INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND MEDIATION

Threat Perceptions in Albania:

An Analysis of Strategic Documents and Perceptions of Security officials and the wider public

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1. Executive summary

Albania has only a recent experience with drafting and adopting strategic documents which in a comprehensive manner identify threats to security and provide the means and approaches to address the threats. The first National Security Strategy (NSS) was adopted by the Albanian parliament in 2000 and has been reviewed only once in 2004. The NSS is the main document that defines the threats to security, sets out the means for addressing such threats and the institutions responsible for the provision of Albania's security.[1] The NSS provides for three categories of threats to security: (1) internal, (2) external and (3) global threats.

Apart from the NSS there are two other more recent official documents that provide for an assessment of threats to security: the National Military Strategy (NMS)[2] and the Strategic Defence Review (SDR)[3], adopted in 2007 and 2013 respectively. Differently from the NSS, the NMS and the SDR are sectoral strategies that are aimed at supporting the military planning and strategic posture of the Albanian Armed Forces.

The NMS and the SDR provide for threat assessment chapters but they differ both from each other and the NSS regarding the categorisation of threats. The NMS focuses on the asymmetry of threats and identifies two categories of threats: (1) internal asymmetrical and (2) external and asymmetrical threats. The SDR identifies four categories of threats: (1) conventional threats, (2) non conventional threats, (3) natural, industrial and manmade risks, and (4) emerging challenges. This makes it rather difficult to come up with a consolidated list of threats. Nonetheless, by grouping the threats provided by the three documents, a list of the main perceived threats to the country's security can be drawn based on the frequency each threat is mentioned in each document.

The lack of systematic approach to reviewing the strategic documents and the lack of a unified approach to assessing the threats suggest that Albania has not developed yet a coherent strategic culture.

To a certain extent this was reflected even in the interviews with officials from the military, police, and intelligence organisations which tended to reflect a sectoral approach when ranking the threats and the means and instruments to address the threats. However, by grouping the threats provided by the interviews based on the frequency that each threat is mentioned, two lists of threats have been drawn: one list presents the current perceived threats and the other presents the threats that according to the interviewees, Albania is likely to be faced in ten years time. The most commonly mentioned threats in the official documents and the interviews are presented in the table below.

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[1] The English version of the 2004 National Security Strategy of Albania can be accessed at:
http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/155586/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/106e8766-1dc7-48de-b68f-7786dab7bdc9/en/Albania_English-2004.pdf

[2] The Albanian version of the 2007 National Military Strategy of Albania can be accessed at:
http://www.mod.gov.al/qksm/strategjia_2007.pdf

[3] The Albanian version of the Strategic Defence Review of Albania can be accessed at:
http://www.mod.gov.al/qksm/rishikimi_strategjike.pdf

Threats identified in the official documents	Current threats as identified by the interviews	Threats in ten years time as identified by the interviews
1. Natural and manmade disasters 2. Organized crime 3. Terrorism 4. Illegal trafficking 5. Nationalism and ethnic conflicts 6. Pollution of the environment and pandemic diseases 7. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction 8. Corruption 9. Political Instability	1. Organised crime 2. Corruption 3. Economic and financial crisis 4. Illegal trafficking 5. Natural and manmade disasters 6. Political instability 7. Terrorism 8. Erosion of religious tolerance 9. Criminality	1. Corruption 2. Political destability 3. Organized crime 4. Individual and property safety 5. Rule of law failure 6. Economic crisis 7. Justice system failure 8. Social problems 9. Terrorism

2. Introduction

This paper maps and discusses the threats that Albania is faced with at the present and threats that it is likely to face in ten years time. The study is a contribution to the discussions in the OSCE Helsinki + 40 process which aims to assessing threats and challenges in the OSCE space, the OSCE place in the modern security architecture, and potential areas where its role could be strengthened to keep up with the security challenges of the 21st century.[4]

The study is based on the analysis of three main sources:

− The official strategic documents adopted by the Albanian parliament by the Council of Ministers.
− Data collected from interviews with officials from Albanian state institutions, namely the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, the Intelligence Service, and from the NGO sector.
− Secondary sources and public opinion surveys.

The paper is structured as follows: the next section analyses the threats to Albania as they are presented in the official strategic documents adopted by the government and the parliament. The subsequent section presents the analysis of the data collected from the interviews with government and non government officials. The following section presents findings from public opinion. The last section draws some concluding remarks.

