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RETHINKING EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
Perceptions and Realities 2005

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INTRODUCTION

During the period September - October 2005, Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) carried out its third annual survey on Albanians' knowledge of the European Union (EU) and its institutions as well as their perceptions on the country's progress towards EU membership. As a first step towards a more comprehensive national survey, AIIS added the public administration of local government to the four target groups that had been surveyed before - central government public administration, business community, NGOs, and media. Since it has been our intention to survey groups that are directly responsible for the integration process (public administration), directly affected by it (business community), or groups that impact the population's perception of the EU and the integration process and monitor its progress (media, NGOs), adding the public administration of local governments to our target group was "imposed" on us by the success of the decentralization reform as well as by the fact that in the forthcoming years it is expected a more active involvement of this group in the integration process. The public administration capacities, internal management rules and its worldviews will become more important as local government structures exercise the powers being devolved to them. In the process, it is to be expected that not only will they play a larger role in administering the obligations of governance, but they will also become more important actors in the policy-making process.

The five categories were administered the same questionnaire and surveying techniques in order to monitor the dynamics of change over time on the level of knowledge and perceptions of the integration process.¹ It is important to point out that the survey was carried out almost three years after the official opening of negotiations for the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between Brussels and Tirana. At this time, at least two contrary factors may have been relevant to Albanians' perceptions of EU. First, the EU and Albania's integration process have been under the spotlight of media attention. The failed constitutional referenda in France and the Netherlands as well as the ensuing rows and soul-searching within the EU have been closely followed by the Albanian press. More close to home, the recent invitation to Croatia and Turkey to begin membership negotiations, and to Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina to start the SA process have confirmed that the enlargement process is back on track on the European side and most countries in Western Balkans are taking good advantage of it. Second, the media perception that Albania had made no relevant progress between October 2004 and October 2005 may have caused increasing frustrations with Albanian

¹ Neither Albania's progress nor the addition of a new target group necessitated major changes to the questionnaire. First, Albania's progress from October 2004 to 2005 was negligible from an institutional perspective—until October 2005, the country had not passed any clearly identifiable stages on the road to membership. The last report of the European Commission in November 09, 2005 came out after our survey was concluded. Second, the addition of the new target group did not change the character of our task since, conceptually, the administrative structures of both levels of government are part of the state's public administration. Minor changes consisted mainly of adding options to already existing questions. These questions are 10, 21, 24 and 27. See ANNEX I and compare with *Rethinking European Integration: Perceptions & Realities*, Albanian Institute for International Studies (Tirana: October 2004), full text: www.aiis-albania.org.

politics, EU approaches towards Albania or apathy towards the process. This may well change now that Albania was given the green light to sign the SAA on the first half of 2006.² However, it is important to remember that our survey was concluded before the progress report of the European Commission.³

The first *Perceptions and Realities* survey was carried out in October 2002. It showed serious misunderstandings regarding the process of Albania's EU integration in terms of its timeframe, determining factors and the benefits that Albania would derive from it.⁴ On the other hand, the second survey showed a great deal of improvement in the three areas of integration enumerated above as well as a decline in support for EU membership. Yet, this decline was firmly linked to a more pessimistic and more realistic understanding of the challenges and timeframe of EU integration rather than any rise in anti-EU feelings. While the fall in EU support was far from hitting a critical point, its swiftness brought home the necessity of monitoring support rather than taking it for granted. As Albania's integration process becomes more tangible and its realities are brought home to an increasing number of Albanians, Europe may become less of a national *teleology* and more of a normal policy choice with costs and benefits that can be weighed rationally. As a result, the extraordinary politics of national consensus that has fueled the integration process so far may become normalized - driven or impeded by interest groups often with antagonistic agendas.

The European Commission's 2005 Report on Albania indicated that Albania may enter a more delicate stage of the integration process. The newly-enhanced capacities of the Ministry of European Integration reflect this trend. Not only is there a necessity for demonstrating continuous willingness to implement the necessary reforms, but the need for medium-term and long-term policies that take into account the differing interests of social groups in diverse areas and aim to maximize utility within the confines of EU conditionality will require all the political vision and technical capacities Albania can muster. The popular perception that Albania must simply comply with the conditions imposed by EU in order to become ready for membership is false and dangerous. The implementation process must be pro-active and inclusive. After all, even long-time EU members differ widely in how they use EU institutions and the *acquis communautaire* to their benefit. The same applies to new member-states or member-states to be. While the European perspective of Western Balkans has never been in doubt since the Thessalonica Summit, the way each country will achieve membership and will take advantage of the integration process will depend on internal factors. European Albania will not be a pre-determined copy of European perfection but what we make of it.

In order to provide some basis for this approach, AIIS has devised a set of recommendations that flow quite naturally from the survey. We hope they will prove helpful to local and international actors. Moreover, AIIS has founded the European Studies Program as an internal strategic analysis unit for issues pertinent to the European integration process.

² Olli Rehn, "The Door to Europe is still Open to you," *Tirana Times*, Nov. 25-Dec. 2 2005, Vol. 1, No. 38. Available at <http://www.tiranatimes.com>.

³ European Commission, *Albania 2005: Progress Report*, Brussels, 9 November 2005.

⁴ See *Albania and the European Union: Perceptions and Realities*, Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS, Tirana 2002), full text on www.aiis-albania.org.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Support for Albania's EU membership remains relatively high in 2005 in all four previously surveyed categories as well as in the new category introduced this year, the public administration of local government. However, the trend of declining support for EU membership continued; from a high support rate of 99 % support in 2002, the figure declined to 89% in 2004 and now is at 83.9%. Although support for membership remains high, a drop of 15 percent over three years may give rise to some concern. While not yet reflected in public discourse, Albania may be starting to experience the beginnings of an interest-based resistance to integration. By itself, this resistance need not be considered a priori as cause for alarm. The surveyed categories display a better knowledge of the EU and a deeper understanding of the integration process than ever before while the trend of declining support for EU integration over time has occurred in other East European countries as well. Moreover, it is important to point out that the categories surveyed do not represent the Albanian population at large—they are better educated and more closely involved in the integration process. The challenge for policy-makers is to divest the integration process from any myths and misperceptions in order to get more pertinent feedback from those sections of Albanian society with a stake on Albania's EU membership.

Interestingly, while support for membership has dropped, the **EU has continued to gain in importance** as a strategic partner for Albania. While the EU has continuously come up as Albania's foremost partner, its gain from an already very high score in 2004 is truly remarkable. Kosovo's score is a close second, while Italy and the United States are tied at third place. These seemingly contradictory trends indicate that the five surveyed categories do not link their support for EU membership to the strategic value they place on the EU as a partner for Albania. The high perceptions of EU as an institution are not dependent on temporary optimism or pessimism with Albania's integration process.

The reason for the increasingly higher importance placed on EU and the drop in membership support is explained by the fact that there is **no rise in Europhobe feelings**⁵ in Albania. The drop in support for Albania's EU membership is partly explained by pessimism regarding the speed of the integration process among respondents. Those who estimate that the integration process will take a very long time have a higher tendency to vote against EU membership. Yet, contrary to 2004 where the positive relationship between increased pessimism on the integration process and a drop on EU membership support was firmly established, now the falling support for EU membership cannot be fully explained by pessimism. Thus, although support for EU membership has fallen, the surveyed categories are slightly more optimistic on Albania's progress towards

⁵ Europhobes reject the underlying principles of European integration, namely institutionalized cooperation on the basis of pooled sovereignty and an integrated market economy because of nationalist, socialist, or isolationist principles. Nicole Lindstrom, "From Permissive Consensus to Contentious Politics: Varieties of Euroskepticism in Croatia and Slovenia, presented to the Cornell Mellon-Sawyer Seminar, *Towards a Transnational and Transcultural Europe*, 9 April 2002, 5.

membership. While better membership prospects would undoubtedly have a positive impact on EU membership support, the latter is not entirely dependent on the former.

The surveyed categories value the EU as a strategic partner for the Albanian Government more than ever before. Their evaluation of the EU as a democratic organization that is a factor of peace, stability and economic growth in Europe has improved as well. Hence, the drop in support for EU membership may come as a result of the categories' **clearer perceptions of the costs of integration** entails. It may also indicate disillusionment considering the extremely high initial expectations of respondents in the past and/or it might reflect a better understanding of the conditionality that forms the bases of EU approach towards aspiring members. Finally, the growth in anti-membership support is relatively modest—we notice a higher growth on the percentage of respondents that are undecided on the issue of EU membership. No matter what the cause or causes of the drop in support for EU membership, Albania seems to reflect a trend experienced in the Eastern European countries that joined the EU on May 1st 2004. In most of these countries support for EU membership started growing thin as the actual membership date approached.

As in 2004, the **business community is the leading social group in its ambivalent attitude towards EU integration**. This community has begun to put up increasing resistance against reforms that the Albanian government has to undertake under EU pressure, in the SAA framework.⁶ Such interest driven resistance that can also be found elsewhere in the accession and candidate countries is combined with skepticism and disillusionment regarding the stages of the integration process, as reflected in the fact that most respondents see EU membership as quite distant in time. Other than the business community, anti-membership feelings in the civil society sector have increased as well. Considering the donor-driven character of Albanian civil society, this may not be as puzzling as it first seems. A European Albania would necessitate a difficult restructuring of this sector from its present ersatz character to a more citizen or interest group based *Bürgergesellschaft*.⁷ Since at present Albanian society seems far from ready to support an indigenous civil society with its internal resources, local NGOs might understandably be fearful of the drying-up of Western financial support. On the other hand, the newly-introduced category of local government administration generally followed closely the perceptions of central government public administration on the integration process—they strongly support EU integration and tend to be more optimistic in their evaluation of Albania's progress towards EU membership.

Compared to 2004, **the categories surveyed are slightly more optimistic on the speed of the integration process**. While in 2004 almost 30% of respondents estimated that it would take 15 years for Albania to join the EU and almost 24% of respondents estimated that the process would last more than 15 years, this year 25.1% think it will take 15 years

⁶ The negative experience of the business community with Albania's WTO obligations and regional FTAs gave birth to fears of a further opening of the Albanian market towards EU firms. The low competitiveness of Albanian businesses vis-à-vis European firms is one of the key issues impeding Albania's integration process.

⁷ Jacques Rupnik, "On Two Models of Exit from Communism: Central Europe and the Balkans," in Sorin Antohi and Vladimir Tismaneanu, eds., *Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and their Aftermath* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000), 17-19.

while only 8% think it will take longer than that. For the first time since 2002, a majority of respondents think that it will take 10 years till the country joins the EU. However, we have to keep in mind that three years have passed since our first survey in 2002 and thus the temporal expectations of the surveyed categories have become a great deal more realistic. Such changes in expectations may be explained with the approaching date of the signing of Stabilization Association Agreement, but also with the election campaign for the parliamentary elections of July 03rd 2005 when optimistic deadlines were promised to the public by campaigning politicians.

When we combine the increased optimism on the speed of the integration process with the increased knowledge of EU and its composite institutions as well as more familiarity with EU membership conditionality relative to 2004, we get a picture of **a greater sense of responsibility and awareness of the complexity of the integration process**. This is confirmed by the fact that respondents rated Albanian politics, free and fair elections, rule of law, organized crime and corruption as more important than Brussels attitude towards Albania, regional developments or the country's religious make up. The increased optimism of respondents may be explained by internal Albanian factors as well as external factors related to the dynamics of EU enlargement. Externally, the survey was carried out in September-October 2005, at a time when the European Commission opened the green light for Croatia and Turkey to begin accession negotiations and Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia & Montenegro to begin the negotiations for an SAA. Moreover, there were strong signals of support for Macedonia to gain full candidate status. The sense of hope and optimism generated in Western Balkans due to these developments may have been reflected in our survey responses as well. Internally, the sense that the signing of the SAA was dependent on the holding of democratic elections on July 03rd was fed by statements made by Albanian politicians as well as implied by EU officials. The peaceful rotation of power after these elections may have fed the optimism on the speed of EU integration process. With hindsight, this optimism has been legitimated with the relatively upbeat report of the European Commission on Albania in November 2005.

Yet, despite a higher level of knowledge and understanding of the integration process, **serious misconceptions continue to prevail**. A substantial percentage of respondents, 44%, think that Brussels should accept Albania before it is ready for membership. This represents an increase of 9 percentage points from 2004 and is almost equal to the 45% answer of 2002. Considering that the 2002 survey revealed a very problematic understanding of the integration process, the figure for 2005 is discouraging. Except for the NGO sector, more than 40% of respondents in each category agree that the EU should admit Albania before it is ready. On the other hand, 67 % of respondents agree that Albania is not ready for EU membership. Compared to 2004, while the assessment on Albanian readiness for EU membership has not changed, there is a considerable increase on the normative judgment that the EU should accept Albania before it is ready.

This misconception may be little more than wishful thinking on the part of respondents rather than a serious estimation of Brussels' intentions. After all, respondents valued only domestic factors when considering EU membership conditionality on Albania. A majority of them mentioned rule of law, the fight against organized crime and trafficking and economic development as primary conditions that Albania has to fulfill in order to

gain membership. Therefore, the surveyed categories understand that EU integration is not a process that starts in Brussels and ends in Tirana, but vice versa. Yet, respondents think that Brussels ought to accept Albania before it is ready for EU membership. According to AIIIS discussions with local experts, this misconception may result from Albanian perceptions that Albania will remain behind European Union standards irrespective of its economic and political progress. In the final analysis, Albanians may have a difficult time envisioning an Albania that is as European in its economic development and its cultural outlook as any West European country.

Another important misconception remains unchanged in the 2002, 2004 and 2005 surveys. All the surveyed categories continue to **perceive free movement as the major benefit of EU membership**. Thus, free movement is evaluated as more important than economic development, consolidation of democracy and the rule of law. Part of the reason for this is the fact that free movement is expected to be a more immediate benefit. No matter what the reason, this finding confirms that fifteen years after the collapse of the extreme isolation of the country, free movement opportunities still represent a major concern of Albanian society. EU conditionality on prospective member-states such as Bulgaria and Romania⁸ may make this problem more acute in the near future. Such expectation might also indicate a growing distaste with the burdensome and at times humiliating experiences with visa granting procedures.

The findings indicate two seemingly contradictory trends: on one hand there is strong enthusiasm for the EU and its institutions as well as relative optimism for Albania's progress towards the EU. On the other hand, the level of support for Albania's EU membership is falling slowly over time. While political or intellectual resistance to the integration process has not materialized, Albania is experiencing the beginning of interest-driven resistance to EU membership. The issue for policymakers is how to act preventively in order to manage this resistance in a way that will not hinder the process itself. The process of European integration needs to be transformed from a highly bureaucratic and elite-driven enterprise into an inclusive process in which all social and interest-groups feel part of. The sooner this issue is addressed by policy-makers and the clearer their strategies to address it the lesser the political costs of integration will be in long-term.

Finally, it needs to be clarified that free movement should not be understood as fully dependent on the EU integration process although it is closely related to it. Albania suffers from more strict visa regimes by EU member states than other neighboring countries although some of them, such as Serbia and Montenegro, are behind Albania in the formal stages of EU integration. Visa granting procedures are regulated by the states themselves and not by Brussels. Thus, they are dependent on Albanian performance in democratic consolidation, rule of law, the fight against corruption and organized crime and other internal developments. For Albania, the process of liberalization of visa regimes starts at home.

⁸ Michael Emerson, "An Interim Plan for South-Eastern Europe: Customs Union with the EU and a Regional Schengen for the Free Movement of People" CEPS Neighbourhood Watch, Issue 9, October 2005.

European integration is not the cure-all pill that will magically solve all of Albania's problems. Instead, it is the outcome of far-reaching reforms that transform an aspiring member into a consolidated democracy with a functioning market economy according to well-specified Copenhagen criteria. The experience of recent members of the EU club showed that there was a great deal of disillusionment with EU membership the "morning after" May 01, 2004 because "nothing much happened."⁹ That is to say that EU integration in itself was a formal recognition of what was achieved by the new members through steady hard work and political will. The transformation itself was carried out prior to formal membership and, therefore it was dependent on internal policy choices and political developments and not on Brussels. The better this is understood, the more realistic will be Albanians' perceptions of the process of EU integration.

⁹ Budapest Analyses, *Support for the Euro and the European Union in Hungary*, No. 76, November 15, 2005.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

The data indicates that last year's frustration and disillusionment with the EU integration process has turned around. Now Albanians have more positive perceptions of the EU, the potential benefits of membership for Albania and they are slightly more optimistic on Albania's progress in the road to membership. Yet, the fall in support for EU membership has continued. Hence the paradox: while last year we could explain the drop in support with general pessimism and frustration with the integration process, in 2005 this trend does not fit easily with the generally more upbeat assessment of the integration process. What we may be witnessing in Albania is the beginning of interest-driven resistance to EU integration. The problem with this type of resistance is its relative inelasticity - speedy progress on signing the SAA does not necessarily impact it.

Hence the efforts of the Albanian Government and other actors need to focus on the medium and long term. There are two ways to deal with the problem of interest-driven anti-membership feelings. First, information campaigns by the Albanian Government and others need to match given aspects of the integration process with the interest-groups that have a stake on the specific issue under discussion. Instead of large-scale "I love Europe" campaigns that lack focus and add little value to an already pro-European environment, small targeted campaigns can demythologize the costs of integration to given interest groups. The experience of recently-admitted member-states showed that the fears and myths of interest groups on the penalties of integration failed to materialize after the integration process was finalized. Timely action on this regard can prevent determined but unfounded opposition later. Moreover, it can give the opposition to EU membership that may materialize in the future a more sound-basis for its opposition thus helping the integration process itself.

Second, the process of integration should not be a highly bureaucratic elite-driven enterprise. While ultimate decision-making lies with the public authorities, institutionalized processes of consultancy, debates, outsourcing and other inputs from non-governmental groups would serve to create a realistic picture of the challenges of the process of integration, to better prepare these groups for the challenges ahead and to help the government formulate policies that are harmonized with public realities. Given the experience of successful membership applicants, if social and economic groups are involved in the process instead of experiencing it as a given from Brussels, the aspiring member state will be more able to maximize its comparative advantages on the European road. After all, the process of European integration should be introduced to citizens as what it really is: a choice they make and an experience they live everyday.

More specifically, in order to enhance the inclusiveness of the integration process it is necessary to:

- Institutionalize cooperation with other actors outside of state structures. Interest-group representatives need to be continuously informed of progress

on issues concerning them and their feedback must be taken into account. This will help the Ministry of European Integration (MEI) negotiating team get a clearer picture of the needs, views, and potential reactions of non-governmental groups to developments on the integration process.

- The Government can enhance its technical capacities by outsourcing technical projects relating to the integration process to civil society think-tanks and the academia. Albania's experience with regional Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and WTO membership demonstrated the need for a better utilization of existing capacities. Also, it can cooperate with other civil society groups in information and awareness campaigns on EU integration issues. Given the rise in anti-membership feelings among civil society groups, this type of involvement would also serve to alleviate the fears or misunderstandings of the integration process that exist in the civil society sector.
- Undertake specialized, targeted information campaigns to acquaint large social groups such as manufacturers, farmers, trade firms and others on the benefits and costs of Albania's potential EU membership. While it would be unrealistic to expect Albanians to not value free movement as the primary benefit of EU membership, different groups ought to have their own cost-benefit analyses on the integration process.

More short-term, the Government needs to maintain the initiative and strive to sign the SAA as soon as possible. Respondents continue to indicate their legitimate frustration with free movement issues. This frustration is bound to increase with Bulgarian, Romanian and Turkish progress towards EU membership because of EU conditionality. Respondents are beginning to feel the paradox: the more successful EU enlargement is, the more difficult the free movement issue becomes for them. In order to deal with this, the Government needs to:

- Deepen reforms and investments in security institutions, law enforcing bodies, as well as institutions that supply services to citizens; preparation of identity cards for citizens, alongside modernisation, computerisation and building of an integrated system for the institutions responsible for providing passports, identity cards, certificates, and other documents.
- Clear demonstration and guarantee to European Union countries with regard to border control and management.
- Take the initiative on proposing projects designed to soften the impact of more stringent visa regimes by new EU member states towards the Western Balkans. Initiatives such as the South East Europe Schengen area or a Western Balkans Customs Union have already been proposed by academics.¹⁰ Yet, such initiatives

¹⁰ Michael Emerson, "An Interim Plan for South-Eastern Europe: Customs Union with the EU and a Regional Schengen for the Free Movement of People" CEPS Neighbourhood Watch, Issue 9, October 2005.

may be tabled only after careful technical preparation after the Albanian Government has created a record of reliable partnership in regional and EU integration issues.

Since AIIIS started to perform regularly the *Perceptions and Realities* survey in 2002, there has been a constant improvement in respondents' knowledge of the EU and a more realistic understanding of what it means for Albania. However, EU integration support has dropped by fifteen percent over a three year period. In order to promote the transparency of the integration process, the Government also needs to:

- Perform national, regional and sectoral studies and analyses on the immediate economic effects of obligations that the Stabilisation Association Agreement bestows on Albania. Such analyses should be made public especially to the business community in large and local entrepreneurs in particular, as this community will be the first to contend with the changing economic dynamics of integration.
- Prevent the consolidation of unrealistic expectations, which may be followed by disillusionment by debating publicly the determining factors of the integration process, timeframes, costs, benefits, and rate of progress. A well-informed public is as necessary to the integration process as the political will to carry out the required reforms.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is a continuation of a similar project that Albanian Institute for International Studies carried out for the first time in September 2002 and which was followed by a second survey in December 2004. The goal of this study is to assess the level of knowledge and perceptions on EU and Albania's integration into EU within the central and local government public administration, media, local NGOs and businesses. AIIS decided to make use of the same questionnaire¹¹ as in previous years in a sample composed of the same categories adding the category of public administration in the local government. This categorization of the target groups was done in order to explore the dynamic of change on the level of knowledge and perceptions on the integration process among various social strata and in particular among those groups which are crucial for the progress of this process. As the European integration process in the country moves forward, the AIIS team of experts decided to include also the local government public administration which is expected in the subsequent years to get more involved in this process.

It is important to point out that this is the third year that this research is carried out since the country entered the Stabilization and Association Process, with the first report (2002) prepared only a few weeks before the official opening of the negotiations for the Stabilization Association Agreement¹². During this time EU and Albania's integrations process has been in the focus of political and social discourse, from political parties to the media. Following the Thessalonica Summit, which for the first time offered to Western Balkans countries a more tangible European perspective; and the EU enlargement with ten new members on May 1st 2004, three other major events is deemed to have influenced the perceptions of the respondents in 2005: the opening of the negotiations for EU membership with Turkey and Croatia; the decision for opening the negotiation for a Stabilization and Association Agreement between EU and Serbia-Montenegro, as well as with Bosnia-Herzegovina in October 2005; and what is more important – the approaching date for the signing of the SAA between Brussels and Tirana.

In order to achieve the project's goal – to assess the level of knowledge and perceptions on EU and Albania's integration into EU in five categories, the following objectives were set by the AIIS team:

- Assess the dynamic of change within categories in terms of perceptions, expectations, and information;
- Assess the familiarity of the chosen categories with international organizations in general and EU in particular;
- Assess perceptions and attitudes towards EU;
- Evaluate the familiarity and perceptions of the chosen groups with the process of integration into EU for Albania;
- Identify the main sources of information on EU for the chosen categories.

¹¹ With a few partial changes, which do not affect the essence of the questionnaire and its comparability. See "Survey Design".

¹² On 31st January 2003.

III.1 Survey Design

The survey is based on the same questionnaire that was used in the 2004 survey. However, the questionnaire contains partial changes, which do not affect its essence and comparability. Some questions were added relating to perceptions on relations with neighbors in the context of regional integration and the signing of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), as well as questions relating to the negotiations for the SAA and its benefits, in order to explore issues that have arisen during these years. Considering that this year's target group is enriched with another category – local public administration, few options have been added in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was prepared by the survey team of the Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS). As in the previous surveys (2002 and 2004), the questionnaire contains four main sections: General Information on the Interviewee, General Information on EU, The Process of EU Integration, and Sources of Information. Final revisions and organizations of the questions resulted in an 11 page, 27 questions and approximately 100 variables questionnaire. In order to achieve accurate as well as unbiased responses, the questionnaire contains both, closed ended and open-ended questions (SEE Annex 1 - Questionnaire).

III.2 Sampling Procedures and Fieldwork

In order to preserve the continuity of the project, as well as the possibility to draw comparisons, this year there has been selected approximately the same sample as for the 2002 and 2004 surveys, while adding the category of public administration of local government. Furthermore, while in 2002 and 2004 the survey was conducted in Tirana, this year's survey involved respondents from ten major Albanian cities (Tirana included) in all categories, except the category "*central level public administration*".

The categories surveyed in 2005 are:

- Central Government Public Administration (in Tirana)
- Local Government Public Administration
- Media
- NGOs
- Businesses

The fieldwork for the survey was completed during the month of October. The above categories were chosen for mainly two reasons. First, they provide an audience whose knowledge on EU is above that of the average citizen; this selection allows for more qualified answers. It also allows us more room to explore the level of knowledge and perceptions on EU and EU integration for Albania. Secondly, these categories and especially the Central Government Public Administration are both immediately responsible for and directly affected by Albania's EU integration process. Furthermore, categories such as the Media, but also local NGOs and government agencies, are sources of information on EU and Albania's EU integration process. Therefore, their answers are of greater interest than those of the average citizen even if only for the mere fact that these categories to a large extent shape the knowledge and perceptions of the public at

large. Moreover, the 2002 and 2004 survey revealed serious misunderstanding even within these categories, and it was interesting to review the dynamic of change within one year, given the large-scale attention devoted to integration issues both in the political and social discourse.

The absence of accurate statistics prevented a rigorous random probability sample throughout the chosen categories. Stratified sampling was used in three categories: Public Administration of both, local and central government and Media, in order to have a representative sample and data that could be analyzed according to each of the specific categories. In the three cases randomization techniques are built into the sampling in order to increase the representativeness of the sample. In the case of businesses and local NGOs purely random probability techniques were employed.

Central Government Public Administration

The first challenge we had to face when selecting a representative sample for the central public administration was the very definition of the public administration. First, we had to decide on the institutions that were to be listed and on their employees. The institutions we decided upon were all the government departments, the Premier's Office, the Parliament, the Presidency and the Central Elections Committee.

Initially, a list of all of the above-mentioned institutions and their civil servant personnel was computed. The data was taken from the Department of Public Administration (DPA) near the Premier's office. Then a representative sample of respondents was selected with a weighted number of respondents in each institution proportional to its ratio of civil servants in relation to the total number of civil servants.

Local Government Public Administration

The selection of a representative sample for the local government public administration followed the same methodology as for the central public administration sample. The survey included only respondents from the ten selected municipalities (cities, not rural area). The survey sample for this category was conditioned by, not only by the number of civil servants in each municipality, but also by the number of citizens in each of the selected cities (municipalities). This data was taken from the last census of Albanian population (2001) conducted by the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT).

Media

A similar methodology was pursued in sampling the media. The media outlets that were chosen were: TV stations, daily newspapers and radio stations. A list of these outlets was compiled with the number of journalists working in each of them. In the case of media, the respondent category consisted of journalists. Besides the number of journalists working at each media outlet, another consideration was also the audience of each outlet. The larger the audience the more the number of journalists interviewed. Due to the patchy information we had on the size of each outlet audience we did not use this factor as a primary consideration, which should have been the case under ideal conditions.

Businesses

In the case of the Business category the survey team compiled a list of businesses either nationally owned or with mixed ownership (Albanian & foreign ownership) located in Tirana and the other nine major cities. Out of this list, a representative sample was

randomly selected. This choice was dictated by the goal of our survey which is to assess Albanian perceptions only. The list of businesses was compiled using the data available at the Chamber of Commerce. The list of enlisted businesses was not exhaustive, i.e. it did not include the entire gamut of businesses. However, the list was representative of medium and large businesses. Our bias towards medium and large businesses was justified mainly on methodological grounds for two reasons. First, medium and large businesses have larger stakes in Albania's integration towards EU, which might entail greater interest on such a process. Secondly these businesses are easier to define since they avoid informal sector complications and other methodological obstacles in defining small-sized enterprises.

