



# INDEX

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# Introduction

The Kosovar Civil Society Index 2018 (KCSI) is a regular study of the Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) that assesses the state of the civil society sector in Kosovo on a periodical basis. This study continues an established tradition of KCSF in providing comprehensive information on the civil society sector in Kosovo, which started with the Anthology of the Civil Society in 2001, the Mapping Analyses of Civil Society in Kosovo in 2005, the CIVICUS Civil Society Index for Kosovo in 2011, the Kosovar Civil Society Index in 2014, the Kosovar Civil Society Index 2016, and continues with this edition, the Kosovar Civil Society Index 2018. This study is conducted every second year and measures the main dimensions of the civil society sector in Kosovo.

The methodology of the study is based on previous rounds of the Civil Society Index from 2011, 2014, and 2016 with specific adaptations of the research methods, aiming to best address the specific characteristics of civil society in Kosovo. The methodology includes desk research and legislative review, primary surveys, focus group discussions and data analysis.

The surveys were conducted during the end of 2017 and beginning of 2018, collecting information for the calendar year 2017. KCSI covers seven main fields that characterize the work of the civil society sector: structure of the sector, legal framework, internal governance and capacities, citizen engagement, funding, perceived impact and external environment for the operation of civil society.

By including a detailed elaboration of a wide range of indicators, this report is intended for use by experts, researchers and professionals, as well as decision-makers in public institutions, donor agencies and CSOs dealing with the civil society sector. In order to reach a broader audience outside of the above target groups, the KCSI 2018 results are also presented in additional platforms including a visualization of more than 50 main indicators.

## Methodology

The research methodology of the Kosovar Civil Society Index 2018 (KCSI) used a combination of methods for different components of the report, including desk and legislative review, primary data collection through surveys, as well as statistical analysis of relevant data collected by other institutions.

The first step, primary data collection, included an organizational survey (CSO Survey) with 101 CSOs across Kosovo, which was done through face-to-face interviews during the months of November 2017 - February 2018. In order to cross-check important aspects of civil society development such as internal governance of organizations, capacities for applying for funds, program and project implementation, sources of funding, and the like, a survey with the most important donors for civil society in Kosovo was realized. Information on the external perceptions regarding the role and impact of civil society was collected through a survey with 101 external stakeholders from different areas relevant for the civil society sector, including: the executive, legislative and judiciary institutions, public institutions (public healthcare providers, primary schools, public cultural institutions), public enterprises, independent agencies, municipalities, the private sector, media, academia, and international development partners. Data on citizens' perceptions of civil society, their voluntary practice, and activism in the civil sector were obtained from the UNDP Public Pulse XIV survey, which interviewed a representative sample of 1,306 adults across Kosovo.

The legislative review was based on the Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development. The Matrix monitors on an annual basis a wide set of standards and indicators, both in legislation and practice, of all elements constituting the environment for civil society operation. KCSF conducts such monitoring since 2013.

The CSO Survey sample was selected from the NGO Registry of the NGO Department within the Ministry of Public Administration, which included a total of 9,015 domestic and 530 foreign and international organizations. In order to collect comprehensive and representative information on the sector in terms of size, activity area, years in the sector and geographical distribution of the CSOs, a stratified random sampling methodology was used. The survey sample was selected following two steps:

1) Setting targets for the strata/target categories: 10 large and well-established CSOs, 5 international CSOs, 5 CSOs from the Serb community and 5 CSOs of other ethnic communities (non-Albanian and non-Serb). In order to ensure geographical representation of the organizations, the survey takers were also divided across regions as follows: minimum 15 CSOs in Prishtina and minimum 10 CSOs in other main regions of Kosovo. Additionally, in each of the regional sub-samples of at least one CSO from smaller municipalities or rural areas was sampled to gain insight on differences they face in their daily operations. The CSOs from the Serbian community were sampled across Serbian majority municipalities: North Mitrovica, Zvecan, Leposavic, Gračanica and Sterpce;

2) Random selection of CSOs across each of the strata/categories, based on the list of registered NGOs. Due to the high rate of inactive CSOs from the NGO Public Register, the same sampling methodology was repeated multiple times, until the final number of planned survey was completed.



A similar sampling was used for the External Perception Survey, with the only difference being in the initial list of the sample. With no formal database of external stakeholders, the research team initially composed a list of categories and assigned an approximate target number of respondents for each of the strata. A number of individual external stakeholders were proposed for each strata, both from the research team and the rest of KCSF staff, the composition of the sample remaining identical to that of the previous edition. These individuals were selected based on three specific criteria: 1) those who are more cooperative with civil society; 2) those who are more active and vocal in their areas of work; 3) those who are less exposed to civil society. The respondents of this survey came from different sectors, such as the Kosovo Assembly (6), Kosovo Government (11), municipalities (15), judiciary (3), private sector (6), media (10), academia (8), political parties (6), Kosovo Police (2), independent agencies (4), other public institutions (12), Inter-governmental and international organizations (3), foreign donor organizations (5), international missions in Kosovo (3), and religious communities (5).

The CSO and External Perceptions Survey were completed through face-to-face interviews, in the premises of the respondents, while the Donor Survey was conducted through an on-line survey platform. The majority of the questions in each of the surveys were closed questions, although in specific cases open-ended questions were included for specific questions whose responses are difficult to categorize in advance. The CSO Survey questionnaire consisted of 129 questions covering the topics such as: general demographics; organizational structure; management, financial management, accountability, transparency and fiscal benefits; human resources (including volunteers) and internal capacities; networking and intra-sectoral communication; freedom of association and legal framework for civil society operation; other fundamental freedoms; support infrastructure; funding trends and sources of funding; public funds and state contracts; non-financial support from the state; service provision; economic activity; philanthropy; civil society involvement in programming of foreign donors funds; donors' influence in the operation of CSOs; advocacy, cooperation with public institutions, access to information and public consultation; perception of civil society impact; and external environment for civil society operation.

The External Perception Survey consisted of 10 questions and covered the topics of: perception of civil society impact; civil society activity; trust in civil society; civil society funding; civil society participation and impact in decision-making and external environment for civil society operation. The Donor Survey consisted of 41 questions and covered the topics of: programming of donor funds for civil society and CSO involvement; support mechanisms for CSOs and types of support; CSO capacities; effective development policies for CSOs; and external environment for civil society operation. The Donor Survey contained 41 questions which covered areas such as: programming of donor funds for civil society and the inclusion of CSOs in programming of funds; support mechanism for CSOs and types of support; CSO capacities; the effectiveness of developmental policies for civil society; and the external environment for the operation of civil society

## Executive Summary

The structure of civil society in Kosovo remains similar to that from before two years, with the exception of continuous increase in the number of registered NGOs. Until December 2017, the NGO Register has counted 9,545 NGOs, over 95% that are registered as associations and the rest as foundations. About one third of the registered NGOs are from the municipality of Prishtina, followed by Prizren and Mitrovica with a considerably smaller percentage. CSOs have a balanced gender composition, unlike other sectors in Kosovo where women do not reach 1/3 of the number of employees. Data from the study suggests that the number of active CSOs in Kosovo is around 1,000. However, official data on civil society organizations continues to be non-systematic, including the number of active organizations, their field of engagement or other characteristics.

The basic legal framework for the functioning of civil society has not changed. Even though registration from state authorities is not a prerequisite for the functioning of a civil society organization, the overwhelming majority of them are registered. In general, no restrictions on freedom of association, freedom of assembly, or freedom of expression of members of civil society have been observed. While CSOs show a high level of financial and tax demand implementation, Kosovo continues to lack an adequate financial reporting system for CSOs, while CSOs report in the same way as businesses.

The legal requirements for CSO internal governance are minimal, but nevertheless, they are applied at minimum. Despite being a legal obligation, more than half of the associations do not declare the Assembly of Members as the highest decision-making body. Similar to the previous edition of the Index, it is again confirmed that possession of documents for internal regulation of CSOs is related to the size and capabilities of the organization. Consequently, the overwhelming majority of large and consolidated CSOs have documents for internal regulation/governing.

Despite the fact that a large number of CSOs operate without funds, yet, this sector employs a considerable number of staff within their structure. Data for this year show an increase in the total amount of contributions paid by CSO employees, which make up about 3.25% of the contributors to the Kosovo Pension Savings Trust (KPST). On the other hand, the state neither has and neither shown interest in policies that would address the specific needs of this sector.

Citizen engagement in CSOs remains low in general. However, compared to previous years, there is an apparent increase in the number of citizens engaged in CSOs, volunteering for CSOs, or who have benefited from the services provided by CSOs. On the other hand, there is a slight decline of citizen confidence in civil society and assessment of the work that this sector does. However, civil society remains one of the most trusted sectors in Kosovo. Voluntary engagement of citizens in civil society organizations has increased significantly compared to two years ago, confirming that civil society continues to have more volunteers than employees.



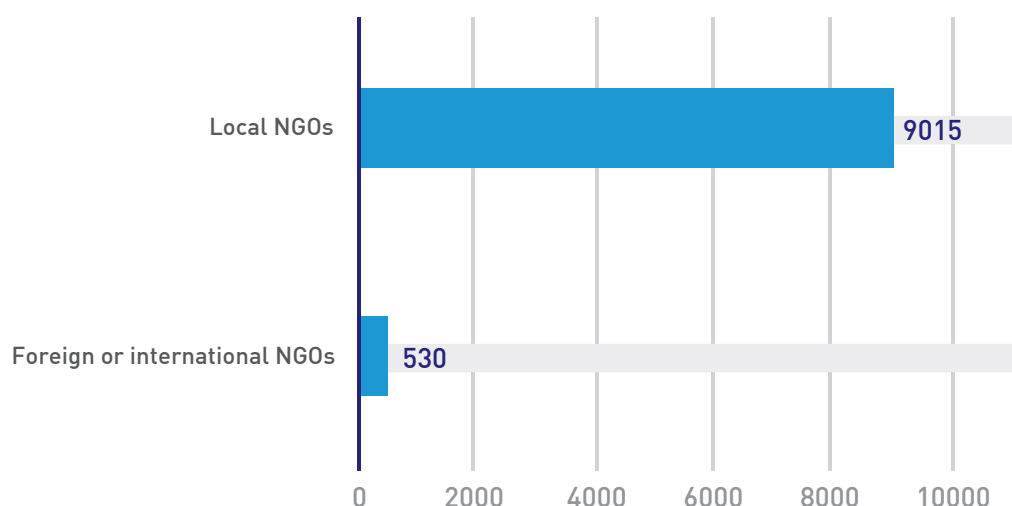
Nearly half of CSOs in Kosovo operate without any funding, and a large number of CSOs operate with less than 10,000 EUR per year. There is a declining trend of CSO funding in all respects, with the exception of public funds. Foreign donors continue to be the main source of funding for CSOs in Kosovo, though with a noticeable decline compared to data from 2015. On the other hand, CSO funding from public funds has increased, as well as the number of organizations that have received funds from public institutions. Although there is an increase in institutional support for CSOs, support for short-term projects and small amounts is dominating, while very few CSOs benefit from non-financial support.

Democratization is assessed as areas where civil society has the greatest impact, followed by the rule of law, the fight against corruption, education and gender equality. As in the previous edition of the Index, actors outside civil society have much more positive opinion on the impact of civil society in the aforementioned areas. Regardless of a noticeable improvement in access to information in public institutions, in general, CSOs consider that they are not sufficiently informed by public institutions about the areas they are engaged in. On the other hand, even when CSOs request access to public documents, those are received with a delay. Compared with 2015, there is a significant decline in the number of organizations that have been involved in any policy-making process or who have received an invitation for public consultation from public institutions.

## Civil Society Structure in Kosovo

The civil society structure in Kosovo remains similar to that from before two years, with the exception being the continuous increase in the number of registered CSOs. Similarly, lack of systematic and reliable data on the number of CSOs that implement activities in Kosovo remains a challenge. Combined with the nature of work and organization of CSOs in general, this prevents accurate calculation of the number of active organizations operating in the country.

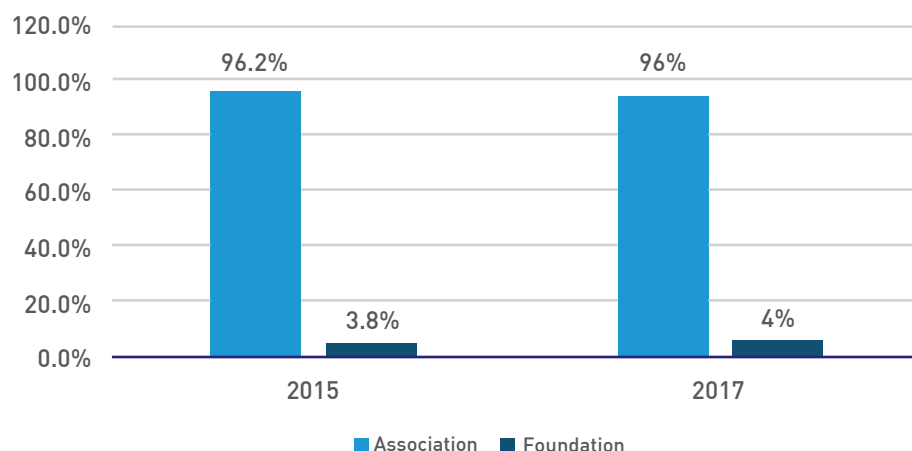
Firstly, civil society consists not only of registered CSOs but also of other types of organizations that can exercise their activity without having to register with the relevant state authorities. Secondly, even if we focus only on registered organizations, it is impossible to count the exact number of organizations operating in Kosovo, for two reasons. First, the Department of CSOs (DCSO) does not have mechanisms for regular communication with CSOs. Second, an CSO is considered active even if it does not exercise day-to-day (regular) activities.



**[Figure 1. Number of registered CSOs - Source: Public Register of NGOs]**

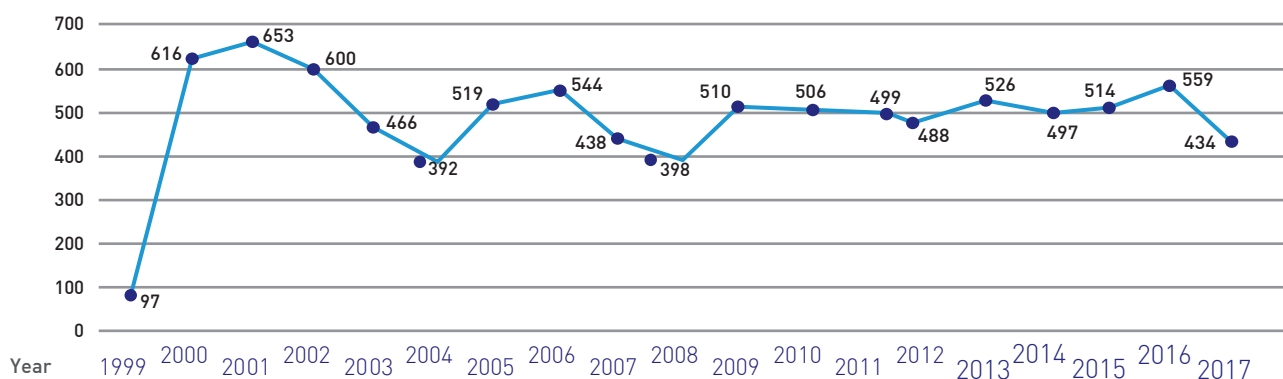
A total of 9,545 NGOs are registered in Kosovo, out of which 9,015 are local NGOs, and 530 foreign or international NGOs. Out of these, 1,493 are sports clubs and sports federations, and 35 religious organizations. Compared to the previous editions of the Index, this time there is a much greater number of sports clubs or sports associations, as well as religious organizations. However, this does not mean that additional organizations from these respective categories have been recorded in the last two years, but DNGO has been working constantly on re-categorizing existing organizations. More concretely, society for society was one of most problematic categories in Public register of NGOs, counting over 3,000 organizations. Following the re-categorization, this category does not appear in the Public Register. Regarding the registration form, 96% of NGOs are registered as associations, while 4% as foundations, a ratio that remains similar throughout many years.





[Figure 2. NGO Registration Forms – Source: Public Register of NGOs]

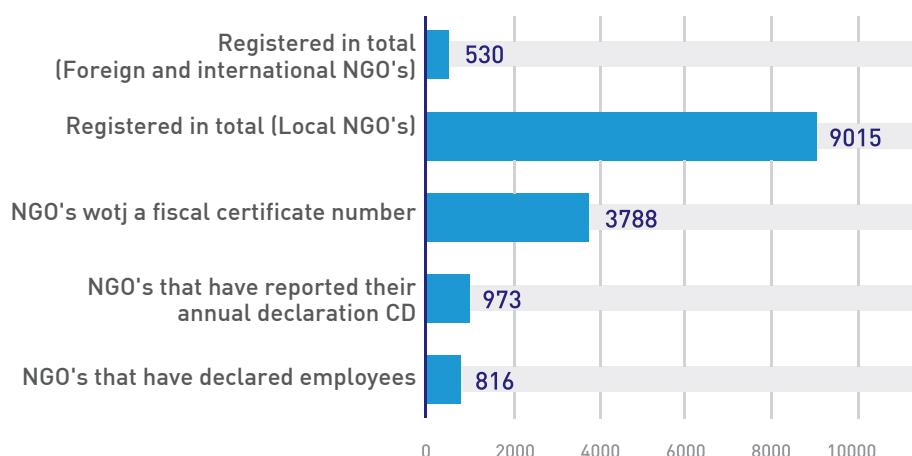
It is worth noting that this calculation does not include foreign and international NGOs, as the Public Register of NGO's does not have information on the form of registration for this category of CSOs. The trend of registration of new NGOs has remained quite constant from year to year. Despite the significant number of registered NGOs in the period 1999-2009, between 2010 and 2016 the average of new registered NGOs is about 500 per year.



[Figure 3. Number of CSOs registered in the period 1999-2017 – Source: Public Register of NGOs]

Despite the fact that the Public Register of NGOs counts more than 9,500 registered NGOs, this number does not indicate the real state of the sector or the number of active organizations. Consequently, in order to get a clearer picture on the number of active organizations or those exercising any kind of activity over a year, data from other institutions such as the Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK) and Kosovo Pension Savings Trust (KPST) should be taken in consideration.

The requirement to issue Fiscal Number Certificates to NGOs was introduced in 2009, which is a requirement for the administration of any kind of tax in Kosovo. From that period until 31 December, 2017, a total of 3,788 NGOs were provided with a fiscal number. Out of those, during 2017, 973 CSOs reported to TAK by declaring the annual form and payment of corporate tax (CT), 954 CSOs paid or presented turnover in their annual declarations, and 816 CSOs declared that they had employed staff during 2017.



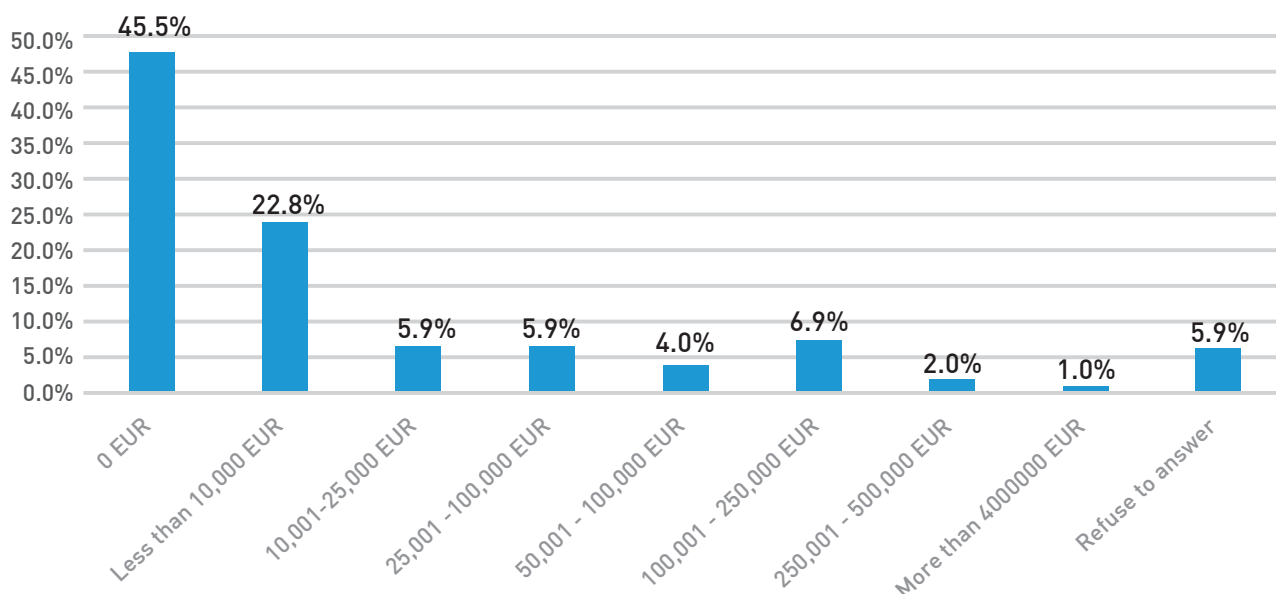
**(Figure 4, CSOs in numbers – Source: Public Register of NGOs and TAK)**

If the organization's financial activity is taken into account, such as annual income, staff employment, tax payments, Figure 4, shows that the number of active organizations in Kosovo is slightly less than 1,000 CSOs. Indirectly, the approximate number of 1000 active organizations is confirmed by different studies conducted with CSOs in Kosovo. Concretely, during the implementation of the surveys for this study, a total of 1,000 CSOs were contacted in order to fill in the sample number of the 101 conducted surveys. From those, around 90% (899 organizations) have declared that their organization does not exist or ceased to exist. While termination and deregistration of an CSO is not related to the activity or non-activity of the organization, a large number of them, even though they have decided to cease their existence, failed to report the same to DCSO. Since 1999, the number of CSOs that have been de-registered voluntarily at the DCSO is only 122.

Regarding the geographic location of CSOs, the vast majority of them are concentrated in Kosovo's main urban areas (69.55%). Prishtinë/Priština is the city with the largest number of registered CSOs (36.8%), followed by Prizren (7.7%), Mitrovica (7.2%), Peja/Peć (5.79%), Gjilan/Gnjilane (4.6%), and Gjakova/Đakovica (4.55%).

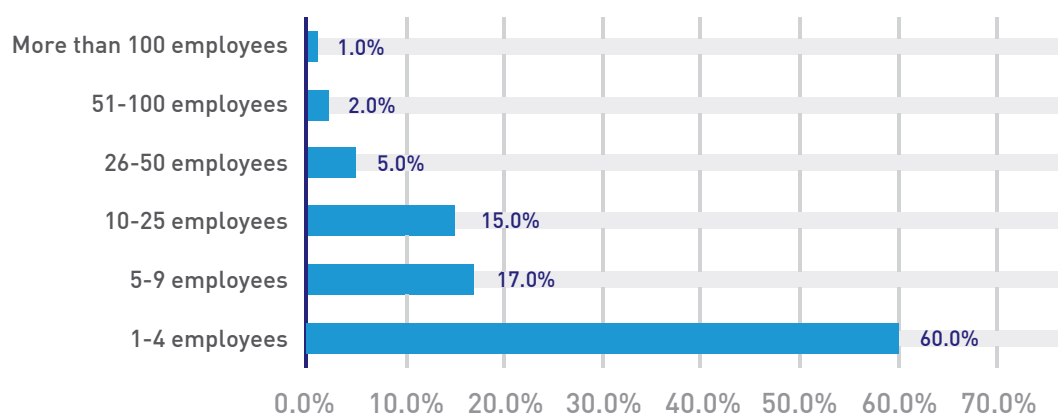
Survey with CSOs shows that around 55% of CSOs operate with funds, while on the other hand a large number (45.5%) of them do not have any financial revenues. Among the CSOs that claim to have annual revenues, the largest group falls into the category of less than 10,000 EUR income per year (22.8%), the second largest group is the one with revenues of 100,001 - 500,000 EUR per year (6.9%). Meanwhile, only 5.9% of CSOs refused to provide answer on this question.





[Figure 5. Annual turnover of CSOs for 2017 - Source: CSO Survey]

On the other hand, there is no improvement in the data collection systems on employees within the non-governmental sector, with continued lack of data on full or part time employees, or other specific data to understand this labor market. Data from TAK show that the total number of CSOs that declared employees during 2017 is 816, and that these 816 organizations employed a total of 8,453 employees<sup>1</sup>. On the other side, the Kosovo Pension Savings Trust (KPST) data show that 3,533 CSO contributors paid regular pension contributions over the 12 months of 2017. More than half of them stated of having 1 to 4 employees (60%) and 1% of them have declared more than 100 employees.



[Figure 6, CSOs by number of engaged staff during 2017– Source: TAK]

<sup>1</sup> Employed staff with full time/or part time employments, including here short-time assignments

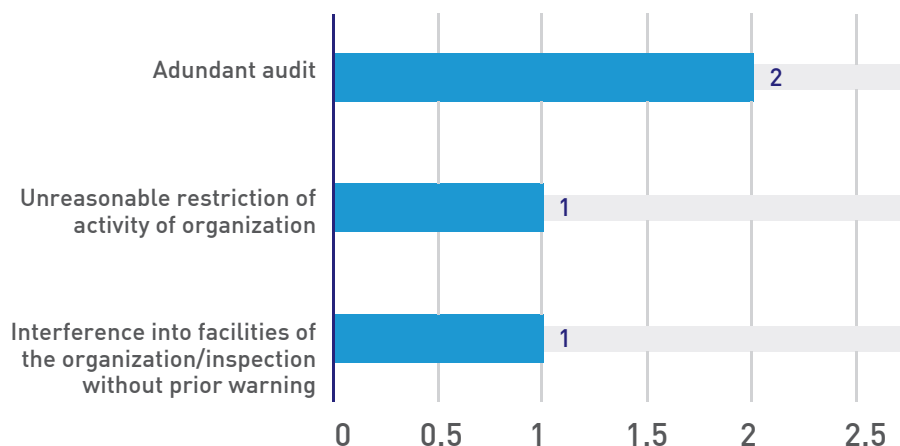
# Legal Framework

## Freedom of Association

In general, during the last two years there has been no significant change in the legal framework or the exercise of the freedom of association in Kosovo. The freedom of association is a constitutional right, guaranteed by Article 44 from the Constitution of Kosovo and defined in Law 04/L-57 on the Freedom of Association of NGOs. This legal framework guarantees the right of every person to exercise their freedom of association without having to register an organization.

