

Tracking Transboundary Corruption

European Corruption Observatory Workshop Minutes and
Feedback

Lithuania July 08th 2015



Agenda

9-10am – Morning Session

10.15 – 12.15 Training Session

10.15 – 11.15 Trans boundary Investigative Journalism and cooperation (Alison Coleman TI EU)

11.15 – 12.15 The use of open data and digital tools for Transparency (Open Knowledge Foundation)

12.15 – 13.15 Lunch

13.15 – 15.15 Training Session

13.15 – 14.15 Introduction to ECO (Alison Coleman TI EU)

14.15 – 15.15 Exploring ECO and ECO Match (Alison Coleman TI EU)

15.15 – 15.45 Coffee Break

15.45 – 17.45 Training Session

15.45 – 17.45 The role of media (TI Lithuania)

10.15 – 12.15 Training Session on Transboundary Investigative Journalism and Cooperation

See Annex 1 for list of the participants



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Programme of the European Union

Minutes

09.00 – 10.00 Morning Session

As the workshop took place in the same venue as the Transparency International School on Integrity the attendees were invited to attend the morning session at the School on Integrity. These morning sessions give the participants the opportunity to join small informal groups to discuss a wide variety of corruption issues. The morning sessions were led by Nicholas Charron, a Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and a Research Fellow at the Quality of Government Institute, University of Gothenburg, Santhosh Srinivasan, a researcher a Transparency International, Stan Cutzach, Governance Manager at Transparency International, and Karolis Granickas, Transparency International Lithuania.

10.15 – 11.15 Training Session

Transboundary Investigative Journalism and Cooperation: Alison Coleman from Transparency International EU (TI EU) office introduced the workshop and gave a presentation on the current state of investigation journalism and need for increased transboundary cooperation in this field throughout Europe. See Annex 2 for the presentation.

The Use of Open Data and Digital Tools for Transparency and Investigations: Attendees from the Open Knowledge Foundation (Mara Mendes and Anna Alberts) shared their thoughts on the importance of Open Knowledge and how it can be used in investigations and journalism work.

13.15 – 15.15 Training Session

Alison Coleman TI EU provided an overview of the ECO project and how to use the beta version of the web tool. Attendees were then invited to explore the tool and its capabilities and then in three groups to discuss what improvements they could envision for the site, what is missing and how they would use it. The groups then provided feedback on these issues.

Feedback from Participants

The participants working off the Beta version of the tool were able to highlight a number of areas where they felt improvements could be made.

Highlights of the feedback included:

Overall Participants felt that the database would be used for investigations for research mostly and that it would be particularly interesting to compare corruption across the regions of the EU. Participants also felt that it would be useful to see if a country / topic has already been tagged and to remove from view those that had not yet been tagged. It would also be useful to have the ability to subscribe so that you can receive emails when articles are added on regions, sectors etc. Country profiles would be particularly interesting – showing the latest information and when it was last updated. Advanced search capabilities would be useful such as available on google scholar for example. It would be very useful to see associations – for example if you filter for a country you could have a word cloud that shows which sectors and or issues are the most prevalent. For ECO match it would be useful to have wider research available background stories and links to journalists. While basic introductory videos (how to videos in corruption issues) would be a benefit.

- **Home Page:** The participants questioned whether having a map of Europe was the right entry point for a database such as this. Overall they felt a more dynamic home page would be more interesting which had regular updates. This could be either seeing the top media articles on the home page or the latest added media articles
- **Other Pages:** The participants overall felt a simpler design to the database would be more user friendly. They did not want to see multiple landing pages but rather one page for articles and one page for cases. It would be more useful to see all of the filters (type of corruption, sector, and country) on the same page rather than having to jump from page to page.
- **Articles:** The participants questioned the rating system in that it was not clear if it referred to a popular media article or if the article was particularly useful. For research and investigation it would be more beneficial if the rating system referred to how useful the article is. If you were to include a rating system then it would be useful to be able to filter the articles to see the top rated articles. It was noted that the current date on articles was the date it was added to the database and not the date that it was actually published. Participants felt this was misleading as often these

dates varied – it would be more useful to see the actual date of publication. A number of participants felt that a commenting function could be useful as this would encourage engagement among users and feedback.

