

Aktiv

Report on Research Results

2017



Trend Analysis:

Citizens Opinion Survey in North Kosovo

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North Mitrovica

October 2017.

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Research Methodology

Quantitative part of the research

Research method: Face-to-face survey research (F2F)

Survey: 51 questions during approximately 15 minutes

Research period: May 4th – 11th, 2017

Research locations: North Mitrovica, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveçan

Sample size: 800 respondents

Sample type: Stratified random sampling – stratification by the municipality of residence

Statistical error: 95% statistical confidence interval with an incidence of 50% is +/- 3,2

Post-stratification: gender, age, place of residence and level of education

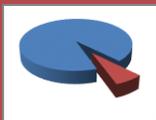
Qualitative part of the research

Focus groups: 4 focus groups conducted in North Mitrovica (June 20th, 2017), Zvečan/Zveçan (June 23rd, 2017), Zubin Potok (July 5th, 2017), and Leposavić/Leposaviq (July 13th, 2017).

Interviews: 6 interviews with government officials and local political analysts (Igor Simić, North Mitrovica Assembly member; Časlav Milisavljević, Zvečan/Zveçan Assembly member; Željko Tvrdišić, journalist; Nusret Hodža, Deputy Minister of Justice of Kosovo)

Research period: June 20th – August 15th

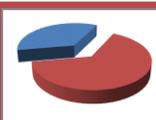
Key results



7% of respondents assessed the current political situation in Kosovo as good.



Over 90% of respondents believe that developments in Kosovo do not go in the right direction, while every second respondent believes that in three years from now the life of Serbs in Kosovo will be worse than today.



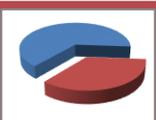
65% of respondents believe that Russia should be the most important partner when it comes to lobbying for the protection of interests of Serbs in Kosovo.



Only 15% of respondents support the Brussels Agreement, while almost 40% of respondents have no opinion.



Every fourth respondent supports the participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions.



Over 35% of respondents plan to participate in the next Kosovo elections when they take place.



Every second respondent does not feel free to publicly express his political views.



The respondents evaluated interethnic incidents, political instability and organized crime as the greatest security risks.



Only 2.1% of respondents believe that the Brussels Agreement has improved the rights and freedoms of the Serbian community in Kosovo.



Almost every second respondent does not see himself/herself in Kosovo in the next five years.



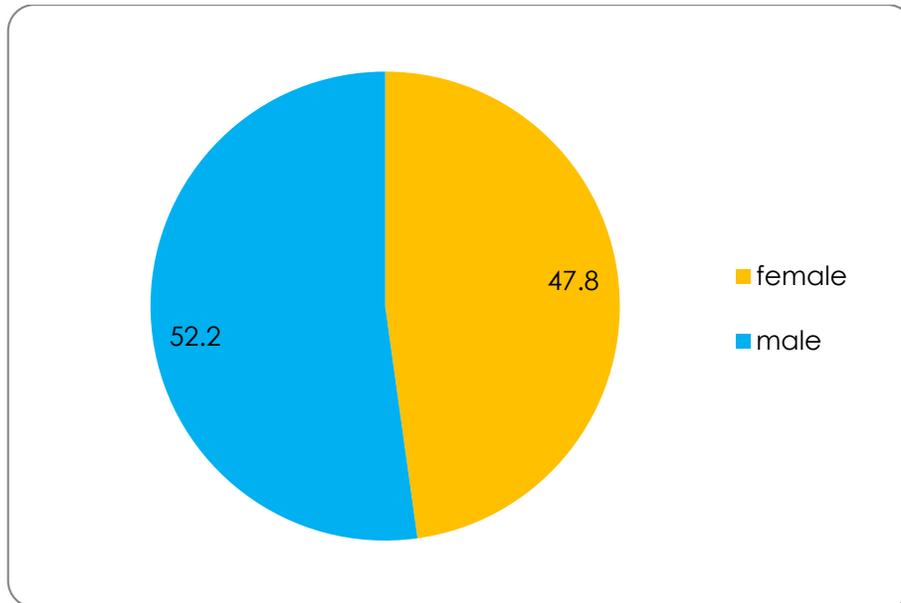
Almost 80% of respondents believe that the European Union is taking Pristina's side in the negotiation process between Belgrade and Pristina.



10.5% of respondents support Kosovo accession to the European Union.

Sample Description

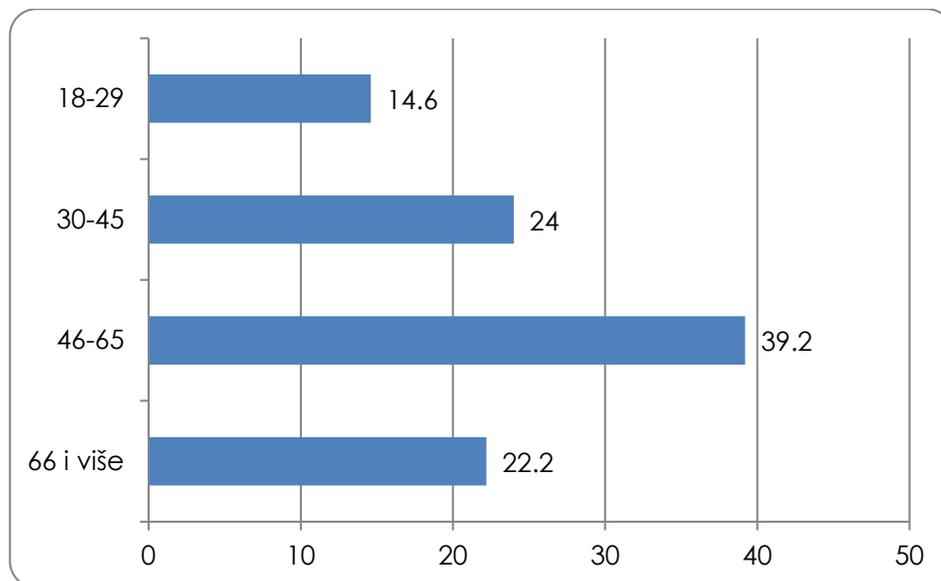
Gender breakdown



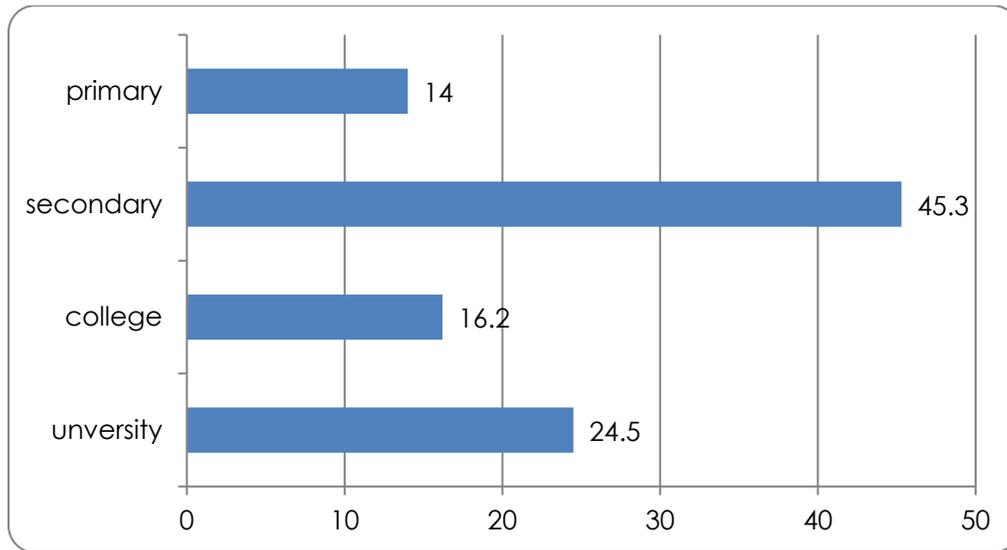
What is your age?

The average age of respondents is 49.

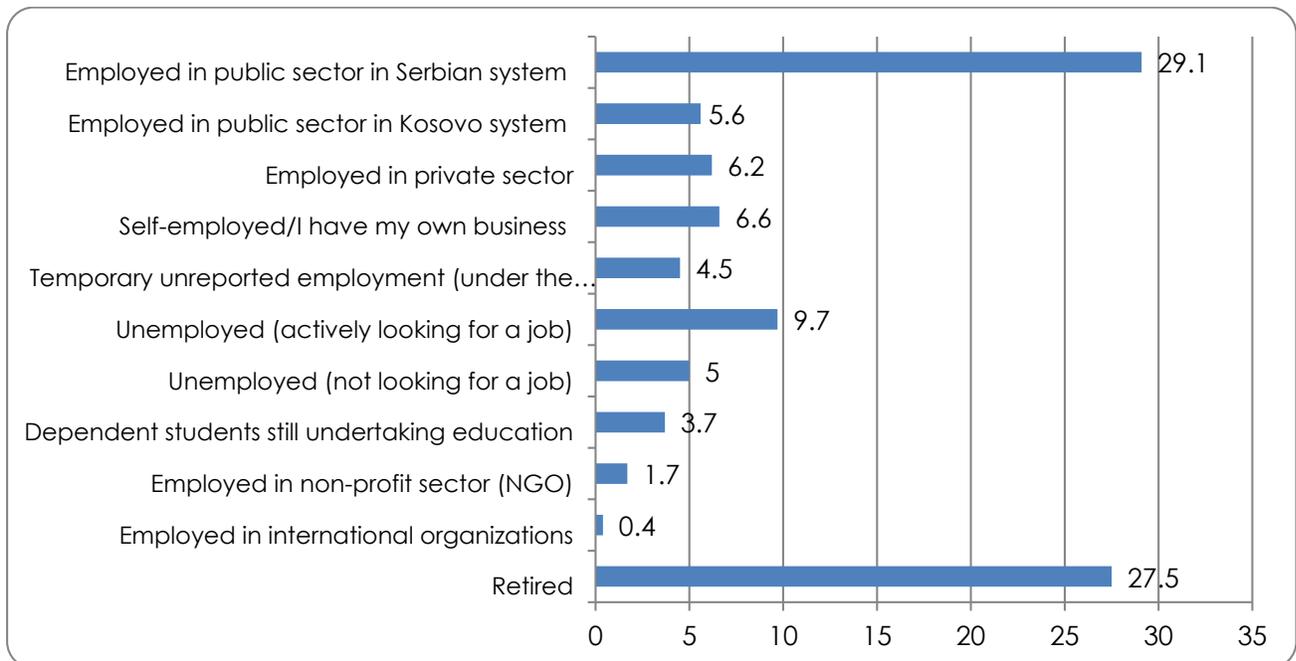
Age breakdown:



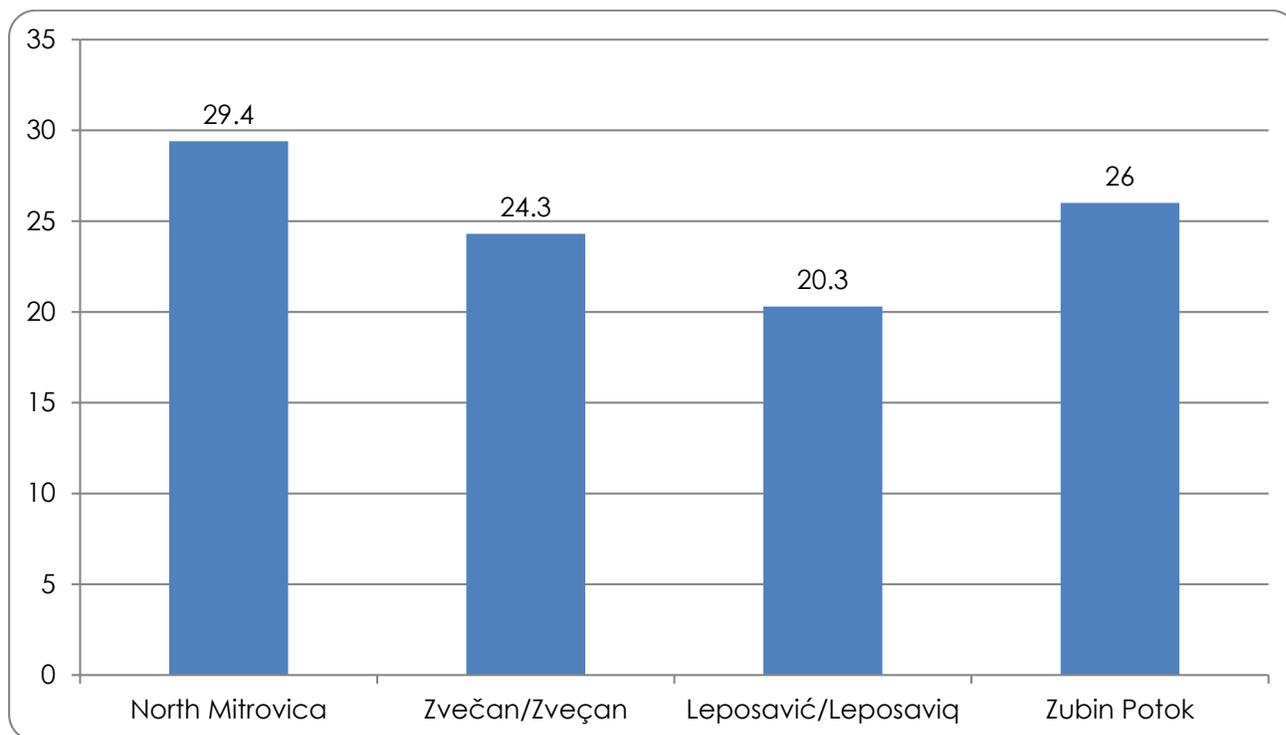
Level of education



Employment status



Place of residence



Research context

Trend analysis is a regular survey of citizens' opinions in North Kosovo that AKTIV has been conducting since 2015. The quantitative part of the research for 2017 was carried out in the first half of May 2017, while the qualitative part of the research was conducted in the period June-August 2017. The aim of the qualitative research was to enable interpretation of the results obtained during the survey activity.

During the period of quantitative research, AKTIV team followed and recorded the most significant events on the socio-political scene in Kosovo in order to establish (and understand) their impact on citizens' views. With regards to security incidents, in the period between May 4th – 11th, the local media reported on: a harassment of a young Serbian female from Laplje Selo/Lapllasellë village by an Albanian male, a demolishing of a newly constructed house of a Serb returnee in Istog/Istok, a murder in North Mitrovica, a murder in South Mitrovica, a theft of gold jewellery from a Serbian female in North Mitrovica, threats to a Serb female in North Mitrovica made by Albanian males, an

assault on an Albanian male in North Mitrovica by an unidentified perpetrator, two thefts in Priluzhje/Preluzhë village, arrests on prostitution charges in Gjakovë/Đakovica, a double murder in the vicinity of Bujanovac committed by a Serbian male from Gjilan/Gnjilane area, an arrest of a Serbian male in Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec on whose property 499 cannabis plants were found and a confiscation of 7 kg of marijuana on the Merdare crossing.

The major political events during the survey period take account of Kosovo Government losing a no-confidence vote after indications over several months period that early elections could take place, Oliver Ivanović met with the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, in Brussels a Friendship Group was formed between Kosovo and the European Parliament and the Kosovo Appeal Court confirmed the conditional sentence to the Mayor of Klokot/Kllokot on charges of the abuse of power.

In the months prior to the survey, the public's attention was focused on an increasing number of interethnic incidents that took place in and around the newly built pedestrian zone in a part of King Peter I Street in North Mitrovica, but also on the closure of one of the mobile operators (Telenor) and the migration of user accounts from Telekom Serbia (MTS Network) to a newly established company 'mts d.o.o.' Both the pedestrian zone and the beginning of operation of 'mts d.o.o.' are the result of agreements reached within the process of normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina, specifically, the agreement on telecommunications¹ reached for the first time in September 2013 and the agreement on revitalization of the main bridge on the Ibar River, that separates South and North Mitrovica, reached in August 2015.

The telecommunications agreement was the first of agreements that affected almost all citizens of Serb-majority northern municipalities who in June 2017 for the first time received the bills for fixed-line and mobile phones with amounts shown in Euros and whose user accounts and contracts were migrated from one company to another without their consent. Also, the Telenor users were completely left without the network coverage.² On the other hand, the municipalities south of the Ibar received the signal for fixed telephony network for the first time after 7 years. The telecommunications agreement also included the allocation of a new dialling code for the territory of Kosovo (+383), for which only the legal preconditions have been met and not the technical ones, therefore the new code, although allocated, cannot still be used. The fact that the Kosovo dialling code does not function is the reason why it is still not possible to call

¹ You can read more about the Agreement in the article written by Sovrić, S. and Đapić, S. *Kako se čujemo nakon Briselskog sporazuma?* ("How do we hear each other after the Brussels Agreement?" t/n) (2017): <http://cnobelisvet.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/KAKO-SE-CUJEMO-NAKON-BRISELSKOG-SPORAZUMA-final.pdf>

² The media have reported that the VIP network was also shut down, however, this is not true. The VIP network is functioning normally and up until the date of this report the mobile phone bills have been delivered in Euros.

"Kosovo numbers", i.e. the users of IPKO and Vala networks, without charging roaming tariffs, and why the "double 047" number incorporated in the 'mts d.o.o.' SIM card is not yet active. This effectively means that the users of 'mts d.o.o.', as well as the MTS users before them, still do not have network coverage throughout Kosovo territory.

Similarly, the agreement on revitalization of the main bridge brought the most visible changes in the infrastructural sense because the modifications included more than just the bridge. The demands for the bridge to be opened for traffic and for the removal of the Peace Park from the bridge were frequently repeated not only by the community south of the bridge, but also by representatives of the international community. In order to reduce the fears the opening of the bridge stirred among the community living in the north³, a compromise decision was made to turn the lower part of the main street, leading to the bridge, into a pedestrian zone. The Peace Park, set up on June 18th, 2014, was removed on August 14th, 2016 thus marking the beginning of a long-planned revitalization of the main bridge on the river Ibar that divides North and South Mitrovica. In the following period the citizens quietly witnessed the works in the city center as once the busiest street was being turned into a pedestrian zone. The change was accompanied by a clumsy reorganization of traffic, due to which the only alternative for the former street with four lanes, now transformed into the pedestrian zone, became a narrow one-way street. This was not the end of the problems related to the pedestrian zone. The project itself underwent several revisions and the construction of a "support wall" at the end of the pedestrian zone, as it was termed by North Mitrovica authorities, or the "fascist wall", as it was seen by the public in Kosovo, only further complicated the already sensitive inter-ethnic relations. By February 7th the wall was removed and a new, much lower, but wider concrete "construction" was built 2 meters away from the original wall. The demolition of the wall came after the February 4th agreement⁴ which was signed by the Mayor of North Mitrovica, Goran Rakić and the Minister of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ferat Shala. The Agreement was witnessed by the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Isa Mustafa, the Deputy Prime Minister, Branimir Stojanović, the U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Greg Delawie and the EU Special Representatives in Kosovo, Natalya Apostolova.

However, the February 4th Agreement itself, like the whole series of events and changes that occurred due to the Bridge Revitalization Agreement, was notably undemocratic, so for example, Article 1, Paragraph III of the Agreement states that the North Mitrovica

³ The bridge on the Ibar river was the site of numerous interethnic incidents, therefore, for many citizens in the North, the existence of a barricade, and the subsequent Peace Park, provided a certain sense of security and guarantee that new mass incidents would take place. On the other hand, for citizens in the South, both the barricade and the Peace Park were seen as another Berlin Wall, an artificial obstacle to integration of something they consider a single indivisible entity.

