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ALBANIAN SECURITY BAROMETER NATIONAL SURVEY

CSDG
Center
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**Friedrich
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Security Barometer 2025

National Survey 2025 – Albania

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CSDG, FES, September 2025

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEC	Central Election Commission
CSDG	Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance
EU	European Union
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NUTS-3	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics – Level 3
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SPAK	Special Anti-Corruption Structure
STATA	Statistical Analysis Software
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

FOREWORD

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is working worldwide on the defence and promotion of social democracy. Fortunately, Europe still is the most peaceful region in the world – although the attack on Ukraine changed the European and Balkan perspective on future threats in a seriously negative way. Apart from traditional security thinking, we have to recognize that other forms of violence caused by corruption or organized crime also threaten states and democracy. This is why this edition of the security barometer focuses on security perceptions from the citizens on inner state threats and their impacts on good governance and human security.

Inner-state conflicts that can be caused by criminal groups are undermining the capacity of states to govern and fulfil the principles of modern statehood: the control over territory (for production or sale), the physical and emotional security of its citizens, a functioning judicial system and the monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Drug trafficking, arms trade and human trafficking are widespread across the region of the Balkans, Europe and the globe – especially affecting countries with access to the maritime trade. Meanwhile the demand for cocaine is growing in the richest countries and the global trade follows the market driven logic of demand and delivery.

It is obvious that organized crime has been adopting mechanisms of the globalized economy in terms of a high degree of flexibility, the ability to adjust to market changes and to use the socially weak segments of society for their means. Already structurally weakened nations are put under serious pressure by the growing phenomena since at the same time, organized crime gains more access to politics. That creates a spiral of mistrust and undermines the trust of citizens into state institutions.

Organized Crime has gained its power from the weakness of the legal and constitutional powers and within a process of infiltration of the political system. Solidarity, equality and empowerment of the excluded are not integrated in the governance of crime that is rather based on greed and fear. But the excluded are part of the structures that built organized groups incorporated in a “culture of protection” that replace social and protective functions of the state.

Neoliberal politics widened already existing non-governed spaces that have easily been occupied by illegal networks. Illegal forms of organized crime groups have restructured themselves into flexible transnational operating units that are internationally linked as an adjustment to globalization and the global economy.

The role of organized crime in the erosion of democratic governance is marked by the replacement of social policies by non-state actors, the bribing of political actors and the illicit financing of political campaigns. The most important factors for upholding a criminal system are therefore income generation through the drug trade and human trafficking, the laundering of money, the provision of

arms and the intensification of political power through corruption and impunity. The strength of institutions decides over the vulnerability to corruption.

Apart from the economic and political levels, the social level also has to be integrated when searching for new approaches to tackle the phenomena. The level of organized crime is directly correlated with the failure of material well-being. Socio-economic inequality and the resulting mistrust in politics are due to a lack of integrative social policy. The widening of the social gap worldwide is obvious in Latin America but also true for most European and Balkan countries. Especially young people active in organized armed violence demonstrate the failure to integrate those who didn't profit from globalization.

The transnational character of organized crime without any doubt defines it as an international phenomenon that can only be addressed accordingly - in a global manner and with international efforts. One of the crucial questions is whether the international community is willing to acknowledge their responsibility to react.

We need to promote new forms of security thinking. The social aspect has to be included into politics of security when searching for new approaches to tackle the impacts of organized crime on democratic governance.

Our efforts to promote democracy are of no use as long as we don't find solutions to the described processes. It is therefore important to forge a common vision between stakeholders and to design tools that can effectively deal with the negative impact of organized crime on democratic governance.

I am therefore highly appreciating that we have the chance to contribute to the process of strengthening a dialogue on security and progressive politics with this edition of the Albanian Security Barometer.

Katharina Hofmann

Resident Representative
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Tirana

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 2019, the *Security Barometer* has been a cornerstone in understanding Albanian citizens' perceptions of security. Conducted annually by the Center for the Study of Democracy and Governance (CSDG), it is the only nationwide survey that systematically measures attitudes, opinions, and experiences related to security from the citizens' perspective. By tracking these perceptions over time, the *Security Barometer* not only identifies emerging risks but also provides a reliable evidence base for policy and institutional responses.

The analytical foundation of the *Security Barometer* is the Security Sector Reform approach; a political and technical process aimed at improving both state and human security by embedding the principles of good governance into the security sector. This means assessing not just the capacity of institutions to deliver security, but also their accountability, transparency, and respect for human rights under democratic civilian oversight.

The 2025 edition is published in a period marked by persistent instability and evolving threats. The aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine, renewed tensions in the Middle East, intensifying competition between democratic and authoritarian models, climate-driven risks, and cyber vulnerabilities have placed security firmly at the forefront of public consciousness. For Albania, these global disruptions intersect with unresolved regional disputes, the imperatives of EU integration, and enduring governance challenges, shaping both the nature of threats and public expectations of institutional performance.

While 2024 edition applied a broad human security lens, this year's survey concentrates on four interrelated areas that dominate citizens' security concerns and shape national policy debates.

Security threats, explores how Albanians perceive the most serious and secondary threats to national security. By analysing these perceptions across demographic and geographic groups, the Barometer provides a granular view of how threat awareness is distributed throughout society, and how it has evolved compared to previous years.

Geopolitics and relations with other countries explores public opinion on Albania's foreign policy orientation, as a key indicator of the country's strategic identity. This theme examines attitudes toward major global powers - the USA, EU, Russia, and China - as well as neighbouring Balkan states. It assesses perceptions of these actors' influence, their role in global affairs, preferred strategic partners, and the balance between transatlantic and regional cooperation.

Organised Crime, which remains one of the most complex and entrenched threats to Albania's security and governance. This edition of the Barometer captures perceptions of its prevalence locally and nationally, identifies the activities of organised crime that are seen as most harmful, and inquires public views on its underlying drivers. Additionally, it measures the citizens confidence in institutional

responses, including law enforcement, the judiciary, and specialised anti-corruption structures, offering insights into where trust is building and where it is eroding.

Crime Victimisation and Reporting. Citizens' direct or indirect experiences with crime, and their willingness to report incidents, are critical indicators of both public safety and institutional credibility. This theme examines the types of crime encountered, reporting behaviour, barriers to reporting (such as fear of reprisals or lack of trust in authorities), and perceptions of which crimes most often go unreported.

By narrowing its lens to these four domains, the *Security Barometer 2025* offers a concentrated yet comprehensive portrait of Albania's security environment as perceived by its citizens. The focus reflects the convergence of governance, geopolitics, crime, and community safety as defining features of the current security landscape.

The survey's design - combining representative sampling with detailed thematic modules - ensures that its findings are both nationally reflective and policy-relevant. They illuminate where the public sees progress, where vulnerabilities remain acute, and where institutional legitimacy is most at stake.

The ultimate aim of the *Security Barometer* remains unchanged: to inform evidence-based policymaking and foster a security discourse grounded in democratic accountability, human rights, and public trust. For government institutions, the Barometer is a diagnostic tool; for civil society, it is a platform for advocacy; and for international partners, it is a window into the societal dynamics that underpin Albania's policy and strategic choices.

In an era when the boundaries between domestic and international security are increasingly blurred, the *Security Barometer 2025* stands as both a mirror of public sentiment and a compass for policy direction - capturing the voices of citizens at a time when security has never been more contested, complex, or consequential.

METHODOLOGY

QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is carefully designed to capture a comprehensive picture of Albanian citizens' views on national security, regional relations, international integration, and organized crime. The inclusion of demographic questions enables stratified analysis, ensuring that insights can be disaggregated across different groups of the population. A central theme is the perception of security threats, both internal (corruption, organized crime, terrorism, cybercrime) and external (regional tensions), which reflects Albania's ongoing challenges in maintaining stability and sovereignty. The extensive section on organized crime examines its scope, causes, and impact on politics, the economy, and trust in institutions, highlighting a critical governance issue with direct implications for EU accession. Closely related, questions on victimization and reporting shed light on citizens' trust in law enforcement and justice institutions, a key element for building democratic resilience.

Beyond internal security, the survey probes regional cooperation and reconciliation in the Balkans, recognizing Albania's role in a complex neighbourhood where historical disputes continue to shape public perceptions. At the same time, questions on the influence of global actors (US, EU, Russia, China) and the importance of international organizations (NATO, OSCE, UN) provide insights into how Albanians situate their country within broader geopolitical dynamics. Finally, the section on EU membership explores both perceived benefits and expectations about the accession timeline, reflecting Albania's strategic priority of integration into the European Union. Together, these themes justify the breadth of the questionnaire: they address Albania's most pressing security concerns, its regional environment, and its Euro-Atlantic trajectory, while ensuring that policymaking can be informed by a representative understanding of public opinion.

SAMPLING

The survey sample was carefully stratified to mirror Albania's adult population, with strict quotas implemented to ensure representativeness. A multi-layered random sample of 1,111 adults was drawn for the study. In the first stage, questionnaires were proportionally distributed across Albania's 61 municipalities according to their adult population. In the second stage, respondents were proportionally selected from urban and rural areas within each municipality, using the cell-web method in the NUTS-3 regions.

To guarantee demographic balance, gender quotas (50%-50%) and age group quotas (25%-25%-25%-25%) were applied within each sublayer. Geographic representativeness was further ensured through randomly selected geolocation points across Albania, following the sampling design (see Annex 1).

Interviews covered all major prefectures, with Tiranë accounting for 30% of respondents, followed by Fier (11.7%), Durrës (9.7%), and Elbasan (9.2%), reflecting the demographic weight of these regions. At the municipal level, Tiranë (22.6%), Durrës (6.6%), and Elbasan (4.8%) emerged as leading contributors, ensuring both national coverage and local-level granularity.

This multi-layered sampling strategy was designed to secure accurate geographic and demographic representation of Albania's adult population, while keeping the sampling error below $\pm 2.9\%$ for the full sample. By ensuring each resident had an equal probability of selection, the approach minimizes bias and guarantees that the findings reliably reflect the attitudes and perceptions of Albania's adult population.

DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING

This survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews, according to the above sampling plan. To ensure data quality, the 28 interviewers underwent thorough training by the project management team prior to commencing fieldwork. Data collection spanned the period of May 19-27, 2025. Interviewers directly entered responses on a smartphone app, which transmitted the data instantly to a central server via purpose-built software. The time and location of each interview were automatically recorded, enabling the statistics director to conduct daily monitoring and ensure adherence to the predetermined sampling plan and methodological instructions.

At the conclusion of fieldwork, a comprehensive quality control check was performed on the collected interview data. Prior to data analysis, the sample was reweighted to reflect the proportional Albanian age distribution as reported by the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), further enhancing the data's representativeness. The reweighted data were then processed and analysed using the statistical software STATA 13.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were grouped and analysed according to the chosen main themes:

1. Demographic information
2. Security threats
3. Geopolitics and relations with other countries
4. Organized crime
5. Crime victimization and reporting

The data are presented graphically and in tables to enhance comprehension and legibility. Interpretation of the data reflects the author's understanding, but the full results of the survey are provided to allow readers to conduct their own analyses and draw independent conclusions.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

It is important to acknowledge certain limitations in the data and analysis presented in this report. First, public opinion surveys are inherently subject to biases and inaccuracies. Respondents may be reluctant to provide honest answers to sensitive questions, particularly those related to criminal activity. Second, the survey data provides a snapshot of public perceptions at a particular point in time and may not capture the full complexity and dynamism of organized crime. Third, the reliance on secondary sources may introduce additional biases or inaccuracies into the analysis. Despite these limitations, this report represents a valuable contribution to the understanding of organized crime in Albania. By providing an evidence-based assessment of the issue, this report aims to inform policy debates, promote public awareness, and support efforts to combat organized crime and promote the rule of law.

KEY FINDINGS

THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY



Albanian citizens' **security concerns are dominated by internal governance-related risks** rather than conventional military or natural threats. **Corruption emerges as the pre-eminent national security threat**, cited far ahead of others, reflecting public anxiety about institutional vulnerability and the erosion of rule of law. **Organized crime follows closely**, reinforcing the perceived interlinkage between criminal networks and corrupt governance structures.

When primary and secondary threats are combined, corruption and organized crime decisively outrank all others, while external military conflict, cybercrime, pandemics, and migration pressures are viewed as important but less urgent. This hierarchy underscores a **security paradigm in which the greatest dangers are seen to come from within**, rooted in systemic weaknesses rather than external aggression.

The weight citizens place on these internal threats reveals both a diagnostic and normative concern: **Albania's stability and resilience depend less on military capacity than on the integrity, transparency, and accountability of its institutions.**

Regional Relations



The data shows a strongly upheld views for **closer cooperation among Balkan states** to address shared security challenges, with overwhelming agreement that a lack of cooperation undermines regional stability. **Citizens understand that cross-border threats**, such as organized crime, trafficking, or irregular migration, cannot be contained unilaterally and require coordinated action.

Despite this cooperative instinct, **optimism about the near-term security trajectory of the Balkans is cautious**. While a majority foresee improvement, a sizeable share remain sceptical, reflecting awareness of entrenched disputes and fragile trust between states.

The **greatest perceived obstacle to reconciliation is the role of politicians**, seen as self-serving and perpetuating divisions for political gain. This cynicism points to a demand for new political leadership styles and strengthened civic oversight. Serbia is overwhelmingly identified as the principal threat to Albania's security, while other neighbours are seen in largely neutral terms, indicating that historical grievances and unresolved political disputes still shape threat perceptions more than economic or cultural competition.

GEOPOLITICS AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS



Geopolitical Influence



Public opinion strongly **affirms Albania's Western orientation**. The **United States and the European Union enjoy overwhelming positive ratings** for their influence in Albania, whereas Russia is viewed predominantly as harmful. **China is assessed more neutrally**, with its influence seen as mixed—neither a trusted partner nor an outright threat.

The **EU is regarded as acting for the global good by a clear majority**, and the US enjoys similar approval, albeit with a slightly higher share acknowledging a mix of positive and negative actions. Russia actions are overwhelmingly perceived to be malicious, while **China's role is judged more ambivalently**.

Global Affairs and Foreign Policy Priorities



Looking ahead, **citizens expect the US to remain the most influential global actor**, followed distantly by the EU, China, and Russia. **In terms of bilateral priorities, Italy tops the list, followed closely by the US**, reflecting both historical-cultural links and strategic security considerations. The public distinguishes between “best current relations” (where

the Italy leads) and “should prioritise” (where US leads), suggesting a desire to further deepen these highly valued strategic relations, viewing them as the foundation of a long-term and reliable partnership.

Transatlantic Relations and International Organisations



NATO and the EU are considered critical to Albania’s national security, with near-unanimous support for their importance. The **OSCE and UN are seen as relevant but less central**. A clear majority expect **US–EU relations to grow closer**, reflecting a hopeful view of continued transatlantic cohesion.

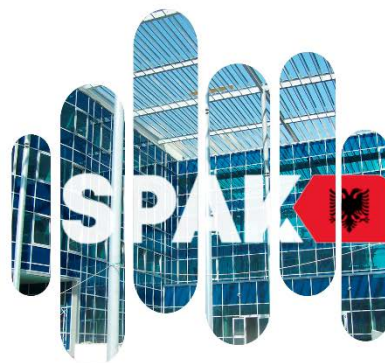
ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION



Support for EU membership is near-universal and grounded in pragmatic benefits—economic opportunity, mobility, and quality of life—alongside values like democracy and peace. **Economic prosperity and the freedom to live, work, and study across the EU** are the most frequently cited personal benefits, particularly among younger cohorts.

Although **optimism about accession by 2030 is widespread**, it is **tempered by scepticism**: a significant minority doubt Albania can meet the criteria or overcome political and bureaucratic hurdles in time. **Even among sceptics, few reject membership outright**; most see it as a longer-term goal. This positions EU integration not just as a foreign policy choice but as a core component of the national development vision.

ORGANIZED CRIME: PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES



Seriousness and Activities



Organized crime is seen as a very serious national issue by a majority, though fewer feel it is acute in their own locality - suggesting a **perception gap between national narrative and local visibility**. Northern and central regions (Shkodër, Elbasan, Lezhë) are viewed as hotspots.

Drug trafficking dominates the list of perceived primary activities, with money laundering and violent crime also prominent. The cannabis cultivation and traffic are seen **as a key enabler**, with near-consensus that cultivation fuels organized crime, though the public is divided on whether **legalization would diminish criminal involvement**.

Factors and Root Causes



Poverty, unemployment, and family instability are widely recognised as **socio-economic drivers** of criminal recruitment, particularly among youth. Institutionally, **lenient sentencing, corruption, and political-criminal collusion** are seen as central enablers, creating an environment where criminal networks can operate with impunity.

Institutional Factors



Lenient sentencing, corruption, and political-criminal collusion are seen as central institutional enablers, creating an environment where criminal networks can operate with impunity. The harms cited go beyond economics, encompassing damage to the justice system, erosion of democracy, and public intimidation.

Impact



Organized crime is believed to **distort market competition**, especially through tax evasion, extortion, and intimidation, and

affecting large businesses most. Its influence is seen to **infiltrate politics, governance, the judiciary, and the media**, with SPAK and Special Courts viewed as more insulated than general courts or local prosecutors.

Organized crime and the 11 May 2025 elections



A majority believe organized crime influenced both **political parties' campaigns and the election outcome**, mainly through vote buying, illicit funding, and, to a lesser extent, intimidation. These perceptions are not abstract, based on media and narratives, as many believe that their own districts were affected, especially in Elbasan, Tirana, Fier, and Shkodër.

Traditional media is the primary source of information on such influence, but personal accounts are also notable: **one in five know someone** who was approached **to sway their vote**, and **one in four** know someone who **exchanged their vote** for money or favours. This suggests that electoral interference operates through both systemic and interpersonal channels.

Effectiveness of institutional performance on prevention



SPAK is the clear emerges as **most trusted** for the role to preventing electoral interference, followed by the State Police and CEC, both of which receive more mixed ratings by the public. Political parties are overwhelmingly seen **as failing in this responsibility**. The data highlights SPAK's reputation for independence and decisive action, contrasting sharply with perceptions of other institutions as compromised or ineffective.

Trends, expectations, and reforms



Over the past three years, many citizens feel **organized crime presence has increased or remained unchanged**, with fewer seeing improvement. The 2015 Law on Decriminalization is seen as partially effective, but doubts remain about its reach—particularly at local and central government levels.

Expectations for reducing organized crime's **influence on politics and the economy** are split almost evenly between optimism and scepticism. **SPAK again emerges as the most trusted institutional actor**, alongside international partner - the EU and USA - whose roles are seen as highly significant in supporting Albania's counter organised crime capacity.

Concerns about **politicisation of justice system persist**, sustained somewhat by some level of trust in the vetting process. **Sentencing of criminals** is overwhelmingly viewed **as too lenient**, contributing to impunity.

VICTIMIZATION AND CRIME REPORTING



Direct victimisation **rates are low**, but **indirect exposure** through friends and family is more common. Reporting rates are **extremely low**, shaped by **fear of retaliation**, **lack of trust** in authorities, and **limited legal awareness**.

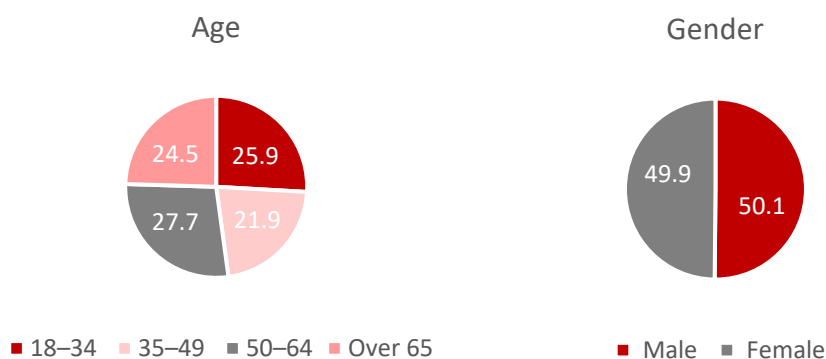
Crimes by powerful actors, government officials, and domestic violence are seen as **most likely to go unreported**. Citizens perceived the **justice system as selective in protection and uneven in enforcement**, resulting in a culture of selective engagement with formal institutions.

In sum, the *Security Barometer 2025* reveals a security landscape where **Albania's greatest perceived threats are internal**, rooted in governance deficits and the systemic entrenchment of organized crime. Public **trust is highly differentiated**: SPAK and international partners enjoy strong legitimacy, while political parties, general courts, and the State Police face deep scepticism. Citizens endorse **closer regional cooperation**, steady **Western alignment**, and **EU integration**, but they remain **aware of the fragility of reforms** and the persistence of power asymmetries that risk undermine democratic consolidation.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

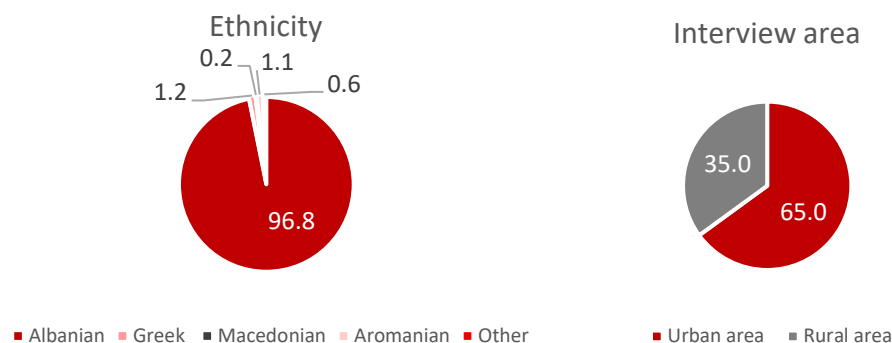
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The survey sample demonstrates near-perfect gender parity, with a virtually even split between male (50.1%) and female (49.9%) respondents, ensuring balanced representation. Age demographics show a relatively balanced distribution across age cohorts, ranging from younger adults (18-34 at 25.9%) to senior citizens (Over 65 at 24.5%).



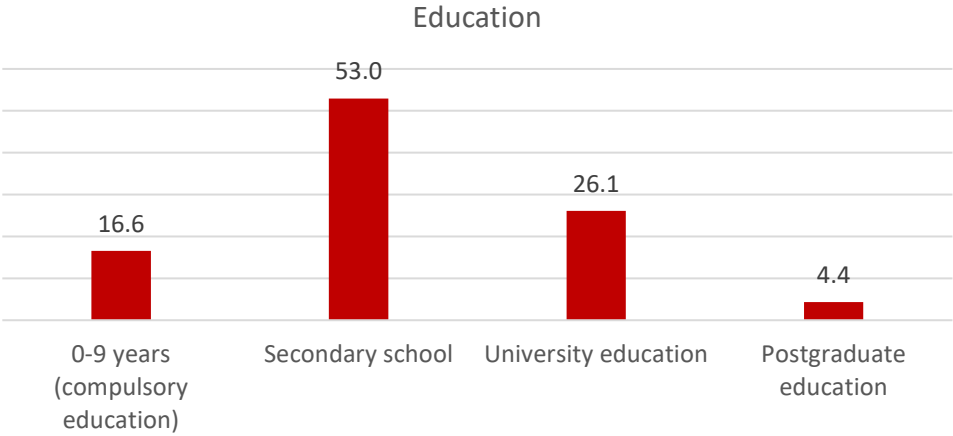
Graph 1 and 2. Age and gender of the respondents

The survey data reflects Albania's ethnic landscape, with an overwhelming majority identifying as Albanian (96.8%), while also capturing responses from smaller minority groups. Among employed respondents, the survey shows a near-equal split between urban (41.3%) and non-working respondents (41.1%).



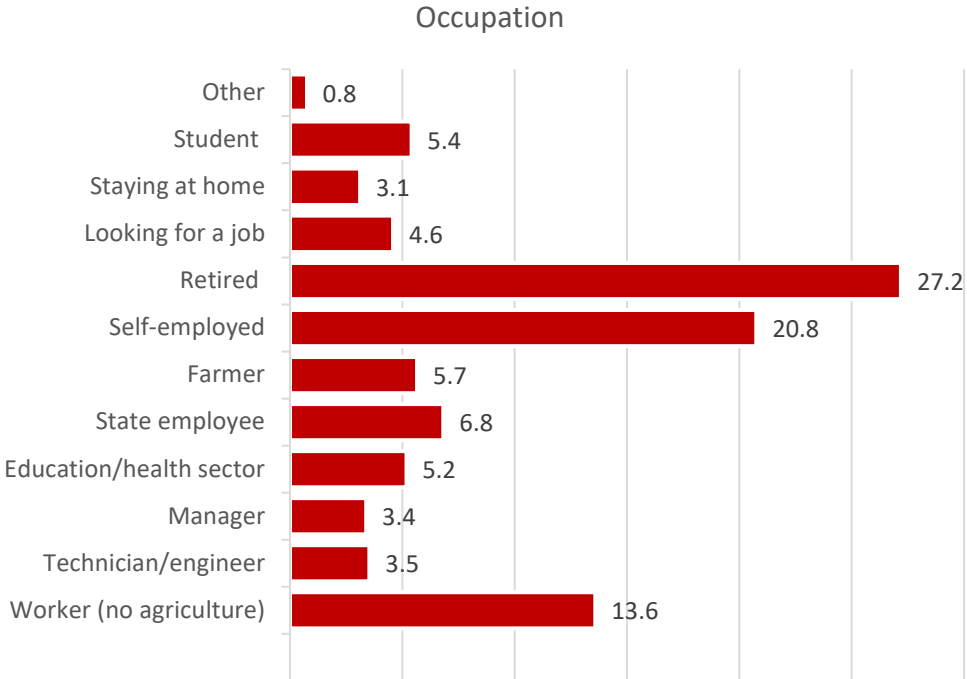
Graph 3 and 4. Ethnicity of the respondents and interview area

Education levels reveal a population where over half have completed secondary school (53.0%), with a significant portion possessing university (26.1%) or postgraduate degrees (4.4%), indicating a generally well-educated populace.



Graph 5. Education levels of the respondents

Occupational data highlights a diverse workforce, with significant representation among retirees (27.2%) and the self-employed (20.8%), in addition to workers in various sectors, painting a detailed picture of Albania's labour market.



Graph 6. Occupation of the respondents



THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY

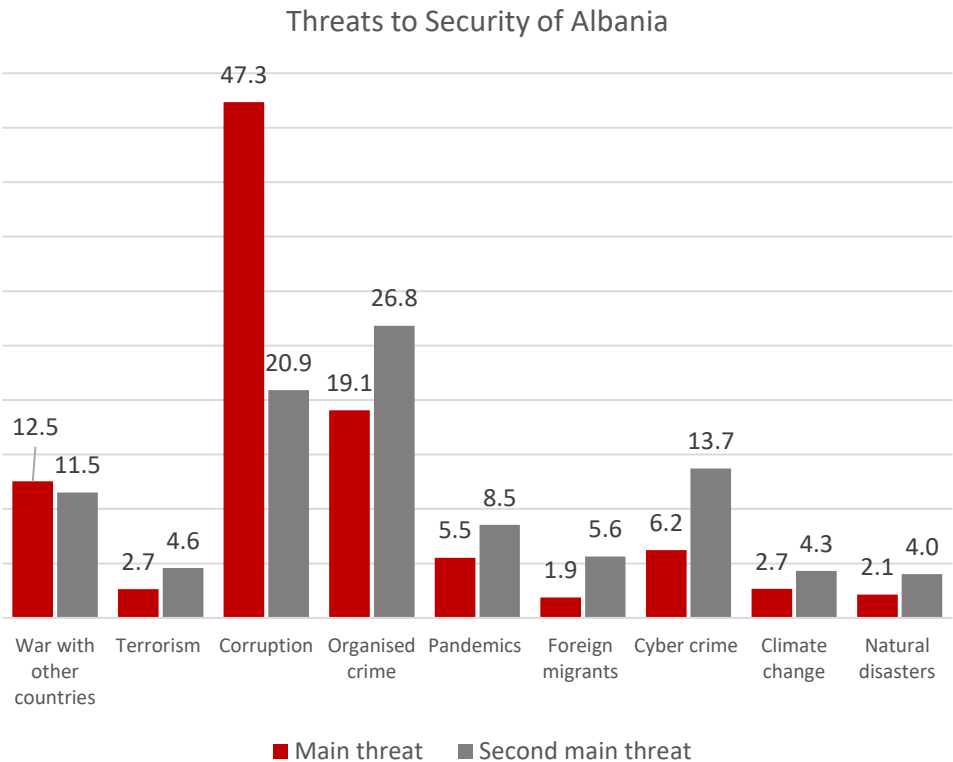
THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY

This section explores public perceptions of the most serious security threats currently facing Albania. Gauging public sentiment on security threats is crucial for effective governance. Respondents were asked to prioritise threats, shedding light on what is foremost in the national consciousness. To gain an insight on the Albanian citizens' views on security threats, the following questions were asked:

- *What do you think is currently the most serious security threat to Albania?*
- *What do you think is currently the second most serious security threat to Albania?*

Corruption is viewed as the most serious security threat, identified by **47.3% of respondents**. While corruption dominates, organized crime is also a significant concern, with **19.1%** identifying it as the primary threat. Interestingly, when considering the second most serious threat, organized crime rises to **26.8%**.

These concerns overshadow traditional military threats and emerging cyber risks, highlighting the perceived vulnerability of institutions and governance structures. Terrorism, foreign migrants, climate change, and natural disasters are seen as less pressing concerns compared to corruption and organized crime.



Graph 7. Threats to Albania's security

The table below provides a ranking of the combined answers of “main security threat” and the “second most serious security threat” facing Albania.

