

Perceptions and Practices Related to European Public Administration Standards in Kosovo: A Scientific Study

Albulena Brestovci*, Zemri Elezi¹

¹ Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences - Governance and Public Administration, SOUTH EAST EUROPIAN UNIVERSITY – SEEU- Tetovo

*(ab29087@seeu.edu.mk)

(Received:20 May 2024, Accepted:31 May 2024)

(3rd International Conference on Engineering, Natural and Social Sciences ICENSOS 2024, May 16-17, 2024)

ATIF/REFERENCE: Brestovci, A. & Elezi, Z. (2024). Perceptions and Practices Related to European Public Administration Standards in Kosovo: A Scientific Study. *International Journal of Advanced Natural Sciences and Engineering Researches*, 8(4), 511-520.

Abstract – The perception and implementation of European standardization in public administration in Kosovo is an important issue for citizens and local policymakers. This scholarly article aims to analyze this topic based on a multidisciplinary approach that includes political science, sociology, and public administration. In this study, we benefit from a wide range of sources, including public opinion research, surveys, and community-level analyses. The use of scientific methodologies such as interviews, field research, and statistical analyses allows us to identify key perceptions, attitudes, and challenges faced by public administration in meeting European standards. This process is crucial for understanding the usability, reliability, and effectiveness of public institutions in the country, as well as for identifying challenges and opportunities in meeting European standards.

A critical part of this process is assessing citizens' perceptions of public administration and Kosovo's efforts to meet European standards. Public opinion research, surveys, and community-level analyses are the primary tools for obtaining an overview of citizens' opinions and concerns regarding this issue. On the other hand, to evaluate the perspectives of implementing European standardization in public administration, it is important to research institutional capacity, personnel training, and the adaptation of legislation and policies. This includes particular attention to the need for developing the capacity of public administration and strengthening the legal system and law enforcement in line with European standards.

In conclusion, achieving successful European standardization of public administration in Kosovo requires a multidisciplinary and scientific approach that encompasses the fields of social sciences, public policy, and administrative studies. This will help address complex challenges and determine effective strategies for the development and implementation of European standards in Kosovo's public administration. In conclusion, this scholarly analysis aims to make a significant contribution to the literature by addressing an important and current topic, such as European standardization of public administration in Kosovo. Based on a foundation of scholarly opinions and empirical research, we aim to provide a deeper understanding and sustainable strategies for the development and improvement of public administration in Kosovo in line with European standards.

Keywords – Standardization, Public Administration, Perceptions, Challenges, Development

I. INTRODUCTION

In Kosovo, one of the most fundamental challenges that society has faced is the standardization of public administration in line with European standards. This issue is not only an obligation to the international community but also a pathway towards the development of local institutions and societal progress. In this context, this study is dedicated to understanding deeply this challenge and analyzing the perceptions, attitudes, and challenges of public administration in Kosovo regarding European standards.

The main objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive and in-depth overview of the current reality of public administration in Kosovo in the European context. Through a thorough analysis of the perceptions of various social actors, such as citizens, representatives of public institutions, and experts, we aim to identify the main challenges and opportunities for improving this situation.

This study is crucial for understanding how public administration in Kosovo can effectively and sustainably meet European standards, thus improving the quality of public services and citizens' trust in local institutions. Furthermore, such an analysis will provide a significant contribution to the discussion and development of public policies in Kosovo in line with the country's European aspirations.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

Describe in detail the materials and methods used when conducting the study. The citations you make from different sources must be given and referenced in references.

Chapter I: Concepts and Development of Public Administration

Public administration is often considered the primary organ of governance in a country, which creates, implements, and manages public policies and services. The concept of public administration includes its organizational structures and functions, focusing on the organization of executive power and the provision of public services to citizens.

Historically, public administration in Kosovo has undergone a long and complex trajectory. Initially, after the Kosovo War in 1999, the United Nations established a temporary mission to manage the situation in the region and to assist in the formation of democratic institutions. This process began with the creation of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, which was based on international regulations and laws for justice and human rights.

