Corruption Indexes of *Coalition 2000*

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Vitosha
Research

CONTENTS

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Sample

National representative survey of the population covering 1037 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 January 01 – February 10, 2001.

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
BULGARIA

The tendency for corruption to be ranked by public opinion among the most critical problems faced by Bulgaria remained unchanged in September 2000 and throughout the period since February 1999. The only social problems rated above corruption by importance were unemployment, low incomes, and poverty. Compared to the previous year, the public significance of this phenomenon in citizens' perceptions has increased. The latter fact comes as further confirmation that corruption constitutes an extremely grave problem of Bulgarian society and that there still lack any sufficiently effective means of brining it down to an acceptable level.

TABLE 1. MAIN PROBLEMS FACED BY BULGARIA

	February 1999	April 1999	September 1999	January 2000	April 2000	September 2000	January 2001
1. Unemployment	58,4	64,1	64,6	65,3	71,3	67,8	67,5
2. Crime	45,4	39,1	32,4	27,9	28,9	25,7	51,7
3. Low incomes	51,3	49,1	50,2	50,6	48,9	49,0	46,0
4. Poverty	31,6	32,9	37,1	41,2	41,9	41,5	39,4
5. Corruption	**38,5**	**34,2**	**38,5**	**37,5**	**40,1**	**37,5**	**36.5**
6. Political instability	17,7	20,2	15,4	13,1	13,8	17,0	18,2
7. High prices	22,9	20,5	21,9	18,9	19,4	22,4	16,3
8. Healthcare	11,5	9,2	16,0	14,6	14,1	14,0	5,1
9. Pollution	3,6	5,2	5,0	4,3	2,4	2,7	3,0
10. Ethnic problems	2,1	2,4	4,0	1,4	1,9	1,7	0,9
11. Education	2,7	2,9	3,8	2,9	2,3	2,1	0,8

Respondents gave up to three answers and the sum total of percentages therefore exceeds 100.
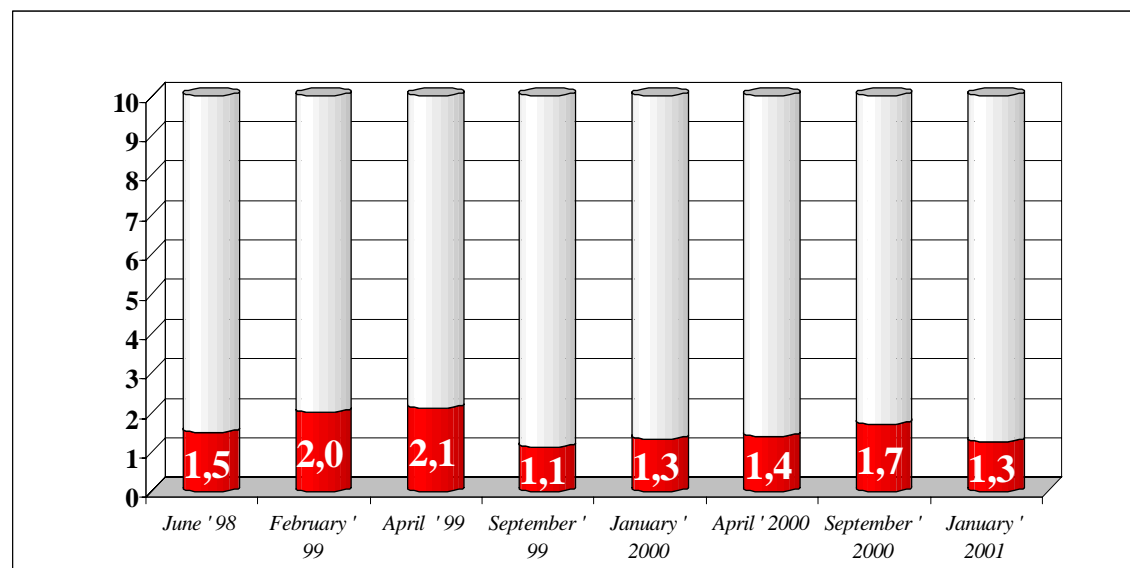
Base: N= 1037

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CORRUPTION

Acceptability in Principle

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

Compared to the month of April, in September 2000 the value of this index marked an increase by 0.3. Notwithstanding this change, in terms of values and principles, public opinion essentially remains negatively inclined towards the phenomenon of corruption. What this increased index value suggests is a certain public desensitization to the manifestations of corruption.