However, most organizations register in order to acquire the legal entity status and to ensure access to formal benefits that come with being a legal entity – such as the possibility of opening a bank account, applying and receiving funds from donors, etc. In Kosovo, CSOs can register using two different forms, as an association or foundation. The Association is a membership-based organization and can be established by at least three people, while the foundation is a capital-based organization and can be established by a person or by a will.

Within the sample survey of CSOs, organizations that were registered during the period covering January 2016 - December 2017 were asked about their experiences during the registration process. From a total of 11 organizations responding to this question, half of them stated that the registration procedure was easy and not costly. However, there have been cases when CSOs reported problems during the registration procedure, mainly related to the way in which decisions were taken by DNGO during the registration process. While the vast majority of CSOs did not report on any limitations related on the exercise of freedom of association during 2017, there are few isolated cases where various restrictions have been reported. One organization was faced with cases in which moderators and/or members of online groups within organization had been bullied, while in another case an organization reported issues related to their bank account, and another organization was denied access to information as a result of absence of sign language.



[Figure 7. Forms of pressure from the state or intervention in the internal affairs of organization during 2017 – Source: CSO Survey]

In four cases surveyed CSOs were faced with pressure from state authorities or illegal interference in the organization's internal affairs. Out of these four cases, two CSOs claimed to have had interference in the work of their organization, a case of unreasonable limitation of the organization's activity, and excessive audits in another case.

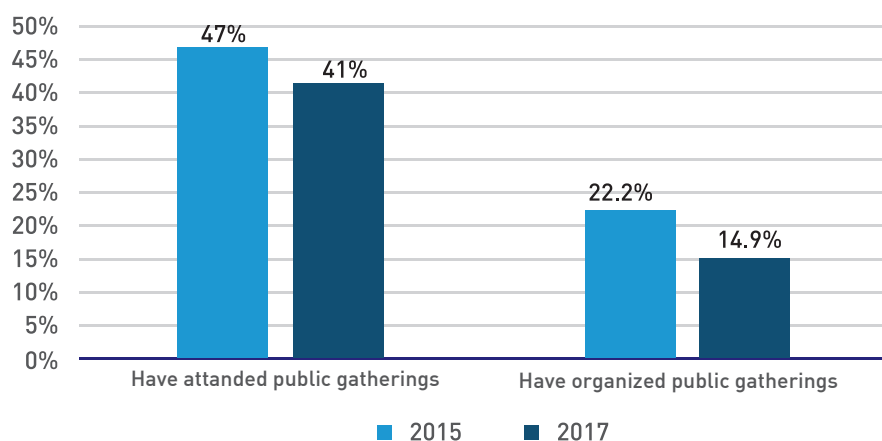
## Related Freedoms

In general, civil society in Kosovo continues to have no explicit restrictions on freedom of assembly, whereas in the last two years there has been a decline in the already low level of public gatherings organized by civil society organizations.

Freedom of assembly is a constitutional right based on Article 43 of the Constitution, while Law 03/L-118 on public gatherings guarantees the right of all citizens of Kosovo to organize public gatherings and to participate in them. Preliminary announcement for public gatherings is mandatory, except in places where no additional security measures are required. In cases where the authorities fail to respond within the foreseen time (48 hours before the public gathering), the same event can be organized without restriction.

Survey data shows that around 15% of CSOs have organized some kind of public gathering (protest, march, outdoor performance) during 2017. Most of them have not encountered any obstacles during the organization of public gatherings (75%), while there were two reported cases of unjustified restrictions imposed by authorities without proper explanation being provided, and being subjected to excessive administrative procedures. Only one case was reported where the organization encountered obstacles by state authorities because of the spontaneous organization of the public gathering.

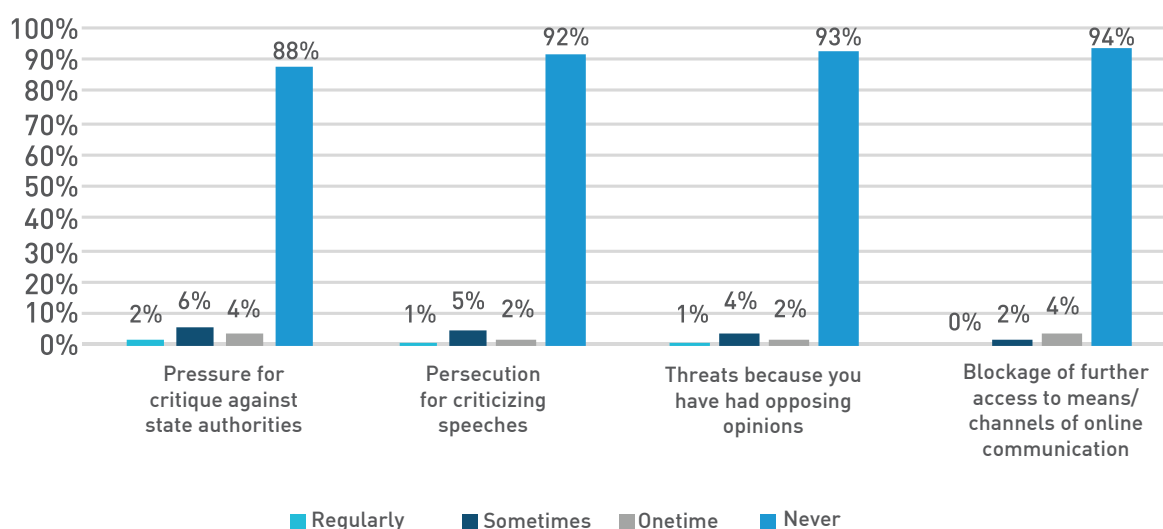
Meanwhile, when asked if they participated in any public gatherings, either through their organization or individually, 41% of respondents stated that they attended public gatherings and generally did not encounter any restrictions. In three cases, CSOs stated that during their participation in public gatherings they encountered restrictions on media participation in the rally, and only one case was reported as an excessive limitation of the rally's proposed duration. Also, 3% of CSOs stated that they had participated in counter-rallies (rallies of opposing groups at the same place and time) during 2017, a practice which has not been expressed in the past. In general, there is a decrease in the organization of public gatherings by CSOs compared to the data of 2015, as well as a decline in public participation at such events.



[Figure 8. Participation in and organization of rallies by CSOs during 2017 – Source: CSO Survey ]

This decline is also noted in Kosovo Police data for the total number of rallies and protests organized in Kosovo during 2017. While, 344 protests across Kosovo were organized in 2015, only 186 such events took place in 2017.

A similar situation has also been reported in the freedom of expression for organizations and members of civil society over the last two years. Pursuant to Article 40 of the Constitution, freedom of expression is guaranteed to all, and may be limited only if it is necessary to prevent racial, ethnic or religious violence or hate. Data from the CSO survey shows that civil society in Kosovo generally enjoys freedom of expression. The vast majority of CSOs stated that they did not experience unlawful restrictions such as persecution for critical speeches (92%), threats because members of the organization had opposing views (93%), or blocked access to tools or channels of online communication (94%). Pressure as a result of criticisms towards state authorities seems to be more problematic compared to other constraints. About 12% of CSOs claimed to have been pressured by state authorities for criticism toward them. Meanwhile, the data shows that the problems related to communication channel limitations are scarce. Only one case was reported for illegal monitoring of communications by state authorities.



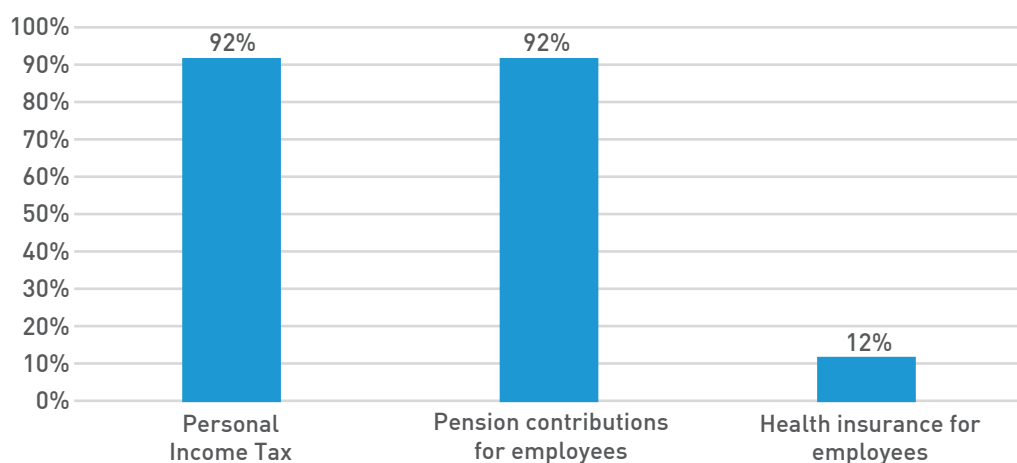
[Figure 9. Experiences of CSOs having their freedom of expression curtailed – Source: CSO Survey]

## Financial Reporting

Similar to the situation from two years ago, CSOs in Kosovo still do not have adequate financial reporting systems, among other things, making it impossible to obtain accurate information on the multiple financial and tax categories within the sector.

The number of CSOs equipped with a fiscal number has continued to grow from 2,230 CSOs since the end of 2015 up to 3,788 by the end of 2017. Also, the number of CSOs reporting the annual declaration to TAK has increased. Assuming that an organization with annual revenues of at least 10,000 EUR has regular activity during most of a fiscal year and at least one employee, it was analyzed whether organizations within this threshold are applying legal





**[Figure 10 - CSOs with +10,000 EURO incomes and that have declared at least 1 employee– Source: CSO Survey]**

Survey data show that the overwhelming majority of CSOs with annual revenues of at least 10,000 EUR per year, and at least one employee, pay on a regular basis personal income tax and their staff's pension contribution (92%). On the other hand, only 12% of CSOs in this category claimed to pay health insurance for their staff.

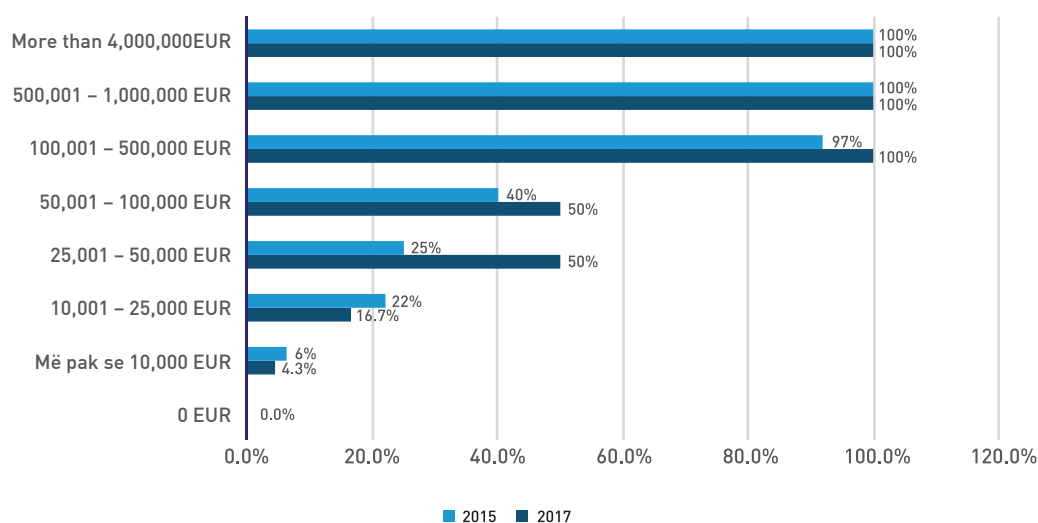
Despite the fact that the tax declaration (TD) is mandatory for all entities holding a fiscal number and should be reported to TAK by 31 March, it is noticed that nearly 3/4 of CSOs fail to comply with this legal obligation. The passivity of CSOs during a fiscal year as a result of lack of funds on the one hand, and the lack of proper information on tax liabilities on the other hand, are just some of the reasons why all CSOs do not comply with this annual obligation.

Also, survey data indicate that CSOs receiving funds from foreign donors are more inclined to declare their tax obligations in general, unlike CSOs receiving funds from central or local public institutions.

## Financial Audits

Financial audits of CSOs in Kosovo continue to be undertaken in most CSOs that manage significant amounts of financial resources, with even more positive results compared to the past two years. CSOs with a public benefit status with annual turnover above 100,000 EUR are required to have an external financial audit. Consequently, in the event that an CSO has no Public Benefit Status (PBS), no matter their annual revenues, they are not required to undertake a financial audit process. However, because it is a good practice of transparency and accountability, as well as a request from the majority of donors, the CSO survey shows that all organizations with revenues of above 100,000 EUR a year make regular financial audits.

Moreover, the CSO survey shows that around 18% of CSOs have undertaken at least one external financial audit during 2017. Although this percentage appears to be low at a first glance, detailed CSO survey data show that among organizations that stated that they did not have any external financial audit, 46% of them are CSOs with zero annual revenues, while all CSOs with annual revenues from 100,000 EUR to 4 million EUR have carried out at least one (1) external financial audit. Moreover, CSOs from this category have reported to have undertaken up to four (4) external financial audits during 2017.



[Figure 11. CSO with at least one audit according to CSO annual turnover during 2017 – Source: CSO Survey]

From Figure 11 it is noted that the external financial audits of CSOs with annual revenues over 100,000 EUR have remained almost the same in comparison with data from the previous edition of the Index. As the number of organizations with annual revenues of 25,000 EURO to 50,000 EUR that have carried out at least one external financial audit has increased, the number of CSOs with annual revenues below 25,000 EUR that have undertaken such an action has decreased.

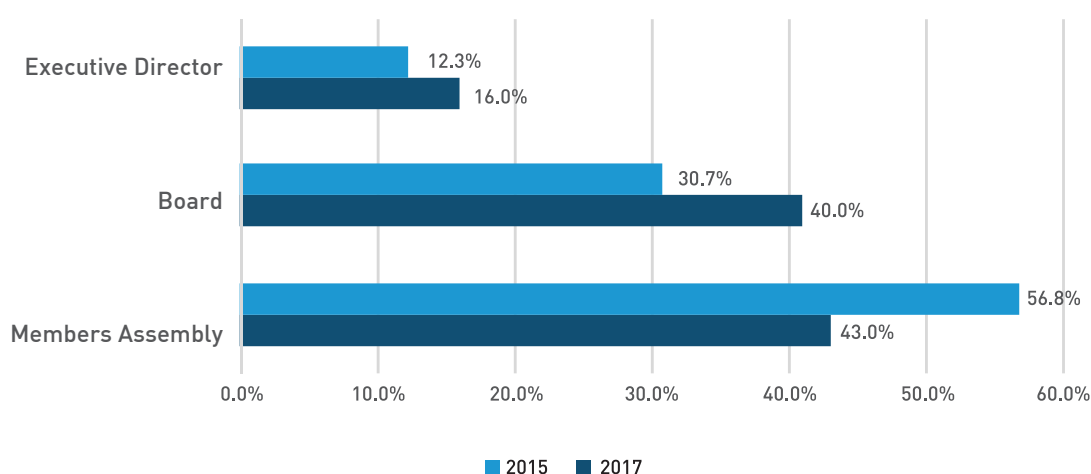
## Governing and Internal Capacities

### Management Bodies

Although with minimal legal requirements, a significant part of CSOs in Kosovo continues to not to properly implement them, with the situation further deteriorating over the last two years.

Based on current legislation in Kosovo, CSOs can be registered in two forms, as associations or foundations. As a membership organization, associations are required to have the Assembly of Members as the highest governing body, which consists of all members of the association. The highest governing body of a foundation is the Board of Directors, appointed by the founder(s) of the foundation, and then elected by the members of the same Board. The highest governing body has a number of reserved competencies, such as approval of annual reports and annual plans, changing of statutes and founding acts, election of the highest officials of the CSO as well as merging, splitting or dissolution of the CSO. Other general legal requirements on internal governance are related to the conflict of interest and prohibition of engaging in political campaigning and elections.

The vast majority of CSOs are registered as associations (96%), and only a small number of them have chosen to register as foundations (4%)<sup>2</sup>. Despite the fact that the registration of an CSO is relatively easy, and there are clear legal requirements, respecting basic legal requirements beyond the moment of registration remains challenging. Less than half of CSOs registered as Associations stated that the Assembly of Members is the highest decision-making organ of the organization (43%), while 41% of associations stated that the Board of the organization has such a function, and 16% of them named the director. Similar results, however a bit more positive, were also found in the Index for 2015, where 58% of associations had declared the Assembly of Members as the highest governing body.



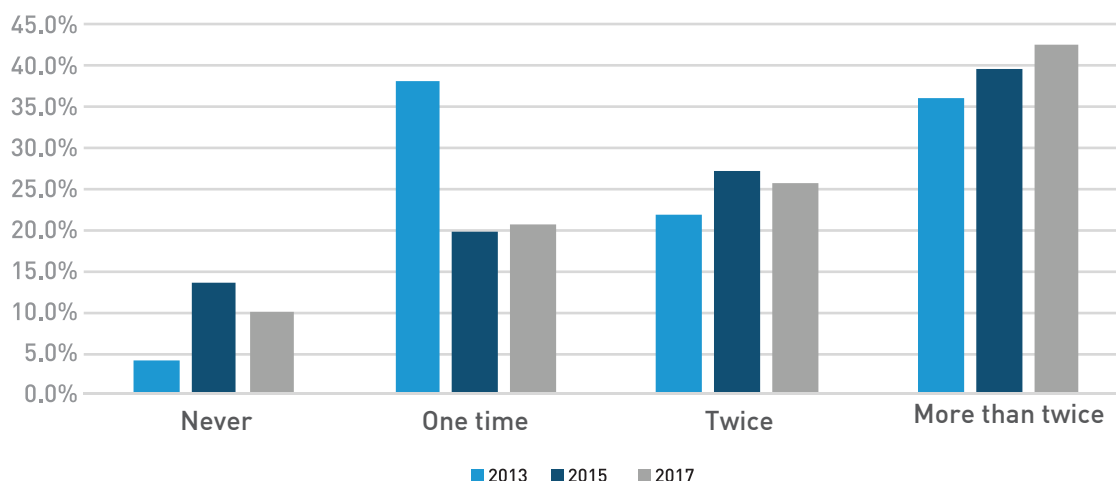
[Figure 12. The highest governing bodies declared by the associations - Source: CSO Survey]

## Decision-making

Similar to previous years, meetings of senior management bodies continue to be held by most organizations at least once a year, although only a few of them make important decisions for the organization.

The Law on Freedom of Association of CSOs stipulates that organizations registered on the basis of this law should call the meeting of highest governing body at least once a year, where the same body should approve the annual narrative and financial reports of the organization for the previous year, and approve annual work plans for the following year. Survey data show that CSOs largely respond positively to this legal requirement. The overwhelming majority of CSOs had at least one (1) meeting of the highest governing body during 2017 (89%). A large number of organizations had two meetings of the highest governing body (25.7%), while 42.6% of them had more than two meetings of the highest governing body. A small increase is noticed, of 3% of the number of organizations that had more than two meetings of the governing body compared to the data from the 2015 Index, while also a decrease in number of organizations that did not have any meetings of the governing body, dropping by 13.5% as it was in the previous edition of the Index, down to 9.9%.

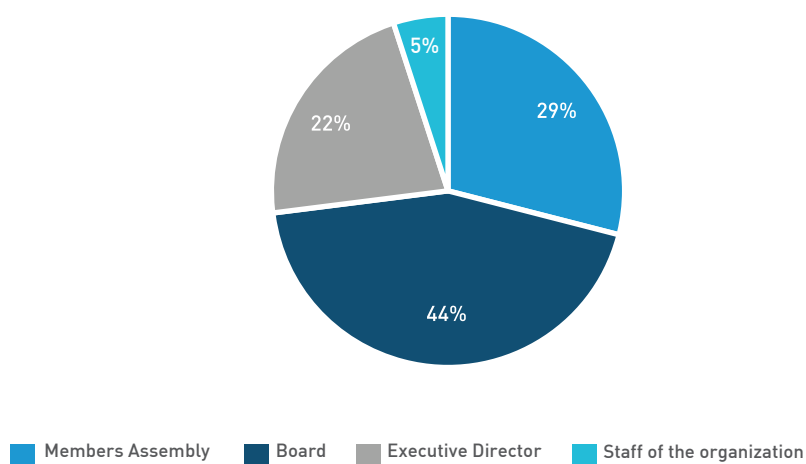
<sup>2</sup> This data does not include foreign and international NGOs, which in the Public Register of NGOs are not categorized as associations or foundations.



**[Figure 13. Frequency of meetings of highest governing bodies - Source: CSO Survey]**

Unlike the data from the previous Index, where about 13% of CSOs registered as foundations stated that some member of the Board is also employed in the organization, data from this edition show that there are no occurrences of foundations having members of the Board who are at the same time employees of the organization

Similar to the previous edition but with a deterioration in the situation of associations, it seems that the Assembly of Members has a weaker leadership role in the case of associations compared with the Board in the case of Foundations. Specifically, less than one-third of associations stated that the Assembly of Members took major decisions in the organization, in relation to over half of the foundations that declared the Board as the main decision maker.



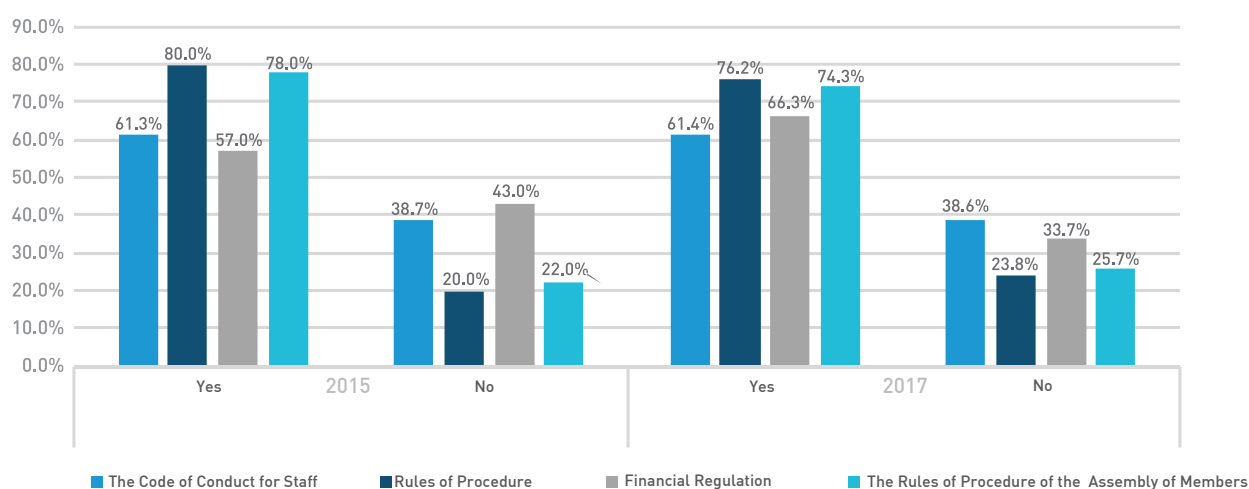
**[Figure 14. Governing body which takes the main decisions in the organization – Source: CSO Survey]**



## Internal documents and transparency

Similar to the previous edition of the Index the most consolidated organizations claim that they are well regulated in terms of internal documents and procedures, although similarly to the past, not all of them have presented these documents when asked to do so.

Well-established organizations with larger operating budgets and many employees are expected to have more formal documents and procedures for their daily operations, while smaller ones do not necessarily need to impose burdensome and bureaucratic procedures on their operations and for the realization of their daily activities. Survey data also confirm this finding. About 38% of the organizations taking part in survey stated that they did not have financial regulation, rules of procedure (24%), or code of conduct (39%). However, a detailed analysis of data shows that among the organizations with an annual income between 10,000 EUR and 4 million EUR, most of them have rules of procedure, financial regulation, and employment contracts for staff (90%).



**[Figure 15. Possession of internal documents - Source: CSO Survey]**

Social networks and the development of communication technology are an extremely important asset for communication to all sectors in general, especially for CSOs, as they enable a greater reach and easy access to public communication while being of extremely low cost. Despite this, a large number of CSOs continue to have no websites or account at social networks. Among the surveyed organizations, only 27% stated that they had web pages, while a slightly larger number said they own a social network account (39.6%).

## Staff

Despite the relatively large number of CSOs operating without funds, the CSO sector has a considerable number of employees in its ranks. However, the state does not have policies or legislation to address the special needs of this sector.

In the absence of the publication of systematic data on the civil society sector by public institutions, as in the previous editions of the Index, KCSF has cooperated with KPST and TAK to secure basic data for the sector. Despite the varying numbers depending on the source and the lack of details regarding the type of employment, it is still clear that civil society continues to be a very important job generator and employs a significant percentage of employees in Kosovo.

Data from KPST indicate that during 2017 CSOs in Kosovo paid pension contributions for 17,940 contributors.<sup>3</sup> If we consider the number of 352,849 active contributors in 2017<sup>4</sup>, civil society accounts for about 3.25% of the total number of KPST contributors. Out of this number, 3,503 contributors were employed in civil society organizations for the entire 12 months of 2017, while 7,049 had also commitments other than those in CSOs<sup>5</sup> - that could otherwise be interpreted both as part-time employees or having short engagement/assignment for CSOs. Overall, there is a slight increase in the number of CSO employees for the 12 months of 2017, as well as the total value of contributions paid by CSOs compared to the 2015 Index data. There is a marked increase in the number of employees having more than one place of employment, while employed at an CSO, from 4,142 in year 2015, up to 7,049 during 2017 (around 67%). However, this unnatural increase is justified by the fact that during 2017 two pairs of elections were held in Kosovo, central and local elections. Consequently, thousands of election monitors from civil society were engaged during this period<sup>6</sup>, which has directly influenced the increase of this number.

