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Assessment of Procedural Justice Tools Application in Basic Courts from 2021-2023: A Comparative Analysis

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**ASSESSMENT OF
PROCEDURAL JUSTICE
TOOLS APPLICATION
IN BASIC COURTS
FROM 2021-2023:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

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Introduction

Purpose and Scope of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an in-depth, comparative analysis of the Court User Survey findings deriving from the Assessment of the Procedural Justice Application tools conducted across the seven Basic Courts in Kosovo in 2021 with the recent Court User Survey conducted from May to June 2023. It aims to evaluate the performance and perception of court users across key dimensions, namely understanding, voice, respect, and neutrality. By delving into specific metrics related to accessibility of information, quality of services, user experiences, and perceptions of fairness, this report seeks to offer evidence-based insights and actionable recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and accessibility of the court system in Kosovo.

The scope of the report encompasses a detailed examination of the aggregated scores of the seven Basic Courts, enabling a holistic view of their collective performance. Additionally, it provides individual scores for each Basic Court, offering a nuanced understanding of their respective strengths and areas requiring improvement. The report further identifies instances of improvement and decline in both performance metrics and user perceptions, shedding light on specific areas where interventions may be particularly impactful. Through in-depth contextualization, the report elucidates the factors that may contribute to the observed trends, providing a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics within each Basic Court. Moreover, the report draws parallels between the main Basic Courts and Basic Court Branches, enabling a comparative assessment of user experiences and perceptions across these distinct operational units.

Emphasis on Comparative Analysis of 2021 and 2023 Basic Courts' User Reports

The central thrust of this report lies in conducting a rigorous comparative analysis between the Court User Survey reports of 2021 and 2023 across seven Basic Courts. This focus arises from the need to understand how user experiences and perceptions have evolved during this period, which is crucial for informed decision-making and designing interventions. By comparing data from these two years, we aim to identify significant changes, trends, and persistent patterns within the seven Basic Courts pre and post the Procedural Justice Action Plans' implementation.

The comparative framework is designed to highlight shifts in user sentiment and operational efficiencies. This offers valuable insights into the impact of interventions made through the Procedural Justice Action Plans' roll-out and the related training on the field of procedural justice. Key focus areas for comparison include dimensions such as understanding, voice, respect, and neutrality. This allows for a detailed assessment of the evolution of these aspects of court services, in light of the Procedural Justice measures adopted by each Basic Court.

Through this emphasis on comparative analysis, the report endeavors to provide a dynamic and forward-looking perspective on people centered justice implementation in Kosovo. It is anticipated that this approach will equip stakeholders with a nuanced understanding of the trajectory of court user experiences, facilitating more targeted strategies and interventions to further enhance the accessibility, efficiency, and user-centricity of the Kosovo judicial system. This section of the report serves as a foundational pillar for the subsequent in-depth analysis and recommendations.

1.1. Basic Courts' User Survey (2021-2023): A Comparative Analysis

A Understanding

- Comparison of Key Metrics (2021 vs. 2023)

The ease of obtaining information about their cases saw notable shifts among basic court users from 2021 to 2023. In 2023, 57.23% found it easy to obtain information from the courts, while the remainder found this service to be challenging to access from their respective basic courts. This indicates a rise in dissatisfaction, with a cumulative 42.77% of respondents providing a negative response, reflecting an increase of 13.26% points. This data suggests that there is a need for further investigation into why a segment of users is facing challenges in obtaining this information, despite the ability of the court users to use the online Case Tracking Mechanism, in addition to traditional means, to get information about their case.

TABLE A.1 In your experience, how easy is it to get information about your case?

Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very hard	154	11.39%	224	20.78%
Somewhat hard	245	18.12%	237	21.99%
Somewhat easy	701	51.85%	302	28.01%
Very easy	252	18.64%	315	29.22%
Total	1352	100%	1078	100%

The dissatisfaction in obtaining information from the court is also mirrored in the assessment of the information's quality. In 2023, 73.84% of respondents found the information obtained from the court helpful, marking an 11.83 percentage point drop compared to the 2021 results. This decline aligns with the increase in dissatisfaction depicted in Table A.1

TABLE A.2 How helpful was the information given to you by the court?

Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very hard	71	5.25%	156	14.47%
Somewhat hard	123	9.1%	126	11.69%
Somewhat easy	744	55.03%	321	29.78%
Very easy	414	30.62%	475	44.06%
Total	1352	100%	1078	100%

Ensuring that court users can easily locate the courtroom or office they need contributes to a user-friendly experience in courts and an indirect but meaningful implication of perception of justice and fairness. In order to evaluate this aspect of the basic courts in Kosovo, court users were surveyed about their experience in finding the necessary courtroom or office. The findings from 2023 indicate a slight decrease in satisfaction among court users in this regard. In 2021, the basic courts received an overall positive rating of 96.22%, whereas in 2023, this rating decreased to 90.81%.

TABLE A.3 What was your experience in finding the courtroom or office you needed?

Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very hard	14	1.04%	26	2.42%
Somewhat hard	37	2.74%	73	6.77%
Somewhat easy	609	45.04%	377	34.97%
Very easy	692	51.18%	602	55.84%
Total	1352	100%	1078	100%

Court users' experiences regarding signage, security information, and the conduct of security personnel can influence a user's broader impressions of justice and fairness. If they encounter difficulties right from the start, they might question the system's ability to handle the more complex and nuanced aspects of their case. In 2021, court users gave Basic Courts high ratings for the quality of signage in their buildings. This positive trend continued in 2023, with an improvement of 2.05 percentage points, reaching a satisfaction rate of 96.94% among court users regarding the quality of signage in basic courts.

TABLE A.4 There was good signage and information to understand the security procedures for entering the building and the security personnel were helpful and respectful.

Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very hard	543	40.16%	490	45.46%
Somewhat hard	740	54.73%	555	51.48%
Somewhat easy	56	4.14%	27	2.50%
Very easy	13	0.96%	6	0.56%
Total	1352	100%	1078	100%

This is supported by feedback from court users regarding the visibility, comprehensibility, and language of the signs placed in basic courts. In 2021, court users were specifically asked to evaluate whether the signs were in their native language. However, in 2023, the assessment was expanded to include considerations of visibility and understanding. The rate of improvement closely mirrors the satisfaction levels related to the information conveyed by the signs. In 2023, Basic Courts showed a 2.04 percentage point improvement compared to 2021.

TABLE A.5 Signs posted around the building and inside the courtroom were visible, easy to understand, and in my native language.

Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very hard	540	39.94%	470	43.60%
Somewhat hard	723	53.48%	559	51.86%
Somewhat easy	68	5.03%	37	3.43%
Very easy	21	1.55%	12	1.11%
Total	1352	100%	1078	100%

- Notable Changes or Trends

When examining the Basic Courts’ performance in delivering and conveying information, the analysis of data from 2021 to 2023 reveals an overall decline in citizens’ contentment with the services offered by the court. This dip pertains to both the quality of information provided and its accessibility. Although the degree of dissatisfaction varies among different basic courts, a noteworthy trend emerges court users’ satisfaction levels have notably dropped, particularly concerning the ease of obtaining information and the perceived quality of the information received.

When examining the trends within individual courts, it is clear that four out of the seven basic courts in Kosovo have made significant progress in enhancing access to information. Specifically, the Basic Courts of Gjilan (14.25%), Prizren (13.96%), Ferizaj (12.67%), and Peja (11.75%) have shown improvements in their efforts to provide information to court users, making it either relatively easy or straightforward for them to access information regarding their cases. However, it’s essential to note that the decline in satisfaction rates in Mitrovica, Pristina, and Gjakova outweighs the improvements seen in the four courts. Mitrovica has the highest regression rate at 37.07%, followed by Pristina at 28.14%, and Gjakova at 12.91%.

