

# Annex 8 Attitudes & Experiences Regarding Corruption in Ukraine



**ENGAGE**  
**Enhance Non-Governmental  
Actors and Grassroots  
Engagement**



## MEMORANDUM

**Re: Attitudes & Experiences Regarding Corruption in Ukraine: Results of the First Five Waves of the ENGAGE Civic Engagement Poll Data**

**From:** Pact, Inc.

**To:** USAID

**Date:** September 30, 2019

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In June–July 2019, USAID/ENGAGE conducted the fifth wave in a series of the Civic Engagement Poll (CEP), providing updated information on a wide range of issues of civic engagement. Altogether, the five waves of CEP cover the period of September 2017–July 2019 and provide data that is representative of the adult population of Ukraine. To refine and widen our current understanding of corruption related trends and attitudes, this paper focuses on specific corruption-related questions from all five waves of the CEP and provides comparative data on: experienced corruption and perceptions, perceptions of the role of anti-corruption governmental bodies, respondents’ tolerance towards corruption, and respondents’ readiness to counteract corruption. Throughout this memo, where justified and appropriate, this data considered alongside larger trends, utilizing data from the USAID-funded Anti-Corruption Poll, which has been conducted bi-annually since 2009. This memo points to several important conclusions that may be of use to ENGAGE and other USAID-funded projects in their anti-corruption programming.

**First**, our data suggests that the 2019 presidential election reversed prior negative trends in corruption perceptions. Since November 2018, there has been a significant **15% decline in the number of respondents who believe that corruption in Ukraine has increased**. Presidential elections also established the new President of Ukraine as the **leader shouldering the anti-corruption hopes of Ukrainians**. Among other political agencies and offices, the executive is regarded as both the most responsible for fighting corruption and most willing to act.

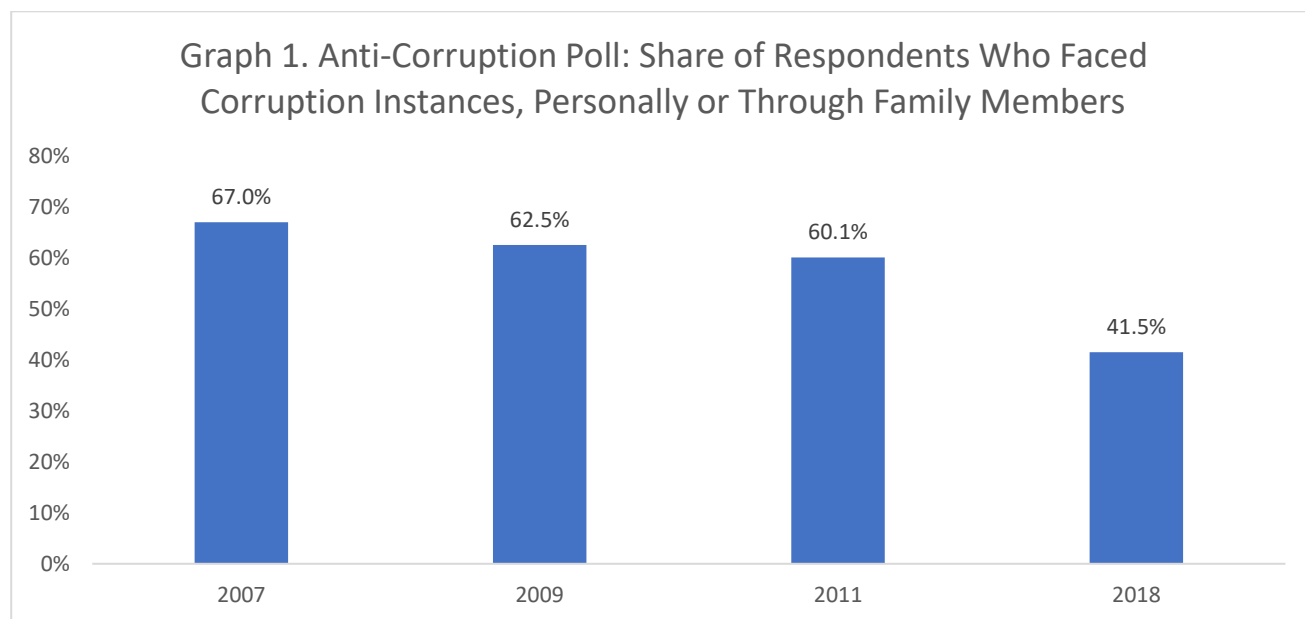
**Second**, although citizens do not see positive results from the anti-corruption reforms that have been implemented during the last five years, there are **no signs of “anti-corruption fatigue” among Ukrainians** (with one local exception we will discuss later). Corruption remains one of the top three issues for Ukrainians today (55% of respondents mentioned it among the country’s top three issues in July 2019). This suggests that no major mistakes have been made in communicating the anti-corruption agenda in media by USAID/ENGAGE’s civil society partners.

