

YOUTH AND CORRUPTION

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INTRODUCTION

Corruption is one of the most serious global threats of our time. It can also have catastrophic effects on the economy and the environment, if widespread, and is linked to the crisis of democracy and growing inequalities. Combating this complex phenomenon requires multiple and simultaneous approaches, including educational programs that empower future generations to resist and prevent corruption. Precisely for these reasons, Centre for Democracy and Law Miko Tripalo launched the project *Empowering Future Generations to Fight Corruption* in early 2024. This project is supported by the Netherlands Helsinki Committee as part of the Catalysts of Change program.

The goal of the project is to develop the anti-corruption attitudes of young people and strengthen their ability to recognize corrupt behaviour in order to empower them in the fight against corruption. Working with young people on building awareness of corruption and integrity is crucial so that they, as future active citizens of the Republic of Croatia and the European Union and actors in the public and private sectors, build a healthier and fairer society. As part of the project, the following activities were carried out: research was conducted on the attitudes of young people and their perception and understanding of the key concepts of corruption and anti-corruption; a policy paper on youth and anti-corruption was drafted, which contains recommendations for raising the anti-corruption awareness of young people and building their capacity to oppose corruption; a round table was held on the topic of anti-corruption and youth; and a campaign was carried out on social media ("Recognize Corruption") with the aim of encouraging young people to think about what corruption is in society and their daily lives and how they can fight it.

As part of the project, Centre Miko Tripalo conducted a survey among 525 young respondents from June to September 2024, of whom 61% were between 19 and 29 years old, 34% 18 and under, while 6% were over 30. Although the number of respondents is relative, the results are of great importance for designing approaches to educating young people and empowering them to fight corruption in their professional and private lives. In 2014, the MY World 2014 survey collected responses from 1,089 people aged 18 to 34 from 102 countries.¹ Their responses reveal the general perception of young people of the negative impacts of corruption on themselves, but also on their wider environment.² Centre Miko Tripalo's survey confirmed the aforementioned result, but also pointed out concrete features specific to Croatia.

¹ World Economic Forum 2015.

²<https://www.myworld2015.org/index.html?page=results>. See the Study: The impacts of corruption on young people and their role in preventing corruption, 2024:

Expert literature has only recently begun to investigate the differentiated effects of corruption on different age groups within the general population³, and this is also true for young people. It is widely understood that young people are often marginalized in society due to the existence of power asymmetries relative to older groups, as well as their typically lower access to resources.⁴ However, less is known about whether and how corruption contributes to the marginalization of youth.⁵

The aim of the *Empowering Future Generations to Fight Corruption* project is to encourage young people in Croatia as its future generations to perceive corruption as a harmful phenomenon that prevents the development of society to its full potential and impedes human rights. Recognizing the manifestations of corruption is particularly important for young people and the development of their integrity, as well as for what they consider to be an appropriate punishment for corruption, what corrupt actions they would be willing to take in certain cases, what are the causes of corruption and what is needed to strengthen the integrity of future generations.

³ Transparency International i Equal Rights Trust 2021

⁴ <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/helpdesk/Corruption-and-marginalisation.pdf>

⁵ In the Study on: The impacts of corruption on young people and their role in preventing corruption, 2024: <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/kproducts/The-impacts-of-corruption-on-young-people-and-their-role-in-preventing-corruption-U4-Helpdesk-FinalDraft.pdf>. See also article: Rita Toleikienė, Vita Juknevičienė, Sigita Balčiūnas and Nora Leach, Development of youth anti-corruption potential in the European Union, Online 2024, European Journal of International Management, Vol. 22 No.2, <https://www.inderscienceonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1504/EJIM.2024.135937> : This paper analyses the dynamics of the anti-corruption potential of young people in the Member States of the European Union (EU) for the period 2013-2019. The anti-corruption potential of young people is assessed based on three main dimensions: perceptions of corruption, attitudes towards the phenomenon and behaviours of resistance to abuse. The study relies on secondary statistical data from the Special Eurobarometer on Corruption (EU-28). Perception is assessed based on young people's opinions on the prevalence of corruption in EU countries and their experiences with this phenomenon. Attitudes are examined based on the level of young people's intolerance towards abuse. Behaviour based on the readiness for social action in relation to reporting corruption cases is analysed. The results of the comparative analysis show variations in terms of the anti-corruption potential of young people across clusters of EU countries. Firstly, the most favourable dynamics were observed among the Western and Northern EU Member States in 2019. Secondly, the Southern EU countries show the most positive development trend in the assessed period 2013-2019. Third, central and eastern EU countries remain weaker in terms of strengthening the anti-corruption potential of young people.

RESEARCH ON CORRUPTION

In the 2024 Eurobarometer survey on corruption, published alongside the Rule of Law Report in July, a majority EU citizens (68%) believe that corruption is widespread in their countries, and 61% of them consider it unacceptable when they are seeking services from public administrations.⁶ At the same time, 65% of EU citizens believe that high-level corruption cases are not processed sufficiently, and only 30% believe that the government's efforts in the fight against corruption are effective. However, 66% do not agree with the statement that they are personally affected by corruption.⁷ Concerns about corruption are also expressed among young people, who increasingly, like the general population of EU citizens, point to the close links between politics and the business sector, which creates fertile ground for corruption. According to a Eurobarometer, 27% of Europeans said they had personally experienced corruption, while many are unsure how to report such incidents.⁸ On average, 1 in 10 Europeans knows someone who gives or takes a bribe, while the majority (88%) do not. The highest percentage of citizens who believe corruption is present is recorded in Greece (98%), Portugal (96%), Malta and Slovenia (95%).⁹

The Eurobarometer survey on perceptions of corruption from July 2024 also shows that a large proportion of Europeans, including young people, consider corruption to be a serious problem, especially when it comes to fair access to employment and education. The percentages are alarming, as at the EU level where 68% of respondents believe that corruption is widespread. In Croatia this figure remains among the highest at a worrying 92% (although 4 points lower than in 2023).¹⁰ According to the 2023 Eurobarometer, 96% of Croatian citizens believed that corruption was widespread in the country, while in 2024 that percentage dropped slightly to 92%, which continues to show an extremely high perception of corruption among the population.¹¹ Many young people in the EU believe that politics and business are too closely linked, which creates conditions for corruption. According to the Eurobarometer, around 75% of citizens believe that this link facilitates the spread of corruption. Many still believe that corruption affects business and political processes, while 83% of respondents believe that close ties between business and politics lead to corruption.

⁶ europa.eu, 2024.: europa.eu (2024) Citizens' attitudes towards corruption in the EU in 2024 <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3217> Accessed September 29, 2024

⁷ Summary Repot. Special Eurobarometer 548, Citizens attitudes towards corruption, July 2024, str. 11.

⁸ politico.eu: politico.eu (2024) <https://www.politico.eu/article/most-europeans-say-corruption-is-rife-in-their-country/> Accessed September 29, 2024

⁹ home-affairs.ec.europa.eu: home-affairs.ec.europa.eu (2024) Corruption in the public opinion. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/corruption/corruption-public-opinion_en Accessed September 29, 2024

¹⁰ <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3217>

¹¹ Ibid.

YOUTH AND CORRUPTION

Young people are a special demographic group that possesses a range of skills and qualities that can contribute to the fight against corruption. Their innovativeness, willingness to cooperate and high level of digital literacy make them key partners in efforts to build more transparent institutions. Young people often have the ability to recognize and propose solutions that traditional systems may overlook, as they bring new ways of thinking and use tools that are natural to them, such as social networks and other digital platforms. However, on the other hand, it also indicates the necessity of educating young people regarding fake news and manipulation of influence. According to the data collected, anti-corruption agencies that already cooperate with young people recognize numerous benefits from such cooperation, with 78% of agencies reporting increased public awareness of their work, while 65% of agencies emphasize that young people bring innovative solutions and ideas. Through their engagement, young people help to increase the reach of anti-corruption programs, especially when they are involved in the early stages of planning and designing these programs. Their participation allows activities to be tailored to their needs and interests, ensuring that programs become more relevant and effective.¹²

Obstacles And Challenges in Youth Engagement

According to published analyses, despite the obvious advantages, there are also significant obstacles to involving young people in anti-corruption efforts. Lack of knowledge among young people about the functions and work of anti-corruption institutions can reduce their interest in participating, as can apathy, especially if a large percentage of them is convinced that corruption is a way of life and without it, progress is not possible, especially in the public sector. Moreover, anti-corruption agencies often do not have sufficient resources and capacities to include young people in their activities, which can make it difficult to implement programs that would further prepare young people to become aware of the importance of integrity in professional life. These institutions often face limited financial resources, and their internal structure may not be flexible enough to support young people as active partners. In the case of Croatia, the Commission for the Prevention of Conflict of Interest implements certain educational programs among a limited number of young people. Also, according to the analyses, one of the significant obstacles is the perception that young people do not have enough experience or technical skills needed to effectively participate in anti-corruption initiatives.

