

Corruption Perceptions Index 2025: Weak institutions are fuelling corruption in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Berlin, 10 February 2026 – Transparency International's 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), published today, shows that weak institutions and democratic backsliding across Eastern Europe and Central Asia are driving corruption and shrinking civic space. The region scores just 34 out of 100, with six of 19 countries significantly worsening and only seven improving, highlighting a decade of stalled reforms and weak institutions.

Concentration of power, undue influence on the judiciary, and pressure on civil society drive democratic backsliding by weakening checks and balances and reducing public oversight. Across the Western Balkans, opacity of decisions on high-value investment projects is a common weakness. Suspended transparency rules and unchecked discretionary powers are putting public funds at risk of corruption, while eroding public trust. Lack of competitive procedures have led to uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (34), risk of environmental degradation in the case of Sazan island in **Albania** (39) and allowed the government of **Serbia** (33) to sign a secret deal with a foreign investor and to illegally cancel cultural monument protection, to replace it with a luxury hotel.

In several Western Balkans countries, weak judicial response is one of the major obstacles to successfully fight against corruption and yet, judges and prosecutors are increasingly a target of government attacks. After probing alleged abuses by cabinet members, the Prosecution for Organised Crime in **Serbia** (33) is facing mounting pressure, including government-led smear campaigns, obstruction of police cooperation, and legal changes that weaken its ability to investigate organised crime and high-level corruption. In **North Macedonia** (40), chronic under-resourcing and continuous government pressure have weakened the state prosecutor's office, culminating in the resignation of the chief prosecutor in December 2025. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (34), political influence over judicial appointments is so deeply entrenched that numerous attempts to regulate it effectively have failed, despite the fact that this stands in the way of the country's EU integration.

Across parts of the region, governments are increasingly restricting civic space and independent oversight, allowing corruption risks to grow. In **Georgia** (50), democratic erosion is accelerating these risks: the ruling party has passed laws criminalising legitimate NGO activity and labelling independent voices as "foreign agents," alongside politically motivated prosecutions, media restrictions, and violent crackdowns on protesters and journalists, hollowing out accountability. International observers now warn of an authoritarian turn, including moves to ban opposition parties and tighten political control over the civil service, police and judiciary.

In Central Asia, repression follows a similar pattern. **Kyrgyzstan** (26) and **Kazakhstan** (38) continue to curb civil society through burdensome NGO legislation, while in Kazakhstan concerns have also intensified over the non-transparent dismantling of the anti-corruption service and the transfer of its functions under the National Security Committee, raising questions about independence, accountability and oversight. In **Uzbekistan** (31), formal reforms have delivered

some progress, but journalists and bloggers exposing corruption still face harassment or prosecution, limiting the impact of anti-corruption efforts.

Meanwhile, **Russia** (22) remains near the bottom of the CPI, with fully centralised, opaque governance that suppresses media, civil society and political opposition. Its authoritarian approach stifles independent voices, restricts civic engagement and spreads corrupt practices across the region, undermining neighbouring democratic institutions.

Despite these challenges, some countries demonstrate that change is achievable when civic space and independent institutions are defended. In **Ukraine** (36), sustained pressure from NGOs, the public and journalists has helped drive governance reforms. In 2025, civil society mobilisation protected key anti-corruption institutions, allowing them to operate independently. Ukraine's specialised anti-corruption system has increased investigations and secured convictions, including in politically sensitive procurement and defence cases. However, further reforms are needed to protect defence and reconstruction funds from misuse.

Similarly, **Moldova** (42) is strengthening judicial vetting and advancing EU-aligned reforms despite intense geopolitical pressure and persistent resistance from entrenched interests. Implementation challenges remain, but political will and structural reforms make Moldova one to watch. At the same time, **Armenia** (46) has adopted anti-corruption legislation and strategies aligned with international standards. Further progress now hinges on strengthening independence and effectiveness of the judiciary and prosecution, alongside sustained enforcement of adopted reforms.

Lidija Prokic, Regional Advisor for Eastern and South East Europe at Transparency International said:

“Corruption in Eastern Europe and Central Asia is not inevitable; it thrives where democracy is weakened and accountability fails. Governments must urgently strengthen judicial independence, protect civic space, and ensure transparency in public institutions, or risk leaving citizens vulnerable against entrenched abuse of power.”

KEY FINDINGS IN THE REGION

The CPI ranks 182 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

- **Turkmenistan** (17), **Tajikistan** (19) and **Russia** (22) are the lowest scorers, reflecting weak democratic institutions and high levels of repression.
- Low transparency and weak reforms are undermining progress. In many countries in the Western Balkans and Central Asia, rushed or poorly implemented reforms, repression of journalists and NGOs, and opaque decision-making limit the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts.

- **Georgia** (50) illustrates how democratic backsliding fuels corruption. Politically motivated prosecutions, restrictions on media, [laws targeting NGOs](#), and elite capture have weakened independent oversight, creating an environment where corruption can thrive.
- Strong civil society and independent institutions, as in **Ukraine** (36) and **Moldova** (42), can drive meaningful anti-corruption reforms despite challenges.

NOTES TO EDITORS

For each country's individual score and changes over time, as well as global and regional analysis, see the CPI 2025 webpage: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2025> (goes live at 07:01 CET, 10 February 2026.)

The [media page](#) includes the CPI 2025 report, as well as the full dataset, methodology and graphics.

INTERVIEW REQUESTS

Spokespeople are available in English, Russian and Serbo-Croatian. For queries about regional and global findings, please contact the Transparency International press office at press@transparency.org.

In case of country-specific queries, please contact Transparency International's national [chapters](#).

ABOUT THE CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX

Since its inception in 1995, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index has become the leading global indicator of public sector corruption. The index scores 182 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 businesspeople, 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 this article: [The ABCs of the CPI: How the Corruption Perceptions Index is calculated](#).