FIGURE 1. ACCEPTABILITY IN PRINCIPLE

Base: N = 1037

Susceptibility to corruption

This index measures citizens' inclination to compromise on values and principles under the pressure of circumstances.

The tendency towards declining value of this index, which began in mid-1999, has ceased by now. Susceptibility to corruption has come to be stabilized at a new level. Even at present this index is still considerably higher than the index of corruption acceptability in principle. This suggests that corrupt behavior is preconditioned by the pressure of circumstances rather than the value system of society.

FIGURE 2. SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CORRUPTION
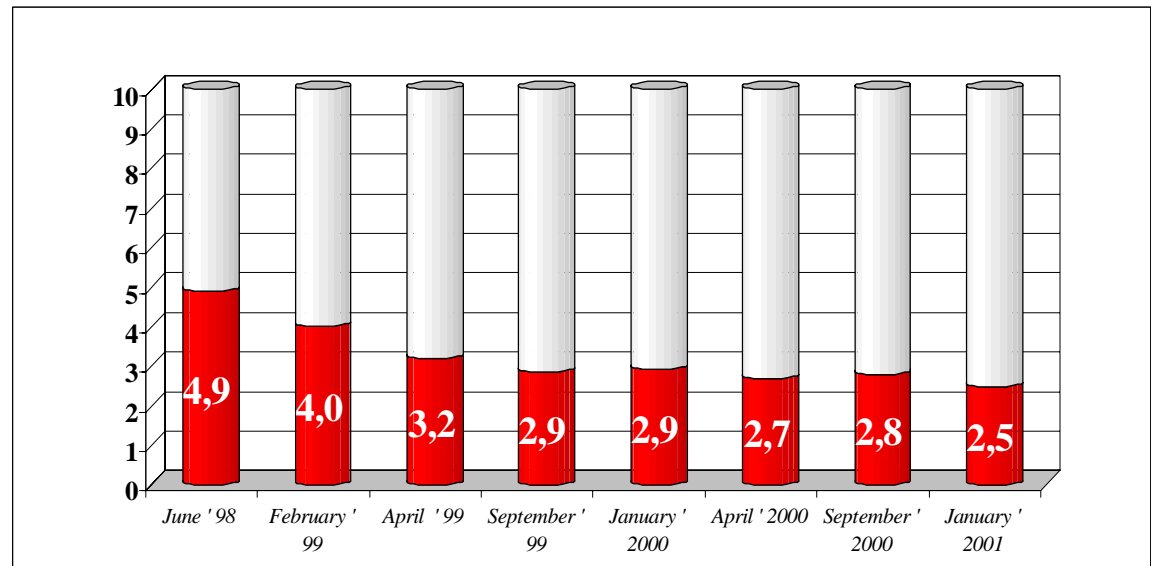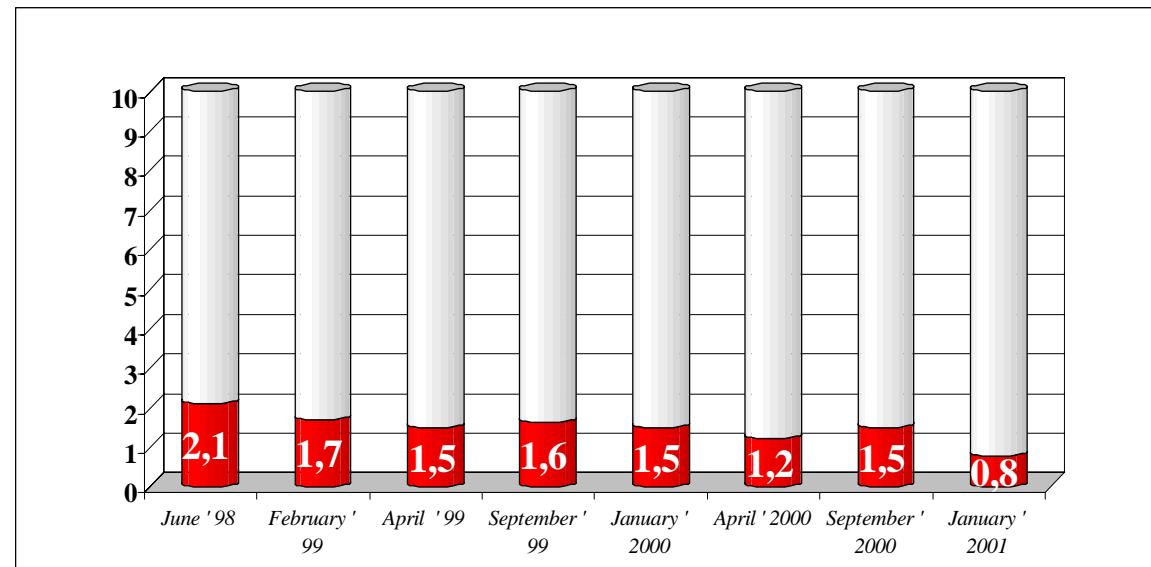

