

You have downloaded a document from



The Central and Eastern European Online Library

The joined archive of hundreds of Central-, East- and South-East-European publishers, research institutes, and various content providers

Source: SEER - South-East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs

SEER - South-East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs

Location: Germany

Author(s): Aleksandar Fatić

Title: Stability and corruption in south-eastern Europe

Stability and corruption in south-eastern Europe

Issue: 04/2000

Citation style: Aleksandar Fatić. "Stability and corruption in south-eastern Europe". SEER - South-East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs 04:61-72.

<https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=261162>

Aleksandar Fatić

Stability and corruption in south-eastern Europe

Corruption is a way of life in south-eastern Europe – a necessary method of survival

Corruption has been one of the most pervasive crisis phenomena that have afflicted south-eastern Europe since the beginning of the social and political transformations a decade ago. Not a single country in the region can be said to be free of corruption. This does not only concern corruption in general, such as petty kick-backs or the “smoothing” of administrative procedures. Grand corruption is also present in all countries of south-eastern Europe, including major financial scandals involving the highest political and business circles. There is no country on earth that is free of corruption, and there is no social stratum that is not prone to corruption in any part of the world, but south-eastern Europe, due to the extreme economic deprivations that apply in the region, is an area in which an increasing amount of normal social activity is impossible without corruption as an essential ingredient.

In Serbia, for example, the average monthly income of a professional was DM80 early in 2000. Average living costs go drastically beyond this figure. Part of each household’s “deficit” is covered from the “grey” economy (cigarette smuggling, the sale of illegal petrol and other small-scale economic transgressions). Yet, even with the grey economy and the additions that it secures, a large majority of the population live on the very edge of sustainability of basic living standards. Cultural needs are reduced to a minimum, even though the cost of tickets for theatres, cinemas and the prices of books are kept relatively low. People can hardly afford to buy newspapers, and this appears as one of the main reasons why they are so profoundly influenced by the dominant electronic media, first of all the state television.¹ Electricity and heating bills are exceedingly high and the consequences of ten years of economic sanctions have devastated the infrastructure so that legitimate and economically competitive industry is no longer feasible in Serbia.

When all these circumstances are taken into account, corruption remains the only avenue for those deprived to “make up” the deficits in the base line of survival that they encounter on an almost daily basis. Administrative workers who issue various types of licence and determine state quotas literally depend on the bribes they receive for the subsistence of their families. The same is true of all those whose work involves discretion as a basic element.

The situation in other countries of the region is not much different. The consequences of major infrastructure damage, such as that arising from the NATO bombing in Serbia, are obviously not present in other south-eastern European states, but there are other, much more serious and profound damages that all these countries have encountered after the beginning of erratic social and economic developments following

1 See Brunnbauer, U. (2000): “Between internal and external isolation: the independent media in Serbia”, *Policy Advocate*, Beograd, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 6-10.

the end of communist rule. The governments of the region were poorly adapted to the new market realities, they were unused to autonomous policy design, which used to be dictated from a single “block” centre, and their policies have involved a great deal of loss of energy of the population and the economy as a system with an integrated infrastructure. The situation today, in countries with weak economies, internal problems of social policy and other serious hindrances to economic performance is such that corruption is the only remaining “industry” on which the population is able to survive.

In short, the region is slowly stepping towards a situation where more or less everybody will be corrupt in various ways. Official prices for all sorts of private relations are a matter of public knowledge.

Without a co-operative set of relations with regional and inter-regional partners and organisations, the corrupt countries of south-eastern Europe cannot introduce stability as the main tool for fighting corruption.

This article briefly examines the main types of corruption in the region, the required measures to combat it and the circumstances that must be satisfied prior to these measures being able to be fully and adequately implemented. Its main contention is that stability must be introduced as an environment that makes possible the elimination of corruption, rather than it being expected as an outcome of the elimination of corruption. Only in stable social and economic circumstances is it possible to introduce transparent mechanisms of corruption monitoring, assessment and control, and such circumstances will be introduced only where the state and society are sufficiently strengthened adequately to take on and fulfil their roles and duties towards their citizens. To do this, they need decisive guidance and financial, political, logistic and expert support from the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

An integrity system is the key pre-requisite for combating corruption successfully. Such a system can be built only on the individual integrity of key actors in the process, who should come not from the government but from the non-governmental sector.

