



Position of the Anti-Corruption Fund dated 05.10.21 in response to a Position of the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission Sotir Tsatsarov on the broadcast interview with Yavor Zlatanov, dated 04.10.21:

Dear Mr. Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission,

We have published the first part of the interview with Yavor Zlatanov, and we will publish its sequel very soon, as we believe that the case of the “Eight Dwarfs” has been openly swept under the rug by the Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Bulgaria and all other institutions that are obliged to react to the reported evidence. At the same time, a sufficient number of senior magistrates are involved in this case to consider it important for uncovering potential dependencies and answering the question of how and in whose favor the Bulgarian Prosecutor’s Office works in some instances.

Regarding your position today, again, you do not comment on the questions about your relations with the main actors in the “Eight Dwarfs” - the former head of the investigation department in Sofia, Mr. Petyo Petrov, and his wife, Lyubena Petrova. For example, despite the Bulgarian court’s conclusion that Petyo Petrov had carried out a bribery provocation in the case against former military minister Nikolai Tsonev, he was not prosecuted for this by the Prosecutor’s Office at the time when you were heading it. Also, Petrov managed to leave the judiciary of his own volition and without any sanction from the Supreme Judicial Council while you were the informal majority leader in it. Lyubena Petrova, on the other hand, organized demonstrations in support of the Prosecutor’s Office and this same majority. These are important questions whose answer the society is waiting for.

Secondly, we believe that every Bulgarian citizen has the right to take to court any action that they feel is damaging to their rights or reputation. However, in the position you have published today, in your capacity as Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission (CAPIAF), we see an attempt to pressure our organization and a classic case of SLAPP (strategic litigation against public participation). We believe that the published position constitutes a public threat of a defamation lawsuit, without considering that our organization has simply made the voice of the brutally, even physically affected by the actions of the institutions, Yavor Zlatanov heard. We believe that making vaguely worded threats concerning a right of reply to a previous publication does not correspond to the senior public office you hold and the considerable powers it has. Adopting and institutionalizing such an approach would discredit the Anti-Corruption Commission and contribute to turning it into an instrument for intimidation.

Last but not least, your position clearly reflects an attempt to influence our activities by referring to our donor organizations and suggesting that the grants received from them are spent in breach of ethical rules. We assure you that the Anti-Corruption Fund Foundation has and will continue to observe the highest standards of ethics and professionalism in its activities, which is reflected in the Foundation’s high level of public trust.

In conclusion, we believe that both the facts of the Eight Dwarfs case presented in 2020, supported by documentary evidence and the testimony of unrelated witnesses, and the circumstances published as part of an interview with Yavor Zlatanov, testify to systemic problems in law enforcement institutions and contain serious evidence of crimes and violations. Therefore, we once again appeal to the competent institutions - the Bulgarian Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Interior, the Inspectorate of the Supreme Judicial Council - to verify and investigate the evidence. We believe that an adequate institutional response to cases of the rank of the "Eight Dwarfs" will significantly contribute to ensuring that Bulgaria does not occupy the shameful place of the most corrupt country in the European Union, according to several international corruption surveys - Corruption Perceptions Index and Global Corruption Barometer (Transparency International), Freedom Barometer (Friedrich Nauman Stiftung) and Rule of Law Index (World Justice Project).

BOYKO STANKUSHEV
ANTI-CORRUPTION FUND DIRECTOR