



**FORUM:** Special Conference on “Democracy, Good Governance and Civil Society”

**TOPIC:** Combatting corruption and strengthening the integrity of justice

**STUDENT OFFICER:** Sofia Saridou

**POSITION:** Deputy President

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## **PERSONAL INTRODUCTION**

Dear Delegates,

My name is Sofia Saridou, and I am a 12th-grade student at Arsakeio Tositseio Lykeio Ekalis. I am immensely honoured to be serving as a Deputy President in this MUN and truly delighted to be participating in this committee. I started participating in MUNs when I was in 9th grade and immediately loved everything about it, leading to me deciding to apply for the chair position. Some would argue that MUN is merely an extracurricular activity, yet to me, it has grown to be far more beyond that, since it has helped me in so many aspects that I can't even begin to count, so I truly wish that I can transmit to you the profound love I have for it.

Through this study guide, I hope you will be provided with knowledge that will strike your interest and allow us to have a fruitful debate. As it is set to cover the subject of corruption in the judicial system, after reading it, you will have a more holistic view on the subject, for instance, why eliminating corruption is deemed as pivotal for society, but you will also be provided with approaches to ameliorate the current situation and strengthen the integrity of justice.

For all the newcomers, I'm sure that you'll do amazing, so don't be afraid to exit your comfort zone, and even if you're stressed, we'll be there to help you. Lastly, I hope that during the conference we will get to know each other, prepare resolutions, debate and of course have fun.

If you have any questions, concerning the study guide or anything else, don't hesitate to contact me via email, as I will be more than eager to help. My email is: sofiaaasrd@gmail.com

Looking forward to meeting you and creating beautiful memories!

Kind regards,

Sofia Saridou

## **TOPIC INTRODUCTION**

According to estimates, hundreds of billions of Euros are paid in bribes every year and that corruption, bribery, theft and tax evasion cost developing countries

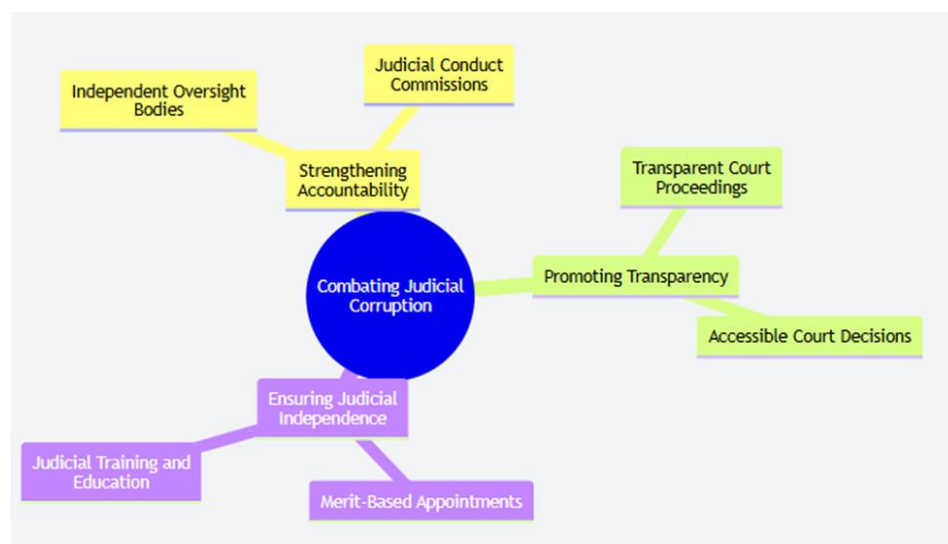
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some US \$1.26 trillion per year. This would be sufficient to lift the 1.4 billion people living on less than \$1.25 a day above the poverty threshold and keep them there for at least six years. However, even with knowing that, those billions are used to manipulate the system and more specifically the judicial one.

Corruption in the justice system covers all aspects of judicial oversight. Police, prosecutors and court staff play a role in improperly influencing the provision of judicial services, and their involvement in corruption can have a menacing effect on the entire judicial process.

Consequently, corruption is rightly called one of the most insidious social phenomena. It erodes trust in public institutions, hinders economic development and has a disproportionate impact on the enjoyment of human rights, particularly by people that belong to marginalized or disadvantaged groups such as minorities, people with disabilities, refugees, migrants and prisoners. It also disproportionately affects women, children and people living in poverty, in particular by hampering their access to basic social rights such as healthcare, housing and education.

In response to these challenges, strengthening integrity within the judiciary has become a global priority. Ensuring that judges and court personnel adhere to high ethical standards requires a comprehensive approach that includes clear codes of conduct, transparent appointment and disciplinary mechanisms, continuous ethics training, and effective oversight. International frameworks, such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption and initiatives like the UNODC Global Judicial Integrity Network, provide essential guidance and support for national efforts to promote judicial integrity and combat corruption.



