

DELIBERATIVE POLLING 'SHQIPËRIA N'KUVENDIM'

FINAL REPORT



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Tirana, February 2022

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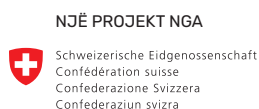
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"Support to Parliament and Civic Education in Albania" (PACEP) is a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) implemented by the OSCE Presence in Albania and the National Democratic Institute (NDI)."

This activity was held by IDM in the framework of PACEP project, in consultation with the Center for Deliberative Democracy (CDD) at Stanford University (USA).

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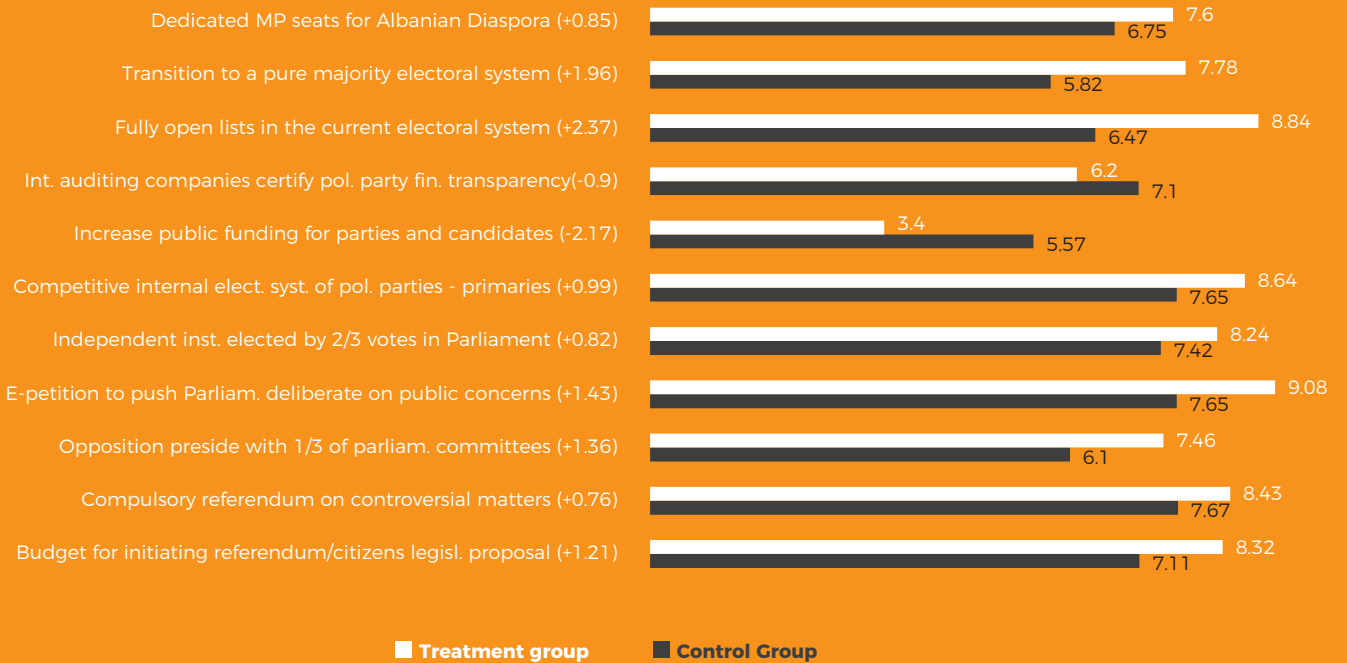
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A deliberative polling exercise helps us to understand the dynamics of public perceptions and attitudes to policymaking, and the extent to which they are influenced by information and knowledge, including factors that may prevent such a shift in public opinion. Out of a total of twenty proposed policy measures aimed at reform or addressing important concerns within the targeted topics, in more than half of them (eleven), significant differences were identified between the treatment group (who were able to discuss and receive further information from experts and briefings) and the control group participants. This means that participants who acquired new knowledge and interacted with their peers and independent experts exhibited different attitudes and positions to those who did not.

Treatment group participants who had the opportunity to access new information through deliberation with their peers and interaction with independent experts and briefing materials at the deliberative workshop (November 2021) had very different attitudes compared to the control group on topics such as party democracy, direct democracy mechanisms and parliamentary oversight. Interestingly, the new information seems to have influenced participants to be more in favour of a specific statement (proposal) than control group participants for most of the policy measures (statements) presented by the survey. However, for a few proposals, the shift was in the opposite direction and treatment group participants were less supportive than the control group respondents. Figure 1 gives a snapshot of the apparent changes in attitude generated through deliberation and more information for treatment group participants.

FIGURE 1: MEAN SCORES FOR CHANGED ATTITUDES – TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP



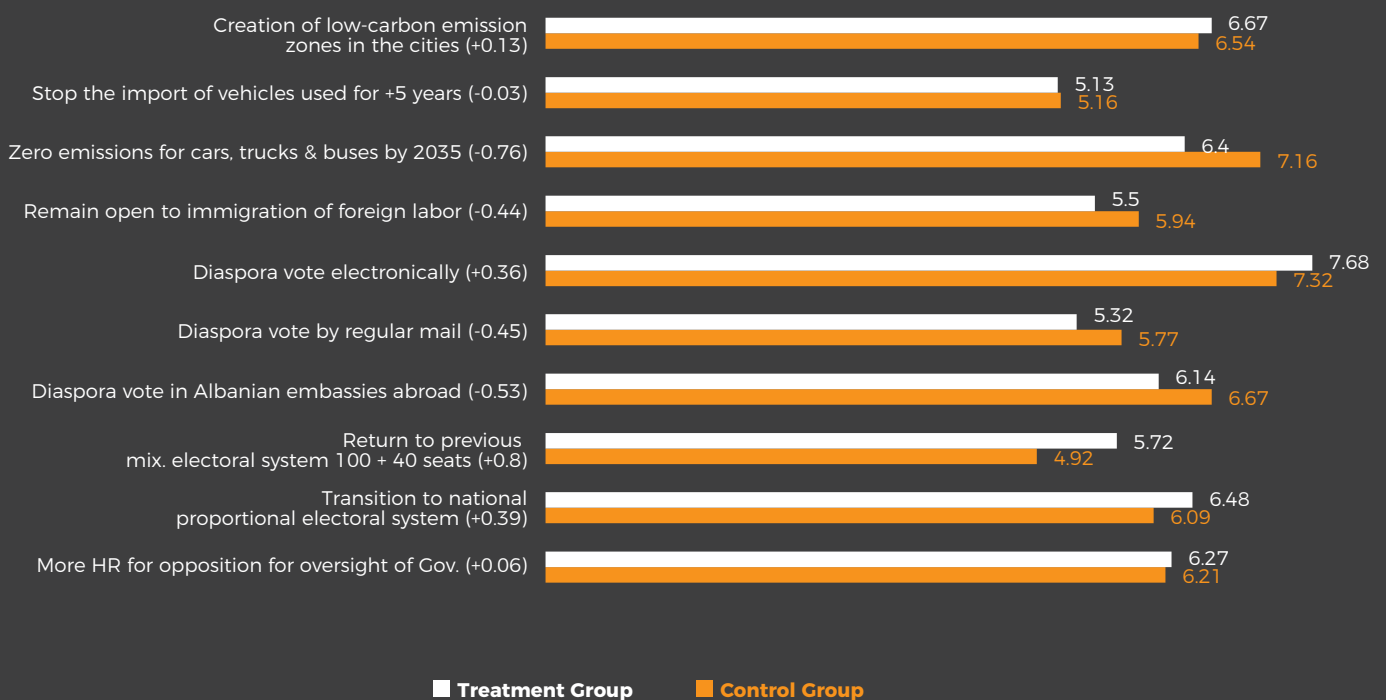
Note: Survey respondents were asked to rate each proposed measure (statements) on a scale from 0 – strongly oppose, to 10 – strongly support.

On the other hand, a significant change in attitudes was not observed regarding topics that are relatively new in the public discourse in Albania, such as climate change and economic immigration. On these topics, the average mean for most of these proposals ranges around 5 to 6 on a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is strongly oppose and 10 is strongly support. This was not the case with most of the statements which witnessed a shift in the positions of participants from the treatment group, whose average mean was between the values of 7 and 9.

Treatment group participants did not exhibit a change in attitude in relation to most of the proposals about electoral processes – one of the most polarising topics of the last three decades which has sparked fierce political and public debate.

Figure 2 shows the average mean and the statistically insignificant difference between control and treatment group respondents for each of the proposed statements.

FIGURE 2: MEAN SCORES FOR UNCHANGED ATTITUDES OF RESPONDENTS – TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP



Note: Survey respondents were asked to rate each proposed measure (statements) on a scale from 0 – strongly oppose, to 10 – strongly support.

On the issue of citizen engagement with parliamentary activities, there were differences between treatment and control group participants on all three proposed statements. Namely, treatment group respondents showed higher support for - “introduce online petitions to pressure the parliament to deliberate on important public concerns”; “establish the obligation of holding referendums on controversial matters”; and “a dedicated budget to cover costs of initiating a referendum or legislative proposals by citizens”.

Similar differences are noted for two out of three proposals on strengthening parliamentary oversight of the executive. Specifically, treatment group participants reported greater support for the proposals to - “enable the opposition to preside over the work of at least 1/3 of parliamentary committees”; and “election of heads of the independent institutions by a qualified majority (2/3) of the votes in the Parliament”.

On the topic of improving accountability and internal democracy of political parties, the data

from the treatment and control groups confirmed significant differences between the two on all three proposed measures - *“Introduce competitive mechanisms for internal election system of political parties (e.g., primaries for their candidates in local and national elections)”*; *“Increasing public funding for parties and candidates”*; and *“Political parties’ financial transparency must be certified by international auditing companies”*. Interestingly, for the last two statements, the experiment suggested that more information provided to treatment group participants at the “Shqiperia n’Kuvendim” event influenced them to show lower support than control group respondents.

Research data suggest that the attitudes of treatment group participants differ from those of control group participants for two, out of four options for change of the current electoral system. There were no significant differences in the opinions of either group on the propositions to - *“Transition from the current regional proportional to a national proportional electoral system (with one national list)”* and *“Return to the previous electoral system with the election of 100 MPs on a majority system and 40 MPs on a proportional system”*. On the other hand, treatment group respondents showed higher support than those in the control group for proposals to - *“Introduce fully open lists in the current electoral system”* and *“Transition to a pure majority system (MP of each constituency is elected by a majority of citizens’ votes)”*.

Three out of four methods for enabling diaspora voting showed no significant differences, based on the t-test. The level of support for *“Vote at Albania’s diplomatic missions abroad”*, *“Vote by regular mail”* and *“Electronic voting”* remained unaffected by participant’s receiving objective information and knowledge about it. The option of having *“Dedicated MP seats for which the Albanian Diaspora votes and gets elected”* displayed significant differences between the two groups of the social experiment. Namely, treatment group participants supported this option more strongly than their peers in the control group, who did not receive more information through briefing materials or deliberation with peers and independent experts.

The topic of climate change remains fairly new in Albanian public discourse and citizens may need more time and information to process its challenges.

On a scale from 0 – fully oppose to 10 – fully support, all participants tended to remain around the neutral values of the axis (mean = 5 to 6) on most of the proposed measures such as to *“Mandate zero emission for cars, trucks, and buses by 2035”*, *“Ban the import of used vehicles older than 5 years”*, *“Establish low-emission zones in major urban centres”*. Furthermore, the t-test revealed no significant differences between the treatment and control group respondents on any of the proposed measures to reduce the impact of climate change.

The data from the treatment and control groups, indicate a more conservative attitude towards the immigration of foreign workers. No significant differences were observed for the proposal - *“Albania should remain open to the immigration of foreign labour”*.

In conclusion, one of the key lessons learnt in this first deliberative polling exercise in Albania is that information and the opportunity to discuss and exchange views is key for developing informed opinions and building consensus. While consensus may be hard to come by on highly polarising and politicised topics in the short term, the benefits of informed deliberations in the medium to long term are invaluable as they help to develop a culture of critical thinking.

INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) held the first national deliberative polling exercise,¹ culminating in a deliberative workshop held on 18–21 November 2021 in Tirana. This workshop brought together a microcosm of Albania, in the form of 110 ordinary citizens, to deliberate on some of the most debated and/or most topical issues in public and political discourse in the country, such as parliamentary oversight, citizen participation in decision-making, internal party democracy, electoral reform, diaspora voting, climate change and economic immigration.

The group of 110 participants, hereinafter the ‘treatment group’, was selected from a sample of 1200 citizens who took part in a nationally representative survey previously administered by IDM during 8–18 October 2021. The national survey asked citizens a range of questions related to the above topics and tested their attitudes towards possible solutions. In addition to the treatment group participants, who attended the deliberative event “Shqipëria n’Kuvendim”, another 110 ordinary citizens were selected at random from the national survey sample and did not participate the event, to act as the ‘control group’. Upon completion of the “Shqipëria n’Kuvendim” workshop, both groups’ participants were asked to complete the same questionnaire that was used for the national survey in early October 2021. The treatment group had the opportunity to deliberate on the topics and access further information through briefing materials and panels of independent experts during the four-day “Shqipëria n’Kuvendim” event. The briefing materials were designed by a team of experts and reviewed by the Deliberative Polling Advisory Board to ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the information provided to participants. Treatment group participants were sent the briefing material in advance to inform their small group discussions on arguments for and against policy proposals in each topic.

Questions raised in the course of these discussions were addressed by experts in the plenary sessions. At the end of the process, the participants completed the same questionnaire as they did during the national survey.

This report explores the shift in attitudes that can be brought about by access to information by examining the differences in perceptions between the participants of the deliberative poll and control group participants. First the report will set the scene by discussing the findings of the national survey on a number of issues for each target topic. It will then focus on specific policy proposals in each area (e.g. mechanisms to improve parliamentary oversight, citizen participation or ways to implement diaspora voting etc.) asked by the survey and examine the perceptions and attitudes of the treatment and control group participants. This will be based on a comparative analysis of the t-test results and measuring statistical differences to determine whether participants appear to have been affected by access to new information and knowledge (treatment group) or lack of it (control group).

This report is supplemented by a set of seven thematic briefs which present the national perceptions and attitudes of citizens (national survey) on each of the target themes – citizen participation, parliamentary oversight, internal party democracy, electoral reform, diaspora voting, climate change and economic immigration. These comprise the main body of knowledge generated through the deliberative polling exercise, which serves the PACEP project to inform parliamentary stakeholders on possible avenues for reform in each of the target themes and also on ways to boost citizens’ engagement in parliamentary activities and decision-making.

1 Albania’s first deliberative poll was carried out thanks to the collaboration between the IDM and the Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University (USA), within the framework of PACEP, a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by the NDI – National Democratic Institute.

WHAT IS A DELIBERATIVE POLL?

Pioneered by James Fishkin at Stanford University's Center for Deliberative Democracy, deliberative polling is an attempt to use public opinion research in a new and constructive way. Fishkin and his colleagues Robert C. Luskin and Alice Siu have conducted deliberative polls in 24 countries worldwide, and deliberative polls have been conducted more than 100 times in 29 countries around the world.²

Deliberative polling is a unique form of political consultation that combines techniques of public opinion research and public deliberation to reveal what public opinion would be on a particular issue if citizens were given a chance to become more informed. The deliberative poll seeks to account for the preferences and opinions of citizens before and after they have had an opportunity to arrive at considerate judgments based on balanced information and discussion with fellow citizens.

2 For more information see: <http://cdd.stanford.edu>

METHODOLOGY

This deliberative poll relies on three surveys – a nationally representative survey with 1200 respondents, a treatment group survey with 110 respondents and a control group survey with another 110 respondents – using the same questionnaire as the main tool of data collection. The national survey took place prior to the other two surveys and was designed to capture the public perceptions at the national level. It was followed by an informative four-day workshop “Shqipëria n’Kuvendim” which offered a group of 110 respondents randomly selected from the national survey’s sample the opportunity to access expert knowledge and information. At the end of this event, the participants in this ‘treatment group’ responded to the same questionnaire that was previously used in the national survey. Parallel to the treatment group survey, another 110 respondents were randomly selected from the national survey’s sample to respond again to the same questionnaire. This formed the ‘control group’ which enabled the analysis of a microcosm of respondents similar to the treatment group for comparative purposes.

NATIONAL SURVEY

The national survey employed a representative sample of the Albanian population in which respondents were selected at random from across the country’s municipalities and administrative units. Employing a weighted, nationally representative sample allows us to extrapolate for the Albanian population as a whole. Consequently, the statistical significance level of the sample is described as follows: for an adult resident Albanian citizen

population of 2,220,569,³ with a sample size of 1200 respondents, for a confidence level of 95%, the confidence interval is ± 2.83 ; and for a confidence level of 99%, the confidence interval is ± 3.72 .⁴

To determine the quota size of each of the counties, the population of Albania was retrieved from the civil registry and the number of residents of each of the counties on 1 January 2021 was retrieved from the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT). Since the number of Albanian residents over the age of 18 changed by only 0.31% between 2019 and 2021, it did not statistically affect the sample size by county and the confidence interval mentioned above. The sample of 1200 respondents was distributed across all 61 municipalities of the 12 counties. Subsequently, distribution by county was adjusted to select only the adult population (aged 18 years and older) and to employ quota controls for gender. As INSTAT does not define age groups as either under 18 years old or over 18 years old, a linear interpolation technique was used.

The population representation coefficient⁵ for Albanian men over 18 as of 1 January 2019 was determined at 0.779325197 and for Albanian women at 0.790087789. The total population representation coefficient for Albanians over 18 years old was 0.78472508614746.⁶ As an illustration, Table 1 shows the distribution per county of the Albanian resident population over 18 years and the sample size per county.

3 See Table 1 for details.

4 The confidence interval (for statistics of the whole population estimated in our study) is a range of values that you can be (95% / 99%) confident that contains the true mean of the estimations of the parameters on the population. In our case this range of values is the confidence interval ($\theta - 2.83$; $\theta + 2.83$) for any θ given estimation.

5 The population representation coefficient is the ratio of the total population after subtracting the number of individuals under 18 years from the total population. The same (by analogy) method is used to for the coefficient in the case of division by gender.

6 This means that about 78.4% of the Albanian population were over 18 years old as of 1 January 2019.

Table 1: Resident population on 1 January 2019 and 1 January 2021 and sample size per county

COUNTY	RESIDENT POPULATION, 2019	RESIDENT POPULATION OVER 18, 2019*)	RESIDENT POPULATION OVER 18, 2021**)	SAMPLE SIZE PER COUNTY		
				Men	Women	Total
Berat	125,157	96,788	93,735	25	26	51
Dibër	118,948	91,986	89,210	25	23	48
Durrës	290,126	224,364	229,163	62	62	124
Elbasan	274,982	212,653	208,929	56	57	113
Fier	294,747	227,938	224,433	61	60	121
Gjirokastrë	61,423	47,500	45,538	12	13	25
Korçë	207,889	160,767	158,666	42	43	85
Kukës	76,594	59,233	58,374	16	15	31
Lezhë	125,195	96,817	94,699	25	26	51
Shkodër	202,895	156,905	154,730	41	43	84
Tiranë	895,160	692,257	715,818	190	197	387
Vlorë	189,311	146,400	147,273	40	40	80
Total	2,862,427	2,213,610	2,220,569	595	605	1,200

The selection was then weighted according to the most recent age groups published by INSTAT (at the time the lot was drawn) which were the data for 2020.

The results calculated and published in this analysis are therefore weighted according to two dimensions: geographical distribution of the population and age group.

