

Serbia Corruption Benchmarking Survey



The United Nations System in Serbia

3rd round October 2010

Contents

■	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	E
■	2. ABOUT THE CORRUPTION BENCHMARKING PROJECT.....	1
	1.1. SURVEY BACKGROUND.....	4
	1.2. INTRODUCTION	4
	1.3. METHODOLOGY.....	4
■	3. SURVEY RESULTS	2
	2.1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION	5
	2.2. CONCERNS: BASIC SOCIAL ISSUES	6
	2.3. EXPERIENCE WITH CORRUPTION	7
	2.4. LEVEL OF CORRUPTION	9
	2.5. PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS REGARDING CORRUPTION.....	11
	2.6. CORRUPTION BY SECTORS.....	13
	2.7. COMBATING CORRUPTION	15
	2.8. PREVENTING CORRUPTION	17
	2.9. INFORMING ABOUT CORRUPTION	18
	2.10. ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY.....	19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Experience with corruption

- One third of respondents report that someone from their closest social network paid a bribe and 13% report their personal involvement in corruption.
- In most cases the bribe was given to doctors, then to police officers and state administration employees.
- The average amount of money paid as a bribe is 255 EUR, which is higher than in the previous rounds. The amount is close to the average salary in Serbia.

2. Perception of corruption

- There is a general impression that the level of corruption is not decreasing.
- Work on prevention and implementation of measures that will bring long term results in reducing corruption are necessary, but more should be done with regards to short-term measures visible to citizens.
- According to citizens` opinions, only the Government and other state institutions have the power to confront corruption and they should have the main role in the fight against it. At the same time, these institutions are perceived as highly corrupt.
- The non-governmental sector should be strengthened.

3. Positive things

- The corruption is less frequently mentioned as a major problem of the Serbian society than in the previous rounds.
- The perception of the levels of corruption in the police sector has improved, evidenced by a number of questions asked. The police are more frequently mentioned as an institution that should lead the fight against corruption.

4. Negative things

- Political life is perceived as an area where corruption is highly present and politicians are perceived as having no real will to fight corruption because they are corrupt themselves.
- The judicial system also has a negative reputation with a prevailing opinion that it is highly affected by corruption.

5. Anti-corruption Agency

- The awareness about the Anti-corruption Agency increased compared to the previous round and the perception of its contribution in suppressing corruption is more positive.

1. ABOUT THE CORRUPTION BENCHMARKING PROJECT

1.1. SURVEY BACKGROUND

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is supporting the Government of Serbia and civil society efforts to promote governance, accountability and transparency, and to combat corruption, by monitoring corruption perceptions and the incidence of corruption at the household level. The survey will inform advocacy and future programming that will build capacity, and educate and raise awareness within the public and private sectors.

1.2. INTRODUCTION

TNS Medium Gallup conducted the initial Corruption Benchmarking Survey in October 2009 and the second round in March 2010. In this report the results of the third round, conducted in October 2010, will be presented.

The main goal of the survey was to explore Serbian citizens' perception on the level of corruption in Serbia as well as their experience with corruption. The survey gathers data on public attitudes, and on the scope and incidence of corruption nationwide. The baseline for the survey and for the questionnaire design was the Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer and the benchmarking studies conducted in comparison countries.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

- **Survey type:** Ad hoc quantitative field survey, 3rd round
- **Technique:** Direct, face to face interview
- **Questionnaire:** Structured questionnaire, paper and pencil data collection, the same questionnaire is used in all three rounds (except for the question regarding the Anti-corruption Agency, asked in the second and third rounds only)
- **Fieldwork period:** October 20th – 27th, 2010

SAMPLE (COVERAGE AND SIZE)

- **Territory:** Serbia
- **Target group:** Voting population of Serbia (18+)

	Initial survey October 2009.	2 nd round March 2010.	3 rd round October 2010.
TOTAL SAMPLE	N= 1014	N= 601 respondents	N= 600 respondents
Belgrade sub-sample	N=239	N=175	N=184

The Belgrade sub-sample is represented as proposed by the pre-set methodology, and North, South, East and West Serbia are represented proportionally to their share in the total population.

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

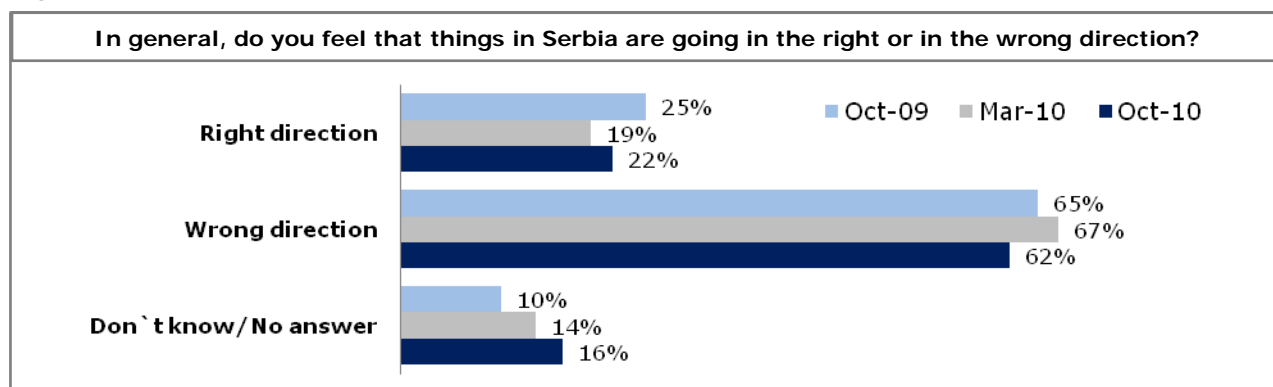
2. SURVEY RESULTS

2.1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

The general impression of Serbian citizens regarding the developments in their country is rather pessimistic. The majority feels that Serbia is going in the wrong direction, while only 22% think that the direction is right. There is also a high number of those undecided, revealing citizens' general confusion regarding this topic.

Men perceive the situation in Serbia as more optimistic than women – 26% of men think that things in Serbia are going in the right direction, compared to only 17% of women sharing this impression. Respondents with higher and university education also have a more positive perception than those with lower education. Students (still) more frequently believe in a brighter future than the unemployed and retired.

A comparison with previous rounds shows that currently less respondents think that things are going in the wrong direction than in March 2010 and October 2009. The impression that Serbia is on the right track is slightly more frequent compared to March, but indecision is the highest of all rounds.

