

Corruption Indexes of *Coalition 2000*

April 2000



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SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Sample

National representative survey of the population covering 1161 respondents aged 18 and over.

Survey method

The survey used the method of the face-to-face interview.

Field work

Field work was conducted between April 1 - April 15, 2000.

CORRUPTION INDEXES

- Corruption indexes are among the important outputs of the Corruption Monitoring System (CMS) of *Coalition 2000*. Their values are updated quarterly based on survey data.
- Corruption assessment index numbers assume values from 0-10.
- The closer the value of the indexes is to 10, the more negative are the assessments of the evaluated aspect of corruption in Bulgaria. Index numbers closer to 0 indicate approximation to the ideal of a “corruption-free” society.
- Corruption indexes have been grouped into several categories:
 - Attitudes towards corruption;
 - Corrupt practices;
 - Assessment of the spread of corruption;
 - Corruption-related expectations.

MAIN PROBLEMS FACED BY BULGARIA

In April 2000 corruption was once again among the most serious problems faced by this country. It was preceded, as in the previous 14-month period since February 2000, by unemployment, low incomes, and poverty. Set against the relatively stable public assessments of the phenomenon of corruption in 1999, in April 2000 there appeared a rise compared to their mean levels of 1999. The fact cannot be ignored that there has been a simultaneous rise in the social significance of such existential problems to the larger part of the Bulgarian population as unemployment and poverty. Bearing in mind the general tendency towards declining urgency of most problems in the past months, there is reason to claim that it is precisely unemployment, poverty, and corruption that are the issues causing a deepening public concern.

TABLE 1. MAIN PROBLEMS FACED BY BULGARIA

	<i>February 1999</i>	<i>April 1999</i>	<i>September 1999</i>	<i>January 2000</i>	<i>April 2000</i>
1. Unemployment	58,4	64,1	64,6	65,3	71,3
2. Low incomes	51,3	49,1	50,2	50,6	48,9
3. Poverty	31,6	32,9	37,1	41,2	41,9
4. Corruption	38,5	34,2	38,5	37,5	40,1
5. Crime	45,4	39,1	32,4	27,9	28,9
6. High prices	22,9	20,5	21,9	18,9	19,4
7. Healthcare	11,5	9,2	16,0	14,6	14,1
8. Political instability	17,7	20,2	15,4	13,1	13,8
9. Pollution	3,6	5,2	5,0	4,3	2,4
10. Education	2,7	2,9	3,8	2,9	2,3
11. Ethnic problems	2,1	2,4	4,0	1,4	1,9

Respondents gave up to three answers and the sum total of percentages therefore exceeds 100.

