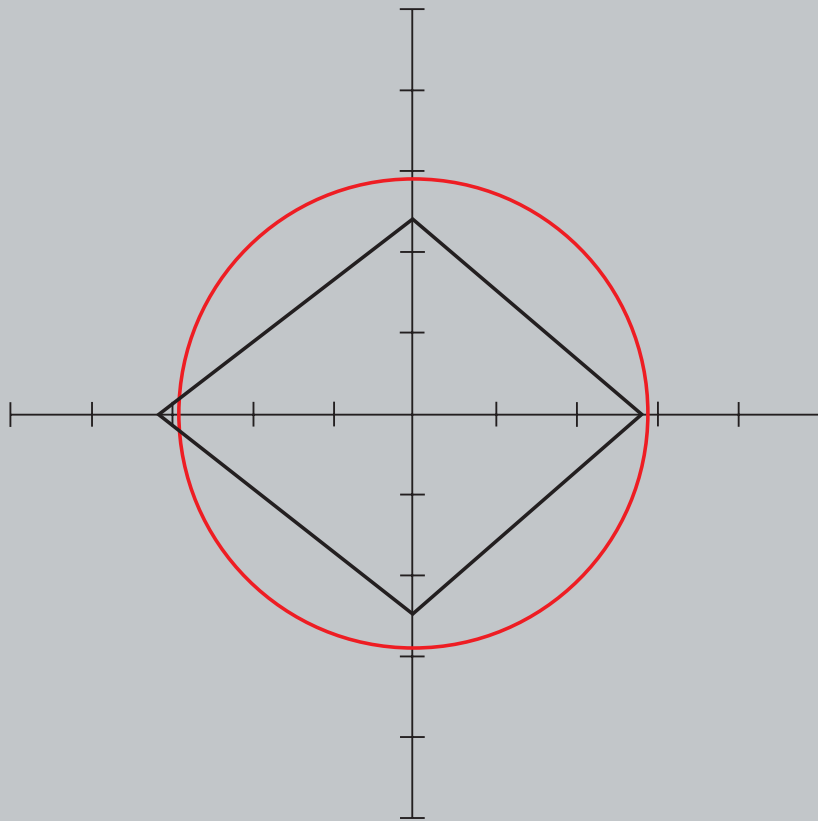




# CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX FOR ALBANIA

IN SEARCH OF  
CITIZENS & IMPACT



The CIVICUS Civil Society Index Analytical Country Report for Albania is prepared by the research team of the Institute for Democracy and Mediation, with the advice and mentorship of the CIVICUS researchers and program advisors.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UNDP.

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# F O R E W O R D

Following two decades of transition to democracy, I am pleased that we can share with all interested parties the first comprehensive assessment of the state of Civil Society in Albania supported by UNDP. This report will no doubt contribute and serve public and private institutions in the country, international development partners that continue to support Albania to further its democratic achievements, reforms, social inclusion, and economic viability. While the main focus here is the level of development of civil society, the findings on their own indicate a certain level of maturity that comes as result of local initiatives, the social and political context in which civil society operates, but also the international support to this important and indispensable component of democratic institutions in the country. The Civil Society Index is also a focal reference document for challenges ahead for the development and consolidation of the sector.

UNDP's involvement and support for this undertaking was developed with a view to aligning national perceptions and understanding of civil society with standards and experiences of democracies worldwide. The timing also coincides with the role of civil society becoming stronger in consolidating democracy, rule of law and sustainable development. This joint endeavour's principal target is the strengthening of civil society in Albania, based on in-depth analysis and assessment of its role, the values it stands for and its interactions with citizens. It also looks at the internal governance and organisation, influence on policies and the mutually reinforcing impact that civil society has on the socio-economic and political context where it operates and vice-versa.

I take the opportunity to express the appreciation of my colleagues at UNDP for the professional work carried out by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) as the national coordinator and implementing organisation of this undertaking as well as to all member organisations of the National Advisory Committee that helped with their inputs and advice throughout the year.

I would also like to recognize the continuous and highly qualified support provided by CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation – Johannesburg, South Africa) to IDM, which was based on global standards and methodology while at the same time ensuring adequate reference to the local context and environment.

Through this in-depth assessment, readers will have access to a shared body of knowledge on the state of civil society in Albania which will serve as a sound baseline to develop dialogue among a broad range of stakeholders. It is also expected to generate ideas for evidence-based actions aimed at strengthening capacities of civil society increasingly focused on influencing processes and delivering tangible results to society at large. With the intention of launching an ongoing process of reflection and actions by all relevant actors, this report reveals the highlights of this assessment. It starts with a historical background of the civil society in Albania, followed by the central section of the analysis with findings and conclusions for each of the five dimensions of civil society – civic engagement, level of organisation, values, impact and environment. The study concludes with general conclusions and recommendations based on a critical-constructive analysis.

The Civil Society Index is currently under the second wave of implementation in more than forty countries worldwide. The responsibility and challenge to act on the recommendations and to create momentum for strengthened civil society initiatives and engagement rests with a wider range of societal actors. Accordingly, this study represents an invitation and a call for involvement that is addressed to all Albanian stakeholders to make optimal use of this knowledge as a means of paving the way for civil society to play its crucial role in the development of all aspects of life in Albania and beyond.

**Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett**  
*UNDP Resident Representative*  
*UN Resident Coordinator*

## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

In the course of implementation of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) for Albania, the Institute for Democracy and Mediation has cooperated with a wide range of institutions present in the country. These reach civil society associations, central government, legislative body, independent institutions, local and regional public bodies, national and international organisations, the private sector, media reporters and observers, and the academic community.

IDM would like to express its high esteem and gratitude to all members of the CSI project's Advisory Committee (AC) – Aleksander Cipa (Association of Albanian Journalists), Alken Myftiu (Regional Environment Centre), Alketa Leskaj (Women's Centre "Hapat e Lehte"), Andi Kananaj (MJAFT! Movement), Antuen Skenderi (MJAFT! Movement), Arbjan Mazniku (Agenda Institute), Ariola Shehaj (Union of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Albania), Arjan Cala (Tjeter Vizion), Auron Pashaj (Institute for Development Research & Alternatives), Blerina Metaj (Children's Rights Centre of Albania), Brikena Puka (Vatra Centre), Brunilda Bakshevani (Open Society Foundation Albania), Elsa Ballauri (Albanian Human Rights Group), Enri Hide (European University of Tirana), Eranda Ndregjoni (Gender Alliance for Development Centre), Ersida Sefa (Albanian Helsinki Committee), Genci Terpo (Albanian Human Rights Group), Kadri Gega (Association of Municipalities), Leke Sokoli (Institute of Sociology), Lutfi Dervishi (Transparency International Albania), Mangalina Cana (NEHEMIA), Mirjam Recic (Civil Society Development Centre, Durres), Nevila Jahaj (Youth Parliament, Fier), Oriana Arapi (Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination, Council of Ministers), Rasim Gjoka (Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution), Skender Veliu (Union of Albanian Roma "Amaro-Drom"), and Zef Preci (Albanian Center for Economic Research).

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Nevila Sokoli and Rovena Sorra – and beyond any doubt, to the team-leader of the CSI implementation in Albania and main author of the analytical country report – IDM Program Director Gjergji Vurmo, who has guided the entire assessment process since its inception. Last but not least, we are particularly grateful for the support and continuous advice of IDM Executive Sotiraj Hroni and IDM Advisory Board and associates.

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Last but not least, the CSI implementation in Albania could not have been possible without the financial support of the UNDP in Albania. This support took the shape of a partnership striving towards a common goal – civil society development through shared knowledge, evidence-based strategies and enhanced capacities, all in the pursuit of strengthening the third sector's position and influence. Special thanks go to Entela Lako and the rest of the UNDP team, for their efforts and kind assistance to enable a result-driven partnership between the two institutions, as well as for their continuous involvement and support to all the major CSI project activities.

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## L I S T O F A C R O N Y M S

AAJ	Association of Albanian Journalists	NOVIB	Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation
AC	Advisory Committee		
ACER	Albanian Centre for Economic Research	NSSED	National Strategy on Social and Economic Development
ADRF	Albanian Disability Rights Foundation	OS	Organisational Survey
AFCR	Albanian Foundation of Conflict Resolution	OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
AHC	Albanian Helsinki Committee	OSFA	Open Society Foundation Albania
AHRG	Albanian Human Rights Group	PS	Population Survey
BCI	Basic Capabilities Index	PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategic Partnership
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina	REC	Regional Environmental Centre
CBO	Community Based Organisations	SA	South Africa
CPI	Corruption Perception Index	SEE	South Eastern Europe
CS	Civil Society	SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
CSDC	Civil Society Development Center	TIA	Transparency International Albania
CSI	CIVICUS Civil Society Index	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	UNU	United Nations University
CPC	Consumer Protection Commission	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
CRCA	Children Rights Center of Albania	WB	World Bank
EPS	External Perception Survey		
EC	European Commission		
EU	European Union		
EUT	European University of Tirana		
FH	Freedom House		
GADC	Gender Alliance for Development Centre		
GNI	Gross National Income		
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit		
HDPC	Human Development Promotion Centre		
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation		
HRW	Human Rights Watch		
ICCO	Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation		
IDM	Institute for Democracy and Mediation		
IFAD	International Fund of Agricultural Development		
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation		
IS	Institute of Sociology		
IDRA	Institute for Development Research and Alternative		
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation		
NCO	National Coordinating Organisation		
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation		
NIT	National Implementation Team		



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Civil Society Index (CSI) is an action research project implemented by and for civil society actors worldwide. It is based on a comprehensive methodology developed by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizens Participation (hereafter CIVICUS). It aims to assess the state of civil society and to create a knowledge base for strengthening civil society. The CSI for Albania was conducted by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) under the guidance and support of the CIVICUS team. The assessment of civil society is carried out with respect to five key dimensions, with a total of 28 sub-dimensions which are configured into 67 separate indicators. A wide range of research methods and analytical tools are used in this assessment. The research relies on a variety of primary and secondary sources – a set of three surveys, five case studies, focus group discussions and other consultation activities conducted in the framework of the project, as well as diverse secondary data sources.

The roots of civil society in Albania can be traced back to the Albanian renaissance period (1831 to 1912) with predominantly sporadic and individualistic initiatives originating from the Diaspora communities. After independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912, the historical circumstances did not favour the development of an active third sector in the country. The establishment of a communist regime after World War II, which soon became one of the cruellest dictatorships in Europe, completely dashed hopes for an active civil society or even academic discourse on the concept for almost half a century in the country. In the past two decades since the demise of the dictatorship, Albanian civil society has made great strides, reaching today's moderately developed level. Beginning with more idealistic initiatives and interactions with the citizens in the early 1990s, Albanian civil society has become more pragmatic in the course of years. Even though public debate on the role of civil society has

intensified in the recent years, there have been only a few studies which have provided only a fragmented knowledge base.

As an action-oriented assessment tool the CSI is used to assess the state of Albanian civil society. It is based on a broad definition of civil society as “*the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests*”. The CSI assessment combines multiple indicators, using the same or comparable metrics, to provide a visual display of five key dimensions:

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** The extent to which individuals engage in social and policy-related initiatives

**LEVEL OF ORGANISATION:** The degree of institutionalisation that characterises civil society

**PRACTICE OF VALUES:** The extent to which CS practices some core values

**PERCEIVED IMPACT:** The extent to which civil society is able to impact the social and policy arena, according to internal and external perceptions.

**EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT:** The above four dimensions are analysed in the context of ‘external environment’, which includes the socio-economic, political and cultural variables within

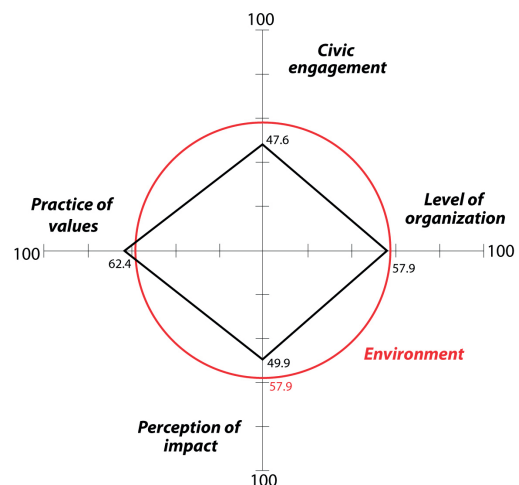


Figure 1: The CSI Diamond for Albania 2009

which civil society operates.

The five dimensions are graphically plotted in a Civil Society Diamond which is a portrayal of empirical structural and normative manifestations of civil society. The CSI Diamond also includes the conditions that support or inhibit civil society's development as well as the consequences (impact) of civil society's activities in society at large. As shown in figure 1, the Albanian third sector is moderately developed. It operates in a generally enabling environment and at a relatively developed organisational level that appears supportive to the general practice of values within the sector. Its major deficiencies consist of the low degree of civic engagement and also the limited impact.

Highly qualified and efficient human resources and management, flexibility in responding to developing situations, networking potential, resistance to political pressure, objectivity, highly knowledgeable about and receptive to contemporary approaches, capable to provide qualitative expertise and help institutional building are some of the major strengths of the Albanian civil society. On the opposite side,

the performance and role of country's third sector are affected by widespread citizens' scepticism towards activism and civil society impact, concerns over essential aspects such as transparency and governance, sustainability, a largely donor-driven agenda, underdeveloped dialogue and exchange with decision-makers, as well as poor performance on advocacy and policy cycles.

Given the growing importance of civil society's role in governance and other sectors, the challenges for its development are not isolated within the sector. Hence, the responsibility to add value to these efforts should not rest solely with civil society actors. The CSI therefore draws a set of recommendations for all stakeholders proposing that concerted efforts need to be directed at addressing deficits in civic engagement, transparency, accountability, sustainability of actions and resources, capacities to influence the policy cycle based on local inputs, dialogue and exchange with governmental and other actors, lack of civil society platforms in remote / rural areas etc. The eventual interventions must form part of an inclusive plan d'action that relies on the commitment of a broad range of actors.

# I. THE CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX PROJECT

Civil society is playing an increasingly important role in governance and development around the world. In most countries, however, knowledge about the state and shape of civil society is limited. Moreover, opportunities for civil society stakeholders to come together to collectively discuss, reflect and act on the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities facing civil society also remain limited. The CSI contributes to redressing these limitations. It aims at creating a knowledge base and momentum for civil society strengthening initiatives. It is initiated and implemented by, and for civil society organisations at the country level, in partnership with CIVICUS. The CSI implementation actively involves and disseminates its findings to a broad range of stakeholders including civil society, government, the media, donors, academics, and the public at large.

The following key steps in CSI implementation take place at the country level:

1. **Assessment:** CSI uses an innovative mix of participatory research methods, data sources, and case studies to comprehensively assess the state of civil society using five dimensions: Civic Engagement, Level of organisation, Practice of Values, Perception of Impact and the Environmental Context
2. **Collective Reflection:** implementation involves structured dialogue among diverse civil society stakeholders that enables the identification of civil society's specific strengths and weaknesses
3. **Joint Action:** the actors involved use a participatory and consultative process to develop and implement a concrete action agenda to strengthen civil society in a country.

The following four sections provide a background

on CSI, its key principles and approaches, as well as a snapshot of the methodology used in the generation of this report in Albania and its limitations.

## I.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The CSI first emerged as a concept over a decade ago as a follow-up to the 1997 New Civic Atlas publication by CIVICUS, which contained profiles of civil society in 60 countries around the world (Heinrich and Naidoo (2001)). The first version of the CSI methodology, developed by CIVICUS with the help of Helmut Anheier, was unveiled in 1999. An initial pilot of the tool was carried out in 2000 in 13 countries<sup>1</sup>. The pilot implementation process and results were evaluated, leading to a revision of the

1. <i>Albania</i>	14. <i>Ghana</i>	28. <i>Niger</i>
2. <i>Argentina</i>	15. <i>Italy</i>	29. <i>Philippines</i>
3. <i>Armenia</i>	16. <i>Japan</i>	30. <i>Russia</i>
4. <i>Bahrain</i>	17. <i>Jordan</i>	31. <i>Serbia</i>
5. <i>Belarus</i>	18. <i>Kazakhstan</i>	32. <i>Slovenia</i>
6. <i>Bulgaria</i>	19. <i>Kosovo</i>	33. <i>South Korea</i>
7. <i>Burkina Faso</i>	20. <i>Lebanon</i>	34. <i>Sudan</i>
8. <i>Chile</i>	21. <i>Liberia</i>	35. <i>Togo</i>
9. <i>Croatia</i>	22. <i>Macedonia</i>	36. <i>Turkey</i>
10. <i>Cyprus</i>	23. <i>Madagascar</i>	37. <i>Uganda</i>
11. <i>Djibouti</i>	24. <i>Mali</i>	38. <i>Ukraine</i>
12. <i>Democratic Rep. of Congo</i>	25. <i>Malta</i>	39. <i>Uruguay</i>
13. <i>Georgia</i>	26. <i>Mexico</i>	40. <i>Venezuela</i>
	27. <i>Nicaragua</i>	41. <i>Zambia</i>

Table I.1.1: List of CSI implementing countries 2008-2009<sup>2</sup>

methodology. Subsequently, CIVICUS successfully implemented the first phase of the CSI between 2003 and 2006 in 53 countries worldwide. This implementation directly involved more than 7,000 civil society stakeholders (Heinrich 2008).

Intent on continuing to improve the research-ac-

1. The pilot countries were Belarus, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, Romania, South Africa, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Wales.  
2. Note that this list was accurate as of the publication of this Analytical Country Report, but may have changed slightly since the publication, due to countries being added or dropped during the implementation cycle.

tion orientation of the tool, CIVICUS worked with the Centre for Social Investment at the University of Heidelberg, as well as with partners and other stakeholders, to rigorously evaluate and revise the CSI methodology for a second time before the start of this current phase of CSI. With this new and streamlined methodology in place, CIVICUS launched the new phase of the CSI in 2008 and selected its country partners, including both previous and new implementers, from all over the globe to participate in the project. Table I.1.1 below includes a list of implementing countries in the current phase of the CSI.

