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Research Report

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Citizens' attitudes in the north of Kosovo

Creation of a sustainable framework for civic activism and democratic decision making within institutions of local and central levels in Kosovo

Northern Mitrovica

Contracting authority

NGO AKTIV

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The program Democratic Society Promotion has financed this project. It has been supported by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Kosovo (SCO-K) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (DANIDA) and was implemented by the Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF).

For publisher

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Northern Mitrovica

July 2018.

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Methodology of research

Method of research: Face to face research methodology (F2F) used to conduct this survey

Survey: A questionnaire consisting of 46 questions conducted for 20 minutes was used

Time span of the research: 20 – 30 June 2018

Locations of research: Northern Mitrovica, Leposavić, Zubin Potok and Zvečan

Sample size: 800 respondents

Type of sample: Stratified random sampling used: stratification based on the municipality of residence

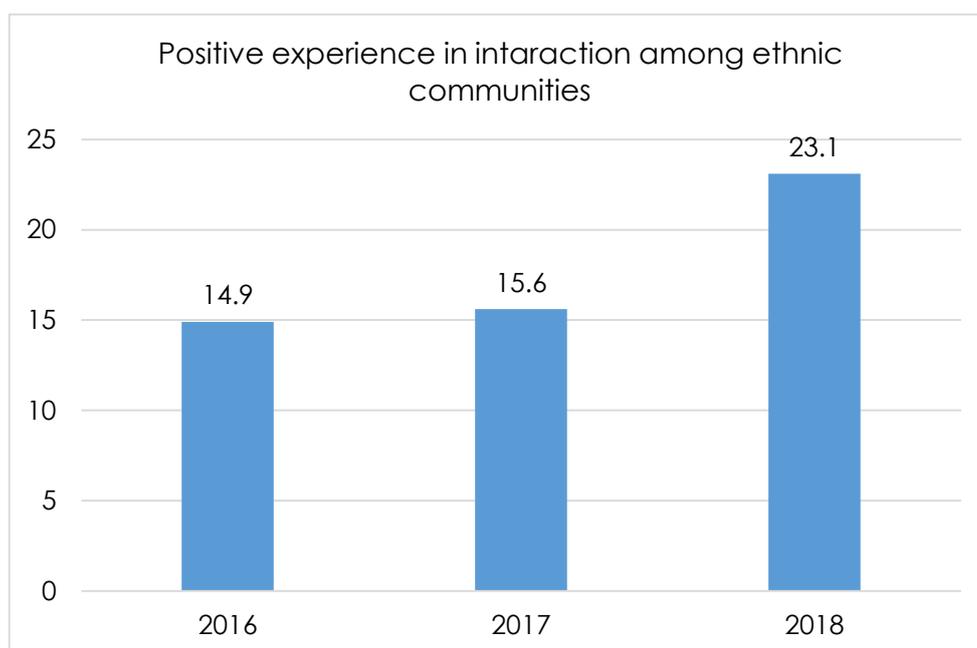
Statistical error: 95% statistical interval of confidence for events with an incidence of 50%, which can amount to a margin of error \pm /- 3,2%

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



Graphical overview of main findings

The frequency of inter-ethnic interactions is on the rise, as well as positive perceptions of inter-ethnic relations resulting from such interactions:



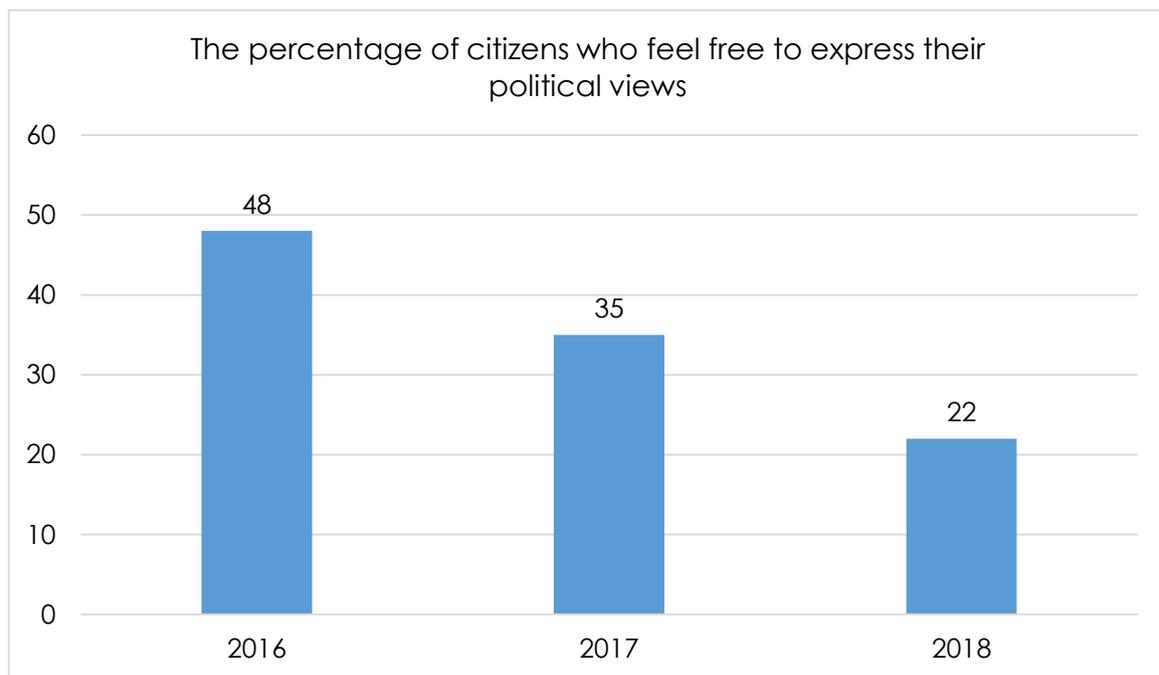
There is also a rising trend in affirmative perceptions between the Serbian and Albanian communities in northern Kosovo, including trust, frequency of interaction, and positive experience during interactions. The standard measure of ethnic distance dropped from an average of 5.1 in 2016 to 4.6 points in 2018.

A lack of trust in political leaders remains extraordinarily high in communities in northern Kosovo. *In 2018, 99.6% of respondents claimed that they did not trust a single Albanian politician. A mistrust of Serbian politicians is also on the rise: Whilst, in 2017, 78% of respondents claimed that they did not trust politicians from the Serbian community, the results from this year show that the figure has risen to 88.2%. Just 12% of respondents expressed a level of trust in politicians in Kosovo.*

Svaki treći ispitanik smatra da će život Srba na Kosovu za tri godine biti lošiji.

The number of respondents who claim that Kosovar Serbs should rely upon the EU to protect and defend their interests rose from 5.3% in 2017, to 13.1% in 2018. Likewise, the number of citizens who negatively perceive the EU has fallen to 16% this year.

The number of respondents who feel free to express their views continued to fall in 2018.



This year's research results clearly show a "crisis of trust" among the citizens of northern Kosovo.

- 88% of citizens do not trust a single Serbian politician
- 99% of citizens do not trust any Albanian politicians
- 66% of citizens do not believe that independent views and opinions are sufficiently represented in the media .

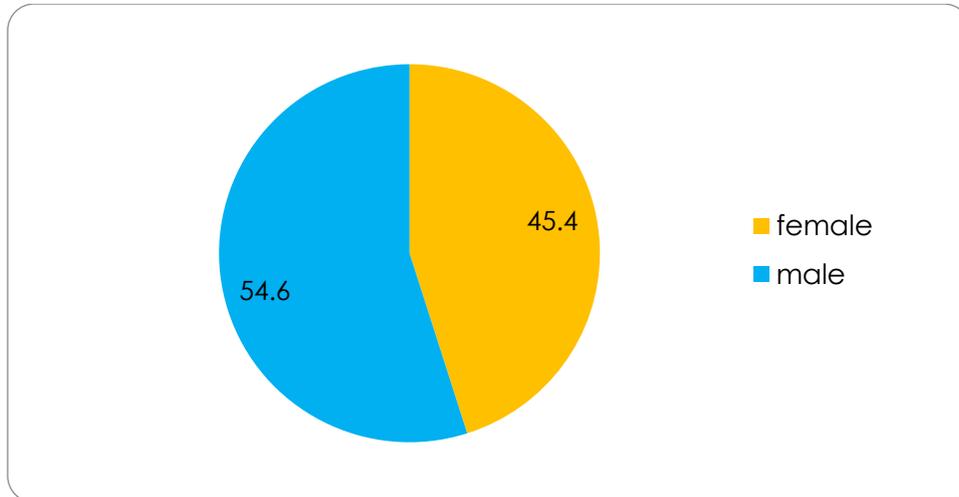
Every third respondent (34%) claims that the rise of illegal activities has become the biggest security threat in northern Kosovo, which is an increase of 10%, when compared to 2016.

More than half of those aged between 18 and 29 are actively thinking of leaving Kosovo in the next 5 years. (53%). Two out of three young persons who completed higher education are actively considering leaving Kosovo. In the more rural municipalities of Zubin Potok and Leposavić, 4/10 young people plan to leave Kosovo within the next 5 years.



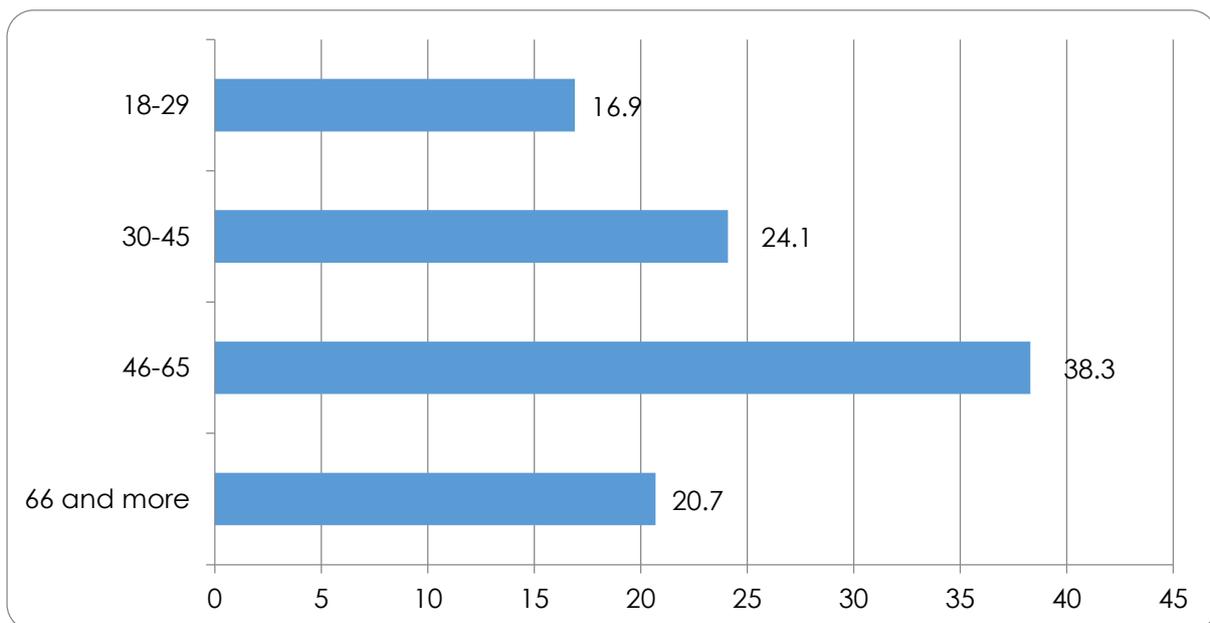
Description of the Sample

Gender of respondents:

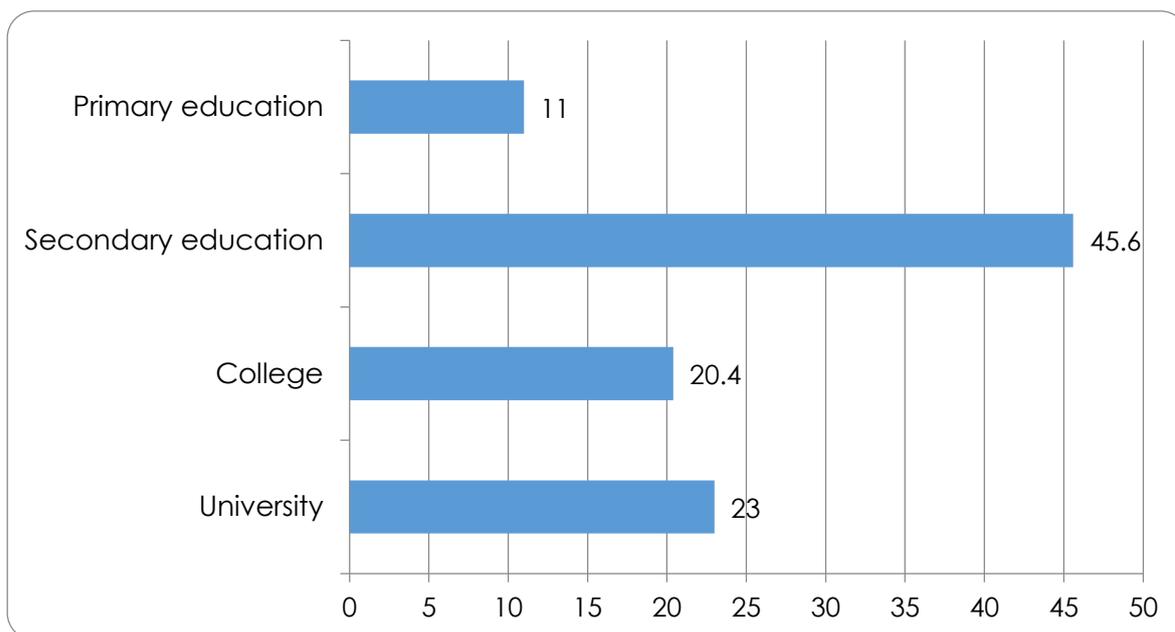


How old are you?

The average age of the respondents was 48.
Age structure of the sample:



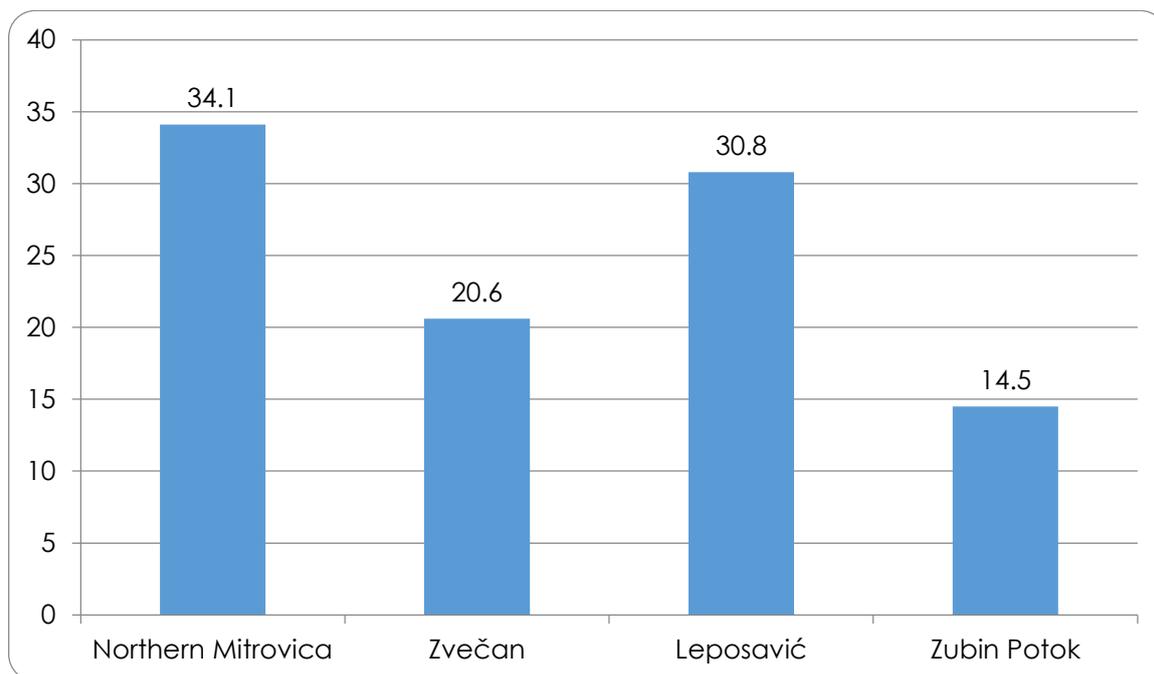
 **Level of education of repondents:**



 **Employment status of respondents:**



 Place of residence:

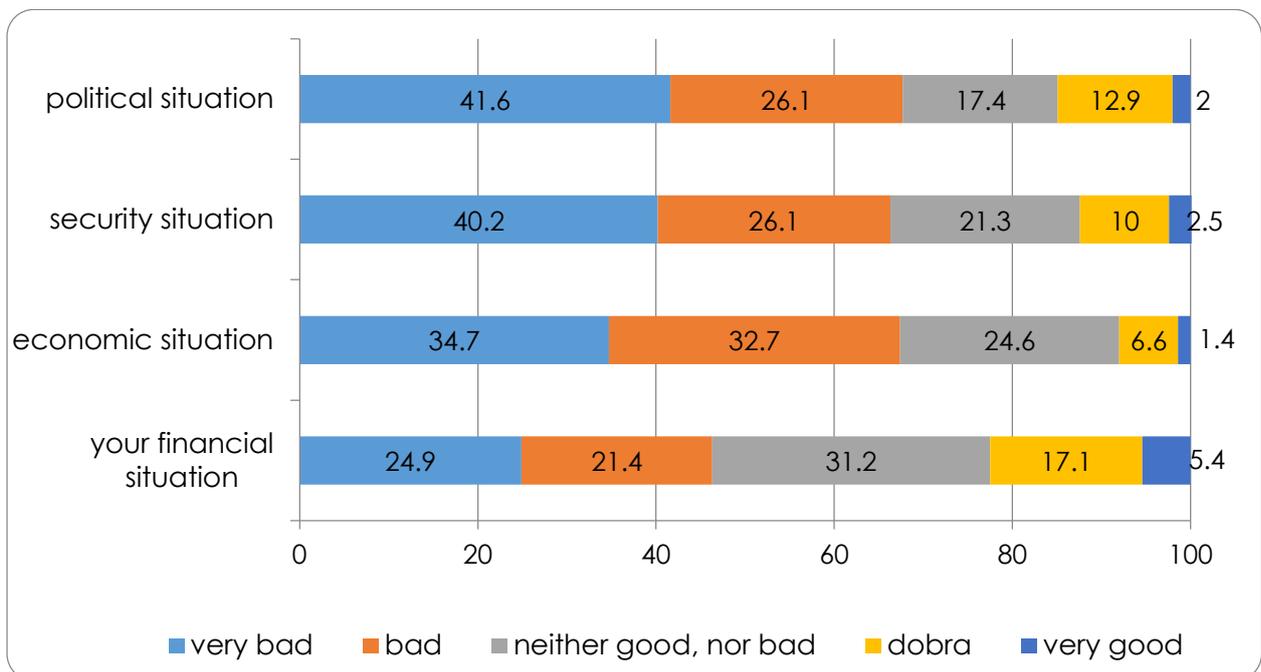


Research results

1. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents “very bad” and 5 represents “very good”, please rate:

	Average rating
Political situation in Kosovo	2,1
Security situation in Kosovo	2,1
Economic situation in Kosovo	2,1
Your financial situation	2,6

When compared to the research conducted over the past two years, we can see that perceptions of the political, security, economic and personal financial situations have improved slightly.