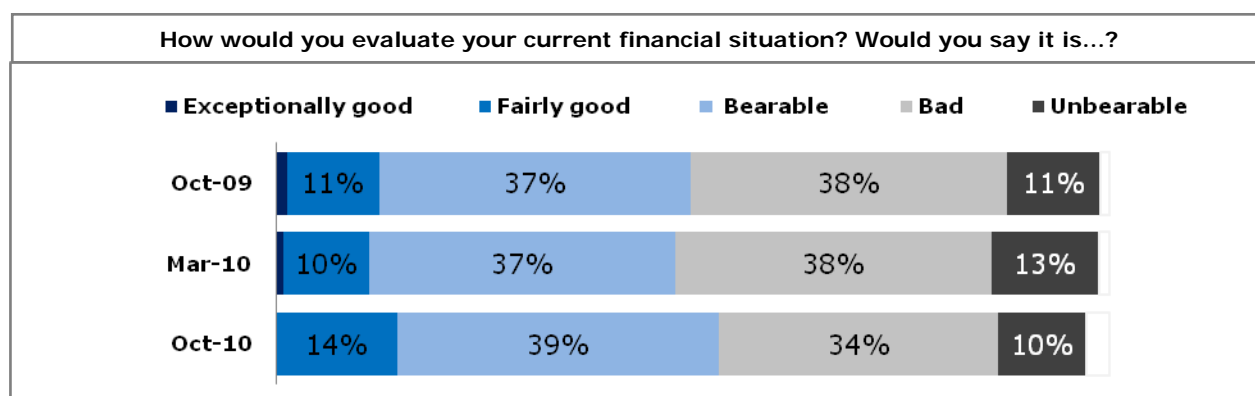


The results regarding the financial situation show a grim picture regarding the financial climate in which Serbian citizens live. 44% describe their financial situation as bad or even unbearable. Only a minority lives fairly good and none of respondents live exceptionally good.

The older population is especially financially deprived – in the 55+ population, 42% of respondents say that their financial situation is bad and 15% that it is unbearable.

The distribution of answers is very similar as in the previous survey rounds. In October 2010, compared to a period of six months and a year ago, slightly more people describe their financial situation as fairly good or bearable and less people describe it as bad or unbearable.

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.



However, it would be hard to conclude that the financial situation of Serbian citizens is better based on the previous results, since, when they are asked directly, almost half of the respondents (47%) said that their current financial situation is worse than 12 months ago, 43% thought that it is the same and only 7% said that it is better.

Expectations regarding next year are not very optimistic either. More than half of respondents (53%) expect that there will be no changes regarding their finances, 26% expect further deterioration, while 20% of people expect improvement. Once again we have a more positive attitude among students – 36% of them believe that next year will be financially prosperous for them, probably expecting that they will get a job. Negative expectations are significantly more frequent in East Serbia and Vojvodina than in the capital, and in rural compared to urban settlements.

2.2. CONCERNS: BASIC SOCIAL ISSUES

Unemployment proved to be the biggest and most important of problems that concern people of Serbia today – every third respondent mentioned it. Poverty (23%), low salaries (10%) and lack of opportunities for young people (9%) are also huge and often mentioned problems. Corruption is among the top five – as mentioned by 7% of respondents.

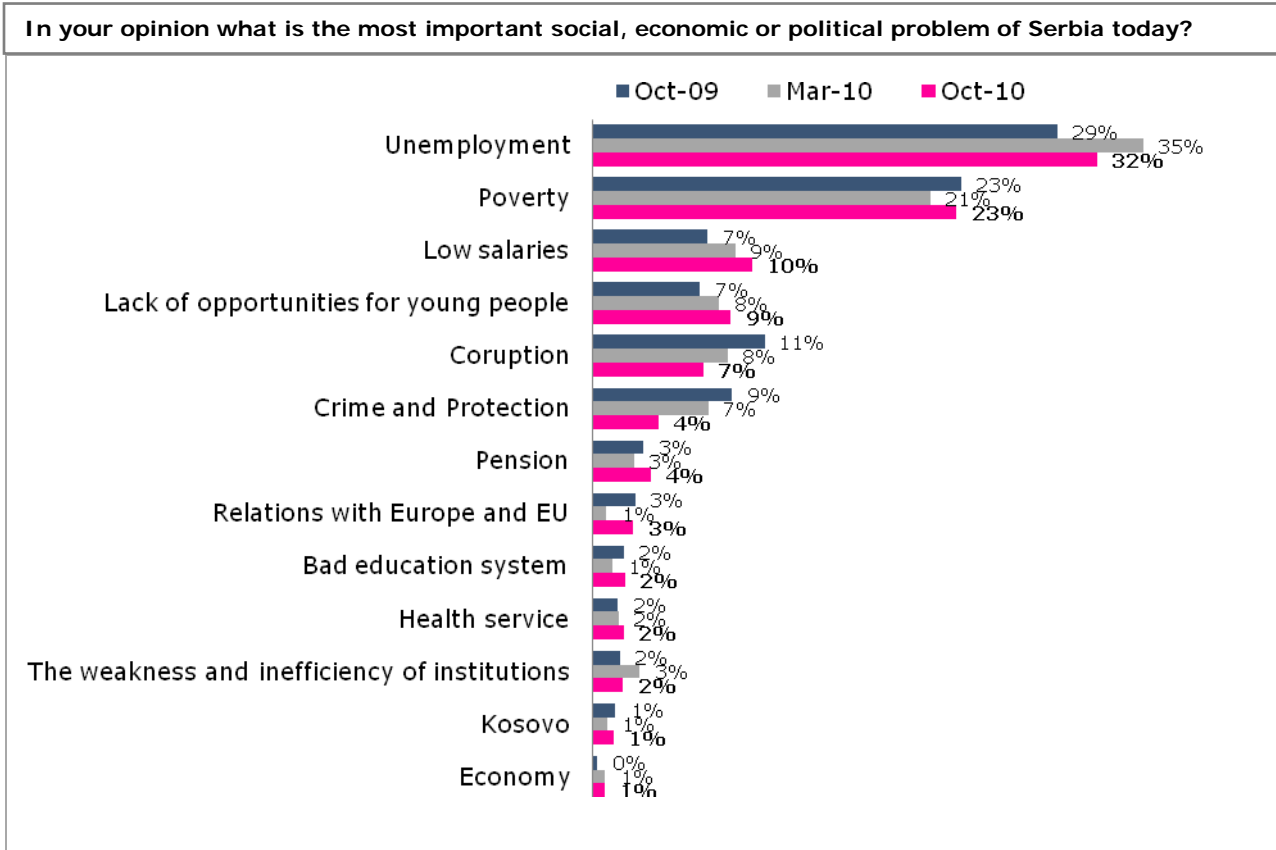
Unemployment and poverty have been the most serious chronic problems burdening the citizens of Serbia for a long time and they are most frequently mentioned in all three rounds of the survey. Corruption went down to fifth place in October 2010, from third in October 2009 and fourth in March 2010.

