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Subject:	Civilian Operation Commander Operational Guidelines on Mainstreaming Anti-Corruption and Building Integrity

Delegations will find attached document EEAS(2024) 1551.

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CIVILIAN OPERATIONS COMMANDER OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES ON ANTI-CORRUPTION

Dear colleagues,

Countering corruption and enhancing transparency, accountability and good governance contribute to the effectiveness of CSDP missions and hence to mandate delivery. The emphasis is on building integrity which is likely to build trust and counter corruption. Working closely with the EU Delegation and with other EU and non-EU stakeholders is key.

While several missions already advice counterparts on anti-corruption strategies, bodies and legislative frameworks, action on corruption begins with prevention, and creating a culture in which corruption is not tolerated. A public system based on integrity, transparency and accountability with those in leadership positions setting an example, is the best guarantee against corruption.

These operational guidelines provide the tools for our missions to integrate these principles both within our missions as well as with the mission's counterparts and replace the Operational Guidelines on Anti-Corruption that were issued in 2019¹. With an emphasis on the preventative rather than punitive approach to countering corruption, local buy-in will be achieved more readily, and the mission's mandate implementation will be more sustainable.

These guidelines are a joint product of CPCC and the missions. A first draft was circulated for comments to the rule of law and justice advisers from the missions. I would like to thank all those involved in the drafting of this document.

Countering corruption and maintaining rule of law are interlinked. Post-conflict societies often return to violence within ten years and corruption is considered as one of the contributors refuelling a conflict. Addressing corruption contributes to maintain peace, also as it helps to restore the confidence of citizens in the state.

I look forward to reviewing together the initial experience in implementing these guidelines - intended for all staff - with a view to optimizing their future implementation across our missions.

Stefano TOMAT
Civilian Operations Commander

¹ Operational Guidelines on Anti-Corruption, EEAS (2019) 1218

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1. Introduction

1.1 Definitions

Corruption is commonly referred to as the abuse of power for private gain, but there is no single definition of corruption.² Instead, corruption is often explained through its different manifestations. National criminal codes include criminalisation of specific acts of corruption, such as misuse of authority, position or power, or embezzlement and bribery. It is important to stress that corruption does not always include transfer of money. Instead, it can consist of a patronage system, absenteeism, regulatory capture or strategic corruption. The wider perspective on corruption would look at the societal level, as an intrinsic part of a certain governance context, a social allocation mode. This definition of corruption includes other forms of favouritism beyond those motivated by bribes.³

Integrity refers to honesty and consistent alignment of shared ethical values, moral principles and norms. In the public sector it requires upholding and prioritising the public interest over private interests⁴. Integrity is interconnected with the principles of transparency and accountability.⁵ Integrity and trust are also closely related and there is correlation between them - those with integrity also tend to be more trustworthy. Integrity can be possessed by an individual or organisation. Integrity is a core standard for public officials.⁶ The Council of Europe, for instance, includes integrity in their eight principles of public ethics.⁷ One of the **United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)**'s purposes is to promote integrity (Art. 1) and it obliges states to act on it (Art. 8). 'Organisational integrity' relates to the rules, regulations, policies and procedures defined and implemented by public institutions in various fields of operations.⁸

Building integrity is a measure to fight corruption by focussing on the positive motivation rather than negative reinforcement. Failings in integrity, conflicts of interest or serious breaches of ethical rules signal corruption risks even if they do not fulfil the elements of a criminal offence. This is why effective anti-corruption approaches should build on measures to enhance integrity, ethics and transparency, as well as regulating areas such as conflict of interest, lobbying and revolving doors. Public bodies should be advised to seek the highest standards of integrity, transparency and independence so as to tackle corruption more broadly.⁹ Creating an enabling environment where civil society can demand accountability is vital. In fact, the evidence shows that, together with transparency and oversight, these are critical factors for countering corruption.¹⁰

² Joint communication of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on the fight against corruption (JOIN/2023/12 final)

³ Mungiu-Pippidi, *The Quest for Good Governance*, Cambridge University Press, 2015

⁴ EC Handbook of good practices in the fight against corruption, 2023

⁵ Building Integrity – A CCOE Fact Sheet, Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence

⁶ Dictionary of Corruption, Columbia University Press, 2024

⁷ Council of Europe, European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG), Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on public ethics, 2020

⁸ Building Integrity – A CCOE Fact Sheet, Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence

⁹ Joint communication of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on the fight against corruption (JOIN/2023/12 final), p.3

¹⁰ Transparency International, GDI Index Report, 2021

1.2 Background

Corruption is a complex social, political and economic phenomenon that affects all countries, including those of the European Union. However, the nature and scope vary from country to country, and understanding the context is essential for civilian CSDP mission members as for any other external actors working in partnership with a host country. Corruption undermines democratic institutions, erodes public trust and perverts the rule of law. It slows economic development, for example by creating bureaucratic quagmires whose only reason for existing is the soliciting of bribes, with an insistence on the use of cash fuelling such corruption. It contributes to instability as it makes those participating vulnerable to extortion and acts as an enabler for hostile foreign interference¹¹.

Corruption is a common feature during and after conflicts as well as in unstable and/or fragile states that often has its origin in the history and political situation of a country. Corruption can be a **cause of the conflict** when resources and opportunities are divided unjustly. Corruption can also **prolong the conflict** if the warring parties benefit from the continuation of the conflict and actively seek to prolong it. If not addressed properly, corrupt practices can continue after the conflict and even become more deeply entrenched. On the other hand, corruption can also be a **consequence of the conflict**. It can be fuelled by post-conflict reconstruction characterised by large-scale injection of resources. Corruption is a key tool for organised crime.

Civilian CSDP Missions often operate in environments where the **legal and institutional frameworks are weak, fragile or non-existent** or their implementation inconsistent, the expertise is scarce and the governance practices unsupportive or underdeveloped. Also, the host state authorities' willingness or ability to build integrity and counter corruption may be limited. So, corruption can pose a direct challenge to the successful implementation of Missions' mandates. As corruption can play a major role in the power-struggle between persons or groups competing for power and resources, Missions must be careful not to contribute to or perpetuate corruption (**'do no harm'**). This obligation applies not only to the "messaging" and support of the mission to anti-corruption laws, institutions and actors, but to the relevant policies and procedures used for to tender for goods and services, in recruitment and in the personal behaviour of mission members.

1.3 Why address corruption from the start

As conflict and crisis expose institutions to corruption it is important that the Missions pay attention to it from the get-go¹². Even if difficult, the cost of inaction against endemic corruption and impunity is particularly high.¹³ It may create spill-over effects that threaten core European interests (e.g. stability and security) and hamper effective responses to global challenges (e.g., peace, climate change, migration, drug trafficking, money laundering, etc.). **While a determined effort to address corruption may increase the complexity of the early stages of a CSDP Mission, it will pay back high dividends in terms of institution-building, stability and the overall success of the CSDP Mission.**¹⁴ Not addressing corruption can also lead to loss of credibility and trust among the local population which is almost impossible to

¹¹ Joint communication to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on the fight against corruption (JOIN/2023/12 final)

¹² Building Integrity in Operations, ACO Handbook, NATO, 2020, p.13

¹³ Evaluation of the European Union support to Rule of Law and anti-corruption in Partner Countries (2010-2021)

¹⁴ EC Guidelines of Ethics and Integrity for civilian CSDP missions and EUSR staff members, 2018, p. 14

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regain.¹⁵ In the worst case, the institution, possibly also the mission itself, is seen as an enabler or driver of corruption. On the contrary, investing in building integrity and leading anti-corruption efforts by embedding an anticorruption agenda in post-conflict interventions may actually strengthen government's position as it increases public confidence in and legitimacy of the government.¹⁶

Effective fight against corruption should include both:

- **Preventative approach** –aimed at decreasing incentives and opportunities for corruption; and
- **Punitive approach** –aimed at increasing the risks and costs of engaging in corrupt practices¹⁷

Corruption and impunity for corruption are **failures in the Rule of Law**. Corruption thrives where it cannot be identified, traced or proven. Like all crimes, corruption feeds on opportunity. As mentioned above, weak **institutions** are part of the key enabling factors of corruption. So, a public system based on integrity, transparency and accountability is the best guarantee against corruption. This is particularly true when done in an inclusive, participatory and gender sensitive way.