Within this sample, we interviewed only managerial staff or where possible the owner(s) of the business. This choice was in line with our goal to gather informed responses, or at least responses from those who had greater stakes in Albania's EU integration process. Since we did not possess prior data on the size of the business, or the number of employees it was decided that on each case the interviewer would ask for the size of the business or the number of employees and depending on this information perform more than one interview where appropriate. While this choice undermined the scientific accuracy of the sample it did ensure a more weighted sample of the businesses depending on their size.

NGO-s

In the same fashion as with the Business sector in the case of NGOs a list of Albanian NGOs in ten major cities was compiled, out of which the AIIS team selected randomly a representative sample. Here again as in the case of the business category given the absence of reliable information on the number of employees in each NGO it was decided that the larger the number of employees the greater the number of interviews that were performed. This principle was pursued rigorously in each individual case. Thus, even in this case we worked with a weighted sample. Those interviewed were the employees excluding supporting staff, such as drivers or secretaries. The aim was always to increase the chances of well-informed responses.

III.3 Limitations and Strengths of the Survey

First of all, it is important to note that the survey conducted by AIIS is not a public survey in the traditional sense of the word. The results cannot be used to show the perceptions and the level of knowledge of the Albanian public at large. These results are valid only for the chosen categories on individual bases. They do not reflect the perceptions or the level of knowledge of the average citizen, no matter how we define him/her. Moreover, the categories are so different from each other that any analysis that groups their responses together should be very cautious in drawing far reaching conclusions. One should also bear in mind that only four (out of five) of these categories are based in the ten selected cities, while the category - central public administration is based in Tirana. Thus, the first limitation of the survey pertains to the selection of the categories.

Having said this, it is also important to mention that the data, both on an individual and group basis does reflect the perceptions and the level of knowledge of a population group

that is, or should be, better informed than the average citizen. However, even in this case the data should be used very cautiously since some important categories that belong to this group such as politicians, university students or members of the academia have not been included.

Another limitation of the survey relates to the sampling methodology and its implementation. Sampling was conducted in the absence of accurate information. In categories such as local NGOs or locally owned businesses we did not possess information on the number of the employees or the size of the business. In the case of the Media our information on the audience of the media outlet was not systematic and often limited to only a restricted number of major TV stations or major newspapers.

Finally, one of the limitations of the survey relates to the Business category in particular. In this category a distinction between those businesses belonging to the services sector and the ones in the production sector would have been helpful since these sectors will be affected in very different ways by the integration process. Here again we did not apply the distinction due to methodological and logistic considerations, ranging from the very definition of the production sector in Albania to the scarcity of accurate information on size and number of employees. Nevertheless, such a shortcoming does not invalidate our findings even in this category since the questions do not particularly focus on the economic implications and prerequisites of the integration process but rather on the level of knowledge of a process as a whole. In future surveys, focus on this category would be necessary.

Besides the above-mentioned limitations, the survey also has some major strengths. The questionnaire that was used, after consecutive rounds of testing, was designed to be simple, easy to use as well as informative. Thus, the interviews were designed to be short and conversational, which meant that in most cases the responses were candid and spontaneous. This was also made possible by the rating scale that we used, which was from 1 to 10, a scale that replicates the Albanian grading system so all respondents were familiar with it from their school years. During the interview phase, none of the respondents had difficulties in understanding the rating scale.

Qualitative questions were combined with quantitative ones in a complementary fashion. The respondents were asked for their opinion on a specific issue, for example the speed of EU integration for Albania, and then asked to quantify that opinion, in terms of years in the present example. This makes the interpretation of the data more accurate as qualitative answers can be now quantified.

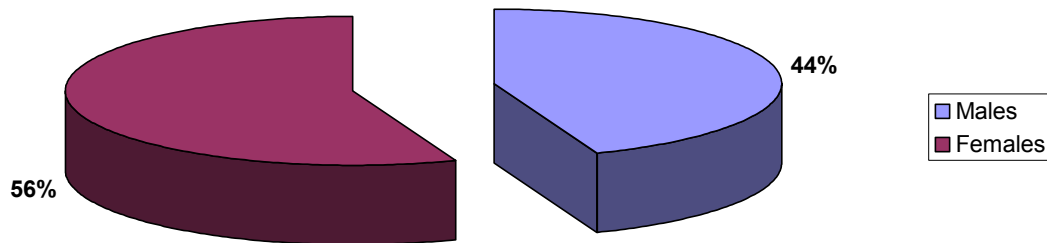
The two categories that were most rigorously surveyed were the central and local public administration and media. In these cases, the sample was very representative and carefully selected. In the three categories the respondents were quite collaborative; this on the other hand made the implementation of the survey easier. In all cases the sample size was large enough to allow statistical analyses for the given category.

IV. SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

General Sample

Females were better represented than males in the general sample. This may have been because of a higher predisposition of females to cooperate with AIIS interviewers. The percentage of females was especially high in the media and public administration of the central and local governments—68.9%, 63.5% and 58.2%. Males were overrepresented in the civil society and business groups with 55.2% and 68.3%. *See Figure 1.*

Figure 1: Gender Representation in General Sample



In line with our objective to survey target groups with higher-than-average education levels, the overwhelming majority of respondents, 90.3%, had completed a post-secondary degree. The public administration of the central government and media were the most well-educated target groups—all public administration respondents and 96.8% of media respondents had completed at least one post-secondary degree.

Figure 2: Education Level of Respondents

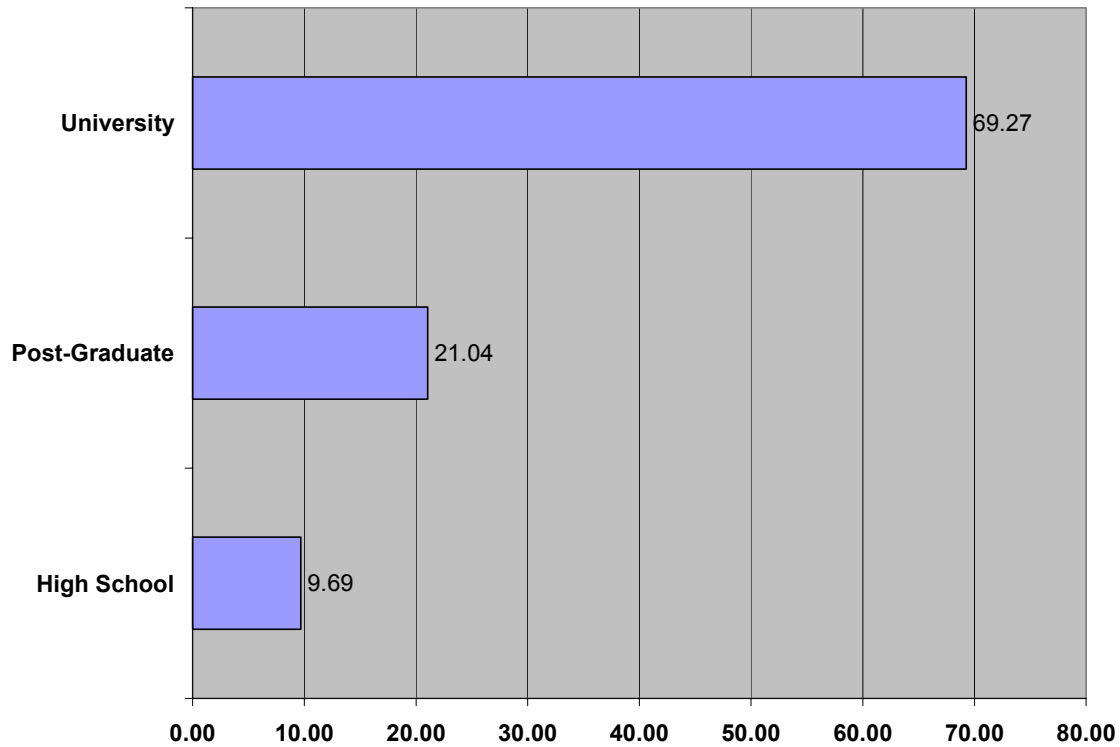
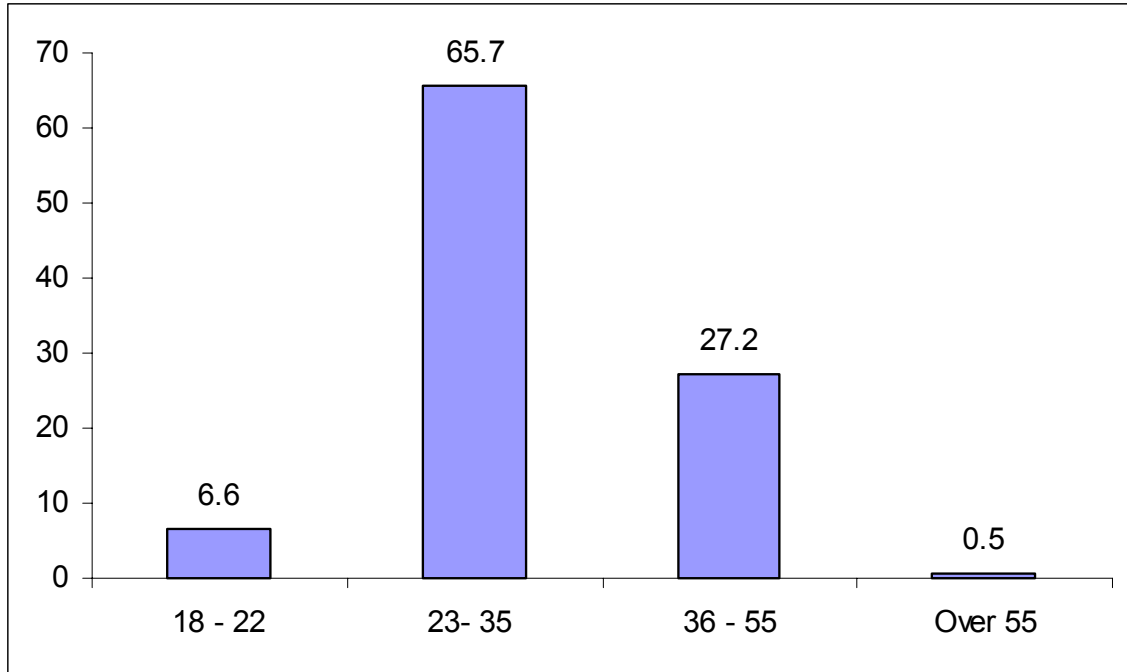


Table 1: Education Levels of Target Groups

	Central P.Ad.	Local P.Ad.	Business	NGOs	Media
High School	N/A	1.4	52.38	10.3	3.3
University	61.7	93.2	46.0	65.5	90.2
Post-Graduate	37.8	5.4		24.1	6.6

The majority of respondents were young falling in the 23 to 35 age group. The next biggest age group was 36-55 years old, with 27.2% of respondents. The preponderance of these age groups may be partly explained by the youthful average age of Albanians. See *Figure 3*.

Figure 3: Age Distribution of Respondents



The central government public administration category had the largest group of respondents, 46.3%. Although this category did not contain the largest population, it contained a larger number of respondents due to the stratified sampling methodology applied to it. Therefore, although the business category has a much larger population in absolute terms, its sample proportion was 14.9% due to the random sampling technique applied. The other three categories, media, local government administration and local NGOs comprised 17.5%, 14.4% and 6.9% of the total sample respectively. *See Figure 4.*

Figure 4: Target Group Sample Percentages

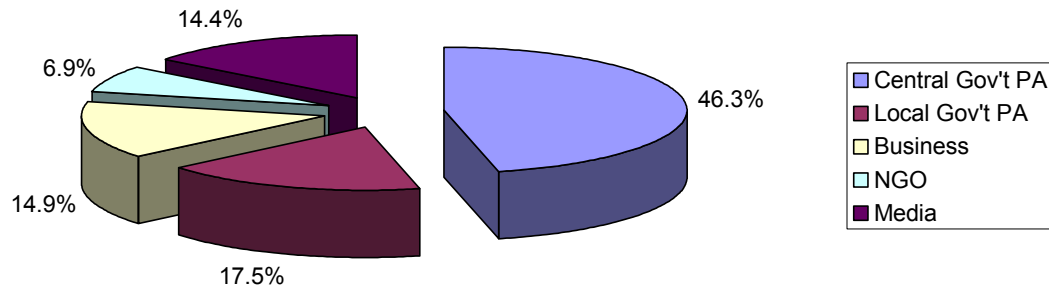


Table 2: Sample Description for Each Category

Category \ Percentage	Central P.Ad. %	Local P.Ad. %	Business %	NGOs %	Media %	Total %
Male	41.84	36.49	68.25	55.17	31.15	44.21
Female	58.16	63.51	31.75	44.83	68.85	55.79
High School Diploma	-	1.35	52.38	10.34	3.28	9.69
University Diploma	61.73	93.24	46.03	65.52	90.16	69.27
Post-Graduate Studies	37.76	5.41	-	24.14	6.56	21.04
18 - 22 years old	1.02	1.35	12.70	6.90	24.59	6.62
23- 35 years old	65.31	62.16	61.90	93.10	62.30	65.72
36 - 55 years old	33.67	35.14	23.81	-	13.11	27.19
Over 55 years old	-	1.35	1.59	-	-	0.47

As Table 2 indicates, all categories share some common characteristics. In all of them most of respondents were very well educated possessing in most cases a university degree. Also, in each of the categories respondents were relatively young, falling mainly in the 23 to 35 years old age group. While the composition of each category is not representative of Albania's population, it is in line with our objective to survey a relatively more qualified group in each category.

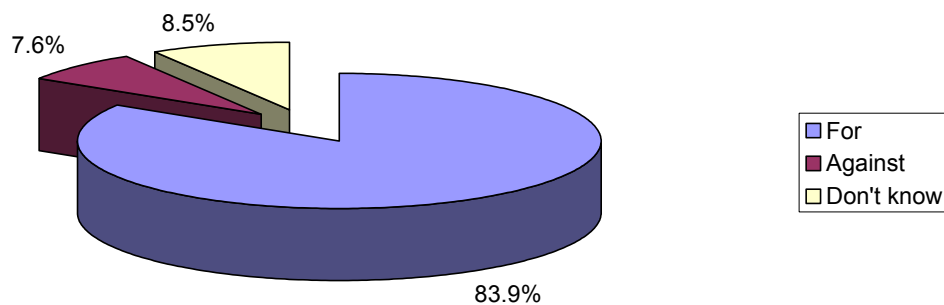
V. SURVEY FINDINGS

V.1 Support for EU Accession

The vast majority of respondents, 83.9% said they would vote in favor of Albania's EU membership if a referendum were held tomorrow. Only 7.6% said they would vote against, while the rest, 8.5%, were undecided. The data indicates high support for the country's efforts to join the European Union, which is at the present the top priority for the Albanian Government. Therefore, such high support is quite encouraging as it shows a much needed coherence between stated Government priorities and those of some important Albanian social categories. However, although support for EU membership remains high, there is a decreasing trend in comparison with the support level in 2004 and even more with the 2002 level, when the percentage of respondents in favor of EU membership amounted to over 98% in 2002 and 89% last year. *See Figure 1.*

Question. Suppose there was tomorrow a referendum in order to decide whether Albania should join European Union (EU) or not, how would you vote. Would you vote for or against Albania's membership into EU??

Figure 1. Level of Support for Albania's EU Membership 2005 – General Sample

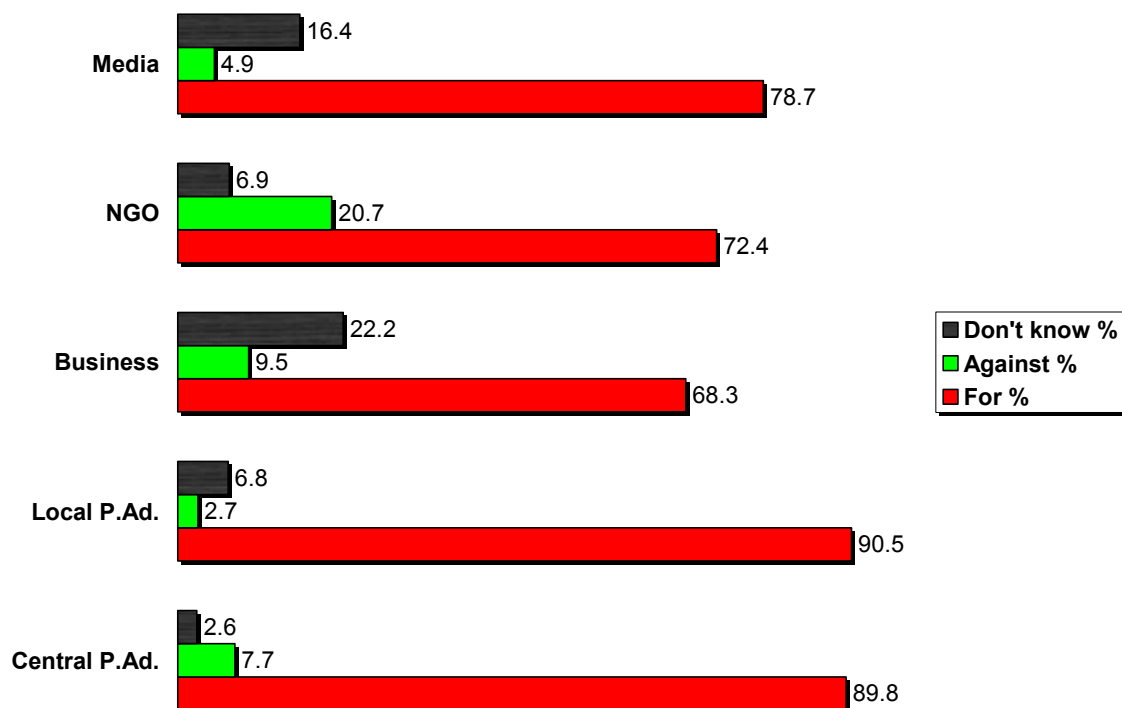


There is a decline by 6 points as compared to the 2004 support which becomes even more remarkable if we compare it with the data of 2002 (15 points). Furthermore, in 2005 there

is an increase of the percentage of respondents who still don't know how they would vote (from 5.5% in 2004 to 8.5% this year). The decreasing trend in the level of support throughout the years (2002 – 2005) may be a consequence of better understanding of the European integration process from a part of these categories in terms of costs and benefits from EU membership. However, such hypothesis may be confirmed only after additional data (on other issues) are analyzed.

Responses according to categories present a similar situation: in the same fashion as in 2002 and 2004, the majority of respondents across categories are in favor of Albania's EU membership. Business community and NGOs show less support for Albania's membership into the EU - 68.3% and 72.4% respectively, while support of local and central government public administration reaches 90.5% and 89.8% respectively. The level of support of respondents from the central government public administration has dropped by less than 1% as compared to 2004. The level of support for Albania's EU membership within each category is shown in the figure below. See Figure 2.

Figure 2. Level of Support for Albania's EU Membership 2005 – across Categories



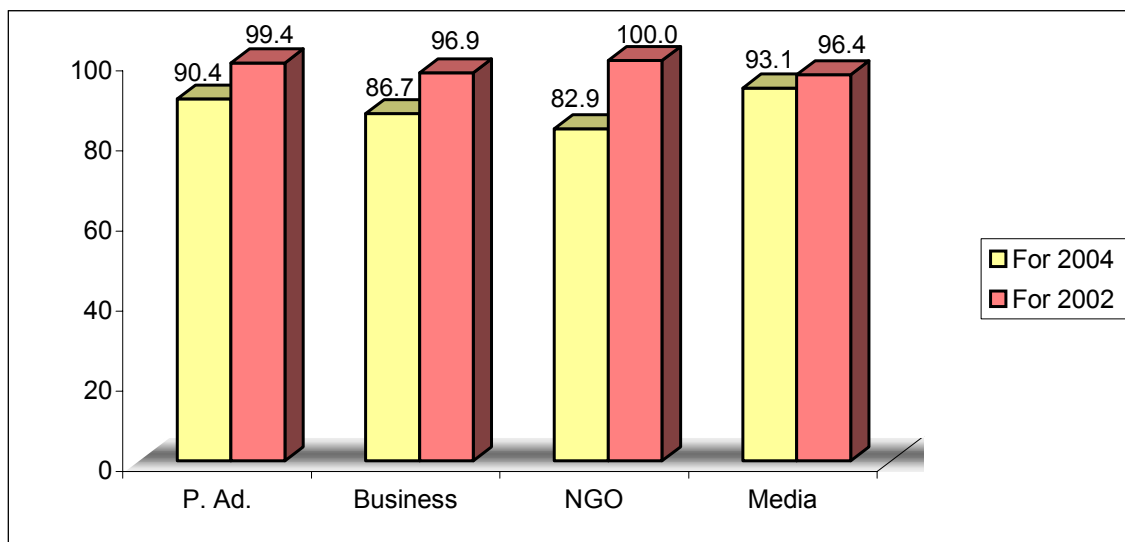
The declining trend in membership support from 2004 to 2005 across all four categories (local public administration excluded) notes considerable rates which vary from less than 1 percentage point – the central government public administration, to a large decline of 18 percentage points in the business category. However, the most interesting finding for the business category is the fact that although it has the lowest level of support for Albania's EU membership, the percentage of those who would vote against is 9.5% which is the second after the NGOs' vote "against" – amounting 20.7%. As portrayed in the figure above, there are 22.2% of the respondents from the business category who don't know how they will vote, which confirms their uncertainty. The second most

significant drop for EU membership support - at around 14.4% from 2004 to 2005, has taken place in the category of media with the category of NGOs following with a decline of 10.5 %. The declining rates are even sharper if we compare the 2005 level of support across categories with the level of support in 2002 which amounts up to almost 29 points (29%) in the business category.

If we only consider the number of opponents for Albania’s EU membership, then it is clear that most of them belong to the category of NGOs, followed by the business category. We find the lowest rate of opponents amid public administration of local government. It is also interesting to note that the maximal declining rate in the support from 2004 to 2005 within categories is higher (18.4 points – in the business category) than the maximal declining rate from 2002 to 2004 (17.1 points – in NGOs).

The figure below shows the level of support (only answers “FOR”) for Albania’s EU membership within each category in 2002 and 2004. *See Figure 3*

Figure 3. Level of Support for Albania’s EU Membership 2002 vs. 2004 – across Categories

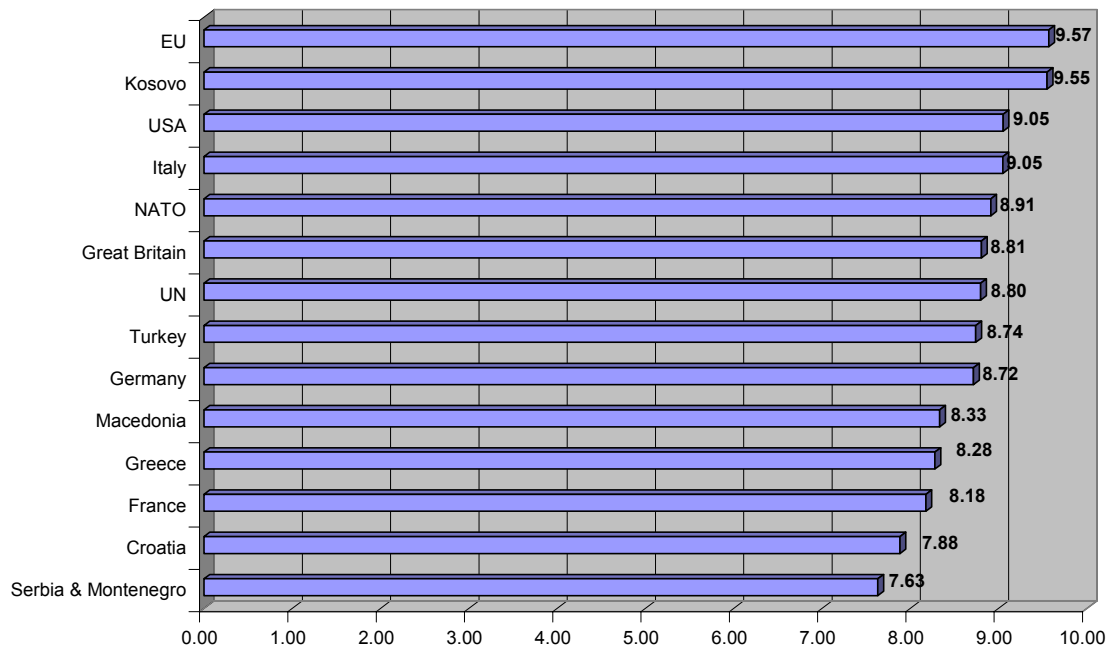


If we analyze the data in both Figures (*Fig. 2 and 3*) we will notice that the least supportive categories in 2004 (Business and NGOs) have switched places and in 2005 the support for EU membership from the business community comes in the last place (while in 2004 it was the NGOs). However, if we consider only the number of opponents (answers “*against*”), it is evident that the NGOs category takes the first place (20.7%) followed by the business category (9.5%) which simultaneously has the largest number of “uncertain respondents”, i.e. respondents who don’t know how they will vote – 22.2%.

The decline in support for EU membership is a common feature of the European integration process in all countries that joined EU in 2004 and proves the perceived country’s progress towards membership, though in the Albanian case – a very modest progress. Such conclusion is also replicated in the importance that respondents give to Albania’s relations with the EU. *See Figure 4.*

Question: In your opinion how much importance should Government place to strengthening Albania's relations with the following states/organizations? Please evaluate in a scale from 1 to 10, bearing in mind that the higher the number the more importance should, in your opinion, the Albanian government pay to strengthening ties with the given State/Organization.

Figure 4. Albania's International Partners – 2005 General Sample



As shown in Figure 4, when respondents were asked to evaluate on a scale from 1 to 10 the importance that the Government should pay to strengthening Albania's relations with some 14 states/organizations, EU scored the highest (9.57 out of 10) which is by 0.03 points higher than last year. Not only did EU score the highest, it also had one of the lowest standard deviation which means that the answers on EU vary very little, i.e. respondents generally agree on the importance that Government should pay to strengthening Albania's relations with EU. *See Table 1.*

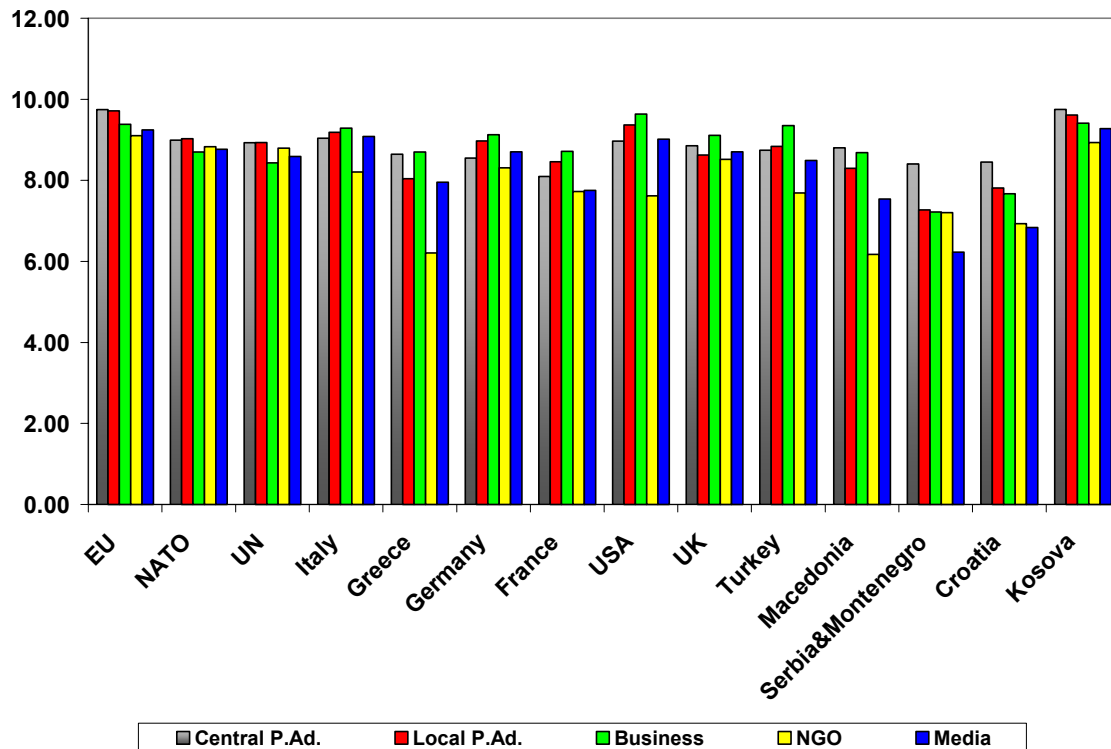
Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation for the General Sample – 2005

	EU	Kosovo	NATO	UN	USA	Italy	UK	Turkey	Germany	Greece	Croatia	France	Macedonia	Serbia & Montenegro
Mean	9.57	9.55	8.91	8.8	9.05	9.05	8.81	8.74	8.72	8.28	7.88	8.18	8.33	7.63
Std. Dev.	1.2	1.1	1.7	1.7	2	1.58	2.55	1.92	1.56	2.35	2.22	1.97	2.04	2.55

Furthermore the above figure also shows that the importance that respondents attach to Albania's relations with EU has remained the same - very high. In 2002 EU scored 9.57 out of 10, whereas in 2004 this figure was at 9.54, practically the same as in 2002 if we also allow for a very small margin of error. The importance that respondents attach in

2005 to the relations of Albania with EU remains at the same levels, 9.57, which is practically the same as in 2002. Thus, EU has sustained its importance as a partner to Albania, while all other states/organizations, except NATO have remarkably gained in importance from 2004 to 2005, which may also come as a result of the approaching negotiations on the future status of Kosovo. The decline in support for NATO climbs just at around 0.06 points, with a 1.7 standard deviation. But this might also be the result of a small margin of error.

