

Platform for Analysis and Research



Views of the citizens in north Kosovo

Political, economic and security aspects





Research was ordered by:

Platform for Analysis and Research

NGO AKTIV and Center for Peace and Tolerance

Authors of the research:

MA Nikola Jović

MA Branislav Nešović

For publisher:

NGO AKTIV

Kralja Petra I, 183a, North Mitrovica

Email: office@ngoaktiv.org

www.ngoaktiv.org

Disclaimer:










This report was made with the support of the Office of EU in Kosovo. The views expressed in this report are the sole responsibility of “AKTIV” and “Centre for Peace and Tolerance” and do not reflect the views of the EU.

North Mitrovica,

September 2015.



Content

 Context of the research.....	5
 Research Methodology.....	7
 Most important results.....	8
 Perception of key problems.....	9
 Citizens' views on political situation in Kosovo.....	11
 Citizens' views on economic situation in Kosovo.....	20
 Citizens' views on security situation in Kosovo.....	27
 Citizens' views on the state of rights and liberties in Kosovo.....	35
 Conclusions.....	39



List of abbreviations

UNMIK - United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

EULEX - European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo

KLA - Kosovo Liberation Army

KSE/KPC - Kosovo Security Force/Kosovo Protection Corps

KP -Kosovo Police

DP - Democratic Party

DPS - Democratic Party of Serbia

MIA - Ministry of Internal Affairs (Republic of Serbia)

CSM/ASM - Community/ Association of Serb majority Municipalities

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

ABR - Agency of Business Registers

CP - Civil Protection

KFOR - Kosovo Force Organization

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

IBM - Integrated border management



Context of research

Platform for Analysis and Research has conducted a public opinion research in the four Serb-majority municipalities in north Kosovo (North Mitrovica, Leposavic, Zubin Potok and Zvečan), as a part of the project “Policy for Change – Strengthening capacity of CSO’s in Northern Kosovo to become more effective contributors in decision making process”. The goal of this research was to gain insight into the key social and economic issues Kosovo Serbs face. This research investigated citizen’s views on security situation, socioeconomic situation, political participation of Kosovo Serbs and the respect of minority rights.

The research was conducted in the period between May and July 2015. This period was marked with the continuation of Brussels negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina, growing interest in the realisation of the already signed Agreements, such as CSM/ASM and integration of Civil Protection members into Kosovo institutions. Apart from the resolute talks in Brussels, citizens’ attention was also divided between ethnically motivated incidents and the process of formation of Special Court for KLA war crimes.

For many, the Brussels Agreement and the Agreements that resulted from it, represent a change of paradigm in the relations between Belgrade and Pristina and have become critical event which marked the change of “status quo” that was persistent in the north for so long. However, the two sides in the negotiation, Belgrade and Pristina, found use of the “constructive ambiguity” of the Agreement and calibrated their interpretations of the Agreement according to the profiles of their constituency, and during this whole period, north Kosovo Serbs wandered in the dark, unable to influence, neither the agreements, nor their implementation. Perceived as an unwanted, forced concession of Belgrade, towards Pristina, the Brussels Agreement and its ambiguity and obscurity generated dissatisfaction and uncertainty in the community in the north at the moment of its conception. Two and a half years after the signing of the Agreement, the community in north Kosovo is still in the position of transitional integration to a new constitutional order, creation of new institutions and acceptance of the new political reality. The main characteristic of the Brussels process is lack of transparency which affected the implementation and aggravated the sense of uncertainty with the citizens in the north. Out of 16 agreements signed in Brussels, only 6 are fully implemented, while 10 more agreements await finalisation of their implementation.



“Post-Brussels” political situation is now characterized with raising awareness of Serbian community about their new position – the position of minority operating within Kosovo’s constitutional framework. The necessity to act from the perspective of these new roles created a sense of distraught among the community, causing the Serbs from the north to compare their status with the status of Serbs south of the Ibar River, now more than ever. They do this probably in an effort to remind themselves and others that the north is in a much more favourable position, but also to learn from the experience of the Serbs who have already gone through the process of integration into Kosovo institutions. Mistrust towards almost all political actors and the feeling of helplessness when it comes to controlling their own destiny, prevails, and due to the lack of transparency of the negotiations that take place in Brussels, the number of "Post-Brussels Microinterpretations" keeps increasing because every citizen has its own vision of things to come, in the words of one of our respondents: “endless possibilities create endless fears”. This is why, it is of grave importance to get familiarised with the attitudes of the citizens in the north about the key social challenges they face, so that the political officials could make more informed decisions and further the implementation of reached agreements in the future, thus improving security and decreasing the sense of uncertainty among the citizens in the north.



