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PUBLIC OPINION ON CORRUPTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The problem with corruption is by all means one of the most complex ones. The implications from this phenomenon are far reaching and multilevel. In this regard determining the perception of the public on the intensity and scope of corruption levels is a clear signal on the gravity and worrying dimensions that it reaches in Macedonia.

This has been the basic motif for initiating the project “Public Opinion on the Level of Corruption in the Republic of Macedonia.”

The project has been realized in the period of January and February 2006. It has been based on utilizing three methods:

- Polling realized on 1600 survey subjects, distributed according to: gender, ethnic belonging, age, and regional distribution of population in the Republic of Macedonia. The Survey was realized directly with the subjects, through two questionnaires: A questionnaire for the citizens who stated that they were victims of corruption, and a questionnaire on the general perceptions on corruption. The polling was conducted in the period 3-8 January 2006.
- Four focus groups realized with: judges, public administration staff, healthcare staff, and professors from state universities.
- Twenty interviews, realized with owners of middle, small and medium sized private enterprises.

In order to identify the most important aspects that refer to corruption in the survey (the polling questionnaire, the focus groups, and the interviews) the following battery questions that refer to the following themes were raised to the survey subjects:

- ✓ The public on the problems in the Republic of Macedonia
- ✓ Information on corruption
- ✓ Evaluations by the citizens on the corruption levels at institutions
- ✓ Perspectives on corruption
- ✓ Efficiency of the combat against corruption
- ✓ Distribution and sources of corruption
- ✓ Identifying corruption
- ✓ Personal encounters with corruption
- ✓ Statements on giving and receiving corruption
- ✓ Mechanisms on tackling corruption
- ✓ Areas in which there is most corruption
- ✓ When did we had more corruption
- ✓ Victimological analysis

In the following publication we are presenting the following: results from the survey on the perceptions by the citizens, results from the victomological survey, reports from the focus groups, and the cumulative report from the interviews. The graphical presentation of the distributions is part of the publication, whilst the intersecting tables are presented in the annex CD.

STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC ON CORRUPTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

BIGGEST PROBLEMS FACED BY THE CITIZENS

The subjects of the Survey rank corruption in the list of priority issues that can be commented via the answers received to the following question: **“Which is the problem with which Macedonia is faced?”** It has been notable the fact that **every second survey subject (or 50%)** have noted **unemployment** as the biggest problem, followed by the **bad economic situation (30%)**. **Corruption** among state institutions is referred as a problem by **14%** subjects; hence it's the third most acute problem, as all following suggested problems have received a much less of attention by the subjects. The other problems noted in the Survey are the following: safety and crime (2%), inter-ethnic problems (1%), healthcare problems, and problems from the sphere of international relations (1%). The received answers are a confirmation that the Republic of Macedonia is continuously faced with, above all, with problems from the economic sphere and the related corruption, versus problems from the sphere of inter-ethnic issues and crime with a lesser attention on the latter (see General Distribution, Issue No. 1).

The Survey subjects from ethnic Albanian origin note unemployment in a lesser extent than the general average (42%), at the expense of putting a bigger emphasis on inter-ethnic issues (6%). Unemployment is more notably mentioned also among the persons having no finished primary education (74%) and the ones with completed primary education (59%), whilst the group with a completed higher education note the problem with corruption in state institutions as a higher problem (18%). It is slightly more notable the fact that inter-ethnic related problems are marked as important by persons with a completed primary education (6%) and among the rural population (4%).

When analysing the professional background of the subjects, unemployment is more notable in answers provided by housewives (59%), pensioners (57%), and of course, unemployed persons (62%). On the other hand, the bad economic situation has been noted by persons employed in the agriculture sector (47%), and the employees from the public sector put an emphasis on the problems associated with corruption in state institutions (22%). Also, unemployment is regarded as a top priority (59%) by persons having lowest wages per family member (up to 2000 MKD per family member). Regionally speaking, the problem with unemployment is above average mentioned in the responses received in the Vardar Region – Central Macedonia (60%), Pelagonia Region – West Central Macedonia (57%), South-eastern Region (56%), and Eastern Region (55%). The subjects from the Polog Region – Northwest Macedonia, put a bigger emphasis on the bad economic situation (36%), the inter-ethnic issues (5%), and problems associated to international affairs (4%). Corruption was

most regarded as a key problem in the Southwest Region (19%) and Northeast Region (18%).

The next question refers to what is the **most acute personal problem faced by the subjects**. The distribution of answers received this time provided an indication that the biggest problem is the one of **one's unfavourable economic status** (low wages, etc.) – 43%; at second position is **unemployment** (38%), whilst **corruption** is again on third position (9%), but it is referred at in a lesser percentage vis-à-vis the general perception on the problem seen in the answers to the previous question. Slightly higher values were appropriated to issues related to crime levels and personal safety (4%) and healthcare (4%), whilst inter-ethnic issues remain at the same as previous level (2%) – (see General Distribution, Question No. 2).

Employees in the private sector (53%), even more in the public sector (62%), are dissatisfied with their own economic status due to low wages. The same dissatisfaction is particularly notable in the age group of 41-50 years (49%) and persons that per family head receive a monthly net income of 4000 to 6000 MKD (53%). Corruption in state institutions is especially notable at the youngest categories, the ones in the 18-25 age group (14%), among students (21%), and among persons living in the south-western region of the country (17%). Unemployment as a particular problem is yet again most notable among persons with finished primary education (52%), housewives (45%), agriculture labour (44%), and unemployed persons (66%), as well as among ones with monthly net incomes of less than 2000 MKD per household member (53%). The category of subjects with highest income per household member (above 9001 MKD), show a more notable level of concern for corruption in state institutions (17%) and in healthcare (12%).

Personal safety and crime are more common answers among subjects working in the agriculture sector and among people living in the Polog Region – north-western Macedonia (both with 7%). The unfavourable economic status is more notable in the south-eastern (48%), eastern (52%), and Vardar – central (47%) regions, whilst unemployment in the north-eastern (46%) and Pelagonia (43%) region.

INFORMING ON CORRUPTION

On the question: “**Did you discuss any corruption related issues in Macedonia with any family members or friends in the last two weeks?**” more than half of the survey subjects (61%) gave a positive answer, i.e. 39% provided a negative feedback.

According to the results, it is evident that corruption is a most often discussed issue, to be more precise – it is a subject discussed by every second citizen of the country (see General Distribution, Question No. 3).

Intersected by categories, it may be seen that corruption was a more frequent subject of discussion among male subjects (65%), highly educated persons (66%), the age category of 50-65 years (68%), and the employees in the public sector (66%). This issue is not present in discussions among the youngest category of subjects in the age group of 18-25 years (46%) and among housewives (50%). Regionally speaking, corruption is most frequently discussed in the southwest (79%) and Vardar regions (74%), whilst it is least frequent as an issue in the southeast (44%), Pelagonia (46%), and Polog (54%) regions.

On the question on the **manner subjects get to know on corruption related cases**, most of them refer their sources to media (62%), which confirms the paramount role and influence of media (positive or negative) on the perceptions and opinions which citizens have on corruption. The remaining subjects refer to friends and relatives (18%) or work colleagues (8%) as their sources, as well as personal experiences as a source of information being in the case of almost each tenth survey subject (12%). (See General Distribution, Question No.4)

It is interesting that ethnic Albanians are above average when it comes to referring to friends and relatives as sources of information on corruption cases (28%) or from personal experiences (17%). Media are more frequent sources of information among elder categories in the age group of 50-65 years (69%), pensioners (75%), and citizens from the Vardar region (71%) and Pelagonia region (75%). Personal experiences as source of corruption-related information is most frequent among the survey subjects in the age group of 26-30 years (17%), students (18%), and the citizens from the south-west region (21%). Friends and relatives are seen as an above the average source of information among the subjects with a completed primary education (27%), housewives (38%), students (24%), those with a monthly income per household member in the range of 6001 – 9000 MKD (25%), and among the citizens of the Polog region (24%). It is most indicative that persons employed in the public sector - in a double than average extent - refer to work colleagues as a source of corruption-related information (17%).

According to the answers, the public has a critical stance on the very transmission of information regarding corruption. On the question “**According to you, what is the quality of media coverage on corruption? Every second survey subject answered that the media reporting on corruption are based and contain too many assumptions and contain and are based on too few data.** Apart from this, each third survey subject sees media reporting as objective and founded on credible data, whilst 17% have no stance on this issue. (See General Distribution, Question No. 5).

A slightly higher trust in the objectivity and credibility of media coverage on corruption related issues is seen among males (38%), persons in the age group of 41-50 (39%), and among those employed in the public sector (38%). Differently from these categories, ethnic Macedonians (55%) and students (54%) are more inclined to perceive that media coverage on corruption as too much based on assumptions and too little on credible data. On the other hand, categories that are more inclined to state that they could not determine their

stance on this issue are ethnic Albanians (24%); persons with finished primary education (26%), housewives (39%), and those with a monthly net income per household member that falls in the ratio of 6001 to 9000 MKD (24%). Regionally speaking, the trust in the objectivity of media coverage on corruption is most notable in the southwest (45%) and eastern (51%) region of the country. A higher level of doubt on having media coverage being most based on assumptions and less credible data is seen in the Vardar (60%), Pelagonia (61%), and southeast (64%) regions of Macedonia, whilst the citizens from the northeast and Polog regions are most indecisive on the matter (each with 25%).

When it comes to the question “**Towards whom is media criticism directed at regarding corruption?**” each second citizen is at the opinion that **the most often criticized side is the one taking bribes (53%)**. Roughly one third (or 32%) is at the opinion that media are equally critical towards both the sides giving and taking bribes, and 5% claim that the criticism is more often directed towards the side giving bribe. Almost each tenth surveyed citizen (9%) has no standpoint on this question. (See General Distribution, Question No.6)

The standpoint that the side taking bribe is more often subject to media criticism is more frequently present among highly educated persons (63%), among the employees of the public sector (61%), but also among persons living in the Polog (60%), southwest (68%), and northeast (64%) parts of the country. The surveyed citizens that more notably claim that media are equally critical to both the sides giving and taking bribes are the ones from the category receiving monthly net income per household member in the range of 4001 to 6000 MKD (37%) and among those who live in the Pelagonia (39%), southeast (39%), and eastern (50%) regions in the country. The groups of surveyed citizens that more often had no answer to this question were the ethnic Albanians (15%), the youngest category of survey subjects in the age range of 18-25 years (16%), those with a finished primary education (16%), housewives (32%), and persons with an income per household member in the range of 6001-9000 MKD per month (16%).

EVALUATION BY THE CITIZENS ON THE LEVEL OF CORRUPTION IN DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS

In the survey, a measurement on the perceptions by the citizens on the level of corruption in twenty different institutions and official functionaries was carried out. The measurement was carried out on a five point scale rating, where each survey subject was asked to measure the level of corruption of each subject listed. Grade 1 marked a subject with a smaller level of corruption, whilst 5 referred to the one with the highest level. An average evaluation has been calculated for each subject, and the following is the ranking:

| Rank | Institution | Average Grade |
|------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION | 4,58 |
| 2 | THE JUDICIARY / COURTS | 4,40 |
| 3 | MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS | 4,26 |
| 4 | HEALTHCARE SYSTEM | 4,21 |
| 5 | PROSECUTION SERVICE | 4,20 |
| 6 | POLITICAL PARTIES | 4,08 |
| 7 | THE POLICE | 3,99 |
| 8 | ATTORNEYS | 3,92 |
| 9 | MAYORS | 3,87 |
| 10 | PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT | 3,83 |
| 11 | EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM | 3,8 |
| 12 | TAX ADMINISTRATION | 3,74 |
| 13 | PRESIDENT OF STATE | 3,49 |
| 14 | THE STOCK EXCHANGE | 3,28 |
| 15 | STATE COMMISSION FOR THE PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION | 3,22 |
| 16 | NATIONAL BANK OF MACEDONIA | 3,05 |
| 17 | MEDIA | 3,11 |
| 18 | DOMESTIC NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS | 2,99 |
| 19 | INTERNATIONAL NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZ. | 2,80 |
| 20 | THE MACEDONIAN ARMY | 2,63 |

It is notable that no institution has received an average grade in the lower half of the scale (below 2,5), which shows a generally negative trend. Nevertheless, there are large differences when comparing different institutions. The perception that nongovernmental organizations and the Macedonian Army are least corrupt matches the findings from other surveys; in each of them, exactly these two institutions enjoy the highest levels of trust among the citizens. On the other hand, the Customs Administration, the judiciary, the Ministers, and the healthcare system, all of which ranked highest on the list, are in the group of institutions most present in the public when it comes to corruption.

However, there are some differences in the marking/grading from the perspective of the socio-demographic characteristics of the surveyed citizens:

The Customs has the highest average grade on corruption; however this perception is different in different groups. Among ethnic Macedonians, there is a higher corruption points awarded to the Customs – 15% of surveyed ethnic Macedonians gave it a grade four, and grade five was appointed by even 73% of them. Among ethnic Albanian survey subjects, this number is somewhat lower: 61% gave the Customs grade five, 16% gave it a four, whilst on the other hand, 10% refused to provide an answer to this question.

Among elderly survey subjects, the urban population, the employees in the private sector, and the highly educated subjects, the grading is also more negative than the average. The highest percentage of grade five, the Customs

has received from the subjects that refused to state their monthly income (even 94% of them). From the regional distribution perspective, more than 90% of high marks on corruption levels are noted in the Vardar and southwest regions.

The Judiciary is ranked second on the scale of corruption levels (62% of survey subjects gave it a maximum grade). Ethnic Macedonians in a larger extent (67%) appointed grade five, whilst grade five is appointed by 51% of ethnic Albanians. Again, the perceptions by the citizens in different regions are again different. The highest grades on corruption levels are typical for the Vardar and south-west regions (each with 84%), and least have been appointed in the northeast region 36%).

The Ministers and Deputy Ministers received a higher than average highest grade on corruption levels by ethnic Macedonians (55%), which in the case of ethnic Albanian survey subjects, is on a lesser extent (45%). They are most negatively marked by students, the unemployed, and the surveyed citizens with smaller income.

The Healthcare System is among the first four on the rank list, with an apparent negative perception among the citizens. The data show about 10% more grade five appointed by ethnic Albanians, whilst there are no major differences among the other ethnic groups. Exceptions are the following regions: most favourable grades were appointed in the eastern region and the worst in the south-west, Vardar, and Skopje regions.

Regarding the **Prosecution Service**, the highest ranking on corruption is appointed by 52% survey subjects. Ethnic Macedonians are more critical towards this institutions (57% gave it a grade five, whilst in the case of ethnic Albanians, this grade was appointed by 40% subjects). The only other feature where there are exceptions from the average is when taking into consideration the material status of the survey subjects. The largest number of appointed grade five is seen among those with smallest incomes (63%), and least among those survey subjects with an average income per household member per month of over 9000 MKD (35%).

Again, in the southwest and Vardar regions, grade five is most frequent, contrary to the northeast region.

When it is about **political parties**, the highest grade on corruption –five- was appointed by 46% surveyed citizens. The differences are seen among several group of survey subjects, but these discrepancies are not large. A larger than average negative marking of 10% more is appointed by ethnic Albanian survey subjects, and among the poorest categories, as well as in the south-west part of Macedonia.

Regarding the **police** service, the only categories than stand out from the average are the housewives and pensioners, which in a lesser extend appointed high grades on corruption level of this service, but this was only for 10% less than the average. However, when looked at from the regions` perspective, the differences are very big: 68% in the Vardar region and 59% in

the southwest region appointed the highest grade on the corruption level scale. Contrary to these two regions, in the eastern, north-eastern, and south-eastern regions, the highest negative grade is presented with below 30%.

Attorneys have a high negative position on the corruption level scale (43% of surveyed citizens gave it a grade five). This perception is on the same level both among ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. More frequent than the average is among the persons of more than 55 years of age, those with smallest incomes (51%), and among survey subjects who declines to provide information on their incomes (55%). There is a large deviation from the average among the surveyed citizens from the south-west region, where even 76% gave it a grade five, contrary to the perception of 10% surveyed appointing grade five in the north-eastern region.

It is interesting to note the small differences among the different categories of surveyed citizens when it comes to the evaluation of **Mayors**. The only relevant deviations from the average are seen from the perspective of the different regions. The highest grade on corruption level – grade five – is most present in the southwest region (54,5%), the Vardar region (49,5%), and the Skopje region (45,5%). On the other opposite was the maximum negative grading appointed by 22% surveyed citizens in the Pelagonia region and by 31% in the eastern part of the country.

The President of the Government has received higher negative grades on corruption level (grades four and five) by 60% ethnic Macedonians, whilst when it comes to ethnic Albanians this is at the level of 50%. The President of the Government (the Prime minister) has received the most negative ratings from the age group of 30 to 50 years, the ones with a secondary education, the urban population, the students, and the farmers.

Most of the negative grades on the **educational system** were appointed by the youngest category of surveyed citizens and by the students, whilst the other differences are statistically unimportant.

The Tax Administration has received most negative ranking from the surveyed citizens having a completed higher education (38% of which gave it a grade five, whilst the same ranking was appointed by 22% of those with primary education). The urban population, the public administration employees, the students, and the survey subjects with lowest incomes, are also above the average when it comes to giving the highest negative grade. Regionally speaking, the Tax Administration has received the most negative points in the Vardar region (54%) and the least in the eastern region (14%).

The **President of the State** has received more negative ranking by the older surveyed citizens, the citizens with a lower education levels, the farmers, the students, and the unemployed, as well as the ones with lowest income. The categories of surveyed citizens that do not have an opinion on the corruption level of the President of the State are the women, the ethnic Albanians, the housewives, and the ones with highest incomes.

Many of the survey subjects were not much familiar with the work of the **Stock Exchange**. Namely, 40% of all surveyed citizens had no standpoint on this institution. From the ranks of those who are familiar with the work of the Stock Exchange, the higher negative ranking was appointed by the ethnic Macedonians, the older categories, and the ones with a completed secondary education. More than half of the surveyed pensioners and housewives did not give an answers to this question. When it come to the regions, most grade five were appointed again in the Vardar region, whilst again a majority of surveyed citizens in the Polog region had no opinion on this institutions (51.5%).

On the level of corruption of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, more than one fifth of the surveyed citizens have no standpoint. The highest negative grade is more present among the ethnic Macedonians (23%), whilst this percentage is lower among the ethnic Albanians (only 9,5%, and 37% gave no answer). All other differences among the various categories of surveyed citizens are statistically irrelevant, with an exception on the surveyed citizens from the southwest part of Macedonia who gave most maximum negative points on corruption level (34,5%).

More than one fourth of surveyed citizens (27%) have no standpoint when it comes to the **National Bank of Macedonia**. The other grades are evenly distributed among all the different categories of survey subjects. Exceptions are the farmers and the housewives who in a larger extend had no opinion on this institution.

The **Media** received an average grade of 3,1 and the opinion of the surveyed citizens on their level of corruption is divided (the grading is evenly distributed among the different categories of survey subjects). Large differences among the categories do not exist. A slightly larger percentage of appointed grade five ranking is notable among those with a completed high education, the urban population, the students, and among the survey subjects with lowest income, as well as the ones coming from the south-west and Vardar regions.

The domestic nongovernmental organizations relatively are well perceived by the public. Although, 19% of the surveyed citizens did not give any answer. There are no relevant differences, except that in the Vardar region there are 29% survey subjects who appointed grade 5, which double than the average.

The international nongovernmental organizations are on the bottom of the corruption rank list, but on their level of corruption one fifth of survey subjects had no opinion. There are hardly any differences among the different categories of surveyed citizens. Even in the regions that usually were most critical (the south-west and Vardar regions), this time, positive marks are dominating.

The Macedonian Army is the institution that when it comes to corruption has received the most positive evaluation. It is the last on the corruption rank list. The only categories that slightly deviate from the average and that have a slightly negative attitude towards the Army are the housewives, the students, as well as those citizens that refused to state their income. From the regions`

perspective, the Vardar region is the only one where the surveyed citizens have appointed higher than average negative grades on corruption levels.

THE PERSPECTIVES OF CORRUPTION

When it comes to what is the **opinion of the citizens on the future of corruption in Macedonia, the largest part of the surveyed citizens are pessimists on the possibility for eliminating corruption (65%), however, according to them, there is a possibility for a small reduction of it.** Contrary to this, almost every fourth survey subject (27%) believes that the level of corruption can be significantly reduced, and only 8% are optimists believing that corruption can be completely eliminated. (See General Distribution No. 27).

Although the general distribution shows that around one fourth of the surveyed citizens are generally more optimistic believing that corruption in Macedonia can be reduced. The level of optimism is higher at certain categories, which is the case with the surveyed ethnic Albanians (33%), the ones in the age group of 26-30 years (31%) and 31-40 years (32%), housewives (40%), the survey subjects with low to mid level incomes per household member – from 2001 to 4000 MKD (32%), as well as the citizens from the Polog (33%), north-eastern (35%), and south-eastern (38%) regions. Among the ones that are more often at the opinion that corruption in one country can be slightly reduced, but not be entirely eliminated are also the category of surveyed citizens in the age group of 41-50 years of age (66%), the students (69%), the persons with lowest income per household member – up to 2000 MKD (72%), and the citizens in the eastern (73%), Vardar (77%), and southwest (77%) regions.

When the level of domestic corruption is compared to the one in neighbouring countries, the surveyed citizens show divided perceptions. **More than one third (or 38%) believe that corruption in Macedonia is higher** than in the neighbouring countries, but almost the same number of survey subjects (or 36%) are at the standpoint that in Macedonia the level of corruption is on an equal standing as in the neighbouring countries. The remaining survey subjects believe that the level of corruption in Macedonia is smaller than in neighbouring countries (13%) or they have no standpoint on this question (13%). (See General Distribution, Question No.28).

