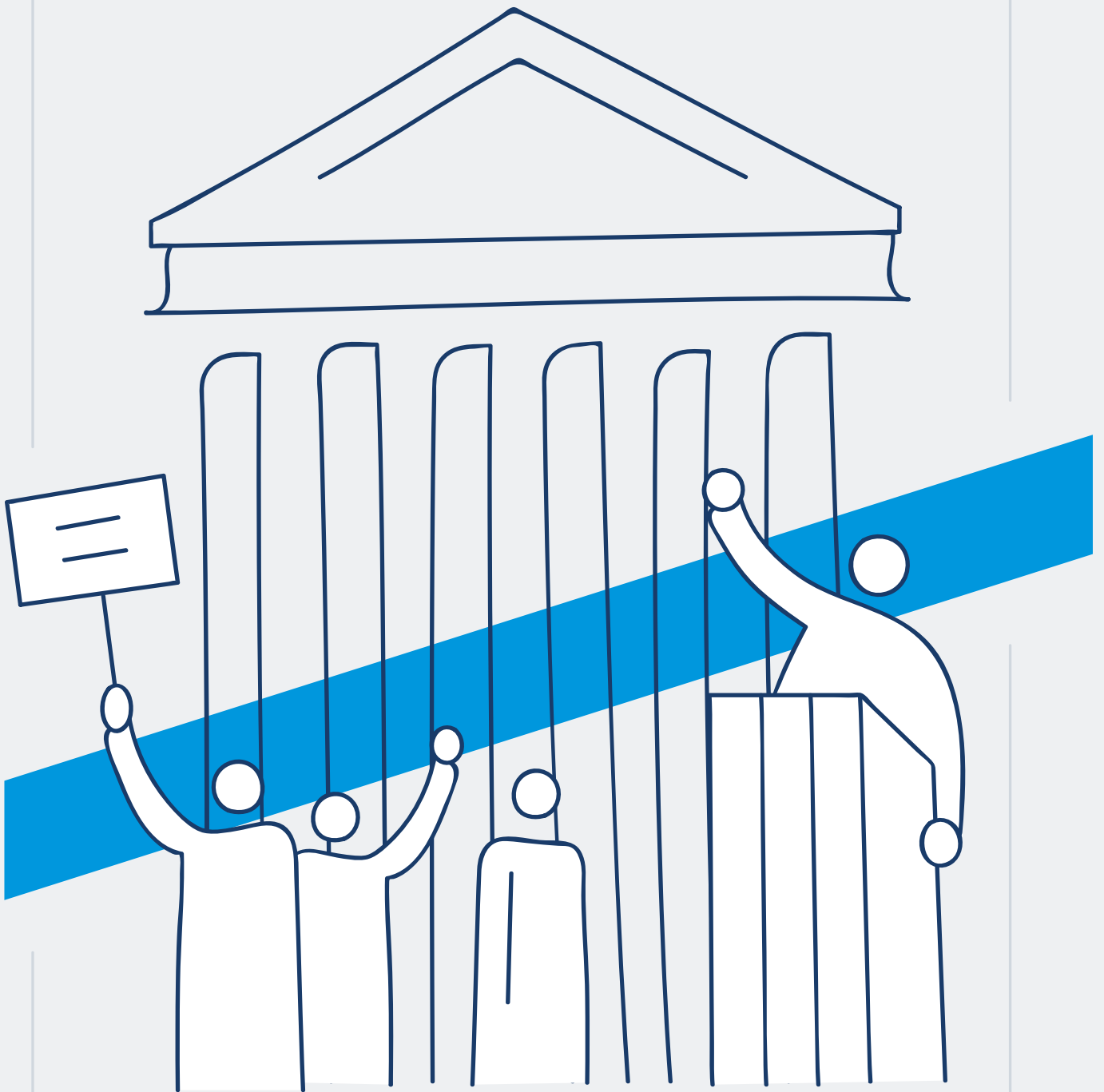




Group for Legal
and Political
Studies



Annual Report

2023



GROUP FOR LEGAL
AND POLITICAL
STUDIES

GLPS ANNUAL REPORT 2023

GLPS is institutionally supported
by the Smart Balkans

Foreword

Dear readers,

As we embark upon the pages of this Annual Report, our team is happy to share the remarkable results achieved during 2023. We at GLPS believe that the essence of civil society lies in its ability to unite the society, communities and organisations in the pursuit of a common purpose – to further contribute in building a more equitable and just society in Kosovo. In the ever-evolving societal dynamics and geopolitical shifts, we believe that the role of civil society becomes increasingly essential. This Annual Report 2023 serves as a testament of GLPS' relentless commitment, its team members, external fellows and associates and partner organisations, who dedicated their time and genuine efforts in driving positive and transformative changes, with focus on programmatic areas our organization specializes on.

Over the course of 2023, our society continued facing systematic challenges, including economic uncertainties, social injustices, poor healthcare and education systems, and lack of proper access to justice, among others. Yet, within these challenges, during 2023 we remained resilient and innovative in standing at the forefront, addressing citizen needs, combatting social injustices, and promoting inclusivity. In the following pages of this report, you will find an overview of the initiatives, projects and impact stories that have shaped our collective journey during 2023.

I can proudly declare that our ever-increasing efforts in rule of law, democratization, economic development, EU integration and regional cooperation remain sturdy and genuine. During 2023, GLPS contribution in further enhancing transparency and accountability of the judicial and prosecutorial systems in Kosovo was direct and impactful. In addition, our efforts to ensure tangible progress in public administration reform and in ensuring a more EU-compliant governance were intensive. Furthermore, GLPS' further engagement in increasing professional skills of young professionals has increased over the years. In 2023, we have put major efforts in putting forward numerous innovative capacity building opportunities for young men and women across all Kosovo, including monitoring and internship programs, innovative workshops, moot courts, trainings and lectures. As we embark in 2024, we are proud of our numerous initiatives listed below, including the Centre for Strategic Litigation which is the first of its kind established in the region, by a civil society organisation.

This Annual Report is not merely a reflection of statistics and achievements, but a celebration of the collective efforts and will in ensuring positive change in our society. What is more, it is a reflection of progress made, and a tool to envision the road ahead of us. GLPS' determination for a society where equality and justice prevail are persistent, and will intensify in the period to come. As I conclude my forward, I would like to extend our gratitude to all those that have played a crucial role in shaping our efforts, including our donors, partners, national and international associates, and institutional stakeholders that apply a participatory approach, and acknowledge civil society's contribution and efforts. None of this would be possible without the generous support of donors, partners, activists, local and international collaborators, and institutions that provided us with the space to contribute.

Sincerely,

Dr. Arbëresha Loxha Stublla,
Executive Director



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MISSION

Group for Legal and Political Studies

is an independent, non-partisan and non-profit public policy organization based in Prishtina, Kosovo. Our mission is to conduct credible policy research in the fields of politics, law and economics and to push forward policy solutions that address the failures and/or tackle the problems in the said policy fields.

We are dedicated to provide high-quality public policy research through prominent scholars drawn from international and European centres of excellence in research, while aiming to be globally competitive for our quality research and impact in the fields of political science, law and economics.



We pursue our mission:

- a. by producing public policy analysis addressing specific challenges that Kosovo faces within the context of the said policy fields, and offering policy solutions and ways to improve the efficiency, integrity, objectivity and credibility of the polity;
- b. by engaging with the governmental, civic, media and community-based stakeholders to advocate that certain policy challenges be tackled with more progressive, informed and effective policy responses;
- c. by offering innovative policy responses to institutions and the public on how to tackle certain challenges in the long-term, and engaging with them to channel the voice for better reform and development strategies;
- d. by stimulating the public, the civic groups and the communities with ways to increase their role in the decision-making and agenda-setting, therein promoting a vibrant civil society and public opinion formation;
- e. by organizing open, informed, level-headed and policy-responsive public debates, wherein governmental and non-governmental stakeholders push forward open-minded policy choices and solutions.

Main Programs

Democratization and democratic institution building – a concept requiring a political system that provides for the rotation of the government via free and fair elections, wherein citizens are an active part of the agenda setting and policy making process, and the government protects human rights (including the ethnic minority rights) and provides for an equal rule of law in the polity. In addition, citizens must have equal access to public services and administration, under which interest groups remain equally represented in the agenda-setting process; the governance is decentralized on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity, with the local governments playing a key role in community development. Furthermore, the political scene does not allow for monopolistic leanings, and a qualitative party pluralism forms part of not only the political scene but also the parties themselves. Mechanisms to fight the unaccountability and abuse of power must be stable and provide for efficient reaction, with a special role attached to free and independent media and civic actors.



PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

- » Support the democratization of the polity with regard to institutional and substantive policy reform

Rule of law – a concept that requires governmental agents to be accountable under the law, wherein laws are equal, honest, clear, stable, efficiently implemented, fair, publicized and protect fundamental rights such as the security of persons and property. The process of enactment of laws should be freely accessible, fair and oriented for the common-good. In addition, the administration of justice should be legally certain and should include competent, independent (both subjectively and objectively), professional, efficient and morally-just mechanisms that are provided for with sufficient resources – thereby mirroring the community confidence in justice – whereas persons have efficient and free access to the justice system.



PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

- » Strengthen the rule-of-law capacity and performance via informed policy solutions and practical advocating strategies

Economic growth and development – a concept that requires established and efficient market mechanisms that fight monopolies, generate stable incomes, and provide for a just distribution of the wealth under an efficient competition policy; wherein, a regionally competitive business environment provides for the swift flow of foreign capital and investments. In addition, macroeconomic policy favours the business growth and offer space for a legally certain business environment and foreign direct investments, while also stimulating the improvement of the standard of life through supporting competitive production and services. Furthermore, the government should orient public investments toward underdeveloped sectors, with the aim of increasing the development of the economy in each policy sector, thereby providing for a more equal distribution of wealth.



PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

- » Enhance the economic growth and development by promoting market strategies that increase the rate of growth and stability

Improved regional cooperation and foreign policy – a concept which requires that the polity choose efficient and competitive strategies to safeguard its interests and to reach its goals at the international level, via the promotion of good neighbourly relations, an increased presence on the international stage, and the promotion of peace, security and tolerance in bilateral and multilateral communications with states, international organizations and non-state actors. In addition, the government must choose/develop foreign policies to maximize the benefits of regional and international cooperation and to promote a positive image of the state in international relations, in light of globalization trends and perspectives.



PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

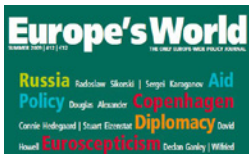
- » Help improve regional cooperation and Kosovo's presence at the international level

Membership in international networks



Stockholm Network

"The Stockholm Network is the leading pan-European think tank and market oriented network. It is a one-stop shop for organisations seeking to work with Europe's brightest policymakers and thinkers. Today, the Stockholm Network brings together more than 110 market-oriented think tanks from across Europe, giving us the capacity to deliver local and locally-tailored global messages across the EU and beyond. Combined, think tanks in our network publish thousands of op-eds in the high quality European press, produce many hundreds of publications, and hold a wide range of conferences, seminars and meetings. As such, the Stockholm Network and its members influence many millions of Europeans every year." Group for Legal and Political Studies is a **full member** of the Stockholm Network



Europe's World and its 'Think Tank Europe' Network

"Europe's World is the only independent Europe-wide policy journal, produced in association with over 140 leading European think tanks and academic institutions. Since its launch in 2005 it has become the premier ideas platform for new thinking on political, economic and social issues, read by over 100,000 of the most influential decision makers and opinion formers across Europe. To date over 500 authors, including Heads of State, corporate chiefs, top academics, leading NGO activists or policymakers, have contributed articles, firmly cementing Europe's World's reputation as a platform for new thinking and ground-breaking ideas." Group for Legal and Political Studies is a **full member** of the Think Tank Europe Network



The European Information Network on International Relations and Area Studies (EINIRAS)

"The European Information Network on International Relations and Area Studies (EINIRAS) is an association of research institutions dealing with information and documentation on international relations in research and political practice, EINIRAS's long-term objective is to establish a common European database on international relations and area studies. Its short-term objectives include the expansion of practical cooperation and the exchange of information, bibliographical data and publications." Group for Legal and Political Studies is a **full member** of EINIRAS.



The Economic Freedom Network

"The Economic Freedom Network is devoted to promoting economic freedom around the world. The network has member institutes in over 80 nations. The Economic Freedom Network publishes annually the Economic Freedom of the World. The index published in Economic Freedom of the World measures the degree to which the policies and institutions of countries are supportive of economic freedom. Group for Legal and Political Studies contributes with data representing Kosovo in the index, and represents it officially in Kosovo." Group for Legal and Political Studies is a full member of The Economic Freedom Network The European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) - "The European Sustainable Development Network is an informal network of public administrators and other experts dealing with sustainable development (SD) strategies in Europe." Group for Legal and Political Studies is an **associated member** of ESDN.



TOWARDS A EUROPEAN
GLOBAL STRATEGY

European Global Strategy

is a think tank-driven process designed to stimulate debate on the future direction of the European Union's external relations. By organizing a series of seminars, workshops and other events, the think-tanks will aim to stimulate and promote a debate on the future of European external relations. The process will be open and inclusive. Input from other think-tanks, civil society and individuals, as well as representatives of governments and EU institutions, will be welcomed. Group for Legal and Political Studies is an **Associated Partner** of European Global Strategy.



The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)

"The Coalition for the International Criminal Court includes 2,500 civil society organizations in 150 different countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide." Group for Legal and Political Studies is a **full member** of CICC.



ACE Practitioners Network

"The ACE Practitioners' Network is (in pair with the ACE Regional Centres) the backbone of ACE. It brings together election professionals from different countries – with diverse and complementary experience and specialisation – into the first ever online global knowledge network in the field of elections. The aim of the Practitioners' Network is to constantly generate new qualified electoral knowledge and to be cutting edge and push the field of elections forward. The network also offers an opportunity for its members to obtain peer advice and support and to extend their own professional networks.". Group for Legal and Political Studies is **represented** at the ACE Practitioners' Network with one senior member.



Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL)

"Central and Eastern European Online Library is the result of 10 years of work by the Frankfurt Eastern/Western European Cultural Center PALAIS JALTA. During the 1990's, the annual book fairs in Frankfurt offered the most appropriate opportunities for networking among publishers, as well as for discussions and all kinds of public events. Today as leading CEE online resource, C.E.E.O.L. offers an outstanding portfolio of 100,000 + articles of 500+ journals which are published by prestigious scholarly and independent institutions. Our titles cover the full spectrum of humanities and social studies, and include numerous titles placed at the top of their fields of Central and Eastern European studies." Group for Legal and Political Studies is a **full member** of CEEOL.



VITA Europe

"Vita Europe was born from within the well-established Vita nonprofit contents group which, since 1994, has been publishing the benchmark third sector weekly newspaper in Italy. Vita Europe is an English language news portal that aims to create an identity and culture for European civil society. It gives voice to the sector's protagonists, their stories and best practices, all the while measuring their economic weight country by country." Group for Legal and Political Studies is a **core partner** of VITA Europe.



International Relations and Security Network

“The International Relations and Security Network is the world’s leading open access information service for international relations and security professionals. ISN strives to meet the rapidly evolving information and educational needs of our users by working with the world’s leading think tanks, universities, research institutes, NGOs and international organizations. ISN partner network continues to grow in tandem with the changing international agenda. This allows ISN to offer its users a broad selection of views and opinions on the major issues of our day.” Group for Legal and Political Studies is a **full member** of ISN.



The European Parties Elections and Referendums Network (EPERN)

“The European Parties Elections and Referendums Network is a network of scholars researching the impact of European integration on parties, elections and public opinion. The Network produces an ongoing series of briefings on the impact of European integration on election campaigns. EPERN emerged as the successor to the Opposing Europe Research Network (OERN) that was launched at a June 2000 workshop at the Sussex European Institute as a network of scholars interested in researching the comparative party politics of Euroscepticism. Over the next three years, OERN organised a series of ESRC-funded seminars together with a workshop at the ECPR joint sessions and a series of conference panels.” Group for Legal and Political Studies is represented at EPERN with two senior members.



Think for Europe Network

“Think for Europe” Network of Think Tanks and EU Policy Research Centres in South East Europe (TEN) was established against the background of weak regional cooperation in EU related policy research, despite the common challenges pre-accession countries face on their road to EU membership. Think tanks in the region persistently improve the evidence basis for policy making and advocacy to ensure that new policies proposed and adopted in the EU accession process are well analysed, their impact is well assessed and their implementation is properly monitored and evaluated. Such efforts, nevertheless, as a rule remain constrained to individual countries and few of the positive experiences and good practices are transferred to their neighbours.

