

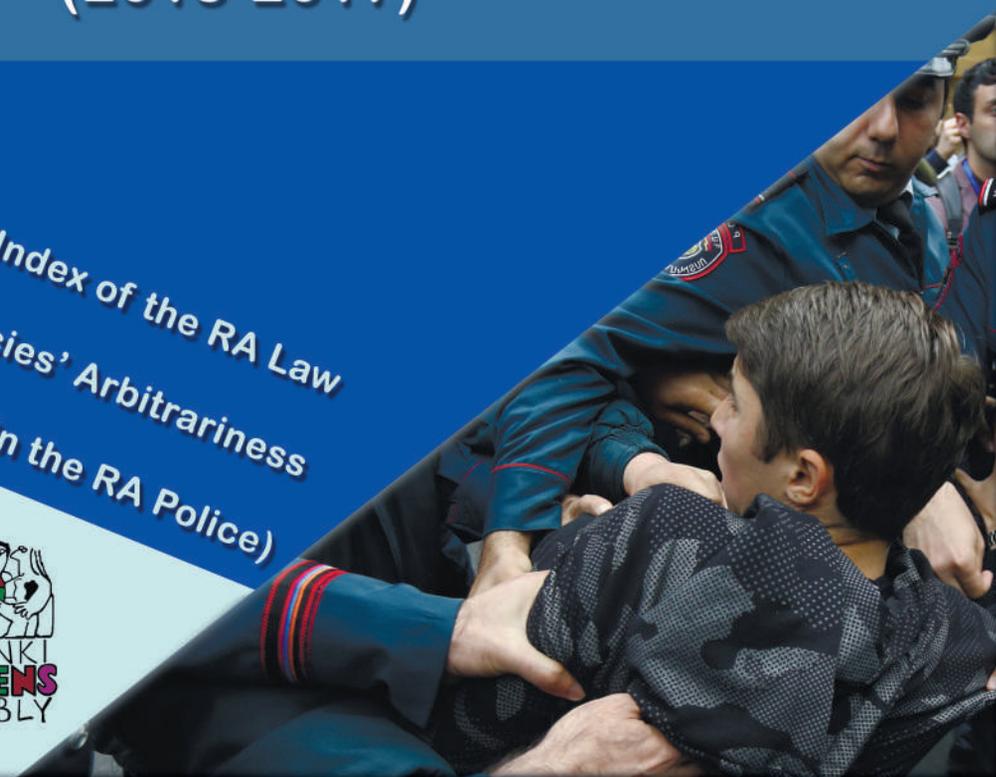


THE INDICES CHARACTERIZING THE ACTIVITY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA (2015-2017)

*(The Index of the RA Law
Enforcement Agencies' Arbitrariness
and the Index of Trust in the RA Police)*



Norwegian
Helsinki Committee



HELSINKI CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY-VANADZOR

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Index of Trust in the RA Police)**

Vanadzor
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The opinions voiced in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funding organization.

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INTRODUCTION

The report summarizes the findings of the recurring sociological surveys conducted by Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor (hereinafter referred to as "HCA Vanadzor" in all the regions of the RA and in Yerevan City in May 2017 with the involvement of the non-governmental organization "Advanced Public Research Group" (hereinafter referred to as "APR Group").

The main *aim* of the survey is to calculate the indices characterizing the activity of the law enforcement agencies (the Police, the courts and the Prosecutor's Office), the Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies' Arbitrariness and the Index of Trust in the RA Police.

With the aim of calculating the aforementioned indices, a methodology and a research tool were developed on the basis of a similar research methodology and similar tools implemented jointly by the Public Verdict Foundation (Фонд "Общественный вердикт") and the non-governmental research organization Levada-Center (АНО "Левада-Центр"), which are operating in the RF. The tools and methodology were localized and, having been refined after being tested in the framework of the pilot research "The Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies' Arbitrariness in the Northern Regions of the RA" in the months of April and May 2013, were applied in all the regions of the RA and in Yerevan City.

This report presents the information collection methodology, including the description of the research sample, the methodology of index calculation, including the calculation formulae, as well as the research findings. The Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies' Arbitrariness and the Index of Trust in the Police were addressed separately. The attitude towards the law enforcement agencies and the level of public concern are presented as well. The findings are presented in comparison with the findings of similar studies which were conducted from 2015 to 2017.