**Third**, an analysis of regional data reveals that **Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine should be given special attention**. Specifically, Eastern Ukraine (Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts) is the only macro-region where strong evidence of “anti-corruption fatigue” is seen (corruption was regarded as an important issue by 51% of respondents in September 2017 and only by 36% in July 2019). Also, the South and the East of Ukraine are two macro-regions that demonstrate the smallest share of respondents willing to participate in anti-corruption activities.

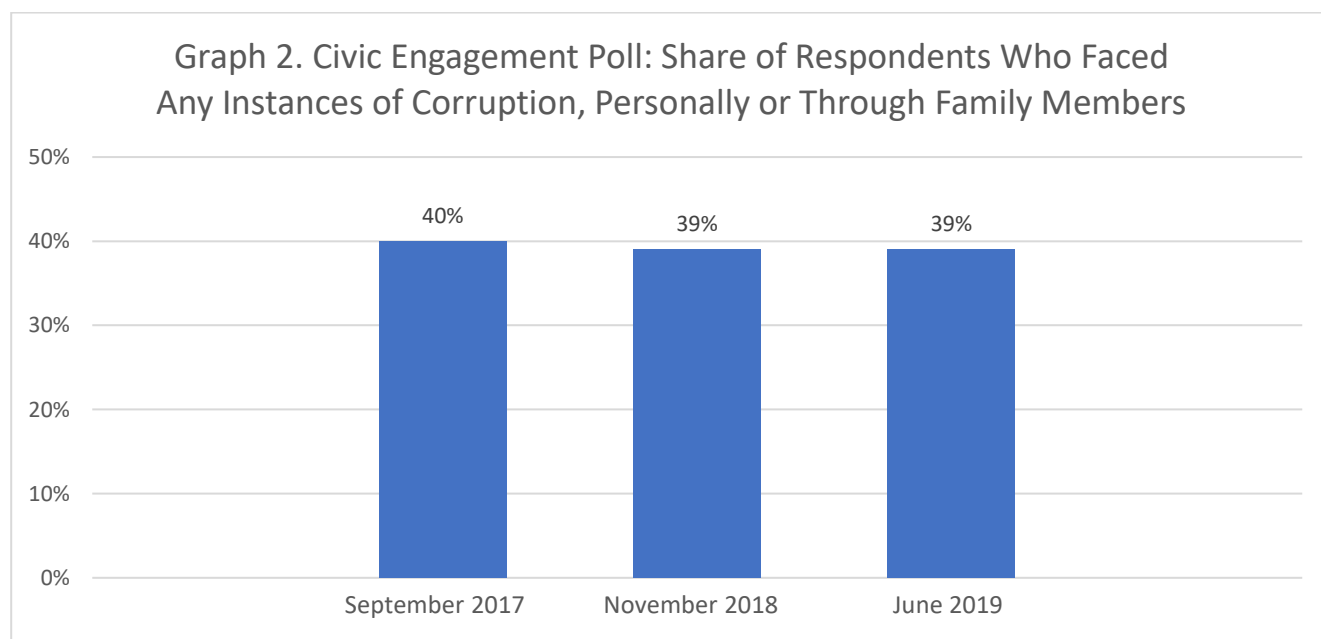
## Experiences with and Perceptions of Corruption

Although the rates of experienced corruption have changed little within the last three years, its perception demonstrated significant improvement over the last year. This once again supports the argument that corruption experiences and perceptions are two indicators that are only loosely related to each other. Available data suggests that the improvement in perception was primarily caused by the election of the new President of Ukraine.

