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On the Right Path

Research Programme



**The Hungarian population's experiences and perceptions
of corruption, integrity and European Union funding**

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**The Hungarian population’s experiences and perceptions of corruption,
integrity and European Union funding**

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The population survey, conducted as part of the research programme *On the Right Path* (original Hungarian title: *Tiszta úton*), examined perceptions of corruption, experiences related to corruption, the fight against corruption, the use of European Union funds, and other related topics among the population aged 18 and over with residence in Hungary. The survey was carried out by the Integrity Academy, the Integrity Authority's educational and awareness-raising initiative.

The methodological design and preparation of the study, as well as the coordination of the data collection and its overall expert supervision, were led by **Dr. Kinga Vajda**, Lead Researcher at the Integrity Academy. The analysis and visualisation of the research data were carried out with the participation of **Enikő Vida**, **Ferenc Ács** and **Péter Fodor**.

Dr. Petra Burai acted as the peer reviewer for the research project, while **Tamás Mehlhoffer** oversaw its implementation, with the support of **Dr. Dóra Lovas**. The graphic design of the publication was created by **Zsuzsanna Portik**. Translation into English was rendered by **Ervin Márk Pavanello** and **András Keresztes**.

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Executive summary

The Integrity Authority's *On the Right Path* research programme is one of the first Hungarian surveys designed to compare trends in social attitudes toward corruption and integrity over time. In Hungary, no such comprehensive assessment had previously existed. It is this gap that the recently started research project is intended to fill in. The study organically complements the KORR-KÉP project, focusing on young people, and one of its objectives is to repeat the survey regularly and systematically, to ensure continuous monitoring of trends and changes. The research data help the Authority and assist in anti-corruption efforts through supporting an evidence-based decision-making process.

Key findings of the study

1. There appears to be a clearly discernible anti-corruption norm in Hungarian society: according to the population, corruption is among the gravest problems; 41.6% of respondents consider it one of the three most important social issues, and three quarters of respondents reject such practices.
2. People believe that those around them are more corrupt than themselves, while they have relatively low amount of tangible, personal experiences with corruption: 7.2% of respondents reported having personally encountered instances of corruption in the 12 months prior to the study.
3. A proportion of 69.2% of the population are not aware of any institution that they could turn to in the event of witnessing a suspected case of corruption – this result is substantially worse than the EU average (52.6%). At the same time, those who are aware of anti-corruption institutions are nearly four times more likely to report cases of abuse. Among respondents able to name such an institution, the Integrity Authority ranked among the three most frequently cited anti-corruption organisations.
4. Based on the results, more than a quarter (26.8%) of society can be expected to act against corruption. Failure to take action against corruption can mostly be ascribed to fear of retaliation, difficulties in providing evidence, procedural uncertainty and a lack of trust in the effectiveness of the procedure.

The position of corruption on the societal problem map

The population considers corruption to be the third most pressing issue in Hungary, after inflation / cost of living and public health: **41.6%** of respondents ranked it among the three most important problems, which points to a systemic concern. The study revealed that respondents more interested in public affairs and more engaged in political and societal processes are more likely to perceive corruption as a major problem. Perceptions of a lower level of subjective well-being are correlated with the impact of corruption on daily life. The greater the impact on Hungarian people's daily lives, the lower their reported levels of subjective well-being.

Perception, experience, self-image and environment

Prevalence of corruption: According to 73.7% of the Hungarian population, corruption is considerably or extremely widespread in Hungary. This is higher than Eurobarometer's comparable findings (26% responded *"very widespread"* and 43.7% *"rather widespread"*).

Trends over the past five years: The majority of the population (45.7%) observed a notable increase in corruption between 2020 and 2025, while a further 20.9% experienced a slight increase. Only 5.7% of the population reported any decrease at all.

Divergence between self-image and the perceived image of others: The majority consider the people around them less rule-abiding and ethical than themselves. 7.2% reported personal experience with corruption, and a further 9.5% (also) encountered corruption through a relative or acquaintance.

In which public institution do Hungarians most frequently experience corruption? People most often experience corruption in the healthcare sector, with 60.8% – almost two thirds – of the respondents having selected this option. One in four respondents who experienced corruption in the 12 months preceding the data collection encountered it in connection with a social institution, while local governments ranked third.

Acceptance of corruption

Almost three quarters (73.6%) of the society reject corruption: According to 59.4%, it is completely unacceptable, while 14.2% said it is rather unacceptable. Nevertheless, **26.4%** of the population consider corruption **completely or rather acceptable** in public institutions, provided that it offers

them some form of advantage. In a regional breakdown, the rate of respondents considering corruption “completely acceptable” was highest in Budapest (11.9% compared to the national average of 7.1%).

What does the population consider corruption? More than 90% reject offering cash in exchange for some form of advantage, while 30% consider offering gifts unacceptable and 34% consider offering favours unacceptable. The largest proportion of respondents (46.9%) consider “rather honest” behaviour to be the key to success in business.

Trust, media and access to institutions

Trust in institutions: Hungarians have the highest level of distrust toward the government, state healthcare, and financial institutions. This finding has an immediate effect on the willingness to report, as higher percentages of those who claimed to have confidence in institutions indicated that they would take an opportunity to report corruption.

Media consumption and corruption: Respondents who identified public service television channels as a source of information perceived corruption as substantially less widespread. Hungarians place the greatest trust in media outlets that are critical of the government, but the level of overall trust in the media is generally low. Assessments of state-run media and those supporting the government showed a strong correlation, which suggests that the population treats these two types of media as a single category.

Access to public services: The vast majority considered access to public services more difficult than access to private services. Respondents considered access to state healthcare, courts, and the tax authority to be the most difficult. The less access individuals have to services, the more negatively they view the overall prevalence of corruption.

Respondents’ willingness to report and awareness of institutions

Among respondents, 26.8% would take action upon encountering a suspected case of corruption, while 73.2% would either not report it or were uncertain of the action they would take. Only 8.8% claimed that either they or an acquaintance had already reported such cases.

Among respondents, 69.2% are not aware of any institution which they could turn to in the event of witnessing a suspected case of corruption (EU average: 52.6%). Where people are aware of such institutions, the willingness to report rises to 48%, in contrast with the 19.5% of those unaware of them.

Both groups (those aware and unaware of institutions) cited the police as the most important reporting channel. Specialised anti-corruption institutions appear in the responses of those who are aware of such institutions, with the Integrity Authority emerging as one of the three most frequently cited institutions.

The four key reasons for failing to report suspected cases of corruption: (1) fear of retaliation and consequences, (2) difficulty in proving corruption, (3) procedural and information uncertainty, (4) perceptions of ineffectiveness.

Use of European Union funds

According to **65.4%** of the population, corruption is considerably or extremely widespread in the domestic use of European Union funds; only 2.2% considered such corruption to be non-existent. Among respondents, 43.8% perceived corruption as prevalent in EU institutions – which means that they consider the domestic use of funds to be substantially more corrupt.

People perceive the presence of EU funding as prevalent: 76% of respondents are aware of local, and 78% of national EU-financed development projects. However, people's assessments of these projects are twofold: while **local use is considered positive by the majority (64%), national use is viewed much more sceptically (44%)**. Those with a higher level of democratic engagement are more critical of the country-level use of funds.

Subjective security and vision for the future

More than 80% of Hungarians do not expect their quality of life to improve in the next period (56.5% expect the situation to stagnate, while 30.4% expect it to worsen). Answering a separate question, **73.6% of the population considered public institutions to be either “completely unable” or “rather unable” to protect the population from the adverse effects of corruption**.

The importance of engagement in public affairs

The overwhelming majority of the population consider it important to have a voice in public affairs: 85.3% at the local level (52.2% consider it very important + 33.1% consider it rather important), while 83.4% at the country level (51.2% + 32.2%).

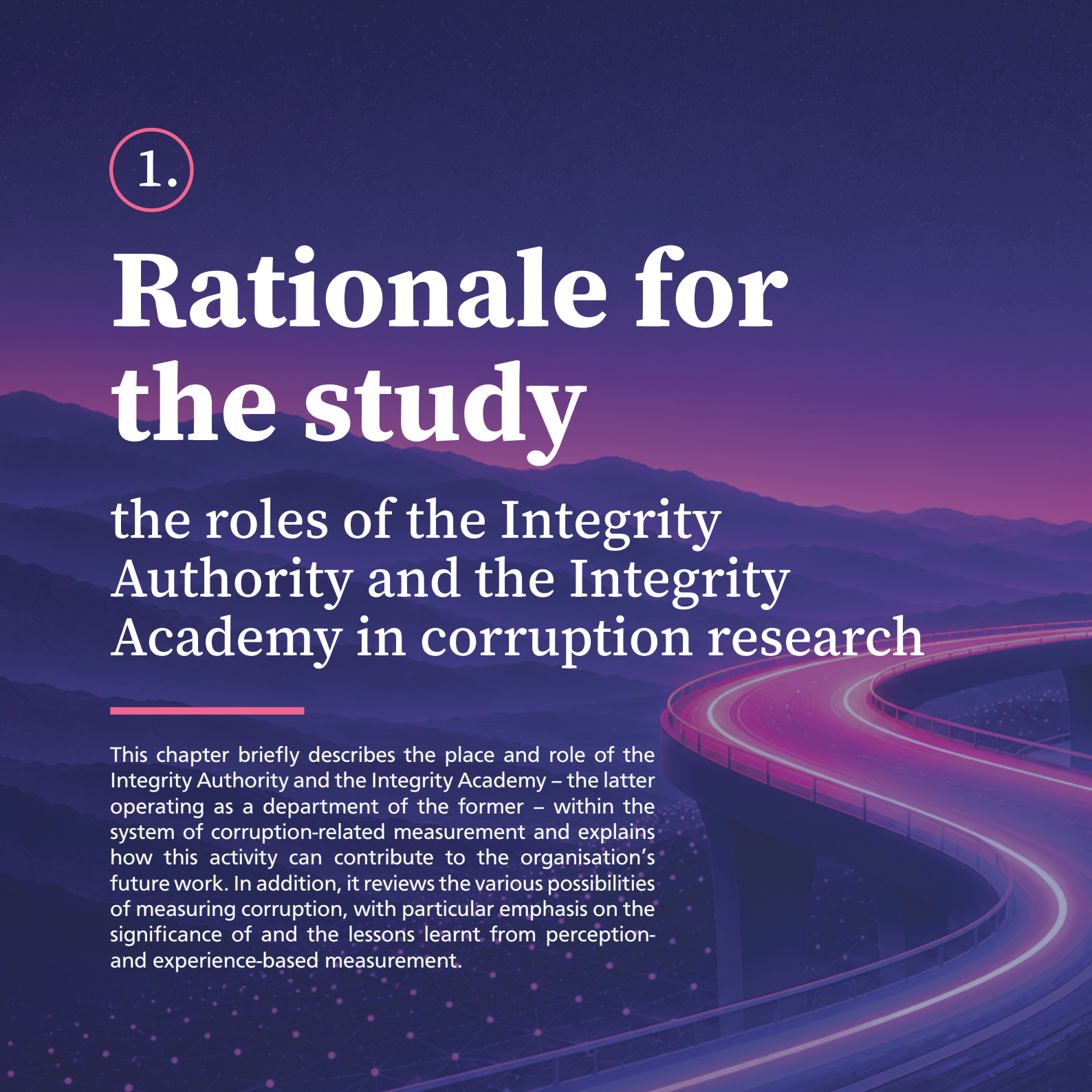
However, this attitude does not automatically translate into action: anti-corruption efforts also require specific institutional infrastructure and knowledge, in addition to general civic engagement.

About the research study – methodological background

The *On the Right Path* research programme consists of a **representative quantitative** survey of the Hungarian population aged 18 and over (n = 1,254), complemented by large-scale survey data collections among two specific target groups (economic actors and public officials) and analyses based on public procurement databases.

The questionnaire covers nine thematic domains: integrity, subjective well-being, perceptions and tolerance of corruption, access to services, experiences related to corruption, anti-corruption efforts, security, democratic participation, and, as a special priority domain for the Integrity Authority, efficiency in the use of European Union funds. Besides the general population, the target population of the research programme will later be expanded to include economic operators and civil servants, as well.

Thanks to its comprehensive approach, the recently published first research report not only provides a snapshot of the prevalence of corruption and society's attitudes toward it but also sheds light on several dimensions of social functioning and outlines a problem map that presents corruption not in isolation but in the context of other systemic dysfunctions.



1.

Rationale for the study

the roles of the Integrity Authority and the Integrity Academy in corruption research

This chapter briefly describes the place and role of the Integrity Authority and the Integrity Academy – the latter operating as a department of the former – within the system of corruption-related measurement and explains how this activity can contribute to the organisation's future work. In addition, it reviews the various possibilities of measuring corruption, with particular emphasis on the significance of and the lessons learnt from perception- and experience-based measurement.

1.1. The role of the Integrity Authority in corruption research

Pursuant to Act XXVII of 2022 on the control of the use of European Union budget funds (*"Integrity Authority Act"*), the Integrity Authority, as an autonomous state administrative body, is tasked with preparing reports and may issue recommendations in the framework of its analytical and proposal drafting duties. Besides fulfilling its tasks set out by law, the body also conducts scientific research activity and continuously improves its operations in order to enhance its efficiency. In this context and based on a systematic review of relevant national and international academic literature and empirical research findings, it seeks to lay the groundwork for and further substantiate the conclusions set out in its reports and recommendations. In addition, by using the data collected and processed through its research projects, it provides solid evidence-based support for the professional and research work carried out by the staff of the Authority. Its objective is for its research findings to support not only the Authority's work and society as a whole but also the efforts of decision-makers, policymakers, and academics.

All this contributes to maintaining the high quality of the Authority's work in two ways. On the one hand, it enables the Authority to make evidence-based decisions in relation to its operation and priorities. On the other hand, it provides the groundwork for the well-thought-out design and efficient implementation of targeted intervention and prevention measures.

Evidence-based decision-making has become particularly important during the past decade: it is becoming an increasingly common approach whose significance is being addressed by a growing number of researchers. In addition to professional expertise and political considerations, this kind of mechanism also places an emphasis on the findings of empirical research (NUTLEY–DAVIES–WALTER 2007). The objective is to ensure that measures tailored to address public policy issues are developed and implemented in response to genuine demands and needs, thereby ensuring their enhanced effectiveness, as well as the comparability and measurability of the effects of interventions. The measurement of the effectiveness of an intervention or programme can pose challenges, but information revealed by empirical research is able to contribute to the decision-making process by providing a context that is key to its adequate implementation. Therefore, it is often reasonable to view evidence-based decision-making as a supplementary or fine-tuning mechanism (SANDERSON 2002).

The Integrity Academy and Communications Office focuses on contributing to the professional work of the Integrity Authority, as well as on carrying out preventive and awareness-raising tasks. One important

instrument in this regard is shaping the attitudes of society and the various groups within. Mundt et al. (2024), in an experiment investigating the possibility of influencing social norms, sought to determine the extent to which people's immediate behavioural choices can be shaped by external stimuli ("*social push*"). Given the nature of the study, assessing long-term impacts was impossible; therefore, they were not monitored. The finding of the field experiment was that in cases where the individual has the time and opportunity to alter his or her behaviour, messages designed to shape behavioural choices can be considerably successful. Conversely, in contexts where action requires quick decision-making, or the individual has limited room for manoeuvre, the impact of such interventions will be much more moderate.

For this reason, a clear and thorough understanding of the context is indispensable when developing social awareness-raising or attitude-shaping programmes. For the Authority and the Academy to explore relevant connections and contexts and build a solid knowledge base for the successful implementation of their social awareness-raising and attitude-shaping projects, it is essential for them to have a comprehensive understanding of corruption-related perceptions and specific experiences within Hungarian society and its various sub-groups, as well as the points at which they are open to intervention. Having this information is a prerequisite for developing a long-term strategy for the preventive and awareness-raising work. In addition to one-off, cross-sectional data collections, subsequent regular data collections may also be of considerable importance, as they could enable longer-term time-series comparisons and trend analyses.

Evidence-based policy interventions, social awareness-raising programmes, the development of up-to-date national measurement methodologies, and the sharing of findings and best practices were among the objectives declared and adopted at the COSP 11¹ international conference (United Nations 2025).

Exploring norms, attitudes and behavioural patterns is an essential condition for diagnosing problems and – implicitly – corruption. OECD's Public Integrity Handbook (OECD 2020) emphasises that integrity policy cannot achieve its desired goal most effectively, unless it is based on measurable indicators and empirical feedback. The role of the surveys addressing this issue is not merely optional or supplementary but constitute a prerequisite for ensuring that interventions and preventive measures, educational methods or communications campaigns can result in genuine social impacts that can be subsequently verified through measurement (UNODC 2023). Empirical data help ensure that development is not based on assumptions but real-life social experience and needs. This is particularly true for programmes aimed at shaping social attitudes.

¹ Conference of the State Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (COSP)

Both the research activity of the Integrity Authority and the present study of the Integrity Academy and Communications Office are well-founded supporting documents. They provide an important theoretical cornerstone not only of the Authority's professional investigational activity but also of its education methodological strategy and social awareness-raising programme, on which key practical elements may be built in the future. The evidence base developed and the well-founded research methodology is not only a pillar of the Authority's comprehensive strategy but may also act as a driving force behind social initiatives addressing issues other than those related to the Authority, since their results and data may also benefit other scientific actors, policymakers and entities.

1.2 Challenges in measuring corruption

Measuring corruption is a complex and difficult undertaking. Since the related activities are considered illegal or at least undesirable either legally or at the level of social norms, the individuals participating in them tend to seek to hide these transactions or the indications of them.

This characteristic of corruption results in two main approaches to measuring the phenomenon. One of them is based on objective facts, while the other also considers perceptions as well as objective experiences, partly drawing on the corruption perceptions of the social group under study (PELIZZO–BARIS–JANENOVA 2018). There are also methodological approaches that seek to maximise the information content of results by combining the two approaches.

There are two easily distinguishable directions within the objective measurement approach. One of them involves analysing statistics of actual corruption cases (for example, based on closed criminal cases), while the other explores the prevalence of corruption risks in a well-defined domain, mostly within the field of public procurement. Thus, it is possible to determine how many contracts these risks are involved in over a given period. The latter technique, which explores and quantifies risks, is the research method examining proxy indicators.

The word "*proxy*" refers to the fact that the technique does not measure the corrupt practice itself but some indirect phenomenon that is a reliable indicator of the practice, such as the proportion of single-bid tender procedures. Studies conducted using proxy indicators identify indicative "*red flag*" risks, which raise awareness to the presence of such corruption risks or anomalies in a specific point of the system under study that may be taken advantage of (FAZEKAS–KOC SIS 2015: 6–10). Ideally, the results obtained through proxy indicators may indicate a relationship with the results of experience-based and/or perception-based studies (FAZEKAS–KOC SIS 2017) and other indicators assessing the quality of governance (CHARRON et al. 2017).

In the context of the above, it should be emphasised that corruption may occur beyond public procurement, and outside the scope of the databases available for study. This type of approach does not examine phenomena such as the *“revolving door”*, *“gratitude payments”*, or nepotism. However, this is a serious deficiency, since these are the least *“tangible”* types of corruption, which are embedded deep in the structure of society, and are, in many cases, even socially tolerated behaviours (UNODC 2004).

The other type of studies focusing on the phenomenon is made up of projects measuring perceptions and – in many cases – specific experiences of corruption. These surveys provide insight into the public’s perceptions of the manifestations and extent of corruption. In this way, they are capable of capturing the diverse manifestations of corruption. Apart from perceptions, the presentation and assessment of experiences help to keep the possibility of subjective perceptual bias under control, providing a more comprehensive picture. The two approaches are often used in combination, or – in certain cases – supplemented with an analysis based on objective indicators (MUGELLINI–VILLENEUVE 2019). The objective of combining different measurement approaches is to eliminate the deficiencies of each type.

Like any measurement method, perception-based studies also have limitations, which are particularly important to examine and take into consideration when designing such studies. This raises the question of how accurate the insight into the population’s opinions can be. Respondents may often seek to comply with certain social norms or try too hard to sound competent in some subjects. Consequently, they may not express their real opinions regarding the questions of the survey. On top of all that, the role of the media must also be taken into account, since any superficial headlines, or the frequent appearance of corruption cases, will have a major influence on the population’s opinions. The same respondent may therefore give a different answer to the same question, depending on the given period (AGERBERG 2024).

Another issue may arise when the questions used in data collection are too general, vague, or not sufficiently targeted. One of the fundamental problems that may undermine the results of any type of survey stems from the varying interpretation of key concepts – in this particular case, corruption –, which shows considerable variation across respondents. Upon encountering the word *“corruption”*, a respondent may think of his or her own experience, for example in relation to school administration, or perhaps of a politician whose suspected corruption cases the respondent has read about. It is also conceivable that a respondent does not consider a particular case to be an act of corruption, while other respondents do. To eliminate these problems, it is essential to clearly define the concepts under study.

Biases arising from political views or other sensitive issues must not be ignored either. Support for or opposition to the government in power obviously influences people’s views on the extent of corruption. Agerberg (2020) mentions an important observation, based on a questionnaire-based survey conducted

on a sample of 3,000 individuals. When the question about the respondent's political identity was asked only at the end of the questionnaire, the difference between pro-government and opposition respondents turned out to be much smaller than when this question was inserted at the beginning of the questionnaire. Since respondents had already formed a highly politicised frame of reference early on, their responses were substantially biased by the ordering of the questions alone. Based on this, it can be seen that although the phenomenon of political bias cannot be eliminated, this biasing effect can be minimised through the methodological work supporting the research project and a proper design of the questionnaire.

Addressing the biasing effect also requires familiarity with the political landscape, as well as the assessment of the extent to which political questions, either individually or in combination with other questions, can affect or account for responses to other questions in the questionnaire.

In order to address the problem of political bias, it is also important to be aware of the degree of sensitivity of a specific thematic domain or question. Rothstein and Varraich (2017) emphasise that offering gifts and bribes is a highly perceptible form of corruption among the general public. For this reason, information based on personal experience is definitely valuable for the study. However, since the respondent is normally aware of the act and its potentially illegal nature, questions concerning corruption and integrity are considered sensitive. When questions address uncomfortable subjects, people tend not to respond, or even if they do, they are more likely to seek to comply with social norms. The more anonymous respondents feel when answering questions, the likelier they will be to answer them sincerely and accurately (AGERBERG 2020).

Nevertheless, asking the public is not an easy and self-evident process: the content of the responses is influenced by the wording and the ordering of the questions, respondents' prior knowledge about the subjects, as well as the social desirability bias (TOURANGEAU–YAN 2007). For this reason, it is essential to clearly define the conceptual frameworks, provide clear definitions and descriptions of situations, and ensure a high degree of anonymity. Although this often results in a lengthy and complex questionnaire, it is key to ensuring valid and reliable measurement (HEYWOOD–ROSE 2014).

Based on scientific experience, with a sound methodological foundation and appropriate correction of biases and limitations, perception and experience-based research studies can provide a uniquely comprehensive picture of corruption, often having relevance for the near future, as perceptions guide human behaviour. Ultimately, both individuals and economic operators act in accordance with their convictions, which is heavily influenced by their perceptions. This knowledge cannot be obtained through any other method.

1.3 International examples of perceptions/ experience-based measurement of corruption

This subsection presents international examples of how the perception-based research approach can be implemented in data surveys. These examples also serve as a practical illustration of the strengths and limitations of the research method.

Corruption Perception Index (CPI)²

One of the best-known perception-based surveys is Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ("CPI"). Using 13 different perception measurement-based data sources, the CPI calculates an index value for the countries for which the indicators of at least three data sources are available. A considerable proportion of the CPI's data sources work with expert survey data, which it uses to determine the index values for each country. On this account, the index has been subject to numerous criticisms, since several data sources are based on the subjective perceptions of a small segment of society, which are very difficult to verify (Transparency International 2024).

Another limitation of the CPI, common to most index type indicators, is that the aggregation of multiple variables may result in the loss of important information, thereby limiting the index's ability to provide a nuanced picture. (KAUFMANN–KRAAY 2007). This does not mean, nevertheless, that using index values is a deficient methodological solution, but it is important to interpret it correctly, and keep in mind its limitations when sharing its results.

Global Corruption Barometer³

A series of corruption population surveys of global importance conducted at varying intervals since 2003, in which perceptions and experience-based matters are equally covered. For the Global Corruption Barometer, Transparency International conducts data collections in different years across different regions, and at specific points in time, it aggregates the results, which leads to a comprehensive global picture (Transparency International 2017). The surveys proceed along the lines of opinion polls, gathering data by asking questions directly to respondents. Besides the numerous advantages, it is important to

² Corruption Perception Index: [Corruption Perceptions Index 2025 - Transparency.org](https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi)

³ Global Corruption Barometer: [Global Corruption Barometer - Transparency.org](https://www.transparency.org/en/global-corruption-barometer)

note that the aggregation of results measured at different points in time and the concern of whether the questionnaires, used across different regions, survey the same phenomenon – that is the reliability and validity of the post-aggregation global results – must be addressed from a methodological perspective.

Eurobarometer⁴

Another well-known survey programme of particular importance is provided by the wide array of Eurobarometer surveys. These measurements are conducted in relation to a number of thematic domains in the member states of the European Union. Two of these devote specific attention to corruption, within social (specific data collections of the Special Eurobarometer) and market-oriented (specific data collections of the Flash Eurobarometer) contexts. These surveys do not process and compile data from other sources but present their own results following data collections that they have designed and conducted themselves. Consequently, this measurement provides a more detailed insight into the situation of the European countries involved in the study.

The general societal Eurobarometer survey waves addressing corruption (e.g. Special Eurobarometer 397, 470, 523, 534, etc.) include thematic sections on the perceived prevalence of corruption, citizens' personal involvement and specific experiences related to corruption, the normative judgement of the acceptability of corruption, trust in institutions, as well as the willingness to report corruption and the factors hindering it (Eurobarometer 548 2024).

From a methodological point of view, Eurobarometer surveys are based on the standard Eurobarometer methodology. Surveys are conducted in 27 member states (previously including the United Kingdom) on samples representative of the population aged above 15/16, using a multi-stage, stratified probability sampling approach.

According to current methodological assessments, similar international corruption studies (including the Eurobarometer) are considered strong in terms of comparability and consistency, yet they present challenges in handling cultural and contextual differences, as well as biases caused by data collection methods (personal or online) (MUGELLINI et al. 2025).

In view of the international nature of the survey, the questionnaire items are formulated in general terms, thereby ensuring the comparability mentioned above. Its drawback, however, is that the survey is less capable of exploring individual corruption-related problems arising from the specific countries' peculiar cultural, societal or economic situation, which means that this survey alone cannot provide a really detailed picture of the country's corruption situation either.

⁴ Eurobarometer: [Citizens' attitudes towards corruption in the EU in 2025 - jülius 2025 -- Eurobarometer survey](#)

Unbundled Corruption Index (UCI)⁵

In another survey exploring corruption, Ang (2020) offers an approach that distinguishes between different types of corruption, rather than treating corruption as a generic concept. While the CPI measures corruption in an aggregate manner without distinguishing between the types, Ang’s approach identifies four distinct types of corruption within a 2 × 2 matrix.

	Theft	Exchange
Not elite	Petty theft	Speed money
Elite	Grand theft	Access money

The UCI’s methodological innovations are that (1) it specifically examines the phenomenon of access money, which is particularly important, as this is the most commonly occurring form of corruption in numerous political spheres, and (2) the survey is conducted using stylised vignettes describing specific situations. Respondents are presented with concrete but generalisable situations (e.g. *“an entrepreneur uses his/her political ties to monopolise the construction industry”*). The objective of the method is to decrease the biases arising from cultural and conceptual differences, that is to improve the validity of the measurement. The scale constructed during the survey ranges from 0 to 40 points. The total of the four categories makes up the UCI score. Besides, the distinction of the four categories reveals which type is dominant in a specific country (ANG 2020). Another advantage of the approach is that it is based on questionnaire surveys, making it possible to reach different target populations.

The UCI clearly points out that the structure of corruption is at least as important as its level. For instance, a country may score high in earlier CPI-like indicators, but the type of corruption that becomes the dominant one – *“access money”* or *“speed money”* – may be the outcome of different social mechanisms.

DATA CORR database

This is a groundbreaking initiative in international corruption research aimed at facilitating and enhancing corruption-related data collection. The DATA CORR database offers 3,050 perception and experience-based, corruption and integrity-related survey questions gathered from 110 international research projects conducted between 1976 and 2019. Before the collection was created in 2020, no *“question libraries”* of this kind had been available to support the standardisation of corruption research (U4, 2024).

⁵ Unbundled Corruption Index: [The Unbundled Corruption Index \(UCI\): Prototyping a multi-dimensional measure](#)

One of the main purposes of collecting the questions was to examine and classify them thematically, thereby enabling future research projects to compile sets of questions that best fit the needs of a given study. When using these question banks, it is particularly important to keep in mind the original research objective of a new study and consider whether the questions will be able to adequately capture the phenomenon under study, or they will need to be adapted and adjusted to the given context.

1.4 Hungarian examples of corruption measurement

Hungarian corruption research projects evolved in several directions during the past decade, while continuing to build on earlier methodological foundations. Perception-based surveys were continued, although only a relatively small number of large-sample research studies were conducted on a national scale. The most notable among these was a joint survey conducted by Transparency International Hungary and the Central European University in 2020, which examined public perceptions of everyday and institutionalised corruption, based on a representative sample of 1,018 respondents. Its findings pointed out, for example, that more than half of respondents thought corruption often goes unpunished, yet, at the same time, only 19% of them would be willing to testify in a corruption case. Perceptions of “everyday” corruption (e.g. gratitude payments) are divided: about 40% of respondents consider this kind of corruption unacceptable, while approximately 70% condemn political bribery. Tamás Bokor’s (2018) research study among young people (aged 18–29) showed a similarly bleak picture: about 80% of Hungarian youth see the country and its political life as “very corrupt”, although only a quarter of them feel that their own immediate environment is affected by this corruption. Most young respondents believe that investigative journalism and the possibility of anonymous reporting are important in the fight against corruption, but they primarily obtain information about corruption from social media. *Perception data in a different approach*: the statistical analysis by Zoltán Zéman et al. (2024) found a positive correlation between the time series of two international corruption indexes (e.g. CPI) and the financial literacy indicators of the population, meaning that where financial literacy is more developed, corruption perception indicators are also better. At the same time, different indexes capture different aspects, and the authors emphasise: *it is necessary to examine multiple indicators* to capture actual corruption trends.

On the other hand, there has been a major step forward in research studies based on objective indicators and administrative data. From 2016, Corruption Research Center Budapest (CRCB) published its corruption risk indicators analysing public procurement data in multiple waves. Based on data obtained between 2009 and 2016, István Tóth and Miklós Hajdu found that around 60% of the public procurement procedures

exhibited at least one “red flag” indicator. For instance, the proportion of single-bid procedures was approximately 25-30%, pointing to a lack of competition. The situation deteriorated dramatically in 2011: the proportion of open and transparent procedures dropped to approximately 12%. Although – with the stabilisation of risk indicators – some improvement was observed by 2016, in 2018 the CRCB once again measured an increase in the proportion of single-bid procedures. An important finding was that Tóth, Hajdu and Vida (2023) confirmed the predictive power of these indicators through an empirical validation analysis. Their examination of public procurement procedures related to a cartel case revealed that *single-bid tender procedures* were much more frequent in corrupt procedures, while the proportion of procurement procedures reflecting genuine competition (with four or more tenders) was substantially lower. This is supported by the fact that such objective indicators can distinguish between clean public procurement procedures and those affected by corruption. The “Red Flags” project (2015), launched by Transparency International Hungary and K-Monitor in collaboration with civil tech partners, provides a good example of the practical application of data-driven methods. Red Flags is an online flag system mechanism, which identified the CRCB’s risk factors in freshly announced public tenders in real time. At its outset, the project established that approximately 60% of the tender procedures in Hungary between 2012 and 2015 had carried at least one corruption risk. This kind of civil and technological innovation supported the *rapid feedback* of public data to the public sphere and control bodies.

Thirdly, the corporate sector and the “Big Four” advisors also published important research on corruption, mainly focusing on the views of corporate leaders. According to Ernst & Young’s 2017 Fraud Survey, 78% of Hungarian business leaders admitted that corruption is a daily occurrence in the business world – this rate was higher than in any neighbouring country. Furthermore, only approximately 20% of the leaders surveyed stated that they would report internally within their company if they encountered illegal or unethical behaviour, while the majority would remain silent for fear of retaliation. Nevertheless, normative rejection remains strong in Hungarian business culture: 85% of respondents said they would not resort to illegal means for either a reward or a promotion. Based on PwC’s global economic crimes surveys, approximately 48% of Hungarian companies reported a case of abuse or fraud in the preceding two years (2018–2020), which was consistent with the 2016–2018 level. Among these cases of abuse, *IT-related fraud* and cyberattacks were becoming increasingly dominant (42% of large companies have experienced such incidents).

Although a smaller fraction of companies admitted to specific cases of bribery, the surveys pointed out that according to two thirds of the corporate sector, corruption was a widespread phenomenon in the Hungarian economy. Deloitte and KPMG primarily published analyses in the fields of *compliance programmes and internal auditing*. For example, in 2021 Deloitte emphasised the importance of the new *whistleblowing* law, which requires companies with more than 50 employees to establish secure reporting

channels for exposing cases of abuse. Overall, large-scale corporate research indicates that *perceptions* of corruption in Hungarian business life *are extremely strong*, although many companies strive to mitigate the actual risks of white-collar corruption through compliance systems.

Finally, research studies addressing methodological development also deserve attention. Debates about the reliability of the measurement of corruption intensified at the beginning of the 2020s. Erzsébet Németh et al. (2021) pointed out in a study that the complex phenomenon of corruption cannot be described using a single indicator. Instead, *public and business perceptions, personal experiences, and institutional corruption risks* should be measured separately – and drawing on these, the authors advocated the establishment of a national corruption measurement system. The authors criticised purely perception-based indexes (e.g. CPI), arguing that the methodology behind them is not sufficiently transparent and that they are *insensitive to real changes*. The State Audit Office's (SAO) series of integrity surveys from 2011 to 2017 similarly reflects this shift in approach, mapping corruption risks and the level of defence mechanisms based on self-reported questionnaire data from several thousand public institutions. According to the results, the integrity of institutions improved during this period: for example, at the organisations involved in the five consecutive surveys, the level of development of anti-corruption controls increased by 12 percentage points. Nevertheless, some weak points remained: in 2017, only 33% of the responding institutions were operating internal abuse reporting systems, and barely a quarter of them had established policies applying to the acceptance of gifts. According to SAO analysts, these surveys were not only diagnostic instruments but also serve to raise awareness within the institutions surveyed. Established in 2022, the Integrity Authority has already been building on this wealth of experience to strengthen the protection of EU funds and step up the fight against corruption.

Overall, Hungarian corruption research has been enriched with both data-driven analyses and social surveys since 2016. The role of civil society organisations (TI, K-Monitor, Átlátszó) has also remained decisive: they continue to complement scientific research efforts by investigating corruption cases, carrying out data-oriented projects, and informing the general public. Feedback from the sector of big companies warns that corruption undermines market competition and trust, but with proper controls and ethical standards, the risk can be reduced. According to domestic and international indexes, Hungary's perceptions of corruption have deteriorated in recent years; however, the research studies presented here also showed that innovative measuring tools and data are available to monitor the phenomenon. The challenge for the future is to ensure that the results of these research projects are utilised in concrete measures, strengthening the rule of law and public trust.

***On the Right Path* research project**

Earlier domestic surveys do not provide sufficiently long time series to allow for the comparison of social attitudes towards and perceptions of corruption and integrity over time. The objectives of the *On the Right Path* research project includes the regular and consistent repetition of data collection in order to address this shortcoming of earlier Hungarian corruption research studies.

The Authority aims to formulate data-driven, evidence-based proposals for the prevention of corruption, the shaping of social attitudes, and the strengthening of integrity, alongside the monitoring of the use of EU funds, thereby primarily supporting its own work and that of other organisations.

This research study is closely linked conceptually to a previous research programme of the Integrity Authority, named KORR-KÉP⁶, which specifically examined a young target population, and serves a supportive, preventive and awareness-raising objective, focusing on a different target population. The combination of the two programmes enables the Integrity Authority not only to respond to corruption risks but also to proactively shape the culture of social integrity, and build on reliable, regular, domestic data from primary sources to achieve that goal.

Therefore, the KORR-KÉP and *On the Right Path* studies establish a research infrastructure capable of addressing, in the long term, the lack of corruption measurement in Hungary, while also laying the foundation for and supporting the monitoring of evidence-based anti-corruption policies.

⁶ KORR-KÉP: <https://doi.org/10.65107/IAK0001>

2.

The methodological background and design of the research

The chapter presents the aspects taken into account during the methodological design of the research; how the preparation and foundation of data collection, the sampling and the design of the measuring instrument were carried out; and the steps taken before data collection began.



The methodological chapter presents the conceptual frameworks of the research, which are based on international corruption measurement principles. The population survey was conducted using a representative, multistage, stratified sampling design based on a randomised procedure involving the selection of 3,000 addresses, yielding 1,254 valid responses. In the development of the questionnaire, particular emphasis was placed on clarifying the core concepts of the research (conceptualisation), designing an appropriate logical structure (flow) of the questionnaire, and applying the vignette method, which helped to standardise interpretive frameworks. To obtain as many valid responses as possible, the survey was conducted using a multimode (hybrid) approach, combining online and face-to-face methods. The chapter also presents the results of the cognitive testing, the weighting procedure and a comprehensive factor analysis, which identified seven latent dimensions.

Before the targeted research programme was designed, the Vienna Principles were reviewed, as they are considered outstanding milestones in international corruption measurement, setting out 15 key principles. Principles such as data protection, objectivity, comparability, multi-source data collection, and conceptual coherence promote the scientific foundation of measuring corruption, providing a comparable, data-driven approach, thereby establishing a sort of global methodological framework (UNODC et al. 2023). Since these principles provide general guidance and a solid framework for any research study on corruption and integrity, the research programme and methodology were designed taking these considerations into account.

The *On the Right Path* research programme consists of a series of sequentially connected data collections aimed at examining specific target populations, as well as perceptions and experiences related to corruption, anti-corruption efforts, and the efficiency of the use of European Union funds. In addition, the research aims to establish a truly comprehensive, holistic study by surveying other areas closely related to corruption based on the literature background. When designing the research programme, several domestic and international experts provided professional support for the finalisation of the research plan, including Joseph Pozsgai-Alvarez, professor at the University of Osaka; representatives from the UNODC; staff members of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office; the head of the Department of Administrative Law at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of ELTE. When examining and monitoring phenomena affecting society as a whole, such as corruption or integrity-oriented behaviour and its advantages, it is essential to study the groups directly affected by them, including society at large, as well as more specifically defined social groups:

- Survey-type data collections help to understand broader social perceptions of corruption;
- They are capable of exploring hidden manifestations of corruption that often remain invisible to administrative data, which makes them suitable for the examination of a broader interpretation of corruption;
- Furthermore, societal impacts are based on perceptions; without knowing them, it is difficult to estimate the development of processes such as the social support for the fight against corruption, or the effectiveness and success of individual measures.

The development and implementation of anti-corruption strategies collectively form the foundation of the fight against corruption, to which the perceptions and experiences of various groups related to the topic contribute meaningfully. For this reason, survey methodology-based, large-sample data collections are particularly relevant.

As part of the *On the Right Path* research programme, the following target populations have been or will be examined in the near future:



Hungarians aged 18 and above,



Economic operators (companies) registered in Hungary,



Government officials, civil servants and public service administrators in Hungary, subject to Act CXCI of 2011 on Public Service Officials.⁷

The basis for the three groups referred to above is provided by the classifications of other international studies (STT Lithuania 2024), as well as sociologist Alfred Schütz's theory of the social distribution of knowledge (SCHÜTZ 1946), also applied by the said classifications. In Schütz's theory, people do not possess knowledge in a uniform manner. In certain topics, individuals may appear as "*experts*", while in others as "*laypersons*", and in yet others as "*well-informed citizens*", which is one of the key approaches of the phenomenological tradition in sociology. Within this interpretation, and in the context of corruption, the knowledge of "*laypersons*" is presented by the population survey, while that of "*well-informed citizens*" is captured through the survey of corporate leaders, as they have direct and frequent

⁷ Based on official HCSO data, requested in spring 2025, the group of government administrators, cited in the act, is not represented in the data provided by the HCSO, since members of this group had earlier been integrated into the group of government officials, as long as they met the required criteria.

interactions with private and public organisations and entities. The knowledge of “*experts*” is represented by civil servants whose positions are deeply embedded within various public services, enabling them to develop a comprehensive understanding of these systems, often through participation in integrity and anti-corruption training programmes. Different members of society contribute to perceptions of social reality with varying levels of knowledge and perspectives, even on specialised topics such as corruption or the fight against corruption, which thus remains multifaceted and dynamic, all of which supports the assessment of these phenomena, involving different levels.