Longitudinal observing of social climate and problems that Serbian citizens perceive as most burdening reveal that 80% of them continuously mention five major problems.

Crime and protection is the area where some improvement is perceived. In October 2009 this was mentioned as the most important problem by 9% of respondents, in March by 7% and in October 2010 by 4%.

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

High state political issues such as relations with the European Union and Kosovo are rarely mentioned; problems related to everyday life are citizens' priority.



2.3. EXPERIENCE WITH CORRUPTION

Indirect experience

Similarly as in March 2010 and somewhat lower than in October 2009, one third of the respondents in October 2010 report that someone from their closest social network (cousins or close friends) paid a bribe in the prior three months. In 38% of cases a bribe was offered in order to receive some service, in 32% a bribe was directly asked for and in 29% of cases a bribe was offered to avoid problems with the authorities.

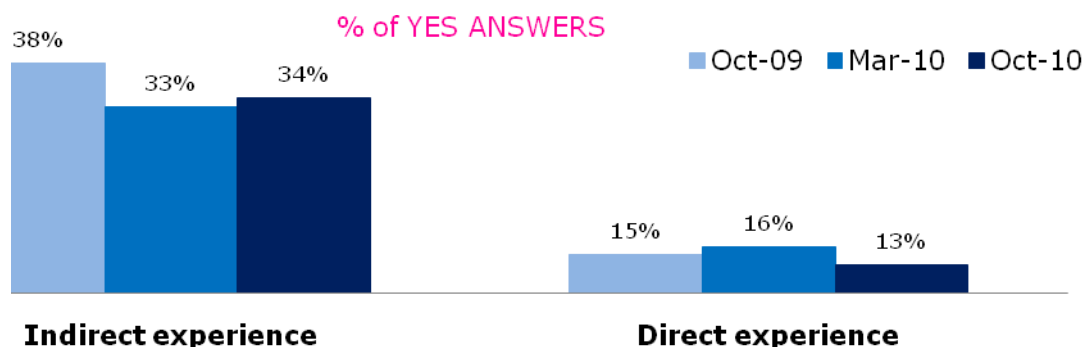
Direct experience

Fewer respondents report their direct involvement in corruption. The number of those who paid (or admit to say that they paid) a bribe is similar as in the previous rounds. The majority of respondents who paid a bribe (63%) did it once, 25% paid a bribe two times, 8% three times and 3% did it four or more times.

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

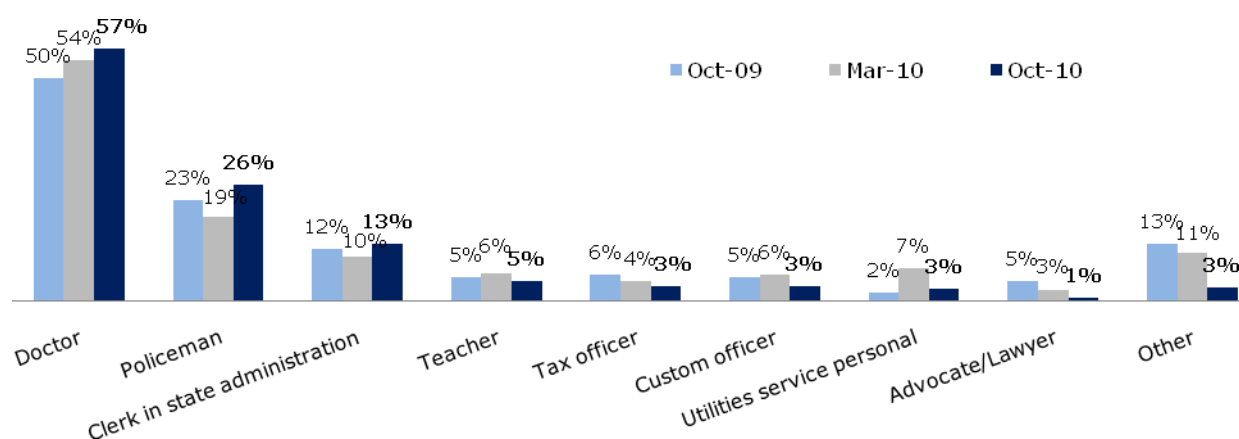
Indirect experience: Has anyone close to you (cousins or close friends) paid a bribe in any form (presents or money) in the past three months?

Direct experience: In the past three months have you paid a bribe in any form (presents or money)?



In most cases the bribe was given to doctors (57%), then to police officers (26%) and to state administration employees (13%). The trend of corruption incidence in these sectors is increasing. Corruption in other sectors is rarely reported.

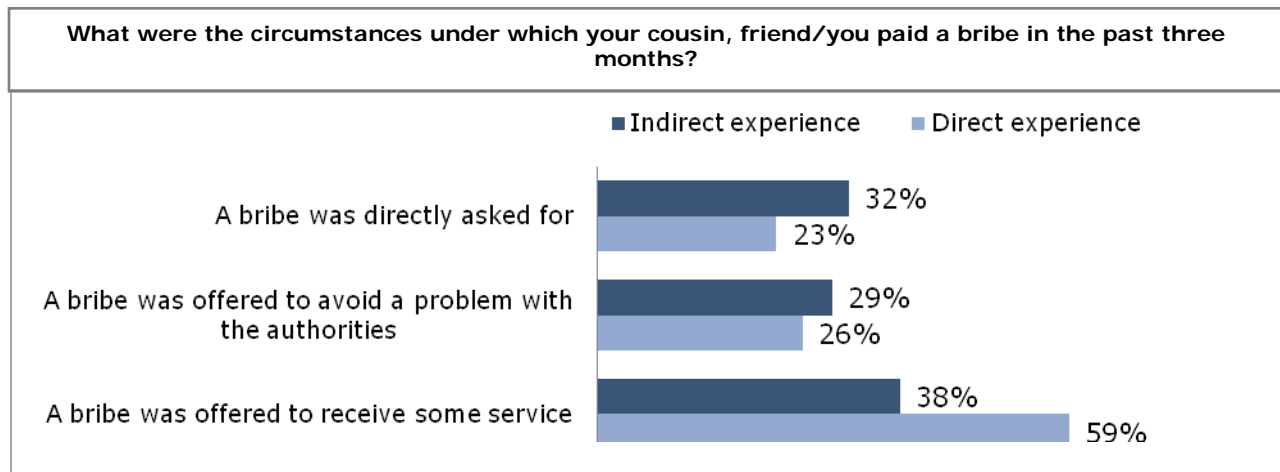
ONLY RESPONDENTS WHO PAID A BRIBE (N=80): Who got paid? MULTIPLE RESPONSE



The average amount of money paid as a bribe in October 2010 is 255 EUR. This is a higher average amount than in the prior survey rounds - 169 EUR in March 2010 and 164 EUR in October 2009. It is possible that general inflation influenced a raise of the amount solicited or offered as a bribe. The amount of money that people give as a bribe in most cases (71%) affects their budget to a great or moderate extent.

