



Impact of Corruption on Kosovo's Business Community

Research Report

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This Report is written by Mr. Kushtrim Shaipi at the request of the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo. The opinions portrayed in this report are those of Mr. Shaipi and do not necessarily portray those of AmCham Kosovo. The report analyzes the opinions of Kosovo businesses concerning the environment in which they operate, and the phenomenon of corruption within different Kosovo institutions.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	Anti-Corruption Agency
AI	Administrative Instruction
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
EC	European Commission
ECLO	European Commission Liaison Office
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission
HRRoL	OSCE Department of Human Rights and Rule of Law
ICO	International Civilian Office
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JIAS	Kosovo Joint Interim Administrative Structure
KCA	Kosovo Cadastre Agency
KCB	Kosovo Consolidated Budget
MFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
OPM	Office of Prime Minister
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UN SCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Corruption appears to be a wide-spread phenomenon in post-independence Kosovo. While corrupt behavior has been an ongoing problem for many years, including the period of the declaration of independence and the full transfer of competencies to the hands of the Kosovo government, the results obtained in the Survey indicate that the phenomenon has intensified in frequency since February 2008. While there is no conclusive evidence to support the claim that the institutions of Kosovo have behaved less responsibly since the declaration of independence, it is certain, however, that corruption has been present throughout the post-war period. Such a situation is not very surprising as it has been proven empirically in other countries that transition periods always provide favorable conditions for the development of corruption.

“Whistle Blowers” should be motivated to report corrupt actions through financial rewards and guaranteed security.

If something is not done urgently, corruption may become an acceptable, ethical norm of conducting business in Kosovo.

The data obtained from the research indicate that corruptive behavior represents a mutually beneficial situation for both the business community and the corrupt officials. In such circumstances, one cannot expect that either of the parties is interested in changing the situation. This aspect makes it really difficult to fight the phenomenon, as it indirectly means that intervention or pressure by a third party is necessary to break the cycle of corruption that risks becoming an acceptable norm for doing business in Kosovo. The role of both the media and civil society in fighting corruption becomes increasingly important when taking into account that corruption works in favor of both businesses and institutional officials. Only by effectively exercising pressure on the government can momentum be achieved and the government forced to strengthen the rule of law and combat corruption.

The survey data indicate that corruption works in favor of larger businesses and that they tend to be less critical of the phenomenon.

The data from the Survey indicate that the dimension and reach of the problem is alarming as over 66% of respondents directly, or indirectly, admit to having offered bribes in the past. Moreover, businesses perceive that the business-enabling environment in Kosovo is not very favorable. A lengthy list of problematic institutions and a considerably shorter list of efficient institutions magnify the problem that is the grounds for the perceptions about the business-enabling environment in Kosovo. It appears that acceptance of corruption depends on the size of businesses -- larger businesses tend to have less critical attitudes towards this phenomenon, despite the fact that they claim to encounter it more frequently.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Context of the Research

Corruption is an often-encountered phenomenon that is more widespread in countries experiencing problems with rule of law and the functioning of the legal system. This phenomenon is especially problematic in countries in transition, as these countries are generally characterized as inefficient in combating this phenomenon. Theoretical and empirical study of this phenomenon indicate that “favorable conditions for corruption exist when a public resource is placed under the control of one, or a group of, public officials; this resource is valuable because it can satisfy a need or be profitable. Under such circumstances the public official may offer to “transfer” control over the resource to persons from the private sector in exchange for personal profit!”

Over eight months into its statehood, Kosovo continues to be perceived as having a relatively high level of corruption and informality. At least 38% of GDP is calculated to be in the informal economy². The Commission’s 2007 Progress Report for Kosovo (COM (2007)663) stated that corruption was still prevalent and undermined the proper functioning of the institutions. The most recent Report on Kosovo that is to be made public in the near future, also criticizes the Kosovo government for insufficient efforts in combating corruption and organized crime. Other reports published by various local and international organizations have also characterized corruption as a major problem in Kosovo³. In addition to these reports, the Report of the Auditor General published in 2008 clearly identifies violations of procedures and regulations and the misuse of public funding in most of the public institutions both at the central and local levels. Until now, legal responses regarding cases of corruption have been very moderate and soft. The Report on Monitoring the Legal Responses to Cases of Corruption indicates that the number of, and instances of, legal proceedings on corruption have been isolated⁴.

Some have argued that the current context, structure, and scope of corruption in Kosovo derive from the political and social systems before the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, as well as from the events and processes that took place in post-conflict Kosovo. The establishment of an international administration vis-à-vis the locally-led government created a power dualism that allowed for conditions which favored the emergence of corruption. With regard to transparency, the United Nations Interim Administration has also been a poor role model for the local institutions.

Various analyses and reports also indicate the poor functioning of the judiciary as one of the causes for the widespread corruption. Other sources have indicated that the legal infrastructure in Kosovo is incomplete and that there are gaps in the institutional structure regarding competent

¹ G.Ganev, *Corruption and Economic Development in Bulgaria*.

² EC Anti-money laundering project estimate. A truer figure might be as high as 50%.

³ See Cohu Reports, USAID, *Corruption in Kosovo* by USAID, *Fight Against Corruption in Kosovo* by UNDP, *Corruption and its Impact on the Kosovo Economy* by Riinvest, etc.

⁴ Organization for Anti-Corruption and dignity ‘COHU’: *The Report on Monitoring the Legal Responses to Cases of Corruption*. March 2008.

authorities for dealing with corruption. However, these remarks remain more political than not, and the real scale and reach of corruption still remain unclear. There are no accurate estimates on the losses incurred to the Kosovo budget because of corruption.