658000

GLOBAL BUDGET
2023



15
HIGH-LEVEL EVENTS,
ROUNDTABLES AND
PRESS CONFERENCES



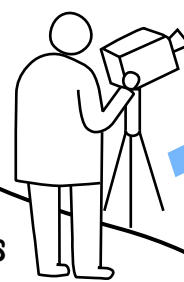
14
PAPERS
PUBLISHED



20+
POLICY INPUT
DOCUMENTS
SUBMITTED

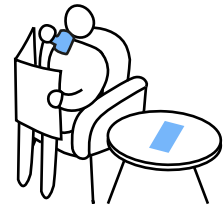


900+
MEDIA DECLARATIONS,
APPEARANCES



12 PROJECTS

15



15
THEMATIC
OP-EDS
PUBLISHED
IN RENOWNED
MEDIA



10+
THEMATIC
PODCASTS AND
VIDEOS PUBLISHED

PARTICIPATION IN
10+

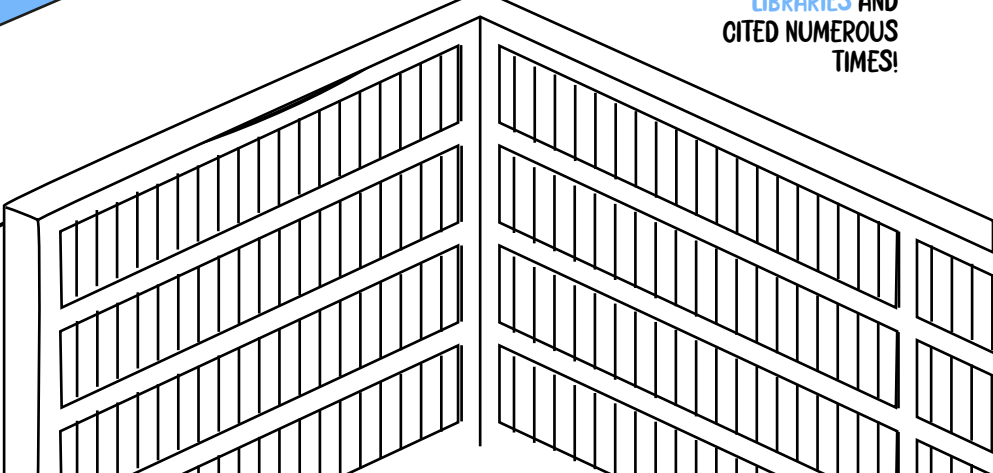
WORKING GROUPS
FALLING UNDER GLPS'
PROGRAMMATIC AREAS



20
TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS
ORGANISED TO INCREASE
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS' CAPACITIES
IN THE FIELD OF RULE OF LAW AND
GOOD GOVERNANCE.

RESEARCH PAPERS
FEATURED IN
RENOWNED
INTERNATIONAL
LIBRARIES AND
CITED NUMEROUS
TIMES!

15+
LECTURES ORGANISED
ACROSS HIGH SCHOOLS
AND UNIVERSITIES



GLPS FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES



**CENTER FOR
STRATEGIC
LITIGATION**

Website:
cskosovo.org

It has been four years since GLPS established the Centre for Strategic Litigation (CSL), the first of its kind established in the Western Balkans, fully operated by a civil society organisation. Since its establishment, CSL has achieved remarkable results, with more than 16 cases handled and brought at court level in Kosovo, mostly pertaining to environment protection and human rights protection, in general. Through CSL, GLPS aims to strengthen the rule of law in Kosovo through strategic litigation processes. Strategic litigation means selecting and sending to court specific cases that have the potential to solve various problems and issues that are potentially harmful to a wider public.

Supported under the umbrella of [Human Rightivism](#) – funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency – SIDA, and implemented by Community Development Fund – the CSL identifies cases of violations or misinterpretations of legal acts by public authorities in Kosovo, or cases which show that these legal acts have any gaps or ambiguities, and then it processes these cases and sends them to the courts, or even public administration bodies when it is necessary. The Center focuses on the field of human rights protection, worker protection, environmental protection and in many other areas of public law. In particular, the Center chooses cases where (i) the violations of the authorities negatively affect the interest of the public, and not only of the individual, (ii) cases can bring benefits in the development, interpretation and implementation of legal acts, and perhaps even their complete abolition when necessary, and (iii) the cases have the potential to bring international standards in local legislation. These cases are sent to court with the aim of become precedents, or examples to be followed, which will have positive effects on other future cases.

Citizens remain crucial in the successful functioning of the CSL. Given this, the CSL platform provides all interested parties/citizens with the opportunity to file cases of potential violation by filling an online application form that is available at the CSL website at all times. The applications filed are carefully reviewed by the CSL team of experts, aiming to identify whether these applications can be classified as strategic litigation cases to be further pursued by the CSL. In addition, partnerships with other civil society organisations, at local and central level, have been established as well. In this regard, numerous cases filed at court level were submitted in partnerships with other partner organisation, in specific to those related to environment violations.

In February 2023, Centre for Strategic Litigation has filed a lawsuit for administrative conflict against the decision to refuse compensation for the paraplegic and tetraplegic persons, jointly with a citizen that was victim of this institutional refusal. This lawsuit was filed against the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers. According to media reporting during



2023, there have been many cases when tetraplegic and paraplegic individuals that underwent through the reassessment procedure have been unfairly treated by the Evaluation Commission, who did not consider doctors' recommendations, the actual situation of the person, and did not devote enough time to the evaluation. Many citizens have complained about the reassessment procedure, that is bureaucratic, as it must be presented in two independent evaluations, and despite this, the Evaluation Commission is often not based on the findings of the Consular Commission composed of five specialist doctors, but evaluates independently. While the case is still at court level, CSL remains fully committed towards seeking justice and proper treatment of this category of Kosovo citizens in the future.

During February, CSL held a training on the topic "Initiation of administrative conflict and strategic cases", where on this occasion the administrative conflict procedure was discussed with the students of the Faculty of Law of the University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini". The training focused on providing knowledge about administrative conflict from the perspective from a legal perspective. The discussions took place on the legal framework in force that regulates the administrative conflict, the steps of the procedure, what can be requested from the court, the actions of the court, as well as on the problems encountered in practice and how these provisions are implemented. The training was interactive and students actively participated in the debate with questions, suggestions and comments on the topic. A total of 26 students participated in this training.

To further increase capacities of the CSL team, a visit to similar centres in Netherlands took place this year. During June 2023, CSL conducted a four-day work visit to the Netherlands. The CSL team met with representatives of the organization Public Interest Litigation Project (PILP) in Amsterdam. The meeting discussed in detail the work of the CSL over the years, as well as the cases sent to court, their impact, cooperation with citizens and other organizations, challenges, and the work methods in general. Moreover, the emphasis was placed on the strategic litigation process and its impact on the state and society of Kosovo. During this visit, CSL team also met with representatives of the organization Bureau Clara Wichmann, whose scope is the improvement of the social and legal position of women in the Netherlands and the protection of human rights in general. Hence, it aims to achieve this goal through the strategic litigation process, as well as changing laws and regulations. During the meeting, there was extensive discussion about their long experience in the strategic litigation process, the strategic cases raised in the court, the methods of organizing work

and public advocacy, as well as the long-term impact of Bureau Clara Wichmann on society.

In August, CSL published a podcast gathering environmental activists to discuss the importance of environment protection in Kosovo, and how citizens can have a positive impact in protecting the environment through their activism. The podcast can be accessed [here](#).

In September, CSL conducted a working visit to Germany. The CSL team met with representatives of the Gesellschaft für Freiheitsrechte e.V. - GFF (GFF) organization in Berlin. During the meeting, was discussed in detail CSL's recent work, the cases brought to court, the successes achieved so far, their impact, collaboration with citizens and other organizations, challenges, and overall work methods. On the other hand, GFF shared their extensive experience with the CSL team in defending human rights through legal means, particularly by utilizing strategic litigation. CSL had the opportunity to learn a lot from their work, which primarily focused on strengthening democracy through four main pillars: protecting fundamental human rights, freedom in the digital age, promoting equal rights and anti-discrimination, as well as social participation.

So far, the CSL has dealt with a total of 16 cases, a number of them still being handled at court level. In addition, to further increase awareness on the importance of human rights, a handful of Op-eds were published in media, discussing significant topics relevant to human rights protection, with particular focus on environment and labour rights. An example of Op-eds published can be found [here](#).



GLPS FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES



Support for Civil Society to Increase Public Oversight and Accountability of Public Institutions of Kosovo

Website:
corrwatch.org

Facebook page:
facebook.com/CorrWatch

We continued to successfully run our initiative CorrWatch, implemented jointly with the GAP Institute and the Institute for Development Policy (INDEP), with the support of the British Embassy in Kosovo. CorrWatch focuses on:

- Recruitment in public administration;
- Public procurement and contract management;
- Distribution of grants and subsidies;
- Issuance of permits, licenses and fees;
- Performance and management of public enterprises.