1.1 Organization and Functioning of Public Administration in Kosovo

After Kosovo's independence in 2008, the process of developing public administration took a new direction. The Government of the Republic of Kosovo adopted the Law on the Organization and Functioning of Public Administration in 2019, establishing a legal basis for its sustainable functioning. This law establishes the structure and duties of public administration, ensuring a legal and transparent approach for citizens and other state institutions.

1.2 Development of Public Administration in Kosovo after Independence

After Kosovo's independence, the country began to build its own state institutions and create a more independent and effective administration. This included establishing new structures, recruiting necessary personnel, and improving administrative capacities to respond to the needs of citizens and good governance.

1.3 Relations and Reforms of Public Administration in Kosovo

The European Union has played a key role in supporting and monitoring public administration reforms in Kosovo. Through their reports and assessments, they have identified challenges and recommended actions to improve the efficiency and transparency of public administration.

1. In conclusion, the development of public administration in Kosovo is an ongoing process that requires commitment and collaboration from all interested parties. On the path towards a more

efficient and transparent administration, progress is possible through the implementation of appropriate reforms and the improvement of institutional and professional capacities.

Chapter II: Public Administration in Kosovo (1999-2024)

After the period of conflict and the consequences of the Kosovo War, public administration in Kosovo was established and developed in a context of reconstruction and stabilization of the country. This period was marked by a series of significant developments, ranging from the creation of basic institutions to the process of modernization and reform of public administration.

2.1 Establishment of Public Administration (1999-2008)

After the end of the conflict in Kosovo, a new process began to establish an independent public administration. This included the creation of basic state institutions, including the government, parliament, and structures of local administration. Fundamental laws were enacted to establish the legal basis for the functioning of public administration in Kosovo.

2.2 Development of Structures and Functioning of Public Administration (2008-2014)

After the declaration of Kosovo's independence in 2008, the process of development and functioning of public administration was accelerated. The creation of new departments and agencies, as well as the improvement of capacities and training of employees, were the main priorities during this period. Existing laws were amended and improved to meet European standards and increase efficiency and transparency in public administration.

2.3 Reform and Modernization of Public Administration (2014-2020)

During this period, Kosovo underwent a series of reforms and modernizations in public administration to meet European standards and prepare the country for European integration. These reforms included improving administrative processes, increasing transparency and accountability, as well as improving public services. Existing laws were amended to reflect these changes and ensure the effective functioning of public administration.

2.4 Recent Developments and Future Perspectives (2021-2024)

During this period, public administration in Kosovo has faced new challenges and opportunities to achieve the objectives and goals of ensuring more efficient, transparent, and accountable governance. Recent developments include improving information and communication technology, developing human capacities, and preparing for the European integration process.

CHAPTER III: Transformation of Public Administration in Kosovo: Challenges and Steps Forward

1. The Public Administration Reform (PAR) in Kosovo is a process aimed at increasing the efficiency and transparency of public services. However, past experiences and challenges have shown that this process is complex and difficult to fully realize. In this chapter, we will examine the main difficulties that have hindered the progress of Public Administration Reform in Kosovo and the steps necessary to move forward.
2. Politicization of Public Administration: One of the main challenges is the politicization of public administration, where employment and promotion of employees are often influenced by the political

preferences of parties. This has led to a lack of professionalism and objectivity in the provision of public services.

3. **Complex Recruitment and Evaluation Processes:** Recruitment and evaluation processes of employees are burdensome and non-transparent, allowing room for favoritism and corruption. This problem has resulted in public administration lacking an appropriate and qualified staff.
4. **Lack of Legal Framework and Efficient Structure:** The legal framework for the functioning of public administration is still chaotic and underdeveloped. An appropriate and efficient structure is necessary to ensure the functioning and accountability of public institutions.
5. **Nepotism and Lack of Meritocracy:** Public administration still suffers from nepotism and lack of meritocracy, with employees being selected based on personal and political connections, while neglecting professional competencies and skills.
6. **Lack of performance evaluation:** Another aspect of the challenges is the lack of performance evaluation of employees in the administration. This has meant that there is little incentive to improve work and public services.¹