Figure 5. Albania’s International Partners – 2005 Categories



As shown in the figure above, all categories have scored both, EU and Kosovo, relatively higher than Albania’s other international partners. However, the slight differences between these scores and the growing trends as regards the importance attached to each of them by Albanians show that the respondents’ perceptions do not necessarily correspond only to an *ad hoc* need for international support (for the Kosovo status for example), but that they also put increasing emphasis on expanding international cooperation and strengthening good neighborhood relations.

At first sight these data seem to contradict the earlier ones on support for EU membership, which is in decline across all categories, although with less than 1% in the category - central government public administration. Thus, on the one hand, from 2004 to 2005 (as well as from 2002 – 2004), we have a decrease of the percentage of those that would vote for Albania’s membership into EU if a referendum was held tomorrow. On the other hand EU remains the most important partner for Albania and it also gains more importance in comparison to other international actors such as the USA. This “paradox” becomes more distinct amid central government public administration category. In 2005 this category has the second highest percentage (after local government public

administration which is being surveyed for the first time this year) of those that would vote in favor of EU membership (89.8%). At the same time this category ranks Kosovo as the most important partner for Albania, while in other categories the EU was ranked first. Regardless of that, we should also consider here that the difference between the rates of importance given to Kosovo and to the EU, as shown in the figure above, is very small – 0.02 points.

If we scrutinize the coherence of respondents' attitude towards the EU as a strategic partner, in comparison with the declining support for Albania's EU membership, one may come to the conclusion that the correlation between the two questions is not as strong. On the one hand, the affinity of Albanians with the EU and its institutions may be further argued by the respondents' considerations for the importance of strengthening ties with the other entities, above all, with Kosovo which comes at the first place for central public administration, business and the media. On the other hand, this may also indicate a persistent sense of empathy among Albanians for the EU.

Such "incompatibility" of data findings points to another interesting phenomenon; the maturity of respondents *vis a vis* the integration process, i.e. their growing familiarity the costs deriving from EU membership. Yet, even those who would vote against Albania's membership in a referendum consider EU as the most important partner for Albania. This is the case with the NGOs category which had the largest number of opponents, but which still ranks EU at the first place as an international partner.

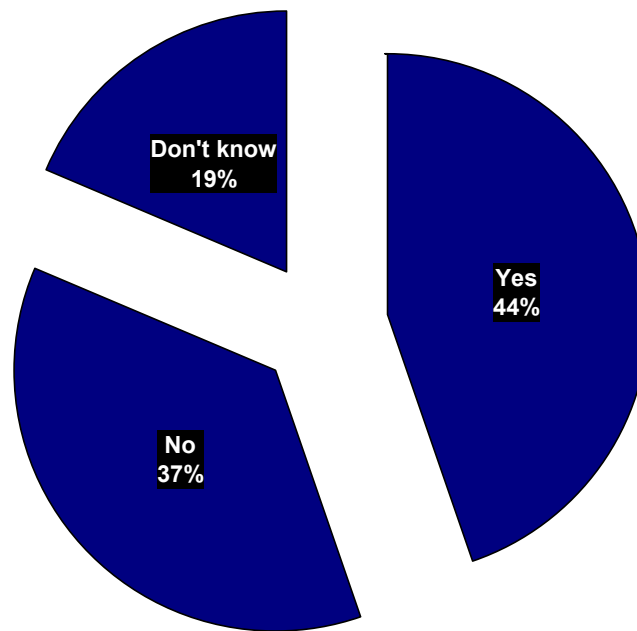
However, such maturity is hard to detect in the general sample when respondents are asked whether EU should admit Albania even if it is not ready for membership. There is in 2005 a growing rate of respondents who think that EU should accept Albania (44%), as compared to 2004 (35.12%), which is still slightly smaller than this percentage in 2002 (45.49%). On the other hand, there is a growing community amongst respondents who are not able to provide a firm answer to this question, i.e. 19% of them state that they don't know whether EU should admit Albania or not even if not ready. This category of respondents in 2002 amounted 3.82%, while in 2004 - 15.72%. The drawn out SAA negotiating process between Brussels and Tirana may constitute an additional reason for respondents who back the idea that Albania should be accepted although is not ready. In this case, the abovementioned maturity of respondents (in the general sample) as regarding the integration process may be affected by their dissatisfaction with their government's disability and lack of capacities to fulfill the SAA requirements. Such dissatisfaction may normally appear in 2005 with a higher intensity than in the previous year.

On the other hand, one may draw the conclusion that respondents from the business community and NGOs seem to be increasingly aware of the conditions, i.e. costs and benefits from EU membership, which is demonstrated in the level of their support for Albania's EU membership. However, such conclusion should not be taken for granted and the subsequent data may provide an additional proof of that (see below). Regarding the general sample (2005), the sharp decrease by 18% only for the business category and 6% in the general sample explains the way support for EU membership has changed from an absolute massive unconditional support to a more mature, albeit, a reduced one (by

6%) in 2005. At this point, EU membership seems to be less of an end in itself. See Figure 6.

Question. Do you think European Union (EU) should admit Albania into EU even before Albania is prepared to become a member of EU?

Figure 6. Should EU Admit Albania before it is Prepared? –General Sample 2005

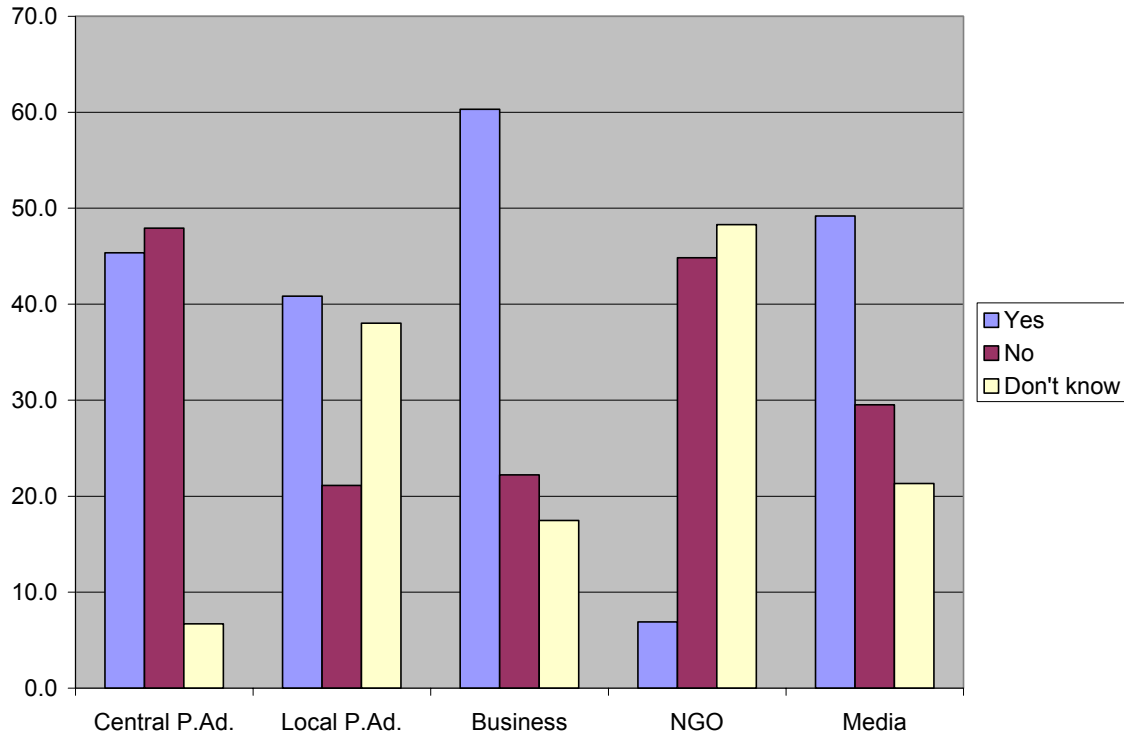


The percentage of respondents in favor of the idea that Albania should be admitted even if not ready for membership among categories varies considerably, starting from only 6.9% in the NGOs category up to 60.3% in the business community. Differently from last year, more than 40% of respondents in each category, except the NGOs, think that EU should admit Albania before it is ready. The major changes, as compared to 2004, have taken place in the categories of media and the NGOs whose support for this idea was 7.84% for the media (in 2005 has increased to almost 50%) and 48.39% for NGOs (in 2005 has dropped to barely 6%).

While the percentage of these respondents within the NGOs category confirms that they are more aware of EU membership costs, the level of support of this idea in the business category may at first sight represent an incompatibility bearing in mind that this category shows least support for Albania's EU membership (68.3%). Nevertheless, considering that the NGOs category has the most opponents for Albania's EU membership (20.7%) it is not surprising that only 6% of them think that Albania should be admitted even if not ready. In the case of the business category, although it shows least support for Albania's membership (68.3% will vote FOR) one should bear in mind that the number of opponents of EU membership in this category is by far smaller than in the NGOs category – amounting only 9.5%. Furthermore, the business category has the largest

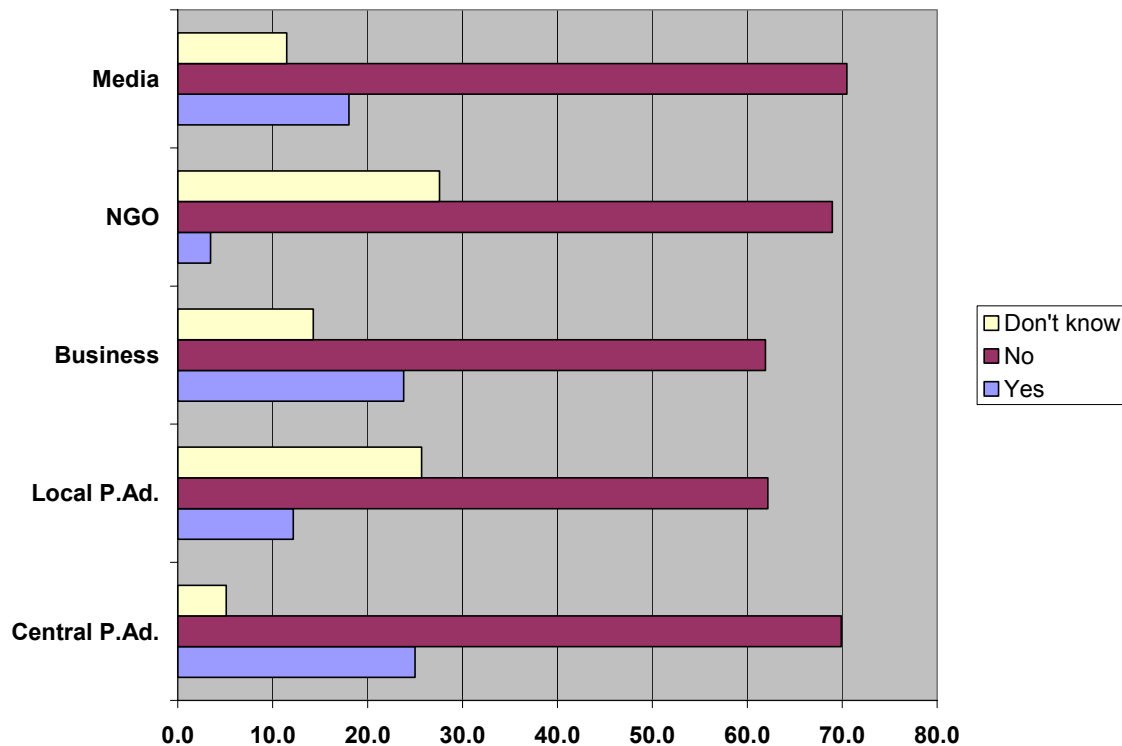
number of respondents who don't know how will they vote in a referendum on Albania's eventual EU membership – 22.2%. Bearing all this in mind, it is not surprising that almost 60% of respondents from the business community think that EU should admit Albania even if not ready. *See Figure 7.*

Figure 7. Should EU Admit Albania before it is Prepared? –Categories 2005



Nevertheless, the majority of respondents in all categories agree that Albania is not ready for EU membership. In the general sample this figure amounts to 67% of the respondents. *See Figure 8.*

Figure 8: Is Albania ready to become a member of EU? Categories 2005



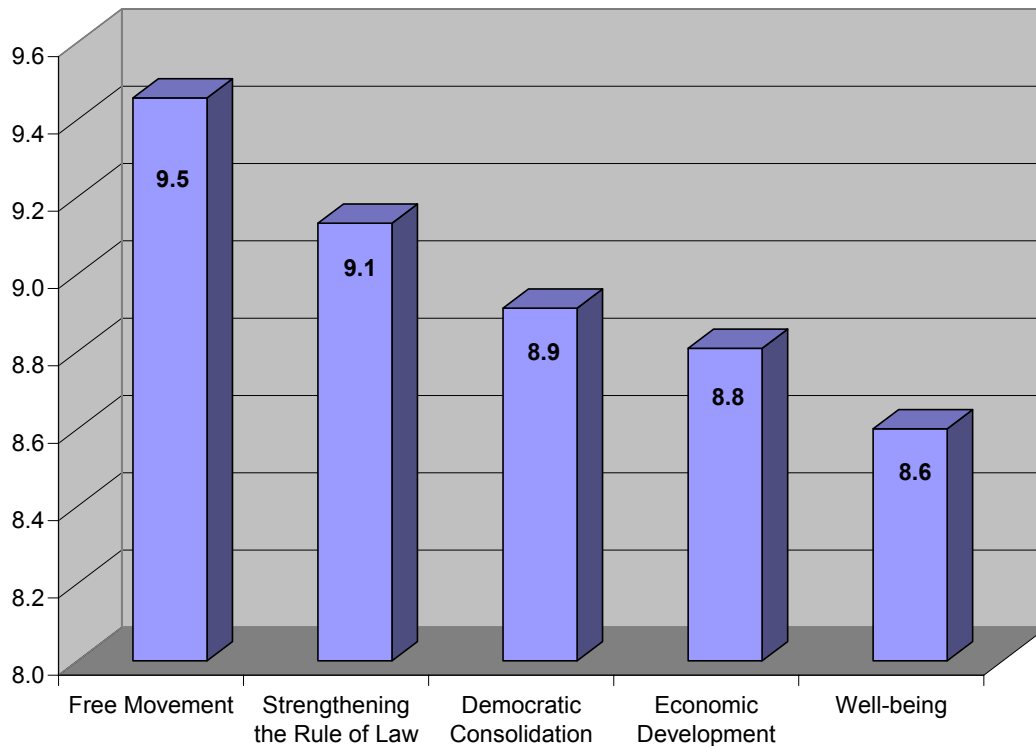
V.2 Expectations

The above section analyzed the level of support regarding Albania's EU membership in five chosen categories of Media, Central and Local Government Public Administration, NGOs and Businesses. In order to understand this support we also have to assess perceptions and expectations regarding Albania's EU membership. Of particular importance here are the respondents' expectations regarding benefits from Albania's EU membership.

Expectations explain in great part the considerable, though decreasing, support for Albania's EU membership (83.9%). As it was the case in 2004, the major benefit that the respondents expect Albania to derive from EU membership is the free movement of people into EU countries. This option scored the highest at 9.5, which is by 0.2 point higher than in 2004. The next most important expected benefit was strengthening the rule of law and democratic consolidation, scoring respectively 9.1 and 8.9. Economic development and well being come last, with respectively 8.8 and 8.6 points out of 10. It is important to note that all the expected benefits scored quite high, over 8.5, which is indicative of the high expectations that respondents have developed for Albania's EU membership. *See Figure 9.*

Question. People have different opinions on the benefits that Albania will derive from EU membership. In your opinion how much will Albania benefit in the following areas? Please evaluate in a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the higher the number the more you think Albania will benefit in the given area.

Figure 9. Benefits from EU Membership for Albania –General Sample 2005



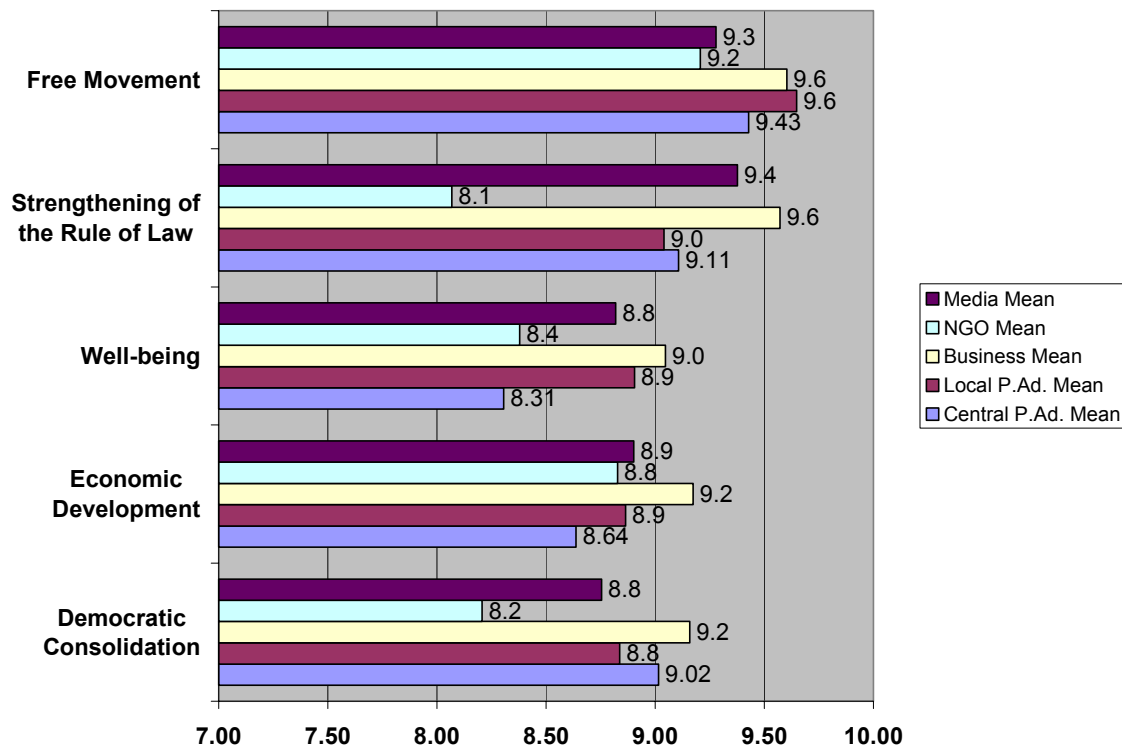
It is interesting to notice that all five benefits (as stated in the questionnaire) in 2005 score even higher if compared to the last year and they in addition preserve the last year's ranking. Typical of both cases (2004 and 2005) is the high enthusiasm for the free movement opportunities into EU countries, which has been confirmed also in the 2002 survey. Indeed, in 2005 respondents are even more enthusiastic about this expected benefit than in 2004 (the option scored 9.5 in 2005 and 9.3 in 2004) or even than it was the case in 2002 (scoring 8.9). This could be explained by the fact that after the opening of the negotiations for the Stabilization and Association Agreement there was much talk in the media and public forums about the possibility of a visa free regime once this agreement would be signed. So free movement is viewed as the most immediate benefit from the integration process, which explains also its highest score. The next most important expected benefit in 2005 is strengthening the rule of law which reconfirms its importance for Albanians. Considering that in 2002 it was the economic development that was positioned in the second place, the 2005 data reconfirms the 2004 development that points to a relatively more mature understanding of the integration process. Namely, in 2002 the EU integration process was perceived as one that would pour financial aid from EU to Albania and thus produce economic development. Starting from 2004, the *strengthening the rule of law*, followed by *democratic consolidation* are being perceived as major benefits, being placed in 2005 ahead of the *economic development* as a benefit. Furthermore given the generally critical stance of the international community on lack of rule of law in Albania, and high perception levels on corruption and bad governance, strengthening rule of law is perceived as another immediate benefit that EU membership would produce.

Of the five categories the NGOs one has the lowest scores. At the same time, the standard deviation in this category proves to be the highest, which means that answers varied in this category more than in the other ones. See Table 2 and Figure 10.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation According to Categories - 2005

	Central P. Ad.		Local P.Ad.		Business		NGO		Media	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Democratic Consolidation	9.02	1.27	8.8	1.4	9.2	0.95	8.2	1.89	8.8	1.06
Economic Development	8.64	1.49	8.9	1.42	9.2	0.85	8.8	1.79	8.9	1.72
Well-being	8.31	1.68	8.9	1.42	9	1.23	8.4	1.23	8.8	1.74
Strengthening the Rule of Law	9.11	1.34	9	1.84	9.6	1.02	8.1	2.17	9.4	1.63
Free Movement	9.43	1	9.6	0.69	9.6	0.88	9.2	1.14	9.3	1.71
Total (Mean Percentage Points)	44.51		45.2		46.6		42.7		45.2	

Figure 10. Benefits from EU Membership for Albania – 2005 Categories



Overall the business community is the category that has the highest expectations from EU membership, although according to the number of opponent for Albania's EU membership, it comes at the second place, right after the NGOs category which has almost 20.7% of membership opponents. The NGOs category, on the other hand has the lowest expectations from EU membership which could partially explain why this category has the highest number of membership opponents. This might indicate also that this category is growing skeptical of the process, perhaps due to their acquaintance with the costs of EU membership. Despite these differences, in four categories free movement scores the highest - it is the main benefit that it is expected by EU membership. However,

this is not the case with the Media category who is concerned with strengthening the rule of law (scoring 9.4), rather than free movement (scoring 9.3), although the difference is at 0.1 points.

Strengthening rule of law and democratic consolidation are the second most scored benefits from EU membership almost in all categories, although for four of them (except the media) free movement still remains very high. The increasing emphasis on rule of law and democratization as benefits of EU membership indicates a relatively matured and realistic group of respondents. It reflects a better understanding of the integration process and of the standards required for it to be completed. It also shows a higher awareness of the importance of rule of law and democratization in this process, and a more sober evaluation of the steps Albania has to take in order to become a member of the European Union.

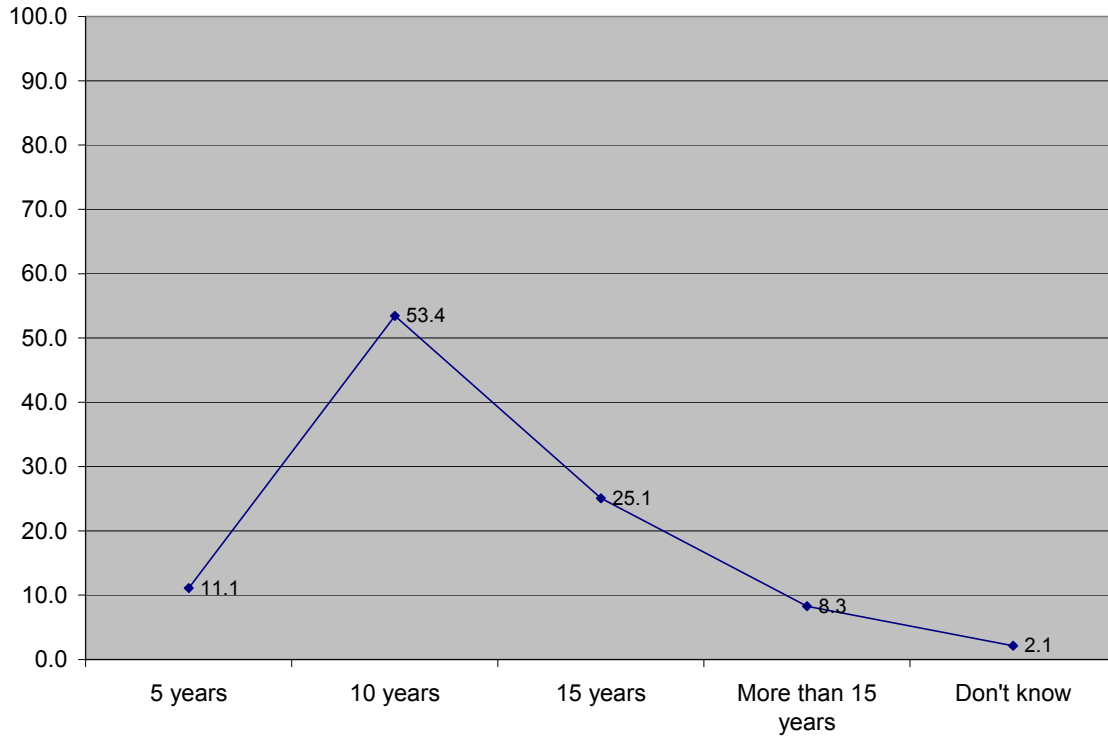
An increasingly realistic perception of the integration process is also reflected in the answers given by respondents when asked about the number of years that it would take Albania to join EU. The vast majority of respondents, 86.8%, thought that it will take more than ten years for Albania to join EU, with more than 50% marking 10 years. However, such finding is quite relative if we consider the fact that there are 64.5% of the respondents who mark a period of up to ten years (11.1% - 5 years, and 54.4% - 10 years).

The most important finding of this year's survey is the fact that in 2005 there is no suspicions that Albania will be a member.¹³ *See Figure 11.*

Question. There exist different opinions regarding the number of years that it will take Albania to become a member of European Union. In your opinion how long will it take for Albania to join EU? Will it take 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, or do you think that Albania will never become a member of EU?

Figure 11. The Number of Years for Albania to Join EU – 2005 General Sample

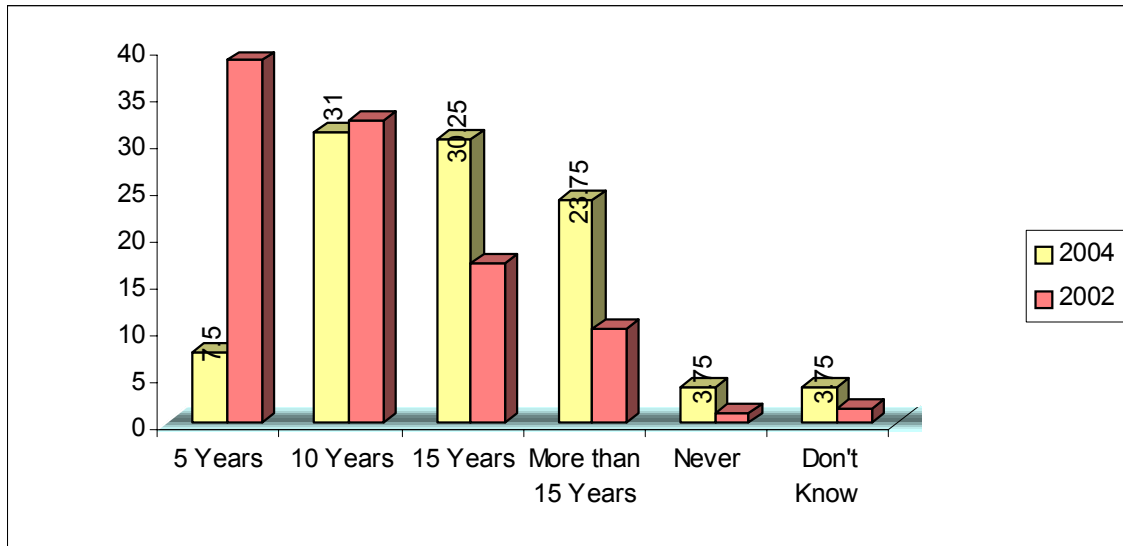
¹³ Note that in 2002 and 2004 there was a small number of respondents (less than 4%) who thought that Albania will never become a member of EU.