Base: N = 1037

CORRUPT PRACTICES

Corruption pressure

This index measures the spread of attempts by public officials to exert direct or indirect pressure on citizens in order to obtain money, gifts, or favors.

Even in this case, as with the values of the former two indexes, there has been a certain increase. This suggests that in the period April-September 2000, the corruption pressure on citizens by public officials has intensified. What is more, there is a consistent relationship between the simultaneous increase in the corruption pressure exerted, in public susceptibility to corruption, and its acceptability in principle.

Base: N = 1037

Corruption pressure by professional groups

The survey conducted in September 2000 recorded a substantial change in popular assessments of the corruption pressure exerted by various groups of public sector employees. The corruption pressure by customs officers marked a drop of nearly 14%. Though more moderate, there has been a similar positive change with respect to municipal officials, businesspersons, investigators, and municipal councilors. With the remaining occupations, and above all, police officers, doctors, university employees, and the representatives of the judicial system, the exerted corruption pressure has increased. In its turn, this change has brought about certain shifts in the ordering of the occupational groups depending on the corruption pressure they exert on the general public. In the period April-September 2000, the strongest corruption pressure was attributed to police officers, doctors, and customs officers, and the weakest, to bankers, municipal councilors, and teachers.

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:"

|	February 1999	April 1999	September 1999	January 2000	April 2000	September. 2000
	%*	%*	%*	%*	%*	%*
Police officer	22,3	22,8	25,9	23,4	19,5	24,0
Doctor	26,6	21,5	25,1	20,0	18,6	22,1
Customs officer	17,3	27,9	30,7	19,8	29,1	15,8
University teacher or official	12,4	9,5	16,2	10,1	12,6	13,9
Administrative staff from the judicial system	15,9	20,4	23,6	18,5	10,4	11,5
Municipal official	15,6	11,5	18,0	11,3	11,7	10,3
Businessperson	13,4	12,0	12,8	13,7	11,9	9,7
Judge	8,6	10,9	11,3	6,9	7,7	9,1
Tax official	9,5	6,6	12,1	8,4	7,8	8,3
Prosecutor	5,5	7,9	9,5	5,9	4,7	7,8
Ministry official	5,4	6,7	7,6	3,2	3,7	7,0
Member of Parliament	2,5	4,8	3,9	1,9	4,5	6,4
Criminal investigator	7,4	7,9	6,1	6,1	8,4	6,0
Teacher	3,4	4,8	5,0	4,9	3,0	5,5
Municipal Council member	8,9	8,6	5,7	6,7	5,6	3,2
Banker	-	-	-	8,1	1,8	2,9

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

Involvement in corrupt practices

The index reflects the self-assessed personal involvement of respondents in various forms of corrupt behavior.

With this index as well, the tendency towards declining values, which began in January 2000, was no longer observed in September 2000. There has been a certain, though minimal, increase in the actual occurrences of corrupt behavior. Set against the more substantial negative changes in the values of the first three indexes, there is reason to claim that the frequency of involvement in acts of corruption in this country remains relatively stable.

