

## **COALITION 2000 CORRUPTION INDEXES**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The corruption indices are constructed based on survey data of Vitosha Research with the Center for the Study of Democracy and are among the basic output results of the CMS.

The elaboration of the CMS began with the first quantitative survey on corruption of March 1997. In the period till September 1998 a total of 5 quantitative and 4 qualitative surveys have been conducted.

Based on the experience gained, in the period July-September 1998 the first surveys (2 quantitative and 3 qualitative) of the CMS have been conducted. The present issue of the Corruption Indexes of *Coalition 2000* is based on these recent surveys.

The methodology of the CMS envisions periodic monitoring of a set of indicators characterizing the way in which citizens and public sector employees perceive corruption and also their involvement in different forms of corrupt practices.

### **CORRUPTION INDEXES**

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

### **CORRUPTION INDEXES: STRUCTURE AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **1. Attitudes towards corruption**

- **Acceptability in principle.**

Indicates the level of acceptance of various corrupt practices at the level of values.

- **Susceptibility to corruption**

Measures the inclination to compromise on values and principles under the pressure of circumstances.

## 2. Corrupt practices

- **Corruption pressure**

Indicates the frequency of attempts to corrupt public officials.

- **Personal involvement in corrupt practices.**

Self-assessment / admission of the frequency of involvement in different forms of corrupt behavior.

## 3. Assessment of the magnitude of corruption

- **Spread of corruption.**

Indicates citizens' assessments of the spread of corrupt practices among public officials.

- **Practical effectiveness.**

Indicates citizens' assessments of the extent to which corruption is becoming an efficient tool of solving personal problems and a social norm of behavior.

## 4. Expectations about the future of corruption

The index is an assessment of the potential of Bulgarian society to cope with corruption.

### THE SOCIAL MEANING OF CORRUPTION INDEXES

Corruption indexes provide an approximation about the scope and the aspects of corruption based on the assessments of citizens and public officials. These assessments are the starting point for their practical behavior and the way they perceive their social environment.

Corruption indexes could not be a base for making direct conclusions about the exact level of proliferation of corrupt practices.

Closest to the dimension "*level of proliferation of corruption*" is the index of personal involvement in corrupt practices as it is based on the anonymous admissions by respondents about their involvement in acts of corrupt behavior.

To a certain extent the specific legal characteristics of corruption (that both sides act illegally) makes the index of personal involvement in corrupt practices one of the few realistic measures of the actual level of proliferation of corruption.

Currently, the level of accuracy of empirical survey estimates of the realities of corruption is substantially higher - for obvious reasons - in comparison with the available information from law enforcement institutions.

### ATTITUDES TOWARDS CORRUPTION (KEY FINDINGS)

- **Corruption is recognized as a social evil.** There is a large measure of agreement among Bulgarians that corruption is unacceptable in principle.

- **Reality versus values.** Susceptibility to corruption rises seriously when values are confronted with personal interest. People are inclined to compromise over their principles because they do not see any other way of achieving their goals.
- **Susceptibility to corruption** The low level of acceptability of corruption on the one hand, and the high level of susceptibility, on the other, together shape the following widely accepted practical philosophy concerning corruption: **corruption is a necessary evil which in practice gets things done.**

### **CORRUPT PRACTICES (KEY FINDINGS)**

- **Corruption is not the outcome of open coercion.** Individual corruption pressure is relatively low. This suggests that in Bulgaria corrupt behavior is generated not so much by social pressure mechanisms but rather by the mechanisms of vested interest and necessity.
- **Not everyone is personally involved in corruption.** The index of corrupt practices is higher among public officials than among the population in general. The data show that the corruption is not produced by the totality of citizens and public sector employees.

### **ASSESSMENT OF THE SCOPE OF CORRUPTION (KEY FINDINGS)**

- **Corrupt practices are perceived as widespread and usual practice.** The Bulgarian public tends to perceive corruption as a widespread phenomenon which is about to turn into a social norm.
- **Involvement in corrupt practices is socially successful.** This value attitude coexists with the general view, confirmed on a daily basis, that corruption is in fact a highly efficient tool of solving personal problems.

### **EXPECTATIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF CORRUPTION (KEY FINDINGS)**

**Corruption will be difficult to eliminate in the foreseeable future.** With regard to the possibility for society to resolve the problem of corruption, Bulgarians are not resigned to the worst but rather tend to be moderately pessimistic.

The value of that index suggests that Bulgarians could possibly change their future expectations in case that legitimate mechanisms are successfully introduced that would be more advantageous than those of corruption.

### **MAIN CONCLUSIONS**

- The Bulgarian public regards corruption as one of the three most significant problems faced by our society.
- There is broad consensus that corruption is a social evil.
- Practical circumstances modify the basic intolerance of corruption and it comes to be perceived as a necessary evil.
- The principle unacceptability of corruption is eroded by the deeply rooted belief that corrupt practices are highly effective in dealing with problematic situations.
- Many people admit that when confronted with the reality of pressure and temptation they would compromise over their values. This choice is supported by the conviction that corruption has begun to turn into a social norm.

- The customs and tax administration, the judicial system, the central executive and the legislative branches of government, healthcare, the police, and the municipal administration are considered the main centers of corruption among public sector employees.
- Citizens assess as quite high the extent to which our society has been infected with the virus of corruption. This pessimistic view is based on three popularly shared perceptions:
  - that corruption is widespread among public officials;
  - that it is a successful practice both for the corrupting and the corrupted;
  - that it is virtually unpunishable.
- In mass consciousness there predominates the moderately optimistic attitude that corruption could be curbed, and that it is less widespread than could be expected in view of its being a successful and unpunishable social instrument.

#### SUMMARY: VALUE THE CORRUPTION INDICES OF *COALITION 2000*

Acceptability: There is consensus in Bulgarian society that corruption is a social evil.

Pressure: Without constituting mass practice, the corruption pressure occurring between citizens and public officials is considerable.

Involvement: Corrupt practices on the part of citizens and public officials are mutually inducing and all too often assume the nature of a mutually profitable "deal".

The susceptibility of part of the citizens to corruption is justified by the pressure of circumstances and the absence of alternatives.

Efficiency: Bulgarian citizens believe that corruption is widespread in our society and constitutes an efficient tool for solving personal problems.

Spread: Even though corruption in this country is assessed as significant in size, it is perceived as less widespread than could be expected in view of its being highly effective and virtually unpunishable.

Expectations: While they remain skeptical, Bulgarians are inclined to think that even if inevitable, corruption may be curbed in the near future.