



Access to justice: Citizens' challenges and views

Report based on the data collected from the "Civic Observatory" survey, in the courts of the cities of Elbasan, Shkoder, Pogradec, Korce, Peshkopi, Durres and Saranda, during the time period of May 2017 – January 2018



This report was prepared within the framework of the project "Empowerment of the citizens regarding the access to justice", implemented by the Coalition "Justice for All", through the member organization AWEN – Albanian Women Empowerment Network. Tirana, March 2018.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The report “Access to justice: Citizens’ challenges and views” was prepared by AWEN – Albanian Women Empowerment Network” within the framework of the project “Citizen’s empowerment regarding access to justice”, implemented by the Coalition “Justice for All”, AWEN and the member organizations, also involved in the realization of this project, for years have been working to defend the rights of vulnerable women in 7 of Albania, by offering assistance and legal aid to survivors of violence and trafficking.

This project is a struggle to have a clearer picture of the challenges that citizens encounter regarding access to justice, with a special focus on the citizens that are more vulnerable and consequently the needs of citizens in order to guarantee more qualitative access in justice through advocacy initiatives related to these challenges. The findings of this report will be used to advance efforts to improve the legislation and legal services that citizens receive, filling the gaps and pushing ahead to improving the situation of access to justice.

AWEN would like to thank the Coalition "Justice for All" for the trust and support in the implementation of this project, as well as the member organizations of AWEN– “Woman to Woman” Shkodra, “It’s Me, The Woman” Pogradec, Korçë; Woman Forum Elbasan, “The Center for Women and Girls in Need” Durrës, "Vatra" Psycho-Social Centre, Vlore, ‘Jona’ Association, Sarandë, Agritra- Vizion” Peshkopi – that enabled the collection of field data, through the involvement of organizations' lawyers in filling in observer questionnaires, in the district courts where they work. We also thank all the citizens that took part in the survey and shared with us their experiences regarding the access to justice.

Lastly, we hope that the findings of this report serve as a basis for new advocacy and lobbying initiatives, in full support of citizens who access the justice system in Albania.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From the data gathered through the survey process of the citizens via the 'Civic Observatory', was found that the challenges and problems encountered are numerous and similar in all the municipalities where the survey was conducted.

Some of the main findings that arose during the observatory were:

- Regarding citizens' access to justice, the most frequent obstacle encountered by them is financial impossibilities (36.1%).
- Around ¼ of the citizens currently going through a judicial process are not represented in court by a defense lawyer. Economic problems do not result to be a significant factor from this survey.
- In all cases where there were minor children, children were assisted by a psychologist.
- The great majority of the citizens were informed by the court regarding the right they have during the judicial process (only 14% did not receive this information), also regarding the judicial procedure before arriving to court (19% did not receive this information);
- 9.4% of the citizens declare that they have not been informed in any way, in other words they have not received any notification regarding the time and date of the trial.
- 1/5 of the citizens declare that they have not received any information regarding their citizen's right to challenge the court's decision concerning the case being judged.
- 31% of the citizens in the survey declare that they have no information/they were not informed by the court of their legal right to retrieve the acts of their file.
- 71% of the citizens have not been made aware from the court concerning the right to free legal aid, whereas 42% of them say that they were aware of the organizations that could offer free legal aid.
- For ¼ of the citizens, the language used by the court was too difficult to understand, even if they were or were not represented by a defense lawyer.



- 17.8% say, that they were not able to express what they wanted during the judicial process.
- ¾ of the citizens say that they felt the need for the presence of a defense lawyer during the judicial process.
- A high percentage of citizens (43%) assesses that the court's decision has not given a definite resolution to their request.
- A high percentage of the citizens (around 31%) declare that they have not been treated with respect, dignity and justice by the government authorities, which they have addressed in order to solve their problem (court, prosecutor). There is no significant difference in the way men, women and people with or without special status (physical disability, economic need) were treated.
- High evaluation were given, by the citizens that took part in the survey, to the secretary of the trial, Secretary of the Court and the Lawyer (around 7.3 points out of 10points), whereas the lowest evaluation was given to the persecutors of the case.
- Court fee expenditures, for the defense lawyers and for the experts are estimated to be unaffordable for an average of 40% of the citizens taking part in the survey, with a higher percentage among the citizens in economical need.



INTRODUCTION

The project within the framework of which this report was compiled, is implemented by AWEN – Albanian Women Empowerment Network in cooperation with SSCI - South East Europe Social Contract Institute, one of the member organizations of the Coalition: “Justice for All”. During the implementation of this project, efforts were focused on the Coalition’s second strategic purpose: Expanding and improving access to justice for vulnerable individuals and groups such as Roma people, women, children, people with disabilities, victims of trafficking and violence, LGBTI, etc.

The three objectives of this intervention, according to the Coalition Action Plan, were: Strengthening disadvantaged groups through legal education; reducing legal, economic, and cultural barriers to access to justice for disadvantaged groups; improve the implementation of the legal framework for the protection of Victims of Domestic Violence. This report is an activity that helps in realizing the second objective of the project.

The overall objectives were to be achieved through: **i) informative and educational activities** through various communication channels with various groups working with AWEN member organizations such as: poor women, roma women and girls, women victims trafficking, women victims of GBV and domestic violence, women living in rural and remote areas, etc. Regarding their rights in terms of access to justice, legal, economic and cultural barriers, as well as in relation to the results the monitoring of the relevant legal framework; **ii) Monitoring the implementation of the legal framework** and assessing obstacles to access to justice in order to identify problems related to the special needs of disadvantaged groups; **iii) Advocacy for completing and improving the legal framework** to address key issues related to the special needs of disadvantaged groups, through meetings with implementing and decision-making institutions, as well as international institutions. These intrusive methods ensure the achievement of the strategic goal as a result of some strong strategic elements such as: wide public information coverage with a focus on disadvantaged groups, through 9 AWEN member organizations that have extensive experience in the work with disadvantaged groups in urban and rural areas; the previous experience of members and AWEN in monitoring the implementation of legislation and the assessment / identification of inhibitory factors that put vulnerable groups in a difficult position with regard to access to justice; AWEN's extensive



geographical coverage in 8 districts of the country; Use of audio-visual media especially locally through member organizations of AWEN

Regarding the second target of intervention, AWEN, through member organizations aimed at realizing an assessment process by citizens themselves through a questionnaire, distributing information to the actors involved and addressing legal, economic and cultural barriers to access to justice for disadvantaged groups at a local and central level through litigation and advocacy, based on findings from the civic observatory.

The cities where the monitoring process was implemented are: Elbasan, Durrës, Vlora, Saranda, Peshkopi, Shkodra, Pogradec, Korça.

The findings of this report are of particular importance when it comes to addressing the obstacles and main issues of access to justice for disadvantaged groups. Very often, some of the obstacles are imposed by local structures, along with central structures. That is why litigation of some concerns at the local level is very important. Based on the findings of this report, AWEN members will hold advocacy meetings with representatives of public institutions at local level in each target area. Some target structures are: courts, prosecution, social services, health structures, administrative units, police departments, etc. The Referral Mechanism for Victims of Domestic Violence will be one of the target structures in relation to their role in minimizing the factors hindering the victims of Domestic Violence to have access to justice. The aim is to inform all relevant institutions in their important role in improving access to justice for disadvantaged groups, avoiding reported / observed obstacles.

At the central level, advocacy efforts will follow the Coalition agenda: "Justice for All". AWEN and member organizations will be part of all initiatives to address issues arising from this process.



METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this report is to provide a clear picture of the issues affecting citizens who access our justice system in the 8 courts of the country (Durrës, Vlora, Elbasan, Pogradec, Korça, Saranda, Peshkopi, Shkodra), and measure quantitative terms the frequency with which problems and difficulties are encountered by the citizens.

This chapter provides a brief outline of the method used in view of the objectives and purpose of the assessment, describing its population, data analysis methods, ethical considerations and its limitations.

Research Typology - This evaluation report aims at achieving the above objectives through secondary analysis of statistical data, based on questionnaires completed by citizens in court proceedings, in 8 courts of the country (Durrës, Vlora, Elbasan, Pogradec, Korça, Saranda , Peshkopi, Shkodër).

Research tools and data collection -Analysis of data on different aspects and phases of access to justice, mainly in court proceedings at first instance courts, taking into account different characteristics of the citizens taken part in the survey (gender, residence, physical or mental disability, socio-economic status, etc.). The evaluation sample were the citizens who were (at the time of collecting data) involved in the court proceedings in the target 8 courts.

The questionnaire was administered by lawyers deployed at the courts in the Information Corners set up by the AWEN member organizations within the framework of this project. The distributed questionnaire collected some quantitative and qualitative data on key issues affecting citizens during the process of access to justice, such as: judicial procedure before coming to Court; access to information about the judicial process; details about the trial process; without / satisfaction with the court decision; knowledge of legislation regarding the issue at trial; difficulties in filing evidence and claims; financial difficulties in coping with court expenses; treatment by the state bodies involved and the behavior of the participants in the judicial process; representation in court, access to free legal aid; etc. For more see the questionnaire attached as an appendix to this report.



The population that took part in the research – The population that was consulted to come up with the findings of this report were 629 citizens which voluntarily became part of the survey in the 8 aimed courts. The collection of data was spread in a nearly even percentage for aimed city (chart 1).

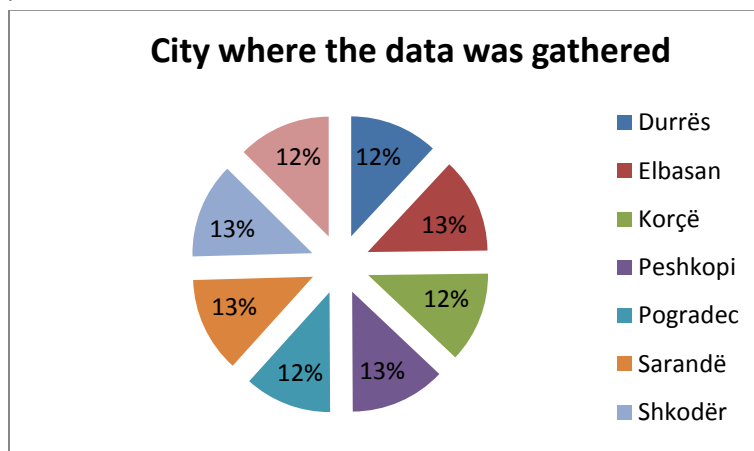


Chart no.1

Approximately 1/4 of people that took the survey (25%) belong to the 59-70 age group, while there is almost equal representation among 49-58 year olds, 39-48 years old and 29-38 (21%, 19%, 19% respectively). Citizens aged 18-28 are the least in the population of the study (16%).

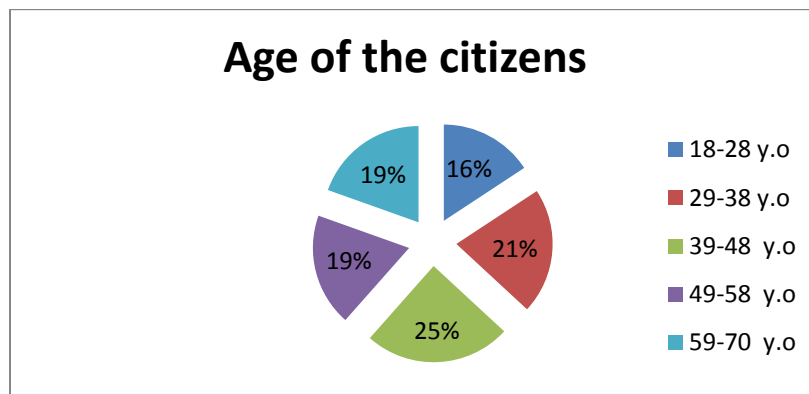


Chart no.2



The gender balance among the citizens that took part in the survey results to be achieved successfully, with a difference of only 4% between the **representations of the two sexes**. In total, there are 31 women interviewed more than men during the civic observatory in the courts. Regarding demographic data, information was also collected about the **residency** of the people taking part in the survey, where it resulted that 2/3 of the population resided in the city, while the rest in the rural areas of the targeted municipalities.

From chart no.3 below, we learn that the vast majority of people taking part in the survey, 63.4% claim to be married, approximately 20% unmarried and about 13% divorced. Data on the employment status of the citizens (Chart 4) show that the number of employed and unemployed people is more or less the same for both categories, meanwhile 9.9% of the population that took part in the survey are retired.

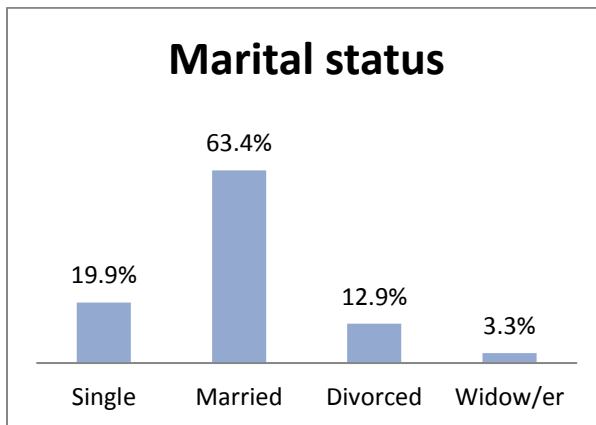


Chart 3

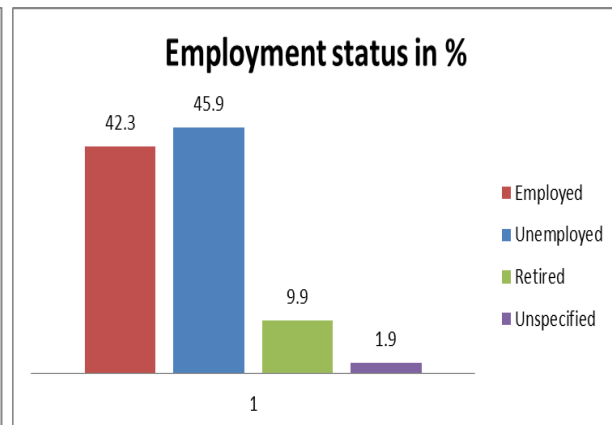


Chart 4

For us it was of interest to gather information about the factors of vulnerability (physical / mental disability, economic need / etc) of the people taking part in the survey (Chart 5). While 76.6% of the citizens do not declare to be part of a vulnerability category, nearly 20% of them state that they are in a difficult financial situation (economic need) and only 3.7% suffer from physical disabilities.