FIGURE 4. INVOLVEMENT IN CORRUPT PRACTICES
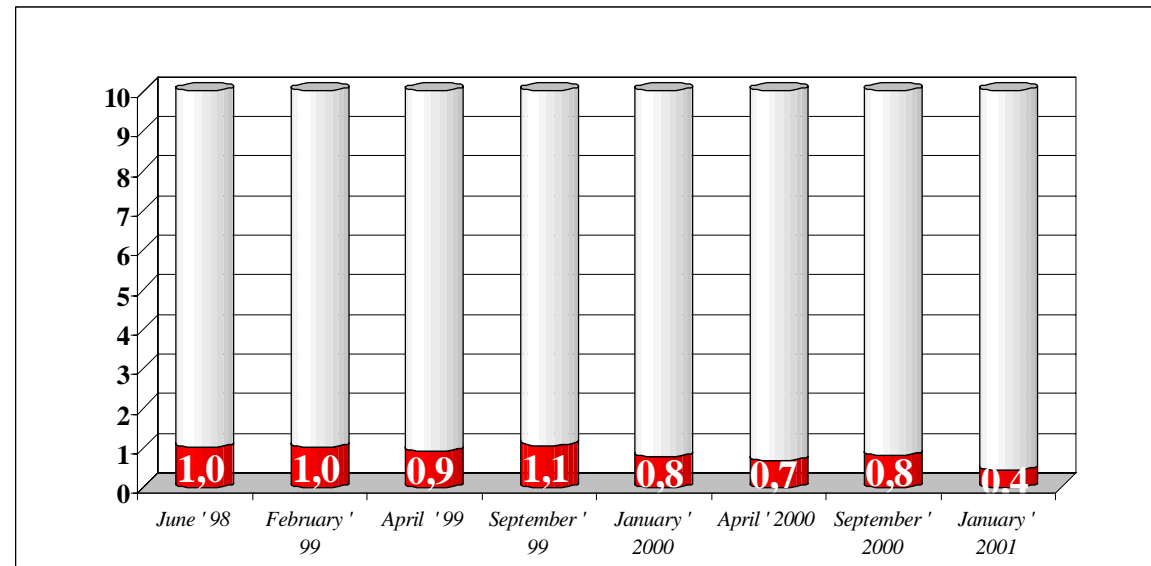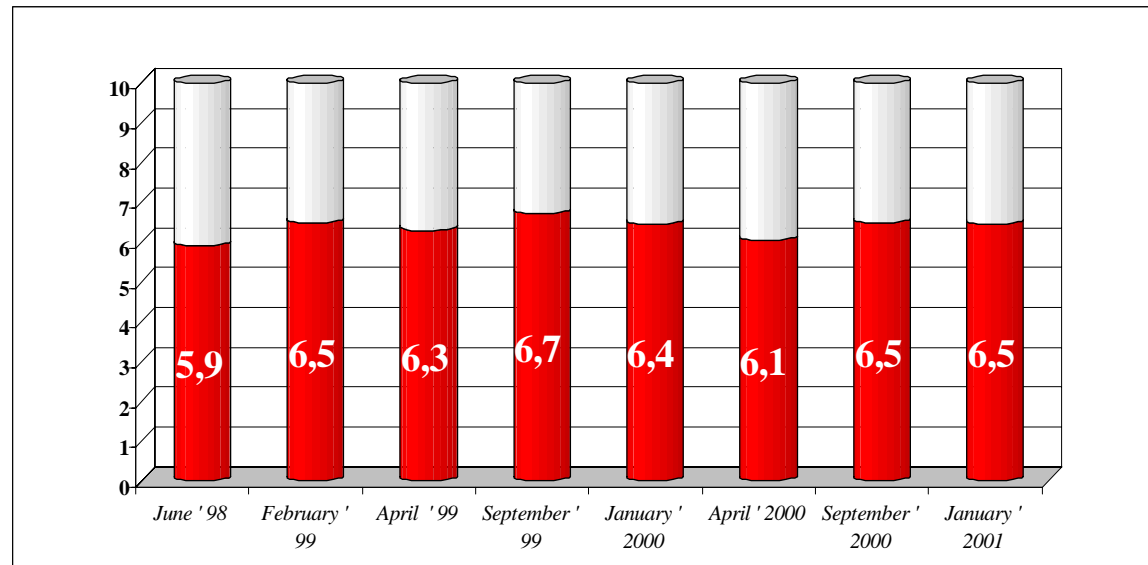

Base: N = 1037

ASSESSMENTS OF THE SPREAD OF CORRUPTION

Spread of corruption

This index registers citizens' assessments of the spread of corrupt practices among public sector employees.

