

Overall Score:

**87 - Strong**

Legal Framework Score:

**95 - Very Strong**

Actual Implementation Score:

**79 - Moderate**

Category I. Civil Society, Public Information and Media

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## I-1. <sup>91</sup>Civil Society Organizations

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### 1. Are anti-corruption/good governance CSOs legally protected?

100

1a. In law, citizens have a right to form civil society organizations (CSOs) focused on anti-corruption or good governance.

**YES** | NO

#### References:

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 44): <http://www.online.bg/law/const/const2.htm>

Non-Profit Legal Entities Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/57363.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned when freedom to assemble into groups promoting good governance or anti-corruption is protected by law, regardless of political ideology, religion or objectives. Groups with a history of violence or terrorism (within last ten years) may be banned. Groups sympathetic to or related to banned groups must be allowed if they have no history of violence.

**NO:** A NO score is earned when any single non-violent group is legally prohibited from organizing to promote good governance or anti-corruption. These groups may include non-violent separatist groups, political parties or religious groups.

1b. In law, anti-corruption/good governance CSOs are free to accept funding from any foreign or domestic sources.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

No legal restrictions exist that limit raising funds from any foreign or domestic sources.

**References:**

Non-Profit Legal Entities Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/57363.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if anti-corruption/good governance CSOs face no legal or regulatory restrictions to raise or accept funds from any foreign or domestic sources. A YES score may still be earned if funds from groups with a history of violence or terrorism (within last ten years) are banned.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there any formal legal or regulatory bans on foreign or domestic funding sources for CSOs focused on anti-corruption or good governance.

1c. In law, anti-corruption/good governance CSOs are required to disclose their sources of funding.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

CSOs in Bulgaria could be registered to work either for public or private benefit. Those registered to work for public benefit are listed in the Central Register of Non-Profit Legal Entities. They have to provide an annual report on their activities, including a balance sheet, and some information about their sources of funding.

**References:**

Non-Profit Legal Entities Act (Article 40)

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 44): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/57363.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if anti-corruption/good governance CSOs are required to publicly disclose their sources of funding.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such public disclosure requirement exists.

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## 2. Are good governance/anti-corruption CSOs able to operate freely?

92

2a. In practice, the government does not create barriers to the organization of new anti-corruption/good governance CSOs.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Though all CSOs are obliged to register at the court, there are no significant government barriers to forming a new anti-corruption or good governance organization.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** CSOs focused on promoting good governance or anti-corruption can freely organize with little to no interaction with the government, other than voluntary registration.

**75:**

**50:** CSOs focused on promoting good governance or anti-corruption must go through formal steps to form, requiring interaction with the state such as licenses or registration. Formation is possible, though there is some burden on the CSO. Some unofficial barriers, such as harassment of minority groups, may occur.

**25:**

**0:** Other than pro-government groups, CSOs focused on promoting good governance or anti-corruption are effectively prohibited, either by official requirements or by unofficial means, such as intimidation or fear.

2b. In practice, anti-corruption/good governance CSOs actively engage in the political and policymaking process.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There are many CSOs that work in Bulgaria on anti-corruption and good governance issues, but only a few of them have real access to the government and might influence, to some extent, its policies in the field. However, this influence is still weak and more about formal adoption of new law provisions and instruments and less about particular practices and procedures. This is partly the result of some of the nongovernmental organizations' strategies to not confront the government in order to preserve their access to its structures. In such a configuration, CSOs played the role of technical assistance providers for the government rather than watchdogs that strictly monitor its activities. This strategy has been challenged over the last year. Regardless of the numerous legislative and institutional changes, corruption is still among the top priorities on the social agenda.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Center for the Study of Democracy Annual Report (2007)

Website of Coalition 2000: <http://www.anticorruption.bg>

Website of Transparency International, Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

**100:** Civil society organizations focused on anti-corruption or good governance are an essential component of the political process. CSOs provide widely valued insights and have political power. Those CSOs play a leading role in shaping public opinion on political matters.

**75:**

**50:** Anti-corruption/good governance CSOs are active, but may not be relevant to political decisions or the policymaking process. Those CSOs are willing to articulate opinions on political matters, but have little access to decision makers. They

have some influence over public opinion, but considerably less than political figures.

**25:**

**0:** Anti-corruption/good governance CSOs are effectively prohibited from engaging in the political process. Those CSOs are unwilling to take positions on political issues. They are not relevant to changes in public opinion.

2c. In practice, no anti-corruption/good governance CSOs have been shut down by the government for their work on corruption-related issues during the study period.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>  
Media overview

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there were no CSOs shut down by the government or forced to cease operations because of their work on corruption-related issues during the study period. YES is a positive score.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any CSO has been effectively shut down by the government or forced to cease operations because of its work on corruption-related issues during the study period. The causal relationship between the cessation of operations and the CSO's work may not be explicit, however the burden of proof here is low. If it seems likely that the CSO was forced to cease operations due to its work, then the indicator is scored as a NO. Corruption is defined broadly to include any abuses of power, not just the passing of bribes.

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### 3. Are civil society activists safe when working on corruption issues?

100

3a. In practice, in the past year, no civil society activists working on corruption issues have been imprisoned.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>  
Media overview

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there were no CSO activists imprisoned because of their work covering corruption. YES is a positive score.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any activist was jailed in relation to work covering corruption. The causal relationship between the official charges and the person's work may not be explicit, however the burden of proof here is low. If it seems likely that the person was imprisoned due to his or her work, then the indicator is scored as a NO. Corruption is defined broadly to

include any abuses of power, not just the passing of bribes. Imprisoned” is defined here as detention by the government lasting more than 24 hours.

3b. In practice, in the past year, no civil society activists working on corruption issues have been physically harmed.

YES | NO

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>  
Media overview

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there were no documented cases of CSO activists covering corruption being assaulted in the specific study period. A YES score can be earned if there was an attack but it was clearly unrelated to the activist's work. YES is a positive score.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there were any documented cases during the study period of assault to an activist who covers corruption. Corruption is defined broadly to include any abuses of power, not just the passing of bribes.

3c. In practice, in the past year, no civil society activists working on corruption issues have been killed.

YES | NO

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>  
Media overview

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there were no documented cases of CSO activists being killed because of their work covering corruption in the specific study period. YES is a positive score.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there were any documented cases during the study period where a person was killed related to a corruption trial, scandal or investigation. The relationship between a mysterious death and an individual's history may not be clear, however the burden of proof here is low. If it is reasonable that a person was killed in relation to his or her work on corruption issues, then the indicator is scored as a NO. Corruption is defined broadly to include any abuses of power, not just the passing of bribes.

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#### 4. Can citizens organize into trade unions?

88

4a. In law, citizens have a right to organize into trade unions.

YES | NO

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 49): <http://www.online.bg/law/const/const2.htm>

Labor Code (Article 4): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/kodeksi/kt.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned when trade unions are allowed by law, regardless of political ideology, religion or objectives. Groups with a history of violence or terrorism (within last ten years) may be banned. Groups sympathetic to or related to banned groups must be allowed if they have no history of violence.

**NO:** A NO score is earned when any single non-violent trade union is legally prohibited by the government from organizing.

4b. In practice, citizens are able to organize into trade unions.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Trade unions are common and established in Bulgaria, but they have little influence on the political process. They formally represent workers' rights, but they are not widely popular among citizens.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** Trade unions are common and are an important part of the political process and political discourse. Trade union organizers have widely understood rights. Trade unions are free from intimidation or violence.

**75:**

**50:** Trade unions exist, but are not always relevant to politics or policy debates. Barriers to organizing trade unions exist, such as intimidation at work, or retribution firings. Trade union organizers have some rights, but these may not be commonly known, or are difficult to defend.

**25:**

**0:** Trade unions are rare. Significant barriers to organization exist, including direct violence. Rights of union organizers are not widely known, or are ineffective in protecting organizers.

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## I-2. Media

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### 5. Are media and free speech protected?

100

5a. In law, freedom of the media is guaranteed.

YES | NO

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 40): <http://www.online.bg/law/const/const2.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if freedom of the press is guaranteed in law, including to all political parties, religions, and ideologies.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any specific publication relating to government affairs is legally banned, or any general topic is prohibited from publication. Specific restrictions on media regarding privacy or slander are allowed, but not if these amount to legal censorship of a general topic, such as corruption or defense. A NO score is earned if non-government media is prohibited or restricted.

5b. In law, freedom of speech is guaranteed.

YES | NO

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 39): <http://www.online.bg/law/const/const2.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if freedom of individual speech is guaranteed in law, including to all political parties, religions, and ideologies.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any individual speech is legally prohibited, regardless of topic. Specific exceptions for speech linked with a criminal act, such as a prohibition on death threats, are allowed. However, any non-specific prohibition earns a NO score.

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## 6. Are citizens able to form print media entities?

100

6a. In practice, the government does not create barriers to form a print media entity.

**Comments:**

Print media in Bulgaria are subject to almost no regulation.

**References:**

The Media Sustainability Index, IREX (2008): [http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI\\_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp](http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp)  
 Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** Print media entities can freely organize with little to no interaction with the government. This score may still be earned if groups or individuals with a history of political violence or terrorism (within last ten years) are banned from forming media entities.

**75:**

**50:** Formation of print media groups is possible, though there is some burden on the media group including overly complicated registration or licensing requirements. Some unofficial barriers, such as harassment of minority groups, may occur.

**25:**

**0:** Print media groups are effectively prohibited, either by official requirements or by unofficial means, such as intimidation or fear.

6b. In law, where a print media license is necessary, there is an appeal mechanism if a license is denied or revoked.

**YES** | NO

**Comments:**

An appeal mechanism does not exist since a print media license is not required.

**References:**

N/A: A print media license is not required.

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is, in law or in accompanying regulations, a formal process to appeal a denied print media license, including through the courts. A YES score is also earned if no print license is necessary.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no appeal process for print media licenses.

6c. In practice, where necessary, citizens can obtain a print media license within a reasonable time period.



100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

A print media license is not required.

**References:**

N/A: A print media license is not required.

**100:** Licenses are not required or licenses can be obtained within two months.

**75:**

**50:** Licensing is required and takes more than two months. Some groups may be delayed up to six months.

**25:**

**0:** Licensing takes close to or more than one year for most groups.

6d. In practice, where necessary, citizens can obtain a print media license at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

A print media license is not required.

**References:**

N/A: A print media license is not required.

**100:** Licenses are not required or can be obtained at minimal cost to the organization. Licenses can be obtained on-line or through the mail.

**75:**

**50:** Licenses are required, and impose a financial burden on the organization. Licenses may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Licenses are required, and impose a major financial burden on the organization. Licensing costs are prohibitive to the organization.

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## 7. Are citizens able to form broadcast (radio and TV) media entities?

7a. In practice, the government does not create barriers to form a broadcast (radio and TV) media entity.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Radio and TV stations are subject to regulation by The Council for Electronic Media (CEM). CEM has the power to register, license and monitor activities of electronic media in the country. When applying to start a new air-based radio or TV channel, entities need an air frequency license, issued by the Communications Regulation Commission (CRC). Licenses are still one of the main problems for electronic media. Over the past six years the process of licensing has been blocked. The licensing procedures are complicated and lengthy. There are many suspicions among the public that licensing is biased. Many experts see the process of licensing as too politicized.

**References:**

The Media Sustainability Index, IREX (2008): [http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI\\_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp](http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp)  
Television Across Europe: Follow-up Reports 2008, Bulgaria, EUMAP, Open Society Institute: [http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at_download/file)

**100:** Broadcast media entities can freely organize with little to no interaction with the government. Media groups have equal access to broadcast bandwidth through a reasonably fair distribution system. This score may still be earned if groups or individuals with a history of political violence or terrorism (within last ten years) are banned from forming media entities.

**75:**

**50:** Formation of broadcast media groups is possible, though there is some burden on the media group including overly complicated registration or licensing requirements. Some unofficial barriers, such as harassment of minority groups, may occur. Division of broadcast bandwidth is widely viewed to be somewhat unfair.

**25:**

**0:** Broadcast media groups are effectively prohibited, either by official requirements or by unofficial means, such as intimidation or fear. This score is appropriate if the division of broadcast bandwidth is widely viewed to be used as a political tool.

7b. In law, where a broadcast (radio and TV) media license is necessary, there is an appeal mechanism if a license is denied or revoked.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

All acts of the state administration are subject to appeal before the Supreme Administrative Court.

**References:**

Radio and Television Act (Article 34): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/z46843.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is, in law or in accompanying regulations, a formal process to appeal a denied broadcast media license, including through the courts. A YES score is also earned if no broadcast license is necessary.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no appeal process for broadcast media licenses.

7c. In practice, where necessary, citizens can obtain a broadcast (radio and TV) media license within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Licenses are still one of the main problems for electronic media. During the last six years the process of licensing has been blocked. The licensing procedures are complicated and lengthy. There are many suspicions among the public that licensing is biased. Many experts see the process of licensing as too politicized.

**References:**

The Media Sustainability Index, IREX, 2008: [http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI\\_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp](http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp)  
Television Across Europe: Follow-up Reports 2008, Bulgaria, EUMAP, Open Society Institute: [http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at_download/file)

**100:** Licenses are not required or licenses can be obtained within two months.

**75:**

**50:** Licensing is required and takes more than two months. Some groups may be delayed up to six months.

**25:**

**0:** Licensing takes close to or more than one year for most groups.

7d. In practice, where necessary, citizens can obtain a broadcast (radio and TV) media license at a reasonable cost.

**100** | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Licenses can be obtained at a reasonable cost.

**References:**

Tariff regulating the fees on radio and TV: <http://www.abbro-bg.org/docs/afe3f168166d60ecd09771ddd9ad2a9d.pdf>  
The Media Sustainability Index, IREX, 2008: [http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI\\_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp](http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp)  
Television Across Europe: Follow-up Reports 2008, Bulgaria, EUMAP, Open Society Institute: [http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at_download/file)

**100:** Licenses are not required or can be obtained at minimal cost to the organization. Licenses can be obtained on-line or through the mail.

**75:**

**50:** Licenses are required, and impose a financial burden on the organization. Licenses may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Licenses are required, and impose a major financial burden on the organization. Licensing costs are prohibitive to the organization.

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## 8. Can citizens freely use the Internet?

100

8a. In practice, the government does not prevent citizens from accessing content published on-line.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### Comments:

Generally, the government does not prevent Internet users from viewing online content. However, there is an isolated case where a website was shut down because it contained anonymous and classified information.

### References:

Capital Weekly, 37, September 12, 2008: Opasnite novini: Drupni im shaltera," <http://www.capital.bg/show.php?storyid=549635>  
Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** The government does not prevent Internet users from accessing online content. While some forms of content may be illegal to download or own (such as child pornography), the government does not manipulate networks to prevent access to this information. This indicator addresses direct government intervention in the transfer of information, not indirect deterrents such as intimidation, surveillance or technical difficulties in countries with poor infrastructure.

**75:**

**50:** Internet users are prevented by the government from reaching online content in some cases. Government tactics may include firewalls preventing access to networks in other countries, or manipulating search engine results to exclude politically sensitive topics.

**25:**

**0:** Internet users are routinely prevented from accessing online content. Government restrictions are in place at all times for certain topics. Government tactics may include firewalls preventing access to networks in other countries, or manipulating search engine results to exclude politically sensitive topics.

8b. In practice, the government does not censor citizens creating content on-line.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### Comments:

Generally, the government does not remove online information. Though some isolated cases of removing information exist. For

example, there is an isolated case where a website was shut down because it contained anonymous and classified information.

**References:**

Capital Weekly, 37, September 12, 2008: Opasnite novini: Drupni im shaltera," <http://www.capital.bg/show.php?storyid=549635>  
Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** The government never removes online information or disables servers due to their political content. All political speech is protected with limited exceptions, such as legitimate intellectual property restrictions; direct calls to violence; or pornography.

**75:**

**50:** In some cases, the government restricts political speech by its citizens on the Internet. This is accomplished either directly by controlling servers hosting restricted content, or indirectly through threats or intimidation against the persons posting political content.

**25:**

**0:** The government regularly restricts political speech by its citizens on the Internet. This is accomplished either directly by controlling servers hosting the restricted content, or indirectly through threats or intimidation against the persons posting political content.

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## 9. Are the media able to report on corruption?

92

9a. In law, it is legal to report accurate news even if it damages the reputation of a public figure.

**YES** | NO

**Comments:**

There are no legal barriers for media to report any accurate news on public figures. However, libel is a criminal offense, defined in the penal code.

**References:**

Constitutional Court Decision 7/1996 (Article 10), ECHR: <http://www.constcourt.bg>  
Radio and Television Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/z46843.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if it is legal to report accurate information on public figures regardless of damage to their reputations. Public figures are defined broadly, including anyone in a position of responsibility in the government or civil service; any political leader; leaders of civil society groups including religious groups, trade unions, or NGOs; leaders or officers of large businesses. A YES score can still be earned if a reckless disregard for the truth (i.e. slander) is prohibited.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if privacy laws protect any public figures (as defined in the YES coding) from accurate information.

9b. In practice, the government or media owners/distribution groups do not encourage self-censorship of corruption-related stories.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There are no explicit cases of the government encouraging self-censorship in the media. The problem still comes largely from the model of media ownership in Bulgaria. According to the Media Sustainability Index, a report prepared by The International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), a media outlet's penchant for different topics is dictated by the ownership's business priorities or political affiliation. Journalistic self-censorship is officially disguised as editorial policy. The narrowing down of priority topics by editors limits a reporter's ability to carry out in-depth coverage and investigations. This is mostly the case in regional media, which are more exposed to pressure by advertisers or local powers.

**References:**

The Media Sustainability Index, IREX, 2008: [http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI\\_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp](http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp)  
Television Across Europe: Follow-up Reports 2008, Bulgaria, EUMAP, Open Society Institute: [http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at_download/file)

**100:** The government, its proxies, or media ownership/distribution groups make no attempt to restrict media coverage of corruption-related issues through unofficial means.

**75:**

**50:** The government, its proxies, or media ownership/distribution groups make some attempts to restrict media coverage of corruption-related issues through unofficial means, such as restricting access by disfavored media outlets, or other short-term consequences. Violent reprisals against media outlets are rare.

**25:**

**0:** The government, its proxies, or media ownership/distribution groups actively use illegal methods to restrict reporting of corruption-related issues. This may include harassment, arrests, and threats. Journalists and publishers take a personal risk to report on corruption, and media outlets who commonly report on corruption face long-term consequences or violent reprisals.

9c. In practice, there is no prior government restraint (pre-publication censoring) on publishing corruption-related stories.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There is no evidence of the government's attempt to directly prevent corruption-related publications. However, suspicions exist in the media and among the public that government influence could be exercised through many other channels involving different business interests.

**References:**

The Media Sustainability Index, IREX, 2008: [http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI\\_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp](http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp)  
Television Across Europe: Follow-up Reports 2008, Bulgaria, EUMAP, Open Society Institute: [http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at_download/file)

**100:** The government never prevents publication of controversial corruption-related materials.

**75:**

**50:** The government prevents publication of controversial corruption-related material in cases where there is a strong political incentive to suppress the information. This score is appropriate if in countries where illiteracy is high, the government may allow a free print press but censor broadcast media.

**25:**

**0:** The government regularly censors material prior to publication, especially politically sensitive or damaging corruption-related material. This score is appropriate even if the government restricts only politically damaging news while allowing favorable coverage.

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## 10. Are the media credible sources of information?

70

10a. In law, print media companies are required to publicly disclose their ownership.

YES | **NO**

### References:

There is no law or regulation that requires public disclosure of the owners of print media companies.

**YES:** A YES score is earned if print media companies are required by law to publicly disclose all owners of the company.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no such requirement or if the requirement is optional, only partially applicable, or exempts certain types of entities or agents from being publicly disclosed.

10b. In law, broadcast (radio and TV) media companies are required to publicly disclose their ownership.

**YES** | NO

### Comments:

In law, electronic media (radio and television) must disclose their ownership in order to obtain a license or registration. However, in practice, it is easy for the actual owners to go around the law by using several companies or off-shore companies. As a result, the actual ownership of some media in Bulgaria is not clear, and the radio and television market is still not transparent enough.

### References:

Radio and Television Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/z46843.html>

Television Across Europe: Follow-up Reports 2008, Bulgaria, EUMAP, Open Society Institute: [http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at_download/file)

**YES:** A YES score is earned if broadcast media companies are required by law to publicly disclose all owners of the company.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no such requirement or if the requirement is optional, only partially applicable, or exempts certain type of entities or agents from being publicly disclosed.

10c. In practice, journalists and editors adhere to strict, professional practices in their reporting.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**References:**

The Media Sustainability Index, IREX, 2008: [http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI\\_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp](http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp)  
Television Across Europe: Follow-up Reports 2008, Bulgaria, EUMAP, Open Society Institute: [http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at_download/file)

**100:** Editors and journalists at the major media outlets abide by a strict journalistic code of conduct and are unwilling to alter their coverage of a particular issue, event or person in exchange for money, gifts, or other favors or remuneration.

**75:**

**50:** Editors and journalists at the major media outlets generally avoid altering coverage in exchange for favors but some exceptions have been noted. Not all newsrooms abide by a formal journalistic code of conduct.

**25:**

**0:** Editors and journalists are widely known to sell” favorable or unfavorable coverage in exchange for money, gifts, or other remuneration. The major media outlets do not abide by any formal journalistic code of conduct.

10d. In practice, during the most recent election, political parties or independent candidates received fair media coverage.

**100** | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

The Media Sustainability Index, IREX, 2008: [http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI\\_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp](http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp)  
Television Across Europe: Follow-up Reports 2008, Bulgaria, EUMAP, Open Society Institute: [http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at\\_download/file](http://www.mediapolicy.org/tv-across-europe/follow-up-reports-2008-country/Bulgaria-web.pdf/at_download/file)

**100:** All political parties and independent candidates have some access to media outlets. Individual media outlets may have biases, but on balance, the national media coverage reflects the interests of the electorate. Media groups generally act as disinterested parties in an election. In places where a government is popular with the public, opposition viewpoints can access the public via media outlets.

**75:**

**50:** Major popular media outlets have a persistent bias regarding some parties or independent candidates. Some major parties may be partially excluded from media coverage, or draw more negative coverage. Media sectors may have distinct biases, such as newspapers favoring one party, while radio favors another.



25:

0: The mass media, on balance, have clear preferences in election outcomes and coverage is driven to achieve these goals. Some major parties or independent candidates are excluded or consistently negatively portrayed by mass media. Dissenting political opinions are only found on fringe or elite media outlets, such as Web sites.

10e. In practice, political parties and candidates have equitable access to state-owned media outlets.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

The Media Sustainability Index, IREX, 2008: [http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI\\_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp](http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_EUR/2008/bulgaria.asp)  
Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** The government ensures that equal access and fair treatment of election contestants is provided by all state-owned media outlets, including all electronic and print media. This obligation extends to news reports, editorial comment, and all other content. All parties and candidates are offered consistent and equivalent rates for campaign advertising on state-owned media outlets.

**75:**

**50:** The government generally ensures equal access and fair treatment of all candidates and parties by state-owned media outlets but some exceptions exist. State-owned media may occasionally discriminate against particular parties or candidates and advertising rates may be confusing or non-transparent.

**25:**

**0:** The government uses state-owned media to routinely discriminate against opposition candidates and parties. Advertising space may be denied to opposition candidates and parties or higher rates may be charged.

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## 11. Are journalists safe when investigating corruption?

67

11a. In practice, in the past year, no journalists investigating corruption have been imprisoned.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There were no journalists imprisoned in relation to their work covering corruption during the study period.

**References:**

There were no journalists imprisoned in relation to their work covering corruption during the study period.

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there were no journalists imprisoned related to work covering corruption during the study period. A YES score is positive.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any journalist was jailed because of his/her work covering corruption during the study period. The causal relationship between the official charges and the journalist's work may not be explicit, however the burden of proof here is low. If it seems likely that the journalist was imprisoned due to his or her work, then the indicator is scored as a NO. Corruption is defined broadly to include any abuses of power, not just the passing of bribes. Imprisoned" is defined here as detention by the government lasting more than 24 hours.

11b. In practice, in the past year, no journalists investigating corruption have been physically harmed.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

Over the past year, there were several cases of journalists physically harmed in relation to their work covering corruption or crime. One journalist, Asen Yordanov, was beaten up and others received physical threats. In September 2008 (outside the study period) a journalist from Frog News (an Internet news portal) was attacked and seriously injured. There are suspicions that the attack was related to his work on another news website called Dangerous News. The website contained information about alleged relations between the State Agency for National Security and some members of organized crime groups.

