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Functional approach to understanding anti-corruption monitoring

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Abstract: In this article, the author substantiates the purpose of anti-corruption monitoring as an integral component of an effective and result-oriented anti-corruption policy. A systematic approach to understanding anti-corruption monitoring made it possible to identify its structural elements, with particular attention given to the functions of anti-corruption monitoring and various scholarly approaches to their interpretation and classification. Additionally, the article presents the author's perspective on these functions.

Keywords: Anti-corruption monitoring, systematic approach, monitoring functions.

Introduction: Corruption is a phenomenon that has accompanied social and state development for several millennia. In the absence of the much-needed consolidation of efforts between the state and civil society institutions, as well as timely and essential anti-corruption measures, corruption becomes an increasingly serious threat to the effective functioning of political, economic and other state mechanisms, as well as to the authority of state power, acquiring ever more noticeable, tangible and alarming dimensions.

Corruption undermines public trust in state institutions, law enforcement agencies and the judicial system. It erodes people's faith in justice, impartiality and the rule of law. As a result, social inequality and other detrimental phenomena emerge, negatively impacting the development of society and state.

Nowadays, one of the most effective anti-corruption mechanisms is the implementation of a consistent anti-corruption policy by states. After all, this threat can only be addressed through continuous and systematic efforts [1, p. 278].

The development and implementation of an effective and coordinated anti-corruption policy is a requirement for State Parties of the UN Convention against Corruption. In accordance with paragraph 3 of article 5 of the Convention, each State Party shall endeavor to periodically evaluate relevant legal instruments and administrative measures with a view to determining their adequacy to prevent and fight corruption [2]. Taking into account this conventional provision, it should be concluded that an accurate and objective understanding of the current state of corruption, its level, dynamics, characteristics, areas of prevalence, development trends, factors contributing to its emergence and spread within a country, the effectiveness and efficiency of anti-corruption measures and initiatives, as well as society's attitude toward corrupt practices and the anti-corruption efforts undertaken, must become a necessary condition and an integral component for the planning, development, organization, implementation and coordination of an effective state anti-corruption policy. In our view, anti-corruption monitoring is intended to form such an understanding.

Scientific conceptualization of this mechanism was initiated at the beginning of this century [3]. Subsequently, this tool received support and scientific development in the research of many authors [4; 5; 6; 7; 8]. In addition to scientific conceptualization, anti-corruption monitoring has also been reflected in the provisions of the Model Legislation of the Commonwealth of Independent States [9; 10; 11].

METHODS

Despite the availability of dissertation studies directly devoted to anti-corruption monitoring [14; 15],

dissertation studies covering other types of monitoring [16], monographic studies on anti-corruption monitoring [17; 18; 19] and numerous scientific publications on the subject [12; 21; 22; 23; 24], the functions of anti-corruption monitoring were mostly considered indirectly or fragmentarily or they were not considered at all. It should be noted that there is insufficient elaboration and accordingly the need for a comprehensive study of this aspect, which means that it is necessary to fill this gap.

This study employs both general scientific methods (dialectical, systematic, content analysis, comparison, classification) and specific methods (formal-legal, comparative-legal, system-structural, descriptive-analytical).

As one of the key methods, we would like to highlight the system-structural method, which is often used in the study of various types of monitoring [12, p. 110]. The application of this method allowed us to conclude that anti-corruption monitoring includes the following structural elements: objects; sub-objects; subjects; participants; goals; objectives; principles [13]; stages; functions.

This approach also made it possible to conceptualize anti-corruption monitoring as a unified system consisting of interconnected and complementary elements, united by common goals. The coherence of these subsystems enables the implementation of essential functions required for monitoring activities. We agree with the opinion of A.M. Slinkov, according to which it is difficult to overestimate the importance of such an element as monitoring functions in the description of the monitoring system, since monitoring functions directly reveal the content of this activity and answer the question of what constitutes monitoring activities [20, pp. 65 - 66]. Considering the above, in the framework of this article we would like to pay close attention to this particular structural element of anti-corruption monitoring.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to I.V. Storozhenko, monitoring functions should include the following: diagnostic; communicative; regulatory; analytical; predictive; information; correctional [15, pp. 15 - 16]. O.Y. Sigurova believes that as a mechanism of economic security, monitoring performs several functions, namely: informational; diagnostic; analytical; predictive [14, p. 42]. We agree with the viewpoint of N.Yu. Maslennikova and O.K. Slinkova, who assert that the importance of monitoring is determined by the functions it performs. These authors identify the following functions: informational; analytical and evaluative; controlling; predictive; system-forming [12,

pp. 113 - 114]. A.M. Slinkov identifies following groups of monitoring functions. Considering monitoring as a means of obtaining new scientific knowledge about monitored objects and processes, the author lists the following functions: cognitive; research; methodical. Considering monitoring as a means of information and analytical management support, the author identifies the following functions: diagnostic; correctional; motivational. At the intersection of these categories, the author identifies functions such as information-analytical and prognostic [20, pp. 66 - 67].