Research methodology

- Quantitative part of the survey-

Research method: On the field survey F2F

Period of survey: 4. - 11. June 2015.

Territory covered: North Mitrovica, Leposavić, Zubin Potok and Zvečan;

Sample: 799 examinees

Sample description: average age 40 years; 400 men - 394 women; N. Mitrovica 281, Leposavić 204, Zvečan 172, Zubin Potok 137, invalid 5;

Sample type: Stratified random sampling - stratification by residence;

Statistical error: 95% statistical confidence interval for an incidence of 50% is + / - 3.45

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

- Qualitative part of the research-

Research method: 10 interviews, 4 round tables and 4 focus groups;

Territory covered: North Mitrovica, Leposavić, Zubin Potok and Zvečan;

Period of research: May – July 2015.

Interlocutors in the interviews: Director of the Center for Social Work in North Mitrovica, Dejan Đinović; politician, Rada Trajković; researcher and project developer, Ljubiša Mijačić; Director of the Agricultural Household Zubin Potok, Rade Utvić; anonymous EULEX official; President of the Democratic Party in North Mitrovica, Miloš Subotić; Executive Director of the Bureau for Social Research, Pavle Dimitrijević; MA in security studies and activist in NGO Human Centre, Veroljub Pertonić, anonymous member of the Democratic Party of Serbia, an anonymous representative of the Kosovo Police Service (integrated from MIA), officers of the National Employment Service.

Screening in focus groups: Criteria for selection of participants: gender, age, level of education and place of residence;



Most important results

4% of respondents assessed the current situation in Kosovo as well.

Every tenth respondent supports the Brussels Agreement, while every other respondent had no opinion.

56% of respondents support the participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions.

3, 6% of respondents assessed the current economic situation in Kosovo as good.

14, 1% of respondents assessed the current security situation in Kosovo as good.

Of all the institutions dealing with security, respondents trust Civil protection the most (although at the time the survey the process of disbanding CP has already started).

The biggest security risks, according to the respondents, are interethnic conflicts, organized crime and unemployment.

83.2% of respondents believe that the Brussels agreement did not improve the freedoms and rights of the Serbian community.

43, 8% of young respondents are unemployed.

52, 2% of respondents receive incomes from the budget of the Republic of Serbia

40% of young respondents (18-29 years) do not see themselves in Kosovo in the future

17, 8% of respondents believe that the CSM will have executive competencies.



Perception of key problems

Most of the citizens in north Kosovo are dissatisfied with the current situation and they assess it as very negative. Both political and socioeconomic situation in the four north municipalities are evaluated equally as negative. Only 10% of the citizens have a positive opinion about the Brussels Agreement, while almost half of the respondents have no opinion about the Agreement, this is a direct consequence of the lack of transparency. Most of the citizens find that the Brussels Agreement did not improve the state of rights and liberties of the Serbian community in Kosovo. Community of Serbian Municipalities is seen as the most important part of the Agreement aimed at ensuring unobstructed functioning of education and health care system and continuation of financial support coming for the Serbian community from the Government in Belgrade. Such aspirations are not surprising, given the fact that 53% of our respondents are directly dependent on the financial aid from Belgrade. Regardless of this, most of the citizens are sceptical about CSM's executive competencies and they believe that Serbia will not be able to negotiate them.

Apart from the negative view of the current situation, the citizens are equally dissatisfied with the functioning of institutions. The level of trust is the highest with the Government in Belgrade (14, 3%), then follow interim institutions in the north (12, 2%), and municipalities formed after the April 2013 elections (10, 8%). Given the fact that the municipalities in the north are still functioning at a limited capacity, and that economic benefits of development projects are still not visible, this result comes as no surprise. Citizens in the north are still distrustful towards Pristina's intentions which is evident when we see that the level of trust in Government in Pristina is the lowest (1, 3%).

The following indicators show that, in spite of distrust in the institutions and general negative view of the Brussels Agreement, the citizens do understand that, in the future, the level of cooperation with official political institutions has to grow. 56% of the citizens support the participation of Serbian representatives in Kosovo institutions because they believe this is the only way to rights of the Serbian community in Kosovo. At the same time, 45% of people had the opportunity to use services of Kosovo institutions, while 52% of mostly elderly citizens have Kosovo identity documents. It appears that when one's financial situation is at stake, the citizens spontaneously enter in these kinds of interactions, especially when we take into consideration that over 60% of citizens would not reject a job in Kosovo institutions.

