

ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (May. 2022)

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ACRC Major Achievements for the Past 5 Years & the Way Forward

For the past five years, ACRC has led the efforts to preventing corrupt practices and swiftly resolving infringements on people's rights and interests caused by unreasonable administrative actions

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (the ACRC) of Korea was established on February 29, 2008, by integrating three institutions, Ombudsman of Korea, Korea Independent Commission Against Corruption, and the Administrative Appeals Commission under the Prime Minister to effectively prevent corrupt practices and to swiftly resolve infringements on people's rights and interests caused by unreasonable administrative actions.

1. Major Achievements for the Past Five Year

A. Anti-Corruption/Fairness Reform Initiative and Strengthening of Whistleblower Protection System

The ACRC has led anti-corruption and fairness reforms for realization of a transparent and fair society, as a leading organization for the pan-governmental anti-corruption initiative. The Commission focused its efforts for the improvement of policies to help anti-corruption reforms take root in civil service and in everyday lives of people.

First, the presidential "Anti-Corruption Policy Consultation Council for a Fair Society" has held total seven meetings since its first meeting in September 2017, to continuously push forward with comprehensive and



reforms systematic anti-corruption at a national level. Plus. "Public-Private Consultative Council for Transparent Society" participated by the ACRC and members from diverse sectors of society including professional circles, civil society, academia, and the public sector was launched in March 2018. The Council has held total 17 meetings so far, from members mostly the private sector anti-corruption and integrity issues from people's perspective to propose solutions.

The ACRC strengthened an institutional foundation for preemptive shutoff of public officials' corruption and prevention of leak of national finance. The Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants ("Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interests") was enacted in May 2021 and enforced in May 2022. The Act includes provisions on reporting about persons related with private interests and applications for recusal and challenges, restrictions on employment of members, restrictions on conclusion of private contracts. prohibition of use of confidential information obtained in course of performing duties, etc. The Act on Prohibition of False Claims for Public Funds and Recovery of Illicit Profits was enforced in January 2020, to enable recovery of maximum five-times amount of falsely-claimed government subsidies.

The institutional foundation for protection and support of whistleblowers who report acts of corruption and violation of public interest has been reinforced. The Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission ("Corruption Prevention and the ACRC Act") was revised to add those who testify about corrupt acts at the National Assembly or



courts, as well as people who report/file suits against corruption, to the subject of protection. The Protection of Public Interest Reporters Act has gone through multiple amendments to increase the number of laws subject to public interest reporting from 180 at the time of the Act's enactment in 2011 to 471 by the end of 2021, dramatically expanding the scope of protection. Rules on protection and compensation of public interest reporters were reinforced to provide sufficient reward for them; a system of anonymous surrogate reporting through attorneys and a system of punitive indemnification of damages for disadvantageous actions taken against whistleblowers were introduced (2018); punishment of those who disclose the identity of whistleblowers was strengthened (2018, 2020); and the upper limit of monetary reward for public interest reporting was raised to KRW 3 billion from KRW 2 billion (2018).

Such efforts have made Korea's global standing in the anti-corruption area rise continuously. Korea's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) announced by Transparency International (TI) every year has risen for five consecutive years to reach record-high 62 points in 2021, which was 32nd-highest in the world. Plus, Korea's Index of Public Integrity (IPI) announced by the European Research Center for Anti-Corruption and State-Building (ERCAS) biannually recorded 8.09 points in 2021, which was 18th highest in the world and the highest in Asia.

B. People-Oriented & Field-Centered Resolution of Social Conflicts and Grievances

The ACRC continued to actively resolve grievance complaints that violate people's rights or cause inconvenience or burden for people's lives. Total 82,900 cases of grievance complaint were handled from 2017 to 2021,



out of which 11,816 cases have been accepted and resolved. During the same time period, the Outreach Complaint-Handling Bus was provided 425 times, to quickly resolve 4,754 grievance complaints on the spot. The Government Complaints Counseling Center was opened in October 2019 so that people can get a one-stop counseling for complaints related with multiple government agencies. The center provided more than 90,000 counseling services until the end of 2021. The 110 Government Call Center which is a counseling service that provides information for civil petitioners over the phone has been offering more than 10,000 counseling services a day on average.