When examining the relevance and helpfulness of information provided by the courts, a more positive trend emerges. Five out of the seven basic courts have demonstrated improvements in their user-friendliness. Leading this improvement is the Basic Court of Gjakova, with a notable 6.15 percentage point increase, followed by Prizren (5.79%), Gjilan (4.79%), Ferizaj (2.58%), and Peja (1.49%). However, the Basic Court of Pristina stands out negatively in this aspect, with a significant 35.20% decrease in user satisfaction. Mitrovica follows with a 7.95% decrease.

Upon examining the specific findings for court users' ability to locate the office or courtroom needed, it is evident that the Basic Court of Pristina had the highest level of dissatisfaction among the seven basic courts, with 11.98%. This was closely followed by the Basic Court of Gjakova, which had a dissatisfaction rate of 11.11%. The Basic Courts of Peja and Prizren had similar scores, with 9.62% and 9.48% respectively. On the other hand, the Basic Court of Ferizaj received the highest positive feedback, with 97.27% of court users stating that they found it easy to locate the necessary offices. This was followed by the Basic Court of Gjilan with 94.22%, and Mitrovica with 92.53%.

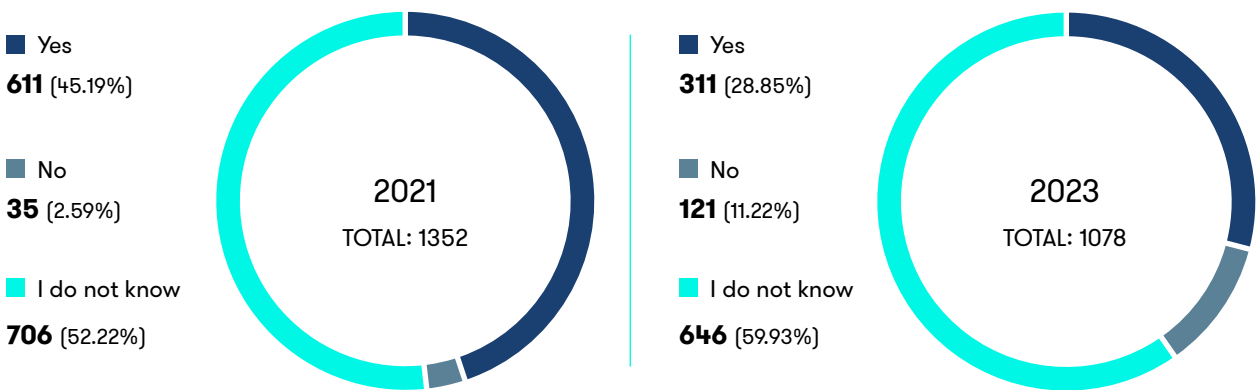
Regarding the presence and comprehensibility of signs within the courthouse, all seven courts received high scores, each exceeding 90%. Notably, the Basic Court of Gjilan achieved a perfect score of 100%, indicating that all surveyed court users either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement confirming the presence of clear signage and easily understandable security procedures, as well as helpful and respectful security personnel. Following closely is the Basic Court of Gjakova, which scored 99.20%, showing an improvement of 2.68% from the previous study. Prizren achieved a score of 99.14%, experiencing a slight decrease from 2021 [-0.86%]. Ferizaj reached 97.27%, with a slight decrease from 2021 [-2.73%]. Mitrovica received a score of 96.27%, representing a decrease of 3.12%. Lastly, Peja scored 91.35%, which is 4.43% lower than its 2021 score.

B Voice

- Comparison of Key Metrics (2021 vs. 2023)

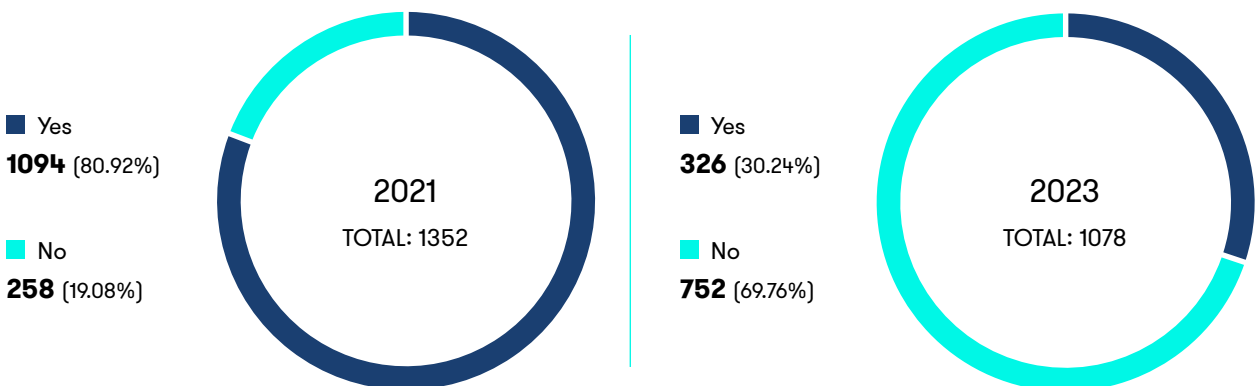
In this chapter, the report compares the findings from 2021 and 2023 to assess accessibility, transparency, inclusivity, and effectiveness in the interactions between court users and the basic courts.

TABLE B.1 Are complaint boxes available in the courthouse?



Regarding the availability of complaint boxes in the courthouse, a majority of court users are unsure whether their basic court has a complaint box. This aligns with the data from Table B.2, which indicates that 69.96% of court users would not utilize complaint boxes due to discomfort.

TABLE B.2 Would you feel comfortable writing down your complaints about the court and putting them into the complaint box?



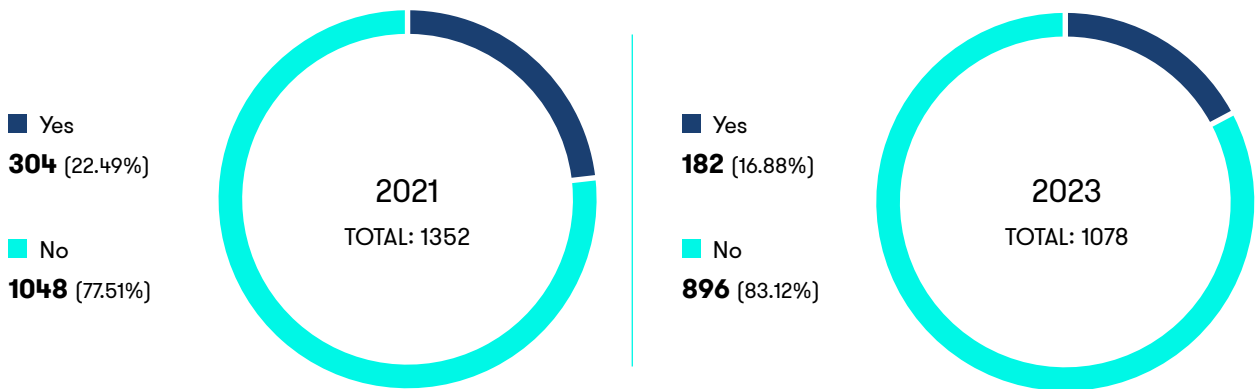
While the awareness of complaint box availability in the courthouse remained relatively consistent in 2023 compared to 2021, there was a significant decrease in court users' comfort level with using the complaint boxes. In 2021, 80.92% expressed comfort in using them, but this percentage dropped to 30.24% in 2023. This is prevalent across all Basic Courts, with the exception of Basic Court of Mitrovica which has scored an improvement of 4.82% from 2021.

TABLE B.3 How helpful was the person at the information desk?

Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very helpful	809	73.28%	753	69.85%
Somewhat helpful	179	16.21%	177	16.42%
Somewhat unhelpful	36	3.26%	23	2.13%
Very unhelpful	80	7.25%	11	1.02%
Not applicable	N/A		114	10.58%
Total	1104	100%	1078	100%

The court users were surveyed on the help received from the information desk. The trend remains positive overall across the basic courts, with slight percentage changes, which can be accounted to the fact that 10.58% of the respondents expressed that they did not need or seek help from the information desk.

