

# The Future of Corruption Benchmarking in the EU

**International conference: Building Integrity and Reducing Corruption in  
Security Sector**

**Rakitje, Croatia, 18-20 May 2009**

## Importance of Reducing Corruption

- Reducing corruption has been among the priorities of most international institutions over a number of years now
- Corruption was a major preoccupation during the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements
- Corruption continues to dominate the agenda of the initial period of membership of newly acceded countries

## Evolution of EU Approach against Corruption: the case of Bulgaria

- Initially the European Commission relied “persistent rumors about corrupt practices at various levels of the administration and the public sector
- The Commission then progressed towards using reliable national and international sources for measuring levels of corruption
- Finally, after Bulgaria’s accession in 2007, the Commission introduced its own mechanism for “benchmarking” cooperation and verification of progress in the areas of judicial reform and the fight against corruption and organized crime

## Monitoring of corruption in the EU

“The Commission is of the opinion that at **this stage** a separate EU anti-corruption evaluation and monitoring mechanism is inappropriate, because this would run against the Commission’s general conviction that unnecessary duplication of efforts should be avoided.”

*Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee on a Comprehensive EU Policy against Corruption, COM (2003) 317 final, Brussels, 28.5.2003*

## Deficiencies of the EU Approach against Corruption

- Anti-corruption is not in the core of EU's acquis and the Union has little specific anti-corruption guidelines to offer Member States and applicant countries
- Currently applied monitoring mechanisms only allow the Commission to evaluate countries' progress over time
- There is no "baseline" of expected standards
- One country's performance could not be compared with another's
- Identifying anti-corruption progress remains largely arbitrary
- The Commission is often accused by Member States of applying double standards

## Deficiencies of the EU Approach against Corruption

- Anti-corruption is not in the core of EU's acquis and the Union has little specific anti-corruption guidelines
- Instead of designing its own corruption monitoring tool the EU refers to existing ones designed to evaluate compliance with respective international conventions rather than assessing the effect of anti-corruption measures
- Currently applied monitoring allows the Commission to evaluate countries' progress over time but there is no "baseline" of expected standards and one country's performance could not be compared with another's
- The focus is still on input indicators (nominal compliance with regulations and procedures) rather than output indicators (impact on corruption)

## Consequences of the lack of EU-wide anti-corruption monitoring

- Identifying anti-corruption progress remains largely arbitrary
- The Commission is often accused by Member States of applying double standards

## Monitoring corruption in Bulgaria: Corruption Monitoring System (CMS)

- Designed and developed by the Center for the Study of Democracy in 1998
- Purpose: to measure the level of corruption and to identify related public perceptions, opinions, and expectations
- Acknowledged by the UN as a best practice national system for monitoring corruption
- Advantages
  - Coherence with the UN victimization approach to measuring administrative corruption levels
  - Reliance on diverse sources of information and combining quantitative and qualitative methods for monitoring and assessment
  - Use of nationally and internationally established methods and indicators
  - Dynamic comparability of the monitoring findings
  - Potential international comparability of the information

