

# Newsletter

# POP

# Network

May 2023



## POP Network

### Përballja e Ofertave Politike

POP Network “Juxtaposing Political Offers” (Përballja e Ofertave Politike) aims to increase public debate and information among citizens, as well as orient these platforms towards the needs and priorities of citizens. Through its activities, the project aims to strengthen Albanian democracy, promoting transparency and accountability. POP is an initiative of the network of Albanian civil society organizations supported by the Olof Palme International Centre and the National Endowment for Democracy.

In the context of the local elections of May 14, 2023, the POP Network has organized 16 Public Forums between candidates of different political forces and citizens. In these public forums, the POP Network has presented the Social Contract for each Municipality, a platform that aims to support citizens in defining their priorities and ensure the commitment of candidates to follow them after the elections.

During the public forums organized by the POP Network, citizens are given the opportunity to receive information from candidates and political parties in an open and transparent manner, while the platform of the Social Contract for each Municipality ensures that the important priorities of citizens will be at the center of the electoral campaign and the future local government.

POP on local elections  
Summary

Focus groups discussion  
with citizens on the drafting  
of Social Contracts

Public Forums between  
citizens and candidates  
within the framework of the  
Social Contract

## POP on local elections Summary

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The Juxtaposing Political Offers Network (Përballja e Ofertave Politike) - POP Network is an initiative of 12 local, independent civil society organizations that aim to increase public debate and information to citizens during election periods, as well as orient political platforms towards citizens' needs and priorities.

In the first months of 2023, the POP Network created an open and independent platform where approximately 1,000 citizens from rural and urban areas in the municipalities of Tirana, Durrës, Vlorë, Fier, Kukës, Shkodër, Vau i Dejës, Pukë, Elbasan, and Korçë expressed their needs and priorities in 62 discussion tables. The priorities of the citizens in each municipality were reflected in ten (10) Social Contracts. The Social Contracts were based on four main areas: (i) Local Democracy and Good Governance, (ii) Social Justice, (iii) Local Economic Development, and (iv) Infrastructure and Public Services.

After drafting the Social Contracts, all political parties and their candidates in the 10 municipalities of the country were invited to participate in the public forums of the POP Network. The public forums, organized within the framework of the 2023 local elections, aim to promote democratic culture and provide an open and equal space for representatives of political parties to present their platforms and engage in discussions with citizens regarding the Social Contracts and their concerns.

Despite the efforts of the members of the POP Network, not all Albanian political parties had the political will to carry out a confrontation between the candidates for mayor. In light of these circumstances, the POP Network continued its mission by facilitating individual forums between citizens and mayoral candidates representing the major political forces in the country. The priority was given to addressing citizens' interests and tackling the problems that require heightened attention.

During the period of April-May 2023, the POP Network organized 16 public forums in nine municipalities, where mayoral candidates discussed the civic priorities outlined in the Social Contracts. Fifteen (15) Social Contracts were signed by the candidates as a moral commitment to address the citizens' priorities. Through the implementation of public forums for Social Contracts, the POP Network demonstrated its unique ability among local organizations to bring mayoral candidates face-to-face with citizens, ensuring that citizens' priorities are addressed in the agendas of local elected officials. The POP 2023 activities stood out as the only initiative where citizens found a politics-free environment and had the opportunity to express their concerns at the local level.

The organization of the forums and the signing of the Social Contracts are only the first steps of the process. Over the next four years, the municipalities will be monitored by the organizations of the POP Network to assess the progress in implementing the priorities identified by the citizens.

