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Following the latest invitation of the secretariat of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption to share any pertinent information on “enhancing the effectiveness of anti-corruption bodies” in preparation for the upcoming 11th session of the Working Group on Prevention, the Austrian Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAK) is pleased to contribute its experiences.

With the foundation of the BAK in 2010, both a specialized investigation department and a science-based prevention and education unit were established in Austria.

The BAK serves as an institutional point of contact and centre of competence for all corruption-related issues and can be contacted by anybody at any time. The establishment of this authority helped to raise awareness of corruption and compliance in the general public. Austria’s continuous improvement in the ranking of the CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index) can be considered as one of the results and as an indicator of the BAK’s efforts and effectiveness.

In addition to its investigative and law enforcement tasks, the BAK provides anti-corruption and compliance advisory services for a wide range of public institutions. Furthermore, the BAK offers specific trainings, workshops and lectures to various target groups.

The elements contributing to the effectiveness of the BAK’s work include:

- budgetary autonomy
- adequate staffing
- internal risk and compliance management system
- internal controlling
- quality checks on its preventive activities, including regular evaluation and constant improvement of educational concepts
- international cooperation
- collection and analysis of statistical data

Additional information (several publications and activity reports) is available on the BAK’s website at <https://www.bak.gv.at/en/start.aspx>.

The BAK currently acts as the Secretariat of the European Partners against Corruption and the European contact-point network against corruption (EPAC/EACN). In this respect, the BAK would also like to draw attention to the Anti-Corruption Authority Standards developed by EPAC/EACN. They are intended to be aspirational rather than legally binding on organizations. Published together with the Police Oversight Principles and including an annex, the Ten Guiding Principles on the Notion of Independence, they are designed for specialized units and bodies in public administration as well as for law enforcement institutions with a mandate to prevent and combat corruption. The Anti-Corruption Authority Standards aim to promote transparent and independent anti-corruption bodies through sustainable modes of operation, as called for by Articles 6 and 36 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) for example, and therefore support their effectiveness.

To fulfil their responsibilities, anti-corruption authorities are increasingly using management tools which have so far mainly been applied in the private sector. These include, among others, risk management and compliance management. In order to be able to benefit from these instruments and make public administration yet more efficient, EPAC/EACN developed Integrity Risk Management Guidelines, which can be found at: <https://www.epac-eacn.org/downloads/recommendations>.

The BAK would like to take this opportunity to thank the secretariat for its initiative and express its interest in the outcome of the survey and recommendations derived from it.