Threat	Main Threat (%)	Second Main Threat (%)	Combined Rank
Corruption	47.3	20.9	1
Organized Crime	19.1	26.8	2
War with Other Countries	12.5	11.5	3
Cyber Crime	6.2	13.7	4
Pandemics	5.5	8.5	5
Foreign Migrants	1.9	5.6	6
Climate Change	2.7	4.3	7
Natural Disasters	2.1	4.0	8
Terrorism	2.7	4.6	9

Table 1. Combined Rank of the main and second main threat



REGIONAL RELATIONS

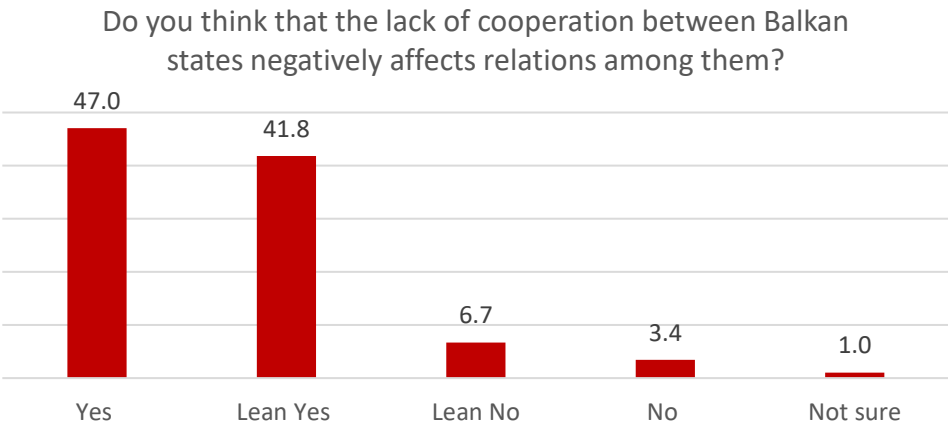
REGIONAL RELATIONS

This section of the survey offers a window into how Albanians perceive their country's role in regional security and their relations with neighbouring Balkan states. These insights are crucial for understanding broader security frameworks and cooperation efforts. The following questions were asked:

- *Do you think that the lack of cooperation between Balkan states negatively affects relations among them?:*
- *In order to deal with threats and challenges to security, do you agree Albania should develop closer cooperation with all the countries of the Balkan region?:*
- *Do you think security in the Balkans will improve over the next 4 years?:*
- *What do you think prevents the reconciliation and peace building in the Balkans?:*
- *Which of the Balkan countries do you see as a threat to the security of Albania?:*

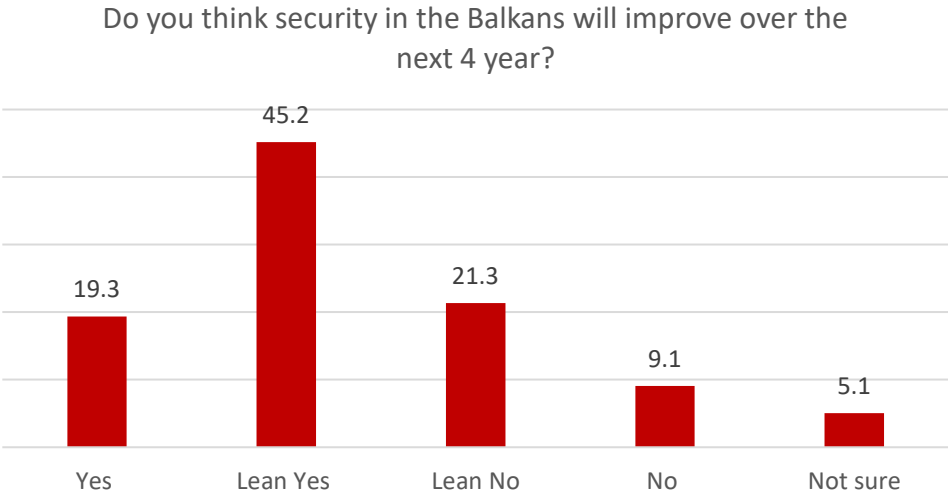
The lack of cooperation between Balkan states is widely perceived as a serious impediment to regional relations. Nearly nine in ten respondents—combining those who answered “**Yes**” (47.0%) and “**Lean Yes**” (41.8%)—believe that insufficient collaboration among neighbouring countries negatively affects inter-state dynamics. Only a small minority—6.7% leaning toward disagreement and 3.4% firmly rejecting the notion—express scepticism about the impact of poor cooperation. The fact that just 1.0% are unsure suggests that this issue is well understood and widely discussed.

This overwhelming agreement shows that the Albanian public is aware of regional tensions but also deeply invested in the idea that trust, dialogue, and joint action are essential for stability.



Graph 8. *Opinion on the cooperation between Balkan states*

While full confidence remains lowkey, a combined **64.5%** express some level of optimism (**19.3% “Yes” and 45.2% “Lean Yes”**) about security improvements in the Balkans over the next four years. The cautious optimism surrounding Balkan security suggests that while people hope for improvement, they remain realistic about existing challenges.



Graph 9. *Opinion on whether security in the Balkans will improve over the next 4 year*

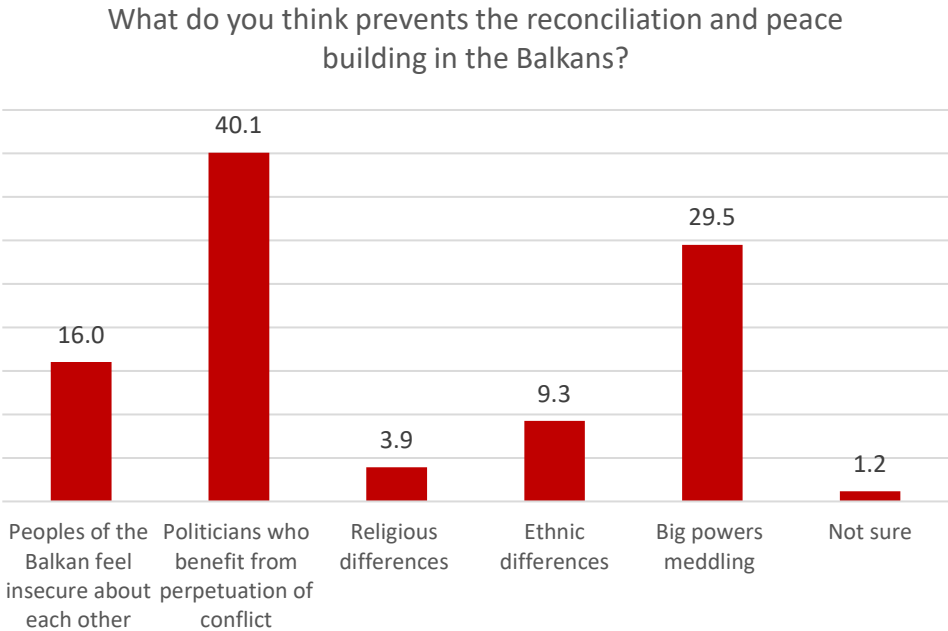
Obstacles to reconciliation

The data paints a sobering picture of the obstacles to reconciliation and peacebuilding in the Balkans, revealing a public that is both politically astute and historically aware. The dominant perception—held by **40.1%** of respondents—is that **political actors who profit from sustained divisions** are the primary barrier to peace. This suggests widespread scepticism toward domestic leadership and a belief that conflict is, at least in part, deliberately maintained for political gain.

A significant portion of the population (**29.5%**) also attributes the lack of progress to **interference by global powers**. This reflects a regional consciousness shaped by decades of geopolitical manoeuvring, where external influence is seen not as neutral mediation but as a complicating force that often exacerbates local tensions.

Interestingly, interpersonal distrust among Balkan peoples accounts for 16.0% of responses, indicating that while societal insecurities exist, they are not viewed as the root cause. Ethnic differences (9.3%) and religious divisions (3.9%) are cited far less frequently, suggesting that identity-based factors—often

emphasized in historical narratives—are now perceived as secondary to political and strategic dynamics.



Graph 10. *Opinion on what prevents the reconciliation and peace building in the Balkans*

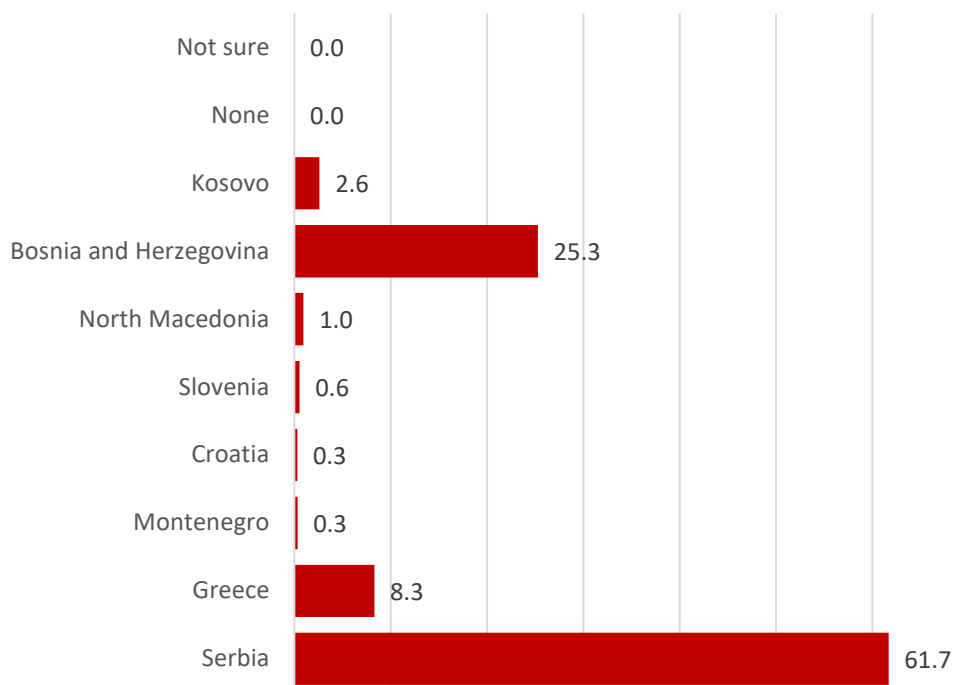
Perceived threats by countries

Albanians perceive Serbia as the most significant security threat in the Balkans, with **61.7%** identifying it as such. Such views reflect longstanding historical tensions, particularly over Kosovo, and ongoing political disputes that shape public perceptions of regional stability.

A smaller but still notable share, **25.3%**, see Bosnia and Herzegovina as a potential threat - likely reflecting concerns about instability in the country, ethnic tensions, and the broader impact of regional fragility on Albania's security environment.

Other neighbours are perceived far less as threats: Greece is mentioned by **8.3%**, possibly linked to periodic disputes over minority rights, maritime boundaries, or historical issues. Countries like Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, and North Macedonia are barely seen as threats (all under 1%), indicating generally stable relations.

Which of the Balkan countries do you see as a threat to the security of Albania?



Graph 11. Countries seen as a threat to the security of Albania



GEOPOLITICS AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS

GEOPOLITICS AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS

This chapter explores Albanian citizens' perspectives on geopolitics and global affairs, revealing their views on key international actors, global power dynamics, and foreign policy priorities. Understanding these public sentiments is crucial for aligning foreign policy decisions with societal expectations, strengthening international engagement, and ensuring accountability in democratic governance.

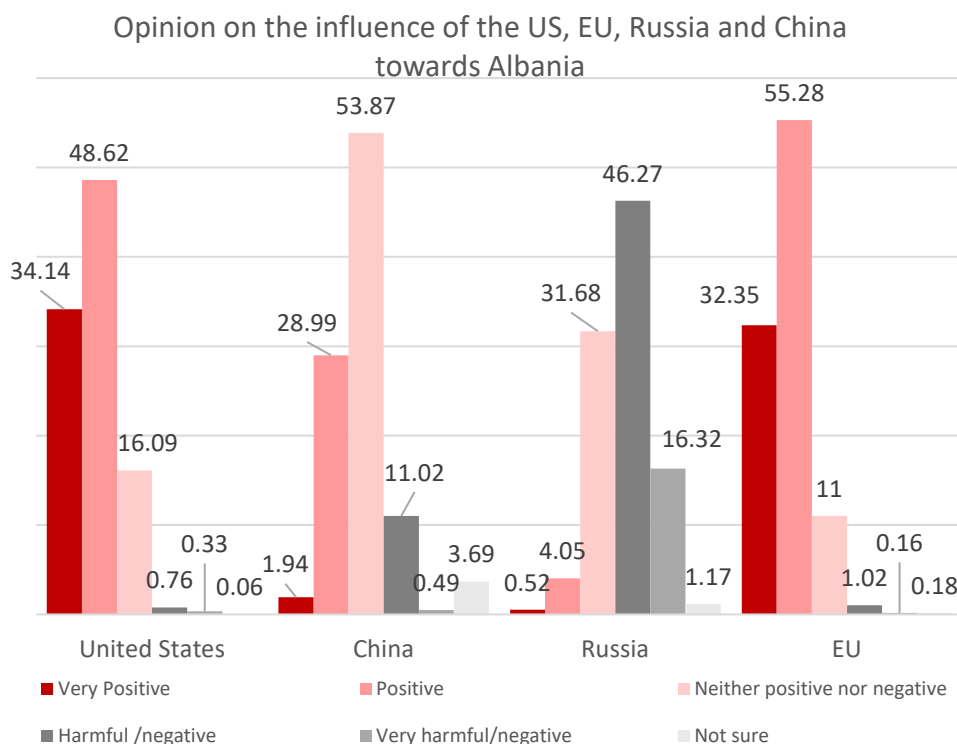
Geopolitical influence

This section captures public perceptions of the influence of major global actors on Albania, providing policymakers with evidence on how foreign relations are understood and valued by citizens. Understanding these views is essential for ensuring that foreign policy decisions are transparent, responsive to societal expectations, and grounded in democratic accountability. The following questions were asked:

- *What do you think is the influence of United States towards Albania?*
- *What do you think is the influence of China towards Albania?*
- *What do you think is the influence of Russia towards Albania?:*
- *What do you think is the influence of the EU towards Albania?*

The United States enjoys widespread support in Albania, with a combined **82.76%** perceiving its influence as either very positive or positive, solidifying the strong transatlantic bond. The European Union also enjoys immense support, with an overwhelming **87.7%** perceiving its influence as either very positive or positive, reflecting Albania's strong aspirations for EU membership.

Russia's influence is viewed critically by a significant portion of the population, with a combined **62.6%** perceiving it as either harmful or very harmful, reflecting broader geopolitical tensions. Opinions on China's influence are more measured, with a majority (**53.9%**) viewing it as neither positive nor negative, suggesting a cautious approach to engagement.



Graph 12. Opinion on the influence of the US, EU, Russia and China towards Albania

Use of global influence

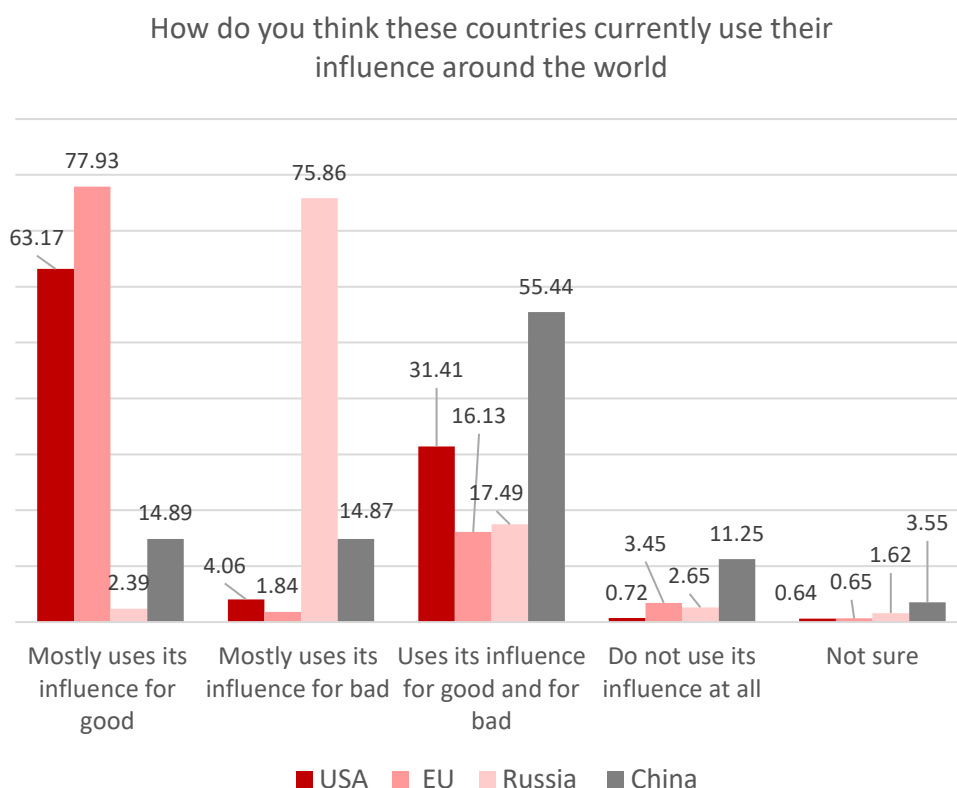
These questions explore how citizens perceive the way major powers use their global influence, offering insights into public trust, scepticism, or ambivalence toward international actors. Such perspectives are necessary to help ensure that national strategies are informed by societal views on the legitimacy and credibility of global powers, guiding decision-makers in aligning foreign relations with public expectations and democratic values. The following questions were asked:

- How do you think the USA currently uses its influence around the world?
- How do you think the EU currently uses its influence around the world?
- How do you think the Russia currently uses its influence around the world?
- How do you think the China currently uses its influence around the world?

The United States is generally seen as a force for good, with **63.17%** believing it mostly uses its influence for positive purposes, although a notable **31.41%**

acknowledge a mix of positive and negative actions. The European Union garners even greater approval, with 77.93% believing it mostly uses its influence for good, reinforcing its image as a benevolent actor on the global stage.

Perceptions of China's global influence are more nuanced, with 55.4% believing it acts for both good and bad, reflecting the complex nature of its international role. In stark contrast, Russia is predominantly seen as wielding its influence negatively, with 75.86% believing it mostly acts for ill, highlighting the deep mistrust of its global agenda.



Graph 13. Opinion on the use of their influence in the world by major powers

Global affairs and foreign policy priorities

The following questions were asked to gain insights on global affairs and Albania's foreign policy priorities:

- Which of the following actors will be the most influential in the Global Affairs in the next 4 years?
- With which of the following countries that Albania should prioritise relations with?

- Which of the following countries do you think, has the best relations with Albania?

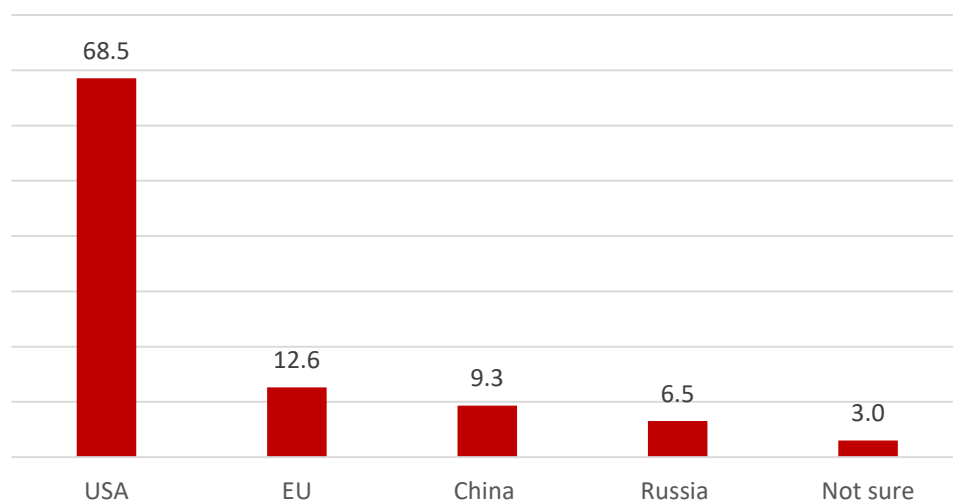
These questions seek to identify public expectations about future global power dynamics and highlight which partnerships citizens believe Albania should prioritize. Understanding these views helps ensure that foreign policy choices reflect societal preferences, strengthen trust in international engagement, and align diplomatic priorities with the relationships considered most beneficial by the public.

A substantial **68.5% foresee** the United States as the most influential global actor in the coming years, likely reflecting its military power, economic reach, and diplomatic presence. This may also signal Albania's continued strategic alignment with Western institutions and values.

Despite Albania's EU integration aspirations, **12.6% of the citizens see the EU** as more internally focused or fragmented in its global role. This could reflect scepticism about the EU's ability to act decisively on the world stage.

While **China's** global rise is acknowledged, it remains secondary in Albanian public perception, with **only 9.3% thinking it will be most influential**. This may be due to limited direct engagement or visibility in Albania compared to Western actors. Russia's role is seen as **marginal (6.5%)**, possibly due to its isolation post-Ukraine invasion and limited soft power in the region.

Which of the following actors will be the most influential in the global affairs in the next 4 years

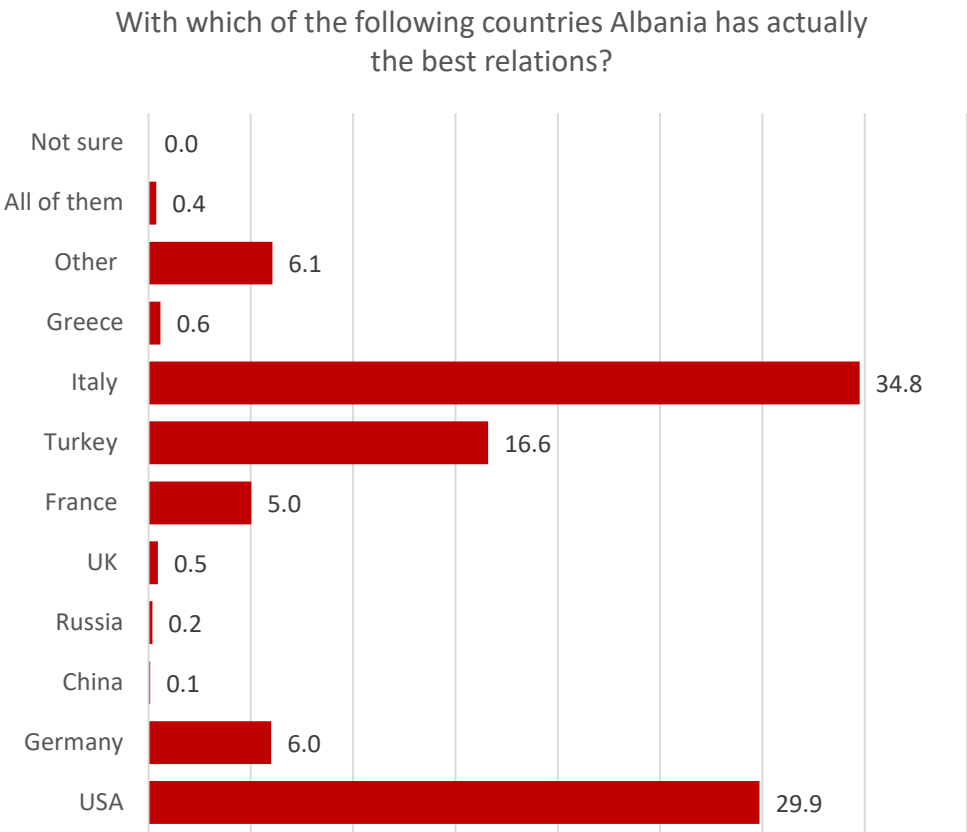


Graph 14. Opinion on the most influential actors in the global affairs in the next 4 years

Best relations with countries

Italy is perceived by **34.8%** of the citizens as the country with the best relations with Albania, reflecting the deep historical, cultural, and economic ties between the two nations. Migration, trade, and geographic proximity are likely to further reinforce its perception as a strategic partner. The United States ranks immediately after Italy (**29.9%**), as Albanians view it as a key ally for security, investment, and the country’s global positioning.

Despite its EU leadership and donor role, Germany ranks modestly (**6.0%**), possibly due to less direct engagement or visibility in Albanian public discourse. France’s role in EU affairs is recognized but not seen as central to Albania’s bilateral strategy. On the other hand, Turkey’s role as a regional power and cultural affinity may explain its relatively high percentage (**16.6%**), suggesting a pragmatic view of regional partnerships.

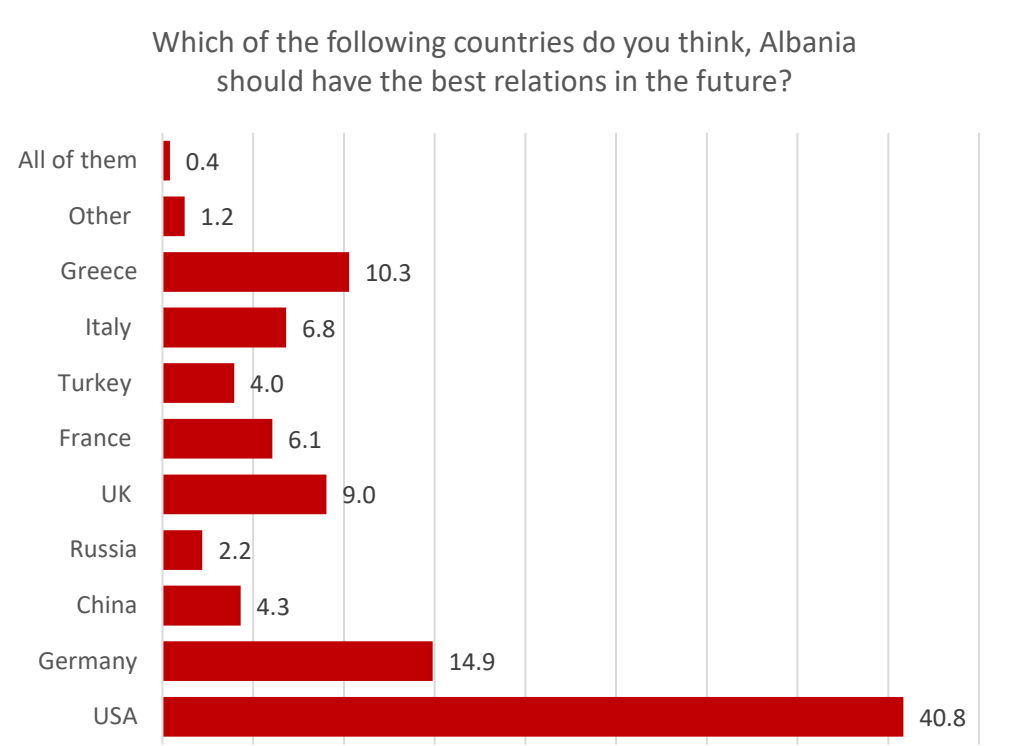


Graph 15. *Opinion on countries with which Albania has best relations with*

For the majority of respondents (**40.8%**), the United States represents the country with which Albania should build the closest relations in the future. This result reflects strong confidence in the U.S. role as a strategic partner in security,

governance, and the fight against corruption. Germany ranks second with **14.9%**, indicating that citizens view it as an important actor for the economy and European politics, though not at the same level of priority as the U.S.

Greece comes third with **10.3%**, with perceptions mainly linked to trade relations, migration, and regional stability. The United Kingdom is mentioned by **9%** of respondents, reflecting diaspora ties and development support, while France, at **6.1%**, is seen as a reliable partner but not a standout priority for the future.



Graph 16. *Opinion on countries that Albania should prioritise relations with*

Country	Should Prioritize Relations (%)	Best Current Relations (%)	Interpretation of mismatch
Italy	6.81	34.75	Perceived as the country with the best current relations, but not seen as a priority for the future. Citizens are satisfied with the existing situation and do not expect additional prioritization.

USA	40.83	29.86	Seen as the partner that should be prioritized in the future, even though current relations are already strong. Reflects expectations for further strategic deepening.
Turkey	3.96	16.60	Current relations are perceived as stronger than the need for prioritization in the future. Suggests a pragmatic and more reserved approach toward Turkey's long-term role.
Germany	14.89	6.00	Although not perceived as a close partner at present, a significant share of citizens consider it a future priority due to its economic and political weight in the EU.
France	6.05	5.03	Small difference between current perception and future expectations. Indicates stability, but not a prominent role in Albania's bilateral agenda.
Greece	10.28	0.59	Current relations are perceived as more important than the need for prioritization in the future. Reflects practical cooperation (migration, trade, regional stability), but a lack of long-term strategic vision.

Table 2: Analysis of the discrepancies between foreign policy prioritisation and best relations

Transatlantic relations and international organizations

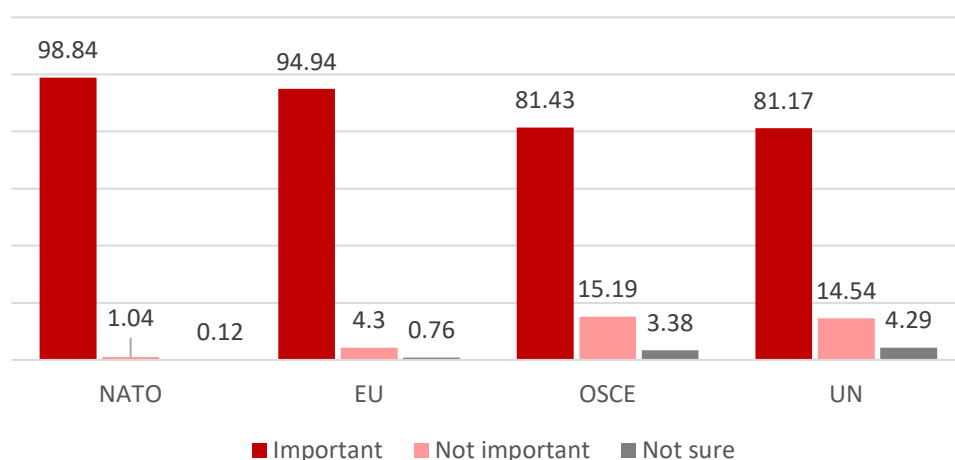
This section provides insight into how citizens perceive Albania's security architecture, international alliances, and multilateral engagements. It does so by gauging citizens' expectations about transatlantic relations and the perceived importance of organizations such as NATO, the EU, OSCE, and the UN, policymakers can align national security and foreign policy strategies with public priorities.

