



# TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL LUXEMBOURG

## The press review

1 au 10 mars 2013

**Prepared by Transparency International Luxembourg**

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Vous pouvez nous joindre à cet effet par téléphone au numéro 26 38 99 29, par email [info@transparence.lu](mailto:info@transparence.lu) ou alors directement en nos bureaux situés au 11C, Bd. Joseph II

# National

# Wort.lu

Donnerstag, 28. Februar 2013

Lëtzebuerg Veröffentlicht am 27.02.

## Kantinenessen: Schülerkonferenz fordert mehr Transparenz



Die Schüler wollen wissen von wem und unter welchen Bedingungen ihr Essen geliefert wird.  
Guy Jallay

(thi) - Im Pferdefleisch-Skandal meldet sich nun auch die Nationale Schülerkonferenz zu Wort: Die Schüler sind besorgt über den Mangel an Transparenz bei der Verteilung von Lebensmitteln.

Die "[Conférence nationale des élèves du Luxembourg](#)" (CNEL) bedauert, dass bei der Verteilung von Lebensmitteln, Produzenten und Verkäufer sich nicht an die gültigen Vorschriften halten, heißt es in einem Presseschreiben

Besonders im Sinne der Interessen der Schüler, stellt die CNEL sich die Frage ob nicht auch im Kantinenessen unserer Lyzeen das Fleisch nicht das ist, als was es angepriesen wird. Die CNEL fordert deshalb vom Kantinenbetreiber "[Restopolis](#)" und den Kantinenbetreibern der Privatschulen die Offenlegung ihrer Lieferanten und klare Aussagen zu Thema Pferdefleisch

Die Offenlegung der Lieferanten wurde bereits in der Vergange

nheit von der CNEL gefordert. Bis heute wurde dieser Forderung noch nicht Rechnung getragen, bedauert die Schülerkonferenz. Schüler sollen wissen können, von wem und unter welchen Bedingungen ihr Essen geliefert wird



## 05.03.2013 / Lebensmittelkandal - Was für eine heuchlerische Welt

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### Das LESERFORUM von "Privat"

In was für einer heuchlerischen Gesellschaft leben wir doch. Empörung unter den Politikern in Europa wegen dem unerlaubten Pferdefleischanteil, gemischt unter anderen Fleischsorten.

Alle paar Jahre ein anderer Fleischskandal. Wo sind die politischen Strukturen, die diese mafiaartigen, kriminellen Machenschaften unterbinden sollen? Fehlanzeige!

Unter unsagbaren Qualen werden diese bedauernswerten Pferde in Rumänien in Züge gepfercht. Diese Pferde werden geschlagen, getreten und mit gebrochenen Beinen in Waggons gesteckt, mit Medikamenten vollgepumpt, um sie im Waggon ruhig zu stellen. Wo ist da die Empörung unserer Volksvertreter? Wo ist hier die gesetzlich vorgeschriebene europäische Tierschutzregelung?

Es ist wie immer: zuerst kommt das FRESSEN dann die MORAL. Es zeigt sich immer wieder, dass Lobbyisten in Brüssel bestimmen wo es lang geht. Kein Wunder! Auf einen Abgeordneten im Europa-Parlament in Brüssel kommen 30 Lobbyisten.

**Rudi Huss**

# Regierungsrot: Deontologiekodex fir Ministeren ugeholl

RTL - 01.03.2013, 16:57 | Fir d'lescht aktualiséiert: 01.03.2013, 17:01

Um Freideg war, no bal 5 Méint, nees e Briefing fir d'Press nom Regierungsrot. De Premier Jean-Claude Juncker huet vu sech aus näischt kommentéiert.



D'Journalisten haten awer d'Méiglechkeet, Froen ze stellen. Wat kënnt zum Beispill op Lëtzebuerg duer? De Premier huet widderholl, datt 2014 weider Spuerefforten néideg sinn. Wat genee kënnt, kéint een elo net soen, sou de Jean-Claude Juncker.

Am Regierungsrot ass awer och en Deontologiekodex fir Ministeren ugeholl ginn. Zum Beispill därerf een Ex-Minister zwee Joer laang net an deem Beräich schaffen, fir deen en zoustänneg war.

## Affaire Livange/Wickrange

28 février 2013 20:41; Act: 28.02.2013 21:49Print

### Krecké retire sa plainte contre Meisch

LUXEMBOURG - Jeannot Krecké a révélé jeudi soir qu'il retirait ses plaintes en diffamations contre le député libéral ainsi que le chef d'entreprise Guy Rollinger, dans l'affaire Livange.



Claude Meisch (DP) et François Bausch (déli Gréng) étaient attaqués par l'ex ministre. (photo: Editpress)

«Ils peuvent compter sur nous pour le stade»

L'ex-ministre de l'Économie, Jeannot Krecké, a annoncé jeudi soir à L'essentiel Online qu'il retirait «les plaintes pour diffamation à l'encontre de MM. Claude Meisch et Guy Rollinger». Ces plaintes faisaient suites à l'affaire Livange-Wickrange. Jeannot Krecké avait été accusé de corruption et de chantage dans ce dossier par le député libéral. L'entrepreneur estimait quant à lui avoir subi des pressions de l'État.

«Suite à plusieurs réunions avec Guy Rollinger d'une part et Claude Meisch et François Bausch d'autre part, j'estime avoir eu, au cours de ces discussions, satisfaction par rapport à leurs allégations à mon égard ainsi que leurs déclarations publiques me concernant dans la soi-disante

affaire Wickrange-Livange», a précisé Jeannot Krecké dans un mail, espérant également «avoir contribué à ce que les débats politiques soient menés de façon plus sereine et plus objective à l'avenir.» Contactés par L'essentiel Online, Jeannot Krecké et Claude Meisch n'étaient pas joignables jeudi soir. François Bausch n'a pas souhaité faire de commentaires.

Claude Meisch et François Bausch, accusent le gouvernement, notamment Jean-Claude Juncker et Jeannot Krecké, d'avoir donné un coup de pouce au projet de Livange, à travers un accord tacite entre le gouvernement et le groupe Rollinger. Des accusations réfutées par les principaux intéressés. Une enquête préliminaire avait été rendue publique en juillet

# RTL.lu

## PAG-Affär zu Mamer: Sträit virum Vote um Méindeg

RTL - 28.02.2013, 18:30 | Fir d'lescht aktualiséiert: 01.03.2013, 07:12

Den nächste Méindeg gëtt am Gemengerot zu Mamer iwwert den ëmstriddene PAG ofgestëmmt. Iwwer 300 Reclamatiounen waren agereecht ginn.