In addition, the ACRC has found out and addressed long-unresolved collective complaints through active mediation, to reduce social costs incurred by conflicts and to resolve long-standing troubles for people. A decades-long issue of ownerless real estate inside the civilian control line in Yanggu—gun, Gangwon-do Province has been finally resolved and an issue of poor residential environment in leprosy patients' community in Gyeongju-si was settled through the ACRC's mediation.

The ACRC received total 116,633 administrative appeal cases through the Central Administrative Appeals Commission for five years from 2017 to 2021. Total 12,248 requests for administrative appeal against illegal/unfair dispositions issued by administrative agencies were accepted. As a result of the ACRC's continuous effort to raise the percentage of acceptance of administrative appeals, the percentage of acceptance of general cases remarkably increased from 14.0% in 2017 to 19.7% in 2021.

Since the introduction of mediation system for administrative appeals in 2018 until the end of 2021, total 73 administrative appeal cases were



successfully mediated through agreement between relevant parties based on the ACRC's efforts for amicable conflict resolution. In the same year, a system of court-appointed defense counsel for administrative appeals was introduced to help active utilization of administrative appeals by the socially and financially-disadvantaged people. Total 336 administrative appeal cases have been proceeded by court-appointed defense counsel.

C. Operation of Digital Platform for Participation of and Communication with People and Improvement of Policies and Institutions

The ACRC works as the window of communication between the government and people, managing diverse digital platforms for people's participation and communication with them, including e-People, People's Idea Box, and so on. e-People system that has been run since 2005 went through a complete reorganization in 2020, so that it can function more conveniently and efficiently. In 2021, as many as 13,265,060 civil petitions were received and handled through the improved system, to open a new chapter of 10 million annual civil petitions processed through e-People.

Since its beginning with participation by 16,000 people in 2016, People's Idea Box has grown approximately 28-fold for six years until 2021, to become Korea's leading digital platform for people's policy participation, in which as many as 445,000 people suggest their ideas. Notably, it recently offerred a driving force for policy change through people's active participation, by carrying out surveys on major social issues such as "on-line school classes due to COVID-19", "real estate agent commission", "CCTV installation at operating rooms at hospitals", and so on.



The ACRC also actively supported policy improvement of public organizations at different levels by analyzing civil complaint data. Policy improvement was successfully induced by collaborating with relevant institutions, based on the result of analysis of civil complaints regarding major issues of society such as fine dust, COVID-19, and carbon neutrality. "Civil Complaint Big Data at a Glance" website was opened in January 2019, to provide the result of civil complaint data analysis to diverse public institutions and the public.

The ACRC actively listened to people's voices through various channels, to find out loopholes in policies and institutions and to improve them. Total 266 policy improvement recommendations were issued to relevant public agencies for the past five years, including "ban on private contracts with retiree groups", "enhancement of fairness/credibility of contests hosted by administrative agencies", "improvement of house agent commission and agent service", "resolution of blind spots in school meals for children", and so on. Out of them, 263 recommendations, except for only three, were accepted to result in realistic changes in policies and institutions.

2. The Way Forward

In 2022, the ACRC will continue to take initiative for realizing a trustworthy government and transparent society by preventing corruption, protecting the rights and interests of the people, and communicating with the public, under the vision of "transparent and fair Korea, government taking care of people's rights and interests".



First, the Commission will remarkably raise Korea's integrity level by completing anti-corruption and fairness reforms. For such purpose, anti-corruption and integrity policies will continue to be innovated to live up to the standards of an advanced country with a high integrity level. Consistent efforts will be made so that the culture of anti-corruption and integrity can take root in all areas of society. Swift and fair response measures will be taken against various corruption issues, while strengthening the system for the protection and rewarding of corruption and public interest whistleblowers to help people feel more assured of making such reports.