In addition to survey data collection examining the three key target populations, the On the Right Path research programme also includes an analysis based on administrative public procurement databases, in which the risks and anomalies (red flags) observed in the Hungarian public procurement system are identified using a set of proxy indicators. The findings derived from proxy indicators based on administrative data, as well as the areas of public procurement procedures exposed to high risk, are also examined through survey-based studies conducted among two special target populations, namely corporate leaders and civil servants. These two target populations possess specialised knowledge of the operation of the Hungarian public procurement system, which is essential for answering questions concerning perceived risks and instances of improper functioning within the system. The combined use of administrative and survey results can further enhance the reliability of the research programme’s findings, as it is able to capture more facets of the phenomena of corruption and integrity, presenting them from a broader perspective.

This study provides a detailed presentation specifically of the methodology and findings of the completed population survey, conducted among Hungarian respondents aged 18 and above. Once all three survey waves and the proxy indicator-based analysis are available, a synthesis study will be prepared to provide a comprehensive and complementary overview of the topic by integrating the different data sources.

2.1 Methodological approach of the population data survey

1.1 Methodology applied for the population survey

For the population data survey, quantitative methodology was applied, as it enabled the collection of a large volume of easily aggregable and statistically quantifiable data. By applying the same method, the

data collection can be easily repeated, thereby improving the reliability of the research projects. A methodologically sound quantitative measurement decreases researcher biases during data collection, thereby making it possible to examine certain causal relationships (HAJDÚ 2018). The specialists of the Department of Methodology and Innovation of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office also participated in and provided expert assistance for the preparation of the population survey of the *On the Right Path* study.

1.2 The measurement instrument developed and applied in the population survey

In the quantitative research, we examined the Hungarian population aged 18 and over through questionnaire-based data collection. The advantage of the method is that it can involve a large number of respondents, the results can be easily captured with mathematical-statistical tools, and with the proper methodological foundations, objective results generalisable to the population can be obtained.

The two principal criteria of measurement are reliability and validity. To strengthen the validity of this data collection,⁸ particular attention was given to the process of defining the key concepts – that is, the conceptualisation – of the study, which covered the period from the development of the research design to the completion of the measurement instrument development phase. During the design of the questionnaire, special attention was paid to ensuring that the questions appropriately capture corrupt practices within the broad conceptual framework of the research, encompassing not only acts regarded as corruption under Act C of 2012 on the Criminal Code (“Criminal Code”) but also those covered by the broader concept of corruption, developed in the course of the study.

There is no universally accepted definition of corruption. The lack of such a definition, the factors of corruption that make it challenging to universally define corruption, such as the difficulty of directly examining the phenomenon (BELLO Y VILLARINO 2021; GNALDI – DEL SARTO 2024), that corruption is a multidimensional phenomenon (GNALDI – DEL SARTO 2024), as well as the fact that the practices regarded as corruption can vary geographically and show a great variety in time, intensified the need for an own definition. The precise definition is essential, as it clarifies and makes transparent exactly what the study examines, as well as its strengths and, where applicable, its limitations. A proper definition helps decision-makers and researchers to address the problem using appropriate tools and have a clear understanding of the definitional biases they may apply (DOBSON PHILLIPS et al. 2025). For this purpose, a very important aspect of the methodological work was the formulation of a valid and study-specific

⁸ Besides reliability and generalisability, validity is one of the most important professional criteria for any measurement. A measurement is considered valid if it actually measures the concept under study, meaning that the measurements and results are relevant and cover the concept under study.

definition of corruption for the research, for which a previous definition was revised in light of Hungarian specificities (DOBSON PHILLIPS et al. 2021, 2025). The revision was necessary to establish an explicitly broad interpretation and reflect the Hungarian context.

The definition of corruption used in the study:

CORRUPTION: Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain – whether by an individual, group, or institution – typically at the expense of the public interest⁹, and involving violations of laws, regulations and/or integrity standards (DOBSON PHILLIPS et al. 2021). 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.¹⁰

The definition above incorporates a number of acts that are regarded as forms of corruption in international academic literature, such as nepotism, lobbying, the revolving door phenomenon, and misappropriation of funds, but which are not always classified as criminal offences or regarded as corruption offences under Hungarian Criminal Code. Integrity was another key concept whose definition proved essential during the research design phase. Many scientific disciplines offer different definitions of integrity; moreover, we can also speak of individual, organisational, institutional and social integrity. In this research, the definition provided by the Integrity Authority was used, supplemented with an additional explanation to the basic definition.

INTEGRITY: Individual integrity is the unity of thought, word and action, i.e. acting in line with professed and declared values (Integrity Authority, 2024). Individual integrity in practice means the consistent adherence to ethical principles, honesty, and accountability in actions and decisions, even in challenging situations, thus fostering trust and accountability in the personal, professional, and public spheres. At the level of institutions, this means that the institution does what it was set up for, fulfilling its objectives and tasks in an ethical manner, safeguarding equal treatment and ensuring that accountability is reflected in the way the organisation operates.

⁹ Providing a detailed definition of public interest goes beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the 2021 study by Dobson Philips et al., used for the conceptualisation of corruption in this research, attempts to organise the arguments for and against incorporating the notion of public interest into the definition of corruption, while also addressing the concept of public interest itself.

¹⁰ In this case, this corresponds to what academic literature describes as “noble cause corruption” (Miller, 2007).

Following the completion of the methodological groundwork and the development of the definition, the data collection phase involved respondents assessing, through case examples, whether they considered certain actions to constitute corruption, using the “vignette method”,¹¹ previously applied in an earlier international study (UCI). The vignette method is a technique frequently used in psychological and sociological research and is particularly suitable for exploring sensitive topics more accurately, as it relies on real-life, everyday examples that are more familiar to respondents than abstract definitions and concepts.¹²

1.2.1 Areas explored using the measurement instrument

During the research, we examined numerous areas directly or indirectly related to corruption and integrity. In arranging the consecutive ordering of the sections, we aimed to reduce respondents’ prolonged exposure to particularly difficult topics, thereby promoting a high willingness to respond and the production of high-quality data. During the data collection phase, the examined topics were addressed in the following order and with the following objectives:

Well-being

This set of questions was intended to assess various dimensions of well-being in order to examine whether there is a relationship between respondents’ subjective well-being and their perception of corruption, its impact on daily life, as well as their possible experiences with corruption and integrity-related issues.

The topic has previously been explored by some international surveys among groups with diverse cultures, demonstrating a connection between well-being and the perception of corruption, as well as the fight against corruption (YAN–WEN 2019; LI–AN 2019; BOTA-AVRAM 2023).

Integrity

Integrity was a key module of the survey, addressing both its personal and institutional dimensions.

In examining individual integrity, we used case examples to explore how respondents viewed the integrity of others and how they would act in the same situations.

¹¹ Within the context of sociological research, the vignette method involves presenting short, realistic but hypothetical situations participants are asked to assess or react to, thereby enabling the exploration of their personal opinions, moral dilemmas and prejudices during the research. In this case, respondents were asked to assess whether the case examples presented to them constituted corruption. Since, under the definition of corruption adopted in the research, all of the case examples constituted corruption, respondents were informed in a concluding sentence following the question that such types of conduct – including those presented in the case examples – were to be regarded as corruption in the subsequent parts of the questionnaire.

¹² In addition to examining examples of corruption, we used vignette-based case scenarios to investigate how respondents viewed their own adherence to norms and ethical standards, as well as how they perceived the behaviour of others in similar situations.

With regard to institutional integrity, the questionnaire examined two dimensions: whether the specified institutions treat all individuals who approach them equally, and respondents' perceptions of the extent to which employees – including those in senior positions – are held accountable within the institution.

Trust

Questions regarding trust assessed the extent to which Hungarians trust each other according to respondents, and the extent to which respondents trust each other. In addition, the assessment of trust in institutions was also crucial. Earlier research has confirmed the connection between trust in institutions and the perception of corruption (PARK–BLENKINSOP 2011), and UNODC's methodological publication also gave great weight to measuring trust in institutions in corruption research (UNODC 2018). While interpersonal trust may have a stronger influence on individuals' conduct in line with integrity norms, a lack of trust in institutions can facilitate the spread of corruption, as people will not trust that they can receive proper treatment or services without resorting to corrupt practices.

Problem map

Respondents could select three out of fifteen problems presented to them, which showed the most serious difficulties in Hungary at the time of the survey.

Perceptions of corruption, tolerance

The set of questions examining perceptions of corruption formed the next key section of the questionnaire following integrity. The objective of the assessment was, among other things, to gauge which actions are widely regarded as corruption, what people think about the prevalence of corruption, its trends, causes, and the effectiveness of the government's anti-corruption measures.

Tolerance toward corruption played an important role, as in our previous research study, young Hungarians proved to be much more accepting of corruption in public institutions than their European counterparts.

Access

Through questions exploring the dimension of access, the study examined how easily respondents, or their relatives, would be able to access certain services if needed, and what difficulties they might face in doing so. Limited access may make corrupt practices more prevalent, as in such cases, certain services become accessible only through the violation of rules or norms.

Corruption-related experiences

The section examining corruption-related experiences was particularly sensitive and important: it examined whether they knew any person, institution or organisation that accepted improper favours in the course of their work. We gauged whether respondents, or people in their immediate social circle, had encountered any cases during the examined period where undue favours, gifts, or money were expected of them, or where using personal connections provided them with advantages. In addition, the questions also addressed the sectors and types of institutions to which such experiences were linked.

Anti-corruption efforts

The questions on the fight against corruption included a hypothetical scenario in which respondents were asked how they would act after encountering a possible case of corruption, as well as questions on any previous reporting experiences. The objective of the questions was to examine the role Hungarian people see themselves as playing, as well as the extent to which they would be willing to undertake an active role in such a situation, either for themselves or for their relatives or acquaintances. Exploring the reasons for not reporting a case was also an important aspect of this set of questions.

Open governance: participation and transparency

Ensuring transparency and participation is closely associated with the democratic functioning of a state, and may indirectly interact with the emergence, frequency, and manifestations of corruption. Questions on participation examined the extent to which people found it important to actively participate in local and national public affairs, and whether, in practice, they take advantage of the opportunities for participation.

Encouraging participation not only reduces the occurrence of corruption but also supports anti-corruption efforts (UNODC 2017). If there is minimal or unrealistic direct¹³ and/or indirect¹⁴ participation in decisions concerning public affairs, anti-corruption integrity culture in society weakens, which can directly lead to a decrease in the willingness to report suspected cases of corruption.

Special set of questions: the use of European Union funds and corresponding opinions and experiences

Under the act governing the functions of the Integrity Authority¹⁵, the Authority fulfils analytical and advisory tasks, to which the Authority seeks to make a contribution through the summary and analysis of the answers to the questions on the use of European Union funds, included in the survey, thereby

¹³ Direct expression of opinion in relation to public affairs, e.g. social consultation, petition, demonstration, boycott.

¹⁴ Through elections in a representative democracy.

¹⁵ Act XXVII of 2022 on the control of the use of European Union budget funds.

facilitating reliable, comprehensive and evidence-based decision-making and policymaking. This set of questions examined perceptions and opinions of Hungarian society regarding the efficiency of the use of European Union funds, and whether they experienced, during their daily lives, the presence of these funds in the form of specific development projects.

Security

The security module assessed the stability of financial security and the extent to which citizens subjectively thought the government could protect them from the harmful effects of corruption.

Questions related to financial security are important and relevant in a questionnaire examining corruption and integrity because corruption has a direct and indirect impact on citizens' financial security, prosperity, and well-being. Corruption undermines the efficiency and stability of public institutions, leading to economic instability, the loss of public funds, higher unemployment rates, and the deterioration of public services. As a result, people experience greater uncertainty and a diminished sense of financial security, affecting both their everyday lives and their ability to plan for the long term.

The effects of corruption are not equally felt by all income groups. Financially more secure people are often capable of bypassing the shortcomings of the system – for instance, by taking advantage of private services – while for those with more limited resources, corruption in public services directly worsens their quality of life.

The assessment of the question regarding the extent to which people trust in the state's ability to protect them from the harmful effects of corruption demonstrates the public acceptance of the government's measures and public trust in the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts. Measuring the sense of security shows that corruption is not only a legal or institutional problem but also a socio-economic factor that can seriously affect the economic situation and even the well-being of citizens.

1.2.2 Cognitive testing of the measurement instrument

Cognitive testing of the measurement instrument, as well as the entire data survey using the finalised questionnaire, were performed by TÁRKI Social Research Institute, with close monitoring and professional support provided by the Integrity Academy's research experts.

Following the completion of the first comprehensive draft of the questionnaire, selected items underwent "*cognitive*" (also referred to as qualitative) testing. This was intended to:

- identify problems that cannot be detected through other questionnaire testing methods and to revise the questionnaire before the actual survey is conducted,
- provide verification of whether the intended phenomenon – in this case, corruption and integrity – is measured with the expected level of accuracy,
- develop a respondent-friendly questionnaire.

In addition to the listed, special and targeted abilities of cognitive testing, the usual reasons and functions that generally support the testing of questionnaires also confirmed the need for a comprehensive questionnaire testing technique before the final questionnaire was developed. Such general reasons supporting the testing were: the assessment of how respondents place their answers within an interpretive framework in the case of questions considered more critical in the testing, and whether this truly aligns with what our objective was to examine during the research, thereby supporting the validity of the study. Furthermore, it helps identify topics that, for one reason or another, present particular challenges during data collection, and for which it may be advisable to reconsider the wording of the questions.

The participants of the cognitive testing of the questionnaire were selected using predefined demographic quotas. Testing took place with 16 persons, and the sample was taken using the following “hard” and “soft” quotas:

„Hard” quotas that the test sample was required to meet:

- Settlement type: Budapest (5 persons) / Pest County, city outside the metropolitan agglomeration (5 persons) / Other county, village (6 persons)
- Highest level of education: High school diploma (7 persons) / No high school diploma (9 persons)
- Age: aged 18–35 (6 persons) / aged 36–60 (6 persons) / aged 60+ (5 persons)

Optional/„soft” quotas

- Labour market activity: Active (9 persons) [Public service (3 persons) / Competitive sector (3 persons) Civil (3 persons)] / Inactive (7 persons)
- Gender: male (min. 7 persons) / female (min. 7 persons)
- Party preference¹⁶ (cannot be screened): Pro-government (min. 4 persons) / Pro-opposition (min. 4 persons) / Apolitical (min. 4 persons)

In order to fully comply with “hard” quotas, test participants were recruited using a “screening questionnaire”.

¹⁶ The party preference quota was ad hoc in nature, as the screening questionnaire did not include any relevant questions.

At the Budapest location, the respondents meeting the required quotas were recruited from TÁRKI's respondent database (comprising the respondents of previous surveys who have consented to being approached again for future research studies) with the assistance of TÁRKI's recruiting staff, and the tests were carried out at TÁRKI's offices.

Participants for the interviews conducted in the village of Tállya (Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County) and the city of Vác (Pest County) were recruited by local TÁRKI instructors and interviewers from a pool of respondents enlisted during previous TÁRKI research studies, and additional respondents were collected using the snowball sampling method,¹⁷ taking into account the required demographic quotas. The distribution of the quotas met by test participants is shown in Annex 1.

Conducting cognitive interviews

Following an overview of the entire questionnaire, its structure, and the description of the sets of questions, 33 questions were selected for cognitive testing. The cognitive interviews were conducted according to a specific methodology, within the framework of a semi-structured interview in which the possible respondent interpretations of the questions and the potential problems related to each question were explored. To support the exploration of respondents' cognitive processes, we developed supplementary questions alongside selected questions of the questionnaire. The interviewers participating in the study received support from the HCSO's experts through targeted workshops and consultation. Similarly to the main survey, cognitive testing was also conducted in compliance with data protection requirements: a declaration of consent and a privacy notice were signed and submitted.

Cognitive test results

The analysis of the results from the cognitive interviews was conducted according to a specific scheme in a summary Excel spreadsheet where the testing partner analysed the responses to each question from all the interviews and then formulated its overall recommendations for any necessary modifications.

The experience gained from cognitive testing indicated that no major modifications to either the ordering or the content of the question sets were necessary, as respondents found the questionnaire easy to follow. As the anticipated length of the questionnaire had seemed problematic even before the testing, we revised it in light of the preliminary testing experience and deleted or merged multiple questions to reduce respondent fatigue. The testing process, together with feedback from respondents and interviewers, also revealed several issues relating to interpretation and wording, which were subsequently addressed.

¹⁷ The snowball sampling method involves researchers initially approaching only a small number of individuals belonging to the target population, who then recommend further participants for the study. In this way, the group of respondents gradually expands like a "snowball", making this method particularly useful for examining hidden or hard-to-reach populations.

Based on the conclusions of TÁRKI, which conducted the testing and the data collection, and the research leader of the Integrity Academy, the following changes were made:

- deleting selected questions and merging question sets to reduce the overall length of the questionnaire,
- rephrasing questionnaire items to facilitate accurate interpretation and clear comprehension, while adhering to the professional standards of psychological and social research,
- inclusion of additional interviewer instructions in the questionnaire and expansion of the interviewers' manual with more detailed guidance,
- changes made to the online platform used by interviewers during the interviews – changes to page layout and design, as well as technical corrections to facilitate easier and more accurate completion.

1.3 Introduction of the sampling used for the study

1.3.1 The method of selecting the sampled municipalities

In the data collection component of the study targeting the Hungarian population aged 18 and over (“population survey”), the aim was to conduct a comprehensive examination of the Hungarian adult population across selected topics. To achieve this goal, particular attention was paid during the survey design phase to ensure that the sample reflected the Hungarian population as accurately as possible, thereby enabling the survey to produce reliable results that were representative of the entire population.

Questionnaire-based data collection makes it possible to draw reliable conclusions on the overall population, based on the responses of a smaller sample of individuals. To this end, it is essential that the composition of the sample accurately reflects the population with respect to key characteristics, making the selection of respondents one of the most critical stages of the research process. To ensure that every social group is properly represented in the sample, we implemented a stratified, multistage sampling procedure. In the **stratified, multistage sampling procedure**, the Hungarian population was stratified according to predefined strata – in this study, counties¹⁸ and settlement types¹⁹ – allowing the proportion of the population belonging to each stratum to be determined. The distribution of the Hungarian population across the defined strata was determined using data from the 2022 census. When designing the gross sample, that is, the group of potential respondents selected for the survey, it was clear, while maintaining

¹⁸ Naturally, the 19 Hungarian counties and Budapest formed the first stratum in the multi-stage sampling.

¹⁹ Regarding settlement types, the classification generally applied for sampling was used: districts of the capital, county seats, cities, villages.

the selected strata, what percentages of the sample of 3,000 respondents involved in the research would be allocated to each stratum (e.g. the “urban” settlement type in Bács-Kiskun County, or the “rural” settlement type in Vas County, etc.). The percentage distribution of the population across the strata, together with the planned sample size, was used to determine the required number of respondents in each stratum (Annex 2). All districts of Budapest and all county seats formed part of the sample, as these are indivisible units and represent themselves in the sample, meaning that data collection took place in every county seat and every district of the capital. By contrast, the “urban” or “rural” settlement type used as stratification variables can be further subdivided: if necessary, data collection may be conducted in several towns or villages within the same county, in order to avoid the overrepresentation of certain settlements in a particular stratum. In the individual strata, the selection of settlements associated with the “urban” and “rural” substrata was performed randomly. The resulting gross sample comprised 104 Hungarian settlements.²⁰

1.3.2 Selecting the respondents included in the sample

In order to ensure that every person over the age of 18 with a registered address in Hungary has an equal chance of being included in the research data collection, the partner conducting the data collection, following the county and municipal stratification, ordered a random personal address list of 3,000 individuals from the Personal Registration Data Supply and Licensing Department of the Personal Registration and Administration Division of the Ministry of Energy for the selected settlements. Given the overall willingness to participate, it was clearly reasonable to sample twice the number of addresses needed to obtain the target of 1,500 respondents. The approval of address queries was slower than anticipated. Although the competent department did not request any supplementary information, the permit and the requested address list were received only after nearly one and a half months, far exceeding the statutory eight-working-day deadline for the summary procedure. This considerably affected the data collection schedule and necessitated its rescheduling.

In summary, the gross sample for the survey was established through a stratified multistage sampling design based on county and settlement type. This involved determining the target sample size for each stratum, randomly selecting settlements within the strata, and obtaining a randomly selected address list of 3,000 individuals from those settlements. Under this approach, every Hungarian resident aged 18 and over had an approximately equal probability of being selected for the survey. Consequently, the sample can be regarded as a probability sample.

²⁰ Annex 2 presents the strata of the sample and the number of respondents per stratum.

1.4 Forms and scheduling of the data collection

The timing and design of the questionnaire-based data collection were influenced both by the highly sensitive nature of the topic under investigation and by the objective of allowing all members of the target population aged 18 and over to choose the response mode that was most convenient and most efficient for them, thereby maximising response rates. The *On the Right Path* population survey was composed of three consecutive data collection phases, implementing a “multimode” (hybrid) data collection technique:

1. Online data collection phase (CAWI1)
2. Phase of data collection based on personal interviewing (CAPI)
3. Reopened final online data collection phase (CAW2)

The different types of data collections had been scheduled to succeed one another over time, but because of the time lag in obtaining the address list, we extended the CAPI interviewing phase. To prevent the personal (CAPI) interviews from being conducted predominantly during the less efficient late July–August period, the duration of data collection was extended to seven weeks from the originally planned five weeks. Also, because of the time lag in the scheduling of the fieldwork arranged by the partner in charge of the data collection in counties, personal interviewing was conducted for an additional three weeks beyond the seven weeks of data collection, meaning that personal interviewing was conducted in parallel with the CAWI2 at certain locations.

On 27 June 2025, invitation letters were sent to the 3,000 individuals selected for the sample as part of the first online survey phase (CAWI1). The letters provided instructions on how to complete the online questionnaire, together with information about the study, data processing arrangements, and contact details. Following the initiation of the online completion, a reminder letter was sent on 10 July to those who had not completed the questionnaire within two weeks and had not declined to respond either. The CAWI1 phase was closed after twenty-five days, on 21 July.

Respondents were informed in both the invitation letter and the first reminder letter that interviewers would visit them at their homes following the CAWI1 phase. The CAPI phase, involving personal interviewing, began on 21 July 2025, and was extended for the reasons indicated above. In most counties, interviewers conducted fieldwork for seven weeks.

Interviewers received specific training before the fieldwork. During the training, they were informed about the research, the measuring instrument (questionnaire), as well as the interviewer interface that provided

the technical background for the survey and the registration of responses. In cases of unsuccessful contact attempts (e.g. when the respondent was away from home or was unable to participate at the time of the visit), interviewers were required to make at least five further contact attempts, scheduled appropriately and carried out at different times of the day.

As the final step of data collection, a further reminder letter was sent at the end of the seventh week of personal interviewing to the addresses where the selected respondent had neither completed the questionnaire during the CAWI1 or CAPI phases nor declined participation nor moved from the address. In this letter, the recipients were informed that no response had been received from them and that they had another two weeks to complete the questionnaire in the second online survey phase (CAWI2). The latter opportunity was taken only by a very small proportion of potential respondents.

1.5 Quality control of the data collection and data cleaning

In the case of personal interviewing, the partner in charge of data collection monitored the work of interviewers by tracking GPS coordinates. For each completed questionnaire, it was checked whether the interviewer had actually visited the designated address. If any doubts were raised about these visits, the addresses in question were included in the scope of telephone verifications along with other addresses. In the case of interviewers where refusal-to-respond rates (item non-response) were substantially higher, their addresses were also subjected to telephone verification. Telephone verification covered at least 10% of the addresses with completed questionnaires.

During data cleaning, the questionnaires completed within an unreasonably short time compared to the average completion time, as well as the questionnaires that did not meet research standards based on data quality or telephone verification were removed. The objective of the verification process was to ensure that the final database contained reliable and applicable responses, thereby ensuring the accuracy of the analyses and the validity of the conclusions.

At the end of data cleaning, 50 questionnaires had to be excluded, resulting in a **final respondent headcount of 1,254**, thus the data collection concluded with a 42% response rate from the 3,000 addresses included in the gross sample. The findings are interpretable with a $\pm 3\%$ margin of error at the 95% confidence level, that is in 95 out of 100 repeated studies, the measured values would fall within a $\pm 3\%$ range of the values measured in the present study.

Failing a 50% response rate, the partner conducting data collection was required under its contract to carry out a non-response analysis to demonstrate that the response rate falling short of the 50% target did not excessively bias the estimates of the study. The results of the non-response analysis are presented in the following subsection.

1.6 Non-response analysis and conclusions

Under the contract signed with TÁRKI Társadalomkutatási Intézet Zrt. (Tárki Social Research Institute), if the response rate was below 50% in the sample of 3,000 individuals, then the contractor's performance including a comprehensive non-response analysis would only be accepted if the analysis proved that despite a relatively low level of fulfilment, the estimates made based on the sample were not biased.

The non-response analysis aims to verify that the sampling process was appropriate and did not introduce any systematic bias into the sample. The significance of this process is also accepted in the academic world, especially in cases where data collection does not exactly follow the sampling plan, the response rate is low, or observations in the field suggest that bias may be detected in the sample (BERG 2005; BETHLEHEM 2009; KOCH–BLOHM 2016; OECD 2025).

The non-response analysis conducted for this survey was based largely on the methodology used in the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). However, certain elements of that methodology could not be applied due to the specific characteristics of the survey and its subject matter, as their use could have resulted in biased or unreliable findings. One of the important differences was that the OECD's standard non-response analysis applied background variables to compare the characteristics of the participants and non-participants of the survey that are related to the subject under study (competencies). For instance, employment status was a background variable which was available in most cases for both participants and non-participants of the survey, irrespective of the organisation's own data collection. With regard to corruption and integrity, no such appropriate background variable was available that would have enabled this sort of comparison. However, this does not indicate a flaw in the methodology, as drawing on the example of the PIAAC assessment, the non-response analysis of On the Right Path established during the basic non-response analysis phase that the individuals of the sample properly represented national distributions, thus no further complex assessment was necessary.

A particularly important part of the non-response study was the analysis of the questionnaire on environmental characteristics recommended by the PIAAC study. The environmental observations

can reveal whether the willingness to respond is related to the quality of the residential environment. The better the residential environment, the easier it is to reach respondents. Although these findings underscored the importance of conducting non-response analysis, they did not in themselves indicate any serious problems. Table 1 presents response and non-response rates by region. The differences between response and non-response rates in each region are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

II/A táblázat: **Válaszolási és nem válaszolási arányok régiók szerint**

	Region							
	Central Hungary	Central Transdanubia	Western Transdanubia	Southern Transdanubia	Northern Hungary	Northern Great Plain	Southern Great Plain	Total
No response	54.1%	51.7%	67.3%	77.4%	57.0%	54.8%	56.3%	58.0%
Response	45.9%	48.3%	32.7%	22.6%	43.0%	45.2%	43.7%	42.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The national average response rate is 42%, which is considered to be a good result in Hungary (SZE-ITL–TÓTH 2020). Response and non-response rates showed more notable differences in Western Transdanubia and Southern Transdanubia. These regions were examined more closely during the analysis to determine whether certain groups were systematically underrepresented; however, no evidence of such underrepresentation was found.

The analysis included the development of alternative weighting schemes modelled after the PIAAC and their comparison with the standard weighting for three randomly selected questions where item non-response was low (OECD 2025). The selected questions:

- Do you think it is rather characteristic or rather uncharacteristic of Hungarians to return a wallet containing documents and HUF 50,000 that they find on the street to its rightful owner, with the money still inside?
- What do you think of corruption prevalence in Hungary?
- Are you aware of any agencies or organisations where you could report suspected cases of corruption?

As part of the alternative weighting procedure, three different alternative weighting schemes were developed. A brief summary of these is provided below:

- As meaningful differences were observed only across regions, reflected in variations in response and non-response rates, the inclusion of region as a weighting variable was considered essential in the alternative weighting procedure. Regions were included as weighting variables in three categories.
- Few variables were available for the alternative weighting procedure. For this reason, we decided to apply a more detailed age group-based breakdown in the second case. According to Little (1993), increasing the level of categorical detail of the demographic variables included in the weighting scheme can reduce bias; however, it may also increase variance, since smaller cell sizes are associated with less stable weighting factors. In the third alternative weighting scheme, educational attainment was included using a more detailed (refined) set of categories. In line with the logic of the sensitivity analysis described above, this level of disaggregation was considered appropriate for the purposes of the analysis.

In summary, the non-response analysis found no statistically significant differences between the results obtained using the official weighting scheme and those produced by the alternative weighting schemes. This suggests that the official weighting procedure adequately compensates for any distortions arising from non-response.

1.7 Weighting of the database

The checks carried out as part of the non-response analysis confirmed that the official weighting procedure is sufficient to correct for any sample bias arising from non-response and to calibrate the survey results in the database to the target population. For this reason, the weight variable was constructed using the four standard weighting variables:

- gender,
- age groups,
- highest level of education,
- settlement types

The weights were calibrated against the 2022 census data using cross-tabulated multidimensional population distributions provided by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. The statistical characteristics of the weights are presented in the tables in the annex (Annex 3).

1.8 Data processing method

The cleaned and weighted database was processed by the Integrity Academy's data analysis and research specialists, using the Python software. The analyses were interpreted using a level of significance of 0.05 or lower ($p < 0.05$).

1.8.1 Brief summary of a factor analysis conducted across the entire dataset

Factor analysis was used to manage the large amount (33) of interrelated ordinal variables. The procedure, based on the correlations among variables, makes it possible to combine questions exhibiting similar response patterns into a small number of clearly interpretable latent dimensions. The purpose of the method is dimensionality reduction: instead of working with a large number of original variables, it creates a smaller set of new variables that retain as much information and variance of the data as possible.

During the factor analysis, a total of 10 latent dimensions emerged based on the Kaiser criterion. We selected those among them that were substantively well interpretable, meaning that similar questions clearly conveyed a common meaning. Factor analysis makes it possible to determine which latent factor each ordinal variable is associated with and the extent to which each variable contributes to that factor. During the remaining analyses, these seven factors readily amenable to practical interpretation were frequently taken into consideration. The questions pertaining to each factor gathered in the following groups:²¹

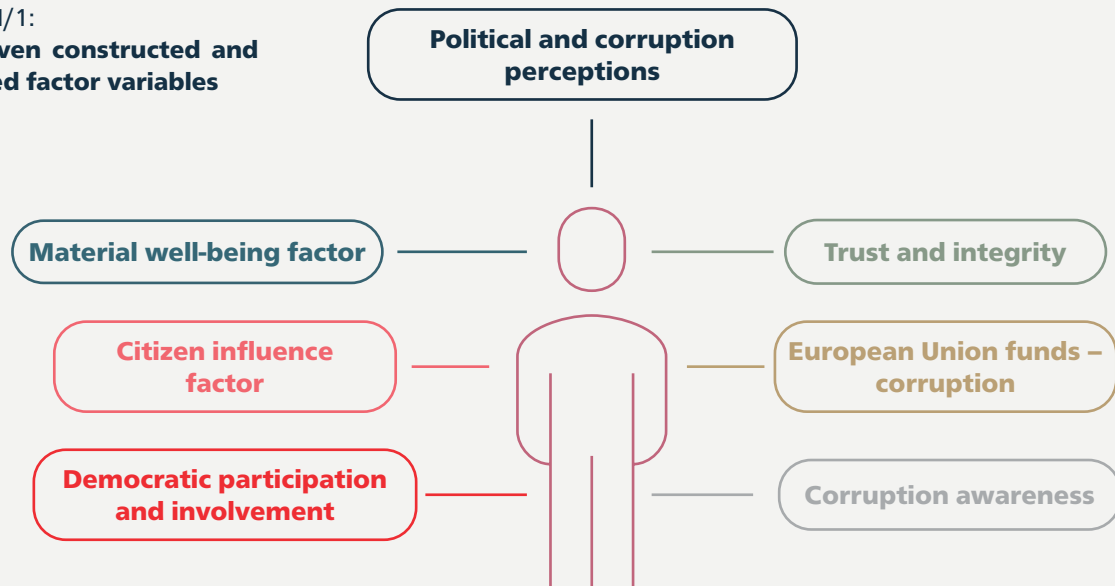
- **Political and corruption perceptions:** this includes questions related to the prevalence of corruption in Hungary, as well as questions exploring the efficiency of the government's and public institutions' efforts to combat corruption, the safeguards they provide against corruption and respondents' political orientation.
- **Material well-being factor:** age, education, household net income, financial security, and overall well-being.
- **Citizen influence factor:** how important respondents consider it to be able to have a voice in public affairs, both at the level of local municipalities and at the national level.
- **Democratic participation and involvement:** measuring interest in public affairs and the willingness to participate actively.

²¹ The questions and cluster classifications related to the resulting factors are presented in Annex 7.

- **Trust and integrity:** trust in people and institutions, good faith, and perceptions of integrity.
- **European Union funds – corruption (EU funds – corruption):** the prevalence of corruption in relation to European Union institutions and EU funds.
- **Corruption awareness:** familiarity with corruption case examples and tolerance toward corruption.

Figure II/1:

The seven constructed and retained factor variables



The background features a dark, starry night sky over a landscape of rolling hills. A prominent, glowing blue and white winding road curves through the scene. In the lower foreground, there is a network of small, light blue dots connected by thin white lines, resembling a data or communication network.

3.

Socio- demographic, income-related and political characteristics

The chapter elaborates on the key sociodemographic results of the respondents participating in the research. In addition, we present the distributions and key indicators of responses to various objective and subjective income-related and political questions based on data weighted for the entire Hungarian population aged 18 and over.

3.1 Socio-demographic distributions and their interrelations

The chapter presents the most important social distributions of the respondents: the sample’s average age is 50, 58.7% are women, and the majority live in cities. The respondents can be classified into three categories in terms of financial security: one third of the population falls into the high category, the largest share into the medium category, and one tenth into the low category. Political interest and self-placement are moderate, but political orientation and perceptions of corruption show a significant correlation. Data on economic activity and employment status indicate that differences between social groups are relevant when interpreting perceptions of corruption.

The final sample consisted of 1,254 participants and, after appropriate weighting by age group, gender, level of education (grouped), and settlement type, it was representative of the Hungarian population aged 18 and over. Thus, the conclusions presented and summarised in the results section can be generalised to the overall Hungarian population aged 18 and over. Table III/A presents the distribution of the respondent sample across selected sociodemographic characteristics before weighting.

Table III/A: **Unweighted demographic characteristics of respondents (n = 1,254)**

Demographic data		No of individuals	Distribution
Gender	Male	516	41.1%
	Female	736	58.7%
	Prefer not to answer	2	0.2%
Age group	Young (18-29)	162	12.9%
	Young to middle-aged adults (30–46)	358	28.5%
	Late middle-aged adults (47–64)	397	31.7%
	Elderly (65+)	337	26.9%

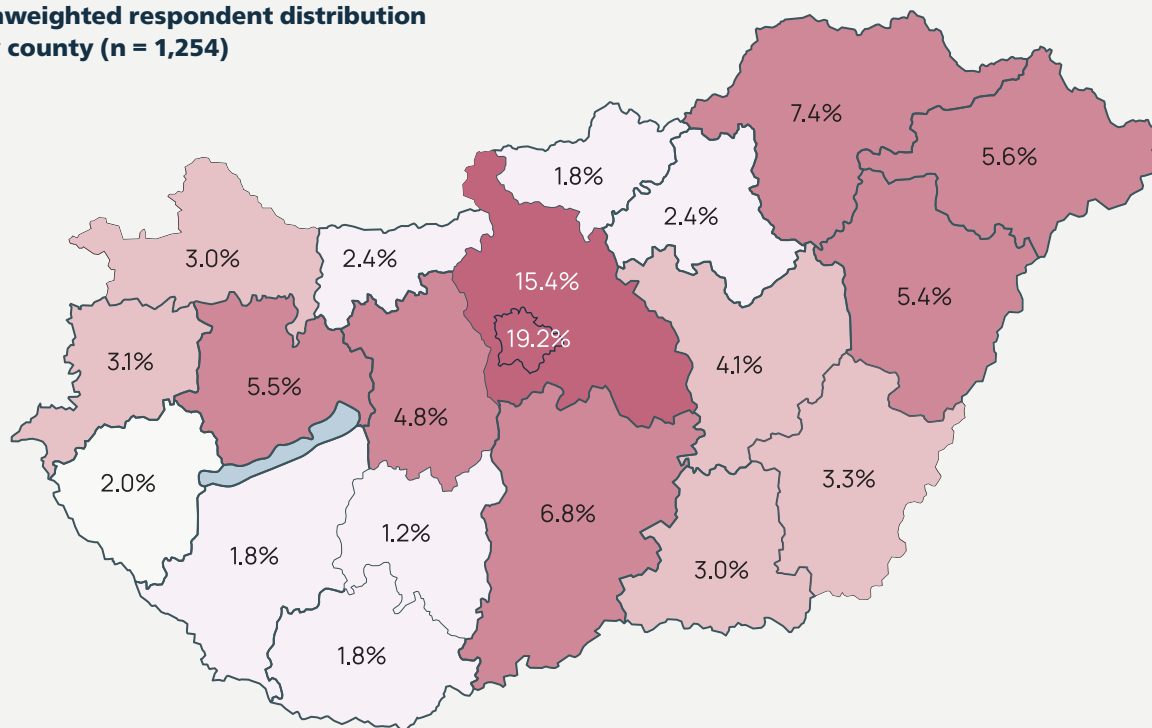
Level of education	Elementary	477	38.0%
	Secondary	502	40.0%
	Higher	275	22.0%
Marital status	Married	663	52.9%
	Unmarried	301	24.0%
	Divorced	135	10.8%
	Widowed	136	10.8%
	Same-sex civil union partner	11	0.9%
	Divorced, civil union partner, same sex	3	0.2%
	Prefer not to answer	3	0.2%
	Widowed, civil partner, same sex	2	0.2%
Settlement	Budapest	239	19.0%
	City/town	430	34.3%
	County seat	193	15.4%
	Village	392	31.3%

Women represent the majority (58.7%) in the gender distribution of respondents. The age group distribution of the sample is balanced, although the younger age group is represented in smaller proportions than the middle-aged one. The average age was 50.3 years; the youngest respondent was 18 years old, and the oldest was 102 years old.

Most respondents (50.1%) were married. Among the groups defined by level of education (primary, secondary and tertiary education), respondents with secondary-level education constituted the largest group²².

²² The details of the grouping related to the level of education are available in Annex 4.

Figure III/1:
**Unweighted respondent distribution
 by county (n = 1,254)**



Most respondents live in Budapest (19.2%) and Pest County (15.4%). 68.7% of the sample consisted of people living in towns, county seats, or in the capital, which is consistent with the overall tendency of Hungarians to concentrate in urban areas. It is important to note, however, that this distribution arises from the sampling strategy. The geographical distribution of the survey corresponded to the population's territorial distribution. In more populous areas, particularly in Budapest and Pest County, a proportionally higher number of respondents were included. As a result, the regional sample proportions closely approximate the corresponding proportions of the population.

2.9% of respondents have a habitual residence different from the one at which they were contacted for the data collection, so it can generally be said that most of the contact details provided in the purchased address list, presented in the methodology description, corresponded to respondents' habitual residence.

Most households in the surveyed sample consisted of two or three persons:²³ two-member households account for 37%, while three-member households represent 19.4% of the sample. Four-member households represent 17.6%, while single-member households account for 19%. Larger households (consisting of 5 to 9 members) account for 7% of all households. Respondents live in households with an average size of 2.62 members.²⁴

From this point onwards in the study, we use and present results weighted with the weight variable based on the 2022 census data. Using this variable enables the generalisation of results to the Hungarian population aged 18 and over.

A multiple-choice question²⁵ reveals that the Hungarian population primarily has domestic experience;



84.4% INDICATED THAT THEY HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY LIVED PERMANENTLY, WORKED, OR STUDIED OUTSIDE HUNGARY.

Examining the objective labour market situation of the population, it can be established that 63.7% worked at least one hour during the week preceding the survey. Within the 63.7% subgroup, 62.3% worked for monetary compensation, while 1.4% for non-monetary benefit or without any compensation. 36.3% of them did not work during the period from Monday to Sunday of the week prior to the survey. A smaller proportion (4.8%) of those not working did not work because they were on sick leave, holiday, maternity leave, or were prevented by other health or family issues.



