

Corruption Perceptions in North Cyprus: 2024 Factsheet

This year marks the completion of the eighth “Corruption Perceptions in North Cyprus” report which continues to be guided by the same five fundamental objectives:

1. To measure the perception of corruption in north Cyprus using an internationally recognized method;
2. To determine where north Cyprus stands in the fight against corruption compared to the rest of the world;
3. To detect changes in the perception of corruption compared to the previous year;
4. To gauge the overall pulse of businesspeople regarding corruption; and
5. To raise public awareness based on the study’s findings.

To achieve particularly the first three objectives, this study adopts the methodology of the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)¹, published annually by Transparency International (TI)—which does not cover the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)²—and relies on the perspectives of businesspeople, and experts.

As in previous years, the survey, designed based on the TI-CPI methodology and expanded with questions from various studies, was administered to 352 participants holding managerial positions in companies registered in the TRNC. The survey of businesspeople was conducted in December 2024 and January 2025 using Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (CASI) methods, implemented by Lipa Consultancy. The sample was selected to represent the business community accurately, considering factors such as region, sector, number of employees, and the duration of the companies’ operations. The survey results have a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$.

The opinions of experts were also collected using the CASI method through a survey designed based on the methodology developed by Transparency International. This expert survey was conducted in January 2025, targeting a select group of senior retired public officials with extensive experience in the operation of state institutions.

Based on the responses from businesspeople and experts, the north Cyprus’ TI-CPI 2024 score has been calculated as 26 out of 100. On a 0–100 scale, zero indicates extremely high corruption, while 100 signifies the absence of corruption. This score is well below the average of 180 countries, which is 43, in the 2024 list published by Transparency International at the beginning of 2025, placing TRNC in the 140th position.

Compared to the previous year, the score has dropped by one point, although the ranking remains unchanged. While last year the score was 7 points behind that of Turkey’s, this year TRNC is 8 points behind. In addition, the Republic of Cyprus (RoC)’s score increased from 53 to 56—placing them in the 46th position—and the gap between the scores widened from 26 to 30 points. This situation indicates a lack of effective anti-corruption policies in the TRNC and difficulties in meeting international standards.

As stated above, the report goes beyond merely calculating a score by delving deeply into businesspeople’s perceptions and experiences regarding corruption. In this context, in addition to the questions used by Transparency International in various studies, country-specific questions were also posed, and the detailed responses to these are presented in the report. The results of the survey with businesspeople can be summarized under thirteen headings.

Table 1: Comparison of the 2024 corruption perceptions scores of north Cyprus with the scores of selected countries and region.

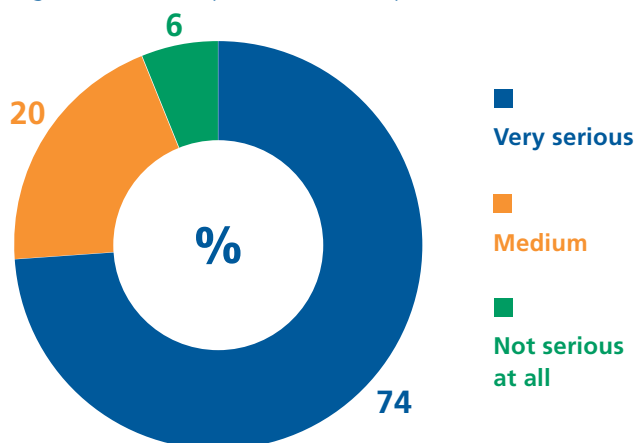
	North Cyprus	Republic of Cyprus	Malta	Greece	Turkey	EU/W. Eur.
IMD	26	40	-	48	36	61
WEF	41	59	39	46	34	60
EIU	22	67	35	35	35	62
Bertelsmann SGI	16			57		68
TI - CPI Score	26	56	46	49	34	64
Ranking	140	46	65	59	107	33

¹ <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2024>

² The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is only recognised by the Republic of Turkey. As the government of the Republic of Cyprus remains internationally recognised as the government of the whole of the island, the entire island is now considered to be a member of the European Union. However, the *acquis communautaire* is suspended in northern Cyprus pending a political settlement to the Cyprus problem (see Protocol no. 10 of the Accession Treaty).

