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ELIAMEP

RELATIONS BETWEEN ALBANIA AND GREECE

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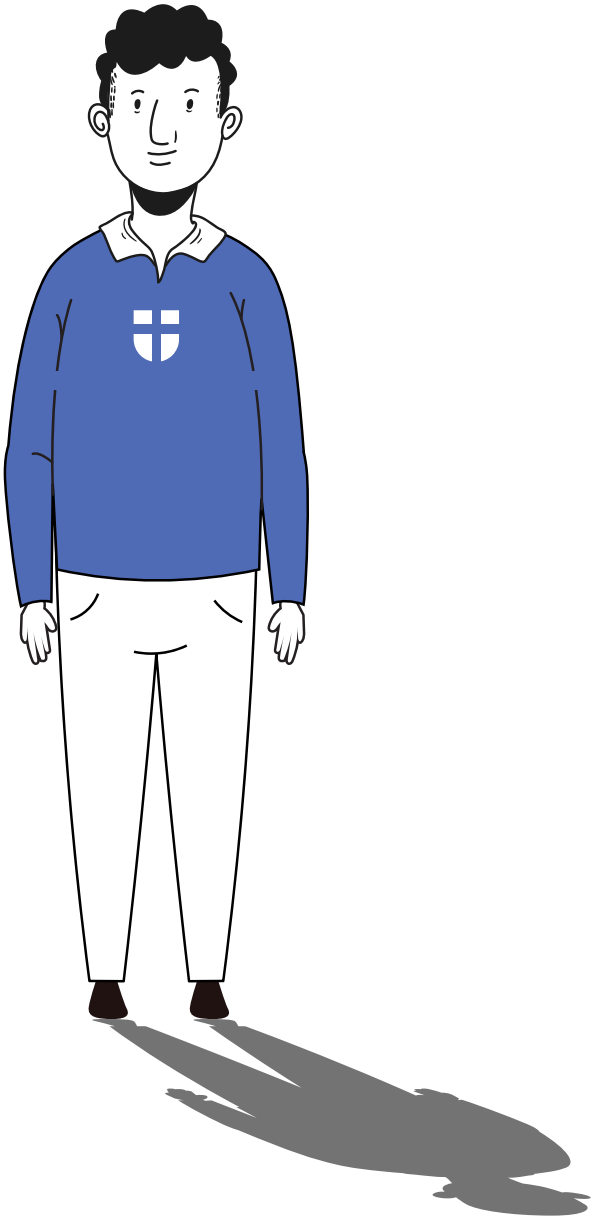
ALBANIA

The results from the Albania's survey are shown in the left side, with charts in red shades and rounded figures are used.
All numbers in both surveys are presented in percentages.
DK/DA refers to respondents who answered "Don't know" or those who refused to answer to the specific question.

GREECE



The results from the Greece's survey are shown in the right side, with charts in blue shades and (not rounded) figures with decimals are used.

All numbers in both surveys are presented in percentages.

DK/DA refers to respondents who answered "Don't know" or those who refused to answer to the specific question.

INTRODUCTION

Relations between Albania and Greece remain a complicated riddle in Southeast Europe. Albanians and Greeks are neighbours with extensive historical, economic and social bonds, they partake the same Euro-Atlantic geopolitical sphere and largely agree about the broader macro-historical political agenda of the region: the establishment of healthy democracies, strong market economies and rule of law states, as well as the integration of the entire Balkans to the European Union and NATO. Moreover, the two countries, went beyond the severe separation of the Cold War through intensive interaction of all sorts from the early 1990s onwards. Such interaction increased the visibility of one country/nation to the other, but also brought to the fore old stereotypes and fears as well as new sources of disagreements and tensions. As a result, Albania and Greece find themselves in a paradoxical situation. The two societies and economies are highly interconnected, but diplomatic and political relations remain testing and in a near permanent state of volatility. Simultaneously, the increasingly hostile rhetoric manifest in electronic and social media, create a fertile ground for the two nations to potentially develop their identities in opposition to one another.

The Open Society Foundation of Albania teamed up with the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) in an effort to explore these factors by revisiting the sensitive and difficult relationship between Albania and Greece. The first step of this joint effort was to explore the societal base for mutual misperceptions and stereotypes. The aim was to understand the attitudes that the Albanian and Greek nations hold about each other and how these opinions may facilitate or obstruct the building of a closer partnership between the two countries. To that end, and as a first step in a broader effort at increasing mutual understanding, the research project aimed to delve deeper into public opinion attitudes in the two countries about bilateral relations and the various dimensions of this complex relationship.

The joint research project involved two parallel opinion polls conducted in Albania and Greece and implemented by Tirana-based Data Centrum Research Institute and polling agency and the Thessaloniki-based Public Opinion Research Unit of the University of Macedonia. For comparative purposes, the two sides worked with a common base of questions, while the structured questionnaires of the two surveys had only few and necessary differences. The Greek survey used a nationwide representative sample (n=1,128), following the multi-stage stratified sampling technique. Data collection was implemented with the use of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) between 13-20 December 2019. The Albanian survey was based on a nationwide representative sample (n=1,200), following the multi-stratified sampling technique. The mode of data collection was face to face, conducting door to door interviews and the fieldwork took place between 11-26 February 2020.

The findings of the analysis conducted by the partners involved in this project are presented in this report, which contains four parts and twelve sections. In Part I, entitled ***International Political and Security Context***, the report reviews questions pertaining to international affairs of the two countries. More specifically, this part includes questions about the perceived best international friends of the two countries, their perceptions of foreign threat, their

Albania's and Greece's economies are highly interconnected, but diplomatic and political relations remain testing and in a near permanent state of volatility.

opinions about neighbouring countries, and their opinions about European integration issues, including the prospect of Albania joining the EU.

Part II, entitled ***Bilateral Relations***, includes questions about the overall assessment of bilateral relations between Albania and Greece, the main problems affecting these relations as they are perceived by respondents in the two surveys, and about attitudes towards Albanian migration in Greece.

Part III, entitled ***Personal Attitudes, Values and Stereotypes***, includes questions about the personal attitudes of Albanians towards Greeks and Greeks towards Albanians, the spontaneous associations that respondents in each of the two surveys make about members of the other nation, and the personal values and attributes that respondents of each side associates with the members of the other nation.

Finally, Part IV, entitled ***Acquaintance and Knowledge***, attempts to identify the extent to which respondents are familiar with members of the other nation as well as to assess whether they possess accurate knowledge about each other.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Open Society Foundation of Albania and the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) joined forces in a project aiming to understand the societal attitudes that the Albanian and Greek nation hold about each other and how these opinions may facilitate or obstruct the building of a closer partnership between the two countries. For the purpose of understanding attitudes in the two countries the project conducted parallel opinion polls in the two countries on the basis of a jointly agreed questionnaire that had very little variance between the two surveys. The polls were conducted by Data Centrum polling agency in Albania and the Public Opinion Research Unit of the University of Macedonia in Greece. Both surveys were conducted on the basis of a nationwide representative samples, but data collection was carried out using different methodologies, following the standard techniques in use for such studies in the two countries. The present report outlines the main findings of the two surveys and is divided into four parts and twelve sections. A summary of the main findings is as follows.

International Political and Security Context

Albania and Greece diverge as to their perceptions of their respective international friendships. Greeks view France as their country's best friend in the international arena, with the EU coming as a distant second. Albanians reserve the top places for the US and Germany.

The two nations view international affairs very differently, with Albanians perceiving the international arena in more collaborative terms and Greeks more in terms of conflict of interests of states. Similarly, the vast majority of Greeks consider their country as being under threat by Turkey, while most Albanians do not consider any foreign country as being a threat. Albanians and Greeks largely do not see each other as a threat.

With regards to neighbouring countries, Albanians have the most positive opinion about Kosovo, Italy and to a lesser extent Turkey; Greeks have the most positive opinion about Serbia and then Israel. Overall, many more Albanians have a positive opinion on Greece than vice versa. However, the negative opinions of Albania are much lower among young Greeks. Among Albanian respondents, Greece has the best record in the fields of democracy, rule of law and human rights. Greeks in contrast, reflecting their own preferences in the Balkan neighbourhood but not the actual data and international rankings on these issues, again favour Serbia as the best country in these fields. Similarly, Greeks consider it most important to develop relations with Israel and Serbia, while Albanians with Kosovo and Italy. On average, Albanian respondents consider developing relations with Greece as more important than Greek respondents consider developing relations with Albania.

The two nations also diverge in their perceptions of the European Union. Only four in ten Greeks consider EU as a good thing, while in contrast nine in ten Albanians consider the Union as a good thing. Albanians are overwhelmingly in favor of their country's accession to the EU, while Greeks seem to have mixed feelings about Albania's accession.

Bilateral relations

Albanians have more positive view of contemporary bilateral relations. In both countries though there is a perception that relations have overall improved compared to previous decades.

Opinions diverge greatly as to the main problems affecting bilateral relations. For Albanians, the most important problems seem to be the delimitation of the maritime zones and the various issues relating to the Cham population. Both of these issues do not register much attention among Greek respondents. The issues that have the highest percentages for Greek respondents are the perceived Albanian expansionism and Albania's policies towards the Greek minority. But even these issues attract percentages of about 12%.

Among respondents in both countries who have heard something about the Chams, issues surrounding this group are considered to be a major obstacle for bilateral relations. The public opinions in the two countries diverge when it comes to the Greek minority in Albania. The vast majority of Greek respondents do not think that the Albanian government respects the rights of the Greek minority, while the vast majority of Albanian respondents think the opposite. The vast majority of Albanian respondents do not consider the Greek minority as a threat for Albania and instead they view it as fully integrated in the Albanian society. Similarly, Albanian respondents consider, by a large majority, relations between Albanians and the Greek minority in Albania to be positive.

There is consensus between the two societies about issues pertaining to Albanian migrants in Greece. Both Greek and Albanian respondents, by large numbers, do not consider Albanian migrants as being a threat to Greece, while both sides agree that relations between Greeks and Albanian migrants are good. Similarly, most Greeks and Albanians agree that children of Albanian migrants are fully integrated in the Greek society. Moreover, both nations think that Albanian migrants have contributed to Greece's economic development. Both nations also agree that Greece has assisted Albania in the last twenty years.

Personal attitudes, values and stereotypes

Purely negative attitudes at the personal level have significantly weakened. Only one in ten respondents in Albania and Greece hold negative attitudes about the other nation. Overall, Albanian respondents hold more positive attitudes about Greeks than vice versa. In Albania, the positive attitudes towards Greeks are mainly found in the south of the country. In Greece, the highest percentage of positive attitudes towards Albanians is found among young people.

When it comes to spontaneous associations that the respondents in the two surveys make about the members of the other nation, the picture we get differs between the two sides. In the Greek survey, by far the largest percentage generates neutral or no associations. There are also smaller percentages of associations of migrants and workers and also of negative associations. In the Albanian survey, there are some positive associations, but at the same time one in five associate Greeks with racism and discrimination.

Albanians and Greeks seem to associate each other with some positive attributes and values. Albanians and Greeks view each other as hardworking and family persons. To a lesser extent they view each other as cordial and honest, and even less as trustworthy. Negative attributes associated with the other nation are much less manifest. Very few Albanians view Greeks as a threat to their culture, as inclined to do illegal activities or as being in a bad

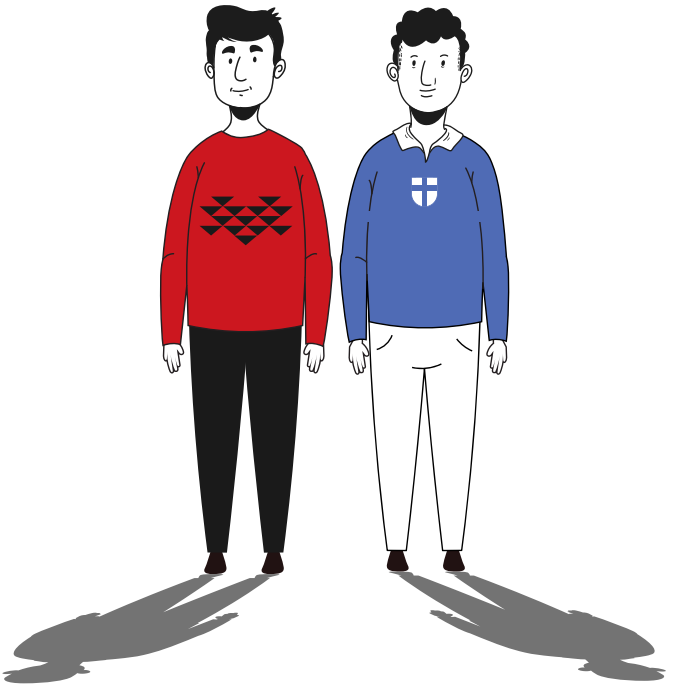
financial situation. Similarly, few Greek respondents consider Albanians to be a threat to their culture, but one in five views them as inclined to do illegal activities, and fewer as being in bad financial situation. There is scope for improving the perceptions that each nation holds for each other, but clearly the very negative stereotypes of the past seem to have subsided.

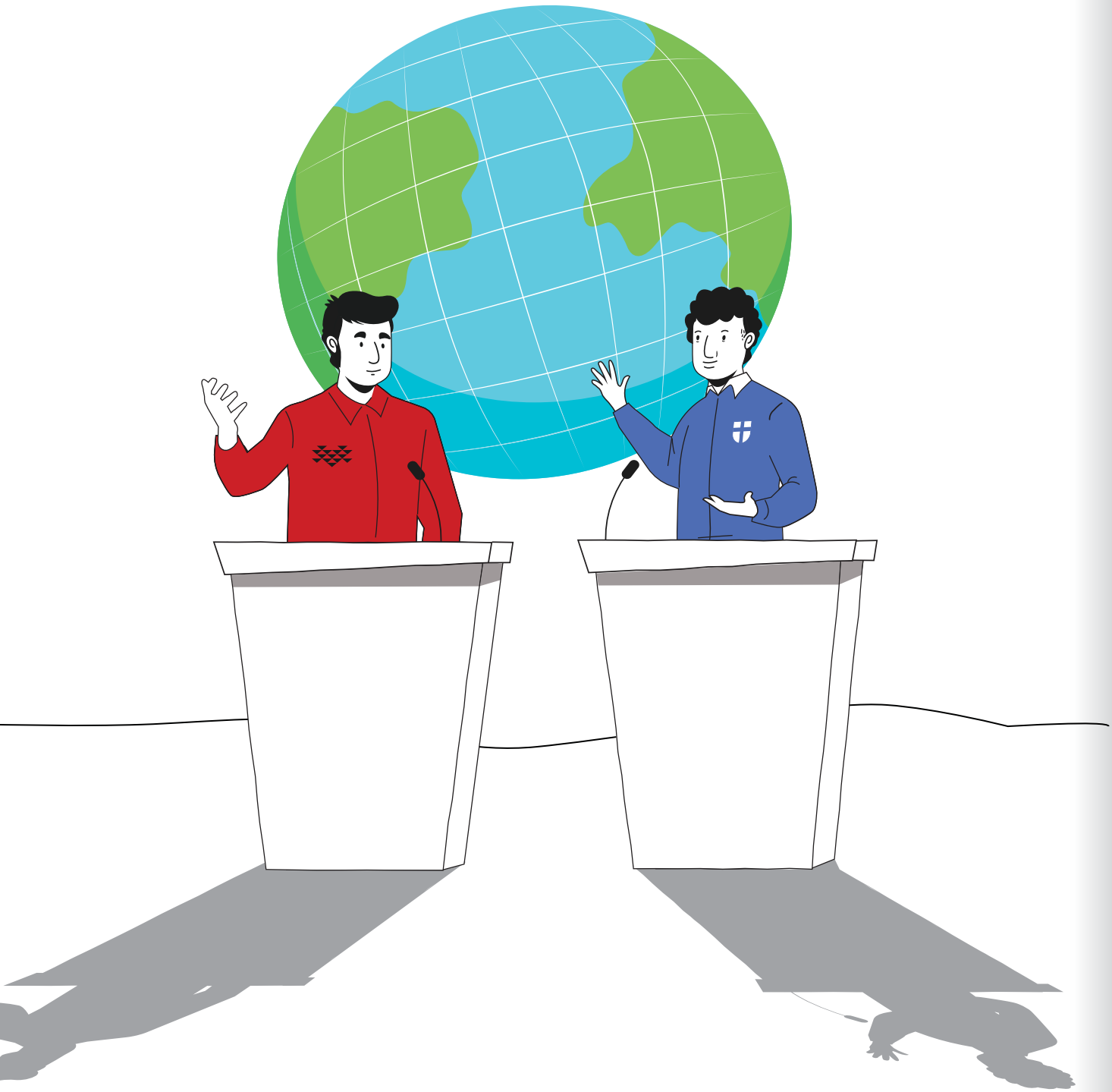
Acquaintance and knowledge

When it comes to acquaintance, the vast majority of Greeks have met someone from Albania, while the majority of Albanians have not met someone from Greece or a member of the Greek minority in Albania. Finally, the two nations do not seem to always have accurate information about each other. Of particular importance, given the sometimes bellicose media discourses in both countries, is that the majority of respondents in both surveys are inaccurately convinced that the two nations have fought against each other in wars in the past.

Overall, there are some good news in the findings of the two surveys, but also some issues that require attention and closer examination. The findings of the two surveys make absolutely clear that there has been improvement in societal attitudes between the two countries, but much more work needs to be done to further improve attitudes, relations and mutual understanding. More analysis is required to understand the bases of misconceptions and negative stereotyping, and more work to increase the level of accurate knowledge and information. Governments and civil society in both countries should invest in energetic efforts and creative ideas that will increase the level of trust between the two societies and will create the basis of a future partnership.

Albanians have more positive view of contemporary bilateral relations. In both countries though there is a perception that relations have overall improved compared to previous decades.





PART A

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL AND SECURITY CONTEXT

1.

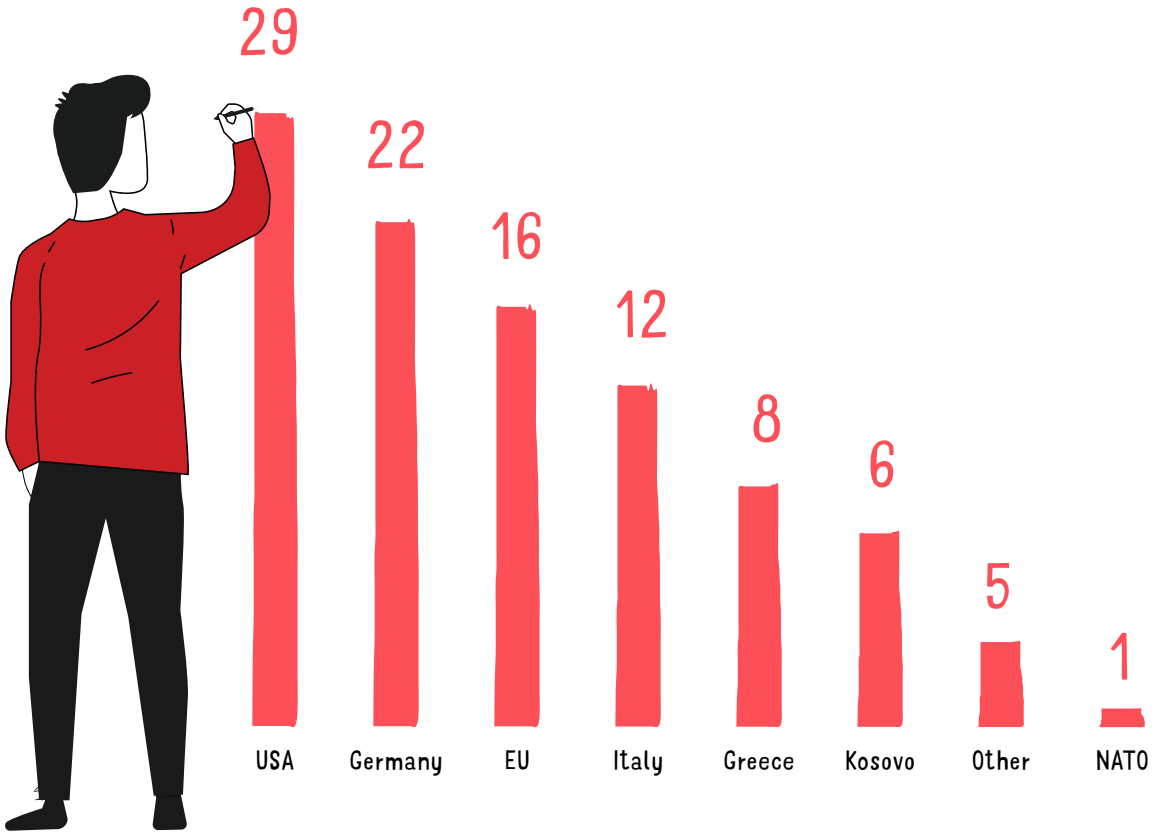
Perceptions of foreign relations

Respondents in both countries were asked to name their respective countries' best friends in the international arena. For Greeks, France tops the list with EU coming as a distant second. For Albanians, USA comes first and Germany second, while Greece comes in fifth place with 8%. The appeal of Greece as a best friend of Albania though can be found almost exclusively in the south of the country where with 19% it is more than nine times higher than the percentages in the centre and north of the country. The appeal of Greece is also very limited in young ages (2% in the 18-24 age group and 4% in the 25-34 age group).

Significant differences appear in the threat perceptions of the public opinion in the two countries. Only one in four Albanians (26%) consider that there is a country that presents a threat to Albania, while almost nine in ten Greeks (89%) consider that Greece is threatened by another country.

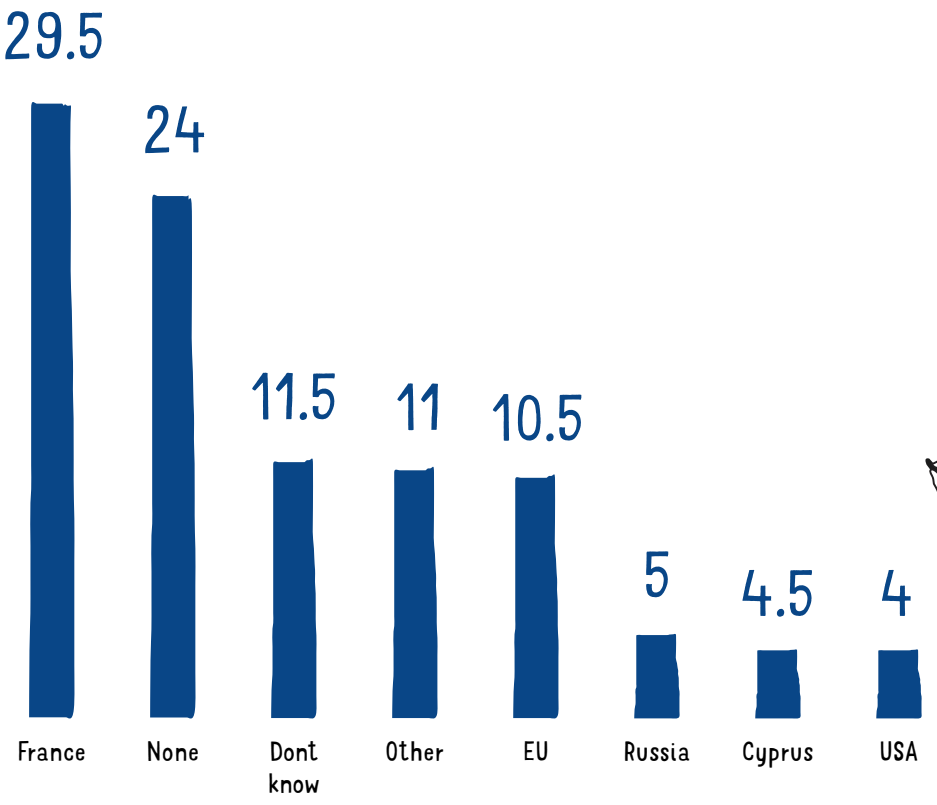
Albanians' perceptions on Albania's "Best Friend"

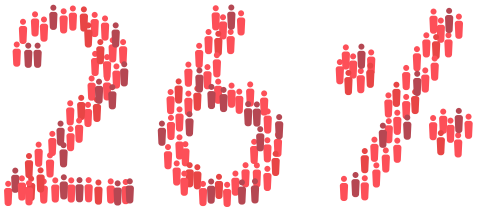
USA is considered by 3 out of 10 of the Albanian respondents as the best friend of Albania in the International system; Germany and EU, followed by Italy are amongst the countries perceived as friends of Albania in the International system. Greece is considered as a best friend by 8% of the Albanians, figure especially higher in South Albania (19%) by the residents of the South of Albania.



Greeks' perceptions on Greece's "Best Friend"

France is considered by 3 out of 10 Greeks as Greece's best friend. One out of 4 Greeks doesn't feel close to any country of international organization.

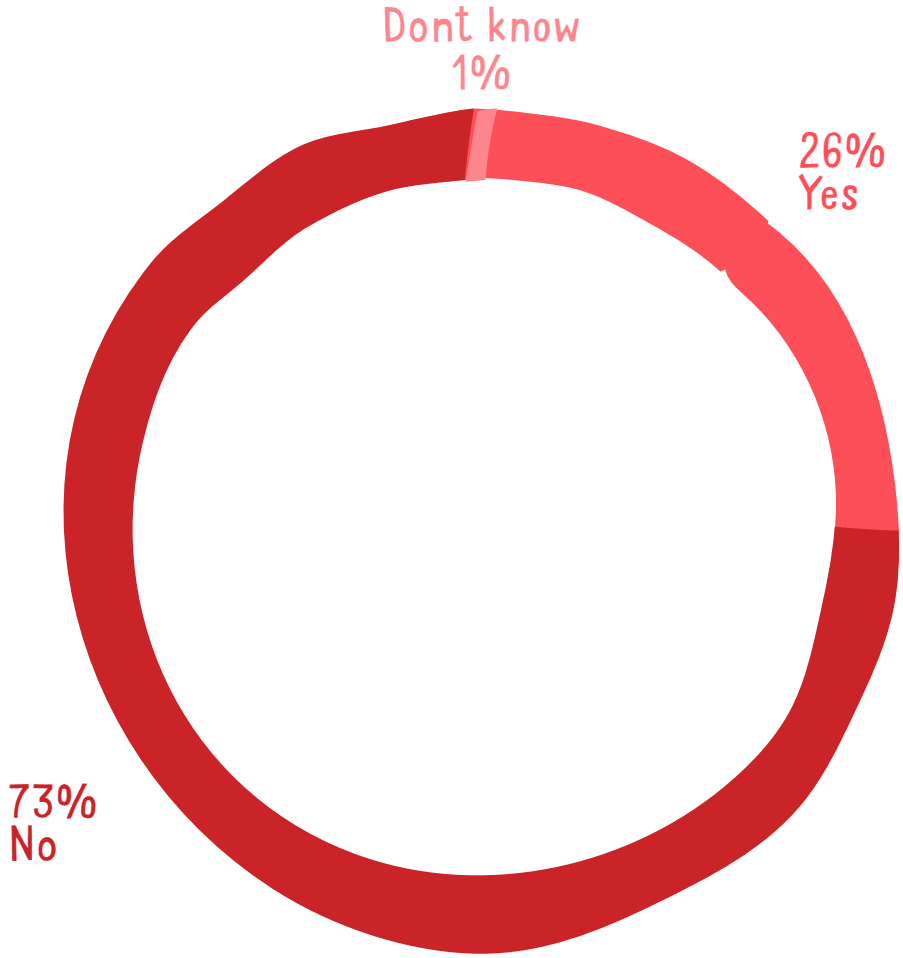


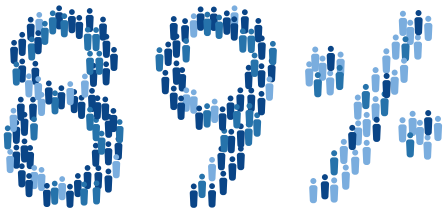


of Albanians believe there is a country which poses a threat to Albania

Do you think that there is a foreign country that could be considered as a threat to Albania?

