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**Balkan Public Agenda**

A Focus Group Study  
in Albania

April, 2001

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**Institute for Contemporary Studies, Tirana**

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## **Introduction**

### **Objectives of the research**

The qualitative approach was designed to deliver information needed for developing a questionnaire inquiry to be implemented in all South East European countries. The goal of the qualitative research is to monitor the public agenda in the Balkan area.

The results of the focus group-based research are not to be considered representative for the entire population of a country. They have an intrinsic value and provide an understanding on how people motivate their stand with respect to the situation of the country.

The group interviews were conducted according to the interview guide designed by IMAS in collaboration with IDEA International and with the network or research institutes in all the countries involved in the project.

### **Group composition**

The participants of the focus group interviews were randomly chosen using the address book for urban areas. The participants of the rural groups were randomly chosen in some villages of the same commune. The participants representing Greek minority were inhabitants of the areas around Saranda and Gjirokastra (southern towns of Albania where the Greek minority mostly lives).

The following table contains general information on the group composition.

Sex		Occupation	
Female	14	agronomist	3
Male	29	Architect	1
age		Biochemist	1
up to 35	20	Businessmen	1
35-45	17	Clerk	1
over 45	6	Computer programmer	1
education		consultant	2
Primary school	1	Cook	1
secondary school	6	economist	7
student	6	Ex-military official	1
university	30	Handcrafted man	1
		engineer	1
		lawyer	3
		military official	2
		nurse	1
		psychologist	1
		retired	1
		Retired (engineer)	1
		student	5
		teacher	6
		topographer	1
		Unemployed	1

Appendix one contains detailed information on each group.

## 1. General overview of the situations in Albania

### 1.1. Vulnerability of situation

As resulted from the group discussions, the problems, Albania faces nowadays are:

problem	groups					
	urban mix under 35	rural new settlement	rural mix	Greek minority	Urban mix over 35	frequency
poverty	+		+	+	+	4
unemployment	+	+	+	+	+	5
public order/insecurity	+	+	+			3
black market labor			+		+	2
drug/prostitution/organized crime		+		+	+	3
rule of law		+			+	2
bad governance				+		1
land and property ownership problems			+	+		2
politics			+	+		2
corruption		+		+	+	3
intrusion of vote			+			1
public services		+		+		2
no development principle	+					1
lack of development tradition	+					1
moral vacuum	+					1
no credibility of information	+					1
no physical infrastructure		+				1
clean environment		+				1
brain chain/emigration				+	+	2
Albanian issue			+			1
vendetta			+			1

**Very important note:** The respondents mentioned almost the all above written problems during the coming questions of the interviews. Therefore the frequency written does not necessarily mean the importance of the problem.

### 1.2. Problems that have the greatest chance to be solved in the near future

#### *Focus group under 35*

- Corruption: the respondents think that it is related only to moral and can be easy to change.
- Economic issue: it is easy to interfere to economic issues and unemployment through reforms.
- Security: it can be solved because of good will of people and direct actions from government.

#### *Rural new settlement*

The water supply seems to be one of the easiest problems. They base the opinion on the up-to now achievement (60% of the water supply network has finished) and they were told by local authorities that the amount of money necessary is not too large.

*Rural mix*

The political issue is the most possible to be solved. The Albanians have understood what is the political tolerance. The tolerated political fight will gradually lead the other problems

*Urban mix over 35*

The implementation of laws is considered as the problem that has the most possibilities to be solved. It depends on the free will of the individuals, starting from the highest level of the state institutions down to the grass root level. This factor may easily turn the problem to the hardest one to be solved.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that the one of the easiest problems to be solved in the near future is the improvement of the public services.

1.3. Problems that are most difficult to be solved

*Focus group under 35:*

The respondents think that it will take a long time until the necessary tradition for the new developments, will be created. Likewise the credibility of information seems to belong to the future.

*Rural new settlement*

Unemployment was perceived as the most difficult problem to be solved because it deals with investments. The last ones need a secure environment, which deal with public order.

The respondent wanted state to promote the private enterprise activities and subsidizes some of them. With this object they suggested 1-2 year professional training courses, based on the categorisation of the unemployed according to age, education and so on.

*Rural mix*

The land ownership is the most difficult issue to be solved. The state institutions are responsible for the solution of this problem. Another issue mentioned was the Albanian cause. This problem needs time.

*Urban mix over 35*

The economic growth is seen as the most difficult problem to be solved. The respondents think the situation is left in this condition by purpose. The up to now adapted laws do not protect the interests of the majority. The personal interests of politically powerful individuals hazard the economic perspectives.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that the issue of properties' ownership is one of them that need a long time to be solved. The corruption is one of the factors that do not allow the problem solution. They also think that there is a total misunderstanding of property compensation and therefore wrong policies and laws are adapted till now. The respondent think that the state institutions must understand quite right the meaning and value of property for individuals.

## **2. Economy in Albania**

### **2.1. Problems, causes and obstacles to solving the problems**

#### *Urban mix under 35*

The following problems were defined by the respondents as the causes and obstacles of the economic development in the same time.

