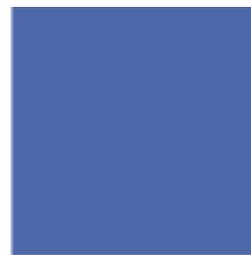
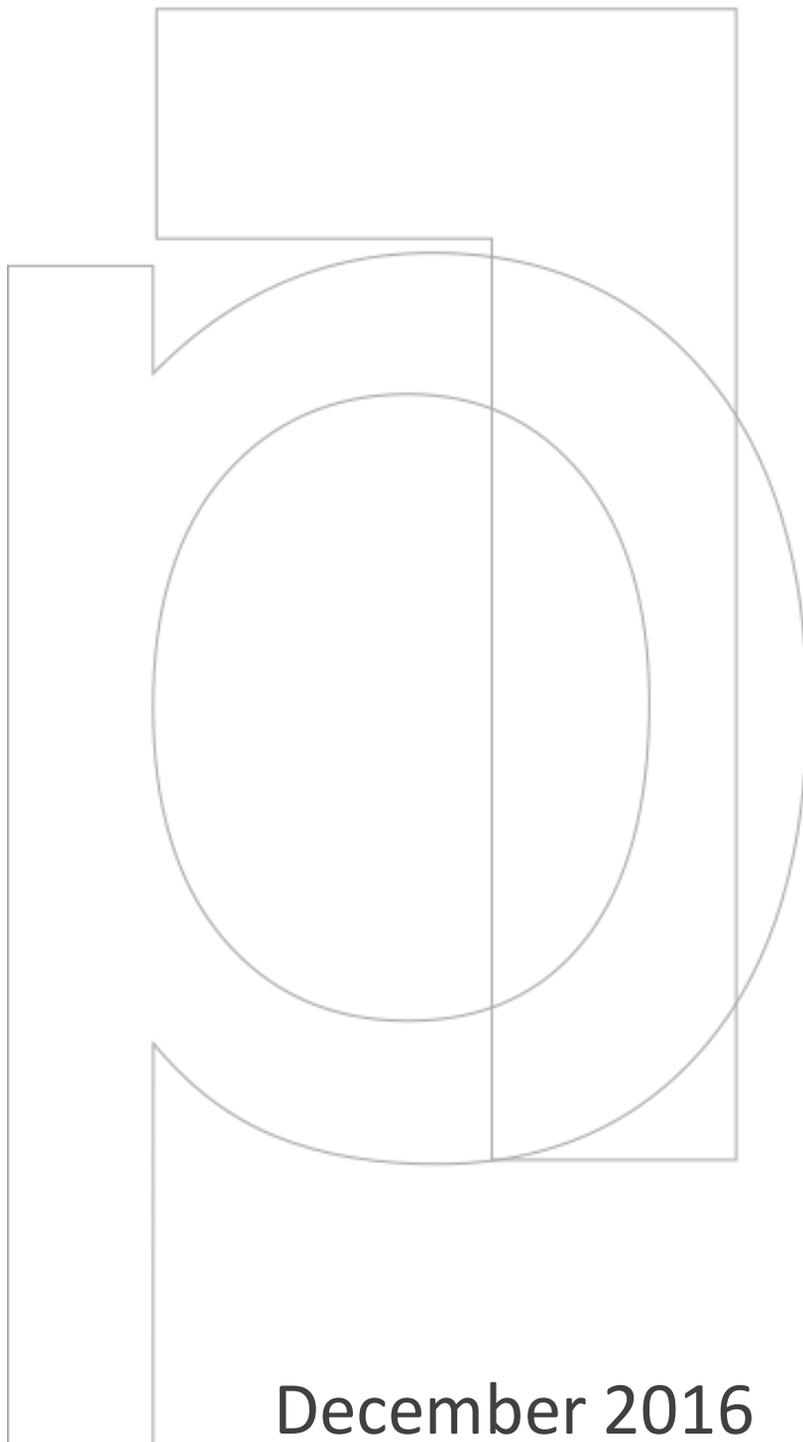


# public issue



**Public opinion,  
attitudes and  
experiences with  
corruption in Greece**

**Main findings**



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# Public Opinion and Experiences with Corruption

## Introduction

The *Survey on Public Opinion and Experiences with Corruption in Greece* was conducted on behalf of The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and aims to measure public opinion towards corruption and capture people's experience with it in Greece.