## I.2. PROJECT APPROACH

The current CSI project approach continues to marry assessment and evidence with reflections and action. This approach provides an important reference point for all work carried out within the framework of the CSI. As such, CSI does not produce knowledge for its own sake but instead seeks to directly apply the knowledge generated to stimulate strategies that enhance the effectiveness and role of civil society. With this in mind, the CSI's fundamental methodological bedrocks which have greatly influenced the implementation that this report is based upon, include the following<sup>3</sup>:

**INCLUSIVENESS:** The CSI framework strives to incorporate a variety of theoretical viewpoints, as well as being inclusive in terms of civil society indicators, actors and processes included in the project.

**UNIVERSALITY:** Since the CSI is a global project, its methodology seeks to accommodate national variations in context and concepts within its framework.

**COMPARABILITY:** The CSI aims not to rank, but instead to comparatively measure different aspects of civil society worldwide. The possibility for comparisons exists both between different countries or regions within one phase of CSI implementation and between phases.

**VERSATILITY:** The CSI is specifically designed to achieve an appropriate balance between international comparability and national flexibility in the implementation of the project.

**DIALOGUE:** One of the key elements of the CSI is its participatory approach, involving a wide range of stakeholders who collectively own and run the project in their respective countries.

**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:** Country partners are firstly trained on the CSI methodology during a three day regional workshop. After the training, partners are supported through the implementation cycle by the CSI team at CIVICUS. Partners participating in the project also gain substantial skills in research, training and facilitation in implementing the CSI in-country.

**NETWORKING:** The participatory and inclusive nature of the different CSI tools (e.g. focus groups, the Advisory Committee, the National Workshops) should create new spaces where very diverse actors can discover synergies and forge new alliances, including at a cross-sectoral level. Some countries in the last phase have also participated in regional conferences to discuss the CSI findings as well as cross-national civil society issues.

**CHANGE:** The principal aim of the CSI is to generate information that is of practical use to civil society practitioners and other primary stakeholders. Therefore, the CSI framework seeks to identify aspects of civil society that can be changed and to generate information and knowledge relevant to action-oriented goals.

With the above mentioned foundations, the CSI methodology uses a combination of participatory and scientific research methods to generate an assessment of the state of civil society at the national level. The CSI measures the following core dimensions:

- (1) Civic Engagement
- (2) Level of Organisation
- (3) Practice of Values
- (4) Perceived Impact
- (5) External Environment

3. For in-depth explanations of these principles, please see Mati, Silva and Anderson (2010), *Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide: An updated programme description of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index Phase 2008-2010*. CIVICUS, Johannesburg.

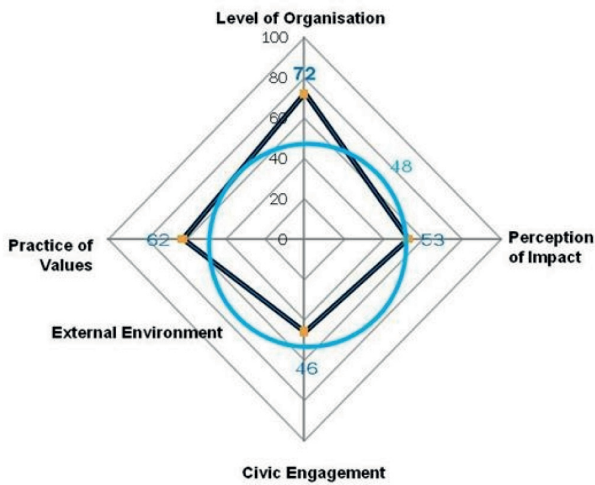


Figure I.2.1: The CSI Diamond

These dimensions are illustrated visually through the Civil Society Diamond (see Figure I.2.1 below), which is one of the most essential and well-known components of the CSI project. To form the Civil Society Diamond, 67 quantitative indicators are aggregated into 28 sub-dimensions which are then assembled into the five final dimensions along a 0-100 percentage scale. The Diamond's size seeks to portray an empirical picture of the state of civil society, the conditions that support or inhibit civil society's development, as well as the consequences of civil society's activities for society at large. The context or environment is represented visually by a circle around the axes of the Civil Society Diamond, and is not regarded as part of the state of civil society but rather as something external that still remains a crucial element for its wellbeing.

### I.3. CSI IMPLEMENTATION

There are several key CSI programme implementation activities as well as several structures involved, as summarized by the figure below<sup>4</sup>. The major tools and elements of the CSI implementation at the national level include:

- Multiple surveys, including: (i) a Population Survey, gathering the views of citizens on

civil society and gauging their involvement in groups and associations; (ii) an Organisational Survey measuring the meso-level of civil society and defining characteristics of CSOs; and (iii) an External Perceptions Survey aiming at measuring the perception that stakeholders, experts and policy makers in key sectors have of civil society's impact

- Tailored case studies which focus on issues of importance to the specific civil society country context.
- Advisory Committee (AC) meetings made up of civil society experts to advise on the project and its implementation at the country level
- Regional and thematic focus groups where civil society stakeholders reflect and share views on civil society's role in society

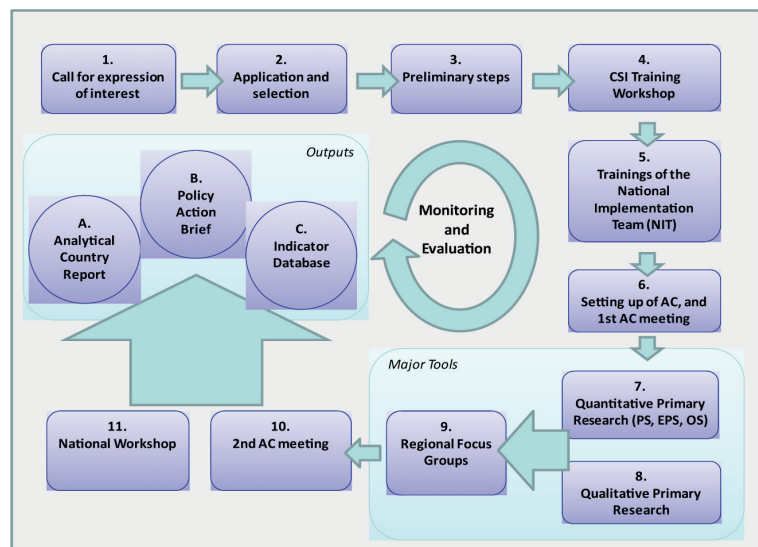


Figure I.3.1. CSI Project Implementation Stages

Following this in-depth research and the extensive collection of information, the findings are presented and debated at a National Workshop, which brings together a large group of civil society and non-civil society stakeholders and allows interested parties to discuss and develop strategies for addressing identified priority issues. This Analytical Country Report is one of the major outputs of the CSI implementation process in Albania, and presents highlights from the research conducted, including summaries of civil society's strengths and weaknesses as well as recommendations for strengthening civil society.

4. For a detailed discussion on each of these steps in the process, please see Mati et al (cited in footnote 3).

The full database of the quantitative research (surveys data), qualitative research analysis (case studies), Action Brief and other CSI outputs are accessible at IDM's official web-page at [www.idm-albania.org](http://www.idm-albania.org).

## I.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE CSI STUDY

The CSI, like every other model that strives to provide a comprehensive assessment of a given sector, has its own limitations. In the case of CSI Albania, two major categories of limitations have been observed by IDM and other project participants, as follows:

- **Methodological limitations:** Although the CSI methodology allows for minor adjustments to respond to the local context, these interventions cannot modify the core indicators. This concern is however partially addressed in the Albanian context through the introduction of additional questions in the quantitative surveys so as to allow an in-depth exploration of the local context. The broadly inclusive definition of civil society represents another concern, emphasized by project participants during the AC meetings, focus groups and structured interviews. While generally agreeing on the proposed constituent sub-sectors of civil society, the public perception and common use of the term “civil society” in Albania does not necessarily comply with the

broad definition employed by CIVICUS. Hence, the positive and significant contribution of non-profit organisations, which are largely perceived and referred to as “civil society” in Albania, may be moderately scored out eventually by the negative inputs provided by other sub-sectors of civil society (according to CSI definition) or even the lack of active “non-traditional” segments of civil society<sup>5</sup>.

- **Limitations related to the CSI implementation:** The implementation of the CSI model is unavoidably linked to various challenges which derive from the diverse contexts and settings over time, and between different sectors in any given country. One of the major challenges evidenced during the implementation of the CSI in Albania was the surprisingly high rate of refusals to answer questions related to internal governance, financial and human resource management in the Organisational Survey. Almost 40% of the surveyed CSOs refused to provide information on these aspects<sup>6</sup>. Another difficulty on the same survey was in compiling the survey sample, due to the fact that official data provide information only on formally registered CSOs, many of which are not necessarily active.

These limitations do not significantly impact the validity of the overall research work and outcomes. Within the framework of the methodology, the CSI study in Albania now presents a valuable source of knowledge on the state, progress, performance and challenges of Albanian CS vis-à-vis the state, the private sector and the citizens at large.

The publication of the Albanian CSI Analytical Country Report and its dissemination to a large audience of stakeholders and interested actors is only the beginning of a process that strives to work with different stakeholders in fusing lessons from the past to the concerns of today. This report offers insights on civil society's bonds with citizens, civil society's level of organisation and networking, its practice of values, its impact, as well as the environment within which it operates. It does not pretend to offer absolute truths of the past nor an uncontested strategy for the future. Rather, it offers information on civil society's progress in the past two decades, while extending an open invitation to stakeholders to engage in the design of fact-based strategies to help Albanian civil society fulfil its natural role in Albanian society.

5. For instance, the perception of “burial societies” as part of civil society is almost inexistent amongst the public while political parties are most usually perceived as non-compliant with the definition of civil society.

6. Unfortunately, in the case of this indicator – which points out a disturbing phenomenon among CSOs in Albania the CSI Diamond model assigns a value without accounting for the percentage of “Refusals”.

## II. CIVIL SOCIETY IN ALBANIA

Albania declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. The period from 1912 to 1944 was characterised by national struggles aimed at establishing and strengthening the Albanian state's foundations as well as guaranteeing territorial freedom and independence. For 46 years after 1944, the country was ruled by a xenophobic communist regime that came to power at the end of World War II and carried through until its collapse in the early 1990s ushering in democracy. Although the transition period has had its challenges including poverty, high unemployment, widespread corruption, poor infrastructure and organised crime etc. successive governments have tried to deal with many of these problems and Albania has come a great deal forward on its path towards democratization and development. Yet, considerable efforts are still needed to address remaining concerns.

Up to now little research has focused on the Albanian civil society. Furthermore, the few studies in the area deal mainly with the contemporary Albanian CS era (e.g. HDPC, "Third Sector Development in Albania" 2009). However, traces of civil society in Albania go back to several decades if not centuries ago. The contribution of Albanian elites in the development of the country and civil society since the renaissance is hailed as being of paramount importance (Thengjilli, 2004; Sulstarova, 2008). Nonetheless, given the historical circumstances, such initiatives were often sporadic and mainly individualistic, and coming from the Diaspora communities (Thengjilli, 2004; Sulstarova, 2008). As such, these contributions are difficult to define and unite under the concept of a civil society sector as defined today<sup>7</sup>.

The main explanation often provided for this sporadic development of civil society sector after the independence in 1912, is that the communist regime abolished basic human rights such as freedom of speech, which hindered civil society activism as in other communist countries (Howard, 2003). The

fall of communism in Albania was forewarned and even led by civic movements such as the demonstrations and the hunger strike of workers in the mining industry and the protests of Tirana University students in the early 1990s. Prior to these events, a number of demonstrations against the communist rule took place in 1990 culminating with the protest of July 2nd, 1990 when some 5000 demonstrators sought refuge in foreign embassies. The establishment of a multi-party democratic regime restored guarantees for basic human rights, opening the path for new developments including that of the civil society sector. Yet, a long road lay ahead to a consolidated democracy and a developed civil society sector.

### II.1. CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN ALBANIA

As pointed out above, there is little literature to review on the history of civil society in Albania and even less on the concept itself. Defining civil society is a difficult task not only in countries like Albania because it is a relatively new concept in the scholarly discourse, but also in countries with a recognised tradition of the third sector (Jochum, Pratten, and Wilding 2005). Terms such as civil society, non-governmental organisations, and not-for-profit organisations have been added to the Albanian discourse only after the fall of communism.

The modern definitions of civil society may vary, but the task of defining it in pre-1990s Albania is altogether a different issue. As Brinton (2003) explains, civil society in the communist context had a different meaning mainly due to the existence of a blurry separation between the public and the private sphere combined with the fact that freedom of expression and association did not always exist. Hence, activities which would resemble those of today's civil society would be impossible to develop

7. CIVICUS defines civil society as "the arena – outside of the family, the state, and the market – which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests".

independent of the state. “It was only in the small space between the regime and the individual that dissidence against regime occurred” (Brinton, 2003: 2).

Such a past left Albania unprepared for the development of the civil society following the fall of communism. The recent developments of the sector have emphasized the need for new definitions and measures to regulate it. The way civil society has been perceived in the last two decades has been shifting from a narrow concept related mainly to NGOs, to a broader one encompassing the realm between the state and the market.

Nonetheless, there exist few definitions we can point out as official and widely agreed upon in Albania and these are the definitions utilised for legislative purposes. The Civil Society Charter in Albania (2009), a draft agreement document between state and civil society, refers to the civil society as the non-governmental sector. It states that “The Civil Society Charter aims to establish a partnership between the non-governmental sector in Albania and the government at national and local level ...” (draft of The Civil Society Charter 2009:1). On the other hand, article 2 of Law No. 8788, of 07.05.2001 on “Non-for profit organisations” defines non-governmental organisations as “associations, foundations, centres, activities that are organised independently, without state interference.” The not-for-profit dimension is defined as “any economic or non-economic activity from which the incomes generated are used for activities encompassed in the organisation statute”.

## II.2. HISTORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN ALBANIA

The short history of Albania as a free and independent country, and even shorter history as a functioning democracy, has been largely reflected in the history of its civil society. Nonetheless, Albanian civil society emerged much earlier. Although not organised and structured organisational forms, Albanian elites have been active in what Brinton (2003: 1) calls the common domain between “the citizens of the state and the power of the state’s governing apparatus.” A look at Albanian history reveals that such activism reached its pinnacle during the Alba-

nian renaissance (19th century). Zef Jubani, Naum Veqilharxhi, Thimi Mitko, Elena Gjika, Dhimiter Kamarda are among the outstanding activists of the time who through individual or networking initiatives, contributed to the unification and development of the country (Thengjilli, 2004). Typical for this period was activism from the Diaspora communities.

Civil society development in ex-communist countries like Albania has been addressed more often in the post 1989 period. Many of the scholarly works of this period correlate the level of civil society development to that of democratization (Ekiert, 1992; Bernhard, 1996; Geremek, 1992). However, such works do not sufficiently explain the complexity of civil society development in these countries (Brinton, 2007 and 2003). The modern history of the Albanian civil society spans less than two decades of intense developments and trends. Human rights organisations were among the first ones to be established with the first formal organisation—the Forum for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms – established in 1991. This was in response to the long and great suffering of Albanians under the frequent violation of human rights during Communism. The other large group of NGOs and interest groups to develop were women rights NGOs. Such a development fit well in the context of a patriarchal society where many issues related to women’s rights and gender inequalities needed to be addressed.

Besides human rights and women’s NGOs and associations, the post-communist transition period saw the development of new forms of organisations known as think tanks. The first think tank established in 1992 was the Albanian Centre for Economic Research (ACER). Other areas that received attention were conflict resolution and management (especially with the revival of the Kanun and blood feuds), environment, economic development, youth, and media. Almost 30% of the NGOs and associations registered and active in these two decades were registered during the early transition period, 1991-1996 (HDPC, 2009:14).

Albania’s development was seriously challenged by the 1997 crisis caused by the collapse of the pyramid schemes. This had a severe negative impact



on the country's economic, political and social life. The situation was further complicated by the war in Kosovo and the fact that up to one million Kosovars were forced to take refuge in Albania. These developments led to the development of a large community of NGOs in Albania dealing with issues ranging from women's rights to landmines (HRW, 1999). Almost 49 percent of the registered NGOs in Albania were established between 1997 and 2001 (HDPC, 2009).

Civil society activity after 2005 was marked by new developments which have also reflected on the way civil society is perceived. This period was marked by a growing tendency of civil society actors to transition to politics, blurring the boundaries between the two sectors in the public's opinion (Tushi, 2008; Boci 2008). As a result many NGO financial supporters reduced their funding resulting in the diminished size and geographical coverage of the third sector.

Regardless of the decline in the Albanian third sector, recent positive efforts have been made by the Albanian Government towards the improvement of the legislation on civil society. In October 2007, the Council of Ministers established a separate budget line in the State Budget "For the support of Civil Society". In March 2009, the Albanian Parliament approved the Law "On the organisation and functioning of the civil society support agency" and the procedures applicable to the distribution of funds in supporting the civil society. Other steps were taken by international organisations towards strengthening civil society in Albania. One of the most important results of such initiatives is the wide consultation and approval of the Civil Society Charter in 2009. Despite these developments, there are still, very few government ministries and departments that have established mechanisms for engaging with civil society and their administrative capacity to do so is often inadequate.

Even though, there are no formal mechanisms for consultations between state and civil society, the Albanian government has begun to consult civil society organisations and other stakeholders on drafting laws. In practice, there are examples of CSO contribution in the field of law - and policy - development.

These include the drafting of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania (1998), the National Strategy on Social and Economic Development (2002-2006), and the Strategy on Decentralization of Local Governments (2000). For example, central and local government, civil society and donors were all engaged in the preparation of the "National Strategy for Social and Economic Development" (Ministry of Finance, 2001)<sup>8</sup>. Civil society was able to articulate sector based priority actions in a number of other areas such as education, health, agriculture and social protection etc.