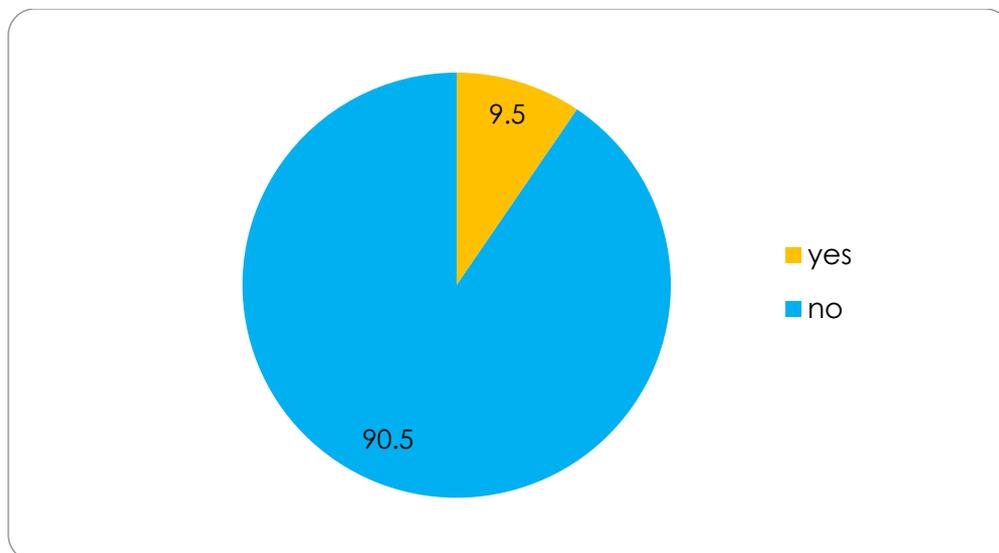


The oldest respondents are least satisfied with the current political situation. More than 80% of respondents aged over 65 consider that the current political situation is bad. The 30-45 age bracket contains the smallest proportion of those who perceive the political situation to be bad (63%). When it comes to security, those in the youngest age bracket (18-29) are least satisfied with the current situation, whilst those in the oldest ones are the

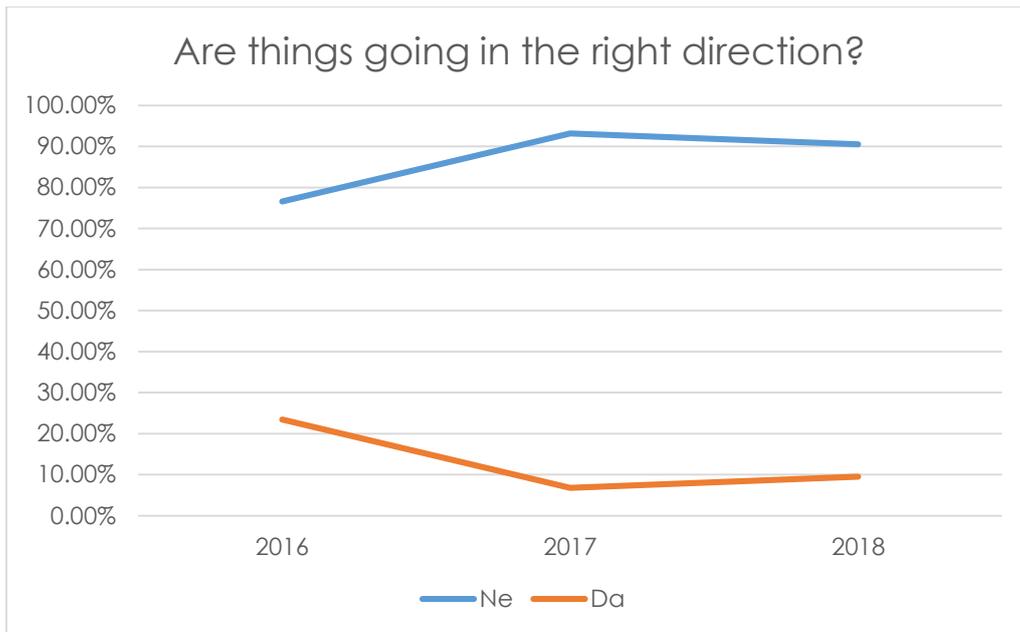
most satisfied. It must be noted that life and life experiences can vary greatly between the oldest and youngest of any given population. Therefore, such differences in perceptions of security should not come as a surprise.

The research also shows that education has an influence on how a 'satisfactory financial situation' is perceived. With higher levels of education, satisfaction with one's financial situation also rises. Average satisfaction with one's financial situation amongst respondents with only a primary education was 1.9. Amongst respondents who have undergone higher education, the average was 2.9.

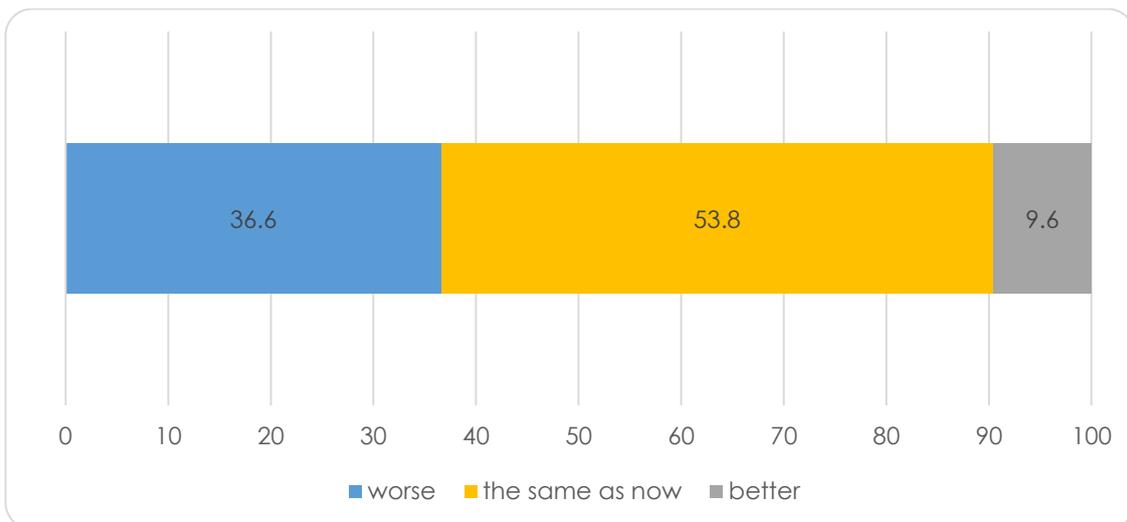
2. Generally speaking, have developments in northern Kosovo been progressing positively?



Comparing the results collected over the last three years, significant differences in the attitudes of respondents concerning quality of life can be observed. While, in 2016, 23% of respondents felt that developments in Kosovo were going in the right direction, this percentage was considerably lower in 2017; amounting to just 6.8%. Today, the situation is somewhat better but still very pessimistic. Only 9.5% of respondents now believe that developments in Kosovo are going in the right direction. Such significant fluctuations in public perceptions can perhaps be explained by the influence of current political events on the respondents' assessments. There exist just a small number of respondents, in the last three years, who look positively upon the socio-political situation.

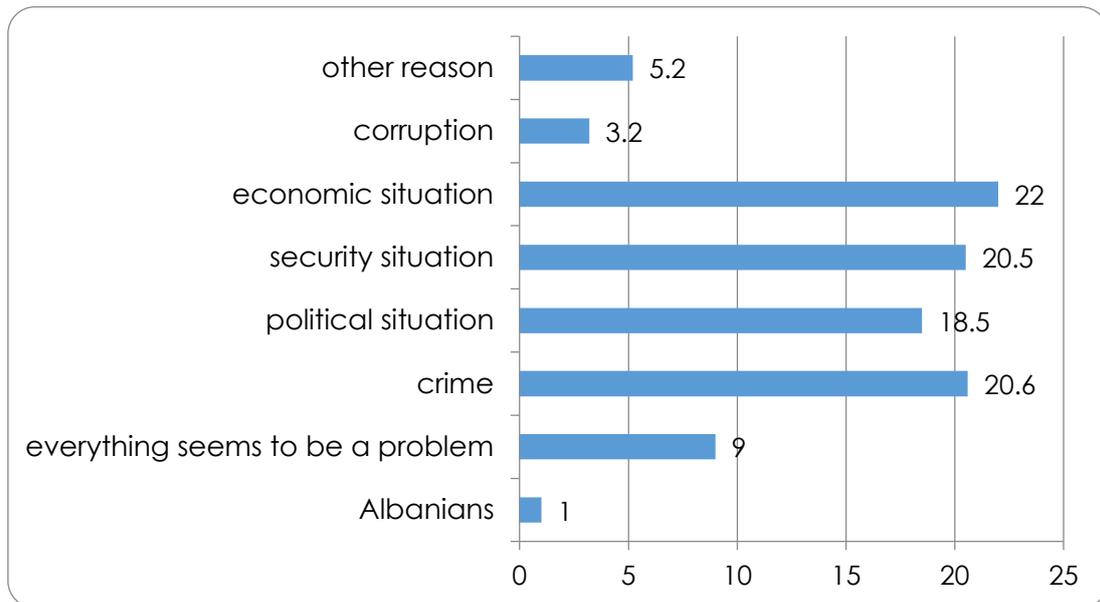


3. In your opinion, how will the life of Serbs develop in the next three years:



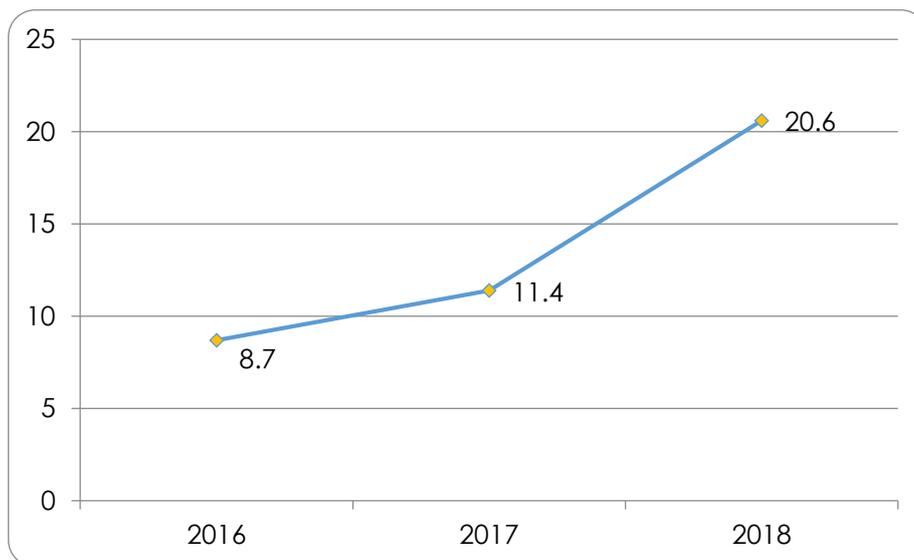
The youngest respondents (those in the 18-29 age bracket) have the least optimism. Only 6% think that the situation will be better in Kosovo in the next three years. Respondents are older than 66 are most optimistic. 18% believe that, in the next three years, the situation will be better in Kosovo. Comparing these results to those collected in 2017, it is possible to observe significant differences. Last year, 54% of respondents claimed that they thought the overall state of affairs would be worse. The results from this year's research are similar to ones from 2016, where 35% of respondents claimed that life in Kosovo would worsen in the next three years.

4. What, in your own opinion, is the biggest problem in northern Kosovo?

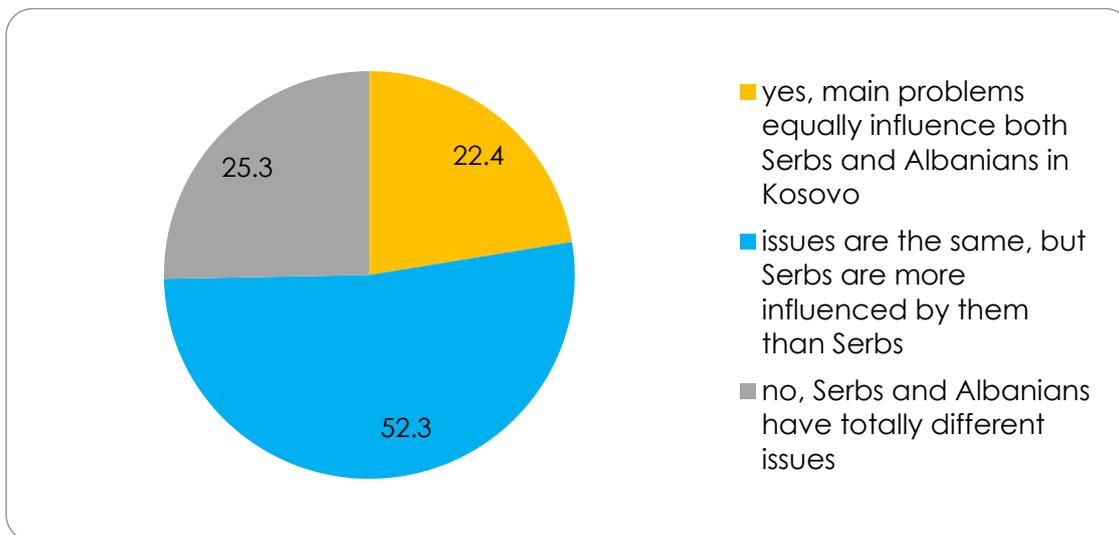


The chart clearly shows that citizens of northern Kosovo perceive the unstable political and economic situations, security and crime rate as the main problems. The number of citizens who perceive crime rate as one of the main problems in northern Kosovo has risen significantly. In 2016, the figure was 8%; in 2017, 11% and, now, the number has risen to 20.6% of respondents.

The perception that the crime rate poses a large security threat has risen significantly over the last three years:

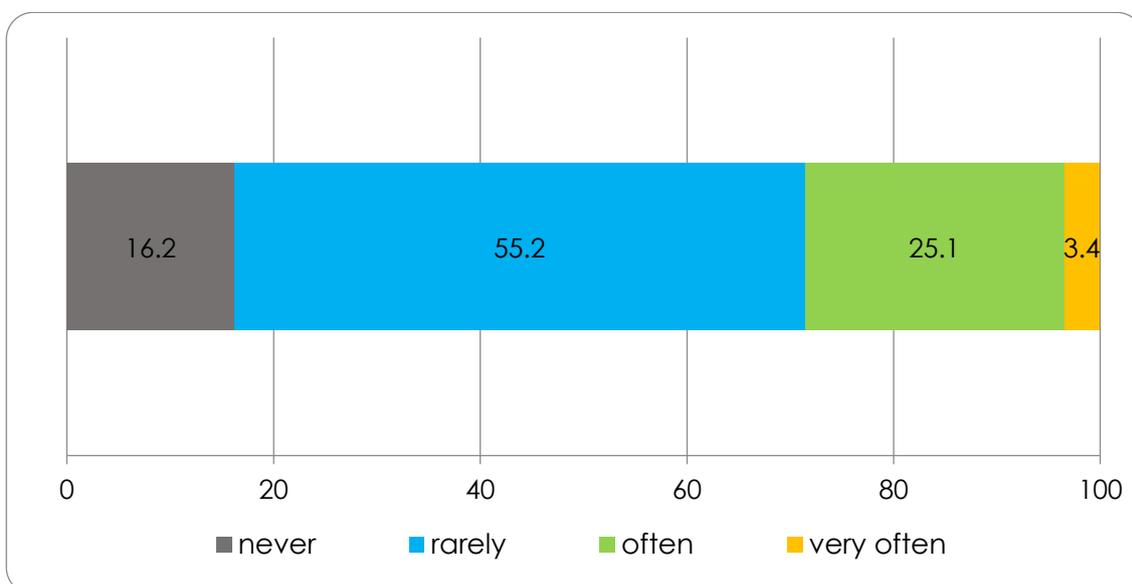


5. Do the main problems equally influence Serbs and Albanians?



Answers given to this question have changed significantly over the last three years.

6. How often do you go to areas where Albanians are the majority?

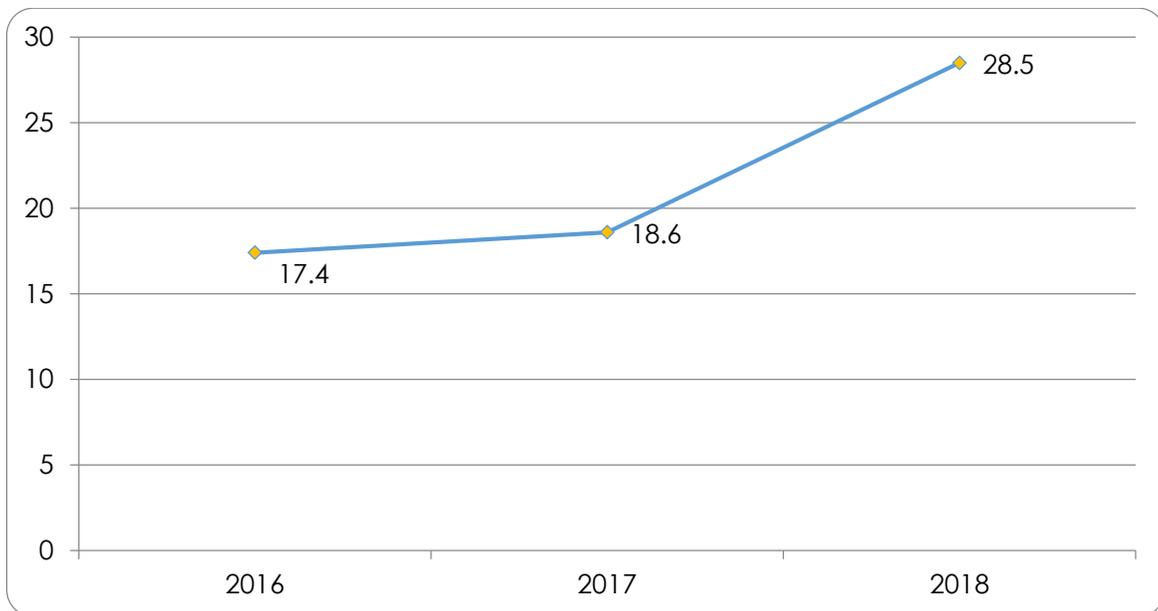


Respondents from the municipality of Zvečan visit areas of Albanian majority least frequently.

	Planning to leave
Northern Mitrovica	41,2%
Zubin Potok	23,7%
Leposavić	21,4%
Zvečan	21%

The frequency of visits made to areas of Albanian majority is linked closely to the level of education of respondents. Analyses show that respondents with just a primary education are least likely to visit such areas (11.7%), while those having undergone higher education are the most likely (38.2%). Also, respondents within the 30-45 age bracket are the ones who visit areas of Albanian-majority areas most frequently, while the youngest and oldest respondents do it in the least.