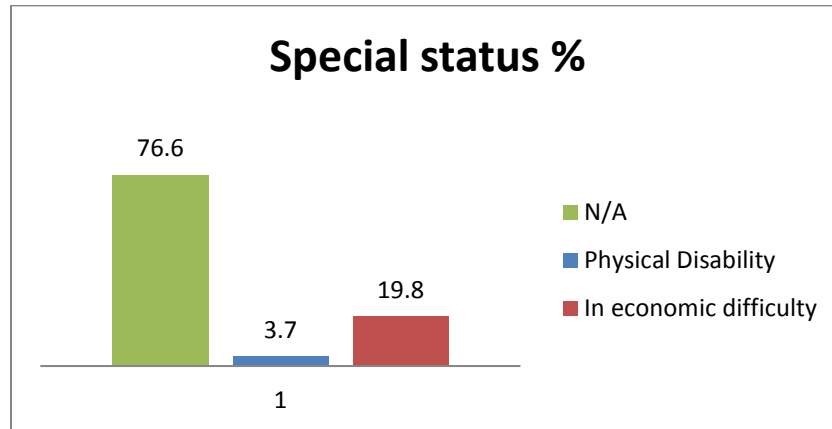


Chart 5

Ethical considerations - In the pursuit and respect of ethical principles, all the citizens that took part in the survey were informed about the contribution expected from them. It was made clear to assessment subjects that their participation was not mandatory and it was their right not to participate or to withdraw from the survey at any time, or the right not to answer questions that could be sensitive to them.

A great amount of care was shown to ethical considerations, such as confidentiality and good faith - the data obtained for the purpose of this assessment were treated in anonymity and in complete confidence and were not used for other purposes than the one disclosed.

Limitations - This report does not aim to generalize its findings beyond the target group being studied. All opinions shared by the subjects of this assessment are preserved in their original form and cannot be generalized beyond the cases studied. Specifically, AWEN is mindful of the limitations of this study, stemming from the difficulty of collecting data and statistics at a wider level.



FINDINGS: DATA ANALYSIS

Below you will find the survey findings, divided in 5 subsections for ease of interpretation and categorization.

- i. The initiation and nature of judicial proceedings
- ii. Institutional assistance to citizens
- iii. Prior Information of Citizens
- iv. Perceptions and experiences related to the judicial process
- v. Citizens' evaluation about professionals and expenses

i) The initiation and nature of judicial proceedings

During the survey, information was gathered around the links and various moments of the judicial process, in order to have a clearer understanding of citizens' experiences in the targeted courts. According to the information provided by the citizens that took part in the survey (Chart 6), results that 1/2 of the ongoing trial / finished trial cases in which they are involved are civil cases, 20% are criminal cases, 22% family cases and 7 % trade issues.

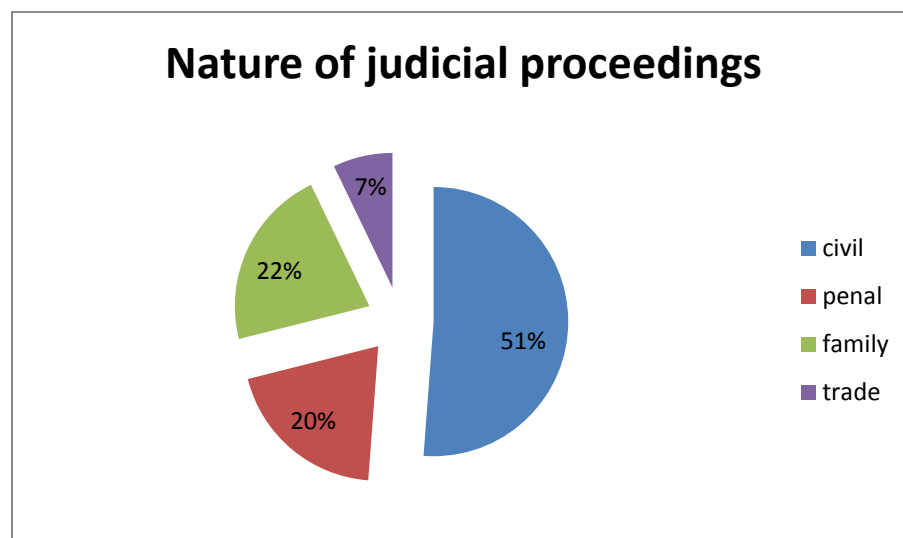
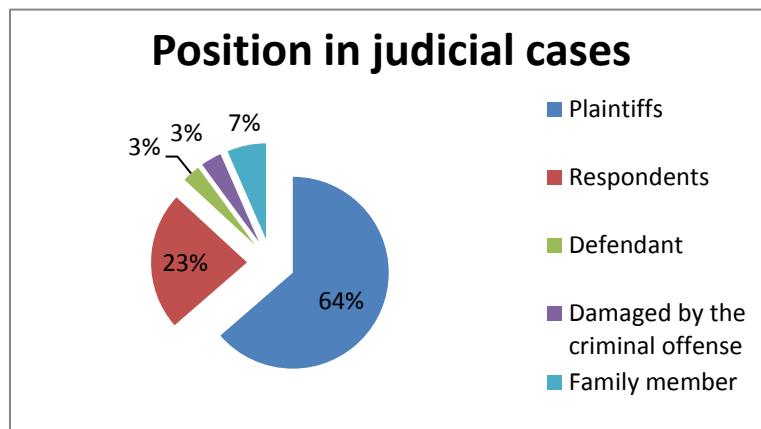


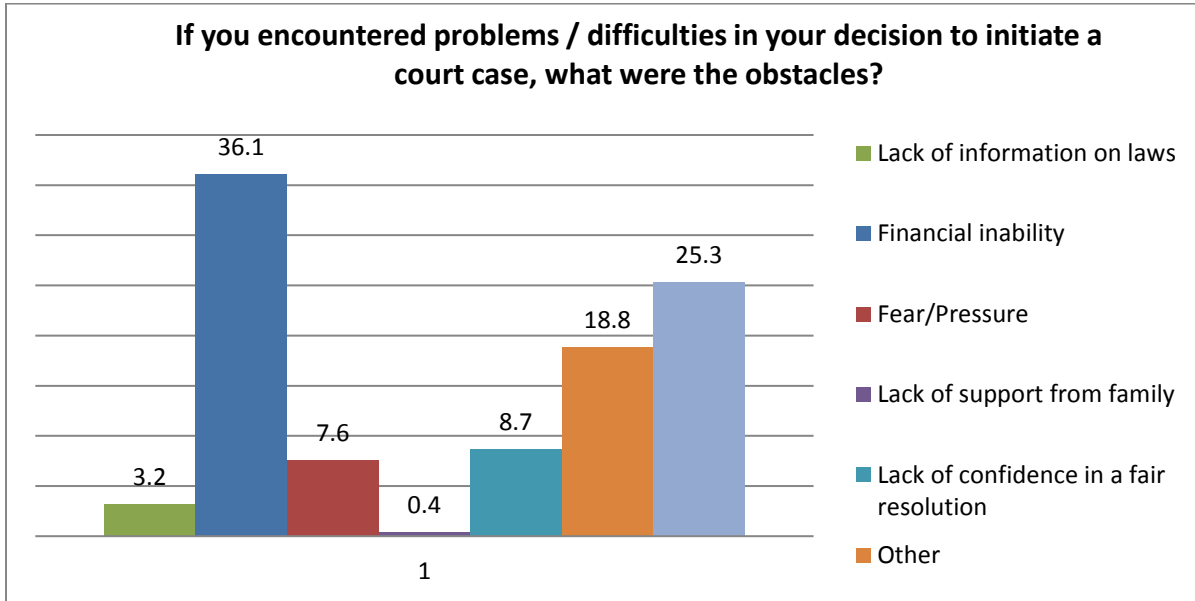
Chart 6



Citizens that took part in the survey were also asked about their position in judicial cases. 64% of them are plaintiffs, 23% are respondents, while defendants and damaged by criminal offence are 3% of citizens respectively (Chart 7).