- Less development of small business
- Difficulties in allocating the investments capital
- Lack of the banking system
- Infrastructure
- Lack of clear politic policies and national strategies
- Monopolies
- Insecurity for new enterprising
- Incomplete legislative frame
- Lack of professional skills
- Weak role of business community
- Domestic debt

#### *Rural new settlement*

The respondents think that both bad or non-existing infrastructure and the irregular land ownership are the causes of lack of investments. Therefore the last one does not contribute in decreasing the unemployment level, which is perceived as a problem in itself. They think that the lack of the rule of law and lack of the proper experiences necessary for operation in the market economy, which are the effects of the previous regime, are obstacles to solving the above mentioned problems.

#### *Rural mix*

The respondents think that there is no development of the agricultural sector. Furthermore the domestic agricultural market is not protected from the imported products. Thus the obstacles mentioned were no marketing of agricultural products and free and uncontrolled import of these products. They want state to encourage and subsidise the private agents to develop the sector and the food industry. Furthermore the respondents think that the insecurity in Albania and instability of Balkan are stopping factors to investments.

#### *Urban mix over 35*

The respondents have perceived the low economic level and unemployment as the most crucial economic problems. Both corruptions in the administrative institutions and in the higher levels of the state institutions and the up to now designed wrong economic policies are the causes of the mentioned problems. They also think that the mentality of laziness strongly encouraged by social assistance policies is another cause of the economic problems. They think that in order to improve the situation the state institutions must change the economic policies, fight corruption and improve the co-operation between each other and within their levels. They also punish the hypocrisy of the politicians whose behaviour is guided by narrow political interests

while denying the state ones. In any other case they don't think there will be any improvement.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that the most crucial economic problems are poverty and unemployment. They think that the cause of the mentioned problems is lack of investments that comes from a total lack of infrastructure and international communication points such as ports, airports. There were a lot of reservations on the implementation of the Eight Corridor. They also had reservation on the country economic policies such as the high level of tax and customs tariffs. They also think that the corruption and lack of economic specialist in the highest level of state are some others obstacles to solving the economic problems.

2.2. Role of the international community/institutions in the Albanian economy

*Urban mix under 35*

The respondents mentioned the WB, IMF, GTZ (German technical assistance) EU, multi-literal agreements of foreign organisations.

According to the respondents opinions the international community has positively contributed through the technical and financial assistance

But the respondent had some reservations regarding the activity of international organisation. They think that the international community's intervention is more than required. They used to impose the policies/models rather than co-operating and creating partnership with the Albanian institutions. Another problem mentioned was the lack of control over the usage of funds that were given by international community.

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents positively evaluated the international organizations activity, especially the EU and WB activity in their zone were considered excellent. Nevertheless the respondents think that there is some mismatching between the opinions of state authorities and international institutions. This makes their activity be less effective.

*Rural mix*

In general the role of international organisations in the economy was positively evaluated. But the respondent thinks that the international organisations' representatives must co-operate closer to the local authorities in order to increase the effectiveness.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that the international technical assistance has been ineffective and very expensive, that means economic aid mostly used to go to their experts. The respondents had the idea that the international community is prolonging the transition in Albania by purpose. Likewise the economic aid was negatively evaluated. They don't think that there are any investments and the corruption in the funds management is too obvious. Furthermore they feel offended by the expired medicines and food coming as aid time after time. As similar, their influence in the Albanian policies has

been totally opposed. Based on what they have heard and experiences, the international community imposes the economic level of Albania and underestimates in a shame way the Albania country. In their opinion the aid given to Albania has been totally conditioned in all aspects. As the conclusion in the respondents' opinion the international community role in the Albanian economy has been unfair and wrong.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that there have been some economic aid but there are a lot of imperfections in the projects implementations. They also think that there is deep lack of information on the Albanian reality by the international organizations. The Albanian counterpart does not control their activity and this is a drawback of the higher state institutions. The technical assistance extension was negatively evaluated. The respondents think that it often has been unnecessary.

2.3. Economic forecast for 2002

*Urban mix under 35:*

In general the respondents were optimists for the future. They have seen some positive changes in the perception of development. Most of the respondents think that time will bring positive changes such as: increase of skilled persons, creation of a tradition etc.

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents think that the future will be better. They have seen some improvements in water supply, irrigate systems etc. They also think that there are two main factors that strongly support their opinion: good energy from people and politicians and improvements of public order.

Only one of the respondents thinks that the situation will be worst because of the high level of unemployment.

*Rural mix*

The respondents think that if the coming elections will be held in a stable situation, there will be a better future. One of the respondents do not expect any improvement in the Albanian situation in the coming years. He thinks that there are a lot undefined things regarding the Balkan security and Albanian issue.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that the state predisposition; encouragement of the domestic production especially the agricultural and livestock one; designation of the policies in order to reduce the imports; destruction of the politicians' monopoly on the different economic sectors and changing the actual politicians' mentality are positive actions that will strongly support the economic perspectives. In any other case an economic regression is expected.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that the economy is going down. The small and medium, even the large businesses' activity is decreased. Inflation pressure is still strong and it doesn't allow any economic growth. Individuals' lives are so strongly depended on

the remittances (emigrants revenues). The reaction of the political class has a strong influence in the economic future.

