



**G7 Ministers' Meeting on Justice
Venice, 9-10 May 2024**

ANNEX TO THE VENICE DECLARATION OF THE G7 JUSTICE MINISTERS

**G7 Justice Ministers' Pledge to support Anti-Corruption efforts for the
Reconstruction of Ukraine**

1. We are convinced that developing the rule of law, strengthening democratic institutions, and tackling corruption in Ukraine is crucial for Ukraine's long-term stability, security, and prosperity. Addressing corruption will also help to prevent the misuse of reconstruction funds, ensure a transparent allocation of foreign aid and resources, and will be critical for Ukraine's long-term recovery. We welcome the progress made by Ukraine in this regard, affirming the G7 Justice Ministers' unwavering commitment to continue our support for these efforts, within the scope of our authority, through appropriate bilateral, regional, and multilateral channels.
2. Aware of the additional reconstruction efforts that Ukraine will have to undertake in the field of justice, we state our commitment to support Ukraine in its endeavour to establish a comprehensive and fully effective anti-corruption framework.
3. We further affirm our strong support for the G7 Anti-Corruption Task Force for Ukraine ("ACT for Ukraine") and call on the ACT for Ukraine to continue to lend its expertise to support Ukraine in its ongoing and future efforts to prevent and combat corruption.

ANTI-CORRUPTION IN THE UKRAINIAN JUSTICE SECTOR - STATE OF PLAY

4. In order to make its judicial system more efficient and transparent by preventing and combating corruption – a primary objective on the Ukrainian reform agenda since the Revolution of Dignity in 2014 – Ukraine has undertaken two rounds of judicial and anti-corruption reforms (2014-2016 and 2020-2021). These reforms – as noted by the European Commission opinion on Ukraine's application for membership of the European Union – supported the alignment of the Ukrainian judicial system with the principles of the rule of law, in particular by strengthening the independence and accountability of the judiciary and established anti-corruption bodies.
5. Since 2014, Ukraine has established the following institutions: the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU), the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO), the National Agency on Corruption Prevention (NACP), the Asset Recovery and Management Agency (ARMA), and the High Anti-Corruption Court (HACC). These institutions have broad mandates and progressively continue to operate more independently. Ukraine's National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2021-2025) and the corresponding Action Plan for 2023-2025 are examples of the progress. Furthermore, Ukraine has started to enact legislation to ensure more effective criminal investigations and trials of corruption cases.
6. In addition to the above, Ukraine has made considerable progress in criminalizing forms of corruption and has also introduced legislation authorizing an effective mechanism of civil



confiscation of unjustified assets. This framework is complemented by Ukraine's adoption of laws regulating conflict of interest, lobbying, protecting whistle-blowers, and ensuring transparent funding for public party financing.

7. Along with relevant tools that directly address recovery and reconstruction challenges (i.e.: the Geographic Information System portal for regional development, a barrier-free/inclusivity agenda, civic oversight), Ukraine has established specific anti-corruption and oversight mechanisms, with a direct or indirect correlation with the field of justice, such as:
 - a. Transparent and comprehensive electronic systems for asset declarations by public officials, allowing for automatic checks and public access to the declarations filed.
 - b. The internationally multi-awarded electronic system – *Pro-Zorro* – for public procurement (and its spin-off *Pro-Zorro Sale*) to increase transparency in previously opaque procurement procedures.
 - c. The Unified Digital Integrated Information and Analytical System for the Management of the Process of Reconstruction of Real Estate, Construction, and Infrastructures (DREAM).
 - d. A modern electronic case management system, implemented by NABU, SAPO and HACC, to facilitate investigations and adjudication of high-level corruption cases.
 - e. The E-Court system that allows participation in court proceedings via video and the electronic workflows permitting to submit documents online. To improve the effectiveness of this system, upgrades will have to be put in place.
8. Ukraine is also party to key international conventions against corruption, including the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the Council of Europe's Criminal Law Convention on Corruption and its Additional Protocol.

