

Independence and Trustworthiness of State Institutions in Slovakia

How to select top representatives of key public institutions

Summary

Over April-July 2019, INEKO evaluated transparency of selection process of top representatives in 10 public institutions where the selection took place during 2017-19: National Bank of Slovakia, The Office for Protection of Whistleblowers, National Security Office, The Slovak Police Force, The Police Inspection Office, The Public Procurement Office, The Board of the Public Procurement Office, Constitutional Court, The Slovak TV and Radio, The State Forests.

The evaluation was based on 23 criteria divided in 3 categories: (1) Openness of selection process for different candidates, (2) Key criteria for candidates, (3) Public hearings, evaluation of candidates and final selection.

The goal of the project was to assess transparency of selection procedures and to propose recommendations for increasing transparency in similar selection processes in future. This should help to increase professionalism and independence of key regulatory, audit and judiciary institutions in Slovakia.

Based on results, the most transparent was selection of the chair of newly established Office for Protection of Whistleblowers. Here, the process was open for a wide pool of candidates with clearly specified conditions and selection criteria, and the expert committee interviewed candidates in public hearings. However, the process was not finished as the National Council of the Slovak Republic failed to find majority for selected candidates in a secret vote.

On the other hand, the least transparent was selection of the Governor of the National Bank of Slovakia and the chair of the National Security Office. There was no open call for candidates, no expert committees and no public hearings. The candidates were chosen behind closed doors based on non-transparent political agreements.

In July 2019, INEKO published the analysis with summary of results, recommendations and detailed evaluation. Among recommendations, INEKO proposed to have open calls for candidates with sufficient time to submit the application, expert committees interviewing candidates in public hearings, candidates declaring their property and publishing their CVs and motivation letters, candidates presenting their vision, setting specific criteria for candidates including the knowledge of at least one world language, excluding top politicians from pool of candidates, etc. The recommendations can be used by political parties in writing their election programs for the upcoming parliamentary elections in February 2020.

The results were published on INEKO webpage, Facebook and blog as well as by the Slovak news agencies, internet portals, the Slovak Radio and The Office of the Slovak Government.