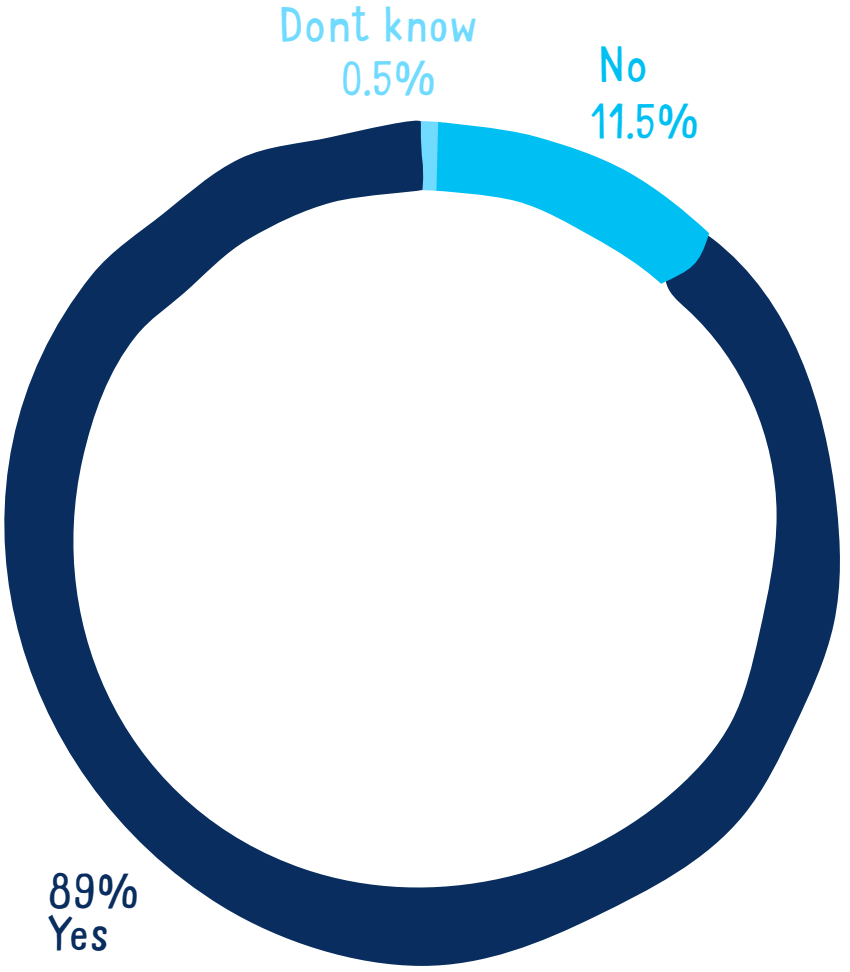
Only 26% of the Albanians do think that there's a country that poses a threat. This percentage is higher among residents in Central Albania (30%) and lower among those in South Albania (19%)





of Greeks believe there is a country which poses a threat to Greece

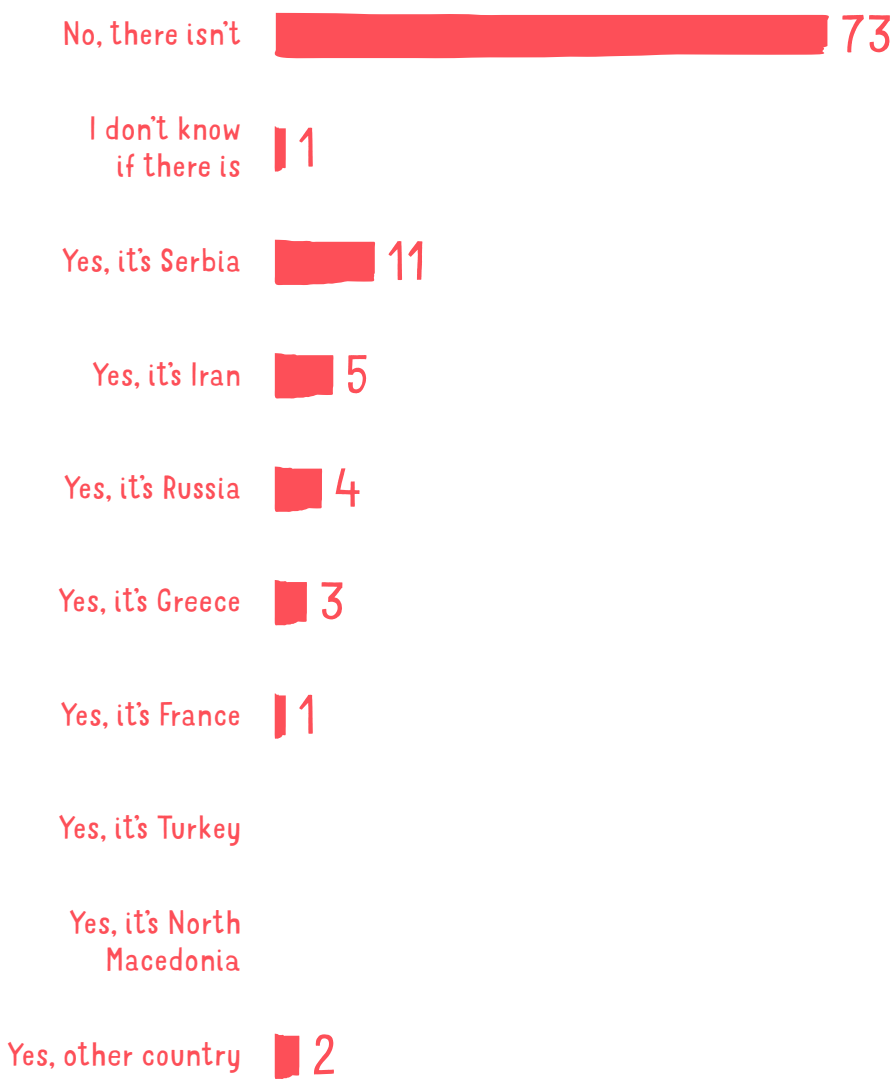
Do you think that there is a foreign country that could be considered as a threat to Greece ?



The countries do not see each other as a significant threat. The threat perception from Albania among Greeks is zero, while the threat perception from Greece among Albanians is as low as 3%.

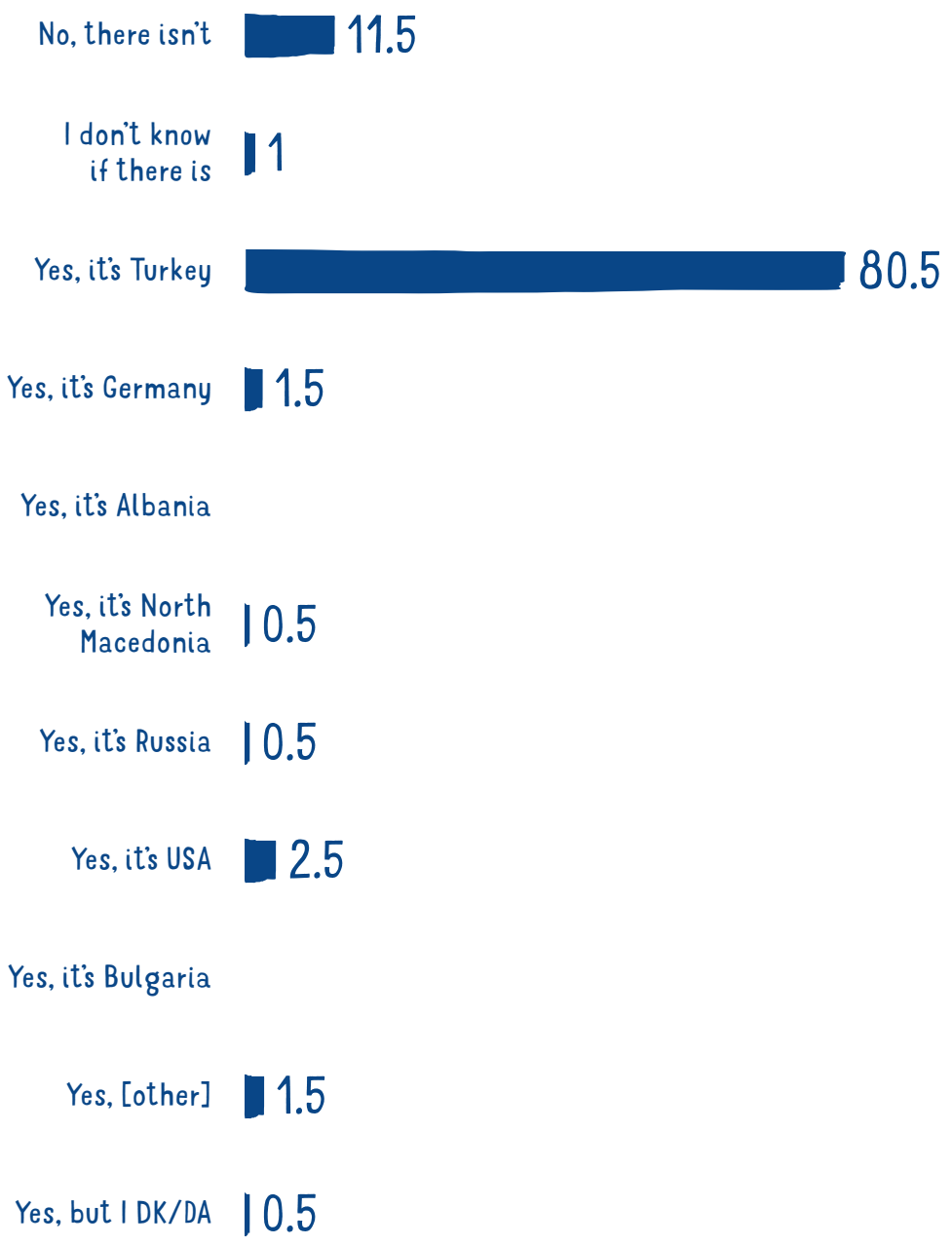
Countries that pose threat to Albania

3 out of 4 Albanians think there is no a foreign country that poses a threat to Albania. Yet, one in ten Albanians consider Serbia to be a potential threat to their country. Another one in twenty Albanians also find Iran as a potential threat to Albania, which is explained by the latest developments on this country and statements about Albania. Greece is defined as a potential threat for the country by just a few of Albanians (3%).



Countries that pose threat to Greece

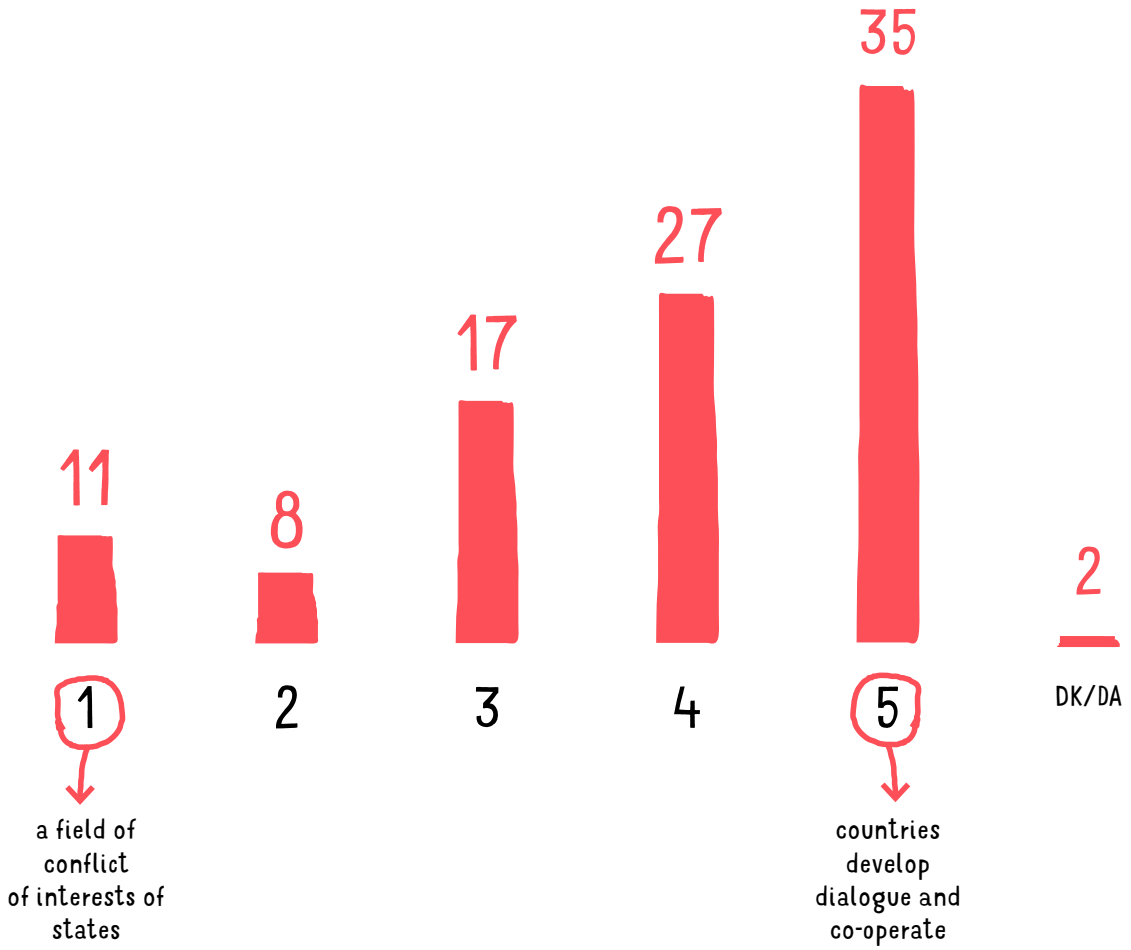
Eight out of ten Greeks consider Turkey as a threat. Almost every respondent that considers a foreign country as a threat pics Turkey, leaving that way all other countries on a single digit figure. Albania is not considered a threat by any respondent.



These attitudes match also the two nations' view of international affairs, with Albanians perceiving them as more benign and Greeks viewing them as conflictual and potentially threatening in equal measure. Almost one in four Greeks (23.5%) think absolutely that the international system as field of conflict of interest of states, while only one in ten Albanians (11%) hold the same view.

Albanians' perception on the international system

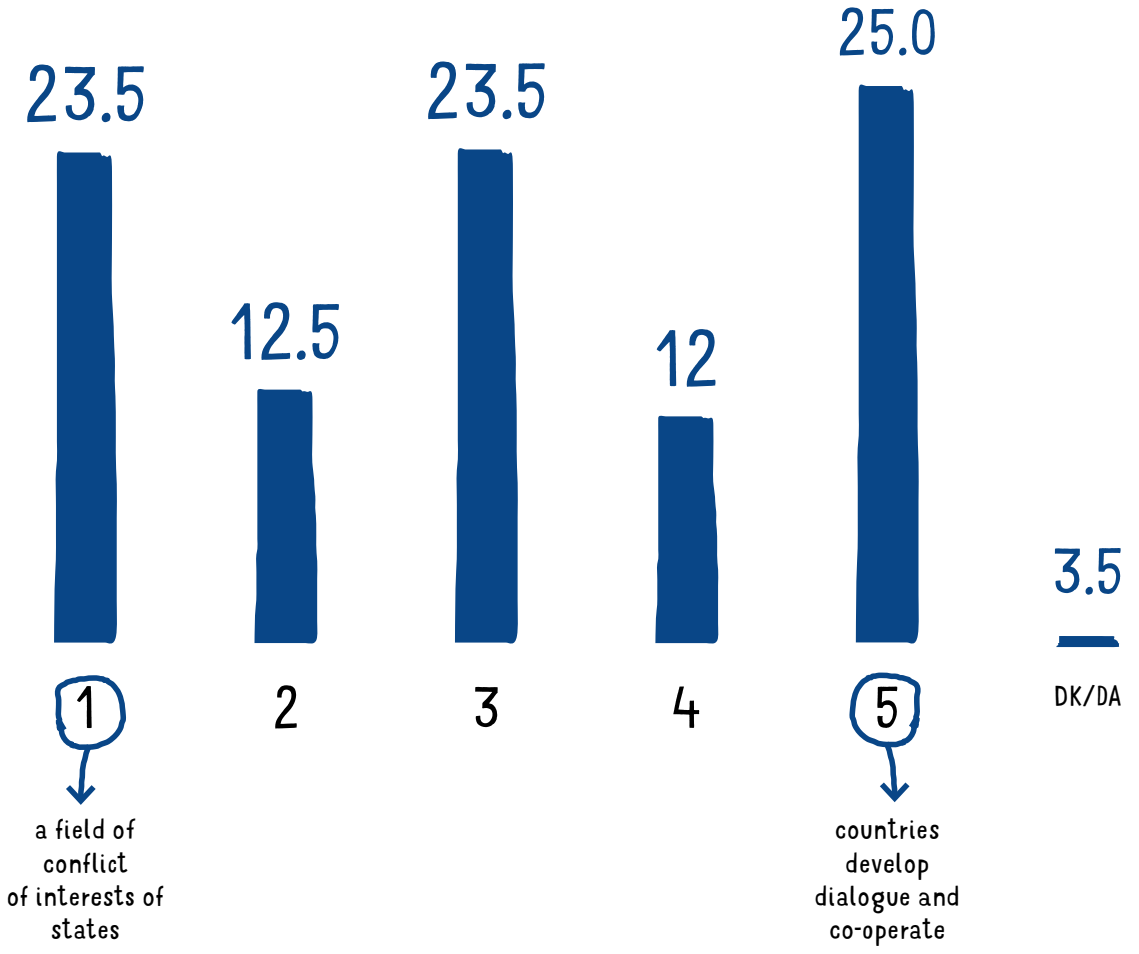
On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 expresses the view that the international system is a field of conflict of interests of states and 5 that it is a field where countries develop dialogue and co-operate, what is your view of the international system?



The percentage of Greeks who view the international system very much or somewhat as a field where countries develop dialogue and cooperate is 37%. In contrast, among Albanians, this more benevolent view of international affairs is shared by 62% of respondents.

Greeks' perception on the international system

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 expresses the view that the international system is a field of conflict of interests of states and 5 that it is a field where countries develop dialogue and co-operate, what is your view of the international system?



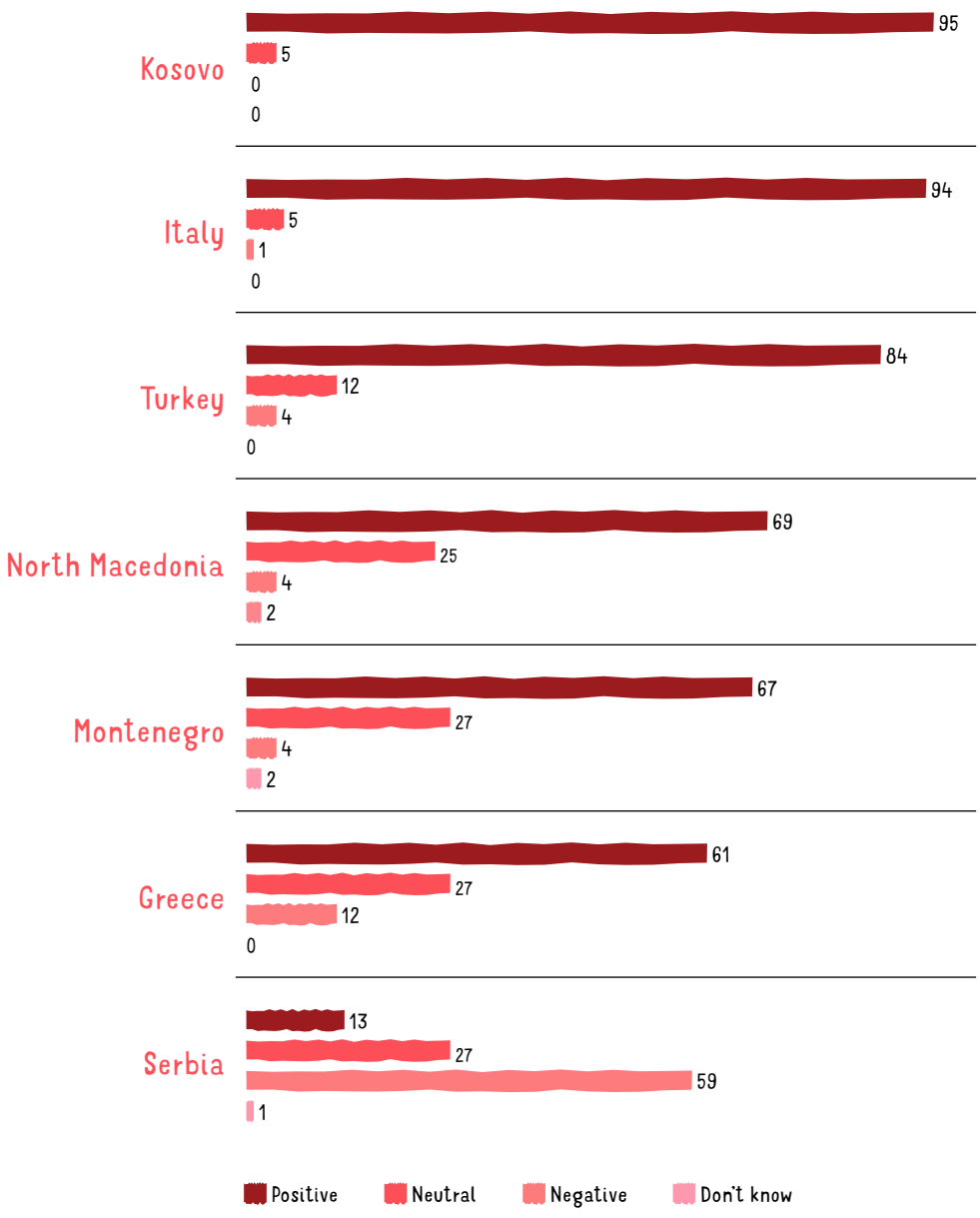
2.

Opinions about neighbouring countries

Attitudes diverge when respondents are asked to express their opinions about neighbouring countries. Albanians have the most positive opinion about Kosovo, Italy and to a lesser extent Turkey, with Greece coming a distant fourth. Greeks have the most positive opinion about Serbia and then Israel. Albania ranks a distant fifth among the countries polled. Having said that, there is a clear difference in opinions when it comes to how the two nations view each other. More specifically, 62% of Albanians have positive opinion on Greece, while only 15.5% of Greeks have a positive opinion of Albania. Four out of ten Greeks (41%) have a negative opinion of Albania, while only slightly more than one in ten Albanians (12%) have a negative opinion of Greece. Interestingly, the negative opinions of Albania are much less present (only 16%) among young Greeks (17-34 years) and much more present (66%) among those Greeks with only primary education.