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4 http://www.osce.org/cio/110043

3. Threat assessment according to the strategic documents

This section analyses the threats as identified and ranked in the strategic documents adopted by the Albanian parliament and the Council of Ministers. It must be said from the outset that Albania's tradition in adopting such documents is fairly recent. The first official document that provides an assessment of threats to Albania's security which was adopted by democratically elected institutions is the National Security Strategy (NSS) that was adopted in 2000. The NSS has been reviewed in 2004, which remains the main strategic document in terms of threat assessment, although its review is long overdue.[5]

Apart from the NSS, the Albanian parliament adopted the first National Military Strategy (NMS)in 2002. The NMS is a sectoral document that supports military planning and posture and has been revised twice, in 2005 and in 2007. The NMS also is rather outdated and doesn't reflect fully the more recent geopolitical developments but in any case its threat assessment is more recent than the NSS.

The most recent document which provides a threat assessment is the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) adopted by the Albanian government in 2013. However the SDR is a document adopted by the Council of Ministers and therefore is not the outcome of a broader political process, like the NSS and the NMS.

The three documents which are analysed in this paper are the following:

- The National Security Strategy, reviewed in 2004
- The Military Strategy, reviewed in 2007
- The Strategic Defence Review, adopted in 2013

3.2 The approach to the processes of adoption of strategic documents

At this point it may be useful to try to understand the reasons for the unsystematic approach to the review process of the strategic documents in Albania.

During communism any threat assessment was conducted on ideological basis and the Albanian communist government defined as external threats all the countries that didn't share the same ideology. The neighbouring countries (Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia) and the two large military alliances of the time, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, were both considered as military threats that were thought to be contained through heavily militarised border and a dense network of bunkers.

Given that the regime controlled very closely the territory and the population the main internal threats were ideological dissent, sabotage and damage of state property.

The collapse of the communist regime brought to the surface a host of new challenges that the post communist government was ill-equipped to deal with such as the breakdown/absence of rule

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[5] The NSS 2004 stipulates that the document should be revised after three years. However the NSS has not been revised despite major changes in the regional geostrategic environment such as the declaration of the Kosovo independence and the membership of Albanian in the NATO. The review process has been resumed by the new government that took over in September 2013 and according to media reports the working group led by the deputy foreign minister has met twice so far.

of law, the underdeveloped and weak judicial systems and the emergence of endemic corruption and criminal activities.[6] The wars in Yugoslavia contributed to maintain the possibility of involvement in armed conflict as an eminent threat which was reflected also in the pace and approach to security sector reform throughout the nineties.[7]

Therefore, following the end of the war in Kosovo and the launch of the Euro Atlantic integration processes, the Albanian government with the support of the international community launched the processes for defining and addressing threats to security through the adoption of strategic documents.[8]

However, the process has lacked full local ownership and articulation of threats reflected to a large extent the influence of different international actors.[9] The lack of continuity in the review process and the categorization and ranking of threats are some other indicators that reflect this trend.

Thus, the approach of both the NSS and the DS has been to distinguish between internal and external threats. Although the threats are ranked according to a certain order the ranking is done in accordance with any hierarchical approach to distinguish between the most imminent threats or threats that are likely to cause more harm. The SDR which has been adopted more recently provides for another categorisation which focuses on the conventional and nonconventional threats. The table below presents the categories of threat in each of the six documents that have been adopted since 2000.

	National Security Strategy 2000	National Security Strategy 2004	National Military Strategy 2002	National Military Strategy 2005	National Military Strategy 2007	Strategic Defence Review 2013
Threat Category	Internal	Internal	Internal Conflicts	Internal	Internal Asymmetrical	Conventional
	External	Transnational	Interstate conflicts	External	External and Asymmetrical	Non Conventional
		Global		Asymmetrical		Natural, industrial and manmade
						Emerging challenges

Table 1: The categorization of threats in the Albanian strategic documents

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[6] Eno Trimcev, "Organized Crime in Albania: An Unconventional Security Threat," Connections: The Quarterly Journal 2, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 61-68.
[7] Arjan Dyrmishi, Besnik Baka and Mariola Qesaraku, 'Context Analysis & Chronology of the Security Sector Reform in Albania 1991–2009', Institute for Democracy and Mediation, 2011
[8] Enri Hide, Geron Kamberi, "Security Policies in the Western Balkans: Albania", Belgrade Centre for Security Policy 2010
[9] Ibid

3.3 Formulation and review of strategic documents

Prior to discussion in the Council of Ministers and the parliament the strategic documents are analysed, discussed and formulated by relevant ministries and agencies. In the case of the NSS the leading institution is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) which coordinates the input provided by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Intelligence Services. Other ministries may also be invited to provide input such as Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Energy (MoE). The draft NSS prepared by the MFA is adopted by the Council of Ministers which in turn proposes the document to the parliament for adoption by law.