Research indicates that increasing the **likelihood of being caught** is more efficient than increasing punishments¹⁸. Increasing the detection of corrupt practices is therefore important. However, in post conflict situation or in otherwise unstable or fragile states the institutional structures may be transitional in nature, suffer from limited legitimacy or lack of appropriate oversight. They may even be captured by the privileged elite with access to power and resources, or influenced by organised crime groups or other informal actors. This has a negative impact on the detection of corruption and makes enforcement difficult. More specifically, corruption within police, prosecution, judiciary and enforcement authorities (including penitentiary) reduces the state's ability to guarantee human security and the well-being of its citizens. It reduces the accessibility, quality, effectiveness/efficiency and legitimacy of the system, leaves people feeling insecure and vulnerable, can lead to increased levels of crime and creates public distrust.

1.4 Policy framework and the EU approach

The **United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)** is the only legally binding **universal** anti-corruption instrument. It offers definitions of different manifestations of corruption. The EU, and all Member States, are parties to the Convention.

In her 2022 State of the Union address, President von der Leyen highlighted the need for decisive action against corruption. This was followed by a number of high-level decisions:

- (i)The **Joint Communication of the European Commission and the Council**¹⁹, which stated that “*The EU will continue its work to fight against corruption and promote good governance and the rule of law as one of the major priorities of the enlargement process and the EU's external relations more generally.*”
- (ii)The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) **toolbox of restrictive measures** (sanctions) was complemented with a **dedicated sanctions regime** to fight serious acts of corruption worldwide; and

¹⁵Building Integrity in Operations, ACO Handbook NATO, February 2020, p. 31

¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Fighting Corruption In Post-Conflict and Recovery Situations (2010)

¹⁷ See CivOpsCdr Operational Guidelines on Anti-Corruption, EEAS (2019) 1218

¹⁸ 'Five things about deterrence', National Institute of Justice, May 2016, NCJ 247350

¹⁹ Joint communication to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on the fight against corruption (JOIN/2023/12 final), p.20

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(iii) The **Council Conclusions on Corruption as an Obstacle to Development** highlighted, especially in contexts where corruption is widespread and identified as a key constraint to sustainable development such as conflict and crisis, the importance of incorporating a strong anti-corruption perspective in all development efforts.²⁰

The **EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy**²¹, sets out the overarching priorities and objectives of the EU and its Member States in this field in relations with all third countries. The CSDP Missions **are expected to** contribute to achieving these objectives. Under the second line of action, building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies, the plan tasks the EU to *“Provide comprehensive assistance to prevent and fight against corruption by supporting public administration reform, effective anti-corruption strategies and legal frameworks, including whistle-blowers and witness protection, specialised bodies, parliaments, independent media and civil society, and **developing anti-corruption guidelines**. Support the ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption.”*

The **Joint Communication on Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform**²² defines a security sector as legitimate when, among others, it fights the corruption. Moreover, it states that to enhance the effectiveness of the security sector trust between the population and security actors is crucial. For this reason the financial resources allocated to the security sector should be managed on the basis of the same good governance principles that apply to other public sectors and nationwide anti-corruption strategies should equally apply to security actors.

In the 2023 **Civilian CSDP Compact**²³ the Member States agreed that civilian CSDP will contribute to the EU's wider response to tackle current, emerging and future security challenges, including those linked to corruption. One of the deliverables of the Compact is *“From 2023, the EEAS and Member States will promote sustainable reforms in rule of law, and support to security sector governance, as well as **accountability and the fight against corruption**, in host countries, including by strengthening all components of the justice chain to respond effectively to security challenges²⁴.”*

1.5 Aim

The aim of these guidelines is to **raise awareness of the risks and impact of corruption** related to the mandate implementation of civilian CSDP missions. They aim to support CSDP missions in **mainstreaming anti-corruption** to mitigate these risks and impacts. This is done by **focusing on building integrity** in the missions as well as in its (external) activities to implement the mission's mandate. These guidelines provide supporting tools for anti-corruption work related to **good governance, transparency, accountability, and integrity building**. They focus on the complex and context specific issue of building integrity and countering corruption but they are not intended to be an exhaustive anti-corruption manual. Rather, they are a **practical guide for civilian CSDP Missions to address corruption and build integrity** when delivering support to host State authorities. Therefore, the emphasis is on practical approach and

²⁰ Council Conclusions Corruption as an obstacle to development (9015/23)

²¹ EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024

²² Joint Communication on Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform, JOIN(2016) 31 final

²³ Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the establishment of a Civilian CSDP Compact, RELEX 16129/23

²⁴ Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the establishment of a Civilian CSDP Compact, RELEX 16129/23, Deliverable 8

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recognised best practices, in the mission's implementation of its mandate (Part 1) and internally in the mission (Part 2).

2. PART 1 - THE CIVILIAN CSDP DIMENSION

2.1 Situational assessment – analysing corruption

The nature/form/type and scope/extent of corruption vary from country to country, from institution to institution and level of hierarchy. The reasons (why / root causes) and actors (who) also vary. So, to be able to respond effectively it is crucial to conduct analyses before planning activities. The **point of departure** must be a situational assessment encompassing the host State's **history, national context, and conflicts**.²⁵ Evaluation of country's previous experience in combating corruption is also relevant. Conflict analyses, country assessments and other studies may be undertaken by other EU actors, notably Delegations and the European Commission, and where these are available they can be used directly to reduce duplication of work.

Whichever analytical tool you choose, involving a broad base of local expertise in the process increases quality and accuracy, particularly on the deep rooted conditions, structures and actors. Involving local expertise in the process also increases ownership. Buy-in and endorsement at the political, institutional and stakeholder level in the host state is a prerequisite for effective interventions. Local institutions or divisions other than those directly involved, such as Ombudsman institutions or inspectorates, may also be enlisted for support. A shared message from the EU family, in line with the integrated approach, is likely to reduce resistance to reform and enhance the political buy-in from the highest political authorities in the host state for identified priorities and proposed activities. But it is not sufficient to gain the political buy-in. The stakeholders must also be kept engaged and prevented from subverting the reforms. Also here a shared message is of assistance.

When gathering data, paying attention to the **independence of the sources of information** is crucial. Public surveys, independent external agencies and (non-governmental) organisations (such as development agencies, World Bank, Transparency International²⁶), media reports and analysis, independent audits all provide valuable information which is not dependent of those in power. As corruption is typically hidden criminality statistics will not provide an accurate picture of its occurrence but they do tell you whether it is investigated at all and if yes, are those investigations targeted. Tools for analysis include:

Corruption Analysis (the “ what, why and who ” of corruption) ²⁷	This identifies general patterns of behaviour, not facts of a specific case. For example, when corruption is endemic, corruption is normalised. The corruption analysis aims to find the drivers and the enablers of corruption. A driver is any factor that generates corruption, such as greed, survival, social pressure, maintaining power. An enabler is a factor that sets up
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²⁵ UN-DPKO, Guidelines on Police Capacity-Building and Development, 2015, p. 5

²⁶ The GDI undertakes this kind of corruption risk assessment. It is an evidence-based comprehensive assessment of the quality of institutional controls, which are aimed at managing the risk of corruption and in doing so it focuses on both policymaking and public sector governance in defence establishments. Five risk areas are assessed in the index: financial risk, personnel risk, political risk, procurement risk, and operational risk

²⁷ A good introduction to corruption analysis is the CJL video Corruption, Justice, and Legitimacy program. An intro to corruption analysis

