

2021 Corruption Perceptions Index reveals a decade of stagnating corruption levels amid human rights abuses & democratic decline in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Progress stagnates as all but one country in the region score below 50

Berlin, 25 January 2022 – The [2021 Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#) released today by Transparency International shows that corruption levels remain at a standstill worldwide. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, nearly 75 per cent of countries have declined or made little to no progress in the last 10 years.

In 2021, Eastern Europe and Central Asia demonstrates the vicious cycle of increasing authoritarianism, human rights abuses and corruption. Political leaders used the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to reduce oversight and accountability for public procurement and foreign aid spending from **Albania** (35) to **Kyrgyzstan** (27). Critics were silenced as governments cracked down on dissenting voices and inhibited the free press, such as in **Russia** (29) and **Azerbaijan** (30). Meanwhile, one of the region's greatest decliners **Belarus** (41) has seen its score drop by six points amid growing violence and democratic deterioration, with appallingly little respect for human rights.

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

"2021 has been devastating for civil rights across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Corrupt leaders repress all dissent – from opposition parties to activists and the press. While doing little to combat the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the population, governments have utilized it to further curb rights and freedoms, further entrenching authoritarianism."

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 holds at a very low 36.

- **Georgia** (55), **Armenia** (49) and **Montenegro** (46) lead and are the only three countries from the region that score above the global average of 43.
- **Turkmenistan** (19), **Tajikistan** (25) and **Kyrgyzstan** (27) are the lowest in the region.
- **Serbia** (38) remains at its lowest score since the data has been comparable in 2012.

In the last decade, 14 countries in the region have either declined or made no significant progress.

- Since 2012, **Turkey** (38) and **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (35) have significantly declined on the CPI.
- Five countries in the region have significantly improved their scores over that period: **Armenia** (49), **Belarus** (41), **Moldova** (36), **Ukraine** (32) and **Uzbekistan** (28).

For each country's individual score and changes over time, as well as analysis for each region, [see the region's 2021 CPI page](#).

CORRUPTION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Several countries in the region illustrate the deadly effects of corruption and authoritarianism. Corrupt leaders use undemocratic practices to protect themselves from prosecution and further concentrate their wealth and power.

- **Belarus** saw its CPI score drop by 6 points since last year. After violently repressing nationwide protests over the rigged 2020 presidential election, the government has clamped down on free speech and peaceful assembly. Grand corruption, consolidating power around the highest political elites, is taking over as officials dismantle democratic checks and balances and crush dissent, including opposition candidates, civil society and journalists.
- **Russia's** score remains at a low 29, while corruption and human rights abuses remain the norm across the country. Amendments to Russia's "foreign agent law" have extended its use to target journalists and activists investigating government corruption. The government also used the COVID-19 pandemic to further tighten control and ban protests.
- **Serbia** remains at a historic low of 38 for the second year running. The government maintains control by influencing the media, harassing independent critics and holding unfair elections.
- **Kazakhstan** was rocked by protests in January 2022 as people took to the streets to decry the spiking price of fuel, corruption and inequality. Kazakhstan lost 1 point on the 2021 CPI but, overall, insignificantly increased 9 points in the last decade to a CPI of 37, and the country continues to score well below the global average. New anti-corruption legislation passed, and authorities have pursued high-profile investigations, but allegations of corruption by the former president Nursultan Nazarbayev's family have been ignored. The protests show that it is imperative to address corruption in high-risk sectors, such as oil and gas. Other urgent priorities are ridding the law enforcement and the judiciary of corruption as well as opening up civil society space.

Transparency International calls on governments to act on their anti-corruption and human rights commitments and for people across the globe to join together in demanding change.

Daniel Eriksson, Chief Executive Officer of Transparency International said:

"In authoritarian contexts where control over government, business and the media rests with a few, social movements remain the last check on power. It is the power held by teachers, shopkeepers, students and ordinary people from all walks of life that will ultimately deliver accountability."

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.

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](#).

Notes to editors

- The media page includes the CPI 2021 report in English and Russian, as well as the full dataset and methodology, and additional analysis for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. See here: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/media-kit>

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.