- **Cases:** Many participants liked the case function so that they could see an overview of a particular story. However they felt that it would be more useful to see how many articles are included in each case so as to provide an insight as to how big the story was. Some of the participants felt that further information on particular cases would be very beneficial such as decisions from the courts etc. or indeed if there were links to relevant laws and regulations.
- **Sources:** For researchers it was felt that only providing links to those articles that are free to access on the internet would be useful and not to paid / subscriber only media sites. The majority of participants wanted to have further information on what kind of RSS feeds were being used to populate the database – what media sources were being included. Criteria for including RSS feeds should also be made available on the website.
- **Filtering:** Although being able to filter articles and cases by type of corruption, sector and country was a good design feature it needed to be further refined. In particular it was pointed out that it was not useful (and a little misleading) to see all of the filters even if no article or case had been tagged with that particular filter. It was only useful to see those filters that had associated articles and cases. Unused filters should not be visible to the user. Participants also highlighted that it would be useful to see associations between filters. For example if you filtered the articles for a particular country then it would be very helpful to see what other filters (types of corruption, sector) were included in this filtered list. A word cloud could be one way to visualise this.
- **Search Function:** The current search function was felt to be very limited, participants highlighted that an advanced search function would be much more useful particularly for those users conducting research. Participants pointed to the search functionality on google scholar as a good example. Beyond a more advanced search function that would include being able to search both article and case lists participants called for filtering on the search results. Search lists should also include the ability to filter the list by type of corruption, sector and country.

- **Statistics / Visualisation:** Participants felt that statistics on the database would be useful for researchers. A visual representation of the database contents showing prevalence of type of corruption and sectors in particular would be helpful. A visual representation of a country profile where a user could easily see which types of corruption or sectors were most common was felt to be an interesting design feature that could be integrated into the system.
- **User functionality:** Participants wanted the ability to subscribe to the database so that users could receive email updates on new articles when they were added to the site. In particular it would be useful to receive an email update in relation to filters (country, type of corruption etc.). So rather than having to constantly check the website for new articles on a regular basis users would instead receive an email notification tailored to their particular interests. It was also suggested that having the ability to subscribe to other key words (outside of particular filters) would be useful. Some participants also felt that design features such as being able to save articles to read for later would be helpful, along with more share buttons (facebook, twitter, email etc)

A full list of comments can be found in Annex 3.

15.45 – 17.45 Media Training Session

TI Lithuania provided training on the importance of ethics and fact-checking to ensure balanced representation, how to choose stories, wording, etc. TV extracts from various TV channels and programs around EU countries were shown highlighting how sometimes information can be distorted. This provided solid grounds for discussions about the decisions made in the editorial room and the impact of media pieces for the public.

Annex 1: List of Participants

First Name	Surname
Anna Flora Robinetta	Alberts
Michel	Anderlini
Aniela	Aron
Amanda	Bengtsson
Pernilla Lina	Bergstrom
Olafs	Grigus
Dragos	Grosu
Olga	Ixari
Agnija	Jansone
Florika	Kolaci
Timo	Klaasveen
Gita	Lazdane
Cameron	Maciver
Mara	Mendes
Katerina	Novikova
Harry	Roberts
Vasil	Stefanov
Aleko	Stoyanov
Bogdan-Costel	Ursu
Johannes	Wendt
Evelien	Westert
Ruta	Mrazauskaite
Paulius	Murauskas

Annex 2: Presentation



TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL
the global coalition against corruption
EU OFFICE

EUROPEAN CORRUPTION OBSERVATORY

COLLABORATE AND VISUALISE

Alison Coleman
EU Project Coordinator

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA



Increase Transparency and Accountability

In most countries surveyed more people believed in the effectiveness of journalists than in national anti-bribery laws. Journalism and its possible effect of naming and shaming is seen as a very effective deterrent to corruption.



TRANSBOUNDARY MOVEMENT



Corruption doesn't respect borders

- In a world where people, money, and businesses can quickly and freely move across borders it means that crime and corruption are also going global.
- Investigating international corruption cases, following illicit flows of money across borders or just swathing through huge amounts of data files takes cooperation, technological expertise and many other skill sets.
- Investigations now need collaboration and the ability to use new technology to make sense of all the available data.
 - There's been [Swissleaks](#), [Luxleaks](#), [NSA leaks](#) and [Yanukovychleaks](#). There are stories about [shell companies](#) buying up New York, [Petrobras bribery investigations](#) and [politicians](#) laundering their money.

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FUTURE OF JOURNALISM



Only a few short years ago many people were sounding the death knell. News was moving from print to digital, ad sales were down, the financial crisis was taking its toll and newsrooms were closing or shrinking across the globe. With money so tight it was hard to justify these in-depth, time consuming, resource draining investigations.

The rumours about the demise of investigative journalism have been greatly exaggerated.

