

DOI: 10.47743/ejpar.2026-7-4

BUILDING ADMINISTRATIVE RESILIENCE THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: EVIDENCE FROM ROMANIAN LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

RĂZVAN-IONUȚ CROITORU

*Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration
Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași
Iași, Romania
croitoru.razvan@staff.uaic.ro*

Abstract

This study examines the gap between the formal institutionalisation of integrity mechanisms and their effective functioning in Romanian local public administration, together with human resource management and development practices and perceived administrative capacity constraints. Using a quantitative, observational and cross-sectional survey of 973 administrative-territorial units from 41 counties, the analysis distinguishes between the formal presence of integrity mechanisms and their implementation in organisational practice. The findings show that formal institutionalisation is widespread, while effective implementation is less consistent, particularly in the case of the ethics adviser. In the multivariate analysis, the effective application of internal procedures and the consideration of integrity in professional promotion are positively associated with perceived institutional integrity, whereas staff and administrative resource constraints are negatively associated with it. These associations remain broadly stable after controlling for institutional size. The study contributes by showing that formal integrity arrangements and their actual functioning should be analysed separately and in relation to HRM practices and implementation capacity. Administrative resilience is used as a theoretical lens for interpreting these relationships, rather than as an outcome measured directly.

Keywords: institutional integrity; human resource management; local public administration; administrative capacity; administrative resilience.

JEL Classification: H83; D73; J24; O15.

1. INTRODUCTION

Institutional integrity in public administration extends beyond corruption prevention and legal compliance to include professional values, impartiality, responsibility and the organisational processes that sustain them (Huberts, 2018; Anechiarico & Segal, 2020). The OECD (2020) similarly approaches public integrity as a system supported by institutional responsibilities, leadership, organisational culture, staff development and merit-based management. Integrity

therefore concerns not only the formal existence of rules and mechanisms, but also the conditions under which they function in practice.

This distinction is central to the present study. Demmke *et al.* (2023) separate the expansion of integrity policies from their implementation, while Demmke (2025) notes that evidence on effectiveness remains more limited than evidence on formal presence. At local level, implementation may also depend on resources, staff competences, training and internal processes (Transparency International Nederland, 2021). The formal presence of integrity mechanisms should therefore not be treated as equivalent to their effective organisational functioning.

Human resource management is directly relevant to this transition because integrity standards are also embedded in personnel practices such as training, performance evaluation, promotion and professional development (Boselie *et al.*, 2021; Codreanu, 2019). In Romanian public administration, these relationships are linked to broader questions of professionalisation and administrative capacity (Profiroiu & Negoită, 2022), while the role of the ethics adviser illustrates the importance of translating formal responsibilities into institutional practice (Cazan & Simion, 2023). Similar legal and organisational obligations may thus operate under different staffing and resource conditions.

Against this background, the study examines the formal institutionalisation and effective implementation of integrity mechanisms, their integration into HRM and development practices, and perceived administrative capacity constraints in Romanian local public administration. Using data from 973 unique TAUs across 41 counties, it analyses how these dimensions are associated with perceived institutional integrity. The study contributes by separating formal institutionalisation from actual functioning and by examining both within the same empirical framework alongside HR practices and implementation capacity. Administrative resilience is used as a theoretical lens for interpreting these relationships in terms of organisational capacity, rather than as an empirical outcome measured directly. Given the quantitative, observational and cross-sectional design, the results are interpreted as statistical associations rather than causal effects.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Institutional integrity

Integrity in public administration extends beyond corruption prevention and compliance with legal norms to include professional values, impartiality, responsibility and the organizational dimension of public conduct. Huberts (2018) defines integrity in relation to the moral values, norms and rules relevant to the exercise of public functions, distinguishing it from both corruption and legal compliance. Corruption is therefore one form of integrity violation, alongside conflicts of interest, favouritism, misuse of authority and breaches of professional impartiality.

The OECD broadens this perspective from individual conduct to institutional functioning. Public integrity involves adherence to values, principles and ethical

norms oriented towards the public interest, supported by institutional responsibilities, leadership, organizational culture, competence development and accountability (OECD, 2017; OECD, 2020). Within this framework, compliance-based approaches, centred on rules and control, and values-based approaches, centred on professional responsibility, leadership and organizational culture, are better understood as complementary rather than competing dimensions of integrity management.

A broad system of rules, however, does not necessarily translate into effective implementation. Demmke *et al.* (2023) capture this distinction through policy coverage density: covering a wider range of risks through rules and policies reflects the formal expansion of an integrity system, but does not in itself demonstrate implementation or effectiveness. At the organizational level, Bhagat & Jha (2024) approach the integrity climate through organizational mechanisms, managerial behaviour and members' perceptions, while Anechiarico & Segal (2020) examine Ethics Management Strategies as ways of sustaining ethical standards within organizations. These perspectives shift attention from the presence of formal arrangements to how they operate in organizational practice.

This distinction guides the empirical approach adopted in the present study. Designated structures, procedures and responsibilities are treated as indicators of formal institutionalization, while their actual functioning is examined separately. This allows the analysis to distinguish between the existence of integrity mechanisms and their implementation in Romanian local public administration.

2.2. Human resource development

Human resource management and development contribute to the capacity of public organizations to perform their functions and adapt to organizational change. In the public sector, HRM extends beyond the administration of employment relationships to recruitment, training, performance evaluation, promotion and career development. Boselie *et al.* (2021) argue that HR practices need to be understood in relation to the specific characteristics and objectives of public organizations. In Romanian public administration, research on integrated HRM activities and strategic workforce planning points in the same direction (Ciobanu & Androniceanu, 2018; Bercu & Buliga, 2019).

Human resource development is broader than participation in formal training. It also concerns how skills, performance and professional development are managed in relation to organizational needs. Dachner *et al.* (2021) place employee development within a wider framework of formal and informal learning opportunities and adaptation to organizational change. Applied to public administration, this perspective connects the development of staff competences with their use in institutional practice.