Base: N= 1161

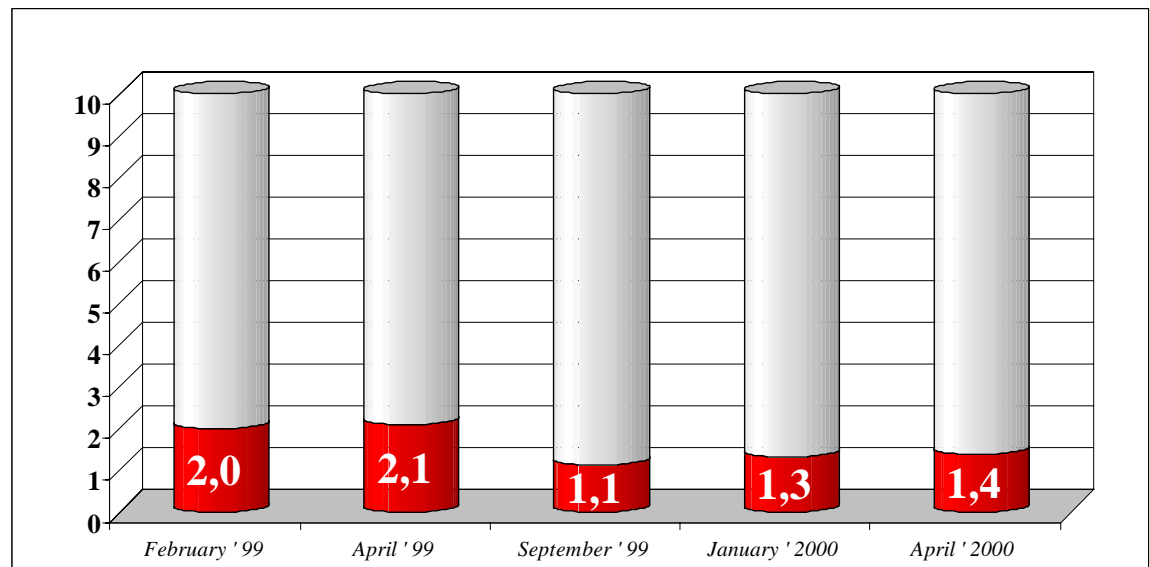
ATTITUDES TOWARDS CORRUPTION

Acceptability in Principle

This indicator reflects the extent to which various corrupt practices are tolerated within the value system.

In April 2000 the value of this index remained almost unchanged compared to January 2000. The tendency towards decreasing public tolerance and increasing moral inadmissibility of corruption continues to date, despite the slight increases in February and April 1999. As a whole, over a period of one year the value of this index has dropped by 0.7.

FIGURE 1. ACCEPTABILITY IN PRINCIPLE



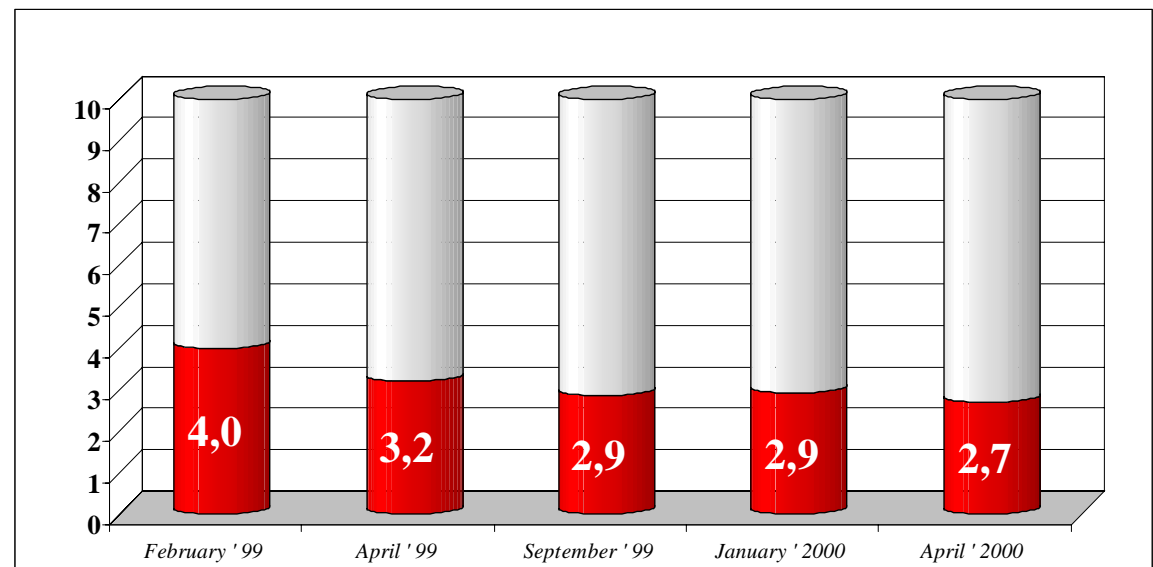
Base: N = 1161

Susceptibility to corruption

The index measures the inclination to compromise on values and principles under the pressure of circumstances.