Research Methodology

Research Aim

The aim of the research is to calculate **the Index of the RA Law Enforcement Agencies'** (the Police, the courts and the Prosecutor's Office) **Arbitrariness** (hereinafter referred to as "the Arbitrariness Index") and **the Index of Trust in the Police** (hereinafter referred to as "the Trust Index").

Research Objectives

The objectives of the given research are as follows:

1. To determine the level of the RA population's trust in the law enforcement agencies,
2. To determine the level of the RA law enforcement agencies' manifestations of unlawfulness and arbitrariness against citizens in the RA,
3. To determine the level of the RA population's willingness to cooperate with the Police,
4. To determine the frequency of the use of the law enforcement agencies by the RA authorities against the political opposition (adversaries),
5. To calculate the Index of Citizens' Concern,
6. To determine the level of the population's protection from the arbitrariness of the law enforcement agencies,
7. To calculate the Index of Personal Concern,
8. To determine the effectiveness of the other law enforcement agencies (the courts and the Prosecutor's Office) acting as a protection mechanism against police arbitrariness according to the surveyees,
9. To conduct a comparative analysis of the aforementioned indices according to the socio-demographic status of the surveyees, the main sources of information and the years,
10. To reveal the assessment of the work of some subdivisions of the Police,
11. To reveal the assessment of the work of some human rights institutions,
12. To assess the level of public concern according to the places and the types of crimes.

Information Collection Method

The method of quantitative interviews was applied for information collection, which provided the opportunity to obtain the opinions of all social groups on the issue according to the settlements. Thanks to the representative sample, there is a possibility to apply the obtained information to different settlements entirely, to determine the prevalence and the distribution of opinions and to identify patterns. Direct interviews were conducted through face-to-face conversations between the interviewers and the respondents. A standardized questionnaire, which consisted of closed and semi-closed questions, was used as a research tool. The questionnaire used in 2015 was used in 2016 and 2017 through the CAPI technique.¹

The findings of the research were analyzed through the statistical software SPSS. The conducted research is a recurring/trend research.²

Research Sample

The researches were conducted in August 2015-2016 and in May 2017 among the population aged eighteen and older residing in all the regions of Armenia and in Yerevan City. The document on “The Voting Results of the RA National Assembly Elections of April 2, 2017”³, which was published by the RA Central Electoral Commission, served as a basis for the estimation of the research sample of 2017. In this document, the number of voters constitutes 2.588.468. Thus, the main research population constituted 2.588.468 people. In the case of research data accuracy of $\pm 2,8\%$, the sample population was estimated to be 1200 people in a 95% confidence interval.

The study samples were constructed through a similar methodology. In both cases, a multistage (stratified) purposeful random sample was constructed. At the initial stages of constructing the sample, the sample units (regions, settlements) were distinguished. After this, random sampling was carried out. The random sampling was implemented on the basis of the principle of “a coordinated step.”

The construction of the sample was carried out in the following stages:

1. Region Sampling

The ten regions of the RA and Yerevan City were involved in the research.

The representativeness of the research results for the given regions was fully ensured.

¹ Computer-assisted personal interviewing: During its application, the interviewer enters the information obtained during the face-to-face interview with the surveyee into an electronic questionnaire on a computer (tablet). The software allows ensuring a high level of supervision over the conducted interviews.

² Trend researches are conducted for the same main population, in a certain time interval and through a relatively identical methodology. The aim of trend researches is to reveal the trends in social changes, the social moods in the given case.

³ <http://res.elections.am/images/doc/020417verj.pdf>

2. Settlement/survey point sampling

To ensure the representativeness of the residents of the rural and urban settlements in the sample, first, the percentage ratio of those residing in the rural and urban settlements of each region was estimated. Accordingly, the number of the interviews to be conducted in the towns and in the villages was determined. In order to estimate how many towns and villages were to be included in the sample, the number of the surveyees allocated to the towns or the villages was divided by the optimal number calculated for the town or the village. The average optimal number of interviews in each village is considered to be 6; incidentally, it should not exceed 7. The optimal average number of interviews in a sampled town was considered to be 11; incidentally, it did not exceed 25. To calculate the number of interviews to be conducted in the sampled towns or villages, the population ratio of the given community was taken into consideration.