Corruption control rests squarely on a single social value, and that is the value of integrity. A national system of honour, which is necessary to deal with corruption, can only be built in circumstances where individuals of high honour and material, financial and political independence stand at the heart of the social control institutions. Such individuals need constant sources of support from outside of the systems that are corrupt. They need to be provided with a live and lasting link with the international institutions that have an influence on the region, first and foremost with the European Commission. The system of integrity that is built by such individuals needs to play a three-fold role: the expert/advisory role; the implementation role; and the watchdog role. There must be specific structures, including particular institutions and their linkages with the EU, as well as separate funding structures, to support such a system. The article provides concrete recommendations as to what should be done in south-eastern Europe in order to address effectively the corruption tide.

Types of corruption

The most common distinction within the general phenomenon of corruption is that between “petty” and “grand” corruption. Petty corruption involves small-scale infringements and economic crime, usually motivated by the desire of individuals to increase their monthly income by abusing their official position. A police officer who stops someone on the road for going through a red light and demands money in exchange for letting the driver go without a penalty engages in petty corruption. A shopkeeper who withholds goods that are in scarce supply on the market and sells them to those who are willing to “add a tax” on top of the official price of the goods does the same. On the other hand, a politician who sets up an international arms sale agreement in order to benefit a national arms manufacturer, motivated by a large gift from that manufacturer often amounting to millions of dollars, is involved in grand corruption.

Grand corruption, such as illegal arms sales, is matched by medium-scale corruption through insider-dealings within large companies. Less easy to detect and prosecute than grand corruption involving arms or state secrets, but equally damaging to society, insider trading occurs in large trading companies, against which employees sell secrets of forthcoming acquisitions to rival firms for percentages that are able to solve all their financial worries for the rest of their lives.

However, there is an array of degrees of corruption that can be considered as neither petty, because the amounts involved are too great, nor grand, because they do not represent, as single instances, such financial blows to the national economy or to particular sectors of industry that they would necessarily be seen as such. For example, city authorities or local governments in almost all Balkan cities have internal prices for the issue of various licences, especially for the renting out or sale of commercial property, i.e. land that is within the jurisdiction of local governments. In Serbia, for example, in major urban centres the “fee” for the issue of a licence to set up a street stall, from where a variety of goods is sold from newspapers to alcoholic drinks and clothes, is DM15,000 for the city centre and between DM7,000 and DM10,000 for the peripheral areas. There are also well-known fees for the issue of building licences and for the sale of land in the city centre for the construction of office blocks and commercial objects.

Building and renovation licences, and land in inner cities, are administered for substantial bribes. There are fees for connecting a telephone line in a new apartment that need to be paid to a telephone company manager who will “push the application through”, the standard response to all applicants for new telephone lines being: “Currently there are insufficient technical possibilities for installing your new line”. There are fees for connecting new apartments or houses to the remote heating system, and for licences for making adaptations to existing structures, etc.

In hospitals, operations “cost” between DM1,000 (in simpler cases) and DM10,000 (in more difficult ones). Pregnancies are monitored for a “fee”, which is apparently “moderate” (DM1,000 to DM2,000 for the entire pregnancy) but, nevertheless, significant.

These types of corruption are neither “petty” (because the benefits from them go considerably beyond the mere survival needs of those who are corrupt, typically administrative or other service providers), nor are they “grand” (because they do not really threaten the national economy or the existence of major companies, at least not as single instances of corruption, and not directly). The victim of these types of corruption is the ordinary citizen, and the main source of corruption is not those who are corrupt, but the failing state, which is unable to provide the employees and those in need of various types of services with adequate resources, conditions to work in and remuneration for their work.