In addition to the impulsive civic movements in the early 1990s against the communist regime, civic activism and civil society in general has played an important role in the subsequent transition period, particularly through awareness raising and addressing concerns related to freedom of expression, human and minority rights etc. Support was generated to restore the state institutions and rule of law after the 1997 crisis in Albania and civic activism was particularly vigorous during the Kosovo refugee crises (1999). A number of successful anti-corruption initiatives and movements have assisted democratisation and institutional development efforts during the 2000s which marks also a period of more active involvement of CSOs in the design of policies and legislative framework. Several examples include:

- Drafting of the Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations (adopted in June 2007). This measure was based on a draft law presented by women's NGOs to Parliament in 2006, with the backing of a public petition signed by 20,000 people. Apart from defining domestic violence as a crime punishable by law, the Law also established a coordination unit of government authorities fighting domestic violence, led by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities;
- The Law On Legal Aid (December 2008), which set the provisions for a structured system of legal aid and access to justice for people in need, was the work of a project organised by the Free Legal Service (a Tirana-based NGO), in co-operation with government and civil society partners;

8. Ministry of Finance (2001). Please see <http://www.minfin.gov.al/skzhes/SRERV-26Nentor2001.pdf>.

- A Consumer Protection Commission (CPC), was established in April 2009 and has started to address the first disputes between consumers and service providers. The CPC's five members include representatives of the Government and of civil society;

### II.3. MAPPING OF CIVIL SOCIETY

This section presents a brief overview of the composition of civil society in the country. Two maps have been developed with the purpose of offering a graphical representation of the main actors and factors influencing civil society in Albania. The maps presented below are products of the discussions between CSOs' representatives – members of the Advisory Committee (AC) established under the auspices of the CSI project in Albania. The purpose of this activity was to create two visual 'maps' of influential actors in the country in order to a) identify and discuss the relationship between civil society actors and other influential actors within society at large and b) identify and discuss relationships among influential civil society groups within the civil society arena.

The first map shows the Albanian society makeup, highlighting main actors and factors. The government, political parties in the country and law enforcement are given crucial importance as the cornerstone of society. Other important actors are universities (academia), civil society actors such NGOs, International Donors and media, which influence the Albanian government.

In addition to interacting with each other, the stakeholders listed above, along with the government have to face several issues highlighted as key; including corruption, environment pollution, human rights, law and EU regulations. Although the business community, unions, CBOs and religious groups are also considered important actors in the society, no links were identified with the rest of the social forces. Nonetheless, the few connections and the actors identified are all believed to be largely influenced by the context as the cultural makeup and prejudices.

The second map brings together the key civil society actors in Albania and includes local and international actors. Although the map presents the main actors, it does not include any presentation on the relations between them; hence, no such trends are part of this map. It is interesting to note that

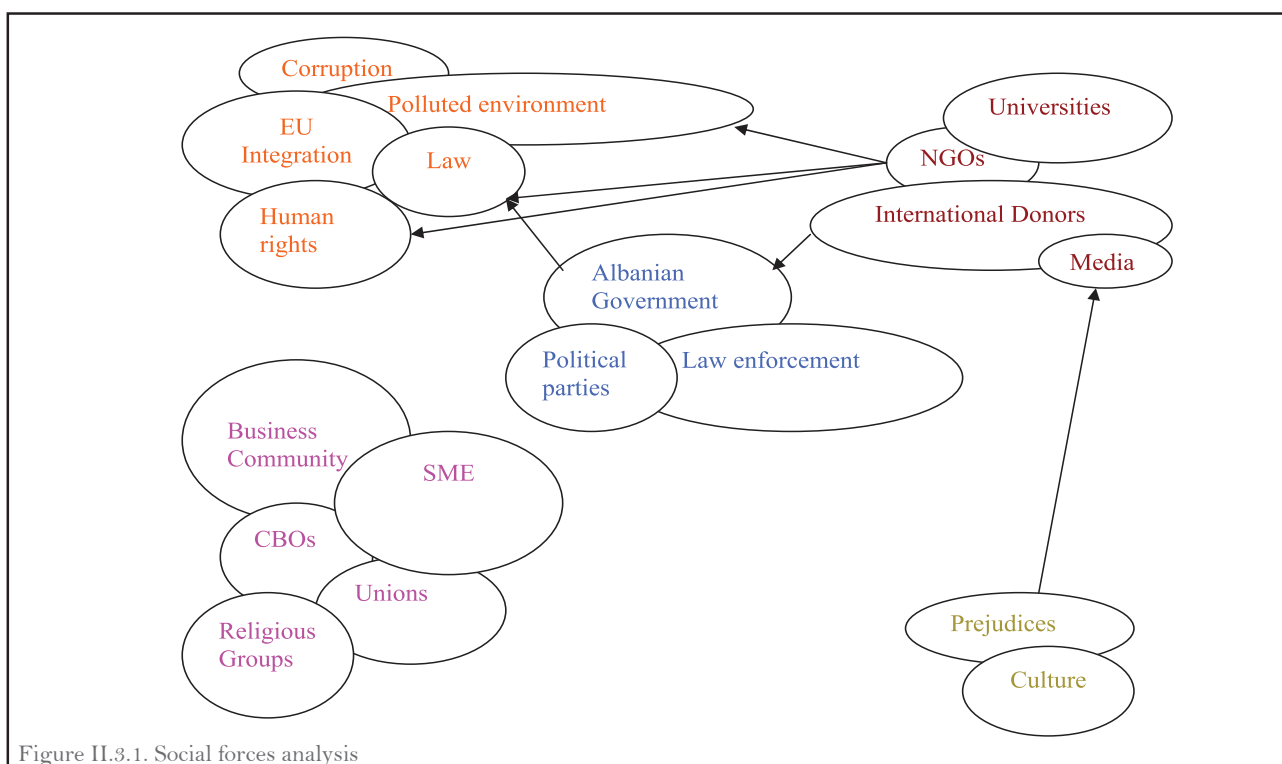
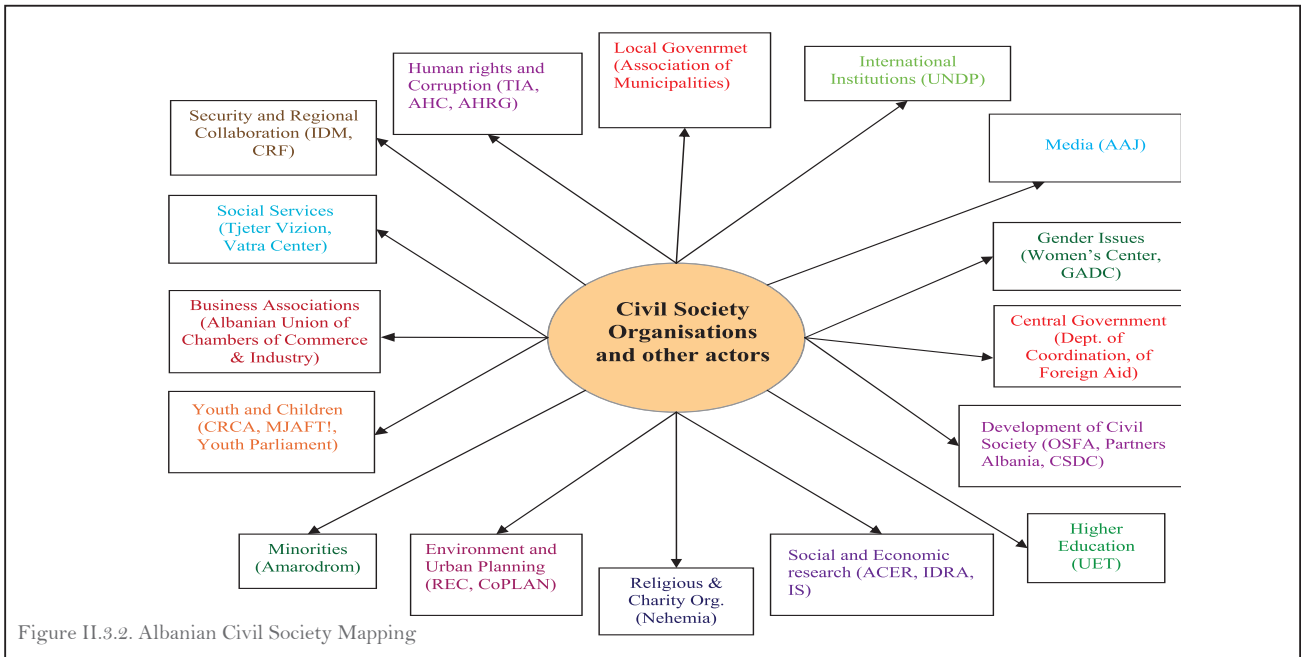


Figure II.3.1. Social forces analysis



a variety of groups are represented through different organisations and institutions. Women NGOs, minority groups, development agencies, educational

institutions, think tanks, environmental groups, social services, children and youth organisations and even religious groups are all represented in the map.

## III. ANALYSIS OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN ALBANIA

### III.1. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic Engagement, the first dimension in the focus of this analysis, is composed of six sub-dimensions, structured into thirteen specific indicators that offer a picture of the extent and depth to which individuals engage in social and policy-related initiatives. It is on the basis of these indicator scores that the general assessment of the Civic Engagement dimension is generated using data gathered mainly from the Population Survey.

This low score is largely influenced by low levels of extent and depth of civic engagement, as analyzed in detail in the following sections.

#### III.1.1. Extent of socially-based engagement

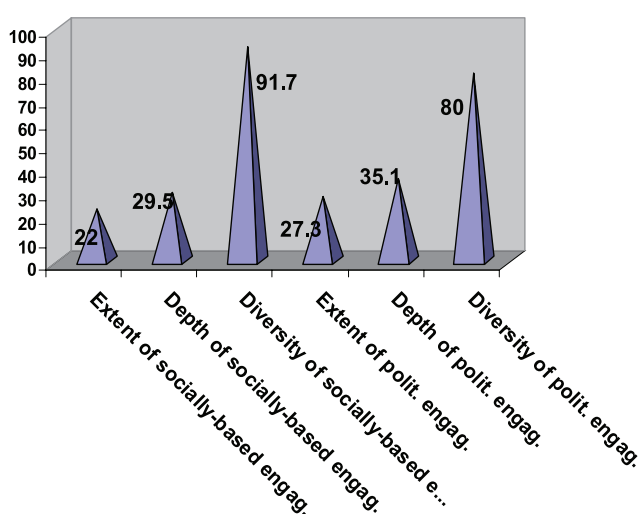
The first sub-dimension explores the extent of citizens' engagement in social activities and organisations by looking at the percentages of respondents

active in social organisations or activities. The three specific indicators used to generate the score for this sub-dimension are: extent of social membership; extent of social volunteering; and extent of community engagement.

Generally, Albanian citizens display high levels of "indifference" towards involvement in various social actions, which is a common feature of societies in transition or early stages of post-transition with a relatively unsettled middle class and high levels of inequities<sup>9</sup>. The fact that a considerable majority of respondents in the Population Survey (60.7%) describe themselves as belonging to the lower middle class, working class or lower<sup>10</sup> corroborates collec-

tive behaviour theorists' argument that lower classes participation in collective action is traditionally low. Only 18.4% of respondents describe themselves as active members of social organisations such as

Figure III.1.1. Civic Engagement sub-dimensions' score (in %)



Although the individual scores of all the six sub-dimensions that make up the Civic Engagement dimension hover around medium values (50 to 60%), the cumulative Civic Engagement dimension score at 47.6% is the lowest amongst the five dimensions.

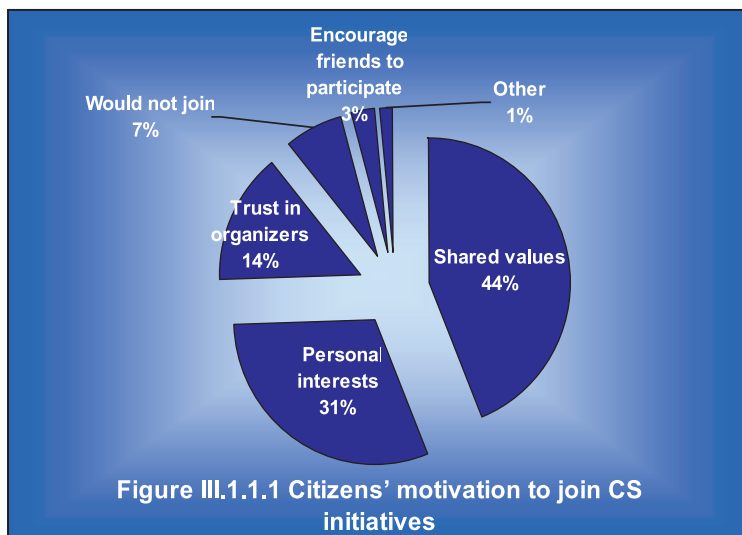
9. The analysis of the socio-economic context (under dimension five) shows that Albania has a high Gini coefficient for Inequality which is almost twice the EU average.

10. According to the Population survey, approximately 42.6% of respondents declare up to 40.000 ALL (approximately 285 EUR) monthly incomes and almost half of this group declares up to 25.000 ALL / month (round 180 EUR). According to the official data issued by the Institute of Statistics of Albania (INSTAT), average income per capita in 2008 stand at 2.785 EUR (4.073\$) a year or roughly 230 EUR monthly, i.e. approximately 28.000 ALL. See detailed information see official website of INSTAT: <http://www.instat.gov.al/graphics/doc/downloads/Llogarite%20Kombetare/flash%202008/PBB%202008.pdf>. For the official information on the exchange rates for 2008, see Bank of Albania website at: [http://www.bankofalbania.org/web/pub/kursi\\_2008\\_2349\\_1.xls](http://www.bankofalbania.org/web/pub/kursi_2008_2349_1.xls).

sport clubs, voluntary or service organisations. The survey indicates a high correlation between “social membership” and “social volunteering” as 18.1% of respondents reported doing voluntary work for at least one social organisation. A slightly better score was recorded for “Community engagement”. 29.4% of respondents reported engaging several times a year in social activities with other people at sports clubs or voluntary/service organisations.

The survey results indicate that Albanian citizens are more likely to spend time sporadically with people in social activities than in being active members of social organisations. They are also less likely to dedicate time to voluntary work. This may be a consequence of the high percentage of the respondents describing themselves as “lower middle class” or lower. It may also be linked to the continuing prevailing perception that “volunteerism” is a phenomenon of the communist dictatorship. These conclusions are to a certain extent supported also by respondent’s answers to the following question: *If you were to take part in civil society activities, what would be your personal motivation for that?*

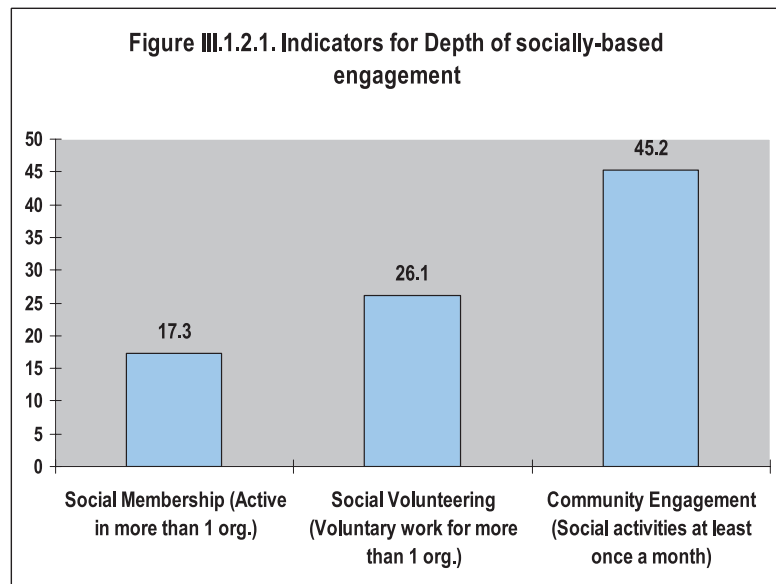
A considerable percentage of respondents (31%) declared that “personal interest” would be their main motivation, while roughly 7% say that they “would not join such initiatives”. Nevertheless, despite low levels of civic engagement, a majority of respondents remain open to such opportunities



as long as they see “shared values with the initiative” (44%) or “trust the organisers” (14%). Only 3% listed as their main motivation to “encourage friends to participate.”

### III.1.2. Depth of socially-based engagement

The second sub-dimension explores the depth of citizens’ engagement in social activities and organisations by measuring the percentages of respondents active in more than one organisation or activi-



ties. More specifically, the three indicators used to generate the value for this sub-dimension are: depth of social membership; depth of social volunteering; and depth of community engagement.

As shown in Figure III.1.2.1., more respondents report engaging in social activities at least once a month (45.2%), than engaging in voluntary work at more than one organisation (26.1%), or active membership in a social organisation (17.3%). The fact that the depth of “Social Membership” indicator scores lower than the depth of “Social Volunteering” is understandable as “volunteerism” is predominantly related to a specific “cause” and individuals’ contributions do not need to be limited by membership in an organisation.

### III.1.3. Diversity within socially-based engagement

This sub-dimension measures diversity in the community that engages in social activities through the use of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, regional distribution and rural / urban divide variables. At 91.7%, the indicator shows a very high level of diversity in this group, making it actually the highest score compared to all other indicators in the Albanian CSI Diamond.

The high score shows that active membership in social organisations is not limited to specific social groups. It is however essential to re-emphasize that the extent of social membership remains very low, as only 18.4% of the respondents report being affiliated with social organisations or actions.

### III.1.4. Extent of political engagement

The fourth sub-dimension of “Civic Engagement” –extent of political engagement–scored 27.3%, a value slightly higher than the score of the indicator on the extent of socially-based engagement. The indicators for this sub-dimension provide an assessment of the level of involvement of citizens, individually or via organised forms in politically oriented activities. Specifically, the sub-dimension looks at the extent of citizens’ engagement (membership, volunteering as well as individual activism) in political activism (boycotts, petitions etc.) and organisations –labour unions, political parties, professional associations, consumer, humanitarian or environmental organisations<sup>11</sup>.

When asked whether they are active members of a political organisation, 23.7% of the respondents replied positively. This compares to 18.4% of the respondents replying positively to the question on whether they are active members of social organisations. Also more respondents (29.9%) reported doing voluntary work for political organisations,

as compared to only 18.1% who report doing voluntary work for social organisations. Despite the involvement in voluntary political activities, only 24.5% of respondents declare to be members of political organisations. A slightly higher percentage of respondents (28.2%) say that they have taken part in various political actions (signing a petition, boycotts and peaceful demonstrations) in the last five years<sup>12</sup>.

