



Project funded by the European Union



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PRESS RELEASE

September 29, 2016

Office: +389 (0)2 3102314

Cell: +389 70367 547

Email: bvelickovska@usaid.gov

Project Contact details:

Cell: +389 70252081

E-mail: gjk@mcms.mk

Bribery remains widespread in the Balkans, but the real problem is high-level political corruption and the stalling of the EU accession process, according to the 2016 results of the Corruption Monitoring System of the Southeast European Leadership for Development and Integrity

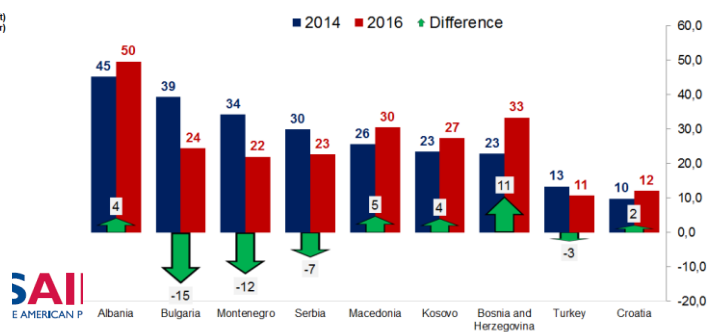
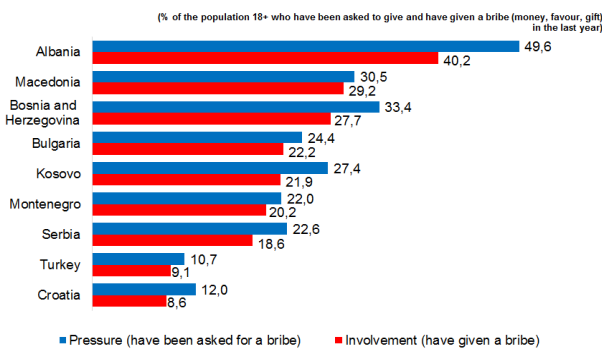
On 29-30 September 2016, the USAID Anti-Corruption Program and the Southeast European Leadership for Development and Integrity (SELDI) held the Regional Forum on Good Governance Policies and Anticorruption dedicated to the issues of anti-corruption in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The participants, the local and international stakeholders discussed the best methods for transforming the research into efficient policy and advocacy tools.

SELDI presented the main findings of its **2016 Corruption Monitoring System in Southeast Europe**, which warns that political corruption has replaced petty bribery both as the dominant concern of national and international reformists and as the cause of most social and economic damage. The earlier emphasis on harmonizing national legislation with international standards has now been substituted by a focus on its enforcement.

Chart 1: Corruption pressure and involvement

Chart 2: Corruption pressure, % (2014 and 2016)



Source: Corruption Monitoring System, SELDI, 2016.

Source: Corruption Monitoring System, SELDI, 2014 and 2016

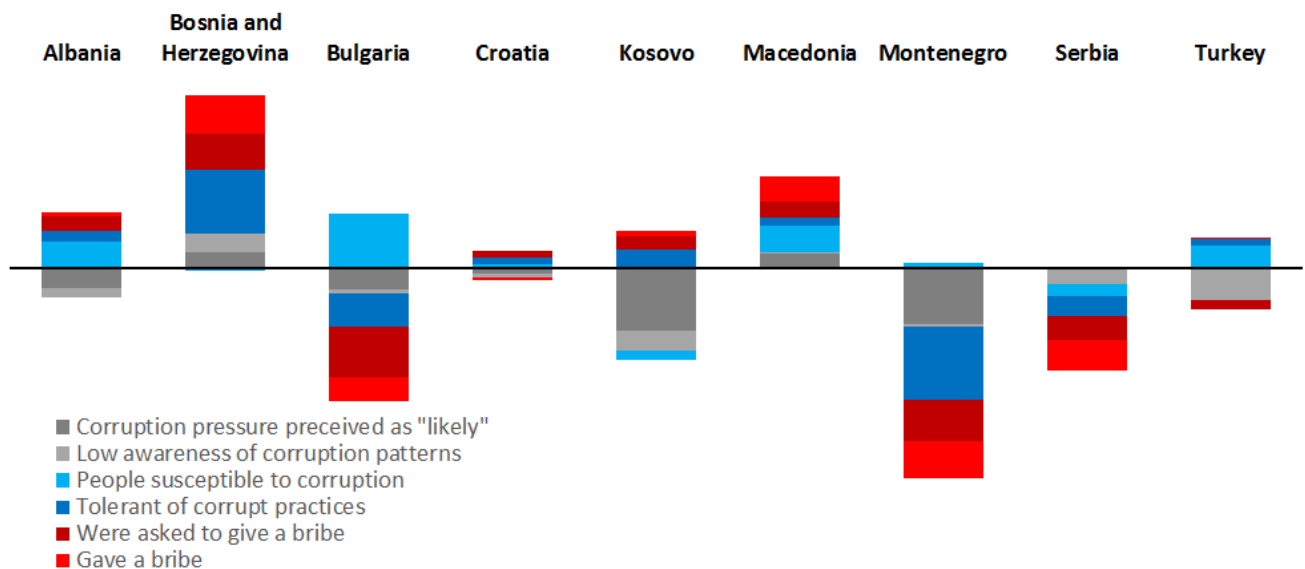
The 2016 SELDI survey shows 26% corruption pressure in the Southeast European countries

The 2016 SELDI population survey shows that corruption remains very high in the SEE region. On the average, corruption pressure is 25.9% - hardly a percentage decline since 2014 when the regional mean was 27.1%.

Corruption pressure (which represents the share of citizens in a country who report being asked for a bribe by a public officer during the past year) is the main indicator not only for administrative corruption, but for the overall corruption environment in a country.

The survey conducted in the beginning of 2016 covered 9 SELDI countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey with at least 1000 respondents from each of the countries. The results demonstrated the alarming pervasiveness of corruption in the SEE region. While three of the countries with highest corruption results from the 2014 survey (Bulgaria, Montenegro, Serbia) show some progress in diminishing corruption, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had promising results in 2014, now once again lose ground in their battle against corruption. At the same time even in the most stable and “corruption-free” countries in the region (Croatia and Turkey) more than 10% of the citizens were asked for a bribe during the past year (2015). Albania still shows the highest corruption levels with further increase of more than 4% corruption pressure since 2014. Hence, now, every second citizen reports being asked for a bribe and every third gave one in 2015.

Chart 3: Corruption Dynamics: Difference 2016 - 2014, %



Note: The figure shows the stacked change in the main six SELDI indicators of corruption between 2016 and 2014: positive values (above the horizontal axis) demonstrate increase in corruption, while negative values show decrease. Dark and bright red bars represent the change in the most important experienced based indicators – Corruption Pressure and Involvement in Corruption.

Source: SELDI Corruption Monitoring System, 2016.

Note: The text in this Press Release can be freely distributed on the condition that the SELDI initiative, the USAID, EU and CEI funding, the title of the event and name of the organizers are explicitly mentioned.

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The USAID Anti-Corruption Program is implemented by the MCIC together with the partners: Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis- Skopje (IDSC), Transparency Macedonia, and the Association for Democratic Initiatives – Gostivar (ADI).



A project implemented by a consortium led by the Center for the Study of Democracy
5 Alexander Zhendov str.
1113 Sofia, Bulgaria
Tel: +359 2 971 3000
Fax: +359 2 971 2233



This event has been organized with the financial assistance of the European Union, USAID and the Central European Initiative (CEI).

The views expressed during this event do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission, USAID and the CEI.



The European Commission is the EU's executive body. "The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".