#### 2.4. Definition of market economy in Albania

##### *Urban mix under 35*

The respondents think that the market economy means competition, development, individuality, more opportunities and free initiatives. They think that market economy influences their life for better despite the difficulties appeared and likewise the fact that self-interest dominates and prices everything.

##### *Rural new settlement*

The respondents think that the marked economy has positively influenced their lives. But they think that there are a lot of rules missing from the real market economy.

##### *Rural mix*

The respondents think that the market economy means giving priority to individual and the private enterprises while the state is the regulator. The respondents think that the market economy always influence for better in the individuals life. Therefore considering its approach in Albania, it is still unorganised and chaotic.

##### *Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that the market economy in the Albania is misused, mismanaged and time after time it is turned to anarchy. The market is not established and there is a complete lack of rules. One of the respondents named the market economy in Albania as thefts' economy. They all opposed the actual situation of the market economy in Albania and all require the real market economy as it is academically defined.

##### *Greek minority*

In their opinion the market economy means: the main actor is market, money, fair and free activity and at the end the winner is the best. They do not pretend there is a fair market economy in Albania, where corruption still is so present.

#### 2.5. Role of state in the market economy

##### *Urban mix under 35 and new rural settlement*

The respondents think that the state must be more active in strategic developments/policies. It must supervise and guarantee the fair competition. The state must reduce its control and management on all the economic sectors. It is also mentioned that state must subsidize.

##### *Rural mix*

The respondents think that the state must encourage the access to free market and protect the domestic one.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that state must be more determined in insuring the laws implementation. It must encourage and subsidize the private enterprises; likewise, it must protect the domestic market. The other think that state must do is accepting the previous right policies by previous different political administrate.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that state must guide the economy and therefore the implementation, on contrary to what often happens today, must be responsibility of the private enterprises. They want the politics to work for economy and not the vice versa.

### **3. Governance in Albania**

#### **3.1. Definition of democracy in Albania**

*Urban mix under 35 and rural new settlement*

The respondents think that the system is based on the free individual vote, on the right of speech, on the existence of free initiatives and on the existence of pluralism. Therefore they think that the system they are living in can be called democracy. Only one of the respondents of the urban mix under 35 thinks that the system can not be called democracy because there are still doubts on the vote credibility.

*Rural mix*

The respondents think that they are living in the democracy. They have the right of vote, the right of speech, the properties right. The new values the democracy provides are the human rights.

*Urban over 35*

The respondents had their reservations regarding the issue. There is the right of speech but they still are afraid of giving their opinions freely because they may lost their job positions or be punished in different ways. The vote is an expression of democracy but it is still not credible.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that they are living in the democracy. But there are still doubts on vote credibility and the kind of governance still leaves rooms for discussion regarding democracy.

#### **3.2. Performance of public officers**

##### **Local administration:**

*Urban mix under 35:*

The local administration are less confidant to the respondents. Their performance has not been good evaluated. They are too depended regarding the finance and competencies by national authorities. The respondents think that the local

administration have been incapable to understand its role and is much influenced by political intervention.

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents of this group appreciate the activity of local authorities. According to their opinion the local authorities have done their best while the central ones have limited their activity. They want the central authorities to increase the co-operation with local ones.

*Rural mix*

The local authority activity is appreciated but the respondent think that its activity is limited up to the competencies and financial resources delegated from the national authorities. They want the local authority to be more independent.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that local authorities are totally depended by national authorities and political parties. They think that local authority representatives have demonstrated predisposition but their competencies are limited.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that local authorities face corruption and byrocracy. Their activity was called demagogy. They think that the local authority's competences and budget must be increased.

**Central administration:**

*Urban mix under 35*

The respondents gave a moderated opinion and evaluation for the central administration. They also think that the model of governance existing in Albania credits the applauds and faults to national authorities.

*Rural new settlement*

On their opinion, the central administration is corrupted and not reliable for solving the individuals' problems. Furthermore, the national authority activity has shocked the public opinion.

*Rural mix*

The respondents do not blame the central administration for its bad performance. They think that the public officials perform their taxes in the accordance of the behaviour of their models: their bosses. They also have worked under the political pressure. From another point of view, the respondents think that there is big communication gap between the simple individual especially one for the communes with the civil servant of the central administration.

*Urban mix over 35*

The common phenomena appearing in the central administrate institutions is nepotism which is the cause of both a fully imposition of the directors to the civil servants and the low professionalism of them. The administrative institutions were considered the ones who are responsible for the things happening today in Albania. The respondents

said that there is no devotion of them to work. Also the political interest appear commonly in their work. The respondents think that the corruption of the civil servant is the reaction of their disappointment to the corruptive attitudes of the higher politicians.

