opinion poll
2017
TRUST IN GOVERNANCE

Institute for Democracy and Mediation
Instituti për Demokraci dhe Ndërmjetësim

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Opinion poll

TRUST *in* GOVERNANCE

2017

Survey Report

Institute for Democracy and Mediation
Instituti për Demokraci dhe Ndërmjetësim

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KEY FINDINGS

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS:

- In 2017, domestic institutions that received higher trust ratings from more than half of the respondents include: **Religious Institutions** (76%), **Armed Forces** (63%), **Education** (63%), **Civil Society Organisations** (57%), **Media**, (54%) **Healthcare** (53%) and **State Police** (53%).

- Domestic institutions that received lower trust ratings from more than half of respondents include: **Local Government** (49%), **Central Government** (47%), **Parliament** (34%), **President** (33%), **Prosecutor** (22%), **Courts** (21%) and **Political Parties** (21%).

- Since 2014, the proportion of respondents that trust **Religious Institutions** has risen significantly from 44% to 76%. During 2017, they have recorded the highest increase in the level of aggregate trust (18 percentage points).

- **Civil Society** registers an increase of 11 percentage points for 2017 and continues to be on the rise since its trust rating of 34% in 2014.

- For 2017, the **Parliament** is on the rise with 7 percentage points compared to 2016.

- **Political Parties** are on the decline (2 percentage points) and for the 5th consecutive year, rank as the least trusted.

- **Media** has seen a decrease of 4 percentage points for 2017. Regarding the credibility of its reporting, one in every two respondents (50%) said that the information provided by media is accurate and truthful.

- Compared to domestic institutions, supranational institutions/organizations – **EU** (85%), **UN** (85%) and **NATO** (84%) – rank as the most trusted institutions by Albanians for the 5th consecutive year.

- Notwithstanding high hopes on the potential positive impact of the **Judicial Reform**, perceptions on its effective implementation in practice continue to be divisive, with 43% responding that the Justice Reform will be implemented accordingly and 38% believing the opposite. There is an increase of uncertain respondents of 8 percentage points since last year.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

- Overall, perceptions on central and local government **transparency** and **accountability** have changed a little over the past few years; respondents continued to rate higher their local government as compared to the central government, albeit positive ratings remain below 50%.

- The **Albanian Supreme State Audit Institution** (SSAI) was perceived as having the greatest role in holding the government to account (67%) in 2017, followed by the Media (65%) and the Parliament (63%).

- Compared to 2016, the **Parliament** was perceived as having an increased role in holding the government to account (12 percentage points increase), followed by **Trade Unions** (7 percentage points) and **Civil Society** (5 percentage points).

- The majority of respondents said that the initiative of opening the **Former State Security Files** was beneficial for the future work of public institutions (67%), will make necessary justice (65%) and contribute to improving social cohesion (60%).

CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS:

- There is a wide discrepancy between corruption perceptions and reported experiences with corruption.

- While more than 8 in 10 respondents viewed **petty** (87%) and **grand corruption** (88%) as either widespread or very widespread in Albania, only 21% of them reported to have **witnessed** at least **a corruption case** at their local government, and 15% at central level government.

- Compared to 2016, the 2017 figures on the personal exposure to corruption in the local government have increased with 6 percentage points, while for the central government with 5 percentage points.

- Respondents were less confident in the **prosecution of grand corruption cases** (25%) as compared to petty corruption cases (36%).

- Asked in an open-ended question, 21% of the respondents considered **Courts** as the most corrupt public institution in Albania for 2017, followed by the **Government** (16%), **Health System** (14%), and the **Parliament** (9%).

POLITICAL INFLUENCE:

- 72% of respondents perceived **Courts** as the most vulnerable to political influence, followed by the **Prosecutor** with 69% and the **State Police** with 49%.

- Religious Institutions were perceived to be the most independent from political influence (9%), followed by CSOs (26%).

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT:

- 36% of respondents reported that they had sufficient **opportunity** to participate in **decision making** at the local level. 28% of respondents reported that they had sufficient opportunity to participate in decision making at the central level.

- 15% of respondents said that they had **participated** in **consultation meetings** at the local level, while 10% said that they had participated in consultation meetings organized at the central level.

- 67% of respondents agreed or fully agreed with the statement "Local public hearings are formal events, they have limited influence on municipal decisions." Compared to 2016, there is an increase of respondents holding this belief with 10 percentage points.

- The majority of respondents, 80%, reported that they have not attended a demonstration/rally or signed a petition.

SATISFACTION WITH PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY and ICT:

- Public services receiving higher ratings from more than half of respondents were: **supply of drinking water** (56%), **street cleaning** (57%), **emergency services** (53%), and **education** (54%).

- Public services that received lower ratings from more than half of respondents included: **employment** (74%) and **judiciary services** (73%), followed by **healthcare** (57%), and **social welfare** (55%). Similar patterns were observed in 2016.

- 15% of respondents reported to have submitted **a complaint to public institutions** for a service received during 2017. 37% of respondents reported that their complaint was addressed. A greater percentage, 44%, reported that their complaint was not addressed.

- 47% of respondents reported that they believe that institutions do not "listen to" and properly address citizens' complaints.

- Almost half of respondents reported that they do not feel **safe** in their everyday life. The majority of respondents reported as the main factors for feeling unsafe crime (58%), employment insecurity (42%), and injustice (32%).

- 39% of respondents were aware that their municipality had a **website**. 52% said they don't know if their municipality has a website. 67% of respondents said that they don't use the website of the municipality.

GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION:

- 65% of respondents believe that in the Albanian society, there is **equality** between men and women, while other 34% disagreed. Women were less likely than men to agree with the statement.

- 74% said that public servants serve with the same devotion and **ethics** to women and men, while 25% disagreed. Again, women were less likely than men to agree with the statement.

- 12% of respondents reported to have been **treated differently** by public institutions on the basis of their characteristics, such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

- 26% of respondents said that they were satisfied with the actual number of women in their municipal council, while 67% did not know. 7% of respondents said they were not satisfied.

- 69% of respondents say that the increased number of **women** in the **municipal council** will have a positive impact on local governance. Women (81%) were more likely than men (58%) to report that the increased number of women in the municipal council will have a positive impact on local governance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the common challenges confronting governance around the world is low and declining public trust in government. Trust in government and institutions is at the heart of a functioning social contract between a government and society, with mutual rights and responsibilities. Women and men expect that their governments will do what they promise and work in their interests. Across countries, there is a high level of interest in measuring institutional trust. In addition to being important for measuring well-being, understanding institutional trust is essential to understanding government effectiveness and the functioning of democratic systems of government.

This is the 5th consecutive year that the Opinion Poll is conducted (2013-2017) based on a similar methodology, survey instrument and national coverage. The fieldwork is conducted during the period 17-30 November 2017 across the 61 municipalities of Albania. The main objective of the Opinion Poll is to explore public perceptions and attitudes on issues covering trust in public institutions, institutional transparency and accountability, corruption, level of citizen engagement in policy and decision-making, satisfaction with public service delivery, and enforcement of non-discriminatory laws and policies.

Findings are presented in 9 main sections, namely: *Trust in Institutions, Transparency and Accountability, Corruption in Public Institutions, Political Influence, Citizen Engagement, Satisfaction with Public Service Delivery, Performance of Public Institutions, Use of ICT (Internet and Communications Technology) and Gender and Social Inclusion.*

With its baseline growing every year, this Opinion Poll is now critical to the monitoring framework of major reforms the Albanian government is engaged in, aiming to public institutions that can deliver quality public services, justice and social cohesion, fair economic policies, environmental protection etc. Moreover, data collected on a yearly basis support the assessment of the county's performance and compliance against its commitments to international initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the Agenda 2030: Sustainable Development Goals.

Since 2013, the Opinion Poll "Trust in Governance" has evolved to accommodate the needs of the public discourse, without compromising its comparability or utility in reading. This year's report offers new insights on important issues related to justice reform and social inclusion.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 APPROACH

A quota sampling approach was employed to select an equal number of respondents (n=27) from each of the 61 Local Government Units (i.e municipalities) in the country. In addition, quota controls were used for both gender and urban-rural classification. In selecting equal quotas per each municipality, the aim was to include a large variety of respondents' profiles in terms of age, educational attainment, employment status as well as vulnerability. However, since there are only two quota controls, other characteristics of the sample vary. For the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents since 2013, refer to the appendix.

The survey instrument includes the same core questions on trust, transparency, accountability, citizen engagement and ICT that were used since 2013, albeit its content is annually reviewed by a panel of experts in the fields of good governance and social sciences to keep up with recent developments at the national level and with the focus of the public discourse. For 2017, a section on the Performance of Public Institutions was re-introduced along with new questions under the sections of Transparency and Accountability, Corruption in Public Institutions and Citizen Engagement.

In the appendix, the list of administrative units included is presented. Twelve teams of trained enumerators administered the questionnaire in face-to-face interviews using PAPI (paper assisted personal interview). Data were processed and analyzed to present findings of descriptive and relational statistics using STATA 12.0.

2.2 LIMITATIONS

Results from the Opinion Poll provide several insights on public perceptions and attitudes and how they have changed over time, however they cannot be generalized to the entire population. The final aim of the Opinion Poll is to give "voice" to all citizens – regardless of their vicinity to the central government and to explore yearly trends on citizens' perceptions.

3. DEMOGRAPHY OF SAMPLE

A total of 1647 Albanian citizens aged 18 years and over were surveyed at the national level. The socio-demographic composition of the final sample population is summarized below.

The sample exhibits a balanced gender representation and urban-rural classification of the population, since quota controls were used for both gender and area of residence. It includes 51% men and 49% women. Half of respondents resided in urban areas and half in rural ones (See fig.1 and fig.2).

Fig. 1

Gender representation
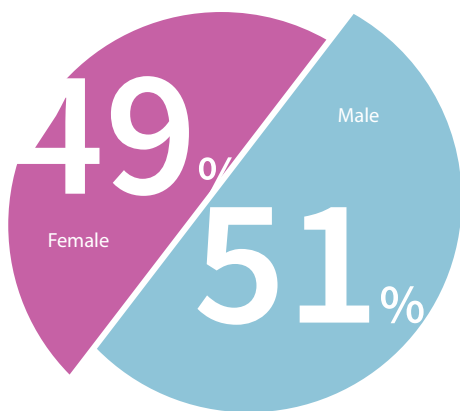
Base: N=1644

Fig. 2

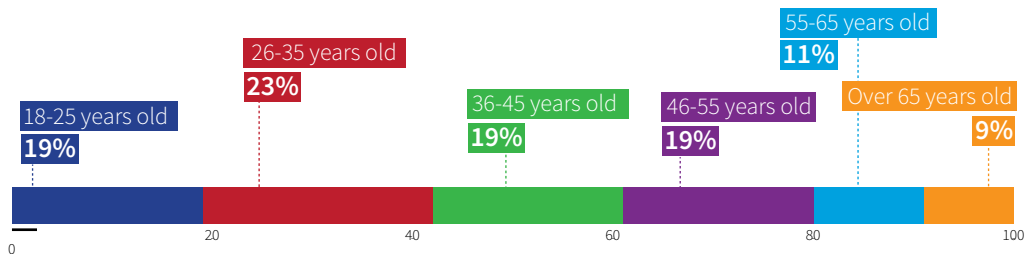Geographical representation
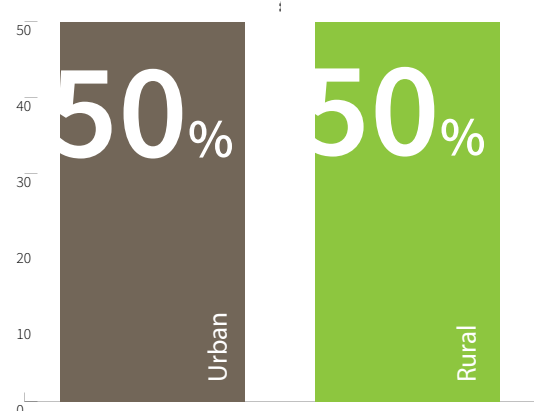
Base: N=1644

As regards the age composition, the average age of the respondents was 41.22 years (SD=15.46)[1] in an interval from 18-91 years. For the distribution of age according to different age groups see Fig 3.

Fig. 3

Age groups

18-25 years old
19%

26-35 years old
23%

36-45 years old
19%

46-55 years old
19%

55-65 years old
**11%**

Over 65 years old
9%

Base: N=1632

In terms of educational attainment of the sample, half of the respondents (50%) have completed their education at the upper-secondary level (high-school diploma), whilst about 28% have either accomplished or are enrolled in tertiary education (university or post-university degree). Roughly 17% of the sample has only accomplished compulsory education.

Fig. 4

Educational attainment

No education
1%

Lower secondary education
17%

Primary education
4%

Upper secondary education
50%

Tertiary education
28%
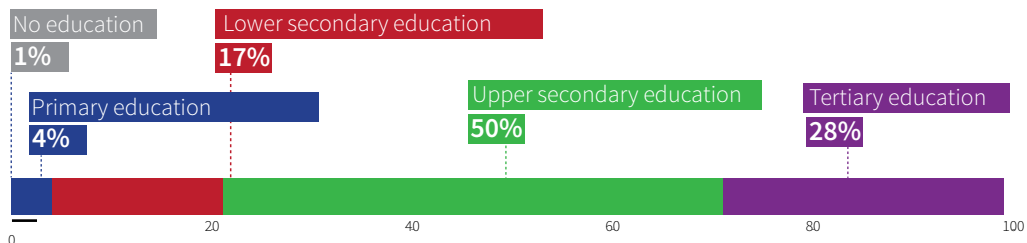
Base: N=1619

As regards their employment status, about 46% of the respondents were employed at the moment of the interview (with 29% of those employed working in the public sector, whilst 71% in the private sector). 7% of the respondents were students and 12% retired.

Table 1. Employment status (Base: N=1632)

Employed	**46%**	
Public sector	*29%*	
Private sector	*71%*	
Total	*100%*	
Unemployed	**34%**	
Student	**7%**	
Retired	**12%**	
Other	**1%**	
Total	**100%**	

The distribution of respondents' individual monthly income is presented in fig. 5.

Fig. 5

Regular individual monthly income (net)
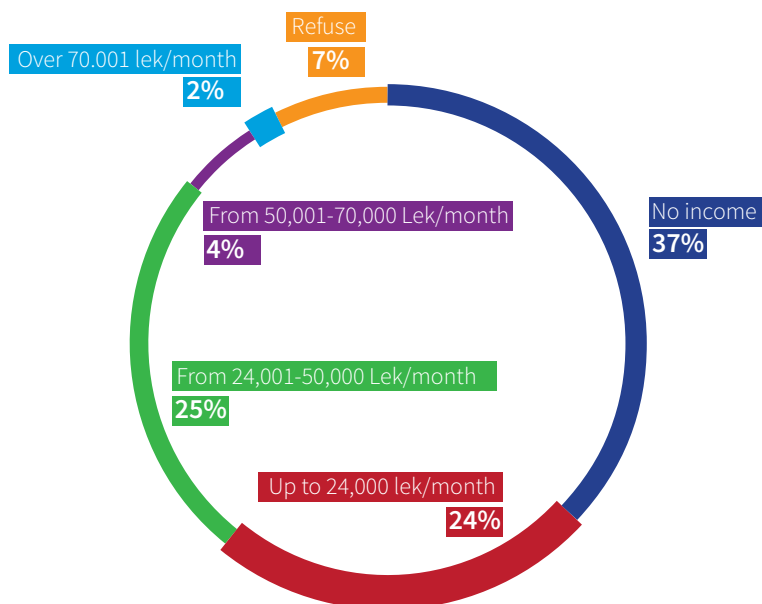
Base: N=1572

Only 7% of the respondents self-reported having a disability, and out of that proportion around 75% benefited from the disability-related financial support scheme. 55% of those self-reporting a disability are men, while 56% live in an urban area.

Fig. 6

Do you have a disability?

Base: N=1623

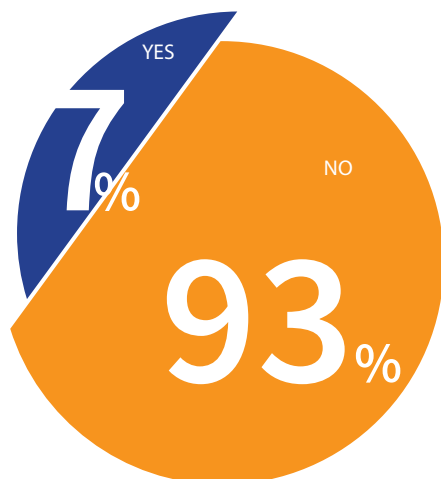Less than 1 in 10 respondents (9%) declared themselves as pertaining to a minority group. Of those, 35% declared themselves as Greeks, 26% as Roma and 17% as Macedonian. See Table 2 for the distribution.

Table 2. Are you a member of a minority group? (Base: N=1624)

YES	**9%**
Greek	35% (n=52)
Macedonian	17% (n=26)
Aromanian	1% (n=1)
Roma	26% (n=38)
Egyptian	9% (n=14)
Bosnian	3% (n=4)
Bulgarian	1% (n=1)
Refuse	8% (n=12)
Total	100% (n=148)
NO	**90%**
REFUSE	**1%**
Total	**100%**

FINDINGS

4.1 TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Trust in institutions or Institutional trust stands for the individual expectation that a given institution will produce positive outcomes (Levi and Stoker 2000). Trust in public institutions, in particular, is remarked as important for the success of a wide range of public policies, programs and regulations that depend on the cooperation and compliance of citizens. Lack of trust compromises the willingness of citizens and businesses to respond to public policies, thus hindering sustainable development (OECD 2013). Trust in public institutions is considered to be a function of institutional evaluation, citizens' policy considerations[2], the quality of policy outcomes, media reporting,[3] perceptions about social and cultural change, but also socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, education, income and gender (Hetherington 1998).

