

Enhanced Police Anticorruption Policy

Police Anticorruption Policy

1 Background

Established by the Council of Europe, Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) issued its evaluation report on the fifth round of evaluation in 2018, including the recommendation that the Police should develop an Anticorruption strategy/Policy to be made known to the general public.

One of the objectives set in the Government decision in principle on anticorruption measures as well as the respective Action Plan for 2021-2023 envisages the development of anticorruption work by the criminal investigation authorities. As concerns the Police, in particular, the measures to be taken towards this objective entail the need for the Police to draft an Anticorruption Strategy/Plan of Action to be communicated to the general public.

During the year 2023, the Police has been involved in developing its Anticorruption Policy outlining the measures in compliance with the decision. In addition to the internal expertise of the working group established at the National Police Board of Finland for the Policy effort, the preparatory work was also promoted by the contributions and professional advice of the Internal Audit and Legality Control functions of the National Police Board, the national anticorruption coordinator located at the National Bureau of Investigation as well as the special prosecutor at Prosecutor General's Office, responsible for leading any investigations on suspected crimes committed by Police personnel.

2 Police Anticorruption Policy

Corruption is misuse of influence to gain advantages. Mostly, the advantage or benefit is of financial nature. A distinction between financial and ethical corruption can also be made. Characteristically, financial corruption refers to various forms of bribery. A typical situation is accepting a bribe destined to or aimed at influencing the operation of an official, for example, in decision-making where the briber is a party. In turn, ethical

corruption refers to the abuse of influence or discretionary powers with no implicit financial motivation. The category might include, for example, nepotism which means favouring one's relatives, with no direct aim to gain any financial benefits. For the purpose of the Police Policy document, corruption comprises both the financial and ethical sides of the phenomenon since the Police fights against all forms of corruption.

With the decision now taken, the National Police Board has laid down the following principles of the Police Anticorruption Policy, to be followed throughout the administration.

Maintaining high trust in the Police

We act neutrally and impartially, and in all our operations, we respect the Law and follow our ethical oath, the Police Code of Ethics and Values (ethics).

The Police has zero tolerance to corruption

We do not accept any form of corruption, and fight and prevent it, for example, through instructions and orders and by underlining ethics in all our operations.

We are aware of, recognise and manage corruption risks

We have incorporated the corruption risks into our risk management approach. Through training and communications, we ensure that the Police staff recognises any misconduct and corruptive features as well as knows the whistleblowing procedure.

We ensure the detection and reporting of misconducts

The staff is obliged to report any misconducts and malpractices, and the superiors are also obliged to intervene in them.

We have introduced an internal information and whistleblowing channel which the entire organisation is aware of.

We ensure effective investigation of Police crimes through a centralized investigation arrangement.

Faced with any corruptive features, we take immediate action

We improve our internal control function continuously, communicating efficiently both internally and externally.

We systematically assess the Police capacity to fight corruption and make this part of our internal control function.

2.1 Maintaining high trust in the Police

Confidence and trust shown by the society at large is an absolute prerequisite for the Police to operate. The principal responsible authority in Finland in internal security, the Police exercises important public powers. In line with the legislative provisions regarding the Police functions, *the Police*

maintains security in collaboration with other authorities, the communities and inhabitants. Trust is also the key element enabling collaboration.

The Police must operate in a matter-of-fact and neutral manner, promoting equal treatment and spirit of conciliation. Impartiality is always primary.

The Police operations are covered by several Acts, some of which refer directly to the Police while others comprise authorities or administration in general. Moreover, we respect the national and international legislation on basic and human rights in our operations.

Each Police officer gives an ethical oath at end of their Police training. The oath is not legally binding but it is pronounced to emphasise the responsibility associated with the work in the Police. The purpose of the oath is for the new Police officers to become aware and internalise the Values and modes of operation expected of the Police in Finland.

Customer service, fairness, professionalism and staff welfare are among the Values that steer the everyday work of the Police. The Ethical Code for the Police comprises eight principles whereby the Police acts, for example, independently and autonomously as well as equally and equitably.

When we follow the Law in all our operations, and, above all, the *ethics* constituted by the Code of Ethics, oath and Police Values, we will attain the trust in us

2.2 The Police has zero tolerance for corruption

We do not accept any form of corruption and fight and prevent it, for example, through instructions and orders and by underlining ethics in all our operations.

The Police upholds several national-level *norms*, i.e., instructions and orders which contribute to our anticorruption action. Some of the norms provide guidance towards correct action; others say what not to do. Some of the norms are guides to procedural action in cases of suspected corruptive features detected.

When we follow the instructions and orders that are legally binding, complemented by the operative *ethics*, we show, both within our administration as well as externally, that we have zero tolerance to corruption.

2.3 We are aware of, recognise and manage corruption risks

We have incorporated the corruption risks into our risk management approach. The means of risk management include the avoidance, minimising and elimination of the risk, or the transfer of the risk to the responsible actor for the measures to be taken. The risk management and notification system also allows for a communication for any suspected corruption risk.

Through training and communications, we ensure that the Police staff recognises any misconduct and corruptive features as well as knows the whistleblowing procedure. The Code of Ethics and Values constitute part of the curricula of the Police University College degrees and further education. The use of the Ethics channel is part of the training for the Police degree gained at the Police University College. The officeholders at the Police Administration also receive training in equality and officeholder ethics.

With due attention to the identification of misconduct through training and communication, we enable our staff to realise, recognise and manage corruption risks as a part of the risk management whole.

2.4 We ensure the detection and reporting of misconducts

The staff is obliged to report any misconducts and malpractices, and the superiors are also obliged to intervene in them. Based on the legally binding Police order, *when a Police staff member notices misconducts or crime in the operations, they must immediately inform the superior about such circumstances.*¹

We have introduced an internal information and whistleblowing channel which the entire organisation is aware of. The staff has received extensive information on the introduction of the Ethics channel. The national instructions for ensured legality at the Police contains the guidelines for the use of the Ethics channel. The notification to the Ethics channel can be made anonymously, and all received information is handled confidentially.

We ensure effective investigation of Police crimes through a centralized investigation arrangement. In early 2024, the Police introduced a centralised Police crime investigation arrangement, organised under the National Bureau of Investigation. Along with this change, the Police crime investigators and heads of investigation will be fully separate from other crime investigation work.

Through the introduction of the above described Ethics channel and the centralised investigative arrangement focusing on Police crime, we ensure that any misconduct is uncovered and investigated efficiently. By underlining the obligation to report, we ensure that misconducts are efficiently notified.

2.5 Faced with any corruptive features, we take immediate action

The Police internal control function is constantly developed, and we provide both internal and external information on it. We systematically assess the Police anticorruption capacity and report the results as an element of internal control. When we notice a new area of risk, we evaluate the respective measures of prevention. If we find deficiencies in the Police

¹ National Police Board, Accounting Unit, Standing Orders of Finance (POL-2023-146849, p. 57.)

anticorruption capabilities, we report such circumstances to the supreme levels of Police administration.

3 Cascading the operative principles down to the Police units

The Police units will be responsible for the implementation of the principles in their own unit. In addition to the Values and the Ethical Code for the Police, the Policy must receive attention in trainings of superiors and other staff, as well as in the induction of new staff. The introduction of the Policy and its impacts are evaluated as a part of the Police internal control whole.

The National Police Board will draft a separate implementation and communication plan to support the introduction of the Policy at hand.

National Police Commissioner

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This document has been signed electronically. Police of Finland 06.02.2024 at 15:51. Authenticity of the signature can be verified by the Registry.

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