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

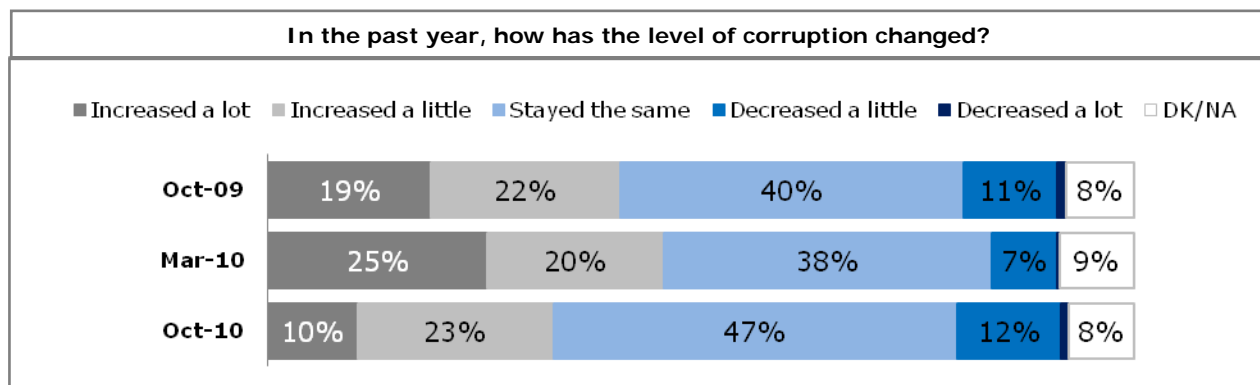
The results reveal that those who paid bribes more usually had offered it self-initiatively (85%) than it had been asked of them (25%). In 59% of cases the bribe was offered to receive some service and in 26% it was offered to avoid problems with the authorities. This data open a question about the reasons why people offer bribe. Has it become implied and unwritten rule to pay doctors, policemen and others in order to receive a service that is in their job description? Whatever the answer is, the responsibility is reciprocal, and citizens should be more aware of it. They should start to evaluate and correct their own behaviour not just blame others and the system.



2.4. LEVEL OF CORRUPTION

Perception of current state

Almost half of Serbian citizens perceive corruption to be stabilized at a certain level. The positive aspect is that in October 2010, compared to previous rounds, there is a much weaker impression that the level of corruption increased in past year.

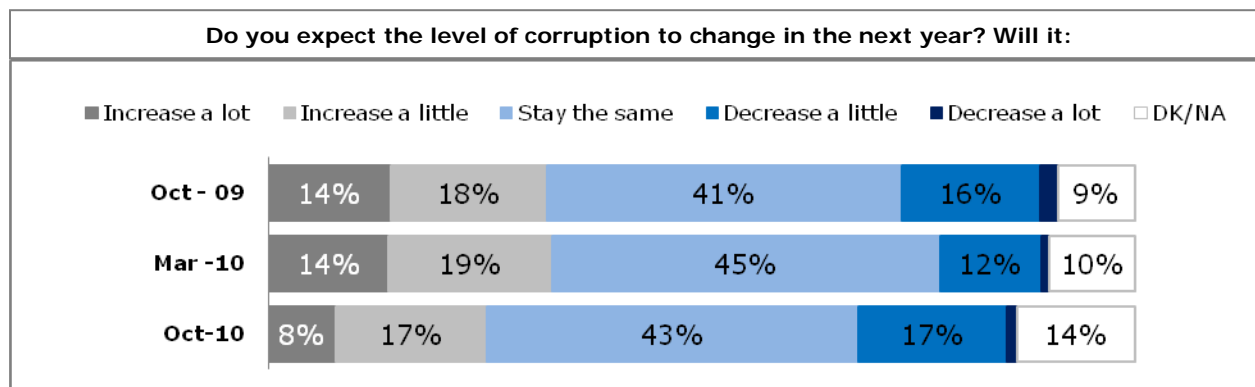


Expectations

Expectations from next year with regards to the level of corruption are slightly more positive than in previous rounds. Less people in this round expect increase and more of them expect

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

decrease of corruption levels next year. However, the share of citizens expecting the level of corruption to remain the same is similar as it was, and negative expectations are still more frequent than positive.