**References:**

Freedom of the Press Worldwide in 2008, Reporters without Borders, [http://www.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/rapport\\_en-2.pdf](http://www.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/rapport_en-2.pdf)

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there were no documented cases of journalists being assaulted during the specific study period for their work covering corruption issues. A YES score is positive.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there were any documented cases of assault to a journalist covering corruption during the study period. Corruption is defined broadly to include any abuses of power, not just the passing of bribes.

11c. In practice, in the past year, no journalists investigating corruption have been killed.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There were no cases of journalists being killed because of their work covering corruption during the study period.

**References:**

There were no cases of journalists being killed because of their work covering corruption during the study period.

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there were no documented cases of journalists being killed because of their work covering corruption-related issues during the study period. A YES score is positive.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there were any documented cases where a journalist was killed in relation to his or her work covering corruption-related issues in the study period. The relationship between a mysterious death and an individual's work may not be clear, however the burden of proof here is low. If it is a reasonable guess that a person was killed in relation to

his or her work on corruption issues, then the indicator is scored as a NO. Corruption is defined broadly to include any abuses of power, not just the passing of bribes.

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87  
I-3. Public Access to Information

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12. Do citizens have a legal right of access to information?

100

12a. In law, citizens have a right of access to government information and basic government records.

YES | NO

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 41): <http://www.online.bg/law/const/const2.htm>

Law on Access to Public Information: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/36100.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal right to access government documents, including constitutional guarantees. Exceptions can be made for national security reasons or individual privacy, but they should be limited in scope. All other government documents should be available upon a public request.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no such right.

12b. In law, citizens have a right of appeal if access to a basic government record is denied.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Access to Public Information (Article 40): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/36100.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal process of appeal for rejected information requests. A YES score can still be earned if the appeals process involves redress through the courts rather than administrative appeal.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no such formal process.

12c. In law, there is an established institutional mechanism through which citizens can request government records.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Access to Public Information: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/36100.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal government mechanism/institution through which citizens can access government records available under freedom of information laws. This mechanism could be a government office (or offices within agencies or ministries) or an electronic request system.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no such formal mechanism or institution.

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### 13. Is the right of access to information effective?

80

13a. In practice, citizens receive responses to access to information requests within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria, 2007; Access to Information Programme, 2008: [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** Records are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two weeks. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information. Legitimate exceptions are allowed for sensitive national security-related information.

**75:**

**50:** Records take around one to two months to obtain. Some additional delays may be experienced. Politically-sensitive information may be withheld without sufficient justification.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than four months to acquire. In some cases, most records may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records. National security exemptions may be abused to avoid disclosure of government information.

13b. In practice, citizens can use the access to information mechanism at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In law, access to public information is free of charge. Citizens may only be requested to pay reasonable fees for photocopying, CDs, etc., and those fees are determined by the Minister of Finance.

**References:**

Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria, 2007; Access to Information Programme, 2008: [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

Finance Ministers Regulation 10/200: <http://www.aip-bg.org/library/laws/order10.htm>

**100:** Records are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

13c. In practice, citizens can resolve appeals to access to information requests within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In some cases, appeal procedures might take longer. However, that is not due to particular problems with the access to public information, but it is rather due to some general problems of the Bulgarian judicial system.

**References:**

Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria, 2007; Access to Information Programme, 2008: [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** The agency/entity acts on appeals quickly. While some backlog is expected and inevitable, appeals are acknowledged promptly and cases move steadily towards resolution.

**75:**

**50:** The agency/entity acts on appeals quickly but with some exceptions. Some appeals may not be acknowledged, and simple issues may take more than two months to resolve.

**25:**

**0:** The agency/entity does not resolve appeals in a timely fashion quickly. Appeals may be unacknowledged for many months and simple issues may take more than three months to resolve.

13d. In practice, citizens can resolve appeals to information requests at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Judicial proceedings in the administrative law area concerning the access to information are not expensive.

**References:**

Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria, 2007; Access to Information Programme, 2008: [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** In most cases, the appeals mechanism is an affordable option to middle class citizens seeking to challenge an access to information determination.

**75:**

**50:** In some cases, the appeals mechanism is not an affordable option to middle class citizens seeking to challenge an access to information determination.

**25:**

**0:** The prohibitive cost of utilizing the access to information appeals mechanism prevents middle class citizens from challenging access to information determinations.

13e. In practice, the government gives reasons for denying an information request.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Formally, almost all cases of refused access to public information are justified, though there are still cases where the reasons given are unclear.

**References:**

Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria, 2007; Access to Information Programme, 2008: [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** The government always discloses to the requestor the specific, formal reasons for denying information requests.

**75:**

**50:** The government usually discloses reasons for denying an information request to the requestor, with some exceptions. The reasons may be vague or difficult to obtain.

25:

0: The government does not regularly give reasons for denying an information request to the requestor.

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## Category II. Elections

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### II-1. <sup>87</sup>Voting & Citizen Participation

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14. Is there a legal framework guaranteeing the right to vote?

100

14a. In law, universal and equal adult suffrage is guaranteed to all citizens.

YES | NO

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 42): <http://www.online.bg/law/const/const2.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if the right to vote is guaranteed to all citizens of the country (basic age limitations are allowed). A YES score can still be earned if voting procedures are, in practice, inconvenient or unfair.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if suffrage is denied by law to any group of adult citizens for any reason. Citizen is defined broadly, to include all ethnicities, or anyone born in the country. A NO score is earned if homeless or impoverished people are legally prohibited from voting.

14b. In law, there is a legal framework requiring that elections be held at regular intervals.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

Elections to the National Assembly are held every four years. Presidential elections are held every five years. Municipal councils and mayors are elected for four-year terms.

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Chapters 3, 4, 5): <http://www.online.bg/law/const/const2.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a statutory or other framework enshrined in law that mandates elections at reasonable intervals.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such framework exists.

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## 15. Can all citizens exercise their right to vote?

92

15a. In practice, all adult citizens can vote.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

No cases of denying the right to vote have been observed during the studied period.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** Voting is open to all citizens regardless of race, gender, prior political affiliations, physical disability, or other traditional barriers.

**75:**

**50:** Voting is often open to all citizens regardless of race, gender, prior political affiliations, physical disability, or other traditional barriers, with some exceptions.

**25:**

**0:** Voting is not available to some demographics through some form of official or unofficial pressure. Voting may be too dangerous, expensive, or difficult for many people.

15b. In practice, ballots are secret or equivalently protected.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Generally, citizens vote by secret ballots at elections. However, at the 2007 local elections, businesses had a greater interest in gaining control over local authorities and local decision-making processes, which allegedly resulted in a broad use of the practice of vote buying. This is potentially a very serious challenge to the Bulgarian democratic system.



**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** Ballots are secret, or there is a functional equivalent protection, in all cases.

**75:**

**50:** Ballots are secret, or there is a functional equivalent protection, in most cases. Some exceptions to this practice have occurred. Ballots may be subject to tampering during transport or counting.

**25:**

**0:** Ballot preferences are not secret. Ballots are routinely tampered with during transport and counting.

15c. In practice, elections are held according to a regular schedule.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** Elections are always held according to a regular schedule, or there is a formal democratic process for calling a new election, with deadlines for mandatory elections.

**75:**

**50:** Elections are normally held according to a regular schedule, but there have been recent exceptions. The formal process for calling a new election may be flawed or abused.

**25:**

**0:** Elections are called arbitrarily by the government. There is no functioning schedule or deadline for new elections.

---

16. Are citizens able to participate equally in the political process?

95

16a. In law, all citizens have a right to form political parties.

YES | NO

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 44): <http://www.online.bg/law/const/const2.htm>

Law on Political Parties: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/3919.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if citizens have the right to form political parties without interference from government. A YES score may still be earned if groups or individuals with a history of violence or terrorism (within last ten years) are banned from forming political parties. Non-discriminatory minimal criteria (e.g. minimum age) are also allowed.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are any legal or regulatory restrictions or prohibitions barring any types of political parties from being formed.

16b. In law, all citizens have a right to run for political office.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

Some restrictions in regard to age, professional qualifications and other conditions may be applicable for certain public offices, but they do not harm the overall democratic character of Bulgarian elections.

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution: <http://www.online.bg/law/const/const0.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if all citizens (citizen is defined broadly, to include all ethnicities, or anyone born in the country) have the right under law to run for political office. A YES score may still be earned if individuals with a history of violence, terrorism, or criminality are banned from running for office.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are any legal restrictions barring certain individuals or groups from running for political office.

16c. In practice, all citizens are able to form political parties.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There are some barriers for registering political parties based on an ethnic principle or challenging the state constitutional order. Such is the case of the party of the Macedonians in Bulgaria (OMO) that was banned by the Constitutional Court, and it still has not been registered by the court, despite several judgments of the European Court of Human Rights against Bulgaria.

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitutional Court Decision, 2000/1

**100:** While there is no guarantee of electoral success, political parties can form freely without opposition.

**75:**

**50:** Some barriers to formation are present, such as burdensome registration requirements that may not be fairly applied. Some parties' political viewpoints may draw pressure from the government, such as surveillance or intimidation. Some political parties or organizations may have extra barriers to getting on a ballot.

**25:**

**0:** Some political parties are effectively barred from forming through some manner of official or unofficial pressure. This may include threats, arrest, or violence from competing parties or other groups.

16d. In practice, all citizens can run for political office.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There are no direct barriers for any Bulgarian citizens who want to run for political office. Some restrictions exist, including the requirement for financial deposits to register Member of Parliament (MP) candidates. However, they are not excessive and do not prevent political parties and candidates with actual public support from running in the elections.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** While there is no guarantee of electoral success, anyone can run for office under transparent and equitable guidelines. There is a formal process for access to the ballot which is fairly applied. The costs of running a campaign are reasonable and do not deter candidates from entering a race.

**75:**

**50:** Some barriers exist to getting on the ballot and bureaucratic or regulatory requirements for doing so may be unfairly applied. The costs of running a political campaign are significant and result in dissuading some candidates from running for office. A system of party lists may discourage or prevent independent candidates from running for office.

**25:**

**0:** Citizens can effectively be barred from the ballot through government abuse of official rules and/or unofficial pressure. The costs of running a campaign are extremely high and result in most average citizens being unable to run an effective campaign for office.

16e. In practice, an opposition party is represented in the legislature.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The opposition is well represented in Parliament and has sufficient instruments to influence the decision-making process and control the majority. The biggest opposition party at the moment, GERB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria), is not represented at the national Parliament because it was formed after the last general elections.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** The opposition party always has some influence on the proceedings of the legislature. The opposition party can introduce legislation or bring pending matters to a vote without the consent of the ruling party.

**75:**

**50:** The opposition party has influence on the proceeding of the legislature, but it is limited in scope. The opposition's ability to force votes or publicly debate certain topics may be limited.

**25:**

**0:** The opposition party has only token participation in the legislature's proceedings and cannot advance legislation or force a debate.

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## II-2. Election Integrity

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### 18. Is the election monitoring agency effective?

85

18a. In law, the agency or set of agencies/entities is protected from political interference.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

The composition of the Electoral Commissions reflects the composition of the Parliament. The Electoral Commission, however, has organizational independence from the political parties represented in the Parliament.

**References:**

Law on Local Elections (Chapter V): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/99.htm>

Law on the Election of Members of the Parliament (Chapter II): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>

Law on the Election of President and Vice President: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/75.htm>

Website of the Central Elections Commission for the 2005 legislative elections: <http://www.is-bg.net/cik2005/>

**YES:** A YES score is earned only if the agency or set of agencies/entities has some formal organizational independence from the bodies contesting in the election. A YES score is still earned even if the entity is legally separate but in practice staffed by partisans.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if the election monitoring agency or set of agencies/entities is legally tied to bodies contesting the election (i.e. an executive branch agency such as the Interior Ministry, or a committee of the legislature). A NO score is automatically earned if there is no domestic election monitoring agency.

18b. In practice, agency (or set of agencies/entities) appointments are made that support the independence of the agency.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Generally, professionals (lawyers and experts) are appointed to the Electoral Commissions. They are nominated by the parties, yet none of them have clear party affiliations.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Website of the Central Election Commission: <http://www.is-bg.net/cik2005/>

**100:** Appointments to the agency or set of agencies/entities are made based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed are free of conflicts of interest due to personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed usually do not have clear political party affiliations.

**75:**

**50:** Appointments are usually based on professional qualifications. However, individuals appointed may have clear party loyalties.

**25:**

**0:** Appointments are often based on political considerations. Individuals appointed often have conflicts of interest due to personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed often have clear party loyalties.

18c. In practice, the agency or set of agencies/entities has a professional, full-time staff.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The Central Elections Commission (CEC) has enough staff and resources to organize and monitor elections.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Website of the Central Election Commission: <http://www.is-bg.net/cik2005/>

**100:** The agency or set of agencies/entities has staff sufficient to fulfill its basic mandate.

**75:**

**50:** The agency or set of agencies/entities has limited staff, or staff without necessary qualifications to fulfill its basic mandate.

**25:**

0: The agency or set of agencies/entities has no staff, or such a limited staff that is clearly unqualified to fulfill its mandate.

18d. In practice, the agency or set of agencies/entities makes timely, publicly available reports following an election cycle.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Reports on election results are published in a timely manner and in accordance with the law. Reports are easy to access on the Internet.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Website of the Central Election Commission: <http://www.is-bg.net/cik2005/>

100: Reports are released to the public on a predictable schedule, without exceptions.

75:

50: Reports are released, but may be delayed, difficult to access, or otherwise limited.

25:

0: The agency or set of agencies/entities makes no public reports, issues reports which are effectively secret, or issues reports of no value.

18e. In practice, when necessary, the agency or set of agencies/entities imposes penalties on offenders.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There were allegations of vote buying in the 2007 local elections, and the Central Elections Commission failed to investigate these allegations properly, partly because elections commissions do not have the legal power to investigate and impose fines. Some of the organizers of the vote buying at the June 2008 local by-elections in the Sandanski municipality were prosecuted and punished, but experts and the general public still believe that the practice of vote buying remains widespread at the local elections and more should be done to eradicate it.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

100: When rules violations are discovered, the agency or set of agencies/entities is aggressive in penalizing offenders and/or in cooperating with other agencies in penalizing offenders.

75:

**50:** The agency or set of agencies/entities enforces rules, but is limited in its effectiveness. The agency may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders, reluctant to cooperate with other agencies, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The agency or set of agencies/entities does not effectively penalize offenders and/or cooperate with other agencies in penalizing offenders. The agency may make judgments but not enforce them, or may fail to make reasonable judgments against offenders. The agency may be partisan in its application of power.

---

## 19. Are elections systems transparent and effective?

100

19a. In practice, there is a clear and transparent system of voter registration.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### Comments:

The system of voter registration is generally transparent, and voters lists are made available to the public in a timely manner.

### References:

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** There is a transparent system of voter registration that provides voters with sufficient time to understand their rights, check the accuracy of their registration, and ensure that errors are corrected before they vote.

**75:**

**50:** There is a transparent voter registration system that provides voters with sufficient time to understand their rights, check the accuracy of their registration, and ensure that errors are corrected before they vote but there are some problems. Voters may have not access to registration lists with sufficient time to correct errors before voting or registration lists may at times be inaccessible.

**25:**

**0:** The system of voter registration is incomplete or does not exist. Government may routinely falsify registration lists to affect voting patterns and limit access to the polls. Double voting and ghost" voting by non-existent voters is common.

19b. In law, election results can be contested through the judicial system.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament (Article 112): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if citizens or political parties can challenge allegedly fraudulent election results through the courts or other judicial mechanisms.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no legal right for citizens or political parties to challenge allegedly fraudulent election results in the courts or other judicial mechanisms.

19c. In practice, election results can be effectively appealed through the judicial system.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The appeal mechanism works efficiently and in a timely manner within the terms provided by the law.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** The electoral appeals mechanism takes cases from both candidates complaining of flaws in the electoral process as well as citizens bringing complaints related to denial of suffrage or registration errors. There is an expedited process for resolving such complaints to avoid delaying a timely announcement of electoral results.

**75:**

**50:** The electoral appeals mechanism takes complaints from both candidates and voters but may not always act on complaints promptly. The appeals mechanism may be abused at times by parties or candidates seeking to delay the announcement of electoral results.

**25:**

**0:** The electoral appeals mechanism rarely or never acts on complaints brought by candidates or citizens. Citizens may not be able to bring complaints related to denial of suffrage or voter registration errors.

19d. In practice, the military and security forces remain neutral during elections.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Since 1989, the military has remained neutral during elections.

**References:**

Various media reports.

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia, 2008 – Country report Bulgaria, [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)



**100:** The military, military officers, and other security forces refrain from overtly supporting or opposing political candidates or commenting on elections. The military or security forces refrain from physically interfering with political campaigns, rallies, or voting.

**75:**

**50:** The military, military officers, and security forces may be known to unofficially support or oppose particular candidates or parties. The military or security forces generally refrain from the use of force to support or oppose particular candidates or parties but there are exceptions.

**25:**

**0:** The military or other security forces are an active and explicit player in politics and overtly support or oppose particular candidates or parties. The military or security forces routinely exercise the use of force to support or oppose parties or candidates.

19e. In law, domestic and international election observers are allowed to monitor elections.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if domestic and international election observers are allowed to monitor the electoral process.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are any legal or regulatory prohibitions on the monitoring of the electoral process by domestic or international election observers.

19f. In practice, election observers are able to effectively monitor elections.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** Election observers have unfettered access to polling sites, counting stations, and voters themselves. The government does not interfere with the observers' activities.

**75:**

**50:** Election observers generally have access to polling sites, counting stations, and voters but encounter restrictions in certain areas. The government may impose burdensome regulatory or bureaucratic requirements on observers to discourage their involvement.

25:

0: Election observers' movements are significantly limited by the government and many polling and counting sites are restricted or barred from observers. The government imposes so many bureaucratic or regulatory burdens on the observers that their mission is rendered ineffective.

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## 17. Is there an election monitoring agency or set of election monitoring agencies/entities?

100

17. In law, is there an election monitoring agency or set of election monitoring agencies/entities?

YES | NO

### Comments:

A Central Elections Commission (CEC) is set up for every election to organize and monitor elections. CECs for local and general elections function until the next local and general elections.

### References:

Law on Local Elections (Chapter V): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/99.htm>

Law on the Election of Members of the Parliament (Chapter II): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>

Law on the Election of President and Vice President: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/75.htm>

Website of the Central Elections Commission for the 2005 legislative elections: <http://www.is-bg.net/cik2005/>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a domestic agency or set of domestic agencies/entities formally assigned to ensure the integrity of the election process.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no domestic agency or set of domestic agencies/entities exists that monitors elections. A NO score is earned if elections are only monitored by an agency informally, such as poll booth monitoring by the police, only by international observers, or only by NGOs. A NO score is earned if the domestic election agency or set of domestic agencies simply facilitates the process of voting but is not empowered to report violations or abuses.

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95

## II-3. Political Financing

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## 20. Are there regulations governing the financing of political parties?

100

20a. In law, there are regulations governing private contributions to political parties.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Political Parties (Article 24): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/3919.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are any formal rules (by law or regulation) controlling private contributions to political parties, including prohibitions against foreign donations.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no regulation of private contributions to political parties.

20b. In law, there are limits on individual donations to political parties.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There is some confusion here between the Law on Political Parties and the other electoral laws such as the Law on the Election of Members of Parliament. Limits on donations to parties existed in the Law on Political Parties, but they were revoked in 2006. However, limits still exist in the Law on the Election of Members of Parliament that limit the individual donation for an election campaign to a maximum of 10,000 leva (USD\$7,600).

**References:**

Law on Political Parties (Article 24): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/3919.html>

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are any limits in size on individual contributions to political parties. A YES score is also earned if individual contributions are prohibited.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no limits on contributions from individuals. A NO score is also earned if limits are applied by the government on opposition parties in a discriminatory manner.

20c. In law, there are limits on corporate donations to political parties.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There is some confusion between the Law on Political Parties and other electoral laws such the Law on the Election of Members of Parliament. On the one hand, limits on donations to parties existed in the Law on Political Parties, but they were revoked in 2006. On the other hand, limits still exist in the Law on the Election of Members of Parliament limiting the individual donation for an election campaign to a maximum of 30,000 leva (USD\$23,000).

**References:**

Law on Political Parties (Article 24): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/3919.html>

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament (Article 72): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are any limits in size on corporate contributions to political parties. A YES score is earned if corporate contributions are prohibited.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no limits on corporate contributions to political parties. A NO score is also earned if limits are applied by the government on opposition parties in a discriminatory manner.

20d. In law, there are limits on total political party expenditures.

**YES** | NO

**Comments:**

There are no explicit limits on political party expenditures in the Political Party Act. However, such limitations are included in the Law on the Election of Members of Parliament and the Law on Local Elections. The presumption is that the main activities of the parties are related to their participation in the elections, and this is the process that should be regulated, limited and controlled. The everyday existence of the parties is left outside this process of control.

**References:**

Law on Political Parties (Chapter 3): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/3919.html>

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament (Article 72): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>

Law on Local Elections (Article 69): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/99.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are any limits in size on political party expenditures. A YES score is earned if all party expenditures are prohibited.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no limits on political party expenditures. A NO score is also earned if limits are applied by the government on opposition parties in a discriminatory manner.

20e. In law, there are requirements for the disclosure of donations to political parties.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Law on Political Parties (Article 34): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/3919.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are any requirements mandating the disclosure of financial contributions to political parties.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no requirements mandating the disclosure of contributions to political parties, existing regulations do not require a donor's name or amount given, or the regulations allow for anonymous donations.

20f. In law, there are requirements for the independent auditing of the finances and expenditures of political parties.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Political Parties (Article 34): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/3919.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a legal or regulatory requirement for the independent auditing of party finances and expenditures. The auditing is performed by an impartial third-party.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no legal or regulatory requirements for the independent auditing of political parties' finances and expenditures or if such requirements exist but allow for parties to self-audit.

20g. In law, there is an agency or entity that monitors the financing of political parties.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

The National Audit Office is assigned to monitor the financing of political parties.

**References:**

Law on Political Parties (Article 34): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/3919.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a domestic agency or set of domestic agencies/entities formally assigned to monitor and enforce laws and regulations around the financing of political parties. A YES score is earned even if the agency/entity is ineffective in practice.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no such agency or entity.

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## 21. Are there regulations governing the financing of individual political candidates?

100

21a. In law, there are regulations governing private contributions to individual political candidates.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament (Articles 71, 72, 73): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>  
Law on Local Elections (Articles 68, 69): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/99.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are any formal rules (by law or regulation) controlling private contributions to individual political candidates, including prohibitions against foreign donations.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no regulation of private contributions to individual political candidates.

21b. In law, there are limits on individual donations to political candidates.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament (Article 71): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>  
Law on Local Elections (Article 68): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/99.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are any limits in size on individual contributions to political candidates. A YES score is also earned if individual contributions are prohibited.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no limits on contributions from individuals. A NO score is also earned if limits are applied by the government on opposition candidates in a discriminatory manner.

21c. In law, there are limits on corporate donations to individual political candidates.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament (Article 71): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>  
Law on Local Elections (Article 68): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/99.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are any limits in size on corporate contributions to individual political candidates. A YES score is earned if corporate contributions are prohibited.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no limits on corporate contributions to individual political candidates. A NO score is also earned if limits are applied by the government on opposition candidates in a discriminatory manner.

21d. In law, there are requirements for the disclosure of donations to individual political candidates.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There is no explicit law provision requiring disclosure of the contributions to the individual political candidates, but this is not a problem since only parties are running in legislative elections. However, there are requirements for disclosing financial contributions to the presidential individual candidates.

**References:**

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament (Article 73): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>

Law on Local Elections (Articles 70a, 71): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/99.htm>

Law on election of President and Vice-president, Article 19, [www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/75.htm](http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/75.htm)

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are any requirements mandating the disclosure of financial contributions to individual political candidates.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no requirements mandating the disclosure of contributions to individual political candidates, existing regulations do not require a donor's name or amount given, or the regulations allow for anonymous donations.

21e. In law, there are requirements for the independent auditing of the campaign finances of individual political candidates.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament (Article 73): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>

Law on Local Elections (Articles 70a, 71): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/99.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a legal or regulatory requirement for the independent auditing of an individual candidate's campaign finances and expenditures. The auditing is performed by an impartial third-party.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no legal or regulatory requirements for the independent auditing of an individual candidate's campaign finances and expenditures or if such requirements exist but allow for candidates to self-audit.

