

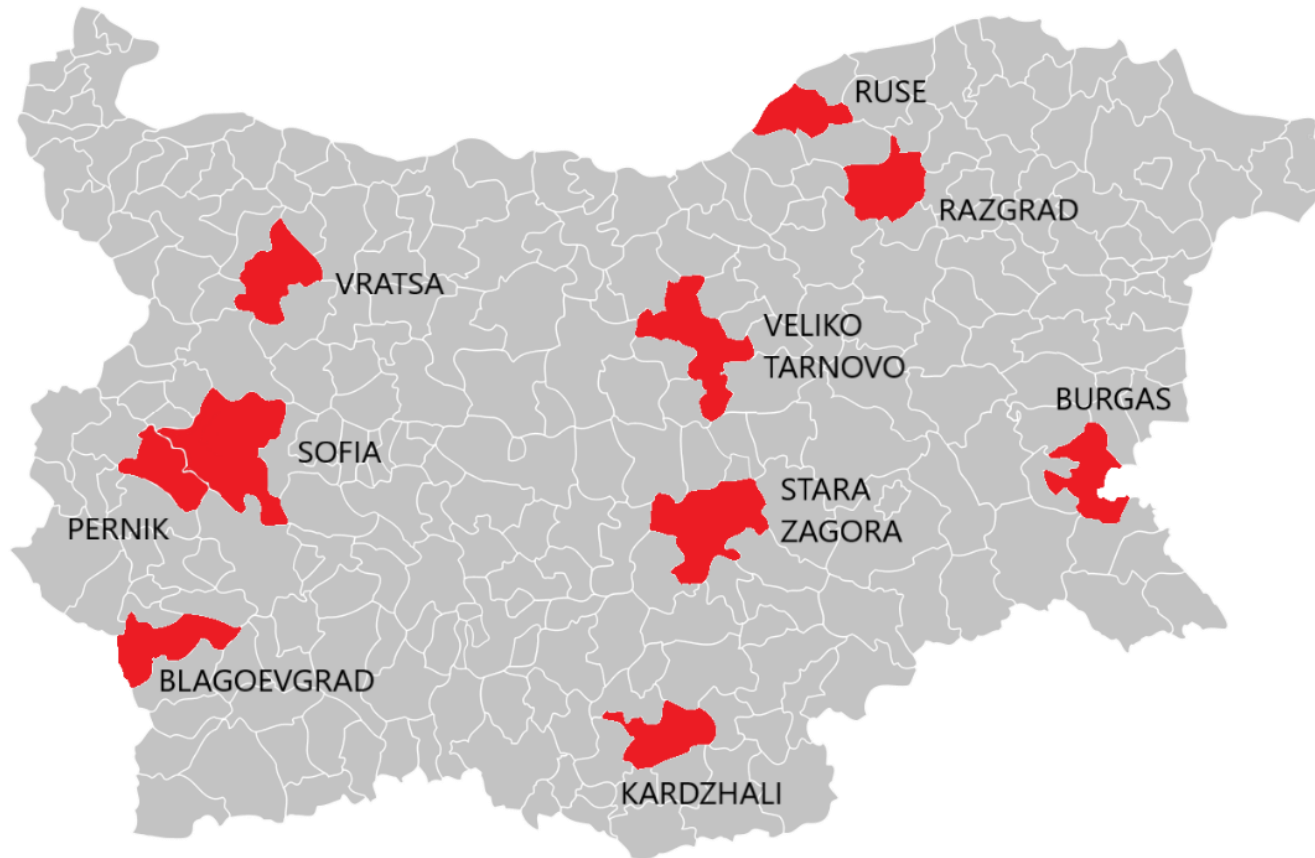
Countering Municipal Corruption in Bulgaria

IRI Program

Workshop: “Strengthening Anti-Corruption Policies
through Public-Private Partnership”, 21 March 2023



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The Program


Scope:

- Implemented in 10 municipalities

Aims:

- To identify municipal vulnerabilities to corruption
- To generate solutions based on government and nongovernment input at the municipal level
- Design, adoption, and implementation of municipal anticorruption reform agendas

Program Elements

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- The **VCA process** and municipal polling
 - The Municipal **Anticorruption Pact**
 - **Design** and adoption of **reform agendas** by WGs
 - **Adoption** of reform agendas by municipal councils
 - Reform **implementation**
 - Trainings for **CSOs / government** officers and officials

Vulnerabilities to Corruption

IRI's Approach



Some important distinctions

**Mitigating
Vulnerabilities**

VS

**Uprooting
Corruption**

Prevention

Punishment

Reform

Judicial Action



The VCA Methodology

POLITICAL-ECONOMY ANALYSIS

- Secondary sources
- Social, political, economic, legal, institutional factors

DATA COLLECTION

- 52 local government
- 63 civil society
- 64 women

STAKEHOLDER VALIDATION

- Working groups in each of the 10 municipalities

VCA Findings

How Vulnerabilities Make Corruption Harder to Prevent

1. Corruption prevention mechanisms not used
2. Transparency practiced without ease of use
3. Informal channels used to bypass administrations
4. Citizen disengagement from participation platforms
5. No substantive policy role by civil society



Implications for Policymakers

BEYOND SOFIA

- The focus of Bulgarian anti-corruption activity – both governmental and non-governmental – should expand beyond Sofia and other large cities.

LOCAL RULES

- The national legislative framework should be supplemented with local systems to fully protect municipalities against corruption.

BEST FIT

- The substantial variation across Bulgarian municipalities calls for tailored responses to corruption vulnerabilities.