Integrity becomes relevant to HRM when values and standards of conduct enter personnel processes. Ethics and integrity training, the assessment of

professional conduct, promotion and professional development planning are practical points of intersection. The OECD (2020) places merit-based management, competence development and standards of conduct within the public integrity system, while the OECD (2023) emphasizes skills development and an adaptable public service in a changing administrative environment. Their presence, however, should not be taken as evidence of higher institutional integrity without examining how these practices actually operate.

Accordingly, the empirical analysis considers ethics and integrity training, the inclusion of integrity in professional development planning, performance evaluation and promotion as separate HR practices. They are examined individually rather than combined into a composite index, allowing their relationships with perceived institutional integrity to be assessed without assuming that they operate in the same way.

2.3. Administrative resilience

Administrative resilience refers to the ability of public institutions to maintain their functions and adapt under conditions of disruption, uncertainty and change. Rather than simply returning to a previous state after a crisis, resilience also involves organizational adaptation and learning (Duit, 2016). In public administration, this perspective is relevant beyond exceptional events, as legislative and technological change, resource constraints and shifting institutional responsibilities can place continuing pressure on organizations.

Resilience therefore depends, among other factors, on the ability to adapt internal practices and mobilize available resources while maintaining administrative functions. Boin & Lodge (2016) relate resilience to institutional design and to the capacities required to manage pressures and disruptions. From this perspective, human resources and administrative capacity matter because translating formal responsibilities into practice requires staff, competences, procedures and organizational resources.

The connection between integrity and resilience is less direct and requires a cautious interpretation. Integrity mechanisms may contribute to predictable processes, clear responsibilities and the maintenance of standards of conduct under pressure, but their formal existence alone does not make an organization resilient. What matters for the present study is whether formal mechanisms operate in practice and whether organizations have the human and administrative resources needed to sustain them.

Administrative resilience is therefore used here as a theoretical lens rather than a distinct empirical outcome. It provides a way to interpret the relationships between functioning integrity mechanisms, human resource practices and administrative capacity constraints in terms of organizational capacity. The study does not measure resilience directly, nor does its cross-sectional design allow the identified associations to be interpreted as effects on resilience.

2.4. Integrating integrity, HR capacity and resilience

Institutional integrity, human resource management and administrative capacity can be brought together through the distinction between the formal institutionalisation of integrity mechanisms and their actual functioning. Rules, structures and procedures provide the formal framework, but implementation also relies on managerial processes, staff competences and organizational resources. This reflects the distinction identified by Demmke *et al.* (2023) between the expansion of integrity policies and their implementation.

HRM connects this formal framework with organizational practice through staff development and conduct. Training, performance evaluation, promotion and professional development planning can embed integrity standards in personnel practices (Codreanu, 2019; OECD, 2020). Their implementation, however, also depends on the resources available to the organization. Staff and resource constraints may limit the functioning of formally established mechanisms, which is why administrative capacity cannot be inferred simply from institutional size or staff numbers.

The framework used in this study does not assume that integrity and human resource development directly produce administrative resilience. Instead, it separates formal institutionalisation, effective implementation, HRM and development practices, and perceived capacity constraints, and examines their associations with perceived institutional integrity. Administrative resilience provides a theoretical lens for interpreting the capacity to sustain functional mechanisms and mobilize resources under pressure and change (Duit, 2016; Boin & Lodge, 2016), rather than an empirical outcome measured by the study.

3. INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY CONTEXT IN ROMANIA

3.1. The legal and strategic framework for public integrity

Romania's public integrity framework combines rules on the conduct of public officials, conflicts of interest and incompatibilities, declarations of assets and interests, whistleblower protection and corruption prevention. A central legal reference for public administration is Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2019 on the Administrative Code, which regulates the status of civil servants and covers professional conduct, ethics counselling, performance evaluation, promotion and training. Government Decision no. 931/2021 further regulates the designation and responsibilities of ethics advisers, as well as the organization, evaluation and reporting of their activity. Together, these provisions establish the legal basis for one of the integrity mechanisms examined in this study.

Other legislation addresses specific components of the integrity framework. Law no. 176/2010, as subsequently amended and supplemented, regulates integrity in the exercise of public functions and dignities, including declarations of assets and interests and the related evaluation mechanisms of the National Integrity Agency. Law no. 361/2022 on the protection of whistleblowers in the

public interest regulates the reporting of legal violations and requires public authorities and institutions to establish internal reporting channels and related procedures. These instruments complement the broader framework through which integrity risks are addressed within public institutions.

The strategic framework relevant to the period preceding the survey was provided by the National Anticorruption Strategy 2021-2025, approved by Government Decision no. 1269/2021. For central and local public authorities and institutions, the strategy included organizational integrity measures, integrity plans and the designation of coordinators responsible for their implementation. Since its formal implementation period ended in 2025, the strategy is used here as a reference for mechanisms established before the 2026 survey rather than as an ongoing strategic framework.

Taken together, these legal and strategic instruments show that integrity mechanisms are extensively formalized in Romanian public administration. Their legal existence, however, is analytically distinct from their organizational functioning. This distinction connects the Romanian institutional context with the theoretical framework and informs the selection of mechanisms examined empirically.

3.2. Organizational integrity mechanisms in local public administration

At the local level, implementing the integrity framework requires legal obligations to be translated into organizational responsibilities, procedures and practices. The study focuses on three such mechanisms: the designation and functioning of the ethics adviser, the coordinator responsible for implementing the integrity plan under the National Anticorruption Strategy (NAS) 2021-2025, and the existence and application of internal ethics and integrity procedures.

The ethics adviser has a primarily preventive role, including counselling civil servants, monitoring compliance with principles and rules of conduct, and fulfilling related reporting responsibilities. Government Decision no. 931/2021 regulates the designation, responsibilities and organization of this activity. Institutional monitoring also continues through the National Agency of Civil Servants (ANFP), which collected data on compliance with conduct rules for 2025 and published its report in 2026 (ANFP, 2026). For the purposes of this study, the designation of an ethics adviser and the actual functioning of this mechanism are treated separately.

A second mechanism derives from the implementation of the NAS 2021-2025. Government Decision no. 1269/2021 provided for the designation of a coordinator responsible for implementing the integrity plan, supported by contact persons at executive level. In the analysis, the presence of this coordinator is treated as an indicator of formal institutionalization rather than evidence that the mechanism functions effectively.