¹² Policy guide for national Anti-corruption authorities on meaningful youth engagement in anti-corruption network, https://www.icac.org.hk/icac/myeguide/pdf/policy_guide_full.pdf

While these concerns are understandable, evidence from practice shows that young people can overcome these obstacles with appropriate support and mentoring. Moreover, their enthusiasm and willingness to cooperate often make up for the lack of formal experience.¹³ This is precisely why education in the field of anti-corruption is necessary, and the results of the survey by Centre Miko Tripalo confirmed this.

Institutional Preparation and Strategies for Youth Engagement

For youth engagement to be effective, institutions need to improve their institutional readiness to develop a culture of integrity and communicate their message to young people. They also need to ensure adequate resources, build capacity within their organizations, and develop systems that will enable young people to actively participate. Institutional readiness also includes intergenerational mentoring, where young people can learn from more experienced professionals, while at the same time bringing new ideas and tools that can help modernize the work of anti-corruption bodies. Young people should also be involved in all phases of anti-corruption projects, from their design to implementation, ensuring that programs are not just intended for young people, but are actively shaped by young people.

Resolution of the Council of Europe no. 2192(2017): *Youth Against Corruption*¹⁴ highlights that many young people have the desire and ability to transform the world and have the potential to positively influence future anti-corruption efforts. As a new generation of politicians, entrepreneurs and civil society actors, they have an important role to play in bringing a new culture of integrity to all levels of society; but they are also the most vulnerable. They therefore need to be taught how to effectively detect, prevent and fight corruption. To this end, it is crucial to design appropriate empowerment strategies to raise young people's awareness and understanding of corruption and how it undermines democratic societies, while at the same time empowering them to stand up to it.

Youth Potential

Youth engagement in the fight against corruption represents a great potential for improving transparency and accountability in society. Their creativity, technical skills and ability to collaborate make them indispensable partners in anti-corruption efforts.

¹³ https://www.icac.org.hk/icac/myeguide/pdf/policy_guide_full.pdf.

¹⁴ [PACE website \(coe.int\)](https://www.pace.int/)

Although there are obstacles that make their inclusion difficult, with adequate institutional support and resources, these obstacles can be overcome, which will make young people one of the key actors in the fight against corruption. Institutions that are ready to adapt and invest in young people will not only strengthen their anti-corruption activities, but will also ensure that new generations are actively involved in building a fairer society. Equally, young people should be empowered enough to encourage anti-corruption activities themselves, so that their role as active citizens contributes to the development of the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as the development of society as a whole.

Examples Of Successful Youth Engagement

There are numerous examples of the successful involvement of young people in anti-corruption initiatives around the world. In Malaysia, the Anti-Corruption Student Force program enables students to lead projects that raise awareness of corruption on and off campus. A similar example comes from Greece, where the National Transparency Agency encourages young people to create their own projects, such as films and posters, to raise awareness of anti-corruption measures. These examples show that young people can become key actors in the fight against corruption when they are given the opportunity to lead and create initiatives that are important to them.¹⁵

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's document *"10 Steps to Take Action Against Corruption: For Youth by Youth"* provides guidelines for the active involvement of young people in the fight against corruption. The first step is education about existing laws and plans in the field of fighting corruption, while the second is choosing a specific focus, for example, human rights violations, access to health care, gender inequality or climate change. The third step calls for adapting the initiative to local cultural and linguistic specificities, making it more accessible. The fourth step is to design the initiative itself, in which the problem, solutions, challenges and risks are identified, while the fifth emphasizes creativity, for example through art and social media, to ensure reaching the target audience. The sixth step calls for finding allies to strengthen the impact, and the seventh emphasizes the importance of inclusiveness through a gender and human rights orientation. The eighth step encourages ensuring personal safety, while the ninth calls for educating others and strengthening support. The tenth step advises acting according to the designed strategy for achieving change.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid.

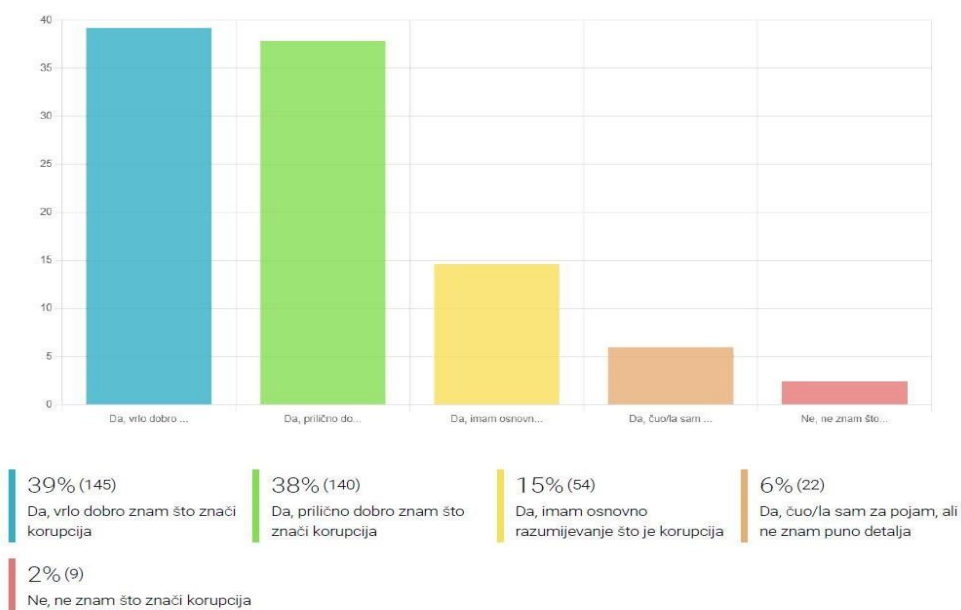
¹⁶ https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2024/August/10-steps-to-take-action-against-corruption_-for- youth-by-youth.html

ABOUT CENTRE MIKO TRIPALO'S RESEARCH AND SURVEY

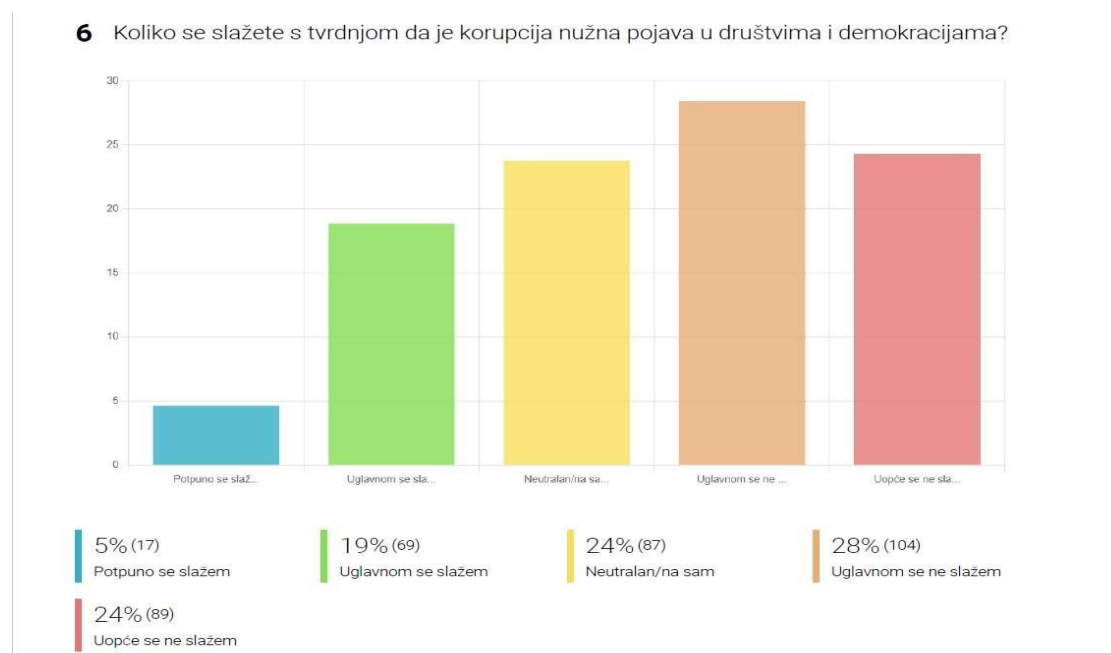
The survey conducted by Centre Miko Tripalo shows a high level of awareness of corruption among young people in the Republic of Croatia, which has great potential for preventing it. The survey was divided into three main parts. The first part, *General Data*, includes general demographic information such as age, gender, employment or student status, and place of residence, which allows the distribution of results according to the social and demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second part, *Knowledge of Corruption and Institutions*, focuses on the respondents' understanding of the concept of corruption, their perception of the causes of corruption in Croatia, and their latest assessment of the effectiveness of institutions that should address it. Special emphasis is placed on examining attitudes about the transparency of the work of Croatian institutions and the role that the media and civil society play in combating corruption. The third part, *Perception of Corruption*, explores the frequency with which respondents perceive corruption in Croatia and identifies the sectors they believe are most affected by corruption, such as politics, the economy, and the judiciary. Respondents also answer questions about their own experiences with situations they perceived as corrupt and about the acceptability of different forms of corruption.