TABLE B.4 Do you use the court's website to obtain information?



To maintain effective communication with users, one approach for basic courts is to offer information online. However, the percentage of users utilizing the website as a source of information is relatively low, both in 2021 and 2023. The findings indicate a slight decline in website usage for information-seeking, but this decrease is not deemed significant. It's worth noting that this may be influenced by the context of 2021, when people were limiting physical contact to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. In 2023, with reduced restrictions, citizens may revert to previous methods of obtaining information.

TABLE B.5 What kind of information do you usually search for on the court's website?

Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Schedule of hearings	200	27.55%	110	25.17%
Contact information	94	12.95%	71	16.25%
News	191	26.31%	60	13.73%
Published decisions	142	19.56%	103	23.57%
Information about judges	97	13.36%	83	18.99%
Other	2	0.28%	10	2.29%
Total	726	100%	437	100%

In both 2021 and 2023, the schedule of hearings was the most frequently sought-after information on the court’s website. In 2023, there was an increase in citizens using the website to search for published decisions (4.01% increase) and information about judges (5.63% increase).

A positive trend in basic court websites is also evident in the availability of content in users’ native language (as shown in table B.6) and the quality of translation (as shown in table B.7), which have garnered favorable feedback from court users.

TABLE B.6 Is the court website content that you need translated to your native language?

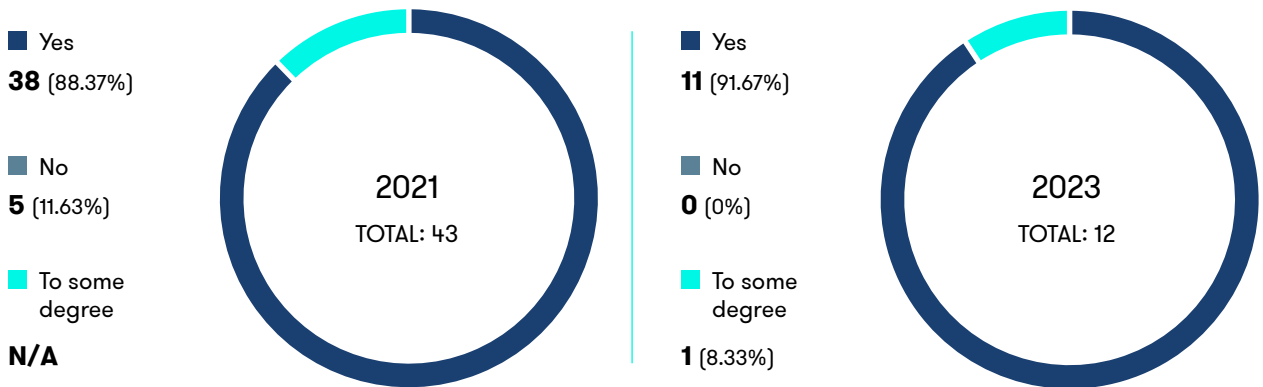
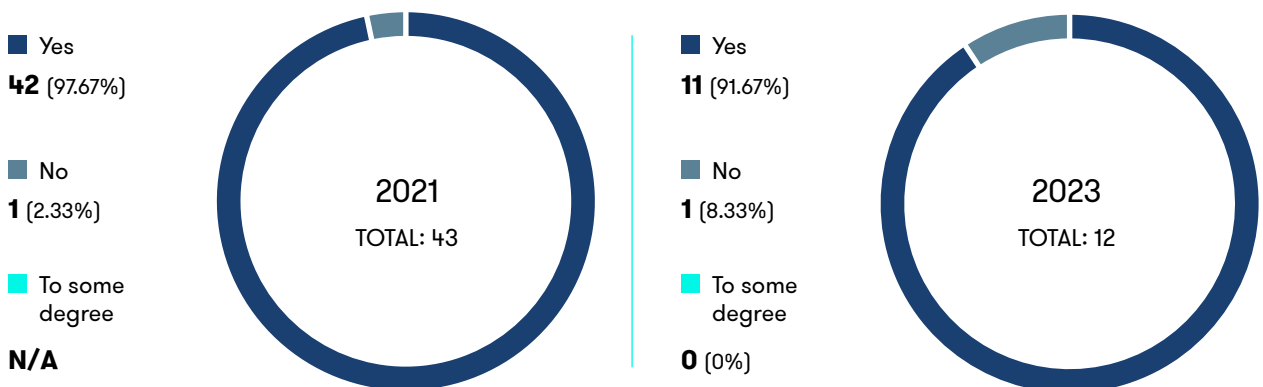
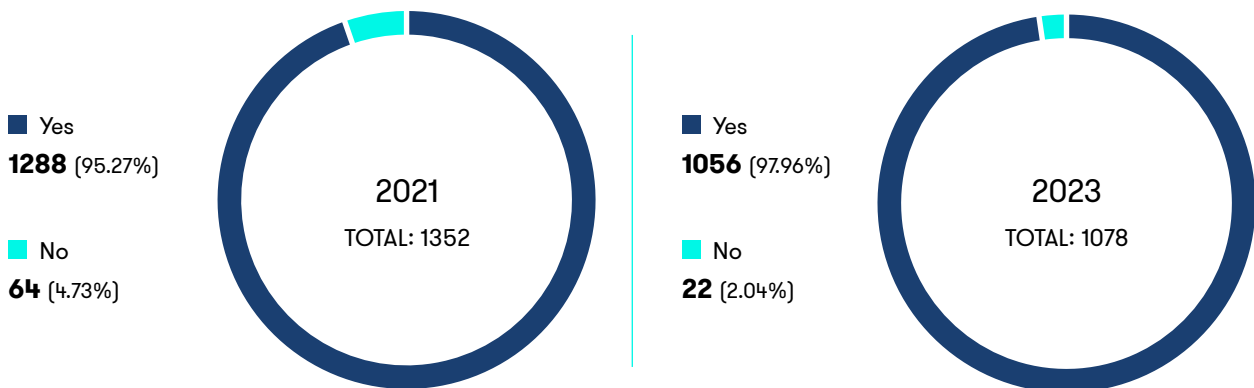


TABLE B.7 Are you satisfied with the quality of translation of the website content?



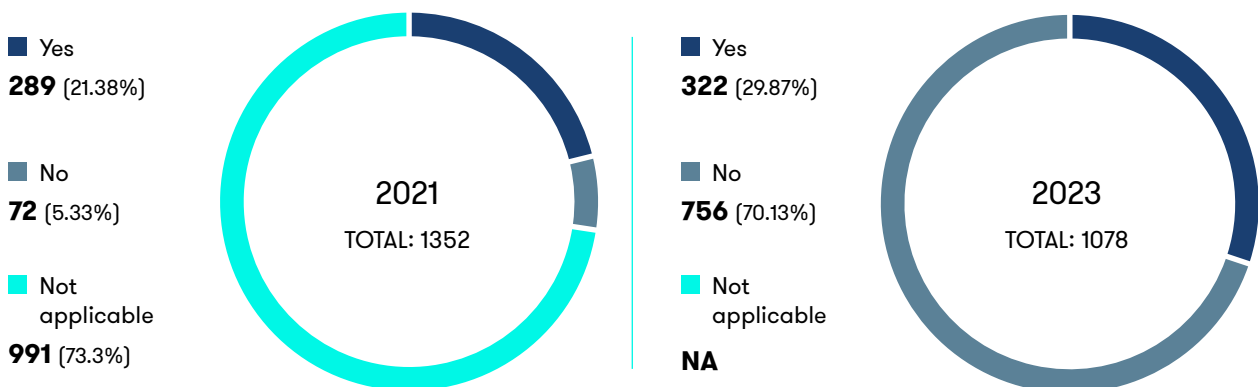
The basic courts have demonstrated proficiency in upholding citizens’ right to use their native language. When surveyed about their interactions with court staff and their experiences during court hearings, citizens reported that they were able to communicate in their native language, and that the court provided the necessary translation.

TABLE B.8 Were you able to talk to court staff in your native language?



