

Most corrupt nations? So which countries are cleaner than us? UK ranked 17th out of 176 in financial corruption survey

By Rachel Rickard Straus

The UK is perceived to be the 17th least corrupt country in the world, according to a survey, thanks to comparatively high levels of transparency and a tough stance on the abuse of power.

It scored 74 out of a possible 100 points, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 very clean – considerably lower than the three countries ranked the least corrupt in the world – Denmark, Finland, and New Zealand, which were each scored 90.

Also making it into the top ten of Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2012 were Sweden, Singapore, Switzerland, Australia, Norway, Canada and the Netherlands.



The darker the colour on the world map, the more corrupt each country is perceived to be

Japan came joint with the UK – and both were beaten by Barbados, which was ranked 15.

The UK beat the United States by one point and France by three.

However out of 176 countries, two thirds scored below 50, with corruption continuing to ravage societies around the world.

Afghanistan, North Korea and Somalia once again cling to the bottom rung of the index, scoring just eight out of 100.

Underperformers also include Eurozone countries hit by the economic crisis. Greece's global ranking fell from 80th in 2011 to 94th in 2012, reflecting the country's continuing economic turmoil and widespread tax evasion.

Italy was ranked 72nd, below EU-newcomer Romania at 66 in the index.

Transparency International warned Europe must address corruption risks in the public sector to tackle the financial crisis, calling for strengthened efforts to corruption-proof public institutions.

12 LEAST CORRUPT NATIONS

1. Denmark - 90
1. Finland - 90
1. New Zealand - 90
4. Sweden - 88
5. Singapore - 87
6. Switzerland - 86
7. Australia - 85
7. Norway - 85
9. Canada - 84
9. Netherlands - 84
11. Iceland - 82
12. Luxembourg - 80

12 MOST CORRUPT NATIONS

1. Somalia - 8
1. North Korea - 8
1. Afghanistan - 8
4. Sudan - 13
5. Myanmar - 15
6. Uzbekistan - 17
6. Turkmenistan - 17
8. Iraq - 18
9. Venezuela - 19
9. Haiti - 19
9. Chad - 19
9. Burundi - 19

'Corruption is the world's most talked about problem,' said Cobus de Swardt, managing director of Transparency International. 'The world's leading economies should lead by example, making sure that their institutions are fully transparent and their leaders are held accountable. This is crucial since their institutions play a significant role in preventing corruption from flourishing globally.'

The figures suggest that even in the Arab Spring countries there have been barely any improvements. Despite citizen uprisings calling for greater accountability led to the overthrow of governments in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen, their rankings have essentially stagnated in the 21 – 41 per cent range over the past year. Every year the index scores countries on how corrupt their public sectors are seen to be, by capturing views of analysts, businesspeople and experts in countries around the world.



Riots in Athens: The country's worst hit by the European financial crisis, in particular Greece, are perceived to be the most corrupt in the EU