To gain insights on transatlantic relations and international organizations, the following questions were asked:

- *How important is NATO for the national security of Albania?*
- *How important is EU for the national security of Albania?*
- *How important is OSCE for the national security of Albania?*
- *How important is the UN for the national security of Albania?*
- *Which of the following international organisations Albania should prioritise relations with?*
- *In the next five years do you anticipate relations between the United States and Europe to be...?*

NATO's importance to Albania's security is virtually unanimous, with a decisive **98.84%** of the respondents deeming it important, underscoring the alliance's central role in the country's national defence. The European Union is also seen as critical to Albania's security, **with 94.9%** deeming it important, emphasizing the EU's significance in broader security considerations. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and United Nations garner strong recognition as well, with **81.4%** and **81.2%** viewing them as important. These perceptions underscore the importance of Albania's continued commitment to these organizations and its active participation in their activities.

How important are these organisations for the national security of Albania?



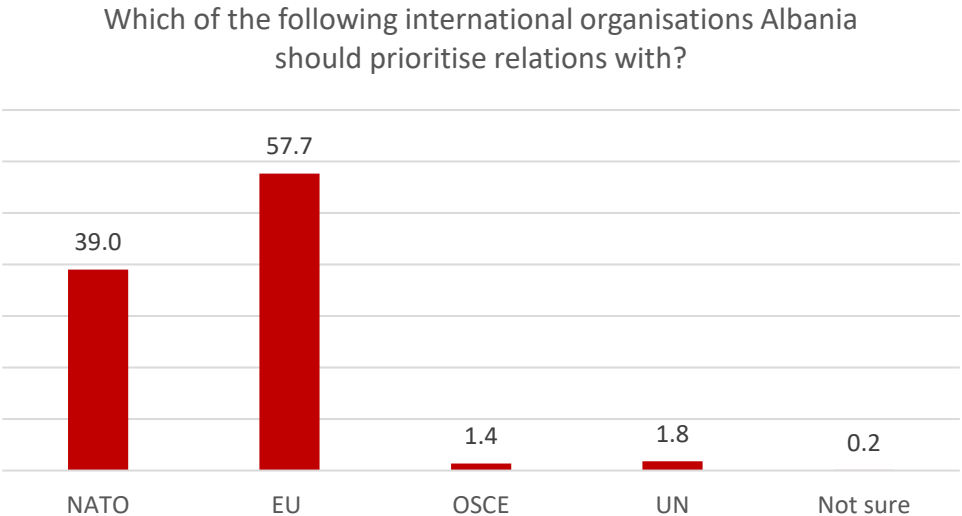
Graph 17. Importance of international organisations for the national security of Albania

When asked which international organizations the country should prioritize in its foreign relations, **57.7%** of respondents identified the European Union as the top choice, followed by **39.0%** who favoured NATO. In stark contrast, only 1.8% selected the United Nations, 1.4% the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and a mere 0.2% were unsure, underscoring the clarity and conviction of public opinion.

This data show that Albanian citizens overwhelmingly view EU integration as the cornerstone of the country's future. The EU is not only seen as a pathway to economic development and institutional reform, but also as a symbol of democratic values, rule of law, and regional stability.

NATO's strong showing further highlights Albania's strategic commitment to collective defence and Western alliances. With **39%** of respondents prioritizing NATO, it's evident that citizens value the security umbrella provided by the alliance - particularly in light of ongoing geopolitical tensions in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. NATO is perceived not just as a military alliance, but as a guarantor of sovereignty and regional peace.

Meanwhile, the low prioritization of the UN and OSCE suggests that multilateral institutions with **broader or more technical mandates are viewed as less directly relevant** to Albania's immediate national interests. While these organizations play important roles in global governance and democratization, their visibility and perceived impact on domestic affairs appear limited in the public eye.

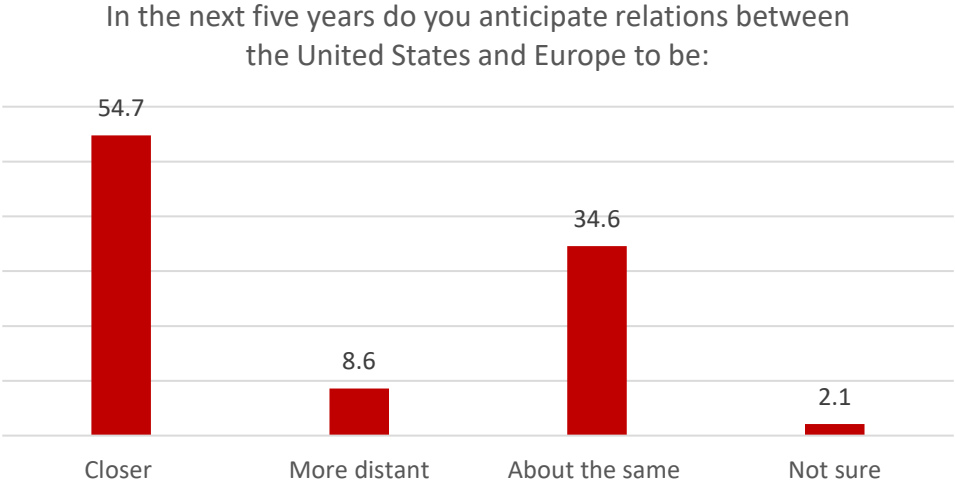


Graph 18. *International organisations Albania should prioritise relations with*

US-Europe Relations

The data reveals a prevailing sense of optimism among Albanian citizens regarding the future of transatlantic relations. When asked how they anticipate

the relationship between the United States and Europe will evolve over the next five years, **54.7%** of respondents said they expect it to grow closer, while **34.6%** believe it will remain about the same. Only **8.6%** foresee a more distant relationship, and a mere **2.1%** were unsure, indicating a high level of public engagement and clarity on the issue.



Graph 19. *opinion on relations between the United States and Europe in the next five years*



**ACCESSION TO THE
EUROPEAN UNION**

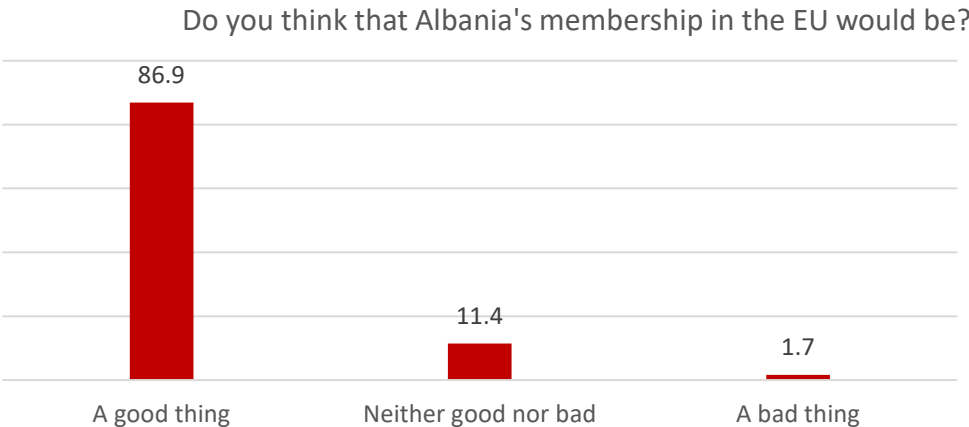
ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

This chapter examines public sentiment in Albania regarding EU membership, a topic of significant national importance. The analysis explores both the perceived value of EU integration and the expected timeline for Albania's accession, providing policymakers with valuable insights into public support and priorities. Understanding whether people see EU membership as beneficial provides policymakers with a clear measure of public support for integration. Exploring what the EU means personally to individuals helps identify the main drivers of that support, which can guide communication strategies and policy priorities. Together, these questions seek to gauge whether policymaking on EU accession remains aligned with public expectations, values, and concerns, which are important for accountability and legitimacy of the process.

To gain insights on these aspects the following questions were asked:

- *Do you think that Albania's membership of the EU would be...?*
- *What does the EU mean to you personally? (First choice)*
- *Other than what you said before, what does the EU mean to you personally? (Second choice)*
- *Are you confident that will Albania become member of the EU by 2030?*

EU membership is overwhelmingly seen as beneficial, with **86.9%** of the respondents believing it would be a good thing, indicating strong popular support for European integration. This support for EU membership signifies a strong national consensus on Albania's strategic orientation towards Europe.



Graph 20. Opinion on Albania's membership of the EU

The responses to the question “*What does the EU mean to you personally?*” reveal a both powerful and aspirational narrative among Albanian citizens. The data shows that economic prosperity (**32.33%**) and freedom to travel, study, and work anywhere in the EU (**31.89%**) are the two most dominant personal associations with the European Union. These findings reflect a population that sees the EU not just as a political entity, but as a gateway to opportunity, mobility, and improved quality of life.

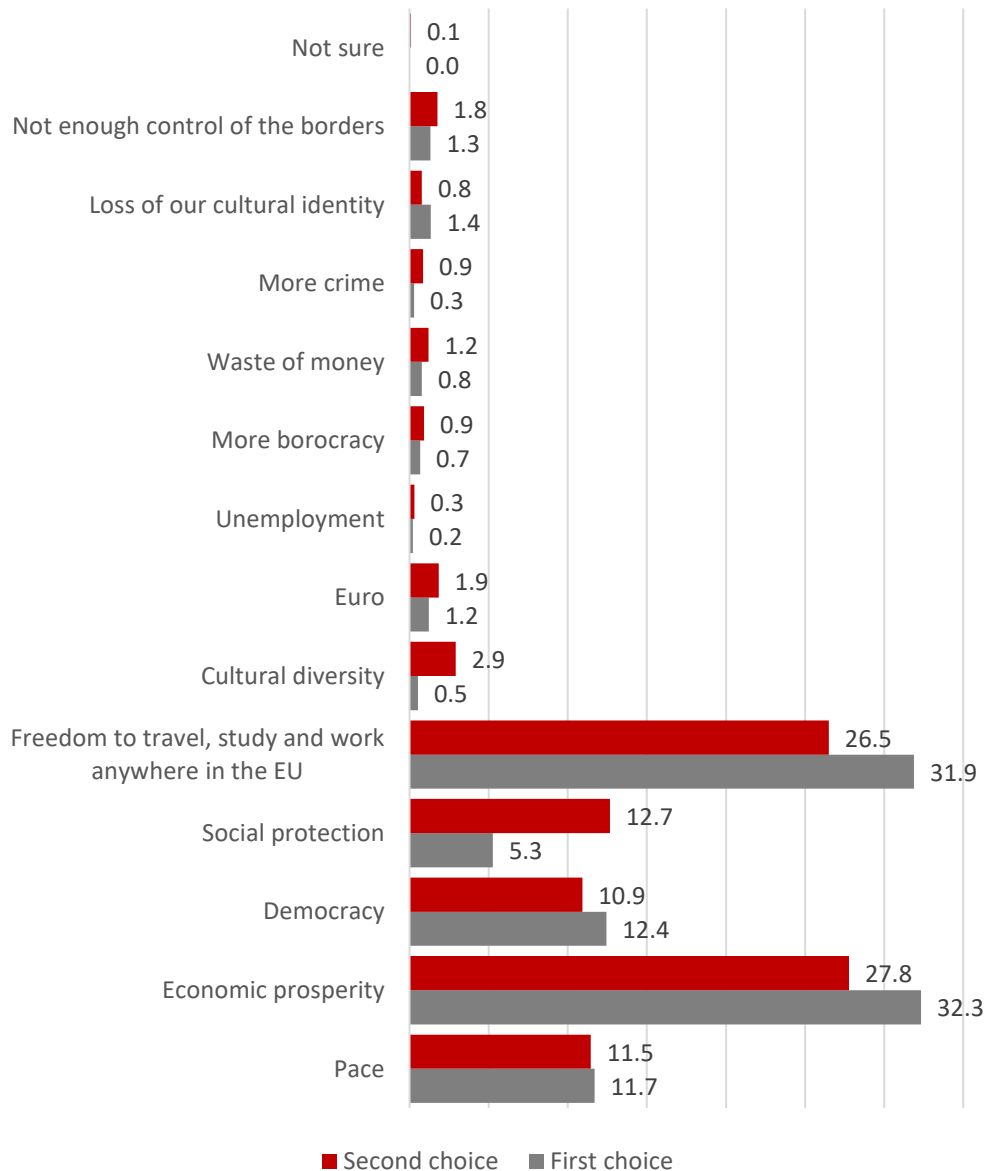
For many Albanians, the EU represents a promise of upward mobility - access to jobs, education, and broader horizons beyond national borders. This is especially resonant among youth and professionals who view integration as a path to personal and professional growth. The strong emphasis on economic benefits also underscores public expectations for tangible improvements in living standards, infrastructure, and employment prospects through EU alignment.

Beyond material aspirations, a significant portion of respondents associate the EU with **democracy (12.4%)** and **peace (11.7%)**. These values reflect deeper hopes for institutional accountability, rule of law, and regional stability. While not the top-ranked choices, they remain central to the EU’s symbolic appeal, especially among those engaged in governance reform and civic empowerment.

Interestingly, **social protection (5.3%)** emerged as a more prominent second choice (12.7%), suggesting that while not immediately top-of-mind, many Albanians value the EU’s inclusive welfare model and its emphasis on equity and support for vulnerable groups.

On the other end of the spectrum, **negative associations with the EU are marginal**. Only small percentages of respondents linked the EU with concerns such as loss of cultural identity (**1.4%**), lack of border control (**1.3%**), bureaucracy (**0.7%**), or waste of money (**0.8%**). These figures suggest that scepticism exists but is not widespread. Nonetheless, they point to the importance of addressing fears around sovereignty, cultural erosion, and institutional complexity - particularly in regions or demographics more susceptible to misinformation or disengagement.

What does the EU mean to you personally?



Graph 21. *Meaning of the EU personally*

Overall, the data paints a picture of a society that is deeply aspirational, largely optimistic, and broadly aligned with the EU's core values and benefits. For policymakers, civil society actors, and communicators, this offers a clear mandate: to reinforce the EU's role as a driver of prosperity and opportunity, while also nurturing democratic values and addressing residual concerns with transparency and inclusion.

However, survey responses reveal a cautiously optimistic outlook among Albanian citizens regarding the country's path to European Union membership. When asked whether they believe Albania will become an EU member by 2030, **43.1%** responded "Yes", and an additional **21.5%** said "Lean Yes". Together, nearly two-thirds of respondents (**64.6%**) express confidence or tentative optimism that accession will occur within the next five years.

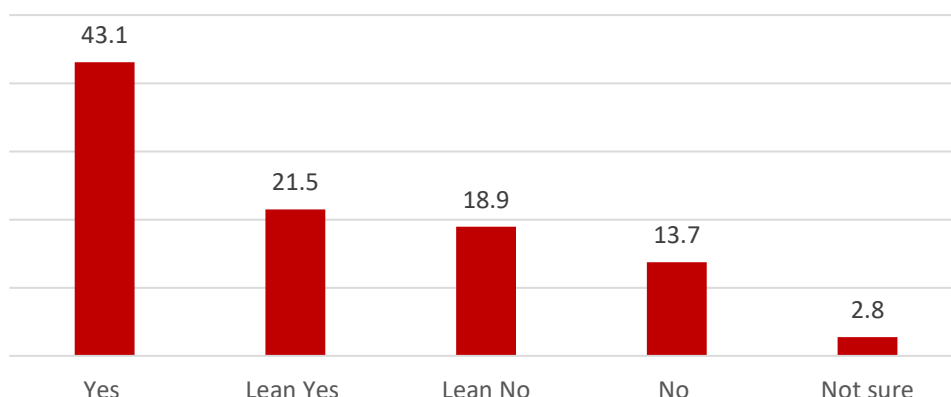
This majority sentiment reflects sustained public belief in the EU integration process, despite its complexity and delays. It suggests that most Albanians still view membership as achievable and desirable, likely driven by the perceived benefits of economic growth, democratic reform, and regional stability.

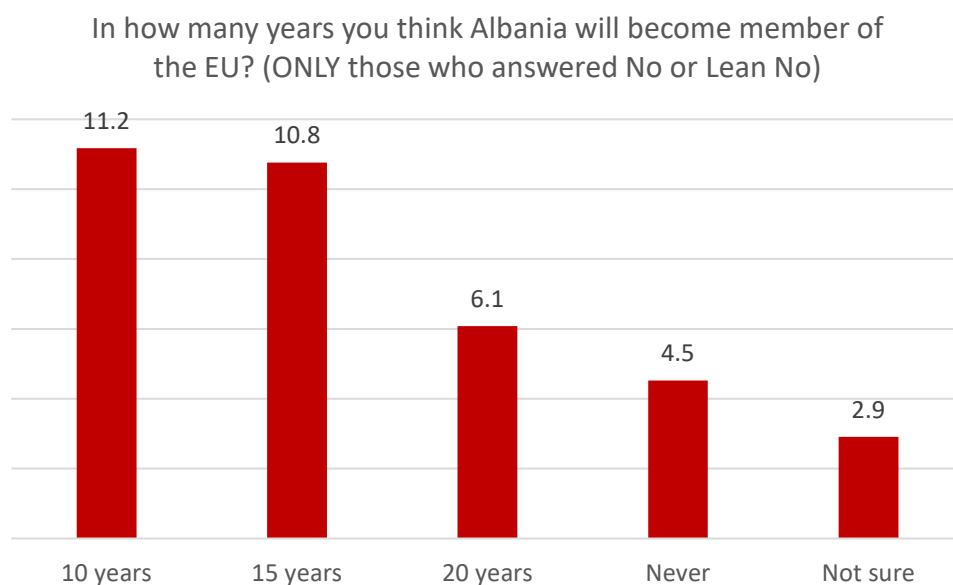
The data also reveals a significant undercurrent of scepticism. **18.9%** responded "Lean No", and **13.7%** said "No", indicating that nearly one-third of the population harbours doubts about Albania's ability to meet accession criteria or overcome political and institutional hurdles by 2030. This group may be influenced by slow progress on key reforms, perceived lack of political will, or broader disillusionment with the EU's enlargement pace.

To better understand these doubts, respondents who answered "No" or "Lean No" were asked to estimate when - if ever - they believe Albania will join the EU. Among them, **11.2%** expect accession within 10 years, **10.8%** within 15 years, and **6.1%** within 20 years. Notably, **4.5%** believe Albania will never join, and **2.9%** are unsure. These responses suggest that even among sceptics, many still see EU membership as a long-term possibility rather than an outright impossibility.

The most striking figure, however, is that **64.6%** of all respondents skipped this follow-up question, having not selected "No" or "Lean No" in the previous one. This reinforces the earlier finding: a clear majority of Albanians remain hopeful or confident that EU accession is on the horizon, and do not anticipate prolonged delays.

Are you confident that will Albania become member of the EU by 2030?





Graph 22 and 23. Confidence on whether Albania will become member of the EU by 2030 and when it will become member of the EU



ORGANISED CRIME: PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

ORGANISED CRIME: PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

This chapter focuses on organised crime in Albania, from the perspective of citizens. This is the first time Albanian citizens are surveyed on this topic. The questions asked sought to capture the perceptions, experiences, and attitudes of Albanian citizens regarding the **seriousness of the organised crime problem**, nature of activities, **the factors contributing to organized crime**, the extent, and impact of organized crime within their communities and across the nation, the influence of organised crime on politics and specifically on elections, and on the economy. Additionally, the questions seek to capture the effectiveness of the institutional efforts to tackle organised crime and the trust in the law enforcement and justice institutions.

Seriousness and activities of organised crime

One of the fundamental questions in assessing the impact of organized crime is understanding how seriously the public perceives the issue. Public perception shapes attitudes towards law enforcement, government policies, and the willingness to engage in efforts to combat crime. This section analyses survey results that directly address the perceived seriousness of organized crime in Albania, both at the national and local levels.

The following questions were asked:

- *How serious do you think the problem of organised crime is in your city/province?*
- *How serious do you think the problem of organised crime is in Albania?*
- *Which region of Albania you think organised crime has more influence?*
- *In your opinion what is the main activity organised crime engages with?*
- *In your opinion what is the second main activities organised crime engages with?*
- *According to your opinion the cultivation of cannabis in the last 3 years in Albania has...*
- *Do you agree that cultivation of cannabis has influenced to expanding the scale of the organised crime presence in Albania?*
- *Do agree that the legalisation of the cultivation of cannabis will reduce the engagement of organised crime in cannabis cultivation Albania?*

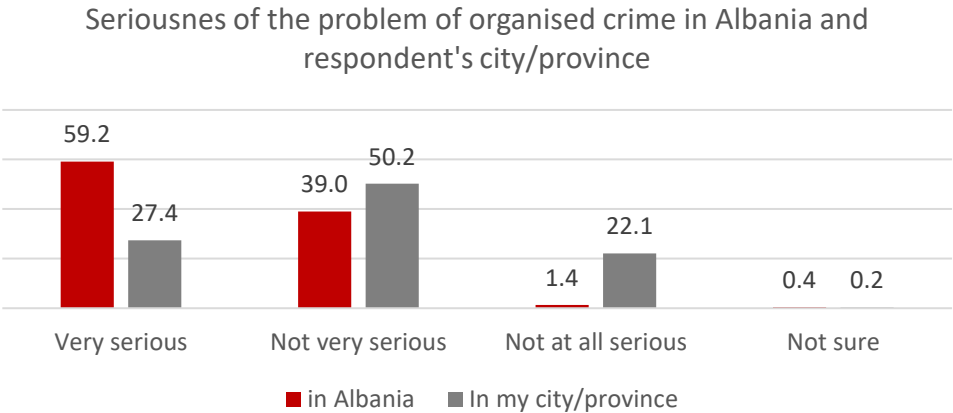
The results of the survey reveal a compelling divide between how citizens view the issue nationally versus locally. While the majority of respondents - **59.2%** - consider organized crime to be a very serious problem across the country, only **27.4%** feel the same about their own city or province. This contrast suggests a psychological and spatial distancing, where the threat is acknowledged broadly but not necessarily felt in one's immediate environment.

Locally, half of the population (**50.2%**) believes organized crime is *not very serious*, and a striking **22.1%** go so far as to say it is *not at all serious*. These figures stand in stark contrast to the national outlook, where only **39.0%** say the problem is *not very serious* and a mere **1.4%** dismiss it entirely. Such a disparity may reflect several dynamics: the hidden nature of organized crime, regional variation in criminal activity, or even a normalization of certain illicit practices that no longer register as threats.

Interestingly, uncertainty is almost non-existent. Just **0.2%** of respondents were unsure about the seriousness of organized crime in their locality, and **0.4%** at the national level. This suggests that Albanians feel confident in their assessments - whether shaped by personal experience, media narratives, or public discourse.

Taken together, these findings point to a nuanced challenge for policymakers and civic actors. While the national concern is clear, the lack of perceived urgency at the local level could hinder grassroots mobilization, reporting, and community-based prevention efforts. Bridging this perception gap will require strategic communication, localized engagement, and greater transparency in law enforcement efforts to ensure that citizens not only recognize the problem but feel empowered to address it within their own communities.

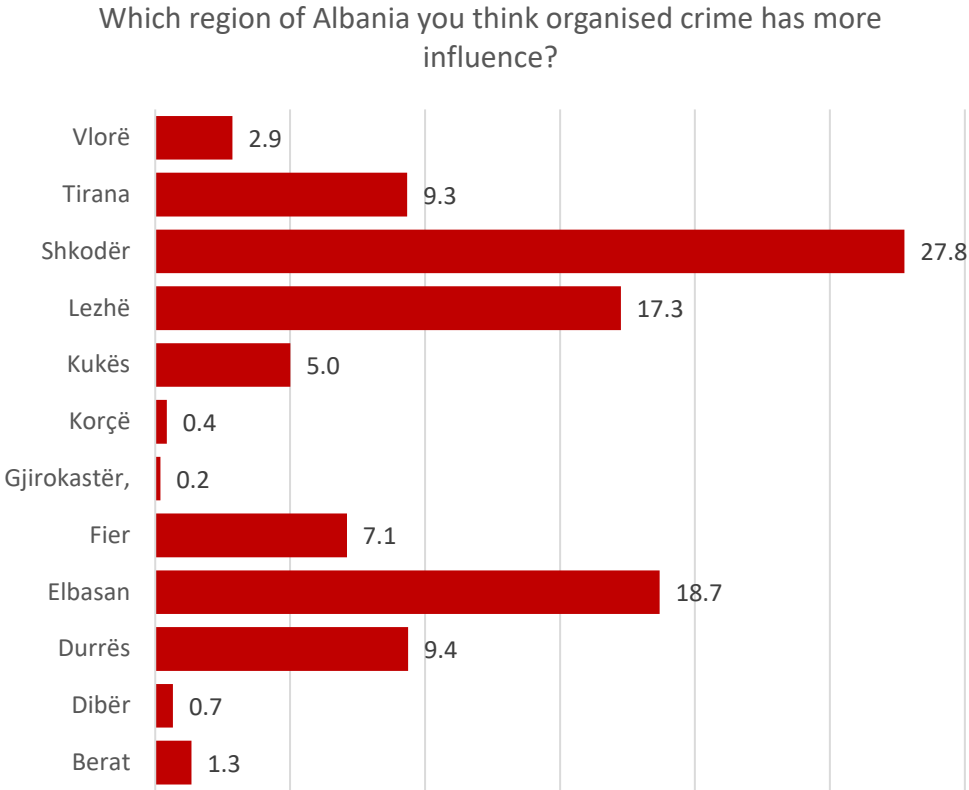
The difference between national and local perceptions is a crucial finding. It suggests the importance of the **media and national narratives**. People are likely influenced by media reports and national-level discussions about organized crime, leading to a higher perception of seriousness at the national level. Also it suggests that **local realities may vary**: the localized responses indicate that the actual experience of organized crime can vary significantly from region to region. Some areas may be less affected, or the forms of organized crime present may be perceived as less threatening. The relatively high percentage of respondents who do not view organized crime as a serious problem in their local area could **lead to complacency and a reduced willingness to support** local anti-crime initiatives.



Graph 24. *Seriousness of the problem of organised crime in Albania and respondent's city/area*

When asked which region of Albania is most affected by organized crime, **Shkodër** emerged as the dominant response, cited by **27.8%** of respondents. This was followed by **Elbasan (18.7%)** and **Lezhë (17.3%)**, suggesting that northern and central regions are viewed as hotspots for criminal networks. **Durrës** and **Tirana**, despite their economic and logistical significance, were mentioned by only **9.4%** and **9.3%** respectively. This contrast may reflect a perception that criminal activity in these urban centres is more concealed or institutionalized.

Regions like **Gjirokastër (0.2%)**, **Korçë (0.4%)**, and **Dibër (0.7%)** were scarcely mentioned, indicating either lower visibility of organized crime or a public belief that these areas are less affected. Interestingly, **no respondents** selected “Not sure,” suggesting a high level of confidence or familiarity with regional crime dynamics.



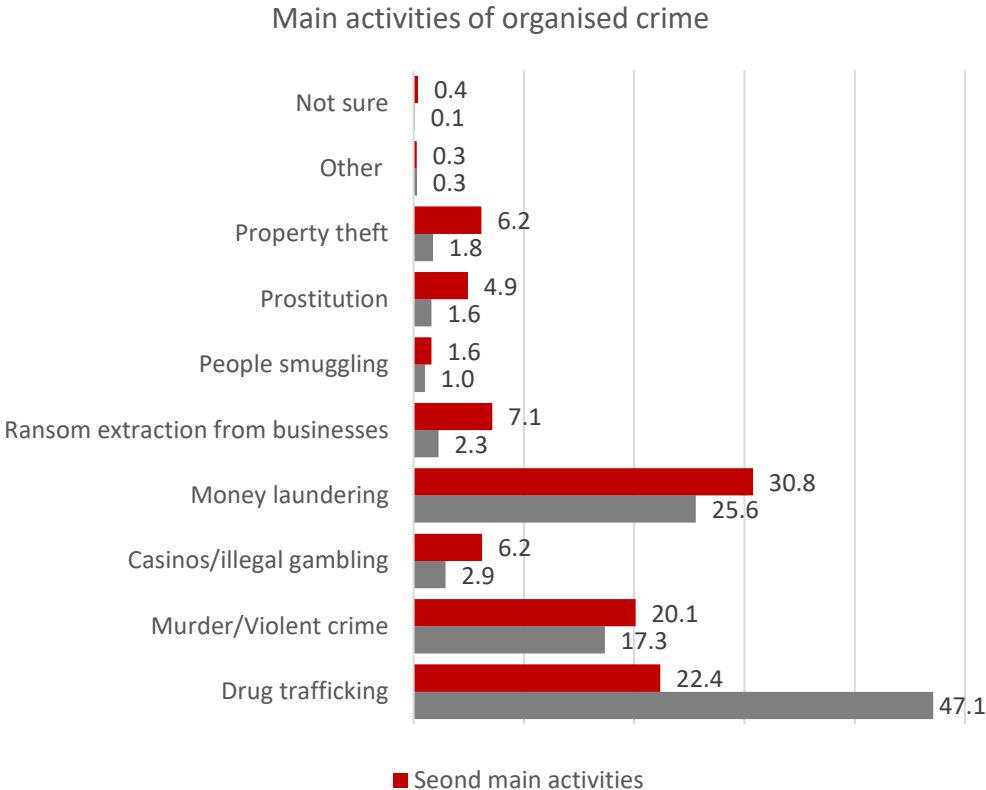
Graph 25. Region in which organised crime has more influence

Activities of Organized Crime

Understanding the specific activities engaged in by organized crime groups is crucial for designing effective strategies to disrupt their operations and dismantle their networks. The survey included questions designed to identify the

activities that the Albanian public perceives as the most prevalent and significant.

