THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE OF ALBANIA

PERCEPTIONS AND REALITIES 2013

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INTRODUCTION

The Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) has been measuring the pulse of public opinion in Albania regarding European integration since 2003. Through its yearly edition of the national public opinion poll “The European perspective of Albania: Perceptions and Realities” that identifies and interprets the perceptions, evaluations and thoughts of Albanian citizens (selected to make up a fairly representative sample), AIIS has been of assistance with its recommendations stemming from the study to a variety of relevant actors in both Tirana and Brussels. European institutions, their representatives in Albania, Albanian and regional media and actors in government, academia and civil society alike have benefitted from this knowledge and this insight provided every year fitted with comparisons and alerts on emerging trends.

“The European Perspective of Albania: Perceptions and Realities” hence is now a valuable reference material for all those who are either directly involved in or observe the European integration process of Albania and how the citizens follow it. The study contains a core group of the so-called ‘traditional questions’ measuring support for integration, reasons for being in favor or against, expectation and o the progress timing and pace, evaluations about factors and institutions as well as other important foreign policy observations.

Depending on the context, every year or every group of years AIIS introduces new questions or sections in the questionnaire that are designed to capture a specific attitude towards new
developments. Hence during and after visa liberalization process the study provided helpful information on citizens’ use of the movement freedom. With the rise of the candidate status issue and the vivid controversial developments attached to it, the study has also been following public reaction and aspiration toward this specific element.

2013: Focus on economy and business perceptions

This year the focus was perceptions from citizens on potential effects of integration on the overall economic situation of the country, on the benefits and cost that Albanian business might see during this process and after accession as well as one some more specific issues such as privileged sectors to benefit from integration/accession according to public perception and attitude towards the euro currency.

This section theme was chosen for two reasons. First economic concerns and aspirations are very concrete in citizens’ everyday life unlike most abstract or complex issues such as those related to politics. Second there has been during the last years, a severe economic and financial crisis that has hit the global economy in general but has been harder on neighboring and regional countries especially those in which the majority of Albanian migrants Albanian reside: Italy and Greece. The crisis in Europe has been also the topic of many debates and controversial policies about solidarity, legitimacy of bailouts, austerity and most importantly about the very prospect of the European identity.

The crisis and the media coverage associated with it have been shaping at least partially the public opinion in Albania. This can be seen for example in the responses towards the possibility of the adoption of euro or even in the reasons cited by EU-skeptics for their stance. However one major result that comes across from the answers is that more information is needed on the
economic dimension of European integration, especially or the responsibilities involved and the potential costs for business and economy. For example that fact that most citizens can not pick up sectors of economy which are posed to benefit more from accession is an indication of lack of knowledge on the subject.

**Context**

As this study is going to print (first days of December 2013) there is still not a decision from the European Council regarding the granting of candidate status to Albania. The enthusiasm that followed the successful completion of the electoral process in Albania in June of these years seems to have cooled off partially. This is due to the recent expression of some doubts by countries such as the Netherlands about the readiness of Albania to receive candidate status and the subsequent need to have more time.

There have been powerful and diverse voices making a strong case for Albania to get the status. Most importantly the position of the European Commission has been unequivocal with Commissioner Fule being strongly in favor of such a development and calling for the EU to “do its part” now that Albania seems to have done hers at least for the moment.¹ Neighboring EU member states to Albania, Italy and Greece have been for quite some time now advocates of Albania’s accession and have reiterated their positive vote for status.² However there is a real risk of refutation given the rise

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of skepticism towards enlargement and the Union itself in many other countries, partially due to the crisis and partially due to a serious image issue that Albania carries as a burden being often associated with high figures of organized crime and a reputation for corruption.\(^3\)

However no matter the outcome of the decision the general positive trend toward accession in Albania is too strong to be under serious threat. Though in case of a negative decision for the status some reaction is eventually expected the number in favor of accession are so high that they could sustain an average gust without losing the upward direction. On the economic front, Albania has been experiencing a stagnant economy and ever lowering remittances.\(^4\) With the new government proposed scheme of different taxation structure, introducing progressive taxation and other changes in the way businesses are taxed, the impact of these changes will be seen mostly next year.