The national survey data enable this report to present and analyse Albanians' perceptions and attitudes on various policy options for each of the seven target themes – citizen participation, parliamentary oversight, internal party democracy, electoral reform, diaspora voting, climate change and economic immigration.

TREATMENT GROUP SURVEY AND DELIBERATION AT 'SHQIPERIA N'KUVENDIM'

The national survey also asked respondents about their willingness to take part in a four-day event running 18–21 November 2021 in Tirana, based on the model of deliberative polling that measures public opinion on the above-mentioned topics before and after the event. Based on the voluntary expression of interest and contact details provided, a total of 10% (120 participants) of the national survey respondents were recruited for the deliberative polling event. A follow-up communication was carried out with these respondents providing details on the event to ensure their participation two weeks prior to the event. A total of 110 individuals, namely the 'treatment group', participated during the entire event and 108 of these filled in the same questionnaire that was used in the national survey. During the event, the participants were divided into eight groups with an almost equal number of participants, where each group had the

best possible representation of individuals across different ages, incomes and gender. This event gave them the opportunity to discuss, enhance their knowledge through interacting with experts and to express opinions on various proposals tackled by the national survey questionnaire and the briefing materials prepared for them.

CONTROL GROUP SURVEY

Parallel to the deliberation event (November 2021) another group of around 110 respondents were selected from the national survey's sample to form the control group. They were selected based on the same characteristics of the treatment group sample in terms of area of residence, gender distribution and age groups. The same volume was chosen to achieve the same level of representation (refer to statistical bias), to avoid the potential need for weights as well as to avoid any obstacles to statistical comparison between 'control' and 'treatment group' data. The control group survey aimed to account for changes in perception and attitudes that could have occurred in the time period elapsing between the administrations of the surveys. (For more information see Appendix II. Demographic composition of the treatment and control group).

T-TEST FOR INDEPENDENT VARIABLES OF TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUP SURVEYS

To compare the treatment and control group participants' attitudes, to identify and statistically measure the differences between the two, the research employs the 't-test for independent variables'. More specifically, the t-test is used to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the associated sample means are significantly different or not.

This analysis is conducted only on twenty such variables in the questionnaire – statements or proposed measures – and only for survey data of treatment and control group participants. The statements contain specific proposals and/or measures addressing issues under the target topic (electoral reform, party democracy, climate change etc.). The purpose of the treatment and control group surveys is to analyse how respondents' attitudes and support for these proposals may differ, depending on whether they have received objective information by attending the 'Shqipëria n'Kuvendim' deliberative workshop (treatment group) or not (control group).

FINDINGS OF ALBANIA'S FIRST DELIBERATIVE POLLING EXERCISE

01

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PARLIAMENT

Citizen engagement and public consultation are critical drivers of effective decision-making processes and trust in public institutions. A low level of citizen-participation and public distrust in institutions hampers the transparency and efficiency of policies while also discouraging citizen engagement in decision-making.

In 2020 there was a significant drop in public interest in participating in decision-making, from 57% in 2019 to 47%. Most Albanians felt that they do not have sufficient opportunities to participate in the decision-making of public institutions.⁷ On a more positive note, the IDM's Survey of Political Engagement in Albania highlighted that, despite the decreased level of citizen engagement, Albanians show more readiness to act on issues that matter to them.⁸

The referendum is one of the most important instruments through which citizens can exercise their sovereignty directly. However, only three referendums have been held in Albania over the past three decades. Article 150 of the constitution anticipates the adoption of a new law on referendums, but such a law is still missing.⁹ As of 2020, a draft law on referendums, prepared by civil society organisations and sponsored by an MP, has been deposited with the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Issues, which should encourage greater engagement. Another constitutional instrument for citizen participation is the citizens' legislative initiative. This and other fora for civic participation could also reverse trends of poor engagement and public distrust.

NATIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS

This report's national survey data confirms the citizens' disillusionment with politics in general. Albanians tend to disagree with the statement "MPs and politicians care a lot about what people like me think" (N=1193). On a scale from 0 (strongly disagree), to 10 (strongly agree), the mean average is 2.31 and the standard deviation¹⁰ is 2.91. Similarly, the national survey results show considerably higher rates of disagreement with the statement "*Ordinary people have an influence over the work of the Parliament*" (N=1194). On the same scale, the average mean here is 2.62 and an SD of 2.98.

When asked "*How much do you trust the Parliament to do what is right?*" the majority of respondents reported 'no trust' (40%) or 'little trust' (29.2%). Less than one-third of them had either 'a lot' (6.7%) or 'a great deal' (1.3%) of trust that Parliament is doing what is right (see Figure 3).

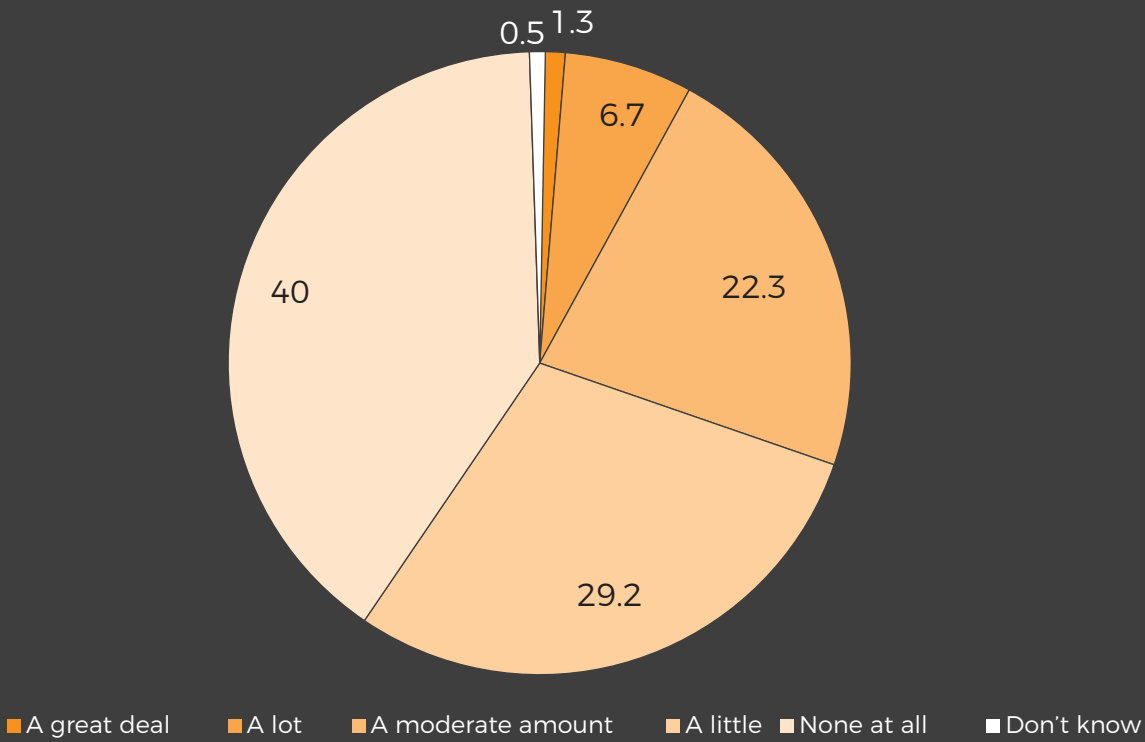
7 IDM, Trust in Governance 2020, available at: <https://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/IDM-OpinionPoll-2020-EN.pdf>

8 IDM, Survey Findings of Political Engagement in Albania 2020, available at: <https://idmalbania.org/survey-of-political-engagement-in-albania-2020/>

9 See Article 150, Constitution of Rep. of Albania, available at <https://www.parlament.al/Kuvendi/Kushtetuta>

10 The abbreviation form of standard deviation is SD.

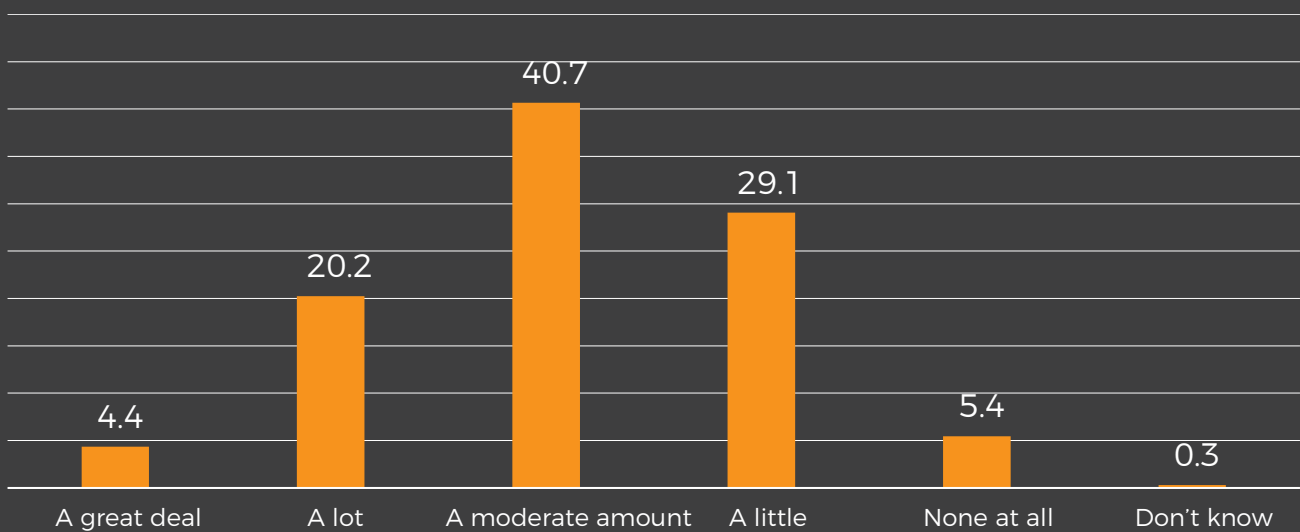
FIGURE 3: HOW MUCH DO YOU TRUST THE PARLIAMENT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT? (N=1192)



Albanians were split when asked how much they feel that can understand what is going on in politics and parliament. A quarter of them (24.6%) felt that they understand 'a great deal' (4.4%) or 'a lot' (20.2%); almost a third of Albanians reported 'a little' (29%) or

'none at all' (5.4%); and another 40.7% felt that they understand a moderate amount of what's going on in politics and Parliament (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4 : HOW MUCH DO YOU FEEL YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON IN POLITICS AND PARLIAMENT? (%) (N= 1196)



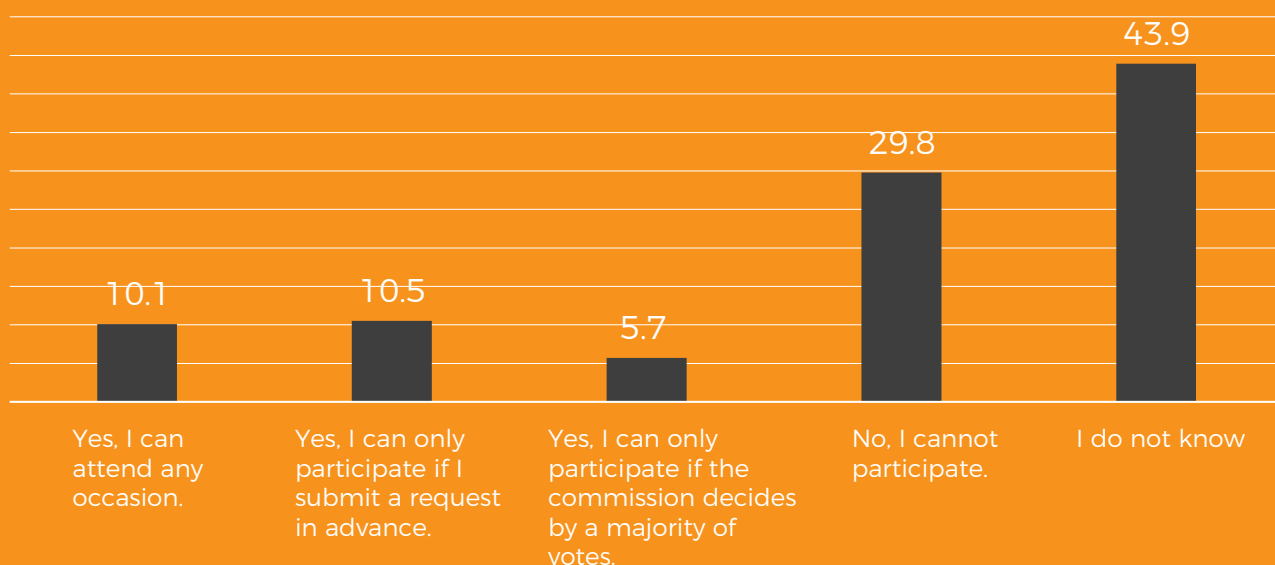
The above trend is also reflected in the approval rate for the statement, *“Most public policy issues and laws are so complicated that ordinary people can’t understand what’s going on”* (N=1183). On a scale of 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree) the dominant answers rest in the middle of the axis. Specifically, the national survey data suggest a mean of 6.81 and SD of 3.18 for this statement.

Yet, regardless of people’s abilities to understand parliamentary activity or politics in general, survey respondents had no doubt that consulting citizens and interest groups would improve parliamentary performance. Respondents (N=1186) showed a

relatively high approval for the proposal *“Mandatory consultation with citizens and interest groups for all draft laws regardless of costs and time required”* as an instrument for improving the work and performance of parliament – on a scale from 0 (strongly oppose) to 10 (strongly support), Albanians rated this measure with a mean of 7.86 and SD of 2.41.

The data shows that Albanians do not have adequate information on either the instruments or access points for political participation, in order to influence parliamentary activity (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5: ACCORDING TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE PARLIAMENT, CAN YOU AS A CITIZEN PARTICIPATE IN THE STANDING PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE MEETINGS? (N= 689)

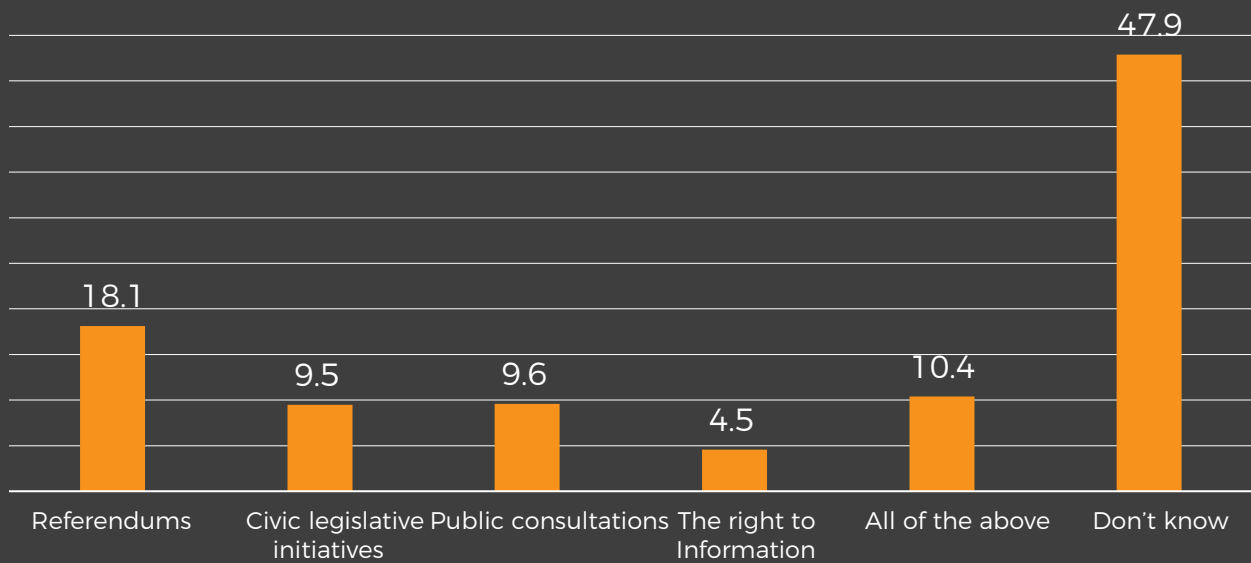


Only one in ten respondents were aware that according to the parliamentary regulations they can attend meetings of standing committees with a simple request submitted ahead of the meeting. Almost 90% of Albanians said that they either don’t know (43.9%) that they could attend such meetings or showed they had received incorrect information on whether and how they can participate.

Less than one-fifth of national survey respondents chose the right answer when asked to identify which vehicles for citizen participation had not yet been legislated for. Namely, only 18.1% correctly identified that currently there is no law adopted on the referendums in Albania. Over 80% of Albanians either didn’t know (47.9%) at all or had incorrect information on the lack of a dedicated law for other engagement initiatives.

While generally unclear about the existence or otherwise of a law on referendums and civic legislative initiative, Albanians would prefer a unified law for both types of instrument. On a scale from 0 (strongly support), to 10 (strongly oppose), national survey respondents (N=1163) were generally in favour (with a mean of 7.84) the proposal of- *“having a unified law on referendums and citizens’ legislative initiatives”*.

FIGURE 6 : ALBANIA HAS NOT ADOPTED A LAW ON... (%) (N=638)



The national survey asked respondents to rate – 0 (strongly disagree), and 10 (strongly agree) – a few proposals for improving the engagement of citizens with parliamentary activities. Overall, surveyed

respondents showed a relatively high degree of support for proposed measures to strengthen citizen engagement with decision-making. Table 2 shows the national survey results on each statement.

Table 2: Support for the proposed measures on citizen engagement in the parliamentary decision-making (national survey)

VARIABLES	N		MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
	VALID	MISSING				
A dedicated budget (from public funds) to cover costs of initiating a referendum or legislative proposals by citizens	1169	31	6.84	2.828	0	10
Establishing the obligation of holding referendums on controversial matters	1177	23	7.67	2.526	0	10
Establish online petition with voter identification as an instrument for citizens to force Parliament to deliberate on an important public concern	1180	20	7.82	2.510	0	10

Note: scale from 0 – strongly disagree; to 10 – strongly agree.