*Greek minority*

The respondents do not expect the central administration' activity to be good as the higher political/state leaders' performance is negatively evaluated.

3.3. Performance of the executive/legislative powers and judiciary

**Prime minister:**

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents think that he works in accordance with his constitutional rights.

*Rural mix*

The opinions on the Prime Minister activity have been contradictory. Prime minister was negatively evaluated by some of them. Some others think that the Prime Minister has worked very well but some factors do not allow him to reach the expected levels of his performance. One of the respondents thinks that he should have accelerated the local authority decentralisation process.

*Urban mix over 35*

The performance of the Prime Minister was so much discussed. The respondents gave different opinions on him. Being decisive was one of the Prime Minister features that were positively assessed. But some other thinks that his behaviour is oriented to personal and his political party interests. Some other negatively evaluated his activity. The illustrative example given by these respondents was the no-motivated firing of the ministers whose performance has been delightful.

*Urban mix under 35 and Greek minority*

The respondents think that there is room for improvements in the Prime Minister activity.

**Parliament:**

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents negatively assessed the parliament activity. Furthermore, there is no parliamentary life, because of the absolute majority and sometimes their activity is destructive. The parliamentarians strongly support the interests of the parties they represent rather than the electors one.

*Rural mix*

The respondents negatively evaluated the parliament activity. They also oppose the fact that the chairman is the representative of a party that does not have at least 2% of the Albanian electorate.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that there is no parliamentary life in Albania. The majority decides and the minority opinion is ignored. The professional level of the parliamentarians leaves room for improvements. Tolerance and ethic are two other features our parliamentarians miss. The respondents blame the Albanians, holders of extreme views who are used to pass massively from one party to another as responsible for the Albanian parliament quality. The respondents think that there will be no parliamentary life in case the Albanians will elect the individual rather than the party.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that parliament is turned to a coffee shop and bargain market.

### **Judiciary:**

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents think that the judiciary is facing a lot of problems.

*Rural mix*

The respondents think that the judiciary system is depended on politics and money.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that there is no justice in Albania. The judiciary is considered as the most profitable activity nowadays. The judiciary is totally depended by money. The respondents do not see any political interference in judiciary except the cases dealing with political issues, which is acceptable.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think the corruption appears strongly in the judiciary. There is a total lack of quality and professionalism in judiciary. The respondents, therefore, cannot speak about justice in Albania. There is no confidence on them at all.

### 3.4. Performance of the President

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents thinks that he is acting in the accordance with his constitutional rights but must be more active and more decisive in some moments.

*Rural mix*

In general the respondents have positively evaluated the president. But they think that he must be more active in the competencies given by the constitution.

*Urban mix over 35*

Some of the respondents appreciated the tolerance and the non-involvement of the president with the interests of the political party he adheres to. The other part thinks that he is secretly involved with the interests of his party. One of the respondents thinks that the head of his political party decides on his competencies. Further more, almost all of them think that he is not in action at all

3.5. Performance of the political parties

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents characterised them as destructive and the cause of conflicts. The extension regarding the number of the political parties was not appreciated.

*Rural mix*

The respondents oppose the fact that the political parties do not accept the election results. But they have seen some improvements on the communication gap between parties lately.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents do think that there is a deep lack of politics in Albania. The programs of the political parties slightly differ from each other. The respondents think that the political parties are causing the regional division of the Albanians and they totally do punish this kind of approach.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that the political parties do not work in accordance with their programs and electoral campaign promises. Their programs slightly differ from each other. They also think that national interests in the decisions are overwhelmed by the political parties' interests.

3.6. Performance of Albanian army

Almost all the respondents think that the Albanian army does not guarantee the country integrity. The group urban mix over 35 goes deeper into the issue describing the taxes of the Albanian army, ironically appraising their skills/abilities to clean and to repair the streets, while the neighbours' countries protect Albanians national borders. Greek minority didn't give any opinion on the issue.

3.7. Factors influencing the Albanians' everyday life

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents of think that local authorities being close to them influence their lives the most.

*Rural mix*

Insecurity and poor economic levels are two main things that influence their lives most.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that the economic level influence their life the most.

3.8. Role of the individual in the decision making process

*Urban mix under 35:*

The respondents think that their influence in the decision making is limited to their vote.

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents think that they can decide on their families' problems. Their influence reaches up to the closer community rather than in higher levels.

*Rural mix*

The respondent think that the individual do not have any role in the decision making process.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that they can be involved in the decision making only through the vote. But they doubt on the vote credibility.

*Greek minority*

The respondents think the individual have no role in decision-making process.

### 3.9. Participation of the individual in the public life

*Urban mix under 35 and Greek minority*

The respondent are willing to be involved in the activities in order to change the society but they do not think that there are chances/possibilities to influence.

*Rural new settlement*

They have been involved in public works of their community. They think that they will continue to be involved.

*Rural mix*

The respondents think that involvement as a community/group or lobe may be more effective rather than individual involvement.

*Urban mix over 35*

They are willing to be involved to but no room for interventions is allowed.

