

27 - 28 January 2026

## INFORMATION FROM THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

### I. Measures to combat corruption and strengthen integrity

In 2025, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) continued to implement anti-corruption policies and measures in line with the National Strategy and annual Anti-Corruption Plans.

The MoI anti-corruption plans are prepared, agreed upon, and adopted with a view to the practical implementation of the Ministry's commitments set out in the National Strategy on the Prevention and Countering Corruption (2021-2027). The Anti-Corruption Plan for 2025 was adopted on January 31 2025.

Over the past year, the need to develop a new strategic document in this area has been identified, which will set the priorities for preventing and combating corruption in the MoI in the medium term, in line with the recommendation made by GRECO in the fifth round of evaluations. A working group set up within the MoI is currently working on a draft of such a document. The document is being developed on the basis of risk assessment, made in accordance with the Methodology for Assessing Corruption Risk in the Ministry of Interior, adopted in 2024.

In 2025, two strategic corruption risk assessments were carried out in areas of heightened risk<sup>1</sup>, and two others were launched, which are still ongoing. The results of the completed assessments are provided to the aforementioned Working Group for consideration in the preparation of the medium-term program for the prevention and countering of corruption in the Ministry of Interior. This will fulfill another GRECO recommendation, namely to conduct a risk assessment in areas with a high risk of corruption.

Specific measures continue to be implemented in areas with an increased risk of corruption.

In this regard, in the area of **border control**:

- Inspections are carried out at border police stations and border checkpoints in order to combat corruption, as well as scheduled and unannounced inspections of border police patrols.
- For the purposes of monitoring border police activities, the location and movement of patrols is monitored in real time using an automatic vehicle location (AVL) system.
- In order to prevent and combat corruption among BCP staff, video recordings are reviewed in the video surveillance system installed in the control booths, lanes, and areas of the BCPs.
- At least 30% of the staff on duty at the BCPs are rotated; to that end, larger checkpoints use automated software to randomly rotate employees between work places at random intervals.
- Interaction and exchange of information take place, and joint inspections are conducted with the Internal Security Directorate to uncover irregular connections and corrupt behaviour among border police officers.
- Training is provided in the field of prevention and combating corruption and the ethical rules and standards, as well as campaigns targeting employees, with a view to preventing corrupt or other unlawful or unethical conduct;

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the proposal of the Internal Security Directorate, the assessments were made in two of the Regional Directorates of the MoI, where the highest number of pre-trial proceedings for corruption crimes had been registered.

- Up-to-date information on the requirements for crossing the border is published on the internet and a 24/7 hotline is available to report incidents, make complaints, pose questions, etc. *(an e-mail address is also maintained for the same purpose)*.
- Surveys are held with Bulgarian and foreign citizens to obtain feedback on the quality of border checks.

In the field of **traffic control**, a video surveillance system is used in traffic police service vehicles. Recordings from the system are reviewed by the Internal Security Directorate and used to hold offending employees accountable for violations or crimes, as well as in cases of non-compliance with the applicable rules for performing the relevant activity. Based on the results of using this system in the traffic police, it was also introduced in the security police.

In 2025, the Internal Security Directorate conducted over 2,000 inspections of the official activities of senior officials with responsibilities for supervising traffic control officers. The relevant managers were notified of all violations. Later that year, the monitoring was repeated, and significantly fewer violations were found.

**Public procurement** in the Ministry of Interior is conducted in conditions of transparency and publicity, guaranteed both by the provisions of the Public Procurement Act and the Internal Rules for Managing the Public Procurement Cycle in the MoI, and by the use of the Centralized Automated Information System "Electronic Public Procurement," which provides free and unlimited access to all interested parties. Regular training is provided for employees involved in public procurement at the MoI. Employees and committee members are rotated at the various stages of the procedures. There is enhanced control over the legality of the procedures carried out. Regular training is provided on the correct application of the legislation in this area.

The Internal Security Directorate conducts tests to assess the performance of employees' duties ("**integrity tests**"). For this purpose, continuous analysis of activities is carried out, including on the basis of reports received, and areas with a high and constant risk of corruption are monitored, where it is appropriate to conduct tests.