In total 525 respondents participated in the survey which consisted of 32 questions of different types (multiple choice, rating scales, open questions). The survey was aimed at the young population in order to gain insight into what the term corruption means for young people, what behaviours it encompasses, how young people perceive corruption and whether they would use it to achieve their goals. The survey also emphasized the preventive and repressive elements that are necessary for it to be an exception as a phenomenon in Croatian society and the occurrence of corruption in the lives of young people. The aim of the survey was to raise awareness among young people about the manifestations of corruption and its harmfulness, as well as the importance of not adopting patterns of corrupt behaviour in their professional lives, in the context of the communication with the state and the public sector and in the process of conducting business.

5 Znete li što znači pojam korupcije?

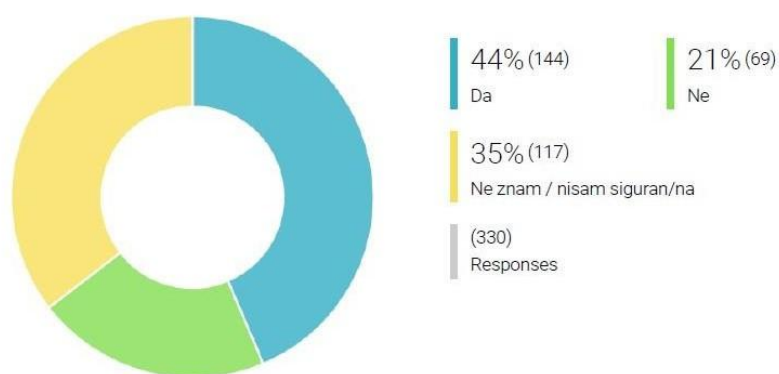


When asked about their perception of corruption, 39% of survey respondents said that they knew very well what corruption means, while 38% said that they knew fairly well what corruption means.



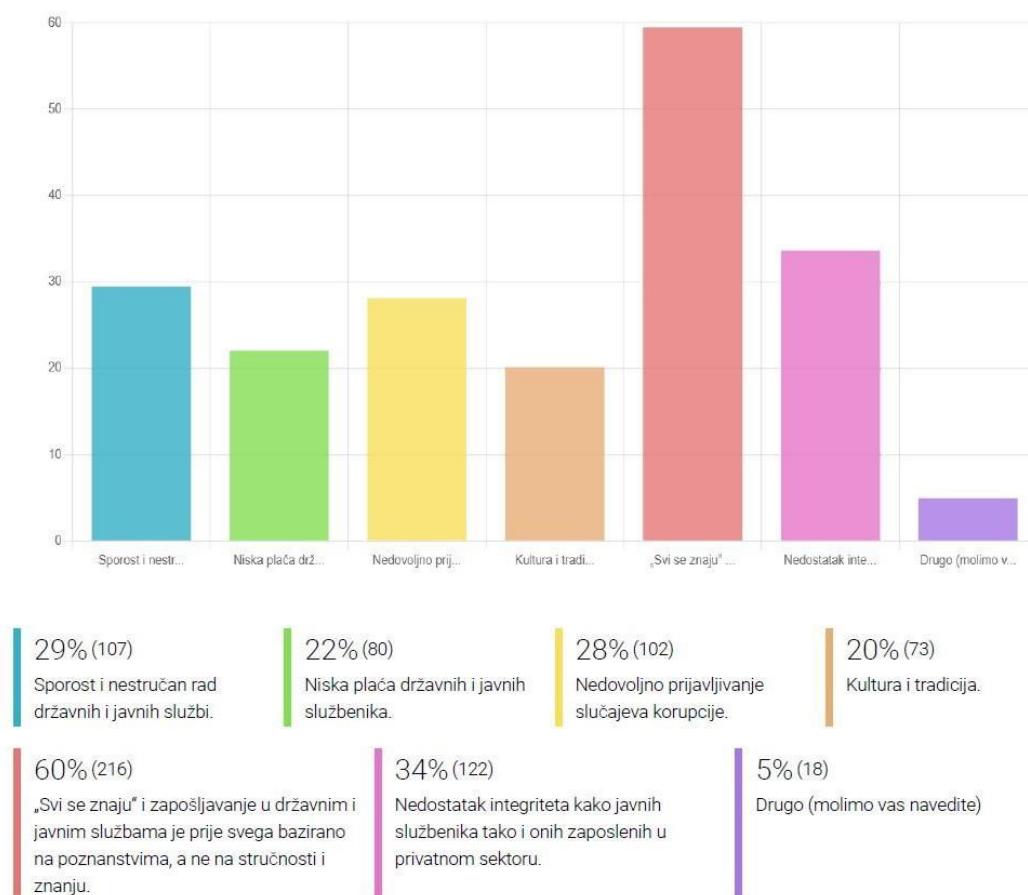
Of the respondents, 28% mostly believe that corruption is not a necessary phenomenon in societies and democracies, while 19% mostly believe that it is a necessary phenomenon. 24% do not agree at all that corruption is a necessary phenomenon, while 5% completely agree with the above statement.

17 Znete li što je sitna korupcija?



However, 44% of respondents believe they know what petty corruption is, while 21% are unfamiliar with what petty corruption is.

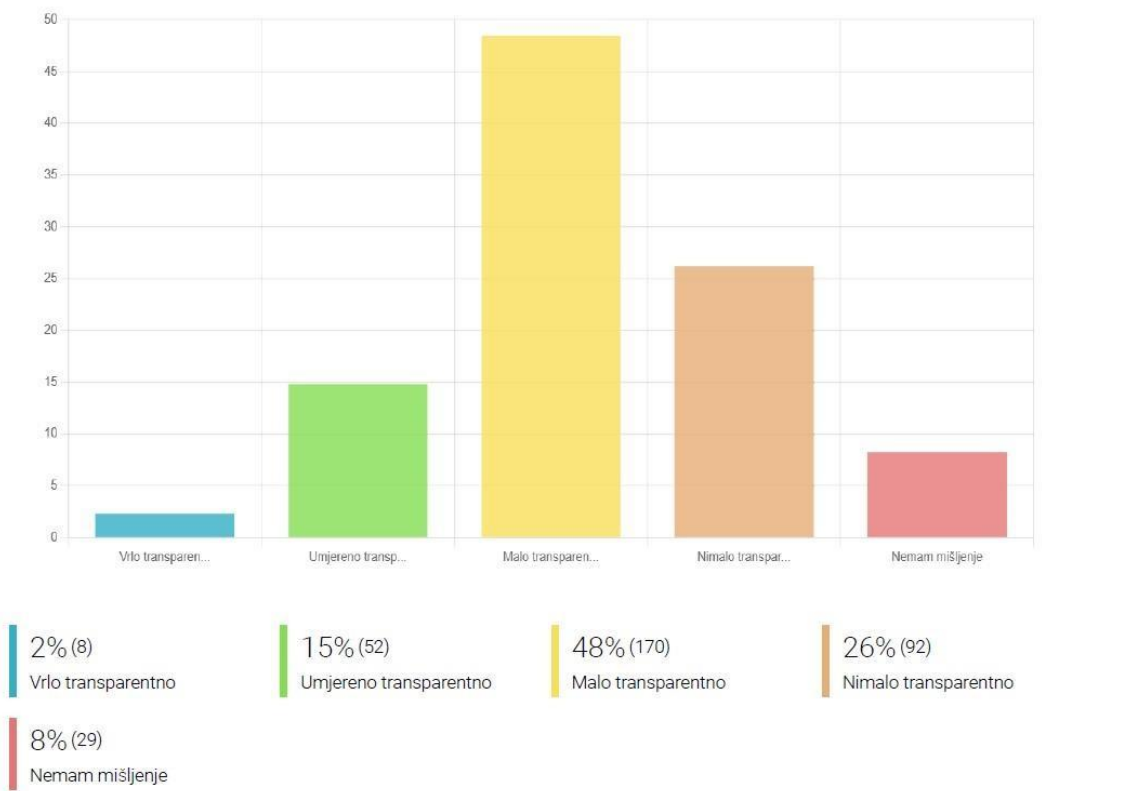
7 Što mislite da je glavni uzrok korupcije u Hrvatskoj? (Odaberite dva najznačajnija uzorka)