The slightly higher score of the political engagement sub-dimension compared to the social based engagement sub-dimension is to a degree understandable given the nature of these organisations/ actions and the expectations they give rise to in terms of expected or desired impact on the involved individuals’ lives. On the other hand, the expectations from socially-based engagement raises are typically of a different nature, and may sometimes not be adequately appreciated by members of societies facing economic and other challenges. Nevertheless, the above argument explains only the prevalence of political over socially based engagement. The relatively low level of political engagement may be a direct consequence of the low levels of the public’s confidence in political organisations, a conclusion supported by the findings of the Population Survey which indicates that political parties and labour unions enjoy least confidence by citizens.

### III.1.5. Depth of political engagement

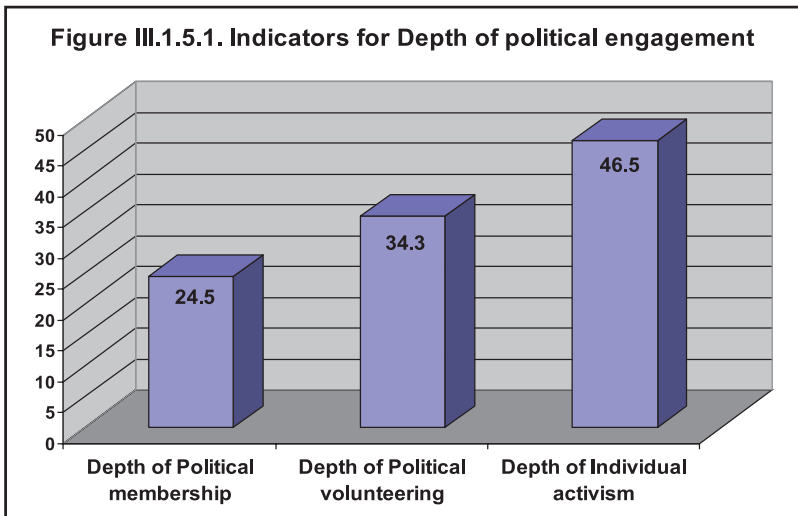
The depth of political engagement sub-dimension captures the portion of the population that is “politically active” in more than one political organisation or engaged in several political activities. The overall score for this sub-dimension is generated from the following indicators: depth of political membership; depth of political volunteering; and depth of individual activism.

As Figure III.1.5.1 shows, the indicators of this sub-dimension generally display similar trends as in the

11. CSI includes under the “political organisations” groups not only political parties, but also other organisations targeting diverse policies or causes such as environmental organisations, labour unions, professional associations etc. The same criteria are used also to define the concept of “political activism” such as signing a petition, joining in boycotts or attending peaceful demonstrations.

12. This finding is interesting when considered in tandem with the respondents’ readiness to take a legitimate action against an institution. Data from the Population survey show that the majority of those interviewed would take such a step “when personally concerned” (53.2%) or when “relatives” (15.3%) and “friends” (2%) are concerned. Only around 22% of those interviewed would take an action when they believe the institution is not functioning properly or when people in general are concerned while the remaining group of 7% of respondents would not consider it at all.

Figure III.1.5.1. Indicators for Depth of political engagement



case of the sub-dimension measuring the “depth of socially – based engagement”. Of those who are active, 24.5% declare that they are members of more than one political association, while 46.3% have participated in various political actions (boycott, petition, demonstrations) on a regular basis.

### III.1.6. Diversity of political engagement

The sixth and final sub-dimension of the “Civic Engagement” dimension, explores the diversity of that portion of the population that actively practices various forms of political engagement – i.e. the percentage of members of organisations belonging to social groups such as women, people from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, those from rural areas, the elderly, and the youth. At 80%, this high score indicates a high degree of diversity among the politically-active people.

### Conclusion

Civic engagement is the weakest dimension of the Albanian civil society. The CSI findings for this dimension reflect the state of the Albanian society, characterised by significant socio-economic as well as democratic deficit concerns. This result needs to be considered in context of the fact that major efforts have been invested by the international partners, Albanian civil society actors, and the donor community targeting issues of democratisation and good governance. Only recently has the fo-

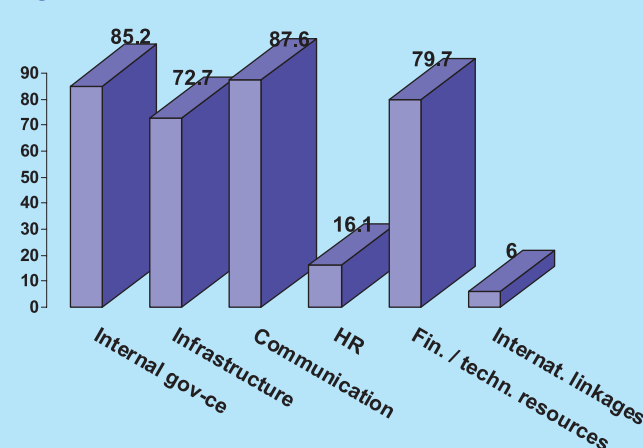
cus shifted towards an active citizenry. The low levels of membership and volunteerism in civic organisations signals indifference amongst Albanian citizens towards civic engagement and civil society in general. Despite the widespread “apathy”, political engagement fares slightly better compared to socially based engagement.

A prevailing feature of civic engagement – social or political – in Albania is that there are no distinctions in terms of the social and demographic categories of people that are active in social or political organisations and actions. The political and socially based diversity indicators notch the highest scores amongst all indicators. If proper approach and concerted actions are employed, a higher rate of civic engagement can be achieved with people of diverse backgrounds.

## III.2. LEVEL OF ORGANISATION

The organisational dimension of the CSI explores the conditions that enable the functioning of civil society in Albania. It provides an assessment of the internal infrastructure of CSOs in terms of governance, financial and human resource management, communication, technology, cooperation with other CSOs, and international linkages, which altogether offer a clear picture *on the degree of institutionalisation that characterises civil society*. CSI for Albania indicates a score of 57.9% for this dimension of Alba-

Figure III.2.1. Level of Organisation subdimensions' scores



nian Civil Society

The final score for the Level of Organisation dimension is arrived at by combining six sub-dimensions and eight indicators dealing with:

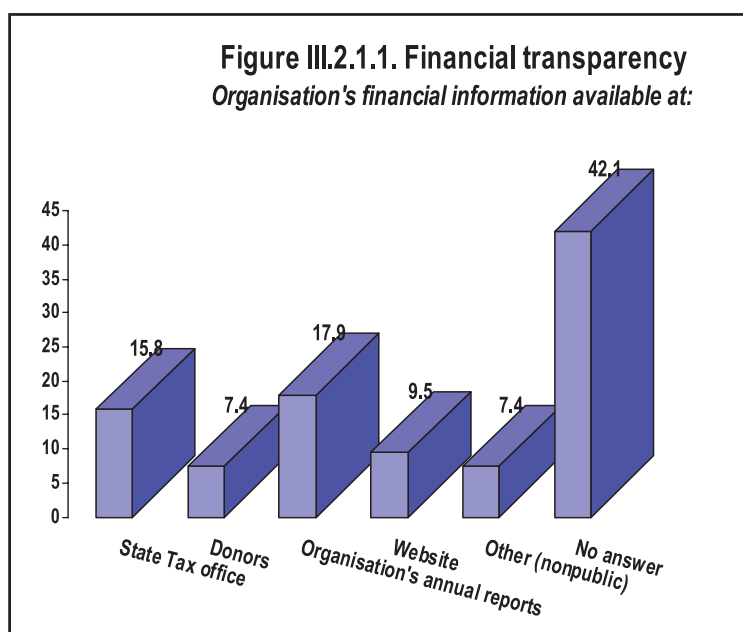
- Internal governance
- Support infrastructure
- Sectoral communication
- Human resources
- Financial & technological resources
- International linkages

The assessment of the first five sub-dimensions is based on the findings of the Organisational Survey. The last sub-dimension, International linkages, is scored based on data from the Union of International Associations ([www.uia.be](http://www.uia.be))<sup>13</sup>.

### III. 2.1. Internal governance

With a single indicator, this sub-dimension focuses principally on the management aspects of civil society organisations. The score for this indicator (sub-dimension) is given as the portion of organisations that have a Board of Directors or a formal Steering Committee. According to the Organisational Survey, this percentage and score for the sub-dimension of Internal Governance is 85.2%. This score has been considered as highly questionable by a considerable number of actors during the regional focus groups, the second AC meeting, individual interviews with opinion makers or policy makers etc. Despite the differences, the various definitions of the concept of governance rely on a combination of several common elements such as accountability, inclusiveness or transparency which indicate the level of the governance system. It is on this ground that different actors involved in the CSI project in Albania have contested the assessment of CSOs' internal governance on the basis of the management indicator only, without reference to other elements that characterize good governance.

**Figure III.2.1.1. Financial transparency**  
Organisation's financial information available at:



The issue takes a graver tone if viewed in combination with a transparency measure such as the availability of the organisations' financial information. To illustrate – although almost 69.5% of surveyed CSOs declare that their financial information is publicly available, nearly 42% of them refused to answer the question on where this information can be found. Worse still, the portion of CSOs whose information can be found on a publicly available source (annual report, CSO website or to a lesser extent the state tax office) is only 43.2%<sup>14</sup>.

### III.2.2. Support Infrastructure

The score for this sub-dimension is also generated on the basis of a single indicator titled "Support organisations" which identifies the portion of surveyed CSOs that are formal members of federations, umbrella groups or other support networks. 72.7% of surveyed organisations declared that they are members of at least one support network. A total of 92 networks and umbrella organisations were listed in the CSOs replies, 48 of these are national structures and 44 Regional, European, and global

13. IDM and Civicus: World Alliance For Citizen Participation would like to thank the Union of International Associations for their collaboration with the CSI project in providing this data.

14. Typically, the "Donor" is viewed as a public source of information since donors are usually assumed to be open to requests for information. However, a particular donor would typically provide only partial information on any given CSO...unless the given donor is the only supporter of the CSO. A similar argument is raised for the "Other non-public" option (see Figure III.2.1.1) which includes sources such as auditing companies (these have a legal obligation not to disclose any information to the public), or the CSO's Bank (a similar legal obligation not to disclose any information of the client to the public) etc.



networks.

This sub-dimension and the corresponding result from the Organisational Survey were debated at length by a majority of participants at the Regional focus groups. Although the existence of such support networks and CSOs' affiliation is considered a positive element for the development of civil society, there is scepticism of the real impact and sustainability of the national support networks. Most participants of the regional focus groups stated that donors' financial support is essential on both accounts – impact and sustainability – for the majority of the national networks:

*“They [networks / umbrella organisations] are active and deliver results only for as long as there is funding from the donor”*

Such dependence on donors' financial support has been identified by regional focus group participants as one of the weaknesses of such networks and their members in general.

### III.2.3. Sectoral communication

The sectoral communication sub-dimension looks at the extent of communication / information exchange and interactions among civil society organisations in the country that work on similar issues. This portion was found out to be 87.6%, indicating a high level of sectoral communication, which is considered a positive factor for civil society in Albania. Another 88.5% of organisations have exchanged information with other CSOs in the past three months.

### III.2.4. Human resources

Sustainability of human resources is viewed as an essential indicator of the level of organisation of civil society. The CSI methodology for this component tries to evaluate the human resource base by looking at the ratio of paid staff to volunteers. The analysis of the Organisational survey shows that only 16.1% of the organisations have a strong human resources base. The cost and sustainability

of human resources is one of the most problematic issues for a predominantly project-based civil society in Albania<sup>15</sup>. Having built up the needed infrastructure (communication, experience and support networks) in the past two decades of generous support from foreign donors, Albanian CSOs must now adapt their strategies to an environment that is experiencing donor withdrawal.

For the moment it does not appear that CSOs are fully prepared to be self sustainable, or at least their plans do not go beyond the existing framework of opportunities and conditions. The majority of CSOs (57%) report that foreign (non-EU) donors are their main source of financial support, followed by the Government (17.8%) and indigenous corporations (10%). Only a minor portion of the organisations list their own services (2.2%), individual donations (2.2%) or membership fees (2.2%) as a financing source. Although the EU has allocated considerable funds for civil society in Albania, funds which are expected to grow in the near future, only 7.8% of CSOs expect to take advantage of this opportunity.

### III. 2.5. Financial and technological resources

This sub-dimension's score (79.7%) was derived from two key indicators: financial sustainability and technological resources. The Organisational Survey found that 75.3% of surveyed organisations have a strong and stable financial resource base, measured by comparing the Albanian CSOs' revenues and expenditures to those of the previous year<sup>16</sup>. Despite the difficulties that the third sector has experienced in the past few years in terms of available funding, its financial sustainability remains at relatively satisfactory levels. The organisational survey indicates that 29.4% of CSOs experienced an increase in revenues as compared to one year ago while for another 36.5% of CSOs the revenues remained the same. For 34.1% the revenues have decreased. In contrast, expenditures have increased for 37.9% of CSOs and

15. According to the Organisational Survey, 75.3% of surveyed CSOs consider the donors' priorities very important in shaping the civil society's agenda. Less than 50% of surveyed organisations consider important other factors such as needs and priorities of various interest groups and marginalized communities. While donors can easily impose their agenda through their funding priorities, Albanian CSOs remain unable to influence them. 72% of the surveyed organisations believe that the Albanian civil society has been “somewhat successful” in its attempts to influence foreign donors' priorities, while 13.4% believe that it has been “not at all successful”. Only 8.5% of respondents believe that civil society in the country has been “very successful” in this account.

16. The formula used to calculate this score relies on the ratio between expenditures and revenues as a source to provide an assessment of financial sustainability.

remained the same for the majority of them (42.5%). Only 19.5% of CSOs declare that expenditures decreased during this period.

### III.2.6 International Linkages

This sub-dimension score (6%) shows the number of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) present in the country as a ratio to the number of known INGOs.

### Conclusion

Overall, the analysis of the indicators and sub-dimensions of the Level of Organisation dimension of the CSI for Albania points out to a satisfactory performance compared to the other dimensions, especially given the development context. On the whole, Albanian civil society operates under a relatively well-developed framework of infrastructure and resources, with needed internal structures of governance, intensive interactions, and networking. However, if internal governance is considered as a full set of principles and democratic practices of good governance, it is obvious that Albanian CSOs must focus particular attention to improving transparency and accountability.

The weakest point of this dimension is the sustainability of human resources, which is the result of a series of external factors. On another note, CSI for Albania confirms the often-repeated conclusion that local CSOs remain largely donor-driven and dependant, while their activities are predominantly project-based.

Given the citizens' indifference towards associating with CSOs, the low number of membership-based CSOs, an underdeveloped philanthropic culture, and minimal interest of the private sector in supporting civil society, donors' funding appears to be the main lifeline for the vast majority of CSOs. These factors have significantly conditioned the sustainability of human resources especially in the last few years when many donors have withdrawn from the region, leaving the responsibility to support Albanian civil society to the EC/EU pro-

grams and eventually to the Government. Neither of the two is taking full responsibility – either because the Government is unprepared for such a step, or because of a lack of capabilities on the CSOs' side to cope with the bureaucratic application and grant procedures under various EC programs.

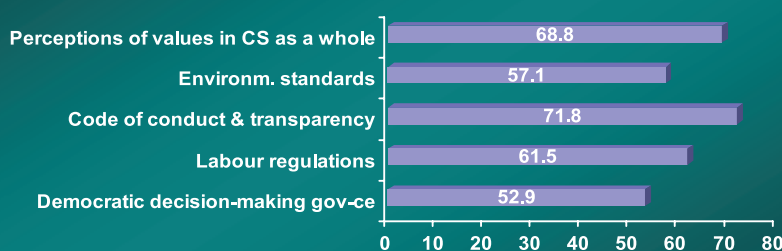
This aspect has influenced not only the sustainability of human resources but also the sustainability of civil society actions, where established networks continue to operate only for the period of time for which funding is available. Funding for CSOs, however, has been increasingly limited to periods of up to one-year or less.

Accordingly, these challenges require a combined approach that would not only facilitate access to EC funding, but would also drive CSOs to diversify their financing sources and deliver services to become self-sustainable. The combined approach must also include appropriate actions to promote and consolidate a culture of philanthropic giving, and interest from the business. In addition, funding may be made available through governmental programs for services that can be offered by CSOs.

### III.3. PRACTICE OF VALUES

The extent to which civil society practices some core values is the focus of this dimension. Data for the dimension is generated mainly through the Organisational Survey. At 62.4%, the overall score of this dimension represents the highest value of all five dimensions of the CSI.

Figure III.3.1 Practice of Values sub-dimensions' scores



The Practice of Values dimension consists of five sub-dimensions that examine the behaviour of Albanian civil society with regard to core values:

- Democratic decision-making governance
- Labour regulations
- Code of conduct and transparency
- Environmental standards
- Perceptions of values in civil society as a whole

As shown in figure III.3.1 Albanian civil society scores the lowest (52.9%) in democratic decision making governance, and the highest in transparency and code of conduct (71.8%). The following sections explain the trends for each sub-dimension and the facts revealed throughout the CSI.

### III.3.1. Democratic decision-making governance

The sub-dimension shows the extent of democratic decision making practices within civil society in terms of who makes decisions in organisations – members, staff, appointed or elected leaders, appointed or elected boards etc. The score includes only the percentage of those CSOs where members, staff, elected board, and elected leaders conduct the internal decision making for the organisation. According to the Organisational Survey data this figure totals to 52.9% of the surveyed CSOs. More CSOs entrust decision making to an appointed leader (27.6%) or to an appointed board (19.5%), as opposed to an elected leader (17.2%) and elected board (27.6%). Barely 8% of surveyed CSOs declare that decisions within the organisation are taken by the members (6.9%) and the staff (roughly 1.2%).