#### Measures against judicial corruption<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lee, Sarah. "Judicial Corruption Exposed." Numberanalytics.com, 2025, [www.numberanalytics.com/blog/ultimate-guide-to-corruption-in-judiciary](http://www.numberanalytics.com/blog/ultimate-guide-to-corruption-in-judiciary).



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### **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

#### **Corruption**

“Dishonest or illegal behaviour, especially of people in authority or the act or effect of making somebody change from moral to immoral standards of behaviour”<sup>2</sup>

#### **Bribe**

“A sum of money or something valuable that you give or offer to somebody to persuade them to help you, especially by doing something dishonest”<sup>3</sup>

#### **Tax evasion**

“The crime of deliberately not paying all the taxes that you should pay”<sup>4</sup>

#### **Adjudication**

“The process of making an official decision about who is right when two groups or organizations disagree; the decision that is made usually in a court room”<sup>5</sup>

#### **Transparency**

“The quality of something, such as a situation or an argument, that makes it easy to understand”<sup>6</sup>

#### **Accountability**

“The fact of being responsible for your decisions or actions and expected to explain them when you are asked”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “Corruption Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.” [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/corruption?q=corruption](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/corruption?q=corruption).

<sup>3</sup> “Bribe Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.” [Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com](http://Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com), 2024, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/bribe\\_1?q=Bribe](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/bribe_1?q=Bribe).

<sup>4</sup> “Tax Evasion Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.” [Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com](http://Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com), 2025, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/tax-evasion?q=tax+evasion](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/tax-evasion?q=tax+evasion).

<sup>5</sup> “Adjudication Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.” [Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com](http://Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com), 2025, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/adjudication?q=adjudication](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/adjudication?q=adjudication). Accessed 19 Aug. 2025.

<sup>6</sup> “Transparency Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.” [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/transparency?q=transparency](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/transparency?q=transparency).

<sup>7</sup> “Accountability Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.” [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/accountability?q=Accountability](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/accountability?q=Accountability).



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### Magistrate

“An official who acts as a judge in the lowest courts of law.”<sup>8</sup>

### The rule of law

“The condition in which all members of society, including its political leaders, accept the authority of the law”<sup>9</sup>

### Impartiality

“The fact of not supporting one person or group more than another.”<sup>10</sup>

### Appellate court

“A court in which people can appeal against decisions made in other courts of law.”<sup>11</sup>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Fields where corruption is visible

Corruption is not limited just in the judiciary environment but it's visible everywhere in our lives and it can take a variety of forms. Firstly, petty corruption is one of the most common forms. Petty corruption refers to everyday abuse of entrusted power by public officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens, who often are trying to access basic goods or services in places like hospitals, schools, police departments and other agencies.<sup>12</sup> Then, there's political corruption, meaning the manipulation of policies, institutions and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by political decision makers, who abuse their position to sustain their power, status and wealth.<sup>13</sup> Despite the frequency of the aforementioned types of corruption, the most severe one is undoubtedly judicial corruption. Judicial corruption refers to the abuse of power by judges or other officials within the judiciary

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<sup>8</sup> “Magistrate Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.” Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, 2025, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/magistrate?q=magistrate](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/magistrate?q=magistrate). Accessed 20 Aug. 2025.

<sup>9</sup> “Law Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.” Wwww.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/law#rule\\_idmg\\_17](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/law#rule_idmg_17).

<sup>10</sup> “Impartiality Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.” Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, 2022, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/impartiality?q=impartiality](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/impartiality?q=impartiality).

<sup>11</sup> “Appellate Court Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.” Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, 2025, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/appellate-court?q=appellate+court](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/appellate-court?q=appellate+court). Accessed 21 Aug. 2025.

<sup>12</sup> “What Is Petty Corruption | IGI Global.” Wwww.igi-Global.com, [www.igi-global.com/dictionary/negative-effects-of-corruption-on-the-global-level/52517](http://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/negative-effects-of-corruption-on-the-global-level/52517).

<sup>13</sup> Amundsen, Inge. “Political Corruption: An Introduction to the Issues.” CMI Working Paper, vol. WP 1999:7, 1999, [www.cmi.no/publications/1040-political-corruption](http://www.cmi.no/publications/1040-political-corruption).



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for personal gain or to benefit others, causing dire consequences to the smooth functioning of the society.<sup>14</sup>

### **Forms of Corruption in the Justice System**

Corruption that exists in the justice system can take place at any time, beginning at the start of a criminal investigation or the filing of a civil lawsuit, and continuing throughout the judicial process until the enforcement of the court's decision. Much of this corruption occurs outside the public eye and often between only two individuals, both of whom are engaged in the illegal conduct and each receiving a personal benefit. Consequently, corruption within the justice system is difficult to expose and challenging to prove, which impedes prosecution of the corrupt behavior. There's a vast variety of ways in which someone can alter the adjudication or generally manipulate the procedure to their benefit.