Of the answers offered related to identifying the most significant causes of corruption in Croatia, 60% of respondents believe that the reason for corruption is: "Everyone knows each other" and

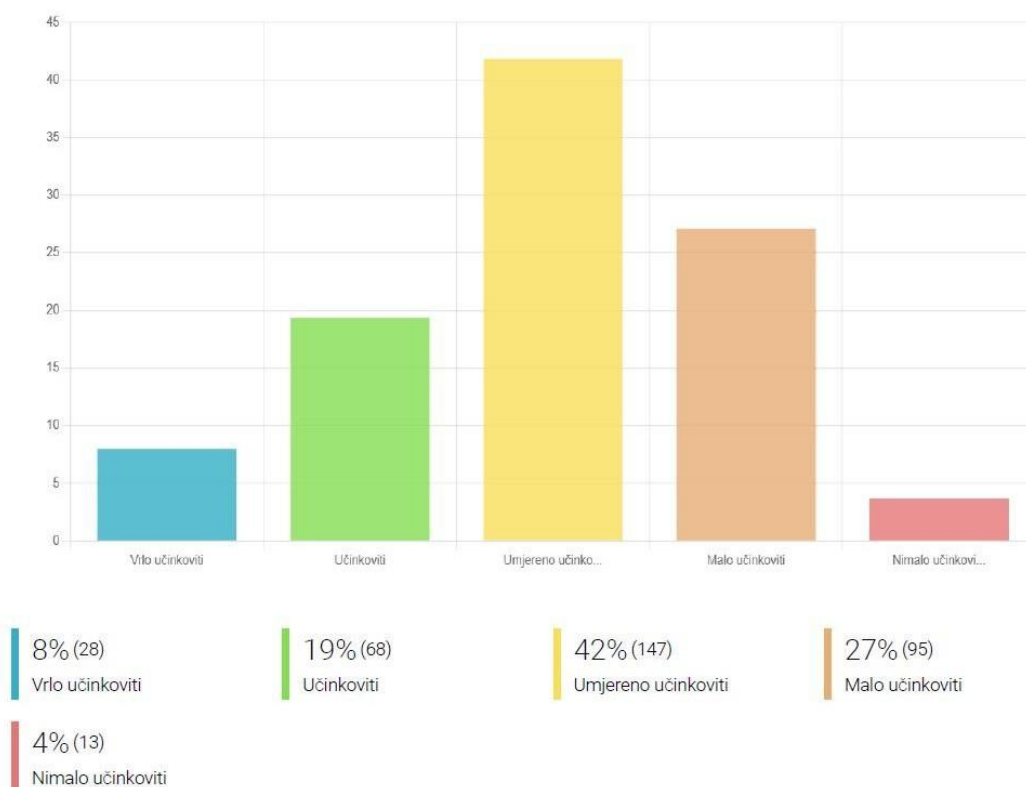
employment in state and public services is primarily based on acquaintances, and not expertise and knowledge. Moreover, 34% believe that the reason is also the lack of integrity of both public servants and those employed in the private sector.

10 Kako ocjenjujete transparentnost (otvoreno i razumljivo prikazivanje informacija o odlukama i aktivnostima koje utječu na društvo, gospodarstvo i okoliš) rada hrvatskih institucija (npr. ministarstva, Sabora, javnih bolnica, fakulteta) u borbi protiv korupcije?



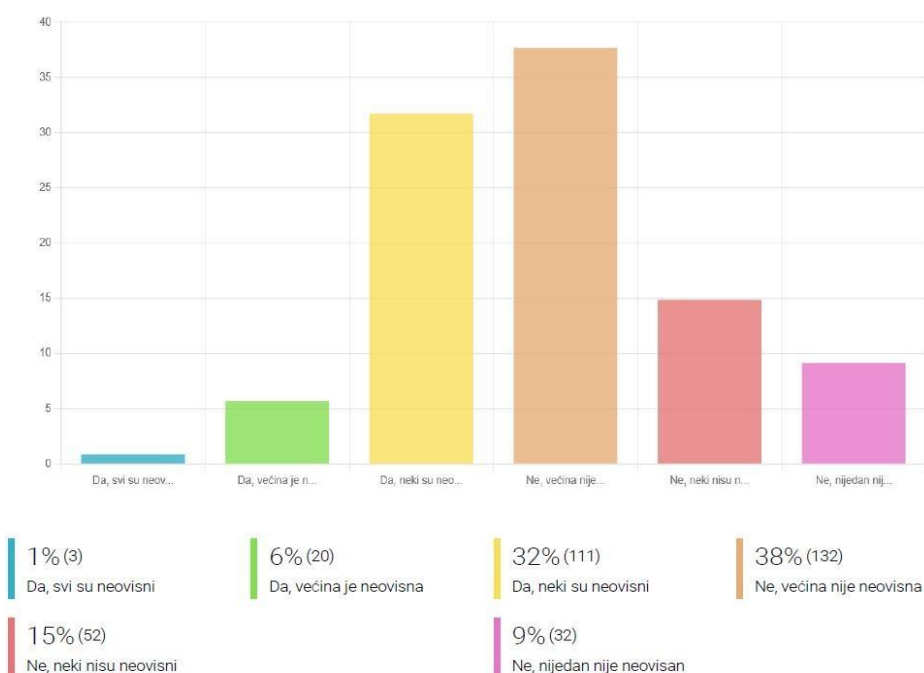
It is notable that 48% of respondents believe that the work of Croatian institutions (e.g. ministries, Parliament, public hospitals, faculties) in the fight against corruption is not transparent, and 26% believe that it is not transparent at all.

11 Koliko smatrate da su mediji u Hrvatskoj učinkoviti u otkrivanju korupcije?



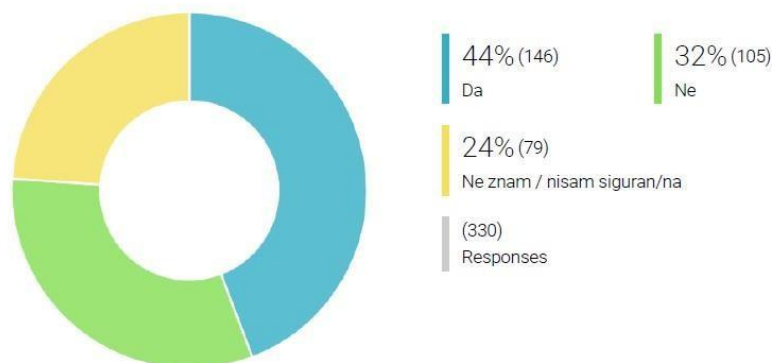
Most young people consider the media to be moderately effective in exposing corruption (42%), while 19% say it is effective and 27% consider it is slightly effective.

12 Smatrate li da su mediji u Hrvatskoj neovisni i slobodni od koruptivnog utjecaja?



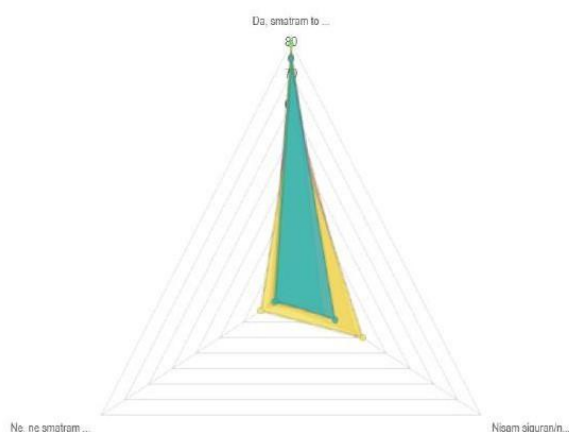
Of all respondents, 38% believe that most media are not independent and free from corrupt influence, 32% believe that some are independent, while 9% believe that no media is independent, and only 6% believe that most media are independent and free from corrupt influence.

19 Jeste li ikada osobno svjedočili slučaju korupcije?



According to the survey results, as many as 44% of young people personally witnessed an instance of corruption, 32% did not, and 24% do not know or are not sure whether they did or did not witness it.