The rise in citizens answering “No” when asked “Did the court provide translation during hearings?” can be explained by the change in response options. Unlike in 2021, where respondents had the choice of “Not applicable/Not needed,” in 2023, they were limited to only “Yes” or “No.,” so the decline may indicate that translation was not needed.

TABLE B.9 Did the court provide translation during hearings?



- Notable Changes or Trends

The availability of complaint boxes has seen positive changes in the courts of Gjakova, Peja, and Ferizaj. Nevertheless, awareness regarding the presence of these boxes remains below 50% across all Basic Courts, except for Peja, which reached 53.85%. Gjakova and Peja exhibited notable improvements, with increases of 22.81% and 19.50% respectively compared to 2021. However, the remaining Basic Courts experienced a decline in this aspect. Gjilan leads this trend, with 88.43% of court users reporting the absence of complaint boxes or their lack of awareness about them. This marks a significant decrease of 31.58% from 2021. Pristina follows closely with 83.38%, reflecting a 33.52% decrease from 2021, while Prizren scores 75.86%, indicating a 32.82% decrease. Mitrovica recorded 61.94%, showing a 30.23% decrease, and Ferizaj had 58.18%, experiencing a decrease of

10.18%. It is important to note that electronic tablets are now installed and accessible in all Basic courts, allowing users to assess the quality of court services, which may be why traditional complaint boxes are not commonly used.

The concerning finding is that court users, across all Basic Courts, expressed discomfort in utilizing the complaint boxes. With the exception of the Basic Court of Mitrovica, where 40.30% of court users indicated comfort in using these boxes—an increase of 4.82%—all other basic courts experienced significant declines in this aspect. The most concerning is the Basic Court of Gjilan, where merely 4.96% of respondents reported feeling comfortable using the complaint boxes. This indicates an alarming decrease of 92.30% from 2021. The table below provides a detailed breakdown of each basic court’s response in this category.

TABLE 8.10 2023 findings of: Would you feel comfortable writing down your complaints about the court and putting them into the complaint box?

Category	Pristina	Prizren	Peja	Ferizaj	Mitrovica	Gjilan	Gjakova
Yes	19.89% (-41.48%) ↓	12.07% (-77.63%) ↓	52.88% (-32.66%) ↓	25.45% (-67.59%) ↓	59.7%	4.96% (-92.30%) ↓	55.56% (-20.83) ↓
No	80.11%	87.93%	47.12%	74.55%	40.3% (-4.82%) ↓	95.04%	44.44%

There is a noticeable positive trend in court users’ experiences with the information desk. Overall, court users who needed to interact with the information desk found the staff to be somewhat helpful or very helpful. Specifically, the helpfulness rates for the information desk staff at other courts are as follows: Gjilan 99.18%, Peja 99.04%, Gjakova 98.42%, Ferizaj 98.18%, Prizren 96.55%, and Pristina 92.10%. The one outlier in this question is the Basic Court of Mitrovica. Although the helpfulness of the information desk is scored at a lower percentage than in other courts, it is important to note that 70% of respondents did not interact or need to interact with the information desk at all. When this is taken into account, the satisfaction rate for the court in Mitrovica is 64.27%.

The Basic Courts’ commitment to respecting individuals’ rights to their native language is viewed positively overall. Court users have expressed satisfaction with website content being translated (or at least partially) into their native language, as well as with the quality of translation. .

C Respect

- Comparison of Key Metrics (2021 vs. 2023)

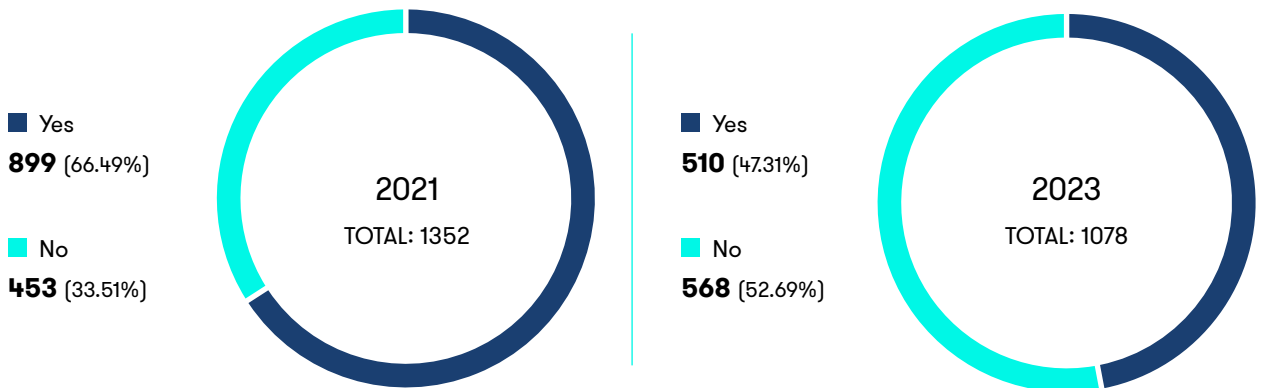
TABLE C.1 The building was clean and well maintained.

Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	517	38.24%	448	41.56%
Agree	729	53.92%	570	52.88%
Disagree	92	6.8%	45	4.17%
Strongly disagree	14	1.04%	15	1.39%
Total	1352	100%	1078	100%

The condition of courthouse facilities plays a significant role in shaping court users' experiences. In this regard, respondents generally reported being satisfied with the maintenance of the basic courts. In fact, there was a slight increase of 2.28% in satisfaction compared to 2021.

Court users experience is not as positive when it comes to basic courts efficiency. When asked if they were able to get what they needed done in a reasonable time, 52.69% of respondents said "No", which shows a significant increase of 19.18% in dissatisfaction from the findings of 2021.

TABLE C.2 Were you able to get what you needed to do today at court done in a reasonable time a reasonable time?



In both 2021 (75.89%) and 2023 (78.47%), the majority of respondents had cases older than six months. This fact may account for the relatively negative score in the question “Are you satisfied with the time with in which your case is being reviewed?” (table C.4). However, when it comes to the reaction of court users to the time it takes for their case to be reviewed, the findings show a significant decrease of 13.14% in the overall satisfaction of court users. While in 2021, 55.62% of court users were either somewhat or very satisfied with the courts efficiency in reviewing their cases, in 2023 this has dropped to 42.48%.

TABLE C.3 How long has your case been pending?

Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than 6 months	326	24.11%	232	21.53%
Up to 1 year	343	25.37%	225	20.87%
Up to 2 years	294	21.75%	175	16.23%
Up to 3 years	217	16.05%	193	17.90%
Up to 4 years	93	6.88%	104	9.65%
More than 5 years	57	4.22%	90	8.35%
More than 10 years	22	1.63%	59	5.47%
Total	1352	100%	1078	100%

TABLE C.4 Are you satisfied with the time with in which your case is being reviewed?

Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very unsatisfied	355	26.26%	414	38.41%
Somewhat Unsatisfied	245	18.12%	206	19.11%
Somewhat satisfied	570	42.16%	287	26.62%
Very satisfied	182	13.46%	171	15.86%
Total	1352	100%	1078	100%

When assessing the impact courts' efficiency has in respondents' personal lives, there are minor improvements in areas like missing work and feeling like progress is being made in court. There are also significant increases in difficulties related to job opportunities, visa applications, and consistent issues with legal representation. Notably, there is a substantial improvement in the accessibility of legal representation, with a marked decrease in self-representation in 2023.