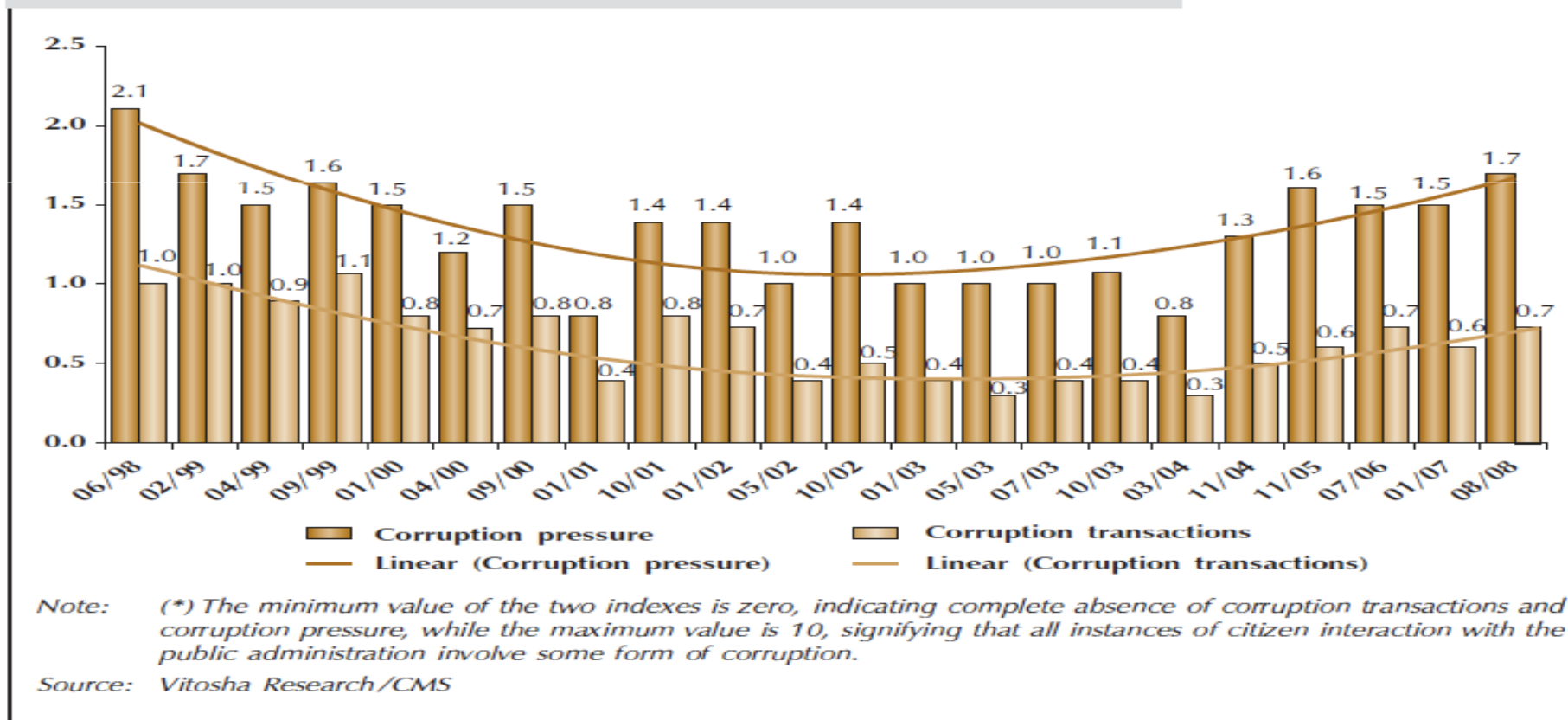


## Corruption indexes: Corruption victimization of the population and the business sector

- Involvement in corruption transactions
  - This index is calculated based on the frequency of self-reported instances when citizens and businesses informally provided money, gifts, or favors in order to have a problem solved. It reflects the level of actual corruption in the country over a definite period of time
- Corruption pressure
  - It is constructed on the basis of the frequency of self-reported cases when citizens and businesspersons were asked for money, gifts, or favors in order to have a problem of theirs solved. It reflects the level of potential corruption in this country

