

THE CITIZENS' OPINION OF THE POLICE FORCE

**The Results of a Public Opinion Survey
Conducted in Albania**

September, 2016



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Conducted in Albania

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ABOUT THE SURVEY

The second round of the public opinion survey "The Citizens' Opinion of the Police Force" was conducted in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. The questionnaire based on which the public opinion survey was conducted was devised by the regional network POINTPULSE to provide answers concerning the citizens' opinion of the police. The questionnaire included six groups of questions:

1. The level of citizens' trust and confidence in institutions;
2. The perception of the police as an institution, but also of policemen and policewomen as individuals;
3. The perception of corruption in the society and the police force;
4. Opinions of citizens regarding the fight against corruption;
5. Opinions of citizens on the work of civil society organisations;
6. Demographics.

The field research in Albania was conducted in April 2016 by IPSOS Strategic Marketing, on a representative sample of 1,000 adult persons, citizens of Albania. A questionnaire was used as a research instrument and interviews were conducted using the "face to face" technique, which involves direct contact with respondents.

The report was published as part of the project titled "Western Balkans Pulse for Police Integrity and Trust", which aims to contribute to increasing the trust and confidence in the police by promoting its accountability and strengthening its integrity. The project is supported by the European Union through the programme "Civil Society Facility" under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

The content of this report is the sole responsibility of the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP) and the views expressed in this document are not necessarily those of the European Union.

SUMMARY

The most trusted institutions in Albania are the media and the education system. Slightly more than half (56%) of the respondents trust the police, while 43% have no trust in this institution. The least trusted institution is the Parliament (25%), followed by the judiciary (33%), customs (34%), the prosecutors' offices (34%) and the Anti-Corruption Agency (35%).

Corruption remains one of the major challenges of the governance in Albania, regardless of the existence of various anti-corruption institutions and measures. Police corruption is still persistent, even though the survey results show improvement of public trust in the police. The concern is that the important pillars in the fight against corruption are also perceived by the respondents as the most corrupt institutions in Albania: judiciary (79%), prosecution (76%), and the Parliament (75%). Corruption is least widespread within the media and non-governmental organisations.

Despite the respondents' prevailing opinion of police being corrupt, it is worth noting that 56% of the respondents believe that employment in the police is gained through public competitions, knowledge and capabilities of candidates. However, Influential friends and political ties form a shortcut to police employment for 71% of the respondents, which is a result that should cause concern in police officials. More than half (55%) of the respondents state that the police act mostly as a service to the citizens, while one fourth of the respondents (25%) who believe the opposite.

The data show a high level of police politicisation: 40% of the respondents believe that politicians have complete influence over the operational work of the police force. An additional 39% share the opinion that politicians influence police work to a great extent. The data also show a contradiction in the citizen's perception on the merit-based recruitment of police officers and the high level of political influence on policing.

Traffic police force is considered the most corrupted police unit, (64%), followed by Minister's closest associates (59%), border police and criminal police (54%) respectively. This indicates that the respondents associate police corruption mainly with bribery, despite the diversity of the forms of police corruption. Moreover, when asked about the institutions to which respondents would first report a case of police corruption, more than half (58%) said that they would report it to the local police station and the media.

With regard to the impunity culture prevailing in Albania, about one fifth (23%) of the respondents suggest strict punishment of offenders, and another fifth (22%) point out that it is necessary to punish a greater number of high ranking police officers. More than one third of the respondents (36%) indicate that the central Government should lead the fight against corruption in the police organisation, assisted by other proposed institutions. Less than half of the respondents (43%) consider that non-governmental organisations should take active part in the fight against corruption, including collaboration with the state institutions favoured by 26% of the respondents.

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Most trust the media and the education system

The trust has been researched for twelve institutions in Albania: customs, education, health care, judiciary, market inspection, police, local self-government, Parliament, media, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and Anti-corruption Agency and Prosecutor's Office. These institutions play an essential role in fighting corruption and enhancing integrity.

TABLE 1: TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS IN ALBANIA

Q: How much do you trust the following institutions in Albania? Please use the following scale, ranging from 1 to 4, when answering: 1 - I have no trust at all, 2 - I mostly do not have trust, 3 - I mostly have trust, 4 - I have complete trust. (One response; Base: total target population)

	I DON'T TRUST IT AT ALL	I MAINLY DON'T TRUST IT	I MAINLY TRUST IT	I COMPLETELY TRUST IT	DON'T KNOW	SUM - (1+2)	SUM + (3+4)
CUSTOMS	34	28	29	5	5	61	34
EDUCATION	22	17	44	17	2	38	60
HEALTH	33	22	36	9	0	55	45
JUDICIARY	46	21	26	7	1	67	33
COMMERCIAL INSPECTORATES	37	26	29	6	3	63	35
POLICE	23	20	40	16	1	43	56
MUNICIPAL/CITY AUTHORITIES	25	23	37	12	3	48	49
PARLIAMENT	55	19	20	5	1	74	25
MEDIA	21	18	44	18	0	38	62
NGOS	30	18	35	13	5	47	48
ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY	35	25	27	8	6	59	35
PROSECUTORS	43	21	26	9	2	64	34

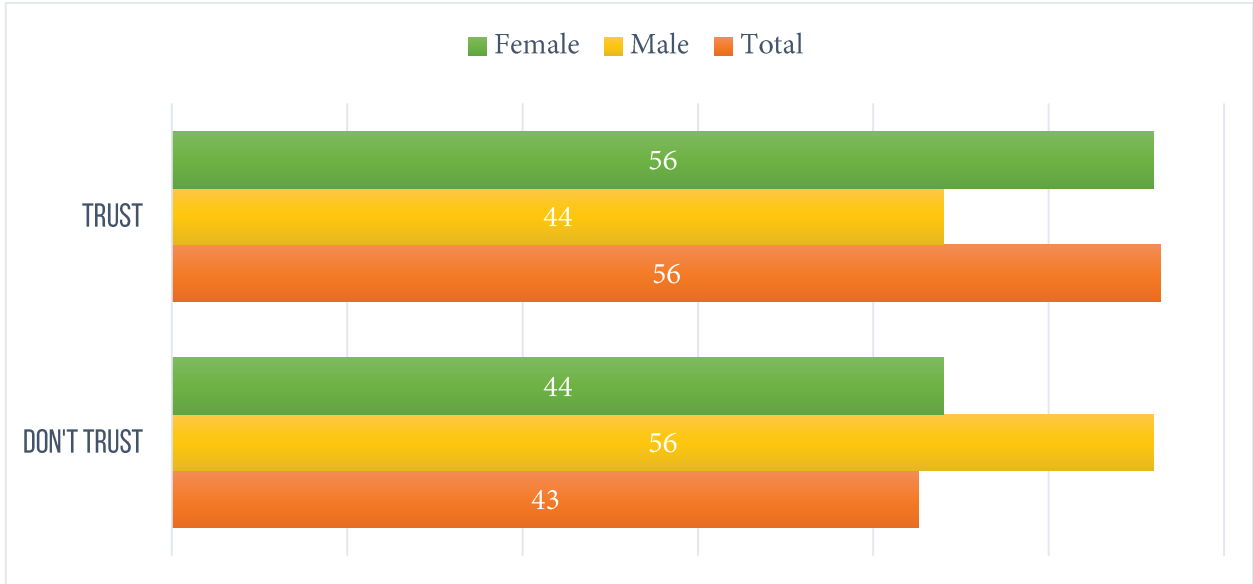
The most trusted institutions are the media (62%) and the education system (60%). The Parliament (25%) is the least trusted institution in Albania, followed by the judiciary (33%), customs (34%), prosecutors (34%), and the Anti-Corruption Agency (35%). The judicial reform approved in July 2016 in the midst of controversy may have caused the low levels of trust in the judiciary and the prosecutor's office. Respondents show diversity of opinion in terms of trust in the police. A little more than half of the respondents (56%) trust the police, while 43% do not. In the last years, police reform has been given considerable attention by the media, due to legislative activities and efforts to enhance institutional capacities and increase public transparency. Positive perception towards police in Albania could represent the results of those efforts.