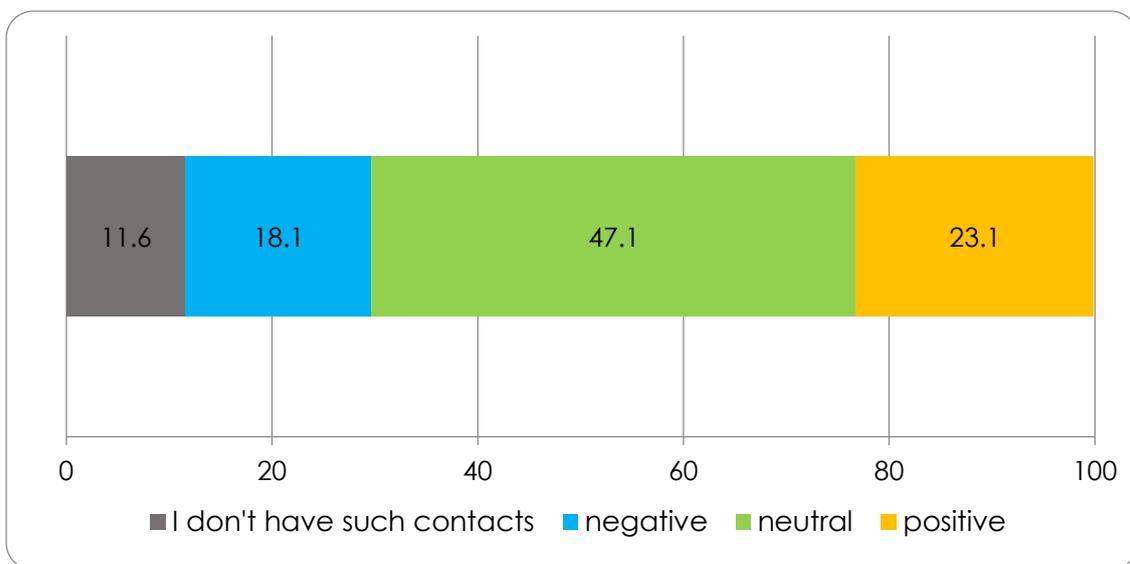
When compared to the previous two years (2016 – 29%; 2017 – 25%), we can see that the number of respondents who do not visit Albanian-majority areas at all has decreased (2018 – 16%), while the number of respondents who frequently or very frequently visit areas of Albanian majority has grown. This can be seen in the following chart:



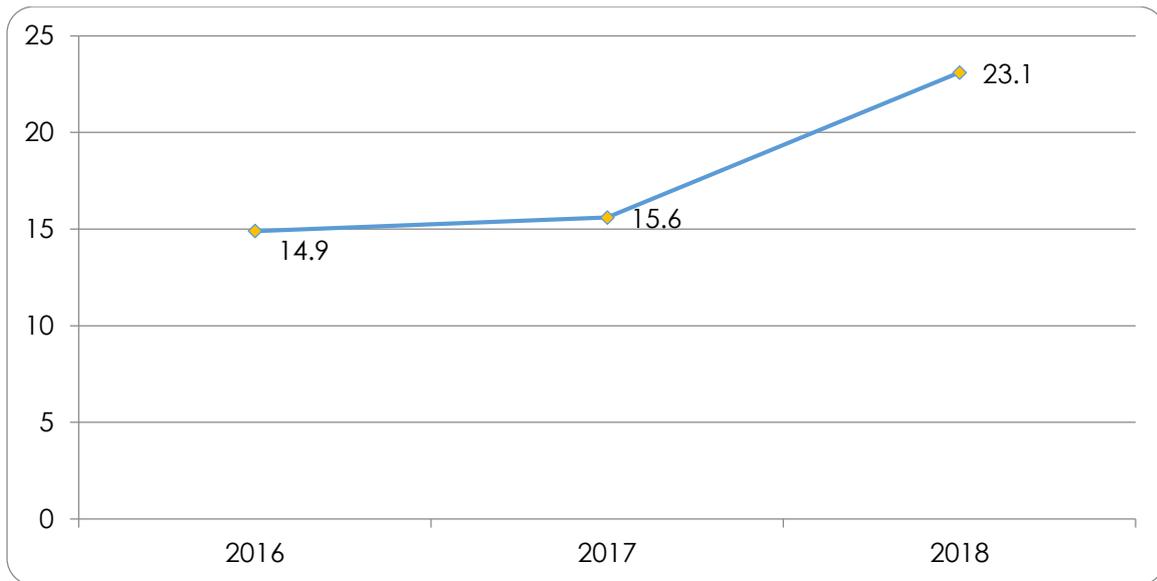
Generally speaking, one of the main findings of this year's study is the positive trend of indicators that describe ethnic relations, from frequency of interaction to positive experiences. In later focus groups and interviews held with representatives of civil society organizations, policy makers and local residents, it was further explained that reasons for this shift have a number of key dimensions, namely; but not necessarily exclusively: an increased institutional need. Here it is possible to identify a level of congruence between what can be described as an improved security situation with heightened integration into Kosovo's legal and political framework. Participants in focus groups stressed that they do not see this as a matter of trust in the strict sense of the term but rather a question of necessity and an underlying belief that personal safety is not necessarily the concern that it once was. That having been said, many participants also expressed the

opinion that, although they do not necessarily always feel physically threatened when travelling to Albanian-majority areas, this does not presuppose a sense of generalized trust that Kosovo's governing bodies have an institutional capacity or willingness to safeguard their legal and constitutional rights. Quite the contrary, views expressed during focus groups and interviews reflected a significant dearth in institutional trust on the part of participants – there being an overriding fear of discrimination and obstructionism stemming from their interactions with state bodies. At the same time, there is an increased willingness to travel to Albanian-majority areas that was noted both by survey results as well as during the course of interviews and focus groups. Perhaps overlooked due to the survey's constraints were economic questions that factor in the increased level of interaction between Serbian and Albanian communities. Participants cited business and other related transactions as having (potential) influence on this.

7. Your experiences with personal contacts with Albanians are mostly:

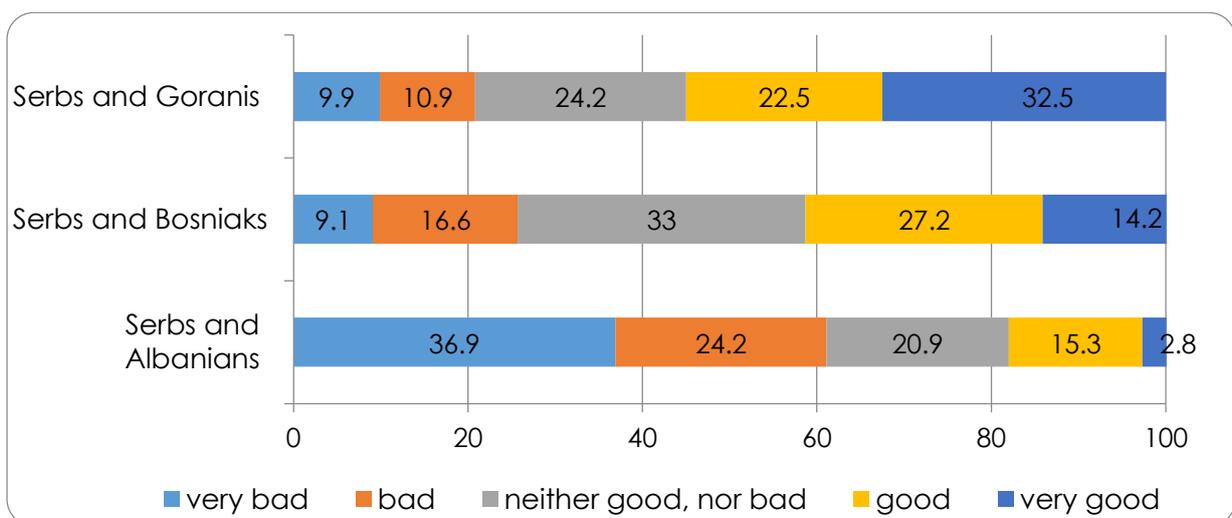


This year's research shows that (personal) experiences during contact with Albanians in the last three years have become significantly more positive:



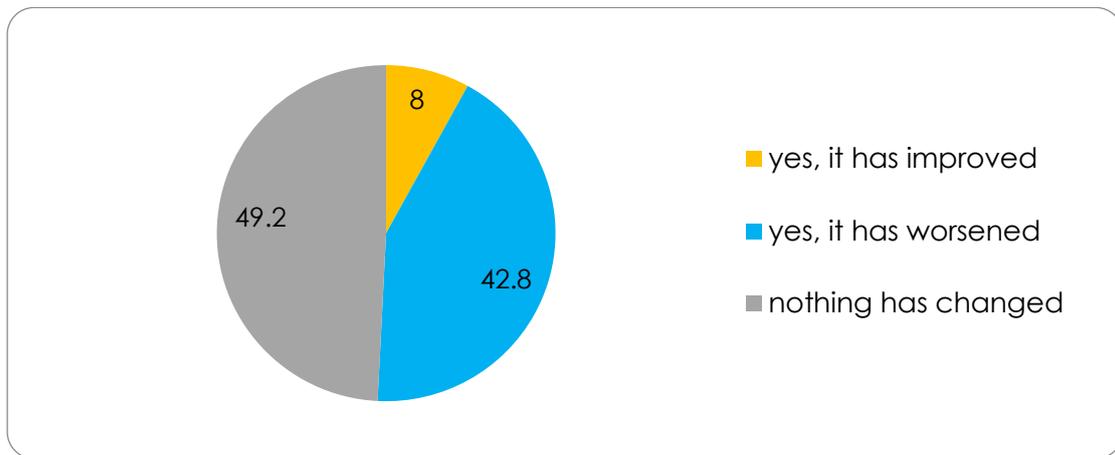
8. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents “very bad”, while 5 represents “very good”, please rate the current state of interethnic relations among communities in Kosovo:

	Average rating
Serbs and Goranis	3,6
Serbs and Bosniaks	3,2
Serbs and Albanians	2,2



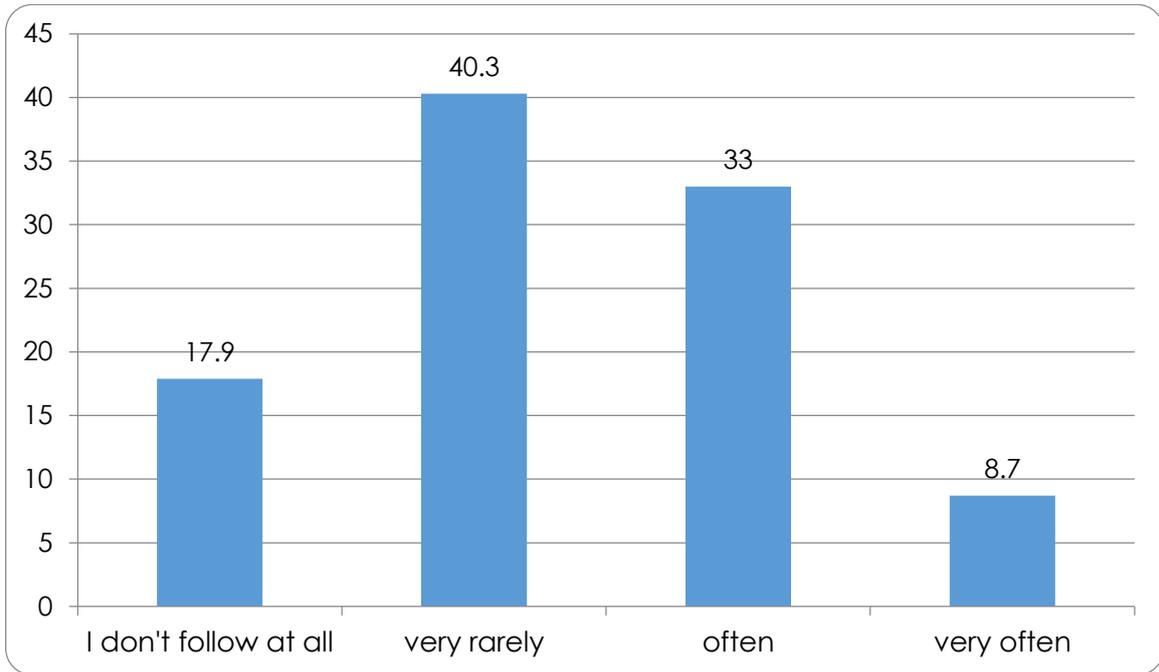
While in 2016, 5% of respondents claimed that relations between Serbs and Albanians were good and, in 2017, this figure decreased again by half, , this year's results show a significant growth: 18% of respondents now claim that relations between members of Serbian and Albanian communities are good or very good. Serb-Gorani interactions remain as stable as previous years and relations with Bosniak communities have improved.

9. Has economic situation in northern Kosovo changed in the period of one year?

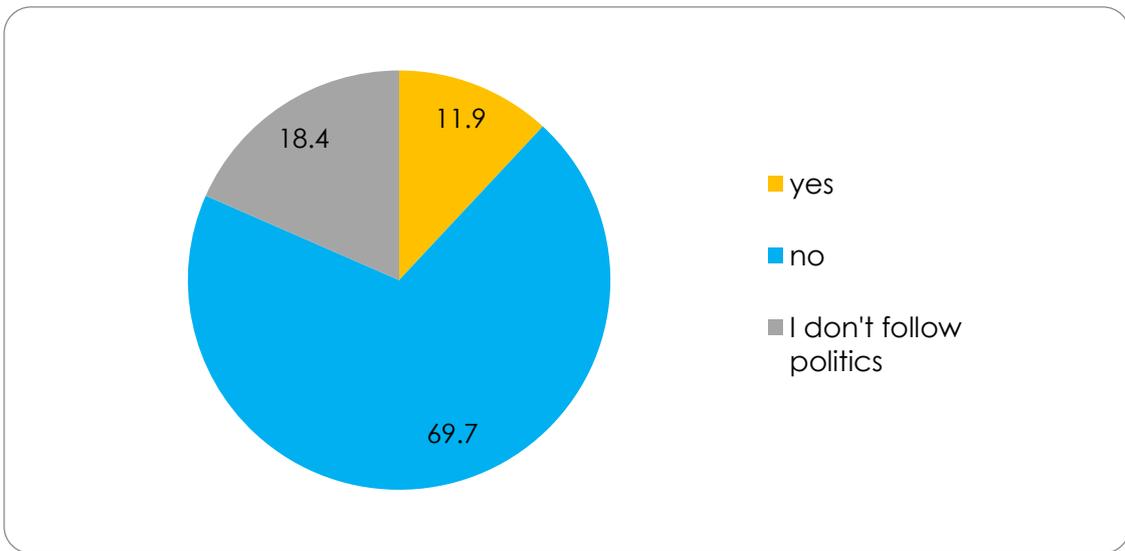


The research shows that there has been a significant change when it comes to the perception of the economic situation, compared with research conducted in 2016. No such change can be observed between the results of the 2017 and 2018 surveys, however. In 2016, 28% of respondents claimed that the economic situation had worsened, while in 2017 47% of respondents made this claim. This year's results show that the number who think that the economic situation has worsened has slightly decreased.

10. How often do you follow political events?



11. Are there any politicians from Kosovo who you trust?



The 2018 results highlight a growing mistrust in politicians. In 2016, 19% of respondents reported having confidence in a politician from the Serbian community. In 2017, an increase was witnessed, with the figure reaching 23%. This year, however, the percentage has once again fallen to just 12%. This tells us that there has been an erosion of trust in politicians in northern Kosovo.

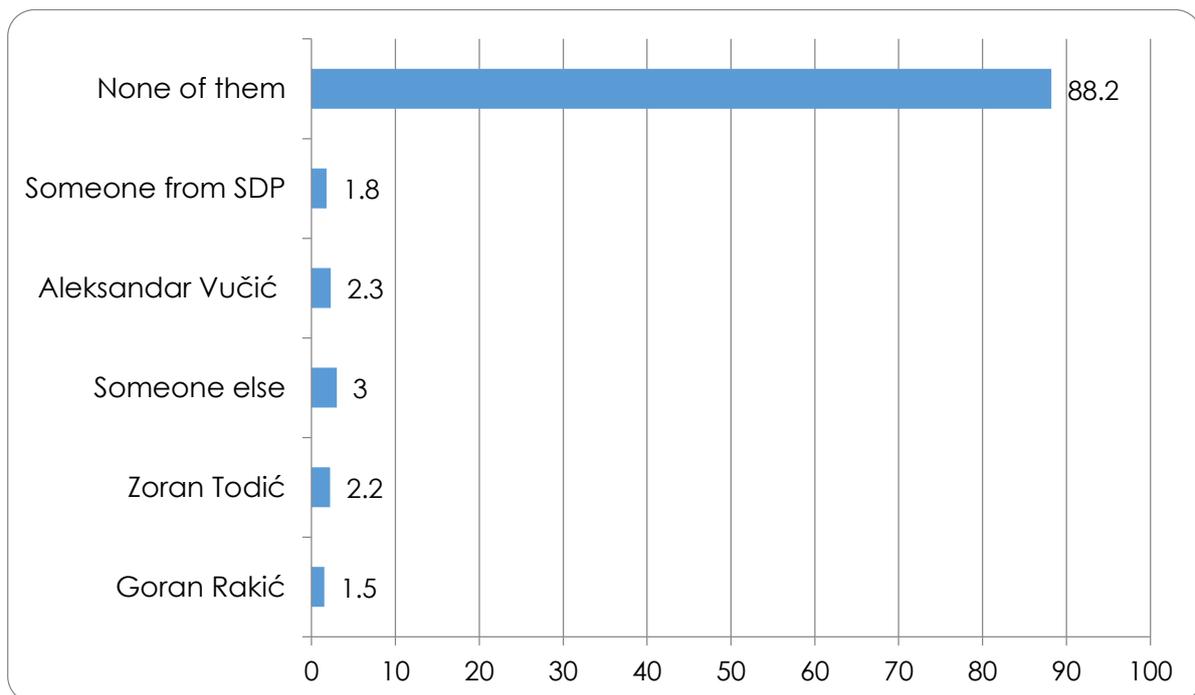
The research shows that trust in politicians grows with the age of participant:

	I have trust
18-29	6,7%
30-45	11%
46-65	11,7%
66 and more	17,6%

There are also varying levels of trust amongst citizens of the different municipalities of northern Kosovo:

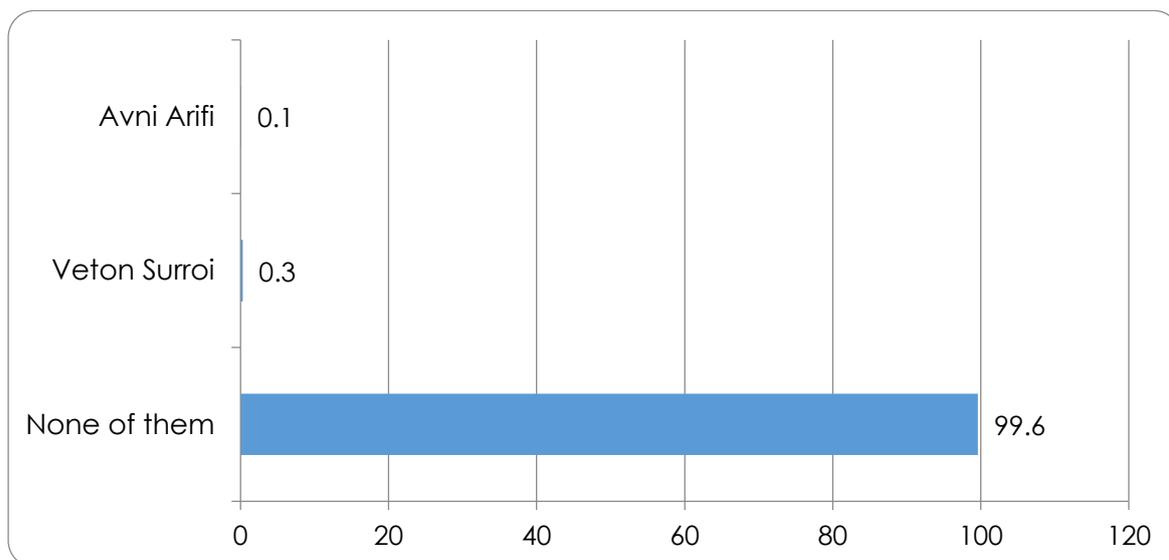
	I have trust
Northern Mitrovica	5,7%
Zubin Potok	27%
Leposavić	11,8%
Zvečan	11,7%

12. Which Serbian politicians in Kosovo do you trust the most?



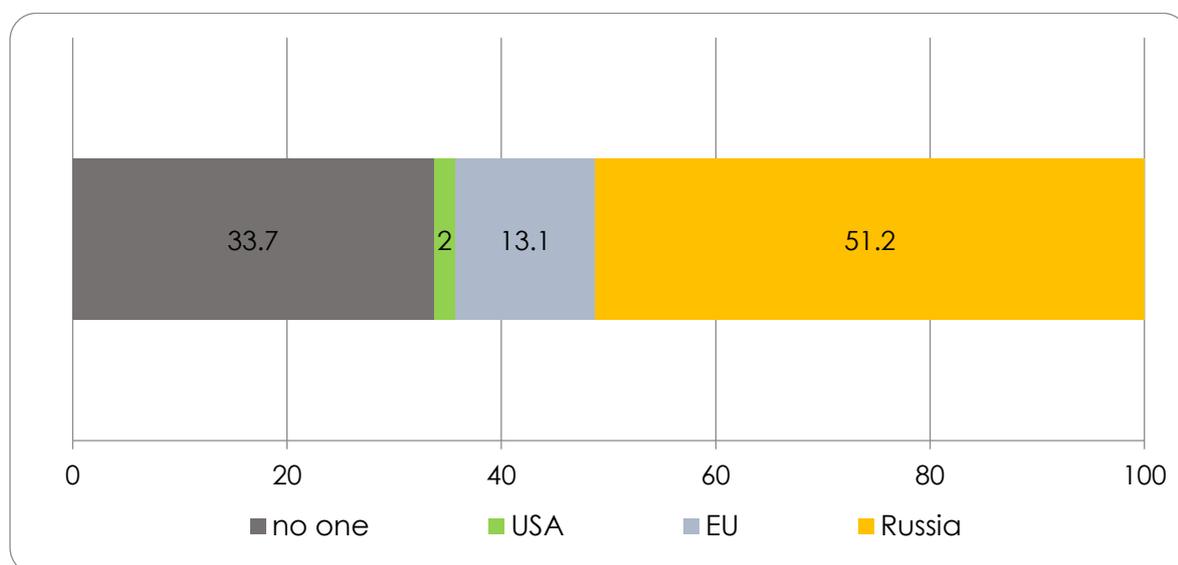
When compared to 2017, when 78.1% of respondents said that they did not trust a single politician, that figure has increased. This year, it stands at 88.2%. Names that have been included in this chart were proposed by the citizens themselves, since the questionnaire included such an option.