If the data above is compared to the 2004 results, then it is obvious that another major change has taken place on the time expectation for Albania's EU membership. While in 2004 almost 30% of respondents stated that it will take 15 years for Albania to join the EU and almost 24% of respondents answered "more than 15 years", this year the first data (15 years) has dropped to 25.1% while the second one (more than 15 years) to a low 8.3%. The most interesting fact is that for the first time since 2002 there is a majority of more than 50% of respondents who think that it will take 10 years till the country joins the EU. Such changes in the expectations can be explained with the approaching date of the signing of SA Agreement, but also with the political parties election campaign (General Elections 2005) when optimistic deadline have been very often offered to the public.

The figure below offers the respondents view on this issue in 2002 and 2004.

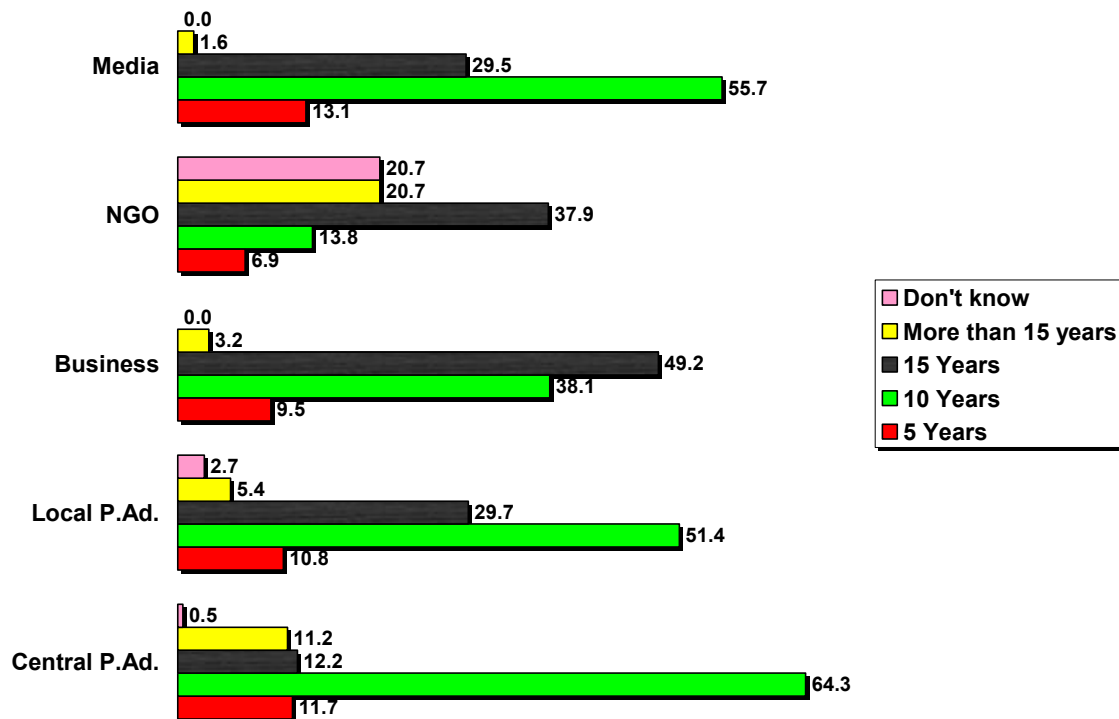
Figure12. The Number of Years for Albania to Join EU – 2004 vs. 2002. General Sample



Nevertheless, although for the first time more than half of respondents agree on an approximate period of time needed for Albania to become an EU member, there is not such “harmony” between categories. Namely, most of the business community and the NGOs (49.2% and 37.9% respectively) think that it will take 15 years for Albania to become an EU member, which is not the case with other categories where more than 50% of respondents in each of them state that it will take 10 years. On the other hand, if we analyze the data within the business and NGOs category, it becomes clear that in each of them there is little consensus amongst respondents, since a considerable number of respondents designate either 10 years or more than 15 years as the period needed. Furthermore, there is a high percentage (20.7%) of respondents from the NGOs category who don’t know when will Albania join the EU. In the remaining categories (media, central and local public administration) the difference between the percentage of respondents designating a 10 years period of time and the closest option amounts in all cases more than 20%. In the case of central public administration category this difference between respondent identifying the 10 years period (64.3%) and the second position – 15 years (by 12.2%) is more than evident.

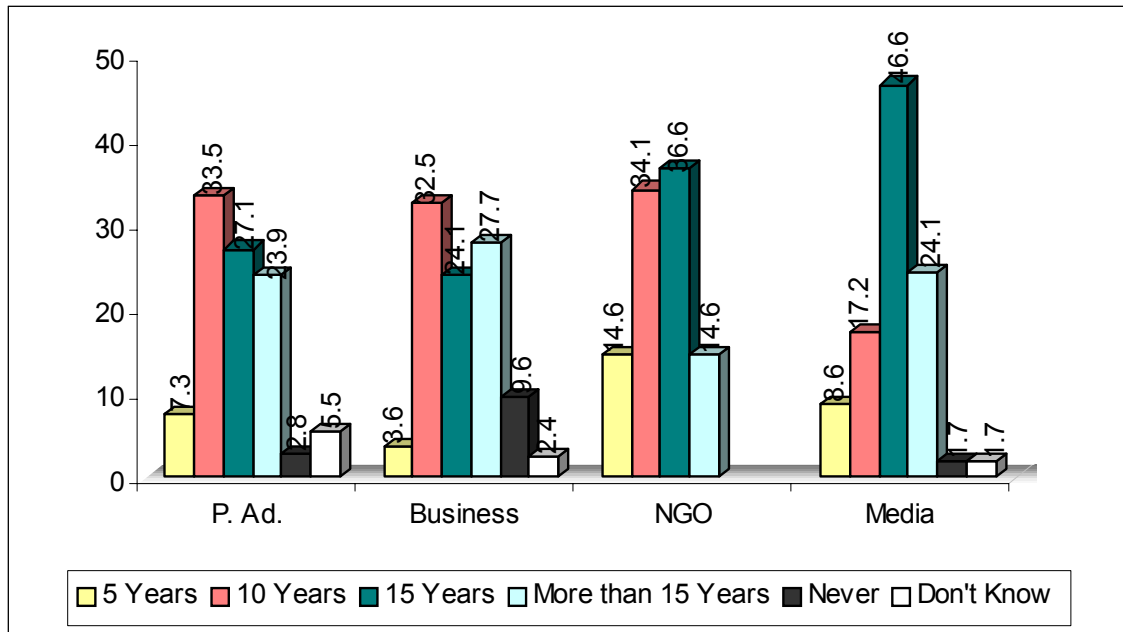
This category seems also to be the most optimistic one as the percentage of those assigning a 5 and 10 years period for accession amounts 76% of the respondents, closely followed by the media (68.8%) and the local public administration (62.2%). The least optimistic category according to the 2005 data is the NGOs one, where 58.6% of respondents assign 15 years or more than 15 years for Albania’s EU membership, followed by the business community with 52.4% of respondents. *See Figure 13.*

Figure 13. The Number of Years for Albania to Join EU – 2005 Categories



It is interesting to note that the most pessimistic category in 2005 – the NGOs, according to the last years’ survey has been the most optimistic one, with over 41% of respondents designating a 5-10 years timeframe for Albania’s accession in EU, only 14.6% believing it shall take more than 15 years, and no members doubting the eventual occurrence of this event. Such major change in one year time may be noticed also in the media category which last year was amongst the most pessimistic categories. It seems that the business community has maintained its “pessimistic spirit” from 2004, when it noted the lowest percentage of “Within 5 Years” answers; and highest of “More than 15 Years” and “Never” answers. *See Figure 14.*

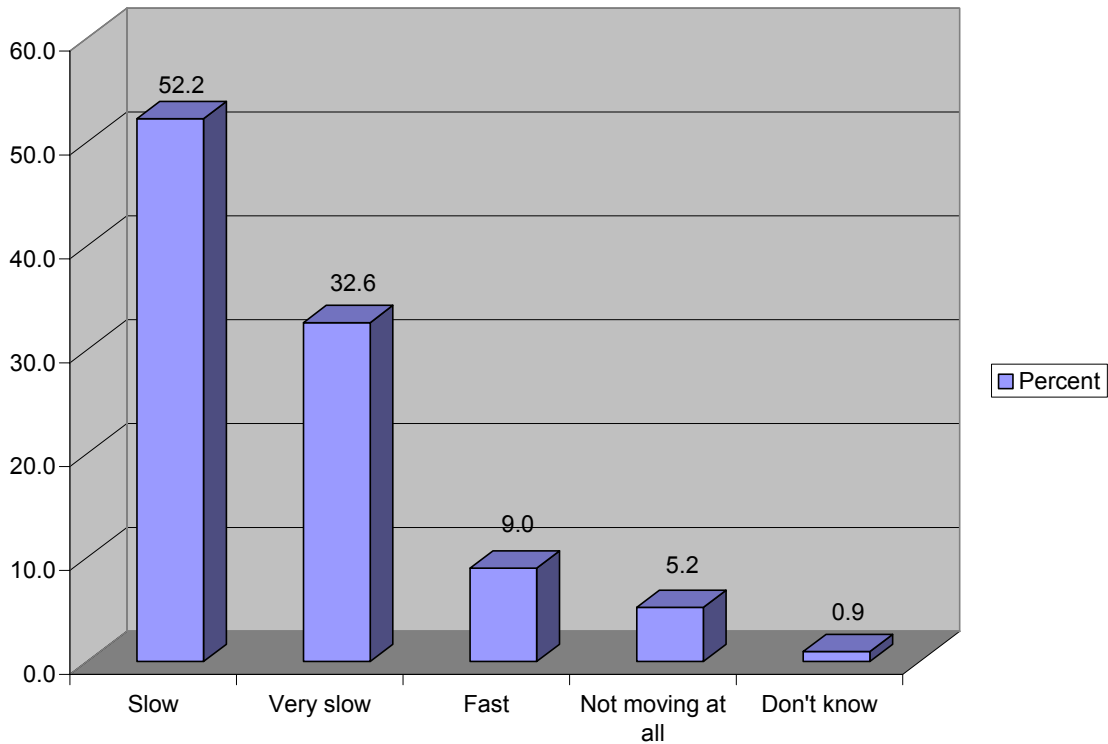
Figure14. The Number of Years for Albania to Join EU – 2004 Categories



The fact that generally there is a relatively optimistic view on the number of years that Albania needs to join EU period (more than 50% of respondents assigning the 10 years period), does not necessarily mean that the speed of the European integration process in the country is perceived as an extremely fast one. However, the respondents' perceptions are more optimistic than in 2004, which explains also the increase (as compared to 2004) in the percentage of those who think that the country needs 10 years to become an EU member (53.4% in 2005 versus 31% in 2004). In this sense, the answers seem to reflect increased expectations as regarding the number of years. Regardless of that, it is important to note that as the country gets closer to the signing of the SAA, there appears an increase of respondents who think that the process is moving slowly and a decline in the number of respondents who think that the process is moving very slow or not at all. See Figure 15.

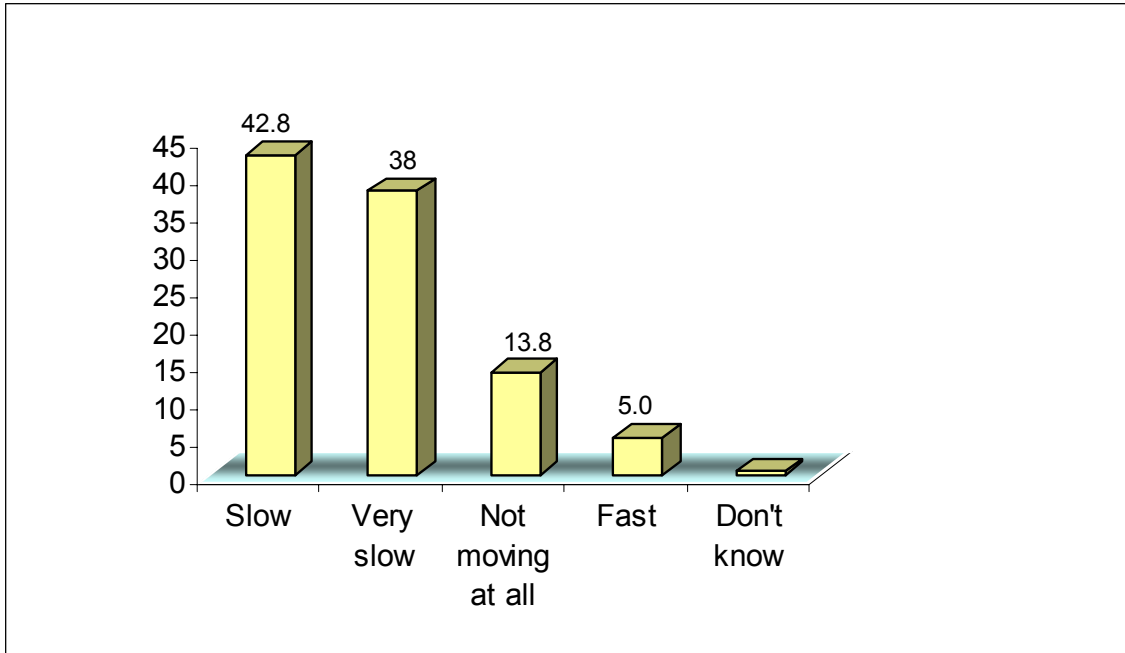
Question. Different people have different opinions regarding the speed of the process of Albanian integration into EU. In your opinion how is this process taking place? Fast, slow, very slow, not moving at all?

Figure 15. The Speed of the Integration Process – General Sample 2005



As the figure above indicates, the vast majority of respondents in 2005, 90 %, thought that the process was moving either slowly or not moving at all, whereas in 2004, this percentage was 95%. Furthermore, the percentage of respondents that think the process is very slow or not moving at all amounts to 41%, which compared to the 2004 data notes a sharp decrease by almost 11% (in 2004 this data was 51.8%). The figure below portrays the respondents' outlook on this issue in the 2004 survey (*See Figure 16*).

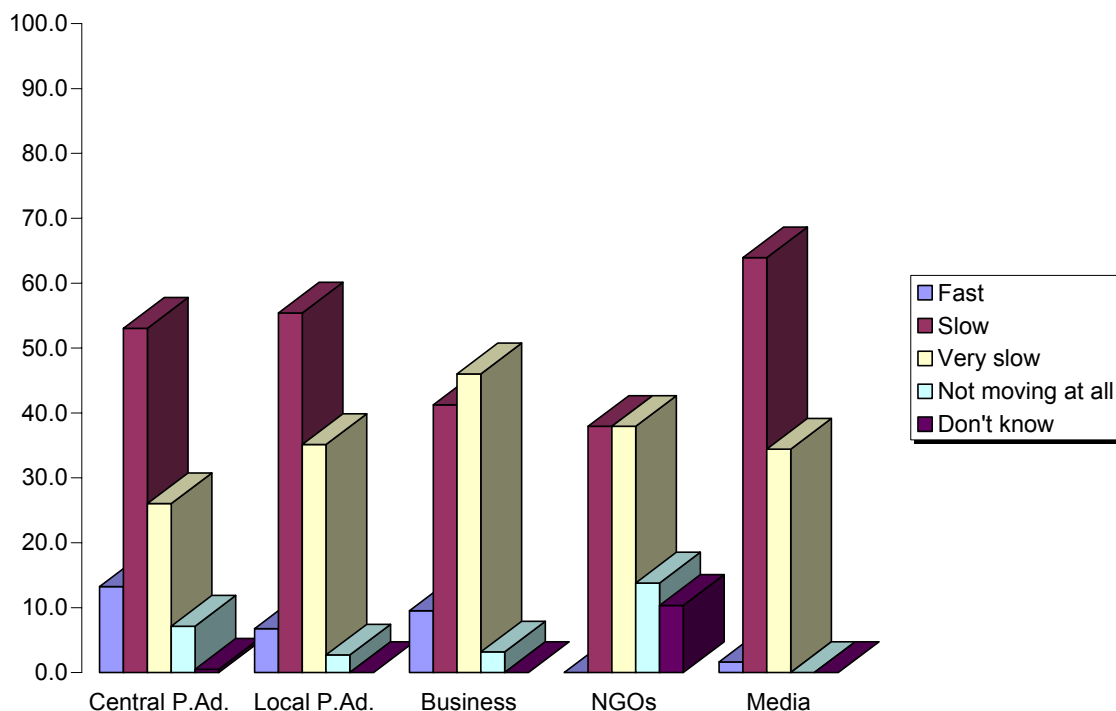
Figure16. The Speed of the Integration Process – General Sample 2004



Although the number of respondents who think that the process is moving slowly remains at the first place also in 2005, besides the increase in the percentage of respondents (from 42.8% in 2004 to 52.2% this year), there exists also a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who think that the process is moving fast. Nevertheless, this is a clear indication of a relatively growing optimism regarding the membership date for Albania.

Such tendency is reflected mainly across the optimistic (and also membership-supportive) categories, which is not the case with the pessimistic ones – in the Business and to a lesser extent in the NGOs category. The Central Government Public Administration category is the most optimistic one with 13.3% of the respondent answering that the process was moving fast, and the lowest percentage thinking the process was taking place very slowly (26%). It is not surprising that the central public administration is the category with the most optimistic outlook on the integration process, which is after all closer to the official stand on this issue. Nevertheless, even in this category, as in the general sample, it is clear that the country is far from fast progress on the road to EU integration. *See Figure 17.*

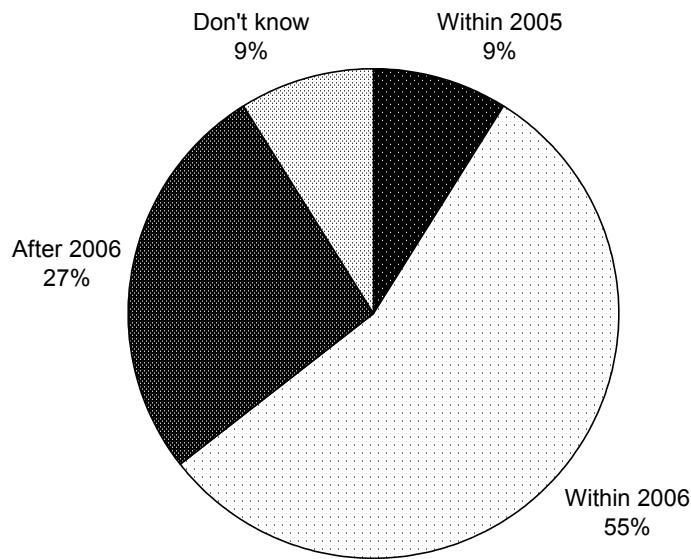
Figure 17. The Speed of the Integration Process – 2005 Categories



The positive trend in time expectations and the high percentage of respondents who think that the process is moving slow (52.2% in 2005 versus 42.8% in 2004) is partly also due to the approaching date of the signing of the SAA which according to most of respondents will happen within 2006. Since this process is close to conclusion, the respondents' perceptions on the speed of the integration process note a modest improvement (see above). On the other hand, such development raises expectations for Albania's eventual EU membership in ten years time (53.4% of respondents). However, Albania's closer involvement in the SA process has also produced more information on this process which may in part (not fully) explain the slight decline in the support for EU membership, but also the increase in the expectations about the possible benefits from membership.

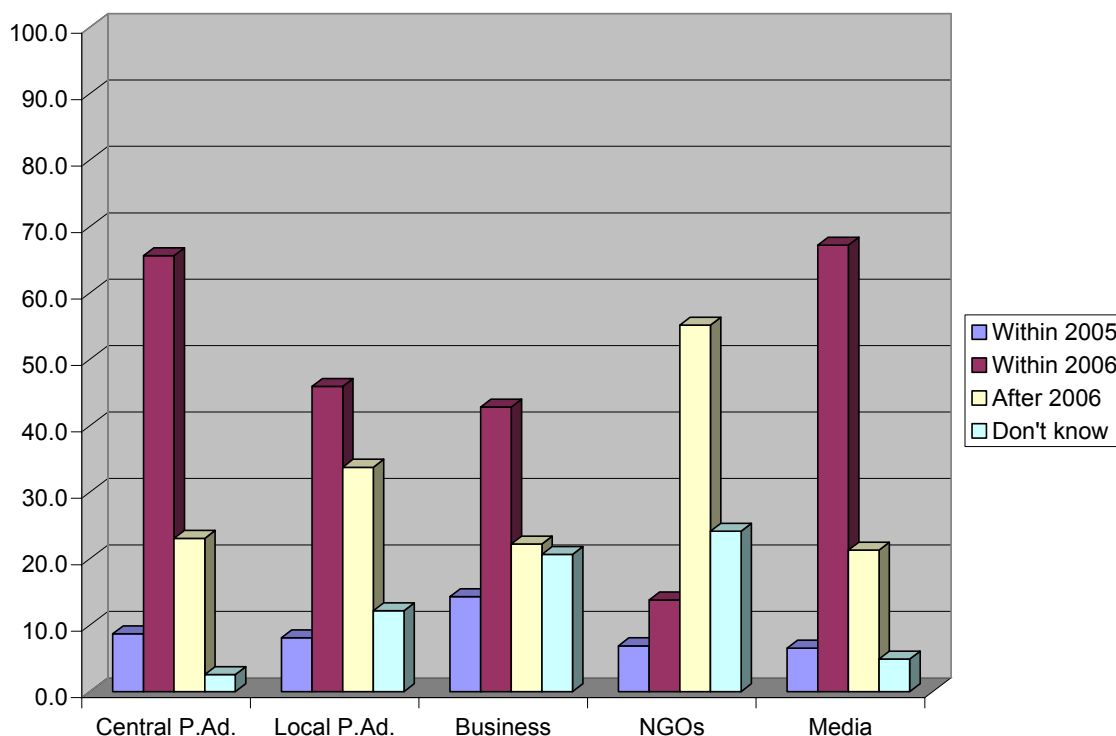
Question. Negotiations for the Stabilization Association Agreement have commenced on 31 January 2003. Different time targets have been anticipated for the signing of this agreement. In your opinion, this agreement will be signed:

Figure 18. Expected time for Signing of SAA – 2005. General Sample



While one year ago respondents were not clear, this year a solid majority of respondents claim that the SAA signing will finally take place in 2006. This should not come as a surprise since it has been acknowledged that this process is close to its end. However, not all categories agree on that. The majority of respondents from the NGOs category (55.2%) think that the signing of the SAA will take place after 2006. This should not be interpreted as a consequence of the lack of information in this category, but as a clear indicator of its skepticism about Albania's progress in the integration process (note that 37% of them think that Albania will become a EU member in 15 years time). *See Figure 19.*

Figure 19. Expected time for Signing of SAA across Categories – 2005



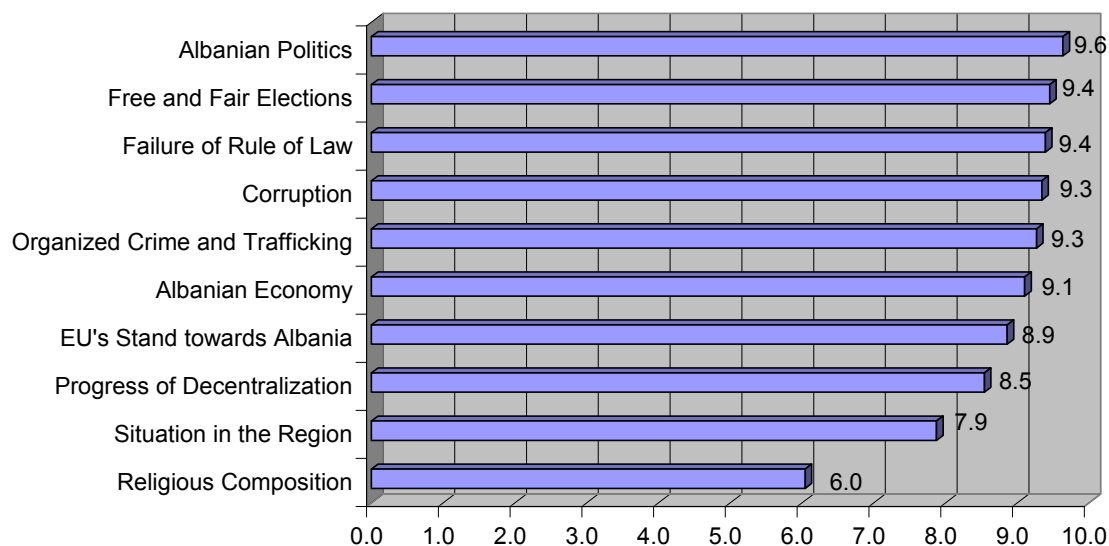
It is evident (from the figure above) that the central public administration and the media categories have a more consensual view of the timeframe for SAA, while the local public administration and the business categories, have a more dispersed percentage across options, although, again, most of them think that the signing will take place within 2006.

V.3 Understanding Determining Factors of Integration

The respondents' evaluation about factors determining the integration process in Albania remains almost the same by rank as in 2002 and 2004, but with higher scores for most of them. Namely, the three main factors for Albania's EU membership in order of importance are: Albanian Politics (9.6), Free and Fair Elections (9.4), and the Failure of the Rule of Law (9.4). Corruption and Organized Crime are placed at the fourth and fifth place, each of them scoring 9.3. The two factors which according to the respondents are less important if compared with the previous eight still remain the Situation in the Region (7.9) and the Religious Composition (6.0). See Figure 20.

Question. Albania's Membership into EU depends on a variety of factors. In your opinion how important are the factors below. Please evaluate in a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the higher the number the more important you consider the factor.

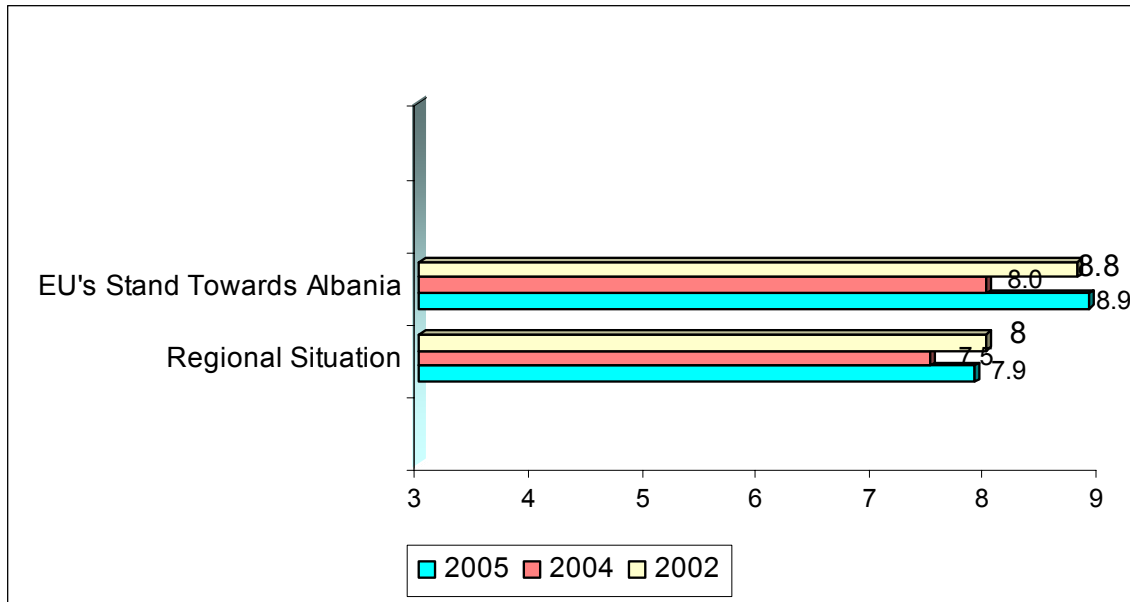
Figure 20. Factors Important for Albania's EU Membership – 2005 General Sample



As we can see from Figure 20, Albanians consider most of the domestic challenges as being the main factors (scoring higher than others) determining the country's EU membership. This is a positive development and reflects the impact of a number of declarations and stands by EU institutions emphasizing that the speed of EU integration for Albania depends on Albania's will to undertake reforms and democratize. However it is important to emphasize that EU stand towards Albania does still remain high in absolute value.

