
Press release

ROMANIA BEGINS HARVESTING THE ANTICORRUPTION MEASURES CROP

According to the Corruption Perception Index launched by Transparency International today, 23rd September 2008, Romania scores 3.8 out of a total of 10 points, which is a tenth of point better than the last year's score. Thus, Romania ascends in the CPI ranking of the EU member states, obtaining the penultimate position, and leaving the last place to Bulgaria which registers a decrease of 0.5 points compared to 2007. This score is not a reason for satisfaction for Romania, considering the fact that the raise is of only 0.1 points and indicates an inertial trend. And bearing in mind the efforts that have been done, the increase is too small weighed against the expectations. It is the same situation where the fever of the patient has dropped from 39.8 to 39.7, which is far from the optimal health state of an individual.

This year's score goes along with the ascending trend registered by Romania in the past years and indicates the existence of a first impact of the anticorruption reforms, from the perspective of the experts, foreign and domestic country analysts, potential investors. Such perception is mainly owed to the legislative measures for the reference period, even though some have occurred due to external pressure. The fact that Romania's evaluation is still behind the majority of the EU countries shows that the implementation of the legislation and the policies in this area are yet to display efficacy. Among the positives which led to the increase of Romania's score, the implementation of the e-administration in certain areas, and the lessening of the direct contact between the public servants and the beneficiaries of the public services. Such policies reduce the vulnerabilities and the increase of the objectivity degree of the administrative procedures.

Transparency International Romania considers that, although ostensibly encouraging, this increase is neither sufficient, nor significant so as to ensure that Romania is competitive inside the European Union, in view of the 6.74 average score for the other member states. In order to confirm the sustainability of this index and to improve the credibility of the anticorruption reforms both among the foreign investors and the Romanian citizens, it is necessary to actively implement the legal measures, both institutionally and from the good practice perspective.

In 1997 Romania scored 3.4 points, while in 2008 the score is of 3.8. The 0.4 difference stretched along the past decade indicates that the different governments have used the anticorruption strategies as political weapon or image instrument and focused less on coherent technical measures that would show within the system or would be perceived by the citizen.

In this direction, Transparency International Romania recommends:

- A correlation of the procedures regarding the conflict of interest with international standards in this field and their substantive and steady implementation with regard to all categories of „public persons”, regardless of their nomination or of the sector within which they deploy their activity.
- The implementation and application of a unitary standard in what concerns the investigation and sanctioning of all corruption cases and the elimination of all supplementary filters which may be

involved in the judicial act. In this sense, it must be taken into account that the sole actor able to get involved and bring in a verdict with regard to the existence or lack of corruption deeds is the independent and impartial judicial process.

- The multiplication of good practice cases resulted from the establishment of unique counters and from the rapid solving of requests related to the release of various categories of documents at the level of public services and simultaneously with regard to the relationship with the business sector.
- Enhancing the administrative and disciplinary jurisdiction with regard to all components of the public sector: magistrates, civil servants, contractual employees and elected officials.
- The improvement of the public integrity standards and the lessening of the vulnerabilities to corruption in the public procurement field, infrastructure works, public investments and the business environment.

At the same time, Transparency International Romania would like to stress the importance of observing its commitments towards fighting corruption, in order to encourage investments, to reduce disparities and to promote the sustainable development in Romania.