More women than men trust the police

Four out of ten respondents (40%) state that they mostly have trust in the police, while 16% of the respondents have trust it completely. Slightly fewer than half the respondents show distrust in this institution (43%). Regarding that, 20% of the respondents pointed out that they mostly do not trust the police, while 23% said that they distrust it completely.

CHART 1: TRUST IN THE POLICE IN ALBANIA

Q: How much do you trust the following institutions in Albania? Please use the following scale, ranging from 1 to 4, when answering: 1 - I have no trust at all, 2 - I mostly do not have trust, 3 - I mostly have trust, 4 - I have complete trust. (One response; Base: total target population)



Respondents from urban areas (56%) show more trust in the police when compared with respondents from rural areas (44%). Interviewees aged 18 to 29 show a slightly higher level of trust in the police (30%) than other age groups. Respondents with less education trust the police more in comparison to the total population (55%). There are no significant differences regarding the trust in the police depending on the origin of respondents. Gender-wise, the perception of distrust in the police is shared equally. On the other hand, more female respondents (56%) trust the police compared to the males - 44%.

PERCEPTION OF THE POLICE

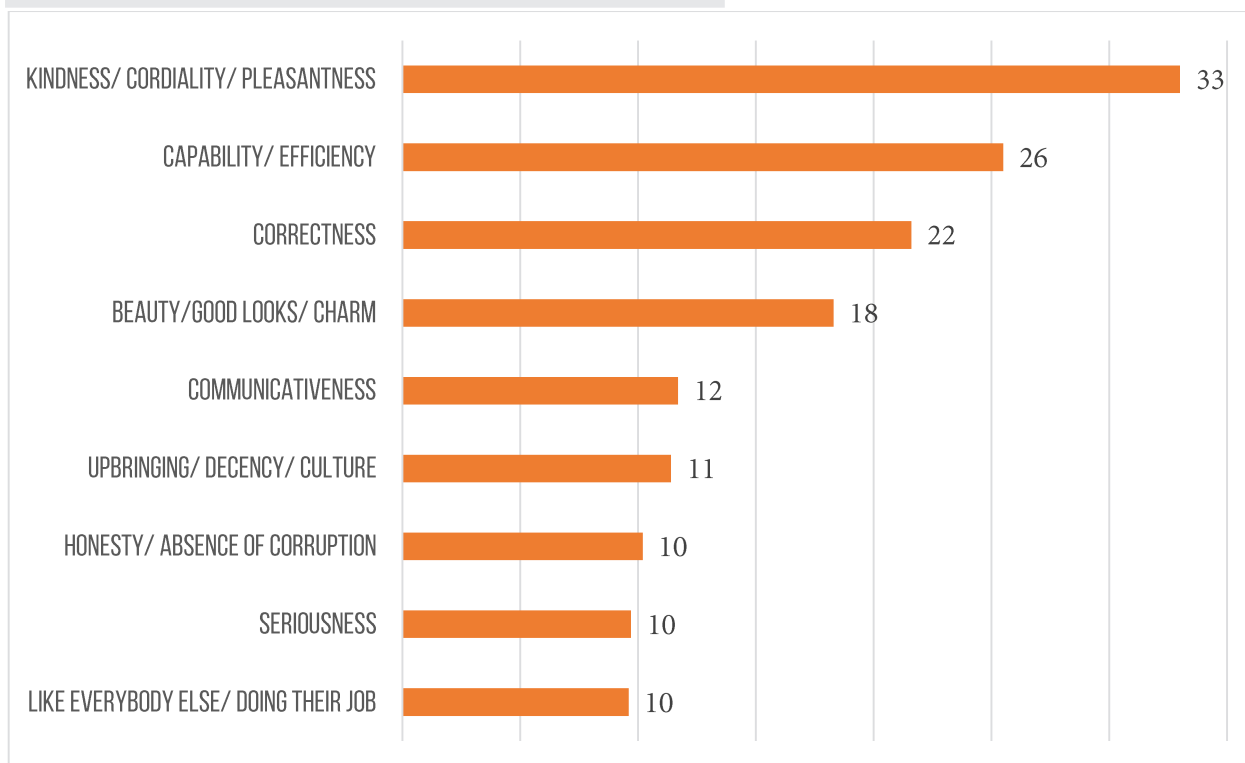
Mostly positive perception towards policewomen and policemen in Albania

First associations towards a policewoman are kindness, cordiality, pleasantness (33%), followed by capability, efficiency (26%). Other associations are represented to a rather lesser extent: correctness (22%); beauty, good looks, charm (18%); politeness, decency, culture (11%); like anyone else, doing their job and honesty (10% each); professionalism, expertise, training and courage, boldness (9% each); goodness (8%); positive opinion (6%) and courtesy/accessibility/interest (1%).

External features like beauty and kindness were listed far more frequently than professionalism, expertise or training in both cases: when respondents were asked to provide their first association with a female police officer and with a typical police officer. This is however more pervasive when it comes to female officers.

CHART 2: FIRST ASSOCIATIONS CONCERNING A FEMALE POLICE OFFICER (MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

Q: When you think of a female police officer in Albania, the one in direct contact with the citizens, how would you describe her? Please specify several characteristics (adjectives) that, in your opinion, best describe an average female police officer in Albania.

