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„Case for International Anti-Corruption Court”
Addressing the Accountability Gap: An International Anti-Corruption Court
Integrity Initiatives International
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We appreciate the opportunity to listen to colleagues from across the world on one of the key challenges we face together. Certainly, we are living times of growing awareness of the size of money laundering, corruption and kleptocratic expansion. What the Russian war, the invasion of Putin has shown us is an enormous size and dynamism of these processes. And when we see how sanctions can be circumvented there is no doubt that in today's world there are cross border, complex networks supported by kleptocratic financial structures. Stolen assets from different continents benefits from regulatory and transparency gaps and weak enforcement of standards.

Public at large is often unaware of the scope and scale of the kleptocracy in their own countries. We need awareness raising. We need to build institutional capacity and have ways and means to react to any reporting and information sharing.

On 3rd of May 2023 the European Commission unveiled a proposal of a new Directive on combating corruption that will include new and strengthened rules criminalising corruption offences and harmonising definitions of criminal offences but also penalties across the EU. Together with the Directive, another proposal was issued by the European High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to establish a dedicated European Common Foreign and Security Policy sanctions regime to target serious acts of corruption worldwide. These new measures put a strong focus on prevention and creating a culture of integrity, in which corruption is not tolerated and on strengthening enforcement tools. We should continue to implement reforms both at national and European level. But we also need international cooperation to set and observe high anti-corruption standards.

International alliances and global solutions are crucial because money laundry, corruption and kleptocratic activities do not respect national borders. Importantly, we also need to make sure that the existing rules we already have at our disposal are properly implemented and enforced. This is still our weakness.

Kleptocratic regimes nowadays are not archaic or anachronistic networks. They actively aim at influencing public opinion in their own countries and around the world. Indeed, in places where corrupt leaders control all branches of government, they remain unpunished. There are many places on our planet where people cannot count on their national justice systems to eliminate corruption damaging to peace and security, to the future young people want to live. Their future depends on justice that can be provided by the IACC. There are states where there are laws and statutes but their implementation and enforcement for various reasons is weak or does not exist. We have to engage against corruption and kleptocracies at all levels of governance.

In February 2022, the European Parliament issued a recommendation to the Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning corruption and human rights. The Parliament called for the establishment of the International Anti-Corruption Court. It was adopted with overwhelming majority, both at committee level with 56 votes in favour and at plenary level with 568 votes in favour. Also, among hundreds of important personalities that have signed the Declaration calling for the creation of the International Anti Corruption Court, there are signatures of the Members of the European Parliament. I understand the challenge now is to build political will behind the initiative. I applaud Judge Mark Wolf and his colleagues for their brave idea and their effort to combat grand corruption by means of an international body and I am grateful that they devoted their time to share their views with us today.