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## New Leaders Seek Changes to Anticorruption Legislation

Anticorruption rhetoric has again become a prominent topic for Ukraine's governmental leaders.

In the summer of 2009 the Ukrainian Parliament adopted three anticorruption laws (collectively, the New Anticorruption Laws):

- "On Basics in Prevention of and Countermeasures against Corruption," No. 1506-VI, dated 11 June 2009;
- "On Responsibility of Legal Entities for Committing Corruption Offenses," No. 1507-VI, dated 11 June 2009; and
- "On Amending Some Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding Responsibility for Committing Corruption Offenses," No. 1508-VI, dated 11 June 2009.

The New Anticorruption Laws were supposed to go into effect on 1 January 2010, but as the date approached, a discussion about amending, cancelling or temporarily suspending these laws gained momentum. As a result, the Parliament postponed enactment until 1 April 2010.

However, for political reasons, the New Anticorruption Laws were not amended before 1 April 2010. Politicians in Ukraine were completely immersed in the presidential campaign, which finished in February 2010, and the

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formation of a new parliamentary coalition and the new government.

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In March 2010 the new president of Ukraine, Mr. Viktor Yanukovich, and the Stability and Reforms parliamentary coalition declared their plans to strengthen the fight against corruption and illegal economic activities and their commitment to ensure the laws are observed by the country's high-ranking officials, politicians and judges, as well as the heads of defense and law enforcement agencies.

Prime Minister Mykola Azarov stated that fighting corruption is a main task of the agencies of the executive branch and the local government. He named key elements in creating an economic system free of corruption including introduction of "a single window" registration and regulation of entrepreneurial activity, transparent state purchases and transparent allocation of land plots.

President Yanukovich signed a law that postpones the enactment of the New Anticorruption Laws until 1 January 2011. He also created the Anticorruption Committee, which will coordinate all anticorruption work in the country, and ordered Ukraine's authorities to expand and introduce to the Parliament new drafts of anticorruption laws no later than 22 April 2010.

Proponents of changes to the New Anticorruption Laws argue that the current version of these laws will lead to violations of the rule of law and may be abused. Opponents of these changes warn that the new authorities intentionally blocked the New Anticorruption Laws to realize their plans of relocation of ownership over state property.

For more information on the New Anticorruption Laws, please contact your principal Squire Sanders lawyer or one of the lawyers listed in this Alert.

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