"Trust in institutions" represents one of the core modules of this Opinion Poll. Respondents are asked to rate on a four-point scale from 1 (I have great trust) to 4 (I do not trust at all) how much they trust key public and political institutions at the central and local level, as well as other important actors in the country[4]. When respondents indicate their degree of trust in certain institutions, we assume that their opinion is based on the institutional images they have constructed, which coincide with the relevant general or normative criteria they use in their rating. The basic assumption here is that in order to construct their pictures of institutions, citizens develop expectations and do not need to know in detail how specific institutions are designed and/or function.

In 2017, domestic institutions that received higher trust ratings[5] from more than half of the respondents include: Religious Institutions (76%), Armed Forces (63%), Institutions of the Education System (63%), Civil Society Organisations (57%), Media (54%), Healthcare Institutions (53%) and State Police (53%).

Religious Institutions rank as the most trusted, with more than two-thirds of respondents (76%) declaring either "I have great trust" (27%) or "Basically I trust" (49%). If we also consider only the scale category "I have great trust", Religious Institutions maintain the highest trust rating (27%).

Armed Forces and Institutions of the Education System rank as the second most trusted institutions, trusted aggregately by 63% of the surveyed population. However, Armed Forces enjoy the greatest proportion of respondents saying "I have great trust" (15%) in comparison to the Education System Institutions (9%).

Next, CSOs are trusted by 57% of the surveyed population, followed by Media with 54%. Slightly more than half (53%) trusts in the same rate the Healthcare Institutions and the State Police.

Domestic institutions that received lower trust ratings from more than half of respondents include: Local Government (49%), Central Government (47%), Parliament (34%), President (33%), Prosecutor (22%), Courts (21%) and Political Parties (21%).

The Local Government enjoys slightly greater trust (49%) than the Central Government (47%). However, the proportion of respondents that show great trust is the same (9%).

The executive, as compared to the legislative and judicial branches, maintains a higher level of trust. The Parliament is trusted by only one-third of the respondents (34%), whereas Courts (21%) and Political Parties are ranked as the least trusted institutions (21%).

In contrast to domestic institutions, supranational institutions/organizations like the EU, UN and NATO rank as the most trusted institutions, enjoying the trust of more than 4 in 5 respondents. (85%, 85%, 84% of public trust, respectively).

Socio-Demographic Comparison

We now examine whether trust in specific institutions tends to vary among different socio-economic segments of the sampled population.

In a combined level,[6] there appears to be little difference in institutional trust between genders. However, women (57%) were more likely to trust the media than men (51%).

Respondents from the older demographics were more likely to report higher levels of trust as compared to the younger segments of the sampled population. Respondents in the bracket "Over 66 years-old" were more likely to trust Religious institutions (87%), Armed Forces (69%), the Police (66%), CSOs (62%), the Media (59%), Healthcare institutions (58%), their Local Government (57%), and the Central Government (53%).

Reported levels of trust were also more likely to increase with the educational attainment of the respondent. Respondents with university education were more likely to trust the Armed Forces (67%), CSOs (62%), the Healthcare System (57%), their Local Government (54%) and the Central Government (51%). An exception is the media, where this relationship appears reversed: 60% of the respondents with basic education[7] trusted the Media, in comparison to 50% with a university degree or higher.

As regards employment status, the employed part of the demographics appears to be more trustful and furthermore, within this category, this sentiment is most pronounced among employees in the public sector. The urban-rural classification does not appear to play a role.

Table 3 summarizes the results.

Fig.7

Institutional trust 2017

	I have great trust	Basically I trust	Basically do not trust	I have no trust	No opinion
Central Government	9%	38%	33%	20%	
Local Government	9%	40%	33%	17%	1%
President	4%	39%	43%	23%	1%
Parliament	3%	31%	43%	22%	1%
Prosecutor	1%	21%	44%	31%	3%
Courts	2%	19%	43%	34%	2%
Police	10%	43%	30%	15%	2%
Armed Forces	15%	48%	21%	12%	4%
Political Parties	3%	18%	48%	29%	2%
Healthcare	6%	47%	32%	13%	2%
Education system	9%	54%	26%	10%	1%
Media	10%	44%	29%	16%	1%
Religious Institutions	27%	49%	14%	6%	4%
Civil Society	13%	44%	29%	9%	5%
EU	37%	48%	9%	4%	2%
UN	37%	48%	8%	4%	3%
NATO	38%	46%	10%	4%	2%

Base: N=1647

Table 3. Two-way table of "I have great trust" or "Basically I trust"

	Government	Local Gov.	President	Parliam.	Prosec.	Courts	Police	Army	Political Parties	Health	Education	Media	Religious ins.	CSOs
TOTAL (trust)	47%	49%	33%	34%	22%	21%	53%	63%	21%	53%	63%	54%	76%	57%
Gender														
Male	47%	48%	34%	35%	21%	19%	55%	64%	23%	52%	62%	51%	77%	55%
Female	46%	51%	31%	34%	25%	21%	50%	61%	19%	54%	63%	57%	76%	60%
Age														
18-25	40%	45%	35%	32%	28%	26%	50%	61%	17%	51%	57%	49%	71%	55%
26-35	50%	53%	34%	33%	23%	20%	50%	67%	21%	54%	64%	53%	79%	62%
36-45	43%	46%	32%	34%	19%	16%	51%	57%	24%	51%	61%	53%	76%	53%
46-55	44%	48%	28%	35%	21%	18%	51%	60%	20%	51%	65%	56%	75%	54%
56-65	48%	49%	32%	40%	22%	18%	56%	63%	20%	57%	64%	56%	75%	60%
Over 66	53%	57%	39%	33%	25%	25%	66%	69%	23%	58%	66%	59%	87%	62%
Educational attainment														
Basic Education	40%	42%	31%	28%	23%	22%	46%	51%	21%	50%	58%	60%	75%	56%
High-school	46%	50%	31%	35%	21%	19%	56%	66%	20%	53%	64%	54%	77%	56%
University	51%	54%	36%	37%	26%	21%	52%	67%	23%	57%	63%	50%	76%	62%
Employment status														
Total	51%	56%	37%	40%	23%	20%	54%	65%	24%	58%	68%	50%	77%	57%
Employed Public	67%	72%	45%	48%	26%	23%	62%	73%	32%	68%	75%	51%	74%	61%
Employed Private	45%	49%	34%	36%	32%	19%	51%	62%	20%	55%	66%	50%	78%	55%
Unemployed	36%	39%	26%	26%	20%	17%	46%	57%	17%	45%	55%	58%	74%	55%
Student	44%	45%	31%	36%	30%	26%	53%	63%	19%	53%	61%	55%	71%	62%
Retired	55%	57%	39%	37%	26%	27%	65%	70%	26%	60%	67%	63%	85%	65%
Region														
Urban	45%	48%	30%	32%	22%	21%	53%	62%	21%	55%	63%	51%	75%	58%
Rural	48%	50%	35%	36%	23%	19%	52%	63%	21%	52%	62%	56%	77%	56%

Note: Rounded to the nearest percent
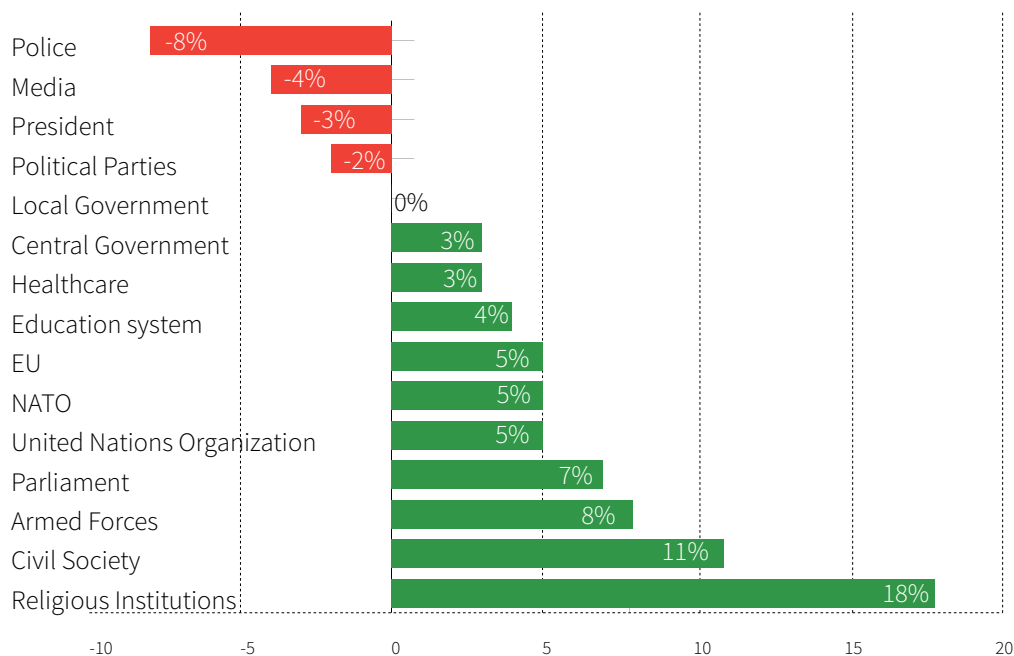
Timeline Comparison

Data for 2017 show that out of twelve listed domestic institutions[8], four of them have recorded a decrease in aggregate trust; one institution has stagnated, whilst seven have recorded an increase in their aggregate levels of trust.

The State Police, for the first time since 2013, has reversed its positive upward trend and records a plunge of 8 percentage points in trust; trust in the Police for 2017 stands at 53%. Media has also seen a decrease of 4 percentage points for 2017. Trust in the institution of the President, for the first time since 2014, is on the decline (3 p.p). Political Parties are also on the decline (2 p.p) and for the 5th consecutive year, rank as the least trusted.

The proportion of respondents that trust their Local Government stands unchanged at 49%.

In recent years (since 2014), the proportion of respondents that trust Religious Institutions has risen significantly. During 2017, they have recorded the highest increase in the level of aggregate trust (18 p.p) and stand at 76%. Civil Society also registers a spike of 11 percentage points and continues to be on the rise since its trust rating of 34% in 2014. In contrast to last year, for 2017, more respondents trust the Armed Forces (63%) than the State Police (53%). The Parliament is also on the rise with 7 p.p.

Fig. 8

Change in cumulative trust (p.p) 2016-2017

Institution	Change
Police	-8%
Media	-4%
President	-3%
Political Parties	-2%
Local Government	0%
Central Government	3%
Healthcare	3%
Education system	4%
EU	5%
NATO	5%
United Nations Organization	5%
Parliament	7%
Armed Forces	8%
Civil Society	11%
Religious Institutions	18%

See Tab. 4 for the distribution of the change in trust disaagregated by the categories "I have great trust" and "I basically trust".
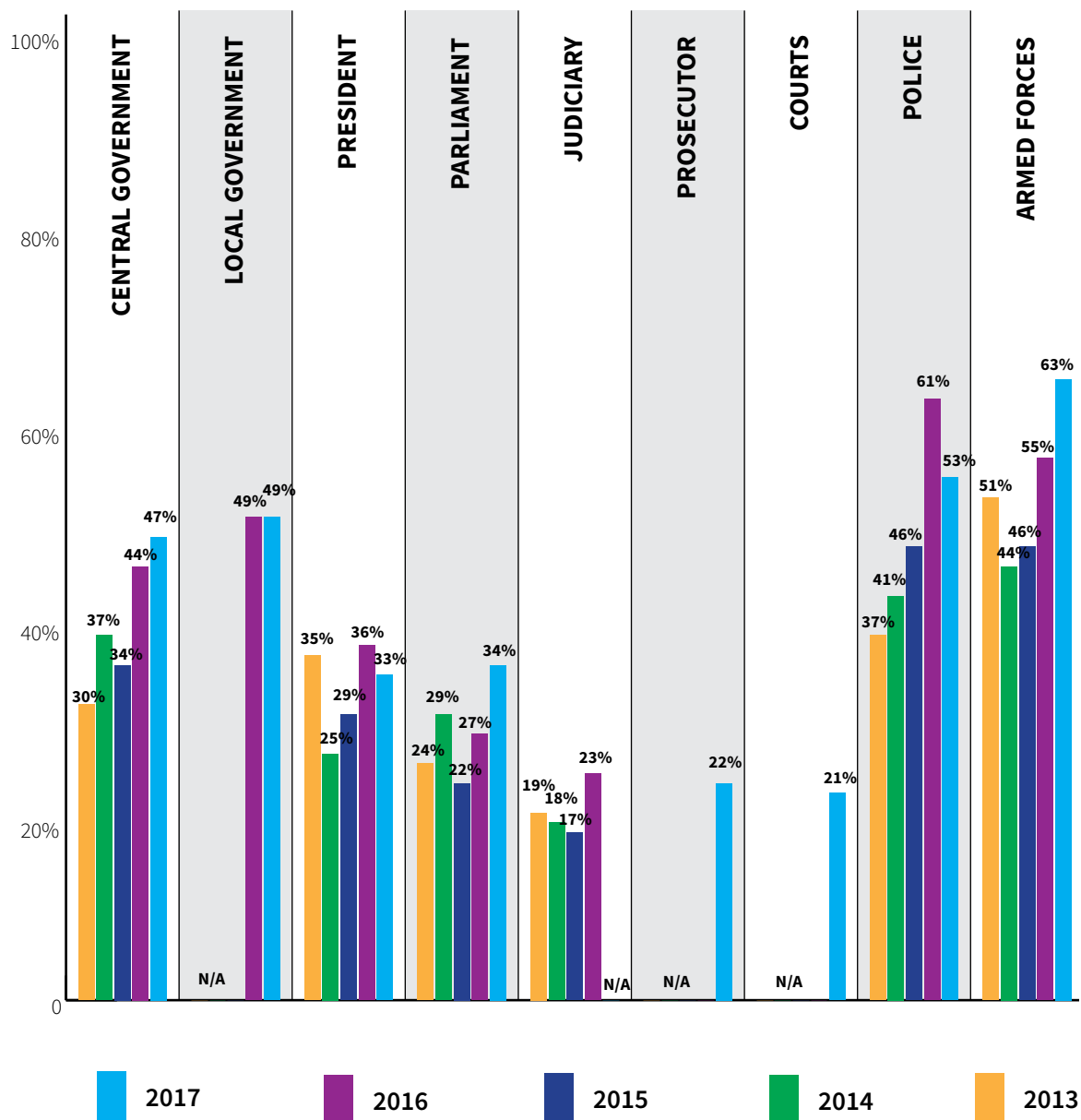
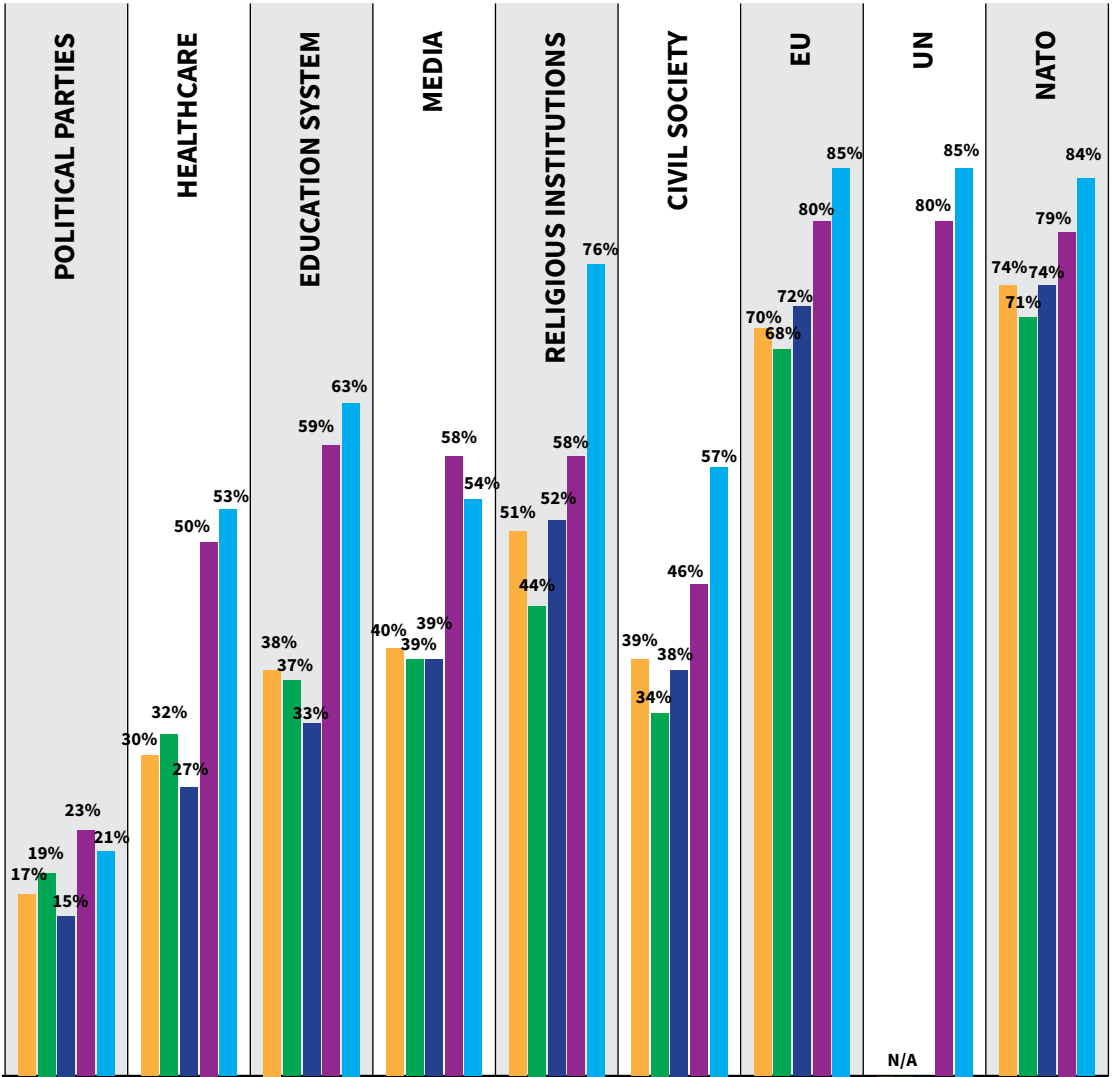*Table 4. Change in trust categories (percentage points: p.p) 2016-2017*

