



opinion poll 2019 **TRUST IN GOVERNANCE**



Institute for Democracy and Mediation
Instituti për Demokraci dhe Ndërmjetësim



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Opinion poll

TRUST *in* GOVERNANCE

2019

Survey Report



Institute for Democracy and Mediation
Instituti për Demokraci dhe Ndërmjetësim



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Resilient nations.*

Opinion Poll 2019: Trust in Governance

Survey Report

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Trust in Governance 2019 at a glance

In its seventh annual edition, the ‘Trust in Governance’ opinion poll was conducted by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) during November-December 2019 across the 61 municipalities of Albania, using a 2500 randomly selected nationally representative sample. Findings are grouped into nine main sections.



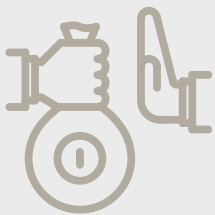
Trust in institutions

- International institutions/organisations like **NATO**, the **UN**, and the **EU** rank as the **most trusted institutions** by the vast majority of Albanian citizens.
- **Religious institutions (65.6%)** are the **most trusted domestic institutions**, followed by the Army (59.4%), the Police (54.6%), educational institutions (57.3%), and healthcare institutions (51.4%).
- Although **prosecution and courts are perceived least often as trustworthy**, the level of trust has increased over the past few years.
- For most institutions, **the level of trust increased between 2015 and 2017, but decreased between 2017 and 2019**.
- Albanians **over 66 years old**, people **employed at the public sector**, or people **with a university degree** generally report **more trust in institutions** than other demographics.
- **52.7%** of the Albanian citizens believe that the **justice reform will have a positive impact** on the development of the country, but **31.5%** believes that the justice reform **is not being implemented properly**.
- **Television (57.2%)** remains the **most popular media outlet** to get information on current affairs, particularly among older generations. However, among younger age groups and citizens with a higher income, social media and news portals are popular as well. The majority of Albanians indicate that they do not believe that the media provides accurate information.



Transparency and accountability

- The **majority** of Albanian citizens perceives **the central and local government as not transparent or accountable**.
- Between 2016 and 2019, the perceived **decline in transparency** is **6 p.p. for the central government** and **7 p.p. for local government**.
- Since 2017, the proportion of Albanians who perceive the government as accountable **has declined by 11 p.p. for local government and 8 p.p. for the central government**.
- The majority of the Albanian population (**66.7%**) is aware of the **Right to Information Law**. Albanians with a university degree, those employed in the public sector, or with a higher income appear more likely to be aware of the Right to Information Law.
- The Albanian population believes that **international organisations (78.9%) are more effective at holding the government to account** than any domestic institution, such as the Supreme State Audit Institution (63.7%) and the parliament (53.4%).
- The **most effective vertical accountability mechanisms**, according to the respondents, are the **media (58%)** and **civil society organisations or CSOs (47.8%)**.



Corruption in public institutions

- Most Albanian citizens perceive petty corruption (**87.5%**) and **grand corruption (85.2%)** as **widespread** or very widespread phenomena in Albanian society.
- **Courts/judiciary, healthcare, prosecution, and the government** are seen as the **most corrupt institutions** by respondents.
- The Albanian population is **sceptical** about the **prosecution of corruption cases**. **6 in 10** respondents had **no confidence in the prosecution of petty corruption** cases and **7 in 10** Albanians had **no confidence in the prosecution of grand corruption** cases.
- In 2019, **15%** of the Albanian population has **personally witnessed government corruption at the central level** and **25.2% at the local level**.
- Of the **34.8%** of respondents **that received a service at the central level**, **19.1% paid a bribe** for that service. At the **local level**, **64.1%** of the respondents **received a service** in 2019, of which **35.8% paid a bribe** for receiving that service.
- Respondents say that they paid bribes **because they were asked to do so (41.3%)**, to receive a **better service next time (31.2%)**, as **gratitude for the received service (17.9%)**, or because “If I do not pay, [the officials] lie that they cannot help me”.



Political influence

- For the fourth consecutive year, the Albanian population perceived religious institutions as the least politically influenced institution: only **10.3% believes that religious institutions are 'highly influenced' or 'extremely influenced' by political interests.**
- The **General Prosecution's Office** and the **courts** were seen as the **least independent institutions** for the third year in a row. 60.5% of Albanians believe that the agenda of courts is 'highly influenced' or 'extremely influenced' by political interest, while 59% of Albanians perceive the Prosecution's Office as 'highly influenced' or 'extremely influenced' by politics.



Citizen engagement

- **56.5%** of respondents are **interested in participating in the decision-making** processes of public institutions, particularly those between 18 and 35 years old (64%), highly educated people (67%), and those employed in the public sector (71%).
- **Participation** in consultation meeting **remains low**, particularly **at central level (10.7%)**. At **the local level, 24.6%** participated in a public consultation meeting. The main reason for low participation was a **lack of trust in such processes**.
- The majority of the Albanian population believes that **citizens have sufficient knowledge to understand** whether a **government decision** is good or bad (68.3%).
- At least **6 in 10** respondents believe that **local public hearings are formal events** with limited influence on municipal decisions and that **suggestions** coming from civil society and interest groups on draft laws are **not taken into consideration**.
- The **participation** of Albanians **in demonstrations, rallies and petitions** remains **relatively low**. Citizens from **urban areas** and those who are members of political parties are **more likely to attend** a demonstration/rally or sign a petition.
- The Albanian citizens are, **to a large extent, willing to engage in voluntary work**, particularly young people or those with a university degree.
- Almost **1 in 2** Albanian citizens **want to move outside of Albania**. Albanians with higher income, a university degree, women, and those who are unemployed are more likely to move out of Albania.



Satisfaction with public service delivery

- **Service delivery** for most core public services is **not satisfactory** according to the Albanian population. On average, 41.5% of Albanians ranked the service delivery as satisfactory and 50.8% of the respondents said the service delivery was dissatisfactory.
- Albanians assume that **service delivery for administrative services is not satisfactory**: on average, 34.5% of the respondents ranked the service delivery as satisfactory. However, when people used an administrative service in 2019, they were substantially more satisfied: 44.1% of the users were positive.
- **71%** of the Albanian population has **not seen an improvement in the quality of social services delivered by their municipality**.
- **Albanians with an income of more than 70,001 ALL** were **more likely to submit a complaint** when public services do not meet expectations compared to other demographic groups.
- **37%** of the people that had send a complaint through *shqiperiaqeduam.al* in 2019 **saw their complaint addressed** by the time of the interview, while for 63% the complaint was not (yet) addressed.
- **23.9%** of the Albanian population **visited an ADISA service window** in 2019, of which nearly **70% were 'satisfied'** or 'very satisfied' with the service delivery.
- The **majority** of the Albanian population (**65%**) indicated that they do **not feel safe in everyday life**. Their main concerns are **crime, healthcare issues, injustice, and employment insecurity**.



Performance of public institutions

- As in previous years, the Albanian population more often viewed the **performance of religious institutions (43.7%)** and **the army (35.7%)** as **positive compared with other institutions**.
- The **performance of the courts (23.6%), prosecution's office (22.1%), political parties (30%), and parliament (21.1%)** were **least often perceived as positive**.
- The **performance of central and local government is perceived slightly better** by Albanians who are employed in the public sector, have a university degree, live in urban areas or are over 65 years old.
- About **half of the Albanian population is satisfied with the impact of foreign donors** in Albania.



Use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

- Respondents are increasingly **aware** that **their municipality has a website**. For the first time this year, more than half of the respondents was aware of the municipal website.
- The municipality website is mostly used to receive information on events or programmes in their place of residence, or to check which services are available. Over the last three years, **most respondents assessed their municipality's website as accurate, continuously updated and rich in information**.
- **71.2%** of the Albanian population indicated that they **are aware of the country's online services through the e-Albania portal**. However, there is still a **lack of awareness among older** Albanians, especially those over 65 years old.
- Most people that have used the **e-Albania portal perceive it as functional and easy to use**. 60% of the respondents indicate that the platform offers sufficient opportunity to express comments and/or suggestions.



Gender and social inclusion

- **Men believe more often than women that there is gender equality** in Albania.
- **60.4%** of the **male** respondents **says that ‘there is equality between men and women in Albanian society’**, compared to 48.5% of the female respondents. In fact, **more than half (51.9%) of the female** respondents **disagrees or strongly disagrees with the statement**.
- **71.1% of the male** respondents **agreed with the statement “women and men have the same access to public services”**, while **66.4% of the female** respondents **agreed** with that statement.
- **70.8%** of the male respondents **reported that public servants serve men and women with the same devotion and ethics**, while **64.3%** of the **female** respondents **reported the same**.
- **12.6%** of the Albanian population reported **being treated differently by an institution or public official** in 2019 **on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, a disability, or something else**. Of the Albanians that had been **discriminated** against in 2019, most were treated differently **because of their age (35.6%) or their gender (27.1%)**.
- Most Albanian citizens **(76.5%) say that women are just as capable as men in holding any public position**.
- **6 in 10** Albanians think that an **increased number of women in the Municipal Council** would have a positive impact in local governance.

List of tables

Table 1: Resident population on 1 January 2019 and sample size per county	20
Table 2. Age groups	23
Table 3. Employment status	25
Table 4. Are you a member of a minority group?	26
Table 5: Institutional trust 2015–2019	33
Table 6: Demographic breakdown of trust, the sum of “I have great trust” and “Basically I trust”	41
Table 7: Demographic breakdown of justice reform	42
Table 8: Demographic breakdown of media	43
Table 9: Perceived effectiveness of accountability mechanisms (2016–2019)	59
Table 10: Demographic breakdown for transparency and accountability (2019)	60
Table 11: Socio-demographic breakdown of horizontal and vertical accountability	61
Table 12. Perceived prevalence of corruption (2017–2019)	65
Table 13: Reasons for paying bribes (2019)	73
Table 14: Institutions perceived as ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by politics (2016–2019)	78
Table 15: Demographic breakdown of institutions that are strongly influenced by political interests according to respondents (2019)	79
Table 16: Type of consultation meetings attended in 2019	87
Table 17: Reasons for not participating in consultation processes in 2019	87
Table 18: Demographic breakdown – interest in and sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making (2019)	96
Table 19: Demographic breakdown of consultation processes in 2019 – only responses in the ‘Yes’ category	97
Table 20: Demographic breakdown of statements on citizens engagement (2019) – grouped ‘fully agree’ and ‘generally agree’	98
Table 21. Utilisation of, and satisfaction with, administrative service delivery 2019	103
Table 22. Satisfaction rate with public-service delivery (2016–2019)	106
Table 23. Reasons for feeling unsafe (2016–2019)	117
Table 24. Satisfaction with public-service delivery across demographics (2019)	118
Table 25: Performance of institutions (2017–2019)	124
Table 26: Demographic breakdown – performance of public institutions (2019)	127
Table 27: Reason for using the website of the municipality (2019)	132
Table 28: Discrimination by institutions (2019)	145

List of figures

Figure 1. Gender representation	22
Figure 2. Geographical representation	23
Figure 3. Educational attainment	24
Figure 4. Regular individual monthly (net) income	26
Figure 5: Institutional trust 2019 (Base: N=2499)	29
Figure 6: Perceived impact and implementation of the justice reform 2019	35
Figure 7: 'Positive impact' vs. 'proper implementation' of the justice reform on development of the country 2016–2019	37
Figure 8: Most-used mediums for information about current affairs	38
Figure 9: Perception of information accuracy provided according to most-used media outlet 2019	39
Figure 10: Accuracy of media 2016–2019	40
Figure 11: Perceived transparency of central and local government 2019	45
Figure 12: Change in perceived institutional transparency 2016-2019	47
Figure 13: Public awareness of right to information Law in 2019	49
Figure 14: Submitted request for information (2019)	50
Figure 15: Received requested information (2019)	50
Figure 16: Submitted requests for information and receiving information requested 2016–2019	52
Figure 17: Perceived accountability of central and local government 2019	53
Figure 18: Change in perceived accountability (2016–2019)	55
Figure 19: Perceived effectiveness of horizontal accountability mechanisms (2019)	56
Figure 20: Perceived effectiveness of vertical accountability mechanisms (2019)	58
Figure 21: Perceived prevalence of corruption (2019)	64
Figure 22: Perception on prosecution of corruption cases (2019)	66
Figure 23. Personal exposure to corruption (2019)	68
Figure 24: Personal exposure to corruption at a central and local level 2015-2019	69
Figure 25. Services received at central level (2019)	70
Figure 26. Bribes paid at central level (2019)	70
Figure 27. Services received at local level (2019)	71
Figure 28. Bribes paid at local level (2019)	71

Figure 29. Prevalence of paying bribes (2016–2019)	72
Figure 30: Perceived influence of political interests in the agenda of institutions (2019)	75
Figure 31: Interest in participating in the decision-making process of public institutions (2019)	82
Figure 32: Opportunities to participate in the decision-making of public institutions (2019)	83
Figure 33: Sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making (2016–2019)	84
Figure 34: Invitations to participate in consultation processes (2019)	85
Figure 35: Participation in consultation meetings (2019)	86
Figure 36: Usage of portal “Konsultimipublik.gov.al” in 2019	88
Figure 37: Invitations to participate in consultation processes (2016–2019)	89
Figure 38: Statements on local representation and citizen engagement (2019)	90
Figure 39: Attended a demonstration/rally or signed a petition in 2019	92
Figure 40: Willingness to engage in voluntary work (2019)	94
Figure 41: Moving from current place of residence (2019)	94
Figure 42. Satisfaction with public services (2019)	101
Figure 43. Changes in the quality of municipal social services (2019)	107
Figure 44. Respondents sending a complaint to institutions (2016–2019)	109
Figure 45. Have you directed any complaints to shqiperiaqeduam.al? (2019)	110
Figure 46. Do you believe that institutions ‘listen to’ and properly address citizens’ complaints? (2019)	112
Figure 47. Respondents that visited the ADISA service window in 2019	114
Figure 48. Satisfaction with ADISA one-stop-shop service in 2019	115
Figure 49. Perceived safety in everyday life (2016 –2019)	116
Figure 50: Performance of public institutions (2019)	121
Figure 51: Satisfaction with the impact of foreign donors in Albania (2019)	125
Figure 52. Do you know if your municipality has a website? (2019)	130
Figure 53: Do you know if your municipality has a website? (2015–2019)	131
Figure 54: Proportion of respondents that uses municipality website (2019)	132
Figure 55: The quality of municipality’s website (2016–2019)	133
Figure 56: Awareness of the e-Albania portal (2019)	134
Figure 57: Have you received any electronic services through the e-Albania portal? (2019)	136
Figure 58: Quality assessment of e-services through the e-Albania portal (2019)	137

Figure 59: Equality between men and women in Albanian society (2019)	139
Figure 60: Equality between men and women in Albanian society (2016–2019)	140
Figure 61: In Albania, women and men have the same access to public services (2019)	141
Figure 62: In Albania, women and men have the same access to public services (2016–2019)	142
Figure 63: Public servants serve women and men with the same ethics and devotion (2019)	143
Figure 64: Public servants serve women and men with the same ethics and devotion (2016–2019)	144
Figure 65: Women and men are equally capable holding any public position (2016–2019)	147
Figure 66: Gender differences for women and men are equally capable holding public positions (2019)	148
Figure 67: Positive impact of increased female representation in the municipal council (2016–2019)	150

Table of Contents

TRUST IN GOVERNANCE 2019 - AT A GLANCE	3
1. INTRODUCTION	18
2. METHODOLOGY	19
2.1 Statistical methodology and the statistical description of the sample	19
2.2 Survey instrument	20
2.3 Focus groups	21
2.4 Limitations	21
3. DEMOGRAPHY OF SAMPLE	22
4. OPINION POLL RESULTS	28
4.1 Trust in Institutions	28
4.2 Transparency and Accountability	44
4.3 Corruption in public institutions	63
4.4 Political influence	74
4.5 Citizen engagement	81
4.6 Satisfaction with public-service delivery	100
4.7 Performance of public institutions	120
4.8 Use of ICT	129
4.9 Gender and social inclusion	138
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	151
6. Appendix 1: Sample Characteristics 2013–2019	153

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the fall of communism, Western Balkan countries have undergone a substantial transition towards an open and democratic society. In recent years, the reform agenda has been further stimulated by the requirements for joining the European Union (EU) set out by the European Commission. In Albania, the functioning of democratic institutions, public administration reform, rule of law, and economic development are at the heart of these reforms¹. The proper implementation of these reforms and the opening of accession talks are currently important indicators for the public's perception of the Albanian government. Together with long-term indicators such as trust in governance, public-service delivery, and public accountability these are important factors that determine support for the status quo in Albanian society.

The Opinion Poll is an instrument that enables the monitoring of public trust and perceptions on governance and citizen engagement in Albania on a yearly basis. Its main objective is to explore public perceptions and attitudes on issues such as trust in public institutions, institutional transparency and accountability, corruption, the level of citizen engagement in policy- and decision-making, satisfaction with public-service delivery, and enforcement of non-discriminatory laws and policies. Furthermore, the Opinion Poll generates data that feeds into the enhancement of major reforms related to good governance, anti-corruption, judicial reform, and cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality and social inclusion.

This report presents the findings from the Opinion Poll 'Trust in Governance' conducted by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) during 15 November and 6 December 2019 across the 61 municipalities of Albania. This is the seventh consecutive year that the Opinion Poll has been conducted (2013–2019) employing a similar survey instrument².

The report starts with an outline of the methodology and the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by the report's findings grouped into nine main sections: trust in institutions; transparency and accountability; corruption in public institutions; political influence; citizen engagement; satisfaction with public-service delivery; performance of public Institutions; use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology); and gender and social inclusion.

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- 1 Democratic institutions, public administration reform, rule of law, economic development and competitiveness are considered the “fundamentals” of the *acquis* by the European Commission.
- 2 Since 2016, the Opinion Poll has been conducted in the framework of the ISDA Support Project – “Support for Innovation against Corruption: Building a Citizen-Centric Service Delivery Model in Albania”, a donor pool fund with contributions from the Government of Italy, Government of Austria and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which is implemented by the Government of Albania in partnership with UNDP.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Statistical methodology and the statistical description of the sample

The Opinion Poll ‘Trust in Governance’ 2019 employed a representative sample of the Albanian population in which respondents were selected across the country’s municipalities and their administrative units. Employing a weighted, nationally representative sample allows us to extrapolate from the findings of the Opinion Poll for the Albanian population as a whole. Consequently, the statistical significance level of the sample is described as follows: for an adult population of 2,213,610,³ with a sample size of 2,500 respondents, for a confidence level of 95%, the confidence interval is ± 1.96 ; and for a confidence level of 99%, the confidence interval is ± 2.58 .

In order to determine the quota size of each of the counties, the resident population of Albania was retrieved from the civil registry and the number of residents of each of the districts was retrieved from the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT).⁴ Quantitative data from the civil registry for 1 January 2019, was used to calculate the sample size by municipality and, in more detail, by the administrative units within them. The sample of 2,500 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 and over 18 years old, a linear interpolation technique was used. The population representation coefficient for Albanian men over 18 years old as per 1 January 2019 was determined at 0.768076985 and for Albanian women over 18 years old at 0.778576952. The total population representation coefficient for Albanians over 18 years old was 0.773333171.⁵ As an illustration, Table 1 shows the distribution per county (Alb. Qark) of the Albanian resident population over 18 years and the sample size per county.

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3 See Table 1 for details.

4 INSTAT defines the Albanian resident population as “all persons residing or intending to reside in the country for at least 12 months, regardless of their nationality”. For the purpose of this study non-Albanian citizens were excluded.

5 This means that about 77% of the Albanian population are over 18 years old as of 1 January 2019.

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

County	Resident population	Resident population over 18	Sample size per county		
			Men	Women	Total
Berat	125,157	96,788	54	55	109
Dibër	118,948	91,986	54	50	104
Durrës	290,126	224,364	127	126	253
Elbasan	274,982	212,653	119	121	240
Fier	294,747	227,938	130	127	257
Gjirokastër	61,423	47,500	26	28	54
Korçë	207,889	160,767	90	92	182
Kukës	76,594	59,233	34	33	67
Lezhë	125,195	96,817	54	55	109
Shkodër	202,895	156,905	86	91	177
Tiranë	895,160	692,257	384	399	783
Vlorë	189,311	146,400	82	83	165
Total	2,862,427	2,213,610	1,240	1,260	2,500

Twelve teams of trained interviewers administered the questionnaire in face-to-face interviews using PAPI (paper-assisted personal interview)⁶. The data was processed and analysed using SPSS software to present findings of descriptive and relational statistics.

2.2 Survey instrument

Each year, the survey instrument includes the same core questions on trust in governance, corruption, citizen engagement, and the use of ICT as in earlier reports dating back to 2013. However, its content is annually reviewed by a panel of experts in the fields of good governance and social sciences to keep up with recent developments and trends in public discourse. This year, two questions were added about ADISA integrated service centres. Another question, focusing on the accountability of public institutions and citizens' feedback was specified to only consider the *shqiperiaqeduam.al* online portal.

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6 It should be highlighted that at approximately 60% of the interviews were conducted in the month following the earthquake of 26 November 2019. This 6.4 magnitude earthquake killed 51 people, injured 3,000 people, and caused damage to 14,000 buildings. Societal developments and government actions following the event may have affected the findings of the Opinion Poll 2019 to some extent.

Similar to previous years, the Opinion Poll expanded the number of institutions that were assessed for their public-service delivery. The social insurance services, civil registry services, and road transportation services were added to the existing thirteen services that are provided by public institutions.

2.3 Focus groups

The methodology of the Opinion Poll ‘Trust in Governance’ 2019 includes a mix of research methods. A series of focus groups were organised to validate and give context to the survey results. The participants were selected based on age, education, income, and geographical representation, as different perceptions with regards to the survey’s core questions were observed. In each of the focus groups, participants were asked to validate notable differences for their demographic group and share their perceptions of trust in institutions, transparency and accountability of institutions, corruption, satisfaction in public-service delivery and motivations to leave Albania.

On 13, 14 and 15 January 2020, five focus groups were organised with eight to ten participants each: ‘Under 30 years old’; ‘Over 55 years old’; ‘University degree or higher’; ‘No income or an income under 24,000 ALL’; and ‘Residing in rural areas’. For each focus group, demographics other than the demographic on which the participants were selected were controlled for.

2.4 Limitations

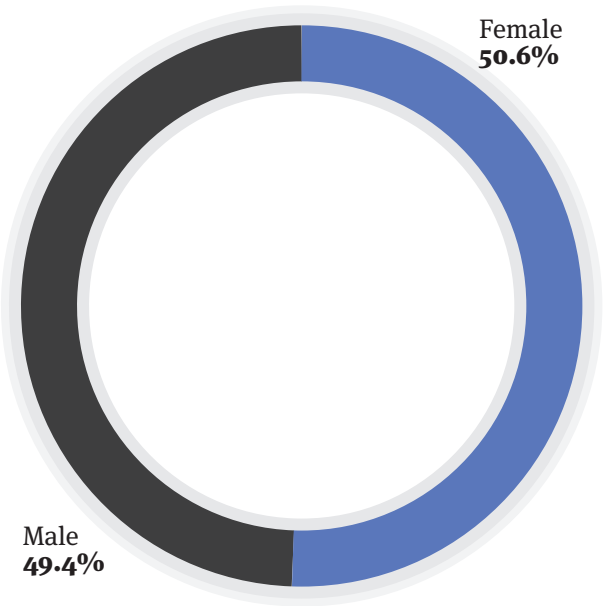
The results of the Opinion Poll 2019 can be generalised to the entire population using weights of representation of the statistical sample to the entire population. However, comparison of the 2019 statistical results with previous years (2013-2018) which used a quota sampling, could carry a level of statistical uncertainty.

3. DEMOGRAPHY OF SAMPLE

A total of 2,500 Albanian citizens aged 18 years and over were surveyed for the Opinion Poll ‘The Trust in Governance’ 2019 at a national level. The main demographics of the final sample of respondents are presented below in terms of gender, geographical representation, age, education, employment status, individual income, disability and minority representation.

Of the 2,500 respondents, 50.6% were female and 49.4% male. The geographical distribution was 69.8% urban and 30.2% rural. In comparison, data from the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) says that in 2011, 58.2% of the Albanian resident population was located in an urban area,⁷ and this number continues to increase.

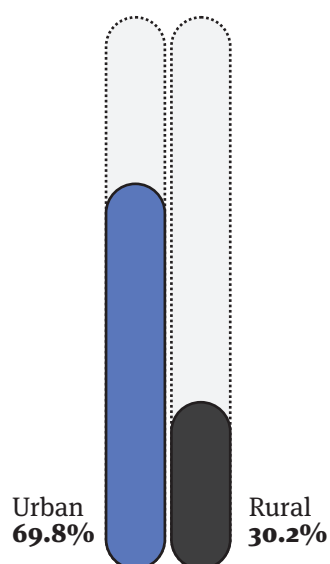
Figure 1. Gender representation



Base: N = 2500

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7 INSTAT, A new urban–rural classification of Albanian population (May 2014). Accessed via: http://www.instat.gov.al/media/2919/a_new_urban-rural_classification_of_albanian_population.pdf

Figure 2. Geographical representation

Base: $N = 2500$

With regards to the age distribution, respondents had to be at least of voting age. Consequently, all respondents are between 18 and 84 years old. Most respondents (64.8%) were between 18 and 45 years old: 19% were between 18 and 25 years old, 26.3% between 26 and 35 years old, and 19.4% between 36 and 45 years old⁸. A further 35.2% of the respondents were between 46 and 84 years old. For the distribution of the respondents according to each of the age groups, see Table 2.

Table 2. Age groups

Age (in groups)	Percentage
18–25 years old	19.0%
26–35 years old	26.3%
36–45 years old	19.4%
46–55 years old	16.2%

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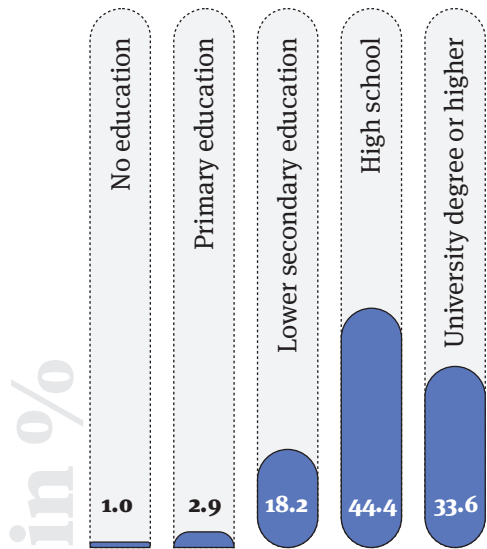
- 8 The age distribution of the sample is similar to previous years. Like the Albanian resident population (see INSTAT), the proportion of respondents between 25 and 34 years old is larger than that of other age groups.

Age (in groups)	Percentage
56–65 years old	12.0%
Over 65 years old	7.0%
Total	100.0%

Base: *N* = 2500

The majority of the respondents (78%) had received a high school diploma or held a university or postgraduate degree. 44.4% had completed their education at the upper secondary level (i.e. high school diploma); whilst 33.6% had either completed or were enrolled in tertiary education (i.e. university or postgraduate degree). Some 18.2% of the respondents had completed compulsory, lower secondary education and 3.9% had received no education or finished only primary education.

Figure 3. Educational attainment



Base: *N* = 2467

Of the respondents, 54.4% were employed at the time of the survey, followed by the unemployed who made up 25.1% of the sample. 10.8% of the respondents were retired and 6.9% were students. 2.7% of the respondents gave a different employment status, for example because they are self-employed, work as a volunteer, a homemaker, or because they work abroad (e.g. seasonal work).

Table 3. Employment status

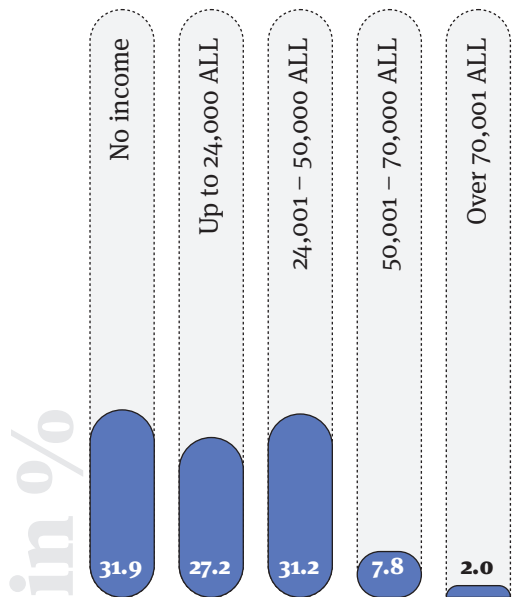
Employment status	N	Percentage
Employed	1,340	54.4%
Public Sector		24.4%
Private Sector		72.2%
Other		3.4%
Total		100%
Unemployed	619	25.1%
Student	171	6.9%
Retired	266	10.8%
Other	67	2.7%
Total	2,463	100.0%

Base: $N = 2463$

The distribution of respondents' individual monthly income is presented in the following graph. Around one-third of the sample (31.9%) did not have any regular monthly income at the time of interview, whilst 27.2% reported a net income up to 24,000 ALL per month (approx. US\$219). 31.2% earned 24,001–50,000 ALL per month, 7.8% between 50,001–70,000 ALL per month and only 2% of the sample had regular individual monthly income of over 70,0001 ALL (approx. \$640).

There are substantial differences in income across female and male respondents. 33.2% of the female respondents did not have a regular monthly income, versus 24.1% of the male respondents. Similarly, 41.3% of the male respondents had a regular monthly income of more than 24,001 ALL, as compared to only 32.6% of the female respondents. 2.7% of the male respondents had a monthly average income of more than 70,001 ALL, while only 0.9% of the female respondents had an income of more than 70,001 ALL.

Figure 4. Regular individual monthly (net) income



Base: N = 2252

Asked if they consider themselves as having a disability, only 7% of the respondents self-reported having a disability (N = 161). Lastly, the respondents were asked if they belong to a minority group. 6.2% of the respondents stated that they belong to a minority group. Of those, 23.7% identified as Greek, 25% as Roma, 15.1% as Egyptian, and 13.8% as Macedonian. 92.8% of the respondents did not identify as being a member of a minority group. Table 4 provides figures on the respondents that belong to minority groups. Due to the small proportion of respondents that reports to belong to a minority group, this demographic characteristic will only be included in the analysis of survey results when directly relevant to the respective question (e.g. discrimination or safety-related questions).

Table 4. Are you a member of a minority group?

Member of a minority group?	N	Percentages
Yes	152	6.2%
Greek	36	1.5%
Macedonian	21	0.9%
Aromanian	6	0.2%
Roma	38	1.5%

Member of a minority group?	N	Percentages
Egyptian	23	0.9%
Montenegrin	3	0.1%
Bosnian	5	0.2%
Serbian	1	<0.1%
Bulgarian	7	0.3%
Refuse/other minority group	12	0.5%
No	2291	92.8%
Refuse to answer	26	1.0%
Total	2469	100.0%

Base: N = 2469

4. OPINION POLL RESULTS

4.1 Trust in institutions

Trust is a complex, dynamic, contingent and context-dependent phenomenon. Trust is an expectation that the object of trust will produce positive outcomes (Levi and Stoker, 2000). Trust or confidence in public institutions is thus seen as an attitude (Hoskings, 2017). Trust in institutions is construed as confidence in state organisations such as parliament, government, police, courts, independent public institutions and non-state organisations such as the media, religious organisations, and non-governmental organisations (Eurofound, 2018: 5). Researching trust in institutions is important because it is conceived as a key indicator of individual and social wellbeing and a fundamental condition of collective action and collaboration (Eurofound, 2018; OECD, 2013). In addition to being essential to social cohesion, trust in institutions and particularly trust in government is regarded as one of the most crucial foundations upon which legitimacy and sustainability of political systems are built (OECD, 2013). Trust is determined by a number of factors: at macro level, economic situation, political climate and general culture of trust in society are deemed as key variables; at micro-level, few of the most common identified variable are education, age, income, religion, personal values, perceptions and experiences (Eurofound, 2018; OECD, 2013).

Trust in institutions represents one of the core pillars of the ‘Trust in Governance’ Opinion Poll. Respondents are asked to rate on a four-point scale from 1 (I have great trust) to 4 (I do not trust at all) how much they trust key state actors and public institutions at the central and local level, as well as other important non-state actors in Albania. The basic assumption here is that the degree of trust in certain institutions indicated by respondents in this Opinion Poll stems from a combination of both macro and micro-level factors. The implication here is that respondents as citizens indicate their degree of trust based on their general perception and experiences with said institutions without necessarily having knowledge and information about how specific institutions operate.

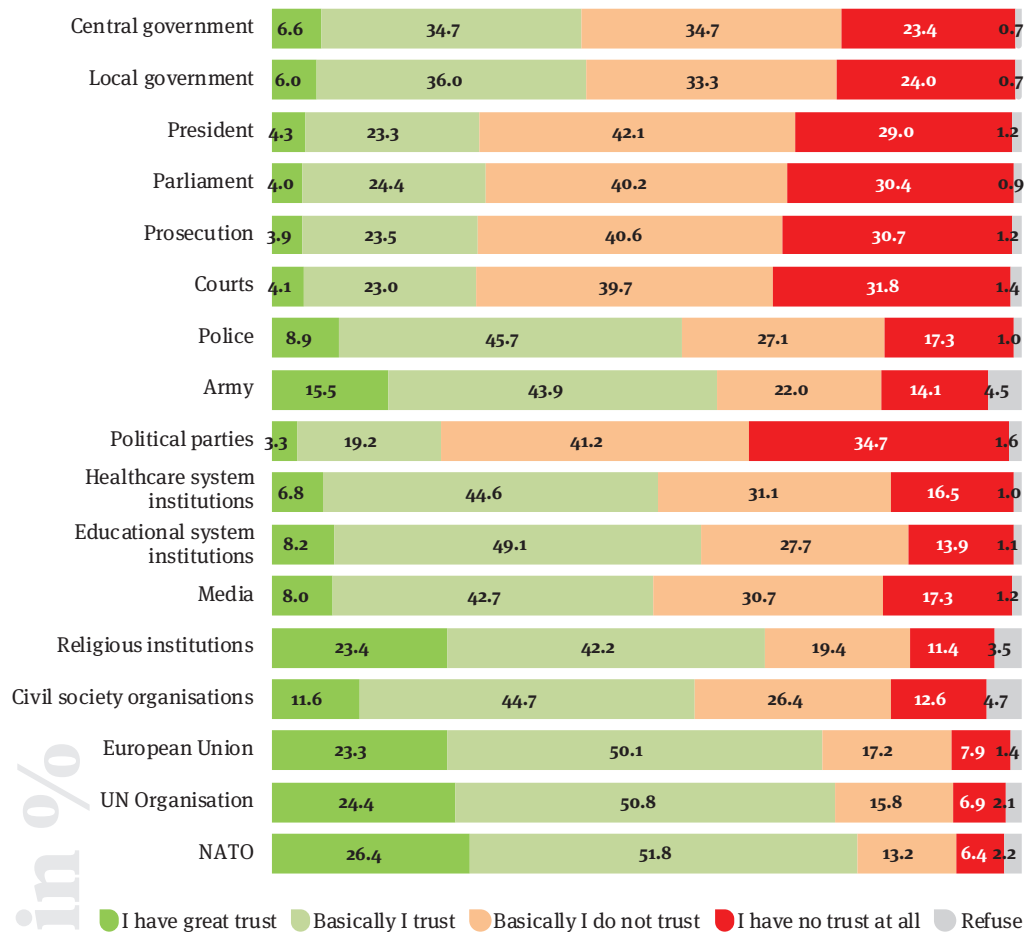
Trust in institutions, the 2019 results

In 2019, Albanian citizens continued to trust religious institutions (65.6%) and the army (59.4%) the most, followed by educational institutions (57.3%), civil society organisations (56.3%), state police (54.6%), healthcare institutions (51.4%), and the media (50.7%). Central and local government, parliament, prosecution, the president, and the courts continue to receive low trust ratings with political parties receiving the lowest rating (22.5%). The executive, as compared to the legislative and judicial branches, maintains a higher level of trust. In contrast to domestic institutions, international institutions/organisations like NATO, the UN and the EU, rank as the most trusted institutions.

In 2019, the domestic institutions that received higher trust ratings⁹ from more than half of the respondents include: religious institutions (65.6%); the armed forces (59.4%); institutions of the education system (57.3%); civil society organisations (56.3%); state police (54.6%); healthcare institutions (51.4%); and media (50.7%).

Not only are religious institutions ranked as the most trusted domestic institutions, they also have the highest rating of ‘I have great trust’ among domestic institutions (23.4%). The armed forces rank as the second-most-trusted institutions, trusted aggregately by 59.4% of the surveyed population.

Figure 5: Institutional trust 2019 (Base: N=2499)



9 Throughout this section, the top (1–2) and bottom (3–4) verbal ratings are collated in two broad categories: ‘tend to trust’ and ‘tend not to trust’.

Institutions of the education system (57.3%) and civil society organisations (56.3%) ranked as the third and fourth most generally trusted domestic institutions. 11.6% of respondents stated that they had great trust in civil society organisations in comparison to the education system institutions with 8.2%. Next, police forces were trusted by 54.6% of the surveyed population, followed by healthcare institutions (51.4%) and the media (50.7%).