Initiating a judicial process is often a major challenge for citizens, starting with filing the request to the court, as they may face a number of other obstacles/barriers. Asked about the difficulties they had during the process of decision-making for starting the process, we note that the most commonly encountered obstacles by the citizens answering this question are financial inability (36.1%), lack of confidence in a fair resolution (8.7%), as well as fear/pressure at 7.6%. ¼ of citizens report that they did not have any specific obstacles.



Grafik 8

Regarding the representation in court of citizens surveyed (Figure 9), 71.4% of them state that they were represented by a lawyer and 23.2% have defended their case without the presence of a lawyer. About 3% were assisted by family members during the process.

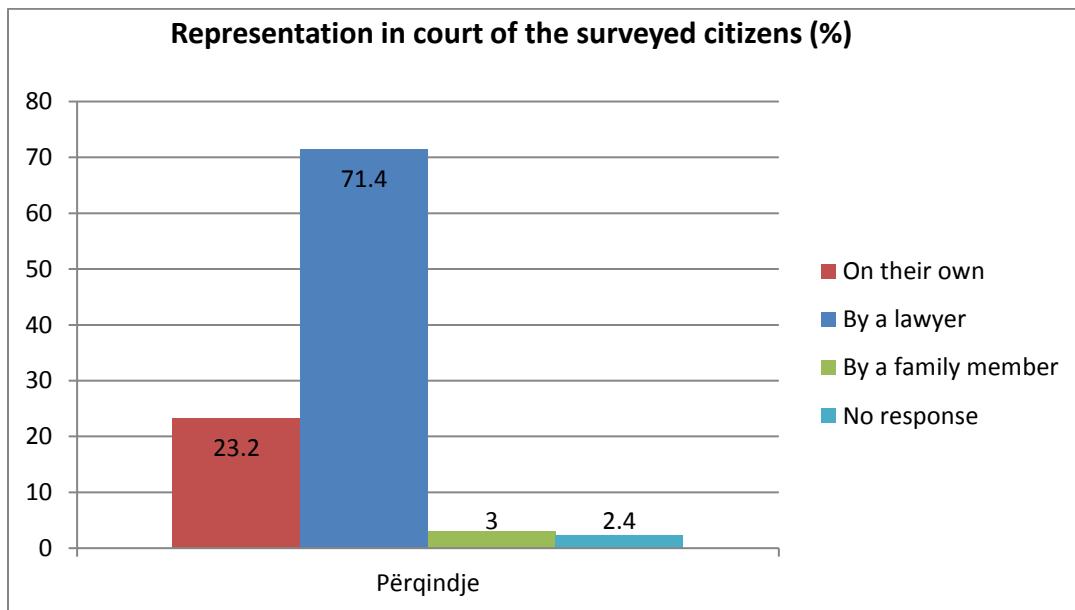


Chart 9

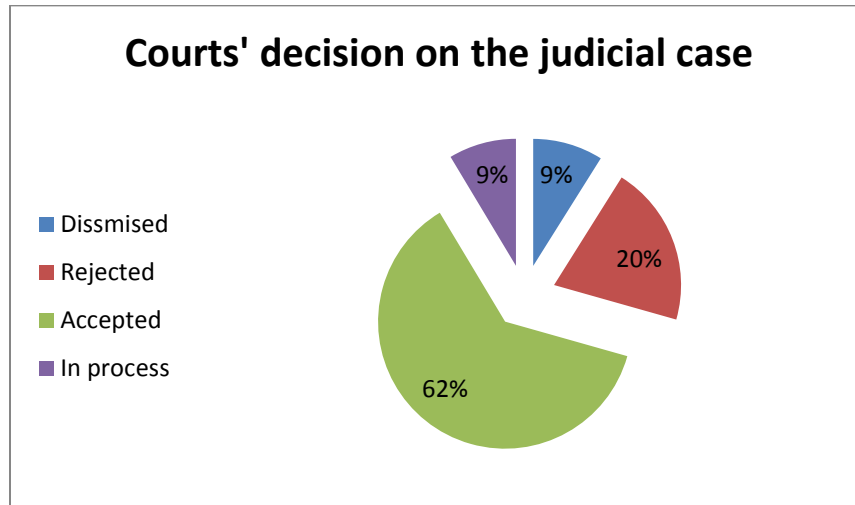


Chart 10

It was also of interest to gather information about the court's decision on the judicial case (see chart 10), apart from the process as a whole (addressed in the following subsections of the Findings section). Citizens report that in 62% of the cases the request was accepted, in 20% of the cases it has been rejected, in 9% of the cases is dismissed and 9% is in the process.

i) Institutional assistance to citizens

Filing the request to address the court is the first link to initiate a judicial process. Often the fulfillment of this requirement is difficult to be done accurately, so from AWEN's lawyers experience we know that in most cases citizens choose to be assisted by lawyers when filing the claim. The results of our survey (Graph 11) confirm the same tendency, with 68% of people that took part in the survey who meet the request through a lawyer, of whom 8.7% were assisted by a state lawyer and others by the lawyer chosen by them. 16.5% of citizens have fulfilled by themselves the request to address the court, 6.8% were assisted by third parties, and 7.2% were assisted by an association/non-profit organization.

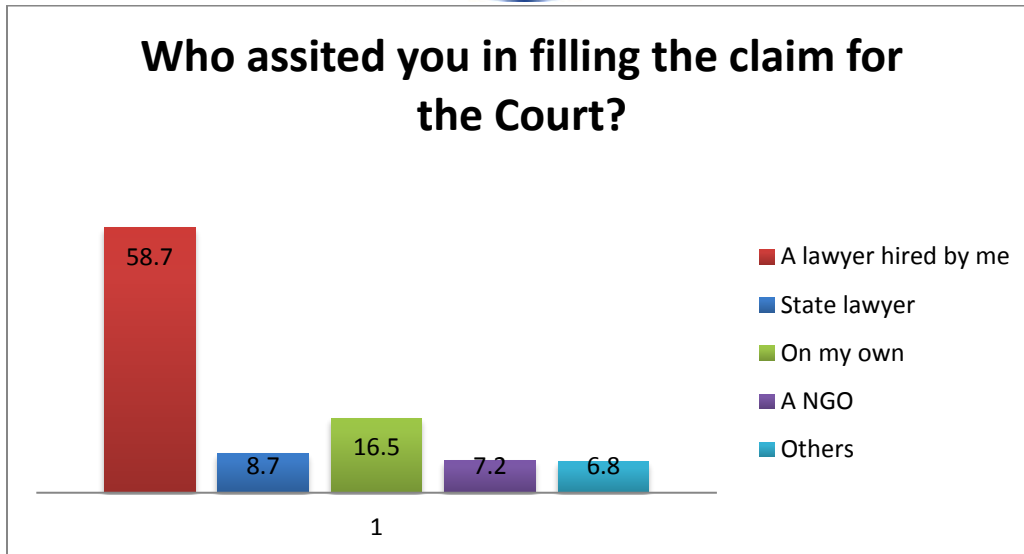


Chart 11

A very important factor in judicial proceedings is also the **assistance provided to protect children** in cases when they are part of the process. In 64% of the cases involving the citizens that took part in the survey, there were children involved and results that in all cases where there were minor children, they were assisted by a psychologist, thus respecting the legal obligation to handle the cases involving children under 18 years old.

i) Prior Information of citizens

Access to justice for citizens and the quality of service received from the judiciary are closely related to their access to information. Information regarding citizens' rights, the procedures to be followed, the obligations that all parties have during/after a judicial proceeding are a key factor to initiate and end the judicial proceedings in conformity with the law. One of the duties of the court to which the citizen is addressed is information about his/her rights during the judicial proceeding. Only 14% of the citizens that took part in the survey report that they did not receive any information from the court regarding the rights they have during the judicial process (chart 12). Asked whether they had/received enough information on the judicial proceedings before coming to trial, 81% of the citizens that took part in the survey state that they have received such information (see chart 13).