Si hu missen

duerchgekuckt ginn. Dës Aarbechte si fäerdeg an elo kënn et wéi gesot zum Vote. Awer net onbedengt fir jiddereen.

Et geet ëm 2 Gréng Conseillere déi, wann et dem Innenminister noheet, net solle mat ofstëmmen. De Grond ass, dass hir jeeweileg Partner Reklamatiounen géint de PAG agereecht haten, an domat ass de Fall kloer, seet de Buergermeeschter Gilles Roth.

Mat där Interpretatioun ass de gréng Conseiller Jemp Weydert awer op kee Fall d'Accord. Ech hu keen Interêt directe, a meng Fra och net, sou de Jemp Weydert. Si hätt sech fir den Naturschutz agesat. Mir loossen eis net ausschléissen.

Och de Paul Ruppert vun deene Gréng versteet d'Welt net méi, den Innenminister géif sech op een Uerteel aus enger anerer Gemeng beruffen, eng Affär an där de Gilles Roth och nach zoufälligerweis den Affekot vum Staat war. D'Argumentatioun vum Minister géing op wackelege Féiss stoen.

De Gilles Roth bleift der Meenung, dass déi 2 Conseillere net sollen ofstëmmen, hien hält se awer net dovun of. Trotzdem géif d'Gefor vun engem Problem mat engem Vice de procédure am Raum stoen. De Gilles Roth ass der Meenung, dass de geplangte Wuesstem moderat a raisonnabel ass an et wier Zäit, dass eppes fir de Wunnengsbau gemaach gëtt



# Régional & International

## Wort.lu

Donnerstag, 28. Februar 2013

International Veröffentlicht am 28.02.13 10:54

## Sloweniens Regierungschef stürzt über Korruptionsvorwürfe



Nur gut ein Jahr ist der slowenische Ministerpräsident Jansa im Amt.  
Foto: Olivier Hoslet

(dpa) - Nach der Abwahl der Mitte-Rechts-Regierung im Euroland Slowenien nimmt die designierte neue Regierungschefin Alenka Bratusek in Ljubljana die Sondierungsgespräche für eine neue Koalition auf.

Medien und Wirtschaftsexperten des Alpen-Adria-Landes zeigten sich jedoch wenig optimistisch, dass die 42-Jährige innerhalb der verfassungsrechtlich vorgeschriebenen Frist von 15 Tagen ein neues Kabinett auf die Beine stellen kann.

Der bisherige konservative Regierungschef Janez Jansa war am Mittwochabend im Parlament nach Korruptionsvorwürfen abgewählt worden. Zuvor hatten fast alle seine Koalitionspartner das Regierungsbündnis verlassen. Die neue Regierung soll von politisch linken Parteien gemeinsam mit der neoliberalen Bürgerliste gebildet werden. Die hatte jedoch schon am

Vortag in der Debatte um Jansas Ablösung betont, ihr Regierungseintritt sei wegen der unterschiedlichen wirtschaftspolitischen Vorstellungen keineswegs sicher.

## **Euroland möglicherweise vor Bankrott**

Das Euroland kämpft mit einer schweren Wirtschaftskrise und steht nach früheren Aussagen von Jansa möglicherweise vor dem Bankrott. Die EU-Kommission hatte am Freitag das slowenische Defizit im laufenden Jahr mit 5,1 Prozent des Bruttoinlandsproduktes angegeben, während die Regierung bisher von weniger als drei Prozent ausgegangen war. Die Wirtschaftsleistung soll danach um zwei Prozent sinken.

In den vergangenen Monaten gab es immer wieder Gerüchte, Slowenien müsse unter den Euro-Rettungsschirm schlüpfen.

## Scandale en Italie

28 février 2013 12:07; Act: 28.02.2013 13:13Print

### Berlusconi a-t-il corrompu un sénateur?

Le parquet de Naples a ouvert, jeudi, une enquête pour corruption à l'encontre de l'ancien président du Conseil italien, accusé d'avoir acheté un homme politique en 2006.



Berlusconi aurait acheté le sénateur de Naples, Sergio De Gregorio, afin de faire tomber le gouvernement de gauche au pouvoir en 2008. (photo: Keystone)

«Silvio Berlusconi est sous enquête à Naples pour corruption dans une affaire d'achat de sénateurs. Selon l'hypothèse du parquet, il aurait payé trois millions d'euros au sénateur De Gregorio», écrit le quotidien de gauche La Repubblica sur son site. L'affaire remonte aux élections législatives de 2006, remportées de justesse par la coalition hétéroclite de gauche dirigée par Romano Prodi, qui n'avait qu'une poignée de voix en plus de Silvio Berlusconi au Sénat.

InfographiesLes ennuis judiciaires de Silvio Berlusconi

Quelques mois à peine après les élections, Sergio De Gregorio, l'un des sénateurs élu dans l'un des partis de la coalition de M. Prodi, quitte son camp en passant avec armes et bagages chez Silvio Berlusconi, accélérant la chute du gouvernement de gauche qui jette l'éponge en 2008, moins de deux ans après le scrutin. L'enquête est de la compétence du parquet de Naples (sud) car Sergio De Gregorio a été élu dans cette circonscription

Selon le site du Corriere della Sera, deux magistrats du parquet de Naples et trois magistrats de la direction régionale antimafia sont en charge de cette affaire. Le Cavaliere a été accusé à plusieurs reprises par ses adversaires politiques d'avoir acheté des voix ou des élus, mais c'est la première fois qu'il se retrouve officiellement sous enquête pour un cas concret de corruption d'un homme politique.



## Affaire Clearstream

27 février 2013 16:11; Act: 27.02.2013 16:35Print

### Lahoud et Gergorin iront bien en prison

La Cour de cassation a rejeté mercredi les pourvois du mathématicien et de l'ancien responsable d'EADS, rendant ainsi définitives leurs condamnations dans l'affaire Clearstream.



Lahoud a écopé de 18 mois de prison ferme. (AFP)

Lahoud «pas le chef d'orchestre»

Gergorin «n'est pas le cerveau de la machination»

Imad Lahoud avait été condamné à trois ans de prison, dont 18 mois ferme, pour faux, usage de faux, dénonciation calomnieuse et recel d'abus de confiance, le 14 septembre 2009 par la cour d'appel de Paris. Jean-Louis Gergorin avait quant à lui écopé de trois ans de prison, dont six mois ferme, pour faux, usage de faux et dénonciation calomnieuse. Ils avaient tous deux également été

condamnés à 40 000 euros d'amende. L'avocat général avait recommandé à la chambre criminelle de la Cour de cassation de rejeter leurs pourvois.