In September 2000 this corruption index marked the most substantial increase. Bearing in mind that it is the index which as a rule displays the highest value, public opinion can be said to regard corruption as a widespread phenomenon in Bulgarian society. What is more, the stable and generally unwavering values of this index suggest that in the short term there are hardly likely to occur any substantial changes in public assessments of the spread of corruption.

FIGURE 5. SPREAD OF CORRUPTION

Base: N = 1037

Factors influencing the Spread of corruption

The chief factor for the proliferation of corruption, associated with the use of public office for personal gain, remains with a practically unchanged value. It is worth noting the declining influence of the factor rated second by importance, and namely, the low remuneration levels. By contrast, the shares of those who cited imperfect legislation as a reason for the spread of corruption increased by about 5%. A similar change occurred with respect to the factor "intertwined official duties and personal interests". Despite the presence of certain fluctuations, the remaining reasons for the spread of corruption kept values close to those registered in the month of January 2000.

TABLE 3. MAJOR FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR THE SPREAD OF CORRUPTION

	April '99	*September '99*	*January 2000*	*September 2000*
Fast personal enrichment sought by those in power	52,9	54,8	57,0	57,8
Low salaries	51,5	43,6	47,2	41,6
Imperfect legislation	38,8	37,8	35,1	40,5
Intertwinement of official duties and personal interests	25,8	28,3	28,3	32,6
Lack of strict administrative control	36,4	33,8	30,8	32,3
Ineffectiveness of the judicial system	19,6	27,5	24,7	22,2
Moral crisis in the period of transition	19,4	19,4	18,2	17,0
Problems inherited from the communist past	6,8	7,4	7,3	7,8
Specific characteristics of Bulgarian national culture	6,9	4,7	5,9	4,2

Base: N= 1037

Spread of corruption by professional groups

In September 2000 public opinion appeared less inclined to believe that corruption is widespread among the majority of occupational groups. Exceptions to this tendency occur with respect to ministers, police officers, tax officials, lawyers, doctors, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and doctors, among whom corruption is perceived as increasing. Customs officers continue to be perceived as the most corrupt occupational group. Revealingly enough, they have come to be immediately followed by ministers, which may be accounted for by the more intensive coverage of corruption scandals by the national media. The share of those who believe that most police officers are involved in corruption marked the largest increase (by about 4%). In September 2000, public opinion again rated lowest the spread of corruption among NGO representatives, journalists, and teachers.

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

	"Nearly all" and "Most are involved in corruption" (%)					
	February 1999	*April 1999*	*September 1999*	*January 2000*	*April 2000*	*September. 2000*
Customs officers	73,3	73,2	75,2	77,0	78,6	75,2
Ministers	39,1	35,3	43,9	45,3	53,4	55,0
Police officers	51,5	49,2	55,8	51,9	50,5	54,3
Tax officials	47,1	45,2	56,4	53,9	51,0	53,7
Lawyers	55,5	55,4	55,6	54,8	51,9	52,9
Members of parliament	39,0	37,7	42,6	45,0	55,1	51,7
Prosecutors	48,5	50,0	50,8	46,3	54,4	51,3
Judges	49,5	50,8	50,7	48,5	56,0	50,1
Ministry officials	42,5	41,9	48,2	47,9	55,1	49,7
Criminal investigators	43,6	41,8	44,9	41,0	48,0	43,8
Leaders of political parties and coalitions	40,5	31,1	42,7	37,5	45,0	43,8
Doctors	56,9	46,0	47,3	42,5	40,9	43,6
Businesspersons	49,5	47,6	48,3	48,5	51,4	42,3
Municipal officials	44,3	39,6	48,8	45,0	46,5	41,6
Administration staff from the judicial system	42,0	40,5	49,7	42,0	45,2	40,2
Local political leaders	34,0	27,5	38,2	31,7	36,4	36,8
Bankers	-	-	-	20,9	38,8	33,5
Municipal Council members	31,2	26,4	34,7	32,5	35,2	32,1
University teachers or officials	29,5	28,5	35,7	29,4	29,3	28,1
Representatives of NGOs	16,3	11,5	20,9	16,2	18,2	23,9
Journalists	12,7	12,0	14,3	10,6	14,1	13,9
Teachers	12,6	8,4	11,5	9,5	8,2	10,9

