

## ANTI-CORRUPTION PREVENTION AND ITS MAIN DIRECTIONS IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

**Margarita A. Volkova**

*Siberian Federal University, Krasnoyarsk, Russia*

### **Article info**

Received –

2023 February 10

Accepted –

2023 December 29

Available online –

2024 March 20

### **Keywords**

Corruption, corruption crime, prevention of corruption crimes, anti-corruption prevention, anti-corruption openness, anti-corruption public control, anti-corruption education, anti-corruption expertise, anti-corruption promotion

The subject of the research is the norms of international and domestic legislation on public procurement, on combating corruption, as well as scientific works on the prevention of corruption crimes and anti-corruption prevention.

The purpose of the study is to determine the place of anti-corruption prevention in the system of preventing corruption crimes in the field of public procurement and to study its main directions.

The objectives of the study are to analyze the existing approaches in the scientific literature to the characterization of the system for preventing corruption crimes in the field of public procurement, to consider the theoretical foundations of anti-corruption prevention, as well as to characterize the main directions of anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement.

The work used dialectical, system-structural, formal-logical and other methods of scientific knowledge.

The scientific novelty of the work lies in the consideration of issues of anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement that were not previously subject to research. The article defines the place of anti-corruption prevention in the system of preventing corruption crimes in the field of public procurement, substantiates the need for the development of anti-corruption prevention in this area, and describes its main directions. The author defines anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement as a system of non-coercive measures aimed at creating conditions that stimulate the anti-corruption behavior of public procurement entities. The paper identifies and characterizes five main areas of anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement: anti-corruption openness, anti-corruption public control, anti-corruption education, anti-corruption expertise and anti-corruption encouragement. These directions are implemented at three levels: general, group and individual.

According to the results of the study, the author comes to the conclusion that in order to optimize the system of preventing corruption crimes in the field of public procurement, it is advisable to develop each of these areas of anti-corruption prevention. The development of the approach outlined in the article will ensure consistency in the analysis and reform of anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement.

## 1. Introduction

One of the main principles of combating corruption is the prioritized application of measures to prevent it<sup>1</sup>. This principle conveys one of the most fundamental criminological ideas conceived by a representative of the classical school Ch. Beccaria: "it is better to prevent crimes than to punish" [1, p. 150].

The legislator widely applies measures to prevent corruption in the general norms of anti-corruption legislation and in the legal regulation of certain spheres of public relations: state and municipal services, the electoral process, the judicial system, education, healthcare, etc. The analysis of public procurement legislation allows us to conclude that it contains a relatively large number of anti-corruption measures.

"Public procurement has become a real breeding ground for corruption" –Russian President said Vladimir Putin in a message to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation at the end of 2012 on the eve of the adoption of a new law regulating the system of state (municipal) procurement. This thesis predetermined the indication in the Federal Laws "On the contract system in the field of procurement of goods, works, and services for state and municipal needs"<sup>2</sup> and "On procurement of goods, works, and services by certain types of legal entities"<sup>3</sup> among the main objectives of regulation is the prevention of corruption and other abuses. Such a goal of public procurement legal regulation is also conditioned by international standards of anti-corruption policy. The UN Convention against Corruption, in article 9 "Public Procurement and Public Finance Management", establishes that "each State Party

shall take, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system, the necessary measures to establish appropriate procurement systems that are based on transparency, competition and objective decision-making criteria and are effective, among others among other things, from the point of view of preventing corruption." Guided by the obligations related to the ratification of the UN Convention against Corruption, the national legislator creates a public procurement system.

The legislation of the Russian Federation has established a regulatory framework for the prevention of corruption and corruption crime in the field of public procurement. One of the directions of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy implementation is "the improvement of the conditions, procedures and mechanisms of state and municipal procurement"<sup>4</sup>. Provisions on the prevention of corruption in the field of public procurement were contained in all National Anti-Corruption Plans. In the First National Anti-corruption Plan, among the measures to improve public administration in order to prevent corruption, it was stated: "the improvement of the rules governing procurement for state and municipal needs in order to exclude the possibility of arbitrary interpretation, discrimination and the provision of unjustified advantages"<sup>5</sup>. Separate measures to prevent corruption in procurement were contained in the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2010-2011 (paragraph 12)<sup>6</sup>; the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2012-2013 (paragraph 2)<sup>7</sup>; the National Anti-

<sup>1</sup> On combating corruption: Federal Law No. 273-FZ of December 25, 2008. Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation. 2008. No. 52 (part I). Article 6228.

