakanj, because the written record of this decision by the Municipal Council must be issued,” is emphasized from the Aarhus Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



EXPERT ANALYSIS: NEW LAW ON WATER IS NEEDED URGENTLY

On the occasion of World Water Day, which is celebrated on March 22, the Aarhus Center in BiH organized a round table conference in Sarajevo to present the Analysis of the Draft Law on Amendments to the FBiH Law on Waters. The analysis was prepared by Muriz Spahić, founder of the Association of BiH Geographers and former dean at the Faculty of Science and Mathematics in Sarajevo, and Maja Mirković, Master of Laws, whose area of expertise includes international public and criminal law. Professor Spahić notes that the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Water is based on the Law on Water, which was passed a long time ago, and that it should have undergone several changes by now. Spahić also emphasizes that the waters that are today the most productive for water supply in BiH were taken for the construction of mini hydroelectric plants, thus destroying over a hundred small watercourses. Maja Mirković notes that the new FBiH Environmental Protection Law that entered into force at the beginning of 2021 strongly emphasizes the role of the public both in the context of access to information and in decision-making. In this sense, the amendments and proposed solutions contained in the Analysis emphasize the importance of the Aarhus Convention and the need to transpose its provisions into domestic legislation. Mirković also reminds of the FBiH Government's Conclusion of November 26, 2020, when the Government adopted the Information of the FBiH Ministry of Energy, Mining, and Industry on the Conclusion of the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament regarding the complete ban on the construction of mini hydroelectric plants on the territory of the entire FBiH and the Proposal for the Declaration on the Protection of Rivers in the FBiH. The above opens up space for the harmonization of different sets of regulations, which was considered during the preparation of amendments to the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Water in the FBiH.

The expert team agreed that the best solution is to draft a new Water Law. The round table was attended, among others, by representatives of the FBiH Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry, as well as representatives of the Sava River Water Area Agency and the Adriatic Sea Water Area Agency.

Find out more at antikorupcija.info



NOBODY BOTHERED BY EXPIRED TERMS OF OFFICE OF MEMBERS OF THE FBiH CONCESSION COMMITTEE

Following the Aarhus Center's press release entitled "What does the FBiH Concessions Committee do?", "looking at the Committee's operation and transparency, the Aarhus Center contacted the Deputy FBiH Minister of Spatial Planning, Mr. Ivan Topić, who in the press release was mentioned as the person proposed to the Federal Parliament in April last year by the FBiH Government for the position of President of the FBiH Concession Committee. In a telephone conversation, Mr. Topić explained that he had been proposed for the position, but the FBiH Parliament refused to adopt the decision of the FBiH Government. Topić also confirms the writings that the mandate of the members of the Committee expired in 2012 and that no Government proposal for a new convening of the Commission passed the Parliament. This means that the Committee established in the first decade of 2000 has been operating illegally for over a decade.



MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES TO ADVOCATE FOR ADOPTION OF LAW ON FORESTS

The Aarhus Center had four meetings with government representatives to advocate for the adoption of the Law on Forests in FBiH. All of the MPs the activists met, support the initiative for the adoption of the law. Given that the FBiH has not had the Law on Forests since 2009, government representatives will support the Aarhus Center in this initiative.



PREPARED AMENDMENTS TO A PROPOSAL OF LAW ON FORESTS OF FBiH

Following the launch of the initiative for the adoption of the FBiH Law on Forests, the Aarhus Center hired a team of experts through a public call. Experts in the fields of law, forestry, and ecology have prepared amendments and intend to submit them to the Parliament on April 14, 2023 with the purpose of advocating for the adoption of the FBiH Law on Forests and including this law on the agenda of the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament.



LEGAL SUBMISSIONS

The Aarhus Center filed seven (7) submissions with different government bodies, such as the FBiH Administration for Inspection Affairs, the FBiH Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management, and Forestry, the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management, and the Prosecutor's Office of BiH. The goal of the initiatives was to prevent illegal logging using legal means venues and TI BiH succeeded in its intentions. At the request of the BiH Prosecutor, the Aarhus Center, and Prozor- Rama Municipality, the FBiH Administration for Inspection Affairs visited the field and prevent further destruction of forests in Osojnica. The battle for forests in Prozor-Rama continues; the group has prepared the text of the initiative for the adoption of forest legislation at the cantonal and FBiH levels.