Spread of corruption among institutions

The ranking of the state institutions depending on the spread of corruption within them did not undergo any substantial changes in September 2000. According to public opinion, corruption is most common in customs, the Privatization Agency, and the judicial system, and least common, in the National Statistical Institute, the army, and the presidency. According to public opinion, in the period April-September 2000, corruption has increased in the sector ministries, the Government, Parliament, the Bulgarian Telecommunications Company, the Audit Office, the Bulgarian National Bank, and the National Statistical Institute.

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

	April 1999	*September 1999*	*January 2000*	*April 2000*	*September 2000*
Customs	8,78	9,10	9,02	9,10	8,90
Privatisation Agency	7,46	7,86	7,96	8,28	8,06
Judicial system	7,62	7,88	7,68	7,68	7,60
Bulgarian Foreign Investment Agency	-	-	-	7,78	7,54
Tax services	7,10	7,98	7,68	7,56	7,54
Sector ministries	6,94	7,40	7,24	7,44	7,50
Government	6,58	7,12	6,94	7,10	7,44
Parliament	6,78	7,16	6,96	7,24	7,42
Police	7,16	7,54	7,30	7,24	7,14
Committee on Energy	6,40	6,84	7,00	7,10	7,00
District administration	6,90	7,32	7,02	7,04	6,94
Bulgarian Telecommunication Company	-	-	-	6,28	6,60
Municipal administration	6,64	7,24	6,82	6,74	6,54
Commission on the Protection of Competition	6,14	6,40	6,18	6,68	6,54
Securities and Stock-Exchanges Commission	6,24	6,28	6,22	6,50	6,46
National Audit Chamber	5,74	5,86	5,54	5,84	5,98
Bulgarian National Bank	5,34	5,32	5,34	5,16	5,72
National Statistical Institute	4,80	4,54	5,00	4,68	5,02
Army	4,88	5,06	5,06	5,08	4,98
Presidency	4,46	4,50	4,28	4,52	4,52

Practical efficiency of corruption

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

In the month of September, by contrast to the general increase in the values of the remaining indexes, this index marks a certain decline. Nevertheless, in terms of the entire period monitored, it has proved extremely stable, has not been subject to any drastic fluctuations, and has consistently displayed one of the highest values. What this suggests is that under the Bulgarian conditions corruption continues to be a highly effective tool for addressing private problems. Hence the more general conclusion that the social environment generating the preconditions for the existence of corruption has not undergone any serious changes.