Domestic institutions that received lower trust ratings from more than half of respondents include: local government (42%), central government (41.3%), parliament (28.4%), prosecution (27.4%), president (27.6%), courts (27.1%) and political parties (22.5%). In contrast, international institutions and organisations such as NATO, the UN and the EU, ranked as the most trusted institutions (78.2%, 75.2%, 73.4% of public trust, respectively).

Socio-demographic comparison of institutional trust

The older resident population reports more often that they trust public institutions than the younger resident population, in particular with regards to the three branches of government: executive, judiciary and legislature. Employed people or those with high levels of education, had somewhat more trust in institutions, while Albanians with a higher income reported lower levels of trust in domestic institutions and a substantially higher level of trust in international ones like the EU, the UN and NATO.

This sub-section examines whether trust in specific institutions varies across different socio-economic segments of the sampled population by considering gender, age, level of education, employment status, income and geographic representation. In a combined level,¹⁰ there is little difference in institutional trust between genders. However, female respondents (53%) were more likely to trust the media than male respondents (49%). Also, 29% of the female respondents trusted courts compared to 26% of the male respondents.

Generally, it is observed that respondents from the older demographics were more likely to report higher levels of institutional trust as compared to the younger segments of the sampled population. Respondents in the age group 'Over 65 years-old' tended to trust religious institutions (66%), the army (65%), police (60%), local government (48%), parliament (38%), prosecution (35%) and court (33%). However, their trust in central government remained almost at the same level (43%) as the overall level of trust indicated across the surveyed sample (41%). Younger generations tended to report lower levels of institutional trust, particularly regarding all three branches of government: executive, judiciary and legislative. Only 23% of the respondents in the age group '18 to 25' tended to trust parliament, which is lower than the overall level of trust indicated by the surveyed

• • • • •

¹⁰ The percentage of respondents expressing 'I have great trust' or 'Basically I trust'.

sample (28%). This group also demonstrated a low level of trust towards religious institutions (29%) compared to the 66% overall level of trust indicated by the surveyed population.

Reported levels of trust are also more likely to increase slightly with the educational attainment of the respondent. Respondents with university-level education were more likely to trust religious institutions (63%), the armed forces (60%), educational institutions (60%), civil society organisations (57%), the police (56%), local government (47%) and central government (44%) than respondents with up to lower secondary education or a high school diploma. An exception is the media, where this relationship is reversed: 55% of the respondents with up to lower secondary education¹¹ trusted the media, in comparison to 44% of the respondents with a university degree or higher. This is also lower than the overall level of trust in the media (51%) indicated by the surveyed population.

As regards employment status, employed respondents appeared more trustful of institutions than unemployed respondents. Respondents working in the public sector reported higher levels of trust for education system institutions (74%), the armed forces (72%), local government (68%), health system institutions (66%) and central government (65%). This is in sharp contrast to level of trust reported by respondents working in the private sector and particularly unemployed respondents. Unemployed persons indicated that they basically do not trust central government (40%), local government (39%), police (30%), health system institutions (36%) and education system institutions (31%).

Generally, there is no difference in the level of trust when comparing urban and rural respondents. Their level of trust tends to be at the same overall level reported by the surveyed population. There are two exceptions: the rural population tended to trust the army (65%) and religious institutions (71%) more compared to urban population (57% and 64% respectively).

The level of trust in domestic institutions is likely to decrease if the respondent has a higher average monthly income (over 70,001 Lek/month). For instance, respondents with a monthly income over 70,001 Lek/month had trust levels in central government of 32%, local government (37%), the president (23%), parliament (23%), prosecutions (21%), courts (25%) and political parties (18%). Yet, this category seems to trust the police (59%) slightly more than the overall level of trust of the sampled population (55%). The media is substantially less trusted by respondents with a monthly income over 70,001 Lek/month (19%) compared to the overall level of trust of the sampled population (51%). 93% of these respondents trusted the EU, 93% trusted NATO, and 82% the UN, which is a higher rating compared to the overall level of trust of the sampled population (73%, 78% and 75% respectively).

• • • • •

11 The group 'up to lower secondary education' includes respondents with no education, respondents with primary education, and respondents that finished school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

In addition, respondents with no income indicated low trust ratings for public institutions, for instance 31% trust central and local government, 26% trust the president and only 19% trust parliament and courts. This category indicates a higher level of trust for the army, police and media: 54%, 47%, and 51% respectively. Whereas respondents with income 24,001 – 50,000 Lek/month reported higher level of trust: 51% trusting central government and 53% trusting local government. Respondents with an income of 50,001–70,000 Lek/month indicated higher trust ratings, with half of them trusting central and local government and a considerable majority trusting religious institutions (70%), education system institutions (64%), the army (64%) and police (61%). See Table 6 at the end of this chapter for data on socio-demographic breakdown of trust in institutions.

Participants in the focus group ‘with no income or an income under 24 000 Lek’ related trust with the ability of institutions to be responsive towards the concrete problems of local communities particularly in peripheral areas as compared to the centre. Some participants argued that institutional trust is low because *“the state is poor and cannot respond our [citizens] needs”* and that *“we see some improvements in health infrastructure for instance, but it is minimal and [has] no meaningful impact on our daily lives and wellbeing”*.

When cross-examining membership to political party with the level of trust in political parties, the majority (59%) of respondents who reported being members of political parties expressed low ratings of trust in them: 35% stated that they basically do not trust political parties and 24% that they do not trust at all.

When it comes to trust in public institutions, all focus groups participants despite coming from different backgrounds pointed out that, to them, trust in institutions stems from the perceived honesty of individuals leading and working in these institutions, and their integrity and ability to act in the public interest more than pursuing their own interests. One of the participants in the ‘over 55 years old’ group noted: *“Even if I wanted to trust the government, how can I actually do that when time and again I have been deceived: too many promises, too little actions. I have lived through different governments, different political parties and to me they are all the same, all very disappointing”*. Another participant pointed out: *“they [public officials and politicians] do things only in their own interest, but they present them in a way as if it were for our benefit”*.

Trust in institutions over the years

For most institutions, the level of trust increased between 2015 and 2017, but has somewhat decreased since then. This is true even for international organisations: the EU (7 p.p.), the UN (4 p.p.), and NATO (3 p.p.) saw a decrease in the perceived level of trust between 2017 and 2019. Prosecution

- *and courts, the institutions least often perceived as trustworthy, have seen an increase in the level of trust between 2015 and 2019.*

Opinion Poll 2019 marks the fifth consecutive year of measuring the perception of trust among a large sample of respondents. The data of five opinion polls reveal several interesting trends regarding the level of trust in Albanian and international institutions. For example, the data shows that for most institutions, the level of trust increased between 2015 and 2017, but has somewhat decreased since then. For domestic institutions such as central government (+13 p.p.), parliament (+12 p.p.), armed forces (+17 p.p.), healthcare (+26 p.p.), education system (+30 p.p.), religious institutions (+ 24 p.p.) and civil society (19 p.p.), the level of trust increased substantially between 2015 and 2017. Between 2017 and 2019, however, the level of trust has decreased between 1 p.p. (civil society) and 10 p.p. (religious institutions). Similarly, regarding international organisations, the 2019 Opinion Poll is the second consecutive report that has demonstrated a decline in the level of trust in the EU, UN and NATO (7 p.p., 4 p.p. and 3 p.p. respectively). This is in contrast to 2015–2017, during which the EU and NATO recorded an increase in trust.

For other institutions, the 2019 opinion poll marked the third consecutive year in which the level of trust has declined. The President, trusted in 2016 by 36% of the respondents, was trusted by only 28% of the respondents in 2019. Furthermore, the institutions that were least often perceived as trustworthy, the prosecution and courts, have actually seen an increase in trust since the 2015 Opinion Poll. Measured as ‘judiciary’ in 2015, the institutions only enjoyed trust of 17% of the respondents, while in 2019 both the prosecution and courts were seen as trustworthy by 27% of the respondents.

Table 5: Institutional trust 2015–2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Central government	34%	44%	47%	42%	41%
Local government	X	49%	49%	47%	42%
President	29%	36%	33%	30%	28%
Parliament	22%	27%	34%	30%	28%
Judiciary*	17%	23%	X	X	X
Prosecution	X	X	22%	28%	27%
Courts	X	X	21%	28%	27%
Police	46%	61%	53%	58%	55%
Armed Forces	46%	55%	63%	63%	59%
Political parties	15%	23%	21%	22%	23%
Healthcare	27%	50%	53%	54%	51%

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Education system	33%	59%	63%	64%	57%
Media	39%	58%	54%	56%	51%
Religious institutions	52%	58%	76%	73%	66%
Civil Society	38%	46%	57%	57%	56%
EU	72%	80%	85%	80%	73%
UN	X	80%	85%	79%	75%
NATO	74%	79%	84%	81%	78%

Base: N=2499 in 2019; N=1647 in 2018, 2017, 2016.

* From 2017 onwards, “Judiciary” has been divided into “Prosecution” and “Courts”

*Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section ‘Methodology’.

For the third consecutive year, the core questions on institutional trust were supplemented with new sets of questions – exploring the public’s views on the topics of judicial reform, its impact on the country’s development, the media and its credibility.

Justice reform – 2019 results

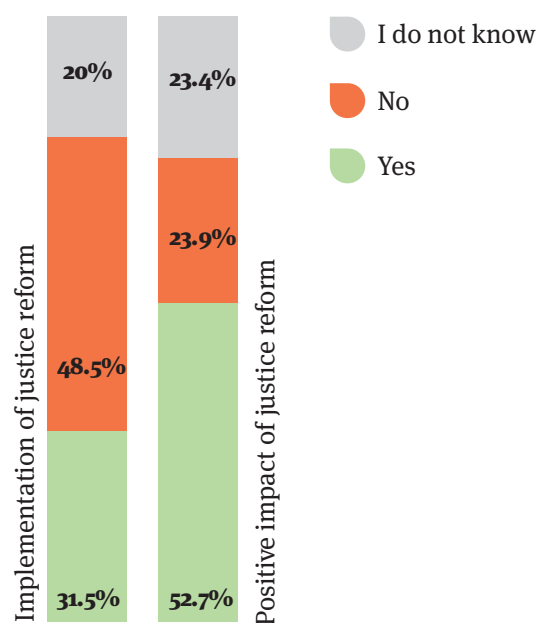
Around 1 in 2 Albanian citizens believe that the Justice reform will have a positive impact in the development of the country (52.7%). However, perspectives on the effective implementation of the Justice Reform in practice continue to be divided – with almost half (48.5%) of the Albanian population believing that the Reform is not being implemented properly.

In 2016, Albania embarked on an extremely challenging reform process of its justice system, aiming to overhaul widespread corruption and political influence and to (re) build public trust in the judiciary. This complex reform package started with a vetting process for all judges and prosecutions and the establishment of new institutions such as the new Special Prosecution’s Office Against Corruption and Organised Crime (SPAK). The European Union and the United States (US), along with other international partners, have strongly supported the reforms and have also recognised progress in its implementation, in particular the vetting procedure (EC Progress Report, Albania, 2019). Both the EU and the US have urged the government and political actors in Albania to maintain and deepen the momentum for reform particularly in areas of the judiciary and the rule of law.

In 2019, 52.7% of respondents believed that the Justice Reform will have a positive impact in the development of Albania. However, only 31.5% believed that the Justice Reform is

being implemented properly. Although the positive expectations for the Justice Reform remained slightly over half of the surveyed population (52.7%), the perceptions of the proper implementation of the reform in practice continued to be divided. 48.5% of respondents believed that the Justice Reform is not being implemented properly. Only 31.5% feel the reform is being implemented properly.

Figure 6: Perceived impact and implementation of the justice reform 2019



Base: N=2498 for implementation of justice reform; N=2494 for impact of justice reform

Socio-demographic comparison on justice reform

Almost half of Albanians, regardless of age or gender, believed that the justice reform will have a positive impact on the development of the country. However, younger generations tended to be more sceptical regarding the effective implementation of the reform. The justice reform was mostly felt to have a positive impact and being implemented properly by those who work in the public sector or respondents that have a university degree. Albanian citizens with a higher income were less confident regarding the positive impact and proper implementation of the justice reform.

There was no substantial difference in the perceptions of women and men regarding the positive impact of the justice reform. Slightly more than half of the male (54%) and female (51%) respondents believe that the justice reform will have a positive impact. Men tended to be more positive regarding its implementation with 34% stating that the reform is being implemented properly compared to women (29%). Please refer to Table 7 at the end of this chapter for socio-demographic breakdown data on justice reform.

Perceptions regarding the positive impact of the justice reform in the development of Albania did not change across different age groups and remained almost at the same level as the overall reported perceptions of the surveyed population (53%). However, younger respondents ('18–25 years old') tended to be more sceptical regarding implementation with 58% stating that the reform is not being implemented properly compared to 41% of those 'over 65 years old'.

Respondents with education up to lower secondary level¹² (47%) tended to be less enthusiastic about the positive impact of the justice reform compared to those with a university degree or higher (59%).

A marked difference can be observed between employed and unemployed respondents regarding the impact of reform: 59% of employed respondents believed that the reforms will have a positive impact in the development of the country, but only 42% of unemployed respondents said the same. Also, the vast majority of respondents working in the public sector (70%) believed that the justice reform will have a positive impact in the development of the country. 54% of the respondents working in the private sector stated the same.

As far as income is concerned, respondents with a higher income (above 70,001 Lek/month) tended to be more sceptical regarding the impact and implementation of the justice reform than those with lower incomes (50,001–70,000 Lek/month): 49% believed that it will have a positive impact and only 20% believe that it is being implemented properly; compared with 64% and 38% respectively of people with lower incomes.

Regarding the Justice Reform, younger participants in the focus groups (including students of law and persons early in their professional career) expressed their distrust regarding the process and its results. Participants in the “under 30 years old” focus group echoed the comment of one of their peers: “the reform is being done only for show, it does not have genuine impact. It is a selective process. Some are being punished to serve others who have powerful support”. On the other side, younger participants also admitted having limited information regarding the substance of the process and how the Justice Reform is being carried out.

12 The group ‘up to lower secondary education’ includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Based on the discussions during the focus group, it can be stated that the perceptions of distrust for the Justice Reform, both for its process and its results, stem not necessarily from knowledge and expertise, but primarily from a general mood of disbelief and dissatisfaction with politics. In this sense, the Justice Reform is perceived more as a political process rather than as a strictly legal one.

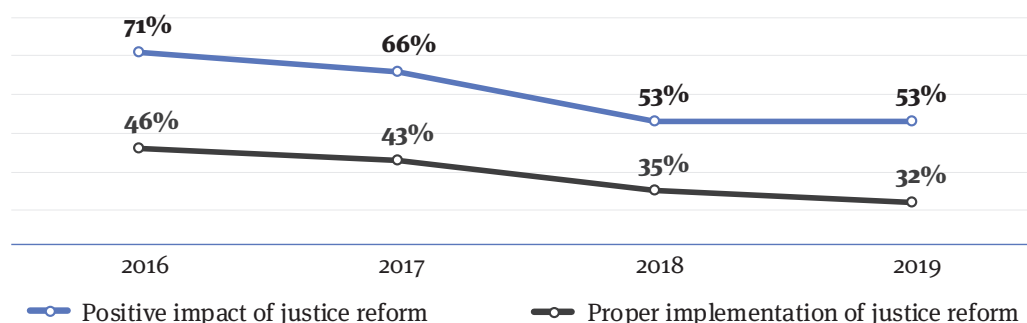
In addition, participants 'over 55 years old' reported limited positive impact of the reform because according to them: "the process is linked with certain political interests". This group also indicated distrust towards the international community: "they [international community] cannot do much in this regard, as they have become corrupted like the Albanians". The issue of trust in public institutions and the Justice Reform in particular is interrelated with the perceptions of citizens regarding alleged corruption, not only of Albanian politicians and institutions, but also of international organisations operating in Albania.

Justice reform over the years

The public expectations regarding the positive impact of the Justice Reform on the development of Albania and its proper implementation have declined over the years (2016-2019).

Data for 2017 and 2018 of this Opinion Poll has reiterated the broad public expectation of the positive impact that the implementation of the Justice Reform will bring to the development of the country. Notwithstanding this, the proportion of positive expectations has declined from 71% in 2016 to 66% in 2017 and 53% in 2018. Data for 2019 demonstrates the same level of confidence (53%) that the Justice Reform will bring to the development of the country. There has been a slight increase of uncertainty over the positive impact of the justice Reform on the development of the country from 16% of respondents stating that they do not know in 2017, to 22% in 2018 and 23% in 2019.

Figure 7: 'Positive impact' vs. 'proper implementation' of the justice reform on development of the country 2016–2019



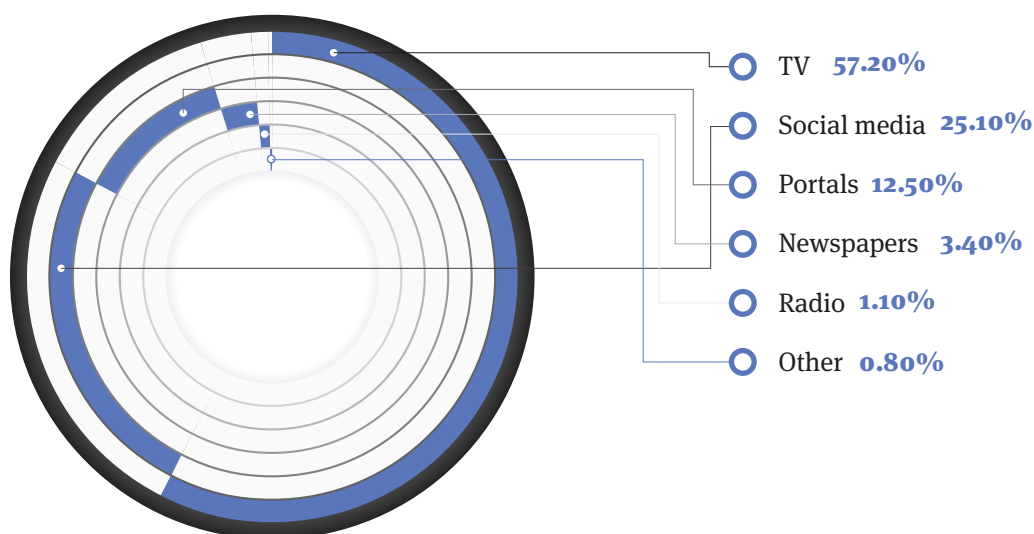
Base: For impact of justice reform, 2016 (N=1639); 2017 (N=1644); 2018 (N=1642); 2019 (N=2494), For implementation of Justice Reform 2016 (N=1641); 2017 (N=1646); 2018 (N=1645); 2019 (N=2498).

Media

Television (57.2%) remains the most popular media outlet for getting updated on current affairs, particularly among older generations, people who are employed, or people living in rural areas. However, television is losing terrain, particularly among younger people and citizens with a higher income. People of all demographics often indicated that they do not believe that the media provides accurate information.

In 2019, 57.2% of respondents mostly used television to obtain information about current affairs, followed by social media (25.1%), portals (12.5%), newspapers (3.4%) and radio 1.1%. Only 0.8% of the respondents answered “other” or did not use any media at all.

Figure 8: Most-used mediums for information about current affairs

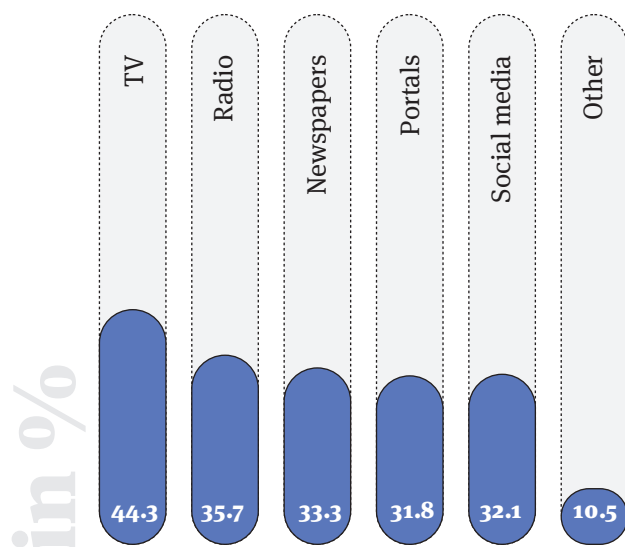


Base: N = 2490

In 2019, 38.9% of respondents believed that the information provided by media is accurate. 33.9% believe that the information provided by media is not accurate and 27.2% do not know.

Respondents who reported television as their most-used media outlet seem to be less sceptical of the accuracy of the information provided than those who mostly use portals. For instance, 44.3% of respondents who mostly use TV believe that the information provided by the media is accurate. 31.8% of respondents that mostly use portals state that the information provided by media is accurate.

Figure 9: Perception of information accuracy provided according to most-used media outlet 2019



Base: N=2489

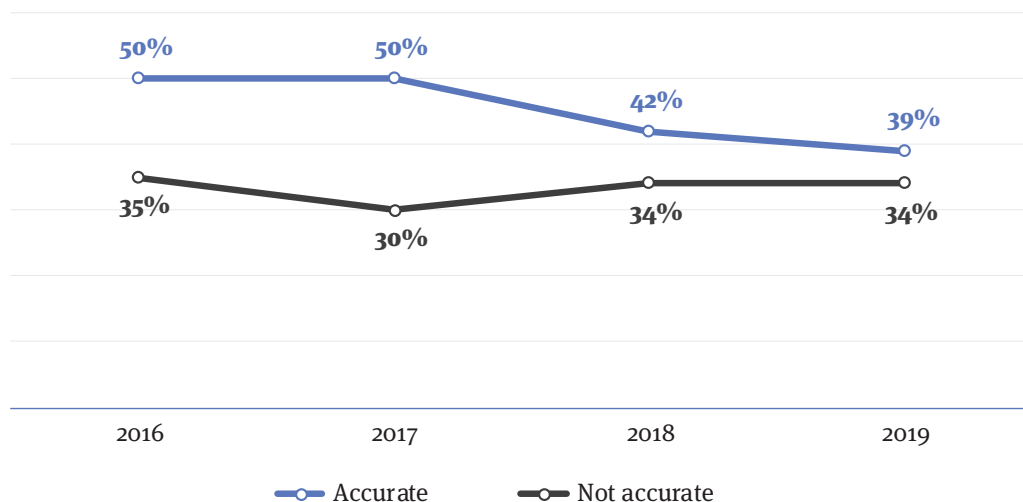
There were no differences observed in the consumption of media by women and men (see Table 8 at the end of this chapter). However, clear differences can be observed when it comes to age groups. More than half of younger respondents ('18–25 years old') mostly use social media (52%) and portals (19%). By contrast, only 1% of respondents in the age group 'over 65 years old' primarily used social media and only 3% used portals. This section of the respondents used television the most: 88% of respondents in the age group '18–25 years old' stated that they use television the most.

The readership of newspapers remains low among the older generation, at 5%. Although the use of newspapers is very low, those 'over 65 years old' consider them as their primary media outlet to a greater extent than younger generations do, with only 1% of '18–25-year-old' respondents reporting the same. The same trend holds true for radio usage. Social media and portals are primarily used by respondents with a university degree or higher or have an average monthly income over 70,001 Lek. Respondents in rural areas indicated that television is their primary media outlet. For an entire breakdown of media usage by demographic, see Table 8 at the end of this chapter for socio-demographic breakdown of media.

Although television remains the most popular medium to receive information about current affairs with respondents, it has recorded a sharp decline compared to 2017 when 70% of respondents stated that television was their most-used medium. Data from the 2019 Opinion Poll shows an increase for social media from 18% in 2017 to 25% in 2019. Also, the usage of portals has increased from 7% in 2018 to 12.5% in 2019.

A decline in the credibility of the media of 11 p.p. was observed. Approximately 39% of respondents in the 2019 Opinion Poll believe that media is accurate, compared to 42% and 50% in 2018 and 2017.

Figure 10: Accuracy of media 2016–2019



Base: 2016 (N=1639); 2017 (N=1646); 2018 (N=1643); 2019 (N=2496)

Focus group participants ‘under 30 years old’ and ‘with a university degree or higher’ indicated in the focus groups not only a high level of distrust towards the three branches of government, but particularly towards the media, which was perceived as a mouthpiece of powerful economic and political actors.

While recognising the importance of media for information, analysis and education, young and well-educated participants also noted current shortcomings of media in Albania such as limited independence and quality. As one pointed out “I think we are very perplexed nowadays because we do not know whom to trust ... we turn to media for the truth, but in vain. All we get is more PR, more propaganda basically. At the end we have all become more cynical and disengaged, nothing changes”. They reported using more and more online media but were wary of the “Fake news” phenomena and expressed concerns that not everyone has the right skills, knowledge and tools to verify media content. Young and well-educated participants indicated that the narratives in the media reinforces cynicism, distrust and feelings of anxiety. In fact, a growing anxiety about the future can be observed across all five focus groups regardless of socio-economic determinants such as age, education, gender or income.

Table 6: Demographic breakdown of trust, the sum of “I have great trust” and “Basically I trust”

	Central Gov.	Local Gov.	President	Parliament	Prosecution	Courts	Police	Army	Political Parties	Health	Education	Media	Religious inst.	CSOs	EU	UN	NATO
TOTAL (trust*)	41%	42%	28%	28%	27%	27%	55%	59%	23%	51%	57%	51%	66%	56%	73%	75%	78%
Gender																	
Male	41%	41%	27%	30%	26%	26%	54%	59%	24%	51%	57%	49%	65%	56%	73%	76%	78%
Female	42%	43%	28%	28%	28%	29%	55%	60%	21%	51%	58%	53%	67%	56%	74%	74%	78%
Age																	
18–25	38%	38%	28%	23%	24%	25%	51%	58%	13%	42%	38%	33%	29%	50%	63%	75%	80%
26–35	39%	40%	25%	26%	26%	26%	52%	57%	17%	41%	51%	52%	63%	48%	61%	72%	62%
36–45	45%	45%	30%	30%	28%	31%	58%	62%	24%	51%	58%	57%	68%	58%	68%	70%	74%
46–55	42%	41%	27%	31%	29%	25%	54%	60%	21%	52%	56%	53%	67%	56%	75%	76%	79%
56–65	43%	47%	30%	30%	28%	26%	58%	59%	24%	52%	59%	44%	63%	57%	76%	77%	81%
66 and over	43%	48%	27%	38%	35%	33%	60%	65%	23%	52%	57%	51%	66%	56%	73%	75%	78%
Educational attainment																	
Up to lower secondary	35%	37%	29%	28%	27%	27%	53%	57%	23%	50%	56%	55%	66%	56%	67%	71%	73%
High school	42%	41%	28%	27%	27%	27%	54%	60%	21%	52%	56%	53%	67%	56%	75%	76%	79%
University	44%	47%	27%	31%	29%	28%	56%	60%	24%	52%	60%	44%	63%	57%	76%	77%	81%
Employment status																	
Total	46%	47%	28%	32%	31%	30%	57%	61%	25%	54%	61%	51%	67%	57%	76%	77%	81%
Employed	65%	68%	30%	47%	41%	38%	69%	72%	33%	66%	74%	49%	69%	62%	77%	79%	83%
Private	40%	40%	28%	27%	28%	28%	54%	58%	22%	50%	57%	51%	65%	56%	74%	76%	79%
Unemployed	32%	30%	26%	22%	18%	20%	46%	54%	18%	44%	51%	51%	67%	55%	70%	71%	74%
Student	39%	42%	26%	19%	22%	20%	53%	55%	20%	53%	50%	47%	56%	57%	65%	69%	74%
Retired	42%	44%	31%	34%	32%	32%	58%	61%	27%	52%	58%	55%	67%	57%	75%	79%	80%
Geographic representation																	
Urban	41%	42%	27%	28%	26%	27%	54%	57%	22%	51%	57%	49%	64%	56%	73%	74%	77%
Rural	43%	43%	29%	31%	31%	28%	58%	65%	24%	53%	59%	55%	71%	58%	76%	79%	81%
Income																	
No income	31%	31%	26%	19%	19%	20%	47%	54%	16%	45%	51%	51%	65%	55%	70%	71%	74%
Up to 24,000 ALL	41%	40%	30%	28%	29%	29%	56%	59%	23%	52%	58%	55%	67%	58%	73%	74%	79%
24,001–50,000 ALL	51%	53%	27%	36%	35%	33%	60%	63%	27%	56%	63%	53%	68%	60%	78%	81%	82%
50,001–70,000 ALL	50%	50%	28%	33%	34%	34%	61%	64%	30%	55%	64%	55%	70%	55%	77%	79%	81%
Over 70,001 ALL	32%	37%	23%	23%	21%	25%	59%	59%	18%	50%	56%	19%	52%	61%	93%	82%	93%

* Rounded to the nearest percent. Colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total response.

Table 7: Demographic breakdown of justice reform

		Positive impact of justice reform (% yes)	Proper implementation of justice reform (% yes)
Total		53%	32%
Gender			
Female		51%	29%
Male		54%	34%
Age			
18 - 25 years old		53%	26%
26 - 35 years old		54%	32%
36 - 45 years old		53%	34%
46 - 55 years old		50%	30%
56 - 65 years old		52%	34%
66 and over		53%	38%
Education			
Up to lower secondary		47%	29%
High school		51%	32%
University degree		59%	33%
Employment			
Employed	Total	59%	35%
	Public	70%	49%
	Private	54%	30%
Unemployed		42%	24%
Student		53%	28%
Retired		50%	35%
Income			
No income		44%	23%
Up to 24,000 ALL		50%	32%
24,001 – 50,000 ALL		62%	41%
50,001 – 70,000 ALL		64%	38%
Over 70,001 ALL		49%	20%
Geographic representation			
Urban		52%	32%
Rural		54%	31%

Note: Colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total responses.

Table 8: Demographic breakdown of media

		Media outlet mostly used				
		TV	Radio	Newspapers	Portals	Social media
Total		57%	1%	3%	13%	25%
Gender						
Female		58%	1%	2%	12%	26%
Male		57%	2%	4%	13%	24%
Age						
18 - 25 years old		27%	0%	1%	19%	52%
26 - 35 years old		40%	1%	3%	18%	38%
36 - 45 years old		63%	2%	4%	13%	18%
46 - 55 years old		79%	1%	4%	7%	8%
56 - 65 years old		86%	2%	5%	3%	3%
over 65 years old		88%	3%	5%	3%	1%
Education						
Up to lower secondary		77%	2%	4%	6%	10%
High school		61%	1%	3%	11%	23%
University degree		39%	1%	4%	18%	38%
Employment						
Employed	Total	53%	1%	4%	13%	28%
	Public	53%	1%	1%	16%	29%
	Private	52%	1%	4%	13%	29%
Unemployed		62%	2%	2%	14%	20%
Student		22%	-	1%	19%	58%
Retired		88%	3%	5%	2%	2%
Income						
No income		55%	1%	2%	14%	27%
Up to 24,000 ALL		70%	1%	4%	7%	16%
24,001 – 50,000 ALL		54%	1%	3%	13%	29%
50,001 – 70,000 ALL		42%	1%	6%	17%	34%
Over 70,001 ALL		32%	-	5%	18%	43%
Geographic representation						
Urban		54%	1%	4%	14%	26%
Rural		65%	1%	3%	8%	23%

Note: Colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total response.

4.2 Transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability are two important principles of good governance, which in turn is often related to the proper functioning of a democratic system. Transparency and accountability are mutually reinforcing and, at the same time, enable citizens to influence decision-making processes and hold those in power to account. Both transparency and accountability are part of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (UN, SDG 2019), more specifically 'Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels', and 'Target 16.6.: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels'.

A government that operates in an open manner is the main assumption underlying the concept of transparency. This entails, inter alia, a government being transparent about how it operates, about its activities and expenditures, and about its operations and the decisions it takes. A key element of transparency is the right of access to information held by public authorities. However, transparency also includes other elements, such as ensuring that meetings of public decision-making bodies are accessible to the public.¹³

Accountability assumes that the government should bear responsibility for its decisions and actions. There are two dimensions to accountability: answerability – or the obligation of public authorities to provide information – and explanations to the public about their activities, and enforcement, or the mechanisms by which the information obtained via answerability can be made effective in obtaining accountability. Accountability can be vertical – owed directly to the public – or horizontal – delivered through mechanisms that operate between public institutions.¹⁴

The questions on transparency and accountability remain the same in 2019 Opinion Poll as in 2018, with one addition: in 2019 respondents were additionally asked to state their opinion regarding the role of the Commissioner on the right to information and data protection in holding the government to account.

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13 The explanation of the concepts is to a large extent based on the Briefing Paper "International Standards on Transparency and Accountability". Centre for Law and Democracy (2014). Retrieved at http://www.law-democracy.org/live/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Transparency-and-Accountability.final_Mar14.pdf

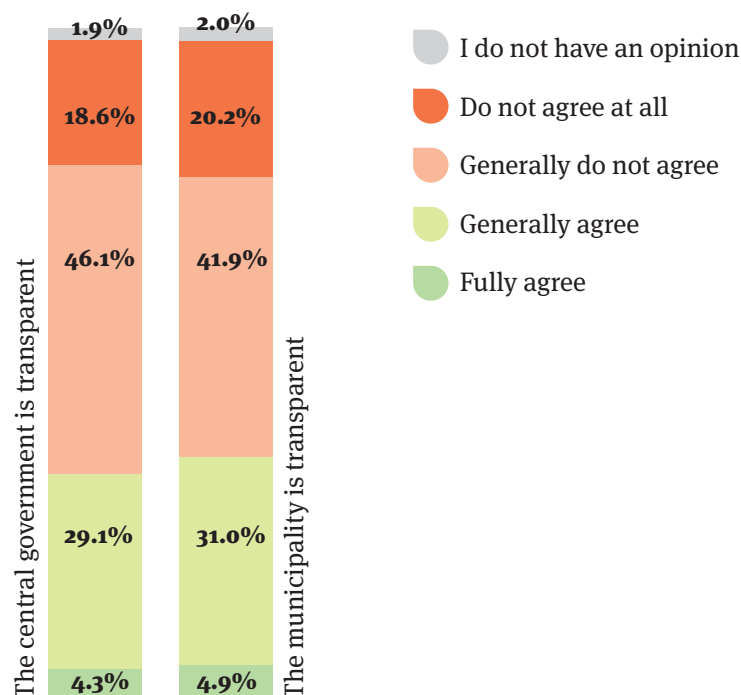
14 Ibid.

Transparency

Data from the 2019 Opinion Poll shows a decreasing level of perceived transparent practices both at the central and local level. However, local government tended to be perceived as slightly more transparent than central government institutions.

In 2019, respondents generally did not agree (46.1%), or did not agree at all (18.6%), that the central government is transparent, while 41.9% generally did not agree, and 20.2% did not agree at all, that municipalities are transparent.

Figure 11: Perceived transparency of central and local government 2019



Base: For central government (N = 2492), for local government (N = 2489)

Socio-demographic comparison of perceived transparency

- Younger Albanians consider central and local government as less transparent than older generations do. Albanian citizens who are well

educated or have a higher income also perceive the central and local government as less transparent compared to those who work in the public sector. Few Albanian citizens with no income perceive the central and local government as transparent.

When checking across demographics (see Table 10 at the end of this chapter), the data shows that respondents' perceptions of government transparency vary between male and female. Male respondents reported a higher proportion of perceived transparency (36%) for central government compared to female respondents (27%). However, there was no substantial difference in the perceived transparency of local government between female and male respondents.

In terms of age group differences, only 27% of respondents in the '18–25 years old' age group and 31% of those in the '26–35 years old' age group agreed that the central government is transparent. Whereas older respondents, particularly those belonging to the 'over 65 years old' group tended to perceive the government at both levels as transparent, 43% and 40%, respectively, agreed that central and local government are transparent.

In terms of educational attainment and perception of transparency, the 2019 Opinion Poll shows that few people with an advanced level of education perceived both central and local government as transparent. Only 37% of those surveyed with a university degree agreed that the central government is transparent and 39% agreed that the local government is transparent.

In terms of employment status, only 26% of unemployed respondents generally believed that central government is transparent and only 29% generally believed that local government is transparent. While employed respondents generally tended to perceive the government at both levels as transparent, those in the public sector do so more with 54% stating they agree that central government is transparent and 57% that local government is transparent. There was no significant difference in the perception of transparency of local and central government when comparing respondents from urban and rural areas.

In terms of income, the data shows that respondents with no income (25%) and those with incomes over 70,001 ALL (27%) perceived the central government as less transparent compared to respondents with incomes of 50 001–70 000 ALL (43%) and those with incomes of 24 001–50 000 ALL (41%). The same pattern holds true for their perceptions of local government: respondents with no income (26%) or higher income (30%) tended to perceive local government as less transparent than respondents with incomes of 50 001–70 000 ALL (43%) and those with incomes of 24 001–50 000 ALL (43%).

Regarding transparency of public institutions, focus group participants 'residing in rural areas' pointed out a positive trend in transparency of both central and local government, but particularly cited local government efforts such as more information provided on municipality websites and local media, organisation of consultation meetings and hearings at municipal councils. Concrete examples of participants working with CSOs or

start-ups were reported as ways in which advocacy campaigns have helped to improve the services provided by local government and to pressure mayors and councillors to be more transparent.