La cour d'appel avait relaxé l'ancien Premier ministre, Dominique de Villepin, dans cette affaire de vaste manipulation au cours de laquelle des noms de personnalités, dont celui de Nicolas Sarkozy, ont été ajoutés à des listings bancaires afin de faire croire qu'elles détenaient des comptes occultes à l'étranger. Le rejet de ces pourvois vient donc clore l'affaire Clearstream. La relaxe de M. de Villepin était déjà devenue définitive, dès septembre 2011. Elle n'avait pas fait l'objet d'un pourvoi en cassation de la part du parquet général, qui avait requis 15 mois de prison avec sursis contre l'ancien Premier ministre pour «complicité de dénonciation calomnieuse». Il lui reprochait d'avoir eu connaissance de la fausseté des listings et de ne pas avoir stoppé la calomnie. Mais la cour d'appel de Paris n'avait pas suivi cette analyse, jugeant que ce délit n'était «pas établi» dans cette vaste manipulation.

## Escroquerie en Belgique

28 février 2013 13:49; Act: 28.02.2013 14:44Print

### 650 000 euros détournés par un agent communal

Un homme de 46 ans, employé par la commune belge de Mouscron, a été licencié après que son escroquerie a été découverte. Une opération frauduleuse qu'il effectuait depuis près de 20 ans.



Sur près de 20 ans, l'ancien employé de Mouscron est parvenu à détourner environ 2 700 euros par mois. (photo: AFP)

Travailler pour le service patrimoine et assurance d'une commune peut fournir quelques avantages. Surtout quand l'appât du gain motive certains employés à s'arranger avec la législation. Telle est la situation qui a été découverte par les responsables de la commune belge de Mouscron ces derniers jours. Selon le quotidien La Dernière Heure, qui révèle l'affaire, l'employé indélicat aurait empoché la modique somme de 650 000 euros sur près de 20 ans.

Une somme astronomique que l'employé a pu détourner tout au long de ces années en fournissant son propre numéro de compte à la compagnie d'assurances de la commune belge, indiquant que ce dernier correspondait à un second numéro utilisé par la ville. Pour éviter que sa petite combine ne soit repérée, l'escroc se faisait verser de petites sommes sur son compte, de manière régulière.

Selon La Dernière Heure, l'homme parvenait tout de même à détourner 2 700 euros par mois, soit un total de 650 000 euros depuis 1993, date de la mise en place de ce système.

#### Licenciement et plainte déposée pour escroquerie

Le grain de sable qui est venu enrailler cette escroquerie n'est autre que l'envoi, par la compagnie d'assurances de la commune de Mouscron, d'un document comptable en double exemplaire. L'un auprès de la comptabilité officielle, l'autre auprès de l'employé peu scrupuleux. «Du coup, ce dernier a renvoyé à Ethias (NDLR: le nom de la compagnie d'assurances de Mouscron) la somme qui lui avait été versée sur son compte, disant qu'ils s'étaient trompés de compte, indique Alfred Gadenne, bourgmestre de la commune, cité par le quotidien. Ethias s'est posé des questions et ils se sont dit qu'ils avaient déjà versé de l'argent sur ce compte précédemment». Un questionnement qui a poussé la compagnie d'assurances à en référer aux responsables communaux.

Auditionné, l'employé du service patrimoine et assurances a alors nié les faits. Seul hic: l'ensemble des transactions versées sur son compte avaient été transmises au bourgmestre. L'escroc a alors consenti à rembourser les sommes encaissées, tout en maintenant ses dénégations quant à sa responsabilité. Licencié, l'homme est également poursuivi pour escroquerie.





## Fund in Niedersachsen: Tausende Tonnen verseuchtes Futtermittel entdeckt

**In Niedersachsen sind mindestens 10.000 Tonnen vergiftetes Maisfutter in Umlauf geraten. Die Ware stammt aus Serbien und ist laut Landwirtschaftsministerium mit dem krebserregenden Pilzgift Aflatoxin verseucht. Auf dem Balkan wurde es schon vor Wochen entdeckt.**



dapd

Kühe an der Futterstelle: Positiver Befund in der Milch

Hamburg - In Deutschland zeichnet sich ein neuer Nahrungsmittelskandal ab: Mehr als 3500 Höfe in Niedersachsen seien mit hochgiftigem Futtermittel aus Serbien beliefert worden, [teilte das Landwirtschaftsministerium am Freitag in Hannover mit](#). Mindestens 10.000 Tonnen Maisfutter, die mit dem krebserregendem Schimmelpilzgift Aflatoxin B1 verseucht sind, seien über Hersteller in Umlauf gekommen. Die betroffene Maissendung - insgesamt sollen es 45.000 Tonnen sein - wurde nach Angaben des Ministeriums über den Hafen im niedersächsischen Brake importiert. 10.000 Tonnen konnten dort gesperrt werden, 25.000 Tonnen wurden in einer Lagerhalle in Bremen entdeckt und aus dem Verkehr gezogen.

Etwa 10.000 Tonnen wurden den Angaben zufolge jedoch an 13 Futtermittelhersteller in Niedersachsen ausgeliefert, die den Mais zur Produktion von Mischfuttermitteln für Rinder, Schweine und Geflügel verarbeitet und an insgesamt 3560 landwirtschaftliche Betriebe im Bundesland sowie 14 Betriebe in Nordrhein-Westfalen ausgeliefert haben. "Die Betriebe werden überprüft", sagte ein Sprecher des Landwirtschaftsministeriums in Düsseldorf.

Kleinere Mengen wurden laut dem niedersächsischen Landwirtschaftsministerium auch nach Sachsen-Anhalt, Brandenburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen sowie in die Niederlande geliefert.

## Einer der stärksten Krebserreger in der Natur

Aflatoxin B1 gehört zu den am stärksten krebserregenden Stoffen in der Natur. Es entsteht durch einen Schimmelpilz der Gattung *Aspergillus*, der auch Lebensmittel im Haushalt verdirbt. Schon vor einigen Jahren hatten Behörden den Pilz in Kosmetika und auf Mandeln entdeckt. Die zulässige Höchstmenge von Aflatoxin B1 beträgt 0,02 Milligramm pro Kilo. In der Lieferung aus Serbien betrug der Anteil laut Landwirtschaftsministerium jedoch 0,204 Milligramm. Entdeckt wurde die Belastung zuerst in belasteter Hofmilch.

Eine Gefährdung der Verbraucher durch belastete Milchprodukte sei aber "unwahrscheinlich", heißt es. Bisher sei in Molkereien bei der für den Konsum aufbereiteten Milch keine Überschreitung von Grenzwerten bemerkt worden. Auch bei Fleisch bestehe nach ersten Einschätzungen kein Risiko für den Verbraucher, betonte das Ministerium. Alle betroffenen Betriebe würden genau untersucht.