BLOCKED LOCAL ROAD TOWARD OSOJNICA FOREST

Illegal logging in the area of Prozor-Rama municipality has been going on for years. The municipal administration, the residents of the Orašac Local Community, and the Aarhus Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina have come together in efforts to protect forests. The main problem is the lack of forest legislation in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, which the competent cantonal ministry itself confirmed. The residents of the Proslap community have come together to protect forests. Together with the Aarhus Center, locals blocked the public company “Šume Hercegovačko-neretvanske” (Forests of Herzegovina-Neretva) preventing logging in Osojnica after which the company abandoned its operations in this area.





CAMPAIGN TO DETECT AND PREVENT ISSUES IN THE WORK OF THE BIH COMPLAINTS REVIEW OFFICE

During the first three months of 2023, UPTIS worked on the analysis of the documentation on the work of the Complaints Review Office (the Office). During that time, activists came across data showing a backlog of cases. In addition, a survey was conducted among participants in the public procurement process regarding the level of satisfaction with the Office's performance. The results of the survey regarding the degree of trust in the work of the Office are discouraging. For example, 55% of respondents say that they think the decisions of the Office are not understandable.

In these three months, activists held three focus groups, presented the project, and received additional input and feedback from participants. The participants in the focus groups say that the weakest part of the Public Procurement System is legal protection, which corresponds to the survey results. A preliminary analysis of court decisions was also made, and it also showed poor results. UPTIS team began to prepare a concept of proposals for improving legal protection and the work of the Complaints Review Office.

The report on the Office's performance for 2019 states delays in resolving 21 cases, and the audit found delays in 880 cases. In 2019, the percentage of complaints resolved within the deadline is 73%, the percentage for delays up to 30 days is 25%, and over 30 days is 2%.

The analysis of the available reports found that BiH taxpayers spent 228 847 KM on funding the Office's operation for the period 2019-2021. This amount also shows that in addition to conducting incorrect public procurement processes in BiH, the Office additionally burdens the pockets of taxpayers with incorrect decisions.

Find out more at antikorupcija.info



NO TO CORRUPTION IN HIRING

On February 27, DEMOS organized a press conference to address the problem of corruption in hiring and ways to fight it.

“We want to take away the ability of members of hiring committees to subjectively choose applicants. Our idea is that committee members should be there more formally and that the objective criteria should include GPA at the university, social status, time spent registered with the Employment Agency, and work experience. It cannot be that a student of the generation is registered with the Employment Agency just because he/she did not pass the competition, because he/she is not a member of some political party or does not have an interest group behind him”, said Božidar Jović, Project Coordinator. DEMOS also used the press conference as an opportunity to invite citizens to join the anti-corruption efforts.

On March 22, 2023, DEMOS met representatives of the OHR, led by the supervisor for Brčko, Mr. Jonathan Mennuti. During the meeting, Demos introduced the problem of corruption in hiring as well as DEMOS’ project, goals, and planned activities. Mr. Mennuti supported the activities against corruption, expressing his readiness to accept DEMOS’ specific requests and direct assistance to anti-corruption based on the requests submitted.

On March 24, a meeting was held with the Mayor of the Brčko District, Mr. Zijad Nišić, and the member of the Assembly of the Brčko District, Abdullah Iljazović. Demos activists introduced the activities of the project “No to Corruption in Hiring” and emphasized the obligation of more transparent and objective evaluation of applicants for positions in the public sector of the Brčko District of BiH. Those present agreed with the fact that the explained way of hiring is unsustainable, that the political world must mature when it comes to the fight against corruption, and that the support of representatives of all levels of government, from the judicial, through the legislative to the executive, is necessary.

