

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

CORRUPTION IN ALBANIA: PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCE 2015-2016

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Perception about corruption in Albania remains high among citizens. Almost 89% of the general public thinks corruption is either “widespread” or “somewhat widespread” among public officials. About 1 in 3 citizens thinks that the corruption in the country has increased compared to 3 years ago while 37% think that it has remained in the same level as three ago. More than half of the general public thinks that corruption amongst public officials has either increased (33%) or has remained the same (37%) compared to three years ago. Similar to findings from 2010¹, people see most institutions in the country as corrupt, scoring an average of 61 points in a 0-100 corruption perception scale in which 0 = “very honest” and 100 = “very corrupt”.

CORRUPTION PERCEPTION

- Public school teachers, Religious Leaders the President of the Republic and the Media are currently the institutions/authorities viewed by Albanian citizens as the most honest. Meanwhile, Customs officials, Judges, Prosecutors, Party Leaders and Tax Officials are seen as those who are the most corrupt.
- Although, they continue to be seen among the least corrupted institutions/groups, President of the Republic, Religious Leaders and Media, have worsened their position compared to the 2010 survey. More specifically, the score for the President of the Republic has increased by 13 points (from 30 in 2010 to 43 in 2015), for Religious leaders by 11 points (from 30 to 41 points), and Media by 5 points (from 42 to 47b points) in a scaler from 0 to 100 where 0 = “very honest” and 100 = “very corrupt”.
- On the other hand, perceptions on the State Police and Public School teachers have improved. Specifically, the citizens’ corruption perception on the State Police show a considerable improvement by 16 points (from 66 in 2010 to 50 in 2015) whereas for Public School teachers findings show an improvement of 7 points on the corruption perception scale (from 46 to 39 in 2015)

POLITICAL ORIENTATION AND CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS

- Public perception on the phenomenon of corruption in Albania, similar to the previous surveys, seems to be influenced by citizens’ political leaning. Findings show that in 2015 (left coalition government in power), right-leaning citizens score 64 points in terms of their perceptions on corruption (average score for corruption perceptions for all institutions evaluated, on a scale from 0-100 where 0= “very honest” and 100= “very corrupt”), whereas left-leaning citizens score 58 points. Comparatively, in 2010 (DP & SMI coalition government in power) left leaning respondents scored 67 points on the same scale, while right leaning ones score 56 points.

¹ IDRA has conducted 5 waves of Corruption Perception & Experience Surveys- General Public in Albania (from 2006 to 2010) funded by USAID. The year 2010 is the last year of the full Corruption Perceptions & Experiences survey.

BRIBERY

- While the general perception about corruption being a widespread phenomenon in the country remains unaltered among citizens, comparison between the 2010 and 2015 survey shows a decrease in citizens' personal experience with corruption. Specifically, while approximately 3 out of 5 (57%) respondents in 2010 claimed to have had experience with corruption, only about 2 out of 5 (44%) claim the same in 2015.
- Additionally, the 2015 survey results show that while the healthcare sector is still considered among the sectors most afflicted by corruption based on citizens' evaluations, an improvement can nevertheless be noted in terms of personal experiences when compared to the 2010 survey. Thus, while about 1 in 3 (33.5%) respondents who had requested healthcare services in 2010 claimed to have "paid a bribe" to a doctor or nurse", only about 1 in 5 (21%) claim same thing in 2015.
- A considerable improvement can also be noticed in the number of respondents who claim to have "been asked for a bribe from a police officer" in 2015 (4%) when compared to 2010 (8.2%), as well as in the number of respondents who claimed to "have seen someone paying a bribe to a policeman" in the 2015 survey (12%) compared to 2010 (28.4%).
- Meanwhile, only 13% of citizens interviewed in 2015 reported they had to pay more than the law required to receive some kind of document (i.e. business registration, license, construction permit, compared to 20% in 2010).

FIGHTING CORRUPTION

- International organizations are considered to be at the forefront in helping to fight corruption with 59 points followed by the State Police who scored 53 points and the media with 52 points out of 100 (on a 0 to 100 scale where 0 is "No help at all" and 100, "Helps a lot"). All other institutions/groups score less than 50 points on the scale, meaning that they are viewed as not particularly helpful in this regard.
- Compared to 2010 the role of the Media in the fight against corruption appears to have somehow diminished in the eyes of the public scoring 52 points (out of 100) in 2015 as opposed to 61 points in 2010.
- Courts are seen as the least helpful institution in the fight against corruption according to citizens, scoring 32 points on the same scale in 2015, a decrease of 8 points compared to 2010.

TRANSPARENCY

- Transparency remains a critical issue for Albanian institutions as seen by the public opinion. All the institutions score less than the average of 50 points in a 0 to 100 scale, where 0 = "Not at all transparent" and 100, "Completely transparent."
- The Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs score the highest (46 points each) while the Ministry of Health has the lowest score with 35 points.

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

- Citizens' trust in institutions remains very low in Albania. Survey findings show that all institutions except for the State Police have scored less than 50 points (mid-scale) on a 0 to 100 scale, where 0 = "No trust at all" and 100 = "Trust a lot.". Political Parties (24), Trade Unions (26), Parliament (27) and Courts (28) scored the least points when compared to other institutions. Compared to 2010, in 2015 only Local

Governments have shown a slight improvement (from 39 points in 2010 to 42 points in 2015). Although the judicial system is one of the most important pillars in the fight against corruption, yet both Courts and the General Prosecution score well below average (28 and 30 respectively) on the 0-100 trust scale.

- Political orientation also appears to influence the degree to which citizens trust institutions. The 2015 findings for example, show that left-leaning citizens trust institutions (both government and non government) more than right-leaning citizens (43 vs. 32 points).

TOLERANCE FOR CORRUPTION

- Compared to previous surveys, where citizens were considerably more tolerant for “givers” compared to the “takers” in corruptive transactions, the survey in 2015 shows that citizens’ measure of evaluations has somehow changed. Findings from 2015 show that Albanian citizens are now more likely to condemn even the “givers” (of the bribe) involved in these interactions as well. A “student who buys a shirt as a present for a teacher in order to get good grades” is considered as “corrupt and should be punished” by 47% of respondents compared to only 32% in 2010. Similarly, a mother who pays a civil servant to speed up the issuing of a birth certificate” is considered as “corrupt and should be punished” by 42% of respondents, compared to 28% in 2010.

OUTLOOK ON ECONOMIC SITUATION

- The general economic situation in Albania is viewed as grim by the majority of citizens in the country. Findings show that more than almost 3 out of 5 (59%) of respondents view the situation in this regard as either “bad” or “very bad”. Even when compared to one year ago, most citizens (53%) think the economic situation in the country is worse.
- However, when asked about their expectations for the economy during the next year, survey findings show that about about 1 in 3 Albanians (35%) believes the economic situation in the country will be “better” during the next year, while only 1 in 4 (28%) thinks the situation will get worse.
- Most citizens expect the anti-informality initiative led by the Albanian government to have a positive effect on the country’s economy. About 1 out of 2 of the respondents (50%) expect the initiative to have a positive effect, while 22% of the respondents felt it will negatively affect the economic situation in the country.

Sample Size & Margin of Error

Sample Frame	Nr.of interviews	Fieldwork timing	Margin of Error	Confidence Interval
General Public (18 vjeç +), National Representative	N=1000	January – February 2016	± 3.1%	95%