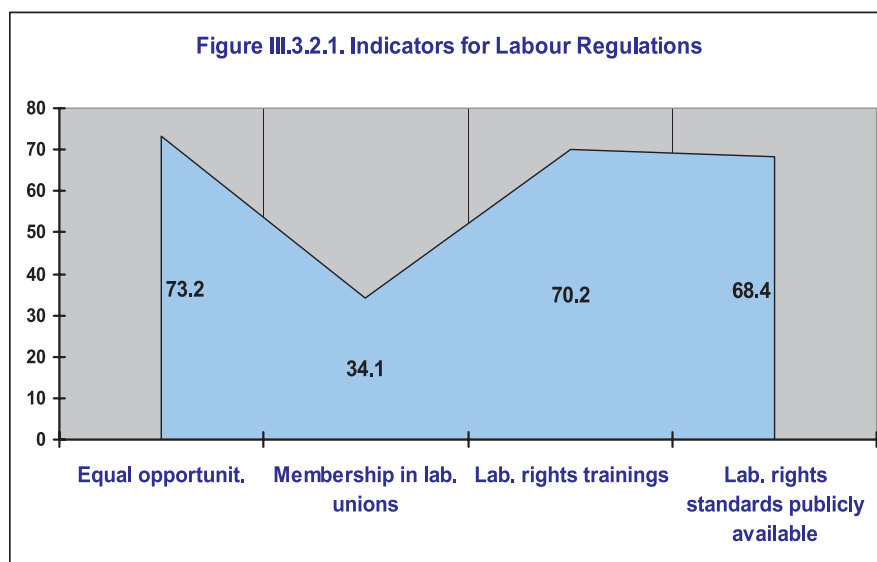
The data seem to reflect the low number of membership-based CSOs, which due to their structure are more open to and often use more inclusive practices of decision making – e.g. members' assembly. Furthermore, a majority of participants in the focus group discussions emphasized that the need for a

prompt decision-making structure within the CSO that provides timely responses and adapts well to changing conditions and the pressures of “deadlines” may have actually led to these practices.

### III.3.2. Labour regulations

This sub-dimension looks at the situation of labour rights and policies among civil society organisations. The overall score for this sub-dimension at 61.5% is generated from four key indicators: Equal opportunity policies, CSO staff membership in labour unions, Labour rights trainings and Publicly available labour standards policy in the organisation.

As shown in Figure III.3.2.1, Albanian civil society organisations rank closely in three out of these four indicators, with the only outlier being membership in labour unions which notches a score less than half of the average of the other indicators. It is essential to note that the Organisational Survey asked CSOs about the existence of such practices, but it did not include additional questions to check the reliability



of their answers, a step that was taken in the case of organisations' financial information.

73.2% of surveyed CSOs declare that they have written policies in place regarding equal opportunity and/or equal pay for equal work for both women and men. Also, approximately 70% of respondents report that their CSO holds trainings on labour rights for new staff, and about 68% say that they have a publicly available policy for labour rights

standards. Lastly, the score of the “membership in labour unions” indicator represents an average of the percentage of paid staff that are members for all surveyed CSOs. The low score comes as no surprise considering that for 67.2% of surveyed CSOs the number of paid staff that are members of labour unions is zero.

### III.3.3. Code of conduct and transparency

The score of the sub-dimension is based exclusively on the quantitative data that assess the practice of publicly available codes of conduct and transparency as core values. According to the Organisational Survey data, Albanian civil society displays a relatively high level of endorsement on both values. 74.1% of the surveyed CSOs declare that they have a publicly available code of conduct for their staff and 69.5% declare that their financial information is publicly available. The second indicator should be approached with caution as almost 42% of the surveyed CSOs choose not to answer the question on where such information can be found, while of those who answered the question, less than half offer a valid available source (e.g. a printed annual report and/or website).

### III.3.4. Environmental standards

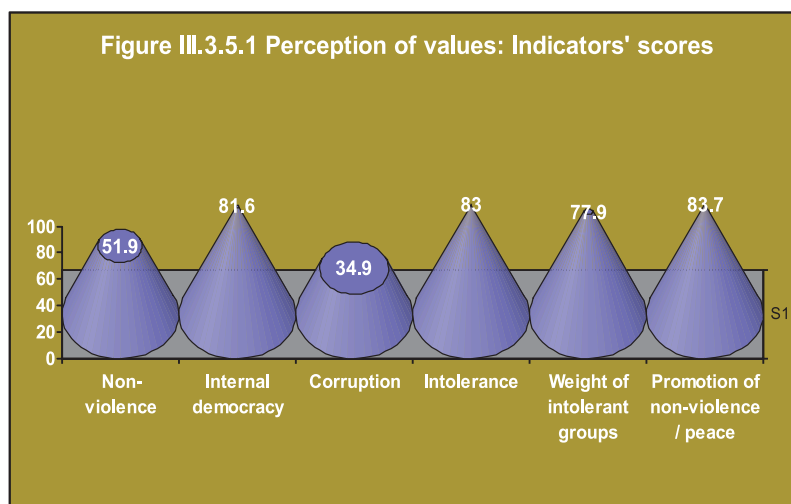
It essential for the civil society assessment to look at the extent to which actors that help building an environmentally-sensitive society are actually honouring these values in their day to day work. This sub-dimension’s score represents the percentage of CSOs that have a publicly available policy on environmental standards. Out of the 90 surveyed organisations, 57.1% declare that they do possess such policy. Most significantly, almost 46% of CSOs with no policy for environmental standards have not thought of adopting one in the future.

### III.3.5. Perceptions of values in civil society as a whole

Unlike the first four sub-dimensions where answers from CSOs help generate scores on CSOs themselves as individual entities of civil society, the last

sub-dimension offers an assessment for the third sector as a whole. As such, perceptions of levels of non-violence, peace, internal democracy, corruption, intolerance, transparency and civil society’s promotion of peace and non-violence are measured.

Figure III.3.5.1 summarises the individual scores



of each of the indicators. The first indicator (Non-violence) refers only to the perceptions of surveyed CSOs that declare that “there are forces within civil society that use violence” (23.8%). These respondents are further asked about the “intensity” as to whether or not these groups are isolated and whether they use violence regularly or sporadically. Accordingly, the score (i.e. percentage) of 51.9 for this indicator refers only to the 23.8% of surveyed CSOs that acknowledge the existence of forces within civil society using violence.

The second indicator (Internal democracy) shows the perception of surveyed CSOs on the role played by civil society in promoting democratic decision making within CS organisations and groups. 81.6% of the interviewed CSOs responded positively, with 58.6% declaring that civil society’s efforts in this regard are significant or at least moderate (23%). A total of 18.4% of surveyed CSOs appear more critical and declared that civil society’s efforts in this regard are either limited or insignificant.

The perceived level of corruption within civil society represents perhaps one of the most surprising findings of the Organisational Survey, which aligns with the perception trends identified in the External

Perceptions Survey. Surprisingly, CSOs exhibited a high level of self-criticism on the degree of transparency and good governance in the sector. 38.3% report that corruption is frequent and 26.7% declare that it is occasional. The score of this indicator also takes into account the percentage of respondents who declare that instances of corruption are very rare (only 9.3%) or who refuse or do not have an opinion (25.6%). According to CSOs’ representatives, most frequent cases of corruptive practices within civil society include “lack of accountability and transparency in the management of funds” (48.2%), “dependence from the state” (10.6%) and “corruption in decision-making and staff management” (9.4%). Similarly, the External Perception Survey reveals that respondents (opinion and decision makers, representatives of academia, media and donors) are sceptic about the transparency of third sector with 56.25% declaring that “most CSOs lack transparency”.

Intolerance within civil society indicator represents one of the best scored indicators for this sub-dimension with an 83% score, slightly below the indicator on the promotion of non-violence and peace (83.7%). The weight of intolerant groups in relation to civil society in general is seen by a substantial majority of respondents (almost 78%) as not significant.

### Conclusion

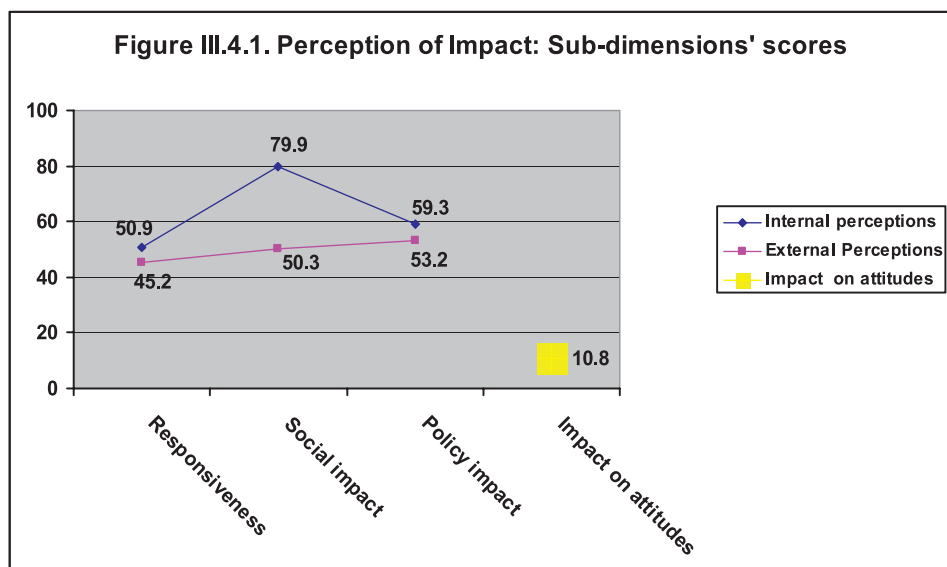
Even though the practice of values dimension receives the highest score of all five dimensions of the civil society assessment in Albania, the analysis of sub-dimensions and indicators raises a number of issues which have drawn the attention of the various stakeholders involved in the CSI implementation. The low score on the “democratic decision-making governance” indicator provides additional evidence to the justifiability of the concerns raised by CSO representatives themselves (at AC Meetings, focus groups and in the Organisational Survey) on the understanding and applicability of good gov-

ernance principles and accountability within civil society. The debate extends to other sub-dimensions assessing labour, environmental, transparency and other standards that should shape third sectors’ approach and not be treated as formal standards.

The strongest values of Albanian civil society are non-violence, equal opportunities for men and women, peace, and tolerance. Internal democracy, as perceived by third sectors’ representatives also appears to be a well-established value. However, the lack of transparency (the weakest value of civil society) overshadows internal democracy, and the CSI shows that both internal and external actors’ perceptions support this finding. Perhaps the best description of these concerns is one that observes civil society as “an efficient actor in promoting internal democracy and democratic governance, but which is still half way to fully practice it internally”. The structural settings of the civil society, characterized by a small share of membership-based organisations, may explain to a certain extent but not necessarily justify this situation.

### III.4. PERCEPTION OF IMPACT

The data for the evaluation of the perception of CS impact is gathered through all three surveys conducted under the framework of the CSI project – Population, External Perception and Organisational Surveys. Hence, the overall score reflects not only CSOs’ attitudes but also the perception of citizens



and the experience of the carefully selected sample of opinion and policy/decision makers, representatives of academia, private sector personnel, and donors. Through a total of seven sub-dimensions and 17 indicators that look at a variety of variables – impact on social concerns, policy making, and civic attitudes – the analysis focuses on the internal and external perceptions of responsiveness, social impact, policy impact and general impact of civil society on attitudes in society.

As the low score of only 49.9% for this dimension of CSI suggests, impact is one of the most problematic elements of Albanian third sector, together with the relatively low level of Civic Engagement.

### III.4.1. Responsiveness (internal perceptions)

The score for this first sub-dimension is generated from the perception of surveyed organisations on the impact of civil society on two of the most important social concerns in the country – transparent governance and the fight against corruption. On the issue of corruption (first indicator), 41.9% of respondents declare that civil society’s impact is tangible while 54.7% believe that the impact has been limited and 3.4% believe that CS has had no impact. The second indicator – perceived impact of civil society on transparent governance – scores better with 59.8% declaring that civil society’s impact has been tangible, while 35.6% of respondents believe that civil society has had limited impact and 4.6% see no impact on transparent governance from civil society.

### III.4.2. Social impact (internal perception)

The second sub-dimension is also generated from the Organisational Survey. It looks at the perceived impact of civil society as a whole on key social issues as selected by the surveyed CSOs themselves. A majority of surveyed CSOs (more than 65%) suggested social development, education and training, and support to vulnerable and marginalized groups as the key issues. There are two indicators that help generate the score for this sub-dimension: perceived impact of civil society in general on selected areas; and perceived impact of the surveyed organisation

on selected areas.

Both indicators score relatively high, with the second one (impact of own organisation) scoring higher than the impact of civil society in general. The impact of civil society on the suggested issues is characterized as “high level” or “tangible” by almost 73% of surveyed organisations with an even larger group of almost 87% of respondents who declare that the impact of their organisation is of “high level” or “tangible”.

### III.4.3. Policy impact (internal perceptions)

The third sub-dimension looks at the policy impact and policy activity of civil society as perceived by representatives of surveyed organisations. There are three indicators that help generate the score for this sub-dimension: general policy impact of civil society on policy making processes; policy activity of own organisation; and successes from activities in policy-related fields (experience of surveyed organisation).

The first indicator shows that a majority of CSOs (66.3%) see tangible or high level impact of civil society in policy activities in general. The highest score for this sub-dimension’s set of indicators is achieved on the “policy activity of own organisation” indicator, with 73.8% of surveyed organisations declaring that in the past two years their organisation has pushed for concrete policy options. However, when asked about the success of the policy activity in the experience of their own organisation, the average score for all surveyed organisations drops to 37.9% which is the lowest score for this sub-dimension’s indicators.

### III.4.4. Responsiveness (external perceptions)

In addition to the internal actors’ perceptions (CSOs) this dimension’s score also reflects the assessment of the perceptions of external actors via the External Perceptions Survey on the impact of civil society on (two indicators) “transparent governance” and “poverty reduction & economic development”. The findings of the External Perceptions Survey reveal that the perceived impact of civil so-

ciety on transparent governance stands higher than the perceived impact on poverty reduction, with the latter standing at less than half as compared to the former. Almost 64.5% of respondents believe that the impact of civil society is relatively tangible or higher. On the other hand, almost a quarter of respondents (24.5%) share the same opinion when it comes to poverty reduction and economic development. Hence the average score for this sub-dimension stands at 45.2%.

### III.4.5. Social impact (external perceptions)

This sub-dimension looks at the impact of civil society as a whole on key social issues as perceived by external actors. The two indicators that help generate the score for this sub-dimension are: the impact of civil society on key social fields and the impact of civil society on the social context in general

For the first indicator, the “issues and sectors” are selected by respondents of the External Perceptions Survey themselves. The survey indicates that the main areas where respondents see civil society as being most active are “social development” (23.33%) and “support to poor / marginalized groups” (21.67%). Other issues such as “Environment” (13.33%) or “EU integration” (11.67%) were also suggested by numerous respondents.

60.1% of respondents see the impact of civil society on the above mentioned social concerns as moderately or highly tangible. When asked about the general social context, a smaller group of respondents see civil society’s impact as moderate or highly tangible which leads to a score of 40.6% for this indicator.

### III.4.6. Policy impact (external perceptions)

The sixth sub-dimension looks at the perception of external actors on the policy impact and policy activity of civil society. The 53.2% score for this sub-dimension reflects the overall assessment on two indicators: policy impact on selected policy ar-

reas where the third sector has been most active according to respondents of the External Perceptions Survey; and the general impact of civil society on the overall policy making context in Albania.

On the first indicator (impact on selected policy areas), the respondents of the External Perceptions Survey were invited to share the outcomes of CS activism in the policy areas in which, in their opinion, civil society has been most active<sup>17</sup>. Twice as many of these external actors perceive civil society’s impact as high in selected policy fields (75% of the respondents) than in the general policy making context in the country. When asked about the impact of civil society as a whole on the policy making context in general, the vast majority of respondents (69%) perceive this impact as limited or as completely lacking. None of them sees a high level impact of civil society in the general policy context. Hence, the score for the second indicator relies solely on the percentage of respondents who characterize this influence as “some impact” (31.3%).

### III.4.7. Change in attitudes between members of CS and non-members

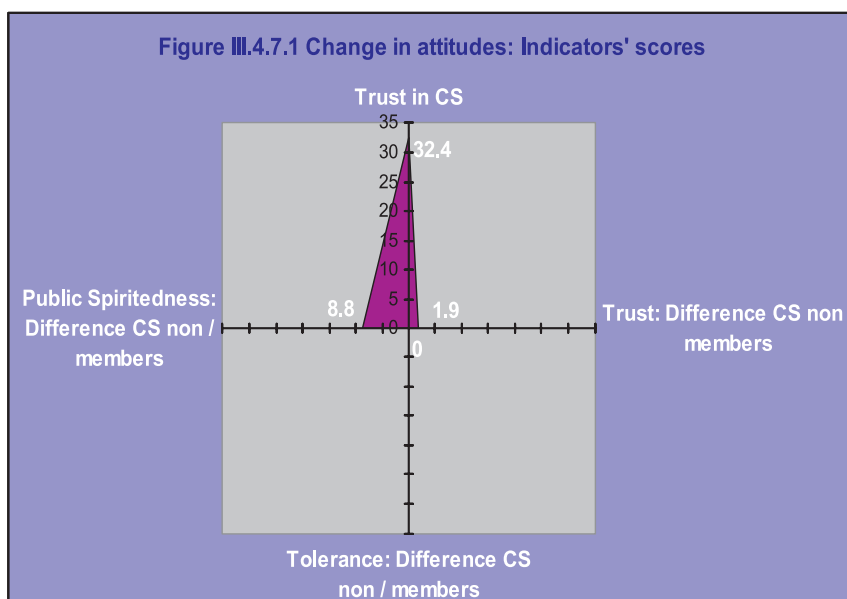
The last component of the “Perception of Impact” dimension deals with the attitudes of citizens, their trust in civil society and the distinctions between citizens that are CSO members and non-members. The score for this sub-dimension is generated on the basis of four key indicators: Difference in trust between civil society members and non-members; Difference in tolerance levels between civil society members and non-members; Difference in public spiritedness between civil society members and non-members and Trust in civil society.

As shown in Figure III.4.7.1, for the first three indicators, the differences between CSO members and non-members are rather small or non-existent. The fourth indicator, trust in civil society, shows a greater difference of opinion between civil society members and non-members.

The first indicator is related to the levels of trust in society and draws its data from the Population

17. Answering to the question: In what policy fields, do you think that civil society has been most active? External Perceptions Survey respondents suggest a total of five general categories (areas) with a total of more than 60-70 policy issues. The main categories of suggested policy issues include local governance, gender issues, EU integration, marginalized groups, good governance etc.