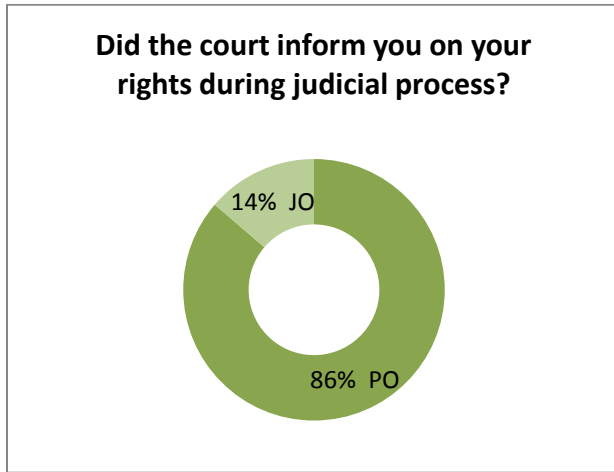


Chart 12

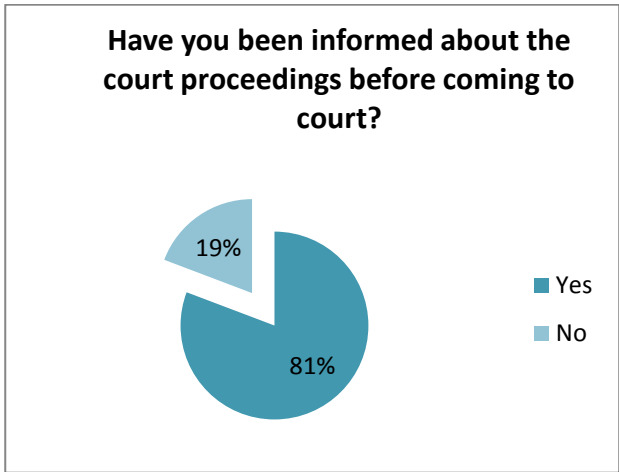


Chart 13

The most widespread manner of citizen's notification by the court regarding the time and date of the trial is through the summons (46.9%). Notification through the defense lawyer is the second most common way ascertained by the citizens that took part in the survey (26.9%), while 9.2% declare that they have been notified by phone. While only 3.2% were reported through the online system, 9.4% of citizens state that they have not been notified in any form so they have not received any notification regarding the date and time of the trial (Graph 14).

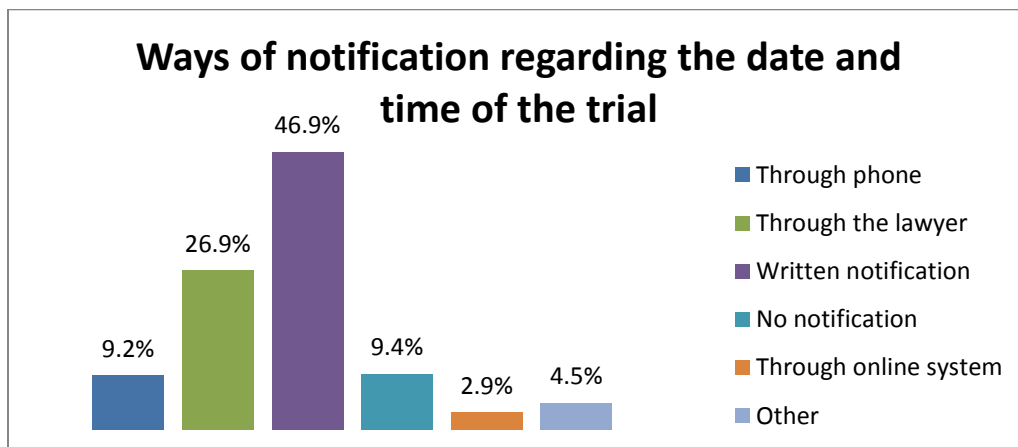


Chart 14

Among other things, key information is even the information about the citizen's right to object to the court's decision regarding the case that is being judged. 1/5 of citizens state that they



have not received information regarding their right (Chart 15). One of the other rights of the citizens is that of obtaining the acts of their file. It is to be worried by the fact that 31% of them state that they are unaware of this right, so that right has not been communicated by the court (chart 16).

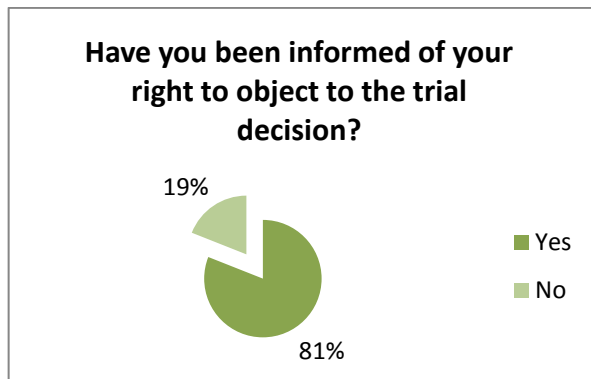


Chart 15

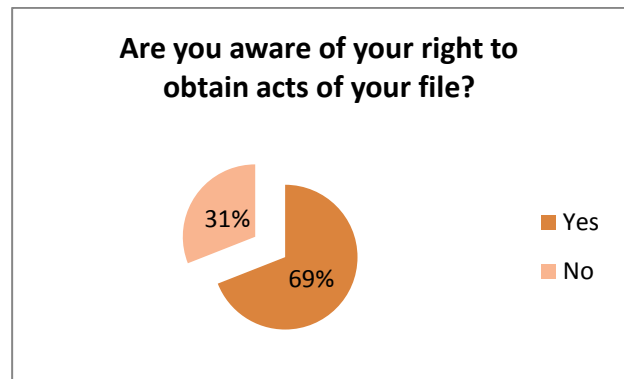


Chart 16

The right to free legal aid, when citizens state that they have difficulty in hiring a lawyer for the defense of their case, is a legally guaranteed right, if he meets the conditions and documentation relevant for obtaining such relief. From our civic observatory survey (Chart 17) it results that 71% of citizens were not informed by the Court about this possibility. Citizens were also asked whether they are aware of associations that can provide free legal aid to those people who need this service but are not in a position to afford a lawyer (see chart 18). 42% of citizens say they are aware of this fact, which is a relatively high percentage.