In den Balkanländern sind Aflatoxin-Funde bereits seit Anfang Februar ein Thema. Das Gift wurde zunächst in importierter Milch aus Kroatien entdeckt und später auch in Serbien, Slowenien und Bosnien nachgewiesen. Bei einer Untersuchung in Serbien wiesen 29 von 35 Milchpackungen einen Aflatoxin-Gehalt jenseits des Grenzwerts auf. Dennoch bestritt der serbische Gesundheitsminister eine Gefährdung und trank bei einer Pressekonferenz in der vergangenen Woche demonstrativ ein Glas Milch.

In den vergangenen Wochen hatten europaweite Funde von undeklariertem Pferdefleisch für Diskussionen über die Sicherheit von Lebensmitteln gesorgt. Der Bundestag beschloss am Donnerstagabend, dass die Behörden künftig nicht nur bei einem Verdacht auf Gesundheitsgefährdung die Bevölkerung informieren müssen, sondern auch "bei hinreichendem Verdacht auf erhebliche Täuschung".

*dab/suc/dba/dpa-AFX/AFP*

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Gabon structural reforms must lead to a more engaged civil society

## **Gabon structural reforms must lead to a more engaged civil society**

Posted 27 February 2013 by [Transparency International Secretariat](#)

Transparency International met yesterday with officials from Gabon at the anti-corruption organization's Secretariat in Berlin to discuss the country's Plan Stratégique Gabon Emergent (Strategic Plan Emerging Gabon).

Transparency International at the meeting called on the leaders of Gabon to embrace transparency in public life and a culture of accountability that will lead to a participatory society in which leaders are held responsible for their actions.

In an effort to address corruption, Gabon has ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2007 and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption in 2009. In this vein, activists, whistle blowers and journalists who speak out against corruption, often at great risk, must be supported and protected.

Miklos Marschall, Deputy Managing Director of Transparency International stated: "Gabon is fortunate to have natural resources. Natural resources can also become a curse without good governance. The fight against corruption cannot be done by the government only; it also requires a vibrant civil society and press freedom".

The discussion was held with President's Political Adviser and Spokesman Alain-Claude Bilie-By-Nze, the Minister of Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development Luc Oyoubi and the Special Adviser to the President Guy Rossatanga-Rignault.

The fight against corruption must mean the practice of transparency in day-by-day government activities; and its impact must be felt at every level of society and compel citizens to join together to defeat bribery, secret dealings and the abuse of power.

Communities must be given the means to hold leaders and institutions accountable for their actions in between elections, as well as multinational companies that profit from operations in their country.

In November 2012 the UNDP, the Financial Intelligence Unit (ANIF) and the national anticorruption commission validated Gabon's "strategic document to fight corruption and money laundering". The initiative undertaken by the UNDP must be translated into higher levels of development.

# Bloomberg News

## Las Vegas Sands Probably Violated Foreign Corrupt Act

By Anthony Palazzo - Mar 4, 2013 10:28 AM GMT+0100

[Las Vegas Sands Corp. \(LVS\)](#), embroiled in two U.S. investigations and a court battle with the former head of its Chinese casino business, said for the first time it probably violated the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

Macau unit Sands China Ltd. fell in Hong Kong trading after billionaire [Sheldon Adelson](#)'s Sands disclosed in its [annual report](#) preliminary results of an internal probe. "There were likely violations of the books and records and internal controls provisions of the FCPA," it said.

Las Vegas Sands Corp. gets almost 60 percent of its revenue from China.

Las Vegas Sands Corp. gets almost 60 percent of its revenue from China. Photographer: Jerome Favre/Bloomberg



[Enlarge image](#)

Las Vegas Sands Corp. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Sheldon Adelson watches a traditional lion dance during the opening of the Sands Cotai Central resort in Macau.

Las Vegas Sands Corp. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Sheldon Adelson watches a traditional lion dance during the opening of the Sands Cotai Central resort in Macau.

Photographer: Jerome Favre/Bloomberg

The findings signal repercussions for Sands from U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and Department of Justice investigations of possible violations of the act, which prohibits improper business payments outside the U.S. Sands, which gets almost

60 percent of its [revenue](#) from China, said it expects no material financial impact from the panel's findings.

Ron Reese, a spokesman for Sands, declined to comment beyond the filing, made on March 1. The audit committee also found that the probable violations won't lead to any financial restatements and don't represent a weakness in current controls.

Sands China lost 1.2 percent, the most since Feb. 21, to close at HK\$36.35 in Hong Kong. That pared Sands China's gain [this year](#) to 7.1 percent. The benchmark Hang Seng Index fell 1.5 percent today.

### Jacobs Lawsuit

"If you look at Adelson and Sands, they've historically been in legal trouble for a number of things, and every time there is a short-time share-price loss it tends to bounce back up," said Michael Ting, a Hong Kong-based gaming analyst with CIMB Securities Ltd. "We don't think there would be any long-term negative issues on the share price."

Sands said in an e-mailed statement dated yesterday that no violations of the anti-bribery provisions of the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act have occurred.

Sands previously held that its dealings in Macau, a former Portuguese colony and the only [Chinese \(1928\)](#) city where casinos are legal, were above-board. In an August interview, the chief executive officer of its Asian unit, Sands China Ltd., said Sands doesn't engage in "crimes or illegal activities."

The company has said that a lawsuit filed by former Sands China CEO Steven Jacobs probably triggered the government probes.

Singapore and Macau's casino regulators did not immediately respond to phone calls and e-mails from Bloomberg News seeking comment on the impact on Sands operations in their cities.

Jacobs sued Las Vegas Sands in 2010, alleging he was fired because he wouldn't give in to the "illegal demands" of Adelson, who is chairman and CEO. Jacobs said Adelson directed him to secretly investigate Macau government officials and use "improper leverage" against them

### Sands' Defense

Adelson, 79, has an estimated net worth of \$24.9 billion, making him the world's 18th-wealthiest person, based on the [Bloomberg Billionaires Index](#).

Following Jacobs's allegations, the Justice Department and SEC opened FCPA-related investigations. The law prohibits companies with U.S. operations and their intermediaries from making improper payments to foreign officials to win or retain business.

Las Vegas Sands has denied Jacobs's allegations and has said it's cooperating with the investigations. Lawyers for the company have said in court filings that Jacobs was dismissed for working on unauthorized deals and violating company policy.

A Nevada judge in September sanctioned Sands for not disclosing that evidence it said couldn't be taken out of Macau was already in the U.S.

The company didn't elaborate on the likely FCPA violations. It said it has improved its practices with respect to books and records and internal controls.

