

ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (December 2020)

ACRC held ‘Anti-Corruption Week’ event for “Public Interest Whistle-Blowing Day”... Let’s meet on-line this year!

- Held various events including “Public Interest Whistle-Blowing Day Ceremony” and “Integrity Talk Concert” -

December 8, 2020

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission

The Republic of Korea



The Anti-Corruption and Civil Right Commission (Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui, hereinafter “ACRC”) hosted the “2nd Public Interest Whistle-Blowing Day Ceremony” and other integrity culture events for three days from December 9 to 11, 2020, in celebration of International Anti-Corruption Day and Public Interest Whistle-Blowing Day.

International Anti-Corruption Day was designated by the United Nations to

commemorate the signing ceremony of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) hosted on December 9, 2003, in Merida, Mexico. Korea designated and proclaimed Public Interest Whistle-Blowing Day on December 9, 2018, to promote the importance of anti-corruption efforts and public interest whistle-blowers and to honor them.

This year, all the events were hosted on-line and contact-free, to prevent spread of COVID-19. They were live-broadcast on the 2020 Anti-Corruption Week website.

In the morning on December 9, the first day of the events, the result of 2020's assessment on the integrity of 580 public institutions was announced at Government Complex-Seoul. The result of the assessment allows understanding of changes in the integrity level of major public institutions at a glance. Case presentations were given by public officials of public institutions with outstanding integrity, to share secrets of policies that have helped enhancement of their integrity.

In the afternoon on December 9, the ceremony for the second Public Interest Whistle-Blowing Day was hosted to raise positive awareness of public interest whistleblowing and to reaffirm Korean government's commitment to protection of public interest whistleblowers.

After ACRC Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui's celebratory remark, celebratory video messages from Chairman Yoon Kwan-Seok of Korean National Assembly's National Policy Committee and Executive Director Mark Worth of the European Center for Whistleblower Rights highlighted the importance of public interest whistleblowing and their support for active protection of whistleblowers. Then, public officials in charge of relevant tasks, as well as citizens, sent supportive messages to public interest whistleblowers.

Plus, Anti-Corruption Training Institute, Korea's one and only anti-corruption

education institution which is affiliated to the ACRC, unveiled a real-time, virtual edition of “Anti-Corruption Live” for the first time.

Integrity Live, one of the major anti-corruption educational programs of the Institute, provides an enjoyable educational experience for everyone.

It is composed of a “sand art” designed based on a real story of a public official, “Heungboga”, a brand-new, humorous adaption of traditional pansori (Korean traditional musical storytelling), a monodrama about ethical dilemmas, and so on.

Talk concert was held in the afternoon on December 10, to discuss the topic of “What does justice mean for those who were born in the 90’s?”. The forum provided opportunities to understand the characteristics of young generations and perception gap between them and former generations, as well as to share ideas about the direction of anti-corruption and integrity policies that can be actually meaningful for younger generations.

Additional events were also held, including ▲ screening of anti-corruption educational content for enhancement of children’s moral sensitivity, ▲ lecture of the day which is a collection of anti-corruption lectures by important figures from various circles of society, and ▲ screening of “Anti-Corruption Rapping” by the winner of the anti-corruption contents contest.

ACRC Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui said, “Successful hosting of the International Anti-Corruption Conference in Korea last week has given us an opportunity to take a step closer to become an advanced country of integrity. I hope this event will also give an opportunity for our anti-corruption and integrity policies to take deeper root in people’s everyday lives.”

TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix assesses, “Korea took 22nd place out of 194 countries, very low risk of bribery”

- *Corruption index based on objective data, not subjective perception, Korea’s ranking rose for 4 years in a row -*

December 10, 2020

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission

The Republic of Korea

Korea took 22nd place out of 194 countries around the world and recorded 20 points out of 100 (lower scores means lower risk of bribery) in 2020 Bribery Risk Matrix recently released by TRACE, an American business risk management solution provider.