In both 2021 and 2023, respondents reported similar trends regarding their experiences with the legal process. The most frequently selected option, chosen by 47.28% of respondents in 2021 and 46.48% in 2023, pertained to individuals who needed to miss work for court-related obligations. This indicates a relatively consistent pattern over the two years. Likewise, respondents' perception of court proceedings showed a similar pattern. In 2021, 29.16% of individuals felt like nothing happened to advance their case after attending court, and this figure decreased slightly to 28.27% in 2023. This indicates a relatively stable sentiment over the two years. When it comes to the impact on job opportunities, licenses, or certifications, there was a noteworthy increase in the percentage of affected respondents. In 2021, 1.85% reported difficulties in this regard, while in 2023, this number surged to 5.13%. This represents a substantial rise of 3.28%, highlighting a significant shift in this aspect. A similar trend is observed in the difficulty faced by respondents in obtaining visa applications. In 2021, 3.59% encountered challenges in this regard, which notably increased to 6.79% in 2023. This points to a substantial 3.2% rise in visa-related difficulties. The need to switch attorneys or representation remained consistent, with 3.42% facing this situation in 2021 and the same percentage in 2023. This indicates a sustained level of dissatisfaction or issues with legal representation over the two years. A notable improvement is observed in the proportion of respondents representing themselves due to a lack of legal representation. In 2021, 14.69% of individuals found themselves in this situation, which significantly decreased to 6.54% in 2023. This represents a substantial 8.15% drop, signifying a marked improvement in accessibility to legal representation.

TABLE C.5 Since your case began, have any of the following occurred (select all that apply):

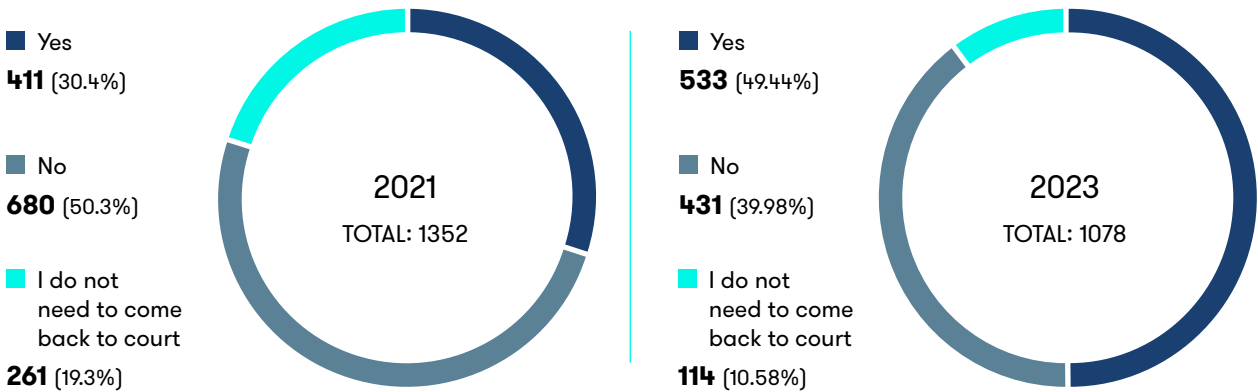
Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
I missed work to attend a hearing or conduct business with the court	843	47.28%	725	46.48%
I came to court and felt like nothing happened to advance my case	520	29.16%	441	28.27%
It affected my ability to get a job/license/certification	33	1.85%	80	5.13%
I could not get a visa application	64	3.59%	106	6.79%
I've had to switch attorneys/representation	61	3.42%	106	6.79%
I did not have an attorney and had to represent myself	262	14.69%	102	6.54%
Total	1783	100%	1560	100%

On a positive note, overall, there has been a clear improvement in the communication and consideration of respondents' scheduling preferences for potential future hearings between 2021 and 2023. This suggests a positive shift towards accommodating the needs and schedules of court users in the latter year.

In 2021, when asked if their lawyer, the judge, or court personnel inquired about their preferred date for a potential return hearing, 30.4% of respondents answered affirmatively. On the other hand, the majority, constituting 50.3%, reported that they were not consulted regarding their preferred date. Additionally, 19.3% of respondents in 2021 indicated that they did not anticipate needing to return to court.

Conversely, in 2023, there was a notable shift. A significant 49.44% of respondents stated that they were asked about their preferred date for a potential subsequent hearing. This marks a substantial increase from the 2021 figure of 30.4%. In contrast, the percentage of respondents who were not consulted about their preferred date decreased to 39.98%, showing a notable drop from the 2021 percentage of 50.3%. Furthermore, the proportion of respondents who did not foresee needing to return to court decreased to 10.58% in 2023, down from 19.3% in 2021.

TABLE C.6 If you needed to come back for another hearing, did your lawyer, the judge, or court personnel ask you what date would work best for you?

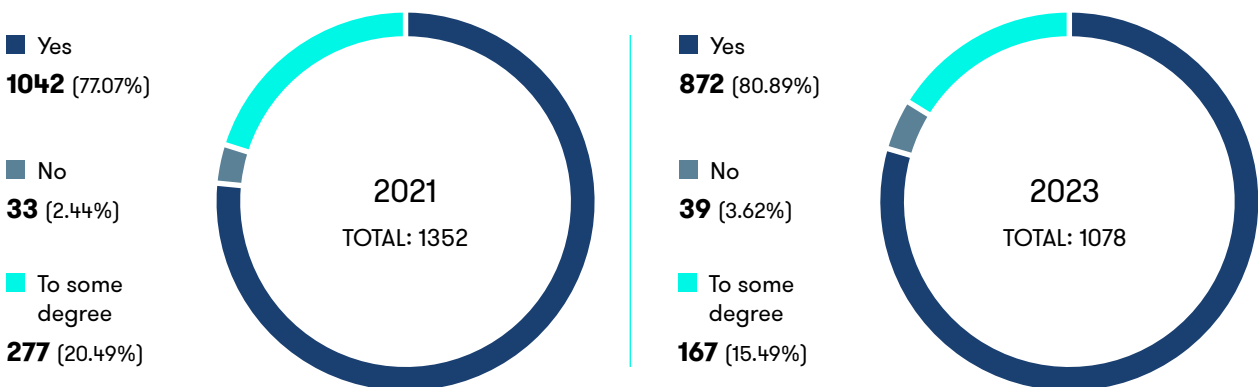


A positive trend is seen in the perception of how court staff treat respondents. The majority of respondents in both 2021 and 2023 reported positive experiences in terms of courtesy and respect, with a slight improvement noted in 2023.

In 2021, a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 77.07%, reported being treated with courtesy and respect by the court staff. Only a small minority, 2.44%, indicated experiencing a lack of courtesy and respect. Additionally, 20.49% mentioned experiencing these interactions to some degree.

In 2023, there was a further improvement in this aspect. A substantial 80.89% of respondents confirmed that they were treated with courtesy and respect by the court staff. The percentage of respondents who reported not being treated with courtesy and respect slightly increased to 3.62%. However, those who indicated experiencing these interactions to some degree decreased to 15.49%.

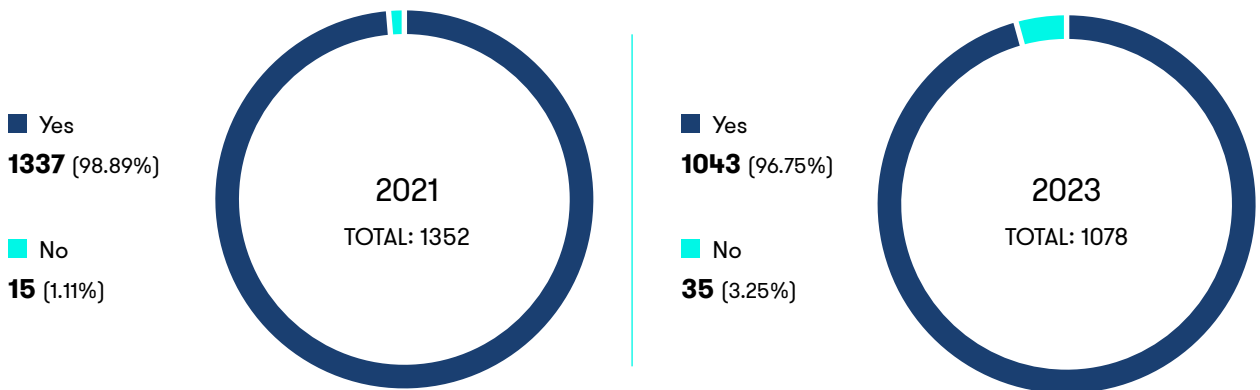
TABLE C.7 Were you treated with courtesy and respect by the court staff?