The following section analyses the support for these same proposals by deliberative polling participants

who had access to information and expertise on the proposals (treatment group respondents) and those

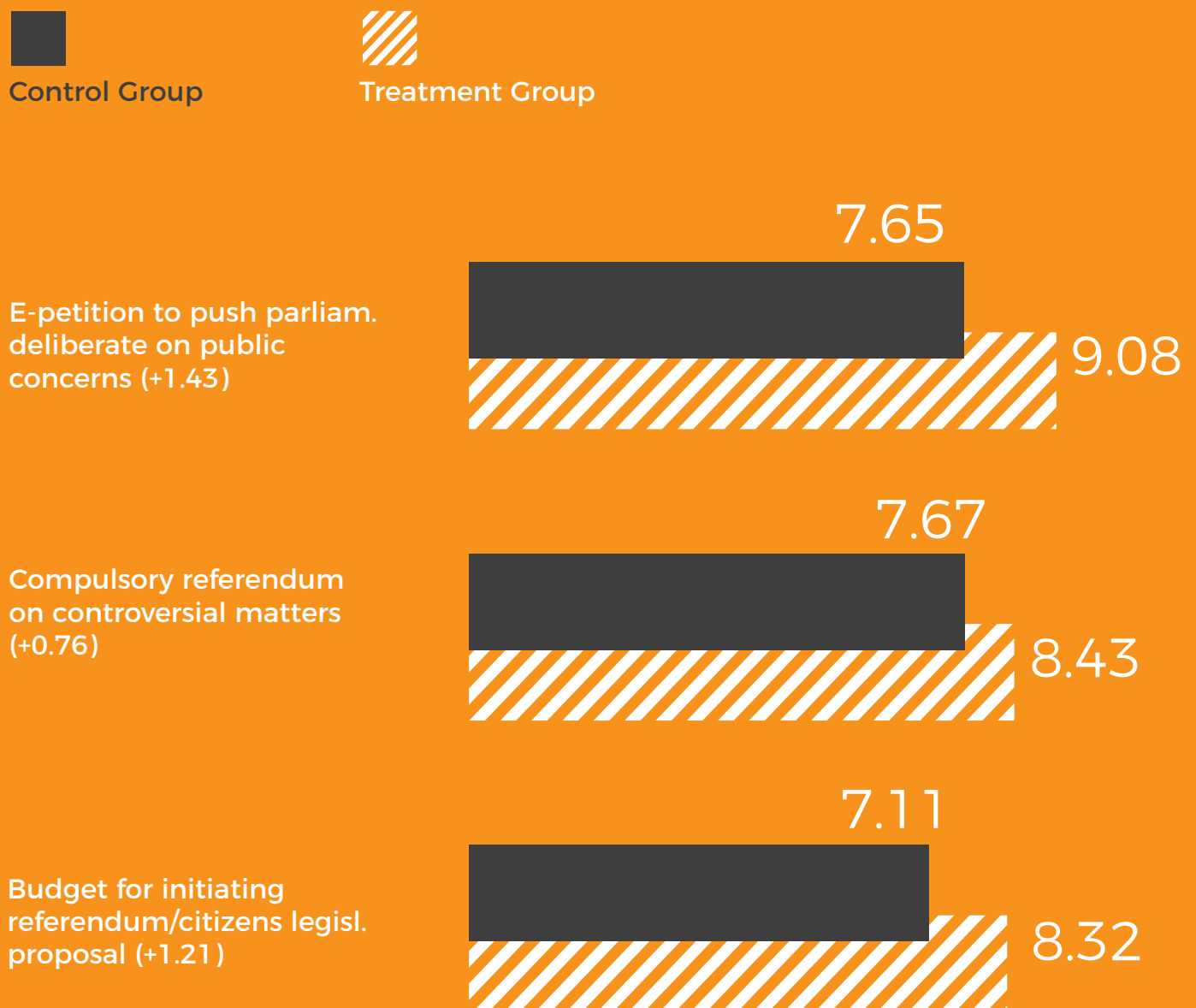
who didn't (control group respondents), and the discrepancies therein.

TREATMENT GROUP VS. CONTROL GROUP

The comparative analysis of data from the treatment and control group surveys shows differences

between the views and perceptions of participants in the deliberative exercise on all three proposed measures to improve citizen participation. Results suggest that the group who attended the deliberative workshop and were informed through briefing materials and expert panel discussions showed a higher approval rate for the proposals than the control group.

FIGURE 7: MEAN SCORES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROPOSALS - TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP



PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Parliamentary oversight is one of the most pressing aspects for improving the performance of the Parliament of Albania, and the European Commission (EC) annual reports for the country have repeatedly urged that it be strengthened and enhanced.¹¹ The 2019 political crisis and the mass resignation of opposition MPs from parliament only underscored the obvious underperformance of the legislative branch in its oversight of the executive and the poor checks and balance mechanisms. The Albanian parliament and government are dominated by one political party and a party leader whose role was strengthened significantly with the 2008 constitutional amendments.¹²

Several independent institutions such as the Chair of the High Inspectorate for the Declaration and Audit of Assets and Conflict of Interest (HIDAACI), the Supreme State Audit (ALSAI), the People's Advocate (or ombudsman) and others are tasked with the duty to keep government agencies and government-run processes accountable. Their independence is of paramount importance for their role in the system of checks and balances.

NATIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS

Albanians are not familiar with instruments of parliamentary oversight over the executive. When asked about their familiarity with parliamentary control and oversight of government, the majority of national survey respondents reported being "a little" (35.7%) or "not at all" (20.4 %) familiar. Another 33% of respondents reported moderate familiarity with the oversight function of the Parliament.

"A dedicated budget (from public funds) to cover costs of initiating a referendum or legislative proposals by citizens"

There was a significant increase in the support for this proposal among the treatment group participants compared with the control respondents. In particular, the treatment group had a higher mean value (8.32) and SD (2.51) than the control group (mean, 7.11 and SD 2.38). The t-test confirms the differences between the two groups with the treatment group displaying a higher mean than control group.

"Establishing the obligation of holding referendums on controversial matters"

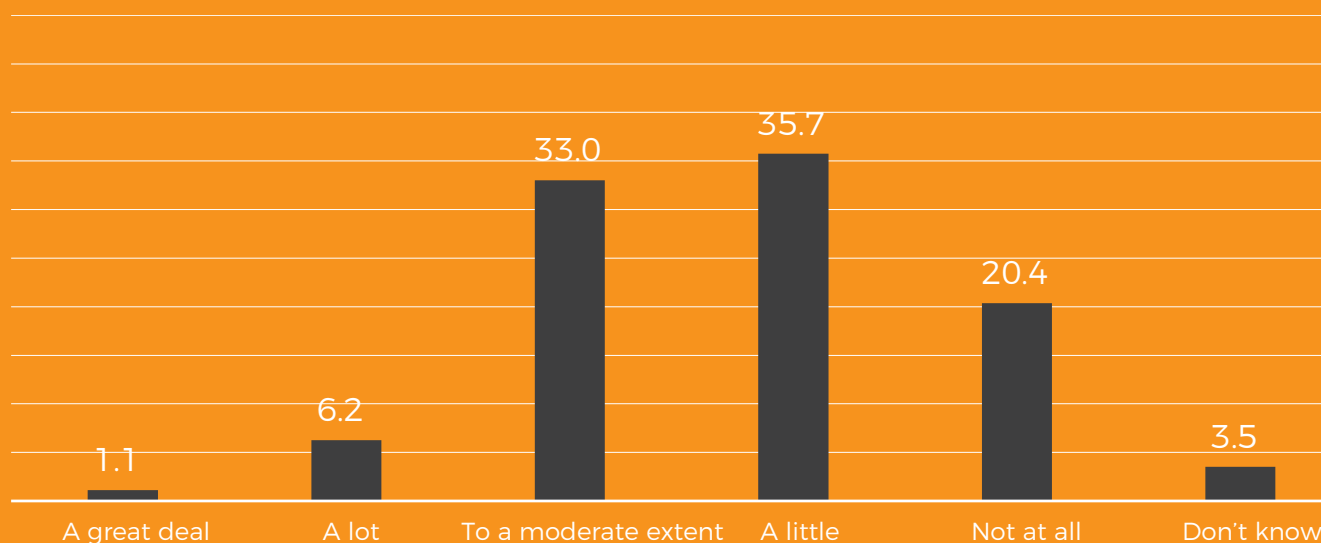
The multifaceted nature of holding referendums was analysed thoroughly during the deliberation event. The treatment group came to give a higher approval rate for this statement compared to the control group, with a treatment group mean of 8.43 and SD of 2.51, and a control group mean of 7.67 and SD of 2.06. The t-test showed that there are differences between the two groups, as the treatment group has a higher mean value than the control group.

"Establish an online petition with voter identification as an instrument for citizens to force Parliament to deliberate on an important public concern"

Lastly, this proposal also gained higher approval rates from the participants of the experiment. Given the use of digital participation, this proposal constitutes an additional tool to increase citizen engagement. In this case, the treatment group had a mean of 9.08 and SD of 1.94, while the control group had a mean of 7.65 and SD of 2.58. Once again, the differences between the two groups were confirmed as the treatment group exhibited higher levels of support than the control group.

- 11 See European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Albania Report, 19 October 2021, p. 15, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/albania-report-2021_en
- 12 The 2008 constitutional amendments have particularly strengthened the role of the prime minister and party leader. They were justified at the time as a way of promoting political stability and sparing unnecessary political crises.

FIGURE 8: HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL AND OVERSIGHT ROLE OF GOVERNMENT? (%) (NATIONAL SURVEY) N= 1156



Although most of them are unfamiliar with it, parliamentary oversight was deemed to be very important by survey respondents. On a scale of 0 (extremely unimportant) to 10 (extremely important), respondents were asked to rate the importance of parliamentary control and oversight of the government in general. The national survey data showed that Albanians (N= 1176) rate parliamentary oversight of the government as very important with an average mean of 7.84 and SD of 2.50.

However, when asked about the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight of the government in practical terms, respondents' assessment is rather pessimistic. On a scale of 0 to 10, 0 (extremely ineffective) to 10 (extremely effective), the respondents displayed a rating with a mean of 3.85 and SD of 2.92.

The national survey respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from 0 (strongly oppose) to 10 (strongly support), their preferences and support for few measures as means to improve democracy in Albania. (See Table 3).

Table 3 : Support for the proposed measures to strengthen parliamentary oversight

VARIABLES	N		MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
	VALID	MISSING				
Enable the opposition to preside over the work of at least 1/3 of parliamentary committees	1143	57	6.45	2.997	0	10
Provide the opposition with more human resources to exercise control and oversight over the government	1171	29	6.08	3.085	0	10
The heads of the independent institutions are elected by a qualified majority (2/3) of the votes in Parliament.	1157	43	7.83	2.487	0	10

Note: scale of 0 - strongly oppose; 10 - strongly support

As the above data indicates, Albanians tend to be more supportive of the third proposal which relies

on the role of independent oversight institutions, than the measures which centre around the

parliamentary opposition. This suggests a shift towards a greater role for the independent institutions to strengthen oversight of the government. This is also confirmed by support for the statement: *"Increase and strengthen the competencies of the independent institutions (e.g., KLSH, the People's Advocate, etc.) in controlling the government, including punitive measures (e.g., fines)"* was rated with a higher average mean of 8.55 and SD of 2.21.

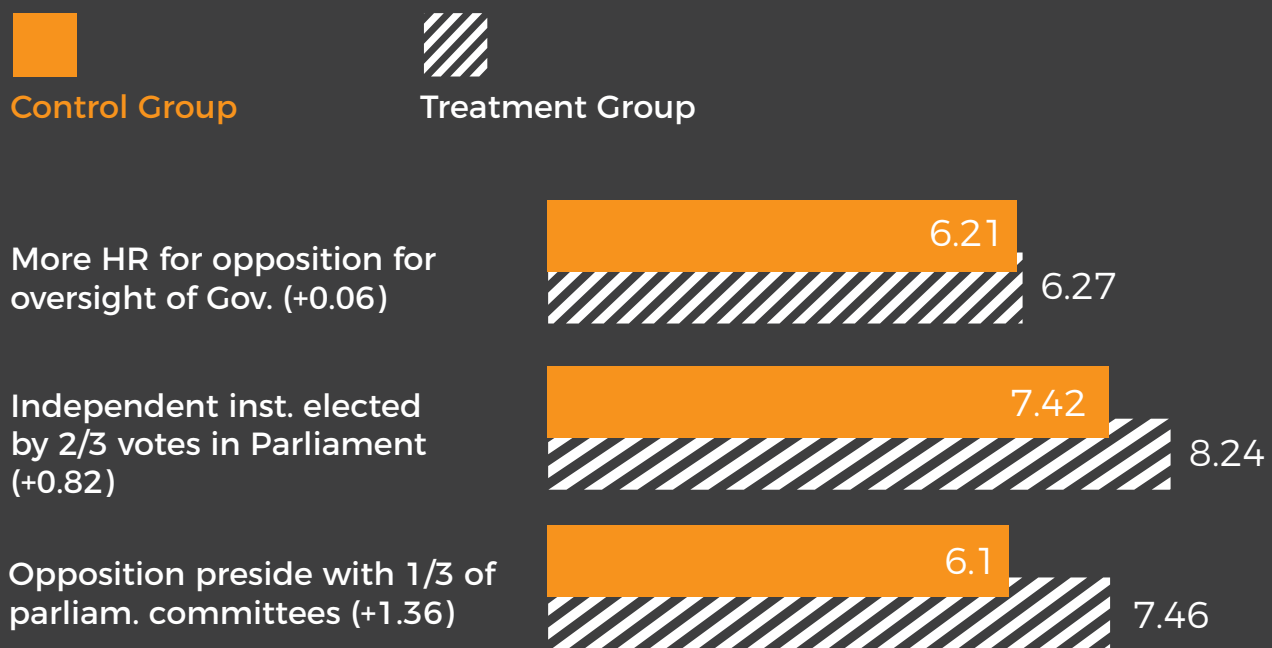
The poor performance of the opposition in general over the past few years, as confirmed by other sources,¹³ may explain such attitudes among Albanians. The IDM's Survey of Political Engagement data showed that 71% of Albanians were dissatisfied

by the work of the parliamentary opposition.¹⁴

TREATMENT GROUP VS. CONTROL GROUP

The comparative analysis of the data from the treatment and control groups' surveys shows that the perceptions and attitudes of treatment group respondents differ from those of participants who did not access information (control group). This is the case for two out of three proposals for strengthening the parliamentary oversight and democracy in Albania.

FIGURE 9: MEAN SCORES FOR STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT - TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP



13 The most recent IDM governance survey found that the opposition was seen less often as holding the government to account, compared to a year before. See IDM, Trust in Governance 2020, p. 52, <https://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/IDM-OpinionPoll-2020-EN.pdf>

14 IDM, Survey Findings of Political Engagement in Albania 2020, <https://idmalbania.org/survey-of-political-engagement-in-albania-2020/>

"Enable the opposition to preside over the work of at least 1/3 of parliamentary committees"

On a scale of 0 (strongly oppose) to 10 (strongly support), the treatment group had a mean of 7.46 and SD of 2.89, while the control group had mean of 6.1 and SD of 2.97. The t-test points out significant differences, as treatment group respondents show a higher mean value than their peers of the control group. This means more information and know-how has helped treatment group participants to overcome their underlying scepticism regarding the opposition when looking at this particular proposal, viewing this measure as more important than control group participants.

"Provide the opposition with more human resources to exercise control and oversight over the government"

On the same scale, the treatment group and the control group showed no differences in relation to this statement. The treatment group had mean of 6.27 and SD of 3.37 and the control group had mean of 6.21 and SD of 2.79. The results show that the exposure to new information, as well as informed dialogue with peers and experts has not influenced significantly the position of treatment group participants.

"The heads of the independent institutions are elected by a qualified majority (2/3) of the votes in the Parliament"

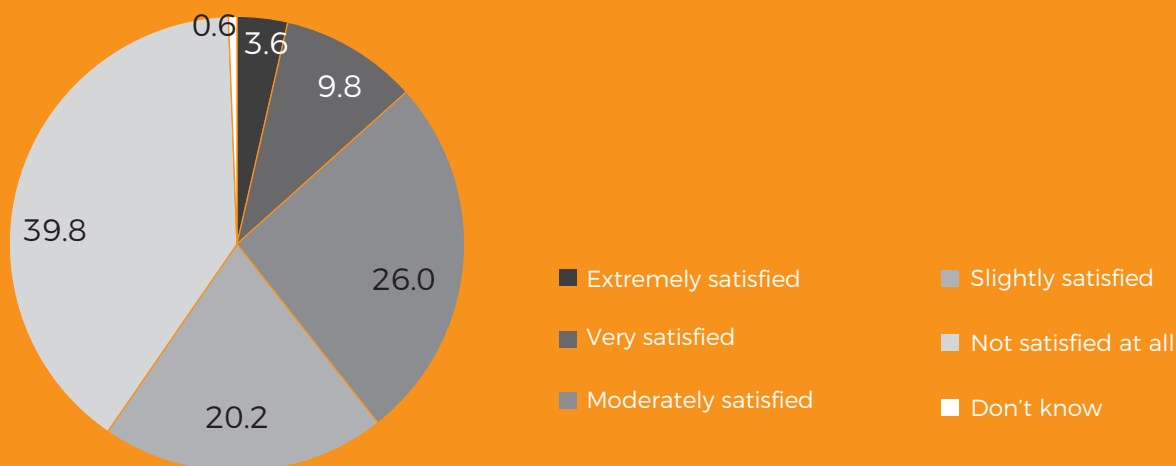
The level of support for this proposal increased for the treatment group, who accessed more knowledge and information at the deliberation event in November 2021. Specifically, the treatment group showed a mean of 8.24 and SD of 2.05 while control group a mean of 7.42 and SD of 2.38. The t-test reveals significant differences between the two groups.

03

INTERNAL DEMOCRACY OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Internal democracy of political parties in Albania has been a key concern throughout the past three decades. Several initiatives and international donor programs have provided support to try to democratise political parties in Albania. The limited progress in this regard speaks volumes about the challenges and resistance by political players. Most Albanians are dissatisfied with Albanian democracy, which Freedom House's 'Nations in Transit' report still refers to as a "transitional or hybrid regime".¹⁵ Approximately 60% of national poll respondents say they are "slightly" or "not at all" satisfied with how democracy works in Albania (see Figure 10).

FIGURE 10: ON THE WHOLE, HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE WAY DEMOCRACY WORKS IN ALBANIA? (%) (NATIONAL SURVEY, N=1193)



15 See Freedom House "Nations in Transit" Albania country report at <https://freedomhouse.org/country/albania/nations-transit/2021>

The role of political parties in liberal democracy is undeniable, and political parties are considered important for the quality of governance by the majority of Albanians. The national survey data (N=1195) found that, on a scale from 0 (extremely unimportant) to 10 (extremely important), Albanians rate political parties' role in the quality of governance with an average mean of 7.00 and SD of 2.99. Such expectations imply that political parties should be governed in line with democratic values.

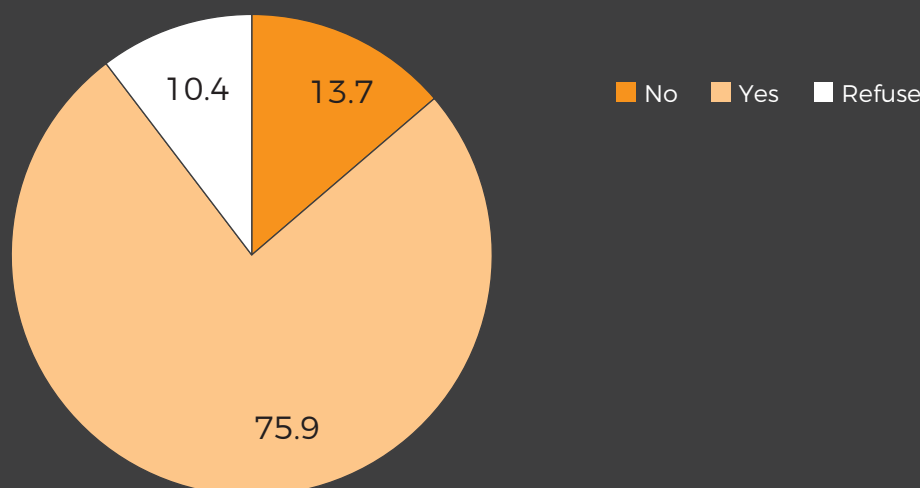
Almost all political parties in Albania rely on their approved statuses and regulations, which are incorporated in their official documentation. In their statutory documents, political parties often claim to guarantee to respect criticism; to enable decision-making based on voting only; to accept new and different ideas; to encourage candidacy for leadership positions; and to allow free entry and exit from the party. In practice, however, this does not always prove to be the case. The inconsistency is indicated in the high number of political parties that derive from the two major political parties: the Socialist Party (SP) and the Democratic Party (DP). Since the fall of communism, 15 new parties have been established as a side-effect of the sanctions, limitations and exemptions against members within SP and DP.