Internal procedures complete this organizational framework in areas such as conflicts of interest, incompatibilities, ethics counselling and whistleblowing. Their existence and actual application are also measured separately. Taken

together, these measures allow the analysis to compare the formal presence of integrity mechanisms with their functioning in local administrative practice.

3.3. Integrity within human resource management

The Romanian civil service framework connects integrity with several areas of human resource management. Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2019 on the Administrative Code regulates professional conduct alongside training and professional development, performance evaluation and career development. Integrity can therefore be examined not only through dedicated ethics mechanisms, but also through its integration into personnel management and development practices.

Research on HRM in Romanian public administration provides further context for this connection. Ciobanu & Androniceanu (2018) examine the integration of human resource activities in relation to organizational performance, while Bercu & Buliga (2019) focus on strategic workforce planning and competence development. From the broader perspective of administrative reform, Profiroiu & Negoită (2022) discuss professionalization, integrity and administrative capacity as interconnected dimensions of public administration reform.

At organizational level, these connections can be observed through ethics and integrity training and its inclusion in professional development planning, as well as through integrity-related criteria in performance evaluation and promotion. The existence of a regulatory framework does not, however, ensure that these practices are applied uniformly across local administrations. The study therefore examines them separately to assess how integrity is reflected in HRM practices among the participating local authorities.

3.4. Implementation capacity and the local administrative setting

The implementation of integrity mechanisms also depends on the organizational capacity of local administrations. Local authorities differ in the size of their administrative apparatus, staff structure and specialization, and available resources. Common legal obligations therefore operate under different implementation conditions. These differences are part of the broader context of Romanian public administration reform, where human resource professionalization, integrity and administrative capacity are closely connected (Profiroiu & Negoită, 2022). Recent institutional reporting on civil service management also reflects continuing attention to human resource development and administrative capacity (ANFP, 2026).

Staff and resource constraints may shape the conditions under which ethics counselling, internal procedures, reporting, training and monitoring are carried out. Administrative capacity, however, is not measured comprehensively in this study, nor is it equated with institutional size or staff numbers. The analysis captures a narrower dimension through respondents' perceptions of whether

insufficient staff or administrative resources constrain the implementation of integrity measures.

The local administrative setting therefore provides the context for examining whether formally established integrity mechanisms also function in practice under different capacity conditions. The following empirical analysis separates formal institutionalization, effective implementation, HRM and development practices, and perceived capacity constraints.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research design and research questions

The study uses a quantitative, observational and cross-sectional design, with the administrative-territorial unit (TAU) as the unit of analysis. Data were collected through an electronic questionnaire designed to examine integrity mechanisms in Romanian local public administration, their integration into human resource management and development practices, and perceived administrative capacity constraints.

The research design distinguishes between formal institutionalization, reflected in the presence of integrity mechanisms and procedures, and effective implementation, reflected in the functioning of the ethics adviser and the application of internal procedures. HRM and development are examined through integrity-related training, performance evaluation, promotion and professional development planning, while perceived staff and administrative resource constraints are treated separately as a dimension of implementation capacity.

For the relational analysis, perceived institutional integrity is the dependent variable, measured on a five-point ordinal scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). The independent variables cover effective implementation, HRM and development practices, and perceived capacity constraints. Institutional size is introduced separately as a control variable in the robustness analysis.

The study addresses three research questions:

RQ1: To what extent are institutional integrity mechanisms formally established and effectively applied in Romanian local public administration?

RQ2: How is integrity integrated into human resource management and development practices in local public administration?

RQ3: How are the effective implementation of integrity mechanisms, human resource practices and administrative capacity constraints associated with perceived institutional integrity in Romanian local public administration?

RQ1 and RQ2 guide the descriptive analysis, while RQ3 provides the basis for the bivariate and multivariate analyses. Administrative resilience is not measured as a separate outcome and is used only as a theoretical lens for interpreting the findings in relation to organizational capacity, functioning integrity mechanisms and resource constraints.

4.2. Sample and data cleaning

Data were collected through an electronic questionnaire administered via Google Forms between 27 April and 17 June 2026 and distributed through institutional and professional channels in local public administration. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were representatives of the participating institutions, mainly involved in human resources, integrity, administrative management or leadership activities. The initial dataset contained 1,002 responses.

Because the TAU is the unit of analysis, duplicate records were identified using the county-TAU combination. Twenty-eight TAUs had multiple responses, resulting in 29 excess observations. These were removed by retaining the most complete response or, in case of equal completeness, the most recent one. The final analytical sample comprises 973 unique TAUs from 41 counties, excluding Bucharest. Coverage varies across counties, from one TAU in Dolj to 62 in Dâmbovița. Given the voluntary and non-probabilistic participation, the sample is not statistically representative at national level, despite its broad territorial coverage.

Data quality checks identified 45 TAUs with inconsistencies between staff structure variables and the reported numbers of approved and occupied posts. These values were neither modified nor imputed. The affected observations were excluded only from the robustness analysis involving institutional size, leaving a subsample of 928 TAUs. The categorical variables included in the main multivariate model contain no missing values, while non-responses to other items were handled at the level of the respective variables. Descriptive and bivariate analyses and the main multivariate model therefore use $N = 973$, while the robustness analysis uses $N = 928$.

4.3. Variables and measurement

Variables were selected in line with the research questions and grouped into four analytical dimensions: formal institutionalization, effective implementation of integrity mechanisms, human resource management and development, and administrative capacity constraints. Perceived institutional integrity is the dependent variable in the relational analysis.

Formal institutionalization is captured by the designation of an ethics adviser and an NAS 2021-2025 coordinator and by the existence of internal ethics and integrity procedures. Effective implementation is measured separately through the functioning of the ethics adviser and the application of internal procedures. HRM and development practices cover ethics and integrity training, its inclusion in annual professional development planning, integrity-related criteria in performance evaluation, and the consideration of integrity in promotion.

Administrative capacity constraints are measured through respondents' perceptions of whether insufficient staff or administrative resources affect the implementation of integrity measures, using three categories: "No", "Partial" and "Yes". This indicator captures a specific dimension of administrative capacity

rather than the concept as a whole. Institutional size is measured by the total number of occupied positions and, after an $\ln(n + 1)$ transformation, is used only as a control variable in the robustness analysis.