The tendency towards improvement appears stable. Though minimal, the decrease by 0.2 matches the overall tendency for the 14-month period, during which the value of the index has dropped considerably. There are reasons to believe that this points to a stable tendency, despite the high assessment of the practical efficiency of corruption as a type of public behavior (Figure 6). As in the previous surveys, despite the drop of this index, it continues to be significantly higher than the one reflecting tolerance of corruption. It should be noted, however, that while the “acceptability of corruption” index tends to remain relatively stable, the susceptibility to corruption has continually been declining.

FIGURE 2. SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CORRUPTION



Base: N = 1161

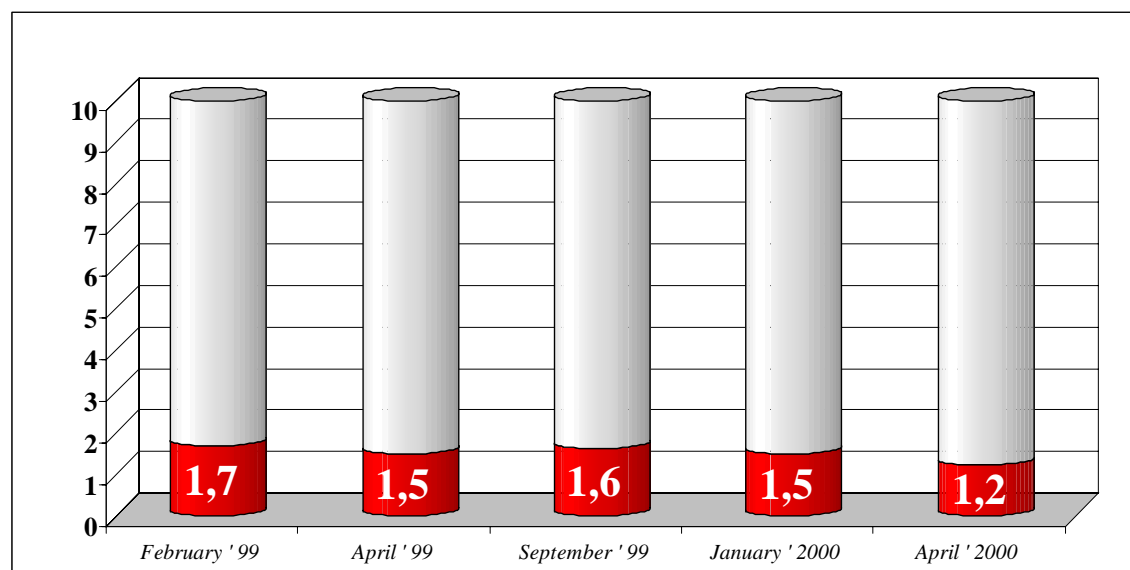
CORRUPT PRACTICES

Corruption pressure

The index reflects the intensity of attempts by officials from the public sector to exert direct or indirect pressure over citizens in order to obtain money, gifts, or favors.

In April 2000 a decline exceeding the common fluctuations over the past period has been observed. A comparison between the index values and the data in Table 2 provides further grounds for the conclusion that there is a certain, though not drastic, drop in the corruption pressure exerted by public officials. It can be assumed that there is a connection between the declining rate of corruption pressure, lower susceptibility to corruption and tolerance of corrupt practices.

FIGURE 3. CORRUPTION PRESSURE



Base: N = 1161

Corruption pressure by professional groups

The survey of April 2000 generally showed a decline in public assessments of the corruption pressure exerted by public officials. One notable deviation from this trend is the 10 % increase of the corruption pressure by customs officers, which – after the drop in the month of January – has recovered its usual values. There has also occurred a certain internal reordering of the main occupations in terms of the corruption pressure exerted. Police officers currently find themselves at the lowest level in 14 months in terms of the corruption pressure they exert, with a drop of about 4% in the last three months alone. A similar decrease can be observed with respect to doctors, officials in the court system, and municipal officials. Teachers and bankers have exerted the weakest corruption pressure.