	Change in "I have great trust"	Change in "I basically trust"	Change in cumulative trust
Religious Institutions	5%	13%	18%
Civil Society	0%	11%	11%
Armed Forces	3%	5%	8%
Parliament	-3%	10%	7%
UN	2%	3%	5%
NATO	2%	3%	5%
EU	3%	2%	5%
Education system	0%	4%	4%
Healthcare	-2%	5%	3%
Central Government	-2%	5%	3%
Local Government	-2%	2%	0%
Political Parties	-2%	0%	-2%
President	-3%	0%	-3%
Media	-2%	-2%	-4%
Police	-2%	-6%	-8%

Moving away from domestic institutions, trust in supranational/international organizations has increased to the same level during 2017 (5 p.p) and the European Union and NATO stand at their highest rating since 2013. See Tab.5 for the distributions of results since 2013

Fig. 9

Institutional trust (2013-2017)

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
- 30% (2013)
- 37% (2014)
- 34% (2015)
- 44% (2016)
- 47% (2017)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- N/A (2013)
- 49% (2016)
- 49% (2017)

PRESIDENT
- 35% (2013)
- 25% (2014)
- 29% (2015)
- 36% (2016)
- 33% (2017)

PARLIAMENT
- 24% (2013)
- 29% (2014)
- 22% (2015)
- 27% (2016)
- 34% (2017)

JUDICIARY
- 19% (2013)
- 18% (2014)
- 17% (2015)
- 23% (2016)
- N/A (2017)

PROSECUTOR
- N/A
- 22%

COURTS
- N/A
- 21%

POLICE
- 37% (2013)
- 41% (2014)
- 46% (2015)
- 61% (2016)
- 53% (2017)

ARMED FORCES
- 51% (2013)
- 44% (2014)
- 46% (2015)
- 55% (2016)
- 63% (2017)

Legend:
- 2017
- 2016
- 2015
- 2014
- 2013

POLITICAL PARTIES

- 17%
- 19%
- 15%
- 23%
- 21%

HEALTHCARE

- 30%
- 32%
- 27%
- 50%
- 53%

EDUCATION SYSTEM

- 38%
- 37%
- 33%
- 59%
- 63%

MEDIA

- 40%
- 39%
- 39%
- 58%
- 54%

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

- 51%
- 44%
- 52%
- 58%
- 76%

CIVIL SOCIETY

- 39%
- 34%
- 38%
- 46%
- 57%

EU

- 70%
- 68%
- 72%
- 80%
- 85%

UN

- N/A
- 80%
- 85%

NATO

- 74%
- 71%
- 74%
- 79%
- 84%

Table 5. Institutional trust (2013-2017)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Central Government	30%	37%	34%	44%	47%
Local Government	N/A	N/A	N/A	49%	49%
President	35%	25%	29%	36%	33%
Parliament	24%	29%	22%	27%	34%
Judiciary	19%	18%	17%	23%	N/A
Prosecutor	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	22%
Courts	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	21%
Police	37%	41%	46%	61%	53%
Armed Forces	51%	44%	46%	55%	63%
Political Parties	17%	19%	15%	23%	21%
Healthcare	30%	32%	27%	50%	53%
Education system	38%	37%	33%	59%	63%
Media	40%	39%	39%	58%	54%
Religious Institutions	51%	44%	52%	58%	76%
Civil Society	39%	34%	38%	46%	57%
EU	70%	68%	72%	80%	85%
UN	N/A	N/A	N/A	80%	85%
NATO	74%	71%	74%	79%	84%

Source: Opinion Poll 2013-2017

For the second year, the core questions on institutional trust were supplemented with new sets of questions – inquiring the public views on the topics of Justice Reform and media reporting credibility.

Justice Reform

During the past two years, the topic of the Justice Reform has dominated much of the public discourse. On July 2016, constitutional amendments related to the organization and functioning of the justice system were unanimously adopted, launching a thorough judicial reform process, which is ongoing.

Data for 2017 reiterate the broad public expectation about the positive impact that the implementation of the Justice Reform will bring to the development of the country, albeit the proportion of positive expectations has declined from 71% in 2016 to 66% in 2017. Also, more respondents are uncertain and say "Don't know" compared to a year before (16% vs. 11%).

Fig. 10

Positive impact of the Justice Reform in the development of the country
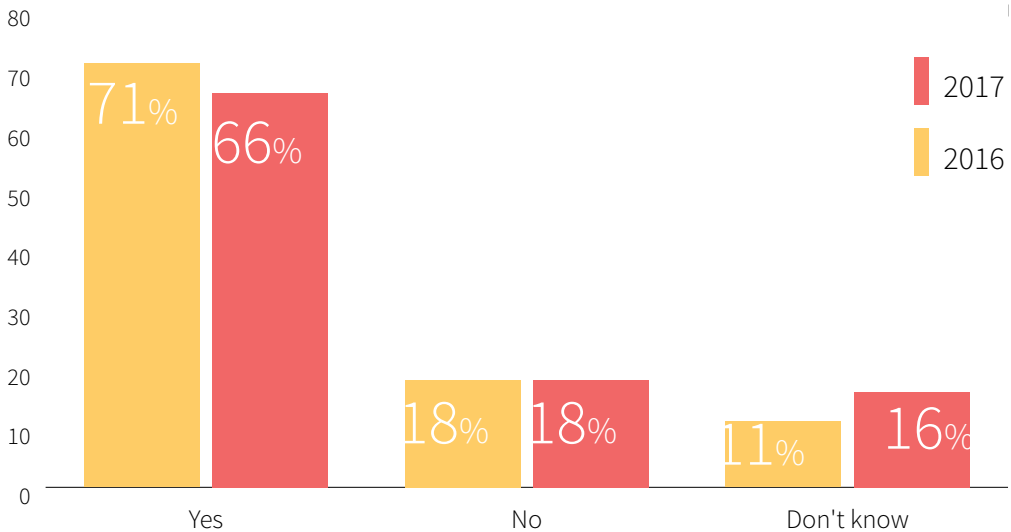
Base: N=1644

Notwithstanding the high hopes of its potential positive impact, the perceptions on its proper implementation in practice continue to be divisive. 43% of the respondents believe that the Justice Reform will be implemented accordingly, while another 38% believe the opposite; 2 in 10 respondents (20%) say they "Don't know" – 8 percentage points up from 12% in 2016.

Fig. 11

Proper implementation of the Justice Reform
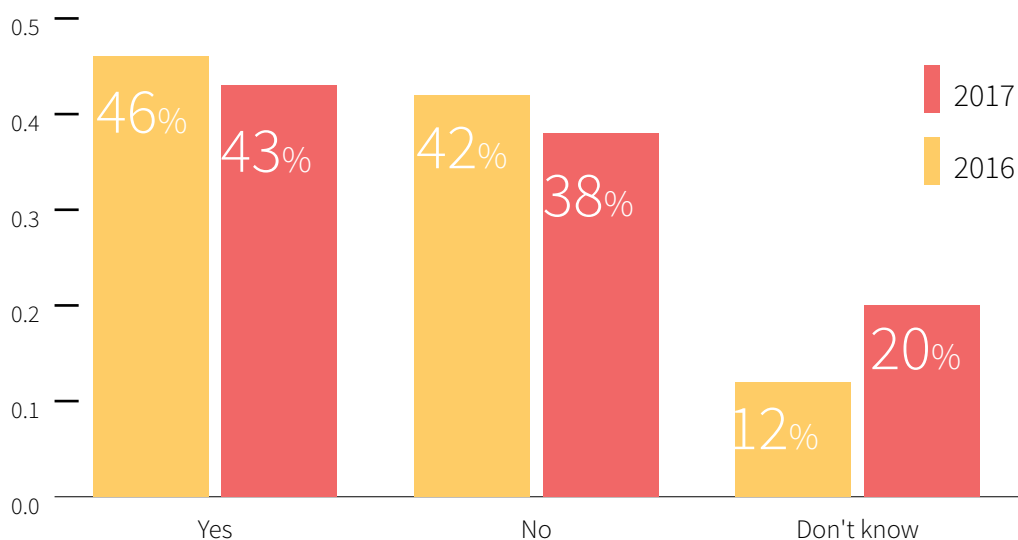
Base: N=1646

Women (23%) were more likely than men (16%) to report that they "don't know" if the Justice Reform will be implemented accordingly. Furthermore, respondents with low levels of education (compulsory education or less) (27%) were more likely to report that they "don't know". Respondents were more likely to report that the Justice Reform will be implemented accordingly if they were involved in the public sector (55%).

Media

Also in 2017, the most popular medium with respondents remains the television: 70% of them report it as the most used media medium. Next, social network platforms rank as the second most popular (18%) followed by portals (7%) and newspapers (4%).

Fig. 12

Media medium mostly used

- TV
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc)
- Portals / Blogs
- Newspaper (printed / online)
- Radio
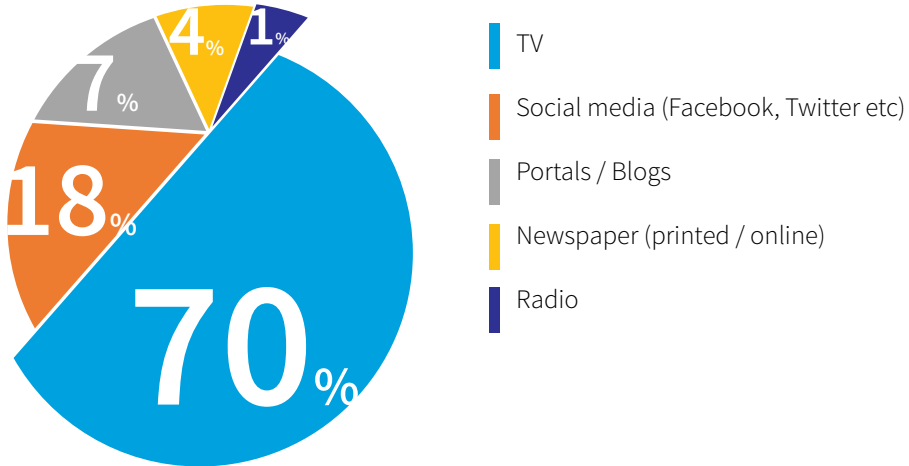
Base: N=1643

Further asked on the credibility of media reporting, only one in every two respondents (50%) says that the information provided by media is accurate and truthful, while 30% of them hold the opposite opinion. More respondents (20%) say they "Don't know" in 2017 compared to 2016 (15%).

Fig. 13

Is the information provided by media accurate/true?
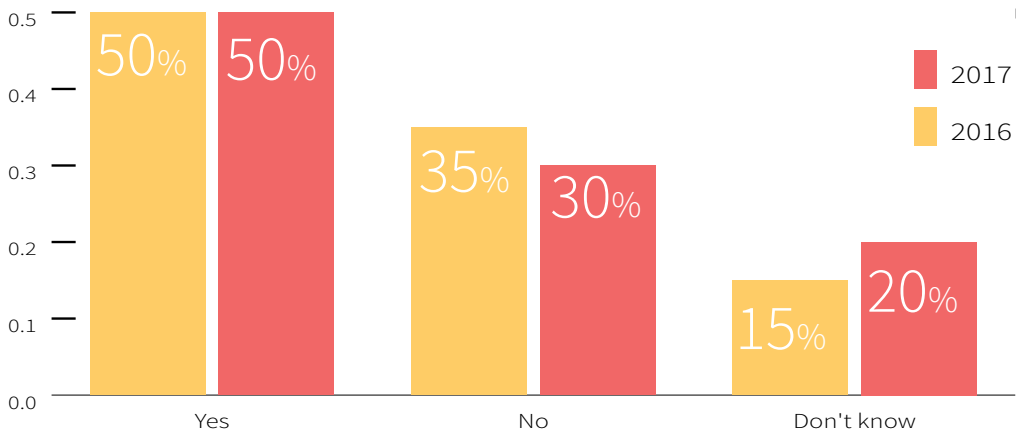
Base: For 2017, N=1646, for 2016 N=1639

Respondents were more likely to report that the information provided by media is accurate if they had low levels of education (58%) and were employed (57%).

4.2 TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Transparency

Transparency is considered as one of the basic principles of good governance and a prerequisite to any democratic regime. Despite the overuse of the term, practitioners and scholars still hold different definitions. Some of them focus on Freedom of Information (FOI) laws, some on e-government, and some others concentrate on the effects of transparency – assuming it generates greater trust, more participation, and a more efficient administration and less corruption.

Overall, perceptions on central and local government transparency have changed a little over the past few years; respondents continue to rate higher their local government as compared to the central government, albeit positive ratings remain below 50%. For 2017, 44% of the respondents either fully agree (7%) or generally agree (37%) that their local government is transparent (43% in 2016). Whereas, when asked about the central government this agreement drops to 40% (39% in 2016): 6% fully agree, while other 34% generally agree. See Fig.14.

Fig. 14

Transparency of central and local government
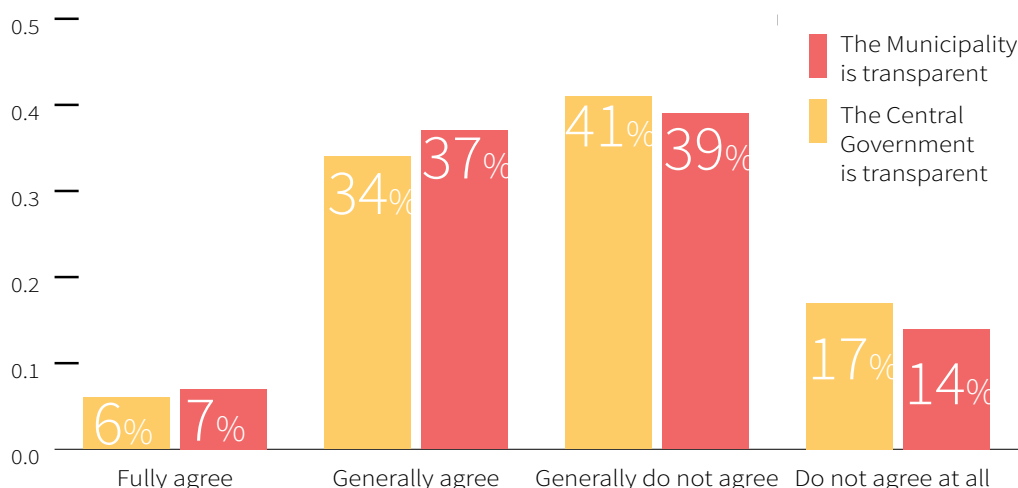
Base: For central government, N=1636, For local government, N=1637 Note: No opinon not shown

Exercising the right to information

A new law "On the Right to Information" (law no. 119/2014) was adopted in September 2014. The law regulates the right of access to information being produced or held by public authorities and aims to encourage integrity, transparency and accountability. The Opinion Poll, for the second year, explores the perceptions of the public on the exercising of the right to information.

6 in 10 respondents (or 60%) report to know that in Albania law guarantees the "Right to Information", while 40% of them are not aware of this fact. These figures are similar to last year, where 57% of the respondents were aware of the law compared to 43% who were not.

