**Digitalization as a Mechanism for Reducing Corruption Risks:**

**An analysis of Estonia and Georgia cases**

This policy brief shows the results of a digitalization research in the contexts of Estonia and Georgia through the prism of the digitalization policy in Kazakhstan. The analysis showed that the digitalization policy mechanism with a view to radically reducing corruption risks is used to varying degrees. So, while in Estonia political measures in the field of digitalization have been implemented since the mid-1990s, along with the systematic improvement of the country's position in the Transparency International rating of corruption, in Georgia a radical solution to the problem of corruption, especially petty corruption, was largely provided by other measures. At the same time, the policy of Georgia’s digitalization began in the mid-2000s, which is correlated with the lower indicators of the country in the ratings of the United Nations E-Government Development Index “E-Government” in comparison with the positions of Estonia and Kazakhstan.

It should be noted that other countries developing e-government services could learn the experience of Estonia. As the Estonian experience has shown, the government should create conditions under which ICT firms can create electronic services in the country. First, the attention of the scientific community and analysts should be focused on the phenomenon of the “disappearance of the mediator” in the context of public services to the population, successfully achieved in Estonia precisely due to the effective implementation of the e-government system. Secondly, Estonia initially emphasized the need to decentralize the infrastructure of the “E-government” in order to prevent monopolization of this sector in the hands of the state.

As for Georgia, there is a relatively high e-government development index (EGDI) compared to other post-soviet countries and a more reliable telecommunications infrastructure. However, the position of the country is not so high as a whole (based on the total number of 193 countries). However, e-government development measures have led to an improvement in the country's position in the corruption perception index of Transparency International.

**Table 1** Digitalization as a mechanism to reduce corruption risks in the modern system of public administration in Estonia, Georgia and Kazakhstan

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Digitalization as a mechanism to reduce corruption risks** | | |
| Estonia | Georgia | Kazakhstan |
| works | the effect is not observed | works |

***Source:*** *analysis of Anti-Corruption Research Center of Academy of Public Administration*

Thus, among the countries under consideration, Estonia and Kazakhstan introduced digitalization as a real mechanism for reducing corruption risks, while in Georgia, in order to reduce the level of corruption, digitalization as a full-scale tool of state policy, as it seems on the basis of the analysis, was not involved.

In conclusion, it should be noted the importance of further improving the digitalization mechanism, taking into account that in Kazakhstan, the full-scale digitalization policy began only in 2010-2013 and given Estonia’s long-term success in countering corruption through digitalization.

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**About the Center**

The Anti-Corruption Research Center of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan was established in September 2014 as a division of the Academy in accordance with the instructions of the Chairman of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs and Anti-Corruption of the Republic of Kazakhstan on August 19, 2014, based on the recommendations of the OECD 3rd round of monitoring of Istanbul action plan against corruption.

The mission of the Center is to provide research and analytical, educational and methodological support the implementation of state policy in the field of anti-corruption.

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*Pictures*

**Picture 1** Dynamics of the UN “E-government” Index in Estonia for 2012, 2014 and 2016

*Source: UN data «E-government survey», https://publicadministration.un.org*

**Picture 2** Dynamics of the UN “E-government” Index in Georgia for 2012, 2014 and 2016

*Source: UN data «E-government survey», https://publicadministration.un.org*

**Picture 3** Dynamics of the UN “E-government” Index in Kazakhstan for 2012, 2014 and 2016

*Source: UN data «E-government survey», https://publicadministration.un.org*