The EU's stand towards Albania (8.9) and the regional situation (7.9) have been placed after the main concerns of Albanian society although their importance, according to respondents is growing as compared with the previous year (8.0 and 7.5 respectively, in 2004). In addition, the importance of *EU's stand*, as perceived by respondents, this year goes a little bit further than three years ago when its 2002 score was 8.8 out of ten maximum. See Figure 21.

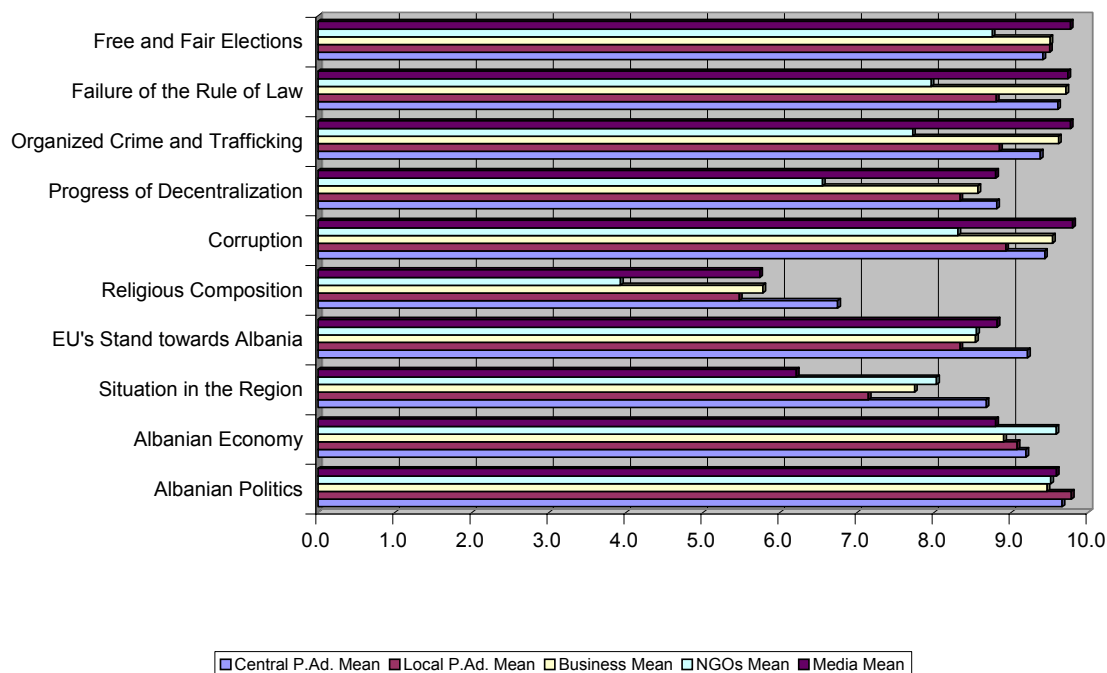
Figure 21. External factors – General Sample 2002, 2004 and 2005



Considering the latest developments within the EU and the forthcoming decisive period for some parts of the region (Kosova, Montenegro) the perceived growing importance of these two factors is understandable. The debate in the EU and beyond, on Turkey's and Croatia's bid for membership, in one hand and the long negotiating process for the SAA with Albania on the other, have changed the respondents' perceptions on the possible effects of a rigid, though justified, EU stand towards Albania. In addition, as the time for a final solution on the Kosovo status approaches, the importance of the regional situation and regional concerns scores higher this year – 7.9, which is close to this factor's score in 2002 (8.0), when Balkan's security was still fragile. These developments within the EU as well as in the Balkan region seem to remind Albanians of the importance these factors carry on their country's EU prospects. This is why the EU's stand towards Albania and the regional situation score higher than the previous year. On the other hand, the sharpness of domestic concerns and problems (elections, corruption, organized crime etc.) which were additionally emphasized during the 2005 General Elections campaign by political parties and other actors of Albanian society have maintained the ranking of domestic concerns versus external factors. Although the latter note growth in their scores as compared with 2004, the higher scores of domestic factors by respondents have remained more or less unchanged the ranking of determining factors.

The same trends regarding the importance that respondents attach to each determining factor are evident across the five surveyed categories - domestic factors are of primary importance in the EU integration process. In all categories, Albanian politics is scored above nine, while the four subsequent factors (free and fair elections, rule of law, corruption and organized crime and trafficking) are scored above eight, except for the scoring of "organized crime and trafficking" by respondents from the NGO sector which is - 7.7. See Figure 22.

Figure 22: Factors Important for Albania's EU Membership 2005 - Categories



However, if we analyze these factors by categories, Albanian politics is the top concern only for the central and local government public administration, while this is not the case with other categories. Namely, the highest importance is attached to the rule of law by the business community, for NGOs the economic situation is perceived as the main concern, while the media provides the highest score to “corruption” and to “organized crime and trafficking”. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that all factors are part of the top five concerns scoring above nine with low standard deviations. Furthermore, the fact that these are closely interrelated factors reveals that the integration process is being increasingly perceived as a process that starts in Albania and ends in EU and not vice versa.

It is interesting to notice that the importance of religious composition continues to note growing scores by Albanians, although still remaining at the last place as compared with other factors and also if analyzed within each category. In 2002 respondents scored this factor in average with 3.79 and in 2004 with 4.25, in both cases being the least important factor for Albania’s European integration process. This year the religious composition as a determining factor notes a considerable increase in the importance attached to it (scoring 6.0 out of a maximum ten), though with the highest standard deviation – 3.1. For the first time this year, the difference between this factor’s scoring and the least scored factor from the remaining ones (in our case the Regional situation) is less than two points while in 2004 was approximately three and in 2002 above four. On the other hand, the religious composition of Albania as a determining factor has had the highest standard deviation from all other factors also in 2002 (3.13), as well as in 2004 - 3.34. It is difficult to determine whether such development is only casual, or whether it has been influenced by the heated discourse on politics and religion in both the international and domestic arena. Nevertheless, the intense debate in the European Union (and beyond) on Turkey’s

bid for EU membership and the last minute crisis one day before the official start of the membership negotiations between that country and Brussels, has undoubtedly had its impact on Albanian public perceptions. This debate was widely portrayed and discussed in Albania, which might have caused the establishment of a link between Turkey's bid and the European prospects of our country, where most of the population is Muslim. In this context, one should also bear in mind that this year's survey was conducted in September – October 2005, exactly the period when the debate on Turkey's EU prospect was amongst the headlines of the media and on the top of Brussels' agenda.

V.4 Perceptions and Information on EU

In order to assess perceptions on EU, respondents were read five statements on EU and asked to evaluate them on an increasing scale of 1 to 10, where the highest number denotes the highest degree of agreement with the statement. The first two statements pertain strictly to EU as an organization, and they attempt to assess to what extent EU is viewed as a democratic organization and to what extent it is seen as a source of peace and security in Europe. The other three deal with EU and its impact on the economy and democracy of countries outside EU. Of particular interest here is also the degree to which respondents see EU as an open organization for other European countries. As shown in *Table 3*, EU scores highest in the first two statements, and the lowest in the other three. Thus, EU is perceived more positively as an organization than for its impact outside its borders.

Table 3. EU Values – General Sample 2005

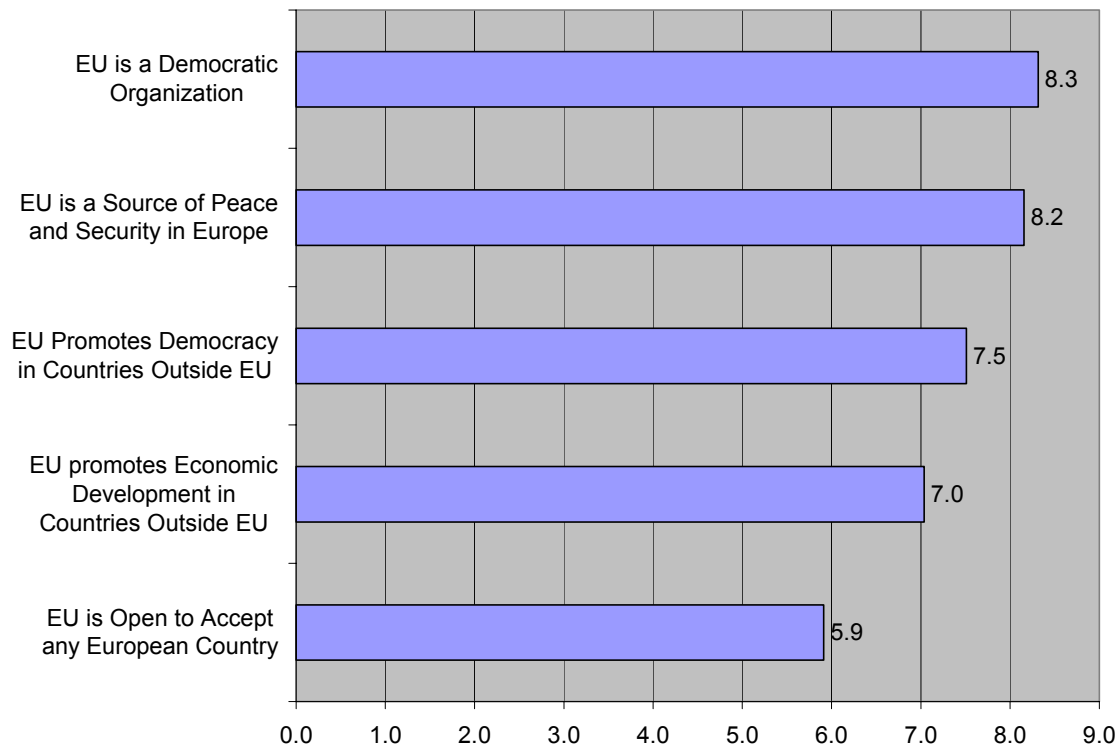
STATEMENT	Mean	Std. Dev.
EU is a Democratic Organization	8.3	1.95
EU is a Source of Peace and Security in Europe	8.2	2.37
EU Promotes Democracy in Countries Outside EU	7.5	2.38
EU Promotes Economic Development in Countries Outside EU	7	2.53
EU Is Open to Accept any European Country	5.9	2.96

An interesting development of 2005 as compared to 2004 is that EU's score has been improved in all the five tested aspects, including the lowest, i.e. the statement that *EU is open to accept any European country*. From 5.05 which has been the average evaluation of this statement in 2004, it has reached the average of 5.9 in 2005. However, one should bear in mind that the standard deviation of this data, although within normal frames, is the highest one as compared to the other statements.

Such changes might be due to the rapprochement of the date of the signing of the Stabilization Association Agreement between EU and Albania. Another factor might be the opening of the membership negotiations with Turkey and Croatia and the progress of Western Balkan countries in the stabilization and association process (Serbia-Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina). These are all factors that bear an immense influencing potential and as such one should consider also their possible impact on Albanians' perceptions.

As shown in Figure 23 respondents in 2005 have a more positive view on EU, however, still aware that it is not open to any European country. *See Figure 23.*

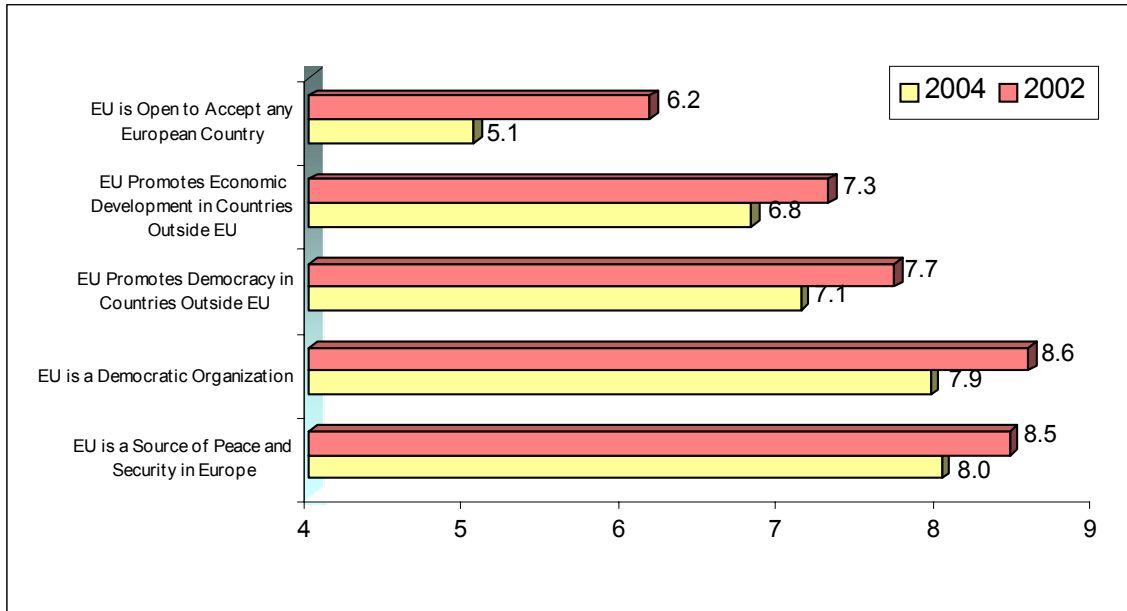
Figure 23. EU Values – General Sample 2005



The 2004 perceptions on EU values were less positive than in 2002 and although this year respondents have rated higher these values, their perceptions are still far from the 2002 level. This is not a surprise considering the realistic trends that are being cautiously strengthened from year to year amongst Albanians. Furthermore, in 2004 respondents were generally quite pessimistic about their country’s European prospects, due to several reasons, while the approaching date of the SAA signing has its own impact on the growing optimism, though within reasonable frames.

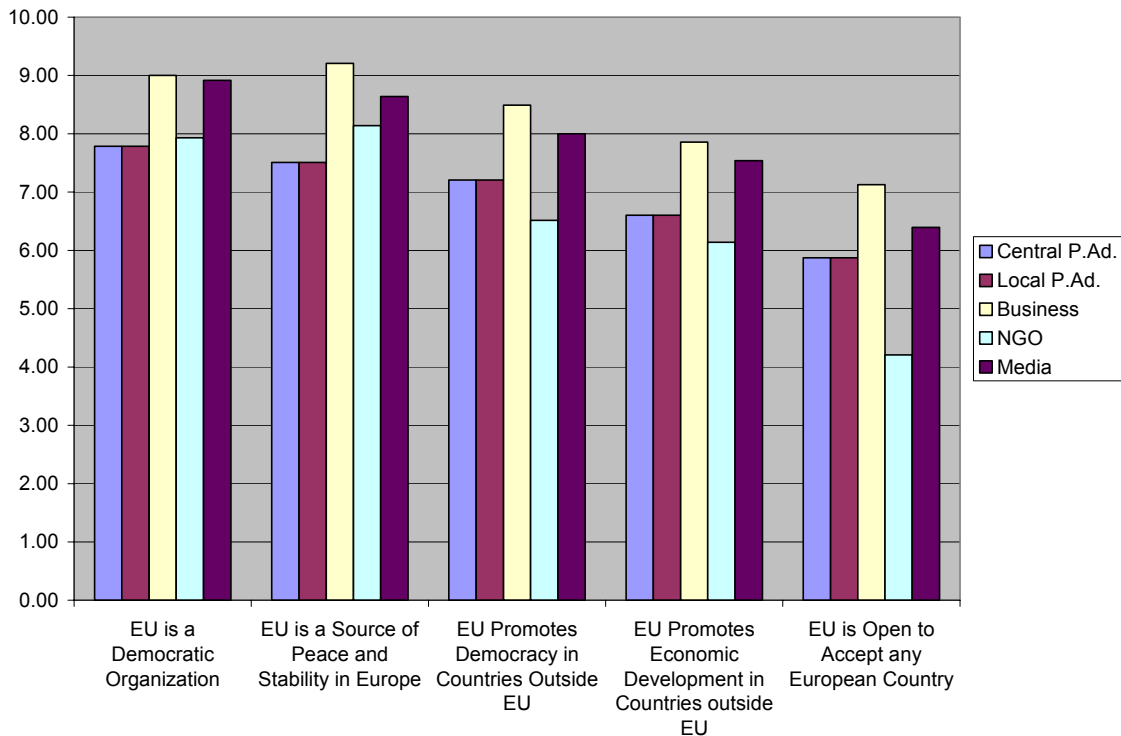
In both 2002 and 2004 EU scored more on the two first statements and slightly worse on the other three. So we have the same pattern repeated in 2004 although with lower scores in all five aspects. However it is important to emphasize that respondents in 2005 still hold EU in high regard as an organization, but, as it is to be expected, they would like to see more action on part of EU outside its borders. The figure below offers the respondents perceptions on EU values in 2002 and 2004. *See Figure 24.*

Figure 24. Perceptions on EU - General Sample, 2002 vs. 2004



The answers of the general sample were also reflected in each of the categories. In all categories EU scores highest on the first two statements and rather lowest on the other three. It is important to notice that EU scores the highest in the Business and Media category, a total of 41.68 and 39.49 points respectively, while it received the lowest scores in the NGOs category- 28.31 points. See Figure 25.

Figure 25. Perceptions on EU according to categories - 2005



The above data reflect the perceptions of respondents on EU as an organization and its impact on third countries. In order to assess both the perceptions and the level of knowledge of respondents on EU priorities and goals the respondents were given four goals and asked to evaluate them according to the importance that EU places on each.

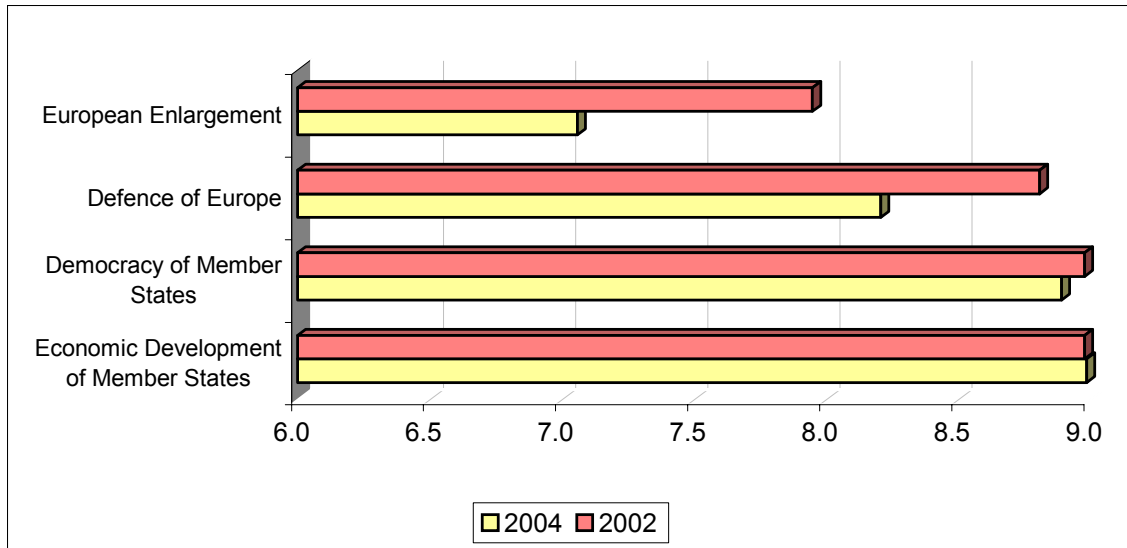
Question: European Union was founded in order to attain a variety of goals. In your opinion how important are the following goals for the European Union? Please rate in a scale from 1 to 10 bearing in mind that the higher the number the more important you consider the given goal for EU.

Table 4. EU Goals for the General Sample – 2005

Goals	Mean	Standard Deviation
Economic Development of Member States	8.9	1.83
Democracy in Member States	8.5	1.89
The Defense of Europe	7.8	2.7
European Enlargement	7.6	2.36

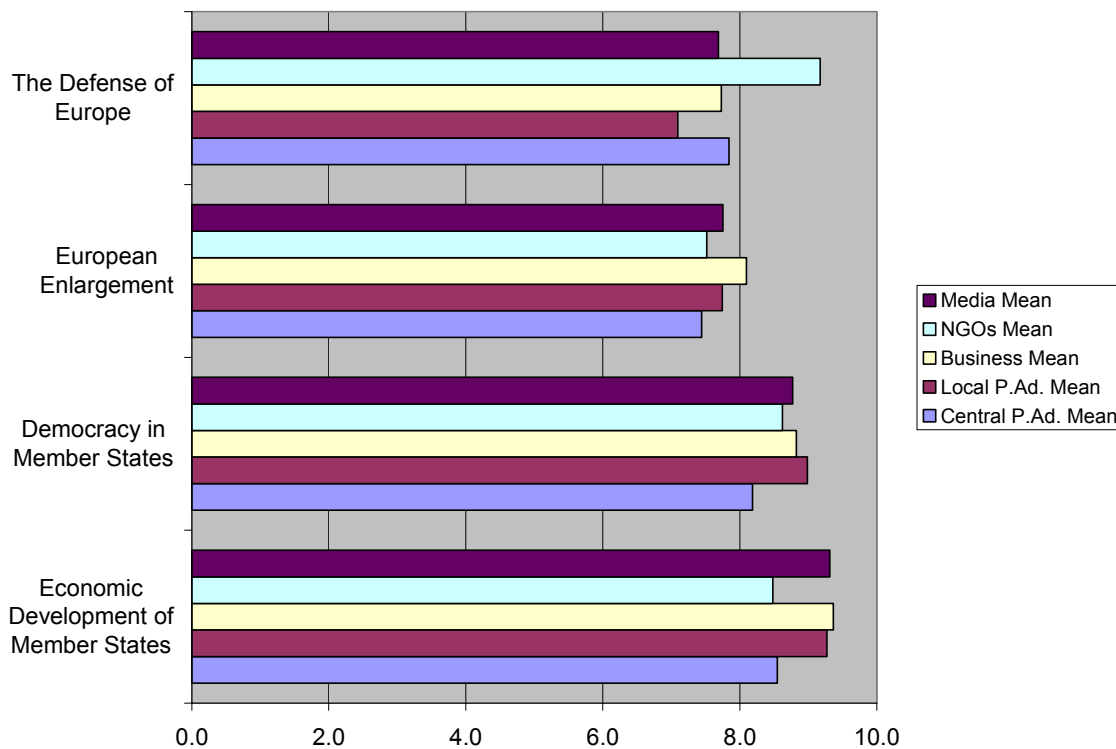
As expected, EU scores lowest in enlargement, which again might reflect respondent's frustration with Albania's slow integration process, as most of respondents characterize it in this fashion. The two most important goals for EU were perceived economic development and democratization of member states. A comparison of the 2005 perceptions with the 2004 ones shows that there is almost no change in perceptions regarding EU's goals of economic development, while there is a slight decline for the second and the third goal rating. Surprisingly, although European Enlargement remains the less scored goal, in 2005 it notes a better score – from 7.06 in 2004 to 7.6 this year. This may come as a result of the approaching SAA signing and also as a result of the recent development in the Balkan countries (Turkey, Croatia, the positive indications about Macedonia etc.). However, considering that Albanians are slowly becoming more realistic in their expectations from the integration process and its pace, it is not surprising that European Enlargement remains at the last place. The figure below offers the respondents' perceptions on these goals in 2002 and 2004. *See Figure 26.*

Figure 26. EU Goals – 2004 vs. 2002 General Sample



The same pattern is present across four categories where Economic Development and Democracy of Member States came as the two main priorities for EU. The only exception here is the NGOs category whose respondents consider the Defense of Europe as the EU's top goal (scoring it with 9.2 points). On the other hand, European Enlargement as a priority has been put at the last place only in the following categories: Central public administration and NGOs, while in all other categories it takes the third place. *See Figure 27.*

Figure 27. EU Goals According to Categories – 2005

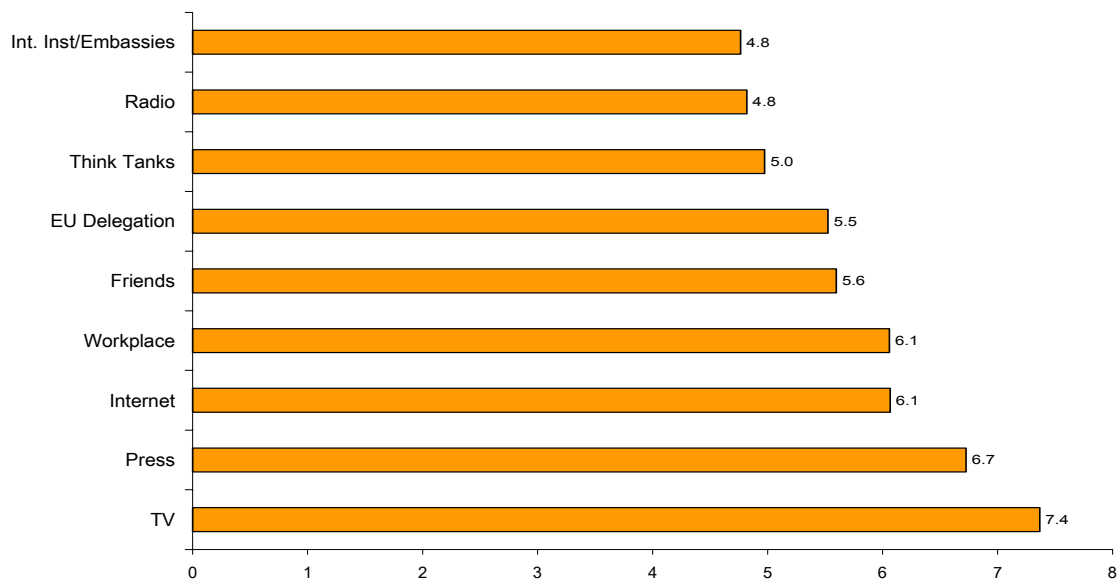


It is interesting to notice from the above figure that EU goals score the highest in the NGOs sector (a total of 33.8 points), and the lowest in Central and Local Government Public Administration (a total of 32 and 33.1 points respectively).