The law on political parties in Albania dates back more than two decades (February 2000) and although it has been amended several times by Parliament and a constitutional court ruling, it has never addressed meaningful concerns over the functioning of internal democracy, membership, transparency, financing etc. Persisting challenges are widely recognised by party membership while citizens at large see political parties as the least trusted institutions in Albania.¹⁶ Hence, strengthening internal party democracy is of paramount importance.

NATIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS

The national survey found (N=1196) that most Albanian's claim they are "moderately" (39%) or "slightly" (31%) interested in politics while 15.8% are "not at all interested". Only 10.8% of respondents reveal they are "very interested" and 2.2% "extremely interested" in politics. However, such plain disinterest is not reflected in voter turnout at parliamentary elections. As Figure 11 suggests, three out of four respondents confirm they have voted in the last parliamentary elections in Albania on 25 April 2021.

FIGURE 11: DID YOU VOTE IN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS? (%) (NATIONAL SURVEY, N = 1091)

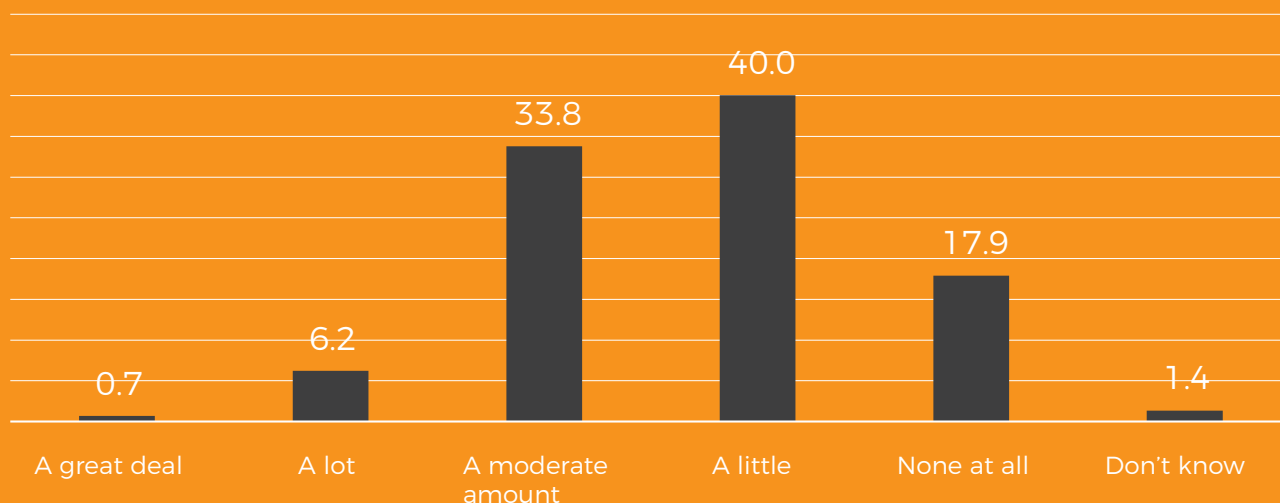


16 See the IDM's annual 'Trust in Governance' survey reports (2015–2020). Available at: <https://idmalbania.org/trust-in-governance/>

Further, national survey respondents were not very familiar with political parties' internal governance as the majority of them are "a little" (40%) or "none at all" familiar with this topic (17.9%). Less than 7%

of Albanians claim to have "a lot" (6.2%) or "a great deal" (0.7%) of information (see Figure 12).

FIGURE 12: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH POLITICAL PARTIES' INTERNAL GOVERNANCE IN GENERAL IN ALBANIA? (%) (NATIONAL SURVEY, N = 1182)



To address such lack of information and to raise public awareness on political parties, their governance structures and internal democracy, more than half of surveyed Albanians (53%) rate the publishing online of political parties' statutes with 9+, on a scale from 0 (extremely unimportant) to 10 (extremely important). According to national survey data, the statement: "Make political parties' statutes

and internal structures public and easily accessible online" (N = 1192) had a mean of 7.8 and SD of 2.54.

Overall, national survey respondents showed a relatively high degree of approval for two out of the three proposed measures to improve the internal democracy of political parties.

Table 4: Approval rate for measures improving accountability and internal democracy of political parties (National survey)

PROPOSED MEASURE	N		MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
	VALID	MISSING				
Introduce competitive mechanisms for internal election system of political parties (e.g., primaries for their candidates in local and national elections)	1184	16	7.93	2.317	0	10
Increasing public funding for parties and candidates	1181	19	3.96	3.395	0	10
Political parties' financial transparency must be certified by international auditing companies	1173	27	6.89	3.127	0	10

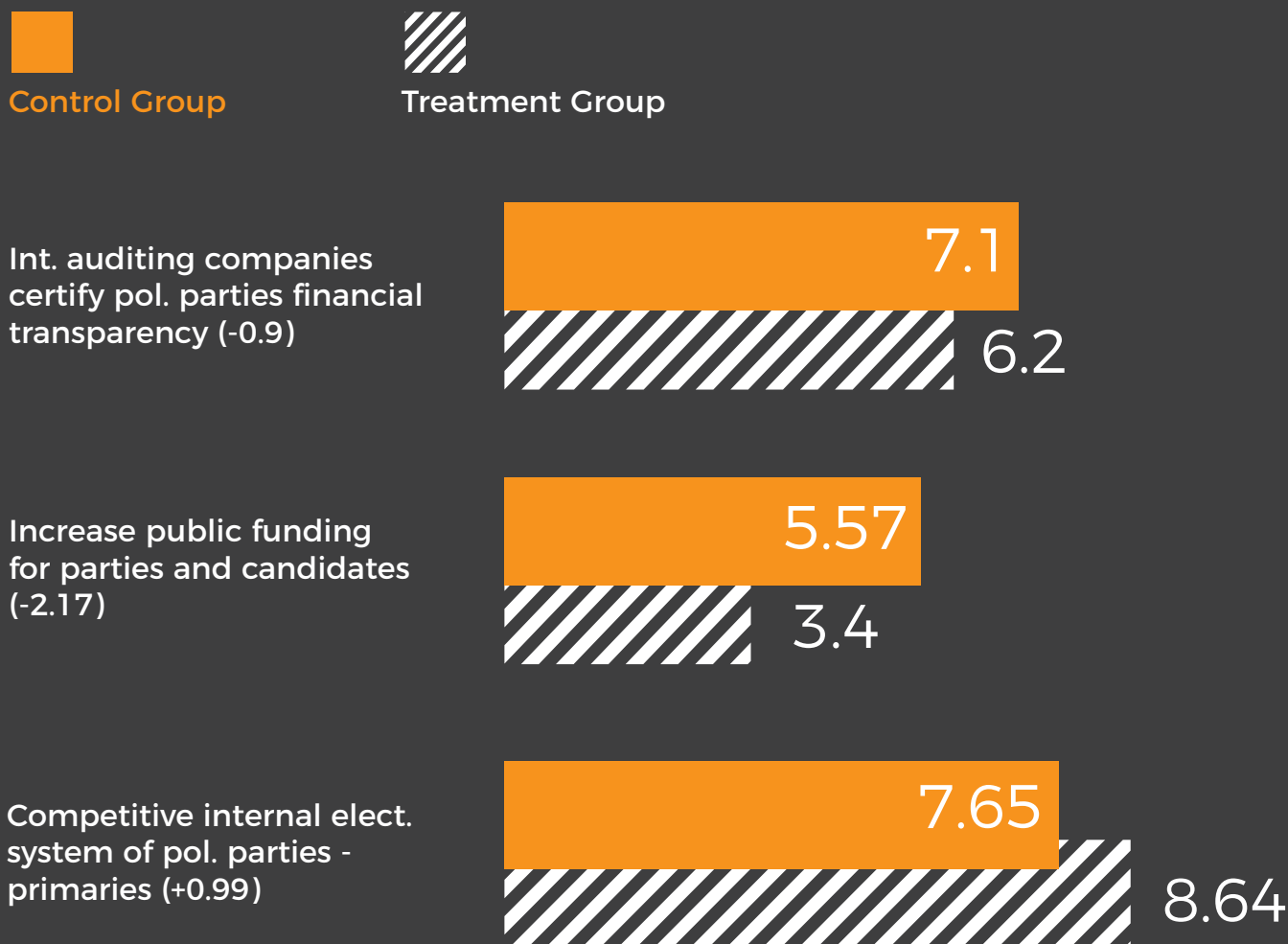
Note: scale of 0 to 10 (0 – extremely unimportant; 10 – extremely important)

TREATMENT GROUP VS. CONTROL GROUP

The t-test applied to the survey data from the treatment and control groups confirmed significant differences on all three statements regarding measures for improving accountability and internal democracy of political parties in Albania.

This means that, depending on whether participants were briefed on the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal, their attitudes may be more or less favourable towards the respective measure.

FIGURE 13: MEAN SCORES FOR INTERNAL PARTY DEMOCRACY PROPOSALS - TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP



“Introduce competitive mechanisms for internal election system of political parties (e.g., primaries for their candidates in local and national elections)”

The treatment group has higher mean value (mean = 8.64 and SD = 2.20) than the control group (mean = 7.65 and SD = 2.23) for this statement. The t-test found that there are significant differences

between the groups. This means that treatment group participants who were informed on the pros and cons of this measure and who participated in discussion with their peers at the four-day event, tended to view this measure as important for improving the accountability and democracy of political parties than respondents who were not in touch with this knowledge (control group).

“Increasing public funding for parties and candidates”

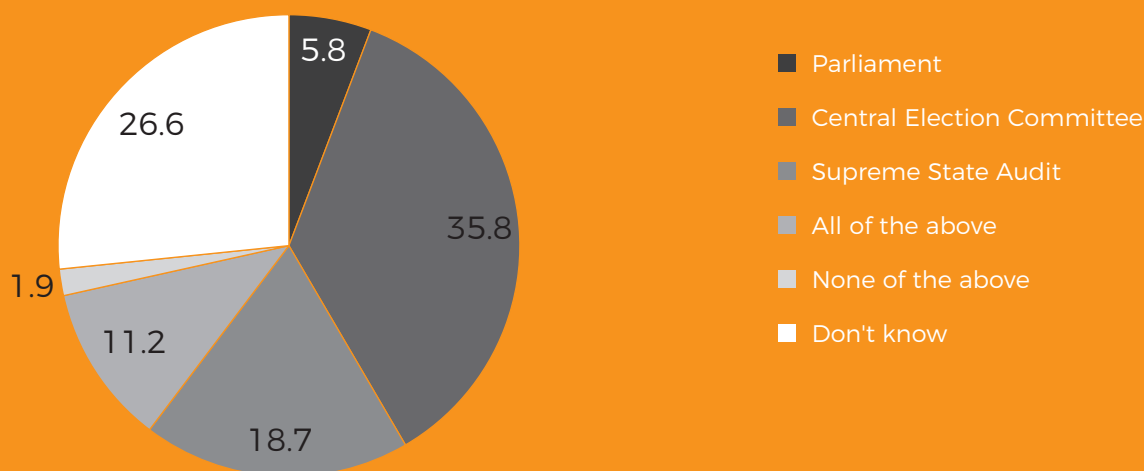
Unlike the previous statement, after being informed about the topic, participants of the treatment group showed lower approval ratings for “Increasing public funding for parties and candidates” as a measure to improve political parties’ accountability and internal democracy. Specifically, the treatment group had a mean of 3.40 and SD of 3.43. The control group has mean of 5.57 and SD of 3.21. The t-test shows significant differences between the groups as the treatment group has lower mean value than the control group. This means that the treatment group participants view this measure as less important for improving accountability and internal democracy of political parties than the control group participants.

“Political parties’ financial transparency must be certified by international auditing companies”

The t-test confirms differences between the two groups also in relation to this final proposed measure. Treatment group has a lower mean (6.20) and SD (3.52) compared the control group (mean = 7.10 and SD = 2.78). This means that participants who were informed on the pros and cons of this measure tended to view this measure as less important for improving the accountability and democracy of political parties than participants without this knowledge and information.

While participants in this social experiment became less supportive towards the proposed measure as they received more information about it, the national poll reveals interesting findings regarding Albanians’ knowledge of the body responsible for monitoring political parties’ finances. As Figure 14 suggests, only 35.8% of Albanians identified the right institution (the Central Elections Committee) as being in charge of the oversight of party finances.

FIGURE 14: ACCORDING TO THE LAW ON POLITICAL PARTIES, WHICH BODY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING AND OVERSEEING THE POLITICAL PARTIES’ FINANCING? (%) (N=908)



04

ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM

The electoral system is one of the main pillars of the political system of any country. It translates the individual political preferences of voters in a single election into a Parliament that seeks to represent the entire country. An electoral system determines

fundamental issues, such as representation criteria, size of parliament, size of electoral zones, voting system, election eligibility, and other rules of political competition. Given this, any electoral reforms must be cautiously designed and carried out. Albania has conducted eight electoral reforms since the fall of

communism. Almost all of them have been carried out in a rush, within a very short period of time, lacking transparency and public involvement.

The country has tried all three main types of electoral systems in the last three decades – majoritarian, proportional and mixed. At the beginning of the post-communist period (1991), the electoral system was a majority system. The country was divided into 140 constituencies, and each constituency’s voters elected a representative by voting for one of several candidates running for Parliament. From 1992 to 2008, Albania employed a mixed system – 100 members of parliament were elected directly through majority voting in 100 constituencies, while another 40 MPs were elected through voting for political parties. Since 2009, the elections have been conducted on a proportional system. Voters vote for political parties while the individual MPs are decided by the parties using lists of candidates.

One of the main elements of every parliamentary election monitoring report in Albania has been the section containing recommendations for improving the electoral process. Traditionally, this has translated into a discussion of different aspects of electoral systems and a preference for one or the other type.

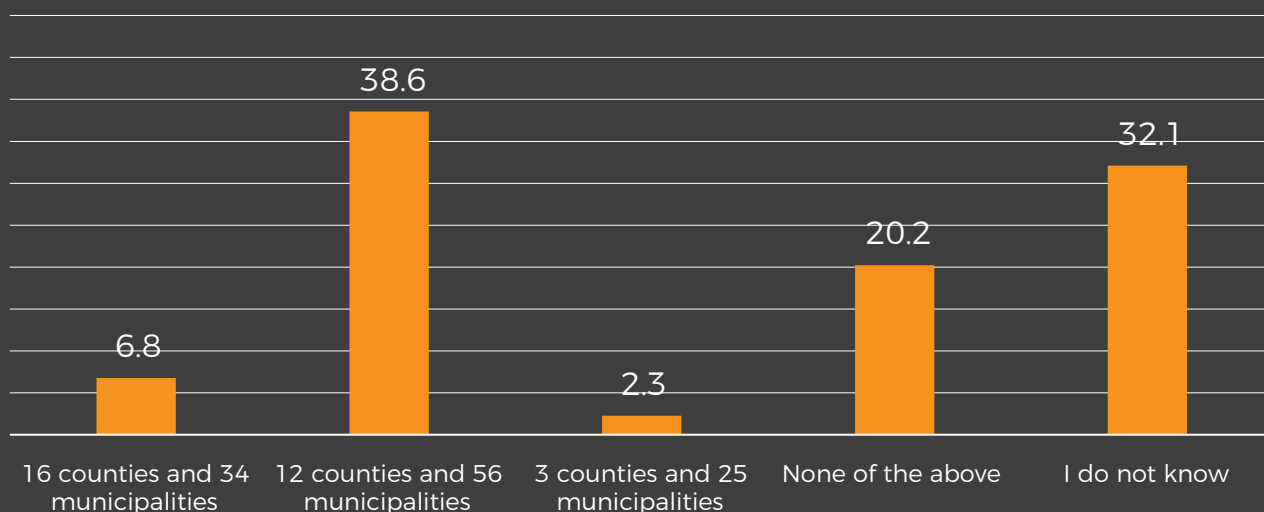
NATIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS

Albanians tend to disagree with the statement – “*The current electoral system for the national parliament in Albania reflects the will of the people*” (N=1181). On a scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree), there was a mean of 3.56 and SD of 3.18. This suggests a relatively low level of trust in the current electoral system.

However, the rate of approval for the next statement – “*The 2014 administrative-territorial division imposes electoral zones which distort the will of the voters when voting for local or parliamentary elections*” (N=1097) – rests approximately in the middle. Namely the national survey data suggests a mean of 5.16 and SD of 3.24. This suggests Albanians feel neutral about such an assumption, and neither approve nor disapprove of the statement.

The current electoral system – regional proportional – is a slightly complex one. The regional lists are drawn based on the territorial division of the country, with a total of 12 regions (qark). The national survey tested respondents’ knowledge about the country’s territorial divisions which, according to the 2014 law which reduced the number of sub-units,¹⁷ comprise 12 regions and 61 municipalities. As portrayed in Figure 15, only one in five Albanians (20.2%) has chosen the right answer, “None of the above”.

FIGURE 15: ACCORDING TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF 2014, ALBANIA CONSISTS OF... (%) (N=830)

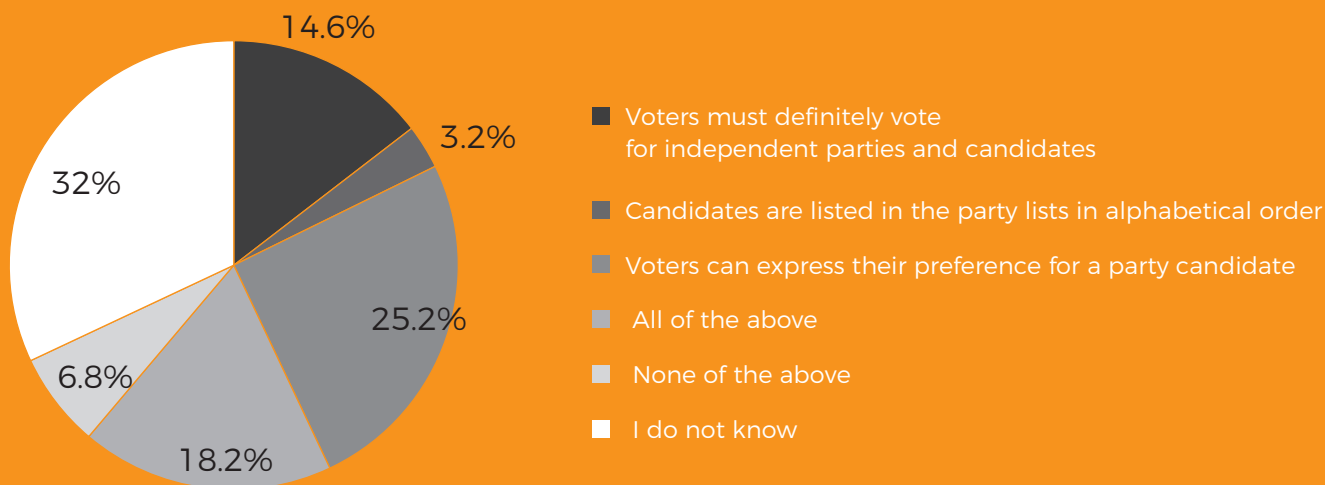


17 Law No.115/2014 “On Administrative-Territorial Division of the Local Government Units in the Republic of Albania”.

Albanians also display deficiencies in regard to their knowledge about the rules governing how candidate MPs are elected and included in the voting lists. According to the national survey, only one in four

respondents (25.2%) could identify the accurate statement for the Albanian electoral system – *Voters can express their preference for a party candidate.*

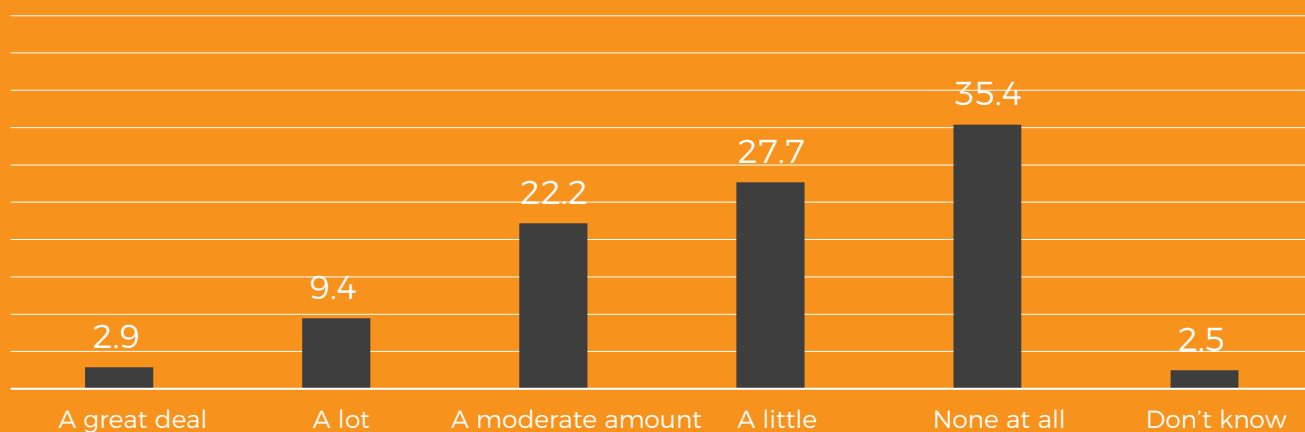
FIGURE 16: WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING ARE TRUE OF THE SYSTEM CURRENTLY USED TO ELECT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT? (%)¹⁸ (N=1200)



The low level of trust in the electoral system combined with low level of knowledge about the procedure and rules of the system, is accompanied by broad public scepticism towards politicians and MPs in general. Namely, more than half of Albanians

according to the national survey think that MPs are “a little” (27.7%) or “not at all” (35.4%) in touch with the priorities and concerns of citizens. (See Figure 17).