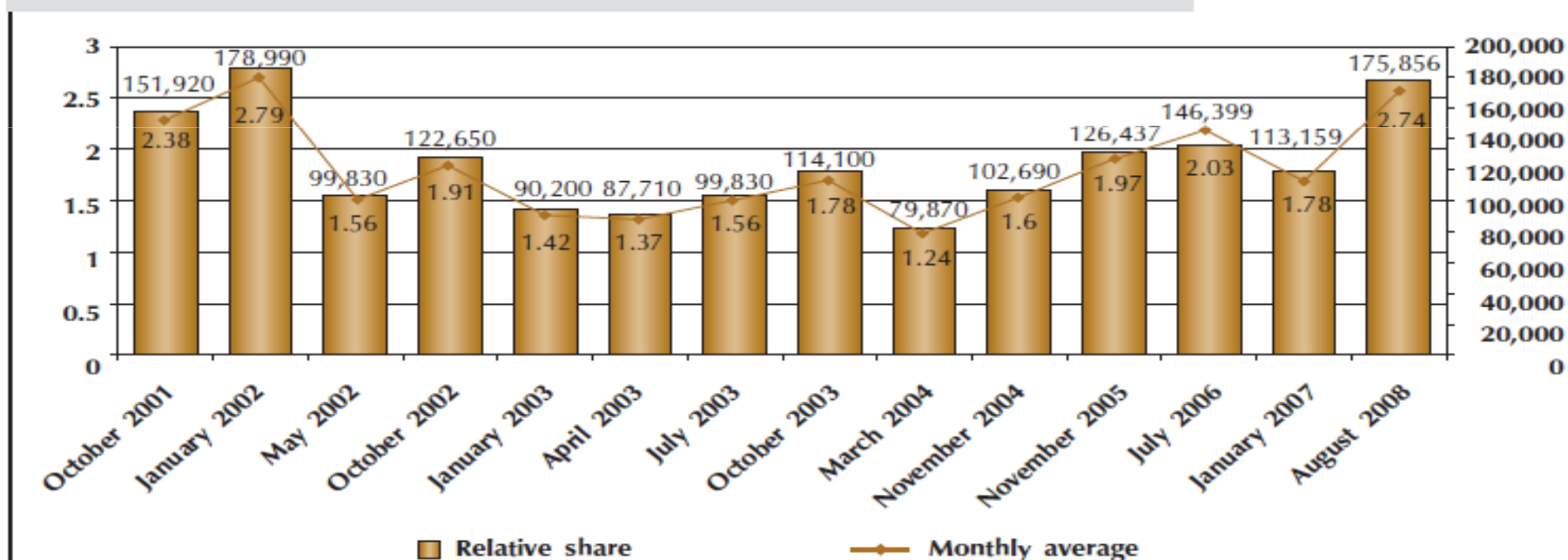
# Corruption indexes: Corruption victimization of the population and the business sector

**FIGURE 7. DYNAMICS OF INVOLVEMENT IN CORRUPTION TRANSACTIONS AND CORRUPTION PRESSURE INDEXES – GENERAL POPULATION (MIN = 0, MAX = 10)\***



## Corruption indexes: Corruption victimization of the population and the business sector

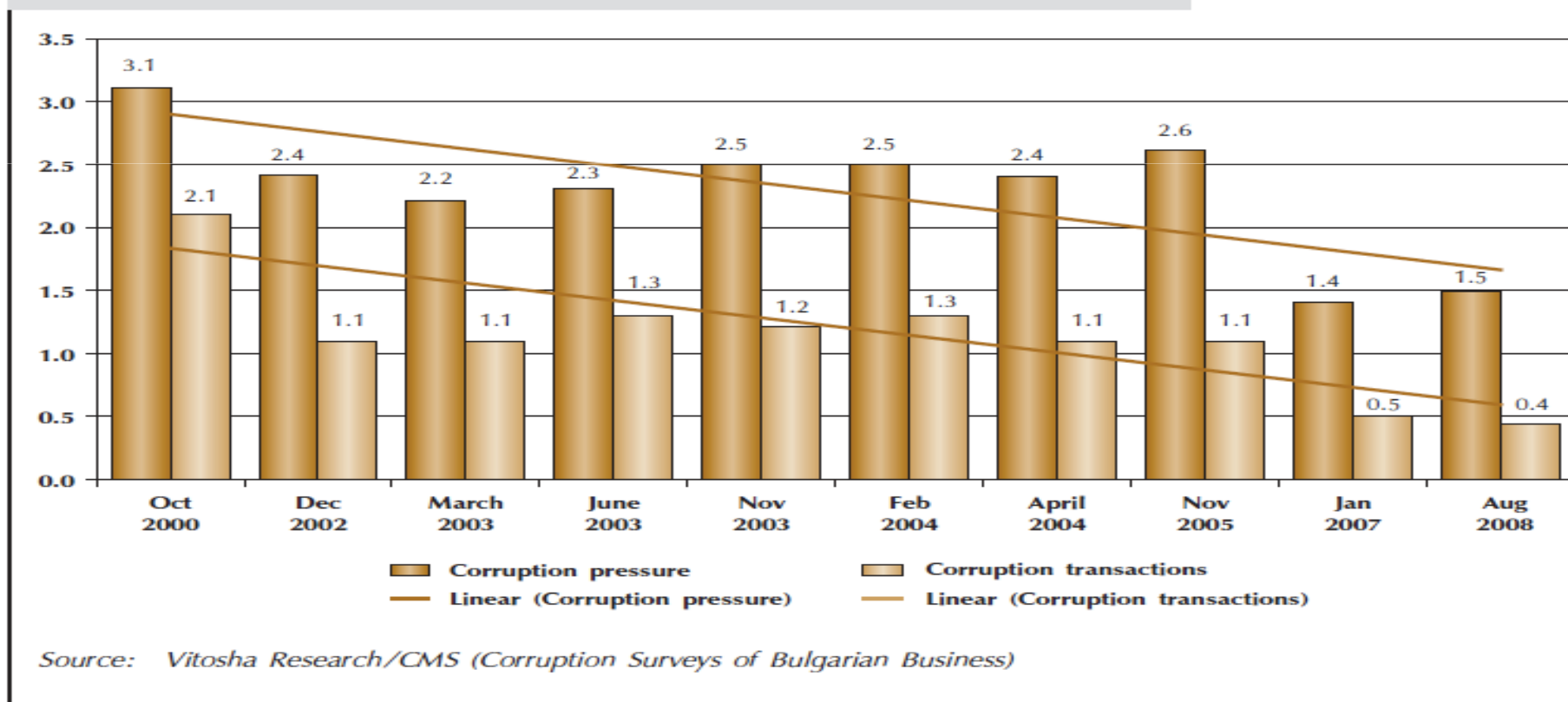
FIGURE 8. CONCLUDED CORRUPTION TRANSACTIONS: AVERAGE MONTHLY NUMBER AND RELATIVE SHARE OF THE POPULATION INVOLVED<sup>10</sup>