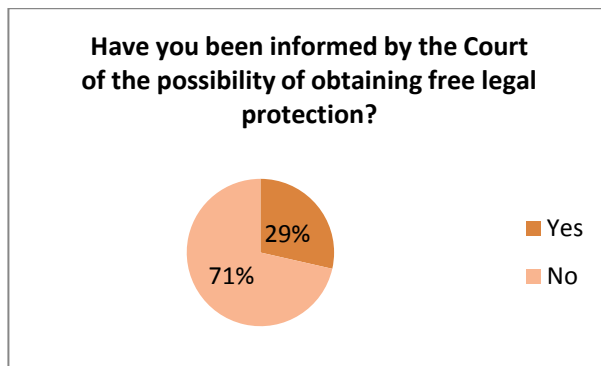


Chart 17

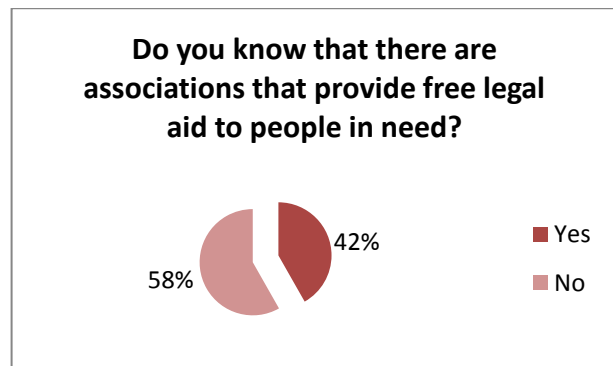


Chart 18

i) Perceptions and experiences regarding the judicial process



Judicial processes are new experiences for many citizens and if they do not have the proper information or assistance these experiences can be difficult and unclear to them. The language used by the court during the judicial process for 23% of the citizens has been very difficult to understand, a statement that expresses the need for more clarity and simplicity expressed during the judicial proceedings. This percentage is approximate for all citizens, regardless of whether or not they are represented with a defense lawyer (Chart 19).

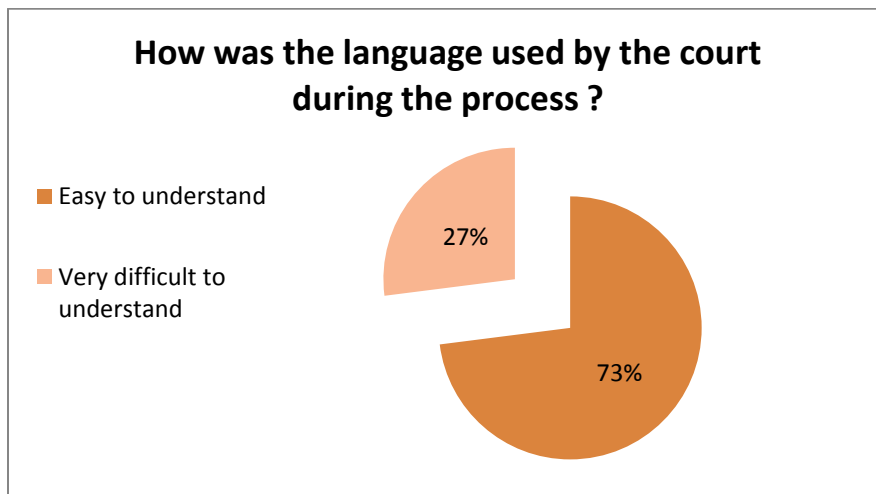


Chart 19

¾ of the citizens state that they felt the necessity of the presence of a defense lawyer in the judicial process, while only 21% stated that they did not deem it necessary. Citizens who are not represented with a defense lawyer in court result to have felt the necessity of the presence of a defense lawyer at a higher percentage than citizens with a defense lawyer (54.1% versus 45.9%). Even the citizens represented by their family members (3% of the total) say they felt this need (78.4% of them). The same tendency (need for a lawyer) is also observed among 81% of citizens who have been equipped with a lawyer.

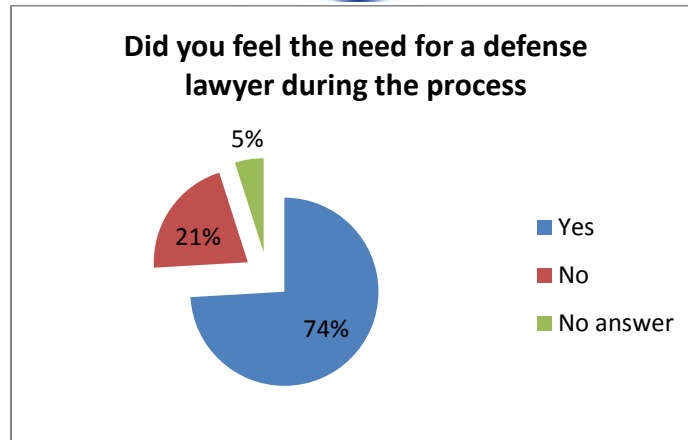


Chart 20

Citizens should be given the opportunity to express their opinion on the problem they are trying to resolve through the court. From the Civic Observatory (Chart 21), it results that 25.8% have managed to express very well what they wanted during the trial, while 55.3% say they have expressed enough. 17.8% stated that they did not express what they wanted and the data shows that among the citizens who have not been represented by a defense lawyer; only 18.6% of them make such a statement, a percentage that is slightly higher than the citizens who have been represented by a defense lawyer (17.2%). Only 20% of citizens said they had difficulty presenting their evidence and claims in front of the court.

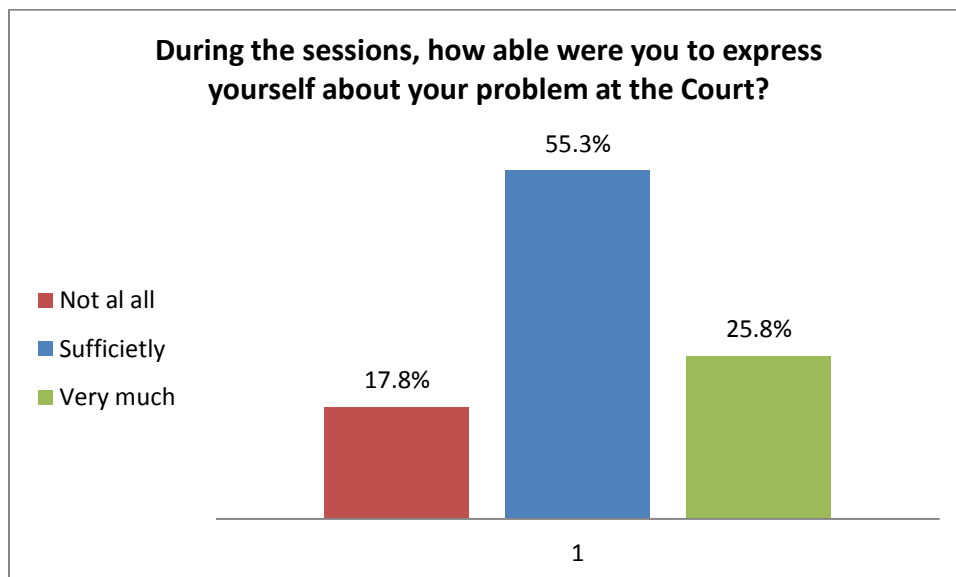


Chart 21



Half of the citizens that took part in the survey state that the court's decision has given a definite resolution to their claim, while a very high percentage of citizens (43%) estimate that the court's decision has not given final settlement to their claim.