13. Which Albanian politicians in Kosovo do you trust the most?



Similar to the previous question, respondents have individually proposed the names represented in this chart. The percentage of respondents who do not trust a single Albanian politician this year is similar to previous years. It amounts to an overwhelming 99.6 % of respondents.

14. In terms of foreign policy and lobbying, Kosovo Serbs should rely upon:

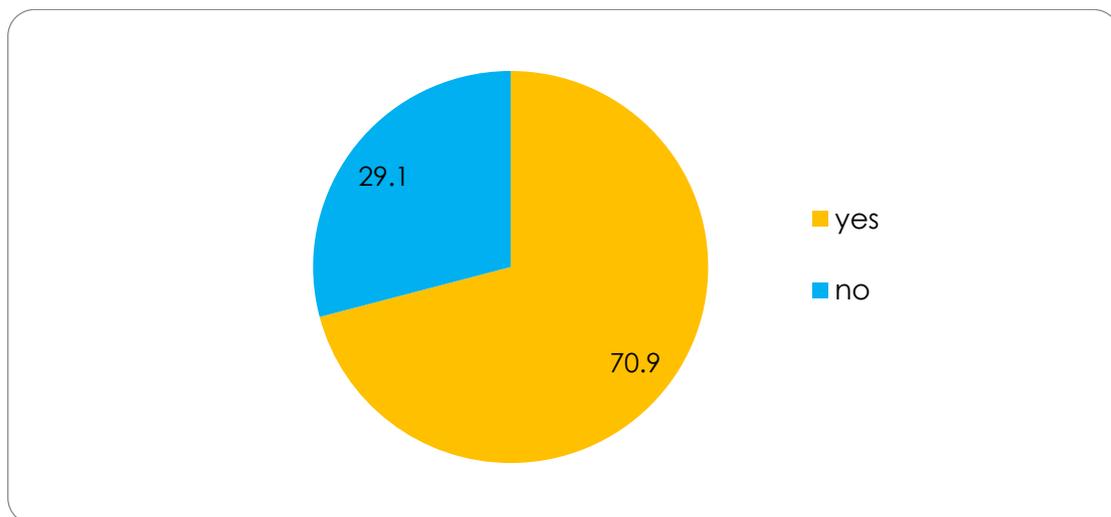


While the research from 2016 showed that 17% of respondents claimed that, in terms of lobbying for interests of Serbs in Kosovo, they should reply upon the EU, that percentage significantly decreased in 2017: only 5% of respondents last year claimed that, in terms of foreign policy, they should rely upon the EU more. This year's research shows that the EU, as a potential

foreign lobbying partner, has reached, approximately, the level of two years ago.

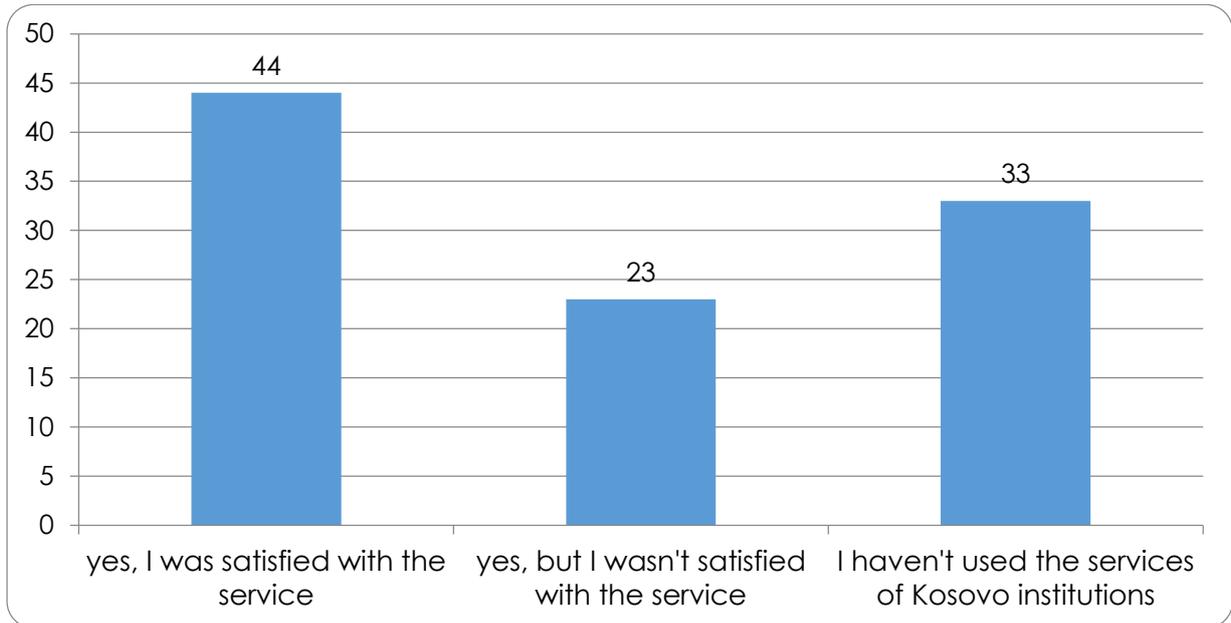
On the other hand, when it comes to the representation of their own interests, the number of respondents who believe that Serbs in Kosovo should rely upon Russia has been in constant decline, starting from 75% in 2016, to 64% in 2017 and now 51% in this year's research.

15. Do you possess IDs issued by a Kosovo institution?



The percentage of citizens who possess IDs issued by Kosovo institutions is increasing. The research shows that, over the last three years, the number of respondents in possession of IDs issued by Kosovo institutions has grown by 5%. Judging by the answers given by focus group respondents, this comes as a consequence of the erosion of community pressure, which was previously considered as a betrayal of Serb interests in Kosovo. The trend might also be explained also by the progress in integrating the institutions of the North into the administrative and judicial system of Kosovo.

16. Have you used the services of Kosovo institutions?



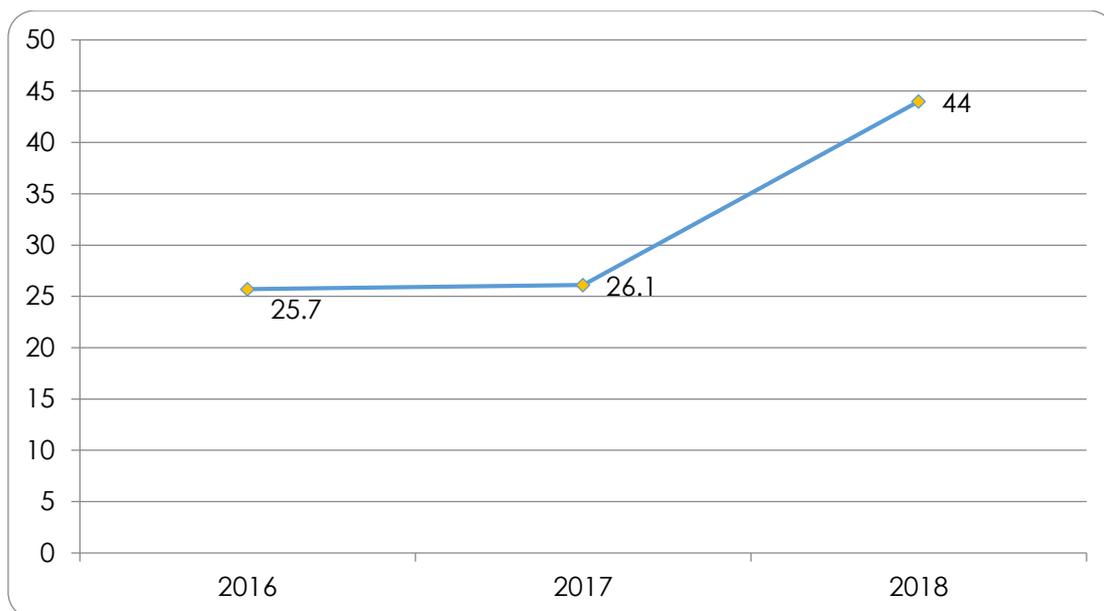
When compared to 2016 and 2017, we can see that that number of those who use the services of Kosovo institutions has grown by nearly 20%. The result is complementary to the results of the previous question: that which concerns the number of citizens from northern Kosovo in possession of documents issued by Kosovo institutions.

The research shows that the oldest respondents are those who use the services of Kosovo institutions the most. Furthermore, the oldest respondents are those who are most satisfied with the services: 61% of of respondents older than 65 claimed that they were satisfied with the services.

The research also shows differences based on the municipality of origin:

	I used the services of Kosovo institutions
Northern Mitrovica	68%
Zubin Potok	58,4%
Leposavić	68,2%
Zvečan	71,6%

When compared 2016 and 2017, we can see that the number of those who use the services of Kosovo institutions has increased by 20%



17. On a scale of 1-5, please rate how satisfied you are with the performance of the following institutions:

Government of Serbia	2,9
Office for Kosovo and Metohija	2,9
Four newly formed Kosovo municipalities in the North	2,8
Provisional institutions of local self-government	2,5
Serbian MPs in Kosovo Parliament	2,5
Serbian ministers in Kosovo Government	2,4
KFOR	2,3
UNMIK	2,2

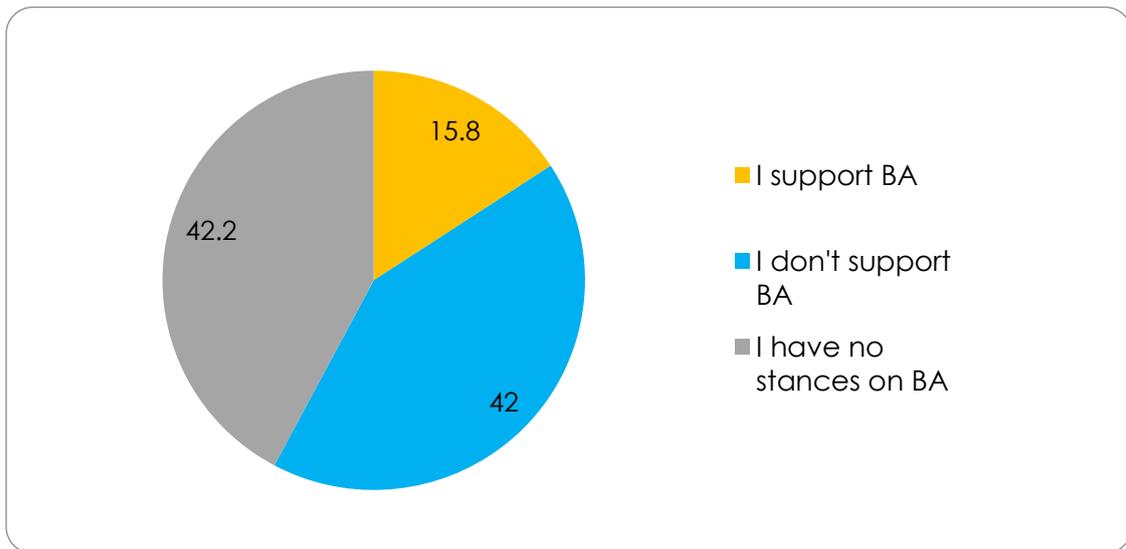
Kosovo Police	2,1
Office of the EU in Kosovo	2,1
EULEX	2,1
Government of Kosovo	2,1

18. On a scale of 1-5, please rate whether you trust the following institutions:

Office for Kosovo and Metohija	2,9
Provisional institutions of local self-government	2,9
Government of Serbia	2,8
Four newly formed Kosovo municipalities in the North	2,8
Serbian MPs in Kosovo Parliament	2,4
Serbian ministers in Kosovo Government	2,3
KFOR	2,3
UNMIK	2,3
Kosovo Police	2,2
Office of the EU in Kosovo	2,2
EULEX	2,1
Government of Kosovo	2,1

The results from two previous charts are largely identical to the ones from previous years, thus there have not been significant changes in citizens' stances toward listed institutions.

19. What is your stance on the Brussels Agreement?



Citizens' stance on the Brussels Agreement has not significantly changed in the last three years.

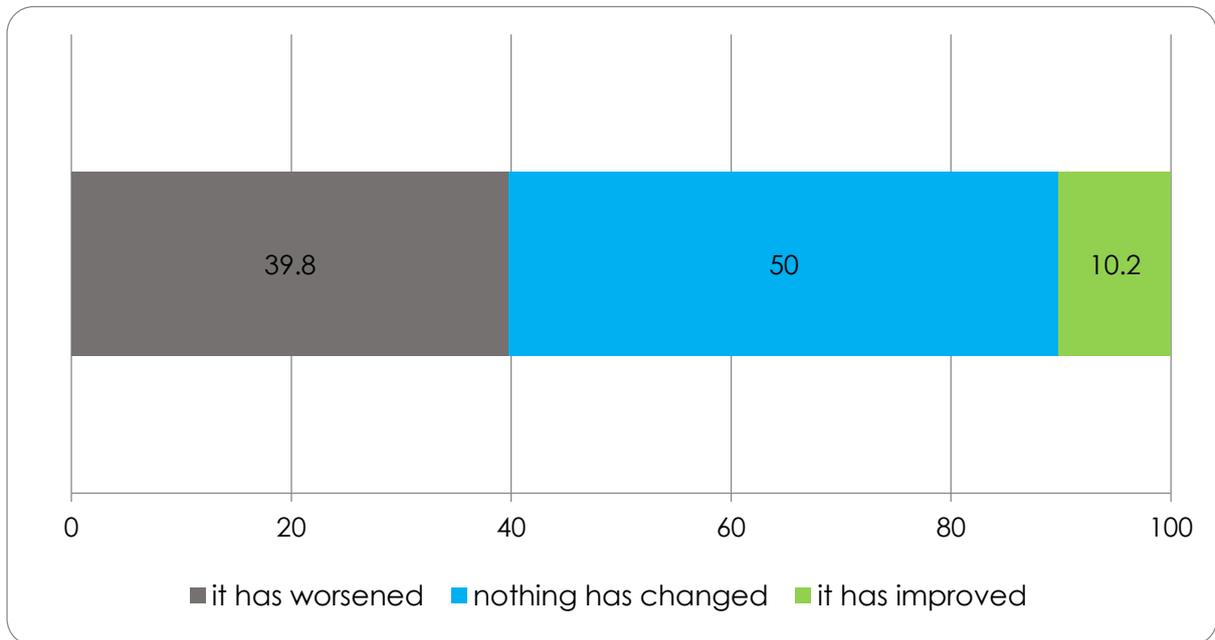
Judging by the answers provided, we can see that there is a significant similarity among the youngest and the oldest groups of respondents:

	I support
18-29	9,8%
30-45	22,6%
45-65	17,4%
66 and more	9,8%

Analyses also show that there are significant differences in terms of the support of the Brussels Agreement among the respondents from different municipalities:

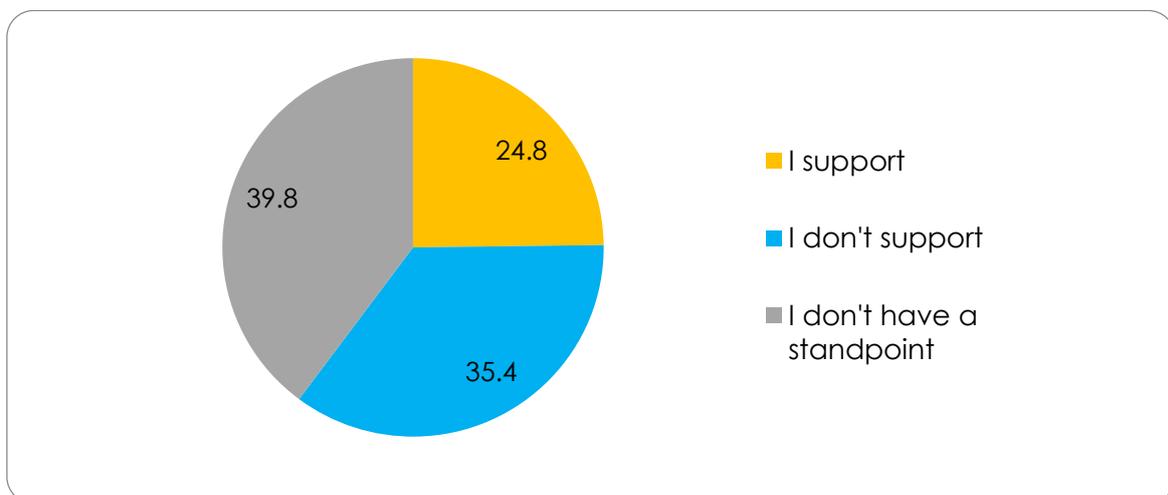
	I support
Northern Mitrovica	20,5%
Zubin Potok	17,5%
Leposavić	9,5%
Zvečan	16,7%

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



In the research conducted during 2016, 25% of the respondents pointed out that life of Serbs in Kosovo worsened after the signing of the Brussels Agreement. In 2017, the number of respondents with such a stance significantly increased to 42% and has, without any significant differences, stayed the same this year.

21. What is your standpoint on participation of Serbs in the institutions of Kosovo?



The standpoint on participation of Serbs in the institutions of Kosovo has not significantly changed in the last three years.

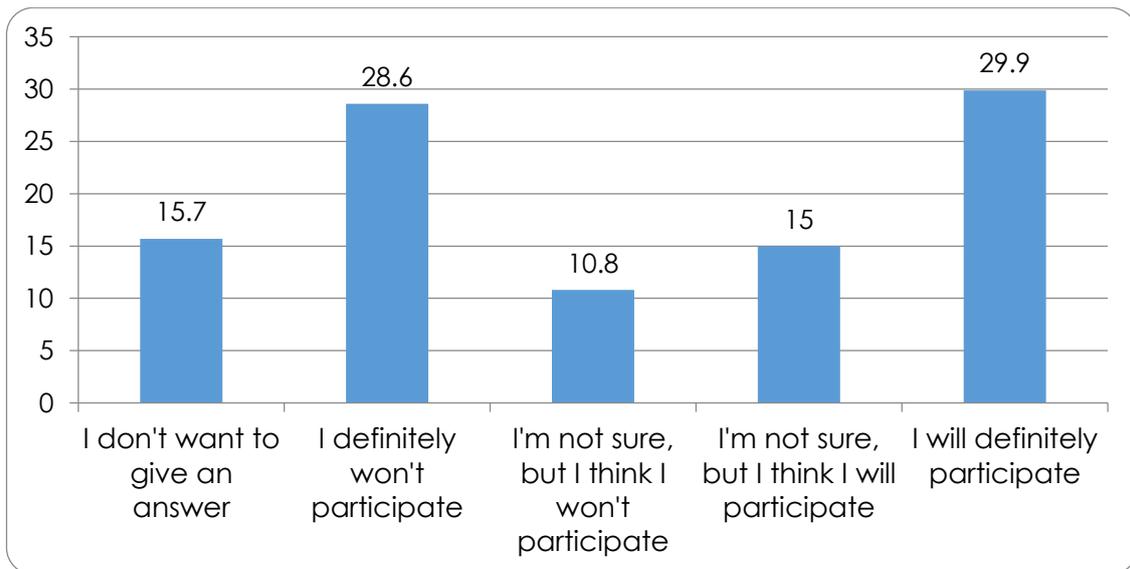
The number of respondents who support participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions differs depending on the municipality of origin:

	I support
Northern Mitrovica	35,3%
Zubin Potok	21,1%
Leposavić	15,8%
Zvečan	24,2%

The number of respondents who support participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions varies depending on the level of education:

	I support
Elementary	11,7%
High	24,6%
Higher	22%
Faculty	34,7%

22. Will you participate in the following elections that will be held in Kosovo?



In the last three years, there has been a significant growth in the number of respondents who plan to take part in the following elections in Kosovo. While,

in 2016, that number was 26% and, in 2017, it was 36%, this year's research reveals that 45% of respondents now plan to vote in the following Kosovo elections. This is a growth of nearly 20% over the last two years. Some of this can be attributed to increased integration into the Kosovo institutional system.

