



PUBLISKA DISKUSIJA

## PAR SAEIMAS BUDŽETA PUBLISKU REVĪZIJU

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### What's Happened to the Citizens' Initiative “Public Auditing of Saeima’s Budget”?

It's been five years since Latvian Parliament (Saeima) first took up Transparency International Latvia (Delna) initiative “[Public Auditing of Saeima's Budget](#)” (in Latvian). The initiative has passed only the first reading in Saeima. The initiative garnered 10,975 votes on the civic initiative platform *ManaBalss.lv* (My Voice) and was submitted to Saeima on November 30, 2018.

To clarify what has happened with the initiative, on March 25 Delna organized an expert forum and public discussion with local and foreign experts, MPs and representatives of Saeima's committees overseeing the changes in current legislation. Participants reviewed the current auditing practice in Saeima and international experience with public auditing of parliaments and discussed possible ways forward Delna's initiative.

The discussions can be viewed (in Latvian) [here ->](#).

The summary of the discussions (in Latvian) is available [here ->](#).



## Delna's Proposals to the Legislation on Lobbying

Delna has examined draft legislation on transparency of interest representation (lobbying), which was passed on the first reading in Saeima. Now, prior to the second reading, Delna has submitted its proposals for improving the draft legislation.

Delna has drawn attention to certain features, such as what is understood to be public decisions within the scope of the draft legislation. Delna has pointed out the need to ensure there is a link between the lobbyist register and the publicizing of lobbyist activities, which currently is not defined in the bill. There are also concerns that many features of the new legislation are unclear as planned to be decided by the Cabinet of Ministers.

In preparing these proposals Delna drew upon Transparency International and OECD international standards for regulating lobbying that directs attention on greater transparency and tracking.

Learn more about Delna's proposals (in Latvian) [here->](#)



## The New Whistleblowing Law

The new Law on Whistleblowing went into effect on February 4 of this year. It was enacted to supersede the October 23, 2019 directive of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law.

Delna participated in the preparation of the new legislation providing recommendations and advice in writing the law and presenting proposals to Saeima's Public Administration and Local Government committee.

Delna's contribution to the writing of the Whistleblowing Law and what are the next steps in further developing the legislation are discussed in our article (in Latvian) [here->](#).



## The First Steps for Democratic Nations in Kicking Addiction to Dirty Money

With Russia's attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022 the world has started to pay a great deal more attention to preventing the legitimizing of money illegally obtained or from illicit sources, as this dirty money can be a threat to a country's national security.

As [Transparency International has pointed out](#), democratic nations have created conditions that have allowed the war in Ukraine to be possible. Corrupted elites and foreign governments have been able to act freely under these conditions and increase their influence in Western democracies.

Every nation should devote sufficient resources to identifying dirty money. Transparency International EU [has proposed 12 measures](#) that the EU should take in an effort to aid Ukraine and strengthen Europe against the influence of authoritarian nations.

To read more about these measures (in Latvian), please visit the Delna homepage [here ->](#).

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## **Integrity Pacts Handbook**

For years Delna has been talking about integrity pacts and how civic society can utilize them in monitoring public procurements in order to prevent possible corruption and mismanagement. From 2016-2020 Delna monitored procurements related to infrastructure projects for *Rīgas Satiksme* (Riga Traffic Department).

The experiences Delna and other civil society organizations gained from monitoring 46 public procurements in the EU have been compiled in the recently published Transparency International handbook "Integrity Pacts in the EU: Suitability, Set Up and Implementation". This book explains what are integrity pacts, how to develop them, and offers recommendations on implementing them.

The handbook (in English) can be accessed on the Transparency International website [here ->](#).

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DELNA COMMENTARIES IN THE MEDIA



## **Changes to the Law on Financing Political Organizations (Parties) do not Address All Shortcomings in the System**

A few weeks back Saeima hastily passed the Latvian President's proposed changes to the Law on Financing Political Organizations (Parties). Delna characterized these changes as an inept attempt to remedy the current system's shortcomings.

In an interview in the news portal LA.LV Delna researcher Olafs Grigus discusses the various problems on political party financing the changes do not solve, also pays attention to way the amendments were adopted in the legislation, skipping debate and fruitful exchange of opinions in the Saeima's Budget and Finance (Tax) Committee. Olafs Grigus also drew attention to the importance of adopting laws on lobbying.

The complete interview (in Latvian) can be read [here ->](#).

Foto LA.lv

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## **Latvian President Calls for State Financing for Parties Running in Local Elections**

In announcing the changes to the Law on Financing Political Organizations (Parties), Latvia's President called for consideration of state financing for local parties that do not participate in national elections.

Commenting on this idea Delna researcher Olafs Grigus, speaking on the Latvia Radio 1 program "*Pēcpusdiena*", pointed out that currently only parties that participate in national (parliamentary) elections are eligible for state financing. Legislation would be required to allow local parties to qualify for this financing and thus improve the quality of their functioning.

The commentary (in Latvian) on Latvia Radi on 1 is available in its entirety [here ->](#).

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION



### **Democracy Must Learn to Defend Itself from Foreign Ideological Influence**

How do unfriendly foreign powers manipulate information and interfere in the democratic processes in the EU? They can:

- influence elections,
- carry out cyberattacks,
- employ former high-level politicians, and
- promote polarizing public debates.

Some countries, such as Russia and China, as well as Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf countries, actively bribe and co-opt a country's elite. Democracy in EU nations is being used as a weapon against the countries themselves.

Delna has emphasized that an independent and strong media are a weapon not only in the fight against money laundering and uncovering instances of corruption and hidden assets, but is a cornerstone of national security.

More about this (in Latvian) read the [LVportals website->](#).

Illustration courtesy of [lvportals.lv](#)

## WE INVITE YOU TO SUPPORT THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

If you wish to take part in the effort to reduce corruption in Latvia, we invite you to join Delna. As a Delna member you will become part of our [80 person community in Latvia](#) and be part of [Transparency International's global anti-corruption network](#) with chapters in more than 100 countries.



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Kāpēc es saņēmu šo vēstuli?

[Lai atteiktos no turpmākām vēstulēm, spiediet šeit](#) | [Atjaunot profilu](#)