

Transparency International EU

The global coalition against corruption

Keynesians ready to take on Brussels

Vitor Teixeira · Monday, July 31st, 2017

The Transparency Group of the College of Europe's Keynes promotion completed its work with a conference last month. Next year's batch of young EU-students will graduate under the patronage of Simone Veil, the first female President of the European Parliament*

For the second year in a row, the students of the College of Europe in Bruges organised the “Transparency Group” as an extracurricular activity. This year’s work culminated in a small conference in Bruges, where students presented their policy papers on issues of good governance, anti-corruption and transparency in the EU’s institutions.

The College of Europe is famed as a breeding ground for the next generation of “eurocrats”. These keen European studies students may very well end up treading the corridors of Brussels, making it all the more important to engage them in discussions on the EU’s democratic legitimacy. The European project has come a long way since the one-of-a-kind bloc first broached the uneasy balance between a diplomatic modus operandi among governments keen to avoid direct criticisms of each other, and the relentless integration of ever more policy areas into EU decision-making, necessitating greater democratic oversight and control at the European level over topics that used to be of exclusive national competence.

The one institution created explicitly to overcome this is the European Parliament, which has expanded its powers at each treaty change since its introduction. So it is only fitting that Simone Veil, the first female President of the European Parliament who passed away in late June, will be the patron of the College’s 2017-18 promotion*. We look forward to working with students of next year’s College of Europe Transparency Group to focus debate on how the EU’s institutions and policies are guarding against corruption and delivering for the public interest.

The students at the College in particular have an attention to the more arcane institutional details that may escape the more casual observer. This is also reflected in the topics chosen for their discussion groups and policy papers, which look into specific categories of external lending undertaken by the European Investment Bank, European party finance and Commission expert groups. You can find the papers and abstracts at the bottom of the page.

Finally, at the formal closing ceremony of the John Maynard Keynes Promotion on 23 June 2017 in Bruges, we awarded the annual Transparency International EU thesis prize to the best thesis on issues of anti-corruption, transparency and integrity. This year, the prize went to Marian Cepoi and José Antonio Campos Navarro, from the College’s Natolin, Warsaw and Bruges-campus respectively. The first thesis focused on the EU’s difficulty to advance the fight against corruption

in a context of state-capture in Moldova and other Eastern Partnership countries, while the other looked into the role of the Court of Justice of the EU in the development and advancement of EU access to documents regulation.

The prize consists of participation in the [Transparency International School on Integrity](#), a summer school gathering young anti-corruption professionals from across the world, in July of each year in Vilnius, Lithuania.

**Keynes Promotion refers to the 2016-17 intake of students at the College of Europe, which names each yearly intake (French: promotion) after famous figures in European thought and integration.*

Transparency of the European Commission's expert groups: which fingerprints can be traced back? [PDF]

By Andreia Silva, Farid Safi and José Antonio Campos Navarro

The Lisbon Treaty came with a surprise for secondary legislation. It broke with the tradition of comitology and forced an adaptation to the EU's machinery in administrative, legal and lobbying practices around the as of yet unexplored distinction between delegated and implementing acts. Today, the new system has shown some deficiencies, leading the Commission to consider revisiting the rules laid down in Regulation 182/2011. Ever since its implementation, the functioning of the so-called "Commission expert groups" envisaged in Article 290 TFEU has been at the core of institutional debates. The rather opaque regime has given rise to lingering debates on their composition and openness, as evidenced by the Ombudsman inquiry back in 2014, when the watchdog recommended the Commission tackle the shortcomings in the composition of the groups and facilitate better public scrutiny of their work. However, the proposal presented by the Commission in February 2017 concentrates on Article 291 (implementing acts), thus leaving aside any reflection on delegated acts.

This paper aims to bring the Commission expert groups back to the debate. It sheds some light on the degree of transparency in their functioning and focuses on three illustrative examples of ongoing expert groups providing policy advice to the EU executive.

Towards a more transparent and coherent party finance system across Europe [PDF]

By Emilie Bartolini, Yvonne Milleschitz and Zociana Stambolliu

Party Finance is key to determine the transparency of a political system. As many cases demonstrate, party finance can serve as an important source of illegitimate influence over political actors through donations and contributions by individuals as well as larger interest groups or firms. Only since 2003 are European Parties granted a public subsidy from the EU budget. In designing the EU party finance system, inspiration was taken from national regulations. It was reformed in 2007 with the aim of ensuring greater institutionalization of parties within the EU political system. In 2014, yet another regulation was approved, introducing substantial reforms such as the establishment of an 'Authority for European political parties and foundations' in charge of "registering, controlling and imposing sanctions on European political parties and European

political foundations". Moreover, this regulation introduces stricter requirements concerning party funding at EU level. Nonetheless, the legislation still leaves considerable space to national regulation and limits itself to the requirement of some basic features of clarity and transparency.

This policy paper looks at whether leaving some room for national legislation could actually increase the risk of a lack of transparency.

Transparency Issues in the EIB's External Action in the Eastern Partnership Countries [PDF]

By Daniela Bularda, Tetiana Tavlui and Valentina Yanakieva

Funds provided to the Eastern Partnership countries are intended to accomplish the goals of the European Neighborhood Policy. Financing of these countries by the EIB has increased over the last years, but the process of granting loans has not kept pace with requirements to mitigate the endemic risk of corruption.

This policy paper includes an analysis of EIB operations in three Eastern Partnership countries: Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova; identifying the particular transparency issues common for this region.

Master thesis: EU engagement in justice sector reform in Moldova and the 'oligarchic effect'. Case study on the reform of the prosecutorial service [PDF]

By Marian Cepoi

In the period of 2012-2014, Moldova was hailed as a 'success story', with the largest EU financial assistance per capita among the Eastern Partnership countries. Reforms have not led to structural changes however; and EUR 1 billion was stolen from the banking system amid widespread state capture. The present Master Thesis proposes to identify the factors that determined limited results of the EU's support for reforms in Moldova. To this end, the reform of the justice sector is analysed as a case study.

Firstly, it analyses the technical part of the EU's engagement in the reform. Secondly, it researches the implementation of the prosecution service reform and pinpoints the main obstacles in the reform over the years. Further on, the author draws the spider web of the oligarchy over today's Moldovan society and narrows it down to illustrate the influence of oligarchs in the judiciary and prosecution service reform. The study concludes with a comprehensive analysis of the EU regional approach and individual approach to the oligarchic factor and 'state capture' in Moldova.

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