<sup>2</sup> On the contract system in the field of procurement of goods, works, services for state and municipal needs: Federal Law No. 44-FZ of April 5, 2013. Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation. 2013. № 14. Article 1652.

<sup>3</sup> On purchases of goods, works, and services by certain types of legal entities: Federal Law No. 223-FZ of July 18, 2011. Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation. 2011. No. 30 (part 1). Article 4571.

<sup>4</sup> On the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2010-2011: Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 460 dated April 13, 2010. Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation. 2010. № 16. Article 1875.

<sup>5</sup> National Anti-Corruption Plan: approved by the President of the Russian Federation No. Pr-1568 dated July 31, 2008. Rossiyskaya Gazeta. 2008. № 164.

<sup>6</sup> On the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2010-2011: Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 460 dated April 13, 2010. Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation. 2010. № 16. Article 1875.

<sup>7</sup> On the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2012-2013 and amendments to certain acts of the President of the Russian Federation on anti-corruption issues: Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 297 dated March

Corruption Plan for 2014-2015 (paragraph 2)<sup>8</sup>. Since 2016, the prevention of corruption in the field of public procurement has already been reflected in the objectives of the National Anti-Corruption Plans. Thus, among the tasks in the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2016-2017, it was stated: "improvement of the efficiency of anti-corruption measures in the procurement of goods, works, and services to meet state and municipal needs"<sup>9</sup>. Among the main objectives of the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2018-2020 was: "improvement of anti-corruption measures in the field of procurement of goods, works, and services for state or municipal needs and in the field of procurement of goods, works, and services by certain types of legal entities"<sup>10</sup>. The current National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2021-2024 establishes a number of measures aimed at "the improvement of anti-corruption measures in the procurement of goods, works, services for state and municipal needs, purchases carried out by certain types of legal entities, as well as in the disposal of state and municipal property"<sup>11</sup>. Considering everything stated above, it is worth agreeing with the experts believing that the legal regulation of the public procurement system is anti-corruption in nature and is aimed at the alleviation of corruption risks in such legal relations [2].

Corruption prevention in the area of public procurement can be considered a priority when combating corruption. However, despite the fact

that the legal foundations of this activity have already been formed, the content of the corruption prevention system in the field of public procurement is still being formed and contains some gaps and imperfections.

## **2. Anti-corruption prevention in the system of corruption crime prevention in the field of public procurement**

Corruption crime is the most dangerous in the field of public procurement, and its prevention is of particular importance. Corruption crime prevention in the sphere of public procurement is part of the general crime prevention system, the study of which takes a central place in the system of criminological knowledge. Nevertheless, criminology lacks a generally accepted concept of crime prevention, and leading experts propose their own definitions. In the scientific literature, various other terms are also used to denote measures to influence crime: crime fighting [3], crime prevention [4], crime preventive measures [5], crime control [6], etc. The question of the content and correlation of these terms in criminology remains open.

The term "crime prevention" is the most common in science as the main one to characterize criminological measures [4; 5; 7-9, etc.]. Crime prevention is understood as "a multi-level system of measures and the entities that apply them aimed at: 1) the identification and elimination or weakening and neutralizing the causes of crime, its individual types, as well as conditions conducive to them; 2) the identification and elimination of the situations in certain territories or in a certain environment that directly motivate or provoke the commission of crimes; 3) the identification of groups of increased criminal risk in the population structure and reducing the said risk; 4) identification of persons whose behavior indicates the real possibility of committing crimes, and the provision of deterrent and corrective effects on them, and, if necessary, on their immediate environment" [8, p. 271].