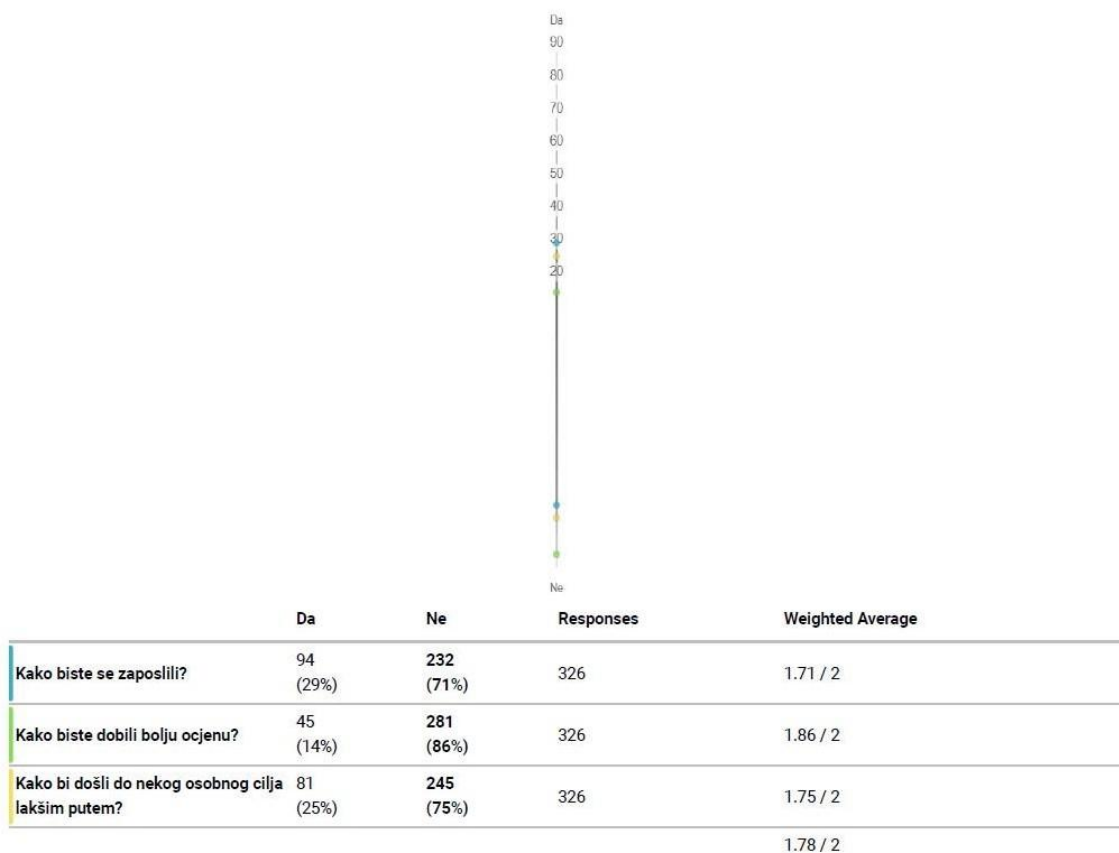
25 Ispod se nalazi niz radnji i situacija. Molimo vas da za svaku od njih navedete biste li ju smatrali/kategorizirali kao korupciju:



	Da, smatram to korupcijom	Nisam siguran/na	Ne, ne smatram to korupcijom	Responses	Weighted Average
Prihvatanje mita u zamjenu za uslugu.	245 (75%)	61 (19%)	22 (7%)	328	1.32 / 3
Namještanje natječaja za javnu nabavu.	261 (80%)	43 (13%)	24 (7%)	328	1.28 / 3
Davanje novca ili poklona liječniku za bržu ili bolju uslugu.	186 (57%)	99 (30%)	42 (13%)	327	1.56 / 3
Korištenje osobnih veza za dobivanje posla ili promaknuća.	213 (65%)	90 (27%)	25 (8%)	328	1.43 / 3
Dobivanje bolje ocjene na ispitu zbog poznanstva.	247 (75%)	61 (19%)	20 (6%)	328	1.31 / 3
Plaćanje policajcu da ne napiše kaznu.	246 (75%)	52 (16%)	30 (9%)	328	1.34 / 3
					1.37 / 3

Considering the following instances and situations, the majority of young people recognize them as corruption: accepting a bribe in exchange for a favour (75%), rigging a public procurement tender (80%), giving money or gifts to a doctor for faster or better service (57%), using personal connections to get a job or promotion (65%), getting a better grade on an exam because of an acquaintance (75%), and paying a police officer not to write a ticket (75%).

30 Ispod se nalazi niz radnji i situacija. Biste li vi bili spremni koristiti koruptivne radnje:



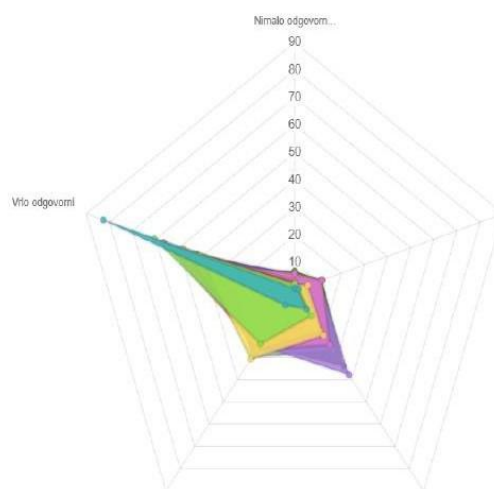
29% of respondents say that they would be willing to use corrupt practices to get a job, while 71% would not be willing to do so. 14% of respondents would be willing to use corrupt practices to get a better grade, while 86% would not be willing to do so. 25% would be willing to use

corrupt practices to achieve a personal goal in an easier way, while 75% would not be willing to do so.

Attitudes Of Young People Towards Institutions that Fight Against Corruption

According to the survey, there is a moderate level of trust among young people in the main institutions that are responsible for fighting corruption.

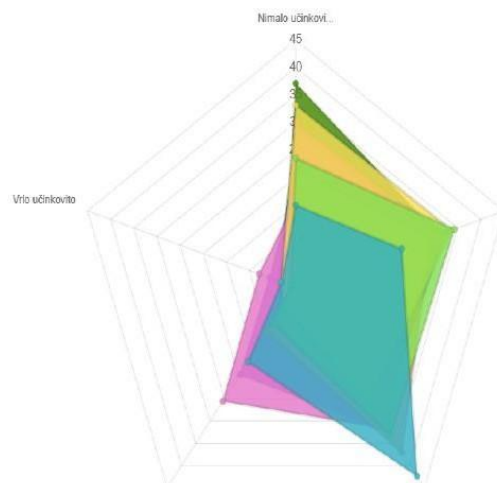
- 8** Procijenite koliko bi svaka od sljedećih institucija u teoriji idealno trebala biti odgovorna za borbu protiv korupcije svojim djelovanjem (ocijenite na ljestvici od 1 do 5, gdje 1 znači „nimalo odgovorni“, a 5 znači „vrlo odgovorni“):



	Nimalo odgovorni					Vrlo odgovorni	Responses	Weighted Average
a) USKOK (Ured za suzbijanje korupcije i organiziranog kriminaliteta)	3 (1%)	5 (1%)	30 (8%)	24 (7%)	296 (83%)		358	4.69 / 5
b) Državno odvjetništvo	8 (2%)	6 (2%)	41 (11%)	86 (24%)	216 (61%)		357	4.39 / 5
c) Policija	8 (2%)	20 (6%)	72 (20%)	110 (31%)	147 (41%)		357	4.03 / 5
d) Povjerenstvo za odlučivanje o sukobu interesa	9 (3%)	14 (4%)	65 (18%)	96 (27%)	172 (48%)		356	4.15 / 5
e) Sudovi	12 (3%)	7 (2%)	43 (12%)	93 (26%)	201 (56%)		356	4.3 / 5
f) Nezavisni mediji	22 (6%)	42 (12%)	87 (24%)	96 (27%)	109 (31%)		356	3.64 / 5
g) Civilne organizacije	18 (5%)	39 (11%)	135 (38%)	88 (25%)	76 (21%)		356	3.46 / 5
h) Obrazovne institucije	22 (6%)	32 (9%)	96 (27%)	107 (30%)	99 (28%)		356	3.64 / 5
i) Svaki građanin pojedinačno	21 (6%)	25 (7%)	85 (24%)	75 (21%)	150 (42%)		356	3.87 / 5
j) Privatni sektor	25 (7%)	42 (12%)	122 (34%)	87 (24%)	80 (22%)		356	3.44 / 5
								3.96 / 5

Young people rate the responsibility of institutions such as Office for the Suppression of Corruption and Organised Crime - USKOK (4.69/5), the State Attorney's Office (4.39/5), and the police (4.03/5) as very high in the fight against corruption.

