INTEGRITY ACADEMY

KORR-KÉP

Corruption, integrity and the use of European Union funds, according to young Hungarians

Comprehensive results of a questionnaire-based, large-sample data collection

What is corruption?

One of the key steps in the research was the introduction of a comprehensive definition for corruption. This comprehensive definition is what we meant by corruption while conducting our data collection and data analysis.

"Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain – whether by an individual, group, or institution – typically at the expense of the public interest, and involving violations of laws, regulations and/or integrity standards. Corruption also occurs when someone offers or provides a private gain to an individual, group or institution entrusted with power for the purpose of gaining an advantage. All such cases are considered corruption, even if they are carried out under the pretext of some perceived or actual public interest."

According to young Hungarians, corruption is prevalent and keeps growing

Young Hungarians think corruption is the second most significant problem in Hungary. It came second only to difficulties perceived in relation to the general price increases, inflation, and the cost of living, as revealed by the problem map.

70% of the young generation believe that corruption is extremely or significantly widespread in Hungary. Respondents considered corruption in the country to be a little more prevalent in general terms than specifically in relation to European Union funds.

Research objective

The KORR-KÉP research programme is intended to **survey the attitudes and experiences of young Hungarians aged 15 to 29 regarding the use of European Union funds, corruption, integrity**, as well as other related subjects. Through the use of reliable and comprehensive data, the study collects relevant information directly from young Hungarians.

Through its research projects, the Integrity Academy assists social stakeholders and economic actors in recognising and taking effective action against corruption, as well as in reinforcing a culture of integrity and ethical operation. The data contribute to substantiating and deepening the Integrity Authority's reports and its recommendations formulated therein.

Research methodology

Data collection in the KORR-KÉP research programme took place using a **mixed methodology**, including both focus group interviews and questionnaire-based data collection. This overview specifically **presents the results from the questionnaire-based data collection**, which was preceded by a study involving "pre-survey focus group interviews".

Sampling for the questionnaire-based data collection was performed using **stratified multistage sampling**, thereby ensuring random (probability) sampling. Respondents were selected using the **random walk method**, setting out from randomly chosen starting points inside the designated settlements. The interviewers conducted **personal interviews** to collect responses for the questionnaire. The proper sampling and the posterior weighting of the results ensure that **the data represent the entire group of young Hungarians aged 15 to 29. 1,012** individuals from the specified age group **participated** in the data collection.

How widespread is corruption in Hungary?

Generally and in relation to European Union funds (%)
(n_{hu}=1,012, n_{eu}=1,000)

	Generally in Hungary	In relation to EU funds
Extremely	32,0%	25,6%
Significantly	38,0%	36,3%
Moderately	20,0%	22,4%
Scarcely	5,4%	7,0%
No corruption	1,3%	2,0%
Don't know	2,9%	6,0%
No response	0,4%	0,7%

Over half (67.1%) of young Hungarians believe that corruption has increased significantly over the past 5 years in the country. Based on their responses, the following factors account for the prevalence of corruption:
• lack of transparency in the use of public funds;
• the structure of public administration is not based on merit;
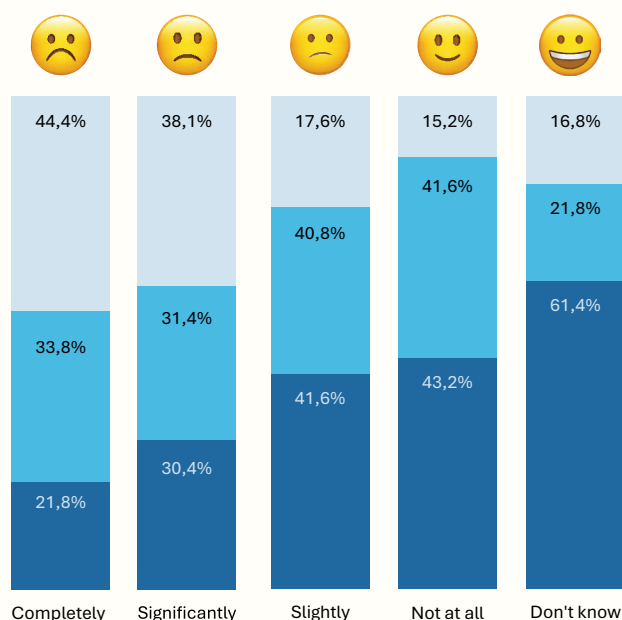• laws do not apply equally to everyone.

The impact of corruption on young people's quality of life

31.7% of young Hungarians reported that **corruption affected their everyday lives completely or to a great extent.** Scientific research on the relationship between well-being and the perception of corruption counts as a novelty in both international and Hungarian academic literature. There was a significant correlation between young Hungarians' **subjective well-being** and the **extent to which** they felt **the influence of corruption on their everyday lives.** The less they felt the effects of corruption on their everyday lives, the higher their well-being levels rose.