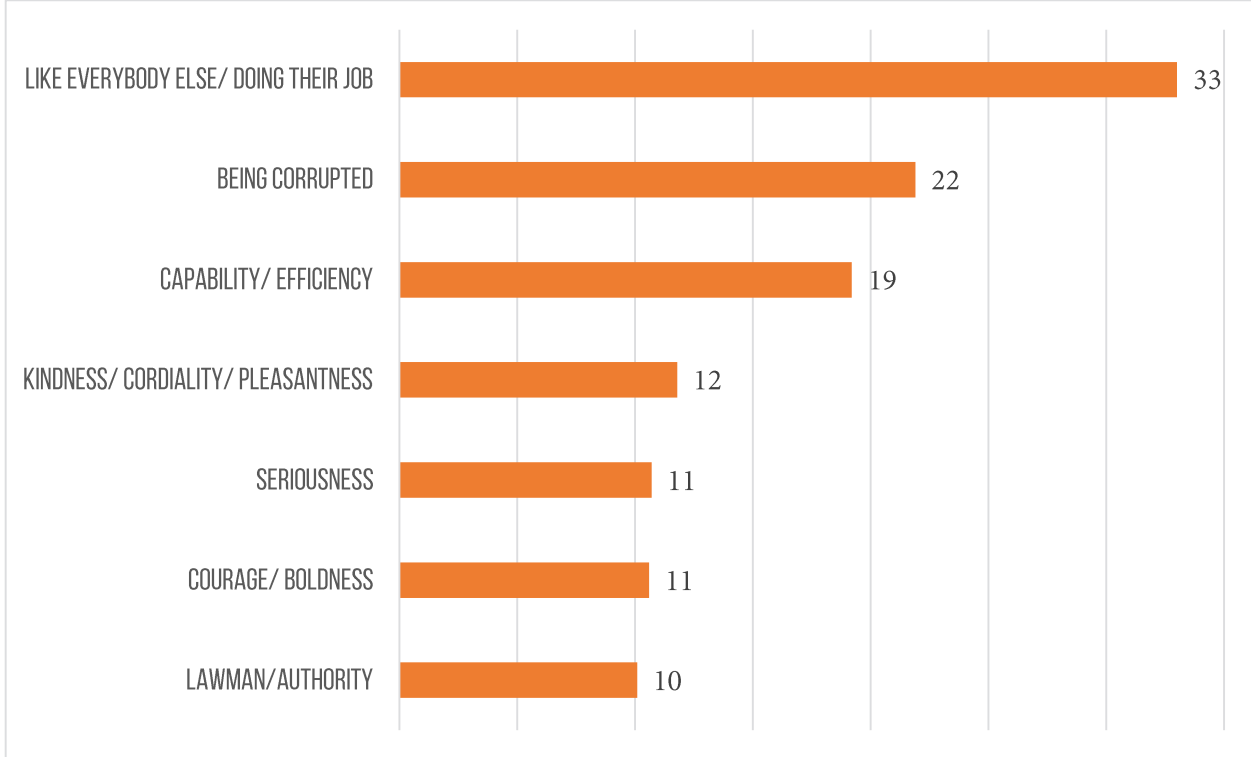


Exactly one-third (33%) of the citizens stated that a typical police officer is like everybody else, thinking of civil servants. The problematic result, in the context of democratic policing and police reform in Albania, is that 22% of the respondents cited that a typical policeman in Albania is corrupt. Such associations were not present toward policewoman in this research. Other associations are represented accordingly: capability, efficiency (19%); kindness, cordiality, pleasantness (12%), courage, boldness (11%); seriousness (11%); correctness (9%); reassuring, trust (8%); professionalism, expertise, training (6%).

The police in Albania have lately paid more attention to the strengthening of public relations of the police and have contributed to improving the overall image of the police force through the (re)construction of police reception halls. This may have influenced the citizens' opinion of their specific characteristics, including kindness, cordiality, seriousness, beauty or other similar features.

CHART 3: FIRST ASSOCIATIONS CONCERNING A TYPICAL POLICE OFFICER (MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

Q: When you think of a typical police officer in Albania, the one in direct contact with the citizens, how would you describe him? Please specify several characteristics (adjectives) that, in your opinion, best describe an average typical police officer in Albania.



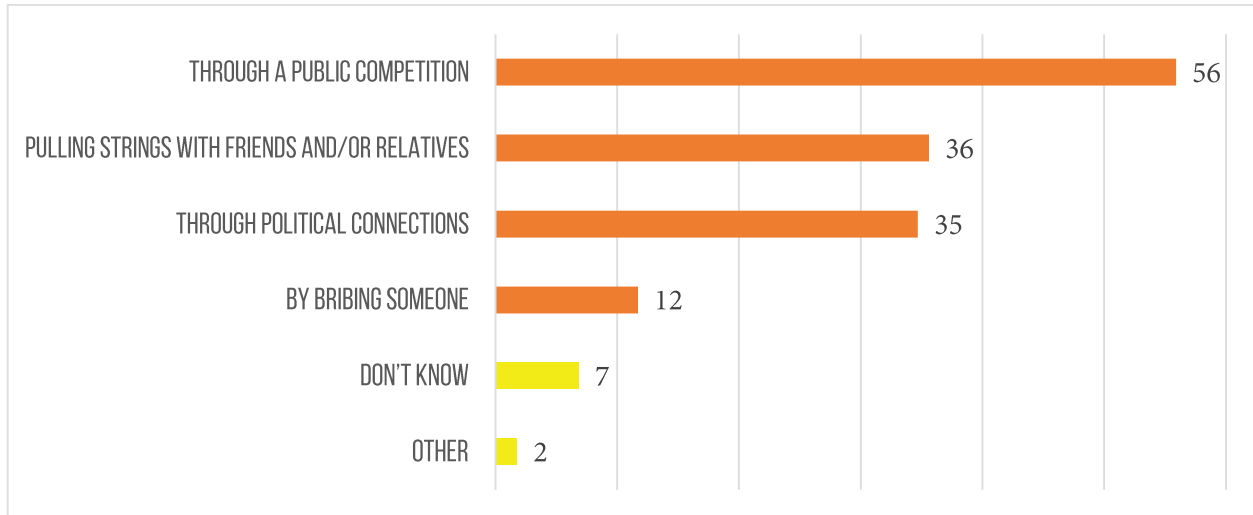
Employment in the police through a public competition

More than one half of the citizens (56%) believe that employment in the police is based on public competitions. However, 36% of the respondents believe that it requires pulling strings with friends and/or relatives, while nearly the same percentage (35%) assessed political ties as important for gaining employment in the police. Influential friends and political ties are a shortcut to police employment for

71% of the respondents, which is a result that should cause worry to officials in the Albanian police. 12% of the respondents pointed out that recruitment in the police force is linked with bribery.