Korea’s ranking in the matrix has risen every year to take the 22nd place this year, from the 33rd in 2017, 25th in 2018, and then 23rd place in 2019. Notably, the level of bribery risk for Korea this year was assessed to be “very low”, better than the level of “low” in 2019.

※ very low (1~21 points), low (22~37), moderate (38~55), high (56~73), very high (74~100)

Bribery Risk Matrix was developed by business risk management solution provider TRACE jointly with RAND Corporation of the U.S.A., to provide information of bribery risk, which means a “likelihood for a businessman to be asked by public officials of a certain country to give bribes to operate business there”.

TRACE has announced bribery risk matrix consisting of multiple evaluation factors (59 detailed indices as of 2020) biennially since 2014, to quantitatively demonstrate bribery risks. After improving methodologies including expansion of the range of source data, the matrix has been announced every year since 2017.

The matrix is produced based on detailed data and analysis of questionnaires with clearly-defined detailed questions, for the purpose of ensuring objectiveness of the assessment.

The matrix is drawing attention recently, as such methodology is different from existing Corruption Perception Index (CPI) per country, which has been assessed based on subjective awareness of experts and businessmen.

ACRC Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui said, “The level of Korea’s integrity evaluated by the global society has been constantly improving for the recent few years in various international indices including CPI. Such progress reflects the achievements of the anti-corruption reform that the Korean government has pushed forward so far.”

The chairperson continued, “Following the success of the International Anti-Corruption Conference (Dec. 1-4, on-line and contact-free video conference) recently hosted by the Korean government and Transparency International, we will continue to share Korean government’s anti-corruption efforts and achievements at world’s anti-corruption forums and meetings including the OECD and UN and do our best to raise anti-corruption awareness.”

“Plus, we will check what further improvements should be made for better state integrity in diverse international indices and firmly push forward with anti-corruption policies for them”, added the chairperson.

ACRC runs an anti-corruption training webinar for Uzbekistan public officials - Korea shares its experience in fighting against corruption with Uzbekistan -

December 9, 2020

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission

The Republic of Korea



The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui, hereinafter “ACRC”) of the Republic of Korea organized a webinar for 44 Uzbekistan public officials to help build their anti-corruption capacities. Hosted by the Anti-Corruption Training Institute of the ACRC, the online training course took place for three days from December 9, 2020.

The training course was planned as part of the ACRC’s efforts to implement the memorandum of understanding signed by the ACRC and the Prosecutor General’s Office of Uzbekistan in October 2019. It was organized as a webinar due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Uzbekistan participants consisted of 34 prosecutors and investigators of the Prosecutor General’s Office and 10 officials of the Anti-Corruption Agency, which was created as Uzbekistan’s new anti-corruption body in June 2020.

At the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly last September

Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev announced the establishment of the independent Anti-Corruption Agency, stating that “the uncompromising fight against corruption has reached a new level.”

The training program covered Korea’s major anti-corruption policies including the Anti-Corruption Initiatives Assessment, Corruption Risk Assessment and whistleblower protection and reward program, which have won international recognition as best practices in the anti-corruption field.

Introduced in 2002, the Anti-Corruption Initiatives Assessment is Korea’s unique policy tool to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of the anti-corruption measures undertaken by individual public organizations. Since this assessment system has proved to be a practical, effective means to spur public sector organizations to increase efforts to prevent and control corruption, the Uzbekistan government is keenly interested in adopting this program.

Jeon Hyun-heui, Chairperson of the ACRC, said that this webinar will provide an opportunity to share Korea’s anti-corruption policies with Uzbekistan.

“The ACRC will expand exchange and cooperation with the anti-corruption bodies of Uzbekistan which is one of the key partners of the Korean government for its New Northern Policy,” said the Chairperson.

Corruption of high-ranking public officials will be resolved by the ACRC and the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials together
- The ACRC will join hands with the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials for realization of a transparent society -

December 14, 2020

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission

The Republic of Korea

Legal ground has been established for the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission and the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials to make joint efforts for realization of a transparent society.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui, hereinafter “ACRC”) has included the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials in the list of public institutions that are obliged to endeavor for prevention of corruption.