#### Adelson Background

The audit committee probe, while ongoing, is largely completed, Sands said. It said it's cooperating with the investigations, and that it "is currently unable to determine the probability of the outcome of this matter, the extent of materiality, or the range of reasonably possible loss, if any."

Casino revenue in Macau, the world's largest gambling hub, rose 14 percent to \$38 billion last year.

Las Vegas Sands has advanced 11 percent this year. The stock closed at \$51.31, down by 0.35 percent, on March 1 in New York before the announcement.

The company in November approved a special dividend to shareholders ahead of an increase in federal taxes this year. Adelson and his wife, Miriam, who regulatory filings show own about 51 percent of the stock, stood to collect about \$1.2 billion. The couple contributed at least \$87 million in last year's failed effort to elect Republican [Mitt Romney](#) as U.S. president, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, a Washington-based research group.

To contact the reporter on this story: Anthony Palazzo in Los Angeles at [apalazzo@bloomberg.net](mailto:apalazzo@bloomberg.net)

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Anthony Palazzo at [apalazzo@bloomberg.net](mailto:apalazzo@bloomberg.net)

# Bloomberg News

## Ohio County Sullied by Scandal Seeks Redemption in Ethics Pledge

By Mark Niquette - Mar 4, 2013 00 AM GMT+01002:

Mired in a scandal that saw its top officials charged with bribery, [Ohio's](#) most populous county needed an image makeover. It turned to a new government -- and a 262-word pledge.

After nearly five years of investigation and prosecutions in Cuyahoga County, 907 companies have signed the promise to uphold ethical standards and combat a culture of corruption. County voters also did their part, restructuring a government that critics said was inefficient and allowed back-room dealing.

Tony Dejak/AP Photo

A file photo shows former Cuyahoga County Commissioner Jimmy Dimora, center, leaving the federal courthouse in Cleveland, during September 2010.

A file photo shows former Cuyahoga County Commissioner Jimmy Dimora, center, leaving the federal courthouse in Cleveland, during September 2010. Photographer: Tony Dejak/AP Photo

March 4 (Bloomberg) -- Ed FitzGerald, executive of Cuyahoga County, Ohio, talks with Bloomberg's Mark Niquette about changes in the county following a scandal that saw its top officials charged with bribery. Voters in Ohio's most populous county have done their part, restructuring a government critics said was inefficient and allowed back-room dealing, and companies have signed a pledge to uphold ethical standards and combat a culture of corruption. (Source: Bloomberg)

The changes in Cuyahoga County in Northeast Ohio, which grew with the [steel industry](#) and [John D. Rockefeller's](#) Standard Oil and saw decline with the [Rust Belt](#), have Ed FitzGerald, the first elected county executive, considering a run for governor next year.



Civic leaders say while it's too soon to render a final verdict, they are more confident about the region's direction and an improving business climate.

"Our credibility as a community was tarnished," said Chris Ronayne, 44, president of University Circle Inc., a nonprofit development corporation in [Cleveland](#) and a former city planner. "The business community and the populace generally knew that we had to change our image."

The scandal began in July 2008, when dozens of federal agents raided homes and offices of public officials and businesses. Sixty-two people have been charged, with 47 sent to prison or awaiting sentencing, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Cleveland.

### Tiki Hut

The biggest targets were Jimmy Dimora, a heavy-set, Boss Tweed-like figure who was first elected a commissioner in 1998 and ran the county's powerful [Democratic Party](#), and Frank Russo, the longtime county auditor.

Dimora, 57, was sentenced to 28 years in July 2012 after he was convicted on 32 counts. He took more than \$166,000 in bribes in the form of cash, home improvements -- including a fake palm tree and money for a back-yard tiki hut -- meals at high-end restaurants and services from prostitutes, prosecutors said. In return, he steered contracts and jobs to friends and interceded with judges on pending cases, according to federal authorities.

Russo, 63, received nearly 22 years in prison and was ordered to pay almost \$7 million in restitution in 2010 after pleading guilty. He took \$1.2 million in bribes to award more than \$21.4 million in commercial real-estate contracts, authorities said.

In 2008, a contractor bidding for work on the county's new Juvenile Justice Center helped arrange a trip to [Las Vegas](#) for Dimora, Russo and others, giving the officials \$6,000 for airfare and gambling and getting them suites at the Mirage, according to federal prosecutors.

The contractor, later sentenced to three years after pleading guilty to bribery, gave Dimora about \$3,500 in gambling chips and escorted a prostitute to his suite in Las Vegas, authorities said.

Through prison spokesmen, both Dimora and Russo declined requests to be interviewed.

“There’s a sense of relief in the community that the corruption has been eliminated and those responsible for it were held accountable,” said George V. Voinovich, a former Cuyahoga official, Cleveland mayor, governor and U.S. senator. “The crooks are gone.”

### Silent Crimes

Prosecutions weren’t enough because the culture had to change, said U.S. Attorney Steve Dettelbach. He worked with the [Cleveland Clinic](#), the county’s largest employer, to create the [Northeast Ohio Business Ethics Coalition](#) in December 2010. Member [companies](#) pledged to maintain standards and conduct at least one training session for vendors.

“It wasn’t just the people who were doing wrong,” Dettelbach said by phone from Cleveland. “When you have a culture of shakedowns and scams at this level, there’s also a culture of silence where when somebody tries to shake you down, even if you don’t go along, you don’t say anything. Why? Because you’re under the impression this is the way things are done.”

The scandal prompted a campaign by a group including suburban mayors and business leaders to adopt a county charter approved with 66 percent of the vote in 2009.

Cuyahoga had been run by three commissioners who made both executive and legislative decisions. It was an anachronistic arrangement that traced back to medieval [England](#), said David Abbott, executive director of the George Gund Foundation in Cleveland, and a former county administrator.

“The county was operating far too much as a kind of an old-boys network,” Abbott said by phone. “And that doesn’t give anybody confidence.”

### Total Renovation

The new charter created a single executive with an elected council to provide checks and balances.

“We couldn’t keep doing business as usual,” Bruce Akers, the former Republican mayor of [Pepper Pike](#), said in a telephone interview. “If we had any chance of saving this county, and for that matter, the region, we had to change this form of government.”

FitzGerald, 44, a Democrat elected county executive in 2010 and a former [Federal Bureau](#) of Investigation agent, said business leaders volunteered to help update or consolidate functions. The county has a net 589 fewer employees after more than 975 retired, quit or were fired in what he called an effort to dismantle a “political patronage machine.”

The county also used bonds to create a \$100 million economic development fund to make low-interest loans to companies, and all 59 municipalities signed an agreement not to poach jobs and companies from one another, FitzGerald said.