When sampling communities in each region, the distance from the center was taken into account. Thus, 3 types of survey points were distinguished:

1. region center,
2. regional communities situated between the region center and the remote communities,
3. remote communities that are located on the outskirts of the region.

3. Household Sampling

During the third stage of the sample construction, the third layer was distinguished; households were sampled. At each survey point the household sampling was carried out through a coordinated step.

4. Respondent Sampling

At the fourth stage, respondents were sampled among household members aged 18 and above on the basis of the principle of randomness. To ensure randomness, the principle of household members' "most recent birthday" was applied during the research of 2015. Only one person from each household was surveyed. To ensure randomness in 2016 and 2017, the "Kish grid"⁴ introduced into the CAPI software was used.

In all the three cases, the number of the surveyees constituted 1200.

Geography of the Surveys Conducted in 2017

⁴ The "Kish grid" (kish grid) is used in surveys conducted on the principle of random sampling, which establishes an algorithm, i.e. the sampling of one household member for an interview. The procedure has been developed in a way that enables every household member to have an equal opportunity to be selected for an interview. The method was named after the person who developed it, i.e. Lesli Kish.

Socio-demographic Profile of the Surveyees

26.3% of those surveyed in 2015 were male, whereas 73.7% were female. As regards 2016, 33.8% were male, and 66.3% were female. In 2017, 36.6% were male, while 63.4% were female.

The surveyees' age distribution is presented in Table 1.

Table1

Surveyees' Age Distribution

Age Group	Survey Year		
	2015	2016	2017
18-25 years old	11.1%	14,8%	12.6%
26-35 years old	19.6%	20.4%	21.7%
36-45 years old	14.4%	16.5%	16.6%
45-60 years old	29.1%	26.3%	25.9%
61 and above	25.8%	21.9%	23.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The surveyees' distribution according to education is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Surveyees' Distribution According to Education

	Survey Year		
	2015	2016	2017
Elementary	0.5%	0.4%	0.7%
Incomplete secondary (8-year education)	7.0%	6.0%	5.0%
Secondary (10-12-year education)	34.3%	37.1%	36.1%
Secondary vocational	27.7%	22.3%	26.8%
Incomplete higher	3.3%	4.1%	4.1%
Higher	26.5%	29.7%	27.0%
Postgraduate (doctoral degree)	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%

I refuse to answer the question	0.1%	0.0%	0.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The surveyees' distribution according to their average monthly household income is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Surveyees' Distribution According to their Average Monthly Household Income

Income in AMD	Survey Year		
	2015	2016	2017
Up to 35000 AMD	10.30%	14.40%	19.75%
From 35001 to 65000 AMD	25.90%	25.70%	21.00%
From 65001 to 150000 AMD	41.00%	39.50%	36.50%
From 150001 to 350000 AMD	17.03%	16.40%	16.08%
More than 350001 AMD	3.80%	4.00%	3.25%
I find it difficult to answer the question	0.30%	0%	3.42%
I refuse to answer the question	1.50%	0%	19.75%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The surveyees described their socio-economic status by responding to the following question:
 "Please specify one of the following statements that best describes your economic status."

The responses are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Surveyees' Distribution According to their Socio-economic Status

Economic Status	Survey Year		
	2015	2016	2017
Insufficient money to buy food	27.8%	23.0%	21.3%
Sufficient money only to buy food	35.1%	37.2%	35.8%
Sufficient money to buy food and clothes	24.1%	24.0%	24.0%
Sufficient money to buy food, clothes and other goods	12.6%	15.8%	18.0%

I refuse to answer the question	0.4%	0%	0.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The responses to the question “Which social class do you associate yourself with?” are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Surveyees' Distribution According to their Social Class

Social Class ⁵	Survey Year		
	2015	2016	2017
Upper	3.3%	1.9%	3.2%
Upper middle class	11.6%	12.1%	10.7%
Middle segment of the middle class	56.1%	53.7%	57.4%
Lower middle class	12.7%	15.7%	10.9%
Lower class	10.8%	11.0%	12.1%
Destitute	4.7%	5.7%	5.8%
I find it difficult to answer the question	0.3%	0%	0%
I refuse to answer the question	0.6%	0%	0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The surveyees' distribution according to the types of settlements is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Surveyees' Distribution According to the Types of Settlements

Settlement	Survey Year		
	2015	2016	2017
Urban	72.0%	72.0%	72.0%
Rural	28.0%	28.0%	28.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

⁵ Affiliation with a social group in this research is based on the surveyees' subjective self-assessment.