The most common form is bribery—offering, promising, or giving something of value to influence a public official or other individual in a position of trust. Bribes can come in the form of money, gifts, or even promises of a higher-paying position. In addition to bribery, political interference and pressure are often used to manipulate the system in favor of politicians or their affiliates, helping them pursue personal or partisan interests. Other forms of corruption include the abuse of discretionary powers, where officials exploit their authority to make biased or unjust decisions, and nepotism, in which favoritism is shown to relatives or close associates regardless of merit. Manipulation of case management—such as intentionally delaying or expediting certain cases to benefit particular parties—further undermines the integrity of the judicial process. Corruption also extends to the enforcement phase, where decisions may be selectively implemented or ignored based on corrupt arrangements. All of these issues are exacerbated by a lack of transparency and accountability, allowing unethical behavior to flourish without sufficient oversight or consequence.

### **Participants in the corruption of the Justice System**

When investigating criminal behaviour, the police have a great deal of discretionary powers, much of which remains unchecked. For a proper sum, the police can suppress the filing of police reports, they can distort the evidence thereby ensuring certain outcomes, they can engage in delaying tactics until the evidence is lost or destroyed, and they can even refuse to investigate. If the alleged perpetrator is politically influential, wealthy or of a certain ethnicity, the police may use their discretionary powers to protect the person rather than investigate them. The police may also commit crimes when investigating other offences, such as rape or robbery.

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<sup>14</sup> Lee, Sarah. "Judicial Corruption Exposed." Numberanalytics.com, 2025, [www.numberanalytics.com/blog/ultimate-guide-to-corruption-in-judiciary](http://www.numberanalytics.com/blog/ultimate-guide-to-corruption-in-judiciary).



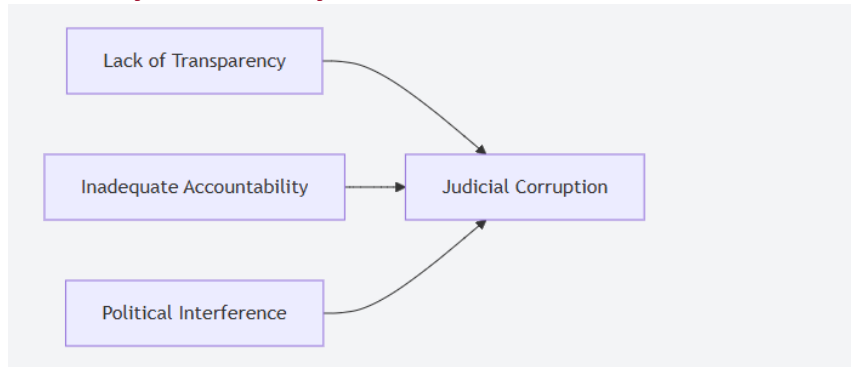
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Even in excellent police investigations, prosecutorial discretion can frustrate the lawful handling of a criminal case.

Similar to the police, prosecutors can also be bribed to delay the investigation and processing of a case. Moreover, powerful governmental ministries can exert substantial pressure on the public prosecutor to withhold prosecution. Such prosecutorial indiscretions go unchecked as there are no objective criteria for managing caseloads and prioritizing investigations that would allow a departure from the procedures to be identified.

Often, court employees are willing to circumvent the administrative process for their private benefit. Due to their vast responsibilities, which receive little oversight by court administrators, court personnel are in a position to manipulate the rules and procedures. They may accelerate or delay a case without detection. They may “lose” the case file and then “find” it for a fee. They may allow or deny access to a judge for a fee or they may influence the assignment of cases again for a fee.

Additionally, governmental leaders, especially those who wield immense power over the judicial system, are able to offer tangible benefits such as housing, car and holidays to those magistrates who ingratiate themselves by tacitly agreeing to rule according to the wishes of the head of government. In some cases, the magistrate becomes accustomed to the higher standard of living and, when he or she retires, will accelerate the search for illicit financial resources from the private sector to maintain a higher standard of living after leaving office. Aside from receiving illicit fee payments, judges may also benefit from succumbing to political pressure by advancing professionally. During the Soviet regime, “telephone justice”, i.e. directives received by telephone concerning pending cases by senior governmental officials, was not uncommon and is still practised to a lesser extent today. Ministries with historical power over the judiciary are used to exerting pressure on the judiciary and are reluctant to relinquish their control. Evidence of this political pressure is the disproportionate number of decisions in favour of the executive or powerful local companies with political or financial ties to the government. Lastly, other sources of pressure are family members or friends who seek “favors” from the magistrate. Due to their personal relationship with the magistrate, close associates expect certain outcomes and the magistrate often goes out of their way to satisfy them.



