



What did the political parties propose and fail to propose in the field of anticorruption?

ANALYSIS

OF THE LEVEL OF COMMITMENT OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES REGISTERED FOR THE 44TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS WITH AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING ANTICORRUPTION REFORM

This analysis assesses the results of the monitoring conducted on the pre-election programmes of the political parties, registered for the 44th National Assembly elections in Bulgaria. The monitoring is part of the efforts of Transparency International-Bulgaria to focus the attention of political parties on the major deficits in the political life and governance practices. These deficits deepen the backsliding of Bulgaria in the efforts for prevention and counteraction to corruption and need substantial corrections in light of the registered low levels of trust and tolerance of Bulgarian citizens. In the eve of the snap parliamentary elections on 26 March 2017 Transparency International-Bulgaria has published a policy paper “17 Anticorruption Commitments for Elections 2017” and has called to political parties to present concrete measures which can be the basis for a civil society monitoring for their implementation. The monitoring is based on a methodology, which includes taking two key indicators into account:

- Level of commitment by political parties with specific measures in key areas of the policy for prevention and counteraction to corruption, formulated by TI-Bulgaria in the eve of the election campaign: <http://transparency.bg/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/On-26-March-2017-parliament-elections-will-take-place-in-Bulgaria.pdf>
- Level of integration in the pre-election campaigns of the political parties of other measures with the potential to limit the corruption risk and to effectively prosecute corruption crimes;

The monitoring included a number of key steps:

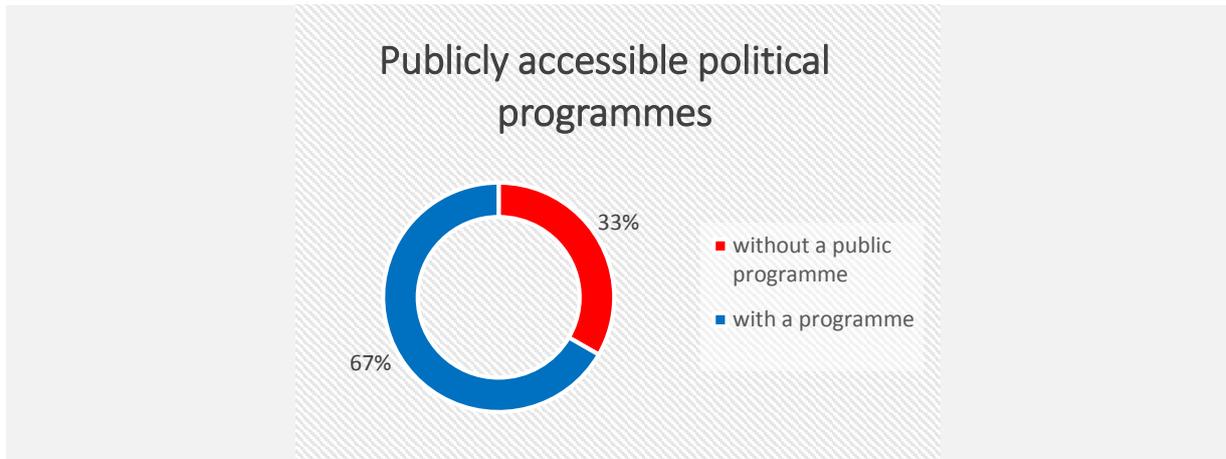
- Establishing a contact with all political parties, registered to participate in the elections for the 44th National Assembly. The official contact address, registered with the Central Election Commission was used. The aim of the contact was to provide publicity of the initiative and to request the current pre-election programme of the parties.
- A content analysis of all publicly accessible programmes of the registered parties in the period 17 February – 10 March 2017.