The surveyees' gender distribution according to the types of settlements is presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1

Cross-sectional Analysis According to the Surveyees' Gender and the Types of Settlements

		Settlement Type						Total
		2015		2016		2017		
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	
Surveyee's Gender	Male	69.3%	30.7%	74.1%	25.9%	69.5%	30.5%	100.0%
	Female	73.0%	27.0%	70.7%	29.3%	73.5%	26.5%	100.0%
Total		72.0%	28.0%	72.0%	28.0%	72.0%	28.0%	100.0%

As can be observed in Tables 1-7.1, the surveyees' ratios according to the main attributes were almost maintained in the researches of 2015-2017.

The surveyees' sources of information are presented in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2⁶

Main Sources of Information on the Developments in Armenia

Sources of Information	2016	2017
Television	49.8%	54.5%
Radio	1.9%	2.2%
Printed press	1.0%	0.5%
Online press	22.7%	20.7%
Social websites	20.7%	18.3%
Workplace	0.6%	0.6%
Friends, acquaintances and relatives	2.4%	2.4%
Meetings, public discussions, social and/or political	0.6%	0.3%
I find it difficult to answer the question	0.3%	0.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

⁶ Question: "Where do you usually learn about the developments in Armenia?"

The data of 2016-2017 were analyzed according to the surveyees' sources of information. The data illustrate the considerable difference in the indices according to the sources of information.

Index Calculation Methodology

Calculation Methodology of the Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies' Arbitrariness

Index Definition

The Index of Arbitrariness of the Law Enforcement Agencies is the generalized index of the trends in the public moods. It reflects the public sense of lack of protection against the arbitrary unlawful actions of the Police, the Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary.

The questions used for the calculation of the index are aimed at identifying the public evaluation of the activity of the law enforcement bodies.

The arbitrariness index is built up on three elements (components):

Public Concern Index

This index is built through the calculation of the arithmetic mean of the generalized indices of the answers to three main questions. Those questions are as follows: "To what extent do you trust the law enforcement agencies (the Police, the courts, the Prosecutor's Office) (the entire system) (all of them together)?" , "How serious do you think is the issue of the arbitrariness and the unlawfulness manifested by the law enforcement bodies for Armenia?" and "How often do you think the authorities of the Republic of Armenia use the law enforcement agencies as a means to suppress the opposition (their own political adversaries)?".

Personal Concern Index

This index is calculated through the arithmetic mean of the generalized indices of the answers to the following questions: "Are you or those close to you likely to suffer because of arbitrary actions by the law enforcement agencies?" and "How protected do you feel personally against the arbitrariness of the law enforcement agencies?".

Personal Protection Index

The index is built through the calculation of the arithmetic mean of the generalized indices of the answers to the questions "If you ever fall victim to arbitrary actions by the Police, do you think the other law enforcement bodies (the courts and/or the Prosecutor's Office) will protect you?" and "Do you think rights violated by the Police may be restored legally in Armenia?".

Calculation Method of the Index of Trust in the Police

Index Definition

The Index of **Trust in the Police** is the generalized trend index of public moods. It reflects the attitude towards and trust in the Police, satisfaction with the police activity and citizens' willingness to cooperate with the Police.

The questions used for the index calculation are aimed at revealing public opinions and assessments relative to the attitude towards the Police and its activity, and the willingness to cooperate.

The calculation of the Index of Trust in the Police is constructed on the basis of three elements (components), too.

Assessment of the Police Activity

This index is built through the calculation of the arithmetic mean of the generalized indices of the answers to the following questions: "To what extent are you satisfied with the activity of the Police in your settlement/community?" and "Do you think the Police in your settlement/community can protect you/your family from criminals?".