The main goal of CorrWatch during 2023 was to provide expertise and continuous support to public institutions to eliminate irregularities and legal violations that may be encountered, so that they can improve them and establish good practices.

During 2023, CorrWatch engaged in numerous processes and activities in the abovementioned fields, via different methods, including public reactions, events, conferences, inputs, and mostly, systemic monitoring of relevant institutions. Apart from this, CorrWatch also engaged in awareness raising in order to provide the general public with real time information on institutional performance in Kosovo when it comes to fight against corruption and organised crime. Given this, numerous podcasts, Op-eds, short thematic reports and videos were produced, further elaborated in the following sections.



GLPS FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES



Boosting Civic Reaction towards an Improved Access to Justice in Kosovo

JUST REACT – funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo – remains one of the flagship initiatives of the organisation. It aims to boost and improve access to justice in Kosovo through an informed and educated citizenry, resulting with an increased trust in the justice sector, and enhanced institutional transparency and performance.

During 2023, JUST REACT engaged intensively in numerous directions of its main pillars. Within its framework, **ten (10) young men and women benefited with engaging in a one-year Court Internship Program**, across all basic courts of Kosovo. In addition, **five (5) Monitoring Officers have successfully continued their engagement within the Court Monitoring Program**, engaging regularly through a sophisticated monitoring methodology pertaining to cases that are at the spotlight of JUST REACT, such as gender-based violence, domestic violence, discrimination, and violation of human rights, among others. Regular court monitoring has commenced in the second year, and **612 cases were regularly monitored**, and daily reports were published via Justice Today platform. In 2023, JUST REACT successfully managed to fulfil its purpose in enhancing institutional transparency, and court performance in the field, given its substantial inputs and analysis, stemming from the monitoring period. This year, JUST REACT also engaged in deepening knowledge of youth, women and vulnerable groups by engaging with more than 200 participants across Kosovo in discussion various topics relevant to its purpose, including the existing available mechanisms to report gender-based violence, institutional performance, role of citizens in

GLPS FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

ACT NOW

Supporting Public Administration Reform and Rule of Law through Fighting Corruption and Improving Service Delivery

In April 2023, GLPS further increased its efforts, in both, public administration and fight against corruption and organising crime, by introducing its newest EU-funded initiative, under the name ACT NOW. Through this initiative, GLPS aims to strengthen the civil society and capacities in two directions, including fight against corruption and an improved administration that is EU-compliant and more efficient. ACT NOW works in two main directions. First, it aims to support the rule of law and anti-corruption efforts through systemic monitoring, and by directly engaging in enhancing institutional accountability and transparency, all while increasing efficiency in the fight against corruption, confiscation and management of criminal assets. Second, ACT NOW directly engages in improving the pace of implementation of public administration reforms that is still slow and inefficient, with particular focus on the Administrative Burden Reduction Programme 2021-2027, and service delivery efficiency.

GLPS FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES



EU Reform
Barometer

EU Barometer in Kosovo

The [EU Barometer in Kosovo](#) – an initiative introduced together with EPIK Institute - was launched in October and aims to provide with an overarching and comprehensive assessment of the Government's performance in fulfilling the objectives and measures foreseen with the National Plan for European Integration, via six-month EU Reform Barometer editions that will be published in a [user-friendly online platform](#). The aim of the EU Reform Barometer is to advance public discourse on EU reforms and increase public institutions accountability by publishing regularly EU Reform Barometer that will allow systematic and visible monitoring of EU reforms. Publication of the Barometer will be a kind of "European Championship" competition in the implementation of EU reforms. Ranking and comparisons of different ministers through infographics and visualization will encourage important public discussions about the role of each minister in the EU integration process, as well as their respective performance within the Government. Publication of the Barometer will be seen as European test for each minister.

GLPS FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

**JUSTICE
TODAY**



Website:
drejtesiasot.com

Facebook page:
facebook.com/GLPSJusticeToday

Justice Today is one of the landmark initiatives of GLPS, developed back in 2018, initially under the support of the British Embassy in Prishtina, and later on sustained by the EU Office in Kosovo. Justice Today represents a sophisticated monitoring platform that covers and reports on the entire spectrum of issues plaguing the judicial and prosecutorial systems in Kosovo, by publishing daily news on cases handled by courts and prosecution, with particular focus on high profile corruption and organised crime.

Through [JUSTICE TODAY](#), GLPS aims to incorporate a new culture of monitoring that equally highlights the shortcomings of institutions and exposes and disseminates them through various channels to the general public. Adding the element of human rights to the monitoring of these court cases and the meetings of the respective Councils will put the right pressure on the institutions to increase their awareness of such issues. The long-term effect of the monitoring process will be to address the handling of human rights issues in the work plan within these institutions. [During 2023, more than 1000 of news outlets have been published via Justice Today.](#)

GLPS FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES



rolpik.org

Rule of Law Performance Index in Kosovo
– RoLPIK

Rule of Law Performance Index in Kosovo (RoLPIK) is a monitoring mechanism developed to assess performance of institutions of rule of law, with particular focus on the justice system. This Index will serve as a platform of open and accessible data for the broader public, and will present the performance of institutions of justice system in Kosovo during the last years. More concretely, this index contains indicators that provide data on perceptions and experiences of citizens of the Republic of Kosovo in relation to the institutions of rule of law, as well as structural data representing reasons that are precondition for efficient and independent functioning of these institutions. In 2023, GLPS published the **8th Edition of RoLPIK**, with the support of the Heinrich Boll Foundation. More information on this Edition can be found in the rule of law section of this annual report.

GLPS FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES



GLPS Legal Training Academy
- GLTA

Website:
glps-academy.org

GLPS considers that civil society plays a crucial role in education and prepare young professionals in capacity-building for their careers in the justice sector, be it as future prosecutors, judges or lawyers. One of the missions of GLPS is to strengthen the rule of law capacity and performance of the institutions.

The lack of opportunities for young professionals to engage in paid internships or work with rule of law institutions, hinders them from developing proper skills to further their professional careers in in the justice sector in Kosovo. The GLPS Legal Training Academy (GLTA) aim to tackle these shortcomings by offering young professionals a well-structured imitative to bring them closer to practical skills and strengthen their role as future practitioners of law. The GLTA selects a number of law graduates and offer them legal training to prepare them for their careers in the justice sector. During 2023, GLPS put special focus in further functionalizing GLTA, with particular focus on rule of law and good governance.

GLPS PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS:

Good governance and democracy





In January, GLPS published a Policy Analysis titled: ["Composition of Central Election Commission in Kosovo in the Perspective of International and Comparative Standards in the Region"](#). This Policy Analysis starts by laying out the Kosovar legislative framework establishing the Central Election Commission as an independent and permanent institution in the country, and its structure. It then goes into the international standards advocated by the Council of Europe's Venice Commission and the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) on what a Central Election Commission should look like in a liberal democracy.

In January, CorrWatch – an initiative led by GLPS – published a [Podcast](#) on the topic: ["Effective governance in public enterprises"](#). In this Podcast, guests discussed on the significant role that civil society plays in monitoring the performance of Publicly-Owned Enterprises (POEs) in Kosovo, while delving deeper into the systematic problems and challenges that POEs face in Kosovo.

In March, GLPS published a Policy Analysis titled: ["Two Years of Kurti II Government: Setbacks and Achievements"](#). This Policy Analysis aims to provide a detailed assessment of Government's performance in some of the main sectors, including rule of law, public administration reform, foreign policy, good governance, EU Integration and the Dialogue with Serbia.

Following this, GLPS held a [Press Conference to Publish an Assessment of the Second Year of Kurti II Government](#). During the conference, GLPS presented a detailed assessment of the second year of Kurti II government, in particular to its performance in some of the key policy areas, including good governance, rule of law, public administration reform, foreign policy and EU integration in general. Particular focus was also put in the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue process and Kurti's approach during the second year in this significant part.

During October, GLPS published a Policy Analysis titled: ["\(Two\) Sovereigns on a Train"](#). What starts as a generic overview on

Sovereign Wealth Funds, is only functional) to the linchpin of the paper - permeation into the terrain of Kosovo's Sovereign Fund initiative. Once there, the argument unfolds between the lines of Kosovo's proposal as manifested through its Concept Document and more importantly, the Draft Law seeking to regulate it. This paper analyzes the Kosovo Sovereign Fund proposal in general and the corresponding Draft Law with its precursory Concept Document in specific. It starts by briefly providing a (I) general overview of Sovereign Wealth Funds and then narrows down to the mainstay of the paper: (II) Kosovo's Sovereign Fund initiative. The latter section is three-pronged: comprising legal arguments, policy perspectives, and theoretical examinations which push back on several grounds of the initiative. Afterward, the paper concludes with (III) final remarks and (IV) recommendations, excised from the substantive parts of the paper.

