Beat: Politics

Corruption in Spain continues to be a serious problem

According the 2023 Corruption Perception

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USPA NEWS - The 2023 Corruption Perception Index, prepared by the Transparency International organization, reveals that Spain repeats last year's score of 60 out of 100. Although it maintains the 2022 rating and avoids falling for the third consecutive year, the organization warns that “it is neither a reason for satisfaction nor peace of mind.” In an index where 0 is “highly corrupt” and 100 “very transparent,” the downward trend in recent years shows “stagnation.” The organization considers that corruption in Spain continues to be a serious problem that should put citizens and public authorities on alert.

Corruption can be measured in two types: legal, such as capturing policies and ensuring that laws are made according to the interest of politicians, and illegal. “In Spain, almost nine out of ten people think that there is a lot or a lot of corruption, but the percentage of businessmen who admit that they have been asked for a bribe does not reach 2%,” argues Manuel Villoria, founding member of Transparency International and professor of Political Science at the Rey Juan Carlos University of Madrid.

Although the number of those prosecuted for corruption has decreased in recent years, "corruption for citizens and experts is more than what can be prosecuted judicially. What's more, much of corruption goes unnoticed by judicial controls," emphasizes Villoria. The expert insists that the fundamental problem of the Spanish judicial system is the interference of the Government and politicians: "We are at the bottom of Europe, we are one of the countries with the greatest perception of dependence on the judiciary," he says.

In perspective with the rest of the world, Spain drops one place in the ranking and goes from occupying position 37 out of 180. This drop has been repeated consecutively since 2019, when it was among the 30 countries with the lowest corruption index. Countries like Israel, Lithuania and Portugal are ahead of Spain in transparency, despite all of them having worsened their score on the Corruption Perception Index.

Of 180 countries analyzed, 23 have reached their historical minimum levels. Among them, several of the democratic countries that top the ranking: Sweden (82 points), which has remained above 85 since 2012; Netherlands (79), which did not drop below 82; Iceland (72), which has lost ten points in ten years; and the United Kingdom (71), which has dropped six points in the last five years. This decline is also repeated in authoritarian states such as Iran, Russia, Tajikistan and Venezuela. By type of regime, consolidated democracies score more than 70 points on average and authoritarian regimes do not exceed 30.

Overall, only 55 countries have improved their scores, and two out of three fail in transparency: the average remains at 43 points. At the top, Denmark leads for the sixth consecutive year, with 90 points out of 100, and Finland and New Zealand follow with 87 and 85 points, respectively.

The countries of Western Europe and the European Union - which comprise only 10% of the world's population - score an average of 65 points. Although it is still the region with the best rating, the average falls for the first time in recent years. The Baltic countries have improved their score, especially Estonia. The improvement of Ukraine stands out, which, after its approach to the EU, has improved three points and is ten points ahead of Russia. No other region passes transparency. In America, Canada gets 76 points and Venezuela worsens its 2022 grade by one point, leaving it with only 13 points out of 100.

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