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	the conditions for corruption, such as not having a clear law, insufficient sanctions or lack of data. Corruption analysis also makes visible the contextual conditions/nuances and the power relations, perceptions and social norms related to corruption, and the key persons such as possible ‘agents of change’ and the likely ‘spoilers’. ²⁸ When conducting a corruption analysis, one must first identify the nature of the corruption, the risks and their manifestations. Then one analyses the drivers and designs the mitigating actions.
Stakeholder analysis	This is used to identify potential stakeholders related to building integrity and countering corruption and to determine their interests, constraints, influence, power and whether that influence is positive or negative. It is important to consult a wide range of actors beyond the narrow priority sector.
Political Economy Analysis (PEA)	This is a type of stakeholder analysis and a useful tool to understand the drivers of corruption. It spells out “ <i>the deeply embedded national and sub-national structures that shape the character and the legitimacy of the state, its political system, and economic choices.</i> ” as well as “ <i>the norms by which stakeholders behave and how they are incentivised.</i> ” ²⁹ It therefore helps to evaluate how anti-corruption measures effect the distribution of power and possible patronage networks.
System/Causal loop mapping	This mapping is focused on processes may help to identify corruption risks in practice when implementing regulations. ³⁰ That is to say that the institutions and processes do not always follow the laws and regulations. Causal loop mapping is a diagnostic tool answering to questions on harmful consequences, their probability, available reduction measures and effectiveness thus helping to identify weaknesses in processes or institutions. These weaknesses, in turn, may present opportunities. Risk assessment focuses on the potential for, and not the perception, existence or extend of corruption. ³¹ Identifying and mapping areas of risk is key to effective anti-corruption action. No sector or area of activity is safe from corruption risks, but common high-risk areas deserve particular attention – usually those involving management of significant public funds or access to permits or to a critical service. ³² Risk areas vulnerable to corruption may include decision making and funding, public procurement and contracting, budgeting, human resources management (hiring and promotion), public service provision, administrative permits (licences and permissions)

²⁸ To learn more on what anti-corruption analysis is and how to conduct one, please see INTPA’s Anti-corruption guidelines for the EU’s external interventions (to be adopted in 2024)

²⁹ DG INTPA’s Anti-corruption guidelines for the EU’s external interventions (to be adopted in 2024), p.12

³⁰ DG INTPA’s Anti-corruption guidelines for the EU’s external interventions (to be adopted in 2024), p.16

³¹ More about the corruption risk assessment from TI Knowledge Hub, *Corruption Risk Assessment Topic Guide*.

https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/kproducts/Corruption_Risk_Assessment_Topic_Guide.pdf

³² INTPA’s Anti-corruption guidelines for the EU’s external interventions (to be adopted in 2024), p.7

Although perception does not equal fact, it still matters. Social norms are closely linked to perception. They both influence individual behaviour. Considering social norms is even more important to conflict-affected states where they might be the only effective normative framework due to the breakdown of the state structures. So, perception surveys and social norms analysis provide valuable information on the likely behaviour of people, and help in planning and implementing more effective measures to build integrity and counter corruption.

Part of the situational assessment is the **mapping of the existing anti-corruption frameworks**. The assessment should look into if and how the host State's policies and legislation comply with the international standards developed by international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the United Nations (UN).³⁴ It should also assess whether the institutions at central, regional and local level engaged in building integrity and countering corruption are structured, tasked, and resourced in such a way as to allow a professional implementation of their duties. Further, it should assess content and the level of implementation of the national policies and/or reform plans related to corruption, should they exist. **Particular attention should be paid to the effectiveness of preventive measures as well as the coordination and regular assessment in their implementation.** These provide information on the host States anti-corruption capability and capacity to building integrity and counter corruption and to mitigate the threats.

Example - Police Corruption Threat and Risk Assessment:

Risks can be measured in financial loss, injury to personnel and other people, damage to property and reputational damage. Mapping the extent and severity of different risks is fundamental to prioritising what needs attention. A thorough police corruption risk assessment should examine risks to the police service, and risks posed by the organisation to others. A practical and holistic approach to police corruption risk assessment tends to focus on hazard areas rather than the actions of individuals. While some risks may be organisation-wide, potentially affecting all areas and police officers, most high risks of corruption will be found in particular geographical areas, types of duties and levels of professional experience (border policing, for example).

For assessment and risk reduction purposes, the focus should be on these hazard areas.

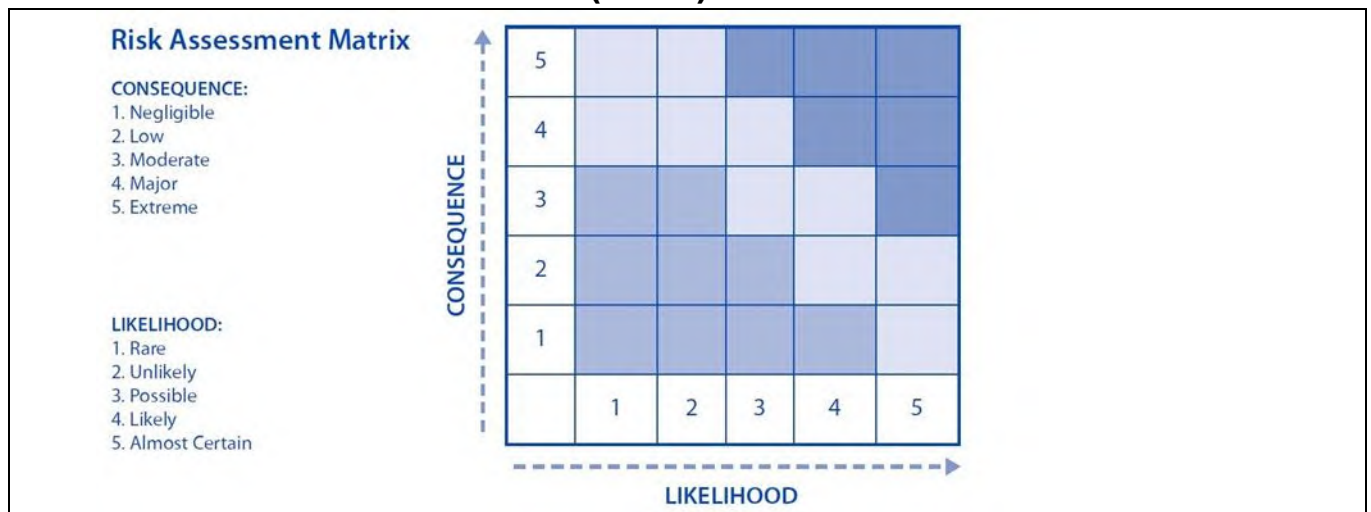
A risk assessment matrix can be useful in defining the threat.³⁵

³³ INTPA's Anti-corruption guidelines for the EU's external interventions (to be adopted in 2024)

³⁴ OECD Glossary of International Anti-Corruption Standards, 2008

³⁵ The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) Toolkit on Police Integrity, 2012

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As corrupt activities are constantly evolving and adapting to new opportunities, the assessment should be reviewed and updated regularly. So, the assessment is not only relevant to planning of the activities but also for evaluating progress.

2.2 Decision on how and where to mainstream anti-corruption

The starting point should always be a situational assessment, discussed above. Ideally this should have taken place at the strategic planning stage and have been shared with the mission³⁶. The next step is to identify opportunities to integrate anti-corruption in the operational planning phase of the mission.

Each **context** calls for a customised approach to corruption. There are a few **guiding principles** that apply to all missions and all activities. These are set out in Section 5.1.

The importance of the situational assessment comes to the fore again when **setting the priorities and sequencing** of activities³⁷. Often missions initiate a long and fundamental process which can take decades to complete. So, there is tension between a short-term objective of the mission and the long-term stability of the host state. **Redistribution of power** – formal and informal - is inherent in countering corruption. On the one hand, if not handled carefully this redistribution of power can be destabilising.³⁸ The shifts in power structures are the main reasons for resistance against the proposed reforms, as it ‘messes’ with the power structures in the host country. On the other hand, anti-corruption measures can be abused to suppress the opposition.³⁹

Working with counterparts to embed initiatives in existing policies and programmes increases the local ownership and sustainability. It is possible to build integrity and counter corruption to a certain extent

³⁶ See below at section 3.3 of these Operational Guidelines

³⁷ This idea is from SIPRI’s report *Assessing the effectiveness of the European Union Civilian CSDP missions involved in SSR, 2024*

³⁸ Marquette, H, 2011, ‘Donors, State-building and Corruption: Lessons from Afghanistan and the Implications for Aid Policy’, *Third World Quarterly*, 32(10).

