

Court ruling: CRCB Corruption Research Center used manipulative and false data

Budapest, ... September 2019 - The Public Procurement Authority has won a lawsuit against the Corruption Research Center (CRCB) over publishing false and manipulated data in a “study” on the Hungarian public procurement database. Unfortunately, CRCB’s studies and data regarding public procurements and transparency are often referred to in Country Reports issued by the European Commission. This new court ruling - which is final and binding - strongly questions the reliability of CRCB. For this reason, the President of the Public Procurement Authority has formally approached the Secretary-General of the European Commission requesting the European Commission to review the EU documents, which use data from CRCB.

The Public Procurement Authority of Hungary launched a lawsuit against the Corruption Research Center (full name: CRCB Institute for Policy and Economic Research Non-profit Ltd.) over an English language „study” published in January 2018, which lawsuit was won by the Public Procurement Authority. According to the court ruling, the Corruption Research Center defamed the Authority by publishing false and manipulated data, by misinterpreting facts and suggested - by using false allegations - that the website of the Authority is “wrong, misleading and of poor quality”.

EU aspects

The Country Reports on Hungary and other EU studies of the European Commission regularly refer to analyses of the Corruption Research Center. Considering the above, the President of the Public Procurement Authority has written a letter to the Secretary-General of the European Commission requesting the review of EU documents, especially Country Reports of Hungary of 2018 and 2019, that are referring to the studies of the Corruption Research Center, which applied manipulated data as stated bindingly by the court, so that EU documents avoid making public procurement related statements, which are based on “false data content prepared in a manipulative way”.

As a reminder, the concerned study included the false and distorted facts as stated below:

- it used data unsuitable for comparison (the websites of the public procurement authorities of non-EU countries Zambia and Bangladesh are incomparable with the Hungarian website), thus gave a false impression about Hungary;
- drew false conclusions based on manipulated URL (the data content of the website was modified by rewriting the link);
- made the false allegation based on manipulated criteria (accessibility of data) that the website of the Public Procurement Authority of Hungary is of poorer quality than the websites of the similar authorities of the countries above (according to the study, the data of public contracts are not properly available, while by contrast, such data is fully available);
- carried out the analysis based on mistaken data input (there was a typo in the word entered in the search engine, „tájékozatató” instead of „tájékoztató”), which is more

serious as the study is in English, while the authors entered the wrong Hungarian search word in the Hungarian search engine, which foreign readers are unable to notice;

- disclosed false facts in the study regarding the number of notices (33.603 pcs instead of the correct 19.450 pcs);
- concluded by using false terminology that the website of the Public Procurement Authority is of poor quality (instead of searching for “contract award notice” [„tájékoztató az eljárás eredményéről”], the non-existent type of public procurement document titled “information on the results of the procedure” [„tájékoztatás az eljárás eredményéről”] was entered, which search obviously generates no results).
