

**Conclusions and Recommendations of the Study**  
**“Public Authorities’ Reaction to the Facts on Public Officials’ Integrity,  
Described by Investigative Journalists (July 2017 – July 2019)”**

**CONCLUSIONS**

- The state institutions did not react in case of 11 of the 26 investigations reviewed in this study. Although, in most cases, reasonable doubts may be found regarding the existence of conflicts of interest or one’s failure to properly declare income and property, the National Integrity Authority (NIA), the institution required by law to verify such circumstances, did not start investigations to check the facts set out in the investigative reports.
- In at least three cases, NIA failed to take actions on its own with regard to the investigations in which NIA’s representatives were consulted by the reporters at the documentation stage and were quoted in the investigative reports saying that the situations described were conflicts of interest or failures to declare one’s wealth (Examples: **Stela Grigoraș**, **Alexandr Chendighilean**, **Valeri Hudoba** cases).
- NAC and GPO/APO showed a higher degree of responsiveness by starting eight internal verifications / investigations / criminal cases.
- The non-uniform reaction of the institutions to the facts described by journalists, allegedly illegal, points to objective and subjective factors that influenced their actions: the reform process undergone by NIA and the insufficiency of integrity inspectors; institutions’ low trust in the facts described by the journalists; institutions’ failure to identify reasonable doubts of legislation infringement by the persons concerned in the investigations; the political position of the person concerned and their party in the governing algorithm at the time of fact description.
- Of the 15 verifications / investigations started (eleven based on one’s own actions and four – on notifications), seven ended without a sanctioning decision, based on findings that the law has not been infringed but on confirmations of the facts described by the journalists. Other seven verifications are in progress and, only in one case (**Grigore Repeșciuc**’s case), there is a NIA’s decision that person is recognized liable of legal infringement (violation of the legal regime of conflicts of interest).
- Based on the facts described in the investigations reviewed, the law enforcement institutions have started only one criminal case, against Prosecutor **Nicolae Chitoroagă**, accused of illicit enrichment, while another criminal case, started until the investigative report was published, checks the assets of **Veaceslav Potop**.
- A part of public institutions further disregards the integrity issues, flagged by the media, when appointing or promoting their officers. Despite the existence, in most institutions, of internal codes of conduct or codes of ethics – documents that also contain integrity provisions – some institutions continue to invoke, as a reason, the justification that the verification of officials’ integrity is NIA’s exclusive prerogative.
- Given that nine persons concerned in the investigations have remained in their positions, that is, they have not undergone any consequences in their career paths, 10 have resigned for reasons other than those related to the facts described in the investigations, and two persons have been promoted, one finds lack of real commitment by the institutions to discourage the employment of persons suspected of lack of integrity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For state institutions

- The institutions having control functions – NIA, NAC, GPO, APO and others – should respond appropriately to the information published by the media, especially by the media specialized in investigative journalism, that points out the lack of integrity of persons holding public positions, without waiting to be notified. This would help prevent the access to public offices of people lacking integrity and would increase people's trust both in the control bodies and in the media as institutions seeking to find out the truth and write about injustices. In addition, the prompt reaction of the state institutions would give a signal of encouragement to the population to report any infringements by the officials / elected officers to the press.
- The National Integrity Authority should review its press monitoring practices in order to identify possible cases for starting verifications.
- If taking actions on their own and starting checks/controls/investigations, the state institutions should communicate about such actions in a public, transparent and argued manner, through press releases or press conferences. The public opinion would thus receive clear evidence of the authorities' real will to investigate any person, regardless of their political affiliation or position in the public affairs administration system.
- When promoting or reconfirming employees in their positions, the heads of institutions should take into account the information documented by journalists and that contained in the verification documents, prepared after the publication of investigation reports.

### For nongovernmental organizations

- The NGOs active in the areas of anti-corruption and integrity are recommended to create partnerships with media outlets based on which to request the authorized institutions to take a stand / react through verifications and investigations to the facts described by the journalists and to follow the outcomes of such investigations and the procedures of recovery of damages caused to the interests of the state.
- Civil society representatives could assume on their own, and apart from partnerships with the media, the periodic monitoring of how state institutions react to the disclosures made in investigative media reports by sending notifications or requests for information.

### For journalists

- Journalists, and not only those specialized in investigations, should strengthen their capacities to investigate the incomes and interests of persons holding public offices and the operations of companies that provide services to state institutions.
- The in-depth documentation of more cases of lack of integrity in the public sector or of abuses in the administration of public affairs could put greater pressure on the authorities to remove the persons with integrity issues from the central and local administration.
- After the investigative reports are published, the journalists should follow the authorities' reactions to the facts described therein.

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