In terms of criminal operations, the data reveals that **drug trafficking** is overwhelmingly seen as the primary activity of organized crime, with **47.1%** identifying it as the main concern and **22.4%** listing it as a secondary one. This aligns with Albania’s known role as a transit and production hub in regional narcotics routes. **Money laundering** follows closely, cited by **25.6%** as the main activity and **30.8%** as the second most common. This reflects public awareness of how illicit profits are reintegrated into the formal economy, often through real estate, construction, or shell companies. **Murder and violent crime** also feature prominently, with **17.3%** listing it as the top activity and **20.1%** as secondary - underscoring the perceived brutality and enforcement mechanisms within criminal groups. Other activities such as **illegal gambling, ransom extraction, prostitution, and property theft** were mentioned far less frequently, suggesting they are either seen as peripheral or less visible. **People smuggling**, despite Albania’s proximity to migration routes, was cited by only **1.0%** as a primary activity. The near absence of “Not sure” responses across both the above questions indicates that the population feels informed and confident in its assessments of organized crime. Whether shaped by media, personal experience, or public discourse.

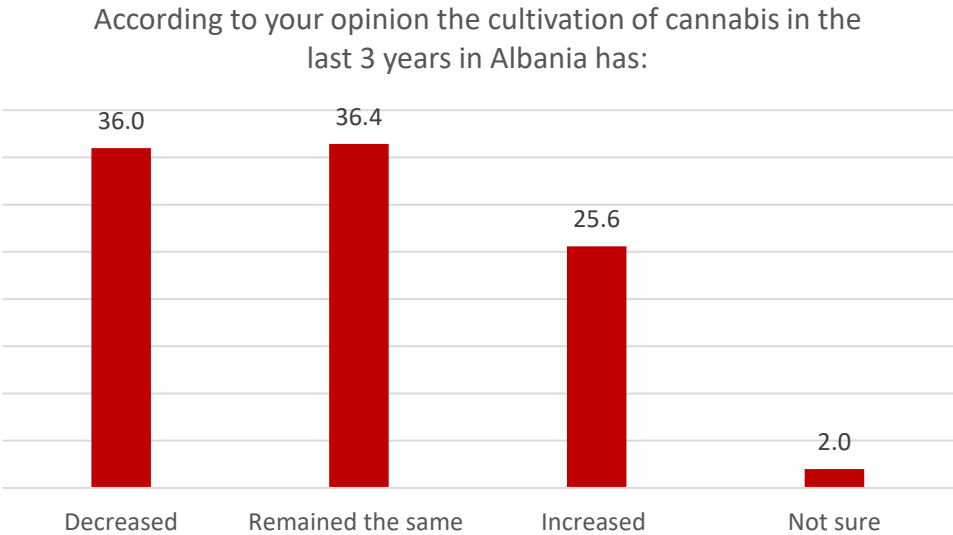


Graph 26. Main activities of organised crime

Cannabis cultivation activity

Cannabis cultivation and trafficking have been one of the very first prolific activities of criminal groups in Albania since the transition from communism. The country's favourable climate, challenging economic conditions, and weak law enforcement have contributed to its emergence as a significant producer of cannabis, primarily for export to European markets. This illicit activity has become deeply entwined with organized crime, providing a lucrative source of income for criminal groups and contributing to corruption, violence, and institutional instability. Despite government efforts to curb cultivation and trafficking, the problem remains a significant challenge, prompting ongoing debate about the effectiveness of current policies and the potential for alternative approaches, such as legalization or decriminalization. Hence, these questions regarding cannabis cultivation are crucial for understanding the complex interplay between drug production, organized crime, and potential policy solutions.

When asked about the trajectory of cannabis cultivation over the past three years, the public appears evenly split. **36.4%** believe cultivation has remained the same, while 36.0% say it has decreased. Meanwhile, 25.6% perceive an *increase*, suggesting that a significant minority still views cannabis as a growing concern. This distribution points to regional variation in visibility and enforcement, as well as differing levels of public exposure to cultivation activity.

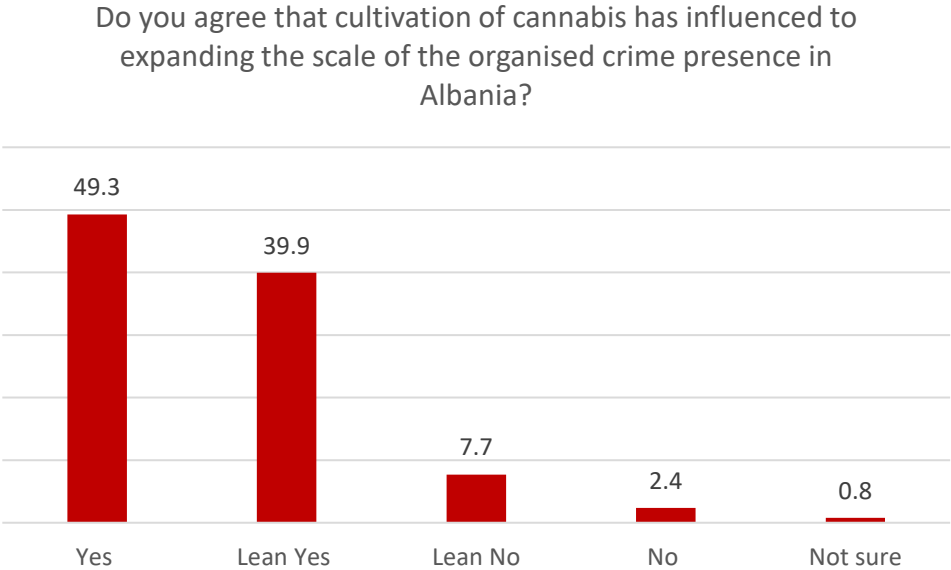


Graph 27. *Opinion on trend of cannabis cultivation in the last 3 years*

A clear majority of Albanians - **49.3%** outright and **39.9%** leaning - agree that cannabis cultivation has contributed to the *expansion of organized crime*. This overwhelming **89.2%** consensus underscores the public's belief that the cannabis economy is not merely an agricultural issue, but a gateway for broader criminal

enterprise. Whether through trafficking networks, money laundering, or corruption of law enforcement, cannabis is seen as a structural enabler of organized crime.

This perception aligns with the investigations and trials involving police complicity, political protection of cultivation zones, and the use of cannabis profits to fund other illicit activities. The small share of dissenting views (10.1% combined “Lean No” and “No”) suggests that scepticism about this link is rare and likely concentrated in specific demographics or regions.

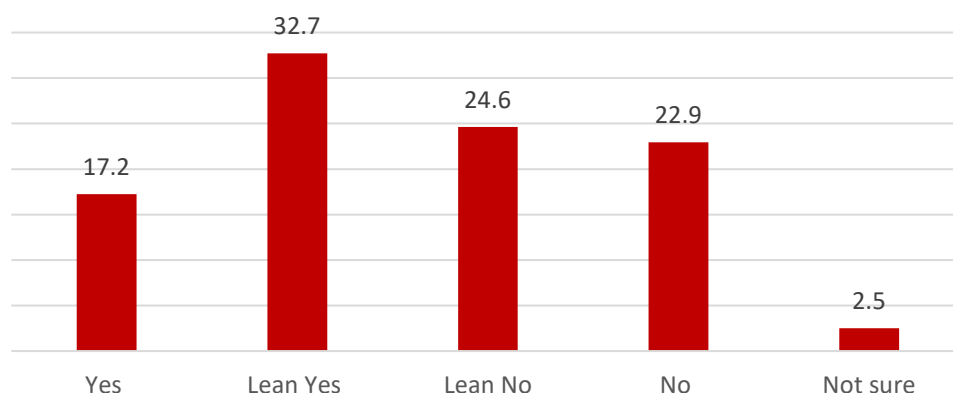


Graph 28. *Opinion on whether cultivation of cannabis has influenced to expanding the scale of the organised crime presence in Albania*

Opinions on whether legalizing cannabis cultivation would reduce organized crime are far more divided. Only 17.2% firmly support legalization as a crime-reduction strategy, with 32.7% leaning in favour. Together, this 49.9% suggests a cautious optimism among half the population. However, 47.5% express doubt - 24.6% leaning against and 22.9% outright rejecting the idea - indicating deep ambivalence about the effectiveness of legalization in curbing criminal involvement.

This split reflects broader tensions in public discourse: while some view legalization as a way to regulate and decriminalize the market, others fear it could legitimize existing criminal networks or fail to dismantle entrenched systems of corruption. The 2.5% who are unsure may be waiting to see how legalization unfolds in other countries or how Albania’s institutions would manage such a transition.

Do agree that the legalisation of the cultivation of cannabis will reduce the engagement of organised crime in cannabis cultivation in Albania?



Graph 29. *Opinion on whether legalisation of the cultivation of cannabis will reduce the engagement of organised crime in cannabis cultivation*

Factors and root causes contributing to organized crime

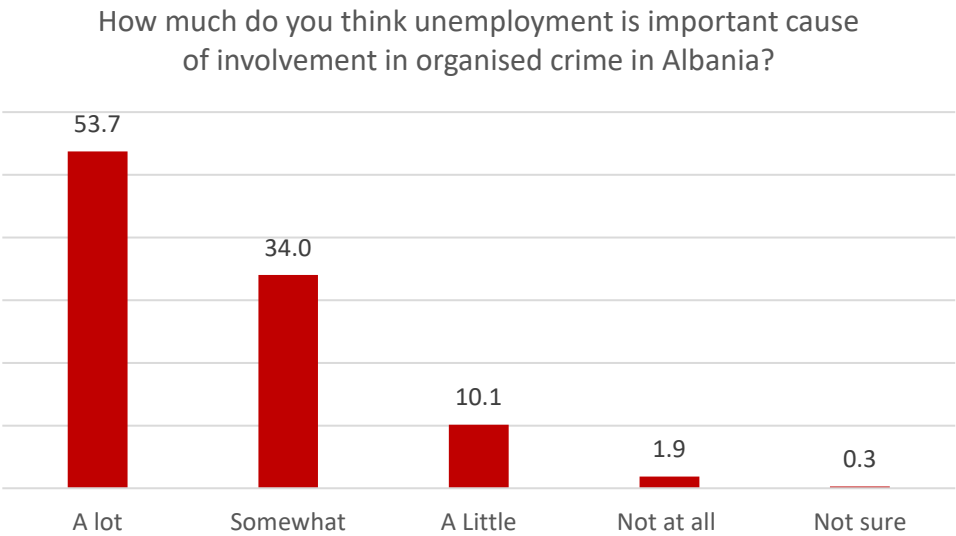
Combating organized crime effectively requires a deep understanding of the factors that enable its emergence, persistence, and expansion. These factors can be broadly categorized as socio-economic, political, institutional, and cultural. This section analyses the survey data on perceived contributing factors and root causes of organized crime in Albania. The following questions were asked:

- *How much do you think Unemployment is important cause of involvement in organised crime in Albania?*
- *How much do you think Poverty is important cause of involvement in organised crime in Albania?*
- *How much do you think Parental relations/problems are important cause of engagement of youth in crime in Albania?*
- *How much do you think Lenient Sentencing of Criminals is important cause of organised crime presence in Albania?*
- *How much do you think the relationship between politics and organised crime is important cause of organised crime presence in Albania?*
- *How much do you think Corruption is important cause of organised crime presence in Albania?*
- *How much do you think the activity of criminal groups itself is a cause for the involvement of citizens in organized crime activities?*

Social factors

Public perceptions in Albania reveal a strong consensus around the socio-economic and familial drivers of organized crime, particularly among youth. The data paints a picture of structural vulnerability - where unemployment, poverty, and strained parental relationships are seen as key catalysts for criminal engagement.

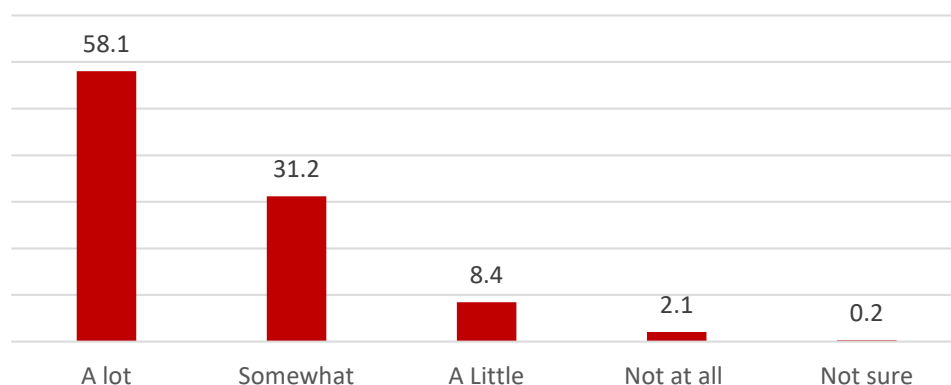
A majority of respondents (**53.7%**) believe that unemployment is a very *important* cause of involvement in organized crime, with another **34.0%** saying it is *somewhat important*. This combined **87.7%** reflects a widespread recognition that lack of economic opportunity fuels desperation and incentivizes illicit activity. Only **1.9%** dismiss unemployment as irrelevant, suggesting that the link between joblessness and crime is deeply embedded in public consciousness. This perception likely stems from persistent youth unemployment, regional disparities, and limited access to dignified work - especially in areas where organized crime offers alternative income streams.



Graph 30. *Opinion on unemployment as an organised crime enabler*

Poverty is viewed as an even more potent driver than unemployment. **58.1%** of the Albanians say it plays a *major* role in pushing individuals toward organized crime, and **31.2%** consider it *somewhat important*. With a total of **89.3%** acknowledging its influence, poverty emerges as the most widely accepted structural cause. This suggests that beyond joblessness, the broader conditions of deprivation - such as inadequate housing, poor education, and lack of social mobility - are seen as breeding grounds for criminal networks. The minimal dissent (**2.1%** “**Not at all**”) reinforces the idea that poverty is not just a background factor but a direct pressure point.

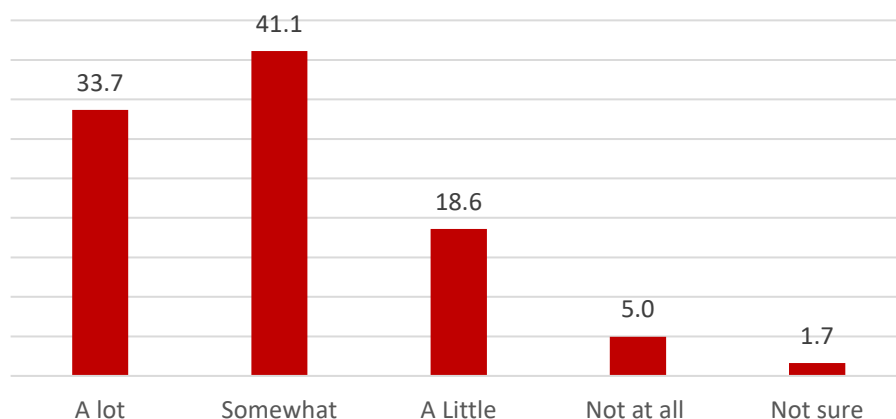
How much do you think poverty is important cause of involvement in organised crime in Albania?



Graph 31. *Opinion on poverty as an organised crime enabler*

While economic factors dominate, familial dynamics are also seen as significant. **33.7%** of respondents believe that *parental problems* are a major cause of youth involvement in crime, and **41.1%** say they are *somewhat important*. The combined **74.8%** indicates that emotional neglect, domestic conflict, or lack of guidance are perceived as contributing to criminal pathways - particularly among younger populations. Interestingly, this factor shows more variation in opinion, with **18.6%** rating it as *only a little important* and **5.0%** rejecting it entirely. This suggests that while many recognize the role of family, it is viewed as less determinative than economic hardship.

How much do you think parental relations/problems are important cause of engagement of youth in crime in Albania?



Graph 32. *Opinion on parental relationship problems as cause of engagement of youth in crime*

Social factors interconnectedness

A large majority of respondents view both unemployment and poverty as significant causes of involvement in organized crime. This suggests a public perception that economic desperation can drive individuals to seek opportunities in illicit activities.

This aligns with broader research on the link between socio-economic deprivation and crime. Areas with high unemployment rates and widespread poverty often experience higher levels of criminal activity, including organized crime. Criminological theories, such as opportunity structure theory, suggest that when legitimate opportunities are limited, individuals are more likely to turn to illegitimate means to achieve economic success or improve their living conditions.¹ Organized crime groups can provide such opportunities, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Factor	A Lot (%)	Somewhat (%)	A Little (%)	Not at All (%)	Not Sure (%)
Unemployment	53.7	34.0	10.1	1.9	0.3
Poverty	58.1	31.2	8.4	2.1	0.2
Parental Relations/Problems	33.7	41.1	18.6	5.0	1.7

Table 3. Summary of social enabling factors

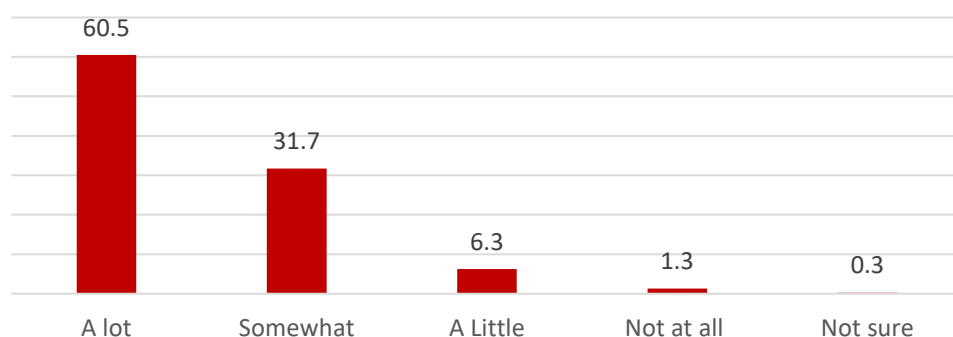
Institutional factors

The data obtained from the survey point to a deep understanding by the public of the systemic and institutional factors that sustain organized crime. The data reveals a strong consensus that lenient sentencing, political-criminal ties, corruption, and the influence of criminal groups themselves, are key drivers of both the persistence and expansion of organized crime across the country.

A striking **60.5%** of respondents believe that lenient sentencing is a major cause of organized crime's presence in Albania, with an additional **31.7%** considering it somewhat important. This overwhelming **92.2%** consensus suggests that the public sees the justice system as insufficiently punitive, allowing criminal actors to operate with impunity. The perception that light penalties fail to deter repeat offenses or dismantle criminal networks reflects broader concerns about institutional weakness and judicial inconsistency. Only **1.3%** reject this view outright, indicating general frustration with the current sentencing regime.

¹ Kleemans, Edward R., and Christianne J. De Poot. "Criminal careers in organized crime and social opportunity structure." *European Journal of Criminology* 5.1 (2008): 69-98.

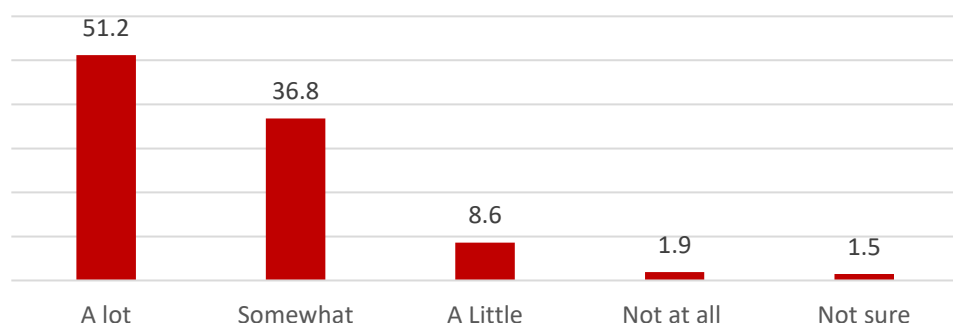
How much do you think lenient sentencing of criminals is important cause of organised crime presence in Albania?



Graph 33. *Opinion on lenient sentencing of criminals as enabling factor of organised crime in Albania*

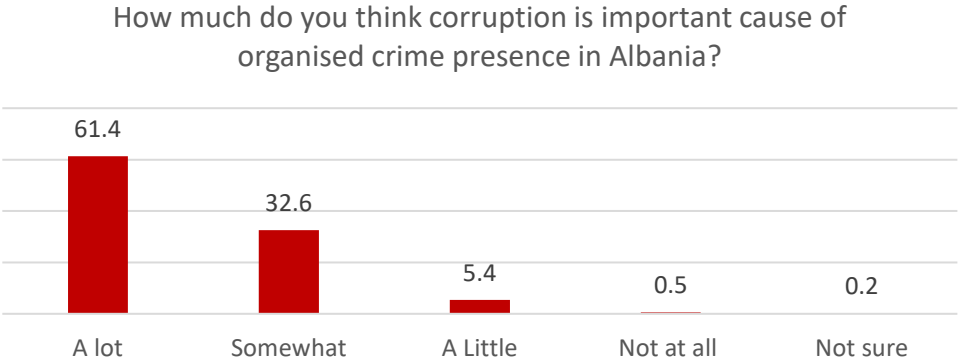
More than half of Albanians (**51.2%**) believe that the relationship between politics and organized crime is a major contributor to its persistence, with another **36.8%** rating it as somewhat important. This combined **88%** points to widespread feeling that political actors may enable, protect, or even benefit from criminal networks. Whether through campaign financing, influence over law enforcement, or selective prosecution, the perceived entanglement between political elites and criminal groups seems to have undermined public trust and reinforces the belief among the citizens that organised crime is not only tolerated but embedded in the system. The **1.9%** who deny this link are a small minority, suggesting that political-criminal collusion is viewed as a structural, not incidental, problem.

How much do you think the relationship between politics and organised crime is important cause of organised crime presence in Albania?



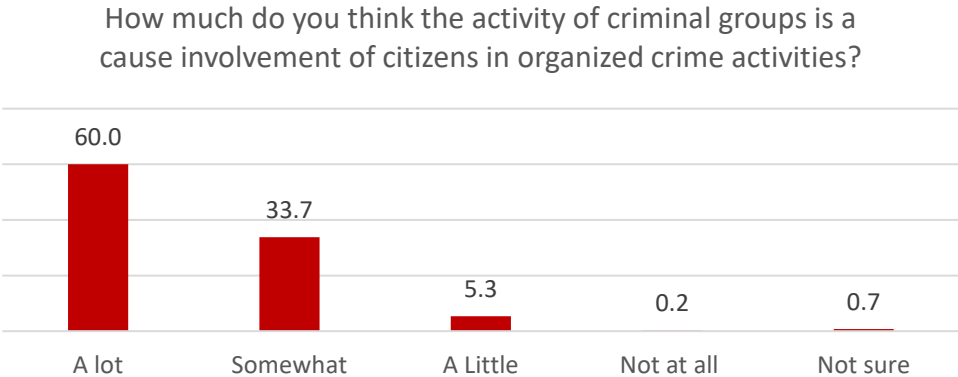
Graph 34. *Opinion on relationship between politics and organised crime as enabling factor for organised crime in Albania*

Corruption is seen as the most significant institutional driver of organized crime, with **61.4%** of respondents identifying it as a major cause and **32.6%** as somewhat important. This near-total **94%** agreement reflects the belief that corrupt practices - whether in law enforcement, the judiciary, or public administration - create fertile ground for criminal activity. The fact that only **0.5%** dismiss corruption as irrelevant underscores its centrality in public discourse. The data shows that for the Albanian citizens organized crime thrives within and through corrupted institutions.



Graph 35. *Opinion on corruption as enabling factor for organised crime in Albania*

60.0% of respondents believe that the activity of criminal groups themselves is a major cause of citizen involvement in organized crime, with **33.7%** saying it is somewhat important. This suggests that organized crime is seen not only as a top-down phenomenon but also as a socially embedded one - where criminal networks exert pressure, offer incentives, or normalize illicit behaviour within communities. The data points to a **self-reinforcing cycle**: as criminal groups grow in power and visibility, they attract more participants, further entrenching their presence.



Graph 36. *Impact of criminal groups presence for involvement of citizens in organized crime activities*

Institutional factors interconnectedness

The data underscores a strong public perception that political and institutional factors are deeply intertwined with the persistence of organized crime in Albania. Over half of respondents (**51.2%**) believe that the relationship between politics and organized crime is a major cause, with an additional **36.8%** considering it somewhat important. This suggests that nearly **nine in ten Albanians** view political-criminal collusion as a structural issue, not a fringe concern. The implication is clear: citizens suspect that political actors may be complicit - whether through protection, facilitation, or passive tolerance - in enabling criminal networks to flourish.

Corruption emerges as an even more dominant concern, with **61.4%** identifying it as a primary driver and **32.6%** as a secondary one. This overwhelming **94%** consensus reflects a belief that corrupt practices within institutions - especially in law enforcement, judiciary, and public administration - create fertile ground for organized crime. Together, these figures paint a picture of systemic vulnerability, where weak accountability and compromised governance are seen as central enablers of criminal activity. The public's diagnosis is not just about crime - it's a call for institutional integrity and political reform.

Factor	A Lot (%)	Somewhat (%)	A Little (%)	Not at All (%)	Not Sure (%)
Politics & Organized Crime	51.2	36.8	8.6	1.9	1.5
Corruption	61.4	32.6	5.4	0.5	0.2
Activity of Criminal Groups	60.0	33.7	5.3	0.2	0.7

Table 4. Summary of institutional enabling factors

Organized crime's activities reach deep into the fabric of the society and leave a trail of negative consequences across various sectors. This section examines the multifaceted impact of organized crime with a focus on how organized crime affects specific groups, the economy, democratic institutions, and the overall well-being of Albanian citizens. The following questions were asked:

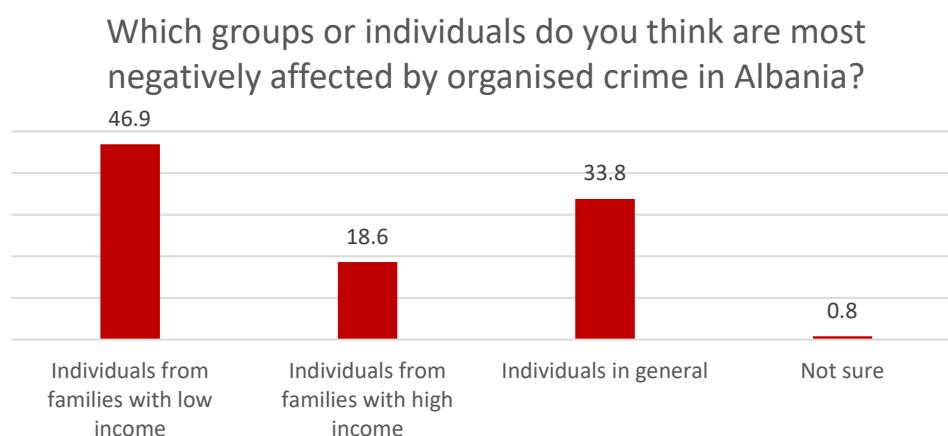
Which groups or individuals do you think are most negatively affected by organised crime in Albania?

- *What are the age groups more likely to be engaged in organised crime activity?*
- *Are women more prone or less prone to getting involved in organised crime?*

- Are women more likely or less likely to becoming victims of organised crime?
- What do you think are the most serious harms that organised crime has caused in Albania?
- Do you think that organised crime influences negatively the way businesses operate in Albania?
- Which businesses do you think are most negatively affected by organised crime?

Eroding society and hindering progress

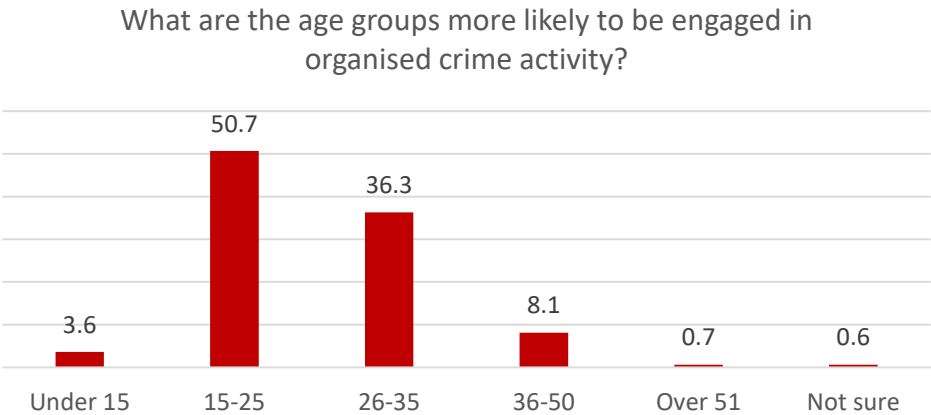
Nearly half of respondents (**46.9%**) believe that individuals from *low-income families* are the most negatively affected by organized crime. This perception may reflect concerns about extortion, the targeting of small businesses, or the erosion of economic stability among more vulnerable groups. By contrast, only **18.6%** consider *high-income families* to be the most affected, suggesting that while poverty is widely seen as a driver of criminal involvement, wealth may also be perceived as a factor that attracts exploitation by criminal groups. Meanwhile, a significant **33.8%** – say that *individuals in general* are affected, pointing to a broad recognition of organized crime’s pervasive reach across society, regardless of class or economic status.



