



UNGASS SIDE EVENT – COORGANISED BY UNDESA AND GRECO

**“BUILDING TRANSPARENT, ACCOUNTABLE
AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS”**

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President of GRECO

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- In the last two decades, GRECO, the Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe, has called for concrete improvements to build up anticorruption and integrity policies, particularly, in the public sector. It is therefore a pleasure for me to take this opportunity to share with you some of the lessons we have learned in this area.
- GRECO membership extends to 50 countries, covering all of Europe, Central Asia and the United States of America. Being a member of GRECO requires adhering to the highest integrity standards. Our member States accept, often very critical, judgments of their performance, and are required to react to them and demonstrate serious change. GRECO’s recommendations serve as benchmarks for assessing and pushing forward progress in the fight against corruption at national level.

- In performing our monitoring task, we have witnessed with concern the decreasing levels of public trust in key institutions, with corruption allegations tainting their credibility and generating citizens' dissatisfaction and disaffection. This runs counter a well-functioning democracy where public participation and active involvement in public life is crucial.
- Public institutions and their representatives - and, here, I am referring to all three branches of government: the executive, the legislative and the judiciary - are above all public services. To fulfil their mandates efficiently, they should act with integrity, transparency and accountability.
- It is precisely with this in mind that GRECO has issued specific recommendations to its members. These includes: the disclosure of financial and other interests, the prohibition and restriction of certain activities, and more generally, the management of conflicts of interest, in-service and post-employment.
- We have also formulated detailed recommendations and observations on codes of conduct and other ethical standards, transparency in decision-making, lobbying and whistleblower protection, etc. The Council of Europe's Twenty Guiding Principles for the Fight against Corruption, along with several soft-law instruments, have led our pronouncements in all these areas.
- Prevention needs to be coupled with vigorous law enforcement; the two are complementary, not alternatives. Preventive efforts will be in vain if they are not backed up by determined actions to counter impunity, and that includes in the area of high-level corruption. The Council of Europe's Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, its Additional Protocol, and the Civil Law Convention on Corruption, are clear in this respect, and these are the treaties that GRECO monitors.

- The fight against corruption requires proactivity, and no leaning back on self-satisfaction. New challenges, such as tech or environmental corruption, require innovative and timely solutions. The covid-19 pandemic has also taught us how important it is that, in state of emergency situations, all decisions and procedures are designed with transparency, integrity and accountability.
- I issued detailed Guidance for states on managing corruption risks in the context of COVID-19 last year. I look forward to the intervention of the Italian Anti-corruption Authority (ANAC), later in this workshop, to learn from its concrete experience in this area, particularly in respect of the sensitive issue of public procurement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- Let me also stress that GRECO does not only play a critical role vis-à-vis its members by flagging shortcomings in the systems and calling for sustained reform. It also serves as a multilateral anticorruption forum for sharing experience and good practice.
- In this regard, I would like to highlight the establishment, in 2018, of an international Network of corruption prevention authorities known as the Šibenik Network. This body acts as an interactive platform for the exchange of information and best practices on corruption prevention. The Network supports the development of practical tools for anti-corruption authorities such as thematic guides, studies, and risk assessment tools. It also constitutes an informal forum of exchange on matters that are relevant for the daily work of these agencies.
- To conclude this brief contribution, GRECO will keep monitoring how our member states fight corruption, whether there is a pandemic or not, and encouraging them in their efforts to do more.

Thank you very much for your attention.