Data from TAK show that 8,453 persons are employed<sup>7</sup> totaling 816 CSOs during 2017<sup>8</sup>. Compared to 2015, this data shows that there are few less CSOs employing staff (from 927 in 2015 to 816 in 2017), but more employed staff members - from 6,412 in 2015 to 8,453 in 2017. However, this large increase in the number of employees may also be related to the large number of election monitors engaged by CSOs during 2017.

The geographical distribution of individual contributors from the civil society sector in general is consistent with the geographic coverage of registered CSOs, where Prishtinë/Priština is on top of the list with 38% of contributors, followed by Prizren region by about 13%, Mitrovica with 12%, Peja/Peć with 9.4% followed by other regional centers of Kosovo.

<sup>3</sup> This includes all contributors from the NGO sector, including the individuals who could be engaged by two or more NGOs during the year.

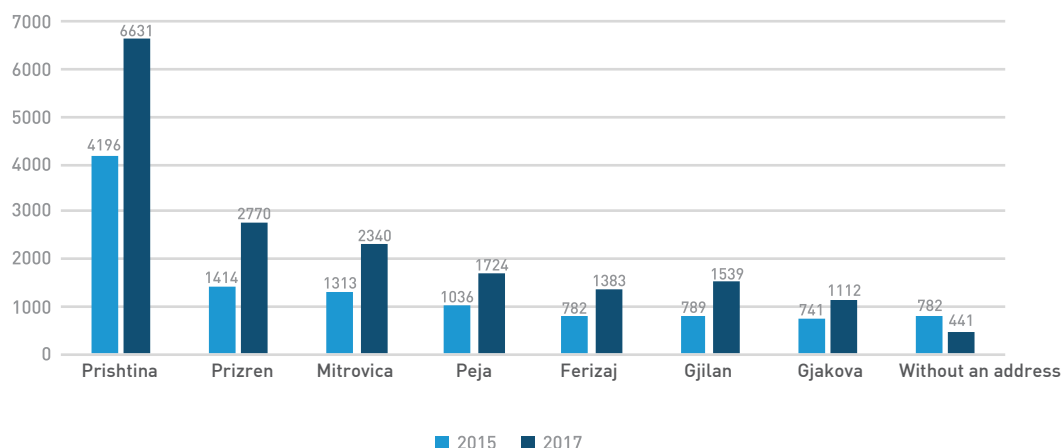
<sup>4</sup> Source Reference - KPST Annual Report; - [http://www.trusti.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RV2017\\_shq.pdf](http://www.trusti.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RV2017_shq.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Data from KPST (date of receipt of the latest data). Unprocessed data, Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo;

<sup>6</sup> Additional research indicates that only two election monitoring networks have engaged over 7,000 observers during the 2017 central election, 2017 local elections, and the 2017 local runoff for Mayors.

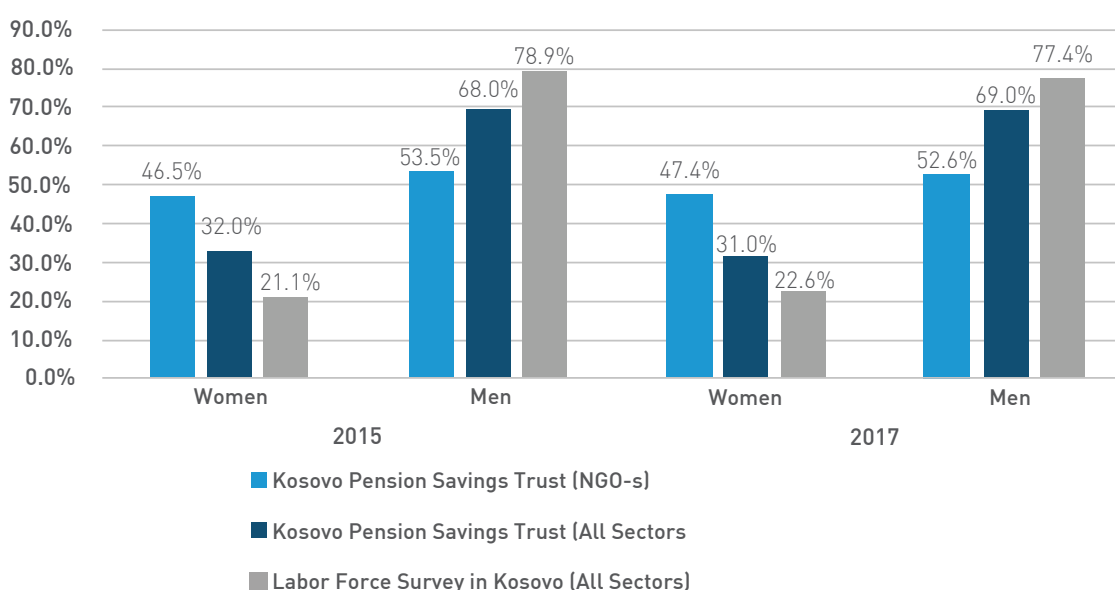
<sup>7</sup> Full-time and part-time and short engagement/assignment;

<sup>8</sup> Official data from the Tax Administration of Kosovo - May 2017; unprocessed data; Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo;



[Figure 16. Geographical distribution of CSO employees - Source: KPST]

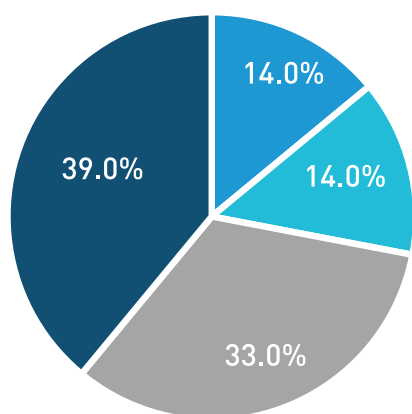
Unlike other employment sectors in Kosovo, the public and private sector, the non-governmental sector has a more balanced gender composition, with similar values as two years ago. Specifically, both the Labor Force Survey and KPST data show that women in general do not reach 1/3 of the number of employees in Kosovo, the ratio is almost equal in CSO sector, with a slight dominance of men (53.5% to 46.5%). Similar data also emerge in the CSO Survey, although similar to the previous edition, the difference deepens in favor of men when it comes to managerial positions within the non-governmental sector.



[Figure 17. Gender distribution of employees in civil society and other sectors in 2015 - Source: KPST]

## Staff Recruitment

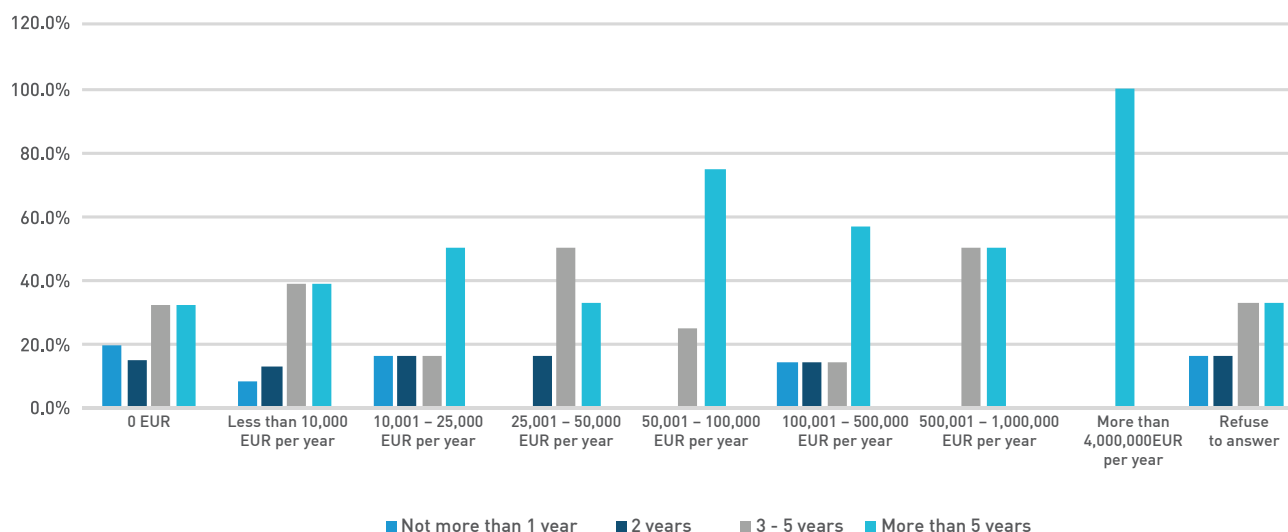
During the recruitment of the staff of the organization, most respondents agreed that the work experience in the relevant field (67.3%) and the educational qualification for the relevant field of work (65.3%) are two main criteria that they take into consideration. Also, data from the survey show that importance is also given to work experience in the civil society sector (33%) or references from partner organizations (31%), while basic skills, such as communication, group work, etc., were assessed as the least important criteria (2%).



■ Not more than 1 year ■ 2 years ■ 3 - 5 years ■ More than 5 years

[Figure 18. Staff retention in the organization during 2017 – Source: CSO Survey]

After recruitment, CSOs report that their staff generally remains for a relatively long time. About 39% of CSOs stated that their staff members remain in the organization for more than 5 years, which is a significant increase compared to the 2015 Index [16.3%]. Thirty-three percent of respondents stated that their staff stays in the organization for an average of 3-5 years, and 14% of CSOs said that their staff does not stay in the organization for more than two years, respectively one year. A breakdown of CSOs on the basis of annual revenues shows that the higher the organization's annual revenue, the greater is the likelihood that staff will stay longer in the same organization. Also, organizations that have declared zero annual revenues show high staff retention in the organization. The latter can be explained by the fact that being defined as an employee in CSO does not necessarily mean that they are paid on a regular basis. This category of CSOs usually consists of one or more individuals who identify with the organization for a long time, regardless of whether they have incomes and are paid.



■ Not more than 1 year ■ 2 years ■ 3 - 5 years ■ More than 5 years

[Figure 19. Staff retention by the annual turnover of CSOs for 2015 – Source: CSO Survey]



## Internal Capacities

Similar to the previous edition, even with a slight increase, CSOs estimate that they have very good capacities in most of the skills and abilities needed for this sector, with the exception of fundraising. The same perception is not shared by the donors, who in general have a lower estimation of the sector's capacities in most categories.

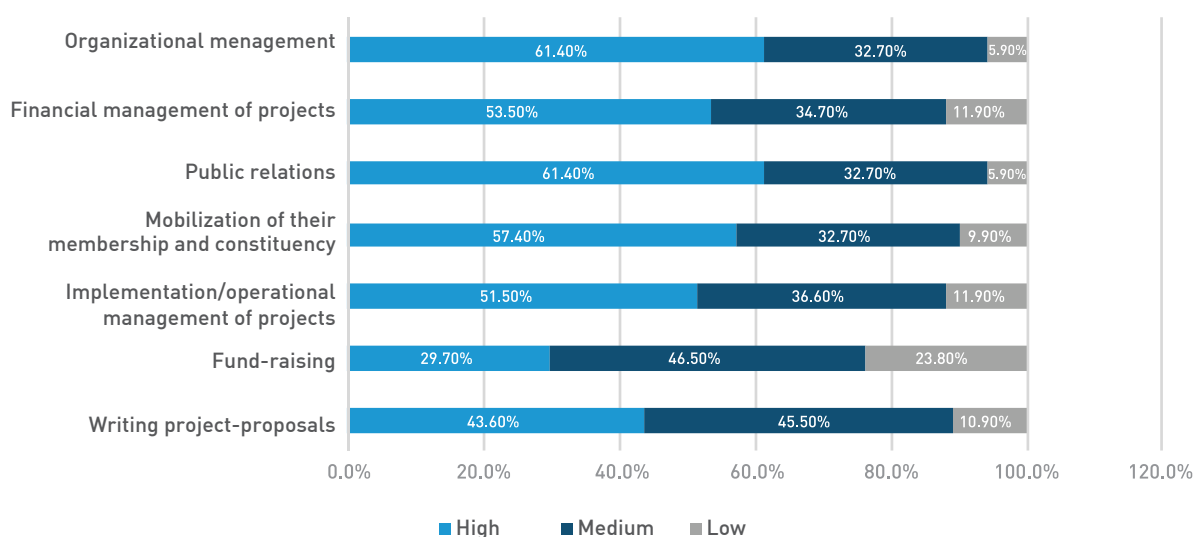
The CSO survey shows a high self-assessment of CSOs in terms of their own organizational capacities. More specifically, survey data show that 61.4% of CSOs highly rate their organization management capacity, public communication (61.4%), financial management (53.5%), community mobilization (51.5%), and writing/drafting project proposals (43.6%). Unlike the perception of CSOs, donors in Kosovo estimate that CSOs have a low capacity in terms of community mobilization (60.7%) or public communication (35.7%).

On the other hand, finding donors is rated as the most problematic part by CSOs, where about 24% of CSOs said they have low capacity to provide funding to the organization. Also, when asked about the main weaknesses of their staff in the organization, finding donors and funds for the organization was the first to be listed (26%). The same perception is also confirmed by donor survey data, where 31% of surveyed donors find it problematic for CSOs when it comes to finding donors, more concretely to ensure co-funding for certain projects.

In general, CSOs have a similar evaluation for their capacities compared to the 2015 Index data, where the most noticeable change is related to their assessment of fundraising capacities, an area for which their assessment of capacities has improved.

The vast majority of surveyed CSOs consider their staff highly trained and professional. Specifically, when asked if their employees are professionally prepared, 74% of CSOs stated that their staff is highly professionally prepared for their field and work, while in the previous edition of the Index only 56% agreed with this statement. However, the donor survey shows that one of the most problematic issues faced by CSOs in applying or implementing projects are inadequate human resources for project implementation.

The surveyed CSOs were also asked to list the three main strengths and weaknesses of their staff. Similar to the data above, organizational skills, project management, professionalism and communication were listed as the main priorities of CSO staff. On the other hand, fundraising for the organization was seen as the main weakness.

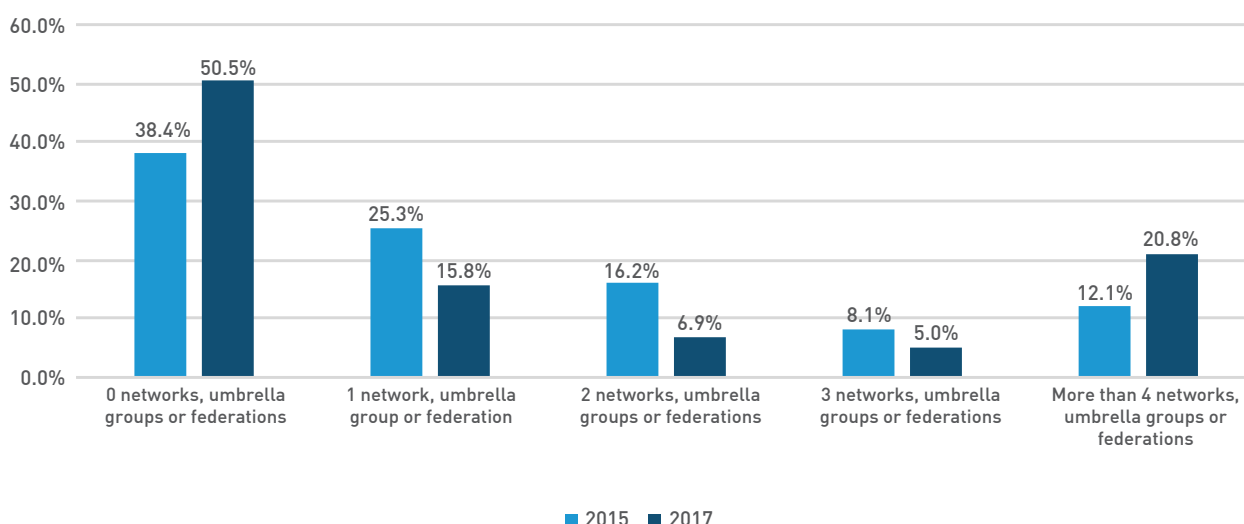


[Figure 20. Self-Assessment of Internal CSO Capacities - Source: CSO Survey]

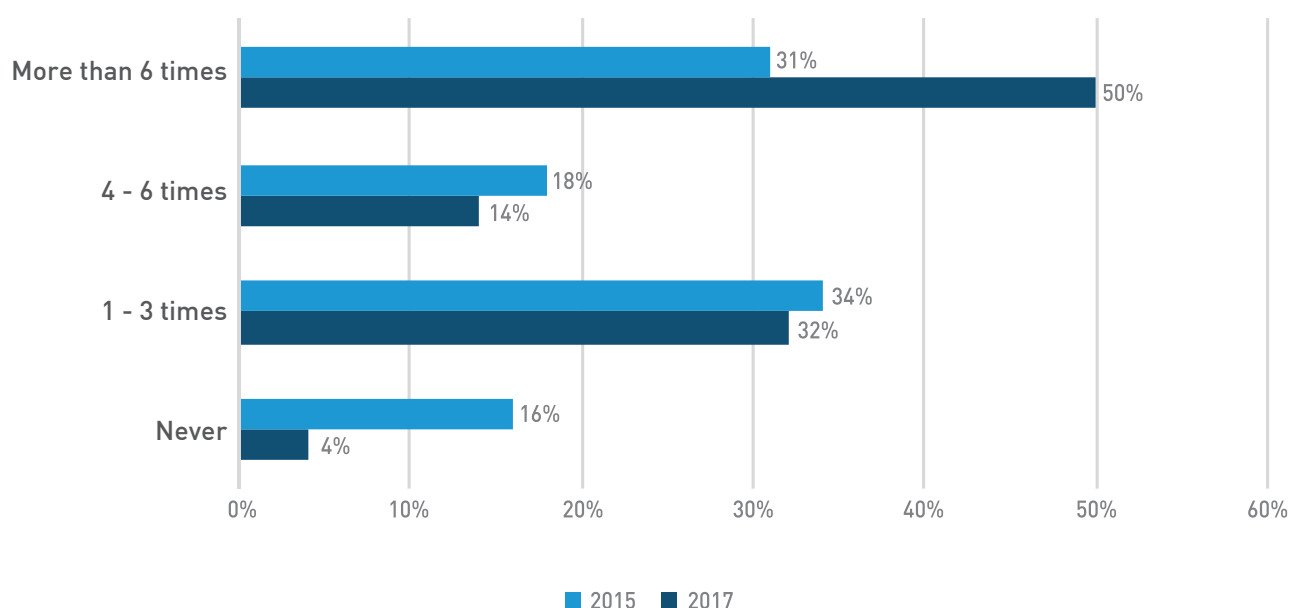
## Networking and Communication

Two different trends have been observed over the last two years with regard to networking and communication between CSOs: unexposed organizations have deepened their isolation, while those with more exposure have increased the level of networking and communication between themselves. On the other hand, a slight increase of the level of cooperation of Kosovar CSOs with organizations outside Kosovo presents a positive development for the sector.

About half of CSOs in Kosovo are members of at least one (1) network, umbrella group or federation. More concretely, 15.8% of CSOs are members of only one network, about 12% participate in 2 to 3 networks, while 21.8% of them are members of more than four networks. Compared with the 2015 Index data, there is a decrease in CSO cooperation through networking in umbrella or federation groups, while there is a noticeable increase of more than 8%, of organizations being a member of more than 4 networks. Also, among organizations that are members of different networks, there is an increase in communication between network members, either through meetings, or exchange of e-mails on issues within their scope of work. About 96% of the organizations surveyed stated that they met at least once during 2017, and half of them said they had more than six (6) meetings.



[Figure 21. Networking of CSOs - Source: CSO Survey]



**[Figure 22. Number of meetings held between member organizations within their respective network/s during 2017]**

With formal networking being only one way of joint work, the study also analyzed the level of interaction and communication between CSOs in Kosovo and abroad. Then when asked about their knowledge on organizations operating within and/or outside of Kosovo in their field or similar to the field of work of their organization, 20% of respondents answered that they do not know any such organization within Kosovo, while 32% have no knowledge of such organizations outside of Kosovo. Compared to the data from previous edition of the Index, the number of organizations cooperating with other organizations outside Kosovo has slightly increased, while the number of organizations that cooperate with other organizations in Kosovo has decreased.

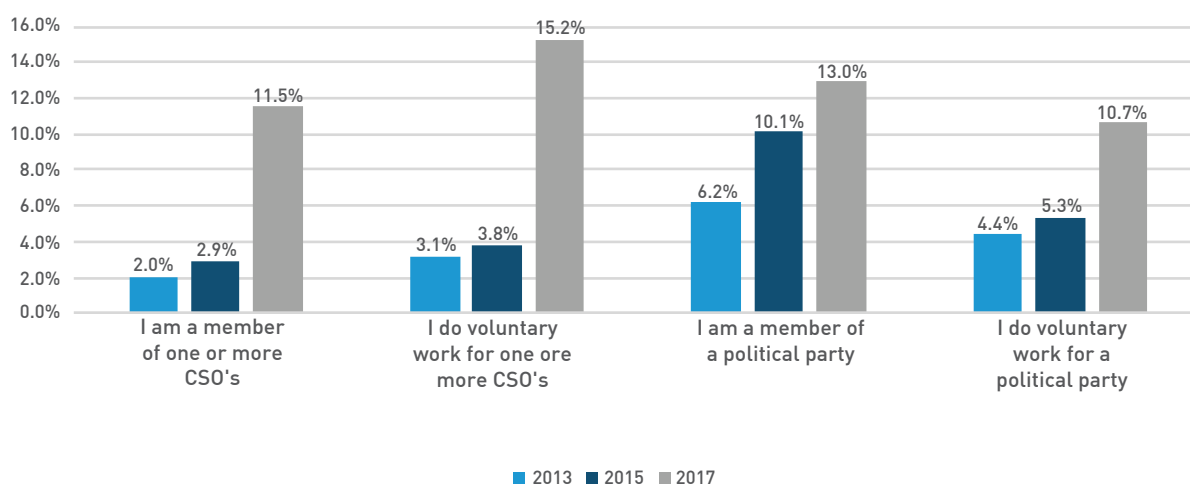
## Citizen engagement

### Civic activism

After many years, the engagement of citizens in civil society has resulted in more pronounced changes. Although still low, the percentage of citizens who are affiliated or volunteering in CSOs has increased, as well as the benefits of services provided by civil society. On the other hand, there is a slight decrease in the trust of citizens in civil society and the evaluation of the work within this sector.

Civic activism can be expressed in a variety of forms, including but not limited to engagement in civil society. To measure the level of civic engagement in Kosovo, a representative sample of 1,306 respondents were asked whether they are members or volunteers of any civil society organization or political party.

In general, a small number of Kosovo citizens are members of civil society organizations or political parties. Survey data shows that close to 11.5% of Kosovo's citizens are members of one or more civil society organizations and 15.2% stated to volunteer for civil society organizations during 2017. On the other hand, 13% respondents stated that they are members of a political party, and 10.7% said they had volunteered for a political party in 2017. Unlike the 2015 Index data, there is a significant increase in the percentage of citizens who declare to be members of civil society organizations.



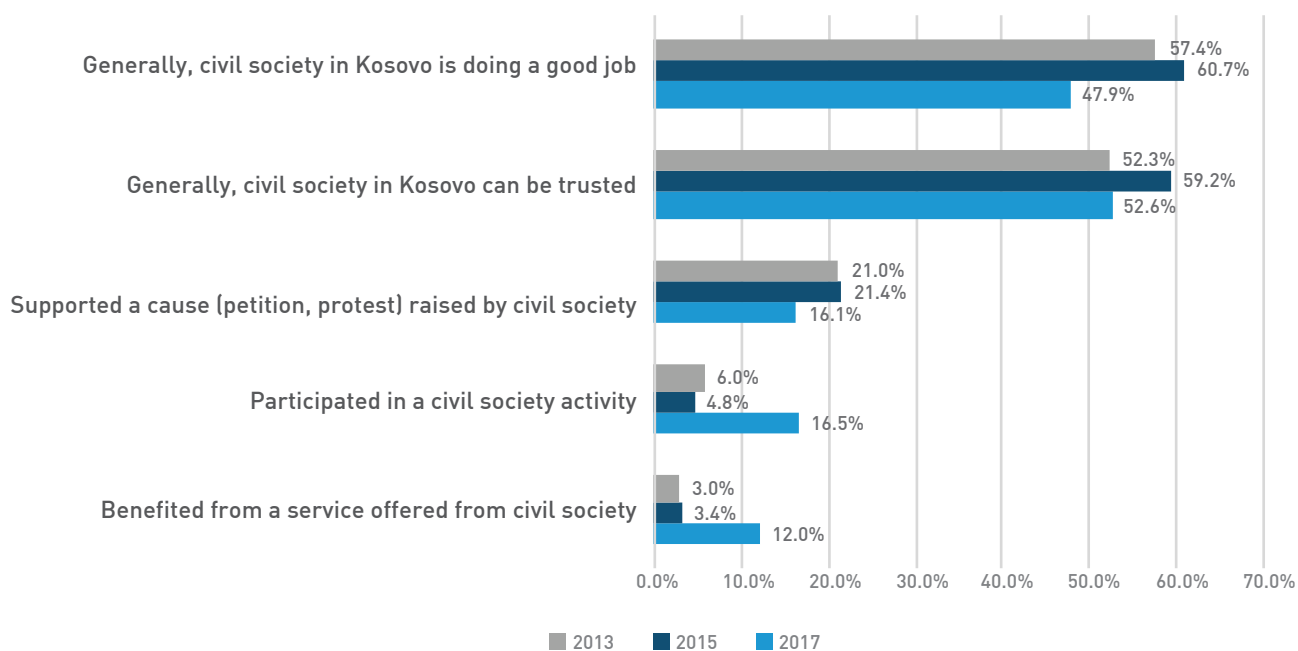
**[Figure 23. Participation of citizens in public activities – Source: UNDP Public Pulse XIV]**

A positive trend is also observed in the number of citizens who have benefited from services provided by civil society, from 3.4% in 2015 to 9.2% in 2017. Although the precise reasons for this increase in civic activism and the interaction of citizens with CSOs cannot be identified, the central and local elections may be one of the factors that caused this increase. This is due to the fact that a large number of Kosovo citizens, about 2,000, were engaged as CSO monitoring monitors, and CSOs have an active and significant contribution to informing citizens about voting procedures, reporting results and eventual irregularities during election processes.