Perceived institutional integrity is measured on a five-point ordinal scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). In the inferential analysis, it is treated as an ordinal outcome without assuming equal distances between adjacent categories.

Table 1. Operationalization of the main variables used in the analysis

Size	Variable	Measurement/ Categories	Role in analysis
Formal institutionalization	Designated Ethics Advisor	No / Yes	Descriptive variable
Formal institutionalization	Designated NAS Coordinator	No / Yes	Descriptive variable
Formal institutionalization	Internal ethics and integrity procedures	No / Yes	Descriptive variable
Effective implementation	Effective functioning of the ethics advisor	No / Partial / Yes	Independent variable
Effective implementation	Effective application of procedures	No / Partial / Yes	Independent variable
Administrative capacity	Implementation affected by insufficient staff/resources	No / Partial / Yes	Independent variable
HR Development	Organization of integrity trainings	Not organized / Occasional / Periodic, planned annually	Independent variable
HR Management	Conduct criteria/integrity in performance evaluation	No / Yes	Independent variable
HR Management	Integrity taken into account when promoting	No / Partial / Yes	Independent variable
HR Development	Ethics/integrity included in the annual training plan	No / Yes	Independent variable
Institutional dimension	Total number of positions occupied	$\ln(n + 1)$	Control variable - robustness model
Result	Perceived institutional integrity	Ordinal scale 1-5	Dependent variable

Source: author's elaboration based on the questionnaire and the operationalization of the research variables.

Three-category independent variables were dummy-coded. “No” is the reference category for the functioning of the ethics adviser, application of procedures, administrative capacity constraints and promotion, while “Not organized” is the reference for integrity training. Binary variables also use “No” as the reference category. No composite integrity index was constructed, as the mechanisms and practices are examined separately rather than assumed to represent interchangeable manifestations of a single latent dimension.

Data on ethics counselling, reporting, training programmes and participation, internal training sessions, disciplinary sanctions and confirmed corruption cases are used only descriptively. Sanctions and confirmed corruption cases are not treated as inverse measures of integrity because the absence of reported cases cannot distinguish between the absence of incidents and differences in their detection, reporting or formal confirmation.

4.4. Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis proceeded in four stages: descriptive analysis, bivariate analysis, multivariate modelling and robustness checks. Statistical significance was assessed at $\alpha = 0.05$, while interpretation also considered effect sizes and the stability of associations across model specifications.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the main variables. Categorical variables are reported as absolute and relative frequencies, while numerical variables are described using the mean, median, standard deviation and range, as appropriate. For count variables with skewed distributions and a high concentration of zeros, medians and the proportions of zero and positive values were also considered.

Given the ordinal nature of the dependent variable, bivariate associations were examined using nonparametric tests. The Mann-Whitney U test was used for two-category independent variables and the Kruskal-Wallis test for variables with three categories. Significant Kruskal-Wallis results were followed by pairwise Mann-Whitney U comparisons with Holm-adjusted p-values. Effect sizes were assessed using epsilon-squared (ϵ^2) for Kruskal-Wallis tests and Cliff's delta (δ) for two-group comparisons (Cliff, 1993; Holm, 1979).

Multivariate associations were examined using ordinal logistic regression with a logit link, reflecting the ordered five-category structure of perceived institutional integrity (Agresti, 2010). Model A (N = 973) was specified under the proportional odds assumption and included the effective functioning of the ethics adviser, effective application of integrity procedures, perceived staff and administrative resource constraints, integrity training, integrity-related criteria in performance evaluation and promotion, and the inclusion of ethics and integrity in the annual training plan. Coefficients were exponentiated as odds ratios (ORs), with OR > 1 indicating higher proportional odds of being in a higher outcome

category relative to the reference category, conditional on the other variables in the model. The model can be expressed as:

$$\log \left[\frac{P(Y \leq j)}{P(Y > j)} \right] = \alpha_j - \sum_{k=1}^K \beta_k X_k, \quad j = 1, \dots, 4$$

where Y denotes perceived institutional integrity, α_j the cumulative thresholds, X_k the independent variables and β_k their estimated coefficients.

Model fit was assessed using log-likelihood (LL), Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), the likelihood-ratio (LR) test against the null model and McFadden's pseudo- R^2 (McFadden, 1974). For multi-category independent variables, LR tests comparing the full model with reduced models were also used to assess their overall contribution.

The proportional odds assumption was examined globally and by variable blocks across the four cumulative splits of the dependent variable. Robustness was further assessed using cumulative binary logistic models and an unconstrained multinomial logistic model, comparing the direction and stability of associations across specifications and model fit. Adjusted probabilities were calculated for the main associations to facilitate substantive interpretation beyond ORs.

Model B was estimated on the subsample with internally consistent staffing data ($N = 928$). It retained the independent variables from Model A and added institutional size, measured as $\ln(\text{total occupied positions} + 1)$, as a control variable. This specification was used to assess whether the main associations remained stable after accounting for differences in institutional size.

All inferential results are interpreted as statistical associations. Given the observational and cross-sectional design, the estimated coefficients are not interpreted as causal effects.

4.5. Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. Participation was voluntary and non-probabilistic; therefore, despite the inclusion of 973 TAUs from 41 counties, the sample cannot be considered statistically representative at national level. The data are self-reported and were not systematically validated against independent administrative sources, while the dependent variable captures perceived institutional integrity rather than an external measure of integrity. The cross-sectional and observational design further limits the analysis to statistical associations and does not support causal inference.

Administrative capacity is captured only through perceived staff and resource constraints, rather than through a comprehensive measure of the concept. Similarly, administrative resilience is used as a theoretical lens and is not measured directly. In addition, inconsistencies in staffing data required the

robustness analysis controlling for institutional size to be conducted on a subsample of 928 TAUs.

