

Kiev Enacts Law to Clean Up International Image

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KIEV — Ukraine passed legislation on Thursday to counter its image as a center of corruption in Europe that dogs its relations with the European Union and affects potential investment.

Parliament enacted a law obliging state officials to make available nonclassified information at the request of any member of society or organizations.

Transparency International, a leading world anti-corruption body, last year urged Ukraine's parliament to adopt the law, saying it would help overcome corruption among thousands of Ukrainian bureaucrats.

The group said Ukraine was one of three former Soviet republics, together with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, not to have such legislation in place.

The European Union, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe also pushed for the law, and its passage shows that Ukraine has fulfilled its promises, Foreign Ministry spokesman Oleg Voloshyn said Thursday.

Volodymyr Fesenko, an analyst with Penta, a think tank, praised the law as "a very important step" toward European standards. "This law will allow Ukrainians to be able to check up on officials," he said.

Many potential foreign investors in Ukraine are deterred from doing business by a high level of bribe taking at every step along the way to sealing a deal.

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