Judicial Corruption Exposed<sup>15</sup>

### Consequences of Judicial Corruption

Judicial corruption has severe and far-reaching consequences for both the justice system and society as a whole. One of the most immediate impacts is the erosion of public trust. When citizens have the impression that court decisions can be bought or influenced by power and money, their faith in the fairness and impartiality of the legal system begins to wane. This loss of trust often leads to disillusionment and decreased cooperation with law enforcement agencies and other state institutions.

Furthermore, judicial corruption can lead to serious miscarriages of justice, where the innocent are wrongly convicted while the guilty walk free. Such outcomes not only deny justice to victims and allow perpetrators to evade accountability, but also fundamentally undermine the rule of law. This situation is particularly concerning given the disproportionate impact it has on marginalised communities. Those with wealth and political influence are more likely to obtain favourable legal outcomes, while the disadvantaged face higher barriers to justice. As a result, social and economic inequalities are deepened, reinforcing the cycle of poverty and marginalisation.

Apart from issues of fairness, corruption in the justice system often leads to violations of fundamental human rights. When the guarantees of a fair trial and equal protection before the law are jeopardised, arbitrary detention, discrimination or abuse of power can occur without individuals being able to take action. As confidence in the justice system erodes, social unrest can grow. Citizens frustrated by perceived injustice may resort to protests or civil disobedience and demand transparency, reform and accountability.

Economic stability is also jeopardised in an environment where the judiciary is compromised. Both domestic and foreign investors are less inclined to operate in countries where property rights are not protected and contracts are not reliably enforced. This reluctance to invest can slow economic growth, limit job creation and reduce development opportunities. Furthermore, the independence of democratic

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<sup>15</sup> Lee, Sarah. "Judicial Corruption Exposed." Numberanalytics.com, 2025, [www.numberanalytics.com/blog/ultimate-guide-to-corruption-in-judiciary](http://www.numberanalytics.com/blog/ultimate-guide-to-corruption-in-judiciary).





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institutions is threatened if the judiciary is influenced by corruption. The separation of powers becomes blurred, allowing political manipulation of court decisions and the suppression of opposition voices.

Efforts to combat organised crime, cross-border crime and corruption in other areas are also hampered if the judiciary cannot be trusted. In a corrupt legal system, perpetrators are not held accountable, allowing criminal networks to flourish. Furthermore, the distortion of justice — when judgements are based on bribery or political pressure rather than facts and law — undermines the legitimacy and predictability of the entire legal framework.

The bottom line of this is that corruption in the judiciary is not a local problem confined to the courtroom. It has profound, systemic effects that threaten human rights, social cohesion, economic development and democratic governance. Fighting it is essential to ensure justice, equality and the long-term stability of societies.

#### **Why should a democratic country worry about corruption?**

In a constitutional democracy based on the rule of law, the role of the judiciary, as an independent and equal branch of government, is charged with protecting human rights and civil liberties by guaranteeing the right to a fair trial by a competent and impartial tribunal. All citizens expect equal access to justice and equal treatment by investigating authorities, prosecutors and the courts, regardless of their position in society. Yet in most corrupt judicial systems, the powerful and wealthy can escape prosecution and conviction, while large segments of society are excluded from their rightful access to fair and effective judicial services.

Police officers and judges in developing countries receive appallingly low salaries, fulfill their duties in miserable working conditions, in overcrowded offices and dilapidated courtrooms, with little or no support staff or equipment and modest access to up-to-date laws or law revisions. A judicial system staffed by ill-informed, underpaid and overworked individuals is a proven recipe for corruption. Although it is the job of the courts to protect the human rights and civil liberties of every citizen in a democratic country, many opinion polls show that the public generally views the judiciary as one of the most corrupt government institutions in their countries.

The perception of corruption is just as insidious and needs to be overcome as corruption itself, because both lead to the same results. Citizens are less likely to abide by the law if they believe that others, especially those in government, are flouting the law and evading detection and punishment. Disgruntled individuals will be more likely to take the law into their “own hands” to resolve disputes rather than submit to a judicial system that is perceived as dishonest and biased. Foreign investors will shun those countries where the judicial system has a reputation of applying the law in an inconsistent and capricious manner. In an increasingly global arena with fiercely competitive markets, economic growth in countries with a real or perceived corrupt judiciary will be severely curtailed.