In order to address these challenges and to move forward on the path of public administration reform in Kosovo, we suggest some important steps:

- **Professionalization and meritocracy:** It is important to increase professionalism in public administration by ensuring that employees are selected and promoted based on their merits and abilities, not based on political preferences.
- **Strengthening the legal framework:** The government must commit to drafting and implementing a clear and efficient legal framework for the functioning of the public administration.
- **Transparency and accountability:** It is important to ensure transparency and accountability in the processes of recruitment, evaluation of employees and provision of public services.
- **Employee capacity and training:** Investment in employee training and development is vital to ensure a public administration prepared and qualified to fulfill its duties.²
- **Approaching processes with international standards:** Public administration should approach international standards of well-being and efficiency, taking the best examples of practices from other countries.

If these steps are taken into consideration and implemented appropriately, they will help on the way to a more efficient, transparent and accountable public administration in Kosovo.

Chapter: Progress and Challenges in Local Governance and Civil Society Development in Kosovo

In 2023, Kosovo has experienced an important period of evaluating its progress in the field of local governance and civil society development. In this chapter, we will examine some of the most important data that characterize this report, including progress, challenges and recommendations for the future.

3.1. Progress in Local Government:³

Increased Budget and Subsidy for Municipalities: In 2023, the total budget of Kosovo increased, bringing a new opportunity for investment and local development. Subsidies to municipalities increased by 15%, reflecting efforts to improve local infrastructure and services.

¹ Ministry of Public Administration and Social Welfare Work. "Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022-2027."

² Democratic Institute of Kosovo. "Study on the Involvement of Women and Marginalized Communities in Local Government."

³ Council for Government-Civil Society Cooperation. "Annual Report on Government-Civil Society Cooperation in Kosovo."

Legislation for Decentralization and Governance Reform: Kosovo has taken steps towards the decentralization of competences in the field of social services, issuing laws for this purpose. However, the challenge remains in implementing these laws and ensuring sustainability of funding for social services.⁴

Local Elections and Electoral Reform: Electoral reform has brought forward steps with the adoption of new laws on the financing of political parties and the organization of general elections. However, low turnout in local elections is important for long-term political solutions in some municipalities.

3.2. Challenges in Local Government:

Inequalities Between Municipalities: Despite the increase in the budget, there has continued to be inequality in the performance and provision of services between municipalities. Concerns regarding the allocation of funds for capital investments must be addressed to ensure the equal development of all municipalities.

Implementation of Laws and Standards: Although Kosovo has issued laws on decentralization and electoral reform, their implementation remains a challenge. For example, the Local Government Finance Bill is not part of the 2023 legislative plan, raising concerns about the sustainability of funding for social services.

Participation of Women and Marginalized Communities: Equal representation of women and marginalized communities in decision-making processes and in local governance remains a challenge. A continuous effort is needed to ensure their participation and representation at the decision-making level.⁵

3.3. Recommendations for the Future:

Improving the Implementation of Laws and Standards: Kosovo should focus on the effective implementation of laws and standards established to improve local governance and civil society development.

Improving Participation and Representation: In particular, measures to increase the participation and representation of women and marginalized communities in decision-making processes and local institutions should be strengthened.

Strengthening Monitoring and Transparency: Kosovo should improve monitoring and transparency mechanisms in local governance to ensure full accountability and responsibility to citizens.

In conclusion, the progress and challenges in local governance and the development of civil society in Kosovo serve as a point of reference to identify areas for further improvements in the journey towards integration into the European Union.⁶

Chapter IV: Survey Data Analysis: Citizens' Perceptions Regarding European Public Administration Standards

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the survey data to reveal the perceptions and attitudes of the citizens of Kosovo regarding the European standards of public administration. Through an in-depth data processing, this analysis provides a clear understanding of public opinion and their expectations regarding reform efforts in public administration in line with European standards.