Although focus group participants with a university degree or higher also noted some positive changes in terms of transparency, particularly facilitated by the use of information and communication technologies, they still indicated that “the level of public disappointment is high and the measures [being taken] to address it are few”. The public disappointment was associated largely with perceived level of corruption of public officials and politicians, which in turns contributes to low level of trust.

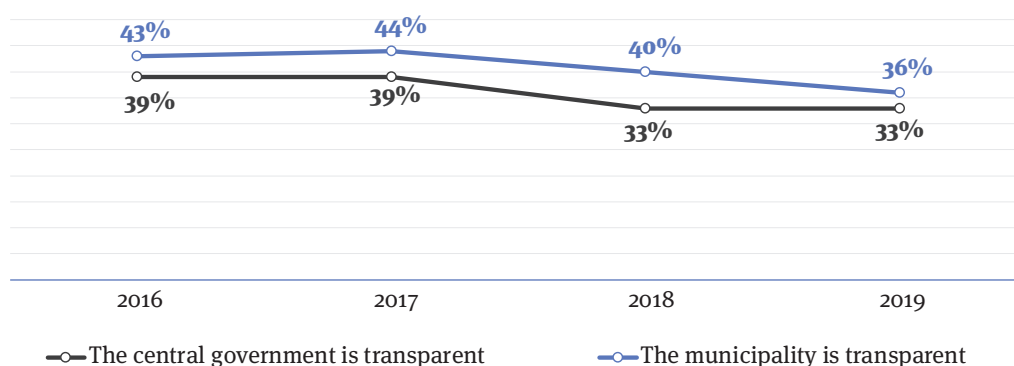
Transparency over the years

The Albanian government, both central and local, has exhibited decreasing levels of perceived transparency over the last four years, with central government perceived as less transparent than the local government.

Compared to previous years there was a decline in perceived transparency: - 6 p.p. for central government and - 7 p.p. for local government from 2016 to 2019.

There is a decline of 6 p.p. of the perceived level of transparency of the central government from 2016 to 2019. There is a decline of 8 p.p. of the perceived level of transparency of the local government from 2017 to 2019.

Figure 12: Change in perceived institutional transparency 2016-2019



Base: 2016, central (N = 1647) and local (N = 1645); 2017, central (N = 1636) and local (N = 1637); 2018, central (N = 1644) and local (N = 1642); 2019, central (N = 2492) and local (N = 2489).

Exercising the right to information

Although the majority of the Albanian population (66.7%) is aware of the right to information law, only 19.9% of those actually made use of it during 2019. Albanians with a university degree, those employed in the public sector, or those with higher incomes appear more likely to be aware of the right to information law. The trends of submitted requests for information maintained a similar proportion throughout the period of 2016–2019. While the trends of receiving requested information have marked a decrease of 11 p.p. from 2016 to 2019.

A key element in transparency is access to information that lies with public authorities, now regulated by Law no. 119/2014 “On the Right to Information”. The exercise of the right to information is founded on two dimensions: citizens’ awareness of their right to access information and their submission of a request for access to information.

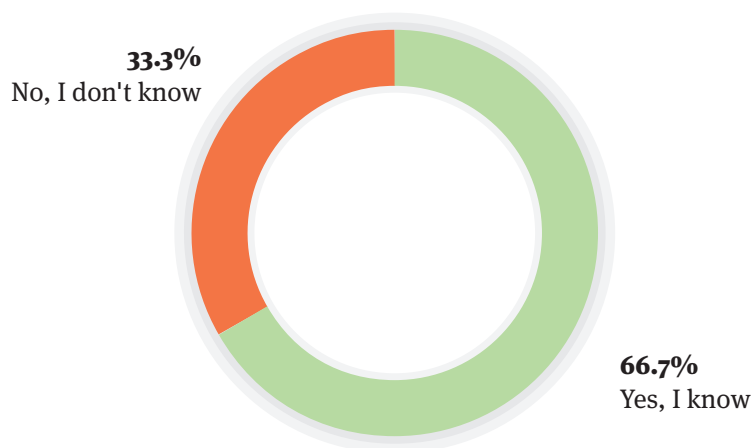
In 2019, 66.7% of respondents were aware that the right to information is guaranteed by law in Albania, while 33.3% responded that they have no information about this law. There was no significant difference by gender with regards to awareness. However, a difference is noticed in terms of age: 71% of respondents in the age group ‘18–25 years old’ and 73% of respondents in the age group ‘26–35 years old’ stated that they are aware of this law, whereas only 52% of respondents in the age group ‘over 65 years old’ stated that they are aware.

Also, 77% of those with a university degree or higher stated that they were aware of the Right to Information Law compared to 52% of those with up to lower secondary education.¹⁵ The vast majority (78%) of respondents that work in the public sector were aware of this law compared to 71% of those in the private sector. 58% of respondents with incomes up to 24,000 ALL were aware of the right to information law compared to 80% of respondents with incomes of 50 001–70 000 ALL. In addition, people residing in rural areas (61%) are less informed about the law compared to residents in urban areas (69%).

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15 The group ‘up to lower secondary education’ includes respondents with no education, respondents with primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Figure 13: Public awareness of right to information Law in 2019



Base: N = 2491

The law on the right to information provides that everyone has the right to access public information without having to explain the reason they have requested it. The procedure requires that requests for information shall be in writing and delivered by hand, mail or email, with the correct identity of the applicant and his/her signature. The public authority, in turn, processes the request for information no later than 10 working days after the day of submission of the request (Law no. 119/2014).

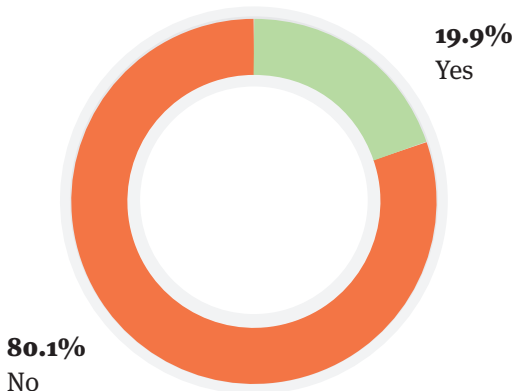
Respondents who were aware of the law on the right to information, were further asked if they had exercised their right to access public information during 2019. Only 19.9% of the respondents, aware of the right, indicated that they had submitted a request to public authorities. Meanwhile, 59.3% of those that had submitted a request stated that they had received the requested information.

There was no significant difference between genders for the submission of a request for information at a public institution in 2019. In terms of age group, the data shows that younger respondents are more prone to submitting requests for information with 24% of the respondents in the age group '26–35 years old' saying they had submitted a request whereas only 14% of respondents in the age group 'over 65 years old' had submitted a request for information. Also, respondents with a university degree or higher have made use of the right to information law by submitting a request for information to public institutions in 2019 more often (26%) than respondents with up to lower secondary education (12%).

33% of respondents working in the public sector stated that they had submitted a request for information and 79% of these stated that they received the information requested as

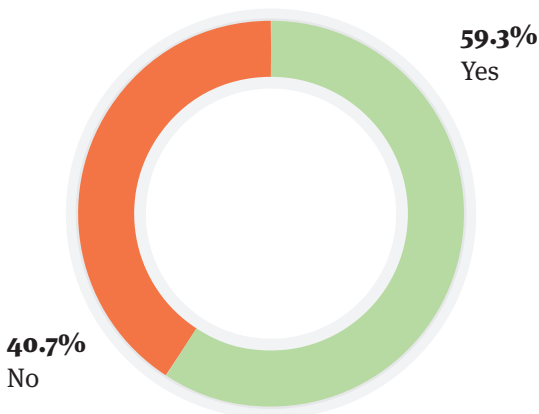
compared to 19% of respondents in the private sector submitting a request for information and 62% receiving the information requested. In terms of income, respondents with no income rarely submitted a request for information: only 17% did so in 2019 compared to 41% of respondents with incomes of over 70,001 ALL. Notably, only 47% of respondents with no income reported receiving requested information as opposed to 94% of respondents with incomes over 70,001 ALL receiving the requested information.

Figure 14: Submitted request for information (2019)



Base: N = 491

Figure 15: Received requested information (2019)



Base: N = 479

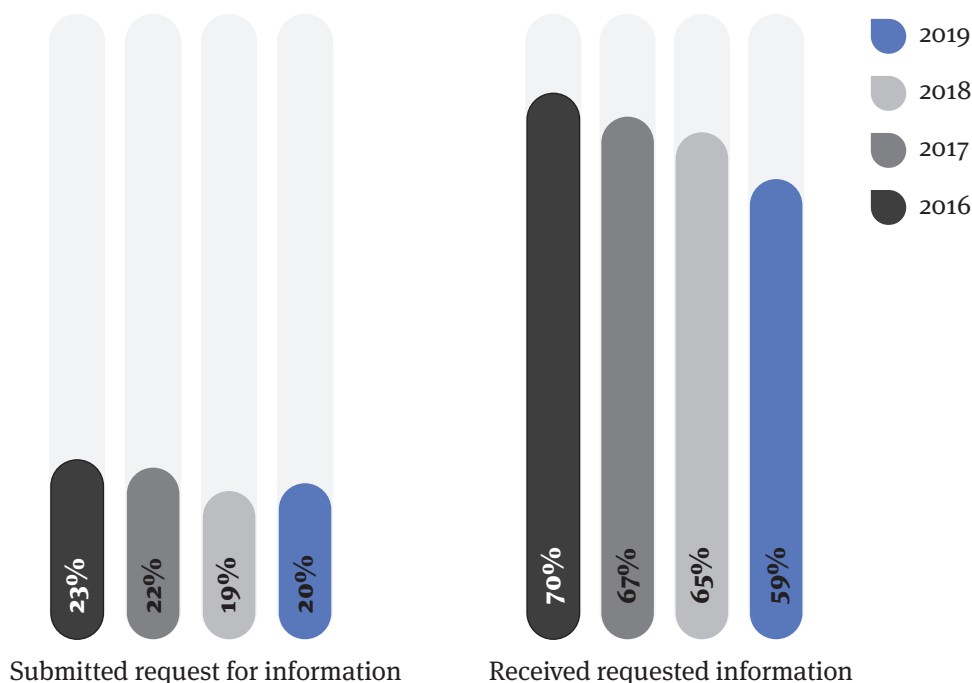
There was no significant difference between genders regarding receiving the information requested. In terms of age groups, younger people were more likely to receive the information requested compared to older groups: 68% of respondents in the age group '26–35 years old' stated that they had received the information requested compared to less than half of the age group 'over 65 years old' (46%). In terms of education, 45% of respondents with up to lower secondary education stated that they had received the information requested compared to those with university education and higher (67%). Furthermore, 79% of respondents in the public sector stated that they had received the information requested compared to 62% of the respondents working in the private sector. Also, respondents who were members of a political party appeared to be more likely to receive the information requested (69%) compared to respondents that were not a member of a political party (57%).

The findings from the focus groups indicate that the submission of requests for information is related to institutional trust. Participants who were aware of the right to information law, particularly among the young and well educated, pointed out that they do not make requests for information under the provisions of this law because they do not trust that the institution will actually provide them with the information they need. One of the participants stated: “I have submitted a request for information to the regional directory of education for months now regarding recognition of my education abroad, also to the Ministry, but I have not received any response yet and I am not expecting one actually, I need to find ‘a friend from within’ to help me with this”.

As it can be noted from this example, participants could not generally differentiate between submission of request under the right to information provisions and applying for a public or administrative service. Notwithstanding, the personal life experiences shared in all focus groups indicate that in some cases, limited awareness of how to submit a request and access public institutions generally, is a factor in delays, meander and ultimately not receiving the information requested – thus reinforcing disappointment with institutions and eventually distrust.

The trends of submitted requests for information maintained a similar proportion throughout the period 2016–2019. While the trends of receiving requested information have decreased from 2016 (70%) to 2019 (59%) by 11 percentage points.

Figure 16: Submitted requests for information and receiving information requested 2016–2019



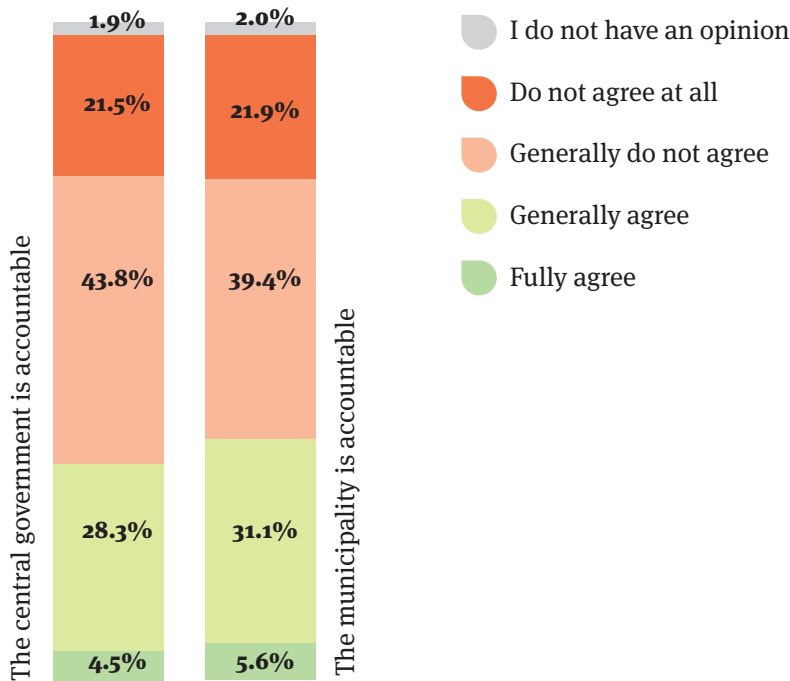
Base: For submission of request for information 2016 (N = 935); 2017 (N = 962); 2018 (N = 979); 2019 (N = 491). For receiving information 2016 (N = 238); 2017 (N = 205); 2018 (N = 186); 2019 (N = 479)

Accountability

Just 36.7% of the Albanian resident population perceived the local government as accountable and 32.8% indicated that they perceive the central government as accountable. Albanians with a university degree, or those employed in the public sector more often perceived the government as accountable compared with other demographic groups.

In general, respondents viewed central and local governments as unaccountable, although a slightly larger proportion of respondents (36.7%) perceived local government to be accountable compared to the central government (32.8%). In 2019, 61.3% of respondents generally did not agree or did not agree at all that municipalities are accountable, and 65.3% of those generally did not agree or did not agree at all that the central government is accountable.

Figure 17: Perceived accountability of central and local government 2019



Base: For central government, $N = 2491$, For local government, $N = 2485$

The demographic breakdown of the 2019 Opinion Poll answers (see Table 10 at the end of this chapter) does not show any substantial differences between gender or geographical representation regarding the perceived accountability of central and local government. There was only a slight difference in the perceived accountability of central government between age groups with younger generations less likely to believe that the central government is accountable: 28% of respondents in the age group '18–25 years old' and 31% in the age group '26–35 years old' stated that the central government is accountable as compared to respondents in the age group 'over 65 years old' (40%). However, there was no significant difference between age groups on the perceived accountability of local government.

When it comes to education level, 36% of respondents with a university degree perceived the central government as accountable compared to 30% of those with up to lower secondary education.¹⁶ There is no substantial difference observed regarding perceived

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¹⁶ The group 'up to lower secondary education' includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

accountability of local government and different education level of respondents. In terms of employment, employed and retired respondents were more likely to perceive central and local government as accountable compared to unemployed respondents. Only 24% of respondents who were unemployed stated that they consider central government as accountable compared to employed (37%) and retired respondents (37%). In addition, those who work in the public sector were more likely to perceive central and local government as accountable compared to those who work in the private sector.

Respondents with no income appeared to perceive the central and local government as unaccountable with only 24% stating the central government is accountable and 27% stating that local government is accountable. These ratings are lower than the overall rating of the surveyed population. Similarly, respondents with a higher income (over 70,001 Lek/month) perceived the central and local government as unaccountable: with only 25% stating the central government is accountable and 27% stating that local government is accountable. 41% of respondents with income 24,001 – 50,000 Lek/month perceive the central government as transparent and accountable. 41% of respondents with income 24,001 – 50,000 Lek/month perceive the local government as transparent and 44% perceive it as accountable.

In terms of accountability of central and local government, young people (participants in the focus group ‘under 30 years old’) did not notice any considerable progress in this regard. However, they also acknowledged that they had a lack of information regarding access to local decision-making processes and that their perceptions were based mostly on a general public mood that “both central and local government are not accountable to voters and citizens, but only to their own ‘pockets’”, as stated by one participant. Young and well-educated participants noted that they follow the social media pages of ministers, mayors and other political figures, but pointed out that social media is not the right way to communicate serious policy issues at local and central level, rather, as one participant stressed “it is just being fashionable and trendy online, but not being accountable”.

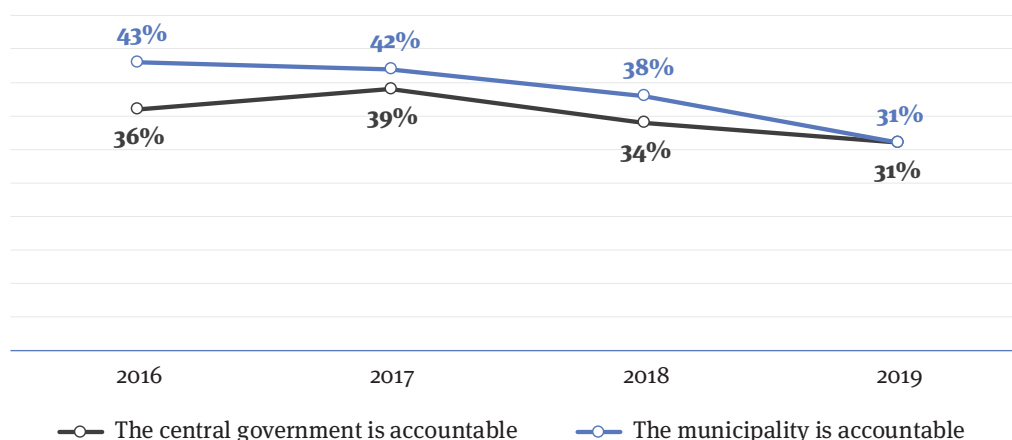
Perception of accountability of central and local government 2016–2019

Since 2016, the proportion of Albanians that perceive the local government as accountable has declined by 12 p.p. to 31% in 2019. For central government, the proportion increased in 2017, but decreased since then with 8 p.p. to 31% in 2019.

The data shows a change in perceived accountability for the time period 2016–2019. For local government there has been an overall decline in perceived accountability of 12 percentage points. In 2016, 43% of respondents perceived local governments as accountable, while in 2019 only 31% of respondents perceived local governments as accountable. The perceived accountability of central government has also declined from 36% in 2016, to 31% in 2019.

An increase of 3 percentage points in the perceived accountability of central government was recorded in 2017 but this was then followed by another decrease by 5 percentage points in 2018 and a further 3 p.p. in 2019.

Figure 18: Change in perceived accountability (2016–2019)



Base: 2016, central (N = 1646) and local (N = 1645); 2017, central (N = 1635) and local (N = 1633); 2018, central (N = 1644) and local (N = 1643); 2019, central (N = 2491) and local (N = 2485).

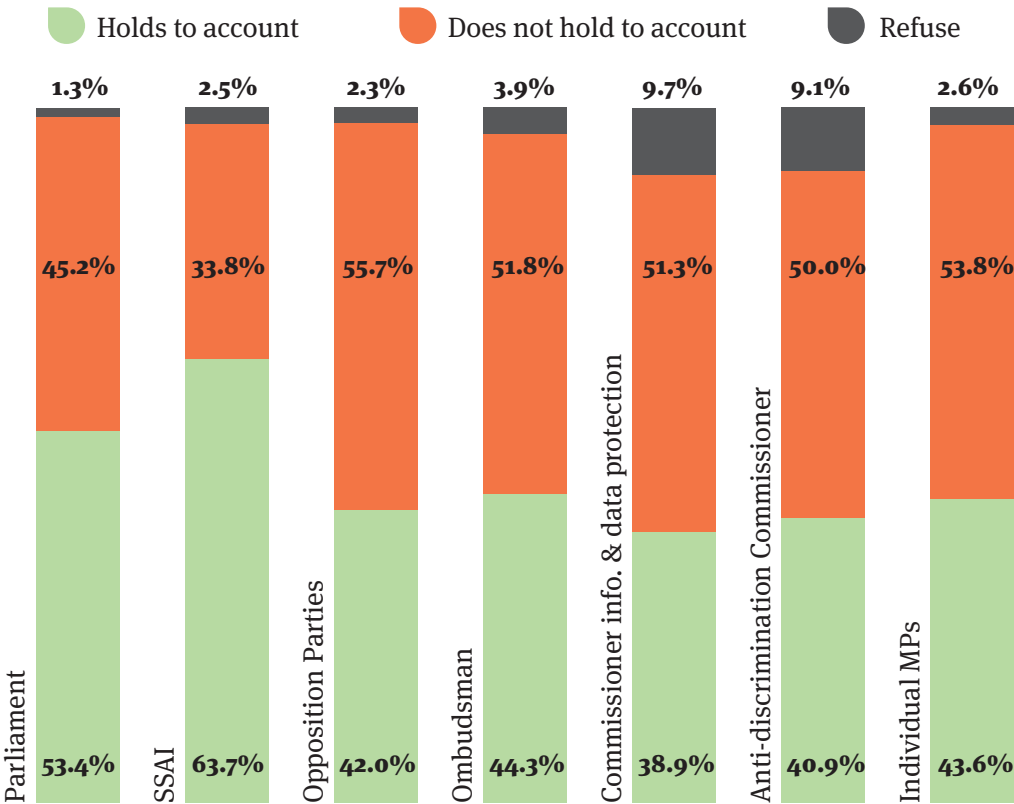
Horizontal and vertical accountability

Albanian citizens believed that the most effective accountability mechanism is the Albanian Supreme State Audit Institution (63.7%), followed by the parliament (53.4%), the ombudsman (44.3%) and opposition parties (42%). 42.6% believed that individual MPs can hold the government to account. As far as vertical accountability is concerned, the media (58%) was perceived as having the greatest role in holding the government accountable followed by civil society organisations (47.8%). The vast majority of Albanian citizens believed that international organisations (78.9%) hold the government accountable far more than domestic organisations.

Accountability can be classified according to the type of accountability exercised and/or the person, group or institution that the public official answers to, and these can be further grouped under two main forms: horizontal accountability and vertical accountability.

Horizontal accountability concerns the capacity of state institutions (such as the legislature and the judiciary) to oversee government policy by demanding information, scrutinising officials and punishing improper behaviour. On the other hand, vertical accountability is the means by which citizens, mass media, and civil society seek to enforce standards of good performance on government officials.

Figure 19: Perceived effectiveness of horizontal accountability mechanisms (2019)



Base: Parliament (N = 2485); Supreme State Audit Office (N = 2485); Opposition Parties (N = 2481); Ombudsman (N = 2478); Commissioner on the right to information (N = 2485); Anti-Discrimination Commissioner (N = 2485; MPs (N = 2484)

The Supreme State Audit Institution (SSAI) continues to be perceived as the institution with the greatest role in holding the government to account (63.7%), followed by parliament (53.4%), the ombudsman (44.3%), opposition parties (42%), the anti-discrimination commissioner (40.9%), and the commissioner on the right to information and data protection (38.9%). More than half of respondents (53.8%) believed that MPs do not hold the government to account.

There was no significant difference in the perception of horizontal accountability between men and women in the surveyed population (See Table 11 at the end of this chapter). Yet, respondents in the age group ‘over 65 years old’ considered individual MPs as more likely to hold the government to account (52%) compared to younger respondents in the ‘18–25 years old’ age group (38%). The same trend can be observed when it comes to the role of opposition parties. A higher proportion of respondents in the ‘over 65 years old’ group (46%) considered opposition parties as likely to hold the government accountable compared to younger respondents in the age group ‘18–25 years old’ (36%). Only 41% of those with a university degree or higher considered that opposition parties hold the government accountable, compared to 46% of those with up to lower secondary education.¹⁷

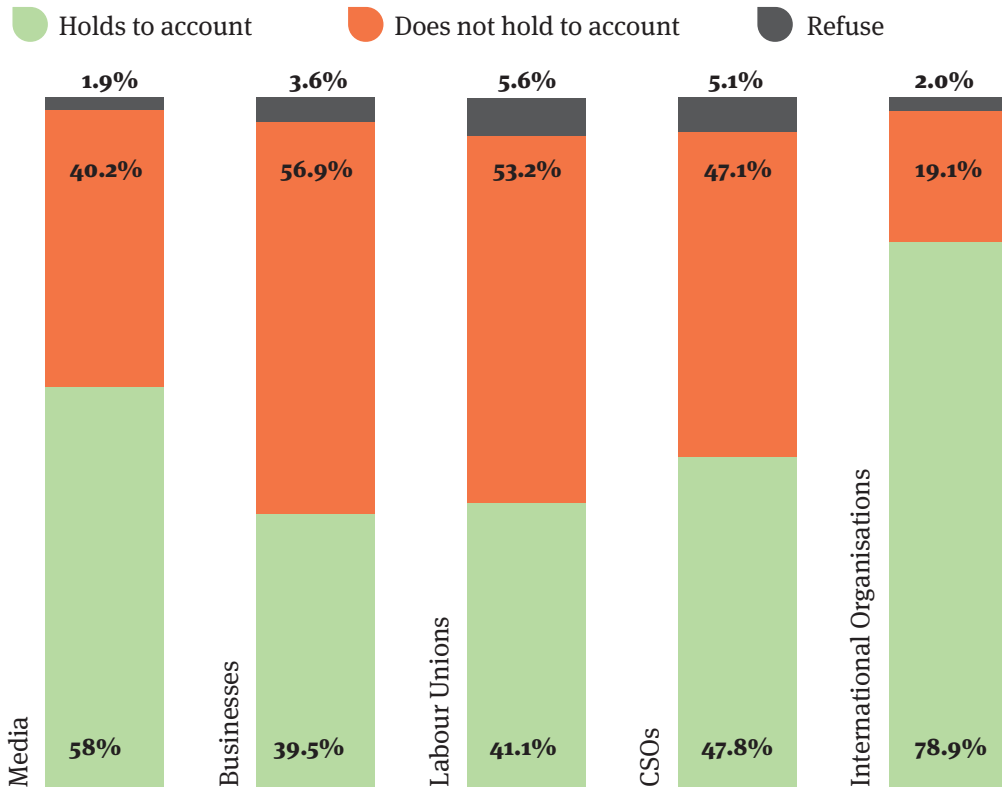
Respondents with a university degree or higher considered that the Information and Data Protection Commissioner (43%) and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (44%) can hold the government accountable. 39% of those with an education up to lower secondary level considered that the Information and Data Protection Commissioner and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination can hold the government accountable.

More than half of employed respondents (55%) believed that parliament holds the government accountable, whereas only 48% of unemployed respondents stated the same. A smaller proportion of unemployed respondents (55%) believed that the Supreme State Audit Office can hold the government accountable compared to employed respondents (67%) and the perception of respondents overall (63.7%).

Regarding vertical accountability mechanisms, the media was perceived as having the greatest role in holding the government accountable (58%), followed by civil society (47.8%). Less than half of the respondents said that labour unions (41.1%) and businesses (39.5%) hold the government to account. The vast majority of respondents (78.9%) believed that international organisations hold the government accountable.

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17 The group ‘up to lower secondary education’ includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 years).

Figure 20: Perceived effectiveness of vertical accountability mechanisms (2019)

Base: Media (N = 2485); Businesses (N = 2483); Labour Unions (N = 2484); CSOs (N = 2482); Intl. Organisations (N = 2484)

Women (60%) were more likely to perceive the media as having the greatest role in government accountability compared to men (56%) (See Table 11). More than half of respondents in each age group believe that the media can hold the government accountable, with fewer respondents (54%) in the age group '18–25 years old' believing this compared to respondents in age group 'over 65 years old' (62%).

The majority of respondents in each age group and each educational level group believed that international organisations can hold the government accountable. As many as 82% of those with a university degree or higher considered that international organisations can hold the government to account. 46% of those with up to lower secondary education,¹⁸

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¹⁸ The group 'up to lower secondary education' includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

believed that CSOs can hold the government accountable, whereas 39% of those with a university degree or higher share the same perception. Respondents employed in the public sector are more prone to believe that CSOs (53%) and media (62%) can hold the government accountable.

57% of respondents with an income of 50,001–70,000 Lek/month believe that parliament can hold the government accountable as compared to 47% of respondents with no income. 45% of respondents with this income believed that opposition parties can hold the government accountable as compared to 38% of respondents with no income.

Over the years, SSAI continue to be perceived as being able to hold the government to account more so than other domestic institutions. It is followed by media with more than half of respondents stating that it can hold the government to account but marking a decrease of 7 p.p. from 2017.

Table 9: Perceived effectiveness of accountability mechanisms (2016–2019)

	2016	2017	2018	2019
SSAI	63%	67%	61%	64%
Media	62%	65%	58%	58%
Ombudsman	54%	55%	59%	44%
Parliament	51%	63%	54%	54%
Opposition Parties	51%	54%	43%	42%
Civil Society Organisations	46%	51%	49%	48%
Anti-discrimination Commissioner	46%	45%	44%	41%
Businesses	43%	44%	40%	39%
Labour Unions	39%	46%	42%	41%
Individual MPs	X	X	X	44%
Commissioner on the right to information and data protection	X	X	X	39%
International Organisations	X	X	X	79%

Overall, participants from different backgrounds participating in the focus group argued that only international institutions have actually been able to hold the government accountable. One of the participants in the ‘over 55 years old’ focus group said: “our politicians do not care about us, about citizens and what we think. They know we will still vote them, we have done so again and again, because we are poor and desperate. But I think they are a bit worried when it comes to ‘the internationals’, so if there is a way out then it is up to the international community to do something about us”. However, most participants referred primarily to politicians, rather than to public officials when discussing lack of official accountability.

Table 10: Demographic breakdown for transparency and accountability (2019)

	The central government is transparent	My municipality is transparent	The central government is accountable	My municipality is accountable
Total	33.4%	35.9%	32.8%	36.7%
Gender				
Female	31%	35%	32%	36%
Male	35%	37%	34%	37%
Age				
18–25 years old	27%	30%	28%	33%
26–35 years old	31%	33%	31%	35%
36–45 years old	36%	40%	36%	38%
46–55 years old	33%	38%	32%	40%
56–65 years old	39%	39%	35%	39%
66 and over	43%	40%	40%	39%
Education				
Up to lower secondary	30%	35%	30%	37%
High school	33%	34%	32%	35%
University degree	37%	39%	36%	39%
Employment				
Employed Total	36%	40%	37%	41%
Public	54%	57%	55%	58%
Private	30%	34%	31%	35%
Unemployed	26%	29%	24%	29%
Student	30%	26%	30%	32%
Retired	40%	39%	37%	38%
Income				
No income	25%	26%	24%	27%
Up to 24,000 ALL	34%	38%	33%	38%
24,001–50,000 ALL	41%	43%	41%	44%
50,001–70,000 ALL	43%	43%	43%	43%
Over 70,001 ALL	27%	30%	25%	27%
Geographic Representation				
Urban	33%	35%	33%	36%
Rural	34%	39%	33%	38%

Note: Colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total response.

Table 11: Socio-demographic breakdown of horizontal and vertical accountability

	Parliament	Individual MPs	Supreme State Audit Institution	Opposition Parties	Ombudsman	Commissioner right to info. & data protection	Anti-discrimination Commissioner	Civil Society Organisations	Media	Businesses	Labour Unions	International Organisations
Total (% accountable)	53.4%	43.6%	63.7%	42.0%	44.3%	38.9%	40.9%	47.8%	58%	39.5%	41.1%	78.9%
Gender												
Female	53%	43%	66%	42%	45%	39%	41%	47%	60%	39%	42%	80%
Male	53%	44%	62%	42%	44%	38%	41%	49%	56%	40%	40%	78%
Age												
18-25 years old	49%	38%	62%	36%	39%	37%	42%	51%	54%	38%	42%	76%
26-35 years old	51%	41%	63%	40%	41%	41%	43%	45%	55%	38%	40%	80%
36-45 years old	57%	47%	64%	43%	49%	39%	40%	50%	62%	40%	40%	79%
46-55 years old	54%	43%	65%	49%	50%	39%	39%	46%	58%	42%	43%	80%
56-65 years old	55%	48%	61%	43%	41%	38%	36%	48%	61%	40%	39%	78%
66 and over	58%	52%	70%	46%	51%	39%	46%	48%	62%	40%	43%	82%
Education												
Up to lower secondary	52%	43%	59%	46%	42%	39%	39%	46%	61%	41%	47%	79%
High school	52%	42%	64%	41%	46%	36%	40%	48%	57%	39%	39%	76%
University degree	56%	46%	67%	41%	43%	43%	44%	49%	57%	39%	40%	82%
Employment												
Employed Total	55%	45%	67%	43%	47%	41%	42%	50%	60%	42%	42%	81%

	Parliament	Individual MPs	Supreme State Audit Institution	Opposition Parties	Ombudsman	Commissioner right to info. & data protection	Anti-discrimination Commissioner	Civil Society Organisations	Media	Businesses	Labour Unions	International Organisations
Total (% accountable)	53.4%	43.6%	63.7%	42.0%	44.3%	38.9%	40.9%	47.8%	58%	39.5%	41.1%	78.9%
Public	68%	55%	77%	50%	53%	49%	50%	53%	62%	48%	46%	83%
Private	51%	42%	65%	40%	43%	38%	40%	47%	57%	41%	40%	80%
Unemployed	48%	40%	55%	39%	41%	35%	36%	43%	55%	33%	38%	76%
Student	53%	38%	63%	40%	38%	35%	42%	50%	49%	34%	41%	73%
Retired	57%	49%	65%	47%	48%	42%	45%	48%	66%	43%	44%	80%
Income												
No income	47%	38%	55%	38%	40%	34%	36%	44%	54%	33%	38%	76%
Up to 24,000 ALL	54%	44%	65%	46%	45%	41%	45%	49%	60%	40%	45%	79%
24,001–50,000 ALL	58%	48%	70%	44%	48%	43%	43%	51%	61%	45%	42%	80%
50,001–70,000 ALL	57%	54%	69%	45%	49%	45%	45%	51%	57%	41%	43%	86%
Over 70,001 ALL	43%	32%	66%	41%	43%	41%	32%	48%	55%	37%	41%	82%

* The group “up to lower secondary education” includes respondents with no education, primary education, and those that finished school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Note: Colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total responses.

4.3 Corruption in public institutions

Corruption is an issue that can happen everywhere and at all levels of society. It “chips away at democracy to produce a vicious cycle, whereby corruption undermines democratic institutions and, in turn, weak institutions are less able to control corruption”¹⁹. Transparency International defines corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, which can be classified into grand corruption and petty corruption depending on both the amount of money lost and the level of society where the corruption occurs.

Grand corruption is the abuse of high-level power that benefits the few at the expense of the many, and causes serious and widespread harm to individuals and society. Petty corruption, on the other hand, is the abuse of entrusted power by public officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens trying to access basic goods or services in healthcare, education, police departments, or other institutions.

Since 2017, the Opinion Poll has transformed its ‘corruption in public institutions’ section to include a new set of questions related to the prevalence of different types of corruption in Albania, such as petty corruption and grand corruption. Subsequently, respondents were asked about their level of confidence in the prosecution of corruption cases – the main objective of the judicial reform that is currently being implemented with the support of the European Union and the United States. Lastly, respondents were asked to indicate the most corrupt public institution in Albania of the past year in an open-ended question.

Following perceptions of corruption in wider society, respondents were asked about their personal exposure to the phenomenon at both central and local level government, including questions as to whether they have witnessed any corruption case or paid any bribes during the year. These sets of questions have been introduced progressively to the Opinion Poll since 2015.

Perceptions on the prevalence of corruption

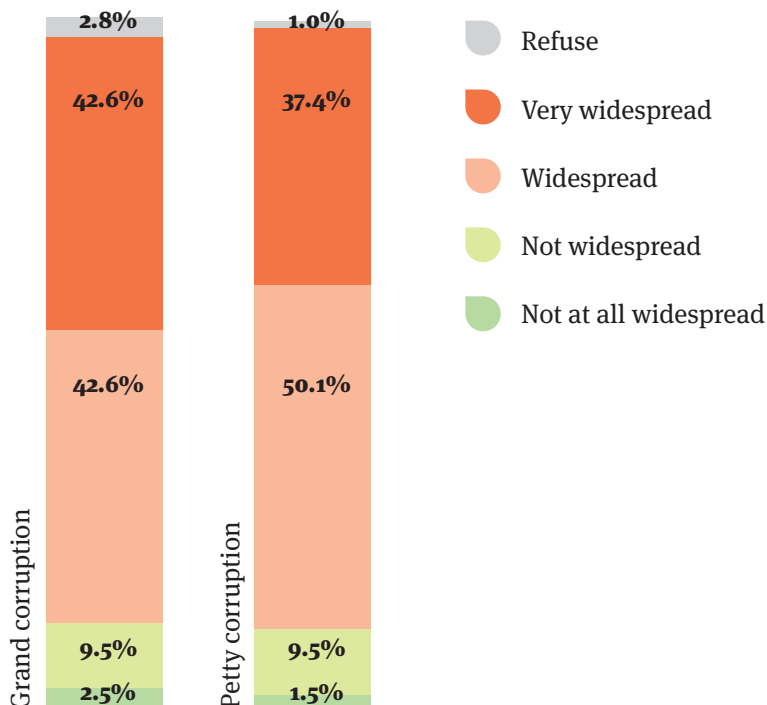
The majority of the Albanian population perceives that petty and grand corruption are widespread phenomena in Albanian society. Compared to previous years, the proportion of the resident population that thinks grand corruption and petty corruption are ‘very widespread’ is increasing.