Graph 37. Groups or individuals most negatively affected by organised crime

The age group most associated with involvement in organized crime is overwhelmingly **15–25**, cited by **50.7%** of respondents. This aligns with broader concerns about youth unemployment, social exclusion, and the lure of fast money. Another **36.3%** point to the **26–35** age group, reinforcing the idea that early adulthood is a high-risk period for criminal recruitment. Very few see older individuals (**36–50: 8.1%**, **over 51: 0.7%**) as likely participants, suggesting that organized crime is perceived as a youth-driven phenomenon. The **under-15**

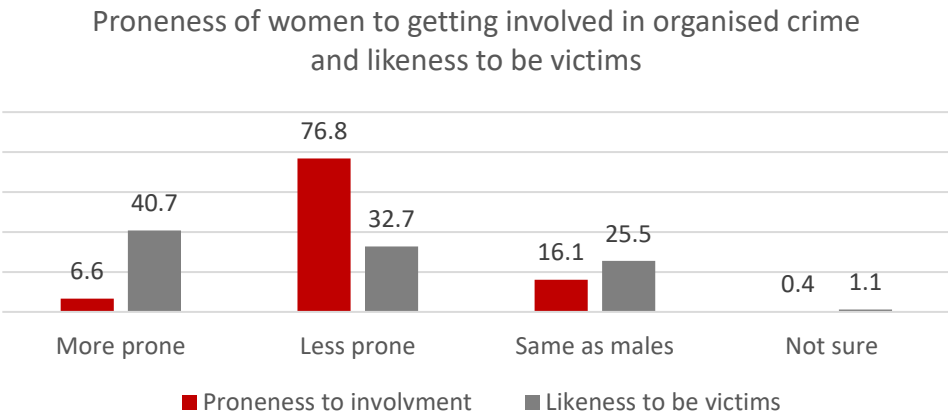
category, though low (**3.6%**), still raises concern about early exposure and vulnerability.



Graph 38. Age groups more likely to be engaged in organised crime activity

There is a strong consensus that *women are less prone* to involvement in organized crime, with **76.8%** affirming this view. Only **6.6%** believe women are *more prone*, and **16.1%** say they are *equally likely* as men. This suggests that organized crime is still perceived as a male-dominated domain, though a minority acknowledges gender parity or rising female involvement.

When it comes to victimization, however, the picture shifts. **40.7%** of respondents believe *women are more likely* to become victims of organized crime, compared to **32.7%** who say they are *less likely*. Another **25.5%** see victimization rates as *equal* between genders. This indicates a perception that while women may be less involved in criminal networks, they are disproportionately vulnerable to its consequences - whether through trafficking, exploitation, or indirect harm.

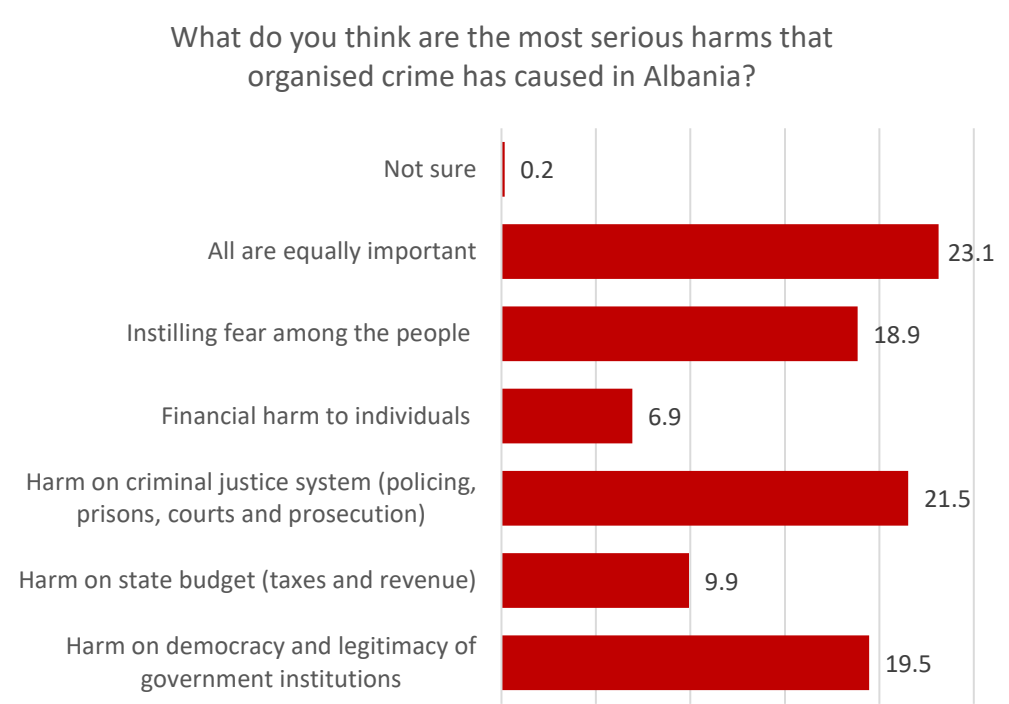


Graph 39. Proneness of women to getting involved in organised crime and likeness to be victims

Effects of organized crime on the society

When asked about the most serious harms caused by organized crime, respondents identified **damage to the criminal justice system (21.5%)** and **harm to democracy and government legitimacy (19.5%)** as top concerns. These figures suggest a public deeply aware of how organized crime can infiltrate and weaken the very institutions meant to uphold justice and democratic accountability. Nearly **19%** also cited the **instillation of fear among the population**, underscoring the psychological toll and climate of intimidation that criminal networks can foster.

Interestingly, **23.1%** of respondents believe *all listed harms are equally important*, indicating a holistic understanding of organized crime’s multi-dimensional threat. Meanwhile, **financial harm to individuals** and **losses to the state budget** were seen as less severe (**6.9%** and **9.9%**, respectively), perhaps reflecting a prioritization of institutional integrity over economic metrics.

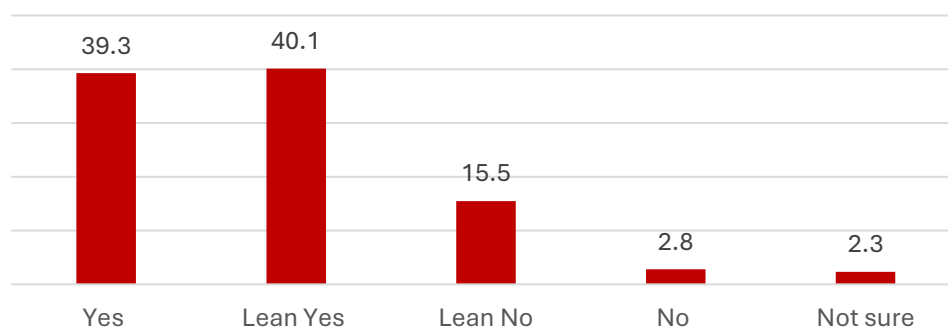


Graph 40. Opinion on most serious harms that organised crime has caused in Albania

Vulnerability of the businesses and economic distortion

A striking **79.4%** of respondents (combining “Yes” and “Lean Yes”) believe that organized crime negatively influences how businesses operate in Albania. This overwhelming consensus reveals a perception that criminal networks distort market dynamics, erode fair competition, and create an environment of coercion.

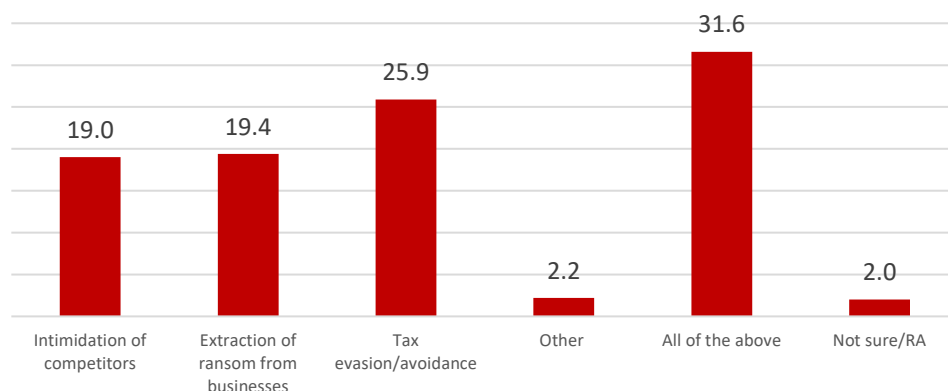
Do you think that organised crime influences negatively the way businesses operate in Albania?



Graph 41. Opinion on whether organised crime influences negatively the way businesses operate in Albania

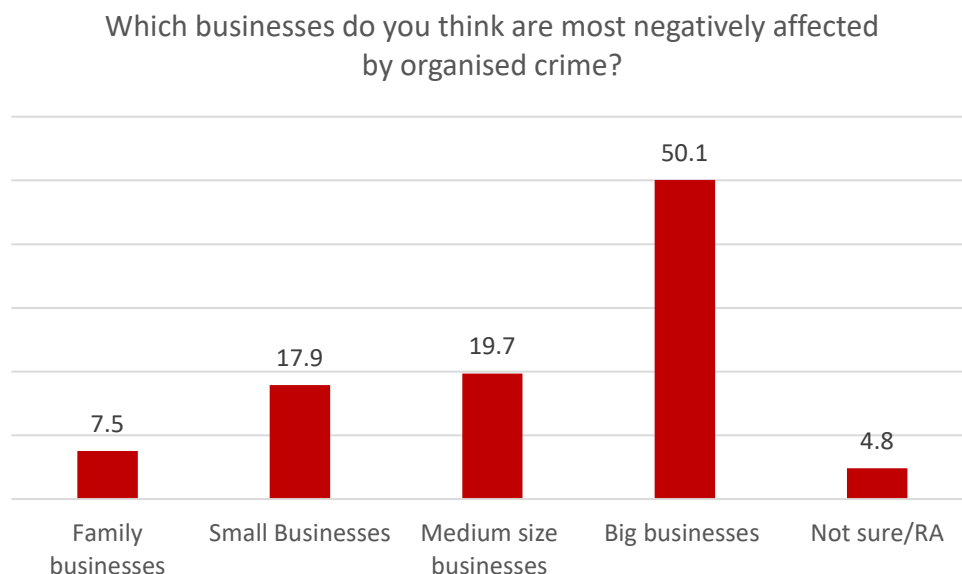
When asked about the *forms* of influence, the most cited were **tax evasion/avoidance (25.9%)**, **extraction of ransom (19.4%)** and **intimidation of competitors (19.0%)**. These responses suggest that organized crime is seen not only as a violent force but also as a manipulator of fiscal and regulatory systems. A significant result is that **31.6%** of respondents selected the option **“All of the above”** implying that most citizens view organized crime as a complex phenomenon with multiple simultaneous impacts—from physical threats to financial extortion and even the distortion of market rules. This broad perception underscores the fact that organized crime is not confined to visible criminal acts but extends to systemic levels that undermine economic integrity and the rule of law.

What do you think are the main forms of influence on economy and the way businesses operate:



Graph 42. Opinion on main forms of influence on economy and the way businesses operate

In terms of which businesses are most affected, **50.1%** pointed to *big businesses*, followed by *medium-sized enterprises* (**19.7%**) and *small businesses* (**17.9%**). This counters the common assumption that smaller enterprises are more vulnerable, suggesting that large firms may be more exposed due to their visibility, assets, or strategic importance.



Graph 43. Opinion on the businesses most negatively affected by organised crime

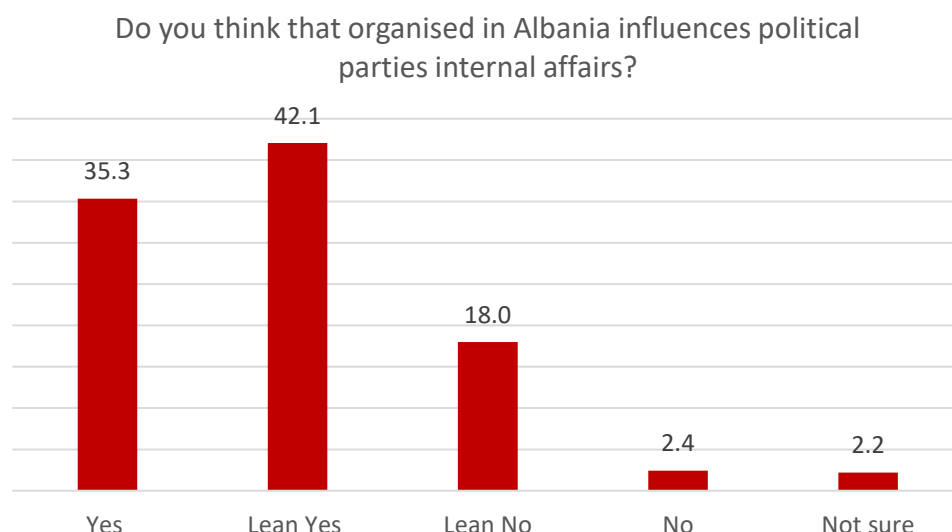
Harm to politics and legitimacy of institutions

Organized crime poses a severe threat to the integrity of political systems and the legitimacy of institutions by undermining democratic processes, fostering corruption, and eroding public trust. Criminal organizations infiltrate political parties through illicit funding and influence, manipulating electoral outcomes and policy decisions to serve their interests. This infiltration undermines the rule of law, weakens accountability mechanisms, and fuels a climate of impunity, eroding public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of governmental institutions and ultimately destabilizing democratic governance. The following questions were asked to obtain citizens opinions on this subject:

- Do you think that organised in Albania influences political parties' internal affairs?
- Do you think that organised influences elections and democratic processes in Albania?
- Does the organized crime influence decision-making of the government at the central level?
- Does the organized crime influence decision-making at the local level?

- Does the organized crime influence-decision-making of the prosecution offices in the districts?
- Does the organized crime influence-decision-making of SPAK?
- Does the organized crime influence decision-making of the general jurisdiction courts?
- Does the organized crime influence decision-making of the special courts?
- Do you think political parties receive funding from organised crime?
- Do you think that political parties approach the organised crime groups, or the organised crime groups approach the political parties? (Only those responding yes to the previous question)
- Does organized crime influence the media reporting?
- What do you think are the main forms of organised crime influence on media? (Only those responding yes to the previous question)

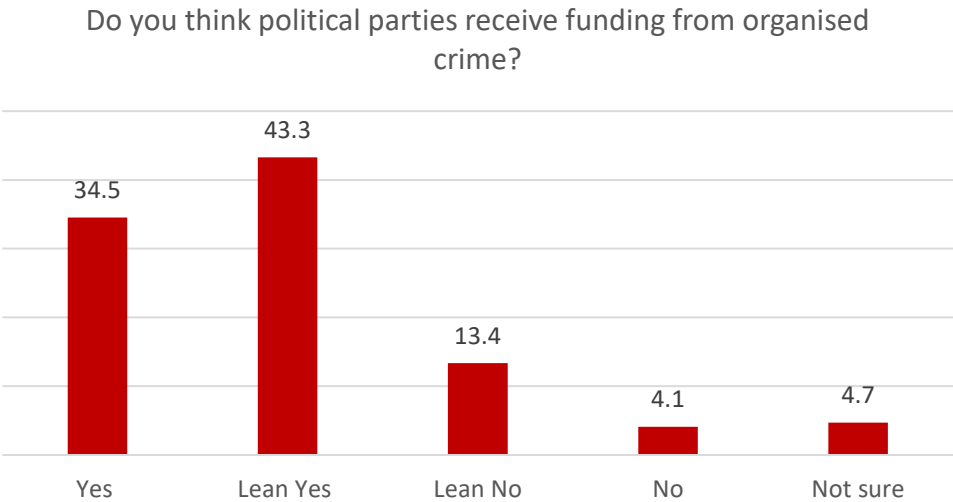
The perception that organized crime influences political parties is alarmingly high. A combined **77.4%** of respondents (adding “Yes” and “Lean Yes”) believe that **organized crime interferes with internal party affairs**. This reflects a public concern that criminal interests may shape political agendas, candidate selection, or policy decisions - undermining democratic representation and public trust.



Graph 44. Opinion on whether organised crime influences political parties internal affairs

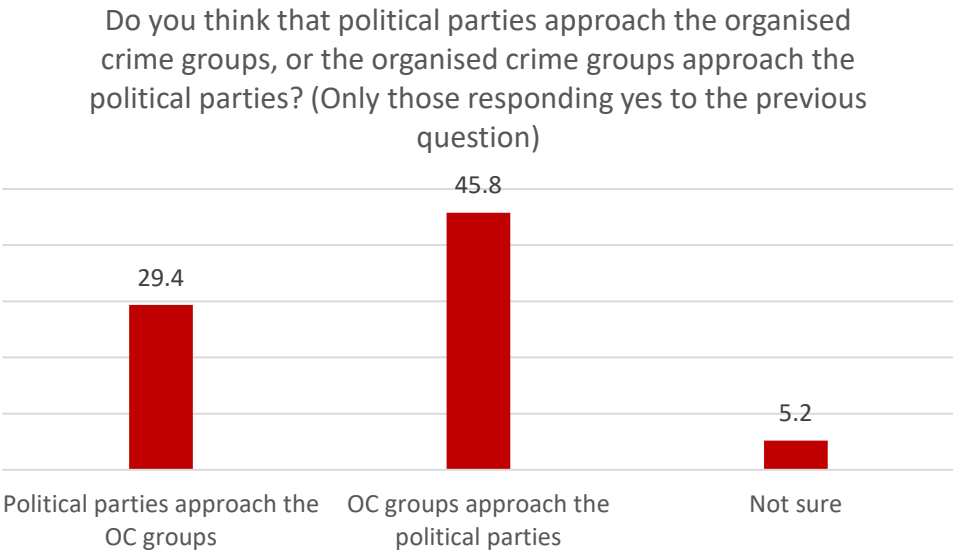
77.8% of respondents (adding “Yes” and “Lean Yes”) believe that political parties receive funding from organized crime. This perception suggests that organized crime is not just influencing policy - it may be embedded in the

political economy itself. It raises serious questions about campaign financing, transparency, and accountability.



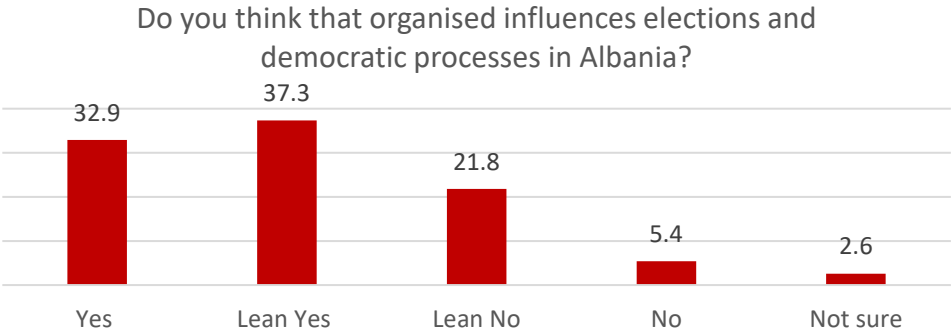
Graph 45. *Opinion on whether political parties receive funding from organised crime*

Among those who agree, **45.8%** think that organized crime groups initiate contact with political parties, while **29.4%** believe the reverse - that the political parties are the ones that approach criminal groups. This suggests a perception of mutual opportunism, where political actors and criminal networks engage in transactional relationships that compromise democratic accountability.



Graph 46. *Opinion on whether political parties approach the organised crime*

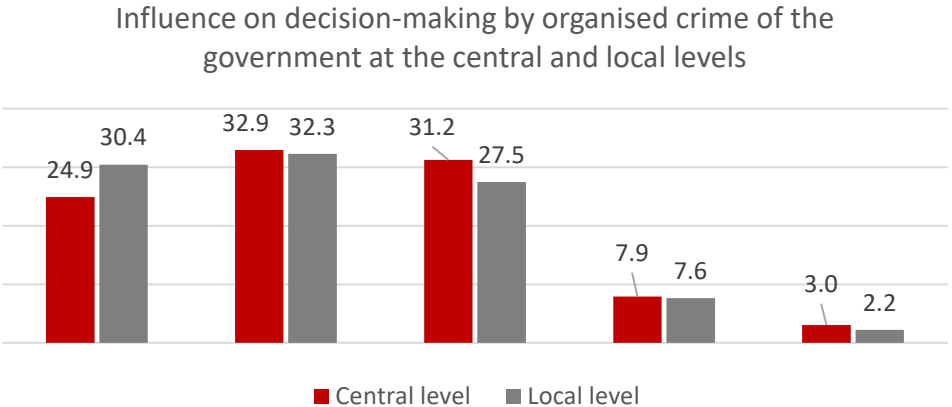
77.6% of the respondents think that organized crime negatively affects elections and democratic processes. These figures reflect a widespread belief that criminal networks may shape candidate selection, campaign strategies, or electoral outcomes - undermining the legitimacy of Albania's democratic institutions.



Graph 47. *Opinion on whether organized crime influences elections and democratic processes in Albania*

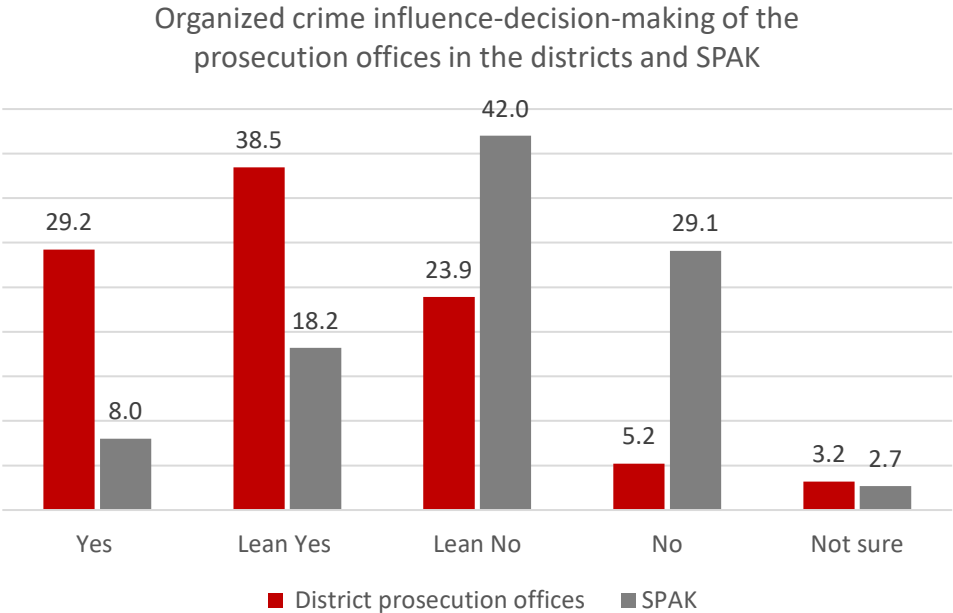
More than half of respondents (**57.8%** Yes + Lean Yes) believe that **organized crime affects decisions made at the highest levels of government**. This points to a perception that policymaking may be shaped by criminal interests, whether through lobbying, coercion, or informal networks. It reflects a concern that national governance is not fully insulated from illicit influence.

Local governance is perceived as even more vulnerable than central institutions with **62.7%** saying the same (Yes + Lean Yes) about **local government**. This may be due to the proximity of local officials to community-level criminal actors, or the visibility of informal arrangements in smaller jurisdictions. The data suggests that citizens see local decision-making as a key entry point for organized crime.



Graph 48. *Opinion on whether organized crime influences the decision-making of government at the central and local levels*

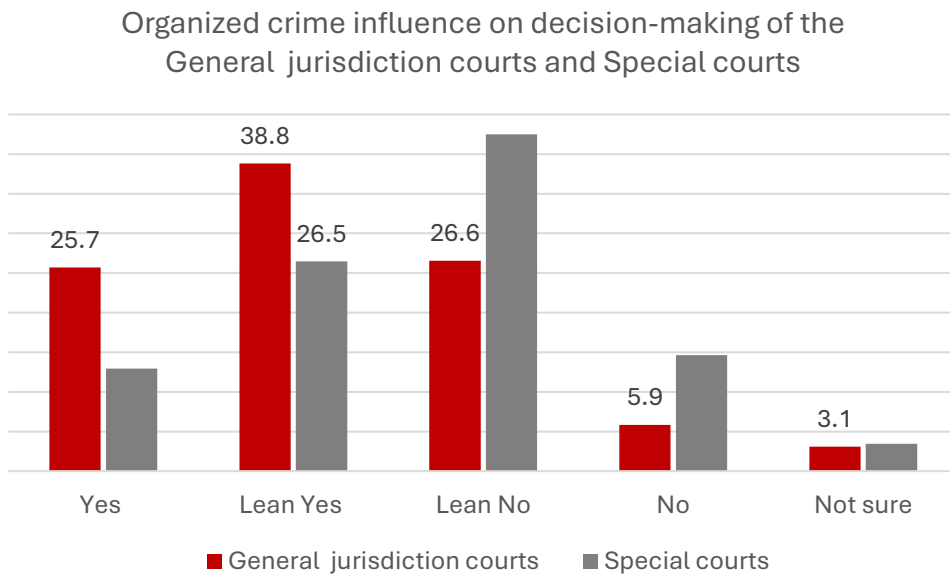
A significant majority believe that district-level prosecution offices are influenced by organized crime (67.7% Yes + Lean Yes). This reflects concerns about selective justice, compromised investigations, and lack of independence in prosecutorial decisions. It suggests that SPAK's creation may have been necessary precisely because traditional structures were seen as compromised. In contrast, only **26.2%** (combined Yes + Lean Yes) believe SPAK is influenced, and **39.5%** say the same about special courts. These figures suggest that while scepticism remains, specialized anti-corruption institutions enjoy relatively higher public trust.



Graph 49. *Opinion on whether organized crime influences the decision-making of the prosecution offices in the districts and SPAK*

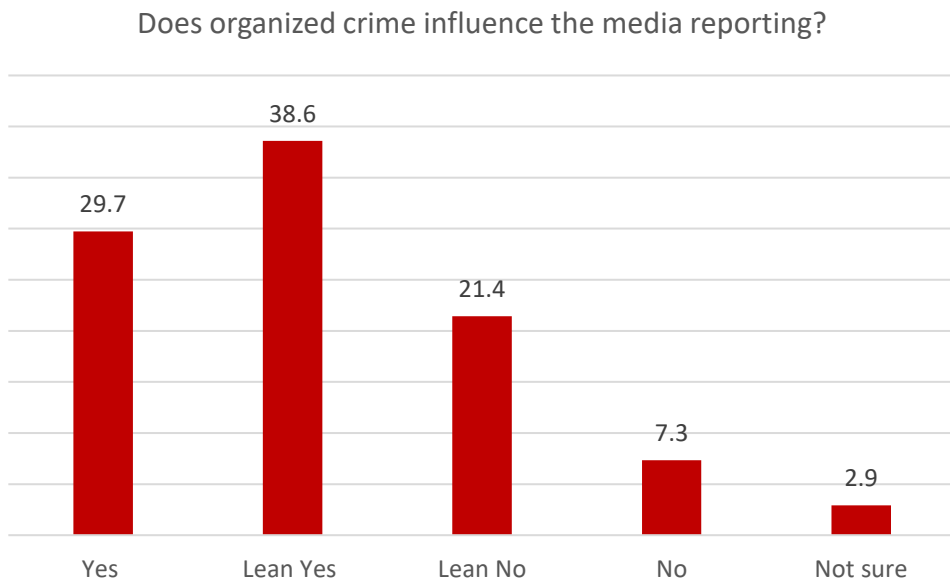
The judiciary outside of specialized structures is viewed as highly vulnerable (**64.5% Yes + Lean Yes**). This perception may stem from past scandals, inconsistent rulings, or lack of transparency. It suggests that judicial reform remains a public priority, and that trust in the legal system is conditional on perceived independence.

Special courts are seen as more insulated than regular courts but still face scepticism (**39.5% Yes + Lean Yes**). While **42.5%** lean toward believing they are not influenced, the fact that nearly **40%** suspect interference indicates that institutional legitimacy is still being earned. Continued transparency and high-profile convictions may help strengthen public confidence.



Graph 50. *Opinion on whether organized crime influences the decision-making of the General jurisdiction courts and Special courts*

The media also is not immune to the belief that it is influenced by organised crime. A combined **68.3%** of respondents (combined Yes + Lean Yes) believe **organized crime influences media reporting.**

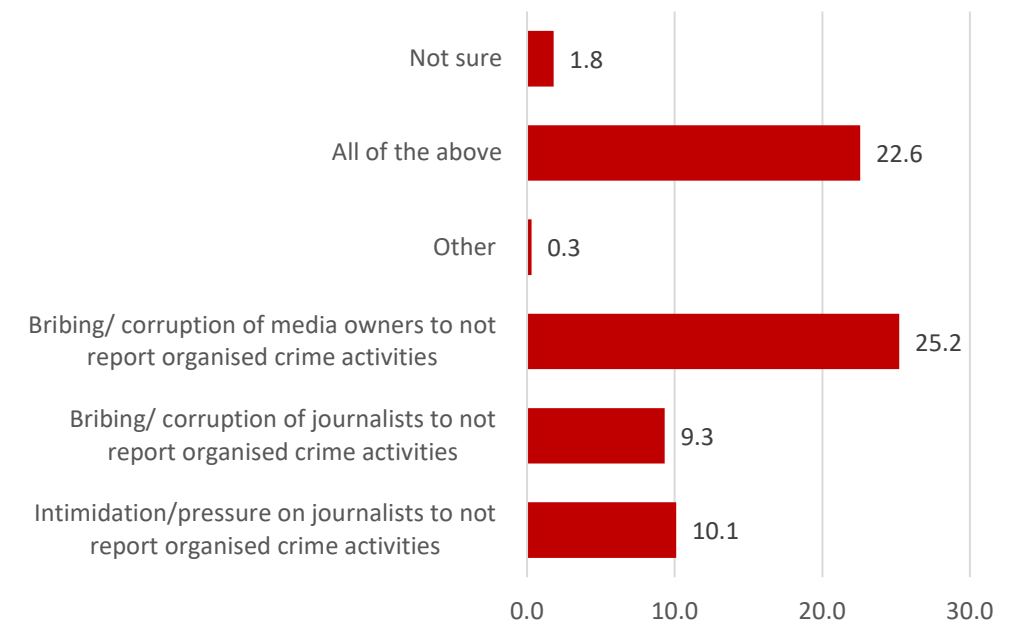


Graph 51. *Opinion on whether organized crime influences the media reporting*

Among those who agree, the most cited forms of influence include **bribing or corrupting media owners (25.2%)**, **intimidation or pressure on journalists (10.1%)**, **bribing journalists directly (9.3%)**, and **all of the above (22.6%)**

These responses reflect a belief that organized crime shapes public narratives by silencing critical reporting, manipulating editorial agendas, and co-opting media platforms. The result is a media landscape that may be compromised in its ability to inform the public and hold power to account.

