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## **Human Rights and Democracy Violation Early Warning *Newsletter* No. 49**

The annual survey by the *Marketing Workshop*, a student research group at the *University of Belgrade School of Economics*, has been published, with interesting some incites. The survey has been conducted annually since 2004, tracking student's perspectives about the university, the education system and wider social issues. The 2010 survey was carried out between April 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> on a sample of 1500 students of all Belgrade university departments and schools

The survey has shown that an increasing number of university undergraduates see their future outside of Serbia. 66.28% of Belgrade University students wish to leave Serbia after their studies. The key drivers of this situation recorded were the desire to continue education in better conditions, the lack of employment opportunities and low standards of living in Serbia.

In practical terms, the survey showed that after finishing their studies most students will look for work in Belgrade (64%), while 13.5% will return to their birthplace. To find work, 36% percent of students believe that personal connections are the most crucial factor, 25% state they rely on their own abilities and their qualifications, while 14% see qualified references as the key factor.

The survey indicated that only 5% of students use their free time to visit cultural events, 42% engage in sports and recreation and a 25% visit pubs and clubs.

Only 13% of students support the organization of a gay pride parade.

The poll showed that 49% of students always use protection during sexual intercourse, 22% often use protection, 12% very rarely, while 6% never do and 11% does not engage in sexual activities.

Around 30% of students do not watch television, and those who do mostly watch films and TV-shows (27%), news (14%), while 11% watch popular reality TV.



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The highest rated TV station by Belgrade students' is [the state controlled] RTS (22%), followed by *B92* (19%) and *Pink* (17%). The highest-circulation daily paper amongst the student population is the (free) *24 časa* (24 hours) daily, read by 50% of those surveyed, followed by *Blic* (23%), *Novosti* (13%) and *Press* (5%). Interestingly, all of these daily papers can be ranked in the category of boulevard and tabloid press.

More than 60% of students who participated in the poll follow politics regularly or occasionally. If elections were to be held today, 46% of the students who participated in the survey claim that they would abstain from voting. Those who would not abstain would mostly vote for the [ruling] *Democratic Party* (28%), 8.6% would vote for the *Serbian Progressive Party*<sup>1</sup> and 7.33% for the *Liberal-Democratic Party*. Other parties would score less than 5%: 3.7% of the students would vote for the [nationalist oriented] *Democratic Party of Serbia*, 2.8% for [the neo-liberal] *G17plus*, 1.78% for the *Serbian Radical Party*, 1.23% for *New Serbia*, and 0.82% for the [post-Milošević] *Socialist Party of Serbia*.

17% of those surveyed stated they have experienced discrimination, predominantly based on accent, origin and gender, 30% are aware of discrimination against others and 50% have neither experienced discrimination nor heard of discrimination against other students.

On a scale from 1 (worst) to 5 (best), the professors were graded 3.2, with the same score for the curriculum, while student services received the lowest grade of 2.54.

Only 7% of students believe that the *Bologna Declaration* is being fully implemented at their respective faculties, while 46% do not believe they are sufficiently informed about its principles. 54% percent believe that the *Bologna Declaration* makes studying easier and 30% think it has had a negative effect on university education.

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According to **Dragan Rakić**, Head of the **Belgrade Police Dept. Narcotics Division**, the police are actively working on preventing drug trafficking

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<sup>1</sup> A right-wing nationalist offspring created after a split in the extremist Serbian Radical Party (SRS) whose leader Vojislav Šešelj is currently on war crimes trial at the ICTY in The Hague.



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**in Belgrade elementary schools, where the problem is acquiring increasingly serious proportions. However, the low market price for narcotics makes them easily accessible to regular and first-time would-be users, said Rakić, with one gram of heroin available on Belgrade's streets for 800 to 900 dinars (€7 to 8). While cocaine common on the Belgrade market, marijuana is used massively, as well as various synthetic drugs.**

\* \* \*

The *Medium Gallup* opinion poll and marketing research agency has conducted a survey<sup>2</sup> about the perception of corruption in Serbia, for the UN Development Program (UNDP). The survey was conducted by means of direct interview of 601 people, between March 17<sup>th</sup> and March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010.

After unemployment, poverty and low salaries, corruption is perceived as the fourth most important social problem in Serbia today. Citizens believe that the most corrupt institutions are political parties (80%), judges and public health (both 70%), and lawyers and the Government (both 66%). On the other hand, religious authorities (28%) and banks/financial sector (34%) are considered the least corrupt. Most people believe that corruption represents a serious social problem that is mostly present in politics (82%), but also at high levels in the private sector (60%).

Almost 90% of citizens believe that corruption is a commonplace phenomenon in Serbia. Citizens' perception, attitude and behavior show contradictoriness and a paradox: the institutions viewed as the most corrupt are at the same time considered as key and most responsible for eliminating corruption. Pessimism is increasingly visible, particularly with regard to new anti-corruption laws; the majority of participants believe that they will not be effective.

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<sup>2</sup> Integral report on the survey results can be seen on the Anti-Corruption Agency's website:  
<http://www.korupcija.gov.rs/cms/item/aktuelnosti/ci/vesti.html?view=news&articleId=378> .



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The frequency bribery is higher than last year and more survey participants indicated that they gave a bribe on three or more occasions. The average sum of money given as a bribe is similar to the sum from last year, which is €169 (€198 in cities and €114 in rural areas) – about half the average salary in Serbia. Amongst those who said they had given a bribe in the last three months, most has given it to doctors.