In fact, the state in Serbia has institutionalised corruption as a legitimate means of collecting revenue. In 1998, the Serbian Interior Ministry issued an edict whereby citizens who are legally registered as residing on the territory of Serbia may not drive motor vehicles that are registered on any other FRY territory, even if they possess a valid court-certified authorisation that they may drive the vehicles of other owners residing outside Serbia. The sanction for this “transgression” is the seizure of the vehicle. This measure, which is contrary to the Constitution and to all accepted principles of governance, under which court-certified documents have a higher authority than simple police regulations, is mainly targeted at curbing the importing of foreign vehicles with a dubious history. Yet the measure has been conducted in a manner that openly demonstrates a disregard for the rules and legal principles that govern such matters in European countries.

These are not the only types of corruption present in the Balkans, but it would probably be pointless to continue enumerating all of them. What can be preliminarily concluded at this stage is that corruption in the Balkans is a way of life. The additional “taxes” on otherwise normal and straightforwardly available services are a fact of everyday life, and they are calculated for all prices of goods and services.

One of the greatest problems as far as corruption is concerned is the police force. An increasing number of competences tend to be granted to police forces wherever and whenever there is a perceived crisis of internal security, such as the one now present in the countries of south-eastern Europe. In Serbia alone, the police force, which is exceedingly strong (according to unofficial estimates, around 150,000 officers) compared to the relatively small size of the population (some eight million excluding Kosovo), has become accustomed to rule by internal decrees and orders which often defy the norms of constitutionality and the interpretative laws at the level of both the Republic and the federal FRY.

Placing the police under a new type of control, able to ensure a far greater degree of transparency of its work and more efficient checks on its everyday performance of its duties, is thus a major task that awaits not only the national government but also local governments throughout Serbia. Corruption within the police force is extremely difficult to document, but there are manifestations of it throughout the social landscape of Serbia. Unresolved murders and the booming of organised crime are usually indicators of a strong synergism between criminal syndicates and the police. Secondly, the political instrumentalisation of the police, which has been traditional and, sometimes, even well-received by the population during communism in most south-

east European countries, continues, at least in Serbia, practically unabated. This second problem entails that corruption needs to be considered not only in its narrowest sense, as a process whereby a public official receives funds or other direct donations by an interested party in order to “twist” the rules or ignore them directly. Rather, corruption in the entire region, in all of its aspects, and especially as far as the criminal justice system and the police as one part of it are concerned, needs to be considered in the broadest sense, as involving any kind of benefit which is illegitimate in the circumstances and in exchange for which one is expected to breach the principles and integrity of one’s office.

In the latter context, the police can not be accused of corruption just in terms of receiving funds, but certainly also in terms of being placed in the position of either executing actions that are in breach of human rights and the accepted principles of the police profession, let alone the applicable national laws, or being dismissed. This “negative” corruption, where one is systematically forced to act contrary to the principles of good practice and even the law simply in order to continue in office, is arguably the most pervasive and it points right back to the very top of the political hierarchy in the region.

The police are particularly vulnerable to corruption where the operation of the police force is highly centralised. The western European practice of municipal police forces makes it far easier to monitor police performance and to detect any “rotten apples” in the bunch. Where the police force is centralised at the national level, and where the national political leadership pursues controversial forms of policy, such as has been the case in FRY until recently, the police become an impenetrable circle of society where only those close to the government are able to peek inside while the rest of society remains largely at the mercy of such a force.

Decentralisation of the police force is one of the priorities for the reform of the Serbian system of social control. The Management Centre, an independent think tank based in Belgrade, has proposed a platform for the reform of local government, published in Spring 2000. This has a substantial section dealing with the need to decentralise the police force and to place the special police forces under the jurisdiction of mayors and municipal bodies.