Differently from the NSS, the National Military Strategy is formulated and drafted by the MoD alone with no consultations with other ministries. However the process of adoption by the Council of Ministers and the parliament is similar to the NSS.

The process of the formulation of the SDR in 2013 was more inclusive. Apart from the MoD, which leaded the process, the MFA, the MoI, the MoJ and the Intelligence Services were also invited to provide their input. Nonetheless, in general the process of adoption of the strategic documents in Albania has traditionally lacked input from the non-government sector and has been accompanied by low public and media interest.[10]

3.4 The assessment of threats in the 2004 National Security Strategy

The NSS adopted in 2004 is the main Albanian strategic document. However, as discussed above, the NSS is rather outdated for it reflects the security environment of the early 2000 which was shaped particularly by the post 9/11 events and the war on terrorism on the one hand and on the other, at the regional level, by the new opportunities provided by the end of the Yugoslav and the Euro-Atlantic integration perspective. Regarding the internal security environment the NSS reflects the post-1997 political, economic and institutional crisis.

The forth chapter of the NSS presents in detail the threats and risks which are divided in three categories: internal, transnational and global.

The **internal threats** to security include and are ranked as follows:

1. The organized crime and the insufficient capabilities to fight and prosecute criminal activities.
2. Political instability that undermines the normal functioning of state institutions, social peace and public safety
3. Insufficient economic development that undermine reforms and factor that promote corruption and illegal trafficking
4. Migration (illegally) of Albanian citizens to other countries that leads to loss of lives, brain drain, artificial ageing of the population, decline of the domestic labour market

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[10] Enri Hide, Geron Kamberi, "Security Policies in the Western Balkans: Albania", Belgrade Centre for Security Policy 2010

5. Natural and manmade disasters that may threaten the life of citizen and cause material damages
6. Internal migration that causes overpopulation in the urban centres and depletion of human resources in rural areas
7. Misinformation of the public opinion that may create situations of insecurity, fear and tensions
8. Inadequate development of education, science and culture necessary to support the development programs

The **external threats** include and are ranked as follows:

1. Use of military force by other countries that may endanger sovereignty, independence and integrity of the country.
2. Nationalism and ethnic conflicts that may lead to regional destabilization.
3. Terrorism and use violence as a means to obtain political objectives.
4. Organized crime which threatens security through the level of sophistication and perfection of its methods and means.
5. Illegal trafficking that is favoured by the country's geographical position, the poor economical and social conditions, unemployment and poverty.

The **global threats** include and are ranked as follows:

1. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
2. Pollution of the environment and pandemic diseases.
3. Reduction of water resources and the effects of climate change.

The NSS presents also the means for addressing the threats to security. Regarding the internal threats the NSS focuses on the importance of strengthening the democratic institutions, consolidate the security institutions to fight against crime, corruption and ensure rapid economic development as a means to raise the level of security in the country.

Regarding the external threats the NSS focuses on the importance of dialogue, cooperation and peaceful means to solve disputes alongside with the integration into collective security and defence organizations for ensuring the country's national security.

3.5 The assessment of threats in the 2007 Military Strategy

The National Military Strategy adopted in 2007 is the most recent official document adopted by the parliament that includes a chapter on threats to Albania's security. Differently from the NSS, the NMS focuses on the asymmetry of threats for its categorisation. The NMS highlights that the possibility of any armed aggression against Albania has become minimal and therefore the focus has shifted towards the asymmetrical threats. Thus the NMS distinguishes two categories of threats: the internal asymmetrical threats and the external asymmetrical threats.

The **internal asymmetrical** threats include and are ranked as follows:

1. Organised crime which is favoured by poor economic development and the high unemployment rates among the 20 to 40 years old age group
2. Corruption.
3. Tax evasion and informal economy.
4. Natural disasters.
5. Industrial accidents.
6. Pandemic diseases.

The **external asymmetrical** threats include and are ranked as follows:

1. The unstable regional security in which is characterised by persistence of historical legacies and fragile democratic institutions.
2. Terrorism being more likely to directly affect Albania as an aspirant (currently member) NATO country.
3. Illegal trafficking which is favoured by the geographical position of the country.