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19 According to Patricia Moreira, Managing Director of Transparency International in the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index Report, ‘How corruption weakens democracy’, 29 January 2019, available at https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/cpi_2018_global_analysis

Respondents were asked to rate the prevalence of petty and grand corruption on a four-point scale from 1 (not at all widespread) to 4 (very widespread). The vast majority of the respondents (87.5%) perceived petty corruption as widespread (50.1%) or very widespread (37.4%). Only 1.5% of the respondents thought that petty corruption is 'not at all widespread'. With regard to grand corruption, or the abuse of high-level power, 85.2% of respondents perceived it as either widespread (42.6%) or very widespread (42.6%). Only 2.5% of the respondents perceived grand corruption as 'not at all widespread'.

Figure 21: Perceived prevalence of corruption (2019)



Base: Petty corruption ($N = 2494$); Grand corruption ($N = 2495$).

No major differences in perceptions of petty and grand corruption were found among demographics such as gender, age, education level, average monthly income, or geographical representation. However, more of the respondents who work in the private sector (88.2%) felt that petty corruption in Albania is widespread or very widespread than those employed in the public sector (77.7%). For grand corruption, respondents employed in the private sector also perceived more often (85.6%) that the phenomenon is widespread or very widespread than people working in the public sector (78.2%).

2019 marked the third consecutive year in which Albanians perceived corruption as pervasive and omnipresent in their society. Compared to previous years, the proportion of Albanians that thought petty corruption and grand corruption are ‘very widespread’ is increasing. In 2019, 37% thought that petty corruption is ‘very widespread’, compared to 34% in 2018 and 33% in 2017. Similarly, more Albanians (43%) think that grand corruption is ‘very widespread’ in 2019, compared to 41% in 2018 and 40% in 2017.

Table 12. Perceived prevalence of corruption (2017–2019)

		2017	2018	2019
Petty Corruption	Widespread	54%	53%	50%
	Very widespread	33%	34%	37%
Grand Corruption	Widespread	48%	48%	42%
	Very widespread	40%	41%	43%

Base: Petty corruption, 2017 (N = 1641); 2018 (N = 1644); 2019 (N = 2494). Grand corruption, 2017 (N = 1641); 2018 (N = 1644); 2019 (N = 2495).

**Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see ‘Methodology’ section.*

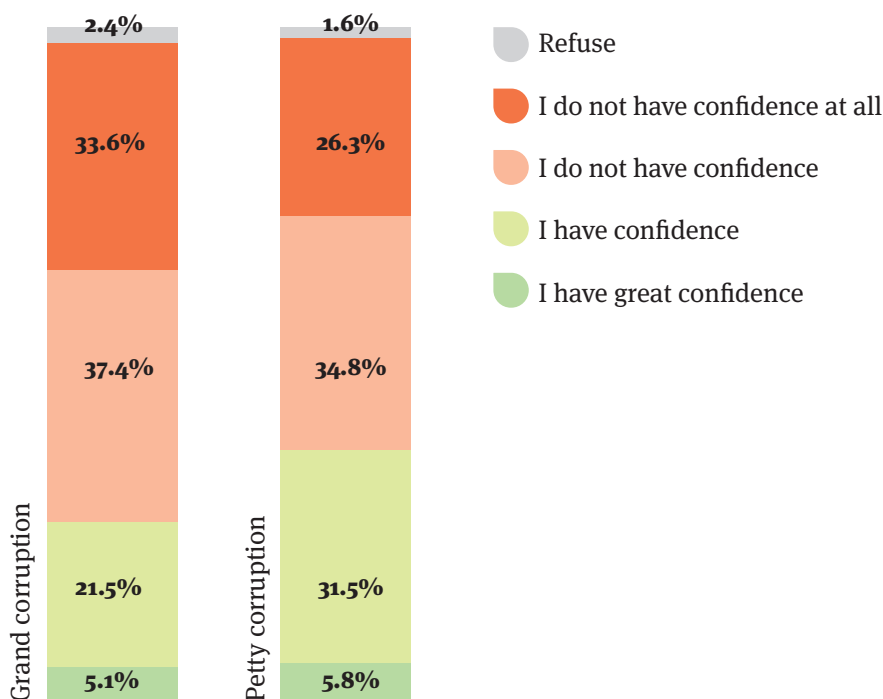
All 2,500 respondents answered the open-ended question: “According to your opinion, which was the most corrupt institution in 2019?”. The most common answer was the courts and/or the judiciary (N = 501), followed by healthcare and/or doctors (N = 255), prosecutions/prosecution (N = 249), the government (N = 220), the parliament (N = 191), the police (N = 113), municipalities (N = 81), and the president (N = 55). 128 respondents answered that “all institutions” or “all politics” are corrupt, indicating a perception of equal corruption across all institutions. Interestingly, 71 respondents said that the education sector was the most corrupt institution in 2019, and 26 respondents that it was the media.

Confidence in the prosecution of corruption cases

The majority of the Albanian population does not have confidence in the prosecution of petty corruption cases or grand corruption cases. 6 in 10 Albanians have ‘no confidence’ or ‘no confidence at all’ in the prosecution of petty corruption cases, whereas 7 in 10 Albanians has ‘no confidence’ or ‘no confidence at all’ in the prosecution of grand corruption cases. People employed in the public sector tended to have more confidence in the prosecution of both petty and grand corruption cases.

Following the questions on the pervasiveness of corruption in Albania, respondents were asked to rate their level of confidence in the prosecution of corruption cases on a four-point scale from 1 (I have great confidence) to 4 (I do not have confidence at all). The majority of the respondents (61.1%) indicated that they 'do not have confidence' or 'have no confidence at all' in the prosecution of petty corruption cases. 31.5% of the respondents had confidence and only 5.8% had great confidence that petty corruption cases will be prosecuted accordingly. In general, the respondents are more sceptical regarding the prosecution of grand corruption cases than petty corruption cases. As many as 71% of the respondents indicated that they do not have confidence or have no confidence at all in the prosecution of grand corruption cases, with only 26.6% having confidence in the prosecution of grand corruption cases. Compared to previous years, there were no substantial changes in the proportion of respondents with confidence in the prosecution corruption cases.

Figure 22: Perception on prosecution of corruption cases (2019)



Base: Grand corruption (N = 2490); Petty corruption (N = 2461)

For the level of confidence in the prosecution of petty corruption cases, the data shows small differences across education levels and employment sector. Of the respondents with

up to lower secondary education²⁰, 34.7% had (great) confidence in the prosecution of petty corruption, compared to 36.3% of the respondents that finished high school, and 39.8% of respondents with a university degree. Furthermore, more respondents working in the public sector indicated that they have (great) confidence in the prosecution of petty corruption cases (58.9%) than respondents working in the private sector (33.6%). With regards to the level of confidence in the prosecution of grand corruption cases, a similar trend is seen according employment sector. Respondents in the public sector have more confidence (43.8%) in the prosecution of grand corruption cases than respondents working in the private sector (25.1%). No substantial differences in the opinions of respondents across gender, age, income or geographical representation were found.

Personal exposure to corruption cases

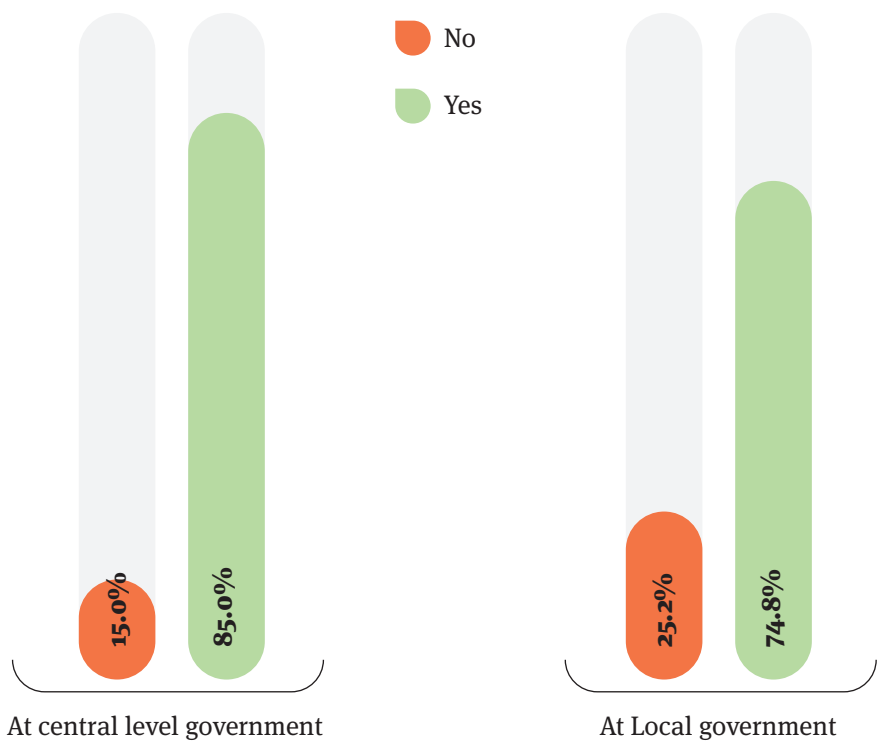
Although the Albanian population perceives corruption as endemic and is sceptical about the prosecution of corruption cases, not many Albanians appeared to have been personally exposed to corruption. In 2019, 15% of Albanians had personally witnessed corruption at the central level and 25.2% at the local level. Compared to the previous three years, there was a slight increase in the proportion of Albanians that had personally witnessed corruption.

Following the perceptions on corruption and its prosecution, respondents were asked about their personal experiences with corruption at the central and the local level. Although Albanians tended to perceive corruption as endemic and were sceptical about the prosecution of corruption cases, not many reported personal exposure to corruption. At the central level, 15% of the respondents reported personal exposure to corruption, compared to 25.2% at the local level. Small differences were found for gender: 16.8% of the male respondents indicated to have witnessed corruption at the central level, compared to 13.3% of female respondents. Similarly, 27.3% of the male respondents indicated to have witnessed corruption at the local level, compared to 23.1% of female respondents. Furthermore, at the local level small differences were found between age categories. Older respondents, in the age categories '56–65 years old' and '66 and over', were less often exposed to corruption at the local level (20% and 15.9% respectively) than respondents under 35 years old (26.8% of the age group 18-25 and 28.4% of the age group 26-35). There were no significant differences in personal exposure across other socio-demographic characteristics such as education, income, or employment sector.

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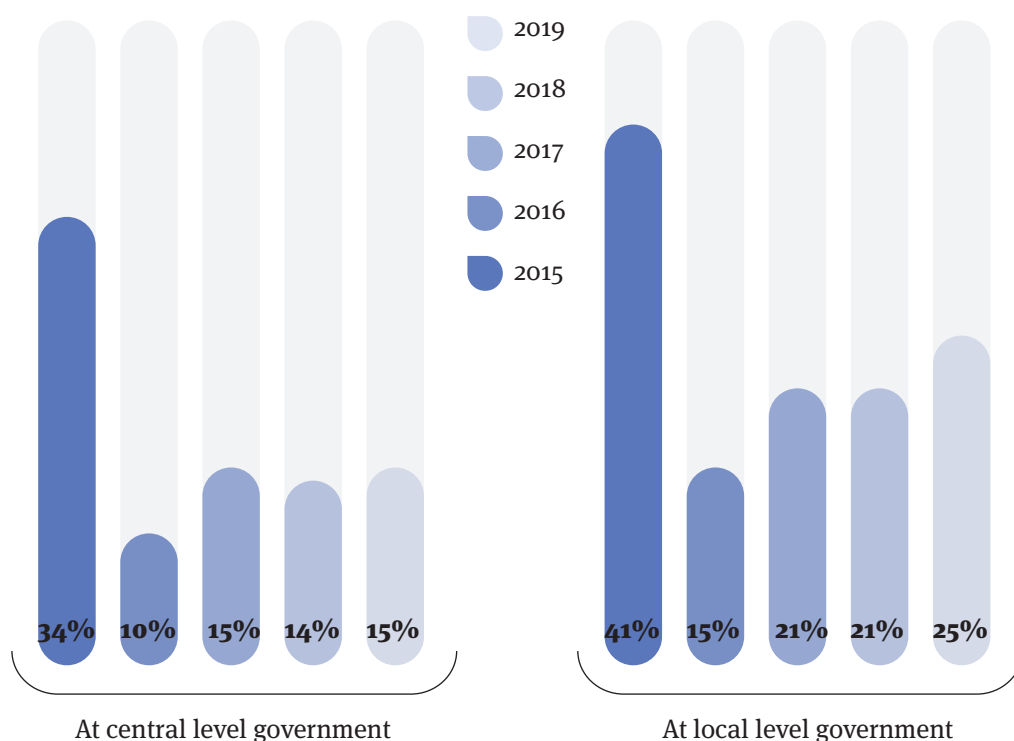
²⁰ The group 'up to lower secondary education' includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Figure 23. Personal exposure to corruption (2019)



Base: Central government (N = 2487); Local government (N = 2487)

Regarding trends in personal exposure to corruption over time, the survey data reveals that the highest level of reported exposure was observed in 2015 (41% at the local and 34% at the central level), followed by the lowest level in 2016 (15% at the local level and 10% at the central level). In 2017, 21% of the respondents experienced corruption at the local level and 15% at the central level. In 2018, the proportion of respondents that personally witnessed corruption was similar to 2017 (21% at the local level and 14% at the central level).

Figure 24: Personal exposure to corruption at a central and local level 2015-2019

Base: For central government: 2015 (N = 1585); 2016 (N = 1633); 2017 (N = 1638); 2018 (N = 1631); 2019 (N = 2487). For local government: 2015 (N = 1571); 2016 (N = 1633); 2017 (N = 1639); 2018 (N = 1631); 2019 (N = 2487).

*Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the 'methodology' section.

Prevalence of bribes

The majority of the Albanian resident population (64.1%) received a service from a public institution at the local level in 2019 and 34.8% at the central level. 19.1% of the Albanians that received a service at the central level paid a bribe, while 35.8% paid a bribe at the local level. Compared to previous years, the proportion of Albanians that paid a bribe for a service at the central level has declined, while bribe paying increased at the local level.

One of the forms of petty corruption is the practice of paying bribes for receiving services from public institutions. Respondents were asked if in 2019, they had received any services

at the central or local level government and whether they had paid a bribe for receiving that service. 34.8% of the respondents had received a service from the central government and 19.1% of these indicated they had paid a bribe for the service they received.

Figure 25. Services received at central level (2019)

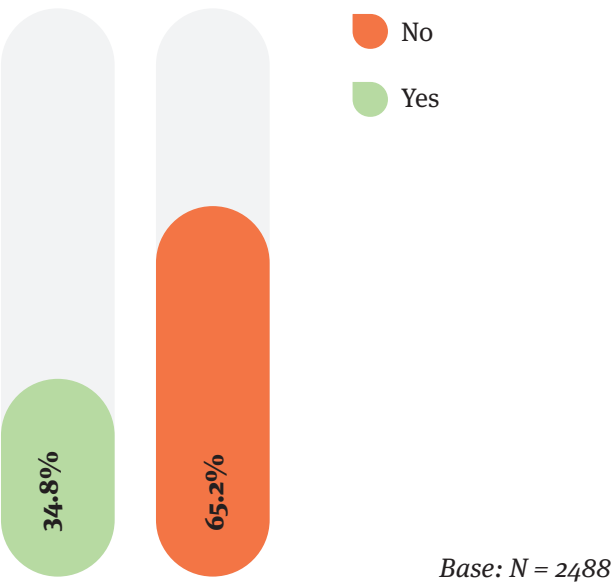
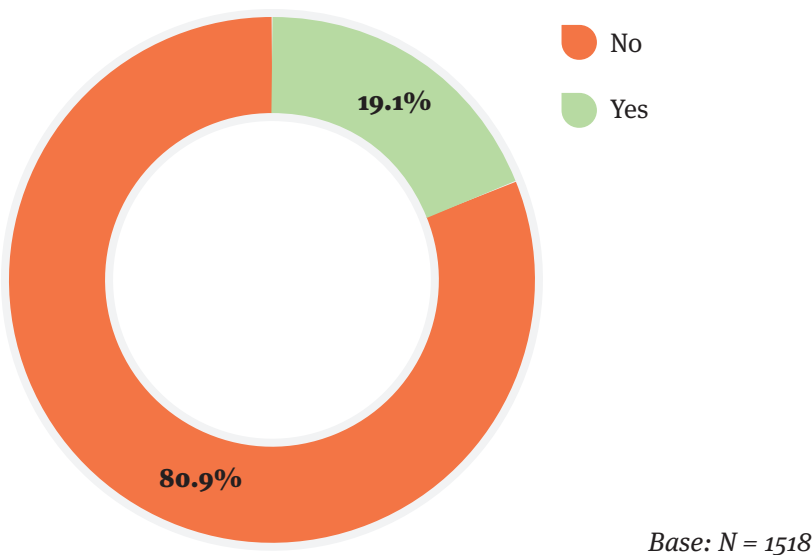


Figure 26. Bribes paid at central level (2019)



At the local level, more respondents that had received a service indicated that they have paid a bribe. In the 2019 Opinion poll, 64.1% of the respondents received a service at the local government of which 35.8% paid a bribe.

Figure 27. Services received at local level (2019)

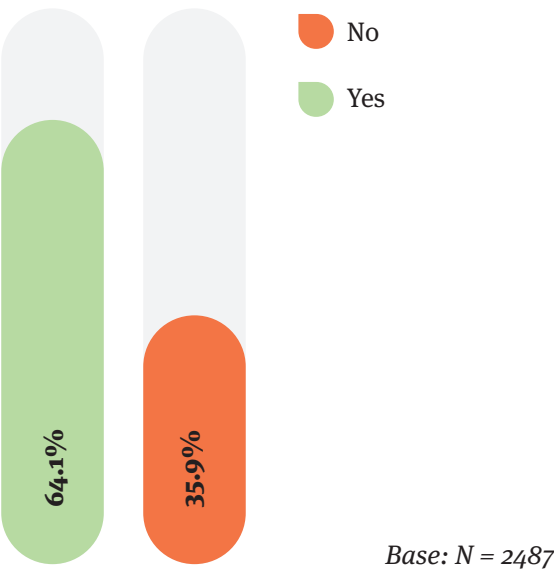
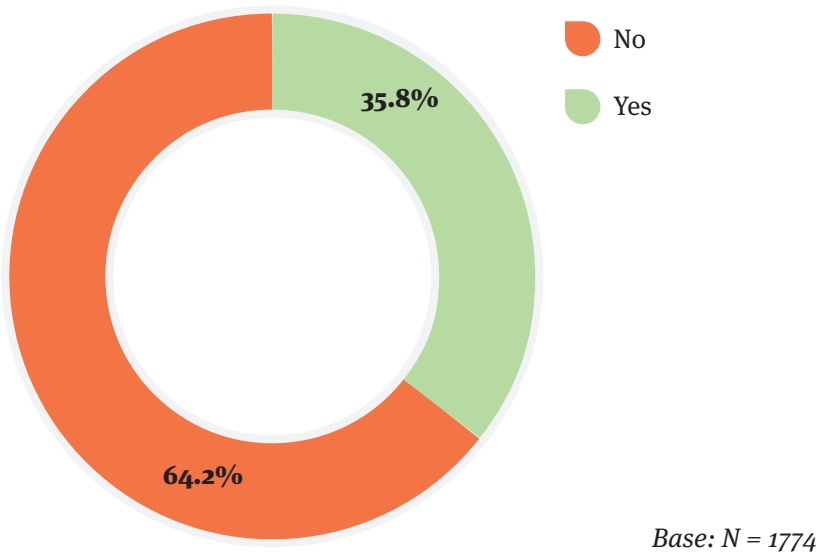


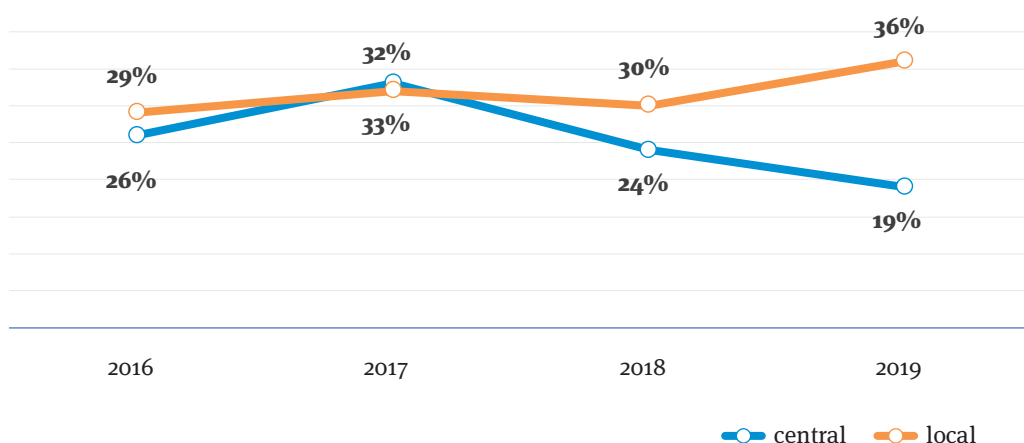
Figure 28. Bribes paid at local level (2019)



People over 65 years old indicated less often that they have paid a bribe while receiving a service. Only 12.8% of them paid a bribe to receive a central-level service and 20.5% while receiving a local-level service. Respondents working in the private sector indicated more often that they had paid a bribe in order to receive a service than respondents employed in the public sector. 19.3% of private sector respondents indicated that they had paid a bribe for a central-government service and 36.3% for a service at the local level. In comparison, of the respondents working in the public sector 10.9% paid a bribe for a service they received at the central level and 27.9% for a service at the local level. No significant differences were found for other socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, education, or income.

For the second year in a row, the proportion of respondents that paid a bribe while receiving a service at the central level has declined. In 2017, the proportion of respondents that had paid a bribe increased by 6 percentage points (p.p.) compared to the year before, but the percentage decreased by 9 p.p. to 24% in 2018, and then by a further 5 p.p. to 19% in 2019. At the local level, on the other hand, the percentage of respondents that paid a bribe has been increasing. In 2016, 29% paid a bribe, compared to 32% in 2017, 30% in 2018, and 36% in 2019 (35.8% rounded to nearest whole number).

Figure 29. Prevalence of paying bribes (2016–2019)



Base: Local level: 2016 (N = 838); 2017 (N = 916); 2018 (N = 924); 2019 (N = 1744). Central level: 2016 (N = 406); 2017 (N = 561); 2018 (N = 648); 2019 (N = 1518).

**Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the 'methodology' section.*

Asked about the reasons for paying a bribe while receiving a public service at the central and the local level, respondents most common answer was that they were asked to do so (41.3% or N = 286). 31.2% of the respondents that paid a bribe – whether at the central or

the local level – said they did so in order to receive a better service next time and 17.9% paid as a gratitude for the received service. A remaining 9.7% (N = 67) answered ‘other’, of which most (N = 35) indicated that they saw no other option than paying a bribe in order to receive the service. Answers like “If I do not give a bribe I will get a bad service or no service at all”, “If I do not pay, [the officials] lie that they cannot help me”, or “Without paying I will not be helped within the day” were common. Another 16 people said that bribes are the only way to get a service quickly or in time, and four people indicated that paying a bribe to get a service is common practice in Albania.

Table 13: Reasons for paying bribes (2019)

	Percentage	Number
I was asked for it	41.3%	286
As a gratitude for the received service	17.9%	124
So that I can receive better services next time	31.2%	216
Other	9.7%	67
Total	100%	693

The respondents that admitted to paying bribes were asked if they had reported the bribery to the respective institution or authority. Only 5.1% (N = 36) of those that paid a bribe reported the practice, meaning that 94.9% did not. Asked about their reasons for not reporting bribery, a lot of the respondents answered that reporting bribery is “useless, because nobody would care about it” (43.2%). Other common responses were that “it is common practice” (26%), that the “payment was made as a sign of gratitude” (9.9%), that there is a “fear of reprisal” (9.7%) or that respondents do not know where to report bribery (9%). 2.2% of the respondents chose “other” and said that they did not report the need to pay a bribe because of three main reasons: “bribery is the only way to get things done”, “I was guilty myself for giving the bribe”, or “I did not see it fit [to report]”. Two people answered that they were too scared to report having been asked to pay a bribe.

To get a better understanding about the prevalence of paying bribes for receiving public services, participants in all focus groups were asked why they think paying bribes remains common practice. In all focus groups, participants provided similar responses. People assume that if they do not pay a bribe, they will either not receive a satisfactory service or they will not receive a service at all. One of the participants in the focus group ‘over 55 years old’ stated: “It is not that they (nurses, doctors) directly ask us for money or that they have refused to treat me while in the hospital, but I know that if I do not give them something they will neglect me. Therefore, I do not wait for them to ask, I just give what I am able to give beforehand, so that I am more confident that I will receive a good service”.

4.4 Political influence

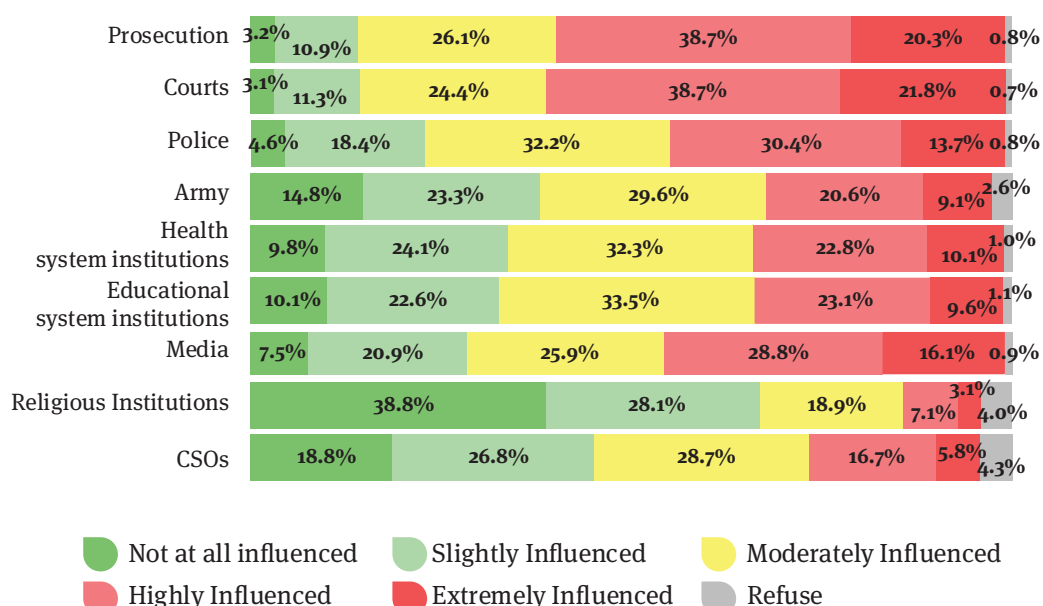
Political influence – or success in promoting or changing political decisions to the benefit of group interests – is a multi-dimensional phenomenon related to both agenda-setting and decision-making processes. Political influence over the agenda of public institutions is a threat to the independence of public institutions and the functioning of a democratic society. When political actors interfere in the decision-making of these institutions, it disrupts their functioning, distorts the balance of their organisational structure, and damages the trust that citizens have towards these institutions. In this section, respondents expressed their perceptions of the level of political interference in 9 Albanian public institutions. For the fourth consecutive year, respondents were asked to rate on a five-point scale from 1 (not at all influenced) to 5 (extremely influenced) how much they think political interests influence the agenda of the respective institutions.

Political interests in the agenda of institutions

Religious institutions are considered the least politically influenced institution: only 1 in 10 Albanians believed that the agenda of religious institutions in 2019 was 'highly' or 'extremely' influenced by political interests. The prosecution and courts were seen as the most politically influenced institutions: 60.5% of Albanians believe that the agenda of courts is highly or extremely influenced by political interest, while 59% of Albanians perceives the prosecution as highly or extremely influenced by politics.

This year's survey results show that religious institutions were perceived as the most independent from political influence during 2019. 66.9% of respondents reported that this institution's agenda was either 'not at all influenced' (38.8%) or 'slightly influenced' (28.1%) by political interests. After religious institutions, the institutions that were perceived as the most independent from politics were civil society organisations (45.6%), the army (38.1%), health system institutions (33.9%), and education system institutions (32.7%).

The prosecution and the courts were perceived as the most politically influenced institutions in 2019 among all nine institutions. 38.7% of the respondents saw the courts as 'highly influenced' and 21.8% as 'extremely influenced' by political interests, while only 14.4% of the respondents believed that the courts are 'not at all influenced' or 'slightly influenced' by politics. Similarly, 38.7% of the respondents considered prosecution as 'highly influenced', while 20.3% of the respondents perceived the prosecution's agenda as 'extremely influenced' by political interests. Only 14.1% of the respondents believed that the prosecution is 'not at all influenced' or 'slightly influenced' by politics.

Figure 30: Perceived influence of political interests in the agenda of institutions (2019)

Base: N = 2488 (for all institutions)

Demographic comparison for perception of political influence on institutions

Albanians with up to lower secondary education, students, people without a regular monthly income, or those receiving a monthly income over 70,001 ALL, tended to see institutions as 'highly influenced' or 'extremely influenced' by political interests more often than other demographics. Albanians employed in the public sector or those earning a regular monthly income of 24,001 to 50,000 ALL, on the other hand, less often saw institutions as 'highly influenced' or 'extremely influenced' by politics than other demographic groups.

When comparing perceptions of political influence on public institutions among demographics, the results show only very small differences across gender, age groups, or geographical representation (see Table 15 at the end of this chapter). Significant differences were found for education level, employment status, employment sector and income level.

Educational attainment

Respondents with up to lower secondary education,²¹ indicated less often that they perceive public institutions as ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by political interests than respondents with a high school diploma or a university degree. For the prosecution (53%), courts (55%), and the state police (38%), respondents with lower levels of education reported considerably less often than other respondents that the agendas of these institutions are ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by political interests.

On the other hand, more respondents with up to lower secondary education indicated (18%) that religious institutions are ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by politics, compared to respondents with a high school diploma (8%) or a university degree (11%). Lastly, more respondents with a university degree perceived public educational institution as ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ (38%) than respondents with a high school diploma (32%) or up to lower secondary education (26%).

Employment sector and status

For all institutions, fewer respondents in the public sector perceived the influence of politics as ‘high’ or ‘extreme’. For the prosecution (42%), the courts (43%), the state police (29%), the army (19%), health system institutions (22%), educational system institutions (23%), the media (35%), religious institutions (8%), and civil society organisations (16%),²² the proportion of respondents that believe they are ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by political interests was smaller for public-sector respondents than for those working in the private sector. For the prosecution (68%), the courts (67%), health system institutions (39%), educational system institutions (40%), the media (55%), and religious institutions (16%), students more often reported that these institutions are ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by political interests than other groups.

Income

On most occasions, respondents receiving a regular individual monthly income between 24,001 ALL and 50,000 ALL reported less often that institutions are ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by political interests than respondents with an income under 24,000 ALL or over 50,001 ALL. For the state police, army, health system institutions, educational system institutions, media, and civil society organisations, the respondents with an income between 24,001 ALL and 50,000 ALL reported that the respective institution

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21 The group ‘up to lower secondary education’ includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

22 The percentages mentioned are the sum of ‘highly influenced’ and ‘extremely influenced’.

is ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by politics less often than other income groups.

For the prosecution and courts, the proportion of respondents that believed these institutions’ agenda is ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by political interests was higher for respondents with no income (both 66%) than for any other income group. For the other income groups, the data shows that the higher the income level, the more respondents indicated that the agenda of the prosecution and the courts are ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by politics. For religious institutions the survey results indicated that the lower the income of the respondent, the more often the respondent perceived the institution as ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by political interests. For all perceptions on institutions’ political influence across demographics, see Table 15 at the end of this chapter.

Annual comparison of influence by political interests

For the fourth consecutive year, the Albanian population perceived religious institutions as the most independent from political interference. The prosecution and courts, on the other hand, were seen as the most politically influenced institutions for the third consecutive year.

When comparing this year’s results to previous years, the data shows that none of the institutions have seen a significant increase in the proportion of respondents that sees the institution as ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by political interests. Between 2016 and 2019, the proportion of respondents that indicates that the police, armed forces, religious institutions, and civil society organisations are ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by political interests have remained approximately the same. The perceived influence of political interest declined in 2016-2017 for healthcare and education, and since then the perceived influence of political interest has stayed approximately the same.

For prosecution and courts, the perceived influence by political interest dropped with 7 p.p. between 2017 and 2018 for both institutions. In the past year, the perceived influence by political interest has remained approximately the same. For the fourth consecutive year, the Albanian population perceives the agenda of religious institutions as the least influenced by political interests.

Table 14: Institutions perceived as ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by politics (2016–2019)

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Prosecution	X	67%	60%	59%
Courts	X	70%	63%	61%
Police	46%	47%	48%	44%
Armed forces	33%	29%	33%	30%
Healthcare system	41%	34%	36%	33%
Education system	38%	29%	34%	33%
Media	45%	37%	39%	45%
Religious institutions	9%	9%	12%	10%
CSOs	20%	26%	24%	23%

The media was the only institution that was perceived more frequently as ‘highly influenced’ or ‘extremely influenced’ by political interests in 2019 than in 2018. In 2018, 39% of respondents indicated that they perceived the agenda of the media as highly influenced or extremely influenced by politics, compared to 45% in 2019 (+ 6 p.p.). These findings are in line with several reports that emerged over the past few years about a lack in plurality in the Albanian media landscape. In March 2018, Reporters Without Borders and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network published a Media Ownership Monitor which found that in the Albanian market, audience and revenues remain highly concentrated in the hands of a few family-owned groups²³. These companies, the report argues, are affiliated with a party, a partisan group, a party leader or a clearly partisan person, which causes a high risk of political influence over news agencies, media outlets and distribution networks.

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23 The Media Ownership Monitor Albania was published on an interactive platform and is accessible via: <http://albania.mom-rsf.org/>

Table 15: Demographic breakdown of institutions that are strongly influenced by political interests according to respondents (2019)

	Prosecution	Courts	Police	Army	Healthcare system	Educational system	Media	Religious institutions	CSOs
TOTAL (strong influence*)	59%	61%	44%	30%	33%	33%	45%	10%	23%
Gender									
Male	59%	61%	46%	31%	33%	33%	46%	10%	23%
Female	59%	60%	42%	29%	33%	32%	44%	11%	22%
Age									
18–25	62%	62%	43%	26%	32%	37%	49%	11%	22%
26–35	61%	62%	47%	33%	35%	36%	45%	11%	24%
36–45	60%	62%	45%	29%	31%	30%	43%	10%	22%
46–55	59%	60%	42%	31%	33%	31%	44%	8%	23%
56–65	53%	57%	40%	30%	32%	29%	40%	9%	21%
66 and over	53%	56%	43%	29%	32%	30%	48%	12%	22%
Education									
Up to lower secondary	53%	55%	38%	27%	30%	26%	43%	18%	25%
High-school	62%	64%	46%	32%	33%	32%	44%	8%	22%
University	59%	60%	46%	29%	35%	38%	48%	11%	21%

	Prosecution	Courts	Police	Army	Healthcare system	Educational system	Media	Religious institutions	CSOs
TOTAL (strong influence*)	59%	61%	44%	30%	33%	33%	45%	10%	23%
Employment status									
Employed	56%	58%	41%	27%	30%	30%	44%	9%	21%
Public	42%	43%	29%	19%	22%	23%	35%	8%	16%
Private	62%	64%	46%	30%	33%	33%	47%	9%	23%
Unemployed	63%	65%	48%	33%	37%	36%	44%	11%	24%
Student	68%	67%	48%	30%	39%	40%	55%	16%	25%
Retired	52%	55%	42%	30%	32%	30%	40%	10%	22%
Income									
No income	66%	66%	50%	33%	38%	37%	47%	12%	24%
Up to 24,000 ALL	52%	54%	40%	26%	30%	29%	42%	9%	21%
24,001–50,000 ALL	57%	59%	38%	25%	26%	26%	39%	8%	18%
50,001–70,000 ALL	57%	59%	43%	33%	31%	33%	45%	8%	21%
Over 70,001 ALL	63%	65%	58%	49%	37%	37%	58%	7%	21%
Geographic representation									
Urban	59%	61%	45%	31%	33%	33%	45%	10%	22%
Rural	60%	60%	43%	27%	32%	33%	44%	10%	24%

*The proportion of strong political influence is measured as the sum of 'highly influenced' and 'extremely influenced'
 Note: Colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total response.