At the same period, GLPS organized a Roundtable Discussion on the topic: ["\(Two\) Sovereigns on a Train: the few highs and many lows of Kosovo's Sovereign Fund Initiative"](#). The aim of this event was to discuss the Government's proposal for the establishment of its Sovereign Fund, from the viewpoint of its constitutionality and impact in economic policies. At the beginning of the event, GLPS presented a Policy Analysis titled: ["\(Two\) Sovereigns on a Train"](#), that provides a detailed analysis on the Kosovo Sovereign Fund proposal in general and the corresponding Draft Law with its precursory Concept Document in specific.

In November, GLPS launched its newest project ["Use of Social Accountability Tools to increase institutional transparency and accountability in Kosovo"](#), which promotes the use of Social Accountability tools—Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) and Market and Price Analysis — to track and ensure public funds reach their intended destinations. The project will work with three healthcare and education facilities within three municipalities of Kosovo, as well as with the Ministry of Health on list of essential medicine & healthcare investments.



GLPS PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS:

Rule of Law



In April, GLPS launched a [new EU-funded project launched in Kosovo to increase civil society capacities in supporting public administration reform and improving the rule of law](#), shortly known as ACT NOW. ACT NOW aims to directly enhance the fight against corruption and overall justice delivery through systemic monitoring of the judicial and prosecutorial systems in Kosovo, as well as through providing various analyses, recommendations and legal expertise to key institutions. Furthermore, direct monitoring of the Anti-Corruption Agency and of the Agency for Confiscation and Sequestration of Assets will also take place. Within this first component, ACT NOW will present a monitoring platform that will cover the whole spectrum of issues plaguing the judicial and prosecutorial system in Kosovo.

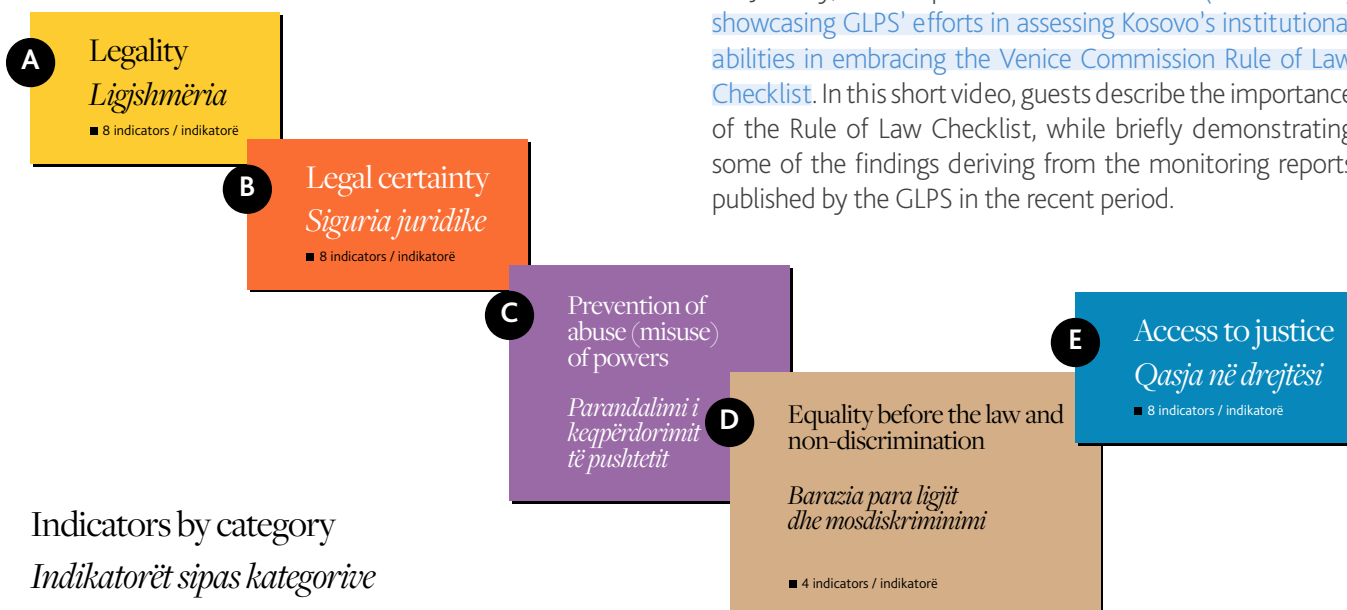
Via ACT NOW, since the monitoring has started back in July 2023, GLPS [monitored a total of 201 court sessions pertaining to corruption and organised crime in Kosovo, since July 2023](#). Under Act Now, there are five monitoring officers that conduct systemic monitoring of the judicial and prosecutorial system in Kosovo, under a sophisticated monitoring methodology. All information on the court sessions monitored can be found in GLPS' online platform, [Justice Today](#).

During May GLPS published the [8th Edition of the Rule of Law Performance Index in Kosovo \(RoLPIK\)](#). RoLPIK is a monitoring mechanism designed to evaluate the work of institutions with a special focus on the justice system in Kosovo. RoLPIK already serves as a platform with open data, accessible to the general public, where from 2013 to 2022, the performance of the institutions of the justice system in Kosovo is analysed and reflected,

and where the data on perceptions and experiences of the citizens of Kosovo for the activities of these institutions throughout the years is provided. RoLPIK – 8th edition contains data related to citizen perception concerning the law enforcement institutions, the performance reports of courts and prosecution offices and the budget allocated for the judicial and prosecutorial system during 2022. These data are based on three components, a) the measurement of citizen perception in relation to law enforcement institutions through a survey conducted with 1,065 respondents¹; b) the efficiency of the judiciary based on the official performance reports of the courts and prosecutions at the country level; and c) the budget allocation for the judicial and prosecutorial system in relation to the overall budget of the Republic of Kosovo.

To present the 8th Edition of RoLPIK, on May 13, GLPS held a [Press Conference on the topic "Challenges in the Rule of Law in Kosovo: Performance of the Judicial and Prosecutorial System and Citizens' Assessment of these Institutions"](#). During the conference, GLPS presented the 8th Edition of the Rule of Law Performance Index in Kosovo (RoLPIK). The first part of the report provides citizens' perceptions for the justice sector, including numerous indicators, such as political influence, corruption, and bribery within the judiciary. In addition, it also measures citizen trust and satisfaction with the justice institutions, in general. It also provides citizen perception for the newly proposed reforms, including vetting and civil confiscation of illicit wealth. The second part of the report represents statistical data on the efficiency of the judicial and prosecutorial systems during the period of 2013 – 2022.

In January, GLPS published a [Doc.Shot \(short video\) showcasing GLPS' efforts in assessing Kosovo's institutional abilities in embracing the Venice Commission Rule of Law Checklist](#). In this short video, guests describe the importance of the Rule of Law Checklist, while briefly demonstrating some of the findings deriving from the monitoring reports published by the GLPS in the recent period.



Indicators by category
Indikatorët sipas kategorive



On April 20, GLPS and a number of other partner organisations in Kosovo [publicly reacted against the lack of transparency of the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council \(KPC\)](#). In this letter, civil society expressed their express deep concern for the actions of the KPC to remain fully non-transparent, and closed to the public. Article 14 of the Law on the KPC expressly provides that the meetings of the Council are open to the public and the same can be closed only for certain significant reasons, foreseen by this law.

In April, GLPS held a Press Conference to publish the ["Rule of Law Findings in Kosovo based on the Rule of Law Checklist: Unpredictability in the Law-making Procedures"](#). At this conference, GLPS presented main findings of the periodic assessment of the Rule of Law in Kosovo – the fourth edition, based on the Rule of Law Checklist approved by the Venice Commission on the Rule of Law. The full report can be found [here](#).



On February 23, GLPS held the [CorrWatch's First Annual Conference on Increasing Public Oversight and Accountability of Public Institutions in Kosovo](#). Under the support of the British Embassy in Prishtina, during this first CorrWatch Annual Conference, the aim was to discuss the accountability and transparency of public institutions in five key areas, including: a. recruitment processes, b.

public procurement practices and contract management, c. distribution of grants and subsidies, d. issuance of permits, licenses and tariffs, and d. performance of Publicly-Owned Enterprises (POEs). At the beginning of the event, the project presented a five-month assessment report for the abovementioned areas, to proceed further with four (4) thematic panels for each of these areas, aiming to discuss the main findings, challenges and problems identified during the monitoring period, and to discuss modalities on how to rectify them, by establishing good practices. Gathering more than 100 participants, this Annual Conference served as an effective platform for the institutional stakeholders, civil society and experts to discuss lessons learned and the way forward to ensuring an enhanced institutional transparency and accountability within these key components.