As indicated in the Anti-Corruption Poll, during the last 11 years there was a general decrease in the share of people who experienced corruption. While in 2007, 67% of respondents reported that they personally, or their family members, had faced instances of corruption, the rate decreased to 62.5% in 2009, 60.1% in 2011 and **41.5% in 2018**.



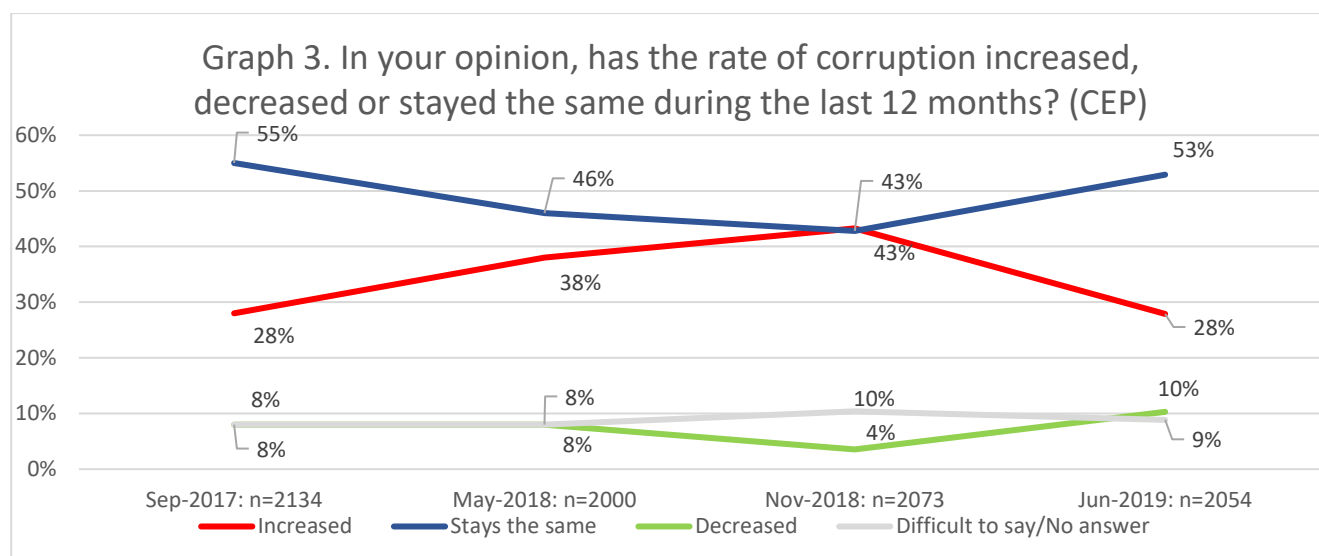
CEP data generally supports this finding in terms of absolute numbers. However, on a two-year scale the declining trend could not be identified, as data fluctuations lie within the margin of error. In June-July 2019, **39% of respondents** reported that they or their family members faced corruption during the last 12 months.



At the same time, within this period there was a noticeable change in the perception of corruption. It did not change fundamentally—the vast majority of Ukrainians still believe that

corruption levels do not change for the better. Between November 2018 and June 2019 there was a significant **15% decrease** in the number of respondents believing that corruption in Ukraine increased (from 43% to 28%). Now, people tend to respond that corruption rates stayed the same (10% increase in responses) or even improved (6% increase).

As data from other available polls suggest, this may be caused by a general increase in optimism associated with election of the new President of Ukraine in March – April 2019.



### Perception of Government Bodies Role and Willingness in Fight Against Corruption

The factor of the 2019 presidential elections also played an important role in changing the respondents' attitudes towards the President's role and willingness to fight corruption. The share of those who believe that the President of Ukraine is willing to fight corruption in Ukraine increased dramatically during the last year. In August 2017, 7.6% of respondents believed that President Poroshenko was willing to fight corruption; in May 2018, this share dropped to 4.2%. Data from June 2019 demonstrates a dramatic increase in this regard, as 28.7% of Ukrainians now acknowledge the willingness of President Zelenskiy to fight corruption.

This transforms President Zelenskiy into the leader of anti-corruption hopes of Ukrainians, as it can be seen from Graph 4, which compares data from the first and fifth waves of the CEP regarding the importance of each public institution or office in fighting corruption and its willingness to do so.

