

Turkey's Corruption Perceptions Index ranking falls again

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Introduction

Reasons behind fall in rank

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On February 21 2018 Transparency International published the 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index, which reflects the public sector corruption perspective of non-governmental organisations and representatives of the business world on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).(1)

New Zealand and Denmark ranked the highest, with respective scores of 89 and 88. Notably, since 2012, several countries have significantly improved their index score – including Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and the United Kingdom – while several others have declined, including Syria, Yemen and Australia.

Turkey came 81st out of 180 countries (six places lower than 2016) and scored 40 in the perceived corruption scale. This is the fourth consecutive year in which Turkey's ranking has fallen. It has lost 10 points and fallen 28 places over the past five years. Turkey is ranked 13th among the G20 countries and 33rd among the 35 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries.

Reasons behind fall in rank

According to E Oya Ozarslan, the head of Transparency International's Turkey branch:

"Turkey losing 10 points in the last 5 years have put 28 countries ahead of us in the index and this damages our competitiveness in the global arena. Rule of law, transparency and accountability are the only way out of this situation."

Further, Transparency International has argued that the:

"2017 results once again prove that perception regarding corruption is directly related to rule of law, press freedom, civil society strength, freedom of association and speech. Violations in these areas have concerning outcomes for corruption perception. Violation of the Public Procurement Law, countless changes introduced and new exceptions defined are paving the way to systemic failures and undermining fundamental institutions for good governance. In the previous year, 40% of investments and procurement of goods and services were concluded outside the scope of the Public Procurement Authority (PPA) and in 27.7% that was in the scope of the PPA, open tendering methods were not used. Countless cases of nepotism and clientelism in public appointments and promotions in 2017 are also among the prominent reasons behind the erosion Turkey is experiencing in the Corruption Perception Index".(2)

It is clear that Turkey's falling rank has not been caused by a lack of legislation; rather it is an enforcement issue. The United Kingdom's ranking (ie, eighth) proves once again that determination in enforcement plays a significant role in this regard.

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In order to improve the country's anti-corruption ecosystem, public sector, private sector and non-governmental organisations must understand that they need to cooperate and work in harmony to fight corruption.

Needless to say, politicians are encouraged to address issues regarding the freedom of speech and end the state of emergency. However, the private sector must also use the tools at its disposal (eg, training, codes of conduct and whistleblowing mechanisms) to change old business habits and help Turkey to become competitive in global markets. As a micro reflection of the freedom of speech in an organisation, company executives cannot ignore what a whistleblower might say about wrongdoings in the company.

With these expectations, it is hoped that public awareness regarding corruption will be raised and that the motivation to fight corruption will be created in the near future.

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Endnotes

(1) The results are based on eight research initiatives conducted in 180 countries, namely:

- the Global Insight Country Risk Ratings;
- the Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index;
- the IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook;
- the Bertelsmann Foundation Sustainable Governance Index;
- the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index;
- the PRS International Country Risk Guide;
- the Varieties of Democracy Project; and
- the Economist Intelligence Unit Country Ratings.

(2) See <http://en.seffalik.org/corruption-perceptions-index-2017-results-are-released>.

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