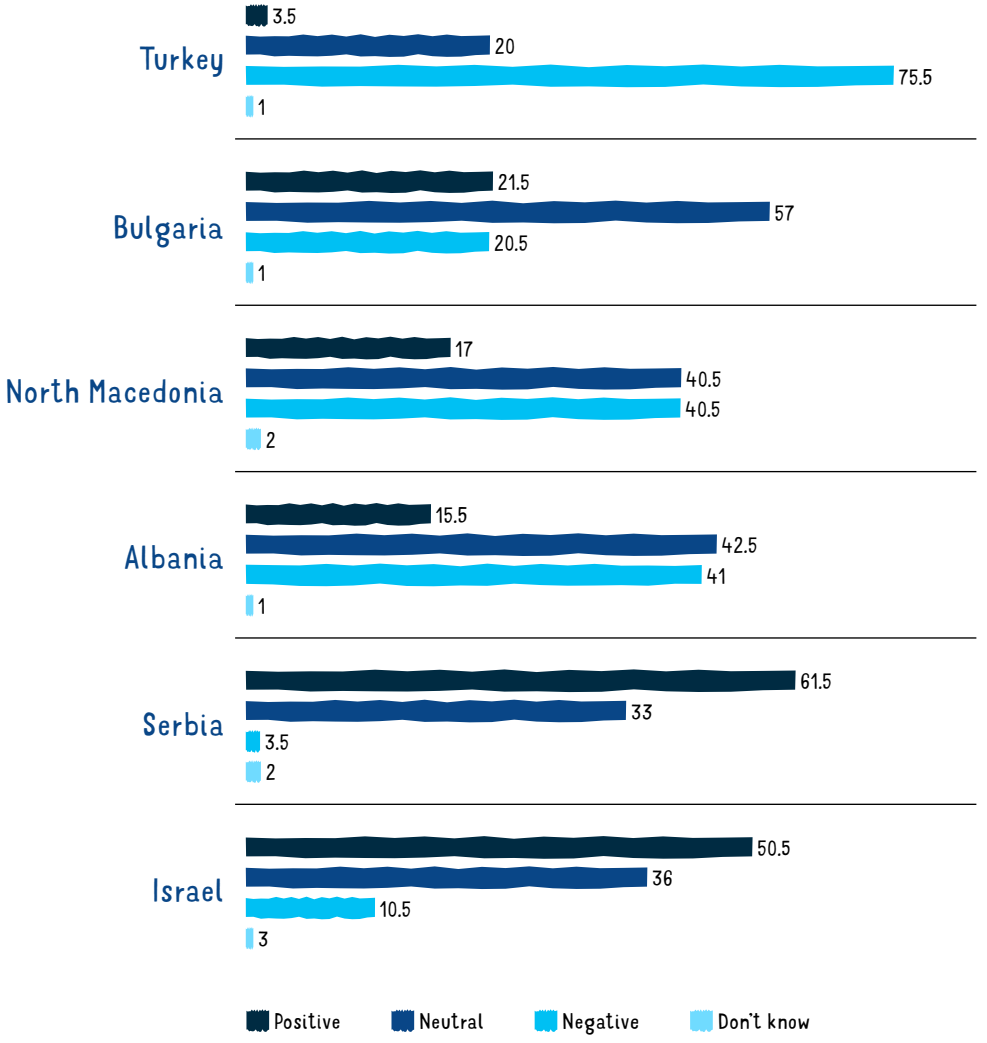
Albanians' opinion about neighbor countries

Albanians have the most positive opinion about Kosovo and Italy while most negative opinion about Serbia



Greeks' opinion about neighbor countries

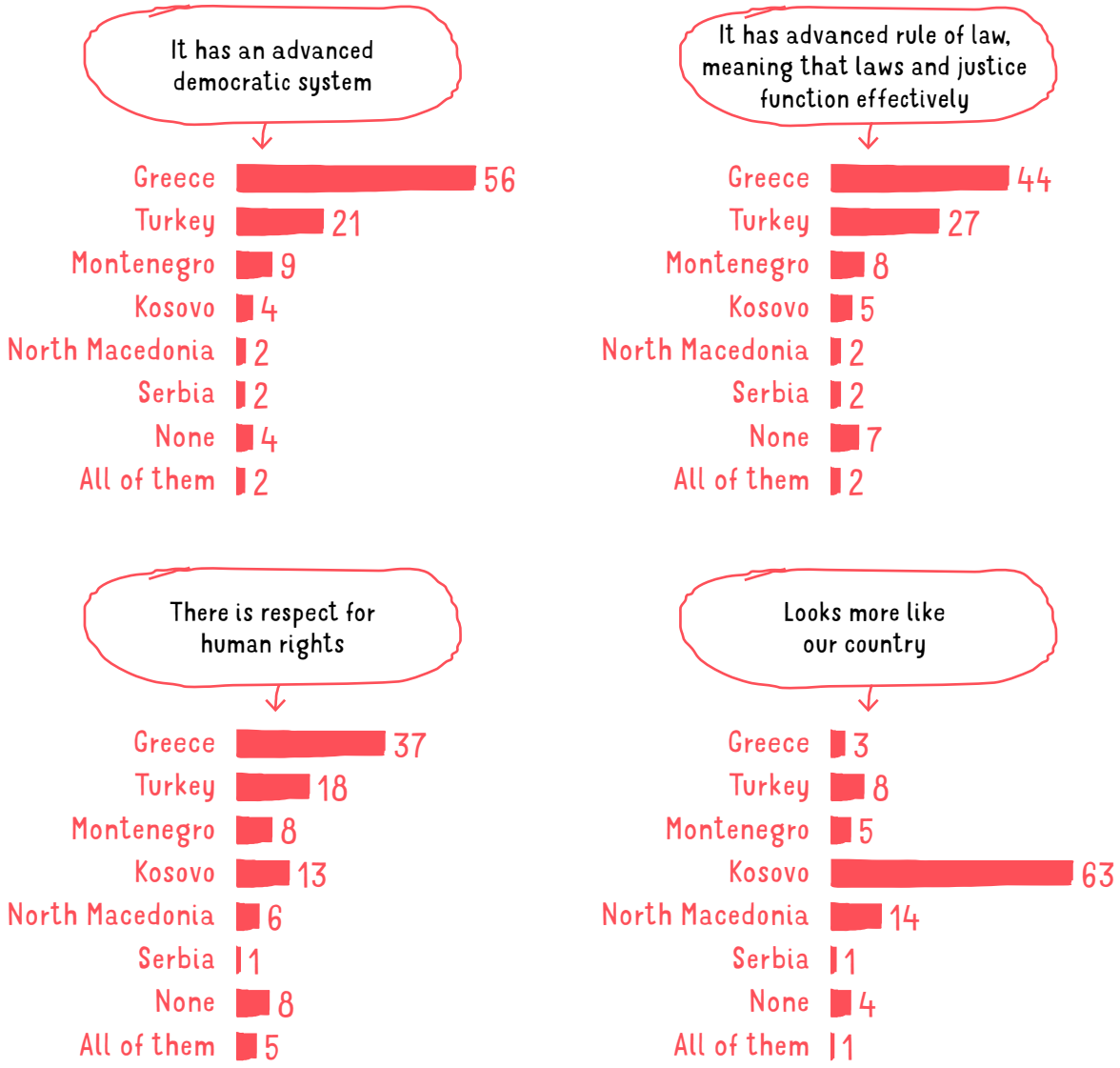
Greeks have the most positive opinion about Serbia and Israel, while most negative opinion about Turkey



Respondents were asked to assess neighbouring countries, specifically when it comes to democracy, human rights and rule of law. Albanians view Greece as being the most successful in the region when it comes to these issues. In contrast, Greeks view Serbia as being the most successful country in the re-

Which of the following countries fits better to the following phrases...

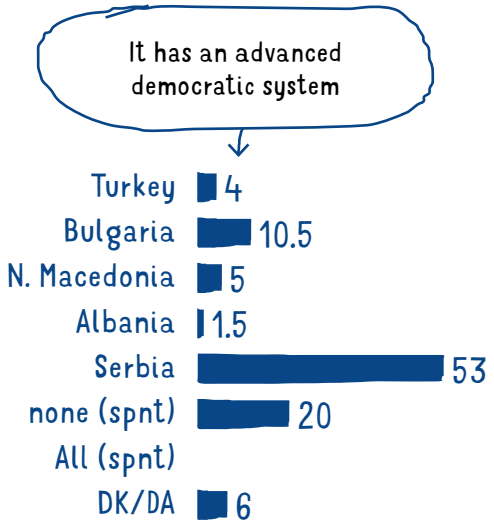
Albanians consider Greece more than other neighbors as a country with an advanced democratic system (56%), and with an advanced rule of law (44%), where there is respect for human rights (37%). About 2 out of 3 Albanians consider Kosovo as the country that mostly looks like Albania.

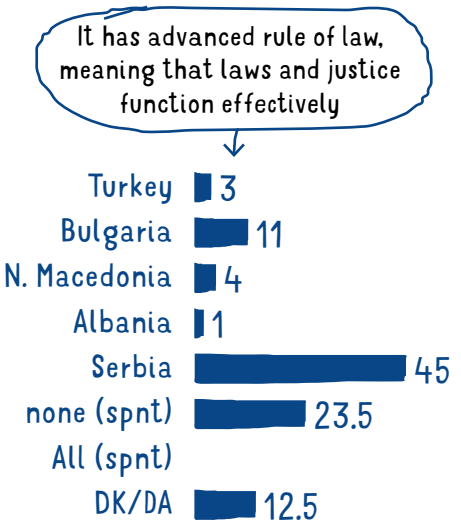


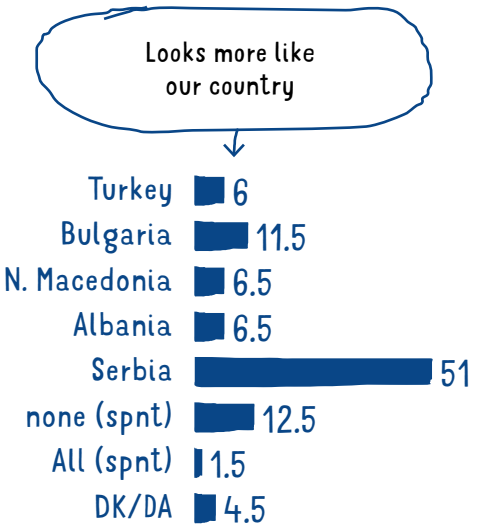
gion in these fields, while they view Albania as being at the bottom of the list in these three issues. When asked to identify the country that looks more like theirs, Albanians selected Kosovo by a rate of 63%, while Greeks selected Serbia by a rate of by 51%.

Which of the following countries fits better to the following phrases...

Overall, Serbia is considered as a country with an advanced democratic system, advanced rule of law, respect for human rights and resemblance with Greece. Albanian is not favoured in this comparison.



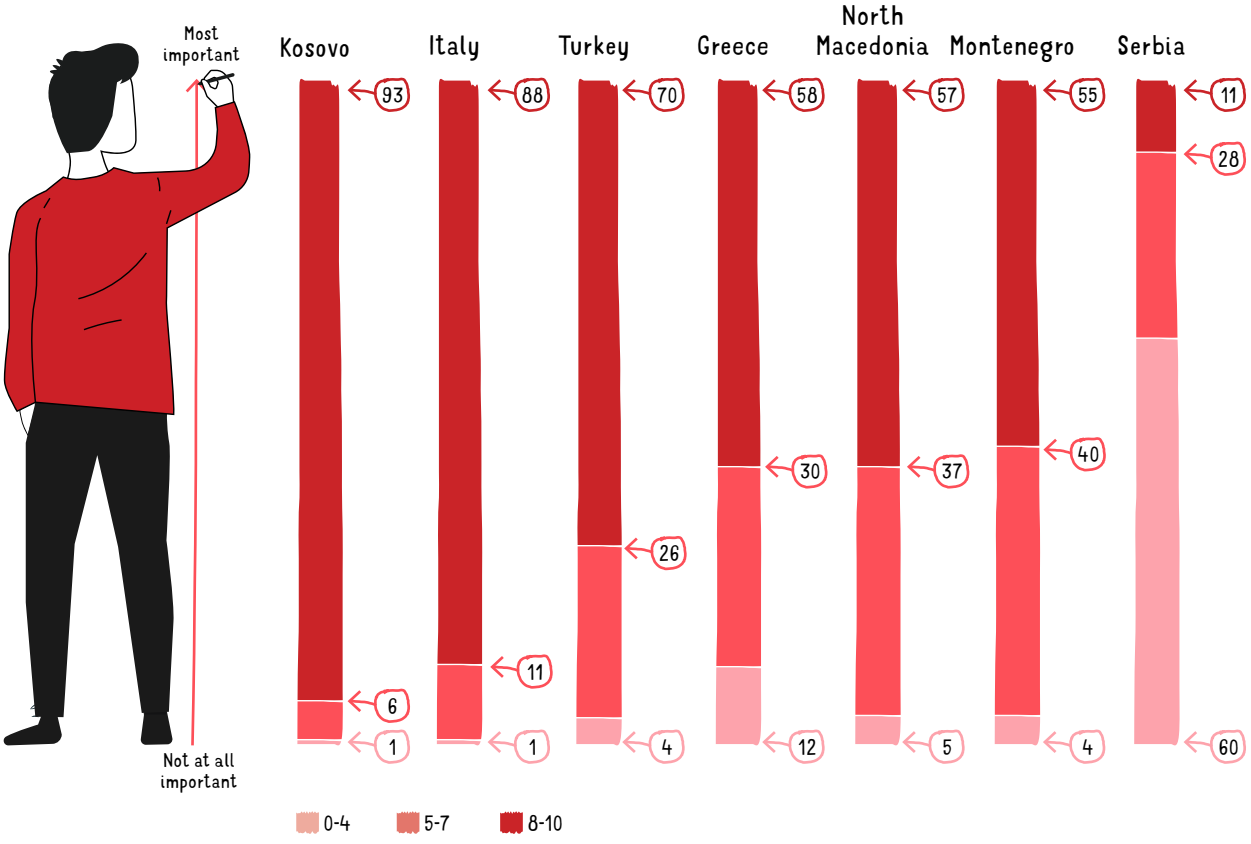




Respondents were also asked to assess whether developing relations with neighbouring countries was more or less important. Greek respondents think that it is most important for Greece to develop relations with Israel and Serbia, while relations with Albania come in fifth place after contacts with Bulgaria and North Macedonia. Albanian respondents think it is most important for Albania to develop

Albanians: importance to develop relations with...

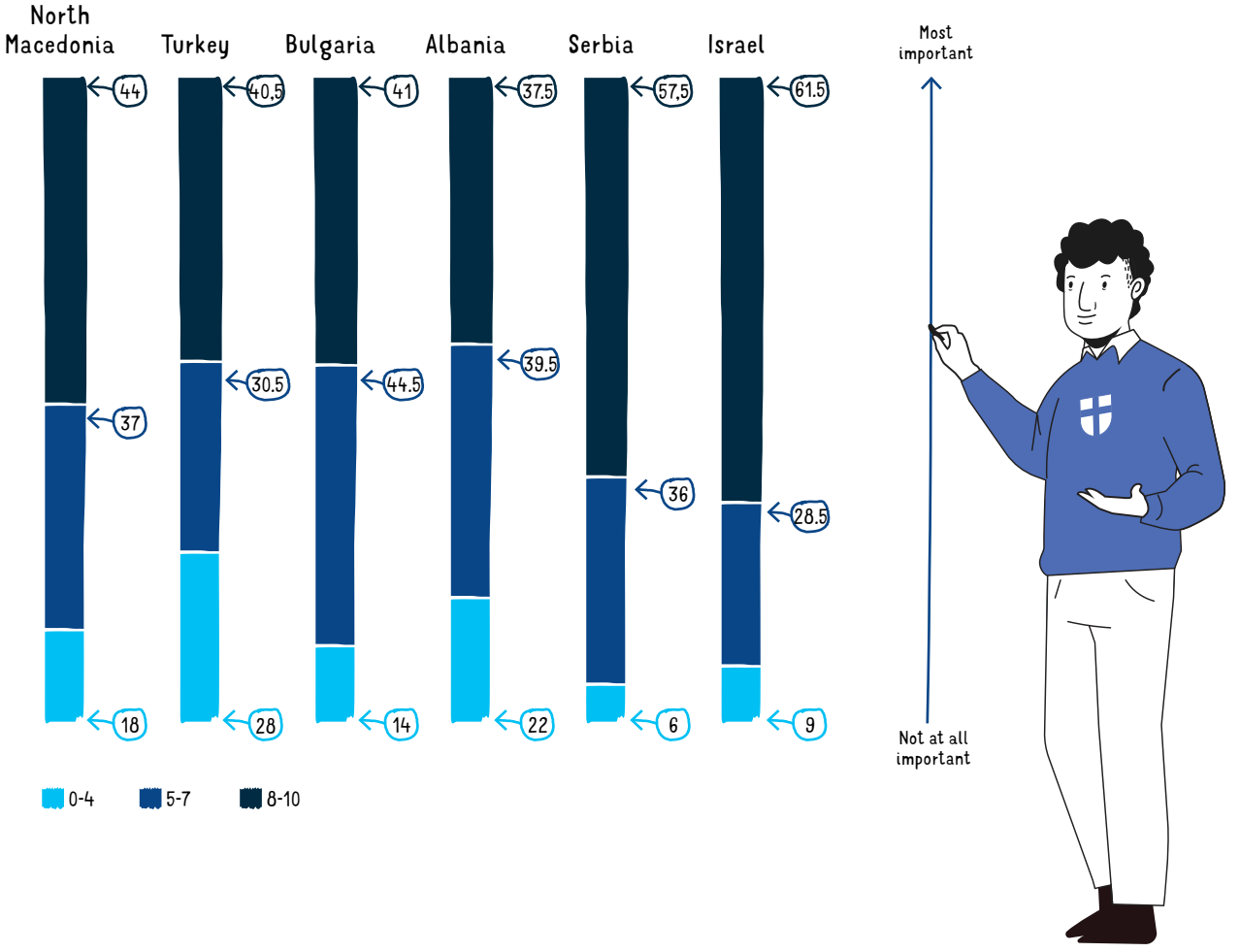
Developing relations with Kosovo, followed by Italy and Turkey, are considered as very important by the majority of Albanians. Relations with Greece, N. Macedonia and Montenegro, are evaluated as very important by 2 to 3 out of 10 of the Albanians.



relations with Kosovo and Italy; Greece comes in fourth place after Turkey. On average, Albanian respondents consider developing relations with Greece as more important than Greek respondents consider developing relations with Albania.

Greeks: importance to develop relations with...

Israel and Serbia are considered as the countries with which Greece should develop relations more. North Macedonia comes in the third place (44%).

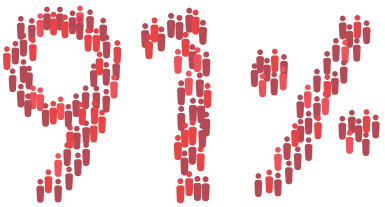


3.

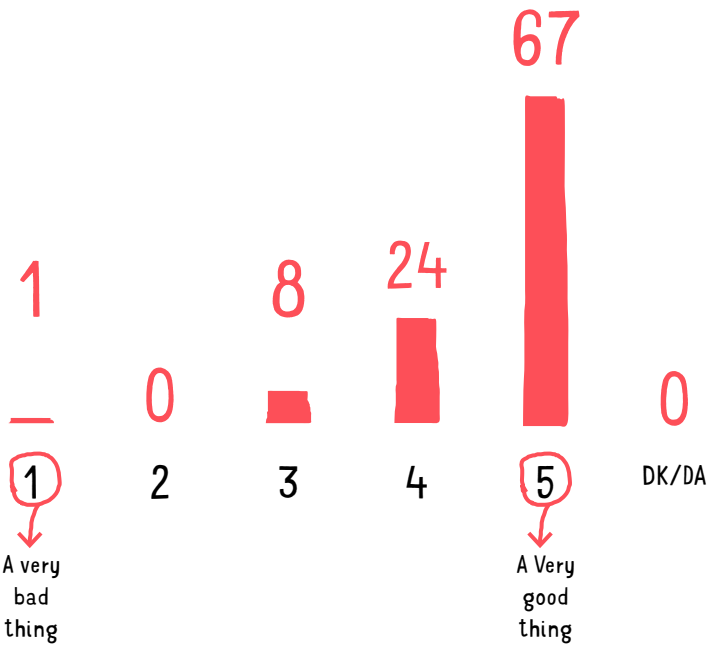
Opinions about EU integration issues

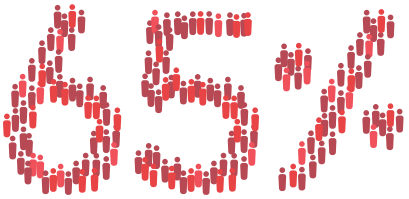
The two nations diverge in their perceptions of the EU. Four in ten (39.5%) respondents from Greece, a member of the organisation for four decades, have a neutral opinion about the EU, while those who consider it a somewhat or very good thing total 41.4%. In contrast, respondents from Albania, a country still waiting to start accession negotiations, at a rate of 91% consider the EU as being a somewhat or very good thing.

Albanians' opinion about European Union

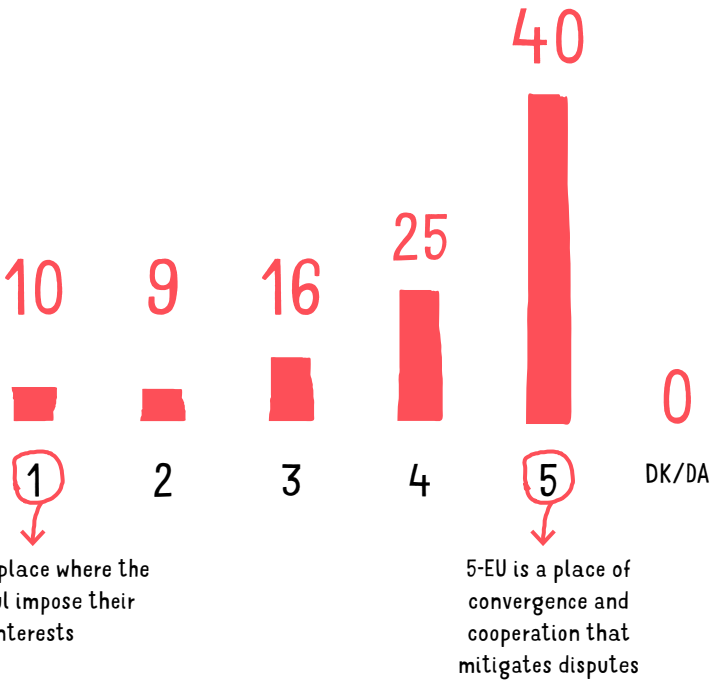


European Union
is a good thing





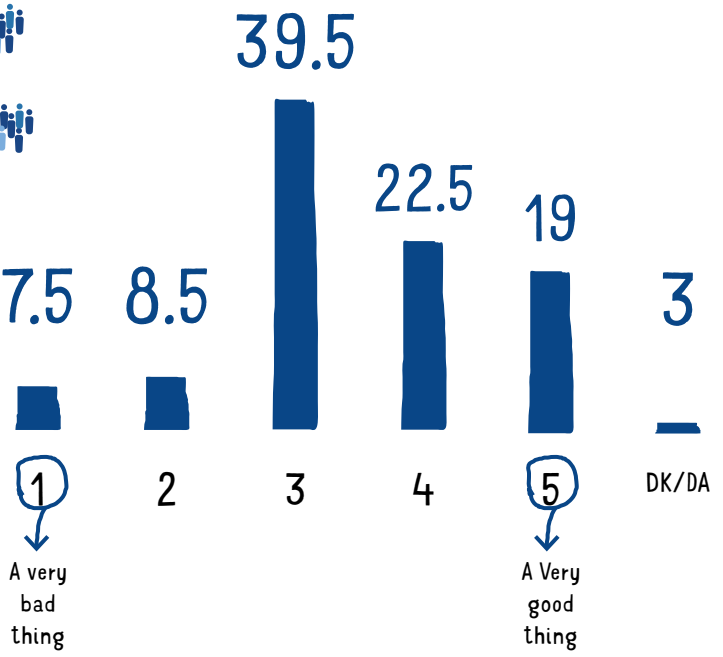
European Union
is a place of
convergence and
cooperation



On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 expresses the view that the European Union is a very bad thing and 5 that it is a very good thing, which position expresses your view of the European Union

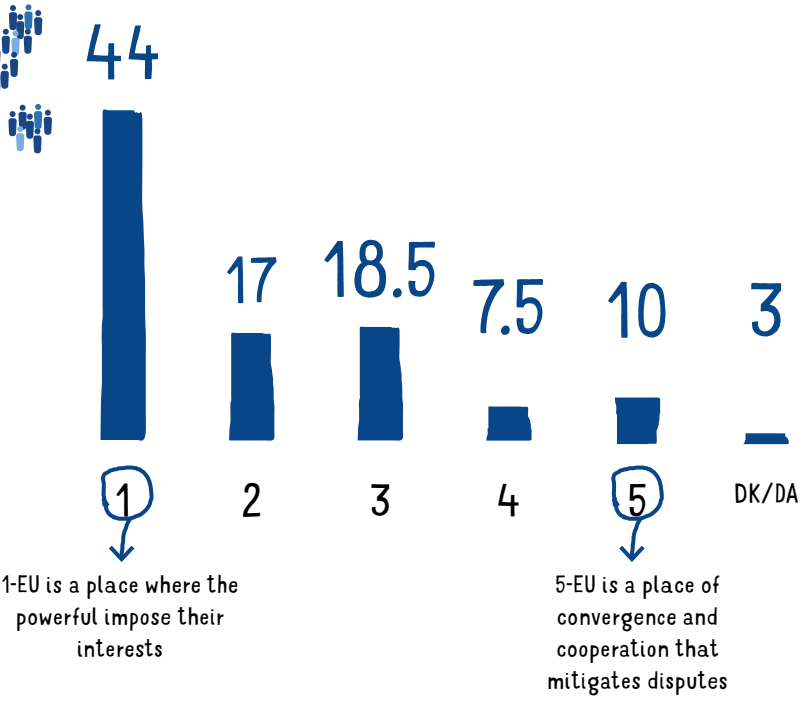
41.5%

European Union is a good thing



17.5%

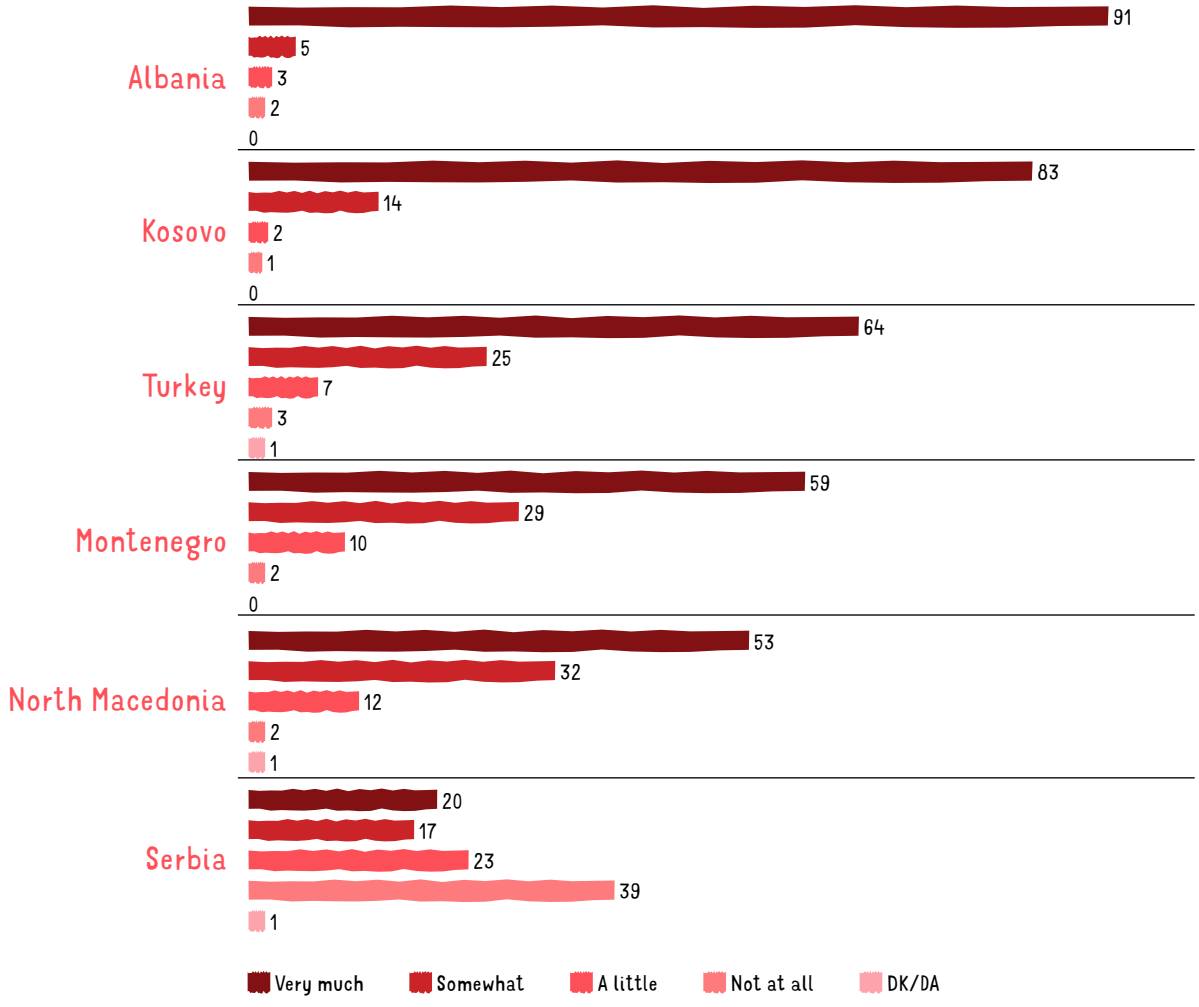
European Union is a place of convergence and cooperation



Opinions diverge when it comes to Albania's EU integration prospects. Albanians are overwhelmingly in favour of their country's accession, while Greeks are divided on the issue. A noteworthy one in three Greeks do not desire Albania's accession to the EU at all. Support for Albania's accession to the EU is the highest among young Greeks (17-34 years), those with university education, the voters of SYRIZA and those who self-identify with the Centre-Left. The lowest support can be found among those in the 35-54 and 55+ age groups, those with only primary school education, voters of New Democracy, and those who self-identify with the Right.