Although the growing trend, CSO membership continues to be low, suggesting a deep civic apathy, but also the lack of communication between civil society and citizens, and their involvement in the work of the sector. In a more detailed analysis of the data from the citizen survey it emerges that membership in civil society organizations is gender balanced, while in the political parties there is an almost three times higher number of men compared to women.

On the other hand, survey data show a slight decline in citizen confidence in civil society, as well as how they evaluate the work of these organizations. More specifically, data in the previous edition of the Index show that 59% of Kosovo's citizens trusted civil society organizations, as opposed to 52.6% of citizens who stated the same in this edition. Similarly, there is the decline in appreciation that citizens have for the work of CSOs, which from 60.7% in 2015, dropped to 47.9% in 2017.





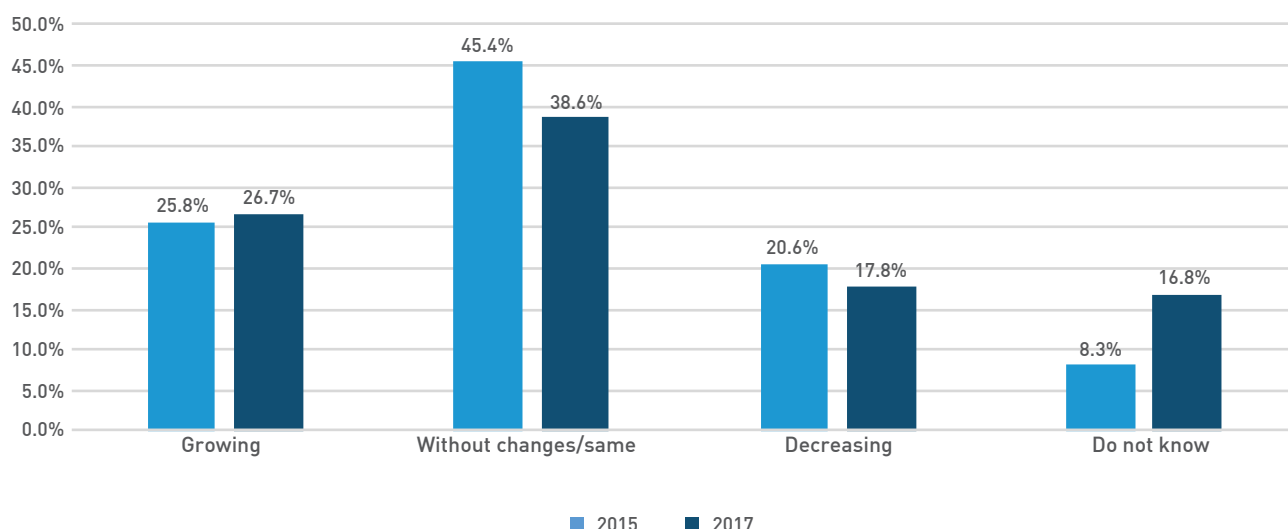
[Figure 24. Citizen engagement with civil society in 2013, 2015 and 2017 – Source: UNDP Public Pulse XIV]

It is also significant that the percentage of citizens who declare to have supported any issue raised by civil society, decreased from about 21% in the previous two editions to 16.2% in this edition. This data is consistent with the results of civil society engagement in policy-making, which are also declining, and suggests a general reduction in the sector’s commitment to raising various social issues.

## Volunteerism

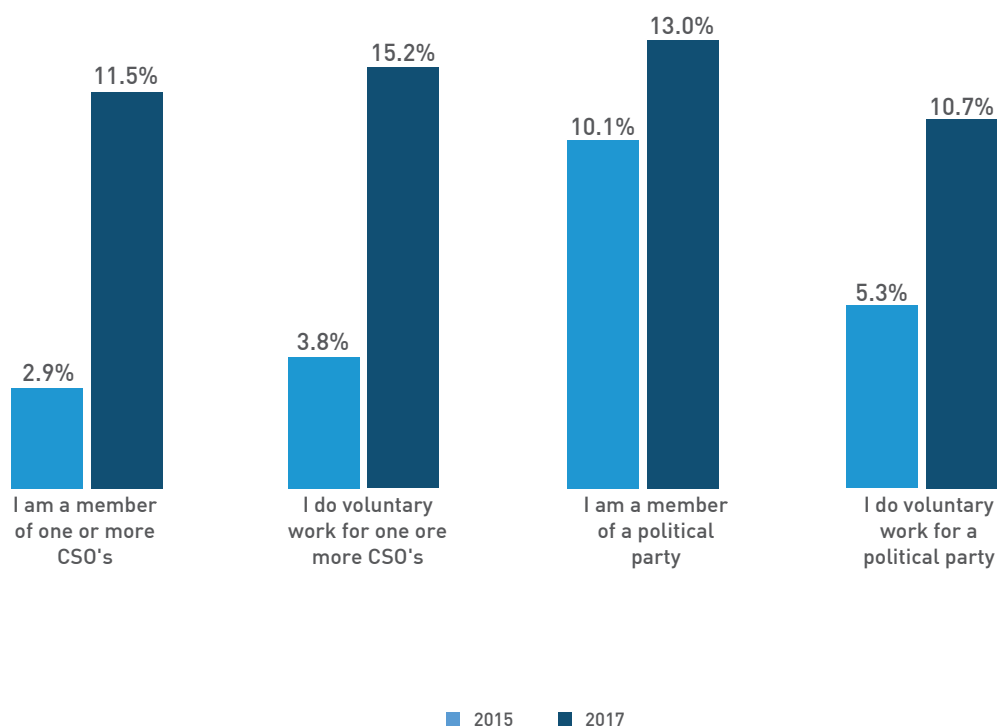
Citizens’ volunteering in civil society organizations has increased significantly compared to two years ago, although the percentage of volunteering organizations has declined. All these developments continue to take place in an unfavorable environment for the expansion of volunteerism.

Despite several attempts by various organizations to build a system for registering volunteers and their work, assessment of voluntary engagement in civil society continues to be difficult. There is no functional system with comprehensive data on the number of volunteers, number of volunteer hours, types of volunteer work, or demographics of volunteers. Therefore, volunteer data has been collected through the CSO Survey, and the UNDP Public Pulse Survey.



[Figure 25: CSO Perceptions on Volunteering Trends in Civil Society during 2015 and 2017 - Source: CSO Survey]

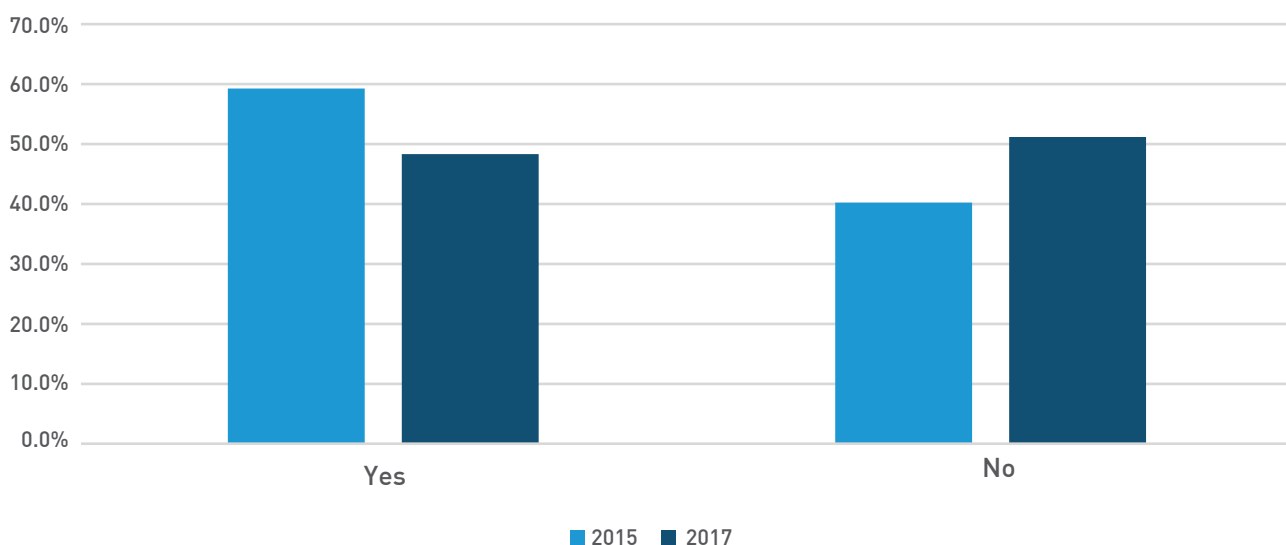
The perception of CSOs on the voluntary engagement trend in Kosovo remains largely unchanged. About 38% of surveyed CSOs stated that voluntary engagement in civil society remains the same as in the previous year, while 27% said voluntary engagement had increased in 2017, and about 18% share the opinion that volunteering in this sector has declined. However, the survey with Kosovo citizens shows a relatively large increase in voluntary work for civil society organizations. About 15% of Kosovo's citizens stated that they volunteered for one or more CSOs in 2017. Compared to 2015, this marks an increase of about 11%.



[Fig 26. Citizen engagement in volunteer work – Source: UNDP Public pulse ]

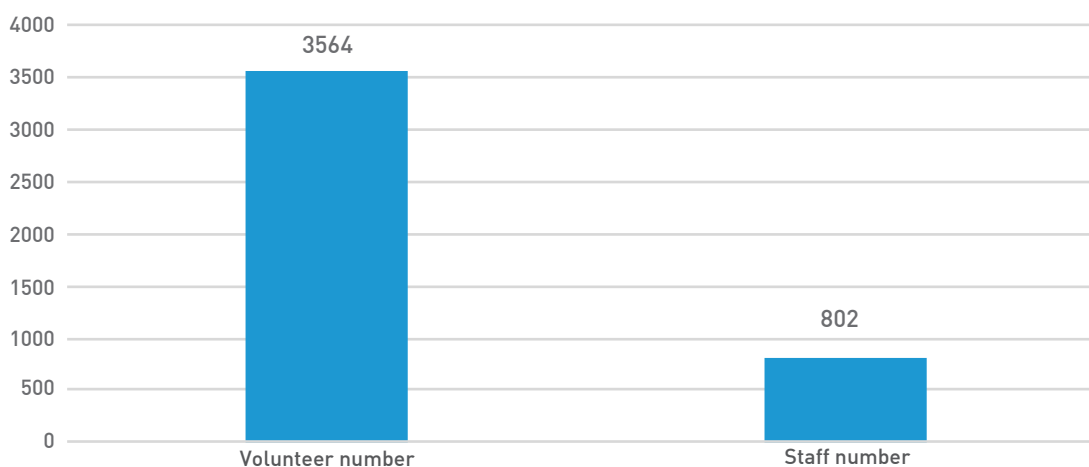
The CSO Survey shows that civil society organizations are skeptical about volunteering policies and the relevant legal framework, while a large part of them have no knowledge of it. Less than one third of surveyed CSOs think that the legal and policy framework for volunteering is stimulating (6%) or somewhat stimulating (32.7%). On the other side, 11.9% of CSOs stated that in Kosovo there is no legal framework or policy for volunteer work, and 26.7% stated that they did not have knowledge of their existence.

However, despite working in an environment where voluntary work is not regulated or promoted, Kosovar CSOs engage a considerable number of volunteers. Although the percentage of organizations that have engaged volunteers has declined slightly during 2017, CSOs continue to engage significantly more volunteers than paid staff.



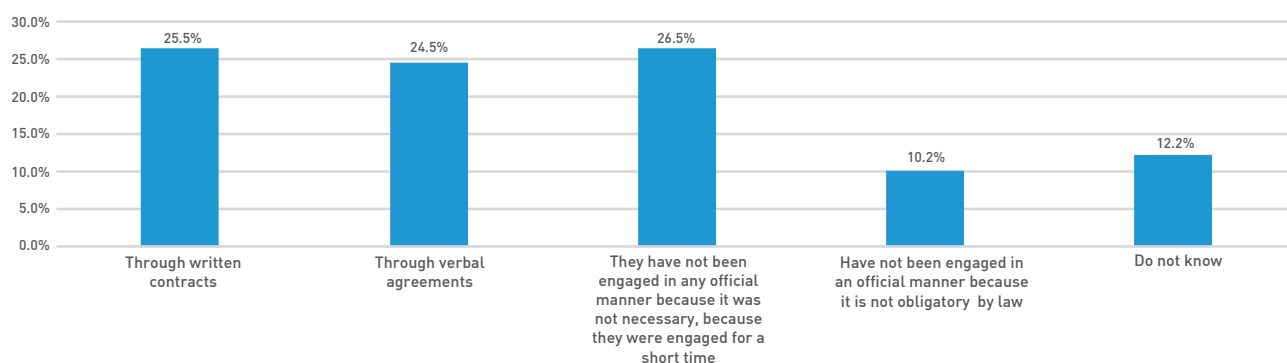
[Figure 27. Engagement of volunteers by CSOs – Source: CSO Survey]

The CSO survey shows that the ratio of volunteers to staff receiving any kind of salary from the organization is one to four. More specifically, for each paid staff member, an CSO has four volunteers.



[Figure 28. Number of volunteers compared to the number of paid employees in CSOs surveyed during 2017 – Source: CSO Survey]

Forms of volunteer engagement, to a great extent, remain informal. When it comes to the surveyed CSOs that engaged volunteers, only a part of them have done so through written contracts (26.5%), while the others engaged them in different non-formal ways.



[Figure 29. Method of engaging volunteers in CSOs – Source: CSO Survey]

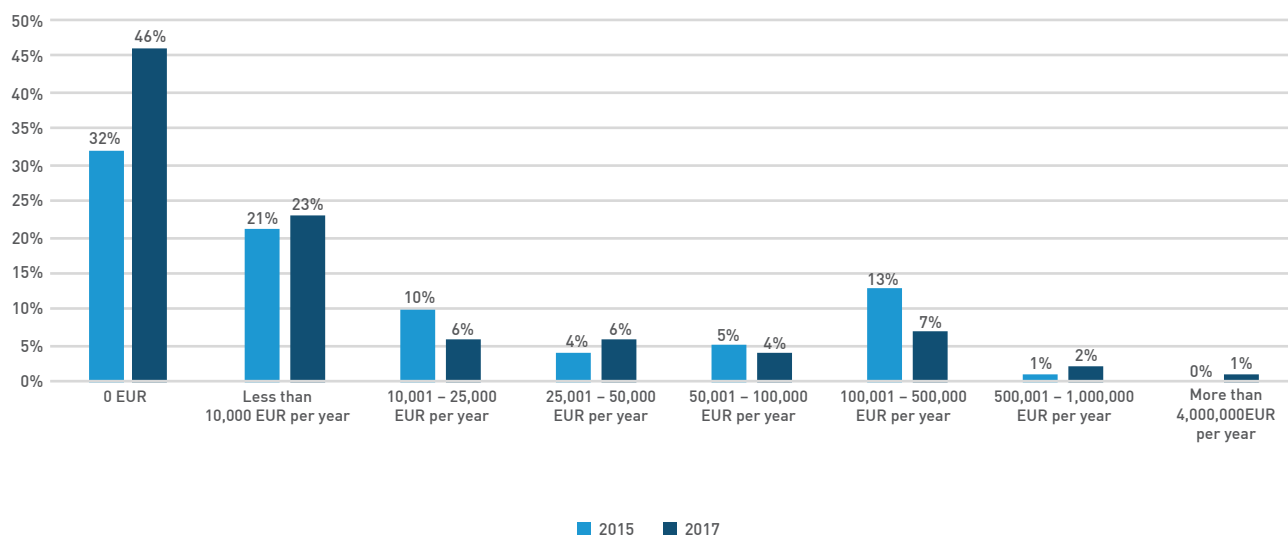
## Financing

### Annual Turnover

Available data shows that funding within civil society show a decreasing trend compared to two years ago in all indicators that cover this area.

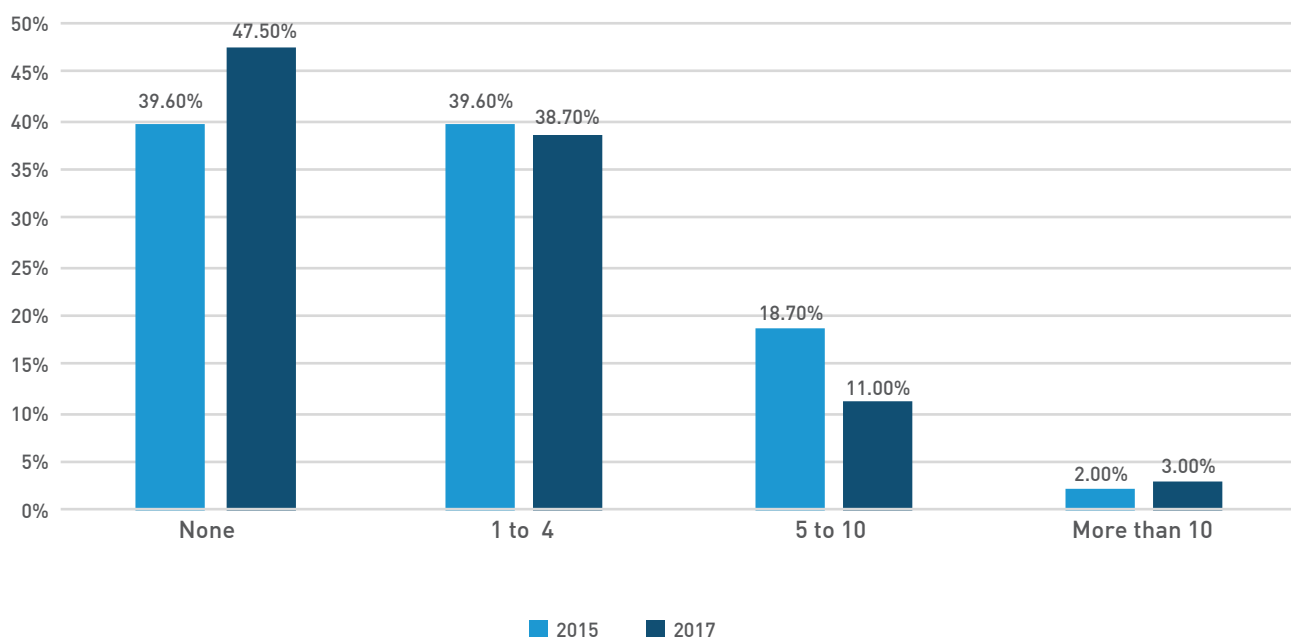
In the absence of systematic and official data on sector revenues, the analysis in this section is based on the CSO survey, whereas data obtained from TAK and the donor survey are used for confirmation. Data from the CSO Survey shows that nearly half of CSOs in Kosovo operate without funding (46%), while the majority of CSOs claiming to have had annual incomes belong to the category below 10,000 EUR per year (23%). The rest of the respondents are distributed in other categories up to EUR 500,000 per year, while only a small part of organizations report annual revenues over this amount. Similar data, with minor differences, are also presented within the Annual Statements submitted by CSOs to the Tax Administration of Kosovo<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Official data from the Tax Administration of Kosovo; May 2017; Unprocessed data; Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo



**Figure 30. CSO Annual Turnover for 2015 and 2017 – Source: CSO Survey**

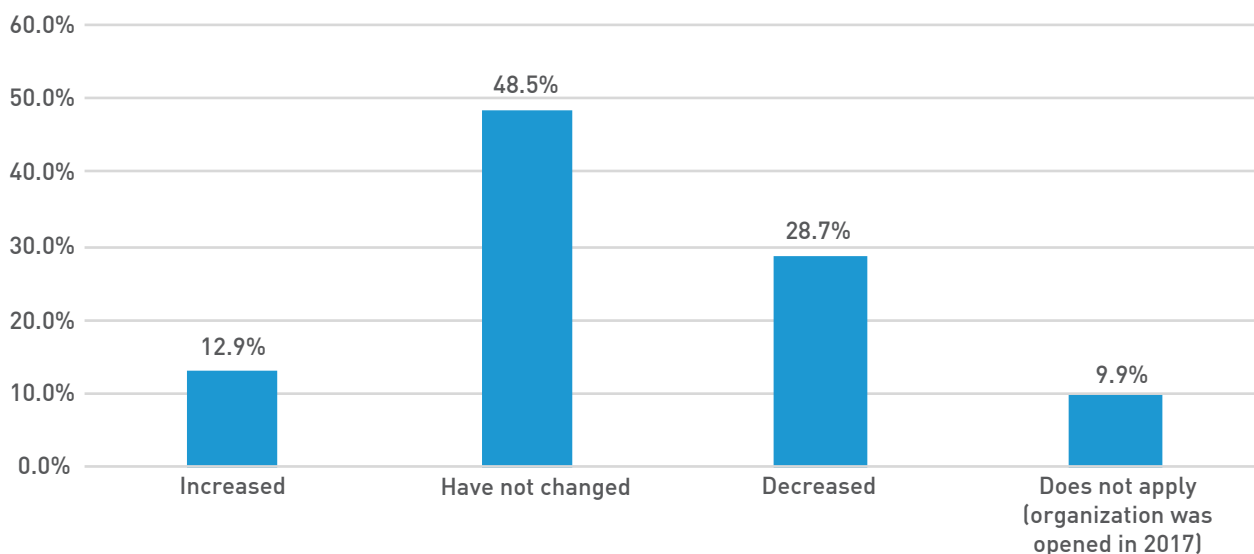
Compared with data from the 2015 index, the CSO survey shows a declining trend in CSO funding. This is most noticeable for organizations that have declared zero annual revenues in 2015 (32%), while the survey data for the current edition of the Index marks an increase of this category up to 46%. More specifically, there is an increase of 14% of organizations operating without any funding. While other categories of annual revenues have remained roughly the same, there is a decrease in the number of organizations with annual revenues of 10,001 – 25,000 EUR and those with annual revenues of 100,001 – 500,000 EUR. Another indicator of this negative trend is the number of organizations that failed to provide sufficient funding to ensure the continuity of their work (72%), as opposed to 62% as it was in year 2015. Moreover, there is increase of organizations that did not implement any projects during 2017 (47.5%), while fewer organizations had 1 to 4 projects (38.7%), and 5 to 10 projects (11%).



**[Figure 31. Number of projects being implemented by CSOs during 2015 and 2017 – Source: CSO Survey]**

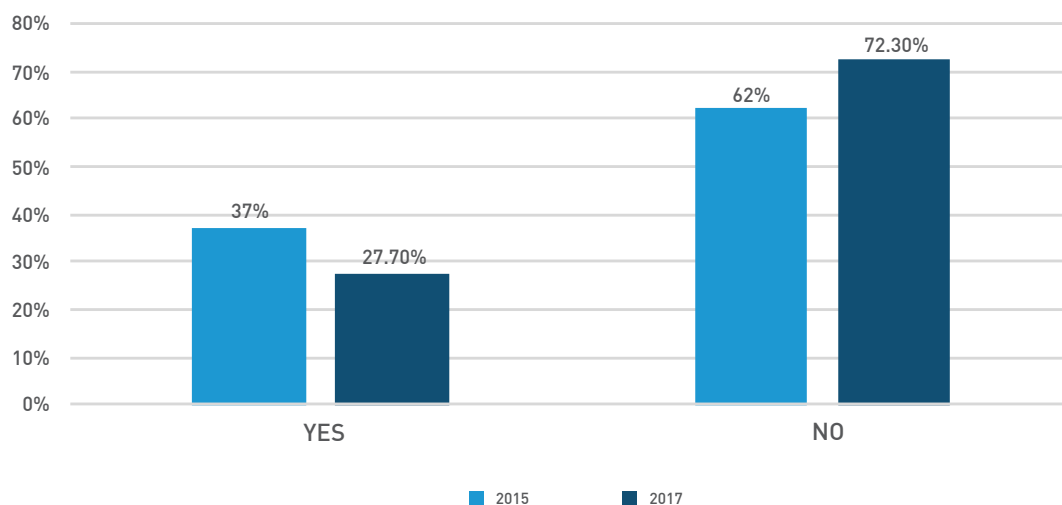


On the other hand, when asked whether or not the organization's revenue has changed compared to last year, 48.5% of respondents stated that it remained the same, while twice as much (29%) stated that they had less income in comparison with those who stated that their revenue increased (13%). Compared to the previous edition of the Index, the main change is in the category of organizations that have declared an increase of their organization's revenue - from 23% reported in 2015 to 13% reported in 2017 - while other categories have remained roughly the same.



**[Figure 32. Trend of CSO revenues and expenses in 2017 - Source: CSO Survey]**

The negative trend of the sector's financing in general is also reflected in the sufficiency of funds to continue the organization's planned work. Although for a long period of time only a certain portion of the organizations managed to secure sufficient funding to continue with their planned work, this percentage has dropped in 2017 (27.7%) compared to 2015 (37%).