MAIN FINDINGS

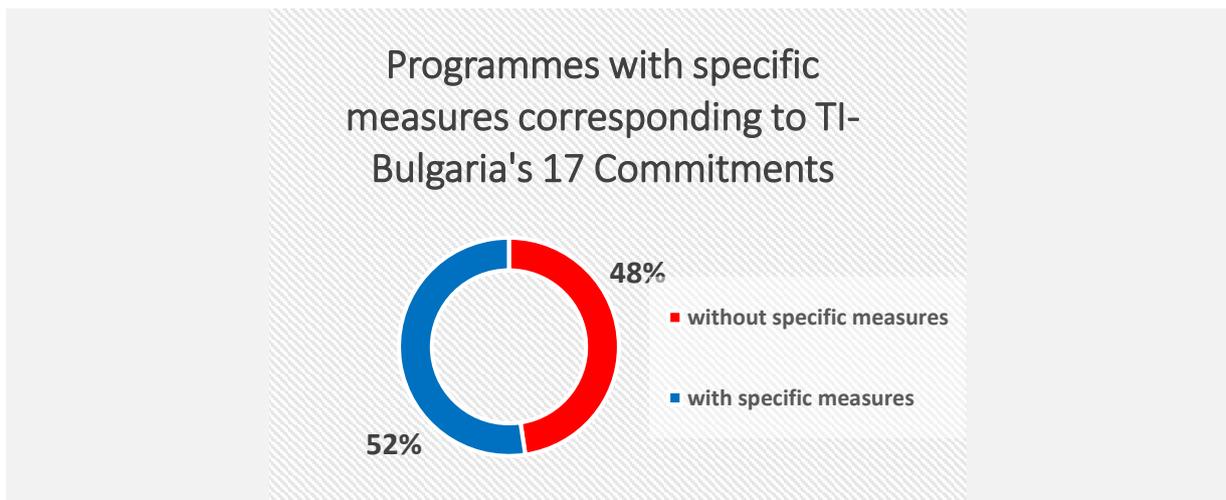
The monitoring registers a high share of political formations which participate in the parliamentary elections without having a public pre-election programme, accessible for the citizens – **for 1/3 of all**



registered parties and coalitions it has proven impossible to find such a document. The tendency is ever more concerning given the eroded trust of citizens in the political institutions in Bulgaria.



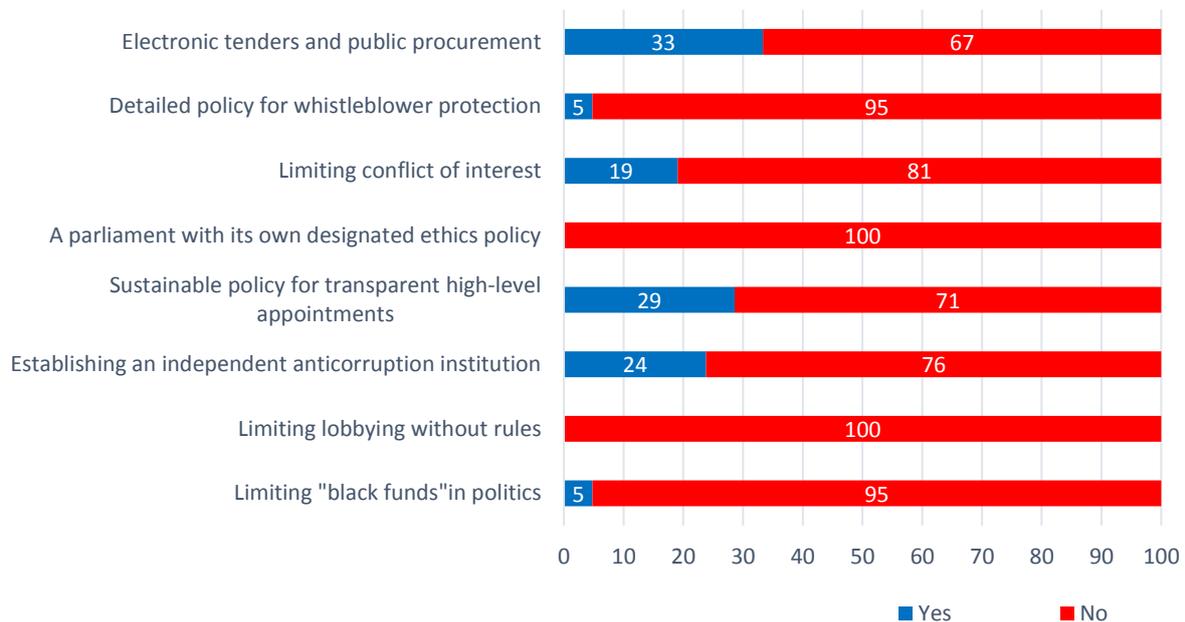
The in-depth analysis of the proposed programmes registered **yet another worrying trend – only half of the formations, participating in the election, have announced measures with an anticorruption effect.**