³⁹ Le Billon, P., 2005. ‘*Buying Peace or Fuelling War: The Role of Corruption in Armed Conflicts*’, *Journal of International Development*

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without wider legal, governance and institutional changes and establishing or modifying related policy framework. However, a legal and policy framework that safeguards issues such as the separation-of-powers and independence of institutions; professionalism and ethics; human rights and fundamental freedoms; rule of law; and freedom of the media increases the sustainability and the effectiveness of the activities. Also to be considered is the fact that institutions and their personnel may not have been appointed in a transparent way, as a result buy-in may be harder to achieve.

Areas posing the greatest risk should be prioritised. Consideration should be given to three factors:

- 1) Significance of the problem targeted (the amount of harm it does to the society);
- 2) Relevance of the proposed reforms and expected effectiveness in reducing the problem (extent to which reforms can reduce the harm to society);
- 3) Cost and sustainability of the reforms (including budgetary or economic, but also the amount of “political capital”/local buy-in, technical capacity or attention needed for effective implementation).

2.3 Identifying activities, finding the role for the mission

The next step is to identify the specific entry points and activities best suited to the mission’s mandate, for instance:⁴⁰

	Building Integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise and strengthen of public administrative rules and procedures, in particular those lower in hierarchy than laws, to de-layer and reduce procedural complexity to levels consistent with the basic bureaucratic functions involved.• Develop/revise an institution’s Code of Conduct, Standards of Behaviour and Code of Ethics, Whistle Blowing procedure• Promote the use of e-governance and digital technology• Vetting procedures to review the suitability of all office holder in a particular institution• Review transparency of recruitment procedures
	Transparency and awareness raising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of laws on access to information, data protection• Public awareness campaigns• Engage with civil society
	Accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen oversight/accountability mechanisms e.g. parliamentary oversight• Support Ombudsman or other independent oversight institutions• Strengthen and support oversight role of civil society

⁴⁰ Adapted from the USAID Guide to Countering Corruption Across Sectors, 2022

2.3.1 Building Integrity

Building integrity requires **political will** and **institutional commitment**. There must be a demand for such interventions from part of the local elites and not only an international push that could appear as imposed.⁴¹ As to citizens, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states, corruption is a major grievance.⁴² So, a balance must be found between the powerful (armed groups, for example) and the legitimate (including civil society, so called change agents and whistle-blowers). In fragile or conflict affected countries this will require choosing the right (and evolving) mix between supply-driven approaches (geared at strengthening formal institutions) and demand-driven approaches (geared at empowering citizens and other actors who call for reforms) enhances the opportunities for sustainable results.⁴³

In 2024, EUAM RCA and the Ministry of Water and Forests held a workshop to validate the Forester's Manual of Ethics, a vital tool for combating corruption and enhancing governance. This document sets high ethical standards for foresters, promoting transparency and accountability

Building integrity and prevention of corruption cannot be outsourced to a single institution or a single person in an institution, nor can they be addressed in isolation or as a technical process. Instead, they require an effort from all members of society to increase their integrity and a whole-of-society approach to countering corruption. The population can be involved in creating and sustaining the pressure needed to fight corruption, and workshops and seminars for different groups (students, women, youth etc.) can make a big contribution in terms of visibility. Integrity of law enforcement institutions, prosecutors, the judiciary and enforcement authorities (including penitentiary) is critical to countering corruption and breaking the circle of impunity, especially in countries affected by high levels of organised crime.⁴⁴

In 2024, EUAM Iraq initiated cooperation with the NATO Mission Iraq. The purpose was to foster synergies and promote complementarity between both missions in this policy area. This has contributed to coherence with due respect to the institutional frameworks in addressing integrity building interventions in the Ministry of Interior. EUAM Iraq continues to work in conjunction with the NATO Mission in supporting Iraqi counterparts in implementing the NATO Building Integrity Programme.

In 2023, EUCAP Sahel Mali supported the establishment of a new Economic and Financial Judicial Office. The initiative was part of a broader intervention of the mission whose experts contributed to revise the Criminal Code and of the Criminal Procedure Code to provide training to the Malian internal Security Forces on Ethics and Deontology and to their respective Inspections Services to promote accountability while fighting against impunity.

Building on already existing good practices respects the **principle of local ownership** and can be used in many different stages of the process; setting the agenda, examining conditions for effective implementation, stimulating lead roles for national actors in identification and implementation and joint revision of the

⁴¹ Evaluation of the European Union support to Rule of Law and anti-corruption in Partner Countries (2010-2021) – Chapter on CAR

⁴² Evaluation of the European Union support to Rule of Law and anti-corruption in Partner Countries (2010-2021) – Conclusion 2

⁴³ Evaluation of the European Union support to Rule of Law and anti-corruption in Partner Countries (2010-2021) – Recommendation 11

⁴⁴ U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre and Transparency International, Anti-Corruption and Police Reform (2010)

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progress achieved so far. It can also create flexibility needed to seize (often short-lived) windows of opportunities and enhance the quality and result-oriented nature of policy and political dialogue processes.⁴⁵

Dialogue is a tool to raise integrity and corruption into conversation with the local counterparts and civil society in the host state. In a context where discussion about corruption might be too sensitive, reframing might be helpful. This means, for example, talking about particular goals or outcomes undermined by corruption instead of the corruption or including corruption into risk management framework⁴⁶. It can also mean **using different terminology, such as ‘public accountability’, building ‘institutional resilience’ or ‘effectiveness’**. It may also be useful to proactively mitigate perceptions of a prosecutorial, finger-pointing approach in relation stakeholder analysis by underlining that it does not aim to identify those who are corrupt, but rather to understand the power and interests that hold the corrupt system in place. Examples of **entry points** for dialogue are:

UNCAC	UNCAC can be used as a basis of conversation as it enjoys near universal adherence and many of its provisions are of mandatory character. Also, the treaty obligation to begin taking measures to implement it arises immediately after the country has ratified the convention. UNCAC includes chapters on prevention, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery and technical assistance and information exchange. It obliges a state party to, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system, develop and implement or maintain effective, coordinated anti-corruption policies.
Sustainable Development Goals	SDGs were adopted by all United Nations Member States. SDG 16 relates to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. This can also be used as a basis of conversation on integrity and corruption.
Indicators	Anti-corruption indicators, such as the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators can be used as a basis for conversation. ⁴⁷
Review laws, rules and regulations	The official mandates, responsibilities and processes are not always followed in practise. It may be the case that poor governance and corruption stems from multiple actors or power structures vying for control of resources at different levels. ⁴⁸ So, it does not suffice to review the laws, rules and regulations but take into account the actual situation in the institution.

⁴⁵ *Evaluation of the European Union support to Rule of Law and anti-corruption in Partner Countries (2010-2021)* – recommendation 5

⁴⁶ *Evaluation of the European Union support to Rule of Law and anti-corruption in Partner Countries (2010-2021)*

⁴⁷ USAID Guide to countering corruption across sectors, Annex 6, p. 55

⁴⁸ *Evaluation of the European Union support to Rule of Law and anti-corruption in Partner Countries (2010-2021)* – Conclusion 3

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Capacity building in institutions	Simply reforming the institutional framework by restructuring existing institutions or creating new ones, or increasing the technical skills of the staff, is unlikely to increase the integrity or reduce corruption as the attitudes and behaviour that supported or condoned corruption will be carried forward. Reforms must promote integrity, accountability, transparency to officials and seek to change their attitudes, beliefs and customs to those that favour integrity over corruption. Leadership defines the organisational culture in an institution so it should set the example. Leading by example sends a powerful message. That is why it is so important to ensure commitment from the top to addressing corruption and promoting integrity. Promoting and celebrating “integrity champions” can set a positive example.
Vetting	Motivating officials by emphasising integrity and merit in career advancements increases integrity. Unfortunately, non-merit-based and absence of meritocratic appointments is a feature in many countries where CSDP missions are conducted. The role of inspectorates (for example of gendarmerie or police) can be important in addressing this dimension.
Specific anti-corruption policies and procedures – e.g. Anti-Corruption Strategy.	To have an impact, anti-corruption strategies must also be implemented. A sense of ownership and commitment created inside and outside the Government during the drafting or revising process will advance the implementation. An action plan with more concretely defined target dates and responsibilities, also for monitoring the implementation and impact as well as coordination and cooperation mechanisms enhances the implementation of a strategy.
Code of Conduct, Ethics	A mission can support the host state institutions in developing such codes where they do not yet exist or revise them. A mission can also support the host state institution in training the officials on the purpose and content of the codes of conduct, standards and/or ethics as well as on the related disciplinary mechanisms. UNCAC obliges states to endeavour to apply, within its own institutional and legal systems, codes or standards of conduct for the correct, honourable and proper performance of public functions.
Conflict of interest	It is important that the codes also cover conflict of interest. Managing conflicts of interest is essential for maintaining public confidence in the integrity, impartiality and legitimacy of public bodies and officials as well as in the decision-making processes that serve the general interests.
Human Resources Management	The mission can encourage and support the host state institutions in developing and implementing effective, transparent and fair HRM. The officers responsible for human resources management are a particularly receptive audience for ethics, integrity and transparency training. Should HR be responsible for managing or organising training for the staff of the institution, the mission could advise them to include mandatory training on integrity and countering corruption in their training program.