Among the surveyed citizens that believe that in Macedonia there is more corruption than in neighbouring countries are the farmers (49%) and students (44%), the citizens with lowest income per household member – up to 2000 MKD (46%), and the citizens from the Pelagonia (43%), south-western (50%), and eastern (48) regions. The ones that are at the standpoint that there is an equal level of corruption in Macedonia as in the neighbouring countries are the pensioners (41%), the persons with highest income – over 9000 MKD per household member (45%), as well as the citizens from the south-eastern region (44%). On the other hand, the categories of surveyed citizens that believe that the level of corruption in Macedonia is lower than in neighbouring countries are the ethnic Albanians (17%), the persons falling in the age group of 26-30 years

(17%), the ones with a completed primary education (18%), the rural population (17%), the employees in the public sector (20%), and the citizens from the Vardar region (21%). The answer “I do not know” was most frequently given by housewives (38%).

But do citizens feel that there are positive changes regarding the level of corruption in 2005? Judging on the answers received, **a large portion (62%) believes that the level of corruption in the country has not reduced.** On the contrary to this belief, 14% are at the standpoint that the corruption level has decreased when compared to the one from the previous year, whilst each fourth respondent (or 24%) can not determine an answer/he-she does not know. (See General Distribution, Question No.29)

To be more concrete, some groups of surveyed citizens, after juxtaposing the received data, more than average are at the belief that the level of corruption has decreased: the employees in the public sector (20%), persons in the age group of 26-30 years (19%), the rural population (19%), the ones with highest incomes per household member – more than 9001 MKD (18%), and the population from the Polog region (22%). The negative feedback is more frequently given among the persons with lowest incomes per household member – up to 2000 MKD (68%) and among the citizens from the eastern region of Macedonia. The answer “*I do not know*” has been most often provided among housewives (48%), but also among the citizens from the Pelagonia (30%) and north-eastern (33%) regions.

When it comes to whether the citizens are optimists regarding the corruption-related trends for the last year, the answers received are the following: each fourth survey subject (26%) believes that corruption levels will decrease, whilst 45% (or almost half of all surveyed) are at the standpoint that there will be no changes when it comes to corruption levels. About 17% from the surveyed citizens are pessimistic as they believe that the corruption level will increase, whilst 13% preferred to give the “*I do not know*” answer. (See General Distribution, Question No.30).

Among the groups that are more outright in their claim that in the following year the level of corruption will decline are the persons with higher education (31%), the pensioners (35%), the surveyed citizens with income per household member in the range of 4001 to 6000 MKD (32%), and the ones with income of above 9001 MKD (34%). Along this trend, the same attitude is witnessed among the citizens from the Vardar (36%), north-eastern (31%), Polog (30%), and eastern (30%) regions. On the contrary to this trend, the persons with lowest incomes (up to 2000 MKD per household member) show a percentage of 25%, farmers with 31%, the ones with completed primary education (24%), and the citizens from the south-western (27%) and eastern (24) regions, all believe that the next year the level of corruption will increase.

EFFICIENCY OF THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

The average general grade by the surveyed citizens on the efficiency of the fight against corruption in Macedonia is 1.91, i.e. the fight against corruption is evaluated as being insufficient. The survey subjects have been offered to evaluate the level of efficiency of the fight against corruption on a grading scale of 1 to 5, whereas 1 means “completely inefficient”, whilst 5 equals “very efficient.”

The largest part of the surveyed citizens gave a **negative grade on the evaluation of the efficiency of the fight against corruption: by grade “1” – 40%; by grade “2” – 29%**. Slightly less than one fifth of the survey subjects (18%) gave it a grade “3”; grade “4” was appointed by 4%, whilst almost 2% of all surveyed citizens gave the grade “*excellent*.” Only 7% responded by “*I have no standpoint*”, i.e. they could not evaluate the efficiency of the fight against corruption. (See General Distribution, Question No35).

The most notable deviations from this structure is seen in the following categories: the above average absence of standpoint on the matter is seen among the surveyed ethnic Albanians – 15%; the youngest survey subjects, the ones in the age group of 18 to 25 years; the least educated – 18%; and housewives – 35%. Above average level of critical attitudes are seen in the answers by the surveyed citizens in the age group of 50 to 65 years – 48% gave it a grade “1”; 49% of farmers gave it a grade “1”; the citizens with lowest incomes in 50% gave it a grade “1”; and the survey subjects from the south-western region in almost 62% appointed a grade “1” as to the level of efficiency in the fight against corruption.

The general impression is that the surveyed citizens have not much trust in the politicians and in their possible efforts to suppress corruption. That is evident in the received answers on the question “***do politicians turn enough attention on the fight again corruption?***” Each second surveyed citizen (50%) is at the belief that **politicians give attention to corruption only during electoral campaigns and after the elections they do not act against it**. It is a similar percentage (46%) that has a standpoint that politicians never give enough attention to this phenomenon. Only 4% of all survey subjects agree with the standpoint that the politicians always provide sufficient attention to corruption. (See General Distribution, Question No.31).

The juxtaposing of gathered data shows that the categories that are more often at the opinion that the politicians turn sufficient attention to corruption only during elections whilst afterwards they do nothing, are the younger categories of 26 to 30 years (56%), the persons with incomes per household member of more than 9001 MKD (56%) and the population from the Vardar (66%) and eastern (64%) regions. The categories that are more inclined to state that politicians never turn enough attention on the suppression of corruption are the ones with an income per household member in the range of 6001 to 9000 MKD (53%), and the surveyed citizens from the south-western (57%) and Pelagonia (54%) regions. On the other hand, housewives (11%) and the surveyed citizens from

the Polog region (10%) are little less at the opinion that politicians do constantly pay attention on corruption.

Having in mind that the government is the one that realistically can do the most when it comes to the fight against corruption, the answers to the question of **“does the government do enough to combat corruption?”** have been very indicative. It is evident that there is a significant level of dissatisfaction in this regard as **three quarters** from the surveyed citizens (76%) **gave a negative response to this question**. From the remaining answers received, only 8% gave an affirmative response to the government efforts for combating corruption, whilst 16% have no standpoint on this question. (See General Distribution, Question No.32.)

The urban population (82%), but also the citizens from the south-western (81%), Vardar (82%) and eastern (91%) regions are more frequently at the opinion that the government does not put sufficient efforts to suppress corruption in the country. On the other hand, the positive response is seen above average among persons employed in the public sector (10%), among pensioners (12%), and the citizens from the Polog region (27%).

Regarding the **activities on the prevention of corruption undertaken by the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption**, according to the received feedback, the impressions are not in that of extent negative as seen in the previous question. Nevertheless, still 56% (or more than half) of the surveyed citizens are at the opinion that the **State Commission for the Prevention of Commission does not undertake enough measures for the prevention of corruption**. The surveyed citizens that believe the opposite, meaning that the Commission does undertake sufficient efforts in preventing corruption present 11% of all surveyed, whilst one fourth (or 26%) responded by “I do not know”, still 7% never heard of this Commission. (See General Distribution, Question No.33)

The groups that above average state that the State Commission does not undertake enough activities to prevent corruption are the male survey subjects (61%), the ethnic Macedonians (62%), the persons in the age group of 31-40 years (65%), and the inhabitants of the Skopje (62%), south-western (62%), and eastern (72%) regions. On the opposite side, the characteristic groups of surveyed citizens that do believe that the State Commission does undertake sufficient activities are the students (15%), the persons with the highest income levels per household member (above 9001 MKD) – 18%, as well as the citizens from the Pelagonia (15%) and Vardar (16%) regions. In the same instance, there are categories of surveyed citizens that have no opinion on this question or they state that they have never heard of the existence of the Commission. Such an example are the ethnic Albanian surveyed citizens (“I do not know” – 33%; “I have never heard of this Commission” – 15%) and the citizens from the Polog region (“I do not know” – 35%; *“I have never heard of this Commission”* – 13%). Also the persons with a completed primary education are the ones who more frequently have not heard of the State Commission (12%), whilst the surveyed citizens from the Pelagonia (34%) and north-eastern (34%) regions more often do not have a standpoint on this question.

If we compare all relevant institutions and organs regarding to **which one has the biggest responsibility for the suppression of corruption in the Republic of Macedonia**, the citizens list their answers in the following order: as first, **the state institutions with 46%**, followed by the courts (13%), and the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (13%), the citizens themselves (10%), as well as the political parties, the prosecutor general, and the police (each with 6%). (See General Distribution, Question No.34)

The responsibility of the state institutions in the suppression of corruption is even more noted by the age group of 50-65 years (50%), the pensioners (60%), and by the citizens from the south-western (59%), and Vardar (61%) regions. A larger trust in the engagement of the citizens themselves in the fight against corruption is shown by the Ethnic Albanian citizens (15%), the youngest categories in the range of 18-25 years (14%), the persons with a completed primary education (16%), the students (16%), the housewives (21%), and the citizens with an income per household member in the range of 6001 to 9000 MKD (16%). The judicial system is more frequently referred to as being most responsible in the eastern and Pelagonia regions (each with 20%), whilst the police is noted in the south-eastern region (10%) and among the persons with a completed primary education (11%). The more frequent mentioning of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption as a responsible organ for the prevention of corruption has been noted among the farmers (22%) and in the south-eastern (21%), the north-eastern (32%) regions. Also, the farmers put a bigger emphasis on the prosecutor general (13%), similarly to the inhabitants of the eastern region (11%). The citizens of the south-western region of the country are notable by their referral to political parties (10%).

DISTRIBUTION AND SOURCES OF CORRUPTION

The first question in this context had the purpose to determine where corruption is most spread, whether it is among high-ranking or low-ranking employees.

Corruption is a “privilege” to the ones on a high-ranking position! Namely, more than two thirds (68%) of all surveyed citizens have stated that the corruption is most present among the employees positioned high in the hierarchy. 15% from the survey subjects believe that the corruption is most spread among middle-ranking employees, and only 5% answered that corruption is most spread among low-ranking employees. Almost every tenth survey subjects (12%) responded that they cannot determine in which level of hierarchy corruption is most present. (See General Distribution, Question No.36).

More notable deviations from these remarks are seen among the surveyed citizens of ethnic Albanian origin who very often 17% responded by “*I do not know*”, i.e. below average have remarked that corruption is most spread among high-ranking employees – 58%. Again, most often, when compared with other categories, the ones that responded more frequently by “*I do not know*” are the ones with least life experience: the age group of 18 to 25 years – 17%, the ones with a completed primary education 20%, and the housewives – 34%. An

extraordinary critical standpoint towards the high-ranking employees is notable in the eastern region – even 92% of them stated that high ranking officials are most corrupt.

Main initiators of corruption are the following: the inability of the citizens to satisfy their needs in an legal manner (40%) and the non-existence of legal order in the state (35%). A third source of corruption, according to the answers provided by the survey subjects, are the small penal measures for corruption convicts (16%). For only 6% surveyed citizens, corruption is initiated by the absence of moral values; for 2% survey subjects, problems arising from the transition period are the one fostering corruption; and the presence of international/foreign organizations is seen as a source of corruption by 1% of all surveyed citizens. (See General Distribution, Question No.37)¹

From the aspect of looking at different groups of surveyed citizens, there are minimal deviations from the suggested structure of answers. The survey subjects that have no completed level of education are more often than the average (48%) at the opinion that the source of corruption is to be located in the inability to meets ones need in a lawful manner, whilst not at all they do not relate corruption to an absence of moral values; 55% of all surveyed housewives, the incentive to corruption they see in the inability of the citizens to meet ones need in a lawful manner; and the same answer was particularly frequently given by the survey subjects from the north-eastern (51%) and south-western (57%) regions of the country.

IDENTIFYING CORRUPTION

As every social phenomenon, regardless whether it is a positive or negative one, corruption too has different forms. Identifying it, and the sensitivity to the different forms of corruption, is an indicator of extraordinary importance in the fight against corruption.

Therefore, the survey interest was focused also towards gathering data with which help, the standpoints of the public on what can and what cannot be regarded as corruption are determined.

Two thirds of all surveyed subjects (61%) responded that “a present given to a doctor after a conducted medical intervention” is not to be regarded as corruption, whilst the remaining 39% survey subjects, still regards this form of expressing ‘gratitude’ as one containing elements of corruption.

(See General Distribution, Question No.38). The surveyed ethnic Albanians, most seldom than the others (52%), do not see these gifts as corruption; whilst

¹ In the framework of this question asked, a possibility of two answers was provided. In this context, the general distribution shows that the biggest source of corruption is seen in “the nonexistence of legal order in the state” by 38%; the “inability of the citizens to meet their needs in a lawful procedure” by 29%; “small penalty measures for corruption convicts” by 20%; the “absence of moral values” by 11%; “problems arising from the transition period” by 4%; and “the presence of international organizations in the country” by 1%.

on the other hand, the surveyed citizens that do not have a completed primary education with 78% are at the same opinion; in the case of farmers, the support of this claim that giving presents to doctors is not be regarded as corruption is at 73%; whilst, 77% and 80% in the south-eastern and eastern regions, respectively. The situation is different **when giving a present to a doctor prior an executed medical intervention. In this case, 79% of all surveyed citizens see corruption.** (See General Distribution, Question No.39)

Groups that show a bellow average sensitivity to this situations of giving presents, i.e. they more seldom see giving a present in these kind of situations as corruption, are the survey subjects that had no completed primary education – 52%; and the surveyed citizens from the eastern region (54%).

Sponsorships given by businesses to doctors on the publication of their books or travel/trips, by an almost equal share of the surveyed citizens are seen as corruption – 52%, and as not being corruption – 48%. (See General Distribution, Question No.40)

The survey subjects that have no completed primary education, much more seldom (41%) evaluate that in this case too there is corruption, contrary to those that do have a completed primary education, where the same answer is given by 61% from all surveyed; An extraordinary sensitivity is seen among housewives – 65% of them see this kind of sponsorships as corruption; and by the ones with an income of more than 9000 MKD per household member where 62% provided the same answer; and 64% of all surveyed citizens coming from the Vardar region.

More than two thirds of all surveyed citizens (69%) recognize corruption in the presents given to professors/teachers during the education of their children. The remaining 31% have the opposite opinion. (See General Distribution, Question No.41)

Analysing from the perspective of the different categories of surveyed citizens, there are deviations in the answers received by the survey subjects coming from the south-western region, where even as much as 83% of them see corruption in cases when presents are given to professors/teachers; contrary to the surveyed citizens from the eastern region, where only 54% of them gave the same response.

A same level of severity is seen on the issue of sponsorship provided to a professor or a favour made/given to a professor: these kind of situations are seen as corruption by 69% of all surveyed citizens of Macedonia. (See General Distribution, Question No.42)

In this case too, the surveyed citizens from the south-western region (85%) are most critical, being again very different from the ones in the eastern region where only 57% of all surveyed subjects gave the same answer.

To four out of five surveyed citizens (83%), there is corruption when a public administration official that has an obligation to conduct public

service, is given a present. The remaining 17% these situation do not regard as cases of corruption. (See General Distribution, Question No.43)

Almost no single category of surveyed citizens does not differentiate in its perceptions on these kind of presents given, except for the survey subjects coming from the eastern region, where only 70% of them see corruption in giving presents in the abovementioned situations.

Nine out of ten survey subjects (93%) see corruption in a situation when a present is given to a judge during a judicial procedure in which they are a party of. To only 7% of them, such a present is not to be regarded as corruption. (See General Distribution, Question No.44)

This form of corruption is undisputable to all categories of surveyed citizens, whilst an extraordinary level of 'tolerance' is seen among the surveyed citizens coming from the north-eastern region – 82% of them see corruption in these kind of presents given.

“It is corruption also when a present is being given by a politician to a journalist” – with this premise, 84% of all surveyed citizens agree, whilst the remaining 16% have the opposite standpoint. (See General Distribution, Question No.45)

These situations are seen as being correct ones to the survey subjects who have no completed primary education – 30% of them see no corruption cases when politicians give presents to journalists; and the same answers was provided by 34% of all surveyed citizens from the eastern region.

A notably less critical attitude is seen among the surveyed citizens in situations of a sponsored **travel/trip for journalists.** In these instances, **corruption is noted by 61% from the survey subjects,** and for the remaining 39%, there is nothing problematic in these cases. (See General Distribution, Question No.46)

There are deviations only from the perspective of different regions of the country: for 76% of all surveyed subjects from the Vardar region, these sponsored trips are to be regarded as a form of corruption, and the same feedback was provided by only 45% of the survey subjects coming from the eastern region.

PERSONNAL ENCOUNTERS” WITH CORRUPTION

On the question: **“How would you react if someone would ask you for a bribe?”** – almost an equal share of the surveyed citizens, **25%** answered that **“the someone” asking for a bribe they would report to the police;** and **23%** answered that they **“do not know”** how they would react in such a situation; **14%** of all surveyed citizens would report to the superior officer of the person asking for a bribe; **9%** would react to the **State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption;** and **8%** would inform media; 4% of all survey subjects would physically resolve the issue with the person asking for a

bribe; 3% would ask for assistance from the Ombudsman; and 1% would ask for help from a nongovernmental organization. The remaining **13% would pay the asked bribe**. (See General Distribution, Question No.47)

More notable deviations are seen among the surveyed citizens from ethnic Albanian origin, that above average are ready to pay the demanded bribe (21%), i.e. they more rarely (14%) would report the case to the police; the surveyed citizens that do not have a completed level of education show an extraordinary readiness to report the case to the police (33%), but not the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, to media, or to an NGO; it is highly indicative to note that the survey subjects that are not ready to state their monthly incomes, more than all others, are ready to pay the demanded bribe (25%), than to report it to the police (17%); the survey subjects from the Pelagonia region are a group that gave most “I do not know” answers – 33%

The following question had the intention to inquire the **standpoints by the public** on the readiness to give, i.e. to offer a bribe in the context of a **quicker completion of a particular task/service**. Each fifth survey subject (21%) would offer a bribe, and the same number of survey subjects (21%) “Do not know” how they would react in such a situation. The remaining 58% surveyed citizens would not offer a bribe to the person in order that he/she would provide a faster/better service. (See General Distribution, Question No.48)

In this case, the survey subjects from an ethnic Albanian origin, less often than other groups, would not offer bribe (47%); the surveyed citizens with no completed primary education responded that they would not offer a bribe with 74%; the Pelagonia region (75%) and in the eastern region (68%) are most notable with the high rates of citizens that are not ready to offer bribes; and above the average, a most notable indifferent standpoint to giving bribes is seen among housewives: 46% do not know how they would react. On the other hand, the surveyed citizens that have the highest monthly incomes and the survey subjects of ethnic Albanian origin, are the categories that are most willing to offer bribes – 26% each.

The next exceptionally important standpoint on corruption, on whose grounds are predetermined the previously analysed perceptions regarding asking or giving bribes, is the **belief that the reporting of corruption would have a positive outcome**. In this sense, a notable higher number of surveyed citizens do not believe (43%) that reporting corruption would have any positive result; differently from the 33% that do believe that reporting on corruption could have a positive outcome. 23% surveyed citizens do not know, they cannot predetermine the outcome of them reporting on corruption. (See General Distribution, Question No.49)

The surveyed ethnic Albanians are a category that in an above the average percentage do not know the outcome of them reporting on corruption (33%); and among the surveyed housewives the “I do not know” answers are again dominating; an exceptional distrust (56%) in a positive result from reporting on corruption is seen among the survey subjects that do not have a completed primary education (57%); and an above the average pessimism (69%) seen in

the answer “there will not be a positive outcome from reporting corruption” is seen among the surveyed citizens coming from the south-western region. The surveyed citizens that have the highest monthly incomes show the highest level of belief (51%) that reporting corruption would lead to a positive outcome, whilst on the contrary, an exceptional percentage of answers received (64%), claiming that reporting corruption would lead to no positive result, is noted among the survey subjects that refuse to disclose their monthly incomes. Most optimistic are the survey subjects from the Skopje region (46%), whilst in the north-eastern region there have been an above the average number of “I do not know” responses – 39%.

“Which are the **reasons for the lack of trust in the effectiveness of reporting corruption?**” was the following question asked. It is indicative that most surveyed citizens – **almost each fourth of them (24%) cannot point out a concrete reason due to which he/she does not believe that reporting corruption can have a positive result.** The most frequently stated reason for this absence of trust is the one of “**laws are not being implemented**” – 19% and that “**there are no adequate laws in place**” – 9%; the “**inefficiency of the police**” -3% and the “**inefficiency of courts**” – 4%. The “**inefficiency of the prosecution service**” is mentioned as a reason by 2% of all surveyed citizens, and the same feedback was received as to “**inefficiency of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption**”.

The passive attitude by citizens – “citizens do not report” was an answer given by 3% of all survey subjects. The remaining 33% are the ones believing that reporting corruption would have a positive result. (See General Distribution, Question No.50)

Among the ones that have a completed primary education (34%), among the surveyed citizens of ethnic Albanian origin (34%), the housewives (57%), the citizens from the north-eastern region (42%) and the Polog region (32%) there has been an above the average responding by “I do not know”; among the surveyed citizens that do not have a completed primary education, exceptionally often the answer referring to the “inefficiency of the police” was stated (by 15%); in the same instance the survey subjects that declined to disclose their monthly incomes, above the average (21%) referred to the “inappropriate legislation” as a reason; whilst in the eastern region (36%) and in the south-western region (34%), the “not implementing legislation” was stated above the general average.

STANDPOINTS ON RECEIVING AND GIVING BRIBES

The fact that receiving and giving bribes fall into the group of corruption related offences, which the Macedonian Criminal Code threatens them as such (as criminal offences), was a reason to ask the surveyed citizens on their perception of the act of receiving and the act of giving bribes. Without any doubt, according to the feedback received, **receiving a bribe is regarded as a criminal offence.** This has been confirmed by the **high percentage of support to the premise – 91%.** Only an irrelevant number of the surveyed citizens (2%) did not agree with this statement, i.e. they reckon that this act is not to be

regarded as a criminal offence. The remaining 7% are the ones that answered by “I do not know” to this question.