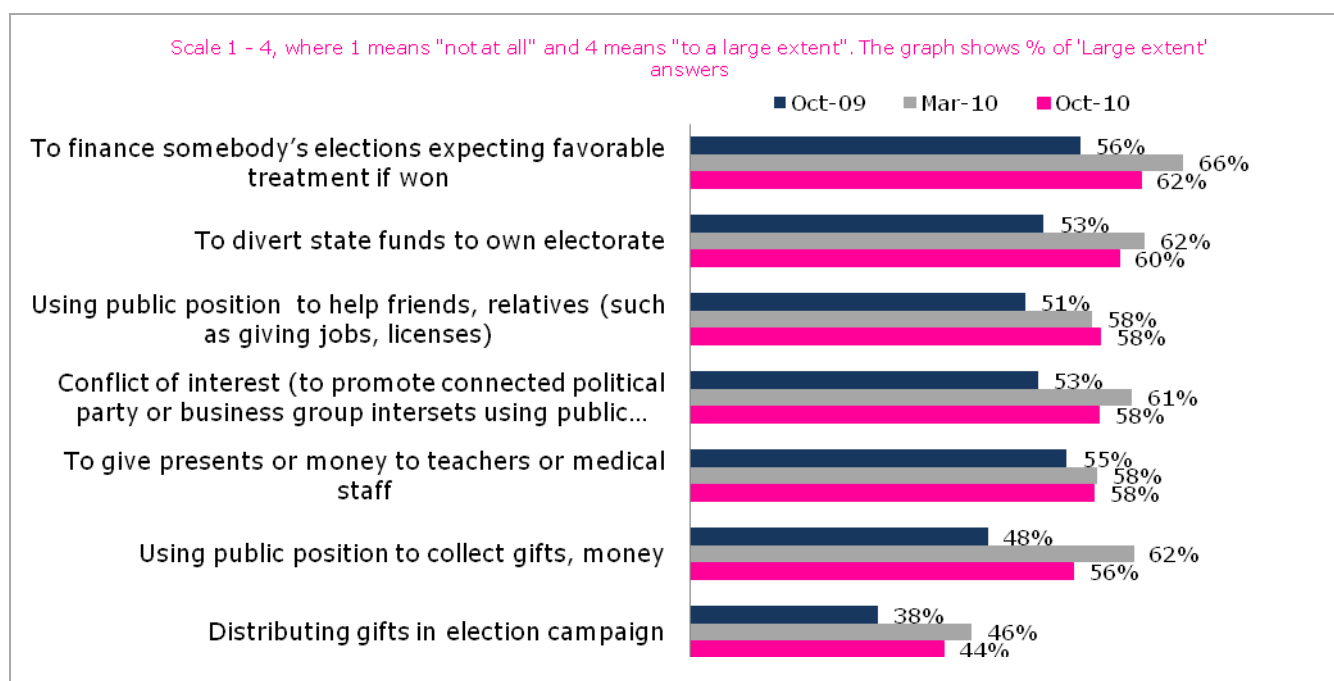


Citizens believe that all spheres of life are to some extent affected by corruption. More than half of them (58%) state that corruption affects their personal and family life and 66% that it affects the business environment to a large or moderate extent. However, political life is perceived as an area where corruption is flourishing - 81% of respondents perceive it as an area affected by corruption to a large or moderate extent.

We explored the perceived presence of specific corruption cases related to conflict of interest, abuse of public positions and financing of somebody's elections in order to benefit from that election. Overall, the perceived level of these cases of corruption is the same or lower than in March 2010 and higher than in October 2009. Financing of somebody's elections in order to receive some benefits in return, divert of state funds to own electorate, breach of duty for taking bribe and conflict of interest are forms of corruption highly presented according to more than half of the respondents.

In your opinion, what is corruption? If yes, to what extent is it present?

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.



2.5. PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS REGARDING CORRUPTION

The results from the third round confirm those from previous rounds. Citizens are basically used to corruption – 83% agree that corruption is a common practice in Serbia and 56% agree that some level of corruption is expected. Ordinary people feel that they are victims of corruption in everyday life, while the elite is perceived as protected and not caring about corruption (81%). Despite the fact that the fight against corruption needs to be generated and led by the Government, citizens seem to underestimate their own roll, contribution and responsibility. More than half of the respondents (59%) think that there is less corruption thanks to the citizens themselves, while 58% think that the person giving a bribe is equally responsible as the one who accepts it.

Could you express your opinion on following statements?			
Scale 1 – 4; The table shows % of answers "Mostly agree" and "Completely agree" with the statement			
	Oct-09	Mar-10	Oct-10
Corruption is a common practice in our country	87%	89%	83%
The person who gives bribe is in the same way responsible as the one who accepts it	57%	59%	58%
Elite do not care much about corruption on low level, as it does not affect them. Only ordinary people are carrying the burden of day-to-day corruption	76%	87%	81%
To have less corruption is a responsibility of citizen themselves	59%	54%	59%
Some level of corruption is expected	60%	59%	56%
Some level of corruption is acceptable	35%	32%	32%

There is a negative perception about politicians and the judicial system. People feel that they have no real will to combat corruption because they are corrupt themselves. This is a dominant impression in all three rounds of the survey. Furthermore, the majority thinks that

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

the Government/politicians are not capable of stopping corruption and that consequently they should be replaced. However, the opinion about the anticorruption legislation is somewhat more positive (or at least less negative) than in March 2010 – 53% of citizens think that the anticorruption legislation will not be effective, while the percentage in March was 61%.

On the other side, perceptions of the police are more positive than in previous rounds. In October 2010 the share of people who think that the police is too corrupt to investigate corruption decreased to 60% from 70% in October 2009 and 71% March 2010.

The work of NGOs in suppression of corruption is perceived as accompanying to the work of Government institutions. Two thirds of the respondents (66%) think that only the Government institutions are capable of stopping corruption, since NGOs do not have adequate capacity. More than a third of the respondents perceive NGOs as institutions with a significant role in the fight against corruption.

Could you express your opinion on following statements?			
Scale 1 – 4; The table shows % of answers "Mostly agree" and "Completely agree" with the statement			
	Oct-09	Mar-10	Oct-10
Politicians have no real will to fight corruption as many of them benefit from it	81%	87%	84%
The Court System has a role to play, but it is too corrupt to deal with corruption	79%	81%	80%
Only police (with special authorities) could deal with the wide spread corruption	62%	59%	62%
Police is too corrupt to investigate corruption	70%	71%	60%
As an existing Government/politicians is/are not capable to stop corruption - it should be replaced	72%	74%	70%
A recently adopted legislation on corruption will not function	52%	61%	53%
NGO's are too weak (do not have capacity) to fight corruption, only Government institutions may help in combating corruption	67%	69%	66%
NGO's have a significant role in fighting corruption	37%	32%	36%

The opinion about public administration and civil servants is less negative than in previous rounds. The improvement of bureaucratic regulations and strengthening of the system is confirmed by the data that now fewer people think that paying bribes is the only way to overcome the bureaucracy or that paying bribes helps to overcome unjust regulations. It is still a dominant opinion that strong penalties are the best measures to reduce corruption in public administration. Still, some level of consideration for corrupt public employees is noticeable since 40% of people think that taking bribes is the only way for them to survive because of their low salaries.

Could you express your opinion on following statements?
Scale 1 – 4; The table shows % of answers "Mostly agree" and "Completely agree" with the statement

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

	Oct-09	Mar-10	Oct-10
The only way to overcome widespread bureaucracy is to pay bribes	57%	55%	48%
Sometimes giving a bribe helps to overcome unjust regulations	60%	62%	55%
Municipality officials in general are corrupt	55%	59%	55%
Because of low salaries bribes are the only way of survival for the majority of public employees	37%	42%	40%
The stronger punitive measures for corruption are – the better officials will work	74%	76%	72%
Young public servants are more corrupt	37%	33%	35%

It is a prevailing opinion in all three rounds that large companies are an important link in a corruption chain. A large number of citizens (75%) think that it is in the interest of large enterprises to have a corrupt Government which they could bribe, realizing self-interest in this way. Small and medium businesses are perceived as a sector, which is negatively affected by corruption.

Could you express your opinion on following statements?

Scale 1 – 4; The table shows % of answers "Mostly agree" and "Completely agree" with the statement

	Oct-09	Mar-10	Oct-10
Small and medium business are most negatively affected by corruption	56%	56%	56%
Large business is interested in corrupt Government since it benefits from it	75%	77%	75%

2.6. CORRUPTION BY SECTORS

Political parties and the health system are perceived as most corrupt sectors. They were perceived as most affected by corruption in the previous round as well. Perception of political parties as corrupt is most pronounced among citizens of East Serbia and Belgrade. The health system is perceived as much more corrupt by citizens from South and East Serbia than from other regions.