FIGURE 17: HOW IN TOUCH ARE MPS WITH THE PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS OF CITIZENS IN THE COUNTRY? (%) (N=1178)

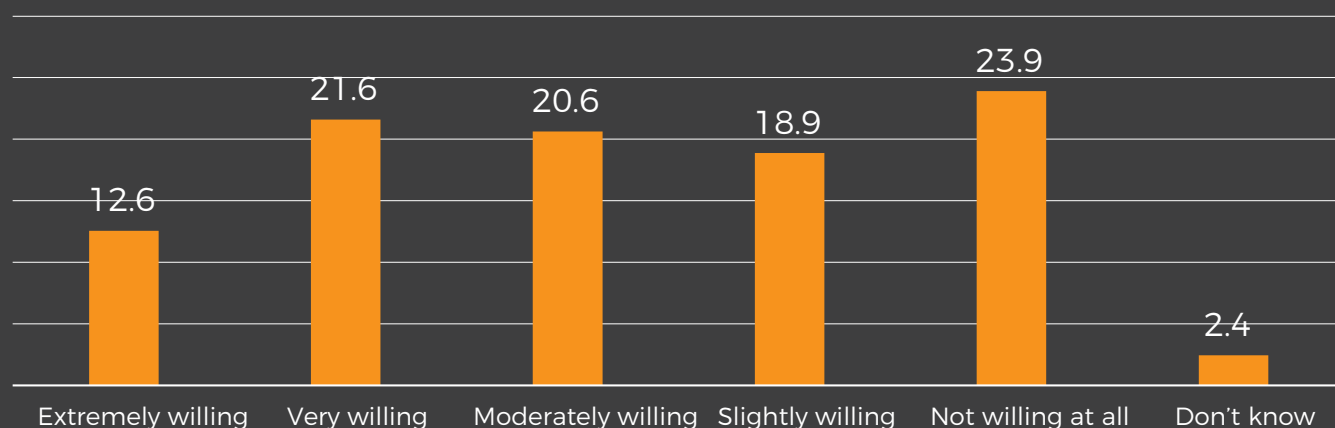


¹⁸ This is a multiple choice question.

However, national survey respondents were somewhat divided when it came to their readiness to interact with politicians and MPs. As Figure 18 shows most of the surveyed Albanians would contact politicians or MPs, and only 23.9% firmly say they are not at all willing to.

On the other hand, Albanians who confirm they are willing to interact are almost equally divided between those who would be “extremely” or “very willing” and those who are “moderately” or “slightly willing” to contact politicians or MPs.

FIGURE 18: HOW WILLING WOULD YOU BE TO CONTACT POLITICIANS OR MPS EITHER IN PERSON, OR IN WRITING, OR IN SOME OTHER WAY? (%) (N=1168)



The next subsection will analyse the attitudes of the treatment and control groups in relation to four proposed changes to the electoral system in Albania. As the report has underlined, these positions are only comparable to one another and not to the data

of the national poll. However, to better understand the national context, Table 5 presents Albanians’ level of support for different alternatives to the current electoral system.

Table 5. Support for electoral system change (National survey)

PROPOSED MEASURE	N		MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
	VALID	MISSING				
Transition from the current regional proportional to a national proportional electoral system (with one national list)	1041	159	5.96	2.915	0	10
Introduce fully open lists in the current electoral system.	1138	62	6.97	2.791	0	10
Transition to a pure majority system (MP of each constituency is elected by majority of citizens’ votes)	1144	56	7.80	2.558	0	10

PROPOSED MEASURE	N		MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
	VALID	MISSING				
Return to the previous electoral system with the election of 100 MPs on a majority system and 40 MPs on a proportional system	1074	126	5.06	3.242	0	10

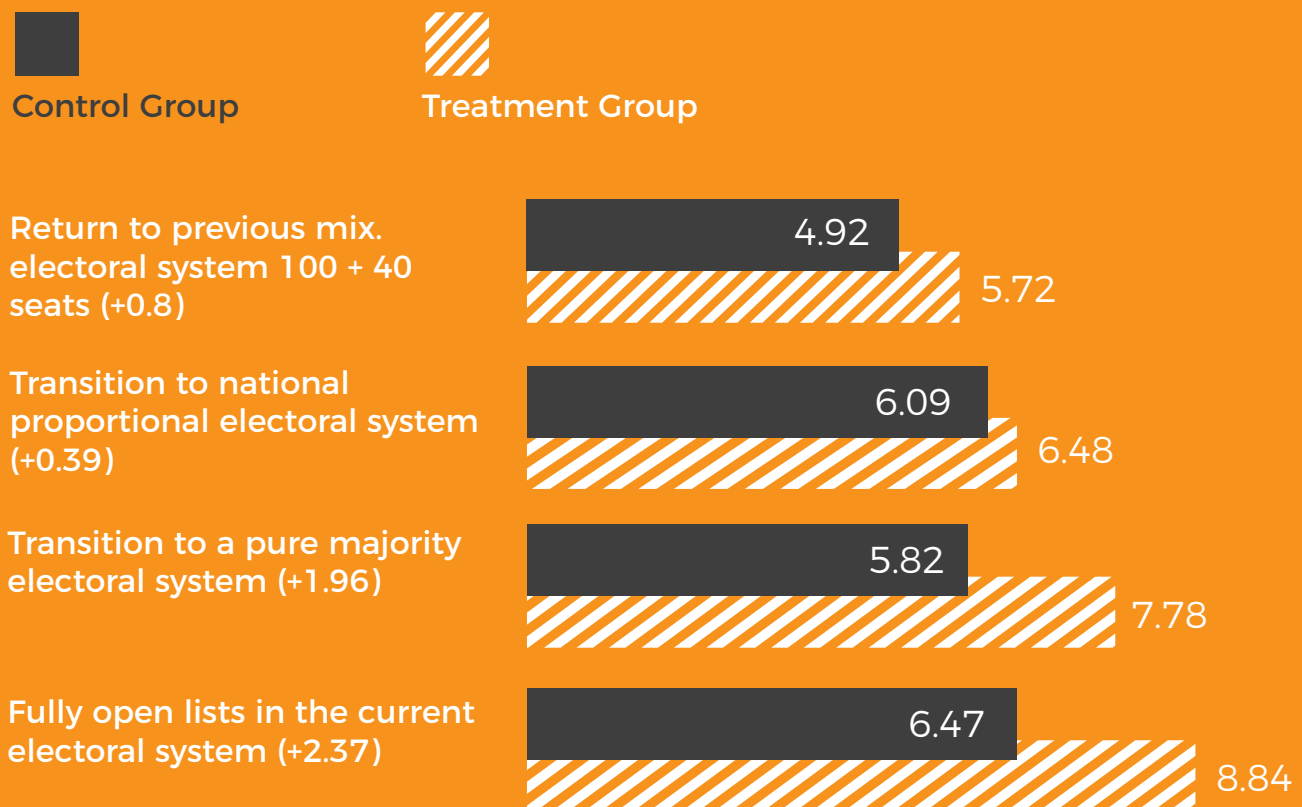
Note: Scale, 0 – strongly oppose; 10 – strongly support

As shown in the Table 5, Albanians are relatively neutral to the first (national proportional) and last (return to the previous mixed system) options. Instead, they tended to favour those options which provide for stronger links between voters and MPs (not parties). Namely, these options are the pure majoritarian system and fully open lists under the current regional proportional electoral system.

TREATMENT GROUP VS. CONTROL GROUP

The comparative analysis of data from the treatment and control groups' surveys found that the positions and attitudes of participants in the treatment group were different for only two out of four options for change of the current electoral system in Albania. Information on the pros and cons for each of the proposals, which was transmitted to participants through the four-day event, seems to have led to a significant increase in the level of support for the alternatives.

FIGURE 19: MEAN SCORES FOR THE ELECTORAL REFORM PROPOSALS - TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP



“Transition from the current regional proportional to a national proportional electoral system (with one national list)”

On a scale from 0 (strongly oppose) to 10 (strongly support), the treatment group had a mean of 6.48 and SD of 3.23, while the control group had a mean of 6.09 and SD of 2.76. The t-test shows no major differences between the two groups. This means that new knowledge and information, as well as the opportunity to exchange views with peers and experts did not significantly influence the positions of treatment group participants.

“Introduce fully open lists in the current electoral system”

The level of support for the second option increased significantly for participants who accessed knowledge and information at the event in November 2021. Namely, the treatment group had a mean of 8.84 and SD of 1.81 for this statement, while the control group had mean of 6.47 and SD of 2.55. There are differences between groups, as treatment group data has higher mean value than control group. This suggests that the new knowledge acquired at the event influenced participants to show a higher level of support than participants from the group who were not informed about the pros and cons.

“Transition to a pure majority system (MP of each constituency is elected by majority of citizens’ votes)”

Another statement which received greater support from treatment group participants was the proposal to implement the majoritarian electoral system. Just like the previous alternative which proposes to introduce fully open lists (thus allowing voters’ preferential vote to decide who gets elected rather than the ranking of candidates), this alternative also promotes more direct links between voters and potential candidates. The treatment group had mean of 7.78 and SD of 3.17 for this statement, while control group had a mean of 5.82 and SD of 3.34. The t-test showed differences between the two groups with a higher value for the treatment group. This means that participants who had access to information showed greater support for this type of electoral system than control group participants who acquired no knowledge about this system.

“Return to the previous electoral system with the election of 100 MPs on a majority system and 40 MPs on a proportional system”

Lastly, treatment group and control group participants showed no significant differences in their view on the possibility of returning to the previous electoral system of Albania. The treatment group had a mean of 5.72 and SD of 3.63, and the control group had a mean of 4.92 and SD of 2.91. There were therefore no significant differences between the two groups. This means that regardless of whether they received new knowledge, participants showed similar attitudes towards this proposal. On a scale from 0 (strongly oppose) to 10 (strongly support), they tended to be neutral.

05

DIASPORA VOTING

Albania is a country with one of the largest diasporas in the world – more than one-third of its citizens live permanently abroad. According to data obtained from INSTAT, over 36% of roughly 4.4 million Albanian citizens live outside the country; about 2.78 million citizens live in the country, while about 1.64 million citizens live abroad.

Albanians living outside the country have the right to vote. The Electoral Code stipulates that in order to exercise their right to vote, citizens must be registered in the National Civil Status Register and have their registered residence in the territory of one of the areas of their assigned polling station. As a result, many Albanians living abroad are registered at a polling station, usually at their last residence before emigration. This is why there are about 3.6 million voters on the voter list, even though Albania has less than 2.8 million inhabitants living in the country.

Yet, irrespective of their right to vote and regardless of whether they may be recorded on the voters’ register, the only way for citizens living abroad to exercise their right to vote is to physically come to Albania.

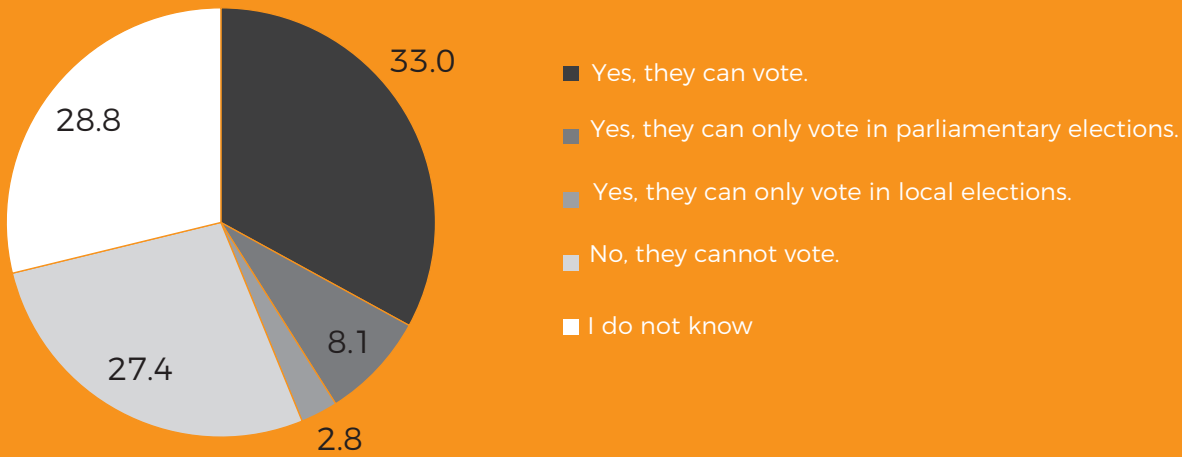
Diaspora voting is a sensitive issue as it has been source of many election irregularities over the past three decades. Broad political consensus is required on how to register voters living abroad, how they will vote, and how their votes will be counted. Consensus is also needed regarding where diaspora votes will be counted.

NATIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS

The majority of surveyed Albanians do not seem to be informed about whether the Albanian diaspora has the legal right to vote in local or parliamentary elections. Only about a third of respondents (33%)

correctly identified that, according to the electoral code, Albanians residing abroad are allowed to vote in local or parliamentary elections in Albania. (See Figure 20).

FIGURE 20: ACCORDING TO THE ELECTORAL CODE, CAN THE ALBANIAN DIASPORA VOTE FOR THE LOCAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS? (%)



The national survey data further suggest that the broad societal support needed to make diaspora voting happen in practice is already in place. Responses to the question, “To what extent are you favourable or opposed to the fact that the Albanian citizens residing abroad can vote in elections in Albania?” (N=1179), registered on a scale from 0 (strongly oppose), to 10 (strongly support), had a mean of 7.98 and SD of 2.87. This implies that the majority of Albanians tend to endorse the rights of

their compatriots residing abroad to have their say in political elections in Albania.

However, such broad consensus is slightly smaller, albeit still on the “support” side of the axis, when they are asked about the different ways that diaspora voting might work in practice. As shown in Table 6, voting by mail and voting at the diplomatic missions are generally less favoured compared to the other two alternatives.

Table 6. Support for diaspora voting (national survey)

PROPOSED MEASURE	N		MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MIN.	MAX.
	VALID	MISSING				
Albanian citizens residing permanently abroad should be enabled voting in parliamentary elections at Albania’s diplomatic missions abroad.	1188	12	6.72	3.374	0	10
Albanian citizens residing permanently abroad should be enabled voting in parliamentary elections in Albania by regular mail.	1187	13	5.34	3.609	0	10

PROPOSED MEASURE	N		MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MIN.	MAX.
	VALID	MISSING				
Albanian citizens residing permanently abroad should be enabled electronic voting for parliamentary elections in Albania.	1187	13	6.92	3.311	0	10
Albania should ensure dedicated MP seats for which the Albanian Diaspora (Albanian citizens residing permanently abroad) votes and gets elected.	1179	21	7.19	3.144	0	10

Note: Scale 0 – strongly oppose; 10 – strongly support

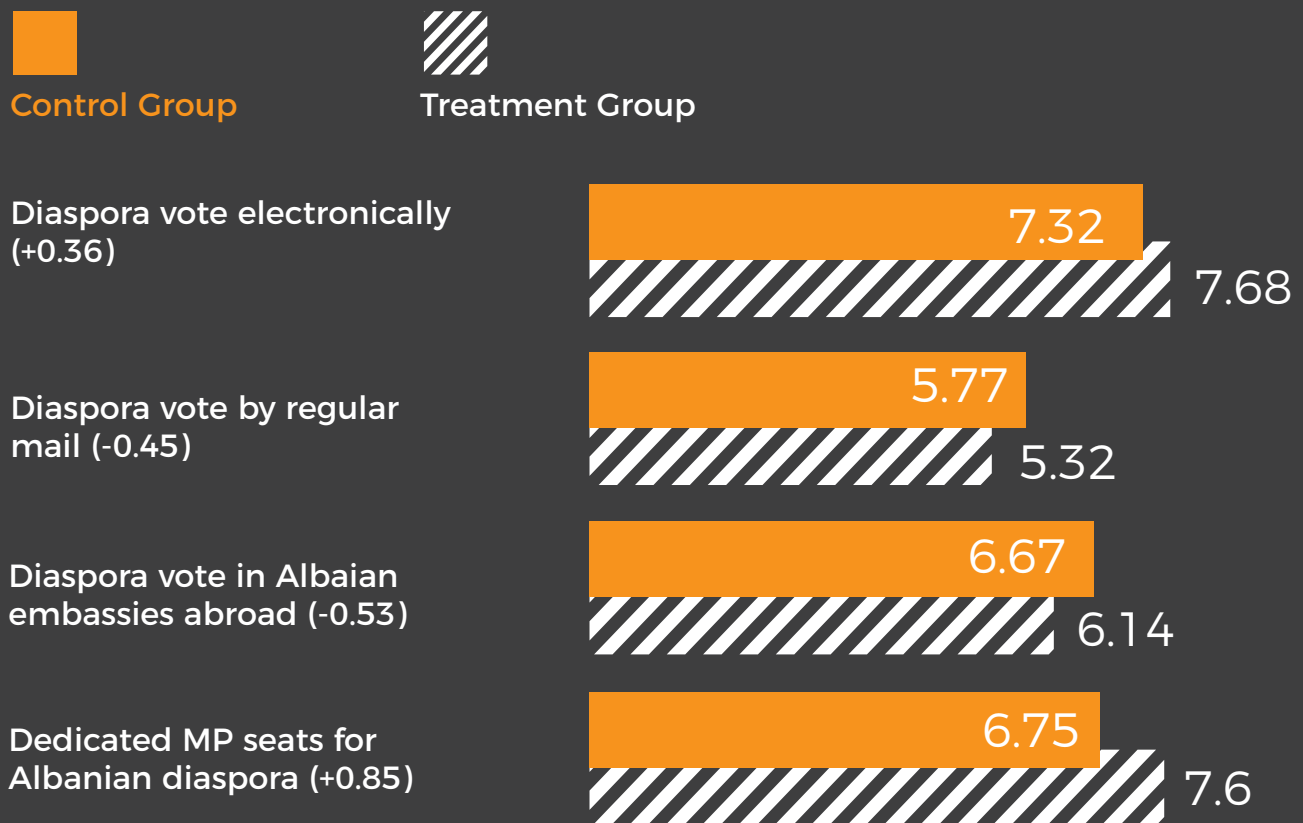
TREATMENT GROUP VS. CONTROL GROUP

The social experiment’s participants from both treatment and control groups showed similar tendencies to the national poll respondents regarding their support for different options that could make the diaspora vote a reality. Nevertheless, the purpose of this subsection is to compare the

attitudes of the participants’ depending on whether they received additional information on the pros and cons of each alternative.