Although a certain diversification is noticeable in the answers received as to the perception of giving a bribe as a criminal offence, nevertheless, in this case too, it is a respectable percentage of the surveyed citizens **(82%) that categorically state that this act has the status of a criminal offence**. The modality of denial, i.e. the standpoint that giving a bribe has no treatment of a criminal offence is registered among 5% of all surveyed citizens, whilst 13% are the ones that do not have a standpoint on this question, i.e. the ones that answered by “I do not know”. (See General Distribution, Questions No.51 and No.52)

The high concentration of answers on the confirming modality of course leaves no space for any deviations from the general distribution of answers, nevertheless some re-grouping in the answers given is notable. Namely, among the respondents of “*I do not know whether receiving a bribe is a criminal offence*” the highest frequency of such answers given is seen among housewives – 31%, which is more than four times the average distribution of answers. Such a trend in the feedback given is noted also among the respondents that have a completed primary education – 11% more than the average. Although the amount of income per household member does not imply cause-effective co-relation in the feedback given, still the respondents in the group with an average income per household member from 6001 to 9000 MKD are twice the average (14%) of the ones who do not know whether receiving a bribe constitutes a criminal offence. With an identical number of “I do not know” answers are the citizens from the south-western region (14%), as well as the surveyed population of ethnic Albanian origin (13%). Comparatively analysed, it is notable that the surveyed ethnic Macedonians (93%) for 10% more than the ethnic Albanians (84%) perceive receiving a bribe to constitute a criminal offence. Among the ones that are almost 100% categorical in their standpoint that this act represents a criminal offence are the citizens of the eastern region (98%). The independent variables regarding the perceptions of giving a bribe, consequently to the previous question, show even identical oscillations in the general distribution of answers. To be more precise, the smaller percentage of positive answers among the different categories of surveyed citizens is transferred to the answer of “I do not know.” So, among the surveyed citizens who perceive giving a bribe as a criminal offence, least present are the housewives category – 24% less than the average distribution, the citizens from the south-western region (-14%), the citizens with a completed primary education (-11%), the surveyed ethnic Albanians (-10%), as well as the respondents from the income group per household member of 6001 to 9000 MKD (-9%). Differently from the participants to the survey that are at the standpoint stating that giving/receiving a bribe constitutes a criminal offence, most frequent are the surveyed citizens from the eastern and Pelagonia regions – 12% more than the average, i.e. 10% more than the average. The discrepancy in the affirmative responses is seen among the surveyed ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian populations. Namely, the ethnic Macedonian respondents (with 86%) for 14% more than the ethnic Albanian respondents (with 72%) are at the standpoint that giving as well as receiving a bribe constitutes a legally sanctioned criminal offence.

MECHANISMS FOR HANDLING CORRUPTION

The experience shows that it is not sufficient only to formally proclaim the means and institutions to combat corruption. Particularly in cases when numerous researches / surveys speak of the serious implications determined by this phenomenon in the Republic of Macedonia, this determination in turn requires much more than the mere declarations on "the models for handling corruption." The complexity of the problem only confirms that it is necessary to continuously, synchronically, and coordinatively all segments work in the handling of corruption. This is the reason why in the survey, the survey subjects were given an **opportunity to evaluate the efficiency of particular installed mechanisms in the fight against corruption**. In fact this aspect of the problem has its reflection on the trust in the institutions as one of the key prerequisites for a stable and democratic development of society.

According to the received answers, it is evident that it is a much smaller percentage of the survey subjects that refer to the installed mechanisms as being "very efficient" in the fight against corruption. Mainly the answers were focused on the evaluations of the kind "partially efficient" and "not at all efficient." Comparatively analysed between the ones that have pledged for the assessment of "very efficient", **communicating to media has been noted as to be the most efficient approach to combating corruption – 16%** of all surveyed citizens shared this perception.

As a second rated contribution to efficiency, the respondents rank the **constant inspection control (15%)** and as a third one the point onto the **specially opened hotline phone number for reporting alleged corruption cases (14%)**. To each tenth surveyed citizen, a submission to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption is a "very efficient" means to combat corruption, whilst the fifth and sixth position is shared by the nongovernmental organizations that deal with this phenomena (6%) and the possibility for a submission to the Ministry of the Interior (6%). Last on this rank list on the efficiency level of handling corruption cases is the option to file a submission to the very Ministry/institution where the corruption case has occurred, i.e. this possibility has been acknowledged by an insignificant number of the surveyed citizens (3%). (See General Distribution, Questions No.53 to No.59)

Table No.1: Ranking List on the Level of Efficiency in the Execution of the Mechanisms for the Fight against Corruption

| Serial No. | Mechanism for the Fight against Corruption | Very Efficient | Partially Efficient | Not at all Efficient | I do not know |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. | Submission to Media | 16% | 55% | 18% | 11% |
| 2. | Constant inspection control | 15% | 44% | 29% | 12% |
| 3. | Special phone hotline for reporting corruption cases | 14% | 40% | 26% | 20% |

| | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 4. | Submission to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption | 10% | 47% | 25% | 18% |
| 5. | Alerting an NGO dealing with corruption issues | 6% | 37% | 31% | 25% |
| 6. | Submission to the Ministry of the Interior | 6% | 47% | 36% | 11% |
| 7. | Submission to the Ministry/institution where the case of corruption has occurred | 3% | 39% | 44% | 14% |

Logically to the beforehand said, as most inefficient in the fight against corruption the public sees the possibility for filing a complaint/submission to the very *“Ministry/institution where the case of corruption has occurred”* – 44%, which is followed by the low level of trust for filing a “submission to the Ministry of the Interior” – 36%. Differently from this trend, “alerting an NGO dealing with corruption issues” and *“constant inspection control”* being as completely inefficient possibilities is regarded by 31%, i.e. 29% respondents. The negative evaluation that through *“a specially opened hotline phone number for reporting cases of corruption”* – 26%, or through a *“submission to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption as an efficient means for reacting to corruption”* is a standpoint shared by each fourth respondent. Among the least efficient, with the lowest percentage of support, are the media, i.e. this is an evaluation by each fifth respondent -18%.

The negative evaluations that via the *“specially opened telephone hotline number”* – 26% or through a *“submission to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption can be an efficient means to react in the fight against corruption”* are a statement by each fourth respondent. Among the least efficient with the lowest percentage of support are the media, i.e. this is an evaluation by each fifth respondent – 18%.

The largest number of the surveyed citizens that cannot determine the efficiency of particular mechanisms in the fights against corruption refer to the so called para-institutional mechanism for protection such as *“addressing for assistance to a nongovernmental organization that deal with the fight against corruption”* – 25%, and the *“specially opened telephone hotline for reporting cases of corruption”* – 20%. Among these respondents, a somewhat smaller percentage is the ones that cannot evaluate the efficiency of filing a *“submission to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption”* – 18%. As regards the efficiency of the other available means through which one can influence on the suppression of corruption, the response of *“I do not know”* is a preference of almost each tenth respondent. This distribution in the answers received of course derives from the fact that in the perception the public has the key role in the fight against corruption. This reserved attitude towards the other means for reaction, which are not sufficiently promoted out in the public, it partially originates in the absence of a longer democratic tradition in the country fostering an active involvement of the civic sector in public life. Exceptions to this are media that via the public initially obtain the initial information on the numerous corruption scandals in Macedonia.

Of course, from the perspective of the independent variables, certain deviations from the generally determined distribution of answers are seen in the responses provided to particular questions. The oscillations show a different level of intensity. Although the gender of the respondents has no crucial role in the distribution of answers, nevertheless, the female respondents vis-à-vis the male ones are more numerous among those that cannot determine the efficiency of the listed mechanisms. This growing discrepancy is evident regardless of the specified forms of protection from corruption. The largest deviation is registered when it comes to the possibility to file a submission to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption. Hence, for 8% more than the male respondents, the female survey subjects cannot determine the efficiency of this available mechanism for handling with corruption.

The comparative analysis in this context locates certain differences also when it comes to the proportions of the responses determined by ethnic background of the surveyed citizens. Namely, among the ones that do not have a standpoint on the level of efficiency of the listed anticorruption mechanisms, with the largest percentage are the respondents with an ethnic Albanian origin, almost by rule, by 10% more than the registered distribution of responses among the survey subjects of ethnic Macedonian origin. The largest diversification of responses received is seen on the mechanism of “addressing to media” as a means to suppress corruption. By “I do not know”, 21% ethnic Albanians respondents answered, compared to 8% ethnic Macedonians who have the same feedback. The smallest discrepancy of responses between the ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanians respondents is seen when it comes to not knowing to determine whether and how efficient it is to address an NGO on a corruption case – almost each fourth ethnic Macedonian respondent (24%) and ethnic Albanian survey subject (28%) has given that feedback. It is interesting to note that only when it comes to this answer the evaluation of “very efficient” for a certain percentage more has received bigger support by the ethnic Albanian respondents – 8% compared to the 6% of ethnic Macedonians.

Age as an independent variable produces smaller re-grouping among the received answers. It is notable that among the ones that do not have a stance on the efficiency of particular anticorruption mechanisms, most numerous are the respondents from the youngest age group of 18 to 25 years. In the same instance, more critical in the evaluation are the older generations that in a larger percentage than the younger generations have given the answer of “not at all efficient.” So, for instance, a “*submission to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption*” is seen a “not at all efficient” by most respondents in the oldest categories – the ones in the age group of 50 to 65 years – 30% and 41 to 50 years – 28%, which is for 11% and 9% more than the evaluation provided by the youngest age category – 19%. Of course, when looked upon from the perspective of the level of education, the most numerous respondents that do not have a standpoint on the level of efficiency of each listed anticorruption mechanism are the ones with a completed primary education – 19%, which is for 9% more than the respondents that have a completed secondary education, i.e. higher or university education.

The distribution of answers from the perspective of the employment status of the respondents that cannot determine the level of efficiency of each anticorruption mechanism, shows that the housewives have provided such feedback twice the average distribution. Students are more sceptic when it comes to the option of filing “a submission to the police” as an efficient means for combating corruption (47%) – the average distribution on this questions is 53%, where the employees from the public sector manifest an above the average level of trust (58%). This trend of an above the average trust is registered equally among the employees from the public (45%) and private sector (45%) regarding the efficiency of filing a submission to the very Ministry/institution where the case of corruption has occurred.

Regarding the average monthly income per household member it is noticeable that the respondents with highest incomes are most numerous in the given positive evaluations on the listed anticorruption mechanisms. Differently from this, the respondents with lowest incomes are more inclines in giving negative feedback to this question.

The region of residence as a variable implies a certain re-distribution in the answers received. Thus, the surveyed citizens that live in the eastern (62%) and south-eastern region (60%) show an a bigger support in the efficiency of filing a “*submission to the police*”. The respondents from the Vardar region – 47% and the south-western region – 50% are most critical when it comes to the role of the police in the combating of corrupting. Among the ones not having a standpoint are the survey subjects coming from the north-eastern region – 18%. In the positive evaluation of the option for filing a “*submission to the very Ministry/institution where the case of corruption has occurred*”, most numerous are the respondents from the eastern region -51%, whilst the ones that cannot determine the efficiency level of the listed anticorruption mechanisms are the respondents from the north-eastern region (9% more than the average) and the ones from the Polog region (+7%). Regarding media, the surveyed citizens from these two regions more than the average (+7%) are represented by the response of “*I do not know.*” As the most efficient anticorruption mechanism – alerting media, in the largest percentage is supported by the survey subjects from the Pelagonia region (83%), whilst as “*not at all efficient*” is the most frequent evaluation by the surveyed citizens from the south-western region - 30%. The respondents from the same region (the south-western one) are even more critical when it comes to the efficiency of a “constants inspection control”, i.e. as “not at all efficient” is regarded by 51% of all respondents from this region, which is for 22% more half the average distribution. This evaluation is shared also by 44% surveyed citizens from the Vardar region. Differently from this trend, the respondents from the south-eastern region – 78%, show a much smaller scepticisms when it comes to the efficiency of constant inspection as means for combating corruption.

Regarding the possibility to combat corruption through a specially installed telephone hotline for reporting corruption, no major misbalance is seen from the perspective of the regional belonging of the respondents. Hence, among the surveyed citizens that responded by “*I do not know*” to the question of the efficiency of different anticorruption mechanisms, most numerous are the ones

from the Polog region (31%) and Pelagonia region (28%). Above the average positive evaluation on this anticorruption mechanism was provided by the respondents from the eastern region - 23% more than the average, and the respondents from the south-eastern region – 18% more than the general average.

On the contribution of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the variable of the regional belonging of the respondents did not produce any major differences in the answers received. But it ought to be mentioned that this institution has a somewhat bigger support by the survey subjects coming from the eastern region.

When it also comes to the effects of the inclusion of nongovernmental organizations in the fight against corruption, two particular regions again show the most frequent absence of determination – by “*I do not know*” 43% respondents from the Pelagonia region answered, as well as 40% surveyed citizens from the Polog region. Most positive are the respondents from the south-eastern region – 22% more than the average, and most negative feedback has been received in the eastern region – 6% more than the average.

AREAS WITH BIGGEST CORRUPTION LEVELS

The problem with corruption in the Republic of Macedonia is not limited to a single segment, but it is obvious through the answers of the surveyed citizens² that this phenomenon is widespread. For part of the areas which in the eyes of the public are seen as being most corrupt, in the survey, though a separate battery of questions, the following segments have been listed: the public healthcare system, the judicial system, and the high education system. Here we speak of spheres that have the widest societal outreach with which most citizens have almost a daily relationship. The fact that in these areas, several different profiles and structures are involved in different stages and aspects, was the reason why we asked the surveyed citizens where in the listed areas there is most corruption.

1. The public on the corruption in the healthcare system

In the public healthcare system, according to most respondents, corruption is equally “practiced” by involved structures in this sphere. Namely, 40% of all surveyed citizens responded “***they are all corrupt.***” From the respondents that more concretely locate corruption is one of the ‘chains’ of the public healthcare system, the biggest number of answers is focused on the “***specialised practitioners/doctors***” – 37%. Then with a smaller percentage “***the administration (The Healthcare Fund, the various commissions)***” follows – 8%. The “***general practitioners/doctors***” and the “***nurses and other hospital personnel***” participate in the general distribution of answers with an equal share – i.e. all together with 8%.

² See evaluations on the distribution of corruption according to questions 7-26.

The dominant negative perception on the situation with the public healthcare system from the aspect of the corruption of the healthcare personnel is unambiguously confirmed by the fact that only 1% of all respondents have chosen to answer by "***there is no corruption in the healthcare system.***" When to this insignificant number we would add the relatively low percentage (6%) of undetermined answers by "***I do not know***", then the high percentage of affirmative answers (93%) is indicative enough for the gravity of the situation in this field, which could not be marginalized as an irrelevant problem. (See General Distribution, Question No.60)

The concentration of the received responses to two modalities – 77% is a reason why the independent variables determine relatively lower oscillations than the general inputs in the answers. Thus, a certain re-grouping in the answers is registered according to the ethnic background of the respondents. The ethnic Albanian survey subjects for 8% less than the average refer to the "*specialized practitioners/doctors*" as being most corrupt, i.e. a certain number of their answers are re-directed towards the "general practitioners/doctors" and the "*nurses and other hospital personnel*" – by 5% more than the average. When it comes to age, it can be noted that the percentage of respondents that point out that "*the administration (the Healthcare Fund, various commissions)*" is the most corrupt segment of the healthcare system, rises as the age group does too. This of course is due to the fact that the older generations are more directed to be in contact with these cadre than the younger ones. This intensity of responses is also seen amid the surveyed citizens that have a higher degree of education. A certain smaller re-distribution in the answers is seen among the respondents that have a completed primary education. Their answers, although they do follow the general trend, nevertheless show a certain level of dispersion, i.e. in a larger percentage – 13% refer to "*general practitioners/doctors*" as being most corrupt.

Regarding the employment status of the respondents, it is interesting to note that in the group of housewives, which usually in the other questions has most frequently opted for the "*I do not know*" answer, in this case with 2% less than the average has decided to sustain from more concretely locating corruption in this area. Also, the respondents from this category, when compared to the other ones, in their answers do not strictly follow the general trend of answers and show a certain level of discrepancy from the average.

The variable of average income per household member, although notes certain minor oscillations, still the impression is that this problem equally concerns all income categories.

As far as the regional belonging, although at first glance, there seem to be certain re-groupings in the answers provided, nevertheless the deviations do not lead to a re-arrangement of the general ranking of most corrupted segments of the healthcare system. The "*specialized practitioners/doctors*" by all respondents are ranked No.1 on corruption level, whilst the largest percentage of all surveyed citizens that do share this stance are the ones that live in the south-eastern region (47%) – which is 10% more than the average. Most

categorical in the standpoint that “all of them are corrupt” are the respondents from the south-western region – 51%, and the ones from the Vardar region – 49%, i.e. this is the answer by every second respondent from these two regions of the country.

2. The Public on Corruption in the Judicial System

As in the previous questions, in this case too, to most respondents – 41%, in the **judiciary** “*all are corrupted*”. Differently from the ones supporting this belief, those that have decided to locate the most corrupt part of this system, point out the “judges” – 39%. The “*attorneys*” as being most corrupt are singled out by 6% from all surveyed citizens, whilst the “*professional associates and court personnel*” are noted to be most corrupt by a somewhat lower portion of the respondents – 4%. According to the received answers, the positive perception of the judicial system is shared by an insignificant number of respondents, i.e. barely by 2% of all surveyed citizens. This percentage together with the eight percentage of the respondents that cannot determine their standpoint, is only a confirmation of the image that this branch of government enjoys among the citizenry, which by definition is one of the key actors in the fight against corruption. (See General Distribution of Answers, Question No.61)

The surveyed citizens, regardless of their demographic characteristics are unanimous in the standpoint that corruption exists in all segments of the judiciary, but on the issue of where it is located the most, there are some differences noticeable in the general distribution. Hence, a discrepancy in the received responses according to the ethnic background of the respondents is seen in regard to the “judges” who the ethnic Albanian survey subjects see being most corrupted for 12% less than the average. Differently from them, to each second respondent with an ethnic Turkish background (49%) it is exactly the “judges” that are the most corrupt part of the judiciary. When it comes to the judges, most critical are the employees from the public sector, which more than 7% than the average are at the standpoint that that this category from the judiciary is most corrupt. The groups of respondents that less than the average single out the “judges” as being most corrupt are the students, the citizens from rural areas, with 7% less than the average distribution, as well as the youngest population – 5% less than the average. But in the same instance, the youngest, i.e. the students, are most frequently present in the generalized perception that all structures involved in the judicial system are equally corrupted – 47%.

When it comes to the educational level as a variable, it can be noted that there is a partial reflection on the trend to the increase of the negative perception of the respondents vis-à-vis all professional groups involved in the judiciary. Regarding the average income per household member, no major tendency is noticeable in the trend of responses received, and the answers are dispersed regardless of the income levels. Regarding the variable of the regional belonging of the respondents, a certain discrepancy is seen in the distribution of answers. Namely, the surveyed citizens that in a larger percentage single out “judges” as a structure that is most corrupted, are the ones from the eastern

region (51%), then the south-western region (50%), the Pelagonia region (49%), and the south-eastern region (48%). With this standpoint in a lesser extent agree the respondents from the Skopje region (29%) and the Polog region (31%). The “attorneys” as a most corrupt category are seen as such by more than the average in the case of the respondents from the south-western region (11%) and the Polog region (9%).

As for the respondents that have no standpoint on this question, the housewives are most frequent with 22%, then the respondents having a completed primary education – 15%, the youngest – 13%, the surveyed citizens from the north-eastern region – 13%, and the ones from the Polog region – 12%, as well as the respondents with an ethnic Albanian origin – 11%.

3. The Public on Corruption in the High Education System

The biggest number of respondents relates the problem of corruption in this sphere with the lecturing staff – the professors. Namely, to each second responded (55%) the “**professors**” are the most corrupt category in the high education system. The standpoint that “**all are corrupted**” is shared by almost a third of all surveyed citizens – 29%. The “**administration**” and the “**assistants**” in this connotation are perceived by 3% and 2% of all respondents. The answers assembled show that little less than each tenth responded has no standpoint on this question. Contrary to the dominant negative perception on the level of corruption in the high education system (90%), only 2% from all participants in the survey are categorically supportive on the statement that “**there is no corruption in the educational system**” (See General Distribution of Answers, Question No.62)

The comparative analysis of the collected data, points out to the conclusion that that all features of the respondents do not determine an identical picture with the one of the general distribution. Namely, an inconsistency with the general distribution is noticeable when it comes to the answers provided by ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian respondents. When it comes to the corruption level among “**professors**”, the ethnic Macedonian survey subjects (60%) are for one third more critical than the surveyed citizens of ethnic Albanian background. Differently from them, the survey subjects from the ethnic Albanian community are in a larger percentage than the average inclined to generalize corruption in the high education system – 33%. In the group that points out to the “**professors**”, above the average are present the ones that do have a completed high education, i.e. the ones with a completed higher or high/university education (61%), the respondents with average income per household member higher than 9001 MKD (62%), the students (61%), the employees from the public sector (61%), and the pensioners (62%). As regards the “**professors**” as a most corrupted category, from the perspective of the region of origin, by far most numerous are the survey subjects from the Pelagonia region – 73%, followed closely by the respondents from the south-eastern region (65%), and the eastern region (62%). When it comes to the respondents that do not point out a specific category from the high education system as being particularly

corrupted, but they generalize that all are corrupted, most numerous are the surveyed citizens from the Vardar region – 44%.

In the answers received on this question, although the younger age groups due to their direct involvement in the educational process it is expectable that they would not follow the general distribution, even in the case of younger respondents there have been no major deviations from the general trend. The respondents that do not have a standpoint on whether there is, and where particularly is located the corruption in the education system, an above average presence is seen by the surveyed citizens from the following categories: housewives – 29%, respondents having a completed primary education – 20%, the ones with highest monthly incomes per household member – 16%, the survey subjects from ethnic Albanian origin – 14%, and the surveyed citizens living in rural areas -12%.