Source: Vitosha Research/CMS

# Corruption indexes: Corruption victimization of the population and the business sector

**FIGURE 9. DYNAMICS OF INVOLVEMENT IN CORRUPTION TRANSACTIONS AND CORRUPTION PRESSURE INDEXES – BUSINESS**  
(MIN = 0, MAX = 10)



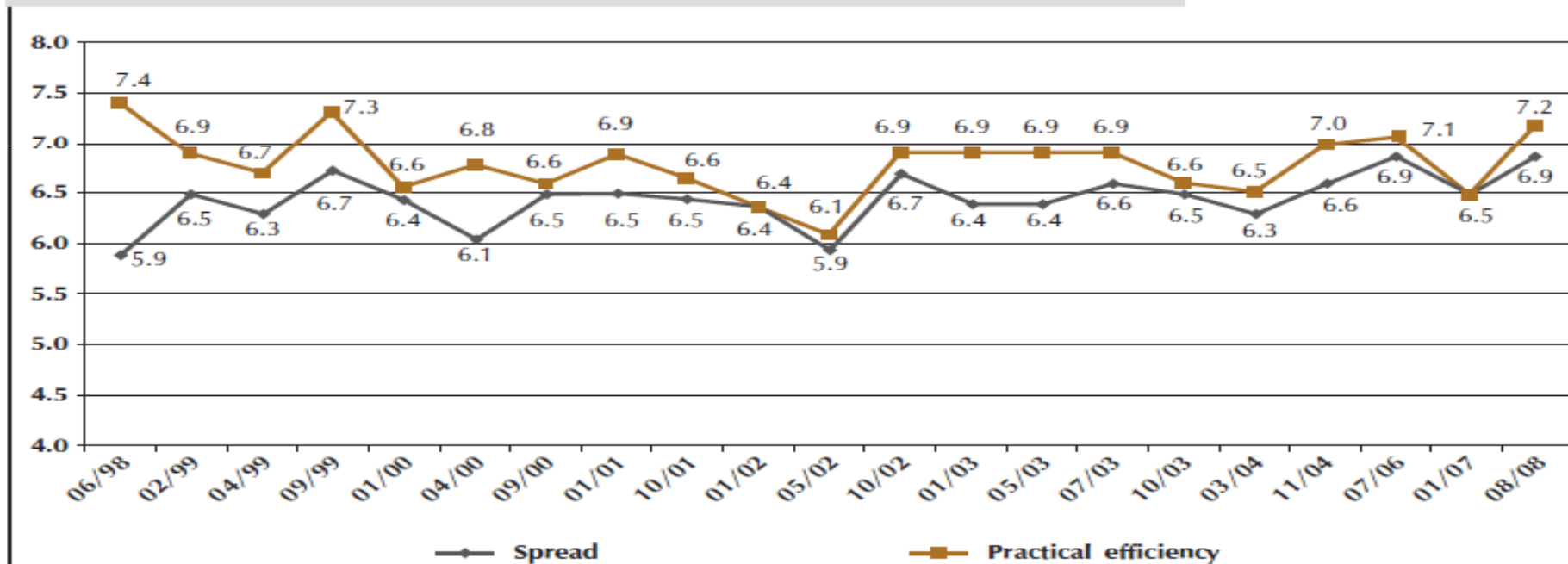
Source: Vitosha Research/CMS (Corruption Surveys of Bulgarian Business)