THE MAJORITY OF THOSE EMPLOYED WORKED IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR (71.9%).

²³ Respondents are also included in the household size, as we asked them to count themselves in while completing the questionnaire.

²⁴ When preparing this descriptive statistic, one respondent, who indicated a household size of 0, was excluded.

²⁵ To this specific question, respondents could select multiple response options simultaneously.

A smaller percentage worked at public institutions or civil society organisations (Figure 2). Only 1.55% selected the “don’t know” or “prefer not to answer” options.

Most respondents work for organisations employing 1 to 9 persons (32.16%), followed by those working for enterprises with a staff number of 10 to 19 personnel (17.55%), and those working for entities with 250 or more employees (16.49%). Respondents working for enterprises with a staff number of 20 to 49 accounted for 13.69%, while those working for entities with 50 to 249 employees made up 11.57%; 8.54% of the respondents could not or preferred not to answer the question.

Figure III/2: **Employer sector**

Distribution of the economically active population by employer sector (n = 818)



Distribution by the NACE major categories of the employer sector

We asked respondents who were employed at the time of responding to indicate the main activity conducted by their employers as an open-ended response.²⁶ The responses received in this way were classified according to the major categories used in the NACE classification system.^{27, 28} The categorisation and classification of the open-ended responses were carried out with the support of artificial intelligence-based text recognition and classification procedures.

Based on the open-ended responses, economic activities in the Hungarian society appear in the following NACE major categories:

²⁶ The classification is subjective and based on respondents’ open-ended responses.

²⁷ The major categories of NACE were indicated using the codes applied by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Source: https://www.ksh.hu/osztalyozasok_teaor25

²⁸ Based on a comparison with the HCSO data tables prepared for the headcount in economic sectors for the fourth quarter of 2025, it can be established that among the ten largest sectors by employee headcount, the distribution of the results of the population survey of the On the Right Path research by economic sector and the HCSO data match in all but two cases – administrative activities and agriculture: https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/mun/hu/mun0112.html

Table III/B: **Distribution by economic activity (NACE major categories) (n = 805)**

Serial No	NACE code	NACE category	Share (%)
1	G	WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE; REPAIR OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES	17.6%
2	C	MANUFACTURING	15.8%
3	O	ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICE ACTIVITIES	9.1%
4	R	HUMAN HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK ACTIVITIES	6.7%
5	Q	EDUCATION	6%
6	I	ACCOMODATION, FOOD SERVICE ACTIVITIES	5.7%
7	P	PUBLIC ADMINSTRATION AND DEFENCE, COMPULSARY SOCIAL SECURITY	5.7%
8	H	TRANSPORTING AND STORAGE	5.6%
9	F	CONSTRUCTION	5.1%
10	N	PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES	4%
11	NT	UNKOWN	3.2%
12	A	AGGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING	3%
13	T	OTHER SERVICES ACTIVITIES	3%
14	NV	NO RESPONSE	2.7%
15	K	TELECOMMUNICATIONS, COMPUTER PROGRAMMING, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONSULTING, IT INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER INFORMATION SERVICES	2%
16	L	FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE ACTIVITIES	1.7%
17	E	WATER SUPPLY,; SEWERAGE; WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REMEDIATION ACTIVITIES	1.4%

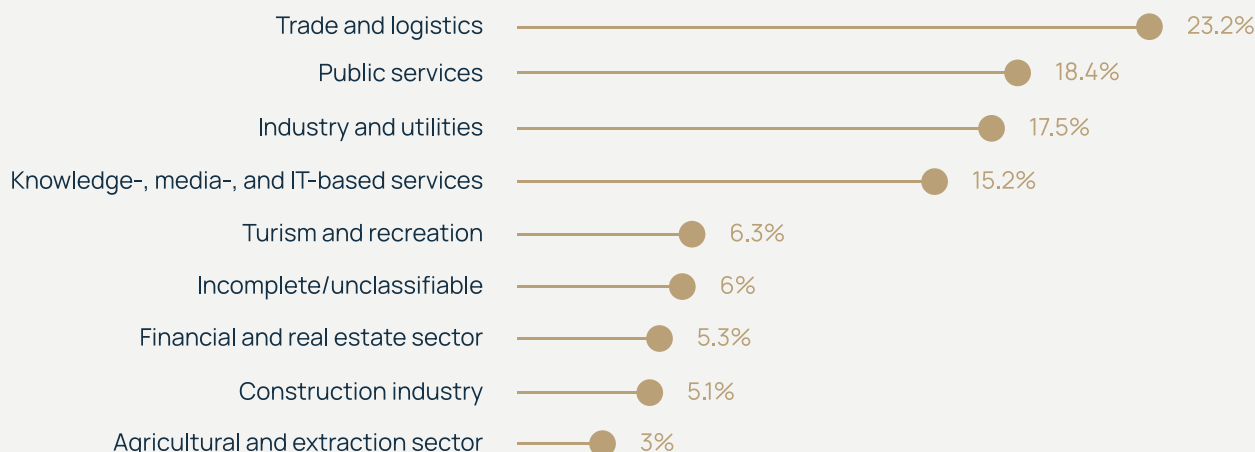
Serial No	NACE code	NACE category	Share (%)
18	S	ARTS, SPORT AND RECREATION	0.6%
19	M	REAL ESTATE ACTIVITIES	0.5%
20	D	ELECTRICITY, GAS, STEAM AND AIR CONDITIONING SUPPLY	0.4%
21	J	PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES, BROADCASTING ACTIVITIES, CONTENT PROVISION AND DISTRIBUTION	0.1%
22	U	ACTIVITIES OF HOUSHOLDS AS EMPLOYERS; UNDIFFERENTIATED GOODS- AND SERVICES-PRODUCING ACTIVITIES OF HOUSHOLDS FOR OWN USE	0.1%

The *“trade, vehicle repair”* sector represents the largest proportion at 17.64%. This is followed by manufacturing at 15.78%, indicating the position of industrial activities.

Administrative and support services secured third place at 9.07%, reflecting the growing role of background services in modern economy. The 6.7% proportion of human health and social care reflects the significance of social needs, particularly in healthcare and social services. The entire group of people working in the five largest economic sectors covers about 54% of the Hungarian population, which points to the fact that economic activity builds around sectors in a relatively concentrated manner. The 21 economic sectors were classified into nine combined groups for better transparency. After classification, frequencies showed the distribution presented in the following figure.

Figure III/3:

**Distribution of the Hungarian population's economic activities
by merged NACE divisions (n = 805)**



The proportions of respondents of working age (16 to 63 years) and young adults (18 to 40 years) show a wide variety across different sectors. The proportion of young people of working age varies between 34% and 53%, with strong differences across sectors' age structures.

The proportion of young people in agriculture and the extractive industry exceeds 50%. By contrast, in the construction industry, commercial and logistics sectors, tourism and leisure sector, as well as in public services, the proportion of young people of working age is around or below 40%, indicating an ageing structure and posing a medium-term risk in succession. The remaining NACE divisions are in a transitory state, with 45% to 48% of young people working in them.

3.2 Income and subjective financial security

As part of the data collection, the Hungarian population was asked about sensitive topics such as the objective and subjective income status of their households, as well as about other variables reflecting social status. In view of their sensitivity, these questions generally offered the possibility of item non-response,

so respondents could decide without pressure whether they wanted to answer the income-related or later political questions or move on to the next section of the questionnaire.

Before the assessment of the household's net income, we asked respondents to indicate any other types of monthly benefits they receive alongside their employment income, and in the case of variable income, to strive to specify the average net income per month. The household's net monthly revenue could be reported either by specifying an exact amount or – if they preferred not to do so due to the sensitivity of the question – by indicating income brackets. Subjective income situation and material status were examined using questions taken from a previous European survey.²⁹

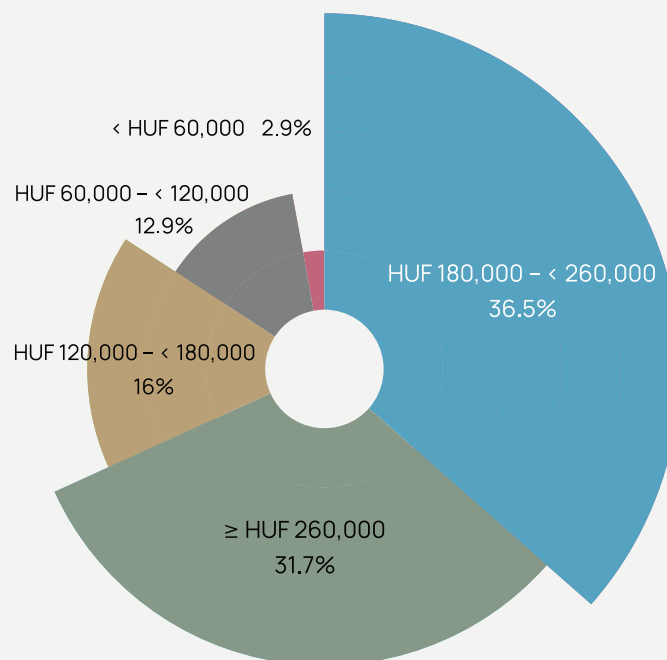
Within this framework, respondents could indicate the extent to which paying an unexpected expense posed a difficulty for them, and whether covering their regular monthly expenses represents a substantial burden on the household. Based on previous experience, we observed somewhat higher item non-response rates for sensitive questions relating to income.

Among respondents, 51% reported an exact amount for their household's monthly net income, while the remaining 49% either indicated only the relevant income bracket or did not wish to, or were unable to, provide any information on their household's net income.

When assessing household net income, it is important to consider the number of people sharing that income, that is, the size of the household. Monthly net income per capita was calculated using the available data. Where respondents reported their household's total monthly net income as an exact amount, that value was used directly. Where income was reported only as an income bracket, the midpoint of the corresponding income range was assigned to the household. Thereby, we constructed a new variable, based on which, and knowing the size of the household, we calculated the monthly net revenue per capita and its distribution.

²⁹ EU-SILC.

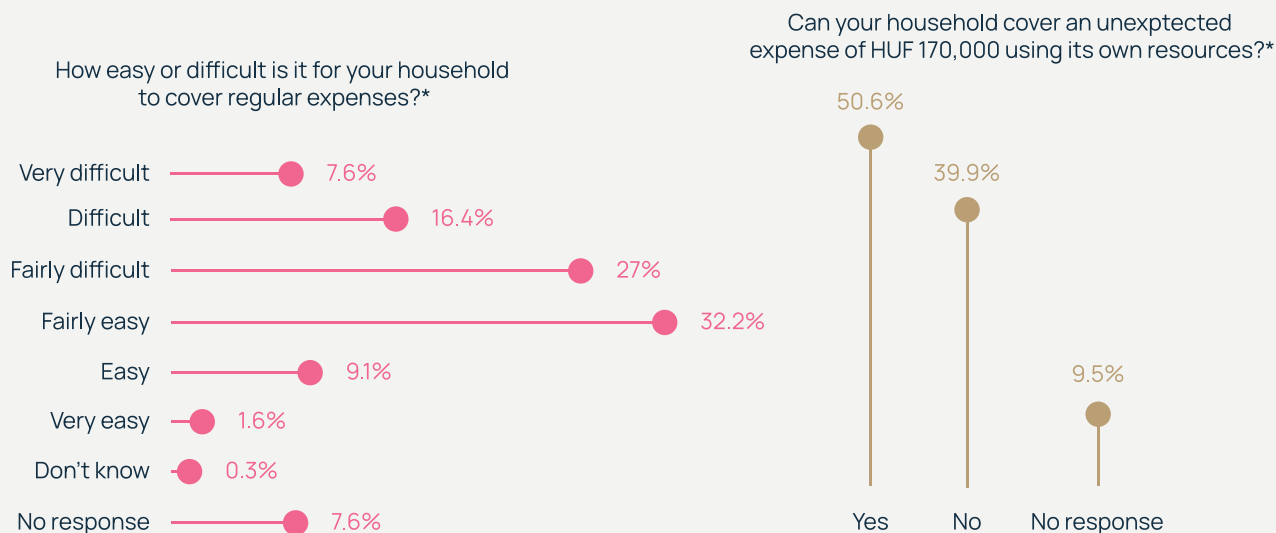
Figure III/4:
**Distribution of monthly net
 income per capita
 (HUF/capita) (n = 931)**



Besides the objective results of households' income status, presented earlier, one of the interesting findings of the study of demographic characteristics is their subjective assessment and the differences of households' savings capacity. Almost half of Hungarian respondents (49.09%) indicated that it was "fairly difficult", "difficult" or "very difficult" for them to cover regular expenses from the income of their household, while 0.35% could not, and 7.61% preferred not to answer this question.

At the same time, another question addressed whether respondents would be able to cover an unexpected expense of HUF 170,000 using their own resources. The question showed a somewhat higher item non-response rate with 9.49% of respondents not answering the question. Among those who responded, 50.64% indicated that they would be able to pay such an unexpected expense using their household's own resources.

Figure III/5: **Ability to cover expenses**



* Based on respondent perceptions (n=1,254)

The question investigating the ability to meet regular monthly expenses and the subjective ability to cover an unexpected expenditure showed a statistically significant relationship.³⁰ The analysis of the percentage distributions clearly indicates that respondents who, in their own opinions, are able to meet their regular expenses more easily are also more likely to have sufficient financial reserves to cover an unexpected expense using their own resources.³¹

It should be noted, however, that the two questions are based on different measurement concepts. While one is designed to capture respondents' subjective assessment of their ability to adapt to ongoing financial challenges, the other focuses on their capacity to cover a specific hypothetical major one-off expense. The

³⁰ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.485$

³¹ The heat map visualisation of the relationship between households' ability to cover regular monthly expenses and unexpected expenses is presented in Annex 5.

relationship between the two questions indicates that subjective perceptions of a household's financial security and actual financial resilience partially overlap, but this does not mean that they are perfectly identical.

It was also revealed that most respondents (79.71%) had not experienced a shortage of money in the past 12 months, i.e. they had had no difficulty paying their bills by due date or covering their housing costs. The item non-response rate (5.32%) is relatively low, so the results represent the sample well.

Assessment of Hungarian households' financial situation

To assess the financial situation of households, we analysed the three complementary questions above:

- subjective difficulty in covering regular expenses,
- the ability to cover an unexpected expense of HUF 170,000 using own resources, and
- experiencing a shortage of money in the past 12 months.

1. High-level financial security

- They find it *"easy"*, *"very easy"* or *"fairly easy"* to cover regular expenses.
- They are able to cover unexpected expenses using their own resources.
- They have not experienced money shortages in the past 12 months.

2. Low-level financial security

- They find it *"difficult"*, *"very difficult"* or *"fairly difficult"* to cover regular expenses.
- They are unable to cover unexpected expenses using their own resources.
- They have experienced money shortages in the past 12 months.

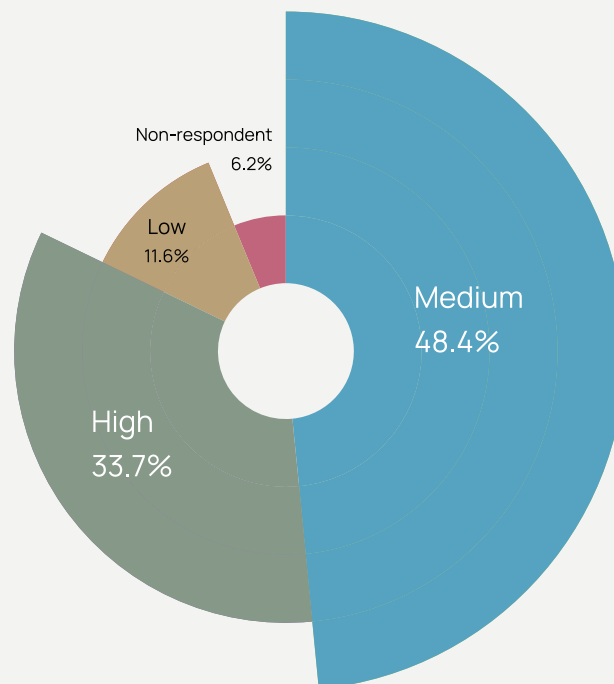
3. Persons who refused to respond

- Only those respondents who selected either *"prefer not to answer"* and/or *"don't know"* for at least two questions.

4. Medium-level financial security

- Any other combinations which do not belong either in the high, the low or the refusal category.
- These households are partially able to cover their regular expenses and have certain savings but are not completely sure of their ability to cover unexpected expenses or have experienced minor money shortages in the year prior to the survey.

Figure III/6:
Subjective financial security of Hungarian households (n = 1254)



According to the results, 48.4% of Hungarians belong to the medium, 33.7% to the high and 11.6% to the low financial security category, while 6.2% fall into the group of those who refused to answer the question.



THIS MEANS THAT MORE THAN ONE TENTH OF HOUSEHOLDS ARE PRESUMABLY EXPERIENCING SERIOUS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES. IN CASE OF UNEXPECTED EXPENSES, THEY FACE A MUCH HIGHER RISK, WHICH INDICATES INCREASED FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY.

The relatively high proportion of medium-level financial security indicates that most households are partly able to cover regular expenses and have some savings, but their financial situation is not completely stable, so the boundaries between the “high” and “low” groups are not clearly defined.

It is an interesting finding that the 2024 figures of Eurostat’s regularly calculated “severe material and social deprivation rate” (SMSD) for Hungary reported roughly similar proportions. Based on the 2024

results, 9.3% of the Hungarian population experienced serious material and social difficulties (Eurostat 2025). The Eurostat indicator is a composite measure of material and social deprivation, based on 13 questions included in the EU-SILC survey. The results of the grouped variable of subjective financial security from the *On the Right Path* population survey and the results of the above Eurostat study can therefore only be compared with reservations for the following reasons:

- The 3 questions on subjective financial security in the *On the Right Path* population survey were indeed taken from the EU-SILC survey questionnaire, but the focus of the two surveys is different, and none of the 13 questions used by the SMSD were included in the *On the Right Path* survey.
- The data for the EU-SILC survey are provided by each country's national statistical office (the HCSO in Hungary); however, since 2018, certain independent Hungarian researchers – together with international organisations such as UNICEF – have highlighted database-level methodological problems in relation to Hungarian poverty data supplied by the HCSO. These data are also used by the EU-SILC database, so the problem may also affect all other surveys that apply the EU-SILC data (TÁTRAI–GÁBOS 2025). Hungary's poverty data were revised in 2025. Although the SMSD rate does not directly use income-based data, the bias in income-based poverty data may indirectly influence even the SMSD's deprivation-based results.
- Thirdly, it should be mentioned regarding the time factor that the most recent SMSD data apply to 2024, while the data collection for the *On the Right Path* population survey took place in 2025.

Overall, the analysis shows that most households have medium or high-level financial security, they can manage regular expenses and have some savings; however, a minor group has limited financial resilience, and unexpected expenses could pose a serious problem to them.

3.3 Political interest among Hungarians and its direction

Political interest, political self-placement, and willingness to vote are key factors in understanding democratic participation within societies. For this reason, in a separate module, the study examined political attitudes, as they may also provide a more nuanced understanding of the interpretation of the experiences and perceptions related to corruption.

To empirically examine this, we analysed political attitudes using a multivariate statistical procedure: based on the variables of the first factor generated during factor analysis – which was named “political

and corruption perceptions” (Annex 7) – we identified two clearly distinct groups, using a clustering procedure. The groups formed in this way showed different patterns in their perceptions of corruption depending on their political orientation: members of the cluster characterised by a predominantly pro-government stance consistently viewed the questions regarding the prevalence of corruption in Hungary more favourably than the group characterised by more pro-opposition attitudes.

International academic literature has also suggested that individuals’ political attitudes and their attitudes towards the government may influence their perceptions of the prevalence and severity of corruption (AGERBERG 2022; ZILLER–SCHÜBEL 2015). It is important to emphasise, however, that the purpose of this analysis is not to evaluate or categorise political views but rather to examine them as social background variables that may be associated with perceptions of corruption and levels of trust in public institutions. They may also serve as control variables, as responses to corruption- and integrity-related questions that correlate only with responses to political questions should be interpreted with considerable caution. By contrast, greater confidence can be placed in correlations and explanatory models in which the observed relationships are also supported by variables other than political ones. The investigation of such correlations is a common practice in social science analysis and cannot be regarded as political opinion formation or taking a stance. The relationship between political self-placement and perceptions of the functioning of institutions is not surprising based on the literature, as individual experiences, interpretive frameworks, and levels of trust can lead to different perceptions. The objective of our analysis is the empirical presentation of these patterns, and not their normative assessment or the conveyance of a political message.



IN TERMS OF THEIR POLITICAL INTERESTS, HUNGARIAN RESPONDENTS MOSTLY SELECTED NEUTRAL RESPONSE OPTIONS, WITH THE MAJORITY CLAIMING TO BE EITHER RATHER INTERESTED (36.3%) OR RATHER UNINTERESTED (28.2%) IN POLITICS.

Based on cross-tab analysis, voting intention is more prevalent among those who show a higher level of interest in politics.³² Political interest shows a significant regional pattern in Hungary.³³

³² $p < 0.001$; Cramer’s $V=0.27$

³³ $p < 0.001$; Cramer’s $V= 0.199$

OVERALL, THE WILLINGNESS TO VOTE IS RELATIVELY HIGH, WITH ALMOST THREE QUARTERS OF THE HUNGARIAN ADULT POPULATION STATING THAT THEY WOULD DEFINITELY OR PROBABLY VOTE IF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WERE HELD ON THE SUNDAY FOLLOWING THE SURVEY.

According to the map-based figures below, an interesting duality emerges in terms of the political self-placement of the Hungarian population.

Averages in left-leaning and right-leaning political orientation in 2025 by county (n = 1,042)

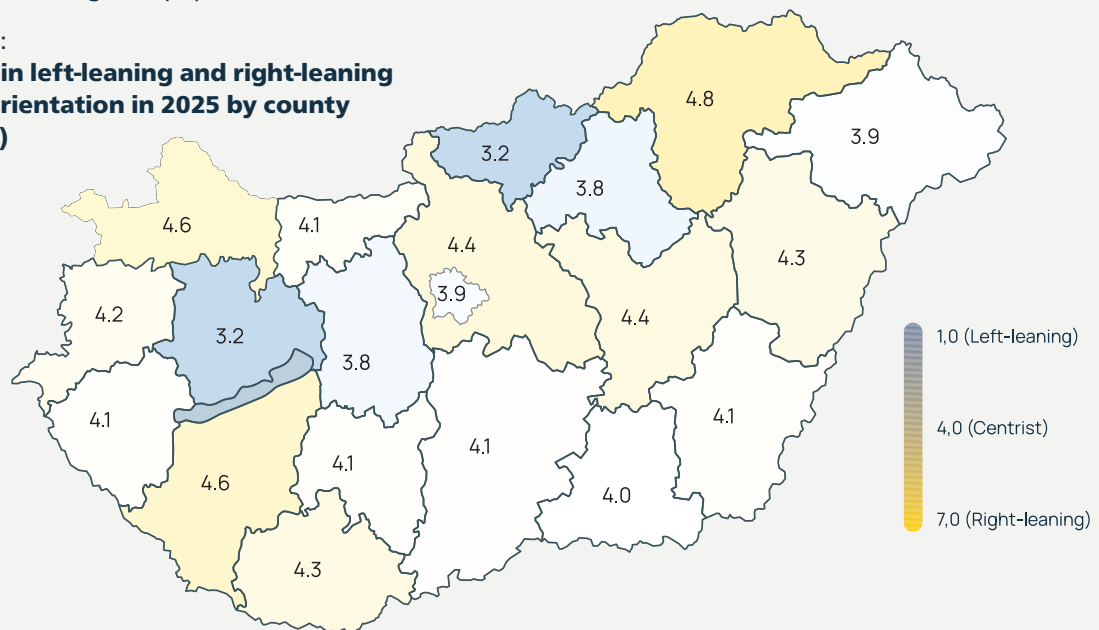


Figure III/7 shows that in several counties, most of the Hungarian population tended to identify as slightly right-leaning, as indicated by yellowish shades. It is important to note, however, that these values were generally close to the midpoint of the scale (4), indicating only a slight right-leaning orientation among the populations of these counties.

Figure III/8:

**Pro-government and
pro-opposition political
orientation in 2025
by county (n = 1,028)**

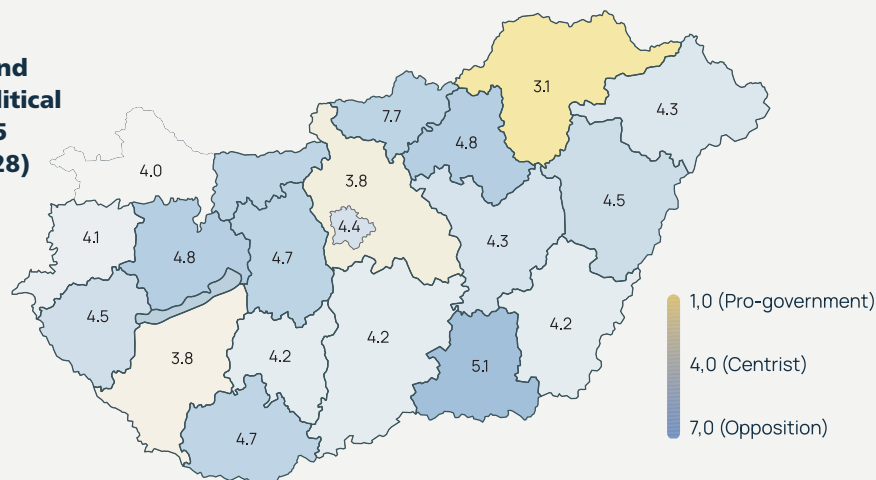


Figure III/8, by contrast, depicts Hungarian society using an opposition–government orientation scale, with 1 indicating a fully pro-government position and 7 representing a completely pro-opposition stance. Here, the national average already leans toward a pro-opposition orientation. The average values are 3.8 and above in each county, except in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, where the average stands at 3.1, making it the county with the strongest pro-government orientation. It should be noted that apart from this, the tendency toward a pro-government orientation is marginal, and can be viewed as falling within the middle range of the scale. Overall, respondents claimed to be more pro-opposition than pro-government in all but one county. All this suggests that political self-placement in Hungary varies by region, but overall, a more moderate ideological self-placement is generally observed.

A strong, structured relationship can be observed between political self-placement (left-right) and current political positioning (government-opposition),³⁴ while subjective well-being is only weakly, albeit significantly, associated with them.³⁵

³⁴ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.48$

³⁵ $p < 0.05$; Cramer's $V = 0.06-0.09$

The background of the slide features a dark, atmospheric landscape with rolling hills under a deep purple and blue twilight sky. A winding road, illuminated with a soft pinkish-purple glow, curves through the scene on the right side. Overlaid on the lower portion of the image is a faint, intricate network of dots and lines, resembling a digital or data visualization. The overall aesthetic is modern and tech-oriented.

4.

Findings

Chapter 4.1 The most serious issues in Hungary

This chapter presents the issues that the Hungarian population perceives as the most serious problems, as well as the hotspots that society views as requiring urgent attention.

According to the population, the most pressing issues are inflation/living costs, public healthcare, and corruption. 41.6% of respondents ranked corruption among the three most important problems, which points to a systemic concern in society. The perception of problems is influenced by individual awareness and involvement in public affairs.

Throughout the design phase of the *On the Right Path* study – as the earlier chapter summarising the methodology also explained – the ordering of the question groups and individual questions followed a precisely planned structure. The objective was to reduce respondent fatigue as much as possible, even in sensitive and difficult research areas such as the study of corruption. With the problem mapping question, our objective was to examine which three of the 15 predefined problem areas are considered by Hungarians to be the most serious, requiring immediate or at least urgent intervention and solution. While drafting the question, a problem list previously applied in several international studies was reviewed. An example of such study is the survey conducted annually by the Special Investigation Service of Lithuania (“STT”), which examines national perceptions of corruption, as well as the Eurobarometer survey carried out after the 2024 European Parliamentary elections (STT 2024; European Parliament 2024). The ordering of the proposed problems was randomised for each respondent, thereby eliminating the bias that could have resulted from presenting them in the same order to everyone.

Regarding the possible answers to the question, in addition to the closed, predefined options, respondents could also articulate other, previously not mentioned problems in their own words (in an “other” category); however, very few respondents, only 10 individuals, made use of this option.

Those choosing from the predefined list of answers identified the following areas as the 5 most serious domestic problems:³⁶

³⁶ The results of the corruption tolerance survey conducted annually in Lithuania show that in 2023 the population also ranked corruption among the top five most serious problems (STT 2024). In their case as well, the top five most serious problems included inflation, low wages, the state of public healthcare, and drug use. Although the findings of the *On the Right Path* survey and Lithuania’s Map of Corruption 2023 survey are not directly comparable, as the questions are not 100% identical in the two studies, the trends are clearly comparable.

Figure IV/1/1:
The five most pressing issues in Hungary (n = 1254)



According to the results, most respondents consider “*price increases, inflation and the cost of living*” to be the most pressing issues, with over half of the respondents selecting this option. This is followed by the state of public healthcare and the issue of corruption, which were also mentioned by a large percentage of the respondents. Among the remaining options, alcohol or drug consumption, as well as general perceptions of the economic situation, stood out, receiving relatively high marks compared to the other problems specified in the list. Regarding the top three problems identified, there was no significant connection between the selected issues and the regions. It was only in the Pest region that alcohol consumption appeared among the three most pressing issues requiring urgent attention, instead of corruption.

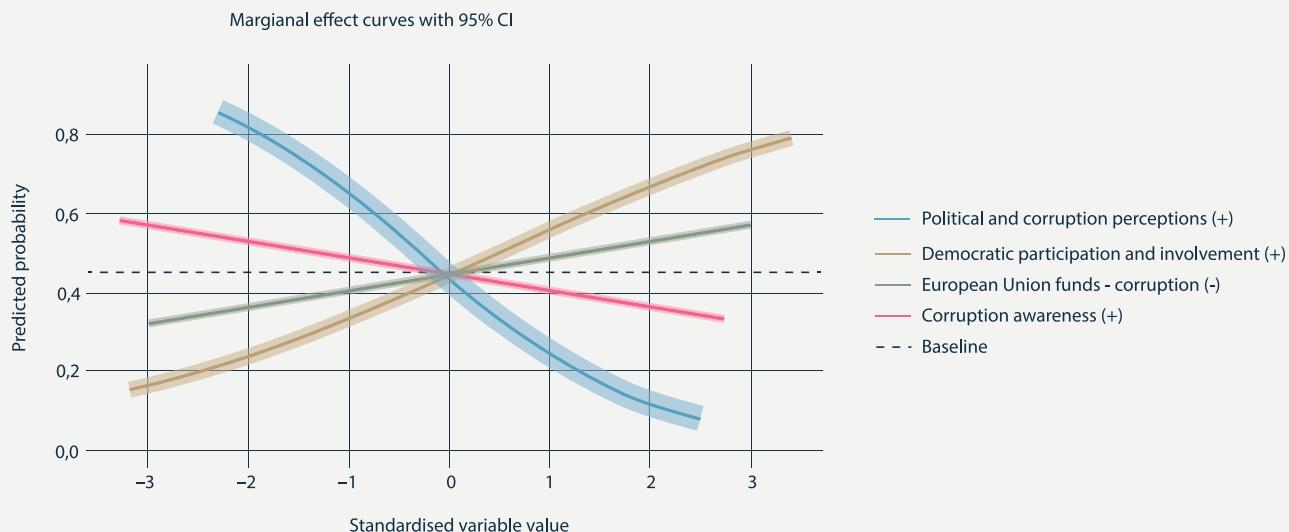


BASED ON THE RESULTS SHOWING THE FREQUENCY OF PROBLEMS, CORRUPTION OCCUPIES A PROMINENT PLACE ON THE POPULATION’S PROBLEM MAP, WITH 41.6% OF HUNGARIANS IDENTIFYING IT AS ONE OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS IN HUNGARY.

This proportion alone indicates that this is far from a marginal issue and is, instead, widely perceived as a social problem.

For this reason, in further analysis, we sought to find out which factors influence whether someone considers corruption to be a major problem. For this assessment, we used the previously identified latent factor dimensions, which encompass several interrelated attitudinal and opinion questions.

Figure IV/1/2: **IV/1/2: Factors reinforcing the identification of corruption as a problem (n=571)**



”

IT CAN BE ESTABLISHED FROM THE FINDINGS³⁷ THAT RESPONDENTS WHO TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND ARE MORE ENGAGED IN POLITICAL AND SOCIETAL PROCESSES ARE MORE LIKELY TO PERCEIVE CORRUPTION AS A MAJOR AND PROMINENT SYSTEMIC ISSUE.

A very similar factor structure can be observed in the model estimating whether an individual has learned about a corruption case from the media: more specifically, effects of a similar direction and magnitude are observed primarily for the first and fourth factors. This suggests that awareness of corruption cases through the media and the perception of corruption as a problem are positively associated.

³⁷ The key results of the logistic regression model are presented in Annex 8.

Chapter 4.2

The impact of perceiving corruption on Hungarians' subjective well-being

This chapter presents the views of the Hungarian population on questions about subjective well-being and quality of life. In addition, by analysing the relationships between various survey questions, we explore the connection between the well-being index variable and the perception of corruption.

Hungarians' overall subjective well-being is relatively high; however, there is a negative connection between the perceived impact of corruption on everyday life and the subjective well-being index. Individuals who perceive corruption as a defining factor in their daily lives are more likely to fall into the low well-being group. Age group and the level of financial security also strongly influence well-being.

The purpose of these questions was to gain insight into how Hungarians feel about their lives, how satisfied they are with it, and the extent to which they believe their lives correspond to their own standards of an ideal life. Using the questions about subjective well-being and the index constructed from them, it was assessed whether there was a connection between the opinion formed about – or a potential experience with – corruption and Hungarian population's subjective well-being.

Assessing the relationship between subjective well-being and the perception of corruption, as well as related experiences, is crucial; however, the availability of domestic data on this topic remains limited. According to international research, corruption impairs not only the subjective well-being and quality of life of those who suffer from it but also of those who benefit from it, as it exerts a detrimental impact through the erosion of trust in social institutions (SULEMANA et al. 2016; TAVITS 2008; BOȚA-AVRAM 2023). The set of questions on subjective well-being examined three key factors of the quality of life of the Hungarian population, with responses recorded on different scales:

- **How satisfied are you overall with your life these days?**

(scale from 0 to 10, where 0 = not at all, 10 = completely)

This question measures overall satisfaction levels, one of the most widely used indicators of subjective well-being. It is also employed in numerous large-sample international surveys, including the EU-SILC and the European Social Survey.

- **How many people close to you could you count on if you had a serious personal problem?**

This dimension shows the extent of social support, referring to individuals' perceptions of the strength of the social network and relational resources on which they could rely should a problem arise.

- **How is your overall health?**

This question measures subjective health status, an important indicator in health psychology and quality-of-life research, which can have a substantial impact on overall well-being.

Constructing a well-being index

The three questions presented above together provide an indication of the subjective well-being of the Hungarian population. From the individual responses to these three questions, a single well-being index can be constructed, which captures the concept of subjective well-being.³⁸ Since the responses to the three questions were not measured on scales of the same length, they were rescaled to a common 0–1 scale, where 0 indicates very low well-being and 1 indicates very high subjective well-being. This was necessary in order to consolidate the responses to individual questions into a single index value, thereby creating the well-being index.³⁹

Construction of well-being groups

To balance the uneven distribution and ensure methodological consistency with other indicators used in the study, the well-being index values were categorised into tertiles, dividing respondents into three approximately equal groups representing low, medium, and high-level of well-being.

The three categories were defined using the following threshold values: the value of the lower tertile was 0.5780, while that of the upper tertile was 0.7060. Accordingly, respondents with an index value below 0.5780 were classified into the low well-being category, those with a value between 0.5780 and 0.7060 into the medium well-being category, and those with a value above 0.7060 into the high well-being category.

The **tertile-based grouping** resulted in three approximately equal-sized groups, with 32.7% of respondents falling into the low well-being category, 33.2% into the medium and 33.5% into the high well-being category; the proportion of those who selected the “*don’t know*” option remained 0.6%.

³⁸ Cronbach’s alpha= 0.7

³⁹ We began by transforming the responses for individual question onto an ordinal scale [0–1] (for example: very poor – poor – satisfactory – good – very good → 0/4, 1/4, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4). Subsequently, the three rescaled values were summed, and the resulting score was then rescaled to the [0–1] range. The resulting index expresses the general well-being of the Hungarian population on a unified, continuous scale, with all questions weighted equally.

Table IV/2/A:
Distribution of well-being groups (n = 1,254)

Well-being group	Distribution	Average	Standard deviation
High (upper one-third)	33.5%	0.8	0.1
Middle (middle one-third)	33.2%	0.7	0
Low (lower one-third)	32.7%	0.5	0.1
Don't know	0.6%	–	–

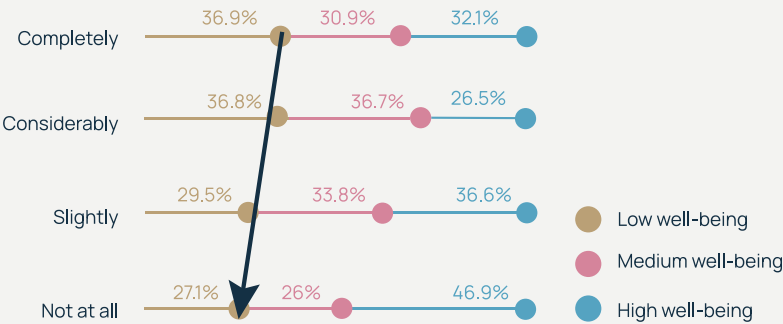
Although there are regional differences in well-being levels, these are only slight differences. A significant but weak connection with counties can be observed.⁴⁰

”
EXAMINING THE AVERAGE VALUES OF THE WELL-BEING INDEX BY COUNTY, THE LOWEST AVERAGE WAS OBSERVED IN NÓGRÁD COUNTY (0.55), WHILE THE HIGHEST WAS RECORDED IN GYŐR-MOSON-SOPRON COUNTY (0.69).

The Chi-squared test conditions are met. Cells with a small number of items do not significantly distort the result.

Figure IV/2/1:
Connection between corruption’s impact on everyday life and well-being in 2025 (n = 1203)

To what extent does corruption affect daily life?



⁴⁰ p < 0.001; Cramer’s V = 0.06

Figure IV/2/1 presents the distribution of the level of well-being according to the extent to which respondents perceive corruption as affecting their everyday lives.



THE RESULTS CLEARLY SHOW THAT AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO PERCEIVE THE IMPACT OF CORRUPTION AS AFFECTING THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES “CONSIDERABLY” OR “COMPLETELY”, THE LOW GROUPED WELL-BEING CATEGORY IS THE MOST PREVALENT.

In contrast, among those who felt that corruption affected their daily lives only “*slightly*” or “*not at all*”, the high grouped well-being category was the most frequent. Respondents selecting the “*don’t know*” option also tended to fall into the low well-being group.

This relationship suggests that the perceived impact of corruption on everyday life is associated with subjective well-being.⁴¹



SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING ALSO EXHIBITS A CLEAR AGE-RELATED PATTERN.

Subjective well-being also exhibits a clear age-related pattern. At 57%, high well-being prevails in younger age groups (aged 18–40), whereas the proportion of those with high well-being is substantially lower among older respondents (aged 65 and over), reaching just 14%. The proportion of respondents with low well-being levels is considerably high (51%). The connection between age and well-being is of moderate strength, which may point to structural differences across different stages of life. It is important to emphasise that this pattern is not universal: in some countries, old age is not associated with lower subjective well-being. A number of international studies – particularly those conducted in the United States – have identified a U-shaped pattern in the relationship between age and well-being, in which the well-being of older age groups exhibits stabilising or improving tendencies (BLANCHFLOWER–OSWALD 2008; STONE et al. 2010). A statistically significant, moderate but consistent connection between subjective well-being and financial security can also be identified.



