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BELGRADE – The National Branch of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) was founded at the Serbian parliament building on Thursday, and Zoran Babic from the Serbian Progressive Party was elected President.



GOPAC is an informal and voluntary organization gathering former and current parliamentarians with the goal of fighting corruption.

Its founder and honorary President John Williams said on the occasion that, according to the international corruption perceptions index, Serbia is 80th out of 176 countries.

Serbia's position is not so bad, but we are aware that the parliament will assume a leading role in the fight against corruption and that Serbia will be successful in it, Williams told journalists after the meeting.

Zoran Babic said that the country is striving to reduce corruption, adding that the parliament should assume an active or even a leading role in this fight.

The participants of the meeting pointed out that the forming of the GOPAC National Branch was backed by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Serbia, and its representative William Infante said that the Serbian government has made great effort in the fight against corruption, but that the parliament has to do the same thing.

Serbian Parliament Speaker Nebojsa Stefanovic said at the founding meeting that Serbia has zero tolerance towards corruption, which is a global issue and affects societies which are much more developed than Serbia.

Corruption is a global phenomenon, but in Serbia it has grown at an alarming rate in the past 15 years, Stefanovic said.

He added that corruption threatens the rule of law, serious economic allocation of resources, and blocks social, economic and political development.

The parliament speaker stressed that it is necessary to adopt a set of anti-corruption laws, incorporate in the provisions of the Criminal Code measures to reduce the level of corruption and fines to deter offenders, and that special attention should be paid to control of law enforcement.

Stefanovic reiterated that the parliament has adopted the new public procurement law, which makes it possible for public procurements to be transparent for the citizens.



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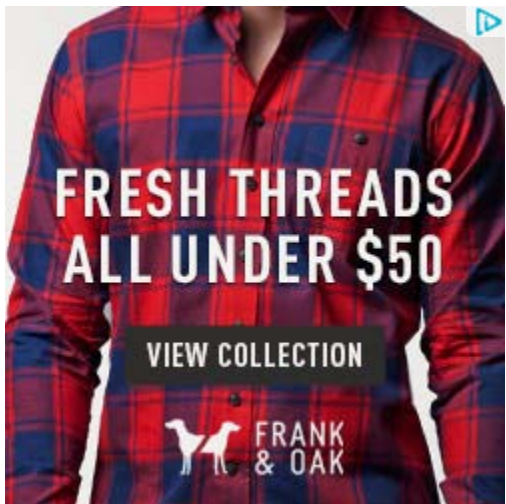
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