

3. Please provide data on the number of human resources of the Commission for Anti Corruption and their specialization in the field of anti-corruption work, including newly appointed investigators. [written]

According to § 1, item 1 of the Additional Provisions of the Law on the Protection of Classified Information, the CAC is a security service, therefore specific data on the human resources ensuring the activities of the Commission cannot be provided.

To maintain and enhance the necessary theoretical training, as well as to acquire new knowledge and skills by employees, training was conducted in various forms - face-to-face, in an electronic environment and/or mixed.

All CAC employees are appointed with the relevant higher education that meets the requirements for holding the position.

Persons with higher education who meet the requirements under Art. 10, paras. 1 and 3 of the ACL are appointed as investigative inspectors and inspectors carrying out operational-search activities in the specialized directorate "Countering Corruption". Investigative inspectors may be capable persons with a higher legal education, acquired legal capacity and at least 5 years of legal experience or acquired legal capacity and 5 years of experience in the security and public order authorities and services.

8. *How many procedural and investigative actions have been taken and how many have resulted in charges being filed? [written]*

In connection with the competencies of the investigative inspectors at the specialized Anti-Corruption Directorate, pursuant to the provision of § 9 of the TFP of the ACL, a total of 245 pre-trial proceedings have been received and initiated by the Directorate, a significant part of which represent factual and legal complexity.

In 2024, the investigative inspectors at the specialized Anti-Corruption Directorate carried out 1,436 investigative actions.

Employees of the Directorate, carrying out operational and investigative activities, have carried out 1,052 operational and investigative measures in connection with the investigation activity.

During the pre-trial proceedings, 79 individuals were brought forward as defendants.

133 searches were carried out in the pre-trial proceedings conducted in the specialized Anti-Corruption Directorate. Of these, 42 were carried out under conditions of urgency and were subsequently approved by the competent court, and 91 were with prior authorization from the competent court.

43 expert examinations have been appointed in connection with the ongoing cases.

Under 245 decrees assigned by the bodies of the Prosecutor's Office, operational and investigative measures were carried out in pre-trial proceedings and prosecutorial inspections with the aim of revealing and documenting corruption crimes.

In 2024, the PO authorities assigned a total of 427 prosecutorial inspections to the directorate under the JSA, concerning the verification of data on illegal acts committed by persons holding public positions.

On 326 files, the work has been completed and the results have been reported to the authorities of the Prosecutor's Office. Operative-investigative and reference measures were carried out on these

files, including taking explanations of persons and demanding and analyzing a large volume of documents. In connection with the work on 40 files, from the collected and analyzed documents and materials, specific data on committed crimes have been identified, which have been sent to the bodies of the Prosecutor's Office for consideration within their competence.

9. How do you assess the level of coordination and cooperation between the Commission for Anti-Corruption, the Prosecutor's Office, the police and other relevant authorities in the fight against corruption?

In the field of combating corruption, the Commission mainly cooperates with the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria. The order of interaction is regulated in joint instructions. Based on the Instructions, the two institutions may form joint teams to carry out joint actions. It should be noted that with the new authority to investigate corruption crimes that the Commission carries out, cooperation with the Prosecutor's Office has strengthened even further, with interaction taking place on a daily basis. Regular working meetings are held with supervising prosecutors, during which the results of the cases are discussed and future investigative actions are identified.

An example in this sense, in the past year, the PO authorities assigned a total of **427 prosecutorial inspections** to the directorate under the JSA, concerning the verification of data on illegal acts committed by persons holding public positions.

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In 2024, the Directorate's employees carried out operational and search activities throughout the country, related to identifying persons and objects; taking explanations from citizens; conducting inquiries into information funds and cross-checking documents; operational verification of the collected data and their documentation; conducting surveillance; penetrating and examining premises, buildings, facilities, means of transport and others; taking samples for comparative research; operational recognition; operational experiment and personal search.