On March 25, a street action was organized in the city center to distribute information to citizens and personally inform them about the project, goals, and planned activities.

“We tried to encourage citizens to report corruption because that is the first step toward a healthier society. The information we shared contains the basic problems and how we see them, where we see that corruption is present, as well as the goals based on which we would change the recruitment and candidate selection processes, and make the recruitment process more transparent and objective,” Damjan Dundžić, Assistant Coordinator said.

ANTIKORUPCIJA

Some of the most popular news on the antikorupcija.info portal:



» A NEW SCANDAL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA - A BANK OWNED BY IT MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO CARRY OUT AN AUDIT, AND THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE SUPPORTED THE VIOLATION OF THE LAW «

The Office for the Audit of Institutions in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina addressed the public today, February 7, with a statement saying that it is prevented from performing its legal duties and obligations, i.e. from performing the planned financial audit of "Union Bank" d.d. Sarajevo for the year 2022, because the Management of this bank, which is 97 percent owned by the FBiH Government, did not allow access to the necessary documentation.

More about this story is available at antikorupcija.info



» FORMER AND CURRENT STUDENTS OF SUSPECTED HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOOLS ARE WORRIED HOW THE CURRENT AFFAIR WILL REFLECT ON THEIR DEGREES AND CONTINUATION OF STUDIES«

While the authorities in the field of higher education in Republika Srpska clumsily wash their hands of responsibility for the major post-war affair in this area, higher education institutions from this entity included in the "Cluster" action face the danger of being denied accreditation and even being banned from further work. In this connection, the fear of their former and current students about the status of their diplomas, i.e. the continuation of their education, also appeared.

More about this story is available at antikorupcija.info

» GOVERNMENT – PRESSURE FROM STUDENT ACTIVISTS AND BIH DEGREES UNRECOGNIZED BY NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES – DECISION NOT TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE LAW ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN RS?«

The Ministry of Scientific and Technological Development, Higher Education and Information Society of the Government of the Republic of Srpska are on the way to abandoning new legal solutions concerning higher education, which would equalize accredited and non-accredited higher education institutions in the RS when it comes to issuing diplomas. Instead of controversial changes, the solutions from the July 2020 Law, harmonized with the Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH, should remain, according to which only accredited higher education institutions, those registered in the State Register of Higher Education Institutions in BiH, can issue public documents, i.e. degrees.



More about this story is available at antikorupcija.info



REJECT CRIMINALIZATION OF DEFAMATION

Despite numerous warnings and well-argued criticisms from journalists, civil society organizations, and the international community, by adopting the Draft Amendments to the Criminal Code of the RS, in addition to violating the procedures that prescribe the method of preparing the law, the ruling regime in the Republika Srpska confirms its dangerous intentions to create legal prerequisites for open repression through the punishment of citizens for expressed views and opinions. The Constitution of the Republic of Srpska and the existing Law on Protection against Defamation of the Republic of Srpska decriminalized defamation and according to the views and resolutions of the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and others, defamation within the framework of criminal laws represents one of the ten greatest threats to freedom of expression. This is precisely why its reintroduction would have serious consequences for freedom of expression and the general democratization of society. Many reports of intimidation and attacks on the property of representatives of the media community and activists confirm that the announcement of changes to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Srpska has already seriously damaged the social environment. These attacks are strongly condemned by civil society organizations, among others, the CCI, TI BiH, and CRMA, and they demand competent institutions to identify and adequately sanction all responsible persons.

After the highest level of executive power created an atmosphere of lynching, targeting journalists and activists, the adoption of the draft of the RS Criminal Code confirms the readiness to go one step further in the process of unscrupulous and systematic suppression of rights and freedoms. Therefore, civil society organizations call on the proponents to withdraw the proposed solution and note that the public debate can only be used to withdraw disputed provisions because any criminalization of defamation represents a major step back in the protection of freedom of expression.