To what extent would Albanians support the candidacy of the following countries, to become a member of the European Union...

9 out of 10 of the Albanians highly support the candidacy of their own country to become member of the EU. For the same cause, Kosovo is supported in a great extent by 83% of the respondents. Turkey, Montenegro and North Macedonia are supported by more than half of the Albanians to become member of the EU. The candidacy of Serbia is highly supported by only 20% of the respondents.

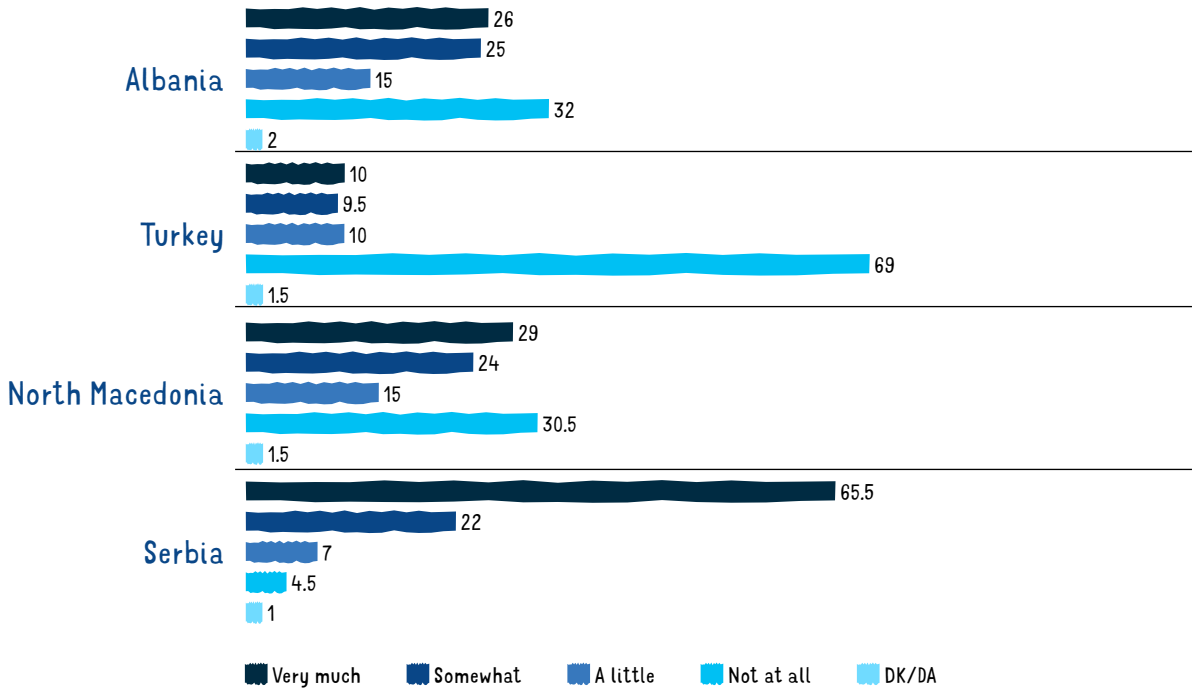


Greeks seem to correlate the European future of certain countries with their own positive or negative assessments of these nations. They overwhelmingly reject Turkey's accession, they have mixed feelings about Albania and North Macedonia's accession and overwhelmingly support Serbia's accession. These opinions do not correspond with the respective nations' desire to join the EU. Among the three Western Balkan nations' public opinions, Albania's and North Macedonia's are overwhelmingly in favour of joining the EU, while the Serbian society is split in half with roughly as many being against joining as those who are in favour.

The surveys were conducted before the European Council finally gave a conditional green light for Albania to start accession negotiations. Both nations consider not-starting accession negotiations as negative for Albania. 78% of Albanians consider not-starting negotiations as something negative, while 69.5% of Greeks consider this something negative for Albania. When it comes to opinions about effects on Greece, opinions are split. Half of Greeks do not consider this development to be positive or negative for Greece, 21.5% consider this as positive and 25.5% as negative.

To what extent, would Greeks support the candidacy of the following countries, to become a member of the European Union...

Overall, Greek public opinion supports the accession of Serbia (87.5%), North Macedonia (53%) and Albania (51%). While Serbia is overwhelmingly supported, in contrast Turkey's EU path is not supported by nearly 8 out of 10 Greeks.



PART B

BILATERAL RELATIONS

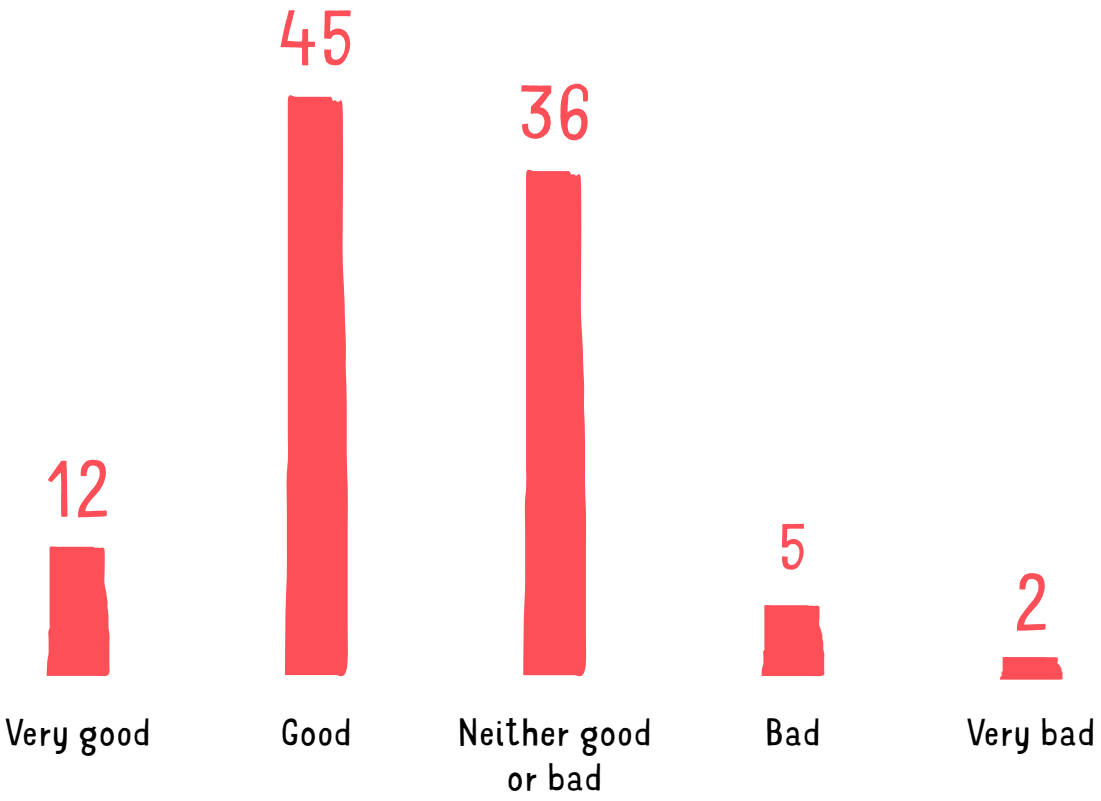
4.

Assessment of bilateral relations between Albania and Greece

Albanians have clearly more positive view of contemporary relations between the two countries. One in three Greeks view relations between the two countries as good or very good, while the same view is shared by almost six in ten Albanians. Nearly one in five Greeks view relations as bad or very bad; the same view is held by less than one in ten Albanians. One in two Greeks and one in three Albanians view relations between Albania and Greece at present as being neither good nor bad. In Albania, a very positive assessment of relations is widespread in the south of the country, while in the rest of the country the opinion is split between positive and neutral assessments. The negative assessments are overall quite low.

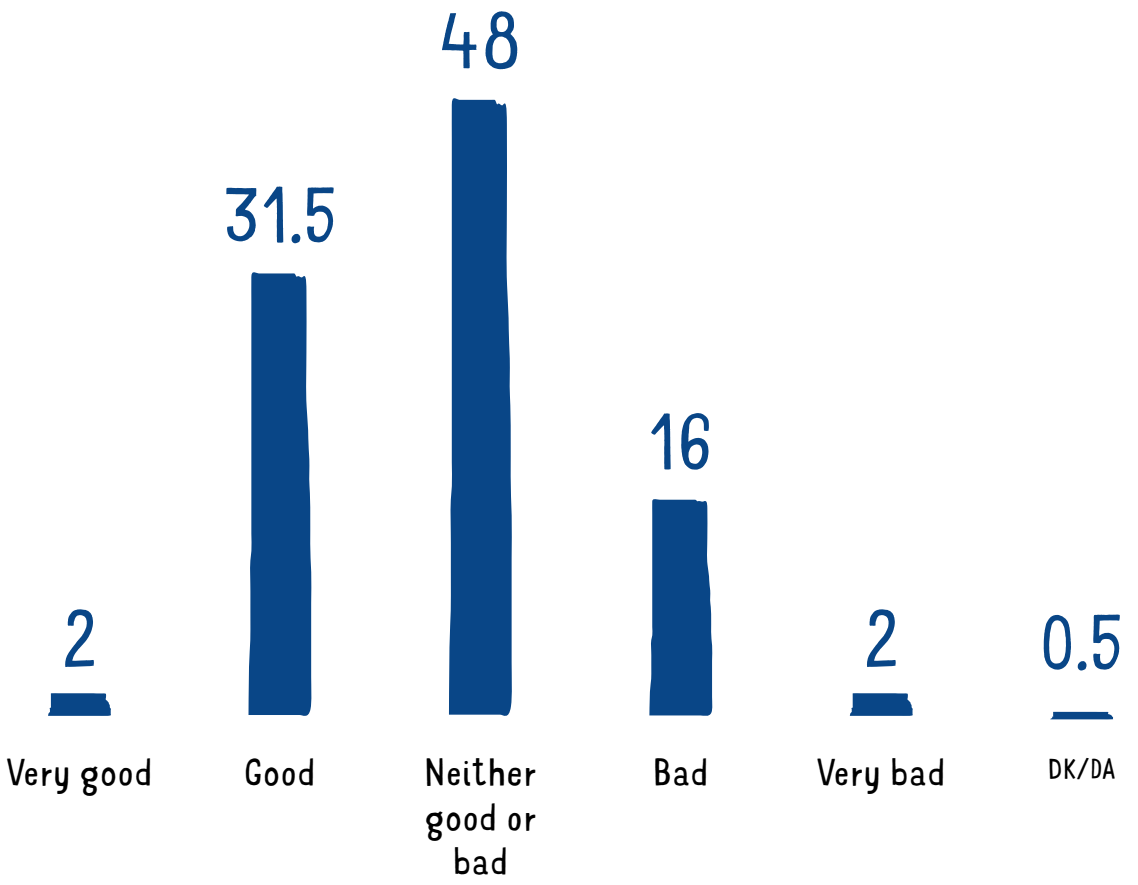
Nowadays relations of Albania with Greece

6 out of 10 of the Albanians do think that nowadays Albania has good relations with Greece. More notably, on the South of Albania where 8 out of 10 of the respondents think that such relations are in a good form.



Nowadays relations of Greece with Albania

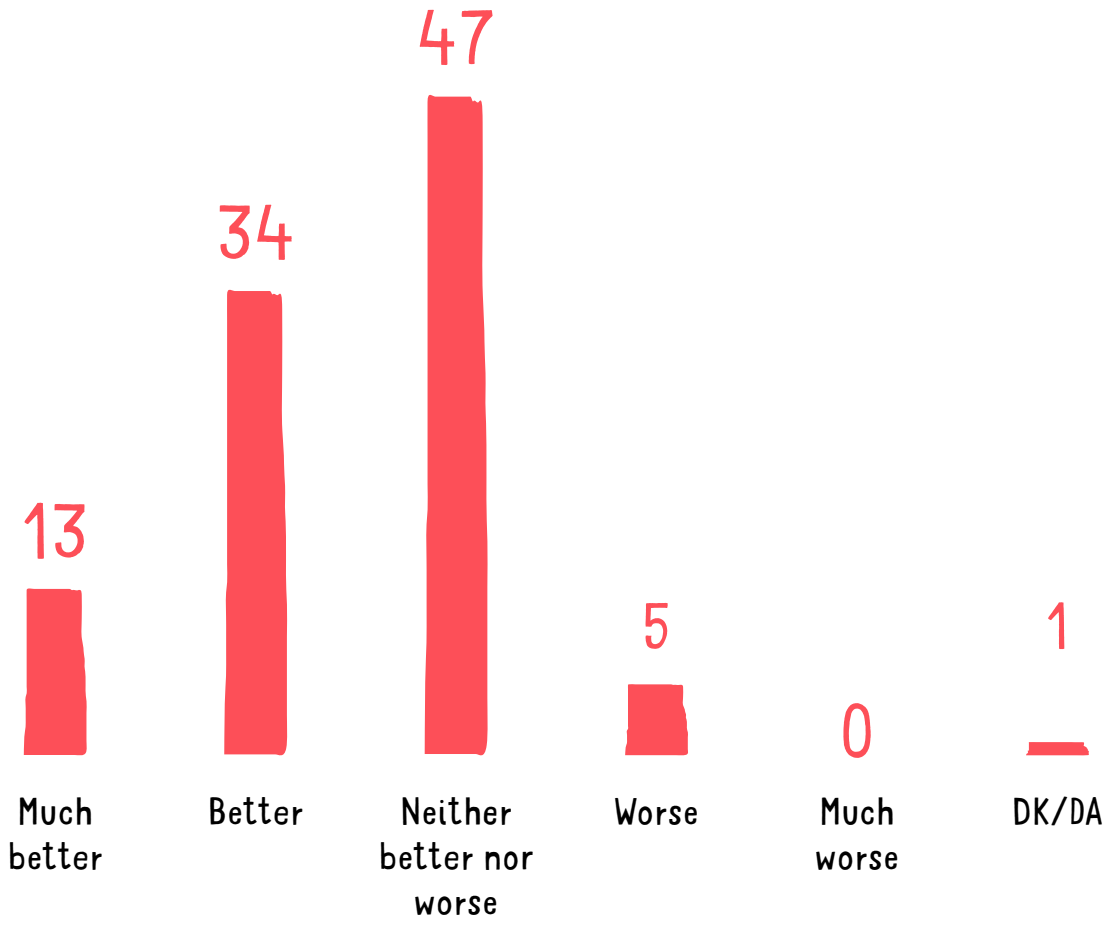
1 out of 3 Greeks think that nowadays Greece has good relations with Albania.



In both countries, there is a perception that relations have overall improved compared to previous decades. This view is shared by one in two Greeks and almost one in two Albanians. Opinions are again

Albania's relations with Greece: recent decade vs. past decades

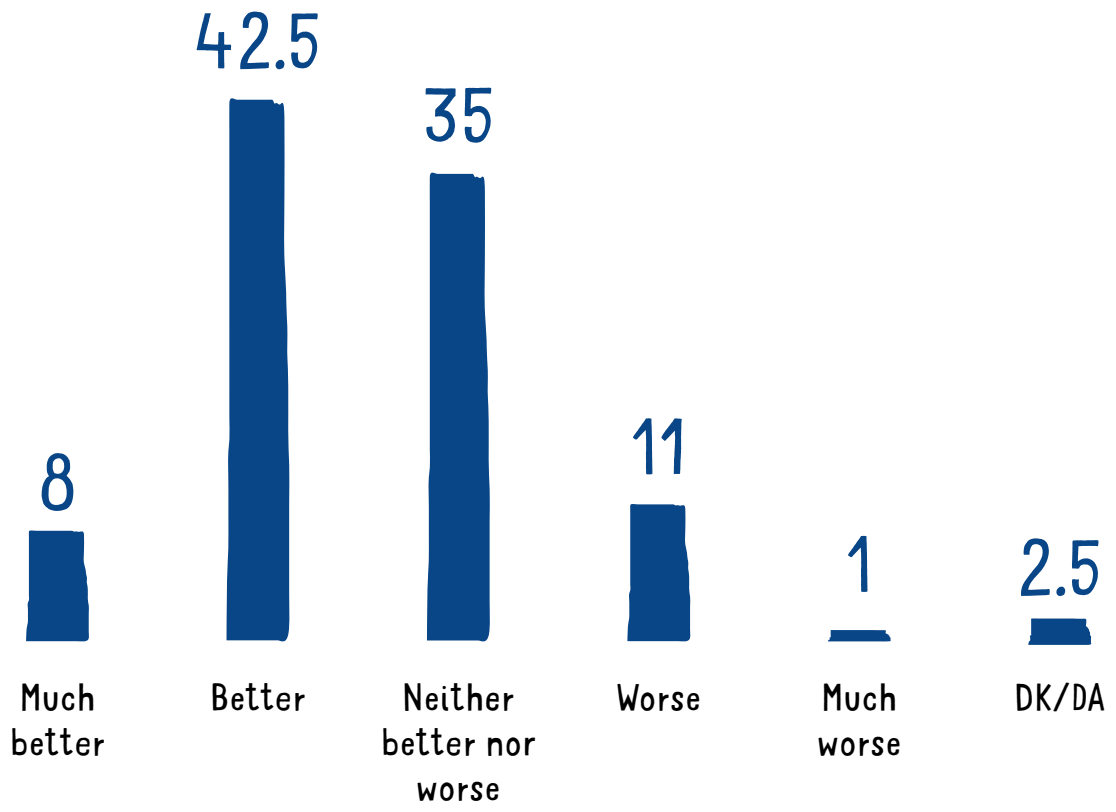
Almost 1 in 2 Albanians do think that the last decade (2010-2019) relations with Greece are better compared to the previous one (2000-2009). More notably, on the South of Albania where 7 out of 10 of the respondents think that such relations for the past decade are in a better form vs. previously.



different in the south of Albania compared with the rest of the country. Seven in ten Albanians in the south consider relations at present to be better than in previous decades.

Greece's relations with Albania: recent decade vs. past decades

One out two Greeks consider the bilateral relations to have improved, compared to the previous decade. About one out of three consider the status as stable, while only 12% believe that nowadays relations are worse than previously.

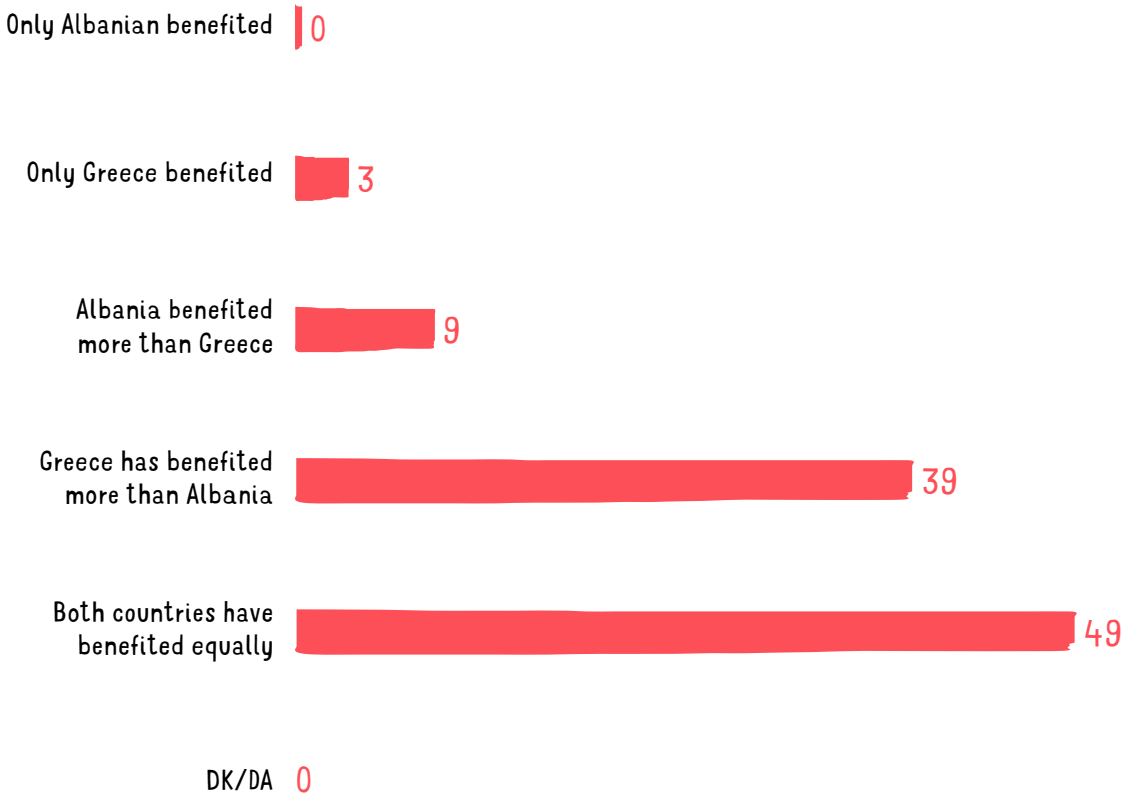


The two nations' perspectives greatly diverge when it comes to the assessment of the benefits from their economic relations. One in two Albanians and one in three Greeks believe that both countries have benefited equally. But four in ten Albanians believe that Greece benefited more than Albania and four in ten Greeks believe the exact opposite, that Albania benefited more than Greece. In the case of Greece there is also another 15% that believe that only Albania benefited.

These attitudes of Albanians respondents are largely equally spread across the board and there does not seem to be divergence between the Albanian

Perceptions of Albanians on economic relations between Albania and Greece

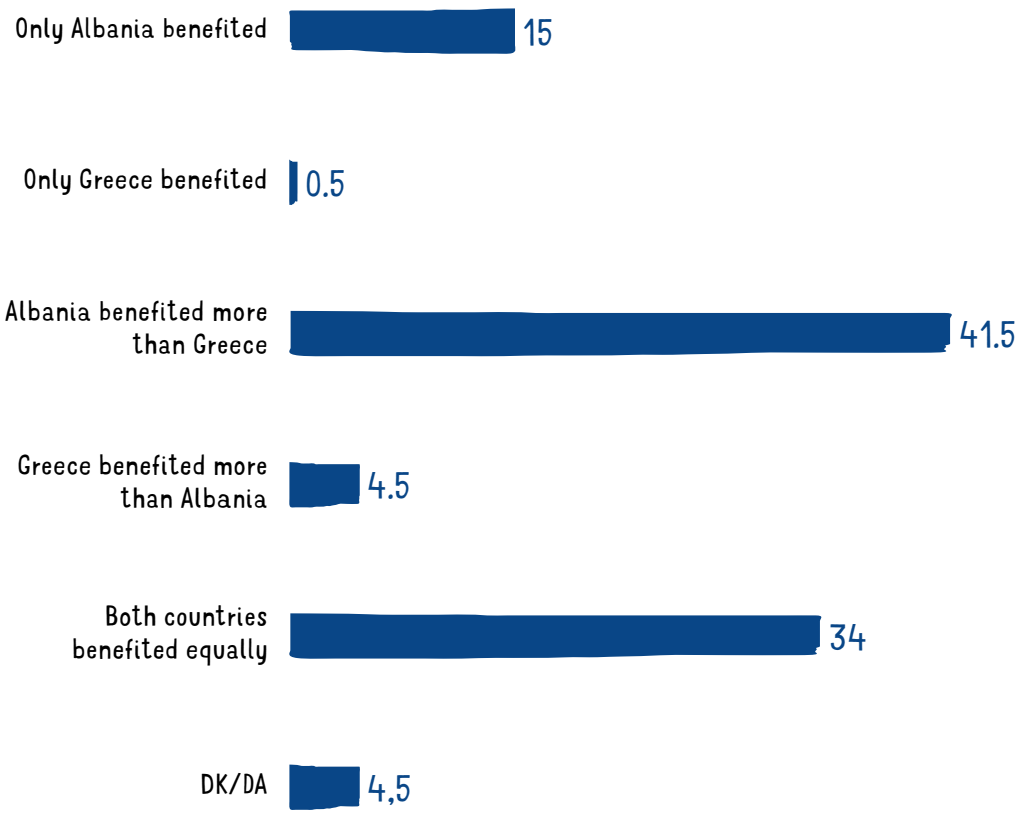
4 out of 10 of the Albanians have the perception that Greece benefited more than Albania, as regards the context of economic since the 1990s.



south and the rest of the country. In Greece, the view that both countries benefited equally from economic relations is most popular among young people and least popular among older people. The majority of those with only primary or secondary school education seem to believe that Albania has benefited more, and the same applies to those who self-identify as Centre-Right or Right. Having said that, the views are similarly spread across the country, so there is limited geographical variation to the Greeks' assessment of economic relations.

Perceptions of Greeks on economic relations between Greece and Albania

Contrary to what the Albanian public opinion believes, the Greek public opinion considers that Albania had benefited more than Greece (56.5%). Greek public opinion also supports to a lesser extent, on what Albanians support, that both countries benefited equally (34%).