Finally, disciplinary sanctions and confirmed corruption cases are used only descriptively. The absence of reported cases cannot be interpreted as evidence of higher institutional integrity, since it may reflect differences in detection, reporting or formal confirmation. The findings should therefore be understood as associations observed within the analysed sample and within the scope of the measures used.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Institutional profile and formal integrity mechanisms

Among the 973 TAUs included in the analysis, formal integrity mechanisms are widely reported. An ethics adviser was designated in 894 TAUs (91.9%), an NAS 2021-2025 coordinator in 866 (89.0%), and internal ethics and integrity procedures were reported in 904 TAUs (92.9%).

Table 2. Formal institutionalisation of integrity mechanisms

Indicator	Yes, n (%)	No, n (%)
Designated Ethics Advisor	894 (91,9)	79 (8,1)
Designated NAS Coordinator	866 (89,0)	107 (11,0)
Internal ethics and integrity procedures	904 (92,9)	69 (7,1)

Source: author's elaboration based on the data obtained through the questionnaire.

Regarding the content of internal procedures, the most frequently reported areas are ethics counselling (829 TAUs) and conflicts of interest (828), followed by incompatibilities (788) and whistleblowing (673). Multiple responses were allowed for this item, and 73 TAUs did not provide an answer; these non-responses were treated separately for this variable.

Overall, each of the three mechanisms is reported as formally established in approximately nine out of ten participating administrations. These findings refer to their reported formal presence rather than their actual functioning, which is examined separately in the following section.

5.2. From formal institutionalization to effective implementation

The widespread formal institutionalisation of integrity mechanisms is not matched to the same extent by their reported functioning in practice. The difference is particularly visible for the ethics adviser: while 91.9% of TAUs report having designated one, only 47.4% report that the mechanism functions effectively, 41.2% indicate partial functioning, and 11.4% report that it does not function effectively.

The difference is smaller for internal ethics and integrity procedures. While 92.9% of TAUs report their formal existence, 65.1% indicate that they are effectively applied, 30.5% report partial application, and 4.4% report that they are not effectively applied.

Table 3. Effective implementation of integrity mechanisms

Indicator	No, n (%)	Partial, n (%)	Yes, n (%)
Effective functioning of the ethics advisor	111 (11,4)	401 (41,2)	461 (47,4)
Effective application of internal procedures	43 (4,4)	297 (30,5)	633 (65,1)

Source: author's elaboration based on the data obtained through the questionnaire.

Other implementation-related indicators show a similarly differentiated pattern. Information or training activities on ethics and integrity during the previous 12 months were reported by 56.5% of TAUs. Regarding the ethics adviser's reporting activity, 65.9% reported annual reporting, 20.6% occasional reporting, and 13.6% no reporting.

Overall, the findings for RQ1 show that formal institutionalisation is widespread, while reported implementation is less uniform. The difference is more pronounced for the functioning of the ethics adviser than for the application of internal procedures. These descriptive results identify the formal-implementation gap but do not establish its causes.

5.3. Human resource practices and administrative capacity

The integration of integrity into human resource management and development practices varies across the dimensions examined. Regarding professional training, 33.5% of TAUs report periodic, annually planned ethics and integrity training, 43.1% report occasional training, and 23.4% report no such activities. Ethics and integrity are explicitly included in the annual training plan in 51.7% of the participating administrations.

Integration is more frequently reported in performance evaluation and professional promotion. Conduct and integrity criteria are included in performance evaluation in 75.1% of TAUs. Regarding promotion, 75.7% report that integrity is taken into account, 14.3% indicate partial consideration, and 10.0% report that it is not considered.

Table 4. Integrating integrity into human resource management and development practices

Indicator	Distribution of responses, n (%)
Organizing ethics and integrity trainings	No: 228 (23.4); Occasional: 419 (43.1); Periodic: 326 (33.5)
Integrity included in the annual training plan	No: 470 (48.3); Yes: 503 (51.7)
Conduct criteria/integrity in performance evaluation	No: 242 (24.9); Yes: 731 (75.1)
Integrity taken into account when promoting	No: 97 (10.0); Partial: 139 (14.3); Yes: 737 (75.7)

Source: author's elaboration based on the data obtained through the questionnaire.

Administrative capacity constraints are also widely reported. Overall, 67.5% of TAUs indicate that insufficient staff or administrative resources at least partially affect the implementation of integrity measures: 39.1% report a partial effect and 28.5% report that implementation is affected, while 32.5% report no such constraints.

The findings for RQ2 therefore show that integrity is integrated unevenly across HRM and development practices, with higher reported levels in performance evaluation and promotion than in regular training and annual training planning. At the same time, more than two-thirds of the participating TAUs report staff or resource constraints that at least partially affect the implementation of integrity measures.

5.4. Associations with perceived institutional integrity

Perceived institutional integrity is concentrated in the upper part of the ordinal scale. Of the 973 TAUs analyzed, 38.6% rate institutional integrity at level 5 and 37.7% at level 4, placing 76.4% of responses in the two highest categories. Level 3 accounts for 18.3%, while levels 1 and 2 together account for 5.3%. The median is 4.

Bivariate analyses show statistically significant differences in perceived institutional integrity across all independent variables examined. The largest difference is associated with the effective application of internal procedures ($H = 126.25$; $p < 0.001$; $\varepsilon^2 = 0.128$). Smaller differences are observed for integrity training ($H = 55.16$; $p < 0.001$; $\varepsilon^2 = 0.055$), staff and resource constraints ($H = 49.72$; $p < 0.001$; $\varepsilon^2 = 0.049$), the effective functioning of the ethics adviser ($H = 49.29$; $p < 0.001$; $\varepsilon^2 = 0.049$), and the consideration of integrity in promotion ($H = 44.15$; $p < 0.001$; $\varepsilon^2 = 0.043$). Significant differences are also found for the inclusion of integrity in the annual training plan ($p < 0.001$; $\delta = 0.169$) and the use of conduct and integrity criteria in performance evaluation ($p = 0.002$; $\delta = 0.124$).

