



FACTI Panel Briefing in Southeast Europe

Reinforcing the Role and Protection of Non-State Actors in Fostering Financial Integrity and Achieving the 2030 Agenda

Date: 26 March 2021, 11:00 – 12:30 (CET)

Virtual meeting via Webex / [Registration Form](#)

Background

Whistleblowers, investigative journalists and civil society activists play a pivotal role in unfolding corruption practices, tax abuses and other financial crime cases. They raise awareness about the devastating societal impacts of these crimes and bring about political change and reforms. Yet, the low level of support and protection that these non-state actors receive in most jurisdictions, stand in sharp contrast with their vital contribution to enhancing financial integrity and accountability.

The positive developments over the past years in the West Balkans countries in terms of whistleblowers protection laws as well as the systems in place to investigate crime reported by whistleblowers reflect the strong involvement of activists, journalists, CSOs and intergovernmental agencies in sustaining political will to increase accountability and transparency.

On 25 February 2021, the FACTI Panel released its final report containing 14 recommendations to bolster financial integrity in order to achieve sustainable development. The recommendation directly tied to non-state-actors is unequivocal about the need for the international community to develop minimum standards of protection and to incorporate these standards in a legally binding international instrument. In addition, the panel highlights the importance of enhanced transparency of tax, financial, contracting and procurement data along with public access to information. All these are necessary tools for civil society actors to advance the fight against illicit financial flows. Furthermore, the Panel underlines the importance of the systematic inclusion of civil society in policy making forums.

The FACTI Panel would like to convene a multilateral meeting with civil society actors and government officials across South-East Europe to present its recommendations, and to explore how they could be best implemented in the region.



Objectives

The virtual briefing aims at raising the awareness of the civil society actors and government officials about the FACTI Panel recommendations to reform and revitalize the frameworks, mechanisms, and tools for enhancing financial integrity and transparency. The meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss the role and rights of civil society actors in advancing the combat against illicit financial flows of all forms. The FACTI Panel hopes that the meeting will help gain endorsement and political momentum for its recommendations across Southeast Europe and the World.

You will find more information about the FACTI Panel and its recommendations for Financial Integrity for Sustainable Development at <https://www.factipanel.org>

Programme

Welcoming Remarks (5 min)

- FACTI secretariat

Presentation of the FACTI Panel's final report and recommendations (15 min)

- **Thomas Stelzer**, FACTI Panel member

Panel discussion segment with registered speakers (50 min)

Topic 1: The protection of non-state actors and their inclusion in financial integrity policy-making

- **Slagjana Taseva**, Chair, Transparency International Macedonia, Member of the Academic Advisory Board of the IACA
- **Flutura Kusari**, Legal Advisor, European Center for Press and Media Freedom
- **Kristina Voko**, Country Director, BIRN Albania

Topic 2: Transparency and open public data policies and tools

- **Vladimir Radomirović**, Editor-in-chief, Pištaljka, Trustee of Whistleblowing International Network
- **Vania Calović**, Executive Director, MANS
- **Aneta Arnaudovska**, Senior Anti-corruption Advisor, Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative

Q&A session with the attendees (15 min)

Closing Remarks (5 min)

- **Thomas Stelzer**, FACTI Panel member