THE DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCIAL SECURITY AMONG RESPONDENTS WITH HIGHER WELL-BEING LEVELS IS CLEARLY CONCENTRATED IN HIGHER CATEGORIES.⁴³

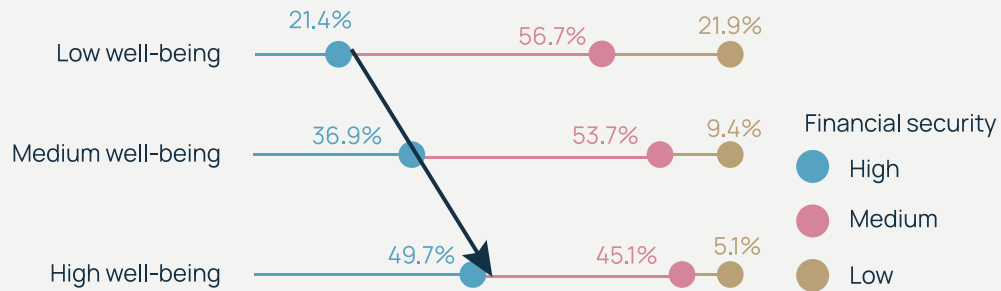
⁴¹ p <0.001; Cramer’s V=0.21

⁴² p <0.001; Cramer’s V=0.22

⁴³ p <0.001; Cramer’s V=0.20

Figure IV/2/2:

Changes in financial security with increasing subjective well-being (n = 1172)



Chapter 4.3

Integrity and trust through the eyes of Hungarians

The chapter on integrity (both personal and institutional) and trust represented one of the key set of questions within the On the Right Path population survey. In this chapter, we examined trust within Hungarian society, including trust both in other people and in selected public and private institutions, alongside respondents' perceptions of their own and other individuals' ethical and rule-abiding behaviour. Among the dimensions of institutional integrity, special attention was paid to equal treatment of service users, as well as employee accountability practices within institutions.

Hungarians view themselves as more ethical than others, a phenomenon consistent with the concept of “*moral self-enhancement*”. Perceived institutional integrity was highest for “*government windows, registrars’ offices and government offices*”, and lowest for the “*national government*” and the “*public healthcare system*”. Despite the limited comparability, the questions assessing trust in institutions and those exploring the perceived integrity of those same institutions were clearly related. Government service centres, registry offices, and government offices achieved the highest scores on both trust and integrity.

One of the central themes of the *On the Right Path* population survey was the assessment of integrity alongside perceptions and experiences related to corruption, as well as the survey of the use of European Union funds. In the *On the Right Path* data survey, we employed an extended definition of integrity, developed by the Integrity Authority (see details in earlier chapter on methodology).



UNDER THIS DEFINITION, AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, INTEGRITY REFERS TO THE ALIGNMENT BETWEEN PROFESSED AND DECLARED VALUES, AS WELL AS ACTING IN A MORAL AND TRANSPARENT MANNER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THOSE VALUES. AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL, IT REFERS TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH AN INSTITUTION FULFILS ITS STATED OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS IN AN ETHICAL MANNER, TREATS ITS CLIENTS EQUALLY, AND OPERATES IN A WAY THAT REFLECTS ACCOUNTABILITY.

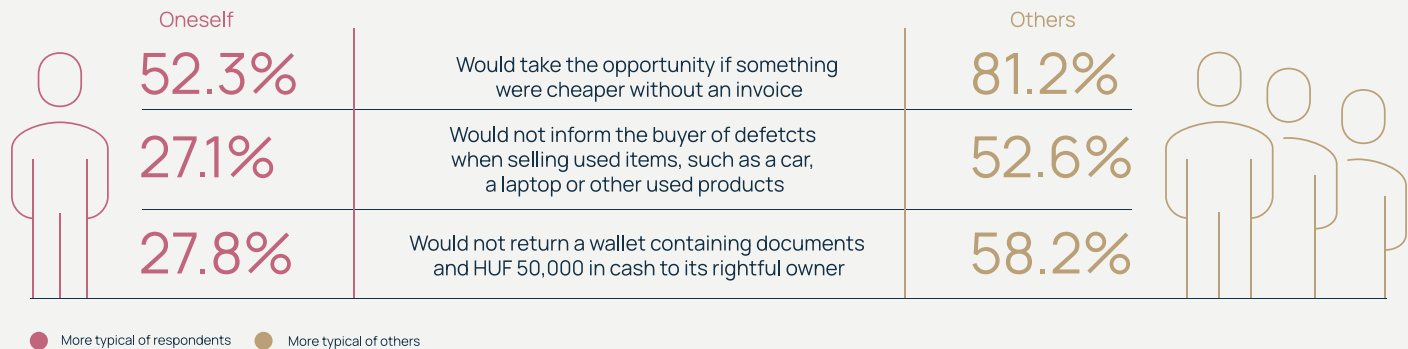
By comparing the two perspectives (respondents vs others) on the level of personal integrity, we sought to keep social desirability bias and moral self-enhancement under control. The latter term refers to individuals’ tendency to present themselves more positively, with their actual behaviour often closer to how they believe others would behave. To eliminate biases, the direction of responses in the three questions was also randomised, thereby reducing the risk of response patterning⁴⁴ effects. The three hypothetical case examples concentrated on the concepts of compliance and honesty, as well as transparent behaviour and their assessment. In the study, we examined Hungarians’ views on the extent to which various types of

⁴⁴ Response patterning in questionnaires refers to the phenomenon whereby respondents gradually recognise patterns or logic in the questions over time, which may lead to less stable responses and thus distort the results. To eliminate this factor, the ordering of the “morally right, ethical” response option was randomised.

behaviour in everyday ethical decision-making situations were characteristic of themselves and of others. The survey presented three specific examples:

- 1. *“Taking the opportunity if something were cheaper without an invoice”*
- 2. *“Informing the buyer of defects when selling used items”*
- 3. *“Finding a wallet containing documents and HUF 50,000, and returning it to its rightful owner, with the money still inside”*

Figure IV/3/1: **Perceived behavioural patterns in respondents and others (n = 1,254)**



THE RESULTS SUGGEST THAT PEOPLE TEND TO PRESENT THEMSELVES MORE POSITIVELY, WHILE VIEWING OTHERS MORE NEGATIVELY (FIGURE IV/3/1).

This phenomenon is in line with the concept of *“moral self-enhancement”*, known in the fields of sociology and social psychology (VAJDA et al. 2025; SÍK 2001; DONG et al. 2019). In each case example, more than half of Hungarians believe that others would behave less ethically than them. Among the three case examples, Hungarians most commonly consider accepting transactions without a receipt to be typical of others (81.2% of respondents), while the least typical is that sellers do not inform buyers about defects in used products (52.6% of respondents). The same pattern was observed in respondents’ assessments of their own behaviour: most believed that taking advantage of transactions without an official receipt was the behaviour most characteristic of themselves.

We examined the relationship between attitudes toward corruption and perceptions of others' honesty and integrity, using cluster analysis to identify two respondent groups based on 10 items measuring the perceived prevalence of corruption. One group perceived corruption as a serious social problem, while the other viewed it more optimistically.

The cluster classification was then compared with responses to the questions presented in Figure IV/3/1 concerning other people. These questions assess, through a series of everyday situations, respondents' perceptions of how rule-abiding others are. We captured this using a composite indicator reflecting the number of situations in which respondents believed that others would behave in a norm-abiding manner. Results show significant differences between the two clusters. Among respondents who perceived corruption as a serious social problem, 50% did not believe that others would behave honestly in any of the situations presented, while only 23% expected others to behave honestly in at least two of the case examples. By contrast, the more optimistic group exhibited the opposite pattern: 26% indicated that they did not believe others would behave in a rule-abiding manner in any of the situations presented, while 50% showed trust in others in at least two of the situations.

As part of the analysis, we compiled a list of institutions to assess how the population evaluated them regarding the two examined dimensions of institutional integrity. These two dimensions were, first, whether respondents perceived the institution as treating all service users equally and, second, whether poor performance by an institutional leader would have consequences – that is, whether even high-ranking employees would be held accountable.

It is worth noting that the two questions initially included the same set of institutions; however, due to space constraints, the lists ultimately somewhat differed.

In both questions, institutions generally received positive evaluations from between 50% and 60% of respondents, although several institutions stood out from this general pattern. The Government of Hungary and its employees received less favourable evaluations on both dimensions. Fewer than 40% of Hungarians believed that the two examined dimensions of institutional integrity functioned properly in their case. Furthermore, nearly 60% of them indicated that public healthcare institutions did not treat all people equally.

Figure IV/3/2: **Perceptions of equal treatment in institutions (n = 1,254)**

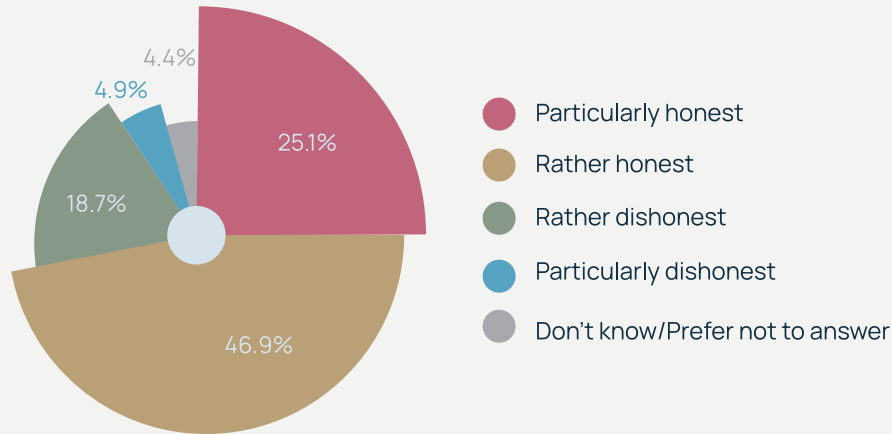
	Rather yes	Rather no	Prefer not to answer/Don't know
Government windows, registrars' offices	70.2%	26.5%	1.8%
Tax authority	54.9%	38.4%	7.9%
Social institutions	56.3%	39.7%	3%
Courts	51.9%	42.1%	3.4%
Local municipalities	54.1%	42.5%	6%
Police	50.9%	46.1%	4%
The Government of Hungary	39.4%	52.7%	6.7%
Public health institutions	41.4%	56.8%	3.3%

Figure IV/3/3: **Perceptions of accountability in institutions (n = 1,254)**

	Rather yes	Rather no	Prefer not to answer/Don't know
Government windows and registrars' offices	63.9%	28.5%	7.6%
Other private companies	62.1%	30%	7.8%
Banks and financial institutions	63.3%	29.9%	6.7%
Tax authority	59.6%	32.7%	7.7%
Police	58.5%	35.2%	6.3%
Courts	56.5%	35.8%	7.7%
Local municipalities	51.6%	42.2%	6.3%
The Government of Hungary	38.1%	53.8%	8.1%

Figure IV/3/4:

What forms of behaviour do you think leaders of private companies and private entrepreneurs generally need to engage in to be successful? (n=1,254)



”

BASED ON THE RESULTS, MOST RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THAT LEADERS OF PRIVATE COMPANIES AND ENTREPRENEURS NEED TO BEHAVE HONESTLY RATHER THAN DISHONESTLY IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

Although nearly one fifth of respondents believe that success requires dishonest rather than honest behaviour, the overall picture remains positive. Those who generally held more positive views of institutional integrity were also more likely to emphasise honesty as a necessary characteristic of corporate leaders' behaviour, whereas more critical attitudes toward institutional integrity were associated with less favourable evaluations of leadership behaviour.

To measure trust, the questionnaire included two questions to be answered on a scale from 0 to 10:

- the first question aimed to find out the extent to which respondents think people generally trust each other,
- while the second question examined respondents' trust attitude, that is, the extent to which they personally trust others.

Overall, respondents believed that people trust each other less than they themselves report trusting others.

We extended the analysis of trust beyond interpersonal relationships to include trust in institutions, as there were reasons to expect that key variables – such as the previously explored perceptions of institutional integrity and, as discussed later, perceptions of corruption prevalence – would be associated with trust levels in specific institutions. Respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale from 0 to 10, the extent to which they trusted each institution listed in the questionnaire. To facilitate presentation, we grouped the values on the 0–10 scale into three categories representing low (0–4), medium (5–7), and high (8–10) levels of trust, thereby enabling all institutions to be compared easily within a single figure.

Figure IV/3/5:
Level of trust among people, as well as between respondents and others (n = 1,254)

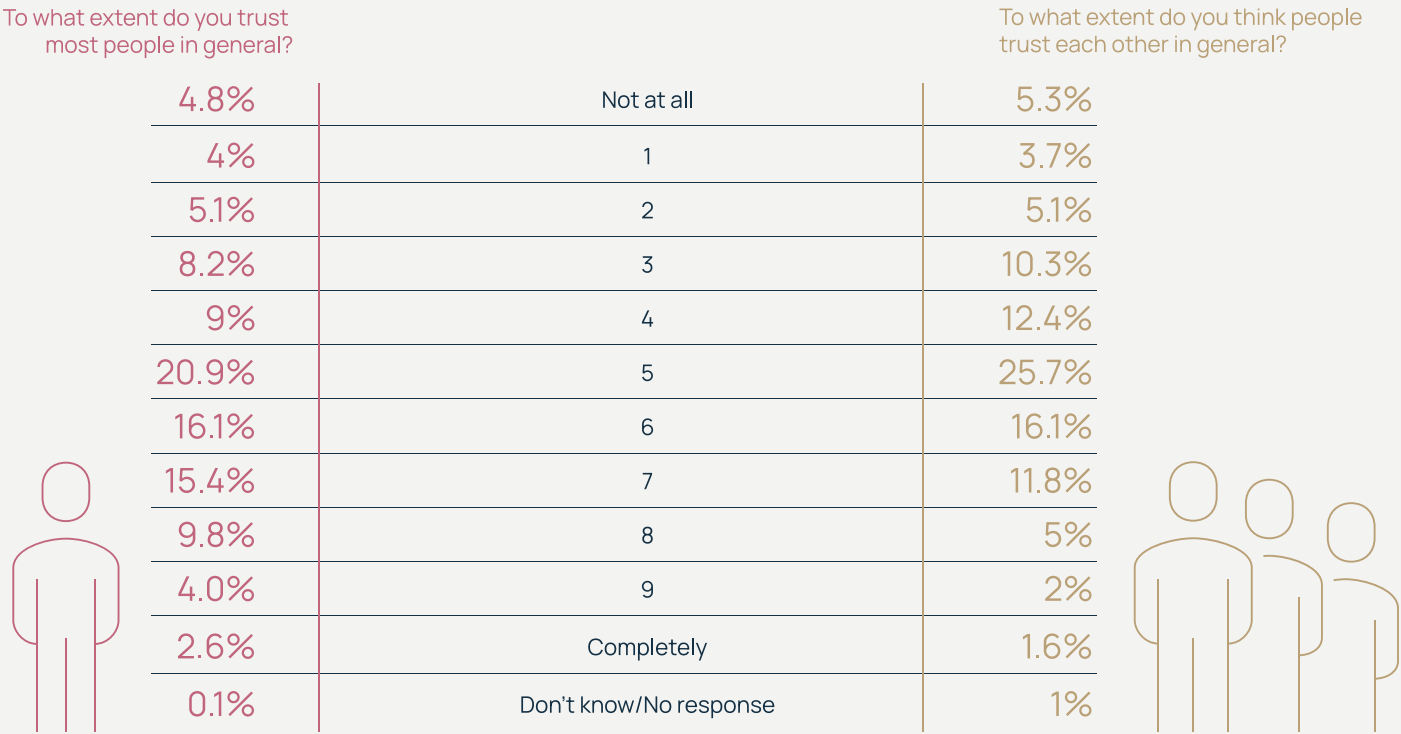


Figure IV/3/6: **Measurement of trust in institutions (n = 1,254)**

	low - [0-4]	medium - [5-7]	high [8-10]	DK/NA
The national government	50.8%	25.5%	19.9%	3.7%
Public healthcare institutions	34.8%	35.1%	28.6%	1.5%
Banks and financial institutions	33.2%	33.7%	29.6%	3.5%
Tax authority	29.5%	30.5%	32.9%	7.2%
The police	29%	32%	37%	1.9%
Government windows, registrars' offices and government offices	28.8%	26.2%	41.7%	3.3%
Courts	28.7%	30%	33.8%	7.4%
Local municipalities	27%	32%	38.6%	2.4%
Social institutions	26.2%	30.1%	38.9%	4.8%
Other business enterprises, private companies	21.2%	41.2%	28.9%	8.7%

Based on the results, levels of trust were relatively evenly distributed across institutions, but substantially lower levels of trust were observed in relation to the national government. The highest levels of trust were observed in the case of “*government windows, registrars’ offices and government offices*”, which may indicate positive experiences with public-facing administrative services. Previously, in the case of two questions examining the integrity of individual institutions, we observed a similar trend, as the most positive evaluations were observed regarding equal treatment and accountability in the case of government windows, registrars’ offices, and government offices.

At the regional level, we examined issues related to integrity and trust in order to identify potential regional differences. In most cases, no major differences were observed; however, one notable distinction is worth highlighting regarding the question groups examining the behavioural patterns of respondents and other individuals. Some regional differences emerged regarding perceptions of rule-abiding and ethical behaviour in certain situations. Regarding perceptions of other people’s behaviour, Pest County was the only one where the proportion of positive evaluations exceeded 50% (reaching 55%). This means that more than half of this county’s population believed that others would act ethically and in a rule-abiding manner in at least two of the three case examples presented. **The corresponding proportion in the Northern Great Plain and Northern Hungary stood at 44% and 40%, respectively, while in the other regions it barely reached 30%.**

Chapter 4.4

Trends in media consumption and trust in the media

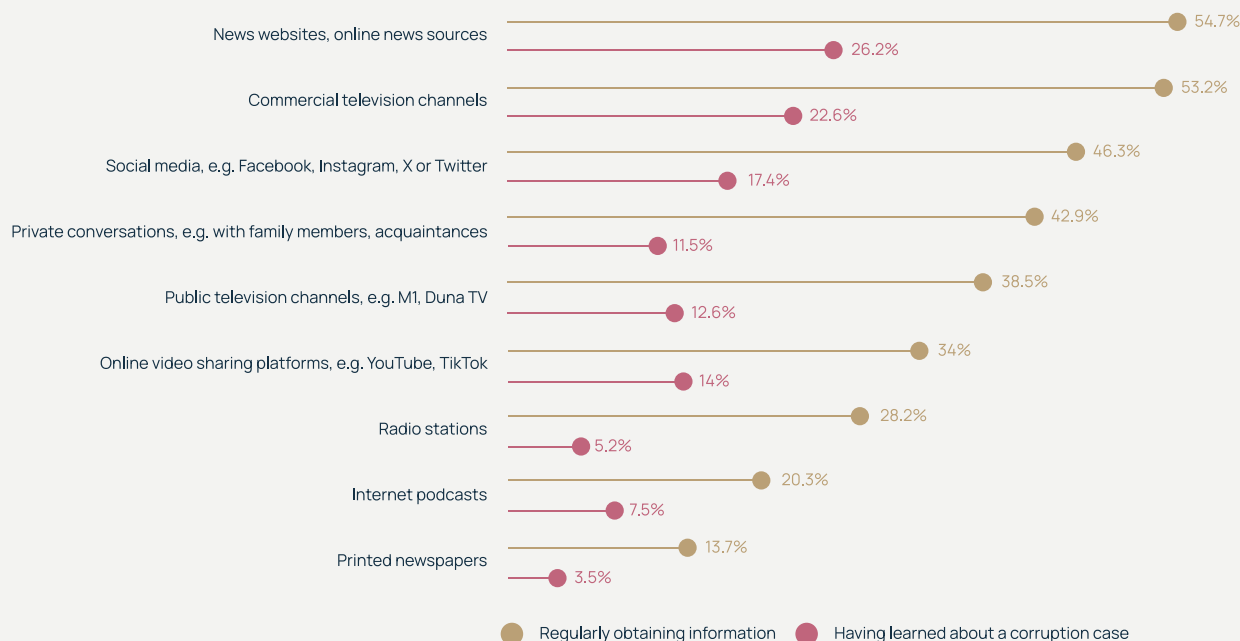
This chapter examines trust in specific media institutions and briefly discusses Hungarians' media consumption habits, as well as levels of trust in different media outlets, which may influence the perception of corruption and related attitudes.

The most frequently used sources of information were online news websites, commercial television channels and social media. A similar pattern is observed in how people receive information about corruption cases: most people learn about such news from frequently visited internet sites, commercial television channels, and social media. Patterns of media consumption affect the perception of corruption: viewers of public service television channels, for instance, perceive corruption as less widespread. Trust in the media is generally low, but media outlets critical of the government are considered the most credible sources of information by the population.

Examining corruption, media consumption, and trust in the media is crucial, as the media is often the primary channel through which corruption cases are brought to public attention, thereby influencing public sensitivity and societal resistance. Numerous previous studies have focused on the macro-level analysis of the media in relation to the perception of corruption (FREILLE et al. 2007; LINDSTEDT–NAURIN 2010). These studies mostly examine the relationship along the lines of press freedom and corruption perception, as well as other factors such as trust, political attitudes, etc. – essentially taking a “bird’s-eye view” of these correlations (CHARRON–ANNONI 2021). However, notably fewer studies discuss the individual, micro-level phenomena of media consumption, despite the fact that this approach makes an important contribution to understanding the heterogeneity of the relationship between media consumption and corruption, as well as differences across smaller groups of society (CHARRON–ANNONI 2021).

The examination of individual-level media consumption habits can thus serve as an important contribution to the survey of perceptions of corruption and related experiences, as well as the roles played in the fight against corruption. It shows whether there are differences between consumers of traditional and online media in their perceptions of corruption-related information, and highlights variations across groups defined by different characteristics. The low level of trust in the media can undermine respondents’ rejection of corruption, as distrustful citizens are less likely to perceive corruption disclosures as credible. In the questionnaire, respondents were presented with a predefined list of media outlets, with the final response option allowing them to indicate whether they also obtained information about public affairs from sources not included in the list. First, respondents were asked to select from the list the sources they had used to obtain information about daily news and public affairs in the year prior to the survey. After selecting the sources, respondents were asked whether they had learned about any corruption cases through the sources they had selected.

Figure IV/4/1: **Information channels and the perception of corruption (n = 1,254)**



Based on the responses, over half of the population regularly obtains information through “*online news websites and online news outlets*” as well as through “*commercial television channels*”, while staying informed via various social media platforms is also widespread. In international comparative studies, the use of social media indicated higher perception of corruption (CHARRON–ANNONI 2021). The On the Right Path study did not confirm the existence of such associations. Although several media outlets were significantly associated with questions assessing the perception of corruption prevalence in Hungary (generally how widespread corruption is in Hungary, how widespread it is in relation to the use of EU funds in Hungary), the corruption perceptions of only those who indicated public service television channels as their source of information differed meaningfully from those of respondents who did not use these sources.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Perceived general prevalence of corruption in Hungary among users and non-users of public service television, sig = 0.000; Cramer’s V = 0.237.

The prevalence of corruption in relation to European Union funds in Hungary, according to users and non-users of public service television, sig = 0.000; Cramer’s V = 0.213.

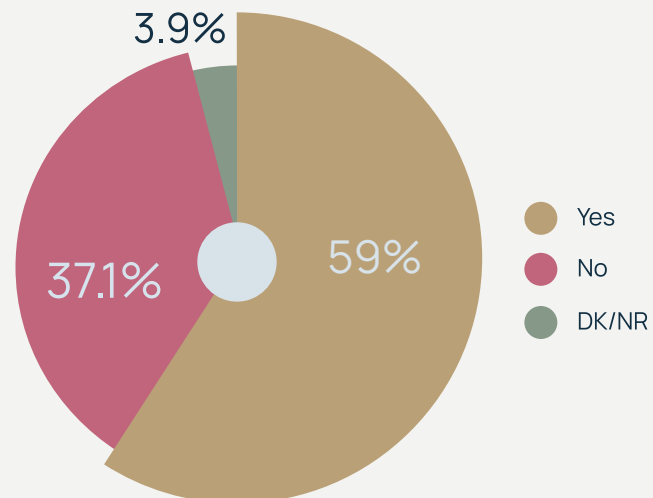


RESPONDENTS WHO IDENTIFIED PUBLIC SERVICE TELEVISION AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION PERCEIVED CORRUPTION AS SUBSTANTIALLY LESS WIDESPREAD IN HUNGARY, COMPARED TO THOSE WHO DID NOT USE THIS MEDIUM.

The adult Hungarian population reported printed “*newspapers*”, “*internet podcasts*”, and the “*radio*” as the least frequently used sources of information.

A separate question assessed whether respondents had obtained information about any cases of corruption through the specified sources.

Figure IV/4/2:
Did you learn about any corruption cases through any media outlet?
(n = 1,254)



More than 50% of respondents reported having learned about a corruption case through one of the media channels they follow in the past year. Based on the previous Figure IV/4/1, it can also be seen that if we look at the overall sample, news websites, newspapers, and commercial television channels are the most common sources through which Hungarian people learn about corruption cases.

Figure IV/4/3:
Share of users of each media source who learned about corruption cases

News websites, online news sources (N=686)	48%
Commercial television channels (N=667)	42.5%
Online video sharing paltforms (N=426)	41%
Social media (N=581)	37.6%
Internet podcasts (N=255)	37%
Public television channels (N=483)	32.7%
Private conversations (N=538)	26.8%
Printed newspapers (N=171)	25.3%
Radio stations (N=354)	18.3%

Respondents were then asked to indicate, among the media sources they had used in the past 12 months, in which they had encountered the most corruption cases, provided that they had come across any.



BASED ON THE RESULTS, A HIGHER PROPORTION OF CORRUPTION-RELATED NEWS WAS ENCOUNTERED VIA ONLINE NEWS SOURCES.

Most respondents reported having learned about such news through “*online news websites and online news sources*” (48.0%), followed by commercial television channels (42.5%) and online video-sharing platforms (41.0%) (Figure IV/4/3).



OVERALL, IT CAN BE CONCLUDED THAT DIGITAL CHANNELS DOMINATE, WHILE TRADITIONAL MEDIA – ESPECIALLY THE RADIO AND THE PRINTED PRESS – PLAY A MORE LIMITED ROLE IN ACCESSING INFORMATION ABOUT CORRUPTION CASES, A PATTERN THAT IS ALSO REFLECTED IN MEDIA CONSUMPTION HABITS.

Private conversations and public service television channels appeared more frequently in terms of media consumption, yet those who used these sources indicated less often that they had obtained information about a large number of corruption cases through them.

Using the latent variables identified through the factor analysis described earlier (1.8.1), we constructed a logistic regression model to identify the factors that distinguished respondents who reported having obtained information about corruption cases through the media from those who had not.⁴⁶

Based on the results of the model, two factors proved decisive: the first factor capturing political and corruption perceptions, and the fourth factor describing the dimension of democratic participation and involvement. Overall, the predictive performance of the model was satisfactory, suggesting that factor scores capture meaningful differences between the two groups.

The results show that people who are more active politically and more engaged in public affairs are more likely to report having heard about corruption cases through the media. In contrast, those who perceive the overall situation of corruption as less serious in Hungary were less likely to report having encountered such news.

The model's recall is relatively low, suggesting that the estimate frequently classifies respondents who were actually aware of corruption cases as falling into the *"not informed"* category. This also raises the possibility that, in some cases, news about corruption has become so commonplace that conscious awareness and recall of such information no longer appear as distinct factors in relation to the attitudinal and participation dimensions examined in this study.

The examination also covered trust in the various types of media, classified into three different groups. In this part of the survey, respondents evaluated the credibility and trustworthiness of various types of media – including *"state-run media"*, *"pro-government media"* and *"media critical of the government"* – in terms of news about corruption cases (Figure IV/4/4).

⁴⁶ The most important results from the regression model are presented in Annex 9.

Figure IV/4/4:
Perceived general credibility of news about corruption cases across different media outlets (n = 1,254)

	Completely credible	Rather credible	Rather not credible	Not credible at all	Don't know / No response
corruption cases reported by media outlets critical of the government?	10.1%	20.7%	44%	19.3%	5.9%
corruption cases reported by pro-government media outlets?	26.5%	25.3%	27.6%	14.9%	5.6%
corruption cases reported by state-run television channels, radio stations and media outlets?	23.1%	27.4%	30%	14.2%	5.5%

The results indicate that Hungarians place the greatest trust in media that is critical of the government; however, overall trust in the media remains low. If we interpret the three examined groups as a single unit covering the entire Hungarian media, then around half of Hungarians considered the media credible in relation to news about corruption (completely or fairly credible). Perceptions of state-run media and pro-government media were strongly correlated⁴⁷, suggesting that Hungarians do not necessarily distinguish between these two types of media.

⁴⁷ r = 0.87

Chapter 4.5

Access to different institutional services

In this chapter, we examined how easily Hungarian people can access certain services based on their own perceptions, and how smoothly they would be able to handle specific matters with the selected institutions, should the need arise. In the analysis, we primarily included public services, as well as some market services, in order to explore whether there are any striking or consistent differences in opinions. If such discrepancies were observed, we also examined which additional factors might influence attitudes toward access to services.

The population generally perceives access to public services as cumbersome, particularly in the case of state healthcare. The services provided by government windows, registrars' offices, and government offices are considered the most easily accessible. A sense of access is associated with trust, the integrity of institutions, and the perceived extent of cases of abuse.

The examination of the “access” question set is a subunit of the *On the Right Path* research population survey, which is indirectly related to the question sets concerning perceptions and awareness of corruption, as well as experiences. As the handling or expediting of certain matters often depends on informal acquaintances and personal connections, access to services provided by institutions – and the related opinions – can substantially influence people’s perceptions of corruption as well. Difficulties experienced in accessing services may affect not only perceptions but also experiences related to corruption, since if people feel that they cannot obtain certain services, or can only do so after a long wait, they are more likely to attempt to “speed them up” – even from the outset – by using personal connections or through bribery. If official channels are slow, costly, or unrealistically inaccessible and impassable, lower-level forms of corruption can also spread rapidly in practice (JANCSICS 2024). Individuals with more highly embedded social networks do not necessarily attempt to bribe frontline bureaucratic professionals with whom they come into direct contact (e.g. nurses or traffic police officers), but instead mobilise higher-ranking acquaintances, often working in middle or senior management within the relevant institution, thereby avoiding penalties or securing faster access to services. (JANCSICS 2024). The use of personal connections in matters that individuals subjectively perceive as urgent and that concern themselves or their close associates is not necessarily considered unacceptable. This phenomenon was also observed in earlier surveys conducted among youth (BURAI–VAJDA 2025; VAJDA et al., 2025).

The UNODC publication focusing specifically on the methodology for measuring corruption also identified seamless access to services as a key issue and recommended its inclusion in such studies (UNODC 2018). An earlier survey examined the actual use of a narrower range of services before perceptions of corruption were assessed (Transparency International 2021).

When designing the questionnaire underpinning the population survey for the *On the Right Path* research, a complex question was employed to address accessibility, taking into account the length of the questionnaire and the need to maintain priorities among topics. In this question, respondents could indicate whether, in their opinion, they would find it easier or more difficult to handle their affairs with the various institutions. If the respondents were employed by any of the listed institutions, they were asked at the beginning of this question block to express their views on the difficulty of access solely as private individuals.

Figure IV/5/1:
Perceptions of the ease of access to different services (n = 1,254)

How easy or difficult do you think it is to access the services provided by the listed institutions if necessary?

	Rather easy	Rather difficult	Don't know	No response
Government windows, government offices, registrars' offices	53.5%	40%	6.1%	0.5%
Banks, financial institutions	49.6%	43.9%	6%	0.4%
Educational institutions	47.2%	42.7%	9.8%	0.3%
Local municipalities	45.4%	47.9%	6.3%	0.3%
Other business enterprises, private companies	43.3%	46.1%	9.8%	0.8%
Police	41%	50.3%	8.3%	0.4%
Social institutions	39.2%	51.8%	8.7%	0.3%
Tax authority	37.7%	53.8%	8.1%	0.4%
Courts	32.5%	57%	10.1%	0.5%
Public healthcare institutions	28.8%	65.9%	5%	0.3%

”
THE VAST MAJORITY OF HUNGARIANS AGED 18 AND OVER CONSIDERED ACCESSING PUBLIC SERVICES TO BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN ACCESSING THE SMALLER NUMBER OF PRIVATE SERVICES PRESENTED IN THE QUESTION (FIGURE IV/5/1).

Accessing services was rated as “rather easy” by more than 50% of respondents only for the category of “government windows, registrars’ offices and government offices”. This may be attributed in part to the number and widespread availability of these institutions, as well as to the fact that many people use their services regularly.



ACCESS TO THE SERVICES OF “PUBLIC HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS” WAS CONSIDERED THE MOST DIFFICULT, AS ONLY 28.8% OF RESPONDENTS FELT THAT, IF NECESSARY, THEY OR THEIR RELATIVES WOULD BE ABLE TO EASILY ACCESS CARE.

The cumbersome nature of access to the services of public healthcare institutions was also highlighted in the previous “Problem map” section. This was likely partly why respondents identified “*public healthcare*” as the third major domestic problem. Services provided by⁴⁸ “*courts*”, the “*tax authority*”, and “*social institutions*” were generally considered more difficult to access. Perceptions of “*banks, financial institutions*” and “*educational institutions*” were more favourable compared to others.

The results measuring the difficulty of access to various institutions were used to construct an “*access index*” which was able to provide a single indicator of how easy or difficult Hungarians think it is to access the services provided by the listed institutions. Despite the value⁴⁹ indicating high internal consistency, the index was retained, as the questions assessing access were not redundant and examined different institutions. However, the question referred to the same construct in all cases, namely the subjective perceptions of access.



THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED PREVIOUSLY ON INSTITUTIONAL TRUST WERE ALSO USED TO CONSTRUCT A COMPOSITE INDEX, WHICH, WHEN EXAMINED IN CORRELATION WITH THE ACCESS INDEX, SHOWED A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP OF MEDIUM STRENGTH.⁵⁰ A HIGHER ACCESS INDEX WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A HIGHER TRUST INDEX.

The access index and perceptions of abuse of power associated with individual institutions also showed a significant relationship.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Over 51% considered them “*rather difficult to access*”.

⁴⁹ Cronbach’s alpha= 0.908.

⁵⁰ $p < 0.001$; $r = 0.312$

⁵¹ $p < 0.001$; $r = 0.2$

To facilitate interpretation and improve transparency, the access index was classified into four groups, with higher group membership indicating perceptions of easier access to institutional services.

When examining the grouped access index variable and the prevalence of abuse of power in individual institutions, the cross-tabulation analysis revealed a significant relationship between the variables for the “national government”⁵² and the “educational institutions”⁵³ categories.



IN THE CASE OF THE “NATIONAL GOVERNMENT”, RESPONDENTS WITH THE EASIEST ACCESS TO SERVICES WERE THE LEAST LIKELY TO INDICATE THAT, IN THEIR OPINION, ABUSE OF POWER WAS PREVALENT WITHIN THE INSTITUTION, WHEREAS RESPONDENTS FACING GREATER DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING SERVICES HELD MORE NEGATIVE VIEWS REGARDING THE PREVALENCE OF ABUSE OF POWER.

A particularly clear pattern emerged in the case of “educational institutions”, as the easier respondents perceived access to be, the less widespread they considered abuse of power to be within that specific institution.

The same pattern was observed with respect to the question regarding accountability, a component of institutional integrity, for the grouped access index and certain institutions. The better respondents perceive access to services to be, the more likely they are to perceive accountability as functioning properly within institutions⁵⁴, such as within the national government⁵⁵, the police,⁵⁶ or local municipalities.⁵⁷

We hypothesised that we would find a significant relationship between lower-income respondents and access to different services, partly because those who cannot afford private services for financial reasons are likely to have different perceptions of access. Based on per capita income, people were classified into

⁵² $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.247$

⁵³ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.202$

⁵⁴ one of the examined dimensions of institutional integrity

⁵⁵ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's V holding accountable = 0.255

⁵⁶ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's V holding accountable = 0.2

⁵⁷ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's V holding accountable = 0.2

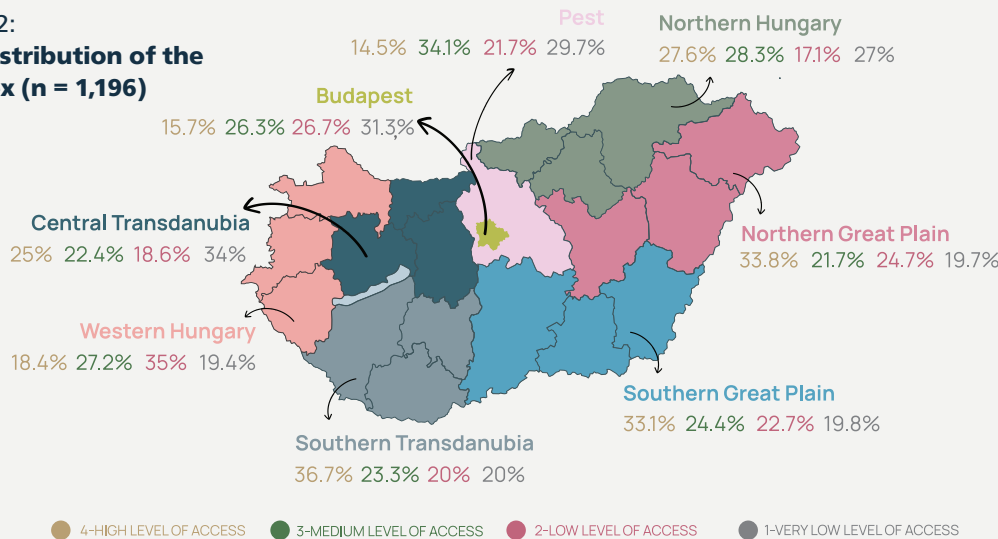
five relatively equal groups, meaning that incomes quintiles were constructed.⁵⁸ A correlation analysis of the questions revealed no relationship between income quintiles and respondents' subjective perceptions of how easily they could access certain services.

There was a significant, albeit weak, correlation between the grouped access index and respondents' region of residence.⁵⁹

”

ACROSS REGIONS, RESPONDENTS IN BUDAPEST WERE MOST LIKELY TO PERCEIVE ACCESS TO SERVICES AS RATHER DIFFICULT, WHEREAS RESPONDENTS IN SOUTHERN TRANSDANUBIA AND THE SOUTHERN GREAT PLAIN REPORTED THAT, WITH HIGH OR MEDIUM LEVELS OF ACCESS, THEY COULD REACH THE INSTITUTIONS IN QUESTION WITH RELATIVE EASE.

Figure IV/5/2:
Regional distribution of the access index (n = 1,196)



⁵⁸ This was not carried out using the income quintile categorisation, regularly recalculated by the HCSO, as the HCSO does not provide the lower- and upper-income thresholds of the quintile groups. These are dynamically recalculated each time using the latest data, based on the OECD2 equivalence scale. An exact reproduction of this is not possible in the case of the *On the Right Path* study, as the number of children is not recorded for each household, which would be essential for calculating the equivalence scale.

⁵⁹ $p < 0.001 = 0.000$; Cramer's $V = 0.133$

Overall, perceptions of access may be influenced by many factors, including local and frequent contact with institutions, as well as the increasingly widespread availability of services offered through digital platforms. Notably, trust in institutions and confidence in the integrity of their operations have a positive influence on how accessible people perceive the services provided by a specific institution to be. By contrast, perceptions of accessibility may be lower for institutions characterised by observed or perceived capacity shortages; services involving long waiting lists; complex, multi-staged service provision; lower levels of trust, or perceptions of widespread abuse of power.

Chapter 4.6

Hungarians' perceptions and tolerance of corruption

This chapter provides an overview of the perceptions and views of people aged 18 and over regarding corruption, as well as patterns in their tolerance of corrupt practices. It presents their views on the prevalence of corruption in general and in specific areas, as well as the institutions in which they perceive abuse of power to be most widespread.

Giving money is almost completely rejected by Hungarians, while views on gifts and favours are more divided. One third of the population consider certain forms of corruption (money, gifts or favours) acceptable. The corruption tolerance index, constructed on the basis of three acts of corruption concerning public institutions, points to the same conclusion, as 26.4% of Hungarians either completely or somewhat tolerate such behaviour. At the same time, although the proportion of those who consider these acts fully acceptable remains low, this proportion in this study is still twice as high as the corresponding European figure. Most respondents consider corruption to be highly prevalent within the European Union, and particularly in Hungary, with a majority reporting that the situation worsened in this regard over the five-year period from 2020 to 2025.

In examining perceptions of corruption, it was crucial to define the two central concepts of the survey within the scope of the study. For this purpose, the methodological chapter sets out definitions of corruption and integrity, which were subsequently applied during data collection using the “vignette method”.