Attitude Towards the Police

This index is estimated through the arithmetic mean of the generalized indices of the answers to the following questions: "To what extent do you trust the Police in your settlement/community?" and "What is your attitude towards the police officers in your settlement/community?".

Willingness to Cooperate with the Police

The index is constructed through the arithmetic mean of the generalized indices of the answers to three main questions: "Do you think citizens should help the Police?", "If you witnessed a beating, robbery, theft and other similar crimes, would you call the Police?" and "Some people, being a witness to a crime, call the Police. If you became a witness to a beating, robbery, theft and other similar crimes, would you call the Police?".

Index Calculation Formulae

The indices are estimated by the following formula:

$$Index = a + 0.5*b - 0.5*c - d,$$

where

“Index” is the index value estimated on the basis of the answers to each question,

“a” stands for the percentage distribution of the most “positive” answers,

“b” stands for the percentage distribution of “positive” answers,

“c” stands for the percentage distribution of “negative” answers,

“d” stands for the percentage distribution of the most “negative” answers.

The index estimated on the basis of the answers to the question “What is your attitude towards the police officers in your settlement/community?” was calculated by the formula as follows:

Formula: $Index = a + b + 0.5*c - 0.5*d - e - f,$

where

“Index” is the index value estimated on the basis of the answers to this question,

“a” and “b” stand for the percentage distribution of the most “positive” answers,

“c” stands for the percentage distribution of “positive” answers,

“e” and “f” stand for the percentage distribution of the most “negative” answers.⁷

In regard to each question, the index is estimated as its generalized value in the form of a difference between the portions of “negative” and “positive” answers. It should be noted that the most “negative” or the most “positive” answers are valued as “1”, and partially “negative” or “positive” answers are valued as “0.5”.

The index is calculated as the arithmetic mean of the generalized values of several partial indices (for each component of 2 or 3 partial indices). Thus, both the generalized indices of arbitrariness/trust and their components range from “-100” to “+100”. **It should be noted that if any of the indices is more than “0”, it means that “positive” assessments prevail. In contrast, if any of the indices is lower than “0”, then “negative” assessments prevail, which in its turn points to the existence of the issue described.**

⁷ Answers to this question according to the coding: “a” stands for “I respect”, “b” stands for “I trust”, “c” stands for “I like”, “d” stands for “I dislike”, “e” stands for “I beware, I fear” and “f” stands for “I get vexed/angry”.

SUMMARY

The study conducted in 2017 and the comparison of its findings with the findings of similar studies conducted in 2015 and 2016 revealed a number of patterns and trends in public perceptions of the activity of the law enforcement agencies.

- The values of the Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies' Arbitrariness⁸ and the Index of Trust in the Police are directly linked with the social and political developments taking place in the country and the level of involvement of the law enforcement agencies in those developments. It is obvious from the fluctuations in the indicators of those two indices from 2015 to 2017. The values of those indices decreased since the Patrol-Sentry Service Regiment had been seized, and the way the law enforcement agencies acted changed during the subsequent incidents. In that period, the society characterized the activity of the law enforcement agencies as a means used by the political force in power to suppress the political opposition. Moreover, in 2016, the Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies' Arbitrariness was negative; it was below 0.⁹ In 2017, this index increased; despite being positive, it was close to 0 nevertheless. This means that there are still issues in the law enforcement agencies. These issues are of concern to the society.

- The indicators of one of the component indices of this index, namely the Public Concern Index, were always negative (from 2015 to 2017), which is clear evidence that arbitrary and unlawful actions manifested by the law enforcement agencies remain a serious issue for the society. The use of the law enforcement agencies by the authorities as a means to suppress the opposition is a factor that concerns the society and has a negative effect on the assessment of the activity of the law enforcement agencies. One of the facts serving as evidence for this is that, according to the data of all the researches conducted from 2015 to 2017, the least safe/secure places for the society are crowded places at social and/or political mass events.