EULEX has observed that verdicts in high-profile corruption cases were often sent for retrial to the basic courts by the Court of Appeals, arguing that the experts' reports on which the first instance judgement relied on had either not been accurately drafted or not thoroughly considered by the court. In August 2023, the Law on Court Experts came into force, regulating the procedure for licensing experts. This could remedy to some extent the quality of the expert reports and the problems regarding conflict of interest when selecting experts.

2.3.2 Accountability

Accountability means that officials are, in carrying out their mandates or functions, responsible for their actions and consequences, and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary for this. The ability to hold officials and institutions accountable is a core feature of good governance.⁴⁹ Without this, the public perception of misconduct and impunity result in lack of credibility which in turn reduces the ability of the institution to function. Holding officials and institutions accountable can be done in various ways: by the law, institutional processes, political processes (parliament) and even media and public. Often these working in combination creates the highest accountability and integrity.⁵⁰ UNCAC requires parties to ensure that they have a body responsible for corruption prevention, and a body or persons responsible for combating corruption through law-enforcement. There is no one single model which is required. The mandate can be centralised or divided. Accountability mechanisms may include audits, internal disciplinary procedures and structures, independent external oversight bodies, criminal investigations, civil liability, “whistle-blowing” and anonymous counter-corruption hotlines or cooperation with civil society such as professional associations.

Courts are the ultimate accountability mechanisms. Functioning administrative courts (or civil courts in systems which do not make this distinction) ensure the legality of the decisions and actions of the public administration and are the ultimate enforcers of the law. The whole of the criminal justice chain – law enforcement institutions, prosecutors, the judiciary and enforcement authorities (including penitentiary) - play an important part in the fight against corruption as it holds accountable those that had breached the law. To be able to function effectively, prosecutors and courts must enjoy independence. This means that they must be able to act without unjustified interference from any other authority. When mentoring or advising prosecutors and courts additional care needs to be taken to ensure their independence.

***EULEX Kosovo** The law gives the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) numerous obligations and duties including the drafting of the Anti-Corruption Strategy and the Anti-Corruption Action Plan, preliminary investigations of corruption, supervision of the property and the acceptance of gifts of senior officials, investigation of conflicts of interest in discharge of public functions etc. However, in reality, the lack of political will and support from the government, the inefficient use of already scarce resources, and poor information sharing and cooperation with other law enforcement agencies make the expectations put on ACA, both legal and structural, highly unrealistic. Without the support of the government, the Agency has only small influence and its limited resources are not sufficient for it to meet its obligations. In July 2022,⁵¹ ACA transitioned into the Agency for Prevention of Corruption (APC). While some progress could be observed, the agency still lacks capacity to complete the transition and operate in line with its mandate, which is broader and more strongly focused on prevention measures than that of the ACA.*

⁴⁹ Dictionary of Corruption, Columbia University Press, 2024

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Law no. 08/I-017 on the Agency for prevention of corruption.

Ukraine anti-corruption justice bodies - In 2016 EUAM Ukraine supported the establishment of new anti-corruption bodies, including the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption (NAPC), the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), as well as Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO).

2.3.3 Transparency

It is important to keep in mind that increasing transparency does not mean absolute openness of data and access to information as there will always be some sensitive information that has to be classified and kept from the public. So, a realistic aim could be to strive to change from the 'confidential unless' to 'transparent unless'. That is to say adopting transparency as a starting point which can be overridden when there is a justified criteria verified in advance.

Within the EU, the most widespread approach to counteracting corruption is based on the mechanisms of increasing transparency and open data, which lays the foundation for other approaches⁵². It, for example, enables active involvement of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as civil society and non-governmental and community-based organizations at local, national, regional and global levels to the monitoring and evaluation of the public sector.⁵³ To make governments accountable by developing and supporting civil society and thus ensure local oversight plays a crucial role in building integrity and countering corruption.⁵⁴ This is done by creating an enabling environment free from backlash and constructive engagement with civil society. In fragile or conflict affected countries engaging with different state-and non-state actors so as to ensure broad-based ownership as well as demand-driven implementation approaches (based on feasible agendas) enhances the opportunities for sustainable results. A culture of secrecy and lack of transparency, on the other hand, can be used as a way to mask corruption.

The principle of access to information or right to information is often legally defined in such a way as to grant the public access to public service information. In 2019, UNESCO established that 125 countries have passed freedom of information laws.⁵⁵

The mission could also support the host country in ways and means to make a context-sensitive use of digitalisation and open data as a tool to counter corruption.⁵⁶ In addition to promoting transparency, a mission could support institutions that collect data on the nature and levels of corruption if it can be done without putting the individuals or institutions in danger. Anonymising can be used to protect the sources. For example, anonymous surveys can be conducted to a select subgroup of individuals such as journalists.

⁵² EC Handbook of good practices in the fight against corruption, p.14

⁵³ Operational Guidelines on Civil Society Engagement, EEAS (2022) 1705

⁵⁴ *Evaluation of the European Union support to Rule of Law and anti-corruption in Partner Countries (2010-2021)*

⁵⁵ UNESCO Monitoring and Reporting of SDG Indicator 16.10.2 2019 and 2023

⁵⁶ Recommendation 2 of the *Evaluation of the European Union support to Rule of Law and anti-corruption in Partner Countries (2010-2021)*

2.4 Importance of enhancing public awareness and participation

2.4.1 Communication with the population

Public confidence and a **positive perception** are critical to success of an institution. **Increased understanding by the population** of the mandate and functions of public institutions also increases population's understanding about their rights and responsibilities. This strengthens the capacity of 'rights holders' to exercise their rights. It also manages expectations as it clarifies the possible actions and timelines, and available financial resources. All this is conducive to engender a more positive perception and increase the legitimacy the institution among the population. This does not require integrity or corruption specific messaging. Instead, institutions should proactively provide clear general information. Lack of communication can lead to low credibility of the institution.

2.4.2 Awareness raising of integrity mechanisms

In relation to integrity and corruption specifically, institutions can develop public awareness of their Codes of Conduct, standards and/or ethics and public complaints systems to make the population aware of their rights and complain mechanisms. Participants from civil society could be included to trainings offered to public officials or separate trainings could be organised. When there is trust in the implementation of the code, knowing it is conducive to increase trust to and legitimacy of the institution. A mission could offer assistance in organising this, for example by offering a speaker or a facilitator for the discussions.

Awareness raising could be used to alter the social norm. Corruption can be an integral part of the fabric of the society and seen as legitimate by a significant part of the population. It can be driven not only by greed and structural forces but also by informal codes of conduct or social networks.⁵⁷ So called fraud triangle illustrates the factors predisposing to corruption - opportunity, motive and rationalization. Rationalisation means self-justification of illegal or unethical activity. Promoting integrity amongst the population targets this self-justification.