Another crucial aspect of south-eastern European societies where corruption tends to be rampant, and again with a special emphasis on Serbia, is the judiciary. The judiciary is one of the most susceptible sectors in society to corruption and is now arguably one of the most corrupt social sectors in the former Yugoslavia. Judges are basically appointed by the ruling parties through a parliamentary procedure. The personnel policy of the courts in promotions and other matters is so destructive that, very often, important judges are people who hardly know the applicable laws in the cases that they most frequently try, let alone be profoundly aware of their particular function in society and the need for judicial independence as a pillar of any democratic society. Political dictate is a matter of norm in the courts and judicial inefficiency is notorious. Private disputes often wait five or even ten years before verdicts are reached and hearings are scheduled months apart.

All these general aspects of corruption in south-eastern Europe need to be addressed in terms of establishing specific directions concerning what needs to be done to combat them and what prerequisite circumstances need to be created in order for these directions to be fully applicable.

How can corruption be addressed?

There are three main areas where corruption needs to be tackled directly. They involve: the reform of the judiciary; the reform of the police force; and the introduction of expert consultancy and watchdog roles for NGOs, with substantial financial and logistical backing from the European Union and with formal linkages to its structures. Preferably, such linkages should also exist between the region's expert bodies and the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund but, as these are institutions that operate on the basis of priorities that are not always or even necessarily reflective of EU policies, the focus in this article is on linkages with the European Commission and the Council of Europe as the key European institutions that have the potential decisively to contribute to fighting corruption on the ground in south-eastern Europe.

Reform of the judiciary

At the very start of any reform of the judiciary, it must be taken into account that the courts are not just like any other social institutions, nor are judges "ordinary people" who share the destiny and problems of other folk in their countries. Judges must be made aware of the special role that they play in their societies, as those who mete out justice and make sure that the basic norms around which society integrates are respected and implemented whenever they are called upon to do so. Individual integrity must therefore be the first and paramount characteristic of all judges. They cannot be individuals who are selected by political parties, or by partisan political groups, and they can only be those who have earned consensual support within their communities by their unblemished record and the respect that they command in their profession and in their lives.

The existing judiciary in Serbia is full of problems, to say the least. To put it right, nothing short of the sacking of all judges is required. This should be followed by the establishment of a temporary tribunal for the most urgent cases in all areas, working under the jurisdiction of a special committee of the national Parliament in close co-operation with, and under the supervision of, high-ranking law officers of the United Nations and the associations of professional judges in western European countries. During this interim period, all judges should be evaluated in terms of the following criteria:

1. formal qualifications in comparison with other candidates who might be available at the time
2. performance record, including the average length of time spent dealing with cases until the final verdict, and the number of verdicts confirmed and struck down by higher courts
3. personal integrity in terms of connections with political or economic circles.

Those judges who are deemed to have satisfied the above three criteria should be re-appointed, along with new judges drawn from the ranks of the best lawyers the country has to offer, including those who might be prepared to return from abroad where they are successfully pursuing their profession.

In the first ten years of operation of the thus reconstituted courts, they need to be subject to close scrutiny by international organisations, primarily consisting of bodies of expert lawyers and judges.

All judges should be provided with substantial salaries which guarantee their financial independence, and benefits that make them less prone to bribery and other techniques of corruption. The funds for these salaries, as the first step of social reforms, should come from the European Union, which must invest money and expertise in the reform of the judiciary as the absolutely fundamental segment in any reform process. The judiciary needs to be reformed and placed well above other sectors of society in terms of its integrity and independence, even to the extent of guaranteeing significant professional and individual independence to judges – at least, in comparison to their relatively lax connections with the social and political developments in their immediate surroundings which would be yet to start undergoing equivalent reforms. This independence of the judiciary from their immediate surroundings, the latter continuing to be permeated by corruption and deprivation, needs to be developed from a substantial commitment of support and resources from the European Union. It is only the European Union that can be the appropriate body to support and supervise this area of development. It would be inappropriate for this support to come from any other quarters, because the judiciary needs to be retained within European conceptual and normative boundaries and it needs to be developed and reformed in accordance with the trends of European integration and European norms of conduct.