The “vignette method” is a research technique, frequently used in psychological and sociological studies, in which participants are presented with short, often hypothetical scenarios (vignettes), followed by questions about their opinions, decisions or emotional reactions (NEMÉNYI et al. 2019; BERDE–BITTMANN 2021). Researchers use this technique especially when their aim is to examine complex situational decisions, attitudes or behaviours in contexts that are more difficult to observe in real life – for example, because of their concealed nature. One of the main advantages of the vignette method is that it enables the examination of certain situations under controlled circumstances, while participants react based on their own values and moral reasoning. Therefore, it can be used to compare different situations and behavioural patterns and to provide a deeper understanding of decision-making mechanisms.

In this study, the vignette method and the case examples provided serve a dual purpose: (1) On the one hand, they allowed for an examination of which situations – otherwise considered corrupt – respondents perceive as corruption, based on their own values and levels of tolerance, at a stage of the study when no explicit question or summary regarding the meaning of corruption had been provided. (2) On the other hand, the case examples of corruption presented in the vignettes provided a comprehensive definitional

framework for “pseudo-corruption”. Instead of providing respondents with the meaning of corruption, as understood in this study, in the form of a specific, often difficult-to-interpret definition, they were given an interpretive framework for understanding corruption using a set of questions containing much more accessible and widely understandable case examples (also known as “vignettes”), followed by a brief summary.⁶⁰ This interpretive framework helped standardise respondents’ understanding of what constitutes corruption, ensuring that they viewed the same cases as corruption even if their initial perceptions of the scope of corrupt conduct had been different.

Owing to the sensitive and concealed nature of the topic in question, it was methodologically essential to ensure that respondents understood the meaning of corruption through realistic and relatable case examples, rather than through a direct, often difficult-to-interpret definition. The case examples provided adequately covered the acts included in the definition of corruption that was developed and applied during the methodological design phase of the study. The objective was clearly to incorporate a wider range of corrupt acts into both the definition and the case examples, and not to restrict them solely to phenomena defined as corrupt acts under Hungarian legislation, as this would have resulted in an overly narrow interpretive framework.

As set out in the methodological description of the study, the ordering of the question groups was crucial, as it aimed to mitigate the impact of the questions containing explicitly sensitive topics, ensuring that they were not presented consecutively. The order of the questions within each group was also important. In the case of the question block exploring perceptions of corruption, the aim was to ensure that respondents would not encounter any specific questions concerning corruption up to this point. The first half of the block explored whether they viewed certain acts of corruption in public offices – such as giving money on top of official fees, giving gifts, or doing favours – as rather acceptable or rather unacceptable.

⁶⁰ In this study, this is referred to as a “definitional framework for pseudo-corruption”, as rather than formulating and providing respondents with a concrete definition, we used case examples to guide them toward what is meant by corruption in this study, which acts are included, and asked them to interpret corruption in this way for all subsequent questions.

Figure IV/6/1: **Social acceptance of corrupt acts in Hungary (n = 1,254)**



Given that the research findings are representative, as indicated in the methodology chapter, it can be generally stated that Hungarian society as a whole considers the giving of money, on top of paying official costs in public institutions and public offices, to be the least acceptable form of behaviour, with 8.8% of Hungarian respondents indicating that they consider this act rather acceptable for the purpose of resolving certain matters or obtaining other advantages. Respondents were generally more lenient toward accepting gifts and favours, with 30% considering giving gifts in such situations rather acceptable, while 34.1% considered doing favours rather acceptable. Giving money in order to resolve certain matters or gain advantages in public institutions – an act viewed clearly as corrupt by many – has proven to be the least acceptable form of behaviour – not only among Hungarian respondents but also within the European population (European Commission 2025). Previous European findings show that giving money was considered unacceptable by the largest proportion of respondents, with 80% deeming it unacceptable under any circumstances; gifts and favours followed closely, with 74% and 71% considering them never acceptable, respectively. For all three types of conduct, intolerance of corruption increased by a few percentage points compared with the EU data collections conducted one year earlier (European Commission 2024, 2025).

When analysing the research data from the *On the Right Path* study, the above three questions (the giving of money, gifts, and favours within public institutions) were used to develop the corruption tolerance index.⁶¹ When constructing the index, the values of the three variables were standardised for each respondent using “z-score values”, and then a single index value was assigned to each respondent based on the arithmetic mean of the three resulting standardised values. This was necessary because, in connection with the three acts, they evidently exhibited differing degrees of leniency.

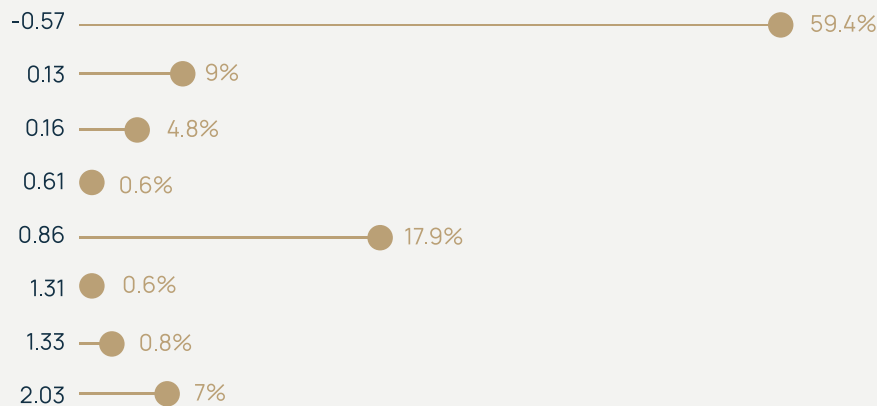
Far fewer people considered giving money “*rather acceptable*” compared to gifts, favours, or the combinations thereof. During the z-score-based standardisation, these acts with varying levels of acceptance can be compared more authentically; and this procedure addresses which acts respondents are lenient toward or strict with, thereby assigning higher or lower values to respondents accordingly. The approach provides a more accurate picture of people’s tolerance of corruption. Respondents who were lenient toward giving money – which is considered a less acceptable form of behaviour – received higher standardised scores, whereas those who considered only doing favours acceptable achieved lower standardised scores for this act. An index value was calculated by taking the arithmetic mean of the three questions transformed through standardisation for respondents who provided valid answers to all three questions.

The resulting index ranged from –0.57 to 2.03. The lower (including negative) the index value achieved by a respondent, the less tolerant they were of the forms of corruption under study. Respondents with lower index values consistently considered offering favours, gifts, and especially money in public institutions and offices with the aim of resolving certain matters or obtaining other advantages to be unacceptable. Those with higher index values were more likely to accept corrupt practices perceived as milder and more widely accepted, such as favours or gifts, and in some cases even the exchange of money, as well as combinations of these forms (Figure IV/6/2). Based on the values of the corruption tolerance index, it is evident that a quarter of the Hungarian population aged 18 and over consider the corrupt acts explored in the three questions to be completely or rather acceptable in public institutions.⁶²

⁶¹ Cronbach’s alpha = 0.716.

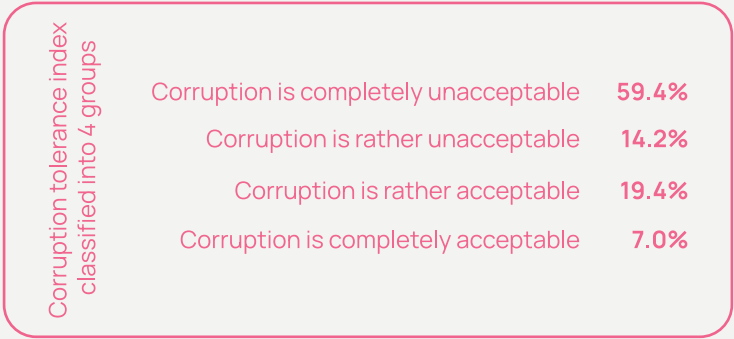
⁶² They consider giving money or gifts, as well as doing favours, rather acceptable / rather unacceptable in the context of public institutions.

Figure IV/6/2: **Distribution of the corruption tolerance index in 2025 (n = 1,219)**



Based on the cumulative percentage distribution, as well as the severity and combination of the three acts, Hungarians were classified into four groups in order to facilitate the interpretation of the corruption tolerance index (Figure IV/6/3).

Figure IV/6/3: **Distribution of the corruption tolerance index by group (n = 1,219)**



It is evident that 59.4% of Hungarians consider all the presented forms of corruption completely unacceptable, whereas only 7% indicated that they consider the listed acts completely “acceptable”. For 19.4% of Hungarians, corruption is considered to be rather acceptable, referring primarily to the

acceptability of favours and gifts among the three cases under study. Overall, 26.4% of the Hungarian population consider corruption in public institutions and offices with the aim of obtaining certain advantages to be completely or somewhat acceptable. A further 14.2% mostly reject these forms of behaviour, yet consider them acceptable in certain scenarios, such as offering favours, gifts or money.

A weak but significant relationship was detected between the grouped corruption tolerance index and the regions⁶³. Respondents across different regions were systematically more accepting or more rejecting of certain forms of corruption in public institutions.



COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE (7.1%), BUDAPEST HAD THE HIGHEST PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDERED CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS “COMPLETELY ACCEPTABLE” (11.9%).

Overall, Pest County (44.2%)⁶⁴ and the Northern Great Plain (34.1%) were the regions where, alongside respondents exhibiting completely accepting attitudes toward corruption, a substantial proportion also expressed a rather tolerant and accepting stance toward corrupt practices.⁶⁵ In other words, a higher proportion of local residents reported being either rather or completely tolerant of the corrupt acts examined (Figure IV/6/4).

⁶³ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.178$

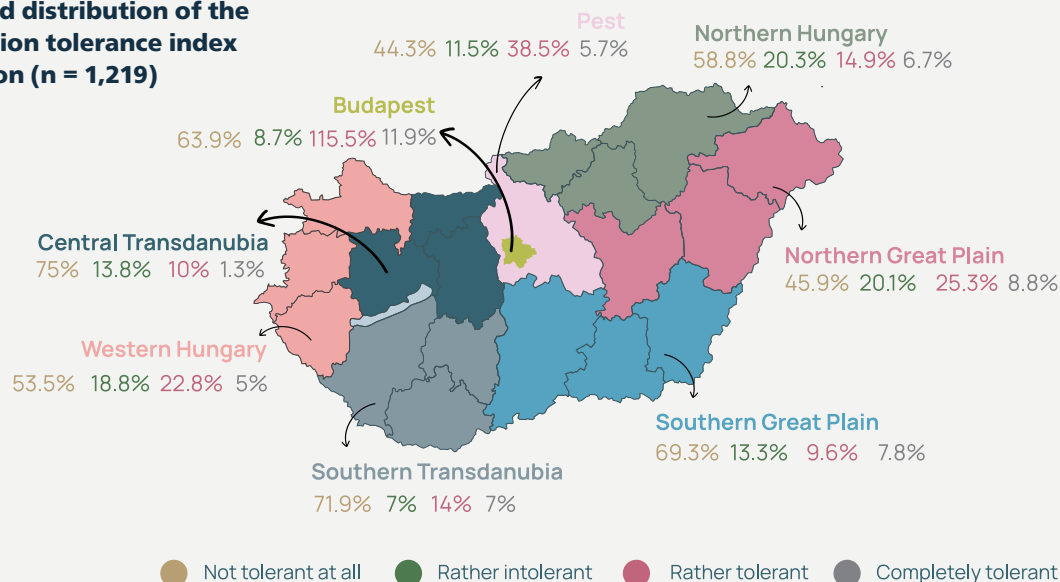
⁶⁴ In respect of Pest County and Budapest, the conditions made it possible to run a Kruskal-Wallis test as well; the results from the corruption tolerance index (with an ungrouped variable) and these two regions indeed confirmed strong and significant differences.

$p < 0.001$; Chi-square = 75.110

⁶⁵ This meant that these two regions had the highest proportion of respondents who, based on their tolerance index, considered the three examined forms of corruption in public institutions to be either “completely acceptable” or “rather acceptable”.

Figure IV/6/4:

Grouped distribution of the corruption tolerance index by region (n = 1,219)



Among the questions on open governance, participation and transparency, the importance of having a voice in local/municipal⁶⁶ and national affairs⁶⁷ showed an even stronger correlation with the grouped corruption tolerance index. In the case of these questions, participation and having a voice in such matters were typically considered to be important by respondents who were less tolerant of corruption.

Corruption tolerance index within the *On the Right Path* research population survey and the Eurobarometer 548 survey

While the two surveys were nearly identical in terms of the questions regarding the corruption tolerance index, they presented different response options⁶⁸. While the *On the Right Path* study provided respondents with two response options (“rather yes” / “rather no”), supplemented by the “don’t know” and “no response” options, the Special Eurobarometer 548⁶⁹ survey, which covered the entire European Union,

⁶⁶ $p < 0.001$; $p = -0.230$

⁶⁷ $p < 0.001$; $p = -0.208$

⁶⁸ The corresponding questions from the two studies, presented side by side, are shown in Annex 11.

⁶⁹ Similarly to the questions relating to corruption tolerance in the *On the Right Path* study, the microdata from the Special Eurobarometer 548 survey were standardised using a z-score transformation for all three relevant questions (QD1_1, QD1_2, QD1_3), after which the corruption tolerance index was calculated using a simple arithmetic mean.

gave respondents three options (*“always acceptable”* / *“sometimes acceptable”* / *“never acceptable”*), as well as the *“don’t know”* option to choose from. Practices involving offering money or gifts and doing favours were either *“completely rejected”* or considered to be *“rather unacceptable”* by most respondents in both surveys (*On the Right Path*: 59.4%; Eurobarometer 548: 57.4%). By contrast, results from the *On the Right Path* study show that compared with their European peers, a nearly 50% higher proportion of Hungarians considered both offering money or gifts and doing favours *“rather acceptable”* in public institutions with the aim of resolving certain matters. (*On the Right Path*: 7%, Eurobarometer 548: 3%).

Opinions on the occurrence of abuse of power were also examined. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate in which institutions they believed cases of abuse of power were more prevalent, based on a list of institutions used in several previous questions (Figure IV/6/5).

Figure IV/6/5:

Prevalence of abuse of power across different types of institutions in 2025

	Rather characteristic	Rather uncharacteristic	Don't know	No response
The national government (n=1,209)	58.10%	31.60%	8.20%	2.10%
Public healthcare institutions (n=1,218)	52.40%	41.30%	5.20%	1.10%
Local municipalities (n=1,214)	46.80%	46%	6.20%	1%
In other businesses enterprises and private companies (n=1,206)	43.10%	43.90%	11.40%	1.60%
Social institutions (n=1,213)	40.80%	51.60%	6.70%	0.90%
Police (n=1,211)	39.60%	50.60%	8.80%	1%
Religious institutions (n=1,203)	38.90%	49.80%	10.10%	1.20%
Tax authority (n=1,206)	37.70%	51.10%	10%	1.20%
Educational institutions (n=1,212)	35.50%	52.80%	10.50%	1.20%
Private health institutions (n=1,208)	35.40%	56.50%	7.20%	0.90%
Courts (n=1,209)	35.40%	55.20%	8.40%	1%
In banks and financial institutions (n=1,211)	32.90%	57.30%	8.40%	1.40%
Civil society organisations (n=1,208)	32.10%	55.20%	11.50%	1.20%
Government windows, registrars' offices, government offices (n=1,216)	24.90%	67.20%	6.80%	1.10%



BASED ON RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS, ABUSE OF POWER IS MOST FREQUENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS: THIS PROBLEM WAS PERCEIVED AS PARTICULARLY PREVALENT IN RELATION TO THE "NATIONAL GOVERNMENT" AND "PUBLIC HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS," WHILE "LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES", WHICH ARE STRONGLY EMBEDDED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, RANKED THIRD.

The first non-state institution was mentioned in fourth place, specifically in relation to *"other business enterprises, private firms"*. Abuse of power, which can be regarded as a corrupt act, was perceived as less prevalent in institutions representing other market sectors (*"civil society organisations", "banks, financial institutions"*), and it emerged as a *"rather uncharacteristic"* problem with regard to *"government windows, registrars' offices, public offices"* among institutions providing public services. Results from the questionnaire survey of the Integrity Academy's youth research project, *"KORR-KÉP"*, likewise showed that among public institutions, respondents considered *"government windows, government offices, and registrars' offices"* to be among the *"cleanest"* types of institutions. (VAJDA et al. 2025). In terms of trust and institutional integrity, respondents expressed positive views of this group of institutions, and significant correlations were also found between the indexes measuring these phenomena. Evidently, abuse of power, trust, and institutional integrity were interrelated variables.

Weak but significant correlations were detected between perceptions of the prevalence of abuse of power and respondents' region of residence in relation to certain types of institutions.⁷⁰

Using the responses concerning institutions in the context of abuse of power, we constructed an index that was able to capture Hungarians' perceptions of abuse of power in relation to certain institutions.⁷¹ The higher this index was, the more the respondents felt that abuse of power was prevalent in relation to the queried list of institutions.

⁷⁰ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.224$

⁷¹ Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.9$. The abuse of power index was retained despite high internal consistency, as the questions comprising it measured different institutions (they were not redundant to each other). No case showed an excessively high co-occurrence in the individual assessment of correlations between institutions.



THE ABUSE-OF-POWER INDEX SHOWED A MODERATE TO STRONG CORRELATION WITH OTHER INDEX VARIABLES: FOR EXAMPLE, THE MORE PREVALENT THE ABUSE OF POWER WAS CONSIDERED TO BE, THE LOWER THE LEVEL OF TRUST (TRUST INDEX) WAS TOWARD A GIVEN INSTITUTION.⁷²

A moderately strong correlation was observed between respondents' perceptions of the prevalence of abuse of power in institutions and their assessment of the extent to which Hungarian state institutions are capable of protecting the population from the harmful effects of corruption.⁷³ Those who thought state institutions were able to provide security against corruption were less likely to perceive abuse of power within institutions as widespread. The two indexes constructed from respondents' own ethical and rule-abiding behaviour and from their perceptions of other people's ethical and rule-abiding behaviour were also correlated with the abuse-of-power index. Within this, perceptions of other people's adherence to rules and ethical conduct exhibited a stronger negative correlation⁷⁴ compared to respondents' assessments of their own ethical and rule-abiding behaviour. Accordingly, the rule-abiding behaviour of other individuals had a greater influence on perceptions regarding the prevalence of abuse of power than respondents' own ethical behaviour.

With regard to corruption, we examined, using eight case examples as previously indicated, whether respondents viewed the cases as corruption or not. The eight case examples, also known as vignettes, were well-defined and represented corrupt cases in line with the definition of corruption used in the study, with each case being classified as corruption. With this method, they were able to understand what should be considered corruption when answering subsequent questions, not through an abstract concept, but by providing responses with the help of more realistic examples. The presented case examples were viewed as corrupt acts by a large proportion of respondents, ranging from 78.6% and 95.8% (Table IV/6/A).

⁷² $p = -0.420$

⁷³ $p = -0.3$

⁷⁴ $p = -0.235$

Table IV/6/A:

Distribution of cases perceived as corruption (n = 1,254)

In the following questions, we are going to ask you whether you view certain situations as corruption or not.

What do you think about a situation where...	Corruption	Not corruption	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
...a civil servant is bribed?	95.8%	3.8%	0.2%	0.2%
...a representative arranges the adoption of a decree that favours the business of a friend?	95%	4%	0.7%	0.2%
...a doctor accepts a foreign trip from a pharmaceutical company in exchange for prescribing that company's medications to their patients?	91.6%	6.9%	1.3%	0.2%
...a person who was previously employed by a pharmaceutical company takes a position at the Ministry of Health with the intention of facilitating the adoption of decisions that would benefit that company?	90.9%	7.1%	1.8%	0.2%
...a mayor gives unjustifiably high year-end bonuses to some municipal employees?	88.6%	10.1%	1.1%	0.2%
...a school hires a relative or acquaintance of the principal as a teacher, even though there were more qualified candidates?	87.8%	10.6%	1.4%	0.2%
...a nurse accepts an expensive smartwatch from a patient or their relative in exchange for more attentive care?	86.9%	11.2%	1.6%	0.3%
...a person embezzles money?	78.6%	19.9%	1.1%	0.3%



HUNGARIANS MOST FREQUENTLY PERCEIVED THE BRIBERY OF CIVIL SERVANTS AS CORRUPTION, WHILE THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND EMBEZZLEMENT WERE THE LEAST OFTEN IDENTIFIED AS SUCH

In the long run, this feedback may warrant further assessments based on a qualitative methodology, as it is important to explore the underlying reasons behind more lenient attitudes toward embezzlement.

Respondents' confidence was further reflected in the low proportion of respondents selecting the *"don't know"* and *"no response"* options. These proportions were slightly higher compared to the others in two case examples: *"a nurse accepts an expensive smartwatch from a patient or their relative in exchange for more attentive care"*, and *"a person who was previously employed by a pharmaceutical company takes a position at the Ministry of Health with the intention of facilitating the adoption of decisions that would benefit that company"*.



AS FOR THE CASE EXAMPLES ON CORRUPTION, 67% OF THE HUNGARIAN POPULATION IDENTIFIED EACH CASE EXAMPLE AS CORRUPTION.

Such a high proportion of respondents who considered all case examples to be corruption made it worthwhile to separate these respondents and examine the distribution of case examples within the smaller group that did not classify every case example as corruption. The advantage of this procedure was that it revealed a more differentiated and nuanced distribution, while those who classified all case examples as corruption formed a homogeneous group that interpreted the question in different ways. Therefore, it was important to examine the extent to which the exclusion of these respondents modifies the frequency distributions of the overall sample. The exclusion of respondents classifying all case examples as corruption from the analysis did not change the ordering of the case examples on corruption, which confirmed that it is not necessary to treat and examine these two groups separately in this case.

Corruption prevalence in Hungary in general, specifically in relation to the use of European Union funds, and within European Union institutions.

Examining the prevalence of corruption in various contexts is a prominent topic: as on the one hand, perceptions of the general level of corruption reflect society's trust in institutions and helps to reveal the extent to which the population perceives public affairs as fair and transparent; whereas on the other

hand, in certain areas – such as the use of European Union funds – perceptions of corruption prevalence warrant special attention, as these grants represent substantial financial resources, and cases of abuse inherent in them can directly hinder economic development, as well as the country's relations, reputation, and overall future progress. In the course of the research, the assessment of prevalence started by exploring respondents' perceptions of corruption prevalence related to the use of European Union funds. The ordering of questions on corruption prevalence was a deliberate decision, intended to prevent apathy toward the general state of corruption in Hungary from having an undesired influence on perceptions of corruption related to EU funds.



ACCORDING TO 65.4% OF THE HUNGARIAN POPULATION, CORRUPTION RELATED TO EUROPEAN UNION FUNDS IS HIGHLY OR EXTREMELY WIDESPREAD IN HUNGARY. ONLY 2.2% INDICATED THAT THERE WAS NO SUCH CORRUPTION IN HUNGARY, MEANING THAT 95.1% OF THOSE PROVIDING A VALID⁷⁵ RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION PERCEIVED SOME LEVEL OF CORRUPTION IN THIS AREA.

For the questions assessing corruption prevalence, respondents also provided answers regarding the extent to which they consider corruption to be widespread within the institutional system of the European Union. At this point in the questionnaire, the interviewers had already provided participants with a brief overview of the most important institutions within the European Union; nevertheless, over 10.6% indicated that they *“don't know”* how to answer the question (Figure IV/6/5). Examining each response option separately, most participants believed that corruption was *“moderately widespread”* within European Union institutions (33.6%). A total of 43.8% of respondents perceived corruption as *“highly widespread”* or *“extremely widespread”* within European Union institutions.

The most negative outcomes were related to general perceptions of Hungary, as Hungarians believe that corruption is most widespread in this respect. According to 73.7% of the Hungarian population, corruption is highly or extremely widespread in Hungary.⁷⁶ This result is consistent with the findings measured specifically among young people in the course of the questionnaire-based data collection of the KORR-KÉP research programme, as 70% of the 15–29 age group perceived this phenomenon to be a major or extraordinary problem (Vajda et al., 2025).

⁷⁵ In this case, a valid response means that the respondent did not select the *“I don't know”* or *“I don't wish to answer”* options.

⁷⁶ If, in the previous question related specifically to the domestic use of European Union funds, respondents stated that *“there is no corruption related to the funds in Hungary at all,”* they were presented with an additional response option in the question assessing the general prevalence of corruption in Hungary, namely: *“there is no corruption in Hungary at all”*. Naturally, those who had also already experienced some level of corruption related to EU funds in Hungary could not indicate in this question that generally there is no corruption in Hungary at all.

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A COMPARISON OF THE RESPONSES REVEALS THAT RESPONDENTS PERCEIVED CORRUPTION TO BE MORE PREVALENT BOTH IN THE DOMESTIC UTILISATION OF EUROPEAN UNION FUNDS AND IN HUNGARY GENERALLY THAN IN EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS (FIGURE IV/6/6).

Figure IV/6/6: **Perceptions of corruption prevalence in different contexts in 2025**

	 Generally in Hungary (n=1,254)	 In relation to European Union funds in Hungary (n=1,254)	 In European Union institutions (n=1,254)
There is no corruption at all	0.3%	2.2%	1.3%
Not particularly widespread	2.1%	6.8%	10.1%
Moderately widespread	20.5%	22.9%	33.6%
Highly widespread	31.3%	29.7%	26.4%
Corruption is extremely widespread	42.4%	35.7%	17.4%
Don't know	3.1%	2%	10.6%
No response	0.3%	0.7%	0.6%

Questions exploring the prevalence of corruption showed a weak to moderate strength connection with certain additional variables. The prevalence of corruption perceived in the context of the domestic use of European Union funds showed a weak connection with marital status.⁷⁷ It is not particularly surprising – yet important to highlight – that the index based on access to services provided by various institutions showed a weak to moderate connection with general perceptions of corruption in Hungary.

”

THE LOWER RESPONDENTS' ACCESS TO SERVICES, THE MORE NEGATIVELY THEY VIEWED THE GENERAL PREVALENCE OF CORRUPTION IN HUNGARY.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's V = 0.152

⁷⁸ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's V = 0.142

Among the questions concerning political attitudes, the left-right self-placement scale and the opposition-government support scale were those that showed a stronger significant connection both with corruption related to European Union funds and with the general prevalence of domestic corruption. A Welch test revealed a significant difference between the prevalence of corruption detected in relation to the EU funds used in Hungary and the group averages of the political left-right self-placement scale found in the question set examining political attitudes.⁷⁹ As a result of the post-hoc test, significant differences emerged primarily between the views of groups with extremely left-leaning and extremely right-leaning political affiliations.⁸⁰

As for the question exploring the generally perceived prevalence of corruption in Hungary, we reviewed which other questions may serve as predictors of how widespread Hungarians believe corruption to be in the country. By setting up an ordinal logistic regression model it was demonstrated that—

- trust in institutions,
- the index constructed from the two variables of institutional integrity,
- age group,
- assessing to what extent corruption committed by others affects their everyday lives, and
- to what extent Hungarian state institutions are capable of protecting their citizens from the harmful effects of corruption,

provided a stable explanation of how widespread people perceive corruption to be in Hungary. The model's reliably fitting explanatory variables explained 41.5% of the model, which is considered a stable level of explanatory power in social science research.⁸¹

The strongest predictor in the model was the extent to which respondents considered state institutions capable of providing protection against the effects of corruption,⁸² while another strong predictor was whether they perceived corruption as affecting their daily lives.⁸³ The latter association shows that the greater the impact of corruption committed by others on individuals' daily lives, the more likely they are to perceive corruption as widespread in Hungary.

⁷⁹ Welch test (F) = 20.674; $df1$ = 6; $df2$ =357.479; sig = 0.000

⁸⁰ The post-hoc test results are included in Annex 12.

⁸¹ Nagelkerke R^2 : 408

$B=2.388$, $Exp(B)$ = 10.892; $p < 0.001$; $OR = 5.371-22.087$

⁸² $B = 2.528$; $p < 0.001$; $OR = 12.5$; transformed into a binary dependent variable $AUC = 0.833$

⁸³ $OR = 0.13-0.23$; $p < 0.001$

Results from the *On the Right Path* population survey and the Special Eurobarometer 548 survey on domestic perceptions of corruption

Both surveys assessed the prevalence of corruption; although the question was presented in a slightly different way, and there were also differences in the number of response options,⁸⁴ nevertheless, the results allowed for a cautious review of trends. In light of these findings, it can be concluded that a larger proportion of Hungarians indicated that they consider corruption to be extremely widespread in the country, whereas this view was reported somewhat less frequently by respondents in the survey conducted across EU Member States. Overall, they also reported similarly negative trends, as indicated by the high proportion of respondents selecting the “fairly widespread” option.

Table IV/6/B: **Perceptions of corruption prevalence in Hungary and the European Union**
(n_{Hu} = 1,254, n_{EU} = 26,411)

Special Eurobarometer 548		On the Right Path population survey	
Very widespread	26%	Extremely widespread	42.4%
Fairly widespread	43.7%	Highly widespread	31.2%
Fairly rare	20.3%	Moderately widespread	20.7%
Very rare	5.1%	Not particularly widespread	2.1%
No corruption	0.2%	No corruption at all	0.3%
Don't know	4.6%	Don't know	3.1%
		No response	0.3%

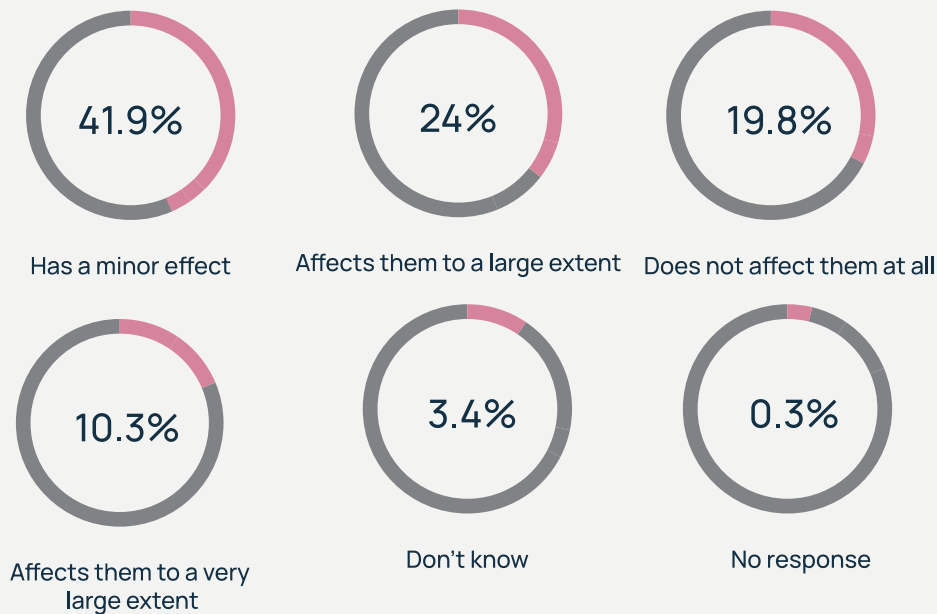
A previous study by the Integrity Academy conducted among Hungarian youth has already addressed the impact of corruption on everyday life, as well as the ways in which it influences the well-being and quality of life of the younger generation (VAJDA et al. 2025). A striking finding from that study was the signifi-

⁸⁴ In addition to the “don’t know” and “no response” options, the *On the Right Path* population survey presented participants with five valid response options, whereas the Eurobarometer 548 survey provided four.

cant detrimental impact corruption has on subjective well-being, an observation that was also confirmed in the current survey (Chapter IV/2). The population survey of the *On the Right Path* research programme provided an opportunity to measure this phenomenon not only among young people but also across the entire Hungarian population aged 18 and over

”
NEARLY HALF OF THE HUNGARIAN POPULATION (41.9%) FEEL THAT CORRUPTION HAS A “MINOR EFFECT” ON THEIR DAILY LIVES, 24% FEEL THAT IT “AFFECTS THEIR DAILY LIVES TO A LARGE EXTENT”, 19.8% BELIEVE IT “DOES NOT AFFECT THEM AT ALL”, WHILE 10.3% SAY THAT IT INFLUENCES THEIR DAILY LIVES “TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT” (FIGURE IV/6/7).

Figure IV/6/7:
To what extent does corruption affect the daily lives of the Hungarian population in 2025? (n = 1,251)



Respondents' region of residence⁸⁵ and, among the political background variables, their position on the government-opposition support scale⁸⁶ had a weak effect on the extent to which they perceived the impact of corruption on their daily lives. The highest proportion of respondents indicating that it affects their daily lives to a "very large extent" or to a "large extent" were observed in Budapest, the Northern Great Plain, and Pest regions. Furthermore, based on the points described previously, perceptions of subjective well-being were also influenced by the question (Figure IV/2/1).

Causes of the prevalence of corruption

Respondents who perceived corruption as "*not particularly widespread*" in Hungary were also invited to elaborate on this view in an open-ended question. We asked respondents to briefly outline which factors, in their view, lie at the core of the presence of corruption in Hungary. The objective of this question, in addition to closed ones, was to collect qualitative information regarding the assessment of the causes of corruption and to identify recurring key themes that spontaneously emerge in the responses.

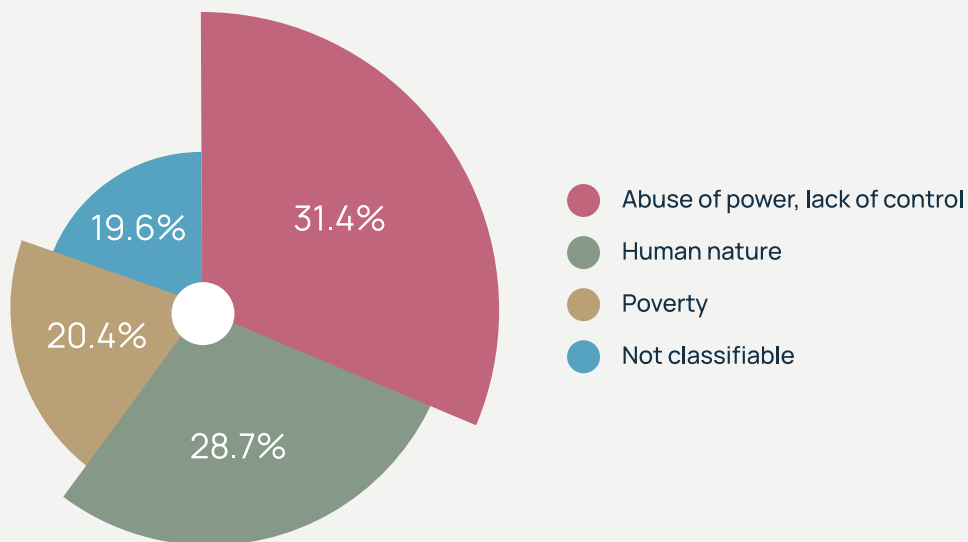
In the analysis of the open-ended question examining the causes of corruption, the first step was to identify the most frequently occurring words and phrases. Based on these, as well as relying on our professional judgement, we established starting categories. Keywords and typical expressions, which were expected to appear in the responses, were assigned to each category. In the first step, the most frequently occurring words in the responses were assigned to the pre-defined categories. Subsequently, these lists of keywords were expanded with synonyms and similar expressions, for which artificial intelligence was also utilised. Finally, the responses were automatically compared with the keywords of the categories, and each text was assigned to the category whose keywords showed the greatest or most relevant match.

Respondents' willingness to respond, however, was limited. Fifteen percent of respondents did not answer the question, while a further 35% expressed their opinions in fewer than four words. These extremely brief responses, often limited to one or two keywords, substantially restricted the possibilities for content analysis and complicated clear thematic classification, particularly in cases of general or ambiguously interpretable wording.

⁸⁵ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.179$

⁸⁶ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.223$

Figure IV/6/8:
The root causes of corruption in Hungary (n =1,254)



Based on the content analysis of the open-ended responses, approximately 80% of the responses received could be classified into three clearly distinguishable categories.

1. Abuse of power, lack of control (31.4%)

The largest group of responses attributes the origin of corruption primarily to institutional and structural problems. Within this interpretive framework, the emphasis is on the responsibility of actors in decision-making positions, the lack of accountability, and the fact that control over community resources does not function properly. Corruption in this instance does not appear as an isolated individual act but rather as a consequence of a system that allows for misconduct and is unable to sanction it effectively. Several responses personalise the problem, attributing responsibility to specific decision-makers or individuals in positions of power.

Typical words and expressions in the category:

- government, EU funds, state, office, political system,
- public fund, misuse, lack of control,
- naming concrete individuals.

2. Factors stemming from human nature (28.7%)

The second most frequently appearing interpretive framework derives corruption from general human features and motivations. In this narrative, the phenomenon is not extraordinary or system-specific but an almost inevitable consequence of the way people respond to opportunities. The responses often employ generalising statements that attribute responsibility to society as a whole, highlighting moral weakness, self-interested thinking, or the desire for rapid gain. Thus, corruption appears not as an exception but as a “human” behavioural pattern.

Typical words and expressions in the category:

- everyone, people, society, always,
- greed, insatiability, getting advantage,
- enrichment, avarice, fast, acquire, own, theft.

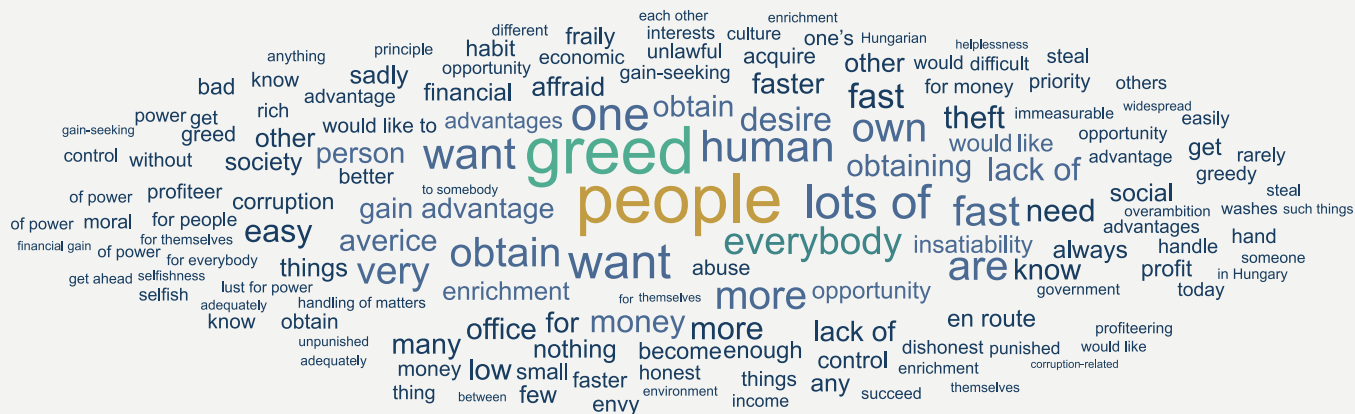
3. Poverty and financial vulnerability (20.4%)

The third interpretive framework presents corruption as a predicament arising from uncertain living conditions and financial pressure. These responses are less moralising, placing greater emphasis on structural and economic reasons. In this interpretation, corruption is not primarily a moral weakness but rather a survival strategy or an adaptive response in an adverse economic environment. References to the current economic situation suggest that financial vulnerability may normalise certain rule-breaking forms of behaviour.

Typical words and expressions in the category:

- money, poverty,
- absence, low, few, lack of, unfortunately,
- finance, inflation, salary, economic, current situation,
- workplace, income, standard of living.

The content of the categories and the most frequently occurring expressions are illustrated by the following word clouds.



”

ACCORDING TO THE OPINION OF MOST OF THE HUNGARIAN POPULATION, THE PREVALENCE OF CORRUPTION IN THE COUNTRY “INCREASED CONSIDERABLY” BETWEEN 2020 AND 2025 (45.7%), WHILE 20.9% EXPERIENCED A SLIGHT INCREASE.⁸⁷ ONLY 5.7% INDICATED SOME LEVEL OF DECREASE, WHILE 25.2% REPORTED STAGNATION.