4.5 Citizen engagement

In the 2019 Opinion Poll, the question on consultations through the internet was removed. A new question was introduced to ask citizen about the usage of the portal “Konsultimipublik.gov.al” to get informed about or give their opinion on draft legislation or draft strategies / action plans.

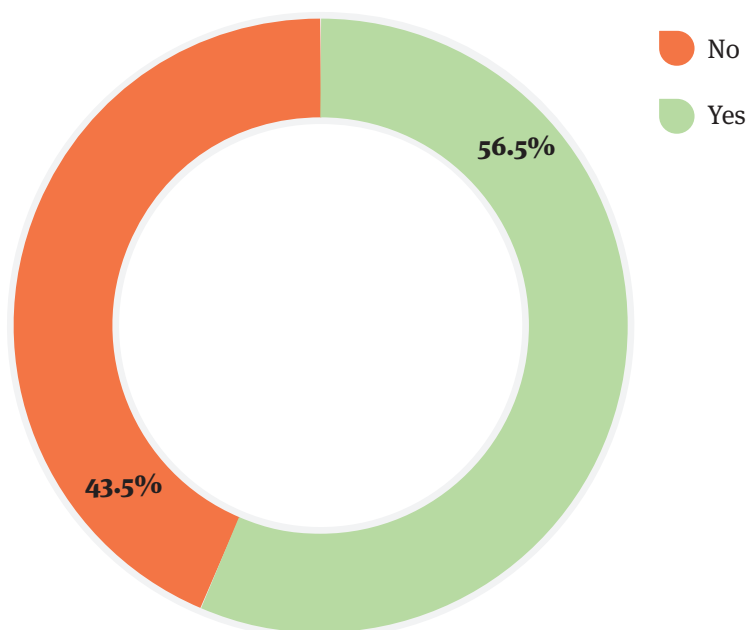
Citizen engagement is an important mechanism to strengthen good governance, local democracy and community empowerment through enabling citizens to participate in decision-making and hold the government to account. The reinforcement and promotion of an environment which enables citizens and civil society organisations to engage meaningfully with each other, government and other stakeholders is therefore paramount (OECD, 2018). As in previous years, the 2019 Opinion Poll differentiates between citizen engagement at the central and local level. To capture citizen engagement, questions focused on interest and opportunities to participate in decision-making, participation in consultation processes and meetings, engagement in voluntary work, attendance of demonstrations/rallies, and petition signing. Respondents were also asked to report on their reasons for not participating in consultation meetings and on the usage of the online public consultation portal. In this section, respondents were also asked about their intentions to move away from their place of residence.

Participation in decision-making

More than half of the Albanian population (56.5%) was interested in participating in decision-making processes of public institutions. Albanians tend to believe that they have sufficient opportunities to participate in the decision-making of public institutions at the local level (41.4%) more than at the central level (21.4%). Particularly people between 18 and 35 years old (64%), well-educated people (67%) or those employed in the public sector (71%) stated that they were interested in participating in decision-making processes of public institutions.

More than half of respondents stated that they are interested in participating in the decision-making processes of public institutions (56.5%). This is understood as being an active citizen in the country's governance.

Figure 31: Interest in participating in the decision-making process of public institutions (2019)



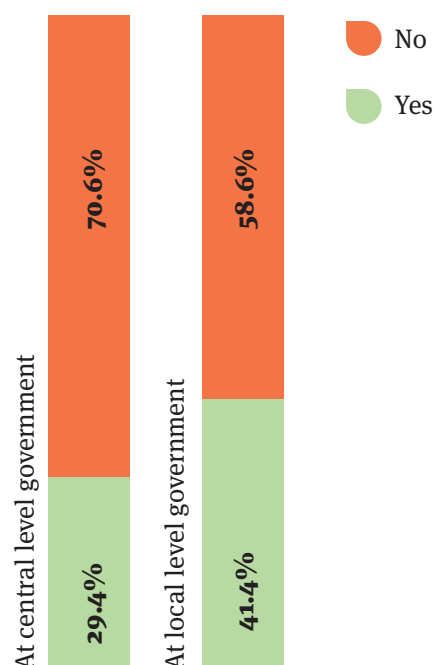
Base: N=2492

When checking across demographic, the data shows a difference between men and women regarding interest in participating in decision-making processes: 61% of male respondents stated that they were interested, whereas only 53% of female respondents stated the same. For age, there appears to be a decline in interest in participating in decision-making processes with the increase of age: only 35% of the respondents over 65 years old stated such interest, whereas 64% of the younger generation ('18–25 years old') stated that they were interested in participating in the decision-making processes of public institutions. Also, the interest in participating was higher among respondents with a university degree (67%), students (67%) or respondents that were employed at the time the survey was conducted (62%). Respondents who worked in the public sector (71%) or those who were members of a political party (72%) were more interested in participating in decision-making than other groups.

The interest in participating in decision-making processes was higher among respondents with a monthly income of 50,001–70,000 Lek/month (66%) compared to respondents with an income of up to 24,000 Lek/month (49%). There was no substantial urban–rural difference regarding interest in participating and being an active citizen. For a full breakdown of all demographics, see Table 18 at the end of this chapter.

70.6% of respondents reported that they do not have sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making at the central level. At a local level, respondents were slightly more optimistic about opportunities to participate. 58.6% reported that they do not have sufficient opportunity, meaning that according to 41.4% of the respondents there is sufficient opportunity to participate in decision-making processes at the local level.

Figure 32: Opportunities to participate in the decision-making of public institutions (2019)



Base: For central government N=2480; for local government N=2463

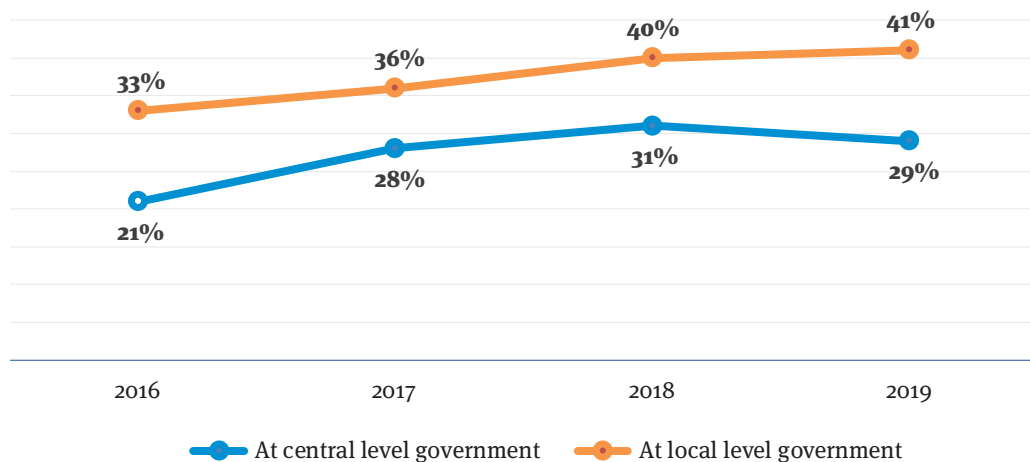
A larger proportion of male respondents (34%) than female respondents (25%) stated that they have sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making at a central level. A similar dynamic was observed at the local level where 46% of the male respondents felt they have sufficient opportunities to participate, as opposed to 37% of the female respondents.

Only 15% of respondents over 65 years old stated that they have sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making at the central level compared to 35% of respondents '26–35 years old'. Meanwhile, only 24% of respondents over 65 years old stated that they have sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making at the local level compared to almost half of respondents in the age group '26–35 years old' (48%).

In addition, respondents were more likely to report that they have sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making at the central and local level if they had high levels of education, were employed in the public sector or were members of a political party. Only 23% of respondents with incomes of up to 24,000 Lek/month stated that they had sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making processes at central government level as opposed to 40% of respondents with income 50,001–70,000 ALL. Also, 24% of respondents with incomes of up to 24,000 Lek/month stated that they had sufficient opportunities to participate at local government level as opposed to 59% of respondents with incomes of 50,001–70,000 Lek/month. 64% of respondents with income of 24,001–50,000 Lek/month stated that they are interested in participating in decision-making processes. 47% of them reported that they have sufficient opportunities to participate at local government level as opposed to 33% stating the same for central government. There was no significant difference in the perception of opportunities to participate in decision-making at the central and local level according to urban or rural residency.

Compared to 2016 and 2017, there was a higher proportion of respondents that felt they had sufficient opportunities to participate at both levels. In 2016, 21% of the respondents said that there was sufficient opportunity to participate at the central level, as compared to 29% in 2019 (+ 8 p.p.). At the local level, the increase was also 8 p.p., from 33% in 2016 to 41% in 2019.

Figure 33: Sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making (2016–2019)



Base: Central, 2016 (N=1633); 2017 (N=1634); 2018 (N=1630); 2019 (N=2480). Local 2016 (N=1634); 2017 (N=1630); 2018 (N=1638); 2019 (N=2463).

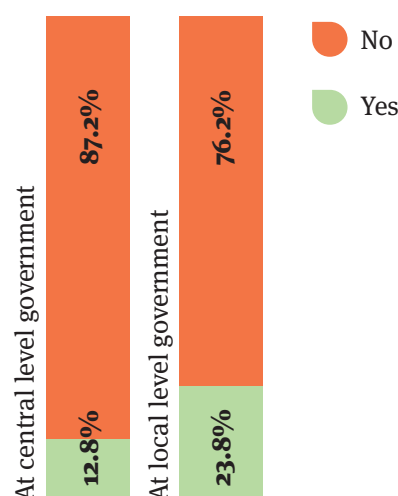
The participants in the focus group “under 30 years old” did not express enthusiasm about future engagement in decision-making processes, as one of them argued: “The system is poisoned and we are poisoned and so even if we become part of politics, we will be like them, we will be corrupted, politics will not allow us to make change”. One of the issues they pointed out is the lack of positive role models in politics, particularly for young people entering political life. However, they emphasised the need for a courageous youth culture in Albania that fights corruption and does not feed it, acknowledging that a way to do this is by becoming more interested in and participating more in decision-making processes at local and central level.

Consultation processes

12.8% of the Albanian population reported being invited to participate in a consultation meeting at the central level and 23.8% for a consultation meeting at the local level. At the central level 10.7% of the sampled population participated in consultation process, compared to 24.6% at the local level. The online public consultation portal was rarely used (8%). The main reason cited for not participating in consultation processes was the lack of trust in such processes.

12.8% stated that they have been invited to participate in consultation processes by public institutions at central government level in 2019 whereas the vast majority (87.2%) stated that they had not. A greater percentage, 23.8%, reported that they have been invited to participate in consultation processes at the local level.

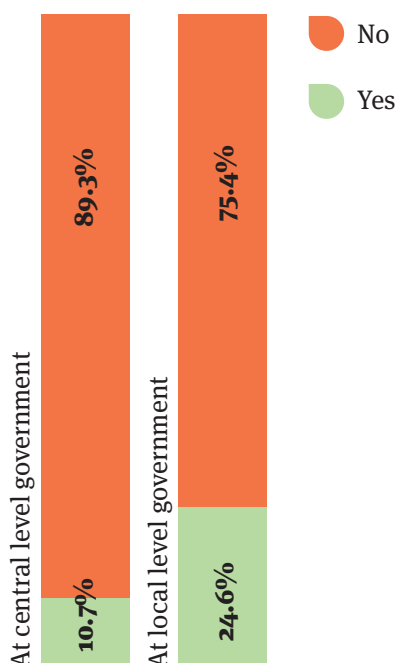
Figure 34: Invitations to participate in consultation processes (2019)



Base: For central government N = 2483; For local government N = 2482

When asked if they have participated in any consultation processes during 2019 an overwhelming majority (89.3%) reported that they had not participated in any consultation processes at central government level. At the local government level, 24.6% of respondents reported that they had participated in consultation meetings during 2019.

Figure 35: Participation in consultation meetings (2019)



Base: For central government $N = 2233$; For local government $N = 2268$

Of the 558 respondents that indicated to have participated in a consultation meeting at the local level and 240 respondents that participated in a consultation meeting at the central level, the majority reported that they attended a meeting at the municipality. 373 respondents, or 14.9% of the Opinion Poll sample, attended an open meeting organised by the municipality and 237 respondents attended a consultative session organised by the municipal council. Fewer respondents answered that they had taken part in consultation meetings organised by the central government ($N = 120$) or the Parliament ($N = 19$).

Table 16: Type of consultation meetings attended in 2019

Open meetings organised by the municipality:	14.9% (N = 373)
Consultative sessions organised by the municipal council:	9.5% (N = 237)
Public consultations organised by the central government:	4.8% (N = 120)
Public consultations organised by the parliament:	0.8% (N = 19)
Other (specify): *	0.9% (N = 23)

**Other: Electoral meetings organised by the competing parties.*

Note: Percentage of total sample, multiple responses allowed.

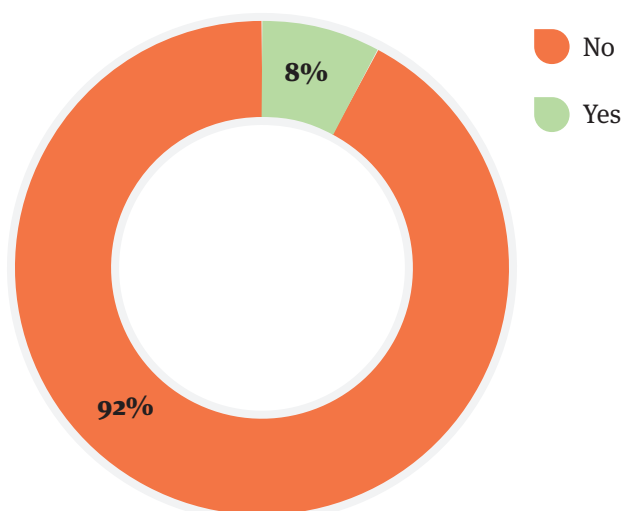
The main reason for not participating in consultation meetings was that respondents “do not believe in such processes”, which was reported by 35.2%. 19.2% said that they believed there were no consultation mechanisms or processes established and 13.1% stated that “they expect others to do so”.

Table 17: Reasons for not participating in consultation processes in 2019

I expect others to do so	13.1% (N = 210)
I don't believe in such processes	35.2% (N = 564)
I did not have information on the subject	11.6% (N = 186)
I could not reach the location	8.5% (N = 136)
I believe there are no consultation mechanisms or processes established	19.2% (N = 307)

Note: Percentage of total sample.

92% of respondents did not use the portal “Konsultimipublik.gov.al” in order to find information about or give their opinion on draft legislation or draft strategies/action plans. Only 8% stated that they use this online portal.

Figure 36: Usage of portal “Konsultimipublik.gov.al” in 2019

Base: N=2438

When checking across demographics for being invited and taking part in decision-making processes, there were some differences according to gender. Male respondents tended to be invited to local (27%) or central government (15%) consultations more often than female respondents (21% and 11% respectively), and male respondents indicated more often that they had participated in local (28%) or central government (13%) consultation meetings in 2019 than female respondents (21% and 8% respectively). In terms of age, a clear difference was observed between respondents over 65 years old and respondents that are of working age: only 14% of respondents ‘over 65 years old’ were invited to participate in consultation processes by public institutions at the local level in 2019 as opposed to 27% of respondents aged ‘26–35 years old’. The same pattern is observed for actual participation in consultation processes at central and local government level. Only 19% of the respondents over 65 years old took part in local consultation meetings, as opposed to 33% of those ‘36 to 45 years old’. Moreover, only 3% of respondents in the age group ‘over 65 years old’ used the online portal “konsultimipublik.gov.al” as opposed to 10% of respondents in the age group ‘26–35 years old’.

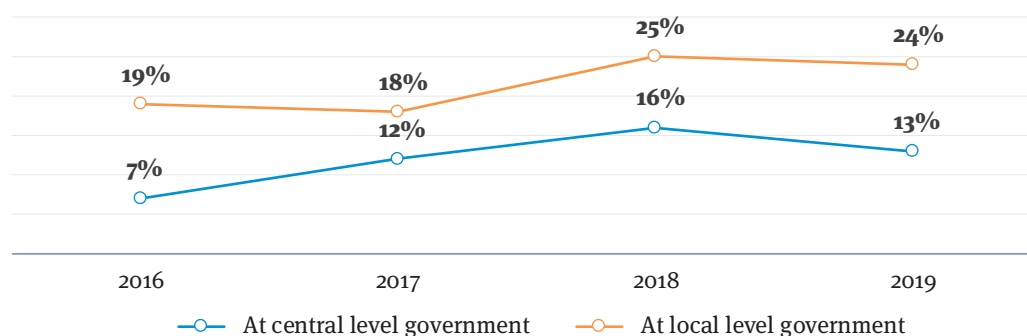
In addition, the level of participation in consultation processes at both central and local government and the usage of the online portal “konsultimipublik.gov.al” was higher if the respondents had a university degree or were employed, particularly in the public sector. Regarding income, 16% of respondents with no income stated that they have been invited to participate in consultation process at local level as opposed to 37% of respondents with incomes over 70,001 Lek/month per month. Also, 19% of respondents with no income stated that they had participated in consultation processes at local level in 2019 as compared to 36% of respondents with incomes over 70,001 Lek/month. A difference can be noted also

in use of the online portal, with respondents with incomes over 70,001 Lek/month (14%) tending to use it more than those with no income or income up to 24,000 Lek/month (6%). Nonetheless the usage statistics remain low. For all full breakdown of all demographics, see Table 19 at the end of this chapter.

Generally, focus-group participants from different backgrounds were not informed on the opportunities and mechanisms for public consultation. The well-educated and young people studying law and economics were more informed. Notwithstanding this, their actual participation in consultation processes at central and local level was relatively low. The main reported reasons were a lack of trust in the substance of consultation processes; lack of trust in the willingness of public institutions to consider citizens' opinions; and an inability to participate. Regarding the latter, one of the participants in the 'lower income or unemployed' focus group pointed out: "I am too busy making ends meet and I simply do not have time to deal with these things, they might be a good thing to do, but too many daily problems won't allow us". The findings from the focus group indicate that the lack of trust in central and local governments is a barrier to the participation and interest of citizens in consultation processes.

There appears to have been a slight decrease of 3 p.p. in 2019 compared to 2018 regarding invitations to participate in consultation processes at central government level whereas there was no substantial difference regarding local government.

Figure 37: Invitations to participate in consultation processes (2016–2019)



Base: Central: 2016 (N=1631); 2017 (N=1635); 2018 (N=1630); 2019 (N=2483). Local: 2016 (N=1624); 2017 (N=1635); 2018 (N=1629); 2019 (N=2482).

Statements on citizen engagement

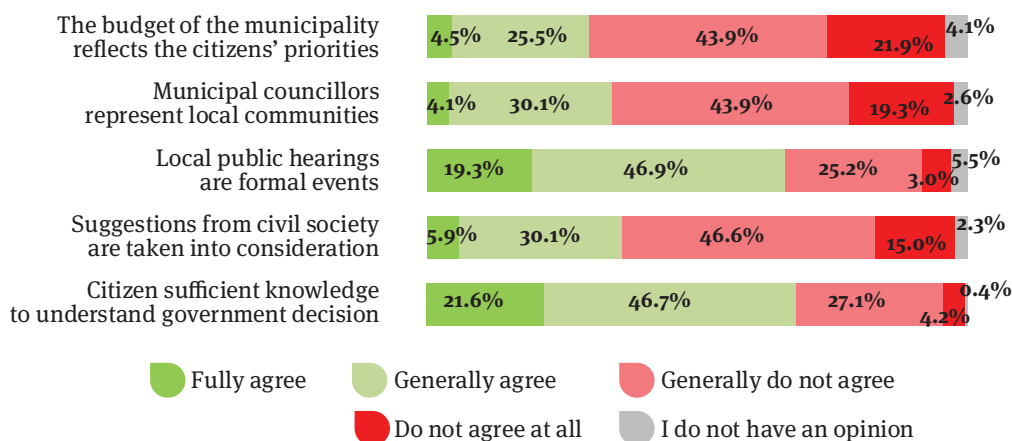
The majority of the Albanian population believed that citizens have sufficient knowledge to understand whether a government decision is good or bad (68.3%), that local public hearings are formal events with limited influence on municipal decisions (66.2%), and that suggestions coming from civil society and interest groups on draft laws are not taken into consideration (61.6%). Municipal councillors are generally not perceived as representing local communities and defending the interests of citizens in front of the mayor and the municipality's administration (63.2%).

68.3% of respondents fully agreed or generally agreed with the statement that: "An ordinary citizen has sufficient knowledge to understand whether a government decision is good or bad". 66.2% of respondents fully agreed or generally agreed with the statement that: "Local public hearings are formal events; they have limited influence on municipal decisions".

63.2% of respondents generally did not agree or did not agree at all with the statement: "Municipal councillors represent local communities and defend the interest of citizens in front of the mayor and the municipality's administration". 61.6% of respondents generally did not agree or did not agree at all with the statement: "Suggestions coming from civil society and interest groups on draft laws are taken into consideration".

68.5% of respondents generally did not agree or did not agree at all with the statement that: "The budget of my municipality reflects people's priorities". Almost 1 in 3 respondents fully agreed or generally agreed that the municipal budget reflects people's priorities.

Figure 38: Statements on local representation and citizen engagement (2019)



Base: N1 = 2496, N2 = 2493, N3 = 2493, N4 = 2492, N5=2491

Across demographics, there are differences as per the responses to the statements. For the full demographic breakdown, see Table 20 at the end of this chapter. There were no substantial differences between men and women regarding the statements on civil engagement. However, 69% of female respondents believed that local public hearings are formal events and have limited influence on municipal decisions, while a slightly smaller proportion of male respondents (63%) held the same view. Younger generations tended to be more sceptical regarding civil engagement compared to older generations. For instance, 74% of respondents in the age group ‘over 65 years old’ believed that an ordinary citizen has sufficient knowledge to understand whether a government decision is good or bad, as opposed to 65% of respondents in the age group ‘18–25 years old’.

Slight differences were observed also with the change in education level of respondents. Respondents who are well-educated (40%) tended to believe that suggestions coming from civil society and interest groups are taken into consideration, as opposed to 36% of those with up to lower secondary education.²⁴ What is more, 72% of those who work in the private sector believe that suggestions coming from civil society and interest groups are taken into consideration as opposed to 64% of those who work in the public sector.

55% of respondents with an income over 70,001 Lek/month believed that ordinary citizens have sufficient knowledge to understand if a government decision is good or bad. Only 27% of respondents with no income or incomes higher than 70,001 Lek/month tended to believe that suggestions coming from civil society and interest groups on draft laws are taken into consideration, as opposed to 46% of those with monthly incomes of 50,001–70,000 Lek/month. Only 27% of respondents with no income or incomes higher than 70,001 Lek/month believed that municipal councillors represent local communities as opposed to 40% of those with incomes of 24,001–50,000 Lek/month. 23% of respondents with no income believed that the budget of the municipality reflects the citizens’ priorities, compared to 35% of respondents with incomes of 50,001–70,000 Lek/month. 38% of respondents who live in rural areas believe that municipal councillors represent local communities and defend the interest of citizens in front of the mayor and the municipality’s administration, as opposed to 33% of those who live in urban areas.

Interestingly, for all statements, respondents employed in the public sector were more trusting of the government than respondents employed in the private sector. Public sector workers more often believed that “An ordinary citizen has sufficient knowledge to understand whether a government decision is good or bad” (74%), that “Suggestions coming from civil society and interest groups on draft laws are taken into consideration” (59%), that municipal councillors represent local communities and defend the interest of citizens in front of the mayor and the municipality’s administration” (52%) and that “The budget of the municipality they live in reflects the citizens’ priorities” (47%), than people working in the private sector (68%, 34%, 31%, and 27% respectively). Moreover, respondents working in the public sector less often believed that “Local public hearings

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24 The group ‘up to lower secondary education’ includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

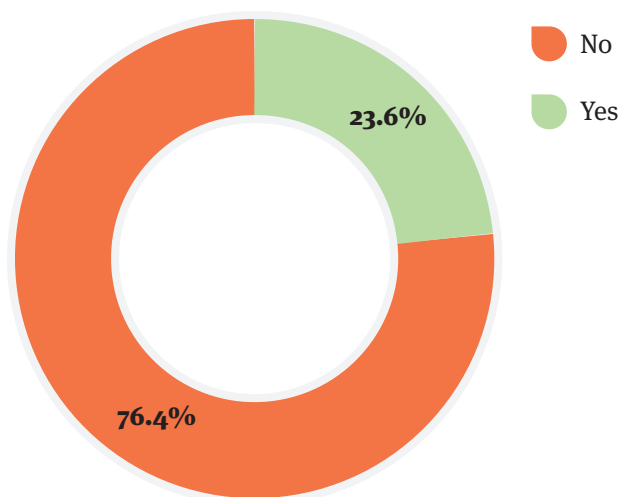
are formal events, they have limited influence on municipal decisions” (55%) than respondents working in the private sector (67%).

Attending a demonstration/rally or signing a petition

The participation of Albanians in demonstrations, rallies and petitions remains relatively low. Respondents between 18 and 25 years old, citizens from urban areas, and people who are members of political parties were more likely to attend a demonstration/rally or sign a petition than other demographic groups.

The majority of study participants (76.4%) reported that they have not attended a demonstration/rally or signed a petition. In December 2018 students took to the streets to protest regarding the quality of higher education. The data of this Opinion Poll from 2016 to 2019 does not demonstrate any substantial change in attendance of a demonstration/rally or petition signing. In 2016, 22% reported attending a demonstration/rally or signed a petition, in 2017 it was 20%, and in 2018 23%.

Figure 39: Attended a demonstration/rally or signed a petition in 2019



Base: N = 2479

The main reason for attending a demonstration/rally or signing a petition was the shared interest of the community where the respondent belongs (55.7%) followed by personal

interests (24.7%). 13.9% reported that they attended a demonstration/rally or signed a petition because of political party militancy and only 2.1% mentioned peer pressure as a reason.

There is only a slight difference between women and men regarding attending a demonstration/rally or signing a petition in 2019: 25% of male respondents stated that they had attended a demonstration / rally or signed a petition in 2019 compared to 22% of female respondents. Young age groups seem to be more prone to attend a demonstration/rally or signing a petition than older ones: 31% of respondents in the age group “18-25 years old” stated that they had attended a demonstration / rally or signed a petition in 2019 compared to only 9% of respondents over 65 years old.

30% of respondents with a university degree or higher stated that they had attended a demonstration/rally or signed a petition in 2019, compared to 14% of respondents up to lower secondary education. As expected, the proportion of students that had attended a demonstration/rally or signed a petition was higher than most other demographic groups: 34.7% of the students said that they had attended a demonstration/rally, or signed a petition in 2019. There are no differences between employed or unemployed respondents. With regards to income, 25% of respondents with no income stated that they had attended a demonstration/rally or signing a petition in 2019 compared to 39% of respondents with income higher than 70,001 Lek/month. Furthermore, respondents from urban areas (25%) were more likely to attend a demonstration/rally or sign a petition compared to 19% from rural areas. Lastly, 39% of respondents who were members of political parties stated that they had attended a demonstration/rally or signed a petition in 2019 compared to 21% of respondents who were not members of any political party.

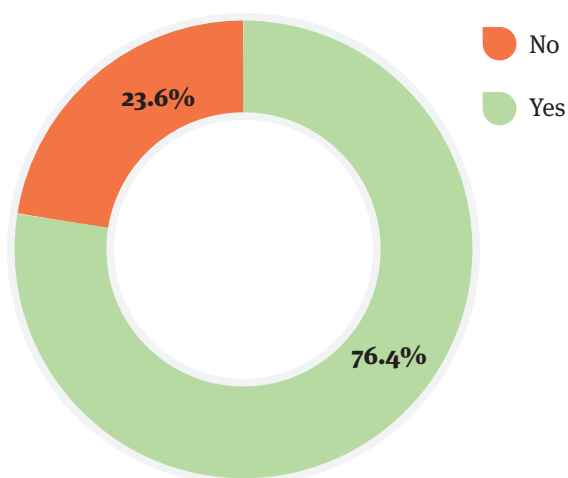
Willingness to engage in voluntary work

The Albanian resident population is, to a large extent, willing to engage in voluntary work, particularly young people or people with a university degree.

A majority (77.7%) of respondents stated that they were willing to engage in voluntary work and 22.3% stated that they were not willing to engage in voluntary work. Male respondents (80%) were slightly more willing to engage in voluntary work than female respondents (76%). With regards to age, the vast majority (86%) of the younger generation (18–25 years old) reported that they are willing to engage in voluntary work for the benefit of the community, compared to a minority of respondents over 65 years old (47%). Also, 85% of respondents with a university degree or higher were willing to engage in voluntary work for the benefit of the community, compared to 48% of those with only primary education.

84% of respondents who were employed were willing to engage in voluntary work for the benefit of the community, compared to 77% of those who were unemployed, which is a stable trend over the years.

Figure 40: Willingness to engage in voluntary work (2019)



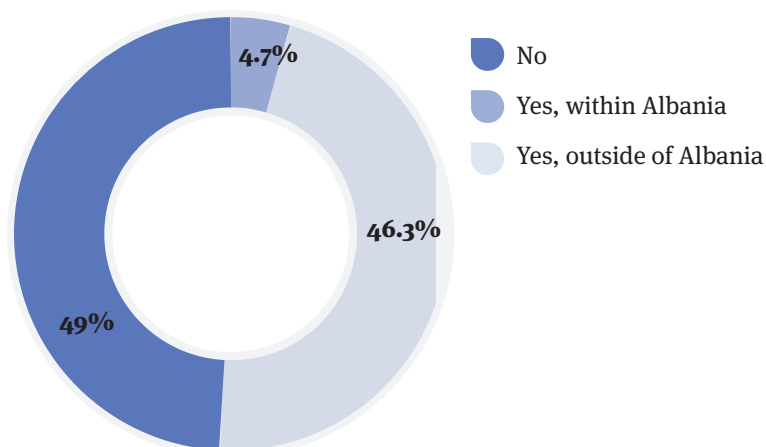
Base: N=2485

Moving from current place of residence

Almost 1 in 2 Albanian citizens want to move outside of Albania. Women were slightly more likely to want to move outside of Albania. Albanian citizens with a higher income, a university degree or higher and those who were unemployed were more likely to want to move out of Albania.

46.3% of respondents stated that they wanted to move from their current place of residence to outside of Albania and 4.7% stated they wanted to move within Albania. 49% stated that they did not want to move.

Figure 41: Moving from current place of residence (2019)



Base: N=2489

48% of women who participated in the poll reported that they wanted to move outside of Albania compared to 45% of men. A vast majority (65%) of respondents in the age group '18–25 years old' reported that they wanted to move outside of Albania compared to 10% of those over 65 years old. As per education, 54% of those with a university degree reported that they wanted to move outside of Albania compared to 35% of those with up to lower secondary education.²⁵ 54% of unemployed citizens that participated in the poll reported that they wanted to move outside of Albania. Almost half of employed respondents (48%) reported that they wanted to move out of Albania. Interestingly, respondents with higher incomes seemed to be more likely to want to move away from Albania: 52% of the respondents in the salary scale over 70,001 Lek/month reported that they wanted to move out of Albania, compared to 35% of those with minimal income (up to 24,000 Lek/month).

When asked about the main reason for wanting to move outside of Albania, the most common answer was to seek better life opportunities for themselves and particularly for their children. Another frequent reason was poor economic conditions and the expectation that abroad respondents would find better and more well-paid jobs. A substantial number indicated that they want to leave the country for study purposes or to join their family members who already live abroad. Other reasons mentioned were the lack of justice in Albania, dissatisfaction with central and local government, and poor health services. Those respondents who wanted to move within Albania usually aimed at migrating to the capital, Tirana, either to find better jobs or to join family members.

The intention to leave the country and the motivations behind it varied across focus group participants. Some participants in the focus group '30 years old' reported that they were keen on leaving the country, but this was an act of desperation, with one law student saying: "there is no light at the end of the tunnel for us if we stay in Albania". Others were hesitant to leave the country because they feared that without the family and social support networks, they enjoy in their home country, it would be more difficult to live abroad. Participants 'over 55 years old' were unanimous in their desire to see their children study and work abroad in search of better life prospects. On the contrary, participants 'residing in rural areas', who were also very much engaged in their local public life and economic sphere, demonstrated enthusiasm about the future and were determined to live in Albania. Participants in all focus groups argued that their personal perspective about moving from the place of residence and their general position about their future in Albania was impacted negatively by a broader public narrative of 'Albanians leaving the country en masse'. Focus group participants argued that this induced a general feeling of anxiety.

25 The group 'up to lower secondary education' includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Table 18: Demographic breakdown – interest in and sufficient opportunities to participate in decision-making (2019)

		Interest in participating in decision-making processes	Sufficient Opportunities to Participate in decision making	
			Central Government	Local Government
Total		56.5%	29.4%	41.4%
Gender				
Female		53%	25%	37%
Male		61%	34%	46%
Age				
18-25 years old		64%	33%	44%
26-35 years old		63%	35%	48%
36-45 years old		61%	29%	41%
46-55 years old		52%	28%	42%
56-65 years old		40%	23%	32%
66 and over		35%	15%	24%
Education				
Up to lower secondary		46%	23%	32%
High school		55%	24%	36%
University degree		67%	42%	55%
Employment status				
Employed	Total	62%	34%	48%
	Public	71%	47%	63%
	Private	58%	29%	42%
Unemployed		53%	26%	34%
Student		67%	34%	45%
Retired		35%	14%	23%
Income				
No income		55%	26%	35%
Up to 24,000 ALL		49%	23%	34%
24,001–50,000 ALL		64%	33%	47%
50,001–70,000 ALL		66%	40%	59%
Over 70,001 ALL		59%	39%	57%
Geographic representation				
Urban		57%	29%	41%
Rural		55%	30%	42%

* The group 'up to lower secondary education' includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Note: Colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total response.

Table 19: Demographic breakdown of consultation processes in 2019 – only responses in the ‘Yes’ category

		Invitation to participate in consultation in 2019		Participation in consultation in 2019		Usage of ‘Konsultimi publik’
		At central level	At local level	At central level	At local level	
Total		12.8%	23.8%	10.7%	24.6%	8%
Gender						
Female		11%	21%	8%	21%	8%
Male		15%	27%	13%	28%	8%
Age						
18–25 years old		9%	19%	8%	19%	10%
26–35 years old		14%	27%	12%	25%	10%
36–45 years old		15%	29%	13%	33%	9%
46–55 years old		15%	27%	12%	27%	6%
56–65 years old		11%	19%	8%	19%	4%
66 and over		7%	14%	8%	19%	3%
Education						
Up to lower secondary*		12%	19%	8%	20%	2%
High school		10%	22%	9%	23%	7%
University degree		18%	30%	15%	29%	13%
Employment						
Employed	Total	16%	29%	13%	29%	10%
	Public	28%	46%	27%	48%	16%
	Private	12%	23%	9%	22%	8%
Unemployed		9%	17%	8%	19%	5%
Student		6%	19%	10%	22%	12%
Retired		8%	16%	6%	17%	2%
Income						
No income		8%	16%	7%	19%	6%
Up to 24,000 ALL		11%	20%	7%	20%	6%
24,001–50,000 ALL		17%	30%	16%	31%	9%
50,001–70,000 ALL		21%	37%	15%	35%	15%
Over 70,001 ALL		23%	37%	21%	36%	14%
Geographic representation						
Urban		14%	25%	11%	25%	9%
Rural		11%	21%	10%	23%	6%

* The group ‘up to lower secondary education’ includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Note: Colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total response.

Table 20: Demographic breakdown of statements on citizens engagement (2019) – grouped ‘fully agree’ and ‘generally agree’

	Citizen sufficient knowledge to understand government decision	Suggestions from civil society and interest groups taken into consideration	Local public hearings are formal events	Municipal councillors represent local communities	The budget of the municipality reflects the citizens' priorities
Total	68.3%	36.0%	66.2%	34.2%	30.0%
Gender					
Female	67%	36%	69%	34%	30%
Male	70%	36%	63%	34%	30%
Age					
18-25	65%	30%	67%	30%	23%
26-35	68%	33%	66%	32%	30%
36-45	69%	40%	68%	38%	32%
46-55	68%	39%	65%	33%	31%
56-65	70%	40%	62%	37%	35%
66 and over	74%	37%	68%	42%	36%
Education					
Up to lower secondary	71%	36%	68%	36%	34%
High school	67%	33%	68%	31%	27%
University degree	68%	40%	63%	37%	31%
Employment					
Employed	69%	40%	64%	36%	32%
Public	74%	59%	55%	52%	47%
Private	68%	34%	67%	31%	27%

	Citizen sufficient knowledge to understand government decision	Suggestions from civil society and interest groups taken into consideration	Local public hearings are formal events	Municipal councillors represent local communities	The budget of the municipality reflects the citizens' priorities
Total	68.3%	36.0%	66.2%	34.2%	30.0%
Unemployed	66%	28%	72%	29%	25%
Student	65%	32%	70%	27%	23%
Retired	72%	38%	66%	41%	37%
Income					
No income	66%	27%	72%	27%	23%
Up to 24,000 ALL	71%	37%	66%	36%	33%
24,001–50,000 ALL	72%	42%	68%	40%	33%
50,001–70,000 ALL	62%	46%	50%	36%	35%
Over 70,001 ALL	55%	27%	42%	27%	25%
Geographic representation					
Urban	68%	35%	67%	33%	29%
Rural	69%	38%	65%	37%	32%
Municipality Size					
Small	69%	31%	70%	31%	26%
Medium	67%	44%	64%	38%	33%
Large	69%	35%	66%	34%	30%

Note: Colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total response.