21f. In law, there is an agency or entity that monitors the financing of individual political candidates' campaigns.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

The National Audit Office is assigned to monitor the financing of individual political candidates' campaigns.

**References:**

Law on the Election of Members of Parliament (Article 73): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/19564.html>  
Law on Local Elections (Articles 70a, 71): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/99.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a domestic agency or set of domestic agencies/entities formally assigned to monitor and enforce laws and regulations around the financing of individual political candidates' campaigns. A YES score is earned even if the agency/entity is ineffective in practice.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no such agency or entity.

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## 22. Are the regulations governing the political financing of parties effective?

42

22a. In practice, the limits on individual donations to political parties are effective in regulating an individual's ability to financially support a political party.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Though some positive changes were made in the legislation recently, the practical situation in regards to the control over the financing of political parties has not improved significantly. There is a certain legal vagueness in regards to the limits of the individual donations to political parties. The limits were repealed in the Law on Political Parties, but they still exist in other electoral laws where they are related to particular election campaigns. The audits of the political parties' financial reports carried out by the National Audit Office (NAO) have not yet led to major investigations by the Prosecutors' Office. In June 2008, a scandal broke out when a leaked report of OLAF (European Anti-fraud Office) linked several donors of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, as well as the incumbent president Georgy Purvanov, with misuse of financial means received as part of the European Union's assistance to Bulgaria.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>  
Dnevnik Daily, September 24, 2008: Transparency International, Political Financing is the Basis of Corruption: <http://evropa.dnevnik.bg/show/?storyid=554461>  
Capital Weekly, June and July 2008: <http://www.capital.bg>

**100:** Existing limits represent the full extent to which an individual can directly or indirectly financially support a political party. Limits are reasonably low enough in the context of the total costs of running a campaign.

**75:**

**50:** Existing limits generally represent the full extent to which an individual can directly or indirectly financially support a political party. However, exceptions and loopholes exist through which individuals can indirectly support political parties above and beyond those formal limitations. Such loopholes could include making donations to third-party groups that advocate on behalf of (or against) a particular party; unregulated loans to parties (rather than direct donations); or in-kind support that is not explicitly regulated by laws or regulations. The limits may be too high in the context of the overall costs of running a campaign.

**25:**

**0:** Existing limits are routinely bypassed or willfully ignored. The vast majority of individual contributions to a political party are made outside of the formal limitation system. There is no enforcement of violations. Limits are so high that they are meaningless in the context of the overall costs of running a campaign.



22b. In practice, the limits on corporate donations to political parties are effective in regulating a company's ability to financially support a political party.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The situation with corporate donations to political parties is not much different than individual donations. The limits on the corporate donations were also repealed in the Law on Political Parties, but they exist in the other electoral laws, where they are applicable to separate election campaigns.

Though some positive changes were made in the legislation recently, the practical situation in regards to the control over the financing of political parties has not improved significantly. There is a certain legal vagueness in regards to the limits of the individual donations to political parties. The limits were repealed in the Law on Political Parties, but they still exist in other electoral laws where they are related to particular election campaigns. The audits of the political parties' financial reports carried out by the National Audit Office (NAO) have not yet led to major investigations by the Prosecutors' Office. In June 2008, a scandal broke out when a leaked report of OLAF (European Anti-fraud Office) linked several donors of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, as well as the incumbent president Georgy Purvanov, with misuse of financial means received as part of the European Union's assistance to Bulgaria.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>  
Dnevnik Daily, September 24, 2008: Transparency International, Political Financing is the Basis of Corruption: <http://evropa.dnevnik.bg/show/?storyid=554461>  
Capital Weekly, June and July 2008: <http://www.capital.bg>

**100:** Existing limits represent the full extent to which a company can directly or indirectly financially support a political party. Limits are reasonably low enough in the context of the total costs of running a campaign to be meaningful.

**75:**

**50:** Existing limits generally represent the full extent to which a company can directly or indirectly financially support a political party. However, exceptions and loopholes exist through which companies can indirectly support political parties above and beyond those formal limitations. Such loopholes could include making donations to third-party groups that advocate on behalf of (or against) a particular party; unregulated loans to parties (rather than direct donations); or in-kind support that is not explicitly regulated by laws or regulations. The limits may be too high in the context of the overall costs of running a campaign.

**25:**

**0:** Existing limits are routinely bypassed or willfully ignored. The majority of corporate contributions to political parties are made outside of the formal limitation system. There is no enforcement of violations. Limits are so high that they are meaningless in the context of the overall costs of running a campaign.

22c. In practice, the limits on total party expenditures are effective in regulating a political party's ability to fund campaigns or politically-related activities.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Limits on total party expenditures can be easily bypassed, for example, through the mediation of party foundations, the direct purchase of goods and services, etc. The institutions that are meant to control whether the parties observe the limits are weak in terms of investigative powers and cannot do much than simple checks of the parties' accounting reports.

Though some positive changes were made in the legislation recently, the practical situation in regards to the control over the financing of political parties has not improved significantly. There is a certain legal vagueness in regards to the limits of the individual donations to political parties. The limits were repealed in the Law on Political Parties, but they still exist in other electoral laws where they are related to particular election campaigns. The audits of the political parties' financial reports carried out by the National Audit Office (NAO) have not yet led to major investigations by the Prosecutors' Office. In June 2008, a scandal broke out when a leaked report of OLAF (European Anti-fraud Office) linked several donors of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, as well as the incumbent president Georgy Purvanov, with misuse of financial means received as part of the European Union's assistance to Bulgaria.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

**100:** Existing limits represent the full extent to which political parties are able to finance their activities. Limits are reasonably low enough in the context of the total costs of running a party to be meaningful.

**75:**

**50:** Existing limits generally represent the full extent to which a political party can finance its activities. However, exceptions and loopholes exist through which parties can generate revenue or finance their activities beyond the scope of existing regulations. Such loopholes could include taking loans that are outside of the scope of regulations covering direct donations; links to revenue-generating business activities that are beyond the scope of electoral or campaign-related regulations; or accepting in-kind support that is not explicitly regulated by laws or regulations. The limits may be too high in the context of the overall costs of running a party

**25:**

**0:** Existing limits are routinely bypassed or willfully ignored. The majority of expenditures are made outside of the formal limitation system. Limits are so high that they are meaningless in the context of the overall costs of running a party.

22d. In practice, when necessary, an agency or entity monitoring the financing of political parties independently initiates investigations.

100 | 75 | 50 | **25** | 0

**Comments:**

The Bulgarian control mechanism over the financing of the political parties remains very weak despite of some recent positive legislative changes. In law, the National Audit Office (NAO) has no power to investigate allegations of violations related to party financing. NAO only collects the financial reports and checks their accounting accuracy. It could ask the Prosecutor's Office to start investigations.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

**100:** The agency or entity aggressively starts investigations into allegations of wrong doing with respect to the financing of political parties. The agency is fair in its application of this power.

**75:**

**50:** The agency or entity will start investigations, but often relies on external pressure to set priorities, or has limited effectiveness when investigating. The agency, though limited in effectiveness, is still fair in its application of power.

**25:**

0: The agency or entity rarely investigates on its own, or the agency or entity is partisan in its application of this power.

22e. In practice, when necessary, an agency or entity monitoring the financing of political parties imposes penalties on offenders.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Bulgarian control mechanism over the financing of the political parties remains very weak despite some recent positive legislative changes. In law, the National Audit Office (NAO) has no power to investigate into allegations of violations related to party financing. NAO only collects the financial reports and checks their accounting accuracy. It could ask the Prosecutor's Office to start investigations.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

100: When rules violations are discovered, the agency or entity is aggressive in penalizing offenders.

75:

50: The agency or entity enforces rules, but is limited in its effectiveness. The agency or entity may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

25:

0: The agency or entity does not effectively penalize offenders. The agency or entity may make judgments but not enforce them, or may fail to make reasonable judgments against offenders. The agency or entity may be partisan in its application of power.

22f. In practice, contributions to political parties are audited.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Political parties' finances are regularly audited. The problem is that the National Audit Office checks only the consistency and authenticity of documentation and has no power to investigate further.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

100: Political party finances are regularly audited using generally accepted auditing practices. This includes the auditing of nominally independent financial organizations that act as financial extensions of the party.

75:

**50:** Political party finances (as defined) are audited, but audits are limited in some way, such as using inadequate auditing standards, or the presence of exceptions to disclosed contributions. Contributions to the political party may be sufficiently audited, but the auditing of nominally independent extensions of the party may not be.

**25:**

**0:** Party finances are not audited, or the audits performed have no value in tracking contributions. Audits may be performed by entities known to be partisan or biased in their practices.

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## 23. Are the regulations governing the political financing of individual candidates effective?

40

23a. In practice, the limits on individual donations to political candidates are effective in regulating an individual's ability to financially support a particular candidate.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

### Comments:

The control over the financing of individual political candidates still remains weak. The audit of the financial reports of the individual political candidates carried out by the National Audit Office (NAO) has not yet led to major investigations by the Prosecutors' Office. A good illustration of the current situation is the public scandal that broke out in June 2008, when a leaked report of OLAF (European Anti-fraud Office) linked several donors of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, as well as the incumbent president Georgy Purvanov (who ran at the last presidential elections as an independent candidate), with misuse of financial means received as part of the European Union's assistance to Bulgaria.

### References:

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>  
Dnevnik Daily, September 24, 2008: Transparency International, Political Financing is the Basis of Corruption: <http://evropa.dnevnik.bg/show/?storyid=554461>  
Capital Weekly, June and July 2008: <http://www.capital.bg>

**100:** Existing limits represent the full extent to which an individual can directly or indirectly financially support a political candidate. Limits are reasonably low enough in the context of the total costs of running a campaign.

**75:**

**50:** Existing limits generally represent the full extent to which an individual can directly or indirectly financially support a particular candidate. However, exceptions and loopholes exist through which individuals can indirectly support particular political candidates above and beyond those formal limitations. Such loopholes could include making donations to third-party groups that advocate on behalf of (or against) a particular candidate; unregulated loans to candidates (rather than direct donations); or in-kind support that is not explicitly regulated by laws or regulations. The limits may be too high in the context of the overall costs of running a campaign.

**25:**

**0:** Existing limits are routinely bypassed or willfully ignored. The vast majority of individual contributions to a particular political candidate are made outside of the formal limitation system. There is no enforcement of violations. Limits are so high that they are meaningless in the context of the overall costs of running a campaign.

23b. In practice, the limits on corporate donations to individual candidates are effective in regulating a company's ability to financially support a candidate.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The control over the financing of individual political candidates still remains weak. The audit of the financial reports of the individual political candidates carried out by the National Audit Office (NAO) has not yet led to major investigations by the Prosecutors' Office. A good illustration of the current situation is the public scandal that broke out in June 2008, when a leaked report of OLAF (European Anti-fraud Office) linked several donors of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, as well as the incumbent president Georgy Purvanov (who ran at the last presidential elections as an independent candidate), with misuse of financial means received as part of the European Union's assistance to Bulgaria.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>  
Dnevnik Daily, September 24, 2008: Transparency International, Political Financing is the Base of  
Corruption: <http://evropa.dnevnik.bg/show/?storyid=554461>  
Capital Weekly, June and July 2008: <http://www.capital.bg>

**100:** Existing limits represent the full extent to which a company can directly or indirectly financially support an individual candidate. Limits are reasonably low enough in the context of the total costs of running a campaign to be meaningful.

**75:**

**50:** Existing limits generally represent the full extent to which a company can directly or indirectly financially support an individual candidate. However, exceptions and loopholes exist through which companies can indirectly support individual candidates above and beyond those formal limitations. Such loopholes could include making donations to third-party groups that advocate on behalf of (or against) a particular candidate; unregulated loans to candidates (rather than direct donations); or in-kind support that is not explicitly regulated by laws or regulations. The limits may be too high in the context of the overall costs of running a campaign.

**25:**

**0:** Existing limits are routinely bypassed or willfully ignored. The majority of corporate contributions to individual candidates are made outside of the formal limitation system. There is no enforcement of violations. Limits are so high that they are meaningless in the context of the overall costs of running a campaign.

23c. In practice, when necessary, an agency or entity monitoring the financing of individual candidates' campaigns independently initiates investigations.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

What was mentioned in the previous comments regarding the control over the financing of the political parties (see below) is also valid in regard to the control over the financing of the individual political candidates. The Bulgarian control mechanism remains very weak. In law, the National Audit Office (NAO) has no power to investigate allegations of violations related to political candidates financing. NAO only collects the financial reports and checks their accounting accuracy. It could ask the Prosecutor's Office to start investigations.

Though some positive changes were made in the legislation recently, the practical situation in regards to the control over the financing of political parties has not improved significantly. There is a certain legal vagueness in regards to the limits of the individual donations to political parties. The limits were repealed in the Law on Political Parties, but they still exist in other electoral laws where they are related to particular election campaigns. The audits of the political parties' financial reports carried out by the National Audit Office (NAO) have not yet led to major investigations by the Prosecutors' Office. In June 2008, a scandal broke out when a leaked report of OLAF (European Anti-fraud Office) linked several donors of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, as well as the incumbent president Georgy Purvanov, with misuse of financial means received as part of the European Union's assistance to Bulgaria.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

**100:** The agency or entity aggressively starts investigations into allegations of wrong doing with respect to the financing of individual candidates' campaigns. The agency is fair in its application of this power.

**75:**

**50:** The agency or entity will start investigations, but often relies on external pressure to set priorities, or has limited effectiveness when investigating. The agency, though limited in effectiveness, is still fair in its application of power.

**25:**

**0:** The agency or entity rarely investigates on its own, or the agency or entity is partisan in its application of this power.

23d. In practice, when necessary, an agency or entity monitoring the financing of individual candidates' campaigns imposes penalties on offenders.

100 | 75 | 50 | **25** | 0

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

**100:** When rules violations are discovered, the agency or entity is aggressive in penalizing offenders.

**75:**

**50:** The agency or entity enforces rules, but is limited in its effectiveness. The agency or entity may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The agency or entity does not effectively penalize offenders. The agency or entity may make judgments but not enforce them, or may fail to make reasonable judgments against offenders. The agency or entity may be partisan in its application of power.

23e. In practice, the finances of individual candidates' campaigns are audited.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

It is not clear to what extent the financial reports of the individual political candidates are audited or not. In law, there is no explicit requirement for auditing these reports but only an obligation to submit them to National Audit Office. No information about such audits can be found on the webpage of the NAO.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

**100:** The finances of individual candidates' campaigns are regularly audited using generally accepted auditing practices.

**75:**

**50:** The finances of individual candidates' campaigns are audited, but audits are limited in some way, such as using inadequate auditing standards, or the presence of exceptions to disclosed contributions.

**25:**

**0:** The finances of individual candidates' campaigns are not audited, or the audits performed have no value in tracking contributions. Audits may be performed by entities known to be partisan or biased in their practices.

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## 24. Can citizens access records related to the financing of political parties?

83

24a. In practice, political parties disclose data relating to financial support and expenditures within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The National Audit Office publishes summarized accounts of the parties' financial support and expenditures on its webpage. Some documents, such as the results of the audit of data relating to the financial support and expenditures of the political parties' financial records, are not published on the webpage and can only be accessed under the Law on the Access to Public Information.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria (2007); Access to Information Programme (2008): [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** Political parties disclose their sources of funding and expenditures at least every quarter.

**75:**

**50:** Political parties disclose their sources of funding and expenditures only one or two times per year. Delays may occur when sensitive political information is involved.

**25:**

**0:** Political parties never publish their sources of funding or expenditures or publish that information only rarely with more than a year in between publication. Politically sensitive information is regular withheld from public disclosure.

24b. In practice, citizens can access the financial records of political parties within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The National Audit Office publishes summarized accounts of the parties' financial records on its webpage. Some documents, such as the results of the audit of the political parties' financial records, are not published on the webpage and can only be accessed under the Law on the Access to Public Information.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>  
Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria (2007); Access to Information Programme (2008): [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** Records are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Records take two to four weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than a month to acquire. There may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

24c. In practice, citizens can access the financial records of political parties at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Information about the financial records of the political parties in summarized form can be found online at the webpage of the National Audit Office.

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>  
Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria (2007); Access to Information Programme (2008): [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** Records are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**



0: Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

## 25. Can citizens access records related to the financing of individual candidates' campaigns?

50

25a. In practice, individual political candidates disclose data relating to financial support and expenditures within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### Comments:

There is no explicit law provision requiring disclosure of the contributions to the individual political candidates, but this is not a problem since only parties are running in legislative elections. No such information can be found at the website of the National Audit Office as regards the disclosure forms of the individual presidential candidates. Some information could be found in the media (for example, journalists' investigations in Capital Weekly about Ludmil Stoikov, the scandalous donor of the incumbent president).

### References:

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

**100:** Individual candidates disclose their sources of funding and expenditures at least every quarter.

**75:**

**50:** Individual candidates disclose their sources of funding and expenditures only one or two times per year. Delays may occur when sensitive political information is involved.

**25:**

**0:** Individual candidates never publish their sources of funding or expenditures or publish that information only rarely with more than a year in between publication. Politically sensitive information is regular withheld from public disclosure.

25b. In practice, citizens can access the financial records of individual candidates (their campaign revenues and expenditures) within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### Comments:

There is no explicit law provision requiring disclosure of the contributions to the individual political candidates, but this is not a problem since only parties are running in legislative elections. No such information can be found at the website of the National Audit Office as regards the disclosure forms of the individual presidential candidates. Some information could be found in the media (for example, journalists' investigations in Capital Weekly about Ludmil Stoikov, the scandalous donor of the incumbent president).

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

**100:** Records are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Records take two to four weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than a month to acquire. There may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

25c. In practice, citizens can access the financial records of individual candidates (their campaign revenues and expenditures) at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In law, there is no explicit provision for the disclosure of data related to financial support and expenditures of individual political candidates. No such information can be found at the website of the National Audit Office. Some information could be found in the media (for example, journalists' investigations in Capital Weekly about Ludmil Stoikov, the scandalous donor of the incumbent president).

**References:**

Studies of Transparency International Bulgaria: <http://www.transparency-bg.org>

**100:** Records are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

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Category III. Government Accountability

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## 27. Can the chief executive be held accountable for his/her actions?

88

27a. In practice, the chief executive gives reasons for his/her policy decisions.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### Comments:

Generally, the chief executive gives reasons for the major policy decisions. There are sometimes minor delays, or the information is not comprehensive enough for the citizens to get a real understanding of the policies proposed.

### References:

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** The chief executive and/or cabinet ministers give formal explanations of all policy matters. The chief executive regularly takes critical questions from journalists or an opposition party, usually at least once a month. There is no censoring of such sessions.

**75:**

**50:** The chief executive and/or cabinet ministers give explanations of policy, but not always in a timely or complete way. The chief executive occasionally takes critical questions from journalists or an opposition party, but not in a regular or formalized process. Particular issues of political sensitivity may be censored by government broadcasters.

**25:**

**0:** The chief executive and/or cabinet ministers do not give substantial justifications for policy. Public appearances by the chief executive offer no exposure to critical questions. The government and government-run media routinely censor such sessions.

27b. In law, the judiciary can review the actions of the executive.

YES | NO

### References:

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 125): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

Law on the Supreme Administrative Court (Chapter

2): <http://www.sac.government.bg/home.nsf/0/F9D61D526517389DC2256FC5002C8506?OpenDocument>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal process by which the judiciary can pass judgments on the legality or constitutionality of actions taken by the executive.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such mechanism exists. A NO score is earned if judicial review is vaguely established in law or regulation without formal procedures. A NO score is earned if general exemptions exist with respect to executive actions that are reviewable (a national security exemption, for example).

27c. In practice, when necessary, the judiciary reviews the actions of the executive.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The Supreme Administrative Court (SAC) has accumulated considerable jurisprudence by reviewing government actions during the last several years.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>  
Annual reports of Supreme Administrative

Court: <http://www.sac.government.bg/home.nsf/0/780E854EE8A7D96DC2256E27002F8033?OpenDocument>

**100:** When constitutional or legal questions or possible violations are raised, the judiciary is aggressive in reviewing executive actions and can void illegal or unconstitutional actions. The judiciary is fair and nonpartisan in its application of this power. It does not need to rely upon the executive to initiate a constitutional or legal review.

**75:**

**50:** The judiciary will review executive actions, but is limited in its effectiveness. The judiciary may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically sensitive issues, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The judiciary does not effectively review executive policy. The judiciary may make judgments but not enforce them, or may fail to pass judgments on executive abuses. The judiciary may be partisan in its application of power. It must rely on instructions from the executive in order to initiate a legal or constitutional review.

27d. In practice, the chief executive limits the use of executive orders for establishing new regulations, policies, or government practices.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In some cases the government might exercise certain influence over the way in which the laws are implemented through the sub-statutory acts issued by the cabinet.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** The chief executive utilizes executive orders only when there is no constitutional or legal requirement for official legislative action or approval. Executive orders are limited in number and narrow in scope.

75:

50: The chief executive sometimes relies on executive orders to implement policies and regulations opposed by the legislature. Some executive orders are overly broad in scope and are designed to circumvent constitutional or legal requirements for legislative action or approval.

25:

0: The chief executive routinely abuses executive orders to render the legislature practically useless. Executive orders are the norm, not the exception, and directly contravene constitutional or legal requirements for legislative action or approval.

---

## 28. Is the executive leadership subject to criminal proceedings?

100

28a. In law, the heads of state and government can be prosecuted for crimes they commit.

YES | NO

### References:

Bulgarian Constitution (Chapter 5, Article 103): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if the heads of state and government can be investigated, charged or prosecuted for criminal allegations. Figurehead officials (symbolic figures without day-to-day authority) may be exempt.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if either the head of state or government cannot be investigated, charged or prosecuted for criminal allegations or the executive branch controls whether investigative or prosecutorial immunity can be lifted on the heads of state or government.

28b. In law, ministerial-level officials can be prosecuted for crimes they commit.

YES | NO

### References:

Bulgarian Constitution (Chapter 5, Article 103): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if ministerial-level officials, or their equivalents, can all be investigated, charged or prosecuted for criminal allegations.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any ministerial-level official, or equivalent official, cannot be investigated, charged or prosecuted for criminal allegations or the executive branch controls whether investigative or prosecutorial immunity can be lifted on ministerial-level officials.

---

29. Are there regulations governing conflicts of interest by the executive branch?

50

29a. In law, the heads of state and government are required to file a regular asset disclosure form.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 2): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if the heads of state and government are required by law to file an asset disclosure form while in office, illustrating sources of income, stock holdings, and other assets. This form need not be publicly available to score a YES. Figurehead officials (symbolic figures without day-to-day authority) may be exempt.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if either the head of state or government is not required to disclose assets.

29b. In law, ministerial-level officials are required to file a regular asset disclosure form.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 2): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if ministerial-level officials, or their equivalents, are all required by law to file an asset disclosure form while in office, illustrating sources of income, stock holdings, and other assets.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if ministers are not required to disclose assets. A NO score is earned if some ministers must disclose assets, but other ministers are not required.

29c. In law, there are regulations governing gifts and hospitality offered to members of the executive branch.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

Some rules governing gifts and hospitality offered to members of the executive branch are part of the Code of Conduct of High-ranking Government Officials, but they have no legal force. Regulations governing gifts and hospitality are a different concept than those concerning bribes. Regulations of gifts go further to prevent practices of corruption in cases, which the actual act of corruption is difficult to prove, namely the state servants are not allowed to accept certain gifts and hospitality in spite of the fact that there are not evidences they have provided illegal favors to the party offering the gifts.

**References:**

Code of Conduct of High-ranking Government Officials: [http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/\(Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Code\\_Vishi\\_Dluznosti.pdf](http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/(Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Code_Vishi_Dluznosti.pdf)

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are formal guidelines regulating gifts and hospitality offered to members of the executive branch of government.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no guidelines or regulations with respect to gifts and hospitality offered to members of the executive branch. A NO score is earned if the guidelines are overly general and do not specify what is and is not appropriate.

29d. In law, there are requirements for the independent auditing of the executive branch asset disclosure forms (defined here as ministers and heads of state and government).

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 7): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a legal or regulatory requirement for independent auditing of executive branch asset disclosures. The auditing is performed by an impartial third-party. Figurehead officials (symbolic figures without day-to-day authority) may be exempt.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no legal or regulatory requirements for the independent auditing of executive branch asset disclosures or if such requirements exist but allow for self-auditing.

29e. In law, there are restrictions on heads of state and government and ministers entering the private sector after leaving the government.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

In law, there are no such restrictions.