- 9 Procijenite koliko se svaka od sljedećih institucija prema vašem mišljenju učinkovito bori protiv korupcije u Hrvatskoj (ocijenite na ljestvici od 1 do 5, gdje 1 znači „nimalo učinkovito“, a 5 znači „vrlo učinkovito“):

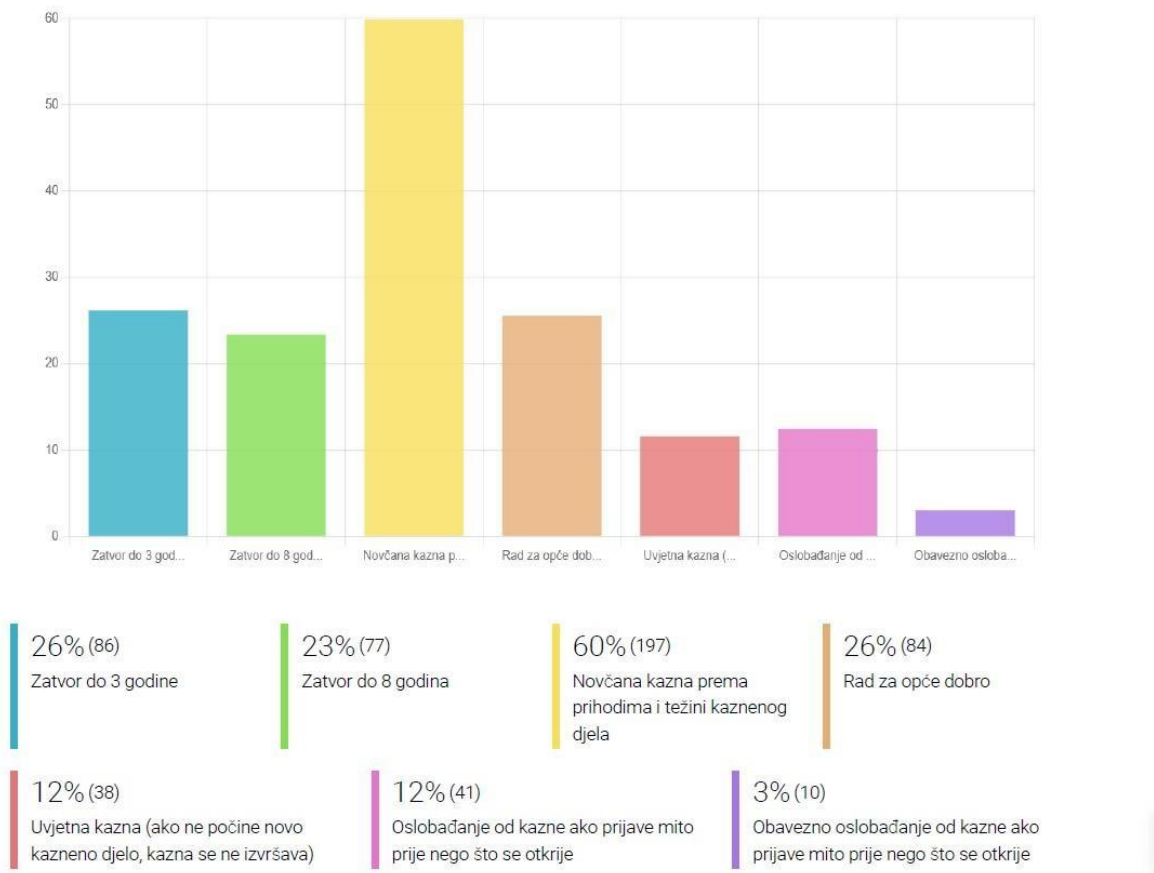


	Nimalo učinkovito					Vrlo učinkovito	Responses	Weighted Average
a) USKOK (Ured za suzbijanje korupcije i organiziranog kriminaliteta)	53 (15%)	81 (23%)	150 (42%)	59 (17%)	11 (3%)		354	2.7 / 5
b) Državno odvjetništvo	83 (24%)	121 (34%)	117 (33%)	28 (8%)	4 (1%)		353	2.29 / 5
c) Policija	117 (33%)	119 (34%)	91 (26%)	15 (4%)	11 (3%)		353	2.1 / 5
d) Povjerenstvo za odlučivanje o sukobu interesa	77 (22%)	103 (29%)	131 (37%)	35 (10%)	7 (2%)		353	2.41 / 5
e) Sudovi	106 (30%)	111 (31%)	108 (31%)	21 (6%)	7 (2%)		353	2.18 / 5
f) Nezavisni mediji	56 (16%)	67 (19%)	112 (32%)	90 (25%)	28 (8%)		353	2.91 / 5
g) Civilne organizacije	71 (20%)	78 (22%)	115 (33%)	69 (20%)	20 (6%)		353	2.69 / 5
h) Obrazovne institucije	101 (29%)	108 (31%)	108 (31%)	23 (7%)	13 (4%)		353	2.26 / 5
i) Svaki građanin pojedinačno	97 (27%)	115 (33%)	105 (30%)	22 (6%)	14 (4%)		353	2.27 / 5
j) Privatni sektor	131 (37%)	109 (31%)	93 (26%)	11 (3%)	9 (3%)		353	2.03 / 5
								2.38 / 5

However, when it comes to rating the effectiveness of these institutions, their grades are significantly lower. USKOK receives an average effectiveness rating of 2.7/5, the State

Attorney's Office 2.29/5, and the police 2.1/5. This actually shows a significant gap between what young people believe these institutions should be doing and what they believe their actual performance is. In reality, the final result of the fight against corruption, e.g. a final judgment and the confiscation of illegally obtained property, does not depend on the institutions themselves, but on the duration of court proceedings and their media presentation.¹⁷

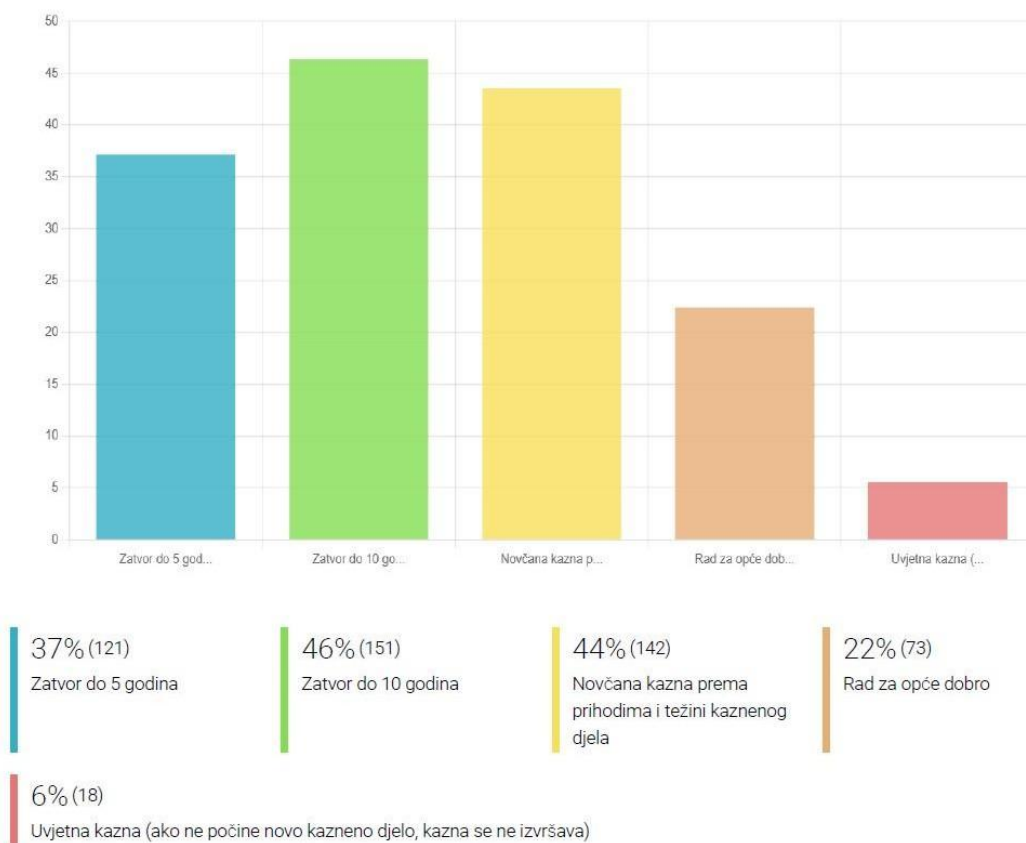
21 Koje kazne bi trebali dobiti građani koji nude, daju ili obećaju mito službenicima u Hrvatskoj?