This year there has been an intensification of efforts to provide more information to several society groups especially via investment in the national media. As this report argues these efforts need to be sustained and diversified for more concrete results among Albanian public.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Support and Importance: the double edged sword

The majority of Albanians deem European integration as a very important process for them personally and an overwhelming 85 percent would vote in favor of accession if asked and only 6 percent would vote against. Once again the main reasons given by citizens to argue their decision are of economic nature. Most of those who would vote in favor of entrance into the EU cite rising living standards and more job opportunities as their main motivation, inspiring some reflection on the realistic nature of these expectations. Even among EU skeptics who would vote against the reasons are of the same nature. The long and difficult economic crisis that has had a strong impact over the EU as well as the expected inflation are among the main reasons for those who are against accession.

There is an interesting decrease in the number of EU skeptics who would refuse accession based on their belief that the Albanian identity would be threatened. While last year more than a quarter of EU skeptics were concerned with national identity this year the number is less than 12 percent of those who would be against.

High level of support remains almost identical to last year’s when 86.5 percent of citizens would vote in favor for integration.

Concerning the importance that integration has for them, this year 61 percent of respondents said that integration was very important
and 29 percent followed by saying that it is important however not a priority. Results reflect a slight increase in 2013 compared to one year before in the number of those who deem integration as very important.

**Progress: fluctuating evaluations**

The majority of citizens, 52 percent, think that Albania is still not ready for accession with 34 percent that disagree. However when asked if the EU should grant accession to Albania even before the country is ready citizens are split into two similar groups of roughly 40 percent that think yes and no with the former being at a very slight advantage.

Half of citizens believe that the decision upon granting official candidate status to Albania within 2013 will be positive with the remaining half split between those who don’t think so and those who simply don’t know or can’t given an answer. The expectation of a positive decision about the status is much stronger this year compared to 2012 given also the new internal political dynamics of Albania and mainly the peaceful rotation of power that occurred.

The main expected benefits of candidate status are more funds from the EU, less corruption and better justice as well as more technical assistance for the Albanian public administration.

While 38 percent of Albanians imagine the integration year to be 2020, there seems to be an optimistic group of 30 percent that persists in expecting a much quicker accession date, in just a few years during 2015. Another 18 percent think that accession will take longer and expect after 2020.
Factors and institutions: the executive trumps all

44 percent of citizens believe the progress on European integration is largely at the hands of the executive naming the government as the most important institution in this regard. A following group of 22 percent thinks that this role in fact is expected of the parliament. Groups of 15 and 13 percent respectively name political parties and the Albanian society as the most important institution while the small group that thinks the most important is the international community is on the decrease from year to year.

The results overall are very similar to last year as the momentum of shift from a high importance assigned to parties towards the government has changed with the end of the political deadlock.

International Partners

The main strategic partners for Albania according to the country’s own citizens continue to be the European Union and the United States of America with the former taking a slight precedence. Hence overwhelming majority of citizens believes that the Albanian government should pay maximum attention to he relations with the EU and USA. High esteem characterizes also the evaluation of relations with organisms such as the UN and NATO. Among neighboring countries Italy reserves a special place with most Albanian believing the government should make an investment in these relations followed by Turkey which also ranks high in the given importance by citizens. Less importance however some growing attention is given to the possibility of developing relations with Russia and the Arab states.

Regional partners

Average esteem except for Kosovo The importance that Albanians believe their government should give countries in the region is
moderate. With the notable exception of relations with Kosovo which are deemed by citizens as deserving maximum attention, other countries take average ratings. Last in the list continues to be Serbia however in comparison to previous years the number of citizens who seek more attention to developing relations with Serbia is on the increase.

**Economic section: yes to benefits, no to ‘euro’**

Business benefits: Albanian citizens believe that both the process of European integration as well as its eventual completion are generally beneficial to the economy and business prospects of Albania. Hence 73 percent of citizens believe that Albanian business is benefitting from integration with the rest of them being split between those who don’t agree and those who don’t know. Asked about whether business will be also a winner form accession to EU 68 percent say that it will be opposed to 15 percent who think it will not win.