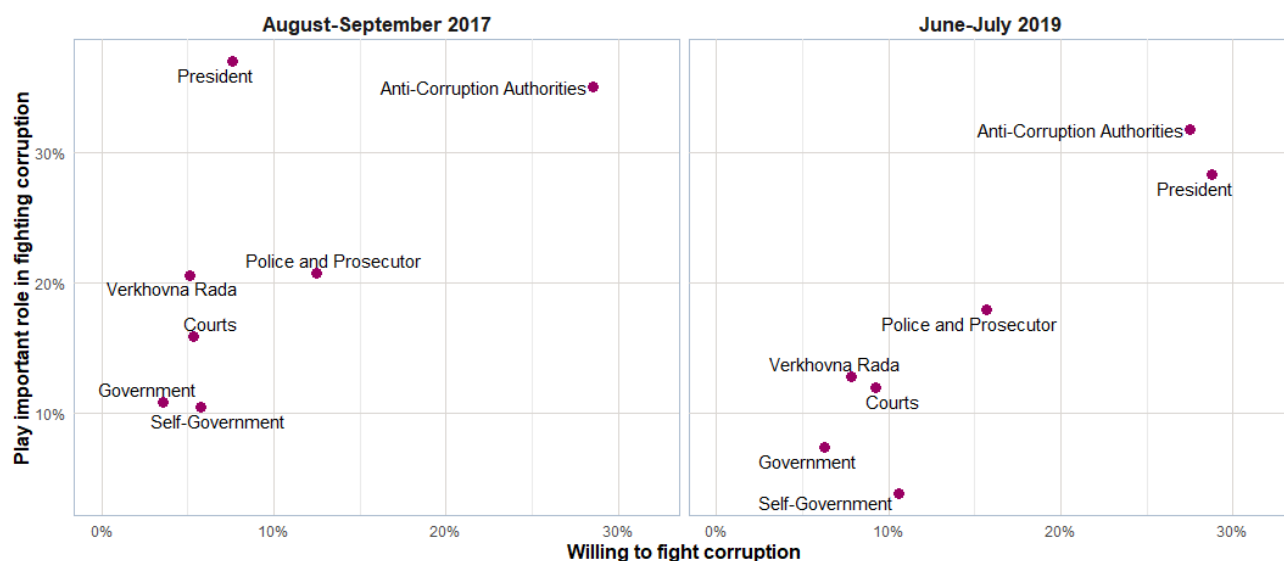
As demonstrated in this graph, two years ago the newly created specialized anti-corruption bodies (namely NABU and NAPC) were the leaders in terms of their perceived willingness to fight corruption and were regarded as the second most important in their role in fighting corruption. Although they generally maintained this status in absolute numbers, the new President of Ukraine has gained even bigger trust in his willingness to fight corruption.

This attitude creates a favorable environment for the new President of Ukraine to take a lead in advancing anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine. Unlike previously, Ukrainians now easily identify the elected political body with which they associate their hopes with the success of anti-corruption reforms.

