Alliance for Integrity's 4th Global Conference

Key Takeaways

28 April 2021 | 15:00 CET | Side Event – Digitalisation and Compliance

Digitalisation has been the way forward since the beginning of the century. Still, last year, it was given a powerful push by the pandemic, when the world had to adapt to a "new normal", both professionally and personally, in a short period of time. Digitalisation also affects compliance processes. It requires adapting existing compliance management systems and expanding the use of technology. The panel discussion outlined the role of digitalisation, market needs, gaps and how to work on them. In addition, the new risk assessment function of TheIntegrityApp was launched. The recordings of the session can be found here.

Speakers:

- Silvina Coria, International Management Executive, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (Presenter)
- Roland Gross, Head of Business Scouts for Development (GIZ), Germany
- Dr Rainer Markfort, Corporate Partner, Dentons, Germany
- Pedro Ruske, Office of the Comptroller General, Brazil
- Susanne Friedrich, Director of the Alliance for Integrity, Germany

Main challenges:

- In times of crisis, control mechanisms often do not perform well as audits cannot take place immediately and have to be carried out remotely.
- Digital products often fail because they are not being used by the intended target users.
- There are risks associated with digitalisation, such as lack of competences and missing access to digital applications; if compliance training is delivered exclusively digitally, some of the target audience may no longer be able to participate.
- With digitalisation come cyber threats, data protection and privacy issues that affect both work and personal lives.
- The compliance programme may exceed the needs of the company if proper risk assessment is not carried out; as result companies put money or direct resources into activities that the company may not need at that time.

Best practices:

- The promotion of digital solutions is one of the main objectives that the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) pursues together with its partners worldwide.
- The e-learning programme 'Women go Digital' from Latin America covers topics on digital transformation, including HR methods, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and blockchain.
- Many digital solutions started in Africa, such as 'Impersa', the well-known mobile phone, money transfer and microfinance service that was founded in Kenya in 2007 and successfully expanded to other African countries.
- Business Scouts for Development uses digital tools to improve cooperation between local and European businesses and economic institutions such as chambers of commerce.
- *TheIntegrityApp* helps SMEs to self-assess and improve their compliance mechanisms. The app is now also available in French language.

Future recommendations:

- In most industries, companies have already digitised their business to a large extent; to communicate on an equal footing with these companies, it is advisable to move from sending physical documents to more digital tools.
- Digital technology supports and improves social and political participation and helps to make knowledge more accessible.
- Digital solutions can help to open up new markets and reduce the physical distance between partners, which has gained additional importance due to Covid-19.
- The whistleblower hotline is a sensitive area for personal data and trade secrets, so it needs to be technically set up to be secure and protected from external threats.
- Before implementing a compliance programme, it is necessary to conduct a risk assessment, especially in the context of crisis situations; this can be done with the help of the new Risk Assessment feature of *TheIntegrityApp*.