⁴ The full text of the Agreement is available at:

http://kossev.info/strana/arhiva/express_mitrovicki_zid_bice_srusen_u_nedelju_dokument/11088

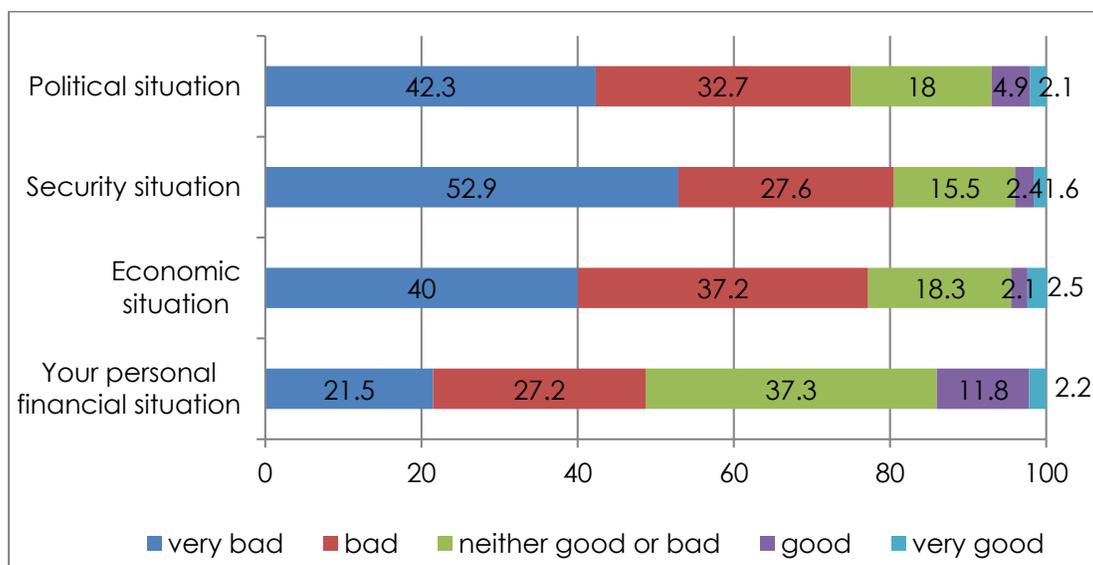
Municipal Assembly will approve the project for the construction of the pedestrian zone (the Municipal Assembly of Mitrovica North to approve the project of pedestrianization (as agreed by parties on February 4th) on February 4th and in line with the Brussels Agreement dated August 25th, 2015). Although the then Prime Minister, Isa Mustafa, confirmed that the February 4th Agreement was made in accordance with the Constitution and applicable laws in Kosovo⁵, it remains unclear which law allows a Mayor of a municipality and a minister in the Government to decide on how should the members of a certain Municipal Assembly vote on some proposal.

⁵ http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/index.php/2009/03/repository/images/common/docs/proc/repository/docs/Strategjia_per_grumbullim_dhe_kontroll_te_AVL_Shqip-Final.pdf?page=2,9,6528

Results of the research

1. On a scale from 1-5 with 1 being “very bad” and 5 “very good” how would you rate the following?

	Rating average
Political situation in Kosovo	1,9
Security situation in Kosovo	1,7
Economic situation in Kosovo	1,9
Your personal financial situation	2,5



In comparison to the results of 2016 research, no significant variations were noticed, so it can be concluded that citizens are equally pessimistic and dissatisfied with the general political, security and economic trends.

The oldest respondents are the least satisfied with the current political situation. Almost 85% of respondents older than 66 assessed the current political situation as bad. When cross-referenced with the place of residence, the least satisfied with the current political situation are the respondents from Zvečan/Zveçan, while, conditionally speaking, the respondents from Zubin Potok are the most satisfied. A member of

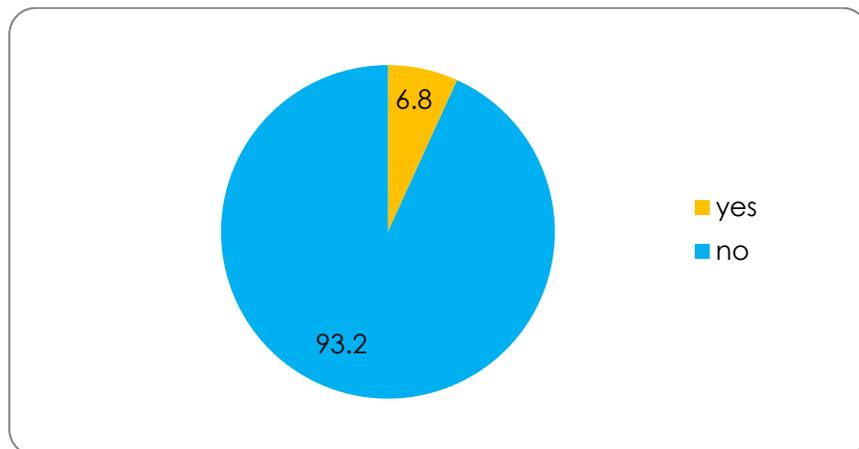
Zvečan/Zveçan Municipal Assembly, Časlav Milisavljević, explains this discontent among the citizens of Zvečan/Zveçan by the fact that most of the EU funds as well as funds of non-governmental organizations and other donor agencies are directed to the other three municipalities in the North and generally bypass the Municipality of Zvečan/Zveçan. Even 90% of the respondents from Zvečan/Zveçan stated that they are not satisfied with the security situation.

The results of the quantitative part of the survey were also commented by citizens who took part in the focus groups in all four municipalities, but also by individuals, politicians, analysts and other prominent people in the Serbian community in Kosovo.

The participants of the focus group in North Mitrovica believe that the political situation is perceived as bad because the citizens' daily life is significantly affected by political tensions between Belgrade and Pristina. Thus, the sense of dissatisfaction grows with the rise of tension and conflictive discourses. The respondents from Leposavić/Leposaviq also added that frequent election cycles either in Kosovo or in Serbia also create an impression of political instability. The respondents from all four municipalities believe that the tensions from the beginning of 2017 including the "Russian train" and the consequent appearance of ROSU troops in the North, the tensions related to "the wall", the arrest of Haradinaj and reactions to the judicial process in France also affected the increased negative perception of the political situation.

When it comes to the perception of the security and economic situation, the participants of the focus group in Zvečan/Zveçan believe that the two are correlated. They stated that crime and corruption in the North have been far more prevalent now than before and that these social issues seriously impact the citizens' right to find employment. Also, the respondents from Zvečan/Zveçan, as well as those from the other three municipalities, claimed that frequent interethnic incidents that followed immediately after the opening of the bridge additionally exacerbate interethnic relations and create an atmosphere of insecurity. The respondents stated that "more and more Albanians cross the bridge and behave provocatively in contacts with Serbs."

2. Generally speaking, are the developments in northern Kosovo going in the right direction?



Answers to this question mark a negative trend of 16.2%.

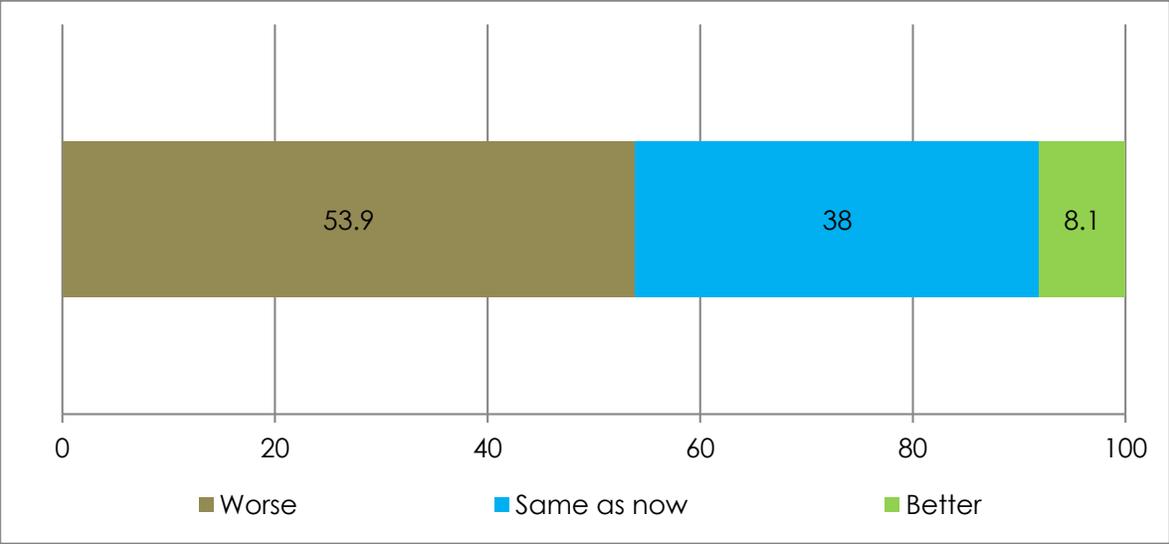
Comparing the results of this year's and previous year's research, we notice significant differences in respondents' opinions. While in the previous year 23% of respondents felt that things in Kosovo are going in the right direction, today this percentage is significantly lower, amounting to only 6.8% ($X2 = 77.650$). This trend was explained by the progress in the legal and administrative integration of northern Kosovo into the constitutional and legal framework of Kosovo, a process which the citizens in the North perceive as imposed and unwanted.

Commenting on the results, the participants of the focus group in Zvečan/Zveçan stated that such findings were predictable because the Serbs from the North "are being increasingly separated from their home state, Serbia, and pushed into Kosovo institutions they do not want to be a part of." Some participants believe that "the period of crisis has not yet passed and that the poverty rate is high" both among Serbs and among Albanians, and it was specifically pointed out that the agreements reached in Brussels, which can be considered affirmative for the Serbian community, have not been implemented, but that the priority was given to those agreements that are "convenient to the Albanian side". The focus group participants from Leposavić/Leposaviq are also of the opinion that the links with Serbia are getting weaker and that they are moving in the direction opposite from the expected. Leposavić/Leposaviq respondents attributed the growing dissatisfaction of citizens to the fact that the time of the survey (May 2017) also saw the beginning of the implementation of the Telekom Agreement. This is one of the few agreements that affected almost every citizen in the four northern municipalities and caused quite a number of administrative problems.

According to Nusret Hoxha, the former Deputy Minister of Justice of Kosovo, the main cause of citizens' pessimism is the lack of trust in their elected representatives both at the local and the central level of government. Hoxha also believes that the latest changes on the ground, resulting from the Brussels Agreement (documents, telecommunications), significantly affect citizens' perception, particularly taking into consideration the fact that most citizens do not agree with these changes. He added that the solution to this is "a young and educated blood in the political life of Serbs in the North" which will work more proficiently and transparently in building the trust between institutions and citizens with a primary objective of facilitating easier and less painful adaptation to the changes that are taking place.

On the other hand, a member of North Mitrovica Municipal Assembly and a newly-elected representative of 'Srpska lista' in Kosovo Parliament, Igor Simić, thinks that people truly expected their position in Kosovo to be improved, and that the main cause of increased citizens' dissatisfaction is the fact that some of the agreements reached in Brussels have not been implemented. What is left to be implemented of the entire Brussels Agreement is actually the part that was supposed to ensure the greatest benefit to the Serbian community living in Kosovo - the Community/Association of Serbian Municipalities (CSM/ASM). Simić believes that given the fact that its formation has not yet taken place, it was likely to expect such a decline in the trust of citizens and the rise of a negative trend.

3. In your opinion, the life of Serbs in Kosovo in three years from now will be...?

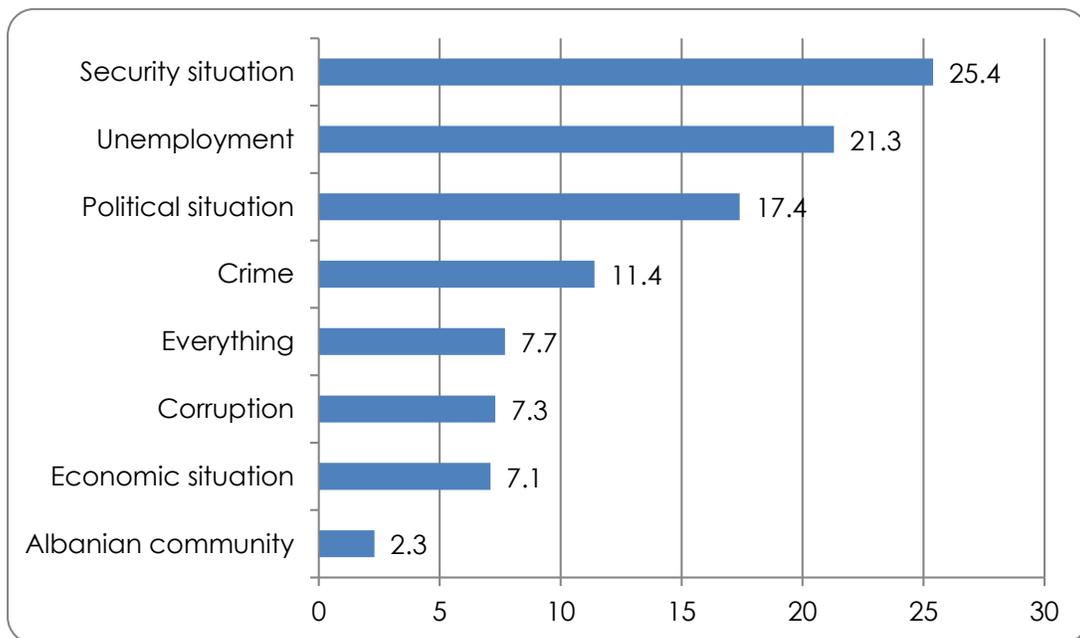


Answers to this question mark a negative trend of 19.2%.

The youngest respondents have shown the least optimism, while the most optimistic were the respondents older than 66. Also, there are significant differences in comparison with the previous year's survey when 34.7% of respondents expected life in Kosovo to be worse in the following three years. ($\chi^2 = 56.595$).

The interpretations of the results point to the unfavorable position of young people, the high unemployment rate and the general feeling of lack of perspective for youth in Kosovo. In addition, the participants of the focus group in Leposavić/Leposaviq attribute this discontent to the imposed and hastened integration which, they believe, has an uncertain outcome, particularly when it comes to the future of the health and education systems that still function within the Serbian system. Likewise, the formation of the CSM/ACM is being continually postponed, which, in addition, creates the impression that too many concessions are given to Kosovo-Albanian side in Brussels.

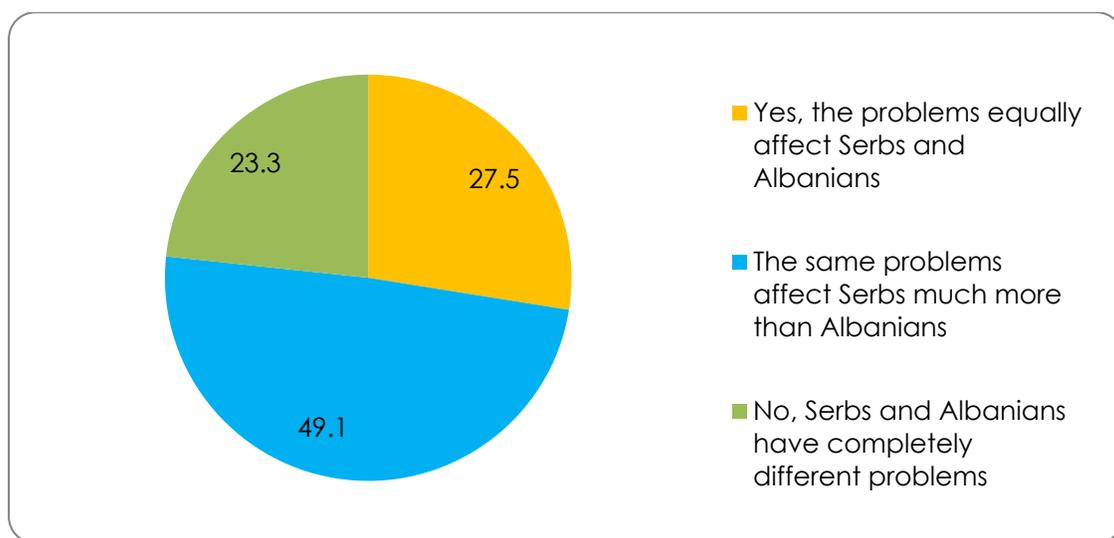
4. What is, in your opinion, the greatest problem in North Kosovo?



Respondents with different levels of education differently perceive the main problems in Kosovo. The respondents with primary education see the unstable political situation as the most prominent problem, while for the respondents with higher education the biggest problem is the security situation.

Compared to the previous year, the only change in the order of problems occurred with the first two problems on the list. So, this year, the security situation was perceived as a bigger problem than the unemployment. The most likely reason for this change in results is the increased number of interethnic incidents in the pedestrian zone or in its vicinity. According to data the non-governmental organization AKTIV obtained from Kosovo Police, during the period between April and August 4th, 2017, 11 cases of aggravated assaults involving Serbs and Albanians were documented in the pedestrian zone alone.

5. Do the major problems in Kosovo affect Serbs and Albanians equally?



Analysed in correlation with the previous question, in which security and unemployment were perceived as the biggest problems in northern Kosovo, it is quite certain that they equally affect all communities in Kosovo. However, the Kosovo Government has brought a number of decisions in recent years that have produced serious consequences for the members of non-majority communities in Kosovo, particularly Serbs or communities educated in Serbian language, such as Gorani and Roma. In addition, the needs of Kosovo Serbs differ from the needs of the majority community, and these differences clearly appear at the level of language and the first contact with the institutions. This also explains the perception that the Serbian community in Kosovo is faced with more problems than the majority community.

A decision made in September 2015 by the Government of Kosovo introduced "reciprocal measures" in response to the decision of the Government of Serbia to ban the import of textbooks intended for students of Albanian nationality in Bujanovac, Preševo

and Medveđa, thus effectively banning the import ⁶ of school materials in the Serbian language into Kosovo. This practice jeopardized the right to education of Serbs, Roma, Gorani and other communities who attend school in Serbian language and at the same time violated Article 12, paragraph 2 of the Law on Education in Municipalities⁷ which stipulates that: "Schools providing education in Serbian language may use the curriculum and textbooks issued by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, provided a notification has been sent to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Kosovo. " As a result of this decision, schools in Kosovo for students getting education in Serbian language for years have had difficulties in organizing classes. The delivery of books for children from socially vulnerable categories is regularly late and tests for entrance exams are obtained through "alternative pathways". The tests for school competitions in various subjects on municipal level cannot be obtained at all, so the competitions are not organized. For that reason, students who attend classes in the Serbian language in Kosovo cannot qualify for regional school contests and compete with peers from primary and secondary school in Serbia. The deliveries of school certificates and students' record books are also late and they are usually obtained through "alternative pathways".

In addition to the decision to ban the import of school material in Serbian language into Kosovo, in May 2017 the Kosovo Government issued a decision on banning entry/exit to and from Kosovo for holders of passports issued by the Coordination Directorate⁸. These passports, issued by the Republic of Serbia to its citizens residing in Kosovo, unlike passports of citizens whose place of residence is in Serbia, are exempted from Schengen visa free regime. The Kosovo Government continues to contest the validity of these documents despite the fact that the Article 3 of the Kosovo Law on Citizenship ⁹ allows the possibility of multiple citizenship for all citizens of Kosovo. Similarly, marriages formed in Serbian institutions in Kosovo are not recognized (despite the fact that Kosovo-run Civil Status Offices responsible for marriage administration have still not been established in northern Kosovo), thus preventing the citizens of neighboring countries, who moved to Kosovo to live with the spouse, to exercise the right to citizenship and documents issued by Kosovo. It is clear that if an individual can not exercise the right to a citizenship, he or she also can not exercise the right to an identity card (or passport

⁶ For more details about the problem see the publication "*Politization of human rights: education in the Serbian language in Kosovo*" (2017), NGO AKTIV, available at:

<http://ngoaktiv.org/uploads/files/Politizacija%20ljudskih%20prava%201.pdf>

⁷ The text of the Law is available at:

http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008_03-L068_sr.pdf

⁸ Andric, M and Bailey, F, "Documented yet 'invalid': Kosovo Serbs barred from traveling with their Serbian documents", available at: <http://prishtinainsight.com/documented-yet-invalid-mag/>

⁹ The Law is available at:

<http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/Zakon%20o%20drzavljanstvu%20Kosova.pdf>

or driver's license) valid in Kosovo. At the same time, the only documents he or she does possess, i.e. Serbian documents, are declared invalid by the Kosovo government. This kind of practice creates "paperless persons", illegal citizens, who are not allowed to enter or exit Kosovo legally.