European market: opportunity or threat- The majority of respondents, 68 percent, believes that the larger European market is a good opportunity for Albanian business. A significant group of 21 percent, one in five citizens asked, does not know if this market represents an opportunity or not, most citizens give a “politically correct answer” or simply easy answer when asked which sector is to benefit more form the available European market by saying all sectors of Albanian economy are to benefit. However those who pick up a specific sector do so by choosing agriculture/food industry (19 percent) and tourism (15 percent) more than the rest.

Attitude towards euro: Albanians seem much split and slightly opposed to the euro currency thinking it should not be adopted by the government for Albania at least at this point. Asked whether the euro currency represents an advantage for business in Albania
40 percent say no and 37 percent say yes while a significant group of 24 percent do not know the answer. On the matter of adoption of euro as a official currency for Albania the tendency against strengthens a little with 42 percent being against, 34 percent being in favor and a quarter of the sample being undecided and answering “don’t know” to the question.

Knowledge and sources of information: the importance of the media cannot be overestimated

Half of the respondents claim that they feel averagely informed on the European integration process of Albania while the rest is split between a larger group of 28 percent that claim a lack of information and 18 percent that feel better informed.

The main source of information is just like in previous years, television for a third of the respondents followed by smaller groups of 17 and 16 percent that mention the use of Internet and the newspapers. The use of the Internet has experienced a curious decline of 8 points compared to last year when around a quarter of respondents picked the Internet as their primary source of information.

Conversations with friends and business partners make up 11 and 7 percent of answers while smaller groups of people rely mostly on information from more specialized sources such as publications/activities of civil society or information directly from the EU Delegation or its EU Info Centre in Albania.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is addressed to a variety of stakeholders whose work is intricately connected and it make sense to address them together once the suggestions concern all. The group of interested and involved actors on the European integration of Albania and more importantly in the communications efforts that accompany the process includes but is not limited to the following:

Albanian government, EU Commission, EU Delegation in Albania, EU info centres, business community clusters (Chambers of Commerce, etc), civil society, media and academia/education sector.

Tackle lack of information especially on the economic front, address unrealistic expectations

While it is natural that ordinary citizens lack sophisticated information of the economic or business nature still the answers pint to some confusion and lack of information regarding the real economic dimensions of integration, accession, the European market characteristics and what it takes to transform them to opportunities. Citizens display sometimes overly optimistic and even outlandish expectations and do not reflect realistically on the pressures of the larger market on Albanian business. On the other side citizens paradoxically overplay some of the fears about the adaption of the euro while in fact significant portions of the Albanian economy already operate almost exclusively in euro (sectors such as transportation, construction and real estate and even some of the service providers).

Even the coverage about the economic and financial crisis in
the European countries seems to have been reflected only in the citizens’ evaluations about euro and not in their adjusting of expectations especially when one considers the large number of people who expect more employment opportunities from integration and accession.

One other adjustment that has not been made is that of expectations about likely timing of accession. The large group of those who expect this to happen within few years reflect a lack of understanding of the complexity of the process. Also lack of appreciation of conditionality is reflected in those who would prefer the EU to give the green light to Albania even before the country is ready.

**Diversify information / invest in better reporting**

The rise of online and social media has still not eclipsed the role of traditional media such as television and newspapers in Albania, but it is however playing a strong role especially among young groups. Different door including the EU delegation in Albania, have increased their support and efforts for more and better communication strategies to increase the public knowledge about integration and maintain the positive support momentum. AIIS based on this study but also on the accumulated knowledge from comparative studies in previous years fully supports and encourages such efforts. One further suggestion is that a diversified portfolio of information and communication strategies and actions should be perpetually supported via the coordination of actors. The role of the public broadcaster and other widely available media should be accentuated when information about EU and integration is concerned. Targeted efforts that address specific groups in the public also have the potential to succeed.

Finally capacity building efforts for journalists who deal in reporting about economic and business/ investment issues are needed in order to make a dent at unrealistic expectations of citizens on this dimension.
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Support and reasons

An overwhelming 90% of Albanian citizens consider the European integration of their country as either important or very important to them personally. These are divided into a majority that believes that integration is very important and a smaller group which believes it is important but not the very first priority. A very small group of 6% has chosen to say that integration is not important for them.
In line with the previous answer, Albanians would vote in a strong majority in favor of accession into the EU in case of a decisive referendum. 85 percent (almost unchanged from last year’s 86 percent) would vote in favor while only 6 percent would vote against accession while almost one in ten respondents could not give an answer to this question.