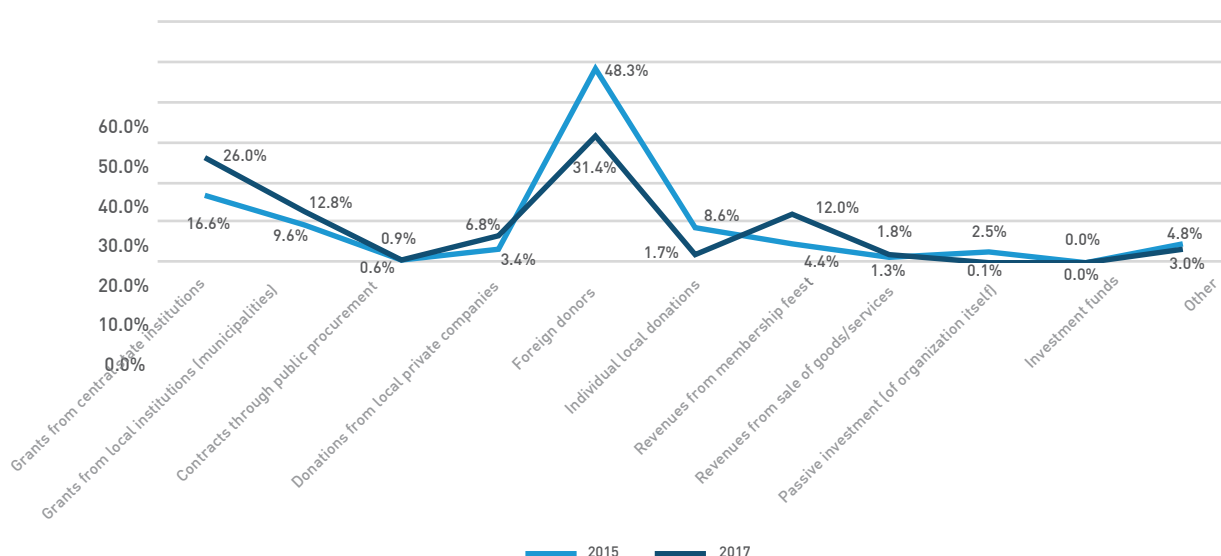


**Figure 33. CSOs that have secured sufficient funding to ensure the continuation of their organizations work during 2017 - Source: CSO Survey**

## Funding Sources

The calculation of the percentage of civil society funding sources remains one of the main challenges due to the lack of comprehensive and accurate data from both public institutions and foreign donors, who remain the main donors of this sector in Kosovo. For many years in a row, the Civil Society Index has inquired CSOs about their funding sources based on specific categories of funding.

As in the previous editions of the Index, survey data show that foreign donors continue to be the main source of funding for CSOs in Kosovo, although in percentage they marked a substantial decline. On the other hand, public funds are the second most important source and with a significant increase compared to 2015. Other funding sources remain relatively low<sup>10</sup>.



**Figure 34. Sources of funding of civil society sector for 2015 and 2017– Source: CSO Survey**

However, when it comes to analyzing the distribution of funds, it is noticed that foreign donors allocate their funds to a smaller group of organizations (22.8%) compared to two years ago (38.6%), while the opposite trend is true for public funds, where more organizations received public funds in 2017 (33.6%) than in 2015 (27.7%). Other sources of funding are less expressed, while major changes are noted in the percentage increase of organizations that have membership fees and decrease of organizations that have received donations from individuals.

<sup>10</sup> Funding sources measure the percentage of a certain source in civil society organizations regardless of the amount of funds, giving the same weight to CSOs with very low budgets as well as those with a high budget. For example, if a CSO that operates with 2,000 Euro per year is funded 100% of public funds, this percentage has the same weight as the percentage of a CSO with 100,000 euros per year that is funded 100% by foreign donors.

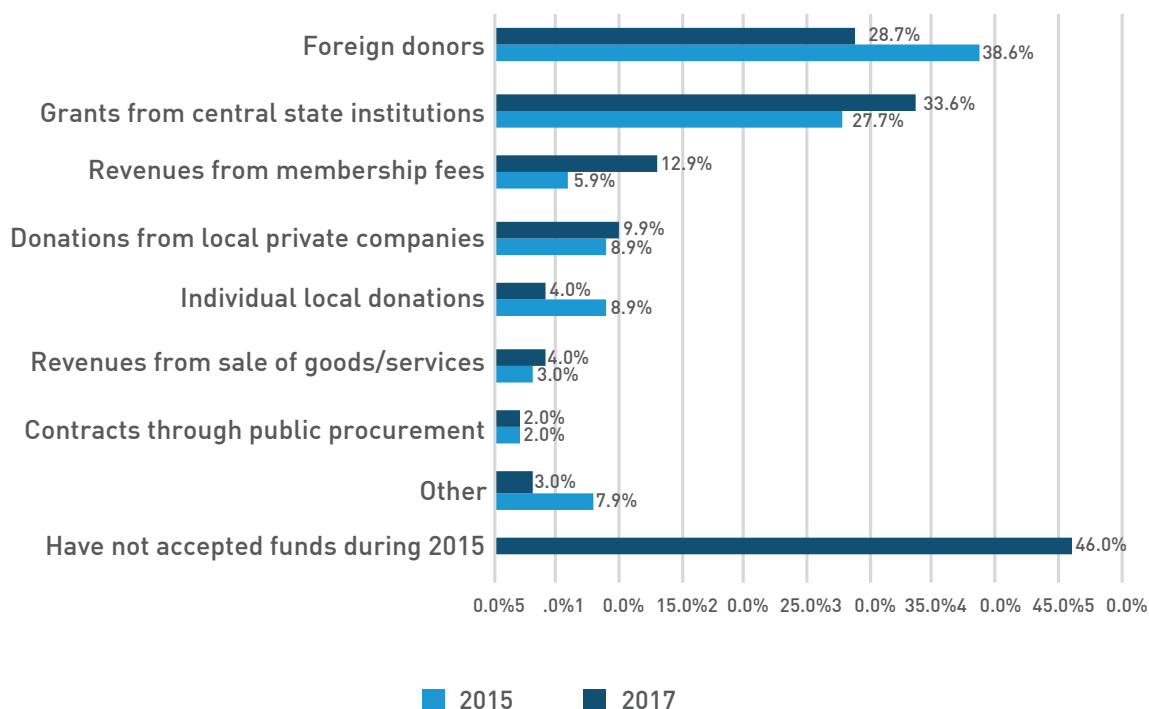


Figure 35. CSOs according to sources of funding – Source: CSO Survey

On the other side, the percentage of organizations declaring not to receive funding during year 2017 (45.5%) increased significantly, compared to 2015, when they amounted to only 31.7%.

## Duration of Funding and Work Planning

Similar results from previous editions showing significant lack of CSOs operational/work planning have reemerged in this edition, similar to the relationship between work/operational planning and the duration of financial support for these organizations.

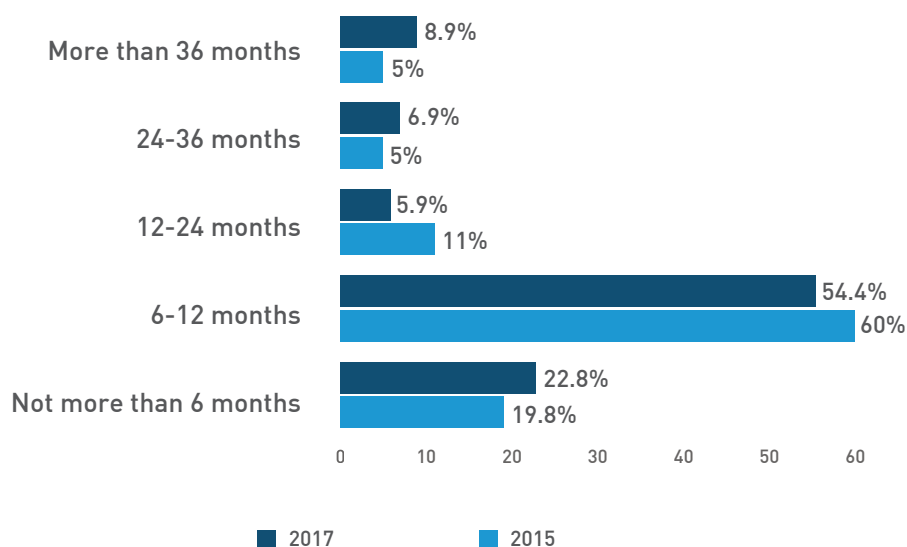
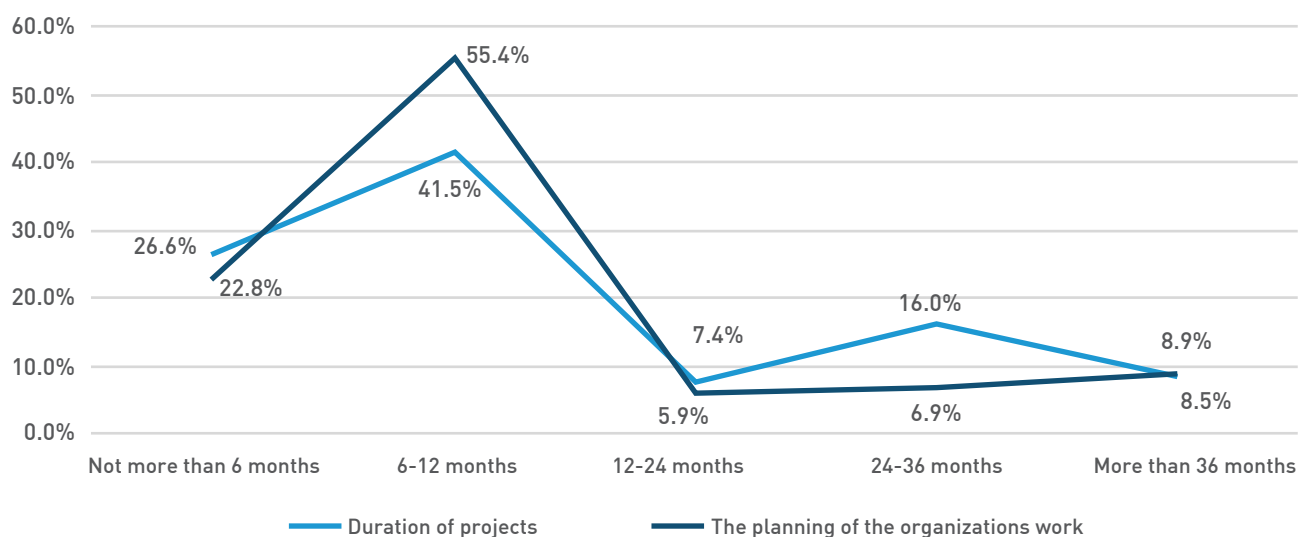


Figure 36. Duration of planning the work of CSOs for 2015 and 2017 – Source: CSO Survey

Data from the CSO survey show that CSOs in Kosovo generally plan their work for short periods of time. The overwhelming majority (78.2%) stated that the organization's work planning was done for a period of no more than 12 months - a figure that is almost identical to the previous edition of the Index (79%). On the other side, there is a slight increase in the number of organizations that plan their work for 24 to 36 months (6.9%) or for more than 36 months (8.9%).



**[Figure 37. The relationship between duration of projects and the planning of the organizations work - Source: CSO survey]**

On the other hand, respondents were asked about the duration of financial support contracts of different amounts and the given results are similar to those from previous editions. Whilst short-term contracts (68.1% of the total contracts declared by the surveyed organizations) dominate again, therefore it naturally impacts the duration of financial support, as the higher the contract amount, the longer the time of implementation. In addition, the in-depth analysis confirms the assumptions that the organization's work planning is directly related to the duration of financial support contracts.

## Types of Support

The main change over the last two years in the types of CSO support concerns the increasing institutional support, even though small scale funding and short-term project support remain the main type of support.

Similar to the past, from all contracts reported by surveyed organizations, lower value contracts have continued to dominate, mainly those below 10,000 Euro (38.3%) and from 10,000 to 25,000 Euro (19.1%). Similar results emerge from the survey with donors, where from all the reported contracts those with low value prevail. However, donor responses rank as the most frequent contracts those from 10,000 to 25,000 Euro (38.2%).

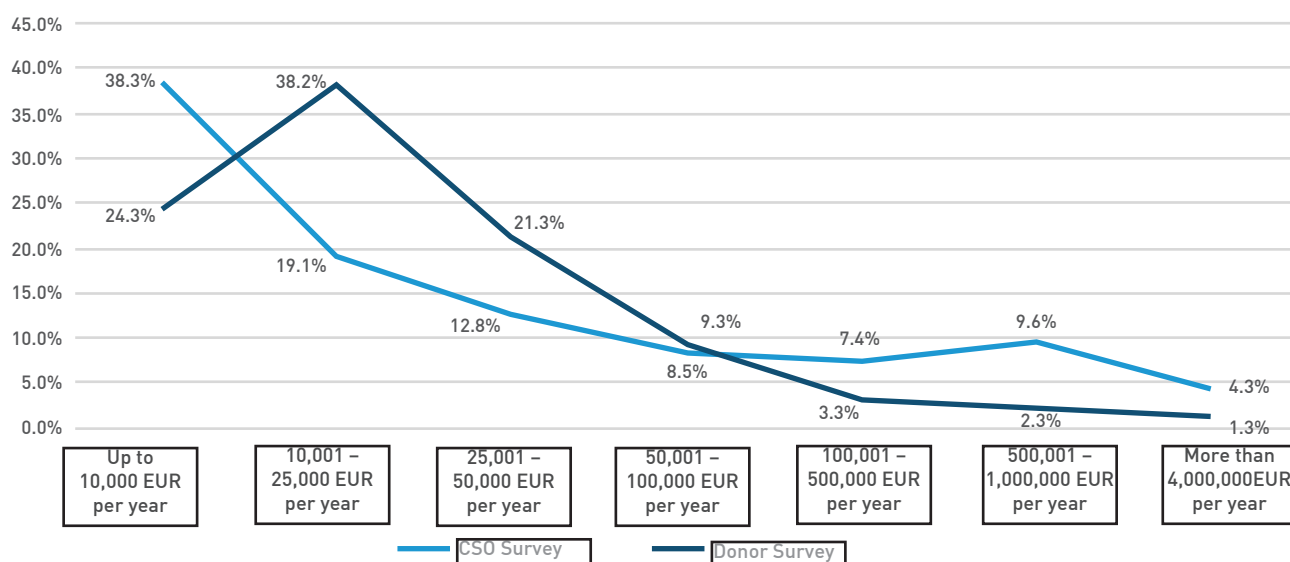


Figure 38. CSO Annual Turnover for 2017 – Source: CSO Survey

The donor survey also shows an interesting result compared to the period before two years, which is the increase of institutional funding as a form of financing for CSOs. Also, although dominant, there is a decrease in grants for short-term projects. Both of these may be among the reasons for the slight increase in the percentage of organizations making longer-term planning of their work.

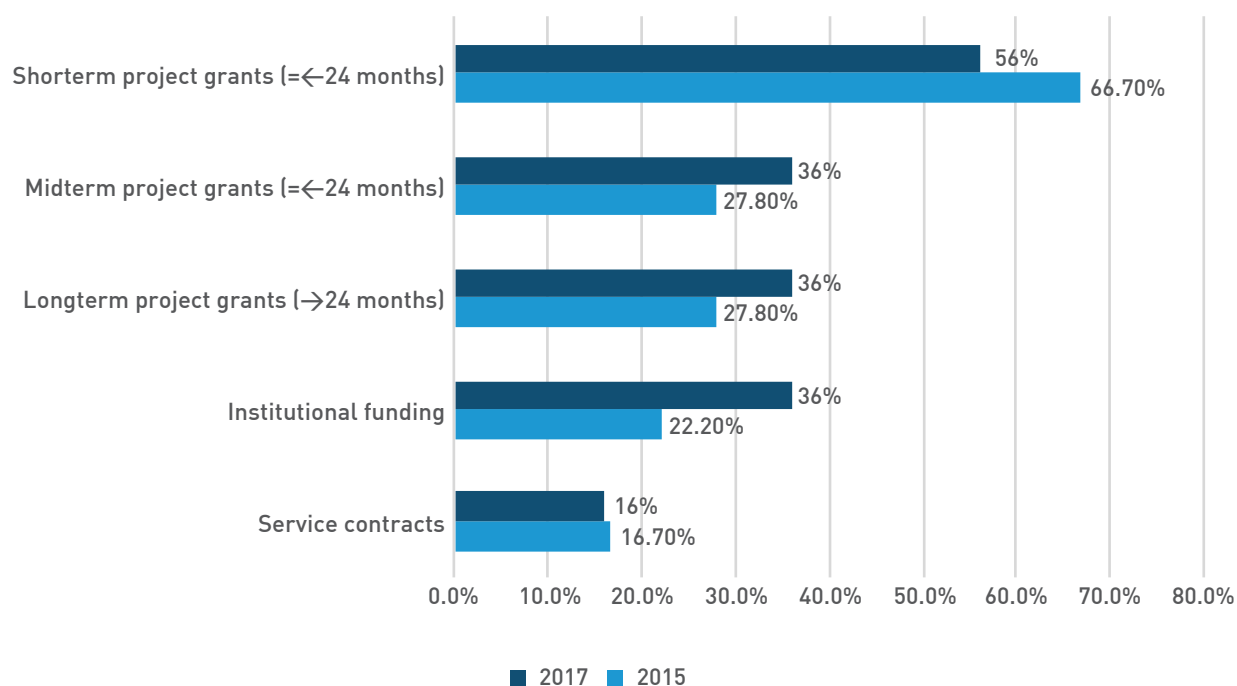
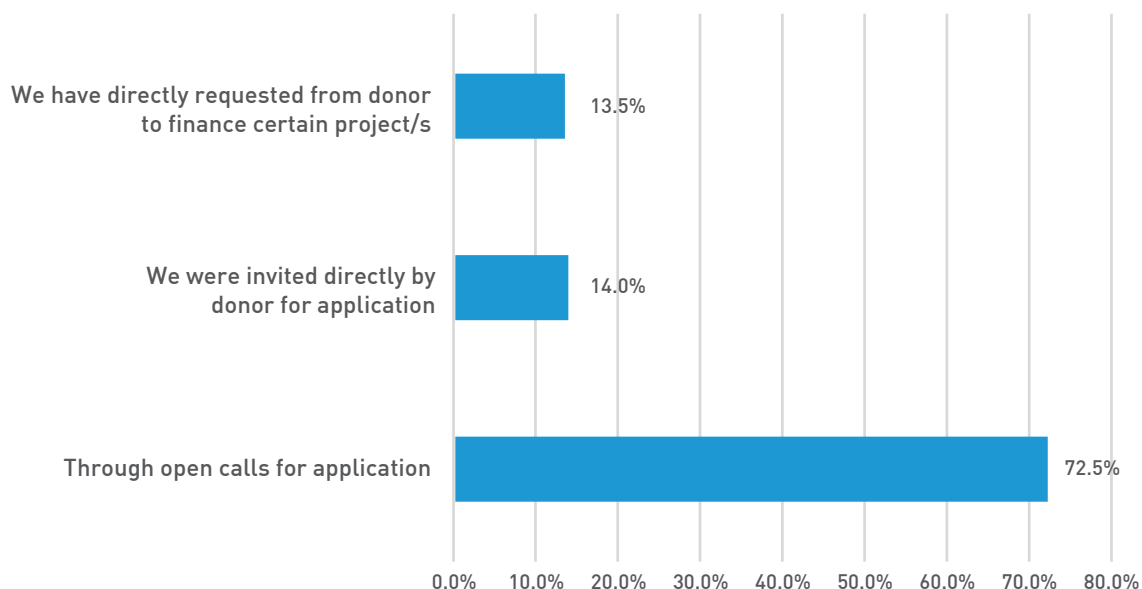


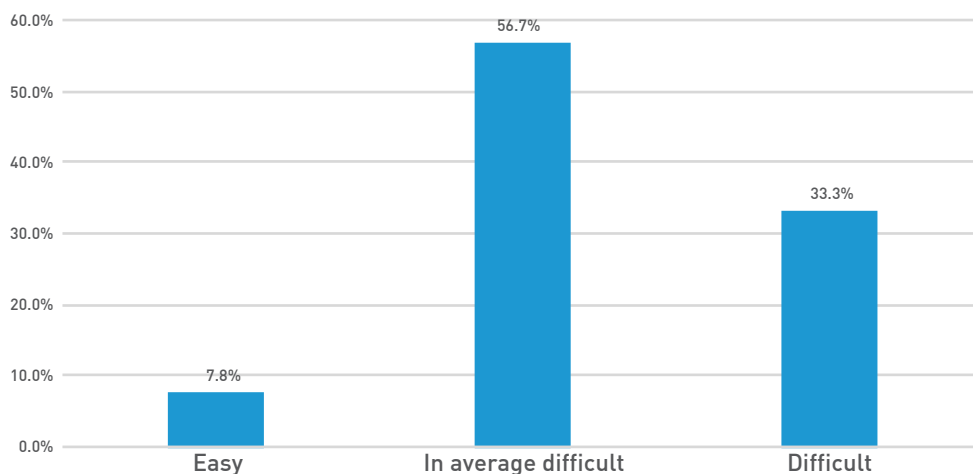
Figure 39. Type of support provided by foreign donors to CSOs during 2017 – Source: Donor Survey

The most common practice for CSOs receiving donor funding continues to be the open call for applications, which results to have been the way of receiving 72.5% of the contracts reported by the surveyed organizations. The dominance of this form is also confirmed by the donor survey. On the other hand, compared to the previous edition of the Index, fewer CSOs agreed to have been directly invited by the donor to apply for funds or have requested funds directly from the donor to support their projects.



**Figure 40. Donor assessment on the application procedures for foreign funds during 2017 – Source: Donor Survey**

Regarding the application procedures for funding, most CSOs surveyed evaluate them as somewhat difficult in relation to the value of the grant they have applied for (56.7), 33.3% estimate them as difficult, and only 7.8 % stated that the procedures for applying for funds are easy. From a comparative analysis between organizations that had funds and those that did not have any income during 2017, it is noticed that among the respondents receiving funds, many more organizations evaluate the procedures for applying for funds as easy (27%), while 41% of organizations that did not have income during 2017 estimated application procedures for funding as difficult.



**Figure 41. Donor assessment on the application procedures for foreign funds during 2017 – Source: Donor Survey**



On the other hand, donors have a relatively different estimation when it comes to their application procedures for funding. More than half of them stated that they considered their grant application procedures as easy (53.3%), and about 26% stated that they had somewhat difficult procedures.

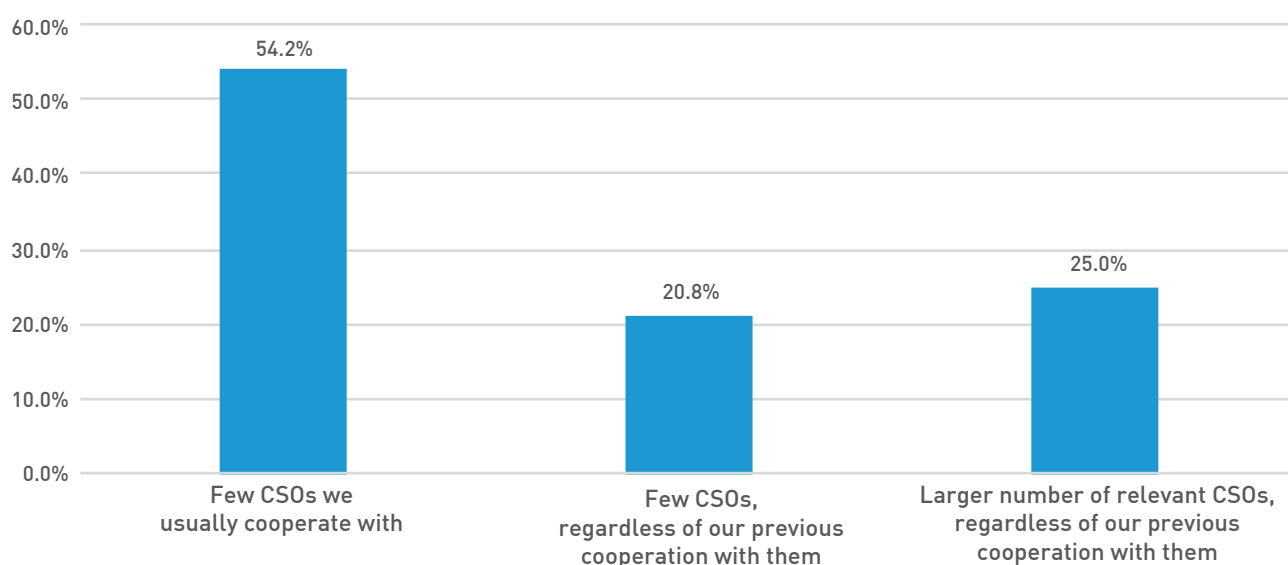
Applying in the English language for many years has been reported as one of the main problems of many organizations, especially the smaller ones. The Donor survey confirms that the dominant language of application to foreign donors remains the English language, which applies to nearly 90% of donors surveyed, while about one third of them receive applications in Albanian or Serbian.

## Programming of Donor Funds

When programming their funds, many foreign donors invite local organizations to consult, and this trend is on the rise compared to two years ago. However, a close group of organizations is generally invited to consult, while the expression of interest by the organizations themselves to be included in consultations is declining.

The Donor Survey shows a growing trend of CSOs involvement in programming donor funds. The overwhelming majority of the donors surveyed stated that they consulted CSOs in programming of funds, and about 38% of them declared that they do this every time they program or revised the program scheme, 48% stated that they invited CSO for consultation about programming their schemes from time to time, while only 13.8% of them mentioned that they do not invite CSOs for consultations.

The majority of donors stated that CSOs generally respond positively to invitations for consultations, and their contribution is satisfactory. About 78% of the surveyed donors said that most of the invited organizations respond positively to their invitation for consultation and they are generally satisfied with the contribution of CSOs in these consultative processes (33.3%), while the rest are somewhat satisfied (67%). Also, from the perspective of CSOs, the process of consultations with donors is positively evaluated. Most of the CSOs stated that when donors consult the programming of their schemes, their contribution is fully considered (23.5%) or somewhat considered (64.7%).