CHART 4: EMPLOYMENT IN THE POLICE (MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

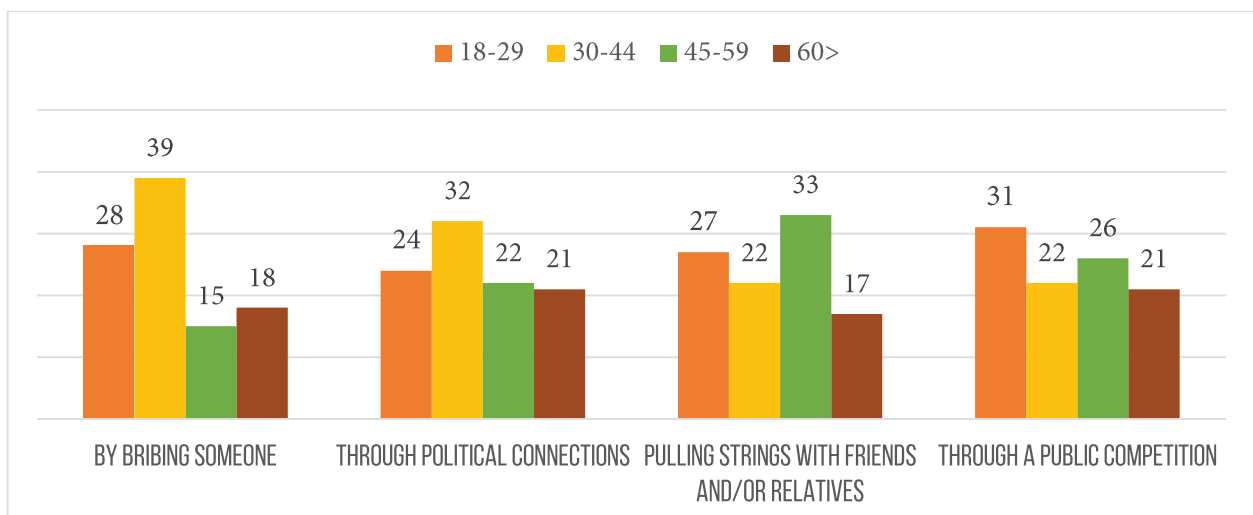
Q: What is your opinion on how are the candidates are selected and how they are employed in the police?



It is interesting to note that respondents aged 18 to 29 (31%) think that candidates for police jobs are selected and employed through public competitions. Pulling strings with friends and/or relatives is considered as the most widespread way of employment in the police by respondents aged 45 to 59 (32.7%). Respondents of 30-44 years of age mentioned political connections (32%) and bribing someone (39%) as the most widespread ways of gaining employment in the police.

CHART 5: AGE DIFFERENCES ABOUT EMPLOYMENT IN THE POLICE (MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

Q: What is your opinion on how are the candidates are selected and how they are employed in the police?

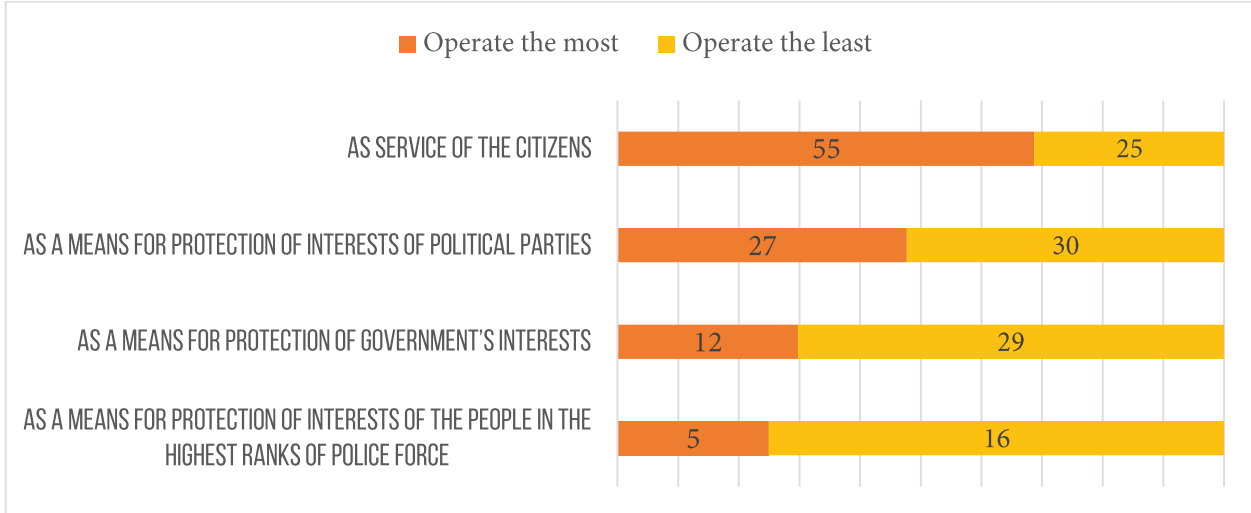


More than half of the citizens believe that the police are working in their interest

Respondents’ opinions on how the Albanian police act are quite diverse. A little more than half (55%) of the respondents stated that the police mostly act as a service to citizens. More than one fourth (27%) believe that the police act as a mean of protection of the interests of political parties, while 12% believe that they are an instrument to protect the interests of the Government. For 5% of the respondents, police act to protect the interests of top police officials. In contrast, one fourth of the respondents (25%) believe that the police act as a service to the citizens the least.

CHART 6: ACTING OF THE POLICE

Q: In which of the following capacities does the police force in Albania operate the most and in which capacities does it operate the least – as service of the citizens, as a means for protection of Government’s interests or as a means for protection of interests of political parties?



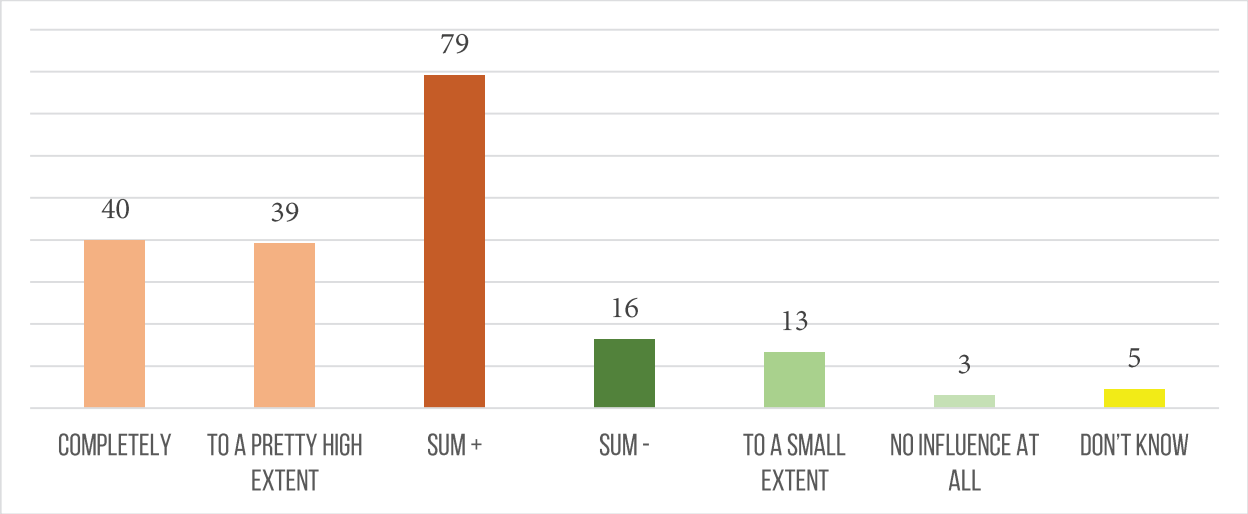
Only three percent of the citizens believe that politics do not influence police work

