



# Tackling today's challenges together: Corruption in education

## ” FACTS AND FIGURES

The problem of corruption in education is impossible to quantify precisely, because it exists in so many – often hidden – forms.

However, a recent survey measuring public perceptions\* found that, on average, 34% of Europeans believe there is corruption in their national education system. There were significant national differences, however, with country-by-country results ranging from 6% to 72%.

\*Source: Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer 2013  
[www.transparency.org/gcb2013/report/](http://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/report/)

## WHAT IS CORRUPTION IN EDUCATION?

— No European country is exempt from corruption in education and corruption exists at every level of education.

— Corruption in education includes: making certain groups pay extra to access ordinary schools, only teaching compulsory subjects in fee-paying tutorials, only passing students who have paid for extra lessons, shadow schools, ghost teachers, rigged examinations, sexual harassment and exploitation, doctors and engineers with false qualifications who endanger lives, embezzlement and nepotism.



▶▶▶ <http://www.coe.int/education>

— Certain issues concern mostly higher education: plagiarism, buying off-the-peg research papers and “diploma mills” selling fake academic qualifications.

— Corruption destroys equal opportunities and undermines human rights, not least every child's right to education.

— It teaches children that such practices are normal and acceptable; that it pays to break the rules; and that money determines success, rather than merit and achievement.

— It erodes public trust in our institutions and, ultimately, democracy itself.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

— We need a culture change in Europe. Corruption can only be eliminated if everyone involved in education – from teachers to parents and students – adopts the highest ethical standards.

— The Council of Europe's Ethics in Education Platform (ETINED) has been created to pool best practices on ethics, transparency and integrity in education and to disseminate this information through training, tools and a website.

— In particular, the platform intends to crack down on fraud in education – starting with plagiarism and “diploma mills” – and to produce ethical guidelines for everyone involved in education. Honesty is set to be a key value in the guidelines.

— The platform complements the Council of Europe's long-standing work on teaching human rights and citizenship and on the democratic management of schools and universities and non-formal learning environments.

— The Council of Europe has legal mechanisms to combat corruption, but its focus on ethics and changing attitudes is vital, because laws cannot resolve the underlying problems alone.

## COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECTS AND MATERIALS

### Two Council of Europe and European Union Joint Projects concern corruption in education:

- *Project against Corruption in Albania (PACA)* (2009-12) – on improving transparency, accountability and social participation in the education system.
- *Strengthening Integrity and Combating Corruption in Higher Education in Armenia* (2015-17).

### Existing Council of Europe materials of relevance to the project include:

- *Democratic governance of schools* – manual for head teachers, explaining how to ensure all areas of school life reflect democratic values and human rights.
- *Education against corruption* – manual for teachers in Albanian primary and secondary schools (PACA project).
- *Teaching controversial issues* – guide to help teachers encourage pupils to discuss the issue of corruption in a safe environment, so they can form their own judgments based on reason, evidence and human rights standards. Corruption is a controversial issue in some European countries.
- *The teacher's code of ethics in public and private pre-university education* – to help teachers create a motivating environment for students, and to take appropriate decisions when faced with ethical dilemmas (PACA project)



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## COUNCIL OF EUROPE STANDARDS

### Recommendations and resolutions of the Committee of Ministers on transparency, ethics and integrity:

- CM/Rec(2014)7 on the protection of whistleblowers.
- CM/Rec(2012)13 on ensuring quality education, defines a quality education as being, among other things, 'free of corruption'.
- CM/Rec(2012)7 on the responsibility of public authorities for academic freedom and institutional autonomy.
- CM/Rec(2000)10 on codes of conduct for public officials.
- CM/Res(1997)24 on the twenty guiding principles for the fight against corruption.

### Standards, legal instruments and norms tackling corruption:

- The Criminal Law Convention on Corruption (ETS No. 173) and its additional Protocol (ETS No. 191) set out common standards for corruption offences.
- The Civil Law Convention on Corruption (ETS No. 174).

## COUNCIL OF EUROPE WEBSITES

- Pan-European Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED):  
[www.coe.int/etined](http://www.coe.int/etined)
- The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) monitors compliance with anti-corruption standards:  
[www.coe.int/greco](http://www.coe.int/greco)
- The Parliamentary Assembly's anti-corruption platform:  
[www.website-pace.net/web/apce/anti-corruption-platform](http://www.website-pace.net/web/apce/anti-corruption-platform)
- Action against corruption (Council of Europe):  
<http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation/economiccrime/corruption>

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