
Press release: Serbia is at the lowest level in the last 10 years on the global list of the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index

According to the most important global ranking of countries by the perception of corruption in the public sector, Serbia is still among the countries with extremely high level of corruption. Today, Transparency Serbia (a member of the international organization Transparency International) presented the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2021, according to which Serbia has 38 out of the ideal 100 points, which is the same result as last year. This is at the same time the worst result in the past 10 years, although the fight against corruption has been stated as one of the state's priorities all this time.

With that score, Serbia, for the third year in a row, ranks in the bottom half of the global list - because it is 96th out of 180 countries, two positions ranked worse than a year earlier and has five points less than the world average (43).

According to TS, Serbia's backsliding in surveys about corruption is expected, bearing in mind that in many areas the long-standing "lack of political will" to implement anti-corruption laws has been even more visibly replaced by "political will" not to implement laws.

This is especially reflected in the illegal status of management in the largest state owned enterprises, which escalated in the case of EPS and the energy crisis. At the same time, the perception of corruption is strongly influenced by the fact that the public prosecutor's office does not give clear answers to publicly expressed and documented suspicions of corruption. It is also influenced by non-transparent contracting of the largest infrastructure works, without competition.

The disastrous effects of the COVID - 19 pandemic on transparency and corruption risks, which was a global trend, are still strongly felt in Serbia. In addition to treating all COVID procurement data as secret, the pandemic is also used as an excuse to distribute helicopter money, which is linked with the election.

More details on the Corruption Perceptions Index and results

For the twenty-seven years in a row, the Corruption Perceptions Index has been created by the leading global anti-corruption organization Transparency International. This year, 180 countries and territories were ranked, the same as a year earlier. Countries are scored on a scale from 100 (very clean) to 0 (very corrupt). This year, Serbia was ranked 96th (94th last year), with a score of 38, which is the same as last year. We share this place with five other countries (Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, Lesotho and Turkey).

The assessment for 2021 is the worst in the last 10 years. For the third year in a row, Serbia is in the "worse half of the world", and the current place on the table is the worst since the CPI in 2005.

Changes in Serbia's score have been minimal for twelve years. With a current score of 38, Serbia is in the group of countries with widespread corruption (below 50). This score places Serbia five points below the world average (43), 19 points below the average of our continent and even 26 points behind the average of the part of Europe of which we want to become a part.

At the top of the list are Finland, New Zealand and Denmark with 88 points, and at the bottom South Sudan with 11 and Somalia and Syria with 13.

Among the former socialist countries of Europe, Estonia is the best placed with almost 74, and of those that are not members of the EU, it is Georgia (55). Within the former SFRY, Slovenia is the best placed with 57, which, however, is declining. In our immediate neighbourhood, Croatia (47), Montenegro (46), Romania (45), Hungary (43), Bulgaria (42) and Northern Macedonia (39) have better results on the CPI, while Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina are ranked slightly worse than Serbia (35). Kosovo, for which special research is being conducted, has a score of 39 this year.

The CPI considers 13 relevant surveys that measure the perception of corruption in the public sector. These researches represent the opinion or impression about the corruption of government officials and public servants by those who do business with them or who advise business people, government and international institutions. Researches capture perceptions of corruption within the past two years and there must be at least three such sources of data for any country / territory to be ranked.

This year, Serbia is included in a total of eight relevant surveys (same as in 2020), which guarantees a high degree of reliability of the findings, as well as comparability of data with those from previous years.

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

Of the surveys relevant to Serbia, in three cases data were collected in 2020, for two during 2020 and 2021, and in three cases the survey was conducted in full in 2021. In four original surveys for CPI 2021 the score is the same as in CPI 2020, in two surveys the score for Serbia is slightly better, and in two slightly worse than in the CPI 2020.

Estimates for individual surveys range from 35.66 to 40.34. The standard deviation is 1.42.

In this year's report, Transparency International highlighted the link between human rights and democracy and corruption. Corruption allows for the violation of human rights, and in contrast, ensuring fundamental rights and freedoms leaves less room for unbridled corruption.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a justification in many countries to further strengthen the executive branch, to hide information from the public and to restrict rights and freedoms.

Transparency International also pointed out that many of the successes in the fight against corruption in recent history are the result of tireless, coordinated efforts of "ordinary people", who took great personal risks to fight for change: "This fight is your fight and it cannot be trusted only to governments."

Complete research results can be downloaded from the TS website:

<https://transparentnost.org.rs/index.php/sr/istraivanja-o-korupciji/indeks-percepcije-korupcije-cpi>

Transparency Serbia,

Belgrade, 25th January 2022