V.5 Sources of Information on EU

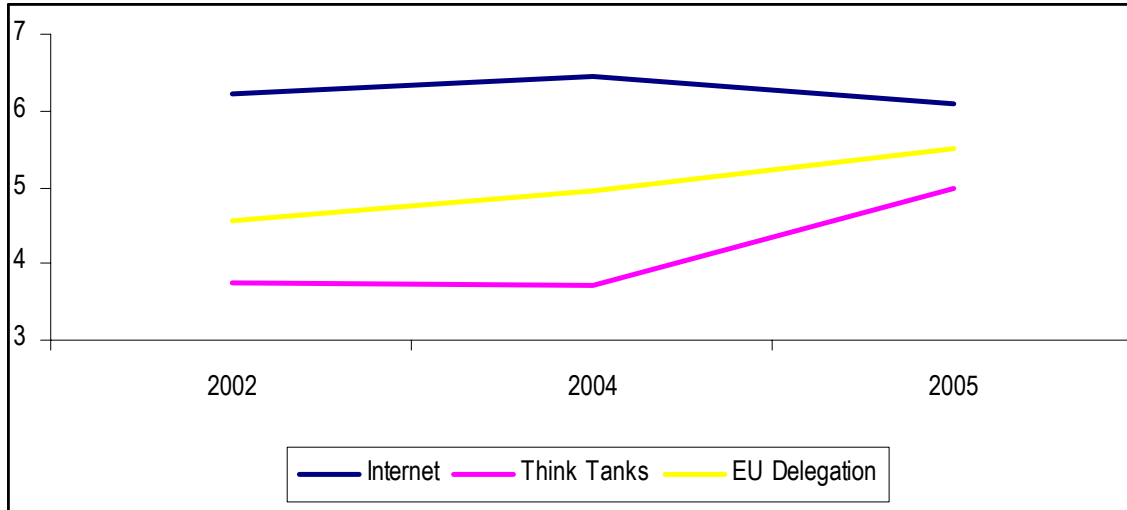
In order to achieve more insight regarding the level of information and knowledge of respondents, we tried to identify the sources of information from where respondents receive information on EU and whether they are interested in acquiring more knowledge on the subject. The two most important sources of information on EU for the general sample in 2005 are Television and Newspapers that scored 7.4 and 6.7 respectively. Internet was also an important source and it came third at 6.1. *See Figure 28.*

Figure 28. Sources of Information on EU – General Sample 2005



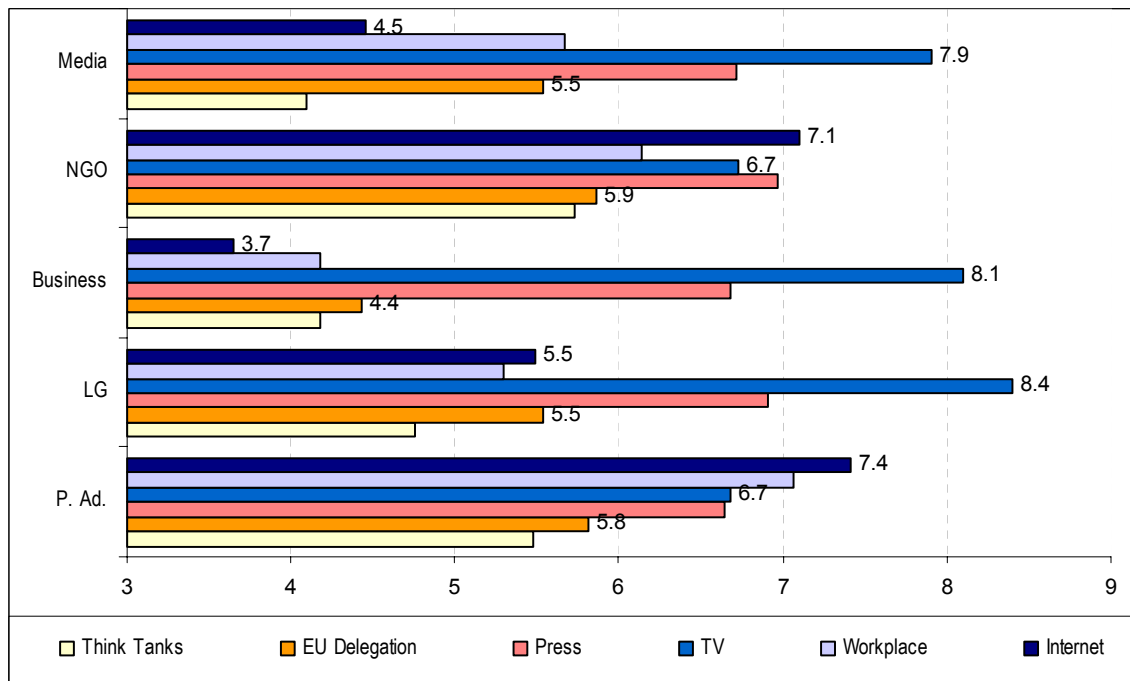
The same pattern of sources of information appears in 2005 as in the two previous surveys, despite the more national character of this year's survey. The EC Delegation in Albania continues to gain importance as a primary source of information on the European Union, tendency which was manifested also in 2004. On the other hand, one of the major changes that have occurred in 2005 is the increasing importance of think-tanks, which have scored relatively high in comparison with the past years. *See Figure 29.*

Figure 29. Sources of Information: EU, Think Tanks, Internet – 2002, 2004 and 2005



The pattern of the general sample was also reflected in each of the categories, with slight exceptions. Of all the categories surveyed, NGOs remain the main Internet customer in the EU information field, but Internet has scored rather low in the Business (3.7, as opposed to 6.8 last year) and Media (4.5) categories. See Figure 30.

Figure 30. Sources of Information on EU across Categories - 2005



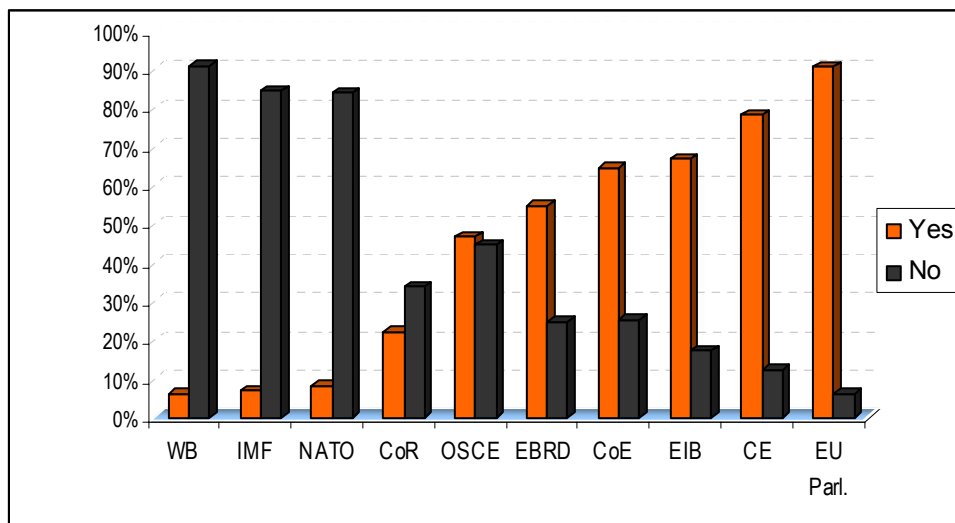
In a similar fashion as in 2004 and 2002, media is the principal means of information on EU-related issues as well. Let us consider the Media Category in particular, in the perspective of both suppliers and consumers of information: results are interesting – respondents here indicated TV and newspapers as the main sources of information, scoring respectively 7.9 and 6.7 out of 10, while Internet and the EC Delegation in Tirana are identified as the next two more important sources, with rather lower scores at respectively 4.5 and 5.5. The fact that this category itself does not receive enough

primary information raises questions as to the validity and value of information made public. Media receives most information from media, thus by itself, creating a closed circle of transmission of information, on which the other categories build a significant part of their knowledge as well.

Such a phenomenon might have a deteriorating impact on the level and quality of knowledge on EU and EU integration process. Let us consider this question further, by exploring the respondents' knowledge on EU and its institutions. In order to achieve this objective, respondents were asked whether specific institutions/organizations were part of EU. Their responses to this question gave us a clearer picture on respondent's familiarity with EU and its institutions. See Figure 31.

Question: From what you know which of the following are Institutions of European Union (EU)?

Figure 31. EU Institutions for the General Sample - 2005

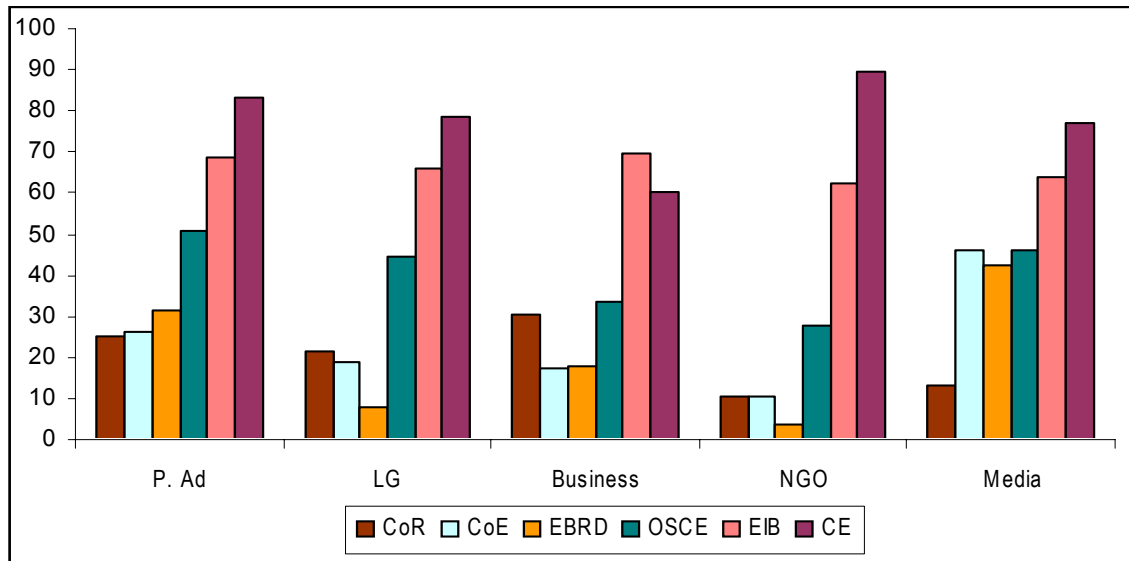


As Figure 31 shows with the exception of the Committee of Regions, OSCE, Council of Europe and EBRD, the majority of respondents answered correctly in the other cases. Nevertheless we should not rush into conclusions since these four organizations are very telling examples. For most respondents the word "Europe" or "European" in the name of the institution seems to have been the determining factor in deciding on whether it was an EU institution or not. This might also explain why most people answered incorrectly on OSCE and EBRD, and why they answered correctly on the World Bank, NATO, and IMF, none of which contains the word "Europe" or "European".

It is important to point out that in the case of OSCE the number of correct answers has increased from 26.5% in 2004, to almost 45% this year. The OSCE presence in Albania and the important role it has acquired in Albanian politics, especially during the 2005 parliamentary elections period, has apparently had an impact on the level of information of our respondents. However, a considerable percentage of respondents (47%) still believe OSCE to be an EU institution.

The Committee of Regions is the institution respondents are less familiar with: surprisingly, more than 40% do not know whether it is an EU institution, and only 22% answered correctly. The familiarity of our respondents with the Committee of Regions is likely to increase as Albania advances in its EU integration efforts. *See Figure 32.*

Figure 32. EU Institutions - Correct answers for each category (2005)

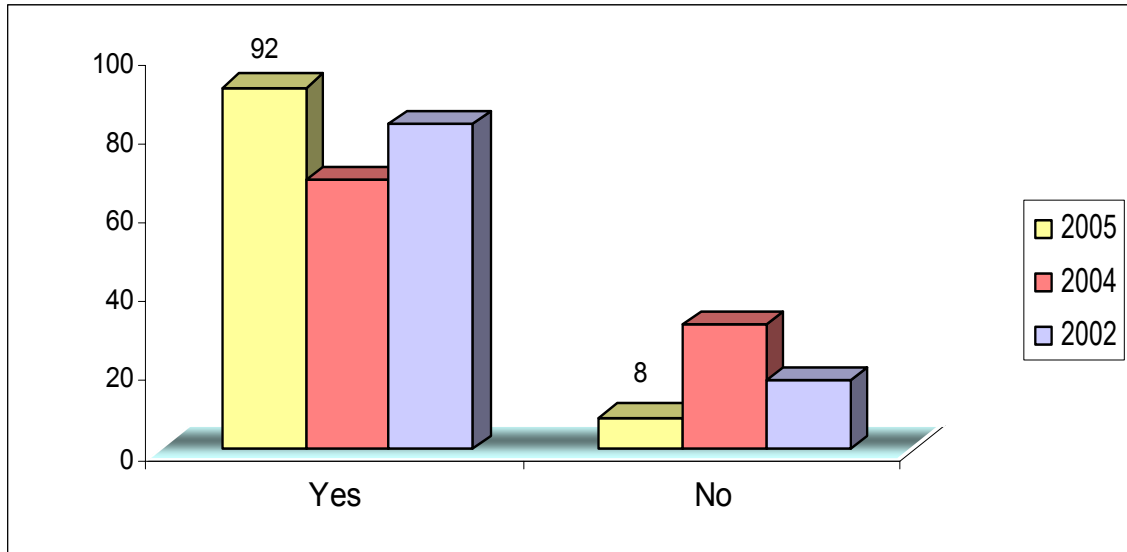


The best-informed category is the Media, which has the greatest value of correct numbers percentage points (664), followed by the Central Public Administration (at 649 percentage points). This year's results show that NGOs are the least informed category, while they have usually scored the highest both in the 2002 and 2004 surveys. Local Government Administration and business have scored respectively 570 and 573 percentage points of correct answers each, which is fairly good.

In order to assess the levels of knowledge and familiarity respondents have with the EU and the process of integration we tested their familiarity with the criterion/requirements that Albania has to fulfill in order to join EU. *See Figure 33.*

Question. In order for Albania to join EU it has to meet certain criterion/conditions, have you heard of them?

Figure 33. Familiarity with Conditions to Join EU, General Sample – 2002, 2004 and 2005

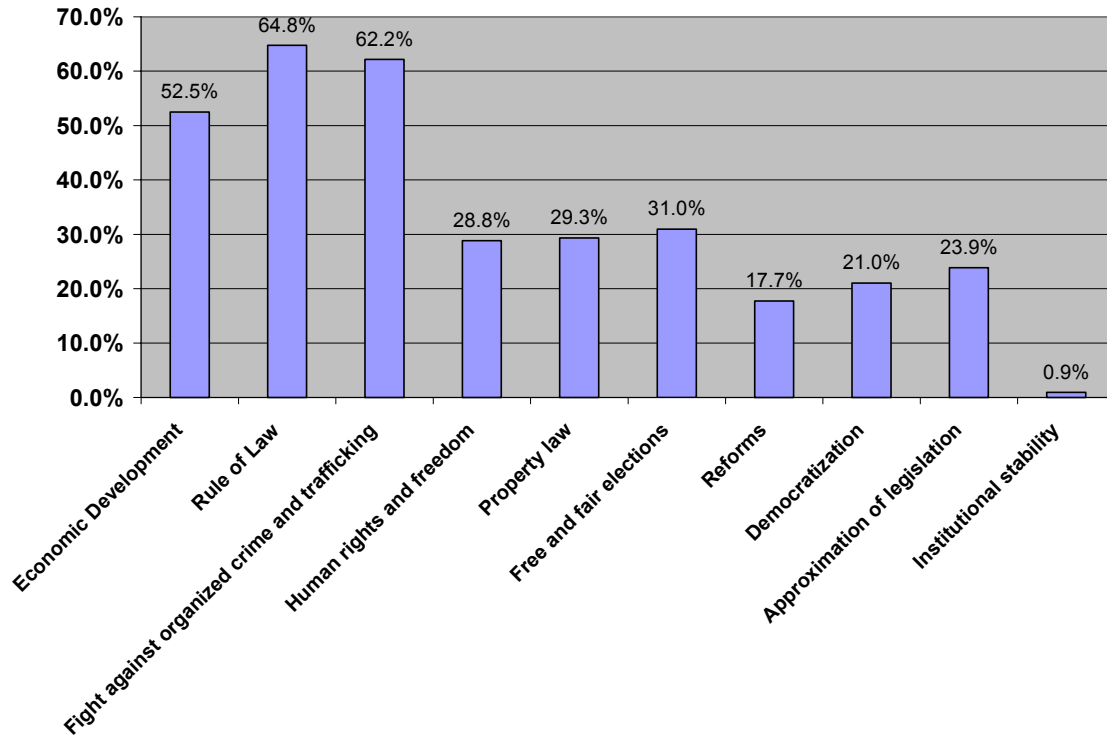


As the above figure shows there is a significant change in 2005 as compared to 2004 regarding the level of familiarity with the EU Integration conditions. The level of familiarity of respondents with EU integration requirements in 2005 seems to be significantly greater than in 2004. As EU integration becomes an ever more present reality, respondents have received more information about the technicalities and complications of the EU integration process. The various categories reflect the same pattern as the general sample: across all categories over 85% of respondents say they have heard of the conditions needed to join EU, with the exception of Business (67% are familiar with conditions), which obviously is the category less interested in technicalities of the process.

In order to test the actual level of information respondents had with regard to EU integration requirements, those who answered “Yes” to the previous question were also asked to rate some of the conditions they had heard of. *See Figure 34.*

Question: Please mention some of the conditions you have heard of:

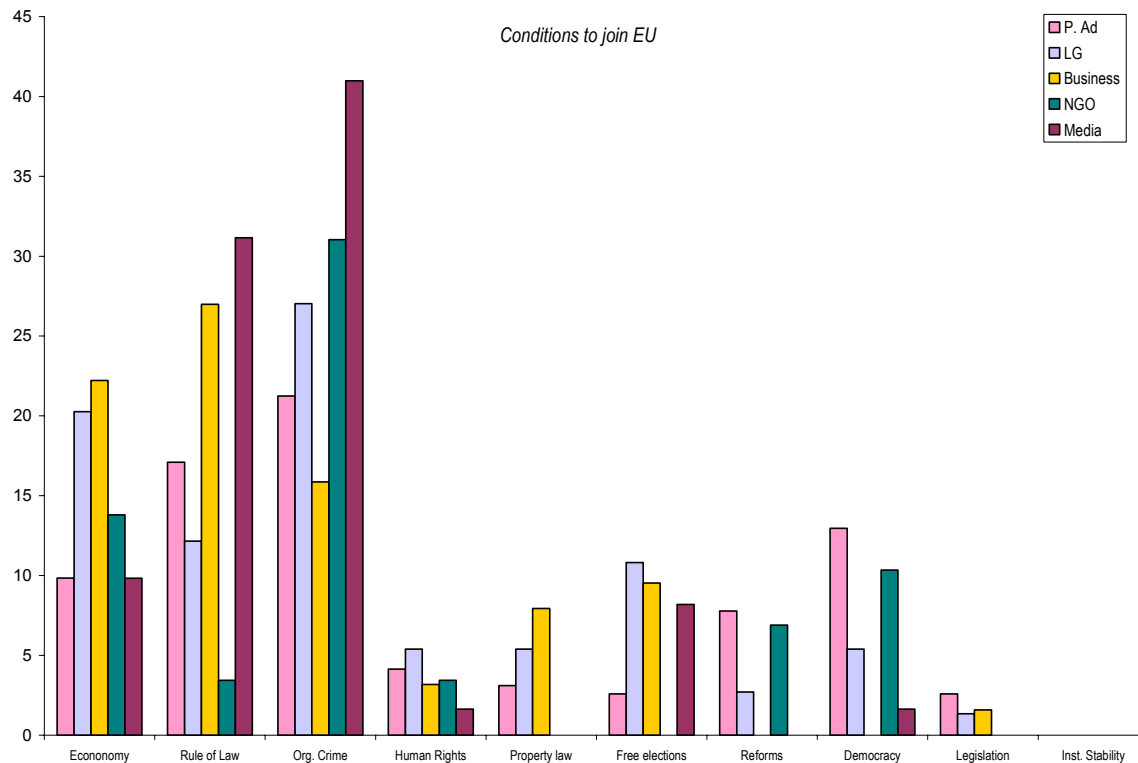
Figure 34. Conditions for Albania to Join EU – General Sample 2005



As the above figure indicates, of the numerous conditions that were mentioned, the Rule of Law, Fight against Organized Crime and Trafficking, and Economic Development, have been most rated conditions by the respondents. Free and fair elections, which was among the first rated conditions in the 2004 survey, has lost significance in 2005 (45.75% in 2004 to 31% this year) although it is still at the fourth place. This is probably due to the fact that the survey was held after the parliamentary elections, which were generally considered as free and fair. In addition, while economic development as a condition in 2004 was the second most scored one, this year it takes the third place, right after the Fight against Organized Crime and Trafficking. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that more than 50% of the respondents who are acquainted with the conditions continue to perceive the first three ones as very important.

Figure 35 shows the distribution of requirements mentioned first across all categories. As shown in the figure, the rating of the abovementioned conditions in the general sample is also portrayed in most of the categories. *See Figure 35.*

Figure 35. Conditions to Join EU – Categories 2005

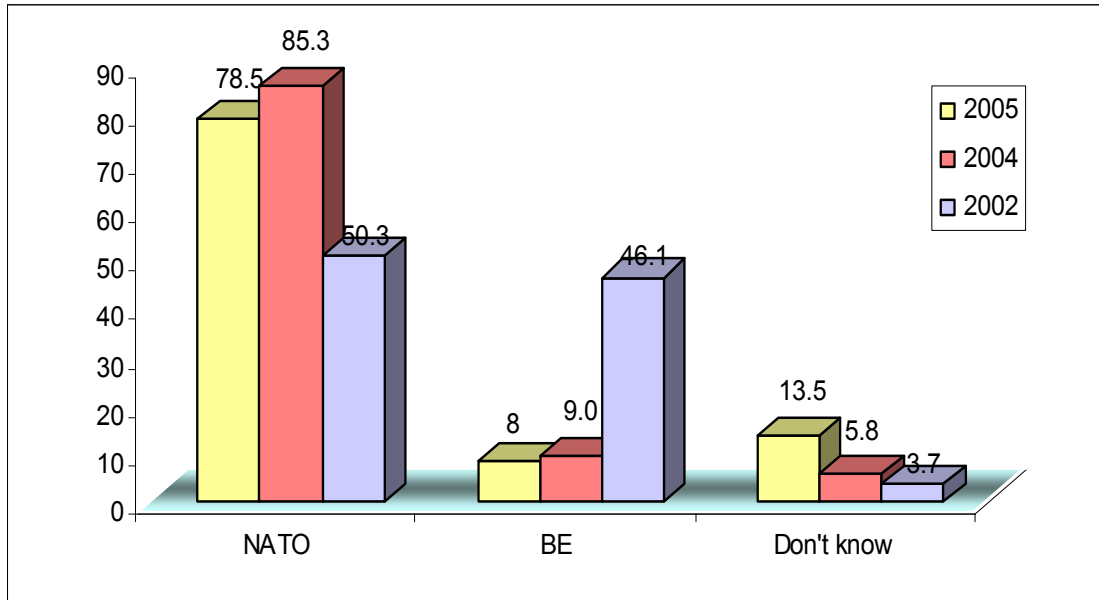


Rule of law and economy are the most important conditions to be met in order to join EU according to the business category, while media indicates war against organized crime and rule of law as very important conditions. In general, the distribution of answers across categories shows an increasing familiarity of respondents with the EU integration process.

This was also clearly reflected when respondents were asked whether Albania will join first NATO or EU. In 2004 the number of people who said that Albania will first join NATO and later EU was much higher than in 2002. In fact in 2004 only 9 % of respondents answered that Albania will first join EU. *See Figure 36.*

Question. Albania is trying to become a member of EU as well as NATO. In your opinion which of them will Albania join first NATO or EU?

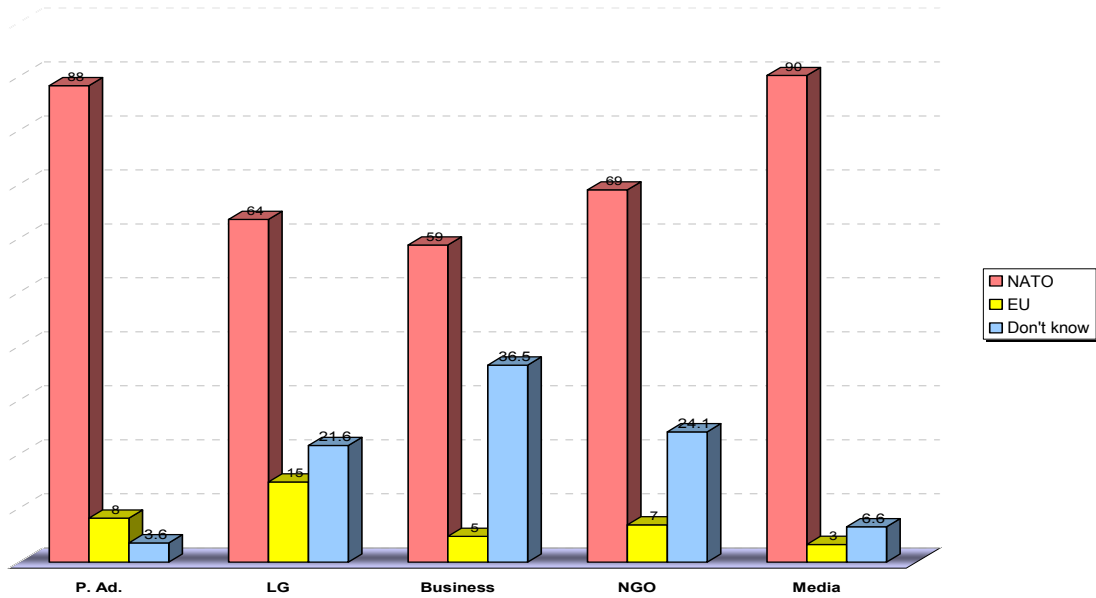
Figure 36. Albania's Membership in NATO and EU – General Sample 2002, 2004 and 2005



The above answers clearly indicate a more comprehensive understanding of the EU integration process. As the figure above indicates, the fact that in 2002 only a slim majority of 50.28 percent answered that Albania would first join NATO may be meaningful in terms of the information our respondents receive. Whereas we cannot say for sure which organization will the country join first (or whether it will join), an empirical consideration would indicate that the prospect of joining NATO before the EU is more probable, both because that has generally been the pattern experienced in other Eastern European countries, and also due to the fact that criteria to join NATO are less exigent than those to join EU. In 2005 the percentage of respondents that have not answered the question (Don't know) has increased significantly to 13.5 percent, which is reflected also in the decrease of respondents in favor of the two choices given (NATO or EU). This may be due mainly to the fact that the 2005 sample has included respondents from other cities outside capital Tirana, which is usually the center of media, information flow and has been the focus of most information and awareness activities.

Answers in the general sample reflect those received in each of the categories. In all the categories the majority of respondents answered that Albania will first join NATO and then EU. *See Figure 37.*

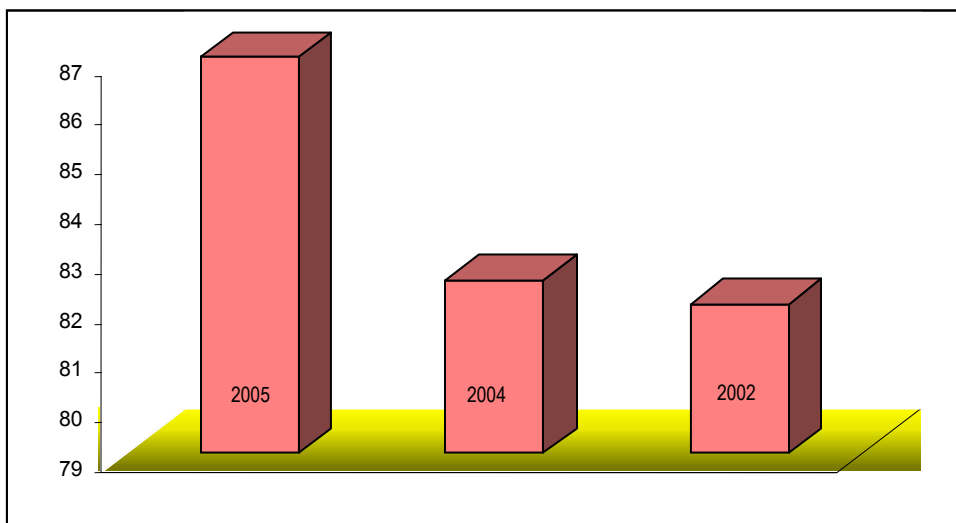
Figure 37. Albania's Membership in NATO and EU – Categories 2005



Differences with the 2004 patterns are obvious: the business and NGO categories have higher percentages of respondents who are uncertain about the time prospect of Albania joining one of these organizations.