**FIGURE 6. PRACTICAL EFFICIENCY OF CORRUPTION**
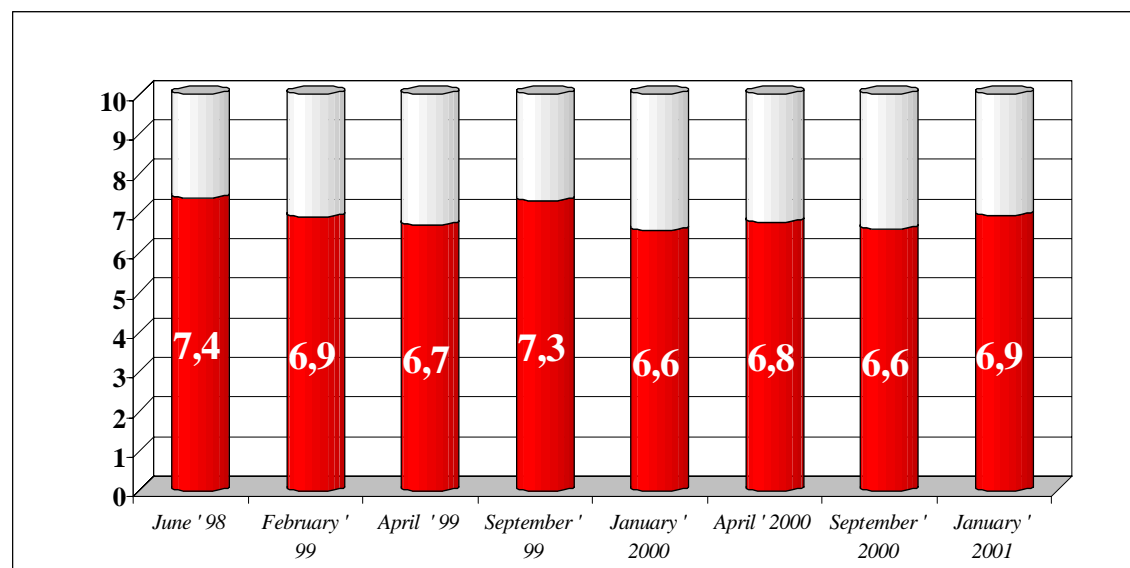
Base: N = 1037

CORRUPTION EXPECTATIONS

This index registers assessments of the capability (potential) of Bulgarian society to cope with corruption.

The value registered in the month of September maintains it as the most stable index of all those included in the corruption monitoring. This comes as further confirmation that the capability of Bulgarian society to cope with the problem of corruption depends not only on a change in mass attitudes to this phenomenon, but likewise on the emergence of new social practices. There is a call for essentially new regulatory mechanisms that should at once be legally regulated, morally acceptable, and effective in practice.

FIGURE 7. CORRUPTION EXPECTATIONS
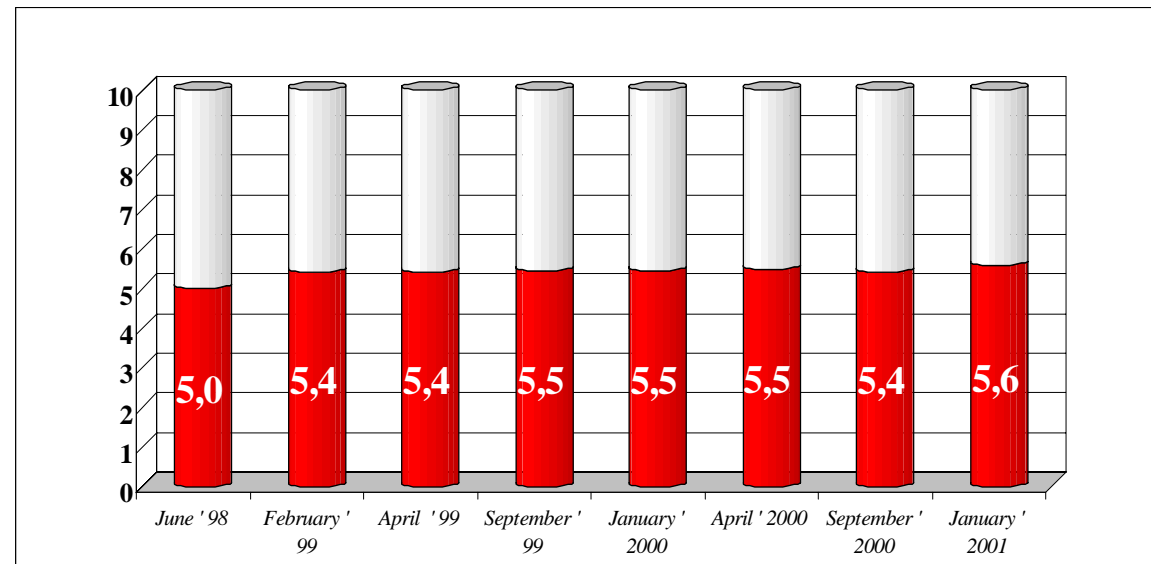
Base: N = 1037

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

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

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