Crime prevention is quite often seen by the authors as one of the forms of corruption prevention, together with such measures as prevention and suppression. "Prevention is the earliest and most difficult stage of prevention, the object of which is not criminal activity, but its determinants," G. rightly notes. A. Avanesov [5, p.

13, 2012. Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation. 2012. № 12. Article 1391.

<sup>8</sup> On the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2014-2015: Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 226 dated April 11, 2014. Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation. 2014. № 15. Article 1729.

<sup>9</sup> On the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2016-2017: Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 147 dated April 1, 2016. Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation. 2016. № 14. Article 1985.

<sup>10</sup> On the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2018-2020: Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 378 dated June 29, 2018. Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation. 2018. № 27. Article 4038.

<sup>11</sup> On the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2021-2024: Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 478 dated August 16, 2021. Collection of Legislation of the Russian Federation. 2021. № 34. Article 6170.

232].

Professor N. V. Shchedrin developed and justified the concept of crime prevention, which meets the requirements of consistency and provides for the differentiation of the terms "prevention" and "prophylaxis". He claims that *"crime prevention is a specific kind of social management, the purpose of which is to reduce the likelihood of criminal behaviour, for which the subject stimulates the inclusion of the object in the system of socially useful relations using the whole range of legal remedies (including coercive ones)"* [10, p. 8].

According to Professor Shchedrin, it is necessary to use "two levers - restrictions and incentives" to build an effective crime prevention system [11]. Following this idea he suggested dividing crime prevention measures by method and mechanism of legal impact: those related to coercion and those which are not. The structure of the first group of measures includes: recovery measures, security measures and measures of liability (punishment). The second group, in accordance with the author's position, includes incentive measures. Various types of stimulation form the basis of *social prophylaxis*, that is, a system of a wide variety of non-coercive methods by which the socialization and rehabilitation of an individual is carried out [10, pp. 8-12]. Thus, for the proper operation of the crime prevention system, legal regulation and law enforcement of both groups of measures (compulsory and non-compulsory) should be developed harmoniously.

Developing the scientific approach of Professor Shchedrin in relation to the prevention of corruption crime, I. A. Damm assumed that anti-corruption prevention should be understood as "a set of non-coercive measures of a social, legal, organizational, informational and other nature aimed at identifying and eliminating subjective and objective determinants that contribute to the commission of corruption offenses, as well as the formation of an anti-corruption culture in the behavior of individuals and the activities of state, municipal bodies, organizations and civil society institutions" [12, p. 40].

Anti-corruption prophylaxis is an integral part of the prevention of corruption crimes in the

field of public procurement. However, the legislator focused his attention on coercive measures. For example, administrative and criminal liability measures have become widely used in the field of public procurement. The Administrative Code of the Russian Federation contains about fifteen administrative offenses related to violations of the law on public procurement. The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation has also introduced nine corruption-related crimes in the field of public procurement. This indicates a repressive vector of legal regulation in public procurement. It seems possible to solve this problem by establishing a balance between incentives and restrictions in the anti-corruption management of public procurement. To do this, it is necessary to create a system for the prevention of corruption in the field of public procurement based on the optimization of existing measures and the introduction of new incentive measures.

### **3. The main directions of anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement**

The main directions of anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement include: anti-corruption openness, anti-corruption public control, anti-corruption education, anti-corruption expertise and anti-corruption encouragement. The areas mentioned are implemented in all areas and have specific implementation features in each of them including public procurement.

*Anti-corruption openness* is one of the key areas of anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement. The anti-corruption openness of public procurement is a set of incentive measures aimed at ensuring publicity and transparency of the procurement activities of public customers. There are three equivalent forms in the structure of openness: informational, procedural and participatory [13].

Information openness in the field of public procurement is the basis for combating corruption in this area. Nowadays procurement information openness is guaranteed by law and is ensured by the creation and maintenance of a unified information system (hereinafter referred to as UIS). Procedural openness in the field of public procurement should be ensured by creating such conditions under which

representatives of the civil society of law will be able to directly (personally) observe the process of preparation and decision-making. To date, such an opportunity in the field of public procurement is practically absent and its enforcement is one of the priorities for the development of anti-corruption profilaxys in this area.