## Corruption indexes: Spread of corruption

- Spread of corruption
  - Indicates citizens' assessments of the spread of corrupt practices in society and in particular institutions/occupational groups
- Practical effectiveness
  - Indicates citizens' assessments of the extent to which corruption is becoming an efficient tool of solving personal problems and a social norm of behavior

## Corruption indexes: Public attitudes to corruption

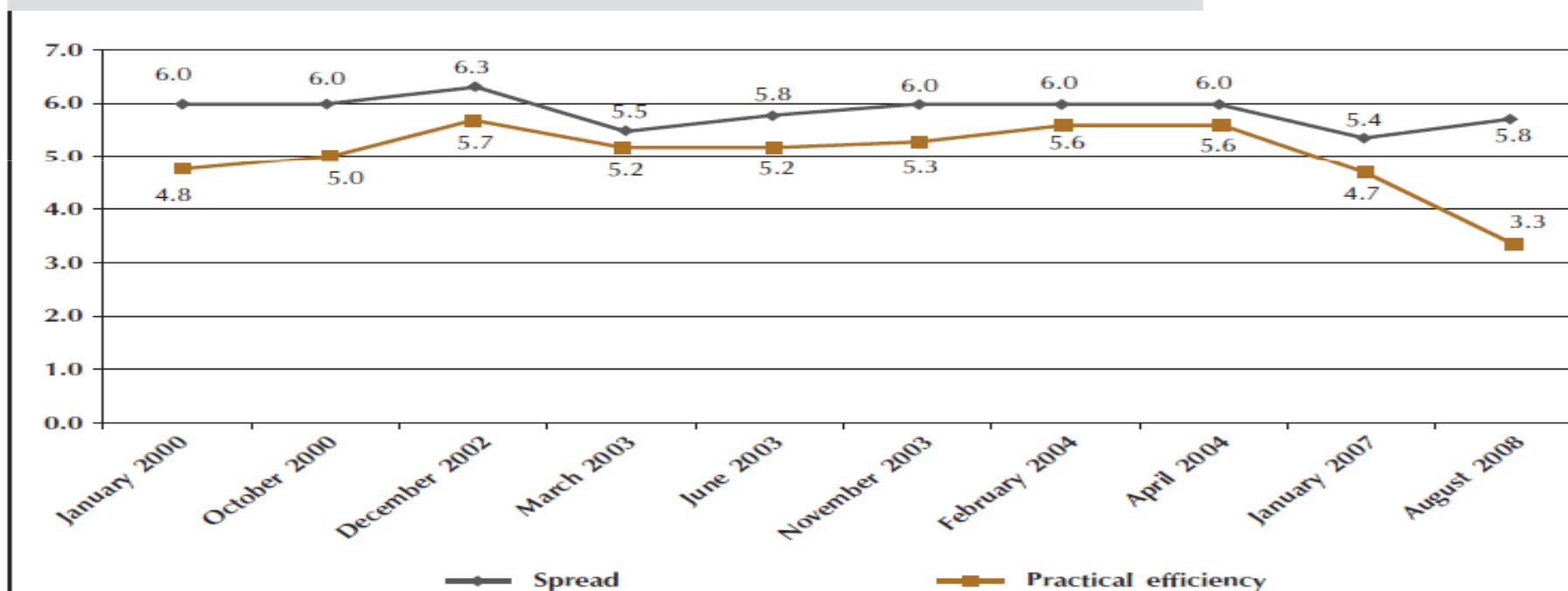
**FIGURE 10. INDEXES OF THE PERCEIVED SPREAD OF CORRUPTION AND ITS PRACTICAL EFFICIENCY (GENERAL POPULATION)<sup>11</sup>**