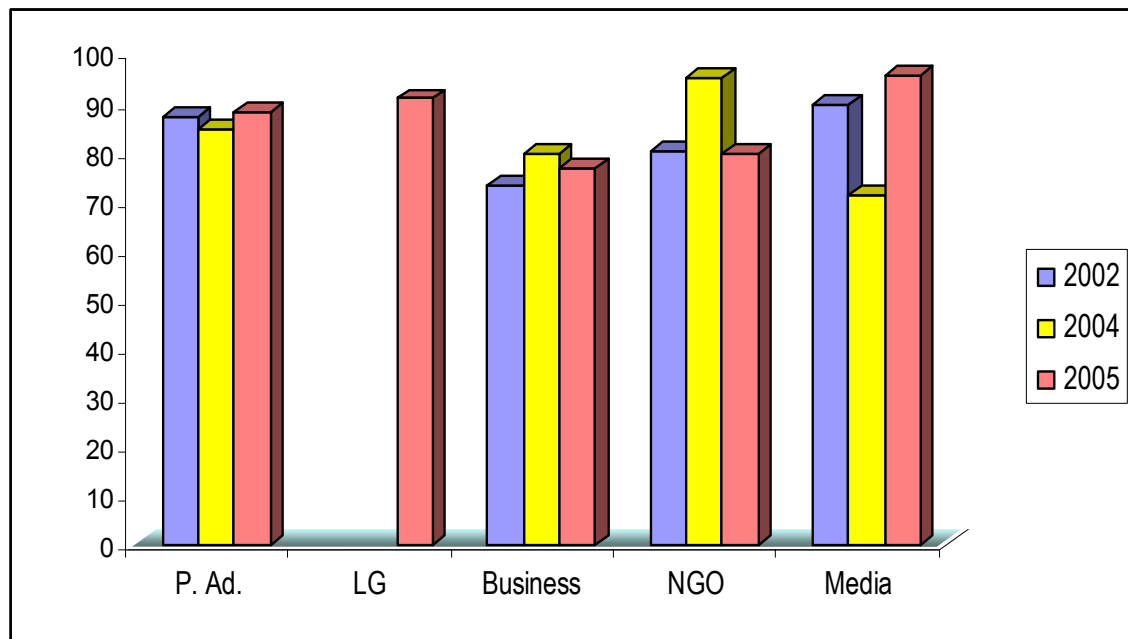
It is important to emphasize that a greater majority of respondents is interested in receiving more information on EU in 2005, than in 2004 and 2002 respectively. This may also be explained through the sample composition, which includes local stakeholder groups that have usually been left out of the focus of information by relevant organizations. *See Figure 38.*

Figure 38. Level of Interest on EU Information – General Sample 2002, 2004 and 2005



The Business and Central Public Administration categories have maintained similar levels of interest on EU from 2004 to 2005. In the Media category on the other hand a significant rise of interest is noticeable, with approximately 25 % more respondents interested to receive information on EU and EU integration processes. Given the impact of the media on the information – as well as perceptions of the population, this is a very positive development. *See Figure 39.*

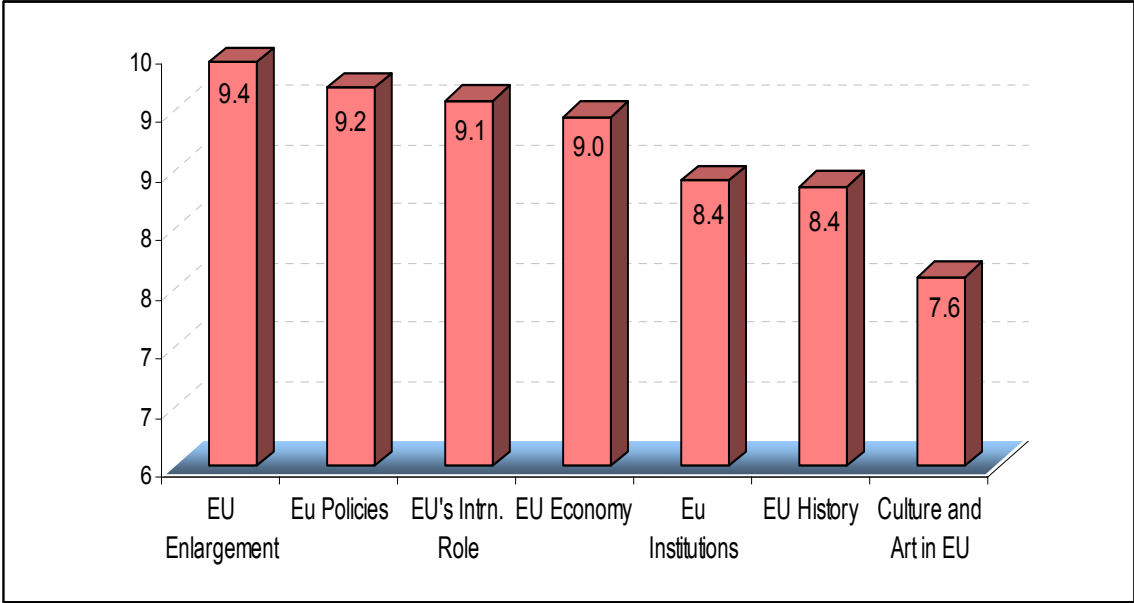
Figure 39. Level of Interest on EU Information– Categories 2002, 2004 and 2005



Those interested to receive more information on EU were also asked in what areas they would like to receive more information. As the figure below shows the area in which respondents were more interested was EU enlargement. The score of EU Enlargement, 9.4 out of 10, is very indicative of the great interest respondents have on such a process. Such an interest does not come as a surprise given the high levels of support for Albania’s EU membership, the expectations from Albania’s EU membership and the general desire for the process to move faster. *See Figure 40.*

Question. The information on EU covers different areas. How interested would you be to receive information on the areas shown below? Please evaluate in a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the higher the number, the more interested would you be to receive information on the given area.

Figure 40. Level of Interest on EU Information According to Area – General Sample 2005



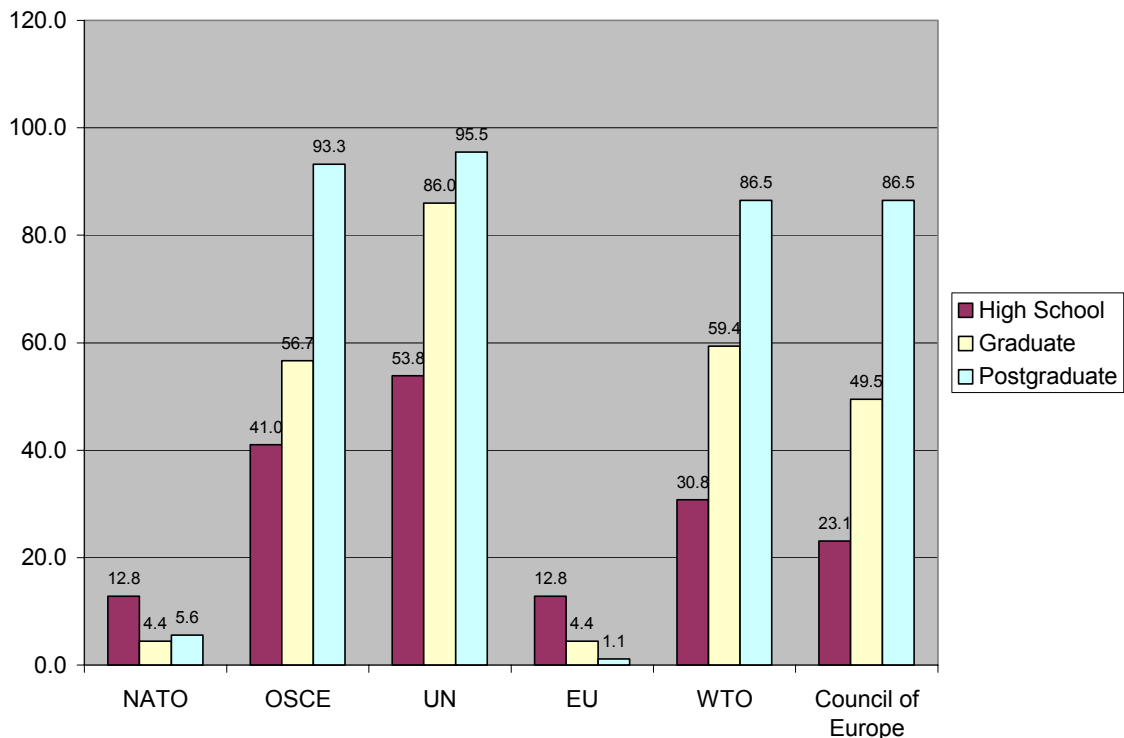
VI. ANALYSES

The survey was based on the assumption that there is a direct relationship between the educational level of respondents and their level of knowledge of EU as an organization and the process of EU integration for Albania. The assumption was behind our choice of target groups, sampling techniques and allows us to form reasonably hypothesis for future research on populations beyond our target groups. We tested this assumption in two areas: respondents' knowledge on Albania's membership in international organizations, EU institutions, and the specificities of Albania's EU integration process.

International Institutions and the EU

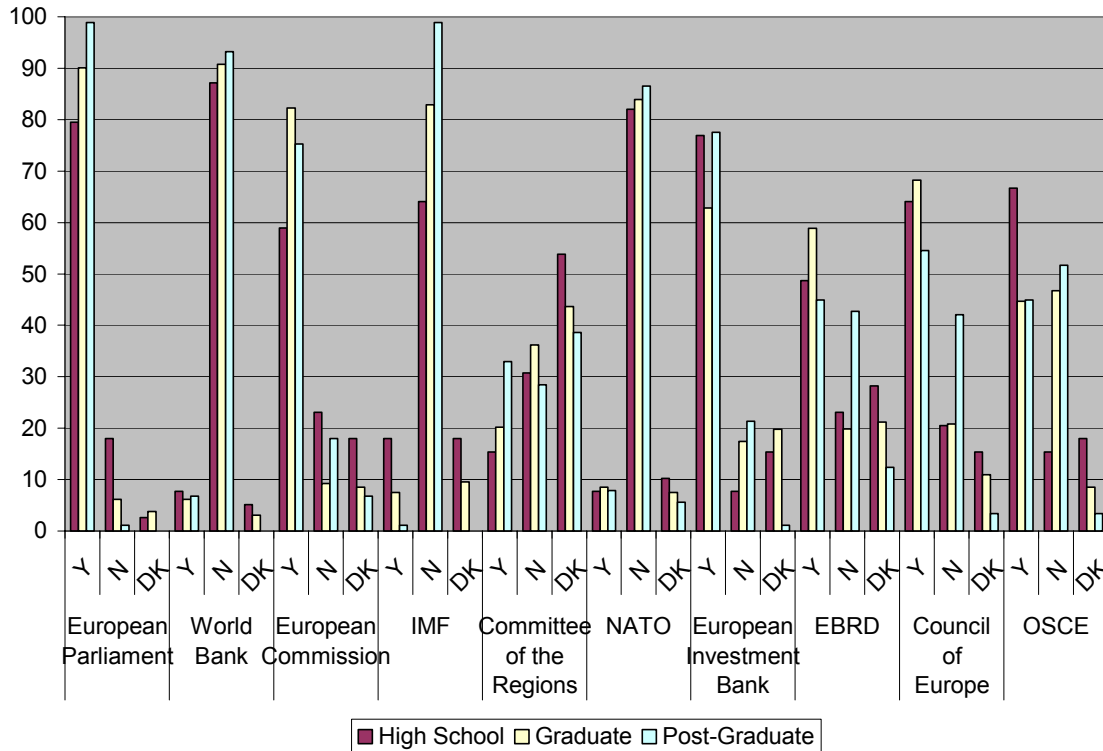
Figure 1 shows the percentages of “yes” answers to Question 6. Of the six international organizations mentioned, Albania is a member of the OSCE, UN, WTO, and the Council of Europe. While our hypothesis on the direct relationship between education level and correct answers proved to be correct in absolute percentage terms and in five out of six organizations, it did not prove true in the case of NATO where there was a slight deviation from our assumption—more post-graduate respondents answered wrongly than graduates. Nevertheless, similarly as in 2002 and 2004, there was a direct relationship between the two variables. *See Figure 1.*

Figure 1: Is Albania a Member of the Following Institutions? (% of “yes” answers)



The same correlation was also identified when combining the educational background with respondents' knowledge of EU and non-EU institutions. However, note that in the case of the European Commission, European Investment Bank, and EBRD the correlation was not clear. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Which of the Following Institutions are EU institutions?

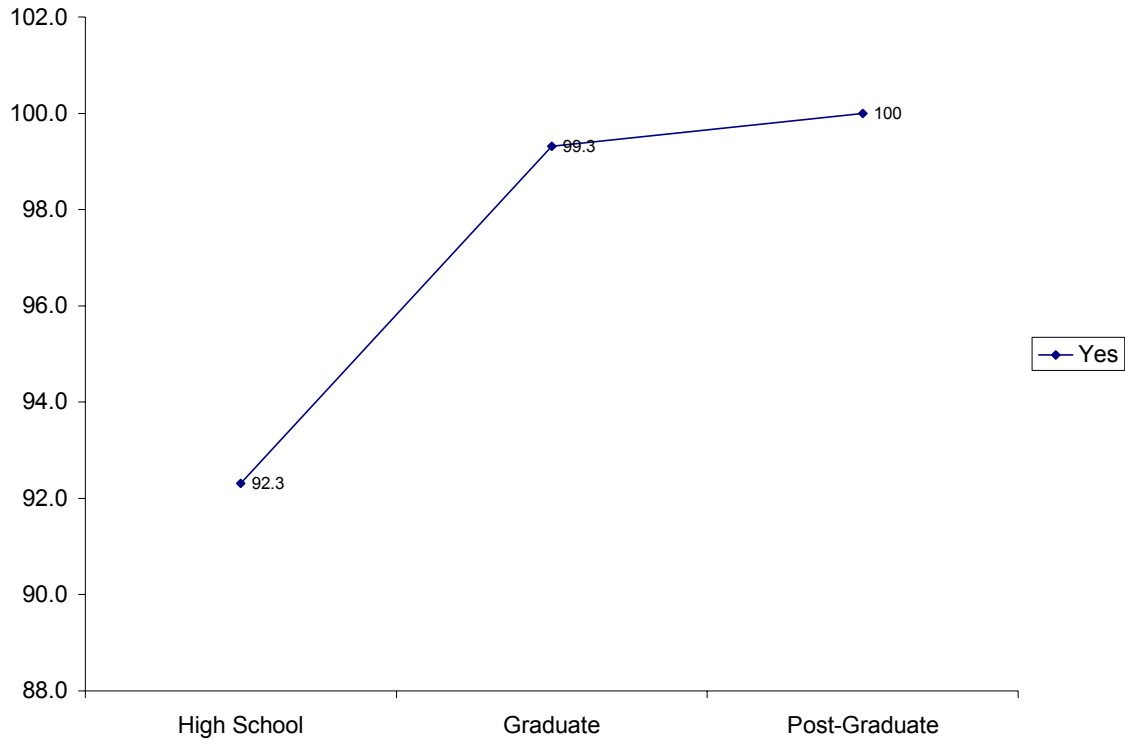


The Process of EU Integration

The above figures show that there exists a direct relationship between educational background and knowledge on EU and its institutions. Now we will test the same hypothesis on the process of EU integration. Given the dynamic of integration and the widely varying perceptions on what it really means for Albania, the correlation may not be obvious. After all, as people get more specialized they may have less time or predisposition to become informed on issues outside of their area of expertise.

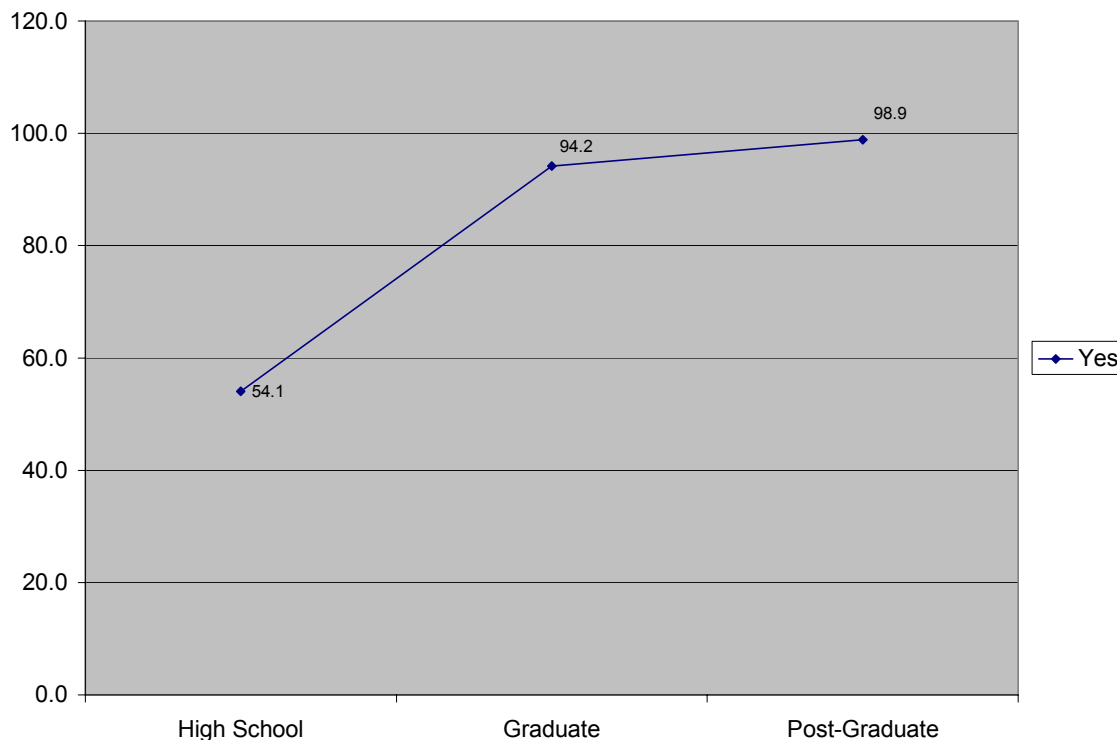
Nevertheless, similarly to 2002 and 2004, the relationship between education levels and knowledge of EU integration process held true for 2005 as well. In order to test our hypothesis, we combined the level of education of respondents (question 3) with the “Yes” answers to Question 11: Have you heard of Albania’s attempts to integrate in the EU. The positive relationship between the two variables is clearly shown in Figure 3. See Figure 3.

Figure 3: Educational Background vs. Knowledge of the Process of Albania’s EU Integration



The second step in exploring this correlation is testing the relationship between education levels and respondents' knowledge of the conditions Albania has to fulfill to gain membership in the European Union. When respondents were asked if they had heard of these conditions, the higher the educational background the higher the percentages of those that responded, "Yes". *See Figure 4.*

Figure 4: Educational Background vs. Familiarity with Albania's Conditions to Join EU



Moreover, these figures proved to be an improvement on 2002 and 2004 while in 2004 there was a comparative decrease in familiarity with Albania's conditions to join EU from 2002. See Table 1.

Table 1: Familiarity with Albania's Conditions to Join EU by Educational Background (Annual Comparison)

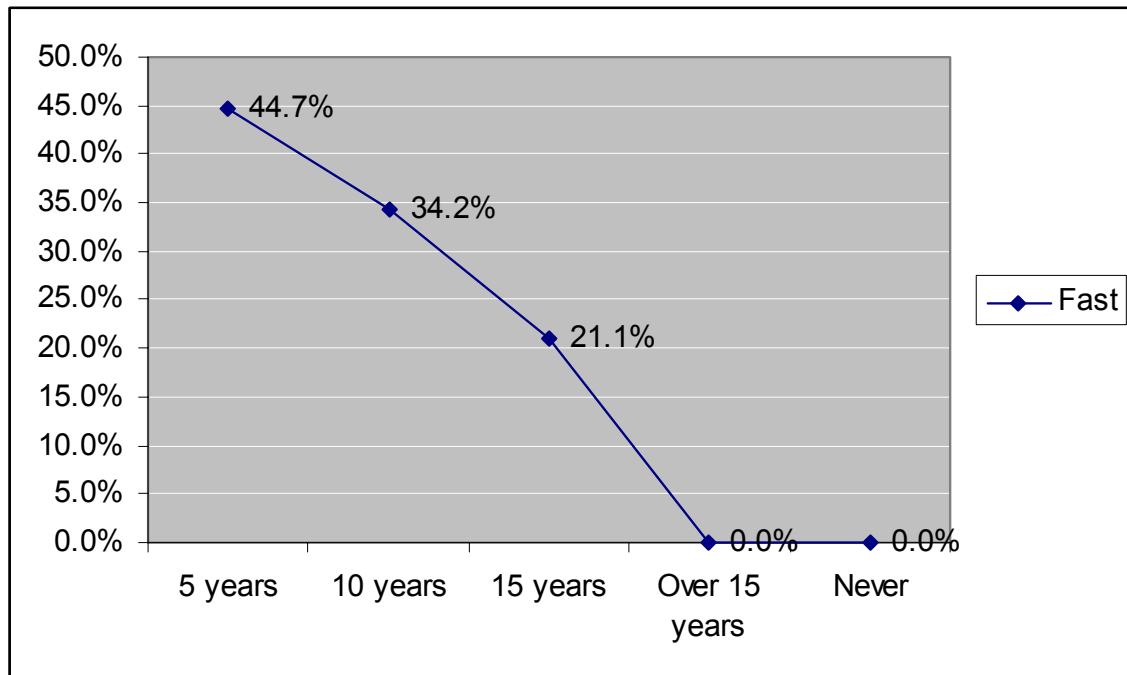
Year \ Education	<i>High School</i>	<i>Graduate</i>	<i>Post-Graduate</i>
<i>2002</i>	62.3 %	84.8%	93.8%
<i>2004</i>	54.3%	67.4%	81.8%
<i>2005</i>	54.1%	94.2%	96.9%

Perceptions and Expectations on the Speed of the EU Integration Process

When asked about the speed of Albania's integration process, most of the respondents answered that the process was moving either slowly (52 %) or very slowly (39%). Moreover, when they were asked to assess the number of years that it will take Albania to join EU, the majority of respondents marked 5 or 10 years. In order to understand the definitions of "fast" and "slow" for our target groups, we combined questions 18 and 19.

First, we combined the responses of respondents that assessed Albania's integration process as "fast-paced" with the number of years they estimated it would take Albania to get in the EU. See Figure 5.

Figure 5: The Answers “Fast” vs. the Number of Years Albania will need to Integrate in EU



Compared to 2004, there is a slight decrease in pessimism on the timeline of Albania’s integration in 2005 for the respondents that perceive the integration process to be moving “fast.” Yet, although three years have passed, respondents are less optimistic than they were in 2002. The largest group of respondents (*fast*), 44.7 %, thinks that Albania will gain EU membership in 5 years—up from 30 percent in 2004 and down from 78.5 percent in 2002. Another considerable percentage of respondents, 34.2 percent think that it will happen in 10 years, while 21.1 percent marked 15 years and no one thought it would last longer than that. Thus, a majority of respondents, 78.9 %, evaluate Albania’s integration process as “fast” when they estimate it to last between five and ten years. This is a more optimistic evaluation than in 2004 when 65 % of respondents gave a similar evaluation but less optimistic than 2002 when a full 89.2 % of respondents gave this evaluation.

Similarly, we combined the answers of the respondents that think that the process was moving slowly with their estimate on the number of years that it would take for Albania to join EU. See Figure 6.

Figure 6. The Answers “Slow” in terms of Years

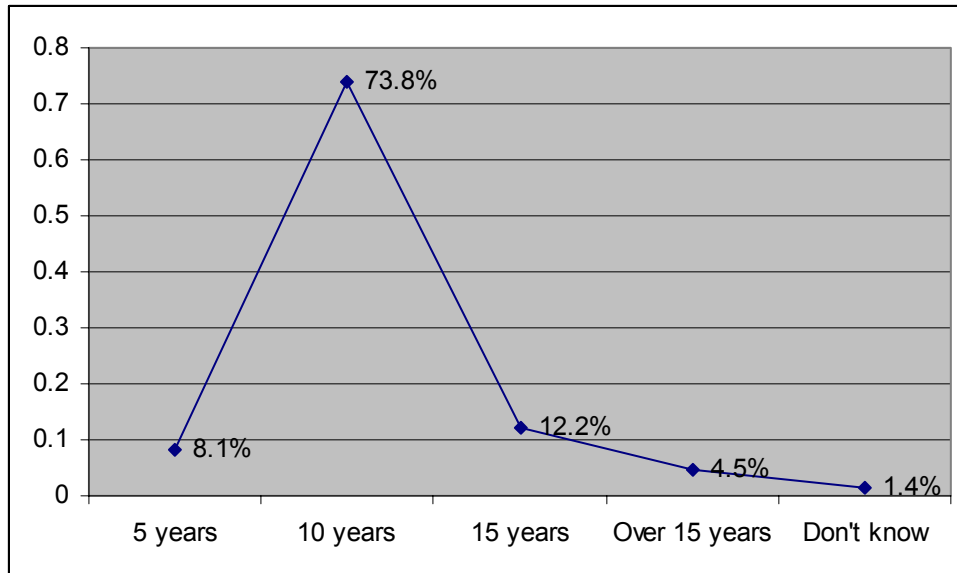
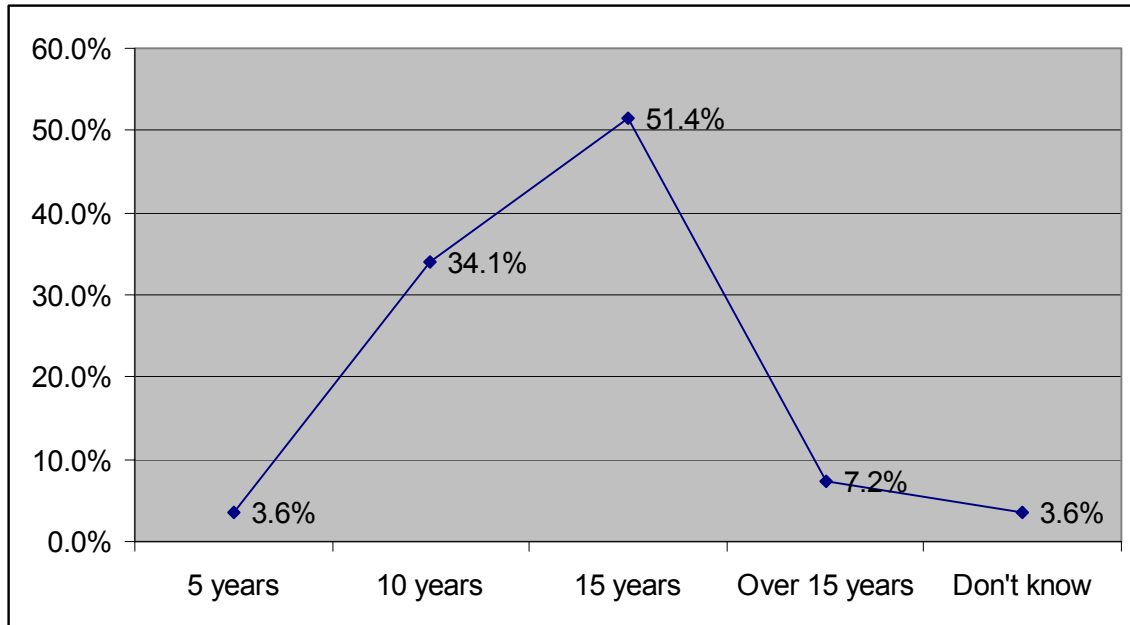


Figure 6 shows that the majority of respondents that perceived Albania’s progress towards EU membership as “slow”, 73.8 %, estimated this process to last 10 years while a further 8.1 % estimated this process to last 5 years. This is a considerably more pessimistic estimate than in 2002 and 2004 when 55% estimated the process to last 10 years. While in 2005, 86 % of respondents estimated the process to last ten to fifteen years, in 2004 that figure was 84.2 % and in 2002 it was 56.3 %. Over time, the target groups’ judgment on the length of the integration process has become more restrained.

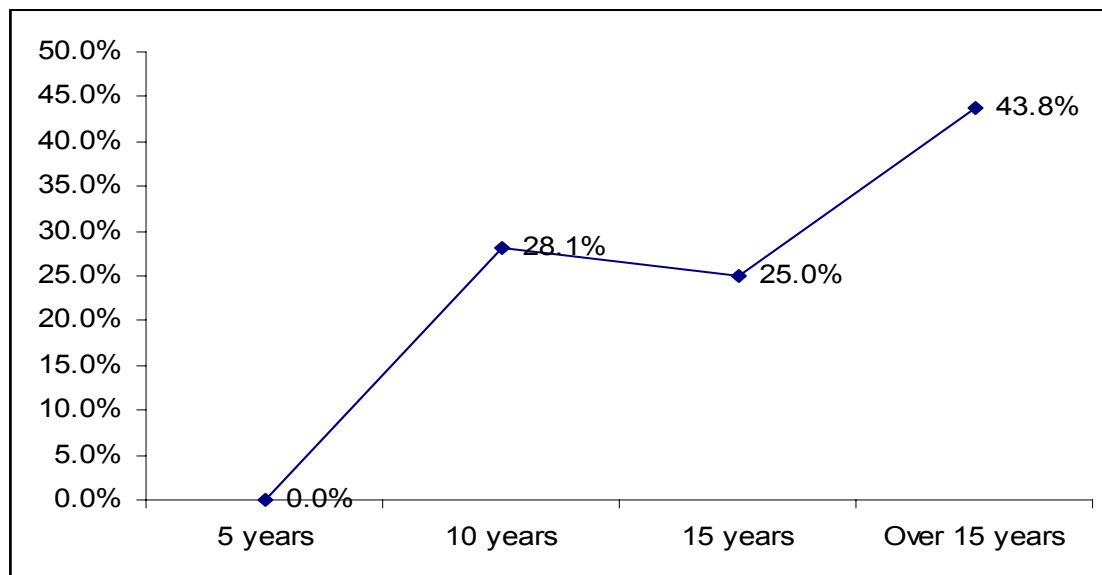
Finally, Figure 7 shows that the majority of those who thought that the process was moving very slowly marked fifteen years as their estimate of the length of the integration process. Overall, this marks a slightly more optimistic definition of “very slow” than in 2004 when 40.13 % of respondents answered “fifteen years” but 36.84 % answered “over 15 years”. Combining the perceptions of “fast,” “slow,” and “very slow,” in 2005 the survey shows that the target groups are less idealistic about the length of the process but more convinced that this is not an open-ended process. The overwhelming majority of respondents estimate the process to end in 15 years. They are less optimistic than they were in 2002, but they make fewer desperate judgments about the length of the process than they did in 2004.