Reform of the police force

Police forces need to be reformed along the same lines as the reform of local government and its relationship with the national government. Namely, the national government needs to retain certain forces at its disposal while the bulk of the police force needs to be dispersed between the municipalities and should fall under the jurisdiction of the mayors. This would make sure that the work of the police force is more democratic, that it serves a plurality of interests and that it is more difficult to monopolise by a narrow group of the political elite.

Secondly, the decentralisation of the police force would make it possible to detect corruption more easily. Smaller numbers of police officers within municipally-organised forces, with no direct links to powerful politicians in the national government, would render corruption a far greater risk to those who are considering becoming corrupt. Public supervision would also be made easier and the transparency of the work of the police increased.

Thirdly, municipal police forces would increase the intensity of the connections and the co-operation between the local police and the local population. The European tradition of “the neighbourhood police officer” would be re-established. This is the key principle behind so-called “community policing”, which is, these days, receiving

increasing popularity in circles of criminological and criminal policy analysis. Community policing is directly opposed conceptually to so-called “military policing” based on mass raids, large “stop-and-search” operations with a high potential to intimidate and antagonise the local population, anonymity of the police force in relation to the population and a higher degree of the use of force by the police than would otherwise, supposedly, be the case. Community policing, in short, enables the police to acquire the trust of the local population, to become familiar with the problems of local communities and thus also to be more effective in their detection and enforcement roles.

Fourthly, the decentralisation of the police force would de-politicise it. Local governments are dominated by various political parties, and thus also by various political ideologies. A decentralised force would be in a position to serve the needs of the community without any substantial regard to the “ruling ideology” or the ruling party in the municipality. Such developments would have beneficial consequences for the integrity and professionalism of the police force itself.

Apart from decentralisation, the police force needs to be supervised in ways not entirely dissimilar to the model of monitoring and assessment that was proposed above for the reform of the judiciary. There is no need to sack all police officers, nor would this course of action be appropriate or feasible, but there should be a special parliamentary committee charged with the supervision of the work of the various sections of the police force. This should, especially, be the case with those sections of the police organisation that remain under the jurisdiction of the national government, wherein dedicated forces, including special anti-corruption and anti-organised crime squads, would have to be located. These two squads need to be made responsible directly to senior figures in Parliament and to the parliamentary committee charged with their supervision.

Methods along the lines of these general directions have been well-tried in countries that have managed substantially to curb corruption and organised crime, including most western European countries. In most of these, there are special forces charged with especially sensitive aspects of law enforcement, such as corruption and organised crime more generally, because the typical perpetrators of these crimes tend to be better equipped to avoid detection and to conceal their crimes.²

Introducing systemic stability through NGOs

Every aspect of societal reform after the initial reform of the judiciary, which needs to be the most radical, must develop in a broadening fashion. The reasons for this are both financial and logistic. Namely, the judiciary needs to be partially supported and kept independent by the European Union, while the other sectors that are to be reformed, including the police, must be funded by the government, both national and local. To do so successfully and in a manner that provides for a decent level of income

2 On some aspects of policing in south-eastern Europe, see Fatić, A. (1997): *Crime and social control in “central”-eastern Europe: a guide to theory and practice*, Ashgate Publishing: Aldershot.

for those public servants who would otherwise be potentially prone to become corrupt, the national and local governments need to be supported by the international institutions. This is exactly where the problems begin.

International organisations have proven very reluctant to commit resources to the Balkans. They have promised to do so through the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, but it remains largely unclear as to who will do this – and how they will do it. Funds and expertise cannot simply be channelled to the governments, which would technically be the most straightforward way, because governments are the most controversial groups in the region, and they are exactly the ones that need to be controlled.