Source: Vitosha Research/CMS

## Corruption indexes: Public attitudes to corruption

**FIGURE 11. INDEXES OF THE PERCEIVED SPREAD OF CORRUPTION AND ITS PRACTICAL EFFICIENCY (BUSINESS)**



Source: Vitosha Research/CMS (Corruption Surveys of Bulgarian Business)

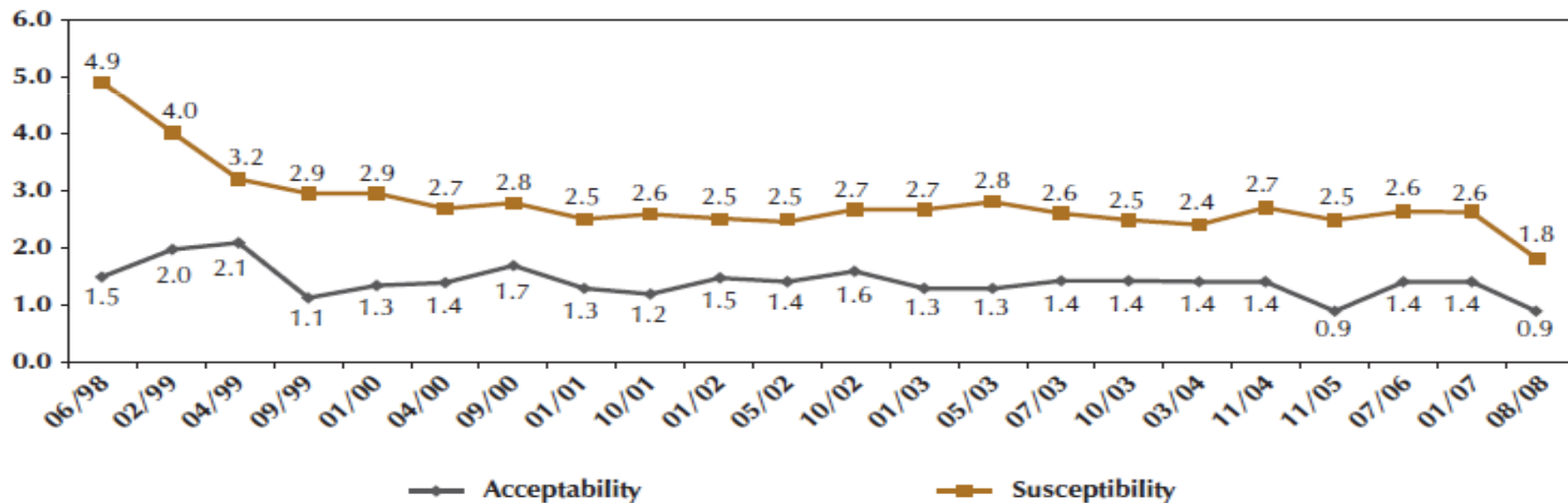
## Corruption indexes: Public attitudes to corruption

- Acceptability in principle of corruption
  - Measures the level of acceptability within the value system and tolerance of corruption occurring in different areas of the public sector
- Susceptibility to corruption
  - Assesses the inclination of citizens and businesspersons to resort to corrupt practices in addressing private problems