3.6 The assessment of threats in the 2013 Strategic Defence Review

The most recent official document that represents the views of the Albanian institutions regarding the threat assessment is the SDR. Although the SDR has not been adopted through parliamentary procedure the drafting process has involved a larger number of ministries and agencies than the Military Strategy.

The SDR is the first strategic document adopted after the membership of Albania in NATO which it considers as a major change in the strategic environment. The SDR highlights also the fact that Albania is now surrounded by NATO member countries or by countries that aspire to become member of this organisation.

The SDR distinguishes four categories of risks, threats and challenges.

Conventional threats, which include and are ranked as follows:

1. Change of state borders through violence.
2. Extreme nationalism.
3. Confrontation of ethnic, cultural, ideological, religious nature.

Nonconventional threats, which include and are ranked as follows:

1. Terrorism.
2. Extremist movements.
3. Failed states.
4. Illegal activities.
5. Crises of various natures.

Risks arising from natural, industrial and human factors, which include and are ranked as follows:

1. Unpredictable risks arising from natural or human factors.

2. Human and industrial negligence.

Emerging security challenges, which include and are ranked as follows:

1. Spread of weapons of mass destruction.
2. Development of ballistic missile capabilities by countries outside the North Atlantic Alliance
3. Cyber attacks.
4. Hybrid threats.
5. Challenges of energy security.
6. Scarce resources.
7. Maritime piracy.

3.7 What are the threats?

Given the varieties of categories and individual threats identified in the three official documents analysed above it is not so easy to conclude on what the actual threats are and how to rank them in order of priority. The documents have been adopted in different times and are different in their scope. However, since the three documents have been formulated with the input from the same institutions they evidently represent the official view of the Albanian institutions. By grouping the threats identified in each document based on how frequently they are mentioned, the following list can be drawn.

1. Natural and manmade disasters (mentioned 5 times as an internal and external threat).[11]

2. Organized crime (mentioned 3 times under different threat categories).

3. Terrorism (mentioned 3 times).

4. Illicit trafficking (mentioned 2 times).

5. Nationalism and ethnic conflicts (mentioned 2 times).

6. Pollution of the environment and pandemic diseases (mentioned 2 times).

7. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (mentioned 2 times).

8. Corruption (mentioned 2 times).

9. Political Instability (mentioned 1 time).

10. Failure of states (mentioned 1 time).

11. Insufficient economic development (mentioned 1 time).

12. Tax evasion and informal economy (mentioned 1 time).

13. Inadequate development of education, science and culture (mentioned 1 time).

14. Misinformation of the public opinion (mentioned 1 time).

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[11] In the three documents analysed this threat is found under definitions such as Natural disasters, Industrial accidents, Human and industrial negligence, Non-intentional risks.

15. Illegal migration (mentioned 1 time).

16. Illegal activities (mentioned 1 time).

17. Internal migration (mentioned 1 time).

18. Use of military force by other countries (mentioned 1 time).

19. Unstable regional security (mentioned 1 time).

20. Change of state borders (mentioned 1 time).

21. Confrontation of ethnic, cultural, ideological, religious nature (mentioned 1 time).

22. Extremist movements (mentioned 1 time).

23. Crises of various natures (mentioned 1 time).

24. Development of ballistic missiles (mentioned 1 time).

25. Cyber attacks (mentioned 1 time).

26. Hybrid threats (mentioned 1 time).

27. Challenges of energy security (mentioned 1 time).

28. Scarce resource (mentioned 1 time).

29. Maritime piracy (mentioned 1 time).

4. Analysis of threats according to the interviews

4.1 The selection of sources

With the aim to have an as much as possible representative sample initially we tried to interviews officials from a broader range of institutions. However, we later decided to focus only on the security institutions given that the input we were receiving was quite limited.[12] In the end we decided to interview sources from the Ministry of Defence (3 civilian officials working in the policy section) from the General Staff (2 uniformed officials with the rank of major), from the Albanian State Police (3 uniformed officials), from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2 officials) from the Intelligence Service (3 officials) from the non-government sector (2 respondents). Indeed the institutions selected for the interviews, except from the NGO sector, are the main contributors that formulate the strategic documents. Concerning gender representativeness of the interviewees there were ten male and five female.

4.2 The identification and ranking of threats according to interviews

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[12] We tried to have interviews with officials from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Energy, and the Ministry of Agriculture but they generally declined to be interviewed saying that that they were not familiar with the issues. When we persisted and tried to get them involved by giving more detailed explanations of the scope of the interview the respondents tended to comply but they evidently lacked the background and just seemed to guess the answers.

