Analyses OSW

CENTRE FOR EASTERN STUDIES 12.01.2011 www.osw.waw.pl

Slovakia: the Internet should improve the transparency of public life

From 1 January Slovak central and local government agencies and other budget-financed entities began having to publish any contracts they have concluded in an online database. This step, made as part of the governmental anti-corruption strategy, fits in with the policy of using the Internet to improve the transparency of public life and in combating corruption, which has been continued by subsequent Slovakian governments.

Pursuant to the regulations adopted by the centre-right coalition, a contract concluded by a state budget entity becomes effective only upon its publication on the Internet. Approximately 70,000 documents will be published annually in the online contract database kept by the Government's Office. The parliament is also working on amending the public procurement act to impose the obligation of holding open tenders via the Internet on all central and local government agencies and other budget-financed entities.

The Ministry of Education has also been propagating a broader use of the Internet. Since 1 September, all diploma theses (from BA to PhD degrees) and post-doctoral theses are to be published online, which is expected to help prevent plagiarism and improve the level of future theses.

When the centre-right government led by Iveta Radicova was taking over power in the country last summer, it promised transparency in public life and changes in political culture after Robert Fico's time in office which was characterised by corruption scandals. Although most Slovakian political parties have problems clearing up scandals they have been involved in, the strategy of improving the transparency of public life is starting to bring results. <grosz>