

PEOPLE FEEL THAT THE OF CORRUPTION CLIMATE IS INTENSIFYING

The majority of people living in a selection of 14 Eastern- and Central-European countries do not consider bribes as a natural and ordinary part of living in their societies. In the Czech Republic, however, corruption is considered a natural and commonplace phenomenon by more than three fifths of the population.

This emerged from an iterative international survey on corruption climate conducted at the turn of the year 2005 by GfK Praha. The survey covered a selection of 14 countries of Central and Eastern Europe – Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Rumania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Ukraine.

The research was conducted as Face-to-Face interviewing in households. The sum total of interviews carried out in the 14 countries was 15,270. In each country, 1,000 respondents were interviewed, with the exception of Russia, where the number was twice as high. Each country's interviewing sample was set up so as to represent its population.

Main Research Results

1. WHO TAKES AND WHO GIVES?

Corruption Pressure and Spread

Pořadí země	Země	Hodnocení CPI 2003	Hodnocení CPI 2005
10.	Rakousko	8	8,7
27.	Estonsko	5,5	6,4
31.	Slovinsko	5,9	6,1
40.	Maďarsko	4,8	5
44.	Litva	4,7	4,8
47.	Česká republika	3,9	4,3
47.	Slovensko	3,7	4,3
55.	Bulharsko	3,9	4
70.	Chorvatsko	3,7	3,4
70.	Polsko	3,6	3,4
85.	Rumunsko	2,8	3
97.	Srbsko a Černá Hora	2,3	2,8
107.	Ukrajina	2,3	2,6
126.	Rusko	2,7	2,4

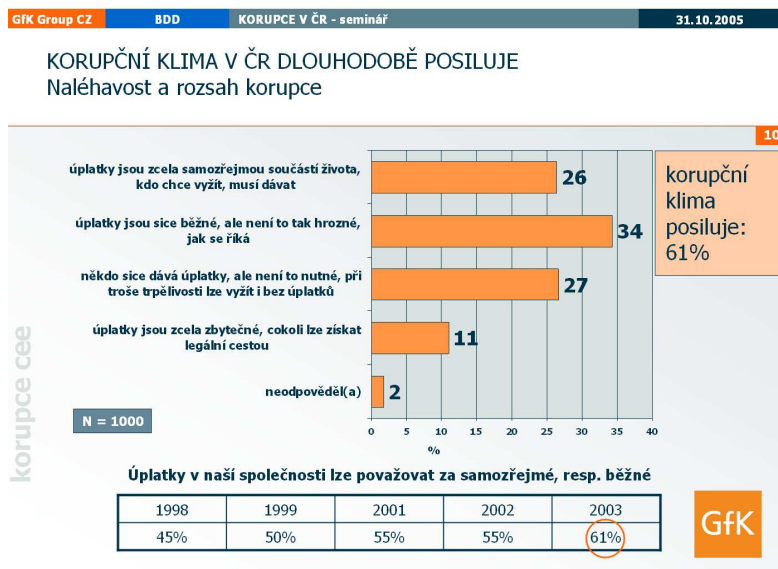
The scale of corruption in the region under scrutiny, i.e. Central and Eastern Europe, is – in accordance with the ratings obtained for the Corruption Perception Index (CPI)¹ – medium-to-very high.

The ratings range from 8.7 to 2.4 – the highest rated (best) country is Austria whereas the worst CPI ratings were attained Russia, closely followed by Ukraine.

¹ Corruption Perception Index – captures the levels of corruption, as perceived by representatives of the business community, analysts, and university and college personnel. The index ranges between 0 and 10, where 0 indicates absolute corruption, and 10 stands for a country practically clean of corruption.

According to the GfK survey, the majority of the population of the investigated region does not consider bribes as a natural and ordinary part of their societies. More than a half of these countries' populations (57%) believe that bribes are not necessary and, with a bit of patience, you can make do without them, or even that they are totally unnecessary. Bribes are totally unnecessary by the opinion of more than a quarter of those interviewed (26%) – in their opinion, everything can be obtained legally. This means that - in contrast to the corruption rates perceived by entrepreneurs, government clerks, and other professionals directly involved – ordinary citizens are more optimistic and consider the situation less alarming, as indicated by the CPI results.

Within the region, there are significant variations of the perception of how much insistent and commonplace corruption is. The population that is most likely to consider bribes natural or commonplace are Slovaks (67%).



commonplace are Slovaks (67%). The Czech Republic is second, where such opinion is espoused by more than two thirds of the population (61%). Both of these countries highly exceed the average regional level which is at 41%. Only about one tenth of the Czech population (11%) consider bribing totally unnecessary. It is the citizens of CR under 29 years of age and those older than 60, who are most convinced that everything can be achieved legally, without bribing.