### Getting There

Cuyahoga’s unemployment rate was 6.6 percent in December, not adjusted for seasonal changes, down from 9.7 percent in February 2010 and matching the unadjusted jobless mark statewide in December, data show.

While manufacturing once dominated the county’s economy, educational services, health care and social assistance now is the leading industry, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The largest employer besides the Cleveland Clinic is University Hospitals Health System.

“While there is still work to be done to enhance [job creation](#), improve education, and develop a more efficient system of government, we have made considerable progress,” Alexander Cutler, chairman and chief executive at [Eaton Corp. \(ETN\)](#) in Cleveland, said by e-mail. He pushed for the charter and served on a transition committee that reviewed county operations.

Stuart Garson, a Cleveland lawyer who replaced Dimora as county Democratic Party chairman, said that the changes have lessened the chances for dysfunction.

“The potential for mischief is always there, but it’s so much more difficult now,” he said.

To contact the reporter on this story: Mark Niquette in Columbus at [mniquette@bloomberg.net](mailto:mniquette@bloomberg.net);

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Stephen Merelman at [smerelman@bloomberg.net](mailto:smerelman@bloomberg.net)

# Bloomberg News

## Police Killings Adding to Outrage Over Pistorius Errors

ike Cohen - Mar 4, 2012 By M3 10:56 AM GMT+0100

The grainy video at first shows a struggle between two South African policemen and a man in a red shirt. Then after a few seconds, something happens that appears in no training manual: The man is tied by his hands to the back of a police van and it drives off, dragging him on the ground in front of a screaming crowd.

The treatment of taxi driver Mido Macia, 27, who later died of his injuries, has turned [South Africa's](#) police from accuser into accused. A court hearing for eight officers arrested on murder charges related to the incident in Daveyton on Johannesburg's eastern outskirts was postponed until March 8.

Jacob Zuma, South Africa's President, center, arrives ahead of addressing mineworkers at Lonmin Plc's Marikana mine, near Rustenburg, South Africa, on Wednesday, Aug. 22, 2012.

Jacob Zuma, South Africa's President, center, arrives ahead of addressing mineworkers at Lonmin Plc's Marikana mine, near Rustenburg, South Africa, on Wednesday, Aug. 22, 2012. Photographer: Matthew Hill/Bloomberg

"The cops are treating us very badly," Frieda Nuku, a vegetable trader and friend of Macia's, said by phone from Daveyton on March 2. "They are a law unto themselves. Mido was a good guy. He did me a lot of favors."

The incident, footage of which was obtained by Johannesburg's Daily Sun newspaper, is the latest in a succession of high-profile cases that have implicated officers in homicide and stoked public outrage. Just a week earlier, the lead investigator in the murder trial of [Oscar Pistorius](#), the double amputee track star who's accused of killing his girlfriend, was replaced after it emerged that he faced seven attempted murder charges for allegedly firing at a minibus.

The judge in the Pistorius bail hearing said the investigator, Hilton Botha, made a series of errors, including possibly contaminating the crime scene, not checking for other

mobile phones owned by Pistorius and misidentifying substances found at his home as testosterone.

### Marikana Shootings

In August last year, police killed 34 protesters, most of them armed with wooden sticks and machetes, at [Lonmin Plc \(LMI\)](#)'s Marikana platinum mine. The Independent Police Investigative Directorate probed 932 deaths in police custody in the year through March 2012, according to the oversight body's latest annual report.

"There is a lack of professionalism and training in the police force," Kerwin Lebone, a security researcher at the Institute for Race Relations in Johannesburg, said in a March 1 phone interview. "They don't follow the ethos of what South African police are supposed to deliver to the public at large. It's been a real let-down and a disappointment to the public."

### Murder Rate

The poor state of policing in [Africa](#)'s largest economy is reflected in the crime statistics. About 43 homicides are committed on average each day. While the [murder rate](#) has fallen to 30.9 per 100,000 people from 67.9 in 1995 when national statistics were compiled for the first time, it is more than six times that of the U.S.

A 2011 study by the [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#) found South Africa had the world's 13th-highest murder rate. Honduras topped the list with 82.1 murders per 100,000 people.

The cost of insuring against a debt default for five years climbed to an eight-month high of 178 basis points last month, indicating a deterioration in risk perception. Credit default swaps on the debt have increased 40 basis points since the Marikana killing on Aug. 16. The rand has slumped 6.7 percent against the dollar this year, the third-worst performer of 16 major currencies monitored by Bloomberg after the pound and the yen. It depreciated 0.1 percent to 9.0708 per dollar by 11:29 a.m. in Johannesburg.

### Poor Leadership

The police force's failings are largely due to poor leadership, according to Chandre Gould, a researcher at the Pretoria-based Institute for Security studies.

Police commissioners are appointed for political reasons, “rather than on their experience of policing, their knowledge of policing and their ability to lead a very large and complex organization,” she said by phone from the southern town of George on Feb. 25.

Riah Phiyega, the current police chief, served as the head of a government commission reviewing the role of state companies and had no policing experience before her appointment her appointment by President [Jacob Zuma](#) in June.

Her predecessor Bheki Cele, was fired in June last year, after a board of inquiry found that he was unfit for office and was guilty of unlawful conduct by agreeing to lease offices costing more than three times the market rate.

Cele, who had urged officers to “shoot to kill” when facing armed criminals, took over from [Jackie Selebi](#), who was sentenced to 15 years in prison for corruption in 2010.

### Improved Policing

The government says it’s made strides in improving policing and will act against rogue officers. It condemned Marcia’s killing and ordered an investigation.

“All police officers have a duty to fight crime and those who are not worthy of wearing our badge and uniform, must know that they have no place within South African Police Service,” State Security Minister Siyabonga Cwele said in an e-mailed statement. “Police officers who abuse their authorities must know that they will not succeed in their criminal conduct.”

Some perpetrators of police brutality have been brought to justice.

Seven policemen are on trial for shooting and beating protester Andries Tatane during a demonstration in Ficksburg in the central Free State province in April 2011. Four others who set dogs on illegal immigrants during a training session were jailed in November of that year. Both incidents were captured on camera.

Nuku wants Macia’s killers to also be held accountable. The Magistrate’s Court in Benoni, east of Johannesburg, today ruled that the accused can’t be identified until an identity parade is held.

About 50 people claiming to be residents from Daveyton, demonstrated peacefully outside the court today. Policemen formed a line between the protesters and the court entrance.

“What they did was illegal,” she said. “I want them to spend a long time in jail.”