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- One of the transformations has been in the way that investigative journalists work. While in the past they may have been solitary creatures, (lone wolves) reluctant to share their information and sources - a cultural change towards collaborative journalism is happening. Journalists are now sharing their methods and skills and are working together to break stories.

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EUROPEAN CORRUPTION OBSERVATORY



- Alongside this, access to information is also increasing and data journalism is on the rise. Data analysis and data visualization are helping investigative journalists transform enormous amounts of information into easily accessible and compelling stories.

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SWISS LEAKS



- Crime and corruption are also going global.
- The documents obtained by ICIJ via the French newspaper Le Monde are already the [basis of tax investigations](#) in multiple countries after originally being shared by French tax authorities. The leaked files provide details on the names, professions and value of assets of over 100,000 HSBC clients, who included royalty, politicians, public figures, celebrities and business leaders in more than 200 countries.
-

SWISS LEAKS



- International Consortium of Investigative Journalists worked with more than [140 reporters in 45 countries](#)
- 60,000 leaked files, some of which provide explicit details of how the bank was aware of wrongdoing by some clients. The total value held in the bank accounts exceeds \$100 billion
- ICIJ and its media partners used traditional reporting methods as well as data analysis and online tools designed especially for this project.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM



- Journalism Fund EU
- European Journalism Centre
- ICIJ
- IRE
- Baltic centre for investigative journalism
- GIJN
- OCCRP
- SCOOP
- Bureau of Investigative Journalism
- Centre for Investigative Journalism
- Hacks/Hackers

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EUROPEAN CORRUPTION OBSERVATORY



What's Missing?

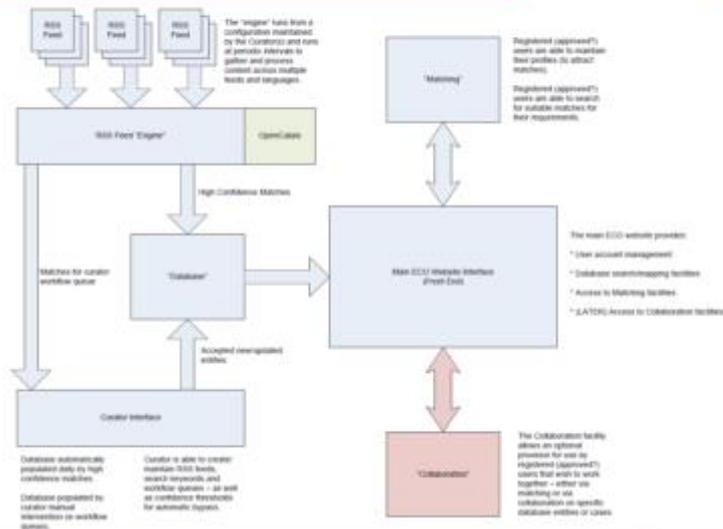
A media monitoring tool on corruption

Not just about investigative journalism

- Provide an evidence base for EU policy making
- Facilitate analysis and identification of corruption trends
- Increase transnational knowledge of corruption
- Create a taxonomy of corruption stories
- Provide a platform for exchange and networking
- Promote Pan European collaboration

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HOW DOES IT WORK



RSS FEEDS



- Initially wanted the top 5 media sites in each member state – plus wires, international press etc
- Minimum of 140 RSS feeds
- Currently tracking 88

SEARCH TERMS (IN ALL EU LANGUAGES)



1. Asset Recovery
2. Bribery
3. Clientelism
4. Collusion
5. Corruption
6. Debarment
7. Price fixing
8. Conflict of interest
9. Cronyism
10. Embezzlement
11. Extortion
12. Facilitation payment
13. Fraud
14. False accounting
15. Graft
16. Illegal lobbying
17. Illicit political contribution
18. Kickback
19. Insider Trading
20. Misuse of Public Position
21. Money Laundering
22. Nepotism
23. Peddling influence
24. Policy Capture
25. Revolving Door
26. Solicitation
27. State capture
28. Tax evasion
29. Trafficking influence
30. Vote-buying
31. Whistleblower
32. Whistle-blower
33. Whistleblowing
34. Whistle-blowing

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CORRUPTION ISSUE



1. Blackmail
2. Bribery
3. Clientelism/ Patronage
4. Collusion/ Cartel /Price Fixing
5. Conflict of Interest
6. Cronyism
7. Data Theft
8. Embezzlement
9. Facilitating Tax Evasion
10. Facilitation Payment
11. Favouritism
12. Fraud/ False Accounting
13. Gift Giving
14. Illegal Lobbying
15. Illicit Political Contribution
16. Inefficiency/ Red Tape
17. Kickback
18. Lack of Transparency
19. Mismanagement of Public Funds
20. Misuse of Insider information
21. Misuse of Public Position
22. Money Laundering
23. Nepotism
24. Revolving Door
25. Sexual Favours
26. Theft
27. Trafficking of Influence
28. Vote-buying
29. Welfare Fraud
30. Whistleblower Retaliation
31. Withholding of Public Information