This section analyses the threats that Albania is currently facing and the threats it is likely to face in ten years time as provided by the interviewed officials. The approach to ranking the threats is based on the frequency the interviewees have mentioned each particular threat. Based on this approach the following list of current threats came out.

Current threats:

1. Organised crime, mentioned in12 interviews,

2. Corruption, mentioned in 10 interviews,

3. Economic and financial crisis, mentioned in 8 interviews

4. Illegal trafficking,[13] mentioned in 7 interviews,

5. Natural and manmade disasters, mentioned in 6 interviews,

6. Political instability, mentioned in 5 interviews,

7. Terrorism, mentioned in 4 interviews,

8. Erosion of religious tolerance, mentioned in 4 interviews,

9. Criminality, mentioned in 3 interviews,

10. Espionage, mentioned in 3 interviews,

11. Cyber attacks, mentioned in 3 interviews.

Other threats that were less mentioned include:

- Brain drain, social inequality, overexploitation of resources, unemployment, street and domestic violence (mentioned in 2 interviews).

- Institution weakness, weapons of mass destruction, energy security, pandemic diseases, blood feud, albanophobia, road accidents (mentioned in 1 interview).

Threats likely to be faced in ten years time:

1. Terrorism, mentioned in 8 interviews,

2. Economic and financial crisis, mentioned in 8 interviews,

3. Corruption, mentioned in 8 interviews,

4. Organised crime, mentioned in 7 interviews,

5. Illegal trafficking, mentioned in 7 interviews,

6. Erosion of religious tolerance, mentioned in 6 interviews,

7. Cyber attacks, mentioned in 5 interviews,

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[13] Under illegal trafficking threat we have clustered, trafficking of drugs, human trafficking and weapons smuggling, which were mentioned as separate threats by different sources.

8. Natural and manmade disasters, mentioned in 4 interviews,

9. Ethnic conflicts, mentioned in 4 interviews,

10. Criminality, mentioned in 4 interviews

11. Espionage, mentioned in 3 interviews,

12. Change of state borders, mentioned in 3 interviews.

Other threats that were less mentioned include:

- Overexploitation of resources, internal migration, and social inequality, (mentioned in 2 interviews).

- Political instability, weapons of mass destruction, pandemic diseases, energy security, brain drain, albanophobia, nationalism, and weakness of security institutions, (mentioned in 1 interview).

4.3 The origins of identified threats

The interviews show that the causes of the current threats identified are predominately of domestic nature. The polarised politics, the home grown criminal organisations, the poor economic performance, increasing social disparity, and weak public administration are the most frequently cited causes. Other less frequently mentioned causes of threats include the participation of Albania in the counterterrorist actions as a NATO member which makes it possible terrorist target; the increased access to internet and exposure to cyber threats; free movement of people that makes the epidemic diseases easier to travel; damages to the ecosystem; and brain drain.

Regarding the causes of threat in ten years from now the interviewees tend to be less willing to provide answers. Nonetheless, among the answers given sources of threat are more balanced between internal and external ones, differently from the current sources of threats. The most frequently cited sources include the polarised politics, poor economic performance, social disparity, and erosion of religious tolerance, but also a further exposure to international cybercrime, international terrorism, and international criminal organisations.

4.4 The victims of threats

Generally the interviewees tend to identify the people and more specifically the vulnerable groups of the society as the main victims of current threats. Other victims, rarely mentioned though, include critical infrastructures, the private sector, and the democratic system. The interviews show similar patterns even for the victims of threats in ten years from now.

4.5 Instruments and policy approaches to address the identified threats

Regarding the instruments needed to addressing the identified threats the most commonly referred by the interviews were the political, the economic and diplomatic ones. This was the case for both present threats and the threats in ten years time. Other instruments, less frequently mentioned included the police, the military and civil society actions.

Regarding the policy approaches to address the identified threats the interviewees distinguish between the policies and approaches to address the internal and those needed to address external threats. The most frequently mentioned policies to address the internal threats include the unilateral state action to ensure closer cooperation of domestic actors and pursuing reforms to strengthen institutions. In order to address the external threats the interviews referred to the cooperation on bilateral, regional and broader levels. There were no differences between the current threats and the threats of ten years from now when specifying the policy approaches.