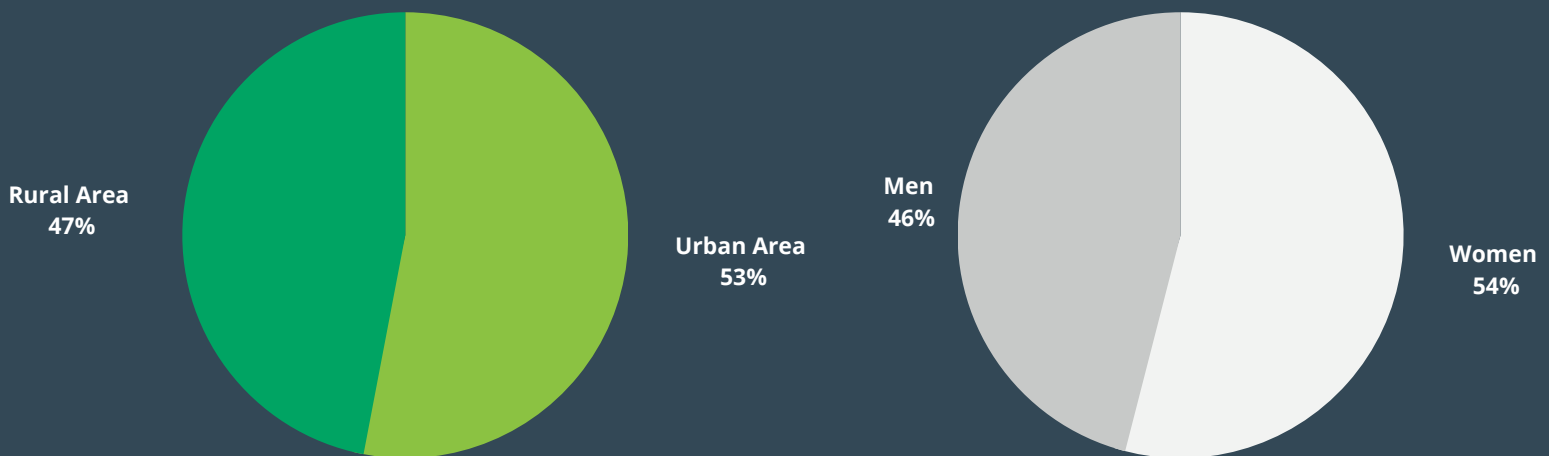
**Click [here](#) to read the Public Statement with findings and conclusions**



## Focus group discussions with citizens

### Drafting of the Social Contract 2023-2027

As is customary before local elections, the organizations of the POP Network organized 62 focus group discussions during the period of February to March 2023, with approximately 1,000 citizens participating from urban and rural administrative units in the municipalities of Tirana, Durrës, Vlorë, Fier, Kukës, Shkodër, Elbasan, Vau i Dejës, Pukë, and Korça



The purpose of these discussion groups with citizens was to reflect their priorities at the local level and the primary needs in their everyday life for the drafting of the Social Contract in each municipality.

#### The discussion groups were based on four main pillars:

- 1. Local democracy and good governance:** Focused on the engagement of citizens in decision-making processes.
- 2. Social justice:** Focused on ensuring citizens' equal opportunities and rights in the fields of social services, education, healthcare, culture, etc., as well as on the fight against discrimination and all forms of social injustice.
- 3. Local economic development:** Focused on the development of local economy and on local capacity building to give an impetus to the economy, increased establishment of businesses and the creation of new jobs.
- 4. Public services:** Focused on ensuring quality public services such as drinking water, sewage, cleaning and waste management, and on ensuring the necessary infrastructure to help citizens live in a safe and healthy environment.

These four pillars are based on the sustainable development philosophy, ensuring that the city's development is coherent in the social, economic and environmental aspects.



## Focus group discussions with citizens Drafting of the Social Contract 2023-2027

Through the discussion groups, 10 (ten) Social Contracts customized for each municipality were created. These contracts were designed with the participation of a range of individuals from different age groups and social categories. The groups consisted of women, men, girls and boys of various ages, various education and job levels, as well as elderly people, people with disabilities, women victims of domestic violence, families benefiting from economic assistance, women heads of household and orphans.