What do you think are the main forms of organised crime influence on media? (Only those responding yes to the previous question)



Graph 52. *Forms of organised crime influence on the media*

The table below provides a summary of the “Yes” and “Lean Yes” responses:

	Yes (%)	Lean Yes (%)	Combined (%)
Political Parties' Internal Affairs	35.3	42.1	77.4
Elections and Democratic Processes	32.9	37.3	70.2
Central Government Decision-Making	24.9	32.9	57.8

Local Government Decision-Making	30.4	32.3	62.7
District Prosecution Offices	29.2	38.5	67.7
SPAK	8.0	18.2	26.2
General Jurisdiction Courts	25.7	38.8	64.5
Special Courts	13.0	26.5	39.5

Table 5. Combined percentage of the influence of organised crime on institutions

The data paints a concerning picture of how Albanians perceive the reach and impact of organized crime across the country's citizens, democratic institutions, economic landscape, and media environment. These findings reflect a public that is not only aware of organized crime's presence but deeply concerned about its embeddedness in Albania's institutional fabric.

Organized crime and the 11 May 2025, elections

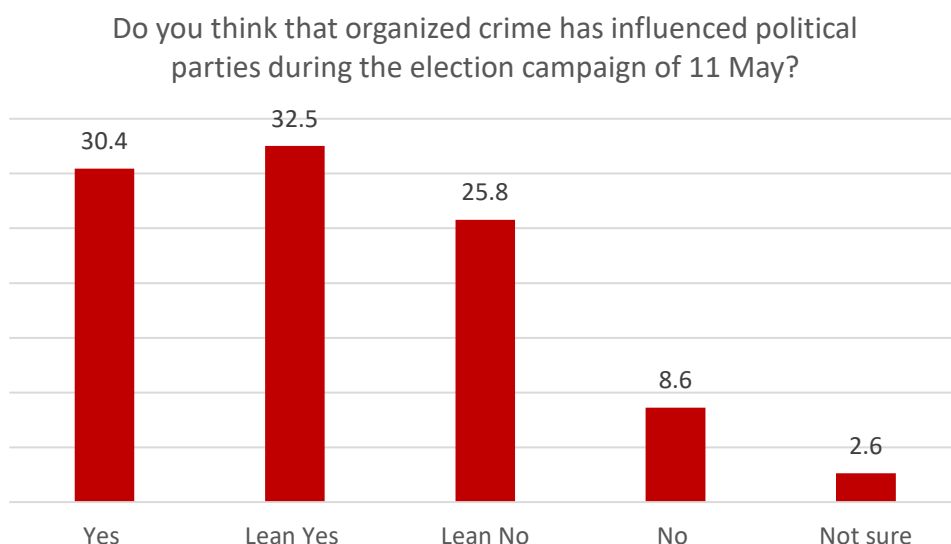
The integrity of electoral processes is fundamental to a functioning democracy. This section examines the perceptions of Albanian citizens regarding the influence of organized crime on the 11 May 2025 elections, as captured by the survey data. It focuses on whether organized crime influenced the campaign, the outcome, the specific mechanisms of influence, and which regions were perceived to be most affected.

The following questions were asked to obtain the data:

- *Do you think that organized crime has influenced political parties during the election campaign of 11 May?*
- *Do you think organized crime has influenced the outcome of 11 May 2025 elections?*
- *How do you think organized crime influenced elections? (ONLY those who answered Yes or Lean yes)*
- *Do you think that organized crime has specifically affected the elections in your district? (ONLY those who answered Yes or Lean yes)*
- *Which are the regions/prefectures you think were more affected? (ONLY those who answered Yes or Lean yes)*

- Where did you get the information on against organised influence on political parties and elections?
- Do you know a relative, family member or friend that has been approached by someone that may be related with criminal activities to influence you on which party or candidate to vote or not to vote for?
- Do you know of any friend or relative who voted for a party or candidate in exchange for money or promised favours?

A significant majority of respondents - **62.9%** (Yes: 30.4%, Lean Yes: 32.5%) - believe that organized crime influenced political parties during the election campaign. Only **8.6%** firmly rejected this idea, while **25.8%** leaned toward scepticism, indicating a nuanced but largely critical public view of campaign integrity.

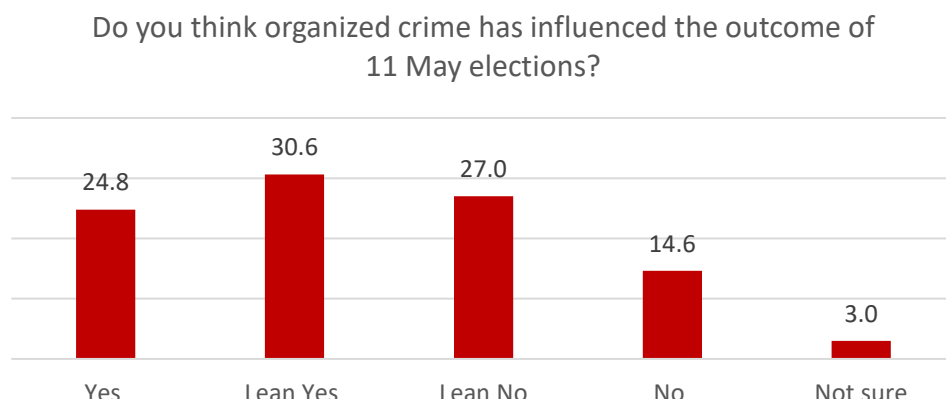


Graph 53. Opinion on whether organized crime has influenced political parties during the election campaign

When asked whether organized crime influenced the actual results of the elections, **55.4%** responded affirmatively (Yes: 24.8%, Lean Yes: 30.6%). This reflects a slightly lower - but still majority - belief that criminal interference extended beyond campaigning into vote manipulation or result distortion. A combined **41.6%** (Lean No: 27.0%, No: 14.6%) expressed doubt, suggesting that while concerns are prevalent, they are not universal.

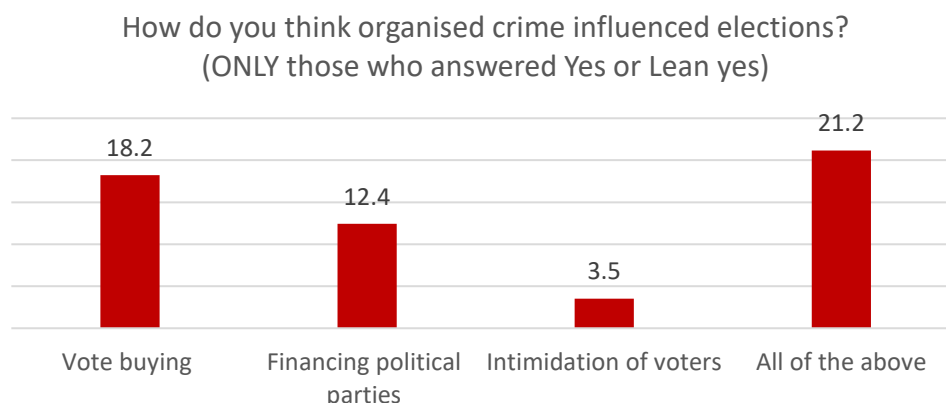
The gap between campaign influence (**62.9%** Yes + Lean Yes) and outcome influence (**55.4%** Yes + Lean Yes) suggests that while many believe organized

crime shaped political party behaviour and campaign dynamics, slightly fewer think it directly altered the final results - indicating a layered perception of influence.



Graph 54. Opinion on whether organized crime has influenced the outcome of 11 May elections

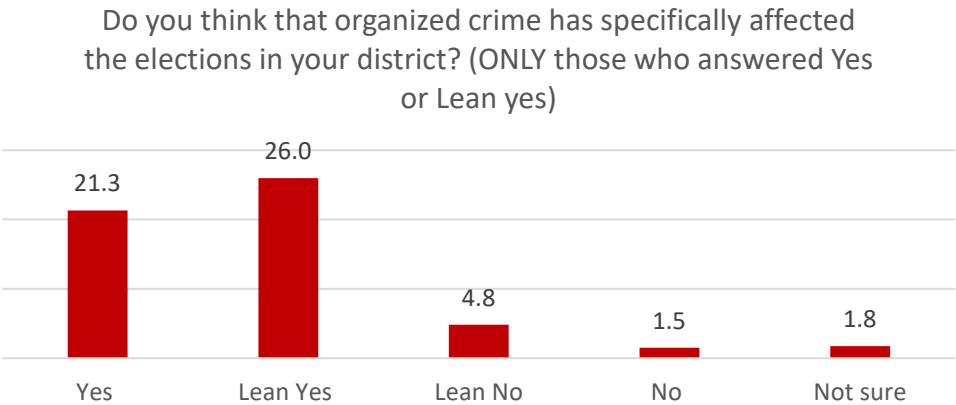
Among respondents who answered “Yes” or “Lean Yes” to organized crime’s influence, **21.2%** believe *all mechanisms* - vote buying, financing political parties, and voter intimidation - were used. **18.2%** cited **vote buying** as the primary method, indicating concerns about direct manipulation of voter behaviour. **12.4%** pointed to **party financing**, suggesting suspicions of illicit funding shaping political agendas. **3.5%** mentioned **voter intimidation**, a smaller but significant concern. This breakdown reveals that among those concerned, many view organized crime’s role as systemic and multifaceted.



Graph 55. Opinion on how organised crime influenced elections

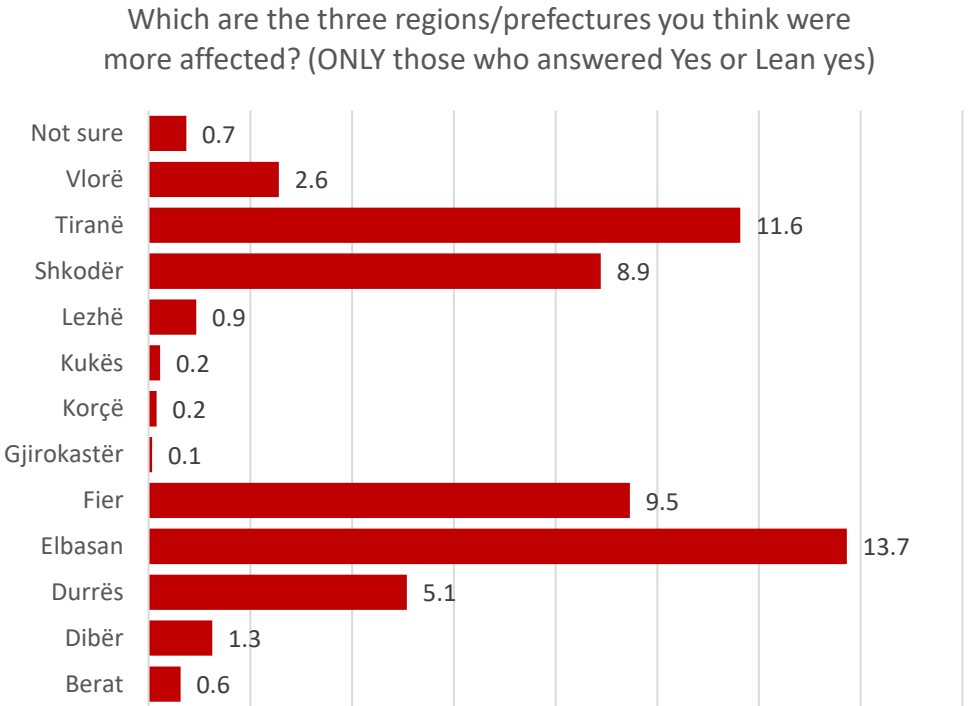
Among those who believe organized crime influenced the elections **47.3%** (Yes: 21.3%, Lean Yes: 26.0%) believe their own district was affected. Only **6.3%** (Lean No: 4.8%, No: 1.5%) disagreed and **1.8%** were unsure. These

data suggest that perceptions of organized crime influence are not just abstract shaped by narratives at the national level, but they are felt locally also.



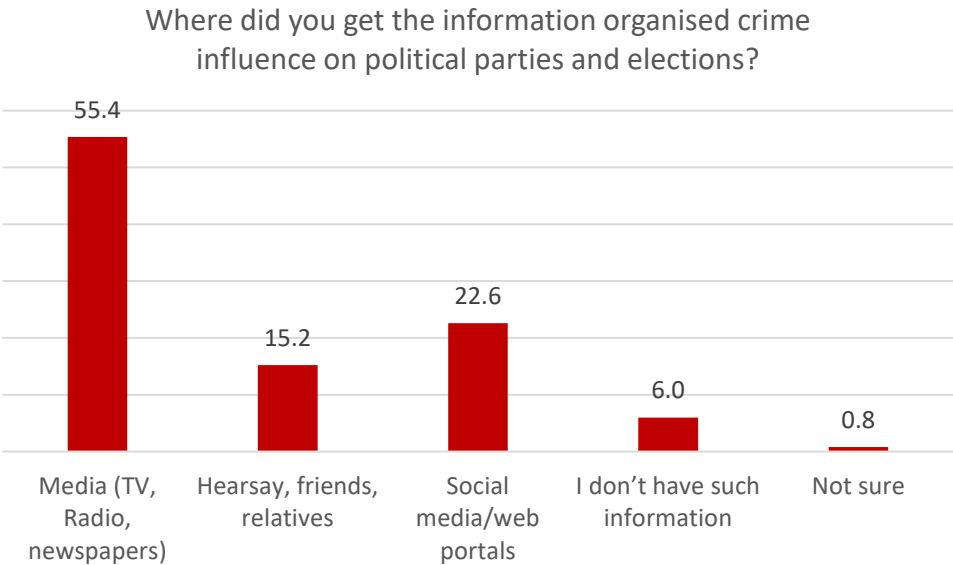
Graph 56. Opinion on organized crime impact on elections in the respondents' district

Elbasan, Tirana, Fier, and Shkodër stand out as perceived hotspots of influence, possibly due to their political competitiveness, economic significance, or prior incidents of electoral irregularities. These findings paint a picture of deep public concern about the integrity of Albania's electoral processes.



Graph 57. Opinion on regions/prefectures in which elections were more affected by organized crime

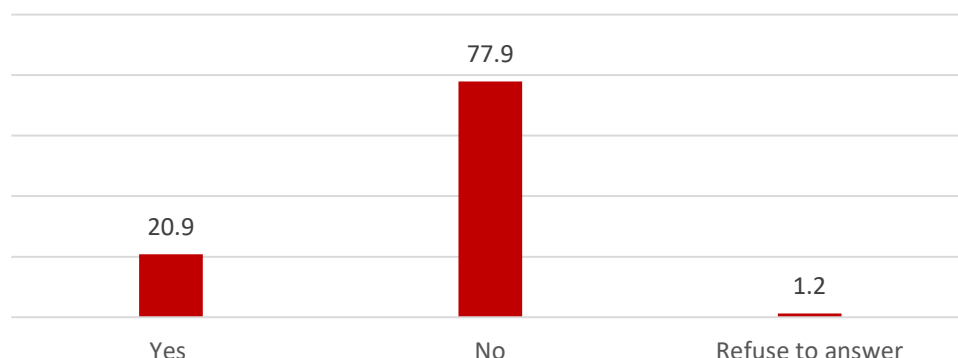
The data reveals that traditional media remains the dominant source of information for Albanians regarding organized crime’s influence on political parties and elections. Over half of respondents (**55.4%**) cited television, radio, and newspapers as their primary source, underscoring the continued authority of legacy media in shaping public understanding of political-criminal dynamics. Meanwhile, **22.6%** of respondents rely on social media and web portals, reflecting the growing influence of digital platforms in disseminating political information—though often with varying degrees of credibility. A smaller segment (**15.2%**) reported learning about these issues through hearsay, friends, or relatives, indicating that informal networks also contribute to shaping perceptions, particularly in close-knit communities. Notably, only **6.0%** said they had no such information, and **0.8%** were unsure, suggesting that awareness of organized crime’s political influence is widespread and actively discussed across multiple channels. This distribution highlights the importance of media literacy and the need for transparent, fact-based reporting to counter misinformation and deepen public understanding. Also it suggests that investigative journalism and mainstream reporting play a critical role in informing citizens about electoral integrity and institutional vulnerabilities.



Graph 58. Sources of information on organised influence on political parties and elections

However, other than opinion being shaped by information obtained through media channels, when the lens shifts to personal experience with social circles, **20.9%** of respondents said they *know a friend or relative* who has been approached by someone potentially linked to criminal networks with the intent to sway their vote. Such findings point to a diffuse form of influence that operates through relational trust and informal pressure.

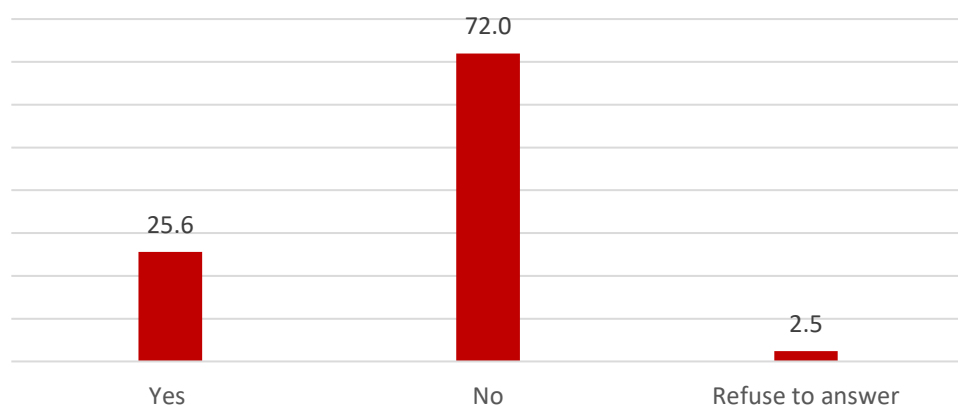
Do you know a relative, family member or friend that has been approached by someone that may be related with criminal activities to influence on which party or candidate to vote or not to vote for?



Graph 59. *Experience of relative/family member or friend that has been approached by persons related with criminal activities to influence voting*

The most striking figure emerges when examining transactional voting behaviour. **25.6%** of respondents acknowledged knowing someone who voted for a party or candidate *in exchange for money or promised favours*. This indicates that shifting the vote remains a visible and socially acknowledged phenomenon. Still, **72.0%** denied knowing anyone involved in such exchanges, and **2.5%** refused to answer—again hinting at the sensitivity of the topic.

Do you know of any friend or relative who voted for a party or candidate in exchange for money or promised favours?



Graph 60. *Knowledge on friends/relatives who voted in exchange for money or promised favours*

Taken together, these findings reveal that criminal influence on elections in Albania is not merely a matter of isolated incidents but a socially embedded phenomenon. To safeguard the integrity of future elections and strengthen democratic governance, Albania needs to take multifaceted and decisive actions rather than mere a legal enforcement approach.

Effectiveness of institutional performance on prevention of organised crime influence on elections process and outcome

Given the acknowledged problem of undue influence on voting, a multi institutional approach was implemented with the involvement of a number of institutions to prevent and investigate electoral crime. To obtain citizens opinion on the performance of these institutions in this respect, the following questions were asked:

- *Do you think that the State Police did effectively fulfil its task to prevent organised crime from influencing the elections?*
- *Do you think that Central Election Commission did effectively fulfil its task to prevent organised crime from influencing the elections?*
- *Do you think that SPAK did effectively fulfil its task to prevent organised crime from influencing the elections?*
- *Do you think that General Prosecution did effectively fulfil its task to prevent organised crime from influencing the elections?*
- *Do you think that Political Parties made adequate efforts to prevent organised crime from influencing the elections?*

Public perceptions of institutional efforts to prevent organized crime from influencing the 11 May 2025 elections reveal a complex mix of cautious approval, scepticism, and deep mistrust—particularly toward political actors. While some state bodies are viewed as having made credible efforts, others are seen as falling short, and political parties are overwhelmingly perceived as inactive or complicit.

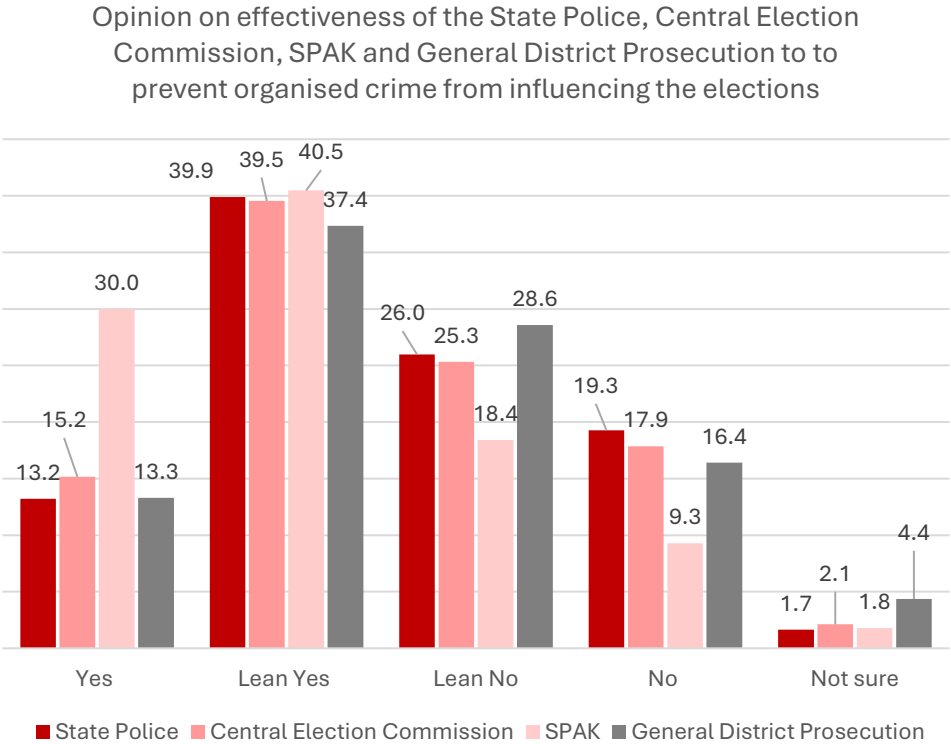
The State Police and the Central Election Commission (CEC) received moderate levels of public confidence. For the State Police, only **13.2%** of respondents said they fully fulfilled their role, while **39.9%** leaned toward approval. However, a combined **45.3%** (Lean No + No) expressed doubt or outright disapproval, suggesting that enforcement efforts were seen as inconsistent or insufficient.

The Central Election Commission fared similarly: **15.2%** expressed full confidence, and **39.5%** leaned positive, but **43.2%** were sceptical. These figures reflect a divided public, with nearly equal proportions expressing trust and concern—possibly influenced by regional variations in enforcement, visibility of interventions, or prior controversies.

In contrast, SPAK stands out as the most trusted institution in this context. A combined **70.5%** of respondents (Yes + Lean Yes) believe SPAK effectively

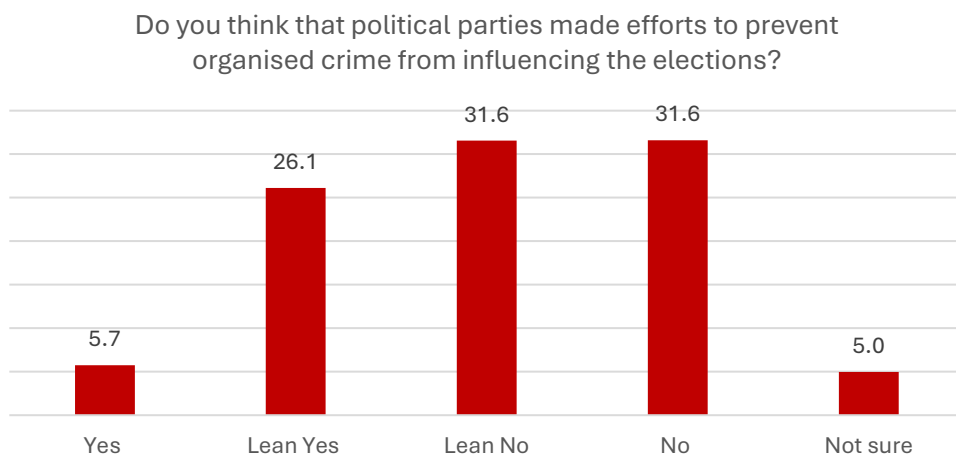
fulfilled its role in preventing organized crime’s electoral influence. Only **27.7%** expressed doubt or disapproval. This suggests that SPAK’s reputation for independence and high-profile prosecutions has translated into greater public confidence, positioning it as a cornerstone of institutional integrity in the fight against criminal interference.

The General Prosecution, however, did not enjoy the same level of trust. Only **13.3%** of respondents said it fully met its responsibilities, and **37.4%** leaned positive. Yet **45%** expressed scepticism or disapproval, and **4.4%** were unsure – indicating that district-level prosecutorial bodies are perceived as more vulnerable to influence or less effective than SPAK.



Graph 61. Opinion on institutional effectiveness to prevent organised crime from influencing the elections

However, citizens are much less confident about the efforts made by the political parties in this respect. A mere **5.7%** of respondents believe parties made adequate efforts to prevent organized crime from interfering in the elections, and only **26.1%** leaned positive. In stark contrast, **63.2%** (Lean No + No) expressed clear dissatisfaction. This overwhelming lack of confidence suggests that parties are widely viewed as passive, complicit, or ineffective in confronting criminal influence - reinforcing broader concerns about political-criminal entanglement.



Graph 62. *Opinion on the political parties' efforts to prevent organised crime from influencing the elections*

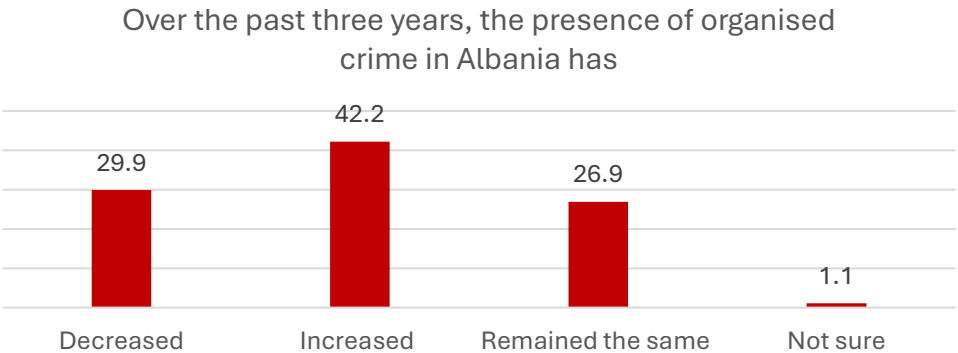
Trends, changes and expectations

This section examines the overall performance of institutions in combating organised crime and the future outlook. The following questions were asked:

- *Over the past three years, the presence of organised crime in Albania has been:*
- *.Do you think that the law on decriminalization has produced results to keeping organised crime away from institutions elected by voters?*
- *Do you think that the law on decriminalisation has produced results to keeping organised crime away from the public administration?*
- *Do you think that the law on decriminalisation has produced results to reducing the influence of organised crime from the institutions of central government?*
- *Do you think that the law on decriminalisation has produced results to reducing the influence of organised crime from the local government?*
- *Do you think that the influence of organised crime on POLITICS will be reduced in the next 4 years?*
- *Do you think that the influence of organised crime on ECONOMY will be reduced in the next 4 years?*
- *Over the past three years, the overall performance of the institutions fight against organised crime is...:*
- *How much you trust the process of vetting of judges and prosecutors has improved the fight against organised crime?*
- *Do you think the justice system is going to be effective to curb organised crime in next 4 years?*

Public perception of organized crime in Albania over the past three years reflects a prevailing sense of concern and stagnation, with a plurality of respondents—**42.2%**—believing that its presence has *increased*. This suggests that despite institutional reforms and high-profile enforcement efforts, many citizens feel that criminal networks have grown more visible, influential, or entrenched in society. The perception of expansion may be driven by media coverage, political scandals, or lived experiences that reinforce the idea that organized crime continues to adapt and thrive.

At the same time, **26.9%** of respondents believe the situation has *remained the same*, indicating a sense of inertia or lack of meaningful progress. This group may not perceive a worsening, but they also do not see improvement—pointing to a broader frustration with the status quo. In contrast, **29.9%** believe that organized crime has *decreased*, reflecting a minority view that recent efforts—such as SPAK’s prosecutions or increased public scrutiny—have had a tangible impact. The low rate of uncertainty (**1.1%**) suggests that most Albanians feel confident in their assessments, whether optimistic or critical.