Figure III.4.7.1 Change in attitudes: Indicators' scores



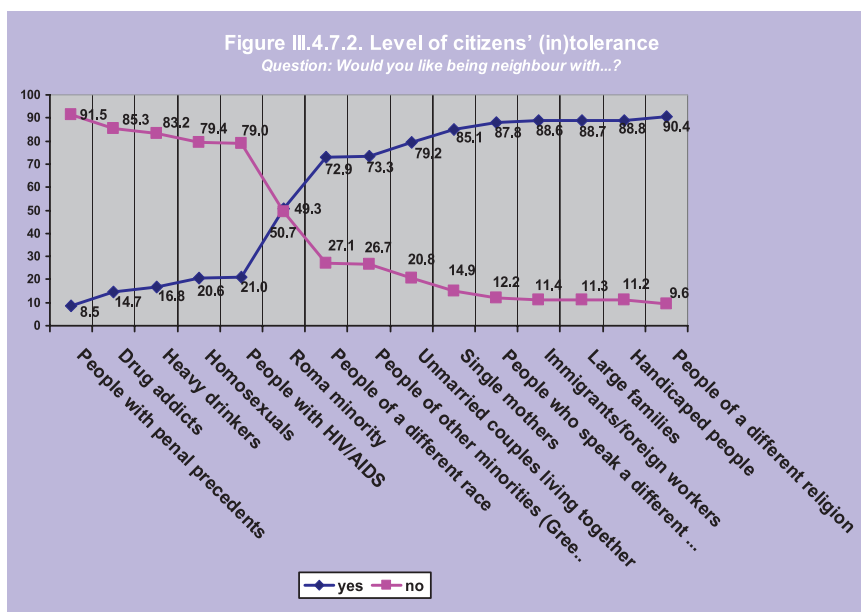
turn when questioned about various minorities – ethnic minorities (73.3%) and people of a different race (72.9%) – and it reaches the lowest point when asked about Roma minorities where almost half of respondents (49.3%) would not like them as neighbours. On the least preferred side of the graph – i.e. categories of people whom respondents would not prefer to have as neighbours – stand five main groups, led by “people with penal precedents” (91.5%). Numerous respondents appear to be intolerant also towards “homosexuals” (79.4%) and “people with HIV/AIDS” (79%).

Survey. The vast majority of respondents (92.5%) declare that “one should be very careful in dealing with people” and only 7.5% say that most people can be trusted. The indicator looks at the differences between respondents that are CSO members and non members which appear to stand at a 1.9%.

The second indicator focuses on the difference of tolerance levels between civil society members and non-members. The results of this indicator are somewhat discouraging, not only because they show a substantial propensity of the Albanian public to discriminate against certain members of society, but also because there is no difference between civil society members and non-members. When asked as to “whether they

would like to have as neighbours certain groups of people”, Albanian citizens display different levels of tolerance towards various social groups (Figure III.4.7.2). Known as a country of religious harmony, respondents show the highest level of tolerance for people of a different religion (90.4% would accept to having neighbours of a different religious affiliation) and so they do for other social categories such as handicapped persons (88.8%), large families (88.7%) or single mothers (85.1%). While still standing at above 70%, the level of tolerance takes a downward

Figure III.4.7.2. Level of citizens' (in)tolerance  
Question: Would you like being neighbour with...?



The third indicator – difference in public spiritedness between civil society members and non-members – is judged in terms of the individuals willingness or refusal to accept various actions, social activities or state of being, i.e. whether they see them as justifiable or not. The Population Survey data on this account (see Table III.4.7.1) confirm the previously presented intolerant attitude towards certain categories of people among citizens (e.g. homosexuality is considered by respondents as more unacceptable than “euthanasia”).



Table III.4.7.1. Level of (non)acceptance of specific actions by citizens

Action	Mean (average score)
Divorce	5.04
Abortion	3.48
Euthanasia	2.79
Avoiding a fare on public transport	2.27
Cheating on taxes if you have a chance	2.23
Homosexuality	2.15
Claiming government benefits to which are not entitled	1.95
Prostitution	1.77
Accepting a bribe in the course of duty	1.68
Man beating his wife	1.42
Suicide	1.34

1 – Always justifiable; 10 – Always not justifiable

## Conclusion

The debate on the impact of civil society represents a constant feature of the civil society development process and performance in general. This debate has gained intensity particularly in the recent years in Albania and has become one of the central topics of the public discourse, expanding from the limited framework of “what donors want or expect”. A growing awareness among the general public and key actors has now shifted the debate to focusing on the question of “what the public interest is and what the citizens and other local stakeholders can and should expect from civil society actors”.

The Perception of Impact is one of the most complex CSI dimensions that reflects the perceptions of internal and external actors while also observing the differences in the perceptions civil society members and individuals who have not associated themselves with CSOs. Predictably, there is a significant gap between the level of perceived impact by internal actors (CSO representatives) and external actors observing from the “outside”.

The differences between civil society members and non-members are relatively minor or even inexistent on issues such as “trusting other people”, “tolerance” towards certain categories (or lack of it), “attitudes towards certain actions and activities”. The one area where there are considerable differences between CSO members and those who are

not, is trust in civil society.

Both, internal and external actors see a generally satisfactory civil society impact on transparent governance. Interestingly, external actors and CSOs representatives share the same perceptions on the areas where civil society has been most active; areas such as social development, support to poor / marginalized groups etc. However, the two sides do not fully agree (at a difference of almost 29%) on the social impact of civil society; external actors appear more sceptical while CSOs’ representatives tend to have a high opinion about their impact on social concerns.

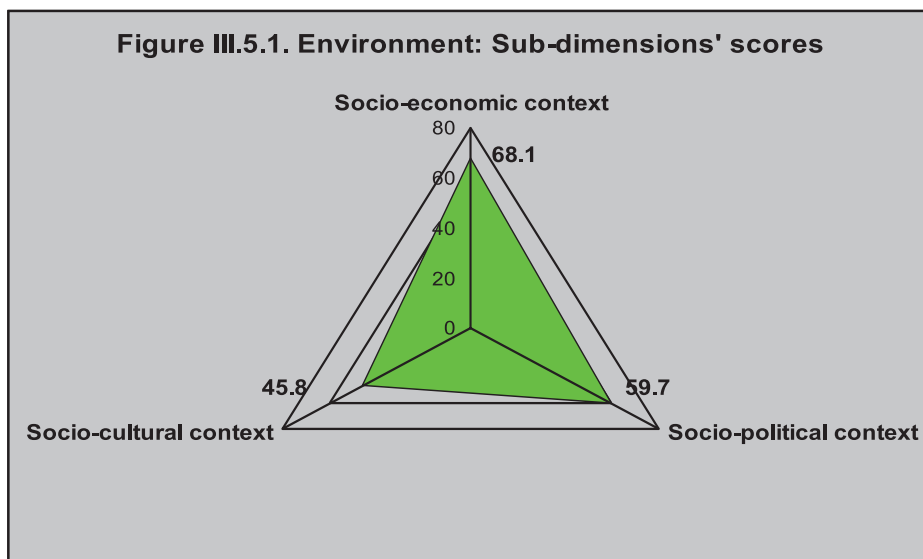
Civil society’s policy impact represents also an interesting case. While it is viewed positively by more than half of the surveyed internal and external actors, it is interesting to note that most external actors rate civil society’s policy impact as having high impact, which differs with CSO members, the majority of which see social impact as an area where civil society has had a high tangible impact.

## III.5. ENVIRONMENT

This section examines the external environment – social, economic, political and cultural context, in which civil society in Albania functions. The score for this dimension, one of the highest compared to the other dimensions, 57.9%, is generated from the scores of three sub-dimensions combining a total of twelve indicators. The primary data used for the scores of certain sub-dimensions and indicators are only partially generated through the surveys conducted under the CSI project – more specifically, through the Organisational and Population surveys with various other sources used to generate the score for the first sub-dimension and some of the indicators of the remaining two sub-dimensions.

Figure III.5.1 plots the limits imposed by the socio-economic, cultural and political conditions where most problematic seems to be the socio-cultural con-

**Figure III.5.1. Environment: Sub-dimensions' scores**



text with a score of 45.8%. A larger “environmental room” – the marked area of the triangle – is enabled by the relatively high scores of the socio-economic (68.1%) and socio-political context (59.7%).

### III.5.1. Socio-economic context

The Socio-economic sub-dimension looks at the local context where civil society operates on the basis of four indicators. Differently from the other sub-dimensions, the indicators of the “Socio-economic context” employ external research data, gathered independently from the CSI project in Albania. The following indicators and sources are applied to generate the overall score of this sub-dimension: the Social Watch Basic Capabilities Index (BCI), the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, the “Gini Coefficient” (inequality) figures, and the Gross National Income (GNI)

The first indicator (Basic Capabilities Index) is obtained by calculating an average of three criteria covering health and basic educational provision: the percentage of children who survive until at least their fifth year based on mortality statistics, the percentage of children who reach fifth grade at

school; and the percentage of births attended by health professionals. The “Social Watch” indicator has a possible range of 0–100, where higher values indicate higher levels of human capabilities which reflect the “dignity for all” proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Although Albania scores quite high on this account, it doesn’t mean that it has attained all the goals of social well-being<sup>18</sup>.

The corruption score (34%) represents another indicator that uses research data from recognized external sources. The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) assesses the level of perceived corruption in the public sector. The CPI is a “survey of surveys”, based on 13 different expert and business surveys, all of them measuring the overall extent of corruption<sup>19</sup>. The CPI score is generated employing a different scoring method than that used by CSI.

The Inequality score (68.9%), the third indicator of this sub-dimension, is obtained from the widely used Gini coefficient<sup>20</sup>. A low Gini coefficient indicates a more equal distribution, with 0 corresponding to complete equality, while a higher Gini coefficient indicates more unequal distribution, with 100 corresponding to complete inequality. Albania displays one of the highest levels of inequality (almost 70) which is almost twice the EU average level of inequality (Gini Index for EU in 2005 was 31).

The last indicator which deals with the economic context is obtained from the World Bank’s World Development Indicators and is calculated as the ratio between external debt and GNI. The score for

18. Social Watch is an international network of citizens’ organisations in the struggle to eradicate poverty and the causes of poverty, to end all forms of discrimination and racism, to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth and the realization of human rights. See <http://www.socialwatch.org>.

19. The CPI 2009 in Albania for instance has used the following sources: Bertelsmann Transformation Index by the Bertelsmann Foundation, Country Risk Service & Country Forecast by Economist Intelligence Unit, Nations in Transit by Freedom House, HIS Global Insight, and World Economic Forum (2008 & 2009 data). For further details see <http://www.transparency.org> (TI) or <http://www.tia.al> (TI Albania).

20. The Gini coefficient was developed by Corrado Gini and is widely used in economics to measure inequality of income and wealth. For further details see <http://go.worldbank.org/3SLYUTVY00>.

Albania is 75.2%, a relatively high ratio which nonetheless, is not a definite sign of trouble since, there are no absolute rules to determine when the ratio of external debt to GNI is too high. The same ratio could be sustainable for one country while being simultaneously a heavy burden for another country<sup>21</sup>.

### III.5.2. Socio-political context

The second sub-dimension looks at the socio-political context in terms of political rights and freedoms, rule of law and legal framework. It evaluates how favourable are these conditions in the given context for the development of civil society. A total of five indicators help generate the specific Albanian score (59.7%), using CSI and external sources as follows:

- Political rights and freedoms – the source for this indicator is the Freedom House (FH) report Freedom in the World (Index of Political rights)
- Rule of law and personal freedoms – FH's report (Freedom in the World) is used for this indicator as well (the first three elements of the Index of Civil Liberties)
- Associational and organisational rights – this indicator comprises the fourth element of FH's Index of Civil Liberties (Freedom of associational and organisational rights)
- Experience of legal framework – reveals the perceptions of Albanian CSOs on the legal framework for CS and on the existence of any illegitimate restrictions from the government
- State effectiveness – the source of this indicator is the answer to the question “To what extent is the state able to fulfil its defined functions?” from the World Bank Governance Dataset (UNU World Governance Survey).

The Freedom in the World report is the source for the first three indicators of this sub-dimension<sup>22</sup>. The score for the first indicator's is taken from the

Political Rights Index where Albania scores 65 in a scale of 0 to 100. The remaining two indicators – “Rule of law & personal freedoms” (64.6%) and “Associational & organisational rights” (66.7%) – are deducted from the Civil Liberties Index of the Freedom in the World.

The score for State effectiveness is generated from an external (non-CSI) source - the World Governance Survey<sup>23</sup>. Albania's score points to a relatively weak performance in this regard<sup>24</sup>. Albania together with Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo score lower than other WB countries with an average score of less than 50 points in a scale of 0-100.

The experience of legal framework indicator is generated from the findings of the Organisational Survey, specifically the two following questions:

Do you believe that your country's regulations and laws for civil society are fully enabling, moderately enabling or quite limiting?

Has your organisation ever faced any illegitimate restriction or attack by local or central government?

The indicator's score (59.9%) implies a moderately acceptable environment for civil society in terms of legal framework and the existence, or not, of any illegitimate pressures by the central or local governments but still with significant barriers to be addressed in order to ensure a better environment. A substantial majority of CSOs (72.4%) declare that they have not faced any illegitimate restrictions or attacks by the local or central government, yet almost ¼ of the surveyed organisations do report such cases<sup>25</sup>. In addition, almost 39% of the surveyed organisations believe that the legal framework on civil society is “quite limiting” and roughly half of them see it as only “moderately enabling” (51.8%), with a meagre 1.2% viewing it as fully enabling.

21. For detailed information see WB World Development Indicators and [www.worldbank.org/debt](http://www.worldbank.org/debt).

22. The scoring used is the forty point scale. For full details on the methodology of the “Freedom in the World” report please visit <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=15>.

23. Government Effectiveness 2008 Report is based on 3 surveys and 8 expert assessments: Bertelsmann Transformation Index, Business Enterprise Environment Survey, Economist Intelligence Unit, Gallup World Poll, Global E-Governance Index, Global Insight Business Conditions & Risk Indicators, Global Insight Global Risk Service, IFAD Rural Sector Performance Assessments, Political Risk Services International Country Risk Guide, WB Country Policy & Institutional Assessments, WEF Global Competitiveness Report. More information: [http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc\\_country.asp](http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_country.asp) or “Governance Matters VIII: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators, 1996-2008” by Kaufmann D., Kraay A. & Masstruzzi M. (Source: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1424591###](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1424591###)).

24. See “Government Effectiveness” in SEE region [http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/mc\\_chart.asp#](http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/mc_chart.asp#)

### III.5.3. Socio-cultural context

The socio-cultural context is the last sub-dimension of the Environment dimension. Through its three key indicators, it looks at the levels of interpersonal trust, tolerance and public spiritedness among the citizens (Population Survey). More specifically, the relevant issues for the score of this sub-dimension (45.8%) consist of Trust, Tolerance, and Public spiritedness.

The first indicator (trust) reveals that respondents of the Population Survey are predominantly distrustful of other people in general. A considerable majority (92.5%) declared that one needs to be very careful in dealing with people. Only 7.5% of respondents believe that “most people can be trusted. The level of tolerance towards certain social groups (e.g. drug addicts, people of a different race / religion / minorities or who speak a different language, immigrants / homosexuals / heavy drinkers etc.) stands at 41%. In relation to the last indicator (public spiritedness), the survey data show that a vast majority of respondents (88.5%) tend to evaluate as “always unacceptable” actions such as: Claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled; avoiding a fare on public transport; cheating on taxes if you have a chance; or accepting a bribe in the course of one’s duties.

### Conclusion

The socio-economic and political context from which the Albanian civil society obtains inputs, instruments and facilities and on which it strives to exert influence offers a generally acceptable set of conditions. These conditions are appropriately reflected in the general state of Albanian civil society development. The advantages of a relatively enabling socio-economic context and to a lesser extent those of the socio-political context are significantly challenged by a rather problematic socio-cultural context. However, the general concerns raised through the CSI analysis on the Albanian context are quite interdependent and hence serve as conditioning factors whose roots cannot be isolated within a single context.

The already existing basic capabilities provide a starting point towards achieving social well-being, an issue of particular importance in a society like Albania with a very high level of inequality (almost 70%). Such a level of socio-economic development and poor performance in addressing essential societal challenges on the other hand foster significant lack of trust and confidence and even intolerance towards social groups. Even more important, a civil society that appears to be distant from the other portions of society is by default relegated to a peripheral position from where it is unable to exert full influence towards positive change.

Despite the progress achieved towards political rights and freedoms, the political context remains seriously challenged by a low level of “state effectiveness” where corruption and rule of law remain a central reform subject. Albania provides a relatively enabling legal framework for civil society yet achieving desired outcomes and influencing positive developments appear to be difficult tasks for civil society, not only due to its own internal challenges or the limited dialogue and relatively inefficient interactions with the state, but also due to the generally distrustful attitude of citizens towards the key institutions, processes and even the third sector itself. These are characteristics of a vicious circle that triggers negative reaction on all aspects, once poor performance is noted even in a single element of the chain.

25. CSOs’ perception of the level of dialogue and exchange of information with the state also points out to a potential problem. According to the responding CSOs, the State – CS dialogue is limited (55.8%) or non-existent (4.7%). Similar perceptions prevail also among external actors who see CS relations with certain state institutions as non-effective – e.g. Parliament (40.7%), Judiciary (55.6%) or Government (42.9%). Surprisingly, CS dealings with local government are considered as effective by 76.7% of EPS respondents.

## IV. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN ALBANIA

This section summarizes the reflections and opinions of the regional focus groups participants (CS representatives, media, academia & local authorities) on the strengths and weaknesses of Albanian civil society based on their experience and in view of the CSI findings (February – March 2010). The discussion is expected to develop further at the national workshop in July 2010 which will serve also as a discussion forum on potential solutions and strategies to address the existing challenges.

Despite the differences among some of the participants over the CIVICUS definition of civil society as being too-extensive, participants articulated high expectations towards the CSI outcomes and impact, as they shall be derived from an approach and methodology that is not limited in targets or even dimensions under which civil society is examined.