In such a setting, the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, with the support of the U.S. Embassy, has conducted a research survey that focuses on assessing the impact that corruption has on the business sector. The rationale behind such an approach is quite clear as corruption as a phenomenon mostly affects the private sector and its growth.

3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Objectives

The overall objective of this research study was the assessment of the business community's perceptions of corruption in the public institutions. It also attempts to assess the readiness of businesses to engage in corruptive processes themselves, their past experiences with corruption, as well as the monetary value of such experiences. Additionally, the research also attempts to assess the level of trust that the business community has in the judiciary system in Kosovo.

3.2. Methodology

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, a survey of over 550 businesses across Kosovo was conducted. The sample was designed in such a way that it faithfully portrays the types of activities (trade, service, and manufacturing) and the geographical distribution of businesses in Kosovo. In order to accurately assess the business-enabling environment in the entire territory of Kosovo, the sample also includes 50 businesses owned by Kosovo Serbs.

In order to ensure the maximum level of sincerity possible, the respondents were not required to provide their names on the completed questionnaires. This was thought to be the most adequate way to obtain information that can be potentially incriminating for businesses.

4. FINDINGS

The sample of businesses surveyed was geographically distributed according to the real concentration of businesses throughout Kosovo. Consequently, over 40% of the businesses interviewed are located in, or operate in, Prishtina Municipality, followed by Prizren Municipality, which was represented by 10% of the sample. The detailed illustration of the sample is presented visually in the chart below:

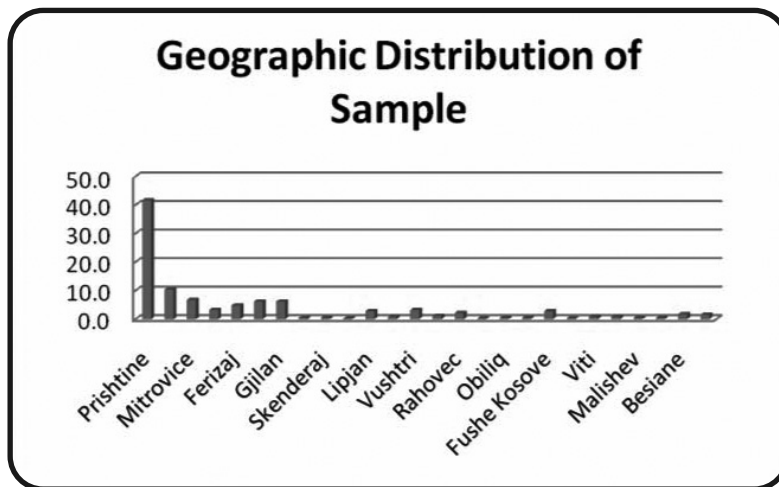


Figure 1. *Geographic Distribution of Survey Sample*

The size of companies was also perceived as an important element influencing their behavior vis-à-vis corruption, and this is why a faithful sample to the reality on the ground was selected. Almost 80% of the companies surveyed have fifty or fewer employees. An intentional focus larger than that in real life was placed on larger companies in order to get statistically valid data for these strata of the sample. The illustration of the companies' sizes according to the number of employees is presented in the chart below:

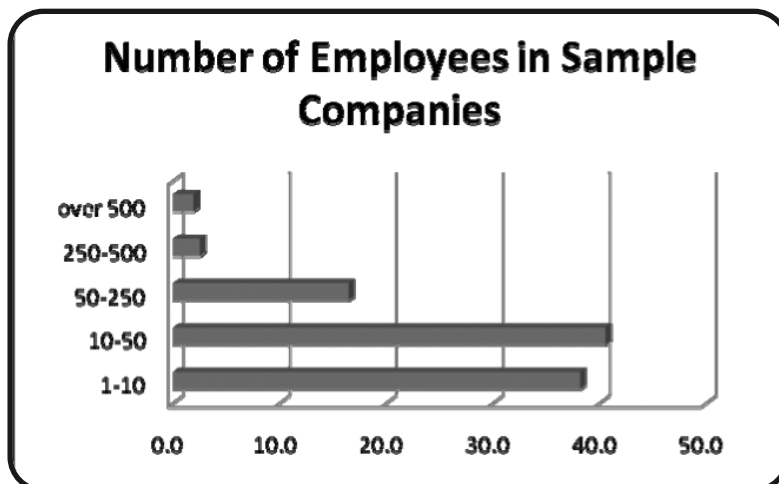


Figure 2. *Number of Employees within the Interviewed Companies*

Another element determining the size of businesses used to select the sample for the research is the annual turnover of these businesses:

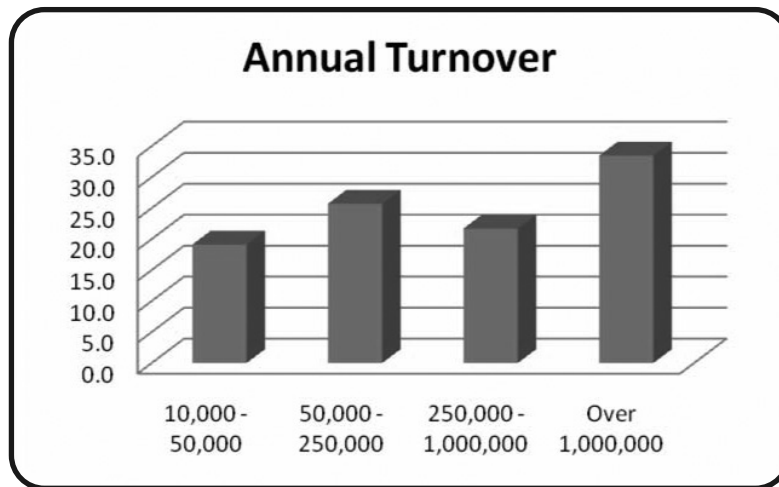


Figure 3. Annual Turnover of Interviewed Companies

Similar to the number of employees, the annual turnover represents an accurate picture of the business community in Kosovo. The figures are slightly higher than those recorded by official institutions, but this could be explained by the fact that a large number of businesses in Kosovo declare less profit than the actual number in order to avoid taxation. This phenomenon is the first peculiarity that testifies to the informality of the business sector, and the potentially unwanted behavior on the part of this community.

