
Press Release: Serbia's further decline on Transparency International's global Corruption Perceptions Index

For the eighth year in a row, Serbia continued its decline in the most significant global ranking of countries in terms of the perception of corruption in the public sector. In the ranking for 2024, the Index is 35, and Serbia is in the 105th position, which is the worst since 2012, since the current ranking methodology has been applied, Transparency Serbia (TS) announced.

According to the results of the global network Transparency International, Serbia has a one-point worse index and one place worse position than in the previous year. A total of 180 countries and territories are ranked, on a scale that ranges from 0 to 100, while in practice it ranges between 8 (South Sudan) and 90 (Denmark).

With the recently adopted Anti-Corruption Strategy, the Government envisaged that the Corruption Perceptions Index, as an indicator of the impact of achieving the overall goal of the Strategy, would increase from 36 in 2023 to 43 by 2028. This is a global average, from which Serbia is now eight points behind.

The average score is 56 on the European continent and 62 among the EU member states.

Of the countries in the region, only Bosnia and Herzegovina is rated worse, with an index of 33, while the largest increase in the index was recorded by Albania, with which Serbia shared the position two years ago, and now has an index of 42nd.

More about the Corruption Perceptions Index and the results

For the 28th year in a row, the Corruption Perceptions Index has been compiled by the leading anti-corruption organization at the global level, Transparency International. The number of ranked states and territories was 180 this year. Countries are scored on a scale from 100 (very clean) to 0 (very corrupt). This year, Serbia continued to drop on the list. With a score of 35, one less than the previous year, it shares the 105th position with Ukraine. There is little consolation in the fact that Algeria and Brazil, which also had an index of 36 in 2023, are now two points worse.

This assessment of Serbia is the worst since 2012, when the current methodology and scale from 0 to 100 have been applied. The ranking, in relation to the number of ranked countries, is the worst since 2005, when the SCG was ranked 97th out of 158 ranked.

The last two rankings when the score for Serbia was approximately equal to the global average were in 2013 and 2016, while we are now eight points behind. The average score for our continent is 56, i.e. 21 points more than the current score of Serbia.

The gap is even larger compared to the EU countries (62), of which we would like to become a member. However, the fact that EU membership is not a guarantee of good results is shown by the score of countries from our neighborhood, especially Hungary (41, a drop of one point), Bulgaria (43, a drop of two points), Romania (46, the same as CPI 2023) and Croatia (47, a drop of three points).

In the EU, Malta (from 51 to 46), Slovakia (from 54 to 49), Spain (from 60 to 56) and Portugal (from 61 to 57) recorded significant decreases.

Although Serbia, according to the data of the "Economist Intelligence Unit" for 2023, is one of the countries with "deficient democracy", its index is two points lower than the average of countries in which a "hybrid regime" has been established, that is considered as worse qualification. Countries with a deficient democracy have an average of 47.

Denmark (90) was in first place this year, followed by Finland (88) and Singapore (84), which overtook New Zealand (83). There are no major changes at the bottom of the table. South Sudan has an index of 8, Somalia has an index of 9, Venezuela has a score of 10 and Syria has a score of 12.

Among the former socialist countries of Europe, Estonia is traditionally the best ranked with a score of 76, and of those countries that are not members of the EU, it is still Georgia (although the index continues to fall, from 56 to 54, and this year to 53). Within the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia is still by far the best positioned with 60, four points better than last year.

Of the countries in the region, only Bosnia and Herzegovina is worse than Serbia, with an index of 33. Albania, with which Serbia held a position two years ago, now has an index of 42, North Macedonia 40, Hungary 41, Bulgaria 43, and Montenegro and Romania 46, while Croatia has an index of 47. Kosovo, which ranks separately, has a score of 44.

The CPI is based on 13 relevant surveys that measure perceptions of public sector corruption. These surveys represent the opinion or impression on the corruption of government officials and public servants by those who do business with them or who advise businessmen, governments and international institutions. Surveys have to be published within the last 24 months and there must be at least three such data sources for a country/territory to be ranked.

This year, Serbia was included in a total of eight relevant surveys, which guarantees a high degree of reliability of the findings. The comparability of data with those from previous years is at an even higher level - as many as 12 years ago, seven of the same sources of information have been used for CPI, and in the last seven years the same eight have been used.

The findings of the Global Insight Country Risk Ratings, the Bertelsmann Foundation, the World Economic Forum, the Economist Intelligence Unit, Freedom House, the International Country Risk Guide, the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index and the Varieties of Democracy Project were used for Serbia.

Of the surveys relevant to Serbia, in three cases the data were collected in 2024, in three surveys during 2023, in one in both years, while one survey, completed in 2024, was conducted during a longer period. Of the eight original surveys on the basis of which the CPI 2024 for Serbia was made, the score is slightly better in four, while in the remaining half the score is worse, which prevailed. In one case, a significant deterioration was noted (survey among business executives for the World Economic Forum).

The standard deviation score is 1.37.

Serbia in the regional report of Transparency International – anti-corruption protests and non-transparent contracting of infrastructure projects

In its regional report for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Transparency International says, among other things, the following:

In many countries, democratic institutions are weakening and the rule of law is deteriorating, due to internal instabilities and external pressures. This allows corruption to flourish while undermining public trust and sustainable development.

The regional report singles out Serbia as one of the countries under scrutiny as follows:

Serbia (35) continues to decline on the CPI, while the dominance of the executive branch and the exposure of institutions to corruption grow under the rigid control of President Aleksandar Vučić.

The reaction of the authorities after the collapse of a canopy at the reconstructed railway station in Novi Sad, which killed 15 people, sparked mass protests across the country, demanding accountability and putting corruption in focus. In an attempt to calm the crisis, Vučić has approved the release of many documents on the station's renovation.

Data from some documents, as well as the non-transparent selection of subcontractors, further fueled suspicions that the project was overpriced. Three months after the event, the Novi Sad public prosecutor announced for the first time that allegations of possible corruption would be investigated.

The Serbian government also relies heavily on intergovernmental agreements and special laws without proper anti-corruption controls related to the EXPO, and other projects planned until 2027, which are estimated to be worth \$18.5 billion.

The full results of the survey can be downloaded from the TS website:
<https://transparentnost.org.rs/index.php/sr/istraivanja-o-korupciji/indeks-percepcije-korupcije-cpi>