For addition of the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials in the list of public organizations for which the ACRC can file accusations of corruption charges of high-ranking officials including ministers and vice-ministers, judges, and public prosecutors, the ▲ Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission has been revised. For addition of the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials in the list of public organizations that must comply with duties regarding prohibition of improper solicitation and grafts and carry out tasks for prevention of fraudulent claim of government subsidies, the ▲ Improper Solicitation and Graft Act and the ▲ Act on Prohibition of False Claims for Public Funds and Recovery of Illicit Profits were amended, respectively.

Anyone who has come to know of high-ranking public officials’ ▲ act of

abusing their position or authority in relation to their public duties, ▲ act of pursuing their own or a third party's interest in violation of law, or ▲ an act of incurring property damage to a public institution, etc. can report with attachment of evidence through channels such as "Integrity Portal_Corruption Whistleblowing"(www.clean.go.kr) operated by the ACRC.

The ACRC inspects factual grounds regarding reports about corruption of high-ranking officials and then refers them to investigative agencies including the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials if audit/investigation or police probe is necessary.

Notably, as the ACRC bears the responsibility to report to an investigative agency such as the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials in case where a person suspected of an act of corruption is a high-ranking public official such as ministers or vice-ministers of central government departments, judges, and public prosecutors and the detail of the suspected corrupt act requires investigation or prosecution for criminal punishment, a response team of investigators with ample experiences of investigation will be formed in the ACRC.

The ACRC will actively cooperate with the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials so that the revised laws can be enforced effectively for prevention of corruption of high-ranking officials.

First, procedures for handling of reported cases of high-ranking officials' corruption will be established in consultation with the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials and the week of reporting of high-ranking officials' corruption will be launched. In addition, active support will be provided for operation of the office's own system of code of conduct and prohibition of improper solicitation, as well as for provision of anti-corruption education.

A collaboration system will be introduced for the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials to notify the ACRC in case a need for institutional improvement is found out in the process of investigating a high-ranking official's crime, to ensure improvement of unreasonable laws and systems.

ACRC Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui said, "I hope recent revisions of the laws will greatly help enhancing integrity of the public sector. The ACRC and the Corruption Investigation Office For High-ranking Officials will actively cooperate for prevention and eradication of corruption of high-ranking officials."

The ACRC established management guidelines for enhanced fairness of employment consigned by public institutions

- Criteria for appointment of recruitment evaluation committee members established... Part of contract amount to be subtracted in case any problem occurs such as wrong exam question in the process of recruitment... Result of evaluation of recruitment agencies' working capabilities to be shared -

December 15, 2020

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission

The Republic of Korea

As more recruitments of public institutions are consigned to external recruitment agencies these days, guidelines for fair recruitment and its management have been established.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Right Commission (Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui, hereinafter "ACRC") has unveiled "guidelines for management of recruitments consigned by public institutions", to ensure fairness of recruitments consigned by public institutions to external recruitment agencies.

The ACRC announced the result of analysis on the current status of recruitments consigned by public institutions to external recruitment agencies, when releasing the result of total inspection on the current status of employment of public institutions in this July.

According to the result of the analysis, the ratio of consigned recruitment out of hiring of public institutions in 2019 recorded approximately 20 percent. The ratio has increased constantly from 2017 to 2019, demonstrating a new trend of consigned recruitment in the market of public sector hiring.

However, some have pointed out insufficiency in management of consigned recruitment of public institutions, as some agencies use the same exam

questions for multiple recruitments or have non-experts to execute document examination.

That is why the ACRC has created the guidelines for management of consigned recruitments of public institutions, to suggest instructions that public institutions should follow when they consign hiring to external recruitment agencies.

First of all, criteria for appointment of evaluation committee members are set, so that properly-qualified recruitment agencies are appointed by evaluation of proposals.

Also, recruitment agencies' management accountability in the process of consigned recruitment is strengthened; in case where problems such as an error in setting of questions occur, part of contract amount for them would be subtracted.