Graph 63. *Opinion on the presence of organised crime in the past three years*

In December 2015 Albania, adopted in the Law on decriminalization with the aim to ensure individuals in public functions uphold high standards of integrity and are free from criminal influence or involvement. So far it has led to the dismissal or resignation of numerous officials, including members of parliament, mayors, and local councillors. The law primarily focuses on preventing individuals with criminal records from holding public office.

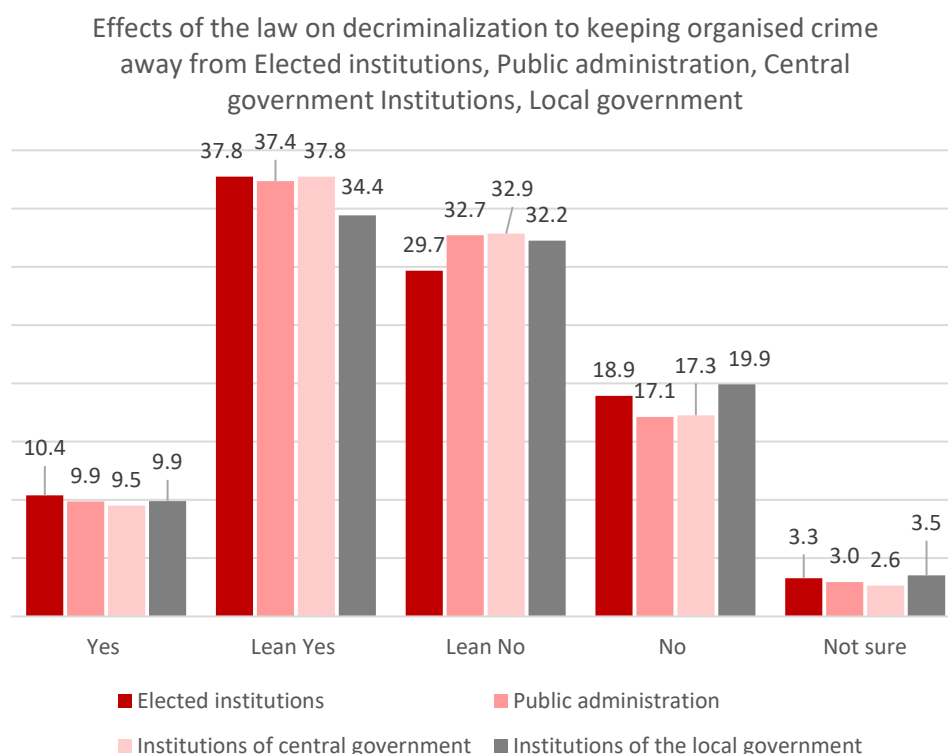
The data reveal a nuanced and somewhat ambivalent public perception of the impact of Albania’s 2015 Law on Decriminalization, particularly regarding its effectiveness in curbing organized crime’s influence across various layers of governance.

When asked whether the law has helped keep organized crime away from institutions elected by voters, only **10.4%** of respondents gave a definitive Yes, while a larger segment (**37.8%**) *leaned positively*. Together, this suggests that nearly half of the population (**48.2%**) sees some degree of success. However,

scepticism remains strong: **29.7%** *leaned negatively*, and **18.9%** outright said *No*, indicating that **nearly half** also question the law's effectiveness in safeguarding electoral integrity. The **3.3%** who were *unsure* reflect a relatively low level of ambiguity - most Albanians have formed a clear opinion.

Perceptions of the law's impact on public administration follow a similar pattern. Only **9.9%** responded with a firm *Yes*, while **37.4%** leaned toward a positive view. Yet **32.7%** leaned negatively, and **17.1%** said *No*, showing that **49.8%** of respondents express doubt or concern about the law's ability to insulate public administration from criminal influence. The **3.0%** uncertainty rate again suggests that the issue is well understood and widely discussed.

Regarding central government institutions, the public remains divided. Just **9.5%** gave a clear *Yes*, and **37.8%** leaned positively - totalling **47.3%** with some level of confidence in the law's impact. However, **32.9%** leaned negatively and **17.3%** said *No*, meaning **50.2%** of respondents are sceptical. The **2.6%** who were unsure is the lowest among all categories, indicating strong public engagement with this issue.

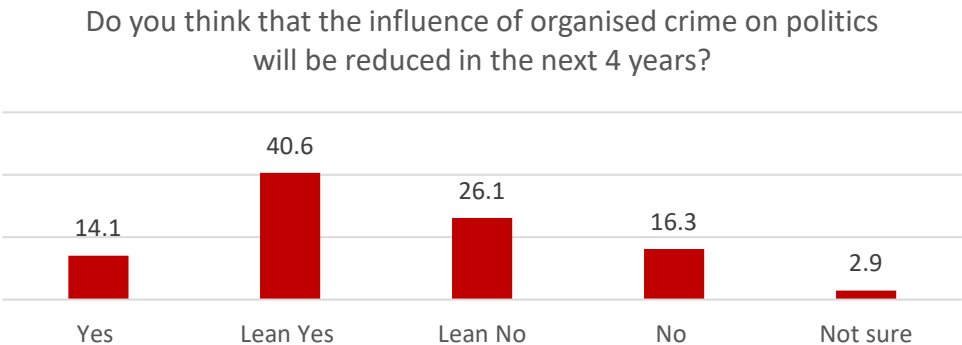


Graph 64. Opinion on the effectiveness of the law on decriminalization

When asked whether organized crime's grip on politics will diminish, **14.1%** of respondents expressed clear optimism, while a significantly larger group—**40.6%**—*leaned positively*. Together, this **54.7%** **majority** suggests that over half of the population sees at least some potential for progress, likely reflecting faith

in ongoing reforms, institutional strengthening, or public pressure for accountability.

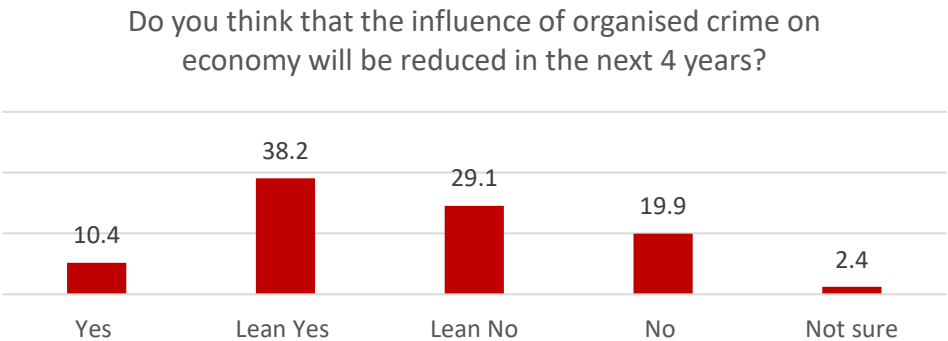
Yet this optimism is fragile. A combined **42.4%** of respondents either *leaned negatively* (**26.1%**) or gave a definitive *No* (**16.3%**), indicating that nearly half of the population remains unconvinced that meaningful change is on the horizon. The low **2.9%** uncertainty rate underscores how deeply embedded and visible this issue is in public discourse.



Graph 65. Opinion on the influence of organised crime on politics in the next 4 years

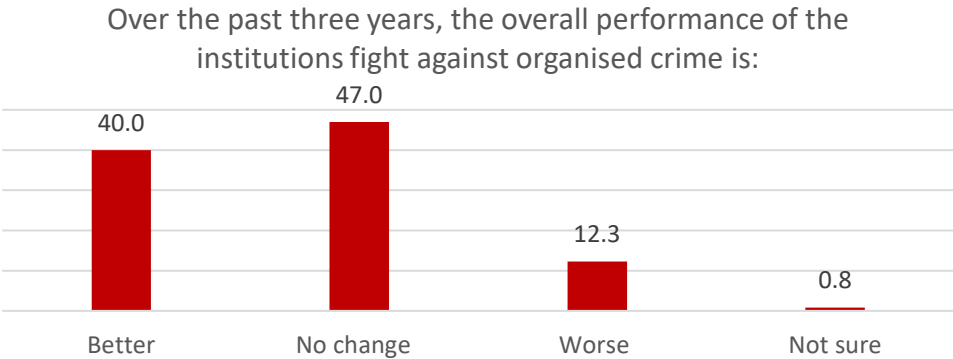
Perceptions of organized crime’s influence on the economy are slightly more pessimistic. Only **10.4%** of respondents believe its influence will be clearly reduced, and **38.2%** *lean positively*, a combined **48.6%**, notably lower than the political domain. Meanwhile, **29.1%** *lean negatively* and **19.9%** say *No*, totalling **49%** who doubt that economic structures will be meaningfully insulated from criminal influence in the near term.

This near-even split suggests that while some respondents may see potential in fiscal reforms, anti-money laundering efforts, or international pressure, others remain sceptical—perhaps due to the perceived entrenchment of illicit networks in key sectors such as construction, energy, or procurement. The **2.4%** who are unsure again reflects a high level of public awareness and engagement.



Graph 66. Opinion on the influence of organised crime on economy in the next 4 years

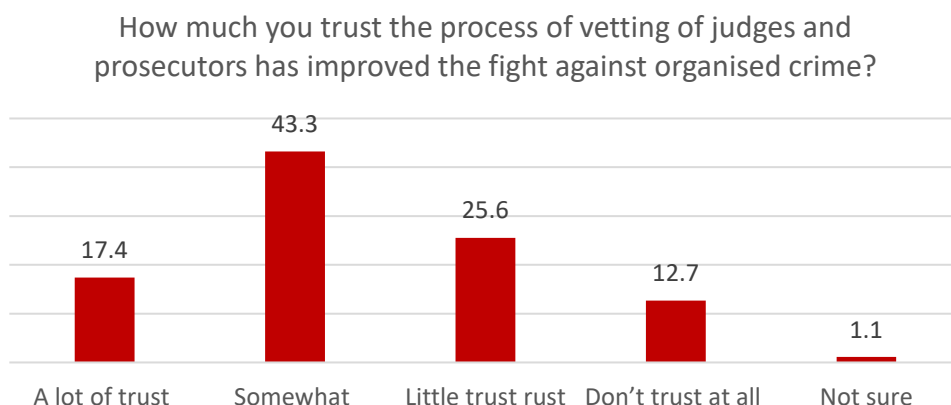
A notable **40.0%** of respondents believe that institutional efforts have *improved*, suggesting that reforms, prosecutions, and increased visibility of anti-crime initiatives—such as SPAK’s activities or international cooperation—have begun to resonate with a significant portion of the population. This group likely sees signs of progress, whether through media coverage, political discourse, or tangible outcomes like arrests and asset seizures. However, the largest share—**47.0%**—perceives *no change*, indicating that nearly half of Albanians feel that the fight against organized crime has plateaued. This sentiment may reflect frustration with the pace of reform, perceived impunity, or the resilience of criminal networks within political and economic structures. It suggests that while some progress may be visible, it has not yet translated into systemic transformation or widespread public confidence. Only **12.3%** believe the situation has *worsened*, a minority view but still significant, pointing to concerns that organized crime may be adapting faster than institutions can respond, or that enforcement efforts are uneven or politicized. The very low **0.8%** uncertainty rate underscores how closely this issue is followed and how firmly opinions are held.



Graph 67. Overall performance of the institutions in fighting against organised crime over the past three years

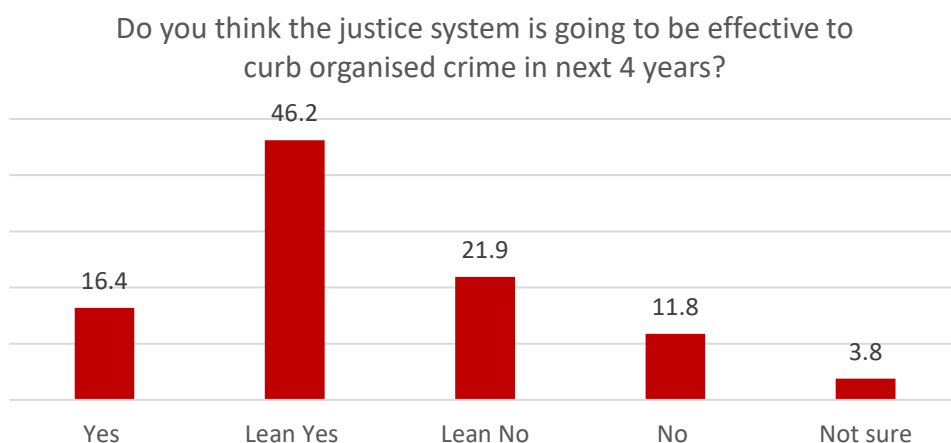
The vetting process has been considered as key to cleaning corruption on the judiciary and thus leading to the improvement of the judiciary performance to combat organised crime. A combined **60.7%** of respondents express some level of trust in the vetting process, **17.4%** say they trust it *a lot*, while **43.3%** offer a more reserved *somewhat*.

This majority suggests that the public sees the vetting of judges and prosecutors as a potentially effective mechanism for cleansing the judiciary of compromised actors and reinforcing institutional integrity. However, **38.3%** of respondents remain doubtful: **25.6%** express *little trust*, and **12.7%** say they *don't trust it at all*. Their scepticism may stem from perceived politicization, lack of visible results, or concerns that the process targets individuals selectively rather than systemically. This data also underscores both the legitimacy and fragility of public trust in institutional reform.



Graph 68. Opinion on whether vetting of judges and prosecutors has improved the fight against organised crime.

The Albanian public expresses a **cautiously optimistic outlook** on the justice system's potential to curb organized crime over the next four years, though tempered by persistent scepticism and a demand for deeper institutional credibility. A combined **62.6%** of respondents, **16.4%** saying Yes and **46.2%** leaning positively, believe that the justice system may be effective in tackling organized crime. This majority signals a meaningful level of public trust, likely influenced by recent judicial reforms, the work of SPAK and high-profile prosecutions that have begun to challenge impunity. However, this optimism is not unqualified. A substantial **33.7%** of respondents, **21.9%** leaning negatively and **11.8%** saying No, remain doubtful. Their scepticism may stem from concerns about political interference, uneven enforcement, or the slow pace of structural change. The **3.8%** who are *unsure* suggest that while most Albanians have formed an opinion, a small segment remains uncertain.



Graph 69. Opinion on effectiveness of justice system to curb organised crime in next 4 years

Institutional performance and trust

This section focuses on the critical aspects of the fight against organized crime in Albania: how current institutional efforts are perceived to be, the level of public trust in the institutions tasked with combating crime and the perceived level of political independence. Questions were also asked about international support to combat organised crime.

The following questions were asked?

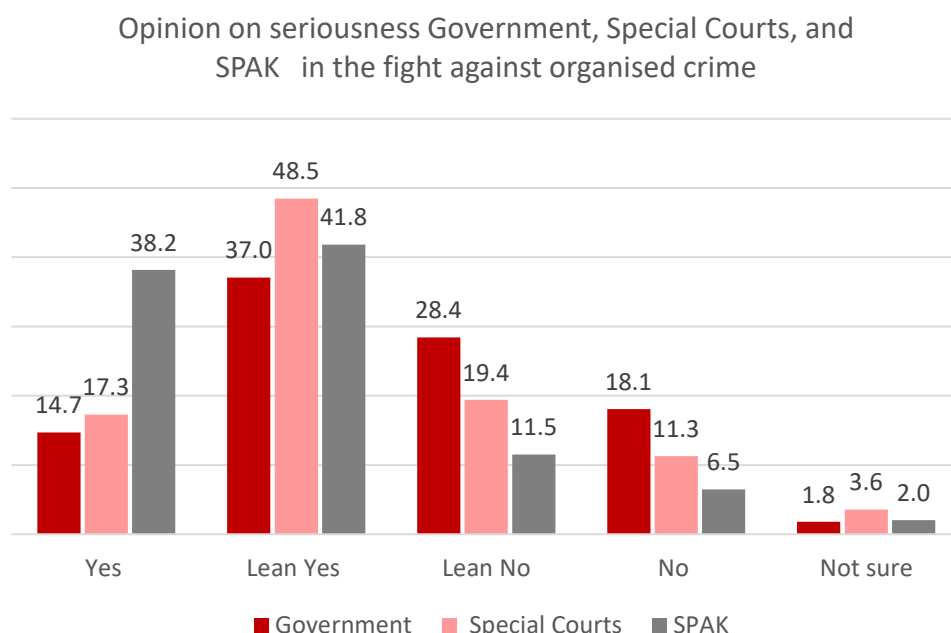
- *Do you think that the Government is serious in the fight against organised crime?*
- *Do you think that Special Courts are serious in the fight against organised crime?*
- *Do you think that SPAK is serious in the fight against organised crime?*
- *Do you think that SPAK's decision-making is influenced by politics?*
- *Do you think that the decision-making of the Special Court is influenced by politics?*
- *How would you rate the contribution of SPAK in the fight against organised crime?*
- *How would you rate the contribution of State Police in the fight against organised crime?*
- *Do you trust that if you report an organised crime related offence it will be duly pursued by the State Police?*
- *Do you trust that if you report an organised crime related offence it will be duly pursued by SPAK?*
- *Do you think that the public administration can play a role in the fight against organised crime?*
- *How do you find the sentences given by the courts to individuals engaged in organised crime?*
- *How would you rate the contribution of the EU in the fight against organised crime?*
- *How would you rate the contribution of the USA in the fight against organised crime?*

When asked whether the government is serious about combating organized crime, only **14.7%** of respondents expressed full confidence, while **37.0%** leaned toward a positive view. However, a combined **46.5%** (Lean No: 28.4%, No: 18.1%) expressed scepticism or outright doubt. This suggests that while some citizens acknowledge government efforts, nearly half remain unconvinced—possibly due to perceived political entanglements, inconsistent enforcement, or lack of transparency. The low **1.8%** uncertainty rate indicates that most Albanians have formed a clear opinion on the matter.

In contrast, the Special Courts enjoy a stronger reputation. A combined **65.8%** of respondents (Yes: 17.3%, Lean Yes: 48.5%) believe these courts are serious

in their mission to fight organized crime. Only **30.7%** expressed doubt, and **3.6%** were unsure. This reflects a growing public confidence in judicial specialization and the role of dedicated anti-corruption bodies in delivering impartial justice.

SPAK stands out as the most trusted institution in this domain. A striking **80%** of respondents (Yes: 38.2%, Lean Yes: 41.8%) believe SPAK is serious in its efforts to dismantle organized crime networks. Only **18%** expressed scepticism, and **2.0%** were unsure. This level of confidence likely stems from SPAK's high-profile investigations, perceived independence from political influence, and its role as a symbol of judicial reform. It suggests that Albanians view SPAK not just as an enforcement body, but as a cornerstone of institutional integrity.

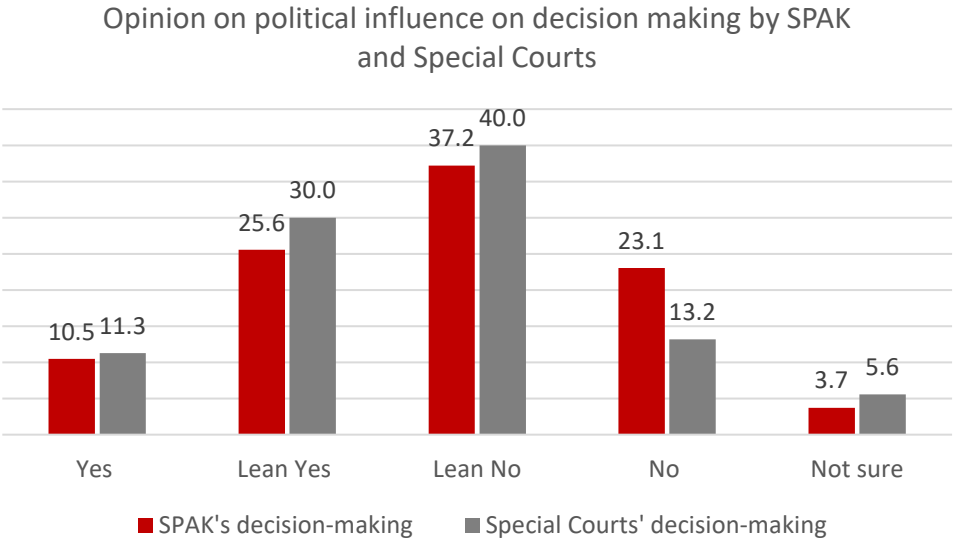


Graph 70. Opinion on seriousness Government, Special Courts, and SPAK in the fight against organised crime

SPAK continues to enjoy the strongest public confidence, not only in its commitment to fighting organized crime but also in its perceived autonomy. A combined **60.3%** (Lean No: 37.2%, No: 23.1) reject that its decision-making is politically influenced. However, **36.1%** expressed concern about political interference, and a **3.7%** were unsure. This suggests that SPAK is seen not just as an enforcement body, but as a symbol of institutional integrity.

When it comes to perceived political influence of the Special Courts, the picture is more mixed. While **53.2%** (Lean No: 40.0%, No: 13.2) believe the courts operate independently, a notable **41.3%** (Yes: 11.3%, Lean Yes: 30.0) suspect

some level of political pressure. This ambivalence may stem from public scepticism about the consistency of rulings in politically sensitive cases.



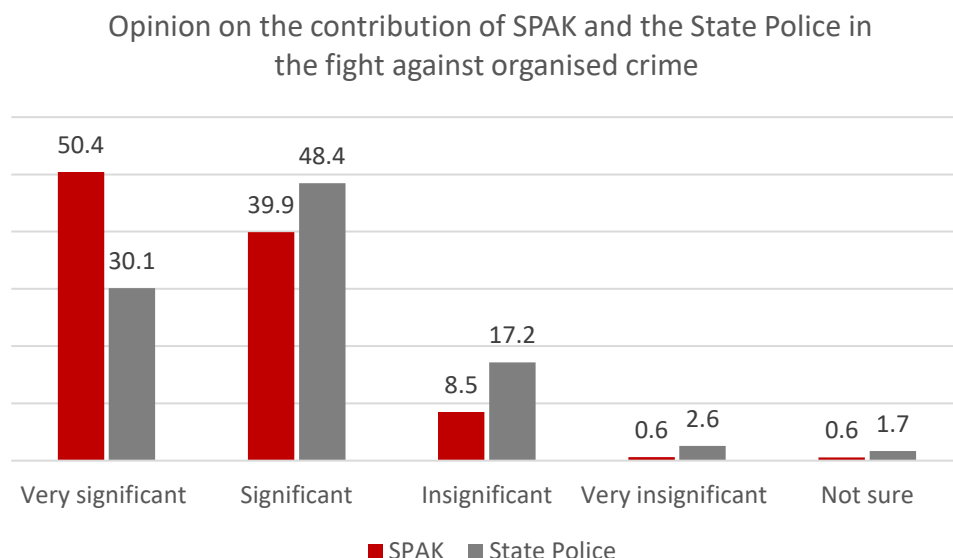
Graph 71. Opinion on political influence on decision making by SPAK and Special Courts

A majority of respondents (**90.3%**) rate SPAK’s contribution as either *significant* or *very significant*, with over half (**50.4%**) identifying it as *very significant*. This overwhelming endorsement reflects SPAK’s growing reputation as a credible and independent institution, likely bolstered by its high-profile investigations, prosecutorial rigor, and perceived insulation from political interference. Only **9.1%** of respondents view SPAK’s contribution as *insignificant* or *very insignificant*, and a mere **0.6%** are undecided, suggesting that public opinion is not only favourable but also firmly held.

The State Police receive a more mixed evaluation. While **78.5%** of respondents still rate their contribution as *significant* or *very significant*, only **30.1%** consider it *very significant*, a full **20 percentage points** lower than SPAK. Moreover, **19.8%** of respondents view the police’s role as *insignificant* or *very insignificant*, more than double the scepticism directed at SPAK. The **1.7%** of undecided respondents further suggest a degree of uncertainty or ambivalence surrounding the police’s effectiveness.

This divergence in public perception may stem from several factors. SPAK, as a specialized prosecutorial body, is seen as more insulated from everyday political and institutional pressures, whereas the State Police operate within broader bureaucratic and political frameworks that may be perceived as vulnerable to corruption, inconsistency, or selective enforcement. Additionally, SPAK’s visibility in pursuing high-level cases may contrast with the police’s more

routine and dispersed operations, making the former's impact more tangible to the public.

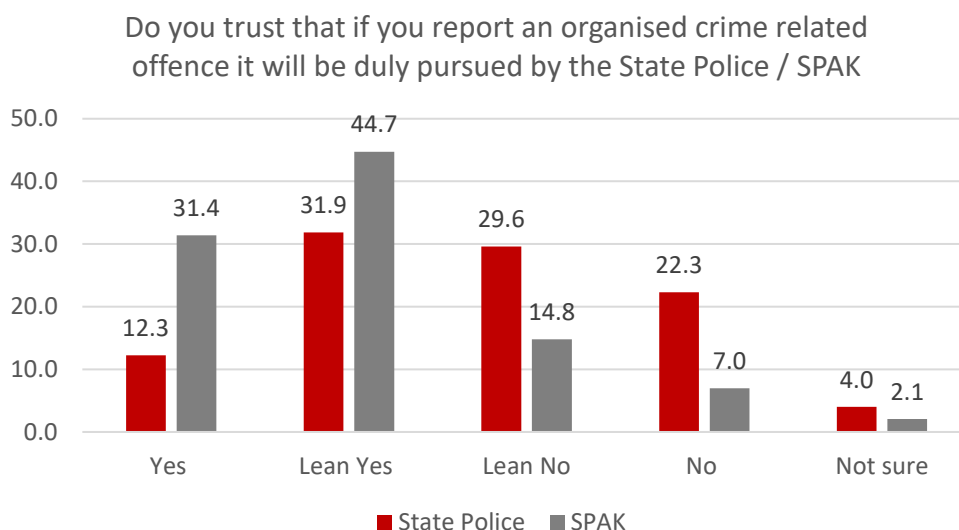


Graph 72. Opinion on the contribution of SPAK and the State Police in the fight against organised crime

Public trust in institutional responsiveness to organized crime reports in Albania reveals a stark contrast between perceptions of the State Police and SPAK.

The data show that only **12.3%** of respondents *fully trust* the State Police to duly pursue organized crime reports, with an additional **31.9%** expressing *leaning trust*. While this brings the total positive sentiment to **44.2%**, it is overshadowed by a substantial **51.9%** who express doubt—**29.6%** leaning negative and **22.3%** outright distrust. This majority scepticism suggests that many Albanians perceive the State Police as either compromised, ineffective, or lacking the institutional will to confront organized crime robustly. The **4.0%** who are *unsure* reflect a small but telling segment that may be disengaged or uncertain due to lack of transparency or personal experience.

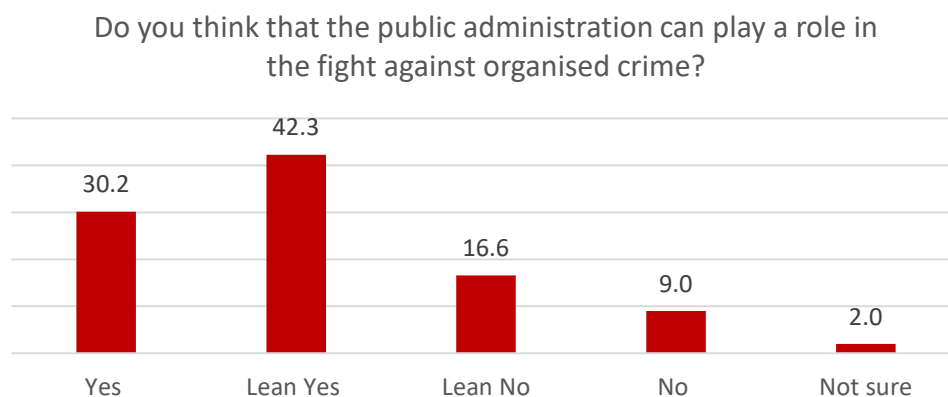
In contrast, SPAK enjoys significantly higher public confidence. A combined **76.1%** of respondents, **31.4%** saying yes and **44.7%** leaning positively, believe that SPAK would pursue organized crime reports effectively. Only **21.8%** express doubt (**14.8%*** lean negative, **7.0%** say no), and just **2.1%** are *unsure*.



Graph 73. Trust on whether a reported organised crime related offence will be duly pursued by the State Police and SPAK

The public administration plays a crucial role in combating organized crime by implementing comprehensive strategies that combine preventive, repressive, and educational measures but also through the **administrative approach**, which involves using the powers of public administration, such as revoking licenses, denying permits, etc, to discourage the operations of organized crime groups.

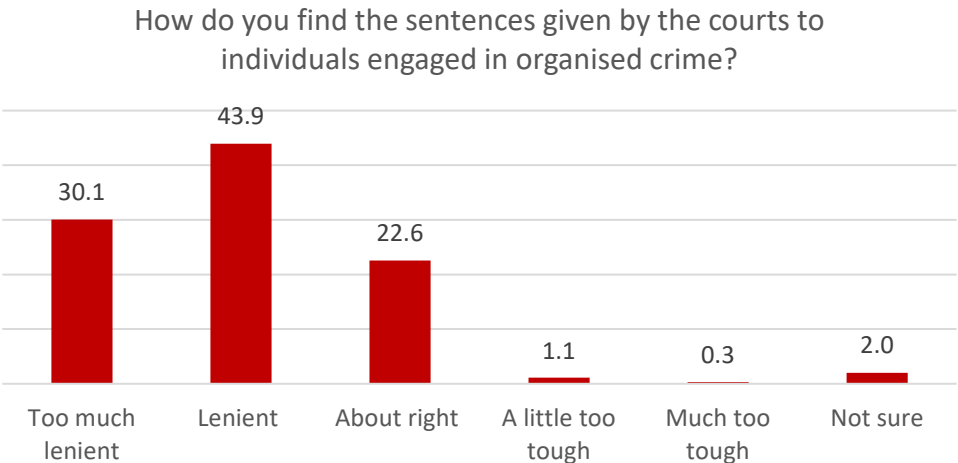
The public reflects a strong belief in the potential of public administration to contribute meaningfully to the fight against organized crime, though tempered by some scepticism regarding its current capacity or integrity. A combined **72.5%** of respondents (**30.2%** saying Yes **and 42.3%** leaning positively), express confidence that public administration can play a constructive role.