Reaction to the Draft Law on the Special Register and Openness of the Work of Non-Profit Organizations: An Attack on the Work of Citizens' Associations




The Draft Law on the Special Register and Openness of the Work of Non-Profit Organizations represents discrimination against citizen associations funded by foreign donors and clearly shows that the authorities in Republika Srpska intend to limit the work of organizations that criticize their work. Associations filed an initiative with the Ministry of Justice to withdraw the Draft Law on the Special Register and Publicity of the Work of Non-Profit Organizations, stressing in the comments on the Draft Law itself that it contradicts not only human rights standards, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Constitution of the Republic of Srpska, but is in direct contradiction with several valid laws in the Republic of Srpska, such as the Law on General Administrative Procedure, the Law on Administrative Disputes, the Law on Civil Procedure, the Law on Associations and Foundations, the Law on Accounting and audit, the Law on Inspections, etc. Furthermore, this Draft Law represents a continuation of activities aimed at suppressing freedom of expression and association, which began with the initiative to criminalize defamation and insult and continued through attacks on journalists, activists, and NGOs.



PRATIMO TENDERE IDENTIFIES RISKS IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

The Pratimo tendere portal conducts anti-corruption monitoring of public procurement. During the period January - March 2023, the monitoring network monitored 673 procedures, with a total value of over 123 million KM. Corruption elements were identified in 96 percent of cases. Public procurement planning is still the riskiest phase, in every other monitored procurement, elements of discrimination and favoritism were discovered in the tender documentation, and in as many as 78% of the procedures, risks were discovered in the contracting phase since only one bidder applied. Although the new Law on Public Procurement provides for the planning of direct agreements, this provision is still not consistently implemented in practice.

673 MONITORED PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PROCESSES (PP)

	LOW RISK	28 (PP)	4.16 % OF PPS
	MEDIUM RISK	262 (PP)	38.93 % OF PPS
	HIGH RISK	383 (PP)	56.90 % OF PPS

122 234 778 44 KM (EXCLUDING VAT) VALUE OF MONITORED PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PROCESSES

	LOW RISK	1.085.039,17 KM	0,90 %
	MEDIUM RISK	72.673.210,19 KM	59,45 %
	HIGH RISK	48.476.529,08 KM	39,65 %

Volunteers of the Monitoring Network on a Mission

"I believe that the engagement of us, young people, is necessary in as many activities as possible in order to broaden our horizons about the current problem and put an end to corruption because we can be the ones who will bring this fight to an end," says Amina Bašović, one of the volunteers of the monitoring network. portal Pratiimo tendere.

The volunteer network makes an exceptional contribution to the anti-corruption monitoring of public procurement and provides the opportunity for young people to step into the world of civic activism and the fight against corruption. So far, over 60 young people have participated in the volunteer network of the Pratiimo tenders portal.

VOLONTERI MONITORING MREŽE JAVNIH NABAVKI



PRATIMO TENDERE
Više na: www.pratimotendere.ba

Amina Bašović
Sarajevo, (20)

Smatram da je zajednički angažman nas mladih neophodan u što više ovakvih aktivnosti da bismo proširili vidike o trenutnom problemu i stavili tačku na korupciju, jer mi možemo biti ti koji će ovu borbu dovesti do kraja.



VOLONTERI MONITORING MREŽE JAVNIH NABAVKI



PRATIMO TENDERE
Više na: www.pratimotendere.ba

Mela Rizvo
Sarajevo, (19)

I ranije sam volontirala na različitim projektima. Ističem da je ovo do sada moje najbolje iskustvo, posebno imajući u vidu činjenicu da sam volontirala na vrlo korisnom i društveno prihvatljivom projektu. Korupcija, posebno u javnim nabavkama je veoma štetna i nažalost proširena u našem društvu.



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Svjetlana Sretenović
Istočno Sarajevo, (28)

Zahvaljujem se na ukazanom povjerenju i saradnji. Za vrijeme rada proširila sam vidike u oblasti antikorupcije, stekla nova znanja i prijatelje.