Procedural openness can be ensured by allowing public observers to participate in the procedures for making decisions on key procurement issues by contract services, procurement commissions or acceptance commissions.

Today, participatory openness in the field of public procurement is ensured by some provisions of the legislation. For example, Article 20 of the Federal Law "On the Contract System in the field of procurement of Goods, Works, and Services for State and Municipal Needs" establishes provisions on mandatory public discussion of purchases. In accordance with Part 1 of this article: "Public discussion of purchases is conducted by the customer in order to publicly discuss the compliance of the planned purchase with the requirements of the legislation of the Russian Federation and other regulatory legal acts on the contract system in the field of procurement." It seems that this measure is also insufficient to ensure participatory openness at all stages of public procurement. The development of this type of openness may mean the inclusion of independent experts in the composition of contract services, procurement commissions or acceptance commissions, giving them the right to vote. Such a measure is effectively implemented in commissions for compliance with the requirements for official conduct and conflict of interest resolution, as well as in competition and certification commissions [14, pp. 348-351].

Procedural and participatory openness presupposes the involvement of civil society in anti-corruption activities, which is one of the priority areas of combating corruption. V. V. Astanin, I. V. Storozhenko and V. P. Sanatin are right claiming that "it is the institutions of civil society that are able to provide reliable information about the real effectiveness of the state anti-corruption policy, maintain a feedback mechanism between the

government and society, purge the government of officials compromising it and contribute to the formation of an intolerant attitude towards corruption manifestations" [15, p. 24]. The participation of civil society in the fight against corruption is implemented within the framework of public control.

*Anti-corruption public control* in the field of public procurement is aimed at involving civil society institutions in monitoring the procurement activities of public customers. V. A. Nomokonov was right in emphasizing that the society has the greatest anti-corruption potential [16, p. 1642]. In this area of anti-corruption profilaxys, one of the anti-corruption principles enshrined in Article 3 of the Federal Law "On Combating Corruption" is being implemented - "cooperation between the state and civil society institutions, international organizations and individuals." Public control in the field of public procurement is regulated by Article 102 of the Federal Law "On the contract System in the field of procurement of goods, works, and services for State and Municipal needs". Experts note that the main part of public control in the field of public procurement is implemented at the stage of determining the supplier (contractor, contractor) [17]. At the same time, considering public control as a measure to prevent corruption in the field of public procurement, it is worth emphasizing the need to implement this activity at all stages of such purchases. The attention of subjects of public control should be focused on the stages of both procurement planning and execution, modification and termination of contracts.

*Anti-corruption education* occupies an equally important place in the system of corruption crimes prevention in the field of public procurement, it forms the necessary competencies and values of subjects important for conscientious participation in procurement activities. As M.V. Shady rightly pointed out "anti-corruption policy will remain a declaration of intent if it does not take into account the phenomenon of legal consciousness of subjects of legislative, executive, judicial authorities, as well as the level of legal awareness of individual social groups and individuals" [18, p. 286]. The prevention of corruption in the field of public procurement is impossible without the formation of anti-corruption

competencies among the subjects of these legal relations, which represent a set of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the implementation of specific measures to prevent corruption and the implementation of activities in the field of public procurement in compliance with anti-corruption requirements and recommendations. Anti-corruption education is aimed at the formation of such competencies.

*Anti-corruption expertise* also plays an important role in the system of social prevention of corruption crimes in the field of public procurement. This measure is "aimed at correcting defects in legal regulation that contribute to the emergence and development of corrupt relations in the process of law enforcement" [19, p. 42]. Such defects in public procurement include legal provisions that are characterized by a defect in form or content, and also allow and (or) stimulate, by virtue of this defect, corrupt behavior of officials [20, p. 96]. Legal regulation in the field of public procurement contains a large number of such defects and is criticized by experts. For example, V. V. Kikavets and Yu. K. Tsaregradskaya point out: "in the current field of procurement, the adopted array of regulatory legal acts does not contribute to minimizing corruption and actual budget savings due to the lack of communication between the budget process and procurement planning" [21, pp. 110-111]. Modern science substantiates the need for anti-corruption expertise not only of legal acts (normative legal acts and local legal acts), but also of the other legal documents in the field of public procurement (for example, procurement documentation) [22-24].