2.4.3 Engage with civil society

It can be useful to **reach out to civil society actors** to provide them with accurate **information to counter misinformation** and to address rumours and local concerns. Civil society actors can also relay and amplify messages amongst the population as they often establish unofficial communication channels across lines of conflict. Similarly and for similar reasons, an institution should inform the population about planned or ongoing reforms, as well as engage in some form of public consultation or debate. The mission could advice on the need, format and the content of information. Missions have already been instructed to enter into a Structured Dialogue with civil society by the Civilian Compact and CivOpCdr Instructions on Operational Guidelines for Civil Society Engagement that were issued to the missions in 2022.⁵⁸

But simply informing the civil society is not the same as enabling **participation** to help address corruption. When authorities provide relevant, accessible, timely, and accurate data to the public in every stage of processes civil society can exercise a voice in decision-making and unlock social and economic value. Civil society can **provide useful information on factual situation** supporting the authorities in situational

⁵⁷ Le Billon, P., 2005. 'Buying Peace or Fuelling War: The Role of Corruption in Armed Conflicts', Journal of International Development

⁵⁸Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the establishment of a Civilian CSDP Compact, RELEX 16129/23, Commitment 19

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awareness and problematic areas, conflict and risk analysis, conflict-sensitive planning as well as consequences and adaptation processes. Information from the civil society can be used to explain or clarify how the population defines, understands or experiences corruption. This will **supplement the public perception indexes**. Civil society can also provide information on the needs of the population and thus facilitate a stronger focus on human security. Professional associations and trade unions, for example, could offer valid contributions, also to assess the extent of corruption and its harmful effects. This **broadens and brings more nuances in the understanding of the phenomena** and can be used to decide when, where and how to build integrity or counter corruption. In this way, it also assists the host state to allocate resources.

Missions could utilise **international anti-corruption day on 9 December** to initiate or extend **public discussions** about integrity and corruption. If data provided by host state is used in the discussions it should be mentioned a starting point only as it may be challenged. If the host state is reluctant to provide data on the level of integrity and corruption, the mission can use public reports such as summaries of UNCAC country evaluations, OECD's public integrity maturity model, and others mentioned under "dialogue".

Civil society can also make a substantial **contribution** to addressing corruption through their **advocacy** activities and mobilising citizens. Civil society involvement in drafting legislation and policy planning and delivery is an essential aspect of a democratic society. In societies affected by instability in particular, civil society can be a necessary counterbalance to failing, discriminatory or predatory government policies. But their effectiveness is moderated by a range of contextual factors such as an independent and free media and the level of engagement between institutions and civil society.

A **mission** should promote a people-centred approach and mainstream engagement with civil society. Missions are often in a unique position to act as a bridge and to assist in building trust between national, regional and local authorities and civil society. When funding is available, missions may consider Quick Impact Projects that target interactions with civil society actors relevant to the mission's mandate.

A mission can also organise, support or facilitate **(bi) annual meetings** for planning purposes and to receive feedback and to build trust. Just as UNCAC can be used as a basis for discussion with the host state officials, it can also be used as a tool for dialogue between authorities and civil society and non-state actors. As the treaty obliges the party to the Convention, using it as basis of discussion may help to depoliticise the dialogue.

A mission can also organise, support or facilitate structured dialogue sessions on integrity and corruption, or include it as a topic to the structured dialogues with civil society organisations required from the missions. A **structured two-way communication** built on mutual interest and potentially shared objectives is an opportunity to exchange views and information. Suitable occasions for such a dialogue sessions are, for example, start of planning, publication or expiration of integrity building or anti-corruption strategy and/or action plan, drafting or revising code of conduct, international anti-corruption day (9 December) or disclosure of a major corruption case. Senior management should participate to ensure credibility.

All this can inform the integrity and anti-corruption policy processes or tailor authorities interventions, possibly in new, innovative ways. So, the effective participation of civil society could be useful in setting country/region level agendas for building integrity and countering corruption.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Evaluation of the European Union support to Rule of Law and anti-corruption in Partner Countries (2010-2021)

Civil society can also contribute to the refining or restructuring of the institutions by participating in the definition of **indicators** and by providing **feedback**. To be able to monitor, assess/evaluate the integrity of authorities, their progress in their efforts, and expose and deter corrupt practices civil society needs to be a well-involved and aware. So, authorities should provide relevant, accessible, timely, and accurate data to the public. Authorities should also be open to receiving critical feedback and constructive proposals for measures to build integrity and combat corruption. On the other hand, civil society often establishes unofficial communication channels across lines of conflict so cooperation may enhance **early-warning** and trust building mechanisms. Civil society can make a substantial contribution to addressing corruption through their **oversight activities**. They have a role to play in reducing corruption by strengthening accountability systems, for example by set-up indicators to evaluate respect for norms. In fact, civil society assuming watchdog functions is crucial for a democratic society. By engaging with civil society, authorities foster democratic governance and support civil society in its oversight of the state. This strengthens the capacity of institutions to respect, protect and fulfil the needs of the population in line with the human rights-based approach. Deepening their relations with civil society in efforts to hold governments accountable also contributes to the strengthening of societal resilience. On the contrary, insufficient attention to the relationship and engagement with population and the inclusion of civilian inputs has the potential to undermine the ability of an institution as well as the mission to deliver on its mandate.⁶⁰ Where measures to address corruption have been successful, civil society has credibility to establish that institutions are not corrupt. Where this has not been the case, civil society can create demand for enhanced accountability and effectiveness from public institutions and reforms.

Media freedom has a particular role to play in reducing corruption by strengthening accountability systems and mobilising citizens. They are efficient in reporting on process/progress and achievements as well as exposing corruption.

Where public scrutiny does disclose corruption in addition to discussing the actual (imposed) consequences and the efforts made to prevent similar activities in the future, it should be used as an opportunity to discuss the possible (theoretical) consequences and to showcase the efforts the state is putting in building integrity and countering corruption. Otherwise the disclosure risks reinforcing beliefs that the problem is too big to solve and too intractable to try to resist.

⁶⁰ SIPRI's report *Assessing the effectiveness of the European Union Civilian CSDP missions involved in SSR*, p. 61

3. PART 2 - MISSION INTERNAL

3.1 Lead by example

In order to counter corruption, missions will need to promote a culture of integrity. This enhances public trust in the mission which in turn increases the legitimacy and acceptance by the local population. It also enhances awareness of corruption and the importance of a culture of integrity. Internal administrative and financial processes should be transparent and fully accountable, both internally as well as externally. The Standards of Behaviour note the importance of supervisors as role models who uphold the highest standards of conduct. All mission members receive mandatory training based on the documents listed in Section 3.2 below upon joining the mission.

3.2 Codes of Conduct, Ethics and Integrity, Standards of Behaviour

The **Code of Conduct**⁶¹ applies to all mission members.⁶² It stipulates that ethical behaviour, impartiality, integrity and acting in an irreproachable manner includes respecting applicable laws and regulations of the host state, international law and instructions, as well as refraining from any action or behaviour which might adversely reflect upon their position and function as a person acting for the European Union. More specifically, it explicitly classifies corruption and misappropriation of mission assets as serious misconduct (Art. 4.3). The Code of Conduct also describes the authorities, procedures and possible actions related to breaches. In addition, the Code of Conduct obliges all mission members to act in conformity with the **Upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Missions and Operations** (the ‘Standards of Behaviour’)⁶³, the **European Commission Guidelines of Ethics and Integrity for Civilian CSDP Missions** (‘Ethics and Integrity Guidelines’)⁶⁴ as well as the **European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour**.

The **Ethics and Integrity Guidelines** list the following as the principles guiding conduct and decision-making of staff members: *independence, impartiality, objectivity, loyalty, respect for others, diligent professionalism and confidentiality*. They note that transparency and accountability, amongst others, are required to put these principles into practice. The Ethics and Integrity Guidelines require staff members to request authorisations, provide notifications in various situations or decline offers (such as potential conflicts of interest, gifts, favours, payments, honours, external activities, spouse’s/partner’s employment, or publication or speeches on EU-related matters). They also forbid any action or behaviour which might reflect adversely on the staff member’s position. Staff members are prohibited from improperly using their relative professional position or contributing to corruption by giving or accepting bribes (for example, money, expensive gifts) for the purpose of gaining advantage

The **Code of Good Administrative Behaviour** includes in the principle of integrity of a civil servant not placing themselves under any financial or other obligation that might influence them in the performance of their functions, including by the receipt of gifts and promptly declaring any private interests relating to their functions. Staff should take steps to avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of such conflicts, and take swift action to resolve any conflict that arises.