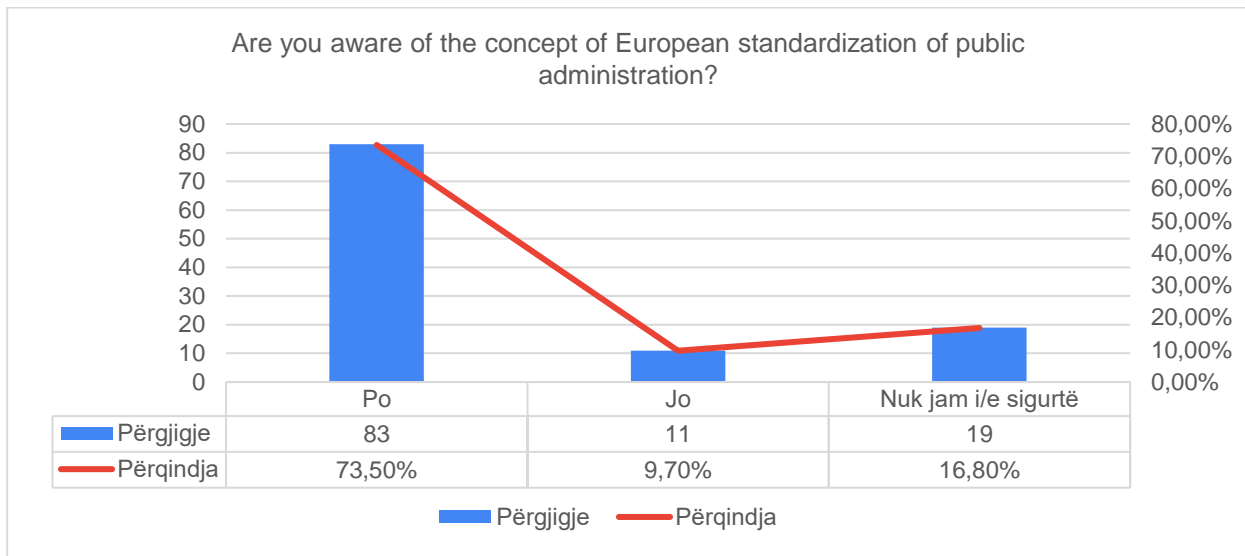
4.1. Knowing the Concept of European Standardization of Public Administration

The results of the questionnaire analysis show that a large majority of participants (73.5%) are aware of the concept of European standardization of public administration. This shows a high degree of citizens' awareness of efforts to align public administration practices with European standards.

⁴ "Kosovo Agency for Statistics. "Annual Report on Economic and Social Development in Kosovo."

⁵ "Center for the Protection of Integrity and Prevention of Conflicts of Interest. "Monitoring Compliance with the Code of Ethics in Public Procurement in Kosovo."

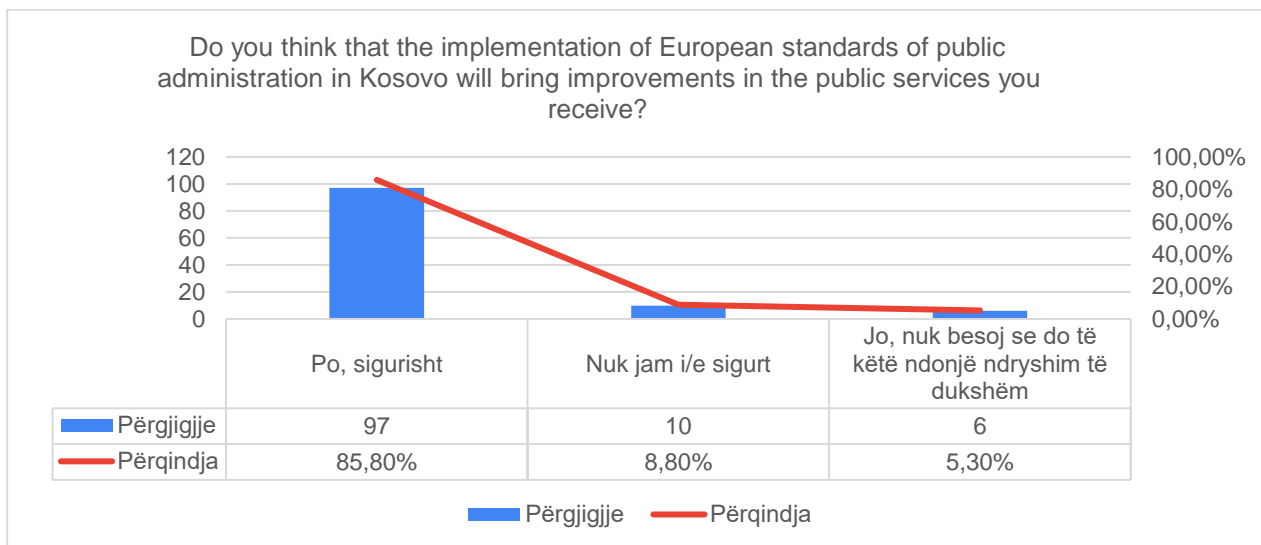
⁶ European union. "Energy Roadmap in the Normalization Dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia."