- 1452 Operational-investigative activities were carried out on the territory of the whole country in connection with the verification of alerts from Bulgarian citizens and/or commercial companies, organizations and state structures, as well as on the basis of verifications assigned by the Prosecutor's Office in accordance with the order of the Law on the Judiciary, which contain data on violations and crimes related to acts of corruption in the activities of persons holding public office; as well as for verification of data on actions or inactions that reveal manifestations of corruption of such persons;

- Under 245 decrees assigned by the bodies of the Prosecutor's Office, operational and investigative measures were carried out in pre-trial proceedings and prosecutorial inspections with the aim of revealing and documenting corruption crimes.

Next, the Commission successfully cooperates and interacts with other bodies working in the field of combating corruption - the Ministry of Interior, NSSA, State Agency for Technical Operations (SATO), State Intelligence Agency (SIA) etc.

10. In your opinion, which sectors are at the highest risk of corruption? Are additional measures needed to more effectively combat corruption in public procurement?

The answer to the question from the perspective of **analytical activity on corruption prevention**, related to the annual analysis by the Commission of the anti-corruption plans of the primary and secondary budget spending units, for 2024, it was found that the central executive authorities have **identified a total of 532 specific corruption risks**. Visible from the distribution of these risks according to the template of an anti-corruption plan in the area - "*Corruption risk - management, disposal or expenditure of budget funds and assets, incl. public procurement*", **the departments have identified a total of 82 specific corruption risks**. To limit these risks, a total of 82 measures have been planned by the departments.

In the 2024 Report, as a result of an analysis carried out by the CAC specifically in this area, **13 summarized risks were identified**, as follows:

- *Omissions and/or outdated internal acts (rules, instructions and methodologies) related to the functioning of the financial management and control system and those for managing the public procurement cycle.*
- *Lack of publicity and transparency in the awarding and implementation of public procurement activities.*
- *Failure to comply with the principles of good financial management and control.*
- *Possibility of making mistakes due to insufficient administrative capacity, including ignorance of the regulatory framework.*
- *Making errors/improper actions when reporting expenses and making payments.*
- *Emergence of mutual commitment between participants in the public procurement process.*
- *Ability to make and impose subjective decisions, influence and impact employees.*
- *Ineffective controls in managing the public procurement cycle and asset protection procedures.*
- *Risk of manifestations of corrupt practices and conflict of interest in organizing and awarding public procurement, including when preparing technical specifications and evaluation methodologies (unlawful spending of budget funds, funds from the European Union or other structural funds; misuse of public funds in the administration of revenues from administrative and criminal activities and in the implementation of payments; abuse of power and official position; bribery; unlawful requirements and criteria; violations; failure to comply with deadlines and obligations, etc.).*
- *Risk of untimely identification of possible corruption practices, respectively untimely actions taken to prevent corruption.*
- *Allowing the possibility of influence, abuse, and corrupt practices in the preparation of regulations that may be unclear, incomplete, or inconsistent with the above-mentioned regulatory act.*
- *Conclusion of unprofitable contracts and/or delivery of poor-quality goods as a result of implemented corrupt practices.*
- *Insufficient awareness of employees regarding possible corruption risks and ways to counteract them.*

The purpose of the summarized risks is to map corruption risks at a central level in this area, including public procurement, in order to assist institutions in identifying risks.

11. What are the main sources of information about possible corruption crimes? Approximately what percentage of alerts are related to whistleblowing?

The main sources of information on corruption crimes and conflict of interest are: signals from citizens and/or commercial companies, organizations and state structures; inspections assigned by the prosecutor's office under the procedure of the JSA, which contain data on violations and crimes related to manifestations of corruption in the activities of persons holding public office; as well as for verification of data on actions or inactions that reveal manifestations of corruption by such persons; publications in the media concerning corrupt behavior; information acquired as a result of operational-search activities, pursuant to Art. 107, para. 1 of the ACL and information acquired as a result of interaction and coordination with other security and public order services.

Comparatively, in 2024, the Commission received many more signals of corruption and conflict of interest than in the previous year, 2023. This in itself is an indicator of the increased public trust in the Commission and in the quality of the work it carries out.

It should be noted that the Commission's efforts to prevent corruption, by providing explanations that clarify the functions of the CAC, increase citizens' trust in the institution. These efforts have resulted in the signals received by the Commission containing more specific data regarding manifestations of corruption and conflict of interest. After processing the received signals, it was found that in 27% of all signals received contain data on the presence of corruption and/or conflict of interest.