*Anti-corruption encouragement* is necessary to involve citizens and organizations in anti-corruption activities in the field of public procurement and to form their internal prerequisites for anti-corruption behavior. Such measures should be applied to individual entities for their "special" merits in the field of anti-corruption. The UN Convention against Corruption pays a lot of attention to incentive measures (Articles 1; 5; 8; 12-13; 37-39, etc.), and among its goals it states: "promotion of honesty and integrity, responsibility, as well as proper management of public affairs and public property" (Article 1). At the

same time, as P. A. Kabanov rightly noted, insufficient attention is paid to the study of the international legal principle of encouraging anti-corruption activities in science [25, p. 411]. The national legislator also practically does not implement legal regulation of anti-corruption incentives. To establish a "balance" in the legal regulation of anti-corruption N. V. Shchedrin proposed: "the principle of "priority application of measures to prevent corruption" should be reformulated as follows: "priority application of measures to stimulate legitimate and selfless service to the interests of society" [26, p. 282]. Using such an approach, it would be possible to shift the focus from restrictive pressure on public servants to the formation of positive incentives for anti-corruption behavior.

The whole range of anti-corruption prevention measures in the field of public procurement can be divided into *general*, *group* and *individual* ones. This classification is carried out according to the object of social prevention. General anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement includes simulation measures applied to all subjects of public procurement. Group anti-corruption prevention includes measures applied to a certain group of subjects of public procurement (for example: customers; procurement participants; experts, etc.). Thus, group anti-corruption prevention is based on general preventive measures, filling them with specific content to influence a certain group of people. The system of individual social prevention includes measures applied to specific individuals and (or) legal entities.

We shall illustrate this classification using the example of anti-corruption education in the field of public procurement. General anti-corruption education can be implemented through mass anti-corruption awareness of all participants in public procurement relations, as well as any interested parties. For example, by posting information on combating corruption in public procurement in the EIS or other open information resources. Group anti-corruption education is implemented, for example, when conducting anti-corruption training for customer representatives on advanced training programs in the field of anti-corruption. Individual anti-corruption education may consist in anti-

corruption consulting by authorized bodies officials of interested persons on issues of combating corruption in procurement activities.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement is a system of non-coercive measures aimed at creating conditions that stimulate the anti-corruption behavior of public procurement entities. The development of legal regulation and enforcement of anti-corruption prevention measures is necessary to optimize the work of the entire system of preventing corruption in the field of public procurement. First and foremost, it is worth paying attention to the improvement of the measures within the framework of the main directions of anti-corruption prevention: anti-corruption openness, anti-corruption public control, anti-corruption education, anti-corruption expertise and anti-corruption encouragement. These areas are closely interrelated with each other and it is advisable to develop each of them for the effective operation of the system. All the main directions of anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement should develop harmoniously and be filled with measures at three levels: general, group and individual. Such an approach to anti-corruption prevention in the field of public procurement makes it possible to ensure its consistency, as well as to identify and fill in existing gaps in legal regulation and the organization of preventive activities.

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#### INFORMATION ABOUT AUTHOR

**Margarita A. Volkova** – Director, Center for Combating Corruption and Legal Expertise of the Department for the Prevention of Corruption Offenses

*Siberian Federal University*

79, Svobodnyi pr., Krasnoyarsk, 660041, Russia E-

mail: marvolkova@sfu-kras.ru

ORCID: 0000-0002-5562-7789

ResearcherID: S-1600-2018 RSCI SPIN-code:  
2058-4468

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

Volkova M.A. Anti-corruption prevention and its main directions in the field of public procurement. *Pravoprimenenie = Law Enforcement Review*, 2024, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 44–53. DOI: 10.52468/2542-1514.2024.8(1).44-53. (In Russ.).