Judges, prosecutors and lawyers also have a bad reputation among citizens – two thirds perceive them as significantly or extremely corrupt. Customs, Government and Parliament are also in unenviable position, with around 60% of people perceiving them as corrupt.

As previous results have already shown, the police improved its image compared to the previous period. It is now perceived as corrupt by 57% of people, which is still not very good, but is better than in October 2009 and March 2009 (65%). People of Central-West Serbia and especially of South Serbia have a more positive opinion about police than people from other regions. Only 12% of citizens from South Serbia stated that the police is significantly or extremely corrupt, and in Central-West Serbia 38% think so. The perception in Vojvodina is more negative (63%), in East Serbia (66%) while it is the worst in Belgrade (72%).

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

Around half of the citizens perceive the media, the city administration and the education sector as highly corrupt. Belgrade citizens are especially dissatisfied (more than citizens of other regions) with the level of corruption in the city administration.

The private business sector, international aid and donor projects, along with the tax office were perceived as highly corruption in October 2010 by less than half of the Serbian citizens, which is less than in the previous rounds. NGOs have a similar reputation as before, 40% of people say that they are highly affected by corruption.

More than a third of the citizens think that there is a high level of corruption in the local administration - registry and permit service, land utilization/cadastral, utility service (telephone, electricity, water supply) and bank sector. This impression is especially dominant in Belgrade and East Serbia.

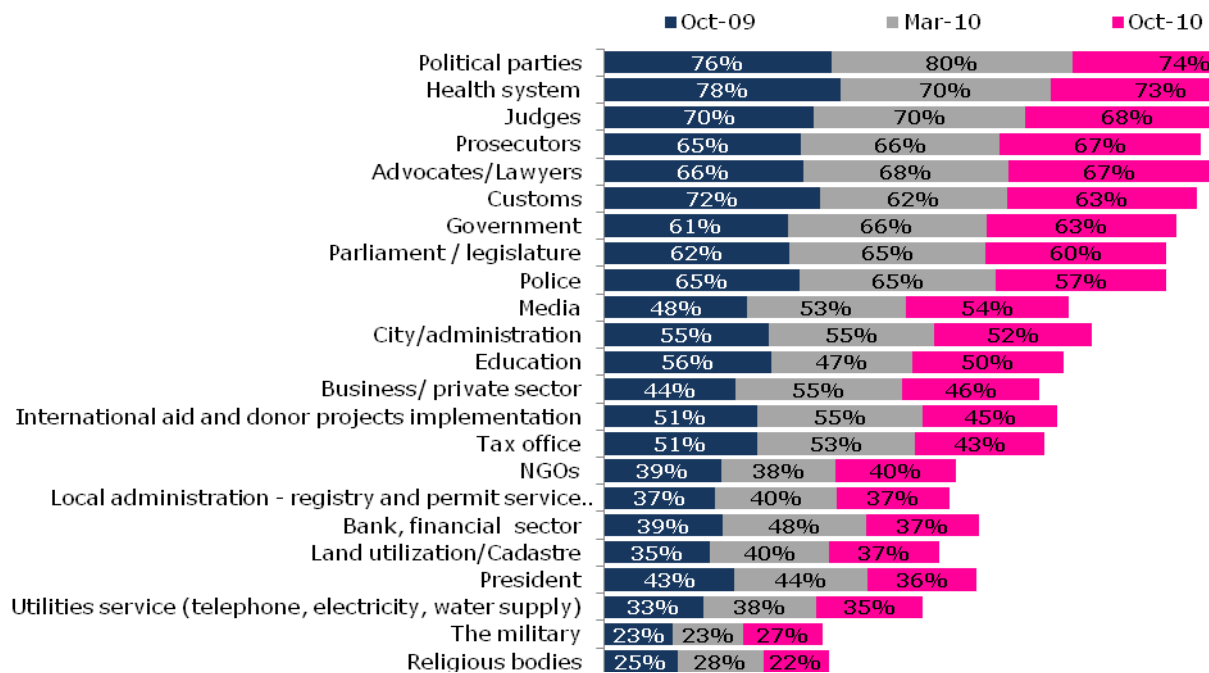
The Serbian President is perceived as corrupt by 36% of people, which is an improvement compared to the previous period. Citizens of the capital have a more negative perception of the President with regards to corruption than citizens of other regions.

The military and religious bodies are perceived as the least corrupt institutions, just like in the previous rounds.

<p>To what extent do you perceive the following sectors in this country to be affected by corruption?</p>
--

<p>Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.</p>
--

Scale 1 – 5; The graph shows % of answers "Significantly affected" and "Extremely affected"

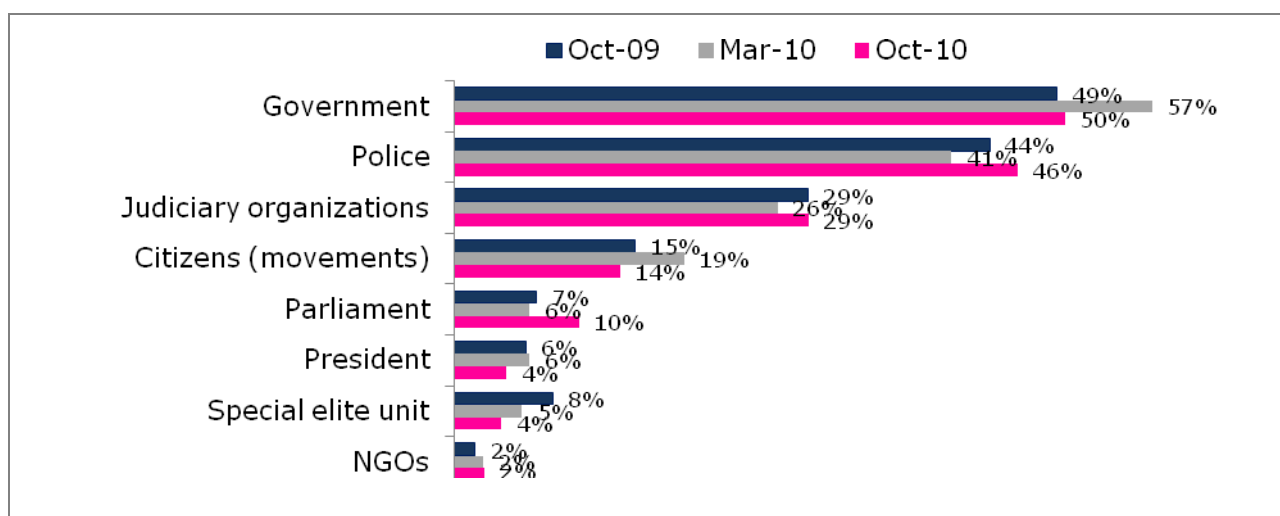


2.7. COMBATING CORRUPTION

According to the opinion of Serbian citizens, the Government (50%) and the police (46%) should be leaders in the fight against corruption. In October 2010, the Government is less frequently mentioned than in the previous round, while the police is mentioned more frequently as a leader in the fight against corruption. This reflects the decrease of trust in Government and increase of trust in the police for anticorruption initiatives. Citizens and their initiatives are less often mentioned as leaders, while the Parliament is mentioned slightly more often than in the previous round.