Based on the alerts received, the Anti-corruption Directorate conducted operation-investigative and reference activities, documents were demanded, information was taken from individuals and cross-checking was carried out on documents.

Of the total number of signals received in the reporting period, the Commission has made a decision on 568 signals, with the inspections having been completed and the relevant reports prepared.

128 signals were identified as anonymous, and 132 did not contain data on crimes but were of a private nature.

Of the signals received in 2024 by the specialized Anti-Corruption Directorate, 226 contained evidence of a crime, with 126 containing evidence of corruption crimes. **For the same, on the basis of Art. 109, para. 2, item 1 of the Anti-Corruption Law, the director of the directorate has decided to send the report and materials from the inspection to the bodies of the Prosecutor's Office, according to their competence.** In accordance with the provisions of Article 109, paragraph 3 of the ACL, the Anti-Corruption Commission has coordinated the decision of the director.

Of the signals received in 2024 at the specialized Anti-Corruption Directorate, 73 were found to be not within the competence of the Commission, but of other state bodies. 23 of the signals were found to be within the competence of the Inspectorate of the Supreme Judicial Council, given the availability of data on actions by magistrates that harm the prestige of the judiciary, as well as those related to the violation of the independence of judges, prosecutors and investigators. For the same, on the basis of Art. 109, para. 4, supra para. 2, item 3 of the ACL, the director of the directorate has taken a decision to send the report and materials from the inspection to the competent authority. In accordance with the provisions of Article 109, paragraph 3 of the ACL, the Anti-Corruption Commission has coordinated the decision of the director.

In the context of the activity related to establishing a conflict of interest in the substantive phase, a total of 186 decisions were adopted, of which: 150 decisions, of which 24 decisions

established a total of 49 conflicts of interest, with incompatibility established in two of them, and 126 decisions in which no conflict of interest was established, as well as 36 decisions on completed inspections under Art. 13, para. 1, item 8 of the ACL, in four of which the Commission established incompatibility and accordingly notified the body that selected/appointed the person to take the appropriate actions.

The decisions establishing a conflict of interest mainly concern persons holding public positions under Art. 6, para. 1, item 32 of the Civil Procedure Code – a total of 13 persons from the sphere of local self-government – seven mayors of municipalities, for one of whom the Commission has issued two decisions for conflict of interest on different grounds, and six municipal councilors; under Art. 6, para. 1, items 50 and 51 of the ACL – a total of 12 persons – two directors of municipal enterprises, three members of the Management Board of a state-owned enterprise, four directors of schools, including vocational high schools, one director of a kindergarten, one director of a home for persons with special needs and one executive director, a representative of the state in a holding with state participation.

Based on reports of Conflict of Interests Directorate the CAC has also adopted 10 protocol decisions to refer the Commission for the Confiscation of Illegally Acquired Property (CCIAP) to conduct an inspection pursuant to Chapter Ten, Article 108, Paragraph 5 of the CIAP Act, due to a conflict of interest established by an act that has entered into force.

In the field of corruption prevention and interaction with citizens and society

By performing the functions of corruption prevention and specifically providing opinions on requests from interested parties on the application of the ACL, the CAC has provided explanations to citizens and institutions regarding the understanding and application of the law. The answers provided achieve an explanatory and preventive function and are related to questions regarding the completion and submission of declarations of assets and interests, avoiding conflicts of interest, filing reports and other issues within the competence of the Commission.

The results of corruption prevention, along with the activities to counter corruption and identify conflicts of interest, contributed to reducing the incidence of violations and increasing trust in the Commission among citizens and institutions.

An example in this direction is that since the entry into force of the ACL, a significant number of opinions have been provided - 248 on specific inquiries from interested parties.

According to the data for Bulgaria, which are part of a special Eurobarometer survey on "Citizens' attitudes towards corruption in the EU in 2024" (conducted during the period February 7 - March 3, 2024) to the question "Have you experienced or witnessed a case of corruption in the last 12 months?":

- 85% of respondents answered "NO" (compared to 83% in 2023)
- 12% answered "YES" (compared to 15% in 2023)
- 3% did not indicate an answer