Within each group, participants engaged in discussions regarding their needs and concerns related to local life. They were provided with the opportunity to share ideas and thoughts on improving their social conditions and other relevant matters. Overall, the involvement of various target groups in the design of the Social Contracts contributed to a diverse and comprehensive approach in addressing the needs of a wide range of citizens. This process ensured that the contracts were tailored to each community category, making them more effective in safeguarding and supporting the citizens.





## Social Contract 2023-2027

The citizens in almost all municipalities determined that their main priorities were the strengthening of local democracy and civic engagement; social justice; accessible and safe public transport; as well as the promotion of sustainable local development especially for youth and women.

### DURRËS



**Main priorities:** Strengthening local democracy and advancing the European integration agenda at the local level; Social justice; the revitalization of the Public Library.

In the municipality of Durrës, the Social Contract and its monitoring is carried out by the "Civil Society Development Center" (CSDC). CSDC promotes and supports the development of civil society in the Durrës region through support, mobilization and bringing together the most important actors from civil society and local government. CSDC is very effective in coordinating and empowering civil society organizations and actors in the Durrës region, focusing on youth and gender equality.



Click [here](#) to read the Durres Social Contract.

### ELBASAN



**Main priorities:** Strengthening local democracy and advancing the European integration agenda at the local level; Social justice; Promotion of sustainable local development.

In the Elbasan municipality, the Social Contract and its monitoring is carried out by the "Another Vision" association. Another Vision is an organization with 20 years of experience in protecting and promoting human rights, and offering social services for target groups in need.

Click [here](#) to read the Elbasan Social Contract.

## Social Contract 2023-2027

The citizens in almost all municipalities determined that their main priorities were the strengthening of local democracy and civic engagement; social justice; accessible and safe public transport; as well as the promotion of sustainable local development especially for youth and women.

### FIER



**Main priorities:** Communication strategies, as a necessity for strengthening democracy at the local level, with the aim of advancing the European integration agenda; Consultation and co-governance with the community; Support for young people.

In the Fier municipality, the Social Contract and its monitoring are carried out by the “New Epoch” Center, which since 2006 operates as a nonprofit organization based in Fier, but with a nationwide scope in its activities. The aim of the organization is to support the social change process, development, democratic progress, and to improve the life of the community, through cooperation with youth.



Click [here](#) to read the Fier Social Contract.

### KORÇË



**Main priorities:** Strengthening local democracy and advancing the European integration agenda at the local level; Promotion of sustainable local development; Social justice.

In the Korça municipality, the Social Contract and its monitoring is carried out by Woman in Development Korça, which is a nonprofit organization that started its activity in July 2003 as a community movement. It has vast experience in the area of gender issues, work with youth, good governance, monitoring municipality budgets, and advocating for justice and equality. It is committed to responsible advocacy, having communities as a starting point, aiming for their voice to be heard, by encouraging citizens to be an active part of the communities where they live.

Click [here](#) to read the Korça Social Contract.

## Social Contract 2023-2027

The citizens in almost all municipalities determined that their main priorities were the strengthening of local democracy and civic engagement; social justice; accessible and safe public transport; as well as the promotion of sustainable local development especially for youth and women.

### KUKËS



**Main priorities:** Strengthening local democracy and advancing the European integration agenda at the local level; Empowerment, inclusion and support of youth; Revitalization of the cultural center.

In the Kukes municipality, the Social Contract and its monitoring is carried out by the Center for Youth Progress (CYP). CYP is a local organization that has been operating in Kukes for 22 years, focusing mainly on youth and aiming to support and help local formal and informal youth groups towards youth programs and youth development initiatives, and to work closely with stakeholders for the promotion of quality services for young people.



Click [here](#) to read the Kukes Social Contract.

### PUKË



**Main priorities:** Strengthening local democracy and advancing the European integration agenda at the local level; Promotion of sustainable local development; Social justice.

In the Puka municipality, the Social Contract and its monitoring is carried out by the Youth Movement for Democracy, which is a nongovernmental, nonpolitical, nonreligious and nonprofit organization that promotes civic activism, the growth of local democracy, and contributes to the improvement of the community's social and public life in the Puka and Fushe Arrez municipalities through education, awareness raising, capacity building and advocacy programs.