When asked about the reasons that compel their decision to vote in favor of accession citizens repeat the pattern observed in previous years of focusing of expected economic benefits. Hence the majority of those who are in favor 34 percent believe that the standards of living ill be higher while 20 percent think that in the accession scenario there will be more employment opportunities. A similar group of 18 percent thinks that the implementation of law will be more successful and hence citizens might be able to benefit from more rule of law. Smaller groups of respectively 8 and 6 percent believe that there will be less poverty, less corruption and stronger democracy.
Economy is an underlining theme in all the reasons mentioned against accession by the small group of 6 percent who would vote for Albania not to be in the EU. Hence a full third of EU skeptics mention that the economic and financial crisis in which the EU finds itself now will be harmful for Albania, followed by another third who say that they would expect considerable inflation should accession happen. A smaller group of 16 percent think that EU accession would harm the position of Albanian business and only 6 percent of them think this would do harm to the Albanian identity. There has been a considerable decrease from last year in the last answer concerning the likely threat towards Albanian national identity. In 2012 more than 26 percent of the EU skeptics mentioned this reason for being against accession. The reason for this change is partially to be found in the lessening of nationalistic rhetoric after the wrapping up of the electoral process and the virtual disappearing from the public scene of political groups.
Reasons against

- The EU is in a economic/financial crisis which will harm Albania: 33%
- Prices will go up: 33%
- Albanian business standing would weaken: 16%
- Other: 8%
- The Albanian identity will be threatened: 7%
- Foreigners will get the best jobs: 3%

**Progress and readiness**

Reflecting a very similar judgment as last year slightly more than half of Albanian citizens (52 %) believe their country is not ready to join the EU with another third of them (34 %) saying that in
fact Albania is ready to join. 14 percent of respondents have said that they don’t know.

Despite their mostly realistic perception of the country’s readiness Albanians seem more split over the issue of the EU accepting Albania even before the country is ready to join. Here citizens can be described as a bit more lenient as 44 percent said that the EU should go ahead and accept Albania even before it’s fully ready for membership and 42 percent thinking that this shouldn’t happen. Again a similar 14 percent does not give an alternative to this question.

Following the praise that the international community has given Albania upon its peaceful and successful rotation of power following a similar successful electoral process, Albanians reflect optimism when they are asked over the hot issue of the candidate status. Hence a half of the sample (49 %) believes that this year Albania will be successful in gaining the official candidate status while a quarter (25%) of respondents say that this will not happen. A large group of citizens, 26 %, do not know whether Albania will get the status or not.
Should Albania gain the candidate status Albanians expect a variety of benefits from this development, such as it indicates a slight tendency towards overly optimistic and sometimes inelastic expectations. 44 percent of respondents think this will lead to more financial funds from the EU, followed by 26 percent who believe this will have an impact in improving the situation of corruption and justice. 13 percent think that the primary beneficiary will be the administration which will benefit from more training available and 9 percent think that actually a larger European market shall be open to businesses after the candidate status.

Expectations and guesses about the timing of accession has always been an interesting topic to investigate as survey after survey it is noticeable that an optimistic group persists in expecting quite a quick accession year. Hence while 38 percent of Albanians place their expectations on the year 2020, a third of the sample believe that accession is going to happen much earlier just after two years in 2015. 18 percent of respondents say that accession is going to take longer than the year 2020. An insignificantly small 3 percent are very pessimistic and say that Albania will never become an EU member state.
Main benefits if Albania receives the candidate status this year?

- Benefitting from more financial funds and grants: 44%
- Less corruption and more justice in Albania: 26%
- Assistance from EU institutions to train the Albanian administration: 13%
- Larger available market for Albanian businesses: 9%
- Don’t know: 5%
- Other: 3%

Albania will become a EU member within

- 2020: 38%
- 2015: 30%
- After 2020: 18%
- Don’t know: 12%
- Albania will never be an EU member state: 3%
International and regional partnerships

One of this survey’s objectives is to understand the evaluation that citizens have for relations of Albania with different international organisms or institutions/alliances as well as influential countries or cluster of countries. This serves to map their assessment of importance of foreign policy goals that the Albanian government should have. In a persistent way through the years which also continues this year, Albanian citizens place the European Union as the most strategic and important partner that Albania has with 68 percent of citizens believing that the Albanian government should pay maximum attention to relations with the EU. This is followed closely the importance give to relations with the United States of America (USA) for which 60 percent say that maximum attention should be paid.

