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PRESS RELEASE

Corruption Perception Index 2021 – backgrounded by the COVID-19 pandemic
We need more accountability in public institutions

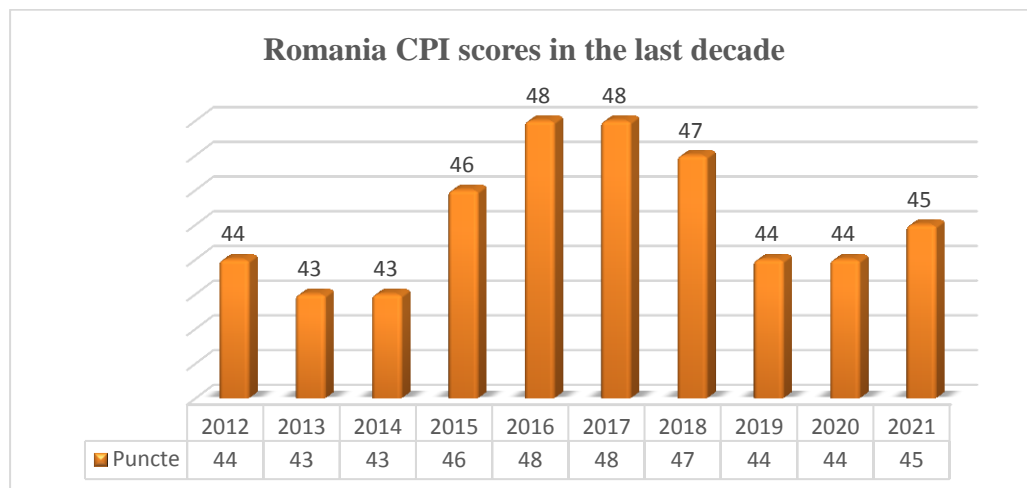
The Corruption Perception Index 2021 launched today by Transparency International reveals that, despite the official commitments, 131 states out of the 180 analysed didn't achieved considerable progresses in fighting corruption in the last 10 years. Romania is not an exception.

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) shows how independent experts and businesspeople perceive the corruption in public sector in 180 states and territories. The ranking is made by awarding points, from zero (*highly corrupt*) to 100 (*very clean*).

The perception regarding the corruption of Romania's public sector has remained unchanged in ten years.

Achieving only 45 points out of 100, Romania remains among the three most corrupt countries in the European Union, along with Hungary (43 points) and Bulgaria (42 points). The perception of public sector' corruption is similar not only from one year to the next, but also by comparison with the results of 2012, when our country had 44 points out of 100.¹

At EU level, however, there are countries that in the last decade achieved results with differences of more than 10 points. Greece and Italy gained 13 and, respectively, 14 points between 2012 and 2021. Thus, Greece is advancing from 36 points in 2012 to 49 points in 2021, and Italy from 42 points in 2012 to 56 points in 2021. At the opposite end are Cyprus and Hungary, which have lost 13 and, respectively, 12 points in the last decade, reaching 53 and, respectively, 43 points in the CPI 2021. The EU average score remains at 64 points.



Public procurement in the context of the pandemic

The TI analysis shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has opened doors for governments to further expand their executive powers, conceal information from the public and strip away rights. The pandemic has affected transparency and accountability, also at the level of EU Member States, and has raised concerns about the setbacks taken even by countries at the top of the CPI rankings.

¹ According to the TI methodology, scores below 50 are unacceptably low, especially compared to the regional average. The EU average score is 64 points. In addition, fluctuations of 1-2 points(+/-) from one year to the next usually reflect the margin of error, especially if they are not constant.

In Romania, one of the most vulnerable areas was the public procurement one, with implicit effects on the transparency of public spending on pandemics.

Today, Transparency International Romania brings back to the public attention the Integrity Pacts (IP) - a solution for ensuring transparency, efficiency and equal treatment in public procurement. Through its activities in recent years, TI-Romania has identified a number of advantages of applying the Integrity Pacts in public contracts:

- Civil society can monitor public investment, including in terms of usefulness and fairness;
- All those interested in public investments are better informed and consulted about those, through the Integrity Pacts;
- The IP make it possible to identify systemic problems in public procurement law and procedures.

The use of Integrity Pacts as a tool for monitoring public procurement is thus a viable solution to reduce the risks of fraud and corruption in this field.

In this context, Transparency International Romania makes the following recommendations:

- Inclusion of Integrity Pacts as a mandatory mechanism for public monitoring of procurement procedures, from the planning-point to full execution, for all procurement that exceeds the legal threshold for publication in the Official Journal of the EU.
- Introduction of Integrity Pacts as a measure tool in projects financed by structural and investment funds.
- Improving SICAP (the national public procurement system) with the information needed to understand the weaknesses of the procurement system and procedures, and also to enable the development of coherent public policies in this area - to address the issues identified.
- Transposition into national law of the EU Directive on Whistleblowing at the high standards of compliance.

Transparency International Romania reiterates the need for constant involvement of all representatives of society - the political class, public institutions, the private sector and citizens - each with their own role and responsibility in the fight against corruption.

Data and statistics on the Corruption Perceptions Index 2021 globally and nationally, as well as comparative data from previous years are available on the website www.transparency.org.ro.

Information on Integrity Pacts is available on the website: www.pactedintegritate.ro.

In its over 20 years of activity, Transparency International Romania has contributed to the establishment / consolidation of public institutions such as ANI, DGA, DNA, has developed more than 40 public policies, including the one on the protection of whistleblowers. At the same time, it has developed and implemented standards on ethics and integrity for the public sector and the business environment. We are consistent with the principles that guide us in our work: integrity, impartiality, accountability, professionalism.

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