The main ordinal logistic model (Model A; $N = 973$) is statistically significant relative to the null model ($LR \chi^2 (12) = 183.37$; $p < 0.001$), with $AIC = 2249.20$, $BIC = 2327.29$ and McFadden's pseudo- $R^2 = 0.076$. After adjustment for the other independent variables, the effective application of procedures shows a strong positive association with perceived institutional integrity. TAUs reporting effective application have 3.67 times the proportional odds of being in a higher category of perceived institutional integrity compared with the reference category “No” ($OR = 3.667$; 95% CI: 1.832-7.341; $p < 0.001$). The consideration of integrity in promotion is also positively associated with the outcome ($OR = 2.005$; 95% CI: 1.267-3.173; $p = 0.003$).

Staff and administrative resource constraints show an inverse association. Compared with TAUs reporting no such constraints, both “Partial” ($OR = 0.662$; 95% CI: 0.493-0.890; $p = 0.006$) and “Yes” ($OR = 0.669$; 95% CI: 0.474-0.945; $p = 0.022$) are associated with lower proportional odds of being in a higher

category of perceived institutional integrity. Integrity training is significant as a categorical variable overall ($p = 0.009$), although the coefficient for periodic training does not individually reach the conventional significance threshold ($OR = 1.436$; $p = 0.057$). The effective functioning of the ethics adviser, integrity criteria in performance evaluation, and the inclusion of integrity in the annual training plan do not show statistically significant independent associations after multivariate adjustment.

Table 5. Ordinal logistic regression of perceived institutional integrity - Model A

Independent variable	OR	p
Ethics Advisor - Partial vs. No	1,141	0,556
Ethics Advisor - Yes vs. No	1,266	0,314
Procedures Applied - Partial vs. No	1,232	0,554
Procedures applied - Yes vs. No	3,667	< 0.001
Constraints - Partial vs. No	0,662	0,006
Constraints - Yes vs. No	0,669	0,022
Trainings - Occasional vs. No	0,916	0,602
Trainings - Periodic vs. No	1,436	0,057
Evaluation Integrity Criteria - Yes vs. No	0,939	0,699
Promotion - Partial vs. No	1,173	0,541
Promotion - Yes vs. No	2,005	0,003
Integrity in the annual training plan - Yes vs. No	1,159	0,258

Note: Model A, N = 973. The reference category is "No", except for integrity training, for which the reference category is "Not organized". OR = odds ratio. Bold values indicate $p < 0.05$.

Source: author's elaboration based on the data obtained through the questionnaire.

Based on Model A, the adjusted probability of being in categories 4-5 of perceived institutional integrity is 59.2% for TAUs reporting no effective application of procedures and 83.5% for those reporting effective application. For the consideration of integrity in promotion, the corresponding probabilities are 66.1% and 78.4%. For staff and resource constraints, the estimated probability of being in categories 4-5 decreases from 80.2% when no constraints are reported to 73.9% when constraints are reported.

The diagnostic assessment rejects the strict proportional odds assumption globally ($\chi^2(36) = 69.11$; $p < 0.001$). However, tests conducted separately by variable blocks do not show statistically significant deviations at $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p = 0.097$ - 0.788). Additional cumulative binary logistic models and the unconstrained multinomial logistic model generally preserve the direction of the main associations. The ordinal specification also has lower information criteria ($AIC = 2249.20$; $BIC = 2327.29$) than the multinomial model ($AIC = 2265.23$; $BIC = 2519.01$). The ordinal model is therefore retained as the main specification, with ORs interpreted conservatively as common proportional estimates.

The robustness analysis (Model B; N = 928) shows that the main associations remain broadly stable after institutional size is introduced as a control variable. Effective application of procedures remains positively associated with perceived institutional integrity (OR = 3.226; $p = 0.001$), while staff and administrative resource constraints remain negatively associated for both “Partial” (OR = 0.675; $p = 0.011$) and “Yes” (OR = 0.691; $p = 0.042$). The consideration of integrity in promotion also remains positively associated (OR = 1.916; $p = 0.007$). Periodic training retains a positive direction but does not reach the conventional significance threshold (OR = 1.426; $p = 0.066$), while institutional size shows no statistically significant independent association (OR = 1.102; $p = 0.268$).

Overall, the findings for RQ3 identify the effective application of integrity procedures, the consideration of integrity in professional promotion, and staff and administrative resource constraints as the most stable multivariate associations with perceived institutional integrity. Integrity training contributes significantly as a categorical variable overall, although the individual estimate for periodic training does not reach the conventional significance threshold. The main associations remain broadly stable after controlling for institutional size. Consistent with the observational and cross-sectional design, these findings are interpreted as statistical associations rather than causal effects.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Formal institutionalization versus effective implementation

The findings reveal a clear difference between the formal institutionalisation of integrity mechanisms and their reported functioning in practice. While the ethics adviser, the NAS coordinator and internal procedures are formally reported in around nine out of ten TAUs, effective functioning is less consistent, particularly for the ethics adviser. This pattern supports the analytical distinction between the formal presence of integrity mechanisms and their organisational implementation.

The finding is consistent with research distinguishing the expansion of integrity policies from their implementation and effectiveness (Demmke *et al.*, 2023; Demmke, 2025). For the ethics adviser, whose role in Romanian public administration has also been examined by Cazan & Simion (2023), formal designation alone provides limited information about how the mechanism operates in institutional practice. The difference is smaller for internal procedures, whose effective application also shows a positive and stable association with perceived institutional integrity in the multivariate analysis.

For RQ1, the results therefore suggest that the main issue within the analysed sample is not the formal absence of integrity mechanisms, but the uneven extent to which they function in organisational practice. This interpretation is consistent with systemic approaches that place rules and procedures alongside institutional responsibilities, competences, management and organisational processes

(Anechiarico & Segal, 2020; OECD, 2020). The study cannot establish why these differences occur, but the findings support treating effective implementation as analytically distinct from formal institutionalisation.

6.2. Human resource management as an integrity infrastructure

The findings show that integrity is unevenly integrated into human resource management and development practices, with higher reported levels in performance evaluation and promotion than in regular training and annual training planning. This pattern is consistent with the view that HRM can translate organisational values and objectives into personnel practices (Boselie *et al.*, 2021). In the field of public integrity, the OECD (2020) similarly connects merit-based management, competence development, evaluation and promotion with the broader integrity system. These relationships are also relevant to research on integrated HRM and strategic workforce planning in Romanian public administration (Ciobanu & Androniceanu, 2018; Bercu & Buliga, 2019).