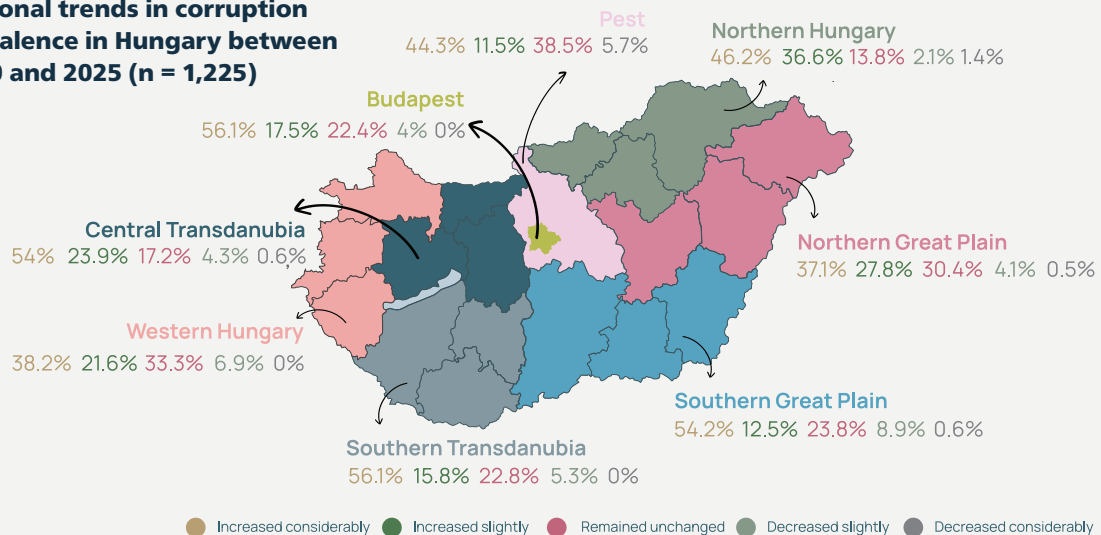
A significant, yet weak correlation was observed between trends in corruption prevalence over the past five years and respondents’ region of residence.⁸⁸

”

WHILE LESS THAN 40% OF RESPONDENTS IN PEST, THE NORTHERN GREAT PLAIN AND WESTERN TRANSDANUBIA INDICATED A CONSIDERABLE INCREASE IN CORRUPTION, IN THE OTHER REGIONS THIS PROPORTION WAS HIGHER, RANGING BETWEEN 45% AND 60% (FIGURE IV/6/10)

Figure IV/6/10:

Regional trends in corruption prevalence in Hungary between 2020 and 2025 (n = 1,225)



⁸⁷ A relevant question: “How do you think the prevalence of corruption has changed in Hungary over the past five years?”

⁸⁸ $p < 0.001$; Cramer’s $V = 0.147$

Responses regarding changes in corruption prevalence over the past five years were divided into three groups (increased, unchanged, decreased) to facilitate better handling in the statistical analysis.⁸⁹ Compared with the other examined connections, stronger correlations emerged with regard to political attitudes, as significant connections were observed both on the right-left and on the government-opposition support scales in relation to how people perceived changes in the prevalence of corruption over the past five years in Hungary.⁹⁰ The proportion of those who believe that the prevalence of domestic corruption has increased over the past five years was the highest among respondents who selected the value 4 on the right-left scale, that is, those who positioned themselves rather toward the centre.⁹¹



RESPONDENTS WHO POSITIONED THEMSELVES TOWARD THE CENTRE OR DEFINED THEMSELVES RATHER AS PRO-OPPOSITION ON THE GOVERNMENT-OPPOSITION SUPPORT SCALE WERE THE MOST LIKELY TO PERCEIVE AN INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF CORRUPTION, WHEREAS THOSE WHO REPORTED STAGNATION OR EVEN A DECREASE BELONGED PRIMARILY TO THE GROUP LEANING RATHER TOWARD THE PRO-GOVERNMENT SIDE.⁹³

If respondents perceive corruption as widespread both in general and in connection with the use of European Union funds, it becomes essential to explore how effective anti-corruption efforts are perceived to be regarding a key institution. The Hungarian government is a key actor in anti-corruption efforts, responsible not only for numerous public functions but also for ensuring security and upholding public trust. In developing public policies, laws, and regulations, the government is tasked not only with guaranteeing physical security but also with ensuring secure access to public services and taking effective action against processes that undermine democratic functioning and social well-being, such as corruption. The government fulfils this function through the establishment and periodic review of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, as well as through the operation of a specialised institutional system. Therefore, it is important to have a direct understanding of the views and perceptions of society in order to ascertain how successfully these efforts are being implemented (Figure IV/6/11).

⁸⁹ The “don’t know” and “no response” answers were excluded from the cross-tab analysis to prevent cross-tab statistics from being distorted by a large number of cells with low sample sizes.

⁹⁰ The “don’t know” and “no response” options were excluded to prevent distortion of the responses during statistical analysis.

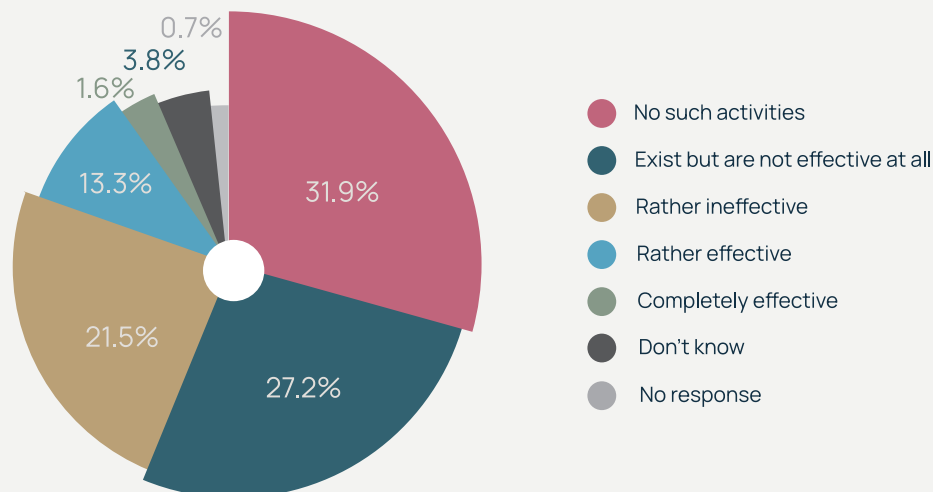
⁹¹ $p < 0.001$; Cramer’s $V = 0.244$.

⁹² On a scale from 1 to 7 – where 1 represents a pro-government position and 7 a pro-opposition stance – the proportion of those who believed that the prevalence of corruption had increased over the past five years was higher among respondents who indicated a value of 4 or higher.

⁹³ $p < 0.001$; Cramer’s $V = 0.234$

Figure IV/6/11:

Perceptions of Hungary's anti-corruption activities in 2025 (n = 1,254)



Most of the Hungarian population believe that the state engages in “no such activities” or that such activities do “exist but are not effective at all”. Based on effectiveness, three groups were distinguished: “no such activities”, “exist but are rather ineffective”, and “exist and are effective”.⁹⁴ Respondents’ region of residence⁹⁵ and political attitudes (left or right-leaning,⁹⁶ pro-government or pro-opposition⁹⁷) showed significant differences in how respondents viewed the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts.

Respondents in the regions of Budapest, the Southern and Northern Great Plain, as well as Central Transdanubia, were explicitly dissatisfied with state efforts in this regard, with many in these regions feeling that such efforts were either non-existent or, even if existent, rather ineffective. Pro-government

⁹⁴ The “don’t know” and “no response” answers were not included in the cross-tabulation analysis for this question.

⁹⁵ $p < 0.001$; Cramer’s $V = 0.177$

⁹⁶ $p < 0.001$; Cramer’s $V = 0.327$

⁹⁷ $p < 0.001$; Cramer’s $V = 0.322$

respondents were more likely to perceive the state's anti-corruption efforts as existing, and a larger proportion of them considered these efforts effective, whereas those identifying as pro-opposition believed not only that such measures were ineffective but also that no such efforts by the government existed at all. Pro-government and pro-opposition individuals were both represented among respondents who observed the existence of government efforts against corruption but questioned their effectiveness. A similar distribution can be observed in the scale measuring left-leaning and right-leaning orientations and the government's role experienced in the fight against corruption.

The proportion of respondents who believe that the state has no substantive anti-corruption activities was higher among those who identify themselves as more left-leaning or centrist, while right-leaning and left-leaning individuals were both represented among those who acknowledge the existence of such activities but consider them ineffective. Respondents who identified themselves as right-leaning were the most likely to perceive anti-corruption efforts as effective.

Chapter 4.7

The level of experiences: specific experiences related to corruption

This chapter presents how frequently members of the Hungarian population experienced corruption in the period preceding the survey, either directly through personal encounters or indirectly through the experiences of relatives and close acquaintances. Beyond the triad of money, gifts, and favours, respondents were also given the opportunity to report their experiences related to the handling or expediting of certain matters through the use of personal connections, a phenomenon that occurs frequently in practice.



Among respondents, 22.8% reported knowing a person or institution implicated in the acceptance of improper advantages, while 7.2% reported having personally experienced corruption in the year prior to the survey. Direct experience most frequently occurs in public healthcare and private-sector companies. The exploitation of personal connections is also widespread, as one in seven individuals encountered such a situation in the year prior to the survey.

Perception-based surveys are increasingly placing emphasis on going beyond respondents' opinions and perceptions of a given issue by examining concrete experiences and actual events while also enabling readers to compare these findings with results related to perceptions. This is because this approach allows for a more comprehensive and robust understanding of the issue. Indeed, while perceptions – as demonstrated in detail in the introduction – are extremely important for a broad study of corruption, enable the examination of processes that are otherwise *“difficult to measure”*, are often rooted in real experiences, and can contribute to policy development and the formulation of comprehensive assessments in the long term, they are also subject to certain limitations. The media, subjective experiences, and current political discourse can give rise to cognitive biases through their difficult-to-control influences. For this reason, it is recommended that perception-based surveys explicitly include questions relating to experiences, which can provide a more comprehensive understanding of sensitive topics such as corruption (DE CALHEIROS VELOZO et al. 2022).

Upon the introduction of this set of questions, respondents were given further assurance – whether completing the questionnaire online or with the assistance of an interviewer – that their responses would remain anonymous and that the data would be processed exclusively in aggregated form. In accordance with legal requirements, the data management notice and the consent form provided detailed information on the purpose and duration of data processing, as well as on the procedure for withdrawing consent.

This was necessary because experiences related to corruption represented one of the most sensitive areas of the questionnaire, as respondents could potentially provide information that falls under criminal offences defined in the Criminal Code. In order to enhance the validity and reliability of responses, both the questionnaire and the interviewer manual contained specific instructions, along with emphasised text sections to be read aloud. Furthermore, in order to strengthen trust and create a secure environment for interviewers in which respondents can provide valid answers to the question group concerning experiences of corruption, the *“don't know”* and *“prefer not to answer”* options were clearly and prominently displayed. This allowed respondents to feel assured that they could skip any sensitive question and continue completing the questionnaire.

The first substantive question explored whether they know of a person, group, or institution that has accepted improper favours, gifts, or bribes in exchange for services or advantages.



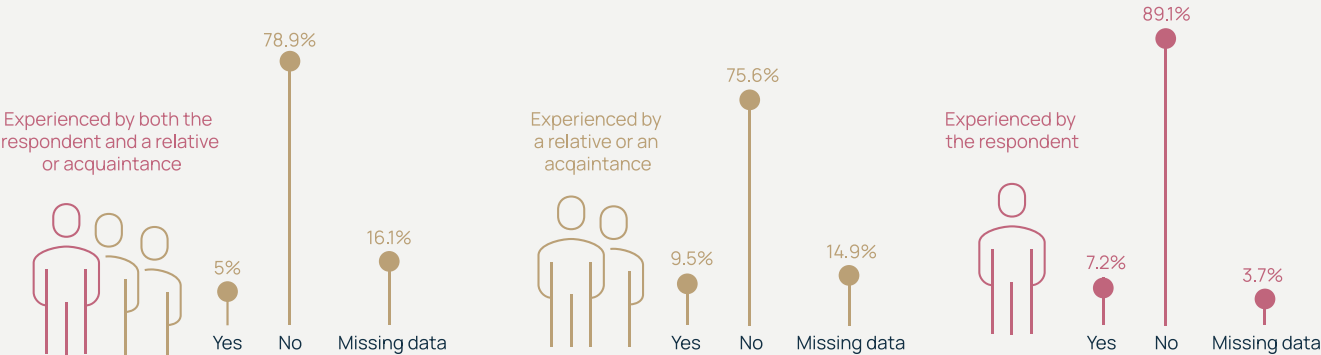
AMONG HUNGARIANS, 22.8% INDICATED THAT THEY KNOW SUCH A PERSON, GROUP, OR INSTITUTION, WHILE 67.7% SAID THEY DO NOT.

As anticipated, the question addressed a sensitive area, resulting in a refusal rate of 9.5%. With regard to the recent past, using a 12-month reference period, respondents were asked whether they had encountered any situation in which they were expected to provide improper favours, gifts, or bribes.



WITH REGARD TO EXPERIENCES OVER THE PAST YEAR, 7.2% OF RESPONDENTS (NEARLY 100 OUT OF 1,254 RESPONDENTS) STATED THAT THEY HAD ENCOUNTERED SUCH A CASE (FIGURE IV/7/1), WHILE 9.5% REPORTED THE SAME REGARDING THEIR RELATIVES AND CLOSE ACQUAINTANCES.

Figure IV/7/1:
Corruption experiences gained personally or through relatives and acquaintances over the one year prior to the survey (n = 1,254)



Therefore, even if minimally, more people have experienced corruption indirectly – meaning through their relatives and acquaintances. Five percent of the Hungarian population reported that either they, a relative, or an acquaintance had encountered a situation over the past 12 months in which they were expected to provide unlawful favours, gifts, or bribes.



A CROSS-TABULATION ANALYSIS OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT EXPERIENCES OF CORRUPTION REVEALED A STRONG AND SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO.⁹⁸ THOSE WHO REPORTED HAVING BEEN PERSONALLY EXPECTED TO PROVIDE SUCH BENEFITS TYPICALLY ALSO HAD RELATIVES OR ACQUAINTANCES WHO ALSO ENCOUNTERED SIMILAR SITUATIONS, AS 80% OF RESPONDENTS WITH PERSONAL EXPERIENCES INDICATED THE INVOLVEMENT OF RELATIVES OR ACQUAINTANCES.

By contrast, if respondents did not have personal experiences from the past year, their relatives and acquaintances also largely lacked experiences of being expected to provide bribes (in 94.7% of cases in which respondents reported no personal experiences, their acquaintances also reported no such experience).

Respondents who reported having experienced, over the 12 months prior to the survey, a situation in which unlawful favours, gifts, or bribes were expected of them were asked, in a multiple-choice question, to indicate the sector in which this occurred: a private-sector company, a public institution, or another organisation (Figure IV/7/2). Naturally, as in other cases, respondents were given the option to indicate that they preferred not to answer the question; however, fewer than 1% selected either of these options. The results show that among those who experienced such corrupt situations in the past 12 months (7.2% of all respondents), 46.2%¹⁰⁰ selected the “*private-sector company, private enterprise*” option, closely followed by 41.4% selecting public institutions (as well). Other institutions (e.g. civil, religious etc.) were selected only by 12.4% of respondents. Most respondents who experienced corruption identified a single sector, with only 10% selecting multiple sectors simultaneously.

If respondents reported having experienced a situation that involved unlawful favours, gifts, or corruption related to bribes through a relative or acquaintance over the past 12 months, once again they were given

⁹⁸ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.633$

⁹⁹ Multiple responses were accepted simultaneously, meaning that respondents were able to indicate that they had encountered such situations in private-sector companies, public institutions, or other entities, such as civil or religious institutions.

¹⁰⁰ In the multiple-choice question, the selection frequency of response options is illustrated by the percent of cases result, which shows the percentage of people who selected a particular response option.

the option to indicate in a multiple-choice question¹⁰¹ which sector(s) this experience originated from, as it was important to see where this was more prevalent. Respondents' indirect experiences of corruption – meaning through the involvement of their relatives or acquaintances – were most frequently linked to public institutions and offices.

”

OF THE 9.5% OF RESPONDENTS WHO INDICATED THAT THEY HAD EXPERIENCED SUCH A CASE THROUGH A RELATIVE OR ACQUAINTANCE, 45.9% STATED THAT THIS HAD (ALSO) OCCURRED IN CONNECTION WITH A PUBLIC INSTITUTION, 39.9% (ALSO) SELECTED THE PRIVATE-SECTOR COMPANIES / PRIVATE ENTERPRISES OPTION, WHILE 14.1% (ALSO) REPORTED EXPERIENCES FROM A DIFFERENT INSTITUTION.

This ratio is contrary to what respondents indicated in connection with themselves, as they experienced cases of abuse somewhat more frequently in private-sector companies / private enterprises.

Figure IV/7/2:
Sectoral distribution of corruption experiences in 2025 ($n_{\text{personal}} = 99$, $n_{\text{relative-acquaintance}} = 141$)



Respondents who indicated that they and/or a relative had been expected to provide unlawful favours, gifts, or bribes in the year prior to the survey, and that this had (also) occurred in connection with a public institution or office, they were given the option to specify, using a multiple-choice question¹⁰², the type of public institution(s) in which such an encounter had taken place.

¹⁰¹ For questions allowing multiple answers, respondents may select more than one option from the list. In these cases, the percent of cases distributions were provided for the question exploring the sectors affected by experiences of corruption, which shows the percentage of people who selected each response option.

¹⁰² In multiple-choice questions, respondents can select several options simultaneously (in some cases even all of them); one answer does not exclude the others, OR only certain answers – for example, the “no response” option – exclude the possibility of selecting other options. When presenting the results, the percent of cases ratios were provided in this case as well.

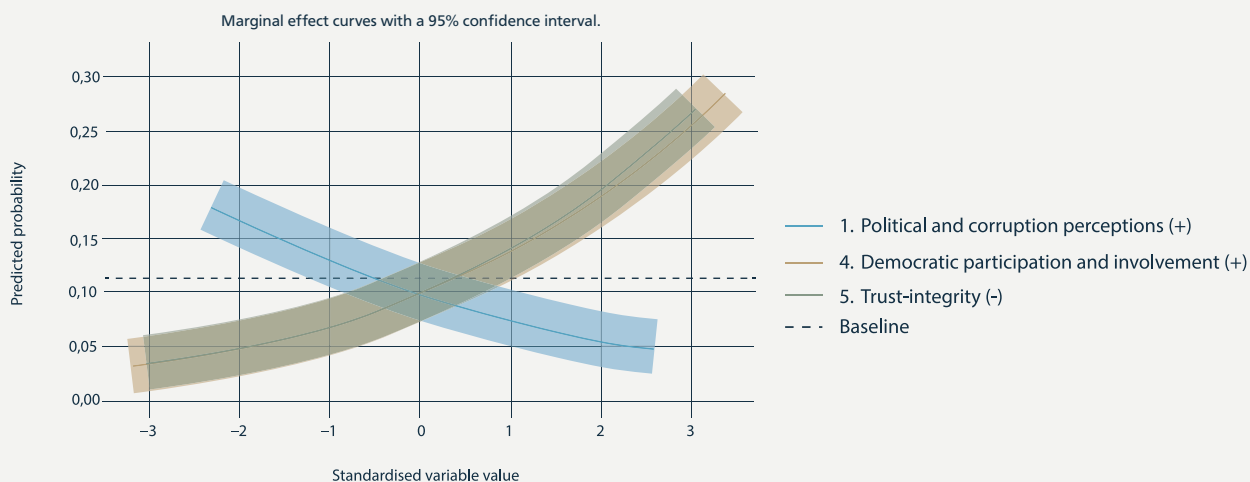


PUBLIC HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS WERE SELECTED BY 60.8%¹⁰³ AND 27% OF RESPONDENTS, RESPECTIVELY, WITH LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES RANKING THIRD AMONG PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN WHICH PARTICIPANTS REPORTED HAVING ENCOUNTERED CORRUPTION.

Among the listed options, courts and educational institutions – selected by 4.5% and 6.1% of respondents, respectively – were mentioned as the least affected public institutions. Similarly, in a previous survey focusing on youth, public healthcare institutions were selected most frequently, with the majority citing personal experiences or those of relatives and acquaintances (VAJDA et al., 2025).

To examine experiences of corruption, we developed a regression model aimed at investigating the patterns associated with the previously presented factors (latent variables) among those who had encountered corruption – either directly (through personal experience) or indirectly (through relatives or acquaintances) – within the year prior to the survey. The occurrence of direct and indirect experiences among the population stands at a mere 12.2%, a relatively low proportion; this should be considered when assessing the predictive capacity of the model.

Figure IV/7/3: The relationship between experiences of corruption and their explanatory factors (n=571)



¹⁰³ The percent of cases (frequency distribution) was likewise presented in this multiple-choice question, meaning that for each response option, the distribution shows the percentage of respondents who selected that particular option.

The results show that **political and corruption perceptions, democratic participation and involvement**, as well as **trust-integrity** factors have a significant and strong impact within the model.¹⁰⁴

”

THE MORE ACTIVELY INDIVIDUALS ENGAGE IN SOCIAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT FACTOR), THE MORE LIKELY THEY ARE TO EXPERIENCE CORRUPTION, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY.

Similarly, for the trust-integrity factor, it is evident that higher values point to individuals’ increased distrust toward other people and institutions. Whether distrust developed as a result of experiences with corruption or whether it predates them cannot be controlled for in the model, as the timing of its development is unknown. At the same time, the connection is clearly observable, as experiences of corruption are associated with a higher level of distrust.

Table IV/7/A: **Reliability of the model developed from experiences of corruption**

	Not experienced according to the model	Experienced according to the model
Actually not experienced	61.6%	27.2%
Actually experienced	4.7%	6.5%

The model has a moderate predictive capability, but it still contains useful information of the pattern. The cross-tab clearly shows that the model often incorrectly indicates that a person has experienced corruption, whereas in reality, they have not. The reason for this is partly that only 12.2% of the population reported actual experiences, either directly or indirectly, meaning genuine positive cases are very rare.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, individuals who have not actually experienced corruption but report extremely negative perceptions of it

¹⁰⁴ The most important results of the model are outlined in Annex 10.

¹⁰⁵ In the sample included in the model, the proportion of respondents who have experienced corruption stands at 11.2%, whereas for the overall population, this percentage stands at 12.2% – only individuals for whom necessary data on all factors were available could be included in the model.

are also included among those classified as having experienced corruption. Thus, the model is unable to properly distinguish between these two groups. Overall, it can be concluded that negative perceptions of corruption extend beyond individuals who have already experienced it, encompassing a much broader segment of society. At the same time, the three most important factors – democratic participation, trust-integrity, and perceptions of the state of corruption – may assume similar values among those who have directly or indirectly experienced corruption.

Using personal connections and acquaintances to speed up the handling of certain matters

The “grey zone” related to corrupt acts refers to situations in which certain matters are facilitated or expedited through personal connections. Mapping up how frequently this occurs among respondents, as well as among their relatives and close acquaintances, is an important research area of corruption, as it seeks to explore a subject that society does not always condemn.

Focus group interviews from the previous youth research project, *KORR-KÉP*, also showed that the use of personal connections can now essentially be regarded as an accepted practice. In the course of the interviews, young people reflected on the use of personal connections in the following ways:

“Well, if you’re sick – with the current state of healthcare – we have unfortunately reached a point where you have to use your personal connections. And now, okay, you may put someone at a disadvantage, but your health is also important. So, you definitely have to use such means.”

or

“Now, for example, at our fire department, recruitment was based on who knows whom. Everybody passed – everybody scored 100% on the physical assessment and everything else. There were 16 of us, and only 4 of us got in. I have connections among the county’s senior officials, and one of them asked the director to keep an eye on me because “the boy really wants it”. And this is how it works – you have to do everything you can, sadly.”

The *On the Right Path* study revealed whether respondents and – as explored in a separate question – their relatives and close acquaintances had encountered situations in the year prior to the survey in which they had to use their personal connections to facilitate or speed up the handling of certain matters. The simple statistical distribution of the responses revealed that the proportion of uncertain individuals was higher concerning relatives and acquaintances: non-respondents accounted for only 4.8% in questions applicable to themselves, whereas, in relation to relatives and acquaintances, this percentage stood

at 17.3%. Among the respondents, 13.6% reported having experienced such a situation over the past year, while 15.1% confirmed that their relatives or acquaintances had encountered a similar situation. Examining how direct personal experiences and indirect experiences through relatives and acquaintances are connected, a strong and significant correlation emerged;¹⁰⁶ therefore, the null hypothesis of the test, which posited that the outcomes of the two questions are independent of each other, was rejected. Typically, there was a connection between whether respondents had, over the previous 12 months, encountered a situation in which they had to use personal connections to resolve certain matters and whether their relatives or acquaintances had experienced a similar situation.

Table IV/7/B:

Occurrence of using personal connections to facilitate or speed up the handling of certain matters in the year prior to the survey (personal and indirect experiences) (n = 1,030)¹⁰⁷

In the past 12 months, has any of the respondent's relatives used personal connections to resolve a matter?		
Over the past 12 months, has the respondent used personal connections to resolve a matter?	Yes	No
	Yes 86.4%	13.6%
	No 6.2%	93.8%

The question exploring the facilitation of the handling of officials matters through the personal connections of relatives and acquaintances revealed a significant but weak connection with the access-based grouped index¹⁰⁸ and with responses on the government-opposition support scale¹⁰⁹. The more individuals identified as pro-opposition, the more frequently their acquaintances or relatives had to use personal connections to resolve certain matters. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that even among respondents who clearly identified as pro-government, the proportion of those whose relatives or acquaintances had recently had to use personal connections to resolve certain matters was somewhat higher. Within the index measuring access to institutional services divided into groups, respondents indicating moderate levels of satisfaction more frequently reported that their relatives or acquaintances had used personal connections to resolve certain situations.

¹⁰⁶ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.742$

¹⁰⁷ In the proportional distributions, personal experiences were placed in the row variable as the quasi-dependent variable, while the variable assumed to influence these experiences – in this case, the experiences of relatives – was placed in the columns as the independent variable. Row-based distributions were applied, thereby showing that respondents who had, in their own experience, needed to use personal connections were also very likely to report similar experiences among their relatives.

¹⁰⁸ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.157$

¹⁰⁹ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.193$

Chapter 4.8

Dimensions of democratic participation and their impact on other areas

At this stage of the survey, we explored the two dimensions of democratic participation: firstly, the extent to which respondents consider direct participation in public affairs and transparency important (attitude); and secondly, the forms of participation they actually engaged in during the reference period (behaviour). In subsequent chapters, democratic participation is understood as a civic resource that is associated with actions taken in suspected cases of corruption (willingness to report, institutional awareness), as well as with perceptions of other subject areas (e.g. the use of EU funds).

Attitude-level support for democratic participation is considerably strong within Hungarian society. Most respondents consider having a direct say in public affairs to be important both at the local and at the national level. Although many support citizen participation in theory, few actually take part in such activities in practice. Complete passivity also often occurs. Those who did not select any form of participation most frequently cited two reasons: either they believed that participation was pointless because nothing would change regardless (32.8%) or they were simply interested in other things (32.6%). This suggests that individual attitudes and interests play a significant role in passivity.

Level of support for and obstacles to participation in public affairs

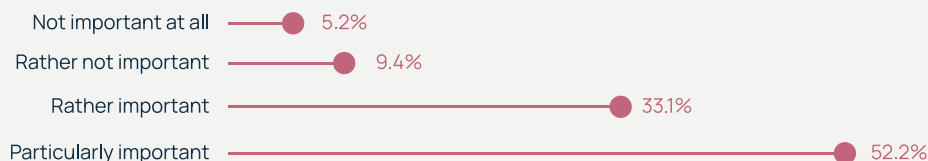
The first two questions in the question block exploring the topic measured the extent to which respondents consider it important for citizens to have a direct say (1) in local, municipal matters and (2) the shaping of national affairs.

Figure IV/8/1:

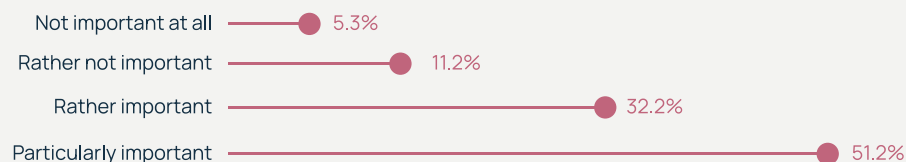
Public perceptions of the importance of engagement in public affairs

(n_{local} = 1,223; n_{national} = 1,218)

Importance attributed to having a say in local, municipal affairs



Importance attributed to having a say in national affairs



More than half of the respondents (52.2%) consider the opportunity to have a direct say in local matters to be particularly important, while a further 33.1% deemed it “rather important”. A very similar pattern can be observed with regard to national affairs: the proportion of respondents selecting the “particularly important” option is 51.2%, while those selecting the “rather important” category stands at 32.2%. Explicitly indifferent perceptions are marginal in both cases, with the proportion of the “not important at all” responses hovering around 5%.

Active participation in democracy (main catalysts of activity)

In examining corruption and integrity, it is crucial to consider the extent to which citizens are involved in public affairs, as participation can simultaneously mean openness to information, interest toward institutions, and potential capacity for action. To capture this, the questionnaire included a set of questions exploring the various forms of democratic participation respondents engaged in during the reference period. This question examined how frequently respondents had participated in the activities listed below since 1 January 2020.

Figure IV/8/2:
Proportion of engagement in democratic activities (n= 1,244) (n_{all answers} = 13,629)

Have you voted in local or parliamentary elections, or in a referendum?	68.7%
Have you signed a petition?	33.4%
Have you participated in a political event or demonstration?	22.2%
Have you participated in a strike?	19.8%
Have you done any voluntary work?	17.4%
Have you given donations to charity or for a public purpose?	16.2%
Have you worked in politics or for a political party?	13.4%
Have you filled out a questionnaire about politics or public affairs?	9.5%
Have you expressed opinions on public affairs in person or on the internet?	6.5%
Have you refused to purchase a product or service in order to express an opinion on public affairs?	3.1%
Have you participated in public affairs in any other way?	2.9%

The chart illustrating the frequency of responses (Figure IV/8/2) demonstrates that voting, as a form of democratic participation, is by far the most popular and widespread activity. Of those who answered the question, 68.7% fall into the “voters only” group, who did not indicate any other form of participation. This ratio suggests that minimal participation remains a dominant pattern within the age group under study and serves as an important starting point for further analysis of the relationship between corruption-related attitudes and the willingness to participate.

Possible forms of aggregating variables measuring participation activity:

The question group consists of 10 closed (yes/no) items which fit well into a unified measurement model; the more open-ended and heterogeneous item “*participated in another way*” was treated separately during index construction, as its meaning may vary across respondents.

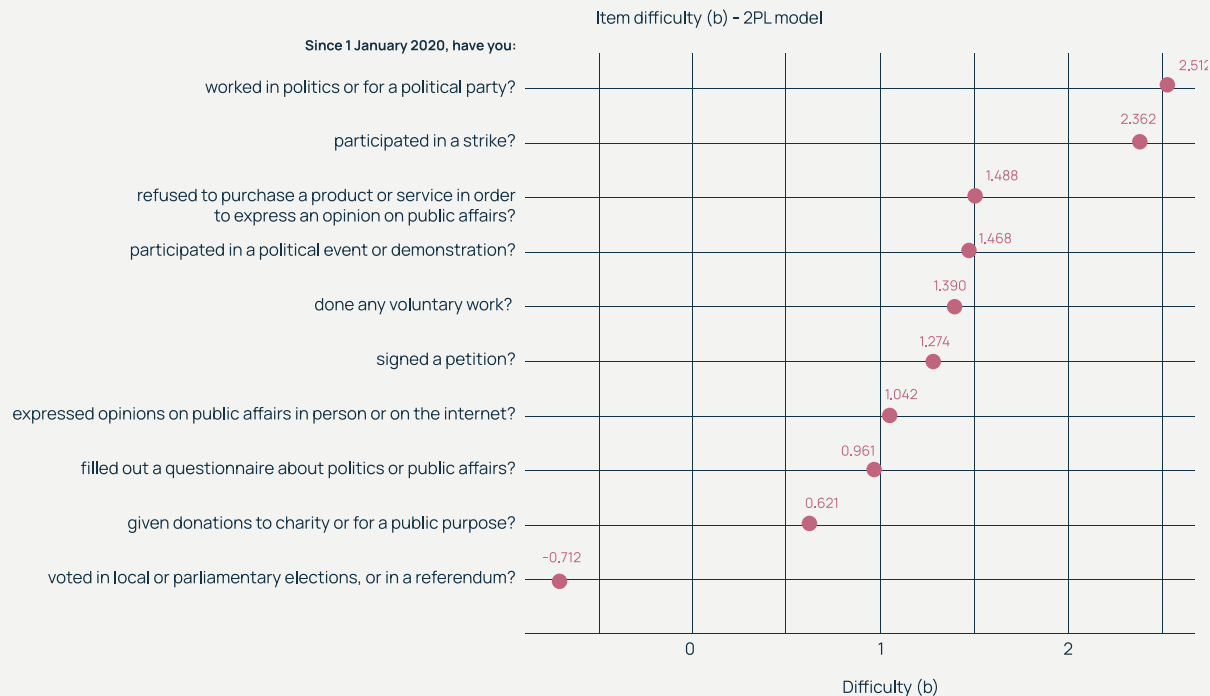
The 10 dichotomous items alone cover a sufficiently broad spectrum to provide an overview of the general level of participation activity. However, these activities represent different “entry thresholds”: voting is typically low-cost and low-risk, whereas working for a political organisation and participating in strikes demand more in terms of time, resources, and exposure. For this reason, it is methodologically justified to apply an aggregation that does not treat the activities with equal weight¹¹⁰.

Lower-threshold, widely practised forms (e.g. voting) typically exhibit a weaker connection with less frequent, higher-threshold forms (e.g. work in political parties), whereas higher-threshold items more frequently demonstrate a stronger connection with one another.¹¹¹ This pattern is substantively and methodologically consistent with the notion that the items are activated at different intensity levels of the same latent scheme.

¹¹⁰ Therefore, a data-driven approach was implemented to measure participation activity: a latent participation indicator was constructed from the 10 dichotomous items using an Item Response Theory (IRT)-based, two-parameter logistic (2PL) model. The model estimates both the difficulty (the latent activity level at which a “yes” response becomes probable) and discrimination (the extent to which it differentiates respondents with lower and higher activity levels) of the items (Embretson-Reise, 2000; Hambleton et al., 1991; Baker-Kim, 2004). The latent score produced as a result of the model, hereinafter denoted by θ (theta), is the merged, continuous indicator of democratic participation. The value of θ follows a normal distribution; consequently, values around 0 indicate average levels of activity, with higher positive values representing increased activity, and negative values indicating a decrease in activity. The co-occurrence of dichotomous items was examined in accordance with the model assumptions: the relationships between the items are overall positive, yet heterogeneous.

¹¹¹ The tetrachoric matrix detailing the connection between the 10 items can be found in Annex 13.

Figure IV/8/3:
Difficulties associated with actions supporting democratic participation (n = 1,244)



Based on these, working for political parties and participating in strikes prove to be the most challenging activities supporting participation currently in Hungary. This is consistent with the theoretical assertion that these activities carry a higher level of risk.

Divide between democratic participatory attitudes and actual democratic participation

To examine the relationship between participatory attitudes and actual participation, the following two questions were compared with the θ -indicator measuring the level of participation: “What is your opinion about citizens having a direct say in local municipal affairs?” and “What is your opinion about citizens having a direct say in national affairs?” The correlations were verified at multiple stages.¹¹²

¹¹² First, they were examined through a non-parametric difference test (Kruskal-Wallis test). Subsequently, we examined the strength of the connection using Spearman’s rank correlation to determine whether the θ -distribution differs between the response categories of the two questions.

For local matters, the test indicated a weak but significant difference¹¹³, whereas for national affairs, a similarly significant but considerably weaker difference¹¹⁴ was observed. These results indicate that regarding local matters, the distributions of participatory attitudes and democratic activity are not independent of each other; however, the explanatory power of this connection is limited, as the connections among the variables are weak. Based on this finding, those who believe it is important that citizens have a voice in local or national affairs exhibit somewhat more active behaviours in actual democratic participation. At the same time, this relationship is weak; and therefore attitudes alone do not explain who actually participates in such activities.

The following question in the chapter aims to explore the reasons why Hungarian people do not participate in public affairs and why they do not engage in the exercise of democracy. Drawing on previous results, this piece of information is particularly important, as it became evident that although Hungarian people generally consider participation in public affairs and politics to be important, the practical manifestations of this position are limited. We asked respondents who did not select any of the 11 previously examined participation categories – meaning they did not participate in public affairs in any form – a single question to investigate the reasons for their non-participation.

Figure IV/8/4: **Reasons for the complete absence of democratic participation (n = 310)**

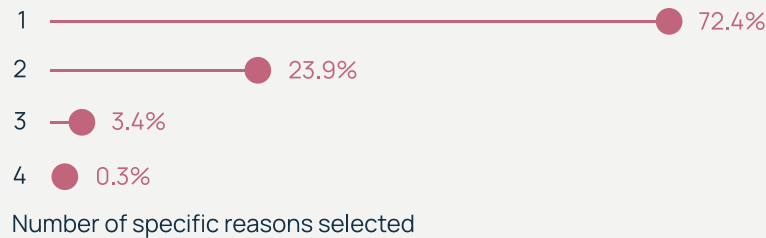


¹¹³ Spearman's rank correlation $\rho = 0.189$; $p < 0.001$

¹¹⁴ Spearman's rank correlation $\rho = 0.101$; $p < 0.001$

The two main reasons in almost equal proportions: *“They believe that their participation would have no effect”* (32.8%) and *“They are more interested in other matters”* (32.6%). Respondents who did not select any form of social participation mostly chose one of the specific pre-defined reasons provided in the question as justification for their non-participation. At the same time, 15 respondents selected the *“other”* category, and in detailing their responses, they cited poor health, old age, and a lack of interest as primary reasons. Looking at participation and its extent, it is evident that slightly over one-fifth of the Hungarian population do not participate in public affairs in any form, not even through anonymous elections and referenda, which may reinforce the presence of apathy toward public affairs.

Figure IV/8/5: **Accumulation of reasons curbing democratic participation**
(n = 293; respondents selecting at least one reason)



Nearly three-quarters of the respondents (72.4%) selected only one specific obstacle, a further 23.9% selected two reasons, while the joint selection of three or more obstacles was rare (below 4%). This suggests that in most cases, participation inactivity is not the result of complex, multi-layered barriers but is linked to a single dominant obstacle. The result is in line with the empirical experiences of the civic voluntarism model, which suggests that resources, a sense of political efficacy, and a lack of motivation are often sufficient, even on their own, to lead to non-participation (VERBA et al. 1995; SCHLOZMAN et al. 2012).

The survey results simultaneously demonstrate the normative support for democratic participation and the limitations of actual participation.

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WHILE MOST RESPONDENTS CONSIDER PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS IMPORTANT, ACTUAL ENGAGEMENT REMAINS SUBSTANTIALLY LIMITED, WITH COMPLETE INACTIVITY OFTEN STEMMING FROM PERCEPTIONS OF INEFFECTIVENESS OR A LACK OF INTEREST.

This fault line is particularly relevant from the perspective of integrity, as acting in response to suspected cases of corruption constitutes a decision that entails personal risks and uncertain consequences. Therefore, the following chapter aims to explore Hungarian society's willingness to take action against corruption, the level of awareness of institutional channels, and how these factors are related to democratic participation.

Chapter 4.9

The fight against corruption and forms of participation within Hungarian society

This chapter aims to summarise what Hungarian people would do upon experiencing suspected cases of corruption, and whether they are aware of any institution or organisation to which they could report such encounters. As findings from academic literature indicate that the proportion of potential whistleblowers is lower, we explored which factors, in the view of Hungarian society, hinder people in reporting.

Active engagement in anti-corruption efforts is not a typical characteristic of Hungarian society. Only 26.8% of respondents indicated that they would act in a suspected case of corruption, while 73.2% said they would not take action or were uncertain. A key driving factor behind the low level of willingness to report is the lack of institutional awareness. A total of 868 individuals could not name any institution they could turn to, and overall, 69.2% of respondents were unaware of any channel through which they could report cases of abuse, pointing to an unfavourable situation in an international context as well. Institutional awareness, however, is a strong motivating factor: 48% of those aware of specific reporting platforms would report corruption, whereas that figure stands at a mere 19.5% among those lacking such knowledge. This difference is further confirmed by the logistic regression model, which indicates that institutional awareness is associated with nearly four times higher odds of reporting. Nevertheless, actual reporting experience is extremely low. Only 8.8% of respondents indicated that they had reported a case they or someone else had encountered. An analysis of the open-ended responses reveals four dominant obstacles to taking actual action: fear of retaliation (being the strongest deterrent), difficulty in providing evidence, procedural and information uncertainty, and perceptions of ineffectiveness.