1. Corruption is very common and a very serious problem

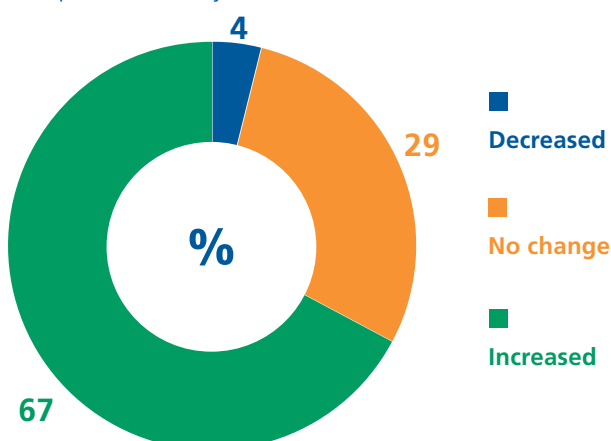
Figure 1: Is corruption a serious problem?



Seventy-five percent of the businesspeople surveyed believe that bribery and corruption are “very common” in the TRNC, while 74% consider corruption to be a “very serious problem.”

2. Corruption has increased compared to the previous year

Figure 2: Has the level of corruption changed compared to the year before?



Two out of three businesspeople believe that corruption in the country has increased compared to a year ago. Only 4% of respondents think that corruption decreased in 2024.

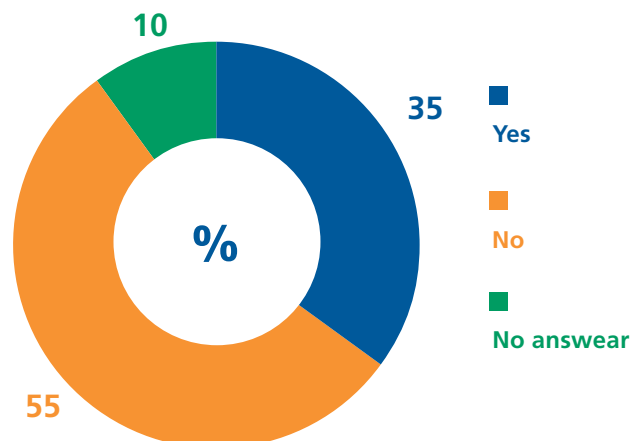
3. Corruption is most common in the awarding of public contracts and licenses

According to the participants, the three procedures where bribery or unofficial extra payments are most common are: 64% believe that bribery is very widespread in public tenders and permit/license procedures; this is followed by the allocation and leasing of public lands and buildings (60%) and state incentives (56%). In contrast, bribery is considered least common in: influencing judicial decisions (32%); local government/municipal services (36%); and obtaining services such as electricity, water, and telephone from the state (38%).

4. One in three businesspeople paid a bribe in 2024

In response to the question, “In the past year, did you or someone in your circle have to give a bribe, gift, or do a favor to the relevant official to receive any of the above services?” 35% answered “Yes,” while 10% did not respond. The three most common reasons were: to expedite the process (40%), to be able to complete the procedure (20%), and to reduce the cost of the service (9%).

Figure 3: Did you have to give a bribe to an official in the last 12 months?



5. Public resources are abused by politicians and senior public officials

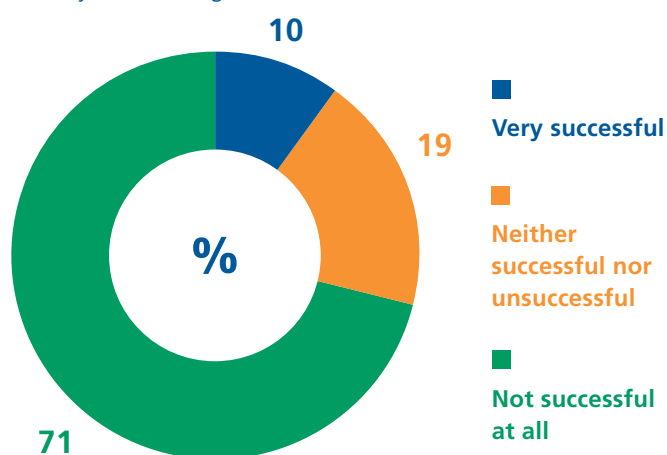
Fifty-seven percent of respondents believe that transferring public resources to private companies, individuals, or groups due to corruption is “very common,” while only 5% think that it never happens. Participants consider government members and their appointees as the two groups most involved in corruption—60% for cabinet members and 55% for senior officials. In contrast, only 31%, 30%, and 29% believe that corruption is very widespread among the police, prosecutors, and judges, respectively.