Funding and expertise, the two commodities most in demand in the region, must be provided as an investment in the stability of the region. It is this type of stability, one that arises from a gradual reform of all the social sectors, monitored by an already rapidly and radically reformed and prestigious judiciary, that would serve as a weapon against corruption in itself. Yet, there is no guarantee that governments will act so as to enhance stability if they are given the resources. In fact, they may choose to act so as to perpetuate or escalate the existing instabilities in order to draw more funds for themselves and their administrations. Dealing with problematic or transitional governments who have not yet become fully accustomed to European standards of operation is a highly risky business, which is what the international organisations have witnessed in trying to resolve the former Yugoslav crisis by dealing with the political leaderships.

Reform of the public sector and the police, followed by a comprehensive reform of local administrations, the health system and other important sectors, must be co-ordinated by an expert forum of non-governmental organisations from the region and from the European Union. These NGOs need to be based on the expertise of their members and should be formed in close diplomatic contact with the representatives of the key members of the EU.

The international community needs to support short- and medium-term expert studies and platform proposals that will set the stage for gradual, but foreseeable and concrete, reform of specific social sectors, backed by EU funding and expertise, but monitored in their implementation by an impartial group of experts.

Expert bodies organised in south-eastern European think tanks must serve the role of the dissemination of information and the channelling of EU efforts to help the societies of the region.

In all this, one general principle needs to be observed. Those who are supposed to act as watchdogs and advisers to governments cannot be left in a position of dependence upon those same governments. They must be systematically linked with the European Commission and the Council of Europe, which are responsible for Working Table I of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe dealing with democratisation and human rights in the societies of the region. This liaison role would be facilitated by the designation of specific contacts for particular areas as regards the main NGOs in the region, especially those that have proven their ability to become integrated in western European models of consultancy, education, research and policy design – ei-

ther as organisations or as individuals who are members and/or officials of the region's NGOs.

These contacts would make it possible to perform the most efficient allocation not only of the financial resources but also of the donations of expertise, as well as the sources of relevant diplomatic information. Within such a network, an International Fund for the Development of South-Eastern Europe should be created within the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, which would serve as a conduit for all the resources and expertise that are being channelled into the countries of south-eastern Europe. Governments should appear as bidders for these funds, while decisions should be made in consultation with regional experts who should be independent of the governments. This independence needs to have two main forms, financial and legal. Members of non-governmental organisations who are connected with diplomatic fora and with the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe should be granted diplomatic status within all member countries of the EU and the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. As such, they would be able appropriately to pursue their interests between being a part of their own societies on the one hand and being able to act independently of certain concrete developments in them on the other.

Some of the accepted principles for the reform of social systems with a view to combating corruption include:

1. a clear commitment by political leaders to combat corruption wherever it occurs and to submit themselves to scrutiny
2. a primary emphasis on the prevention of future corruption and on changing systems (rather than indulging in witch-hunts)
3. the adoption of comprehensive anti-corruption legislation, implemented by agencies of manifest integrity (including investigators, prosecutors and adjudicators)
4. the identification of those government activities most prone to corruption and a review of both substantive law and administrative procedures
5. a programme to ensure that the salaries of civil servants and political leaders adequately reflect the responsibilities of their posts and are as comparable as possible with those in the private sector
6. a study of legal and administrative remedies to be sure that they provide an adequate deterrence
7. the creation of a partnership between government and civil society (including the private sector, professions and religious organisations)
8. making corruption a "high risk" and "low profit" undertaking.³

Let us have a brief look at these principles, with which we can generally agree as far as south-eastern Europe is concerned.

Firstly, obtaining a clear commitment by political leaders to fight corruption requires motivating those same leaders to express such a commitment. All south-eastern

3 Quoted from the *Transparency International Source Book*, "Executive Summary", which can be found at the following address: <http://transparency.de/documents/source-book/summary.html>.

European societies are poor or, at least, relatively poor. As regards the funding of their political activities, most politicians rely on sources which they cannot always guarantee have no connection with activities that could be described as in some way corrupt. In other words, asking south-eastern European politicians to undertake a commitment to fight corruption requires providing them with replacement resources and channeling these – including not only money, but expertise and consultancy – through individuals and organisations which can themselves demonstrate independence and integrity. South-eastern European NGOs are the most appropriate organisations for such a purpose because they are founded on the basis of independence from governments and government policies but, in order to fulfil this function efficiently, they must be adequately supported in the structural, long-term sense.