TABLE 2. “IF IN THE COURSE OF THE PAST YEAR YOU HAVE BEEN ASKED FOR SOMETHING IN ORDER TO HAVE A PROBLEM OF YOURS SOLVED, YOU WERE ASKED BY:”

	<i>February 1999</i>	<i>April 1999</i>	<i>September 1999</i>	<i>January 2000</i>	<i>April 2000</i>
	<i>%*</i>	<i>%*</i>	<i>%*</i>	<i>%*</i>	<i>%*</i>
Customs officer	17,3	27,9	30,7	19,8	29,1
Police officer	22,3	22,8	25,9	23,4	19,5
Doctor	26,6	21,5	25,1	20,0	18,6
University teacher or official	12,4	9,5	16,2	10,1	12,6
Businessperson	13,4	12,0	12,8	13,7	11,9
Municipal official	15,6	11,5	18,0	11,3	11,2
Administrative staff from the judicial system	15,9	20,4	23,6	18,5	10,4
Criminal investigator	7,4	7,9	6,1	6,1	8,4
Tax official	9,5	6,6	12,1	8,4	7,8
Judge	8,6	10,9	11,3	6,9	7,7
Municipal Council member	8,9	8,6	5,7	6,7	5,6
Prosecutor	5,5	7,9	9,5	5,9	4,7
Member of Parliament	2,5	4,8	3,9	1,9	4,5
Ministry official	5,4	6,7	7,6	3,2	3,7
Teacher	3,4	4,8	5,0	4,9	3,0
Banker	-	-	-	8,1	1,8

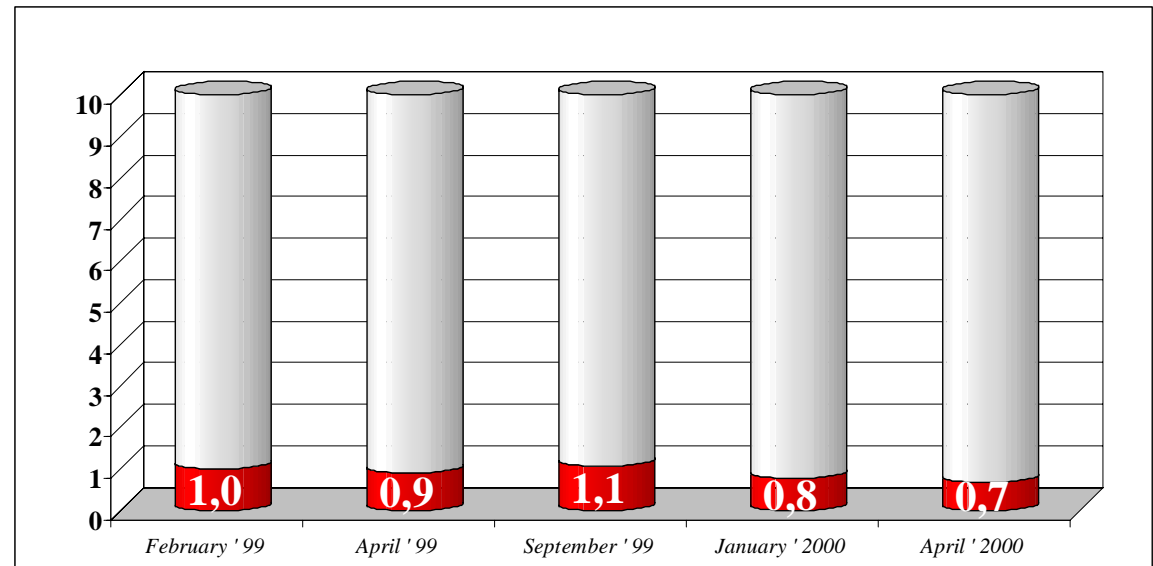
** Relative share of those who have had such contacts, who have been asked for money, gifts, or services.*

Involvement in corrupt practices

Reflects the self-evaluation / admission of personal involvement in forms of corrupt behavior.