As far as the type of activity conducted by businesses is concerned, the sample was comprised of 40% of businesses in the service sector, 30% of trade businesses, and around 29% of manufacturing businesses. Such stratification of businesses ensures statistically representative results as it contains a sufficient level of companies in the three major activity sectors. The composition of the sample according to the type of activity conducted is represented in the chart below:

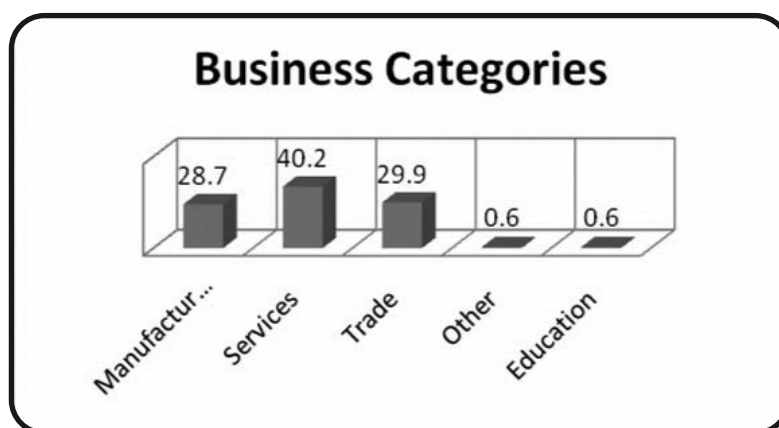


Figure 4. Business Categories Represented in the Sample

4.1. The Business Environment as Perceived by Kosovar Businesses

The composition of businesses surveyed during this research and illustrated above in a multi-dimensional perspective perceives the business-enabling environment in Kosovo as very difficult to navigate. The hardships that businesses face in their day-to-day operations are multi-faceted and come from various sources. Among the most frequent obstacles that businesses face in their daily work include the availability of electricity, poor infrastructure, unfair competition, rule of law, and burdensome taxes.

Such responses are indicated by almost all respondents (not necessarily in that order) and which they believe prevent their businesses from achieving rapid growth. In order to improve these aspects, the interviewed businesses recommend various sets of policy measures that include, but are not limited to, revisions of legal and fiscal policies, strengthening of law enforcement, stimulating growth and access to capital by offering incentives to commercial banks, and much more. It should be noted that the Serbian businesses interviewed also share similar constraints and obstacles along with their Albanian peers, as they also suffer the consequences of an irregular supply of energy, poor infrastructure, poor rule of law (worse than that in the majority-populated areas) and lack of access to capital.

When asked to provide a list of institutions that are most efficient, the Albanian businesses interviewed indicate commercial banks, business associations, and local government as the most efficient institutions that are helpful in enabling them to do business. The Serbian respondents, on the other hand, indicate the international organizations and institutions such as the U.S. Embassy and USAID as their first choices as the most efficient institutions, while the third ranking is reserved for commercial banks.

In order to create a complete illustration of the perceptions of the business community regarding Kosovo's business environment, respondents were also requested to provide their opinions about the least efficient or most problematic institutions that impede their normal operations. Concerning this aspect, businesses indicated a lengthy list of institutions that are perceived as problematic and almost all institutions (both at the local and central levels) were mentioned by at least one respondent. The most frequent responses provided by Albanian companies include the UNMIK Custom, Kosovo Tax Administration, the Kosovo Energy Corporation, the government and the courts. On the other hand, Serbian businesses believe that the most problematic institutions are KEK, Cadastre and local government, 40%, 30% and 10% respectively. The responses of both Albanian and Serbian businesses are presented visually in the chart below:

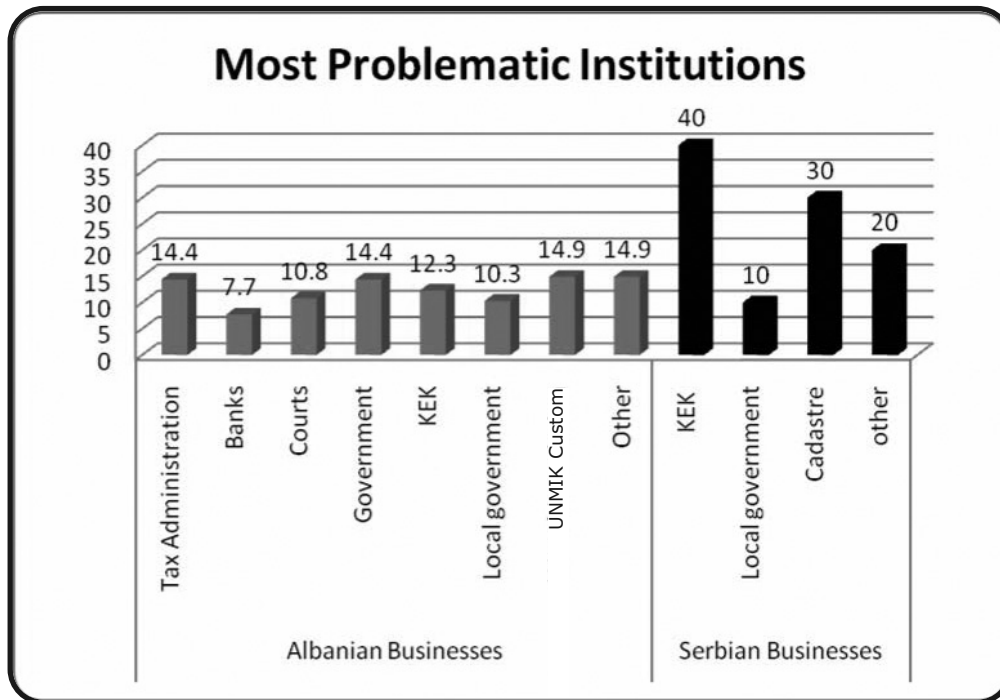


Figure 5. *Most Problematic Institutions as Perceived by Businesses*

If the data is analyzed along ethnic lines, it can be seen that the Serbian businesses display considerably less dissatisfaction with Kosovo institutions. The reason behind such attitudes is the lack of a presence of Kosovo institutions both at the central and local levels, including the judiciary (courts). However, the institution upon which the business owners of the two ethnic communities agree is the Energy Corporation of Kosovo, which represents a serious impediment to the normal flow of business.

4.2. Perceived Corruption VS. Experienced Corruption

Numerous reports and analysis published about corruption in Kosovo indicate a higher perceived level of corruption than the level incurred by ordinary citizens. When asked about this matter, businesses in Kosovo share different viewpoints. In general, all business owners consider that corruption is not combated systematically. This view is shared by 46% of Albanian businesses and 26% of Serbian businesses. A similar number of respondents believe that corruption is only partially combated (44% of Albanian and 52% of Serbian businesses), while only 10% of Albanian businesses and 22% of Serbian businesses believe that corruption is combated systematically.

As can be seen from these data, the Serbian businesses have a relatively more positive view of the seriousness of the government to combat corruption. On the other hand, Albanian businessmen do not trust that the attempts made by Kosovo institutions are systematic and/or sincere. Such results by no means indicate that the situation in the enclaves with regards to corruption is more positive than that in the majority-populated areas but, instead, it could be argued that the institutions of Kosovo do not have the opportunity to exercise their power in the enclaves. The perceptions of businesses regarding the sincerity in combating corruption are presented in the chart below:

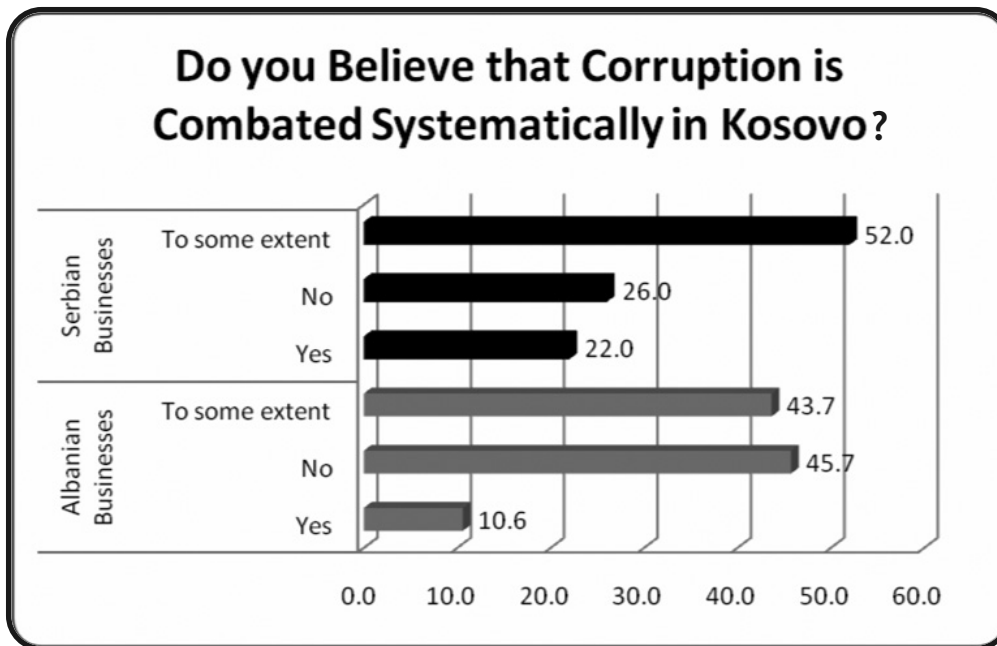


Figure 6. *Is corruption combated systematically?*

If the responses from the chart above are compared to the size of the businesses, namely, their annual turnover, it could be perceived that the larger the business, the worse is its perception of corruption.