**References:**

Code of Conduct of High-ranking Government Officials: [http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/\(Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Code\\_Vishi\\_Dluznosti.pdf](http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/(Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Code_Vishi_Dluznosti.pdf)

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are regulations restricting the ability of heads of state/government and ministers to take positions in the private sector after leaving government that would present a conflict of interest, including positions that directly seek to influence their former government colleagues. Figurehead officials (symbolic figures without day-to-day authority) may be exempt.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such restrictions exist.

29f. In practice, the regulations restricting post-government private sector employment for heads of state and government and ministers are effective.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

No such legal regulations exist.

**References:**

No such legal regulations exist.

**100:** The regulations restricting post-government private sector employment for heads of state/government and ministers are uniformly enforced. There are no cases or few cases of those officials taking jobs in the private sector after leaving government where they directly lobby or seek to influence their former government colleagues without an adequate cooling off" period.

**75:**

**50:** The regulations are generally enforced though some exceptions exist. In certain sectors, heads of state/government or ministers are known to regularly take jobs in the private sector that entail directly lobbying or seeking to influence their former government colleagues. Cooling off periods are short and sometimes ignored.

**25:**

**0:** The regulations are rarely or never enforced. Heads of state/government or ministers routinely take jobs in the private sector following government employment that involve direct lobbying or influencing of former government colleagues. Cooling off periods are non-existent or never enforced.

29g. In practice, the regulations governing gifts and hospitality offered to members of the executive branch are effective.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

This is difficult to measure precisely. There are still many suspicions in the media about gifts and hospitality offered to members of the executive branch.

**References:**

Publications in the printed media.



**100:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to members of the executive branch are regularly enforced. Members of the executive branch never or rarely accept gifts or hospitality above what is allowed.

**75:**

**50:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to members of the executive branch are generally applied though exceptions exist. Some ministers in certain sectors are known to accept greater amounts of gifts and hospitality from outside interest groups or private sector actors than is allowed.

**25:**

**0:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to members of the executive branch are routinely ignored and unenforced. Ministers and other members of the executive branch routinely accept significant amounts of gifts and hospitality from outside interest groups and actors seeking to influence their decisions.

29h. In practice, executive branch asset disclosures (defined here as ministers and above) are audited.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The National Audit Office (NAO) compares data declared in the disclosure forms of the executive branch with data from the National Revenue Agency and reports inconsistencies. This is more or less what the law provides for the NAO to do. The problem is that there are no further investigations and punishments for those who break the law. In society there are powerful suspicions that many politicians can easily circumvent the law and not declare their actual assets and property.

**References:**

Report of the National Audit Office: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/index.php?p=2228>

**100:** Executive branch asset disclosures are regularly audited using generally accepted auditing practices.

**75:**

**50:** Executive branch asset disclosures are audited, but audits are limited in some way, such as using inadequate auditing standards, or the presence of exceptions to disclosed assets.

**25:**

**0:** Executive branch asset disclosures are not audited, or the audits performed have no value. Audits may be performed by entities known to be partisan or biased in their practices.

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## 30. Can citizens access the asset disclosure records of the heads of state and government?

92

30a. In law, citizens can access the asset disclosure records of the heads of state and government.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 6): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if the heads of state and government file an asset disclosure form that is, in law, accessible to the public (individuals, civil society groups or journalists).

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no asset disclosure for either the head of state or government. A NO score is earned if the form is filed, but not available to the public.

30b. In practice, citizens can access the asset disclosure records of the heads of state and government within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In law, disclosure records of the heads of the state and the government should be published on the website of National Audit Office, but they are not accessible online yet. However, access is provided through the provisions of the Access to Public Information Act.

**References:**

Written order of the Chairman of the National Audit Office on the access to government officials' disclosure records: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/bg/zapovedPR.doc>

**100:** Records are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Records take around two weeks to obtain. Some additional delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than a month to acquire. In some cases, most records may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

30c. In practice, citizens can access the asset disclosure records of the heads of state and government at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Accessing government officials disclosure records is not expensive.

**References:**

Written order of the Chairman of the National Audit Office on the access to government officials' disclosure records: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/bg/zapovedPR.doc>

**100:** Records are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

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## 26. Can citizens sue the government for infringement of their civil rights?

100

26. In law, can citizens sue the government for infringement of their civil rights?

YES | NO

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution: <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

Law on the Liability of the State and the Municipalities for Damages: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/127.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if all citizens (citizen is defined broadly, to include all ethnicities, or anyone born in the country) can receive compensation or redress through the courts for civil rights violations committed by the government, such as failure to follow due process of law when detaining suspected criminals.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any group of citizens is excluded from the right to sue the government, or no such mechanism exists.

---

## 31. Official government functions are kept separate and distinct from the functions of the ruling political party.

75

31. In practice, official government functions are kept separate and distinct from the functions of the ruling political party.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Formally, official government functions are kept separate from the functions of the ruling political party. In practice, of course, some problems exist in this respect, but similar problems are found in most well-established democracies. For example, the current prime minister is also the leader of the Bulgarian Socialist Party. Many other ministry and deputy ministry level officials participate in the leadership of their political parties.

**References:**

Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia (2008): <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

**100:** Clear rules are followed distinguishing state functions from party activities. Government funds are never used for party activities. The civil service is completely distinct from party bureaucracy.

**75:**

**50:** The ruling party is, in principal, separate from the state, but exceptions to this standard sometimes occur. Examples may be the use of civil servants to organize political rallies, use of government vehicles on campaign trips, or use of government funds for party purposes.

**25:**

**0:** The government bureaucracy is an extension of the ruling party. There are few boundaries between government and party activities. Government funds, equipment and personnel are regularly used to support party activities.

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## III-2. Legislative Accountability

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### 32. Can members of the legislature be held accountable for their actions?

67

32a. In law, the judiciary can review laws passed by the legislature.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

The Constitutional Court has the power to review laws passed by the Parliament.

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 149): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal process by which the judiciary or constitutional courts can pass judgments on the legality or constitutionality of laws passed by the legislature.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such mechanism exists. A NO score is earned if judicial review is vaguely established in law or regulation without formal procedures. A NO score is earned if general exceptions exist exempting certain legislative actions from being reviewed (a national security exemption, for example).

32b. In practice, when necessary, the judiciary reviews laws passed by the legislature.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

The website of the Constitutional Court: <http://www.constcourt.bg>

**100:** When constitutional or legal questions or possible violations are raised, the judiciary is aggressive in reviewing laws passed and can void illegal or unconstitutional actions. The judiciary is fair and nonpartisan in its application of this power.

**75:**

**50:** The judiciary will review laws passed, but is limited in its effectiveness. The judiciary may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically sensitive issues, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The judiciary does not effectively review laws passed. The judiciary may make judgments but not enforce them, or may fail to pass judgments on executive abuses. The judiciary may be partisan in its application of power.

32c. In law, are members of the national legislature subject to criminal proceedings?

YES | **NO**

**Comments:**

According to the Constitution, members of Parliament (MPs) are protected from criminal proceedings. However, the Prosecutor General might submit to Parliament a request to lift the immunity of particular MPs so they can be investigated in connection to particular crimes. The Parliament might decide to lift the immunity of the MP. According to the 2006 amendments of the Constitution, an MP may refuse to use the right to immunity from criminal proceedings by submitting a declaration to this effect.

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 70): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if all members of the legislature can, in law, be investigated and prosecuted for criminal allegations.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any member of the legislature cannot, in law, be investigated and prosecuted for criminal proceedings. A NO score is also earned if the legislative branch itself controls whether investigative or prosecutorial

immunity can be lifted on members of the legislature.

### 33. Are there regulations governing conflicts of interest by members of the national legislature?

61

33a. In law, members of the national legislature are required to file an asset disclosure form.

YES | NO

#### References:

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 2): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if all members of the legislature are required by law to file an asset disclosure form while in office, illustrating sources of income, stock holdings, and other assets. This form does not need to be publicly available to score a YES.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any member of the legislature is not required to disclose assets.

33b. In law, there are restrictions for national legislators entering the private sector after leaving the government.

YES | NO

#### Comments:

In law, there are no such restrictions. There are some restrictions in the Rules of Organization and Procedure of the National Assembly that restrict members of Parliament (MPs) from entering the private sector. However, only being in the private sector while serving as an MP is prohibited.

#### References:

Rules of Organization and Procedure of the National Assembly (Article 11): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=app&lng=en&aid=6>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are regulations restricting national legislators' ability to take positions in the private sector after leaving government that would present a conflict of interest, including positions that directly seek to influence their former government colleagues.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such restrictions exist.

33c. In law, there are regulations governing gifts and hospitality offered to members of the national legislature.

YES | NO

**References:**

Rules of Organization and Procedure of the National Assembly: <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=app&lng=en&aid=6>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are formal guidelines regulating gifts and hospitality for members of the legislature.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no guidelines or regulations with respect to gifts or hospitality offered to members of the legislature. A NO score is earned if the guidelines are general and do not specify what is and is not appropriate.

33d. In law, there are requirements for the independent auditing of the asset disclosure forms of members of the national legislature.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 7): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a legal or regulatory requirement for independent auditing of legislative branch asset disclosures. The auditing is performed by an impartial third-party.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no legal or regulatory requirements for the independent auditing of legislative branch asset disclosures or if such requirements exist but allow for self-auditing.

33e. In practice, the regulations restricting post-government private sector employment for national legislators are effective.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Not applicable. There are no such regulations.

**References:**

Not applicable. There are no such regulations.

**100:** The regulations restricting post-government private sector employment for national legislators are uniformly enforced. There are no cases or few cases of legislators taking jobs in the private sector after leaving government where they directly

lobby or seek to influence their former government colleagues without an adequate cooling off" period.

**75:**

**50:** The regulations are generally enforced though some exceptions exist. In certain sectors, legislators are known to regularly take jobs in the private sector that entail directly lobbying or seeking to influence their former government colleagues. Cooling off periods are short and sometimes ignored.

**25:**

**0:** The regulations are rarely or never enforced. Legislators routinely take jobs in the private sector following government employment that involve direct lobbying or influencing of former government colleagues. Cooling off periods are non-existent or never enforced.

33f. In practice, the regulations governing gifts and hospitality offered to national legislators are effective.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There is no effective control mechanism with respect to regulations governing gifts, nor are there any serious independent investigations on the topic. This makes the assessment of the situation very difficult. Occasionally, the printed media publish stories about members of Parliament (MPs) who spend vacations in the expensive hotels of their business friends or drive expensive cars, but the data is largely unreliable.

**References:**

Publications in various print media.

**100:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to national legislators are regularly enforced. Legislators never or rarely accept gifts or hospitality above what is allowed.

**75:**

**50:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to national legislators are generally applied though exceptions exist. Some legislators in certain sectors are known to accept greater amounts of gifts and hospitality from outside interest groups or private sector actors than is allowed.

**25:**

**0:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to national legislators are routinely ignored and unenforced. Legislators routinely accept significant amounts of gifts and hospitality from outside interest groups and actors seeking to influence their decisions.

33g. In practice, national legislative branch asset disclosures are audited.

100 | **75** | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The National Audit Office (NAO) compares data declared in the disclosure forms of the legislative branch with data from the National Revenue Agency and reports the inconsistencies. This is more or less what the law provides for the NAO to do. The



problem is that there are no further investigations and punishments for those that break the provision of the law. In society, there are powerful suspicions that many magistrates can easily circumvent the law and not declare their actual assets and property.

**References:**

Report of National Audit Office: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/index.php?p=2228>

**100:** Legislative branch asset disclosures are regularly audited using generally accepted auditing practices.

**75:**

**50:** Legislative branch asset disclosures are audited, but audits are limited in some way, such as using inadequate auditing standards, or the presence of exceptions to disclosed assets.

**25:**

**0:** Legislative branch asset disclosures are not audited, or the audits performed have no value. Audits may be performed by entities known to be partisan or biased in their practices.

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### 34. Can citizens access the asset disclosure records of members of the national legislature?

92

34a. In law, citizens can access the asset disclosure records of members of the national legislature.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on the Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 6): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if members of the national legislature file an asset disclosure form that is, in law, accessible to the public (individuals, civil society groups or journalists).

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no asset disclosure for members of the national legislature. A NO score is earned if the form is filed, but not available to the public.

34b. In practice, citizens can access legislative asset disclosure records within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In law, legislative disclosure records should be published on the National Audit Office's website, but they are not accessible online yet. However, access is provided through the provisions of the Access to Public Information Act.

**References:**

Written order of the Chairman of the National Audit Office on the access to government officials' disclosure records: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/bg/zapovedPR.doc>

**100:** Records are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Records take around two weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than a month to acquire. In some cases, most records may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

34c. In practice, citizens can access legislative asset disclosure records at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Accessing legislative disclosure records is not expensive.

**References:**

Written order of the Chairman of the National Audit Office on the access to government officials' disclosure records: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/bg/zapovedPR.doc>

**100:** Records are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

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## 35. Can citizens access legislative processes and documents?

92

35a. In law, citizens can access records of legislative processes and documents.

YES | NO

**References:**

Access to Public Information Act (Article 40): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/36100.html>  
Rules of Organization and Procedure of the National Assembly: <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=app&lng=en&aid=6>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a general legal right to access records of legislative proceedings including voting records. A YES score can still be given if there are formal rules for specific exemptions to the right to disclosure (special secret sessions related to national security).

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no general right to access documents recording legislative proceedings. A NO score is earned if there exemptions to the general right that are not clearly defined by formal rules.

35b. In practice, citizens can access records of legislative processes and documents within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Some exceptions aside, most of the documents related to the legislative process are available online.

**References:**

Website of the Parliament: <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=app&lng=bg&aid=4>  
<http://www.parliament.bg/?page=plSt&SType=browse&lng=bg&SYear=2006&SMonth=7>

**100:** Records are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Records take around two weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than a month to acquire. In some cases, most records may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

35c. In practice, citizens can access records of legislative processes and documents at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Records are available online.

**References:**

Web site of the Parliament: <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=app&lng=bg&aid=4>  
<http://www.parliament.bg/?page=plSt&SType=browse&lng=bg&SYear=2006&SMonth=7>

**100:** Records are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

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### III-3. Judicial Accountability

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#### 36. Are judges appointed fairly?

100

36a. In law, there is a transparent procedure for selecting national-level judges.

YES

NO

**Comments:**

According to the Constitution, the chairs of the Supreme Courts and the Prosecutor General (in Bulgaria, the Public Prosecutor's Office is part of the judicial branch) are elected by an independent body called the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC).

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 129): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

Judiciary Act (Article 27): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

The Rules of Operation of the Supreme Judicial Council and its Administration: <http://212.122.184.99/bg/start.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal process for selecting national level justices. This process should be public in the debating and confirmation stages. National-level judges are defined as judges who have powers that derive from a national law or constitution; are nominated/appointed by a national governmental body (head of state/government or national legislature); and/or are elected nationally.

**NO:** A NO score is given if there is no formal process of selection or the process is conducted without public oversight. National-level judges are defined as judges who have powers that derive from a national law or constitution; are

nominated/appointed by a national governmental body (head of state/government or national legislature); and/or are elected nationally.

36b. In practice, professional criteria are followed in selecting national-level judges.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Formal requirements are always met. It is not impossible to become a judge without certain professional qualifications. Chapter 10 of the Law on the Judiciary describes in detail the necessary professional qualifications of the magistrates. These include a law degree and work experiences, and vary depending on the specific position.

**References:**

Judiciary Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

**100:** National-level judges selected have relevant professional qualifications such as formal legal training, experience as a lower court judge or a career as a litigator.

**75:**

**50:** Most national-level judges selected meet these qualifications, with some exceptions.

**25:**

**0:** National-level judges are often unqualified due to lack of training or experience.

36c. In law, there is a confirmation process for national-level judges (i.e. conducted by the legislature or an independent body).

YES | NO

**Comments:**

The Supreme Judicial Council elects all judges (including those in the Supreme Courts) and prosecutors in the country. These appointments are not contingent upon the approval of any other institution, except in the case of the chairmen of the Supreme Administrative Court, the Supreme Court of Cessation and the Prosecutor General. The nominees for these positions are reviewed and finally approved by the president. However, the president can only veto these nominees once. The chairman of the Constitutional Court is elected by the members of the court. One third of them are elected by the National Assembly, one third are appointed by the president, and one third are appointed by the general assembly of the judges in the Supreme Administrative Court and the Supreme Court of Cessation.

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution: <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

Judiciary Act (Article 27): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal process establishing a review of national-level judicial nominees by an agency independent from the body appointing the judges.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no formal review. A NO score is earned if the review is conducted by a body directed by the body appointing the judges (such as review by the head of police if judges are appointed by the executive).

## 37. Can members of the judiciary be held accountable for their actions?

92

37a. In law, members of the national-level judiciary are obliged to give reasons for their decisions.

YES | NO

### References:

Bulgarian Constitution (Chapter 8, Article 149): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal and mandatory process for judges to explain their decisions.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if justices are not required to explain decisions. A NO score is earned if there is a general exemption from explaining some decisions (such as national security).

37b. In practice, members of the national-level judiciary give reasons for their decisions.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### Comments:

All national-level judges give reasons for their decisions in practice. Decisions and reasons can be easily found on court websites.

### References:

Website of the Supreme Administrative Court: <http://www.sac.government.bg/home.nsf/vPagesLookup/home~bg>

Website of the Supreme Court of Cassation: <http://www.vks.bg>

Website of the Constitutional Court: <http://www.constcourt.bg>

**100:** Judges are formally required to explain their judgments in detail, establishing a body of precedent. All judges comply with these requirements.

**75:**

**50:** Judges are compelled to give substantial reasons for their decisions, but some exceptions exist. These may include special courts, such as military courts or tribunals.

**25:**

**0:** Judges commonly issue decisions without formal explanations.

37c. In law, there is a disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) for the national-level judicial system.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

This role is played by the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). In addition, a new specialized disciplinary body, the Supreme Judicial Council Inspectorate, was recently created with similar functions.

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Chapter 6): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

Judiciary Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) for the judicial system. A disciplinary agency is defined here as an agency or mechanism specifically mandated to investigate breaches of procedure, abuses of power or other failures of the judiciary.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no agency or mechanism is specifically mandated to act as a disciplinary mechanism for the national-level judiciary.

37d. In law, the judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) is protected from political interference.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

The Supreme Judicial Council members have a fixed mandate and operational independence from both the judiciary and the political branches of power. In 2007, the Supreme Judicial Council was transformed into a permanently acting body, and that presumably is strengthening its independence.

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Chapter 6): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

Judiciary Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are formal rules establishing that the judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) is protected from political interference by the executive and legislative branches.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no formal rules establishing the independence of the judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism). A NO score is given if the judicial disciplinary agency or equivalent mechanism function is carried out by an inherently subordinate organization, such as an executive ministry or legislative committee.

37e. In practice, when necessary, the judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) initiates investigations.

**Comments:**

There has been a constant reform of the judiciary during the last several years. This process has been prompted by the criticism of the European Commission in the framework of the European Union's pre- and post-accession monitoring process. In 2008, an Inspectorate of the Supreme Judicial Council was established with a task of investigating procedural deficiencies and disciplinary cases in the judiciary. Despite these positive institutional changes, experts and the European Commission still believe that the disciplinary proceedings should intensify in order to improve the overall performance of the judiciary.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** The judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) aggressively starts investigations — or participates fully with cooperating agencies' investigations — into judicial misconduct. The judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) is fair in its application of this power.

**75:**

**50:** The judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) will start or cooperate in investigations, but often relies on external pressure to set priorities, or has limited effectiveness when investigating. The judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism), though limited in effectiveness, is still fair in its application of power.

**25:**

**0:** The judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) rarely investigates on its own or cooperates in other agencies' investigations, or the judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) is partisan in its application of this power.

37f. In practice, when necessary, the judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) imposes penalties on offenders.

**Comments:**

There are some positive steps in this direction, but the results are still limited in scope.

There has been a constant reform of the judiciary during the last several years. This process has been prompted by the criticism of the European Commission in the framework of the European Union's pre- and post-accession monitoring process. In 2008, an Inspectorate of the Supreme Judicial Council was established with a task of investigating procedural deficiencies and disciplinary cases in the judiciary. Despite these positive institutional changes, experts and the European Commission still believe that the disciplinary proceedings should intensify in order to improve the overall performance of the judiciary.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** When rules violations are discovered, the judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) is aggressive in penalizing offenders or in cooperating with other agencies who penalize offenders.

**75:**

**50:** The judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) enforces rules, but is limited in its effectiveness. The judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders,



resistant to cooperating with other agencies, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

25:

0: The judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) does not effectively penalize offenders. The judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) may make judgments but not enforce them, does not cooperate with other agencies in enforcing penalties, or may fail to make reasonable judgments against offenders. The judicial disciplinary agency (or equivalent mechanism) may be partisan in its application of power.

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## 38. Are there regulations governing conflicts of interest for the national-level judiciary?

61

38a. In law, members of the national-level judiciary are required to file an asset disclosure form.

YES | NO

### References:

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 2): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if all members of the national-level judiciary are required by law to file an asset disclosure form while in office, illustrating sources of income, stock holdings, and other assets. This form does not need to be publicly available to score a YES.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any member of the national-level judiciary is not required to publicly disclose assets.

38b. In law, there are regulations governing gifts and hospitality offered to members of the national-level judiciary.

YES | NO

### References:

Judiciary Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

Code of ethics elaborated by the Supreme Judicial Council: <http://www.justice.bg/bg/start.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are formal guidelines regulating gifts and hospitality for members of the national-level judiciary.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no guidelines or regulations with respect to gifts or hospitality offered to members of the national-level judiciary. A NO score is earned if the guidelines are general and do not specify what is and is not appropriate.

38c. In law, there are requirements for the independent auditing of the asset disclosure forms of members of the national-level judiciary.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 7): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a legal or regulatory requirement for independent auditing of national-level judiciary asset disclosures. The auditing is performed by an impartial third-party.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no legal or regulatory requirements for the independent auditing of national-level judiciary asset disclosures or if such requirements exist but allow for self-auditing.

38d. In law, there are restrictions for national-level judges entering the private sector after leaving the government.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There are no such restrictions.

**References:**

Judiciary Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are regulations restricting national-level judges' ability to take positions in the private sector after leaving government that would present a conflict of interest, including positions that directly seek to influence their former government colleagues.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such restrictions exist.

38e. In practice, the regulations restricting post-government private sector employment for national-level judges are effective.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Judiciary Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

**100:** The regulations restricting post-government private sector employment for national-level judges are uniformly enforced. There are no cases or few cases of judges taking jobs in the private sector after leaving government where they directly lobby or seek to influence their former government colleagues without an adequate cooling off” period.

**75:**

**50:** The regulations are generally enforced though some exceptions exist. In certain cases, judges are known to regularly take jobs in the private sector that entail directly lobbying or seeking to influence their former government colleagues. Cooling off periods are short and sometimes ignored.

**25:**

**0:** The regulations are rarely or never enforced. Judges routinely take jobs in the private sector following government employment that involve direct lobbying or influencing of former government colleagues. Cooling off periods are non-existent or never enforced.

38f. In practice, the regulations governing gifts and hospitality offered to members of the national-level judiciary are effective.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

This is difficult to measure precisely. There are still many suspicions in the media about gifts and hospitality offered to magistrates.

**References:**

Publications in the printed media.

**100:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to members of the national-level judiciary are regularly enforced. Judges never or rarely accept gifts or hospitality above what is allowed.

**75:**

**50:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to members of the national-level judiciary are generally applied though exceptions exist. Some judges are known to accept greater amounts of gifts and hospitality from outside interest groups or private sector actors than is allowed.

**25:**

**0:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to members of the national-level judiciary are routinely ignored and unenforced. Judges routinely accept significant amounts of gifts and hospitality from outside interest groups and actors seeking to influence their decisions.

38g. In practice, national-level judiciary asset disclosures are audited.

100 | **75** | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The National Audit Office (NAO) compares data declared in the disclosure forms of the national-level judiciary with data from the

National Revenue Agency and reports the inconsistencies. This is more or less what the law provides for the NAO to do. The problem is that there are not further punishments for those who breach the provision of the law. There is strong suspicions that many politicians can easily go round the law and not declare their actual assets and property.

**References:**

Report of the National Audit Office: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/index.php?p=2228>

**100:** National-level judiciary asset disclosures are regularly audited using generally accepted auditing practices.

**75:**

**50:** National-level judiciary asset disclosures are audited, but audits are limited in some way, such as using inadequate auditing standards, or the presence of exceptions to disclosed assets.