The decline in the values of the “acts of corruption” index continued in April 2000. Though minimal, it can be assumed to be real, and it also matches the registered drop in the values of the “susceptibility to corruption” index. Notwithstanding possible future fluctuations of the index values, there is reason to claim that the rate of occurrence of acts of corruption is on the decline.

FIGURE 4. INVOLVEMENT IN CORRUPT PRACTICES



Base: N = 1161

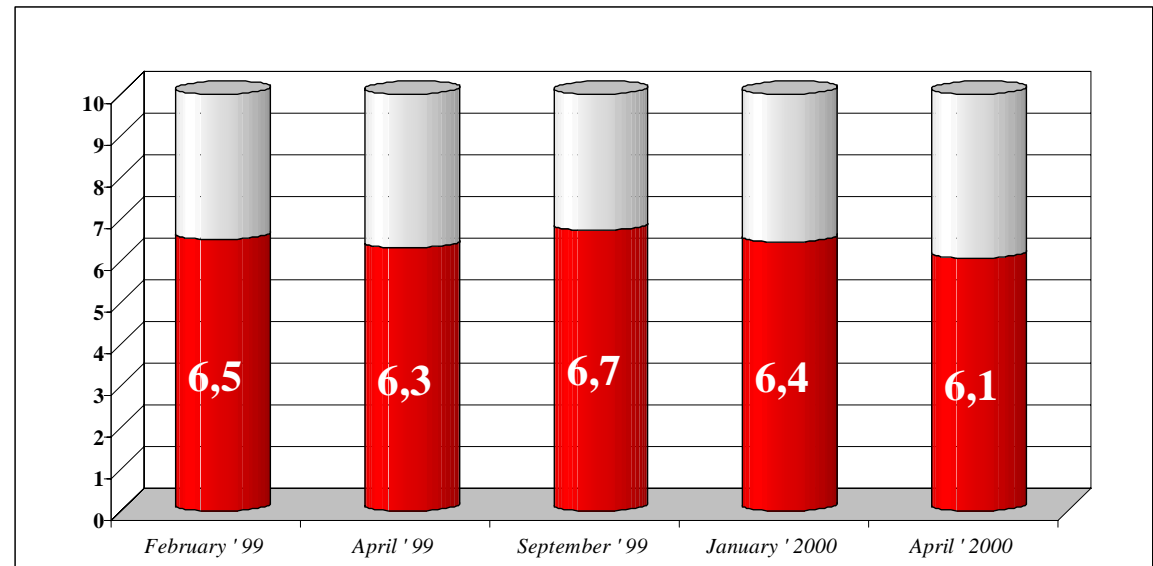
ASSESSMENTS OF THE SPREAD OF CORRUPTION

Spread of corruption

Registers Bulgarian citizens' assessments of the spread of corrupt practices among public sector officials.

The gradual fall as compared to September 1999 continues at the same rate. Nevertheless, in view of the generally high value of this index, it is still not possible to speak of any tangible decline in the assessments of the spread of corrupt practices. The comparison with the steady values of the "practical efficiency of corruption" index still does not provide grounds to assume the presence of a stable tendency rather than temporary fluctuation. Corruption continues to be perceived as widespread, regardless of the noted changes in the attitude towards it.

FIGURE 5. SPREAD OF CORRUPTION



Base: N = 1161

Factors influencing the Spread of corruption

In the month of April 2000 respondents only cited the single most important factor influencing the spread of corruption in this country. The introduced modification has not affected the distribution of the major factors for the spread of corruption – their significance has remained similar throughout the period monitored. It is worth noting that the reasons for corruption are associated mainly with the subjective qualities and attitudes of those potentially involved in acts of corruption (one third of the respondents account for corruption with the “wish for self-enrichment of those in power”). Adding such factors as “moral crisis” and “people’s dishonesty”, the share of those who see the reasons for corruption in definite personal qualities reaches 47.5%. At the same time, nearly half of those interviewed (45.3%) attributed the reasons for corruption to objective factors such as low salaries, inefficiency of the legislation and the system of justice. It is interesting to note that the negative legacy of the former regime and the particular characteristics of Bulgarian national culture have been placed last in the rating.