The multivariate results, however, show that these practices are not associated with perceived institutional integrity in the same way. The consideration of integrity in promotion has a positive and stable association, including after controlling for institutional size. By contrast, integrity criteria in performance evaluation and the inclusion of integrity in the annual training plan do not retain statistically significant independent associations after adjustment for the other variables. Integrity training is significant as a categorical variable overall, although the individual estimate for periodic training does not reach the conventional significance threshold. These differences support examining HRM practices separately rather than assuming that their formal presence or reported use is similarly associated with perceived institutional integrity.

Taken together, the findings for RQ2 and RQ3 support the relevance of HRM as an organisational dimension of integrity, while also showing that personnel practices should not be treated as equivalent mechanisms. The stable association observed for promotion draws attention to the integration of integrity standards into decisions affecting professional development, whereas the results for training and performance evaluation are less consistent after multivariate adjustment. These associations should not be interpreted causally given the cross-sectional and observational design.

6.3. Administrative capacity and resource constraints

Around two-thirds of the analysed TAUs report that insufficient staff or administrative resources at least partially affect the implementation of integrity measures. These constraints also show a negative and stable association with perceived institutional integrity in the multivariate analysis, including after institutional size is introduced as a control variable.

This finding draws attention to the organisational conditions under which integrity mechanisms are implemented. In the Romanian public administration, Profiroiu & Negoită (2022) discuss administrative capacity, human resource professionalisation and integrity as interconnected dimensions of reform. Staff and resource constraints may affect the conditions under which ethics counselling, monitoring, training and internal procedures are carried out. Institutional size, however, does not show a statistically significant independent association in the robustness model. This suggests that perceived implementation constraints cannot be reduced simply to the size of the administrative apparatus.

Administrative capacity also concerns the ability to mobilise available staff, competences and resources in carrying out institutional responsibilities, a perspective consistent with the OECD (2020) approach to the functioning of public integrity systems. The findings therefore support considering organisational conditions when examining the difference between formal institutionalisation and effective implementation. The negative association observed for staff and resource constraints points to the relevance of this dimension, without establishing that these constraints determine perceived institutional integrity.

6.4. Implications for administrative resilience

The findings can also be interpreted through the lens of administrative resilience, although resilience itself was not directly measured. The distinction between formal institutionalisation and effective implementation, together with HRM practices and capacity constraints, provides insight into the organisational conditions under which integrity mechanisms operate. This interpretation is consistent with Duit's (2016) emphasis on adaptation and learning in public administration and with Boin & Lodge's (2016) focus on institutional design and capacities.

From this perspective, the formal existence of integrity mechanisms represents only one part of the organisational infrastructure; their functioning also depends on the capacity to sustain them in practice. The findings are consistent with this interpretation: the effective application of procedures and the consideration of integrity in professional promotion show positive and stable associations with perceived institutional integrity, while staff and resource constraints show a negative association. Taken together, these relationships draw attention to organisational processes, human resource practices and available resources as conditions relevant to the functioning of integrity mechanisms.

The broader implication is that institutional integrity in local public administration should not be examined solely through the formal institutionalisation of mechanisms, but also through the organisational conditions under which they are implemented. Administrative resilience offers a theoretical lens for interpreting this relationship between integrity mechanisms and the capacity to sustain organisational functioning under pressure and change. Since resilience was not directly measured and the study is cross-sectional, the findings

should not be interpreted as evidence that the identified factors produce or strengthen administrative resilience.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the formal institutionalisation and implementation of integrity mechanisms, their integration into human resource management and development practices, and administrative capacity constraints across 973 Romanian local administrative-territorial units. The findings show that integrity mechanisms are widely institutionalised, but their reported functioning is less consistent. Formal rules, procedures and responsibilities should therefore not be treated as equivalent to their functioning in organisational practice.

Three findings stand out. First, the difference between formal institutionalisation and effective implementation is more pronounced for the ethics adviser than for internal procedures. Second, integrity is unevenly integrated across HRM practices, with its consideration in professional promotion showing a positive and stable association with perceived institutional integrity. Third, staff and administrative resource constraints show a negative association that remains after controlling for institutional size. Alongside these relationships, the effective application of internal procedures shows the strongest positive association with perceived institutional integrity in the multivariate analysis.

The study contributes by examining formal institutionalisation, effective implementation, HRM and development practices, and capacity constraints within the same empirical framework. Separating these dimensions moves the analysis beyond the formal presence of integrity mechanisms and towards the organisational conditions under which they function. In this respect, the findings draw attention to human resource practices and implementation capacity as relevant dimensions in the analysis of institutional integrity.

Administrative resilience provides a theoretical lens for interpreting these findings rather than an outcome measured directly by the study. The results draw attention to the capacity of public organisations to sustain institutional mechanisms in practice through organisational processes, human resources and available administrative capacity. They should not, however, be interpreted as evidence that the identified factors produce or strengthen administrative resilience.

These conclusions remain subject to the limitations of an observational and cross-sectional design based on self-reported data and a non-probabilistic sample that cannot be considered statistically representative at national level. Future research could combine longitudinal designs with external indicators of integrity and broader measures of administrative capacity and resilience, while also comparing different categories of local government. Such approaches could provide a more detailed understanding of the conditions under which formally established integrity mechanisms become sustained organisational practices.

