RATING: HOW MPs' VOTE ON ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS

Reconstruction of the State—a coalition of anti-corruption NGOs—has set up a rating system that shows how MPs, and political parties, vote on selected anti-corruption laws. On the project website, anyone can watch 'live' how the 165 MPs who have pledged support to Reconstruction of the State during the last election campaign live up to their commitment. A new media campaign—involving well-known public figures and using the metaphor of politicians as sportspeople and the public as cheering fans—is supposed to draw public attention to the rating.

As a part of the campaign, people will be able to virtually sit in the audience and watch how the politicians 'score'—or not—in the process of the adoption of good quality anti-corruption legislation. Each legislative proposal, including amendments, will be first assessed by a relevant group of experts. The Reconstruction of the State team will then send their position towards the proposal to all MPs so that they are informed—prior to the actual voting—whether or not is the proposal in line with their commitment to the pledge. The MPs that will vote against a law they have previously pledged to support will receive a 'red card', indicating that they have broken their promise to the voters. All politicians will then have a chance to send their reaction to the rating, which will get published on the website too. In addition, the website shows combined percentages for political parties—how many per cent of their members have signed the pledge, how many have voted in line (or not in line) with such commitment, how many have actively sponsored the bills, or else, have tried to stop them from being adopted. Importantly, the rating will include not only the votes from plenary sessions but also proposals discussed during committee meetings, which are often not public and thus allow for all kinds of 'riders' that might effectively rule out the desired anti-corruption effect of the laws.

Step 1

165 of the current deputies have pledged to support anti-corruption laws that will increase transparency and control of public money.

Before the elections, we asked the candidates to sign the Pledge of Support of Reconstruction of the State. The pledge includes 43 specific measures in 9 proposed laws that will reduce corruption and prevent misuse of public money. Being already effective in the majority of European countries, most of the laws are long overdue.

Step 2

Before each vote, our experts inform the politicians about which proposals are in line with their commitment in the pledge.

Following a successful pledge campaign, we initiated three bills from the pledge to be proposed in the new Chamber of Deputies. We also ensured that the remaining bills appeared in the new government legislative plan—with deadlines that are realistic, yet ambitious enough. We actively participate in the process of drafting the bills, sharing our positions, recommendations and comments. For each proposal and amendment, we prepare a detailed position—as we very well know that the devil is in the detail, and sometimes even one sentence can doom the entire bill to failure.

Step 3

After each vote, we monitor and show how each MP has voted on the issue. Based on their previous commitment, we also assess whether or not the MPs have kept their word.

The final formulation of the laws before they are adopted is up to the politicians to decide. In our rating system, we base the assessment on key parts of the law—those parts and provisions that guarantee the desired anti-corruption effect of the law. When an MP does not vote for a particular law that they have previously promised to support, we are happy to publish their explanation for such a decision.

Step 4

As voters and citizens, we have a right to know how our MPs vote on the issues that matter to us. The more people are interested in how the MPs vote on anti-corruption issues, the more likely it is that the politicians will raise their hand for these laws.

During election campaigns, politicians don't seem to expect us to have the time or the energy to look for facts, or base our voting decision on their actual behaviour during the election period. Instead, they hope to impress us with new promises on billboards. Using our rating system, we will provide the voters with a simple overview of which parties and MPs helped to fight corruption and increase transparency. We need to show the politicians that we care what they do and how they represent us, and they must understand that we are ready to use this information before the next election.