According to the data NGO AKTIV obtained from the Kosovo Ministry of Internal Affairs, until August 8th, 2017, this Ministry issued 33,986 ID cards, 2,586 passports and only 1,464 driving licenses to citizens in northern municipalities with the following distribution per municipality of residence:

	ID card	Passport	Driver's license
Severna Mitrovica	12,407	1,104	645
Leposavić/Leposaviq	10,100	380	234
Zubin Potok	5,507	667	363
Zvečan/Zveçan	5,972	435	222
Total	33,986	2,586	1,464

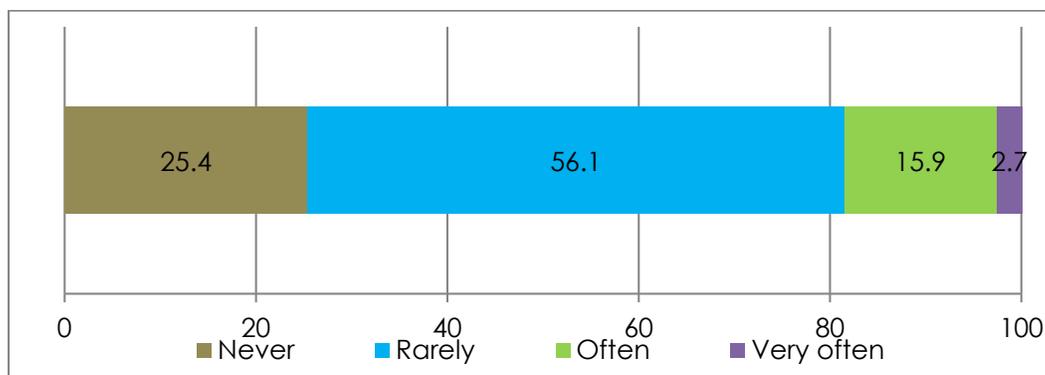
Possession of identification and travel documents issued by the Kosovo Government is a prerequisite for the implementation of almost all agreements reached in Brussels, but despite the fact, not all who live in Kosovo have equal access to those documents. For instance, without a Kosovo identity card one cannot verify a diploma obtained at the University of Pristina temporarily seated in Kosovska Mitrovica, the only higher education institution in Kosovo providing education in Serbian language. The same goes for signing a contract with the mobile network provider 'mts d.o.o.' or registering a vehicle in Kosovo. Finally, even though it has so far been allowed to vote in Kosovo with an ID card issued by Serbia for its citizens residing in Kosovo, if such a practice ceases and voting gets permitted only with Kosovo-issued documents, not all who should have the right to vote actually be able to do so in Kosovo.

The problem with documents issued by Serbia for its citizens residing in Kosovo re-emerged in June 2017 when over 900 health record booklets issued by the Republic of Serbia's Health Insurance Fund were first confiscated¹⁰ and then returned to Serbia. Health institutions functioning within the Serbian legal and administrative system are still operating in Kosovo and all citizens insured in the Health Insurance Fund of the Republic of Serbia have the right to obtain health care. All employees of Serbian public institutions in Kosovo (municipal administration, schools, health workers and employees of public companies), but also their children aged up to 25 (if unemployed) are insured in this fund.

¹⁰ Radio KIM, „Kosovo police seized Serbian health record booklets“, available at: <http://www.radiokim.net/vesti/drustvo/kosovska-policija-oduzela-srpske-zdravstvene-knjizice.html>

Due to these and many other issues, such as disregard for Serbian language as an official language in Kosovo, failure to meet the quota of public sector employees coming from non-majority communities, etc. 23.3% of citizens deem Serbs and Albanians to have completely different problems, while 49.11 % believe that the common problems still affect the Serbs more.

6. How often do you visit Albanian-majority areas?



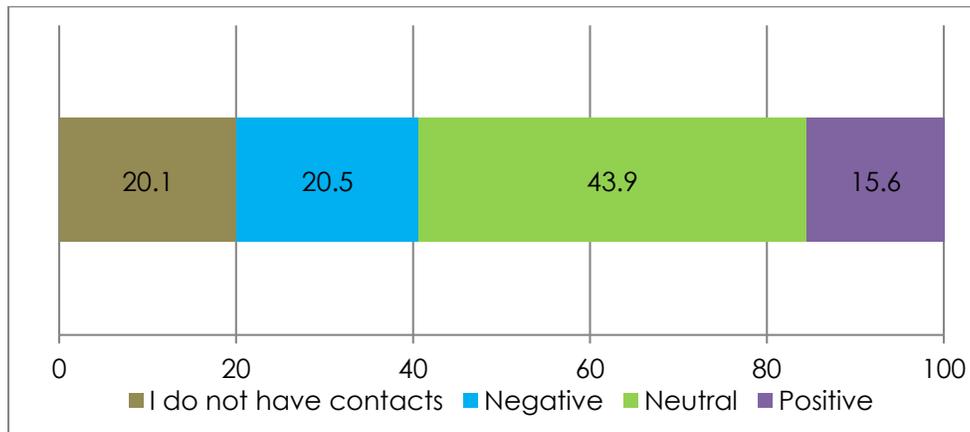
The Albanian-majority areas are the least frequently visited by respondents from Zvečan/Zveçan municipality, while the respondents from North Mitrovica are the most frequent. The frequency of going to areas where Albanians are the majority is also related to the level of education of the respondents, because the analysis show that the respondents with primary education (8.6%) are the least likely to frequent them, while the respondents with university education (21.6%) are the most likely.

Almost two decades after the conflict, the only self-initiated links between Serbs and Albanians remain those based on economic interest, which is why the most common reasons for people from northern municipalities to go to the South are shopping, business meetings or administrative obligations towards the Tax Administration or some other central-level institution.

According to the results of the research on the perception of the freedom of movement conducted by the non-governmental organization AKTIV in March 2016¹¹, the most common reasons why the residents of Serbian-majority northern municipalities go to the areas with the majority-Albanian population is shopping (average grade 3.10 on a scale of 1-5) then administrative obligations – registering for tax, obtaining personal documents or visas (2.29), next are business meetings (2.04), private visits (2.02), entertainment (1.86) and finally permanent employment (1.76).

¹¹ "Perception and Reality: Freedom of Movement in Kosovo", (2016), NGO AKTIV, available at: [http://ngoaktiv.org/uploads/files/Istrazivanje%20-%20sloboda%20kretanja%20\(1\).pdf](http://ngoaktiv.org/uploads/files/Istrazivanje%20-%20sloboda%20kretanja%20(1).pdf)

7. Your experience from your personal contacts with the members of Albanian community are generally:

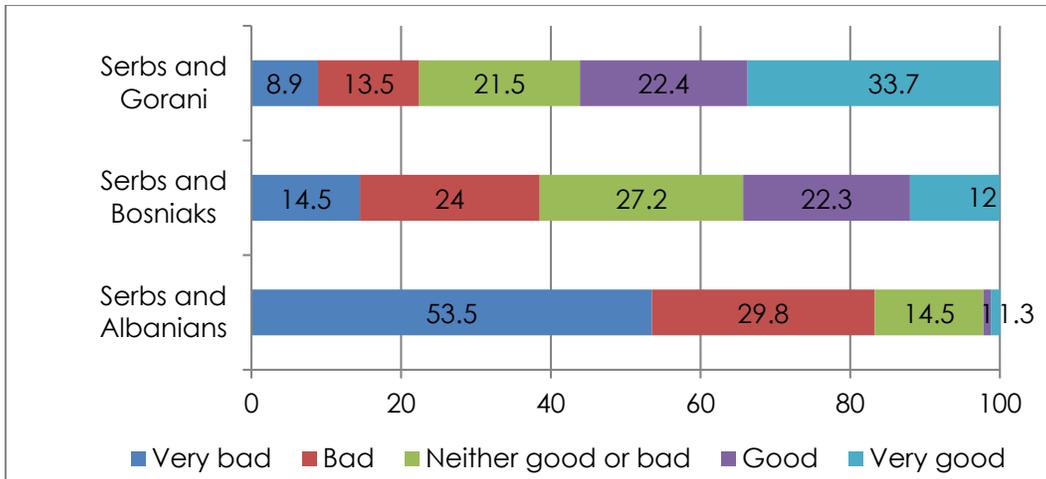


The fact that there are minuscule changes in the answers to this question in comparison to the ones from the previous year shows us that interethnic relations have entered a period of stagnation. Such results also represent solid indicators that it is necessary to change the approach in reconciliation projects. The limited outcomes of these projects are the consequence of an unstructured approach of the implementors, but also of the influence of the dominant public discourse among ethnic communities that remains inflammatory and conflictive. The interpretation of the results of this question will be also relevant next year in the context of the government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission¹² and the effects of its work. It is interesting that the overall impression of the deterioration of security situation did not affect the perception of interethnic relations.

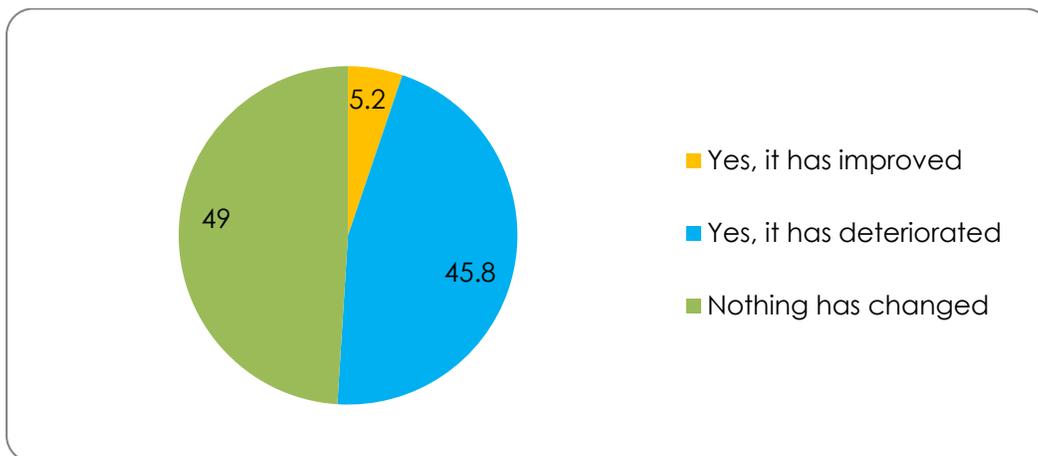
8. Please rate the current inter-ethnic relations between the given communities in Kosovo by using a scale from 1-5 with 1 meaning “very bad” and 5 meaning “very good”:

	Prosečna ocena
Serbs and Gorani	3,6
Serbs and Bosniaks	2,9
Serbs and Albanians	1,67

¹² KoSsev, “The second meeting of Thaci’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission”, available at: http://kossev.info/strana/arhiva/drugi_sastanak_tacijeve_komisije_za_istinu_i_pomirenje_/11296



9. Has the economic situation in North Kosovo changed in the past year?



Answers to this question mark a negative trend of 17.5%

The research shows that there is a significant change in the perception of the economic situation in relation to the previous research. Last year, 28.3% of respondents felt that the economic situation had worsened, while the recent survey shows that as much as 45.8% of respondents evaluate the economic situation as deteriorating ($\chi^2 = 64.697$).

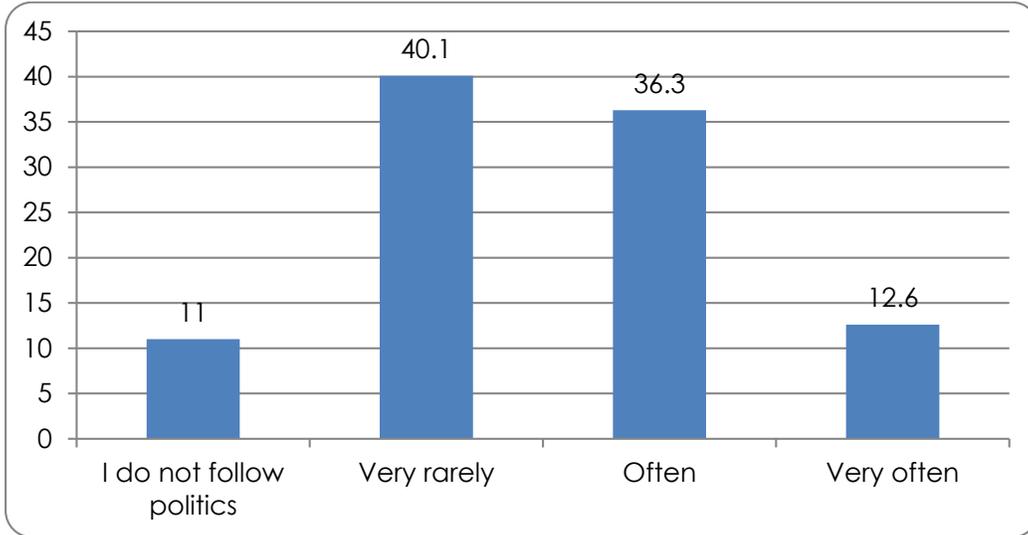
Focus group participants in Leposaviq/Leposaviq stated that this perception stems from the lack of developed private sector, reduction in donor assistance and nepotism in employment as an increasing common practice during the election period. Focus group participants in all four municipalities also indicated that in the last 7-8 years the

purchasing power of citizens remained the same, while the prices increased. Sa građanima se slaže i Nusret Hodža, zamenik ministra pravde koji kaže da na čitavom Kosovu, ne izuzimajući i sever ne postoji jasna vizija ekonomskog razvoja. Nusret Hoxha, Deputy Minister of Justice, supported citizens' stance by saying that generally in Kosovo, including the North, there is no clear vision of economic development. He added that the process of integration has left a certain number of people unemployed and that even some of the 'integrated', employed in Kosovo institutions, are losing their jobs after expiry of the initial contracts signed with the Kosovo Government. A local journalist, Željko Tvrđišić, is of similar opinion. According to him, in addition to losing jobs, many workers are now facing a decrease in salary rate as was the case with the former employees of *Telekom Srbija* now working in company *mts d.o.o.*

On the other hand, North Mitrovica Assembly member, Igor Simić, believes that international organizations, NGOs and the Government of Serbia are more engaged in recent years and that economic activity is more vivid than before. Simić pointed out that now there is a great number of projects providing incentive funds which were not available in the previous period and also, that NGOs are very active in analyzing the problems and providing guidelines. Simić also added that the Municipality of North Mitrovica has issued job announcements for 168 positions ¹³ and explained that people who are not employed in any of Serbian institutions, but are working in the Kosovo ones, are usually registered as unemployed, however, these individuals do have jobs and are earning their living. The situation is the same in the private sector which employs thousands of people.

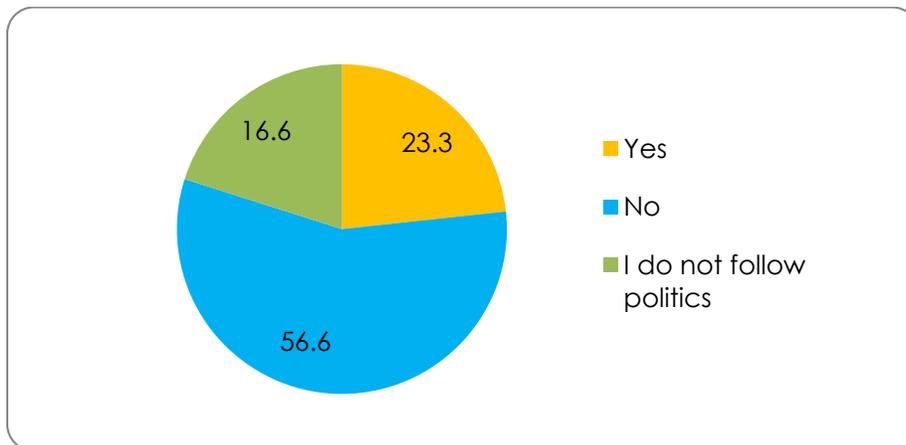
¹³ KoSsev, Municipality of North Mitrovica: announced vacancy for 168 jobs, available at: http://gradjanskastrana.kossev.info/strana/arhiva/opstina_severna_mitrovica_raspisan_konkurs_za_168_radnih_mesta/11927

10. How often do you follow political events?



Almost half of the respondents follow the political events often or very often which indicates the enormous influence that politics has on everyday life of the Serbs living in the municipalities targeted by this research. Since 2011 the talks in Brussels have been shaping the daily lives of residents of these four municipalities, and of the entire Kosovo, including decisions about how they will travel, where they will work, under what conditions they will retire, which mobile provider or network they will use, how they will vote. Citizens are learning about some details of these arrangements, that affect almost every aspect of their life, from scarce media reports based on alike statements by the negotiators. This, to some extent, explains the vigilance of Kosovo Serbs' political awareness, which unfortunately is not reflected in the pluralism of political options among the political representatives of Kosovo Serbs.

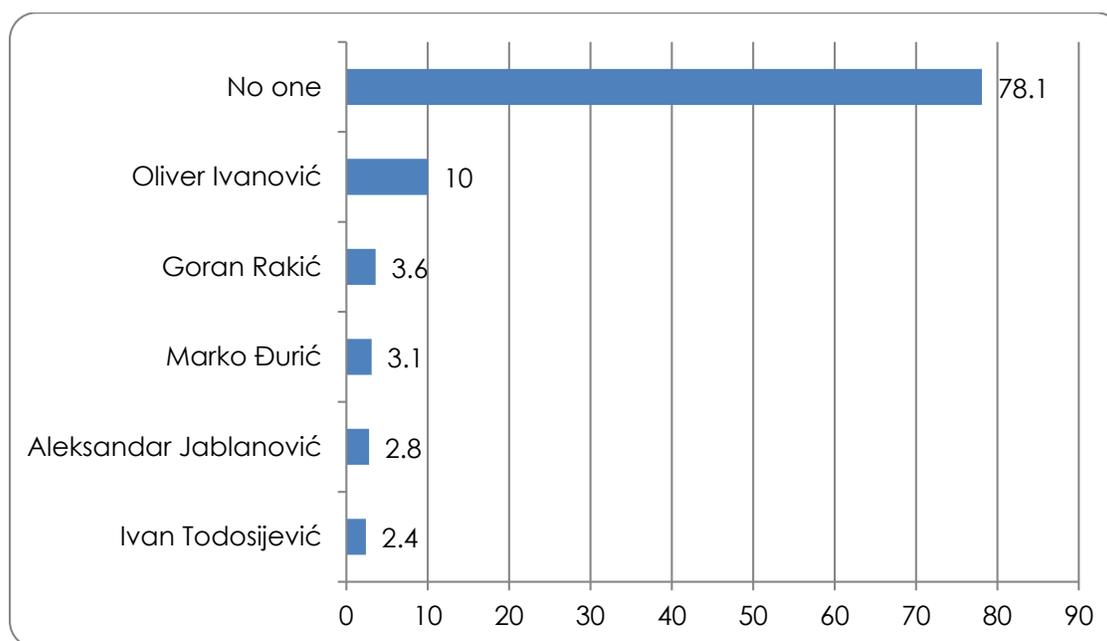
11. Are there any politicians in Kosovo whom you trust?