WHEN DID WE HAD MORE CORRUPTION

Although we live in a time where the former times of the communist era are heavily and intensively criticized, nevertheless the problem of “corruption” in Macedonia is increasingly more often treated as a by-product of the slow transition processes, rather than something that has a genesis in the socialism as a political system. In fact the answers to the question in a way confirm this thesis: **“Was there more corruption during the times of socialism than now?”** Namely, for three fifths of all surveyed citizens, corruption is more widespread now than in the former times, i.e. 62% responded by **“no, there was less corruption during socialism”**. Slightly less than one fifth of all respondents – 17% stated that the situation now is the **“same”**, and the same number of respondents could not determine in which political system there was more corruption – 17%. Categorical in their answers claiming that **“yes, there was more corruption in socialism”** are the minimal 3% of all respondents. (See General Distribution, Question No.63)

The educational level is not reflected in the general trend of answers received, which of course is due to the fact that the problem of corruption equally influences all categories. In that sense, there are no deviations from the general distribution neither in the answers provided by respondents living in urban and rural areas.

Regarding the other variables there are certain noticeable re-groupings. Such is the perception of a smaller extent of corruption present in the former political system seen in the responses by the employees in the public sector – 69%, the pensioners – 78%, the farmers – 71%, as well as among those with minimal monthly incomes per household member (the ones with less than 2000 MKD) – 71%. Also, the two oldest groups of respondents are most represented by their large belief in the small presence of corruption in the socialist system. The same impression was shared by 75% of the oldest category (the ones in the age group of 50 to 65 years), i.e. 73% of all respondents in the age group of 41 to 50 years. The students, as a youngest population that has no build-up experiential perception on the situation in the former regime, expectably, far

above the average, are most present among those that have no standpoint on this question – 47%, i.e. 42%. In this context the answer “*I do not know*” is a preference by housewives in an above the average frequency – 35%, female respondents – 22%, as well as the survey subjects living in the Vardar region – 26%, and the Skopje region – 21%. The negative responses as to the intensity of corruption in the previous political system, from the perspective of the respondents` region of residence, are most dominant in the eastern region – 76%, and in the Pelagonia region – 75%.

The ethnic element shows a certain level of discrepancy in the responses received, as the ethnic Macedonian respondents state that there was less corruption in the previous system in a larger percentage (64%) than the ethnic Albanian survey subjects (57%). The survey participants with average monthly incomes per household member of above 9001 MKD are most frequent among the ones that have a negative perception of this problem in the times of the previous system – 7% more than the average.

VICTIMES OF CORRUPTION - VICTIMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS-

CORRUPTION IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION³

Introduction

Corruption, comprehended in its broadest sense, represents the miss-usage of a public function for the utilisation of a personal benefit. No single society is immune to the problem of corruption – it is everywhere and always present⁴. The degree of its societal negative influence is determined by its scope. The larger it is, the more dangerous it is, and eventually it leads to disorganization and anomaly of all society.

But also the other way round: the processes for disorganization and the anomaly situation in the society influences the amount of corruption present. It is therefore that it is an immensely important question of determining the areas, the amount/scope of corruption, and its characteristics, because only like this the appropriate societal reaction for its suppression and prevention may be determined. In the same instance, this is one of the more complicated issues in criminology due to the nature of this phenomena (the confidential character of the very act of corruption) and the penalty of the act of corruption.

In the framework of the project “*The Public Opinion on Corruption in the Republic of Macedonia*” one aspect of the research was dedicated also to the determination of the scope and some of the characteristics of the corruption present in the public administration.

Why did we choose to investigate corruption in the public administration?

1. The presence of corruption in the public administration shows certain aspects of the current state of play in this field: it presents an indicator for the lack of control in the institutions (both internal and external); the absence of measures that bring about responsibility and transparency in the work performed; and too many authorisations and many discreet rights awarded to certain officials.

2. The presence and scope of corruption in this sphere is also an indicator of the position and orientation of the public administration: whether it is the governor or the service of and for the citizens.

3. The scope of corruption in the public administration presents a significant criteria for evaluation of the quality of life enjoyed by the citizens, as it refers to an area that daily involves the citizens on a massive scale.

³ Under the term ‘Public Administration’ in this survey it is meant the state administration and the public services.

⁴ The term corruption is mentioned even in the Old Testament. In it, the consequences from the initial sinn, by which the man’s mortality begins and his tendency to wrongdoing, are mentioned, differently from the Lord who is an eternal bearer of all virtues.(Gjorgje Ignjatovic, KRIMINOLOGIJA, Beograd, 2005, str 271).

4. Complete absence of experience-based empirical data on the corruption in the state.

Until now, in all surveys on corruption, and there have been quite a number of them, the estimate on the scope of corruption was based on the basis of the perception on corruption. Where is the difference between surveying the perception of corruption by researching corruption on the basis of the experience of the citizens (victimological survey)? The differences at first relate to the precise character of the obtained data on the scope and characteristics of the corruption. The perception based on experience merits also means seeing the reality that surrounds us, and this in a larger extent is determined by subjective psychological factors. Whilst, on the other hand, the perception of corruption belongs to, what is named as, social perception, which implies also seeing the social phenomena in the reality and based on the observation, aside all psychological factors other factors too have their influence (the standpoints, the interaction among people, the prejudices, the means for mass communication, the social welfare of the particular person that perceives, etc.), which could enlarge or decrease the accuracy of the social perception.⁵

For the perception of corruption, of paramount importance is the media space given to it, as well as the very approach it has been given by media.

The insights obtained on the basis of the real experiences of the citizens (victimological survey) are much more accurate out of the reason that they are founded only on experience, hence the influence of other factors has been excluded. In this context, a question on the sincerity of the surveyed citizens may be asked, especially due to the fact that the very respondents are involved in a corruption relationship, which according to Macedonian legislation, is punishable by law – it's considered to be a criminal offence. Of course, these are circumstances that may have their influence on the survey results, but for the time being, the use of victimological surveys are regarded as being most adequate and most relevant for researching shadowy social phenomena such as corruption.

5. Need for empirical knowledge on the scope and characteristics of corruption for the creation of a policy for its suppression and prevention.

What was subject of research to the survey

Subject of the survey was corruption in the public administration, more concretely in the higher education, the healthcare system, the judiciary, and the public management. Two forms of corruption were in focus of the survey: first, paying an additional fee to officials for receiving a service for which the citizen is entitled to, or for a quicker realisation of it. The second form of corruption that was subject of the survey was paying for achieving a privilege for which the citizens is not entitled to, i.e. giving a bribe for braking the law.

⁵ For more, see at, S-r Nenad, Havelka, Socail Prevention / Socijalna prevencija, Zavod za udzbenike i nastavna sredstva, Beograd, 1992, pages. 51-56.

Approaches for researching crime

There are three standardized sources of approaches to researching crime that in a certain way determine the approach utilized by the research. These are: 1. official statistics on crime; 2. the opinions and estimates of competent individuals/experts; and 3. the citizens as potential perpetrators or victims of criminal conduct. All of these three sources of knowledge, i.e., approaches, have particular advantages and drawbacks, and the selection of the approach to be used in the survey is determined by the sort and nature of the criminal offence to be analysed. For investigating corruption, which in Macedonia is characterized by an exceptionally high shadow number, the first two approaches, i.e. sources of insight, we regard as to be not suitable: the official statistics on crime cannot be used due to the exceptionally low level of the official numbers (the discovered and registered **corruption**), and the opinions of competent individuals can only present an orientation, but are not sufficient to provide a precise presentation for the complete whole of corruption, its scope and characteristics. To us, the most adequate source of insight are the citizens, being the potential victims of corruption in the society.

Methodological procedure

The research was conducted on the foundation of a victimological survey. Namely, the citizens reported on their participation in the corrupt behaviour, but only if they were in the role of giving a bribe. With this methodological procedure we estimated that we shall receive a more realistic showcase on the scope and characteristics of corruption in the public administration.

Sources of insight

Sources of insight were adult citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

Surveyed unit

Unit of the survey was the household. It was defined as community of all persons that live on the same address and east on the same table. The household was selected as the unit of the survey from the reason that in the focus of the research were the spheres that affect all members of family – the inability to realise certain rights or services (reason for corruption), or direct services (e.g. receiving a house construction permit), and indirect services (e.g. the parents have to pay a bribe for their child – a student).

Level of victimisation

The estimate on the scope of corruption (in the surveyed spheres) is conducted on the bases of the experience of the citizens. The citizens reported whether in the last five years they were asked for a bribe in one of the areas subject to our research. **Hence, subject of the survey was not to determine the fact of giving a bribe, but we were interested only the determination of the**

situation of when the bribe was asked. This approach derived from our estimate that by it we shall receive a more realistic presentation of the state of play of corruption in the country.

By determining the level of victimized citizens, each respondent was considered to be only one of the victims, regardless of in how many areas and how many times he has been victimized. Should he/she was a victim of corruption in 2005 and before 2005, he/she was considered as a victim in 200% (this is due to the fact that the survey was directed also at determining the characteristics of corruption in 2005). On the basis of this calculation, the five years level of the victimized citizens is at 45.9%, and the level of the victimisation of the citizens in 2005 is 28.5%. The impression on the victimisation of corruption is different if we take into consideration the victimized citizens in all areas that were surveyed (the ones that were victimized in two areas are counted two times). According to this approach, the five years level of victimisation is at 58.2%, whilst the level of victimisation in 2005 is 32.8%. The first calculation is more precise from the aspect of determining the number of victims; the second calculation is more precise as to the determination of the scope of corruption.

Regardless of the way for calculating the level of victimisation, it may be stated that that we speak of a large scale phenomenon that presents a real danger to the state. It is interesting to note that the scope of corruption in the Republic of Macedonia is higher than the one in the neighbouring countries.⁶

1. CORRUPTION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

1.1. Scope of corruption

The unit on which the survey on corruption in the higher education system was conducted has been formed in such a way that from the total representative unit (1612 respondents), the respondents that in the last five years were involved as a student, personally or via a family member, were singled out. The respondents were asked to report whether they have had a personal experience (or experience through a family member) on corrupt behaviour in the higher education system. By this selection of respondents, a unit (a sub-unit from the representative unit) with the size of 605 respondents was listed. The basic insight is that in the last five years each fifth respondent (30,2%) has been asked a bribe, or were expected to give a bribe in order to gain certain rights or receive a certain service regarding their studying or the studying of a member of their family. The level of the one year victimisation by corruption in the higher education system in the country is 13,9%. That means that in 2005 each seventh respondent (who in a certain way was involved with the higher education system) was in a situation where he/she was asked or was expected to give a bribe.

In this context, it ought to be noted that there is no sign of an equation between the number of victimised students with the number of corrupt teachers (this interpretation is often heard). This derives from the specificity of the very act for

⁶ http://www.transparentnost.org.yu/index_s.htm

which it is characteristic to believe that there ought to be one perpetrator and a few or many victims.

Corruption is a phenomena that is more typical for state universities (89%), and much less is seen at private colleges/universities – only 6%.

1.2. Time of victimisation

The structure of the victimisation by corruption in the high education system according to the time when it occurs shows that it was most frequent in 2005, but also that there is a general tendency for its increase in the last five years (table No.1)

Table No.1 Time of victimisation

| | Frequency | % |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| This year (2005) | 84 | 45.9 |
| Last year (2004) | 35 | 19.1 |
| Before 2004 | 35 | 19.1 |
| Cannot remember, does not know | 12 | 6.6 |
| Refuses to answer | 17 | 9.3 |
| Total | 183 | 100 |

This tendency means that it derives from the increase or intensification of the influence of the factors that sway the frequency and scope of corruption. In the same instance, this could also mean the absence of measures and actions to combat and prevent corruption, i.e. the lack of sensitivity of the corruption to the societal reactions to it, which in turn speaks for the inappropriateness of the undertaken measures.

Bribes – why are they given, to whom, and what is being given

Passing exams is the most frequent (48,8%) reason for bribery in the high education system. All other situations are much less present (see table No.2).

Table No.2: Purpose of the bribe

| | Frequency | % |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| To pass a university admission exam | 13 | 15,5 |
| To pass an exam | 41 | 48,8 |
| To obtain a higher grade at an examination | 3 | 3,6 |
| To receive a scholarship, credit/loan | 2 | 2,4 |
| To be granted accommodation in a student dormitory | 7 | 8,3 |
| For an administrative service | 12 | 14,3 |
| Other | 6 | 7,1 |
| Total | 84 | 100,0 |

According to the respondents, the persons involved in the education process were identified as being most corrupt (61,9%), followed by the persons from the university administration (see table No.3). This insight corresponds to the previously located most risky situations for corrupt behaviour (passing an exam, administrative services)

Table No.3: Who asked for the bribe?

| | Frequency | % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| By a professor (a person involved in the educational process) | 52 | 61.9 |
| By a person from the university administration | 17 | 20.2 |
| By an official from the Ministry of Education and Science | 2 | 2.4 |
| By a person from the management of a student dormitory | 6 | 7.1 |
| Others | 1 | 1.2 |
| Does not know | 4 | 4.8 |
| Refuses to answer | 2 | 2.4 |
| Total | 84 | 100 |

A feature of corruption in the high education system is that most often bribes were asked through an proxy/intermediary (56%), and less frequently directly (35,7%). This insight deserves a bit of commenting. We said that one of the basic characteristics of corruption is in the high shadow numbers, which in turn is explained by the confidentiality of the act. The act of corruption is being undertaken by two sides – participants to the relationship (according to the Macedonian legislation, both receiving and giving a bribe is considered to be a criminal offence), and they have their own reason that the act ought not to be disclosed.

The indirect, proxy asking of a bribe, as a dominant experience in our environment, points out to two issues: first, that there is a possibility to take a bribe on the behalf of an another person whilst this very person not to be aware of the act; and second, that there is a possibility than an element of organization (installed organized scheme/network) is set in place, which of course implies an increase of the degree of the societal danger of this phenomenon.

Most often, the bribe was asked in the form of money (65,5%), followed by an obligatory purchase of a particular book/text book, whilst sponsorships, counter-services, and gifts, are less frequent. (See table No.4).

Table No.4: What was asked as a bribe?

| | Frequency | % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Money | 55 | 65.5 |
| Sponsorship for publishing a book, a project | 4 | 4.8 |
| Obligatory purchase of a text book written by the lecturer asking for the bribe | 9 | 10.7 |
| Gift | 1 | 1.2 |
| Counterservice that I can provide | 2 | 2.4 |
| Refused to answer | 13 | 15.5 |
| Total | 84 | 100 |

The amount asked for corruption in the sphere of the high education system has been in the range of 50 Euros to 2000 Euros (only one respondent reported on the latter highest amount). The most frequently reported sums were in the range of 200 to 500 Euros. The only reported experience of corruption by a gift being demanded is in the form of products from a shop.

1.4. Reporting corruption

The low level of reporting of corruption has been confirmed also by this research. Namely, from the total number of registered corruption acts in the higher education system (84), only four respondents stated that the event was reported, and only one respondent said that the case was reported to the police, two said that they did it to the College Board, and one respondent refused to give an answer.

The motives for not reporting corruption cases are different (see table No.5). The dominant reason for not reporting the case is the fear from negative consequences upon the student (28,8%). This is connected to the students being convinces that the professors would solidarise to their colleague, and the student that would report the corruption case would have to bear consequences in the continuation of his/her studies. Second most frequent motive due to which the corruption case is not being reported was the intention of the respondent to have his/hers interest met and the 'job done' (25%) – this is the most crucial reason why these criminal acts remain undisclosed, hence corruption is characterised by the large shadow numbers.

The other two stated reasons for not reporting the criminal act of corruption (which are: "I know that nothing will be achieved - I know that no procedure will be initiated upon my reporting" and "this is an every-day practice in our country – it is accepted as a normal behaviour"), which are referred at by each fourth respondent (27,6%) is related to the inappropriate work of the institutions and the fact that the citizens do not have trust in the capability of the authorised organs that have to be involved in the combating of corruption. The statement by 7,5% of all respondents that they did not know to whom to report the

corruption act deserves a particular attention. In this direction go the answers to the question of to whom the respondents would report the corruption case.

From a total of four reported cases, only one was reported to the police, which is authorised to combat this phenomenon; for one case the organ to which the case was reported was not précised; and two corruption cases have been reported to the College/University Board.

When it comes to the reporting of a case of corruption to the College Board, with a dose of certainty it may be assumed that no procedure would be initiated in front of the authorised organs, i.e. the efforts of the College Board would be to keep the case in a low-profiles, within the quarters of the College/University.

Table No.5: Why did you not report the case of corruption?

| | Frequency | % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| It was in my interest to have the “job done” | 20 | 25.0 |
| I feared negative consequences | 23 | 28.8 |
| Because no procedure would be initiated – the perpetrator to be penalized | 15 | 18.8 |
| It is an every-day practice in our country, normal behaviour | 7 | 8.8 |
| Other | 1 | 1.3 |
| I did not know to whom to address a complaint/report | 6 | 7.5 |
| Refused to answer | 8 | 10 |
| Total | 80 | 100 |

2.CORRUPTION IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

2.1. Scope of the corruption

Another societal sphere to which we have directed our research was the survey of corruption in the healthcare system. The unit on which this part of the research was conducted included 1313 respondents, selected according to them (or a household member) using a service from the healthcare system in the last five years. According to the insight obtained, the level of the five year victimisation of the citizens in the healthcare system is 22,1%, and in 2005 the level was at 8,3%. This means that in the last five years, to every fifth citizen that was involved with institutions from the healthcare system, he/she was asked to give a bribe in order to the gain a certain right or to receive an otherwise guaranteed by law service. In 2005 this occurred to each 12th respondent (8,3%).

2.2. Time of victimisation

The data on the time when the bribe was demanded show that in this sphere, the highest victimisation is noted in 2005, and that there is a tendency of an increase of corruption in the healthcare system (see table No.6).

Table No.6: Time of victimization

| | Frequency | % |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| This year (2005) | 109 | 37.6 |
| Last year (2004) | 78 | 26.9 |
| Before 2004 | 68 | 23.4 |
| Does not remember, does not know | 20 | 6.9 |
| Refused to answer | 15 | 5.2 |
| Total | 290 | 100 |

2..3. Bribe – why it is given, to whom it is given, and what is given as a bribe

The citizens most frequently reported that bribes have been asked on the undertaking of a surgical intervention (57,8%). The remaining situations that the citizens have identified as being of high risk regarding their corruption potential are the provision of hospital accommodation, quicker medical service, utilizing the right of invalid pension, and sick-leave absences approvals; but all these cases are much less frequently noted than the cases of surgical interventions. (See table No.7).

Table No.7: What for has the bribe been given for?

| | Frequency | % |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| For provision of hospital accommodation | 13 | 11.9 |
| For a surgical intervention | 63 | 57.8 |
| To obtain a quicker medical intervention | 16 | 14.7 |
| To obtain the right of invalid pension or sick-leave absence approval | 11 | 10.1 |
| Other | 1 | 0.9 |
| Does not know | 1 | 0.9 |
| Refused to answer | 4 | 3.7 |
| Total | 109 | 100 |

According to the respondents' statements, most frequent forerunners of corrupt acts in the sphere of the healthcare are the medical staff – 76,1%. All other persons that were listed by the respondents as being corrupt (the persons from the hospitals' administrations, the officials from the fund for social and pension insurance, and the staff of the healthcare fund), are far less frequently corrupted (total of 14,7%) – table No.8. These situations, as regards the presented experience of the citizens, are the most frequent cases of corruption:

Table No.8 Who asked for the bribe?

| | Frequency | % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| By the medical staff | 83 | 76.1 |
| By a person from the hospital administration | 9 | 8.3 |
| By a medical assistant/nurse | 1 | 0.9 |
| By an official from the Healthcare Fund | 2 | 1.8 |
| By an official from the Fund for Social and Pension Insurance | 4 | 3.7 |
| Others | 1 | 0.9 |
| Does not know | 3 | 2.8 |
| Refused to answer | 6 | 5.5 |
| Total | 109 | 100 |

In this societal sphere too (67%), the most frequent form through which corruption is being conducted is money, whilst other forms are less present.

Table No.9: What was asked as a bribe

| | Frequency | % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Money | 73 | 67.0 |
| A gift | 5 | 4.6 |
| Sponsorship for publishing a book/text book | 2 | 1.8 |
| Travel sponsorships – for participation to seminars, symposia | 1 | 0.9 |
| Counterservice that I can provide | 3 | 2.8 |
| Does not know | 2 | 1.8 |
| Refused to answer | 23 | 21.1 |
| Total | 109 | 100 |

The amount of money that was demanded as a bribe from citizens (a response on this question was provided by 50% of the surveyed citizens) is different, and it ranges from 50 Euros (only one respondent stated this sum) to 3000 Euros (an amount reported by two respondents). Most of the respondents reported bribes in the amount of 2000 Euros. This is the value that the public claims to have heard to be the 'price' ought to be paid for the undertaking of a surgical intervention.

2.4. Reporting the corruption

The level of reporting corruption cases in the healthcare sphere is exceptionally low. From the total of 109 corruption cases in the healthcare system, only five of them have been reported, of which one to the prosecution service, one to the Ministry of Health, and on the remaining three cases the respondents refused to identify the organ to which they have reported the corruption case.

Most frequent motives for not reporting the case (24,5%) are claimed to be on the standpoint that "by reporting the case nothing will be achieved, no proceeding will be initiated" – by this the citizens show that they do not have trust in the competent organs responsible for the combating of corruption. The fear from negative consequences, which is the second most frequent reason for not reporting a corruption case, shows that, again the citizens do not trust the institutions and that they fear it would be them to bear negative consequences instead of the perpetrator of the act. It is a notable insight that the citizens have come to terms with corruption as part of every-day life, i.e. the citizens, it seems, have agreed to have their rights breached on a daily basis (see table No.10).

Table No.10 Reasons for not reporting corruption

| | Frequency | % |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| It was in my interest to have the 'job done' | 15 | 15.3 |
| Fear from negative consequences | 16 | 16.3 |
| I know that nothing will be achieved by reporting – no proceeding will be initiated | 24 | 24.5 |
| It is an every-day practice in our country accepted as being normal | 12 | 12.2 |
| Other | 2 | 2 |
| Does not know to whom to address for assistance | 7 | 7.1 |
| Does not know the reason for not reporting | 2 | 2 |
| Refused to answer | 20 | 20.4 |
| Total | 98 | 100 |

3.CORRUPTION IN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

3.1. Scope of the corruption

Determining the scope of corruption in the sphere of the judiciary was conducted on a sample of 450 respondents. These respondents were selected on the basis of their communication established with judicial organs in the last five years. According to the survey results, the five year level of victimisation with corruption in the judiciary is 25,1%, whilst the one year level is on 11,3%.