- The values of the Index of Arbitrariness of the Law Enforcement Agencies were always (from 2015 to 2017) the lowest in Yerevan City. The indices of this index were low among the urban population (in comparison with the population of urban communities) and among males (in comparison with females). In both cases, one of the potential reasons for the low indicators might be the fact that the representatives of the mentioned groups are more active in socio-economic and political processes; therefore their responses and judgments are rather based on personal experience

⁸ The Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies' Arbitrariness characterizes the level of arbitrariness of the law enforcement agencies in relations with citizens, i.e. the level of unlawfulness leading to violations of human rights.

⁹ If one of the indices is over "0", then it means that "positive" assessments prevail, which points to the absence of the issue described. And if one of the indices is lower than "0", then "negative assessments prevail, which in its turn points to the existence of the issue described.

and observations. Almost all the indices are high among the representatives of the “26-35” age group, i.e. the younger generation. In contrast, these indices are low among the “36 and over” age group, i.e. middle-aged and older adults. The researches of 2015-2017 also revealed the trend that the indices assessing the activity of the law enforcement agencies were greatly influenced by the level of the surveyees’ education. The higher the level of education, the lower the Index of Arbitrariness of the Law Enforcement Agencies and its component indices. In contrast, the lower the level of education, the higher the positive values of this index. The data of the researches conducted in 2015-2017 revealed the link between the Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies’ Arbitrariness (as well as all its component indices) and the amount of the average monthly household income of the surveyees. In almost all the cases, the low indicators prevail among those who marked the answer “350001 AMD and more”.

- Negative or the lowest positive assessments were given to the values of the Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies’ Arbitrariness as well as nearly all its component indices by the surveyees who marked the answer “Insufficient money to buy food”, i.e. those who consider themselves as socially insecure. The findings of the 2017 research are the only exception; the values of the Index of Legal Arbitrariness and its component, namely the Personal Concern Index, are the lowest among those who indicated the option “Sufficient money only to buy food.” All this serves as evidence for the fact that there is a logical link between the values of the Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies’ Arbitrariness as well as almost all of its component indices and the economic status of the surveyees.

- According to the data of the researches conducted in 2016-2017, the assessments of the work of the law enforcement agencies were observed in accordance with what main sources of information the surveyees had. Thus, the surveyees who mainly obtain information through television are mostly inclined to give positive assessments, whereas those using social networks and online press gave more negative assessments. One of the reasons for these sharp differences may be the fact that television is mostly considered to be controlled by the authorities and presents information which is beneficial to the current authorities. This serves as evidence for the lack of objectivity of television. Unlike television, online press is partly not controlled by the authorities, and social networks are not controlled by them at all; therefore these sources are freer to mostly present the objective reality.

- The findings of the researches conducted in 2015-2017 were also observed according to the amount of the surveyees’ average monthly household income. Nearly in all the cases, the values of the Index of the Law Enforcement Agencies’ Arbitrariness as well as all its component indices were given negative or the lowest positive assessments by the surveyees whose average monthly household income constituted “350001 AMD and more”.

- In spite of the fact that the indices fluctuated according to the research findings of different years, the indicators of the Index of Trust in the Police were always positive (over 30). This serves as evidence for the fact that although people attribute to the Police characteristics such

as arbitrariness, unlawfulness and activity aimed at providing political services to the authorities, there are expectations of the Police as a law enforcement agency in public consciousness.

- The Index of Trust in the Police was the lowest in Yerevan, among the urban population (in contrast to the rural population) and among males (in contrast to females).
- The Index of Trust in the Police was higher among the surveyees who mainly obtain their information from television in contrast to those who give their preference to electronic sources of information.

Hence, steps need to be taken to increase public trust in the Police, which should be based on a radical change in the way the Police operates and in its mission. The provision that the Police fulfills its duties set by the law should be rooted in public consciousness. When the Police starts to ensure people's security unconditionally, to prevent or to stop crimes and administrative offenses, to solve crimes regardless of the chains where those crimes are/were committed, to ensure maintenance of social order and social security without bias and so forth, trust in the Police will be built among the society. The mass media, which cover their activity, have an immense role in this and can substantially change the public opinion.

Taking into consideration the fact that the assessments of the law enforcement agencies vary from region to region, the law enforcement agencies should conduct the assessment and management of their activity in a differentiated manner according to regions, taking into account the public opinion of each region.