Fig. 15

Awareness on Right to Information law

NO

YES
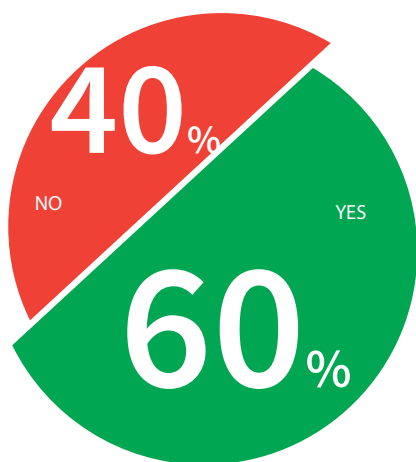
Base: N=1630

Respondents, who were aware that the Right to Information is guaranteed by law, were further asked if they had submitted a request for information to a public institution during 2017. Article 3 of the law stipulates "Everyone has the right to access public information without having to explain the reasons as to why". Procedurally, requests for information shall be in writing and delivered by hand, mail or email, with the correct identity of the applicant and his/her signature. The public authority, in turn, processes the request for information not later than 10 working days since the day of its submission.[9]
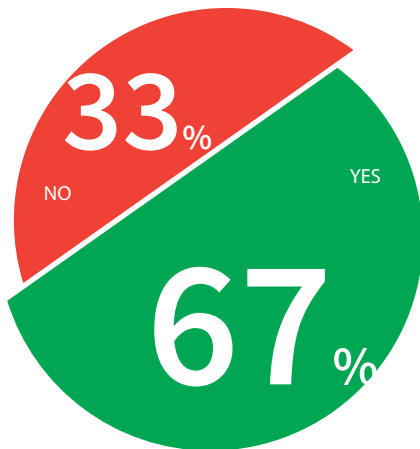
Fig. 16

Submitted requests for information

22%
YES

NO

78%
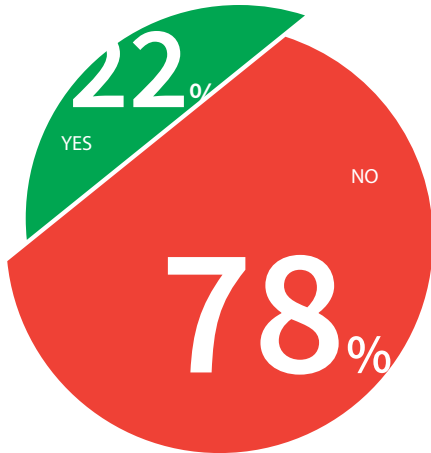
Base: N=962

For 2017, less than quarter of respondents (22% or n=207)[10] claim to have submitted a request for information to a public authority (23% in 2016) and out of that proportion about 67% (n=138) report receiving the requested information. See fig.16 and fig.17.

Fig. 17

Received requested information

33%
NO

YES

67%

Base: N=205

Accountability

Similar to transparency, accountability is central to the theory and practice of good governance, given its importance in preventing the abuse of political power. To be accountable means to have the duty to provide an account: that is, to explain and justify one's actions in terms of appropriate criteria and in sufficient detail. Building accountable and transparent institutions at all levels was also singled out as one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 16.[11]

In the Opinion Poll, respondents were asked to rate the accountability (i.e explanation of actions or non-actions to their constituencies) of their local government and central government during 2017. Along the same lines with findings from transparency, respondents view their local government more accountable than the central government, albeit positive ratings remain below 50%. For the local government, 42% of the respondents either fully agree (7%) or generally agree (35%) that their local government is accountable, whilst the majority (or 55%) does not agree. As regards the central government, 39% of them either fully agree (7%) or generally agree (35%) that the central government is accountable, whilst the majority (or 61%) either do not generally agree (41%) or do not agree at all (20%). See Fig.18 for the results. These figures are similar to last year; accountability of the local government was rated at 43%, whilst of the central government at 36%.

Fig. 18

Accountability of central and local government
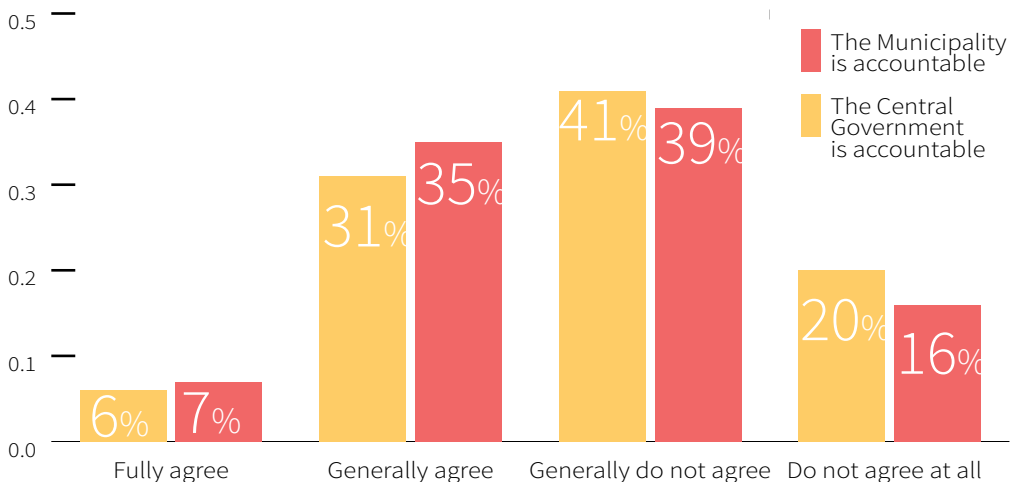
Base: For central government, N=1635, For local government, N=1633. Note: No opinon not shown

The concept of accountability can be classified according to the type of accountability exercised and/or the person, group or institution the public official answers to, recognizing two main forms: horizontal accountability and vertical accountability. Horizontal accountability concerns the capacity of state institutions (such as legislatures and the judiciary) to oversee the government by demanding information, questioning officials and punishing improper behavior. On the other hand, vertical accountability is the means through which citizens, mass media, and civil society seek to enforce standards of good performance on government officials.[12]

Fig. 19

Horizontal Accountability Mechanisms
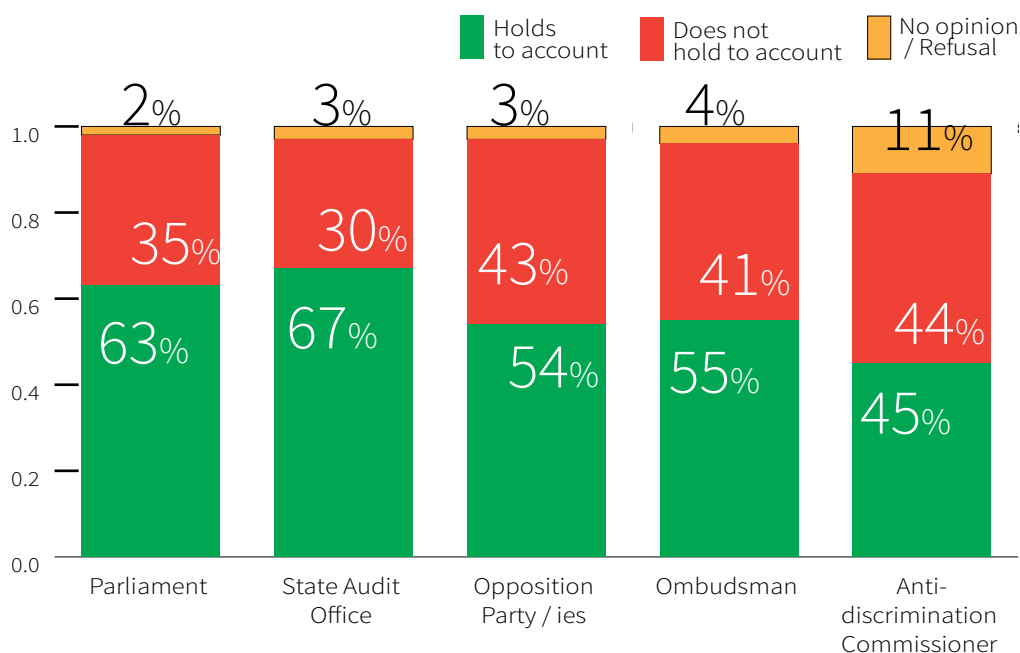
As Fig. 19 suggests, for 2017 the Albanian Supreme State Audit Institution (SSAI) is perceived as having the greatest role in holding the government to account (67%), followed by the Parliament (63%), the Ombudsman (55%), Opposition Parties (54%), and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (45%).

With regard to vertical accountability mechanisms, media is perceived as having the greatest role in holding the government accountable (65%), followed by Civil Society (51%). Less than half of the respondents say that Trade Unions (46%) and Businesses (44%) hold the government into account.
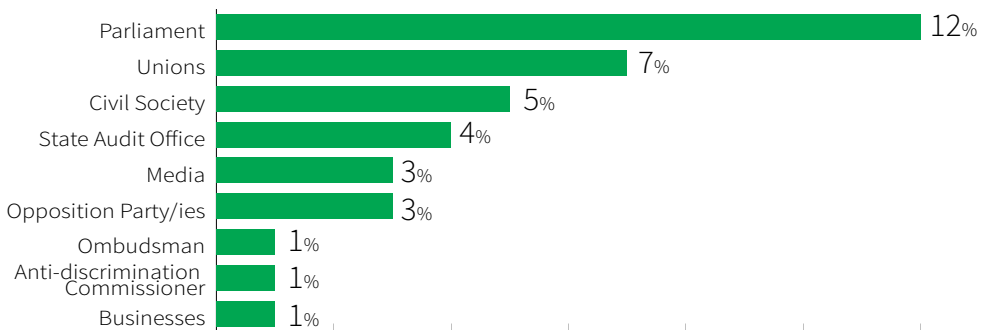
Fig. 20

Vertical Accountability Mechanisms
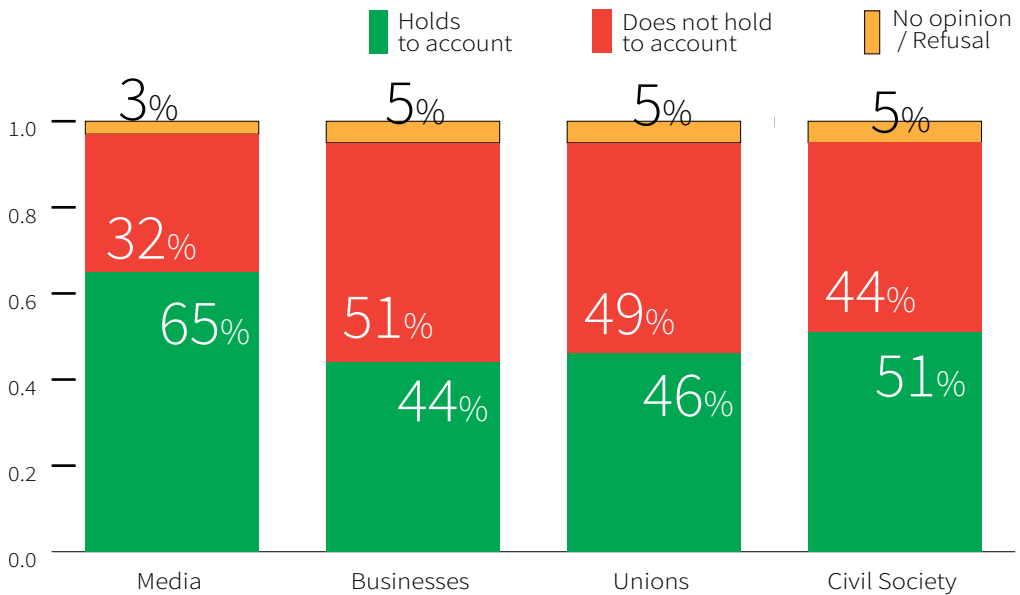
From a timeline perspective, compared to 2016, the Parliament was perceived as having an increased role in holding the government to accounts (12 p.p increase), followed by Trade Unions (7 p.p) and Civil Society (5 p.p). See Fig.21 for the distribution of results.

Fig. 21

Changes in accountability 2016-2017

Opening of Fomer Sigurimi Files

The Albanian Authority for Information on Former State Security Documents, established with law 45/2015, is responsible for managing and making transparent the files of Albania's former Sigurimi.[13] For 2017, the Opinion Poll asked a new set of questions to gauge the public perception on the impact of the initiative. The majority of respondents says that this initiative is beneficial to the future work of public institutions (67%), makes necessary justice (65%) and contributes to improving social cohesion (60%). Roughly 2 in 10 respondents declare themselves uncertain on the topic.

Fig. 22

The initiative of opening the former Sigurimi files
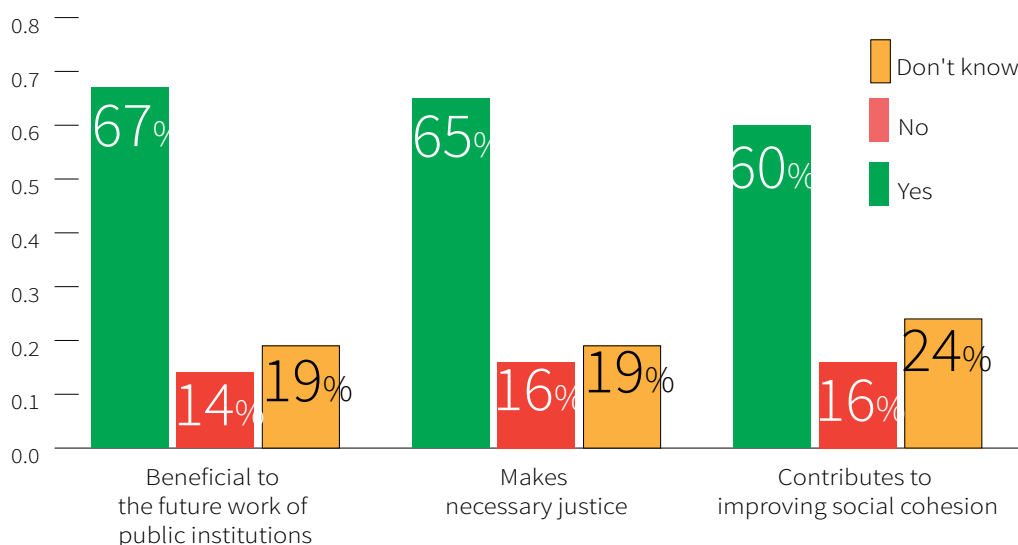
4.3 CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Transparency International defines corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gains. Corruption can be classified as grand or petty, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs. Grand corruption involves political decision-makers and high-level public officials, who exploit their positions to extract bribes, embezzle large amounts of money or tailor regulations to benefit their private interests. Petty corruption, on the contrary, involves middle or low-level public officials and generally harms the poorest members of society in their interactions with public services (Andvig et al. 2001).

Perceptions on the prevalence of corruption

As a newly introduced question to this round of the Opinion Poll, respondents were asked to rate on a four-point scale from 1 (Not at all widespread) to 4 (Very widespread) the prevalence of petty and grand corruption[14] in Albania during 2017. Overall, respondents perceive the phenomenon of corruption as omnipresent in the Albanian society, regardless its form. See Tab.6. More than half of the respondents (54%) perceive petty corruption as widespread, while other 33% as very widespread. For grand corruption, 48% of the respondents view it as widespread. Other 40% consider it as very widespread. Only 9% of the respondents perceive grand corruption as either very rare (1%) or fairly rare (8%).

Table 6. Perceptions on corruption and prosecution of corruption cases

	Not at all widespread [very rare]	Not widespread [fairly rare]	Widespread	Very widespread
Petty Corruption	1%	9%	54%	33%
Grand Corruption	1%	8%	48%	40%

	Great confidence in prosecution of corruption cases	Confidence in prosecution of corruption cases	Don't have confidence in prosecution of corruption cases	Don't have confidence at all in prosecution of corruption cases
Petty Corruption	6%	30%	39%	23%
Grand corruption	5%	20%	41%	32%

Note: Refuse not included

Confidence in the prosecution of corruption cases

Data on the public confidence in the prosecution of corruption cases confirm the low trust rating of the justice system (See section 4.1 Trust in Institutions). Furthermore, respondents say that they are less confident in the prosecution of grand corruption as compared to petty corruption cases (in a margin of 11 percentage points). The majority of respondents or more than 6 in 10 respondents (62%) either don't have confidence (39%) or don't have confidence at all (23%) in the prosecution of petty corruption cases, while some other 36% respondents have great confidence (6%) or confidence (30%). For the prosecution of grand corruption cases, 73% of respondents either don't have confidence (41%) or don't have confidence at all (32%), while some other 25% respondents have great confidence (5%) or confidence (20%).

Next, respondents were asked to indicate in an open-ended question the most corrupt public institution in Albania for 2017. 1,373 respondents answered the question. 21% of them considered Courts as the most corrupted followed by the Government (16%), Institutions of the Health System (14%), and the Parliament (9%).

**Personal exposure to corruption**

Following perceptions on corruption, respondents were asked about their personal exposure to the phenomenon to explore the proportion of the general public who has witnessed any corruption case or paid any bribes during 2017.

Data show a wide discrepancy between corruption perceptions and reported experiences with corruption.

First of all, the vast majority of respondents deny to have witnessed a corruption case either at their local government (79%) or at the central level (85%). Only 21% of the respondents say to have witnessed at least a corruption case at their local government, as compared to 15% at central level government. These figures for 2017 are up from 15% and 10%, respectively in 2016.