Of those surveyed, 60% believe that citizens who offer, give or promise bribes to officials in Croatia should receive a fine based on their income and the severity of the crime, and 23% believe that the punishment should be a prison sentence of up to 8 years.

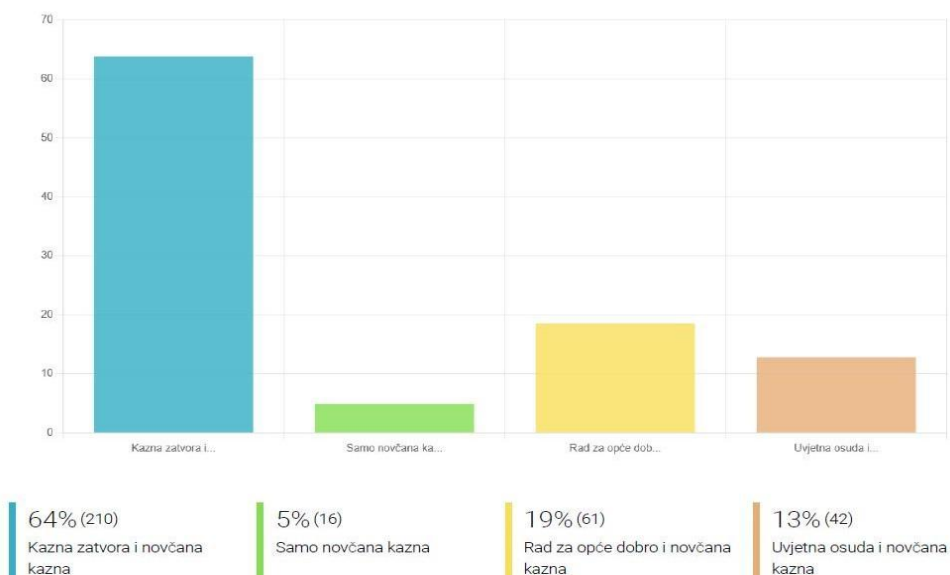
¹⁷ V. Rule of Law Report, Croatia, 2024.

22 Koje kazne bi trebali dobiti političari koji traže ili prime mito od građana u Hrvatskoj?

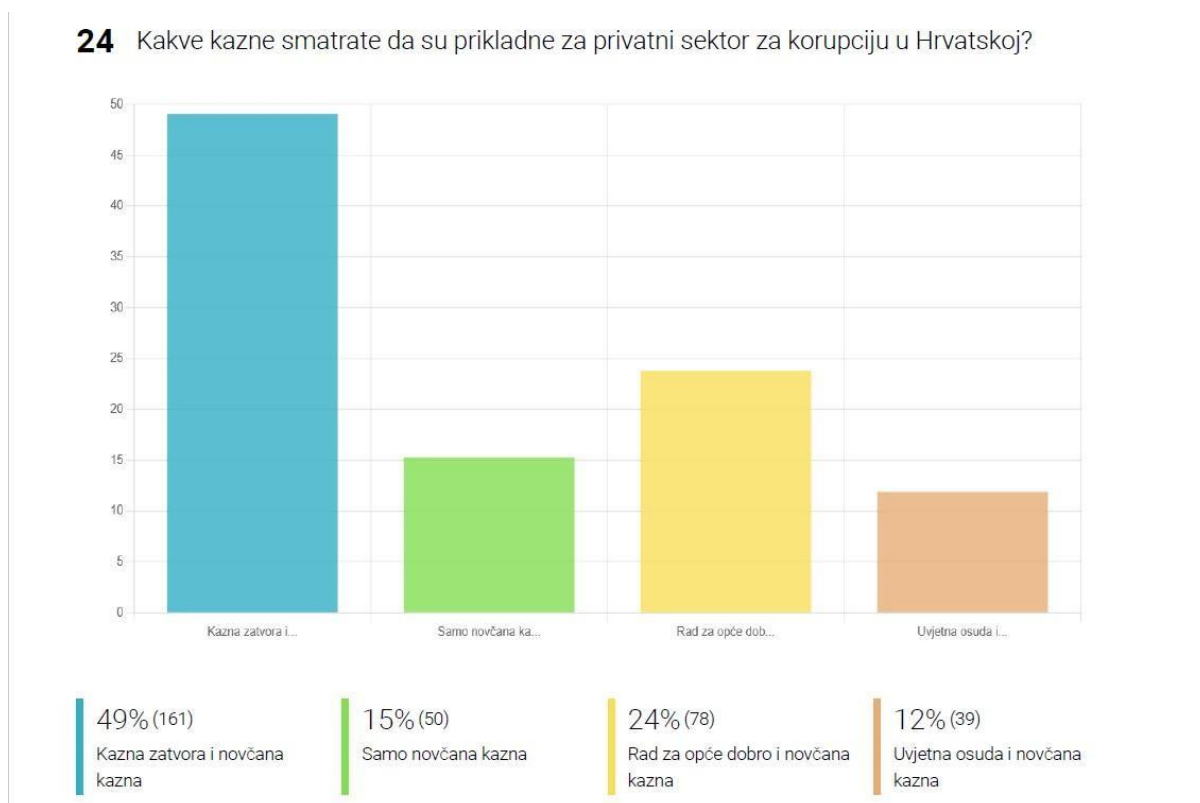


While 46% stated that the most appropriate punishment for politicians who demand or accept bribes from citizens in Croatia is imprisonment of up to 10 years, 44% believe that it should be a fine according to income and the severity of the criminal offense.

23 Kakve kazne smatrate da su prikladne za javni sektor za korupciju u Hrvatskoj?



Of all respondents, 64% believe that imprisonment and a fine are appropriate in cases of corruption in the public sector in Croatia, while 5% of respondents believe that only a fine is sufficient (19% believe that this would be community service and a fine, and 13% a suspended sentence and a fine).



Respondents also differ on what punishments they consider appropriate for the private sector in corruption cases in Croatia: 49% believe it should be a prison sentence, 15% only a fine, 24% community service and a fine, 12% a suspended sentence and a fine.

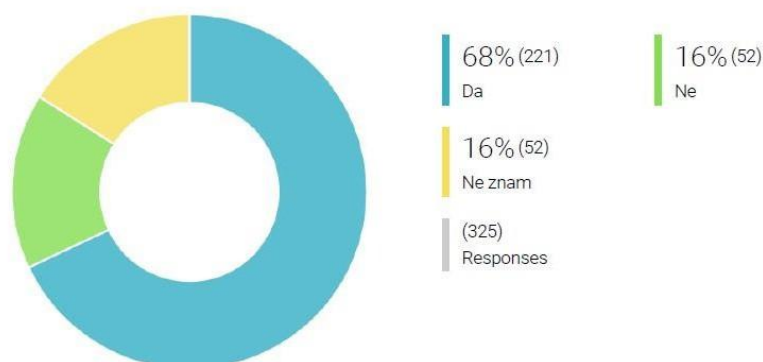
Youth and Education in the Fight Against Corruption

When it comes to young people, according to the survey by Centre Miko Tripalo, the majority, as many as 86%, believe that corruption in Croatia occurs frequently, while only 3% of respondents believe that it is a rare occurrence. On the other hand, the data also shows a high level of awareness of the widespread problem of corruption among young people. Moreover, the vast majority of young people themselves believe that a special program or education on corruption and the harmfulness of its occurrence, tailored specifically for the young population, would be useful. As many as 68% of young people support the introduction of anti-corruption education into school curricula, while 16% of them do not have a clear opinion on this. This data

additionally shows how much young people see education as a key tool in the fight against corruption.

According to the survey, 44% of respondents believe that education on corruption and its consequences is not present at all in schools and universities, 41% of them believe that it is not present enough, 9% believe that it is present to some extent, while only 2% that it is present enough. This data demonstrates the need for a change in education. On the other hand, although they recognize the importance of institutions in the fight against corruption, the trust of young people in these institutions is not particularly high. Only 8% of respondents consider the work of Croatian institutions in the fight against corruption to be very transparent, while 48% believe that it is somewhat transparent. Despite scepticism about the effectiveness of institutions, young people show a willingness to engage through education. Most of them believe that education about corruption is not sufficiently present. Although some faculties have special courses aimed at combating corrupt behaviour, these are often elective courses or are more represented in faculties with a social focus. Since the vast majority of young people will participate or are already participating in the labour market, all educational institutions should have the opportunity for their students to have access to such courses or lectures.

32 Smatrate li da anti-koruptivna edukacija treba ući u školske kurikule i postati dio obveznih predmeta na fakultetima?



As many as 68% of young people in the survey support and consider it important to include anti-corruption education in school curricula. As previously stated, in this survey, the majority of respondents do not believe that education about corruption and its consequences is adequately present, which is data that calls for a change in the field of education, and which, considering the specificities inherent in Croatia, can also be based on the aforementioned educational materials.