The number of respondents who plan to participate in the following Kosovo elections differs depending on the age of respondents:

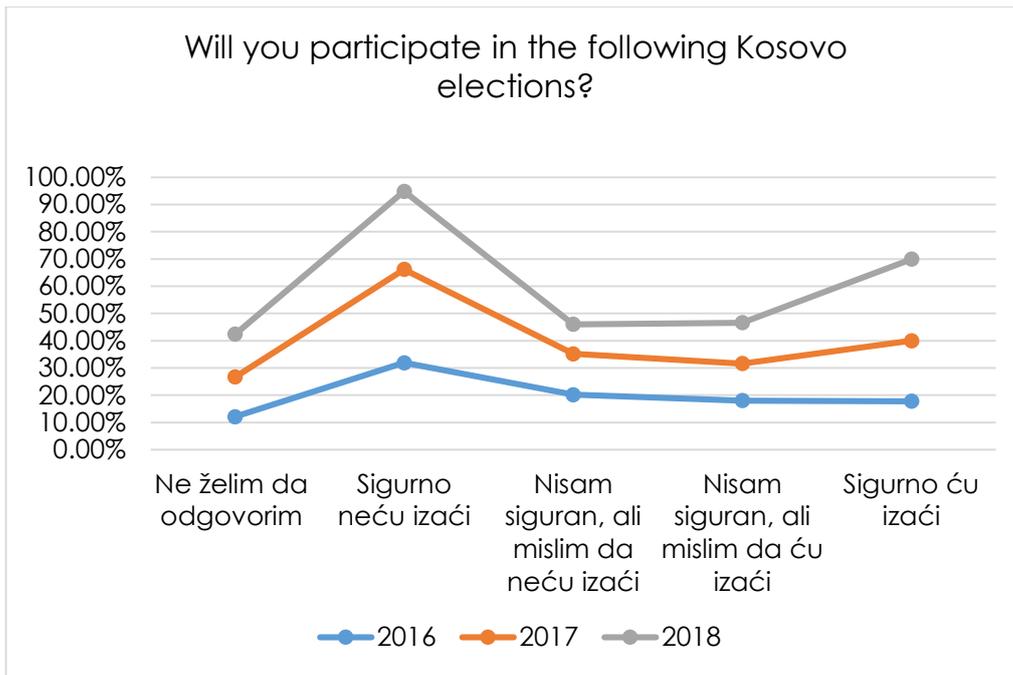
	I will surely/probably vote
18-29	35,1%
30-45	45,8%
46-65	49,2%
66 and more	43,9%

The number of respondents who plan to vote during the following Kosovo elections differs depending on the level of education:

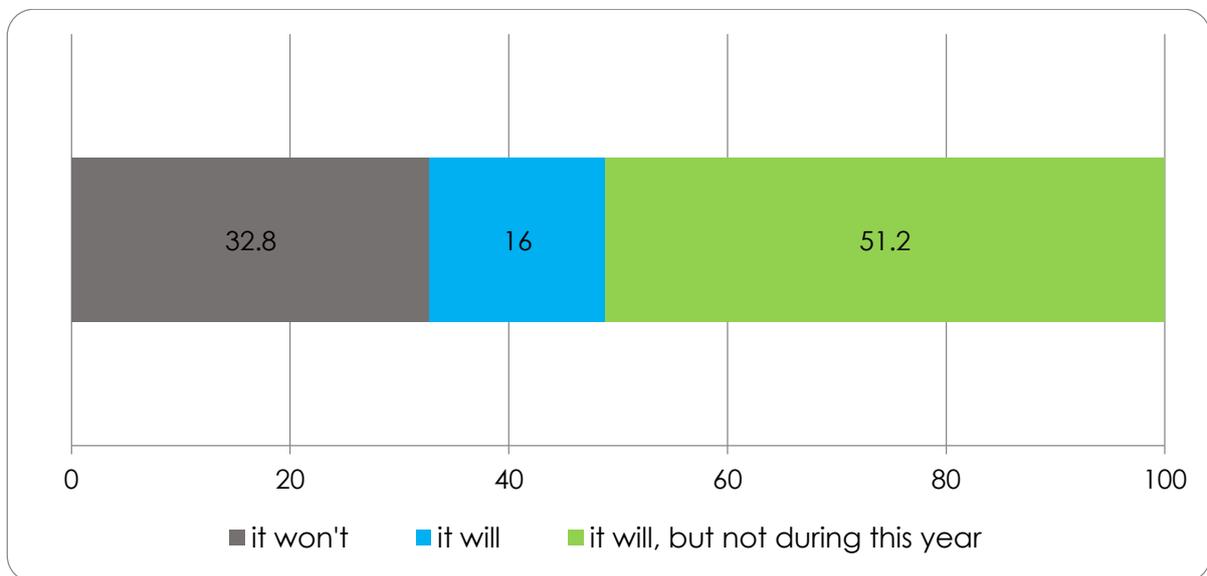
	I will surely/probably vote
Elementary	27,3%
High	45,6%
Higher	49,1%
Faculty	46,6%

The number of respondents who plan to vote during the following Kosovo elections differs depending on the municipality of origin:

	I will surely/probably vote
Northern Mitrovica	46,9%
Zubin Potok	57,1%
Leposavić	37,6%
Zvečan	45%



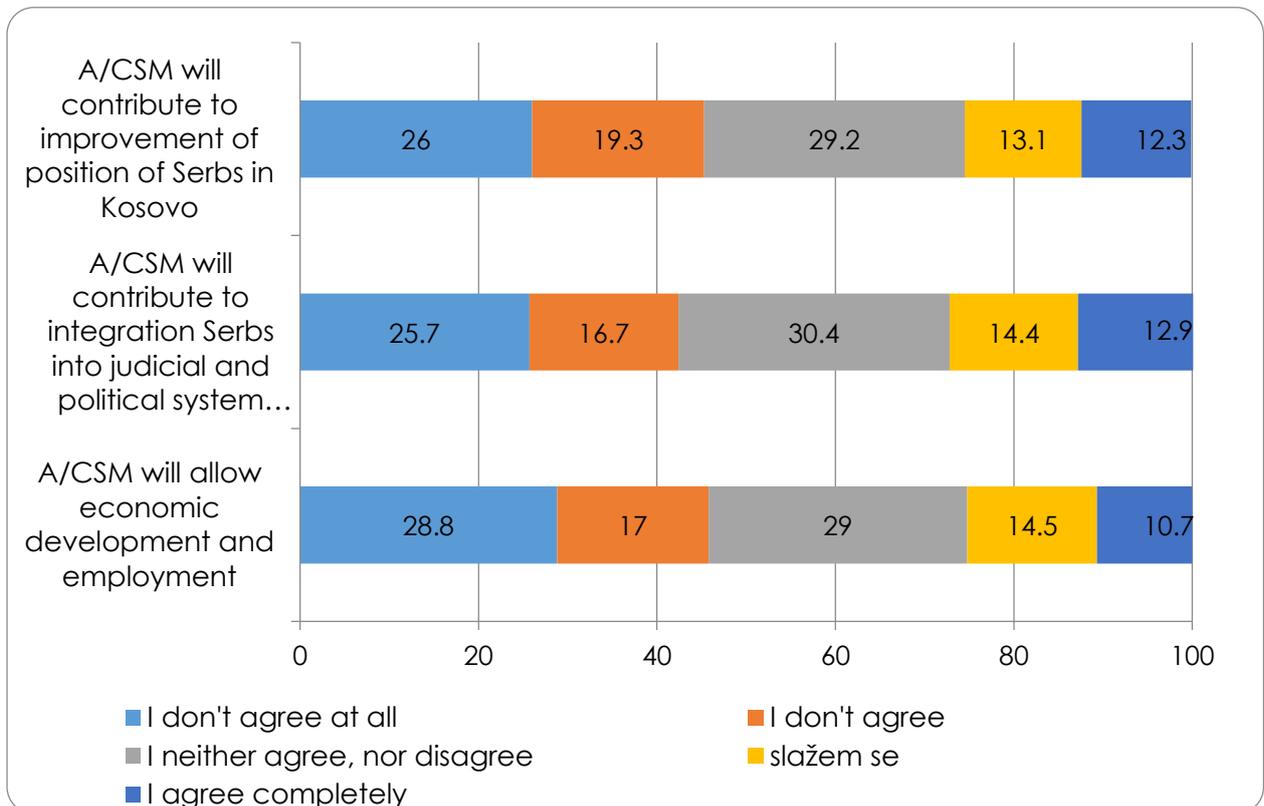
23. Do you think that an association/community of Serb-majority municipalities will be formed?



In the last three years, there have not been significant changes when it comes to the number of people who believe that an association/community of Serb-majority municipalities will be formed.

24. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents “I don’t agree completely”, while 5 represents “I agree completely”, how would you rate the following stances on an association/community of Serb-majority municipalities?

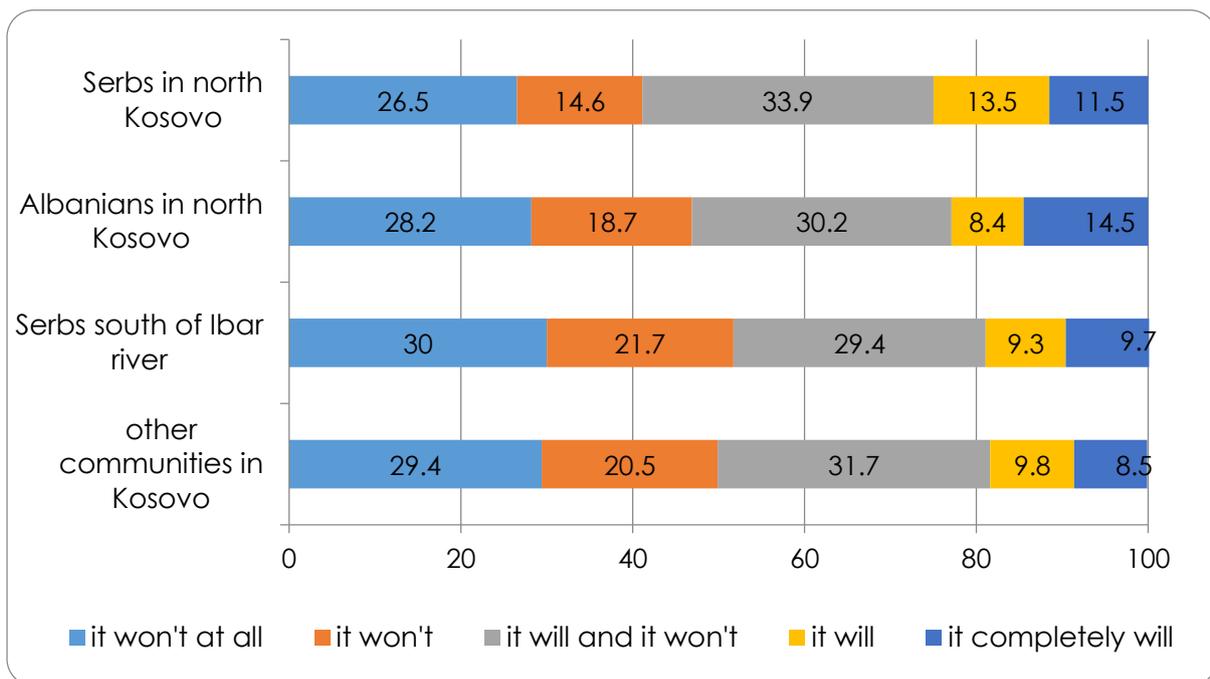
	Average rating
A/CSM will contribute to the improvement of the position of Serbs in Kosovo	2,7
A/CSM will contribute to the integration Serbs into the judicial and political system of Kosovo	2,7
A/CSM will allow economic development and employment	2,6



While among the majority of respondents there exists a certain optimism when it comes to formation of the A/CSM, in the last three years there has been a significant growth of pessimism when it comes to citizens' perceptions on whether A/CSM will bring benefits, or whether it might be formed at all.

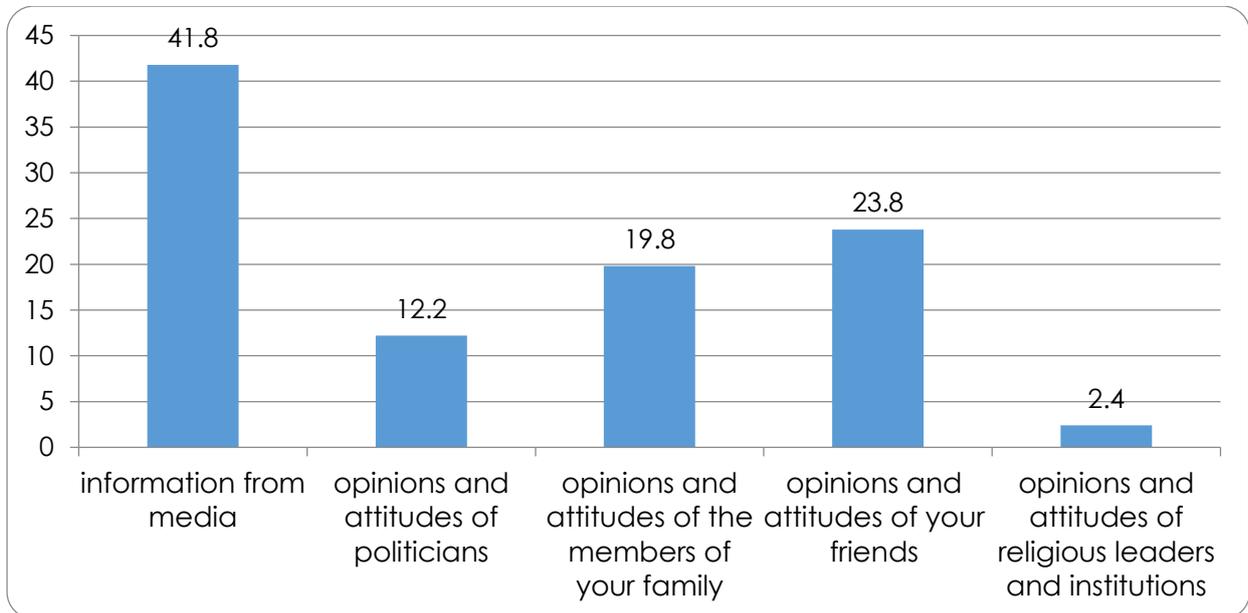
25. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents “it won’t at all”, while 5 represents “it completely will”, how would you rate the possibility of improvement of life with the (possible) creation of Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities:

	Average rating
Serbs in northern Kosovo	2,7
Albanians in northern Kosovo	2,6
Serbs south of Ibar river	2,5
Other communities in Kosovo	2,5

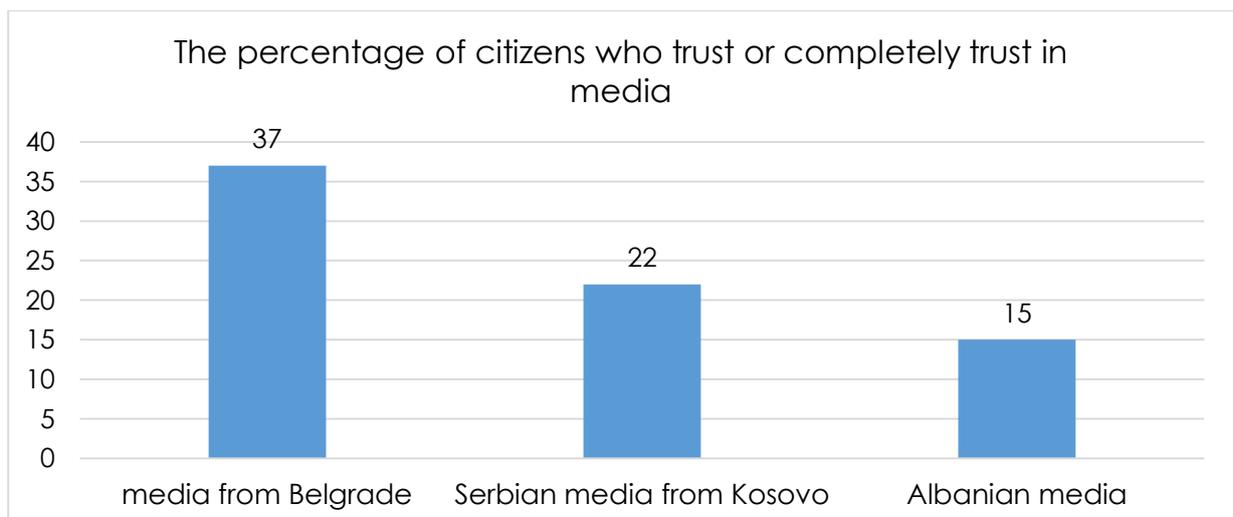


Similar to the previous question, this year's research shows that, compared to those conducted in 2016 and 2017, there has been a decrease in expectations of Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities bringing any benefit.

26. Based on which facts do you build your standpoints on politics and political events?

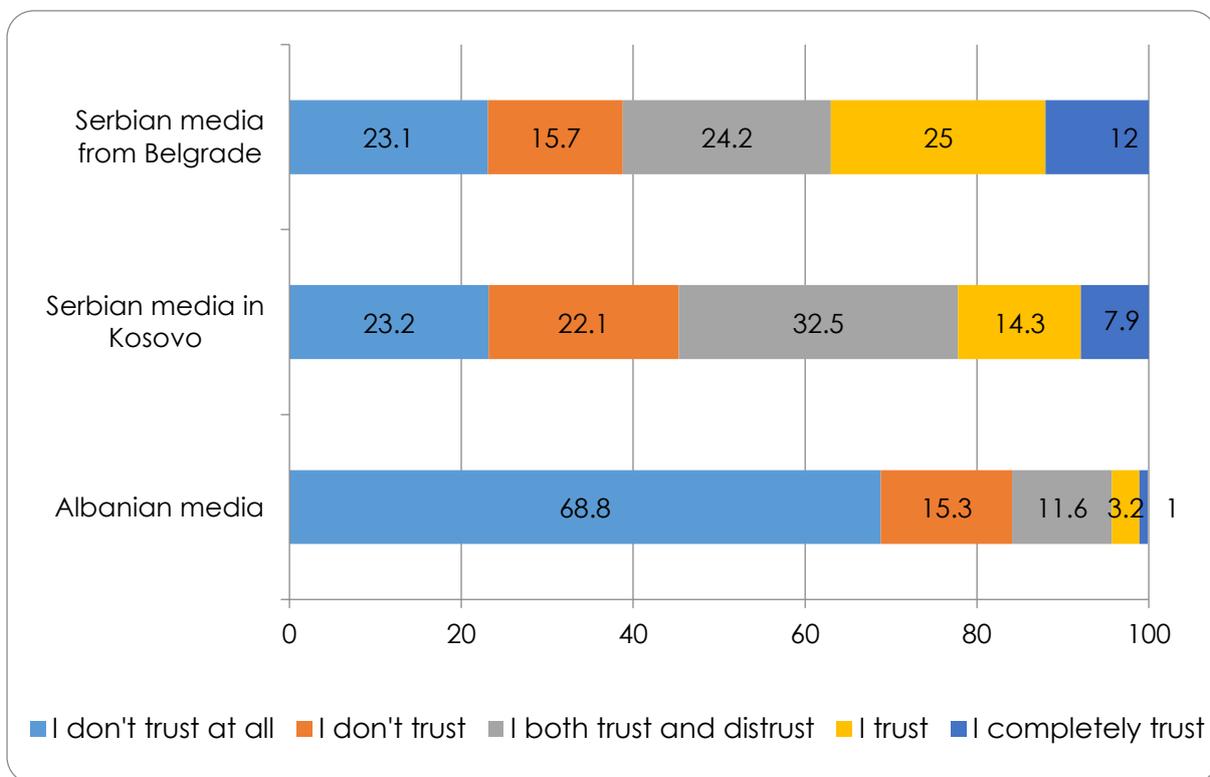


The media remains the main source of information for citizens and strongly influences the way in which their political views are formed. Levels of trust in the media, however, have been and continue to be relatively low. 37% of respondents said that they believe or fully trust the media in Belgrade; 22% trust Serbian media from Kosovo and less than 15% trust the Kosovo Albanian media.