Click [here](#) to read the Puka Social Contract.



## Social Contract 2023-2027

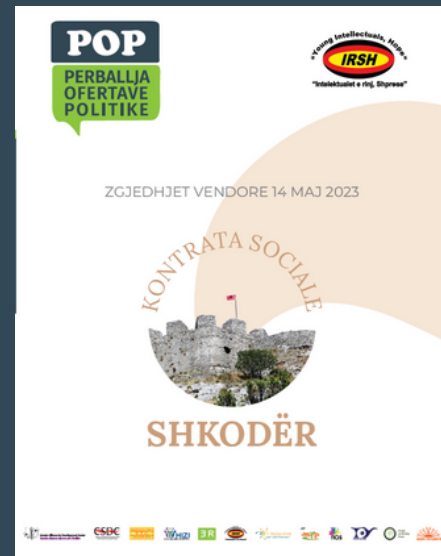
The citizens in almost all municipalities determined that their main priorities were the strengthening of local democracy and civic engagement; social justice; accessible and safe public transport; as well as the promotion of sustainable local development especially for youth and women.

### SHKODËR



**Main priorities:** Strengthening local democracy and advancing the European integration agenda at the local level; Promotion of sustainable local development; Social justice.

In the Shkoder municipality, the Social Contract and its monitoring is carried out by Young Intellectuals, Hope (IRSH). IRSH is a socio-cultural, independent, nonpolitical and nonprofit association, established in 1994 and working for the development of civil society in Albania. The organization represents intellectuals, young people, and different groups from civil society organizations.



Click [here](#) to read the Shkoder Social Contract.



Click [here](#) to read the Tirana Social Contract.

### TIRANË



**Main priorities:** Strengthening local democracy and advancing the European integration agenda at the local level; Promotion of sustainable local development; Social justice.

In the Tirana municipality, the Social Contract and its monitoring is carried out by the “Gender Alliance for Development Center” (GADC), which operates since 1995. GADC is a leading organization in Albania and the Western Balkans, with successful results in defending human rights, promoting gender equality and participatory democracy in the Albanian society. The organization works for the advancement of human rights from the perspective of gender equality and justice through gender actions and the development of gender policies and analyses.

## Social Contract 2023-2027

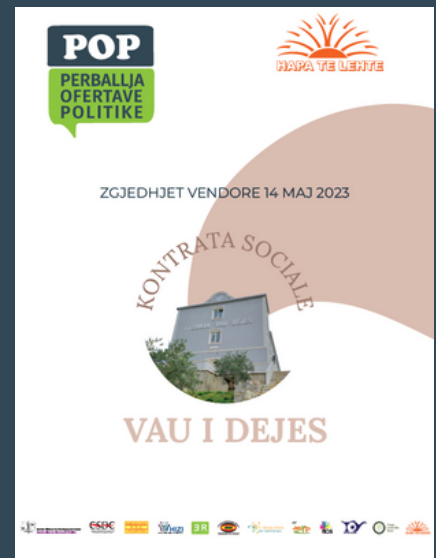
The citizens in almost all municipalities determined that their main priorities were the strengthening of local democracy and civic engagement; social justice; accessible and safe public transport; as well as the promotion of sustainable local development especially for youth and women.

### VAU I DEJËS



**Main priorities:** Strengthening local democracy and advancing the European integration agenda at the local level; Promotion of sustainable local development; Social justice.

In the Vau i Dejes municipality, the Social Contract and its monitoring is carried out by the “Light Steps” Social Center. “Light Steps” is an organization working for human rights, with a special focus on women’s rights. “Light Steps” is committed to the social integration of women and girls in rural areas, through the provision of support services and the economic empowerment component.



Click [here](#) to read the Vau i Dejes Social Contract.