Answers to this question mark a slightly positive trend of 4.6%

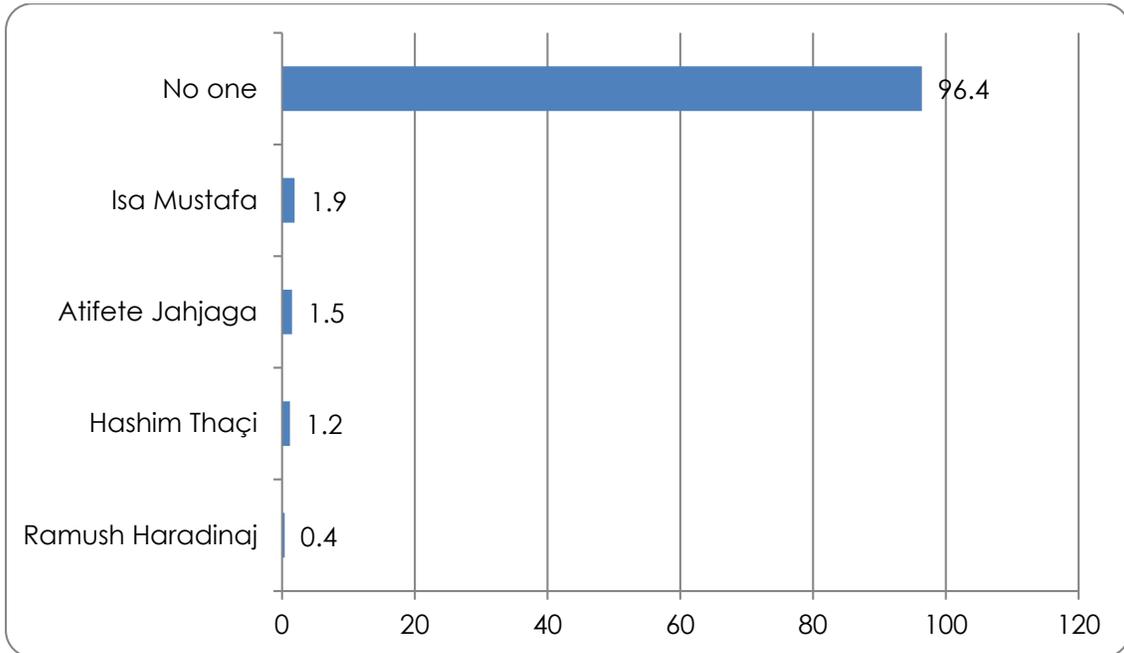
We can notice that the older the respondents are the more they trust politicians. While the percentage of young people who trust politicians is only 11%, it rises up to about 35% for the oldest population. The situation is similar with the level of education. According to this variable, respondents whose maximum education level is completed primary education trust politicians the most, while the least trustful are respondents with completed university education. A slight increase i.e. positive trend in expressed trust in political leaders is interpreted by the authors of this research as well as participants of the focus groups as a result of reduced resistance of the Serbian community in Kosovo to participation in political life within the Kosovo system, or in other words, reduced social condemnation and stigma related to political affirmation on the political scene in Kosovo.

12. Whom of Serbian politician do you trust the most?



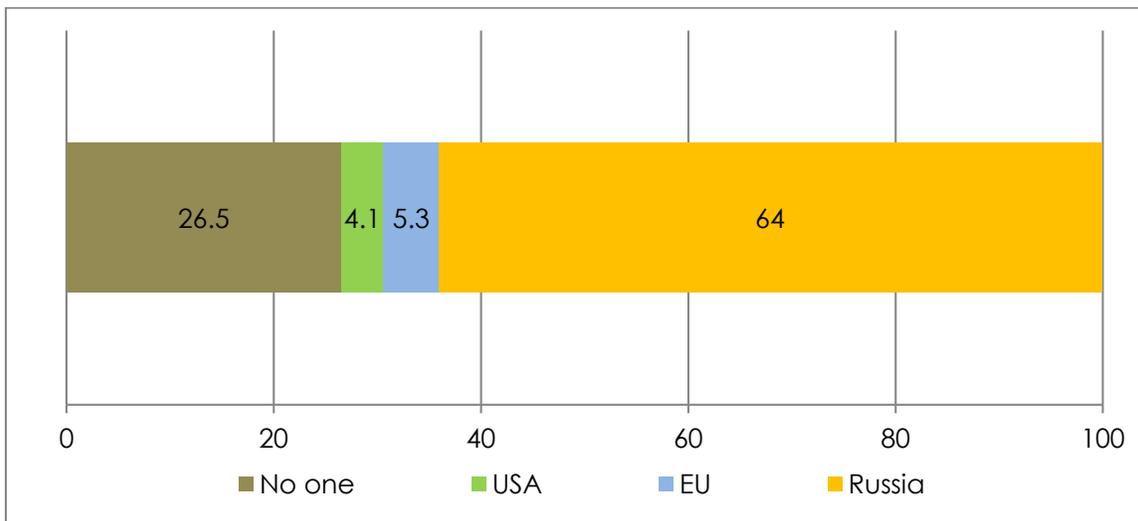
This was an open-ended question and the respondents were allowed to add their own answer options.

13. Whom of Albanian politician do you trust the most?



This was an open-ended question and the respondents were allowed to add their own answer options.

14. Whom should Serbs from Kosovo rely on most in foreign policy and lobbying?



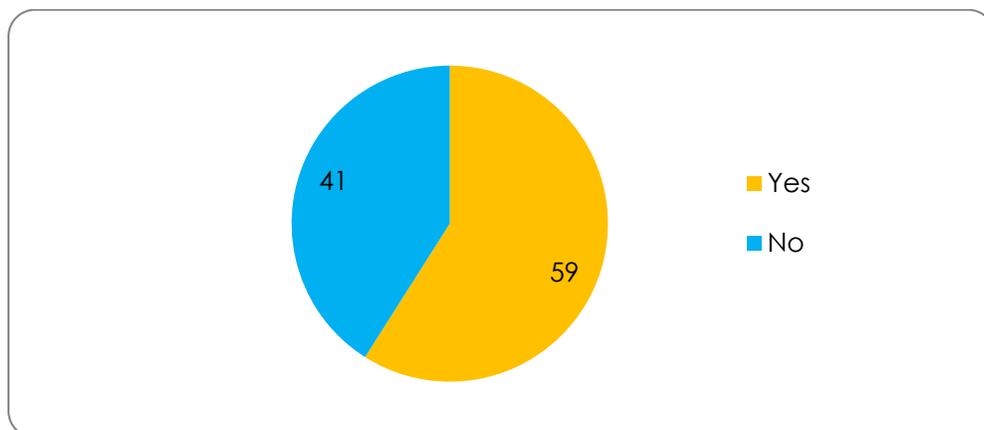
All answers mark a negative trend:
Russia (11.5%), EU (12%) i USA (1.3%)

While the previous survey indicated that 17% of respondents believe that in lobbying for their interests Serbs in Kosovo should rely on the EU, after a period of one year this percentage dropped considerably coming to only 5% of respondents supporting this stance (X2 = 165,460).

As stated by Zvečan/Zvečan citizens, the European Union does not treat Serbia fairly and confronts it with so many preconditions it often cannot fulfill. They also believe that the EU favours Pristina in the negotiation process in Brussels and that Brexit is a proof that there are more problems within the European Union than obvious from the outside, which calls into question the capacity of the EU to ensure a sustainable stability.

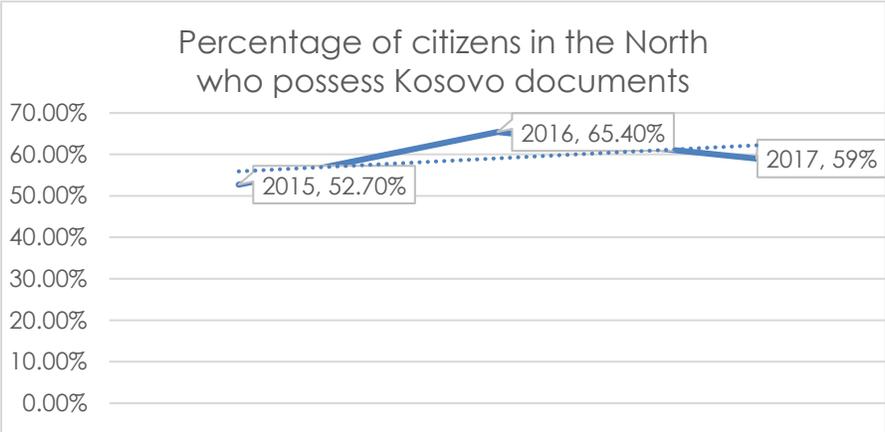
Similar opinion is shared by North Mitrovica citizens who argue that negative connotation among the population in the north whenever the EU is mentioned should not be taken as a surprise considering the fact that 23 EU member states recognize the independence of Kosovo. The fact that only 5% of respondents believe that in their foreign policy Serbs in Kosovo should rely more on the EU, can be attributed to the prevailing opinion that in the negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina the EU is biased and most often leans towards Pristina's side. The passing years have not seen any visible results of the Brussels dialogue, the process of Serbia's accession to the EU is slow, the problem of visa liberalization for holders of Serbian passports residing in Kosovo is still not resolved, consequently, such issues affect citizens' attitude towards the EU and make them see it less and less as a partner to rely on in foreign policy.

15. Do you possess any identity documents issued by the Kosovo institutions?



Twice as many older respondents (84%) have documents issued by Kosovo institutions than younger ones (40%). This question was posed to citizens of the four northern municipalities for the third consecutive year and it is very difficult to notice any trend. In 2015, when NGO AKTIV conducted this survey for the first time, 52.7% of citizens stated that they possessed documents issued by Kosovo institutions, in 2016, this

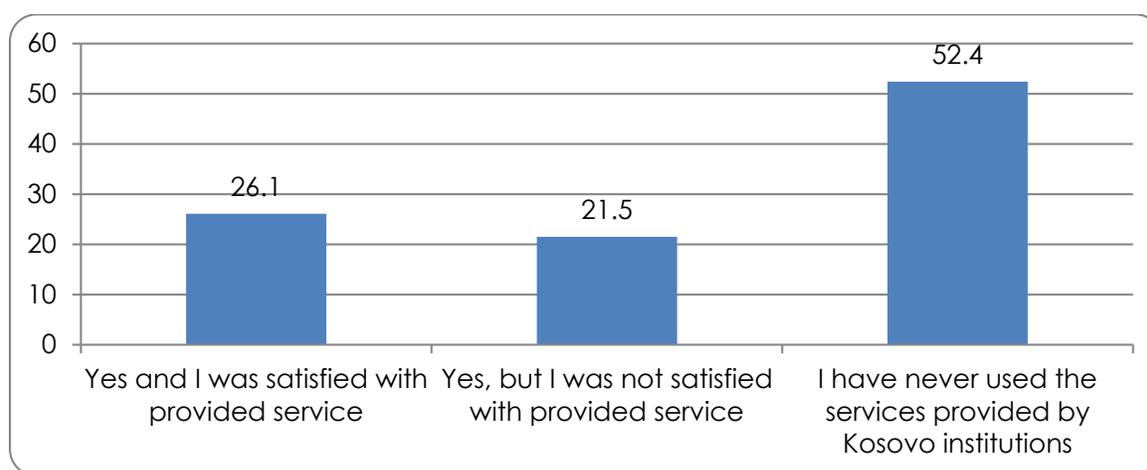
percentage rose to 65.4% , while this year it corresponds to 59%. Although small variations are understandable as it is not possible to survey the same 800 respondents each year, these results are still confusing because on several occasions in 2016 and 2017 local governments announced that there was an increased number of citizens' requests for identity documents . A possible explanation for observed stagnation could be that it is a result of the "stricter procedure" by the Kosovo government which either blocks or makes access to identification documents difficult for persons who were never issued UNMIK registration documents, displaced persons or children of displaced persons or spouses of Kosovo citizens who were not born in Kosovo, but who live and work there after marrying Kosovo citizens. In other words, the increased number of requests for Kosovo documents does not mean that more citizens actually managed to obtain them, as was already explained earlier in this text.



It is difficult to estimate the number of inhabitants in the north since the last census in the four northern municipalities was conducted in 1991 and the available sources provide quite different estimates. For example, if we compare the official data of 33,969 issued identification documents in four northern municipalities with the projections of the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS) in these municipalities, we get a percentage of 85% of people who possess documents (and only 5,500 persons who either do not possess documents or are minors). Even though, among the 33,986 registered holders of Kosovo ID cards there are most probably people who are displaced and do not live in these municipalities, the KAS projection still seems unrealistic. Compared with the OSCE population estimates, 42.5% of the population possess documents issued by the Kosovo government.

	Census 1991 ¹⁴	OSCE Municipal Profiles 2015	Kosovo Agency of Statistics 2014 ¹⁵	Number of voters registered in electoral registry ¹⁶ 2017	Number of enrolled students ¹⁷ 2016
North Mitrovica	-	29,460 ¹⁸	12,173	22,630	
Zubin Potok	8,479	15,200 ¹⁹	13,515	8,362	
Leposavić/Leposaviq	16,395	18,600 ²⁰	6,537	18,013	
Zvečan	10,030	16,650 ²¹	7,341	9,059	
Total:	34,904 (without North Mitrovica)	79,910	39,566	58,064	14,159

16. Have you used services provided by Kosovo institutions?



¹⁴ <https://www.osce.org/kosovo/75450?download=true>

¹⁵ http://askdata.rks.gov.net/PXWeb/pxweb/en/askdata/askdata_09%20Population_Population%20Structure/Estimated%20data%20by%20municipality%202012-2014.px/?rid=1d14f9f7-c39d-4241-b050-91a21a8917a5

¹⁶ http://www.kqz-ks.org/Uploads/Documents/6.%20Statistikat%20sipas%20Komunave%20%20-%20Statistics%20by%20Municipality_yuxfvzurs.pdf

¹⁷ Number of students in secondary and primary schools in the Municipality of Kosovska Mitrovica, according to data the non-governmental organization AKTIV obtained from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia in November 2016..

¹⁸ <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/122119?download=true>

¹⁹ <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13135?download=true>

²⁰ <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13120?download=true>

²¹ <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/13136?download=true>

This question, like the previous one, does not record significant differences in results compared to the last year's research. In 2015, 55% of surveyed citizens stated they did not use the services of Kosovo institutions, while in 2016 this percentage was 49.2%. One of the reasons why there was no increase in the number of people who used the services of Kosovo institutions is perhaps the fact that since 2013, when the first Kosovo institutions were introduced in northern Kosovo, no new institutions have been established. Thus, the Municipalities in the North still have not established all municipal departments under Kosovo system, the Court still does not function at full capacity and does not have offices in these municipalities, which significantly impedes the work of the police and tax administration.

17. On a scale from 1-5 please rate your level of satisfaction with the work of the following institutions.

Government of Serbia	2.6
Office for Kosovo and Metohija	2.5
Interim municipal bodies in the North	2.5
Four newly-formed Municipalities in the North	2.4
KFOR	2.4
Kosovo Police	2.1
UNMIK	2.2
Serbian representatives in the Kosovo Parliament	1.8
Serbian ministers in the Kosovo Government	1.8
EU Office in Kosovo	1.9
EULEX	1.7
Government of Kosovo	1.6

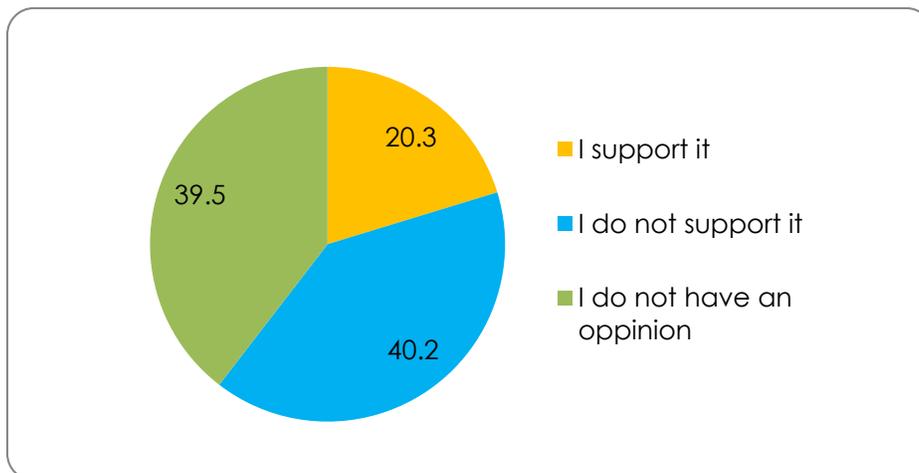
18. On a scale from 1-5 please rate your level of trust in the following institutions.

Government of Serbia	2.6
Office for Kosovo and Metohija	2.4
Interim municipal bodies in the North	2.4
Four newly-formed Municipalities in the North	2.3
KFOR	2.3
Kosovo Police	2.3
UNMIK	2.1
Serbian representatives in the Kosovo Parliament	1.8
Serbian ministers in the Kosovo Government	1.8
EU Office in Kosovo	1.8
EULEX	1.7
Government of Kosovo	1.6

Generally speaking, the citizens' level of trust is low with regards to all institutions. The best ranked are the central and local institutions of the Republic of Serbia. However, based on the fact that citizens obviously associate the performance of institutions with the trust they place in them, their primary reliance on Serbian institutions cannot be attributed to emotional reasons. One of the reasons why citizens are most satisfied with the Serbian institutions most likely lies in the fact that the provision of health and education services still functions within Serbian system. Particularly the health insurance system, that is available to all citizens and through which a large part of the Serb population in Kosovo is provided, is extremely important for the community. Namely, a public health system does not exist in Kosovo and health insurance can only be obtained through private insurance companies, which is a system that the Serbian community in Kosovo is not familiar with and therefore very skeptical about.

The "most popular" Kosovo institution is local self-government in the Kosovo system, while the Government itself is the lowest-rated institution according to citizen. The unpopularity of the Kosovo Government is a result of many discriminatory policies mentioned in the opening chapters of this document, as well as conflictive political messages sent by the Government to the Serbian community. The occurrence of such messages was the most frequent in the beginning of 2017 and after the events related to the 'wall' in North Mitrovica and the train.

19. What is your opinion of the Brussels Agreement?



The answers to this question reveal a significant difference in attitudes of the youngest and the oldest group of respondents in relation to support to the Brussels Agreement:

	Supports the Agreement
18-29 godina	8.5%
30-45 godina	13.6%
45-65 godina	10.9%
66 + godina	24.2%

Also, the analyses show that there are significant differences in the level of support to the Brussels agreement between respondents coming from different municipalities:

	Supports the Agreement
North Mitrovica	13,2%
Zubin Potok	17%
Leposavić/Leposaviq	15,6%
Zvečan/Zveçan	33,2%

The lowest support for the Brussels agreement comes from respondents with higher level of education:

	Does not support the Agreement
Primary	20%
Secondary	43.9%
College	63%
University	56.9%

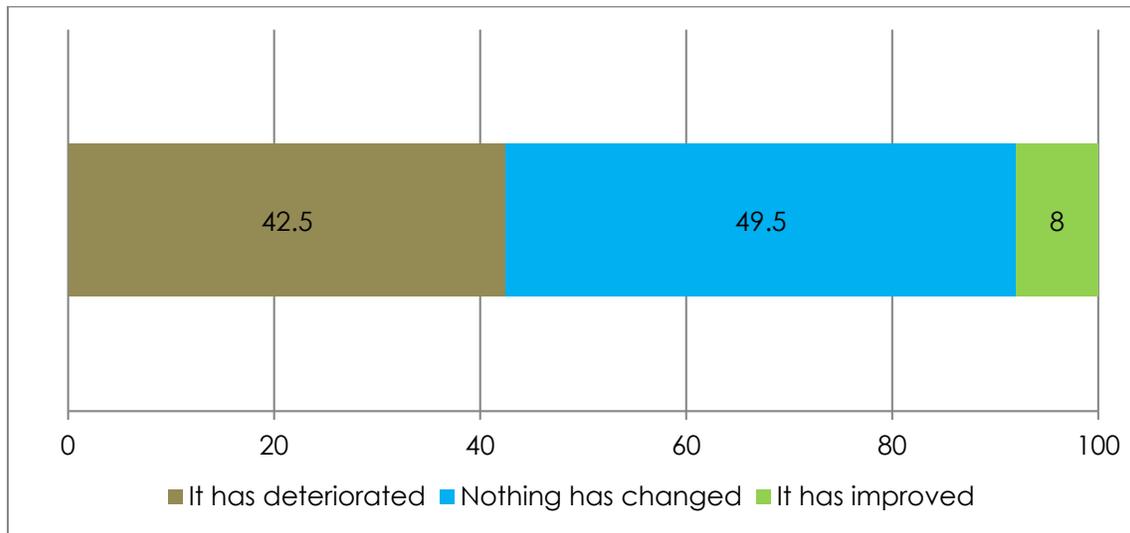
Citizens' position on the Brussels agreement has not significantly changed for the past year, although we can notice that the number of those who do not support it has increased. The participants of the focus groups found this trend quite surprising, so their

attempts to explain it were mostly speculative in nature and as such insufficiently grounded to be included in this research.