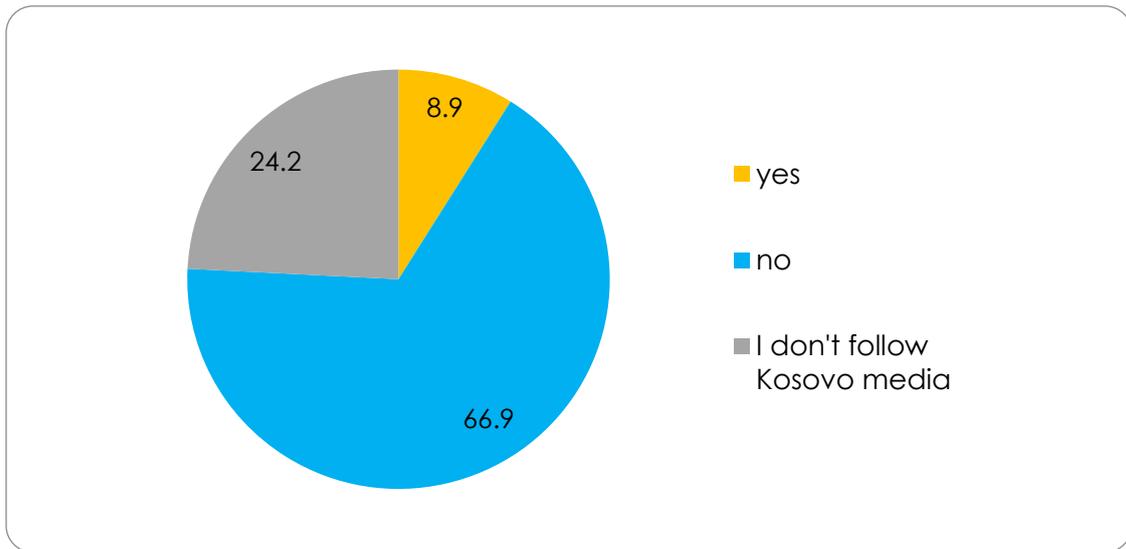


27. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents “I don’t trust at all” and 5 represents “I completely trust”, how much do you trust:

	Average rating
Serbian media from Belgrade	2,9
Serbian media from Kosovo	2,6
Albanian media	1,5

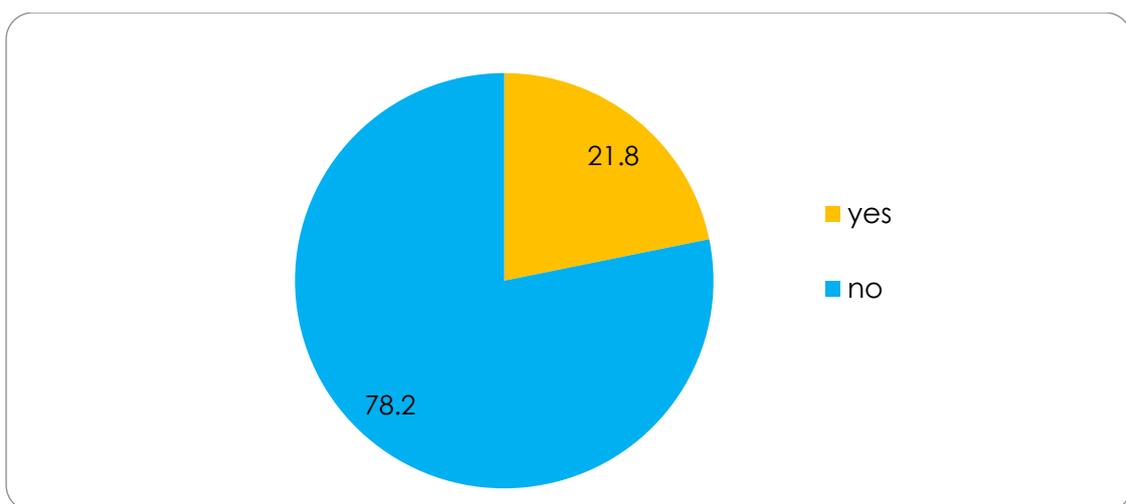


28. Are independent views and opinions sufficiently represented in the media in Kosovo?

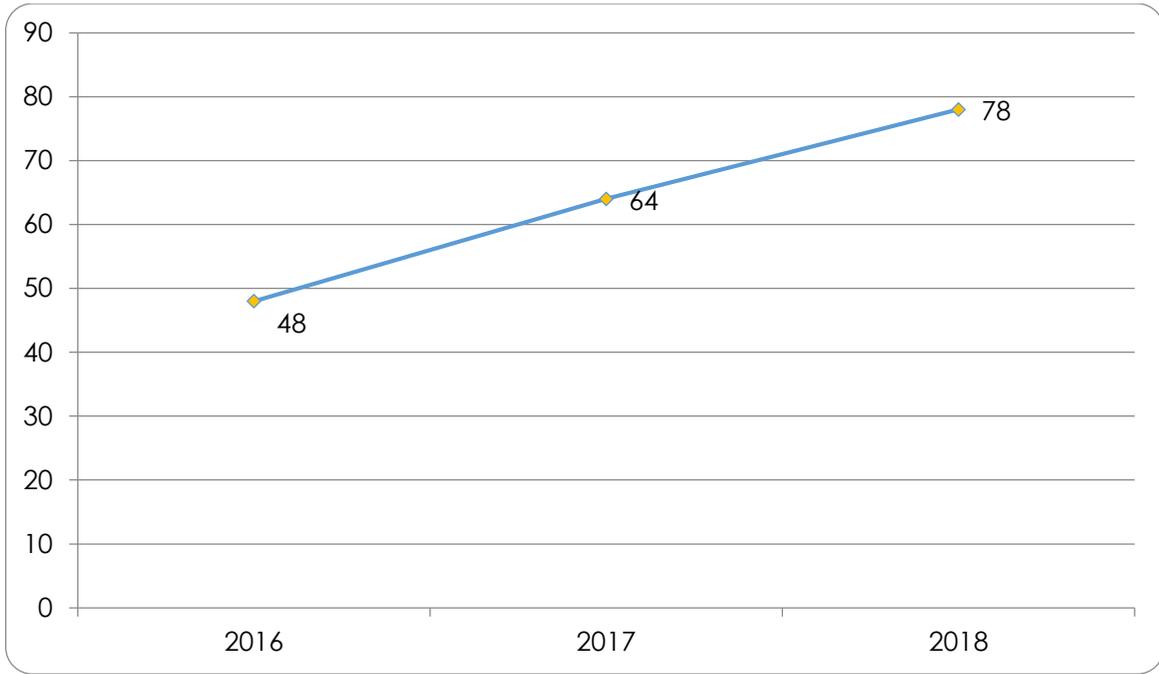


The number of respondents who believe that independent attitudes and opinions are not represented in the media is growing: the figure stood at 53% in 2016 and 2017. This has increased to 66% of respondents in the 2018 survey. When added to the results of citizens' distrust of politicians and institutions, one might conclude that a 'crisis of trust' exists in the society of northern Kosovo.

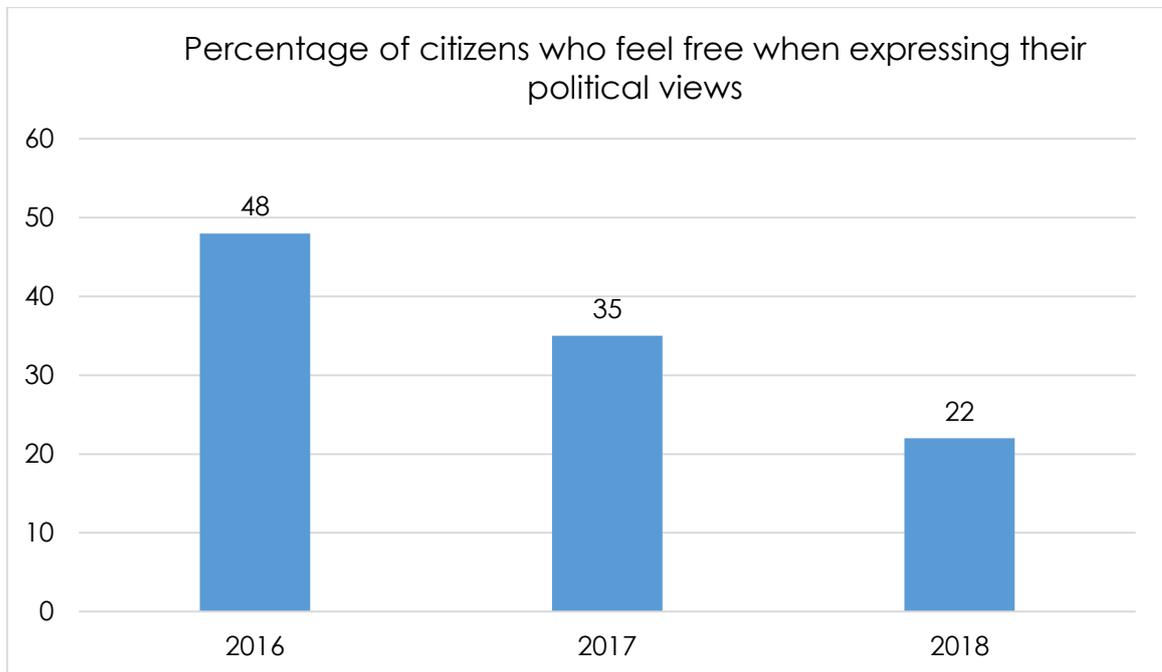
29. Do you feel free to publicly state your political views?



The studies of the last three years reveal a rising trend in feelings of fear when it comes to freely expressing political views.:



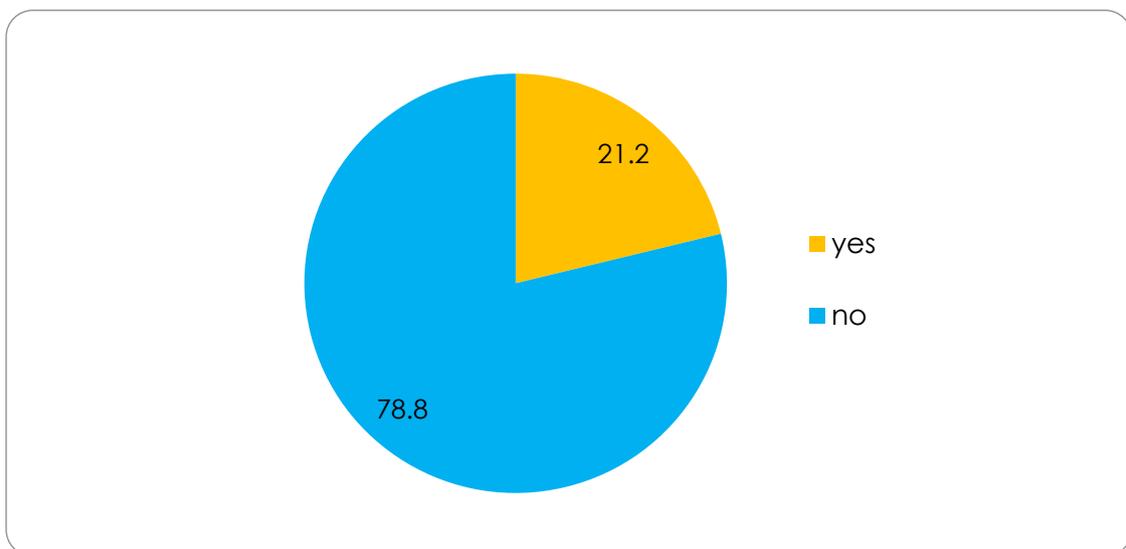
Two years ago, 48% of respondents said that they were afraid to publicly express their views and freely talk about politics. In 2017, the percentage increased to 64%. This year, citizens are even more reticent to express their views, with 78% admitting to feeling fearful.



Participants in focus groups and interviews in north Kosovo noted a significant increase in localized tensions stemming from the influence of recent political

events¹. It was stated on a number of occasions that pluralism within the context of the Serbian political system has all but disappeared in the face of the rising dominance of Aleksandar Vučić's Serbian Progress Party (SNS) and the Srpska Lista. As a result of this, there is an overriding sense of fear and therefore reticence to express views that differ 'from the party line.' The influence exerted over public institutions and organs by members of the ruling parties is far reaching and such that the threat of loss of employment contracts and other forms of reprisals are sufficient to suffocate more open political dialogue to a significant degree. Participants also cited the recent assassination of Oliver Ivanović and other incidents as evidence of an increasingly polarized and limited public space.

30. Has your safety or the safety of your closest family members been endangered in the last six months?



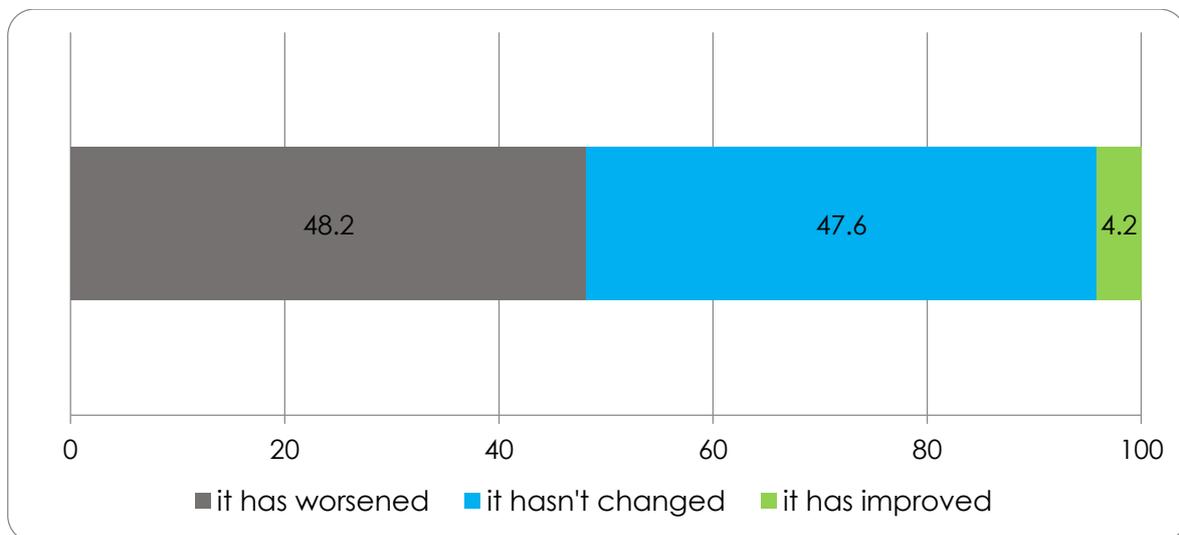
When compared to the previous two years (2016: 13%, 2017: 14%), we can see that there has been a growth in the number of people feeling that their personal safety has been endangered. These results are related to a series of incidents that took place during the implementation of the survey within the Serbian community in Kosovo.

¹ These events have significantly and directly influenced the tone and the nature of social dialogue and discourse.

Perception of endangered personal safety varies from municipality to municipality:

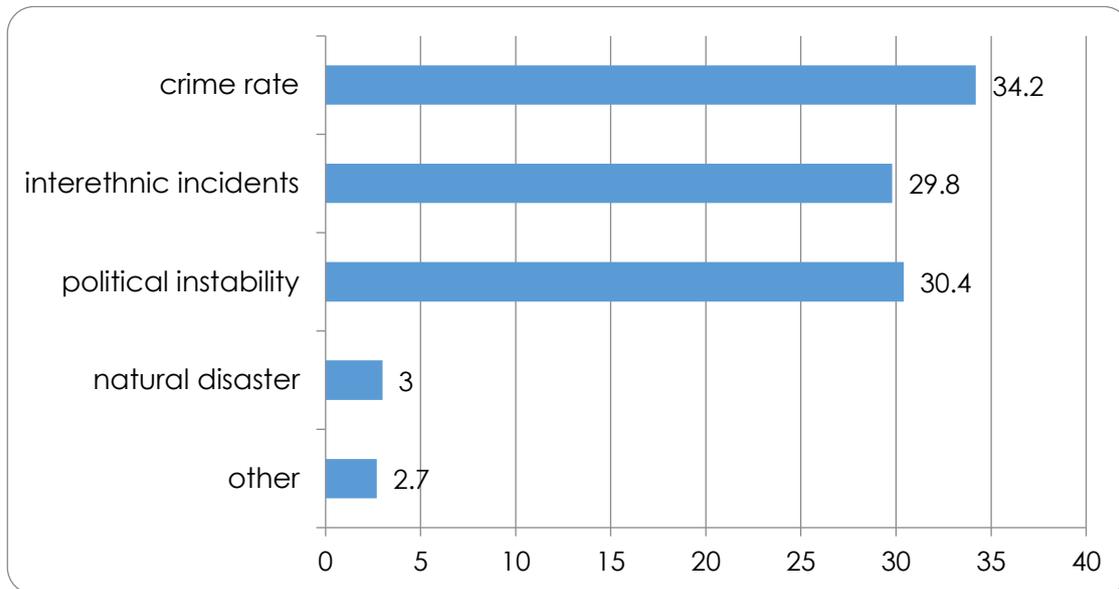
	Endangered personal safety
Northern Mitrovica	32,3%
Zubin Potok	9,6%
Leposavić	5,8%
Zvečan	24,6%

31. Has the security situation in northern Kosovo changed over the last year?



There have not been significant shifts between 2017, when 52% of respondents claimed that there had been a deterioration of the security situation and 2018, when the number totaled just under 50%.

32. In your opinion, what are the biggest security risks in your area?



When it comes to biggest security risks, we can see that there has been a growing fear among citizens due to the increase of illegal activities (12% in comparison to the previous year) and a decrease in fear regarding interethnic incidents (a change of 10% compared to the previous year). It is interesting that perceptions of political instability as a security risk has not changed over the last three years.

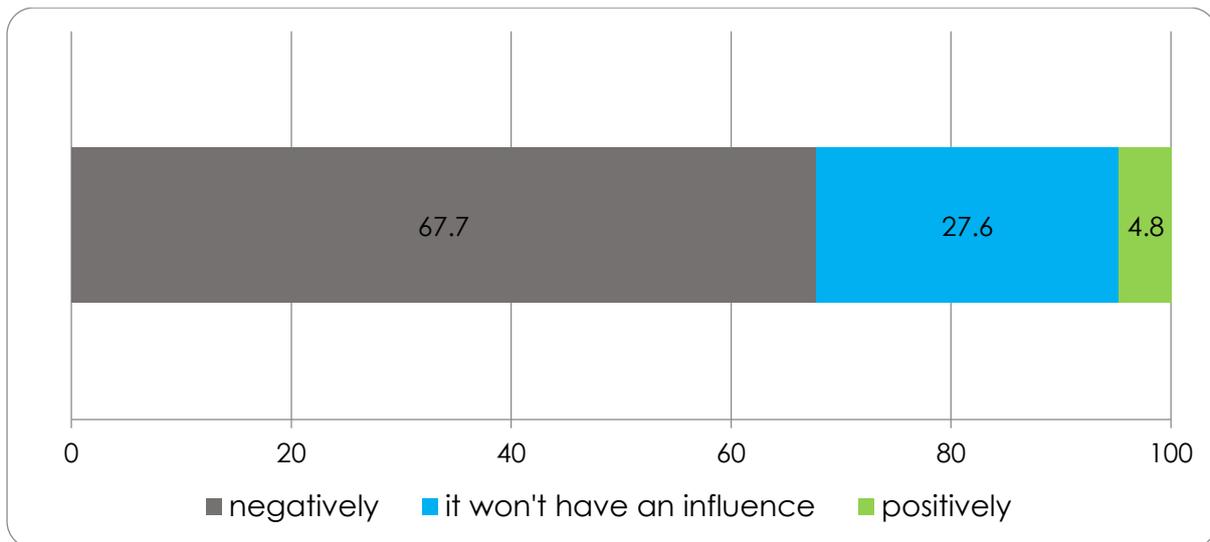
2. Based on the empirical results of the survey and the qualitative research conducted in conjunction with this, it might be concluded that the past year has witnessed a significant shift in perceptions of physical and material security in northern Kosovo. This is largely, though not exclusively, due to increased concern over the presence and activities of organised criminal groups and the degree to which they have ingratiated themselves in both local and national politics. In total, 34.2% of respondents cited crime rate as the biggest threat to security in their communities, an increase of more than 10% since last year's survey. This can be attributed to a number of specific incidents that have taken place; namely the murder of Kosovo-Serb politician Oliver Ivanović. The investigation into Ivanović's assassination is ongoing, and has yet to yield any concrete results or leads³, something that has created a cloud of uncertainty surrounding the event. The perceived lack of transparency on the part of the political elite, combined with an overriding sense of insecurity and belief that

²From participant's statements made during focus groups held in North Mitrovica on the 18th and 19th of July 2018 in North Mitrovica.

