

ALAC Initiative:

TS has made an initiative for the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunication to amend its practice and further regulates financing of consumer organizations. Upon reviewing several agreements that the Ministry concluded with consumer protection organizations in regards to financing and implementation of programs within the Competition for financing programs of public interest in the field of consumer protection, we noticed certain provisions that could be construed as a limitation of freedom and independence in the work of consumer protection organizations. We made recommendation to regulate these issues at the system level, by amending existing agreements, drafting proposed contracts for future competitions and adopting an act that would specify the relationship between the Ministry and organizations that are awarded assets on competitive basis.

ALAC Case:

A representative of one of the participants in the competition contacted our organization and presented us with documents related to agreements between consumer organizations and the Ministry that donated funds for financing programs of public interest in the field of consumer protection. While reviewing the copies of the agreement, we noticed the disputed provision on the basis of which an organization that receives funds (and executes the agreement) is obliged to "refrain from statements and disclosure of information that offend the reputation of the Ministry and other bodies of state administration", and which serves as the basis for introducing threatening sanctions in the form of agreement termination and the request for return of the funds received.

We considered that the restrictive purpose of such provisions could affect objectivity in the work of consumer organizations that participated in the competition. After this case, we contacted several other organizations that received agreements with identical content that includes the limitations we point out to.