⁶¹ Code of Conduct and Discipline for EU Civilian CSDP Missions (2026)12076

⁶² There is a mandatory pre-deployment eLearning on the Code of Conduct and Upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour.

⁶³ Upgraded Generic Standards of Behaviour for CSDP Missions and Operations (2018) 6877

⁶⁴ EC Guidelines of Ethics and Integrity for civilian CSDP missions and EUSR staff members

The **Standards of Behaviour** stipulates that professional integrity requires that personnel must maintain the highest professional and personal standards of ethical behaviour, respect, impartiality and integrity and must act in an irreproachable manner, during and outside working hours.

A **safe and inclusive working environment**⁶⁵ is a basis for better performance of the staff. Feeling safe and secure is also a condition that must be met before most staff members feel comfortable to report unethical or outright corrupt activities of their colleagues. This is particularly so if a staff member is to report a staff member who is in a position of power or works in close proximity.

3.3 Planning and implementation

The two key questions for all mission members are: ‘How do I contribute to the implementation of the mandate?’ and ‘Does my contribution also increase integrity and reduce corruption?’

When measures to build integrity and counter corruption are coherent with or even part of the existing overall policy or strategy of the **host state**, they are more likely to attract the political will required. As noted previously, a shared message from the mission, the EU Delegation and EU Ambassadors is likely to reduce resistance to reform and enhance the political buy-in from the highest political authorities in the host state should there be need to alter the existing policy or strategy. However, even in such cases **local buy-in** must be ensured, through dialogue.

3.3.1 Reporting

Relevant and sufficient data needs to be available in order to provide planning staff, mission management and those responsible for mandate implementation with an accurate picture of the context. That is why missions should systematically **include information on and analysis of corruption** as well as of the difficulties it poses on the mandate implementation, developments and achievements as part of their general reporting and situational analyses. The data gathered will increase and deepen the understanding of the phenomenon of corruption in the specific area. As planning and reporting on corruption are closely related, this improves the planning as well as mission reviews and updates of the assessments.

Most important requirements on content, form and transmission are set out in the Civilian Operations Commander Instruction on ‘Reporting Guidelines for Civilian CSDP Missions’ (Reporting Guidelines).⁶⁶

The Reporting Guidelines do not refer to corruption specifically. Assessments made in the reports should be substantiated and fact-based. This underlines the importance of a situational analysis as a basis for planning the mission’s lines of operations.

Reporting could include:

⁶⁵ Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the establishment of a Civilian CSDP Compact, RELEX 16129/23, Commitment 16. The upcoming ‘Comprehensive Strategy on a Safe and Inclusive Working Environment for Civilian CSDP missions’ will amongst others highlight this.

⁶⁶ Civilian Operations Commander Instruction on Reporting Guidelines for Civilian CSDP Missions, Ares(2024)1857793 – 11/03/2024

- Information on the concrete occurrence of corruption;
- Good practices and challenges in building integrity and countering corruption;
- Changes in the legislative and strategic framework;
- Information on consultations with local and international non-state actors on countering corruption, including preventive measures such as integrity building initiatives;
- Achievements in building integrity and countering corruption within the counterpart institutions;
- Lessons learned on activities related to building integrity and countering;
- The impact of mission's activities disaggregated by works strains (non-generic statements);
- Statistics and data;
- Any actions related to preventive measures, within the mission as well as jointly with the counterparts;
- Changes in public perception when such data is available

3.3.2 *Planning of activities and a roadmap*

Ensuring the situational awareness and the contextual knowledge when planning the reforms or activities is essential. The starting point should be the information gathered and analysed during the assessment. In addition, inclusion into the planning process of people in formal decision-making functions in the host state increases situational awareness and the contextual knowledge. Civil society should also be engaged already in the planning phase. In addition to the additional information, this increases the legitimacy and accountability of the authorities and the trust of the local population. It is also likely to make the results more sustainable. Inclusion of the foreseen target groups in the project formulation phase facilitates their involvement in the implementation and possible ownership. It may also result to identification of new target groups or re-prioritising.⁶⁷ After all, the purpose of the planned reforms or activities is to benefit the whole of the local community either directly or indirectly, not just the few on top of the hierarchy. Engaging national stakeholders in the planning process has the added value of ensuring that they **share the same understanding** of the reform or activities, the processes, the timelines and the capacities needed.

Planning must establish the desired end **goals** and aim at achieving them. In relation to integrity and corruption both preventive and punitive measures should be considered. Where feasible raising awareness and addressing the descriptive norms and beliefs of the population should be included. For the mission to participate, the plan must fit into the scope of the mission's mandate. Planning must consider the activities to get there. The goals should be SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound). The **available resources** (particularly in terms of expertise) of both the mission and host state should be considered and allocation of adequate resources must be ensured. Ideally, the plans are incorporated into multiannual plan/strategy/development annual plan which allows for the host state to align its budget to the demands. Likewise **absorption capacity** of host state entities engaged in the reform or activities must be borne in mind as it might be very limited. Alignment of reforms or activities with national policies, strategies and priorities increases and their integration into existing organisational systems and procedures increases concreteness and buy-in and increases the likelihood of sustainable success. Particularly in large or (ethnically) divided countries too much focus should not be placed on the capitals.

Establishing roles and responsibilities is also crucial for the implementation of the plan. Those who participate in the planning are not necessarily those responsible for the implementation of the plans. This also assists in allocating the resources.

⁶⁷ SIPRI's report *Assessing the effectiveness of the European Union Civilian CSDP missions involved in SSR*

Risk assessments should be considered already at planning phase. This way planning can also take precautionary and mitigation measures.

3.3.3 Implementation: Manage the “project”

Simply creating a plan changes nothing. It must be accompanied with a rigorous implementation. Project management tools are used in civilian CSDP missions for measuring performance. Using these tools in interaction with the host state authorities is recommended in order to ensure a common understanding of progress. In addition, this builds the host states capacities for future projects.

Implementing of the plans needs to be context sensitive. Mission personnel need to be sensitive to local culture and traditions and respond to the realities on the ground. Fundamental international principles and standards must, however still be recognised and incorporated into the activities. When required skills are not available mobilising existing expertise as visiting experts, from the specialised knowledge institutions or from the EU structures (such as DG JUST or DG HOME) should be considered.

During the implementation of the plans mission staff will collect and analyse specific data and report on the progress. It will also gain experience and knowledge. If public, all this can be used in awareness raising. Even when not public it can also be used in the next phases – evaluation and review.

3.3.4 Monitor, evaluate, review

Corruptive activities and patterns are changing over time, and the interventions involve long-term and wide-ranging policies. New information, such as successes achieved in other countries, or changes in external circumstances such as the development of international agreements or instruments may trigger or advise adjustments in the strategy or planned activities relating to building integrity and countering corruption. Also, some actions may turn out to be more successful than expected or succeed in unexpected ways where as others may fall short of the desired or predicted results.

Regularly tracking the implementation and identifying those approaches that work well and those that need refinement enables responding to these changes. In addition to identifying areas where adjustment is needed the information gathered through monitoring and evaluation also provides essential information for the substantive design of new strategies, plans and activities. Regular monitoring process is also important as a means of identifying, deterring and taking account of non-compliance. So, regular use of monitoring, assessment and adjustment tools is essential. This applies both to the missions and the host states. At the host state, the tools can be used at national or local level.

Monitoring and evaluation should be planned and integrated to the strategies, plans and activities from the very beginning. This includes setting aside required human and financial resources. Quantitative and/or qualitative indicators should be formulated that will enable measuring achievements or assessing performance. Data collection methods (documents review, questionnaires, surveys, interviews, etc.) should be determined.⁶⁸ For the missions these should have a link with the Mission Implementation Plan (MIP)/OPLAN benchmarking. Monitoring and evaluating strategies, plans, activities and outcomes jointly

⁶⁸ ISSAT-DCAF, Course on Policing and Police Reform in Complex Environments, 2015.

with the host state institutions increases the local ownership. It also builds the host state's capacity to monitor and evaluate their progress in their own projects. Further, the process can assist in coordinating the activities of the mission and the host state. If monitoring and evaluation is done separately, missions could support host state authorities.

