Transparency International EU

The global coalition against corruption

Transparency International EU welcomes EU Anti-Corruption Sanctions Regime

Pia Engelbrecht-Bogdanov · Wednesday, May 3rd, 2023

Transparency International EU (TI EU) welcomes today's proposal by the EU High Representative and the European Commission to sanction acts of corruption worldwide, as part of the proposed EU anti-corruption package. It is an important signal that the EU is willing to step up in the global fight against kleptocrats.

TI EU along with other anti-corruption organisations unsuccessfully fought for the inclusion of corruption in a horizontal EU sanctions regime in 2020. This regime allows the EU to sanction third country nationals involved in serious human rights violations.

A new horizontal EU anti-corruption sanctions regime would now supplement the EU's existent human rights sanctions regime, as well as other country-specific regimes, to cover acts of corruption worldwide. It would enable the EU to react quickly and flexibly to corrupt practices across the world. It could also complement country-specific anti-corruption policies, allowing for greater targeting of corrupt individuals.

The proposal would bring the EU into line with a number of existing sanctions regimes, such as the US Global Magnitsky Act, which was passed after Russian tax lawyer Sergei Magnitsky was killed in a Russian prison in 2009, following an investigation into tax fraud on part of Russian officials. It allows the US to ban visas and freeze the assets of corrupt individuals and human rights abusers worldwide.

Roland Papp, Senior Policy Officer for Illicit Financial Flows, said: "This allows the EU to sanction corrupt officials from all around the world, cracking down on global kleptocrats and autocrats who are trying to hide their wealth in the EU. A separate anti-corruption sanctions regime provides the EU with the necessary flexibility to target individuals and entities in various countries."

It is now incumbent upon the EU member states to adopt the Commission’s proposal without delay.

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