

## NATIONAL CONVENTION ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

### Session 3, Working Group I (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights)

#### Topic: What role for the interest groups in the accession talks - Slovak experience

June 18, 2021

#### Recommendations:

- EU membership should be the main engine to make the reformation process going, especially taking into consideration the 'painful' reforms concerning the justice system, fight against corruption and strengthening of the rule of law. In this way, the EU membership should not be seen as an end in itself, but a catalyst of positive transformation.
- What is of relevance is that this reformation process and achieving of the democratic and EU standards does not finish at the moment the country becomes a Member State, but these high standards should be sustained even after accession process. Nowadays EU has established the Justice Scorecard to assess the Justice system for all its member states, meaning that being part of the EU does not make a country immune on the backsliding of the democratic and just institutions and procedures.
- The reformation process, especially in the matters linked with Chapter 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, should be assessed by all actors involved (state institutions, civil society organizations and other interested parties) not as a race that should be finished as soon as possible, but mostly as a long, complicated and non-linear process, where all the actors should be involved, and all the issues should be underpinned and dealt with.
- Thus, the process should involve all the actors that are linked and affected by such reformation process – this is not a process that can be monopolized only by state institutions or judiciary structures, but non-state actors have their own saying and should have their own space for contribution and engagement. This multi-actor approach is beneficial to assess all aspects of the matter and to avoid mistakes and failures.

- During the process of EU negotiations, the independence of judiciary and/or enforcement bodies such as state police is prerequisite, and this should go hand in hand with strengthening of their capacities and of the establishing and enforcing the internal control mechanisms. This is essential in order to target corruption and to strengthen the implementation of the rule of law. Independence of such structures should be linked with their accountability and responsibility, by establishing such monitoring and supervising mechanisms.
- Media have critical importance especially in these issues: 1) promoting transparency – by giving information to all interest groups; 2) through information the media empowers involvement and engagement of the interest groups.
- As the accession process as become more complex and probably longer than previous processes, this should be used from the candidate country to prepare by using in an efficient way the human and financial resources and to involve all stakeholders.
- It is advised that strategic documents and approach how to use efficiently the human capacities, institutional and financial resources, how to cooperate with internal but even the regional actors involved in the process will make the process to go smoother and without mistakes and failures.

### **Participants in Session 3, WG I:**

#### **Slovak expert:**

**Co-Hosts:** Adea Pirdeni, Deputy Minister of Justice; Gledis Gjipali, European Movement in Albania

#### **State institutions**

**Ministry of Justice:** Elona Hoxha; Najada Shundi; Nino Strati; Helga Baruti, Enea Babameto, Tatjana Janku,

**Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs:** Meral Todri, Megi Gjoni

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#### **Foreign representatives**

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**OSCE:** Cailean MacLean

**Austrian Development Agency:** Eggenweber Katharina; Tabea Seedoch

#### **Civil Society**

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**European Movement in Albania:** Nirvana Deliu; Endrita Shehu;

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