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### **MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED**

#### **Denmark**

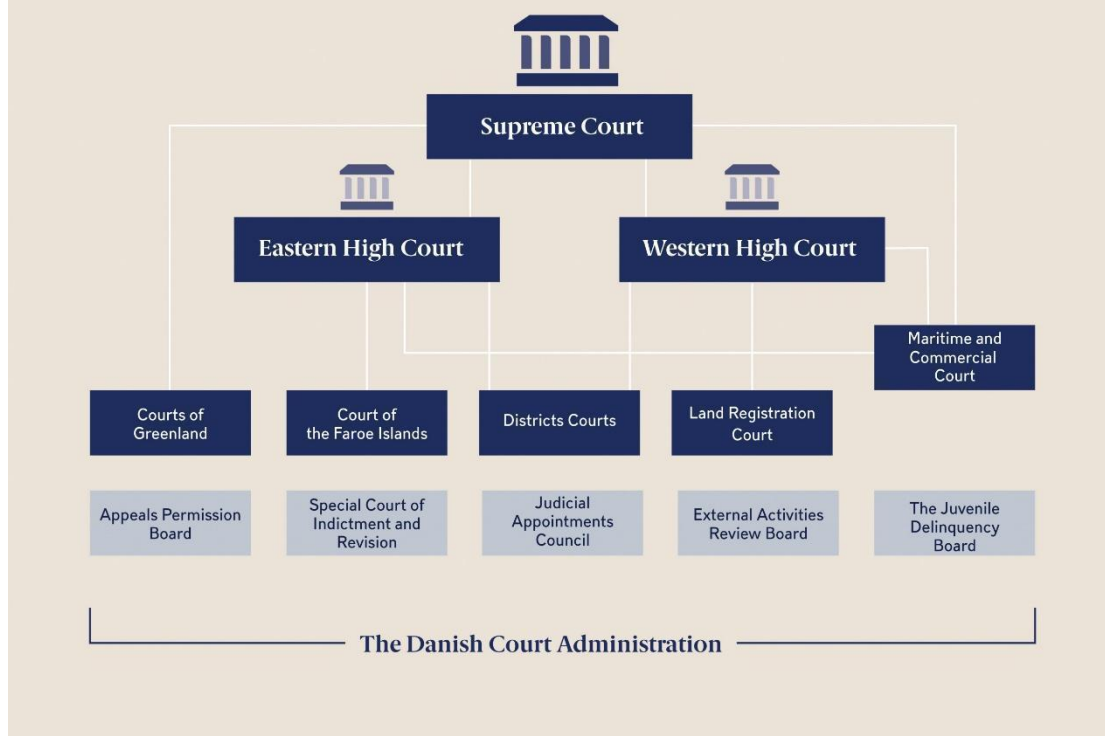
Denmark is known for having a very trustworthy and independent judiciary that adheres to strict principles of judicial integrity. The country's judicial system operates according to clear ethical guidelines that emphasise independence from parliament and the executive, impartiality, respect, professionalism and accountability. Danish judges must fulfil their duties with high quality, maintain confidentiality and avoid conflicts of interest, with these principles codified by the Association of Danish Judges and are supported by national law.

Denmark has no standalone anti-corruption strategy or central body dedicated to anti-corruption agency, but applies strict laws against bribery and corruption, including in the judiciary, where the risk of corruption is considered to be very low. The legal framework includes provisions on conflicts of interest and transparency laws that regulate public sector information and corporate disclosure. The judiciary is considered independent, fair and efficient and contributes to Denmark's global reputation as one of the least corrupt countries.

Recent reforms in Denmark's criminal justice system include tougher penalties for violent crime, investment in prison capacity and rehabilitation initiatives, which indicate ongoing efforts to strengthen law enforcement and judicial efficiency. The judicial system consists of three levels — district courts, high courts and the Supreme Court— - and procedures are governed by the Danish Administration of Justice Act. Court hearings are usually public and oral to ensure transparency.

Overall, Denmark has a solid framework for judicial integrity that promotes public trust, respect for the rule of law and effective legal protection, while recent reforms aim to improve the capacity and responsiveness of the justice system.

### The Courts of Denmark - Organisational chart



The Danish judicial system<sup>16</sup>

## Australia

Australia possesses a strong and independent judicial system founded on the principle of separation of powers, which allocates law-making and law enforcement responsibilities among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The judiciary is made up of federal courts as well as state and territory courts. At the top is the High Court of Australia, which holds the highest appellate authority on constitutional issues, federal and state laws, and has discretionary review powers. Beneath it are the Federal Court of Australia, the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, along with the courts of the states and territories, each having varying jurisdictions over civil, criminal, family, employment, and administrative matters. Judges are selected by the executive government based on their qualifications, and they have secure tenure with safeguards against arbitrary dismissal, which upholds judicial independence. Judges typically serve until they reach mandatory retirement ages, generally between 70 and the early 70s, depending on their jurisdiction. Maintaining judicial integrity is

<sup>16</sup> Domstol.dk. *The Courts of Denmark – Organisational Chart*. Danmarks Domstole, [publisher if different], [date of image or page, if known], <https://www.domstol.dk/media/rsjekuep/the-courts-of-denmark-organisationsdiagram.jpg?rmode=min&width=1339&height=1034&v=1dbb5d8083adb80>. Accessed 23 Aug. 2025.



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paramount in Australia, with continuous efforts aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and public confidence in the judiciary.