Public institutions will evaluate the performance and capabilities of recruitment agencies and share the result with one another, to find out sound agencies and to raise competitiveness of those agencies.

Finally, to save costs, items whose payment can be settled in actual expenses such as venue rental fee for written tests and allowance for interview panel members should be specified in advance when designing the cost of consigned recruitments.

The ACRC distributed the guidelines for management of consigned recruitment to 1,563 organizations including public institutions, local public institutions, and other organizations related with public service and also posted the guidelines on the official website of the ACRC, so that public officials in charge of hiring can utilize them for their work.

The ACRC will continue to enhance fairness in the management of consigned

recruitment by public institutions, by monitoring how the guidelines are actually utilized.

Director General Yim Yoon-Joo of the Anti-Corruption Bureau of the ACRC said, “We have laid the foundation to ensure fairness in consigned recruitment of public institutions, by establishing measures to manage consigned recruitment which is settling as a new trend in the market of public sector employment.”

“We will continue to work hard to help fair recruitment take root, by monitoring constant changes in the recruitment market of the public sector and pushing institutional improvement in areas where unfairness exists”, added the Director General.

Ten major institutional improvements by the ACRC, which changed people's lives in 2020

- *Contributed to eradication of injustice/inequality by ▲exemption/deferment of water bills for small business owners ▲restriction of payment of incentives for corrupt employees of public institutions -*

December 21, 2020

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission

The Republic of Korea

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui, hereinafter "ACRC") introduced 10 cases of institutional improvements implemented by the ACRC in 2020 for anti-corruption and resolution of people's grievances for the purpose of eradicating injustice in people's everyday lives and realizing an inclusive society.

The ACRC has made recommendations for institutional improvements to prevent corruption and injustice and to fundamentally resolve inconveniences for people which frequently take place due to unreasonable systems. Here are introduced major cases of such institutional improvements that had actual positive effect on people's lives during the year, which were selected by 1,503 people by voting on People's Idea Box from December 8 to 17.

#1. Alleviation of the burden of water/gas bills for small business owners (May 25. recommendation)

Burden of paying for water and gas which are essential public utilities for people's daily lives was alleviated by exempting or temporarily deferring water bills for small business owners and people of vulnerable social groups who are suffering from financial difficulties due to COVID-19. Such action resulted in 50 to 100 percent reduction of water charges for people in

many local communities including Gwangmyeong-si and Wando-gun.

In addition, gas charges incurred by gas leak, not by carelessness of users, were exempted, while abolishing the releasing fee that had been charged for re-opening of gas supply suspended due to overdue payment. Consequently, revision of the gas supply regulations in Busan-si and Incheon-si, as well as Jeollanam-do has been completed.

#2. Restriction of payment of incentive/early voluntary retirement allowance for corrupt employees of public institutions (Oct. 12 recommendation)

The practice of paying excessive incentives even for employees of public institutions who have been given severe disciplinary action for a misconduct is eradicated. Payment of incentive is now banned for a public institution employee who has been given a severe disciplinary action or a disciplinary action for five major misconducts—receiving of grafts/entertainment, embezzlement, sexual violence/harassment, sex trade, and driving under influence.

Plus, public institution employees under the period of promotion restriction due to disciplinary action are unable to receive early voluntary retirement allowance, which is expected to enhance integrity of public institutions and prevent unnecessary waste of public money.

#3. Cancellation of contents subscription as easy as purchase (May 11 recommendation)

Fairness has been enhanced for the use of contents subscription services of music, videos, and books which are rapidly growing as a new trend of contact-free consumption for post-COVID times. Notification will be made in advance so that agreement on automatic renewal payment is not done

unknowingly. Plus, consumers who have purchased services on mobile application will be able to cancel or get refund of the service on the application, not on PC, to ensure convenience for consumers.