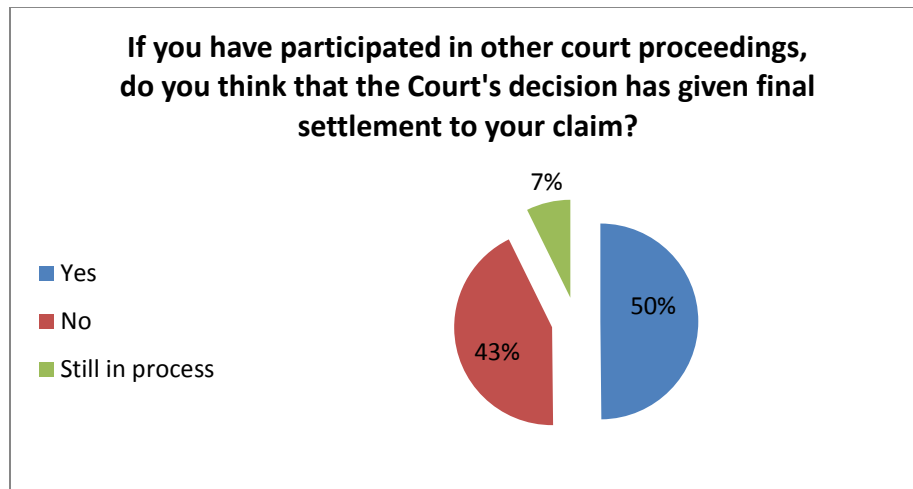


Chart 22

v) Citizens' evaluation about professionals and expenses

A high percentage of citizens (about 31%) claim that they have not been treated with respect, dignity and justice by the state authorities they are addressing to resolve their problem (court, prosecution). Viewed from a gender perspective, a slightly higher percentage of men (16.1% versus 14.5%) reported that they were not treated with respect, dignity and justice by state organs. Whereas, referring to the citizens with a special status (physical disability and economic need), it results that there is no significant difference in the way of treatment among citizens who do not have a special status (Chart 23).

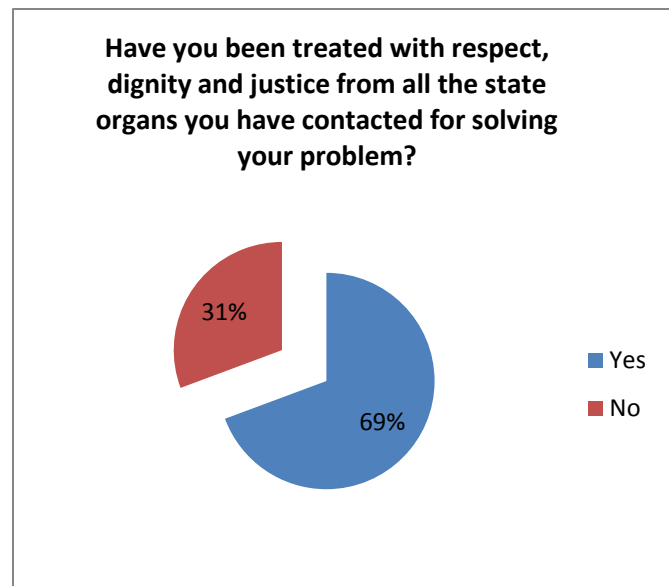


Chart 23



Citizens in target municipalities, part of this civic observatory, were asked to make an assessment of the performance and professionalism of some key actors (secretary of the session, judge, lawyer, judicial secretary, prosecutor and expert) throughout the judicial process they are going through or ended. While none of the citizens give maximum points to any of the court professionals, the highest rating (roughly 7.3 points out of 10 points) is received by the secretary of the trial, the Secretary of the Court and the lawyer. Not very poorly are evaluated judges (6.5 points), with 5.5 points experts. The lowest rating by citizens is given to the prosecutors of cases, seen as less profitable professionals than all other actors involved in judicial proceedings.

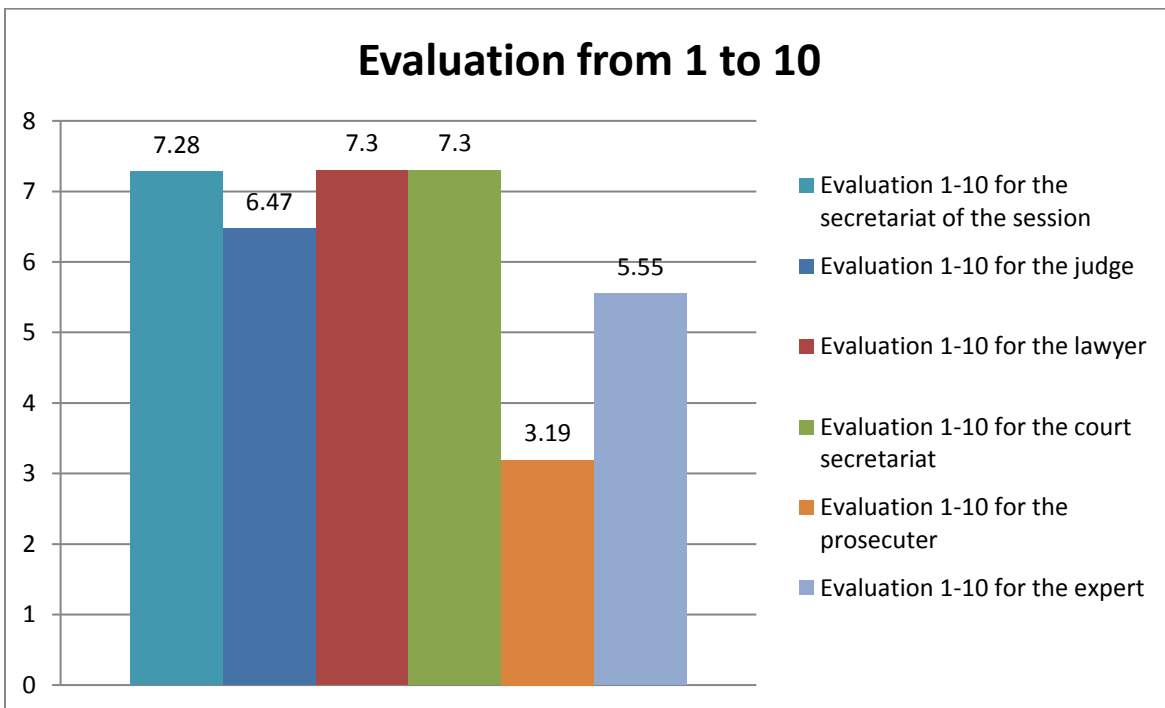


Chart 24

Costs related to judicial proceedings are an issue that often worries the citizens, especially those most vulnerable. We were interested in understanding what their assessment was for some inevitable expenses for initiating and ending a judicial process. While slightly more than half of citizens estimate the cost of juridical fees/taxes (Chart 24) affordable or normal, 41.7% of them estimate them to be too high, so unaffordable. From the data it results that there is no significant difference in percentage between the citizens in need and those without special status.