TABLE 3. MAJOR FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR THE SPREAD OF CORRUPTION

	<i>April 2000</i>
Fast personal enrichment sought by those in power	33,6
Low salaries	20,9
Imperfect legislation	13,6
Ineffectiveness of the judicial system	11,8
Moral crisis in the period of transition	9,8
People are dishonest	4,1
Can't decide	3,8
Problems inherited from the communist past	1,8
Other	0,5

Base: N= 1161

Spread of corruption by professional groups

In the month of April 2000 the clearly marked and steady perception of the rate of corruption among the different occupational groups displayed a substantial modification for the first time in 14 months. Above all, there has been an overall increase in popular belief that corruption is widespread in nearly all occupational groups. Doctors, among whom people perceive corruption as declining, constitute the single exception from this trend. Customs officers once again occupy the leading place, far ahead of the other occupations. There has been a drastic rise (about 10%) in public distrust in judges, officials at ministries, members of parliament, and ministers, who used to hold middle positions in the rating up to now. In April 2000 public opinion once more appeared to regard corruption as least widespread among the representatives of non-governmental organizations, journalists, and teachers.

TABLE 4. "ACCORDING TO YOU, HOW WIDESPREAD IS CORRUPTION AMONG THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:"

	<i>"Nearly all" and "Most are involved in corruption" (%)</i>				
	<i>February 1999</i>	<i>April 1999</i>	<i>September 1999</i>	<i>January 2000</i>	<i>April 2000</i>
Customs officers	73,3	73,2	75,2	77,0	78,6
Judges	49,5	50,8	50,7	48,5	56,0
Ministry officials	42,5	41,9	48,2	47,9	55,1
Members of parliament	39,0	37,7	42,6	45,0	55,1
Prosecutors	48,5	50,0	50,8	46,3	54,4
Ministers	39,1	35,3	43,9	45,3	53,4
Lawyers	55,5	55,4	55,6	54,8	51,9
Businesspersons	49,5	47,6	48,3	48,5	51,4
Tax officials	47,1	45,2	56,4	53,9	51,0
Police officers	51,5	49,2	55,8	51,9	50,5
Criminal investigators	43,6	41,8	44,9	41,0	48,0
Municipal officials	44,3	39,6	48,8	45,0	46,5
Administration staff from the judicial system	42,0	40,5	49,7	42,0	45,2
Leaders of political parties and coalitions	40,5	31,1	42,7	37,5	45,0
Doctors	56,9	46,0	47,3	42,5	40,9
Bankers	-	-	-	20,9	38,8
Local political leaders	34,0	27,5	38,2	31,7	36,4
Municipal Council members	31,2	26,4	34,7	32,5	35,2
University teachers or officials	29,5	28,5	35,7	29,4	29,3
Representatives of NGOs	16,3	11,5	20,9	16,2	18,2
Journalists	12,7	12,0	14,3	10,6	14,1
Teachers	12,6	8,4	11,5	9,5	8,2

Spread of corruption among institutions

Assessments of the rate of corruption in the various institutions have not undergone any substantial changes. According to the respondents, corruption was once again most widespread in customs and the Privatization Agency. The position of the system of justice has remained unchanged, while the slight decrease in the negative assessments of the tax services is enough to send them to the fifth place. Support for the opinion that the rate of corruption is high at the Energy Committee has continued to grow gradually, though the increase has not been substantial. This may be due to the various scandals accompanying the restructuring of the sector in the past months. Even if only slightly, distrust in the police appears to be decreasing. At the same time, distrust in the Privatization Agency and the key sector ministries is on the rise. The rate of corruption in the Foreign Investment Agency, included in the survey for the first time, was deemed high. The Bulgarian National Bank, the army, the National Statistical Institute, and the Presidency have again been assessed as institutions with low corruption.