3.2. Bribe – for what it is given for, to whom it is given, and why?

The most frequent situation in which the citizens were asked a bribe is for an acceleration of the judicial procedure, for which an indicator is the inefficiency of the judicial system that in turn is a very real situation – both domestic and international experts agree on the inefficiency and slowness of judicial proceedings.

By the slow progressing of the judicial proceeding, the citizens are practically double victims – in a reasonable timeframe they cannot realize their right for which they undertake the judicial proceeding, and second, in order to realize this right (the one for a being provided with a reasonable term for the conduction of the judicial proceeding), they have to “pay.” The second most frequent situation in which the respondents were asked a bribe (but it is not excluded that they have offered the bribe themselves) is to win a judicial dispute – 23,5%. In this situation it may be assumed that the citizens are ready to pay in order to realize the right they are not entitled to, i.e. the person that is corrupt has to breach the law.

The other remaining reasons which the respondents have listed in which they have given a bribe, can be separated as situations where no law was breached, but an acceleration of the procedure for receiving a needed document from the court was subject to the bribe given – 7,8%, and cases of breaching a regulation or a working codex: in order that the verdict's enforceability becomes overdue (mostly in the misdemeanour proceedings) – 9,8%; postponing a court session – 7,8%; release from pre-trial detention – 7,8%.

Most frequently (58,8%), the bribe was asked for a judge, followed by cases for a professional judicial associate, then the court administration staff, and less frequently the president of a court (see table No.11).

Table No.11: Whom for was the bribe

| | Frequency | % |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Judge | 30 | 58.8 |
| Professional Judicial Associate | 9 | 17.6 |
| Court Administration Staff | 5 | 9.8 |
| President of a Court | 2 | 3.9 |
| Other | 3 | 5.9 |
| Refused to answer | 2 | 3.9 |
| Total | 51 | 100 |

In this sphere too, the bribe was asked without any intermediaries in 31,4%, and most often a proxy was present (60,6%). Here again we will come back to the previous commentary – it was possible that a bribe was taken on the behalf of some other person, or even worse – that an element of an organized scheme was in place.

According to the data, the bribery most often (70,6%) was asked in the form of money. Regarding the amount of the demanded bribe it may be noted that it has ranged from 50 Euros to 2500 Euros. However, most notable was the frequency of bribes in the range of 200 to 250 Euros. In the framework of the other forms of bribery, there was one example where a bribe was demanded in the form of an automobile – Peugeot 206.

3.3. Reporting corruption

Not a single corruption act has been reported to a competent or other organ. Hence, corruption in the judicial system is exclusively realized in its shadow numbers.

As a reason for not reporting corruption in the judiciary, the citizens have listed the following: that nothing can be done by reporting it, i.e. to initiate a proceeding (32,6%), followed by the personal momentum – it was in their interest to have the 'job done' (28,3%), and the same number of respondents referred to the fear from negative consequences. Least number of respondents' referred to corruption as a model of conduct/behaviour in Macedonia.

Table No.12: Reasons for not reporting

| | Frequency | % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| It is in my interest to have the 'job done' | 13 | 28.3 |
| Fear from negative consequences | 13 | 28.3 |
| I know that nothing will be achieved by reporting, no judicial proceeding will be initiated | 15 | 32.6 |
| It is an every-day practice in our country regarded as normal conduct | 5 | 10.9 |
| Total | 46 | 100 |

4. CORRUPTION IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The contact with the public administration, i.e. the need for services from the public utilities was the criteria on whose foundation the sample was constructed for the survey of corruption in this sphere. The sample had 575 respondents. The received insight showed the five year level of victimisation, being at 17,2%, and the 2005 victimisation at 6,3%. In this sphere too there is a notable tendency of increase over the five year period.

Table No.13: Time of victimisation

| | Frequency | % |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| This year (2005) | 36 | 36.4 |
| Last year (2004) | 30 | 30.3 |
| Before 2004 | 23 | 23.2 |
| Does not remember, does not know | 4 | 4 |
| Refused to answer | 6 | 6.1 |
| Total | 99 | 100 |

According to the survey results, the biggest risk from giving a bribe is seen in the area of **urbanism and spatial planning**. More specifically, the highest risk of corruption is seen in the works related to permits issued by the Cadastre / the properties` registry. As much as 44,4% of all respondents that have provided a bribe or were expected to give one, had the experience during a procedure at the Cadastre. Next are bribes asked for the acceleration of the receiving of a construction permit (27,8%); much less for obtaining a permit for conducting a particular service – 8,3%. Least bribes were asked in situations of a construction inspector being asked not to intervene; - the same percentage being for winning works tenders involving large profits.

Having in mind the sphere in which corruption was surveyed, as well as the most frequent corruption conducts, most frequent forerunners of corruption were the officials from the Cadastre (52,8%) and the Municipalities` officials (25%). Other bearers of corrupt conduct were much less frequently noted. (See table No.14).

Table No.14: Whom was the bribe for

| | Frequency | % |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Municipality official | 9 | 25 |
| An official from the relevant Ministry | 1 | 2.8 |
| Inspector | 2 | 5.6 |
| Cadastre official | 19 | 52.8 |
| Does not know | 3 | 8.3 |
| Refused to answer | 2 | 5.6 |
| Total | 36 | 100 |

In this sphere too, bribes were more often demanded via intermediaries / proxies. More frequent form of bribery was money, and the amount ranged from 50 to 5000 Euros

From the total number (36) of reported experiences with bribes being asked, the citizens in only two such cases has reported them – one to the manager of the institution where the corruption case occurred, and in the second case no information was provided as to whom the case was reported to.

As most frequent motives for not reporting the corruption act, the citizens has noted the following: “I know that I will not achieve anything by reporting corruption, no proceeding will be initiated” (26,7%), and “I fear from negative consequences” (20%)

5. Corruption in other spheres

Our determination was to research corruption in four spheres of societal living, which in the moment we found as being most under risk from this form of criminal conduct. In order to receive data on the scope of corruption in the country, the respondents were provided with two additional questions that referred to corruption beyond these foregoing spheres. The first question was on the presence of corruption in other spheres in the public sector in 2005, and the second one was on whether it has been reported.

The survey results confirmed the appropriateness of this approach. Namely, as much as 249 respondents, or 15% from the total population of surveyed citizens (1612 respondents) reported that they were asked for a bribe or they were expected to provide one. Obviously that the gathered data justify the approach of asking this additional two questions, moreover, having in mind the fact that two areas were not taken into consideration – the customs and the police – it is necessary that they would be provided with an additional specific attention in future researches/surveys as being areas of particular risk of corruption..

Most frequently, bribes were demanded or expected to be given by customs officials or police officers (see table No.15)

Table No. 15: Bribery in public services

| | Number | % |
|------------------------|--------|-------|
| Civil servant | 62 | 24.9 |
| Customs officer | 84 | 33.8 |
| Police officer | 73 | 29.3 |
| Inspector | 26 | 10.4 |
| Other person | 4 | 1.6 |
| Total | 249 | 100.0 |

Out of the total number of reported corruption cases (249), only four were reported to a particular organ.

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS OBSERVED

1. Level of victimisation

The level of corruption in the public administration is high. In 2005, a bribe was asked or was expected to be given to/by every third citizen in the country. Those situations were in order to effectualise a certain right or service in the framework of the public administration

2. Structure of corruption

The level of corruption is different in different spheres of the public administration. In 2005 the highest level of corruption is notable in the high education system (13,9%) and in the judicial system (11,3%), followed by the healthcare system (8,3%), then the public utilities (6,3%), the customs administration (5,2%), and the police (4,5%).

3. Corruption tendencies

In the last five years the corruption levels show a tendency of increase. It has been most intensive in 2005, and the corruption levels were on the lowest levels before 2004.

4. Repetitive victimisation

The **single-occurring victimisation** by corruption conduct (60,7%) is dominant. That means that the citizens most frequently reported that they were only for once victims of corruption. However, the level of **repeated experiences of corruption** is also very high – 26,7%. This is a very important insight received that directs us to the need for deeper research that would provide an insight into aetiology, and especially, on the prevention of corruption, particularly in the cases of repetitive corruption.

5. Most frequent reasons behind corruption

The citizens gave bribes most frequently for the passing of an exam in the sphere of high education, for the conduction of a surgical intervention in the sphere of the healthcare, for the acceleration of a judicial proceeding in the sphere or the judiciary, and for the acceleration of a cadastre procedure in the sphere of the public utilities.

6. Reporting rate of corruption

The rate of reporting corruption is exceptionally low. From the total number of surveyed corruption cases in 2005 (461), only 15 of them or 2,9% were reported to a certain organ, out of which only two were reported to a competent state organ – one to the police, and one case to the prosecution service (this makes for 0,4% of all corruption cases being reported).

7. Reasons for not reporting

The reasons for not reporting the corrupt conduct distinguish the situations that bring about, or have an influence on the shadow numbers of corruption. Namely, the most frequent reason for not reporting the corrupt conduct, the citizens identify as "no proceeding will be initiated and the perpetrator will be left unpunished". This means that the citizens have no trust in the competent organs for the combating of corruption, or they do not believe in the corrupted persons ever being brought to justice.

The second most frequent reason due to which corruption is left un-reported is the fear from negative consequences. Here we can speak to reasons related to the very positioning of the public administration being regarded as the ruling structure and not as a service to all citizens for the utilization of their rights. Only as the third most frequent reason for avoiding the reporting of corruption the motive of "it was in my interest to have the 'job done'" has been noted by the respondents – this being, by rule, the biggest contributor to the large shadow numbers of corruption.

8. The position of the public administration

The total research insight show that the public administration is positioned in such a manner that the citizens have the impression of it being an extension of government, a ruler, and not as a service to all citizens being their function financed by the tax payer's money.

CONCLUSIONS

- Corruption is the third largest problem in the country. In the same time, the employees from the public sector and the ones with higher education are most corrupted.
- On corruption there are frequent discussions among family members and friends, but also by media. Every second respondent is critical on the media reporting on corruption: there are too many assumption and too few data involved.
- The average general evaluation of the respondents on the efficiency of the fight against corruption in Macedonia is insufficient – 1.91!
- Three quarters from the surveyed citizens evaluate the government as being passive and insufficiently engaged in the combating of corruption.
- There has been criticism also directed to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption that does not undertake a sufficient array of activities on the combating of corruption. The slow transition, the delay of the reform processes, as well as the malfunctioning of the legal state creates an ambience where citizens *apriori* have a reserved attitude towards the institutions, even when it comes to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption. In this direction go the facts that the capacity of the new “means” and institutions in the fight against corruption: the nongovernmental organizations (25%); the specially installed telephone hotlines (20%), and the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (18%) very frequently are evaluated by the “*I do not know*” answer.
- The lack of trust in the readiness of the government to face and resolve the problems arising from corruption is seen in the response that a submission filed to the very Ministry/institution where the corruption case has occurred or to the Ministry of the Interior, is regarded as being least efficient; the reporting of corruption to media and to the inspection controls are regarded as being the most efficient approach.
- More than two thirds from all survey subjects are at the opinion that corruption in Macedonia can only be insignificantly decreased. For almost the same number of respondents corruption in 2005 has not been reduced when compared to the previous year. In the same instance, each second respondent is sceptical that 2006 will bring any positive changes as regarding corruption. Twice less, each fourth respondent, expressed a positive attitude as to expectation on the fight against corruption in 2006.
- Pessimism is also notable when it comes to reporting corruption: 43% respondents do not believe, and 33% do believe that reporting corruption would lead to a positive result; 24% cannot pre-determine what would be the outcome of such reporting.

- It's a worrying fact that the largest number of respondents (24%) cannot refer to a concrete reason due to which they do not believe in a positive outcome of the reporting on corruption. On the other hand, the most frequently mentioned reasons for the lack of trust are: "that the laws are not being implemented" – 19% and "there are no appropriate laws in place" – 9%. Followed by the responses of: "due to the inefficient police, public prosecution service, and the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption..."
- The largest number of surveyed citizens (68%) believe that corruption is most present among the higher ranking officials.
- Three most often mentioned incentives to corruption are: the inability to meet one's needs in a legal procedure/manner (40%); the non-existence of a legal state (35%), and the low penalties for the corruption convicts (16%).
- Corruption is not an enigma, in most cases it is identified (from 80% to 90% of all respondents do recognize it) in the gifts to doctors, professors, judges, but also in the gifts and services that politicians give to journalists.
- The results on the "dark, but yet practical side" or on "corruption in first person" are: 13% respondents would pay a bribe if asked for it by someone, and 21% would offer a bribe should this would assist them to have their job done. Almost each fourth respondent does not know how to proceed should he/she is asked to provide a bribe; and 21% from the surveyed citizens do not know whether they would make an attempt to offer a bribe to have the job done. 55% of all respondents would not offer a bribe, whilst 64% survey subjects responded that they would the bribe to various institutions.
- There is a clear and unambiguous conscience that both sides of corruption: both receiving and giving a bribe, are criminal offences. However, a larger number of this statements (91%) refer to the situations when a bribe is being received, than when it's about giving a bribe (82%).

RECCOMENDATIONS

- ✓ The complexity of the problem of corruption, it has been empirically confirmed by the survey results – emphasize the need for a continued and coordinated participation of all segments in the prevention and combating of corruption.
- ✓ The conceptualisation of the policy for the combating and preventing corruption, i.e. the build-up of a national strategy for the combating of corruption, will be successful should it is accompanied with multidisciplinary researches. Having in mind the dynamics and the numerous forms of corruption, it is necessary to implement continuous researches of this kind.
- ✓ Apart from the systematic measures, such as the reform of the public administration, by which this administration is being changed into becoming a citizens` service, which is being undertaken by increasing the internal and external control over the institutions and measures that secure the introduction of the notions of responsibility and transparency in the work conducted; the following measures are also of significant importance: the authorisations and discession rights as potential sources of corruption to be reduced; as well as from not less of importance is to provide support and motivation to the victims of corruption for its reporting to the relevant authorities.
- ✓ Finally, no change, neither societal and/or political activity cannot be successfully managed without an active public communication. Therefore, the public ought to be informed through a media and educational campaign in order to trigger a higher level of conscience and sensitivity vis-à-vis corruption, and of course, to make it more prepared to combat corruption.
- ✓ In this sense, the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption has a particularly essential role to conceptualise a somewhat different approach to affirm what it does through an appropriate public relations campaign that would create an image of it being a responsible, consistent, and without compromise in its anticorruption efforts. In this lays the only possible approach to win over the trust and support of the citizens in the fight against corruption.

REPORTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

REPORT FROM THE FOCUS GROUP WITH PARTICIPANTS FROM THE HIGH EDUCATION SYSTEM

Organizing the focus group with representatives from the higher education institutions was very hard to achieve. Large number of the invited participants refused to get involved with the project, although their explanation was mainly that of them being occupied or absent from the city. In this focus group, present were less participants than planned, and mainly professors from the universities in Skopje and Bitola. The statements in the group were very homogenous; almost no differences of opinion among the group participants were noticed.

The role of media

The participants had a common stance that the reporting by media regarding corruption is generally not objective and are not directed towards resolving this problem. They consider that the media create a certain stereotype that whoever is in a position to gain a revenue through corruption is actually doing it. To this problem there is so much attention given to, so the created perceptions among the citizens are that politicians, doctors, professor, etc are corrupted by definition: *“The problems and cases for which there is evidence are not being disclosed, but there are generalisations. Hence, people that hear all this gain the impression that all people are corrupted, which is not the case.”* This especially refers to the higher education system: *“We cannot speak of corruption in the higher education, but only of concrete professors for which there is evidence, there is a court proceeding...otherwise, people gradually start to believe that all professors are corrupted.”* In this context, the corruption at media was referred at. According to the participants to this focus group, the remarks and reporting by media are exclusively directed to the state universities, particularly at the Saints Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje, and the corruption at private universities where there is also corruption without any control mechanisms in place has not been treated at all. The opinion that *“For some of the journalists that are most persistent in their hunt against state universities, it is even known that they cooperate with concrete private universities as they have the personal interest to attack the state universities.”*

Corruption as an issue

Corruption as a problem in education is a subject for which the focus group participants have said that they do discuss with their colleagues, both at meetings and informally. Although corruption is not considered to be the main problem in the higher education system, there is a level of consciousness that there are such cases of corrupt behaviour for which appropriate measures have been implemented for its reduction.

Commentary on the survey results

The data received from the survey, according to which corruption in the higher education system has been evaluated to be on a high level, the focus group participants have evaluated it with a high dose of criticism. According to them, it is about perception of the citizens that do not necessarily have to be true; sometimes the perception can be based on the actual cases and experiences, but they also can be a result of pure gossip or result of the previously mentioned behaviour of the media. According to participants in the higher education focus group, the perceptions of the citizens cannot be a valid indicator for the existence of corruption, and the state is being damaged should these perceptions are presented as being indicators of the level of corruption in the society. The participants were at the opinion that the corruption in the higher education system is not on a higher level than in other segments, nor that it is specific only to the Macedonian society.

Factors providing an incentive to corruption

Regarding the factors that foster corruption in the high education system, the focus group participants have listed the following ones:

- In Macedonia there is no genuine labour market. There is no competition. Under these conditions, the high education system too cannot be valued from the aspect of quality. When the 'price' goes down, corruption level go up.
- Under these conditions when no labour market exists, the university degree/the diploma is the only left to be important, regardless of where from and how it has been issued and deserved, this being very different from the experiences from the developed countries where exactly it is known how much a particular degree is 'worth.' Hence, all means to obtain a diploma are used, even the most extreme approach of 'buying it.'
- In the process of hiring staff, the gained knowledge plays no particular role, as it is not possible that it can be determined whether the university diploma has been obtained in a fair manner – by studying, or it has been 'bought.' No one is interested in this: *"When the context would be normal, the 'purchased' diploma would be immediately noticed and due to not having the appropriate level of knowledge, you would not be able to get the job."*
- The stereotypes created on corruption in the high education system have a negative impact to the honourable professors. As one of the focus group participants has stated *"even the professor that has never taken a bribe will start taking it as he would begin thinking that he would be anyway publicly proclaimed to be corrupted."*
- The overall situation in the country stimulates corruption, so the one in the higher education system.

Personal experiences

The focus group participants claimed that they were witnesses to offering of corruption by student that they have refused. *“Some students offer bribes in a very direct fashion.”* The offering of sexual services by female students for obtaining a grade has been also mentioned. According to one of the participants: *“How should I treat the case when I have students coming on the examination dressed up only in very short skirts or other provocative clothing, and moreover – they are acting in a very provocative manner? Or they ask me a question of the kind “What is there to be done so I can pass the exam?”* Some students also offered money.

On the question of how the focus group participants have reacted to such instances, the responses were in the range of asking the student to leave the examination, having an argument with the student, discussions, etc. According to the participants, it is impossible to report these cases to the Police as they can never be proven. Other solutions were suggested by the participants, such as banning individual examination: *“the examination is public, and it has to be done in front of a group. By this we shall avoid encountering unpleasant situations, but also the level of doubt on the regularity of the examination will be reduced.”*

Corruption trends

According to the participants` estimations, corruption in 2005 has not been reduced when it comes to its quantity. However, the fact that some cases were reported and have ended up in court, and were publicly disclosed, resulted in the corrupt persons to fear more and to be more precautionous, whilst the victims got encouraged to report the corruption cases. However, one of the participants stated that on the other hand, this outcome may eventually even increase corruption: *“if someone starts reckoning that now is the last chance to catch whatever possible.”*

Evaluation on the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption

The State Commission has not been evaluated with a good mark, and this has been the opinion of all participants in the focus group on high education. They all were at the opinion that the Anticorruption Commission still functions as a *“showcase”*, a *“Disneyland”*, *“it exists for parading.”* The assessment was mainly that *“it has been established only because we have to report that we have it”* and that it shows no results of its work. However, the above listed standpoints do not put the blame solely at the State Commission, as the very legal foundation of it and other subjects (the prosecutors, the courts, etc) may obstruct its work.

Perspectives of corruption

On the future of corruption in the country, the participants speak with a certain dose of reserve. According to them, it is an illusion to think that corruption can be entirely eliminated as no country has succeeded in that, however corruption can be substantially reduced. In the high education system there is a specific situation: *“in the conditions of high unemployment, we have a rapid increase of the number of students. The ones that do deserve to study are not the only ones enrolled at university but all the ones that have a desire to be at university. It is therefore that the ones that have no real capacity to complete the university education will do whatever they deem necessary in order to come to a degree. It is therefore that there are cases of diplomas being bought.”*

According to the focus group participants, the state universities are active in seeking mechanisms for the combating of corruption. However, nothing can be done, as one focus group participant has noted, *“should we search for both the reasons and solutions for corruption solely in the higher education system.”*

REPORT FROM THE FOCUS GROUP WITH PARTICIPANTS FROM THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The role of media

The participants from this focus group although have conveyed relatively different standpoints on the reporting of media referring to examples from their own institutions, nevertheless they also **showed a high level of homogeneity of their assessment.**

The reporting by media was generally assessed as being too superficial and stereotypical, with much more assumptions than factual data used as reference. *“The reporting on such a serious issue such as corruption are not the necessary level. Private sources and assumptions dominate the style of reporting.”* *“There are many speculations, and from the media reporting it appears that everyone and everywhere in the country is corrupted.”* *“It is very easy to put labels to everyone and everything, which is very harmful to the fight against corruption. Reports are written from the perspectives of political parties needs, the issues are instrumentalized by the media, and by this by also many others.”*

The focus group of participants judges, despite the criticism on their expense are aware on the problems that the very subject causes when media report on corruption. *“The media do refer to facts, but the issue at stake is such that it is hard to come to the necessary information.”* In the same instance, the most critical assessments are not being regarded as pressure being exercised to the media to make them be less critical or to be silent when it is about corruption. *“It is by all means a negative thing, hence the media have the right to be critical when referring to corruption.”*

Discussions on corruption

The subject of *“corruption in the judiciary”* both at formal and informal meetings and discussion is not a taboo issue. On the contrary, this a subject often discussed by representatives of the judiciary. Corruption is a frequent subject of discussions at the collegial meetings as well as during so-called *“chats over coffee.”*

The official stance or message from the formal meetings is that: *“...there ought to be no silencing on cases of corruption. Should there is such a case it has to be disclosed...it should not be only something to be heard of, whilst to stay silent as judges and courts.”*

According to the discussion by the participants to the judiciary focus group, the informal deliberations are not less serious than the formal meetings. They are aware of the current momentum: *“the judiciary is at the centre of attention and accusations”*, but they are seriously against any unfounded accusations, regardless of that it is during discussions with an informal character.