In this context, it is interesting to note that on three out of four modalities, the t-test shows no significant differences between the two groups.

FIGURE 21: MEAN SCORES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES FOR DIASPORA VOTE - TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP



“Vote at Albania’s diplomatic missions abroad”

The treatment group had a mean of 6.14 and SD of 3.68, and the control group had a mean of 6.67 and SD of 2.80. There are no major differences between groups. This means that the level of support for this option remains unaffected by whether participants have received objective information and knowledge about it or not.

“Vote by regular mail”

No differences are noted for this option between the two groups. The treatment group had a mean of 5.32 and SD of 3.68; the control group had a mean of 5.77 and SD of 3.12. This means that the new knowledge and information, as well as the opportunity to exchange views with peers and experts did not influence significantly the positions of the participants.

“Electronic voting”

As with the previous two alternatives, there were no major differences between treatment and control group participants. The treatment group had a mean of 7.68 and SD of 3.41, while the control group had a mean of 7.32 and SD of 2.61. This implies that regardless of whether they received new knowledge or not, surveyed participants showed similar attitudes towards this alternative.

“Dedicated MP seats for which the Albanian Diaspora votes and gets elected”

The last modality which would implement diaspora voting showed significant differences between the two groups. The treatment group had a mean of 7.60 and SD of 3.27, while the control group had a mean of 6.75 and SD of 2.78. The treatment group had higher mean value than the control group. This suggests that participants who received information and knowledge at the four-day event tended to more strongly support this alternative than their peers in the control group who did not attend the event.

Environmental issues have been part of the public debate in Albania for more than a decade, especially concerning environmental services such as integrated waste management and waste water treatment. In recent years though, the debate has covered other issues such as climate change, sustainable transport sector, the environmental effects of thermo-electric and hydro-power plants, illegal logging, hunting, animal welfare etc.

Albania signed the Paris Agreement on 14 July 2016, thereby aligning itself with a new era of international climate policies. The transport sector, the largest energy consumer in Albania with as much as 40% of final energy consumption in 2018, is subject to these policies.¹⁹ Over the years, the significant increase in the number of road vehicles in Albania has been accompanied by an increase in transport activity and an evident increase in the consumption of fuels, mainly diesel and gasoline.

To counter the effects of climate change, and prevent further pollution of the environment, several measures can be carried out. There are diverse challenges though to such measures including but not limited to high costs for the state budget and thus for citizens, outdated transport infrastructure, the capacity of businesses to comply with environmental standards and so on. Another important challenge is public awareness and citizens’ readiness to collaborate for a healthier environment, decarbonise and prevent other effects of climate change.

NATIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS

Climate change is a relatively new topic in the Albanian public discourse. For more than a decade now, various environmental causes have taken the attention of the public and have been at the centre of citizens’ campaigns and protests – e.g. the importing of waste, dismantling of chemical weapons and the protection of rivers etc.

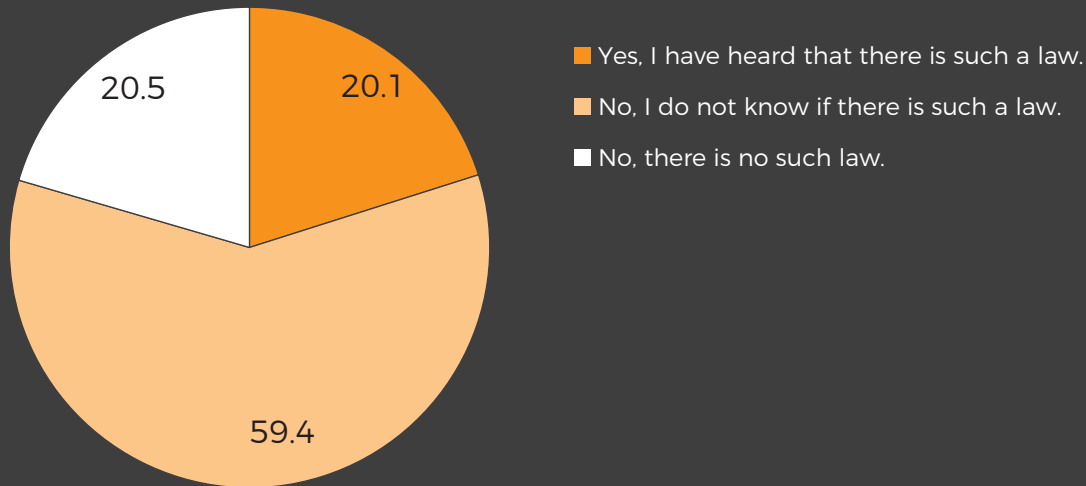
In December 2020, the Parliament of Albania adopted a law on climate change which entered into

19 IRENA (International Renewable Energy Agency), Renewables Readiness Assessment – Republic of Albania, March 2021, p 21, https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2021/March/IRENA_RRA_Albania_2021.pdf

force in July 2021.²⁰ The law constitutes the national response to global climate challenges and the obligations assumed by many countries under the UN framework convention on climate change (1992).

Public awareness regarding climate change does not seem to be commensurate with earlier environmental causes. Almost 60% of Albanians say they don't know if Albania has adopted a law on climate change. In fact, only one in five Albanians has heard of such law. (See Figure 22).

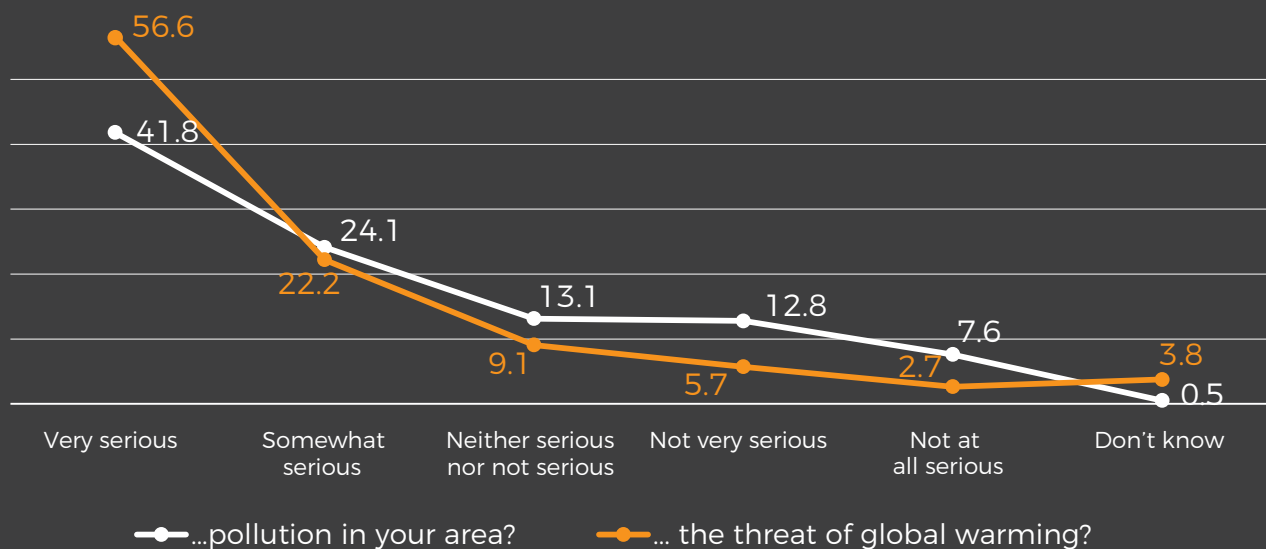
FIGURE 22: DOES ALBANIA HAVE A LAW ON CLIMATE CHANGE? (%)



Interestingly, although the respondents consider both pollution in their areas and the threat of global warming to be serious, a higher percentage of Albanians are concerned with global warming. As shown in Figure 23, more than half of Albanians

(56.6%, N=1163) consider the threat of global warming as very serious, compared to 41.8% (N=1195) who report pollution in their area as very serious.

FIGURE 23: POLLUTION IN LOCAL AREA VS. GLOBAL WARMING



20 Law no 155/2020, 17 December 2020.

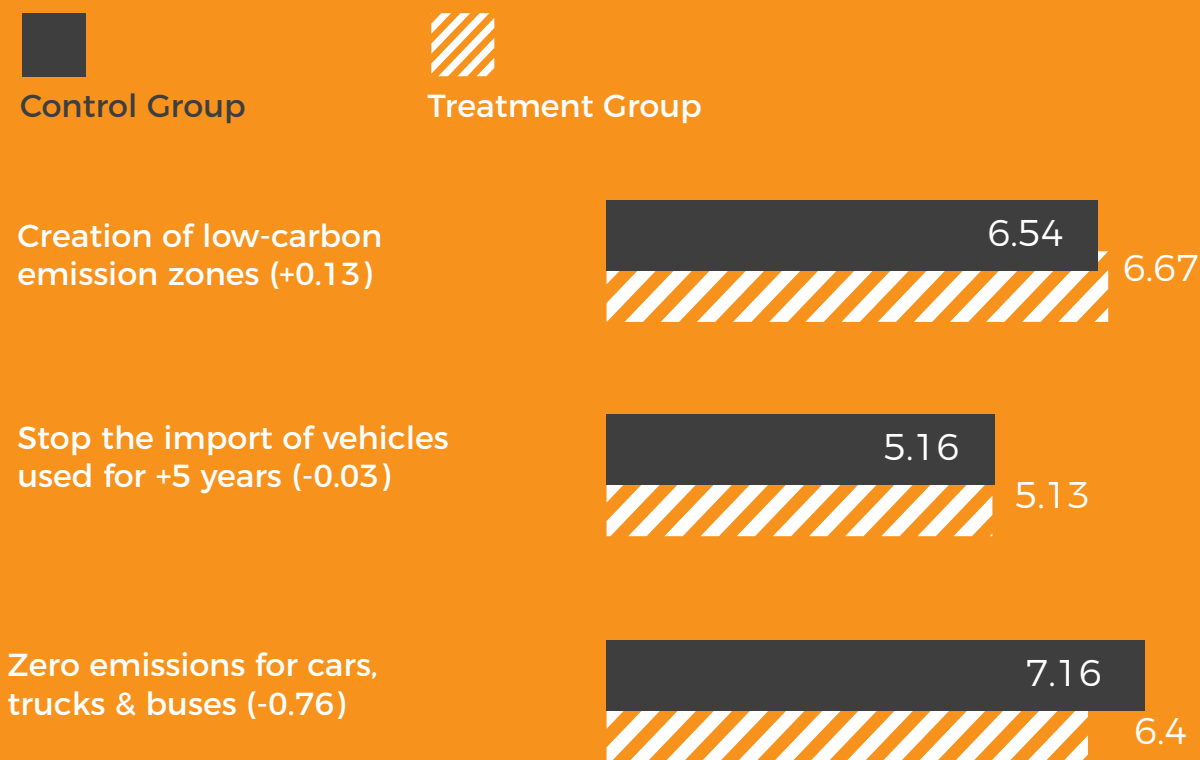
However, although survey respondents report a very high level of concern over pollution and global warming, such an attitude is not matched by the same or even a similar level of readiness to act. Namely, when asked whether they are *“ready to pay higher taxes in order to protect the environment”* (N=1182), the mean average of respondents’ answers was 4.13 and with an SD of 3.51 on a scale of 0 (fully oppose) to 10 (fully support). The t-test for this statement showed no significant differences between treatment and control groups, which means that respondents remained unwilling even after they were provided with objective information on the matter.

Such a gap between the level of concern about pollution in local areas and global warming (as perceived by respondents) and the readiness to act upon such concerns indicates that there is still a lot to be done to raise public awareness and information about environmental issues among ordinary citizens. In fact, the findings of the following section further reinforce such a need.

TREATMENT GROUP VS. CONTROL GROUP

Despite the official obligations the country has assumed in the context of climate change, the topic remains fairly new and citizens need more time and information to process the challenges of climate change. As with the national survey, our respondents exhibited a gap between their declaration of support and actual readiness to act. On a scale from 0 (strongly oppose) to 10 (strongly support), participants tend to remain around the neutral values of the axis (mean = 5 to 6) on most of the proposed measures. Furthermore, the t-test revealed no significant differences between the treatment and control groups on any of the proposed measures to reduce the impact of climate change and prevent its environmental deterioration.

FIGURE 24: MEAN SCORES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE PROPOSALS - TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP



“Mandate zero emissions for cars, trucks, and buses by 2035”

The treatment group had a mean of 6.40 and SD of 3.28, while the control group had a mean of 7.16 and SD of 2.49. There were no major differences between the two groups. This means that regardless of the information provided and the opportunity to interact with peers and experts, participants of this social experiment did not significantly change their attitudes and level of support for this particular measure.

“Stop the import of used vehicles older than 5 years”

Participants of the treatment and control groups appear even more neutral on the next proposed measure, which aims to limit the import of used vehicles allowing only those of up to five years old. The treatment group had a mean of 5.13 and SD of 3.52, while the control group had a mean of 5.16 and SD of 2.98. The t-test shows no significant differences between the two groups, which means that participants’ responses are around neutral values regardless of the level of information accessed by them.

“Establish low emission zones in major urban centres”

The treatment group had a mean of 6.67 and SD of 3.64, while the control group had a mean of 6.54 and SD of 2.66. There were no major differences between the two groups which means that participants who received additional information on the pros and cons about this proposal did not appear to be particularly influenced.

Over the last three decades, about 1.64 million Albanian citizens moved permanently to other countries,²¹ with the country experiencing several waves of emigration. High rates of outgoing migration have persisted,²² and Albanian emigration is expected to continue at a high rate in the coming years, primarily through legal channels (e.g. family reunification and emigration within the framework of the immigration programmes of western countries).

However, following the economic crises in the most popular destination countries (such as Greece) and the 2015 European refugee crisis and its aftermath, new migration patterns have been observed in Albania, including intensified return migration,²³ and a growth in Albania acting as a transit and/or destination country.²⁴ These new trends appeared in the official data when, in 2018, Albania started to include asylum seekers and foreign residents in its official statistics. In that year, a total of 4386 asylum seekers and 9090 foreign residents were reported.²⁵ These developments and the growing attention of the political and media discourse on Albania’s role as both a country of origin and a potential host country for migrants have raised concerns and/or feelings that were previously irrelevant to a predominantly net-emigrating country.²⁶

The Parliament of Albania adopted a new law on foreigners in 2021.²⁷ The purpose of this law is to harmonise the Albanian practice of foreign nationals’ entry and comply with European standards. In addition to improving the overall visa system, the law regulates the entry and stay of foreign nationals in Albania for employment purposes of all types and fields, including temporary economic immigrants.

21 ‘National Diaspora Strategy 2021–2025’ adopted by Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) N. 585, 22 July 2020 <https://diaspora.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/STRATEGJIA-KOMBETARE-E-DIASPORES-2021-2025-ENG.pdf>

22 European Commission, ‘Key findings of the 2021 report on Albania’, 2021, <https://ec.europa.eu/>

23 E Dhëmbo, V Duci and Z Vathi, ‘Return migration and human rights in Albania, the case of social protection’, *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, 4, 55–62, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-018-0078-z>

24 E Dhëmbo, E Çaro, and J Hoxha, ‘“Our migrant” and “the other migrant”: migration discourse in the Albanian media, 2015–2018’, *Humanit Soc Sci Commun*, 8, 317, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00981-w>

25 INSTAT, *Foreigners and Asylum Seekers in Albania*, 2019, <http://www.instat.gov.al/>

26 E Dhëmbo, E Çaro, and J Hoxha, ‘“Our migrant” and “the other migrant”’.

27 Law No. 79/2021 “On Foreigners”, Retrieved from: <https://www.parlament.al/Files/Akte/2021070817284820210705135531ligj%20nr.%2079%20dt.%2024.6.2021.pdf>

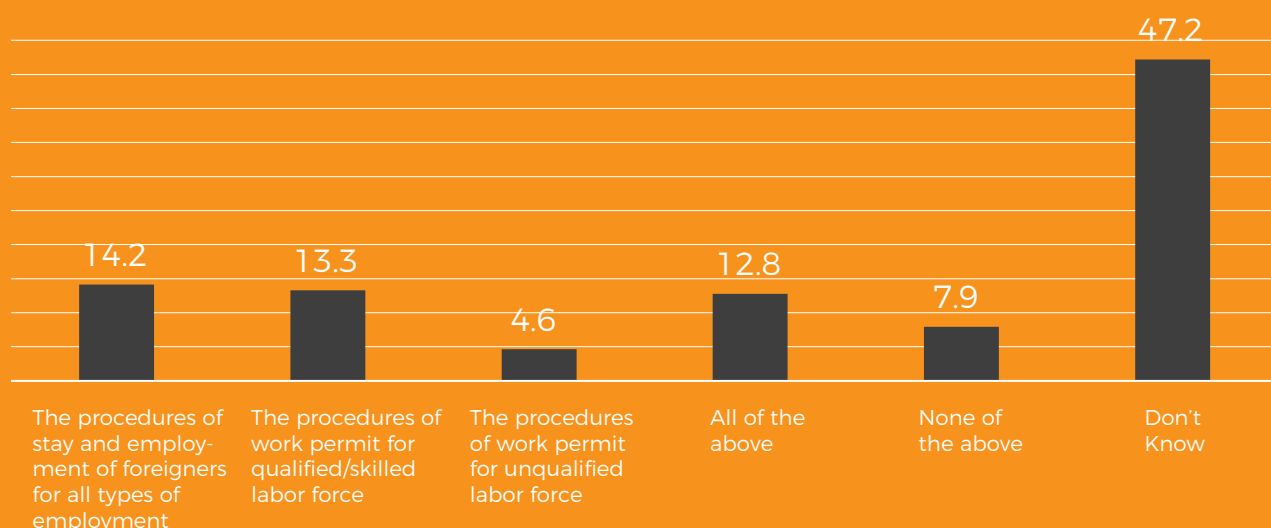
The law facilitates the process of obtaining a work and residence permit for foreign nationals who have a job offer in Albania, for all types of employment. Given that the Albanian economy offers few opportunities for skilled work, the main beneficiaries of this law will likely be unskilled workers. This prediction is supported by public statements by made-to-order and construction companies declaring their need for employees since they cannot find Albanians who are willing to take up the jobs they offer. Indeed, many Albanian companies have already employed workers from Bangladesh and other less developed countries.²⁸ Nevertheless, economic immigration to Albania is a relatively new phenomenon in the public discourse and was

met with perplexity by some public opinion, public analysts, and policymakers.

NATIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS

The respondents of the national survey showed low levels of understanding about the law on foreigners and the unemployment rate in Albania. Almost half of the respondents (47.2%) reported that they “don’t know” what the law “On Foreigners” is about. (See Figure 25).

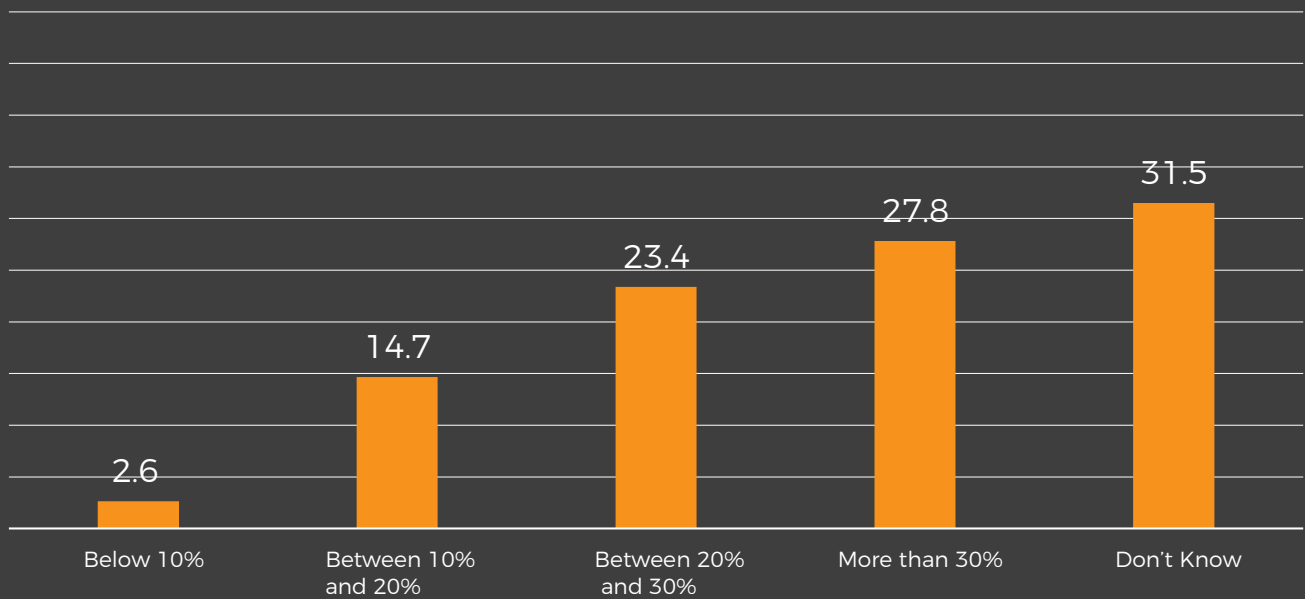
FIGURE 25: IN YOUR OPINION, THE NEW LAW ON FOREIGNERS (OF THE YEAR 2021) IN ALBANIA FACILITATES? (%) (N=656)



Also, one in four Albanians (27.8%) believed that the unemployment rate in Albania is “more than 30%”, and 31.5% of the respondents answered that they “don’t know”. (See Figure 26).

28 Elvis Hila, ‘Asian Migrants Fill Jobs That Picky Albanians Now Spurn’, Balkan Insight, 20 July 2021, <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/07/20/asian-migrants-fill-jobs-that-picky-albanians-now-spurn/>

FIGURE 26: IN 2020, WHAT WAS THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN ALBANIA? (%) (N=836)



Public attitudes to immigration were explored through a set of statements asking the national survey respondents to express their approval or disapproval. Overall, on one side, Albanians are relatively neutral to statements aiming to test their

openness towards foreign economic immigrants. On the other side, they are also very supportive of having higher salaries for Albanians instead of importing foreign immigrants. (See Table 7).

Table 7: Attitudes on economic immigration issues (national survey)

VARIABLES	N		MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
	VALID	MISSING				
Albania should push businesses to pay higher salaries for Albanians and not import foreign immigrants.	1194	6	8.31	2.560	0	10
Immigrants improve our society by bringing in new ideas and cultures.	1190	10	4.57	3.307	0	10
Regular immigrants should be granted the right to vote in local elections.	1173	27	5.02	3.555	0	10

Note: Scale 0 – strongly oppose; 10 – strongly support

More than half of the respondents were in favour of the statement, “Albania should push businesses to pay

higher salaries for Albanians and not import foreign immigrants”. The average mean for this statement

scored as high as 8.31 and with an SD of 2.56, on a scale from 0 (strongly oppose) to 10 (strongly support).

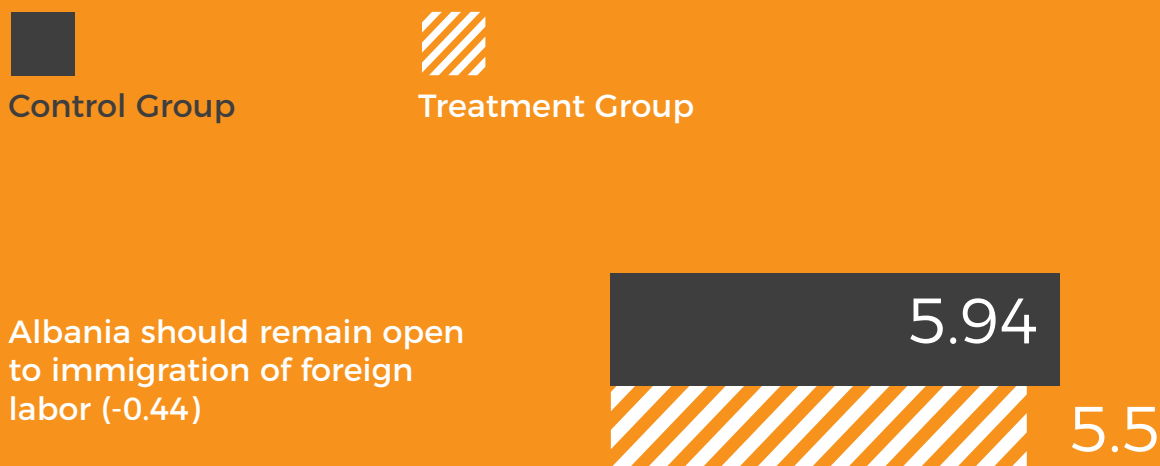
On the statements, *“Immigrants improve our society by bringing in new ideas and cultures”* and *“Regular immigrants should be granted the right to vote in local elections”*, the respondents tended to lean towards the middle. Specifically, the former statement had mean of 4.57 and SD of 3.30, whereas for the latter statement, the national survey data indicated a mean of 5.02 and SD of 3.56.

Overall, the national survey respondent’s attitudes on economic immigration to Albania suggest a less supportive, although not strongly opposed, stance on immigration.

TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP

The deliberation workshop focused on the pros and cons of the recent, however modest, trend of incoming migrants from third countries and potential concerns as perceived by Albanians. There was only one proposal for this particular topic in the survey which was designed to be tested for comparison between the treatment and control group participants.

FIGURE 27: MEAN SCORES FOR THE ECONOMIC IMMIGRANTS - TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP



“Albania should remain open to the immigration of foreign labour”

The treatment group had a mean of 5.5 and SD of 3.22 and the control group had a mean of 5.94 and SD of 2.76. The t-test results indicate no differences between the groups. This means that despite being provided with briefing materials on the topic and the opportunity to exchange with fellow citizens and experts, participants of this social experiment did not change their level of support for this statement. Namely, their attitudes remained around neutral values of the evaluation axis from 0 (strongly oppose) to 10 (strongly support). This finding is very important as it shows that Albanians do not

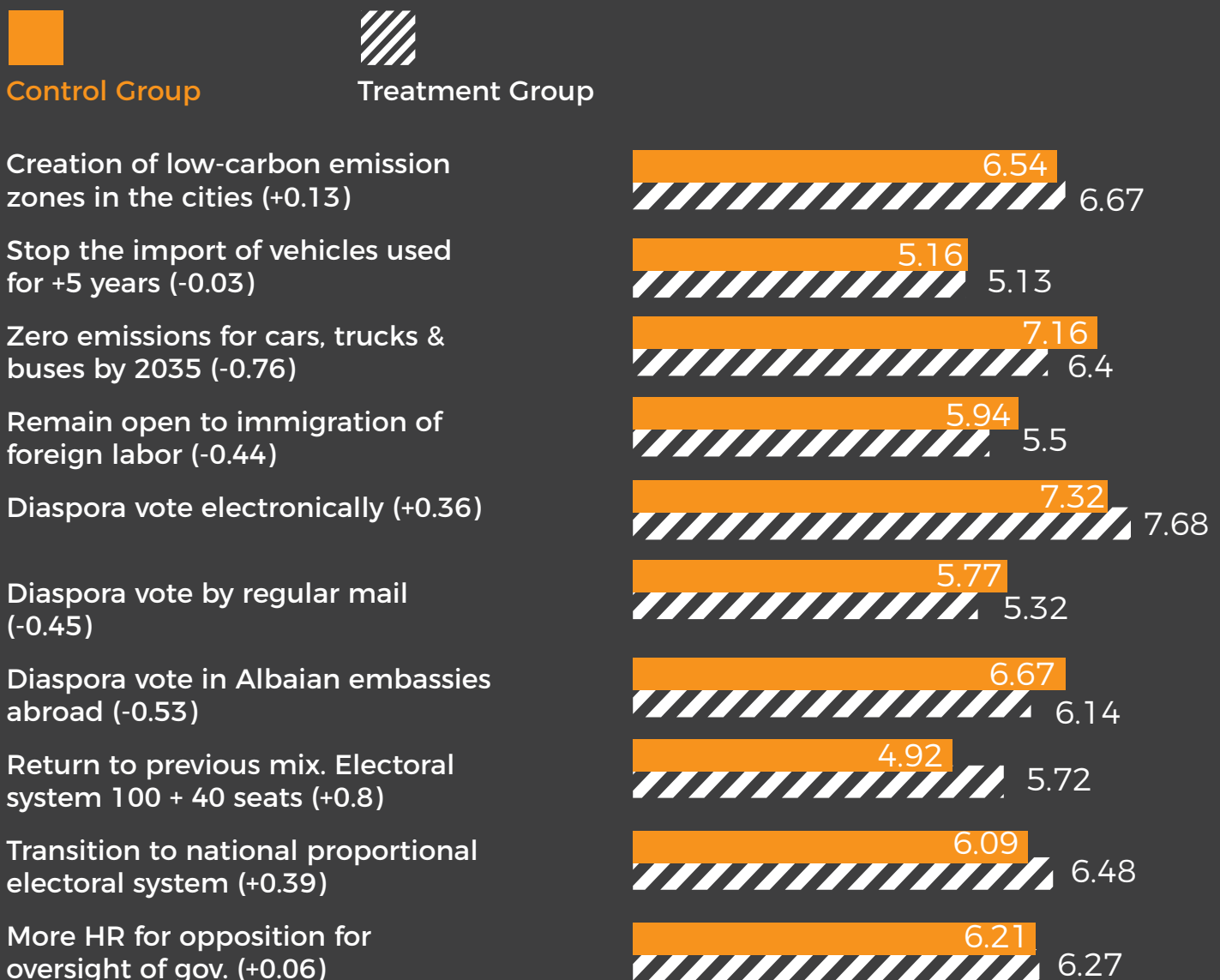
necessarily have strong feelings against foreign immigrants.

LESSONS LEARNT FROM ALBANIA'S FIRST DELIBERATIVE POLLING EXERCISE

Generally, the deliberative democracy exercise in Albania proved that objective information and the opportunity to deliberate on topics can have an important effect on people's attitudes and the quality of public discourse even on highly controversial and divisive matters. Out of a total of twenty proposed measures to improve the political situation or address concerns on important matters

of the targeted topics, for more than half of them (11) there were significant differences between the responses of treatment and control group participants (these include the 11 statements at the bottom of Figure 28). This means that treatment group participants who acquired new knowledge and interacted with their peers and independent experts tended to show different attitudes and positions to those who did not receive such knowledge. (See Figure 28).

FIGURE 28: TREATMENT VS. CONTROL GROUP – MEAN SCORES OF DIFFERENCES AND SHARED POSITIONS ON PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

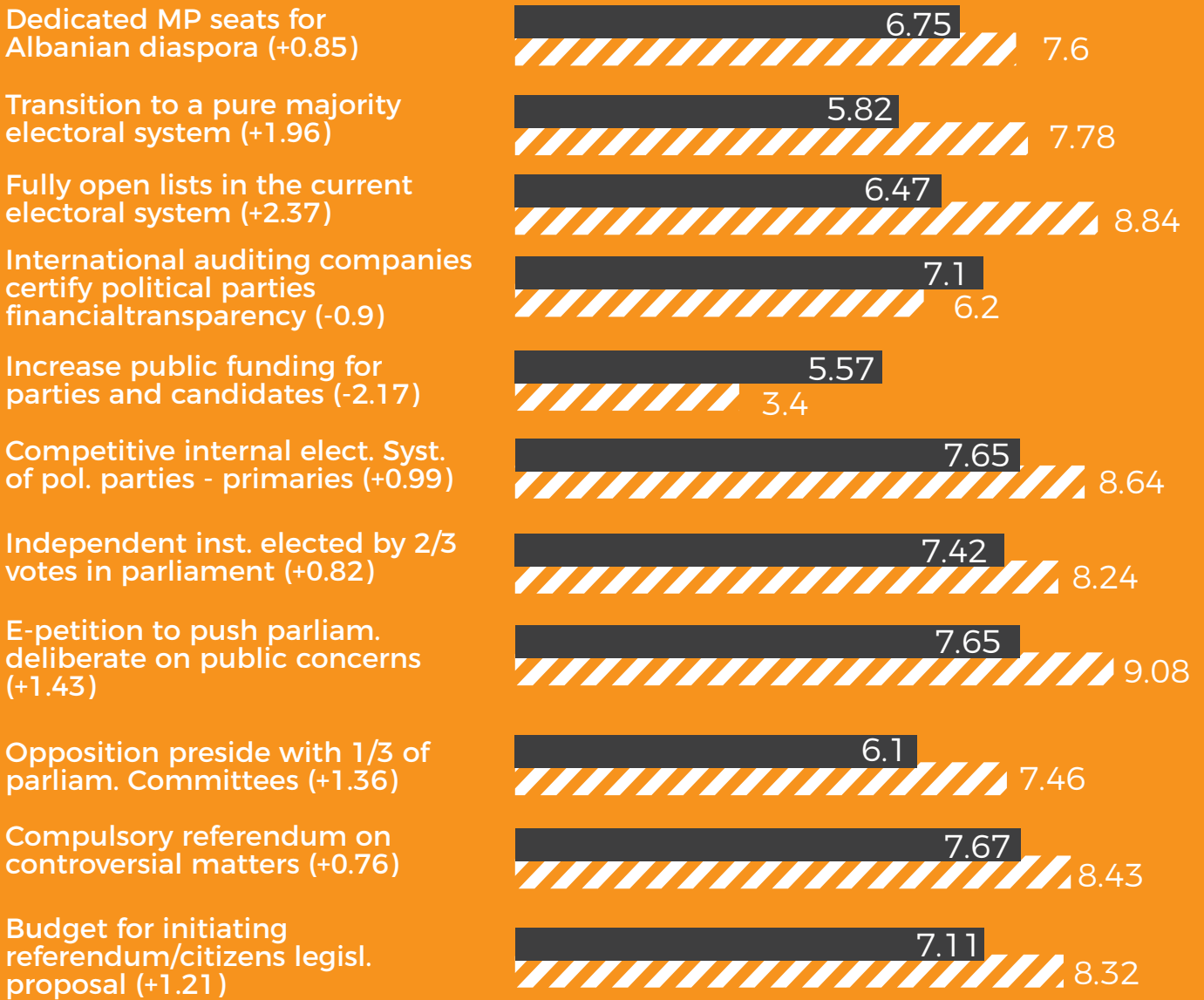




Control Group



Treatment Group



Note: Survey respondents were asked to rate each proposed measure (statements) on a scale from 0 – strongly oppose, to 10 – strongly support.

Interestingly, the themes and proposals on which treatment group participants shifted their positions compared to the control group include topics such as party democracy, direct democracy mechanisms and oversight. Further, the new information influenced participants to be more in favour of a given proposal than control group participants for most of the policy measures (statements) asked by

the survey. However, for few of them the shift was in the opposite direction and influenced treatment group participants to be less supportive than control group respondents.

On the other hand, no shift in the positions of treatment group attendees was observed on most proposals related to climate change, electoral

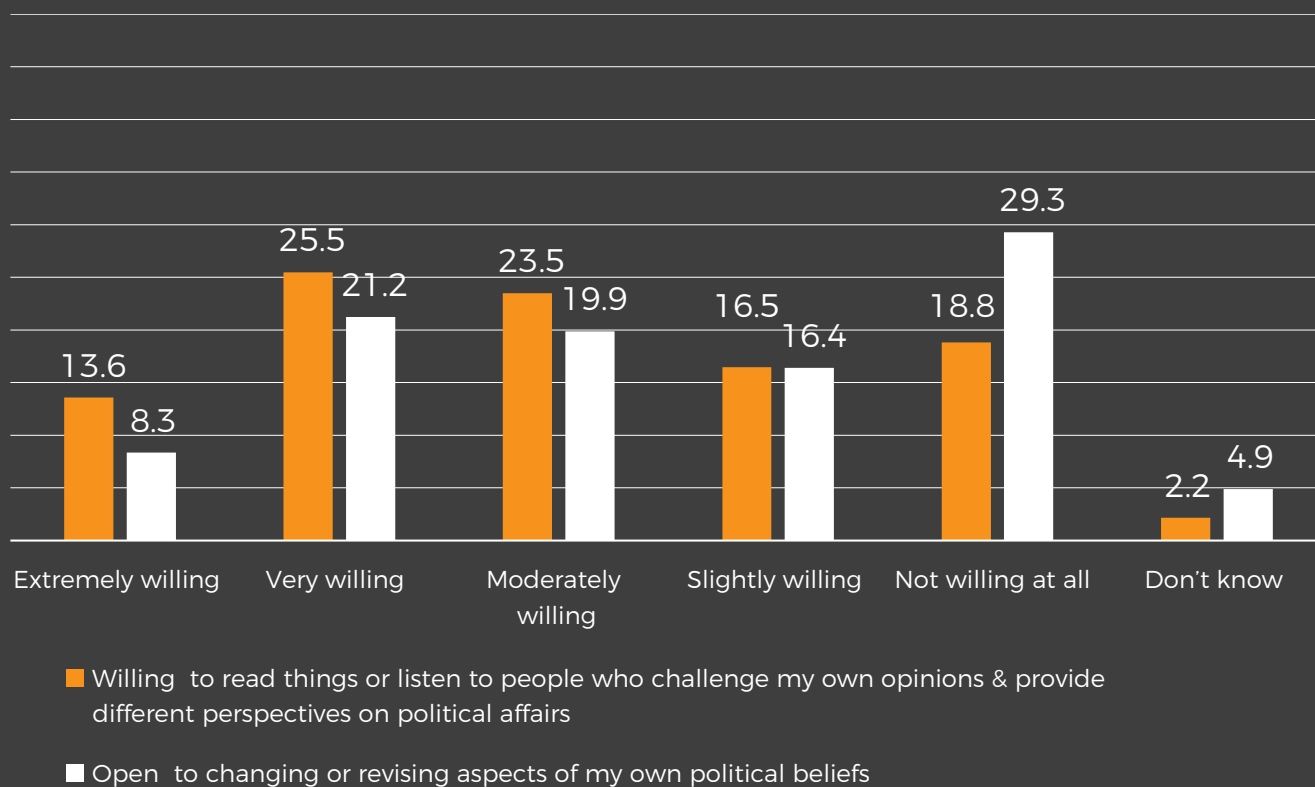
system, diaspora voting and economic immigration (see the ten statements at the top of Figure 28). This may in part be due to the fact that some of these themes are relatively new in the public discourse in Albania (e.g., climate change and economic immigration). Consequently, they show insufficient public awareness which is manifested also in the average mean for most of these statements ranging around neutral values (5 to 6, on a scale of 0 to 10). This is not the case with most of the statements, which witnessed a shift in the positions of participants from the treatment group with an average mean between the values of 8 and 9.