Relatively high esteem is shown for relations with both the UN and NATO with more than 80 percent of citizens in both cases that chose the degree of attention from 7 up hence from high to maximum attention.

When it comes to neighboring countries Italy retains its privileged place of being valued as an important country with around a third of citizens saying maximum attention should be paid with relations and fairly 46 percent describing the degree of needed attention as high. Less importance seems to be vested paradoxically with Greece when only 18 percent think maximum attention should be paid while 38 percent place high importance to the relations. Turkey fares much better in the perception of importance of relations according to respondents, a quarter of which have said maximum attention should be devoted to relations with turkey followed with almost half of them thinking quite some attention should be paid.
Russia and the Arab countries continue to be in the last places of perceived importance. However while less than 45 percent of citizens believe considerable attention should be given to Russia almost half of the respondents believe high attention should be paid to relations with the Arab countries signaling some increase in the perception of the importance of these relations. However both Russia and the Arab countries register the largest groups of citizens that believe almost no attention should be paid to relations of Albania with them (a fifth of the sample each, 20 and 21 percent)

**On a scale of 1 to 10, how much attention should the government pay to relations with the following? (Maximum attention 10, a lot of attention 9-8-7, some attention 6-5-4, very little or no attention 3-2-1)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>7-9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab countries</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When it comes to the region of the Western Balkans, Albanians seem reserved to give any country but Kosovo maximum importance saying that he governed should do all what it can to strengthen relations. 61 percent of Albanians believe Kosovo should be in the priority list and the government should make maximum efforts to relations with it followed by another 29 percent that place high importance. Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro trail in the list with roughly quarter of the citizens placing very high importance and seeking maximum attention to relations with them followed by approximately half of the sample placing the
needed attention at the high scale of 7-9. Although again the latter is valid for Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), hence almost half assessing importance varying from 7-9; in general less people (15 %) believe that relations with BiH need maximum attention. Last in the list comes the attention that citizens think the government should pay to relations with Serbia with 61 percent of citizens thinking no attention or small attention should be paid, while less than a third assess high impotence. However, it is interesting to report that one in ten respondents believes maximum attention should be devoted to relations with Serbia by the Albanian government.

On a scale from 1-10 how much attention should be paid by the Albanian government to strengthening relations with these neighboring or region countries? (Maximum attention 10, a lot of attention 9-8-7, some attention 6-5-4, very little or no attention 3-2-1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>7-9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BiH</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors and institutions

Albanians are very executive-centric when determining which institutions/actors are the most decisive for the process of the European integration of their country. Hence 44 percent chose the government as the single most important institution of determining the course of progress for integration while 22 percent follow with determining that the most important institution in this regard is the Parliament. Political parties are chosen as the most important institution regarding European integration by 15 percent of the respondents followed by a similar 13 percent that think Albanian society itself is the most important actor. There has been a welcomed decrease in the number of those that name the international community to be the most important institution to be the most important institution through the years and in 2013 only 5 percent of those asked said that in fact it is the international community which is decisive.

### Relative importance of institutions that determine Albania's progress towards EU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albanian society</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International community</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Business and economy expectations

Three quarters of the asked sample believe that Albanian business is in general is benefitting from the European integration process of Albania. 13 percent think that this is not true while 14 percent do not give an answer.
Once Albania is already a member of the EU the positive expectation persists. 68 percent of the respondents believe that Albanian business will still win once the country is an EU member state while 15 percent think that in fact the opposite will occur and business in general will lose. 17 percent of the sample declines or does not know the answer.

Most citizens believe that the European common market is indeed an opportunity for Albanian business while only one in ten respondents thinks that it is not. One in five respondents does not know whether the market is an opportunity or not.
When asked to identify specific sector/s that are better posed to benefit from the European market the majority of citizens, 42 percent, chose an easy option by saying all of them. Those who make an effort to pick a privileged sector focus more on agriculture, with 19 percent of answers, and on tourism with 15 percent of the answers. 8 percent don’t know which sector is to benefit more while very small groups no more than 5 percent pick industry, transportation and textiles/fason.
On the interesting topic of assessing whether the competition from the EU will be a threat to Albanian business companies, respondents seem split. A majority of 42 percent think that there will be such a threat while 34 percent do not agree. A large group of almost a quarter of the sample (23 percent) do not know the answer.

