

Olgica BATIC, MP
Chairwoman of the GOPAC in Serbia Executive Board
National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia

Looking at summing up the activities and results accomplished during the past year on the occasion of celebrating the international anti-corruption day, the year 2015 was a turning point in activities of the GOPAC Chapter in Serbia. I would like to point out three major accomplishments in the year behind us: promotion of the culture of transparency and accountability of public institutions; major achievements in the public finance oversight in Serbia; and launching of the regional cooperation and initiatives.

In May, the International Conference “Transparency and Accountability for Effective Oversight – the Role of Parliament“ in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia for parliamentarians of seven countries of this region resulted in signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation between parliamentarians, which established a common platform for cooperation with UNDP support, with a goal to enable the exchange of best practices, cooperation and coordination in relation to the promotion of principles of transparency, accountability and parliamentary public finance oversight.

Furthermore, GOPAC Serbia supported regional cooperation amongst parliamentarians against corruption in the Balkans. In April, delegation of National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia was invited by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in December its delegation visited our National Assembly, in order to finalize preparations for launching of the GOPAC chapter in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bearing in mind that the Moldovan and Georgian Chapters are soon to be formed after the successful organization of the Belgrade Conference, I truly believe this can be regarded as a major step in launching of the GOPAC Regional Chapter for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

GOPAC in Serbia was actively engaged in promoting of the culture of fight against corruption, through advocating for the principles of transparency and accountability in the work of public institutions. Our members have actively participated in the international conferences, seminars and public events, where the mission of GOPAC in Serbia was promoted. In March, Dubravka Filipovski MP and I held a lecture on the contribution that the national branch of GOPAC, as a nonpartisan parliamentary group, gives to the overall efforts that our country and society invest in combatting corruption, as well as to the strengthening of parliamentary oversight over the executive branch. In September, at the international conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, on Open Government Partnership, our members presented the work of our parliament in the panel dedicated to achievements in the spheres of parliamentary openness and transparency. Dubravka Filipovski presented the mechanisms and tools Serbian Parliament uses to perform its control function.

Finally, on 7 December, as a part of the activities to mark the International Anti-Corruption Day 2015, members of GOPAC in Serbia took part in the presentation of the National Assembly’s Portal for monitoring public finances. This pioneering and highly politicized process was led for three years by the GOPAC in Serbia, whose members actively advocated for it within the parliamentary Committee on Finance, State Budget and Control of Public Spending. On monthly basis, the Portal will provide both dynamic and static reports on direct budget users, budgetary execution by direct budget users, by source of funding, by source and functional classification, by its economic classification. In this sense, the development of the Portal for monitoring public finance is considered the most notable achievement thus far in strengthening of the National Assembly’s oversight function.

On behalf of the GOPAC in Serbia, I can safely say that we have successfully completed the first two-year plan, and are looking forward to adopt the plan for the next two years. It will outline our major focus and tasks in the upcoming period. I am confident that MPs, members of the GOPAC in Serbia, will continue to work together in a non-partisan manner, in order to continue to promote the culture of the fight against corruption, transparency and accountability of public institutions and regional cooperation and networking of parliamentarians, as the region continues to face common challenges.