**25:**

**0:** National-level judiciary asset disclosures are not audited, or the audits performed have no value. Audits may be performed by entities known to be partisan or biased in their practices.

---

### 39. Can citizens access the asset disclosure records of members of the national-level judiciary?

92

39a. In law, citizens can access the asset disclosure records of members of the national-level judiciary.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 6): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if members of the national-level judiciary file an asset disclosure form that is, in law, accessible to the public (individuals, civil society groups or journalists).

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no asset disclosure for members of the national-level judiciary. A NO score is earned if the form is filed, but not available to the public.

39b. In practice, citizens can access judicial asset disclosure records within a reasonable time period.

100 | **75** | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In law, disclosure records of national-level judiciary should be published on the National Audit Office's website, but they are not accessible online yet. However, access is provided through the provisions of the Access to Public Information Act.

**References:**

Written order of the Chairman of the National Audit Office on the access to government officials' disclosure records: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/bg/zapovedPR.doc>

**100:** Records are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Records take around two weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than a month to acquire. In some cases, most records may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

39c. In practice, citizens can access judicial asset disclosure records at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Accessing disclosure records of national-level judiciaries is not expensive.

**References:**

Written order of the Chairman of the National Audit Office on the access to government officials' disclosure records: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/bg/zapovedPR.doc>

**100:** Records are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

---

## 40. Can the legislature provide input to the national budget?

100

40a. In law, the legislature can amend the budget.

**YES** | NO

### References:

Bulgarian Constitution (Chapter 3): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if the legislature has the power to add or remove items to the national government budget.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if the legislature can only approve but not change details of the budget. A NO score is earned if the legislature has no input into the budget process.

40b. In practice, significant public expenditures require legislative approval.

**100** | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### Comments:

All significant public expenditures are approved by the Parliament when passing the Law on the State Budget.

### References:

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** All significant government expenditures (defined as any project costing more than 1% of the total national budget), must be approved by the legislature. This includes defense and secret programs, which may be debated in closed hearings.

**75:**

**50:** Most significant government expenditures (as defined) are approved by the legislature, but some exceptions to this rule exist. This may include defense programs, an executive's personal budget, or other expenses.

**25:**

**0:** The legislature does not have the power to approve or disapprove large portions of the government budget, or the legislature does not exercise this power in a meaningful way.

40c. In practice, the legislature has sufficient capacity to monitor the budget process and provide input or changes.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There is a permanent budgetary committee that has enough capacity and resources. The committee has its own experts and can also rely on additional expertise when needed.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganey, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** Legislators benefit from a sufficient and qualified staff as well as adequate financial and physical resources. Lack of capacity is never a reason why legislators cannot carry out their duties effectively.

**75:**

**50:** Legislators have some staff and financial resources but are limited by a shortfall of resources to adequately perform all of their budgetary oversight functions. Legislators are occasionally overwhelmed by the volume of work to be performed.

**25:**

**0:** Legislators have little to no staff and virtually no financial resources with which to perform their budgetary oversight role. Lack of resources is a regular and systemic problem that cripples the performance of the legislature.

---

#### 41. Can citizens access the national budgetary process?

75

41a. In practice, the national budgetary process is conducted in a transparent manner in the debating stage (i.e. before final approval).

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Major documents about the budget policies are publicly available, as are the minutes of the meetings of the Budgetary Committee of the Parliament. However, there is no tradition of wide, public debates on the budget. Some business organizations or other groups might participate in the debates about the budget, but this process is not regulated and needs more transparency.

**References:**

Report of Open Budget Initiative: <http://www.openbudgetindex.org/#CountrySummariesandQuestionnaires>

**100:** Budget debates are public and records of these proceedings are easily accessible. Authors of individual budget items can easily be identified. Nearly all budget negotiations are conducted in these official proceedings.

**75:**

**50:** There is a formal, transparent process for budget debate, but major budget modifications may be negotiated in separate, closed sessions. Some items, such as non-secret defense projects, may be negotiated in closed sessions. Authors of individual line items may be difficult to identify.

**25:**

**0:** Budget negotiations are effectively closed to the public. There may be a formal, transparent process, but most real discussion and debate happens in other, closed settings.

41b. In practice, citizens provide input at budget hearings.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**References:**

Report of Open Budget Initiative: <http://www.openbudgetindex.org/#CountrySummariesandQuestionnaires>

**100:** Citizens, usually acting through CSOs, can provide information or commentary to the budget debate through a formal process. This information is essential to the process of evaluating budget priorities.

**75:**

**50:** Citizens or CSOs can provide input, but this information is often not relevant to budget decisions.

**25:**

**0:** Citizens or CSOs have no formal access to provide input to the budget debate.

41c. In practice, citizens can access itemized budget allocations.

**100** | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Plenty of information is available online and regularly updated on the website of the Ministry of Finance.

**References:**

Report of Open Budget Initiative: <http://www.openbudgetindex.org/#CountrySummariesandQuestionnaires>

**100:** Citizens, journalists and CSOs can access itemized lists of budget allocations. This information is easily available and up to date.

**75:**

**50:** Citizens, journalists and CSOs can access itemized lists of budget allocations but this information may be difficult to access, incomplete or out of date.



25:

0: Citizens cannot access an itemized list of budget allocations, due to secrecy, prohibitive barriers or government inefficiency.

---

### 43. Is the legislative committee overseeing the expenditure of public funds effective?

67

43a. In practice, department heads regularly submit reports to this committee.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Not much information is available on this.

**References:**

Web page of the Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee:  
<http://www.parliament.bg/?page=ns&lng=bg&nsid=5&action=show&gid=196>

**100:** Heads of ministry- or cabinet-level agencies submit regular, formal reports of expenses to a budget oversight committee.

**75:**

**50:** Agency heads submit reports to a budget oversight committee, but these reports are flawed in some way. The reports may be inconsistently delivered, or lacking important details.

**25:**

**0:** There is no budget oversight committee or equivalent, or heads of agencies do not submit meaningful reports to the agency.

43b. In practice, the committee acts in a non-partisan manner with members of opposition parties serving on the committee in an equitable fashion.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The committees in the Bulgarian Parliament reflect the composition of the chamber. There is no parity between government and opposition.

**References:**

Web page of the Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee:

**100:** The committee is comprised of legislators from both the ruling party (or parties) and opposition parties in a roughly equitable distribution. All members of the committee — including opposition party members — are able to fully participate in the activities of the committee and influence the committee’s work to roughly the same extent as any other member of the committee.

**75:**

**50:** The committee is comprised of legislators from both the ruling party (or parties) and opposition parties although the ruling party has a disproportionate share of committee seats. The chairperson of the committee may be overly influential and curb other members’ ability to shape the committee’s activities.

**25:**

**0:** The committee is dominated by legislators of the ruling party and/or the committee chairperson. Opposition legislators serving on the committee have in practice no way to influence the work of the committee.

43c. In practice, when necessary, this committee initiates independent investigations into financial irregularities.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There is some information on the activities of the Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee on its website, but not enough to assess its performance in a reliable manner. So far, no major results of the activity of the committee are known.

**References:**

Web page of the Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee:

<http://www.parliament.bg/?page=ns&lng=bg&nsid=5&action=show&gid=196>

**100:** When irregularities are discovered, the committee is aggressive in investigating the government.

**75:**

**50:** The committee starts investigations, but is limited in its effectiveness. The committee may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The committee does not effectively investigate financial irregularities. The committee may start investigations but not complete them, or may fail to detect offenders. The committee may be partisan in its application of power.

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## 42. Is there a separate legislative committee which provides oversight of public funds?

100

42. In law, is there a separate legislative committee which provides oversight of public funds?

YES | NO

**Comments:**

The Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee was set up in the Bulgarian Parliament in May 2007. Another subcommittee within the Committee of European Integration supervises the spending of the European funds.

**References:**

Web page of the Public Sector Accountability Subcommittee:

<http://www.parliament.bg/?page=ns&lng=bg&nsid=5&action=show&gid=196>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a dedicated legislative committee (or equivalent group located in the legislature) that oversees the expenditure of public funds.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such body exists within the legislature. A NO score is earned if there is a body executing this function but it is not part of the legislature (such as a separate supreme audit institution).

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Category IV. Administration and Civil Service

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IV-1. <sup>82</sup> Civil Service Regulations

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44. Are there national regulations for the civil service encompassing, at least, the managerial and professional staff?

100

44a. In law, there are regulations requiring an impartial, independent and fairly managed civil service.

YES | NO

**References:**

Civil Servants Act (Article 2): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/40648.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are specific formal rules establishing that the civil service carry out its duties independent of political interference.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no formal rules establishing an independent civil service.

44b. In law, there are regulations to prevent nepotism, cronyism, and patronage within the civil service.

YES | NO

**References:**

Civil Servants Act (Article 29a and others): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/40648.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are specific formal rules prohibiting nepotism, cronyism, and patronage in the civil service. These should include competitive recruitment and promotion procedures as well as safeguards against arbitrary disciplinary actions and dismissal.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such regulations exist.

44c. In law, there is an independent redress mechanism for the civil service.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There is no separate, independent redress mechanism for the civil service. In law, civil servants can appeal disciplinary decisions before the administration that have appointed them, and then before the court. There is another institution within the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform, called State Administrative Commission, that also might accept some complaints from civil servants, but it is not independent and its central functions are different.

**References:**

Civil Servants Act (Chapter 8): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/40648.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a mechanism to which civil servants and applicants for the civil service can take grievances regarding civil service management actions. The mechanism should be independent of their supervisors but can still be located within the government agency or entity (such as a special commission or board). Civil servants are able to appeal the mechanism's decisions to the judiciary.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such mechanism exists.

44d. In law, civil servants convicted of corruption are prohibited from future government employment.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

In law, when a civil servant is convicted of any premeditated crime, his or her contract is terminated and the person may not be

appointed to another position within the civil administration. This includes corruption and its derivatives, as defined in the Penal Code.

**References:**

Civil Servants Act (Articles 7, 103): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/40648.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are specific rules prohibiting continued government employment following a corruption conviction.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such rules exist or if the ban is not a lifetime ban.

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## 45. Is the law governing the administration and civil service effective?

83

45a. In practice, civil servants are protected from political interference.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Political appointments at high levels in government agencies are still common practice. There is a strong perception among the general public that appointments in the administration (especially for attractive positions) are not based on purely professional criteria.

**References:**

State of Administration (2007): <http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/AnnualReport%202007.pdf>

**100:** Civil servants operate independently of the political process, without incentive or pressure to render favorable treatment or policy decisions on politically sensitive issues. Civil servants rarely comment on political debates. Individual judgments are rarely praised or criticized by political figures. Civil servants can bring a case to the courts challenging politically-motivated firings.

**75:**

**50:** Civil servants are typically independent, yet are sometimes influenced in their judgments by negative or positive political or personal incentives. This may include favorable or unfavorable treatment by superiors, public criticism or praise by the government, or other forms of influence. Civil servants may bring a case to the judicial system challenging politically-motivated firings but the case may encounter delays or bureaucratic hurdles.

**25:**

**0:** Civil servants are commonly influenced by political or personal matters. This may include conflicting family relationships, professional partnerships, or other personal loyalties. Negative incentives may include threats, harassment or other abuses of power. Civil servants are unable to find a remedy in the courts for unjustified or politically-motivated firings.

45b. In practice, civil servants are appointed and evaluated according to professional criteria.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

For the most part, civil servants are appointed and evaluated according to professional criteria. However, there are media allegations that senior civil servants are not always appointed and evaluated solely on the basis of their professionalism. No independent surveys on the topic exist, making it difficult to evaluate the current situation with precision.

**References:**

State of Administration (2007): <http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/AnnualReport%202007.pdf>

**100:** Appointments to the civil service and their professional evaluations are made based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed are free of conflicts of interest arising from personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed usually do not have clear political party affiliations.

**75:**

**50:** Appointments and professional assessments are usually based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed may have clear party loyalties, however.

**25:**

**0:** Appointments and professional assessments are often based on political considerations. Individuals appointed often have conflicts of interest due to personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed often have clear party loyalties.

45c. In practice, civil service management actions (e.g. hiring, firing, promotions) are not based on nepotism, cronyism, or patronage.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Nepotism, cronyism and patronage still remain serious problems. There were several cases that became public during the study period. In January 2008, a journalist investigation by Capital Weekly revealed that the brother of the chief executive of the National Agency for Roads had won public procurements contracts for road constructions for about 120 million leva (USD\$94 million). These findings provoked huge public outrage that eventually led to the resignation the chief executive of the National Agency for Roads.

**References:**

120 miliona ot batko," Capital Weekly, January 2008: <http://www.capital.bg/show.php?storyid=446989>

"Batkovci na vseki kilometur," Capital Weekly, January 2008: <http://www.capital.bg/show.php?storyid=456706>

**100:** Nepotism (favorable treatment of family members), cronyism (favorable treatment of friends and colleagues), and patronage (favorable treatment of those who reward their superiors) are actively discouraged at all levels of the civil service. Hirings, firings, and promotions are based on merit and performance.

**75:**

**50:** Nepotism, cronyism, and patronage are discouraged, but exceptions exist. Political leaders or senior officials sometimes appoint family member or friends to favorable positions in the civil service, or lend other favorable treatment.

**25:**

**0:** Nepotism, cronyism, and patronage are commonly accepted principles in hiring, firing and promotions of civil servants.

45d. In practice, civil servants have clear job descriptions.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

All civil servants have clear job descriptions included in the administrative structures' Rules of Organization.

**References:**

State of Administration (2007): <http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/AnnualReport%202007.pdf>

**100:** Civil servants almost always have formal job descriptions establishing levels of seniority, assigned functions, and compensation. Job descriptions are a reliable representation of positions in terms of a person's authority, responsibility and base pay.

**75:**

**50:** Civil servants often have formal job descriptions, but exceptions exist. Some civil servants may not be part of the formal assignment of duties and compensations. Some job descriptions may not map clearly to pay or responsibilities in some cases.

**25:**

**0:** Civil servants do not have formal roles or job descriptions. If they do, such job descriptions have little or nothing to do with the position's responsibilities, authority, or pay.

45e. In practice, civil servant bonuses constitute only a small fraction of total pay.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Generally, civil servants' bonuses constitute only a small part of their total salary, although in some particular cases, bonuses might exceed 10 percent of the basic salary.

**References:**

State of Administration -(2007): <http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/AnnualReport%202007.pdf>

**100:** Civil servant bonuses constitute no more than 10% of total pay and do not represent a major element of take-home pay.

**75:**

**50:** Civil servant bonuses are generally a small percentage of total take-home pay for most civil servants though exceptions exist where some civil servants' bonuses represent a significant part of total pay.

**25:**

**0:** Most civil servants receive bonuses that represent a significant amount of total take-home pay. In some cases bonuses represent the majority of total pay to civil servants.

45f. In practice, the government publishes the number of authorized civil service positions along with the number of positions actually filled.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There is a Register of Administrative Structures, as required by the Law on Public Administration. The Register is an online database of all administrative structures and positions in the civil administrations (occupied and vacant). The register is regularly updated.

**References:**

Website of the Register of Administrative Structures: <http://www1.government.bg/ras/konkursi/index.html>  
State of Administration (2007): <http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/AnnualReport%202007.pdf>

**100:** The government publishes such a list on a regular basis.

**75:**

**50:** The government publishes such a list but it is often delayed or incomplete. There may be multiple years in between each successive publication.

**25:**

**0:** The government rarely or never publishes such a list, or when it does it is wholly incomplete.

45g. In practice, the independent redress mechanism for the civil service is effective.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

While no specific or independent system exists for the civil service, the existing redress mechanism of the general courts is generally effective. The problem is that court proceedings can take longer, potentially reducing the overall effectiveness of the system.

**References:**

State of Administration (2007): <http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/AnnualReport%202007.pdf>



**100:** The independent redress mechanism for the civil service can control the timing and pace of its investigations without any input from the bodies that manage civil servants on a day-to-day basis.

**75:**

**50:** The independent civil service redress mechanism can generally decide what to investigate and when but is sometimes subject to pressure from the executive or the bodies that manage civil servants on a day-to-day basis on politically sensitive issues.

**25:**

**0:** The civil service redress mechanism must rely on approval from the executive or the bodies that manage civil servants on a day-to-day basis before initiating investigations. Politically sensitive investigations are almost impossible to move forward on.

45h. In practice, in the past year, the government has paid civil servants on time.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There have not been any problems in this respect so far.

**References:**

State of Administration (2007): <http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/AnnualReport%202007.pdf>

**100:** In the past year, no civil servants have been paid late.

**75:**

**50:** In the past year, some civil servants have been paid late.

**25:**

**0:** In the past year, civil servants have frequently been denied due pay.

45i. In practice, civil servants convicted of corruption are prohibited from future government employment.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There are no cases in which persons convicted of corruption have been reappointed to the public administration. However, there have been cases of reappointment of persons accused of corruption who have not been convicted.

**References:**

State of Administration (2007): <http://www.mdaar.government.bg/docs/AnnualReport%202007.pdf>

**100:** A system of formal blacklists and cooling off periods is in place for civil servants convicted of corruption. All civil servants are subject to this system.

**75:**

**50:** A system of formal blacklists and cooling off periods is in place, but the system has flaws. Some civil servants may not be affected by the system, or the prohibitions are sometimes not effective. Some bans are only temporary.

**25:**

**0:** There is no such system, or the system is consistently ineffective in prohibiting future employment of convicted civil servants.

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## 46. Are there regulations addressing conflicts of interest for civil servants?

64

46a. In law, senior members of the civil service are required to file an asset disclosure form.

**YES** | NO

### References:

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 2): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if senior members of the civil service are required by law to file an asset disclosure form while in office, illustrating sources of income, stock holdings, and other assets. This form does not need to be publicly available to score a YES.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any senior member of the civil service is not required to disclose assets.

46b. In law, there are requirements for civil servants to recuse themselves from policy decisions where their personal interests may be affected.

**YES** | NO

### References:

Civil Servants Act (Article 29a): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/40648.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are requirements for civil servants to recuse themselves from policy decisions where their personal interests, including personal financial interests as well as those of their family and friends, are affected.

**NO:** A NO score exists if no such requirements exist in regulation or law.

46c. In law, there are restrictions for civil servants entering the private sector after leaving the government.

YES | **NO**

**Comments:**

There are no such restrictions.

**References:**

There are no such restrictions.

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are regulations restricting civil servants' ability to take positions in the private sector after leaving government that would present a conflict of interest, including positions that directly seek to influence their former government colleagues.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such restrictions exist.

46d. In law, there are regulations governing gifts and hospitality offered to civil servants.

**YES** | NO

**Comments:**

No such legal restrictions exist. However, they are included in the Codes of Conduct of the Civil Servants.

**References:**

Civil Servants Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/40648.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are formal guidelines regarding gifts and hospitality given to civil servants.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no such guidelines or regulations.

46e. In law, there are requirements for the independent auditing of the asset disclosure forms of senior members of the civil service.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 7): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a legal or regulatory requirement for independent auditing of civil service asset disclosures. The auditing is performed by an impartial third-party.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no legal or regulatory requirements for the independent auditing of civil service asset disclosures or if such requirements exist but allow for self-auditing.

46f. In practice, the regulations restricting post-government private sector employment for civil servants are effective.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

N/A: There are no such restrictions.

**100:** The regulations restricting post-government private sector employment for civil servants are uniformly enforced. There are no cases or few cases of civil servants taking jobs in the private sector after leaving government where they directly lobby or seek to influence their former government colleagues without an adequate cooling off" period.

**75:**

**50:** The regulations are generally enforced though some exceptions exist. In certain sectors, civil servants are known to regularly take jobs in the private sector that entail directly lobbying or seeking to influence their former government colleagues. Cooling off periods are short and sometimes ignored.

**25:**

**0:** The regulations are rarely or never enforced. Civil servants routinely take jobs in the private sector following government employment that involve direct lobbying or influencing of former government colleagues. Cooling off periods are non-existent or never enforced.

46g. In practice, the regulations governing gifts and hospitality offered to civil servants are effective.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Not much reliable information on the topic exists, but the overall impression of experts is that problems are still present.

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director, Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to civil servants are regularly enforced. Civil servants never or rarely accept gifts or hospitality above what is allowed.

**75:**

**50:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to civil servants are generally applied though exceptions exist. Some civil servants in certain sectors are known to accept greater amounts of gifts and hospitality from outside interest groups or private sector actors than is allowed.

**25:**

**0:** The regulations governing gifts and hospitality to the civil service are routinely ignored and unenforced. Civil servants routinely accept significant amounts of gifts and hospitality from outside interest groups and actors seeking to influence their decisions.

46h. In practice, the requirements for civil service recusal from policy decisions affecting personal interests are effective.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

This is still a serious problem. Nepotism, cronyism and patronage still remain serious problems. There were several cases that became public during the study period. In January 2008, a journalist investigation by Capital Weekly revealed that the brother of the chief executive of the National Agency for Roads had won public procurements contracts for road constructions for about 120 million leva (USD\$94 million). These findings provoked huge public outrage that eventually led to the resignation the chief executive of the National Agency for Roads.

**References:**

120 miliona ot batko", Capital Weekly, January, 2008: <http://www.capital.bg/show.php?storyid=446989>  
"Batkovci na vseki kilometur", Capital Weekly, January, 2008: <http://www.capital.bg/show.php?storyid=456706>

**100:** The requirements that civil servants recuse themselves from policy decisions where their personal interests are affected are routinely followed by most or all civil servants.

**75:**

**50:** The requirements that civil servants recuse themselves from policy decisions where their personal interests are affected are followed by most civil servants though exceptions exist. In certain sectors, civil servants are known to routinely participate in policy decisions where their personal interests are affected.

**25:**

**0:** Most civil servants routinely ignore recusal requirements and continue to participate in policy decisions where their personal interests are affected.

46i. In practice, civil service asset disclosures are audited.

100 | **75** | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In law, only the disclosure records of civil service senior members are subject to audit. The National Audit Office (NAO) compares data declared in the disclosure forms of the senior members of the civil service with data from the National Revenue Agency and reports inconsistencies. This is more or less what the law provides for the NAO to do. The problem is that there are no further investigations and punishments for those that break the provisions of the law. In society there are powerful suspicions that many civil servants can easily circumvent the law and not declare their actual assets and property.

**References:**

Report of the National Audit Office: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/index.php?p=2228>

**100:** Civil service asset disclosures are regularly audited using generally accepted auditing practices.

**75:**

**50:** Civil service asset disclosures are audited, but audits are limited in some way, such as using inadequate auditing standards, or the presence of exceptions to disclosed assets.

**25:**

**0:** Civil service asset disclosures are not audited, or the audits performed have no value. Audits may be performed by entities known to be partisan or biased in their practices.

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## 47. Can citizens access the asset disclosure records of senior civil servants?

92

47a. In law, citizens can access the asset disclosure records of senior civil servants.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 6): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if laws or regulations guarantee that citizens can access the asset records of senior civil servants.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if senior civil servants do not file an asset disclosure. A NO score is earned if senior civil servants file an asset disclosure, but it is not available to the public.

47b. In practice, citizens can access the asset disclosure records of senior civil servants within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In law, disclosure records of senior civil servants should be published on the National Audit Office's website, but they are not accessible online yet. However, access is provided through the provisions of the Access to Public Information Act.

**References:**

Written order of the Chairman of the National Audit Office on the access to government officials' disclosure records: [http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/\\_bg/zapovedPR.doc](http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/_bg/zapovedPR.doc)

**100:** Records are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Records take around two weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than a month to acquire. In some cases, most records may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

47c. In practice, citizens can access the asset disclosure records of senior civil servants at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Accessing senior civil servants' disclosure records is not expensive.

**References:**

Written order of the Chairman of the National Audit Office on the access to government officials' disclosure records: [http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/\\_bg/zapovedPR.doc](http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/_bg/zapovedPR.doc)

**100:** Records are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

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48. Are employees protected from recrimination or other negative consequences when reporting corruption (i.e. whistle-blowing)?

6

48a. In law, civil servants who report cases of corruption, graft, abuse of power, or abuse of resources are protected from recrimination or other negative consequences.

YES | **NO**

**Comments:**

There is some standard protection in the Penal Code for those who cooperate with the bodies of investigation, but there is no specific protection for civil servants who report cases of corruption.

**References:**

Penal Code: [http://www.vks.bg/vks\\_p04\\_04.htm](http://www.vks.bg/vks_p04_04.htm)

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are specific laws against recrimination against public sector whistleblowers. This may include prohibitions on termination, transfer, harassment or other consequences.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no legal protections for public-sector whistleblowers.