4.6 Satisfaction with public-service delivery

The section ‘satisfaction with public-service delivery’ has been an important part of the ‘Trust in Governance’ Opinion Poll since the start of the report in 2013. This is due to the prevalent claim that there is a relationship between citizens’ satisfaction with public-service delivery and their overall trust in governance. When citizens receive satisfactory services from public institutions, their trust in the governance system increases and vice versa. In Albania, a citizen-centric public service delivery has been adopted since 2014. The reform strives to transform the way public administration delivers services to citizens by shifting from operating in an isolated departmental view within the government, to a more holistic citizen-centric approach. This drastic change has transformed the relationships between policymakers, service providers and citizens, and changed the way citizens experience public services. In such an environment, regular citizen feedback on the quality and efficiency of public-service delivery is essential to continue improving the performance of the administration.

In this context, the Opinion Poll aimed to quantify satisfaction with public service delivery in the past twelve months asking questions related to key services provided by central institutions and municipalities. These services include core public functions, such as health, education (including pre-school), water supply, public transport, cleaning services, emergency services, police and the judiciary. In addition, the Opinion Poll rates satisfaction for administrative services, such as in the areas of property, social insurance and assistance, employment, business registration and licensing, construction permitting. This year, three administrative services were added to the questionnaire to track service delivery more specifically, namely: civil registry, social insurance, road transportation. Besides the level of utilization of such services, complaint submission and institutional responsiveness were subjects of inquiry, as well as the perceptions on every day safety of Albanians. Following the launch of the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services (ADISA), two questions regarding its service windows were added as well.

Satisfaction with service delivery of core public services

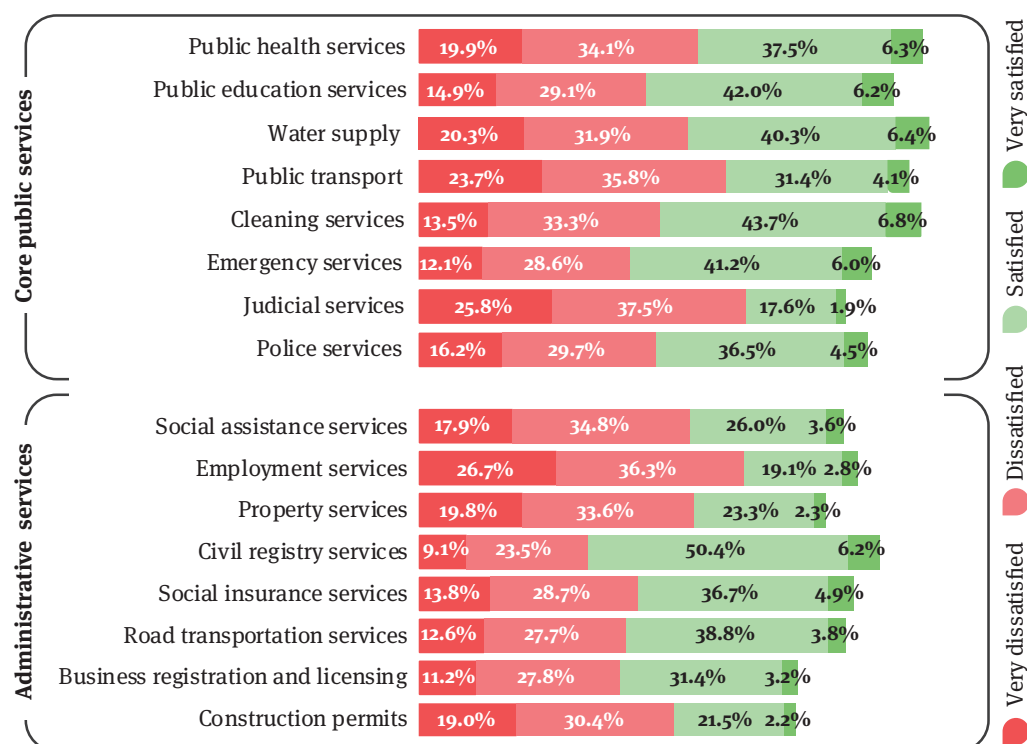
Service delivery for the majority of core public services, including judicial services, public transport, public health services, and the water supply, is not satisfactory according to the Albanian population. On average, 41.5% of the respondents ranked the service delivery of Albania’s core public services as satisfactory and 50.8% of the respondents said the service delivery was dissatisfactory.

Respondents of the Opinion Poll were asked to rate their satisfaction with public-service delivery on a scale from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. The core public services ranked in this opinion poll are public health services, public education services (including pre-school), water supply, public transport, cleaning services (town, countryside), emergency services (firefighting, medical, etc.), judicial services, and police services. The survey data

suggests that on average, 41.5% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service delivery of core public services²⁶. 50.8% of the respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and on average 7.7% of respondents refused to rank their satisfaction with the service-delivery of a core public service. Respondents are most often satisfied with cleaning services (50.5% positive vs. 46.8% negative), public education services (48% positive vs. 44% negative), and emergency services (47.2% positive vs. 40.7% negative).

For the five remaining core public services, the majority of the respondents rated the service delivery more often as dissatisfactory than as satisfactory. These included the judicial services (63.3% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied), public transport (59.5%), public health services (54%) and water supply (52.2%). With regards to police services, respondents were more often dissatisfied (45.9%) than satisfied (41%), albeit this difference is smaller than for other services. For the rating of all 16 public services rated in the opinion poll, see Figure 42.

Figure 42. Satisfaction with public services (2019)



Base: $N = 2446$, $N = 2306$, $N = 2473$, $N = 2376$, $N = 2433$, $N = 2196$, $N = 2070$, $N = 2172$, $N = 2059$, $N = 2123$, $N = 1974$, $N = 2230$, $N = 2103$, $N = 2073$, $N = 1841$, $N = 1828$.

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26 This percentage is the satisfaction rate for all core public services taken together.

Satisfaction with service delivery of administrative services

The general population assumes that the service delivery for most administrative services is not satisfactory. On average, 34.5% of the respondents ranked the service delivery of Albania's administrative services as satisfactory. However, when people used an administrative service, they were substantially more often satisfied with the service delivery: 44.1% of the users were positive about the service delivery of the administrative service they used in 2019.

The administrative services ranked in this opinion poll are social assistance services, employment services (National Employment Service SHKP), property services (State Cadastre Agency ASHK: former ZRPP and ALUIZNI), civil registry services, social insurance services (such as pension-Social Insurance Institute ISSH), road transportation services (such as driver's permit-General Directorate of Road Transport Services DPSHTRR), business registration and licensing (National Business Centre QKB), and construction permits. The survey data suggests that on average, 34.5% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service delivery²⁷. 46.6% of the respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. On average 18.9% of respondents refused to rank their satisfaction with the service-delivery of an administrative service. Respondents are most often satisfied with civil registry services (56.6% satisfied or very satisfied), road transportation services (42.6% satisfied or very satisfied), and social insurance services (41.6% satisfied or very satisfied).

For the other five administrative services, respondents were less satisfied with the public service delivery. For employment services (63% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied), property services (53.4% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied), social assistance services (52.7%), construction permits (49.4%), and business registration and licensing (39%), respondents were more often negative than positive about the public service delivery. For the rating of all administrative services ranked in this Opinion Poll, see Figure 42.

However, as administrative public services are not necessarily used by all citizens, assessing the proportion of respondents who were satisfied with the service delivery²⁸ according to those that had used a service in 2019 and those that had not, it is notable that the former were often more satisfied with the service delivery. On average, 44.1% of the respondents that had used an administrative service in 2019 were satisfied or very satisfied with the service delivery of that administrative service²⁹.

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27 This percentage is the satisfaction rate for all administrative services taken together.

28 The proportion of respondents that is satisfied is calculated as the sum of 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied'.

29 This percentage is the satisfaction rate for all administrative services taken together.

Users were particularly more positive about civil registry services (70% satisfied or very satisfied), road transportation services (55.7% satisfied or very satisfied), social insurance services (52.3%), business registration and licensing (47.6%), and social assistance services (32.4%) after having used the service in 2019. Interestingly, the three services rated the least satisfactory by all respondents in the Opinion Poll survey; (employment services, property services and construction permits) had similar satisfaction rates among users only. Table 21 displays the percentage of the respondents that used a given service and compares the satisfaction rate of all respondents with those that did use the service in 2019.

Table 21. Utilisation of, and satisfaction with, administrative service delivery 2019

	Overall satisfaction rate	% of respondents that used service in 2019	Satisfaction rate among those that did use service
Social assistance services	29,6%	32%	34.2%
Employment services	21,9%	37%	23.5%
Property services	25,6%	31%	28.8%
Civil registry services	56,6%	50%	70.0%
Social insurance services	41,6%	39%	52.3%
Road transportation services	42,6%	32%	55.7%
Business registration and licensing	34,6%	21%	47.6%
Construction permits	23,7%	21%	22.7%

The administrative public services most respondents used in the past year are civil registry services (50%), social insurance services (39%), and employment services (37%). The least-often used services were construction permits and business registration and licensing (both 21%).

Demographic comparison for satisfaction with public service delivery

For all public services that were rated in this Opinion Poll, the data shows that Albanians working in the public sector were more satisfied with public service delivery than Albanians that are not employed in the public sector. In addition, older people, Albanians with a higher level of education, and employed Albanians, were more positive about public service delivery than other demographics. Albanians with a monthly income over 70,000 ALL (US\$640), were more often negative about public-service delivery.

When comparing the satisfaction regarding public-service delivery among demographics, the data shows differences across age groups, education level, employment status, and income level. No substantial differences were found for gender or geographic representation. With regards to age, oftentimes older respondents were more positive about the public-service delivery of Albanian institutions than younger respondents. For public transport, emergency services, police services, property services, civil registry services, and social assistance services, the survey data shows that older respondents rated the public service delivery more often as satisfactory than the younger respondents. For example, of the age group ‘over 65 years old’, 45% were satisfied with public transport services, compared to less than 31% for age groups under 35 years old. Furthermore, the data shows that for public health, education, cleaning, civil registry, social assistance, road transportation, and business registration and licensing, respondents with a higher level of education were more satisfied with public-service delivery than respondents with a lower level of education.

Focus group participants of different age groups demonstrated that not only did their expectations differ regarding public services but also their personal experiences with the delivery of those services. Younger participants were interested in education, employment, police, and business registration, whereas older participants focused on health, social services, public transport and the water or electricity supply. Many of the ‘over 55 years old’ in the focus group shared personal stories about disappointing service delivery. One participant from Skrapar, a female small-business owner, pointed out that: “When it comes to collecting taxes and introducing new taxes, municipality officials and other governmental agencies find me very easily, but when it comes to construct a road to connect my neighbourhood to other parts of the town, they cannot find me, I am invisible to them, not just me, the entire neighbourhood”.

For all public services that were rated in this Opinion Poll, the data shows that respondents employed in the public sector were more satisfied with public-service delivery than respondents employed in the private sector. Moreover, for 12 of the public services, the data shows that employed respondents – regardless of which sector they are employed in – are more often satisfied with public service delivery than unemployed respondents. This is particularly true for education and cleaning services. Students were particularly dissatisfied with general public-services delivery. For 10 of the 16 public services fewer students rated the service as satisfactory (-5 p.p. difference) than other groups. Retirees, on the other hand, were often more positive about the service delivery of public institutions.

In the focus group ‘Under 30 years old’, participants who were primarily students said they did not use public services as much and had little personal experience with public-service delivery, because their family members usually deal with administration. As one of the participants put it: “It is usually my father or my older sister that supports me with documents, plus it is not that I have needed much. The school documentation was mainly

done by my family”. On the other hand, participants in the focus group with rural areas’ residents stressed that they noticed a gap between the public-service delivery in urban areas and the public services available in rural or remote areas.

There were differences in satisfaction with public-service delivery across different income groups. Respondents with an average monthly income between 24,001 ALL and 70,000 ALL were more often satisfied with service delivery of core public services, while people with a lower or higher income were more often dissatisfied. For administrative services, people with an income of 50,000 ALL or more were more often satisfied with the service delivery. In general, respondents without a stable monthly income are the most dissatisfied of all income groups. For the satisfaction rates across demographics of the 16 public services rated in this Opinion Poll, see Table 24 at the end of this chapter.

In the focus group ‘No income or income under 24,000 ALL’, participants pointed out that they have noticed some improvement in public-service delivery, particularly in the healthcare system. Personal stories of participants or family being hospitalised were shared. Although the medical personnel did a good enough job, many felt the infrastructure in health centres was lacking. The quality of infrastructure continues to be problematic, especially in peripheral areas. In cities like Berat, Shkodra and Korça the refurbishment of health service centres (polyclinics) and regional hospitals were thought to show progress in health services. However, in small towns like Skrapar, and Erseka there is a lack of specialised services, for which citizens have to go to regional hospitals or to Tirana. According to participants from Kamza, a growing population with diverse backgrounds has put pressure on the current quality of health and education services and thus more investment is needed.

Annual trend in satisfaction with public-service delivery

Over the past four years, satisfaction with service delivery for most core public services has declined substantially, while respondents have been in general equally or more satisfied with the service delivery of administrative services.

Between 2016 and 2019, the overall satisfaction of respondents with the public service delivery, particularly that of core public services, has decreased. Satisfaction with police services declined with 25 p.p. from 66% in 2016 to 41% in 2019, satisfaction with water supply also decreased with 25 p.p., satisfaction with public transport 19 p.p., satisfaction with cleaning services 10 p.p., and satisfaction with public education services also 10 p.p. On the other hand, for most administrative services, respondents have been equally satisfied or more satisfied with the public service delivery. The satisfaction rate

for employment services, for example, increased 4 p.p. between 2016 and 2019. For an overview of satisfaction rates from 2016 to 2019, see Table 22.

Table 22. Satisfaction rate with public-service delivery (2016–2019)

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Core public services				
Public health services	47%	42%	41%	44%
Public education services	58%	54%	50%	48%
Water supply	72%	56%	50%	47%
Public transport	55%	50%	37%	36%
Cleaning services	61%	57%	49%	51%
Emergency services	55%	53%	44%	47%
Judicial services	21%	15%	19%	20%
Police services	66%	50%	40%	41%
Administrative services				
Social assistance services	34%	34%	31%	30%
Employment services	18%	19%	17%	22%
Property services	X	X	26%	26%
Civil registry services	X	X	X	57%
Social insurance services	X	X	X	42%
Road transportation services	X	X	X	43%
Business registration and licensing	35%	36%	32%	35%
Construction permits	X	X	24%	24%

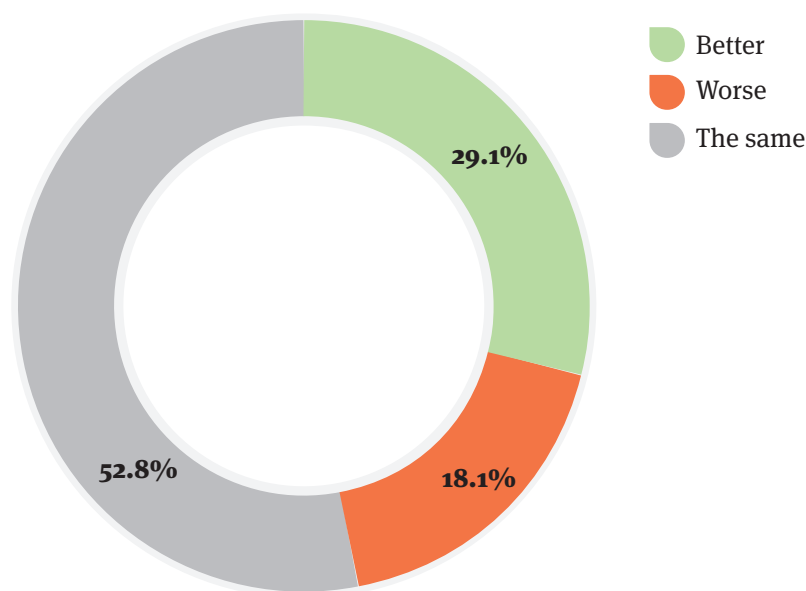
**Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section on ‘methodology’.*

Assessing the quality of social services delivered by the municipality

The majority of the Albanian population did not see noteworthy changes in the quality of social services delivered by their municipality in 2019, compared to 2018. Nonetheless, Albanians over 65 years old, employed Albanians, Albanians with a higher income, or Albanians working in the public sector were more likely to indicate that the social service delivery in their municipality had improved in 2019 than other demographic groups.

Even though an annual comparison was made for the proportion of respondents that were satisfied with public-service delivery (see the previous section), it is important to consider that the expectations of citizens can change. In a transforming society such as Albania, citizens expectations tend to increase over time. As such, respondents were asked how they would assess the quality of municipal social services in 2019, compared to 2018. The majority of respondents (52.8%) reported that the quality of social services delivered by their municipality had not changed. 29.1% said that the services had improved and according to 18.1% of the respondents, the quality of social services delivered by their municipality had worsened compared to the previous year.

Figure 43. Changes in the quality of municipal social services (2019)



Base: $N = 1617$

Significant differences were observed across several demographic groups, such as age, education employment and income. Respondents over 65 years old reported more often (35.1%) that the quality of social services delivered by their municipality had improved than respondents who were 18–15 years old (27%). With regards to education, respondents with a university degree were more likely (35.7%) to indicate that the social service delivery of the municipality had improved than respondents with up to lower secondary

education³⁰ (26.2%) or a high school diploma (25.4%). Employed respondents more often felt that the quality of services delivered by the municipality had improved (34.9%) than unemployed respondents (18.4%). Respondents employed in the public sector particularly perceived the quality of municipal services as having improved (54.6%). Lastly, broken down by average monthly income, respondents with an income of 24,001–50,000 ALL (38.2%), 50,001–70,000 ALL (37%) or over 70,001 ALL (43.2%) more often thought that the quality of municipal services has improved than respondents with no income (16.2%) or up to 24,000 ALL (29.7%). No differences were observed across gender or rural/urban.

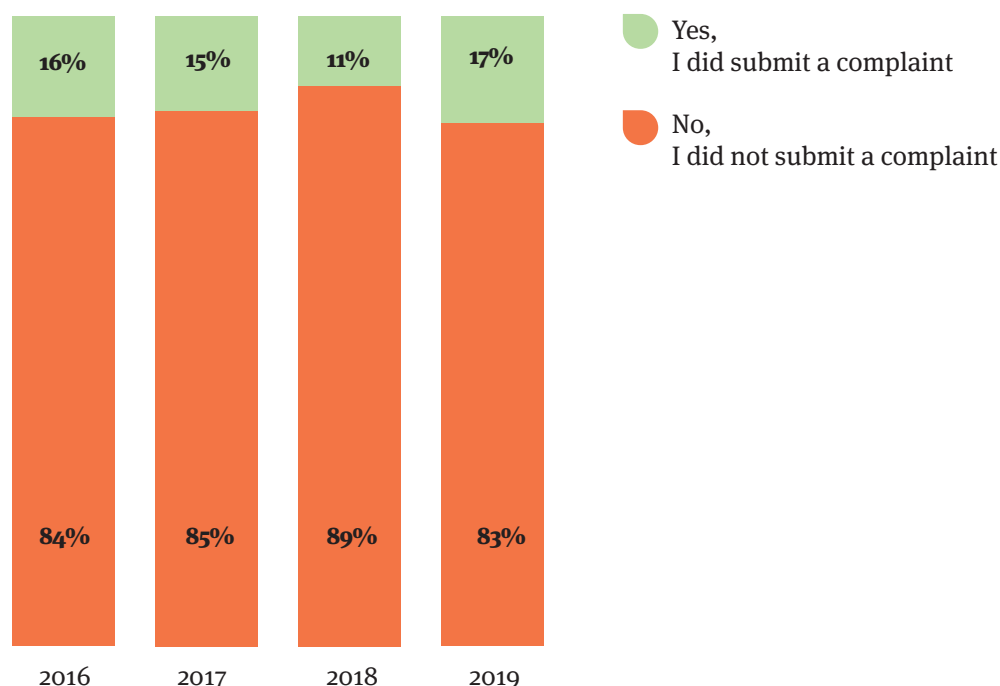
Submission of complaints

The survey data shows that, although a considerable portion of the Albanian population was not satisfied with public service delivery in 2019, only 1 in 6 Albanians submitted a complaint when services did not meet expectations. While Albanians with an income of more than 70,001 ALL were more likely to submit a complaint than other demographic groups, Albanians over 65 years old were less likely to have submitted a complaint to the respective institution in 2019.

Although the proportion of respondents that were satisfied with the public service delivery of Albanian institutions has increased from 2018 to, there were still a considerable number of respondents that were not satisfied with the service delivery of one or more institutions. Therefore, respondents were asked whether they submitted a complaint for a received service to one of the sixteen institutions when services did not meet their expectations. 17% of the respondents indicated that they had submitted a complaint, while 83% did not submit a complaint. Compared to previous years, the percentage of respondents that submitted a complaint has increased. In 2018, only 11% of the respondents said they had submitted a complaint, compared to 15% in 2017 and 16% in 2016.

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30 The group 'up to lower secondary education' includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Figure 44. Respondents sending a complaint to institutions (2016–2019)

Base: 2016 (N = 1627); 2017 (N = 1639); 2018 (N = 1628); 2019 (N = 2491)

**Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section ‘methodology’.*

Especially unlikely to submit a complaint were respondents over 65 years old: only 10.8% of them said to have done so in 2019. With regards to education, respondents with up to lower secondary education (12.9%) or a high school diploma (16.3%) were less likely to have sent a complaint to an institution than respondents with a university degree (21.7%). Respondents with an average monthly income of more than 70,001 ALL, on the other hand, were more likely to have submitted a complaint for a service received to the respective institution (29.5%) than other demographic groups. No significant differences were observed between other demographics, such as gender or rural/urban.

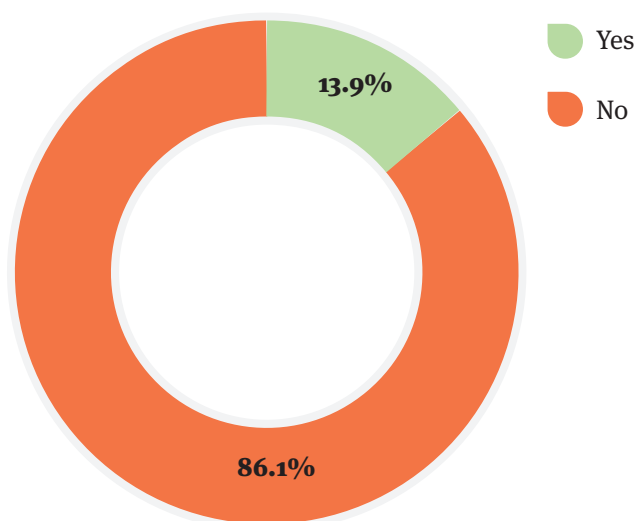
Co-governance platform shqiperiaqeduam.al

Since its introduction in 2017, Albanians have increasingly made use of the new co-governance platform shqiperiaqeduam.al. In 2018, 14% of the respondents had used the platform. Albanians with an average monthly income of over 70,001 ALL or members of a political party – regardless of

- *which party– were most likely to have submitted a complaint through www.shqiperiaqeduam.al.*

In 2017, a new online co-governance platform www.shqiperiaqeduam.al was introduced, where citizens are able to file any complaint they might have regarding public institutions or public service delivery. In 2019, 13.9% of respondents used the platform to submit complaints. Respondents over 65 years old and respondents with up to lower secondary education were unlikely to have submitted a complaint through [shqiperiaqeduam.al](http://www.shqiperiaqeduam.al). Respectively, only 7.4% of respondents over 65 years old and 8.5% of those with up to lower secondary education had sent a complaint through the platform in 2019. In contrast, respondents with an average monthly income of over 70,001 ALL or respondents that are members of a political party – regardless of which party – were more likely to have submitted a complaint through the platform in 2019, respectively, 22.7% and 21.5%.

Figure 45. Have you directed any complaints to [shqiperiaqeduam.al](http://www.shqiperiaqeduam.al)? (2019)



Base: N = 2482

Respondents that had submitted a complaint via the [shqiperiaqeduam.al](http://www.shqiperiaqeduam.al) platform were further asked whether the substance of the complaint was addressed. Of the respondents that had sent a complaint 37% said that it was addressed, while 63% indicated that their complaint was not addressed.

Complaints of female respondents were more often addressed (38.4%) than those of male respondents (35.3%). Similarly, employed respondents indicated more often that their

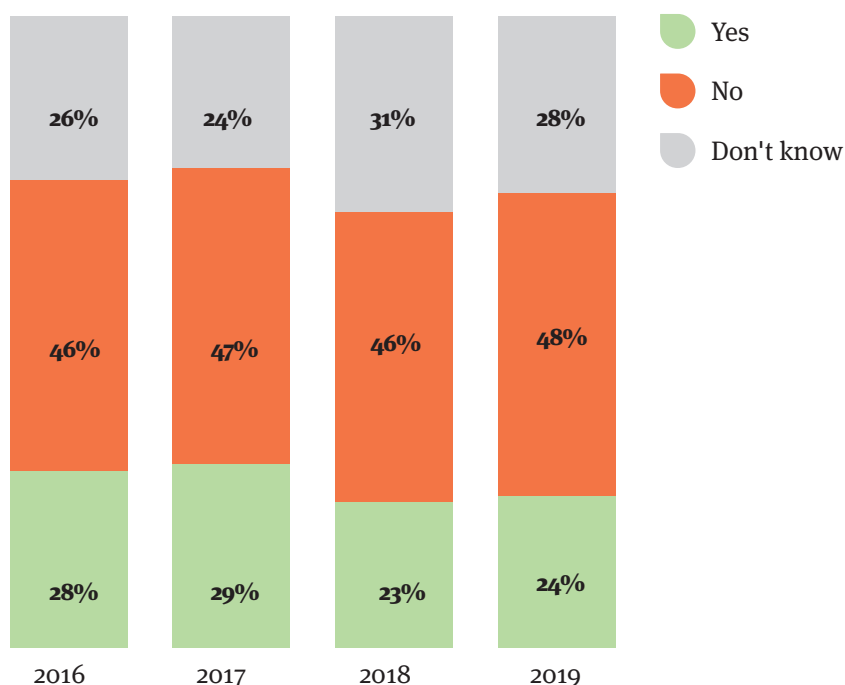
complaint was addressed (40.7%) than unemployed respondents (30.8%). Respondents working in the public sector indicated that their complaint was addressed (60%) more often than respondents working in the private sector (34.4%). Similarly, respondents that were a member of a political party more often saw their complaint addressed (44.6%) than respondents that were not a member of a political party (36.6%). Lastly, respondents with an average monthly income of over 70,001 ALL indicated less often that their complaint to shqiperiaqeduam.al was addressed (20%) than respondents with lower income levels.

Albanian institutions ‘listen to’ citizens

In 2019, approximately 1 in 4 Albanians believed that institutions ‘listen to’ and properly address citizens’ complaints, compared to 2 in 4 that says institutions do not ‘listen to’ and properly address the complaints coming from citizens. People working in the public sector (47.3%) were more likely to believe that institutions ‘listen to’ citizens, than people working in the private sector (22.6%) or unemployed people (16.3%).

Public accountability is an important element for a transforming country like Albania seeking to improve service delivery. It is often seen as the hallmark of modern democratic governance. If those in power cannot be held accountable, democratic governance is reduced into a mere procedure where those in power can abuse their power without fear of facing the consequences. In this context, respondents were asked whether they believe that institutions ‘listen to’ and properly address the complaints coming from citizens. 24% of respondents answered that they believe that institutions ‘listen to’ and properly address the complaints coming from citizens. 48% of them thought that institutions do not listen to citizens’ complaints and do not properly address their concerns, while 28% were not sure whether public institutions perform well in responding to their feedback. Compared to 2018, there were no substantial changes. However, in 2018 and 2019 respondents remain slightly more pessimistic than in previous years, when 28% (2016) and 29% (2017) of respondents believed that institutions ‘listen to’ and properly address the complaints coming from citizens.

Figure 46. Do you believe that institutions ‘listen to’ and properly address citizens’ complaints? (2019)



Base: 2016 (N = 1259); 2017 (N = 1599); 2018 (N = 1565); 2019 (N = 2464)

**Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section “methodology”.*

Comparing demographic groups, no differences were found across gender. With regards to education, respondents with a university degree were somewhat more likely (27.4%) to believe that institutions ‘listen to’ and properly address the complaints coming from citizens, than respondents with a high school diploma (22.7%), or those with up to lower secondary education³¹ (20.1%). With regards to income, respondents that did not have a regular income were least likely (15.6%) of all the income groups to believe that institutions ‘listen to’ and address the complaints coming from citizens. Respondents with an income between 24,001 ALL and 70,000 ALL think more often that institutions ‘listen to’ citizens: 31,3% of the income group 24,001 - 50,000 ALL and 33,9% of the income group

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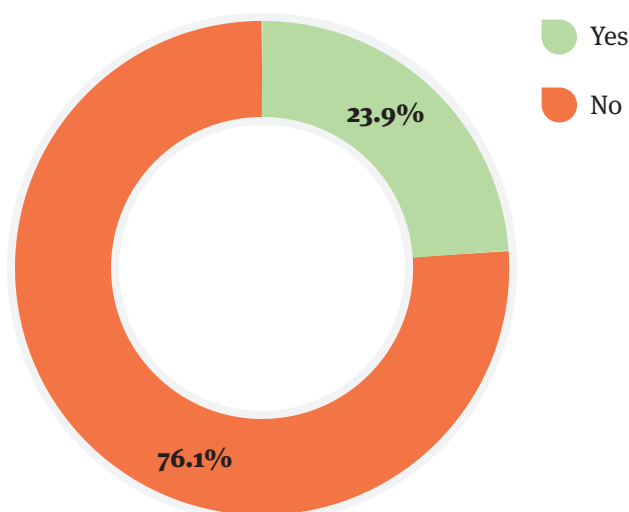
³¹ The group ‘up to lower secondary education’ includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

50,001- 70,000 ALL said that they believe institutions properly address complaints coming from citizens. Furthermore, employed respondents were more likely (29%) to believe that institutions 'listen to' and properly address the complaints coming from citizens than unemployed respondents (16.3%). Respondents working in the public sector were most likely (47.3%) to report that institutions listen to citizens than respondents working in the private sector (22.6%). Lastly, respondents with a disability (13%) or respondents that are a member of a minority group (15.2%) reported less often that they believe institutions are accountable than respondents that do not have a disability (24.4%) or are not a member of a minority group (24.2%).

ADISA service windows

23.9% of the Albanian population has visited an Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services (ADISA) service window in 2019. The majority of Albanians that visited ADISA were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the service delivery. In particular, Albanians over 65 years old (78.3%), those working in the public sector (82.8%), with a university degree (76.2%), or with an average monthly income of 50,001–70,000 ALL (83.3%), were satisfied with the service of the ADISA service window.

In the framework of the citizen-centric public services reform undertaken by the Government of Albania, the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services (ADISA) has been tasked with the implementation of Front Office-Back Office separation in public service delivery, and was appointed the authority for standards and the quality assessment of such delivery. As part of its activity it manages integrated one-stop-shop service windows. By the time of the 2019 survey, there were seven ADISA centres (Kavaja, Kruja, Fier, Gjirokastrë, Shkodër, Tirana Kombinat and Tirana 1), as well as six co-locations of ADISA central government service windows in municipal one-stop shops in Maliq, Belsh, Patos, Librazhd, Divjakë and Malësi e Madhe. Additionally, ADISA publishes comprehensive public services' information passports and operates a dedicated phone number (0800 0118) where Albanians can request information on public services. In 2019, 23.9% of respondents visited an ADISA service window in-person (at an ADISA centre or a co-location).

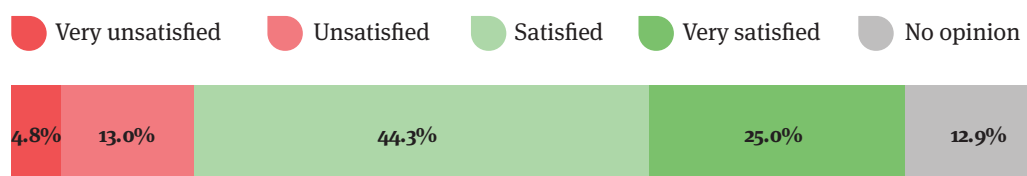
Figure 47. Respondents that visited the ADISA service window in 2019

Base: N = 2500

When comparing by demographic, the data shows that the proportion of respondents that had visited an ADISA service window in 2019 was smaller for respondents over 65 years old, with low levels of education, living in rural areas, or living in small municipalities than for other respondents. No differences were observed across gender. Of respondents over 65 years old, 13.1% had visited an ADISA service centre compared to over 28% of the respondents between 26 and 45 years old (26-35: 28%, 36-45: 28.8%). With regard to education, of the respondents with up to lower secondary education 13.8% had visited the service window, compared to 23.6% of respondents with a high school diploma and 30.9% of the respondents with a university degree. Of the respondents living in rural areas, 20.6% had visited an ADISA service window, compared to 25.4% of the respondents living in urban areas. Likewise, fewer respondents residing in small municipalities (<50,000 inhabitants) had visited an ADISA office (15.8%) than respondents residing in medium-sized municipalities of 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants (21.4%) or large municipalities of more than 100,000 inhabitants (27.2%). It is possible that these differences are related to the distribution of the first ADISA service windows, while their expansion is under way.

With regard to income, respondents with a higher average monthly income of 50,001–70,000 ALL (37.7%) or more than 70,001 ALL (38.6%) were more likely to have visited the ADISA service window than other income groups. Of the respondents who worked in the public sector, 34.1% had visited the ADISA service window, compared to 24.9% of those working in the private sector.

Respondents that had visited an ADISA service window, were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the public service delivery. Among them, 69.3% of respondents that visited an ADISA service window were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the service delivery. Only 4.8% were ‘very unsatisfied’.

Figure 48. Satisfaction with ADISA one-stop-shop service in 2019

Base: $N = 598$

Based on demographic data, 71.6% of the male respondents and 66.8% of female respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their visit to ADISA service windows. With regards to age, respondents 46 years of age and above recorded satisfaction levels of 73.3% to 78.3%, and younger respondents around 67%. Furthermore, respondents working in the public sector (82.8%), with a university degree (76.2%), or with an average monthly income of 50,001–70,000 ALL (83.3%) indicated more often that they were (very) satisfied with their visit to an ADISA service window, while respondents with up to lower secondary education (58.7%) or unemployed respondents (55.7%) were slightly less likely to indicate that they were satisfied. Lastly, respondents residing in rural areas (72.3%) were more often satisfied than respondents residing in urban areas (68.2%).

Safety in everyday life

The majority of the Albanian population (65%) did not feel safe in everyday life. Respondents under 35 years old, respondents working in the private sector, unemployed respondents, or respondents with a disability were most likely to report that they do not feel safe in everyday life. Often-cited reasons for feeling unsafe were criminality, healthcare issues, injustice, and employment insecurity.

In general, do you feel safe in your everyday life?

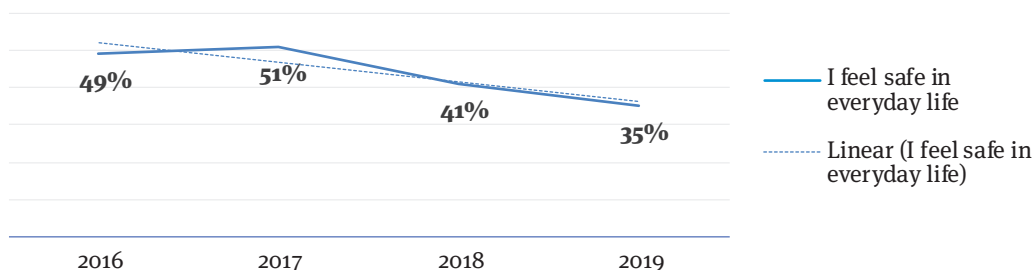
Besides basic needs such as food, water and shelter, safety is an important indicator of the life quality. European Union's Statistics Office has identified physical and economic safety as one of its nine core quality-of-life indicators (Eurostat, 2018).³² In this context, the Opinion Poll asked respondents about their sense of safety in their everyday life. The majority of respondents (65%) answered that they do not feel safe in everyday life, meaning

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³² See Eurostat, Quality of Life Indicators, available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Quality_of_life_indicators

that only 35% of the respondents feels safe in everyday life. Compared to previous years, the proportion of respondents that feels safe is declining. In 2017, 51% of respondents indicated that they felt safe, compared to 41% in 2018 and 35% this year.