## Corruption indexes: Public attitudes to corruption

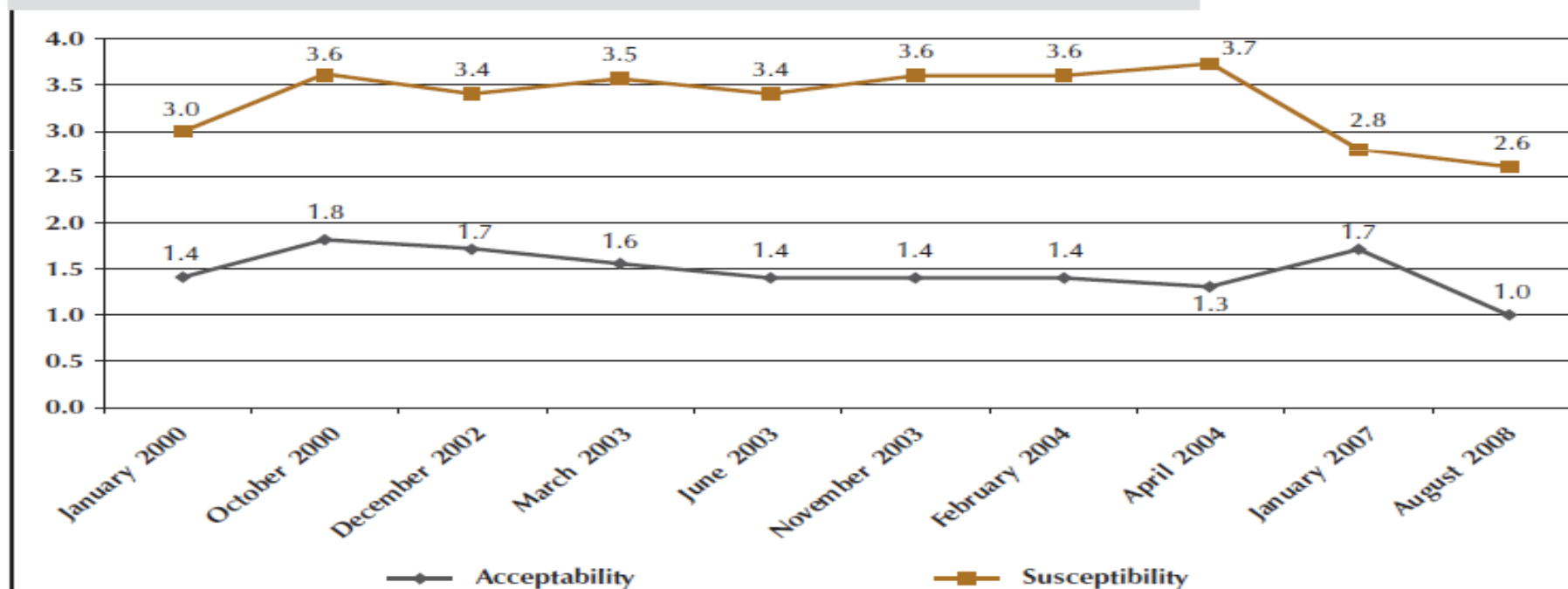
**FIGURE 12. ACCEPTABILITY IN PRINCIPLE AND SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CORRUPTION (GENERAL POPULATION)**



Source: Vitosha Research/CMS

## Corruption indexes: Public attitudes to corruption

**FIGURE 13. ACCEPTABILITY IN PRINCIPLE AND SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CORRUPTION (BUSINESS)**