Four out of ten citizens (40%) believe that politicians have complete or almost complete influence over the operational work of the police force, while 39% of them share the opinion that politicians influence the work of police to a great extent. Consequently, a considerable percentage of the respondents in Albania believe that politics influence the police to a significant level. Thus, respondents do not see the police as the serving the people, but as the extension of the political parties’ interests.

Thirteen percent of the respondents see the political influence that is present to a lesser extent, and only 3% believe that politicians do not influence police work. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a large number of respondents who believe that there is a connection between the police and current politics.

CHART 7: POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON POLICE WORK

Q: Do you believe that politicians have influence on the operational work of police force?



PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION

Judiciary is the most corrupt institution in Albania

As regards the perception of corruption in the twelve researched institutions, 54 percent of the respondents consider corruption to be least widespread in the media and NGOs. On the other hand, 4 out of 10 respondents point out that media (44 percent) and NGOs (38 percent) are also corrupt. Media and NGOs are the only examined institutions that received a “positive score”.

According to respondents’ statements, the most corrupt institutions in Albania are the judiciary (79%), prosecutors (76%), Parliament (75%), health care (74%) and customs (71%). It goes without saying that a more comprehensive approach is necessary to fight the endemic corruption. Therefore, the anticorruption efforts of the police cannot succeed without the contribution of the above institutions.

TABLE 2: PREVALENCE OF CORRUPTION IN THE INSTITUTIONS IN ALBANIA

Q: How widespread is the corruption in the following institutions. Please answer using the scale from 1 to 4, where 1 –not widespread at all, 2 –widespread to a little extent, 3 –somewhat widespread, and 4 – means that it is widespread to the highest extent?

	NOT WIDESPREAD AT ALL	WIDESPREAD TO A LITTLE EXTENT	SOMEWHAT WIDESPREAD	WIDESPREAD TO THE HIGHEST EXTENT	DON'T KNOW	SUM - (1+2)	SUM + (3+4)
CUSTOMS	5	19	34	37	5	24	71
EDUCATION	11	35	34	18	2	46	52
HEALTH	5	21	36	36	1	27	73
JUDICIARY	4	13	27	52	4	17	79
COMMERCIAL INSPECTORATES	7	25	38	23	7	32	62
POLICE	7	28	40	23	3	35	62
MUNICIPAL/CITY AUTHORITIES	8	33	35	20	5	40	55
PARLIAMENT	5	17	25	50	3	22	75
MEDIA	14	40	30	14	2	54	44
NGOS	18	35	25	13	9	54	38
ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY	13	27	31	21	9	40	51
PROSECUTORS	5	15	30	46	4	21	76

More than a half of the male respondents (59%) consider corruption in police not widespread at all, compared to females (41%). Nearly the same ratio applies to the opinion shared about the prevalence of corruption: 54% of the male respondents consider the corruption in police widespread to the highest extent, in comparison to 46% of females who share this opinion.

Approximately 56% of the respondents surveyed in urban areas think that corruption in the police is not widespread at all. Indeed, there is no considerable difference when respondents from urban areas are asked about the prevalence of corruption, as 51 percent of them believe that it is widespread to the highest extent.

Traffic police is the most corrupt part of the police

Respondents’ opinions vary when it comes to the prevalence of corruption in the following police force units: special police are considered by 65% of the respondents as those where corruption is not widespread, followed by police officers in charge of public order and law enforcement (51%), administrative duties (issuance of identity documents), for which 44% of respondents believe that they are not corrupt.

The traffic police force is considered the most corrupt police force unit by 64% of those surveyed, followed by Minister’s closest associates (59%), border police and criminal police (54% each).

TABLE 3: PREVALENCE OF CORRUPTION WITHIN THE POLICE FORCE UNITS IN ALBANIA

Q: How widespread is corruption in the following police force units? Please answer using the scale from 1 to 4, where 1 – not widespread at all, 2 –widespread to a little extent, 3 –somewhat widespread, and 4 – widespread to the highest extent?

	NOT WIDESPREAD AT ALL	WIDESPREAD TO A LITTLE EXTENT	SOMEWHAT WIDESPREAD	WIDESPREAD TO THE HIGHEST EXTENT	DON'T KNOW	SUM - (1+2)	SUM + (3+4)
BORDER POLICE FORCE	11	29	29	24	8	40	52
SPECIAL POLICE FORCE UNITS	25	25	23	18	10	49	41
ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS (ISSUING PERSONAL DOCUMENTS)	19	30	25	22	4	49	47
TRAFFIC POLICE FORCE	7	26	36	27	4	33	62
POLICE OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC LAW AND ORDER	19	34	27	14	6	53	42
CRIMINAL POLICE FORCE	14	27	25	22	11	42	47
MINISTER'S CLOSEST ASSOCIATES	8	24	25	32	11	32	58

Corruption within the traffic police is considered widespread to a small extent by the respondents who have completed primary school and those with and less (50%), by those with secondary education (35%) and by respondents with a university degree (15%). Additionally, regarding traffic police, corruption is considered somewhat widespread by respondents with primary school and less (52%), by respondents with secondary education (35%), and by those with a university degree (13%). Corruption in traffic police is considered widespread to the highest extent by respondents with primary

education and less (47.6 percent), by respondents with secondary education (39.2 percent) and by those with a university degree (13.2 percent).

