

Parliamentary Web Dialogue

Parliamentarians & Journalists: Partners Against Corruption

Wednesday, 14 October 2020, 15:00-18:00

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Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the organizers of this Parliamentary Web Dialogue on the crucial issue of the partnership between Parliamentarians & Journalists in the fight against corruption. I would like to thank particularly the OSCE PA Special Representative on Fighting Corruption, Hon. Irene Charalambides for her praiseworthy commitment on her mandate and kind spirit of cooperation in promoting a stronger role of the OSCE in combating corruption and supporting good governance.

Today's web dialogue takes place at a critical juncture for the joint commitment of the OSCE Participating States and Partners to combating corruption and enhancing Public Governance institutions.

We are living a time of exceptional and unpredictable circumstances, ones that are exerting an enormous pressure and much strain on the public

governance systems. Such predicament is raising worries on the resilience of our public governance, in the face of risks of instability against the growing public demand for quick and efficient responses in terms of provision of services and public spending.

Indeed, preserving the sustainability of our governance structures stands out as a most urgent task for all our Countries. However, while we should remain vigilant on the actual risks posed by the magnitude of the challenges ahead of us, we should also try and balance any such grim scenario of demise with a call to take up, instead, the opportunity offered by the crisis to expedite the modernization of our public governance systems, alongside a strong re-affirmation of their main pillars and tenets.

I am referring to the need of leveraging on the severe constraints posed by the crisis to apply and extend measures of simplification of rules and procedures, in a renewed effort to foster collective responsibility and a culture of integrity between citizens and government, toward the formulation of a new social compact.

I am referring particularly to a call for promoting a participatory approach among Parliament, Government, civil society, business community and media to foster citizens' trust and social consensus on non-tolerance of corruption.

Parliamentarians, being elected by citizens, are the “first line” in building this new social compact, promoting a corruption free environment and pushing for legislative initiatives addressing the public expectation for modern, effective and accountable public governance institutions.

Media are equally crucial in this endeavor, both in their traditional role of “watchdog” on the shortcomings of our public governance ecosystems and in that, increasingly important, of agent of positive change in the process of modernization of the public governance tools and institutions.

The role of journalists and media has been greatly enhanced by the digital transformation of our societies. They represent a relevant resource to be leveraged upon on our quest for building trust and a solid culture of transparency and accountability in our societies, particularly to the benefit

of younger generations, themselves a powerful agent in preventing corruption and raising public awareness about corruption and the damage it causes to the well-functioning of democratic institutions.

The magnitude of the COVID crisis and the global latitude of its reach has brought along the need to re-affirm the importance of international cooperation and multilateral approach as the most effective way to prevent and react to global threats. The Albanian OSCE Chairmanship has set the fight against corruption as one of its priorities. Indeed, the call for international cooperation in the domain of the fight against corruption has resounded clearly and vividly during the OSCE anti corruption Conference in July and again on the occasion of the OSCE Prague Forum last month. Today's event stands out as a further, significant confirmation that the OSCE, both in its intergovernmental and interparliamentary articulations, remains uniquely placed to counter the spread of corruption, through enhanced international cooperation and by virtue of its holistic approach to counter this security threat.

I wish you all fruitful discussion and exchanges. Thank you