48b. In practice, civil servants who report cases of corruption, graft, abuse of power, or abuse of resources are protected from recrimination or other negative consequences.

100 | 75 | 50 | **25** | 0

**Comments:**

Not much information is available on this, but the overall perception of the experts is that the current system does not provide the civil servants who report cases of corruption with enough protection.

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** Public sector whistleblowers can report abuses of power without fear of negative consequences. This may be due to robust mechanisms to protect the identity of whistleblowers or may be due to a culture that encourages disclosure and accountability.

**75:**

**50:** Public sector whistleblowers are sometimes able to come forward without negative consequences, but in other cases, whistleblowers are punished for disclosing, either through official or unofficial means.



**25:**

**0:** Public sector whistleblowers often face substantial negative consequences, such as losing a job, relocating to a less prominent position, or some form of harassment.

48c. In law, private sector employees who report cases of corruption, graft, abuse of power, or abuse of resources are protected from recrimination or other negative consequences.

YES | **NO**

**References:**

Penal Code: [http://www.vks.bg/vks\\_p04\\_04.htm](http://www.vks.bg/vks_p04_04.htm)

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are specific laws against recrimination against private sector whistleblowers. This may include prohibitions on termination, transfer, harassment or other consequences.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no legal protections for private-sector whistleblowers.

48d. In practice, private sector employees who report cases of corruption, graft, abuse of power, or abuse of resources are protected from recrimination or other negative consequences.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | **0**

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** Private sector whistleblowers can report abuses of power without fear of negative consequences. This may be due to robust mechanisms to protect the identity of whistleblowers or may be due to a culture that encourages disclosure and accountability.

**75:**

**50:** Private sector whistleblowers are sometimes able to come forward without negative consequences, but in other cases, whistleblowers are punished for disclosing, either through official or unofficial means.

**25:**

**0:** Private sector whistleblowers often face substantial negative consequences, such as losing a job, relocating to a less prominent position, or some form of harassment.

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50. In practice, is the internal mechanism (i.e. phone hotline, e-mail address, local office) through which civil servants can report corruption effective?

50a. In practice, the internal reporting mechanism for public sector corruption has a professional, full-time staff.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Most of the inspectorates in the state institutions have sufficient staff. The problem is that signs of corruption are not their main priority.

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** The agency/entity has staff sufficient to fulfill its basic mandate.

**75:**

**50:** The agency/entity has limited staff, a fact that hinders its ability to fulfill its basic mandate.

**25:**

**0:** The agency/entity has no staff, or a limited staff that is clearly unqualified to fulfill its mandate.

50b. In practice, the internal reporting mechanism for public sector corruption receives regular funding.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The inspectorates within the ministries have sufficient funding. However, it is not clear what portion of the funding is directly intended for activities related to signs of corruption.

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** The agency/entity has a predictable source of funding that is fairly consistent from year to year. Political considerations are not a major factor in determining agency funding.

**75:**

**50:** The agency/entity has a regular source of funding but may be pressured by cuts, or threats of cuts to the agency budget. Political considerations have an effect on agency funding.

**25:**

**0:** Funding source is unreliable. Funding may be removed arbitrarily or as retaliation for agency actions.

50c. In practice, the internal reporting mechanism for public sector corruption acts on complaints within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Despite numerous formal mechanisms for reporting corruption, there have not been any spectacular cases exposed as a result of their activity. There is no independent study on how many of the complaints are answered and how quickly. The general public has little trust in the existing reporting mechanisms.

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** The agency/entity acts on complaints quickly. While some backlog is expected and inevitable, complaints are acknowledged promptly and investigations into serious abuses move steadily towards resolution. Citizens with simple issues can expect a resolution within a month.

**75:**

**50:** The agency/entity acts on complaints quickly, with some exceptions. Some complaints may not be acknowledged, and simple issues may take more than two months to resolve.

**25:**

**0:** The agency/entity cannot resolve complaints quickly. Complaints may be unacknowledged for more than a month, and simple issues may take more than three months to resolve. Serious abuses are not investigated with any urgency.

50d. In practice, when necessary, the internal reporting mechanism for public sector corruption initiates investigations.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

So far, there have not been any spectacular investigations into cases of corruption exposed as a result of the activity of the existing reporting mechanism.

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** When irregularities are discovered, the agency/entity is aggressive in investigating the government or in cooperating with other agencies' investigations.

**75:**

**50:** The agency/entity starts investigations, but is limited in its effectiveness. The agency/entity may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders, reluctant to cooperate with other investigative agencies, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The agency/entity does not effectively investigate. The agency/entity may start investigations but not complete them, may refuse to cooperate with other investigative agencies, or may fail to detect offenders. The agency/entity may be partisan in its application of power.

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49. Is there an internal mechanism (i.e. phone hotline, e-mail address, local office) through which civil servants can report corruption?

100

49. In law, is there an internal mechanism (i.e. phone hotline, e-mail address, local office) through which civil servants can report corruption?

YES

NO

**Comments:**

There is no specific law on this and no centralized system exists, but there are many inspectorates in state institutions that are meant to collect and investigate signals of corruption. Such mechanisms exist in the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform. They can receive information not only from the civil servants but also from citizens.

**References:**

See, for example, the report mechanism of the Ministry of Interior: <http://nocorr.mvr.bg/crr/p5c1.nsf/6152030f80281b98c2256f4d002a7867?OpenForm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a mechanism, or multiple mechanisms for multiple national government agencies, through which civil servants can report cases of graft, misuse of public funds, or corruption.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such mechanism (or equivalent series of mechanisms) exists.

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56  
IV-3. Procurement

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51. Is the public procurement process effective?

90

51a. In law, there are regulations addressing conflicts of interest for public procurement officials.

YES | NO

**References:**

Civil Servants Act (Article 29a): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/40648.htm>

Code of Conduct of Public Procurement Agency

Employees: [http://www.aop.bg/fckedit2/user/File/bg/agency/eticen\\_%20kodeks.pdf](http://www.aop.bg/fckedit2/user/File/bg/agency/eticen_%20kodeks.pdf)

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are specific formal regulations defining and regulating conflicts of interest between official public duty and private interests for public procurement officials. A YES score is earned if such regulations cover all civil servants, including procurement officials.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such rules exist.

51b. In law, there is mandatory professional training for public procurement officials.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

No such requirements exist in the Public Procurement Act. The Civil Servants Act provides for mandatory training for all newly appointed civil servants.

**References:**

Civil Servants Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/40648.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if public procurement officials receive regular mandatory training to ensure professional standards in supervising the tendering process. A YES score is earned if such training is mandated for portions of the broader civil service, to include procurement officials.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no regular required training of public procurement officials or if training is sporadic, inconsistent, unrelated to procurement processes, or voluntary.

51c. In practice, the conflicts of interest regulations for public procurement officials are enforced.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Public procurement is still one of the main corruption instruments that are used by the governing parties to compensate their donors for election financial assistance. During the study there were many journalist investigations revealing irregularities in the public procurement.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.  
Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council On Progress in Bulgaria under the Co-operation and Verification Mechanism (2008): [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat\\_general/cvm/docs/bulgaria\\_report\\_20080723\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/cvm/docs/bulgaria_report_20080723_en.pdf)

**100:** Regulations regarding conflicts of interest for procurement officials are aggressively enforced.

**75:**

**50:** Conflict-of-interest regulations exist, but are flawed. Some violations may not be enforced, or some officials may be exempt from regulations.

**25:**

**0:** Conflict-of-interest regulations do not exist, or are consistently ineffective.

51d. In law, there is a mechanism that monitors the assets, incomes and spending habits of public procurement officials.

**YES** | NO

**Comments:**

In law, only the heads of the Public Procurement Agency are obliged to submit annual asset disclosure forms to the National Audit Office.

**References:**

Law on Public Disclosure of Assets of High-ranking State Officials (Article 2): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/23743.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal mandate to some agency to monitor the assets, incomes and spending habits of public procurement officials, such as an inspector general, or ombudsman.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such mandate exists.

51e. In law, major procurements require competitive bidding.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Public Procurement Act (Article 14): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/16585.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if all major procurements (defined as those greater than 0.5% of GDP) require competitive bidding.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if competitive bidding is not required by law or regulation for major procurement (greater than 0.5% OF GDP).

51f. In law, strict formal requirements limit the extent of sole sourcing.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Public Procurement Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/16585.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if sole sourcing is limited to specific, tightly defined conditions, such as when a supplier is the only source of a skill or technology.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no prohibitions on sole sourcing. A NO score is earned if the prohibitions on sole sourcing are general and unspecific.

51g. In law, unsuccessful bidders can instigate an official review of procurement decisions.

**YES** | NO

**Comments:**

Procurement decisions can be appealed before the Competition Protection Commission and the courts.

**References:**

Public Procurement Act (Chapter 11): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/16585.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal appeal process for unsuccessful bidders.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such process exists.

51h. In law, unsuccessful bidders can challenge procurement decisions in a court of law.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Public Procurement Act (Chapter 122e): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/16585.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if unsuccessful bidders can use the courts to appeal a procurement decision.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such process exists.

51i. In law, companies guilty of major violations of procurement regulations (i.e. bribery) are prohibited from participating in future procurement bids.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Public Procurement Act (Article 47): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/16585.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are formal procurement blacklists, designed to prevent convicted companies from doing business with the government.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such process exists.

51j. In practice, companies guilty of major violations of procurement regulations (i.e. bribery) are prohibited from participating in future procurement bids.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Not many companies have been convicted of corruption so far. It is not difficult for the companies convicted to circumvent the law by changing registration, title and chief executives and then participate again in procurement bids.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** A system of formal blacklists and cooling off periods is in place for companies convicted of corruption. All companies are subject to this system.

**75:**

**50:** A system of formal blacklists and cooling off periods is in place, but the system has flaws. Some procurements or companies may not be affected by the system, or the prohibitions are sometimes not effective.

**25:**

**0:** There is no such system, or the system is consistently ineffective in prohibiting future hiring of blacklisted companies.



52a. In law, citizens can access public procurement regulations.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There is a Public Procurement Register where all regulations and procurements are published.

**References:**

Public Procurement Act (Articles 21, 22): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/16585.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if procurement rules are, by law, open to the public. These regulations are defined here as the rules governing the competitive procurement process.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if procurement rules are officially secret for any reason or if there are no procurement rules.

52b. In law, the government is required to publicly announce the results of procurement decisions.

YES | NO

**References:**

Public Procurement Act (Articles 21, 22): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/16585.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if the government is required to publicly post or announce the results of the public procurement process. This can be done through major media outlets or on a publicly-accessible government register or log.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no requirement for the government to publicly announce the results of the public procurement process.

52c. In practice, citizens can access public procurement regulations within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria (2007); Access to Information Programme (2008): [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** Records are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information. These records are defined here as the rules governing the competitive procurement process.

**75:**

**50:** Records take around two weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than a month to acquire. In some cases, most records may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

52d. In practice, citizens can access public procurement regulations at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria (2007); Access to Information Programme (2008): [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** Records are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line. These records are defined here as the rules governing the competitive procurement process.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

52e. In practice, major public procurements are effectively advertised.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria (2007); Access to Information Programme (2008): [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** There is a formal process of advertising public procurements. This may include a government website, newspaper advertising, or other official announcements. All major procurements are advertised in this way. Sufficient time is allowed for

bidders to respond to advertisements.

**75:**

**50:** There is a formal process of advertisement but it is flawed. Some major procurements may not be advertised, or the advertising process may not be effective. The time between advertisements and bidding may be too short to allow full participation.

**25:**

**0:** There is no formal process of advertising major public procurements or the process is superficial and ineffective.

52f. In practice, citizens can access the results of major public procurement bids.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Information about the contracts made with the contracting companies is still not publicly available, because it is treated as a commercial secret. However, this information is crucial for assessing the integrity of the procurement process.

**References:**

Annual Report: Access to Information in Bulgaria (2007); Access to Information Programme (2008): [http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007\\_en.pdf](http://www.aip-bg.org/pdf/report2007_en.pdf)

**100:** Records of public procurement results are publicly available through a formal process.

**75:**

**50:** Records of public procurements are available, but there are exceptions to this practice. Some information may not be available, or some citizens may not be able to access information.

**25:**

**0:** This information is not available to the public through an official process.

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## IV-4. Privatization

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### 53. Is the privatization process effective?

100

53a. In law, all businesses are eligible to compete for privatized state assets.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

Specific requirements could be in place for certain privatization deals.

**References:**

Law on Privatization and Post-privatization Control: <http://212.122.167.183/apnew/Root/Files/laws/laws747.rtf>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if all businesses are equally eligible to compete for privatized assets. A YES score is still earned if the government did not privatize any state-owned assets during the study period.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any group of businesses (other than those blacklisted due to corruption charges) is excluded by law.

53b. In law, there are regulations addressing conflicts of interest for government officials involved in privatization.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law for Privatization and Post-privatization Control (Chapter 4): <http://212.122.167.183/apnew/Root/Files/laws/laws747.rtf>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are specific formal regulations defining and regulating conflicts of interest between official public duty and private interests for privatization officials. A YES score is earned if such regulations cover all civil servants, including privatization officials.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no such formal regulations.

53c. In practice, conflicts of interest regulations for government officials involved in privatization are enforced.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There have been no cases of proven violations of the conflict of interest regulations by officials from the Privatization Agency during the study period. Privatization is no longer a priority for the government. Most of the major state-owned companies were privatized several years ago.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** Regulations regarding conflicts of interest for privatization officials are aggressively enforced.

**75:**

**50:** Conflict-of-interest regulations exist, but are flawed. Some violations may not be enforced, or some officials may be exempt from the regulations.

**25:**

**0:** Conflict of interest regulations do not exist, or are consistently ineffective.

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## 54. Can citizens access the terms and conditions of privatization bids?

100

54a. In law, citizens can access privatization regulations.

**YES** | NO

### Comments:

In law, there are public registers that contain information on the privatization process and the deals completed.

### References:

Law for Privatization and Post-privatization Control: <http://212.122.167.183/apnew/Root/Files/laws/laws747.rtf>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if privatization rules (defined here as the rules governing the competitive privatization process) are, by law, open to the public. Even if privatization is infrequent or rare, the most recent privatization should be used as the basis for scoring this indicator.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if privatization rules are officially secret for any reason or if there are no privatization rules.

54b. In practice, privatizations are effectively advertised.

**100** | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### References:

Website of Privatization Agency: <http://www.priv.government.bg/apnew/Root/index.php>

**100:** There is a formal process of advertising privatizations. This may include a government website, newspaper advertising, or other official announcements. All major procurements are advertised in this way. Sufficient time is allowed for bidders to respond to advertisements.

**75:**

**50:** There is a formal process of advertisement but it is flawed. Some privatizations may not be advertised, or the advertising process may not be effective. The time between advertisements and bidding may be too short to allow full participation.

**25:**

**0:** There is no formal process of advertising privatizations or the process is superficial and ineffective.

54c. In law, the government is required to publicly announce the results of privatization decisions.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Law for Privatization and Post-privatization Control: <http://212.122.167.183/apnew/Root/Files/laws/laws747.rtf>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if the government is required to publicly post or announce the results of the privatization process. This can be done through major media outlets or on a publicly-accessible government register or log.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no requirement for the government to publicly announce the results of the privatization process.

54d. In practice, citizens can access privatization regulations within a reasonable time period.

**100** | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Regulations are published on the Privatization Agency's website.

**References:**

Website of Privatization Agency: <http://www.priv.government.bg/apnew/Root/index.php>

**100:** Records (defined here as the rules governing the competitive privatization process) are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Records take around two weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than a month to acquire. In some cases, most records may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

54e. In practice, citizens can access privatization regulations at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Regulations are available online.

**References:**

Website of Privatization Agency: <http://www.priv.government.bg/apnew/Root/index.php>

**100:** Records (defined here as the rules governing the competitive privatization process) are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

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Category V. Oversight and Regulation

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V-1. <sup>90</sup> National Ombudsman

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56. Is the national ombudsman effective?

89

56a. In law, the ombudsman is protected from political interference.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

Parliament elects the ombudsman, but his or her office is a fully independent structure of the executive and legislative branches.

**References:**

Ombudsman Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/28283.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned only if the agency (or set of agencies) has some formal organizational independence from the government. A YES score is earned even if the entity is legally separate but in practice staffed by partisans.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if the agency is a subordinate part of any government ministry or agency, such as the Department of Interior or the Justice Department.

56b. In practice, the ombudsman is protected from political interference.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The ombudsman is elected for a five-year term and cannot be removed by the Parliament without serious justification. In practice, this procedure guarantees a high level of protection from ungrounded dismissal of the ombudsman. There were no publicly known cases of political interference in the work of the ombudsman (during the survey period).

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** This agency (or set of agencies) operates independently of the political process, without incentive or pressure to render favorable judgments in politically sensitive cases. Investigations can operate without hindrance from the government, including access to politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** This agency (or set of agencies) is typically independent, yet is sometimes influenced in its work by negative or positive political incentives. This may include public criticism or praise by the government. The ombudsman may not be provided with some information needed to carry out its investigations.

**25:**

**0:** This agency (or set of agencies) is commonly influenced by political or personal incentives. This may include conflicting family relationships, professional partnerships, or other personal loyalties. Negative incentives may include threats, harassment or other abuses of power. The ombudsman cannot compel the government to reveal sensitive information.

56c. In practice, the head of the ombudsman agency/entity is protected from removal without relevant justification.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.



**100:** The director of the ombudsman (or directors of multiple agencies) serves a defined term and cannot be removed without a significant justification through a formal process, such as impeachment for abuse of power.

**75:**

**50:** The director of the ombudsman (or directors of multiple agencies) serves a defined term, but can in some cases be removed through a combination of official or unofficial pressure.

**25:**

**0:** The director of the ombudsman (or directors of multiple agencies) can be removed at the will of political leadership.

56d. In practice, the ombudsman agency (or agencies) has a professional, full-time staff.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** The ombudsman agency (or agencies) has staff sufficient to fulfill its basic mandate.

**75:**

**50:** The ombudsman agency (or agencies) has limited staff that hinders its ability to fulfill its basic mandate.

**25:**

**0:** The ombudsman agency (or agencies) has no staff, or a limited staff that is clearly unqualified to fulfill its mandate.

56e. In practice, agency appointments support the independence of the ombudsman agency (or agencies).

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The ombudsman independently appoints the staff members working for the ombudsman's office. Generally, appointments made support the independence of its institutions. Some staff members have had clear political affiliations in the past, but they represent different political parties.

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** Appointments to the agency (or agencies) are made based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed are free of conflicts of interest due to personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed usually do not have

clear political party affiliations.

**75:**

**50:** Appointments are usually based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed may have clear party loyalties.

**25:**

**0:** Appointments are often based on political considerations. Individuals appointed often have conflicts of interest due to personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed often have clear party loyalties.

56f. In practice, the ombudsman agency (or agencies) receives regular funding.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** The agency (or agencies) has a predictable source of funding that is fairly consistent from year to year. Political considerations are not a major factor in determining agency funding.

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) has a regular source of funding, but may be pressured by cuts, or threats of cuts to the agency budget. Political considerations have an effect on agency funding.

**25:**

**0:** Funding source is unreliable. Funding may be removed arbitrarily or as retaliation for agency functions.

56g. In practice, the ombudsman agency (or agencies) makes publicly available reports.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Reports at the website of the ombudsman: <http://www.ombudsman.bg/index.php?action=list&item=opinions&type=10>

**100:** The agency (or agencies) makes regular, publicly available, substantial reports either to the legislature or directly to the public outlining the full scope of its work.

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) makes publicly available reports to the legislature and/or directly to the public that are sometimes delayed or incomplete.

**25:**

**0:** The agency (or agencies) makes no reports of its activities, or makes reports that are consistently out of date, unavailable to the public, or insubstantial.

56h. In practice, when necessary, the national ombudsman (or equivalent agency or agencies) initiates investigations.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The very idea, as understood and developed in the Law on the Ombudsman, is that the ombudsman should collect citizens' complaints, and approach the responsible institutions with requests to initiate investigations or address the issues concerned. So, the very nature of the ombudsman institution does not include investigative powers and activities. The ombudsman does initiate checks, but many of them are irrelevant in regards to corruption. In law, he can only approach other institutions with information about irregularities discovered. Some experts believe that so far, the ombudsman has not addressed some of the major problems in Bulgaria.

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** The agency aggressively starts investigations — or participates fully with cooperating agencies' investigations — into judicial misconduct. The agency is fair in its application of this power.

**75:**

**50:** The agency will start or cooperate in investigations, but often relies on external pressure to set priorities, or has limited effectiveness when investigating. The agency, though limited in effectiveness, is still fair in its application of power.

**25:**

**0:** The agency rarely investigates on its own or cooperates in other agencies' investigations, or the agency is partisan in its application of this power.

56i. In practice, when necessary, the national ombudsman (or equivalent agency or agencies) imposes penalties on offenders.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In most cases, the ombudsman does what he is supposed to do according to the law. However, he has no legal powers to impose penalties.

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** When rules violations are discovered, the agency is aggressive in penalizing offenders or in cooperating with other agencies who penalize offenders.

**75:**

**50:** The agency enforces rules, but is limited in its effectiveness. The agency may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders, resistant to cooperating with other agencies, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The agency does not effectively penalize offenders. The agency may make judgments but not enforce them, does not cooperate with other agencies in enforcing penalties, or may fail to make reasonable judgments against offenders. The agency may be partisan in its application of power.

56j. In practice, the government acts on the findings of the ombudsman agency (or agencies).

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There is no independent study on the topic.

**References:**

Interview with Svetoslav Georgiev, director of the Institute for Public Environment Development, Sofia, September 12, 2008.

**100:** Ombudsman's reports are taken seriously, with negative findings drawing prompt corrective action.

**75:**

**50:** In most cases, ombudsman's reports are acted on, though some exceptions may occur for politically sensitive issues, or particularly resistant agencies.

**25:**

**0:** Ombudsman's reports are often ignored, or given superficial attention. Ombudsman's reports do not lead to policy changes.

56k. In practice, the ombudsman agency (or agencies) acts on citizen complaints within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There is no independent study on the topic.

**References:**

Reports at the website of the ombudsman: <http://www.ombudsman.bg/index.php?action=list&item=opinions&type=10>

**100:** The agency (or agencies) acts on complaints quickly. While some backlog is expected and inevitable, complaints are acknowledged promptly and investigations into serious abuses move steadily towards resolution. Citizens with simple issues can expect a resolution within a month.

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) acts on complaints quickly, with some exceptions. Some complaints may not be acknowledged, and simple issues may take more than two months to resolve.

**25:**

**0:** The agency (or agencies) cannot resolve complaints quickly. Complaints may be unacknowledged for more than a month, and simple issues may take more than three months to resolve. Serious abuses are not investigated with any urgency.

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## 57. Can citizens access the reports of the ombudsman?

100

57a. In law, citizens can access reports of the ombudsman(s).

**YES** | NO

### References:

Ombudsman Act (Article 22): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/28283.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if all ombudsman reports are publicly available.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any ombudsman reports are not publicly available. This may include reports made exclusively to the legislature or the executive, which those bodies may choose not to distribute the reports.

57b. In practice, citizens can access the reports of the ombudsman(s) within a reasonable time period.

**100** | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### Comments:

Reports are available online.

### References:

Reports at the website of the ombudsman: <http://www.ombudsman.bg/index.php?action=list&item=opinions&type=10>

**100:** Reports are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Reports take around two weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Reports take more than a month to acquire. In some cases, most records may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

57c. In practice, citizens can access the reports of the ombudsman(s) at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Reports are available online.

**References:**

Reports at the website of the ombudsman: <http://www.ombudsman.bg/index.php?action=list&item=opinions&type=10>

**100:** Reports are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Reports can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Reports impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving reports may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving reports imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Reports costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

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55. Is there a national ombudsman, public protector or equivalent agency (or collection of agencies) covering the entire public sector?

100

55. In law, is there a national ombudsman, public protector or equivalent agency (or collection of agencies) covering the entire public sector?

YES | NO

**References:**

Ombudsman Act : <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/28283.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a specific agency or set of agencies whose primary mandate is to investigate the actions of government on the behalf of common citizens. This agency or set of agencies should be specifically charged with seeking out and documenting abuses of power.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such agency or set of agencies exists, or that function is a secondary concern of a larger body, such as the legislature.

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## V-2. Supreme Audit Institution

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### 59. Is the supreme audit institution effective?

88

59a. In law, the supreme audit institution is protected from political interference.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

Members and the chairman of the National Audit Office (NAO) are elected by the Parliament. NAO is fully independent from the government.