Graph 74. Opinion on public administration playing a role in the fight against organised crime

Public perception of judicial sentencing for organized crime reveals a pronounced concern over leniency and impunity. A striking **74%** of respondents (**30.1%** saying sentences are *too much lenient* and **43.9%** simply *lenient*) believe that the courts are not imposing sufficiently harsh penalties on individuals involved in organized crime. This dominant view suggests widespread frustration with the justice system’s perceived inability to deliver proportionate consequences, potentially undermining deterrence and public trust.

In contrast, only **22.6%** of respondents feel that sentencing is *about right*, indicating that fewer than one in four Albanians believe the judiciary is striking an appropriate balance. This minority may reflect those who see recent reforms or high-profile cases as signs of progress, or who favour a more rehabilitative approach to justice.



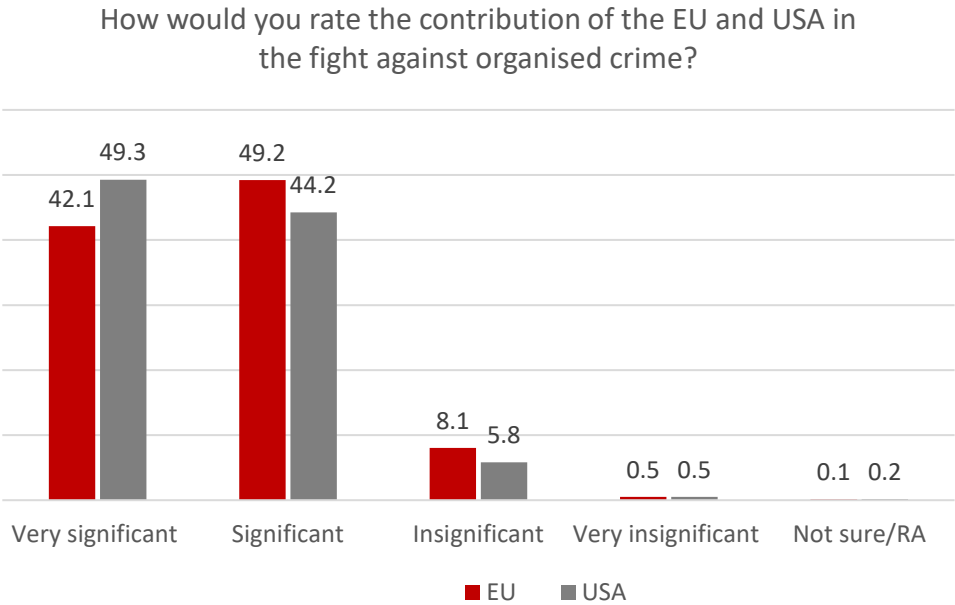
Graph 75. Opinion on sentences given by the courts to individuals engaged in organised crime

Public opinion reflects a high level of trust in the role of the European Union and the United States—in combating organized crime. The data reveal a strong endorsement of both entities, with nuanced differences in perceived impact and credibility.

A resounding **91.3%** of respondents rate the EU’s contribution as either *significant* (**49.2%**) or *very significant* (**42.1%**). This overwhelming majority suggests that Albanians view the EU not only as a normative anchor for legal and institutional reform, but also as a practical ally in strengthening rule of law mechanisms. The EU’s support—through technical assistance, judicial reform, and alignment with *acquis* standards—is clearly recognized as instrumental in shaping Albania’s anti-crime architecture. Only **8.6%** express scepticism (**8.1%** *insignificant*, **0.5%** *very insignificant*), and a negligible **0.1%** are *unsure*, indicating that the EU’s role is widely understood and largely appreciated. This trust may also reflect the broader aspiration for EU integration, where

organized crime is seen as a barrier to accession and EU involvement as a corrective force.

The USA garners even stronger endorsement, with **93.5%** of respondents rating its contribution as *significant* (**44.2%**) or *very significant* (**49.3%**). This slightly higher confidence compared to the EU suggests that the U.S. is perceived as a more assertive actor—perhaps due to its visible support for SPAK, public diplomacy efforts, and backing of high-profile investigations and prosecutions. Only **6.3%** express doubt (**5.8%** *insignificant*, ***0.5%** *very insignificant*), and **0.2%** are *unsure*, reinforcing the notion that the U.S. is seen as a reliable and results-driven partner in Albania’s fight against organized crime.



Graph 76. Contribution of the EU and USA in the fight against organised crime



VICTIMIZATION AND CRIME REPORTING

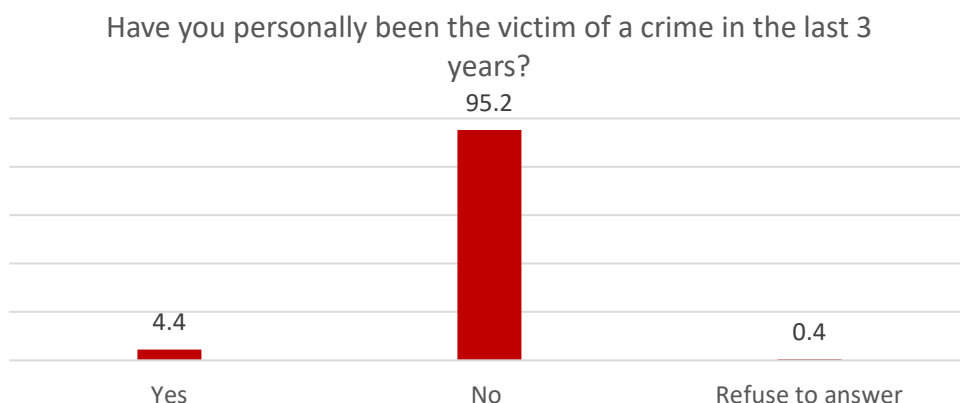
VICTIMIZATION AND CRIME REPORTING

Victimization and crime reporting surveys are crucial for understanding the true extent of crime and its impact, as they capture data on both reported and unreported incidents. Understanding the extent of victimization and the willingness of individuals to report crimes is crucial for assessing the true impact of organized crime also, and for developing effective strategies to support victims and enhance law enforcement efforts. This section analyses survey data on personal experiences of victimization, reporting rates, reasons for non-reporting, and levels of fear, providing a nuanced picture of the challenges facing Albanian citizens.

The following questions were asked:

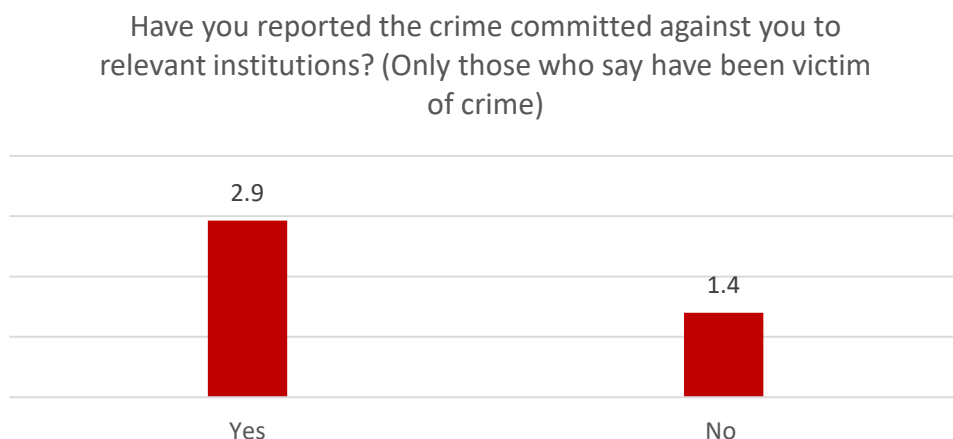
- *Have you personally been the victim of a crime in the last 3 years?*
- *Have you reported the crime committed against you to relevant institutions? (Only those who say have been victim of crime)*
- *Do you know a relative or friend who has been the victim of a crime/criminal case in the last 3 years?*
- *Has he/she reported the crime committed to relevant institutions? (Only those who say have relative/friend who have been victim of crime)*
- *Do you think Albanian citizens in general report all the crimes they are victims of?*
- *Do you think Albanian citizens in general report all the crimes they witness even if they are not victims themselves?*
- *If you were to report/denounce a crime, would you be afraid to report it?*
- *What kind of crimes you think go unreported?*
- *What are the reasons Albanian citizens do not report the crimes they witness?*

The data reveal that while direct victimization by crime in Albania is relatively low, the rate of reporting among victims is even lower. Only **4.4%** of respondents reported being personally victimized by a crime in the past three years, while an overwhelming **95.2%** said they had not, and **0.4%** declined to answer. This may suggest that most Albanians do not experience crime directly, or at least do not identify as victims within the scope of the survey.



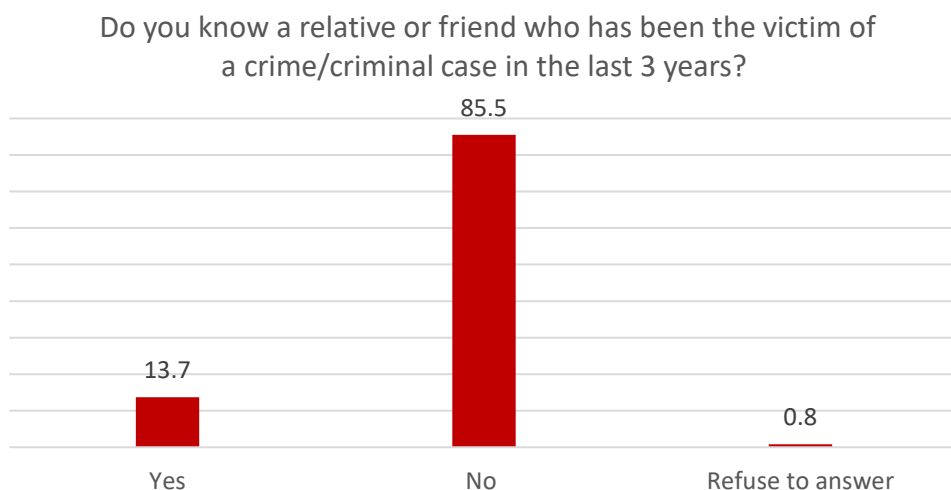
Graph 77. *Incidence of being victim of a crime in the last 3 years*

Among those who did report being victims, only **2.9%** said they had informed the relevant institutions, while **1.4%** admitted they had not. The vast majority of **95.7%** skipped the question, as they had not identified as victims.



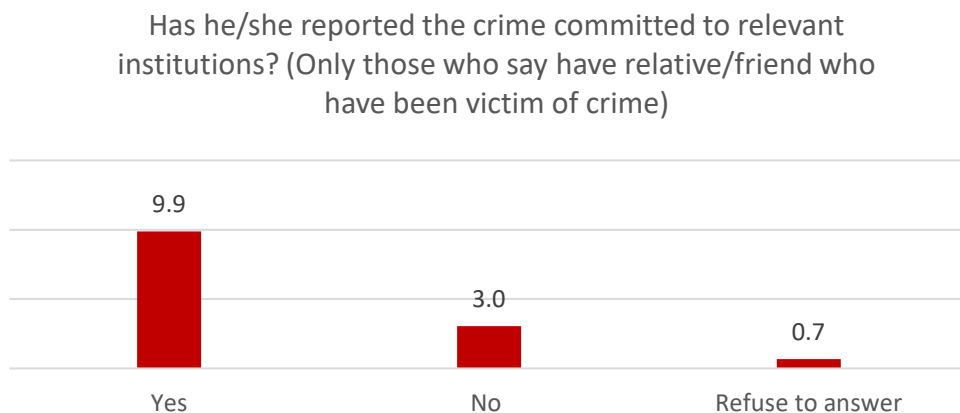
Graph 78. *Reporting of crimes by citizens have been victims of*

While only **4.4%** of respondents reported being personally victimized by crime a notably higher **13.7%** said they knew a relative or friend who had been the victim of a crime or criminal case in the past three years. This suggests that crime may be more prevalent than personal victimization rates alone imply, and that its impact extends beyond the individual to the wider social fabric. The vast majority—**85.5%**—did not know anyone affected, and **0.8%** declined to answer.



Graph 79. Knowledge on relative/ friend being victim of a crime in the last 3 years

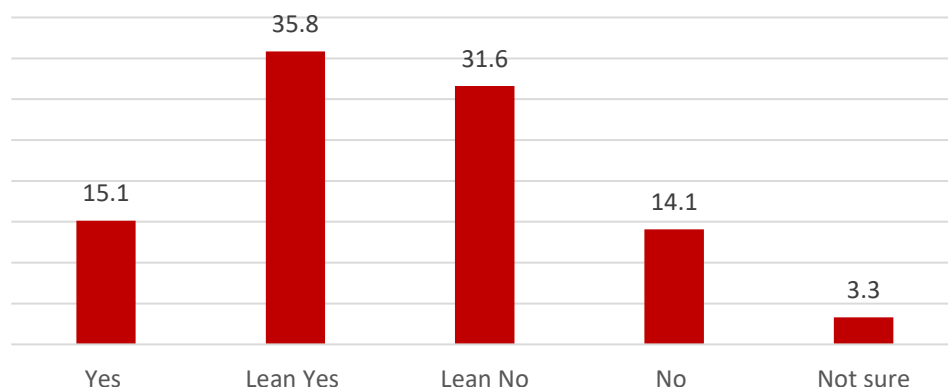
Among those who acknowledged knowing a victim, only **9.9%** said the crime had been reported to relevant institutions, while **3.0%** said it had not. A significant **86.4%** skipped the question, as they had not identified anyone affected. These figures mirror the earlier trend: even when crime touches someone's social circle, formal reporting remains limited.



Graph 80. Reporting of crimes by relatives/friends

When asked whether Albanian citizens generally report crimes they are victims of, only **15.1%** responded with a confident “Yes,” while a larger share—**35.8%**—leaned toward believing that such reporting occurs. However, nearly an equal proportion expressed doubt: **31.6%** leaned toward “No,” and **14.1%** firmly believed that victims do not report crimes. The remaining **3.3%** were uncertain.

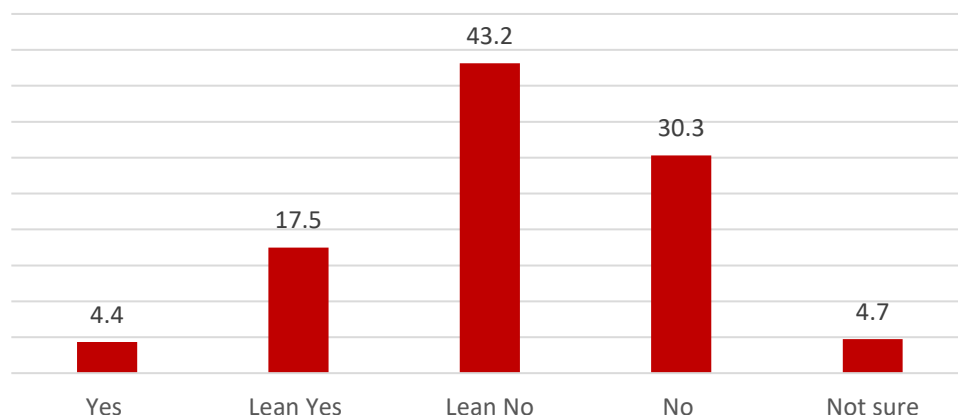
Do you think Albanian citizens in general report all the crimes they are victims of?



Graph 81. Reporting of crimes citizens are victims themselves

The picture becomes even more stark when the question shifts to crimes that are witnessed rather than personally experienced. Here, only **4.4%** of respondents believe that citizens consistently report witnessed crimes, and **17.5%** lean toward that view. In contrast, a combined **73.5%** either lean toward “No” (**43.2%**) or firmly say “No” (**30.3%**), with **4.7%** unsure. This dramatic drop in perceived reporting suggests that Albanians are significantly less confident in the likelihood of bystanders stepping forward—perhaps due to fear of retaliation, social stigma, or a lack of faith in institutional follow-through.

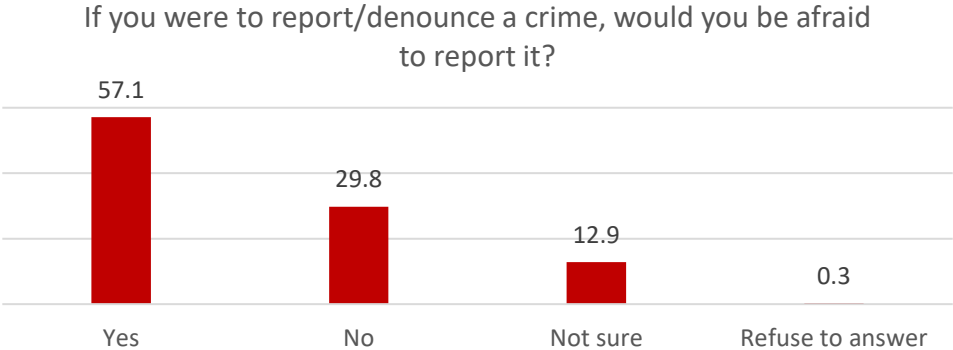
Do you think Albanian citizens in general report all the crimes they witness even if they are not victims themselves?



Graph 82. Reporting of crimes citizens witness even if they are not victims themselves

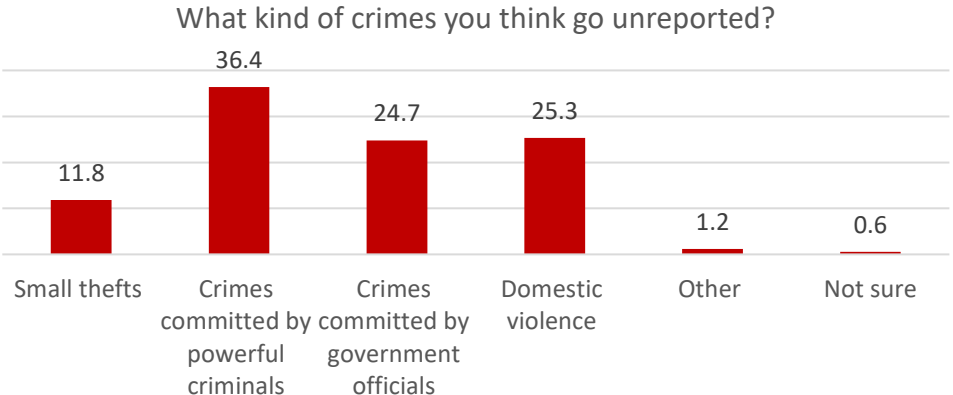
A striking **57.1%** of respondents said they would be afraid to report or denounce a crime. This majority suggests that fear - whether of retaliation, social stigma, institutional inaction, or personal exposure - is a dominant factor that shapes public behaviour. Only **29.8%** of respondents said they would not be afraid to report a crime, indicating that less than a third of the population feels secure or empowered enough to engage with law enforcement or judicial institutions. Meanwhile, **12.9%** were unsure, and **0.3%** refused to answer—small but telling figures that reflect uncertainty and perhaps discomfort with the topic itself.

These responses reveal a profound sense of fear and hesitation surrounding the act of reporting crime in Albania



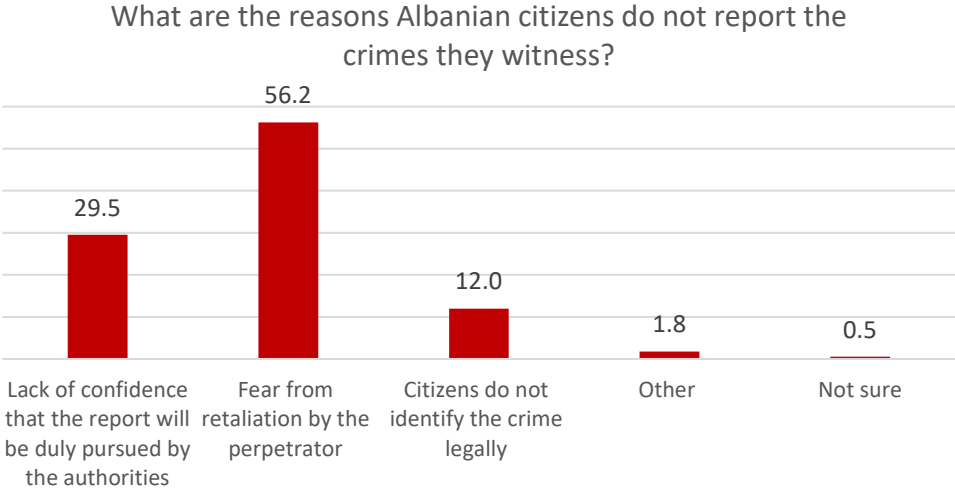
Graph 83. Fear of reporting a crime

When asked what kinds of crimes tend to go unreported, respondents overwhelmingly pointed to those involving power and vulnerability. The most frequently cited were **crimes committed by powerful criminals (36.4%)**, **domestic violence (25.3%)**, and **crimes committed by government officials (24.7%)**. In contrast, only **11.8%** believed that small thefts go unreported, indicating that everyday crimes are more likely to be acknowledged, while systemic or sensitive offenses remain hidden.



Graph 84. Crimes citizens think go unreported

The reasons for this silence are equally revealing. The most dominant factor is **fear of retaliation**, cited by **56.2%** of respondents. This fear, whether physical, social, or professional, underscores the risks that many Albanians associate with reporting crime, especially when perpetrators hold influence or operate within closed networks. Another **29.5%** cited a **lack of confidence that authorities will pursue the report**, reflecting deep scepticism toward institutional responsiveness and effectiveness. This aligns with earlier findings on low reporting rates and perceived institutional inertia. A smaller but notable **12.0%** said that citizens **do not legally identify the crime**, pointing to gaps in legal literacy or public understanding of what constitutes a reportable offense. This may be especially relevant in cases of domestic violence or corruption, where cultural norms or ambiguous boundaries blur the lines of legality.



Graph 85. *Reasons why citizens do not report the crimes they witness*

The responses to questions on crime victimisation and reporting reveal a layered and systemic tension between crime exposure, public responsibility, and institutional trust in Albania. At the surface, crime appears to be a relatively rare personal experience, yet its social proximity through friends and family is more pronounced. This duality suggests that while individuals may not frequently encounter crime directly, its presence is felt and observed within their communities.

However, this awareness does not translate into action. Reporting behaviour is consistently low, both among victims and witnesses, indicating a widespread reluctance to engage with formal justice mechanisms. This reluctance does not seem to be rooted in apathy but rather in a complex interplay of fear, scepticism, and perceived hopelessness.

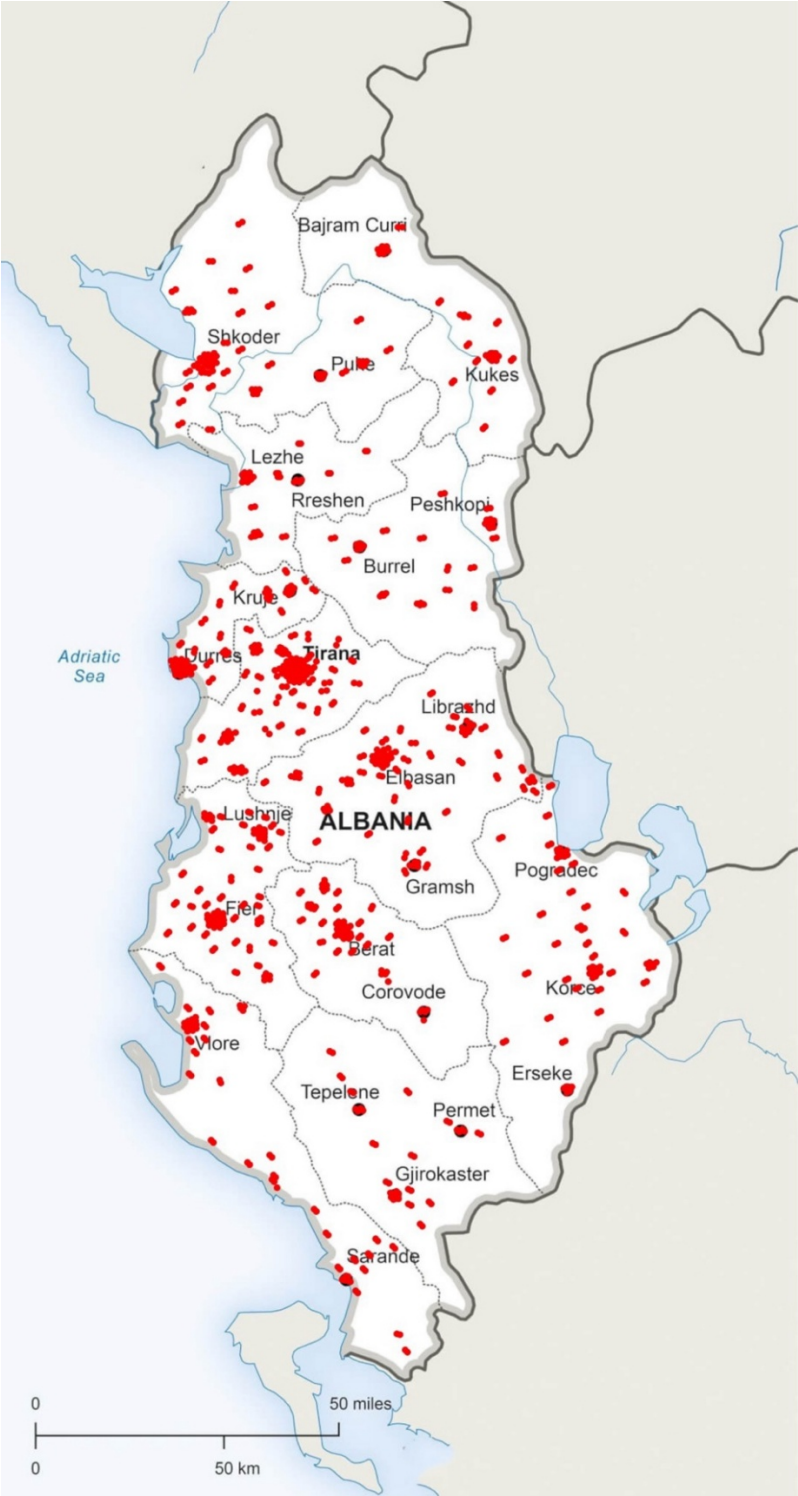
At a deeper level, the data point to a civic environment shaped by power asymmetries and institutional weakness. Crimes involving influential actors,

whether criminal networks, government officials, or within domestic spheres, are perceived as especially prone to silence.

The dominant emotional response to the idea of reporting is fear, combined by a lack of confidence in institutional follow through. This reflects not just a crisis of enforcement, but a crisis of legitimacy, painting a landscape where legal norms are unevenly applied, and in which speaking out may carry personal risk.

The result is a civic culture marked by caution, fragmentation, and selective engagement which begs an intervention not only through legal reform but a concerted action to reimagine public trust, protection, and empowerment to be addressed.

Annex 1 - Geographical sample distribution



Annex 2 - Sample distribution across municipalities and prefectures

Municipality where interviews were conducted

Municipality	%
1.Belsh	0.5
2.Berat	2.0
3.Bulqizë	0.9
4.Cërrik	0.8
5.Delvinë	0.2
6.Devoll	1.1
7.Dibër	1.8
8.Divjakë	1.3
9.Dropull	0.4
10.Durrës	6.6
11.Elbasan	4.8
12.Fier	4.8
13.Finiq	0.4
14.Fushë-Arrëz	0.2
15.Gjirokastër	1.1
16.Gramsh	0.8
17.Has	0.2
18.Himarë	0.4
19.Kamëz	3.7
20.Kavajë	1.8
21.Këlcyrë	0.2
22.Klos	0.5
23.Kolonjë	0.4
24.Konispol	0.1
25.Korçë	2.7
26.Krujë	2.2
27.Kuçovë	1.2
28.Kukës	1.2
29.Kurbin	1.5

30.Lezhë	2.5
31.Libohovë	0.1
32.Librazhd	0.9
33.Lushnje	2.9
34.Malësi e Madhe	1.1
35.Maliq	1.4
36.Mallakastër	1.1
37.Mat	0.8
38.Memaliaj	0.3
39.Mirditë	0.8
40.Patos	1.1
41.Peqin	0.8
42.Përmet	0.3
43.Pogradec	2.1
44.Poliçan	0.3
45.Prenjas	0.6
46.Pukë	0.4
47.Pustec	0.2
48.Roskovec	0.6
49.Rrogozhinë	1.0
50.Sarandë	0.9
51.Selenicë	0.5
52.Shijak	1.1
53.Shkodër	4.0
54.Skrapar	0.3
55.Tepelenë	0.4
56.Tiranë	22.6
57.Tropojë	1.3
58.Dimal	0.7
59.Vau i Dejës	1.0
60.Vlorë	3.3
61.Vorë	1.2

Prefecture where interviews were conducted

	%
1.Berat	4.7
2.Dibër	3.8
3.Durrës	9.7
4.Elbasan	9.2
5.Fier	11.7
6.Gjirokastër	2.8
7.Korçë	8.0
8.Kukës	2.5
9.Lezhë	4.8
10.Shkodër	6.9
11.Tiranë	30.0
12.Vlorë	6.0

ALBANIAN SECURITY BAROMETER NATIONAL SURVEY