Graph 1. Statements of the respondents regarding the concept of European standardization of PA

4.2. Prishtina for Improvements in Public Services

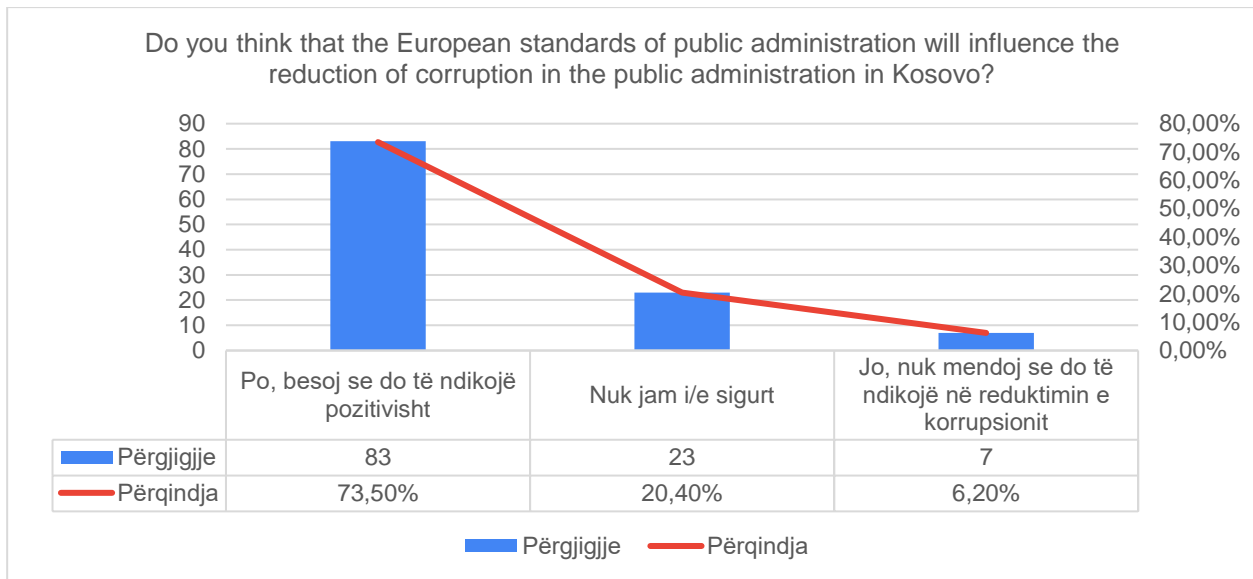
The results of the survey show that a large majority of Kosovo citizens (85.8%) believe that the implementation of European public administration standards would lead to improvements in public services in the country. This optimistic attitude of citizens promotes the idea that European standards can positively affect the improvement of the daily life of citizens.