The discussions in the focus groups were generally driven by the main highlights of the CSI findings, particularly by the identified concerns and challenges, rather than identified strengths. The most intensive debates focussed above all on essential concerns such as low levels of citizens' participation in civil society actions and the reasons to distrust in institutions and civil society (transparency and good governance of CSOs), impact on policies, sustainability of civil society and relationship with donors, cooperation with governmental actors, private sector and beneficiaries etc. Accordingly, this section gives more space to weaknesses as compared to strengths of civil society in an attempt to faithfully mirror the regional focus group discussions.

### STRENGTHS

- CSOs are generally open to networking and exchange of information. The creation of networks and encouraging civic participation

- through a range of organisations offers better opportunities for active citizens;
- Civil society organisations (especially think tanks) have better capacities to influence policies and achieve greater impact;
- CSOs' advocacy and lobbying activity is fully supported by, and well-grounded in research work and analysis;
- There is currently an upward trend in state actors willingness to cooperate with CSOs, although often driven by a pro-forma approach;
- CSOs human resources and capacities are often attractive to political and governmental actors. Yet, once involved in politics, former civil society members have failed to facilitate a greater impact of civil society;
- CSOs are generally flexible and efficient in adjusting to developing situations or sectors;
- Compared to state institutions, CSOs are better equipped with, and more aware of communication opportunities, particularly with regard to interactions with beneficiaries and foreign/international bodies;
- CSOs have reached a higher level of efficiency in human resources management as compared to state agencies;
- There is a high level of sensitivity among citizens on specific situations or the needs of certain social groups (marginalized communities, people in need etc.);
- Civil society has been quite successful in promoting certain values such as religious harmony, interethnic relations or good neighbourly relations at the national and regional level;
- Well targeted activities of CSOs do succeed in attracting citizens' support (for instance trainings for people in need or marginalized categories, e.g. unemployed women).

26. The reflection process and its results will be summarized in the Action Brief, which is a separate outcome of the CSI implementation and aims to disseminate among a broad range of stakeholders concrete proposals on how to improve civil society development trends.

## WEAKNESSES

- Citizens are sceptical of civil society and perceive CSOs mainly as a source of financial benefits. Civic participation often depends on the profile and credibility of CSOs;
- CSOs do not rely on consultations with citizens and interest groups during involvement in policy making processes;
- Low levels of civic participation are often the consequence of policy / decision makers underestimating the values of civic actions and initiatives;
- Civil society is widely perceived as, and identified only with non profit organisations;
- The painful transition period has led to individualistic attitudes and apathy towards volunteering;
- Cooperation between the Government, civil society and the private sector is at low levels, a fact reflected in the lack of sustainability of civic actions and hence, lack of interest by citizens to be included in “sporadic” (not sustainable) actions;
- Cooperation between CSOs and the media is more present on political issues while the politicization of concerns and debates is often counter-productive for citizens’ participation;
- Political bias is present among some CS organisations and representatives, which undermines their objectivity and hence public support;
- Despite some success on gender equality and women rights, civil society has not been able to deliver positive results on issues related to the fight against domestic violence, non-discrimination & integration of Roma or sexual minorities etc.;
- Civil society actors do not see the inter-linkages between certain negative phenomena and their consequences. Rather they tend to focus on the consequences and not with the root causes. The same approach can be identified among donors (who are more open to immediate results and not to actions that build ground for sustainable solutions by addressing the root causes). The inter-linkages between blood feuds and property issues, domestic violence, economic development and social inequities etc. are one example of this incorrect focus;
- CSOs are largely based on, and dependent on (foreign) donors’ funding and with the latter’s withdrawal the sustainability of civil society’s actions, as well as existence of portions of it, is threatened;
- Cases of interferences and/or unequal treatment of CSOs by state authorities at central and local level are still present;
- Human resource management also appears to be a weak point for CSOs despite the generally high quality of human capacities;
- The social context from where CSOs could draw resources, support and even capacities (at the local level) to implement their activities remains weak;
- Accountability, transparency and democratic (internal governance among CSOs remain problematic;
- State – civil society dialogue and consultations are often treated as a pro-forma instrument by governmental actors;
- Civil society actors are still in the phase of “building capacities” for active involvement in the policy shaping processes in the area of socio-economic development, particularly in view of EU approaches and policies;
- CSOs still need to improve their capacities and understanding on proper mechanisms for policy impact, and how to use them;
- The fact that civil society is fully project-based and relies only on short term funding (up to a year) is often reflected in the lack of sustainability of impact;
- The lack of coordination among state institutions often negatively reflects in CSOs efforts to improve policies

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

A set of recommendations in support of the development and consolidation of the third sector in Albania has been drawn based on the discussions of civil society actors and other representatives (members of the Advisory Committee and participants at the regional focus groups) as well as on the analysis of the CSI findings for Albania. The purpose is to provide food for thought and to encourage an inclusive reflection process so as to generate civil society strengthening initiatives and commitment for follow up actions from a substantial number of stakeholders. The Policy Action Brief, the final CSI Albania output, will supplement the recommendations presented below by incorporating the suggestions and proposals from the national conference expected to be held in July 2010. Including the recommendations from the national conference, will allow for their official endorsement by a wide range of national stakeholders.

The following recommendations focus on the major concerns and highlights identified for all five dimensions of the CSI analysis of the Albanian civil society – Civic Engagement, Level of Organisation, Practice of Values, Perception of Impact and Environment. The set is divided into five sections, depending on the type of targeted group or actor, with the last section that covers recommendations with shared interest for all key stakeholders:

### CIVIL SOCIETY

- Design and initiate actions to expand and deepen citizens' participation in civil society actions and structures, including initiatives that aim to increase public confidence in civil society activities;
- Initiate and implement actions that strive to broaden the motivation and degree of involvement of citizens not only in politically – oriented organisations but also in other civil society structures;
- Increase communication and outreach capacities towards citizens, communities, interest groups, as well as towards advocacy efforts with governmental actors and the donor community;
- Diversify the focus areas of work and generate ideas and strategies to become (self)sustainable;
- Improve policy making capacities and build strategies for effective advocacy and networking;
- Increase internal transparency, accountability and democratic decision-making. Establish an applicable set of standards (e.g. Code) and encourage civil society actors to endorse and implement it within their internal structures;
- Initiate actions to promote and strengthen civil society and qualitative inputs from remote and rural areas
- Undertake campaigns and other actions to promote democratic values of non-discrimination, tolerance, understanding and support for various social groups, in particular for Roma, sexual minorities, gender equality, people with disabilities etc.;
- Improve the quality of services and promote established benchmarks as a reference for quality and objectivity with national, regional and European institutions;
- Intensify cooperation with regional and European centres and networks as an opportunity to upgrade capacities, and integrate with EU-based civil society.

### STATE ACTORS

- Increase transparency, access to information, dialogue, consultations and cooperation with civil society organisations and enable a friendly-environment for monitoring, watch-dog, and advocacy activities of civil society actors;
- Discontinue the formal approach in the policy-making process and adopt mechanisms that absorb inputs from civil society actors in the policy shaping stage, throughout the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of impact to better meet the challenges in the implementation of the National Strategy for Development and Integration, as well as other national strategies;
- Improve the current tax & financial reporting related legislation through a separate frame-

- work for the third sector;
- Enact measures and adopt legislation that encourages the private sector and the citizens at large to support civic initiatives and/or expand the use of voluntary services;
- Take appropriate measures to implement the recently developed “Charter of Civil Society” with active involvement and a major say from civil society actors;
- Develop cross-sector support schemes for civil society at the local and rural areas.

## DONOR COMMUNITY

- Diversify focus in terms of thematic areas, type and geographical coverage of civil society structures as eligible applicants (e.g. community based organisations), based on wide and continuous consultations with civil society actors and other stakeholders;
- Increase the cooperation and coordination among donor organisations in the country, and ensure the active participation of local civil society. A genuine, non-formal structure of consultations among donor, civil society and the public sector could function at the national and local levels to prioritize real needs and challenges based on the local context;
- Design medium term programs with flexible time-spans and funding that enable civil society actors to deliver sustainable results, monitoring and evaluation of impact;
- Adjust the complexity and requirements of formal application procedures to the extend, scope and targeted impact and encourage capacity building for CSOs to be better prepared to meet the criteria of application procedures;
- Encourage support and capacity building for membership-based organisations and particularly to key partners of the social dialogue framework such as labour unions, various professional associations (journalists) etc;
- Encourage initiatives aiming to increase transparency, good governance and accountability practices within civil society at large

## OTHER STAKEHOLDERS (Private sector, Media, Academia etc.)

- Engage in joint consultations with civil society and governmental actors to explore opportuni-

- ties for “civic-private” partnerships;
- Build cooperation and inter-linkages with CSOs (typically, think tanks), universities and the existing or recently established research and academic centres;
- Identify converging interests amongst influential actors – CSOs / business / Media / Academia and the State – and initiate partnerships based on shared resources, interactions and active involvement to advance common priorities.

## SHARED CHALLENGES

- Improve institution building, rule of law and accountability of public authorities at all levels as a prerequisite for an active public and civil society;
- Engage in developing and supporting civic platforms in remote and/or rural areas that target key socio-economic concerns, governance, human resources and other fundamental factors for an active community, social cohesion and a citizen-oriented governance;
- Promote a more active role of civic actors in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy frameworks and measures in the areas of social and economic development, and particularly in the context of EU integration;
- Develop a more transparent and comprehensive framework of shared responsibilities among public and private actors for the country’s sustainable development and European Integration.



## VI. CONCLUSION

The CSI implementation in Albania was driven by the intention to present relevant and evidence-based information on the state of the third sector and equally important, to share this body of knowledge with civil society actors and stakeholders. The project's comprehensive methodology enables the reader to explore the depth and extent of a variety of dimensions of civil society and to link current phenomena with their root causes and consequences. These are interconnected throughout various perspectives of civil society such as societal values, civic engagement and activism, structure and development of civil society, impact on policies and processes, and are embodied in the very environment where civil society actors operate, an environment that affects their actions, and in which they struggle to influence society.

In the course of the one year CSI implementation, a wide range of civil society actors and representatives from other sectors have been involved in the various research and consultation activities of this project. The far-reaching database of findings and conclusions have been a subject of continuous discussions, has gathered and shared "know-how" from and with the involved participants and has already provided relevant arguments that are used in the public discourse on topical issues<sup>27</sup>. Most significantly, this analytical report and the whole CSI process has benefited from the thoughts and conclusions drawn therein.

While all the necessary preconditions for a thoughtful set of actions and processes for civil society development have been created in the framework of the CSI for Albania, the first results and the impact on the strengthening of civil society in the country are yet to be observed. The highlights of this pending process have been outlined throughout this work and particularly in the "Recommendations" section of the report. A much more detailed and profound plan d'action will result from the National Workshop

to be held in July 2010, which shall gather more than 100 representatives of civil society, political actors, policy and decision makers, representatives of the donor community, academic society and opinion-makers, media, private sector etc. The implementation of the recommendations outlined above and the degree of the stakeholders' commitment to engage in concrete actions and generate ideas to effectively address present concerns for Albanian civil society remains as the main challenge ahead.

This process needs to be focussed on, though not limited to, some of the key highlights that gave rise to several particularly intensive debates and attention by Advisory Committee members, participants at the series of regional focus groups and even within structured interviews with individual CS activists, experts, officials, reporters etc.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT in Albania displays serious concerns over a limited breadth and depth of social and political engagement despite the high degree of diversity within such a limited engagement. While indifference and even "apathy" towards civil society actions and activism in general has significantly impacted socially-based engagement, citizens appear slightly more active and committed when it comes to politically-based engagement. Despite the low levels of confidence in political actors and some of the state institutions (e.g. the judiciary) it seems that politically-active-citizens see affiliation with political organisations as a shortcut to the solution of their personal economic or other concerns. This points to a mindset that change comes from the top, from the government or other sources of centralized power. Of course, there is room to hope for a change in this mindset, which to a certain extent is a traditional "by-traveller" of societies in transition or early stages of post-transition era. For a majority of citizens the main motivation to engage in civil society actions are "shared values" and "trust in organizers", as opposed to almost 1/3 of them whose

27. One of such examples is the use of the findings of CSI for Albania on citizens' attitudes towards sexual minorities and their degree of (in) tolerance which was indirectly referred in an article by a member of the project's Advisory Committee in one of the Albanian dailies. Furthermore, CSI findings have already attracted the attention of the donor community in Albania.

motivation is derived from personal interest. However, change will not come solely from actions oriented towards changing individual's mindsets; their confidence in elected institutions and more generally their trust in a governance system that can function without any interference from political shortcuts must be gradually increased. Civic engagement will become attractive for citizens within the space that their economic status allows for once they see that the processes, the actors and the governance system they struggle to influence do function normally in a polity with democratic values and principles. In an ideal situation, this will be reflected in diametrically reverse trends than the current prevailing ones, with the majority of citizens showing greater readiness to react against illegitimate actions of institutions not only when personally concerned and with higher trust and confidence in state institutions, labour unions, civil society, the media and other actors.

**LEVEL OF ORGANISATION:** One of the main conclusions from this CSI assessment is that Albanian civil society is relatively well-structured, with functional internal structures, active interactions, capacities to network and infrastructure. Nevertheless, the most significant and intensive part of the discussions at the AC meetings and regional focus groups has focused on the challenges and key concerns raised by certain findings on this dimension. A largely donor-driven civil society that appears to be unable to influence donors' priorities and almost fully project-based CSOs which display concerns over their sustainability, represent a major challenge for the third sector and the Albanian society at large. Furthermore, the predominance of non-membership-based CSOs as well as the weak performance of the existing membership-based ones (typically labour unions) has weakened the link with the citizens and interest groups, despite the success stories and results delivered in the framework of certain civil society initiatives such as the 30% quota of women representation in politics.

The non-sustainability of human resources is also a direct consequence of the funding structure, characterized by limited funding and duration of projects, lack of governmental funding or willingness to "buy" cost-effective and qualitative services from civil society and an inexistent role from the private sector in the support of civil society. Another rea-

son for the lack of sustainability of human resources, as suggested by the regional focus groups, is the fact that the third sector is often used as a jumping board into politics and this phenomenon (given the high quality of CS representatives' capacities) has been particularly encouraged by political parties in the last two general elections.

Significant discrepancies are observed between civil society organisations in Tirana, CSOs in other major cities and civil society structures in small urban centres in terms of infrastructure, resources, capacities and for remote and rural areas even (in)existence of formal civic structures. From a thematic coverage perspective, Albanian civil society displays similar discrepancy trends as in geographical coverage; reflecting the predominant focus of most donors a considerable number of CSOs are very active in some areas such as human rights, EU integration, gender women, anti-corruption, decentralization etc. The lack of attention by donors' in other areas (e.g. security) explains the lack of, or the sporadic civic activity, despite the growing needs and the contribution that civil society expertise is able to deliver. The isolation and under representation in civil society organisations of rural communities (a view held by 70% of the CSO representatives interviewed in the Organisational Survey) which are essential in a predominantly agricultural economy, represents an additional example in this context.

Last but not least, perhaps one of the most problematic issues raised in the 2nd AC meeting and focus groups is the issue of good governance and transparency within civil society. The Albanian third sector shows a good performance with regard to CSI formal indicators on internal governance (such as the existence Boards). Yet, if civil society internal governance is considered as a full set of principles and democratic practices of good governance that take into account its relationship with the citizens, it is obvious that Albanian CSOs must focus particular attention to improving levels of transparency and accountability. In the past few years the issue of CS transparency, accountability and relations with the public / interest and funding agencies has often been the subject of the public discourse, manifested in the emergence of questions such as "Are CSOs accountable only to donors? What is the role of the State when civil society transparency and accountability

is concerned? What is the CSOs relationship with the public interest? Prevalence of membership or non-membership based CSOs?" etc. The CSI findings in this respect will serve to elevate the quality of the debate, the process of generating ideas and most significantly, to tangible efforts aiming at improving CS performance in this regard.

The PRACTICE OF VALUES within the sector suggests that civil society appears to be "an efficient actor in promoting democratic decision-making and governance, but which is still half way to fully practicing it internally". Concerns over the transparency of the sector and the poor performance in internal decision-making practices raise a question mark over this aspect of civil society. Nonetheless, equal opportunities for men and women, non-violence, peace and tolerance are some of Albanian civil society's strongest values.

Civil society as a sector has succeeded in minimizing the extent and activity of intolerant groups to almost inexistent levels within the third sector, yet much remains to be done at the citizens' level. As the analysis of the "Environment" and "Impact" dimensions shows, serious concerns and prejudices towards certain social groups or actions appear to be widespread among citizens.

The general PERCEPTION OF IMPACT suggests that civil society's performance leaves much space for improvement due to a variety of factors – moderate levels of dialogue, interactions and exchange with policy and decision making structures, the gap between formal civil society structures and citizens or interest groups, inability to impose genuinely local agendas etc. While the differences between internal and external actors' perceptions on the social and policy impact are evident, they all observe a higher civil society impact in those areas where donors have been more sensitive. According to the regional focus group participants, the extensive emphasis of donors on "transparency & governance" has resulted in more intensive activities by the CSOs and also in a higher impact that is "accepted" as such not only by civil society representatives but also by external actors.

An evident discrepancy exists between the internal and external actors' perceptions on civil society's

impact – with the former tending to evaluate higher the impact on social concerns, and the external actors believing that the policy impact of civil society stands higher than the social impact. Both, CSO representatives and external actors suggest that civil society has been more active in issues related to social development, support to poor and marginalized groups. External actors add to this group also issues related to the environment and EU integration.

On promoting understanding, tolerance and support for certain social groups, it seems that civil society's performance has not yet met the expectations. Most importantly, the (in)tolerance towards sexual minorities, people with HIV/AIDS or Roma stands at the same levels for members and non-members of civil society structures. On the other hand, the religious harmony prevailing in the Albanian society at large or the high degree of tolerance towards other social groups (handicapped persons, immigrants, national minorities etc.) does not appear to be an achievement of civil society, but rather a traditional and well-established value in Albanian society.

