

**Information provided by the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (KNAB) of the Republic of Latvia**

**The Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (KNAB)** is not only engaged in prevention and combating of corruption in accordance with the functions assigned to it under Latvian legislation, but is also tasked with monitoring the compliance of political organisations (parties) and associations thereof with financing regulations as well as inspecting compliance with the restrictions laid down concerning pre-election campaigning, the campaigns before a national referendum, campaigns for the initiation of a law, and any campaign for initiation of the dissolution of the Saeima (Latvian Parliament). In its work, the Bureau, observes the rights and obligations set out in the Law on Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau and other laws and regulations, as well as ensuring the compliance with the general principles of law and human rights.

A key principle of the Latvian State Administration is that the administration shall act in the public interest. Public interest includes also proper and proportionate observance of the rights and lawful interests of private individuals. It is a duty of state administration to inform the public of its activities. This especially applies to members of the public and also to those private persons whose rights or lawful interests are or may be affected by the implemented or planned activities. Consequently, whenever a policy-planning document or a piece of legislation is being drafted, the Bureau ensures engagement with the public before the draft is forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration.

Public participation in the development planning process is accomplished through informing society about an upcoming planning document or draft legislation and thereby facilitating participation at the initial stage of decision-making. This includes the obligation to publish a draft planning document or a piece of legislation on the Bureau's website at least 14 days before their presentation at the meeting of State Secretaries (the first stage in Cabinet level decision-making). This allows any member of the community to put forward their proposals in the field of prevention and combat of corruption.

It is noteworthy that in order to ensure continued involvement of members of society in the formation and implementation of policies on corruption prevention and raising of public awareness, the Director of the Bureau has established a Public Consultative Council. The Council is entrusted with the task to foster the link between the Bureau and the public by providing recommendations on current issues of importance. Twenty civil society organisations are represented on the Council.

Guidelines for the Corruption Prevention and Combating 2015–2020, approved by the Cabinet Order No. 393 of 16 July 2015 (hereinafter – Guidelines), is a medium term development planning document. In the drafting of the Guidelines, the Bureau has carried out a full assessment of the conformity of the Latvian institutional system with the requirements of the United Nations (hereinafter – UN) Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Based on this assessment, the Guidelines are structurally organised in accordance with the contents of the UNCAC.

In the process of developing the Guidelines, the following aspects were taken into account: proposals made during the working meetings; recommendations on possible improvements given during events (meetings, seminars); surveys, studies, and reports related to prevention and combat of corruption in Latvia, including information established during inspections carried out by the Bureau and in the framework of the criminal cases under investigation.

Since all types of corruption violate human rights, be it directly or indirectly, the Bureau has set in its Operational Strategy for 2018–2019 a policy goal to take action against corruption for the good of society and in national interests with the full force of law and public support, in

order to achieve integrity in the exercise of power vested in public authority.

We would also like to draw the attention of the OHCHR to the Whistleblowing Law that came into force on 1 May 2019 in Latvia, the purpose of which is to promote whistleblowing in the public interest and ensure the establishment and operation of whistleblowing mechanisms, and also due protection for whistleblowers. The Whistleblowing Law in Latvia offers a definition of a whistleblower, specifies whistleblowing mechanisms and lays down basic requirements for the examination of a whistleblower's report. The Whistleblowing Law establishes the rights of anyone to submit a whistleblower's report by making use of mechanisms set out in the law. The Whistleblowing Law aims at ensuring simultaneously the formation of easily accessible and safe whistleblowing mechanisms and a single framework for guarantees of protection of whistleblowers. At the same time, the existence of such a law demonstrates the position of the Latvian government that whistleblowing is the conduct of a responsible citizen in a democratic society and that such conduct is supported by the state and society.