Serbian MPs commit to anti-corruption

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Strengthening the role of the parliament and MPs, and motivating citizens to take a part in the fight against corruption are the main goals of a new anti-corruption organisation in Serbia.

By Iana Jovanovic for Southeast European Times in Belgrade -- 18/09/13

Serbian parliamentarians and the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption parliamentary peers in anti-corruption efforts. [Nada Bozic/SETimes] Corruption (GOPAC) recently joined forces and adopted an action plan until 2015.

Their joint workshop, planned before the close of 2013, will address topics such as the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, the UN Anti-Corruption Convention, supervision of state finance spending and the civil sector, public finance, ethical codes and the law on lobbying, while raising awareness of anti-corruption efforts.

“We came up with an ambitious action plan until 2015 and its activities are strengthening capacities and the role of parliament and parliamentarians as..."
individuals in the fight against corruption, motivating Serbian citizens to report corruption," Zoran Babić, chairman of the GOPAC executive committee, told SETimes.

Babić said the parliament used to be represented as an institution with only a legislative function, but not so much in its executive function and added that GOPAC membership will improve both roles of the parliament.

"Legislative and control functions have the same priority and we will use knowledge, experience and regulation of other parliaments in the fight against corruption and try to implement them," Babić said.

Zoran Gavlović, director of the Bureau for Social Research Society Against Corruption programme, said MPs active participation in the effort is two-fold: passing new legislation and the control of the government.

"Participation of parliamentarians is significant since they are a part of legislative powers that pass laws and aim to control governance. This is particularly important for a society with a non-consolidated democracy where corruption has a systemic character, and Serbia is one such society," Gavlović told SETimes.

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"Developing citizen representatives' integrity is the most direct way to fight against corruption. Their main purposes should be limited and controlled executive power by the parliament, strengthening integrity in politics, and improving the work of parliament boards that should deal with corruption cases through public hearings," he added.

Zoran Stojiljkovic, a professor at the political science faculty in Belgrade and a board member at the Anti-Corruption Agency, supports the effort.

"As a non-party body, GOPAC should improve dialogue in the parliament and decrease political propaganda, increase efforts and unite against corruption, since it is a key link among government structures, independent state bodies, and citizen associations," Stojiljkovic told SETimes.

How effective can and will the new anti-corruption effort be in Serbia and the region? Let us know what you think below.

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