

Conference on “Preventing corruption in Europe: a new perspective”

10 October 2024

Temple Hall of Vibia Sabina and Hadrian, Rome, Piazza di Pietra

Giuseppe Busia speech

Authorities, Representatives of European, National Institutions and International Organizations,
Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very glad to welcome you today in Rome to discuss new perspectives of corruption prevention in Europe, at this important conference, which is also the Annual Plenary Meeting of the *European Network for Public Ethics*.

It is precisely to ENPE's Presidency and Secretariat that I would like first to express my most heartfelt thanks, for having contributed, with such commitment and conviction, to the organisation of this event, which will take place today and tomorrow in this wonderful setting of the Temple Hall of Vibia Sabina and Hadrian.

I would like to thank everyone here today for being part of this prestigious event: international organizations, EU institutions, leaders from governments and national authorities, civil society, academia and stakeholders.

And, of course, my sincere thanks to the entire ANAC team for the extraordinary work they have done to make this event possible and to create the conditions for discussion and debate to be as comfortable and fruitful as possible.

As we well know and also read in the *Explanatory Memorandum* to the European Commission's proposal for an Anti-corruption Directive of 3 May, currently under negotiation, corruption is highly damaging

- to society, to our democracies, to the economy and to individuals, because it undermines the institutions on which we depend, jeopardising their credibility as well as their ability to deliver public policies and quality public services.

- It also deepens social inequalities,
- diverts resources from productive outcomes and collective well-being,
- hampers the effective functioning of the single market and
- acts as an enabler for organised crime and hostile foreign interference.

Therefore, successfully preventing and fighting against corruption is essential both

- to safeguard EU values and the effectiveness of EU policies,
- and to maintain the rule of law and trust in those who govern and public institutions.

Such a need must be felt even more urgently today, when corruption has become a widespread and trans-national phenomenon that affects all societies and economies.

So, trans-national must be the efforts to fight and eradicate it, and EU-level action is expected to be more effective and efficient and to bring a tangible added value compared to action taken by Member States individually, especially in terms of prevention.

For this reason, since its inception, the ENPE, our Network, has set itself the objective of developing a unique expertise in order to become the *privileged interlocutor* of European institutions on issues of integrity, transparency and public ethics.

With the same aim of integrating and coordinating to the maximum degree anti-corruption strategies, the Network has strongly urged the EU institutions to adopt a Directive representing an effective progress in combating the phenomenon, through a legislative approach to preventive measures and the introduction of some shared minimum standards of public integrity.

We therefore hope that the negotiations will be concluded soon, that the resistance that has emerged in some countries can be overcome, so that all the European Union Member States can have even more effective and coordinated tools to defend their institutions from the dangers of crime and bad administration.

This is also essential to strengthen our democracies, which are now experiencing an alarming crisis of participation.

We also believe that this Conference will be a valuable opportunity for representatives of different institutions and countries to discuss future perspectives of corruption prevention, within the framework of the proposed directive and beyond.

The exchange of experiences and good practices is always the best way to identify effective and shared solutions, especially in an increasingly complex and challenging context such as the current one.

And we believe that ENPE, which brings together authorities from European Union Member States active in matters of public integrity, can really make a difference in this sense, indicating fruitful paths also for governments and political institutions.

Our shared mission involves

- not only maintaining the rule of law and fighting corruption,
- but also, through effective anti-corruption strategies,
- promoting good governance and transparency,
- spreading the culture of integrity,
- strengthening trust in public decision-makers and
- fostering democratic participation.

Our commitment to act together at the highest level is a prerequisite for achieving our common goals and thus making our communities healthier and more equitable.

Today, we are living an historic moment in Europe for corruption prevention.

We have not to lose this unique occasion and strengthen our cooperation and common effort to achieve our institutional objectives, to reinforce our institutions and to contribute to the well being of our societies and the growing of our democracies.