Figure 7: Answers “Very Slow” in terms of Years



In order to assess whether there is a correlation between more pessimistic expectations and growing EU skepticism we combined the answers against EU membership in a hypothetical referendum (Question12) with the number of years thought necessary for the country's EU accession. *See Figure 8.*

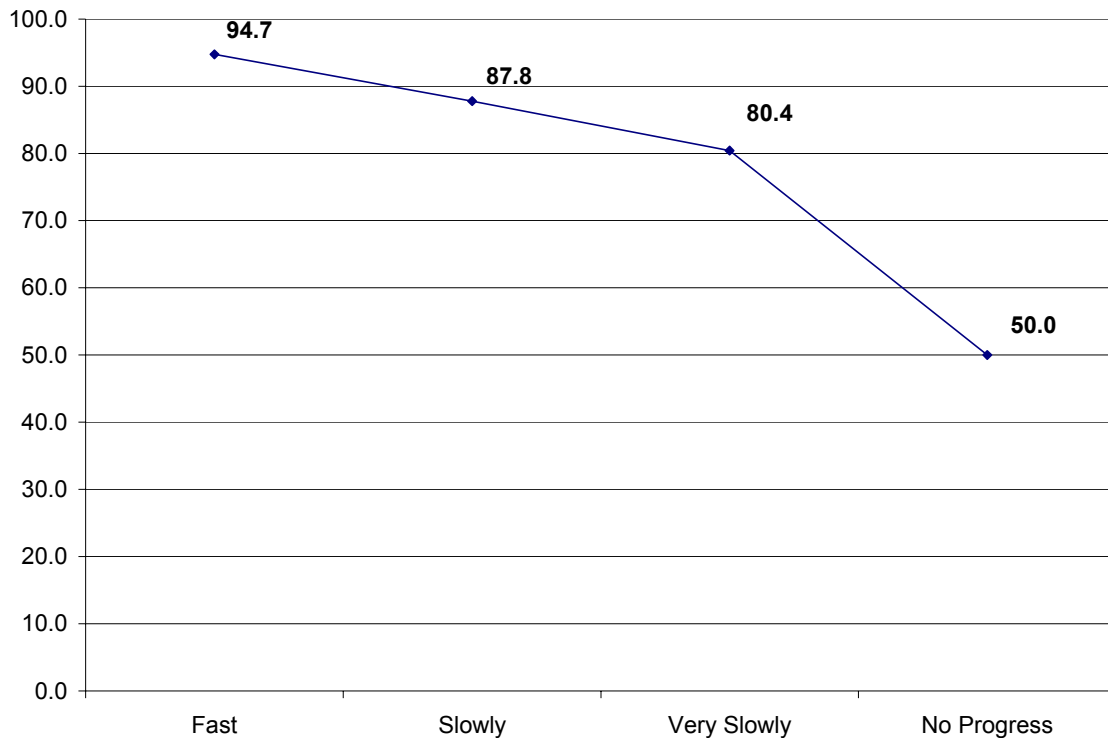
Figure 8: Pessimism and EU Support: Against EU Membership vs. Expectations in terms of Years



As Figure 8 shows, there is a correlation between the level of pessimism and the level of support for Albania's EU membership. However, this correlation is far from perfect—the percentage of respondents that estimate Albania's integration process to end in fifteen years and were against EU membership is smaller than the percentage of respondents that held the same view on EU membership but expected the process to end in ten years. The correlation becomes clearer when we combine question 18 which asks respondents on

their general perception of the speed of the integration process with those that were in favour of EU membership. As can be noticed in Figure 9, support for EU integration declines as respondents become more pessimistic on the timeframe of the integration process. *See Figure 9.*

Figure 9: Support for EU Membership vs. Pessimism on the Timeframe of the Process of Integration

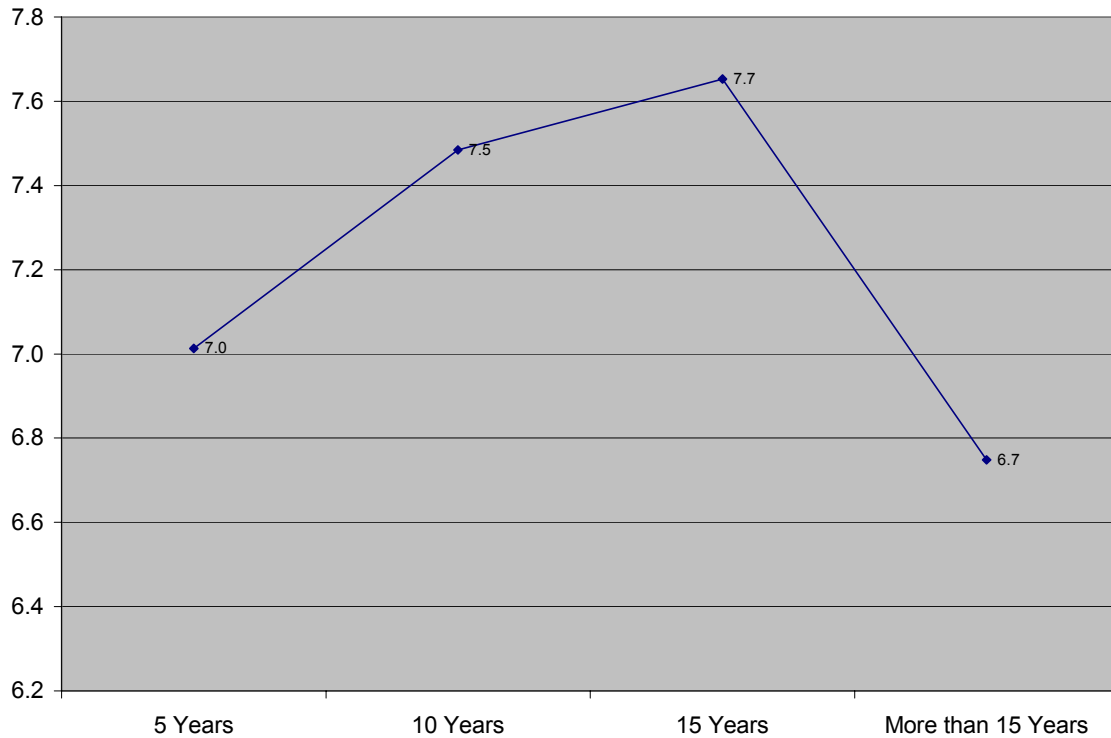


Perceptions of European Union

It has been clearly shown in the Findings section, Questions 7 and 8, that respondents hold the EU in very high regard. They perceive it as the most strategic international partner for the Albanian Government, and as a democratic organization that preserves peace and stability in the continent and helps the cause of democracy in other countries. Finally, an overwhelming majority support Albania’s membership in the EU.

However, it may be the case that the more hopeful the respondents are towards Albania’s integration, the more positive becomes their assessment of EU and its importance to Albania. In order to see whether there is a correlation between the level of enthusiasm and the way respondents perceive the EU, we combined the answers to questions 18 and 19 with the answers that assess perceptions of EU. Questions 18 and 19 were used to measure the level of optimism on Albania’s integration process. *See Figure 10.*

Figure 10: EU Perceptions in Relation to Membership Expectations (Question 19 vs. Question 8)



As Figure 10 above shows, the most pessimistic respondents—the ones that estimate Albania’s membership to be more than 15 years away—had the least positive perception of EU. The “perception” was calculated as the total mean of answers across all categories in Question 8. It is important to notice that while the EU scored less than in 2002, it scored better across all categories—democratization, peace and security, democratizing force, economics, and openness—than in 2004. This may well be related to increased optimism on the estimated timeframe of EU membership for Albania. *See Table 2.*

Table 2: Estimated Timeframe of Integration Process 2004-2005

Year	2004	2005
Est. timeframe		
<i>5 Years</i>	7.5%	11.1%
<i>10 Years</i>	31.0%	53.4%
<i>15 Years</i>	30.3%	25.1%
<i>More than 15 Years</i>	23.8%	8.3%
<i>Never</i>	3.8%	-

However, Figure 10 shows that the correlation between perceptions of EU and optimism of the integration process is not clear. Respondents that estimate the integration process to last 15 years rate the EU higher than those that think the integration process will last 5 years. The reasons for this are not clear although the 2002 AIIS survey met similar results. Probably, the respondents that estimate the process to last 10 or 15 years base their estimate simply on their perceptions of the gap between Albania and Europe. The correlation becomes clearer when we combine question 18 with question 8. Differently than question 19 which asks for an estimate in terms of years, question 18 asks

respondents on their perception of the tempo of the process of integration which makes it easier to categorize them into “optimists” and “pessimists”. The optimists think that the process is going “fast”, while the pessimists perceive the process to be “very slow”. Since the option “the process is proceeding normally” was lacking, we have classified those respondents that answered “the process is taking place slowly” as optimists. *See Figure 11.*

Figure 11: Perceptions of EU vs. Speed of the Integration Process (Question 18 vs. Question 8).

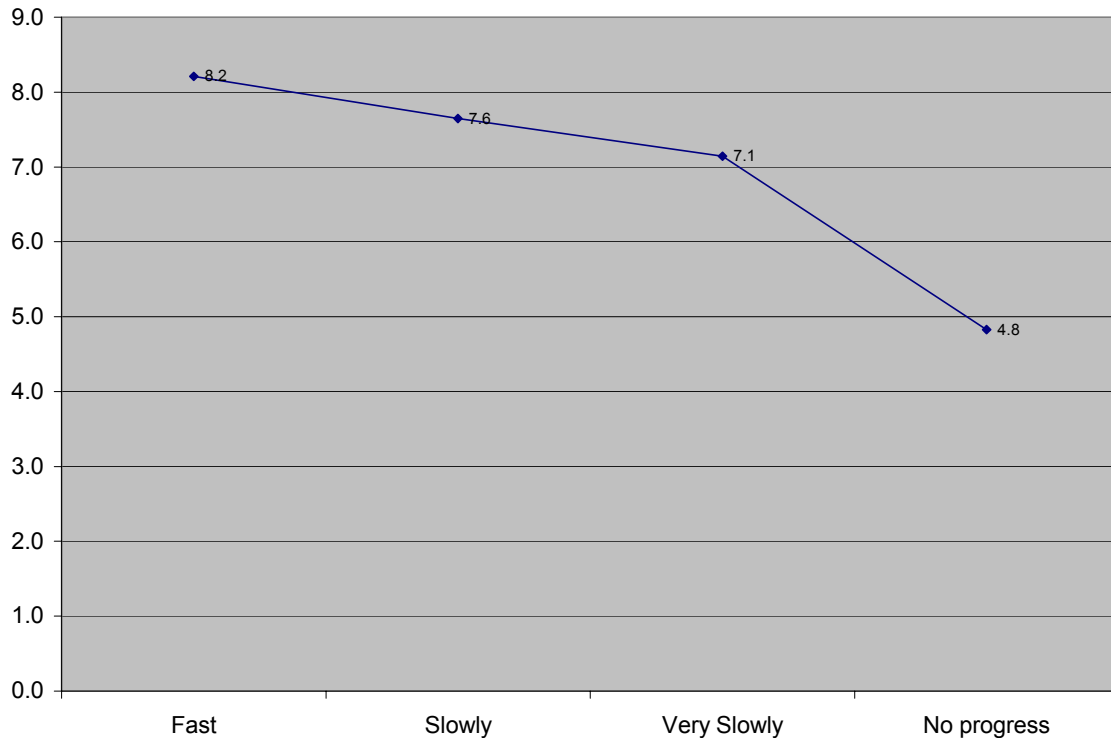
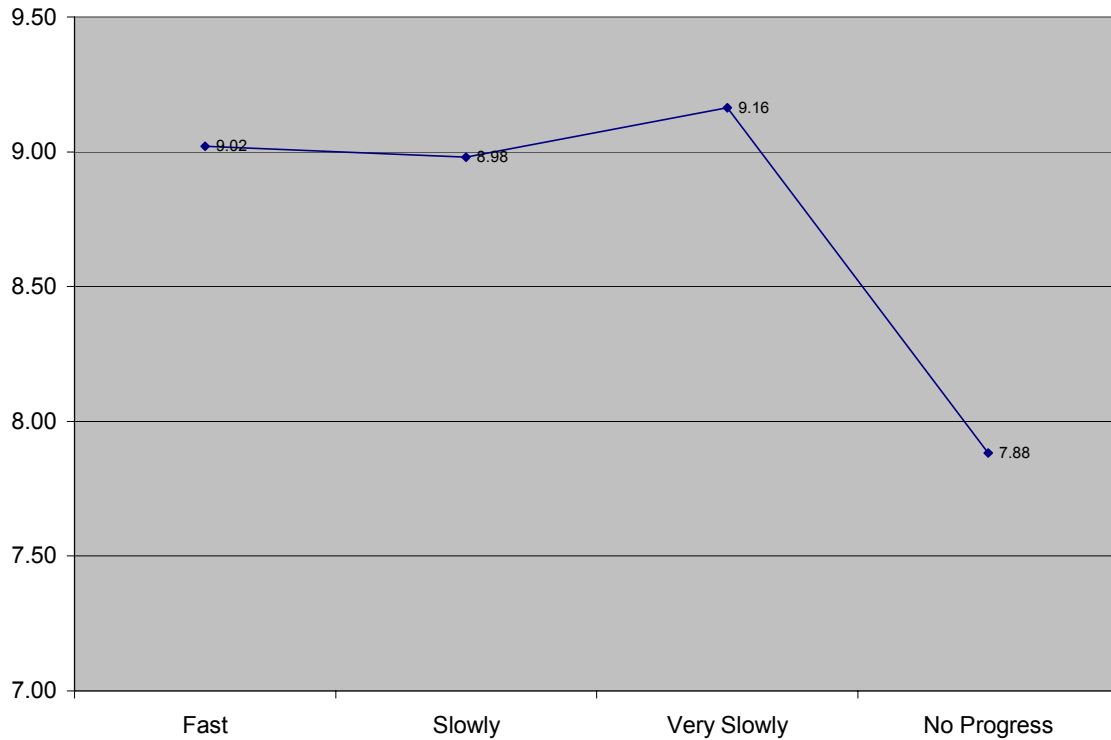


Figure 11 shows a clear correlation between the two variables: the more optimistic respondents are on the speed of the integration process, the higher do they value the EU.

Finally, in 2002 and 2004 there was a correlation between perceptions of the temporal dimension (speed) of the process of EU integration and the level of expectations on the benefits of EU membership for Albania. This correlation does not hold true for 2005. *See Figure 12.*

Figure 12: Speed of the Integration Process vs. Perceptions of EU Membership Benefits (18 vs. 20).



Therefore, differently than in previous years, the expected benefits of EU membership are not vulnerable to the speed of Albanian progress towards EU. Also, the expected benefits of membership are higher than in 2002 and 2004. That is to say, that the target groups surveyed feel more certain than in previous years that Albania is on the track towards membership. Only those respondents that perceive Albania to be making no progress towards membership are understandably skeptical on the potential benefits of membership. Yet, Figure 11 showed that the target groups' perception of EU is dependent on the optimism with which they view Albania's integration process. Therefore, the respondents that support EU integration are more confident of Albania's European future and the benefits of membership but, there may be a tendency to perceive the European Union as too "stingy" towards Albania. This conclusion shows that over 2005 Albania has moved farther away from the risk of the vicious circle identified in 2002 and 2004: increased pessimism on the process of integration bringing about declining support for the EU as an institution and the expected benefits of membership.

In order to find out the outlook of the respondents that are against EU membership, we combined the answers to Question 12 with the respondents' perceptions of EU (Question 8) and their perceptions of the benefits that EU membership would bring to Albania (Question 20). See Figure 13.

Figure 13: Pro and Against Membership vs. Perceptions of EU and Estimated Membership Benefits

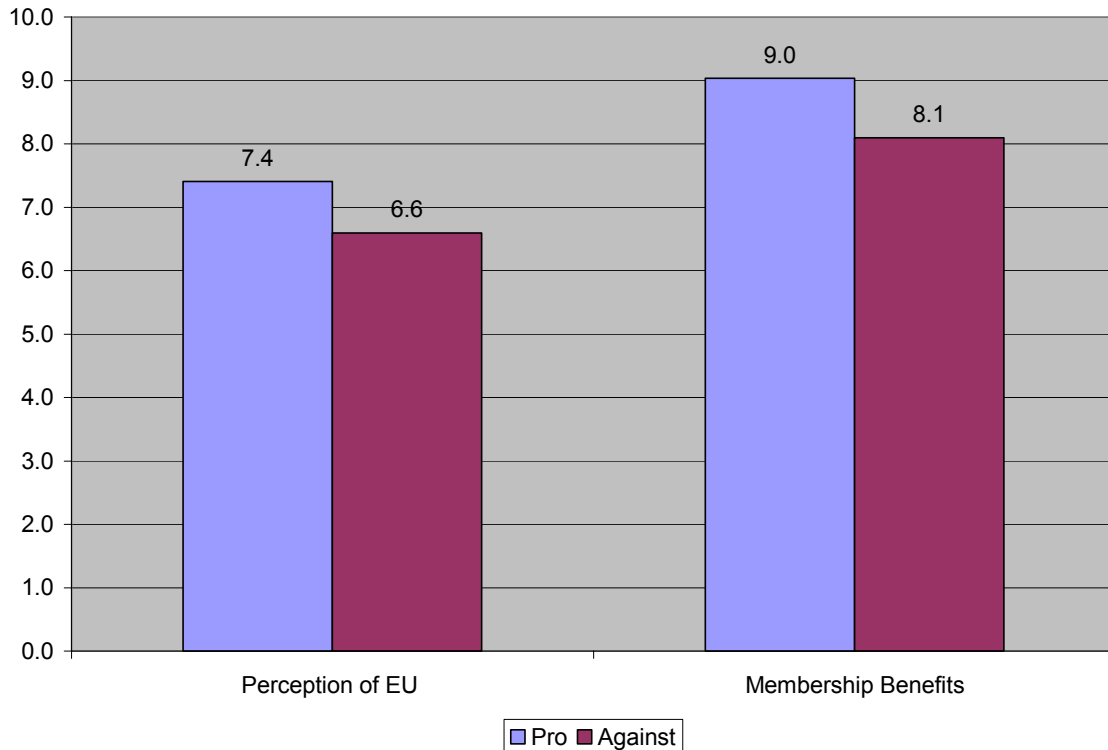


Figure 13 shows clearly that those respondents that would vote against Albania’s EU membership hold the EU in lower regard as an institution that is capable to act as a factor of democratization, peace, stability and economic growth as well as have a lower perception of the potential benefits of EU membership for Albania.

Accordingly, while perceptions of EU as an organization and benefits from EU membership are closely related to (depend on) respondents’ support for Albania’s EU membership, Figures 11 and 12 show that the speed of the integration process is a factor which affects only the respondents’ perceptions of EU as an organization. But this variable does not affect how respondents score the expected benefits from membership. On the other hand, membership expectations in terms of years, generally, are not related to respondent’s perceptions on EU as an organization, except the fact that EU is least scored by respondents who think that it will take more than 15 years for Albania to become a member of the Union.

Although contradictory, these trends confirm that respondents’ perceptions on EU and the European integration process are becoming more complex. As Albanian integration process moves forward, it may normally appear a growing alienation and subsequent resistance of certain interest-groups towards the process. The prominent issue then is how to turn the process of European integration from a highly bureaucratic and elite-driven enterprise into an inclusive process in which all social and interest-groups feel part of. The sooner this issue is addressed by policy-makers and the clearer their strategies to address it the lesser the political costs of integration will be in long-term.

ANNEX I - Questionnaire

ALBANIAN INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (AIIS)

Rr "Deshmoret e 4 Shkurtit", Nr. 7/1. Tirana, Albania

Tel: +355 42 488 53; Fax +355 4 270 337

E-mail: aiis@albaniaonline.net

Website: <http://www.aiis-albania.org>

ID: _____

Name of the Interviewer _____

Date of the Interview _____

Questionnaire

Albanian Institute for International Studies (AIIS) is conducting an opinion in order to assess Albanian perceptions on the European Union and Albania's EU integration. You have been randomly selected for this purpose. Your participation is voluntary, your name and answers will remain anonymous. Even if you begin this interview you can stop at any time you want. The entire conversation will take approximately 10 minutes.

P1. Are you ready to begin?

- Yes GO TO THE NEXT SECTION AND BEGIN THE INTERVIEW
- No GO TO QUESTION 2

P2. If this is not the right time could I come back at a more convenient time for you?

- Yes WRITE DOWN TIME AND PLACE
- No GREET AND LEAVE

General Information

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Initially I would like to ask some general questions that will help us analyze the data according to social and age group criterion.

1. WRITE DOWN THE GENDER OF THE INTERVIEWEE

- 1. MALE
- 2. FEMALE

2. Where are you employed? Are you employed in the Central Government Public Administration, Local Government Public Administration, private business sector, Non Governmental Organization (NGO), in the Media, or elsewhere?

Central Government Public Administration	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Local Government Public Administration	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Business	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Non Governmental Organization (NGO)	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Media	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Other, specify _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. *What kind of schooling have you completed? Did you graduate from secondary school, high school, university or did you complete postgraduate studies?*

Secondary School	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
High School	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
University	3 <input type="checkbox"/>

Post Graduate Studies	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------	----------------------------

4. What is your age group? Are you 18-22, 23-35, 35-55, or older than 55 years old?

18 – 22 years old	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
23- 35 years old	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
36 – 55 years old	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Over 55 years old	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

General Information on EU

Now I would like to talk with you generally about a number of international organizations.

5. Have you heard of the following organizations?

1	NATO	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No
2	OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No
3	UN (United Nations)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No
4	IMF (International Monetary Fund)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No
5	World Bank	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No
6	European Union (EU)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No
7	World Trade Organization (WTO)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No
8	Council of Europe	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No

6. Now I will mention a few organizations and I will ask you if Albania has become a member or not. Is Albania member of:

1	NATO	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
2	OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
3	UN (United Nations)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
4	European Union (EU)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
5	World Trade Organization (WTO)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
6	Council of Europe	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW

7. Different people have different opinions regarding the states/organizations with which Albania needs to strengthen its ties. In your opinion how much attention should our government pay to strengthening Albania's ties with the following states/organizations? Please evaluate in a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the higher the number the more you think our Government should pay attention to strengthening Albania's ties with the given state/organization.

SHOW CARD 1 AND REPEAT QUESTION

1	European Union (EU)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	NATO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	UN (United Nations)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Italy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Greece	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Germany	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	France	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	USA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Great Britain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Turkey	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Macedonia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	Serbia and Montenegro	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13	Croatia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14	Kosovo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15	Other, specify _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. Now I will read some statements about EU and I will ask you to what extent you agree with them. Please evaluate in a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the higher the number the more you agree with the given statement.

SHOW CARD 2 AND REPEAT QUESTION

1	EU is a democratic organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	EU is a source of peace and security in Europe	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	EU aids democracy in countries outside EU	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	EU promotes the economic development of countries outside EU	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	EU is open to accept any European country	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. The European Union was established in order to achieve certain goals. In your opinion how important are the following goals for EU. Please evaluate in a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the higher the number the more you think the given goal important for EU.

SHOW CARD 3 AND REPEAT QUESTION.

1	The economic development of the member states	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Democracy in the member states	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	EU Enlargement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	The defense of Europe	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

10. From what you have heard which a\of the following is an EU institution?

1	The European Parliament	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
2	World Bank	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
3	The European Commission	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
4	IMF (International Monetary Fund)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
5	The Committee of the Regions	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW

6	NATO	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
7	European Bank of Investments	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
8	The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
9	Council of Europe	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW
10	OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2 <input type="checkbox"/> No	99 <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW

EU Integration

Now we will talk for a few minutes about the relations of our country with EU.

11. First of all I would like to ask you whether you have heard about Albania's attempts to become a member of EU?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No GO TO QUESTION 24

12. Suppose tomorrow there was a referendum on Albania's membership in EU? How would you vote? Would you vote for the membership or against Albania's membership in EU?

- 1. For
- 2. Against
- 99. DON'T KNOW

13. Do you think Albania is ready to become a member of EU?

- 1. Yes GO TO QUESTION 15
- 2. No
- 99. DON'T KNOW

14. Do you think EU should admit Albania even before it is ready to become a member of EU?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 99. DON'T KNOW

15. Albania is trying to become a member of NATO as well as of EU. Which of these organizations will Albania join first? Will it join first NATO or EU?

- 1. NATO
- 2. EU
- 99. DON'T KNOW

16. If Albania is to become a member of EU it has to meet certain criterion. Have you heard of these criterions?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

GO TO QUESTION 18

17. Please name some of the criterion you have heard of:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

18. There exist a variety of opinions on the speed with which Albania's integration into EU is taking place. In your opinion how is Albania's integration into EU taking place? Is it taking place fast, slow, very slow or is it not taking place at all?

Fast	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Slow	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Very Slow	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

19. There also exist different opinions on the time that will be needed for Albania to become a member of EU. How long do you think it will take for Albania to become a member of EU? Will it take 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, more than 15 years or do you think that Albania will never become a member of EU?

5 years	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
10 years	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
15 years	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
More than 15 years	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Albania will never become a member of EU	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

20. People have different opinions on the benefits that Albania will derive from EU membership. In your opinion how much will Albania benefit in the following areas? Please evaluate in a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the greater the number the more you think Albania will benefit in the given area.

SHOW CARD 4 AND REPEAT QUESTION

1	Democratization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Economic Development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Higher Living Standards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Strengthening of the rule of law	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Freedom of movement into other EU countries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Other, specify _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

21. Albania's membership into EU depends on a variety of factors. In your opinion how important are the following factors. Please evaluate in a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the greater the number the more important you think the given factor is for Albania to become an EU member.

SHOW CARD 5 AND REPEAT QUESTION

1	Albanian Politics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Albanian Economy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	The situation in the region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	EU's stand towards Albania	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Albania's religious composition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Corruption	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	The progress of the decentralization process	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Organized crime and trafficking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Failure of the rule of law functioning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Free and fair elections	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	Other, specify _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

22. In its attempts to become an EU member Albania has to sign a number of agreements with EU. Have you heard of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between EU and Albania?

1. Yes

2. No

GO TO QUESTION 24

23. In your opinion is the signing of the Stabilization an inevitable step for Albania to become an EU member?

1. Yes

2. No

99. DON'T KNOW

24. The negotiations for the Stabilization and Association Agreement have started on January 31st 2003. Different deadlines have been announced for the signing of this agreement. In your opinion, this agreement will be signed:

Within 2005	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Within 2006	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
After 2006	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
DON'T KNOW	99 <input type="checkbox"/>

Sources of Information on EU

25. A number of sources offer information on EU. How much information do you receive on EU from the following sources? Please evaluate in a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the greater the number the more information you receive from the given source. SHOW CARD 6 AND REPEAT QUESTION.

1	Television	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	Radio	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	Newspapers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	Internet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	EU Delegation to Albania	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	Conversations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Organization/institution where you work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Embassies/International Organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	Think tanks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	Other, specify _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

26. Are you interested to receive more information on EU?

1. Yes

2. No

END THE INTERVIEW.

Thank you very much for your time. If you are interested we will send you a copy of the conclusions of this survey.

27. The information on EU covers a variety of areas. How much would you be interested to receive information on EU in the following areas? Please evaluate in a 1 to 10 scale, bearing in mind that the greater the number the more interested you are to receive information in the given area.

SHOW CARD 7 AND REPEAT QUESTION

1	EU economy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	EU History	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	EU Policies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	EU Institutions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	Cultural and artistic activities in EU	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	EU in the international arena	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	EU enlargement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	Other, specify _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Thank you very much for your time. If you are interested we will send you a copy of the conclusions of this survey.