Corruption in the traffic police is considered to be somewhat widespread for 49% of the male respondents and for 51% of the female respondents.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

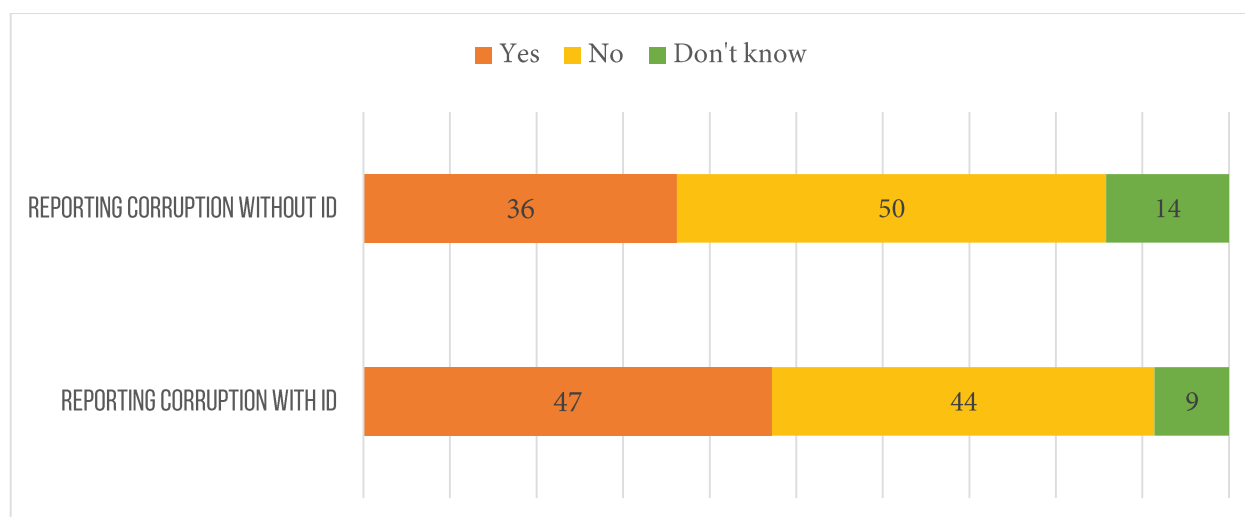
Personal data do not hinder reporting police corruption

There has been a major emphasis in previous two years in Albania on the public's role in refusing to tolerate corruption and reporting cases of police corruption. In this context and as a result of promotion of reporting as an anti-corruption tool, there is nearly an equal share of respondents (47%) that would report a case of corruption in police by choosing to disclose their identity, while less than half (44%) would not report and reveal their identity.

Moreover, when the latter respondents were asked about their readiness to report if they would not have to reveal their personal data, an unequal share of 36% of them were willing to report while 50% chose not to do it. Therefore, personal data disclosure does not appear to impede reporting on police corruption. In both cases, when analysing the results disaggregated by respondents' gender and age, there is no particular data on the decision to report, regardless of disclosing personal identity.

CHART 8: REPORTING POLICE CORRUPTION IN ALBANIA

Q: Would you report a case of corruption in police (someone requested a bribe from you), if you would have to disclose your personal data (social number, address, etc.)? Would you report a case of corruption in police in the case where it is not required to disclose your personal data?

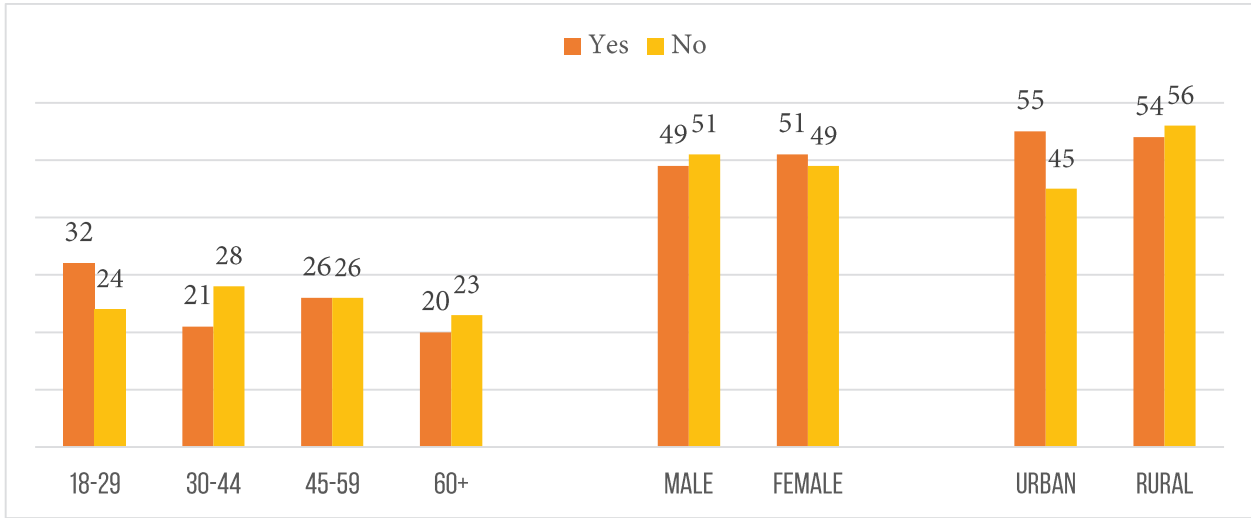


When asked if they would report a case of corruption in police if their personal data would be disclosed, more women (51%) than men (49%) would report corruption in this case. On the other hand, more respondents from urban areas (55%) than from rural areas (45%) would report corruption if their data was to be revealed. Respondents aged between 18 and 29 years are higher in number (32%) compared to other age groups when it comes to reporting corruption.

More female respondents (51%) have responded negatively to reporting corruption in the police as compared to male respondents (49%). People surveyed in rural areas (54%) are more numerous than those in urban areas (46%) in the group of those who would refuse to report corruption if their personal identity was to be revealed. The highest number of respondents refusing to report a case of corruption in the police has been identified in the age group of 30-34 (28%).

CHART 9: AGE, GENDER AND ORIGIN DIFFERENCES IN REPORTING POLICE CORRUPTION

Q: Would you report a case of corruption in police (someone requested a bribe from you), if you would have to disclose your personal data (social number, address, etc.)?