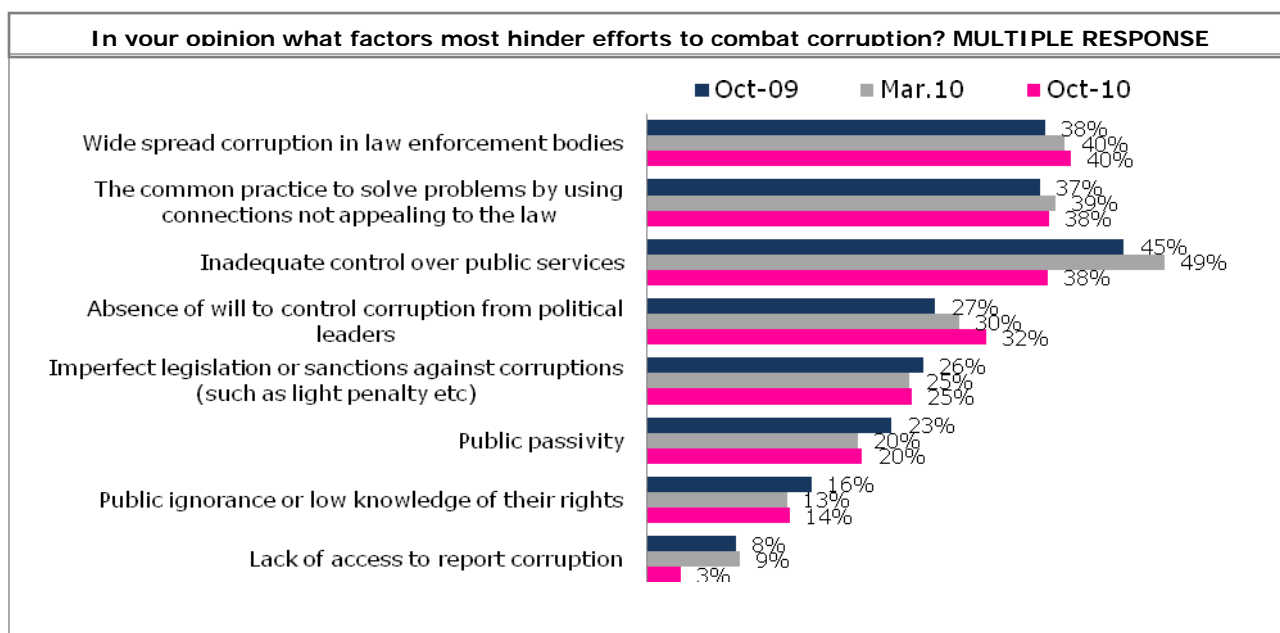
Who should lead in combating of corruption? TWO ANSWERS

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.



There is a lack of belief that the current Government will have a significant success in the fight against corruption. The majority (64%) thinks that it will perform the same in fighting corruption as the previous government. Only 16% of respondents think that the current government will be more successful, while 19% think that it will do worse than the previous one. The distribution of answers is similar in all three rounds.

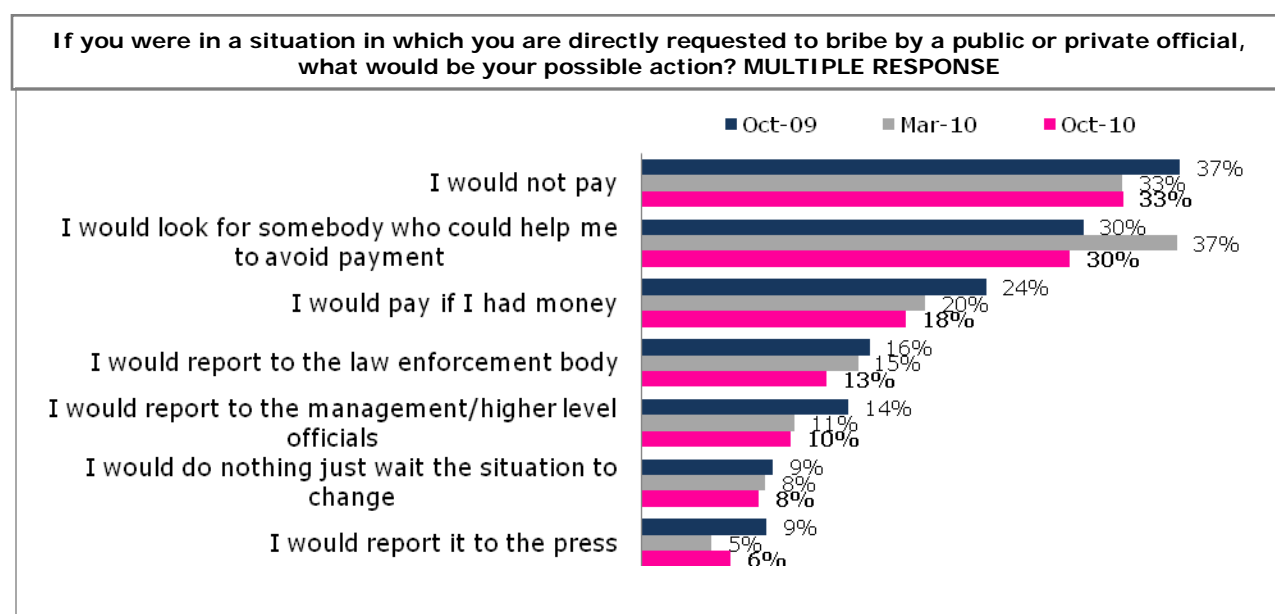
In October 2010 the wide spread corruption in law enforcement bodies is perceived as the major factor that hinders the fight against corruption. The common practice of solving problems by using connections and inadequate oversight over public services are other most often mentioned hindering factors. The perception of the politicians' role in corruption suppression is again revealed – in 32% of cases respondents mention absence of political leaders' will to control corruption. One of the important hindering factors is insufficiently good legislation and inadequate (too light) penalties for corruption. Public passivity and ignorance also hinder the efforts to reduce corruption.



Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

Most respondents would not pay a bribe if it was solicited. In 30% of cases, they say that they would try to avoid payment by looking for someone to help them, while in 18% of cases they would agree to pay a bribe if they had money.