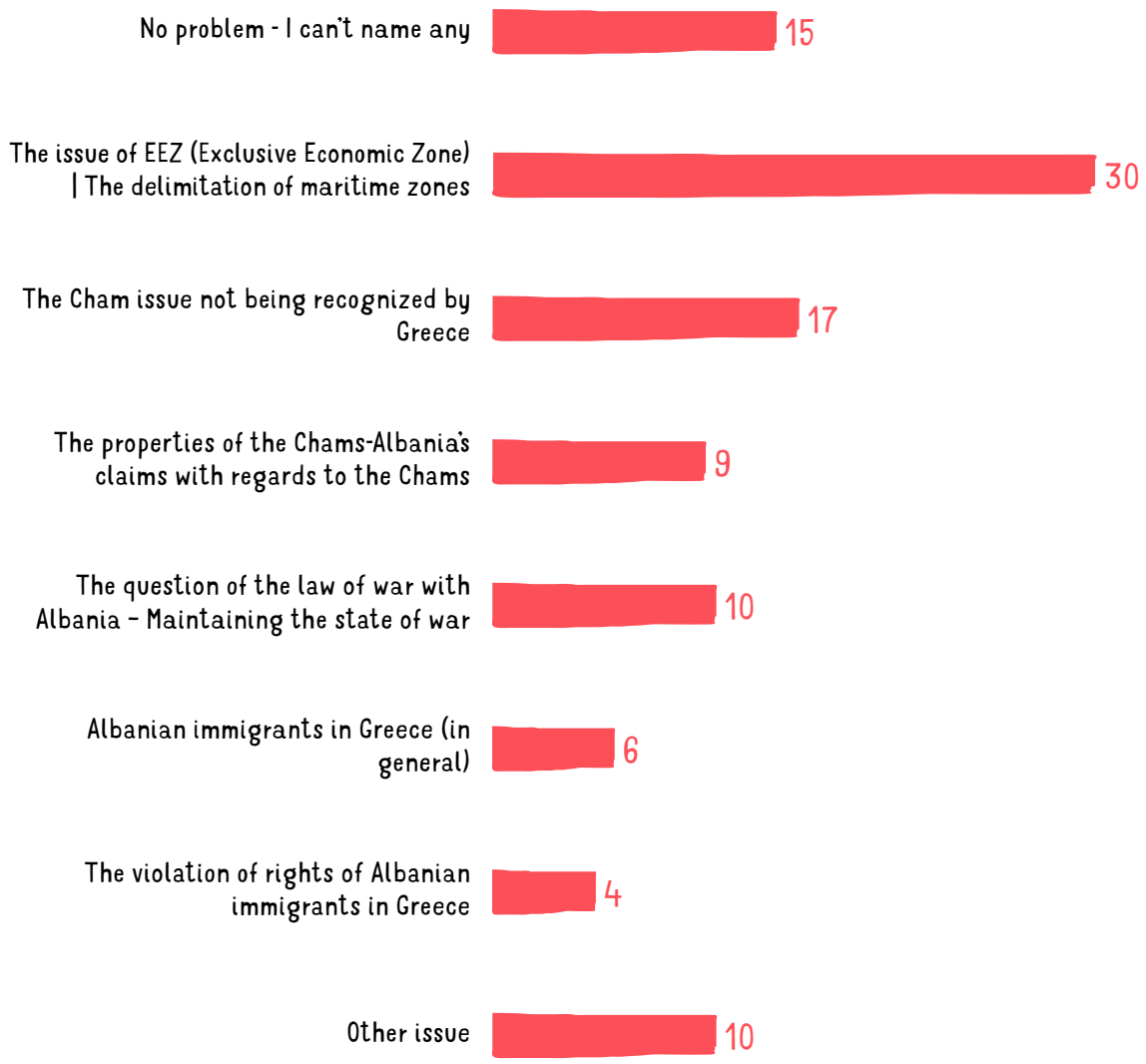
5.

Problems affecting bilateral relations between Albania and Greece

The differences in attitudes between the two public opinions are significant when it comes to perceptions of the main problems affecting bilateral relations. Two issues seem to dominate the concern of Albanian respondents: three in ten (30%) respondents consider the delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone to be the most important, while one in four (26%) respondents consider as most important various issues pertaining to the Chams. These two issues are of almost equal significance (50% and 51% respectively) when all problems are considered together. A not insignificant 15% of respondents cannot name any issue as affecting bilateral relations.

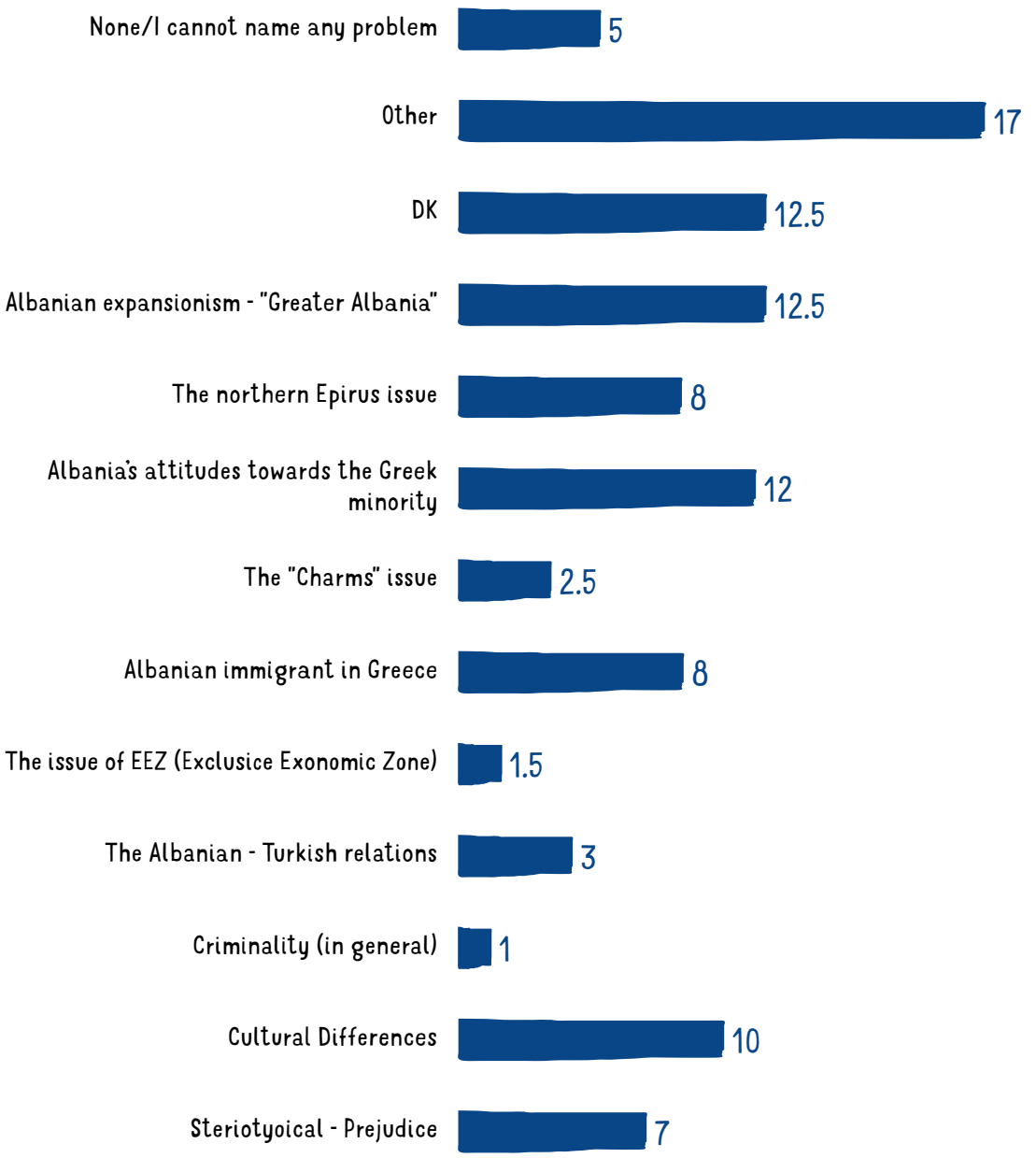
Problems affecting Albanian-Greek relations, according to Albanians

The Albanian public opinion believes there are two issues which somewhat affects the bilateral relations with Greece: and these are the issue of Exclusive Economic Zone / the delimitation of maritime zones, followed by Chams' issue - not being recognized by Greece and/or the Albania's claims about their properties in Greece.



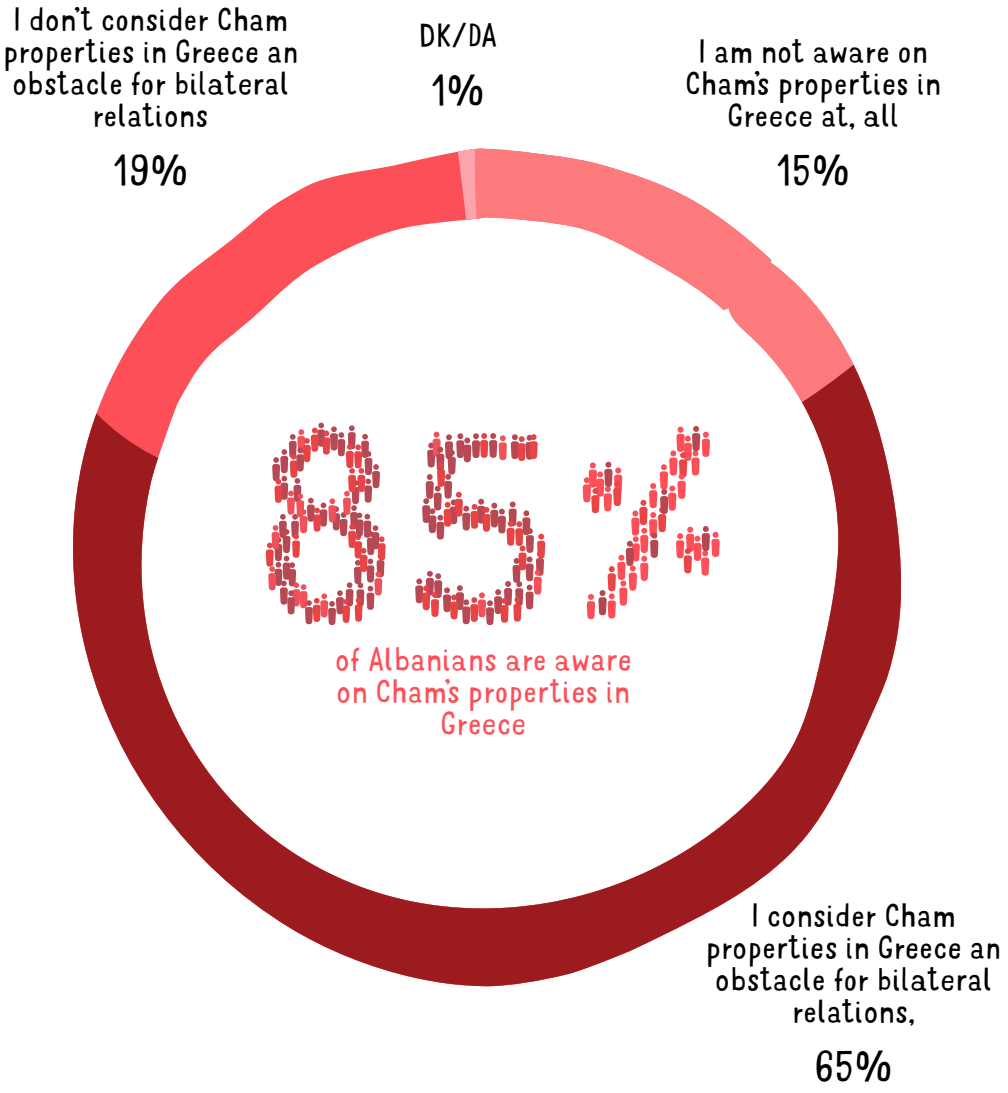
Problems affecting Greek-Albanian relations, according to Greeks

The Greek public opinion doesn't share any prominent concern on issues that could jeopardise the bilateral relations. The items mentioned by the respondents, such as the Albanian expansionism (eg "The Greater Albania), attitudes towards the Greek minority or culture difference in general, share scattered beliefs rather than a concrete view of a significant share.



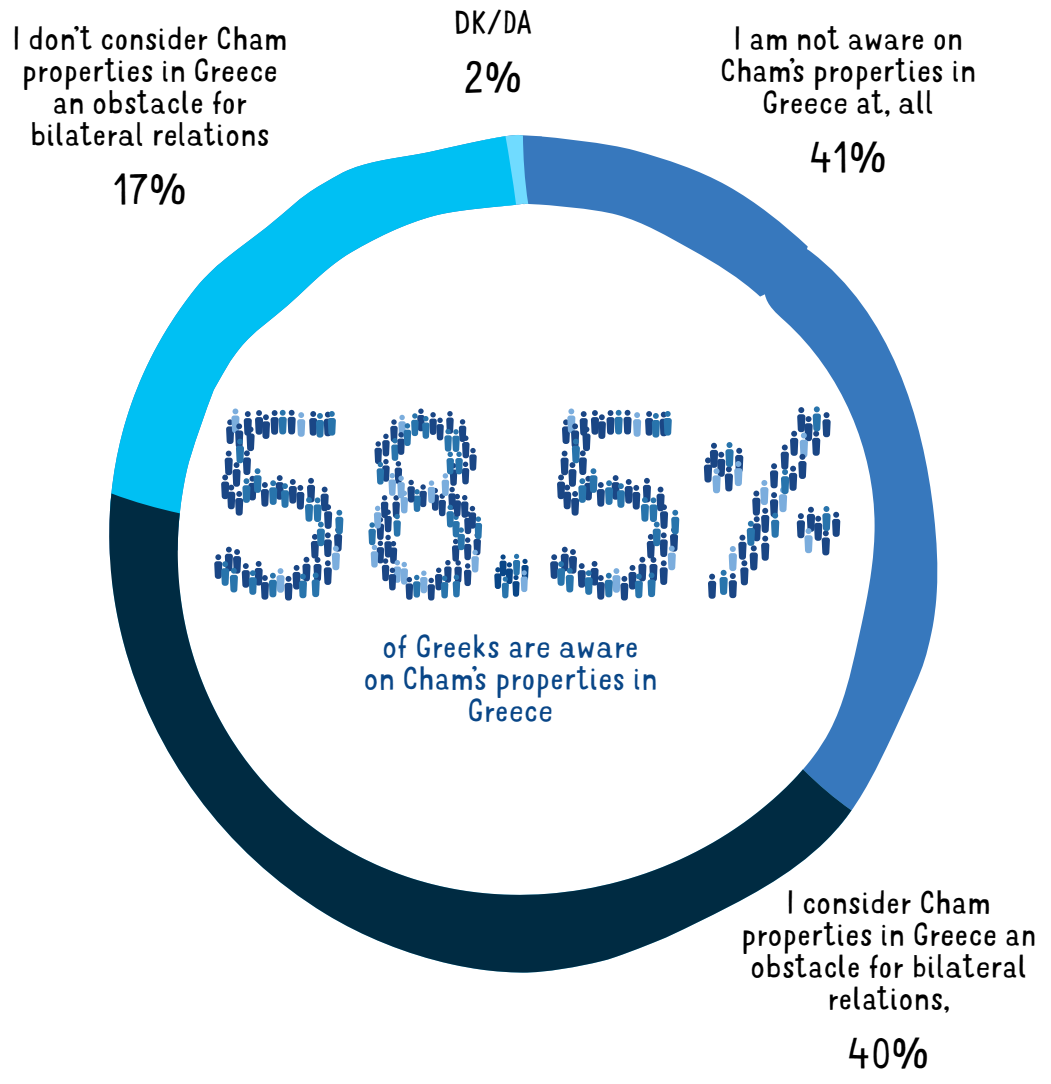
Awareness on Chams and their properties in Greece among Albanians

85% of Albanians have heard about Chams and their properties in Greece. Lower awareness is noticed amongst younger group of ages. Two in three Albanians consider such issue an obstacle to the relations between Albania and Greece.



Awareness on Chams and their properties in Greece among Greeks

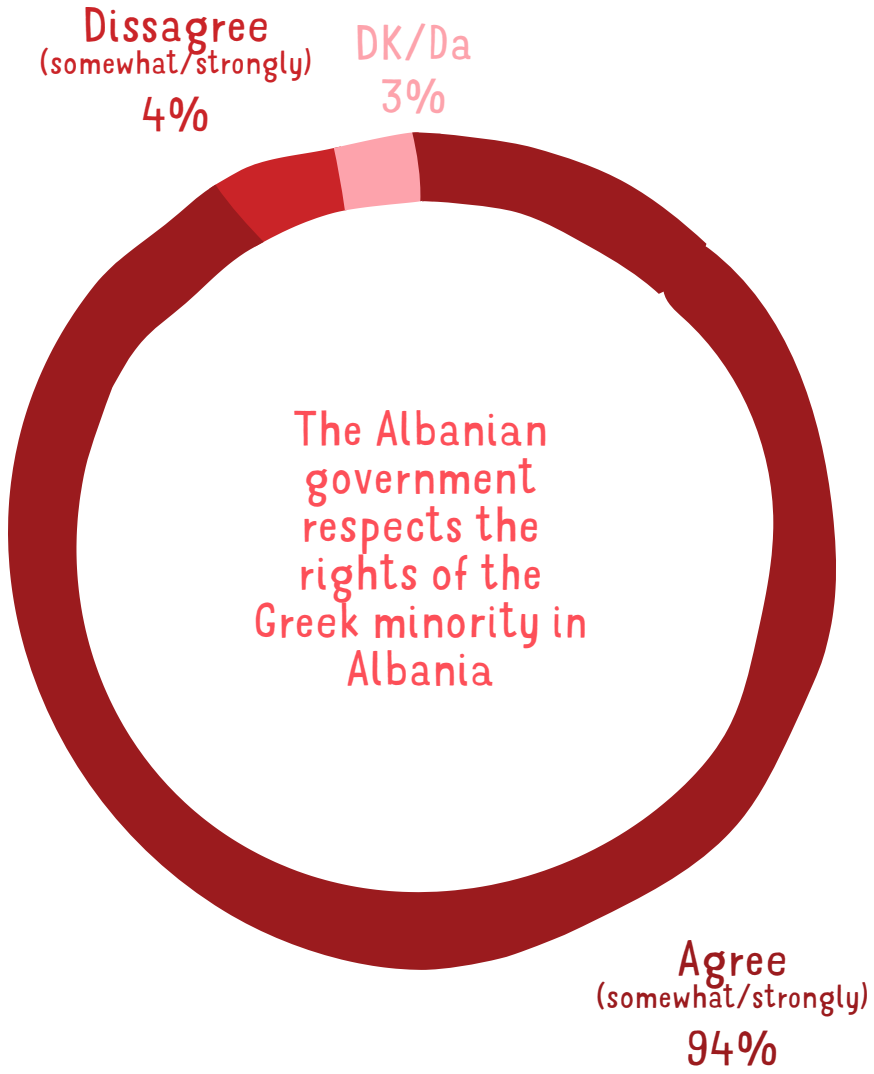
Six out of ten Greeks are aware of the Chams' properties issue. This percentage is even bigger among people aged 55+, while, in contrast, only 1 out 3 people aged 17-34 are aware of that.



When it comes to the Greek minority in Albania, opinions diverge greatly. When asked whether the Albanian government respects the rights of the Greek minority, an overwhelming majority of 78%

Albanians' perception on Greek minority rights

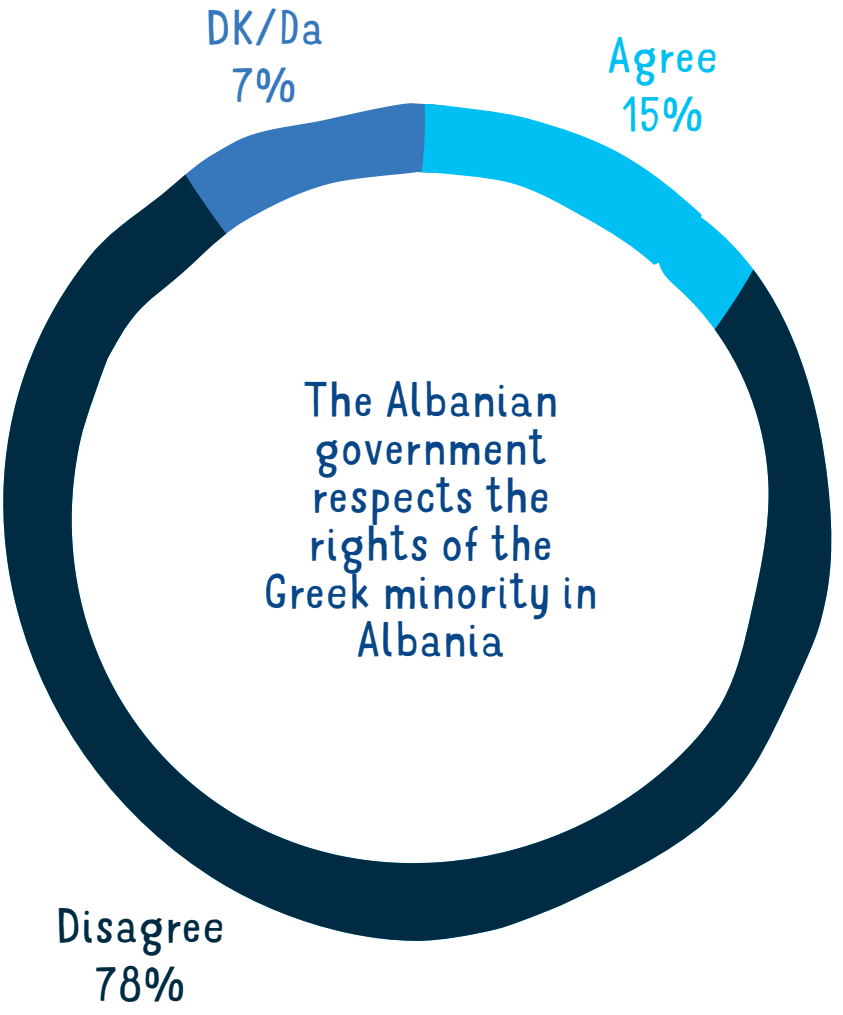
9 out of 10 of Albanians think that Greek minority living in Albania are fully integrated in the Albanian society and that the Albanian government respects the rights of the Greek minority, and also Albanian government pay the same treatment to the Greek minority living in Albania as to other Albanian citizens.



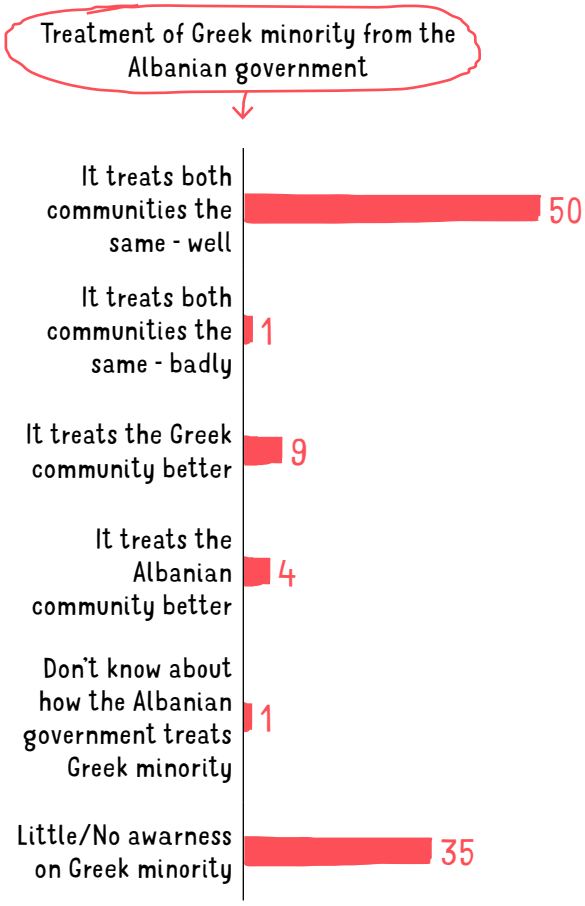
of Greeks responded negatively and only 15% responded that the rights of the minority are respected. In contrast, 94% of Albanian respondents consider that the Albanian government respects the rights of the Greek minority.

Greeks' perceptions on Greek minority rights

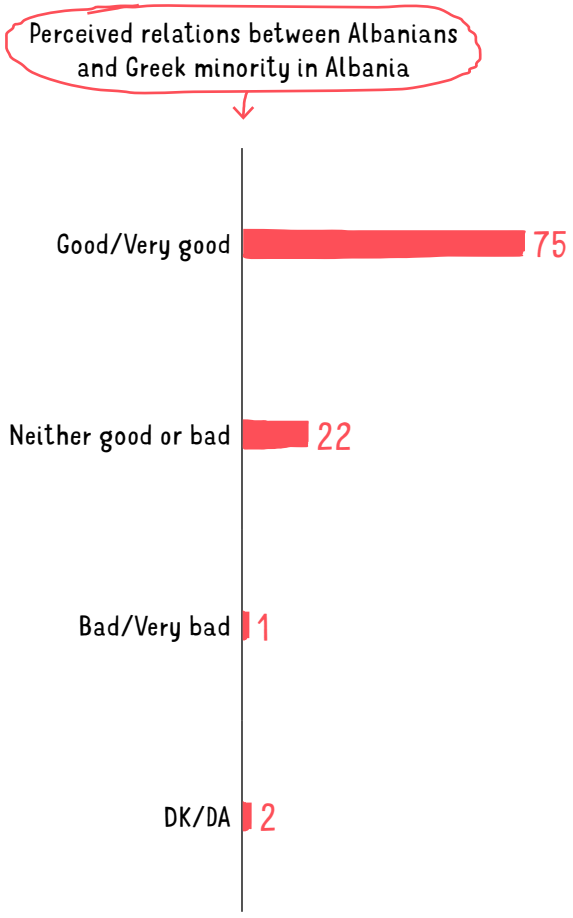
Nearly 8 out of 10 Greeks believe that the Albanian government does not respect the rights of the Greek minority. In comparative perspective, this consists of a mirror image of the Albanian public opinion. Regarding the age groups comparison, ages 17-34 are the most positively oriented, as 3 out of 10 support that the Albanian government treats the Greek minority fairly.



