

DNA: Pandemic context fuels corruption; there is major risk of money reaching the wrong hands

The pandemic context fuels corruption and there is a major risk that the money will not serve the right causes and be invested in the endowment of hospitals, in protective equipment, specialized equipment, products and medicines, but end up in the wrong hands instead, the DNA (National Anti-corruption Directorate) said in a message on the International Anti-corruption Day.

In a statement issued on Thursday, DNA states that December 9 has been declared the International Anti-Corruption Day by the United Nations Convention against Corruption, a document also ratified by Romania.

"Corruption threatens the entire democratic path of a society. Therefore, the fight against corruption must remain a major goal not only of criminal justice, but of the whole society through its representatives. Fighting corruption requires a strong social consensus, political will, human resources and logistics," said the same source.

DNA maintains that it is up to the relevant forces in a society whether or not the International Anti-corruption Day will become the time to renew the commitment to fight back corruption: through education, prevention and combating.

In DNA's view, it is unacceptable for the fight against corruption to be hampered by legislative, administrative obstacles or lack of resources.

On the other hand, the DNA considers that without transparency and decisive action by the authorities, the funds intended to fight the coronavirus epidemic risk being misappropriated.

"Like any crisis situation, the pandemic context fuels corruption. Consistent public funds are mobilized (...) Without decisive, concerted action by institutions, without transparency in the award of contracts, without clear rules for tracking the destination and use of money, there is an additional risk that the goal will be missed and money will not go where it needs to go, which is one more reason for anti-corruption to become a priority again. The creation of a de facto impunity for an important category of people in the face of possible suspicions of corruption is becoming a duty assumed before the citizens by the Romanian Government and Parliament," says DNA.

At the same time, according to the DNA, the involvement of citizens and civil society in the fight against corruption remains essential.

Thus, in the last two years, the notifications received from individuals or legal entities, companies facing corruption have resumed the growth trend. This shows that the institution regained the trust of the responsible and engaged people who refuse to tolerate corrupt practices.

"Every prosecutor, along with all those who work at DNA, are aware of the important role of the institution and of the expectations that the Romanian society has. Therefore, the DNA leadership wants to assure the citizens that the fight against corruption continues with a firm commitment, determination and professionalism, for a correct act of justice to be carried out to the benefit of the Romanian citizens. Moreover, the DNA leadership encourages prosecutors and other employees to do their duty seriously, confidently and resolutely, assuring them of the institution's support, under the law, in such difficult situation that might appear. DNA has been and will remain a key institution in the democratic development of the Romanian society, which applies the principles of professionalism, fairness and respect for the law," reads the same press release.