

# SELDI

South-East Europe Leadership  
for Development and Integrity

## *Corruption and Anti-Corruption Reforms in Turkey: The role of CSOs in providing advocacy and policy advice*

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# Anti-corruption reforms in Turkey 1

- During the 90s and at the beginning 2000s, the issue of corruption took a large space on the agenda of Turkey
- Ministries such as interior affairs and customs made anti-corruption discourse a part of their political agenda
- Even the president of the country, took part in anti-corruption events and gave public speeches touching on the subject
- Media paid considerable attention to corruption cases, both in the business and public sectors. People's reaction to corruption cases was quite strong
- The financial crisis of 2001 was a major turning point. The dishonest dealings between private financial companies and public institutions came into light. The government introduced an austerity package that brought forward many regulations for financial institutions

# Anti-corruption reforms in Turkey 2

- In 2002, the current government party, AKP (Justice and Development Party) was elected with a 34% vote.
- The AKP government has been vocal about fighting corruption from the beginning of their governance, which translated into signing a number of international anti-corruption conventions.
- An **“Action Plan on Increasing Transparency and Enhancing Good Governance in the Public Sector”** has been adopted in 2002.
- Turkey also agreed upon an **Emergency Action Plan** with the EU in 2003, that included anti-corruption such as strengthening specialized anti-corruption units and awareness raising

# Anti-corruption reforms in Turkey 3

- More recently, in February 2010, the government launched a “strategic plan on reducing Corruption and Enhancing Transparency.”
- A ministerial committee was established in December 2009 together with an executive board to form further anti-corruption strategies and to direct and monitor implementation
- However, the design process of the strategic plan was criticized for being opaque and not participatory
- In line with the 2010-2014 Strategy and Action Plan, an Executive Committee for Increasing Transparency and Fighting Corruption prepared proposals for 28 corruption related issues.
- However, no increase in the strength or independence of institutions involved in the fight against corruption

# Anti-corruption reforms in Turkey 4

- The Executive Committee contributed to changes in the area of incrimination and the financing of presidential candidates.
- On the other hand however, no progress was made limiting the immunity of MPs and senior public officials in corruption related offences.
- GRECO recommendations are yet to be fully implemented
- The implementation of anti-corruption Strategy requires greater political engagement and broader civil society participation
- A track record of investigation, indictment and conviction related to corruption cases are yet to be established.

# Institutional framework to fight corruption 5

- Turkey does not have an anti-corruption agency; instead several institutions have an anti-corruption mandate
  - The Financial Crimes Investigation Board
  - Coordination Board for Combating Financial Crimes
  - The Ombudsman
  - Council of Ethics for the Public Service
  - Inspection Board of the Prime Minister
  - Turkish Court of Accounts
  - Public Procurement Authority
- Need for effective coordination

# Anti-corruption reforms in Turkey 6

- Despite the shortcomings, the public shows confidence in government efforts: with 59% of the 2010 GCB respondents perceiving government efforts against corruption to be effective.
- The positive trends are reflected in World Bank's worldwide governance indicators in terms of control of corruption:
  - Score (0-100) in 2010: 57,9 compared to
  - Score (0-100) in 2000: 42,9
- On the other hand, challenges are reflected in Transparency International's 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index (0-10, highly corrupt-highly clean):
  - Turkey's score: 4,2 (relatively high levels of public sector corruption)

# Extent of corruption in Turkey 7

- In spite of the various steps taken, most observers still consider that progress in the fight against corruption has been limited, as stated in the EU 2008 and 2011 progress reports.
- **58%** of the companies surveyed in **2008** consider corruption as one of the most severe problems affecting the business environment - **41% in 2005** (Source: World Bank Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey)
- Citizens also share the perception that corruption remains a problem in the country, with **57%** of respondents believing that corruption has increased in the 3 years preceding the survey (Source: Transparency International, 2010)



- There is no central body in charge of developing and evaluating anti-corruption policies
- In spite of greater civil awareness and participation, civil society only has limited oversight over the implementation of national anti-corruption policies.
- Very strong immunity regulations for public officials
- Weak legislation for financing and auditing of political parties
- Weak transparency and accountability rules and laws in place

- Transparency Association (TI Turkey)
- the Association for Combating Corruption and the Association for the Protection of Citizens' Taxes (VAVEK).
- Corporate Governance Association of Turkey
- Corporate Social Responsibility Association of Turkey
- Economic and Social Studies Foundation of Turkey (TESEV)
- Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV)

- No legal pressure on associations dealing with corruption-related matters
- On the other hand, involvement of CSOs in policy making is limited: less than expected involvement in the policy making process in 2010
- The CSOs such as TEPAV, TESEV and TI were consulted in preparing the 2010 anti-corruption action plan but no active participation took place
- Civil society's involvement in policy making needs to be improved

# TESEV's efforts in the area of anti-corruption 11

- TESEV is an independent, non-governmental think-tank, analyzing social and political policy issues facing Turkey
- By opening new channels for policy-oriented dialogue and research, TESEV aims to promote the role of civil society in the democratic process and seeks to share its research findings with the widest possible audience.
- Many research studies conducted by TESEV are related to anti-corruption policies

- Some important examples are:
  - A series of corruption surveys and policy proposals (2002-2004)
    - Household, business perceptions
    - Corruption in municipalities
    - Watchdog platform for civil society
  - Fiscal Transparency Monitoring Reports (2004)
  - Civil Society in Monitoring the Budget (2005)
  - Right to Information (2006)
  - Budget Handbook for Non-expert (2007)
  - The Guide for Public Expenditures Analysis (2008)
  - Monitoring the Social Budget of Local Governments (2011)
  - A report on the new law for Court of Accounts (2012)

# TI-Turkey (Transparency International) 13

- TI-Turkey was founded in 2008 by voluntary efforts. The association aims to set the rule of transparency, integrity and accountability principles in all segments of the society for the democratic, social and economic development of the country.
- TI- Turkey has two important projects;
  - The CIMAP Initiative (Comparative Indicator-based Monitoring of Anti-Corruption Progress) is designed by TI to monitor the progress of accession in the areas of governance and anti-corruption related issues in the judiciary, legislature and public administration.
  - Call for Transparency is a tool developed by TI to empower citizens against corruption. CfT functions as a center for the victims and witnesses of bribery, malversation and misconduct to address their grievances where they can receive information and support on the way for searching solution for their complaints.

# TEPAV-The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey

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- TEPAV is a non-profit think tank based in Ankara and was founded in 2004 by a group of businessmen, bureaucrats and academics.
- TEPAV organizes Anti Corruption Conferences on a yearly basis, each focusing on a specific topic. The aim is to follow-up anti corruption efforts in Turkey, to provide knowledge and platform for the policy debates and to create awareness in the public opinion.

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## Thank you !

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