In general, focus group participants in all four municipalities believe that the non-transparency of the process makes it difficult for citizens to create an opinion on the Brussels agreement. There were also some opinions that the process was sufficiently transparent because all the agreements were published, but that the society was apathetic, not interested in knowing more about the Brussels agreement and making an informed opinion. Nevertheless, such opinions were not in the majority. Citizens generally acknowledge that the reached agreements are available to the public, but argue that formulations used in them leave plenty of room for different interpretations. In addition, the agreements do not contain information on the manner of their implementation, nor is the public informed about it, as claimed by the respondents of the focus group held in North Mitrovica. Finally, citizens are of opinion that the Serbian Office for Kosovo and Metohija and the Kosovo Ministry for Dialogue always interpret the agreement in a different way which creates confusion among citizens. Participants of the focus group in North Mitrovica pointed out that although neither Belgrade nor Pristina fully disclose the details of the reached agreements, the statements of the Minister for Dialogue on the outcome of the negotiations were closer to the truth than the statements of the director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, Marko Djurić.

Igor Simić, North Mitrovica Assembly member and newly elected delegate of the Srpska Lista in the Kosovo Assembly, thinks that the Serbs in Kosovo possess high level of political literacy and that there is a greater number of those with a defined stance towards the Brussels agreement, but that they are not willing to express it publicly. He also added that for the non-transparency of dialogue process he primarily blames the EU. Simić pointed out that he was disappointed with the EU's rejection of the proposal made by the Director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, Marko Djurić, to organize a joint press conference after the signing of each agreement, where the representatives of the EU, Belgrade and Pristina would be present.

20. Has the life of Serbs in Kosovo changed since the signing of the Brussels Agreement?



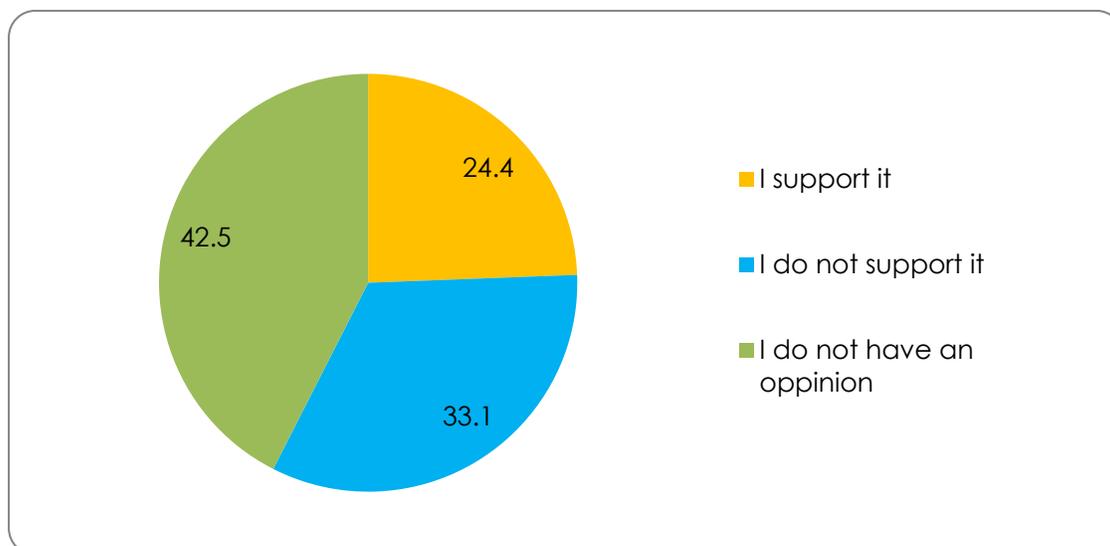
Answers to this question mark a negative trend of 17.5%

Whereas last year 25% of respondents pointed out that the life of Serbs in Kosovo has worsened after the signing of the Brussels Agreement, the number of respondents with an identical attitude has increased to 42% ($X^2=45.181$).

Igor Simic, North Mitrovica Municipal Assembly member said that he is surprised by the result and believes it does not apply on the ground. He further explains that only the opening of the bridge and an increased number of incidents in March and April of 2017 might have been the cause of this kind of citizens' attitude. With the exception of those incidents, he mentions that the biggest success of the Brussels Agreement in terms of security lies in the fact that there has been a smaller number of incidents in comparison to the period before the signing of the Brussels Agreement, and that conflicts have moved to the political arena, Simic claims. He added that, in comparison to an increased sense of safety in general, the queues that were created while citizens attempted to pay their phone bills, irritating them in the hot summer days – as result of unpreparedness for implementing the agreement on telecommunications – represent a negligible problem. His colleague Nusret Hoxha, the deputy of the minister of justice, disagrees, and believes that most citizens were against the agreement earlier, but now, according to him, some agreements made direct influence on their lives, where they often face problems with accessing documents, issues with paying phone bills, and some other basic things that are making their lives difficult. All this leads to a conclusion that an ever-increasing

number of citizens in the future will believe that they live worse in comparison to the period prior to the Agreement.

21. What is your attitude towards the participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions?

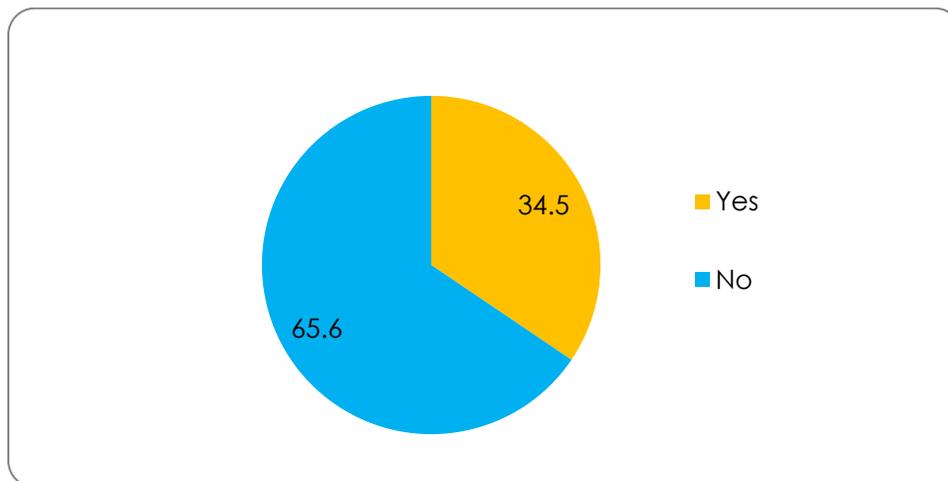


The number of respondents supporting the participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions is varying in different municipalities:

	Supports the participation
North Mitrovica	26.9%
Zubin Potok	32.8%
Leposavić/Leposaviq	22.2%
Zvečan/Zveçan	13.1%

There is no significant difference in attitudes of respondents from the last and this years. A substantial percentage of those who do not have any attitudes towards the issue important for the future of the Serbian community in Kosovo is a sign that citizens still do not know what to expect from such political engagement. Part of the reason for this potentially lies in the fact that Srpska lista has not coaxed its coalition partners to fulfill certain points from the Brussels Agreement that were marked as priorities, but also that the explanation for such a situation has often been: a complex political situation and a lack of political will. Citizens have often received a message that there are no interlocutors in Pristina who would be open to hear out the suggestions of the Serbian political representatives, which is stultifying the participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions.

22. Did you vote in the Kosovo parliamentary elections in 2014?

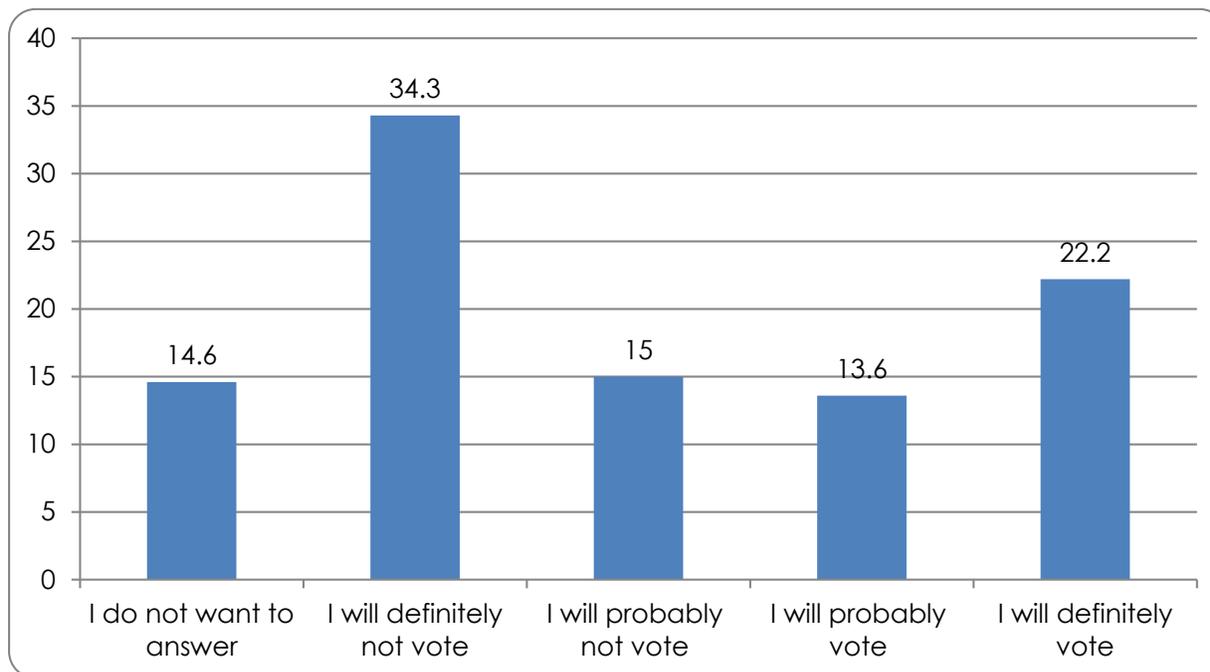


The number of respondents who voted at the previous elections in Kosovo in 2014 differs significantly from municipality to another:

	I voted
North Mitrovica	37.3%
Zubin Potok	51,3%
Leposavić/Leposaviq	27.1%
Zvečan/Zveçan	20%

We compared these results with the data of the Central Election Commission according to which voter turnout in Leposavić/Leposaviq was 26.85%, in North Mitrovica 18.25%, in Zvečan/Zveçan 22.92% and in Zubin Potok 35.86% of all registered voters.

23. Will you vote at the next Kosovo elections when they take place?



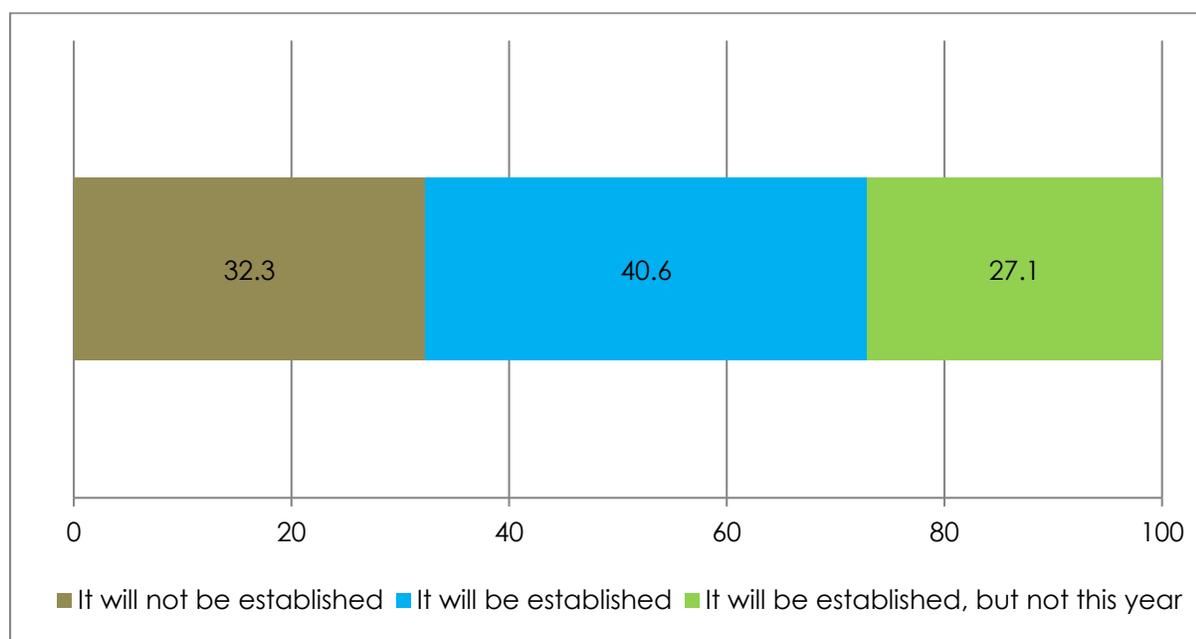
The largest number of respondents who planned to vote in the next election (I would surely/probably vote) are coming from Zubin Potok with 56,4%, the second place is taken by North Mitrovica by 35,3% and Leposavic/Leposaviq with 31,1%, whereas the smallest percentage of those who planned to vote in the election comes from Zvecan by 19,9 percent. This research was completed exactly one month prior to the holding of parliamentary elections (on June 11th 2017), when 22,398 voters from those municipalities had voted, or as expressed in the percentage of registered voters:

	Estimated turnout based on a research (May 2017)	Actual turnout based on data obtained from Central Election Commission ²² (Jun 2017)
North Mitrovica	35,3%	33.05%
Leposavić/Leposaviq	31,1%	41.73%
Zvečan/Zveçan	19,9%	43.05%
Zubin Potok	56,4%	63.91%

²² http://www.kaz-ks.org/Uploads/Documents/6.%20Statistikat%20sipas%20Komunave%20%20-%20Statistics%20by%20Municipality_yuxfvzurs.pdf

The Zubin Potok Municipality had convincingly the largest projection of turnout and conceivably the biggest genuine turnout of voters, which most probably indicates the discontent of citizens with the work done by the local authorities, but also the performance of central level representatives, even besides the fact that this municipality was the only not to have its own representative at the central level, neither in the government, nor the assembly.

24. In your opinion, will the Community/Association of Serbian Municipalities be established?



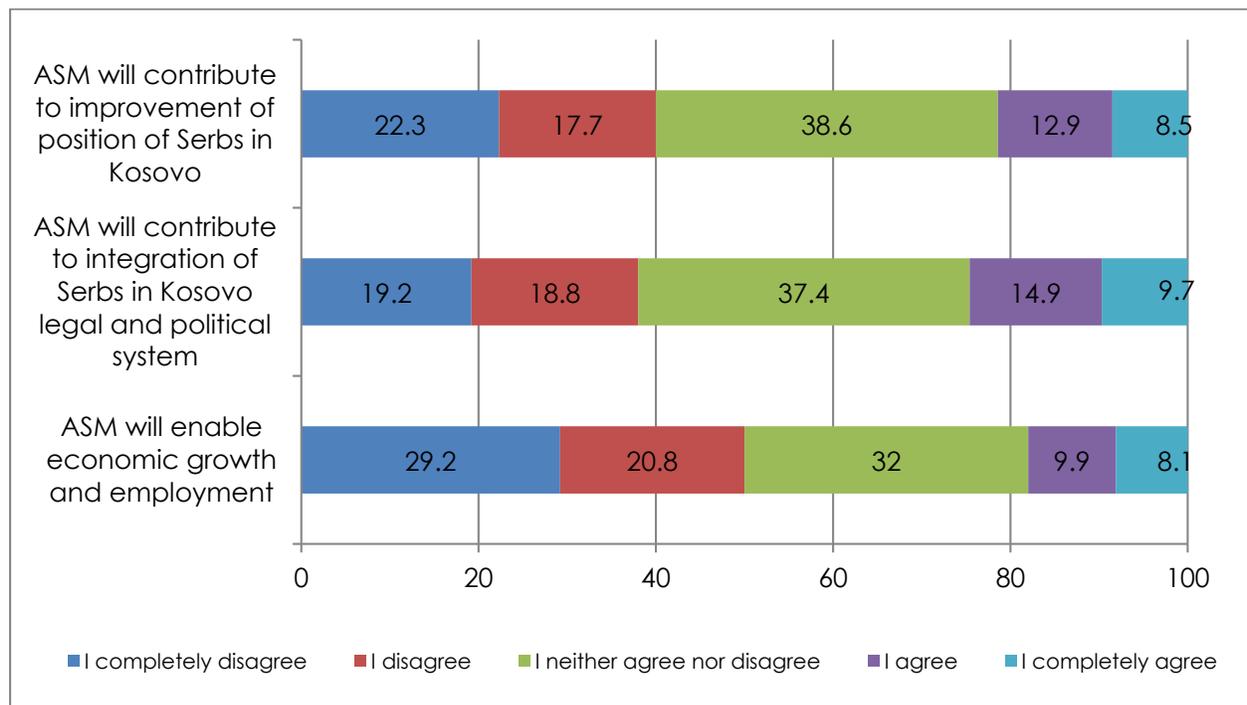
Answers to this question mark a positive trend of 15.3%

In comparison to 2016, this issue has experienced a rise of optimism amongst those who believe that the Community of Serb-majority Municipalities (CSM/ASM) will be created, hence the number of those who do not think that CSM/ASM will be established in the current year had decreased as much as 20,9%. The rise of optimism among citizens who believe that CSM/ASM will be established may be interpreted in the light of frequent and clear messages on the necessity to form CSM/ASM, which have been statements given by international representatives in Kosovo. However, there has been a change in answers only amongst those who expect CSM/ASM to be established, whereas the number of people who believe that CSM/ASM will not be formed had slightly increased from last year's 26,7% to 32,3% this year.

25. On a scale from 1-5 with 1 meaning “I completely disagree” and 5 meaning “I completely agree” how would you evaluate the following statements about the Community/Association of Serbian Municipalities?

	Rating average
CSM/ASM will contribute to an improvement of the position of Serbs in Kosovo	2.7
CSM/ASM will contribute to the integration of Serbs in Kosovo legal and political framework	2.8
CSM/ASM will enable economic development and employment	2.5

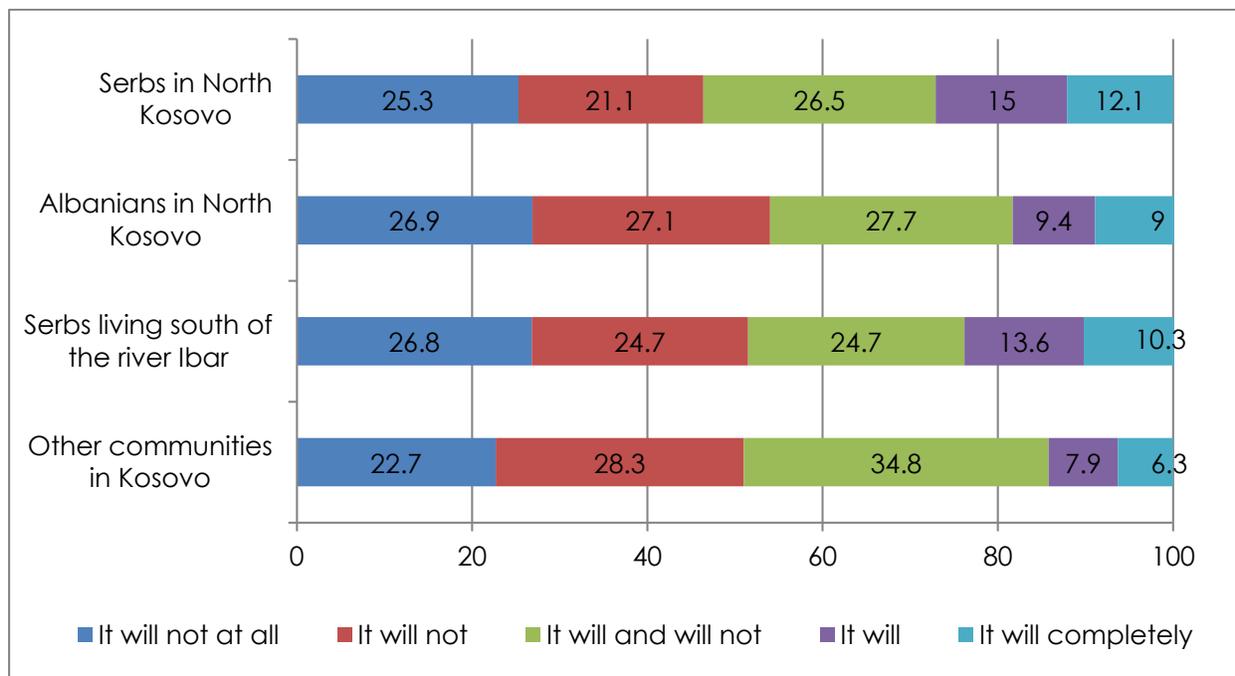
Even though optimism grew towards the CSM/ASM's establishment, expectations that citizens have of this institution remained identical, not enviously high. Most probably, citizens connect the expectation they have of CSM/ASM to the performance of those who should lead it, that is – the Serbian political representatives, the trust in whom by citizens has deteriorated as we have seen in the previous segment of this paper.