The second aspect addressed during the Survey of businesses is their actual experience with corruption. From the responses obtained, it appears that 40% of Albanian and 18% of Serbian businesses interviewed have been faced with corruption on one or another occasion. Being that this constitutes really sensitive information, the level of sincerity on the part of the businesses is doubtful. There are grounds to believe that the number of businesses that have come across corruption is higher, but that they did not feel comfortable with sharing this information, as it could be potentially incriminating. This assumption is also based on the other aspects of the Survey, which indicate that many more businesses have come across corruption. The results obtained from this question are presented visually in the chart below:

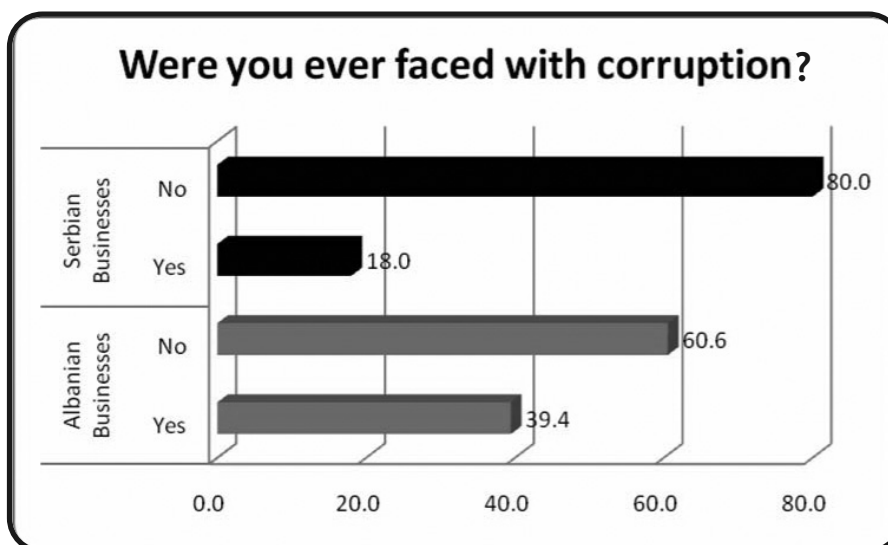


Figure 7. *Were you ever faced with corruption?*

However, in order to assess the level of corruption and the level of the institutions which are more prone to engage in corruptive activities, the respondents were also asked to indicate the level of governance in which they have encountered corruption. The results obtained from businesses indicate that the most problematic or corrupt level of governance are the municipal authorities: all Serbian respondents who declared having experience with corruption indicated that this experience has been at the local level, while 37% of Albanian respondents confirming corruptive experience also cited the local level of governance. A significant portion of Albanian businesses also indicate a relatively high level of corruption at the central level (28%), with which they claim to have experience. A more detailed overview of all responses confirming corruptive behavior is presented in Figure 8 below:

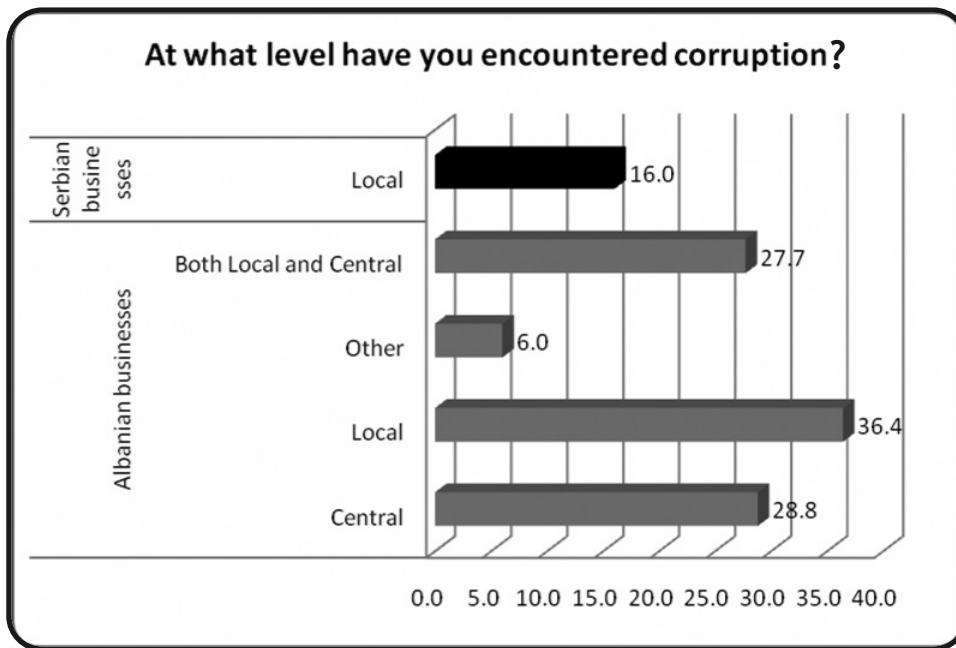


Figure 8. *Level of Institutions Where Corruption is Encountered?*

4.3. Readiness of Kosovar Businesses to Engage in Corruptive Affairs

The Survey results indicate that there is a general perception of the majority of respondents that corruption is compulsory in order to achieve high business efficiency. Over 47% of respondents believe that bribing officials is the only way to maintain business efficiency, while 12% of respondents believe that this is the case only with certain institutions. The remaining 40% of respondents claim that corruption is not a precondition for achieving the maximum efficiency of businesses in Kosovo. However, when these answers are cross-checked with the respondents' declared annual turnover, it can be seen that the larger the business is, the greater the need to work with corrupt officials. This information could be explained from several perspectives the most plausible of which is that larger businesses are usually the ones that bid for public funding (tenders) and that the denounced corruption is mostly related to these procedures.

