

Corruption Perceptions Index 2025: Europe must step up leadership in the fight against corruption

Berlin, 10 February 2026 – Despite ranking as the world's least corrupt region, progress against corruption in Western Europe and European Union (EU) has stalled over the past decade. The region's average CPI score has fallen from 66 to 64, with 13 countries seeing significant declines and only seven making improvements, underscoring a widening gap between anti-corruption standards, enforcement and the integrity of those in power.

As Europeans confront overlapping challenges, the demand for decisive leadership and robust, independent institutions has never been clearer. Instead, persistent failures of leadership and accountability are undermining integrity and accelerating the loss of public confidence in government.

In December 2025, the EU adopted its first Anti-Corruption Directive, intended to harmonise criminal laws across member states and establish a zero-tolerance approach. However, key provisions were weakened, as a result, the Directive's final framework falls short on ambition, clarity, and enforceability, squandering an opportunity to take a collective stance against corruption. As EU member states prepare to transpose the Directive, they should treat it as a springboard, not a ceiling, for ambitious reform and enforcement.

At the same time, efforts to weaken anti-corruption rules and checks and balances, along with state attacks on civil society, independent media, and whistleblowers, are undermining the quality of democracy in the region by making abuses of power harder to detect and expose.

In **Hungary** (40), Viktor Orbán's party used claims of promoting transparency to justify proposed powers to shut down critical NGOs and media, an effort that ultimately failed. In **Slovakia** (48), the government is dismantling anti-corruption safeguards, including whistleblower protections, and weakening investigations of corruption and organised crime, especially those involving senior officials. Instead of wielding the strong rule-of-law measures available to it, the EU has sat idly by as Member States have dismantled democratic protections.

Elsewhere, significant decliners include the **UK** (70) and **France** (66). In the UK, the past decade has seen major domestic scandals, the awarding of favours and honours to political donors, and MPs working as lobbyists for paying clients and corrupt regimes.

Even with some strong standards in France, enforcement challenges persist and there is growing risks of collusion between officials and private interests. Both countries and **Spain** (55), another significant decliner, have launched national anti- corruption plans to address existing loopholes. However, for these to be effective, implementation will need to be ambitious, well- funded, and carefully monitored.

Flora Cresswell, Regional Advisor for Western Europe at Transparency International said:

"In the current geopolitical climate, Europe should be raising, not lowering, its anti- corruption ambitions. Corruption is not inevitable: Europe and its leaders must act now to show ambitious, enforceable reform and global leadership."

KEY FINDINGS FOR 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).

- Top scorers in the Western Europe & EU are **Denmark** (89), **Finland** (88) **Norway** (81). These are among the top performers globally.
- **Hungary** (40), **Bulgaria** (40) and **Romania** (45) are the lowest scorers.
- Public frustration over corruption is growing, with **Bulgaria** (40) and **Spain** (55) seeing their largest protests in years. In Bulgaria, widespread private influence over the state has fuelled calls for action against kleptocracy.
- Among the biggest improvers since 2012 are **Greece** (50) up 14 and **Czechia** (59) up 10.
- Among the biggest decliners since 2012 are **Spain** (55) down 10 and **Malta** (49) down 8. The **UK** (70) has experienced one of the most dramatic declines, down 12 since 2017.
- **Estonia** (76), **Latvia** (60) and **Lithuania** (65), have all raised their CPI scores over the past decade and continue to stand out for their commitments to open government and anti-corruption reforms. However, important gaps remain, particularly in lobbying transparency, whistleblower protection and clarity about who funds politics.
- Across the region we are seeing a trend in backsliding scores in traditionally well performing democracies like **France** (66), **Sweden** (80) and **Netherlands** (78).

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. 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](#).