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SECTORS



1. Agriculture and Farming
2. Banking and Finance
3. Civil Society
4. Construction
5. Customs and Immigration
6. Defence and Security
 1. Military
7. Education
8. Executive/Government
9. Health
 1. Healthcare
 2. Medical services
 3. Pharmaceutical
10. Independent Oversight Institutions
 1. Anti-Corruption Agencies
 2. Audit Institutions
 3. Electoral Management Body
 4. Ombudsman
11. Judiciary
12. Labour and Employment
13. Land and Property
 1. Land Services
 2. Real Estate
 3. Registry and Permit Services
14. Legislative / Parliament
15. Manufacturing
16. Media
17. Natural Resources
 1. Fisheries
 2. Forestry
 3. Mining
 4. Oil and Gas
 5. Water
18. Police
19. Political Parties
20. Power Generation and Transmission
21. Private Sector
22. Public Administration
23. Religion
24. Tax Authority
25. Technology
26. Transport
27. Utilities
 1. Electricity
 2. Gas
 3. Telecommunications
 4. Waste disposal
 5. Water and Sanitation

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CURRENT CHALLENGES



- RSS Feeds that don't work
- Too many search returns (over 5,800 articles sitting in queues)
- Automatic Translation does not work well
- Slow manual process – read the article, write a summary, tag the article



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ECO MATCH



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EUROPEAN CORRUPTION OBSERVATORY



<http://gamechangers.16iacc.org/about/>

<http://community.ejc.net/>

<http://emm.newsexplorer.eu/NewsExplorer/home/en/latest.html>

<http://emm.newsbrief.eu/NewsBrief/clusteredition/en/latest.html>

<http://eco.eurobrain.com/user>

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DEVELOPMENT PHASE 2



- Better RSS searching for improved results
- Grouping articles to create cases
- Reducing manual input / creating a sustainable database
- Analysing the data produced and creating visualisations
- Scaling up ECO Match to a working pilot network



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twitter.com/ti_eu

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Annex 3: Feedback from Participants

1. It would be interesting to compare corruption across regions of the EU
2. Rating the article is a good idea – but what do you mean by rating – rating should be about if the article is useful
3. Would be useful to filter for the top rated articles
4. It would be better to have one page rather than multiple pages – don't need a lot of pages just all the filters on one page (simpler website)
5. Would be useful to see if a country / topic has already been tagged (not useful to see filters for those countries, issues etc that have not been tagged yet – could be removed if there are no articles yet)
6. Statistics would be very useful. Also would be interesting to see how many articles and cases had been added recently
7. Be careful with distortion – too many articles on show might make it less interesting / easy to use
8. It would be useful to have the ability to subscribe so that you can receive emails on articles, regions, sectors etc.
9. Would be useful to see the number of articles per case.
10. Need the proper date on the article not just when it was added to the database
11. Further information on cases would be useful (Jurisprudence – such as decisions from court)
12. Would be useful if there were links to relevant laws and regulations in a country
13. Country profiles would be interesting – with the latest information and when it was last updated
14. Information on the RSS feeds used and criteria for including RSS feeds
15. Regular updates on the home page rather than a static page – such as top stories on the home page
16. Be useful to have contact details to follow up on an article
17. Ability to subscribe to follow key words
18. You could contact universities with journalism courses and get them involved in updating the website
19. Only include those articles that have free access
20. Links to academic papers and articles would be useful
21. Question as to whether the map is the right entry point for this database?
22. Design thoughts – front page could look like an old newspaper layout
23. Should be able to comment on articles to encourage interactive feedback
24. Should have an advanced search function (check out google scholar)
25. Should include filters on the search results
26. The latest articles list is very long would be more useful to have the top rated articles
27. Would be useful to see associations – for example if you filter for a country you could have a word cloud that shows which sectors and or issues are the most prevalent
28. Save things to read for later
29. More share buttons

30. Wider Research, background stories, linking to journalists,
31. Contact details for local journalists would be very useful
32. Skills should include – languages, country experiences, and areas or topics of expertise
33. Autofill function from linkedin
34. Its about skills sharing not 'matching'
35. Basic introductory videos (how to videos in corruption issues)