TABLE 5. "ACCORDING TO YOU, HOW WIDESPREAD IS CORRUPTION IN THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS:"

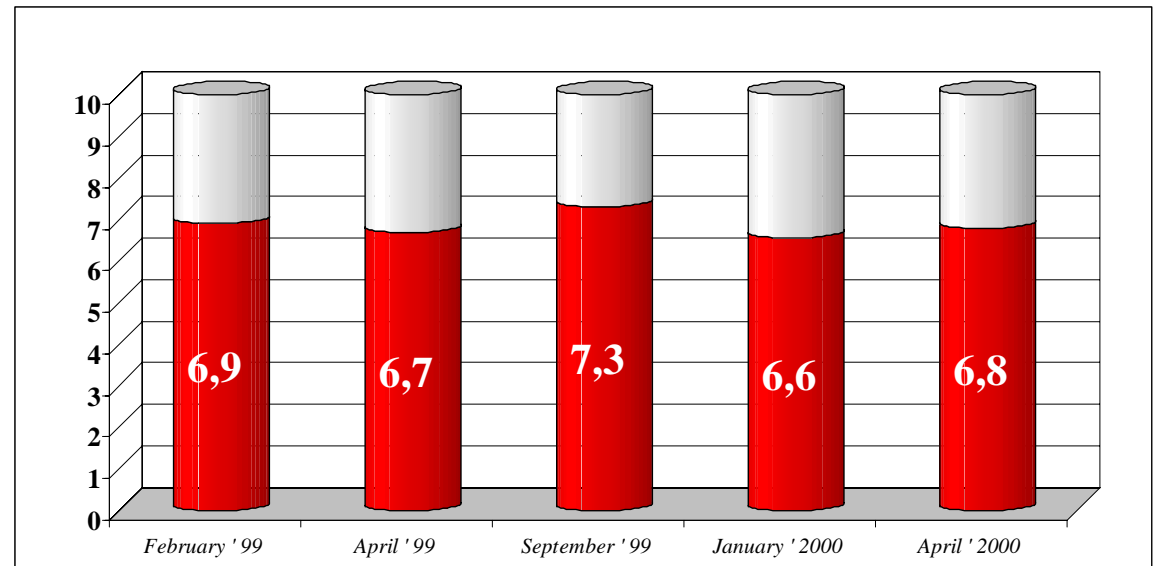
	<i>April 1999</i>	<i>September 1999</i>	<i>January 2000</i>	<i>April 2000</i>
Customs	8,78	9,10	9,02	9,10
Privatisation Agency	7,46	7,86	7,96	8,28
Bulgarian Foreign Investment Agency	-	-	-	7,78
Judicial system	7,62	7,88	7,68	7,68
Tax services	7,10	7,98	7,68	7,56
Sector ministries	6,94	7,40	7,24	7,44
Police	7,16	7,54	7,30	7,24
Parliament	6,78	7,16	6,96	7,24
Committee on Energy	6,40	6,84	7,00	7,10
Government	6,58	7,12	6,94	7,10
District administration	6,90	7,32	7,02	7,04
Municipal administration	6,64	7,24	6,82	6,74
Commission on the Protection of Competition	6,14	6,40	6,18	6,68
Securities and Stock-Exchanges Commission	6,24	6,28	6,22	6,50
Bulgarian Telecommunication Company	-	-	-	6,28
National Audit Chamber	5,74	5,86	5,54	5,84
Bulgarian National Bank	5,34	5,32	5,34	5,16
Army	4,88	5,06	5,06	5,08
National Statistical Institute	4,80	4,54	5,00	4,68
Presidency	4,46	4,50	4,28	4,52

Practical efficiency of corruption

This index reflects citizens' assessments of the extent to which corruption is becoming an efficient means of solving personal problems.