Fig. 23

Exposure to corruption
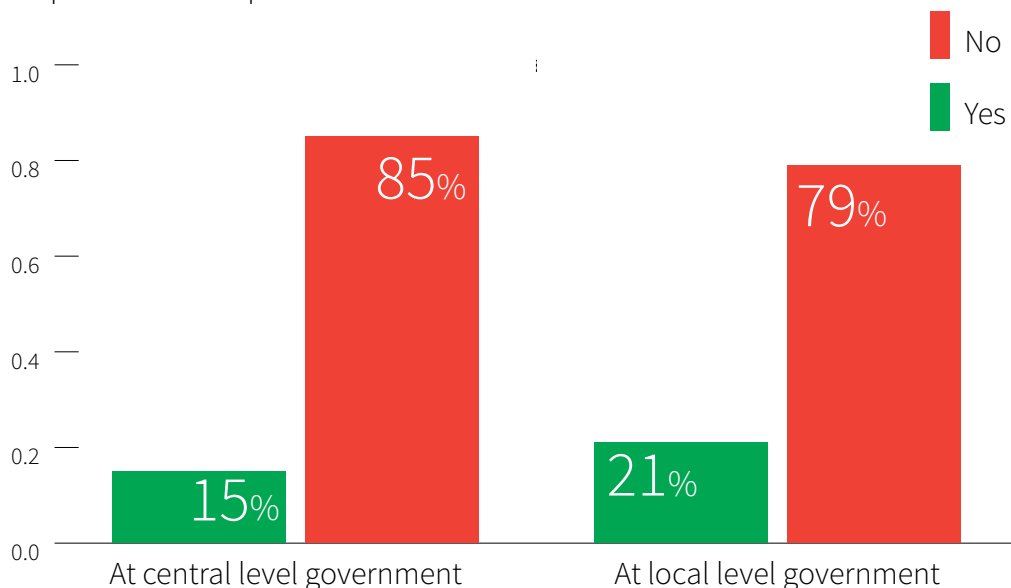
Base: For central government N =1638, for local government N =1639

Next, respondents were asked whether, during the past year, they had any contact with institutions at the local and central level to receive any services. For those that had received services, respondents were asked whether they had paid any bribes. 35% (n=566) of respondents say to have received services by public institutions at central level in 2017 (25% in 2016). Among those who have received services, 33% (n=183) report to have paid a bribe (26% in 2016).
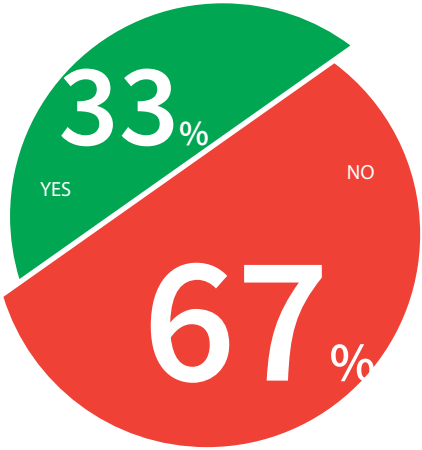
Fig. 24

Received services by public institutions at central level

35%
YES

NO
65%

Base: N=1630

Fig. 25

Bribes paid at central level
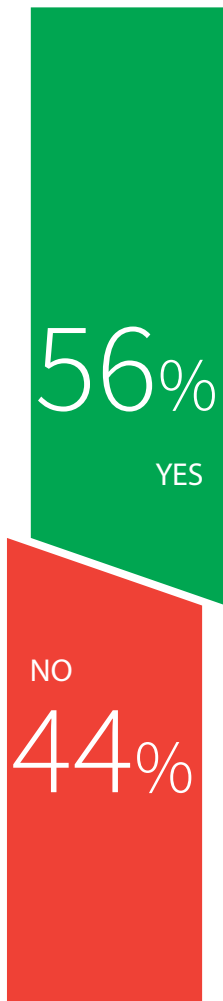
33%
YES

NO
67%

Base: N=561

More than half or 56% of respondents (n=920) say to have received services by public institutions at their local level in 2017 (52% in 2016). Among those who have received services, 32% (n=293) report to have paid a bribe (29% in 2016).
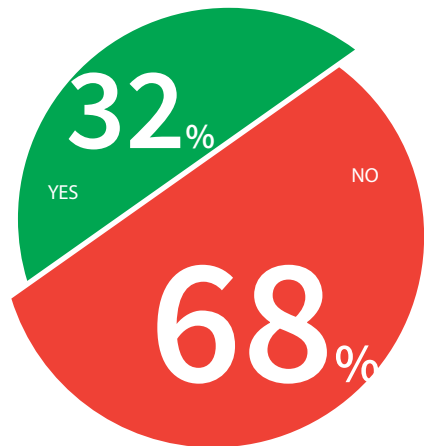
Fig. 26

Services received at local level

Fig. 27

Bribes paid at local level

32%
YES

68%
NO

Base: N=916

56%
YES

NO
44%

Base: N=1633

Asked on the reasons behind paying the bribes, 51% of the respondents (n=171) report to have paid a bribe because they were asked to do so. Other 25% (n=84) declare that they paid the bribe as a gratitude for the received service, while other 24% of the respondents (n=80) say that they paid the bribe in order to receive better services in the future.

Next, the respondents who admitted paying bribes during the last 12 months were asked if they had reported this phenomenon to the respective official authority/institution. Only 3% of those (n=10) claim to have reported the corruption, whilst the majority (97% or n=331) of respondents declared not to have reported the practice.
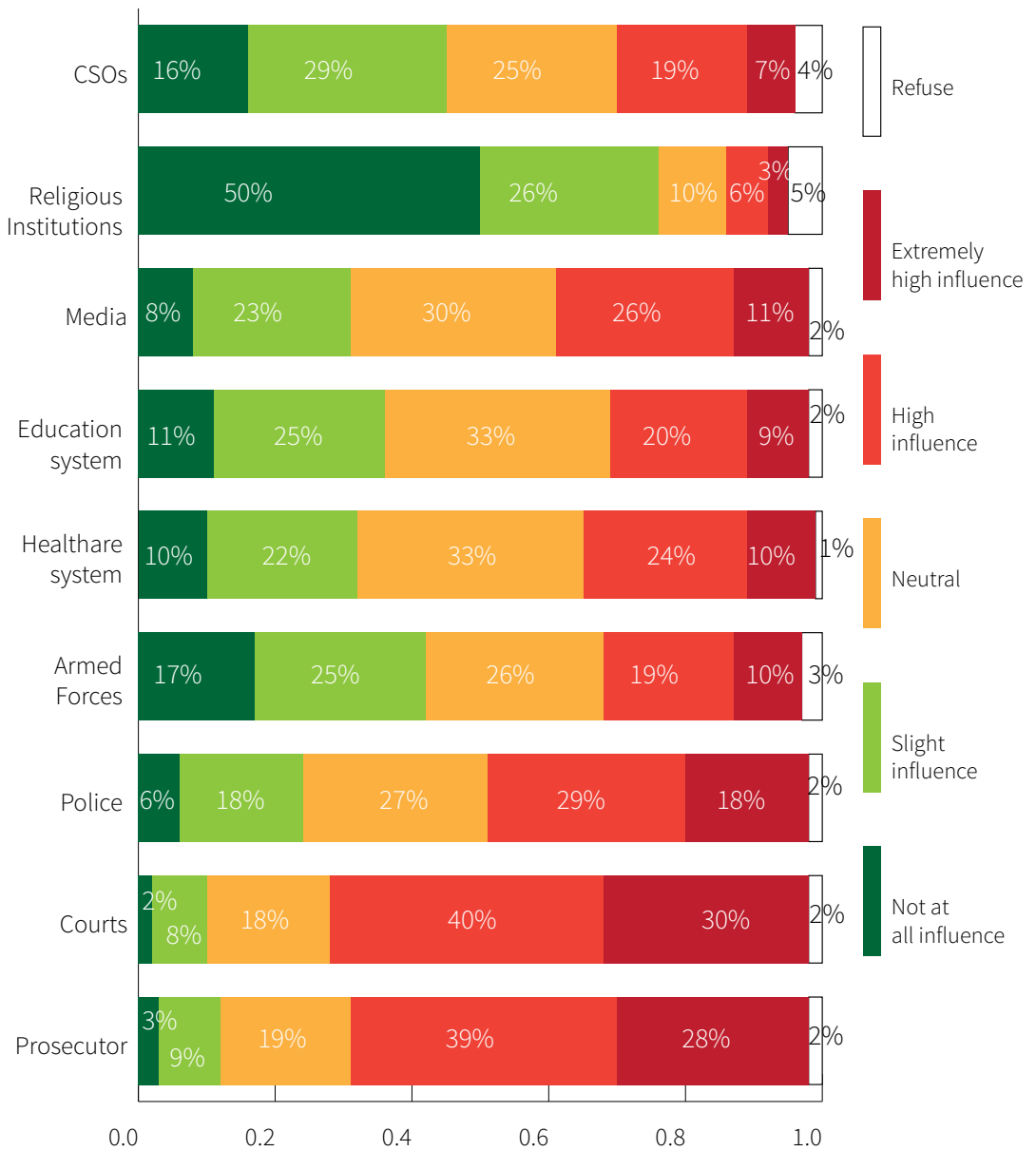
Asked on the reasons behind non-reporting, the majority or 37% of respondents (n=122) say that bribery is a common practice, followed by other 33% (n=111) who think that it is useless, since nobody cares about it. 13% of the respondents (n=42) did not report because of fear from reprisal.

4.4 POLITICAL INFLUENCE

Respondents were asked to rate on a five-point scale from 1 (not at all influential) to 5 (extremely high influence) how much do political interests influence the agenda of a list of institutions. 72% of respondents perceive the Courts as the most vulnerable to political influence, followed by the Prosecutor with 69% and the State Police with 49%. On the other hand, Religious Institutions are perceived to be the most independent ones from political influence (9%), followed by CSOs (26%).

Fig. 28

Political influence in the work of institutions 2017

CSOs	16%	29%	25%	19%	7%	4%
Religious Institutions	50%	26%	10%	6%	3%	5%
Media	8%	23%	30%	26%	11%	2%
Education system	11%	25%	33%	20%	9%	2%
Healthare system	10%	22%	33%	24%	10%	1%
Armed Forces	17%	25%	26%	19%	10%	3%
Police	6%	18%	27%	29%	18%	2%
Courts	2% / 8%	18%	40%	30%	2%	
Prosecutor	3% / 9%	19%	39%	28%	2%	

Legend:
- Refuse
- Extremely high influence
- High influence
- Neutral
- Slight influence
- Not at all influence

x-axis: 0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1.0

4.5 CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Numerous studies conducted in Albanian communities reveal low levels of citizen engagement in decision-making. Some of the explanations focus on the communist legacy of centralized governance, the lack of trust in local and central-level authorities, and dissatisfaction with increasing inequalities (Dauti, 2017; Partners Albania, 2013; IDM, 2010). In this poll, we differentiate between citizen engagement at the central and local level. To capture citizen engagement, questions focused on opportunities to participate in decision-making, participation in consultation processes and meetings, engagement in voluntary work, and attendance of demonstration/rally and petition signing. Respondents were also asked to report on reasons for not participating in consultation meetings.

Participation in decision making in public institutions

28% of respondents report that they have sufficient opportunity to participate in decision making at the central level. Meanwhile, 72% report that they do not have sufficient opportunity to participate in decision-making at the central level. A greater percentage (36%) reports that they have sufficient opportunity to participate in decision making at the local level. 64% report that they do not have sufficient opportunity.

Fig. 29

Sufficient opportunity to participate in decision making 2017
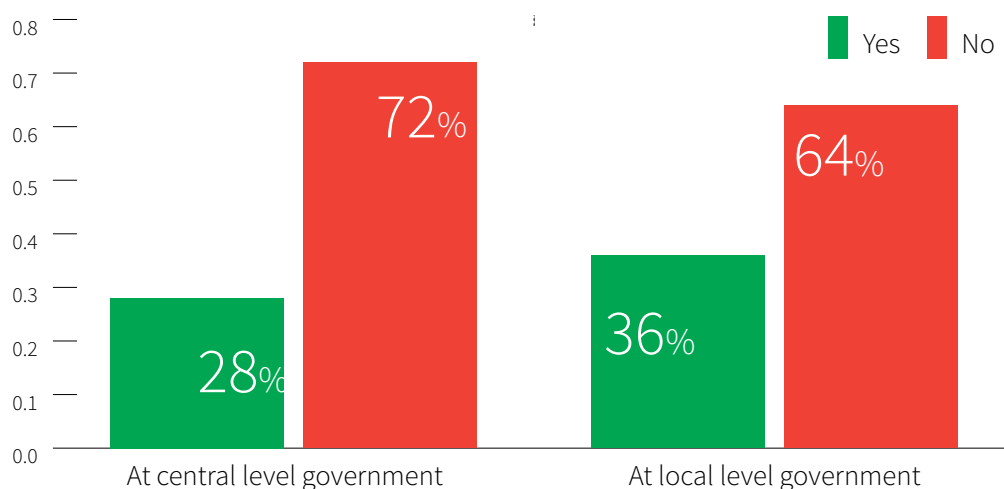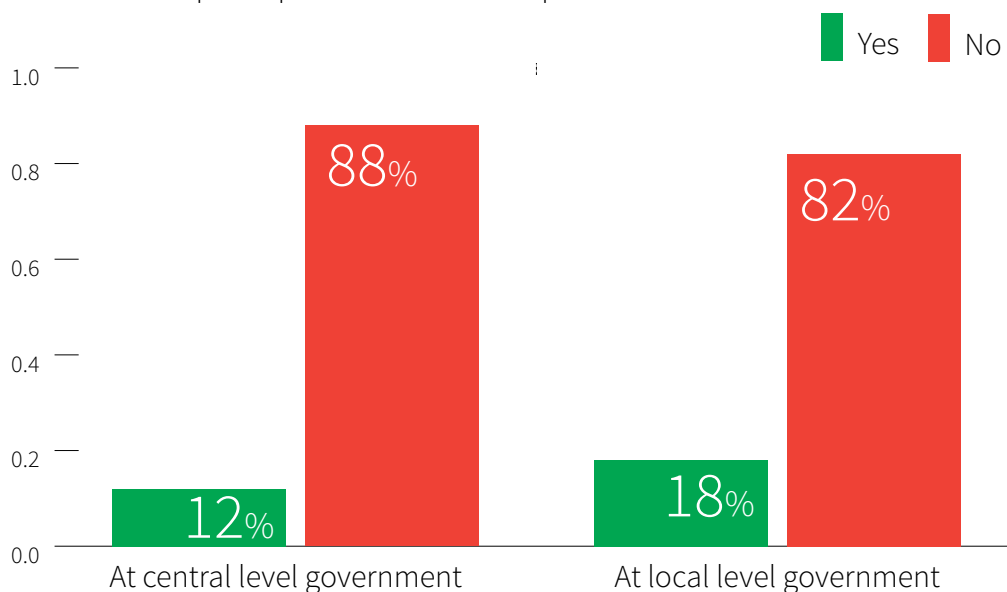

Base: N = 1634

Respondents were more likely to report that they have sufficient opportunity to participate in decision making at the central and local level if they had high levels of education, lived in urban areas, and were employed in the public sector. Younger respondents were more likely to report that they have sufficient opportunity to participate in decision making at the central and local level.

Being invited to participate in consultation processes

Only 12% of respondents report that they have been invited to participate in consultation processes organized by public institutions at the central level. A greater percentage, 18%, reports that they have been invited to participate in consultation processes at the local level.

Fig. 30

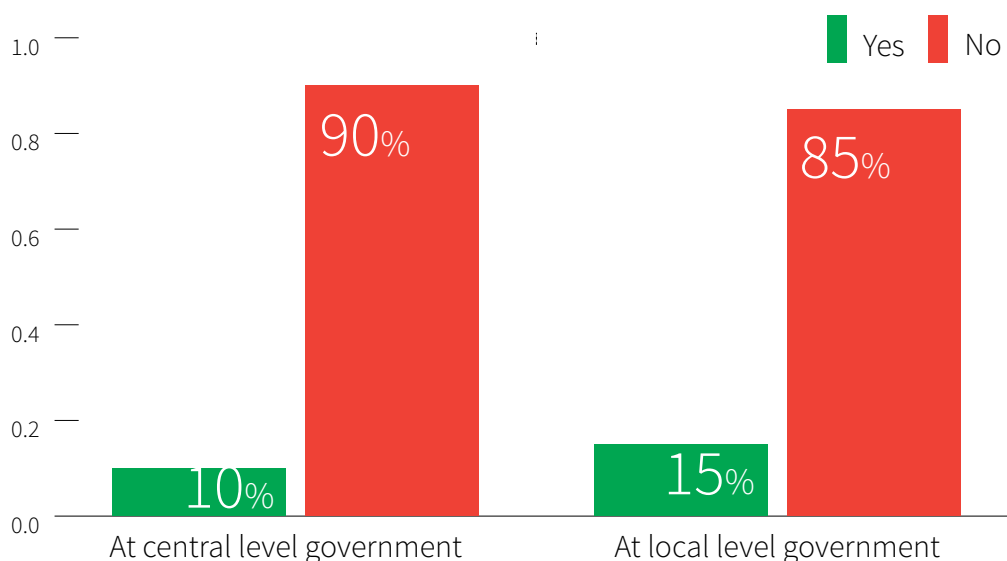Invitations to participate in consultation processes 2017

Base: N = 1635

Respondents who had high levels of education (26%), lived in urban areas (22%), and were employed in the public sector (41%) were more likely to report that they were invited to participate in consultation processes organized by public institutions at the local level. Younger respondents were also more likely to report that they were invited to participate in consultation processes. The same conclusion holds for participation in consultation processes organized by public institutions at the central level.

Participating in consultation meeting

Only 10% of respondents said that they have participated in consultation meetings organized at the central level. 15% of respondents said that they have participated in consultation meetings at the local level.

Fig. 31

Participation in consultation meetings 2017

Base: N = 1632

Respondents who had high levels of education (15%) and were employed in the public sector (13%) were more likely to report that they have participated in consultation meetings at the central level. The same conclusion holds for participation at the local level. Respondents in rural areas (12%), compared to those in urban areas (17%), were less likely to report that they have participated in consultation meetings at the local level.