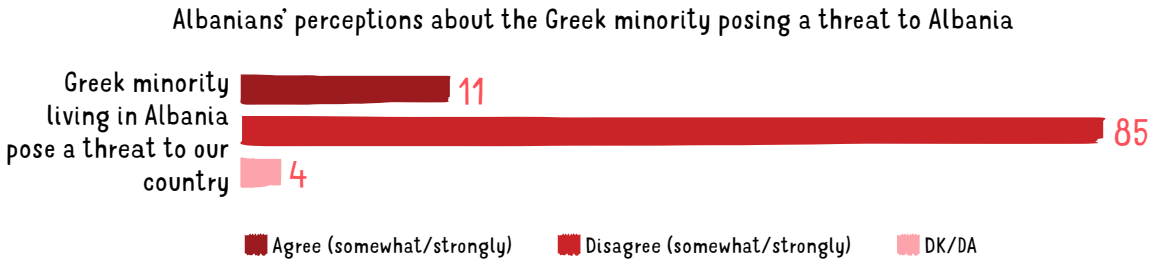
1 in 2 Albanians think that the Albanian Government pays the same good treatment to both Albanian community and the Greek minority living in the country. Another 1 in 10 Albanians think their treats the Greek community better.



9 out of 10 of Albanians think that Greek minority living in Albania are fully integrated in the Albanian society and slightly less of them (85%) agree that the Greek minority living in Albania don't pose a threat to their country.



3 out of 4 Albanians find the relations between the Albanian community and the Greek minority living in the country as good.



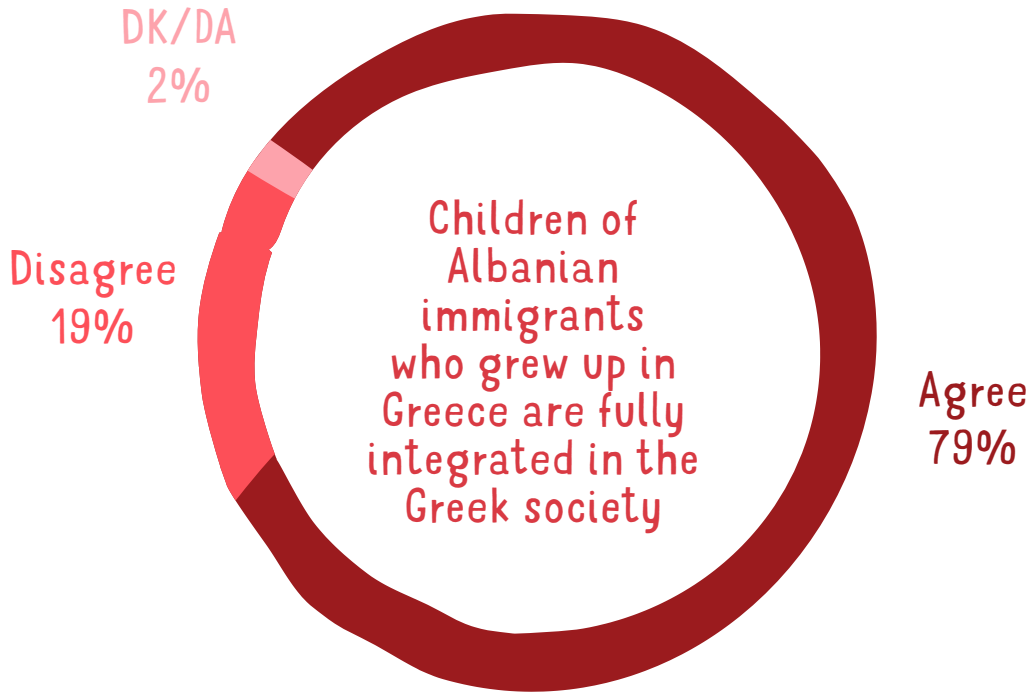
6.

Attitudes towards Albanian migration in Greece

The two societies seem to have relaxed their attitudes about Albanian migration to Greece, an issue which had divided the two countries in the past. Albanian migrants now seem to be an important bridge between the two nations. 74% of Greeks and 97% of Albanians rejected the view that Albanian migrants pose a threat to Greece. Moreover, 85% of Greeks and 79% of Albanians believe that children of Albanian migrants who grew up in Greece are fully integrated in Greek society. The picture was rather split when Albanian respondents were asked about well-being of Albanian migrants in Greece. 47% of Albanians believe that Greece respects the rights of Albanian migrants in Greece, while 52% believe the opposite. Furthermore, 52% of Albanians believe that Greek citizens treat Albanian migrants the same way they treat Greek citizens, while 47% believe the opposite.

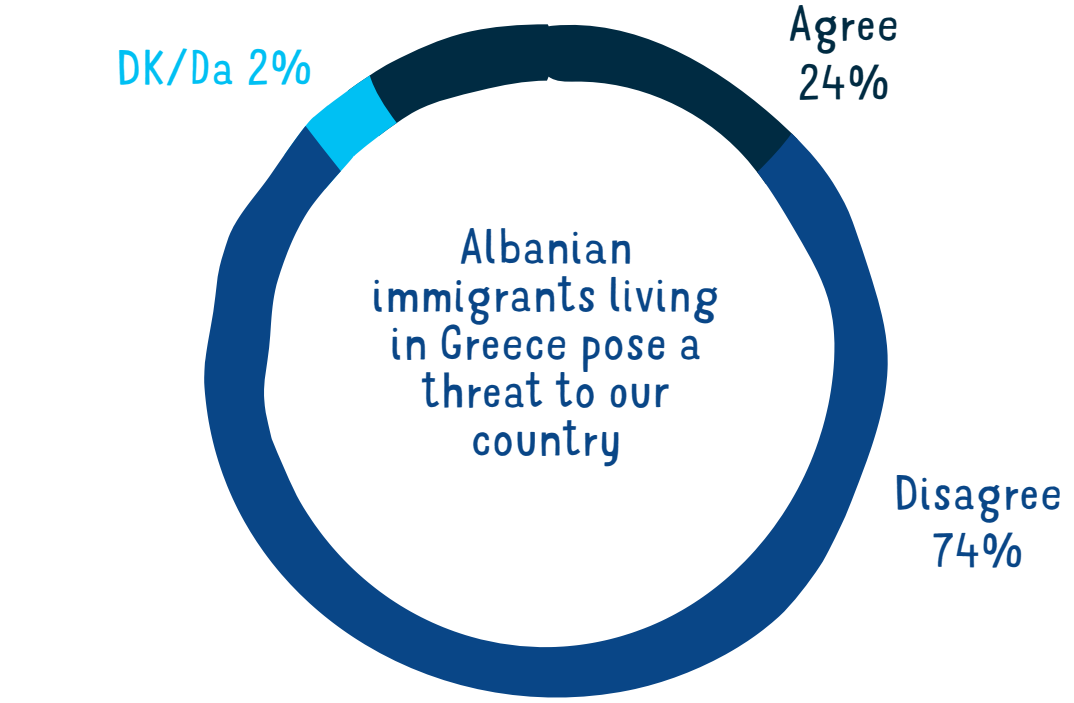
Albanians' perception about Albanian immigrants living in Greece

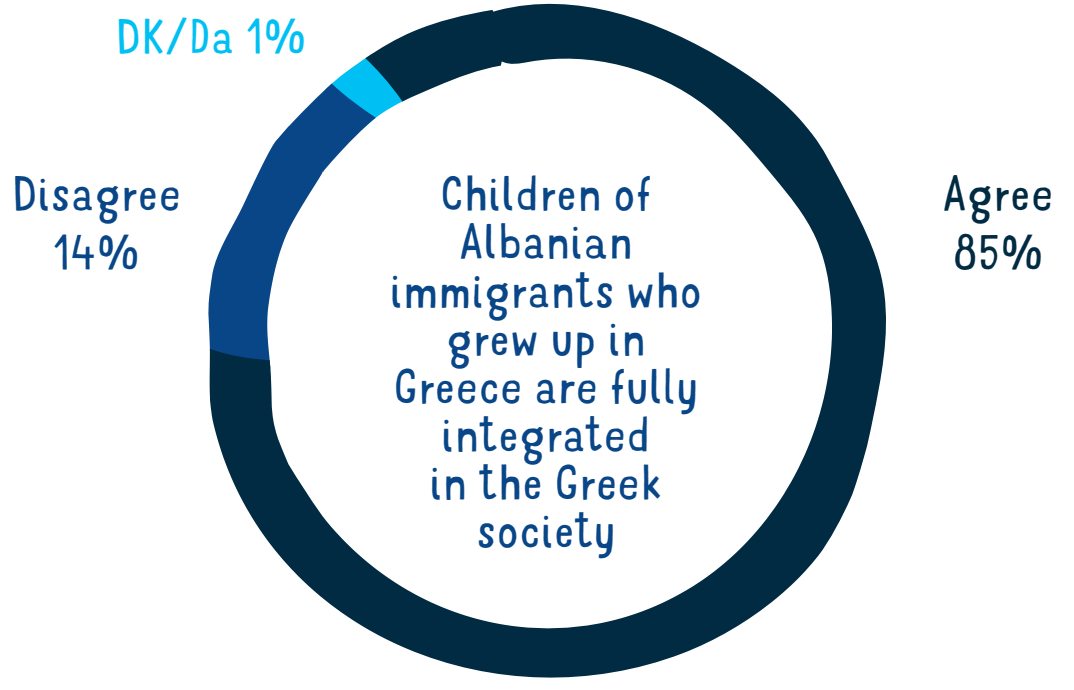
All Albanian respondents think that Albanian immigrants have contributed to both Albania and Greece's economic development, and 8 out of 10 of them think that children of Albanian immigrants who grew up in Greece are fully integrated in the Greek society.



Greeks' perception about Albanian immigrants living in Greece

The vast majority of the respondents support that the integration of the children of Albanian refugees was successful (85%) and that the Albanian immigrants do not pose a threat to Greece (74%). These findings reflect a similar depiction with the Albanian public opinion stance.

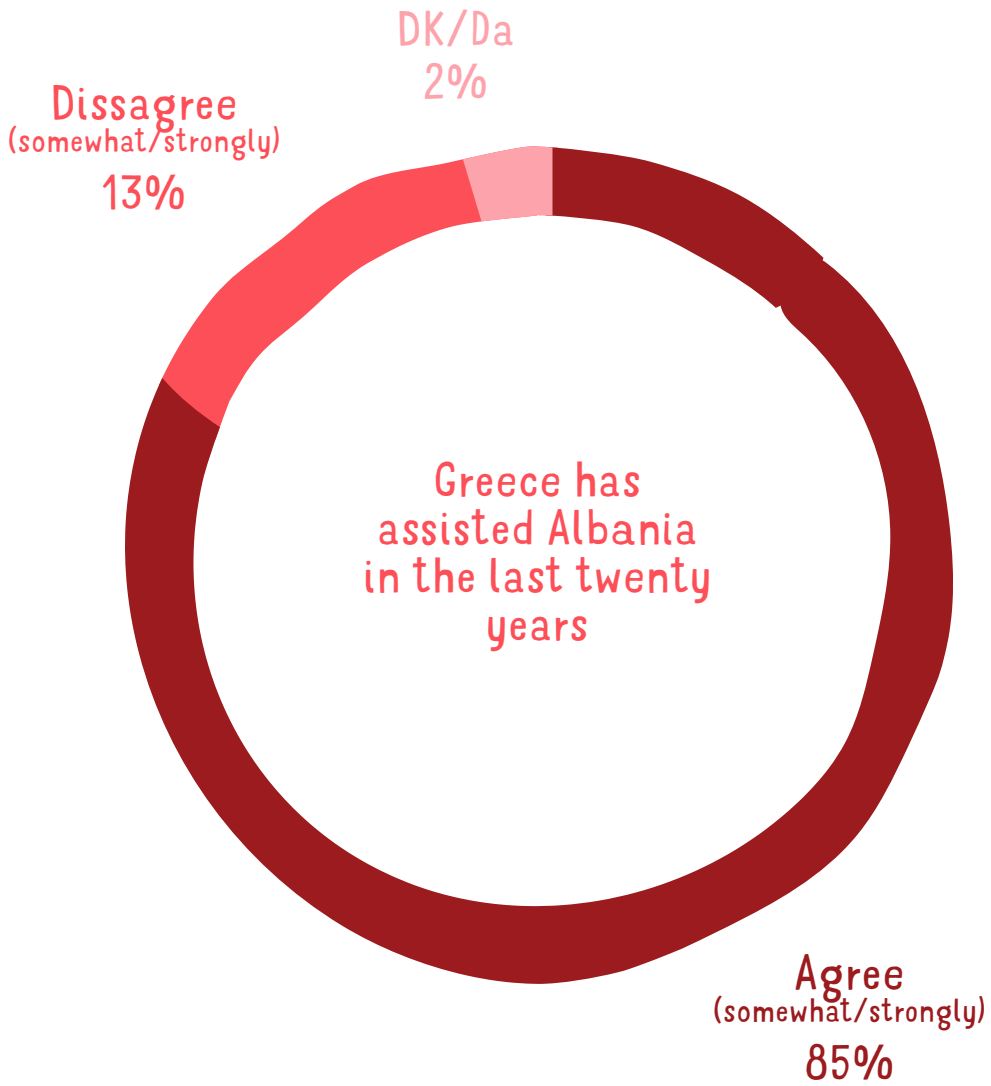




Both nations believe that Albanian migrants have contributed to Greece's economic development, but at diverging rates. A staggering 99% of Albanians believe the above to be so, while the same

Do Albanians agree Greece has assisted Albania in the last twenty years?

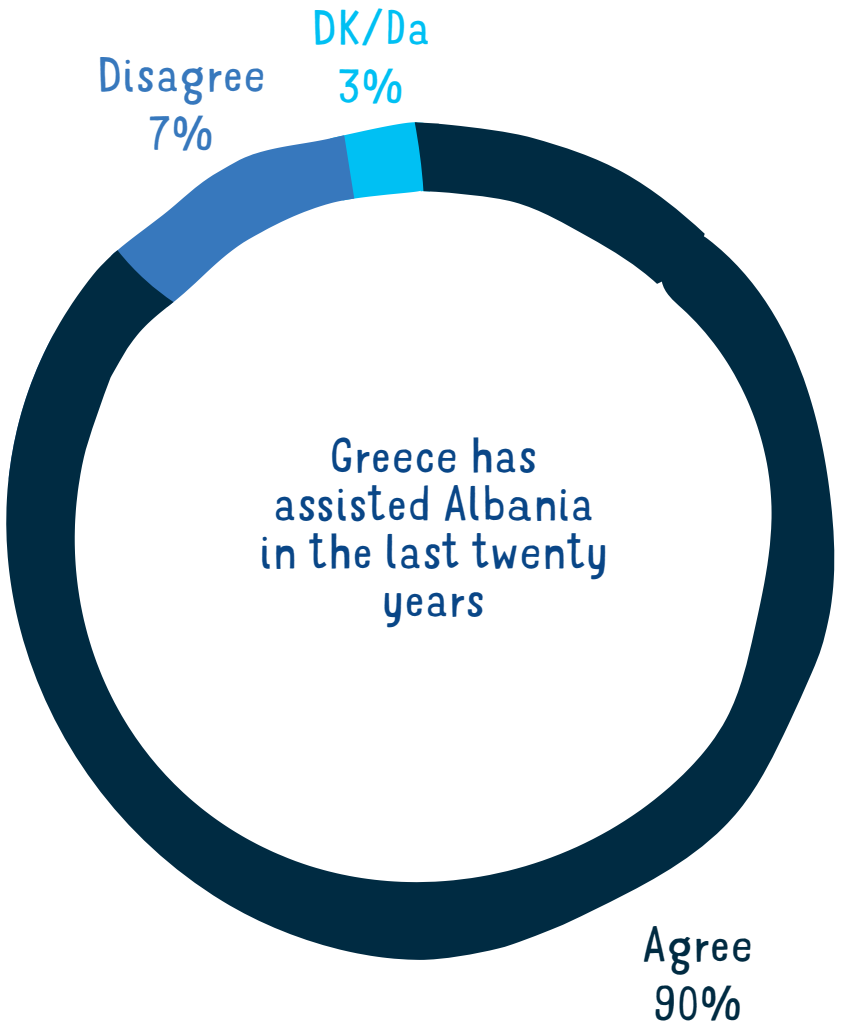
More than 8 out of 10 Albanians think that Greece has assisted Albania during the last 20 years. Such opinion is stronger among residents in South Albania with 9 out of 10 supporting it.



view is shared by 64.5% of Greeks, with a sizeable 34.5% believing the opposite. Both nations also agree that Greece has assisted Albania in the last twenty years. 90% of Greeks and 86% of Albanians agree on this point.

Do Greeks agree Greece has assisted Albania in the last twenty years?

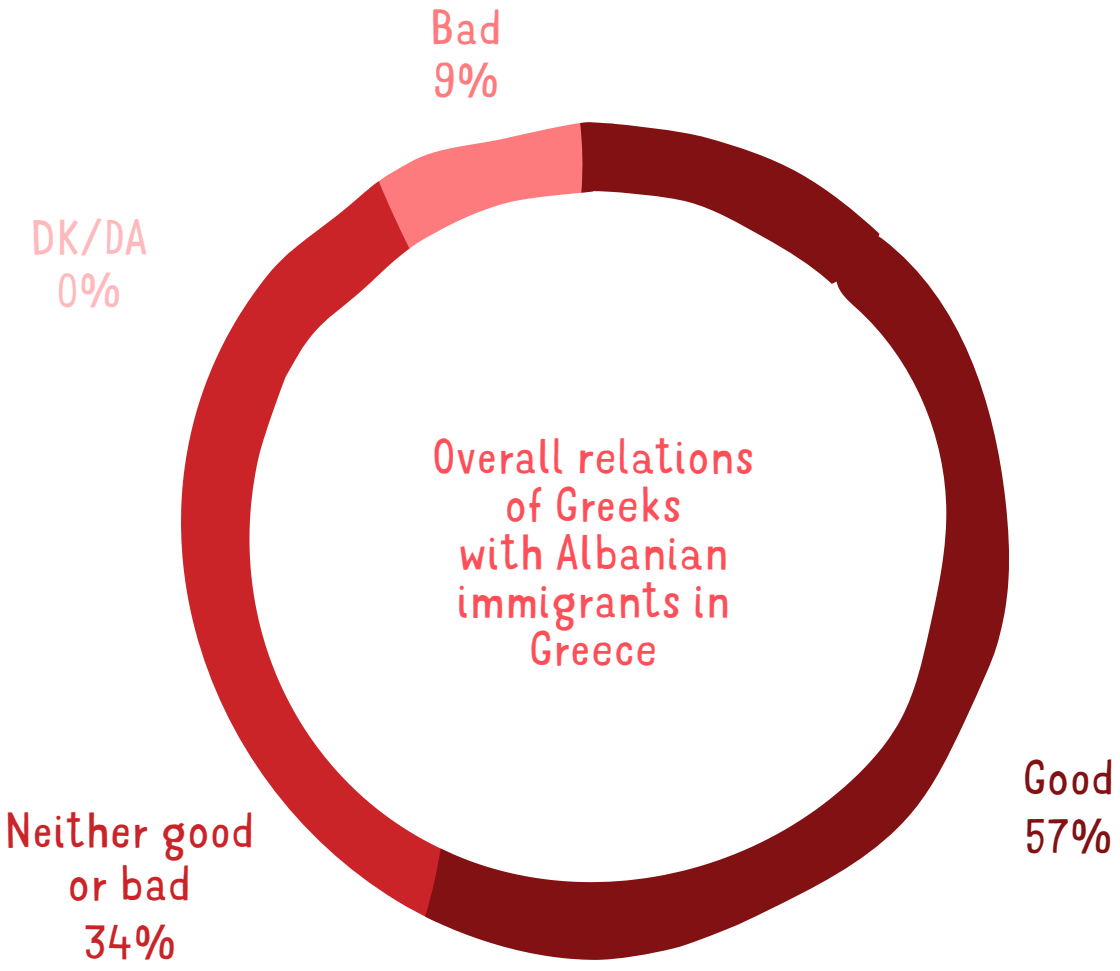
Once again, Greek public opinion shares a similar view with the Albanian, supporting with a similar share (90%) that Greece has assisted Albania in the previous 20 years. This belief is even stronger among ages 55+ (92.5%).



Respondents in both countries also seem to largely agree on their assessment of relations between Greeks and Albanian migrants living in Greece. In what can only be seen as good news, on both sides the percentage of respondents who assess the relations as bad is under 10%; among Greek respondents only 7% and among Albanian respondents only 9% think that relations are bad. Assessments of relations as good is at 54% among Greek respondents and at 57% among Albanian respondents.

Albanians' perceptions about overall relations of Greeks with Albanian immigrants living in Greece

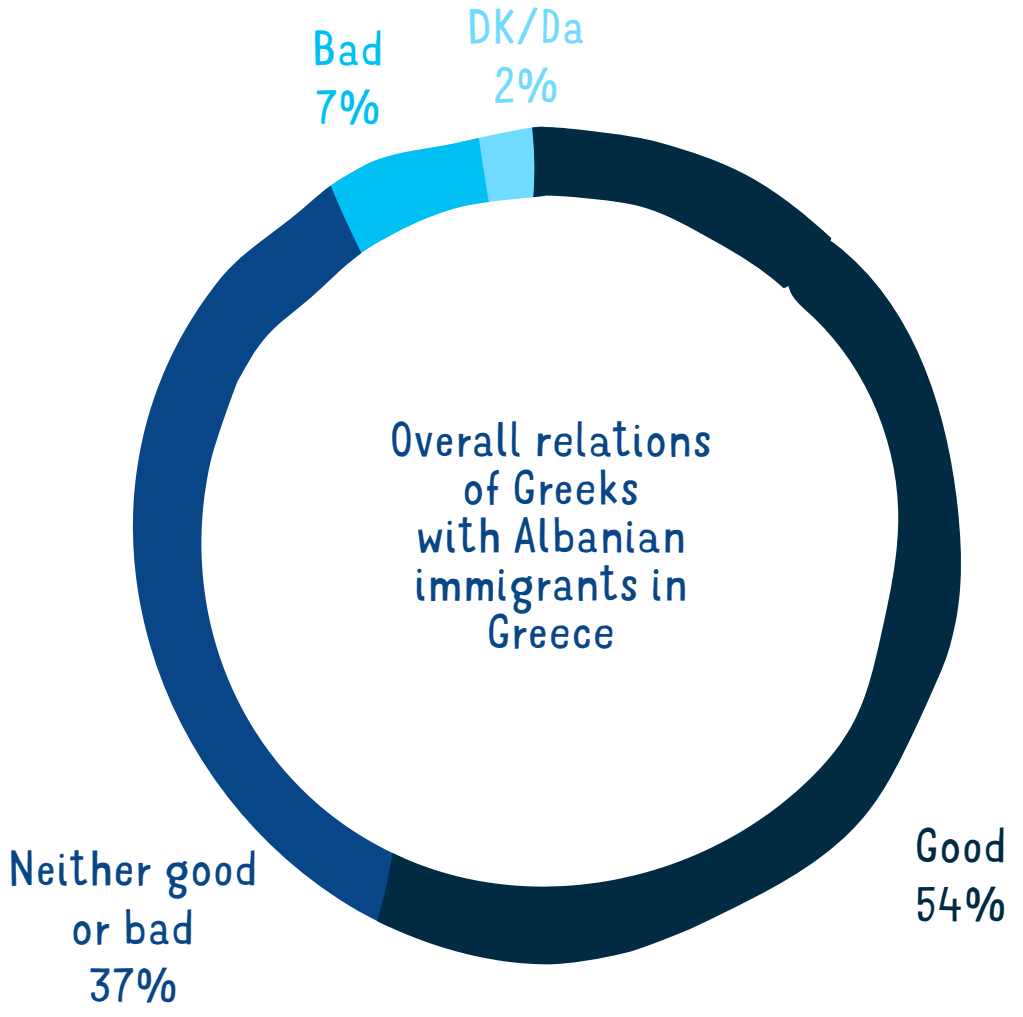
75% of the respondents think that Albanians have a good relation with Greek minority in Albania, while 57% of them perceive as good the relation of the Greeks with Albanian migrants in Greece.

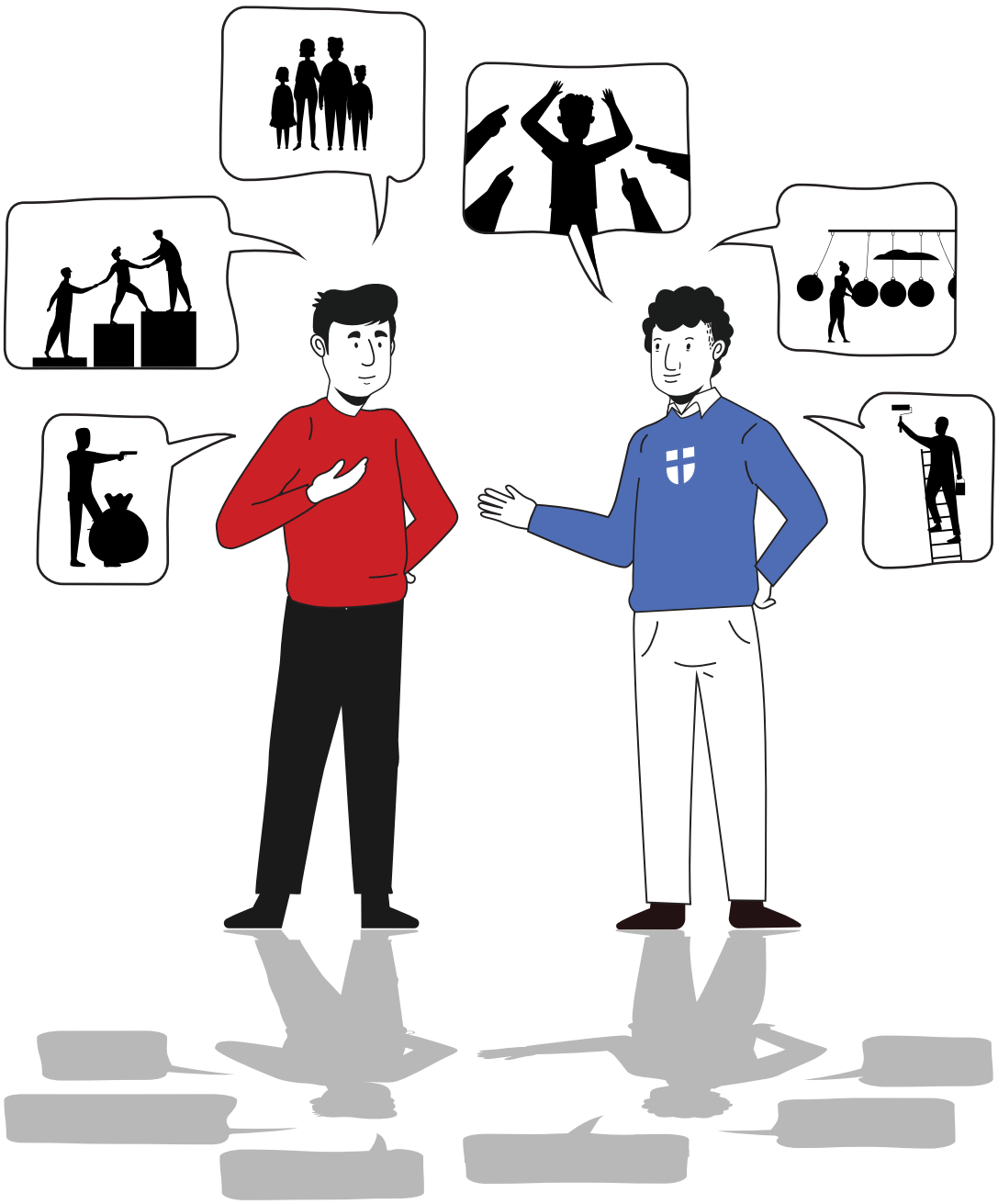


Like with other questions, the attitudes in the south of Albania are significantly more upbeat with positive opinions at the rate of 71%. In contrast to other questions posed, the most positive attitudes among Greek respondents can be found in the 55+ age group (60%) and the least positive in the 17-34 age group (47%). Also, the most positive attitudes can be found among Greek respondents who self-identify as Left (60.5%) and Centre-Left (59%).