THE WAY FORWARD

9. Ukraine, which is now a candidate country to join the European Union, has continued throughout the years as a resilient democracy to develop an anti-corruption framework including by gradually aligning with relevant EU legislation, and elaborating a new national anti-corruption strategy with a focus on relevant sectors.
10. This framework now should be further strengthened. Several recommendations and opinions from relevant international anti-corruption monitoring mechanisms, including UN, GRECO and OECD, have only been partly implemented. In February 2023, Ukraine was granted the Participant status in the OECD Working Group on Bribery (WGB) with the expectation that by February 2025 it would enact legal reforms to meet the requirements necessary for full membership in the WGB. The second cycle review of Ukraine under the Implementation Review Mechanism of UNCAC is currently underway in the field of Prevention and Asset Recovery and will result in further recommendations in these areas.
11. Welcoming the efforts already undertaken by the "G7 Ambassadors' support group for Ukraine" in its priorities for 2024, the G7 Justice Ministers will work together with the Ukrainian government to identify and fill in any remaining implementation void after the significant progress made in updating the legal framework of Ukraine.
12. Based on the recommendations, and the opinions of the UN, European Commission, OECD and GRECO, the following four areas have been identified as key priorities for the G7 Justice Ministers' enduring support to Ukraine:



(I) Transparent and merit-based selection

13. Recalling applicable international standards and practices for the selection procedures of individuals for public positions, to help strengthen public trust in the Ukrainian judicial system, it is important to support the progress already made in this field by increasing the effective and adequate implementation of anti-corruption measures for the transparent and merit-based selection of judges and prosecutors. It is also important to ensure the uninterrupted qualification assessment of judges by the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine, the timely filling of vacancies in the judiciary and adequate staffing in the anticorruption bodies, including the HACC and the SAPO.
14. *Our commitment:* we reaffirm our support for the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to implement the recommendations of relevant bodies in the “transparent and merit-based selection” area.

(II) Ethics and moral integrity

15. Recalling that Integrity Plans and Codes of ethics are in place in key parts of the Ukrainian public administration and judiciary, it is important to support the full and steady implementation of such Plans and Codes. It is also important to further strengthen other existing integrity tools to address corruption risks in all Ukrainian courts, including the Supreme Court, notably through improved verification of integrity declarations of judges and appropriate disciplinary proceedings.
16. *Our commitment:* we reaffirm our support for the provision of technical assistance and capacity building aimed at the full and steady implementation as well as the strengthening of the integrity tools across the Ukrainian public administration and judiciary.

(III) Full implementation and further strengthening of existing preventive anti-corruption measures in contracts awarded for the physical reconstruction of justice system institutions

17. Despite the ongoing war, Ukraine’s judicial system remains largely operational; however, at present, about 15 % of courts are not operational nationwide. Since the outbreak of the war, many judicial offices have been seriously damaged, completely destroyed, or occupied by Russian aggressors; judges, prosecutors, and administrative staff of these judicial offices have been relocated to other locations.
18. *Our commitment:* we reaffirm our commitment to support Ukraine’s further strengthening of existing preventive measures to reduce the risk of corruption with respect to contracts awarded for physical reconstruction of justice system institutions, including through the full implementation of both Ukraine’s National Anti-Corruption Strategy and the corresponding State Anti-Corruption Programme.

(IV) Training

19. It is important to promote multilevel training initiatives (intended not only for judges and prosecutors, but also for judicial offices’ administrative staff and employees of anti-corruption institutions) aimed at informing and training judicial and legal practitioners in the fight against corruption, as well as to continue with those already in place. It is essential that new programmes do not duplicate current efforts in this field, to ensure targeted and effective delivery of substantive training in the anti-corruption assistance space.



20. Training courses should be focused on strengthening the capacity of judges, prosecutors, and investigators in the field of anti-corruption/bribery and with a view to full cooperation between law enforcement agencies, institutions, prosecution, and the judiciary.
21. In designing training programmes, particular attention must be paid to international cooperation for the recovery of economic and financial resources misappropriated as a result of corruption offences, aiming also at compensating for the damages suffered.
22. *Our commitment:* we reaffirm our commitment to promoting and continuing multilevel training initiatives on tackling and preventing corruption designed for judges, prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, and administrative staff. We also reaffirm our commitment to share best practices for the correct functioning of judicial offices with the objective of enhancing the rule of law.

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURE

23. Any follow-up to the present Statement will take place within ACT for Ukraine and the outcome will be presented in advance of the annual Ministerial meeting of the G7 Justice Ministers.

Venice, 10 May 2024