COMPARISON OF OTHER RESEARCH AND THE SURVEY BY THE MIKO TRIPALO CENTRE

Perception of Corruption Among Young People and the General Population

The views of the general population and young people on corruption and anti-corruption bodies show similarities, but also key differences, especially when analysing the figures from the Eurobarometer survey and the recent Centre Miko Tripalo's youth survey in Croatia. Both the general public and young people recognise the seriousness of the problem, but young people emphasise education as a key tool in the fight against corruption, while the general EU population places greater emphasis on the current weaknesses of institutions. The UN Convention against Corruption states that each State Party shall endeavour to establish, maintain and strengthen systems for the recruitment, employment, retention, promotion and retirement of civil servants which, promote such education and training programmes, as will enable them to meet the requirements of the correct, honest and proper performance of public service and which will provide them with specialized and appropriate training to raise their awareness of the risks of corruption inherent in the performance of their duties. Such programmes may refer to codes and standards of conduct in applicable fields.¹⁸

In Croatia, where the perception of corruption according to the Eurobarometer is 92% and according to the survey by Centre Miko Tripalo, 86% of young people believe that corruption occurs frequently. On the other hand, 93% of young people said that it is not a necessary phenomenon in democratic societies, which indicates that there is a great potential in future generations for corruption not to be accepted as part of the "normal conduct of business or obtaining public services." In the general population, similar patterns emerge. The Eurobarometer survey shows that Croatian citizens have a high awareness of corruption in state institutions, with 90% of citizens believing that corruption exists in national institutions, and 91% in local institutions. Similar to young people, the general population shows doubts about the effectiveness of institutions. A large proportion of respondents doubts that enough cases of corruption are being sanctioned.

It is interesting to note that young people are more pessimistic about certain institutions compared to the general population. For example, trust in the police and the judicial system among young people is lower than in the general population. However, the general population also expresses concern that political and business connections encourage corruption, with a large number of

¹⁸ Article 7 of https://www.unodc.org/documents/brussels/UN_Convention_Against_Corruption.pdf and in NN 2/2005

citizens believing that politicians and the business sector are key sources of corruption. It is worrying if trust in the police and the justice system among young people is lower than in the general population, as this may be an indication that younger people are less likely to decide to report corruption to the competent authorities and have less faith in the favorable outcome of official actions related to the occurrence of corruption. It is precisely young people who should act in the opposite way, be more sensitive to the occurrence of corruption and not adopt it as a standard pattern of behaviour if they encounter it in their (business) environment.

The General EU Population and Youth and Institutional Weaknesses

In the Eurobarometer survey, it can be noted that 62% of EU citizens believe that corruption is present in their countries, while only 36% believe that their country's efforts to fight corruption are effective. The general EU population also recognises personal connections and acquaintances as a key factor in public sector employment (60%), while 59% of EU citizens consider slow and incompetent public services to be the main cause of corruption.

Personal experiences with corruption also vary, with 44% of young people from Croatia having witnessed corruption, while in the Eurobarometer 26% of EU citizens stated that they had been directly affected by corruption. Both the Eurobarometer survey and Centre Miko Tripalo's survey recognise the important role of the media and civil society organizations in the fight against corruption. The Eurobarometer indicates concerns about the independence of the media in the EU, and young people in Croatia also tend to distrust the independence of the media, reflecting their perception that the media is often under corrupt influence.

Young people believe that introducing anti-corruption content into schools is very important for future generations. However, it is also necessary to encourage young people to participate in public campaigns or organize activities aimed at combating corruption, since 85% of them have not participated in such activities so far. A more active and engaged approach of young people in developing integrity and in activities of civil society is needed to strengthen the fight against corruption.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CENTRE MIKO TRIPALO

In accordance with Article 13 of the UN Convention against Corruption, each State Party shall take appropriate measures to promote the active participation of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, in preventing and combating corruption, and to raise public awareness of the existence, causes and gravity of, and the threat posed by, corruption. Such participation should be strengthened by measures such as:

- (a) promoting public input into and increasing the transparency of decision-making processes;
- (b) ensuring effective public access to information;
- (c) undertaking public information activities that contribute to non-tolerance of corruption, as well as public education programmes, including school and university curricula;
- (d) respecting, promoting and protecting the freedom to seek, receive, publish and impart information concerning corruption; this freedom may be subject to certain limitations, but these may only be such as are provided for by law and are necessary for: (i) respect for the rights or reputations of others; (ii) protection of national security or public order, or public health or morals.¹⁹

Development of the Anti-Corruption Educational Module in Croatia

Although both youth and the general population recognize the seriousness of corruption as a problem, young people in Croatia emphasize education as key to the future fight against corruption, while the general population focuses on institutional weaknesses. Prevention and anti-corruption efforts are the key when it comes to young people, as is the development of their creative potential through various anti-corruption activities, which are at least partly organized by young people.

Both young people and the general population in Croatia have similar perceptions of the prevalence of corruption, with young people showing a greater tendency to distrust the effectiveness of institutions. Both groups recognize that politicians, the judiciary and the police are among the sectors most affected by corruption. Although there is a consensus that institutions such as USKOK should play a key role in the repressive fight against (high) corruption, trust in their actual performance is lower than the perceived importance of their role. USKOK receives an average efficiency rating of 2.7/5, the State Attorney's Office 2.29/5, and the police 2.1/5.

¹⁹ https://www.unodc.org/documents/brussels/UN_Convention_Against_Corruption.pdf and NN 2/2025

These results are interesting, as is the relative mistrust they express in the independence of the media, which play a very important role precisely in uncovering corruption. The percentage of respondents who stated that they would participate in certain corrupt activities, if necessary, should be highlighted. The perception of different punishment of citizens who offer bribes and those who accept it also deserves further analysis, but it also points in the direction of actors who, according to young people, have the main responsibility to lead by example.

The study *The Impacts of Corruption on Young People and Their Role in Preventing Corruption*,²⁰ point out that young people are vulnerable to multiple forms of corruption that can lead to serious negative impacts that span the social, economic and political dimensions of their lives. Anti-corruption measures can consciously seek to inform young people about the effects of corruption and engage them through activism, innovation and social responsibility initiatives. An important enabling condition is that national stakeholders provide meaningful opportunities for youth participation. This is precisely what this survey sought to highlight by raising questions that lead to youth awareness of the phenomenology and prevention of corrupt behaviour.

The importance of anti-corruption education for young people is also highlighted in the 2017 Council of Europe Resolution on Youth and Corruption. The Assembly further encouraged the European Commission to support, through the Erasmus+ programme, initiatives to establish anti-corruption studies at university, postgraduate and lifelong learning levels within national education systems and to support anti-corruption projects by national and international youth associations, in particular by creating platforms for the fight against corruption.²¹ In Croatia, as previously noted, 68% of respondents to Centre Miko Tripalo's survey believe that anti-corruption education should be included in school curricula and become a compulsory subject at universities.

The data indicating the passivity of young people in terms of participation in anti-corruption activities is worrying, and it is necessary to strengthen the role of young people as active citizens. The potential for activating young people is evident from the data that shows that only 15% of the respondents participated in some kind of activity against corruption. Participation of young people as future generations in public life is crucial, as is awareness of their responsibility for the overall functioning of society

²⁰ Bergin J. (TI), https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/kproducts/The-impacts-of-corruption-on- young-people-and-their-role-in-preventing-corruption-U4-Helpdesk_FinalDraft.pdf

²¹ Here we also refer to [Youth Action Plan - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#) - Youth Action Plan (YAP) in the European Union's external action for 2022-2027, the first political framework for a strategic partnership with young people around the world.

CONCLUSION

Youth engagement in the fight against corruption is becoming an increasingly important factor in global efforts to build more just and transparent societies. The involvement of young people not only brings fresh perspectives, but also provides innovative solutions that can significantly advance anti-corruption efforts,²² as the conducted survey and the project show. However, another conclusion is that a campaign is needed aimed at encouraging young people to design and propose, as well as to participate in anti-corruption activities in order to foster the importance of integrity in all their future professions and behaviours as citizens of Croatia and the EU. At the same time, it is necessary to propose to legislators and policy makers to introduce mandatory anti-corruption content in secondary schools, both vocational and grammar schools, and a mandatory common anti-corruption module for university and college programs.

²² icac.org.hk, 2023.: icac.org.hk (2023) POLICY GUIDE FOR NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITIES ON MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK;
https://www.icac.org.hk/icac/myeguide/pdf/policy_guide_full.pdf Accessed September 29, 2024.