

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY !

THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Special Session of the General Assembly on Challenges and Measures to Prevent and Combat Corruption and Strengthen International Cooperation United Nations Headquarters, New York, 2 - 4 June 2021

Statement by Dr. Robert Šumi, Chief Commissioner Commission for the Prevention of Corruption of the Republic of Slovenia

Mister President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Republic of Slovenia, I wish to express my gratitude to this forum and the efforts of all those who facilitated consensus on the political declaration, which emphasizes our common commitment to effectively fight corruption.

We strongly believe that this Special Session represents a great opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the Convention against Corruption and the use of its review mechanism and other established tools. We support maintaining balance between prevention of corruption and its criminalisation. Only equal consideration of both sides of the spectrum can ensure that long-lasting results are achieved.

We live in challenging times, with the COVID-19 pandemic and exponential technological progress drastically affecting the way we approach corruption. Constant changes of modalities of corruption and related forms of crime demand an innovative approach in order to guarantee a high level of transparency of activities, through the use of digitalisation and IT tools, online registers like the beneficial ownership register, open data portals, public procurement portals and state budget oversight. As a priority, the staff of supervisory institutions that have a mandate in fighting corruption, must be provided with the necessary training to be able to detect and investigate corruption through the use of information technology and online resources.

I am pleased to inform you that all these concepts have already been successfully brought into practice in Slovenia. We rank at the top in terms of openness of public sector data. The National Open Data Portal serves as a single point for publishing open data for the entire public sector, including government documents and data of the National Statistical Office. The data is to a large extent accessible in a machine-readable format that enables researchers, journalists and entrepreneurs to produce new analyses, applications and visualizations.

The Commission for the Prevention of Corruption developed an online application called Erar, which provides the general public with a user-friendly access to information on business

transactions of all public sector bodies and has been for nearly 10 years one of the most prominent public databases in Slovenia. The application also matches financial transactions to company records from the Business Register, thus providing a further insight into links between the public and private sphere. Recently, the application was updated with information on tax debtors, lobbying contacts and information on the restriction of business activities. This way, Erar presents an indispensable tool for strengthening the rule of law, integrity and transparency, and raises the awareness of corruption risks and conflicts of interest.

Last but not least, we support the inclusion of civil society in anti-corruption programs. Dealing with corruption is always a joint effort, and civil society can provide valuable insight and help combat corruption in a comprehensive manner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

the world is changing fast, and I firmly believe that the implementation of universal conventions such as Convention against Corruption can lead the way to a better future. The consensually agreed UNGASS political declaration is a strong reminder of that.

I wish all participants a productive exchange of views and experiences and a successful outcome of the General Assembly.