## 4. Civil society

### 4.1. Sources of information and their credibility

*Urban mix under 35*

Printed and electronic media, personal contacts, rumours and reports of state authorities or international organisations were mentioned as the sources of information.

The electronic media was considered as the most reliable one and can provide larger quantity of information.

The criteria used to decide on credibility of an information were: I) the previous experience of the source ii) the political affiliation of the source iii) personal deduction and perceptions

*Rural new settlement*

The sources of information are printed and electronic media. Gossips are also mentioned as sources of information also.

The media are not reliable in their opinion and mostly the information given by different resources are controversial. The media are weak and mostly misinform the individuals. In order to take the right information they try to find it between different sources.

*Rural mix*

The sources of information were printed and electronic media. They think that the media almost reflect the reality as it is. The respondents think that media are somewhat depended by the political attitudes of their financier/donor.

*Urban mix over 35*

The sources of information were printed and electronic media. All the respondents think that media is not reliable. Actually media misinforms and damages the society. The respondents think that there is lack of professionalism, media is politicised and they serve to politics. Some of the respondents said the sometimes politics do not allow media to give the right information.

*Greek minority*

The respondent think that media are part of politics, manipulate the public opinion, and have a deep lack of professionalism. They also think that media in Albania, contrary to others countries' experiences, have an unlimited and uncontrolled freedom.

#### 4.2. Performance and role of NGOs

*Urban mix under 35*

Most of the participants assessed the NGOs activity relatively positive. They consist of skilled individuals and have been effective in their activity.

NGOs provide employment, influence the public opinion, promote and improve different values; they are bridges between the individuals and authority and are mechanism of self-expression and public opinions.

*Rural new settlements area*

There is a big intervention in this area by national/international organizations through a specific NGO. The whole respondents evaluated the activity of this NGO as excellent. They have a lot of confidence on it.

*Rural mix*

The NGO activity was positively evaluated. They think that they support the society integration and the local governance. They work close to the community. Nevertheless they want NGOs increase their activity in order to improve the society.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that the NGOs are turned to profitable organisations. They appreciated the activity of some NGOs, and were negatively positioned on some others thinking that they do not act in the accordance with their status and missions. They also said that some NGO work in dirty. Some of the respondents think that they are mostly non-heard by the government.

*Greek minority*

The majority of the respondents think that the NGOs are part of politics. They also think that NGOs do not have a working platform and the results of their performance are not integrated in the public life. The respondents think that some NGOs has done e good job but their role is not so present because of the invasion of politics in the public life.

4.3. Performance and role of professional organisations

*Urban mix under 35*

The information on these organisations was not adequate and the opinions supported all the possible alternatives: positive/negative/no role at all

*Rural new settlement*

Most of the respondents do not know the professional organisations activity. Therefore they were not able to give an opinion on them.

*Rural mix*

The respondents think that the professional organisations are protectors of different political parties' interests rather than protectors of the interests of the individual they represent. The respondents think also that the Albanian get more involved with the political events rather than with their professional rights.

*Urban mix over 35*

The respondents negatively evaluated the professional organisation activity. In their opinion these organisations do not protect the interest of the individual they represent. Furthermore, there is a lot of nonsense in their tax approach. The example given to illustrate the idea is "the head of an employee' syndicate is the employer"

*Greek minority*

The respondents think that professional organizations have still a very slight role in the society and their influence is inconsiderable.

4.4. Performance and role of religious organisations

*Urban mix under 35*

The respondent think that their activity' effects in the Albanian life are limited.

*Rural new settlement*

The activity of religious organisations is unknown.

*Rural mix*

The respondents think that religious organisations do not influence their life. But changing the religion encouraged by the religious organisation worry them a lot.

*Urban mix over 35*

There are a variety of opinions on the religious organisations within this group. Some of the respondents think that the religious organisations have a positive role in the society through the promoting the educate values. Some others think that these organisations are negatively influencing the society: orthodoxy is trying to divide the Albanians and the Islam is introducing obscurantism. Some others think that the religion is turned to the server of politics.

*Greek minority*

The respondent totally agreed that there is a co-living of religions in Albania. Regarding the introduction of the different religious organizations, a part of the respondents were negative positioned emphasising the fact that some of them try to impose the religion. The other pat in opposite to the above mentioned opinion, emphasise the fact that religion always promotes positive values and it is up on the individual to decide on his/her belief.

## 5. Public services

### 5.1. Assessment of the activity of public services<sup>1</sup>

groups	health	education	social assistance	transport	heating	electricity	water	sewage	police
I	4.44	5.22	3.78	2.89	2.67	2.33	3.67	2.22	5.00
II	6.00	5.56	2.67	3.22	1.78	3.78	1.11	2.00	6.00
III	5.63	5.50	4.75	2.75	3.75	5.13	5.00	2.63	5.50
IV	3.5	4	2.75	3	1.875	2.375	4.375	3	5.125
V	3.25	3.88	2.50	3.63	2.38	3.63	3.63	2.25	3.38
average	4.56	4.83	3.29	3.10	2.49	3.45	3.56	2.42	5.00

*Heating:* is not considered a public service at all. There is a total lack of investments on this sector. The respondents think that Albania is a warm country, therefore it is easily to provide this service in a low cost, but the up to now policies have been completely wrong. They positively evaluated the governmental degree, that introduces the obligatory central heating for the new building, but it will have no effects if the introduction of alternative source, such as solarium, in the market still remains an issue of lobbies or monopolies that are controlled by few individuals.