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Riad Zejnilović
Sarajevo, (24)

Korupcija je značajan izazov koji podriva integritet institucija, narušava povjerenje javnosti i guši ekonomski rast. Biti dio tima koji je posvećen rješavanju ovog problema bila je prilika da se pozitivno utječe i doprinese boljoj situaciji u društvu.



The call for volunteering is open to young people aged 18-30 and is open 24/7.
Register via e-mail: volonteripratimotendere@gmail.com.

Monitor tenders, monitor your money!

ANTI-CORRUPTION ACTIVITIES OF TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL BIH

The Free Legal Aid Center Presents Results

In 2022, Transparency International's Legal Assistance Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina acted in 302 cases related to corruption and violation of citizens' rights, which is 14% more than in 2021. The Center received more than 1,560 calls from citizens who sought legal assistance or advice. It is important to say that in the 37 initiated cases, the complainants belong to the category of "whistleblowers," persons who report corruption at a workplace, and most of them are from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has not yet adopted the Law on the Protection of Corruption Whistleblowers.

Following a Report by TI BiH, Inspection Bans Doctors Operating without Permits in Živinice

Based on a report by Transparency International in BiH (TI BiH), the cantonal inspector of Tuzla Canton found four doctors in Živinice who provided health services to patients without work permits and registered activities. They were banned from operating. The reaction of the authorities followed after the persistent insistence of TI BiH, which submitted its first report on this case back in January 2022.

Following a Report by TI BiH, CEC Fines Laktaši Mayor

The Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CEC) fined Mayor Laktaš Miroslav Bojić for misuse of public resources during the election campaign because he held a party rally at the opening of infrastructure works funded from the city budget.

The punishment of Bojić, who was also running for a seat in the RS National Assembly, followed a report sent to the CEC by Transparency International in BiH regarding the opening of public works in the local community of Slatina.



TI BiH Reports Nine Parties for Accepting Donations from Companies Receiving Public Contracts

Political parties in BiH reported about 550,000 KM in donations from private companies, and nine parties received contributions prohibited by law from companies that received tenders from executive authorities. Because of this, Transparency International in BiH (TI BiH) sent reports to the Central Election Commission against SDP BiH, SDA, HDZ BiH, NiP, Party for BiH, HRS, Social Democrats of BiH, Republican Par.

CEC's Auditors Conclude: The RS Helicopter Service Gives Prohibited Contribution to SNSD as It Provided Transport for Dodik to Election Rallies.

The Audit Office of the Central Electoral Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina concluded that the SNSD violated the Law on the Financing of Political Parties because SNSD received a non-monetary donation from the Helicopter Service of the Republic of Srpska that, at the expense of the citizens, drove the then member of the BiH Presidency, Milorad Dodik, to pre-election rallies for the Local Elections in 2020. Information about this case was submitted to the CEC by Transparency International in Bosnia and Herzegovina based on publicly available data on helicopter flights. The data showed that the take-off and landing times of the helicopter coincided with the time of the SNSD rallies, and TI BiH then made public the information that in the first ten days of the election campaign, the helicopter of the RS Government flew seven times to the SNSD pre-election rallies.

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**TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL**
Bosna i Hercegovina



CENTRI CIVILNIH INICIJATIVA
ЦЕНТРИ ЦИВИЛНИХ ИНИЦИЈАТИВА

PUBLIC CALL

FOR PROJECTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION!

THROUGH YOUR WORK, YOU FIGHT AGAINST
CORRUPTION IN VARIOUS FIELDS, SUCH
AS HEALTH, EDUCATION, JUSTICE, ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION, PUBLIC SPENDING...?

APPLY FOR A PROJECT!

Podržano od:  **USAID**
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA

CONTINUOUS CALL FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION PROJECTS, CIVIC INITIATIVES AND CAMPAIGNS

The Call for BiH CSOs (associations of citizens and foundations) to submit their project proposals is geared toward fighting corruption and solving specific local-level problems or toward advocacy initiatives addressing the higher government levels.

The applicants are required to submit the application form and other documents, as requested in the application, exclusively via the online application platform available at

<http://tender.protivkorupcije.ba/>



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