Even though Kosovo battles serious political instability and security threats, the respondents still see unemployment as the biggest problem in the north. Unemployment rate in the north is higher than in the rest of the region, amounting to



32,8%. Moreover, when we cross-reference unemployment rate with age groups, we can see that 43,8% of young people (aged 18-29) are unemployed. The lack of perspective is also mirrored in the fact that half of the young respondents plan on leaving Kosovo in the next five years.

At the same time, regardless of the fact that the economic situation is perceived as unfavourable, private initiative is at a high level and more than third of our respondents plan on starting their own business in the near future. Among the main obstacles to small businesses, citizens include: lack of financial resources, small and limited market, and unstable security situation.

The question of security is extremely important to the citizens in the north, and most of them are displeased with it. Potential inter-ethnic incidents are singled out as the biggest security threats. The most concerned about inter-ethnic incidents are the citizens of North Mitrovica (54%), then follow residents of Zubin Potok and Leposavic (40%), and finally, residents of Zvecan (32,3%). Organised crime is another highly positioned problem in the hierarchy of security threats.

As far as the institutions in charge of security are concerned, the most reputable are Civil protection, KFOR and KP, while EULEX and Kosovo Security Force¹ are the least trusted institutions. Most of the citizens do not consider that the security situation has changed after the integration of the Serbian police structures and CP into KP. A somewhat larger percent of respondents believe that the security situation has improved after the integration of former members of the Serbian police into KP. The majority of citizens do not believe that politicians' statements affect the security situation, but they do consider that the politicians in general should be more careful when giving statements regarding sensitive situations which can trigger inter-ethnic problems. However, the cooperation between North and South Mitrovica Mayors is perceived as a positive instance in alleviation of inter-ethnic tensions after the incidents on the Ibar Bridge.

The research showed that the ethnic distance between Serbs and Albanians is still high and that a little under 15% of citizens in the north cross paths with Albanian majority, or visit Albanian-majority municipalities. On the other hand, 40% of citizens have some sort of interaction with Albanians, which is a slightly better result in comparison with previous researches, conducted before the signing of the Brussels Agreement. It is obvious that a lot more should be done on creating contact points and

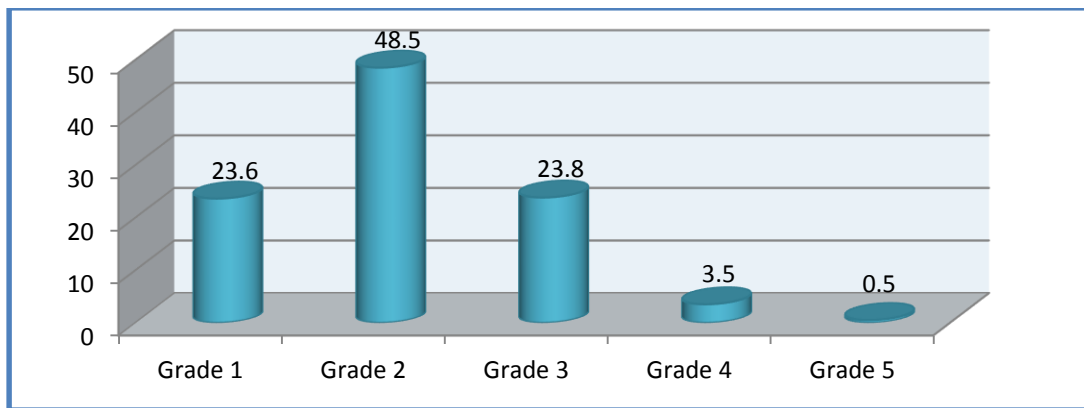
¹During the field research, we also used the previous, more recognizable name of this structure – Kosovo Protection Corps



building trust between the two communities. Primary causes of the lack of interaction are insecurity, freedom of movement and fear for one's safety.

Citizens' views on political situation in Kosovo

Question 1. How do you assess the current situation in Kosovo?



As we can see from the chart, only 4% of respondents assessed the current situation in Kosovo as well. The average value on a scale from one to five is 2.09. With further analysis, we can see that there is no significant difference in the assessment of the current situation among respondents with lower and respondents with higher education, as well as between different age groups. The only difference is in the stratification on the basis of place of residence where, conditionally speaking, the best values are in the North Mitrovica (2.24), while the worst values are in Zubin Potok (1.84), estimated range in Leposavić and Zvečan is around 2.