The privatisation of this sector is considered an alternative but state must design the right prices' policies.

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<sup>1</sup> Each respondent has granted individual scores on a 1-to-10 scale to each of the public services listed. The figures in the table represent the average of these scores in each group.

*Sewage:* The respondents think that there are inadequate investments in this direction. The existing infrastructure does not support the new phenomena happening today such as migration and increase of products consumed by households. They think that a good management of this sector by local authorities and contribution of the household through the local taxes can help the situation. The respondents of the rural new settlement think that the public private partnership mediated by NGOs can be much effective in the problem solution.

## **6. International relations**

### **6.1. Influence of international institutions in the agenda of the Albanian State**

All the respondents think that the international institutions definitely influence the country agenda. The respondents of “*rural mix*” group think that Albania is suffering from the international policies. The group “*Urban mix over 35*” goes deeper into the issue. The international organisations can dictate their orders until the country has a poor economy. They also think based on the previous experiences that these organisations are able to destabilise the Albania at a glance if the country do not carry their orders.

### **6.2. EU, its influence and role in Albania**

The respondents do not differ the role and influence of EU from other international organizations. Information, they have, on the total economic aid given by EU, is much more compared to the same information for the other organization. They think that the membership of Albania in EU will improve the situation.

### **6.3. Significance of the Stability Pact**

#### *Rural new settlement*

The respondents have heard a lot about the stability pact. In their opinion Stability Pact was design in order to solve the Balkan problems.

#### *Rural mix*

The Stability Pact means political and economic stability in region. The respondents think that being the poorest country in Balkan, Albania should have a favourable treatment from this pact.

#### *Urban mix over 35*

The respondents have heard a lot about the Stability Pact. They think that the concrete investments are missing. The Stability Pact was named as “much ado for nothing”.

#### *Greek minority*

The majority of the respondents do not appreciate the ongoing of the Stability pact. Only one of them thinks that the economic aid given to Albania was in accordance with its capabilities.

6.4. NATO's role in Albania

All the respondents appreciated what NATO did for Kosovo. This event makes them

*Rural new settlement*  
think that NATO role can be very important in Albanian life, because of its political and military authority.

*Rural mix*  
feel secure for the Albanian integrity.

*Urban mix over 35*  
think that NATO must do the same think for the Albanians in Macedonian and Montenegro.

*Greek minority*  
think that NATO will be psychological and real military support while the conflicts in Balkan keeps going.

6.5. Significance of joining NATO

All the respondents welcome the idea to join NATO.

*Rural new settlement*  
The respondent thinks that NATO will request the accomplishment of its standards such as military potential. They agree on that. One of the respondents doesn't want NATO to request the Albania to abandon the Albanian beyond the national boundaries.

*Rural mix*  
The respondents think that NATO will require keeping on with its standards.

*Urban mix over 35*  
The respondents think that in any kind of relation or agreement you give and benefit something. Nato may require setting up military bases.

*Greek minority*  
The respondent think that NATO will require accomplishing of its standards and creating military bases in Albania. There is no opposition to the potential mentioned requirements.

6.6. The key to security in the region

*Urban mix under 35*

The respondents think that the regional cooperation may be very effective factor but it hardly can be reached. So they think that America and NATO by their armies and funds can secure the region.

*Rural new settlement*

The respondents think that the keys to security are the solution of the ethnic problems and the solution of Albania issue.

*Rural mix*

The respondents gave some alternatives as the keys to security: There are: Solving the ethnic problems in Balkan; using co-living principle; using the self governance principle. They also think that Europe must decide in the Albanian issue in order to have the security in region.

*Urban mix over 35*

As a general agree upon opinion was the fact that the powerful states totally determine the Balkan future. There are two opposite opinions on the key to the security in Balkan. The first sub group thinks that the redesigning the Balkan boundaries as they were in 1913 can be the best alternative. The second subgroup opposes this opinion promoting the idea of a common Balkan structure. Therefore no boundary redesign is necessary.

*Greek minority*

The respondents gave some keys to security in Balkan. They mentioned the economic cooperation, no boundaries and the solution of Kosovo issue.

## 7. Individualities

### 7.1. Perceived future of the South East Europe by Albanians

#### *Urban mix under 35*

The respondents were optimists for the future of the people in Southeast Europe.

#### *Rural new settlement*

There is a variety of opinions on this issue. Some of them think that there will be a lot of improvements. Some thinks that America is a very decisive actor in Balkan future. Some others think that a better future for Balkan is too far.