To contact the reporter on this story: Mike Cohen in [Cape Town](#) at [mcohen21@bloomberg.net](mailto:mcohen21@bloomberg.net)

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Nasreen Seria at [nseria@bloomberg.net](mailto:nseria@bloomberg.net)

# Bloomberg News



Hugo Chavez, Venezuela's Anti-U.S. Socialist Leader, Dies at 58

View: Popular Autocrat Leaves a Legacy of Ruin

Obit: Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, 1954-2013

Venezuela faces political infighting and the risk of unrest after the death of Hugo Chavez, whose personal brand of socialism left the region's biggest oil exporter polarized and among the world's most violent countries.

Chavez Legacy of Polarized Venezuela Endangers Smooth Transition

Antonio Scattolon/Contrasto/Redux

Venezuela faces political infighting and the risk of unrest after the death of Hugo Chavez.

Venezuela faces political infighting and the risk of unrest after the death of Hugo Chavez.

Photographer: Antonio Scattolon/Contrasto/Redux

Chavez bolstered his popularity among Venezuela's 9 million poor by subsidizing food and housing, expanding education and health care, and halving poverty. As government control of the economy spread, Chavez's critics blamed the nationalization of more than 1,000 companies or their assets, currency controls and price caps for discouraging investment, creating food shortages and fueling inflation.

The former paratrooper's departure yesterday after 14 years in office opens up a void, even after the cancer-stricken leader in December urged supporters to elect Vice President Nicolas Maduro to succeed him if he couldn't fulfill a term that began Jan. 10.

"He dominated politics so thoroughly that it is impossible to forecast what comes next," said Peter Hakim, former president of the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington. "He was the commanding political presence, virtually the only governing authority in the country."

Television Show

Since Chavez, who was 58, was first elected in 1998, he set himself at the center of all state decisions, big and small. On his weekly television program he might call for the nationalization of a company, announce a change in the currency, order troop movements or praise the virtues of home gardening. He could harangue ministers, discuss foreign policy and slap hands with union workers in monologues that lasted as long as six hours.



“Chavez fed off and expanded the corporatist myth that prosperity can result from loyalty to one man,” said Stephen Johnson, director of the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. “He rode the wave of oil wealth, repeating the old saying that ‘Venezuela is rich, you can be too.’”

Chavez’s funeral will be held March 8. Under Venezuela’s constitution, an election must be held within 30 days of the president’s death. Maduro will serve as interim president until then, Foreign Minister Elias Jaua said. Maduro has led Venezuela since Chavez missed his Jan. 10 inauguration.

Maduro called for national unity in a speech yesterday, saying “only together can we guarantee the future of the fatherland.”

Former National Assembly President Fernando Soto Rojas, a member of the ruling PSUV party, said the legislative chamber’s current leader, Diosdado Cabello, should be sworn in until elections are held.

#### Bond Rally

Since Chavez announced he had cancer in June 2011, investors have speculated that his departure could pave the way for the opposition to win power and introduce more market-friendly policies. Venezuela’s dollar bonds returned 46 percent last year, the best of any emerging market after the Ivory Coast, according to JPMorgan Chase & Co.’s EMBI Global index.

The cost to insure \$10 million of Venezuelan debt against default for five years tumbled to \$468,461 on March 5 from \$1,082,996 on Oct. 6 before Chavez’s re-election and return to Cuba for cancer surgery, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

While Maduro probably will assume a radical posture during the campaign, he may need to soften his criticism of private corporations after he wins, Eduardo Porcarelli, executive director of investment promotion council Conapri, said.

“Reactivating dialog with Venezuela’s private sector will be a necessity,” Porcarelli said. “Business development must be made viable in the country, and employment must be reactivated.”

#### ‘Things Will Change’

Other business leaders such as Ronald Pantin, chief executive of Bogota-based oil producer Pacific Rubiales Energy Corp. (PRE), expressed optimism that relations with Venezuela eventually will improve.

“Things will change,” Pantin, who was born in Venezuela, said in an interview before Chavez’s death. “Twelve years ago nobody invested in Colombia and now it’s a favorite.”

Maduro, a 50-year-old former bus driver and union leader who served as Chavez’s foreign minister for more than six years, will face an opposition weakened after regional elections in December in which they lost five of eight governorships.

#### Opposition Candidate

Miranda state Governor Henrique Capriles Radonski, who lost his presidential bid to Chavez by more than 10 percentage points in October, may be the strongest candidate against Maduro after he held onto his seat in the regional vote. If elected president, Capriles would have to work with a national assembly dominated by Chavez's PSUV party, a central bank devoid of autonomy, a judiciary filled with Chavez allies and a politicized military establishment.

Venezuela's justice system is beset by corruption and political interference, making it the least accountable in a ranking of 97 nations published Nov. 28 by the World Justice Project, a Washington-based group supported by jurists and businesses that seek to strengthen the rule of law.

"Venezuela's institutions are broken," Margarita Lopez Maya, who teaches history at the Central University of Venezuela, said in a telephone interview.

If Maduro prevails, he will struggle to keep opposing factions in Chavez's own movement together, said David Smilde, a sociologist at the University of Georgia in Athens who has lived in Venezuela for 10 years and wrote a book about Chavez's rule.

#### Career Start

"It was Chavez, personally, who held the Chavista movement together and settled its internal disputes," said the Inter-American Dialogue's Hakim. "He was also the primary factor that unified a raucous opposition."

The military will be a key player in any transition, Lopez said.

Chavez kick-started his political career in 1992, when he led a group of officers in a failed attempt to overthrow the government of President Carlos Andres Perez. After his election in 1998, Chavez rewarded military colleagues by promoting them to senior government positions. Those officers are now pitted against a civilian faction of supporters drawn by his socialist discourse, said Gregory Weeks, a professor of Latin American studies at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte.

#### Internal Challenge

Maduro's strongest challenge may come from Cabello, a former lieutenant who fought alongside Chavez in the 1992 rebellion and whose influence within the military may enable him to take advantage of social unrest to claim power, Smilde said. While Chavez's endorsement of Maduro was designed to offset the influence of National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello, Maduro may struggle in the long-term, he said.

"If there's any kind of conflict, when the dust clears Cabello is going to be on top," Smilde said. "Chavez went a long way toward neutralizing him and making Maduro his successor but he's not out of the game."

Nevertheless, the likelihood of a democratic transition was increased by Chavez's anointment of Maduro and his insistence that there be elections if he couldn't fulfill his term, said Francisco Rodriguez, senior Andean economist at Bank of America Corp. in New York.

“His decision was designed precisely to avoid Chavismo falling into a state of internal conflict and paralysis,” Rodriguez said. “Not only was he saying here’s my successor but he was also saying there’ll be elections soon if I’m not around.”