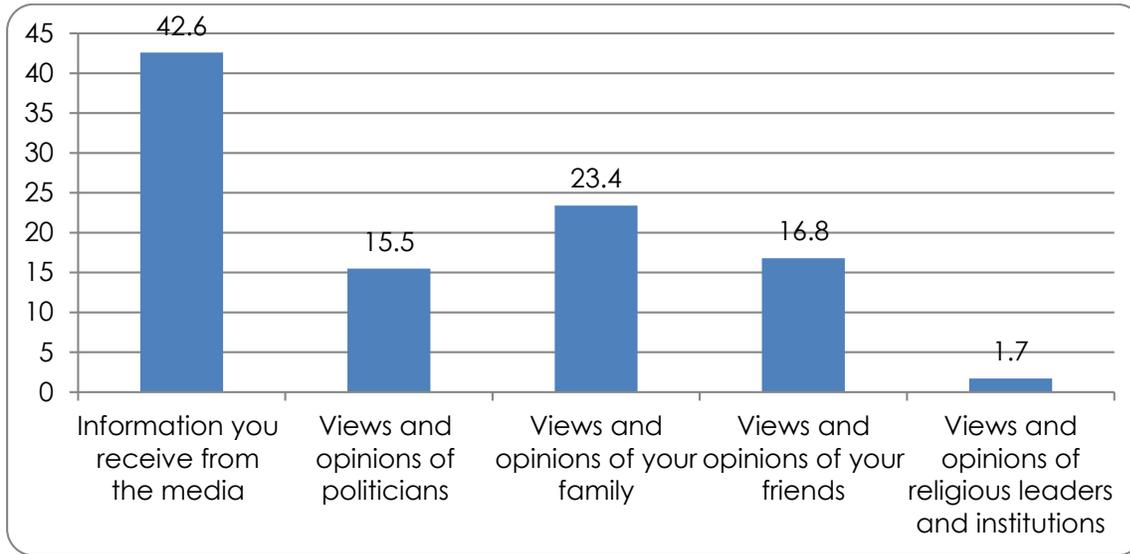
26. By using a scale from 1-5 with 1 meaning “it will not at all” and 5 meaning “it will completely” please rate whether the Community/Association of Serbian Municipalities will improve the life of the following communities:

	Rating average
Serbs in North Kosovo	2,9
Albanians in North Kosovo	2,8
Serbs living south of the river Ibar	2,7
Other communities in Kosovo	2,7

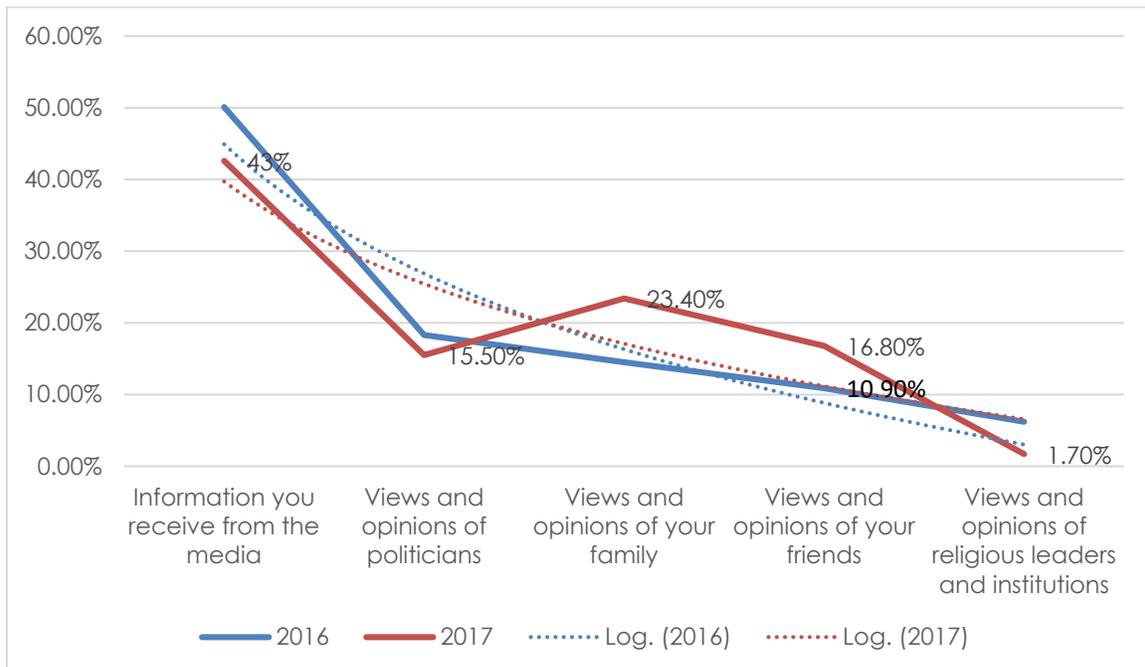
North Kosovo respondents expect CSM/ASM to be equally useful (or useless) to all members of communities that live in municipalities that will become members within the Community. Numerous research has shown that the biggest expectation from the Community lies in the influx of financial means for sustaining the health and education systems that are not utilized by all communities in Kosovo, and therefore it is difficult to understand citizens who believe that everyone will have equal benefits from CSM/ASM.



27. What factors shape your views on politics and political events?



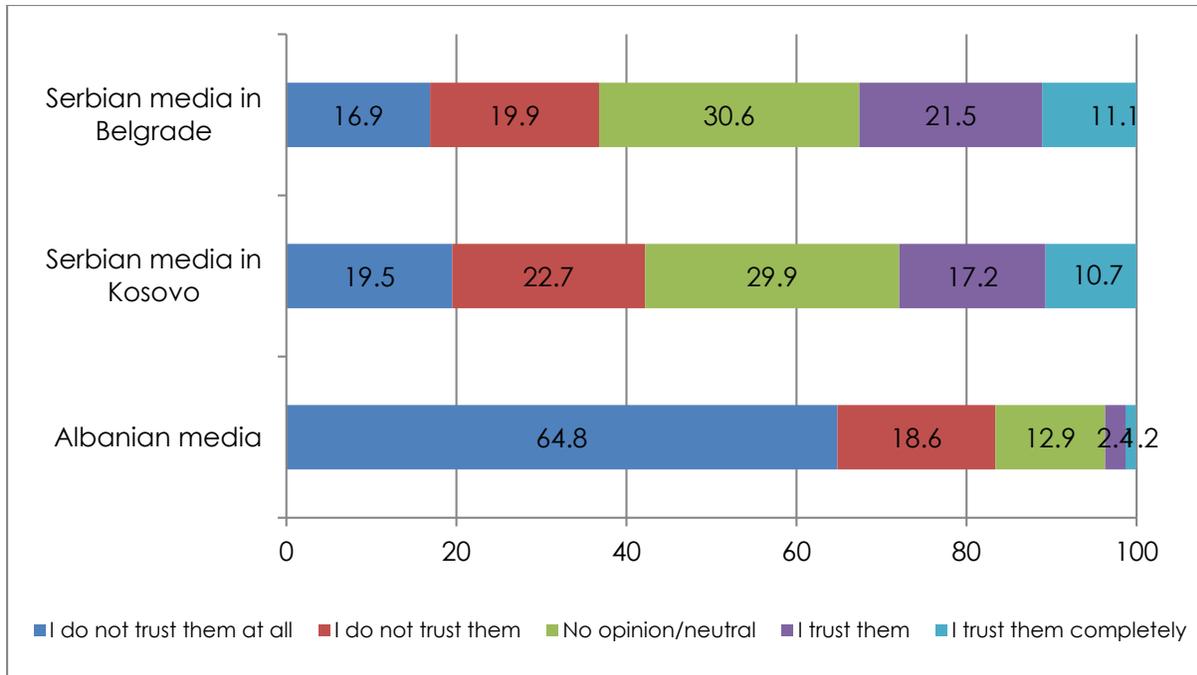
All respondents under the age of 66 mostly get their share of news from the traditional media, while members of the oldest age group say that politicians are their most significant source of information. Family and friends play an important role in the process of creating attitudes of citizens, all pointing towards the notion that the media are losing their crucial impact on creating citizens' attitudes. Obtaining information from friends and family has experienced a growth at the expense of the media, politicians, and religious leaders.



28. On a scale from 1-5 with 1 meaning “I do not trust at all” and 5 meaning “I trust completely” please rate how much do you trust the following media?

	Rating average
Serbian media in Belgrade	2.9
Serbian media in Kosovo	2.8
Albanian media	1.6

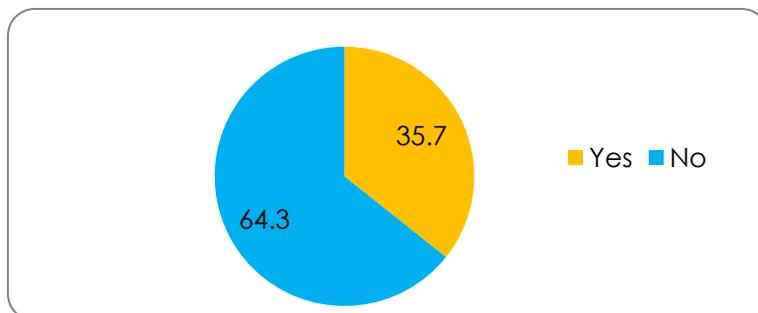
One of the most significant findings of this research is precisely the one in which the local population almost equally trusts Belgrade news outlets and the local media. Bearing in mind the resources that are at the disposal of both, and all the difficulties with which the Serbian media in Kosovo face, the trust built within their audiences may be considered a professional success. However, the fact remains that results of neither are ideal and that there is space for improvement in increasing journalistic integrity for the local media. On the other hand, animosity the Serbian community feels towards the media who report in the Albanian language has not decreased in intensity. The distrust expressed by the Serbian community toward the Albanian language media is grounded in numerous examples of tendentious reporting, the heating up of ethnic conflict, and one-sided interpretation of the main social and political processes in Kosovo. For instance, participants of focus groups mention the principal example of tendentious reporting with devastating consequences for security in Kosovo, by referring to media speculation on the causes of the accident Albanian children were part of in March 2004 (loss of life by drowning), which continues to be interpreted as the immediate trigger of general violence towards Serbs in Kosovo. Similar, but sorely speculative and sensational reports on northern Kosovo were given by RTK this year, when a Serbian journalist was accused of coordinating a network of Russian spies, whereas a sport association of Air Soft, a sport similar to that of paintball, was accused of being a paramilitary formation. Still, here we need to take into consideration the language barrier, as well as the technical limits of the northern Kosovo Serbian community that subscribes to Albanian language media (there is no distribution of printed media, nor are there cable operators that offer Kosovo Albanian TV channels). The perception of the Serbian community is therefore chiefly created by transmitting allegations or interpretations of those reports on behalf of the local Serbian media in Kosovo and the national media in Serbia.



Trust towards the media was a topic of a conversation we had with the Municipal Assembly member from Zvecan, Caslav Milisavljevic, a former journalist. He said he was of the opinion that municipalities in the north are found in a transitional process, a shift from one institutional system to another, and states that this process has not avoided the media. According to him, there is only a small number of existing media; he says that radio stations are leading in the field of freedom of expression and upholding the code of journalism, whereas other electronic media are mostly dependent, and do not respect their own program and editorial policies.

Journalist Zeljko Tvrdiscic blames his colleagues for the relatively bad perception of the media; he says that they are becoming PR services rather than doing genuine journalistic work. He also added that the economic situation in which the media in Kosovo find themselves in is disastrous, thereby not helping quality reporting.

29. Do you feel free to publicly express your political views?

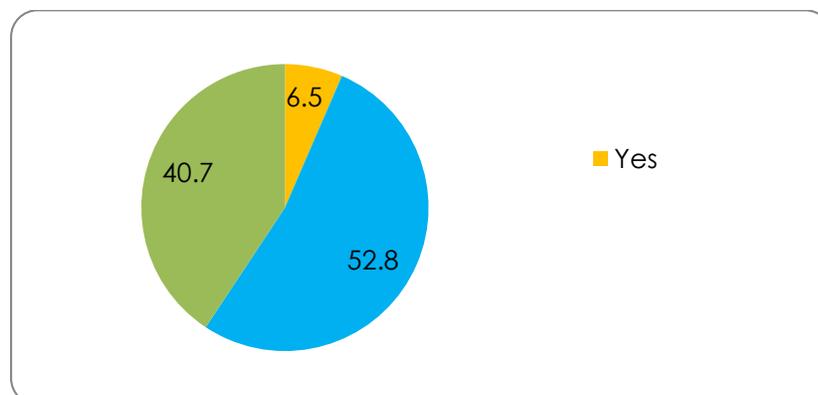


Answers to this question mark a negative trend of 16.4%

This research shows that fear among respondents to express their political views freely had grown. In the past year, 47,9% of respondents pointed out that they are afraid to publicly express their attitudes and freely discuss politics, whereas this percentage has increased to 64,3% this year ($X^2 = 32.675$). Intimidation is part of the political culture of Kosovo Serbs since the nineties. Setting cars on fire, throwing hand grenades, beating up political opponents have been an established practice that culminated in 2013 with murder of one of the mayoral candidates in the local Kosovo elections. According to independent observers, in the period following 2013, new methods of political intimidation that most probably contributed to this negative trend were set up, amongst which the following ones: collective voting of heads and workers of public institutions, threats of job loss, and threatening people who wish to be election candidates, and voters who do not want to vote or those who do not wish to participate in public rallies of political parties, establishment of a register of voters and of their political views, and many other forms of intimidation.

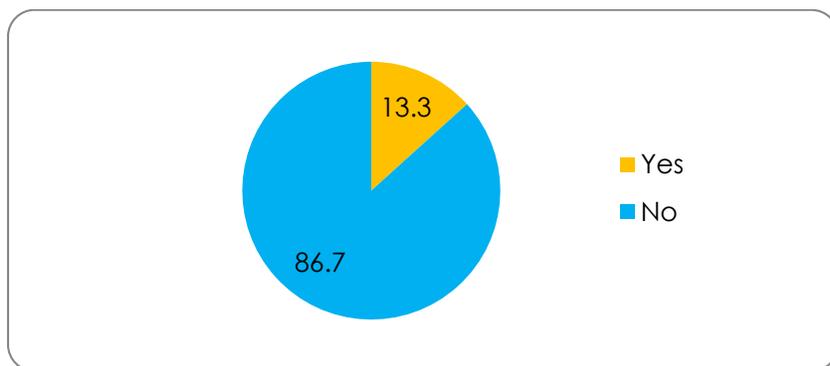
Still, even though clear warnings were given by local organizations, it is contradictory that the EU monitoring mission reports view the local elections of 2013 and the parliamentary elections of 2014 and 2017 as successful and democratic. Besides this, the Serbian community in Kosovo has seen campaigns in which political pluralism is equated with high treason, while political uniformity is promoted.

30. Are independent views and critical thinking sufficiently present in the media in Kosovo?



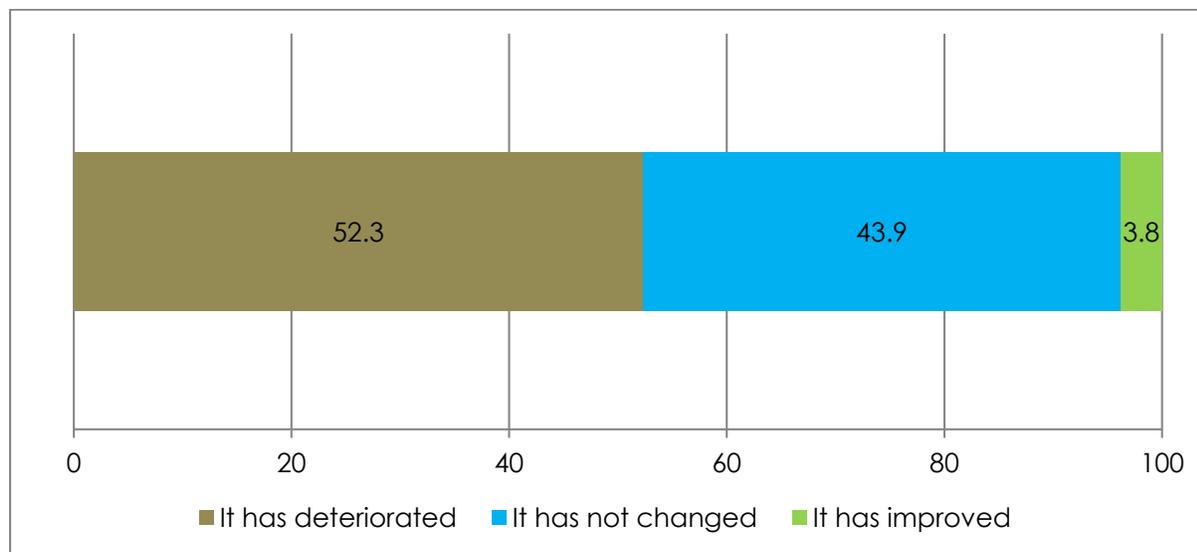
The percentage of people who believe that the media in Kosovo do not report critically enough has slightly increased by 3,5%, which is in accordance with all previous trust issues of citizens towards the media.

31. Has your safety or safety of your family members been threatened in the last six months?



There are no significant changes in the distribution of responses to this question in relation to the same period last year. This tells us that, even though the feeling of collective security has deteriorated, it had not affected the perception of individual safety.

32. Has the security situation in northern Kosovo changed in the past year?

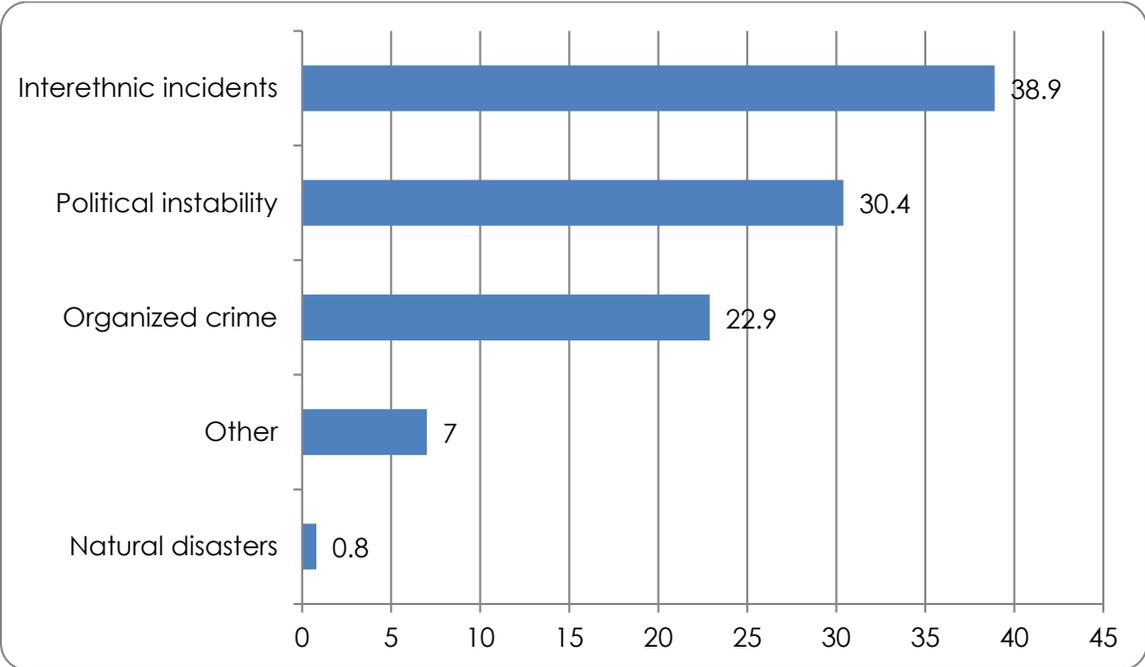


Answers to this question mark a negative trend of 38.3%.

