

Press Release

CIVIL SOCIETY PROTEST AGAINST THE SANCTIONING OF THE TRANSPARENCY CRIME

Bucharest, the 5th of May, 2010

The Alliance for the Rule of Law, consisting of Active Watch – Media Monitoring Agency, the Pro Democracy Association, the Centre for Legal Resources and Transparency International Romania, strongly protests against the way in which the Legal Affairs Committee of the Senate has analysed the request of the National Integrity Agency (ANI) to revoke the representative of the civil society from the National Integrity Council (CNI).

We take the opportunity to remind the fact that in June 2009 the leadership of the ANI asked the Senate to revoke the representative of the civil society from the CNI. The representative had requested the Agency, in a transparent manner, to exercise its role of preventing conflicts of interests and to offer an affirmative or a negative answer regarding the necessity of his abstention from voting during the period in which the ANI was investigating another representative of the civil society. The Agency had considered that this request represented a threat to the secret nature of the ANI's operations, though information regarding ANI's investigations had already reached the press through anonymous sources.

Considering all of the above, we would like to present to the public opinion, as well as the Romanian Senate, the following:

1. Mr. Codru Vrabie has neither been invited, nor has he been informed about the hearings of the Legal Affairs Committee regarding the request for revocation. Therefore, Mr. Vrabie's right to defend himself, as well as the possibility of the Legal Affairs Committee to find out the point of view of the other part, have been ignored.
2. Mr. Codru Vrabie has not been heard by the members of the CNI regarding the accusations brought against him before the submission of the request for revocation to the Senate.
3. Furthermore, when the ANI sent the request for revocation, Mr. Codru Vrabie was not informed regarding the facts he had been accused of.
4. Is it possible that a member of the CNI, which is an instrument meant to monitor the activity of the ANI, can be revoked at the request of the ANI? Moreover Codru Vrabie has been intimidated by the leadership of the ANI for a "transparency crime" and he has publicly criticised the leadership of the Agency, as one can see from the minutes of the CNI (which are public documents). What is happening with the similar request, with regard to the President of the CNI himself, sent by the leadership of the ANI to the Romanian Senate?

5. Why is the request for revocation kept secret, the leadership of the ANI refusing to communicate the document to the Centre for Legal Resources, which asked in Court for the publicity of the request?

In this line of thought, we request the Standing Bureau of the Romanian Senate, as the body that can defend Senate lawfulness, constitutionality and integrity, to assume his institutional role and to request the Legal Affairs Committee to fundament its decision on consistent reasons coming from both parts. Thus, the Legal Affairs Committee will prove that it does not want to replace Mr. Vrabie with a "friendly" representative of the civil society, but that the revoking of Codru Vrabie meets the procedure and the substance conditions of the rule of law, not to damage the reputation of the members of the Senate, after the reputation of the leadership of the ANI has already been damaged.

The Alliance for the Rule of Law invites all the organisations whose representation in the National Integrity Council has been damaged by yesterday's decision to join this appeal and to support the promotion of transparency and accountability standards.

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