Another country, where more than a half of the interviewees (52%) consider bribing natural or common practice, is Ukraine. The lowest corruption levels of corruption ubiquitousness were measured in Slovenia. Estonia, Poland, and Austria.

Personal Bribing Experience

Most of the population in the region (60%) categorically distanced themselves from corruption attitudes, this part of the respondents declared that they had never given any bribe.

In the Czech Republic, the proportion of inhabitants who indicated that they never gave a bribe is 58%. More than a third of the Czech population (36%) did admit they had given a bribe. More than a quarter

(28%) said that their experience with bribes is only sporadic, and 8% of the interviewees declared their readiness to give out bribes.

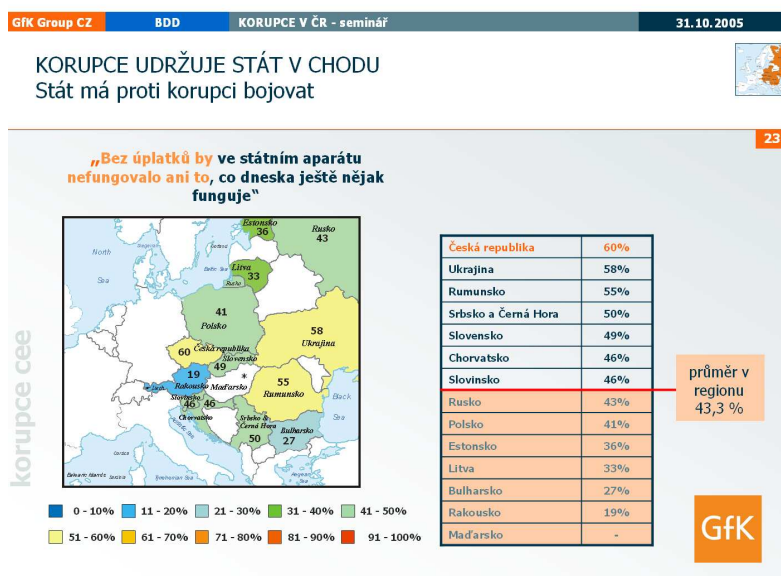
The level of disposition to give bribes varies across the region. The highest level of readiness to give bribes was indicated by the population of Lithuania, Rumania, and Ukraine. In contrast, bribing is met by disapproval from the people in Slovenia, Croatia, Poland, Austria and Bulgaria.

The Most Corrupt Environment

According to citizens of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the environment that is most often perceived as the most corrupt is the health service (22%). The runners up among corruption-ridden areas are government agencies and the judiciary. In eight out of the fourteen states under investigation, it is the health service which most of the respondents consider the most corrupting. In the Czech Republic, the sector which respondents are most likely to associate with corruption is government agencies. The proportion of interviewees who are convinced about corruption presence in this field has almost doubled since 2001 (from 20% to 37%).

2. WHO IS TO BLAME?

Who Shall Fight Corruption?



The inhabitants of the countries of the region assess the problem of government administrations' corruption very critically. Most of them assume that they live in a corrupted state, while having the feeling that their country does not want to do anything with it. It is a paradox, to a certain extent, that whereas most of the population of the region declared their negative feelings towards bribing, claimed that they did not give bribes, they still have the feeling that their state is corrupted. Approximately four out of every individual in the region (79%) consider

their country as corrupt. With the exception of Austria, the feeling that prevails among the rest of the

population of Central and Eastern Europe is that they live in a corrupt country. The Czech Republic is considered corrupt by 64% of its population. This places the Czech Republic **below the regional average**, which is at 79%. On the other hand, three of every five Czechs (60%) share the opinion that corruption is a part of the state administration and its agencies and that, without bribes even the government sectors that are still in working order would come to a standstill – this rate is the highest in the region. And the share of Czechs convinced that corrupt government officers and businessmen form an intertwined network supporting mutually each other is stands at eight of every ten of them.