#### *Rural mix*

The respondents think that in case the rights of minority are constituted and respected there will be no stabilisation in Balkan and no future. The international community help will be a positive factor. Only one of the respondents thinks that the future will be better.

#### *Urban mix over 35*

The respondents think that there is no stability and future in Balkan in case the minorities in any country are respected and treated well.

#### *Greek minority*

The respondents think that the future of Balkan depends on the EU, and EU-USA future relations. The strengthening of the EU will determine the future economic aids to Balkan. Despite the importance of EU, the respondents think that the Balkan countries are totally responsible for solving some of their problems. The solution of ethnic problems is seen as the main factor of future Balkan integration.

### 7.2. Belonging to a community

All the respondents think that they belong to their community, which means the closest one up to the Albanian community. They leave and work together. They have same culture and history.

The “*rural new settlement*” group has a more dominating feeling of community compared to the others groups, because they have been involved with the community works in their zone.

### 7.3. Geographic mobility?

#### *Urban mix under 35*

The respondents answers can be group into two categories: the first category want to emigrate and the other category want to stay here because thy see more opportunities for a better life and personal satisfaction here in Albania.

*Rural new settlement*

This group belongs to a new created settlement. All the inhabitants of this area have moved from other areas of Albania to this one that is close to the capital city in order to find more opportunities in all aspects of life.

Regarding the emigration issue. They have thought leaving Albania in certain moments where the general situation has been worst and hot. More opportunities for employment is another reason that makes them leave Albania.

*Rural mix*

The respondents think that the insecurity and poverty makes them leave Albania. The hot political situation in Albania has been also a determining factor for this issue. .

*Urban mix over 35*

Insecurity in all aspects of life makes the respondents think for moving abroad often. They continue to think the same way but they are conditioned by age, lack of money and difficulties in getting a visa. Some of them think that the bad treatment of the Albanians abroad stops them to leave the country

*Greek minority*

All the respondents have lived and worked permanently abroad, especially in Greece. They think that the main factors that makes them leave Albania is low economic levels and lack of opportunities in the country and has nothing to do with the nationality.

7.4. Perception of Balkan countries by Albanians

	<b>Urban mix under 35</b>	<b>Rural new settlement</b>	<b>Rural mix</b>	<b>Greek minority</b>	<b>Urban mix over 35</b>
<b>Kosovo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Albanians</li> <li>- Hard workers</li> <li>- Other part of nation</li> <li>- resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- our heart</li> <li>- Albanian territory</li> <li>- Albanian language</li> <li>- national flag</li> <li>- 1913, the year it was taken by Albania</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Albanian</li> <li>- patriot</li> <li>- willing to work</li> <li>- tolerant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural resources</li> <li>- Hard-workers</li> <li>- Less educated than Albanians</li> <li>- Different character from the Albanians of Albania</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- patriot</li> <li>- More developed economy than we have</li> <li>- Hard-workers</li> <li>- Massacred</li> <li>- survive</li> </ul>
<b>Serbia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- chauvinism</li> <li>- Slobodan</li> <li>- Military potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balkan witch</li> <li>- The worst words could ever said</li> <li>- One of the oldest state in Balkan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chauvinism</li> <li>- It has started the democratisation process</li> <li>- Transmitting the Russian policy</li> <li>- They should accept the Republic of Kosovo</li> <li>- Racist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the biggest problem in Balkan</li> <li>- Miloshevic</li> <li>- A nation bad-leaded and governed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- chauvinism</li> <li>- they have a pathological hater for Albanians</li> <li>- nationalist</li> <li>- genocide</li> <li>- religious dominates</li> </ul>
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- massacred nation</li> <li>- war</li> <li>- religion</li> <li>- ethnic minorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Independence</li> <li>- Suffered a lot by Serbia</li> <li>- Massacred nation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rebuilding country</li> <li>- The same tragedy with kosovo</li> <li>- multiethnic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- war</li> <li>- the same problems as Kosovo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multi ethnic stat</li> <li>- ethnic problems</li> <li>- culture</li> <li>- love freedom</li> </ul>

<p><b>Croatia</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- developed</li> <li>- boosters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development</li> <li>- Tito</li> <li>- Former Yugoslavia</li> <li>- Development of</li> <li>- Close to western Europe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beautiful country</li> <li>- High living standards</li> <li>- Filo-german</li> <li>- Seems to be predisposed to work with Albania</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- developed country</li> <li>- rich country</li> </ul>
<p><b>Greece</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- emigrants</li> <li>- discriminating policies toward Albanians</li> <li>- tourism</li> <li>- culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neighbour</li> <li>- Trojan horse</li> <li>- 1949 attacked the Albania</li> <li>- It still has the war law with Albania</li> <li>- Camera</li> <li>- negative behaviour toward the Albanian emigrants</li> <li>- misinform the EU regarding the Albania</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Albanians living there</li> <li>- Camera</li> <li>- Law of war</li> <li>- Discriminating policy to Albanians</li> <li>- Not trust worthiness</li> <li>- Ancient culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neighbour country</li> <li>- Positive factor in Balkan</li> <li>- The highest living standards in Balkan</li> <li>- The actual problem between Greece and Albania are emigrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>pabesi</b></li> <li>- Unix</li> <li>- Trojan horse in Balkan</li> <li>- Anti-Albanians</li> <li>- bouzouki</li> <li>- agriculture and livestock</li> </ul>