The majority of respondents who have participated in consultation meetings reported that meetings were organized by the municipality (58%) and the central government (44%). A smaller percentage (25%) reported that they have participated in public consultations organized by the municipal council.

Table 7. Types of consultation meetings attended

Open meetings organized by the municipality:	58% (n = 160)
Consultative sessions organized by the municipal council:	25% (n = 69)
Public consultations organized by the central government:	44% (n = 121)
Other (specify): *	6% (n = 16)

Other: Public hearings with political parties, village head, and civil society organizations.
Note: Multiple responses allowed; percentages do not add to 100%

The main reason for not participating in consultation meetings was that respondents "do not believe in such processes." Specifically, 37% of respondents said that they "do not believe in such processes." 14% said that they did not have information on consultation meetings.

Table 8. Reasons for not participating in consultation meetings

I expect others to do so	18% (n = 169)
I don't believe in such processes	37% (n = 344)
I did not have information on the subject	14% (n = 128)
I could not reach the location	9% (n = 80)
I believe there are no consultation mechanisms or processes established	11% (n = 99)
Other (specify):	12% (n = 108)

Other: I am too old; I am not well prepared; I support my party alone; I am not interested in politics; I haven't been invited.
*Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not always add to 100%*

Disbelief in consultation meetings did not vary by gender, education, area (urban vs. rural), employment status, and employment sector. Younger respondents (Mean = 39) reported greater disbelief in consultation meetings than older respondents (Mean = 43).

Municipal budget reflecting people's priorities

39% of respondents report that the budget of the municipality does not reflect people's priorities. 31% report that the budget reflect people's priorities. 30% report that they "don't know" if the budget reflect people's priorities.

Fig. 32

Municipal budget reflects people's priorities
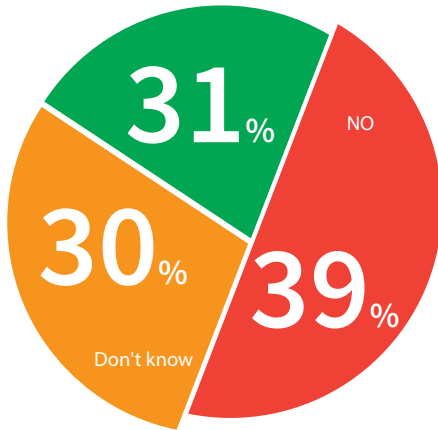
Base: N = 1549

Women (36%) were more likely than men (25%) to report that they "don't know" if the municipal budget reflects people's priorities. Respondents with low levels of education (compulsory education or less) (41%) and the unemployed (42%) were less likely to report that the budget reflects people's priorities. Respondents were more likely to report that the budget reflect people's priorities if they were involved in the public sector (52%).

Statements on citizen engagement

78% of respondents agree or fully agree with the statement "An ordinary citizen does have sufficient knowledge to understand whether a government decision is good or bad (72% in 2016)." 40% agree or fully agree with the statement "Suggestions coming from civil society and interest groups on draft laws are taken into consideration." 67% agree or fully agree with the statement "Local public hearings are formal events, they have limited influence on municipal decisions."

Fig. 33

Statements on citizen engagement 2017
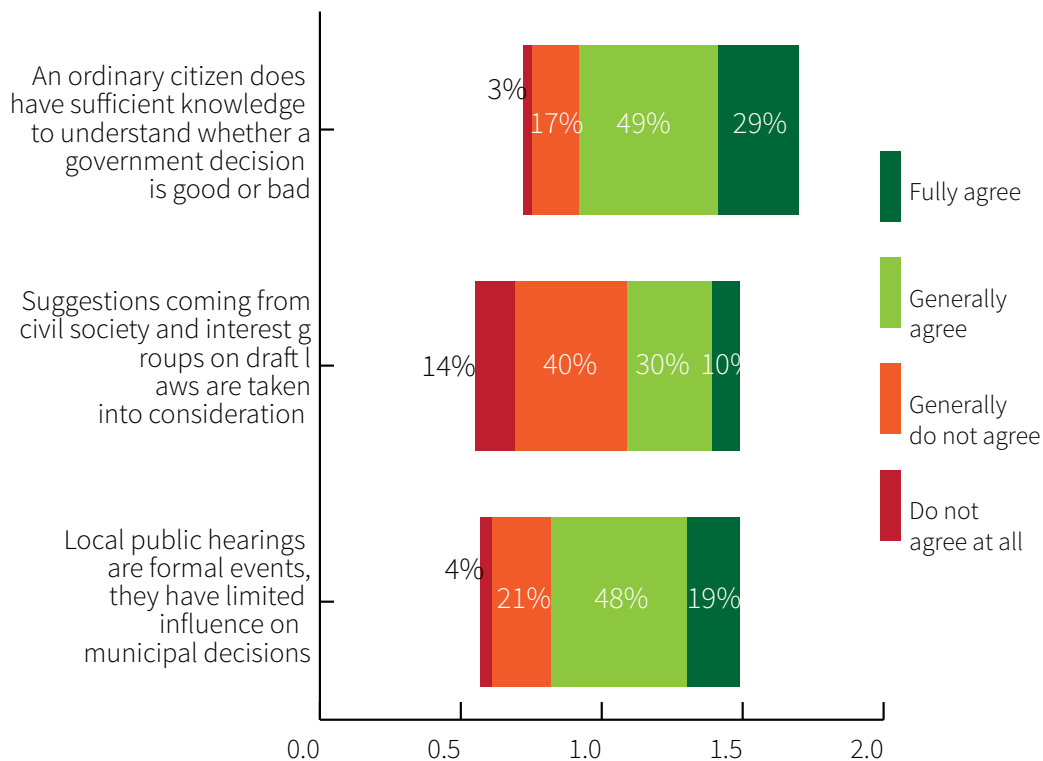
Base: N = 1632

In 2016, 54% of respondents agreed or fully agreed with the statement "Suggestions coming from civil society and interest groups on draft laws are taken into consideration." In 2017, the percentage was 40. The opposite trend was observed for the statement "Local public hearings are formal events, they have limited influence on municipal decisions." In 2016, 57% of study participants agreed or fully agreed with this statement." In 2017, the percentage was 67.

Attending a demonstration/rally or signing a petition

The majority of study participants, 80%, report that they have not attended a demonstration/ rally or signed a petition. Younger respondents (Mean = 37) were more likely to report that they have attended a demonstration/rally or signed a petition.

Fig. 34

Attended a demonstration/rally or signed a petition 2017
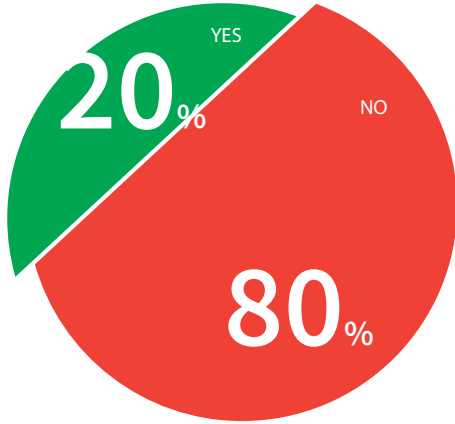
Base: N = 1637

The main reason for attending a demonstration/rally or signing a petition was sharing a common interest with the community.

Table 9. Reasons for attending a demonstration/rally or signing a petition 2017

Personal interest	12% (n = 41)
Shared interest of the community I belong to	51% (n = 166)
Political party militantism	17% (n = 56)
Peer pressure	2% (n = 5)
A combination of more than one reason	17% (n = 55)
Other (specify)*	2% (n = 5)

*Other: National interest, concerns regarding the education system
Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not always add to 100%

Willingness to engage in voluntary work for the benefit of the community

75% of respondents report that they are willing to engage in voluntary work for the benefit of the community. Meanwhile, 25% report that they are not willing to engage in voluntary work.

Fig. 35

Willingness to engage in voluntary work 2017

YES
25%
NO
75%
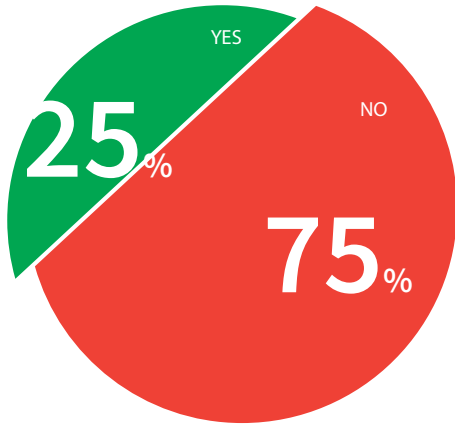
Base: N = 1635

Respondents were more likely to report that they are willing to engage in voluntary work if they had high levels of education (88%) and were employed in the public sector (88%). Younger respondents (Mean = 39) were more likely to report that they are willing to engage in voluntary work.

4.6 SATISFACTION WITH PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Regular citizen feedback on the quality and efficiency of public service delivery holds particular importance in transition countries, where the relationships between policy-makers, service providers and citizens have been transformed intensely under the service delivery reforms centering on the citizen. In this context, the Opinion Poll aimed to quantify the level of public satisfaction towards public services delivered by a number of government-related institutions in the past 12 months. The selected public services are the ones citizens receive on a daily basis (i.e. public transport, supply of drinking water) or quite often (i.e. health services, communal services etc.) offered by both central and local government.

Specifically, questions focused on satisfaction with public services, utilization of public services, submission of complaints to municipal departments, responsiveness of institutions, the quality of social services, and safety. A striking finding is that 49% of respondents reported that they do not feel safe and the majority attributes the lack of safety to crime,

health concerns, employment insecurity, and injustice. Compared to the Opinion Poll of 2016, respondents were asked if they had used public services. Then, comparisons were drawn between those who had used public services and those who had not used them. Comparisons were also drawn based on individual-level characteristics, including gender, age, education, area (urban vs. rural), employment status, and employment sector. A Likert scale – ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied – was used.

Satisfaction with public services

Public services that received higher ratings from more than half of respondents are: supply of drinking water (56%), street cleaning service (57%), emergency services (53%), and education services (54%). Public services that received lower ratings from more than half of respondents are: employment services (74%) and judiciary services (73%), followed by healthcare services (57%) and social welfare services (55%). Similar patterns were observed in 2016. Public services that received lower ratings from more than half of respondents in 2016 were: employment services (78%), judiciary services (66%), social welfare services (60%), and healthcare services (53%).

Respondents were more likely to report that they were dissatisfied with health services if they had low levels of education (65%), were unemployed (63%), and worked in the private sector (54%). A greater percentage of individuals who have used health services reported that they were very dissatisfied. 21% of study participants who reported that they have used health services said that they were very dissatisfied. The percentage for those who have not used health services was 12.
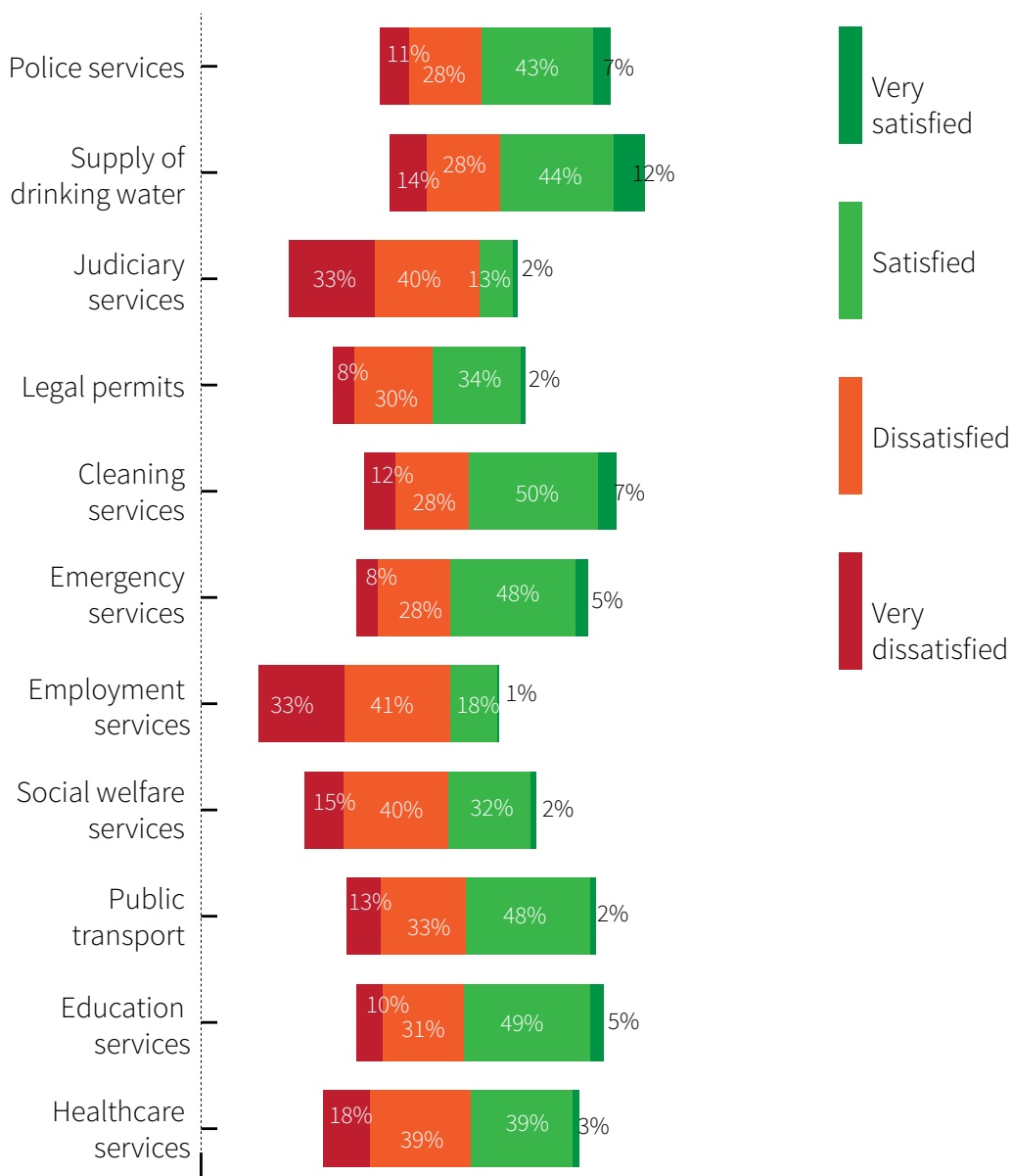
Respondents were more likely to report that they were dissatisfied with education services if they were young, had low levels of education (50%), lived in rural areas (46%), and were unemployed (49%). Respondents who reported that they have used education services were more likely to report that they were very dissatisfied. Specifically, 14% of study participants who reported that they have used education services said that they were very dissatisfied. Meanwhile, the percentage of those who have not used education services was 8.

Respondents were more likely to report that they were dissatisfied with public transportation if they were older and unemployed (54%). Respondents who have used public transportation were more likely to be very dissatisfied. Respondents were more likely to report that they were dissatisfied with social welfare services if they had low levels of education and were unemployed. Respondents who have used social welfare services were more likely to be very dissatisfied. Respondents in rural areas (54%), compared to those in urban areas (63%), were less likely to report that they were satisfied with the street cleaning service. Respondents involved in the private sector (51%), compared to those involved in the public sector (64%), were less likely to be satisfied with business licensing/permits/registration services.

Respondents were more likely to be very dissatisfied with courts and other judiciary institutions' services if they have used such services. 56% of respondents who have used

Fig. 36

Satisfaction with public services 2017

Service	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Police services	11%	28%	43%	7%
Supply of drinking water	14%	28%	44%	12%
Judiciary services	33%	40%	13%	2%
Legal permits	8%	30%	34%	2%
Cleaning services	12%	28%	50%	7%
Emergency services	8%	28%	48%	5%
Employment services	33%	41%	18%	1%
Social welfare services	15%	40%	32%	2%
Public transport	13%	33%	48%	2%
Education services	10%	31%	49%	5%
Healthcare services	18%	39%	39%	3%

Legend:
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

courts and other judiciary institutions' services reported that they were very dissatisfied. 37% of respondents who have not used such services reported that they were very dissatisfied.

The most frequently used public services are: water supply, public transport, and health care services. Respondents were more likely to report that they are very dissatisfied with public services if they have used them.

Table 10. Utilization of public services

|	
Health care services:	73% (n = 1,118)
Education services	46% (n = 707)
Public transport	76% (n = 1,150)
Social welfare services	42% (n = 634)
Employment services	46% (n = 702)
Emergency services	23% (n = 354)
Street cleaning services	51% (n = 767)
Business licensing/permits/ registration	15% (n = 221)
Courts and other judiciary institutions' services	11% (n = 159)
Supply of drinking water	80% (n = 1,186)
Police services	22% (n = 327)

Submission of complaints

15% of respondents report that they submitted a complaint to institutions for a service that they have received.

Respondents were more likely to report that they have submitted a complaint if they had high levels of education (18%) and were employed (18%).