### Economic Changes

High prices for Venezuelan crude oil allowed Chavez to increase spending during the 2012 electoral campaign and helped the economy expand 5.6 percent last year. Venezuela’s oil exports averaged \$103.46 a barrel in 2012, up from \$101.60 in 2011 and a 43 percent increase from 2010, according to the Oil Ministry.

The spending spree spurred a 32 percent devaluation of the currency in February to close a budget gap estimated by Moody’s Investors Service at about 11 percent of gross domestic product.

If Maduro wins, there’s a strong chance that Chavismo could tone down some of its economic policies, said Rodriguez.

“There are very strong incentives in the Venezuelan political system for a president like Maduro to seek a path of greater moderation in order to contend with the opposition by appealing to swing voters,” he said. “These swing voters were turned on by some aspects of Chavez’s policies but disliked others.”

A win for the opposition could be resisted with violence, said Michael Shifter, president of the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington. With the support of Cuba, Chavez placed loyalists in the highest ranks of the armed forces.

### Crime Wave

Violent crime has been on the rise. Homicides rose 23 percent in 2012 to 16,030 from 13,080 in 2010, according to a report Maduro presented to the National Assembly Feb. 28. The Venezuelan Violence Observatory, a non-governmental organization, puts the number higher, estimating 21,692 people, or 59 people a day, were murdered in 2012. The murder rate of 73 per 100,000 inhabitants is the highest in South America. In the U.S., the murder rate was five per 100,000 in 2009.

Caracas has seen rioting in the past, most notably in 1989 during the so-called Caracazo when hundreds were killed after the armed forces opened fire during protests against then- President Carlos Andres Perez’s austerity measures.

Should the opposition gain power, Venezuela, which holds the world’s largest technically-recoverable crude reserves, may see an influx of foreign investment into the oil industry, said Bret Rosen, a Latin America strategist at Standard Chartered Bank in New York. Investors, who struggle to repatriate dividends under Chavez’s currency controls, will be more cautious about committing to other sectors until it is clear the new government plans to dismantle those policies, he said.

### Divided Opposition

Chavez’s death could also lead to a splintering of the opposition, which for many years was only held together by its rejection of the country’s longest-ruling leader, Weeks said.

U.S. President Barack Obama said his government seeks a “constructive relationship with the Venezuelan government.” The U.S. will probably have better relations with Venezuela regardless of who leads the South American country, Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson said in a Dec. 11 interview.

Chavez’s death may hurt the economies of Cuba and other allied countries. The son of poor schoolteachers, Chavez often spoke of fulfilling his hero South American liberator Simon Bolivar’s dream of uniting the region.

Beneficiaries of programs such as Petrocaribe, which allows countries to acquire Venezuelan crude with long-term financing, may lose out, said Giovanna de Michele, a professor in international relations at the Universidad Central de Venezuela.

#### Caribbean Allies

The Petrocaribe program, which allows its 18 member countries to take out 20-year loans with an interest rate of 1 percent to 2 percent, has sent oil shipments worth more than \$14 billion since 2005, Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez said last year.

Chavez’s relationship with former Cuban President Fidel Castro, whom he described as a father figure, helped Cuba win a supply of cheap oil after the communist island lost its benefactor following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Venezuela delivers 97,000 barrels of oil a day to Cuba, which the government repays by sending doctors to work in community clinics in Venezuela.

Regardless of whether Chavez’s party remains in power, the influence he exerted over Venezuela will continue through supporters in the judiciary, Congress and the armed forces. While the style of government would change if the opposition takes over, Chavez’s focus on social issues will live on, Weeks said.

“It took years for the opposition to realize that a lot of what Chavez did, Venezuelans liked,” he said. “The emphasis of the state’s role in the economy is something that will be long- lasting.”

To contact the reporters on this story: Charlie Devereux in Caracas at [cdevereux3@bloomberg.net](mailto:cdevereux3@bloomberg.net); Corina Pons in Caracas at [crpons@bloomberg.net](mailto:crpons@bloomberg.net); Indira A.R. Lakshmanan in Washington at [ilakshmanan@bloomberg.net](mailto:ilakshmanan@bloomberg.net)

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Andre Soliani at [asoliani@bloomberg.net](mailto:asoliani@bloomberg.net)

## Millionen-Veruntreuung: Griechischer Ex-Bürgermeister zu lebenslänglich verurteilt



Ex-Bürgermeister Papageorgopoulos im Gefängnis: Lebenslang wegen Veruntreuung

**Der frühere Bürgermeister der nordgriechischen Stadt Thessaloniki, Vassilis Papageorgopoulos, ist zu lebenslanger Haft verurteilt worden. Er soll die Veruntreuung von fast 18 Millionen Euro öffentlicher Gelder gebilligt haben. Papageorgopoulos wies die Vorwürfe zurück.**

Thessaloniki - Es ist die Top-Meldung in den griechischen Nachrichten: Der frühere Bürgermeister der nordgriechischen Stadt Thessaloniki, Vassilis Papageorgopoulos, ist in einem aufsehenerregenden Verfahren verurteilt worden - zu lebenslanger Haft. Es ist die erste Verurteilung eines griechischen Politikers seit vielen Jahren, die Strafe ist spektakulär hoch.

Nach Angaben von Behördenvertretern wurde Papageorgopoulos für schuldig befunden, zwischen 1999 und 2008 die Veruntreuung von knapp 18 Millionen Euro städtischer Gelder gebilligt zu haben. Papageorgopoulos war von 1999 bis 2010 Bürgermeister von Thessaloniki. Der frühere Athlet und Zahnarzt gehört der konservativen Regierungspartei Nea Dimokratia an.

Papageorgopoulos muss zunächst so lange in Haft bleiben, bis der Fall vor einem Berufungsgericht verhandelt werden kann. Er wies jegliche Beteiligung an der Veruntreuung der Gelder zurück. "Einige Menschen werden mit schlechtem Gewissen sterben", sagte er nach dem Urteil.

Neben Papageorgopoulos erhielt auch seine frühere rechte Hand, Michalis Lemousias, eine lebenslange Haftstrafe. Der Finanzverwalter der Stadt, der als Hauptzeuge der Anklage fungierte, wurde ebenfalls zu lebenslanger Haft verurteilt. Er hatte den Ermittlern gesagt, dass Steuereinnahmen und Rentenbeiträge von Beamten systematisch veruntreut worden seien.

Ein Teil des Geldes sei Papageorgopoulos' Parteiapparat in Thessaloniki zugute gekommen. Zwei weitere Stadtbeamte erhielten Haftstrafen von 15 und zehn Jahren, wurden aber auf freien Fuß gesetzt