Greeks' perceptions about overall relations of Greeks with Albanian immigrants living in Greece

Overall, the relations of Greeks with Albanians leaving in Greece are considered good (54%) or neither good nor bad (37%). The most positive attitude is reported by elder people of ages 55+ (60% good) and those placed in the left side of the left-right spectrum (60.5%).





PART C

PERSONAL ATTITUDES, VALUES AND STEREOTYPES

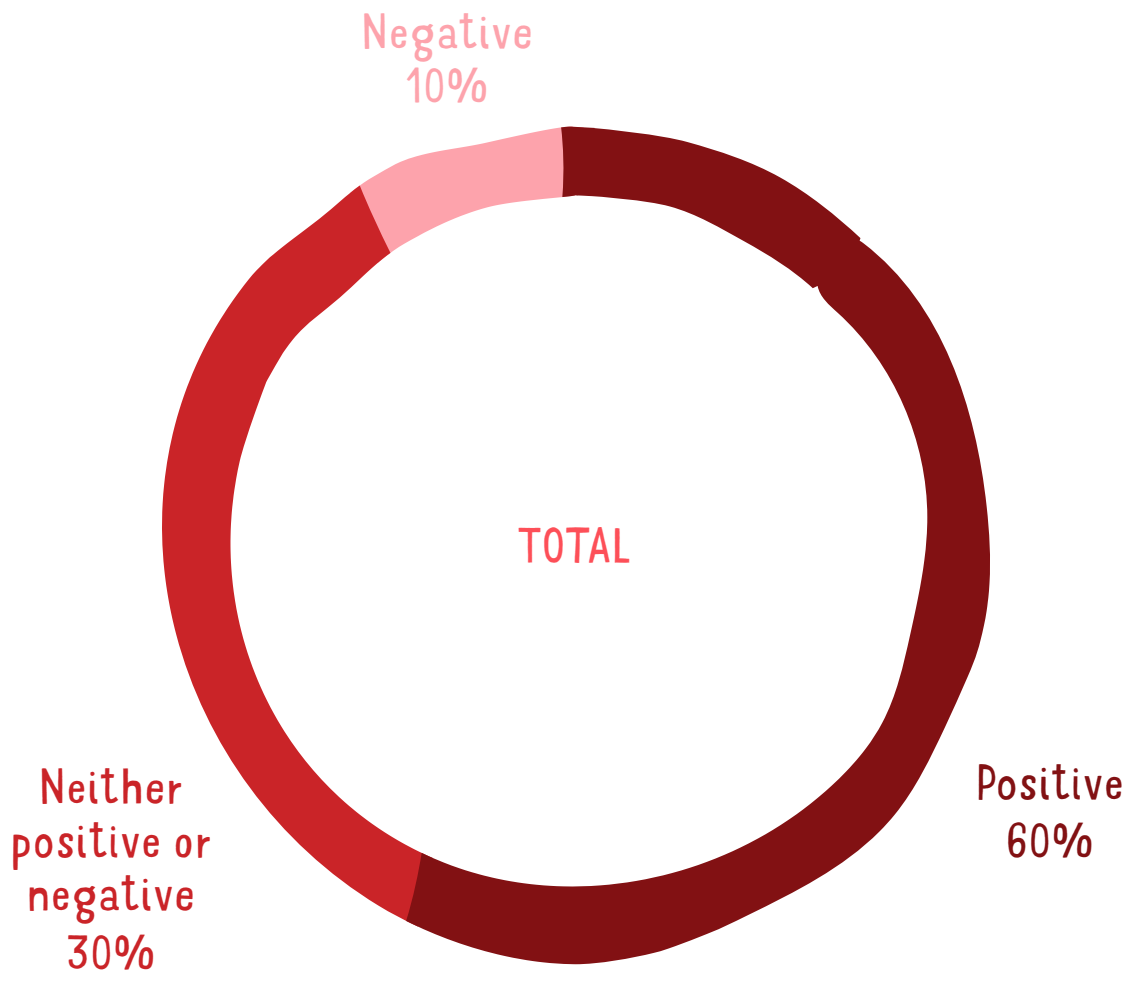
7.

Personal attitudes towards Albanians and Greeks

Purely negative attitudes at the personal level have significantly weakened. Only one in ten (10% of Albanians; 9.5% of Greeks) hold negative attitudes about the other nation. Overall, Albanian respondents hold more positive attitudes than the Greeks. More specifically, Albanian positive attitudes towards Greeks are at rate of 60%, while Greeks' positive attitudes towards Albanians are at a rate of 47.5%. The neutral stances are at 30% in Albania and 42% in Greece.

Personal attitudes of Albanians towards Greeks in general

Majority of Albanians (60%) have a positive attitude towards Greeks in general. Higher positive attitude toward Greeks is noted amongst residents in South of Albania (80%).

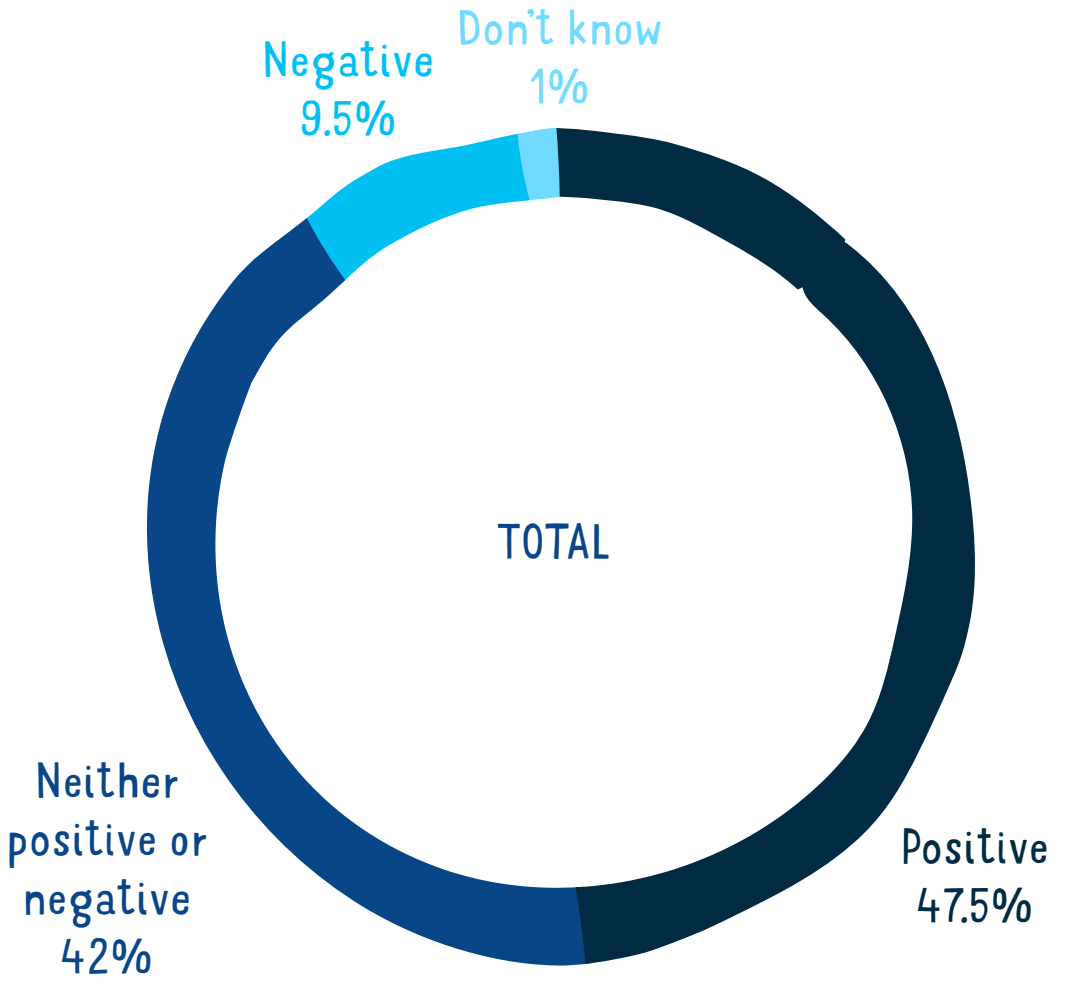


The Albanian views, however, are quite split geographically. The positive attitudes towards Greeks reach 83% in the country's south, but are at 47% and 50% in the centre and north respectively. In the latter two regions, the neutral opinions reach 41% and 37% respectively.

The attitudes of different age groups are also interesting. In Greece, the negative attitudes towards Albanians goes down to only 3.5% at the age group 17-34, while the positive attitudes increase to 54%. In Albania in contrast, the highest percentages of positive attitudes towards Greeks can be found in

Personal attitudes of Greeks towards Albanians in general

Nearly one out of two respondents express a positive view towards the Albanians on a personal level, while only one out of ten express a negative stance. The most positive attitudes are reported by elder people (55+) and those placed in the left side of the left-right spectrum.



the 55-64 and 65+ age groups with 69% and 65% respectively. Younger Albanians are in relative terms less positive towards Greeks than older folk, but still not in significant numbers. When it comes to political identity of Greek respondents, the lowest percentages of negative attitudes towards Albanians can be found among those self-identifying as Centre-Left and Centre, while the highest percentage, double the national average, can be found among those self-identifying as Right.

8.

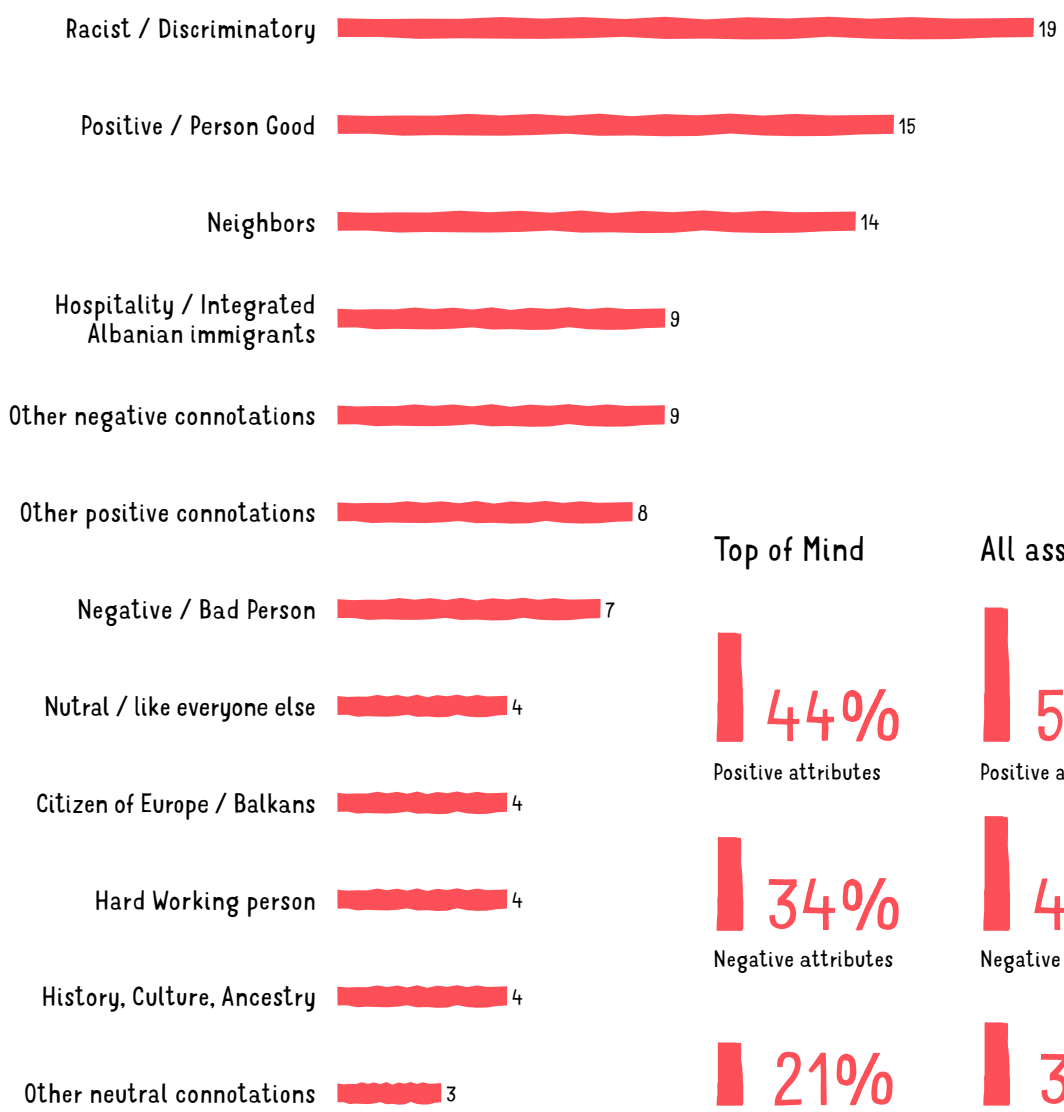
Spontaneous associations

We asked respondents to state the first thing that comes to mind when they hear about a member of the other nation. These questions generated interesting and quite diverse responses. In the Greek survey, four in ten (40%) respondents seem to have a neutral or no association. Specific associations are diverse but also of limited spread across the sample. Many respondents seem to associate Albanians with migrants (10%) or as workers (10%); both of these are close to Greeks' experience of Albanians in the last thirty years as migrants in Greece and typically, though not exclusively these times, as labourers. There are also several different negative associations, which individually do not attract high percentages in the sample: negative feelings (6%), criminal (5%), fear (3%), sly person (1.5%). If added, however, all these negative associations make up a not insignificant rate of 15%. Put together, the spontaneous associations of Albanians demonstrate indifference, neutrality, low status social roles and not insignificant negative connotations.

In the Albanian survey, things are on the whole more positive, since many spontaneous responses offer positive associations. These are: positive/good person (15%), hospitality and integration of Albanian migrants (9%) and others. Having said that, the highest percentage of spontaneous associations, one in five respondents or 19%, view Greeks as racist or discriminatory, something that may relate to

Albanians' spontaneous associations with Greeks

Most of Albanians' associations with Greeks have a positive connotation. Despite the first mentioned attribute is «being racist» the other top mentions are positive, such as: being a positive person and Albanians' neighbours, followed by Greek hospitality due to the belief that they have supported integration of the Albanian immigrants in Greece.

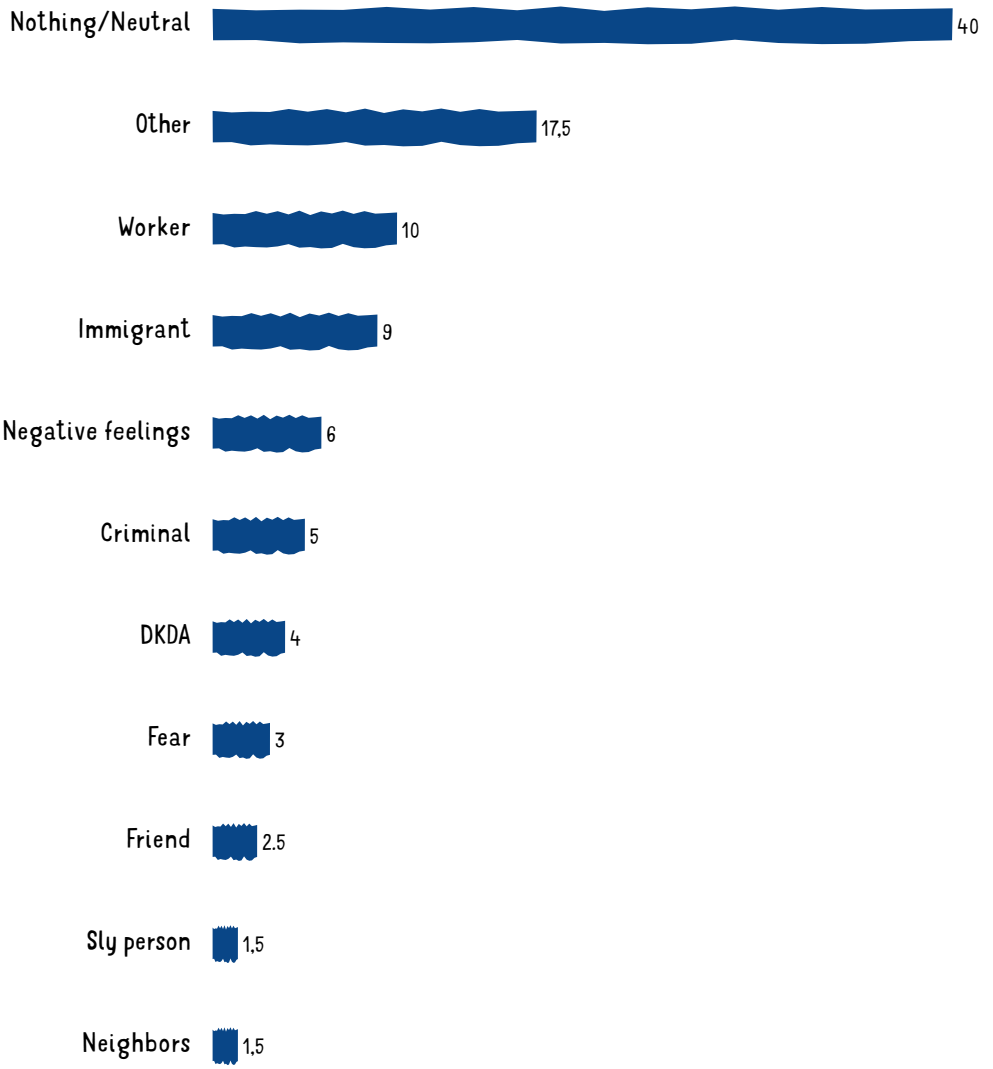


the experience of migration in Greece or the way that this experience is reported in Albanian media. Overall, the spontaneous associations of Greeks among Albanian respondents can be classified as 40% positive, 34% negative and 21% neutral.

We also measured some attributes that are considered as clearly negative or somewhat negative. Both nations do not seem to associate these negative attributes with each other at high rates, which means that the negative perceptions held for per-

Greeks' spontaneous associations with Albanians

Four out of ten respondents cannot illustrate a specific association while the rest illustrate pretty scattered views.



9.

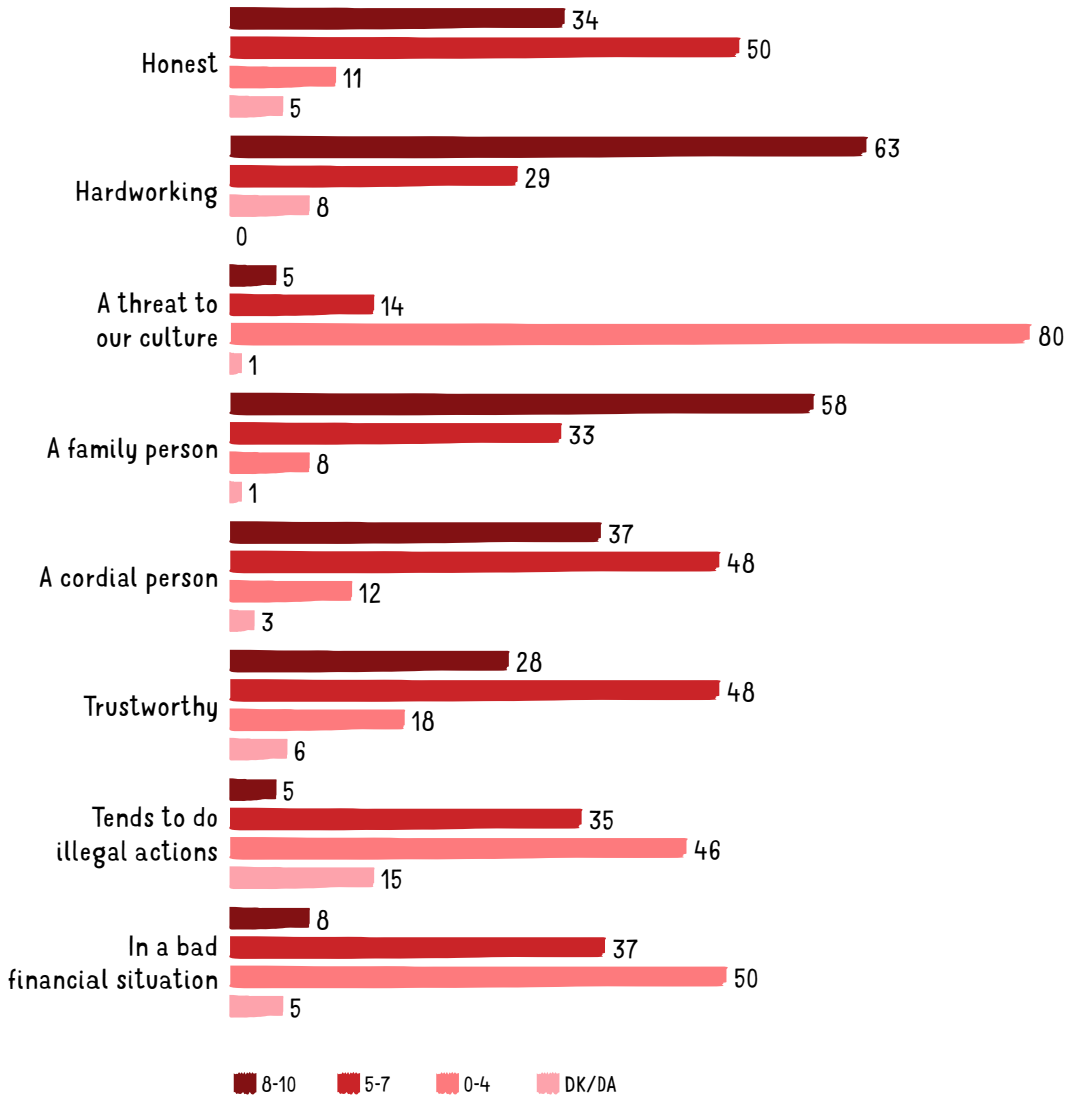
Personal values and attributes

Overall, Albanians and Greeks seem to associate each other with some positive attributes and values that were measured by our surveys and somewhat less with some others. Albanians view Greeks as being hardworking (63%) and family persons (58%). They also view them – at a lower rate – as cordial (37%), honest (34%), and trustworthy (28%). Greeks view Albanians as being hardworking (63%) and family persons (54%). At a significantly lower rate, they view them also as cordial (20.5%), honest (19%), and trustworthy (15.5%).

sonal attributes of the members of the other nation are these days minimal. More specifically, only one in twenty Albanians (5%) view Greeks as a threat to their culture, one in twenty (5%) view them as inclined to do illegal activities, and less than one in ten (8%) view them as being in a bad financial situation. Similarly, a bit more than one in ten (11.5%) Greek respondents consider Albanians to be a threat to their culture, one in five (21%) view them as inclined to do illegal activities, and 14.5% view them

Description of a Greek person by Albanians

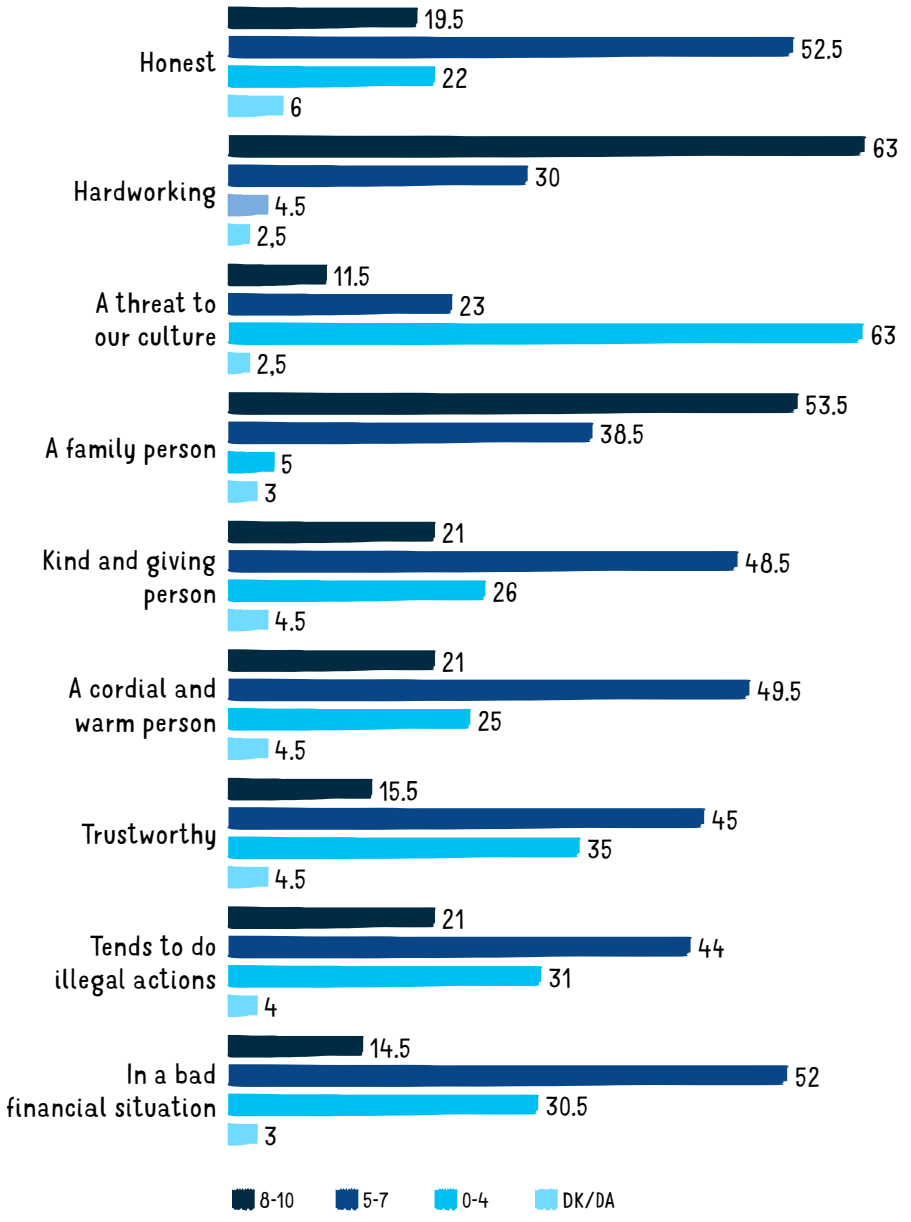
The most mentioned driven characteristics of a Greek, are 'being hardworking', 'a family person', 'honest and a cordial person, while less negative attributes are related to a Greek (of Greek minority or from Greece).