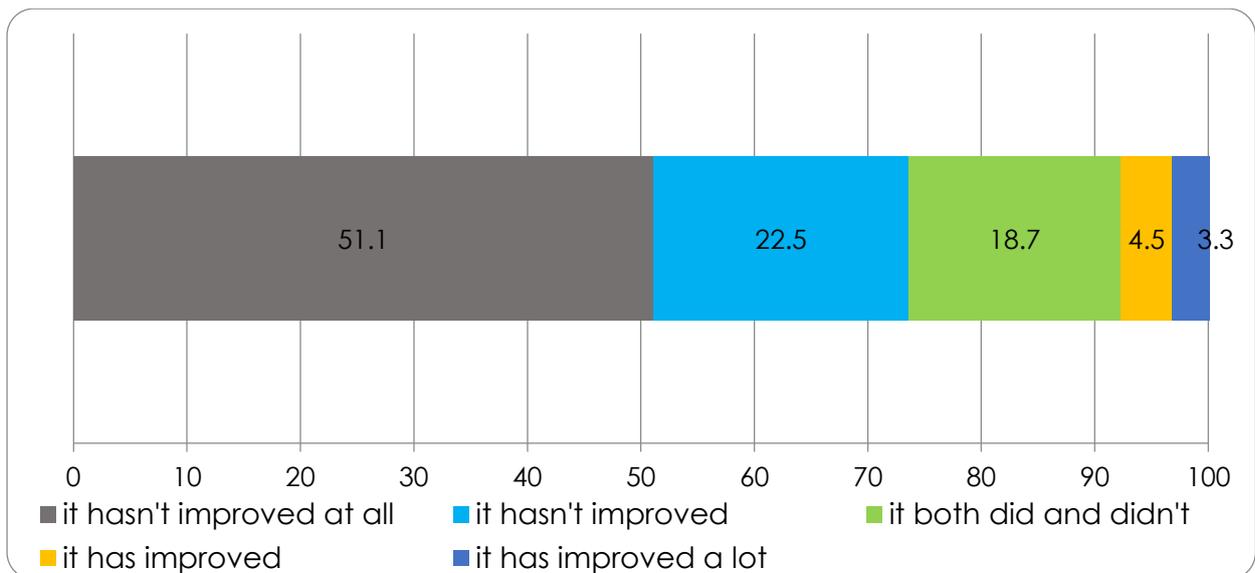
³ <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-kosovo-lack-cooperation-in-ivanovic-murder-investigation-05-30-2018>

illegal activity has become more prevalent in north Kosovo has created a confluence of worries regarding the future status of Serbian institutions, political developments, and indeed physical security.

33. How will the possible opening of the main bridge over the Ibar River influence the security situation?



34. On a scale of 1-5, please rate whether the Brussels Agreement has improved freedom and the rights of the Serbian community in Kosovo?



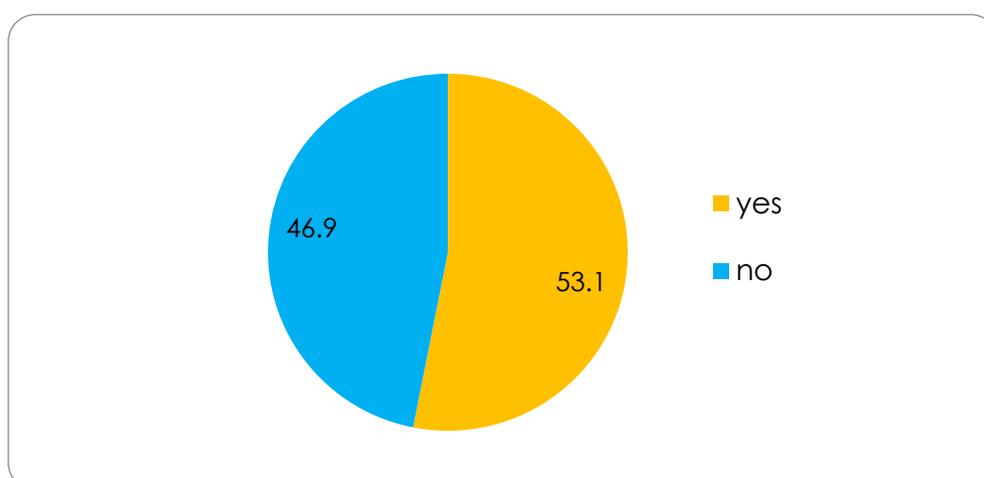
Comparing the results of the last three years, it is possible to see that respondents think that the protection of freedom and the rights of the

Serbian community in Kosovo in regards to the Brussels Agreement has worsened. When compared to 2016, when 35% of respondents claimed that the Brussels Agreement had not improved the protection of freedom and the rights of the Serbian community in Kosovo, that number has significantly increased this year, now reaching 51%.

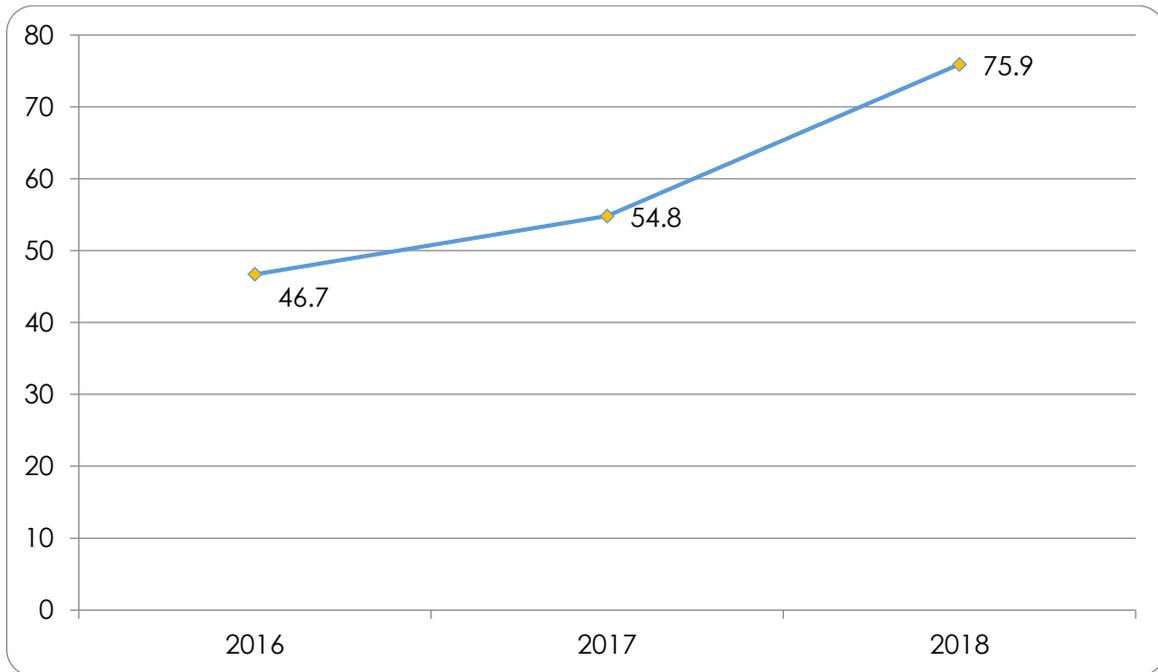
35. Can you rate the protection of the following rights and freedoms for the Serbian community in northern municipalities?

Freedom of language	4,1
Right for education	4,1
Freedom of religion	4
Right to freely express your own nationality	3,7
Right to healthcare	3,6
Freedom of movement	3,6
Freedom of speech	3,3
Right for employment	2,8

36. Do you see yourself still living in Kosovo in five years' time?



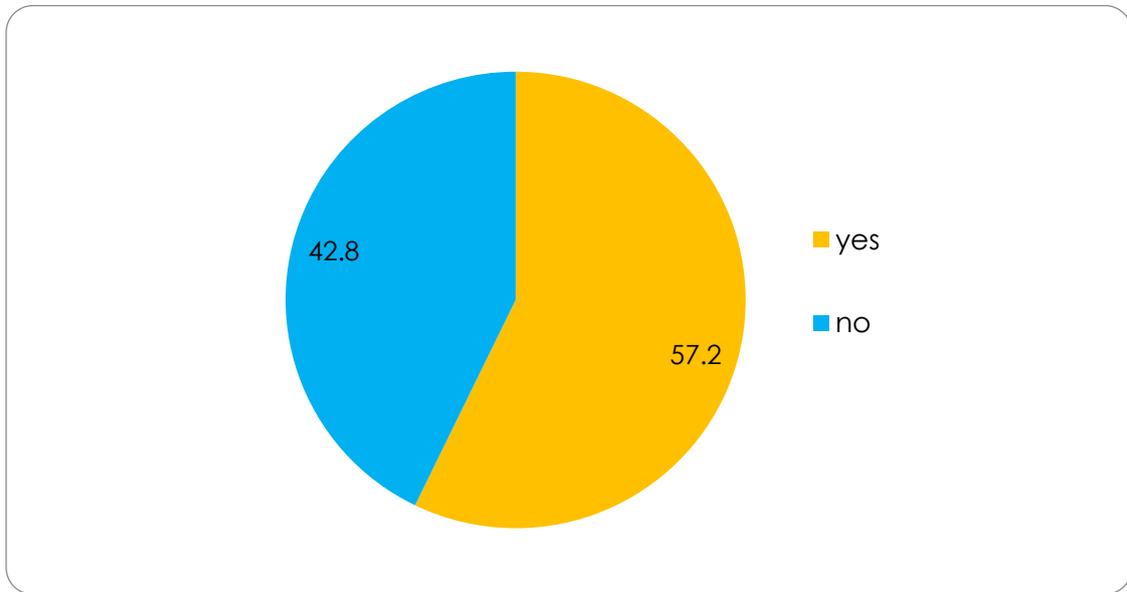
Compared to last year's research, the pattern of answers to this question has barely changed . However, there is now a growing number of young respondents (within the 18-29 age bracket) who are actively considering leaving Kosovo. While, last year, every third respondent in the the youngest age bracket considered leaving Kosovo, this year, every second respondent plans of leaving within the next five years. It is also important to point out that two thirds of respondents who have undergone higher education plan on leaving Kosovo.



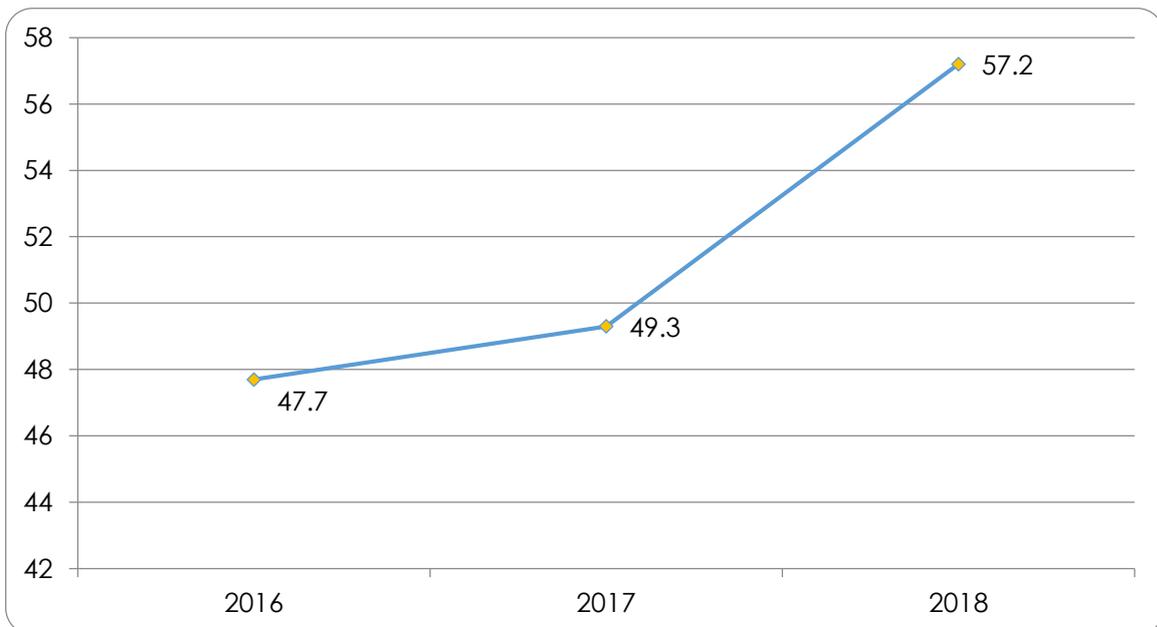
The analysis shows that there exist discrepancies among respondents coming from different municipalities regarding staying in/leaving Kosovo:

	I do not see myself in Kosovo in 5 years' time
Northern Mitrovica	53%
Zubin Potok	80%
Leposavić	77,2%
Zvečan	59,7%

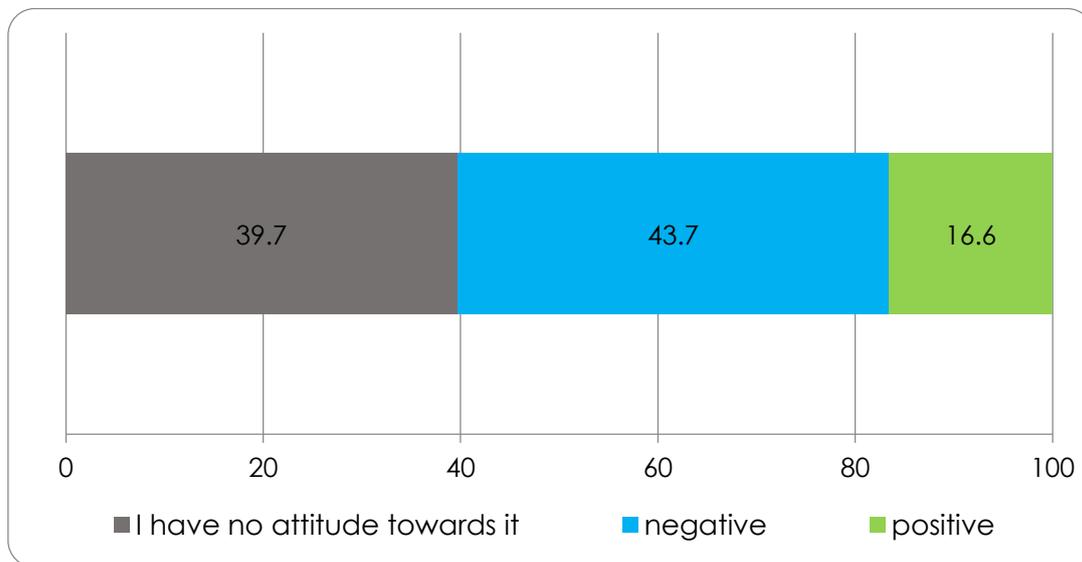
37. Has anyone from your close social surroundings left Kosovo in the last six months?



Comparative analysis of responses shows that, over the last three years, there has been a significant increase:



38. When you hear the term, “the European Union (EU)”, do you have a positive or negative association?



Negative associations with the term, 'EU' has decreased by 16% since last year's research and around 7% when compared with the research conducted in 2016.

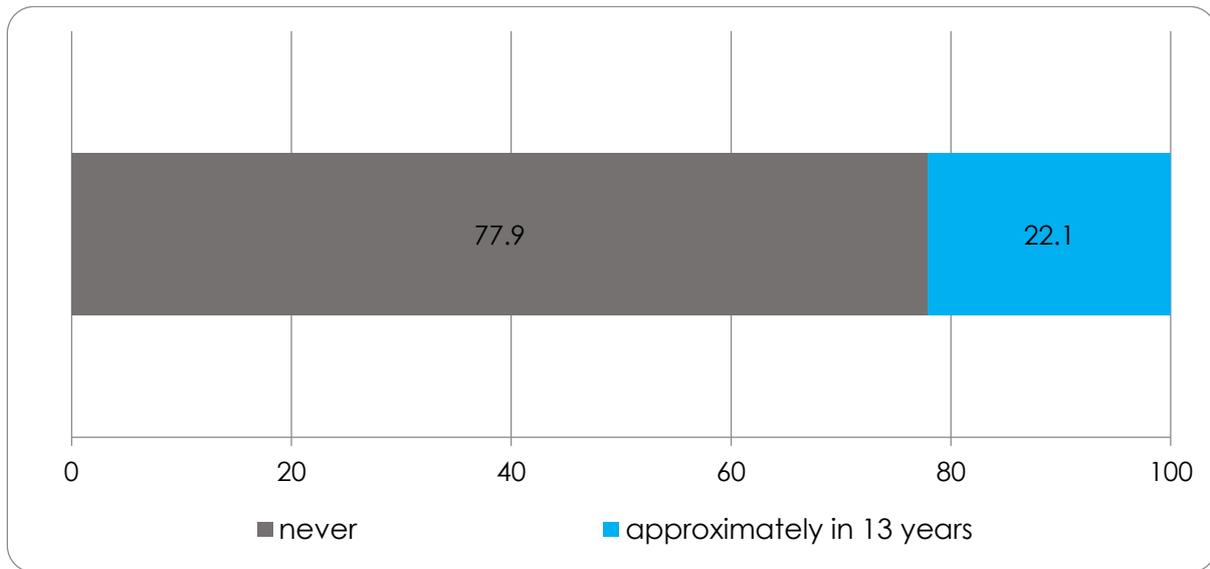
Only 12% of young respondents hold positive associations of the European Union. When it comes to the older age groups (46-65 and 66+), little change in the number of positive associations can be observed, whereas the 30-45 age bracket is significantly higher:

	Positive associations with the term 'EU'
18-29	12,8%
30-45	25,3%
46-65	14%
66 and older	14,6%

Differences in the level of education also displays variances

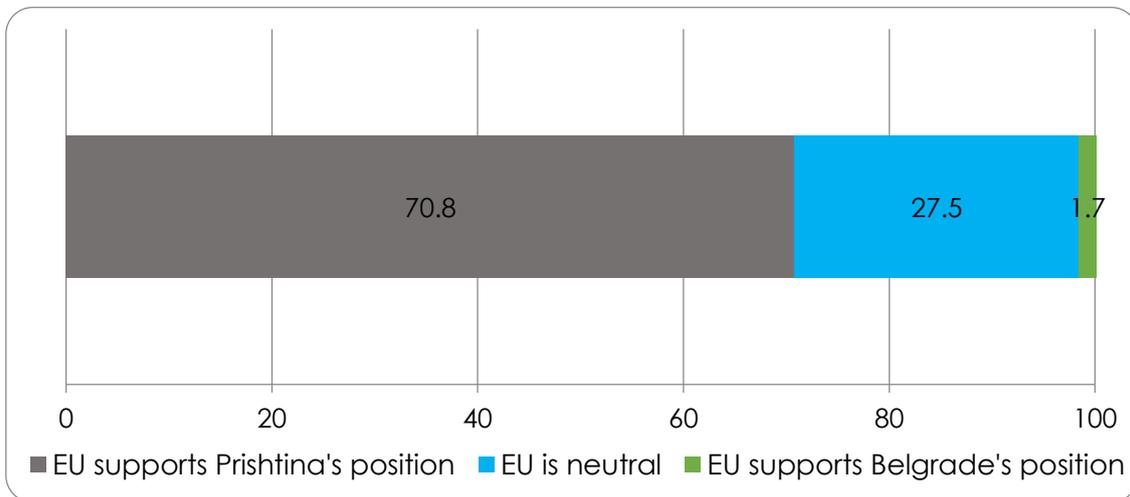
	Negative correlation
Elementary	10,4%
High	19,9%
Higher	11,1%
Faculty	17,5%

39. When do you expect Kosovo to enter the EU?



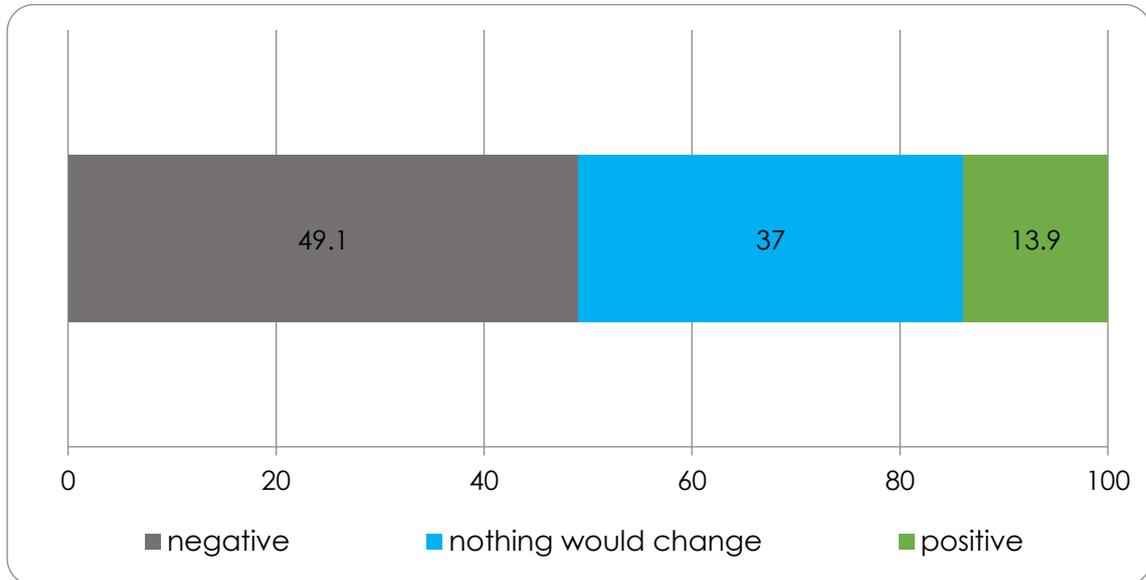
The surveys of the last three years have also documented a growing pessimism concerning Kosovo's future membership in the EU. While in 2016, 44% of respondents felt that Kosovo would enter the EU; in 2017 this percentage fell to 33% and has now reached 22% in the 2018 report.