The expectations for next year are similar – a third of the participants expect more corruption and the same level of corruption is expected by almost a half of the participants of the survey (45%), while 13% believe that corruption will decrease.

An overwhelming majority (89%) believes that the political leaders does not care about corruption at the lower levels of the social ladder, because they are not affected by it; a similar majority believe that large corporations support and benefit from corruption in government (77%) and that politicians do not have the will to combat corruption because they themselves gain from it (87%). Political parties are evaluated as corrupt by 80% of citizens, which is 4% more than in the last poll conducted in October 2009. More than 80% of citizens believe that the judiciary is important for combating corruption but that it is too corrupt to accomplish this task.

The lack of trust in the police has slightly lessened – 71% of citizens believe that police officers are *too* corrupt. Lack of control over state services and widespread corruption in law enforcement agencies are recognized as key obstacles in combating corruption.

The following tables contain replies to the most interesting questions.

***To what extent<sup>3</sup> do you believe the following institutions in our country are corrupt?***

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<sup>3</sup> The level of corruption was determined on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 – not at all; 2 – a little; 3 – moderately; 4 – significantly; 5 – very much), and only the marks 4 and 5 were considered when the answers were interpreted.



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| Institution             | March 2010 | October 2009 |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Political parties       | 80%        | 76%          |
| Judges                  | 70%        | 70%          |
| Public Health           | 70%        | 78%          |
| Lawyers/Jurists         | 68%        | 66%          |
| Government              | 66%        | 61%          |
| Prosecutors             | 66%        | 65%          |
| Police                  | 65%        | 65%          |
| Parliament/Legislation  | 65%        | 62%          |
| Customs                 | 62%        | 72%          |
| Private Business Sector | 55%        | 44%          |
| Media                   | 53%        | 48%          |
| Education               | 47%        | 56%          |
| Army                    | 40%        | 23%          |
| Cadastre                | 40%        | 35%          |
| Communal Services       | 38%        | 33%          |
| Banks/Financial Sector  | 34%        | 39%          |

### ***If you ever gave bribe, who did you give it to?***

(Multiple answers)

| Institution                   | March 2010 | October 2009 |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Doctor                        | 54%        | 50%          |
| Policeman                     | 19%        | 23%          |
| State Administration Employee | 10%        | 12%          |
| Tax Official                  | 4%         | 6%           |
| Customs Official              | 6%         | 5%           |
| Teacher/Professor             | 6%         | 5%           |
| Lawyer/Jurist                 | 3%         | 5%           |
| Judge                         | 7%         | 4%           |
| Prosecutor                    | 1%         | 2%           |
| Communal Service Staff        | 7%         | 2%           |



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|       |     |     |
|-------|-----|-----|
| Other | 11% | 13% |
|-------|-----|-----|

### ***What factors do you see as the largest obstacles in combating corruption?***

(Multiple answers)

| Factor   | March 2010 | October 2009 |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Inadequate control of state services   | 49%        | 45%          |
| Widespread corruption in law enforcement agencies                            | 40%        | 38%          |
| The habit of solving problems by using personal connections, outside the law | 39%        | 37%          |
| Lack of political leaders' will to control corruption                        | 30%        | 27%          |
| Imperfect legislation or mild sanctions                                      | 25%        | 26%          |
| Citizens' passivity  | 20%        | 23%          |
| Citizens' ignorance of their rights  | 13%        | 16%          |
| Insufficient places for reporting corruption                                 | 9%         | 8%           |

### ***Who should lead the way in combating corruption?***

(Multiple answers)

| Institution                    | March 2010 | October 2009 |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Government                     | 57%        | 49%          |
| Police                         | 41%        | 44%          |
| Judiciary                      | 26%        | 29%          |
| Citizens (citizens' movements) | 19%        | 15%          |
| Special elite units            | 5%         | 8%           |
| Parliament                     | 6%         | 7%           |
| President of the Republic      | 6%         | 6%           |



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|                             |    |    |
|-----------------------------|----|----|
| NGO                         | 2% | 2% |
| Army                        | 1% | 0% |
| I don't know/without answer | 2% | 1% |

***To what extent do you believe the following activities would be efficient in preventing corruption?***

(Multiple answers; % of answers 'to a large extent')

| Activity   | March 2010 | October 2009 |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Harsh penalties  | 70%        | 75%          |
| Strengthening control over public administration                               | 52%        | 54%          |
| Raising consciousness about corruption   | 50%        | 52%          |
| Improving legal measures (new anti-corruption laws)                            | 49%        | 54%          |
| Strengthening the control of the civil (NGO) sector over public administration | 41%        | 45%          |
| Transparency in adopting administrative decisions                              | 37%        | 35%          |
| Raising civil servants' salaries in the public sector                          | 25%        | 22%          |



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**Prognosis:**

A lack of trust in state institutions, a sense that the situation is getting worse and an increased tendency towards various forms of deviant behavior and a desire to simply leave in search of escape for a reality burdened with enormous problems emerge from these recent surveys, particularly amongst younger generations, reflecting a society that is still in the initial phase of transition to a open democratic society based on the rule of law. It is ever more crucial that the Serbia's political and intellectual leaders take greater responsibility and make renewed efforts to find a way out of the crisis-proportion challenges Serbian society faces.