The Albanian civil society operates in a generally enabling ENVIRONMENT with concerns, or challenges, being primarily concentrated in the sphere of the socio-cultural and to a certain extent also at the socio-political context. The root causes however are not isolated within a single cluster of the general environment, rather, the identified concerns in the other dimensions of the third sector and the other various contextual settings at the society and state level appear as significant factors that "threaten" the environment, as a resource and also a target set of processes, structures and actors for civil society.

Inequalities, trust, confidence in the rule of law and democratic institutions, good governance & democratization, state efficiency, tolerance, citizens' participation, socio-economic development etc. represent some of the areas that need further attention in order to ensure a more fostering environment for civil society's activities and impact. The eventual interventions should not be isolated, rather, they must form part of a more complex and inclusive framework of actions that would improve civil society's ability and capacity to adequately "absorb" the development through better and more sustainable capacities, a stronger sense of accountability, trans-

## APPENDICES

### Annex I. List of Advisory Committee Members

AC members in alphabetical order:

- Aleksander Cipa, Association of Albanian Journalists
- Alken Myftiu, Regional Environment Center
- Alketa Leskaj, Women's Center "Hapat e Lehte"
- Andi Kananaj, MJAFT! Movement
- Antuen Skenderi, MJAFT! Movement
- Arbjan Mazniku, Agenda Institute
- Ariola Shehaj, Union of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Albania
- Arjan Cala, Tjeter Vizion
- Auron Pashaj, Institute for Development Research & Alternatives
- Blerina Metaj, Children's Rights Centre of Albania
- Brikena Puka, Vatra Center
- Brunilda Bakshevani, Open Society Foundation Albania
- Elsa Ballauri, Albanian Human Rights Group
- Enri Hide, European University of Tirana
- Entela Lako, UNDP Albania
- Eranda Ndrejoni, Gender Alliance for Development Center
- Ersida Sefa, Albanian Helsinki Committee
- Genci Terpo, Albanian Human Rights Group
- Kadri Gega, Association of Municipalities
- Leke Sokoli, Institute of Sociology
- Lutfi Dervishi, Transparency International Albania
- Mangalina Cana, NEHEMIA
- Mirjam Reci, Civil Society Development Center (Durrës)
- Nevila Jahaj, Youth Parliament (Fier)
- Oriana Arapi, Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination (Council of Ministers)
- Rasim Gjoka, Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution
- Skender Veliu, Union of Albanian Roma "Amaro-Drom"
- Zef Preci, Albanian Center for Economic Research

### Annex II. Case Studies

The CSI qualitative analysis on the Albanian civil society has also benefited from the scientific discussion and arguments of a set of case studies, one per each CSI dimension.

The following case studies are accessible online at [www.idmalbania.org](http://www.idmalbania.org)

#### 1. TRENDS OF CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN THE CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR IN ALBANIA

*Researcher: Elona Dhembo, PhD candidate*

The case study explores the current traits of active citizenry in the country, drawing a profile with reference to gender, age, and educational background. It also outlines recommendations to overcome existing obstacles to higher degrees of civic activism.

#### 2. GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN ALBANIA

*Researcher: Nevila Sokoli, PhD*

This analysis explores the role of civil society in setting priorities for the country's future, and in influencing the legislative and regulatory environment for NGOs. In assessing the relationship between the government and civil society, this case study provides a historical background of the development of the third sector in Albania, as well as considers the current state of development and recommendations for the future.

#### 3. THE INFLUENCE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES ON THE SECTORAL AND GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN ALBANIA

*Researcher: Blerta Picari, MA*

This case study explores the impact of donors' funding on the geographical and interest areas distribution of CSOs in Albania. It outlines the interlinkages in a largely donor-driven civil society with internal management and organisation of CSOs and seeks to present the key instruments that would lead to a diversified focus of civil society with an increased support from local societal actors.

#### 4. ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY: AN EVOLVING DEBATE IN A TRANSITIONAL SOCIETY

*Researcher: Edlira Peco, PhD*

This paper analyzes the concept of accountability as practiced and to the extent applied by Albanian CSOs. It argues that the strengthening of civic structures (membership-based or not) and social dialogue, as well as the development of CSO practices are all means that contribute to improved levels of accountability among Albanian civil society.

#### 5. INTERNAL DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN ALBANIA

*Researcher: Egest Gjokuta, MA*

Internally and externally perceived democracy among CSOs at large in Albania are the focus of this work. It builds on the assumption that the Albanian third sector has been relatively successful in fulfilling its mission towards the democratization of society, but it still has much to do towards strengthening of internal democracy.

### Annex III. Population Survey Methodology

The Population Survey (PS) was conducted in the September – October 2009 period through personal interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1.100 respondents over 18 years old, throughout the 36 counties (urban and rural areas) of the country. The PS sampling is based on the official data of the 2001 population census in Albania (REPOBA 2001) and also on the latest update of the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT, 2008). Interviewers, acting in teams of two persons (female & male), followed clearly prescribed rules in the selection of households and respondents within the household. In addition to the testing procedure prior to the survey implementation, the quality-checks mechanisms have consisted of testing questions introduced within the questionnaire and also of monitoring missions conducted parallel to and immediately after the interviewing phase.

The demography of the Population Survey's respondents generally conforms to the same characteristics of the Albanian population. The sampling has achieved a relatively balanced gender representation with a slight predominance of female respondents (51%). From the ethnic background perspective, 97.9% of respondents declare themselves as Albanians, while 2.1% as belonging to minority groups (Greek-0.6%, Aromanians-0.4, Roma-0.3%, Montenegrin-0.3%, Macedonians-0.2% and other-0.3%).

The largest groups of respondents (24%) represent the younger age group of 18 – 25 year old, closely followed by the group of "46 – 55 year old" with 22.7%. The smallest group (14.7%) includes respondents older than 56 years.

Table A.III.1. Population Survey Respondents according to age-group

Age-Group	Percentage (overall sample)
18 - 25 years	24.2%
26-35 years	19.6%
36-45 years	18.8%
46-55 years	22.7%
56-60 years	8.1%
Over 60 years	6.6 %

The majority of respondents (36.8%) have completed secondary legislation while 33.2% hold a university degree. Approximately 14% of respondents have completed primary education; interviewees with no formal education or incomplete primary level represent 1.9% of the sample while 5% say they have incomplete secondary education degrees. 9.1% of respondents declare that they hold higher education, non-university degrees.

An interesting finding is the religious background composition of the surveyed citizens and most significantly, the fact that religious denomination is not considered a relevant factor for the majority of them.

Figure A.III.1. shows respondents' religious background; the majority (68.2%) declare themselves as Moslem, 15.5% as Orthodox and 8.8% as Catholics. Bektashi and Protestants are represented with 4.3% and 0.4% of respondents respectively while 2.8% declare that they don't belong to any religious group.

The Population Survey also asked respondents the

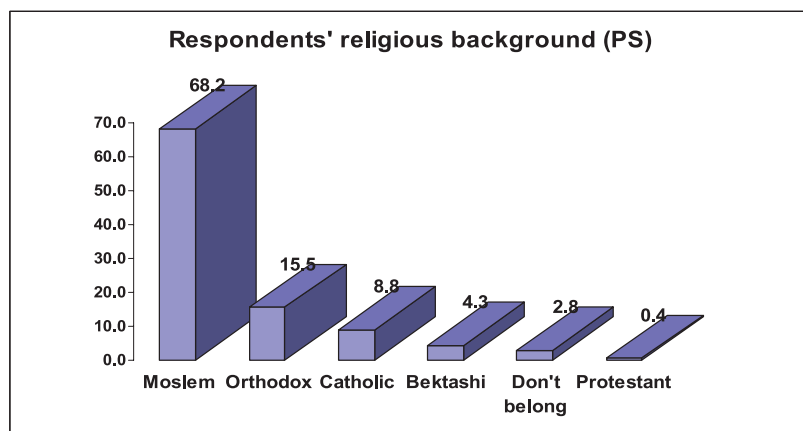


Figure A.III.1. Respondents' religious background (PS)

following question: "Regardless of whether you belong to a religious group or not, would you consider yourself as a religious person, not a religious person or an atheist"

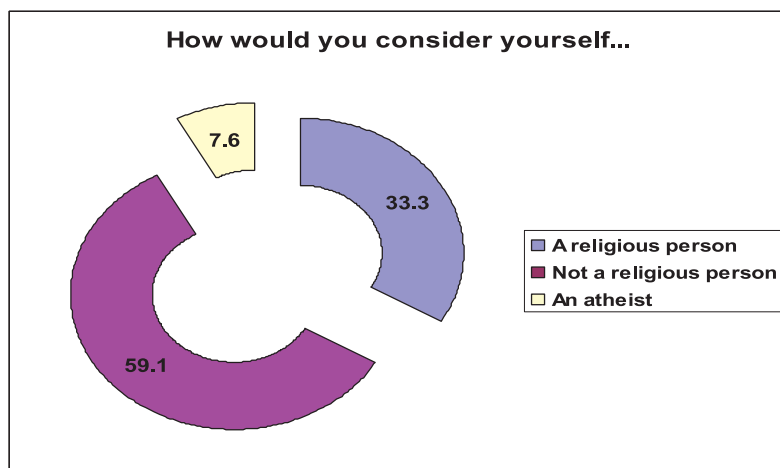


Figure A.III.2. Religious and non-religious respondents

The figure A.III.2. shows that only 33.3% of respondents consider themselves as religious persons while the majority of them say they are either "not religious" (59.1%) or and atheist (7.6%).

## Annex IV. Organisational Survey Methodology

The Organisational Survey (OS) was conducted in the September – November 2009 period with 90 civil

society organisations in Albania. A comprehensive questionnaire was used for the survey with interviews that last 35 – 45 minutes. Geographical coverage and sector representation of Albanian civil society were the main criteria for the sample selection. In addition, an appropriate representation between experienced (more than 5 years) and newly-established CSOs (up to five years) was an issue which was considered in the sampling process, with the majority of surveyed CSOs belonging to the first group.

Approximately 53% of surveyed CSOs' representatives are females and the vast majority of respondents have at least a graduate / university degree (85%). All interviewed representatives hold a senior executive position in the organisation (89%) or they are members of the board (11%).

Figure A.IV.1. shows that the majority of surveyed CSOs' representatives belong to three main age-groups: 51-60 years old (28.6%), 18 – 30 years old (26%) and 31-40 years old (24.7%). The vast majority of CSOs are located in cities (96.2%) while less than 4% are located in small towns (1.3%) or villages (2.5%).

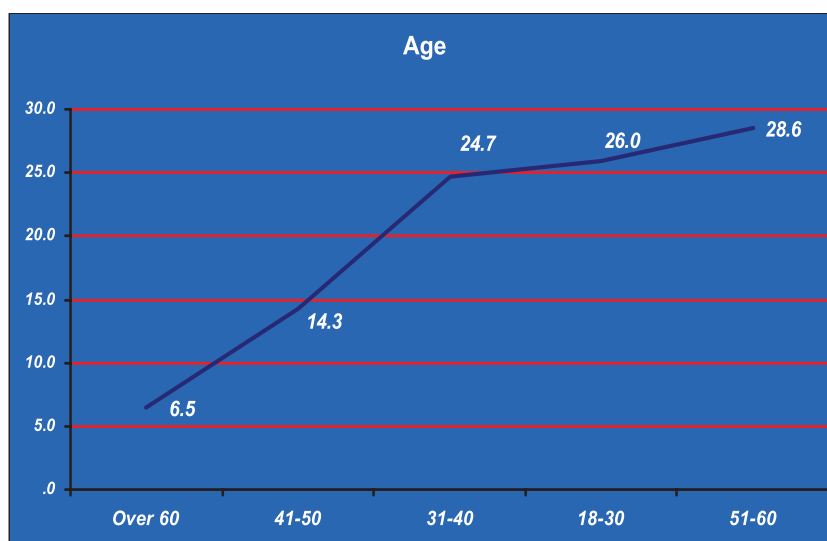


Figure A.IV.1. Age-groups among surveyed CSOs' representatives (OS)

## Annex V. External Perceptions Survey Methodology

The External Perceptions Survey (EPS) was conducted in September 2009 with 32 representatives of policy and decision makers at national and local level, media, academia, donor organisations, private sector, opinion-makers and international governmental organisations etc. A relatively simple questionnaire and surveying methodology was used in order to get to a snapshot of opinions and attitudes of respondents on the most essential issues related to civil society in Albania.

The selection of respondents was based on the suggested criteria by CIVICUS so as to have the most relevant and representative actors of key target institutions. The table below shows the structure of EPS's respondents according to the institution they represent.

Table A.V.1. EPS' respondents according to sectors

Potential respondents	No of respondents
Executive branch of government	4
Legislative branch (i.e. Parliament)	3
Judiciary branch	2
Private sector	2
Media	4
Academia	4
International Governmental Organisation	2
Donor organisation	5
EC Delegation or related mission	2
Local government, or related institution	4

A relatively acceptable level of gender balance was achieved with 48% female respondents and 52% males. More than 80% of respondents are between 31 and 50 years old, with a slight advantage of the 31 – 40 years old group of respondents (42%). Approximately 72% of respondents have a post-graduate degree or PhD while 28% with university degree. All respondents have a long experience in the sector they represent and a significant understanding of civil society.

## Annex VI. CSI Data Indicator Matrix for Albania

Dimension Sub-dimension and Indicators	Scores (%)
<b>1) Dimension: Civic Engagement</b>	<b>47.6</b>
<i>1.1 Extent of socially-based engagement</i>	22.0
1.1.1 Social membership 1	18.4
1.1.2 Social volunteering 1	18.1
1.1.3 Community engagement 1	29.4
<i>1.2 Depth of socially-based engagement</i>	29.5
1.2.1 Social membership 2	17.3
1.2.2 Social volunteering 2	26.1
1.2.3 Community engagement 2	45.2
<i>1.3 Diversity of socially-based engagement</i>	91.7
1.3.1 Diversity of socially-based engagement	91.7
<i>1.4 Extent of political engagement</i>	27.3
1.4.1 Political membership 1	23.7
1.4.2 Political volunteering 1	29.9
1.4.3 Individual activism 1	28.2
<i>1.5 Depth of political engagement</i>	35.1
1.5.1. Political membership 2	24.5
1.5.2. Political volunteering 2	34.3
1.5.3. Individual activism 2	46.5
<i>1.6 Diversity of political engagement</i>	80.0
1.6.1. Diversity of political engagement	80.0
<b>2) Dimension: Level of organisation</b>	<b>57.9</b>
2.1 Internal governance	85.2
2.1.1. Management	85.2
2.2 Infrastructure	72.7
2.2.1. Support organisations	72.7
2.3 Sectoral communication	87.6

2.3.1. Peer-to-peer communication 1	86.7
2.3.2. Peer-to-peer communication 2	88.5
2.4 Human resources	16.1
2.4.1. Sustainability of HR	16.1
2.5 Financial and technological resources	79.7
2.5.1. Financial sustainability	75.3
2.5.2. Technological resources	84.1
2.6 International linkages	
2.6.1. International linkages	6.0
<b>3) Dimension: Practice of Values</b>	<b>62.4</b>
3.1 Democratic decision-making governance	52.9
3.1.1. Decision-making	52.9
3.2 Labour regulations	61.5
3.2.1. Equal opportunities	73.2
3.2.2. Members of labour unions	34.1
3.2.3. Labour rights trainings	70.2
3.2.4. Publicly available policy for labour standards	68.4
3.3 Code of conduct and transparency	71.8
3.3.1. Publicly available code of conduct	74.1
3.3.2. Transparency	69.5
3.4 Environmental standards	57.1
3.4.1. Environmental standards	57.1
3.5 Perception of values in civil society as a whole	68.8
3.5.1. Perceived non-violence	51.9
3.5.2. Perceived internal democracy	81.6
3.5.3. Perceived levels of corruption	34.9
3.5.4. Perceived intolerance	83.0
3.5.5. Perceived weight of intolerant groups	77.9
3.5.6. Perceived promotion on non-violence and peace	83.7
<b>4) Dimension: Perception of Impact</b>	<b>49.9</b>
4.1 Responsiveness (internal perception)	50.9



4.1.1. Impact on social concern 1	41.9
4.1.2. Impact on social concern 2	59.8
<b>4.2 Social Impact (internal perception)</b>	<b>79.9</b>
4.2.1. General social impact	72.8
4.2.2. Social impact of own organisation	86.9
<b>4.3 Policy Impact (internal perception)</b>	<b>59.3</b>
4.3.1. General policy impact	66.3
4.3.2. Policy activity of own organisation	73.8
4.3.3. Policy impact of own organisation	37.9
<b>4.4 Responsiveness (external perception)</b>	<b>45.2</b>
4.4.1. Impact on social concern 1	25.8
4.4.2. Impact on social concern 2	64.5
<b>4.5 Social Impact (external perception)</b>	<b>50.3</b>
4.5.1. Social impact selected concerns	60.1
4.5.2. Social impact general	40.6
<b>4.6 Policy Impact (external perception)</b>	<b>53.2</b>
4.6.1. Policy impact specific fields 1-3	75.0
4.6.2. Policy impact general	31.3
<b>4.7 Impact of CS on attitudes</b>	<b>10.8</b>
4.7.1. Difference in trust between civil society members and non-members	1.9
4.7.2. Difference in tolerance levels between civil society members and non-members	0.0
4.7.3. Difference in public spiritedness between civil society members and non-members	8.8
4.7.4. Trust in civil society	32.4
<b>5) Contextual Dimension: Environment</b>	<b>57.9</b>
5.1 Socio-economic context	68.1

5.1.1. Basic Capabilities Index	94.3
5.1.2. Corruption	34.0
5.1.3. Inequality	68.9
5.1.4. Economic context	75.2
<b>5.2 Socio-political context</b>	<b>59.7</b>
5.2.1. Political rights and freedoms	65.0
5.2.2. Rule of law and personal freedoms	64.6
5.2.3. Associational and organisational rights	66.7
5.2.4. Experience of legal framework	59.9
5.2.5. State effectiveness	42.4
<b>5.3 Socio-cultural context</b>	<b>45.8</b>
5.3.1. Trust	7.5
5.3.2. Tolerance	41.4
5.3.3. Public spiritedness	88.5

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**CIVIL SOCIETY  
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IN SEARCH OF  
CITIZENS & IMPACT