40. How do you perceive the position of the European Union in regards to the negotiation process between Belgrade and Prishtina?

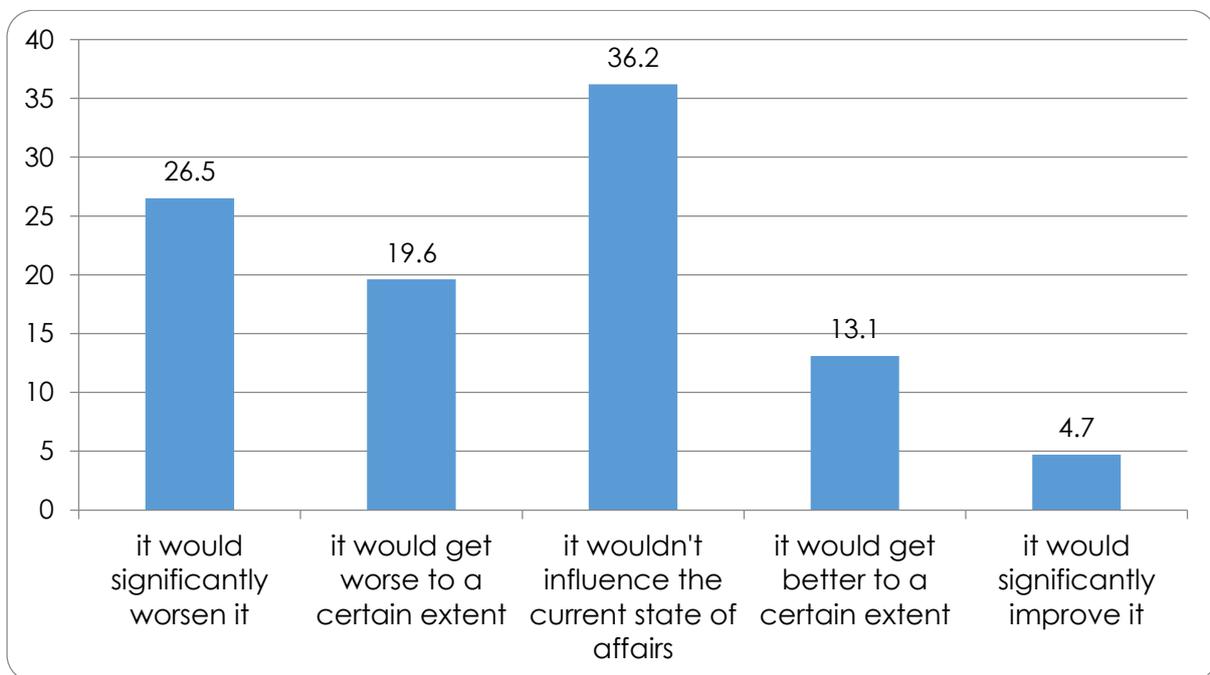


There is a rising trend in the number of respondents who see the role of the EU in the negotiation process between Belgrade and Pristina as neutral. In 2016, the number was 13%. In 2017, this increased to 21% and, in this year's research, 27% of respondents now perceive the EU's position to be neutral.

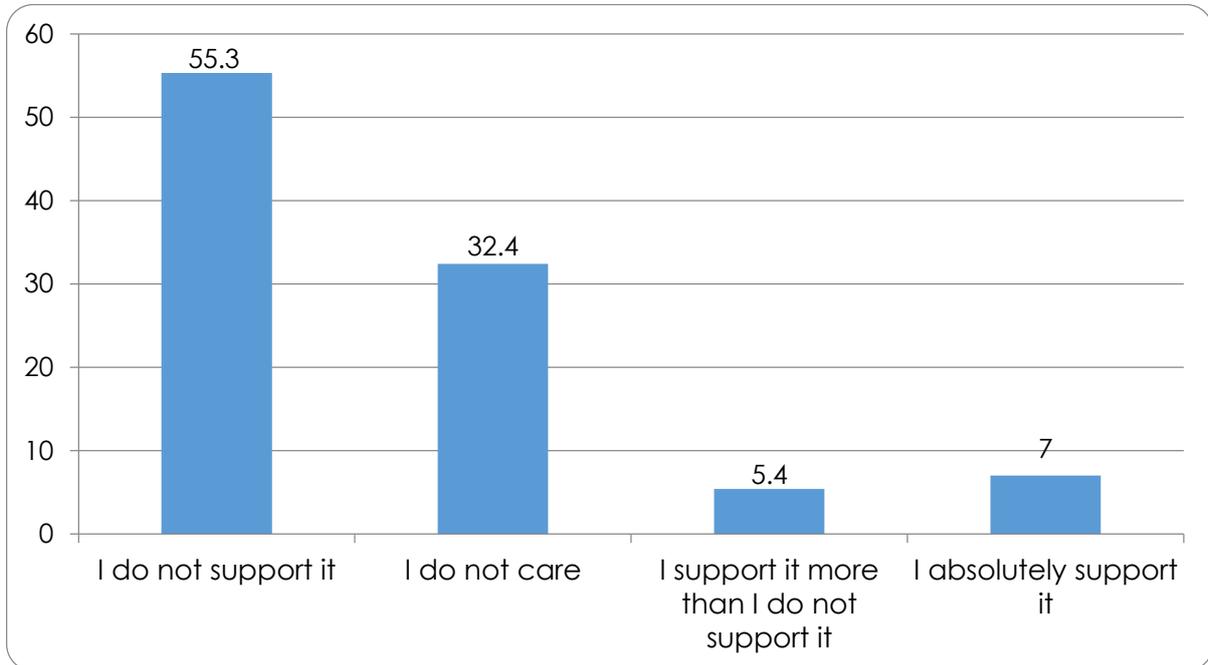
41. What personal impact would the membership of Kosovo in the EU have on you?



42. How would Kosovo's entry into the European Union change the existing socio-economic situation in Kosovo?

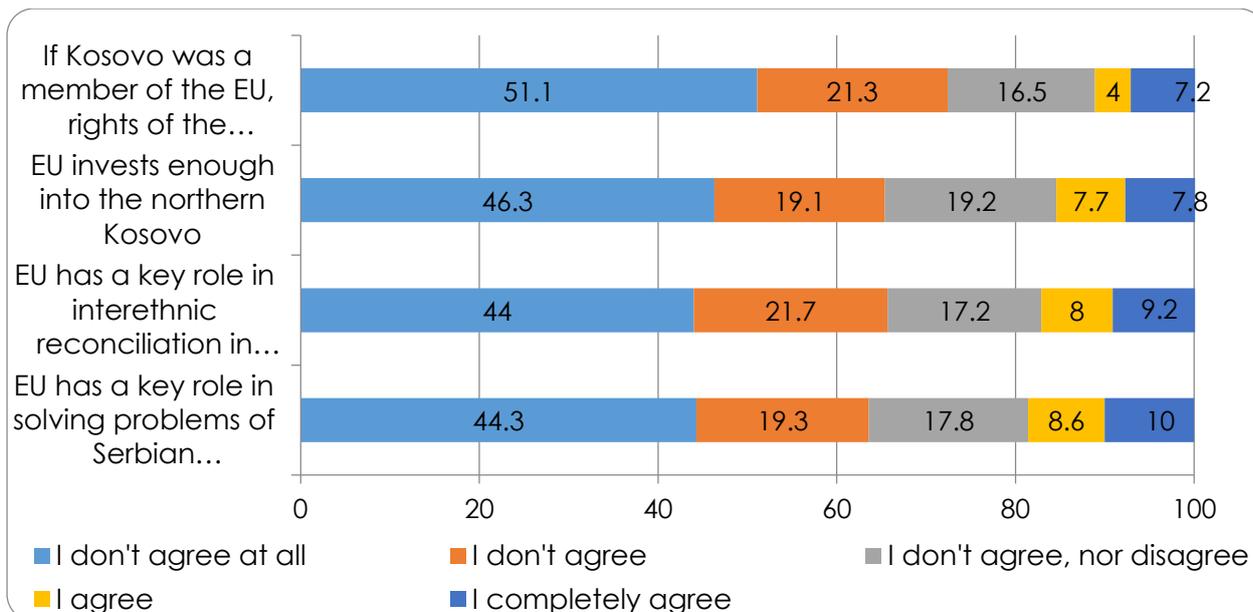


43. Do you support Kosovo's ambition to become a member of the European Union?



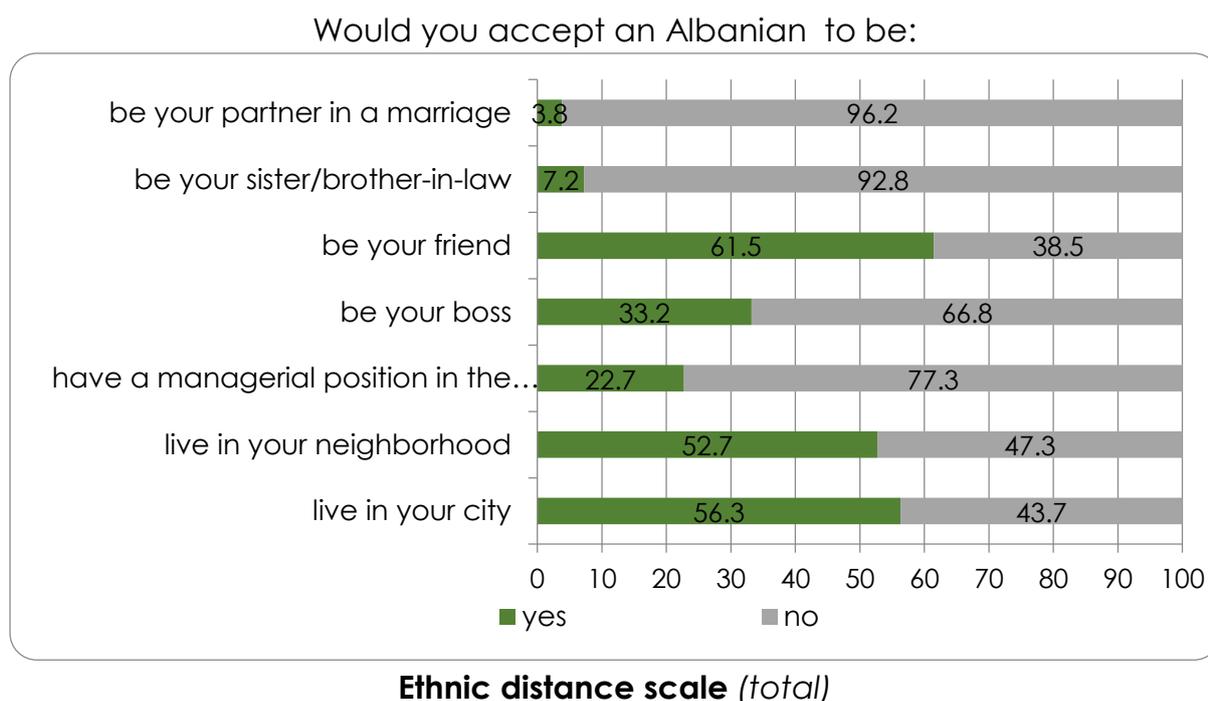
44. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents "I do not agree at all", and 5 represents "I completely agree", please rate the following claims:

	Average rating
The EU has a key role in solving the problems of the Serbian community in Kosovo	2,2
The EU has a key role in facilitating interethnic reconciliation in Kosovo	2,1
The EU invests enough in northern Kosovo	2,1
If Kosovo were a member of the EU, the rights of the the Serbian community would be better protected	1,9

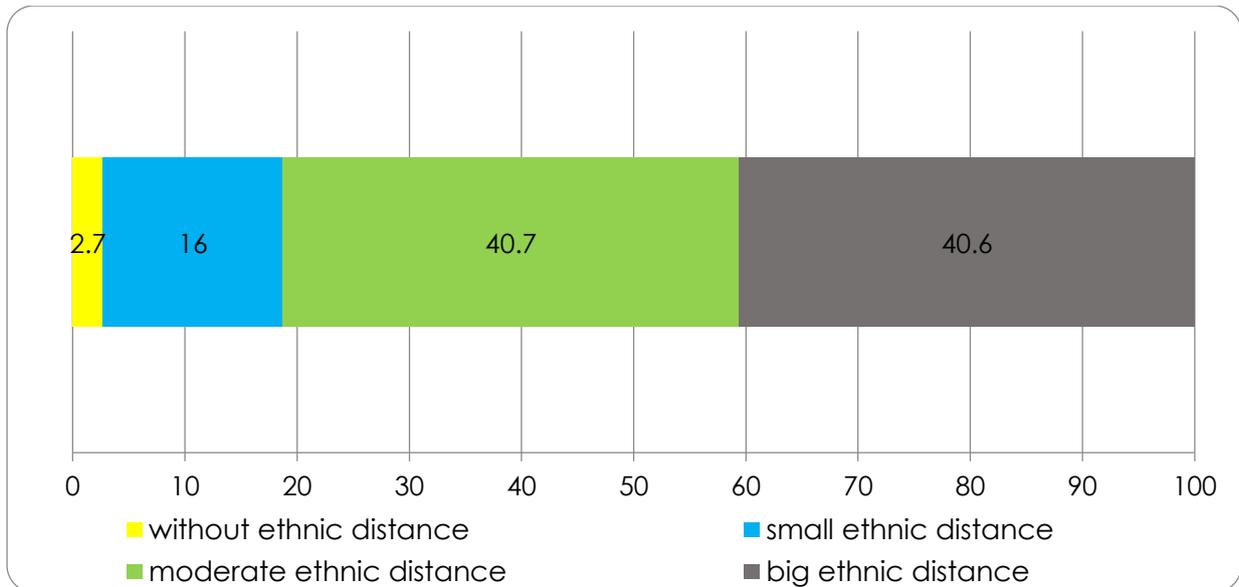


While responses to the last two statements have not changed in the last three years, it is noticeable that trust that the EU can contribute to solving the problems of the Serbian community in Kosovo (2016 – 2.7; 2017 – 2.6; 2018 – 2.2) and is an important actor in the facilitation of interethnic reconciliation in Kosovo (2016 – 2.5; 2017 – 2.5; 2018 – 2.1) has significantly decreased.

45. Measuring ethnic distance



Respondents were divided into four groups: those without any inter-ethnic distance (0 negative answers), those with a small degree of inter-ethnic distance (1-2 negative answers), those with a moderate degree of inter-ethnic distance (3-5 negative answers) and those with a distinctive degree of inter-ethnic distance (6-7 negative answers). Using this, the following results were obtained:



The research shows that inter-ethnic distance has decreased in the last year. In 2017, the inter-ethnic distance, ranked on a scale of 0-7, was 5.1. This year, the distance has returned to the level of 2016 – 4.6. These results correspond to the general conclusions of this research: that being that the relationship between Serbs and Albanians is improving.

The level of education of has a crucial role in the distribution of answers::

	Moderate and big ethnic distance
Elementary	77,3%
High	83,8%
Higher	89,5%
Faculty	70,9%

There also exist differences depending on one's place of origin:

	Moderate and big ethnic distance
Northern Mitrovica	67,5%
Zubin Potok	85,2%
Leposavić	89,1%
Zvečan	88,6%

Frequency of visiting places of Albanian majority significantly influences feelings of inter-ethnic distance:

How frequently do you visit place with Albanian majority	Srednja i velika etnička distanca
Never	94,4%
Very rarely	83,1%
Often	72,7%
Very often	53,5%

Conclusions are also reinforced by the negative correlation ($r = -0.3$), which tells us that, with a higher frequency of visits to areas of Albanian majority, there comes a decrease in feelings of inter-ethnic distance. Of course, the more positive experiences there are during these contacts, the lesser the feeling of inter-ethnic distance. Every third respondent who had a positive experience exhibited a feeling of no or a small degree of inter-ethnic distance.

Conclusion

After three years of conducting public opinion research in northern Kosovo, we can conclude that there are opinions on certain topics that have significantly changed. Some of these shifts seem somewhat contradictory in nature. Others have shifted in a significantly negative direction, most notably: the number of respondents who feel comfortable expressing their views in public (from 48% in 2016 to 22% in 2018); the number of respondents who see developments in Kosovo progressing in a negative direction (90%) and the number of respondents who perceive crime rate to be the greatest security threat to their communities (8.7% in 2016 and 20.6% in 2018). This indicates that there exists a high level of anxiety in local communities that follow recent political developments. It also brings into question the extent to which local residents are able to envisage a sustainable future for themselves in Kosovo.

However, there are also subjects where public opinion has only changed marginally since 2016. Citizens have remained very unsatisfied with the overall political, economic and security situations in Kosovo. This is regardless of the evident dynamic and contextual changes in public life that have occurred since 2016.

Despite efforts to improve the position of Serbs in Kosovo, both by the government in Belgrade and the government in Prishtina, the research shows that, in reality, citizens do not feel improvements.

The current political, economic and security situation reflects an inability of institutions to establish a durable institutional order. Year on year, respondents have little trust in both Kosovar and Serbian institutions. Further more, just a small number of respondents trust political elites. It is difficult to imagine a sustainable political community when citizens do not trust, political processes, institutions and political actors. The research tells us that this trend of mistrust is present no matter what the developments in the political sphere are. Despite the signing of the Brussels Agreement in 2013, the increased involvement of Serb politicians in the governing coalition of Kosovo and the ongoing negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina, little positive impact has been achieved on the ground.

What is noticeable though is that various forms of "soft power" and the particular nature of the 'choice' that people are faced with leads to a situation in which the number of local residents using the services of Kosovo institutions is raising. The fact that increased interactions with Kosovo

institutions is not mirrored by a rise in the level of trust in those same institutions is most likely a result of the (potential) consequences that can arise from *not* using them.

The most important insight that results from this year's trend analysis is highlighted most clearly through the responses given to the following questions: *Have you voted in previous Kosovo elections?* and *Will you vote during the next elections?* An analysis of responses shows that there are a growing number of respondents willing to participate in elections in Kosovo. This trend is important in that it shows where Serbs in northern Kosovo now perceive the main decision-making processes regarding the well-being of the Kosovo Serb community to be situated. Additionally, the ongoing dialogue between Belgrade and Prishtina provides a certain space for Kosovo Serb participation in important democratic processes within Kosovo's political sphere.

Despite the negative trends discussed, it is possible to observe a growing trust between the Serb and Albanian communities.. This is the result of more frequent contact and, also, positive experiences during this contact. It is for this reason that a decreased degree of inter-ethnic distance should not come as a surprise..

To conclude, results from the research emphasise that there are certain fundamental questions to which citizens do not have answers to, as is the case with the attitude towards the Brussels Agreement. This fact is alarming for two reasons: (1) citizens are not informed enough in order to have a defined attitude; (2) citizens are afraid to speak about fundamental problems, even in cases of anonymous surveys. Whatever the main reason behind this might be, the question of responsibility of the political elite has to be raised. These are the individuals who, by selectively informing citizens, are not providing sufficient information through which citizens can gain insights into affairs of importance to their lives.. The fear of speaking out openly about controversial political topics creates a narrowed and exclusive political arena, to the detriment of the affected community. Without open dialogue and freedom of expression, even with open civil disagreements, authoritative ways of decision-making processes will remain with political elites, denying those most impacted by those decisions any means of control.

Nikola Jović, author of the research

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This grant is financed by Democratic Society Promotion (DSP) program financed by the Swiss Cooperation Office – Kosovo (SCO-K) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (DANIDA), and managed by Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF).



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