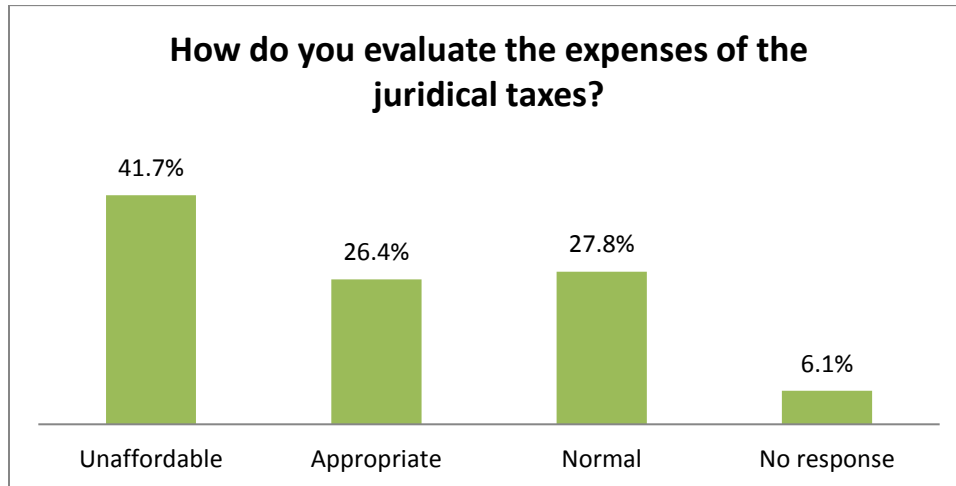


Chart 25

Expenses for defense lawyer and for the expert are also considered as unaffordable by 40% of the interviewed citizens, with the highest percentage among economically-needed citizens only for lawyer expenses (45% of citizens in need).



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the assessment of all findings arising from the field data collection process and the direct and indirect recommendations given by the citizens that took part in the survey the main recommendations are:

- There is need to review the mandatory court fees for vulnerable categories, whom are also excluded from national taxes.
- Creating the possibility of free legal aid for vulnerable categories by increasing access to information regarding the benefits and importance of being represented in trial through a lawyer.
- The courts should accelerate the process of informing the citizens on their right to benefit from free legal aid, as stated in the Law on Free Legal Aid (which enters into force in June 2018).
- Ensure the psychological assessment and psychological assistance of minors at each stage of the investigation and trial through specialist support (psychologists), as provided for in the Juvenile Justice Code.
- Improve the citizens' information procedure on the right to appeal court decisions, the respective deadlines, as well as the specific courts they should address.
- Improve legislative techniques during the judicial process in order for them to be more understandable and efficient for the citizens.
- Create opportunities for educating citizens on how to present/report explanations and facts to the court.
- Courts should give citizens the opportunity to clarify important details and essential circumstances about their case, regardless of whether or not they are represented by a lawyer.
- Improve the drafting of court decisions, by not ignoring the cause and purpose that both conflicting parties present during the judicial processes.
- Prosecutors need to improve interaction with citizens, especially in regards to respecting their dignity, their rights and their freedom.
- Reduce and make public the expert and lawyer fees for vulnerable categories that experience economic constraints, so they can respond to the financial obligations during court proceedings.



APPENDIX 1. CIVIC OBSERVATORY ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE

This questionnaire was prepared in the framework of a project focused on citizens' access to justice, implemented by AWEN – Albanian Women Empowerment Network in cooperation with member organizations in 8 Districts of Albania and supported by the “Justice for All” Coalition with USAID funds. Through this questionnaire, it is aimed to gather information from citizens themselves about their experience in the judicial system. The findings will be used to draw up a brief report with particular attention to the challenges and difficulties faced by citizens during the judicial proceedings. The report produced will be used to advocate at the local and central level on improving the quality of access to justice for citizens.

The collected data will be treated in the anonymous, so it is not necessary to enter your name. A legal specialist of the ___ association will guide you and assist you in completing the questionnaire. Thank you in advance for your valuable contribution!

Personal Data

Your age: 18-28 years 28-38 year 38-48years 48-58 years 58-70 years

Gender: Female Male Employment status: _____ Profession: _____

Residence: City Village Marital status: _____

Special status (Physical disability/ mental, economical need / ect _____)

1. Can you determine the nature of the trial of your court case?

- civil lawsuit Criminal Trial - Family Trial -Trade

2. What was your position in the court process? (if you want to provide your information)

- Plaintiff - Accused - Defendant - Damaged by the criminal act - Familiar

3. Who helped you in the completion of your request to address the Court?



-Counsel hired by you - State's lawyer Yourself -An association -Other

4. Were you informed about the court proceedings before coming to court?

a) Yes b) No

If yes, what did the information you received consist of?

- a) The form of the act I will present to the court
- b) In the trial schedule
- c) In the notice manner
- d) In the decision the Court would issue
- e) All the information
- f) None of these
- g) Other

5. How were you notified of the date and time of the trial?

- a) Through the phone
- b) Through the lawyer
- c) Summons
- d) Was not informed
- e) Through the Court's online system
- f) Other

6. Did you find it hard to come to court on time?

a) Yes b) No

7. How long did you wait for your trial to begin?

a) On time b) 15 min c) 30 min d) More than 30 min

8. What expectations do you have regarding the decision that the Court has given / will give?

a) No expectation b) good c) bad d) not pronounced



9. If you have been involved in other court proceedings, the decision taken was;

a) In your favor: No decision One decision More than 1 decision

b) Against you: Asnjë vendim One decision More than 1 decision

10. Do you think that the decision of the Court has given the final solution to your claim (concern, problem)? Give your suggestion

a) Yes b) No

11. Was the language used by the court during the process understandable by you? Give explanations why.

a) It was easy to understand b) It was too difficult to understand

12. Did the Court inform you of your rights during the trial?

a) Yes b) No

13. During the sessions were you able to express everything you thought about your problem at the Court? If you have not been heard during the process, explain why.

a) Not at all b) Enough c) Very well

14. Have you received advice from employees about how you should behave in court?

a) Not at all b) Enough c) Very well advised Other _____

15. Did the Court issue a decision to you?

a) Was dismissed b) Was dropped c) Was accepted

16. Do you have information on the relevant legislation regarding your case?

a) No b) A little c) Enough d) Very well informed

17. Did you encounter difficulties in submitting your evidence and claims to the Court?

a) Yes b) No



If so, can you list 3 obstacles?

a) _____ b) _____ c) _____

18. Have you encountered problems / difficulties in your decision to initiate a court case?

a) Yes b) No

If so, what kind of obstacles did you encounter?

a) Lack of information on the law b) Financial inability c) Fear / pressure

d) Lack of family support e) Lack of confidence for a fair resolution

f) Other _____

19. Did you represent yourself in trial or have a defense lawyer?

a) Myself b) Defense lawyer c) family member

20. Did you feel the need for a defense lawyer during your trial?

a) Yes b) No

21. How do you estimate compulsory court expenses?

Court tax: Unaffordable Appropriate Normal

Attorney's payment: Unaffordable Appropriate Normal

Expert payment: Unaffordable Appropriate Normal

22. Have you felt pressured for other out-of-court expenses during the course of the process?

a) Yes b) No

If yes, from whom has this pressure come from? _____

23. Have you been informed by the Court of the possibility of obtaining free legal aid? Give explanations if yes.

a) Yes b) No

24. Have you been treated with respect, dignity and justice from all the state bodies you have contacted for solving your problem? Please comment.



a) Yes b) No

25. Determine the level of behavior of participants in the court process against you, from 1 to 10 (where 1 is "bad" and 10 "very good"):

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| - Secretary of the trial | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Prosecutor of the case | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - Judge | | - Opposing Party | |
| - Secretary of the court | <input type="checkbox"/> | - Experts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - Lawyer /s | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

26. Have your children been part of the court process?

a) Yes b) No

If so, were you assisted by a psychologist?

27. Are you aware of your right to obtain the acts of your file?

a) Yes b) No

28. Have you been informed of your right to oppose the trial decision?

a) Yes b) No

29. Do you know that there are associations that provide free legal aid to people in need?

a) Yes b) No

Thank you for your time!