**References:**

Law on the National Audit Office (Articles 2, 10): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/200.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned only if the agency has some formal organizational independence from the government. A YES score is earned even if the entity is legally separate but in practice staffed by partisans.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if the agency is a subordinate part of any government ministry or agency, such as the Department of Interior or the Justice Department.

59b. In practice, the head of the audit agency is protected from removal without relevant justification.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** The director of the agency serves a defined term and cannot be removed without a significant justification through a formal process, such as impeachment for abuse of power.

**75:**

**50:** The director of the agency serves a defined term, but can in some cases be removed through a combination of official or unofficial pressure.

**25:**

**0:** The director of the agency can be removed at the will of political leadership.

59c. In practice, the audit agency has a professional, full-time staff.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The National Audit Office has staff members who are well trained to fulfill its basic functions as described by law. The problem is that the workload of the institution has grown significantly during the last several years due to new obligations deriving from the Bulgarian membership in the European Union. The current staff numbers are not enough to deal with those new obligations efficiently.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** The agency has staff sufficient to fulfill its basic mandate.

**75:**

**50:** The agency has limited staff that hinders its ability to fulfill its basic mandate.

**25:**

**0:** The agency has no staff, or a limited staff that is clearly unqualified to fulfill its mandate.

59d. In practice, audit agency appointments support the independence of the agency.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.



**100:** Appointments to the agency are made based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed are free of conflicts of interest due to personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed usually do not have clear political party affiliations.

**75:**

**50:** Appointments are usually based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed may have clear party loyalties.

**25:**

**0:** Appointments are often based on political considerations. Individuals appointed often have conflicts of interest due to personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed often have clear party loyalties.

59e. In practice, the audit agency receives regular funding.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** The agency has a predictable source of funding that is fairly consistent from year to year. Political considerations are not a major factor in determining agency funding.

**75:**

**50:** The agency has a regular source of funding, but may be pressured by cuts, or threats of cuts to the agency budget. Political considerations have an effect on agency funding.

**25:**

**0:** Funding source is unreliable. Funding may be removed arbitrarily or as retaliation for agency actions.

59f. In practice, the audit agency makes regular public reports.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Reports are published regularly on the website of National Audit Office.

**References:**

Reports at the website of National Audit Office: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/index.php?p=18>

**100:** The agency makes regular, publicly available, substantial reports to the legislature and/or to the public directly outlining the full scope of its work.

**75:**

**50:** The agency makes publicly available reports to the legislature and/or to the public directly that are sometimes delayed or incomplete.

**25:**

**0:** The agency makes no reports of its activities, or makes reports that are consistently out of date, unavailable to the public, or insubstantial.

59g. In practice, the government acts on the findings of the audit agency.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Generally, the government and especially the National Revenue Agency, act on the findings of the National Audit Office (NAO). However, this year the NAO discovered inconsistencies in some of the disclosure forms of high-ranking politicians and public officials, but there were not many efforts on behalf of prosecutor's office to initiate further investigations.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganey, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** Audit agency reports are taken seriously, with negative findings drawing prompt corrective action.

**75:**

**50:** In most cases, audit agency reports are acted on, though some exceptions may occur for politically sensitive issues, or particularly resistant agencies.

**25:**

**0:** Audit reports are often ignored, or given superficial attention. Audit reports do not lead to policy changes.

59h. In practice, the audit agency is able to initiate its own investigations.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Under the law, the National Audit Office may audit all institutions funded with public funds, but it is not able to initiate its own investigations.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** The supreme audit institution can control the timing and pace of its investigations without any input from the executive or legislature.

**75:**

**50:** The supreme audit institution can generally decide what to investigate, and when, but is subject to pressure from the executive or legislature on politically sensitive issues.

**25:**

**0:** The supreme audit institution must rely on approval from the executive or legislature before initiating investigations. Politically sensitive investigations are almost impossible to move forward on.

---

## 60. Can citizens access reports of the supreme audit institution?

100

60a. In law, citizens can access reports of the audit agency.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Law on the National Audit Office (Articles 2, 10): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/200.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if all supreme auditor reports are available to the general public.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any auditor reports are not publicly available. This may include reports made exclusively to the legislature or the executive, which those bodies may choose not to distribute.

60b. In practice, citizens can access audit reports within a reasonable time period.

**100** | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Most of the audit reports are published on the website of the National Audit Office. Access to the other reports is provided within a week through the provisions of the Access to Public Information Act.

**References:**

Written order of the Chairman of the National Audit Office on the access to government officials' disclosure records: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/bg/zapovedPR.doc>

**100:** Reports are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Reports are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Reports take around two weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Reports take more than a month to acquire. In some cases, most reports may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

60c. In practice, citizens can access the audit reports at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Reports are either available online or are not expensive to obtain.

**References:**

Written order of the Chairman of the National Audit Office on the access to government officials' disclosure records: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/bg/zapovedPR.doc>

**100:** Reports are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Reports can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Reports impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving reports may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving reports imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Report costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

---

58. Is there a national supreme audit institution, auditor general or equivalent agency covering the entire public sector?

100

58. In law, is there a national supreme audit institution, auditor general or equivalent agency covering the entire public sector?

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on the National Audit Office: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/200.html>  
<http://www.bulnao.government.bg>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a specific agency whose primary mandate is to audit and track the movement of money through the government. This agency should be specifically charged to investigate and document the misuse of funds. A system of agencies located in each department is equivalent.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such agency exists, or that function is a secondary concern of a larger body, such as the executive.

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96  
V-3. Taxes and Customs

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62. Is the tax collection agency effective?

100

62a. In practice, the tax collection agency has a professional, full-time staff.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** The agency has staff sufficient to fulfill its basic mandate.

**75:**

**50:** The agency has limited staff that hinders its ability to fulfill its basic mandate.

**25:**

**0:** The agency has no staff, or a limited staff that is clearly unqualified to fulfill its mandate.

62b. In practice, the tax agency receives regular funding.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** The agency has a predictable source of funding that is fairly consistent from year to year. Political considerations are not a major factor in determining agency funding.

**75:**

**50:** The agency has a regular source of funding, but may be pressured by cuts, or threats of cuts to the agency budget. Political considerations have an effect on agency funding.

**25:**

**0:** Funding source is unreliable. Funding may be removed arbitrarily or as retaliation for agency actions.

---

65. Is the customs and excise agency effective?

100

65a. In practice, the customs and excise agency has a professional, full-time staff.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** The agency has staff sufficient to fulfill its basic mandate.

**75:**

**50:** The agency has limited staff that hinders its ability to fulfill its basic mandate.

**25:**

**0:** The agency has no staff, or a limited staff that is clearly unqualified to fulfill its mandate.

65b. In practice, the customs and excise agency receives regular funding.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** The agency has a predictable source of funding that is fairly consistent from year to year. Political considerations are not a major factor in determining agency funding.

**75:**

**50:** The agency has a regular source of funding, but may be pressured by cuts, or threats of cuts to the agency budget. Political considerations have an effect on agency funding.

**25:**

**0:** Funding source is unreliable. Funding may be removed arbitrarily or as retaliation for agency actions.

---

### 61. Is there a national tax collection agency?

100

61. In law, is there a national tax collection agency?

**YES** | NO

**Comments:**

National Revenue Agency

**References:**

Law on National Revenue Agency: <http://www.nap.bg>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a national agency formally mandated to collect taxes.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if that function is spread over several agencies, or does not exist. A NO score is earned if national government ministries can collect taxes independently.

---

### 63. Are tax laws enforced uniformly and without discrimination?

75

63. In practice, are tax laws enforced uniformly and without discrimination?

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Unfortunately, there is no precise information on the subject. There are perceptions among the general public, as well as media allegations, that corruption is widespread, not only among tax officers but also in many other spheres of the state administration. These are, however, perceptions and should be treated with caution. However, there is no discrimination, since there is not a group of companies that are systematically targeted by the officials.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganey, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** Tax laws (which may be economically unfair as written) are enforced consistently for all citizens. No general group of citizens is more or less likely to evade tax law than another.

**75:**

**50:** Tax laws are generally enforced consistently, but some exceptions exist. For example, some groups may occasionally evade tax law. Some arbitrary and discriminatory tax rules exist.

**25:**

**0:** Tax law is unequally applied. Some groups of citizens are consistently more or less likely to evade tax law than others. Tax regulations are, as a rule, written to be discriminatory and/or arbitrary.

---

64. Is there a national customs and excise agency?

100

64. In law, is there a national customs and excise agency?

YES | NO

**Comments:**

National Customs Agency

**References:**

Customs Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/104.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is an agency formally mandated to collect excises and inspect customs.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if that function is spread over several agencies, or does not exist.

---

66. Are customs and excise laws enforced uniformly and without discrimination?



50

66. In practice, are customs and excise laws enforced uniformly and without discrimination?

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Perceptions about widespread corruption amongst customs officers are still common among experts and the general public.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** Customs and excise laws (which may be economically unfair as written) are enforced consistently for all citizens. No general group of citizens is more or less likely to evade customs than another.

**75:**

**50:** Customs and excise laws are generally enforced consistently, but some exceptions exist. For example, some groups may occasionally evade customs requirements.

**25:**

**0:** Customs and excise laws are unequally applied. Some groups of citizens are consistently more or less likely to evade customs and excise laws than others.

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## V-4. State-Owned Enterprises

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68. Is the agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism overseeing state-owned companies effective?

60

68a. In law, the agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism overseeing state-owned companies is protected from political interference.

YES | **NO**

**Comments:**

The enterprises, which are directly supervised by the ministries, are ultimately controlled by political appointees (ministers), who

also appoint board members. However, for publicly listed companies and companies providing financial services, there is an independent agency that exercises controlling functions.

**References:**

Law on the Financial Supervision Commission (Article 5): <http://www.fsc.bg/go.idecs?m=library&f=download&id=16510>

**YES:** A YES score is earned only if the agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism has some formal operational independence from the government. A YES score is earned even if the entity is legally separate but in practice staffed by partisans.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if the agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism is a subordinate part of any government ministry or agency.

68b. In practice, the agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism overseeing state-owned companies has a professional, full-time staff.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism has staff sufficient to fulfill its basic mandate.

**75:**

**50:** The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism has limited staff that hinders its ability to fulfill its basic mandate.

**25:**

**0:** The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism has no staff, or a limited staff that is clearly unqualified to fulfill its mandate.

68c. In practice, the agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism overseeing state-owned companies receives regular funding.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism has a predictable source of funding that is fairly consistent from year to year. Political considerations are not a major factor in determining agency funding.

**75:**

**50:** The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism has a regular source of funding, but may be pressured by cuts, or threats of cuts to the agency budget. Political considerations have an effect on agency funding.

**25:**

**0:** Funding source is unreliable. Funding may be removed arbitrarily or as retaliation for agency functions.

68d. In practice, when necessary, the agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism overseeing state-owned companies independently initiates investigations.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

It is difficult to assess with precision whether the agencies initiated investigations when needed, because there are no reports or independent studies on this issue. However, such investigations are still rare.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** When irregularities are discovered, the agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism is aggressive in investigating and/or in cooperating with other investigative bodies.

**75:**

**50:** The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism starts investigations, but is limited in its effectiveness or in its cooperation with other investigative agencies. The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism does not effectively investigate financial irregularities or cooperate with other investigative agencies. The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism may start investigations but not complete them, or may fail to detect offenders. The agency may be partisan in its application of power.

68e. In practice, when necessary, the agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism overseeing state-owned companies imposes penalties on offenders.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Although there are some cases in which offenders are investigated for misconduct, experts believe that more should be done to achieve effective control over state-owned companies.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** When rules violations are discovered, the agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism is aggressive in penalizing offenders and/or in cooperating with other agencies that impose penalties.

**75:**

**50:** The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism enforces rules, but is limited in its effectiveness or reluctant to cooperate with other agencies. The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism does not effectively penalize offenders or refuses to cooperate with other agencies that enforce penalties. The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism may make judgments but not enforce them, or may fail to make reasonable judgments against offenders. The agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism may be partisan in its application of power.

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## 69. Can citizens access the financial records of state-owned companies?

95

69a. In law, citizens can access the financial records of state-owned companies.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

In law, citizens can access the financial records of state-owned companies, especially publicly listed companies.

**References:**

Law on the Public Offering of Shares: <http://www.bulnao.government.bg/files/bg/ZCenniKnija.doc>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if the financial information of all state-owned companies is required by law to be public. State-owned companies are defined as companies owned in whole or in part by the government.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any category of state-owned company is exempt from this rule, or no such rules exist.

69b. In practice, the financial records of state-owned companies are regularly updated.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** State-owned companies always publicly disclose financial data, which is generally accurate and up to date.

**75:**

**50:** State-owned companies disclose financial data, but it is flawed. Some companies may misstate financial data, file the information behind schedule, or not publicly disclose certain data.

**25:**

**0:** Financial data is not publicly available, or is consistently superficial or otherwise of no value.

69c. In practice, the financial records of state-owned companies are audited according to international accounting standards.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** Financial records of all state-owned companies are regularly audited by a trained third party auditor using accepted international standards.

**75:**

**50:** Financial records of state-owned companies are regularly audited, but exceptions may exist. Some companies may use flawed or deceptive accounting procedures, or some companies may be exempted from this requirement.

**25:**

**0:** State-owned companies are not audited, or the audits have no functional value. The auditors may collude with the companies in providing misleading or false information to the public.

69d. In practice, citizens can access the financial records of state-owned companies within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Financial reports of publicly listed companies are available online. The reports of others companies are accessible through different procedures, including the Law on Access to Public Information.

**References:**

Public Register of the Financial Supervision Commission: <http://www3.fsc.bg/ERiK/runner?lang=BG>

**100:** Records are available on-line, or records can be obtained within two days. Records are uniformly available; there are no delays for politically sensitive information.

**75:**

**50:** Records take around two weeks to obtain. Some delays may be experienced.

**25:**

**0:** Records take more than a month to acquire. In some cases, most records may be available sooner, but there may be persistent delays in obtaining politically sensitive records.

69e. In practice, citizens can access the financial records of state-owned companies at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The financial records of state-owned companies are available online or are not expensive to obtain.

**References:**

Public Register of the Financial Supervision Commission: <http://www3.fsc.bg/ERiK/runner?lang=BG>

**100:** Records are free to all citizens, or available for the cost of photocopying. Records can be obtained at little cost, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Records impose a financial burden on citizens, journalists or CSOs. Retrieving records may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Retrieving records imposes a major financial burden on citizens. Records costs are prohibitive to most citizens, journalists, or CSOs trying to access this information.

---

67. Is there an agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism overseeing state-owned companies?

100

67. In law, is there an agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism overseeing state-owned companies?

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There are different mechanisms for overseeing the state-owned companies. Some of them are supervised by the ministries directly. Publicly listed companies are also supervised by the Financial Supervision Commission.

**References:**

There are different mechanisms for overseeing the state-owned companies. Some of them are supervised by the Ministries directly. Publicly listed companies are also supervised by the Financial Supervision Commission.

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is an agency, series of agencies, or equivalent mechanism tasked with overseeing the conduct and performance of state-owned companies on behalf of the public. A YES score can be earned if several government agencies or ministries oversee different state-owned enterprises. State-owned companies are defined as companies owned in whole or in part by the government.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if this function does not exist, or if some state-owned companies are free from government oversight.

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## 85 V-5. Business Licensing and Regulation

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### 70. Are business licenses available to all citizens?

94

70a. In law, anyone may apply for a business license.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Law on the Limitation of Administrative Regulation and Administrative Control over Economic Activity: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/36326.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if no particular group or category of citizens is excluded from applying for a business license, when required. A YES score is also earned if basic business licenses are not required.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if any group of citizens are categorically excluded from applying for a business license, when required

70b. In law, a complaint mechanism exists if a business license request is denied.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

Denial of a business license can be appealed before the administrative courts.

**References:**

Law on the Limitation of Administrative Regulation and Administrative Control over Economic

Activity: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/36326.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal process for appealing a rejected license.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such mechanism exists.

70c. In practice, citizens can obtain any necessary business license (i.e. for a small import business) within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

In many cases, business licenses can be obtained within a month. In other cases, however, such as construction licenses, the process takes longer than four months.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

Doing Business 2009: Bulgaria, World Bank: <http://www.doingbusiness.org/Documents/CountryProfiles/BGR.pdf>

**100:** Licenses are not required, or licenses can be obtained within roughly one week.

**75:**

**50:** Licensing is required and takes around one month. Some groups may be delayed up to a three months

**25:**

**0:** Licensing takes more than three months for most groups. Some groups may wait six months to one year to get necessary licenses.

70d. In practice, citizens can obtain any necessary business license (i.e. for a small import business) at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0



**Comments:**

The cost of business licenses is not excessive. For example, to obtain a construction permit in the capital of Bulgaria, construction companies need to pay 21 Bulgarian leva (USD\$14) per square meter, while the average market price of properties per square meter is 2400 Bulgarian leva (USD\$1,600).

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** Licenses are not required, or licenses are free. Licenses can be obtained at little cost to the organization, such as by mail, or on-line.

**75:**

**50:** Licenses are required, and impose a financial burden on the organization. Licenses may require a visit to a specific office, such as a regional or national capital.

**25:**

**0:** Licenses are required, and impose a major financial burden on the organization. Licensing costs are prohibitive to the organization.

---

## 71. Are there transparent business regulatory requirements for basic health, environmental, and safety standards?

100

71a. In law, basic business regulatory requirements for meeting public health standards are transparent and publicly available.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Law on the Limitation of Administrative Regulation and Administrative Control over Economic

Activity: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/36326.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if basic regulatory requirements for meeting public health standards are publicly accessible and transparent.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if such requirements are not made public or are otherwise not transparent.

71b. In law, basic business regulatory requirements for meeting public environmental standards are transparent and publicly available.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on the Limitation of Administrative Regulation and Administrative Control over Economic

Activity: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/36326.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if basic regulatory requirements for meeting public environmental standards are publicly accessible and transparent.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if such requirements are not made public or are otherwise not transparent.

71c. In law, basic business regulatory requirements for meeting public safety standards are transparent and publicly available.

YES | NO

**References:**

Law on the Limitation of Administrative Regulation and Administrative Control over Economic

Activity: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/36326.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if basic regulatory requirements for meeting public safety standards are publicly accessible and transparent.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if such requirements are not made public or are otherwise not transparent.

---

72. Does government effectively enforce basic health, environmental, and safety standards on businesses?

67

72a. In practice, business inspections by government officials to ensure public health standards are being met are carried out in a uniform and even-handed manner.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Many business representatives still believe that corruption related to business inspections is widespread. However, there is not much reliable information on this.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** Business inspections by the government to ensure that public health standards are being met are designed and carried out in such a way as to ensure comprehensive compliance by all businesses with transparent regulatory requirements.

**75:**

**50:** Business inspections by the government to ensure public health standards are met are generally carried out in an even-handed way though exceptions exist. Bribes are occasionally paid to extract favorable treatment or expedited processing.

**25:**

**0:** Business inspections to ensure that public health standards are met are routinely carried out by government officials in an ad hoc, arbitrary fashion designed to extract extra payments from businesses in exchange for favorable treatment.

72b. In practice, business inspections by government officials to ensure public environmental standards are being met are carried out in a uniform and even-handed manner.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There is a widespread perception among the general public and the media that business inspections carried out by government officials often involve corruption. However, there is no reliable data on this, since neither businesses nor government officials have an interest in disclosing such information.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganev, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** Business inspections by the government to ensure that public environmental standards are being met are designed and carried out in such a way as to ensure comprehensive compliance by all businesses with transparent regulatory requirements.

**75:**

**50:** Business inspections by the government to ensure public environmental standards are met are generally carried out in an even-handed way though exceptions exist. Bribes are occasionally paid to extract favorable treatment or expedited processing.

**25:**

**0:** Business inspections to ensure that public environmental standards are met are routinely carried out by government officials in an ad hoc, arbitrary fashion designed to extract extra payments from businesses in exchange for favorable treatment.

72c. In practice, business inspections by government officials to ensure public safety standards are being met are carried out in a uniform and even-handed manner.

**Comments:**

There is a widespread perception among the general public and the media that business inspections carried out by government officials often involve corruption. However, there is no reliable data on this, since neither businesses nor government officials have an interest in disclosing such information.

**References:**

Interview with Georgy Ganey, economist, Sofia University/Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, September 10, 2008.

**100:** Business inspections by the government to ensure that public safety standards are being met are designed and carried out in such a way as to ensure comprehensive compliance by all businesses with transparent regulatory requirements.

**75:**

**50:** Business inspections by the government to ensure public safety standards are met are generally carried out in an even-handed way though exceptions exist. Bribes are occasionally paid to extract favorable treatment or expedited processing.

**25:**

**0:** Business inspections to ensure that public safety standards are met are routinely carried out by government officials in an ad hoc, arbitrary fashion designed to extract extra payments from businesses in exchange for favorable treatment.

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## Category VI. Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law

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### VI-1. <sup>88</sup>Anti-Corruption Law

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#### 73. Is there legislation criminalizing corruption?

100

73a. In law, attempted corruption is illegal.

YES | NO

**References:**

Penal Code (Article 301 (1)): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/kodeksi/parts/nk4.html#:~:q=020%20A<0>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if corruption laws include attempted acts.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if this is not illegal.

73b. In law, extortion is illegal.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Penal Code (Chapter 5, Section V): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/kodeksi/parts/nk3.html#0745;%20V-5>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if corruption laws include extortion. Extortion is defined as demanding favorable treatment (such as a bribe) to withhold a punishment.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if this is not illegal.

73c. In law, offering a bribe (i.e. active corruption) is illegal.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Penal Code (Chapter 8, Section IV): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/kodeksi/parts/nk4.html#:020%20A<0>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if offering a bribe is illegal.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if this is not illegal.

73d. In law, receiving a bribe (i.e. passive corruption) is illegal.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Penal Code (Chapter 8, Section IV): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/kodeksi/parts/nk4.html#:020%20A<0>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if receiving a bribe is illegal.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if this is not illegal.

73e. In law, bribing a foreign official is illegal.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Penal Code (Chapter 8, Section IV): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/kodeksi/parts/nk4.html#:020%20A<0>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if bribing a foreign official is illegal.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if this is not illegal.

73f. In law, using public resources for private gain is illegal.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Penal Code (Chapter 8, Section II): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/kodeksi/parts/nk4.html# 0745;%20IV-8>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if using public resources for private gain is illegal.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if this is not illegal.

73g. In law, using confidential state information for private gain is illegal.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Penal Code (Chapter 8, Section I): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/kodeksi/parts/nk4.html# 0745;%20IV-8>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if using confidential state information for private gain is illegal.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if this is not illegal.

73h. In law, money laundering is illegal.

**YES** | NO

**References:**

Law on Measures Against Money

Laundering: [http://www.fia.minfin.bg/images\\_content/Measures\\_Against\\_Money\\_Laundering\\_Act.pdf](http://www.fia.minfin.bg/images_content/Measures_Against_Money_Laundering_Act.pdf)

Penal Code (Chapter 7): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/kodeksi/parts/nk4.html#:020%20A54<0>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if money laundering is illegal. Money laundering is defined as concealing the origin of funds to hide wrongdoing or avoid confiscation.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if this is not illegal.

73i. In law, conspiracy to commit a crime (i.e. organized crime) is illegal.

**YES** | NO

**Comments:**

In the Bulgarian Penal Code, there is no definition of organized crime. Instead, the organization of and participation in an organized crime group is a crime.

**References:**

Penal Code (Article 321): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/kodeksi/parts/nk5.html#0745;%20IV-11>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if organized crime is illegal.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if this is not illegal.

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## VI-2. Anti-Corruption Agency

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75. Is the anti-corruption agency effective?

75a. In law, the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) is protected from political interference.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

The agency has formal organizational and operational independence from the government. The chief of the State Agency for National Security is appointed by the president upon proposal of the government. Agency employees have the statute of civil servants and have the same protections as other civil servants.

**References:**

Law on the State Agency for National Security (Article 4, 4): <http://www.econ.bg/law86416/enactments/article133007.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned only if the agency (or agencies) has some formal organizational or operational independence from the government. A YES score is earned even if the agency/agencies is legally separate but in practice staffed by partisans.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if the agency (or agencies) is a subordinate part of any government ministry or agency, such as the Department of Interior or the Justice Department, in such a way that limits its operational independence.