37% of respondents report that their complaint was addressed. A greater percentage, 44%, report that their complaint was not addressed. 19% do not know if their complaint was addressed.
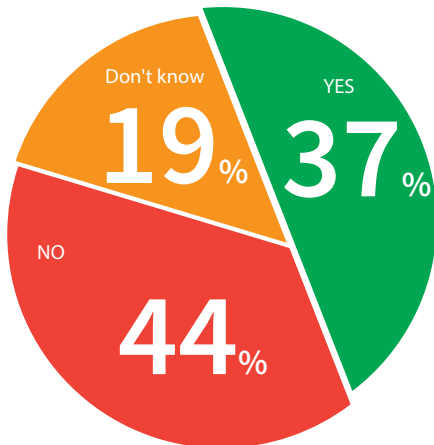
Fig. 37

Did you submit a complaint to institutions 2017

YES

15%

NO

85%
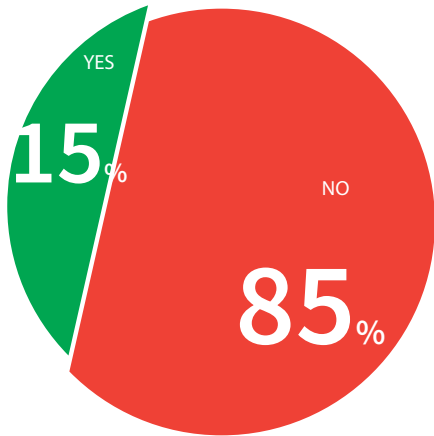
Base: N = 1639

Fig. 38

Was your complaint addressed?

Don't know

19%

YES

37%

NO

44%

Base: N = 241

Respondents were more likely to report that their complaint was addressed if they were employed (40%).

Institutions "listening to" and properly addressing citizens' complaints

47% of respondents report that institutions do not "listen to" and properly address citizens' complaints. The percentage of respondents who report the opposite – institutions "listen to" and properly address citizens' complaints – is 29.

Fig. 39

Do you believe that institutions "listen to"
and properly address citizens' complaints?
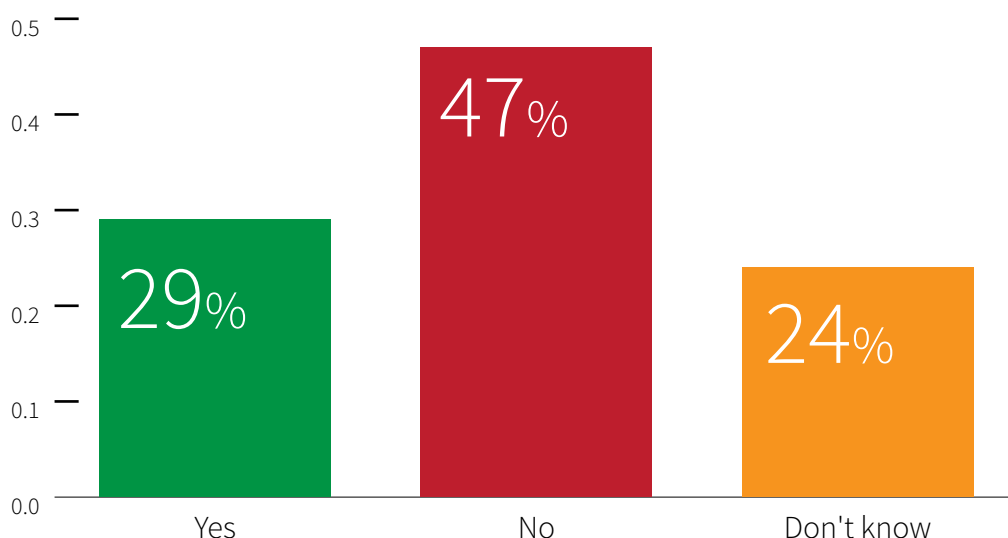
Base: N = 1599

Respondents were more likely to report that institutions do not "listen to" and properly address citizens' complaints if they had low levels of education (57%), and were unemployed (55%).

Assessing the quality of social services delivered in the municipality

More than half of study participants, 53%, report that the quality of social services delivered in the municipality has not changed. 33% report that it has improved. 14% report that the quality of social services has worsened.

Fig. 40

Changes in the quality of social services 2017

WORSE
14%

BETTER
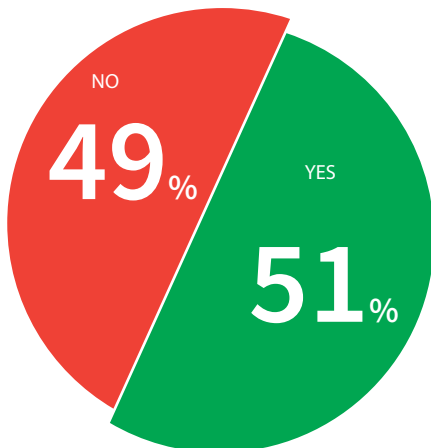**33**%

THE SAME
53%
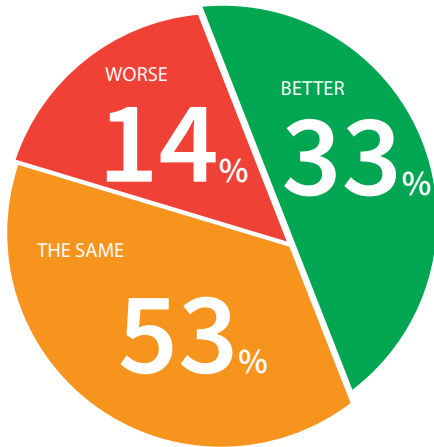
Base: N = 1620

Safety

51% of respondents report that they feel safe. Meanwhile, 49% report that they do not feel safe.

Fig. 41

Perceived safety in everyday life 2017

NO
49%

YES
51%

Base: N = 1615

The majority of respondents report as the main factors for feeling unsafe crime (58%), health concerns (30%), employment insecurity (42%), and injustice (32%).

Table 11. Reasons for feeling unsafe

Crime (assault, burglary)	58% (n = 459)
Traffic	11% (n = 90)
Pollution	12% (n = 95)
Health issues	30% (n = 242)
Drug use	23% (n = 181)
Employment insecurity	42% (n = 331)
Domestic violence	15% (n = 121)
Injustice	32% (n = 257)
Politics	29% (n = 230)
Unequal wealth	23% (n = 183)
Discrimination on bases of sex, religion, wealth, social ability	5% (n = 36)
Lack of free expression	5% (n = 39)
Lack of confidentiality and protection in case of reporting of wrongdoings:	6% (n = 49)

Base: N = 795

Note: Multiple responses allowed; percentages do not add to 100%

4.7 PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

To measure the performance of public institutions, study participants were asked to rank 11 institutions from 1 (excellent performance) to 5 (very poor performance). A consistent finding in previous Opinion Polls is that Albanians view the performance of Religious Institutions and the Army as more positive than other institutions. Meanwhile, the performance of Courts, Political Parties, and the Parliament is viewed as more negative than other institutions. Results of this year's Opinion Poll follow the same trajectory.

Referring to respondents' opinions, the poorest performing institutions include Courts, the Prosecutor, Political Parties, and the Parliament. For instance, 72% of respondents assessed the performance of Courts as poor or very poor. 69% assessed the performance

of the Prosecutor as poor or very poor. Meanwhile, 57% of study participants assessed the performance of Religious Institutions as very good or excellent.

Table 12. Performance of institutions (in percentages)

	Excellent	Very good	Neutral	Poor	Very poor
Central government	4	24	27	31	15
Local government	4	28	28	29	11
President	2	12	37	37	12
Parliament	2	11	33	39	16
Prosecutor	1	7	24	43	26
Courts	1	6	21	42	30
Police	5	24	30	28	12
Central Election Commission	3	17	52	21	7
Army	10	36	38	11	5
Religious institutions	19	38	33	7	4
Political parties	2	11	30	37	20

Base: N = 1635

4.8 ICT (USE OF TECHNOLOGY)

ICT can be an effective tool in bringing citizens and authorities closer. However, this depends on the quality of electronic sources and the extent that citizens actually utilize them. Questions focused on citizens' knowledge of the municipal website and e-services. Respondents were also asked if they have used the website of the municipality, the way that they have used it, and the quality of the website.
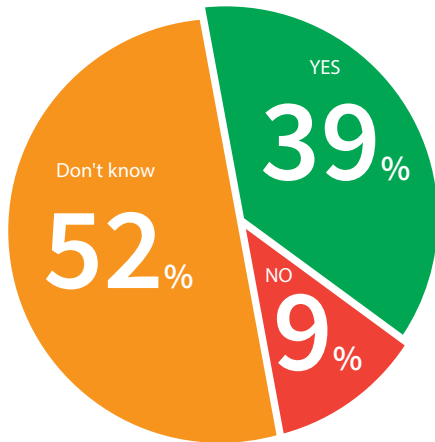
The municipality has a website

39% of respondents report that their municipality has a website. 52% report that they don't know if their municipality has a website. Respondents were less likely to report that they know if their municipality has a website if they had low levels of education (12%), lived in rural areas (32%), and were unemployed (30%).

Fig. 42

Do you know if your municipality has a website?

Base: N = 1640

Only half of the respondents that are aware if their municipality has a website report to know if their municipality also offers e-services. 42% do not know if their municipality offers e-services. Respondents were more likely to report that they know if their municipality offers e-services if they had high levels of education (57%) and were employed in the public sector (61%).

Fig. 43

Do you know if your municipality offers e-services?
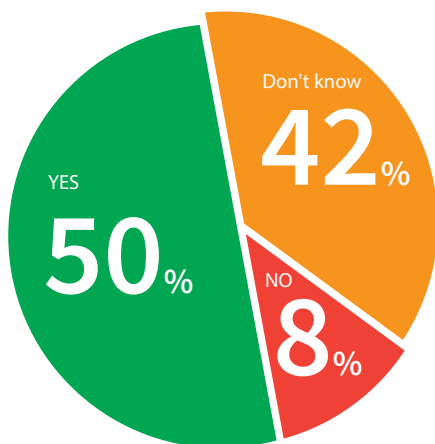
Base: N = 644

Using the website of the municipality

67% of respondents that are aware of the existence of the website say that they don't use the webpage of the municipality. In 2016, 41% of respondents reported that they use the website of the municipality. Respondents with high levels of education (41%) and employed in the public sector (51%) were more likely to report that they use the website of the municipality. Knowledge and use of technology had a positive relationship with age.

Fig. 44

Do you use the website of the municipality?

YES
33%

NO
67%
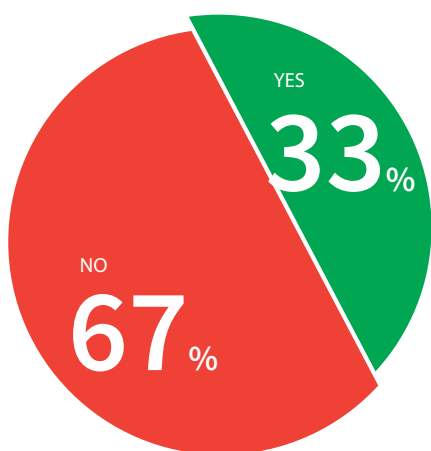
Base: N = 638

Ways of using the website of the municipality

The majority reports that they use the webpage of the municipality to receive information (34%), follow council decisions (16%), and receive electronic services (16%).

Table 13. Ways of using the website of the municipality

To receive information (check programs/ events in my city/town):	34% (n = 128)
To follow council decisions, I read minutes of meetings	16% (n = 59)
To send complaints, comments to a municipal department/staff	7% (n = 26)
To receive electronic services	16% (n = 60)

| To receive information on types of available services and where and how to access them	9% (n = 32)
Other:*	3% (n = 12)

Other: To complete school assignments, receive business information

Assessing the quality of the website of the municipality

The majority of respondents assess the quality of the website in terms of the information provided as accurate (91%), complete (79%), and continuously updated (72%).
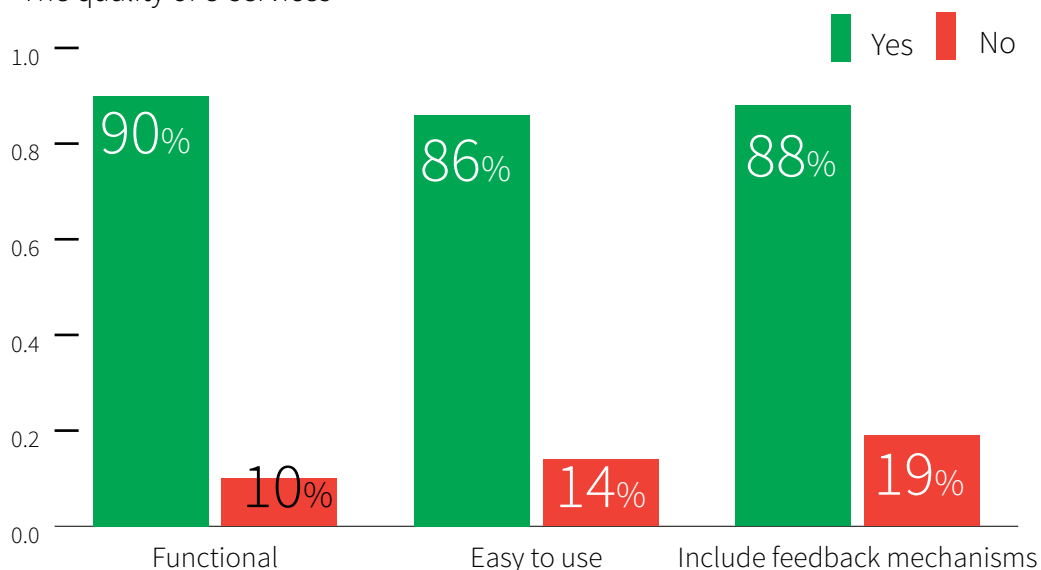
Fig. 45

The quality of the website of the municipality
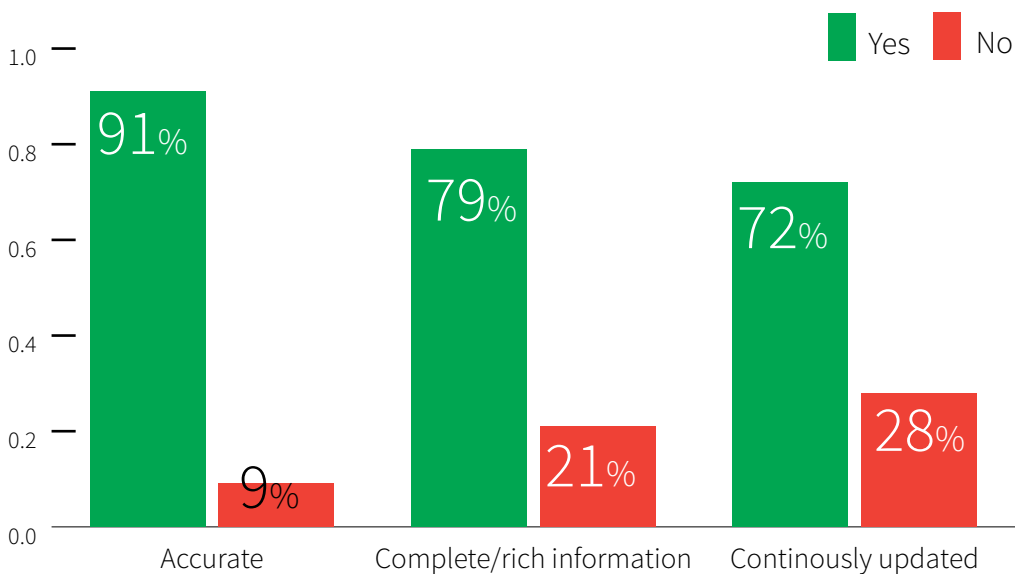
Base: N = 205

Similarly, the majority of respondents assess e-services as functional (90%), easy to use (86%), and including feedback mechanisms (88%).

Fig. 46

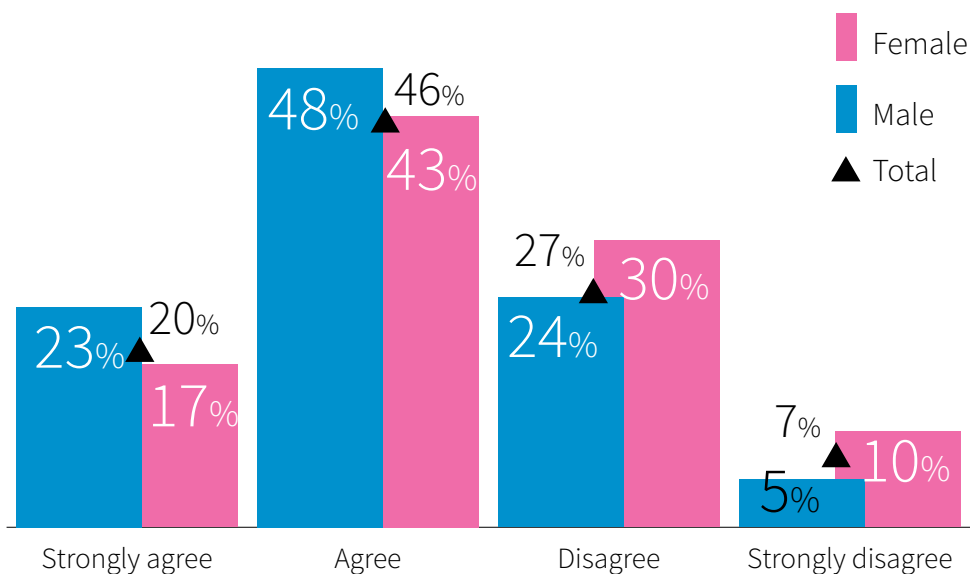The quality of e-services

Base: N = 164

4.9 GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

A traditional division of gender roles characterizes Albanian society. It is usually women who do the laundry and iron clothes, clean the house, cook, and wash dishes. The two household chores where men are more likely than women to be involved are related to house maintenance and the payment of bills (UNDP, 2016). To reveal attitudes towards gender equality, respondents reported on three statements. Following the introduction of the gender quota of 50%, questions also focused on respondents' knowledge and attitudes towards women in local decision making. To capture other aspects of social inclusion, respondents reported if they have been treated differently on the basis of their characteristics, including gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability.