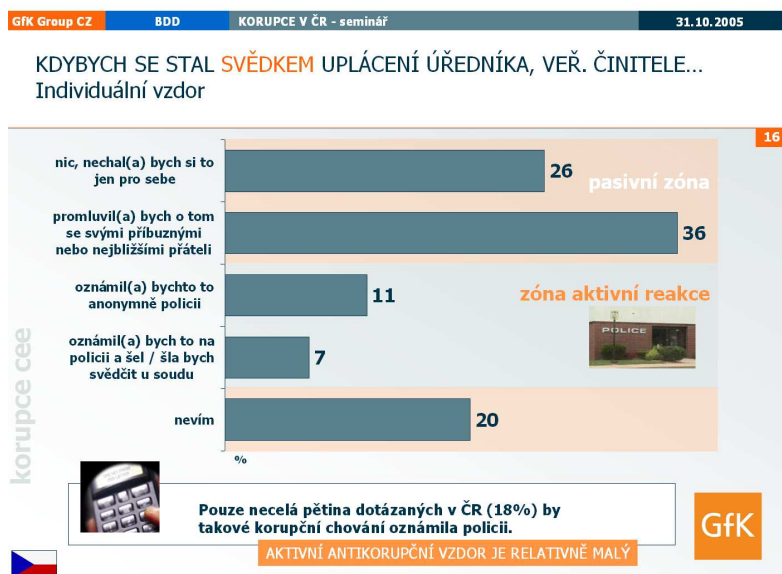
Despite the fact that most of the people believe that they live in a corrupt state, they rely on the corrupt state to fight corruption and resolve all the corruption-related problems by itself. The opinion that it should be the state and not its citizens who should fight corruption and bribery was shared more than four fifths of the people interviewed in Central and Eastern Europe (82%). The proportion of Czechs, basically relying on their state to lead the anti-corruption efforts (81%), is comparable to the regional average rating.

3. SILENCE PAYS OFF

The Struggle against Corruption

Whether we are talking about active or collective resistance, the extent of anti-corruption efforts undertaken by ordinary citizens is relatively low. If respondents were confronted with a corruption-

related situation and witnessed a person or a private company bribing a state employee or a public official, only 16% of the population of the region would handle the situation with the help of the police. In the Czech Republic, the proportion of citizens who would, in such a case, react actively and report this incident to the police, is 18%. The highest level of individual resistance against corruption was recorded in Slovenia, Austria, and Croatia. The lowest 'courage' was displayed by the inhabitants of Ukraine.



The willingness to join a group action against corruption-related attitudes of state administration clerks and public officials, for instance by participating in a street demonstration is higher compared to

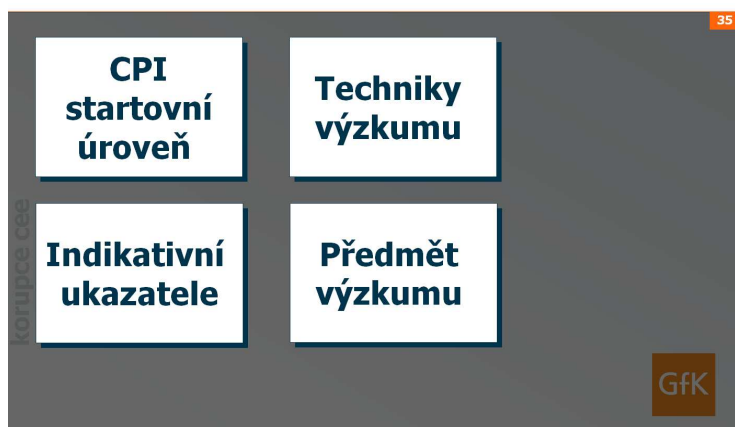
individual initiative. In the surveyed countries, 37% of the population was willing to support the fight against corruption by joining a street demonstration. In spite of this positive result, a prevailing part of the people would not get involved even in such an activity. In this respect, the most active populations live in Bulgaria, Rumania, and Serbia and Montenegro. The least willing to mobilize against corruption were the citizens of Austria, Hungary, and Slovenia. In the Czech Republic, the proportion of respondents willing to engage in a group initiative against corruption reached 34% or roughly one third of the total.

4. RESEARCH POTENTIAL

Research Is Replacing Statistics

The results provided by the research above show us exclusively the **perception** of the corruption by the population (in other surveys it is the perception of other specific target groups – entrepreneurs, the professionals involved, political representatives etc.) 'Hard' data, such as the number of those convicted for bribery, malfeasance etc., do not capture of corruption in a statistically plausible manner, nor do they map the incidence of corruption in its entirety.

Kontinuální inovace v měření vnímání korupce



The limited explanatory power of 'hard' data refers us to a setting where corruption perception research provides some of the most reliable data so far. In spite of that, even the latter does not render an accurate picture, as it is influenced by factors such as media's attention to the topic or current corruption-related cases. This is why corruption measurement includes other more sophisticated interviewing techniques allowing a more accurate insight into the phenomenon coupled with alternative

indicators focused on secondary corruption symptoms such as the rate and methods of public funds' redistribution, legislative process parameters, tax evasion, or the implementation of anti-corruption tools in the operations of the administration and government agencies.

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