



Policy Association for an Open Society

A network of independent policy centres in
Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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PRESS RELEASE

PASOS project poll: Trust in public institutions declines in Western Balkans



Illustration 1: Click on the image to view an interactive presentation showing the most-trusted institutions in the Western Balkans, according to the results of PASOS project polling data.



Illustration 2: Click on the image to view an interactive presentation showing the least-trusted institutions in the Western Balkans, according to the results of PASOS project polling data.

The level of trust citizens of the Western Balkans have in national and international institutions generally dropped in 2015, with the most drastic declines seen in scandal-plagued Macedonia, according to the results of polling conducted for a PASOS project on open government.

Overall, the polling showed that political parties fared the worst among domestic institutions in the third annual polling conducted for [Advocacy for Open Government](#), an EU-funded project to encourage governments in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia to become more transparent.

In Macedonia, respondents identified political parties and the government's anti-corruption office as particularly untrustworthy. Only 10 percent said they had trust in the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, giving it the fewest number of people who said they had some level of trust in the institution. Meanwhile, political parties got the highest percentage of people who explicitly said

PASOS aims to promote and protect democracy, human rights and open society values – including the rule of law, good governance, and economic and social development – by supporting civil society organisations that individually and jointly foster public participation in public policy issues at the European Union level, in other European and global structures, and in the wider neighbourhood of Europe and Central Asia.

Chair: Andrew Cartwright **Executive Director:** Vít Těrauda

PASOS is a not-for-profit association registered in the Czech Republic

Sdružení pro podporu otevřené společnosti – PASOS, registrováno Ministerstvem vnitra ČR pod č.j. VS/1-1/58 438/04-R
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they mistrust the institution.

“Political parties still remain the most distrusted subject with 75.6% of respondents saying they do not trust political parties. However, the judicial system and the State Commission also have a high level of distrust with 67.3% and 65.1%, respectively,” said Qendresa Sulejmani, an analyst with the Skopje-based Center for Research and Policy Making, which oversaw the project polling in Macedonia.

“This relates mainly with the current political crisis in the country,” Sulejmani said. “In 2015 the opposition party released many wiretapped tapes of top government officials showing the criminal activities that government officials have engaged in and the politicization of institutions, such as the courts and the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, among others.”

Trust in institutions in Macedonia has plunged when compared to previous surveys on the topic. For example, the percentage of Macedonians who said they had some level of trust in the country’s military dropped from 71.5 percent in 2014, when it was the most-trusted institution in the country, to 37.5 percent in 2015.

Even the country’s most trusted institution in 2015, the education system, has the confidence of only about 44 percent of Macedonians.

Other countries in the region saw similar, albeit less dramatic, declines in public trust in other institutions, especially those touched by scandals.

For example, the percentage of Kosovars who say they trust the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the EU took a sharp drop. About 31 percent of Kosovars have trust in EULEX, down from 54 percent in a similar poll conducted in 2014. Trust in the EU is down from 64 percent in 2014 to 53 percent in the latest poll, which was held in the fall of 2015.

Other findings from the survey showed that:

- The percentage of Montenegrins who have trust in political parties dropped to 25 percent, a drop of nine points compared to an earlier poll on the question.
- Religious groups are the most trusted public institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. More than 62 percent of survey respondents there said they have some or much trust in religious institutions. Political parties ranked last, with more than 77 percent of those polled saying they have no or little trust in those organizations.
- The percentage of Serbians who say they trust the country's president dropped from 54 percent in 2014 to 44 percent in 2015. Serbians also expressed the lowest level of confidence in NGOs among the six countries: only 28 percent said they had some level of trust in those organizations.
- NATO and the European Union continue to be highly trusted institutions in Albania, far outranking the levels of trust Albanians have in their domestic institutions.

The six PASOS members who conducted the polling are: the [Institute for Democracy and Mediation](#) (Albania), [Analitika Center for Social Research](#) (Bosnia and Herzegovina), [Riinvest Institute for Development Research](#) (Kosovo), the [Center for Research and Policy Making](#) (Macedonia), the [Center for Democracy and Human Rights](#) (Montenegro), [The Monitoring Center CEMI](#) (Montenegro), and the [Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies](#) (Serbia).

The project participants are monitoring the impact of governmental actions being undertaken as part of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Initiative. The project also draws on experience from new EU members, critiques commitments, and is creating advocacy plans for open government.



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[OGP is a multilateral initiative](#) that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. To become a member of the OGP, participating countries must embrace a high level Open Government Declaration; deliver a country Action Plan developed with public consultation; and commit to independent reporting on their progress.

PASOS is a network of independent think tanks in Europe and Central Asia. PASOS supports civil society organizations that individually and jointly foster public participation in public policy issues at the European Union level, in other European and global structures, and in the wider neighborhood of Europe and Central Asia.

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