Specifically, the survey includes:

1. Views and attitudes of public opinion towards acts of corruption (ideological acceptance, perception of being acts of corruption and awareness of their harmfulness).
2. Experiences and corruption incidents from dealing with public services.
3. Attitudes towards the consequences of corruption and ways to tackle it.
4. Trust in government and other institutions to fight corruption.
5. Opinions and attitudes regarding the report of corruption incidents and the penalty for those responsible.
6. Awareness of the General Secretariat Against Corruption.

## Main findings

### 1. Acceptance, perception and harmfulness of corruption

In the first part of the survey, the respondents were asked to evaluate some incidents of corruption that happen in everyday life, using three (3) criteria. First, the survey asked if they are accepted by them, second, whether or not they constitute acts of corruption and, third, if they are harmful to them or to their family.

As to the first criterion, the replies showed that all the examples used are socially **unacceptable** acts, but the most unacceptable ones are: The bribe of a contractor to get a contract to build a school (96%) or to pass a building inspection (93%), the use of connections by a friend or relative to get a job in the public sector (91%) and the actions to erase a speeding ticket (90%). Other acts were also considered unacceptable, but less so. These include smoking in places where it is prohibited (84%), bribing to get an appointment sooner in a public hospital (84%), a salesperson's avoidance to give a receipt on purchases (77%) and the hiring of the same classroom teacher to prepare a student for exams (67%).

As to the second criterion, certainly acts of corruption are identified by the public: The bribe of a contractor to get a contract to build a school (97% said this was corruption) or to pass a building inspection (95%), the bribe to get an appointment sooner in a public hospital (90%), the use of connections by a friend or relative to get a job in the public sector (88%) and the actions to erase a speeding ticket (86%). These are followed by a salesperson avoiding giving a receipt on purchases (71%) and the hiring of the same classroom teacher to prepare the student for the exams (62%), whereas smoking in places where it is prohibited is not perceived by most people as an act of corruption (38%).

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As to the third criterion, all acts are considered harmful to the respondents or their families, but above all: The bribe of a contractor to pass a building inspection (88%) or to get a contract to build a school (87%), the use of connections by a friend or relative to get a job in the public sector (79%), the bribe to get an appointment sooner in a public hospital (77%) and a salesperson's avoidance to give a receipt on purchases (69%).

**Table 1: Attitudes towards incidents of corruption**

Incidents	Socially unacceptable	Corruption act	Harmful
1. Bribery of a contractor to get a contract to build a school	96	97	87
2. Bribery of a contractor to pass a building inspection	93	95	88
3. Receipt avoidance on purchases	77	71	69
4. Smoking in places where it is prohibited	84	38	66
5. Use of connections by a friend or relative to get a job in the public sector	91	88	79
6. Actions to erase a speeding ticket	90	86	66
7. Hiring of the same classroom teacher to prepare the student for the exams	67	62	54
8. Bribe to get an appointment sooner in a public hospital	84	90	77

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## 2. Experiences and corruption incidents from dealing with public services

The second part of the survey refers to the experiences and corruption incidents from the transaction between citizens and public services. In the area of education, 21% of parents with children who attend public school state that "they paid their child's classroom teacher for tutoring outside class", while in the area of health, 15% of people who used public services "paid a bribe to obtain the service". Smaller percentages of corruption appear in the tax services (5%), the EU co-funded programs (4%), the civil registry services (3%), the companies of public interest (2%) and the police (1%).

Table 2: Corruption experiences dealing with public services

Service	Corruption (% respondents)
Public health services	15
Tax services	5
Civil registry services	3
Companies of public interest	2
Police	1
Teachers of public schools	21
EU co-funded programs	4

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The phenomena of corruption in the public service could be prevented, if there were more transparency regarding the cost of using each service or if there were clear information on the procedures to be followed by citizens.

Regarding transparency, the replies of respondents who came in contact with a public service show that the amount they had to pay in fees was **not publicly displayed** in the **health services (70%)**, in the **civil registry services (68%)**, in the **companies of public interest (65%)** or the **police (64%)**. More than half of the respondents did not find information available on what they would have to pay in taxes and how it would be calculated (54%). However, there was clear guidance available in the EU co-funded programs (87%).