The local police station and media are the first choices for reporting corruption

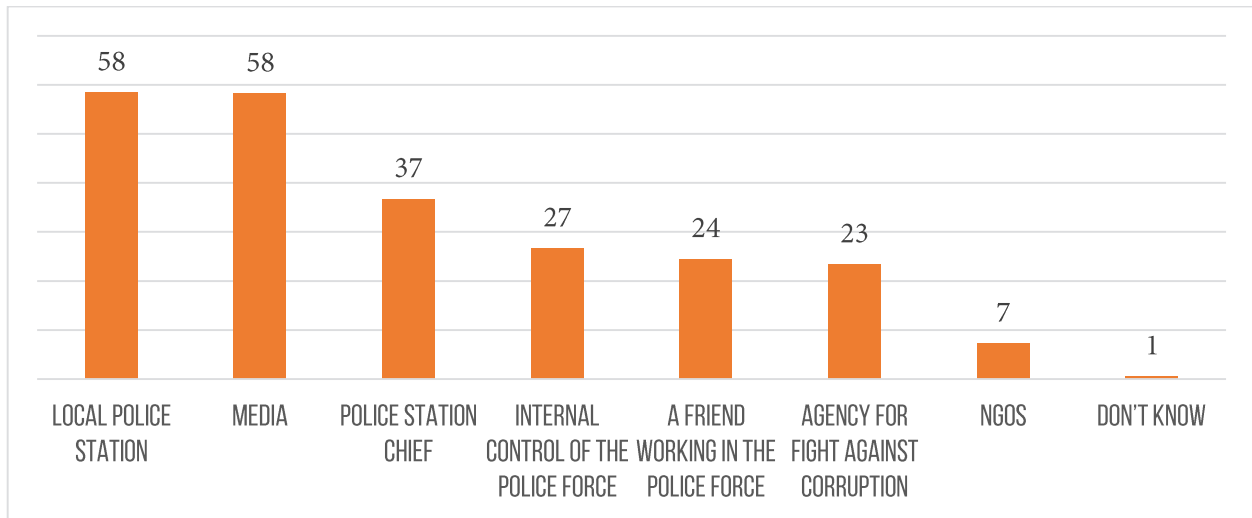
More than half of the respondents (58%) would report a case of police corruption to the local police station and the media. This result was to be expected given the high level of respondents’ trust in the media. Lately, the traditional media have been providing an opportunity to the public to report on generic corruption through investigative television programmes.

The chief of police station is rated by about one third (37%) of the respondents as the first choice to report a case of corruption to. Moreover, 27% of the respondents would report it to the internal affairs and complaints service of the police force. This data indicates that the respondents may be less familiar with the role of the internal control mechanisms in the police despite their relevance in fighting corruption within the police.

On the other hand, respondents would very rarely report a case of corruption to the NGOs, only 7%.

CHART 10: FIRST CHOICE FOR REPORTING POLICE CORRUPTION (MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

Q: Who would be the first in the list that you would report a case of corruption in the police force to? Who else?



It's very interesting that all respondents (100%) aged between 18 and 29 years consider NGOs as the most important institutions to report a case of corruption to. Respondents between 30 and 44 years of age think that the most important institutions to report a case of corruption to are: a friend working in the police (28%) and the media (27%). Respondents of the 45-59 age group consider the Anti-Corruption Agency the most appropriate institution to report a case of corruption to. Respondents 60 years of age and above would report a case of corruption to the police station chief and the local police station.

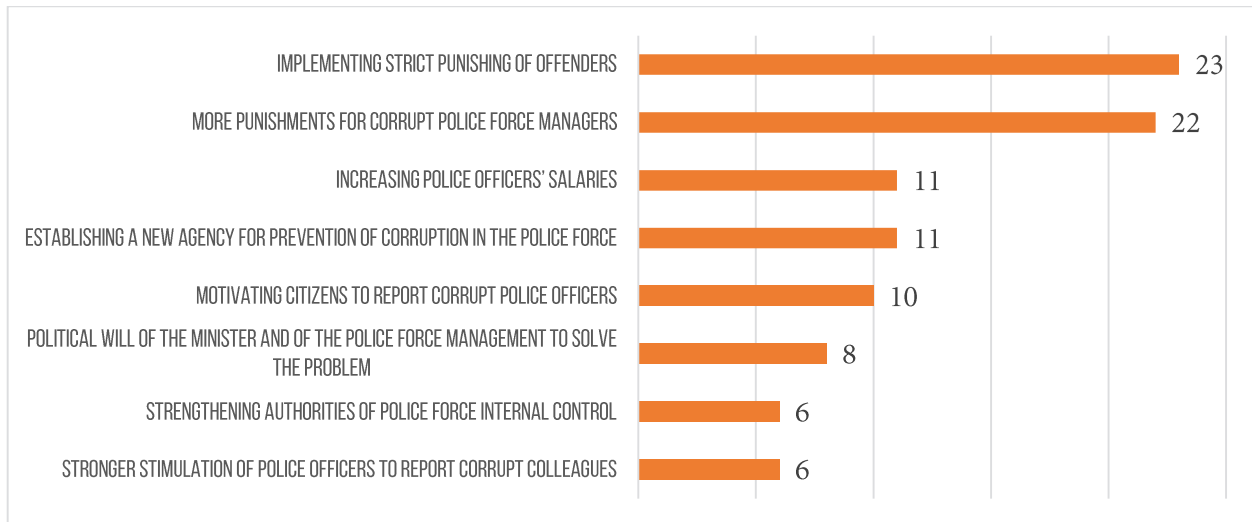
Repression as the main solution for fighting police corruption

Two of the most necessary mechanisms for preventing corruption in the police are “repressive” in their nature. One fifth (23%) of the respondents point to the strict punishment of the offenders, while another fifth (22%) confirm that it is necessary to punish a greater number of high ranking police officers. Moreover, 11% point out that the creation of a new body for preventing corruption and an increase of police officers' salaries would contribute to the prevention of corruption in the police.

Another 10% of the respondents state that it is also important to motivate the public to report on corrupt police officers. To a much lesser extent, respondents indicate the following mechanisms for preventing corruption within the police: political will of the Minister and police officials (8%), stronger stimulation of police officers to report corrupt fellow officers (6%), and strengthening of internal police control (6%).

GRAPHIC 11: MECHANISMS FOR THE PREVENTION OF POLICE CORRUPTION

Q: What do you consider most necessary for preventing corruption in the police force?



Strengthening the powers of internal police control was considered as most necessary for preventing corruption in the police by 47% of the respondents 18-29 years of age and 29% of those 30 to 44 years old. Also, surveyed people aged 45-59 (34%) consider encouragement of police officers to report corrupt cases the most important mechanism, while 30% of the respondents aged over 60 consider increase of police officers' salaries as the most necessary mechanism to prevent corruption in the police.