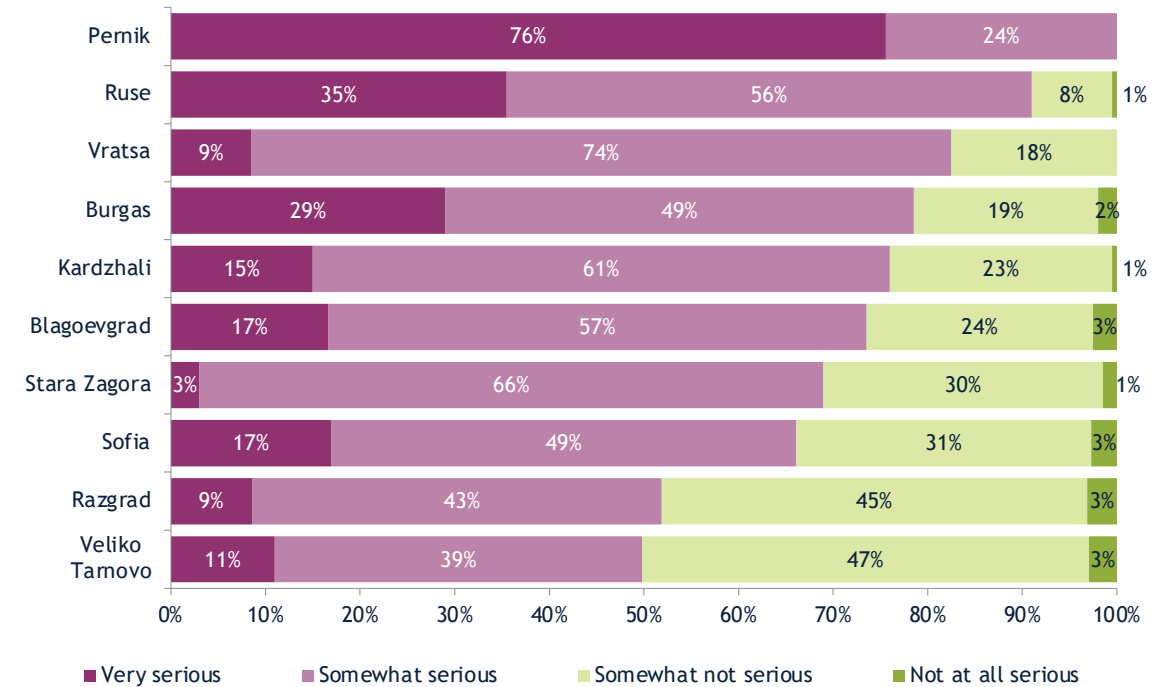
The quantitative argument:

Municipal polls

- 10 municipal polls
- Main conclusions:
 - Corruption at the municipal level considered a problem by 50%+
 - Discrepancy between the perception and experience of corruption
 - Anticorruption mechanisms seen as ineffective
 - Very low levels of participation
- **Outcome:** Creating **evidence on citizen perceptions** of corruption as a problem at the municipal level **to motivate and focus reforms.**



Do you believe that corruption in your municipality is a serious problem or not?



Perceptions of corruption as a problem at the municipal level



The Municipal Anticorruption Pact



Пакт за превенция и противодействие на корупцията на общинско ниво

Ние, долуподписаните кметове на общини,

Отчитайки, че:

- корупцията заплашва устоите на демокрацията, като уронва доверието на гражданите към публичните институции, към техните политически представители и към държавните и общински служители,
- корупцията накърнява правата, свободите и стандарта на живот на гражданите, и че
- неефективната прозрачност и липсата на ангажираност на гражданите могат да породят уязвимост към корупция,

Се ангажираме да работим в нашите общини за:

- поддръжане на ефективна прозрачност и нейното по-нататъшно подобряване;
- по-голяма откритост, достъпност и ангажираност с гражданите от страна на общинското ръководство, общинската администрация и Общинския съвет;
- повишаване на гражданското участие и ангажираност при вземането на общински решения;
- ефективно използване на механизмите и структурите за превенция и противодействие на корупцията на общинско ниво.

Даниел Панов
Кмет на община
Велико Търново

Динчо Бояджиев
Кмет на община
Рахово

Димитър Николов
Кмет на община
Бургас

Хасан Азис
Кмет на община
Кърджали

Илко Стоянов
Кмет на община
Благоевград

Калин Каменов
Кмет на община
Враца

Петя Петрова
Кмет на община
Русе

Станислав Владимиров
Кмет на община
Перник

Йорданка Фандъкова
Кмет на Столична
община

Живко Тодоров
Кмет на община
Стара Загора



Municipal WGs in Sofia (above) and Stara Zagora (below) discuss the texts of anticorruption reform agendas.



IRI convened mayors for a roundtable to discuss reform agenda adoption and implementation priorities, a special guest was the U.S. Ambassador Herro Mustafa.

The Anticorruption **Reform Agendas**

- Design and adoption by WGs:
 - WG constitution.
 - Catalogue of Reforms.
 - A two-step process, adoption by unanimous consensus.
- Reform agendas submitted to mayors in December 2022
- **6 Official Adoptions by Municipal Councils: Stara Zagora, Burgas, Razgrad, Kardzhali, Sofia, Pernik.**
- 4 to be adopted.

Examples of Some Reforms

- Institutional transparency policies
- Institutional communication policies
- Registers of public assets and expenditure
- Awareness-raising campaigns
- Civic education campaigns
- Online platforms for civic participation
- Digital platforms for citizen reports and complaints
- Consultative mechanisms for civic groups
- Participatory budgeting
- Ordinances for public consultations and discussions

Sustaining Active CSO Engagement



CSO Training - the role of CSOs in:

- Upholding municipal transparency
- Increasing citizen participation
- Anticorruption reform implementation and monitoring

Thank **you!**



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