Even though in April 2000 the index values proved considerably lower compared to other months, they again reached the levels registered 12 months ago. The rate of decline of this index does not match the decline of the indexes of acts of corruption, corruption pressure, and susceptibility to corruption. Being one of the most stable ones, this index shows that regardless of the specific anti-corruption steps undertaken, the consensus about its negative effects, etc., it remains an instrument of proven efficiency in addressing private problems. Clearly, the fact also remains that the objective conditions favoring corruption have not undergone any notable changes.

FIGURE 6. PRACTICAL EFFICIENCY OF CORRUPTION



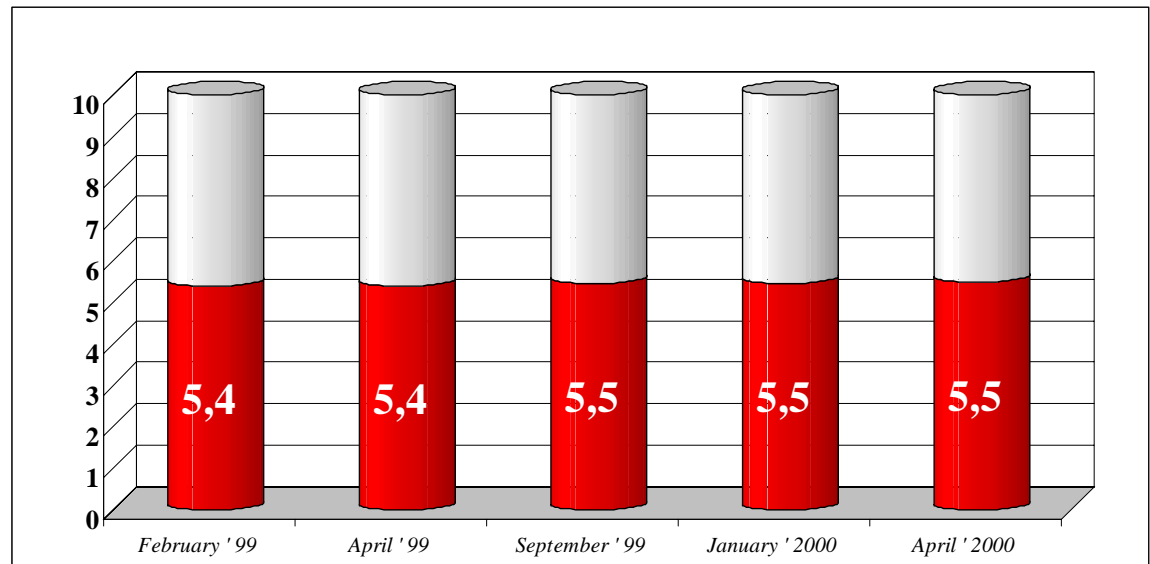
Base: N = 1161

CORRUPTION EXPECTATIONS

Reflects assessments of the capability (potential) of Bulgarian society to cope with corruption.

The values of this index are the most stable ones of all those observed over the whole period of the corruption monitoring. This indicates that the capability to cope with corruption is not only related to a change in public attitudes towards corrupt practices. The stability of the index values brings them closest to those of “spread of corruption” and “practical efficiency of corruption”. This gives reason to claim that the changes in individual attitudes to, and perceptions of corruption, though positive and necessary, are insufficient to resolve this painful social problem.

FIGURE 7. CORRUPTION EXPECTATIONS



Base: N = 1161

Vitosha Research (VR) is a social and market research agency and the survey research unit of the Center for the Study of Democracy, Sofia.

Vitosha Research specializes in carrying out social and market research in the fields of privatization, social policies, economic, political and electoral behavior, value orientations and attitudes of Bulgarians, public opinion studies, surveys of media audiences and programs, advertising research and others.

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