Actually, all participants emphasize the danger from the creation of a climate of “*uncertainty*” or wrong perceptions for a “*corruption of the whole judicial system*” – “*A very wrong climate and impression is being created, and the ones that are not corrupted start to ask themselves whether it’s worth being honourable when everyone else is corrupted.*”

“*At these informal meetings most often we discuss exactly on the wrong impression created on the judiciary. We, as individuals and as a Court do follow what is being said and published, but we cannot react if there is no evidence. It has to be accurately specified.*”

Also, the judges emphasized that the long processing of the cases cannot be automatically regarded as a consequence of corruption. The judges and the courts operate according to Law, according to strictly defined procedures, and the inefficiency at most is due to the behaviour of the attorneys or the clients that do not show up at court sessions/proceedings, or due to the problems related to the delivery of court documentation/ invitations.

Commentaries on the survey results

Judges do not negative the existence of corruption in the judicial system, but they note that on corruption there ought to be discussions only in cases for which there is evidence, and such cases are very few, being contrary to the wrong perception for the corruption of the judiciary. The concrete statements, above all, forward arguments that are directed towards negating the assessment for an alleged large presence of corruption in the judiciary.

“...this assessment is extreme...it is logical to say that most people that did not have any personal experience with courts, hence all this is just spreading rumours, gossip...” There is truth, but also aspects that are not true in these statement, but I believe that there is more smoke than fire.” “There is nothing particular to comment, these are only opinions and things ought to be confirmed. There are such opinions on corruption in the judiciary as the general fight against corruption is the one missing. A devaluation of the judiciary is happening, as the executive and legislative branches of government had allowed this. The executive and the legislative branches of government are the ones that create the conditions in the judiciary to enable its role in the fight against corruption. The judiciary alone cannot fight corruption.” “It has to be clarified why according to the survey results the judiciary is ranked as second most corrupted segment. It is the administrative part of the judiciary where the largest part of the reasons for the delay, non-delivery or even loss of court invitations and other documents lays. I do not agree that the judges are the main reason for corruption in the judiciary.”

The scope of corruption in Macedonia and in the sector

The judges are very homogenous in their assessment that corrupting in the judicial system is less present than in other sectors, i.e. it is lower when compared to the general level of corruption in the country. In the same instance, when it is about corruption in the judiciary, it has been emphasized to make a

distinction between the judicial administration and the judges, whilst it has been assessed that there is more corruption in the former than in the latter.

“There is much more corruption in the courts` administration. Often there are delays in the delivery of documents, and this does not depend on the work of the judges.”

“The connection in the corruption scheme can also be a professional associate from the court administration or an attorney, and the judge not to be at all involved.”

“The judge seldom delays the court hearings, the prolongment is first of all due to the acts of the clients and the attorneys. Even the judge is the one that most often secures the necessary conditions for the conduction of the court hearing, and not to have it delayed.”

In this context, there have been statements that stress that there are no real data on corruption in the judiciary due to the fact that there are too many generalisations and stereotypes created.

Presence of corruption in the hierarchy

According to the assessments of the judges, the lower hierarchical levels, i.e. the courts` administration is much more ‘infected’ with corruption than the judges are. The reasons are as follows: less control, lesser transparency in the work of the junior associates / administration staff, and the enormous number of cases/workload, the inability to constantly control. In the same instance, the judicial experts are the one also referred at as being ‘infected’ with corruption.

“In the lower levels of the hierarchy there is more corruption as the control there is much less when compared to the oversight of the work of the judges.”

“When it comes to the judges, there are more levels of scrutiny of their work, and than reduces the possibility for corruption or other form of illegal conduct.”

The discussants, however, admit that the judges are not “*entitled to innocence.*” Nevertheless, the fact that the courts` administration answers in front of the judges, i.e. in front of the President of the court is not to be neglected.

“Should there are more cases that refer to corruption among the administrative employees, then there ought to be something also among the judges too.”

It is indicative to note that the self-critical attitude of the judges is parallel to the hierarchical position of the court where from the judge is coming.

The possibilities for corruption in the judicial system lay in the procedure, in the badly conceptualised procedures, in the bad laws, and in the criminal procedure. As the next reason for corruption the inappropriate protection of witnesses was mentioned. In this sense, it was noted by most discussant that the new laws and the amendments to the existing ones have changed things for the better – they have lowered the possibility for corruption.

“The adoption of the new law on Litigation (Civil Law Procedure Law) has changed many things, the prosecuting side secures the evidence, and hence the judges have no role in this regard.”

The advance agreement was referred as the most realistic form of corruption as making an agreement after the verdict has been reached, brings no guarantee for a “profitability” of the very verdict.

Examples and experiences

In most cases, the focus group participants stated that they did not have an experience with a bribe being offered to them. In the same instance, it has been accented that the number of disclosed and proven cases, as well as cases with an effectualized verdict on corruption in the judiciary are just a few, which is only a proof that there is much more talking than actual, proven corruption.

Only one judge, participant to the focus group, referred to a case out of his personal experience, whilst he emphasised that the case was about “*the mother of a convicted and imprisoned drugs addict*” and that “*her offer of 100 German Marks for a ‘feast for the judge’*” has been an offer provided after the officialisation of the verdict. Of course, the “*offer for a feast*” was not accepted by the judge. The judges from the senior courts, as well as the ones from the professional Association of Judges confirm that there are cases where there was doubt on corruption, but without any evidence that could serve as such in a trial proceeding. “*Those cases are regarded as a not-professional and unconscious conduct.*” “*The Association of Judges has its Status and Codex, but these are only declaratory documents, there have been no members of the association that were ever punished, hence there are no sanctions from the professional circles. The sanctions derive from the available legislation. In the same instance, the Association of Judges has no Ethics Board, and till now the Association has never initiated a proceeding, which is the job of the law-enforcement organs, or on the basis of an appeal and evidence material the court is running a trial regardless of whom it is about.*” “*Whenever it is known, and there is evidence, this will always be processed through courts.*”

When it comes to the question of how it is reacted or how it could be reacted in such cases, the importance of the following was emphasized:

- “*the strength of the profession*”;
- “*the local habits and mentality*”; and
- “*The general political climate*” which necessarily has to change in order a clear political will for the fight against corruption is shown and practically proven.

These three elements were referred at as being very important in the fight against corruption in the judiciary, but also generally in the society, i.e. in whichever separate sphere.

Trends on corruption

Regarding this subject, judges from this focus group emphasized that they would not like to speculate, i.e. they mostly stated that they lack data so to be able to discuss corruption and to provide answers to any questions. In the same instance, the data presented by media do not refer to this conclusion.

The work of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption

The discussion on the work of the State Commission emphasize that basically they are based on “*general knowledge*” or on what has been presented by media. Parallel to this, the remarks are targeted to the issues of the status and the role of the State Commission, and the status of the members of the Anticorruption Commission and in that direction, the conflict of interest present among some of the Commission members.

The status of the State Commission is found to be provocative. “*Is the Anticorruption Commission a “supra-institutional organ”? “Does it only initiate proceedings or does it also reaches the verdicts?”*”, “*I am not aware of them changing something.*”, “*Is the Commission doing the job of the Prosecution service?”*” “*There are many examples of the Commission colliding and conflicting with other institutions.*”

The membership in the State Commission has to be immune to any sort of conflict of interests. It is therefore that the focus group participants emphasize that: “*it is hard for the people that are members of the Commission to be that what they are supposed to be, as simultaneously they perform other duties and hence, there is conflict of interest in their involvement with the Commission, and this generates a wrong image for the State Commission*”. “*It should not be allowed that the persons working at the Commission to simultaneously have also another job, which is the case for almost all incumbent members. This results in conflicting situations.*”

The future of corruption

The focus group members were realistic and emphasized that no country exists where there is no corruption at all, whilst in the same time they stipulate that this is by no means an excuse for the existence of corruption in Macedonia.

According to their assessments, corruption in Macedonia “*is fed*” by the low standard of living and the transition changes, but in particular by the “*ambience*” provided for the executive and legislative branches of government. It has been also emphasized that the fight against corruption very little depends from the judiciary. In the same instance, it has been noted that the current reforms in the judiciary will further limit those sources of corruption that have been deriving from the judicial system.

In the same instance, in a very homogenous manner, the focus group participants state that the necessary predicament for the advancement of the fight against corruption is the adoption of the Law on the Surveillance of Communications and generally, the advancement of the implementation of Special Investigation Measures (SIMS).

A separate organ that would run a record of the assets status of all citizens and families/households, of course including also the judges, ought to be established. In this regard, of equally important value is the adoption of the Law on the Court Service and the Law on the Judges' Salaries.

Finally, focus group participants emphasized that the judges and the judiciary are prepared for the fight against corruption, but they cannot lead this fight alone, without the appropriate legislation in place and the existence of the same ambience in the other spheres and authorities.

REPORT FROM THE FOCUS GROUP OF HEALTHCARE EMPLOYEES

At the meeting present were about ten representatives from the healthcare system. The focus group members were at a different age, with a different level of education and employment status (six doctors, three nurses, and one physical therapist). The sensitivity on the subject in certain extent was the reason for a constraint in the answers given to some of the questions. The impression is that during the conversation not all issues were discussed openly and without restraint.

To role of media

The focus group participants were unanimous that Macedonian media are very much unprofessional when it comes to the reporting of what is happening in the healthcare system. According to them, the sensationalism in the reporting is their priority, without respecting the ethics and privacy of the subjects alleged to be involved in particular scandals. The quest for a 'scandalous story' is the priority to our journalists, and not the authenticity of the information presented. Following the discussions of the focus group, the impression is that this problem the discussants treated more from the aspect of the media speculations on the possible occurrences in the healthcare system, and not as an authentic informing of the public in order to overcome the real situation in the healthcare sector. *"By rule, these are unfound assessments presented by media, not checked, done in a sensationalistic manner." "There is no ethics among the journalists. I cannot name one media that was fair in its reporting. They have violated the working rhythm at the clinics in numerous occasions, by which the discretion of the patients is being also violated."*

In fact this problem to the discussants is more complex and it cannot be treated in an isolated manner from the overall situation in the country. Hence, according to them, the problem of corruption is increasingly seen as one of the segments that is only a reflection from the overall problems in the healthcare system.

"Being handicapped from the general situation in the healthcare system, the crisis of lack of values and moral, the dissatisfaction from the situation, of course is felt in our work."

The problem of the double moral, according to one of the discussants, is notable also among the very journalists, who behave quite differently when they themselves are the patients. They note a dose of inconsistency of behaviour by the journalists and that very often when they come to the doctor to ask for medical interventions, they make pressures in order to receive better conditions of treatment than the other patients. *"It is very interesting to note that the very same journalist that is the most outspoken forerunner of anticorruption in the country, as a patient is different – asking for privileges and a different treatment than the other patients."*

In the framework of this subject, the discussants also suggested that a legal framework is missing as to the rules of conduct for the acting of media when informing on healthcare services / issues of concrete patients. Namely, according to them, it is necessary to draw a line of distinction from one hand between the reporting on some general situations in the healthcare system and on the healthcare policy of the government; and on the other hand, when it is about concrete cases related to concrete patients. Only like this, the focus group discussants say, the privacy and discretion of the patients would be provided for, by which they would be protected from the possible manipulation by media.

Corruption in the healthcare system as a subject for discussions

The informal commenting among colleagues is the only level at which the problem of corruption in the healthcare system is being discussed. According to the discussants, in not a single case till now, there was no formal approach to this issue. In fact, according to the focus group participants, this problem is most exposed by media, but not also the institutions from the healthcare system.

“Aside of the professional discussions related to the very professional issues, so far no official meetings have been ever organized to discuss the subject of corruption.”

From the focus group discussion, the impression is that corruption as a problem is being ignored and that it is left to the concern of those that spread rumours as the only channel of debate on this issue.

The scope of corruption in the Macedonian healthcare system compared to the other sectors

The participants in the focus group are unanimous in their standpoint that corruption in the Republic of Macedonia does exist, but however they emphasize that this standpoint is based on a perception, and not a personal experience. Regarding the ranking list of most corrupted institutions, the discussants point out to the highest tiers of government as being most corrupted – *“the Ministers and Deputy Ministers”*, followed by the *“political parties.”* According to them, the presented image on the corrupted healthcare workers is not realistic and it is incorrect to make generalizations and to label all doctors as corrupted.

The scope of corruption in the hierarchy

“Corruption exists on a higher level. The Healthcare Fund or some of the Commissions that decide on the distribution of finances – this is where corruption is. When it comes to us doctors, it is on the level of receiving chocolate candies and coffee as a gratitude for the successful healing of a patient.”

The discussants agree that the corruption in the healthcare is most present at those levels that are in a position to make decisions on what will be purchased in the clinics and from whom. This is confirmed by conducted human resources policy directed from the political parties that do not care for the professional capacity of the personnel, but *“they appoint people that will serve as an extended hand of those that have the power and create the policy of the healthcare system.”* In this regard, the healthcare focus group participants mentioned some examples, such as the parainstitutional procedure (without the possession of the necessary sanitary record and control), by a directive, patients coming from Kosovo are being received with a dangerous diagnosis to the health of the other patients. It was even mentioned that for the services to these patients from Kosovo a special price-list exists.

“The surgeons are most exposed. They are the gods where lives are put in their hands. This notion produces a feeling of ego-centricism. It has been mentioned that for a surgical intervention as much as 2000 and even 3000 Euros are being asked and paid, but I myself was never a witness to something like that. So, much is discussed on this, but I do not know precisely whether this is entirely true.”

In any case, for the discussants there needs to be a dose of carefulness when such issues are being commented as their experience has showed that many such alleged cases of corrupt doctors were a set-up / were fake. It has been noted that the fact that health, being the most sensitive issue for every person, implies a special relationship between the doctor and the patient, which assumes a mutual trust. The violation of this relationship, the loss of trust, in practice is manifested in different ways, and even in a direct confrontation that can produce set-up, fake cases, and situations.

“The dissatisfied or disappointed patient knows how much harm he can cause even by just pointing out the finger at the doctor accusing him/her that he had blackmailed him/her asking for a bribe (money), or that the doctor was not competent. In this kind of circumstances, often the very doctor is a ‘victim’, and not just the patient.”

Personal experiences and examples

Regarding this subject, the participants in the discussion as the most frequent form of corruption in their work they have referred to presents given after the medical intervention, being an act of expression of gratitude by the patient. The discussants were divided as to the question of whether symbolic expression of gratitude in the form of *“coffee of candies”* represents a form of corruption or not. *“Everything is corruption. There is no need for the patient to give something to the doctor.”* *“Things are not merely black or white. It is a form of moral-based form of owing something to the doctor that the patient wants to express, which in essence I believe is not bad and dangerous for the society. There are situations when the doctor would insult the patient should he/she does not accept the gift.”* In this sense, as symbolic gifts certain food produce, drinks, or flowers were listed as most often given presents.

However, the discussants have mentioned some attempts by patients to bring about bigger attention by money, but according to the doctors, they have refused this. Not a single of these attempts were reported by the doctors to the relevant institutions. In any case, to all discussants, the attention given to the patient is never determined by a present given, or any other request. *“It is not humane to ask for any kind of illegal benefit for my professional service.”* A certain level of criticism was directed to the very patients, i.e. on their mentality seeing it necessary to pay a bribe in order to receive a better service.”

In this context, sponsorships were mentioned as a more subtle way to obtain a counter-service from the patient. All focus group participants are against these situations, but they agree that this form of corruption is a reality. *“Contrary to the determined procedure for requesting a sponsorship, some of our colleagues misuse their position by making a selection of the patients and they choose the ones that are richer and that later could sponsor their participation at an international medical conference.”*

As a special form of sponsorship, the usual practice of expressing gratitude by sponsoring the renovation of the offices of some directors in the healthcare system that decided to purchase equipment for the hospital through a particular company was mentioned. *“Just go and see the luxury in the offices of some of the directors...”*

To one of the discussants, the only appropriate and acceptable form of expressing gratitude to the hospital would be to put donation cash boxes in each hospital. Being in a situation of constant lack of finances to run the healthcare system, this approach to giving anonymous donations would be more than welcomed to improve the working conditions. In this regard, there was a suggestion *“to create a codex that would concretely regulate the use of these donations.”*

Corruption trends

To the discussants from this focus group, corruption in 2005 is with the same level of intensity as in previous years. They agree that there is no change in the trend of this problem, but they are worried that the reform of the healthcare system is being undertaken very slowly. The statement is that this problem in the public is over dimensioned creating a wrong impression of its scope and frequency. The hard economic situation of the country, the lack of critical reasoning in the discussions on the phenomenon of corruption, as well as the one-sided approach in the treatment of the problem, are all part of the factors that influence the lack of critical attitude in the citizens` perceptions. In the discussion it has been emphasized that this is not an isolated problem, i.e. that it is not solely a characteristic of the healthcare system and it therefore has to be investigated in a more complex manner. Therefore, the measures that would have to be undertaken do not only refer to the area of the healthcare system, but it is also necessary to involve more subjects.

The work of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption

Regarding the performance of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the discussants were not precise in their evaluation. The general impression is that more concrete knowledge of the work of the commission is missing. The impression is that there was more discussion on a general, declarative level in a sense what is there to expect from the Commission, than to evaluate what concretely has been done by this Commission.

“The Commission ought to be more energetic in its work and to be braver.”

“There needs to be a higher level of discretion in the work of the Commission, and not to have transparency at any cost by which the integrity of the persons involved in some of the corruption scandals is endangered.”

In any case, the common recommendation is one that the Commission in its work has to rely more on law and less to just publicly label persons for alleged involvement with corruption. It was noted that in Macedonia a bigger discretion is secured for persons accused of murder than for healthcare workers for which there is a speculation on a possibility for their involvement with corruption. *“Let them first prove the alleged corruption case, and only then to publicize the names of particular persons. With the current practice to instantly make the names of the persons allegedly involved with corruption public, causes immense damage to the professional and overall reputation of the person in question.”*

The future of corruption

The dominant standpoint is the one that corruption will exist as long as the reform of the healthcare system does not finish. These reforms are the necessary precondition to overcome the reasons generating corruption in this area. For this purpose, the priority prerequisite is to create the conditions enabling sound competition in the healthcare system. *“The market economy is equally important for the healthcare system.”* One of these steps that was just recently undertaken was the legalisation of the private healthcare practice. However, the discussants have noted the still unresolved issue of the involvement of the healthcare practitioners from the public sector also in the private one.

In this direction, it was mentioned that each doctor needs to be rewarded according to his/her performance and the patients to be given the opportunity to select their doctor. *“Each good doctor ought to have his/hers price. This unwritten rule stands for some doctors stands even today, but it has to be legalized. The current situation, according to the discussants, is most favourable for the poor-performance doctors that are equally rewarded with the best performing practitioners.”*

The need to implement a sound human resources policy, relieved from the influence of political parties was particularly emphasized. Also, it was stressed

that it is necessary to have the managerial positions at the public healthcare institutions taken over by professionals that would know how to best organize and run the system, and not to have party appointees as directors of clinics and other healthcare institutions.

REPORT FROM THE FOCUS GROUP WITH CIVIL SERVANTS (PUBLIC OFFICIALS)

The role of media

According to the discussants, the media have a generally negative coverage on the performance of the ministries and their connection with corruption. They have this attitude towards some institutions in a larger extend and to some in a lesser. It is seldom to identify a single ministry or any other government institutions that is exclusively a target of media. The media's coverage is lately more frequently focused on the work of particular high officials. Most frequently, media cover concrete corrupted dealings that *this* or *that* person has misused his or hers official position and has gained a material benefit. Concrete names and documents are stated and cited, which often results in a judicial process. In 90% of all cases, media promote instances of involvement with corruption by the higher levels of hierarchy. One high official was accused and arrested on charges of money extortion. Others have been accused for manipulating with public tenders and causing damages to the budget of the Republic of Macedonia. There was media coverage also on public procurements through direct dealings as a form of corruption. However, very few of the cases covered by media have had a judicial (court) final outcome other than the commencement of the court proceeding. Overall, the media have a very selective and generalized coverage on corruption, whilst an analytical attitude is missing. It is symptomatic that some media report on corruption "*per request*" – they do the coverage only if someone provides them the information. The impression is that the media are still not involved with substantial research on these cases. However, even with the existing style of media coverage on corruption, this coverage has contributed to the decrease of this phenomenon. This at least, is the general impression. On one hand, employees from the ministries are the ones that leak original documents and precise data on corruption to the media. And on the other had, when media make an attempt to verify the documents and data leaked, they are faced with closed doors by the state institutions. The situation is that the state institutions are still too much restrictive on providing information. This presents a large problem in the fight against corruption. An easier access to information in possession of ministries ought to enabled, there is a way to provide this – state the discussants.

