

Cyprus climbs 8 places in Corruption Perception Index

GEORGE PAPANICOLAOU

At about the same time last year we criticized the fact that Cyprus ranked 39th in the 2007 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, a reduction of 12 places since 2003 when it ranked 27th in the TI Corruption Perceptions Index.

However, in the 2008 survey, Cyprus ranked 31st and its score climbed from 5.3 in 2007 to 6.4.

The annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), first released in 1995, is the best known of Transparency International tools. It has been widely credited with putting TI and the issue of corruption on the international policy agenda.

The Index ranks 180 countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians. It is a composite index, a poll of polls, drawing on corruption-related data from expert and business surveys carried out by a variety of independent and reputable institutions. The CPI reflects views from around the world, including those of experts who are living in the countries evaluated

Change between 2007 and 2008

Cyprus was one of the countries that improved most from 2007 to 2008, including Albania, Bahrain, Benin, Dominica, Georgia, Indonesia, Jordan, Mauritius, Nigeria, Oman, Poland, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Korea, Tonga and Turkey.

On the contrary, examples of deteriorations from CPI 2007 to CPI 2008 are Bulgaria, Burundi, Finland, France, Italy, Macao, Maldives, Norway, Portugal, Somalia, Timor-Leste and United Kingdom. In these cases, actual changes in perceptions occurred during the last two years

Latvia is ranked 52nd, Italy is

55th, Greece 57th, Turkey 58th, Romania 70th and Bulgaria 72nd. At the bottom of the table are Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, Myanmar and Somalia.

What is corruption?

The TI CPI focuses on corruption in the public sector and defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain.

The surveys used in compiling the CPI ask questions that relate to the misuse of public power for private benefit, for example bribery of public officials, kickbacks in public procurement, embezzlement of public funds or questions that probe the strength of anti-corruption policies, thereby encompassing both administrative and political corruption.

The CPI 2008 has drawn on 13 different polls and surveys from 11 independent institutions. To qualify, the data must be well documented and sufficient to permit a judgment on its reliability.

All sources must provide a ranking of nations and must measure the overall extent of corruption.

This condition excludes surveys which mix corruption with other issues, such as political instability, decentralization or nationalism.

How should the CPI scores be interpreted?

A country or territory's CPI Score indicates the degree of public sector corruption as perceived by business people and country analysts, and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt).

While ranking countries enables TI to build an index, a country's score is a much more important indication of the perceived level of corruption in a country. A country's rank can change simply because new countries enter the index or others drop out.

Rank	Country	2008 CPI score
1	Denmark	9.3
1	Sweden	9.3
1	New Zealand	9.3
4	Singapore	9.2
5	Finland	9.0
5	Switzerland	9.0
7	Iceland	8.9
7	Netherlands	8.9
9	Australia	8.7
9	Canada	8.7
11	Luxembourg	8.3
12	Austria	8.1
12	Hong Kong	8.1
14	Germany	7.9
14	Norway	7.9
16	Ireland	7.7
16	United Kingdom	7.7
18	USA	7.3
18	Japan	7.3
18	Belgium	7.3
21	Saint Lucia	7.1
22	Barbados	7.0
23	France	6.9
23	Chile	6.9
23	Uruguay	6.9
26	Slovenia	6.7
27	Estonia	6.6
28	Spain	6.5
28	Qatar	6.5
28	St Vincent and the Grenadines	6.5
31	Cyprus	6.4
32	Portugal	6.1
33	Israel	6.0
33	Dominica	6.0
35	U.A.E.	5.9
36	Botswana	5.8
36	Puerto Rico	5.8
36	Malta	5.8
39	Taiwan	5.7
40	South Korea	5.6
41	Mauritius	5.5
41	Oman	5.5
43	Macao	5.4
43	Bahrain	5.4
45	Bhutan	5.2
45	Czech Republic	5.2
47	Malaysia	5.1
47	Costa Rica	5.1
47	Hungary	5.1
47	Jordan	5.1
47	Cape Verde	5.1
52	Slovakia	5.0
52	Latvia	5.0
54	South Africa	4.9
55	Seychelles	4.8
55	Italy	4.8
57	Greece	4.7
58	Turkey	4.6
58	Lithuania	4.6
58	Poland	4.6

Source: Transparency International

George Papanicolaou (MICA) is Managing Director of GP Global Ltd