‘Euro’ currency

EU competition a threat to Albanian companies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EURO currency - an advantage for Albanian business?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey results point to the fact that the potential benefits and adoption of the euro currency are controversial among Albanian citizens. Hence respondents are split between 40 percent that think that the euro does not represent an advantage to Albanian business and 37 percent that assume there would be an advantage in the usage of euro. A quarter of the sample does not know. Asked whether they think the government should adopt the euro as official currency, Albanians lean against with 42 percent not supporting this decision and 34 percent who would be in favor. Again a quarter of the sample does not know or does not give an answer.

**Knowledge and sources of information**

When asked about whether they feel informed about the developments related to the European integration process of Albania 50% of citizens report that they have an average
information level while 28 percent believe that there is lack of information. 18% say that they are well informed. The latter group might be divided contain those whose daily occupation allows them to be more in contact with news and information sources.

When identifying the main sources of information about both the EU and the European integration process of Albania it is clear that the majority of citizens depend on traditional media to get their news with 30 percent saying that TV is their main source of information and 16 percent mentioning newspapers. Although 17 percent say that they get most of information and news from the Internet one should not that some of the most frequently visited websites by Albanians are again media websites that belong mainly to national televisions. Friends and business contacts account for less than a fifth of citizens as sources of information with respectively being mentioned by 11 and 7 percents. 6 percent of the respondents belonging naturally to young age groups say
that they get information in school books or activities while 5 percent mention the radio. Only 4 percent of citizens use civil society publications as primary or sole means of information and gain 4 percent have gotten information for EU Delegation or the EU info centers.

**Sources of knowledge and information on EU and integration**

- **TV**: 30%
- **Internet**: 17%
- **Newspapers**: 16%
- **Friends**: 11%
- **Business contacts**: 7%
- **School (textbooks, class discussions, etc)**: 6%
- **Radio**: 5%
- **Various academic or civil society publications**: 4%
- **EU Delegation or EU Info center activities (newsletter, Facebook)**: 4%
- **Don’t know**: 0.2%
- **Other**: 0.1%
METHODOLOGY

Sample description

1200 citizens randomly selected were interviewed in 10 Albanian cities. The characteristics of the sample by gender, age, education and employment are given below:

The sample was roughly divided equally between male respondents and female respondents.

The majority of the sample is made up by people having elementary, primary (8-9 years) or middle level education respectively 6 percent, 16 percent and 37 percent followed by 30 percent who have university level and 7 percent which have post-university degrees. 3 percent have no formal education completed.
42 percent of the sample is made of employed people while 26 percent is in the unemployed category. 6 percent are self-employed and 15 percent are students while a smaller group of 12 percent are pensioners.

When different age groups are characterized, the young average age of Albanians is reflected also in this sample where 22 percent of the respondents belong to the 18-24 years old age group, 28 percent of the sample belongs to the 25-35 age group of while 20 percent belong to the 36-45 years old age group. The group of people in the age group of 46-55 years old is 15 percent, while the elder group comprises 16 percent of the sample.
Survey facts: Polling method: face to face, Data analysis software: SPSS

Distribution of respondents is done according to population in every administrative region of Albania.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qark- Administrative region</th>
<th>Registered population</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kukës</td>
<td>85292</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dibër</td>
<td>137047</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shkodër</td>
<td>215347</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lezhë</td>
<td>134027</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Durrës</td>
<td>262785</td>
<td>113</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tiranë</td>
<td>749365</td>
<td>322</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elbasan</td>
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<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berat</td>
<td>141944</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fier</td>
<td>310331</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlorë</td>
<td>175640</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accurate data on the population per each administrative region in Albania is taken from the most recent census carried on by INSTAT in 2011.  

The margin of error within a 95 percent confidence interval for the final results is 2.85 percent rounded to 3 percent, which is a respected margin within the statistical field.