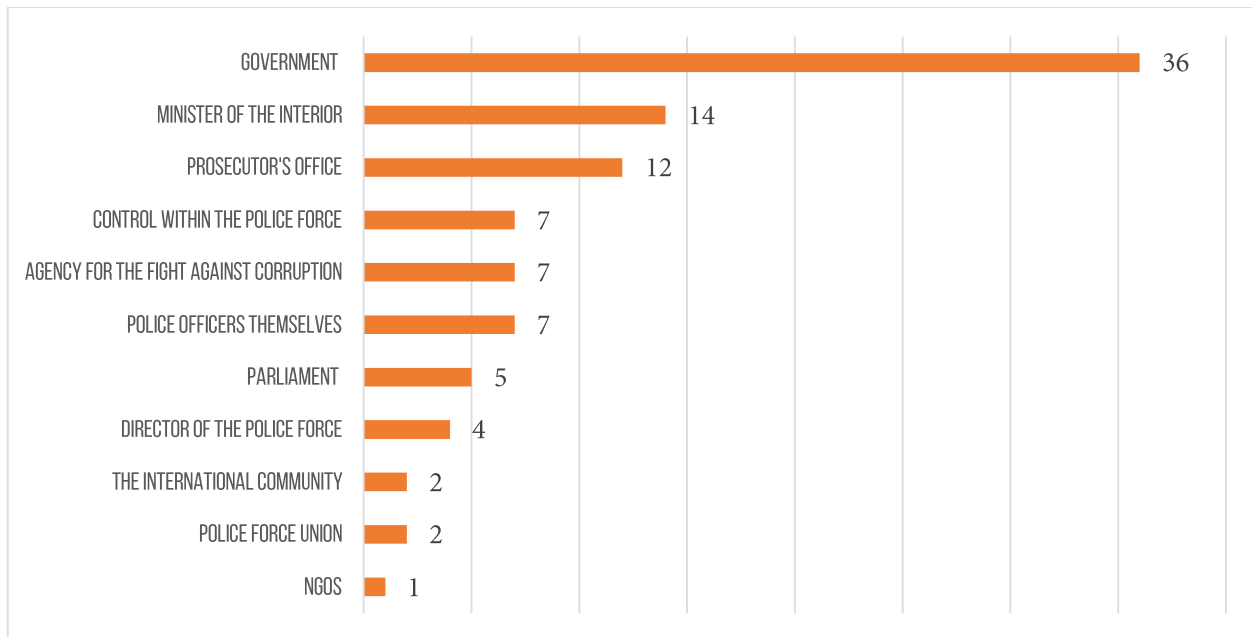
Government should lead the fight against police corruption

About one third of the respondents (36%) point out that the Government should lead the fight against corruption in the police organisation, assisted by other proposed institutions. Moreover, 14% of the respondents point to the Minister of Interior and an additional of 13% state the prosecutor's office as the primary institutions. The Governments' responsibility to fight corruption is still rife in Albania and at the very focus of the media. In addition, there is no particularity with regard to the categories of age or gender, nor by type of settlement, when choosing the Government as the main institution to fight corruption.

Surprisingly, other important institutions are left behind, including the Parliament (5%), internal affairs of the police, Anti-Corruption Agency, police officers themselves (7% each) and police trade unions (2%).

CHART 12: INSTITUTIONS THAT SHOULD FIGHT CORRUPTION IN THE POLICE

Q: Please look at the following list of institutions and tell me which institution should be the first to fight corruption in the police force.



Civil society should participate in the fight against corruption

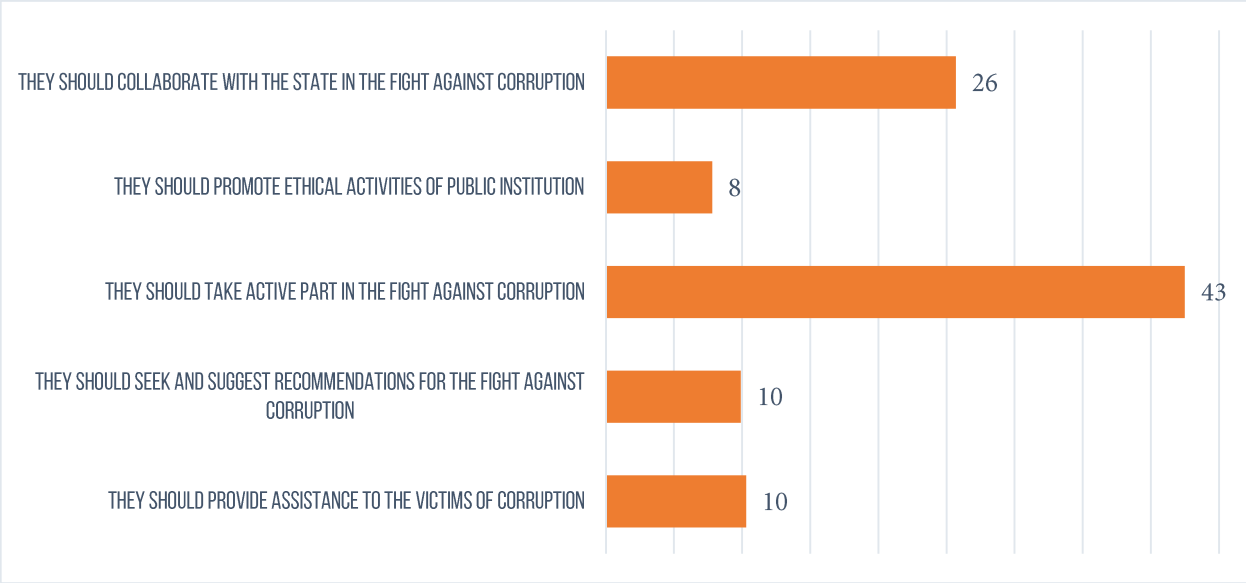
Civil society plays a significant role in fighting corruption. Its activities vary from monitoring public services, raising awareness, to contributing to the implementation of anti-corruption instruments. To this end, less than half of the respondents (43%) in Albania believe that NGOs should take active part in the fight against corruption and 26% of the surveyed favour their collaboration with the state.

Ten percent of the respondents state that NGOs should provide assistance to the victims of corruption and give recommendations on the fight against corruption. Eight percent of the respondents suggest that NGOs should promote ethical work in public institutions.

The graphics above show a correlation between the age groups and the various opinions on the role of NGOs in the fight against corruption. Respondents aged between 18-29 years placed an emphasis on the role that NGOs should have in promoting ethical activities of public institutions. Surveyed respondents of 30-44 years of age think that collaboration of NGOs with the state in the fight against corruption happens to be most important. In addition, respondents belonging to the age group of 45-59 years point out that the most important role of NGOs is to provide recommendations on the fight against corruption. Surveyed respondents of 60 years of age and over think that the active participation of NGOs in the fight against corruption is the most important role of NGOs.

CHART 13: THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION

Q: People have different opinions on the role of NGOs in the fight against corruption. Bearing this in mind, what role do you think NGOs should have in the fight against corruption?



METHODOLOGY FRAMEWORK

LOCATION	Albania
DATA COLLECTION METHOD	Face-to-face, in the respondents' homes
SAMPLING FRAME	Male and female citizens of Albania 18 years of age and over, who permanently resided in the territory of Albania at the time of the survey
SIZE OF SAMPLE	1,000
TYPE OF SAMPLE	Three-stage random representative stratified sample
STRATIFICATION	Performed by region, type of settlement, gender, age and level of education
SAMPLING ERROR	$\pm 3.31\%$

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