**Figure 42. Types of CSOs that get invited by foreign donors for consultations on their programming of funds – Source: Donor Survey**

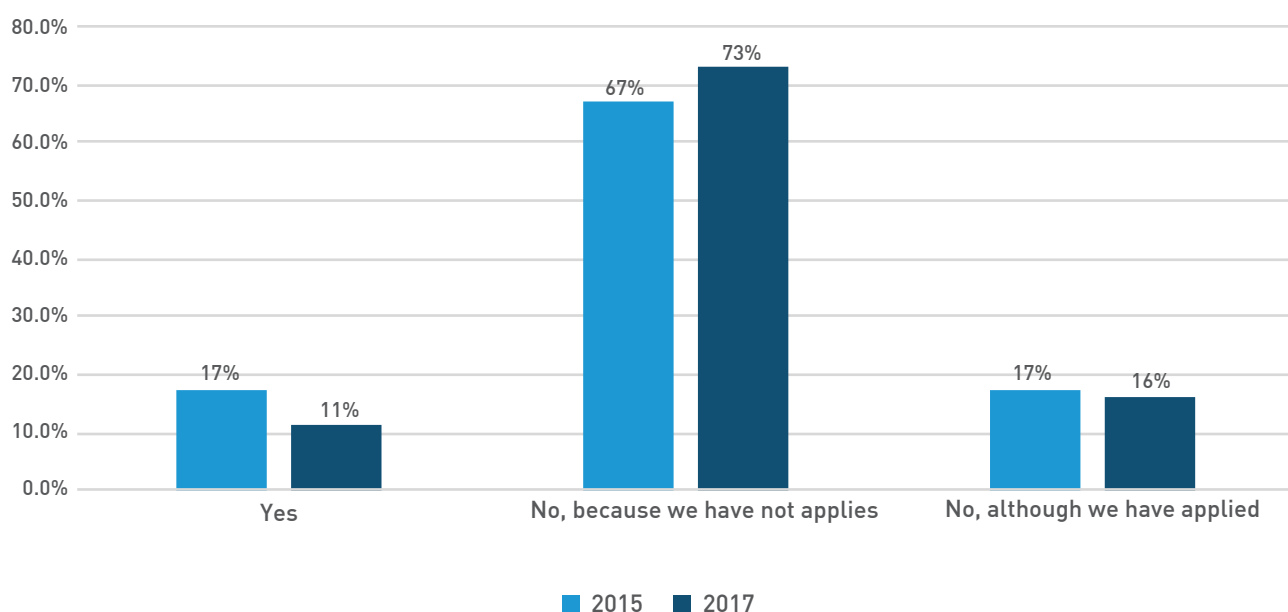
However, the results of the survey reveal two important challenges. When asked which CSOs they normally consult, more than half of the donors stated that they consult only a few organizations with whom they usually cooperate (54%), and CSOs that are consolidated and specialized in certain areas (60.8%). This is also confirmed by the CSO survey, as among the organizations that did not have funds during 2017, only 2% were invited for donor consultation, while most CSOs with annual revenues over 100,000 EUR have been invited at least once for consultations by donors.

On the other hand, very few CSOs have asked to be consulted by donors. Only 23.8% of surveyed CSOs have requested to be consulted by respective donors during 2017. This is a negative trend, almost halved, compared to the 2015 Index data (40%). The same is confirmed by the donor survey, where about 68% of respondents stated that they did not receive any request from CSOs for consultations. Also, it is important to note that around 91% of CSOs with zero annual revenues have never requested to be consulted by donors in 2017.

## EU Funds

A separate chapter has been devoted to European Union (EU) funds for two reasons, 1) the EU is one of the largest foreign donors in Kosovo, and 2) Kosovo has a strategic goal of EU membership, while EU funds for civil society serve to advance this process.

Compared to two years ago, data show a declining trend in organizations that have applied for EU funds or have received funding from this institution.



**Figure 43. CSO applications for EU funds during 2017 – Source: CSO Survey**

About 73% of surveyed CSOs stated that they did not apply for EU funds while only 11% of the respondents claimed that they benefited from these funds. Respondents who applied for EU funds during 2017 were asked whether they encountered any challenges during the application process. Complicated application procedures seem to be the main challenge which CSOs continue to face when applying for EU funds (33.3%), followed by difficulties in providing co-financing for their project (20%) – a request which is specific to most projects funded by the EU. Also, 13% of the respondents mentioned insufficient information about the application procedures, the inability to apply in languages other than English, as well as high demands on human resources and implementation capacities.

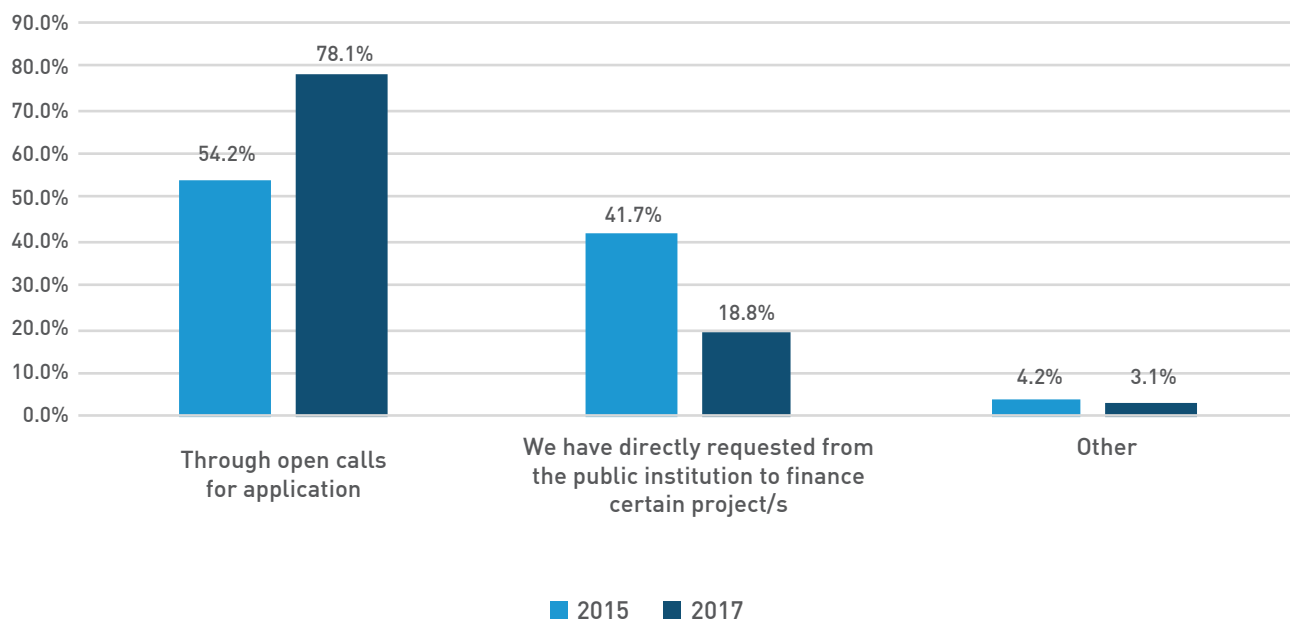
A deeper analysis of the data shows that the main beneficiaries of EU funds are consolidated organizations, both in terms of organization, specialization in the operating area and annual revenues. On the other hand, the EU has increasingly used intermediary organizations to re-allocate their funds for the purpose of easier procedures and penetration into smaller organizations. However, the number of beneficiaries remains low in relation to the overall number of civil society organizations, leaving the EU as a suitable donor for consolidated organizations, but not as much for small ones.

## Public Funds

Compared to two years ago, there is a slight increase in the number of organizations that have received public funds, as well as a positive trend related to open calls for applications and monitoring of the implementation of these funds.

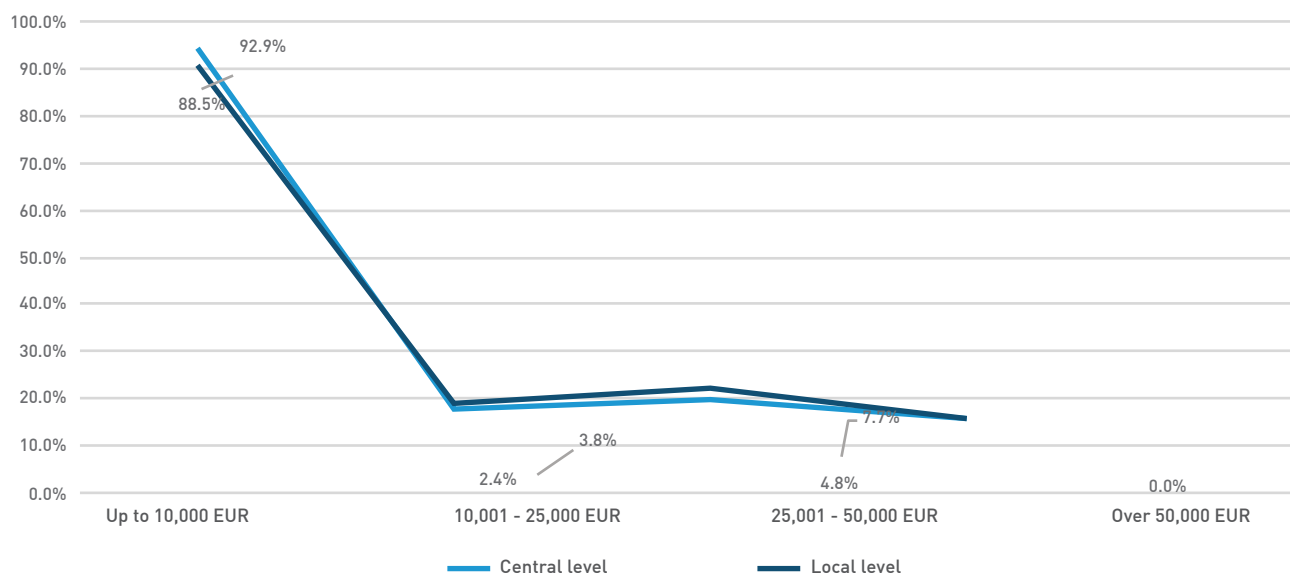
Public funds for civil society remain very problematic with regard to transparency and strategic approach. After years of public funds allocation for CSOs without any planning, criteria or transparency, in June 2017, the Government of Kosovo adopted the Regulation on CSO Criteria, Standards and Procedures for Public Financing. This regulation clearly sets out the procedure for granting financial support to CSOs and its implementation is mandatory for all public budget organizations. Although it has produced a more positive situation than before its approval, during the first year the implementation level of the regulation is very low.

Data from the CSO survey show an increase in the number of organizations that have benefited from public funds as well as a positive trend of public funding through open calls for applications. Of the surveyed CSOs, about 31% of them claimed to have received public funds, as opposed to 25% who claimed to have received public funds in the previous edition of the Index. In a situation where most other trends related to CSO financing are negative, this positive trend becomes even more significant. The vast majority of respondents said that they received public funds as support for the implementation of a project or some specific activity of the organization (76.5%), while 20.6% stated that these funds were received as institutional funding for the organization - which also marks an increase of about 8% compared to data from the 2015 Index.



**Figure 44. Type of application procedures for public funds during 2017 – Source: CSO Survey**

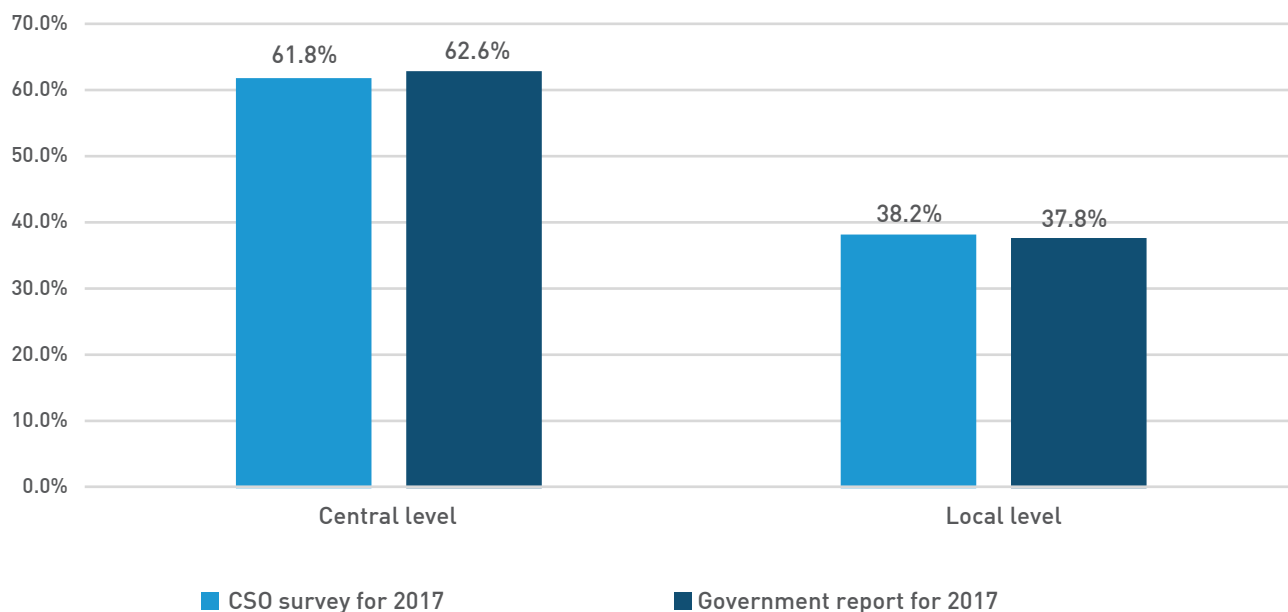
Moreover, CSOs were also asked about the application procedures, respectively the form through which they received public funds. Marking a positive trend, 78% of them stated to receive public funds through open call applications, and about 19% of CSOs claimed they had requested direct funding from institutions. Bearing in mind that the number of organizations that received public funds increased significantly compared to 2015, and there is a declining trend of allocating funds without public calls, these may be indicative of the initial positive effects of regulation on public funds.



**Figure 45. Public funds contract amounts – Source: CSO Survey**

The vast majority of contracts for public funds do not exceed the total value of 10,000 EUR (about 90%), while much less are in the category of 10,001 - 25,000 EUR or 25,001 - 50,000 EUR.

Progress was noted in the monitoring of organizations that received public funds, with only 5.6% of respondents claiming that they were not monitored at all, as opposed to 12% of the organizations that stated the same in the 2015 Index. On the other side, there is a slight decline in organizations that have stated that they have submitted detailed reports of spending activities, from 76% in 2015 to 66.7% in 2017.



**Figure 46. Public funds contracts according to governance level – Source: CSO Survey and Government Report for 2017**

From a more detailed analysis of the contracts reported by the surveyed organizations, more public funding contracts come from the central level (61.8%) than from the local level (38.2%). This is also confirmed by the Government Report on Public Funds for CSOs for 2017, which also confirms the dominance of low value payments and an increase in public funds for CSOs in general.

## State Contracts for Public Services

Although they are an obligation of state institutions, most of the public services offered by CSOs are unfortunately still covered by foreign donor funds rather than the state, similar to the period of two years ago.

In general, only a small number of CSOs stated that they applied for state contracts through public procurement during 2017 (7%).

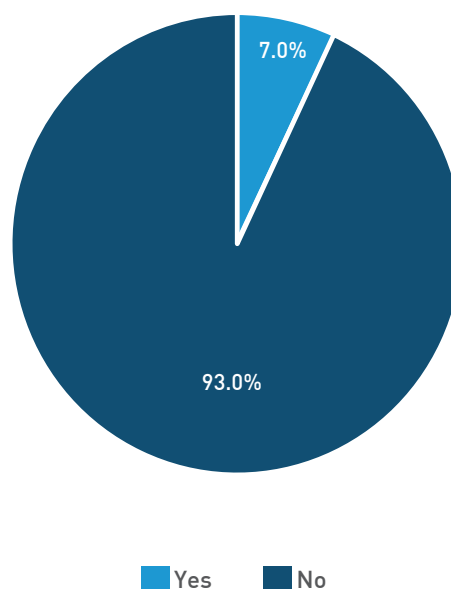
Asked if they encountered any obstacles during their application for state contracts, surveyed CSOs declared that the main obstacles are the many administrative requirements (33.3%), followed by the complicated licensing procedures for the provided services (16.7%), and the numerous requests for selection criteria that favored businesses (17%). However, only one case of an organization applying for this type of contract complained about not being allowed to compete without being given specific or objective explanations for the reasons of this restriction.

Regarding the monitoring of the costs and quality of services provided by organizations, the CSOs that have implemented such contracts are generally satisfied. Despite the small number of organizations receiving service contracts from state authorities, it is noted that the monitoring of these contracts by state authorities is regular, with the vast majority of contracted organizations reporting such monitoring.

In general, the perception of whether public contracts are awarded fairly and transparently or not is largely negative (40.6%). Only 11% of CSOs think that these contracts are awarded fairly and transparently, while nearly half of the respondents declared to have no knowledge of this (49%). When asked where they base their views, the majority stated that their opinion is based on personal/organizational experience (32.7%) or conversation with others and experiences of other organizations (33.7%).

## Non-financial Support

Similar to two years ago, non-financial support for CSOs continues to be rare, with the majority of organizations not requesting such support, and short-term use of public spaces being the most common form of non-financial.

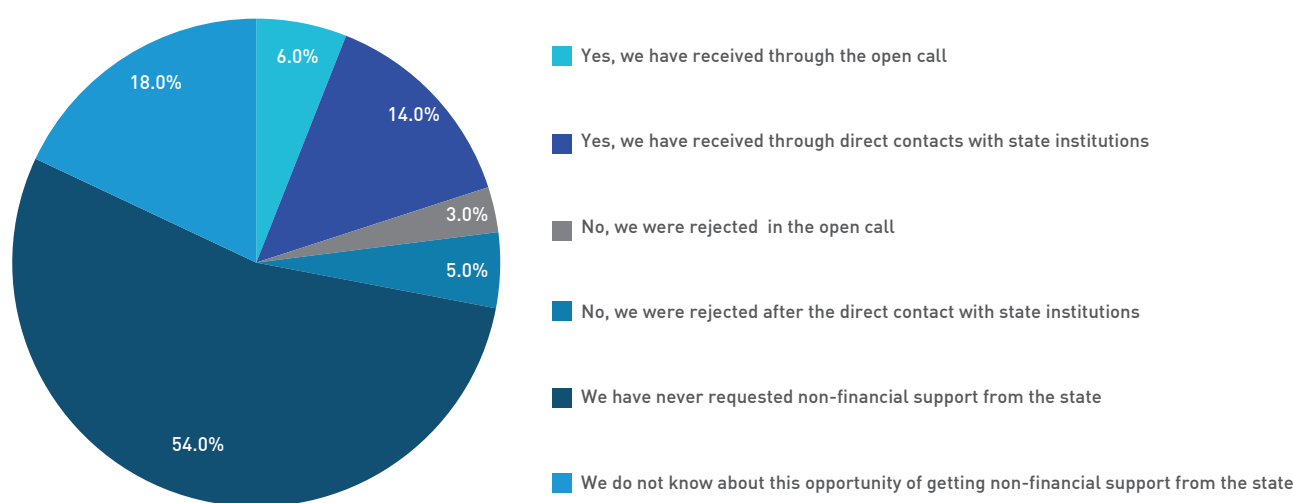


**Figure 47. Applications for state contracts through public procurement during 2017 – Source: CSO Survey**



In Kosovo we have no policy or legal framework for non-financial support of CSOs. The only document that indirectly addresses this issue is Law 04/L-144 on the Use and Exchange of Immovable Property of the Municipality, which, although not while it does not exclude CSOs from the use of municipal property, it does not specify any procedure or encouraging criteria for this sector. This law is in the process of being amended since 2017, while the major involvement of civil society in the public consultations process will result in more positive provisions for civil society.

On the other hand, data from the CSO survey show that more than half of CSOs have never asked for non-financial state support, while about 22% claimed to have received non-financial support, a percentage identical to the previous edition of the Index. Most of them claimed to have access to free public space, while only some organizations have received various equipment needed to carry out their activities or means of transport.



**Figure 48. Types and challenges of non-financial support of CSOs during 2017 - Source: CSO Survey**

While more than half of the surveyed organizations have not requested non-financial support, but when they do so direct contact in relation to open calls dominate. Also, survey data show that a large number of CSOs do not have any information about the possibility of non-financial state support (17%).

## Perceived Impact

### Responsiveness

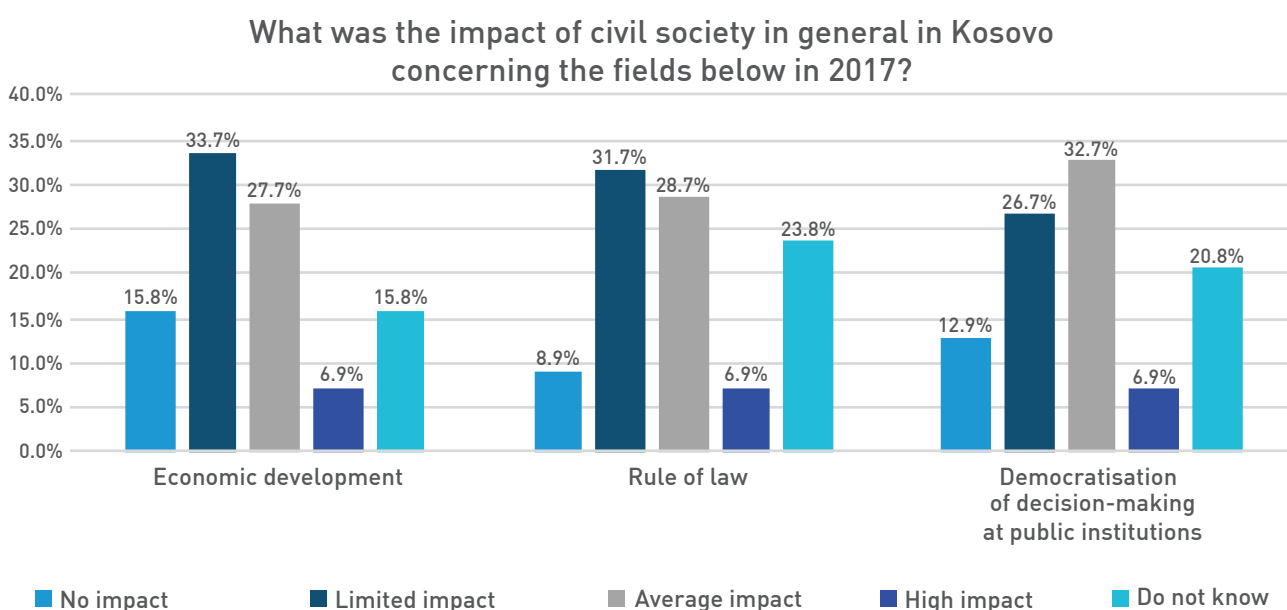
Compared to two years ago, civil society is estimated to have higher responsiveness to the main concerns of citizens, especially in the field of economic development.

Similar to previous years, various surveys of public opinion confirm that the main concerns of citizens in Kosovo are unemployment, corruption, poverty, and poor quality of education. The study analyzes whether civil society responds to the main concerns of citizens, as well as the democratization of decision-making in institutions as a very important part of the values promoted by civil society in Kosovo and beyond.

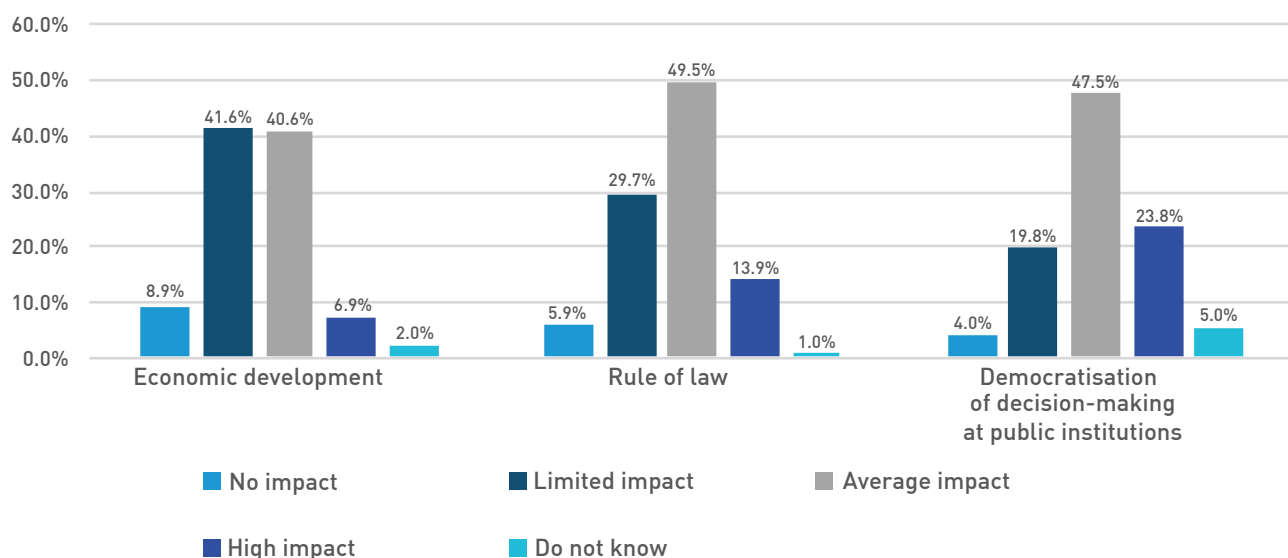
The perception of CSOs on the impact of civil society on economic development, rule of law and democratization has changed, compared to data from the previous edition of the Index. Democratization of decision-making in public institutions is assessed as the area in which civil society has had the greatest impact – 32.7% stated that civil society had an average impact in this field during 2017, and about 7% said they had had a high impact. On the other hand, the data from the CSO Survey shows that the impact of the civil society sector on the economic development of the country has increased as compared to the data of 2015. More concretely, 22.5% of respondents think that civil society had an average impact on this area during 2017, while 7% of them stated that civil society has a high impact on the economic development of the country. The same increase is observed in the survey with external stakeholders, where about half of the respondents stated that civil society has a positive impact on the country's economic development, 40.6% stated a medium impact, and 6.9% stated a high impact.