From the theoretical perspective, the argument could be made that the envy and greed of the public officials increase when dealing with larger businesses, which usually symbolize wealth and power. Regardless of the motive and reasoning behind these results, the decision-makers should pay special attention to this phenomenon as larger businesses are the businesses that can drive the economy to faster development and growth and that impediments to these businesses indirectly imply slower growth and development. The responses to this question are presented in the chart below:

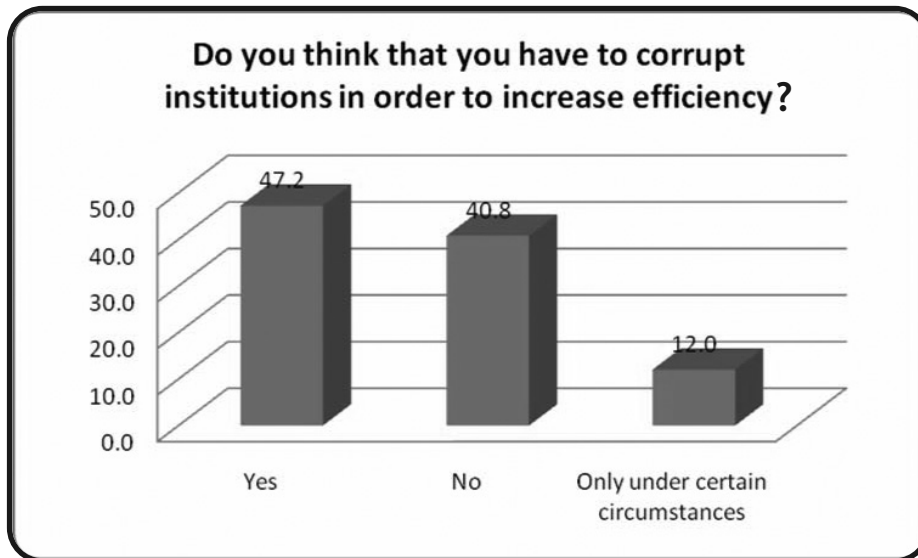


Figure 9. *Is corruption necessary to increase the efficiency?*

The respondents who provided positive answers to the question visualized in Chart 9, were also requested to provide the names of institutions that are the most problematic and where bribery is mandatory. The results from this sub-question indicate that the perception of businesses is that the customs service, procurement officials and the tax administration are the addresses where corruption is encountered most frequently.

As stated above, one of the objectives of the study was to assess the difference between perceived and encountered corruption. When posed with a straightforward question: 'Have you ever offered bribes to institutional officials?' most of the businesses do not have the courage to respond and the level of sincerity in their responses is doubtful. Some 52% of respondents refused to answer this question, which leads one to believe that they are not being quite honest in their responses. The rationale behind such a claim is that if the respondents, indeed, have never offered bribes, they would not hesitate to answer, as a negative reply would not hurt their reputations. Through that argument, one can conclude that the percentage of respondents who have offered bribes to public officials should be represented as an aggregate percentage of those who confirm having offered bribes (over 14%) and those refusing to respond to the question. If the two percentages are added together, we get an alarming 66% of businesses interviewed that have offered bribes in the past.

When the responses to this question are analyzed through the lens of business size, it becomes apparent that the larger businesses are the most open to admitting they have offered bribes. One could argue that the reason behind such an attitude from larger businesses could be explained by their involvement in public tenders, where it is more 'acceptable', or even is 'acceptable' to offer bribes. The responses to this aspect of the assessment are presented below:

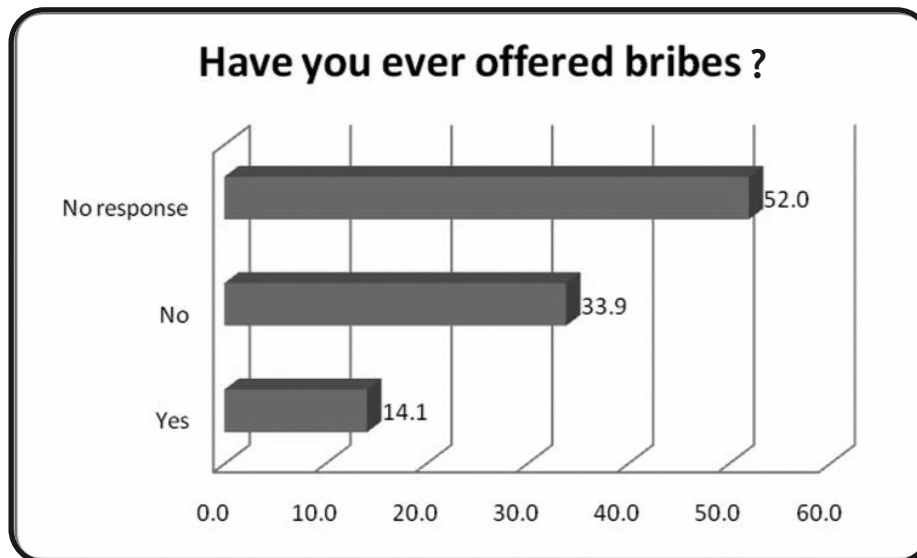


Figure 10. *Experience in Offering Bribes?*

The claim made in the previous paragraph is also validated by the results to the question regarding the type of procedure or activity for which they have offered bribes. A dominating 50% of respondents have claimed that this process took place in connection with tenders or public procurement. These findings clearly indicate that in order to combat corruptive behavior, the institutions in charge of fighting this phenomenon should look into reviewing public procurement law and establishing more efficient monitoring mechanisms.

However, these actions may not be sufficient in combating this phenomenon as the businesses interviewed indicate that the bribe was not requested from them by institutional officials. When describing the process of bribing officials, respondents who confirm having offered bribes claim that the process usually takes place through the mediation of third parties. Another dimension that, according to the respondents accompanies the bribing process, is that there are no set rules when the bribe should take place. This claim is supported by the respondents' answers, which confirm having given bribes either at the beginning of the project, while the tenders are in process, or when the contracts are awarded.

When the issue is treated from a time perspective, the results obtained from the survey indicate that corruptive processes have taken place throughout the post-war period. It should be noted however, that around 20% of corruptive practices took place during 2008, namely, in the few short months of Kosovo's statehood. While there may be a coincidence in the frequency of responses in this time period, it may also be interpreted as a worsening of this phenomenon from the time when Kosovo institutions gained full competencies.