When it comes to the information we obtained from the conducted focus groups, we can say that all the participants agreed that the situation is very unfavourable for the Serbian community. One of the main reasons this is the case, is that nobody is asking Serbs from Kosovo about anything and, as a consequence, they remain excluded from the major processes, observing them from the sidelines. Participants find that solutions are forced onto the Serbian community by the governments in Belgrade and Pristina, and the actors of the international community.

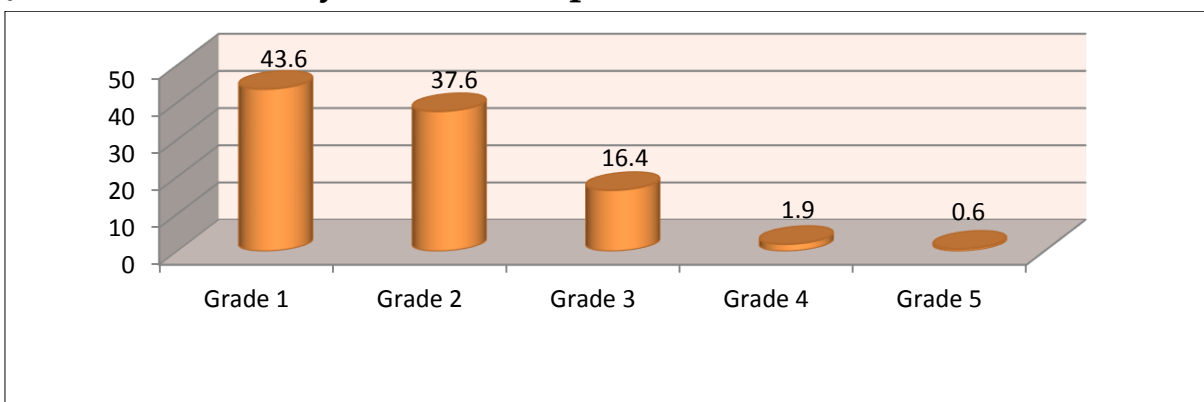
One of the interviewees, a former political figure who wanted to remain anonymous, said in an interview that the situation is still very bad, and the blameable are found on all three sides. According to him "Serbs never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity", he also emphasizes that the international community is "to be blamed for the downfall of democracy and the political system in Kosovo, because nothing has been done to democratize Kosovo society". From this failure of the



international community emerges the paradox that "the fate of the Serbian people in Kosovo is far more complicated now than it was in 1999, immediately after the NATO aggression." In regard to the role of the Kosovo government, he says that the acceptance of participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions is the result of the international pressure.

Miloš Subotić, current president of the Democratic Party in North Mitrovica, assesses the current position of the Serbs in Kosovo as very bad and calls it "a kind of soft apartheid". He states that "the worst thing is that they all accept this state of affairs as normal. It has become normal to burn the houses of the returnees in Klina, and that is not even qualified as novelty or the news for the media".

Question 2. How do you assess the political situation in Kosovo?



From the total number of respondents, only 2.4% of them said that the political situation in Kosovo is good or very good, while 81.3% of respondents assessed the political situation as bad or very bad. On the scale from one to five, the political situation is estimated with an average mark of 1.7. By all criteria of post-stratification (age, place of residence and educational level) we got approximately the same value.

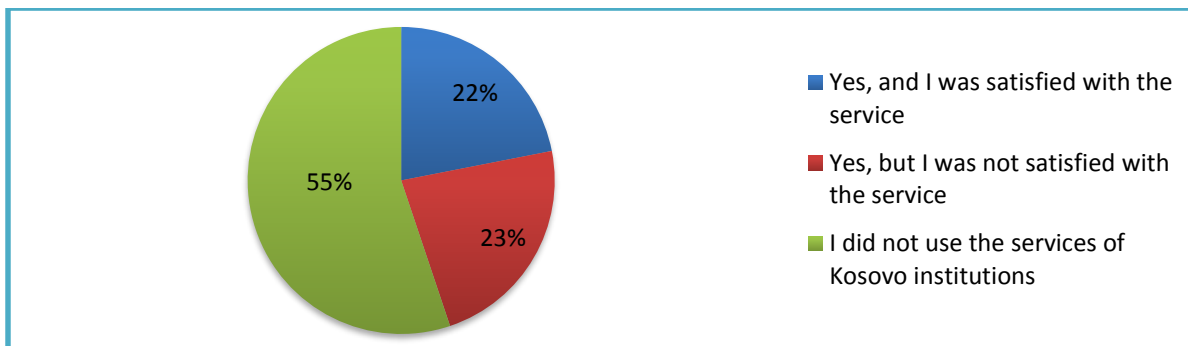
Findings from the focus groups show that most participants are distrustful of the political elite because they do not think that the number of citizens who voted in the April 2013 elections is high enough to grant legitimacy to local and central authorities. On the other hand, the participants feel that since they are already in the institutions, Serbian representatives have to perform better and more efficiently if they are to contribute to preservation of the rights of the Serbian community in Kosovo.