In both 2021 and 2023, an overwhelming majority of respondents expressed feeling physically safe on the court premises. In 2021, 98.89% of respondents reported feeling safe, which slightly decreased to 96.75% in 2023. The slight drop notwithstanding, the feeling of safety remains highly prevalent.

Conversely, a very small minority of respondents, 1.11% in 2021 and 3.25% in 2023, indicated not feeling physically safe on the court premises.

TABLE C.8 Do you feel (physically) safe on the court premises?



Respondents who expressed feeling unsafe in the courthouse generally attributed their concerns to several factors. The most frequently cited reason was a perceived threat from the opposing party in their proceedings, with many considering them to be dangerous or known for making threats in the past. Another prevalent response was a general unease associated with being in a courthouse, which some respondents found difficult to pinpoint as something specific the court did or did not do. Additionally, a few respondents raised concerns about the age of the security staff, expressing apprehension that in the event of an incident, they might not be equipped to provide adequate assistance.

- Notable Changes or Trends

The primary source of dissatisfaction in relation to the Respect variable of procedural justice is the efficiency of courts in addressing court users' needs. The report examines the level of satisfaction among court users regarding the time it took to accomplish what they needed at the court on the day they were surveyed, as well as the time it took for their case to be reviewed.

When asked about their ability to efficiently handle what they needed to do at court, the Basic Court of Peja showed the most significant improvement, with a rate of 18.34%. This also correlated with the highest positive response from court users, totaling 89.42%. The Basic Court of Gjakova demonstrated a slight improvement of 1.98%, achieving a 69.44% satisfaction rate in 2023. Conversely, the other Basic Courts experienced a decrease in court users' satisfaction with the time required to accomplish what they needed from the court. Pristina's Basic Court achieved a score of 50.14%, which is 9.76% less than in 2023, followed by Prizren at 39.66% (a decrease of 27.61%), Gjilan at 0.83% (a decrease of 37.53%), Ferizaj at 42.73% (a decrease of 39.55%), and Mitrovica at 40.30% (a decrease of 44.46%).

When court users were asked about their satisfaction with the time it takes for their cases to be reviewed, three out of seven basic courts demonstrated improvement. The Basic Courts of Prizren, Pristina, and Gjakova received more positive evaluations in 2023 compared to 2021. Prizren showed the most significant improvement, with a total increase of 11.70%, achieving a satisfaction rate of 57.76%. Pristina scored 38.97%, marking a 7.92% improvement from 2021. The Basic Court of Gjakova received a 64.59% satisfaction rate in 2023, reflecting a 5.07% improvement from 2021.

Although Gjilan had the highest percentage in 2023 – 79.34%, this actually indicates a decrease in performance as perceived by court users, accounting for a 2.85% regression. On the other hand, the Basic Courts in Peja, Ferizaj, and Mitrovica experienced a more significant decline in the time it takes to resolve cases, with decreases of 32.15%, 50.50%, and 53.98%, respectively. This trend is consistent with the scorecard, which shows Peja receiving a 36.54% score in 2023, Ferizaj receiving a score of 25.45%, and Mitrovica achieving a mere 8.21%.

In terms of the treatment of court users with courtesy and respect, as well as creating a safe environment for court users where they can feel safe, the basic courts perform quite well. The findings in 2021 were mainly positive, and the same trend follows in 2023 with slight changes that can be attributed to the change in sample size.

D Neutrality

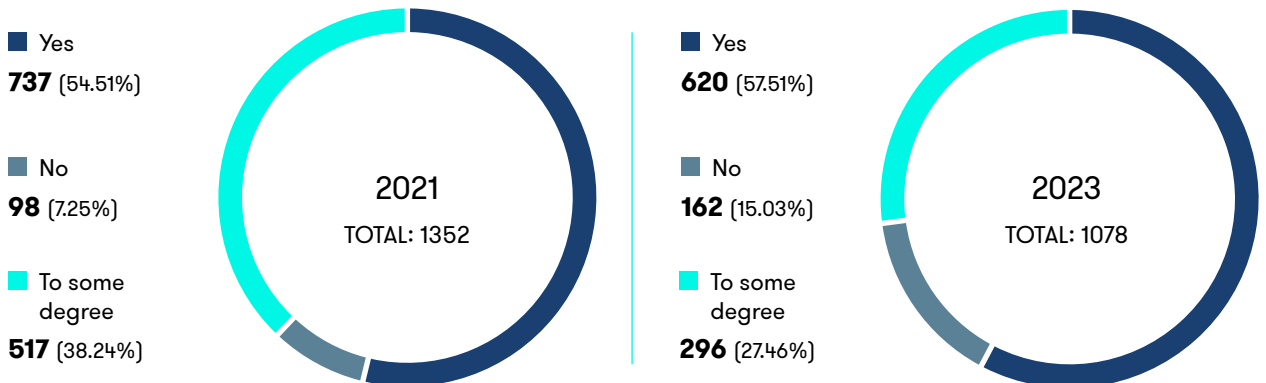
- Comparison of Key Metrics (2021 vs. 2023)

Evaluating fairness in court proceedings is a crucial aspect of understanding the overall experience and perception of court users. The studies conducted in 2021 and 2023 asked court users about their perception of being treated fairly by the judge.

The findings from both years indicate that over 50% of respondents believed they were treated fairly, although not by a large margin. There was a slight improvement in 2023, with 57.51% expressing satisfaction in comparison to the 54.51% reported in 2021. However, there was also an increase in the percentage of respondents who felt they were not treated fairly by the judge in 2023. In 2021, only 7.25% responded with a “No,” which is significantly lower than the 15.03% recorded in 2023.

To understand the factors contributing to this shift in feedback, the report delves into individual Basic Courts to identify areas of improvement and instances of increased dissatisfaction.

TABLE D.1 Do you think you were treated fairly by the judge?



When comparing respondents' perceptions of differential treatment in 2021 and 2023, it's essential to consider that in 2021, the option “I was not treated differently” was not provided, resulting in no responses in this category. Respondents had the choice to select multiple options or to indicate that they weren't treated differently compared to other court users.

In 2023, a significant majority of respondents (80.49%) chose this latter option, indicating they felt treated equally with other court users. The remaining 19.51% of respondents provided varied responses, which mirrored a similar pattern to 2021.

When asked to specify reasons for feeling treated differently, a common response in 2021 was the perception that knowing someone who works in the court leads to preferential treatment. This sentiment persisted in 2023, but more respondents also highlighted issues such as perceived arrogant behavior from court staff, unnecessary prolongation of their cases, suspicions of corruption, and the frequent expression of not being able to pinpoint the exact reason why they were treated differently.

TABLE D.2 If you were treated differently than other court users, why do you feel you were treated differently?