Graph 2. Statements of respondents regarding the improvement of public services from the implementation of European standards

4.3. Belief in Reducing Corruption and Increasing Transparency

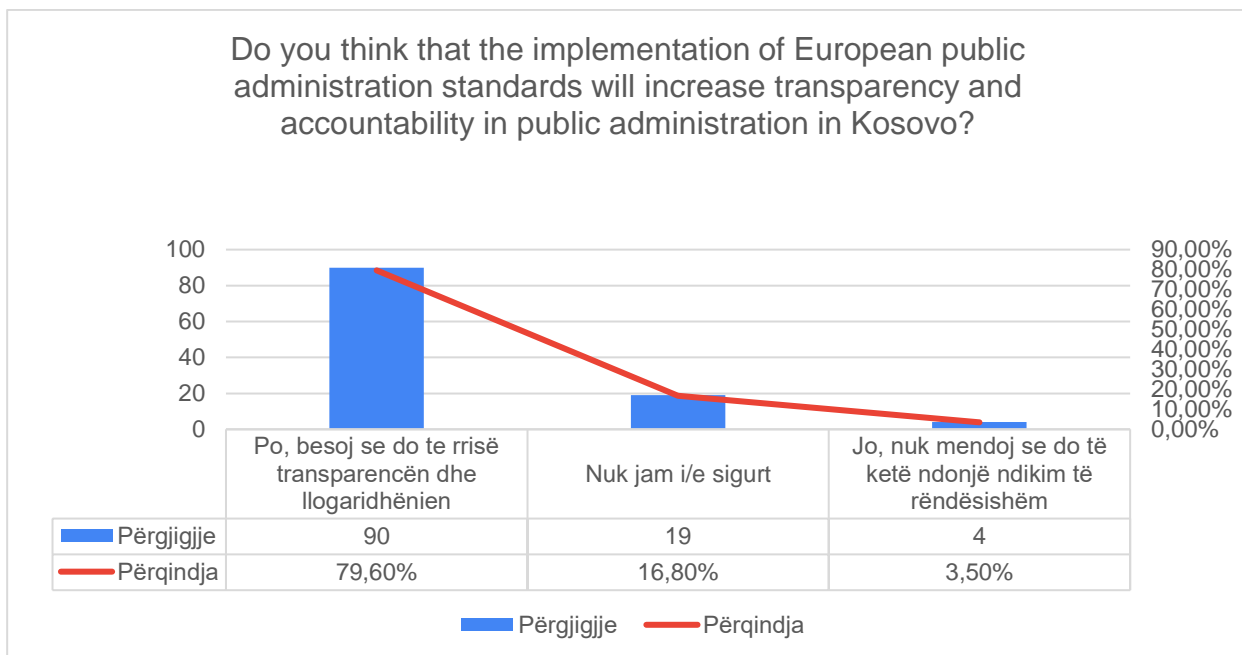
Data analysis shows that a majority of citizens (73.5%) believe that the implementation of European standards can help reduce corruption in Kosovo's public institutions. At the same time, a significant number of citizens (79.6%) express confidence in increasing transparency and accountability in the work of the public administration, emphasizing the need for a more open and responsible government.



Graph 3. Statements of respondents regarding the reduction of corruption from the implementation of European standards

4.4. Efficiency and Speed of Administrative Procedures

The results of the questionnaire analysis show a strong support from the citizens (85%) for increasing the efficiency and speed of administrative procedures with the implementation of European standards of public administration. This helps define the need for simple and fast governance processes that conform to international standards.



Graph 4. Statements of respondents regarding the increase in efficiency and speed of administrative procedures from the implementation of European standards

4.5. Culture of Service to Citizens and Businesses

The data analysis shows a strong belief of citizens (85.8%) in the fact that the implementation of European standards will have an impact on increasing the culture of service to citizens and businesses. This aspect

shows the need for a cultural change in the way the public administration serves and communicates with citizens and businesses.

In this chapter, the analysis of the survey data provides a detailed description of the perceptions and attitudes of the citizens of Kosovo regarding the European standards of public administration. These results provide a solid basis for understanding the needs and expectations of citizens in the process of public administration reform in accordance with European principles and standards.