Comparison of research results in the last two years shows that the perception of security has significantly deteriorated. In the previous year, 14% of respondents stated that the security situation had deteriorated in the last year, whereas as many as 52% of respondents emphasized that there has been a deterioration of the security situation this year (X2 =280.984).

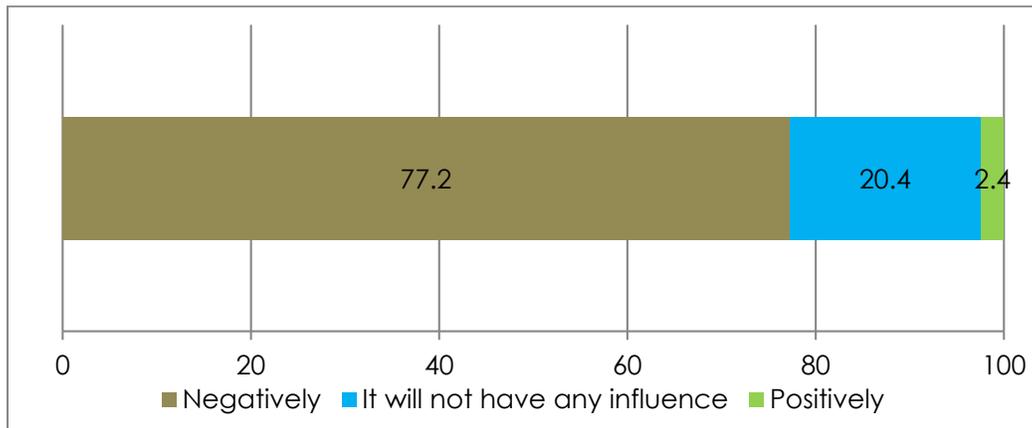
Participants of a focus group conducted in Zubin Potok are unsurprised by these results, and state that the main reason for this is media reporting (arrest of Haradinaj, the train affair, the wall, etc.). As per the findings of the same focus group, politically motivated moves of both governments and instrumentalized media had the goal of creating a sense of unrealistically high insecurity, and that citizens should therefore be ready to give up their rights and freedoms for greater security. Also, respondents mentioned that the arrest of Ramush Haradinaj brought anxiety into the everyday lives because – even though his release was a sign that he has support from the EU, NATO, and US – citizens were still afraid that a decision on extraditing him would bring unrest and threaten the physical safety of Serbs in Kosovo.

33. In your opinion, what are the greatest security risks in your environment?



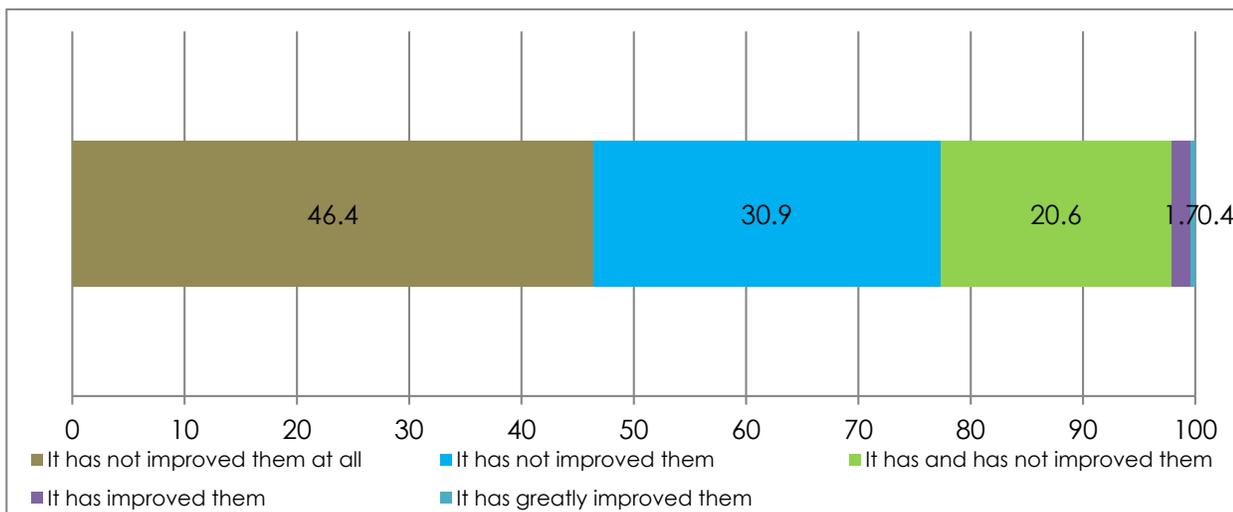
These results fully match the opinions of focus group participants, according to which interethnic incidents and political tensions marred the first half of 2017.

34. How will the opening of the main Ibar bridge influence the security situation?



A slightly higher percentage of citizens (4,2%) this year believe that opening the main Ibar bridge would have a negative impact on the security situation. Tensions around the Peace Park, the wall, and the increased number of incidents in a part of a street now transformed into a pedestrian zone do not instill trust into citizens that normalization will actually occur if traffic is functionalized on this bridge.

35. On a scale from 1 to 5 please rate to what extent has the Brussels Agreement improved the rights and freedoms of the Serbian community in Kosovo?



Answers to this question mark a negative trend of 11.5%

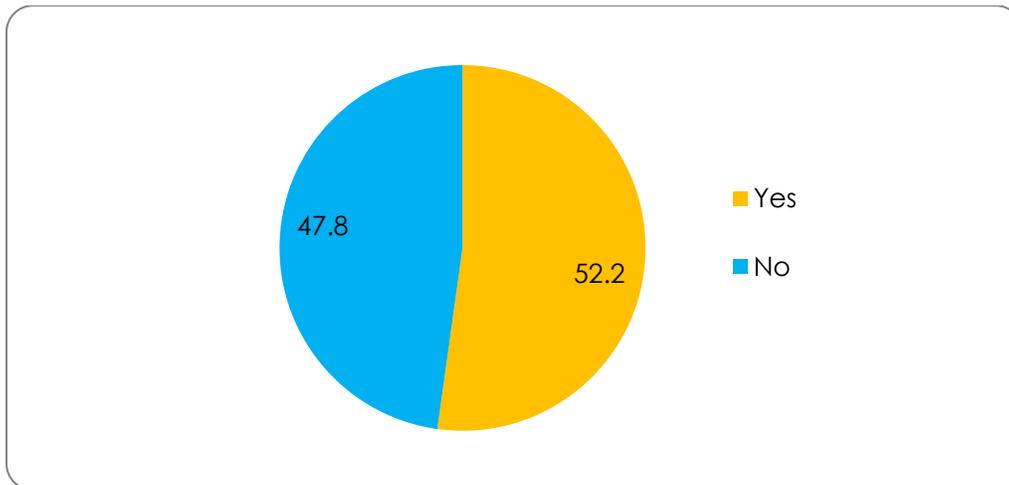
The reason for this change surely lies in the fact that those parts of the agreement that have been described by Kosovo Serb political representatives as the biggest priority and the most optimal solution for Serbs – have still not been implemented. The Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities in Kosovo is seen as one of those priorities; the northern Kosovo citizens have high expectations in the sense of creating a framework for self-government of elementary life-related issues (education, health sector, economy, security).

36. Please rate to which extent are the following rights and freedoms of the Serbian community respected in the northern municipalities?

Language rights	3.8
The right to freedom of religion	3.4
The right to education	3.8
The right to health care	3.6
The right to freedom of expression of national identity	3.1
The right to freedom of speech	3.1
The right to freedom of movement	3
The right to employment	2.5

Generally speaking, within this year, citizens have given the lowest grade to the status of respect for aforementioned rights in comparison to the previous year. The biggest decline was documented with regards to the rights of the freedom of movement and that of speech. None of the two are surprising if observed from the context of burdened and difficult movement of citizens who possess Serbian documents and the aforementioned culture of political intimidation that has especially been expressed in the period of conducting this research, a month prior to holding of the parliamentary elections. The fact that, when discussing the notion of upholding rights, the right to employment is the worst ranked by citizens; Caslav Milisavljevic, a Municipal Assembly member of Zvecan, explains this as a result of incomplete integration that has seen the local self-government lacking municipal departments that would be the ones to largely make up the local authorities and be a guarantee for implementing laws.

37. Do you see yourself in Kosovo in the next five years?



Expectedly, the youngest respondents are the ones who think about leaving Kosovo the most. Every third participant aged 18 to 29 does not see herself or himself in Kosovo in the next five years. Besides that, it is more important to say that every third person with a university diploma plans to abandon Kosovo.

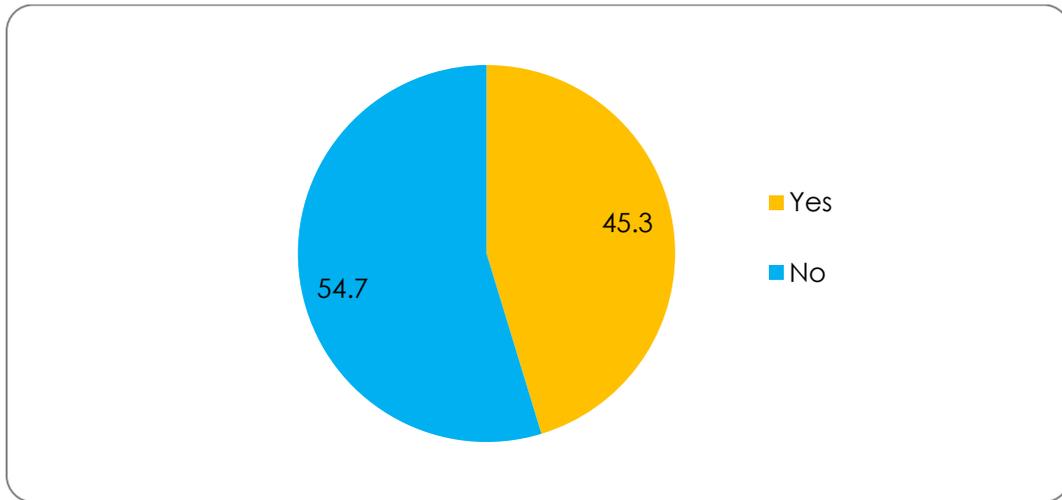
Analysis show that there are differences in plans for the future between respondents from different municipalities with regard to staying in or leaving Kosovo:

	I do not see myself in Kosovo in 5 years
North Mitrovica	45.5%
Zubin Potok	24.9%
Leposavić/Leposaviq	27%
Zvečan/Zveçan	17.6%

Comparative review of research from 2016 and 2017 shows that the percentage of respondents who do not wish to remain in Kosovo has increased. While in the last year only 21% of respondents had an identical attitude, this year's 47% of respondents stated that they do not see themselves living in Kosovo in the coming years. ($\chi^2 = 131.086$).

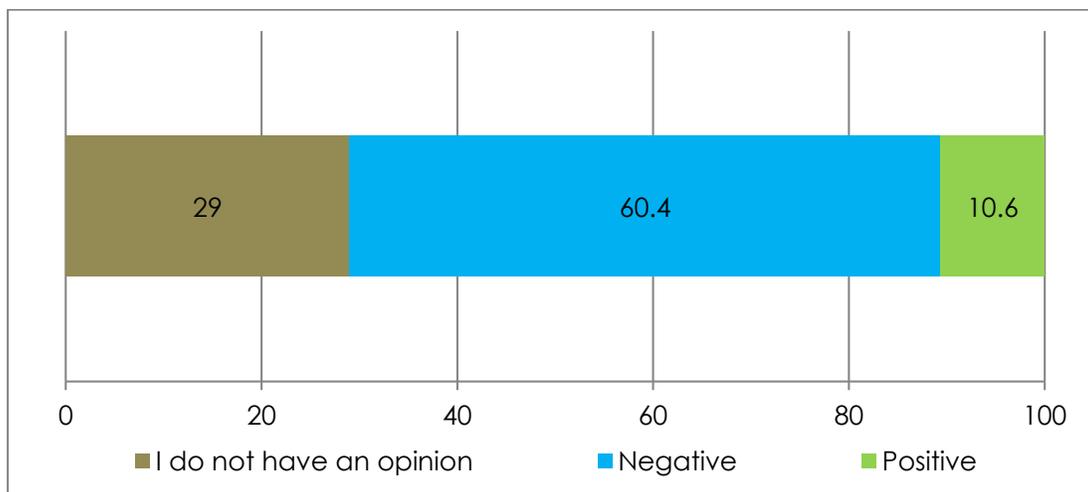
With deteriorated perception of security, respect for rights, and discontent with the political and economic situation, nepotism and corruption at the local level, this result is completely expected but also alarming.

38. Has anyone close to you left Kosovo in the past 6 months?



Unlike the previous question, this one does not note significant differences in relation to results from 2016. This is evidence for the claim that an increased wish for leaving Kosovo still has not left significant mark on the pace by which people are heading outside of Kosovo. This data shows that discontent is increasing among citizens in northern Kosovo, and that an ever-increasing number of people see the exit strategy for the situation they find themselves in in leaving Kosovo.

39. When you hear the expression “European Union” is your first association positive or negative?



Answers to this question mark a negative trend of 8%.

A total of 8,5% of young respondents have a positive association of the European Union. When it comes to different age groups, the European Union is not well positioned there either: 30-45 years – 10,9%, 46-65 years – 8,7%, older than 66 – 15,2%.

The level of education also shows significant differences in perceiving the European Union:

	Positive association
Primary	16.1%
Secondary	13.4%
College	6.8%
University	6.5%

Negative associativity towards the EU grew by almost 8% in comparison to the previous research (X2 =14.959).

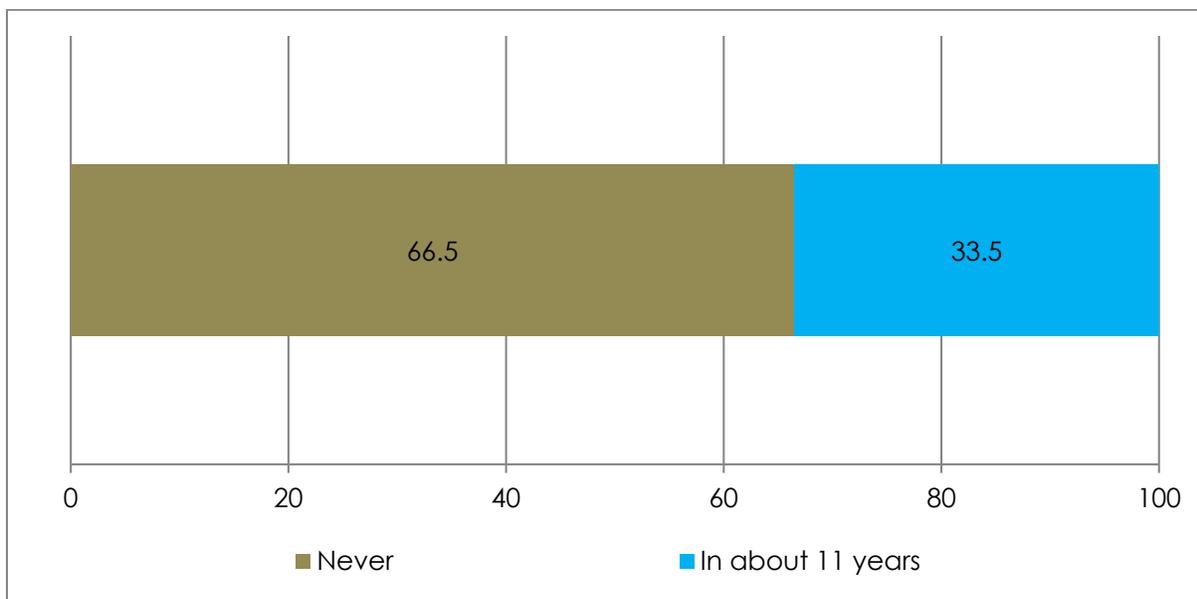
According to respondents of a focus group held in Leposavic/Leposaviq, donations were seen as the most positive association of the EU, whereas EULEX is perceived as the most negative association. Also, participants believe that the popularity of the EU declined after High Representative of the European Union Office in Kosovo Samuel Zbogar left and was replaced by Nataliya Apostolova. According to them, the EU has not shown results of their work in order to secure support from the citizens. There is a perception that the EU works for the “other side,” in favor of Albanians. Similarly, it was said that the EU gives full support to the elections from 2013 and 2014, thereby closing their eyes towards undemocratic processes occurring back then, including threats and blackmail; they only reacted to these irregularities and intimidation in the 2017 parliamentary elections. By the words of the focus group participants, EU's “hypocrisy” has largely contributed to the deterioration of civic perception. Also, investments in northern Kosovo were mentioned as something that was initially distributed no matter the local self-governments' capacities, which resulted in projects being implemented with discontinuity.

Respondents from Zubin Potok also agreed that investments are the first association they have of the EU, but added that the EU is partly guaranteeing the safety of the Serbian community in Kosovo. However, opinions are divided on the issue, hence there were participants who believed that the EU “isn't doing anything for us” and that it “blurs our eyes” by investing in the north, and that this is being done to citizens who were not given any other choice but to integrate into the Kosovo system, which is not in their best interest, as stated by the focus group participants.

One of the interviewed representatives from the Serbian community who wanted to remain anonymous, believes that locals are increasingly feeling the consequences of

requests being sent to Belgrade from the EU, and gives the example of the issuance of personal documents, more concretely – passports. Serbs in Kosovo are being issued passports for which visa liberalization does not apply, which is a direct consequence of EU demands. The respondent mentioned that the EU had a highly controversial role in the occurrences around the main Ibar Bridge. He says that people understand that the goal of the EU is to open up the bridge as a freedom of movement symbol, but these same people do not see that the EU is taking necessary security steps for the bridge to open up.

40. When do you expect Kosovo to join the EU?

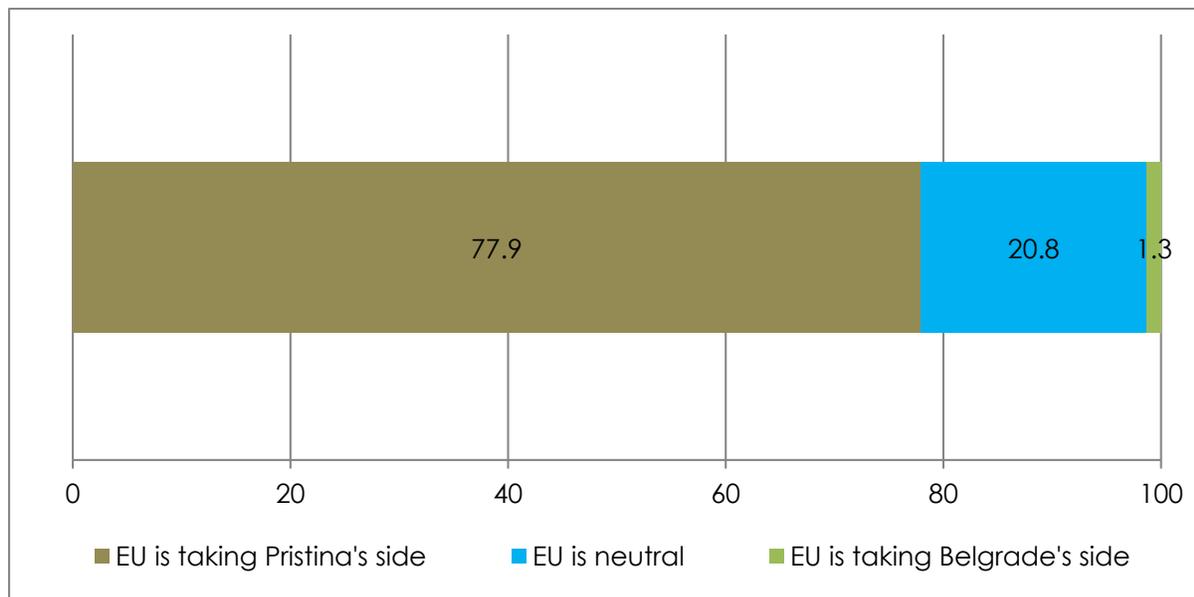


Answers to this question mark a negative trend of 10.8%.