When asked to provide their opinions on whether they would have been awarded contracts and tenders if they hadn't given bribes, 62% categorically deny this possibility, while 38% believe they would still have won the tenders.

An additional dimension that the Survey brings to our attention with regard to the motivation of businesses to offer bribes, is that the majority of respondents who have admitted being part of corruptive practices, strongly believe that because of corruption they have profited a great deal. When this aspect is combined with the perspective elaborated upon in the previous paragraph, one can conclude that businesses believe that by not offering bribes to government officials

they cannot win tenders and government contracts, hence denying themselves a considerable share of the profit, and consequently hurting their businesses.

This aspect brings a completely new perspective to the problem as businesses appear to be willing to pay to get awarded public contracts, hence are, themselves, among the agents who foster corruptive behavior. One viewpoint that can explain this predisposition of businesses is the perception that someone will, in any case, offer bribes, so by not doing so, it is very likely that those other companies will get awarded the tender. From a philosophical and ethical perspective this situation discloses an issue that at its core is entirely moral — is it ethical and moral for businesses not to offer bribes and lose tenders, hence working against their own interests? While there is no clear-cut answer to the dilemma, there are also no reasonable grounds to believe that either party will change its behavior. The ground for such a claim is the assumption that in a setting where the two parties in corruptive affairs are in a mutually-beneficial position, they have no incentive to change the setting.

In addition to this, it appears that businesses do not have enough faith in any institution to report the corruption. 38% of respondents confirm this claim, while an additional 35% refuse to provide answers to this question. This attitude portrayed in the responses of the businesses interviewed, clearly indicates that faith in the institutions in charge of combating corruption is very low.

4.4. Faith in the Judiciary

One of the key institutions that is supposed to fight corruption is the judiciary system. Without the proper functioning of this system, one cannot expect that there can be any concrete results in the fight against this phenomenon. In the question directly assessing businesses' faith in the judiciary, there is an indication that over 40% of respondents in the Survey do not believe in this system. This attitude is followed by an additional 41% that believe in the judiciary partially, while only 18% have complete faith in the courts.

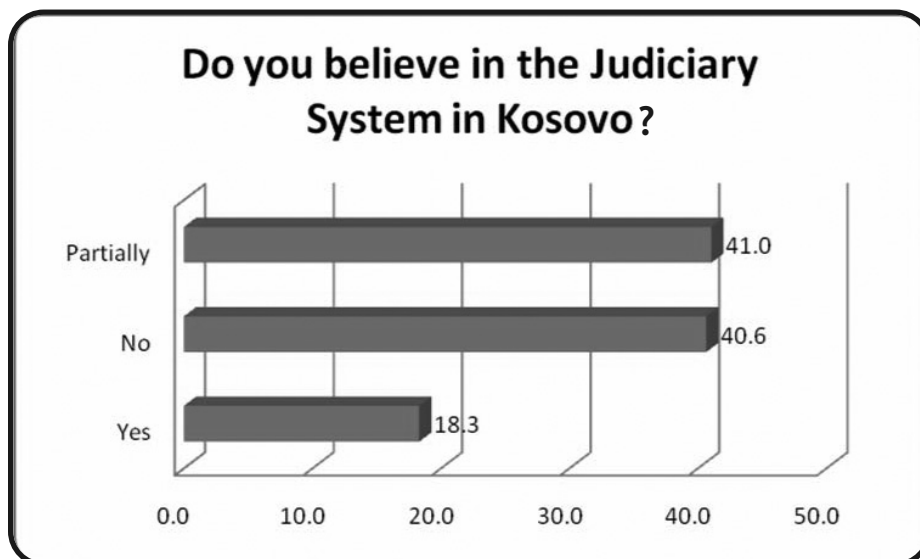


Figure 11. *Faith in the Judiciary?*

Similarly to the issue of corruption, the Survey also attempted to assess the ground for perceptions regarding the judiciary. Contrary to the issue of corruption, the vast majority of respondents, comprising around 68% of the total number of businesses interviewed, claim not to have ever dealt with the Kosovo courts. What this leads one to believe is that the perceptions of businesses have been created by the stories and experiences of others, or at best, by the media's influence. Being that their perception is not based on the first-hand experience of businesses, it could be argued that they can also change more easily. This argument however is not valid for the 32% of respondents who claim they do have personal experiences with Kosovo courts. The experience of the interviewed businesses is presented visually in the chart below:



Figure 12. Personal Experience with the Judiciary?

Out of the businesses that have dealt with the courts in Kosovo, a significant portion declares that the matter of lawsuits has been non-compliance with contracts by others, including the Kosovo institutions here. In order to identify the real source of dissatisfaction, the respondents who confirmed their experience with the Kosovo courts, were requested to indicate the outcome of the court proceedings. Being that only 16% of these experiences have resulted negatively for the interviewed respondents, the outcome of lawsuits can be ruled out as being the primary motivation for distrust towards the courts. While 28% of respondents claim to have successfully completed court processes in their favor, almost 56% of respondents claim that their cases are still being processed:

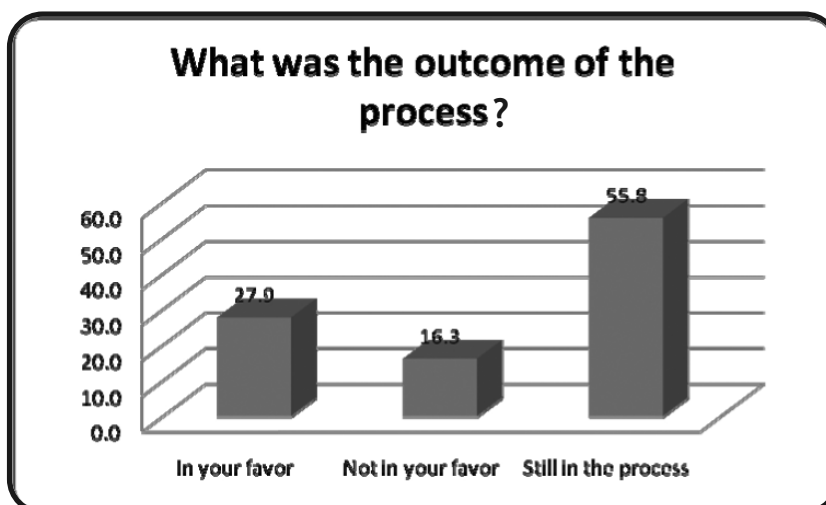


Figure 13. Outcome of the Judicial Process?

It is precisely this aspect that may be detrimental to the faith that businesses have towards the court system in Kosovo. Long delays that sometimes last for up to 72 months is the major cause for the low trust portrayed towards the courts. From the businesses' perspective, long legal processes are extremely harmful, as they cost both in terms of money and energy spent for their completion.

When asked for suggestions on how to improve and intensify the fight against corruption, businesses offer a variety of possibilities. Capacity-building for anti-corruption agencies, political will or changes in the top-level politicians, strengthening the rule of law, awareness-raising for the general population and the business community, and financial rewards for 'whistle blowers' reporting corruption, are among the most frequent suggestions that the interviewed businesses believe would improve the efficiency in the fight against corruption.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data obtained from this research indicate that corruption constitutes a serious threat to the normal operation of business in Kosovo. Business owners in Kosovo have lost hope that corruption can be combated and that the attempts to eradicate this phenomenon are sincere and systematic. Moreover, they are convinced that the judiciary system in Kosovo is dysfunctional and is not effective, and this has convinced them to believe that the overall business environment is not favorable and does not work in their favor unless they offer bribes.

Such a mindset has been one of the major causes in the further spread of corruption, as a fair portion of businesses believe that they cannot effectively conduct their business unless they corrupt institutional officials. The degree of corruptive activity is spread over all levels of governance and across all institutions. What is more worrying is that businesses have become prone to offer bribes to officials without even being asked to do so. Such behavior is believed to be based on the perception that the official will, at some point, get his/her share somehow. Despite the fact that the perceived level is higher than the level of experienced corruption, this phenomenon is becoming ever more common in Kosovo.

In order to break the corruption cycle and effectively combat this phenomenon, serious and systematic actions are necessary. The relevant institutions need to combine forces and harmonize actions that aim at minimizing the occurrence of this phenomenon. Aside from legal actions, a clear message needs to be sent to the public that corruptive behavior is not acceptable and is punished. This is especially important because, if no action is taken, very soon this phenomenon will very likely become acceptable business norms and ethics and will be deeply rooted in the system.

The experiences of other countries that have dealt with this phenomenon during their transition period teach us that there are several characteristics that stimulate widespread corruption. First and foremost, the factor that creates suitable grounds for fostering corruption is the number and nature of the registration, permissions and license regimes, and their regulation. The simple existence of such regimes is favorable ground for corruption because the contractors will offer bribes in order to form a business. Secondly, ineffective monitoring and control of tax and customs authorities also have a major influence on corruption as business owners are inclined to offer bribes to officials in order to pay taxes and fees foreseen by the regulations. The third major factor that affects corruption is the perception of officials that their corruptive behavior will be punished.

In order to minimize the influence of these factors on the Kosovo setting, the law enforcement agencies and all of society needs to take immediate actions. The most important factor for combating corruption is the pressure of public opinion. As corruption (especially at high levels of government) usually yields negative consequences for the party in power, the media and civil society need to actively exercise pressure on the government to take measures to prevent and fight corruption. This would, in turn, generate/force the government to devote itself to combating this

phenomenon. The lack of political will is one of the major causes of corruption in Kosovo. Under the current circumstances in Kosovo, the government of Kosovo should:

- **Introduce harsher punishment for corruptive behavior (for all parties engaging in corruption).** Such a signal would be effective in sending a clear message that corruption is not -- and will not be -- tolerated.
- **Revise the institutional setting in which corruption is combated and eliminate the gaps in the system.** Such action would eliminate the excuses for a lack of action on the part of institutions in charge of combating corruption such as the anti-corruption agency, prosecution, courts etc.
- **Pressure the courts to process the cases of corruption that are now awaiting trial.** This action would, itself, yield results, as it would increase faith and trust in the judiciary.
- **Offer prizes and awards to "Whistle Blowers" exposing corruption.** Informants denouncing corruptive actions should be rewarded in order to stimulate individuals who have information on corruption to step forward and share this information with competent authorities. However, in order for this recommendation to be implemented, the government needs to establish a data protection system and to ensure the safety of whistle blowers.
- **Institutions in charge of fighting this phenomenon should look into reviewing public procurement law and establishing a more efficient monitoring mechanism.** This recommendation is validated by the fact that most of the corrupt actions are attached to procurement processes.
- **Civil Society and the Media should more actively engage in combating corruption, as this is proved to be a critical component in achieving momentum and generating pressure on the government.** The TV show "Fiks Fare" on the Albanian television station "TOP Channel" has been a champion of investigative journalism into corruption and blowing the whistle on corrupt affairs. The same conclusion can be made regarding the "Slavi Trifunov" Show in Bulgaria.