Second, the ACRC will be quick and active in protecting people's rights and interests, as a troubleshooters always at people's side. Top priority will be put on supporting stabilization of livelihoods and businesses of the disadvantaged or small business owners. While focusing more on resolving collective complaints, the Commission will actively cooperate with the local grievance commissions to help them handle and prevent civil complaints on their own. Also, the system for protection of people's rights and interests through administrative appeal will be actively reinforced.

Lastly, the ACRC will take lead in materializing a people-oriented digital platform for the government. While actively improving policies and systems by reflecting people's voices based on the result of analysis of civil complaint big data collected through e-People and People's Idea Box which are the leading digital platform for people's policy participation and communication with them, counseling for and resolution of civil complaints through the Government Complaints Counseling Center and the 110 Government Call Center will be promoted.



ACRC Set to Implement the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants to Which 2 Million Public Officials in About 15,000 Institutions are Subject

Anyone can file a report on violations of the Act and reporters will receive thorough protection and rewards of up to 3 billion won

Public officials subject to the Act should comply with their obligations to report conflict-of-interest situations they face while performing their duties and submit relevant documents including details of activities in the private sector they were formerly involved in

(18 May 2022, ACRC)



ACRC Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui gave a briefing on the implementation of the Conflict of Interest Prevention Act on May 18 at Government Complex-Seoul

The Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants to which two million public officials in around 15,000 public institutions started to be implemented on May 19 in order to systematically prevent and control conflict-of-interest situations that may arise while public officials perform their duties.



Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui gave a briefing on the implementation of the Act in the morning on May 18 at the Government Complex-Seoul, calling for active reports on public officials' violations of the Act for the stable establishment of the Act in Korean society.

The Act stipulates 10 standards of behaviors for public officials and provisions of criminal punishment, including the imposition of administrative fines in cases of violations of the 10 standards.

From now on, two million public officials subject to the Act should faithfully comply with the 10 standards of behaviors under the Act and about 15,000 public institutions of various levels must strictly manage conflict-of-interest situations facing the public officials belonging thereto.

ACRC regards reports on violations of the Act by public officials filed by the public as important for swift settlement of the Act.

ACRC made it possible for the general public to easily file a report on violations at any time anywhere by accessing the Clean Portal at www.clean.go.kr.

In addition, ACRC provides 24/7 free call services such as 110 people's call and 1398 corruption report consultation call service.

In cases where public officials violate the provisions of the Act, anyone can file a report to the ACRC, public institutions to which the public official concerned belongs, or the supervisory institutions of the public institutions, etc.



No one can hinder the filing of reports, disclose personal information of a reporter, or take disadvantageous measures against a reporting person on grounds of his/her report, etc.

A reporter can request ACRC to take protective measures in the case where there is a concern for him/her to risk life or be physically injured due to the filing of reports, and can apply for a protective measure such as reinstatement when he/she received a disadvantageous measure.

ACRC plans to pay a monetary reward of up to 3 billion won to a reporter in the case where the report filed directly results in a recovery of or an increase in the revenues of a public institution or a reduction in its costs, and a monetary award of up to 200 million won in the case where the report filed advances the public interest.

If conflict-of-interest situation arises while public officials perform their duties, he/she needs to access the standard reporting system in the Clean Portal, go through identification confirmation, and report a person related with his/her private interests under the Act.

The Clean Portal established in the integrated government cloud environment can flexibly respond to the demand from public institutions and favorable for the system security and reporter protection.

Given that the Act came into force at a time when a new administration is formed and the head of local authorities and members of local council are elected, ACRC will conduct a complete investigation during the second half of the year into the status of compliance with obligations under the Act, including those to submit details of activities of senior



officials in the private sector, report a person related with private interests and apply for the recusal of himself/herself for stable implementation of the Act.

ACRC Chairperson Jeon Hyun Heui said, "If the general public actively file reports on public officials' violations of the Act, it will lay a foundation to improve unfair practices in the public sector. The two million public officials will perceive such reports as a stern demand from the public for transparent and fair performance of public duties."



Content of the Law

 Public officials shall comply with ten standards of conduct, five duties of reporting and submission and five restrictions and prohibition.