Approximately the same remains the assessment of the impact on the rule of law, where 28.7% of CSOs stated that civil society had a medium impact, and 6.9% evaluated a high impact. Unlike the previous edition of the Index, more CSOs stated that they are not able to assess the impact of civil society in these three areas, respectively, responding to not know.

Non-civil society actors continue to have a much more positive view of the impact of civil society in the three above-mentioned areas compared to the sector's own perception. The vast majority of respondents think that civil society has had an average impact (47.5%) and high impact (23.8%) in democratization of decision-making in Kosovo.



**Figure 49. Perception of CSOs on the impact of civil society in the areas of major concerns for citizens – Source: CSO Survey**



**Figure 50. Perceptions of external parties on the impact of civil society on areas of major concern for citizens - Source: External Perceptions Survey**

## Perceived Impact

Democratization and education continue to remain areas in which civil society is perceived to have a higher impact, and also where the sector is more active.

Through active engagement, civil society has an impact on many other areas outside those identified as a priority for Kosovo's citizens. However, 2 out of 3 areas of major concern emerge to be areas where civil society in general has had the greatest impact. Specifically, democratization and rule of law have been evaluated by surveyed organizations as areas where civil society has had the most impact during 2017, followed by education and monitoring of institutions.

Democratization	11%	Human rights	4.2%
Rule of law	8.3%	Economic development	2.8%
Education	6.9%	Culture, youth and sport	2.8%
Monitoring (of the work of institutions)	6.9%	Gender equality and empowerment of women	2.8%
Fight against corruption	5.6%	Culture, youth and sport	2.8%
Drafting and implementing policies and legislation	5.6%	Environmental protection	1.4%
Agriculture	4.2%	In no field	20.8%

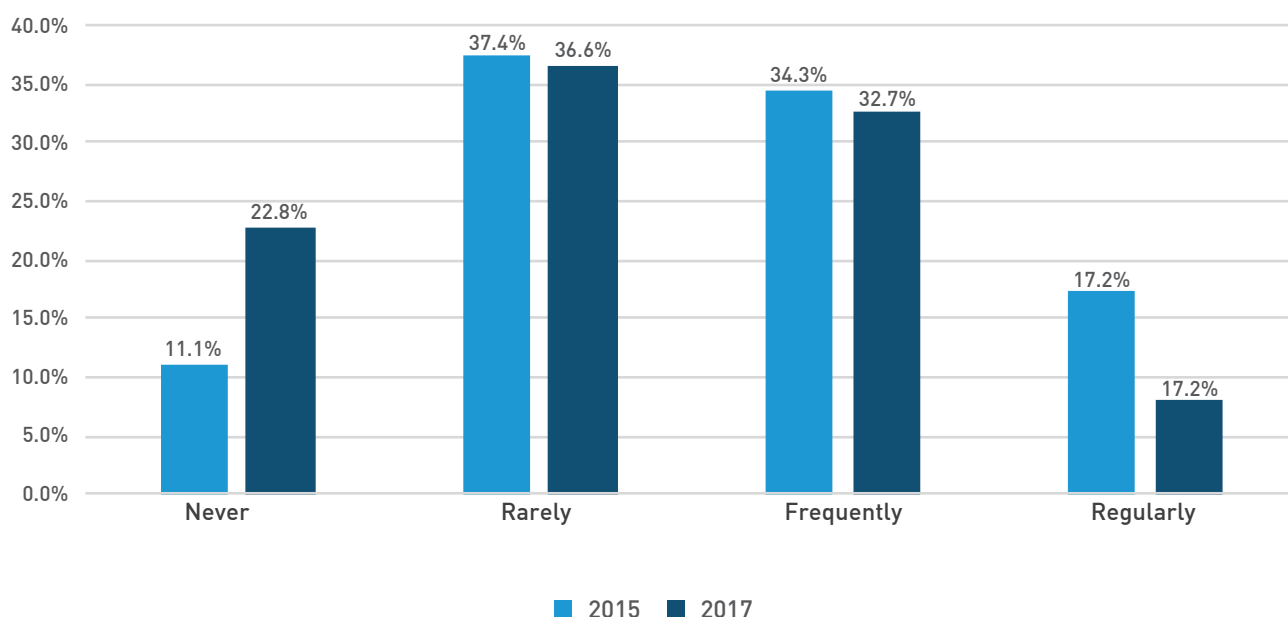
**Figure 51. Perceptions of CSOs on the main areas of civil society impact in general - Source: CSO Survey**

Meanwhile, when asked in which field their organizations had the most impact, 11% of surveyed organizations declared education, 6% civil society capacity building, and 5% in economic development. While education and democratization remain high both in the perceived impact of the sector in general and individually for surveyed organizations, culture is highly expressed in the perceived impact of organizations but significantly below in general within the sector.

The level of activity, which remains a subjective category, was measured by the perception of external stakeholders, i.e. by asking them on the areas in which civil society was more active during 2017. This survey shows that the areas in which civil society in Kosovo has shown more activity are education, the rule of law, and environmental protection. Similar to previous editions, these results confirm that civil society can be active in one area, but it does not necessarily have an impact in same area.

## Advocacy

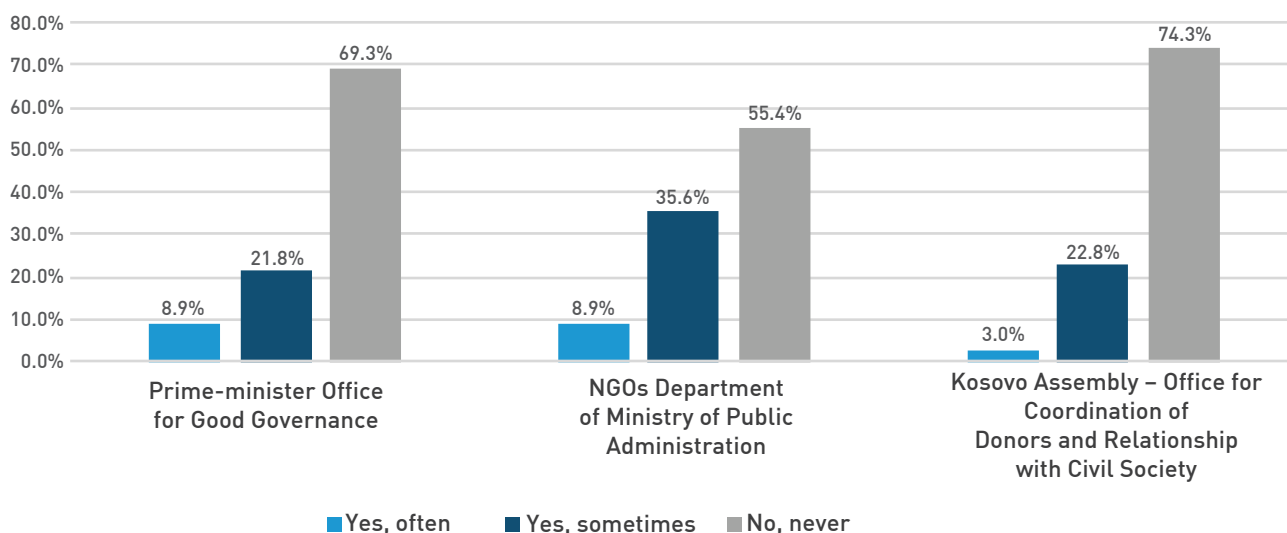
A significant part of the work of CSOs is oriented towards advocacy, either through communication with public institutions, participation in policy making, or protest - all these in the function of fulfilling a legitimate demand or civic need. Advocacy for causes and issues requires a number of preconditions. This section covers the whole cycle, ranging from communicating with relevant public institutions, access to information, and direct involvement in policy making.



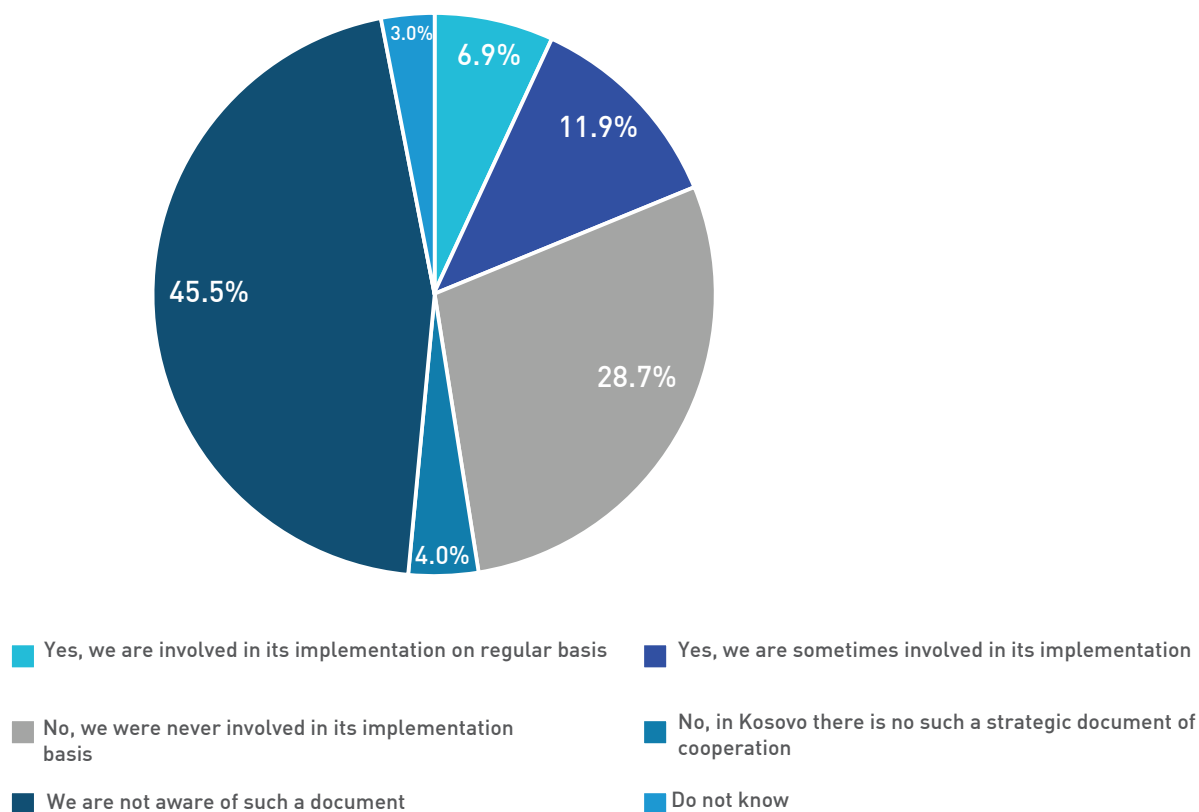
**Figure 53. Communication of CSOs with state institutions responsible for cooperation with civil society - Source: CSO Survey**

Data from CSO surveys point to less frequent CSO communication with public institutions compared to 2015 data. About one-third of surveyed CSOs said they frequently communicate with public institutions within the same area as that of their organization (32.7%), and only 7.9% said they regularly communicate with these institutions. A more detailed analysis of data shows that CSOs whose activity extends across Kosovo communicate more often with public institutions than other CSOs. Meanwhile, the data show that the organization's revenue does not have any impact in this regard.

Similar to the previous edition of the Index, the communication of CSOs with institutions with the mandate for co-operation and communication with CSOs remains low. More concretely, 9% of CSOs often communicate with the Office of Good Governance at the Office of the Prime Minister, and 22% of others communicate only from time to time. The same is valid for Office for the Coordination of Donors and Civil Society Relations of the Assembly of Kosovo. On the other hand, CSOs communicate a little more with D-CSO, mainly because this department is mandated to register CSOs and is the first contact address for all administrative matters of CSOs.



**Figure 54. Communication of CSOs with public institutions responsible for cooperation with civil society -**  
**Source: CSO Survey]**



**Figure 55. Involvement of CSOs in the implementation of the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society – Source: CSO Survey**

Being the main document defining government policy on the sector, the survey has also measured the level of involvement and knowledge of civil society in implementing the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society. Similar to the previous edition, the percentages of those who are involved or have knowledge of the document are quite low. Almost half of the surveyed CSOs do not have any knowledge of this document (45%), while one third of them stated that despite having knowledge, they never engaged in the implementation of this document (28.7%). About 19% of CSOs said they were engaged in implementing the Government Strategy for Cooperation with Civil Society.

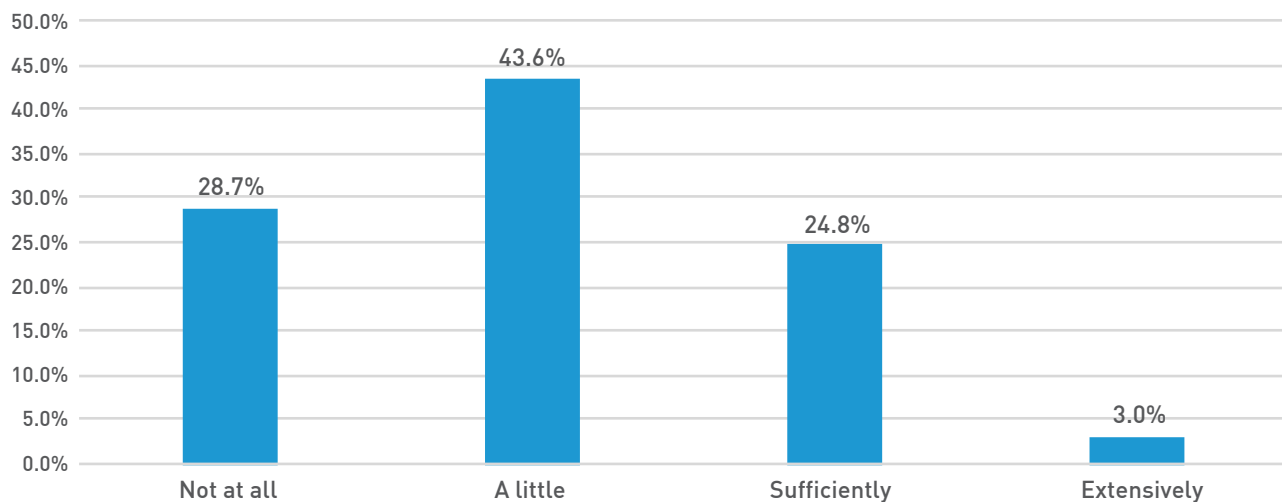
## Access to Information

Compared to two years ago there is a slight improvement in civil society access to public information, although information from public institutions remains insufficient.

In general, access to information is a prerequisite for any civil society engagement in public life, and in particular for participation in policy making. Access to public information is a constitutional right guaranteed by Article 41 of the Constitution, while Law 03/L-215 on Access to Public Documents defines the principles and conditions for access to public documents. This law and other sub legal acts define information and documents that should be public without the need for a request, and when it is necessary to request access, public institutions are obliged to respond to the party within 7 days from the day of receiving the request for access.



In general, few CSOs declared that they are sufficiently informed by public institutions about the areas in which these CSOs are engaged. Thus, the overwhelming majority of surveyed CSOs stated that they are slightly informed by public institutions about the areas in which they operate (44%) or not at all (29%). Only about 25% of the respondents stated that they were sufficiently informed by public institutions about their work in the field of CSOs.



**Figure 56. Communication of CSOs with public institutions which act within a similar field– Source: CSO Survey**

On the other hand, the number of organizations that have requested access to public documents is low. Among the surveyed CSOs, only about 19% stated that they applied for access to public documents during 2017. However, when CSOs apply for access to public documents, it appears they largely receive response with a delay (42%), or did not received answer at all; respectively they are rejected by administrative silence (21%).

## Participation in Policy-making

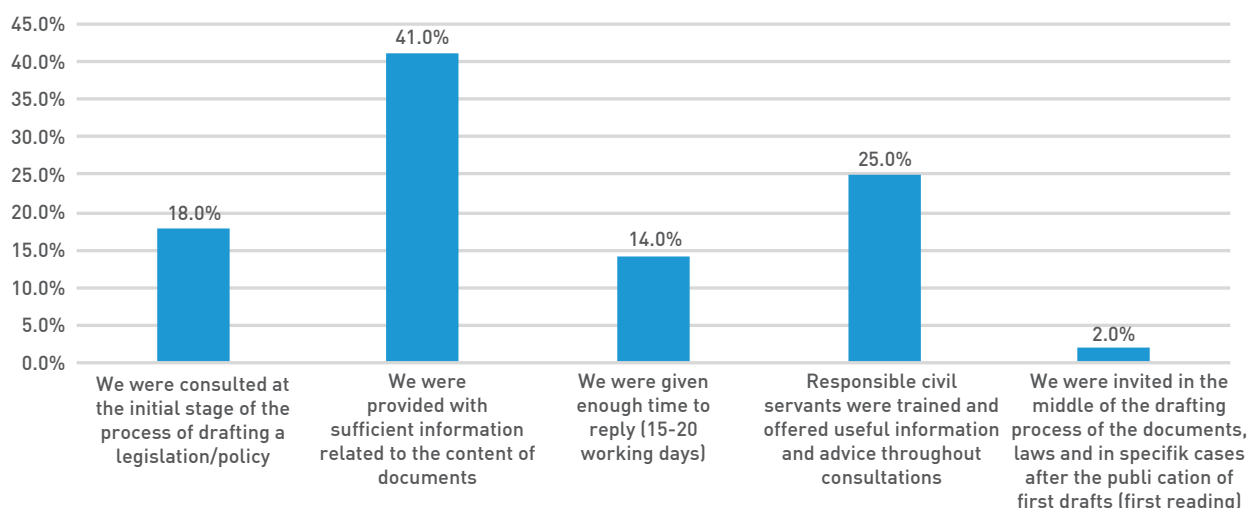
Compared to the situation from before two years, the participation of civil society in policy-making during 2017 has decreased. Elections at both levels and the decline of policy-making dynamics during 2017 seem to have affected the apparent decline in the percentage of organizations that have been active in the policy-making process and those who have received regular invitations for public consultation.

The legal framework in Kosovo foresees the involvement of CSOs and citizens in decision-making at all levels of government, with the exception of the Kosovo Assembly, where the involvement of CSOs is not mandatory. In addition to the general conditions set out in the Constitution, the Government's Rules of Procedure foresee public consultations on all policy and law proposals where the proposing body needs to provide proper and timely information as well as information on the results of the consultation. The Rules of Procedure of the Assembly provide for the possibility to invite CSOs to meetings of Parliamentary Committees and to hold public hearings. The Law on Local Self-Government incorporates citizen participation mechanisms at local level, including public consultations, sectoral consultative commissions, petitions, public meetings with the mayor, etc. Also, since January 2017, the Rule on Minimum Standards for the Governmental Public Consultation Process is in force, which has started to be implemented but still not at the appropriate level.

Data from CSO surveys show that a large number of organizations do not follow the process of drafting laws and policies in Kosovo at all. Among those active in this field, the majority stated that regulations, draft laws, or draft policies were never published on time (24%), or rarely published 38%. On the other hand, a very small number of organizations stated that they were invited regularly for public consultation, whenever there were issues related to their work (5%) or who were invited only from time to time (21.8%), while more than half stated that they were never invited to public consultation by public authorities during 2017. Similarly, organizations responded when they were asked whether their organization was involved in drafting any public policy, law, or municipal regulation, where only about 18% of them stated that they were engaged in drafting any public policy during 2017. Moreover, in the previous edition of the Index, the data show that CSOs with their wider geographical coverage are more frequently invited for public consultation as compared to CSOs whose activity is limited to a village, town or independent institution.

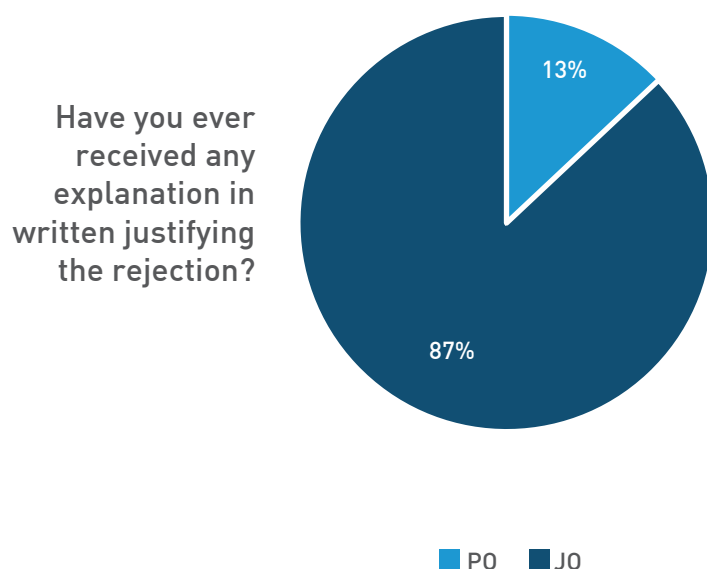
While the full effects of the entry into force of the Regulation on minimum standards for public consultation remain to be further analyzed, it appears that this apparent decline in participation is mainly due to the fact that 2017 was an election year at both levels. Concretely, the June 2017 general elections have led to the decline in the workload of the government and the Assembly several months earlier, while the policy-making process has almost completely stopped from June to the formation of the government in September 2017. Similarly, local elections in October 2017 have led to the second part of the year being characterized by focus in the electoral campaign, rather than in official processes of drafting public policies and normative acts.

Asked about their experience during the public consultation process, about 41% of CSOs stated that they were not provided enough information on the content of consultation documents, and only 14% stated that they had sufficient time to respond to the invitation for public consultation. Moreover, a very small number stated that they were consulted at the initial stage of the process of drafting the policy or legislation. On the other hand, only a quarter of respondents think that the persons responsible for public consultation management from the public institution have been competent for their work and that CSOs have provided them with enough advice and information (25%).



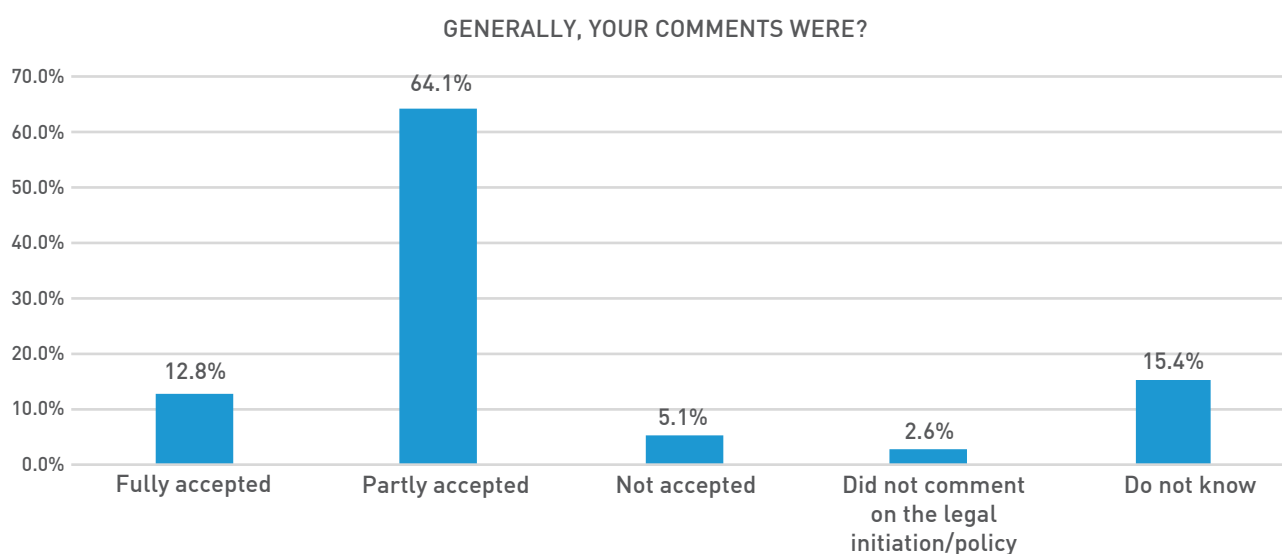
**Figure 57. CSO experience with the public consultations process – Source: CSO Survey**

What is repeated from the previous edition, and continues to remain worrying is the low level of feedback from public consultation. Around 73.3% of CSOs stated that they never received any written response to the reasons for refusing their comments. On the other hand, data show that organizations that have received justification for their rejected comments operate at the municipal level. This finding confirms the findings made in the 2015 Index, providing indication that local level of governance implements communication mechanisms, respectively ensures better reasoning compared to the central level.



**Figure 58. CSO experiences with responses of refused comments during the public consultations process – Source: CSO Survey**

In general, it is noticed that only a part of civil society organizations are active in the policy-making process, while the vast majority stated that they are not invited for public consultation by public authorities (61.4%), of whom about half did not closely follow the process of drafting laws and policies. However, organizations that participate in policy-making processes seem to be more consolidated. Among the organizations claiming that they are active in the policy-making process, the overwhelming majority said that this commitment would be made regardless of whether their organization has funds for such a thing or not. Also, when CSOs participate in public consultation processes for drafting laws or policies, they are largely taken into account by public institutions. The overwhelming majority of CSOs that participated in a public consultation process during 2017 stated that their comments were partially (64%) or fully accepted (12.8%).



**Figure 59. CSO's experience with the handling of their comments during the public consultations process**  
 – Source: CSO Survey

On the other hand, the participation of CSOs in various working groups or other bodies established by public institutions remains low. The overwhelming majority of CSOs stated that they were never invited to participate in a joint body with public institutions, whether a working group, a consultative body or something similar (95%). Those few organizations that were invited have been invited by the Assembly of Kosovo and the municipalities. In most cases, civil society representatives have been nominated directly by public institutions, and from all the organizations surveyed, only one case has been reported where it has been asked the organizations themselves to appoint their representative to the relevant working group.