During 2023, GLPS was [part of numerous working groups for significant legislative processes in the field of rule of law](#), including the Anti-Corruption Strategy, the draftlaw on Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, the Criminal Code, the Civil Code, etc. Similarly, GLPS [provided professional inputs for various draft laws and strategic documents](#), widely shared and discussed with relevant institutions.

During 2023, GLPS closely followed the newly [proposed revisions to the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council \(KPC\)](#), which was one the landmark initiatives undertaken with the aim to ensure institutional reform of the KPC, given continuous criticism towards its lack of transparency, accountability, professionalism and poor performance. GLPS was publicly declared against the MoJ's proposal to increase the number of KPC members, due to numerous practical and legal obstacles, while considering it a threat for further politicization of the KPC. The Venice Commission opinions were fully in line with those proposed by GLPS. In addition, GLPS also provided professional inputs for the **draft law for the Special Prosecution of the Republic of Kosovo (SPRK)**, under which a whole new Special Investigation Unit was proposed to be established within the Kosovo Police, engaging exclusively in investigating cases that fall under the competence of the SPRK. GLPS did not consider that there is a need for this aspect to be regulated by law, given that it is already granted with the Constitution of Kosovo. Similarly, GLPS was also involved in contributing to the proposed amendments for the [Criminal Code and the Criminal Code Procedure](#). Also, inputs were provided for the newly proposed draft law on Central System of Criminal Evidence in Kosovo, which aims to regulate the system of criminal evidence by establishing structural mechanisms to collect and maintain criminal evidence data within a centralized system.

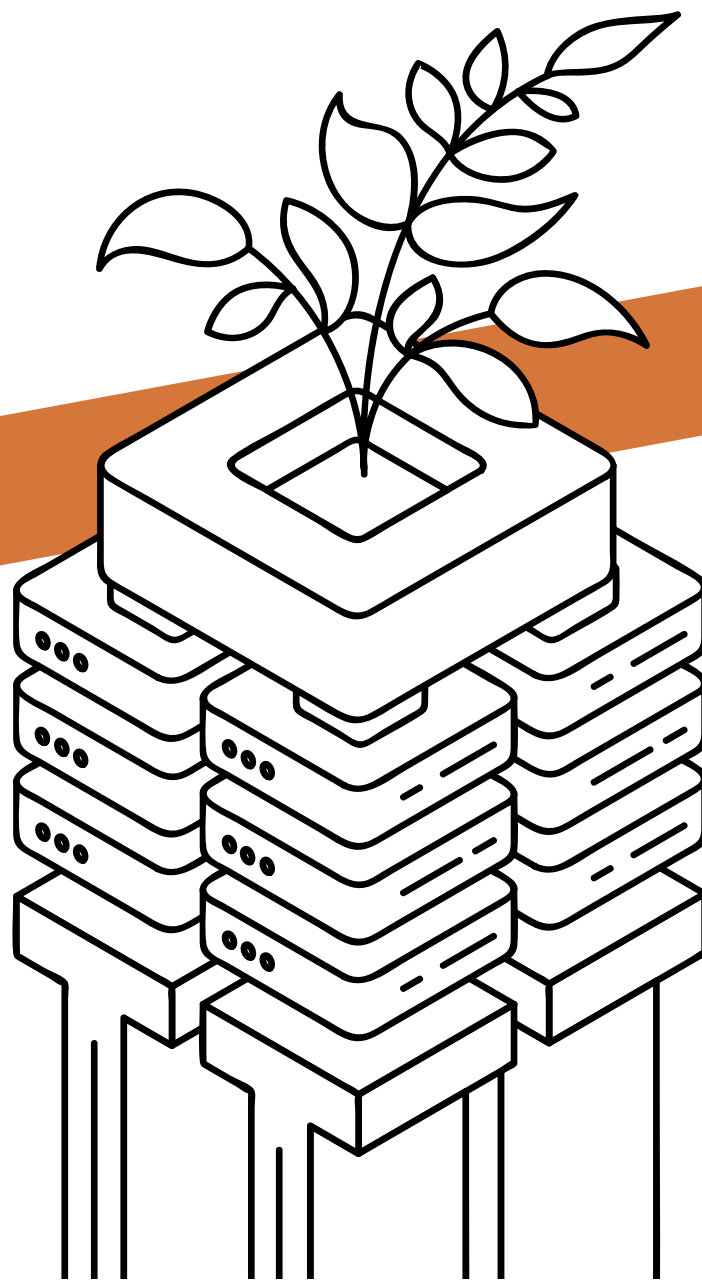
In December, under CorrWatch initiative, GLPS held a high-level conference on the topic: **"From Transparency to Trust: Solutions for Combating Corruption and Organized Crime at Institutional Level"**. Marking the International Anti-Corruption Day, this event aimed to discuss modalities and solutions that would support institutional efforts in combating corruption and organised crime at institutional level in Kosovo. The conference started with an opening panel composed by the Minister of Justice in Kosovo, Ms. Albulena Haxhiu, British Ambassador to Kosovo, H.E. Mr. Nicholas Abbott, the Head of the Anti-Corruption Agency, Mr. Ylli Buleshkaj, the Head of the Agency for Information and Privacy (AIP), Ms. Krenare Sogojeva Dermaku, and under the moderation of the Executive Director of GLPS, Ms. Arberesha Loxha Stublla.

After the opening panel, the conference continued in a form of a workshop with more than 80 participants gathered from various institutions and organisations. First session focused on prevention of corruption in the public sector through the right to information, the reporting of illegality and the importance of whistleblowing. While in the second session focused on the impact of organized crime on public institutions, addressing the level of criminality as well as the sustainability of crime in Kosovo, organized corruption as well as the connection of organized crime with the public and private sector.



GLPS PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS:

Public Administration Reform



On February 22, Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS) held the Annual Conference PAR Progress Kosovo 2023, under the title: "Public Administration Reform in Kosovo: Challenges, progress and the way forward", held in Prishtina. GLPS has been closely monitoring the progress of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) in Kosovo, providing a civil society perspective on the process. Despite an evident progress reached over the years, it remains insufficient due to a variety of challenges. Factors such as lack of political willingness, instability, and inadequate inter-institutional coordination have greatly hindered progress in this crucial reform process. This affects not only the efficiency of the administration but also Kosovo's EU integration efforts. Given the significance of PAR and the complex dynamic involved in this process, GLPS organized the second Annual Conference that aimed to discuss key issues, challenges, and results related to PAR. The conference brought together more than 150 participants, including institutional stakeholders, civil society, academia, experts and professionals, both local and international, to engage in a comprehensive dialogue on this significant reform process.

PAR Progress Kosovo 2023 was divided into three (3) thematic panel discussions, focusing on key PAR-related aspects, including public service, accountability, rationalization of agencies and reorganization of ministries, and the Commentary on the Law on General Administrative Procedure. The latter was presented for the first time during the Annual PAR Progress Kosovo 2023, and is a novelty brought in Kosovo. PAR Progress Kosovo 2023 was divided into three (3) thematic panel discussions, focusing on key PAR-related aspects, including public service, accountability, rationalization of agencies and reorganization of ministries, and the Commentary on

the Law on General Administrative Procedure. The latter was presented for the first time during the Annual PAR Progress Kosovo 2023, and is a novelty brought in Kosovo.

The Annual Conference was opened by the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Mr. Albin Kurti, followed by a speech from the Head of the EU Office in Kosovo/EUSR, Mr. Tomas Szunyog. Both, PM Kurti and Mr. Szunyog emphasized the importance of the public administration reform as one of the key processes that requires strong institutional and political willingness, in order to be properly implemented. Equal treatment, professionalism and efficiency are the principles that must be followed in order to ensure a well-functioning public administration in Kosovo, they concluded. PAR Progress gathered more than 150 participants from various institutions, international organizations, embassies, academia, civil society and experts from the national and international arena.