Figure 49. Perceived safety in everyday life (2016 –2019)



Base: 2016 (N = 1608); 2017 (N = 1615); 2018 (N = 1629); 2019 (N = 2500)

**Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section ‘methodology’.*

Respondents under 45 years old, respondents working in the private sector, unemployed respondents and respondents with a disability were most likely to report that they do not feel safe in everyday life. Male respondents (36.4%) indicated more often that they feel safe in everyday life than female respondents (33.6%). With regards to age groups, respondents in the age groups 18–25, 26–35, and 36–45 indicated less often (31.1%, 29.2%, and 33.7% respectively) that they felt safe compared to other age groups. Similarly, unemployed respondents indicated less often that they feel safe (30.9%) than employed respondents (36.7%). Fewer respondents working in the private sector said (30.8%) that they feel safe in everyday life than respondents working in the public sector (54.5%). Furthermore, respondents residing in urban areas were less likely to feel safe (32.8%) than respondents residing in rural areas (40.1%). Lastly, the lowest proportion of respondents that felt safe in everyday life were those that are a member of a minority group (28.3%) or have a disability (23%).

Respondents who indicated that they did not feel safe in their everyday life were asked to identify the three main factors that made them feel unsafe. Most respondents said that criminality (67%), health issues (49%), injustice (36%), and employment insecurity (36%) were everyday concerns. Other commonly cited factors included politics (28%), pollution (17%) and unequal wealth (16%). For all answers the respondents gave as reasons for feeling unsafe, see Table 23.

Table 23. Reasons for feeling unsafe (2016–2019)

Factors for feeling unsafe	2016	2017	2018	2019
Criminality	49%	58%	71%	67% (n = 1084)
Health issues	11%	30%	50%	49% (n = 791)
Injustice	11%	32%	45%	36% (n = 581)
Employment insecurity	X	42%	52%	36% (n = 576)
Politics	5%	29%	45%	28% (n = 459)
Pollution	3%	12%	20%	17% (n = 270)
Unequal wealth	3%	23%	23%	16% (n = 259)
Drug use	6%	23%	29%	15% (n = 250)
Traffic	7%	11%	13%	13% (n = 204)
Domestic violence	3%	15%	19%	7% (n = 108)
Lack of free expression	1%	5%	11%	4% (n = 64)
Discrimination on basis of sex, religion, wealth, social status	X	5%	7%	3% (n = 44)
Lack of confidentiality and protection when reporting wrongdoings	1%	6%	12%	3% (n = 48)

Base: 2016 (N = 1608); 2017 (N = 1615); 2018 (N = 1629); 2019 (N = 1613)

Note: Multiple responses allowed; percentages do not add to 100%. Furthermore, in 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section ‘methodology’.

As respondents often chose all or many of the answer options in previous years, in 2019 the maximum number of choices was set at three for the 2019 questionnaire. Although this gives a better indication of what respondents find the most important reasons of feeling unsafe, it does affect the ability to compare the proportions with previous years. Notwithstanding, compared to previous years, the same five options were the most common reasons for feeling unsafe. Just as in 2018 and 2017, respondents said that criminality, health issues, injustice, employment insecurity and politics are the main reasons for feeling unsafe. Drug use, in 2018 mentioned by 29% of the respondents, was mentioned less often as a reason for feeling unsafe in 2019 (15%). Pollution and traffic on the other hand, were increasingly mentioned as reasons for feeling unsafe. In 2016, only 3% of the respondents indicated that pollution made them feel safe in everyday life, compared to 12% in 2017, 20% in 2018, and 17% in 2019. For traffic, 7% of the respondents indicated that this was an everyday concern in 2016, compared to 11% in 2017 and 13% in 2018 and 2019.

Table 24. Satisfaction with public-service delivery across demographics (2019)

Core public services (all respondents)										Administrative services (respondents that used service in 2019)							
		Health	Education	Water	Public transport	Cleaning	Emergency	Judicial	Police	Social assistance	Employment	Property	Civil registry	Social insurance	Road transportation	Business reg. and licensing	Construction permits
TOTAL (satisfied*)		44%	48%	47%	36%	51%	47%	20%	41%	34%	26%	29%	70%	52%	56%	48%	23%
Gender																	
Female		44%	50%	47%	35%	52%	47%	21%	42%	32%	24%	26%	68%	53%	57%	46%	21%
Male		43%	47%	47%	36%	49%	47%	18%	40%	35%	23%	30%	72%	51%	55%	48%	23%
Age																	
18–25		42%	45%	44%	30%	52%	43%	16%	34%	32%	21%	26%	69%	57%	54%	44%	23%
26–35		41%	44%	43%	31%	49%	44%	18%	38%	32%	22%	28%	68%	50%	59%	48%	19%
36–45		47%	55%	52%	38%	51%	51%	21%	43%	36%	26%	30%	70%	54%	59%	49%	24%
46–55		47%	49%	47%	39%	52%	49%	20%	44%	33%	22%	29%	72%	48%	49%	49%	24%
56–65		42%	51%	49%	39%	49%	49%	22%	47%	31%	22%	30%	73%	52%	51%	48%	18%
66 and over		46%	47%	47%	45%	53%	52%	23%	47%	46%	39%	30%	70%	53%	50%	38%	34%
Educational attainment																	
Up to lower secondary		39%	43%	47%	36%	41%	48%	22%	44%	31%	21%	21%	60%	38%	33%	24%	18%
High school		44%	49%	45%	37%	51%	48%	18%	39%	31%	21%	27%	70%	51%	55%	46%	23%
University		47%	50%	50%	33%	56%	46%	20%	41%	43%	28%	35%	76%	64%	64%	61%	26%
Employment status																	

Core public services (all respondents)										Administrative services (respondents that used service in 2019)							
	Health	Education	Water	Public transport	Cleaning	Emergency	Judicial	Police		Social assistance	Employment	Property	Civil registry	Social insurance	Road transportation	Business reg. and licensing	Construction permits
TOTAL (satisfied*)	44%	48%	47%	36%	51%	47%	20%	41%		34%	26%	29%	70%	52%	56%	48%	23%
Employed	48%	53%	49%	36%	56%	49%	22%	44%		37%	29%	31%	72%	58%	59%	53%	23%
Public	64%	64%	61%	45%	66%	59%	32%	56%		52%	46%	45%	82%	66%	75%	59%	35%
Private	42%	49%	44%	33%	52%	45%	18%	39%		33%	23%	28%	69%	55%	55%	54%	20%
Unemployed	36%	36%	41%	44%	34%	38%	45%	14%		25%	13%	18%	63%	36%	45%	30%	17%
Student	43%	43%	44%	42%	35%	51%	43%	13%		30%	20%	36%	73%	42%	59%	47%	33%
Retired	42%	42%	46%	46%	40%	52%	50%	26%		43%	32%	32%	71%	52%	44%	32%	33%
Income level																	
No income	37%	42%	43%	34%	41%	44%	14%	34%		22%	12%	19%	62%	35%	45%	30%	16%
Up to 24,000 ALL	42%	47%	46%	37%	53%	45%	21%	42%		40%	26%	25%	68%	49%	50%	37%	23%
24,001–50,000 ALL	51%	57%	51%	39%	57%	54%	25%	47%		37%	29%	36%	74%	59%	57%	52%	32%
50,001–70,000 ALL	47%	53%	51%	37%	55%	53%	24%	41%		48%	41%	46%	74%	76%	74%	66%	13%
Over 70,001 ALL	43%	34%	34%	32%	45%	36%	11%	32%		56%	40%	26%	64%	70%	71%	65%	9%
Geographic Representation																	
Urban	44%	48%	47%	36%	52%	46%	19%	40%		35%	24%	29%	68%	51%	54%	43%	21%
Rural	44%	48%	46%	34%	48%	49%	21%	44%		32%	23%	28%	74%	53%	59%	54%	25%

* The percentage is calculated as the sum of percentage 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied'.

Note: For core services, colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total response. For administrative services, colours represent >10 p.p. difference with total response.

4.7 Performance of public institutions

Citizens' perceptions on the performance of public institutions is a key indicator for the credibility of these institutions. As such, this section is interrelated with two other chapters in this report, namely the assessment of trust and satisfaction with service delivery, particularly for governmental institutions both at central and local levels. Together, the three assessments provide a good picture of the public's perception of governance in Albania.

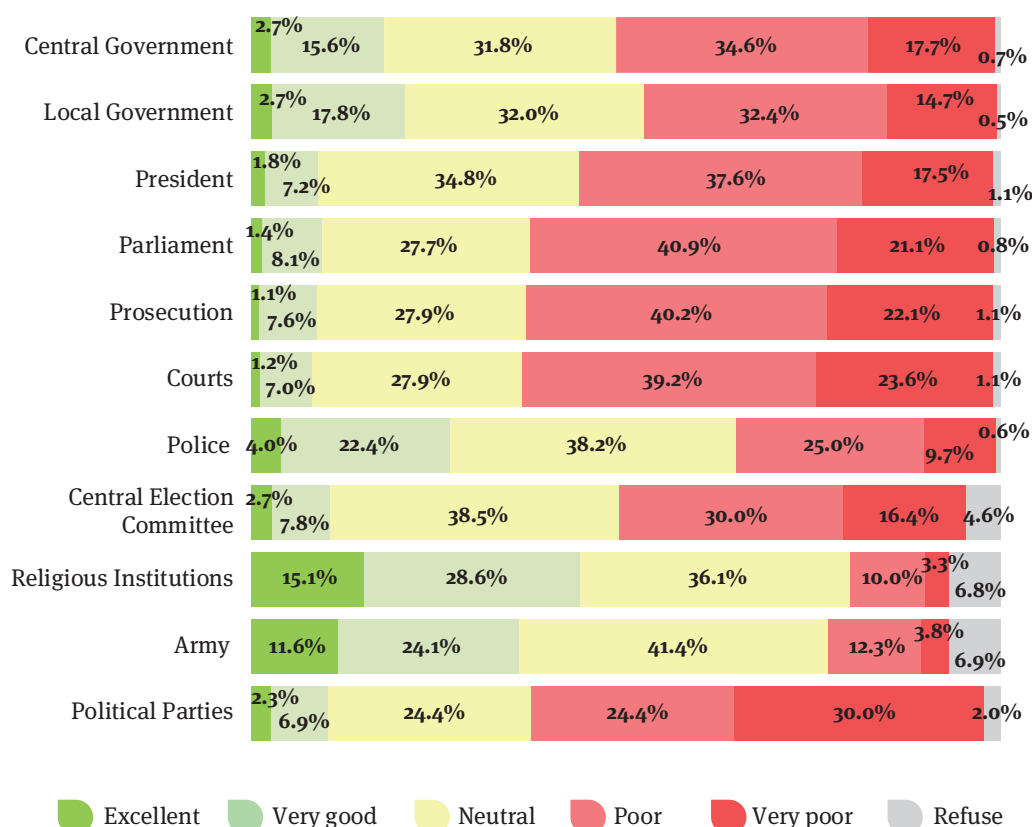
The performance of public institutions in 2019

In 2019 the Albanian resident population viewed the performance of religious institutions (43.7%) and the army (35.7%) more positively than other institutions. The performances of courts (23.6%), prosecution (22.1%), political parties (30%), and parliament (21.1%) were viewed least positively.

To measure the performance of public institutions, respondents were asked to rank 11 institutions on a scale from 1 (excellent performance) to 5 (very poor performance). Religious institutions (43.7%) the army (35.7%) were the institutions most often assessed as performing well. 15.1% of the respondents rated religious institutions' performance as 'excellent', while 28.6% of the respondents rated them as 'very good'. For the army, 11.6% of respondents felt that its performance was 'excellent' and 24.1% of the respondents felt it was 'very good'.

The institutions that were assessed most often as performing 'very poorly' were political parties (30%), courts (23.6%), prosecution (22.1%) and parliament (21.1%). More than half of the respondents perceived political parties (54.4%), courts (62.8%), prosecution (62.3%), parliament (62%) and president (55.1%) as performing poorly overall (aggregating 'poor' and 'very poor').

The local government (20.5%) was more often perceived as performing well than the central government (18.3%). 17.8% of respondents assessed the performance of local government as 'very good', whereas 15.6% rated central government in the same way. 26.4% of respondents assessed the performance of the police as 'very good' or 'excellent'. Only 10.5% deemed the performance of the Central Election Committee as 'very good' or 'excellent'.

Figure 50: Performance of public institutions (2019)

Base: N = 2485

Socio-demographic analysis of performance of public institutions

Overall, the perceptions of the Albanian citizens regarding the performance of public institutions does not vary greatly based on their demographics. The performance of central and local government is perceived as better by Albanian citizens who are employed in the public sector, have a university degree, live in urban areas or are over 65 years old. The performance of the judiciary, prosecution and courts, was seen as poor or very poor across demographics.

There was no substantial difference between male and female respondents in the assessment of the performance of 9 public institutions out of 11. The performance of religious institutions was considered to be slightly more positive by female respondents

(46%) as opposed to male respondents (42%). Men were more likely to perceive the performance of the army as positive than women: 37% of men, compared to 34% of the female respondents. In terms of age differences, respondents 'over 65 years old' tended to perceive the performance of central and local government more positively than younger age groups: 21% of respondents 'over 65 years old' assessed the performance of central government as positive and 26% that of local government as positive, whereas only 13% of those '18–25 years old' perceived the performance of central government as positive and 16% that of local government.

Only small differences were found regarding the perceptions of different age groups of the performance of the president, parliament, prosecution, courts, and political parties, which were seen by the vast majority of respondents as performing poorly. Respondents in the age group 'over 65 years old' tended to perceive the performance of the police and the army more positively than younger groups: 31% of respondents 'over 65 years old' rated the performance of the police as positive, but 20% of respondents in the age group '18–25 years old' stated the same. Also, 43% of respondents 'over 65 years old' rated the performance of the army as 'excellent' or 'very good', but 31% of respondents in the age group '18–25 years old' saw the performance of the army as positive.

In terms of education, respondents with a university degree considered the performance of central government more positively (23%) than respondents with up to lower secondary education³³ (15%). The same trend is observed for local government performance, where respondents with a university degree or higher more often considered the performance of local government as positive (26%) than respondents with up to lower secondary education (18%). There were no substantial differences in terms of education when it came to assess the performance of parliament and the president, which were both considered as performing poorly by the majority of the respondents.

The performance of central government, local government, the president and the parliament, were more likely to be considered negative if the respondents were unemployed. The same trend is observed in the assessment of the performance of the courts and prosecution. Respondents employed in the public sector were more likely to consider the performance of central or local government, and that of other public institutions, as positive, compared to those who work in the private sector. For instance, 39% of respondents working in the public sector rated the performance of central government as 'excellent' or 'very good' compared to 17% of those who work in the private sector. The performance of political parties was generally seen as negative across both sectors, but particularly so by private sector: only 8% assessed the performance of political parties as positive.

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33 The group 'up to lower secondary education' includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Only 9% of respondents with no income considered the performance of central government as positive compared to 30% of respondents with incomes of 50,001–70,000 Lek/month. The same trend can be seen in the perceived performance of local government, with 10% of respondents with no income rating the performance of local government as positive compared to 28% of those in the 50,001–70,000 Lek/month bracket. 17% of respondents with no income saw the performance of the police as positive compared to 35% of those with an income higher than 70,001 Lek/month. 45% of respondents with income in the 24,001–50,000 Lek/month bracket viewed positively the performance of religious institutions. Only 8% of respondents with income in the 24,001–50,000 Lek/month bracket deemed the performance of president as positive. Respondents with income in the 24,001–50,000 Lek/month bracket viewed the performance of the local government (27%) as more positive than central government (22%).

Respondents in urban areas tended to perceive the performances of central and local government as more positive than those in rural areas. There were no substantial differences in the perception of other public institutions between urban or rural areas. For an overview of all differences across demographics, see Table 26 at the end of this chapter.

The findings of the focus groups indicate that citizens are more concerned about the performance of local and central government, parliament, the president, prosecution, the courts and the police, rather than with the other institutions assessed. The main concern regarding the performance of these institutions was the waste of resources and abuse of power. Participants, particularly in the focus group ‘over 55 years old’ and focus group ‘with a university degree and higher’ attributed their dissatisfaction with their performance to practices of clientelism, nepotism and corruption. Such perceptions stemmed from personal experiences particularly with the judiciary regarding land and property, media reporting on political scandals, and alleged government corruption on large-scale projects.

Performance of institutions over the years

Over the years, this Opinion Poll finds a decrease in the perception of positive performance of central and local government. 28% of respondents perceived the performance of central government as positive in 2017 as opposed to 22% in 2018 and 18% in 2019. 32% of respondents perceived the performance of local government as positive in 2017 as opposed to 23% in 2018 and 21% in 2019.

Following three years of measuring perceived performance of Albanian institutions, the data shows that the positive performance ratings³⁴ of most institutions dropped in 2017 – 2018, but stayed roughly the same in 2018 – 2019. The biggest changes were for religious institutions and the army: religious institutions dropped 14 p.p. between 2017 and 2018, but then increased 1 p.p. in 2019. The proportion of positive rankings for the army dropped 12 p.p. from 2017 to 2018, but then increased with 2 p.p. in 2019.

Five institutions saw a continued decline in positive performance, including the local government (-11 p.p. between 2017 and 2019), central government (-10 p.p.), Central Election Commission (-9 p.p.), the president (-5 p.p.), and political parties (-4 p.p.). For the performance ratings of all institutions ranked in the Opinion Poll, see Table 25.

Table 25: Performance of institutions (2017–2019)

	Positive Performance			Neutral			Negative Performance		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Central government	28%	22%	18%	27%	29%	32%	46%	49%	49%
Local government	32%	23%	21%	28%	34%	32%	40%	43%	47%
President	14%	10%	9%	37%	39%	35%	49%	51%	55%
Parliament	13%	9%	10%	33%	32%	28%	55%	58%	62%
Prosecution	8%	9%	9%	24%	26%	28%	69%	64%	62%
Courts	7%	9%	8%	21%	24%	28%	62%	65%	63%
Police	29%	30%	26%	30%	34%	38%	40%	36%	35%
Central Election Commission	20%	12%	11%	52%	46%	39%	28%	35%	46%
Religious institutions	57%	43%	44%	33%	34%	36%	11%	16%	13%
Army	46%	34%	36%	38%	41%	41%	16%	19%	16%
Political parties	13%	10%	9%	30%	26%	24%	57%	61%	64%

Base: 2017 (N = 1647); 2018 (N = 1647); 2019 (N = 2485).

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34 A positive performance rating is calculated as the sum of ‘excellent performance’ and ‘very good performance’

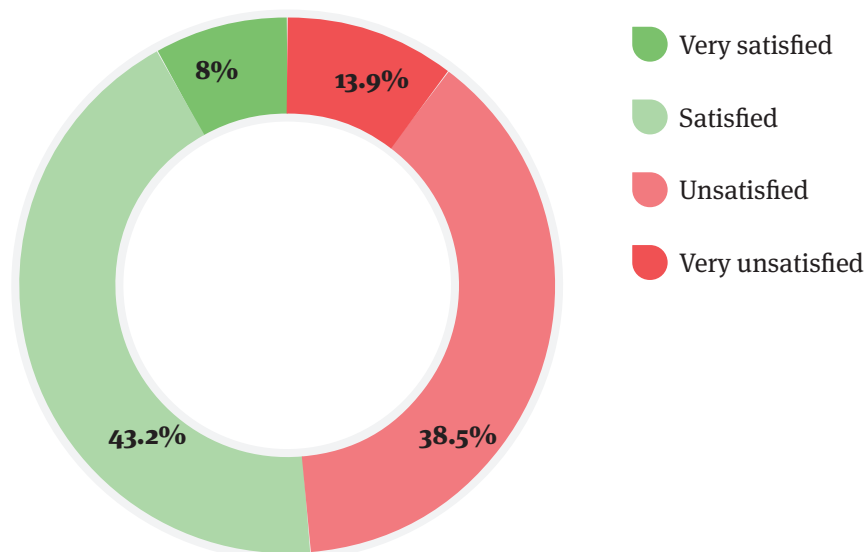
Satisfaction with foreign donors in Albania

About half of the Albanian resident population was satisfied or very satisfied with the impact of foreign donors in Albania. People with a university degree, those employed in the public sector or from urban areas were more satisfied.

In the past thirty years Albania has received financial and technical assistance from foreign donors, particularly in relation to major policy reforms, economic development, democratisation, human rights and civil society. This section of the survey measured the satisfaction of citizens with foreign assistance (donors) in Albania.

43.2% of respondents were 'satisfied' with the impact of foreign donors in Albania and 8% were 'very satisfied'. 38.5% were 'unsatisfied' with the impact of foreign donors in Albania and 10.4% 'very unsatisfied'.

Figure 51: Satisfaction with the impact of foreign donors in Albania (2019)



Base: N=2470

Female respondents (46%) were slightly more satisfied with the impact of foreign assistance (donors) in Albania than male respondents (41%). Respondents with a university degree or higher (45%) were more likely to be satisfied with the impact of donors in Albania compared

to respondents with up to lower secondary education³⁵ (41%). Some differences were observed in perceptions regarding foreign donors across different employment statuses. For instance, a smaller proportion of unemployed respondents (40%) were satisfied with the impact of donors in Albania than respondents who are employed (45%). Respondents from rural areas appeared to be less satisfied with the impact of donors in Albania (39%) than urban residents (45%).

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- 35 The group 'up to lower secondary education' includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Table 26: Demographic breakdown – performance of public institutions (2019)

	Central government	Local government	President	Parliament	Prosecution	Courts	Police	Central Election Committee	Religious institutions	Army	Political parties
Total (positive performance)	18.3%	20.5%	9.0%	9.5%	8.7%	8.2%	26.4%	10.5%	43.7%	35.7%	9.2%
Gender											
Female	17%	19%	8%	9%	9%	9%	27%	10%	46%	34%	9%
Male	19%	22%	10%	10%	9%	8%	26%	11%	42%	37%	10%
Age											
18–25 years old	13%	16%	7%	8%	8%	7%	20%	8%	39%	31%	7%
26–35 years old	19%	20%	8%	8%	8%	7%	25%	10%	40%	30%	9%
36–45 years old	20%	21%	11%	11%	10%	10%	29%	11%	50%	41%	13%
46–55 years old	20%	22%	9%	9%	9%	8%	28%	12%	48%	39%	8%
56–65 years old	20%	22%	8%	12%	7%	8%	31%	12%	44%	39%	11%
66 and over	21%	26%	11%	14%	12%	12%	31%	10%	44%	43%	7%
Education											
Up to lower secondary	15%	18%	7%	9%	8%	8%	25%	11%	47%	35%	9%
High school	16%	18%	10%	8%	8%	7%	25%	9%	44%	36%	8%
University degree	23%	26%	9%	12%	10%	9%	29%	12%	41%	35%	11%

	Central government	Local government	President	Parliament	Prosecution	Courts	Police	Central Election Committee	Religious institutions	Army	Political parties
Total (positive performance)	18.3%	20.5%	9.0%	9.5%	8.7%	8.2%	26.4%	10.5%	43.7%	35.7%	9.2%
Employment											
Employed	23%	26%	10%	11%	10%	9%	31%	12%	45%	38%	11%
Public	39%	43%	12%	22%	15%	15%	39%	19%	50%	43%	17%
Private	17%	19%	10%	8%	9%	7%	27%	10%	43%	36%	8%
Unemployed	11%	12%	7%	6%	5%	6%	19%	8%	43%	31%	7%
Student	13%	13%	6%	5%	8%	9%	16%	7%	40%	25%	6%
Retired	20%	22%	11%	14%	12%	12%	31%	13%	44%	42%	11%
Income											
No income	9%	10%	7%	5%	5%	5%	17%	7%	43%	29%	6%
Up to 24,000 ALL	22%	23%	11%	12%	11%	10%	29%	13%	48%	40%	11%
24,001–50,000 ALL	22%	27%	8%	11%	10%	10%	31%	11%	45%	37%	10%
50,001–70,000 ALL	30%	28%	10%	13%	11%	11%	29%	14%	42%	38%	17%
Over 70,001 ALL	21%	16%	9%	12%	7%	5%	35%	7%	42%	33%	12%
Geographic representation											
Urban	18%	21%	9%	9%	8%	8%	25%	10%	41%	33%	9%
Rural	19%	18%	9%	12%	11%	10%	29%	13%	51%	42%	9%

* Combined responses of 'excellent performance' and 'very good performance' categories.

Note: Colours represent >5 p.p. difference with total response.

4.8 Use of ICT

The digitisation of public services or ‘e-governance’ has become a worldwide trend over the past decade or so. The digitisation of public services makes them more accessible, efficient and transparent to citizens, who can access information in the comfort of their own homes. An additional advantage of e-government portals is that it makes the process of service delivery fairer and less open to corruption.³⁶ Elimination of human interaction in government processes makes bribery and other forms of corruption less likely.

In Albania, the e-governance platform e-Albania was launched in 2012. The platform aims to be the main channel for accessing public services, while reducing service time, limiting bureaucracy, and reducing corruption, while also giving people the chance to improve public services and government policies. The platform is continuously expanding its range of e-services and information regarding public services.³⁷ According to the portal’s website, e-Albania offers 1799 services to individuals and businesses.³⁸ In this section, the respondents answered questions about their knowledge, usage and impressions of local and central government websites and e-services.

Municipality website

For the first time this year, the majority of the Albanian population was aware that their municipality has a website. The older population however, had little knowledge about their municipality’s online platform. Only about 1 in 3 Albanians that were aware of the municipal website have used the website in 2019.

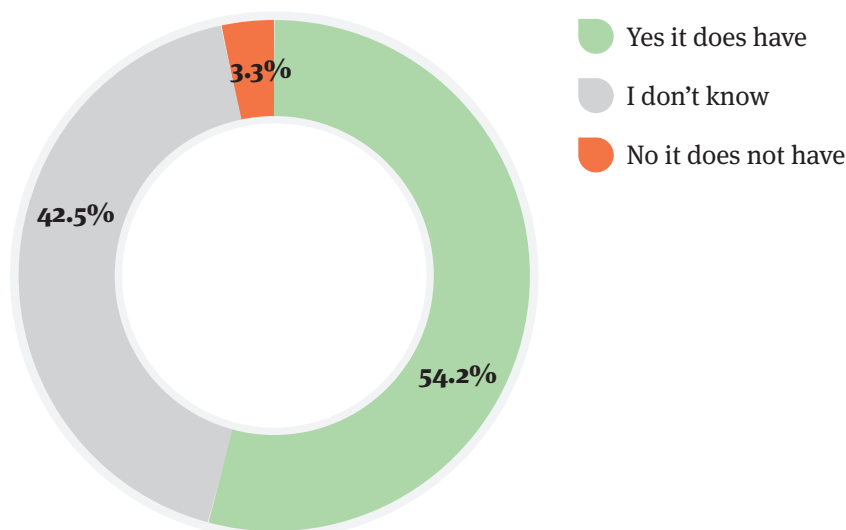
Today, almost all municipalities in Albania have a dedicated website that provides information on their organisational structures, local legislation, budget and activity reports. Though some of the larger municipalities such as Tirana have very comprehensive websites, smaller municipalities such as Tepelena or Fushë-Arrëz have simpler websites. When asked, 54.2% of the respondents were aware of their municipality’s website, whereas

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- 36 See the report, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (March 2018) Embracing Digitalisation: How to use ICT to strengthen Anti-Corruption, available at https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2018-eng_ICT-to-strengthen-Anti-Corruption.pdf
- 37 E-Albania. (n.d.). ‘Rreth portalit’ (about the portal). Retrieved via: <https://e-albania.al/Pages/eAlbania.aspx>
- 38 E-Albania. (n.d.). Statistics for February 2020. Retrieved via: <https://e-albania.al/Pages/Statistics/statistika.pdf>

42.5% were unsure whether their municipality has a website and 3.3% claimed that their municipality does not have a functioning website.

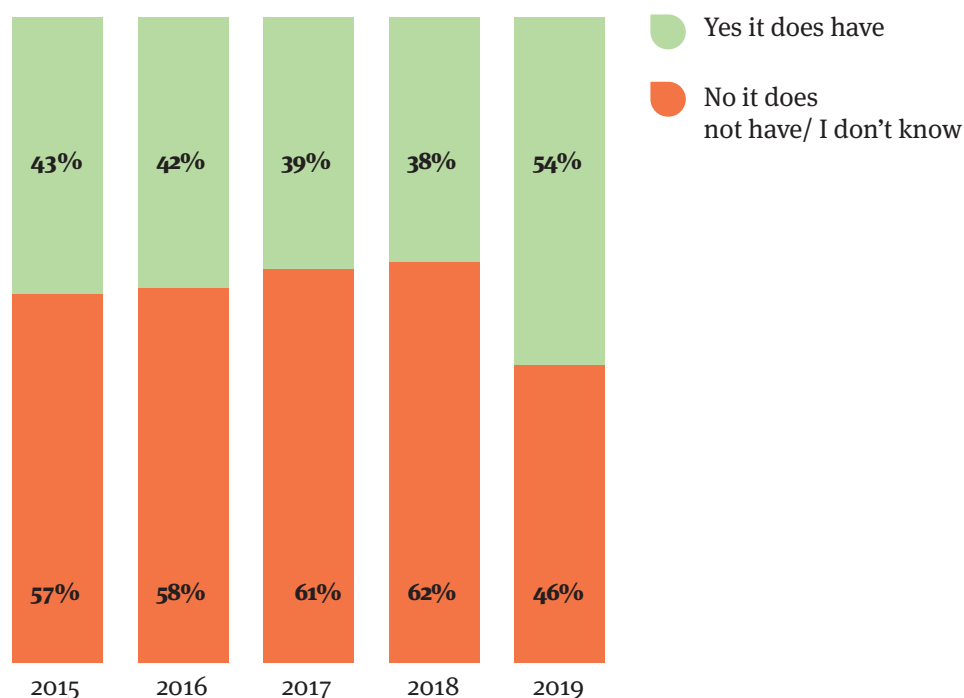
Figure 52. Do you know if your municipality has a website? (2019)



Base: $N = 1638$

When checking across demographics, the data shows no significant differences based on gender or income status. Substantial differences were recorded for age, on the other hand. Of the respondents aged 18–45, a majority was aware of their municipality’s website (60%), while only 17.1% of the respondents over 65 years old thought that their municipality has a website. Respondents with a university degree were the most likely to be aware of their municipalities’ websites (72.1%), whereas respondents with a high school diploma (51.3%) or had only completed up to secondary education (33.5%), were less often aware. Moreover, respondents employed in the public sector (74.6%) were more informed on the existence of the municipality website than respondents working in the private sector (56.3%). Respondents from urban areas reported more regularly that their municipality has a website (57.6%) than respondents living in rural areas (45.7%).

Comparing this year’s results to previous years, the awareness regarding the municipal website has increased substantially. In 2015, 43% of the respondents was aware that their municipality has a website. After the proportion of respondents that were aware of their municipality’s website had decreased for three years in a row, from 43% in 2015 to 38% in 2018, the 2019 Opinion Poll results show that, for the first time, more than half of the respondents were aware of their municipality having a website.

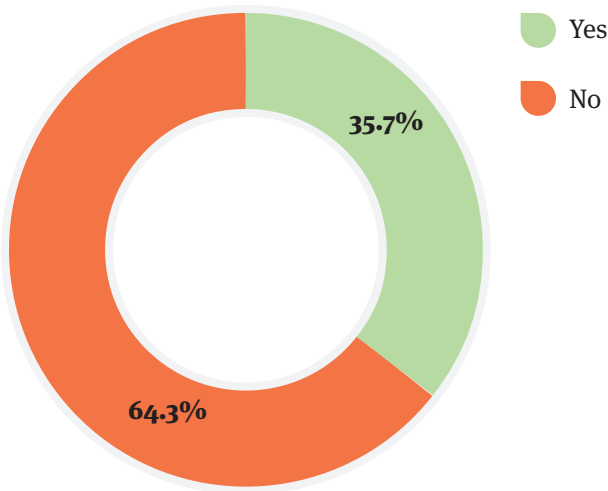
Figure 53: Do you know if your municipality has a website? (2015–2019)

Base: 2015 (N = 1565); 2016 (N = 1618); 2017(N = 1640); 2018 (N = 1638); 2019 (N = 2493)

**Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section 'Methodology'.*

However, among the respondents that indicated that their municipality has a functioning website, only 35.7% indicated that they have used the website during the course of 2019. No significant differences were found for socio-demographic characteristics such as gender or income level. Respondents with a university degree were more likely to have used their municipalities' website (43.4%) than respondents with a high school diploma (29.6%) or respondents that had completed up to lower secondary education (32.6%). Employed respondents (40.6%) were more likely to have used their municipality's website than unemployed respondents (29.6%). Respondents working in the public sector were considerably more likely to have used the website (58%) than respondents working in the private sector (33%). Respondents who were over 65 years old were the least likely of all demographic groups to have used their municipality's website (14%).

Figure 54: Proportion of respondents that uses municipality website (2019)



Base: N = 1556

Quality and reasons for using the municipality website

Albanians that used their municipality’s website in 2019, usually did so to receive information on events or programmes in their place of residence, or to check which services are available to them. Over the last three years, most Albanians assessed their municipality’s website as accurate, continuously updated, and rich in information.

During 2019, respondents used their municipalities’ websites mainly to receive information on programmes or events in their local area (11.9%) or to receive information on the types of available services and where and how to access them (9.5%). A smaller number of respondents used these websites to follow municipal council decisions (4.5%) or to send complaints and comments to a municipal department or staff (2.2%). No differences were found across demographics in the use of the municipality websites.

Table 27: Reason for using the website of the municipality (2019)

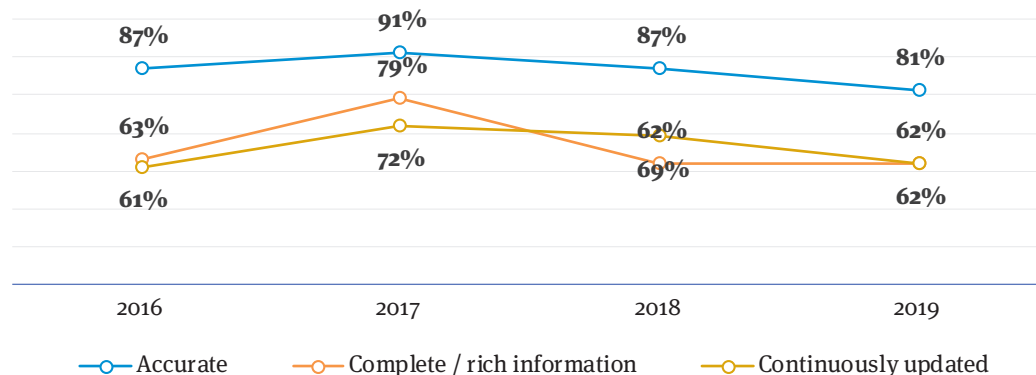
	Proportion of respondents
To receive information (check programs/events in my city/town)	11.9% (N = 297)
To follow council decisions, I read minutes of meetings	4.5% (N = 113)

	Proportion of respondents
To send complaints, comments to a municipal department/staff	2.2% (N = 54)
To receive information on types of available services and where and how to access them	9.5% (N = 238)
Other*:	0.6% (N = 16)

*Other: e.g. to learn about ongoing projects in my municipality, to apply for a job.

The majority of respondents that used their municipality's website in 2019 saw the information and services provided as accurate (81%), complete/rich (62%), and continuously updated (62%). Although the numbers demonstrate overall satisfaction with the quality of the municipality websites, the proportion of respondents that rated the websites as accurate, rich in information, and continuously updated has decreased in 2019 compared to previous years. In 2017, respondents rated their municipality's website particularly positive: 91% of respondents said that their municipal website was accurate, 79% that it was complete/rich in information, and 72% that it was continuously updated. Since then, the proportion of respondents that rated the municipality website as 'accurate' or as 'continuously updated' both decreased by 10 p.p., while the proportion of respondents that perceived the municipality website as rich in information decreased by 17 p.p.

Figure 55: The quality of municipality's website (2016–2019)



Base: 2016 (N = 266); 2017 (N = 205); 2018 (N = 205); 2019 (N = 537).

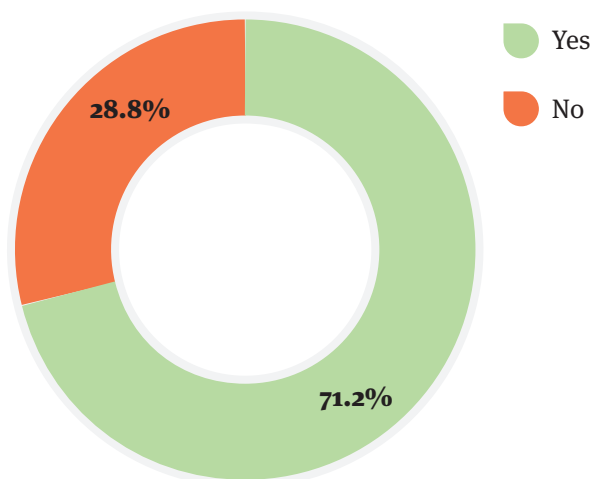
*Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section 'methodology'.

E-governance in Albania

71.2% of the Albanian population indicated that they are aware of the country's online services through the e-Albania portal. However, there was still a lack of awareness among older Albanians, especially those over 65 years old. Most people that have used the e-Albania portal saw it as functional and easy to use. 60% of the respondents indicated that the platform has sufficient opportunity to express comments and/or suggestions.

With the e-Albania portal consolidating its position as an important tool for delivering the government's e-services, Albanians have become increasingly aware of the platform's existence and its function. To the question: "Are you aware that the government offers electronic services through the e-Albania portal?" 71.2% of the respondents replied 'yes', as opposed to the 28.8% of respondents that were not aware of the platform's existence. Compared to last year, there was an increase in the awareness of the e-Albania platform; in 2018, only 54% of respondents were aware of e-Albania's existence.