Standards		Content
Reporting submission (5)	Disclosure of personally interested persons and application for challenge or evasion	If public official's duty-related persons (persons who requested specific actions or measures in performance of duties or are impacted by any advantage or disadvantage in the performance of duties) are personally related to the public official, the public official should report the fact and apply for evasion.
	Disclosure of ownership/ purchase of public duty- related real estate	Public officials who are working for public organizations dealing with real estate must report an ownership or purchase of real estate located in the organizations' development project by the public officials, their spouse, their lineal ascendant or descendant who share livelihood.
	Submission of records of high-ranking officials business activities in the private sector	High-ranking officials must submit their private sector activity records for the 3 years before their appointment, within 30 days after his appointment.
	Report of transactions with duty-related persons	Public officials must report a financial or real estate transactions or contract between their duty-related persons and the public officials themselves, their spouse, their direct lineal ascendants/descendants.
	Report of personal contact with retirees	Public officials must report a personal contact such as playing golf, traveling, or gambling together with a retiree of his organization who is related to his public duty.
Restriction -prohibition (5)	Restriction on duty-related outside activities	Public officials should not get paid for the provision of labor or advice, duty- related knowledge or information to a duty-related persons.
	Restriction on employment of family members)	Public institutions should not employ family members of their high-ranking officials, HR officers, etc. without an open competitive recruitment process.
	Restriction on private contracts	Public institutions should not make private contracts with their high-ranking officials, officials in charge of contract affairs, their family members, or a corporation that is represented by them or their family members.
	Prohibition of private use of or profiting from public institutions' goods	Public officials should not personally use or profit from goods, etc. owned or rented by public institutions.
	Prohibition of use of job secrets, etc	Public officials should not get valuables or property benefits using their organization's secrets or undisclosed information, and they should not allowing a third party to do so.

- If public officials violate the 10 standards of conduct, they could be subject to punishments such as criminal penalty, administrative fines, disciplinary measures, or return of illicit benefits.
- Anyone who has become aware of the violation of the Act can report the fact to the public organization where the violation occurred, the organization's supervisory agency, the Board of Audit and Inspection, investigative agency, or the ACRC.

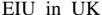


"ACRC Actively Promotes Anti-Corruption Policy Achievements Including Enactment of the Conflict of Interest Prevention Act in International Community to Improve National Integrity"

ACRC delegation paid an official visit to have in-person meetings with experts of the Economist Intelligence Unit in London, UK and the Bertelsmann Stiftung in Gütersloh, Germany to introduce Korea's best anti-corruption policy institutions

(May 31, 2022. ACRC)







Bertelsmann Stiftung in Germany

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) delegation paid an official visit to the Economist Intelligence Unit in London, UK and Bertelsmann Stiftung in Gütersloh, Germany, which are international assessment organizations providing source data for the Corruption Perceptions Index issued by Transparency International and actively promoted the achievements of the Korean government's anti-corruption policies such as the implementation of the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants.



From May 24th to 25th, ACRC had practitioner-level meetings with experts of the EIU headquartered in London, UK and the Bertelsmann Stiftung (BF) based in Germany to improve its national integrity level that matches its status in the international community.

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) published since 1995 by the Transparency International assesses the level of corruption in the public and political sector in 180 countries every year.

The Index is derived from multiple individual source data related to perceptions of corruption in the public and political sector provided by international assessment organizations* that analyze national competitiveness and business investment environment, etc.

* Bertelsmann Stiftung, HIS Markit, Political Risk Services, Economist Intelligence Unit, World Justice Project, and V-Dem Institute, etc.

In 2021 CPI issued by the Transparency International (TI), Korea was ranked 32nd out of 180 countries covered, scoring 62 points out of the perfect score of 100, which is an all-time high.

Economist Intelligence Unit is a renowned intelligence that provides analysis on economic and political developments in countries around the world, and the Bertelsmann Stiftung is a non-profit research institution that conducts social science research on themes such as democracy, etc.

The EIU Country Risk Service and the Bertelsmann Transformation Index and Sustainable Governance Indicators are the most highly recognized among the 13 source indicators that construct the Corruption Perceptions Index.