Under the regional Think for Europe Network, for more than seven years, GLPS is implementing partner for Kosovo of the regional initiative WeBER. Building upon the achievements of its predecessors, the WeBER (2015 – 2018) and WeBER 2.0 (2019 – 2023) projects, **the Western Balkan Enablers for Reforming Public Administrations – WeBER 3.0** project is the third consecutive EU-funded grant of the largest civil society-led initiative for monitoring public administration reform (PAR) in the Western Balkans. Its implementation period is February 2023 – July 2026. Guided by the SIGMA/OECD Principles, the first two phases of the initiative laid the foundation for WeBER 3.0's ambition to further empower civil society organisations (CSOs) to contribute to more transparent, open, accountable, citizen-centric and thus more EU-compliant administrations in the WB region. This third project reinforces participatory democracy by enabling CSOs to actively engage and inclusively monitor PAR outcomes across the WB, advocating for the reforms' consistency with EU requirements. By capitalizing on the successes of our past endeavours, WeBER 3.0 continues to promote the pivotal role of CSOs in participatory democracy, advocates for inclusive citizens' engagement and ensures that reforms yield tangible improvements in citizens' lives.

Under WeBER 3.0, there is a **Citizen Platform - Reforma Jone**, available for all citizens of Kosovo to share their experiences with service delivery obtained at institutional level. All interested citizens are regularly invited to share their feedback with the WeBER 3.0 team, so that problems and challenges identified are further discussed with relevant institutions, with the sole purpose to further improve service delivery in Kosovo.

In May, GLPS published a Policy note titled: **"The Phenomenon of Acting Positions within the Public Administration"**. This Policy Note tackles the issue of Acting Positions on Public Administration and provides more in-depth analysis on the consequences that this approach entails for the public sector, in general. It also delves into the existing legal framework, and provides a number of recommendations and solutions to mitigate further risks that the current situation imposes. Recently, there is a growing trend, not only in Kosovo but also in the region, that the regular positions that remain vacant are filled with acting position and which for a long time are not filled through the procedures of advancement or external recruitment. This approach, certainly simple and suitable for daily politics, but also for the officials close to him, has managed to ignore and seriously violate the principles and rules of meritocracy and professionalism. Almost all managerial positions, especially high- level

management positions, have been held for years with acting positions to make it easier to achieve political goals, which in most cases are illegal and do not protect the public interest. In July 2023, the PAR Monitor Report for the Western Balkans region was published. The **PAR Monitor 2021/2022** is the result of monitoring work performed during 2022 by the **Think for Europe Network**, and it represents a compilation report of all the key findings for the entire Western Balkan region in six areas of PAR defined by the SIGMA Principles of Public Administration. Furthermore, as the third systematic PAR monitoring in the region by civil society, this report offers benchmarking between WB administrations and comparison with the baseline 2017/2018, and 2019/2020 monitoring cycles. PAR Monitor reports are based on a comprehensive methodological framework designed by the WeBER research team, combining quantitative and qualitative evidence sources. With the EU-SIGMA Principles as the building blocks of monitoring work, PAR Monitor reports complement the same type of work of the SIGMA/OECD and the European Commission and offer citizen and civil society perspectives on these Principles. Together with this comparative regional report, the PAR Monitor package consists of six national reports, each including findings on the 23 compound indicators to monitor a selection of SIGMA Principles. In line with the WeBER mission, these monitoring exercises are driven by the necessity to



strengthen domestic, bottom-up pressure for PAR from the civil society in the region, especially from the view of keeping demand for this reform ongoing in the event of loosening of the EU's conditionality in PAR domain eventually. All findings from this report, PAR Monitor 2019/2020, and the baseline PAR Monitor 2017/2018 can be accessed and compared via the [Regional PAR Scoreboard](#).

Following the regional report, on August, GLPS published the [National PAR Monitor Report Kosovo 2021-2022](#). This report follows a standard outline established for the two previous PAR Monitors and is divided into six chapters: 1) strategic framework for public administration reform, 2) policy development and coordination, 3) public service and human resource management, 4) accountability, 5) service delivery, and 6) public financial management. Each chapter follows an identical structure. In each chapter introduction, the reader is briefly introduced to the WeBER indicators used in the observed PAR area and their values for Kosovo, on a scale from 0 to 5. Immediately after, a brief state of play in Kosovo is given to contextualize the analysis for the observed area, based on existing secondary sources. The state of play sections largely relies on the latest European Commission report for 2022 and the SIGMA assessment from 2021,

but also refer to other relevant sources. State of play is followed by the WeBER monitoring focus, describing the methodological steps in more detail, illustrating the structure of each principle and indicator, including data collection and analysis methods. The key section of each chapter is the presentation of WeBER monitoring results, stemming from thorough and methodologically robust research conducted in Kosovo. For each PAR area, indicator values, and scores of their elements, are presented for all completed WeBER monitoring cycles to date allowing easy insight and comparison of monitoring results for the three PAR monitoring exercises. A summary of results that follows for each area presents key, succinct one-page findings and trends. Finally, section on recommendations consists of implementation status of recommendations proposed in PAR Monitors 2019/2020 and 2017/2018.

To present the National PAR Monitor 2021-2022, on June 21, GLPS held a Roundtable Discussion on the topic: ["Public Administration Reform: Where does Kosovo stand compared to the countries of the region for 2021 and 2022?"](#), held in Prishtina. This event was held to present the National Monitoring Report on Public Administration Reform (PAR) 2021/2022 for Kosovo, drafted within the auspices of WeBER 2.0. During the discussion, GLPS presented a draft report from a civil society perspective on the implementation of PAR in comparison to Western Balkan countries.

In December, GLPS organized a workshop on [administrative burden in vehicle registration](#) within the "Act Now" project, supported by the European Union in Kosovo. Participants discussed simplification possibilities, including removing conditions for registration, ceasing renewal, changing document requirements, and reconsidering ecological taxes. These proposals, aimed at reducing administrative burden, were discussed in light of the ongoing drafting of the new Law on Vehicles.



Gender-based violence and non-discrimination



Group for Legal and Political Studies continued to successfully implement [JUST REACT- Boosting Civic Reaction towards an Improved Access to Justice in Kosovo](#), a three-year initiative funded by the European Union. JUST REACT aims to promote the role of citizens and civil society in improving institutional transparency, accountability and protection of human rights in Kosovo, especially in the local and rural areas. The final goal is to increase awareness and activism among youth of Kosovo in order to combat gender-based and domestic violence, yet not limited only to those phenomena.

In 2023, under the auspices of Just React, [ten \(10\) young lawyers were successfully selected to attend the 2nd round of a one-year internship within the judicial system](#), successfully systemized across seven basic courts in all regions of Kosovo. Second, [five \(5\) monitoring officers have successfully continued the monitoring program for the second year](#), thus regularly engaging in monitoring court sessions pertaining to cases that are at the spotlight of JUST REACT, such as gender-based violence, domestic violence, discrimination, and violation of human rights, among others. Regular court monitoring has commenced in the second year, and [612 cases were regularly monitored](#), and daily reports were published via Justice Today platform. Overall, during this second year JUST REACT managed to directly enhance the transparency of the justice sector in Kosovo, given the project's wide and regular scrutiny, in particular to areas of focus. On the other hand, during this period, the project had a substantial focus in increasing civil society and citizens' role in promoting and protecting human rights, and increasing capacities of young professionals, in particular to youth, women and those with fewer opportunities, through an enhanced civic engagement in particular areas of the justice system that are of a red alert. Hence, seven (7) thematic lectures in municipalities. [191 high schoolers were part of thematic lectures](#) and gained theoretical and practical knowledge from expert trainers. In 2023, Just React has progressively established cooperation with institutions such as with Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) and Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo (OIK) also with Ministry of Justice and parliamentary committees.

In Just React, [four trainings and four moot court simulation were held](#), tackling various topics related to human rights, with particular focus on gender-based violence and discrimination. During these capacity building activities, young professionals were informed for the existing mechanisms to report gender-based violence and discrimination, institutional architecture handling these cases, as well as civil society role and engagement.



In 2023, GLPS and USAID Justice Activity joined forces to further sophisticate the [Mobile App "AFER TEJE" \(Near You\)](#). The existing app "Afer Teje" was designed in 2020, with USAID support, and it serves as a means to inform victims of domestic violence where they can go to report their cases and seek legal advice. Afer Teje app shows the closest address where the victim of domestic violence can report their case. It also includes address and contact information about other institutions where domestic violence can be reported nearby institutions, including police, Ombudsperson offices, etc. The application also contains some statistics, including the total number of cases within a specified period. In 2023, with USAID's support, the Group for Legal and Political Studies, re-launched 'Afer Teje,' a mobile application providing information services available to persons impacted by domestic and gender-based violence. The application is an innovative approach to enabling better access to justice for Kosovans. During this year, a short video on AFER TEJE was widely published by GLPS and USAID, and can be accessed [here](#).

In September, GLPS organized a Roundtable Discussion on the topic: ["Dealing with Domestic Violence in Kosovo: institutional treatment of domestic violence for the period of July 2022–June 2023"](#), held in Prishtina. The aim of this event was to discuss the institutional performance and handling of domestic violence cases in Kosovo, with particular focus to courts, prosecution and the police.