75b. In practice, the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) is protected from political interference.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

It is too early to assess to what extent the State Agency for National Security is protected from political interference. During the study period, there were no publicly known cases demonstrating attempts of political interference. However, after the study period, on September 29, 2008, it became clear that the agency had checked the lists with the mobile phone calls of several members of Parliament (MPs) without adequate justification. Earlier, the agency investigated and shut down an Internet news portal (Dangerous News) due to an alleged leak of classified information. Soon after this, a journalist who is believed to be behind the above mentioned website was attacked and seriously injured. These events provoked controversy and serious doubts about the effectiveness of the newly established agency and its function to counteract corruption and organized crime.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** This agency (or agencies) operates independently of the political process, without incentive or pressure to render favorable judgments in politically sensitive cases. Investigations can operate without hindrance from the government, including access to politically sensitive information. .

**75:**

**50:** This agency (or agencies) is typically independent, yet is sometimes influenced in its work by negative or positive political incentives. This may include favorable or unfavorable public criticism by the government, political appointments, or other forms of influence. The agency (or agencies) may not be provided with some information needed to carry out its investigations.



**25:**

**0:** This agency (or agencies) is commonly influenced by political or personal incentives. These may include conflicting family relationships, professional partnerships, or other personal loyalties. Negative incentives may include threats, harassment or other abuses of power. The agency (or agencies) cannot compel the government to reveal sensitive information.

75c. In practice, the head of the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) is protected from removal without relevant justification.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

So far, there have not been any politically motivated attempts to remove the head of the State Agency for National Security.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** The director(s) cannot be removed without a significant justification through a formal process, such as impeachment for abuse of power.

**75:**

**50:** The director(s) can in some cases be removed through a combination of official or unofficial pressure.

**25:**

**0:** The director(s) can be removed at the will of political leadership.

75d. In practice, appointments to the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) are based on professional criteria.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** Appointments to the agency (or agencies) are made based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed are free of conflicts of interest arising from personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed usually do not have clear political party affiliations.

**75:**

**50:** Appointments are usually based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed may have clear party loyalties, however.

**25:**

**0:** Appointments are often based on political considerations. Individuals appointed often have conflicts of interest arising from personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed often have clear party loyalties.

75e. In practice, the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) has a professional, full-time staff.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** The agency (or agencies) has staff sufficient to fulfill its basic mandate.

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) has limited staff, or staff without necessary qualifications to fulfill its basic mandate.

**25:**

**0:** The agency (or agencies) has no staff, or a limited staff, that is clearly unqualified to fulfill its mandate.

75f. In practice, the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) receives regular funding.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The State Agency for National Security is a very new institution, but so far, there have not been any reports about funding problems.

**References:**

The State Agency for National Security is a very new institution, but so far, there have not been any reports about funding problems.

**100:** The agency (or agencies) has a predictable source of funding that is fairly consistent from year to year. Political considerations are not a major factor in determining agency funding.

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) has a regular source of funding, but may be pressured by cuts, or threats of cuts to the agency budget. Political considerations have an effect on agency funding.

**25:**

**0:** The agency's funding sources are unreliable. Funding may be removed arbitrarily or as retaliation for agency actions.

75g. In practice, the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) makes regular public reports.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There are no legal obligations for the State Agency for National Security to make regular public reports. This is because the agency is a policing and investigative body that needs a certain level of secrecy. An annual activity report will be submitted to the Parliament. The agency gives information about its activities to the president, the prime minister and the Parliament.

**References:**

Law on National Security National Agency (Articles 131,132): <http://www.econ.bg/law86416/enactments/article133007.html>

**100:** The agency (or agencies) makes regular, publicly available, substantial reports to the legislature and/or to the public directly outlining the full scope of its work.

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) makes publicly available reports to the legislature that are sometimes delayed or incomplete.

**25:**

**0:** The agency (or agencies) makes no reports of its activities, or makes reports that are consistently out of date, unavailable to the public, or insubstantial.

75h. In practice, the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) has sufficient powers to carry out its mandate.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

It is still very early to assess this with precision.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** The agency (or agencies) has powers to gather information, including politically sensitive information. The agency (or agencies) can question suspects, order arrests and bring suspects to trial (or rely on related agencies or law enforcement authorities to perform such functions).

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) has most of the powers needed to carry out its mandate with some exceptions.

**25:**

**0:** The agency (or agencies) lacks significant powers which limit its effectiveness.

75i. In practice, when necessary, the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) independently initiates investigations.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

It is still very early to assess this with precision, but so far, there are no considerable results from the investigations initiated by the National Security National Agency. Instead, there are several scandals in which the agency was involved. For example, after the study period, on September 29, 2008, it became clear that the agency had checked the lists with the mobile phone calls of several members of Parliament (MPs) without adequate justification. Earlier, the agency investigated and shut down an Internet news portal (Dangerous News) due to an alleged leak of classified information. Soon after this, a journalist who is believed to be behind the above mentioned website was attacked and seriously injured. These events provoked controversy and serious doubts about the effectiveness of the newly established agency and its function to counteract corruption and organized crime.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** When irregularities are discovered, the agency (or agencies) is aggressive in investigating the government or in cooperating with other investigative agencies.

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) starts investigations, but is limited in its effectiveness or is reluctant to cooperate with other investigative agencies. The agency (or agencies) may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The agency (or agencies) does not effectively investigate or does not cooperate with other investigative agencies. The agency (or agencies) may start investigations but not complete them, or may fail to detect offenders. The agency (or agencies) may be partisan in its application of power.

---

## 76. Can citizens access the anti-corruption agency?

63

76a. In practice, the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) acts on complaints within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Not much information is available on this topic yet.

**100:** The agency (or agencies) acts on complaints quickly. While some backlog is expected and inevitable, complaints are acknowledged promptly and investigations into serious abuses move steadily towards resolution. Citizens with simple issues can expect a resolution within a month.

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) acts on complaints quickly, with some exceptions. Some complaints may not be acknowledged, and simple issues may take more than two months to resolve.

**25:**

**0:** The agency (or agencies) cannot resolve complaints quickly. Complaints may be unacknowledged for more than a month, and simple issues may take more than three months to resolve. Serious abuses are not investigated with any urgency.

76b. In practice, citizens can complain to the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) without fear of recrimination.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Generally, not many people in Bulgaria are ready to report corruption due to very low confidence in law enforcement agencies.

**References:**

Studies of Center for the Study of Democracy: <http://www.csd.bg/bg/artShow.php?id=9439>

**100:** Whistleblowers can report abuses of power without fear of negative consequences. This may be due to robust mechanisms to protect the identity of whistleblowers, or may be due to a culture that encourages disclosure and accountability.

**75:**

**50:** Whistleblowers are sometimes able to come forward without negative consequences, but in other cases, whistleblowers are punished for disclosing, either through official or unofficial means.

**25:**

**0:** Whistleblowers often face substantial negative consequences, such as losing a job, relocating to a less prominent position, or some form of harassment.

---

74. Is there an agency (or group of agencies) with a legal mandate to address corruption?

100

74. In law, is there an agency (or group of agencies) with a legal mandate to address corruption?

**YES** | NO

**Comments:**

The State Agency for National Security was established in January 2008 with specific functions (among others) of fighting corruption of high-ranking politicians and state officials.

**References:**

Law on State Agency for National Security (Article, 4, 4): <http://www.econ.bg/law86416/enactments/article133007.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if an agency is specifically mandated to address corruption. A YES score is earned if there are several agencies or entities with specific roles in fighting corruption, including special prosecutorial entities.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no agency (or group of agencies/entities) is specifically mandated to prevent or prosecute corruption.

---

81  
VI-3. Rule of Law

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77. Is there an appeals mechanism for challenging criminal judgments?

92

77a. In law, there is a general right of appeal.

YES | NO

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution (Article 120): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

Judiciary Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal process of appeal for challenging criminal judgments.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no such process.

77b. In practice, appeals are resolved within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There is no specific data on the average period in which appeals against criminal judgments are resolved. The average length (including the pretrial phase and appeals) of common criminal cases is 835 days, which is below the average European standard.

**References:**

The Judiciary: Independent and Accountable. Indicators on the Efficiency of the Bulgarian Judicial System, report of the Centre for Liberal Strategies: [http://www.cls-sofia.org/uploaded/1146578882\\_final\\_report\\_english.pdf](http://www.cls-sofia.org/uploaded/1146578882_final_report_english.pdf)

**100:** Appeals are acted upon quickly. While some backlog is expected and inevitable, appeals are acknowledged promptly and cases move steadily towards resolution.

**75:**

**50:** Appeals are generally acted upon quickly but with some exceptions. Some appeals may not be acknowledged, and simple cases may take years to resolve.

**25:**

**0:** Most appeals are not resolved in a timely fashion. Appeals may go unacknowledged for months or years and simple cases may never be resolved.

77c. In practice, citizens can use the appeals mechanism at a reasonable cost.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Appealing criminal proceedings is not expensive and is affordable to middle-class citizens.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** In most cases, the appeals mechanism is an affordable option to middle class citizens seeking to challenge criminal judgments. Attorneys fees are not a barrier to appeals.

**75:**

**50:** In some cases, the appeals mechanism is not an affordable option to middle class citizens seeking to challenge criminal judgments. Attorneys fees present somewhat of a barrier to pursuing appeal.

**25:**

**0:** The prohibitive cost of utilizing the appeals mechanism prevents middle class citizens from challenging criminal judgments. Attorneys fees greatly discourage the use of the appeals process.

---

## 78. Do judgments in the criminal system follow written law?

78. In practice, do judgments in the criminal system follow written law?

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** Judgments in the criminal system are made according to established legal code and conduct. There are no exceptional cases in which individuals are treated by a separate process. Political interference, bribery, cronyism or other flaws are rarely factors in judicial outcomes.

**75:**

**50:** Judgments in the criminal system usually follow the protocols of written law. There are sometimes exceptions when political concerns, corruption or other flaws in the system decide outcomes.

**25:**

**0:** Judgments in the criminal system are often decided by factors other than written law. Bribery and corruption in the criminal judicial process are common elements affecting decisions.

---

79. Are judicial decisions enforced by the state?

75

79. In practice, are judicial decisions enforced by the state?

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

The system of private bailiffs was introduced in the judicial system three years ago. One of the rationales behind this reform was to improve the enforcement of the judicial decisions by the state through entrusting the task to private players. There have been some positive changes since then, but there are still problems in regard to financial compensation.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** Judicial decisions are enforced quickly regardless of what is being decided or who is appearing before the court. Failure to comply brings penalties enforced by the state.

**75:**

**50:** Judicial decisions are generally enforced by the state, with some exceptions. Certain areas of law may be ignored, or certain parties appearing before the courts may evade or delay enforcement.



25:

0: Judicial decisions are often ignored. The state lacks the will or capacity to consistently enforce these decisions.

---

## 80. Is the judiciary able to act independently?

94

80a. In law, the independence of the judiciary is guaranteed.

YES | NO

### References:

Bulgarian Constitution (Chapter 6): <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

Judiciary Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are formal rules establishing that the judiciary is independent from political interference by the executive and legislative branches. Independence include financial issues (drafting, allocation, and managing the budget of the courts ).

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there are no formal rules establishing an independent judiciary.

80b. In practice, national-level judges are protected from political interference.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

### Comments:

There are sufficient mechanisms to protect the judiciary from political interference. However, among the general public there are still suspicions that some appointments are politically motivated.

### References:

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** National level judges operate independently of the political process, without incentive or pressure to render favorable judgments in politically sensitive cases. Judges never comment on political debates. Individual judgments are rarely praised or criticized by political figures.

**75:**

**50:** National level judges are typically independent, yet are sometimes influenced in their judgments by negative or positive political incentives. This may include favorable or unfavorable treatment by the government or public criticism. Some judges may be demoted or relocated in retaliation for unfavorable decisions.

25:

**0:** National level judges are commonly influenced by politics and personal biases or incentives. This may include conflicting family relationships, professional partnerships, or other personal loyalties. Negative incentives may include demotion, pay cuts, relocation, threats or harassment.

80c. In law, there is a transparent and objective system for distributing cases to national-level judges.

YES | NO

**References:**

Judiciary Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is an objective system that is transparent to the public that equitably or randomly assigns cases to individual judges. The executive branch does not control this process.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if the case assignment system is non-transparent or subjective where judges themselves have influence over which cases they adjudicate. A NO score is also earned if the executive branch controls this process.

80d. In law, national-level judges are protected from removal without relevant justification.

YES | NO

**References:**

Judiciary Act (Article 29): <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/211.htm>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there are specific, formal rules for removal of a justice. Removal must be related to abuse of power or other offenses related to job performance.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if justices can be removed without justification, or for purely political reasons. A NO score is earned if the removal process is not transparent, or not based on written rules.

---

## 81. Are judges safe when adjudicating corruption cases?

100

81a. In practice, in the last year, no judges have been physically harmed because of adjudicating corruption cases.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There were no such cases.

**References:**

There were no such cases.

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there were no documented cases of judges being assaulted because of their involvement in a corruption case during the specific study period. YES is a positive score.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there were any documented cases of assault to a judge related to his/her participation in a corruption trial. Corruption is defined broadly to include any abuses of power, not just the passing of bribes.

81b. In practice, in the last year, no judges have been killed because of adjudicating corruption cases.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There were no such cases.

**References:**

There were no such cases.

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there were no documented cases of judges being killed related to their involvement in a corruption case during the study period. YES is a positive score.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there were any documented cases where a judge was killed because of his/her participation in a corruption trial. The relationship between a mysterious death and a judge's involvement in a case may not be clear, however the burden of proof here is low. If it is a reasonable assumption that a judge was killed in relation to his or her work on corruption issues, then the indicator is scored as a NO. Corruption is defined broadly to include any abuses of power, not just the passing of bribes.

---

## 82. Do citizens have equal access to the justice system?

96

82a. In practice, judicial decisions are not affected by racial or ethnic bias.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** Judicial decisions are not affected by racial or ethnic bias.

**75:**

**50:** Judicial decisions are generally not affected by racial or ethnic bias, with some exceptions. Some groups may be occasionally discriminated against, or some groups may occasionally receive favorable treatment.

**25:**

**0:** Judicial decisions are regularly distorted by racial or ethnic bias. Some groups consistently receive favorable or unfavorable treatment by the courts.

82b. In practice, women have full access to the judicial system.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** Women enjoy full and equal status in the eyes of the courts. There are no exceptions or practices in which women are treated differently by the judicial system. For this indicator, discrimination against women should reflect specific biases that confront women in the justice system as opposed to difficulties resulting from broader socio-economic disadvantages or discrimination against women.

**75:**

**50:** Women generally have use of the judicial system, with some exceptions. In some cases, women may be limited in their access to courts, or gender biases may affect court outcomes. For this indicator, discrimination against women should reflect specific biases that confront women in the justice system as opposed to difficulties resulting from broader socio-economic disadvantages or discrimination against women.

**25:**

**0:** Women generally have less access to the courts than men. Court decisions are commonly distorted by gender bias. Women may have to go through intermediaries to interact with the court, or are unable to present evidence. For this indicator, discrimination against women should reflect specific biases that confront women in the justice system as opposed to difficulties resulting from broader socio-economic disadvantages or discrimination against women.

82c. In law, the state provides legal counsel for defendants in criminal cases who cannot afford it.

YES | NO

**References:**  
Legal Aid Law

**YES:** A YES score is earned if the government is required by law to provide impoverished defendants with legal counsel to defend themselves against criminal charges.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no legal requirement for the government to provide impoverished defendants with legal counsel to defend themselves against criminal charges.

82d. In practice, the state provides adequate legal counsel for defendants in criminal cases who cannot afford it.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Over the last two years, many efforts to reform the system of state legal counsel have been made, but there is still a perception among experts that more needs to be done in terms of the quality of state legal aid.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** State-provided legal aid is basic, but well-trained and effective in representing the rights of impoverished defendants.

**75:**

**50:** State-provided legal aid is available, but flawed. Legal aid may be unavailable to some impoverished defendants. Legal aid/public defenders may be sometimes unable or unwilling to competently represent all defendants.

**25:**

**0:** State-provided legal aid is unavailable to most impoverished defendants. State legal aid/public defenders may be consistently incompetent or unwilling to fairly represent all defendants.

82e. In practice, citizens earning the median yearly income can afford to bring a legal suit.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** In most cases, the legal system is an affordable option to middle class citizens seeking to redress a grievance. Attorneys fees do not represent a major cost to citizens.

**75:**

**50:** In some cases, the legal system is an affordable option to middle class citizens seeking to redress a grievance. In other cases, the cost is prohibitive. Attorneys fees are a significant consideration in whether to bring a case.

**25:**

**0:** The cost of engaging the legal system prevents middle class citizens from filing suits. Attorneys fees are high enough to discourage most citizens from bringing a case.

82f. In practice, a typical small retail business can afford to bring a legal suit.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** In most cases, the legal system is an affordable option to a small retail business seeking to redress a grievance. Attorneys fees do not represent a major cost to small businesses.

**75:**

**50:** In some cases, the legal system is an affordable option to a small retail business seeking to redress a grievance. In other cases, the cost is prohibitive. Attorneys fees are a significant consideration in whether to bring a case.

**25:**

**0:** The cost of engaging the legal system prevents small businesses from filing suits. Attorneys fees are high enough to discourage most small businesses from bringing a case.

82g. In practice, all citizens have access to a court of law, regardless of geographic location.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** Courtrooms are always accessible to citizens at low cost, either through rural courthouses or through a system of traveling magistrates.

**75:**

**50:** Courts are available to most citizens. Some citizens may be unable to reach a courtroom at low cost due to location.

25:

0: Courts are unavailable to some regions without significant travel on the part of citizens.

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## VI-4. Law Enforcement

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83. Is the law enforcement agency (i.e. the police) effective?

67

83a. In practice, appointments to the law enforcement agency (or agencies) are made according to professional criteria.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

There are formal professional criteria for appointments in law enforcement agencies. However, many believe that the system is not effective enough, allowing appointments based on nepotism and creating a system of favor exchange.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** Appointments to the agency (or agencies) are made based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed are free of conflicts of interest due to personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed usually do not have clear political party affiliations.

**75:**

**50:** Appointments are usually based on professional qualifications. Individuals appointed may have clear party loyalties, however.

**25:**

**0:** Appointments are often based on political considerations. Individuals appointed often have conflicts of interest due to personal loyalties, family connections or other biases. Individuals appointed often have clear party loyalties.

83b. In practice, the law enforcement agency (or agencies) has a budget sufficient to carry out its mandate.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Law enforcement agencies have huge budgets, measured as a percentage of the state budget. However, it is not the size, but the effective use of the financial means that is problematic.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** The agency (or agencies) has a budget sufficient to fulfill its basic mandate.

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) has limited budget, generally considered somewhat insufficient to fulfill its basic mandate.

**25:**

**0:** The agency (or agencies) has no budget or an obviously insufficient budget that hinders the agency's ability to fulfill its mandate.

83c. In practice, the law enforcement agency is protected from political interference.

100 | 75 | **50** | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Formally, the political and the operative management of the Ministry of Interior are separated. However, in practice, the law enforcement agencies are not fully protected from political interference. The past year was abundant in scandals that confirm the above statement and that eventually led to the resignation of the Home Minister. In September 2008 (outside the study period) it became clear that the newly created State Agency for National Security (SANS) had collected the cell phone call lists of several Members of Parliament (MPs) without having reasonable grounds. This, as well as the consequent scandals with SANS, aroused serious suspicions about the agency's political independence.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** The agency (or agencies) operates independently of the political process and has operational independence from the government. All laws can be enforced regardless of the status of suspects or the sensitivity of the investigation.

**75:**

**50:** The agency (or agencies) is typically independent, yet is sometimes influenced in its investigations or enforcement actions by negative or positive political incentives. This may include favorable or unfavorable public criticism by the government or other forms of influence. The agency (or agencies) may not be provided with some information needed to carry out its investigations.

**25:**

**0:** The investigative and enforcement work of the agency (or agencies) is commonly influenced by political actors or the government. These may include conflicting family relationships, professional partnerships, or other personal loyalties. Negative incentives may include threats, harassment or other abuses of power by the government.



84a. In law, there is an independent mechanism for citizens to complain about police action.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

There is no centralized mechanism, but citizens can complain to the Ministry of Interior and its disciplinary inspectorate, the ombudsman and the Parliament (Complaints and Petitions Committee).

**References:**

Law on the Ministry of Interior: [http://www.mvr.bg/NR/rdonlyres/379531D2-0059-4223-86F8-ABA9D17680D8/0/Zakon\\_za\\_MVR.pdf](http://www.mvr.bg/NR/rdonlyres/379531D2-0059-4223-86F8-ABA9D17680D8/0/Zakon_za_MVR.pdf)

Ombudsman Act: <http://www.paragraf22.com/pravo/zakoni/zakoni-d/28283.html>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is a formal process or mechanism by which citizens can complain about police actions. A YES score is earned if a broader mechanism such as the national ombudsman, human rights commission, or anti-corruption agency has jurisdiction over the police.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if there is no such mechanism

84b. In practice, the independent law enforcement complaint reporting mechanism responds to citizen's complaints within a reasonable time period.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Complaints are considered and answered within a reasonable period of time.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** The agency/entity responds to complaints quickly. While some backlog is expected and inevitable, complaints are acknowledged promptly and investigations into serious abuses move steadily towards resolution. Citizens with simple issues can expect a resolution within a month.

**75:**

**50:** The agency/entity responds to complaints quickly, with some exceptions. Some complaints may not be acknowledged, and simple issues may take more than two months to resolve.

**25:**

**0:** The agency/entity cannot resolve complaints quickly. Complaints may be unacknowledged for more than a month, and simple issues may take three to six months to resolve. Serious abuses are not investigated with any urgency.

84c. In law, there is an agency/entity to investigate and prosecute corruption committed by law enforcement officials.

YES | NO

**Comments:**

In law, there is an Inspectorate Department within the Ministry of Interior, which is separate from the police and has a legal mandate to counteract corruption in the law enforcement agencies.

**References:**

Law on the Ministry of Interior (Article 115): [http://www.mvr.bg/NR/rdonlyres/379531D2-0059-4223-86F8-ABA9D17680D8/0/Zakon\\_za\\_MVR.pdf](http://www.mvr.bg/NR/rdonlyres/379531D2-0059-4223-86F8-ABA9D17680D8/0/Zakon_za_MVR.pdf)

**YES:** A YES score is earned if there is an agency/entity specifically mandated to investigate corruption-related activity within law enforcement. This agency/entity may be internal to the police department (provided it has a degree of independence, such as an internal affairs unit) or part of a broader national mechanism such as the national ombudsman, human rights commission, or anti-corruption agency.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if no such agency/entity exists.

84d. In practice, when necessary, the agency/entity independently initiates investigations into allegations of corruption by law enforcement officials.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** When irregularities are discovered, the agency/entity is aggressive in investigating government law enforcement officials or in cooperating with other investigative agencies.

**75:**

**50:** The agency/entity starts investigations, but is limited in its effectiveness or is reluctant to cooperate with other investigative agencies. The agency/entity may be slow to act, unwilling to take on politically powerful offenders, or occasionally unable to enforce its judgments.

**25:**

**0:** The agency/entity does not effectively investigate or does not cooperate with other investigative agencies. The agency may start investigations but not complete them, or may fail to detect offenders. The agency may be partisan in its application of power.

84e. In law, law enforcement officials are not immune from criminal proceedings.

YES | NO

**References:**

Bulgarian Constitution: <http://www.parliament.bg/?page=const&lng=en>

**YES:** A YES score is earned if law enforcement officers are fully accountable for their actions under the law and can be investigated and prosecuted for their actions.

**NO:** A NO score is earned if law enforcement enjoys any special protection from criminal investigation or prosecution.

84f. In practice, law enforcement officials are not immune from criminal proceedings.

100 | 75 | 50 | 25 | 0

**Comments:**

Some positive steps aside, there is still strong professional solidarity amongst police officers and the prosecutors or investigators that might potentially impede the investigations of crimes committed by policemen.

**References:**

Interview with Yonko Grozev, lawyer, Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, August 20, 2008.

**100:** Law enforcement officers are subject to criminal investigation for official misconduct. No crimes are exempt from prosecution.

**75:**

**50:** Law enforcement is generally subject to criminal investigation but exceptions may exist where criminal actions are overlooked by the police or prosecutors. Some crimes may be exempt from prosecution, such as actions taken in the line of duty.

**25:**

**0:** Law enforcement enjoys a general protection from most criminal investigation. This may be due to a formal immunity or an informal understanding that the law enforcement community protects itself.