

## **DEMOCRACY THAT DELIVERS:**

### **AN ANTI-CORRUPTION ACTION AGENDA FOR NATIONAL SECURITY, STABILITY AND SOVEREIGNTY**

Anti-corruption is one of the three core pillars of the Summit for Democracy, as part of a global effort to rally democratic nations and to highlight democracy as the best tool for building a more peaceful and prosperous future. Corruption can be pervasive and can undermine a country's ability to advance its national interests and the welfare and well-being of its citizens. Effectively preventing and countering corruption – especially when entrenched and systemic – is the best way to demonstrate the advantages of transparent and accountable government.

The Summit for Democracy Cohort on Anti-corruption Policies as a Guarantee for National Security, Stability and Sovereignty co-led by the Government of Bulgaria, the Center for the Study of Democracy, and the Basel Institute of Governance is designed to unite governments and civil society organizations and serve as a platform for cooperation towards the development of evidence-based anti-corruption policies and models for collective action. Recognising the Cohort's potential and added value beyond the current Year of Action, its members have come together to put forth the following Action Agenda.

The participants in the Cohort on Anti-corruption Policies as a Guarantee for National Security, Stability and Sovereignty:

- *Confirm* their commitment to act together on the anti-corruption pledges assumed under Summit for Democracy, with a focus on security – national and collective – and the corrosive effect of corruption on democratic institutions;
- *Take stock* of the fact that the participating stakeholders have already taken steps in this direction and that they would like to strengthen the capacity of this Cohort beyond the Summit for Democracy Year of Action;
- *Recognize* that public-private partnerships between governments and civil society are indispensable for anti-corruption and that “[one key strategy](#) for increasing the impact of the Summit for Democracy will be civil society engagement on what governments are committing to and how they can deliver on those commitments”;
- *Acknowledge* the desire of governments and civil society actors to enhance and strengthen their anti-corruption cooperation within this Cohort and serve as a driver for innovation as well as an example of action and achievement;

- *Reiterate* the relevance of regional cooperation and to that end the role of regional organizations in preventing and fighting corruption, through joint initiatives and action.
- *Consider* the sanctioning of corrupt actors an effective method against political corruption and thereby intend to promote efforts to multilateralize financial sanctions and visa actions as tools designed to curtail corruption;
- *Emphasize* that for an anti-corruption agenda to be truly transformative it needs to target and involve private sector corruption as well. This should include, inter alia, measures involving the private sector to prevent and disrupt the creation and laundering of criminal proceeds, in particular those linked to foreign autocratic governments, and anti-bribery enforcement as well as effective anti-corruption education and training made available to the private sector. As part of these efforts, governments should ensure that they have effectively implemented relevant multilateral conventions including the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (“UNCAC”), the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (“UNTOC”) and the Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (“FATF Recommendations”). Further, continued public and private sector engagement on strategies to combat corruption should be prioritized.

The Cohort intends to further the goals of the Summit for Democracy and build upon its achievements during the Year of Action by focusing its efforts in a number of different areas under the leadership of the participating stakeholders, depending on interest and capacity:

**Monitoring systemic corruption.** Combatting corruption, which is a clandestine phenomenon by nature, requires constant efforts to understand its causes, mechanisms and effects. Building on a considerable body of knowledge, the Cohort intends to pursue the following lines of action:

- carry out regular reporting of appropriate information about corruption within the public and private sectors, with a focus on the actual prevalence of corruption; and measures undertaken (e.g., successful prosecutions, the implementation of new strategies, etc.) to address such occurrences;
- encourage open government initiatives and data-driven policies to address corruption-related vulnerabilities, as appropriate in accordance with domestic law, such as public procurement, contracting and concessions, asset declarations by public officials, etc.;
- make use of existing international and regional frameworks, networks and processes designed to help states implement their anticorruption commitments and strengthen accountability;

- work with civil society and the private sector as appropriate in order to improve and streamline the process of detecting and exposing the types of corruption with the most harmful effect on democracy, including state capture and strategic corruption.

**Preventing corruption.** Effective prevention requires that domestic policies be complemented by a refocusing of the anti-corruption effort at the level of individual public institutions. The Cohort intends to pursue the following lines of action:

- work with partners towards better anti-corruption policy implementation;
- conduct assessments of the implementation of anti-corruption policies and provide advice to public and private institutions on improving their performance. Such an assessment should be performed by national administrations in cooperation with civil society in a broader, internationally-supported public-private platform;
- develop an alert/warning system for identification of appropriate information on cases of corruption or external attempts at corrupting state officials.

**Thwarting strategic corruption.** In the past decade, anti-corruption initiatives have acquired a new national security dimension and a renewed urgency as a result of the use of strategic corruption as a tool by autocratic governments aiming to undermine democracy and further their own geopolitical objectives. Their efforts are targeted not only at national institutions but also seek to sow dissent among democratic allies and thus weaken their unity. The Cohort intends to pursue the following lines of action:

- encourage the development and enhancement of investment screening criteria or best practices for identifying and preventing the use of financial investment activity originating from authoritarian states to undermine the economies and institutions of democratic nations;
- work towards the development of effective mitigation strategies against foreign influence operations, including hybrid threats and attacks, disinformation, etc.

In pursuing these initiatives, the Cohort intends to seek to promote **sustainable communication channels and robust partnerships** with the private sector, multilateral institutions, international and regional organizations, civil society, and media actors. In particular, the participants in the Cohort intend to:

- *Take steps to ensure* that domestic legislation and policies regarding anti-corruption, rule of law and good governance are effectively consulted, as appropriate, with all stakeholders;
- *Strengthen and promote* regional cooperation by making use of existing regional mechanisms, instruments and platforms, in line with the Resolution 9/4 entitled "Strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Convention against



Corruption at regional levels" adopted at IX Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the UNCAC;

- *Enhance* transparency, and access to public information, registers, draft laws, and the decision-making process.

The Southeast Europe Leadership for Development and Integrity (SELDI), the Regional Good Governance Public-Private Partnership Platform (R2G4P), and the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) will serve as resource structures of the Cohort in view of their expertise and capacity.