At the beginning of the discussion, GLPS presented an [Annual Assessment Report](#) with the same title, reflecting on the main findings on the basis of the data collected through systematic monitoring of courts and prosecution during the given period.

GLPS PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS:

EU Integration and global affairs



On January, GLPS published an Espresso Insight titled: **"Recognized but not supported: Hungary's stance on Kosovo's EU bid"**. In light of Kosovo's recent application for membership in the European Union (EU), the issue of EU enlargement and the recognition of Kosovo's independence has been brought back into the spotlight. As Kosovo has formally submitted its application for candidacy status in the EU, the process towards potential membership has begun and is expected to be a long one. This process is hindered by the ongoing dispute with neighbouring Serbia, which has called for the EU to cancel the accession process. Additionally, five EU countries, including Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Greece, and Cyprus, have yet to recognize Kosovo as a state, citing their desire to see a resolution reached between Kosovo and Serbia before granting recognition. They believe that premature recognition could hinder efforts towards an agreement and reconciliation between the parties. More can be read [here](#).

On January, GLPS published a comprehensive monitoring report that assesses institutional performance in implementation of measures deriving from the National Plan for the Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, signed back in 2013. The report titled: **"Assessing the implementation of the National Programme for the Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement"** provides evidence-based information on the level of implementation of NPISAA for year 2022, divided into two main sections, including the narrative part and the short-term measures matrix. The narrative part of each chapter summarizes the obligations of the SAA. While the matrix of short-term measures, shows the concrete measures that will be taken for each chapter.

Similarly, during January, GLPS published an assessment report titled: **"Assessing the Implementation of EU-Kosovo Political Priorities: European Reform Agenda (ERA) II 2022"**. This report analyzes and visualizes the accomplishments of the indicators of ERA II, by Kosovo institutions throughout 2022. The results presented in this report derive from the achievements reported by responsible institutions during 2022. This monitoring report includes the period from the beginning of the implementation of the Action Plan in 2021 to the end of 2022. The report has four main chapters. The first chapter presents the main findings from monitoring the PV ERA II. The three next chapters analyze each pillar of ERA II, highlighting the most and least achieved among each pillar. Lastly, the fourth chapter presents statistics of institutional performance in accordance with ERA II, and visualizes every indicator stipulated on the Action Plan.

In October, GLPS and EPIK Institute have [launched the EU Reform Barometer](#), during a launching event held in the Europe House in Prishtina. The launching event was opened

by keynote speeches of the Head of the EU Office in Kosovo/ EUSR, H.E. Mr. Tomáš Szunyog, and the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Kosovo, H.E. Ms. Carin Lobbezoo. The EU Reform Barometer is supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kosovo, and is a novelty brought by the civil society, namely, GLPS and EPIK Institute. The aim of the EU Barometer in Kosovo is to provide with an overarching and comprehensive assessment of the Government's performance in fulfilling the objectives and measures foreseen with the National Plan for European Integration, via six-month EU Reform Barometer editions that will be published in a user-friendly online platform. Publication of the Barometer will be a kind of "European Championship" competition in the implementation of EU reforms.. To learn more about the EU Reform Barometer. [click here](#).



On February, GLPS published a Policy Note titled: **"Soft vs. Hard Power: The EU's Lacking Mandate from the Eastern Europe's Fast-Tracked Membership to Western Balkans Enlargement"**. This Policy Note considers where the fast-tracked membership for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia stands six months on, and how its unfolding has impacted the existing enlargement package. Notably, the paper assesses how the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue has sabotaged enlargement aims for the Balkan Peninsula as a whole, with the lingering problem increasingly appearing to be the EU's denial to acknowledge Serbia's uncooperativeness towards Kosovo's recognition or wider European values and international standards.

In March, GLPS published a Policy Analysis titled: **"Russia's Increasing Exploitation of Fragile Peace: from northern Kosovo region to global issues"**. This Policy Analysis will delve into how Russian disruptive actions, namely disinformation campaigns, have triggered escalated regional tensions between Kosovo and Serbia in Northern Kosovo that erupted this summer yet continue until today. Northern Kosovo appears as a critical target of the wider 'soft aggression'

the Kremlin is executing in complementarity to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and one carrying the high probability of EU and/or NATO reaction should the situation escalate in the Schengen or Alliance vicinity. We situate such disruptive actions within the scope of Russia's crisis-export strategy as an integral part of their foreign policy direction and aims, especially in neighboring regions. Thereafter, the final section explores the broader perspective of the Russian crisis-export policy, putting forth examples of global issues Russia has had a fundamental hand in unsettling, with consequences for the Western Balkans and wider European stability and security.

In May, GLPS published a Policy Analysis on the topic: ["Berlin Process Success: Situating the New Policy and Legal Agreements"](#). The signing of these three mobility agreements connected the six hopeful candidates and harmonized their standards and societies in a way unlike before, with direct impact to citizens. Furthermore, the agreements certainly signaled a particularly relevant milestone to the Republic of Kosovo. The agreements did not alienate the newborn country in any way, rather integrating it in the same terms as the other five countries, including Serbia. This Policy Analysis breaks down the regional integration potential and expectations the signing and eventual implementation of these three agreements carry, as well as compares this milestone to similar integration moments between EU Member States. Finally, it offers a look forward on what to keep an eye out for in terms of correct execution in order to properly advance each country's EU integration process, as well as increased closeness between the Western Balkan countries and EU Member States. This Policy Analysis argues that plenty of, arguably enough, diplomatic and financial support has been announced and granted to the Western Balkans – what is truly needed now is for each achievement's implementation to be monitored and followed up on. At the end of the day, it is implementation and tangible results that matter, not signatures. Only this way do milestones remain relevant in the long run. Monitoring work should be undertaken towards the Three Agreement to ensure their relevance and tangible results.

In July, GLPS published a Policy Analysis titled: ["How Kosovo is Positioned in Geoeconomics as the New Global Paradigm of Power Politics – Relations with the EU, Russia, China and the US"](#). The world is becoming more volatile in its threats and challenges, and more unpredictable in its opportunities and partnerships. While like-minded actors following a rules-based order stick together, they are also bound to cooperate with antagonists given unprecedented globalization and economic and financial linkages. In this new paradigm, key international actors such as the European Union, Russia, the United States and China have strategic engagement and priorities and, in turn, less significant international actors are

pawns in such geoeconomic competition and/or cooperation. The Analysis looks particularly at how Kosovo inserts itself in the new global paradigm of geoeconomics, and how key actors have engaged with the newborn country as a means to advance its strategic interests or increase their bargaining chip. We look into Kosovo's 'soft power' relations with the EU, Russia, the US and China, and the linkages therein of regional and global significance. Finally, a concluding analysis is provided on how to most accurately analyze these linkages and power moves in the wider context of international relations and power dynamics existent today – in which the same global actor can be seen as a partner, competitor, or rival, depending on who you ask.

In October, GLPS published a Policy Analysis titled: ["The Berlin Process as the Best Regional Initiative Moving Forward: A Comparative Analysis"](#). The Western Balkan countries have, for a long time now, sought more advanced levels of regional integration as a means to signal their improved ability to integrate into the EU's own integrated regional mechanisms. The Western Balkan countries are keen on signaling through concrete steps and regional moves that they are ready to join the EU's Western Balkan Common Regional Market and accede to its economic regional integration model. To date, there are a number of integration and/or regional cooperation initiatives across the Western Balkan region. The most renowned ones are: the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), the Regional Economic Area (REA), the Regional Council for Co-operation (RCC), Common Regional Market (CRM), the Berlin Process (BP), and, most recently, the so-called mini-Schengen Open Balkans initiative. The ever-growing variety of initiatives and linked actors and partners encompassed has muddled the clarity on best way forward, and specifically what would be the best way forward for Kosovo in particular. This Policy Analysis will provide, in Chapter 1, a comprehensive overview of ongoing and sought-after regional initiatives with the aim to solidify Western Balkan regional integration, in order to best assess what is what, what is working, and what should be the way forward. The Analysis argues, in Chapter 2, that unclear initiatives such as the Open Balkan should not be pursued, while the Berlin Process has proven to be and remain the most significant and consequential initiative to best attain eventual Euro-Atlantic integration of Kosovo and its Balkan neighbors. Similarly, the Berlin Process appears to be the most appropriate to achieve the goal of a common regional market and economic regional integration, as presented in Chapter 3. Concluding remarks are then offered at the end of the Analysis on capitalizing on this way forward.

Main donors



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