

Dear Readers,

From football to road construction – corruption has many faces. But the general rule is that the more opaque and unregulated decision-making processes are, the greater the risk of abusing power for self-enrichment. Arbitrary and unclear decisions, whether that be in dispensing justice, granting governmental contracts, or filling public offices, undermine the rule of law and swallow up additional resources. Corruption is a global phenomenon. But a panacea has yet to be found. Instead, various approaches have been tried worldwide.

The problem becomes ubiquitous when the central controlling function of the rule of law can no longer be trusted. Judges hold a prominent position in the state structure. Any corruption on their part affects all areas of political life. Worldwide, corrupt judges are not a rarity, as outlined by Franziska Rinke and the authors from the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Rule of Law Programmes in their global overview. When searching for effective measures to combat corrupt justice systems, it pays to look beyond regional borders.

Corruption can also influence everyday matters that are the basis for development, such as access to electricity, as Anja Berretta illustrates with the example of Sub-Saharan Africa. More than half of the population has no access to electricity. However, a large part of the funds that could be used to invest in expanding the energy supply system and the general infrastructure, disappear into the pockets of a few.

Political upheaval does not necessarily dismantle entrenched structures of corruption. Using the example of Ukraine, Isabel Weininger analyses the interplay between old structures and the reorganisation of political power. Efforts for reform taken over the past few years have achieved increased transparency and social awareness of corruption. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen in which direction the “most transparent corrupt country in Europe” will develop under President Zelensky. The change of power in Nigeria has not yet had the desired success either. There is currently insufficient political will to tackle individual cases of corruption, let

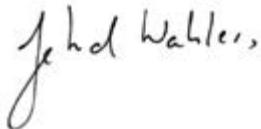
alone engage in far-reaching reforms affecting all areas of the state and the economy. Vladimir Kreck describes how politics is still perceived as a means of self-enrichment in Nigeria. When, due to corruption, there is a lack of funds in the security sector, the effects on the country's domestic security are devastating.

Opacity in political systems favours situational and structural corruption. Transparency measures are therefore an important element in the struggle against corruption and to establish trusting relationships between policymakers and the public. Morocco's freedom of information law is an example of how such mechanisms can be anchored in legislation. The royal family is attempting to regain the trust of its own people by instituting new legal mechanisms. Steffen Krüger's article is about the new right to access information. The foundation for more transparency has been laid. However, successful implementation will depend on the entire Moroccan administration.

There are many approaches to combatting corruption, from transparency initiatives to control mechanisms right through to changes in political power. Yet, there is often insufficient political will to actually improve conditions. When that is the case, anti-corruption measures are little more than a fig leaf. Structures of corruption are often intractable and deeply embedded in their environment. Raising awareness that corruption has negative consequences for everyone involved is the only way to provide any hope for change.

I wish you a stimulating read.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerhard Wahlers".

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