

# EU ENLARGEMENT FACTSHEET

<http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement>

## EU ENLARGEMENT: FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

### OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

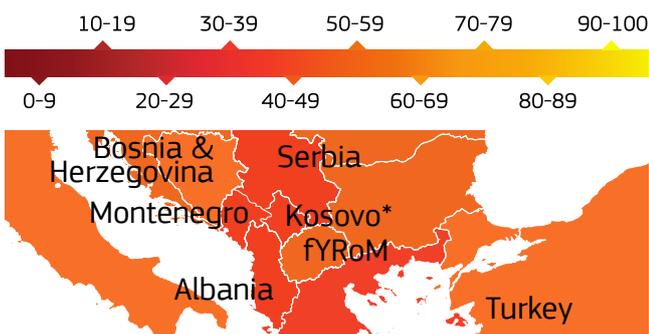
Corruption is recognised as a serious crime in the EU, which is reflected in its many anti-corruption instruments covering existing member states. Countries wishing to join still face considerable systemic corruption issues in their public institutions. The latest annual Global Corruption Barometer by Transparency International (TI) identifies key areas and people's perception of the issue in their country.

Between September 2012 and February 2013, more than 6,000 people were interviewed in the Western Balkans on their views of corruption levels in their country/territory and their governments' efforts to fight corruption.

Country	Score*	World Rank*
Albania	33	113
Bosnia & Herzegovina	42	72
Iceland	82	11
Kosovo*	34	105
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (fYRoM)	43	69
Montenegro	41	75
Serbia	39	80
Turkey	39	54

\*0= highly corrupt  
100= very clean

\*of 176 countries and territories



Source: Corruption Perceptions Index 2012, Transparency International\*1

The survey shows that:

- 44% of people surveyed in the enlargement region believe that corruption has increased in their country over the past 2 years.
- Perceptions of increase in corruption levels are particularly high in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania with 65% and 66% respectively of people surveyed.
- Political parties, the judiciary and medical sectors are perceived as the most corrupt institutions across the region.

### WHY IS IT RELEVANT FOR CITIZENS?

Corruption affects citizens in very basic aspects of their everyday life in various ways. It has a negative impact:

#### on citizens' everyday life

- it affects their trust in the legal system and public administration
- it deprives them from the health services they are entitled to get when bribing doctors is a common way to be helped faster
- it affects the quality of education and professional standards if a diploma can be bought instead of honestly obtained

#### on a political level

- it fosters a system where not the public interest but the interests of individuals or groups are better served
- gaps in legislation allow corruption to spread
- it causes distortions in elections
- it undermines democratic values which are indispensable for EU enlargement

#### on economic development

- it scares off foreign investors
- it prevents the free market to grass root
- it causes skilled people to leave the country to seek for better opportunities abroad

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

\*1 The European Commission regards Transparency International as one of the sources with reliable data on this issue

### on the country's prospect to join the EU

- if there is no political will to effectively implement a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption
- if there is no convincing track record of effective prosecution and sanctioning of corruption related crimes
- if those that should be in the forefront of the fight against corruption – be it the police, the judiciary or the political leadership of a country – are not willing to lead by example

## WHAT THE EU DOES TO HELP

The European Union encourages candidate and potential candidate countries to tackle corruption early in the accession process, which is essential to an effective reform.

Key actions include:

### Political dialogue

Various channels are in place to foster a political dialogue on a range of security related matters, including the fight against corruption. This includes frameworks such as SAAs (Stabilisation and Association Agreements) as well as the Visa Liberalisation process.

### Accession negotiations

The accession negotiation process provides the probably biggest leverage to ensure that reforms are implemented, grass root and generate results. With the New Approach (a new negotiation methodology in the 2 rule of law chapters) the EU has a new tool in its hands to ensure that also the fight against corruption is addressed timely and thoroughly and generates the expected results.

### Expert advice and monitoring

- The European Commission continuously assesses efforts made by countries wishing to join and reports once a year through its annual progress reports.
- The European commission uses peer-review mission to take stock on the ground – with the help of Member States experts – what the effect of various measures are.
- EU candidate and potential candidate countries need clear standards set out from the beginning, urging them to adopt and implement necessary anti-corruption reforms.
- Progress towards standards needs to be monitored by independent bodies and civil society on a country's prospect to join the EU.

### EU tangible assistance in the Western Balkans

The EU allocated 29,778,000 EUR between 2007 and 2013 to support anti-corruption projects implemented in the Western Balkans. For example:

1 The EU supports a regional prosecutors' network in the Western Balkans through its joint investigations project "Fight against organised crime and corruption: Strengthening the Prosecutors' Network" (November 2011 – November 2013).

EU contribution: 5 million EUR (95% of the total costs)

2 IPA has allocated 7 million EUR in 2013 for its multi-beneficiary project "Fight against organised crime: International Cooperation in Criminal Justice"

## SOME IMPROVEMENTS – BUT STILL SOME WAY TO GO

Progress has been made in the fight against corruption. However, there is a gap between reforms on paper and their real implementation in practice.

- Corruption remains one of the major issues during the accession process of these countries.
- Progress has been uneven and several countries continue to struggle with systemic corruption in their public institutions.
- The political will to address the problem has not always been matched with effective action and results.
- A bigger focus is needed to ensure that those agencies that should be in the forefront to prevent and fight corruption are sufficiently "clean" and independent to play that role.
- Further efforts are needed in regard to the financing of political parties and election campaigns, the management of conflicts of interest, transparency in public procurement, access to information and the seizure and confiscation of assets.
- Aid should flow to CSOs, as they play a significant role in the fight against corruption.
- Further operational cooperation with the relevant European agencies is needed.