## Graph 4. Who wants to fight corruption and who is responsible for fighting corruption?

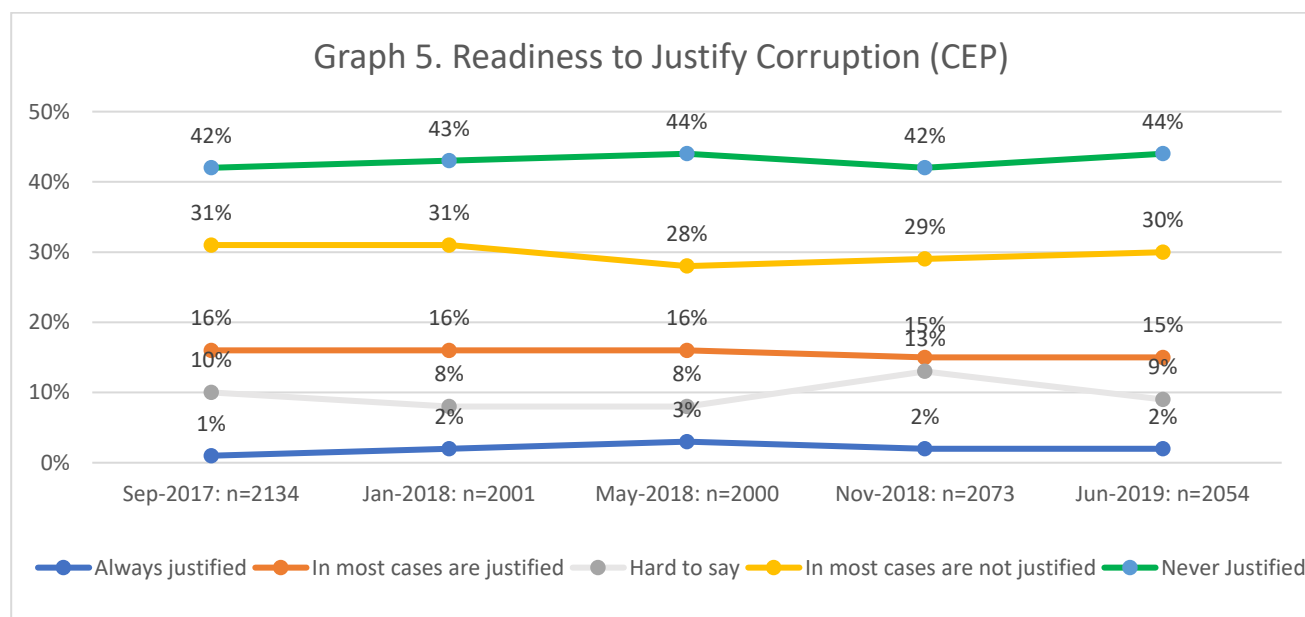
### Who Wants and Who Can Fight Corruption?

President is now considered the one who wants to fight corruption the most - and also responsible