References

- 1) Agresti, A. (2010). *Analysis of Ordinal Categorical Data*, 2nd ed. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470594001>
- 2) National Agency of Civil Servants (2026). *Report on monitoring the implementation of principles and standards of conduct, as well as disciplinary procedures within public authorities and institutions for the year 2025*. Bucharest: National Agency of Civil Servants. Available at: <https://www.anfp.gov.ro/comunicare/publicatii/rapoarte/raport-privind-respectarea-normelor-de-conduita/> (accessed on 7 September 2026).
- 3) Anechiarico, F. & Segal, L. (2020). 'Democratic Governance as a Function of Ethics Management Strategies', *Public Integrity*, 22(3), pp. 280-295. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999922.2020.1716603>
- 4) Bercu, A.-M. & Buliga, A.M. (2019). 'Strategic Planning of Human Resources in Public Administration. Insights from North East Romanian Region', in Tofan, M., Bilan, I. & Cigu, E. (eds.), *European Union Financial Regulation and Administrative Area (EUFIRE 2019)*, pp. 361-375.
- 5) Bhagat, G. & Jha, K.N. (2024). 'Determinants of the integrity climate of public organizations - a procurement perspective', *International Journal of Construction Management*, 24(16), pp. 1780-1788. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15623599.2023.2299525>
- 6) Boin, A. & Lodge, M. (2016). 'Designing Resilient Institutions for Transboundary Crisis Management: A Time for Public Administration', *Public Administration*, 94(2), pp. 289-298. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12264>
- 7) Boselie, P., Van Harten, J. & Veld, M. (2021). 'A human resource management review on public management and public administration research: stop right there... before we go any further...', *Public Management Review*, 23(4), pp. 483-500. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2019.1695880>
- 8) Cazan, D.-G. & Simion, C.-E. (2023). 'Ethics and Integrity in the Romanian Public Administration: The Role of Ethics Advisor', in Grigorescu, A. & Radu, V. (eds.), *Lumen Proceedings, Vol. 19: Global Ethics - Key of Sustainability (GEKOS 2022)*, pp. 180-206. LUMEN Publishing House. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc/gekos2022/15>
- 9) Ciobanu, A. & Androniceanu, A. (2018). 'Integrated Human Resources Activities - The Solution for Performance Improvement in Romanian Public Sector Institutions', *Management Research and Practice*, 10(3), pp. 60-79.
- 10) Cliff, N. (1993). 'Dominance Statistics: Ordinal Analyses to Answer Ordinal Questions', *Psychological Bulletin*, 114(3), pp. 494-509. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.114.3.494>
- 11) Codreanu, A. (2019). 'Strategic Human Resource Management. A Milestone for Integrity Building in Public Administration', *Redefining Community in Intercultural Context*, 1/2019, pp. 267-274. Available at: <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=874330>
- 12) Dachner, A.M., Ellingson, J.E., Noe, R.A. & Saxton, B.M. (2021). 'The future of employee development', *Human Resource Management Review*, 31(2), 100732. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2019.100732>

- 13) Demmke, C. (2025). 'Civil Service Ethics in Germany from an International Perspective - Between a Role Model and Latecomer', *Central European Public Administration Review*, 23(1), pp. 63-98. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17573/cepar.2025.1.03>
- 14) Demmke, C., Autioniemi, J. & Lenner, F. (2023). 'Explaining the Popularity of Integrity Policies in Times of Critical Governance—The Case of Conflicts of Interest Policies for Ministers in the EU-Member States', *Public Integrity*, 25(1), pp. 1-14. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999922.2021.1987056>
- 15) Duit, A. (2016). 'Resilience Thinking: Lessons for Public Administration', *Public Administration*, 94(2), pp. 364-380. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12182>
- 16) Holm, S. (1979). 'A Simple Sequentially Rejective Multiple Test Procedure', *Scandinavian Journal of Statistics*, 6(2), pp. 65-70.
- 17) Huberts, L.W.J.C. (2018). 'Integrity: What it is and Why it is Important', *Public Integrity*, 20(Suppl. 1), pp. S18-S32. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999922.2018.1477404>
- 18) McFadden, D. (1974). 'Conditional Logit Analysis of Qualitative Choice Behavior', in Zarembka, P. (ed.), *Frontiers in Econometrics*. New York: Academic Press, pp. 105-142.
- 19) OECD (2017). *Recommendation of the Council on Public Integrity*. Paris: OECD. Available at: <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0435>
- 20) OECD (2020). *OECD Public Integrity Handbook*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/ac8ed8e8-en>
- 21) OECD (2023). *Public Employment and Management 2023: Towards a More Flexible Public Service*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/5b378e11-en>
- 22) Proftiroiu, C.M. & Negoită, I.C. (2022). 'Public Administration Reform in Romania: Assessing the Past and Looking into the Future', *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, Special Issue, pp. 150-168. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.24193/tras.SI2022.9>
- 23) Romania, Government of Romania (2019). *Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57 of 3 July 2019 on the Administrative Code*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 555 of 5 July 2019, as subsequently amended and supplemented. Available at: <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/215925> (accessed on 7 September 2026).
- 24) Romania, Government of Romania (2021a). *Government Decision no. 931 of 1 September 2021 on the procedure for designation, attributions, the method of organizing the activity and the procedure for evaluating the individual professional performance of the ethics counsellor, as well as for the approval of the reporting method of institutions and authorities in order to ensure the implementation, monitoring and control of compliance with the principles and norms regarding the conduct of public officials*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 893 of 17 September 2021. Available at: <https://legislatie.just.ro/public/DetaliuDocument/246437> (accessed on 7 September 2026).
- 25) Romania, Government of Romania (2021b). *Government Decision no. 1.269 of 17 December 2021 on the approval of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2021-2025 and its related documents*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 1218 of 22 December 2021. Available at:

- <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/249828> (accessed on 7 September 2026).
- 26) Romania, Parliament of Romania (2010). *Law no. 176 of 1 September 2010 on integrity in the exercise of public functions and dignities, amending and supplementing Law no. 144/2007 on the establishment, organisation and functioning of the National Integrity Agency, as well as amending and supplementing other normative acts*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 621 of 2 September 2010, as subsequently amended and supplemented. Available at: <https://legislatie.just.ro/public/detaliuDocument/121924> (accessed on 7 September 2026).
- 27) Romania, Parliament of Romania (2022). *Law no. 361 of 16 December 2022 on the protection of whistleblowers in the public interest*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 1218 of 19 December 2022, as subsequently amended and supplemented. Available at: <https://legislatie.just.ro/public/DetaliuDocument/262872> (accessed on 7 September 2026).
- 28) Transparency International Nederland (2021). *Integrity Close to Citizens: An Exploratory Study of Integrity Systems in European Local Authorities*. Amsterdam: Transparency International Nederland. Available at: <https://www.transparency.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/IT-EB-digitaal2202-1.pdf> (accessed on 7 September 2026).