Corruption as a subject of discussions

At the various state institutions corruption is a frequent theme of discussion. It definitely is not a taboo. Bribery is also a subject among the employees; actually it is a more frequent topic of discussion, being an acute problem of the bureaucracy, than the broader forms of corruption. Many of the state institutions directly work with clients, hence often they have an insight referring to bribery and corruption. But all of these discussions are from an informal character. Formally, officially, corruption never is a subject of discussion at any level. Hence, the discussions are always on an informal level whereas always there is

a 'wall' that prevents a higher level consideration of the issue. On the first barrier there is a halt. The channels for any kind of formalization of such a dialogue are closed. There is a probability that establishing any kind of a formal procedure would lead to unwanted "*discoveries*" in which the names of high officials would be disclosed. The persons that are to protect the institutions and the state system are the ones that misuse for their own personal benefit. The internal controls and mechanisms are also under the control of the very same people. It is a vicious circle hard to penetrate and dissolve.

Comments on the survey results

According to the discussants, the Tax Revenue Office is the institution that has the most developed network of corruption dealings. Most typical are its selective work regarding its clients. "*If you 'have someone there' – at the Tax Revenue Office – you will always end up going your way with fewer expenses.*"

To a part of the discussants, "*the political parties are the summit of corruption in the Republic of Macedonia. Politics is currently the most profitable business.*" The political elite are the most powerful part of society. Always, at least in the last fifteen years there has been one group of people that is in power and with the change of government a different, new group of people switch on their place. These so-called party soldiers are the influential factors in the state administration. The political parties are corrupted on a double scale. One side of their corruptness is the one of the political party, and the second one is via the state institutions where the respective 'fee' is demanded for any kind of service that one should receive.

The discussants agreed that in Macedonia out of this group of profiteers, part of which is placed within the institutions of the system, a so-called transition class is established that turned rich by asking for the infamous 10% fee for any kind of service performed, any procurement, or a document needed for a relevant state institution. The largest fees are received by fixing public procurement tenders.

The scope of corruption in Macedonia

On corruption it was said that it is not spread in all spheres of society. Simply, it is not there in all areas. Corruption is seen the most in those areas where there are most possibilities for manipulations and violations.

According to the discussants, the corruption is most present among the high officials. Least present is among the administrative staff. The administrative personnel are only receiving bribes, small gifts. Bribery is widely present. Especially in cases of the small services / favours provided by the administrative structures.

"In Macedonia you cannot have a more 'serious' job done unless you are connected and close to the political party in power. In this 'package' are included: the issuing of construction permits, permits for conducting import and

export activities, the services of the cadastre, fees for public procurement tenders, corruption in the commissions for denationalisation of properties, etc.”

“Today, on the other hand, one cannot be even too much polite to a customer as you might end up becoming labelled as being corrupted. If you are timely in performing your duties as a civil servant, not to mention if you perform your duties faster than what is required, then you will end up becoming suspicious of corruption. The metastasis has reached its ultimate maximum.”

Distribution of corruption in the hierarchy

The ones involved with corruption are most often the managerial staff that we know are selected according to the preferences of political parties. They are the so-called ‘*party soldiers*’, very powerful people. They indeed feel powerful when their party is in government. This feeling of power and the support they enjoy from the party leadership creates a notion that the public funds are there to provide them with a privileged status and gaining of material benefit, both personal and for the political party. Macedonia gradually, but surely has become a “*party state*”, in the literary sense of the word. The lower ranks from the administration are too scared for their employment status so they would be able to involve in larger corruption adventures. We do not say that this does not happen, but it is much more seldom at that lower level. They fear to get involved in any kind of corruption due to the fear of losing their jobs. The small salaries of the administration are a system for manipulation of this segment of society.

Forms of corruption typical for the sector

One of the most sensitive moments to this group, regarding corruption on a larger scale in Macedonia, is the process of privatisation. “*The privatisation model has changed according to the needs of the political elites. And the model has had the initial idea to attract foreign investments. But eventually the outcome was quite different.*” The fictive contracts for a completed procurement or service were mentioned as a frequent form of corruption. “*Contracts were made with construction companies for works that have never occurred. This is more a large scale crime than simple corruption, but it has been present. The laws have been outrageously breached. There is no fear of sanctions. If something is uncovered in the public, the political party stands behind as a protector, although not entirely always.*”

The most frequent forms of corruption are the fees received for a contract done, followed by fixed tenders, face-to-face dealings, etc. “*Lately a new form of corruption is very frequently used – the procurement tenders with the rule of needed three offers. Coordinated teams of companies are established that perform this kind of schemes. They do each other favours, switching the roles of the ‘winning company’ in the tender out of the three offers needed. The prices offered are being levelled to meet the scheme of the fixed tender.*”

Personal experiences and examples

From the present focus group participants no one wanted to refer to a concrete example of an offered bribery. According to their statement, none of them has had a direct experience with this phenomenon. Smaller examples were mentioned, such as the most traditional means for a '*minor bribery*', and that is giving a package of coffee or liquor which the customer insists to be received by the doctor. "*The more serious treating for a 'bigger' intervention end up in a cafeteria or a restaurant depending from the income capacity of the provider of the treat.*" It is seldom that there are strong insights and evidence for bigger bribes and classical cases of corruption. These are the hardest to discover.

Corruption trends

"2005 was a bad year for corruption, 2006 will be even worse". The received status of a candidate country for European Union membership so far leads to no results for decreasing the level of corruption. The corruption is among the government structures and the mentality of these people cannot be easily changed. The corruption in the country is erupting. All legislation inconsistencies, so called "*holes in the laws*" are being used for corruption conducts. "*For instance, what has been done in Macedonia with the introduction of the so-called one-stop-shop system, has not been completely properly done. In some of the neighbouring countries, in their one-stop-shop system at one place as much as 60 services can be obtained. This is the right way to put an end to corruption, blackmailing, misuse of function. This has to be done also in Macedonia.*"

"In order to invest in any kind of business, firstly it is necessary to have the support of a political party or to enter into some good scheme. If you are not part of a gang, then you can only be left doing a trafficking business. Nothing more serious than that. This hasn't changed yet."

According to the discussants, "*perhaps the time has come to think about a collective amnesty for all corruption cases. But to put an end to at least 90% of the corruption. On the contrary, endless court processes are awaiting us.*"

The work of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption

According to the focus group participants, the State Commission has more of a parading role than that it does something to prevent or decrease corruption. "*Their activities are more on the declaratory side. We are not aware whether they do not have much available mechanisms for the fight against corruption or something else is in question.*"

"Against corruption we can not fight merely by words or statements. We are at the opinion that the judicial system is not cooperating on a sufficient basis. It seems that the Commission is left on its own without any support."

"The Commission for instance has not inquired on any political party's conduct vis-à-vis possible corruption in their courtyard. We have not seen any action

that finished with a court decision and a sanction. The fight against corruption has to begin from the high officials.”

“The Anticorruption Commission, for the time being, ought to start working gradually, step by step, than without a plan as it does now. Let the fight against corruption last even ten years. The Commission in this process has to gain independence in its work. Otherwise, its hands will always be tied. Corruption is everywhere, but it has to be gradually repressed. In a short term, not much can be done. Not even the Anticorruption Commission is powerful enough to improve things.”

The future of corruption

The people in the administration consider that they have to be stimulated by higher salaries. Of basic importance is for them not to fear for their jobs and to earn a decent living.

“Imagine a four member family, with two grown-up children (students or unemployed) and that family has only one of them employed and this being in the public administration with a monthly income of 10.000 to 15.000 MKD. In which graph of poverty level would you then list their average income per household member. Economic development ought to happen, to decrease the influence of the political parties, to have free media, less pressure.”

“The complete eradication of corruption is not possible, but it can be drastically reduced. Much has to be done on raising public awareness, to build a different system of values. We ought to finally become a state governed by laws.”

The discussant from this focus group all agreed that *“at this moment, the healthiest pressure for the fight against corruption is the one coming from the European Union. This, of course, is for our own benefit.”*

REPORT FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE BUSINESS SECTOR

-Owners of small and medium size enterprises-

In order to receive an in-depth insight and opinions by the owners of the small and medium sized enterprises regarding corruption, twenty individual interviews were conducted. Their practical experiences present a most valuable indicator on the situation regarding this sphere. The structure of the interviews contained the same topics as in the case of the survey of the citizens, this time with a stronger emphasis on personal experiences. This report compiles the answers by the owners of small and medium sized enterprises as well as the representatives of the chambers of commerce.⁷

Media coverage of corruption

Regarding the role of **media** and their reporting on **corruption in the business sector**, the general impression is that in the recent period there has been a large media coverage on corruption in this area, however, a significant part of the interviewed representatives from the business sector (1/3) do not have much trust in the media and the manner they report to the auditorium.

Their remark is that media do their reporting not on an analytical foundation, basing their information on rumours and not on facts, hence they very easily put accusations regardless of the fact whether there is a foundation for the accusation or not. *“Independent journalism is understood as anarchy”* – was the comment by a part of the discussants. Others, on the other hand, are at the standpoint that the level of corruption in the business sector is much larger than what is presented by media and that the media reporting is not focused on the main problems as *“we all know, but we are all silent.”*

Other two discussants stated that *“the very media are one of the more corrupt segments of the society”*. They claim that the media most often report on corruption or other related affairs unobjectively and selectively, only in cases when they would have their own interest in putting forward the particular story. Most attractive for promotion are the possible corruption affairs related to politicians, famous businessmen, or other persons from the public life, as such stories *“sell best”*. It is believed that this reporting is very often conducted and initiated by the political games and competition between the governing and opposition parties. *“All governments are ruthless, if you are not close with them, then to them you are with the opposition. Then your company may end up as a victim of these situations, no matter whether it performs according to law and in the interest of the state.”*

⁷ Unfortunately, despite all our efforts to involve the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Macedonia, and our attempts to establish a contact with its Director Ms. Slavica Bogoeva, we have received no feedback from their side. Consequently, the interviews were conducted only with representatives of the Alliance of Economic Chambers of Macedonia.

Out of this reason, the representatives from the business sector have expressed their disappointment from the current situation that despite the continuous discussions on the problem of corruption (such being the sale of state owned land adjacent to the main square in Skopje) there are no concrete effects and responsibility taken by the actors, particularly that the very actors of these affairs are on high government positions. In the same time, the media are constantly in the quest for yet another attractive story and they do not insist that the cases that were already located to reach their final result / outcome.

Despite these remarks, some of the discussants considered that most media correctly perform their reporting and relatively appropriately cover the cases of corruption. It is important to note that the very media have genuinely discovered some of the cases of corruption and they have uncovered them to the public. Notable is the overflow of such information on alleged corruption scandals in the business sector as some have the feeling that media report on anything, regardless of whether this is needed or not, whether there are facts or just rumours. From the reason that the cases of corruption are very diverse, often to the journalists some aspects are not entirely clear, which in turn influences the quality of the transferred information. The discussants found it that the *“reporting is objective when based on data, and it is unobjective when founded on assumptions.”* It is therefore that the auditorium loses the criteria for judging and evaluating this phenomenon. To enable a better prevention, it has been suggested to establish an appropriate communication among the media and the competent institutions (law enforcement organs) in order the citizens to become familiarised on how to recognize corruption and how to react upon it.

The negative dimension of corruption

On the question **“does corruption causes damage to the Macedonian economy?”**, large part of the discussants (around 80%) absolutely agreed that the damage is enormous, commenting that corruption has already become a lifestyle. The direct damages from its existence are numerous: decreasing normal competitiveness, the disrespect of the necessary standards, the unemployment level increasing, the fostering of unequal conditions on the market, the increase of the prices and expenses, the lost of quality, the lose of time and money, the absence of direct foreign investments, and damaging the reputation of the country in front of these investors, the creation of a climate of mistrust among the economic subjects and the state, and eventually to all the foregoing – the state budget ends up less empty than the possible levels.

“It is understandable that no one would like to invest in a state that has a chaotic economic environment where the level of corruption level is high on the expense of the citizen.”

Some persons from the smaller companies describe the damage very concretely – in numbers, claiming that the damage they suffer presents an additional 50% from the planned expenses. Others, on the other hand, claim that the bribery upgrades the expenditures by 30%. Yet others estimate that as much as 90% of everything that exists in the country is corrupted and that the

system does not function. More than half of the respondents expressed their regret that *“instead the finance to be streamlined into the budget, out of which the public needs and projects to be supported, the finances end up in private budget.”*

Of course, despite the institutions of the system, in the responses, the very companies have not been amnestied, for which the discussants state that are not least often involved in irregularities. According to one discussant – *“There are cases when for the sake of the personal interest, the potential foreign investor is de-stimulated by asking from it a bribe in order to have the foreign company’s venture succeed.”*

The representatives from the business sector that possess small companies state that the corruption presents a damage only to those who have nothing or with what to corrupt, because only those that make large revenues are ready to bribe as this item has been already pre-calculated in the estimated costs. In this constellation, the discussants claim, the politicians or the civil servants working in the state institutions are involved. On the other hand, the discussants that possess middle size companies claim that:

“It is my very personal continuous experience that whenever my company is even mentioned I instantly feel that I am accused of being ready to offer a bribe. I have had the feeling that should I not promise something tangible, most often a certain favour, support, or to employ someone, my proposition will not pass or a certain decision from which we as a sector have been dependant on. This also creates a very bad impression on us.”

Regarding to the question of whether the discussants have personally encountered corruption as a problem, the answers were positive, having in mind that all of them try to function in the given circumstances of the economic environment. Realistically speaking, the larger companies more easily overcome these situations, being different from the cases of small companies that are more vulnerable. The problem is that corruption creates illegal competitiveness as whenever a new contract is to be conducted, the businessman has to compete with companies that are ready to offer bribes. Even some of the discussants have stated that they were labelled as being *“not enough generous.”*

Most frequently involved in corruption dealings are noted to be the companies engaged in the domain of public procurements, cadastre, courts, etc (especially companies from the construction sector, but also trading companies – export and import). It is also believed that corruption is most spread in areas where it is hardest to achieve certain rights, most often when property rights are involved, thus corruption is most present in the judiciary where the disputes are being resolved (in the form of fees, attorneys, government representatives, etc). Some of the discussants from the business sector noted that they have personally seen how others around them have been giving bribes or that they have been facing corruption whenever they would require the issuing of a particular document (e.g. a permit that in any case they are supposed to receive in a regular procedure according to law).

The organs (more specifically, the state officials) that need to issue these documents prolong the procedure without any justification whilst giving hints that they require something in return for them to be cooperative. The businessmen say that this is the case everywhere where there is a bureaucracy involved, regardless of whether it is a ministry, inspection, customs, or local government. The following opinions were received:

“Unfortunately, it is an old rule in our country that should you want to fix a certain contract, the easiest way is to run a procurement tender on it.”

“As most others, we have started participating to all tenders with a high dose of enthusiasm. To none of the tenders we have won, whilst parallel to this we have been contracted by many other foreign and domestic private firms. We have already given up from participating to tenders issued by public institutions, it is only a waste of time.”

Regarding the concrete amounts of bribery, one discussant stated that *“they are not too high; on the contrary, they are ‘market-value’ – a consideration is paid that all sides are satisfied and that everything goes smoothly. The start-up price is 100 to 200 Euros, but when it is about a tender, the bribe amount is the first thing to arrange. In such a case, the usual practice is to give 5% to 10% of the value of the deal as a bribe.”* More than half of the discussants state that in most cases the rules of the tender (the point scaling of the bids) are not being followed. The case of the Faculty (Academy) of Pedagogy in Skopje has been mentioned as an example – in this case a company that has no portfolio has won the tender, namely a sister company of an enterprise from the city of Kumanovo that is prosecuted for financial corruption (money laundering).

“The civil servants themselves spread the info on what is their tariff (bribery amount). They even give instructions on how to compile and submit the document needed to ‘speed up the completion of the job’” – says the director of a firm that is involved in production.

Others generally have had no such drastic experiences, but of course for the benefit of receiving a particular favour, they have provided some counter-service, treating lunches, trips, sponsorships, etc. However, they see these instances as being usual practices whilst conducting contracts, and not as being cases of corruption. Some firms, due to the specificity of their work, are especially cautious not to get involved in direct financial transactions in order to conduct their business without any *“obstacles”*, out of reason that they would lose their credibility in front of their clients.

The discussants claim that corruption is wide-spread among the large companies that conduct wholesale dealings via intermediaries, which in turn causes higher prices on the market. In the trading sector it is more frequently felt that large companies act as monopolies. Those large companies are in a position to, and do blackmail, in order not to have any good sold to their competitors.

“The Bitola Dairy Industry controls 40% of the Macedonian market of dairy products, and if another company ventures into a competitive relationship vis-à-vis them, the Bitola Company will sure eliminate them as a competitor as they are a company having connections with all major state institutions.”

A respondent that ventured into a larger investment of constructing a large production plant stated that in order to receive the construction site and construction plan permits, he had to pay to other three ‘places’ in addition to the ‘right one’ as these other three persons on three different positions were in a position to prolong the procedure without any reason. Although the start-up of the project received the approval of the State Inspectorate without any problem, nevertheless, the Public Revenue Office, the market and labour inspectors pressured him by over-frequent inspections to his company’s offices.

The discussants from the construction sector are often faced with the same problems saying that in some cases *“the state officials referred to them certain alternative means to quickly have the procedures done.”*

Institutions most inclined to corruption

The interviewed representatives from the business sector when asked *“in which state institution corruption is most wide-spread?”*, they have listed them in the same line-up:

The Customs Administration is ultimately No.1 (according to more than a half of all respondents), due to the reason of that whenever there is export and import, there lay the biggest possibilities for corruption blackmailing (keeping the stock at customs warehouses, not issuing different permits, declarations, or other documents, the existence of double invoices, etc). Some say that there is an obvious pressure in order to secure a bribe – to ask for a larger customs duty than the one according to the value of the export declaration, etc. Cigarettes are a stock that is referred as the being the most attractive for corruption. For an example, one respondent stated that *“according to the data compared with the one provided by the German Customs Administration, what is exported from Germany and declared into Macedonia shows a 50 million Euros value of imported goods in the country for which no customs duty and no Value Added Tax has been paid.”*

Second on the list is the **Cadastre**, where the prolongment of the deadlines puts the customers in a dead-lock situation where they are forced to pay a bribe in order to have the job done. *“By people I know, I was told that I have been unnecessarily dragging myself into slow procedures whilst I could have got my way through much faster by paying my way out.”* *“If you know the right person and if the tariff of 1000 Euros is acceptable to you a construction permit can be issued in a matter of 24 hours”* (the respondent that gave the example personally knows the ones that paid the bribe and got the permit).

Over one third of the respondents claim that corruption is most wide-spread at the **ministries** that issue import permits, certificates, taxation labels – banderol's, declarations, etc., and where *“in no case you can get your way through without paying a bribe since otherwise they would prolong the deadlines and further complicate the procedure.”* Not less often, a bribe has been indirectly demanded; some say for “the minister”, but the persons giving the bribe would never find out whether this indeed is true. It is believed that in cases when a bribe is asked for issuing permits or other similar documents, the bribe is exclusively demanded by the administrative staff and not by the directors or the Ministers. The respondents referred to the **Ministry of Transport and Communications** as most often and in the largest scale **demanding** such **bribes**.

Another problem regarding the role of the ministries is related to the tenders and the winning companies as *“it is impossible that a company that has only one person employed to win a contract of the value of 20 million Euros and to pledge to complete the task in ten days.”* It is believed that the ministries produce regulations that enable a *“legalized corruption”* through tender-agreements conducted in four eyes. In order to overcome this problem, the suggestion is to organize public biddings as in the case of the sale of construction sites. Also, as most spread, corruption is seen to be in those areas where it is hardest to realize certain rights, most specifically – ownership rights and it is therefore that corruption is most present in the **judiciary** which decides on the disputes (bribery in the form of fees involving attorneys, and/or government officials). The **attorneys** were also noted as being very corrupted, but not just themselves alone, but in connection with the police. Racquet/extortions are believed to be most typical for the **police** and the **inspectors** that are paid in order **not** to have some activities undertaken that otherwise should be conducted binding by law.

The **Public Revenue Office** and the **Public Healthcare System** are next on the list of most corrupt state institutions. In the public healthcare, for the use of more sophisticated medical equipment or interventions the patients are regularly directed to use the services of the doctors' private hospitals/policlinics, despite the fact that those doctors work in a public healthcare institution. All this is being done with the justification that the public healthcare institution they work in does not have the necessary equipment, materials, etc. The **local government** is also not immune, which with the current process of decentralisation will be harder to control.

Nevertheless, the respondents note that not all corrupted; that when talking about corruption it is about individuals that we speak of *“it depends on whom you'll end up to.”* Also, it has been noted that *“the very businessmen are inclined to offer a bribe in order to have their interest met.”*

Efficiency in the fight against corruption

More than half of all respondents generally evaluate that the **efficiency of the fight against corruption in Macedonia** is at a **beginning level** due to

having a situation where the state institutions are attempting to do something but **without a particular effect**.

Another important section of the respondents (one quarter of them) do not notice any fight against corruption being in place, but on the contrary, they characterize the situation as being desperate, since it is beyond any logic to expect corruption being a “system” to fight itself. They believe that is present starting from the lowest to highest levels of the hierarchy. These respondents believe that usually only the “small fish” are caught, whilst regarding the large corruption cases nothing has been done as no efforts have been undertaken in the first place to generally resolve the problem of corruption in the country.

“The corrupted structures are not isolated cases, but are connected and supported by each other.”

“From the very same institutions where we have attempted to report corruption, after a certain period of time we have been subjected to racquet”

Very often the discussants have complained that no state organ exists to which they can address to commence a proceeding (one processing company complained that it has even experienced racquet / extortion from the police).