Considering the approaches outlined above, we would like to consider our vision of anti-corruption monitoring functions, but first of all, we should disclose what this tool is. In our opinion, anti-corruption monitoring is a comprehensive and interdisciplinary professional activity undertaken by authorized entities of anti-corruption policy. It aims to ensure continuous observation, thorough processing, comprehensive research, objective evaluation and substantiated forecasting. This is achieved through the systematic collection, processing, analysis, evaluation and interpretation of information related to the actual state of corruption, its level and dynamics of spread within a country, specific forms and types of its manifestation, causes of corruption (corruption-generating factors and risks) and the outcomes of implementing anti-corruption policies (strategies, programs and plans). This activity is conducted based on a standardized methodology with the participation of civil society representatives.

Speaking about the essence or content of anti-corruption monitoring, it can most concisely be described as a combination of five fundamental processes: observation, processing, research, evaluation and forecasting, applied to various objects within the sphere of countering corruption.

Each of these processes includes subprocesses. Specifically, observation involves the collection, accumulation and storage of information. Processing entails the organization and systematization of information. Research consists of a comprehensive study of patterns related to the monitoring object. Evaluation involves comparing information against predefined criteria or indicators. Forecasting entails constructing possible future scenarios for the development of the monitoring object and developing proposals to minimize and / or eliminate identified shortcomings.

For a deeper understanding of its essence and to answer the question of what constitutes this type of monitoring activity, attention must be directed to the functional content of anti-corruption monitoring. The

foundation for the realization of all functions of anti-corruption monitoring is the informational-analytical (informational-research) function, as its implementation encompasses the collection, accumulation, storage, processing and analysis of information essential for this monitoring tool. Additionally, the functions of anti-corruption monitoring include the cognitive (epistemological), diagnostic, expert (consultative), methodological, evaluative-comparative (evaluative-contrastive), correctional and prognostic (predictive) functions. It is suggested to consider each function separately.

Informational-research function, serving as the foundation for realizing all other functions of anti-corruption monitoring, is aimed at the collection, accumulation, storage, processing, transmission and research of necessary information related to the monitoring object. This function enables the identification of cause-and-effect relationships that reflect the current state and potential future development trends of the monitoring object. Cognitive (epistemological) function involves the search for and generation of new knowledge within the framework of countering corruption by studying patterns, trends, phenomena and processes related to the monitored object. Diagnostic function is aimed at the precise and timely identification and examination of problematic areas and indicators, not only within the current state of the object but also for predicting potential deviations and their prompt localization, neutralization, or elimination. Expert (consultative) function consists in providing qualified assessments, recommendations, conclusions and results obtained by specialists who possess the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to conduct this type of monitoring. Methodological function consists in the continuous development and improvement of the methods, tools and approaches used for conducting anti-corruption monitoring. This function includes the creation of tested standards, instructions, methodologies and recommendations to ensure the further effectiveness and efficiency of this type of monitoring. Evaluative-comparative (evaluative-contrastive) function consists in assessing and comparing the collected information and obtained results with predefined criteria, expected and/or desired outcomes, established standards and initial assumptions. These data are essential for identifying relationships and dependencies within the monitored object, as well as for detecting and determining the causes of various deviations. Correctional function consists in developing and implementing scientifically grounded recommendations for addressing and eliminating identified deficiencies in anti-corruption efforts. This

function involves adjusting strategic documents and anti-corruption measures based on monitoring results to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. Prognostic (predictive) function consists in forecasting the development trends of the monitored object in the short-term, medium-term and long-term perspectives.

CONCLUSION

Evaluation and monitoring mechanisms are an integral part of state anti-corruption policy, as a targeted, effective and efficient anti-corruption strategy is impossible without timely, adequate and objective measurement and subsequent assessment of corruption levels, its areas of prevalence, as well as the causes and conditions contributing to its spread. Additionally, these mechanisms assess the effectiveness of both implemented and ongoing anti-corruption measures. Anti-corruption monitoring is designed to address these tasks. Its essence can be concisely described as a combination of five fundamental processes: observation, processing, research, evaluation and forecasting of corruption-related phenomena. A deeper understanding of anti-corruption monitoring requires an examination of its functional structure, which includes the following functions: informational-analytical (informational-research), cognitive (epistemological), diagnostic, expert (consultative), methodological, evaluative-comparative (assessment-comparative), corrective and prognostic (predictive).

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