65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "In Albanian society, there is equality between men and women." Women were less likely than men to agree with the statement. 60% of women and 71% of men agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Respondents with compulsory education or less (11%), compared to those with higher levels of education (34%), were less likely to agree with the statement. Responses did not vary by area, employment status, employment sector, or age. In 2016, 55% of men and 39% of women agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. In 2017, these percentages were 71 and 60, respectively.

Fig. 47

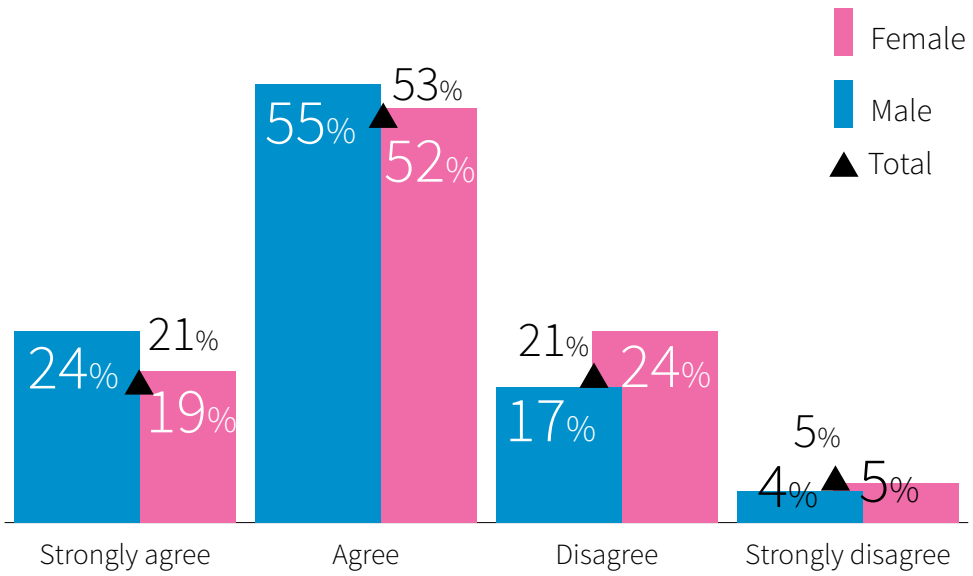In Albanian society, there is equality between men and women

Legend: Female, Male, ▲ Total

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Male	23%	48%	24%	5%
Female	17%	43%	30%	10%
Total	20%	46%	27%	7%

Base: N = 1623

74% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "In Albania, women and men have the same access to the public services." Women were less likely than men to agree with the statement. 71% of women and 79% of men agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Respondents with compulsory education or less (13%), compared to those with higher levels of education (34%), were less likely to agree with the statement. Responses did not vary by area, employment status, or age. 79% and 73% of study participants involved in the private sector and public sector respectively agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. In 2016, 63% of men and 55% of women agreed with the statement. In 2017, these percentages were 79 and 71, respectively.

74% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "In Albania, public servants serve with the same devotion and ethics to women and men." Women were less likely than men to agree with the statement. 69% of women and 80% of men agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Respondents with compulsory education or less (76%) were less likely to agree with the statement than respondents with higher levels of education (85%). Responses did not vary by area, employment status, or age. In 2016, 66% of men and 56% of women agreed with the statement. In 2017, these percentages were 80 and 69, respectively.

Fig. 48

In Albania, women and men have the same access to public services

Female
Male
▲ Total

Strongly agree: 24% | 21% ▲ | 19%
Agree: 55% | 53% ▲ | 52%
Disagree: 21% ▲ | 17% | 24%
Strongly disagree: 5% ▲ | 4% | 5%

Base: N = 1619

Fig. 49

In Albania, public servants serve with the same devotion and ethics to women and men

Female
Male
▲ Total

Strongly agree: 24% | 22% ▲ | 20%
Agree: 56% | 53% ▲ | 49%
Disagree: 21% ▲ | 16% | 26%
Strongly disagree: 5% ▲ | 4% | 5%
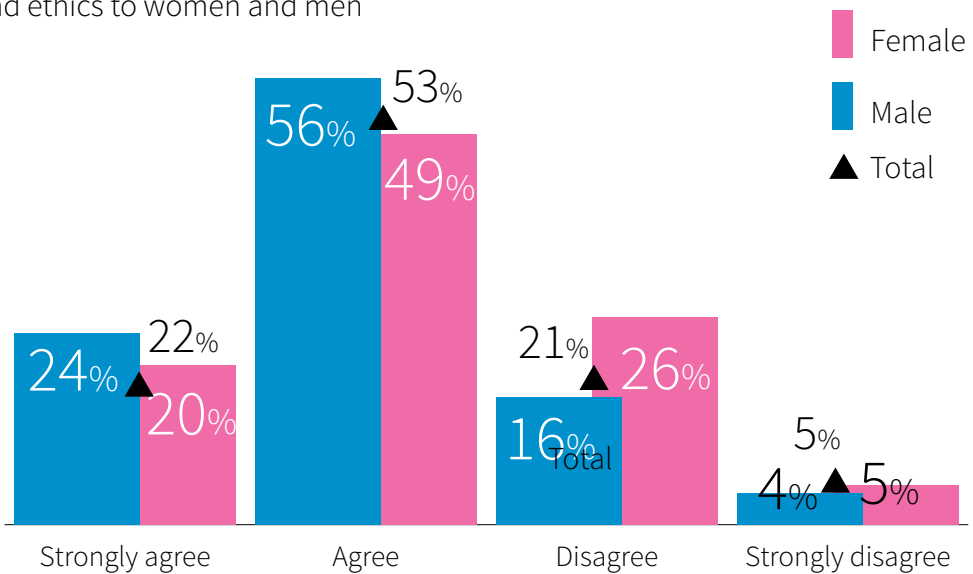
Base: N = 1614

Treatment by institutions

88% of respondents say that they have not been treated differently on the basis of their characteristics, such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation. Respondents were more likely to report that they have been treated differently if they had low levels of education (21%), lived in urban areas (14%), and were unemployed (14%). Women (14%) were more likely than men (10%) to report that they have been treated differently. Out of 192 respondents who reported that they have been treated differently, 42% were men and 58% were women.

Table 14. Treatment by institutions

I have been treated differently	12% (n=192)
Gender	(n = 51)
Age:	(n = 48)
Ethnicity	(n = 45)
Sexual orientation	(n = 5)
Disability	(n = 23)
Other:*	(n = 20)
I have not been treated differently	88% (n = 1430)

Other: political beliefs, economic situation (poverty), and rural origin.

More women in the municipal council

63% of respondents say that they don't know if there are more women in the municipal council. Responses varied by education, area, employment status, and employment sector. Respondents who had low levels of education (73%), lived in rural areas (65%), and were employed in the private sector (58%) were more likely to report that they don't know if there are more women in the municipal council.

Fig. 50

Do you know if there are more women in the municipal council?

23%

14%
NO

Don't know
63%
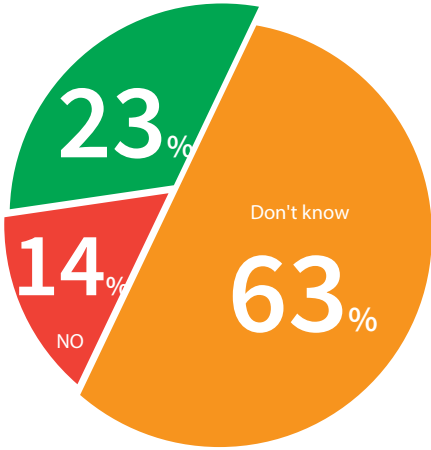
Base: N = 1628

Satisfaction with the number of women in the municipal council

7% of respondents say that they are not satisfied with the actual number of women in the municipal council. 26% say that they are satisfied. Women were less likely than men to report that they are satisfied with the number of women in the municipal council. Respondents were more likely to report that they are satisfied with the number of women in the municipal council if they had high levels of education (34%), lived in urban areas (29%), and were employed in the public sector (43%).

Fig. 51

Are you satisfied with the number of women in your municipal council?

YES
26%

NO
7%

Don't know
67%
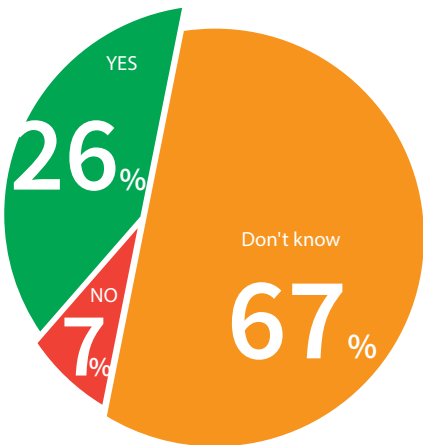
Base: N = 1439

Women's capability

83% of respondents say that "women are just as capable as men holding any public position". 9% say that women are not as capable as men holding public positions. Women (88%) were more likely than men (78%) to report that "women are just as capable as men holding any public position." Respondents were less likely to agree with the statement if they had low levels of education (76%). Responses did not vary by area, employment status, or employment sector.

Fig. 52

Women are just as capable as men holding any public position
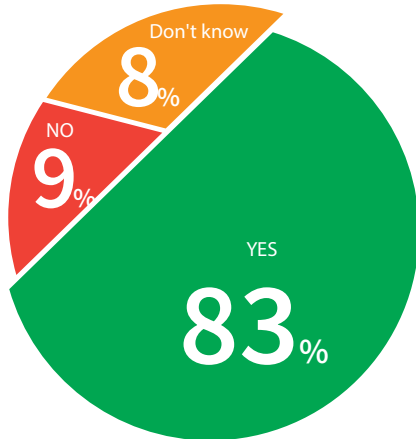
Base: N = 1626

Fig. 53

Do you think that women are just as capable as men holding any public position?
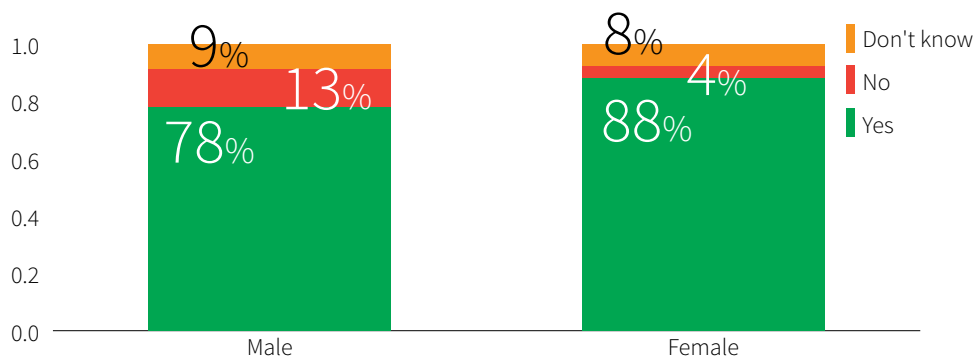
Women's impact on local governance

69% of respondents say that the increased number of women in the municipal council will have a positive impact on local governance. Meanwhile, 17% say that the increased number of women will not have a positive impact. 14% say that they don't know. Women (81%) were more likely than men (58%) to report that the increased number of women in the municipal council will have a positive impact on local governance. Responses did not vary by area, employment status, or employment sector.

Fig. 54

Do you believe that the increased number of women in
the municipal council will have a positive impact on local governance?

Don't know
14%

NO
17%

YES
69%
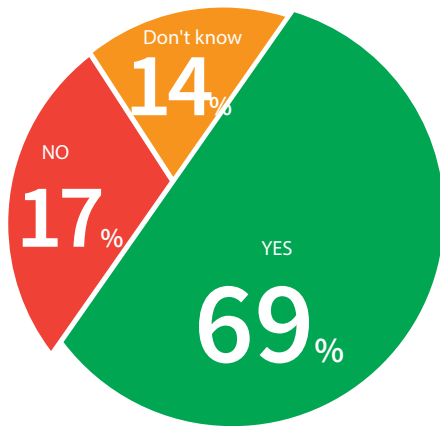
Base: N = 1631

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APPENDIX 1: ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

No.	Region	Municipality Center	Administrative Unit	No of Questionnaries
1	Berat	Berat	Otllak	27
		Ura Vajgurore	Poshnjë	27
		Kuçovë	Kozarë	27
		Skrapar	Qendër Skrapar	27
		Poliçan	Tërpan	27
2	Dibër	Peshkopi	Maqellarë	27
		Bulqizë	Ostren	27
		Burrel	Ulëz	27
		Klos	Xibër	27
3	Durrës	Durrës	Ishëm	27
		Shijak	Maminas	27
		Krujë	Fushë Krujë	27
4	Elbasan	Elbasan	Labinot	27
		Cërrik	Gostimë	27
		Belsh	Grekan	27
		Peqin	Përparim	27
		Gramsh	Pishaj	27
		Librazhd	Hotolisht	27
		Përrenjas	Qukës	27

No.	Region	Municipality Center	Administrative Unit	No of Questionnaries
5	Fier	Fier	Cakran	27
		Roskovec	Kuman	27
		Patos	Sharrëz	27
		Lushnjë	Golem	27
		Divjakë	Grabian	27
		Ballsh	Selitë	27
6	Gjirokastër	Gjirokastër	Antigonë	27
		Libohovë	Qendër Libohovë	27
		Memaliaj	Memaliaj Fshat	27
		Përmet	Petran	27
		Këlcyrë	Kelcyrë Fshat	27
		Tepelenë	Dukat	27
		Dropull i Sipërm	Dropull i Poshtëm	27
7	Korçë	Korçë	Vithkuq	27
		Maliq	Libonik	27
		Pustec	Pustec fshat	27
		Ersekë	Novoselë	27
		Bilisht	Hoçisht	27
		Pogradec	Udënisht	27
8	Kukës	Kukës	Bicaj	27
		Krumë	Golaj	27
		Bajram Curri	Margegaj	27

No.	Region	Municipality Center	Administrative Unit	No of Questionnaries
9	Lezhë	Lezhë	Shëngjin	27
		Rrëshen	Rubik	27
		Laç	Milot	27
10	Shkodër	Shkodsr	Rrethinat	27
		Koplik	Gruemire	27
		Pukë	Gjegjan	27
		Vau Dejës	Bushat	27
		Fushë Arrrëz	Fierzë	27
11	Tiranë	Tiranë	Petrelë	27
		Kamëz	Paskuqan	27
		Vorë	Bërxullë	27
		Kavajë	Luz i vogël	27
		Rrogozhinë	Kryevidh	27
12	Vlorë	Vlorë	Orikum	27
		Selenicë	Vllahinë	27
		Himarë	Lukovë	27
		Sarandë	Ksamil	27
		Konispol	Xarrë	27
		Finiq	Livadhja	27

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS 2013-2017

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Gender					
Male	45%	49%	50%	57%	51%
Female	55%	50%	50%	43%	49%
Age groups					
18-25	14%	23%	23%	18%	19%
26-35	14%	22%	25%	23%	23%
36-45	14%	18%	16%	19%	19%
46-55	19%	18%	17%	18%	19%
55-65	20%	10%	11%	13%	11%
Over 66	18%	7%	8%	9%	9%
Education level					
Uneducated + Only primary	1%	1%	2%	0%	5%
Basic education	14%	15%	14%	25%	17%
High school	40%	41%	40%	51%	50%
University degree	44%	42%	43%	24%	28%
Employment status					
Employed	40%	46%	45%	43%	46%
Unemployed	20%	25%	28%	35%	34%
Student	8%	10%	9%	8%	7%
Retired	26%	9%	11%	12%	12%
Other	3%	5%	7%	2%	1%

endnotes

1. *SD denotes standard deviation. Standard deviation is a measure that summarizes the size by which every value varies from the mean.*

2. *If people perceive that the government is pursuing policy goals with which they agree, then they should trust the government more.*

3. *As a distributor of positive and negative information people receive about government.*

4. *Three non-Albanian institutions, namely UN, NATO and the European Union (EU) have been added to the list, mostly due to the high level of involvement of these institutions in the political, economic and social life of the Albanian society.*

5. *Throughout the report, the bottom (1-2) and top (3-4) verbal ratings are collated in two broad categories: tend to trust and tend not to trust.*

6. *% of surveyed expressing "I have great trust" or "Basically I trust".*

7. *Basic education here means the completion of primary school or of compulsory education.*

8. *The Institutions of Courts and Prosecutor are not included in the comparison, since they were introduced for the first time this year.*

9. *Chapter III of the law.*

10. *N denotes the number of observations.*

11. *Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Retrieved at http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/*

12. *Staphenhurst, R. Accountability in Governance, World Bank Paper 4.*

13. *Law 45/2015. Retrieved from http://autoritetidosjeve.gov.al/baza-ligjore/*

14. *Respondents were given a detailed definition of what entails petty and grand corruption.*

opinion poll
2017
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