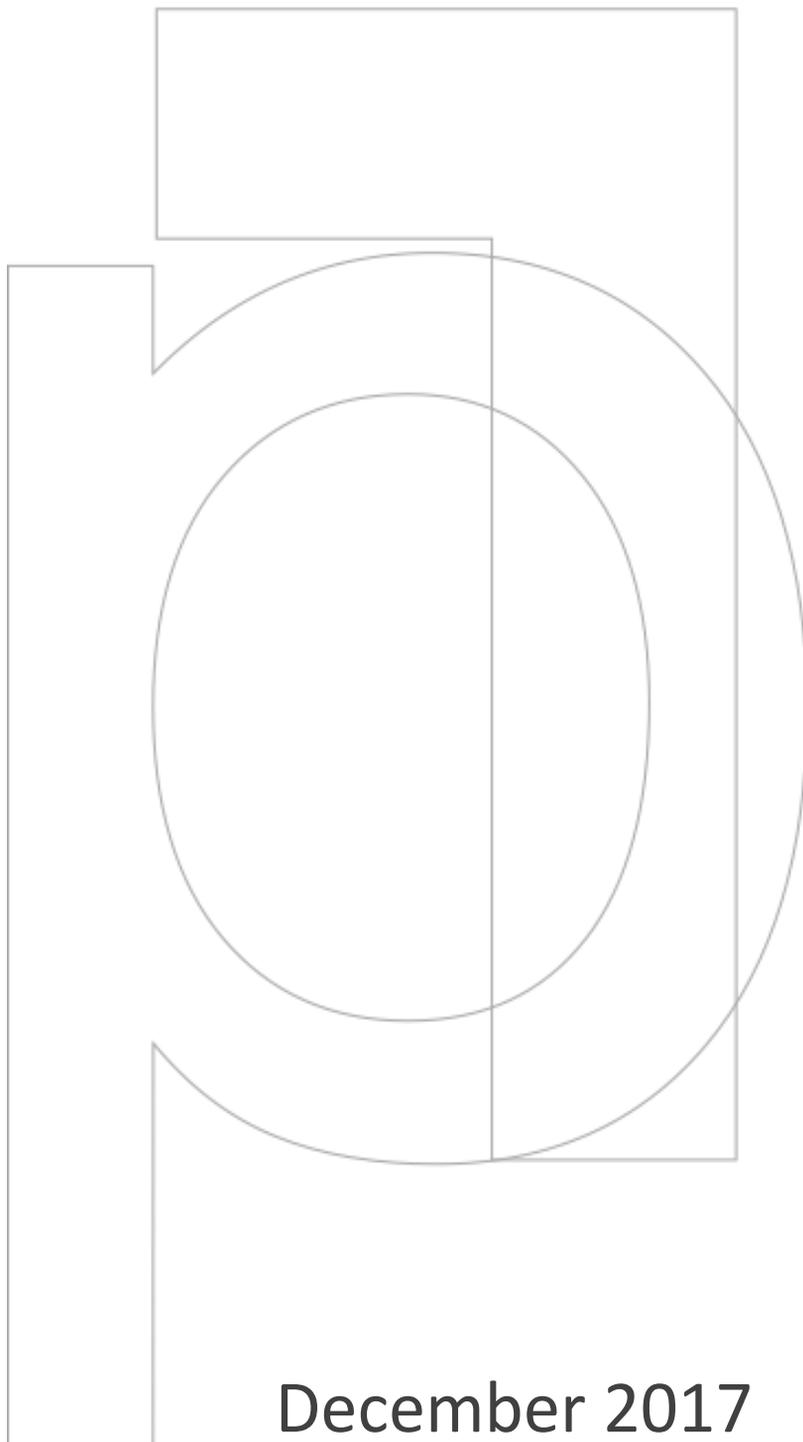


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**Public opinion,
attitudes and
experiences with
corruption in Greece**

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 for second consecutive year on behalf of the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)* and aims, first, to measure the public's attitudes towards corruption and, second, to capture people's experiences with it in Greece.