Correlation between corruption and well-being

The correlation between corruption's impact on everyday life and subjective well-being (n = 1,012)

To what extent does corruption affect everyday life?

	Completely	Significantly	Slightly	Not at all	Don't know
Low well-being (0-5)	44,4%	38,1%	17,6%	15,2%	16,8%
Moderate well-being (6-7)	33,8%	31,4%	40,8%	41,6%	21,8%
High well-being (8-10)	21,8%	30,4%	41,6%	43,2%	61,4%

Legend:
- High well-being (8-10)
- Moderate well-being (6-7)
- Low well-being (0-5)

Young Hungarians are more tolerant of corruption

In line with international results, young Hungarians also think that it is the payment of **bribes that is the least acceptable** in public institutions and offices: 72.8% of the respondents stated that such conduct is completely unacceptable or rather unacceptable. By contrast, giving gifts and doing favours were rejected consistently only by 52.4% and 41.8% of the respondents, respectively.

A **corruption tolerance index** was constructed using the three questions about the acceptability of bribes, illicit gifts and favours. Based on the results of the Special Eurobarometer 548 survey, it can be **concluded that the proportion of those who clearly rejected[1] the acceptability of all forms of bribery was significantly higher among young Europeans than among young Hungarians.**

Corruption in the life of Hungarian youth

According to research findings, 4.1% of young Hungarians have already reported a suspected corruption case, but only half of them indicated that they would report such a case again. According to young respondents, what primarily accounts for people's passivity is **the concern that by reporting a corruption case, they might put themselves in a difficult situation (43.1%).**
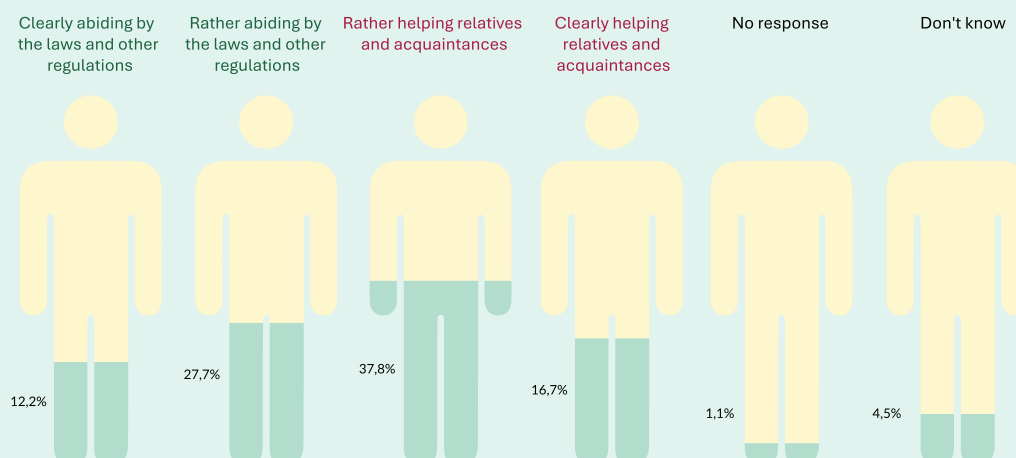
Are young people more honest than others?

Young people believe that they are **much more compliant** with rules and ethical standards than other people.

However, while young people consider themselves more honest than others, **54.5% of them responded by stating** that when compelled to choose, **helping relatives and acquaintances is more important to them** than adhering to laws and regulations.

Is helping relatives and acquaintances more important than abiding by the law?

If you had to choose, which one would you say is more important: helping relatives and acquaintances or abiding by the laws and other regulations? (n=1,012)

Clearly abiding by the laws and other regulations	Rather abiding by the laws and other regulations	Rather helping relatives and acquaintances	Clearly helping relatives and acquaintances	No response	Don't know
12,2%	27,7%	37,8%	16,7%	1,1%	4,5%

[1] "completely unacceptable"

Whose duty is it to fight corruption?

41.5% of young people **would not do anything if they encountered corruption.** This high rate of passivity might also result from the fact that they may not know which organisation or person they could turn to in such a situation, since the results demonstrated that **only 13% of them were aware of who they could report it to.** They see the fight against corruption as the responsibility of other institutions and organisations, much rather than their own.

Efficiency in the use of European Union funds

More than half (53.8%) of young Hungarians think that the use of European Union funds is not efficient.

Over the past ten years the utilisation of European Union funds in the areas of transportation and infrastructure development, as well as in the healthcare sector. At the same time, nearly one third of young Hungarians **could not name an area in which they would have observed the utilisation of European Union funding.**

Demand for anti-corruption training

The youth of today are the leaders, politicians, public officials, and businesspersons of tomorrow; therefore, **empowering this generation to recognise, reject and report corrupt practices** is critical. Based on the research findings, young people believe that achieving this goal **requires training programmes that accompany them throughout their studies and career paths**, combining conventional and interactive educational methods and involving professionals from diverse backgrounds.