

Results of opinion survey on corruption

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A comprehensive survey of public opinion was commissioned by the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau and carried out about extent of corruption and experience with corruption in Latvia. For the first time such a wide survey– questioning 2010 persons– was carried out in Latvia.

Questions were asked both about experience of citizens with public institutions to find out whether in dealing with them unofficial payments or deals were used and about opinion of citizens about honesty of public institutions and officials, causes of corruption and ways to diminish it.

The survey mainly revealed that the influence of corruption is diminishing at administrative or low level, while increasingly citizens acknowledge that high level corruption is developing and doubt whether willingness of public officials to fight against corruption is genuine. Comparing to 2005 the trust of the public to the Parliament and the government is decreasing.

While number of persons admitting that they do not have personal experience with corruption is increasing (6,1% in 2005, 15% in 2007), a large part of the society has heard of such experience from their friends or relatives (39,5%) or else – themselves were forced to make unofficial payments to resolve their problems (13,4%).

Taking into account the latent nature of corruption offences, the survey shows the gap between positive personal experience with public institutions and negative opinion about honesty of public institutions.

Also the experience of investigators of the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau shows that corruption in Latvia is increasingly comparable to trends in some developed countries (bribes are accepted more relying on well-known intermediaries, specific schemes of embezzlement of public goods are being developed).

Personal experience of citizens from their everyday contacts with the state and municipal institutions shows that the level of corruption in Latvia is decreasing in all areas.

Table 1. Question from the survey: "Matter was solved without an unofficial payment or connections":

Area	(%)
Change or receipt of passport, permit of stay, invitation letter	93,8
Matters in the competence of the State Revenues Service (taxes, declarations, audits)	92,8
Car registration and roadworthiness test	87,4
Solving matters at municipal authorities	86,7
Solving matters in relation to structural funds of the European Union	84,1

Table 2. Question from the survey: „Unofficial payments or gifts were necessary to solve the matter (5 Lats of more)”

Areas	(%)
In connection with the Road Police	17,3
Health center, hospital	16,6
Permits, licenses (entrepreneurship, construction, including reconstruction of apartments)	13,8
Deals in relation to customs (import, export, transit)	9,3
Participation of the enterprise in state and municipal procurement offers	9,3
Matters to be solved at the Court	8,5
Solving matters related to real estate (privatization of land, apartment, house, receipt, buying/selling)	8,1
Studies or entering of children in the school or kinder garden	6,7

Honesty. The negative opinion about honesty in certain public institutions in the context of corruption is possibly related to the fact that in 2005 65% of surveyed persons said that the main source of information about level of corruption in Latvia is information published in mass media together with their own experience and experience of relatives and friends.

Table 3. Honesty of public institutions („Very honest” un „Rather honest”)

Nr.	Institution / Area of Activities	(%)
1.	State Fire-fighting and Rescue Service	54,2
2.	Church	54,1
3.	Radio	49,0
4.	TV	47,2
5.	Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau	45,6

As the most honest institutions and areas citizens consider the State Fire-fighting and Rescue Service, church, radio, TV and the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau to which trust 45,6% to 54,2% of citizens.

More than 30% of citizens consider as honest only four more institutions and areas: the press, presidency, educational institutions and the State Audit Office.

Nr.	Institution/ Area of Activities	(%)
6.	Press	38,1
7.	Presidency	36,5

8.	Public educational institutions	33,1
9.	State Audit Office	31,8

10% and less citizens consider that honest are those officials who work at the customs, the Parliament, the Road police and the government of Latvia (Cabinet of Ministers).

Nr.	Institution	(%)
33.	Customs	10,7
34.	Parliament (Saeima)	9,5
35.	Road Police	8,2
36.	Government of Latvia (Cabinet of Ministers)	7,8

Out of all institutions mentioned in the survey seven received more public trust as in 2005. Mostly the trust has increased to the State Audit Office (by 12,3%) and only by 2 – 3% to those officials who have rights to issue licences, to the privatisation agency and the customs.

Table 3. Honesty of institutions (increase compared to 2005)

Institution/ Area of Activities	Consider honest (%)	Increase compared to 2005 (%)
State Audit Office	31,8	12,3
State Revenues Service	24,9	0,4
Banks and insurance control	20,5	1,4
Deputies of municipalities	16,7	0,1
Public officials with rights to issue licenses	13,2	3,3
Privatization agency	11,8	3,1
Customs	10,7	2,9

Regardless of the fact that the experience of citizens shows a decrease in low level corruption, there are certain areas where the assessment has seriously worsened. More than 10% of supporters have lost the Presidency (decrease of 14,9%) and NGOs (10,7%). The part of the society that supports radio, the Parliament, church, TV, press, hospitals and health centers, the government and electricity enterprise “Latvenergo” has decreased by 6% - 9%.

Table 4. Honesty of institutions (decrease, compared to 2005)

Institutions/areas	Consider honest (%)	Decrease compared 2005 (%)
Church	54,1	7,9
Radio	49,0	9,1
TV	47,2	7,7
Press	38,1	7,5
Presidency	36,5	14,9
NGOs	23,9	10,7
State and municipal hospitals	19,3	6,3
Latvenergo	19,1	6,1
Parliament (Saeima)	9,5	9,0
Government of Latvia (Cabinet of Ministers)	7,8	6,2

Consequences of corruption. To the question about impact of corruption unanimously as the main feature most of citizens – 52% - quoted the undermining of public trust to the state of Latvia.

Table 5. Opinions on impact of corruption in on the country in general (compared to 2005)

Nr .	Impact of corruption	Consider honest (%)	Change compared to 2005 (%)
1.	Undermines trust of citizens to the state of Latvia	52,0	5,6
2.	A part of citizens becomes wealthy on other's account	39,6	0,6
3.	Illegal business is flourishing	35,2	1,7
4.	Increase in level of wealth of citizens is undermined	34,9	-8,2
5.	Obedience to law is decreasing (lack of trust in rule of law)	30,8	10,7

Attitude towards bribery. One of the positive outcomes of this survey is the improvement in the attitudes of citizens towards bribery: 39% of citizens would be ready to give a bribe to a public official (49% in 2005). Meanwhile, same reasons are mentioned as to why people give bribes: fastening resolution of some issues (36,4%), security that the problem will be really resolved (32,4%) and guarantee that the problem will be resolved in the necessary way (29,9%).

Further information about the survey (in Latvian) is available here[>>>](#)

<https://www.knab.gov.lv/en/article/results-opinion-survey-corruption>