No shift was witnessed in relation to a significant number of the proposals relating to electoral processes (diaspora voting and electoral system).

These are topics on which there is an enduring and fierce political and public debate in Albania.

Interestingly, the above changes and shifts in the positions and attitudes of IDM's social experiment's participants (as witnessed by the treatment and control groups) took place in the context of a population which, according to the national survey was quite rigid when it comes to their attitudes, especially on political matters. As Figure 29 shows, although the majority of national survey respondents declared that they are open to read things or listen to people who challenge their opinions and provide a different perspective on political affairs, less than half of the population confirmed they would be open to changing aspects of their political beliefs.

FIGURE 29: WILLINGNESS TO READ/LISTEN DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS (NATIONAL SURVEY, N=1182) VS. OPENNESS TO CHANGE/REVISE ASPECTS OF OWN POLITICAL BELIEFS (NATIONAL SURVEY, N=1154) (%)



Over 62% of respondents would be (extremely/very/moderately) willing to listen to new perspectives but only 49% of the population would be extremely, very or moderately willing to change or revise aspects of their own political beliefs.

No distinct differences are noted among respondents across categories of gender, age, employment status or sector in relation to "willingness to listen or read different perspectives on political affairs". The percentage of national survey

respondents who declared they are “*not at all willing*” declined steadily with higher levels of “completed education level” and monthly income.

In relation to “*openness to revise or change aspects of political beliefs*”, no significant differences are observed in relation to gender, employment status or sector. However, the analysis of other demographic categories of the national survey respondents reveals interesting findings. A higher percentage of +55-year-old respondents declared they are not at all open to change/revise; generally, the more educated the respondent the less likely they were to choose either “extremely open” or “not at all open”. Finally, the lower the monthly income the higher the percentage of respondents who were not at all open to change or revise aspects of their political beliefs.

While these findings are very helpful in tailoring approaches aimed at informing specific demographic groups and audiences, the deliberative polling experiment suggests another important lesson. Although respondents to the national survey reported being more open to listen to different perspectives but less so to change their own, the comparative analysis between treatment and control group participants showed that “changing perspectives” is not so impossible either. Providing more knowledge and reliable information, enabling opportunities to exchange with peers, as well as to interact with experts, are important ways of building consensus and informed opinions. Indeed, it may be more challenging to do so on highly polarising and politicised topics in the short term, but the benefit in the medium to long term is invaluable. It will be particularly so if informed deliberation is practiced more frequently as a tool to develop critical thinking, even if it does not always deliver consensus at first.

APPENDICES

I. SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS, NATIONAL SURVEY (N=1200)

Gender	
Male	44.9%
Female	55.1%
Age groups	
Up to 24 years old	13.3%
25 - 34 years old	19.6%
35 - 44 years old	14.9%
45 - 54 years old	16%
55 - 64 years old	17.2%
65 - 74 years old	11.4%
75 - 84 years old	6.3%
85 + years old	1.2%
Geographical representation	
Urban	68.6%
Rural	31.4%
Education Level	
No education or incomplete education	1.4%
Completed primary school (4th grade)	7.2%
Completed compulsory level (8/9th grade)	19.6%
Completed High school	43.1%
University degree or higher	27.7%
Refuse	1.0%
Employment Status	
Employed	46.9%
Unemployed	19.3%
Student	6.0%
Retired	20.9%
Other	5.4%
Refuse	1.6%
Employment Sector	
Public	27.6%
Private	72.4%

Regular individual monthly income (Net)

No income	22.5%
Up to 30 000 ALL / month	33.2%
From 30 001 – 50 000 ALL / month	21.2%
From 50 001 – 70 000 ALL/ month	12.5%
From 70 000 - 100 001 ALL / month	1.1%
Over 100 001 ALL / month	0.6%
Refuse	8.9%

II. DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUPS

Demographics	Treatment group		Control Group	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Female	62	57.4	60	55.6
Male	46	42.6	48	44.4
Age Group				
Up to 24 years old	34	31.5	20	18.5
25 - 34 years old	14	13.0	31	28.7
35 - 44 years old	19	17.6	13	12.0
45 - 54 years old	14	13.0	19	17.6
55 - 64 years old	19	17.6	13	12.0
65 - 74 years old	7	6.5	12	11.1
75 - 84 years old	1	0.9	0	0
Educational level				
No education or incomplete primary education	2	1.9	0	0.0
Completed primary school (4th grade)	0	0.0	2	1.9
Completed compulsory education (8/9th grade)	2	1.9	10	9.3
Completed High school	35	32.4	44	40.7
University degree or higher	69	63.9	49	45.4
Refuse	0	0	3	2.8
Employment status				
Employed	55	50.9	55	50.9
Unemployed	20	18.5	25	23.1
Student	10	9.3	13	12.0
Retired	17	15.7	12	11.1
Other	4	3.7	3	2.8

Refuse	2	1.9	55	50.9
Employment Sector				
Public	35	32.4	16	14.8
Private	24	22.2	40	37.0
Regular individual monthly income (Net)				
No income	19	17.6	33	30.6
Up to 30 000 ALL / month	26	24.1	28	25.9
From 30 001 – 50 000 ALL / month	28	25.9	25	23.1
From 50 001 – 70 000 ALL / month	13	12.0	9	8.3
From 70 001 – 100 000 ALL / month	0	0.0	2	1.9
Over 100 001 ALL / month	1	0.9	2	1.9
Refuse	21	19.4	1	0.9

III. EVENT EVALUATION

In the main, the four-day event was highly rated by the participants. At the end of the deliberations, participants were asked to fill out an evaluation form for the entire experiment. On a scale from 0 (waste of time) to 10 (extremely valuable), 72% said the event as a whole was extremely valuable. On average, 55% of the participants reported that the briefing materials provided valuable background information on each topic. The contribution of the moderated group discussions in clarifying their positions on each of the issues was rated by 50% as “extremely valuable” and 40% “extremely valuable” for the expert plenary sessions.

In addition, with regards to the small group discussions, on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), 87% of the participants agreed that the moderated group discussion format ‘provided the opportunity for everyone to participate in the discussion’. 65% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement that “their group moderators attempted to influence the group with their personal political views”. 69% agreed that ‘the members of my group participated relatively equally in the discussions’. Meanwhile, 79% agreed that ‘the discussion platform tried to make sure that opposing arguments were considered’ and 72% fully agreed that ‘the important aspects of the issues were covered in the discussions’.

Overall, 63% of the participants concluded, ‘I learned a lot about people very different from me’. In the comments section in the evaluation forms, participants had emphasised the value of the information provided on the topics and the opportunity to consider different perspectives to the problems posed and discuss them with specialists in the field. One participant stated, “I am satisfied with the event, but I would like these activities to be not a one-time event and to find a way for our voice to really reach the parliament”. These high ratings and positive reviews of the process show that informed deliberation is both possible and rewarding for citizens.

IV. DELIBERATIVE POLLING QUESTIONNAIRE

The interviewer starts:

Greetings! The Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), in consultation with the Center for Deliberative Democracy of the University of Stanford in USA, is conducting a survey on Albanian citizens’ attitudes and opinions on a variety of political and socio-economic issues. You have been randomly selected to be part of this study. If you accept to become a part of this survey, IDM guarantees your anonymity and that the answers will be kept confidential.

If you agree to take part in this survey, you can participate in a four-day activity in Tirana where all expenses are covered by the organizers and will be compensated with an additional daily fee.

This survey is being carried out in the framework of the "Support to Parliament and Civic Education Project - PACEP, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), implemented by NDI, IDM and Albanian Helsinki Committee.

No.	Interviewer Code	Date	Municipality	Administrative unit	City/ Village
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Let's start with some questions about your general attitudes towards politics.

1. On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Albania?

- Extremely satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Moderately satisfied
- Slightly satisfied
- Not satisfied at all
- Don't know

2. In general, how important do you consider political parties for the quality of governance?

Extremely unimportant					in the middle					Very important		Don't Know
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	

V. PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

3. On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is "strongly disagree" and 10 is "strongly agree", how would you agree or disagree with the following measures to improve the work and role of the Parliament?

	Strongly oppose					in the middle					Strongly support		Don't Know
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	
Consultation with citizens and interest groups to become mandatory for all draft laws regardless of costs and time required													

	Strongly oppose					in the middle					Strongly support		Don't Know
Having a unified law on referendums and citizens' legislative initiatives	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	
A dedicated budget (from public funds) to cover costs of initiating a referendum or legislative proposals by citizens	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	
Establishing the obligation of holding referendums on controversial matters	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	

4. And, on the same scale, how important do you believe are the following measures to improve democracy in Albania?

	Strongly oppose					in the middle					Strongly support		Don't Know
Enable the opposition to preside over the work of at least 1/3 of parliamentary committees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	
Provide the opposition with more human resources to exercise control and oversight over the government													
Establish online petition with voter identification as an instrument for citizens to force Parliament to deliberate on an important public concern	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	
The heads of the independent institutions are elected by a qualified majority (2/3) of the votes in the Parliament.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	
Increase and strengthen the competencies of the independent institutions (e.g. KLSH, the People's Advocate, etc.) in controlling the government, including punitive measures (e.g. fines).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	

VI. INTERNAL DEMOCRACY OF POLITICAL PARTIES

5. On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is 'Extremely unimportant' and 10 is 'Extremely important', how important or unimportant are the following measures to improve political parties' accountability and internal democracy in Albania?

	Extremely unimportant	in the middle					Extremely important	Don't Know				
Make political parties' statutes and internal structures public and easily accessible online.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
Introduce competitive mechanisms for internal election system of political parties (e.g., primaries for their candidates in local and national elections).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
Increasing public funding for parties and candidates.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
Political parties' financial transparency must be certified by international auditing companies.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

VII. ELECTORAL SYSTEM REFORM

6. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree", how would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	in the middle					Strongly agree	Don't Know				
The current electoral system for the national parliament in Albania reflects the will of the people.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
The 2014 administrative-territorial division imposes electoral zones which distort the will of the voters when voting for local or parliamentary elections.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

7. On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is “strongly disagree” and 10 is “strongly agree”, how desirable or undesirable would you say are the following electoral systems?

	Strongly oppose					In the middle					Strongly support					Don't Know
Transition from the current regional proportional to a national proportional electoral system (with one national list)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	
Introduce fully open lists in the current electoral system.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	
Transition to a pure majority system (MP of each constituency is elected by majority of citizens' votes)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	
Return to the previous electoral system with the election of 100 MPs on a majority system and 40 MPs on a proportional system	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	

8. To what extent are you favorable or opposed to the fact that the Albanian citizens residing abroad can vote in elections in Albania?

Strongly oppose					In the middle					Strongly support					Don't Know
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	

9. On a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is extremely unfavorable, 10 is extremely favorable, and 5 is exactly in the middle, what is your general opinion on the following statements?

	Strongly oppose					In the middle					Strongly support					Don't Know
Albanian citizens residing permanently abroad should be enabled voting in parliamentary elections at Albania's diplomatic missions abroad.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	
Albanian citizens residing permanently abroad should be enabled voting in parliamentary elections in Albania by regular mail.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	

	Strongly oppose					In the middle					Strongly support					Don't Know
Albanian citizens residing permanently abroad should be enabled electronic voting for parliamentary elections in Albania.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	
Albania should ensure dedicated MP seats for which the Albanian Diaspora (<i>Albanian citizens residing permanently abroad</i>) votes and gets elected.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	

VIII. ECONOMIC IMMIGRATION TO ALBANIA

10. On a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is extremely unfavorable, 10 is extremely favorable, and 5 is exactly in the middle, what is your general opinion on the following statements?

	Strongly oppose					In the middle					Strongly support					Don't Know
Albania should remain open to the immigration of foreign labor.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	
Albania should push businesses to pay higher salaries for Albanians and not import foreign immigrants.																
Immigrants improve our society by bringing in new ideas and cultures.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	
Regular immigrants should be granted the right to vote in local elections	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				99	

IX. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

11. Now, I want to ask a few questions concerning your opinions about environmental protection.

In your opinion, how serious is the air pollution in your area?

- Very serious
- Somewhat serious
- Neither serious nor not serious
- Not very serious

- Not at all serious
- Don't know

12. In your opinion, how serious is the threat of global warming?

- Very serious
- Somewhat serious
- Neither serious nor not serious
- Not very serious
- Not at all serious
- Don't know

13. On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is completely opposed and 10 is completely support, how strongly do you oppose or support the following measures to prevent air pollution?

	Strongly oppose	in the middle					Strongly support	Don't Know				
Albania should mandate zero emissions for cars, trucks, and buses until 2035.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
Albania should stop the import of vehicles used for more than 5 years.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
I would be willing to pay higher taxes to protect environment.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
I support the creation of low-carbon emission zones in the town/city (such as only electric cars are allowed to circulate in city center)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

The following questions are related to your general attitudes towards politics.

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	in the middle					Strongly agree	Don't Know				
MPs and politicians care a lot about what people like me think.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
Most public policy issues and laws are so complicated that people like me can't really understand what's going on.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
Ordinary people have an influence over the work of the Parliament	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

15. How familiar are you with parliamentary control and oversight role of government?

- A great deal
- A lot
- To a moderate extent
- A little
- Not at all
- Don't know

16. In general, how important do you consider the parliamentary control and oversight of government?

Extremely unimportant	in the middle										Very important	Don't Know
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	

17. In Albania, how effective is the control and oversight of the government by parliament?

Extremely not effective	in the middle										Very effective	Don't Know
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99	

18. To what extent are you familiar with political parties' internal governance in general in Albania?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all
- Don't know

19. Overall, how interested are you in politics?

- Extremely interested
- Very interested
- Moderately interested
- Slightly interested
- Not interested at all
- Don't know

20. How much do you feel you can understand what is going on in politics and Parliament?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all
- Don't know

21. How much do you trust the Parliament to do what is right?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all
- Don't know

22. How in touch are MPs with priorities and concerns of citizens in the country?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all
- Don't know

23. How willing would you be to contact politicians or MPs either in person, or in writing, or in some other way?

- Extremely willing
- Very willing
- Moderately willing
- Slightly willing
- Not willing at all
- Don't know

24. Did you vote in the last parliamentary elections?

- Yes
- No
- Refuse

25. How willing are you to read things or listen to people who challenge your own opinions and provide different perspectives on political affairs?

- Extremely willing
- Very willing
- Moderately willing
- Slightly willing
- Not willing at all
- Don't know

26. How open are you to changing or revising aspects of your political beliefs?

- Extremely open
- Very open
- Moderately open
- Slightly open
- Not open at all
- Don't know

X. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE GAIN

Now we come to some factual questions to which not everyone may know the right answers. If you come to one to which you don't know the answer, don't worry about it. Just say so, and we'll move on to the next one.

27. According to the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament, can you as a citizen participate in the Standing Parliamentary Committee meetings?

- Yes, I can attend any case.
- Yes, I can only participate if I submit a request in advance.
- Yes, I can only participate if the committee decides by a majority of votes.
- No, I cannot participate.
- I do not know

28. Albania has not adopted a law on (only one option):

- Referendums
- Civic legislative initiatives
- Public consultations
- The right to Information
- All of the above
- Don't know

29. Which, if any, of the following are true of the system currently used to elect Members of Parliament? (More than one answer is permitted.)

- Voters must definitely vote for independent parties and candidates
- Candidates are listed in the party lists in alphabetical order
- Voters can express their preference for a party candidate
- All of the above
- None of the above
- I do not know

30 .According to the Electoral Code, can the Albanian Diaspora (Albanian citizens residing permanently abroad) vote for the local and parliamentary elections in Albania?

- Yes, he can vote.
- Yes, he can only vote in parliamentary elections.
- Yes, can only vote in local elections.
- No, cannot vote.
- I do not know

31. According to the Law on Political Parties, which body is responsible for monitoring and overseeing the political parties' financing?

- Parliament
- Central Election Committee
- Supreme State Audit
- All of the above
- None of the above
- Don't know

32. According to the administrative-territorial division of 2014, Albania consists of:

- 16 counties and 34 municipalities
- 12 counties and 56 municipalities
- 3 counties and 25 municipalities
- None of the above
- I do not know

33. In 2020, what was the unemployment rate in Albania?

- Below 10%
- Between 10% and 20%
- Between 20% and 30%
- More than 30%
- Don't Know

34. In your opinion, the new law on foreigners (of the year 2021) in Albania facilitates?

- The procedures of stay and employment of foreigners for all types of employment
- The procedures of work permit for qualified/skilled labor force
- The procedures of work permit for unqualified labor force
- All of the above
- None of the above
- Don't Know

35. Does Albania have a law on climate change?

- Yes, I have heard that there is such a law.
- No, I do not know if there is such a law.
- No, there is no such law.

XI. DEMOGRAPHICS

And, finally, here are some questions about you.

1: Gender

Female

Male

2: Age: _____

3: Educational level

No education or incomplete education

Completed primary school (4th grade)

Completed compulsory level (8/9th grade)

Completed High school

University degree or higher

99. REFUSE

4: Employment status

Employed

Unemployed

Student

Retired

Other _____

99. REFUSE

5: Employment sector

Public

Private

6: Regular individual monthly income (Net)

No income

Up to 30 000 ALL / month

From 30 001 – 50 000 ALL / month

From 50 001 – 70 000 ALL / month

From 70 001 – 100 000 ALL / month

Over 100 001 ALL / month

99. REFUSE

INVITATION TO THE WORKSHOP

On 18 (Thursday) to 21 (Saturday) of November 2021, IDM will organize a workshop with a selected number of respondents of this survey to deliberate on the survey topics. This event will take place at _____ in _____ and participants will be addressed by renowned experts and public figures in plenary sessions and will subsequently discuss in small groups the topics and possible solutions to challenges.

Should you accept our invitation, IDM will cover all your travel and accommodation costs, and will also pay a daily fee for all days of the event.

Would you be willing to participate in our event (full 3.5 days) under these conditions?

Yes, definitely

Probably yes

Probably no

No definitely

Are you vaccinated against Covid-19?

Yes, both doses

Yes, only the first dose

No, but I have planned to get vaccinated by November

No, I will not get vaccinated

Other _____

Only for respondents that chose option 1-3 above. Participant contacts: Mobile _____ and Email _____

THANK YOU!

To be filled by the interviewer (for the DP event):

To what extent the respondent showed interest in the topics covered by the questionnaire?

A great deal of interest

Good interest

Average interest

Very little interest

No interest at all

To what extent was she/he serious and attentive while answering the questions?

Extremely serious and attentive

Very serious and attentive

Averagely serious and attentive

Very little serious and attentive

Not serious and attentive at all