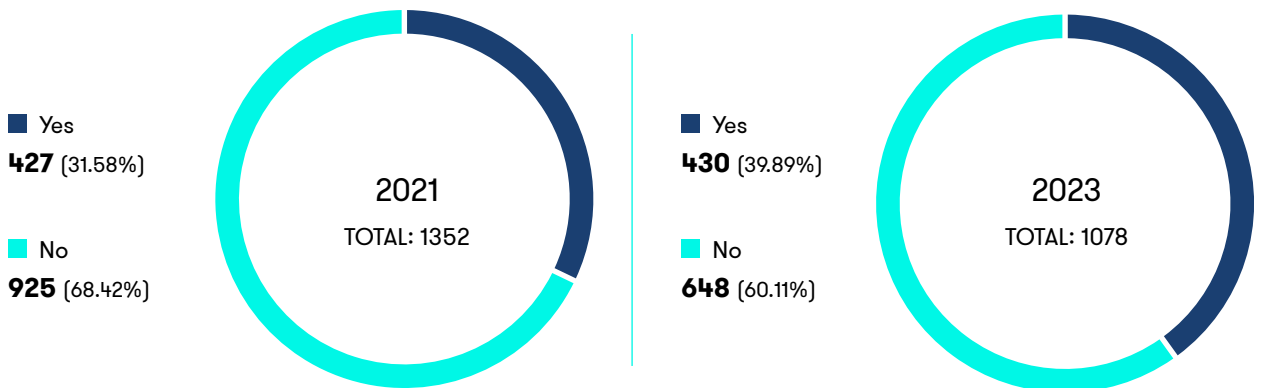
Category	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Race/ethnicity	3	1.21%	18	1.61%
The language I speak	2	0.81%	6	0.54%
My gender	15	6.05%	14	1.26%
My economic status	131	52.82%	52	4.68%
My appearance (clothing, hair, etc)	74	29.84%	11	0.99%
My age	22	8.87%	14	1.26%
I was not treated differently	NA	NA	895	80.49%
Something else	1	0.4%	102	9.17%
Total	248	100%	1112	100%

There was an improvement in awareness from 2021 to 2023 regarding the possibility of filing a claim for disciplinary violations of the judge.

In both 2021 and 2023, respondents were asked if they were aware of the option to file a claim for disciplinary violations of the judge. In 2021, 31.58% of respondents affirmed their knowledge of this option, while the majority, 68.42%, stated they were not aware of it.

Moving to 2023, there was an increase in awareness, with 39.89% of respondents indicating that they knew they could file a claim for disciplinary violations of the judge. Conversely, the percentage of respondents who were not aware of this option decreased to 60.11%.

TABLE D.3 Do you know that you can file a claim for disciplinary violations of the judge?



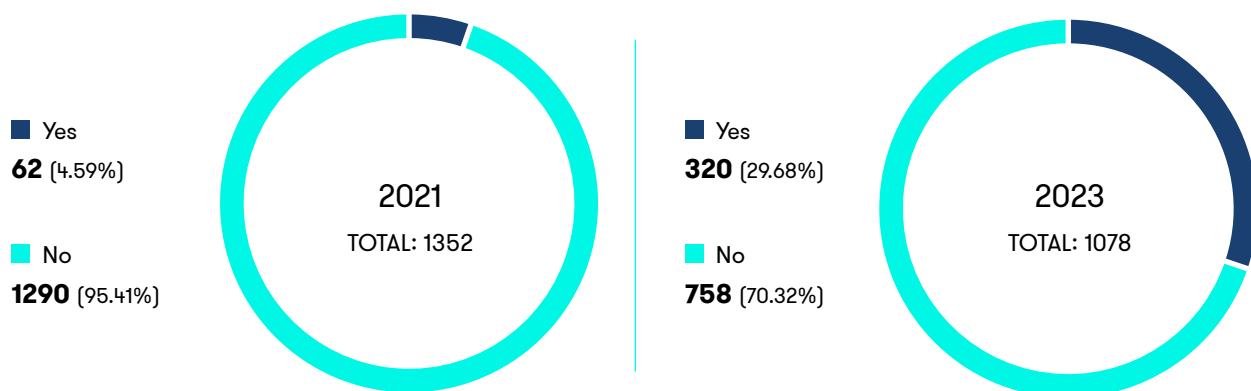
When respondents were queried about where they would file this claim, most indicated that they would either seek assistance from their lawyer/representative, submit a complaint in the designated complaint box, or request guidance from the court on where to direct the claim.

In order to gauge court users' perceptions of corruption in court proceedings, they were asked whether they were aware of instances where a friend, family member, or community member offered or received a bribe involving a judge or court employee. In 2023, there was a noteworthy shift in these perceptions, with 29.68% of respondents indicating they had heard of such incidents, a significant increase from the 4.59% reported in 2021.

It's worth noting that this substantial change may be attributed to the phrasing of the question itself. In 2021, court users were asked if they personally had been approached for a bribe by a court judge or employee, or an intermediary acting on their behalf. In 2023, the question was framed in a way that allowed respondents to include information they had heard from their network, not just their own experiences. This alteration in question structure likely contributed to the observed shift in percentages.

Nevertheless, the findings still indicate that the majority of respondents, at 70.32%, have not heard of such incidents, underscoring a prevailing lack of awareness regarding bribery occurrences in the court system.

TABLE D.4 Have you ever heard of a friend, family member, or community member receiving or offering a bribe to a judge or court employee?



- Notable Changes or Trends

Table D.5 presents the 2023 findings on how court users perceive the fairness of their treatment by judges across basic courts in Kosovo. The table provides a breakdown of responses categorized by court location, shedding light on the dynamics of perceived fairness in judicial interactions. The percentages indicate changes in responses compared to the previous assessment in 2021, offering valuable insights into any shifts in user experiences with the judiciary.

TABLE D.5 2023 findings of: Do you think you were treated fairly by the judge?

Category	Pristina	Prizren	Peja	Ferizaj	Mitrovica	Gjilan	Gjakova
No	19.07% [-15.65%] ↓	20.69% [-4.93%] ↓	9.62% [-7.21%] ↓	5.45% [-3.55%] ↓	29.85% [-13.39%] ↓	4.96% [+5.31%] ↑	4.76% [+1.49%] ↑
To some degree	32.97% [-11.53%] ↓	14.66% [-35.64%] ↓	18.27% [-11.85%] ↓	20.91% [+10.78%] ↑	41.04% [+5.67%] ↑	35.54% [-12.41%] ↓	14.29% [-25.99%] ↓
Yes	47.96% [-4.12%] ↓	64.66% [+30.72%] ↑	4.65% [+4.65%] ↑	73.64% [-14.33%] ↓	29.10% [-19.07%] ↓	59.50% [+17.72%] ↑	80.95% [+27.48%] ↑

Pristina's score reflects a perceived decrease in fair treatment by judges as reported by court users. The response "No" has seen a notable increase of 15.65%, while the affirmative response, indicating fair treatment, has decreased by 4.12%. Additionally, the somewhat ambiguous response of "to some degree" has also decreased, providing a clearer assessment compared to 2021.

The court users in Prizren have shown a noticeable improvement in their perception of fair treatment from judges, a trend that is also observed in Gjakova, Gjilan, and Peja. In contrast, Mitrovica's court users have reported an increase in their perception of unfair treatment by judges. It's worth noting that 41.04% of court users opted not to provide a clear response, indicating a 5.67% rise from 2021.

The Basic Court of Ferizaj continues to receive an overall positive rating for how court users perceive their treatment. However, when compared to the 2021 results, there is a slight increase in the "to some degree" option.

When asked if court users were aware that they can file a claim for disciplinary violations of the judge, court users responded more positively across all basic courts compared to 2021.

In 2023, there is a notable rise in the perception of corruption across all basic courts, except for the Basic Court of Gjilan, where there is a modest improvement of 2.74%. It's important to acknowledge that this change is partly attributed to the rephrasing of the question. In 2021, court users were asked if they personally experienced being asked for a bribe by a court judge, employee, or an intermediary acting on their behalf. In 2023, the question was modified to include experiences recounted by friends or family, allowing for a broader interpretation.

Peja stands out with the highest increase in the perception of bribery, showing a staggering 73.08% increase. This means that 73.08% of court users surveyed in Peja reported hearing about incidents of bribery. This is a significant shift from 2021 when 100% of respondents from Peja answered "No" to this question. Mitrovica follows with a 20.67% increase, indicating that 34.33% of court users have heard about requests for bribery, a notable rise from 2021's 3.66%.

Pristina witnessed a substantial increase, with 40.87% of court users indicating they have heard of corruptive activities occurring in this court, marking a 29.13% surge from 2021. In Ferizaj, 20% of court users reported similar knowledge, reflecting a 19.37% increase from the 0.63% recorded in 2021. Prizren saw a noteworthy rise, with 16.03% more respondents in 2023 acknowledging awareness of bribery, accounting for 17.24% of total surveyed court users in this basic court. Finally, in Gjakova, 4.76% of court users stated they are aware or have heard of court users being asked for bribes by court employees, which is 4.07% higher than in 2021.

