



During a May 12, 2020 meeting Latvia's government supported the proposals put forth by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) to amend the "Preventing Conflicts of Interest" law. The amendments would reduce the amount of financial information officials of institutions of higher education and board members of state-owned enterprises report on their Declaration of Interests.

If Saeima (parliament) adopts the amendments, the financial declaration's public section will no longer contain complete financial information about an official's sources of income, which will hinder efforts to uncover and prevent corruption.

The government believes that these amendments will make it easier for state-owned enterprises to attract well qualified professionals. Peteris Vilks of the *Cross-Sectoral Coordination Center* commented that "greater transparency in state employee interest declarations has not had an impact on reducing corruption in the country." However, KNAB (The Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau) has publicly noted that information uncovered by the media has been the source for initiating a number of investigations.

It is possible that the government wishes to further reduce transparency because it has asked KNAB to evaluate the requirements of the Declaration of Interests for other public officials. The Bureau has until August 31 to submit amendments to the sections of the Preventing Conflicts of Interest law which pertain to transparent income disclosures similar to those the MES would like to change.

Please read [Delna's explanation](#) of what reduced transparency in government employee interest declarations would mean in practice (in Latvian).

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**In the past month Delna has participated in 13 meetings on centralized**

## procurements during the COVID-19 pandemic

In order to further transparency, fair competition, and effective use of state resources, Delna on April 30 signed an agreement with the Ministry of Defense (MoD) on monitoring COVID-19 related centralized procurements. In May Delna lawyer Zane Zvirgzdiņa participated in 10 MoD work groups and three VAMOIC (State Defense Military Object and Purchasing Center) commission meetings. Delna has requested that complete information be made available, so that we are informed about all meetings and receive all pertinent procurement documents. While detailed procurement procedures have been worked out, there are some that are still being developed, such as those related to the receiving of products and determining their quality.

Read [Delna's report](#) on overseeing procurements (in Latvian).

Please support our work! Every donation, large or small, helps to fight corruption in Latvia!

## Fewer members of Saeima (parliament) abstain from voting

According to our [review of voting data](#) from Saeima plenary sessions, more MPs are choosing to take a position on issues and vote "For" or "Against". From January 10 – May 14, 2020 a total of 20 MPs have not abstained on a vote. In our last review (November 6, 2018 through September 26, 2019), only seven MPs did not abstain on a vote.



Delna, together with the Public Administration School, organized

## specialized courses for public sector employees

More than 80 participants took part in the courses in April and May. Topics covered included defining corruption, its sources and consequences, ethical principles of public servants, and preventing conflicts of interest in the activities of public officials. The courses were co-funded by the EU Fund as part of the project (Nr.3.4.2.0/15/I/002) to educate public employees in the prevention of corruption and the reduction of the shadow economy.

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## Representatives of local governments and Latvian NGOs invited to participate in a survey about public procurements

Your answers to this survey will help Delna and the Procurement Monitoring Bureau to evaluate the challenges and opportunities that exist in engaging the public's involvement in monitoring public procurements in local governments. This will help in realizing the government's determination to promote greater transparency in public procurements that is part of the "open government action plan for 2020-2021".

[Survey for municipalities.](#)

[Survey for NGOs.](#)

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## Delna's General Assembly will take place in June remotely

The annual meeting will consist of two parts – early voting and the online "Zoom" conference. Currently Delna has 90 members.

If you also wish to participate in Delna's activities, please, become a member. As a member of Delna you will help reduce corruption in Latvia and be part of the [Transparency International](#) global network with chapters in more than 100 countries!

**Be a Part of Delna!**

## Krista Pētersone resigns from the Delna board

On May 11, 2020 [Krista Pētersone](#) [informed Delna](#) that she is resigning from the board for personal reasons.

The board will continue to operate with five members until the 2020 General Assembly, at which time a replacement will be elected to fulfil the two years remaining in Pētersone's term.



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## ALLIANCE AGAINST CORRUPTION IN LATVIA

“Observing violations in the work place, an employee often feels powerless to do anything, fearing reprisals from employers or colleagues. In addition, as a subordinate, an employee may not only be witness to a violation, but also become complicit and thus have even less reason to whistleblow.

“It has been a year since employees no longer have to reconcile themselves with workplace violations because the Whistleblower law provides special protection to whistleblowers who report violations that are important to society,” acknowledges Zane Zvirgzdiņa, Delna's Whistleblower Center expert.

Be a whistleblower! The law protects you!

For more information go to [www.celtrauksmi.lv](http://www.celtrauksmi.lv)

### **Delna is looking for an intern or volunteer!**

Delna and the Alliance Against Corruption in Latvia are looking for an intern and volunteer to join our team. This is an excellent way for students to learn firsthand about Delna, gain practical experience in the fight against corruption, form new friendships, and meet collaboration partners. As an example, Delna's newest member, Jēkabs Rasnačs, joined us at the beginning of the year as an intern.

If you know of an energetic student or volunteer who wishes to gain experience with an NGO and to work on issues related to fighting corruption, protecting society's interests, and increasing transparency in government, please send them [this application form!](#)

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# DELNA'S VIEWPOINTS



Picture: Valda Kalnina / EPA

*“Die Situation wird durch den Umstand begünstigt, dass das Parteienkonglomerat, in dem Lembergs aus dem Hintergrund die Fäden zieht, erstmals nach Jahren von der Exekutivmacht auf nationaler Ebene abgeschnitten ist.“*

Delna Director Liene Gātere told Switzerland's Neues Züricher Zeitung in an interview (April 29, 2020). The whole article, “The Corruption Net in Latvia” (Lettland kämpft gegen ein Netz der Korruption), can be read [here](#).

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