However, a number of representatives from the business sector are at the opinion that the things are slowly changing due to a change of policies, and in that sense the gained status of a Candidate Country for European Union Membership of Macedonia goes in that favour. A positive exception is the installation of the one-stop-shop system that decreases the possibilities for corruption as the length of the procedure for registering companies has been defined by law. Another positive evaluation was appropriated to the State Audit Office which is an independent body and whose reports say much on the situation, according to which the actions should be determined. It is generally considered that the government would like to have more corruption cases resolved in order to gain more support in the upcoming parliamentary elections, but it gets lost in the complicated procedures. In the same instance, the government is being criticized for some of the new law provisions that further damage the principal rules of conduct – as an example, *“the government allows the registering of construction companies that have only one registered employee, hence allowing everyone to claim to be an ‘expert’ even for the large construction endeavours. Through this provision, of course, the doors for corruption in the construction sector are being wide opened.”*

The **State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption** is seen as an initial sparkle in the whole process of anticorruption, but *“if they want to succeed, they will have to work hard, as the present effects of their work are neither noticeable nor long-lasting.”* More than half the respondents are at the opinion that the State Anticorruption Commission is attempting something, but without a tangible success, hence the fight against corruption is left to be only on the declarative level. Some respondents have expressed doubts regarding some of the members of the Commission, whilst some have regarded the existence of the Commission to be only to present an *“image of anticorruption efforts being taken.”* Nevertheless, there is a sense of consciousness that the Commission

ought to refer to possible cases of corruption, whilst it cannot alone fully uncover those cases, this being the job of the police.

“The corruption cases are only being noted, without any outcome from that, or those cases are then only minimised.”

“The Commission has created a self-perception of them being someone important, hence I do not believe in their efficiency.”

“The people that were put as members of the Commission are the very same structures that practice corruption – politicians or businessmen.”

“In the Commission there are some strange people whom I do not trust.”

It has been generally noted that the **chambers of commerce** do nothing in the direction of fighting or preventing corruption as in principle they are weak due to not having a structured and organized channel on this issue. Also, according to some respondents, the economic chambers have their own favourites in the business sector; hence they are not motivated to help in the anticorruption efforts. In any case, they are expected to be much more active in the fight against corruption.

The fight against corruption is believed that would be more efficient should the **state officials** are paid better, hence they would not be motivated for corruption and to be put into temptation when they are involved in dealing with large amounts of state finances. In the same instance, rigorous sanctions on corruption must be introduced – *“the fear not to be caught in corruption would very much help in its prevention.”* In this sense, most respondents suggest the build-up of a good legal framework in order to provide that the state would become the genuine citizens` service and its administration to be operative, professional, and responsible.

“We are all a sort of a ‘dual person’, in a position to both give and make a use of corruption. To half of the people involved in the business sector, the current situation is acceptable.”

“It is hard to install a self-regulation among the businessmen, the government intentionally creates conditions where everyone is dependant on corruption and there are many barriers installed.”

“It is unthinkable, should one is a serious businessperson, not to have encountered any sort of corruption.”

“The smaller companies are more vulnerable to corruption, each state official or a police officer can blackmail such a businessperson.”

What is the incentive to corruption?

On the question “*what is the incentive for corruption in the economy and how it is undertaken?*”, the respondents have listed the following:

- Generally the bad economic situation and poverty that influence all and everything;
- The low wages of the dissatisfied civil servants, as many of them are earning below the needed minimum (needed to meet the personal and family expenses);
- The large amount of money in circulation during the public procurements, where many possibilities exist to bypass the rules (fixed procurements, direct bids, the three offers rule, etc) through unfair competition;
- The whole system of public procurement in the public administration “*where 80% to 90% of all finances are located and where the rules are bad*” as well as the violation of the already existing tender rules;
- The climate created by the state officials that through bribery it is easier and more efficient to have the job done since with the regular procedures and means everything would be prolonged;
- The non-existence of security of the work position with the frequent changing of governments (“*hence one grabs whatever possible*”);
- The current mentality;
- The inappropriate legal framework for an adequate prevention of corruption;
- The non-implementation of the existing laws in the direction of the prevention or sanctioning of corruption;
- The absence of standards in all sectors of the economy and their violations in those cases where such standards exist;
- The domination of persons that often are loyal to the membership of a political party or certain business interest groups, which are set in a managerial position that can ‘utilize’ the corruptive gain for themselves or their political party;
- The personal greed, the strive to get to easy money and luxury lifestyle (expensive cars, prestigious houses, sending children for education abroad, etc)’
- The dependence from “the *offer and demand*” of certain services offered by the state (the overflow of clients and requests to a certain state organ), but also from the predisposition of managerial staff and all other personnel down the hierarchy of that state organ towards corruption (the situation with the Customs Administration during the previous government).

Mentioned as a concrete example was the situation when the Customs Administration would intentionally keep the merchandise at the Customs warehouses for days whilst knowing that the company is tied with strict deadlines for delivery. Or, the case when a new shop has been opened and instantly the inspectors come to investigate aspects for which the owner has already paid for the necessary permits (statement by the owner of a company

with ten employees); *“The inspectors tour our shops and pressure for rules for which there is no binding legal regulation”*, etc.

“When a company that has no single registered employee is awarded a public work by the state administration through a public procurement tender, and in the same time you have a company with 120 employees, and for the same works under the same offered price you have lost at that tender, that situation has a name – we call it corruption.” (Statement by the direction of a processing company).

“There are cases when during the purchase of land by bonds issued from the process of denationalisation, the rule is being changed by first 100.000 Euros being demanded as a bribe, which eventually is dropped to 50.000.”

How corruption activities are practically undertaken?

When it comes to **“whether someone has ever asked them for a gift or a favour/service?”** the businesspersons responded affirmatively. They were asked for gifts, services, discounts, employment, money – all of which most frequently by the administration or the officials from the Ministries. Usually the bribes are being demanded through intermediaries / proxies, and not directly. Many of them state that they do pay, or give presents, or they try to meet the demand without any resistance, as this is expected from them so they would not be maltreated or the procedure to be prolonged by the relevant state institutions. As an example, the demands by certain departments (agencies) within the Ministry of Economy were mentioned:

“First they prolong the procedure and then they openly say that in order to have the job done for some permit to be issued you will need to pay for a sponsorship. When they receive the feedback that the requested sponsorship has been paid (you receive a precise bank account for doing so), they immediately issue the needed permit. The catch is that the sponsorship is being provided on a ‘voluntary basis.’”

One person has stated that it has happened that the report on the financial conduct of his company done by the Public Revenue Office to be given to him on his hand so he would check whether he likes it. In the case that the report would not be ‘desirable’, then the option of providing a sponsorship is put on the table, by agreeing with that proposal eventually the tax that would be needed to be paid will be less. Other respondents mentioned the inspectors (from the sanitary inspection - its district office, etc) that demanded gifts (depending on what the company from which it is demanded would have to offer – in some cases meat, cheese and other products were asked and given as presents). It also happens that the Customs would demand a higher customs duty on a merchandise for which the price upon import is clearly stated (the general evaluation by all respondents was that there has been not much benefit from the opened telephone hotline for anonymous reporting of corruption cases in the Customs). A fee has been demanded through an intermediary from a service that had to pay for the delivered merchandise, regardless of the fact that

the company in question regularly brings them gifts with their products as a treat, *“It seemed as if these products do not have their counter value.”*

“The ones that know the person / company, from which they ask, ask the bribe in an amount based on their analysis of what they could get.” (Statement by the owner of a small business consulting firm).

The decision of whether one would pay the demanded bribe is based on the evaluation of how much the company would lose should it does not in a situation where he / she would be faced with a time delay of his / her business. The representatives of some companies are at the opinion that it is an issue of mentality meaning *“one should give little in order to gain more”* and they give presents in the extent that can be covered by their accounting. There have been cases of employing people upon the intervention of influential persons and there has been lobbying towards other close businesspersons for the same service.

“Most often you are put in a deadlock. I was importing trucks, but I had to come to terms with what the government asks from you, as there is no one to complain to as even the ones on highest position are involved with corruption. Of course you will have to pay in order to have the job done and to be able to continue working.”

“In reality, the damage caused eventually falls on the back of the tax payer, the citizens.”

In this context, the respondents stated that the cases of treating lunches or dinners in restaurants they do not consider as being corruption, but only a “small incentive” or as the usual expenditure for promotion.

Nevertheless, most respondents (more than half of them) are at the opinion that from them not that often strictly money are being demanded, and this in turn is being perceived as the presence of fear not to be caught. It is considered that when dealing with the lower levels of the bureaucracy, one can get his / hers way through with a smaller gift or a smaller bribe, whilst when talking about the true, large corruption, it is exclusively among the ranks of the high officials who demand a percentage fee from each public procurement.

“Percentages are being demanded, money...they ask ‘where am I in all this?’, but this is nothing new as we had this back in the previous times (here they refer to the previous, socialist system).”

“There have been corrupt payments done to the agencies that issue permits, consents, attestations, and decisions, but also officials from the Customs, the Ministry of Economy, and the Ministry of Transport and Communications.” (Statement by the representative of a company producing electrical appliances).

“When there is something to please everyone, then this is silent corruption, everyone is satisfied and the business continues with an eternal happy end.”

Some do not directly ask for money, but they ask for discounts for the produce of the company in question. A large portion of the respondents do not consider

the smaller gifts and treats as corruption. Usually, the ones that ask for this kind of gifts are the middle ranking officials and inspectors.

A certain number of respondents (three of them) answered that they have never given a bribe, not they were ever in a position to be asked, thus refuse to accept a bribe.

The respondents from the business sectors that have responded positively to the question of whether they have ever given a bribe explain:

“This is already a domesticated practice, to which I have agreed and I have paid in cash upon the completion of the job. It was about documents that I was legally entitled to, but I did not wanted to have their issuing being prolonged and thus to loose time. I have been paying such bribes at the Cadastre Office, and in some Ministries only through trusted persons. By rule, most often they ask for money, but they also ask for employment for someone, or they demand sponsorships to cover for trips. I haven’t refused nor reported any of those cases, as I do not think that the openness for cooperation is to be sanctioned.”

The largest number of those that give money do not exactly know to whom the money are intended for, as it is questionable whether the alleged final destination of the money is indeed true. They reckon that the possibility is that the money is for the administrative staff as it depends from them whether they would intentionally keep the documents in the drawer or they will process them. Other companies have a concrete system of communication with the ones that directly perform the service; hence they know where the money ends up.

Most respondents from the business sector would not offer money upon their own initiative. This would happen only if they have no other choice.

“It is very easy to find out who ask for how much money and people pay, all what matters is not to be faced with a larger damage.”

“People have no idea of the extent of corruption in our society.”

“In larger companies, the giving of the bribe is being undertaken by the company’s attorneys and not by the owners or managers as there are many intermediaries involved in the corruption process.”

Others state that they would not know how to perform the act of corruption, to whom, how, and how much to give as a bribe, whilst some would not give the bribe out of considerations for personal principles, and others fear that the competition would decide their involvement with corruption.

The ones that respond affirmatively, condition their involvement with corruption only in cases of large business dealings or in cases of export in which large finances have been invested and they are restricted by strict deadlines, or they simply have another urgent problem.

A part of the respondents (one fifth) from the business sector claim that initially, in the first such case, they have refused to give a bribe, but once they have realized that they will never have their job completed, have changed their stance on corruption, as *“opposing it does not pay off”*. Others have stated that when a bribe is being asked from them, they immediately give it as otherwise they are not sure whether they would have the job done for which they would not like to risk. Still, there are some that have refused giving bribes to inspectors and have threatened that they would report them (Statement by the representative of a small trading company). The general impression is that the people from the business sector still have no trust in the efficiency of the established mechanisms for protection from corruption.

“The procurement tenders are a separate problem, as usually there is no pre-qualification phase, but everything is left to the very tender procedure, which if has not been agreed in advance, it will be a waste of effort and time to participate in it. On these cases there is no one to complain to.”

“An experience when a person has refused to pay: in the Cadastre in a case when everything was resolved and yet nothing is being decided for already two years as they demand a bribe of 1500 Euros, of course via intermediaries.”

Reporting cases of corruption

The respondents from the business sector (more than half of them) are in a dilemma whether they would report the case of a bribe being asked due to the reason of them being uncertain whether this would have an effect and whether the reporting of it would harm the further operation of their company. In principle, no one likes to be slow in his / hers business as in this case their business would collapse, hence his business partners would go to someone else. The damage would be very hard to be compensated through a court procedure as it would be surely prolonged forever. In the same time, it can happen that the company's or/and the owners name to be publicized by media by which his / hers integrity would be damaged. They note that among the employees from the administration a some kind of solidarity exist making them protect each other, and all of them on the other hand are protected by the governing political parties. In this case, reporting the case of corruption would not lead to any results, therefore these persons are not ready to report it. To them, it is a disappointing fact that the people convicted on corruption are never the ones from the top of the hierarchy but only the so-called 'scape goats' – the ones from the lowest hierarchical levels.

Other persons would report corruption (around one forth), but only *“in some more normal circumstances and a more regulated environment”* and only if they have a supporting back behind them. Some, that would also like to report it, would do it only for a minor case, as in the bigger cases of corruption they believe that their reaction would not result in any outcome as *“those high*

officials generating high level corruption are never prosecuted but they only switch into another high position.” One person has stated that he would report should the particular bribe asked would go beyond some ‘normal’ limits, this being due to the fact that “*this situation exists for way to long*”.

There have been such respondents that do not know where to report a case of corruption or that would report it to the police only if they are able to prove it, but they fear that they would not be aware on who else is involved in the particular corruption scheme. The judicial system still does not enjoy a level of trust among these respondents.

“The financial situation is too hard to be able to afford to loose time in hopeless procedures.”

The businessmen prefer to report the cases of corruption by telephone, should the state provide the necessary conditions. Currently, there is a belief that the telephone hotlines installed for reporting corruption are being tapped; hence the respondents expressed their suspicion regarding the anonymity of the person reporting by the hotline. According to this, it is believed that the one reporting the case will be the one to be damaged by reporting it, and not the person(s) involved with corruption.

However, all respondents have asserted that they themselves are to be also blamed for this situation as many of them find the corruption-based system appropriate to the way of their business operation.

By a principle, people do not believe that they can change anything at the moment. They reckon that the ones that report corruption are later noted as being such by the institution they have reported of being the ‘host’ to a case of corruption. The respondents are at the opinion that once the public will witness that someone was indeed severely sanctioned on corruption, only then reporting corruption will increase. In the same time, the corrupted persons located at various levels and institutions ought to be “taken off” simultaneously. The most tragic consequence of having corruption is the destruction of moral values in the society.

“Everyone would report corruption should it is known that doing it would lead to results, but to do it under the present conditions and environment is ridiculous. The report would be submitted to a higher level of the same institution, whilst all hierarchical levels do cooperate when it comes to corruption, hence there will be no outcome.” – This is a statement by a person that has reported corruption in the past on the case of fixed tender for public procurement, but his reaction resulted in no action taken against the perpetrators. The person was neither informed on the outcome of his report, nor was there a call for publicly opening all the bids received for the procurement tender, nor he has received the points scale for all bid received (this is case of a construction company).

Differences between fees/provisions and bribery

According to the majority of respondents, the fee for a contract won is perceived as being normal, regular, and legal. The respondents do not at all see it as a form of bribery as they understand it to be a normal segment of every contract. In some sectors it is on the level of 5% to 8% of the total contract value, and in some is 4%. This is a fee for the intermediary that lobbied and connected the two sides; it is seen as normal reward for his services. It is a reward for the business contracted, for the sold or provided service, and on it professionals and even firm work that deal with such mediation. The respondents believe that it is better to have this fee as it is legalizing a large part of the financial violations as it will be clearly known to whom this fee has been paid, and it will be subjected to taxation.

Differently from the abovementioned, it is clear that the bribery is hidden in front of the state organs in front of which the financial and overall report is being submitted. The corruption in this case actually is the unreported revenue and it represents a release of cash money shared among the contracting sides.

The bribe is given for something that according to all regulations is an entitlement to the person/company requesting the service. However, the discussants (one quarter of them) consider that it is somewhat problematic that when a fee/provision is given, it is in the case of a contract with a state institution (on a tender for public procurement) as a public official should not personally profit from such a contract. In this case, this situation is seen as a bribe, especially when given to ministers, state secretaries, etc., as the money given as a fee is not returned into the state budget.

“In the market economy, the regulations are established, and if there is an intermediary, than this person/company is not a secret, it is known that he/she is somewhat part of the team. When the money comes from the state budget and there is a public procurement tender, then the state official acts as the intermediary and he/she takes the fee for himself/herself and not for the benefit of the state budget.” (Statement of a representative from the Economic Chamber).

Financing the campaigns of political parties

More than half of all respondents have never financially supported the campaign of a political party. Some of the discussants want to stay neutral, whilst others are worried that should they support one party, then the other parties will ask for a similar assistance. The assessment is that the political parties do not pay for the agreed services, or they are too late in doing so, whilst they do take the financial support of the donor. There is a dilemma whether the persons that receive the money on behalf of the political parties do indeed use them for the political campaign, or the money ends up in their personal pockets

“It is questionable whether that what is taken as a donation for the campaign is done with the knowledge of the party leader, as the political parties too have their own petite thieves that make profit from the internal party dealings.”

The remaining businessmen that answered that they have supported the political parties in their campaigns, stated that this was more in the sense of providing a logistical assistance or such services (donating the printing of promotional t-shirts, baseball caps, flags, small inventory, office materials, printing paper, drinks, sandwiches during party rallies, preparing other promotional materials, etc). Of course, none of this is to be neglected as any of these donations do have their counter value.

“By a principle, these donors are active on a friendly basis.”

Of course, the discussants say that there are companies that by the act of donating expect to be favoured by the new government, although such cases are seen much seldom. In order to overcome the violations in this area, changes in the payment system are suggested as currently payments in cash are being widely tolerated.

Assessing the trend of domestic corruption

Again, the largest number of discussants (two thirds) is at the opinion that in 2005 the level of corruption has not decreased in comparison with the previous year. It is believed that corruption in the country has deep roots, back to the times of the Ottoman occupation, only now it is being transformed and aligned to the current legislation. A newer form of corruption is the one affiliated with political parties – 70% of all corrupt dealings in the country are related with the political elites. Connected to the political elites are the large businesses that are also inevitably corrupted. The assessment is that corruption is wide-spread due to the decisive role of the human factor.

“The whole institution can be in good order, but the three employees that issue the documents or the permits to be the core of the corruption, and should the client does not bribe them, the job will not be completed.”

It is considered that in 2005, as the pressure on corruption increases, it seems that people become conscious of the fact that little time has left to ‘grab’ whatever possible. Only, due to the greater involvement of media and the public, they are now more discreet and careful in corruption than before.

“The fight against this phenomenon is very hard as it seems to be endless since the governments change whilst the corruption is still intact.”

Although it is believed that corruption cannot be entirely eliminated as it is seen and it is present in all countries, there are optimists among the respondents. They hope that it will be brought to a level that will not so much damage the state and the business sector. The hopes are directed towards the European

Union and the new rules that it would impose in the direction of the reduction of corruption.

“It has to be started with having only normal legal payments, as when duties are being paid to the state, it is necessary at least not to have to pay additional, corruption fees...this is lethal for the existence of small enterprises.”

“The level of corruption has decreased during the times when head of the Customs Administration was Ljubomir Mihajlovski, whilst in the same time the level of corruption has increased in the Cadastre. Corruption in the judiciary is on a status quo level. In the first ranks of the government nothing has changed, as their discession right were preserved.”

The situation with corruption, however, is not that bleak, as that the respondents state that a slight improvement is noticeable, although this is far from sufficient. In order to have larger effects, they suggest that it is needed to have a more important politician or businessmen prosecuted and eventually convicted on corruption. Praise was given to the inauguration of the one-stop-shop system that has eliminated some forms of corruption. It has been suggested that all laws necessary for the combating and prevention of corruption ought to be adopted, followed by efficient penal mechanisms for protection. The introduction of a national payment card has been also suggested as means for overcoming the high levels of corruption.

SUMMARY ASSESMENTS

- Although corruption is much more often and widely discussed in the public, there is mistrust on the quality and the manner it is being commented, and on the media incentive for dealing with the issue when it comes to concrete cases of corruption;
- It is an absolute fact that the wide-spread corruption presents a great danger to the economy, first and foremost by distorting the healthy market competition and slowing the economic growth, and the overall dynamics of the economy;
- The respondents are conscious that always eventually the damage from corruption is being paid by the citizens;
- The list of most corrupted institutions is comprised of the Customs Administration, the Cadastre, the Ministries that issue particular permits and other documents (in particularly the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Ministry of Economy), the Courts, the various inspectors, etc.
- The very businessmen, in order to faster and without any problems have their interest met, are inclined to offer bribes;
- The general assessment is that the efficiency of the fight against corruption in Macedonia is at the beginning level;
- A clear procedure on the protection from corruption is missing as well as completely detailed legal provisions in that regard;
- The opinions on the work of the State Commission of Corruption are generally positive, whilst it is widely believed that the effects of its work are not yet visible nor long-lasting;
- The economic chambers are believed to do nothing in this direction as in principle they are weak due to not having a structured and organized channel for the fight against corruption;
- Although the political will has been declared, the people are still afraid and they have no trust in the possibility to report corruption cases – in other words, they still have no trust in the existing mechanisms for the protection from corruption;
- The reasons incenting corruption in Macedonia are numerous: the bad economic situation, the low wages, the faults in the tender procedures, the non-satisfactory legal framework for an adequate prevention, the human nature, the current mentality, etc.
- In order to have an efficient fight against corruption there is a need for introducing a combination of stimulative measures for the civil servants (better wages) with rigorous sanctions for the violators of this new, detailed legal regulation;
- The businessmen are often extorted money, services / favours, sponsorships, but also attention in the form of treating in restaurants;
- Directly asking for money is a less often practice than the ones for asking for a service / favour;
- Most businesspersons do provide the required / extorted bribes in order to have the job quickly done and to be able to work smoothly in the future;

- The businesspersons rarely report the cases of corruption due to their personal fear that reporting it can harm their future work;
- Generally, people do not know to whom to address in a possible case of corruption;
- Contrary to corruption, asking / giving a fee / provision is considered as being legal and normal;
- Half of the respondents have stated that their companies have supported the electoral campaigns of some political party, but mainly by providing the logistics or other services. Obviously, the companies that participate in the political parties` campaigns by direct financial contributions are much less frequent;
- For the time being, corruption in the Republic of Macedonia shows no trend of decreasing. Nevertheless, there are already some optimistic processes noted, that in the future might lead to the reduction of this societal phenomenon.

GRAPHICAL PRESENTATION OF THE GENERAL DISTRIBUTIONS

(see attached excel sheet)