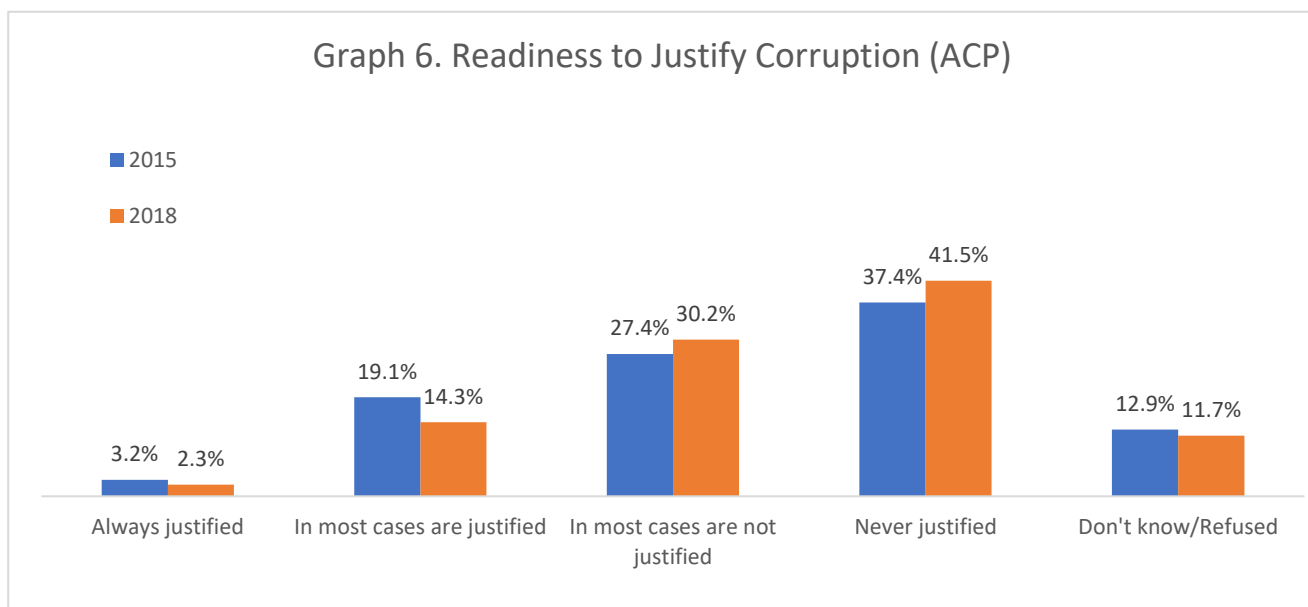


## General Attitudes Towards Corruption

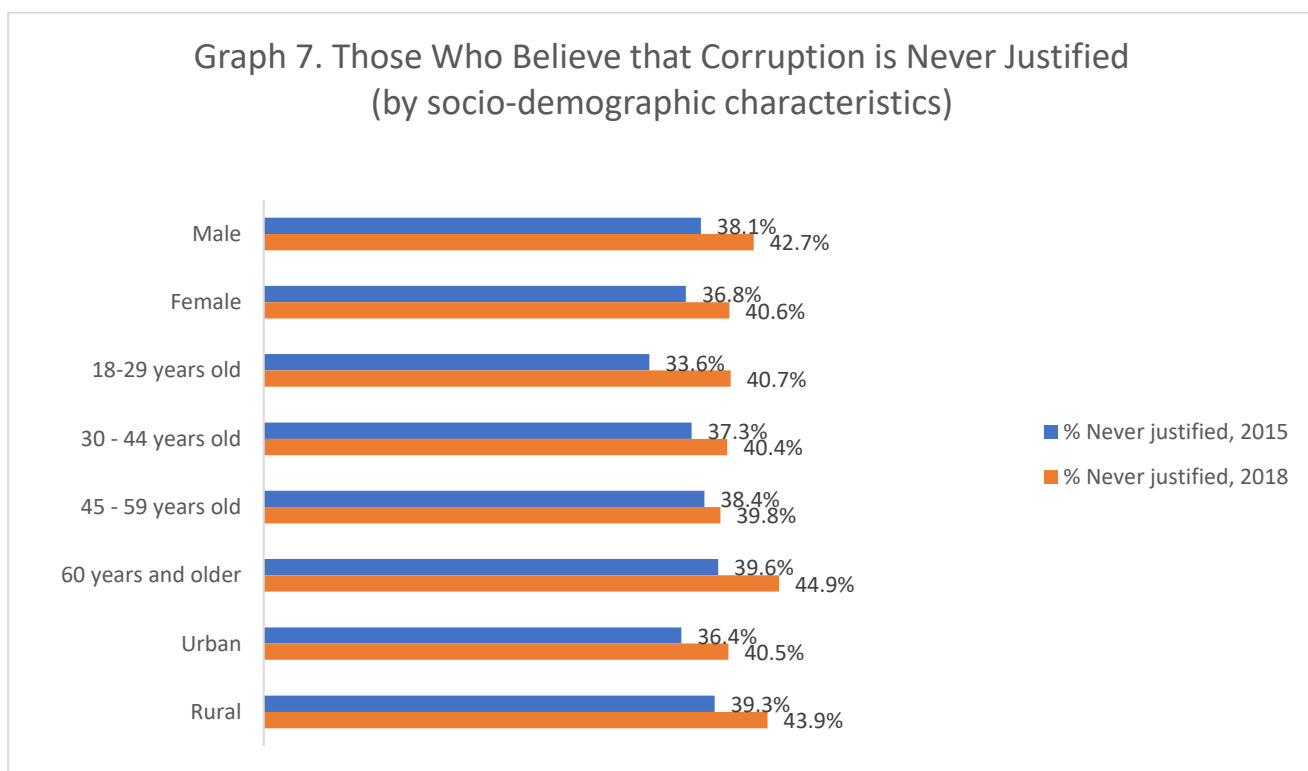
Throughout 2017-2019, the share of those who believe that giving bribes is never justified did not change significantly and fluctuated within a range of 42-44% of the population.



This generally supports data from the Anti-Corruption Polls of 2015 and 2018, which demonstrate a modest increase in the number of those who believe corruption could not be justified over these years.