During the meetings, ACRC delegation explained Korea's anti-corruption policy initiatives and institutions that have been recently introduced, including the promulgation of the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest related to Duties of Public Servants and implementation of the Act on the Prohibition of False Claims for Public Fund and Recovery of Illicit Profits, and delivered relevant materials.

The EIU experts said, "the Country Risk Service provides countries with data based on its comprehensive assessment of the impact of corruption on the economy and civil society to induce the society, people and government to make concerted efforts. Korea is a country overcoming setbacks caused by corruption scandals through future-oriented anti-corruption policy institutions."

The Bertelsmann senior experts said, "While a lot of countries usually go through progress and regression back and forth, Korea has been moving forward continuously with its constant anti-corruption policy efforts since 2017."

ACRC Anti-Corruption Bureau General Director Han Sam-Seok said, "In order for Korea to take a leap forward as a nation with the level of integrity on a par with that of advanced countries, ACRC will continue to push for consistent anti-corruption and integrity policies so that Korea can join the top 20s in the global ranking in the CPI."



ACRC, "Anti-Corruption Education Completion Ratio Among Public Officials Reached 95 Percent Last Year... Showing a Steady Increase"

Anti-corruption education completion rates for elected local government heads (70%) and local council members (77.8%) were relatively low ACRC announced the results of inspection of anti-corruption education completion status in public institutions

(May 24, 2022, ACRC)

It was found that 1.74 million (95%) public officials in 2,073 public institutions completed their mandatory anti-corruption education last year, a steady increase since 2016.

Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun Heui) published its inspection results of public institution anti-corruption education completion status on May 24th.

Since September 2016 when anti-corruption education became mandatory for public officials to complete, the number of public officials who have completed the education has steadily increased from 1.57 million in 2019 to 1.62 million in 2020 to 1.74 million in 2021, indicating successful establishment of the system.

By type of public institution, the completion ratios for Office of Education, central administrative agency, public service-related organizations, local government, local council, and public universities were 98.1%, 97.3%, 94.5%, 92.2%, 88.8% and 62.7%, respectively.

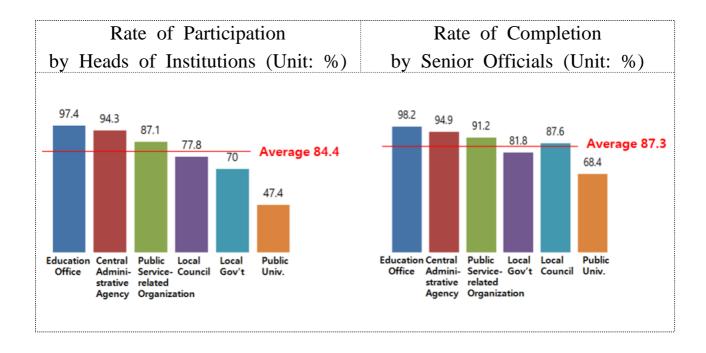


The number of public institutions with completion rates of less than 60%, such as Pocheon-si in Gyeonggi Province, Gangwon Provincial Council, and Gongju University, was 90*.

* 4 lower-level local governments, 20 local councils, 18 public universities, 45 public service-related organizations

Among 2,097 public institutions subject to the mandatory education, 24 institutions have not submitted their completion records.

As for the participation rates of heads of institutions, office of education and central administrative agency showed the highest rates of 98.2% and 94.9%, respectively, followed by public service-related organizations (91.2%), local governments (81.8%), local councils (87.6%), and public universities (68.4%).





The inspection results found relatively lower completion rates among elected heads of local governments (70%) and members of local councils (77.8%), who are responsible for transparency and integrity of local authorities, and the lowest completion rates among public universities.

Accordingly, ACRC will try to enhance the effectiveness and completion rate of the mandatory anti-corruption education through various means, including by offering special training for officials in charge of anti-corruption education management in the institution showing lower anti-corruption education completion rates and disclosing their completion rates to the public.

