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Invisible Reforms

According to this year's CPI, BiH has not demonstrated progress in combating corruption, taking the 93-98th position on the global list

Berlin/Banja Luka, 6 November 2006 — The 2006 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), the most representative global survey of corruption, charts levels of corruption in 163 countries, and has included Bosnia and Herzegovina for the fourth time. The Index ranks countries from the least to the most corrupt, based on the score that every country is given on a scale of 10 (highly clean) to 0 (absolutely corrupt) on the basis of relevant surveys that the Index is comprised of.

Over the last three years, BiH's rating on the CPI list has been on the continuing decline and the country ultimately finished with a score of 2.9 sharing 88-96th place, thus ranking among the most corrupt and underdeveloped countries in Europe. This year, BiH shares 93-98th place with Argentina, Armenia, Eritrea, Syria and Tanzania, maintaining the score at 2.9, which indicates that the decline on the list is only nominal due to a larger number of countries included in this year's CPI.

"Although the decline on the scale has been finally halted, the result of this year's CPI is disappointing, and the principal cause for this lies in lack of political will among those in power in BiH to fight corruption", stressed Boris Divjak, Chairman of the TI BiH's Board of Directors and member of the International Board of Directors of TI, at the presentation of 2006 CPI in Banja Luka. "Without clearly articulated will on the part of the government in the form of a viable and comprehensive national anticorruption strategy, we will soon find ourselves at the very bottom of the list", Divjak concluded.

The surveys carried out over the last year indicate that the major barrier to effective anticorruption combat is existence of corruption among the highest ranking officials and very strong "state capture" effect, that is, undue influence of powerful oligarchs and criminal groups on the government. Year after year, according to all relevant surveys, political parties represent the most corrupt segment of society as they still make illegal gain draining huge amounts of resources from state-owned companies and abusing of the privatisation process. Public prosecutor's offices and the judiciary in BiH, despite extensive reform, have not proved effective in prosecuting cases of corruption, and constitute the crux of the problem along with the police and law enforcement agencies, which act as strong exponents of partisan interests, rather than institutions whose work is based on the principles of law.

When compared to other countries in the region, BiH is lagging even behind the neighbouring countries. This year, Croatia has ranked 69th and maintained the score of 3.4, while Serbia, which experiences a steady increase year after year, outran BiH and is now ranked 90th with the score of 3.0, which constitutes a visible improvement.