

2023 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX REVEALS HOW EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA GRAPPLE WITH CORRUPTION AMIDST AUTOCRACY AND WEAK JUSTICE SYSTEMS

CPI 2023 reveals a region in crisis

Berlin, 30 January 2024 – The [2023 Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#) released today by Transparency International shows that Eastern Europe and Central Asia are grappling with dysfunctional rule of law, escalating authoritarianism, and pervasive corruption. Against a backdrop of widespread democratic regression and compromised justice systems, the result is a diminished grasp on controlling corruption.

Despite the strong challenges faced in much of the region, change is possible, as evidenced by progress in five countries which have significantly improved their CPI scores since 2014.

Altynai Myrzabekova, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Advisor of Transparency International said:

"Public institutions, including the police, prosecutors, and the courts, often face challenges in investigating and punishing those who abuse their power to steal public funds. In a region marked by war and increased poverty, it is crucial for leaders to prioritise actions that contribute to the common good. Substantial reforms in justice systems across the region are key to preventing corruption from thriving."

EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA HIGHLIGHTS

The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

The Eastern Europe and Central Asia average score of 35 out of 100 makes it the second lowest scoring region in the world, and only one country scores above 50.

- **Armenia** (47), **Moldova** (42), **Kosovo** (41), **Ukraine** (36) and **Uzbekistan** (33) have significantly improved their CPI scores over the past 10 years.
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (35), **Turkey** (34) and **Turkmenistan** (18) have declined. Turkey also reached its lowest score ever on the CPI, as did **Serbia** (36), **Russia** (26) and **Tajikistan** (20).

- **Azerbaijan** (23), **Tajikistan** (20) and **Turkmenistan** (18) are the lowest in the region.

For each country's individual score and changes over time, see the global [2023 CPI page](#). For in-depth analysis on trends and countries, see the region's feature article: [CPI 2023 for Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Autocracy and weak justice systems enabling widespread corruption](#).

CORRUPTION AND INJUSTICE

Widespread democratic backsliding and weakening justice systems are undermining the control of corruption in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Independent, transparent and well-resourced judiciaries and law enforcement institutions are central to keeping corruption in check. In turn, preventing the abuse of political power, bribery and other forms of corruption from influencing justice systems is key to ensuring their effectiveness.

- The deep-rooted corruption in **Russia** (26) stems from Putin's regime prolonged efforts to dominate the nation and its resources. The regime's pervasive control of public institutions facilitates the widespread abuse of power without accountability. This, coupled with the erosion of judicial independence, creates an environment where corrupt practices flourish with impunity, steadily eroding public trust in the justice system. The ongoing war against Ukraine serves as a stark reminder of the dangerous consequences of unchecked power.
- **Moldova** (42), continues its rise on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), gaining three points this year. Moldova continues to prioritise strengthening democracy, anti-corruption measures, and the rule of law. Central to its reforms is bolstering the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary, minimizing political interference, and preventing the manipulation of legal procedures. Its proximity to Russia's war against Ukraine and historical ties with Russia create external pressures, occasionally impeding reform processes and elevating corruption risks.
- In four years, **Kyrgyzstan** (26) has transformed from a democracy with a vibrant civil society into a consolidated authoritarian regime. President Sadyr Japarov's move to presidential rule has increased his control, resulting in a five-point decline on the CPI since 2020. Japarov's influence on critical judicial appointments and the ineffective enforcement of anti-corruption legislation have eroded judicial independence, undermining the rule of law and impeding the handling of corruption cases. Urgent action is needed to reaffirm commitments to democratic principles, ensure judicial independence, and enforce anti-corruption laws effectively.
- Justice systems in the Western Balkans remain largely unable to prosecute public officials who abuse their position due to political pressure. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (35), leading ethnic political parties exert control over the judiciary, impeding anti-corruption efforts and leaving significant scandals unaddressed. This trend worsens as political elites seek to silence watchdogs through proposed legislation criminalising defamation, targeting civil society, and sanctioning critics of

state authorities. The potential adoption of the latest draft law on immunity in Republika Srpska threatens the already fragile rule of law, limiting the courts' capacity to hold public officials accountable for both past and future offenses.

Transparency International calls on governments to give justice systems the independence, resources and transparency needed to effectively punish all corruption offences and provide checks and balances on power. Where necessary, they must also introduce better procedures and laws to help justice institutions shield themselves from and target corrupt acts.

Daniel Eriksson, Chief Executive Officer of Transparency International said:

“Corruption worsens social injustice and disproportionately affects the most vulnerable. In many countries, obstacles to justice for victims of corruption persist. It is time to break the barriers and ensure people can access justice effectively. Everyone deserves fair and inclusive legal systems where victims’ voices are heard at every stage. Anything else is an affront to justice.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

The media page includes the CPI 2023 report, the full dataset and methodology, international press release, and additional analysis for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia in English and Russian. See here:

<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/media-kit>. To obtain login details, please send an email to press@transparency.org, ensuring that the email explicitly acknowledges the embargo.

INTERVIEW REQUESTS

In case of country-specific queries, please contact [Transparency International’s national chapters](#). In case of queries around regional and global findings, please contact the Transparency International Secretariat: press@transparency.org.

ABOUT THE CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX

Since its inception in 1995, the Corruption Perceptions Index has become the leading global indicator of public sector corruption. The Index scores 180 countries and territories around the world based on perceptions of public sector corruption, using data from 13 external sources, including the World Bank, World Economic Forum, private risk and consulting companies, think tanks and others. The scores reflect the views of experts and business people, not the public.

The process for calculating the CPI is regularly reviewed to make sure it is as robust and coherent as possible, most recently by the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre in 2017. All the CPI scores since 2012 are comparable from one year to the next.

For more information, see article: [The ABCs of the CPI: How the Corruption Perceptions Index is calculated.](#)