

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT 2015 - SERBIA

SUMMARY REPORT ON CORRUPTION AND LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

Achievements:

The government made an effort to prosecute officials from the police and the government; there is an improvement in the quality of police internal investigations due to the implementation of the new criminal procedure code; there are anticorruption training events, which included police, border patrol officers, prosecutors and customs officers; there are cases of high-level corruption; the mechanisms for financial disclosure are effective and officials who did not respect their obligation have been subject of sanctions.

Key issues:

The sectors affected by the corruption are health care, education, government and police; the courts remained susceptible to corruption and political influence; it is reported by EU experts that there is regular abuse of office from public officials for private sector corruption schemes; the lack of transparency in the government and the risk from corruption persist despite governments efforts; there is a need of improvement of the law regulating the Anticorruption Agency (ACA) because it was the reason preventing the Agency to react in cases of clear public-private conflict of interest; insufficiency in the human and financial resources of the ACA.

Statistics:

As of July 122 police officers were charged; in 2014 there were 148 officers charged; for 2014 from the 4,696 complaints against officers, 80% were made by citizens; according to the director of the ACA, during the year there were 6 1/2 times the number of requests for investigations compared to 2014; during the year the ACA initiated 217 requests for misdemeanor proceedings most of which were for not reporting assets.

Public access to
information:

There is a considerable effort in the government to implement the transparency prescribed by the law. There are various exceptions allowing restriction access but the majority of complaints filed during the year were for lack of response to freedom of information requests. There is an increase in references to confidentiality but there is a decrease in references to abuse of the right to obtain information. In June the Whistleblower Protection Law took effect and the government sponsored a public outreach campaign and trainings for judges and prosecutors who were concerned by the new law.

Source: U.S. Department
of State

Country Reports on
Human Rights Practices
for 2015