1.2. Comparing Findings between Basic Courts and their Branches

- Comparison of Key Metrics between Basic Courts and the respective Basic Court Branches

In 2023, the Court User Survey was conducted across 18 branches of the basic courts in Kosovo. As there are no findings available for 2021, direct comparisons cannot be made. These branches represent geographical subdivisions of the Basic Courts, covering regions and often serving multiple nearby municipalities. While they operate independently, they fall under the jurisdiction of the same Basic Court President, commonly referred to as the main branch. Consequently, this study cannot draw direct comparisons with the main branches, but it can establish parallels in how court users perceive their respective courts in terms of Understanding, Voice, Respect, and Neutrality.

First, for the Understanding dimension, the assessment of accessibility and communication of information in the basic court branches yielded distinctive results. Across all five questions targeting this aspect of procedural justice, the average positive score was 90.58%. Notably, the Basic Court Branches in Decan and Shterpce deviated from this trend. Users in these branches indicated difficulty in obtaining information from the court, and in Decan, they also reported challenges in navigating the courthouse and locating the necessary offices or courtrooms.

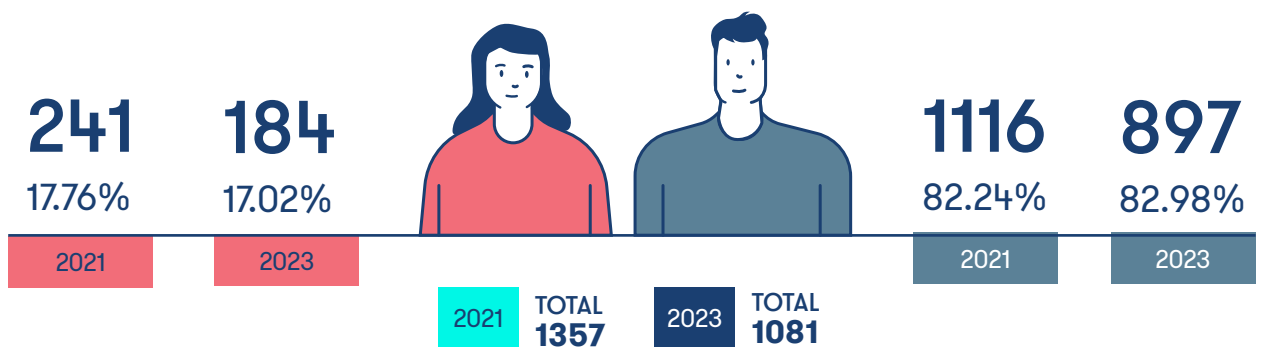
Second, in the Voice pillar there is a notable trend. The average positive score stands at 70.38%, well above the median. One striking finding is that a significant majority (84.06%) do not utilize court websites for information. Another noteworthy difference concerns complaint boxes. On average, 75.88% of court users either weren't aware of the existence of complaint boxes in the courthouse, or stated there were not available. Additionally, only 22.56% of court users indicated they would feel comfortable using these complaint boxes to file grievances about the court. The percentage of users willing to use these boxes exceeds 50% only in Decan (52.38%), Gracanica (72.94%), and Shterpce (58.67%).

Third, the overall score for Respect for the branches of basic courts is 81.25%. Two questions contribute to a slight decrease in the overall score: whether court users were able to accomplish what they needed to do in a reasonable time, and if they are satisfied with the time it takes for their case to be reviewed. Around 67% of surveyed respondents responded positively to these questions.

Finally, court branch users consistently express a high level of satisfaction with the fairness of judges' treatment. Among the 18 basic court branches, an average of 83.53% of court users believe they receive equitable treatment from the judge, with only 2.64% feeling the treatment was unjust. Furthermore, the prevalence of perceived corruption is notably lower in comparison to the basic courts, with just 4.93% of respondents reporting knowledge of instances involving bribes to judge or court personnel within their social network. One area for improvement lies in public awareness regarding the process of filing disciplinary complaints against a judge, as the data reveals that only 21.73% are aware of this right.

Demographic Data Comparison (2021 vs. 2023)

Demographic data for both surveys are presented below. The demographic data for the Court User Survey includes disaggregation of data by gender and ethnicity.



Respondent's Ethnicity	2021		2023	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Albanian	1197	88.21%	998	92.32%
Serbian	54	3.98%	36	3.33%
Turkish	3	0.22%	1	0.09%
Bosnian	40	2.95%	9	0.83%
Roma	27	1.99%	10	0.93%
Ashkali	28	2.06%	14	1.3%
Egyptian	6	0.44%	11	1.02%
Gorani	0	0%	1	0.09%
Other	2	0.15%	1	0.09%

Recommendations

- Summary of Key Comparative Findings

Comparing findings from 2021 to 2023 reveals significant progress in court-user interactions. A greater percentage of court users now commend the courtesy, respect, and fairness exhibited by court staff and court judges. Additionally, users report feeling safer and finding it easier to navigate courthouses. Despite these improvements, there has been little change in utilizing online tools for accessing court-related information. The primary challenge remains in efficiently delivering timely and helpful information regarding their cases. While the report doesn't specify how to expedite case reviews, given its complexity, the forthcoming recommendations offer a foundational roadmap for courts and their respective branches to enhance the overall court user experience:

1

Basic Courts and their respective branches should prioritize enhancing accessibility to information about cases. This can be achieved by improving their websites. Additionally, they should promote the online Case Tracking Mechanism feature on their websites through social media, QR codes, and strategically placed brochures within the court premises.

2

It is imperative to address the issue of prolonged waiting times in court proceedings, especially in those branches where respondents have reported difficulties in obtaining the necessary information within a reasonable time frame. The timely and efficient resolution of cases is crucial in ensuring justice and maintaining the trust of the public in the judiciary system. In order to reduce waiting times, it is recommended that the court system streamline its processes and increase its capacity to manage the influx of cases. This can be achieved through the implementation of new technologies, such as electronic filing systems and case management software, which can improve efficiency and reduce administrative burdens. Additionally, increasing staffing levels and providing training for court personnel can help to expedite the processing of cases. Providing excellent customer service is crucial in all industries, particularly in the legal system, where individuals are often dealing with complex and sensitive issues. It is imperative that court staff possess the necessary skills and knowledge to provide compassionate and effective support to those in need. To achieve this goal, it is recommended that a comprehensive training program be developed and implemented for all court staff. This program should cover topics such as active listening, effective communication, conflict resolution, and cultural competence, among others. Additionally, regular refresher courses should be offered to ensure that staff members remain up-to-date with the latest customer service techniques and practices.

3

Basic Courts and their respective branches should introduce a numbering system for court users to streamline services. This system would provide clear instructions for obtaining a number, segment services into categories, and display real-time updates on wait times. By doing so, basic courts can effectively reduce wait times and improve the efficiency of our court operations and enhance the overall court users experience.

4

Basic Courts and their respective branches should take proactive measures to enhance the accessibility and utilization of their websites by court users. To achieve this, it is crucial to raise awareness among court users regarding the website's availability as a valuable source of information. This awareness campaign should emphasize the visibility, accessibility, and informative value of the court's website. Furthermore, courts should prioritize the continuous improvement of website content, ensuring it is user-friendly and up-to-date.

5

To improve comment mechanisms and increase user comfort, especially in the court branches, it's recommended to enhance the visibility and accessibility of comment boxes and the newly installed tablets which offer court users the option to assess the experience in court while obtaining court services.

6

Basic Courts and their respective branches should proactively inform court users about their right to file disciplinary complaints for judge violations and provide clear guidance on the process. This can be achieved by distributing informative leaflets at the court's entrance, ensuring information is readily available at the information desk, and offering brochures inside the court premises which include detailed information on this process. Furthermore, it's essential to on each basic court's website. These measures will empower court users to address concerns effectively and promote transparency in the judicial system.



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