#4. Strict restriction of domestic violence assailants' access to resident registration information of victims (Oct. 26 recommendation)

Cases of secondary violence committed by domestic violence assailants after finding out the address of victims or their parents or children who live separately will be strictly prevented. Domestic violence assailants' access to resident registration information of family members who live with victims, as well as their parents or children who live separately, is now restricted. In addition, domestic violence assailants' reading of victims' resident registration for the reason of interest such as credit/debt is also banned.

#5. Free meal vouchers for children easier to use at convenience stores (Jun. 8 recommendation)

List of items that can be purchased with free meal vouchers provided to children from vulnerable families has been widely expanded, so that children do not experience frustration by convenience stores' refusal of their purchase. So far, the list of items such as cup noodles, fried chicken, and beverages which can be purchased with the voucher differed for each local community. Now, after revision of standard manual for free meal vouchers for children from vulnerable families in this July, all items at convenience stores except for some restricted ones including alcoholic beverage and cigarette, chocolate/candy, and condiment can be freely purchased with the voucher.

#6. Failed 1st round of national qualifying exam but can't get refund of application fee for 2nd round exam? (Sep. 21 recommendation)

In the past, application fees for the first and second rounds of national qualifying exams were collected together, so those who failed in the first round had to pay the fee for second-round test unwillingly. Such unfairness has been resolved. From now on, application fee for first and second rounds of 21 national qualifying exams including tax accountant exam will be charged separately. Plus, for applicants who cannot come to take 37 qualifying exams for an inevitable reason such as death of a family member, application fee will be refunded.

#7. Eradication of special favor for rental of public cultural facilities and excessive cancellation charge (Sep. 7 recommendation)

Improper request and special favor for rental of public cultural facilities for exhibition and performance has been eradicated. Special favor of preferential rental opportunity given for certain groups is abolished and the ratio of external members for rental review committees is raised, to strengthen fairness in the process of review and decision on rental. Notably, cancellation charge for rental of such facilities and deposit for contract is now limited within a reasonable extent, which is expected to resolve financial difficulties faced by the performing art and cultural circles due to COVID-19.

#8. Lower price, better quality, wider choice: improved system for school uniform purchase (Jul. 20 recommendation)

School uniforms have been purchased by schools collectively since 2015, for the purpose of stabilizing the price. Inconveniences experienced by students and parents in regards to the system of collective purchase of school uniforms have been resolved. Now, female students can choose pants for their school uniform and excessive pricing of frequently-bought school uniform items such as shirt has been banned. From the new semester next

year, students will be able to wear more inexpensive but higher-quality school uniforms.

**#9. No more dismissal of fixed-term teachers before termination of contract
(Apr. 20 recommendation)**

The practice of discharging fixed-term teachers before termination of their contracts in case of early/temporary return of original teachers who took leave of absence has been eradicated. Guidelines for operation of fixed-term teachers have been amended to abolish the provision of automatic cancellation of contracts for fixed-term teachers in case of early return of teachers who took leave of absence. Plus, the process of advance notification of dismissal and payment of severance pay is systemized, which is expected to resolve confusion at schools caused by discharging of fixed-term teachers before termination of their contracts.

**#10. No more gap in childcare due to sudden shutdown of daycare centers
(May 11. recommendation)**

Parents' grievances caused by sudden shutdown of daycare centers and difficulty to find out another center or kindergarten has been resolved. When a daycare center plans to shut down, such fact should now be notified to parents first and only then its close-down report will be accepted by relevant local government.

In addition, the number of daycare centers for which parents can put their children's name on the waiting list has been increased from two to three, so that children of daycare centers to be closed down can easily transfer to another center. When the improvement of the system is completed, stable care of children will be provided for children and parents even in the process of close-down of daycare centers.

Director General Yang Jong-Sam of the Institutional Improvement Bureau of the ACRC said, “Institutional improvement for eradication of corruption/injustice and protection of people’s rights and interests is getting more and more important. We will continue to monitor the progress of implementation of institutional improvements, so that more people can see the effect of improvement in their everyday lives. We will also keep actively pushing forward with institutional improvements that can resolve grievances of people.”