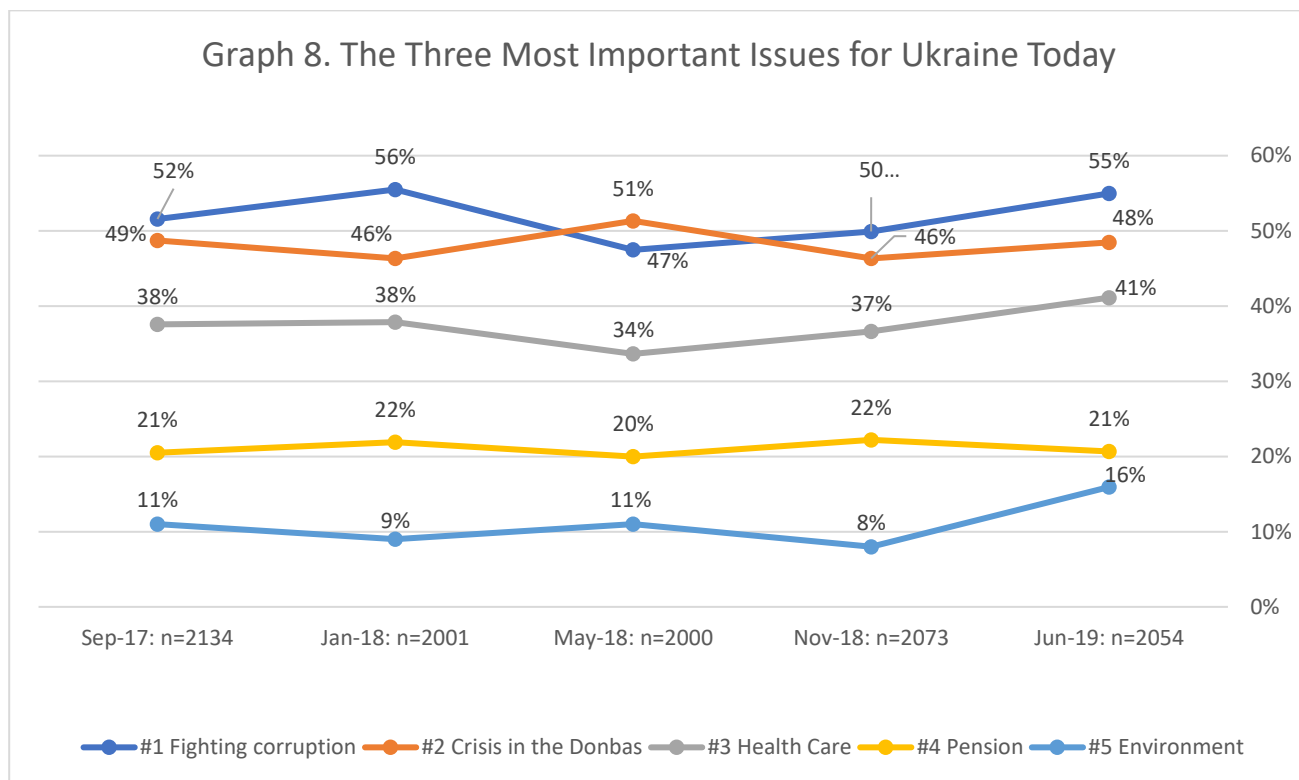
Interestingly, according to the Anti-Corruption Poll, this positive dynamic is present within all age groups, genders, and types of settlement. This indicates that attitudes towards corruption changed evenly throughout the whole Ukrainian society.



### Corruption as a Policy Issue

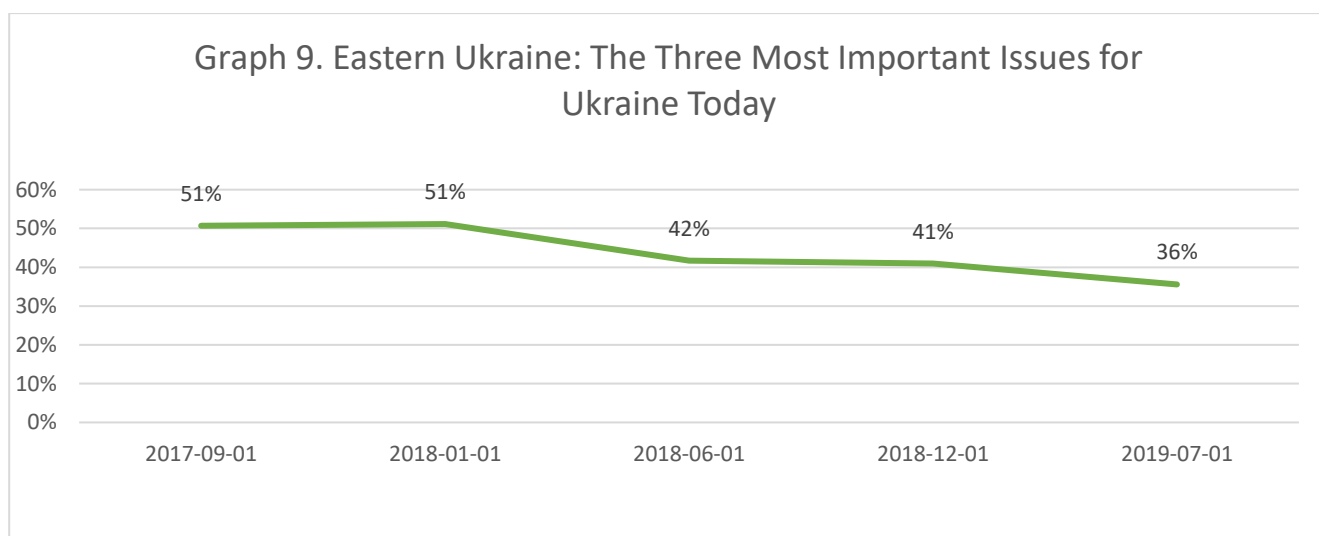
Corruption remains to be regarded by respondents as one of the top three issues for Ukraine. In 2019, 55% of respondents agreed with this assessment. The other two important issues were the crisis in the Donbas (48%) and health care (41%).