6. Those expected to deter corruption are not effective

When asked, “How effective do you think the institutions that are supposed to combat or expose corruption are?” very few respondents rated any institution as “extremely effective.” The police were considered the most effective by 26% of respondents; next were the Public Prosecutor’s Office (25%) and the courts (23%). The Parliament was rated as not effective at all by 61% of respondents, and 60% deemed the government “highly ineffective.”

7. The government is not successful in fighting money laundering

Figure 4: How successful is the government in fighting money laundering?



Responses to the question, “How effective do you find the government’s efforts to combat money laundering?” indicate that confidence in the government’s performance in this area remains low. A vast majority (55%) believe that money laundering is a common occurrence in the country, and 71% consider the government completely ineffective in this regard.

8. Offering voters money or a special favor in elections is common

Sixty-one percent of respondents believe that paying money or promising special favor to voters in exchange for their votes is common. In addition, 34% think that threatening to punish the voters in case they do not vote in a certain way is common.

9. The relationship between business and politics is concerning

Forty-three percent of respondents indicate that it is very common for large companies to avoid paying their taxes. Similarly, 62% believe that the TRNC government is largely run by a few big interest groups that focus solely on their own benefits.

10. Those who are involved in corruption are not held accountable

Forty-five percent of respondents state that corrupt officials are never punished, while 28% report that this happens very rarely. Only 13% say that officials involved in corruption are frequently or very frequently held accountable.

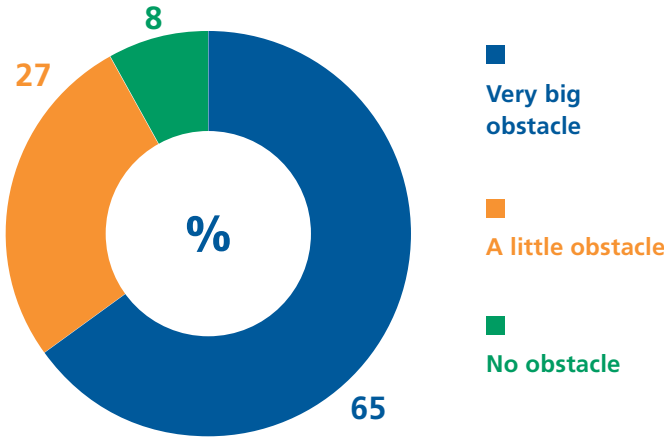
11. There has been an increase in tolerance for corruption

The percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement “It is acceptable to use personal relationships and connections with employees in public institutions in order to expedite processes” increased from 17% in 2023 to 25% in 2024 (after being only 5% in 2022). Similarly, those who agreed that “It is acceptable for the government to be involved in corruption as long as it delivers good services” rose from 9% in 2023 to 11% in 2024

(compared to just 3% in 2022), indicating a steady rise in tolerance over the past two years.

12. Corruption is a very big obstacle to doing business

Figure 5: Is corruption an obstacle for doing good business?



Sixty-five percent of respondents believe that corruption is a major obstacle to doing business, while only 8% say that it poses no obstacle at all.

13. Does success depend on merit and effort?

For the first time in 2024, respondents were asked whether individual success depends on merit and effort. Thirty-nine percent agreed, 37% were neutral, and 24% disagreed. The results indicate a division of opinion on whether or not success in the country is based on merit and effort.

Table 2: Corruption, connections, merit

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
It is acceptable to use relationships and contacts in public institutions in order to speed up business-related procedures.	56%	19%	25%
It is acceptable for the government to engage in corruption as long as it delivers good results.	75%	14%	11%
The government in TRNC is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves.	16%	22%	62%
In our country, people's chances of success depend on their merit and effort.	24%	37%	39%

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