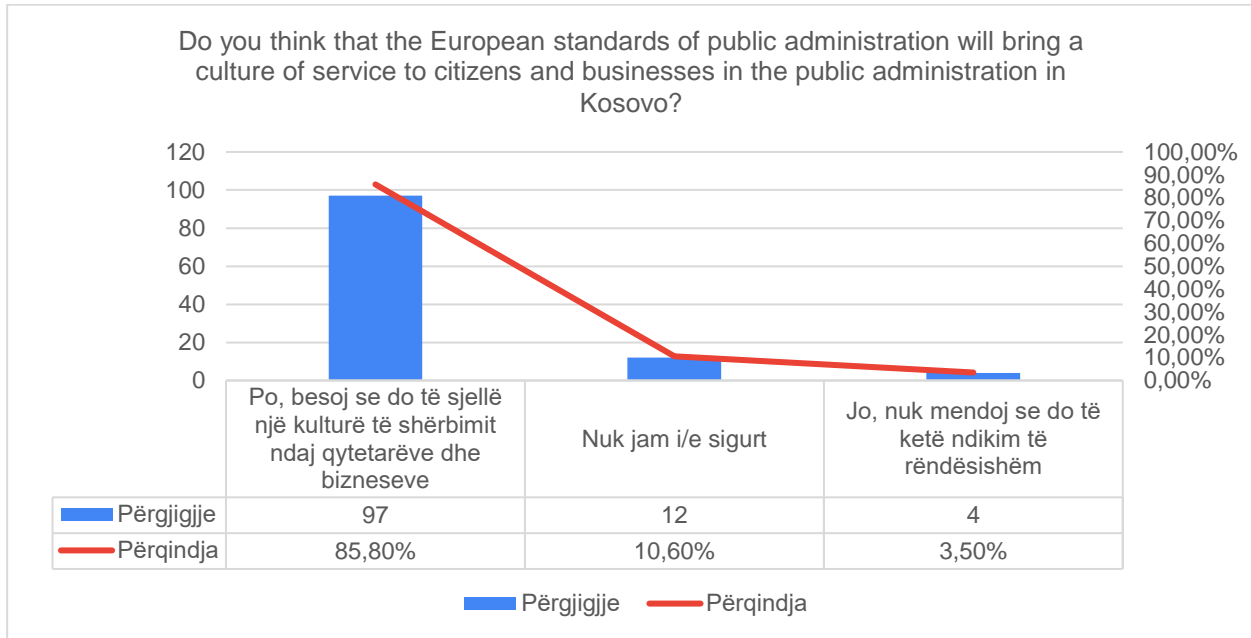


Chart 5. Statements of respondents regarding the culture of services to citizens and businesses from AP under the implementation of European standards

III. RESULTS

During the reporting period, significant progress was made in several key areas:

1. **Financial Allocation and Subsidies:** There has been an increase in the total budget and in the subsidies allocated to municipalities, indicating a commitment to local development and service provision.
2. **Legal Reforms:** Kosovo has adopted laws oriented towards decentralization and electoral reforms, showing efforts to comply with the criteria of integration into the European Union.
3. **Local Elections and Democratic Participation:** The electoral reform has improved the organization of local elections and increased transparency in democratic processes, leading to increased participation and legitimacy of local institutions.

Although there have been these advances, some challenges continue to exist:

1. **Inequality Between Municipalities:** Disparity in performance and service delivery between municipalities remains a concern, especially in relation to the direct allocation of capital investment funds.
2. **Implementation of Laws and Standards:** Although laws have been adopted, challenges continue in their effective implementation, highlighting the need for better coordination and monitoring mechanisms.
3. **Inclusion of Women and Marginalized Communities:** Women and marginalized communities continue to be marginalized in decision-making processes and local governance structures, compelled by ongoing efforts to ensure their equal participation.

To move forward, recommendations for improvement include:

1. **Improving the Implementation of Laws and Standards:** Strengthening institutional capacities to implement existing laws and standards in local government.
2. **Favoring Participation and Inclusive Representation:** Taking measures to increase the participation and representation of women and marginalized communities in decision-making processes and local institutions.