Specifically, the survey includes:

1. Views and attitudes of the public towards possible acts of corruption (ideological acceptance, perception of their being acts of corruption, and awareness of their harmfulness).
2. Experiences with corruption in 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. Knowledge and attitudes regarding the reporting of corruption incidents and the penalties for those responsible.
6. Awareness of and experience with 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 possible corruption that happen in everyday life, using three (3) criteria. First, the respondents were asked if the incidents 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. To a greater extent, unacceptable acts are considered: the bribe of a contractor to pass a building inspection (96%) or to get a contract to build a school (95%), the actions to erase a speeding ticket (90%) and the use of connections by a friend or relative to get a job in the public sector (89%). Other acts that are also considered unacceptable, but to a lesser extent, include: bribing to get an appointment sooner in a public hospital (85%), smoking in places where it is prohibited (82%), a salesperson's avoidance to give a receipt on purchases (81%) and the hiring of the same classroom teacher to prepare a student for exams (70%).

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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 is corruption) or to pass a building inspection (96%), 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 (86%) and the actions to erase a speeding ticket (84%). These are followed by a salesperson's avoidance of giving a receipt on purchases (71%) and the hiring of the same classroom teacher to prepare the student for the exams (63%), whereas smoking in places where it is prohibited is not perceived by most people as an act of corruption (37%).

Lastly, as to the third criterion, all acts are largely considered harmful to respondents or their families, but above all: The bribe of a contractor to get a contract to build a school (88%) or to pass a building inspection (87%), the use of connections by a friend or relative to get a job in the public sector (77%), the bribe to get an appointment sooner in a public hospital (77%) and a salesperson's avoidance of giving a receipt on purchases (70%).

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The following table summarizes the findings of the survey with regard to the three criteria mentioned above.

Table 1: Attitudes towards possible corruption, 2017

Incidents	Socially unacceptable	Corruption act	Harmful
1. Bribery of a contractor to get a contract to build a school	95	97	88
2. Bribery of a contractor to pass a building inspection	96	96	87
3. Receipt avoidance on purchases	81	71	70
4. Smoking in places where it is prohibited	82	37	67
5. Use of connections by a friend or relative to get a job in the public sector	89	86	77
6. Actions to erase a speeding ticket	90	84	64
7. Hiring of the same classroom teacher to prepare the student for the exams	70	63	52
8. Bribe to get an appointment sooner in a public hospital	85	90	77

In comparison to 2016, the attitude of the Greek public towards corruption has not changed significantly.

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2. Experiences with corruption in dealing with public services

The second part of the survey refers to experiences with corruption in the transactions between citizens and public services. In the area of education, 13% 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, 11% of people who used public services “paid a bribe to obtain the service”. Smaller percentages of corruption appear in the tax services (2%), the EU co-funded programs (2%) and the civil registry services (1%).

It is worth noting that, compared to 2016, corruption incidents from dealing with public services have been reduced over the past year (see the table below).

Table 2: Corruption incidents from dealing with public services, 2016-2017

Service	2016 (% respondents)	2017 (% respondents)	Change +/-
Public health services	15	11	-4 ↓
Tax services	5	2	-3 ↓
Civil registry services	3	1	-2 ↓
Companies of public interest	2	0	-2 ↓
Police	1	0	-1 ↓
Teachers of public schools	21	13	-8 ↓
EU co-funded programs	4	2	-2 ↓

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The phenomena of corruption in the public service could be more easily 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 (77%), the police (76%), in the companies of public interest (73%) or in the civil registry services (72%). Moreover, about 4 out of 10 respondents (42%) did not find information available on what they would have to pay in taxes and how it would be calculated. However, there was clear guidance available in the EU co-funded programs (84%).

As shown in the following table, in comparison to 2016, the situation regarding the issue of transparency has deteriorated over the past year.

Table 3: Absence of price list for public services, 2016-2017

Services	2016	2017	Change +/-
Public health services	70	77	+7 
Police	64	76	+12 
Companies of public interest	65	73	+8 
Civil registry services	68	72	+4 

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To the open-ended 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 €" (65%). The remaining responses, that refer to an amount, fall into the following categories:

Table 4: Reported amounts of the maximum acceptable value of a "gift" to a public official, 2017

1-10 €	6%
11-20 €	7%
21-50 €	5%
51-100 €	2%
Over 100 €	3%

Transparency in public spending, contracts and budgets is an important measure to fight corruption. In the past year, about **1 in 8 people (13%)** consulted a source of public information on budgets or procurement, such as the "Diavgeia" or the "Central Electronic Registry of Public Procurement", and 86% 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" (83%) and respectively that "the construction companies that pay bribes to public officials, deliver shoddy work" (79%). Moreover, they agree that corruption in Greece "acts as a deterrent to foreign companies to do business and this is bad for the economy" (64%).