4.6 Sufficiency to address threats

The data from the interviews shows that generally all the current threats are addressed in an unsatisfactory manner. The interviewees from the police referred to terrorism and trafficking as being sufficiently address but this perception may be biased and confused with the efforts that the police is making rather the actual results in countering the threats.

Similarly, the data from interviews show that even the threats in ten years from now will not be addressed in a satisfactory manner. Only two or three interviewees were confident that external threats such as terrorism and religious extremism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and cyber will be addressed in a satisfactory manner. The same numbers of interviewees were confident that internal threats such as economic decline, political instability and overexploitation of resources will be addressed in sufficient manner in ten years time.

4.7 OSCE involvement

The interviews show that review and supervision, training and coordination of policies are the main areas where the OSCE can be involved in addressing both current and future threats. Other less mentioned areas of involvement include setting of norms, awareness rising, and protection of human rights.

The interviewees recognise that the main OSCE strength consists in its partnership role in the consolidation of democratic institutions and the monitoring of election processes. Some of the mentioned areas where the OSCE can be further involved include the facilitation of dialogue with the civil society and assistance to legal reforms.

The main weaknesses of the OSCE according to the interviews included the meddling on domestic politics and the need for a more effective cooperation among a broad spectrum of member countries.

4.8 Other relevant international actors

The majority of the interviewees consider the European Union as the best suited actor to address the current threats identified by them. Other actors that are less mentioned include the United Nation, NATO, OSCE, Interpol and the International Monetary Fund. The interviews show that the best way to address the threats is the combination of economic and law enforcement means.

The EU is considered as the best suited actor to address even the threats identified in ten years from now. NATO and OSCE are also mentioned as other important international actors while the UN was less mentioned. South East Europe police cooperation organizations were also identified

but only by the interviewees from the police. The combination of different economic, military and law enforcement means and the division of roles among the mentioned international actors came out as the most common approach to address the threats by the interviews.

The interviews show that the awareness of state sector employees on the potential of civil society actors in addressing the threats is limited. Only the two interviewees coming from the nongovernment sector stressed the relevance of the involvement of the civil society in the process of formulation of relevant policies to addressing the threats.

5. Threat perception according to public opinion surveys

As mentioned above, one of the main features of the process of adoption of the strategic documents has been the top approach to processes with minimal inclusion of other societal stakeholders and or inexistent vague political debate. Similarly, the approach of other societal actors in providing alternative views with regard to threat assessment has been patchy, including public opinion surveys which during the past two decades have been conducted very rarely.

More recently there has been an emerging interest by local civil society organisations to conducted studies and surveys to indentify threats as perceived from the population. The Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) has conducted a public opinion survey in October 2013 in which questions on threats to security were also posed.[14]

In two open questions the respondents were asked to identify by themselves the external and internal threats against Albania's national security.

The results of the survey show that the public identifies the following list of **external threats**:

1. Border and territorial disputes
2. Racism and ethnically based violence
3. Political and diplomatic failure
4. Economic crisis
5. Terrorism
6. Illegal trafficking
7. Organized crime
8. Religious extremism
9. Uncontrolled Migration

The identified **internal threats** rank as follows:

1. Corruption
2. Political destability
3. Organized crime
4. Individual and property safety
5. Rule of law failure

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[14] More information about this survey can be found in:
http://idmalbania.org/sites/default/files/publications/albanian_public_perception_related_to_security_-_english_0.pdf

6. Economic crisis
7. Justice system failure
8. Social problems
9. Terrorism

6. Concluding remarks

This paper analysed the threats as assessed by the Albanian official documents and as perceived by security officials and the wider public.

The analysis shows that there is lack of systematic approach in the official documents in defining the categories of threats and in ranking the threats in order of priority. However, the list of threats generated by clustering the threats included in the three official documents can be considered as the most appropriate and the findings from the interviews and the public opinion survey contribute to substantiate it. Despite the variations in the categorisation and ranking, the three sources of analysis converge in identifying similar sets of threats.

The main threats identified are of transnational nature, but given that organised crime and illegal trafficking are identified as internal threats too, there seems to be no clear division between internal and external threats. The traditional military threats seem to be more remote.

The analysis of the official documents and the interviews reveal the convergence on the means and instruments to address the indentified threats. The interviews point to the insufficiency of efforts in addressing the current threats and the need for better international cooperation and multilateral action.

The study shows that the OSCE is expected to play an important role in supervising and coordinating policies and in providing support to consolidate democratic institutions, although the European Union was identified as the best suited international actor that can contribute to address the identified threats.