Durin the examination of anti-corruption efforts, one of the key questions in the analysis was how democratic participation, as a general civic resource, relates to the willingness to report suspected cases of corruption, as well as to its actual implementation. Academic literature has long emphasised that there is often a noticeable difference between citizens’ attitudes and their actual behaviour, particularly in actions involving personal risks, uncertain consequences, or institutional conflicts (LAPIERE 1934; AJZEN 1991; SHEERAN 2002). Accordingly, the analysis examined anti-corruption efforts in terms of three interrelated dimensions: institutional awareness, willingness to act, and actual experiences of reporting.

Figure IV/9/1:
Respondents’ willingness to take active steps in response to suspected cases of corruption (n = 1,254)



The results indicate that the willingness to take action can no longer be regarded as a majority attitude in itself. Within the overall sample, approximately 26.8% of respondents would take action upon

encountering suspected cases of corruption, while 73.2% would either not report it or were uncertain about making such a decision. This ratio is in line with the findings of international corruption research, which indicate that despite the rejection of corruption, the willingness to take concrete action is typically low (OECD 2016; UNODC 2018).

The next question of the dimension aimed to provide as detailed a picture as possible of the reasons as to why the willingness to report is so low in Hungary. The overwhelming majority (868 persons) are not aware of any institution to which they could turn in the event of experiencing corruption.

Figure IV/9/2:
**Awareness of institutions investigating reports of suspected corruption cases
(Hungary; EU27) (n = 1,254; EU27 n = 26,049)**

	 Hungary	 EU27
Aware of such institution	26.9%	46%
Unware of such institution	69.2%	52.6%
No response	3.9%	1.4%

Eurobarometer’s survey (Eurobarometer 548) on corruption and integrity, conducted between February and March 2024, also examined the public’s awareness of institutions that receive reports. The question used in the *On the Right Path* study and the question from the Eurobarometer 548¹¹⁵ align sufficiently well, suggesting that respondents’ associations likely differed only minimally between the two surveys. Furthermore, the response options available for the two questions are identical, allowing the two sets of data to be compared despite the limitations.

¹¹⁵ QD7: “If you were to encounter or witness a corruption case, would you know where to report it?”

The results show a difference between Hungary and the European Union average. In Hungary, a lack of awareness about reporting channels is significantly more common, with 69.2% of Hungarian respondents unable to name such an institution, compared to the EU average of 52.6%.

A statistically significant and moderately strong relationship in the field of social sciences was found between the willingness to act and institutional awareness¹¹⁶.

Figure IV/9/3:
Institutional awareness among respondents willing to take active efforts and those choosing not to report (n = 1,254)

	Would take action	Would not report/uncertain
Aware of such institution	48%	52%
Unware of such institution	19.5%	80.5%
No response	11.4%	88.6%

For a more precise examination of the connections, a logistic regression model was developed in which the dependent variable indicated whether respondents would take action upon encountering suspected cases of corruption, while institutional awareness served as the explanatory variable. Based on the results, respondents aware of such institutions were significantly more likely¹¹⁷ to demonstrate a willingness to take action, which means that

”
THOSE WHO KNOW WHERE TO TURN TO IN SUSPECTED CASES OF CORRUPTION ARE NEARLY FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY TO REPORT SUCH CASES THAN THOSE WHO DO NOT POSSESS SUCH KNOWLEDGE.

In order to examine whether this connection is merely a characteristic of citizens who are generally more active and more open to democratic participation, the model was supplemented with an indicator measuring democratic activity. With the inclusion of the control variable, the effect of institutional awareness remained strong and significant¹¹⁸ while democratic activity also showed a positive but

¹¹⁶ p < 0.001; Cramer's V=0.296
¹¹⁷ 3,96 (95% CI: 3,02–5,21)
¹¹⁸ (β = 1.32; p < 0.001; OR ≈ 3.7)

substantially more moderate effect.¹¹⁹ This indicates that institutional awareness is not merely a characteristic of respondents who are more active or open to participation in public affairs but also an independent factor that significantly increases the likelihood of suspected cases of corruption being reported.

The willingness to report corruption and the corresponding institutional knowledge are closely linked to citizens' trust in institutions, as well as to perceptions of whether reports lead to any actual consequences (OECD 2016). If the functioning of the reporting system is not transparent, or the risk of retaliation is strongly present in public consciousness, the mere existence of information does not automatically lead to active civic behaviour. A more detailed examination of the phenomenon was made possible by the analysis of data obtained from responses to more in-depth questions.

Being aware of relevant institutions plays a major role in shaping people's willingness to report. Nearly 70% of the Hungarian population are unaware of an institution to which suspected cases of corruption could be reported. However, those aware of such an institution exhibit a considerably higher willingness to report. Forty-eight percent of those aware of such an institution would make a report, whereas only 19.5% of those unaware of such an institution would do so. This finding supports the proposition of the theory of civic voluntarism and the corresponding academic literature that considering it important to have a voice in local or national affairs is not, in itself, sufficient to motivate action. The existence of a dedicated institutional infrastructure, the broadest possible dissemination of information about opportunities, and the shaping of social attitudes are essential for enabling the reporting of suspected cases of corruption (VERBA et al. 1995; MICELI et al. 2008).

We also asked open-ended questions regarding the reporting of suspected corruption cases, the analysis of which followed a different approach from that applied to the other open-ended questions in the study. The reason for this is that the two open-ended¹²⁰ questions pertained to different groups of respondents. One of the questions was addressed to those who indicated that they are aware of an institution where a report could be made, while the other question was directed to those who reported being unaware of such institutions.

¹¹⁹ (OR $\approx$ 1,31)

¹²⁰ K59A_1 In the event of a suspected case of corruption, which institution would you turn to? (Those who indicated not being aware of such an institution.)

K59A_2 In the event of a suspected case of corruption, which institution would you turn to? (Those who indicated being aware of such an institution.)

Figure IV/9/5:
Respondent preferences concerning the handling of suspected cases of corruption among respondents aware of institutional channels; which institutions would they turn to in cases of suspected corruption? (n = 336)

Distribution of mentions	
Police	66%
General institutions	18.1%
Integrity Authority	5.1%
Would not report	2.4%
National Tax and Customs Administration/Tax authority	1.8%
Courts	1.5%
Municipalities	1.5%
Public prosecution service	1.5%
Unsure/Don't know	0.9%
Media/Press	0.9%
Civil society organisations	0.3%

Figure IV/9/4:
Perceptions concerning the handling of suspected cases of corruption among respondents unaware of institutions; which institutions would they turn to in cases of suspected corruption? (n = 602)

Distribution of mentions	
Police	40.8%
General institutions	29.8%
Unsure/Don't know	12.1%
Would not report	5.3%
Municipality	4.1%
National Tax and Customs Administration/Tax authority	2.5%
Media/press	1.6%
Integrity Authority	1.4%
Courts	1.2%
Civil society organisations	0.5%
Public prosecution service	0.5%
Fear/afraid of retaliation	0.2%

The open-ended responses were processed through thematic content analysis based on categories. The responses were categorised into four functional subgroups based on responses from individuals both aware and unaware of institutions receiving reports.

- Respondents selecting specific institutions (clearly defined and identifiable organisation, institution);
- Respondents selecting general institutions (responses in which respondents only generally stated that they would file a report with an institution, with the institution where the suspicion of corruption arises, or with an organisation investigating corruption);
- Unsure respondents (they do not know, are not sure whether they would file a report);
- Respondents explicitly refusing to report.

As part of the analysis, expressions and phrases were assigned to the appropriate categories using artificial intelligence.

Figure IV/9/6:

**Possible institutional channels to report suspected cases of corruption
(aware of institutions n = 336; unaware of institutions n = 602)**

	Aware of institutions	Unaware of institutions
Respondents selecting specific institutions	75.5%	46.2%
Respondents selecting general institutions	4.5%	4.2%
Uncertain	0.9%	11.3%
Would not report	2.7%	5.5%
Other/not classifiable	16.4%	32.8%

While forming the categories, the responses were classified at the respondent level into a single category based on priority logic, according to the meaning closest to the actual behavioural outcome. This ensured that the different respondent groups were comparable within a common analytical framework, as a

respondent could be placed only in one category. The list of key expressions associated with the categories is provided in Annex 14. The results of the analysis indicated differences between respondents who are aware of such institutions and those who are not. The vast majority of respondents aware of such institutions provided the names of specific institutions, indicating a more structured and differentiated understanding of the institutional landscape.

The police play a decisive role as a reporting channel in both groups, suggesting that the reporting of corruption remains primarily associated with the general law enforcement functions of the state. However, specialised anti-corruption institutions – such as the Integrity Authority – do appear among the responses of participants who are aware of such institutions.

In addition to the general willingness to report, the analysis also focused on actual experiences of reporting. The analysis showed a significant discontinuity in this regard. Among the Hungarian population, 8.8% indicated having reported suspected cases of corruption, whether experienced personally or via others, while the majority either did not file such a report or did not wish to respond.

This result closely aligns with the classical and contemporary interpretations of the attitude–behaviour gap. Attitude theories (AJZEN 1991) and research on whistleblowing (MICELI et al. 2008) equally emphasise that the actual decision to report is primarily influenced not by attitudes or general activity but by risk perception, fear of retaliation, and trust in institutional protection.

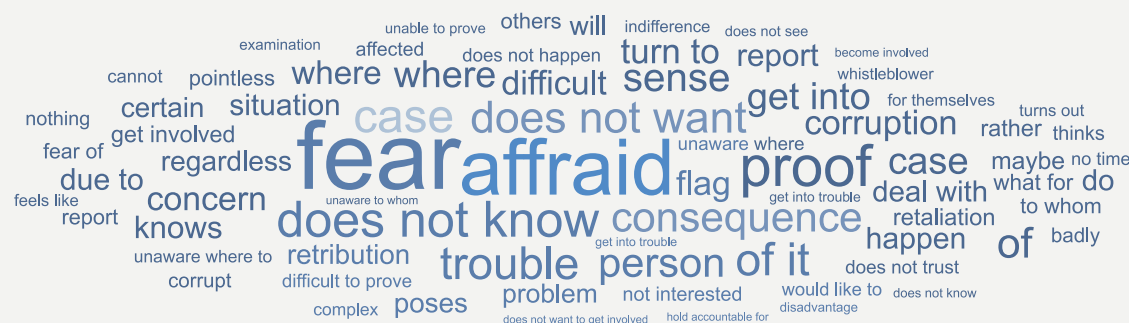
The results show that the extent of democratic participation plays an important role in the dimension of attitudes toward anti-corruption efforts; however, it is not a sufficient condition for actual action. Institutional awareness the increases willingness to report, but actual action requires further structural and institutional conditions.

Figure IV/9/7: **Distribution of reporting experiences and institutional awareness (n = 1,116)**

	Aware of institutions	Unaware of institutions
Has reporting experience	17.3%	6.1%
No reporting experience	82.7%	93.9%

The willingness to report and the reasons underlying a lack thereof are further nuanced by the open-ended question included in the topic (respondents provide an open-ended answer to these types of questions). This question helps to understand why people are reluctant to report cases of misconduct. Rather than focusing on the individual, it is important to recognise that the problem primarily stems from the social and institutional environment, namely that the Hungarian population does not feel it is worthwhile or safe to report issues. The word cloud presented in Figure IV/9/8 shows the main reasons why reports are not filed.

Figure IV/9/8: **Obstacles to reporting corruption (n = 1,003)**



The frequency results clearly identified five thematic categories:¹²¹

1. Fear of retaliation
2. Procedural uncertainty and lack of information

¹²¹ The responses to the question were processed using rule-based, key phrase-driven text analysis. The preprocessing of responses involved conversion to lowercase letters, removal of punctuations, and accent normalisation, allowing different forms of spelling (e.g. "értelme", "ertelme", "értelme") to be analysed in a standardised form.

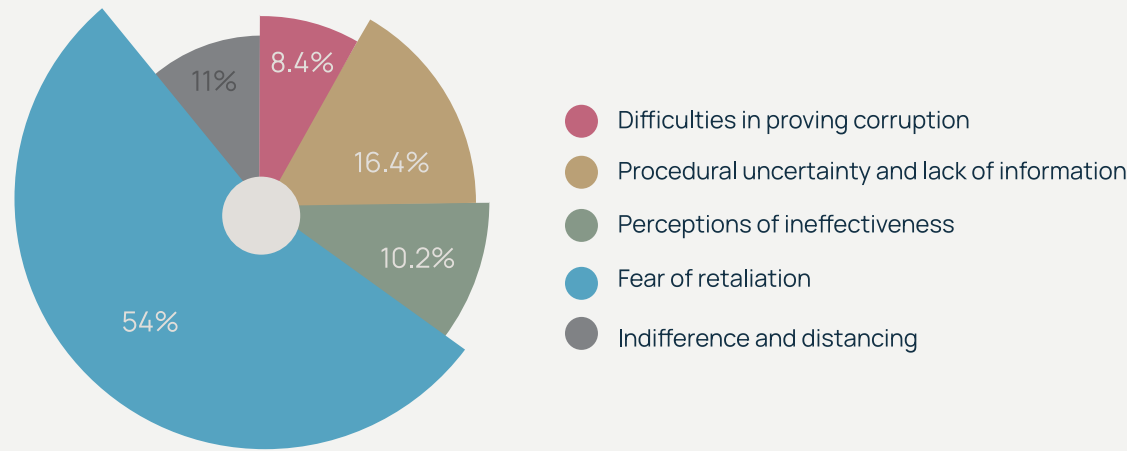
The categorisation was based on the stem forms of expressions (limited stem matching and regex) (e.g. "tud" → "tudja", "tudják", "tudtam"), thus allowing different word forms to be classified into categories. The lists of key expressions were expanded iteratively based on the analysis of unclassified responses.

A response could contain elements associated with multiple categories; therefore, we implemented a dominance-based classification. The final category was determined by the category whose key phrases appeared most frequently. In the event of equal frequency of occurrence, the position of the first occurring key phrase was decisive. The list of key expressions associated with the categories is provided in Annex 15.

- 3. Indifference and distancing
- 4. Perceptions of ineffectiveness
- 5. Difficulties in proving corruption

In constructing the categories, we did not use a predefined theoretical typology; instead, based on the linguistic structure and frequency patterns of the responses, we grouped together reasons that were similar in content using a data-driven approach.

Figure IV/9/9: **Subjective reasons for not reporting corruption (n = 821)**



When interpreting the figure (Figure IV/9/8), it should be emphasised that the proportions presented reflect the dominant explanations in the subject matter and cannot be regarded as entirely accurate. A more detailed exploration of this sense of fear may provide an important and valuable approach for future research.

The relationship between institutional trust and the willingness to report corruption when encountered was examined using multiple statistical approaches. As the first step in the analysis, we estimated a logistic regression model to explore whether the institutional trust index, by itself, can predict willingness

to report. Based on the model's results, the effect of institutional trust was not found to be statistically significant,¹²² suggesting that trust alone cannot be considered a direct determinant of filing a report.

At the same time, the examination of differences among the groups presented a different picture. A Mann–Whitney (Wilcoxon) rank-sum test indicated a significant difference in the level of institutional trust between respondents willing and unwilling to report.¹²³ Among respondents who would make a report upon observing corruption (n = 336), the mean value of institutional trust was 4.99 (median = 6.6), whereas for those unwilling to report (n = 918), this value proved to be lower (average = 3.61; median = 6.0). The strength of the effect can, however, be considered small ($r = 0.128$), suggesting that although the difference is statistically stable, the willingness to report is influenced by numerous other factors.

To gain a more precise understanding of the structure of the relationship, we also examined the trends in reporting rates by breaking down institutional trust into quartiles. The results demonstrated a monotonic increase: in the group with the lowest level of trust, the proportion of respondents willing to report stood at 20.1%, rising to 24.8% in the second quartile and 27.2% in the third, and reaching 35.1% among respondents with the highest level of trust. This indicates that an increase in institutional trust is associated with a higher likelihood of reporting cases of corruption; however, the willingness to report does not reach a majority even at the highest level of trust.

This is further corroborated by the fact that even among respondents with above-median institutional trust, those who would not report remained in the majority (424 persons), as opposed to those willing to do so (194 persons). Overall, the results suggest that institutional trust is important, but by itself it is not a sufficient condition for active engagement in combating corruption.

¹²² ($\beta = 0.089$; SE = 0.081; $z = 1.10$; $p = 0.271$)

¹²³ (W = 179 975; $p = 5.77 \times 10^{-6}$)

Chapter 4.10

Efficiency of the use of European Union funds

Overseeing the proper use of European Union funds is one of the fundamental activities of the Integrity Authority. Questions concerning the efficiency of the use of European Union funds constituted a prominent part of the survey, as the findings are incorporated into the reports and activities of the Authority, thereby supporting its own professional work. The chapter sheds light on two distinct dimensions of fund utilisation: namely, the utilisation of local/municipal funds and national funds.

Society's perceptions of the use of European Union funds are dual in nature: on the one hand, the perceived use of funds is particularly high, with 76% and 78% of respondents aware of EU-funded development projects at the local and national levels, respectively, indicating that the "presence" of EU funds is widely observable within Hungarian society; on the other hand, there is a clear difference in the evaluation of local and national utilisation, in favour of local utilisation. Higher levels of democratic participation are associated with more critical evaluations of fund utilisation at the national level, suggesting that more active and more conscious citizen attitudes are accompanied by stronger normative expectations concerning institutional performance. The regional breakdown shows differences; however, it is not possible to speak of sharp territorial "divides", as positive perceptions at the local level range between 40.9–93% by region, whereas at the national level, they range between 23.4–71.9%, meaning that national perceptions are more differentiated, but overall differences remain moderate. The media environment plays a key role in this process, as there is a moderately strong relationship between perceptions of the use of EU funds at the national level and trust in media content about corruption, suggesting that national-level perceptions are partly based on indirect information.

Exploring whether the Hungarian population is aware of any instances involving the use of EU funds at the local (municipal) or national level was an important step in examining the use of EU funds. With regard to the question, the five years prior to the survey served as the reference period, within which respondents could indicate whether they were aware of any cases in which EU funds were used at the local or national level.¹²⁴

Based on the weighted distributions, **76%** of respondents reported that a development project funded by the EU had been carried out in their places of residence. The awareness rate at the national level was slightly higher than previously expected: 78% of respondents were aware of instances of EU funds being used at the national level. This result suggests that the subjective presence of EU funds is widely perceivable.

After reporting awareness, respondents who had encountered instances of the use of EU funds assessed the efficiency of the use of funds both at the local and at the national level.

¹²⁴ During the survey, the research defined the reference period as running from 1 January 2020 up to the date of the survey.

Figure IV/10/1: **Efficiency of the use of European Union funds**
 (n_{local} = 727 n_{nationwide} = 753)

	Local	Nationwide
Not efficient at all	8.1%	17.9%
Rather inefficient	27.5%	37.4%
Rather efficient	55%	40.3%
Completely efficient	9.3%	4.5%

Over half of Hungarians (64%) classified the utilisation of EU funds at the local/municipal level as rather positive.¹²⁵

With regard to fund utilisation at the national level, the proportion of positive assessments was lower (44%), representing a gap of nearly 20 percentage points. This difference, even at a descriptive level, suggests that Hungarian society views the utilisation of funds at the national level with greater scepticism than projects that are more immediate and potentially more perceptible at the local level. This effect was supported by a statistical¹²⁶ model as well.

Democratic participation and perceptions of EU funds

Views on the efficiency of the use of EU funds showed a notable relationship with two variables. Spearman’s rank correlation coefficients showed a negative and significant relationship with the previously detailed theta variable, developed to measure participation activity both at the local and national levels:

- Efficiency of the use of European Union funds at the local level × θ : $\rho = -0.14$; $p < 0.001$
- Efficiency of the use of European Union funds at the national level × θ : $\rho = -0.21$; $p < 0.001$

¹²⁵ “Rather efficient”; “Completely efficient”

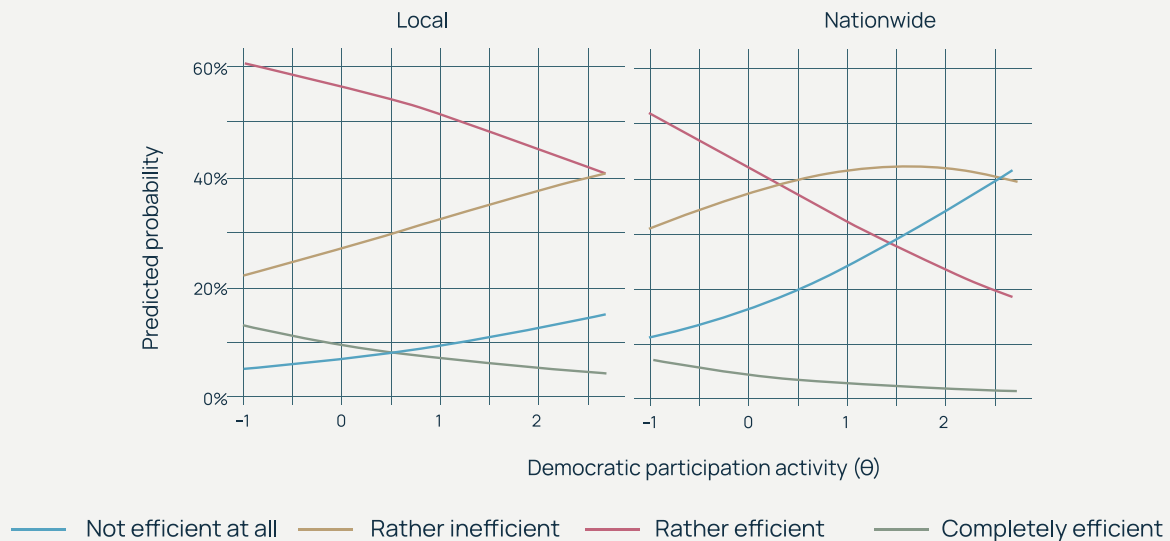
¹²⁶ Wilcoxon signed-rank test: $V = 14,616$; $p < 0.001$; $Md(K68) = 3$; $Md(K70) = 2$; $r = 0.38$.

”

THIS SUGGESTS THAT RESPONDENTS WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION ARE MORE LIKELY TO HOLD MORE CRITICAL VIEWS ON THE EFFICIENCY OF THE USE OF EU FUNDS, ESPECIALLY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

According to the results of the ordinal logit models, an increase in democratic participation decreases¹²⁷ the likelihood that respondents will consider the use of EU funds more effective.

Figure IV/10/2: **The relationship between perceptions of European Union funds and democratic participation activity** ($n_{\text{local}} = 727$ $n_{\text{nationwide}} = 753$)



¹²⁷ The odds ratio at the local level is $OR \approx 0.72$, while at the national level $OR \approx 0.62$, which means that an increase of one unit in θ decreases the odds of a positive assessment by 28% and 38%, respectively.

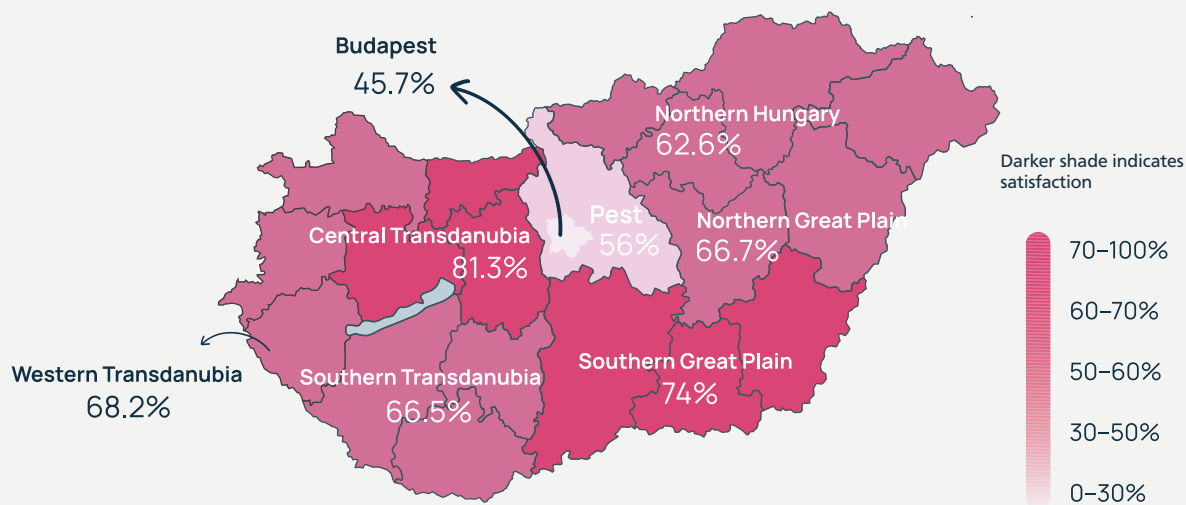
Regional differences in perceptions of EU funds

In order to explore regional differences, the efficiency scales were grouped into two categories,¹²⁸ where non-respondents and uncertain individuals were excluded from the analysis, and then two-dimensional cross-tabs were created for *region* and *satisfaction*.

The Pearson chi-square test showed a significant but weak correlation between regions and evaluations of the efficiency of the local use of EU funds.¹²⁹

The proportion of positive perceptions by region ranged from 52% to 80%. The differences can therefore be demonstrated empirically; however, they do not indicate sharp regional divides. Although there are discernible differences across regions in how respondents evaluate the effectiveness of the local use of EU funds, these variations are not substantial enough to draw sharp distinctions between the regions. Although the proportion of positive opinions varies, it remains relatively high across the board.

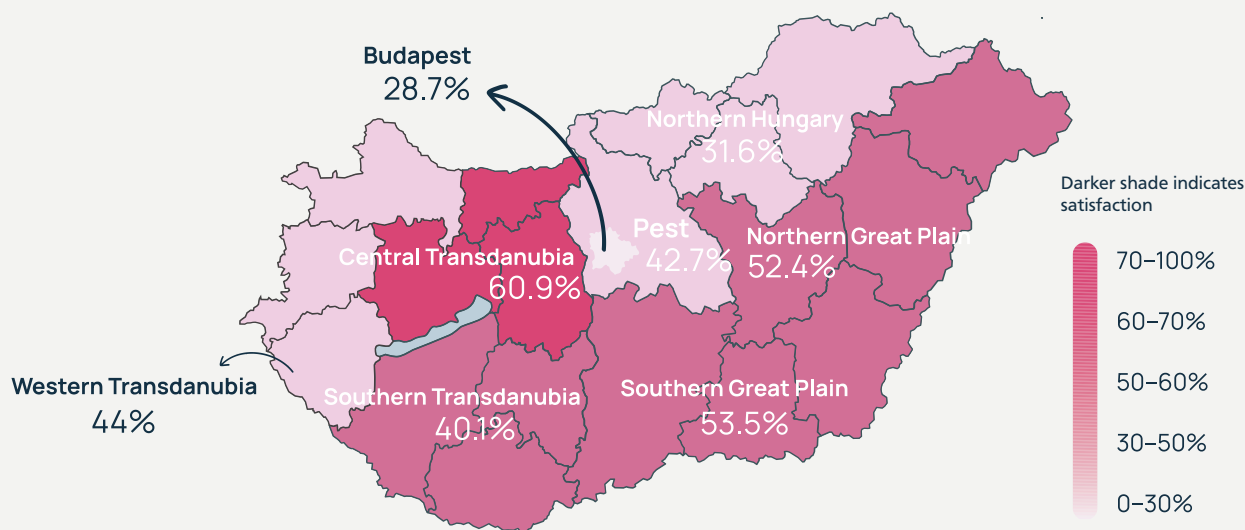
Figure IV/10/3: **Perceptions of the use of European Union funds at the local level by region (local n = 727)**



¹²⁸ Not effective: 1–2; effective: 3–4

¹²⁹ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.20$

Figure IV/10/4: **Perceptions of the use of European Union funds at the national level by region (nationwide n = 753)**



Perceptions of national funding utilisation in relation to respondents' region of residence

In the case of national perceptions, the regional association proved to be only marginally strong.¹³⁰ In this case, the proportion of positive evaluations varied between 28.5% and 60.9% by region. The results suggest that perceptions of the national use of EU funds are somewhat more differentiated across regions than perceptions at the local level; however, the effect remains moderate in this case as well.

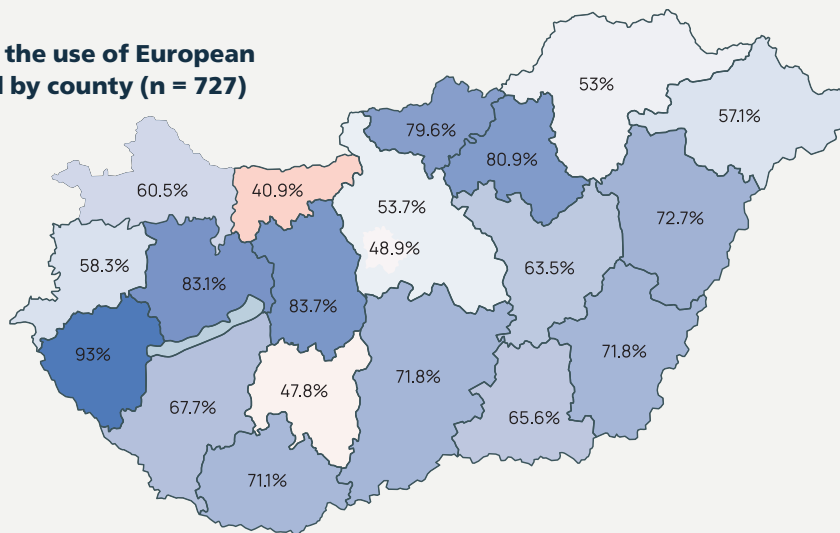
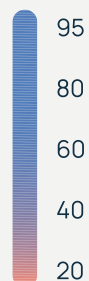
Based on the existing relationship between region and satisfaction with the use of EU funds, we examined the responses at the county level as well. Responses regarding the efficiency of the use of European Union funds at the local and national levels were grouped based on positive and negative perceptions,¹³¹ after which weighted proportions were calculated for each county. The results are illustrated on thematic maps, showing the proportion of positive perceptions by county.

¹³⁰ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.21$

¹³¹ Four categories were merged – positive direction: completely effective, rather effective; negative direction: rather ineffective, not effective at all.

Figure IV/10/5: **Perceptions of the use of European Union funds at the local level by county (n = 727)**

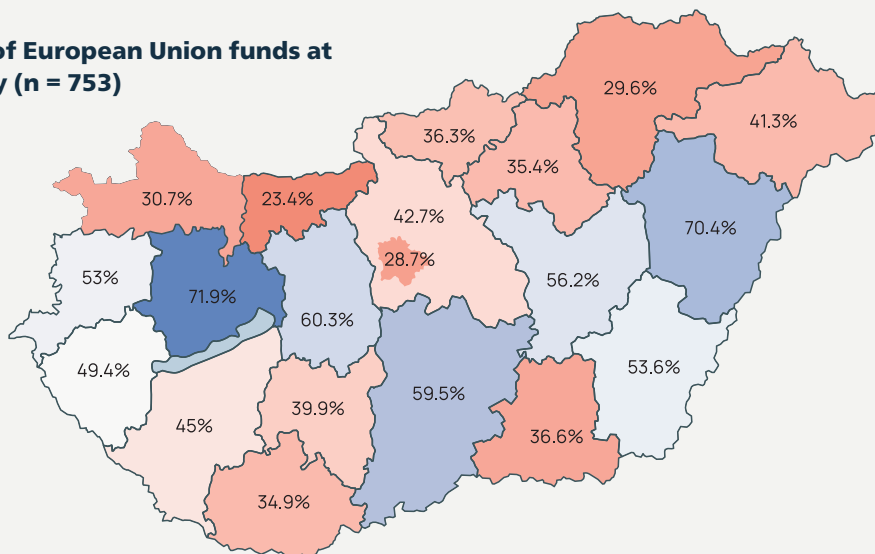
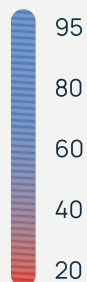
Positive perceptions (%)



Perceptions of the use of European Union funds in relation to local tenders are generally rather positive, except for Komárom-Esztergom County, where perceptions of the success of their use were substantially more negative than in other counties.

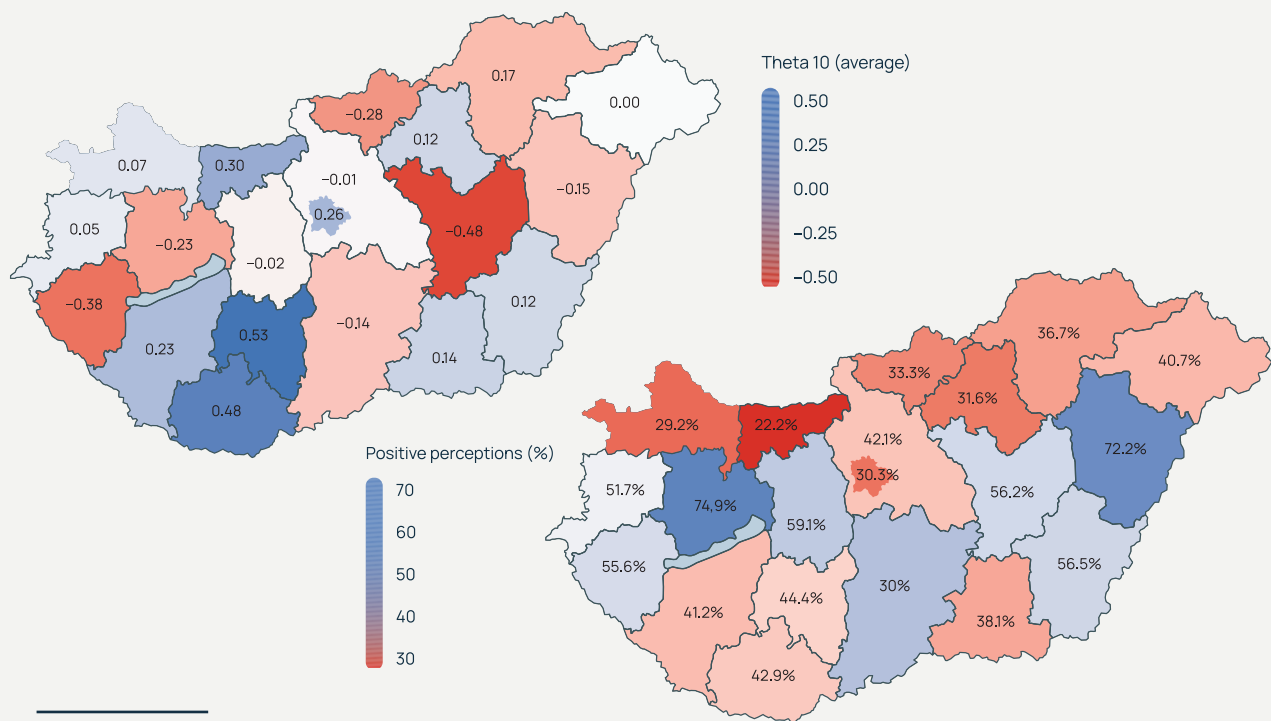
Figure IV/10/6: **Perceptions of European Union funds at the national level by county (n = 753)**

Positive perceptions (%)



The general opinion on the use of national funds is considerably more critical, with only three counties exceeding a 60% rate of positive perceptions, which marks a significant deterioration compared with perceptions of local-level funds. One potential explanatory factor for this phenomenon is that individuals' personal experiences can significantly influence their views on a particular subject. The maps clearly show that perceptions of EU funds are not homogeneous within the country. In certain counties, the proportion of positive perceptions is consistently higher, whereas more critical attitudes are more pronounced in other regions. The differences were more pronounced for national-level¹³² perceptions, while local-level¹³³ perceptions showed a more moderate correlation.

Figure IV/10/7: **Average level of democratic participation (theta) by county and county-level perceptions of national EU funds (theta n = 1,244) (national perceptions of funds n = 753)**



¹³² $p < 0.001$; Cramer's V ≈ 0.31 national
¹³³ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's V ≈ 0.25 local

The above figure (Figure IV/10/7) provides a visual illustration of the general correlation between the level of democratic participation and satisfaction with the use of European Union funds at the national level. It is important to note that connection does not imply causation. The two maps illustrate a general trend whereby dissatisfaction intensifies with the rise in democratic participation. For the sake of clarity, the figure shows satisfaction levels only in relation to the use of national-level EU funds; satisfaction levels with the use of local funds are not included. This is because at the local level, perceptions are somewhat more homogeneous across geographical areas.

The role of trust in the media in shaping perceptions of EU funds

Based on the interpretation of the results, it is clear that perceptions of EU funds is a regionally structured phenomenon; however, this structuring cannot be explained solely by differences in democratic participation. By contrast, trust in the media shows a statistically significant correlation¹³⁴ of moderate strength with national-level perceptions.

¹³⁴ State media $p < 0.001$ $\rho = 0.30$
Media critical of the government $p < 0.001$ $\rho = 0.24$
Pro-government media $p < 0.001$ $\rho = 0.34$

Figure IV/10/8: **The relationship between media credibility and the perceptions of the use of European Union funds (state media n = 725; media critical of the government n = 730; pro-government media n = 732)**

Level of satisfaction with the use of EU funds.

State media		
	Not reliable	Reliable
Not at all	25.2%	11.5%
Rather not	46.8%	26.7%
Rather yes	27.3%	53.2%
Completely	0.7%	8.6%

Media critical of the government		
	Not reliable	Reliable
Not at all	9.4%	21.8%
Rather not	28.4%	40.1%
Rather yes	55.9%	34.2%
Completely	6.2%	3.9%

Pro-government media		
	Not reliable	Reliable
Not at all	25.6%	10.1%
Rather not	47.2%	25.9%
Rather yes	26.4%	55.2%
Completely	0.7%	8.7%

This suggests that differences among counties are not primarily due to local differences in experience but also to the effects of distinct information and narrative environments in which interpretations of EU funds are shaped. Trust in various media groups regarding news about corruption arranges opinions on the efficiency of the use of EU funds in different directions, while the internal structure of these perceptions (the ratio of effective to ineffective categories) consistently aligns with the respective media environment.

Trust in pro-government media and media critical of the government activates different interpretive frameworks. While in one case the utilisation of EU funds is typically viewed more positively, in the latter case perceptions are more critical.

These results are in line with approaches in political communication and media studies which assert that the media does not primarily convey information but rather offers frameworks for interpreting political and economic phenomena (CHONG–DRUCKMAN 2007).

Previous analyses presented separately how democratic participation, territorial location, and the information environment relate to perceptions of the use of European Union funds. However, to explore the extent to which these factors collectively influence perceptions of efficiency, we estimated multivariate regression models for local and national-level perceptions separately.

Models concerning the efficiency of EU funds utilised at the local and national levels were estimated separately, considering that the two assessment levels may develop in different experiential and information environments; however, the results are interpreted collectively. The predictive capacity of the model applicable to the residential level is more uncertain than the national model (ROC = 0.70 vs. 0.825¹³⁵), which suggests that perceptions of the efficiency of EU funds at the national level are better explained by factors describing general attitudes. By contrast, at the local level, respondents may presumably possess specific additional information or personal experiences that can override general political and institutional attitudes, thus the weaker fitting is not surprising. This is confirmed by the residential model's relatively low recall value of 0.54, meaning that the model often fails to recognise cases where respondents actually consider the use of EU funds effective. This suggests that at the local level, perceptions of efficiency may be influenced by pieces of information and experiences that a model built on general attitudes cannot fully capture.

The first factor plays a key role in both models: respondents' perceptions of the prevalence of corruption and their sympathy toward the government increase the likelihood that they will consider the use of EU funds effective. By contrast, democratic participation has a detrimental impact in both cases: the more actively individuals participate in public affairs, the more critical their views on the efficiency of the use of EU funds.

Furthermore, as for the local use of European Union funds, the trust-integrity factor also proved to be significant: greater trust in people and institutions enhances perceptions of the effective use of local-level EU funds. This effect, however, does not appear in the national-level model.

¹³⁵ The detailed regression data are included in Annexes 16 and 17.

Chapter 4.11

Subjective perceptions of security

The final set of questions explored expectations regarding financial security in the near future. The questions focused on changes in living standards, employment security, and the extent to which state institutions can protect people from the harmful effects of corruption. These expectations can already influence economic decisions, perceptions of corruption, and whether individuals are willing to report cases of abuse.

Over 80% of Hungarians do not expect their standard of living to improve in the foreseeable future. However, although 28.5% of the population are not at all concerned about their job security becoming uncertain, a significant proportion (26.1%) think that they are either moderately or seriously at risk of losing their jobs. Perceptions of state institutions' anti-corruption efforts are also unfavourable, with over 70% of respondents believing that the competent institutions are unlikely to counter corruption effectively.