3. Monitoring and Transparency in Governance Processes: Development of strong monitoring and transparency mechanisms to ensure accountability and responsiveness to citizens' needs.

In conclusion, while there have been advances in local governance and civil society development in Kosovo, continued efforts are needed to achieve more effective governance and broader social inclusion in the future.

IV. DISCUSSION

The progress and challenges that Kosovo has faced in the field of local governance and civil society development in 2023, based on the European Union Country Report. The discussion highlights some key elements of progress and ongoing concerns to achieve effective governance and full inclusion of communities. In relation to progress, the increase in the budget and subsidy for municipalities, as well as the adoption of laws on decentralization and electoral reform, is emphasized. These positive steps mark a continuous commitment of Kosovo to advance on the path towards integration in the European Union. However, challenges remain. The discussion addresses the disparity between municipalities in performance and service delivery, highlighting the need to address the allocation of capital investment funds. Also, concerns regarding the implementation of laws and established standards, as well as the low representation of women and marginalized communities, are issues that require special attention, recommendations for the future, including improving the implementation of laws, strengthening participation and representation of marginalized communities, as well as monitoring and transparency of governance processes. These recommendations serve as a guide to achieve more effective local governance and a more involved civil society in the future.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the European Union report for Kosovo in 2023 marks a continuous effort to advance in the direction of effective local governance and to include civil society in decision-making processes. Progress in increasing the budget for municipalities, the adoption of laws on decentralization and electoral reform, and the commitment to EU integration show a clear goal to meet European standards and meet the needs of citizens.

However, the report also identifies major challenges facing Kosovo. Inequality between municipalities in the provision of services, limited implementation of laws and standards, and low representation of women and marginalized communities are challenges that must be addressed seriously.

Overall, in order to achieve more effective local governance and to fully involve civil society in decision-making processes, it is important that Kosovo continues to improve the implementation of laws, strengthen the participation and representation of marginalized communities, and ensure transparency and monitoring of governance processes. These steps would help build a more reliable and fair government for all citizens of Kosovo.

REFERENCES

- [1] Administrative Law. (2020). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/administrative-law>
- [2] Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo. (2019). Law on the State Administration of the Republic of Kosovo. Retrieved from https://mpb.rks-gov.net/Uploads/Documents/Pdf/Ligji_03_2019_shqip.pdf
- [3] Government of the Republic of Kosovo. (2000). Regulations of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo. Retrieved from <https://www.unmikonline.org/Regulations/2000/reg00-1.htm>
- [4] European Union. (2022). Report on Enlargement 2022: Kosovo. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/default/files/20220406-kosovo-report.pdf>
- [5] Rosenbloom, D. H., O'Leary, R., & Chanin, J. (2019). *Public Administration and Law*. Routledge.
- [6] Stillman, R. J. (2019). *Public Administration: Concepts and Cases*. Cengage Learning.
- [7] Shafritz, J. M., Russell, E. W., & Borick, C. P. (2019). *Introducing Public Administration*. Routledge.

- [8] Peters, B. G., & Pierre, J. (2019). *The SAGE Handbook of Public Administration*. SAGE Publications.
- [9] Durant, R. F., & Fiorino, D. J. (2017). *The Administrative Presidency Revisited: Public Lands, the BLM, and the Reagan Revolution*. University of Kansas Press.
- [10] Sopaj-Berisha, Arbenita. *Public Administration in Kosovo*. Pristina: Dukagjini Publications, 2017.
- [11] Rama, Bashkim. *Development of State Administration in Kosovo*. Pristina: Koha Publications, 2015.
- [12] Bajčinovci, Shqipe. *Public and State Administration in Kosovo*. Pristina: Democratic Institute of Kosovo, 2013.
- [13] Ramadani, Burim. *Public Administration Reform in Kosovo*. Prishtina: Institute for Political and International Studies, 2018.
- [14] Haliti, Xavit. *Structuring and Functioning of Public Administration in Kosovo*. Pristina: University of Pristina, 2016.