Rada Trajković criticized Serbian members of the parliament for not voicing their concerns, thus winning over the public opinion. "I am primarily referring to the Embassies that follow each parliamentary session, and they may indeed send many messages - even though they will not be heard in parliament, nor will they be spread



among the Albanian public, but still, a clear message would be sent to others who still have the power to decide about Kosovo.”

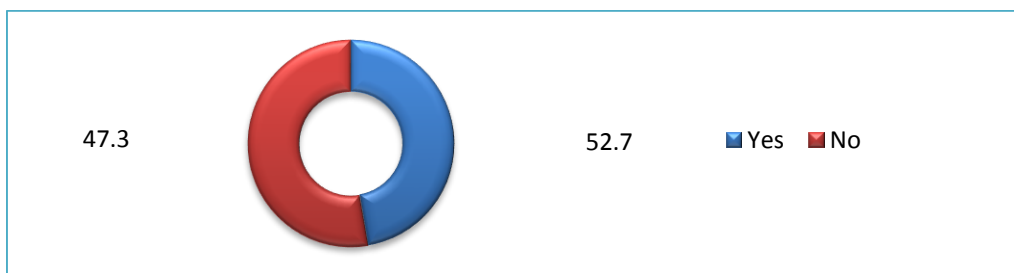
Question 3. Have you used the services of Kosovo institutions?



Answers to these questions can be cross referenced, with the place of residence. This shows us that the least satisfied with the services of Kosovo institutions are respondents from North Mitrovica, while the most satisfied are the respondents from Zvečan municipality. Although, this answer must be taken with reservation, given that the local self-governments in the north operate in a limited capacity and that the citizens still do not make a difference between municipalities formed after the 2013 elections and interim municipal bodies.

	Yes and I was satisfied with the service	Yes, but I was not satisfied with the service	Never used
North Mitrovica	20%	30%	50%
Zubin Potok	23,9%	23,9%	50,2%
Leposavić	20,2%	16,6%	63,2%
Zvečan	24,4%	20,3%	55,3%

Question 4. Do you have personal documents issued by the Kosovo institutions?

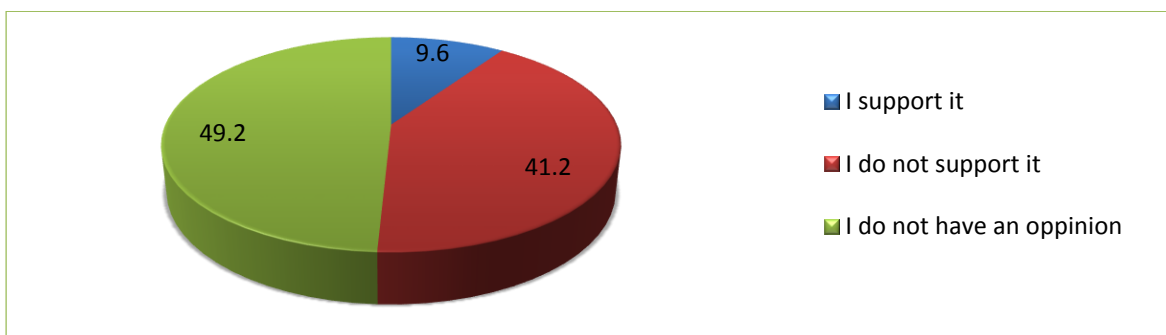




The highest number (76%) of those who have identity documents issued by Kosovo institutions, belongs to the oldest generation of examinees. As for the level of education and place of residence, there is no significant difference in the responses.

