

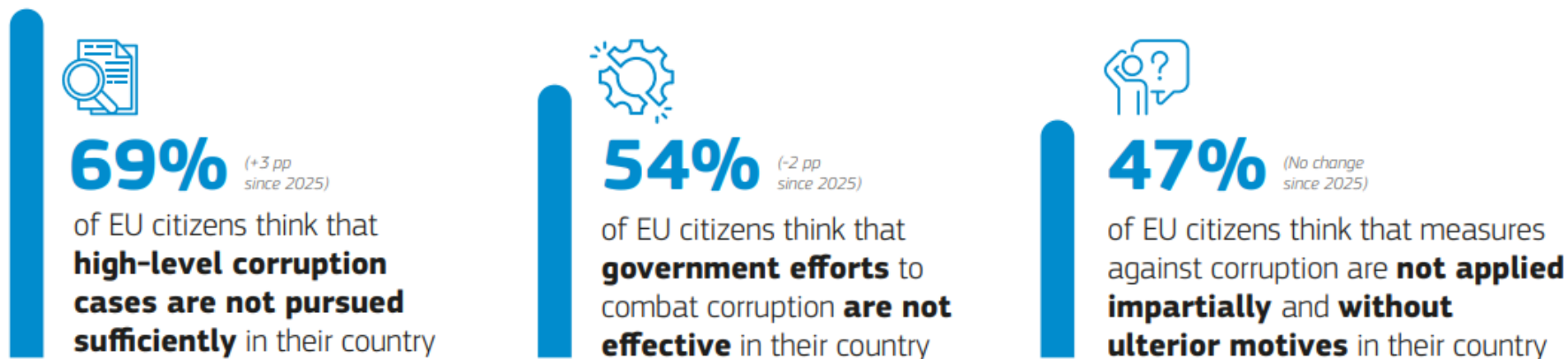


Directive on combatting corruption

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Why a new Directive? (1)

EU CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS ON EFFECTIVENESS OF EFFORTS TO ADDRESS CORRUPTION



Source: Special Eurobarometer 573 (2026)

Why a new Directive? (2)

- Corruption as a three-pronged threat: security, rule of law, economy
- Corruption costs the EU economy at least EUR 120 billion per year
- Outdated EU-level legislation

Timeline

- **September 2022**: Commission President von der Leyen announced update of anti-corruption rules in her State of the Union
- **May 2023**: Commission presented its proposal for a Directive
- **February 2024**: European Parliament adopted its negotiating position
- **June 2024**: Council adopted its negotiating position
- **January 2025**: start of trilogue negotiations
- **2 December 2025**: provisional political agreement
- **29 April 2026**: publication of the Directive in the OJ
- **31 May 2026**: entry into force

Key changes introduced by the legislation

1. Harmonising corruption offences
2. Establishing a minimum level of penalties
3. Ensuring effective investigations and prosecutions
4. Stepping up the prevention of corruption

Harmonising corruption offences

Why? EU legislation was fragmented, outdated and incomplete

- One legal act for all corruption offences
- Harmonising definitions of all corruption offences
 - Bribery in the public and private sector (Art. 3 and 4)
 - Misappropriation (Art. 5)
 - Trading in influence (Art. 6)
 - Unlawful exercise of public functions (Art. 7)
 - Obstruction of justice (Art. 8)
 - Enrichment and concealment (Art. 9 and 10)
 - Inciting, aiding and abetting, and attempt (Art. 11)

Establishing a minimum level of penalties

Why? Differences in penalty levels among Member States

- Setting penalties for natural and legal persons (minimum-maximum level) (Art. 12-14)
- Possibility to apply alternative measures such as fines, exclusion from access to public funding, holding public office or standing for elections (Art. 12-14)
- Harmonising some aggravating and mitigating circumstances (Art. 15 and 16)

Ensuring effective investigations and prosecution of corruption offences

Why? Corruption difficult to investigate – many obstacles to effective investigation and prosecution

- Lifting of immunity or privileges from investigation and prosecution (Art. 17)
- Setting limitation periods to allow investigation, prosecution, and adjudication as well as enforcement of offences (Art. 19)
- Ensuring that a person reporting offences or cooperating with authorities has access to protection, support and assistance measures (Art. 25)
- Availability of investigative tools (Art. 26)

Stepping up prevention of corruption

Why? Fighting corruption starts with prevention – absence of culture of integrity in many Member States

- Obligation to ensure that preventive tools are in place (Art. 20)
- Obligation to raise awareness and perform risk assessments (Art. 20 and Art. 33)
- National anti-corruption strategy (Art. 21)
- Anti-corruption bodies or organisational units (Art. 22)

Additional changes

- Suspension or reassignment of a public official (Art. 31)
- Data collection obligations (Art. 34)
- Amendments to Directive 2017/1371/EU (PIF Directive) (Art. 26)

Conclusions and relevance for candidate countries and potential candidates

- Publication on 28 April 2026 – Entry into force on 31 May 2026
- 2-year transposition period until June 2028 (3 years for anti-corruption strategies & risk assessments)
- Preventive framework as a key novelty in EU anti-corruption legislation
- EU Network against Corruption as the main forum to discuss preventive standards



EU anti-corruption strategy

- Announced in the Commission Work Programme - Q4 2026
- Objective: development of a comprehensive, strategic approach
- Building on existing tools to ensure coherence and complementarity with other policy initiatives
- Broad consultations

Thank you



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