There are also supranational monitoring/review mechanisms related to international legal instruments. They may address anti-corruption measures in general or be targeted at specific areas. UNCAC's review mechanism for its implementation is a general anti-corruption mechanism.

3.3.5 Communication

Missions are obliged, and it is in their self-interest, to communicate transparently and frequently with the public.⁶⁹ Communication is an opportunity to convey key messaging about the mission. Limited awareness of the public about the mission and its work makes it vulnerable to rumours and disinformation which are known to increase during conflict. Limited awareness also makes the mission more dependent on the host government.⁷⁰ The frequency and timing of messaging should also be considered. When dealing with the media avoiding speculation, providing factual information, and ensuring clarity of information are key practises to follow.

As highlighted above, transparency and communication with the public are important for the host state institutions. On the other hand, a gap between communication and actions may lead to loss of trust and credibility. So, it also matters when you communicate and how.

Communication can be used to promote ethical culture and promote the role models. But before rushing to organise a press campaign it is necessary to think of the limitations. Research shows that simply raising awareness of corruption can backfire. This is because particularly messages which emphasise a descriptive social norm; i.e. norms based on beliefs about how others behave can reinforce pre-existing beliefs of those already convinced that corruption is widespread. In addition, it also risks making corruption appear to be socially acceptable.⁷¹ Raising public awareness on corruption must be accompanied by credible measures that visibly address the problem, to avoid that increased awareness leads to widespread cynicism, frustration and loss of hope, which may contribute to further corruption.

Engaging with **civil society actors** is important but it may raise unrealistic expectations if incorrectly handled. The belief that corruption can be eradicated, and in a short time, inevitably leads to false expectations, resulting in disappointment, distrust and cynicism.⁷² So, it is important to emphasise that the institution or official may not be able to bring about change overnight. Likewise, it is important to openly state if the official is not able to take action on a given issue when he/she/the institution does not have the mandate or (financial) resources to do so. It takes consistent messaging to remind civil society of the institution's and/or official's mandate and to refer them to other sources for funding.

⁶⁹ See, Civilian Operations Commander Instruction, Communication Documents For Civilian CSDP Missions which obliges missions to develop an Annual Communication Plan and a Crisis Communication Plan

⁷⁰ SIPRI's report *Assessing the effectiveness of the European Union Civilian CSDP missions involved in SSR*

⁷¹ From "*Message misunderstood: Why raising awareness of corruption can backfire*"

<https://www.u4.no/publications/message-misunderstood-why-raising-awareness-of-corruption-can-backfire.pdf>

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5. Appendix - Guiding Principles

Always keep in mind the **Do No Harm –principle**, and **conflict sensitivity**.⁷³ It aims to avoid exposing people to additional risks through our action. Conflict is associated with the breakdown in governmental structures. In every conflict there are forces and structures present that promote or maintain violence, as well as forces and structures that promote peace. As is implicitly noted in the common definition of corruption – “Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” - It is about power. It can be formal or informal. Fighting corruption is therefore also about re-distribution of power. When trying to hang on to their power the threat from “the powerful” and corrupt can be even greater to the civilians than that from an external adversary.⁷⁴ For example, the powerful politicians and populists may use anti-corruption campaigns to discredit or even eliminate their opponents. Likewise, corrupt security forces may not be able to provide security to civilians and can become a threat to them.⁷⁵ International actors can cause damage by failing to act; equally they can cause damage by articulating or promoting their interest and priorities too vigorously. Any international involvement has unavoidable side effects but a mission should look at the broader context, mitigate potential negative effects, or avoid unintended contribution to violating human rights, human security, the social fabric, the economy or the environment. Do No Harm –principle applies to planning, evaluation and adaptation of measures in crisis management.

Taking a **human rights-based approach**⁷⁶ is in line with the core values of the EU as set out in the Treaties and an EU standard policy. It is a methodology used for mainstreaming human rights. It serves to ensure that all policies and actions are aimed at realising the human rights of the whole of society without discrimination, be it direct or indirect. In the CSDP mission context this means ensuring that human rights are integrated consistently and coherently in missions. The long-term objective of human rights mainstreaming is to ensure that societies are resilient, inclusive and democratic, and enjoy lasting peace. Integrity, countering corruption and human rights approach are interlinked in that they all aim to uphold the rule of law and are people-centred. Experience of police reform from CSDP missions indicates that anti-corruption strategies need to be embedded in the broader framework of democratic institution-building that promotes a human rights-based approach. This point cannot be overstated in the efforts of missions are to gain traction and be sustainable.

Local ownership is one of the core principles of any CSDP mission, and its importance is underlined by the Compact to ensure the sustainability of the results and to contribute to the resilience, stability and security of host countries. This principle is evident from the fact that missions are established at the invitation of the host country. This stakeholder engagement should start during the situational assessment and continue during the design and the implementation phases.⁷⁷ It requires resisting the temptation of the mission’s high-level experts to “take over” tasks and processes but instead encouraging the host state authorities to assume primary responsibility and actively support and assist them. This form of cooperation will build up a long term and self-sustainable capacity.

⁷³ The 2011 World Development Report highlighted the importance of First, Do No Harm – Then, Build Trust: Anti-Corruption Strategies in Fragile Situations

⁷⁴ NATO Handbook, pp 33 and 35

⁷⁵ “In Control A Practical Guide for Civilian Experts Working in Crisis Management Mission. ENTRi Handbook.” https://www.cep.si/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ENTRi-In-Control_English.pdf

⁷⁶ More on Human Rights mainstreaming at Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines on Human Rights Mainstreaming and Human Rights Due Diligence (2021)

⁷⁷ UN-DPKO, Guidelines on Police Capacity-Building and Development, 1 April 2015, page 12

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Civil society is a key partner of the missions.⁷⁸ The need to deepen engagement with civil society is also acknowledged in the Compact.⁷⁹ It is important to reach out to the civil society to ensure buy-in, credibility, and cross-societal consensus as policies and practical measures are most likely to succeed if they enjoy the full support and participation of, and are owned by, civil society as representatives of the population. At a minimum, civil society should be aware and informed, but preferably their relevant views also inform the implementation of the mandate. In interactions with civil society, the mission may seek information regarding corruption, relating to areas such as bribery, nepotism, access to justice, as well as to the existence and ramifications of national legislation or strategy on fighting corruption. Corruption of the partner security institutions may eventually affect the legitimacy of the missions, especially if they are perceived to be working only with these institutions.⁸⁰

The Compact further consolidated the concept of the **Integrated Approach**⁸¹ to external conflicts and crises. It is a framework for a more coherent and holistic engagement by the EU to external conflicts and crises and promotes human security. It also creates more leverage with local counterparts. It requires cooperation among all EU actors within a mission's theatre of operations as well as with Commission programmes, agencies and projects, and Member States' actions and activities). After all, a CSDP mission is likely to be only one actor in and only a part of the transformation process of the host state. Integrated approach also requires active implementation of crosscutting issues. For example, the fight against corruption is also part of the political, human rights, security and sectoral policies dialogues with third countries and international organisations. Adherence to the integrated approach increases the effectiveness and impact of the missions. While there are no common EU means to assess joint impact, missions should report on how they apply and contribute to the EU Integrated Approach and Team Europe Initiatives.

Gender is also relevant in building integrity and counter corruption as corruption exacerbates inequalities and disproportionately affects women, girls and persons with disabilities.⁸²

⁷⁸ For more on interaction with civil society, see Civilian Operations Commander Operational Guidelines on Civil Society Engagement (EEAS(2022)1705 which includes a toolbox for engagement

⁷⁹ See Compact Commitment 19

⁸⁰ SIPRI's *report Assessing the effectiveness of the European Union Civilian CSDP missions involved in SSR*, p. 61

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⁸² For more on gender and corruption, see UNODC (2020) Mainstreaming Gender in Corruption Projects/Programmes: Briefing Note for UNODC Staff: https://www.unodc.org/documents/Gender/20-05712_Corruption_Brief_ebook_cb.pdf