<b>Macedonia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- artificial state</li> <li>- ethnic minorities</li> </ul>	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Albanians</li> <li>- mother Tereza</li> <li>- multiethnic state</li> <li>- artificial state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the majority of population are Albanians</li> <li>- a creation that links 5 territories</li> <li>- it tries to be a nation stealing history</li> <li>- some developments on the economic aspects</li> <li>- violating human rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- national tendencies</li> <li>- discriminates Albanians</li> <li>- multiethnic state</li> <li>- Great Alexandri</li> </ul>
<b>Romania</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prostitution</li> <li>- Economic regression</li> <li>- crises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friend country</li> <li>- Not known</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cahushesku</li> <li>- Non Slav nation</li> </ul>	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pastors</li> <li>- Thieves</li> <li>- Enormous fields</li> <li>- Roma minority</li> </ul>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fields</li> <li>- workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boza ( a kind of Bulgarian drink)</li> <li>- Friend country</li> <li>- Balkan country</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sophia</li> <li>- Fertile agriculture</li> <li>- Ex communist country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is far</li> <li>- Less known</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slav</li> <li>- People who works</li> <li>- Beautiful ladies</li> <li>- New comers in Balkan</li> </ul>
<b>Montenegro</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tourism</li> <li>- Seeking independence</li> <li>- Kind people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neighbour</li> <li>- Ulqin</li> <li>- It is OK if it gain its independence</li> <li>- Kingdom, once</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multiethnic</li> <li>- Requiring independence</li> <li>- Dukanovic</li> <li>- Cheap tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full of problems</li> <li>- Ex communist country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- never independent</li> <li>- their resources are in the Albanian part</li> <li>- moderated nation</li> <li>- calm people</li> </ul>





7.5. Inter-ethnic relationships in Albania

The respondents define the Albanians-minorities relations as very good ones. They all think that the minorities' constitutional rights are totally respected. Nevertheless the group Urban mix over 35 goes deeper to the issue. They contrast the Albanian peaceful character determining the very good treatment of minorities, from the conquering character of the neighbour countries. One of the respondents of the Greek minority thinks that the involvement of the Greek minorities is still low in the policy or in the highest level of state.

**8. Final comments**

8.1. Most significant fears and hopes with respect to our country

	<b>Fears</b>	<b>Hopes</b>
<b>Urban mix under 35</b>	- No improvements	- better life
<b>Rural new settlement</b>	- Albania will be in danger by political/state Mafia - Starting a conflict in Macedonian - Next coming parliamentary elections	- Better life
<b>Rural mix</b>	- Any conflict in region - Strengthen of the anti-Albanian lobe - Disappointed by the hopes	- the good relation will the international community will continue - better life
<b>Greek minority</b>	- politics - continuing of emigration - relations of politics with crime - insecurity - corruption	- better future
<b>Urban mix over 35</b>	- the coming elections - unemployment - economic insecurity for the future - apathetic situation	- the coming election will be stable - economic growth - a better life

## 9. Appendix

### 9.1. Brief presentation of group attendants

#### **Urban mix under 35**

<b>sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Education</b>
F	26	lawyer	university
F	26	lawyer	university
M	33	consultant	university
F	28	Computer programmer	university
M	35	Businessmen	university
F	23	psychologist	university
F	23	student	student
M	28	student	student
F	33	consultant	studies
M	25	Student	student

#### **Rural new settlement, Bathore, Kamza municipality, Tirana region**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Education</b>
M	40	School director	university
M	38	teacher	university
M	37	Military official	university
M	38	unemployed	Secondary education
M	45	teacher	university
M	27	Handcrafted man	secondary education
M	42	Cook chief	Secondary education
M	60	retired	Primary school
M	34	teacher	university

#### **Group 3 Rural mix- Commune of Petrele**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Education</b>
M	32	teacher	university
M	31	teacher	university
M	46	agronomist	secondary education
M	47	topographer	Secondary education
F	40	economist	university
F	30	economist	university
F	33	nurse	secondary education
M	34	agronomist	university

**Greek Minority**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>M</b>	33	Architect	university
<b>M</b>	24	Student	student
<b>M</b>	34	Clerk	university
<b>M</b>	61	Retired (engineer)	university
<b>M</b>	30	Economist	university
<b>M</b>	45	Ex-military official	university
<b>F</b>	22	Student	student
<b>M</b>	24	economist	university

**Urban mix over 35**

<b>sex</b>	<b>age</b>	<b>occupation</b>	<b>education</b>
F	45	Agronomist	university
F	52	Economist	university
F	37	Economist	university
M	40	Jurist	university
M	43	Economist	university
M	40	Biochemist	university
F	41	Military official	university
M	46	Engineer	university