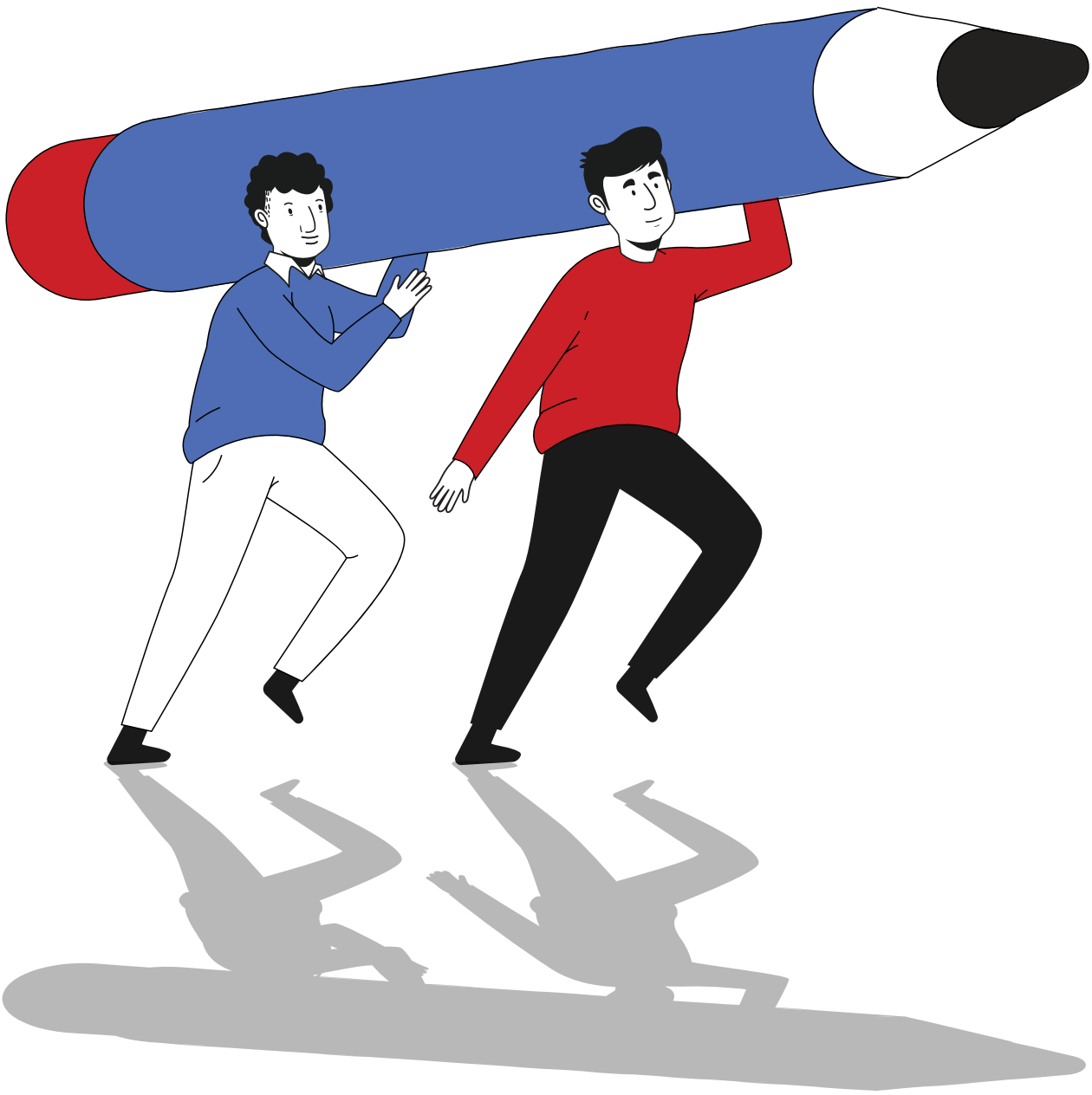


as being in bad financial situation. While there is still scope for improving the perceptions that each nation holds for each other, we can clearly assess that very negative stereotypes of the past seem to have subsided.

Description of an Albanian person by Greeks

The most popular characteristic assigned to an Albanian person is hardworking (63%), followed by being a family person (53.5%). Negative associations, such as being involved in illegal actions, or being in bad financial situation, are not supported by the majority of the respondents.





PART D

ACQUAINTANCE AND KNOWLEDGE

10.

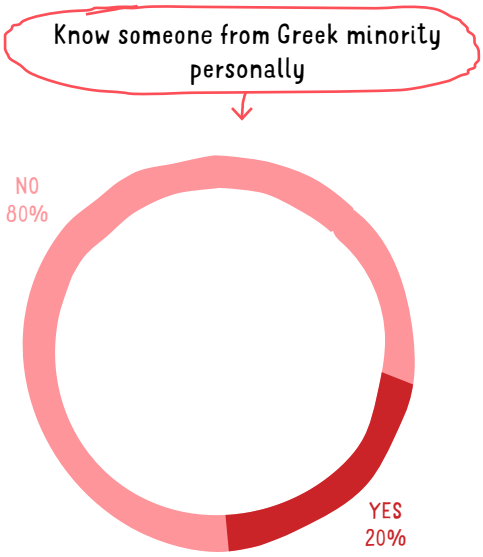
Acquaintance

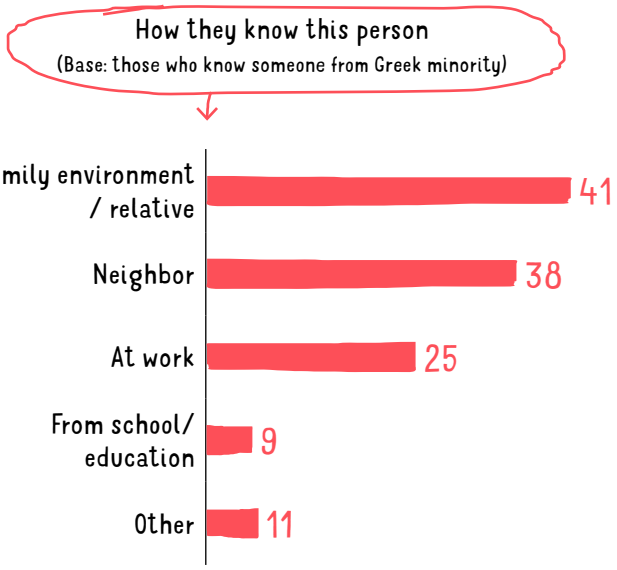
Respondents of the two surveys were asked whether they know personally a member of the other nation. More specifically, the Greek survey asked whether respondents know personally someone of Albanian origin, with the implicit assumption being that in most cases that would mean an Albanian migrant in Greece; the Albanian survey asked two questions: one about whether respondents know personally someone belonging to the Greek minority of Albania and one about whether they know someone from Greece.

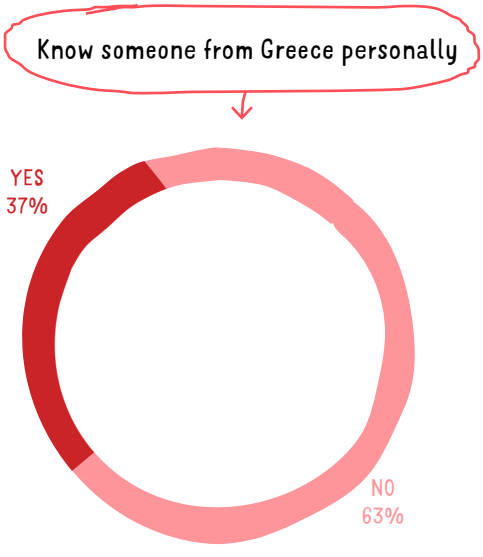
Almost all Greek respondents (98%) responded affirmatively that they know personally Albanians.

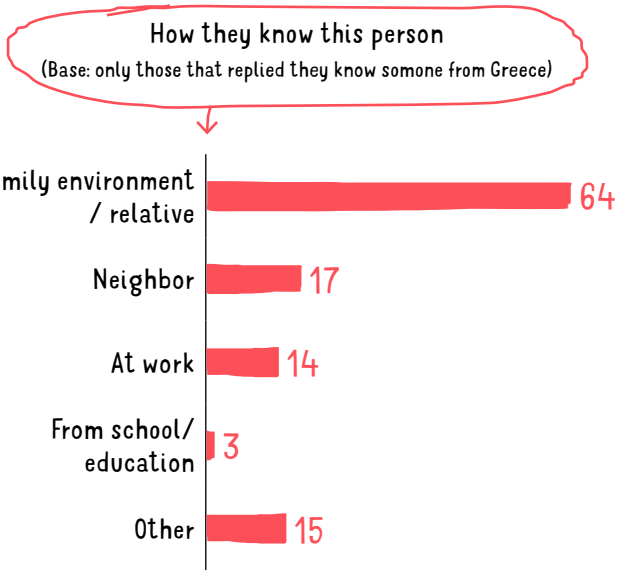
When it comes to the Albanian respondents only one in five (20%) responded affirmatively that they have met someone from the Greek minority. Predictably, in the south of Albania there are many more respondents (39%) who know personally Greek minority members. In the centre and north of Albania the percentages are 13% and 6% respectively. Still, more respondents have met Greeks from Greece: 37% on average among all Albanian respondents; 74% in the south, 21% in the centre and 13% in the north of Albania.

The survey results show that 1 in 5 Albanians personally know someone belonging to the Greek minority living in Albania, who is part of their family environment or neighbourhood. While 1 in 3 Albanians personally know Greeks who live in Greece or work in Albania, and who is part of their family environment. These figures are especially high in South Albania, respectively 39% and 74%.



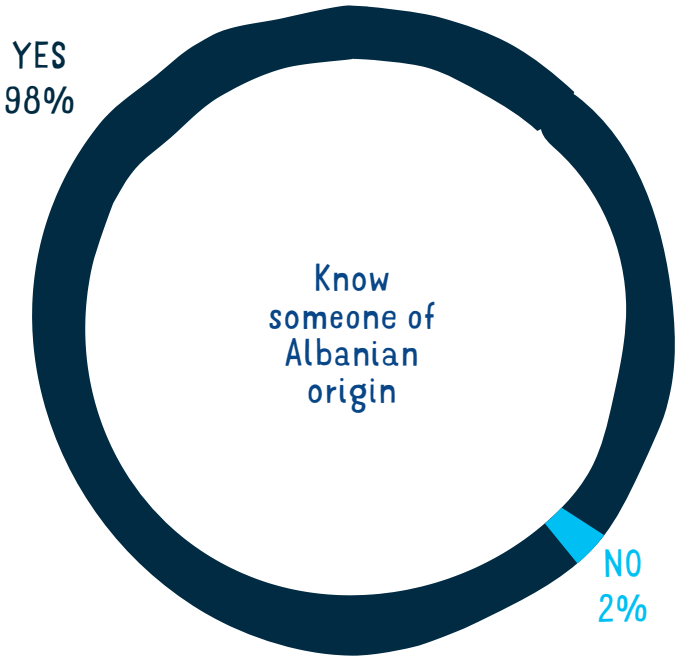


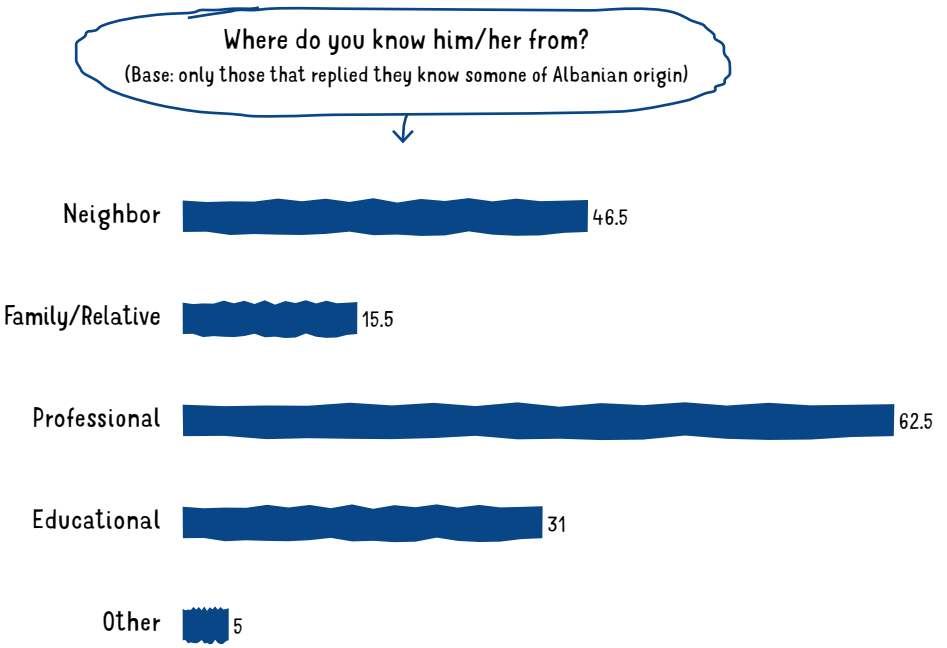




Do you know someone of Albanian origin ...?

Almost all Greeks know someone of Albanian origin from their professional /working environment or neighbourhood.





11.

Accuracy of knowledge

Despite the geographic proximity and strong economic and social linkages, the two nations do not always possess accurate knowledge about each other. More specifically:

- Both Greeks and Albanians, by 73.5% and 58% respectively, are convinced that the two nations have fought wars against each other in the past. Only one in five Greeks and one in three Albanians possess accurate knowledge that the two nations have never fought each other.

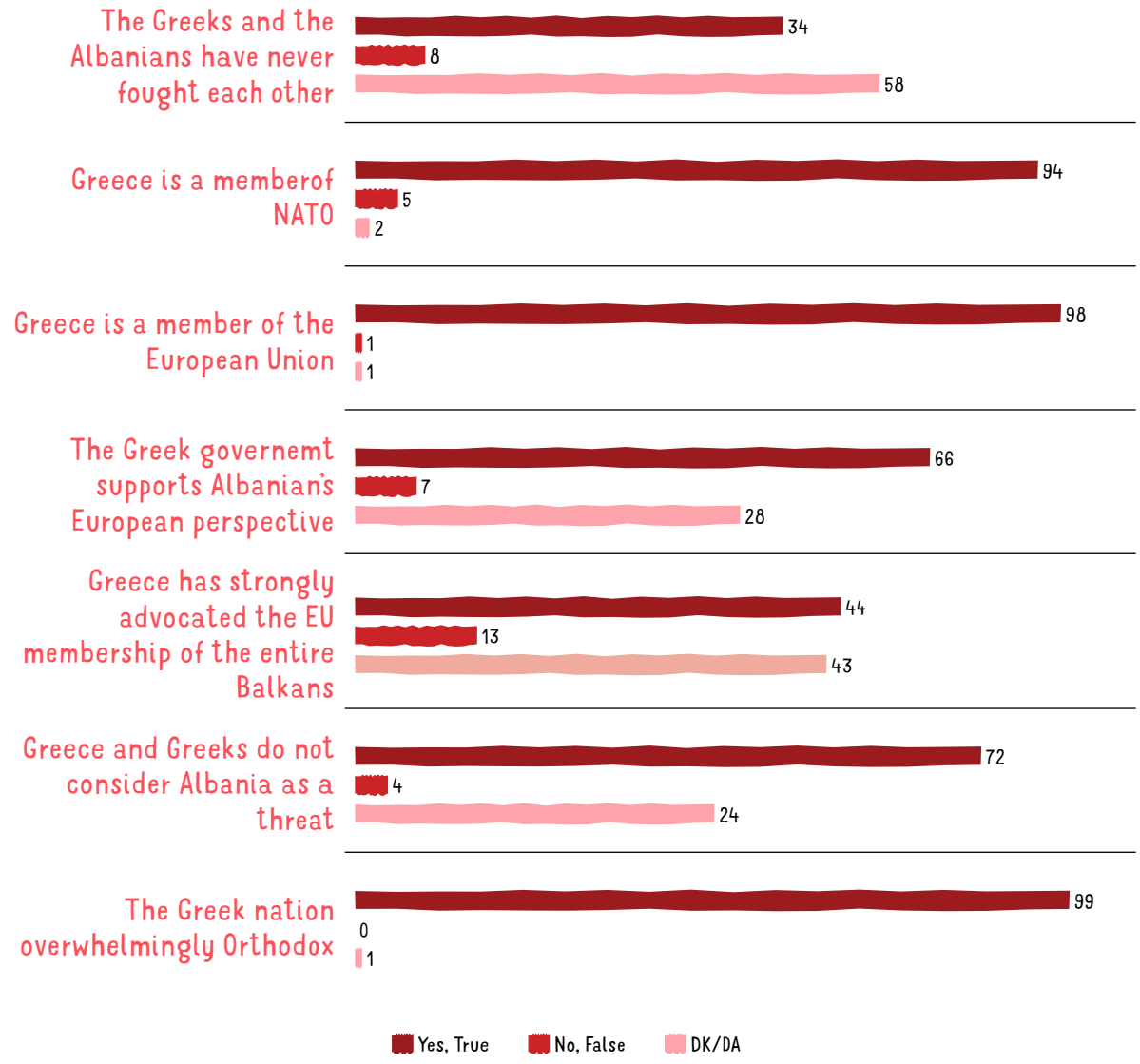
- Both Greeks and Albanians accurately know, by rates of 63% and 66% respectively, that the Greek government supports Albania's European perspective.

- Albanian respondents accurately think (72%) that Greeks do not consider Albania as a threat, but only 44% know that Greece is a strong advocate of the EU membership of the entire Balkans.

- Greek respondents accurately know (80%) that the Albanian nation includes Muslims, Orthodox and Catholic, but only 27% know that Albania has joined NATO and is a member state since 2008 (48% think that Albania is not a member and 25% do not know at all the issue).

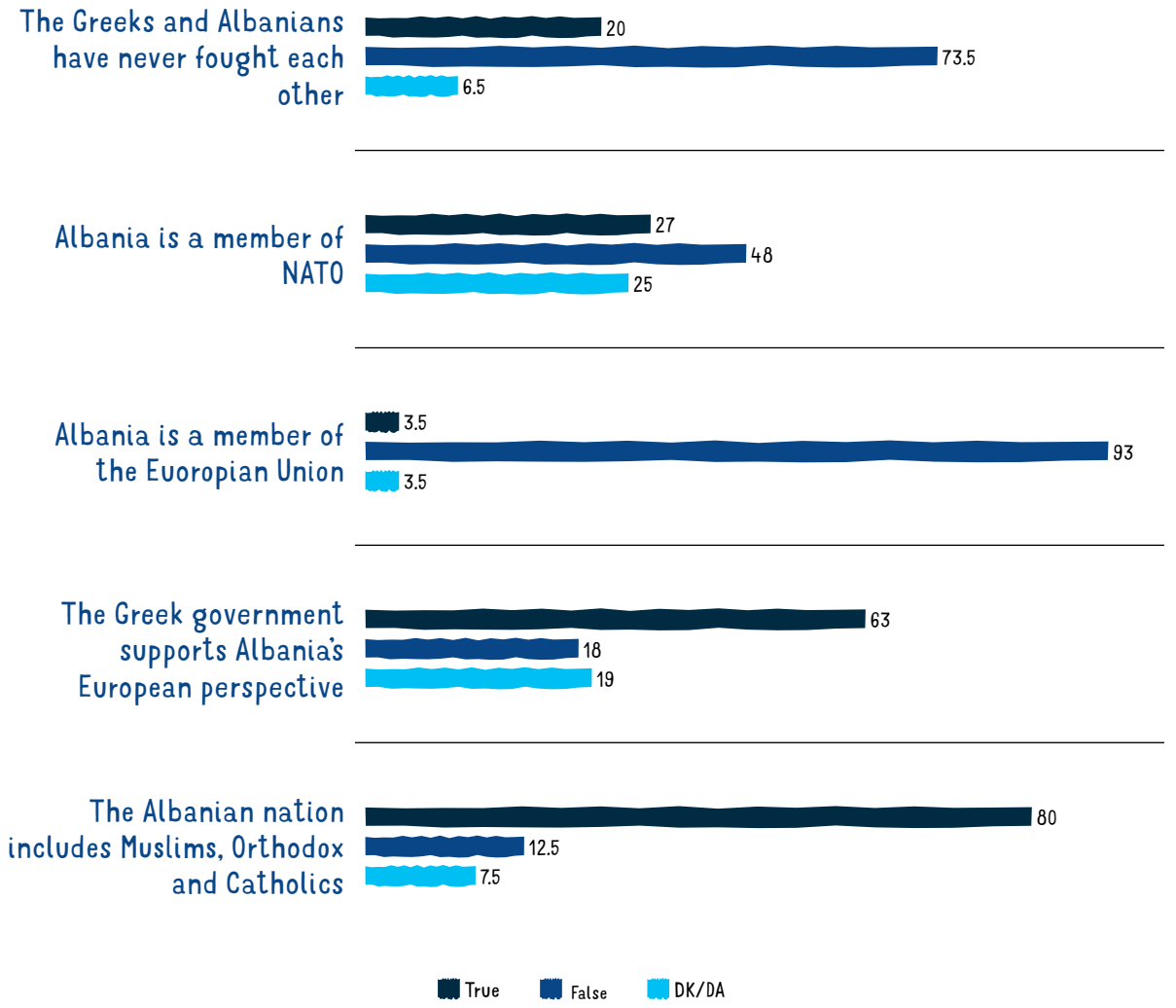
Albanians' knowledge on topics about Greece

Almost all Albanians are aware that Greece is an EU and NATO member, and that the Greek nation is overwhelmingly Orthodox. One in three Albanians believe the Greek government supports Albania's European perspective.



Greeks' knowledge on topics about Albania

Vast majority of Greeks (80%) are aware the Albanian nation consists of mixed religions, while almost 1 in 3 Greeks claim their government supports Albania's European perspective.



CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

There are some positive news in the findings of the two surveys. Both sides seem to agree that relations have improved compared to previous decades. The two nations largely do not see each other as a threat. Albanians view the Greek minority in Albania as well integrated and relations between the majority and the members of the minority to be good. Purely negative attitudes at the personal level between Greeks and Albanians have significantly weakened. Moreover, the two nations seem to associate each other with some positive attributes and values.

Further to the positive findings, the surveys demonstrate that Albanian migration in Greece, an issue which had repeatedly in the past become a source of friction, is not anymore seen as a problematic aspect. There is some divergence in the way that the issue in perceived in the two sides and, of course, much more that can be done to resolve remaining problems. But, by and large, one can state that Albanian migration in Greece is not any more a source of notable problems and migrants have become a bridge between the two countries and potentially a unifying factor between the two societies.

There are, however, also findings in the surveys that require closer examination and attention or should be a source of concern. The two nations continue to hold some negative opinions and stereotypes about each other, and also to associate each other with some negative values and attributes. Similarly, the knowledge that each side holds for the other is often inaccurate. The situation is even more problematic at the diplomatic-political level. There is a noteworthy gap when it comes to disputes and issues of concern to the two sides, in the sense that the two sides have very different perceptions of the problems challenging bilateral relations.

Albanians and Greeks diverge on which issues they consider as the most important problems in bilateral affairs: Albanians focus on the question of the delimitation of the maritime zones between the two countries and various issues related to the Chams, while for Greeks the main problem in the relationship is Albanian nationalism. The two sides also seem to disagree on the character of various issues and on who is to blame for them. A characteristic example is the question of the Greek minority in Albania. Greeks overwhelmingly consider that its rights of the Greek minority are violated, while Albanians overwhelmingly consider that the Greek minority is treated well by the Albanian state. It should also be stressed that the issues that are identified by the two sides are key problems seem to match those that are typically covered by media in the two countries in nationalist and emotional terms.

Other interesting conclusions can be also drawn. There seems to be a bias, which one could argue that is a residue and a legacy of the turbulent 1990s, in the way that Greeks view neighbouring nations, including Albanians. Evidently, Greeks value highly their positive view of Serbia, which was largely forged during the Yugoslav wars, to the extent that this influences their perceptions of other regional issues, such as the European integration of the Western Balkans or the state of democracy in these

countries. At the same time, there seems to be a negative bias towards Albania, which can again be traced back to stereotypes and conceptions formed or reinforced in the last thirty years.

The two sides also seem to diverge significantly when it comes to their perceptions of security and international affairs, with Greeks being concerned about their security and identifying Turkey as the main threat. The Albanian side is much more relaxed about these issues, but one is left wondering whether, in the context of the need for increased understanding between the two sides, Albanians understand the sensitivities of Greeks when it comes to their security and relationship to Turkey.

Overall, the findings of the two survey make absolutely clear that there has been improvement in societal attitudes between the two countries, but much more work needs to be done to further improve attitudes, relations and mutual understanding. More analysis is required to understand the bases of misconceptions and negative stereotyping, and more work to increase the level of accurate knowledge and information. Governments and civil society in both countries should invest in energetic efforts and creative ideas that will increase the level of trust between the two societies and will create the basis of a future partnership.

There are some positive news in the findings of the two surveys. Both sides seem to agree that relations have improved compared to previous decades. The two nations largely do not see each other as a threat.

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