All attitudes of citizens related to the EU are either negative or have a negative trend. Hence, an increasing percentage of citizens have negative connotations of the EU, believe that the EU will not improve the respect for their rights, and think that Kosovo will not become part of the EU. EU investments in Kosovo have been enormous, and still remain the largest per capita in comparison to all other countries the EU invests in. However, as for northern municipalities, these funds only became accessible in 2013, and even though the given investments were substantial, their result is yet to be seen. Besides this, the EU has a serious issue with self-promotion in these municipalities, and is investing huge efforts in connecting its name to projects that are unpopular amongst the citizenry, such as the bridge revitalization, whereas other projects remain unnoticed. According to

the Institute for Territorial Economic Development research²³, in the period of 2010-2015, the EU approved projects with a value of 54,503,985 euro for the northern municipalities, which represents an unprecedented investment. Besides this, one agreement in Brussels served to establish the North Development Fund that gathered around 10 million euro from interflow of customs revenues (from crossings 1 and 31, called Jarinje and Brnjak) obtained from products intended for these municipalities. Despite all of this, citizens do not recognize the role of the EU as a positive one, nor do they have expectations that improvement will really follow. With so much taking place, EU reactions are lacking with regards to numerous violations of rights of Kosovo Serbs, such as the ban on importing Serbian language books, denial of validity of documents that Kosovo Serbs possess, the genuine collapse of the process of returnees coming back to Kosovo due to assaults and attacks on them, and the non-issuance of personal documents to this community's members, making access to documents difficult to Serbs already living in Kosovo, etc.

41. How do you perceive the position of the European Union in the negotiation process between Belgrade and Pristina?

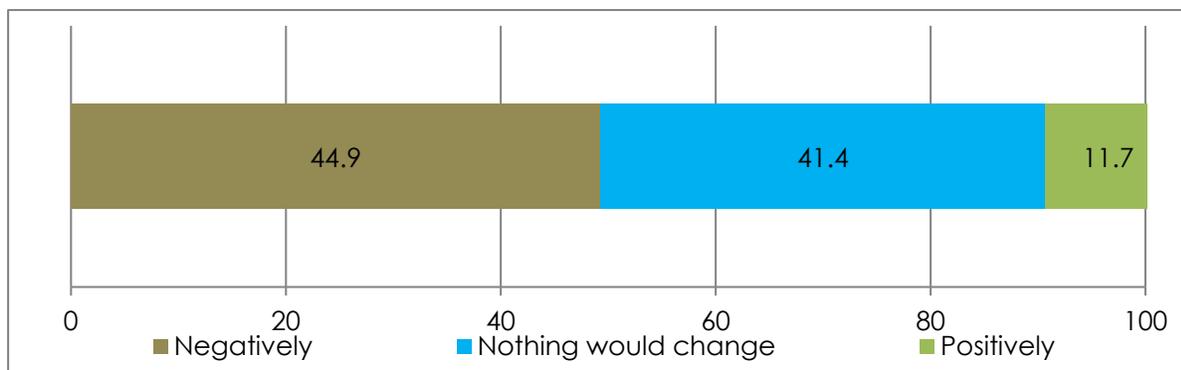


This question revealed big differences in responses by interviewees with a different level of education. Nearly 40% respondents with primary education believe that the EU is neutral in the negotiation process between Belgrade and Pristina. 60% of the respondents with a lower level of education believe that the European Union favours Pristina in the negotiation process, while this percentage is even higher for respondents with a university degree and amounts to as much as 84.9%. A journalist, Željko Tvrdišić, disagrees with this

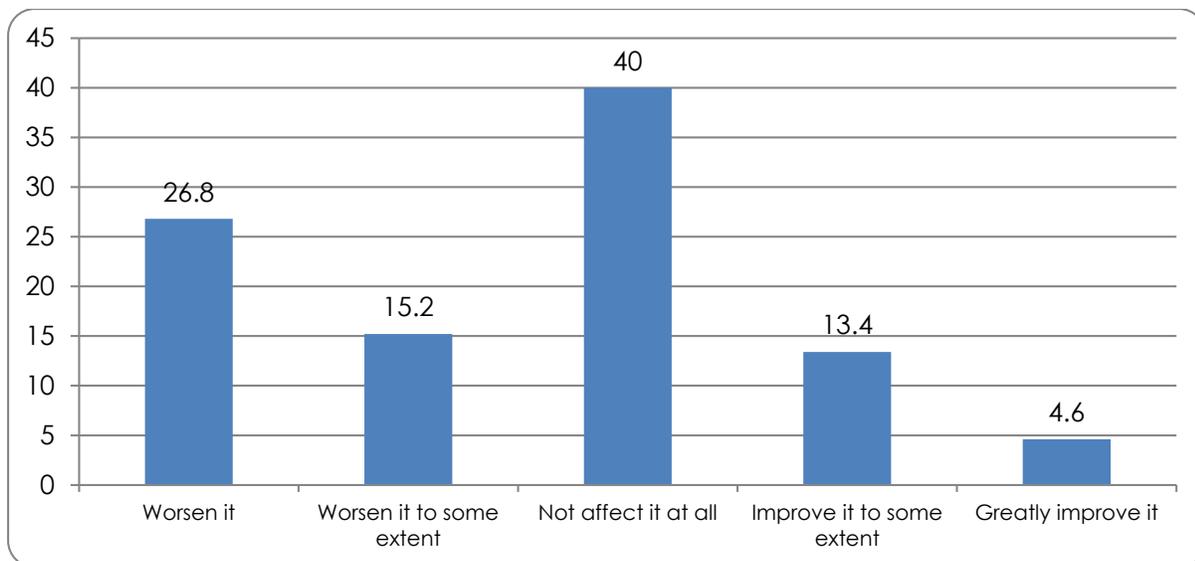
²³ "Do We Live Better?" (2016), Institute for Territorial Economic Development, available at: http://www.lokalnirazvoj.org/upload/News/Documents/2016_12/Da_li_zivimo_bolje.pdf

assessment and claims that citizens have wrong perception. In his opinion the EU is not so concerned about the outcomes of the dialogue on the ground which explains why it unfolds without citizens' participation. According to Tvrdišić the negotiation process is like a train stopping only at the main stations, i.e. Belgrade and Prishtina, without paying much attention to smaller stations where the citizens are. In his opinion that is the main reason for the EU being perceived as bias. The unfinished construction works in the area around the bridge and pedestrian zone only further contributed to creation of negative perception.

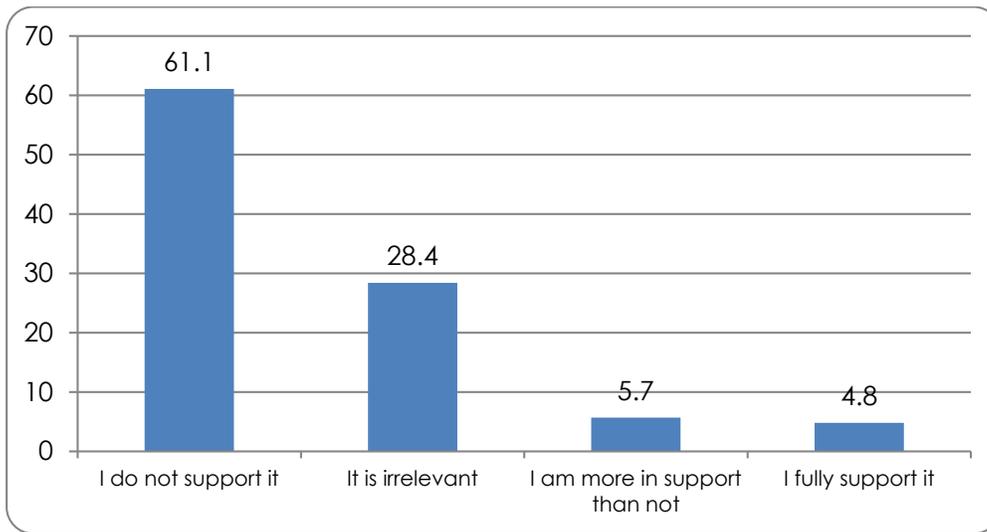
42. How would Kosovo accession to the EU affect you personally?



43. How would Kosovo accession to the EU change the current socio-economic situation in Kosovo?

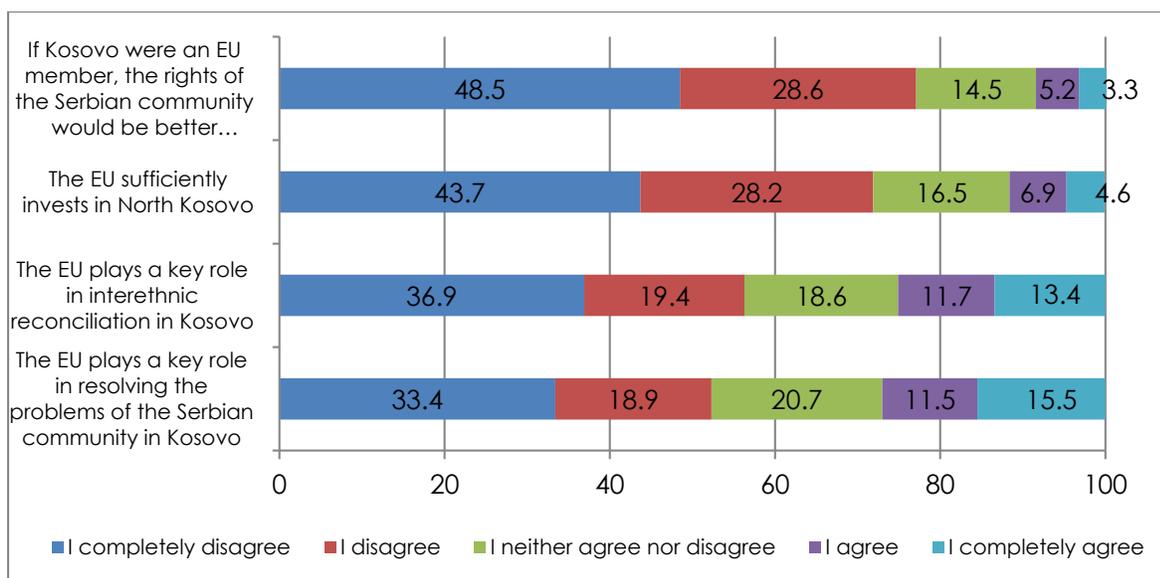


44. Do you support Kosovo's accession to the European Union?

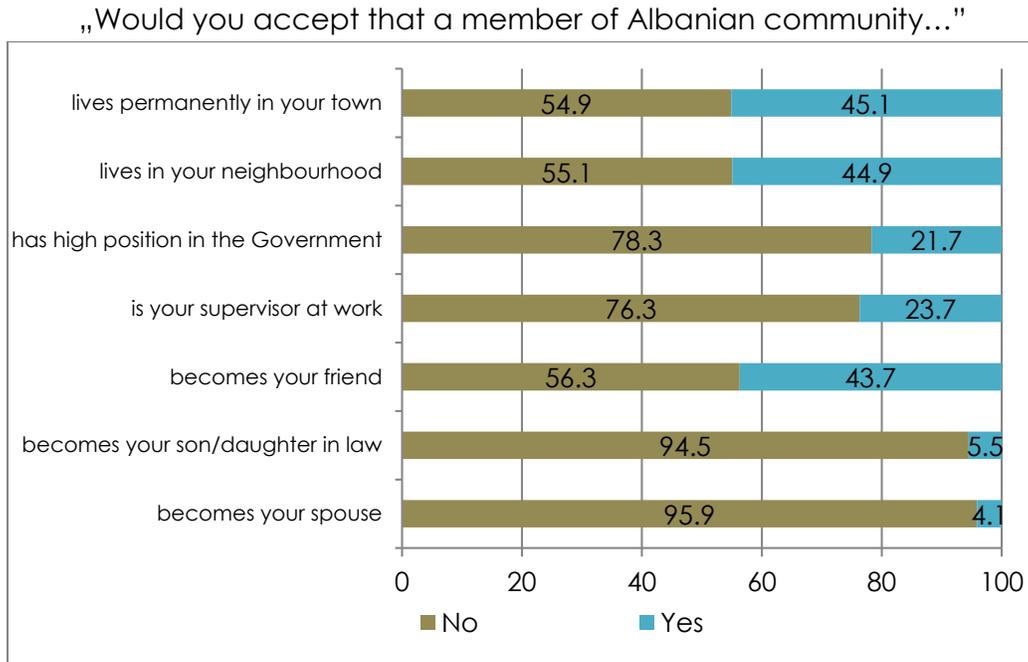


45. On a scale from 1-5 with 1 meaning "I completely disagree" and 5 meaning "I completely agree" please rate the truthfulness of the following statements:

	Rating average
The EU plays a key role in resolving the problems of the Serbian community in Kosovo	2.6
The EU plays a key role in interethnic reconciliation in Kosovo	2,5
The EU sufficiently invests in North Kosovo	2
If Kosovo were an EU member, the rights of the Serbian community would be better protected	1.9

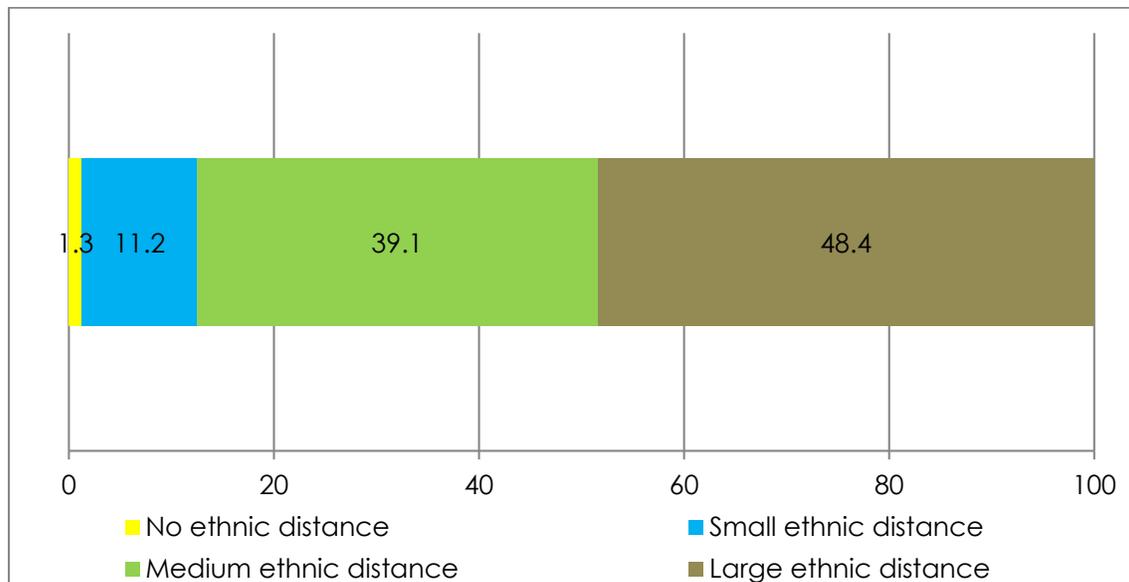


46. Measuring ethnic distance



Ethnic distance scale (total)

All respondents were divided into four groups: those with no distance (0 negative responses), those with a small distance (1-2 negative responses), moderate distance (3-5 negative responses) and significant distance (6-7 negative responses). As a result, the following data were obtained:



The scale of ethnic distance shows significant variations in correlation to respondents' age:

	Medium and large ethnic distance
18-29 godina	83.6%
30-45 godina	77.2%
45-65 godina	89.7%
66 + godina	96.9%

The level of education also plays an important role in distribution of responses on the scale of ethnic distance:

	Medium and large ethnic distance
Primary	100%
Secondary	85.6%
College	88.3%
University	85.3%

Ethnic distance scale per municipality of residence:

	Medium and large ethnic distance
North Mitrovica	77.8%
Zubin Potok	95%
Leposavić/Leposaviq	80.9%
Zvečan/Zveçan	96.3%

The survey shows that ethnic distance has increased since the previous survey conducted a year ago. Last year, the ethnic distance was 4.6 on the scale from 0 to 7, while this year it has increased to 5.1.

Ethnic relations have regressed during the past year which can be seen as a consequence of all negative political events referred to throughout this report. For Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians there are still no issues of common interest that everyone could agree upon or any common goal that could be jointly pursued. Quite on contrary, their attention is turned towards topics that even further antagonize the two communities and result in extorted solutions, such as the bridge and pedestrian zone.

As expected, the ethnic distance is "the smallest" in the municipality of North Mitrovica. North Mitrovica is one of the few cities in Kosovo with truly multi-ethnic neighbourhoods such as Mikronaselje/Kodra e Minatoreve and Bosniak mahala, nevertheless, the percentage of 77% of respondents with a large or medium ethnic distance is still too high. The results from the other three municipalities are even more worrying and they clearly point to the fact that administrative integration was not followed by a social one and that these municipalities are still detached from the main developments in Kosovo society.

Conclusions

- The research reveals no significant change in northern Kosovo inhabitants' perception and evaluation of the overall trends in Kosovo. The citizens of northern Kosovo remain discontented by main political, economic and security trends. Furthermore, in comparison to the previous year, there is a notable increase in the number of respondents expressing negative opinion about the overall trends in Kosovo. Thus, less than a 10% of the interviewees believe that Serbs in Kosovo can expect a better life in the years to come.

- This year the trust of citizens in institutions remained at a very low level. The respondents showed evident distrust toward political elites and institutions in Kosovo, towards Serbian and Albanian political representatives alike regardless of the fact whether they come from Pristina, Mitrovica or Belgrade. Such a poor "supply at the political market" appears to be one of the main factors influencing a large number of respondents to show no intention of participating in the forthcoming elections.

- This research affirms the previously noticed trend of indecisiveness of northern Kosovo respondents on many important topics. The high prevalence of the answer "I do not have an opinion/I do not know" to queries related to participation in political institutions of Kosovo or questions related to Brussels Agreement, suggests that citizens are either not informed properly (implying the lack transparency) or afraid to "publicly" speak their mind on such sensitive topics, regardless of the anonymity assurances.

- The previous research provided worrisome results on main demographic (migration) tendencies in northern Kosovo. This year the numbers got even worse. Namely, in only one-year time the already high percentage of interviewees indicting the intention to leave Kosovo, increased even more. The problem is further aggravated by the fact that this tendency is mainly shown by young and highly educated citizens. How will this growing brain-drain tendency affect the development of economy in this part of Kosovo is a question that calls for immediate attention.

- One of the most important findings from a comparative analyses of the results obtained from this and last year's research is certainly the attitude of citizens towards the European Union. Northern Kosovo respondents do not share a positive view on the role of the EU in the process of Kosovo status resolution which caused negative trends in all questions related to the European Union compared to the previous year's survey. This "Eurosceptic" trend could be a consequence of a wider social context, primarily the crisis in the European Union caused by Brexit, but the key generator of such a position is certainly the perception of EU role in influencing the processes of utmost importance for current and future position of Serbs in Kosovo.

- The ethnic distance between Serbs and Albanians remains vast. This year it even slightly increased, contributing to overall negative trend in inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. Instead of getting improved and becoming more frequent, contacts between the communities, as the research reveals, are getting increasingly rare resulting in a more distanced inter-ethnic relation.

Jan

Feb

2K

1.5K

1K

500

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