A strategic approach to the prevention and counteraction to corruption is proposed by only 1/4th of all registered parties and coalitions in the 2017 parliamentary elections campaign. Almost half of the participants refuse to commit to the topic. **Around 1/3 of the participating parties and coalitions have made an attempt to formulate concrete measures but these are not systematized in regard to set strategic goals and expected results.**



Adoption of specific anticorruption commitments in the political programmes by topic



The review of the correspondence between the proposed pre-election party programmes and the 17 Anti-corruption commitments, proposed by TI-Bulgaria outlines an explicit refusal of political formations to commit to certain topics and to propose adequate solutions to ascertained deficits – these are the topics of shedding light over lobbying and lobbying activities, as well as the ethical rules in the activities of the Bulgarian Parliament.

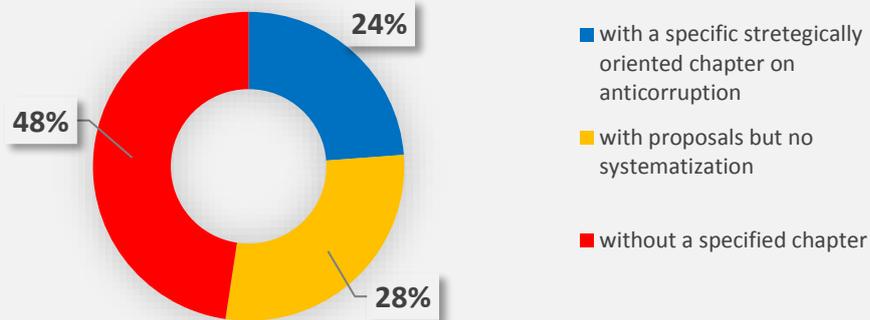
Parties demonstrate a clear refusal to commit to the problem of ineffective control over the financing of political activity.

Only one programme declares an intent to limit “black funds” in politics through the implementation of more effective mechanisms for control over the financing of political and pre-election activity. In only one party programme a detailed proposal is developed for implementing an all-encompassing policy for whistleblower protection by establishing mechanisms for compensation of the whistleblower regarding all categories of risks and for imposing sanctions to the institution which has initiated repressive measures towards the whistleblower who has submitted information out of good faith.

The largest share of specific measures is proposed as regards the topic of transparency of public procurement (33% of parties), the appointment procedures in all governance bodies (29%). The establishment of an independent anticorruption body, with specific competencies to define, coordinate and report the implementation of the state policy for prevention and counteraction to corruption, is supported by 1/4th of the participating formations, while concrete steps for limiting corruption risks through prevention of the conflict of interest are proposed by 1/5th of all formations.



Strategic approach to corruption prevention, adopted in the party programmes



The detailed analysis of the pre-election programmes registered **other zones of possible consensus** beyond the 17 Commitments, proposed by Transparency International-Bulgaria. Among those, a key commitment is related to the ambition of 90% of political formations to **implement the policies of e-governance in a short timeframe with all its components**.

Half of the parties which have proposed political programmes place the emphasis on two other important steps in the **prevention of corruption – implementing the “implied consent” as a measure against the administrative corruption and limiting the possibilities for political influence over the judiciary by removing the parliamentary appointment quota within the Supreme Judicial Council**.

Further to that 50% support is foreseen in regard to the need to establish a specialized anticorruption court and prosecutor’s office.

The least level of consensus among the political parties who have presented a pre-election programme **is established in relation to the measures for improving the effectiveness of the regulatory bodies and the reforms in key aspects of the penal policy in the country**.

Level of consensus on other anticorruption measures

(as a % of the publicly accessible programmes)