The Law Council of Australia advocates for the creation of a federal judicial commission to independently manage complaints against judges, improve the processes for judicial appointments, and advance judicial training in ethics. These measures seek to reinforce public trust and maintain the rule of law. Compared to other institutions, public confidence in the Australian judiciary is relatively high, indicating trust in the competence and neutrality of judicial officers. Specialized initiatives, like the Pacific Judicial Integrity Program, offer training and mentorship to assist courts in dealing with corruption-related challenges. Anti-corruption strategies within the judicial system are integrated into Australia's wider national integrity framework, involving agencies that strive to uncover and avert corruption at all government levels, despite some ongoing difficulties in coordination and resource allocation.

#### **Central and Eastern European Law Initiative Institute (CEELI) Institute**

The CEELI Institute is an independent, non-profit, and non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting the rule of law worldwide, with a historical focus on Central and Eastern Europe and expanded efforts in Asia and Africa. Founded in 1999 and headquartered in the Villa Grébovka in Prague, Czech Republic, the Institute's mission is to protect fundamental rights, promote transparent and accountable institutions, enhance economic opportunities and support the peaceful resolution of disputes. CEELI works primarily with judges, prosecutors, investigators, lawyers, and local organisations to build law-based institutions, promote judicial independence, integrate the integrity of the judiciary and improve competencies, including specialised training to handle complex corruption cases. Through innovative training, webinars, conferences, workshops, and a strong network of lawyers, CEELI has reached tens of thousands of lawyers from over 50 countries since 2007. Key programmes include the Conference of Chief Judges of Central and Eastern Europe, launched in 2011 to bring together senior judges to share best practises on judicial integrity, and networks for the exchange of judges in Central and Eastern Europe and Africa. CEELI also works with US partners on training programmes for judges in South Asia. The Institute operates from the historic Villa Grébovka, a building from the late 19th century that has been converted into a conference and residential centre. CEELI emphasises mutual exchange, anti-corruption efforts, judicial review and the continuous development of market economy and human rights. In 2023, CEELI conducted about 86 programmes with over 2,000 lawyers, demonstrating the organisation's global reach and impact in strengthening judicial independence and the rule of law.

#### **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental international organization founded in 1961 and headquartered in



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Paris, France. It currently comprises 38 member countries committed to democracy and market economy principles. The OECD serves as a global policy forum and knowledge hub that promotes policies to improve the economic and social well-being of people worldwide. OECD runs Anti-Corruption Networks (ACN) and supports governance reforms, law enforcement cooperation, and best practice exchanges among over 20 countries, actively helping to minimize corruption and tackle its dire consequences.

#### International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre (IACCC)

The International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre (IACCC) is a specialised global initiative based in London that brings together law enforcement officials from several countries to work together to combat allegations of grand corruption. The IACCC facilitates the rapid exchange of information, helps countries affected by major corruption and supports efforts to bring corrupt elites to justice through coordinated international investigations and actions. Its mandate focuses specifically on cases involving high-level corruption, such as the abuse of public office by powerful leaders for private gain (kleptocracy). The IACCC aims to improve coordination and operational support between participating countries to overcome the challenges posed by jurisdictional limitations and political interference in domestic anti-corruption efforts. Although the IACCC includes several English-speaking countries, it also includes some European observers and smaller financial centres as associate members and occasionally cooperates with Interpol. The public is only informed to a limited extent about the detailed activities of the IACCC, which reflects the sensitive nature of its investigative and coordination work. The IACCC complements broader new initiatives such as the proposed International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC), which would prosecute major corruption cases when national systems are unable or unwilling to act, and which would further strengthen global accountability against corruption at the highest level.

The International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre (IACCC) differs from other international anti-corruption mechanisms mainly in its role and function as a coordination and intelligence-sharing hub rather than a prosecutorial or judicial body. Unlike proposed international judicial bodies like the International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC), which would have prosecutorial powers and a judicial mandate to try high-level kleptocrats, the IACCC does not prosecute cases or interfere with national sovereignty. It supports national investigations by improving coordination and operational effectiveness among participating countries.

#### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
1961	The organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was founded



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29 March 1996	Adoption of Inter-American Convention against Corruption
1999	The CEELI Institute was founded
2003	Establishment of The Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct
31 October 2003	Adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)
14 December 2005	the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) was put into force
2011	The Conference of Chief Judges of Central and Eastern Europe was launched by the CEELI Institute
April 2018	Launch of The UNODC Global Judicial Integrity Network
2023	CEELI conducted about 86 programmes with over 2,000 lawyers

### RELEVANT UN TREATIES, CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

#### United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)

The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) is the only legally binding international anti-corruption treaty. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 31 October 2003 and came into force on 14 December 2005. By 2024, it has near universal adherence with 191 States Parties. The UNCAC serves as a comprehensive global instrument to combat corruption through a multi-layered and binding approach. It emphasises preventive measures, meaning the promotion of integrity and transparency in the public and private sectors, the establishment of anti-corruption bodies, codes of conduct, financial disclosure, safeguards in the public service, transparency in political financing, and public participation in anti-corruption measures. It also draws attention to law enforcement, as in the definition of corruption-related offences such as bribery, embezzlement, abuse of office, illicit enrichment, money laundering, and obstruction of justice, along with enforcement tools for prosecution such as freezing and confiscation of illicit assets, witness protection, and cooperation between law enforcement agencies.