ACRC Anti-Corruption Bureau General Director Han Sam-Seok said, "It has been six years since the anti-corruption education became mandatory for public officials, showing stable settlement of the system. However, anti-corruption education needs to be more strengthened for public universities, local authorities, local councils, and public service-related organizations which have been newly designated as such," adding that "there have many changes, including the launch of a new been administration and the organization of new local governments, and the enforcement of the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants. Given these changes, we will put more into further improving anti-corruption efforts efforts and integrity capabilities of public institutions."



ACRC, "Complaint Big Data Containing Voices of the People will be Used by National Assembly in Developing Public Policies"

- Korea National Complaint Map visualizes region-specific complaint issues based on analysis of 1,500 complaint big data -

(May 12, 2022, ACRC)



On May 11, at the National Assembly, ACRC(Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui demonstrated National Complaint Big Data Map, a joint project with the National Assembly Secretariat and talked about how to cooperate for the service.

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Korea National Complaint Map which is based on complaint big data representing voice of the people will be used for legislative activities and policy development by the National Assembly.



On May 6, the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun- Heui) launched big data based Korea National Complaint Map, developed jointly with the National Assembly Secretariat (Secretary General Lee Choon Suak), on its Complaint Big Data At a Glance webpage (bigdata. epeople.go.kr) and linked to the website of the National Assembly Secretariat.

* Complaint Big Data At a Glance web page > Analysis information > Complaint Keywords > National complaint keywords, Top 10 regional key words

The ACRC and the National Assembly Secretariat have closely cooperated after singing an MOU in March to conduct a joint project of complaint big data analysis for public policy.

The ACRC operates government-wide citizen communication channels to listen voices of the people, such as e-People, Government Call 110, and Government Complaints Counseling Center.

Each year, the ACRC analyzes more than 1,505 complaint big data and provides the result containing citizen inconveniences and policy issues and etc. to some 1,799 public organizations, so that voices of the people could be reflected in public policies of organizations at each level.

The ACRC-National Assembly Secretariat Joint Project analyzed 1,500 complaints received on e-People last year and shows region-specific complaint keywords (17 cities and provinces and 228 cities and districts) by gender and age on the big data based Complaint Map



< Big Data-based Korea National Complaint Map>

Issue Keywords



Complaint map





As for issue keywords, the most frequent keyword is 'apartment' with the great interest of improvement of property values and housing environment, such as housing re-development, application for apartment sales in lots, construction design and management, and installment repair.

The second most frequent keyword is 'transportation' requesting safety and expansion of infrastructure such as intercity trains and subways, followed by 'education' including requests of parents in their 30s and 40s who are worried about safety for their child to and from school, asking for establishment of a school in residential areas and assignment of their child to such school. 'Bus' is the fourth most frequent keyword demanding the removal of bus service-related inconveniences such as by creating new intercity bus routes and shortening bus intervals and reports filed on bus not stopping at a bus station.

By ages, those in their 30s accounted for the largest proportion of the complainants at 37.8%, followed by those in their 40s at 30.3% and 50s at 16.0%. As for key words by age groups, teens and twenties concerned 'education, transportation, military service and student loan' the most. Key words of 30s, 40s and 50s are 'apartment, transportation, new town, and education.' The age group of 60 to 79 concerned 'apartment, transportation, taxation, and health care' the most.

By region, Gyeongi-do took the biggest proportion at 43.6% (5,520,925), followed by Seoul at 15.9% (2,015,130), Incheon at 7.9% (996,023), Busan at 3.8% (551,664) and Daegu at 3.7% (544,653).

Three metropolitan areas that have large population large number of apartment supplies and new town development projects took up some



70% of the entire complaints, with top key words being different depending on regional characteristics.

With the project, the ACRC will enhance social awareness on the value of complaint big data use and promote the usage of complaint big data analysis result as supporting data in resolving citizen inconveniences and social issues.

ACRC Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui said, "Complaints concern inconveniences and grievances facing citizens in their daily life. They are important data for not just government policies but also legislative procedure of the National Assembly."

She added, "The ACRC will carry out joint projects of complaint big data link to implement citizen-centered policies."