To the open question "What would be the maximum value of an acceptable gift to a public official?" which essentially measures the tendency of citizens towards bribery, the majority of people respond spontaneously: "no gift", "nothing" or "0 €" (61%). The remaining responses (that refer to an amount) fall into the following categories:

- 1-10 € (7%)
- 11-20 € (6%)
- 21-50 € (8%)
- 51-100 € (4%)
- Over 100 € (4%)

Moreover, transparency in public spending, contracts and budgets is an important measure to fight corruption. In the past year, about 1 in 10 people (11%) consulted a source of public information on budgets or procurement, such as the "Diavgeia" or the "Central Electronic Registry of Public Procurement", and 90% of these people found the information they were looking for.

## 3. Attitudes towards corruption

In the third part of the survey, the respondents expressed their views on statements related to the consequences of corruption and the ways to tackle it. As for the consequences, the majority of citizens agree that "the hiring of friends/relatives in state owned companies makes the quality of these services worse" (82%) and respectively that "the construction companies that pay bribes to public officials, deliver shoddy work" (80%). Moreover, they agree corruption in Greece "acts as a deterrent to foreign companies to do business and this is bad for the economy" (70%).

As for the ways to tackle corruption, "citizens should make more of an effort to stand up and report those responsible for corruption" (93%), while there is also need for "more transparency and supervision of the financing of political parties in Greece" (85%).

## 4. Trust in institutions

In the fourth part of the survey, citizens' trust in government and other institutions is examined. The responses indicate a general distrust, mainly to the Government (77%) and the European Union (63%), followed by Local (51%) and Regional (50%) government.

Regarding the actions taken by the government to fight corruption, they are judged as "ineffective" by the majority of citizens (71%). When asked to choose one measure that the government could take to reduce corruption, the top three actions supported by the public are: education of children in schools, disclosure of a list with the names of citizens who evade taxes, and strengthening the protection of citizens who report acts of corruption. This means that public opinion gives weight primarily to the education of young people in order to create defenses against corruption. Secondly, there is support for public consequences for corrupt behavior. Thirdly, although to a lesser extent, the results suggest a need for greater whistleblower protection.

With respect to education, public opinion numbers quite a few important values that children should be taught at school to prevent corruption. Most of the answers refer to: "honesty/truth/integrity/sincerity" (29%), "morality" (14%), "solidarity/respect for others" (7%) and "meritocracy" (5%).

## 5. Report of corruption incidents

The fifth part of the survey examines the issue of reporting incidents of corruption. The responses indicate that the majority of citizens (55%) do not know where to report a corruption complaint. However, if they wanted to make a complaint, the institutions they would trust the most would be the police, followed by the judiciary and the National Ombudsman.

About 2 out of 3 citizens (65%) say that if they witnessed corruption, or were affected by corruption, would report a complaint. The rest are split between those who would not do so (17%) and those who are not sure (18%). When asked to give one main reason for being unwilling or hesitant to report cases of corruption, the main reason cited was the fear of the consequences (34%), the belief that it is not worth the effort (17%) or would make no difference (15%) and the feeling guilt of that they "witness and betray" (12%).

Indeed, the fear of consequences of reporting proved strong also in the workplace. Thus, despite the fact that the vast majority of people "see positively" (92%) the employees who witness bribery or stealing money at their workplace, at the same time they strongly believe that the complainants would face negative consequences for this action (92%).

Regarding the issue of penalty for financial crimes, the public opinion has mixed views on the proposal for a reduced jail sentence, if the culprit returns the stolen money or assets in exchange. Specifically, they take tougher stance on the abuse of public funds (71% oppose reduced jail time) and money laundering (67%), and are more willing to consider reduced jail sentences in case of tax evasion (45% support reduced jail time) and bribery cases (48% support).

## 6. Awareness of General Secretariat Against Corruption

The sixth and final part of the survey includes questions on the awareness of the General Secretariat Against Corruption. The responses indicate that the awareness of the newly established public service (almost 1.5 years later) could be raised, since only 35% of Greeks know about it. Of these, 8 out of 10 (80%) also know that they can make a complaint there, which is very important in the fight against corruption.

Regarding the presence of the service on the Internet, only 12% of respondents, who are aware of it, have visited the website, but 72% of the website users evaluate it as positive and user friendly.