Moreover, it provides international cooperation and asset recovery, providing mechanisms to trace, freeze, seize and return assets stolen through corrupt practices, recognising asset recovery as a fundamental principle of the Convention. On the whole, the Convention contains 8 chapters and 71 articles, dealing with institutional reforms, accountability, and legal frameworks needed to fight against corruption holistically. It also promotes the active participation of civil society and emphasises



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transparency and access to information. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) serves as the Secretariat for the UNCAC, monitors its implementation and provides support to States Parties. The UNCAC is recognised as a pioneering international instrument that not only combats corruption, but also contributes to strengthening the rule of law, democratic governance, and sustainable development worldwide.

#### **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Global Judicial Integrity Network**

The UNODC Global Judicial Integrity Network, which was launched in April 2018, serves as a platform aimed at helping judiciaries across the globe enhance judicial integrity and combat corruption within the justice sector. It operates in line with Article 11 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which highlights the critical function of the judiciary in maintaining integrity, independence, and impartiality. The Network fosters peer learning and mutual support among judges, magistrates, judicial councils, court staff, judicial associations, and other justice system stakeholders. It provides access to an extensive database of resources, which includes best practices, publications, training materials, and guidance manuals focused on judicial integrity.

Furthermore, it aids in the development and practical application of judicial conduct principles and anti-corruption measures tailored to the unique needs of justice systems worldwide. By promoting networking opportunities and exchanges among various legal and cultural frameworks, the Network bolsters international cooperation and encourages the sharing of knowledge and experiences. It also offers technical assistance to judiciaries in devising and executing strategies, systems, and policies that enhance accountability and integrity. The Network tackles emerging and complex challenges such as the effects of social media, the influence of digitalization on judicial proceedings, judicial stress, and gender-related issues within the judiciary.

One of its most significant initiatives is the provision of Judicial Ethics Training Tools, which have been adopted by over 73 jurisdictions, benefiting more than 7,000 judiciary members globally. Through these initiatives, the Global Judicial Integrity Network aims to uphold the rule of law by promoting transparent, equitable, and corruption-free judicial systems. In this pursuit, it strengthens public confidence in justice, aids in the protection of human rights, and contributes to the development of accountable and resilient institutions.

#### **PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE**

##### **Inter-American Convention against Corruption**

The adoption of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption in 1996, as the first international convention against corruption, was an important step towards the adoption of many different international instruments. Since then, numerous international commitments to combat corruption and illicit financing have been adopted by various multilateral institutions. The culmination was the adoption of the



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United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2003 as the only truly global anti-corruption convention.

### **The Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct**

The Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, developed during 2000-2002 and formally established in 2003, serve as a fundamental international framework outlining the core values that judges are expected to adhere to in order to maintain the integrity and independence of the judiciary. Created by the Judicial Integrity Group with the backing of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), these Principles have received widespread recognition and have been integrated into various national judicial ethics codes. The document defines six key values: independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, and competence and diligence. These values are designed to direct judicial conduct both within and outside the courtroom.

Independence guarantees that judges are free from outside influences in their decision-making, while impartiality necessitates that they remain unbiased and neutral throughout all legal proceedings. Integrity and propriety require personal honesty and suitable behavior that fosters public confidence in the judiciary. Equality emphasizes the duty to treat all individuals without bias, ensuring equal access to justice for everyone and lastly competence and diligence highlight the importance of legal knowledge and the dedication to effectively and efficiently fulfilling judicial responsibilities.

Although the Principles are not enforceable by law, they provide a significant ethical benchmark for assessing judicial conduct, shaping disciplinary actions, and informing judicial reform initiatives. In numerous countries, they have been utilized for training judges, developing judicial codes of conduct, and supporting initiatives aimed at combating corruption and political interference. By fostering ethical conduct and enhancing public trust in judicial institutions, the Bangalore Principles are vital in reinforcing the rule of law on a global scale.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

### **Training programs**

Offering judges ongoing training throughout their careers contributes to the maintenance of high professionalism standards. Training initiatives can address ethical matters, including approaches to resolving ethical dilemmas. An effective training approach could involve encouraging peer-to-peer mentoring and sharing experiences and best practices among judges from various countries, as they might feel more comfortable discussing ethical topics with their counterparts from other nations. In general, empirical research has demonstrated that ethics training programs can produce a number of positive effects that can help lead to the prevention of corruption. However, it is important to note, the effectiveness of ethics training can





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be dependent on various aspects of the specific training model and structure and that's why it needs to be tailored to the specific needs of each country, adhering to their laws and sometimes culture.