Graph 8. The Three Most Important Issues for Ukraine Today



At the local-level, there were no noticeable change in trends except for Eastern Ukraine (Kharkiv Oblast and controlled territories of Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts), where the issues of corruption seem to be of declining interest to respondents.

Graph 9. Eastern Ukraine: The Three Most Important Issues for Ukraine Today

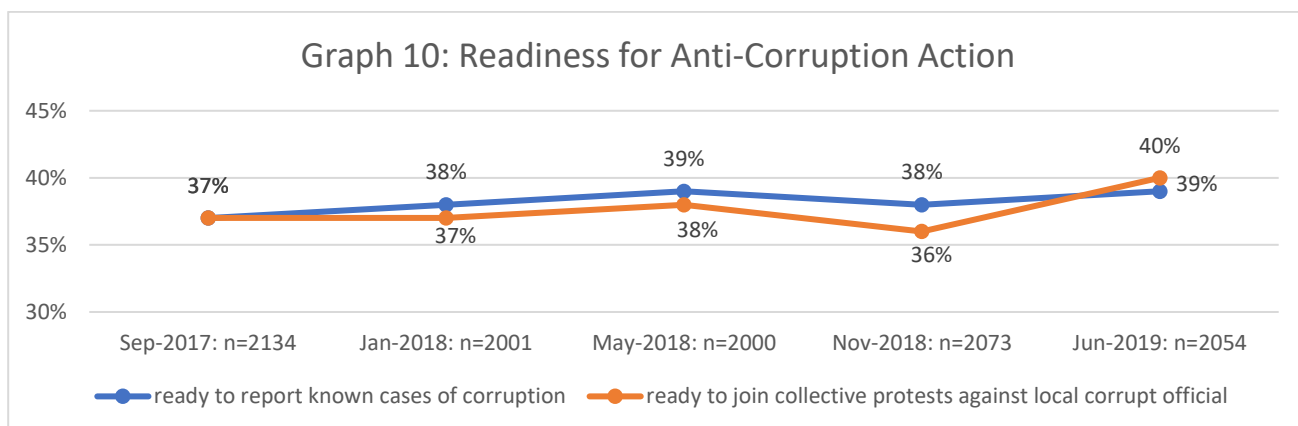


Based on the data from the fifth wave of the CEP, the most pressing issue in the East is the war in the Donbas (49% of respondents named it among the top three issues), followed by healthcare (41%), and corruption (36%).

### Readiness to and Experience with Counteracting Corruption

About forty percent of respondents are ready to participate in anti-corruption activities (they rather or totally agree to join collective protests against local corrupt officials or to report cases of

corruption). Although this number is not significantly different from the previous measurements, one can observe a minor positive trend over the last two years.



The regional dimension of the data from the 5<sup>th</sup> wave of the poll reveals that respondents from the South and East Ukraine tend to be less ready to participate in suggested types of anti-corruption activities, compared to the general population and respondents from other regions. In the East of Ukraine, 33-34% of respondents are ready to participate in anti-corruption activities, while only 30% show such readiness in the South.

