Asset Declaration for Public Officials – A tool to prevent corruption

Overview: This study is divided in three parts. The first part deals with policy principles and reccomendations for public asset declarations. The second part analyzes existing asset declaration practices, and the third part are case studies from Lithuania, Romania, Spain (Catalonia) and Ukraine.

In the first part, the study tries to answer to questions such as why do we need asset declaration, which legal framework should be chosen, who should be obliged to declare assets. Particularly interesting part of this analysis is whether there should be one regulation for all officials, or different regulation for all categories.

The second part goes into more detail, and there are a few interesting chapters, Chapter 3, which explains the legal basis and institutional arrangements is provides a lot of information and comparisons between different approaches to legal frameworks in different countries. Subjects of declaration systems, scope and content of declarations, processing of declarations, public disclosure and effectiveness of declaration systems are also discussed through examples form different countries.

The main takeaway from these two parts is that there an all encompasing approach for all countries does not exist, since asset declaration is in many cases a political issue. For example, when it comes to income, there are number of ways it can be declare. You can take a strict approach (like in most former socialist countries) where all income must be declared, or you can take a 'softer' approach, like in the German Bundestag, where you have to only declare income above a certain threshold.

Overall, this study provides a lot of information about how policy principles for Public Official Asset Declaration can be be set up. The problem with it is that it was published in 2011 and it may not be that accurate when it comes to specific solutions in certain countries, since changes could have been made to the countries' systems (for example, changes were made in Bosnia since then, so the data for Bosnia is no longer correct).