Secondly, a reconciliatory dimension is a necessary part of any effort to conduct social, legislative, judicial or policy reforms. Corruption has been a systemic, endemic phenomenon. It would be unfair, even counter-productive, to prosecute all those who have been corrupt in south-eastern Europe, because, as was said at the beginning of this article, without being corrupt it is doubtful whether they would have been able to survive and to support their families. This conditional forgiving and “forgetting” of past misdeeds should be extended as far as possible, except in no case should it stretch to the judiciary, where corruption must directly lead to dismissal. Reprisals and legal retribution need to be avoided for the aforementioned reasons but people who have acted “in the spirit” of a corrupt and dependent judiciary during illegitimate and authoritarian governments must be asked to leave office and seek work elsewhere. Generally speaking, reforms need to aim at the betterment of most people, rather than being a deterrent to those who have “gone with the flow” of corruption and the semi-legitimate activities that have characterised the countries of the region over the past decade, or even several decades.

Thirdly, a comprehensive anti-corruption legislation, including the formation of special police forces for fighting corruption, is essential for any anti-corruption strategy. However, the new anti-corruption laws must be drafted by experts in independent organisations and verified via the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and through public debate in the countries of the region, and not by the existing governments.

Fourthly, the identification of those government services most prone to corruption can hardly be expected to be performed by the government itself. Again, the role of independent teams of experts is irreplaceable.

Fifthly, an increase in the salaries of those whose discretionary authorisations are a potential source of corruption must be tied to an influx of funds from European sources, which need to be administered in exchange for good programmes and a strong promise of concrete reforms. Organisations of high integrity are crucial in the facilitation of this process.

Sixthly, a study of the legal remedies is a prerequisite for any programme of anti-corruption activity. Such studies are partly already underway, at least in Serbia. Still, increasing the deterrent measures within the criminal legislation would be a wrong way forward, which would go contrary to the forward-looking nature of the anti-cor-

ruption campaign. The provision of alternatives and incentives is a more effective method of combating corruption than threats of heavy-handed legal intervention.

Seventhly, fostering a partnership between government and the non-governmental sector is at the heart of that for which this article argues, bearing in mind that NGOs are to play an advisory and supervisory role in the evolution of a new structure of government and a new manner of governance.

Eighthly, rendering corruption a high risk and low profit activity belongs to the realm of legislation and enforcement, and, again, this should be done more by exposing corruption. This is in sharp contrast with the incentive-building and standard-increasing options that could be opened up by a corruption-free system of governance supported systematically at the international level.

Conclusion

Corruption in south-eastern Europe is widespread at all levels – petty corruption, medium-scale corruption and grand corruption. For many people, it has been their only method of survival during the most intense transition crises in their countries. These societies now face a common problem in how to devise platforms and implement policies for effectively combating corruption while, at the same time, retaining the pace of the social cohesion that has just started to build up after the rapid changes that occurred in these countries during the first years of the post-communist change.

There are two very general steps in any such comprehensive anti-corruption campaign. First, a wholesale reform of the judiciary, strongly supported internationally, needs to be undertaken. Secondly, a system of expert bodies, consisting of individuals of high integrity coming from the ranks of NGOs from throughout the region, and experts from EU countries, needs to be formed. This would help channel expertise and funding from the EU to the countries of south-eastern Europe through an International Fund for the Development of South-Eastern Europe, which would be established within the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

By these two steps, the basic elements of societal stability would be gradually introduced in south-east European societies, which would make possible a systematic and cautious attention to particular aspects and types of corruption control. Some of this work is already ongoing in the region's NGOs in terms of platform design. These efforts need to be pooled together with those of the western European expert teams that should be formed in response to the effort to combat corruption in south-eastern Europe. Greater liaison and co-operation must also be established in order to give the resultant platforms the financial, logistic and political support they need.