#### **Strengthening control or oversight mechanisms for the judiciary**

Control or monitoring mechanisms can be integrated into the justice system. The participation of civil society or the representation of lay people in the panels for the appointment of judges can subject the process to greater scrutiny. Additionally, an electronic case allocation system can randomly assign cases so that pliant judges are not cherry-picked to hear particular cases, decreasing the risk of manipulation to satisfy certain interests, while an electronic case management system can monitor the progress of cases through the courts and detect irregularities. Other than that, official complaints mechanisms can receive complaints from court users about judges or court officials and court user committees can be established to provide feedback to courts on the effectiveness, efficiency and integrity of their work. Lastly, journalists trained in reporting legal issues and aware of both the evidence required to bring proceedings against the corrupt, as well as the pitfalls of reportage that can lead to the collapse of cases, can be instrumental in both uncovering corruption cases in society and holding courts to account

#### **Merit- based selection**

Merit-based recruitment involves hiring professionals on the basis of their qualifications (talent, skills, experience, competence) and their ability to fulfil the job successfully, rather than on the basis of nepotism or patronage. It is believed that hiring professionals on the basis of merit creates the necessary foundations for developing a culture of integrity, which ultimately helps to prevent corruption. The OECD (2020), recommends in its Handbook on Public Integrity that countries introduce merit-based recruitment and employment systems to reduce the possibility of corruption. Merit-based recruitment is generally considered "best practice" and is strongly recommended by various anti-corruption bodies. Several empirical research studies have also demonstrated the overall effectiveness of this approach. However, although these studies have generally been positive, they have not been able to identify the specific mechanisms of meritocratic recruitment that contribute to its success. For example, is it the fact that meritocratic recruitment fosters a culture of integrity? Is it the fact that candidates who have a high level of merit are less corruptible?

#### **Collaboration among justice sector stakeholders**

Collaboration between stakeholders significantly reduces corruption by leveraging the collective strengths, resources, and control capabilities of different stakeholders, including government, the private sector, civil society, the media, and international organisations. By working together, these stakeholders can establish and enforce common ethical standards, compliance programmes and transparency



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measures that elevate integrity across all sectors and reduce opportunities for corrupt practices. Multi-stakeholder partnerships promote transparency through the open exchange of information about processes, such as procurement and public projects, enabling external scrutiny that discourages corruption and facilitates the early detection of irregularities. Furthermore, cooperation enables the sharing of risks and the pooling of financial, technical, and human resources, which increases the effectiveness of anti-corruption initiatives beyond what a single actor could achieve alone. Joint efforts also empower stakeholders to influence, negotiate, and implement anti-corruption policies and legal frameworks with greater legitimacy, which improves adoption and enforcement. Multi-party engagement builds mutual trust, communication, and accountability mechanisms, strengthening compliance with integrity norms and increasing reputational risk for wrongdoers.

### **Penalties and punishments**

Punishments and penalties play a crucial role in reducing judicial corruption by changing the cost-benefit analysis for individuals contemplating corrupt behaviour. Severe penalties — such as heavy fines, or imprisonment, and disqualification from public office— increase the personal and professional costs of corruption and make it less attractive. For penalties to be an effective deterrent, they must be proportionate to the offender's income and the illegal benefits realised. They must also be severe enough to deter corrupt behaviour and not simply be reduced or ignored. Disqualification from public office prevents corrupt judges or officials from further abusing their positions and helps to prevent repeat offences by sending a clear signal of accountability. These disciplinary measures, combined with ethical codes, transparent procedures, and regular evaluations, foster an environment in which corruption is not tolerated while preserving the independence of the judiciary. In addition, the imposition of penalties reduces impunity by ensuring that corrupt members of the judiciary cannot manipulate the justice system without consequences, thereby increasing public confidence in the legal system. However, penalties alone are insufficient. They work best as part of a comprehensive anti-corruption framework that includes proactive investigations, fair prosecutions, institutional reforms to promote transparency, and professionalism within the judiciary. Striking the right balance is important to prevent anti-corruption efforts from being misused to jeopardise the independence of the judiciary or to pursue political objectives.

### **Increasing transparency**

Transparency initiatives may necessitate that judges make their rulings public and that courts enhance the availability of information regarding their operations and the status of particular cases. It is also important for judges to have straightforward access to relevant information, laws, cases, and court procedures, while those involved in court proceedings should be informed about their due process rights and the specifics of their rights during and following legal proceedings. Basic measures,



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such as displaying posters in courthouses that outline court fees, can help reduce the likelihood of dishonest court officials requesting unauthorized payments. Furthermore, the press's freedom and access to information must be protected by permitting journalists to report accurately and independently on legal matters and any allegations of corruption or improper influence within judicial processes, thereby educating the public and offering clarity.

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