# External environment

## Socio-economic Context

Based on the latest census data, conducted by Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS), during 2011 Kosovo had 1,739,825 inhabitants, of whom 50.3% were males and 49.7% females; around 63% of the population was under the age of 34, making Kosovo the country with the youngest population in Europe.<sup>11</sup> Estimates of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics are that at the end of 2017, Kosovo had 1,798,506 inhabitants<sup>12</sup>.

During 2017, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was estimated to have been 6.3 billion EUR<sup>13</sup>, while in the year 2016 GDP per capita was 3,386 EUR<sup>14</sup>, making average income about ten times lower than those at EU level. Despite the fact of positive economic growth over the years, Kosovo remains one of poorest countries in Europe. During 2017 Kosovo marked an economic growth of 4.4%, which is considered as the country with the most visible economic growth in the region, but this growth is still very small to bring economic development to the country<sup>15</sup>. Without taking in consideration this economic growth, a large part of the population (50.01%) remain dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the current economic direction of Kosovo, 38.0% are neutral, while only 11.9% are satisfied or very satisfied with the economic direction of the country.<sup>16</sup> Poverty remains high despite the criteria on the standardized poverty lines that can be used. The latest KAS data from 2015 show that the poverty rate in Kosovo is 17.6% (with the poverty line set at 1.82 EUR per day), while the extreme poverty is 5.2% (with the extreme poverty line set at 1.30 EUR per day).<sup>17</sup> High unemployment and lack of quality jobs have contributed to poverty and income insecurity. Kosovo has one of the lowest employment figures in Europe. In 2017, only 29.8% of working age population in Kosovo were employed, while 30.5% of them were unemployed.<sup>18</sup> The degree of inactivity of the workforce is even more worrying, where in 2017 the percentage of the population that was not economically active was 57.2%. All employment indicators show that women and young people are most affected by unemployment or inactivity: only 20% of working age women are active in the labor market compared to 65.3% of men; only 12.7% of women of working age are employed in relation to 46.6% of men; 52.7% of people aged 15-24 were unemployed.

<sup>11</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Republic of Kosovo, Population Census 2011: Main findings [Prishtinë/Priština, 2012]. Can be found at: [http://askdata.rks-gov.net/PXWeb/pxweb/sq/ask-data/askdata\\_\\_09%20Population\\_\\_Population%20Structure/ps02.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=6e365ede-2905-445c-87f6-12f3ce368482](http://askdata.rks-gov.net/PXWeb/pxweb/sq/ask-data/askdata__09%20Population__Population%20Structure/ps02.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=6e365ede-2905-445c-87f6-12f3ce368482)

<sup>12</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Republic of Kosovo, Statistical Yearbook of Republic of Kosovo [Prishtinë/Priština, 2018]. Can be found at: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4149/vjetari-statistikor-2018-final.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Central Bank of Kosovo, Annual Report 2017 [Prishtinë/Priština, 2018]. Can be found at: [https://bqk-kos.org/repository/docs/2017/BQK\\_RV\\_2017.pdf](https://bqk-kos.org/repository/docs/2017/BQK_RV_2017.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Republic of Kosovo, Gross Domestic Product 2008-2016 [Prishtinë/Priština, 2017]. Can be found at: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3628/bpv-2008-2016.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> World Bank Country Snapshot April 2018

<sup>16</sup> Public Pulse XIV

<sup>17</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Republic of Kosovo, Poverty in Consumption in the Republic of Kosovo 2012-2015 [Prishtinë/Priština, 2017]. Can be found at: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3186/stat-e-varferise-2012-2015.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Republic of Kosovo, Labor Force Survey 2017 [Prishtinë/Priština, 2018]. Can be found at: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3972/anketa-e-fuqis%C3%AB-pun%C3%ABtore-2017-1.pdf>

Remittances continue to have a high impact on economic development, along with government spending and increased lending activity.<sup>19</sup> However, there is still no substantial increase in the demand for manpower that would reduce the pressure of some 20,000 newcomers who enter the labor market every year. According to the latest data for 2016 by KAS, private sector is dominated by commercial/trade enterprises (47.7% of enterprises with 34.9% of employees), while the category of production accounts for only 13.5% of enterprises, respectively 15.6% of employees.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, out of 9,223 new enterprises registered during 2017, 26.6% are concentrated in the trade sector, followed by 10.1% in the hotel sector and about 9.5% in the manufacturing sectors, respectively agriculture. About 99% of them are micro-enterprises with less than 10 employees.<sup>21</sup> This structure of enterprises has no potential for significant job creation. Remittances that are considered the largest category within the secondary accounts, during the year 2017 amounted to 759.2 million EUR, marking an increase of 9.9% in comparison to last year.<sup>22</sup> Countries with the highest remittances are Germany with 39.3% of them, Switzerland with 22.5% and US with 7.0%.<sup>23</sup> The trade deficit remains large; exports amount to nearly 378.0 million EUR in 2017, while imports amounted to 3.047 billion EUR.<sup>24</sup> In addition, employees remain vulnerable due to high informality in the economy. Recent studies over the last few years speak about the size of the informal sector in Kosovo ranging from 34% to 37%, depending on whether it is measured by the number of enterprises avoiding tax payment or the number of enterprises that do not report their employees to relevant state institutions.<sup>25</sup> A similar degree is also confirmed by the statements of the Minister of Finance at the end of 2017.<sup>26</sup>

Kosovo's large diaspora is a result of traditional movements of Kosovo's citizens towards countries of Western Europe and beyond due to various political and economic circumstances. Compared with the large waves of emigration that took over Kosovo during 2014 and 2015, the number of asylum seekers from Kosovo to the western countries has declined significantly over the last two years. Thus, the number of asylum seekers from Kosovo to EU and Schengen areas has dropped from 73,235 in 2015 to 11,965 during 2016 and around 7,575 during 2017.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the number of returned Kosovans decreased from 18,789 as in 2015 to 11,030 in 2016 and 4,509 in 2017.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Central Bank of Kosovo, Annual Report 2017 [Prishtinë/Priština, 2018]; Can be found at: [https://bqk-kos.org/repository/docs/2017/BQK\\_RV\\_2017.pdf](https://bqk-kos.org/repository/docs/2017/BQK_RV_2017.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Republic of Kosovo, Statistical Yearbook of Republic of Kosovo (Prishtinë/Priština, 2018); Can be found at: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4149/vjetari-statistikor-2018-final.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Republic of Kosovo, Statistical Yearbook of Republic of Kosovo (Prishtinë/Priština, 2018); Can be found at: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4149/vjetari-statistikor-2018-final.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> [https://bqk-kos.org/repository/docs/2017/BQK\\_RV\\_2017.pdf](https://bqk-kos.org/repository/docs/2017/BQK_RV_2017.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> [https://bqk-kos.org/repository/docs/2017/BQK\\_RV\\_2017.pdf](https://bqk-kos.org/repository/docs/2017/BQK_RV_2017.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4085/tregtija-e-jashtme-2017-shqip.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Zeka, Elda, Premton Hyseni, Julia Leuther, Gent Beqiri, Lumir Abdixhiku, Alban Hashani and Agon Nixha. To Pay or Not to Pay: A Business Perspective of Informality in Kosovo. Report: Riinvest; Pristina: Riinvest, 2013. Can be found at: [http://www.fes-prishtina.org/wb/media/Publications/2013/BUSINESS\\_INFORMALITY\\_\\_ENG\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.fes-prishtina.org/wb/media/Publications/2013/BUSINESS_INFORMALITY__ENG_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> "31.7% of the economy in Kosovo is not formal." November 2017. Telegrafi. Accessed on 15 August 2018; <https://telegrafi.com/31-7-e-ekonomise-ne-kosoves-eshte-jo-formale/>

<sup>27</sup> European Commission, Kosovo Report 2018 [Brussels, 2018]; Can be found at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> European Commission, Kosovo Report 2018 [Brussels, 2018]; Can be found at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>

## Socio-political Context

Over the last few years, Kosovo's political landscape has experienced some characteristic developments. Although six years have passed since the end of Kosovo's independence oversight by a foreign entity, Kosovo remains a host and subject to foreign political, judicial and military organizations, such as NATO and EULEX. Both of these organizations continue to exercise considerable political influence within Kosovo, although from June 2018 EULEX has changed its mandate by removing most of its executive powers and focusing on the support, monitoring and advisory mandate for the rule of law institutions in Kosovo.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Kosovo remains challenged in the international arena, as five EU member states and a significant number of United Nations member states (UN) continue not to recognize its independence.<sup>30</sup> By gaining recognition of Barbados during 2018, the number of states that have recognized Kosovo to date has reached 118,<sup>31</sup> only seven higher than in August of 2016.

Kosovo over the past two years has continued to mark slight improvement in the democratic performance that Freedom House evaluates on an annual basis, being considered a semi-consolidated authoritarian regime with a grade of 4.93<sup>32</sup>. The year 2017 was an eventful year in terms of electoral activities, as in a very short period of time Kosovo held elections both at central and local level. With the pretext of the inability to delay some of the important political processes, specifically the ratification of the demarcation agreement with Montenegro, the then-directed government of Isa Mustafa collapsed in May 2017. Early elections were announced by the President in a short timeframe for 11 June 2017. These elections were generally considered to be peaceful and democratic, but with some recurring hurdles, incorrect voter lists, a short term unjustified choice for early elections, a non-functional system for voting outside the country<sup>33</sup>. Even after these elections, the country entered a period of political stalemate caused by the inability of political parties to find agreement on the position of the Speaker of Parliament and the lack of votes to establish the Government. The 3-month institutional gridlock only ended when a small parliamentary party passed on the other side, securing the necessary majority to form the new government with Ramush Haradinaj as Prime Minister.<sup>34</sup> In addition to the ratification of the demarcation agreement with Montenegro in March 2018, this coalition failed to push forward reforms related to EU integration and to provide broader consensus on key issues that preoccupy Kosovo<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> "New mandate of EULEX", 8 June 2018; EULEX mission; Accessed on 15 August 2018 <http://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/?page=1,10,836>

<sup>30</sup> "How long will last the withdrawal of Kosovo recognition from Liberia", 20 June 2018. Koha Ditore. Accessed on 15 August 2018 <https://www.koha.net/arberi/100439/sa-do-te-zg-jase-terheqja-e-njohjes-se-kosoves-nga-liberia/>

<sup>31</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo <http://www.mfa-ks.net/?page=1,259>

<sup>32</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2018 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018>

<sup>33</sup> EU Election Monitoring Mission, Kosovo Parliamentary Election Report 2017. Can be found at: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/final\\_report\\_eom\\_kosovo\\_june\\_2017.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/final_report_eom_kosovo_june_2017.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> "Ramush Haradinaj is elected new Kosovo Prime Minister", 9 September 2017; RTK; Accessed on 15 August 2018 <http://www.rtklive.com/sq/news-single.php?ID=197510>

<sup>35</sup> Progress Report



The political dialogue on the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia that started in 2012 is continuing, albeit with an unpredictable pace and with evident problems of legitimacy over who should lead the dialogue on behalf of Kosovo<sup>36</sup>. While there are problems in the implementation of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Association of Serb Majority Municipalities, one of the most important agreements arising from this process during these two years was the one on justice through which in October 2017 40 Serbian judges and 13 prosecutors were decreed, thus completing the recruitment process for judicial personnel in the north of Kosovo.<sup>37</sup>

Following the entry into force of Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) in April 2016, institutions continued to establish implementing mechanisms and prioritize reforms through the European Reform Agenda (ERA). This Agenda has identified priority areas including reform and good governance, rule of law, competitiveness and the investment climate, employment and education.<sup>38</sup> Overall, the implementation of the SAA measures is on a low level<sup>39</sup>, while the main reasons for this are considered to be lack of coordination between implementing institutions, lack of dedicated implementation budget and lack of understanding of the importance of SAA and the European integration process from some institutions.<sup>40</sup>

Since political parties are the most influential political entities, their funding remains the most problematic issue. The main political parties are mainly funded by private businesses, while their spending reports have not been published, although there are certain laws that foresee political parties to do so.<sup>41</sup> The main problem remains the uncertainty of political party financial statements, a problem that has only deteriorated with the change of the Law on Financing of Political Parties. The main change relates to the transfer of the competencies of selecting auditors to audit party financial statements from the Central Election Commission to the Assembly of Kosovo, which has done no auditing of the statements since 2013.<sup>42</sup> Similar to the past, even during the 2017 election year, many political parties recruited civil society or media activists just shortly before the elections, but the effect of these recruitments on their internal democratization was insignificant.

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<sup>36</sup> "Kosovo: Thaçi seeks the creation of unity group for dialogue with Serbia", 2 July 2018. Deutsche Welle. Accessed on 15 August 2018 <https://www.dw.com/sq/kosov%C3%AB-tha%C3%A7i-k%C3%ABrkon-krijimin-e-grupit-t%C3%AB-unitetit-p%C3%ABr-dialog-me-serbin%C3%AB/a-44487918>

<sup>37</sup> Progress Report

<sup>38</sup> Progress Report

<sup>39</sup> "Minister Hoxha requests more work from institutions for implementation of SAA", August 7, 2018. The Ministry of European Integration; Accessed on 15 August 2018 <http://mei-ks.net/sq/lajmet/ministrja-hoxha-krkon-m-shum-pun-nga-institucionet-pr-zbatimin-e-msa-s>

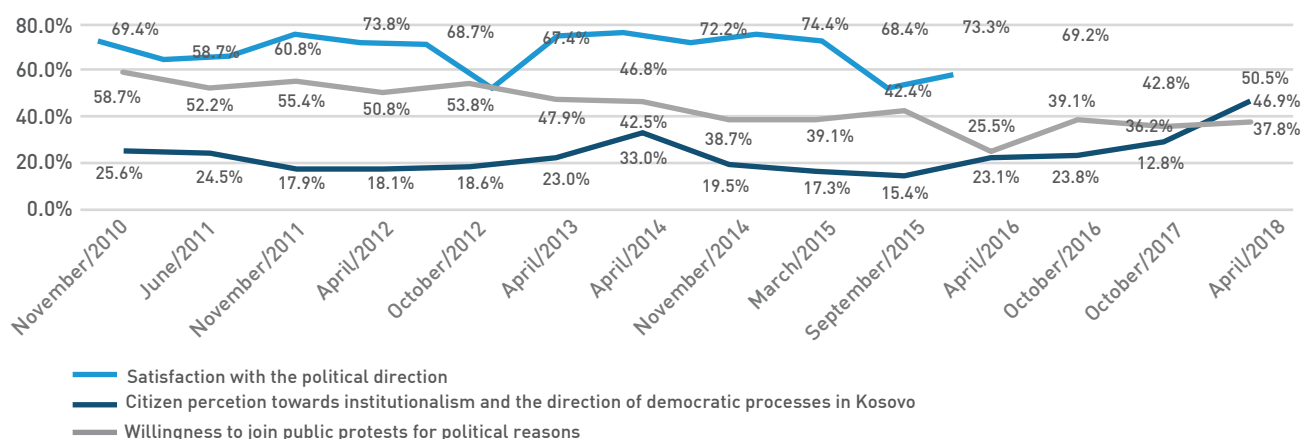
<sup>40</sup> "Monitoring the Implementation of the SAA ...", May 5, 2018. Group for Legal and Political Studies; Accessed on 15 August 2018 <http://www.informatat.com/glps-per-gjashtemujo-rin-e-dyte-te-2017-tes-u-realizuan-39-te-objektivave-per-msa-ne/>

<sup>41</sup> Visar Sutaj and Artan Canhasi. National Integrity System Assessment Kosovo; Report; Kosovo Democratic Institute; KDI, 2015; Can be found at: [http://www.kdi-kosova.org/publikime/19-2015-10-31-kdi-tik-nis-eng\\_all\\_single\\_final-3.pdf](http://www.kdi-kosova.org/publikime/19-2015-10-31-kdi-tik-nis-eng_all_single_final-3.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> <http://kosovotwopointzero.com/political-party-funding-kosovo/>

## Socio-cultural Context

Compared to the years 2015 and 2016, where satisfaction of citizens with political directions in the country's governance was very low in the evaluation, at the end of 2017 and early 2018, this parameter has increased. However, the values remain generally low: only 15.2% of citizens are satisfied with Kosovo's political direction, while 50.5% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Similar trend is also marked on satisfaction with the work of key country institutions. The results from April 2018 show that only 30% of respondents are satisfied with the work of the Government, 33% with the work of the Assembly, 31.2% with the work of the Courts and 29.9% with the Prosecutor's Office. When it comes to the country's leading positions, citizens' satisfaction ranges from 39.1% for the work of the President, 33.2% for the work of the Prime Minister and to 31.5% for the work of the President of the Assembly.<sup>43</sup>



**Figure 60. Trends of citizens' opinions about political direction, democratic processes, and readiness for protests – Source: UNDP Public Pulse XIV**

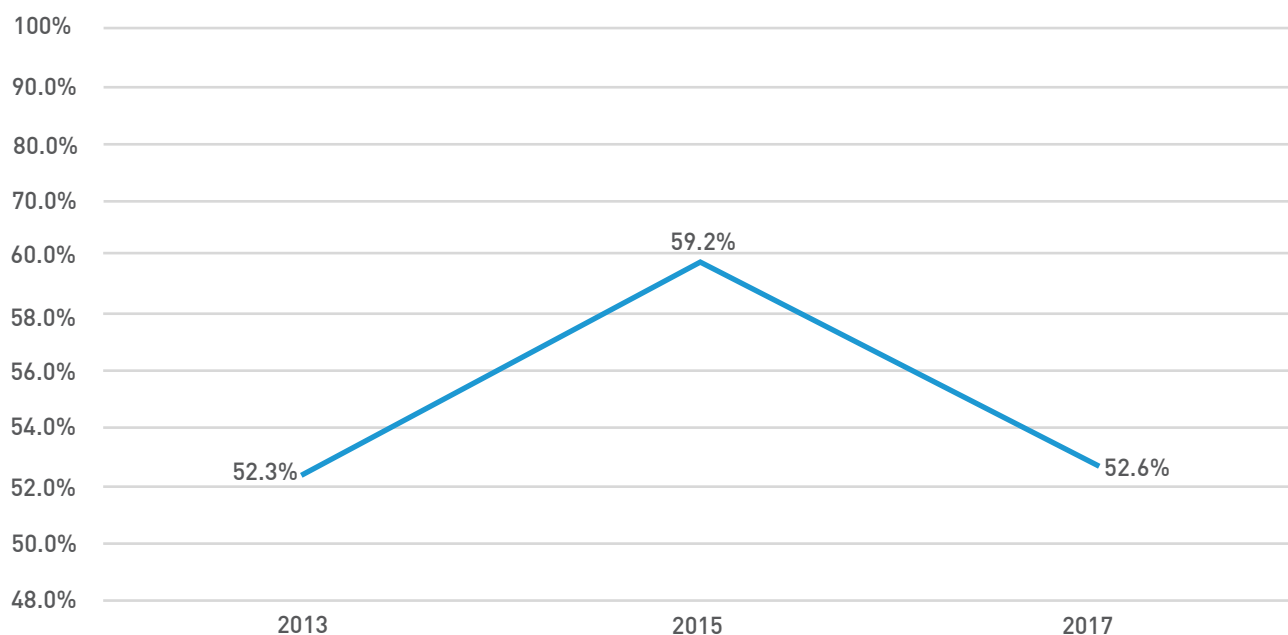
On the other hand, the percentage of citizens willing to protest for political reasons remains similar to two years ago, at slightly less than 40%. Although low, the Democratization Index measured by the UNDP Public Pulse has increased over the past two years, with some elements that have influenced this growth, such as the assessment that the Constitution and laws of Kosovo are democratic, that the media in Kosovo enjoys freedom of expression, and that elections in Kosovo are democratic and in line with international standards. However, the low confidence of making changing through elections is still very worrying, where only 32% of potential voters think that their vote could change the situation in Kosovo.<sup>44</sup>

Over the past two years, there has been less public opinion measurement about credibility in the institutions. However, available data indicate that security institutions continue to remain the most trusted, with KSF at the top of the list with 78% of citizens trusting this institution, followed by KFOR with 66% and Kosovo Police with 61%.

<sup>43</sup> UNDP Office in Kosovo, Public Pulse XIV (Prishtinë/Priština, 2018). [http://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic\\_governance/public-pulse-xiv.html](http://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic_governance/public-pulse-xiv.html)

<sup>44</sup> UNDP Office in Kosovo, Public Pulse XIV (Prishtinë/Priština, 2018); [http://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic\\_governance/public-pulse-xiv.html](http://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic_governance/public-pulse-xiv.html)

In the other extreme, the Government and the Assembly are trusted by 14%, respectively 12% of citizens. Municipalities (37%), Prosecution (29%) and Courts (25%) also remain with low credibility.<sup>45</sup>



**Figure 61. Level of citizen trust in civil society – Source: UNDP Public Pulse XIV**

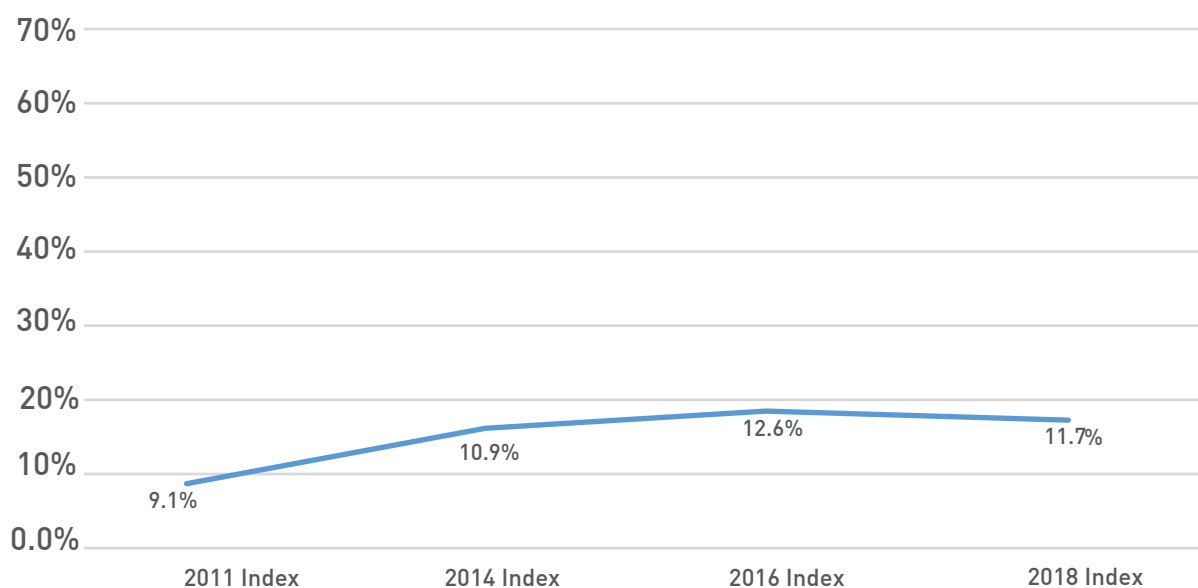
Civil society continues to remain on the list of the most trusted sectors, despite a slight decrease compared to 2015. Similar to previous years' data, more than half of citizens think that civil society can be trusted.

The protection of human rights is guaranteed by a legal framework mainly according to European standards, but implementation in practice is deficient due to lack of budget and other resources, lack of political prioritization and lack of coordination. Minority rights, the lack of gender equality and the lack of a child protection system remain as main problems.<sup>46</sup> Freedom of expression and media freedom during these years have been violated, especially with regard to the increased number of threats and reports reported to journalists. During 2017, for example, the Association of Journalists of Kosovo (AJK) reported 24 incidents, almost double more in comparison with the previous year. The perplexing reaction of the justice system to the investigation and punishment of attacks on journalists and the freedom of expression is generally still a concern. The list of these incidents includes two death threats against two editors-in-chief and one case of the threat of a journalist attacked by a member of a Parliament.<sup>47</sup> The European Commission report on Kosovo also criticizes the state funding of Radio Television of Kosovo that continues to jeopardize the independence of this institution, making it more vulnerable to political pressures.

<sup>45</sup> Kosovo Security Barometer, Kosovo Center for Security Studies (KCSC); KCSC, 2018; Can be found at: <http://www.qkss.org/sq/Raportet/Barometri-Kosovar-i-Sigurise-Edicioni-i-Shtate-1050>

<sup>46</sup> European Commission, Kosovo Report 2018 (Brussels, 2018); Can be found at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> European Commission, Kosovo Report 2018 (Brussels, 2018); Can be found at: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>



**Figure 62. The level of interpersonal trust among citizens - Source: UNDP Public Pulse XIV**

Kosovo citizens continue to exhibit low trust towards each other. Asked when dealing with others, how much can they trust them, only 11.7% of respondents claim that most people can be trusted. This low level of interpersonal trust, which is repeated for years, is extremely obstructive for any common commitment to public affairs, especially for civil society initiatives where co-operation and shared civic action is a key element.



## Indeksi Kosovar i Shoqërisë Civile

The Kosovar Civil Society Index (KCSI) is a regular study of the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation (KCSF), which periodically assesses the state of civil society in Kosovo by measuring the main dimensions of this sector, such as: sector's structure, legal framework, governance and internal capacities, citizen engagement, financing, perceived impact as well as the external environment for civil society operation. This Summary serves to present the main findings and general recommendations for each chapter of the Research Report.

The index is based mainly on the results of the organization's survey (with 101 CSOs), external stakeholder's survey (with 101 representatives of other sectors outside the civil society), donor survey (with about 30 foreign donors in Kosovo) and population survey (with integrated questions in the UNDP Public Pulse XIV) as well as data from the NGO Public Register, the Kosovo Tax Administration and the Kosovo Pension Savings Trust.

For more, download the full version of the Kosovar Civil Society Index 2018 at [www.kcsfoundation.org](http://www.kcsfoundation.org).

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