In 13% of cases respondents said that they would report bribe solicitation to the law enforcement bodies; in 10% they would report it to the management and in 6% to the press.



2.8. PREVENTING CORRUPTION

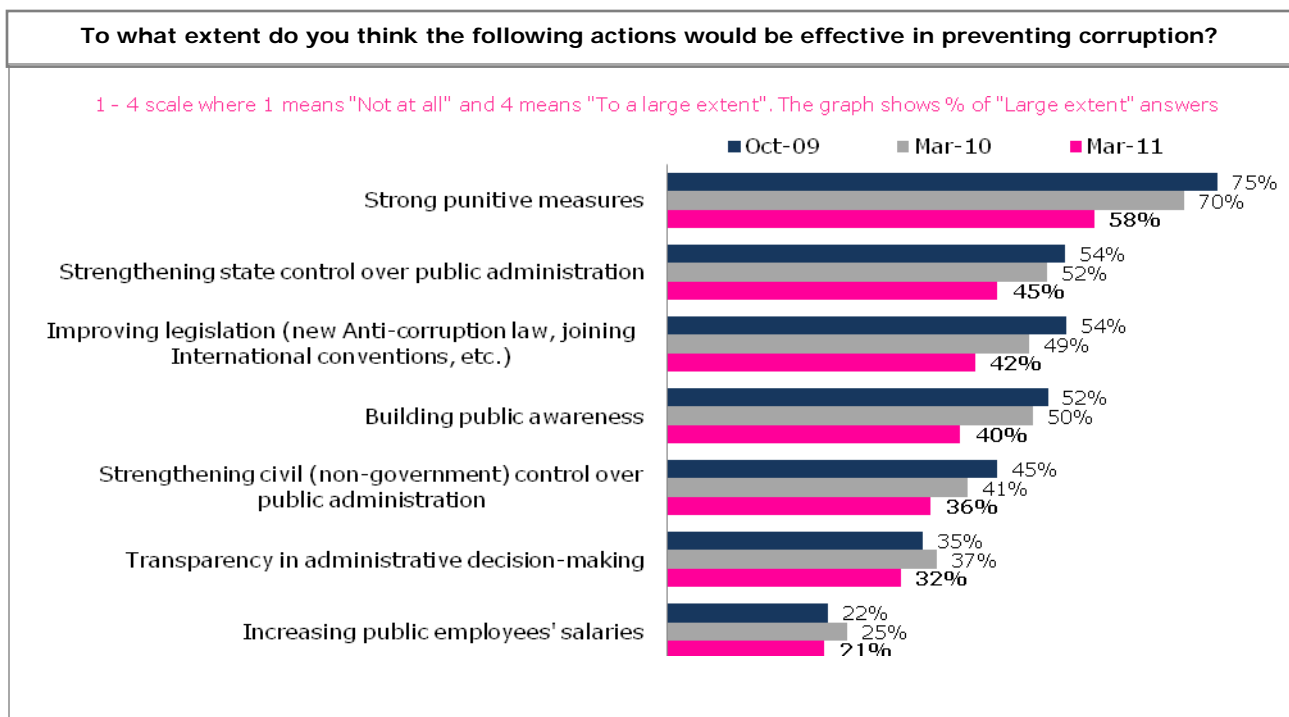
Generally, the belief in strong effectiveness of measures for prevention of corruption decreased. It seems like people have lost their faith that something seriously could be done with respect to the reduction of corruption.

Strong punitive measures are perceived as the most efficient instrument for reduction of corruption. Strengthening of the state control over public administration and improvement of legislation would also reduce the level of corruption in the respondents' opinion.

Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

Rising of public awareness, strengthening of civil society and transparency in administrative decision making are certainly perceived as important. But oversight and legislation prescribing severe penalties are crucial.

Increasing of public employees' salaries is perceived as less related to prevention of corruption.



2.9. INFORMING ABOUT CORRUPTION

The results from the third survey round confirm that people inform themselves about corruption mostly from media. The importance, power and responsibility of media are consequently great. In order to use its power in a best way media should teach people what

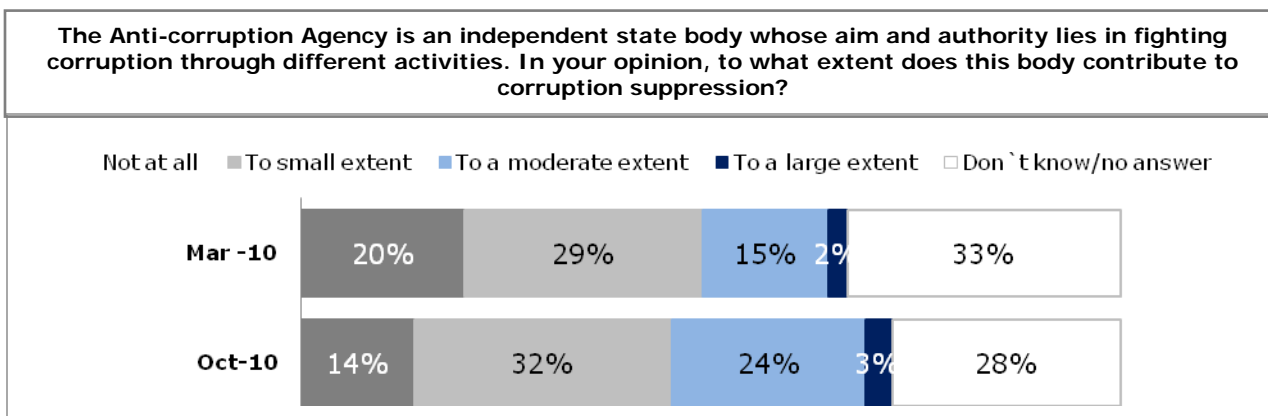
Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.

corruption is, how to recognize it, what to do if they found themselves in such situations and what are the consequences of paying bribe, both for those who offer it and those who receive it. Media should create a more sensitive and rebelling public opinion and increase a proactive attitude among citizens. This could raise citizens' awareness about their importance and possibly lead to their higher involvement in fighting corruption.

2.10. ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY

The awareness about Anti-corruption Agency slightly increased - in October 2010, 65% have heard about it, while in March 2010 60% of the respondents knew about it.

Compared to the previous round, the Anticorruption Agency is perceived to have a greater role in the suppression of corruption. There are less respondents who believe that the ACA does not contribute at all to the suppression of corruption, and, more of those who now think that ACA contributes to a small extent. Importantly, the share of those who think that ACA contributes to a moderate extent has increased, although still very few see the ACA as contributing to a large extent to the fight against corruption.



Disclaimer note: Statements made in this report are the statements of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or United Nations Development Program.