### VLORE



Click [here](#) to read the Vlorë Social Contract.

**Main priorities:** Strengthening local democracy and advancing the European integration agenda at the local level; Quality and safe public transport; Promotion of sustainable local development.

In the Vlorë municipality, the Social Contract and its monitoring is carried out by the Vlorë Youth Center (VYC). VYC is a nonprofit organization working in the Vlorë region since 1998, in the interest of the public and respecting human rights and democracy. The organization bases its activity on the principles of social and economic justice and solidarity, democratic participation in community life, promotion of civil, social and human rights, and volunteering.

## PUBLIC FORUMS WITH CITIZENS AND CANDIDATES

The POP Network organized 16 public forums in nine different municipalities: Tirana, Durrës, Vlorë, Fier, Kukes, Shkoder, Vau i Dejës, Puke, and Korça. The purpose of these forums was to provide a platform for political force candidates to discuss their plans and programs. During these forums, candidates had the opportunity to address citizens' questions, which focused on resolving the issues outlined in the Social Contract. The Social Contract was created based on the priorities and demands of respective communities.

The POP Network organized these forums with the aim of fostering public dialogue and encouraging active citizen participation in the election process. The provided platform served as a valuable tool in facilitating debates on social policies and assisting citizens in making informed decisions regarding their choices.

Approximately 700 citizens participated in the public forums in person, while an additional 20,000 citizens from the respective municipalities had the opportunity to watch them live on the official POP Network page and candidates' social media platforms. This allowed local citizens to actively engage in the debate between the candidates and the community. In each of the organized public forums, all participating candidates expressed their commitment to signing the Social Contract and embracing the priorities set forth by the citizens. Furthermore, they pledged to integrate the Social Contract as an essential component of their governing program in the event of winning the elections.

In these forums, 2 (two) candidates of the Democratic Party of Albania out of 3 candidates competing in total from this political force in the 10 municipalities where POP network organizations operate accepted the invitation to participate in the Public Forums in Tirana and Vau i Dejës. Their presence in these forums was important for the citizens of their municipalities, who gave the candidates the opportunity to discuss with them local problems and plans for their solution.



**Tiranë:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Roland Bejko

🗨️ **NË MOS TI, KUSH?  
NË MOS SOT, KUR?**  
**- NGRIJE ZËRIN  
NË ZGJEDHJET  
VENDORE!** 🗨️



**VAU I DEJËS:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mrs. Klomentina Drini



## PUBLIC FORUMS WITH CITIZENS AND CANDIDATES

6 (six) candidates from the Socialist Party running for Mayor in Shkoder, Durres, Vau i Dejes, Korça, Kukës and Vlora agreed to participate in the Public Forums organized by the POP Network, where they faced the citizens and discussed local problems based on the respective Social Contracts.



**DURRËS:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mrs. Emiriana Sako



**SHKODËR:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Benet Beci



**VAU I DEJËS:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Kristian Shkreli



**KORÇË:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Sotiraq Filo



**KUKËS:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Safet Gjici



**VLORË:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Ermal Dredha



## PUBLIC FORUMS WITH CITIZENS AND CANDIDATES

8 (eight) candidates from the “Together We Win” Coalition running for Mayor in Tirana, Fier, Durres, Shkoder, Puka, Kukës, Vau i Dejes and Vlora participated in the Public Forums organized by the POP Network, where they faced the citizens and discussed local problems based on the respective Social Contracts.



**TIRANË:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Belind Këlliçi



**FIER:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Evdar Kodheli



**DURRËS:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Igli Cara



**SHKODËR:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Bardh Spahia



**PUKË:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Rrok Dodaj



**KUKËS:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Admir Sinamati



**VAU I DEJËS:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Zef Hila



**VLORË:** Click [here](#) to watch the Public Forum with Mr. Hysni Sharra

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” NË MOS TI, **KUSH?**  
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– **NGRIJE ZËRIN**  
**NË ZGJEDHJET**  
**VENDORE!** ”

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