In order to improve the applicable regulations, new Integrity Testing Instruction was adopted in June 2025, which expanded the possibilities for the application of the tests, e.g. through the use of audio and video recordings, transport and communication means and involving employees from other structural units of the Ministry of Interior in order to make use of their specific professional expertise. Specific options for test scenarios were also developed.

In 2024, amendments to the Code of Ethics were adopted, covering all issues of ethics and integrity in the activities of police officers.

Ethical rules and standards are part of the training provided by the MoI Academy and the specialised police training centres. According to the Anti-Corruption Plan, annual refresher training courses on these topics are also conducted locally.

In addition, employees with police powers receive regular training on the provisions of the Criminal Code relating to corruption and the methods for detecting and combating corruption.

Systematic measures are in place to ensure transparency and accessibility of information. All service delivery points maintain up-to-date information on applicable procedures and requirements for citizens and businesses, including the necessary documents and fees, which is also available on the websites of the relevant structures.

Overall, stable mechanisms for preventing and combating corruption are established within the Ministry of Interior and efforts to develop and improve them continued during the reporting period.

A portal for electronic services of the MoI is developed and continuous efforts are being made to further develop it through improving the functionalities of the offered services and computerizing new types of services. Surveys are conducted to assess user satisfaction with the services provided, including through questionnaires and the use of "mystery shoppers." The results and conclusions of these surveys are presented in annual reports, published on the MoI website.

In 2005, the use of technological solutions to reduce vulnerability of the environment to corruption continued and expanded.

Conditions have been created for the wider use of body cameras as a tool for preventing corruption and other crimes and violations committed by MoI officials. Following a public procurement, 13,400 body cameras and a further 1,800 cameras for installation in official vehicles were purchased. These are currently being put into operation, and their use is continuously monitored and controlled by the Internal Security Directorate.

## **II. Implementation of GRECO recommendations**

In the GRECO compliance report of February 6, 2025, seven of the recommendations to the Ministry of Interior were reported as satisfactorily implemented, five as partially implemented, and three as not implemented.

The Ministry of Interior is working on the implementation of all remaining recommendations.

An updated Action Plan was adopted April 2025 to channel efforts in this area.

Six working groups have been set up to implement the plan, some of which have already completed their work.

In accordance with the activities set out in the updated plan:

- Corruption risk assessments are being carried out in accordance with the approved *Methodology for Assessing and Managing Corruption Risk in the MoI*;
- A strategic document for the prevention and countering corruption in the MoI in the medium term is being developed, in accordance with the national anti-corruption strategy and the identified risks;
- An analysis of the implementation of procedures for the promotion of employees in the MoI, including those introduces with the latest amendments to the Promotion Regulation, has been prepared and reported to the Ministry leadership in November 2025.
- Proposals for amendments and addenda to the relevant legislative acts are being developed in line with the recommendation to strengthen the security screening system, with the working group set up for this purpose expected to complete its work in March 2026.
- Internal rules on the procedure and conditions for receiving protocol gifts by the MoI officials have been drawn up and adopted.

### **III. Other issues related to prevention and combating corruption: legislative proposal to close the Anti-Corruption Commission**

The bill has been submitted by members of parliament and is motivated by the fact that during its existence (since the end of 2023), the Anti-Corruption Commission did not have any added value in the fight against high level corruption.

The bill proposes returning the functions of detecting and combating corruption to the competent specialised MoI structure - General Directorate for Combating Organized Crime, which has accumulated considerable experience and expertise over the years and whose results are highly regarded, including internationally.

The investigation of high-level corruption is expected to be returned to investigators who are part of the judiciary and have performed these tasks in the past, while activities related to the prevention of corruption, identification of conflicts of interest and discrepancies in the declared assets of persons holding high public office will be transferred to the Court of Auditors, which has also successfully carried out such activities over the years.

The fight against corruption is not any different from the fight against any other form of criminal behaviour and should be entrusted to the authorities that, in accordance with the national context and traditions, are called upon to detect and investigate crimes.