One of the final question groups in the research questionnaire consisted of three variables that explored the general sense of security among the population, primarily related to the standard of living and employment stability. Furthermore, they sought to measure the effectiveness of the security and protection provided by the state against corruption. The unit forming the questionnaire was based on three questions:

- How do you think the current living standard of your household will change over the next 12 months?
- How likely do you think it is that your current job will cease to exist within the next 12 months?¹³⁶
- To what extent do you think Hungarian state institutions are capable of protecting the country's population from the harmful effects of corruption?



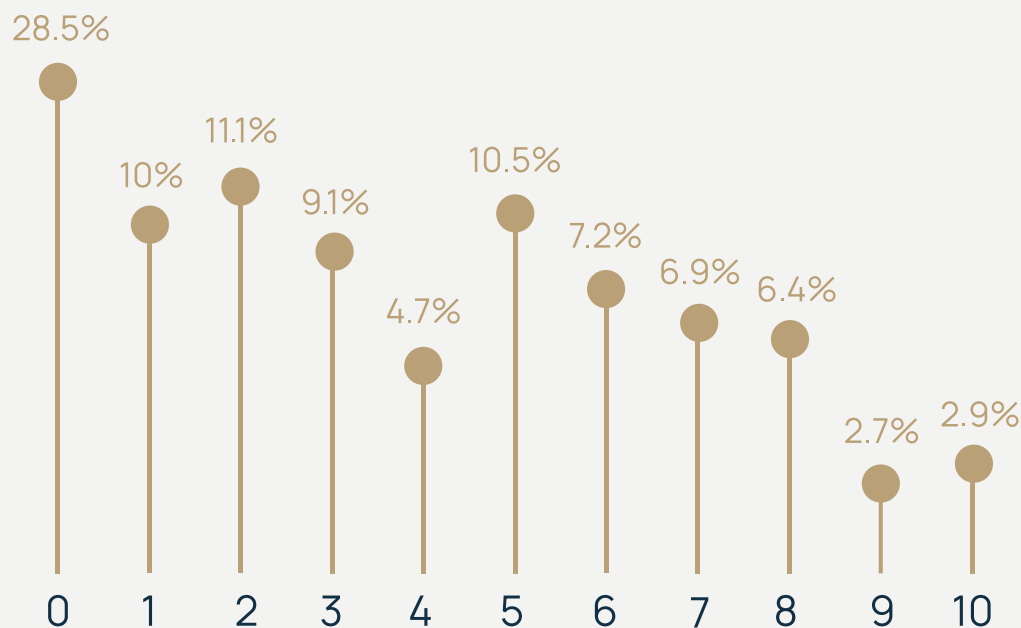
BASED ON THE RESULTS, MOST OF THE POPULATION EXPECTED THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING TO REMAIN UNCHANGED (56.5%) OR DETERIORATE (30.4%) OVER THE YEAR FOLLOWING THE SURVEY.

Only 13% reported an improving trend, with “significant improvement” accounting for a very low proportion (1.1%).

¹³⁶ This question was asked of respondents who had indicated at the beginning of the questionnaire that they were active in the labour market.

Figure IV/11/1:

Perceived likelihood of job loss within the next 12 months (n = 768)

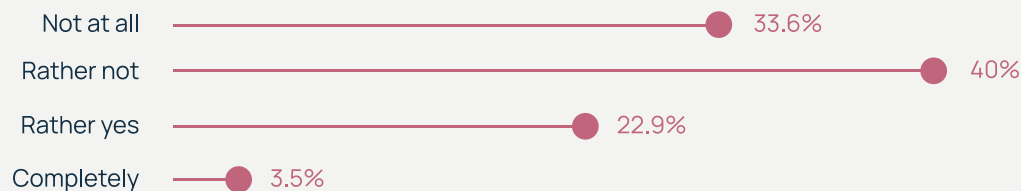


The vast majority of the Hungarian population are not afraid of losing their jobs in the near future; however, a non-negligible proportion is firmly concerned about this.

After examining expectations regarding changes in living standards, which generally pointed to stagnation or deterioration, and assessing the extent to which the economically active population perceived their current employment as secure and stable, it also became relevant to investigate respondents' perceptions of the extent to which state institutions are capable of protecting the country's population from the harmful effects of corruption.

Figure IV/11/2:

Perceptions of state institutions' ability to safeguard against corruption (n = 1,155)



It is a generally held opinion that the protection against corruption provided by state institutions is perceived as especially low in the country. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73.6%) believe that public institutions are either “completely incapable” or “rather incapable” of protecting the population from the harmful effects of corruption. Only 22.9% of Hungarians indicated that they believe these institutions are rather capable of protecting, or completely capable (3.5%) of protecting the population from the harmful effects of corruption. This distribution indicates a strong lack of confidence in Hungarian state institutions’ ability to protect against corruption, pointing to an important correlation for interpreting corruption-related attitudes and behaviours.

A lack of social trust affects the acceptance of government actions on corruption and society’s confidence in the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts. Social features such as age, gender, or level of education, show only a very weak connection with the extent to which people feel that public institutions are capable of protecting them against corruption.

Among socio-demographic factors, only regions¹³⁷ showed a significant connection. People in Central Transdanubia, Southern Transdanubia, and Northern Hungary generally felt that state protection against corruption is less effective. Nevertheless, basically all regions reported dissatisfaction levels exceeding 50%. The perceived effectiveness of state institutions’ protection against corruption was correlated with the number of listed institutions in which respondents perceived corruption to be widespread. The more satisfied individuals were with state institutions’ protective efforts against corruption, the fewer

¹³⁷ $p < 0.001$; Cramer’s $V = 0.177$

institutions they identified from the list as places where they considered abuse of power to be widespread.

To provide a more nuanced understanding of the protection against corruption provided by state institutions, it is worthwhile examining its relationship with the willingness to report suspected cases of corruption.

Figure IV/11/3: **The connection between institutional competence and respondents' willingness to report (n = 1,155)**

	Would report	Would not report
Not at all	28.8%	32%
Rather not	33.3%	38.1%
Rather yes	31.8%	17.1%
Completely	1.9%	3.5%
No response	4.2%	9.3%

The two questions show a significant correlation; however, its strength is considered weak.¹³⁹ This means that the effectiveness of the protection provided by public institutions against corruption and the willingness to report suspected cases of corruption are not independent of each other.

A more detailed examination of the distributions, however, reveals a well-interpretable pattern.

¹³⁸ $p < 0.001$; $\rho = -0.290$

¹³⁹ $p < 0.001$; Cramer's $V = 0.154$



SCEPTICISM TOWARD INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IS MORE PRONOUNCED AMONG THOSE WHO ARE NOT WILLING TO REPORT: IN THIS GROUP, THE PROPORTIONS OF “NOT AT ALL” AND “RATHER NOT” RESPONSES ARE HIGHER.

This difference suggests that the willingness to report corruption is associated with trust in the protection of state institutions against corruption. Those who do not consider state institutions effective are less likely to report suspicious cases, whereas relative trust in the functioning of state institutions may increase the willingness to report.

A weak Cramer’s V value also indicates that perceptions of institutional effectiveness alone do not fully explain reporting behaviour. There are additional factors behind a decision to report, such as perceptions of individual risk, the fear of retaliation, or personal experiences. The results therefore point to one element of a more complex, multidimensional explanatory framework rather than a single determining cause.

All this may prove to be crucial in encouraging action against corruption, as the general institutional trust index and perceptions of state institutions’ efforts against corruption showed a close relationship¹⁴⁰.

The level of trust differs significantly among the various categories of institutional protection against corruption as well. Based on the results of a Kruskal–Wallis test, the distribution of institutional trust differs significantly¹⁴¹ across the response categories concerning the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. This means that those who consider state institutions less capable of combating corruption generally have less trust in these institutions, whereas more favourable perceptions are associated with higher levels of trust.

¹⁴⁰ $p = 0.001$; $\rho = 0.42$

¹⁴¹ $p < 0.001$; $\eta^2 [H] = 0.164$

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Annexes

Annex 1

Hard quotas			
	Budapest	Vác	Tálya
No high school diploma	2	3	2
High school diploma	3	3	3
Aged 15–35	2	1	2
Aged 36–60	2	2	2
Over 60	1	2	2
Soft quotas			
	Yes	No	
Employed	10	6	
	Men	Women	
Gender	8	8	
	Pro-government	Pro-opposition	Apolitical
Political preference	3	8	5

Annex 2

STRATUM	POPULATION	SAMPLE		
Stratum (county / settlement type)	Share of the stratum's population within the overall population in Hungary	Number of settlements selected	Number of individuals included in the sample by settlement	Total
Baranya – city	1.0%	1	29	29
Baranya – village	1.3%	2	19	38
Bács-Kiskun – city	2.4%	2	36	72

Bács-Kiskun – village	1.7%	2	25	50
Békés – city)	1.9%	2	29	58
Békés – village	0.8%	1	24	24
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén – city	2.2%	2	33	66
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén – village	2.6%	3	26	78
Csongrád – city	1.4%	1	42	42
Csongrád – village	1.0%	1	30	30
Fejér – city	1.5%	1	45	45
Fejér – village	1.8%	2	28	56
Győr-Moson-Sopron – city	1.4%	1	43	43
Győr-Moson-Sopron – village	2.0%	2	31	62
Hajdú-Bihar – city	2.2%	2	33	66
Hajdú-Bihar – village	1.0%	1	31	31
Heves – city	0.8%	1	24	24
Heves – village	1.6%	2	25	50
Komárom-Esztergom – city	1.3%	1	40	40
Komárom-Esztergom – village	1.1%	1	33	33
Nógrád – city	0.4%	1	13	13
Nógrád – village	1.1%	1	33	33
Pest – city	8.7%	5	52	260
Pest – village	4.7%	4	35	140
Somogy – city	1.0%	1	30	30
Somogy – village	1.5%	2	22	44
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg – city	1.7%	2	26	52

Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg – village	2.4%	3	24	72
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok – city	1.9%	2	29	58
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok – village	1.1%	1	32	32
Tolna – city	0.9%	1	27	27
Tolna – village	0.9%	1	28	28
Vas – city	0.8%	1	23	23
Vas – village	1.0%	1	31	31
Veszprém – city	1.6%	2	23	46
Veszprém – village	1.4%	2	21	42
Zala – city	1.0%	1	29	29
Zala – village	1.2%	1	37	37
Pécs	1.5%	1	45	45
Kecskemét	1.1%	1	34	34
Békéscsaba	0.6%	1	18	18
Miskolc	1.6%	1	47	47
Szeged	1.7%	1	51	51
Székesfehérvár	1.0%	1	30	30
Győr	1.4%	1	41	41
Debrecen	2.1%	1	63	63
Eger	0.5%	1	16	16
Tatabánya	0.7%	1	21	21
Salgótarján	0.3%	1	10	10
Kaposvár	0.6%	1	19	19
Nyíregyháza	1.2%	1	36	36
Szolnok	0.7%	1	21	21
Szekszárd	0.3%	1	10	10
Szombathely	0.8%	1	25	25

Veszprém	0.6%	1	18	18
Zalaegerszeg	0.6%	1	18	18
Budapest 01	0.3%	1	8	8
Budapest 02	0.9%	1	27	27
Budapest 03	1.3%	1	40	40
Budapest 04	1.0%	1	30	30
Budapest 05	0.2%	1	7	7
Budapest 06	0.4%	1	12	12
Budapest 07	0.6%	1	17	17
Budapest 08	0.8%	1	24	24
Budapest 09	0.7%	1	20	20
Budapest 10	0.8%	1	25	25
Budapest 11	1.5%	1	45	45
Budapest 12	0.6%	1	18	18
Budapest 13	1.3%	1	40	40
Budapest 14	1.3%	1	39	39
Budapest 15	0.8%	1	25	25
Budapest 16	0.8%	1	23	23
Budapest 17	0.9%	1	27	27
Budapest 18	1.0%	1	31	31
Budapest 19	0.6%	1	18	18
Budapest 20	0.7%	1	20	20
Budapest 21	0.8%	1	23	23
Budapest 22	0.6%	1	17	17
Budapest 23	0.2%	1	7	7
Total	100.0%		2,207	3,000
Budapest 22	0.6%	1	17	17
Budapest 23	0.2%	1	7	7
Total	100.0%		2,207	3,000

Annex 3

The statistical parameters of the weights are summarised in the following table.

Four-dimensional weight (gender, age, school, settlement type)	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
	0.42	2.49	1.0000	0.34

Gender distribution in the sample, unweighted and weighted

	Unweighted proportions	Weighted proportions
Men	41.3%	47.1%
Women	58.5%	52.7%

Age distribution in the sample, unweighted and weighted

	Unweighted proportions	Weighted proportions
Young (15–29)	12.9%	14.5%
Early middle-aged (30–46)	28.5%	28.9%
Middle-aged (47–64)	31.7%	31.2%
Elderly (aged 65 and over)	26.9%	25.4%

Distribution of level of education in the sample, unweighted and weighted

	Unweighted proportions	Weighted proportions
Elementary education	38.2%	42.5%
Secondary education	40.0%	34.3%
Higher education	21.9%	23.2%

Settlement type distribution in the sample, unweighted and weighted

	Unweighted proportions	Weighted proportions
Budapest	19.0%	18.1%
County seat and cities	49.5%	52.8%
Villages	31.5%	29.2%

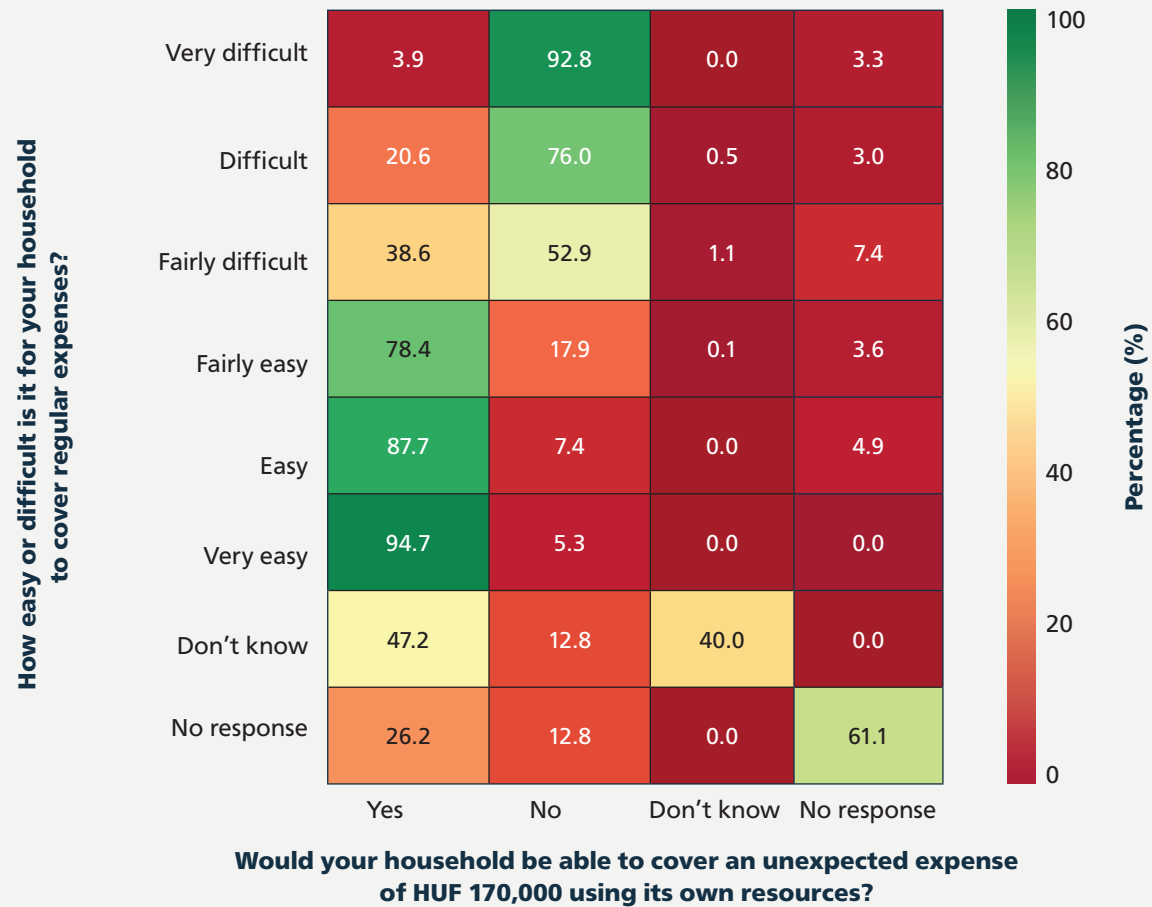
Annex 4

Groups by level of education

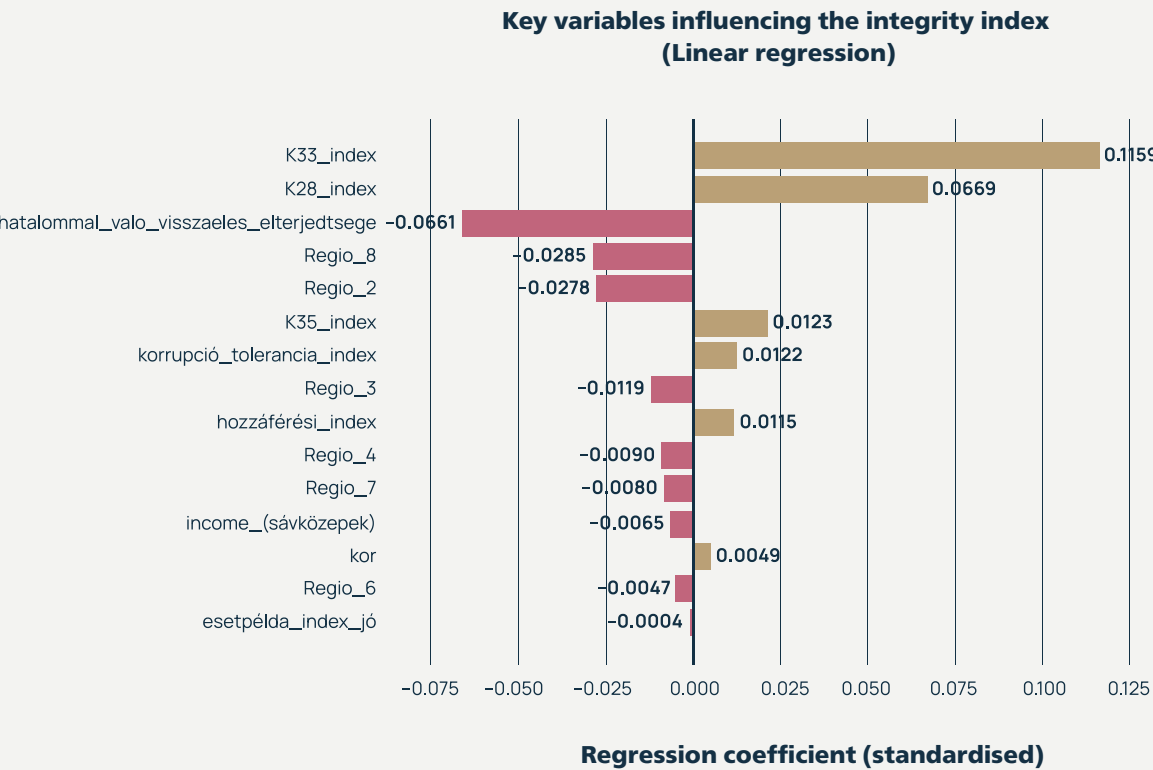
Classification of level of education	
Elementary	- No level of education completed (respondent has not even completed Grade 1) - Elementary school (Grades 1–7) - Elementary school (Grade 8) - Vocational qualification without a high school diploma (e.g. vocational school or trade school certificate)
Secondary	- High school diploma without vocational qualification - High school diploma with vocational qualification, qualification certificate (e.g. vocational qualification acquired with a high school diploma) - Upper secondary vocational certificate acquired in a school system based on a secondary school leaving exam
Higher	- Higher education vocational training certificate - College degree or equivalent qualification - Bachelor's degree (BA/BSc) - University degree or equivalent qualification - Master's degree (MA/MSc) or integrated long-cycle degree - Doctoral degree (PhD, DLA)

Annex 5

The relationship between households' ability to cover regular monthly expenses and unexpected expenses



Annex 6



Annex 7

Table summarising latent variables derived from factor analysis

Summary table of factor analysis results							
	Question code	Question text	Variable contribution	Z-score values of 1 st cluster	Z-score values of 2 nd cluster	Interpretation of 1 st cluster	Interpretation of 2 nd cluster
1. Political and corruption perceptions (+)	K44_n	How has the prevalence of corruption changed in Hungary over the past five years? [Increased substantially - decreased substantially]	71.5%	0.7	-0.6	Pro-government sentiment, optimistic perception of corruption (383 persons) average factor value : 0.9	Opposition sentiment, pessimistic perception of corruption (478 persons) average factor value : -0.7
	K42A2_n	Corruption prevalence in Hungary in general [There is no corruption - Extremely widespread]	70.5%	-0.8	0.6		
	K86_n	Opposition or pro-government affiliation [Pro-government - Opposition]	66.8%	-0.7	0.6		
	K85_n	Left-leaning or right-leaning orientation [Left - Right]	66.2%	0.7	-0.5		
	K73_n	State institutions protect people from the harmful effects of corruption [Not at all - Completely]	65.5%	0.7	-0.6		
	K46_n	Anti-corruption efforts by the Government of Hungary [Non-existent - Completely effective]	65.4%	0.7	-0.6		
	K41_n	Corruption prevalence in relation to EU funds in Hungary [There is no corruption - Extremely widespread]	64.9%	-0.7	0.6		
	K77_1_n	Credibility of news about corruption in state-funded media [Not credible at all - Completely credible]	44%	0.7	-0.5		
	K77_2_n	Credibility of news about corruption in pro-government media [Not credible at all - Completely credible]	43.7%	0.7	-0.6		
	K77_3_n	Credibility of news about corruption in media critical of the government [Not credible at all - Completely credible]	39.1%	-0.1	0.1		
2. Material and well-being factor (+)	money_kat	Income of respondent's household [Low - High]	68.4%	0.6	-0.8	Younger respondent, higher-level of well-being, better financial situation (487 persons) average factor value : 0.6	Older respondent, lower-level of well-being, worse financial situation (426 persons) average factor value : -0.8
	jolet_index_round	Respondent well-being index [Low - High]	66.6%	0.5	-0.6		
	penzugyi_biztonsag_n	Financial security index of respondent [Low - High]	53.9%	0.5	-0.7		
	kor	Age of respondent [Low - High]	51.8%	-0.4	0.5		
	iskola	Highest level of education completed by respondent [Low - High]	48.2%	0.5	-0.6		

Summary table of factor analysis results							
	Question code	Question text	Variable contribution	Z-score values of 1 st cluster	Z-score values of 2 nd cluster	Interpretation of 1 st cluster	Interpretation of 2 nd cluster
3. Citizen influence factor (+)	K63_1_n	People's say in local government affairs [Not important - Important]	83.6%	0.7	-0.9	The population's opinion is important (688 persons) average factor value : 0.5	The population's opinion is not important (530 persons) average factor value : -0.9
	K63_2_n	People's say in national affairs [Not important - Important]	83.8%	0.7	-0.9		
4. Democratic participation and involvement (+)	K84_n	Interest in politics [Not interested - Interested]	65%	0.3	-0.9	More interested in politics (912 persons) average factor value : 0.2	Less interested in politics (264 persons) average factor values : -0.7
	K64 pol_aktiv_theta	Civic engagement index over the past five years [Low - High]	60.2%	0.2	-0.7		
	K87_n	They would vote [They wouldn't vote - They would vote]	45.5%	0.4	-1.5		
5. Trust-integrity (-)	K33_index	Trust in institutions [Low - High]	81.1%	0.5	-0.8	Optimistic confidence in other people and institutions (667 persons) average factor value : -0.3	Suspicious of other people and institutions (435 persons) average factor value : 0.5
	integritas_index_round	Integrity in institutions [Low - High]	56.2%	0.5	-0.8		
	bizalom_ember	Trust among people [Low - High]	48.3%	0.4	-0.6		
	hatalommal_valo_visszaeles_elterjedtsége	Prevalence of cases of abuse in institutions [Low - High]	46.5%	-0.4	0.7		
	Hozzáférés_index	Accessibility of institutions [Bad - Good]	37.9%	0.2	-0.4		
	K31_n	Integrity of leaders of successful companies [Low - High]	30.5%	0.4	-0.6		
6. EU funds - corruption (-)	K42A1_n	Corruption prevalence in European Union institutions in general [There is no corruption - Extremely widespread]	47.1%	0.3	-0.4	More negative perceptions of corruption, a more negative vision for the future, higher level of activity (631 persons) average factor value : 0.3	More positive perceptions of corruption, optimistic vision for the future, lower level of activity (431 persons) average factor value : -0.4
	K41_n	Corruption prevalence in relation to European Union funds in Hungary [There is no corruption - Extremely widespread]	41.2%	0.6	-0.9		
	K42A2_n	Corruption prevalence in Hungary in general [There is no corruption - Extremely widespread]	31.8%	0.6	-0.9		
	K71_n	How do you think your household's current standard of living will change over the next 12 months? [Significantly deteriorate - Significantly improve]	30%	-0.4	0.5		
	K64 pol_aktiv_theta	Civic engagement index over the past five years [Low - High]	25.1%	0.1	-0.2		
7. Corruption awareness (+)	esetpélda_index_jó	Familiarity with the definition of corruption (case examples) [Low - High]	60.3%	-0.3	0.1	Turning a blind eye to corruption (382 persons) average factor value : -0.4	Intolerant of corruption (664 persons) average factor value : 0.2
	korruptio_tolerancia_index	Acceptability of money, gifts and favours [Unacceptable - Acceptable]	30.5%	1.4	-0.6		

Annex 8

Logistic regression model indicators – Corruption as one of the three most pressing domestic issues

Logistic regression, y = Did you list corruption among the top 3 problems?				
AUC = 0.7; Nagelkerke R2 = 0.2				
Feature	coeff	OR	std_err z	p
const	-0.2	0.8	0.1	0
1. Political and corruption perceptions (+)	-0.9	0.4	0.1	0
4. Democratic participation and involvement (+)	0.5	1.6	0.1	0
9. Corruption awareness (+)	-0.2	0.8	0.1	0.1
6. EU funds - corruption (-)	0.2	1.2	0.1	0.1

Annex 9

Logistic regression, y = Did you learn about corruption cases from the media?				
AUC = 0,8; Nagelkerke R2 = 0,4				
Feature	coeff	OR	std_err z	p
const	0.8	2.2	0.1	0
4. Democratic participation and involvement (+)	1	2.6	0.1	0
1. Political and corruption perceptions (+)	-0.7	0.5	0.1	0
2. Material and well-being factor (+)	0.6	1.7	0.1	0
3. Citizen participation factor (+)	0.5	1.7	0.1	0
6. EU funds - corruption (-)	0.4	1.5	0.1	0
5. Trust–integrity (-)	0.4	1.5	0.1	0

Annex 10

Logistic regression, y = Have you encountered corruption?				
AUC = 0,66; Nagelkerke R2 = 0,1				
Feature	coeff	OR	std_err z	p
const	-2.2	0.1	0.1	0
4. Democratic participation and involvement (+)	0.4	1.5	0.1	0
5. Trust–integrity (-)	0.4	1.5	0.1	0
1. Political and corruption perceptions (+)	-0.3	0.7	0.1	0

Annex 11

Questions concerning the tolerance of corruption in the *On the Right Path* population survey and the Eurobarometer 548 survey

<i>On the Right Path</i> population survey	In order to facilitate certain outcomes in public institutions or offices, or to gain other advantages, do you think it is rather acceptable or rather unacceptable to do favours?	In order to facilitate certain outcomes in public institutions or offices, or to gain other advantages, do you think it is rather acceptable or rather unacceptable to give gifts?	In order to facilitate certain outcomes in public institutions or offices, or to gain other advantages, do you think it is rather acceptable or rather unacceptable to give money, on top of paying official expenses?
Special Eurobarometer 548 (2024)	Generally speaking, if you wanted to receive something from public administration or public service, to what extent do you think it is acceptable to do any of the actions listed below? -Do a favour	Generally speaking, if you wanted to receive something from public administration or public service, to what extent do you think it is acceptable to do any of the actions listed below? -Give a gift	Generally speaking, if you wanted to receive something from public administration or public service, to what extent do you think it is acceptable to do any of the actions listed below? -Give money

Annex 12

Post-hoc test (Games-Howell) of the relationship between the prevalence of corruption in relation to European Union funds and political orientation

Dependent Variable:

What do you think about the prevalence of corruption in Hungary in relation to European Union funds?

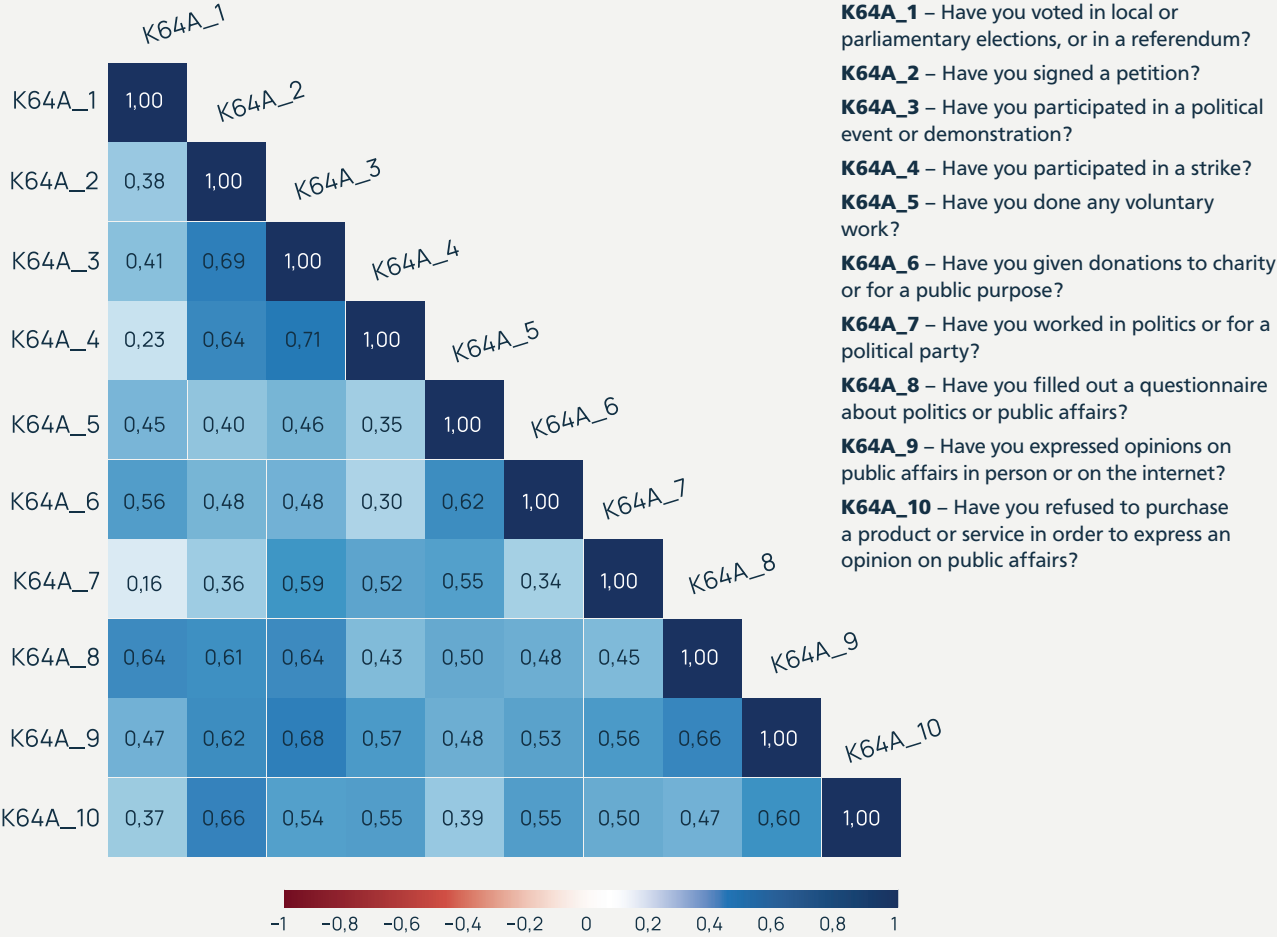
Grouped Variable: Political self-placement on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 = clearly left-leaning orientation; 7 = clearly right-leaning orientation

The 95% confidence interval refers to the mean differences for each pairwise comparison.

(I) Group	(J) Compared group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-,022	,131	1,000	-,41	,37
	3	-,100	,114	,976	-,44	,24
	4	,154	,098	,698	-,14	,45
	5	,728*	,115	,000	,39	1,07
	6	,675*	,141	,000	,25	1,09
	7	,850*	,127	,000	,47	1,23
2	1	,022	,131	1,000	-,37	,41
	3	-,078	,130	,997	-,47	,31
	4	,176	,116	,732	-,17	,52
	5	,750*	,131	,000	,36	1,14
	6	,696*	,154	,000	,24	1,15
	7	,872*	,141	,000	,45	1,29
3	1	,100	,114	,976	-,24	,44
	2	,078	,130	,997	-,31	,47
	4	,254	,096	,118	-,03	,54
	5	,828*	,114	,000	,49	1,17
	6	,774*	,139	,000	,36	1,19
	7	,950*	,126	,000	,58	1,32

4	1	-,154	,098	,698	-,45	,14
	2	-,176	,116	,732	-,52	,17
	3	-,254	,096	,118	-,54	,03
	5	,574*	,097	,000	,29	,86
	6	,520*	,126	,001	,14	,90
	7	,696*	,111	,000	,37	1,03
5	1	-,728*	,115	,000	-1,07	-,39
	2	-,750*	,131	,000	-1,14	-,36
	3	-,828*	,114	,000	-1,17	-,49
	4	-,574*	,097	,000	-,86	-,29
	6	-,054	,140	1,000	-,47	,36
	7	,122	,127	,962	-,25	,50
6	1	-,675*	,141	,000	-1,09	-,25
	2	-,696*	,154	,000	-1,15	-,24
	3	-,774*	,139	,000	-1,19	-,36
	4	-,520*	,126	,001	-,90	-,14
	5	,054	,140	1,000	-,36	,47
	7	,175	,150	,906	-,27	,62
7	1	-,850*	,127	,000	-1,23	-,47
	2	-,872*	,141	,000	-1,29	-,45
	3	-,950*	,126	,000	-1,32	-,58
	4	-,696*	,111	,000	-1,03	-,37
	5	-,122	,127	,962	-,50	,25
	6	-,175	,150	,906	-,62	,27

Annex 13



- K64A_1** – Have you voted in local or parliamentary elections, or in a referendum?
- K64A_2** – Have you signed a petition?
- K64A_3** – Have you participated in a political event or demonstration?
- K64A_4** – Have you participated in a strike?
- K64A_5** – Have you done any voluntary work?
- K64A_6** – Have you given donations to charity or for a public purpose?
- K64A_7** – Have you worked in politics or for a political party?
- K64A_8** – Have you filled out a questionnaire about politics or public affairs?
- K64A_9** – Have you expressed opinions on public affairs in person or on the internet?
- K64A_10** – Have you refused to purchase a product or service in order to express an opinion on public affairs?

Annex 14

1. Respondents selecting concrete institutions	Responses that name a clearly defined institution or type of institution	• police • public prosecution service • courts • National Tax and Customs Administration / tax authority • Integrity Authority • municipality • government office • ombudsman / commissioner for fundamental rights
2. Respondents selecting general institutions	Responses that refer to institutional channels but do not name specific organisations	• authority • competent body • appropriate body • office • body • superior body • "some office" • „specific administrative body"
3. Unsure respondents	The respondent cannot name a reporting interface	• Don't know / I don't know • No idea • Not a clue • I'll skip • Maybe
4. Respondents selecting "no" as a response	The respondent explicitly indicates that they would not turn to a reporting interface	• Nowhere • Wouldn't report / I wouldn't report • Wouldn't turn to a reporting interface / I wouldn't turn to a reporting interface • Wouldn't report it / I wouldn't report it • Wouldn't say anything
5. Other	All responses that do not fit into any of the above-mentioned categories	• Irrelevant responses • Ambiguous or difficult to interpret phrasing

Annex 15¹⁴²

1. Fear of retaliation	
Sub-category	Key expressions
General fear	fel, felel
Retaliation/repercussions	retorz, megtorol, bossz
Intimidation	megfenyeget, fenyeget, megfélemlit, zsarol
Negative consequences	kovetkezm, hatrany, kellemetlen
Personal risk	bajba kerul, baj, problema, gond
Self defence	nem akar bajt, nem akar problemat, maganak problemat
Existential consequences	kirug, munkahely
Physical repercussions	megut, betorik fejet, hurcol
Social backlash	visszaut, rosszul jar, porul jar
Fear of involvement	belekever, beleavatkoz, belefoly, bonyodal
Keeping calm	nyugalma
2. Difficulties in proving corruption	
Sub-category	Key expressions
Producing evidence	bizonyit, bizonyitek + negáció
Lack of witnesses	tanú + negáció, fosztó képző
Difficulties in producing evidence	nehez, nem egyszeru, nem lehet bizonyítani, nem tudja bizonyítani
Credibility issues	nem hinn, nem hiszi el
Procedural uncertainty (investigation)	vizsgalat bizonytalan
Difficulties in acquiring information	nehez megtudni

¹⁴² The Hungarian word stems and inflected forms presented in Annex 15 were not translated into English, as a direct translation would not adequately preserve the linguistic information relevant to the categorisation procedure.

3. Procedural uncertainty and lack of information	
Sub-category	Key expressions
Lack of institutional awareness	nem tud hova, nem tud kihez, nem tud hol, hova fordul, kihez fordul
General lack of knowledge	nem tud, nem ismeri fel, nem látja hogy korrupt
Lack of information	informaciohiany, nincs informacio
Lack of trust	bizalmatlan, nem biz
Lack of institutional awareness	nem ismer, nem ismeri
Lack of procedural knowledge	eljaras, hol kell jelezni
Barrier to access	nincs hova, nincs lehetoseg
Lack of awareness	nem tájékozott
4. Perception of ineffectiveness	
Sub-category	Key expressions
Pointlessness	nincs értelme, nem látja értelmet, hatástalan, felesleges, hiába, nem hatékony, nem változik semmi
Ineffectiveness	nem történik semmi, úgysem, úgyse
Lack of institutional reaction	nem foglalkoznak vele
Cover-up	eltussol, elsurol
Lack of consequences	nincs következmény, nem megy semmire, nem ér el semmit
Lack of results	nincs eredmény
Fatalism	reménytelen, beletorodes
Apathy	fasultság, megszokott
Normalisation	elfogadott korrupcio

5. Indifference and distancing	
Sub-category	Key expressions
Indifference	nem érdekli, érdektelen, nemtorodomseg, kozom-bos, minek, nem foglalkozik, nem akar foglalkozni
Normative distancing	nem az en dolgom, nem az o dolga
Individualism	sajat dolga, mindenki a saját, nem avatkozok, nem akar bele
Lack of motivation	lusta, lustaság
Lack of time	nincs ideje, nem ér rá
Lack of personal involvement	nem érinti
Lack of experience	nem talalkozott, nem látott ilyet
Social distance	nem mozog olyan korben
Cultural norm	hallgatni arany

Annex 16

Logistic regression, y = Have EU funds been used effectively in your place of residence?				
AUC = 0.7; Nagelkerke R ² = 0.2				
Feature	Coeff	OR	Std_err z	p
const	0.7	2.1	0.1	0
1. Political and corruption perceptions (+)	0.5	1.6	0.1	0
6. EU funds - corruption (-)	0.4	1.5	0.1	0
5. Trust–integrity (-)	-0.4	0.7	0.1	0
4. Democratic participation and involvement (+)	-0.3	0.7	0.1	0
9. Corruption awareness (+)	0.3	1.3	0.1	0

Annex 17

Logistic regression, y = Have EU funds been used effectively in Hungary?				
AUC = 0,8; Nagelkerke R2 = 0,4				
Feature	Coeff	OR	Std_err z	p
const	-0.4	0.7	0.1	0
1. Political and corruption perceptions (+)	1.4	4.3	0.2	0
9. Corruption awareness (+)	0.5	1.6	0.1	0
3. Citizen participation factor (+)	0.5	1.7	0.1	0
4. Democratic participation and involvement (+)	-0.5	0.6	0.1	0

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