As for the ways to tackle corruption, there is widespread acceptance of the view that "citizens should make more of an effort to stand up and report those responsible for corruption" (92%), while there is also need for "more transparency and supervision of the financing of political parties in Greece" (82%).

In conclusion, compared to 2016, the attitudes of the Greek public towards corruption have not changed significantly over the past year.

4. Trust in institutions

In the fourth part of the survey, citizens' trust in government and other institutions is examined. The responses indicate that there is still a general distrust, mainly in the Government (68%) and the European Union (51%), and to a lesser extent in the Local (47%) and the Regional (47%) government.

Nonetheless, in comparison to 2016, the citizens' distrust has significantly decreased (see the table below).

Table 5: Distrust in institutions (%), 2016-2017

Institutions	2016	2017	Change +/-
Local government	51	47	-4 ↓
European Union	63	51	-12 ↓
Regional government	50	47	-3 ↓
National government	77	68	-9 ↓

Regarding the actions taken by the government to fight corruption, they are judged as "ineffective" by two-thirds of citizens (65%). This is an improvement of 6% as compared to 2016 (71%).

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"The education of children in schools", "the disclosure of a list with the names of citizens who evade taxes" and "the strengthening of the protection of citizens who report acts of corruption" constitute, in terms of greater social support, the three most important measures that the public believes the government could take to reduce corruption. This means that, first, the public gives weight primarily to the education of young people in order to create defenses against corruption. Secondly, there is support for public shaming of corrupt behavior. Thirdly, although to a lesser extent, the results suggest a need for greater whistleblower protection.

With respect to education, the public expresses quite a few important values that children should be taught at school to prevent corruption. Most of the answers to the open-ended question refer to: "honesty/truth/integrity/sincerity" (28%), "morality" (12%), "respect for the state and institutions" (6%), "solidarity/respect for others" (5%) and "meritocracy" (5%).

5. Reporting of corruption incidents

The fifth part of the survey examines the issue of reporting incidents of corruption.

Survey results indicate that the majority of citizens (58%) 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 3 out of 5 citizens (59%) say that if they witnessed corruption, or were affected by corruption, would report a complaint. This percentage is 6% lower than in 2016 (65%). The rest of the respondents are divided between those who are not sure (25%) and those who would not do so (15%). 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" (13%) or would make no difference (14%) and the feeling guilt of that they "witness and betray" (9%).

Indeed, the fear of consequences of reporting proved strong also in the workplace. Thus, despite the fact that the vast majority of people (90%) "see positively" the employees who witness bribery or stealing money at their workplace and report it, at the same time they strongly believe that the complainants would face negative consequences for this action (92%).

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Consistent with the results of the previous survey in December 2016:

The public maintains a positive position towards individuals who report incidents of bribery or abuse of public money in the workplace to the authorities.

The public maintains the opinion that facing negative consequences after reporting cases of bribery or abuse of public money in the workplace is very likely.

The public maintains the opinion that the main reason for not reporting corruption incidents is fear of negative consequences.

Regarding the issue of penalties for financial crimes, the public 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 a tougher stance on the **abuse of public funds** (69% oppose reduced jail time) and **money laundering** (66%), while they are more willing to consider reduced jail sentences in case of **tax evasion** (43% support reduced jail time) and **bribery cases** (50% support).

Regarding the issue of penalty for financial crimes, the attitudes of the Greek public has not changed significantly compared to 2016. Most survey respondents consider as acceptable the reduction of the imprisonment term as an exchange for the return of amounts of money or assets, except for the cases of money laundering and abuse of public money.

6. Awareness of and experience with the 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 about **4 in 10 Greeks (37%)** are aware of this service (2% slightly higher than last year). Of these, almost **8 out of 10 (76%)** also are aware 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 **9%** of respondents, who are aware of it, have visited the website, but **71%** of the website users evaluate it as positive and user friendly.