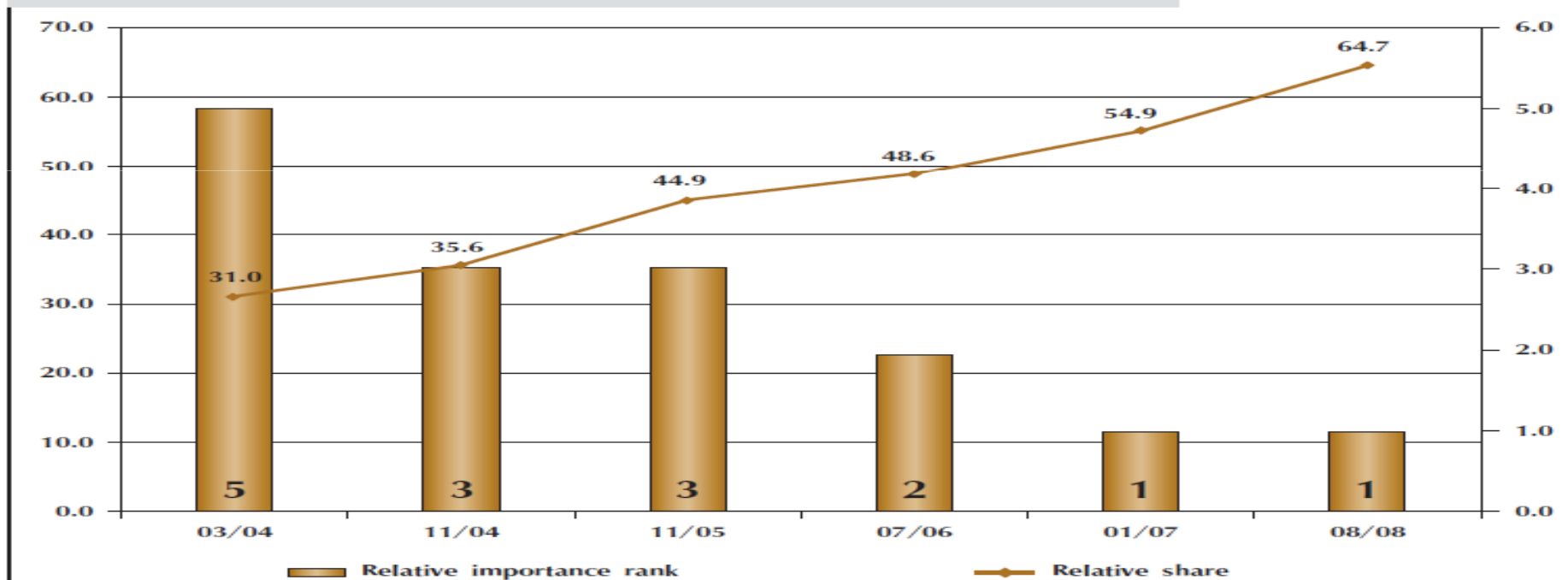
Source: Vitosha Research/CMS (Corruption Surveys of Bulgarian Business)

## Corruption indexes: Corruption expectations

- Corruption Expectations
  - Expectations related to corruption reflect the degree of public confidence that the problem of corruption can be addressed successfully. These expectations are the combined product of respondents' perception of the political will demonstrated by the government and of their opinion of the magnitude and gravity of the problem of corruption

# Corruption indexes: Public attitudes to corruption

**FIGURE 14. RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF CORRUPTION AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM (%)**



*Note:* Proportions of respondents who cited the respective problem as being the most important one for Bulgarian society.

*Source:* Vitosha Research/CMS.

## Monitoring corruption in Bulgaria: assessment of the progress and impact of the national anti-corruption strategy

- Assessment of the effectiveness of anticorruption policies and trends in the spread of corruption is a key element of the governmental *Strategy for Transparent Governance and Counteraction of Corruption for the period 2006-2008*
- The government's 2006 program for the implementation of the strategy envisions the development of a system of indicators to monitor progress and actual impact
- The system of indicators has been developed by the Center for the Study of Democracy based on the best European and world practices and primarily draws on the experience gained in Bulgaria in the period between 1997 and 2006 from the implementation of the Corruption Monitoring System developed

## Monitoring corruption in Bulgaria: assessment of the progress and impact of the national anti-corruption strategy

- Indicators for the evaluation of the results from the measures to counteract corruption and to enhance the transparency of government differ by type and methods of data collection and analysis
  - The first set of indicators reflects the adequacy, effectiveness, timeliness, implementation progress, etc., of the measures outlined in the strategy and the program
  - The second set of indicators aims to evaluate the social environment factors directly affecting the level of corruption and governance transparency
  - The third set of indicators show the effect of the implemented programs and measures by monitoring their outcomes and impact

## Advantages of a common corruption measurement methodology in the EU

- It would provide verifiable data about corruption allowing the EU to use it in its evaluation efforts and to tailor its recommendations for action to specific local environments
- It is context-neutral and could be utilized in any political, social or cultural environment thus being useful both during future enlargements and in countries where the Union provides assistance
- It would allow international benchmarking which is particularly useful in assessing the impact of international legal instruments
- It is an instrument for risk assessment as it provides information about the worst affected sectors of the public administration
- It is an important overall indicator of the effectiveness of the Internal market
- It would significantly enhance the credibility of EU's anti-corruption policies as anchoring assessments in hard data would significantly enhance the Union leverage in bringing about change depriving governments of deniability about the magnitude of corruption in their countries

## For more information

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