Figure 56: Awareness of the e-Albania portal (2019)



Base: N = 2468

As often happens with new media, the awareness and use of the platform declines as the age of the respondent increases. Consequently, positive responses to the question: "Are you aware that the government offers electronic services through the e-Albania portal?", were given by 84.5% of individuals aged 18–25 years old, but only 36.8% of respondents

over 65 years old. Furthermore, respondents with a university degree (85.4%) reported more often that they were aware of the e-Albania portal than respondents that had up to lower secondary education³⁹ (51%).

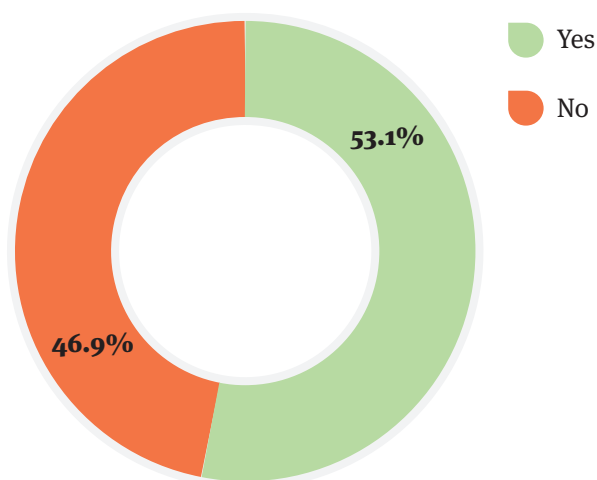
Findings from the focus groups indicates that the main reason for the differences in the level of awareness regarding e-Albania across demographics was that of access to internet and capacity to use ICT. Both the focus groups ‘under 30 years old’ and ‘over 55 years old’ indicated that young people have better access to the internet and other ICT, and are better able to use these technologies than older people. In addition, some focus group participants who were students mentioned that they have been studying about e-governance and anti-corruption and used e-Albania as a case study. Furthermore, participants in the ‘over 55 years old’ focus group that had used the e-Albania portal reported a negative experience due to discrepancies in data registered such as differences in family name, or birth date. These issues then had to be resolved by the relevant institution, which took a long time. In the focus group ‘No income or income under 24,000 ALL’, participants showed limited awareness of e-Albania. They claimed they were used to a certain type of service provision and preferred personal contact with public officials to better understand the procedures. Others noted limits of access to information technology and internet, as well as limited ability to use them.

Of the respondents that were aware of the e-Albania online portal, 53.1% received electronic services from the platform during 2019. Younger respondents were more likely to have received e-services through e-Albania than older respondents. Over 61% of the respondents aged 18–35 had received services through the portal, while only 14.1% of the respondents over 65 years old received a service through the portal.

Comparing by education levels, respondents with a university degree (67.7%) were more likely to have received a service through e-Albania than respondents with a high school diploma (46.9%) or with up to lower secondary education (33.5%). Similarly, employed respondents (59.5%) had more often received an e-service than unemployed respondents (47.1%), and of the employed respondents, those working in the public sector received services through e-Albania more often (69.9%) than respondents working in the private sector (54.3%). Moreover, respondents residing in urban areas more often reported (55.8%) that they had used electronic services than respondents residing in rural areas (46%). No significant differences were found for the socio-demographic characteristics of gender or income.

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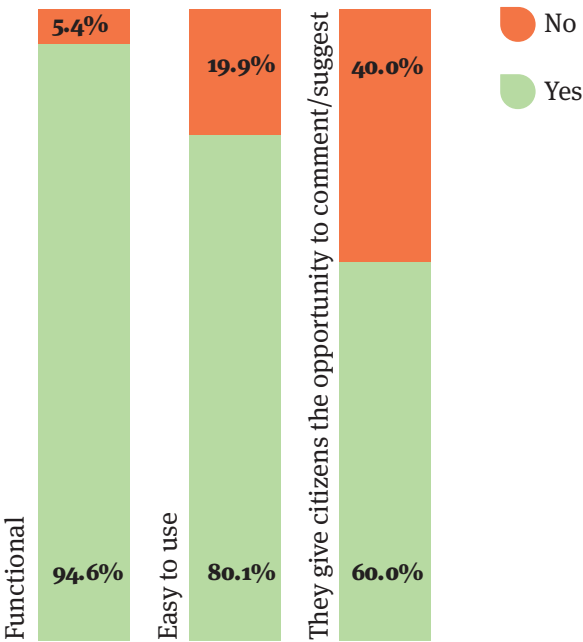
³⁹ The group ‘up to lower secondary education’ includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Figure 57: Have you received any electronic services through the e-Albania portal? (2019)

Base: N = 1758

Respondents that received electronic services during 2019 were generally positive about the quality of the e-Albania portal. An overwhelming majority (94.6%) that had used the service reported that the electronic services were functional, 80.1% found the services easy to use, and 60% said that the electronic services gave them the opportunity to make comments or suggestions. Respondents over 55 years old, on the other hand, did not feel that the portal gives sufficient feedback opportunities: respondents 56–65 years old (43.6%) or over 65 years old (55.6%) reported less often that the e-Albania portal gives citizens the opportunity to submit comments and/or suggestions. Lastly, fewer respondents with up to lower secondary education (50.6%) or a high school diploma (54.3%) indicated that e-Albania has enough feedback mechanisms compared with respondents with a university degree (65.7%). No significant differences across other socio-demographic characteristics were found.

Figure 58: Quality assessment of e-services through the e-Albania portal (2019)



Base: N1 = 914; N2 = 919; N3 = 897

4.9 Gender and social inclusion

Albanian society is characterised by a traditional division of gender roles, in which women are often the homemakers and men are the breadwinners. According to a study conducted in 2010, women spend on average 5 hours and 43 minutes a day on unpaid housework, while men spend an average of 2 hours and six minutes. Meanwhile, men are more likely to perceive that there is an equal share of housework, while women generally indicate that they do not get the support of men.⁴⁰ Particularly in households with children or households located in rural areas, women do the lion's share of child-rearing and household tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, and ironing (Dauti and Zhllima, 2016).⁴¹ In urban areas and among couples that have a migration background, this division of labour in the household is changing towards a more equal share of chores.

However, women are increasingly pursuing tertiary education degrees. Over the past five years, 6 in every 10 university students was female, and more women are graduating from Albanian universities than ever before (INSTAT, 2019).⁴² Women are also participating more in decision-making processes than in the mid-1990s and 2000s. A series of legislative amendments paved the way for an increase in female participation in parliament (which stood at 29% in 2018), more female mayors (15% after the 2015 elections), and an improved female representation in municipal councils (36.9% in 2017).⁴³ In 2018, women held 57% of the government's ministerial positions,⁴⁴ the highest proportion of female cabinet members in the region. Yet, substantial progress is also needed in other sectors, including the higher ranks in the police, where women remain underrepresented. In this section, the perception of Albanians with regards to gender equality and social inclusion are explored. Compared to previous years, one question in this section on the number of women in the municipal council was omitted, because people are generally unaware of the composition of their municipal council and its new members after the 2019 elections.

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40 Dauti, M. and Zhllima, E. (2016). Public Perceptions and Attitudes toward Gender Equality in Albania. Tirana: UNDP. http://www.al.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/STUDIMI_PERCEPTIMET_eng.pdf

41 Ibid.

42 Institute of Statistics INSTAT. (2019). Women and Men in Albania 2019. pp. 55–57. Retrieved via http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6413/burra-dhe-gra_2019.pdf

43 Ibid. pp. 102–103.

44 Ibid. p. 128.

Perceptions about gender equality in Albanian society

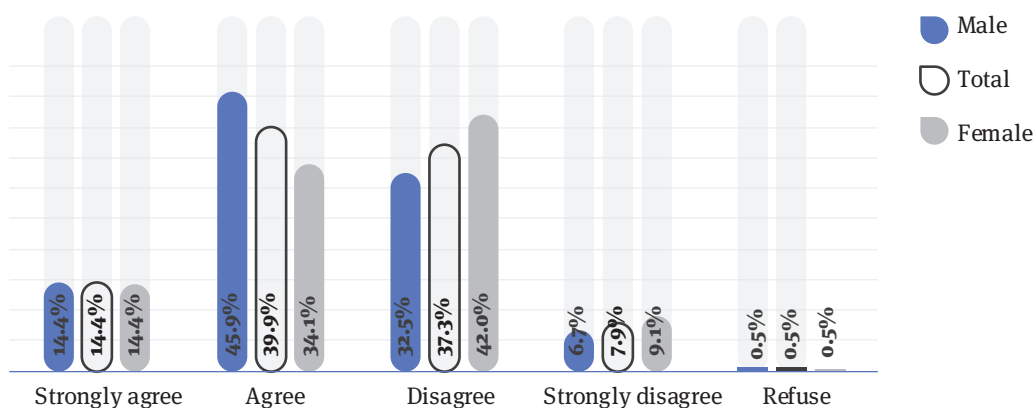
A small majority of the Albanian resident population thinks that there is equality between men and women in Albanian society. Men were more likely to agree that there is gender equality than women. Albanians between 18 and 25 years old agreed least often that there is gender equality, while Albanians over 65 years old were most likely to state that there is gender equality in Albanian society. Albanians employed in the public sector were more likely to indicate that there is gender equality than Albanians employed in the private sector.

As the first part of the section ‘Gender and Social Inclusion’ consists of a set of three statements about gender equality in Albanian society, access to public services, and service delivery across genders. These statements aim to reveal the attitudes of Albanians regarding equality between men and women.

“Statement 1: “There is equality between men and women in Albanian society”

With regard to the first statement, 54.3% of the respondents either ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the statement. Female respondents were less likely (48.5%) to feel that there is gender equality in Albania than male respondents (60.4%). This suggests that women are less convinced that there is equality between men and women in Albanian society than men.

Figure 59: Equality between men and women in Albanian society (2019)

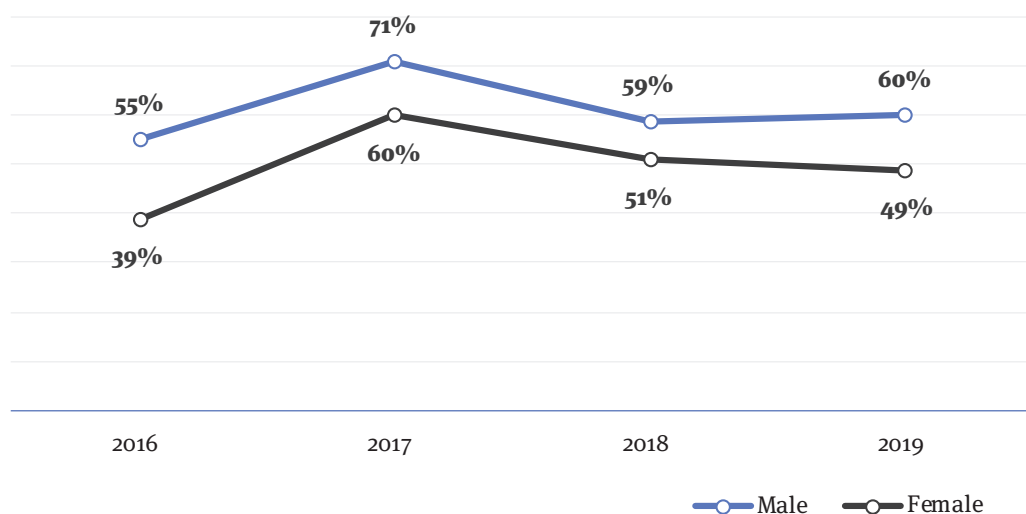


Base: N = 2487

When checking across demographics, the data shows differences across age groups although there is no discernible trend for age. Respondents between 18 and 25 years old were the least likely to agree with the statement (46%), while respondents between 36 and 45 years old (60.2%) or over 65 years old (62.3%) were more likely to agree to the statement than other age groups. Furthermore, respondents employed in the public sector were more likely (61.7%) to agree with the statement than respondents employed in the private sector (53.6%). Contrary to previous years, where respondents from rural areas were more likely to think that there is gender equality in Albanian society, this year respondents residing in urban areas were more likely to agree with the statement (56.5%) than rural respondents (49.3%).

Comparing this year's results to previous years, no clear trend is visible with regard to perceptions of gender equality in Albanian society, besides that each year more male respondents perceive that there is gender equality in Albanian society than female respondents. In 2017, the Opinion Poll's highest-scoring year for gender equality, 71% of male respondents and 60% of female respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement: 'There is equality between men and women in Albanian society'. In 2016, on the other hand, only 39% of female respondents and 55% of male respondents felt that there was equality between the sexes in Albanian society, a much lower proportion.

Figure 60: Equality between men and women in Albanian society (2016–2019)



Base: 2016 (N = 1636); 2017 (N = 1623); 2018 (N = 1636); 2019 (N = 2487)

**Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section 'methodology'.*

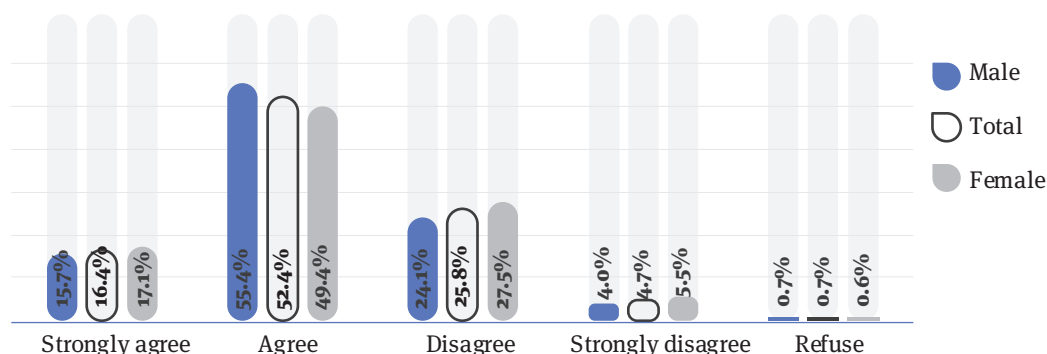
Access to public services across genders

The majority of the Albanian resident population reported that women and men have the same access to public services. Women were somewhat less likely to agree that there is equality in access to public services than men. People over 65, those with higher levels of education, working in the public sector or residing in urban areas were more likely to indicate that women and men have the same access to public services than others.

“Statement 2: “In Albania, women and men have the same access to public services.”

For the statement “In Albania, women and men have the same access to public services”, 68.8% of the respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the statement, whilst only 4.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed. Male respondents were more likely to report that both genders have the same access to public services. 71.1% of male respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the statement, compared to 66.4% of women.

Figure 61: In Albania, women and men have the same access to public services (2019)



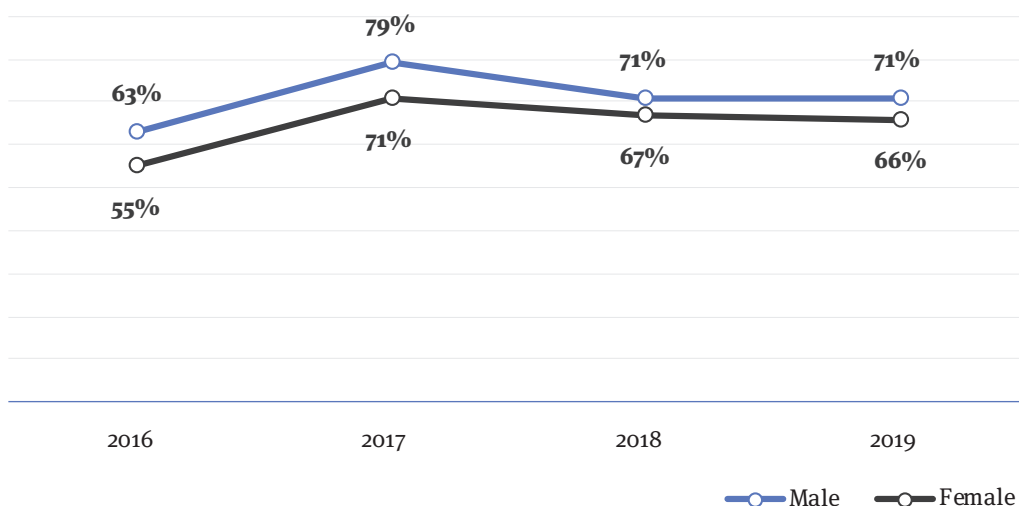
Base: N = 2487

When comparing across demographics, the data shows that respondents with a university degree (70.3%) or a high school diploma (70.6%) were more likely to agree with the statement: “In Albania, women and men have the same access to the public services”

than respondents with up to lower secondary education⁴⁵ (62.7%). Regarding employment status, employed respondents (70.5%) and particularly those employed in the public sector (75.6%) were more likely to agree with the statement than unemployed respondents (64.1%) or respondents working in the private sector (69.5%). Lastly, respondents residing in urban areas agreed more often with the statement (70.4%) than respondents residing in rural areas (65.1%).

In 2016, the percentage of respondents that agreed with the statement: “In Albania, women and men have the same access to the public services” was lower than in 2017, 2018 and 2019. In 2016, only 55% of female respondents and 63% of male respondents said that women and men had the same access to public services. In 2017, this percentage increased to 71% of female respondents and 79% of male respondents. Since then, the proportion of respondents that agree with the statement has decreased slightly but remains higher than 2016. Additionally, each year more male than female respondents perceive that “In Albania, women and men have the same access to the public services”.

Figure 62: In Albania, women and men have the same access to public services (2016–2019)



Base: 2016 (N = 1635); 2017 (N = 1619); 2018 (N = 1624); 2019 (N = 2487)

*Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section ‘methodology’.

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⁴⁵ The group ‘up to lower secondary education’ includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

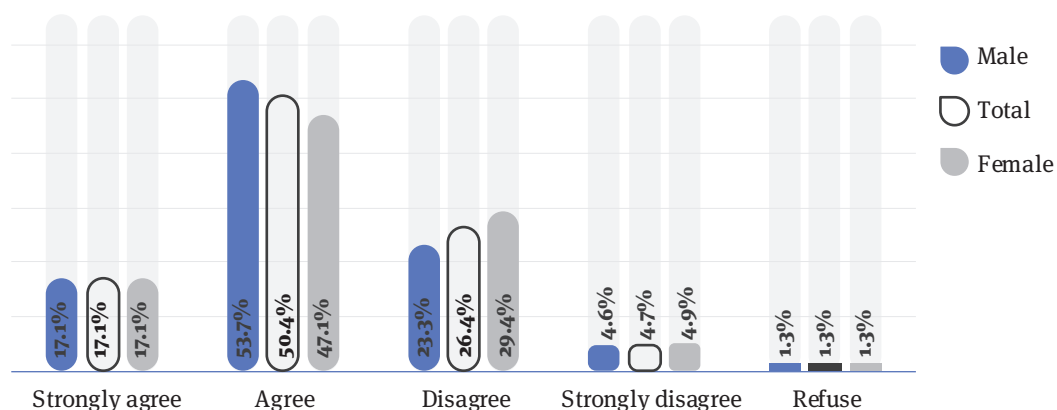
Public-services delivery across genders

The majority of the Albanian resident population reported that public servants serve men and women with the same devotion and ethics. Women were somewhat less likely to agree with the statement than men. People over 35, those that are employed, and those that work in the public sector specifically were more likely to indicate that women and men are treated equally by public servants.

“Statement 3: “In Albania, public servants serve men and women with the same devotion and ethics”

Respondents were asked to give their opinion on the statement: “In Albania, public servants serve with the same devotion and ethics to women and men”. 67.5% of the respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the statement, while 4.7% ‘strongly disagreed’. Male respondents were more likely (70.8%) to agree with the statement than female respondents (64.3%).

Figure 63: Public servants serve women and men with the same ethics and devotion (2019)



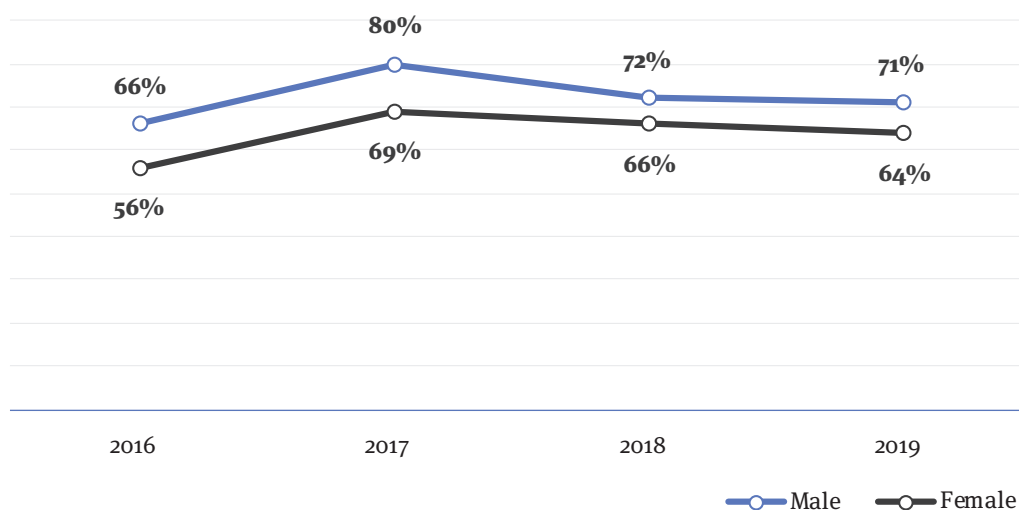
Base: N = 2487

Across demographics the data shows differences for age, employment status, and employment sector. Older respondents were more likely to agree with the statement: “In Albania, public servants serve with the same devotion and ethics to women and men” than younger respondents. Of the respondents over 65 years old, 77.7% agreed with the

statement, of the respondents 46–65 years old 70% agreed, and of the respondents 36–45 years old 71.2% agreed. Of the younger respondents, 59.2% of the age category 18–25 agreed along with 65.3% of the respondents that were 26–35 years old. With regard to employment status, employed respondents agreed more often (69.1%) with the statement “In Albania, public servants serve with the same devotion and ethics to women and men” than unemployed respondents (62.9%). Lastly, respondents employed in the public sector (75.4%) agreed more often with the statement than respondents employed in the private sector (67.6%).

Similar to the statements 1 and 2, respondents were considerably more positive about public servants serving both genders equally in 2017 than they were in 2016. In 2016, respondents were quite negative about the statement, when only 56% of female respondents and 66% of male respondents said that public servants serve men and women equally. Since 2017, when 69% of female and 80% of male respondents agreed with the statement, the proportion of respondents that think that in Albania, public servants serve men and women with the same devotion and ethics has decreased somewhat. As for the previous two statements, each year more male than female respondents perceive that “public servants serve with the same devotion and ethics to women and men”.

Figure 64: Public servants serve women and men with the same ethics and devotion (2016–2019)



Base: 2016 (N = 1635); 2017 (N = 1614); 2018 (N = 1636); 2019 (N = 2487)

*Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section ‘methodology’.

Discrimination by institutions or public officials

Approximately 1 in 8 Albanians reported being treated differently by an institution or public official in 2019 on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, a disability, or something else. Of the Albanian resident population that had suffered discrimination in 2019, most were treated differently because of their age (35.6%) or their gender (27.1%).

After assessing the three statements on gender equality, the section continues with a set of questions about social inclusion and inclusive governance. Respondents were asked if they had been treated differently by an institution or a public official in 2019, on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, a disability, or something else. The majority of respondents (86.8%) indicated that they had not been treated differently by an institution or public official. Of the respondents that did indicate that they had been treated differently, they said most often that they had been discriminated against due to age (4.5% or N = 113) or gender (3.4% or N = 86).

Table 28: Discrimination by institutions (2019)

I have been treated differently	12.6%	N = 317
Gender	3.4%	N = 86
Age	4.5%	N = 113
Ethnicity	2%	N = 50
Sexual orientation	0.2%	N = 5
Disability	0.9%	N = 22
Other*	1.6%	N = 41
I have not been treated differently	86.8%	N = 2169

Base: N = 2486

*Other: economic status, poverty, political affiliation, or physical appearance.

Depending on which characteristic (gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability) people were treated differently due to, there were differences in reporting across the demographics regarding discrimination in 2019. For discrimination on the basis of gender, female respondents reported more often (5.2% or N = 66) to have been discriminated against than male respondents (1.6% or N = 20). Furthermore, respondents in the age category 18–25 (4.8% or N = 23), the age category 26–35 (4.7% or N = 31), and respondents with a university degree (5% or N = 41) reported most often that they were treated differently by an institution or a public official based on their gender.

With regard to discrimination based on age, respondents between 18 and 25 years old (8.4% or N = 40) and respondents over 65 years old (9.7% or N = 17) more often reported that they had been treated differently by an institution or a public official because of their age. Respondents that have a disability (9.3% or N = 15) were also more likely to report that they had been treated differently based on their age than respondents that do not have a disability (4.2% or N = 96).

Concerning ethnic discrimination, respondents were more likely to report having been discriminated against when they belonged to a minority group. 26.3% (N = 40) of the respondents that belonged to a minority group felt they were treated differently on the basis of ethnicity, compared to 0.3% (N = 8) of the respondents that did not belong to a minority group. Lastly, with regard to discrimination based on disability, all but two disabled respondents said they were treated differently by an institution or a public official because of their disability in 2019.

In the focus group “Albanians with a university degree or higher”, participants discussed cases of discrimination in public-service delivery. According to highly educated participants, certain groups such as the Roma community or other marginalised groups were disfavoured in the provision of public services. Participants working in the area of social inclusion for marginalised communities indicated that the Roma community and other marginalised groups have limited access to public services.

Women in the decision-making process

A large majority of the Albanian resident population thinks that women are just as capable as men at holding any public position. However, the proportion of Albanians that think women and men are not equally fit for public office is slowly increasing. Women, people under 45 years old, and Albanians with a university degree were more likely to indicate that they believe women are just as capable as men in holding any public position.

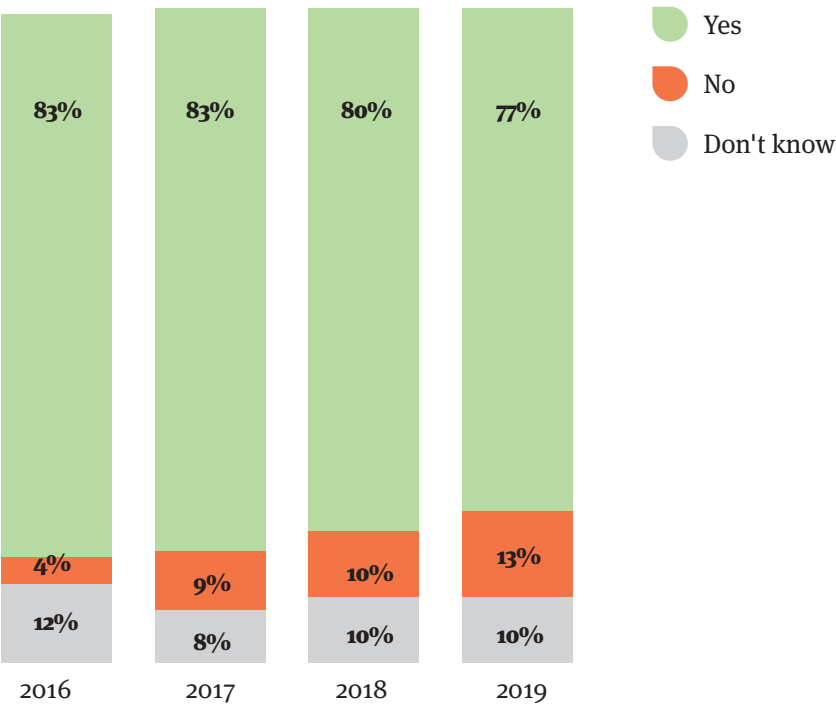
Following amendments to the Electoral Code made in 2008, the number of women participating in the parliamentary elections and taking part in central governance structures has increased. Whereas in 2008 only 7% of the MPs were female, in 2018 the proportion of female MPs was 29%.⁴⁶ Similarly, in 2015, amendments to the Electoral Code were made to increase the participation of women in local governance. That year, 10% of candidates running for mayor were women and 49% of the candidates running for the

46 Institute of Statistics INSTAT. (2019), Women and Men in Albania 2019. pp. 102–103. Retrieved via http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6413/burra-dhe-gra_2019.pdf

municipal councils.⁴⁷

Respondents were asked how capable they perceive women to be in public office. 76.5% of the respondents answered that they think women and men are equally capable holding any public position, while 13.5% said that women are not equally fit of holding any public position and 9.9% were not sure. Compared to previous years, there was a small increase in the proportion of respondents that did not think women are just as capable as men in holding any public position. In 2016, only 4% answered ‘No’ to the question, while in 2017 it was 9%, in 2018 it was 10%, and in 2019 it was 13%. Consequently, the proportion of respondents that think women and men are equally fit for public office is decreasing.

Figure 65: Women and men are equally capable holding any public position (2016-2019)



Base: 2016 (N = 1635); 2017 (N = 1628); 2018 (N = 1632); 2019 (N = 2486)

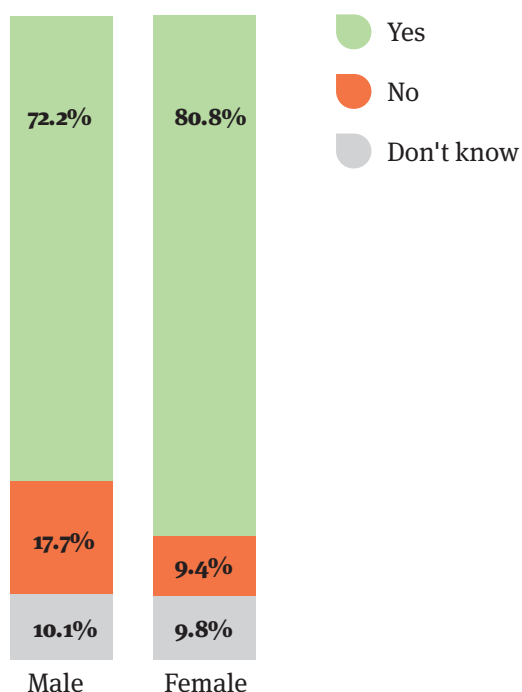
*Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section ‘methodology’.

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47 Ibid.

When we look at the differences between the answers of male and female respondents, we can see that female respondents were more likely to report that women and men are equally capable holding any public position than male respondents. 80.8% of female respondents said that women and men are equally fit for public office, compared to 72.2% of male respondents.

Figure 66: Gender differences for women and men are equally capable holding public positions (2019)



Base: N = 2486

Furthermore, respondents under 45 years old or respondents with high levels of education were more likely to indicate that they believe women and men are equally capable holding any public position. Respondents aged 18–25 (79.4%), 26–35 (80.8%) and 36–45 (78.8%) reported more often that women are equally fit for public office than respondents in the age categories 46–55, 56–65, and 65+ (70.3%, 71.8% and 69.1% respectively). Similarly, respondents with a university degree (82.8%) or a high school diploma (76.8%) were more likely to report that women and men are equally capable holding any public position than

respondents with up to lower secondary education⁴⁸ (66.9%). No substantial differences were observed across employment status or geographical representation (urban vs. rural).

Women's impact on local governance

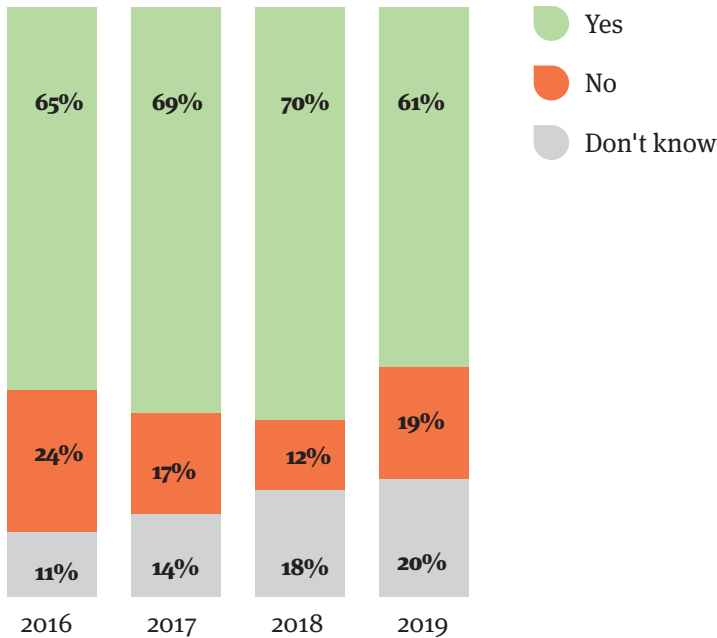
6 in 10 Albanians think that an increased number of women in the Municipal Council will have a positive impact in local governance. Women, people under 45 years old, university graduates, or Albanians working in the public sector, were more likely to report that women will have a positive impact on local governance than other. The proportion of the Albanian resident population that thinks an increased female representation does not have a positive influence on local governance is slightly increasing.

Lastly, respondents were asked whether they felt an increased female representation in the municipal council would have a positive impact on local governance. 60.9% of respondents said that they think more women in the municipal council will be positive for local governance, while 18.6% said it would not have a positive impact and 20.5% were not sure. Compared to the previous three years, a smaller proportion of respondents thought that an increased female participation in the municipal council would have a positive influence on local government.

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⁴⁸ The group 'up to lower secondary education' includes respondents with no education, respondents with only primary education, and respondents that attended school until the compulsory level (8/9 year).

Figure 67: Positive impact of increased female representation in the municipal council (2016–2019)



Base: 2016 (N = 1635); 2017 (N = 1631); 2018 (N = 1633); 2019 (N = 2486)

*Note: In 2019 the sampling method changed compared to previous years. For more information, see the section 'methodology'.

Female respondents (68.9%) were more likely than male respondents (52.7%) to answer that an increased number of women in the municipal council would have a positive impact on local governance. Additionally, more than 68% of the respondents under 45 years old reported that an increased female representation is positive for local governance, compared to 54.7% of the respondents 46–55 years old, 57.4% of the respondents from 56–65 years old and 58.3% of the respondents over 65 years old. Furthermore, more respondents with a university degree (65.9%) reported that an increased female representation is positive for local governance than those with a high school diploma (59.2%) or with up to lower secondary education (57.2%). Lastly, respondents working in the public sector were more likely (70.1%) to report that women have a positive impact on local governance than respondents working in the private sector (60.5%). Responses did not vary substantially by geographical representation.

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6. Appendix 1:

Sample Characteristics 2013–2019

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Gender							
Male	45%	49%	50%	43%	51%	52%	49%
Female	55%	50%	50%	57%	49%	48%	51%
Age groups							
18–25	14%	23%	22%	18%	19%	16%	19%
26–35	14%	22%	25%	23%	23%	23%	26%
36–45	14%	18%	16%	19%	19%	19%	20%
46–55	19%	18%	17%	18%	19%	20%	16%
56–65	20%	10%	11%	13%	11%	13%	12%
Over 66	18%	7%	8%	9%	9%	9%	7%
Geographical representation							
Urban			81%	51%	50%	50%	70%
Rural			19%	49%	50%	50%	30%
Education Level							
Uneducated + elementary education	1%	1%	3%	6%	5%	7%	4%
Middle secondary education	14%	15%	12%	19%	17%	23%	18%
High school	40%	41%	40%	50%	50%	46%	44%
University degree	44%	42%	43%	24%	28%	24%	33%
Employment Status							
Employed	40%	46%	45%	43%	46%	46%	54%
Unemployed	20%	25%	28%	35%	34%	32%	25%
Student	8%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	7%
Retired	26%	9%	11%	12%	12%	12%	11%
Other	3%	5%	7%	2%	1%	4%	3%

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Employment Sector							
Public				32%	29%	28%	25%
Private				64%	71%	69%	72%
Other				4%		3%	3%
Regular individual monthly income (Net)							
No income			34%	33%	37%	32%	29%
Up to 24,000 ALL			21%	25%	24%	28%	25%
24,001–50,000 ALL			29%	28%	25%	28%	28%
50,001–70,000 ALL			6%	4%	5%	4%	7%
Over 70,001 ALL			2%	1%	2%	<1%	2%
Are you a member of a minority group?							
YES					9%	7%	6%
Greek					3.2%	2.7%	1.5%
Macedonian					1.6%	1.1%	0.9%
Aromanian					<0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Roma					2.3%	2.4%	1.5%
Egyptian					0.9%	0.2%	0.9%
Montenegrin					0%	0%	0.1%
Bosnian					0.2%	<0.1%	0.2%
Serbian					0%	0%	<0.1%
Bulgarian					<0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
No					90%	92%	93%
Do you have a political party preference?							
Yes					40%	36%	35%
SP					15.5%	16.1%	12.3%
DP					8.5%	9.2%	8.1%
SMI					3.4%	1.2%	2.1%
Other					0.7%	0.4%	0.3%
No					52%	58%	60%
Are you a member of a political party?							
Yes					16%	12%	13%

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SP					6.9%	6.6%	4.6%
DP					2.6%	3%	2.9%
SMI					2.2%	0.8%	0.9%
Other					0.6%	<0.1%	0.2%
No					75%	81%	82%

Note: Refusals are not included. Percentages might not sum up to 100%.