Focus group participants, particularly emphasised that Serbian politicians, at the local and central level, must pay more attention to everyday life issues, such as the provision of documents, certificates, applications etc. Also, participants note that for them it is of great importance that the community comes to some broader agreement on whether to acquire documents from Kosovo institutions. In particular, they were concerned about the non-recognition of diplomas of the University of Pristina, temporarily settled in Kosovska Mitrovica and similar bureaucratic constraints caused by one's nationality.

Question 5. What is your opinion of the Brussels agreement?



As we can see, the most important information we get from this question is not that only 10% of respondents support such the Agreement, which on the intuitive level was expected, but that a very large number of respondents is undecided when it comes to whether they support the Brussels Agreement or not.

If we consider the support of the Brussels agreement through age variable we can see that the Brussels agreement is less likely supported by young people, aged 18 to 29 (6.6%), followed by respondents aged 30 to 45 (9.3%), respondents aged 46 to 65 (11, 6%), and conditionally speaking, the greatest support for the Brussels Agreement is found among respondents who are older than 66 (17.3%).

Focus group participants mainly stated that the Agreement is ambiguous and can be understood in more than two ways, so no one could specify exactly what is specifically written in that agreement and those that spawned from it. Participants stated that it can often be witnessed that the Albanian and Serbian press interpret the Agreement in their own way. Moreover, the participants point out that the entire process is not transparent enough and that all interested citizens have no information

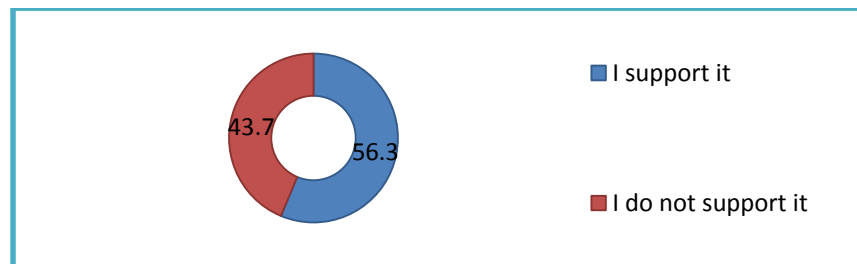


related to the negotiating process. Also, when it comes to the final outcome of the negotiations, during the focus groups we could hear sentences such as: "We all know that this process leads to affirmation of Kosovo as a state."

When it comes to positive outcomes of the Brussels agreement, the participants pointed out the following: established contact and the conversation between the two sides (Belgrade and Pristina), relaxation of political tensions, reduced number of interest groups and, finally, community's realisation of the new reality and abating of uncertainty: "Now something has changed, before, there were endless possibilities and endless possibilities create endless fear."

Nevertheless, fears are never-ending. Participants recognized that the political integration into Kosovo institutions was performed relatively quietly because its effects were not that visible on the field, but they do expect a stronger reaction from the Serbian community when the level of economic integration increases, and possibly, the quality of health care and education decreases.

Question 6. What is your attitude towards the participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions?



Respondents from all age groups provided answers that are similar, 52% of the youngest respondents support the participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions, and 61.7% respondents aged 30 to 45 support the political participation. This is a very interesting piece of information, as it shows that, in spite of distrust the local community has towards Brussels process, majority of citizens intuitively realize the political reality and necessity of political participation of Serbian representatives in Kosovo institutions. The need to participate is especially pronounced when the fact that Serbian political representatives have already granted legitimacy to Kosovo institutions by being a part of them and trying to improve the position of the Serbian community, is taken into consideration.

When we distribute the answers to this question according to the place of residence, we get the following information:



Supports the participation

North Mitrovica	61,5%
Zvečan	58,4%
Leposavić	54,1%
Zubin Potok	48,1%

Focus group participants think that performance results of Kosovo institutions are not visible. Institutions do not work, and when they do work, they discriminate against the representatives of the Serbian community. As for the Serbs working in Kosovo institutions, especially those placed in central institutions, most people think they are not able to do anything for the Serbian community because they are a minority when compared to Albanian political structures. Apart from that, they are perceived as overly dependent on Belgrade authorities. The participants take their involvement in the Kosovo Government with suspicion and they also pointed out to two insufficiencies that they have in their work: lack of ability to change anything and lack of qualifications and human resources. Pavle Dimitrijević also agrees that Belgrade has a dominant role in the political life of Kosovo and political decisions of Serbian politicians, but points out that this may not be so bad because otherwise the situation would be much worse for the Serbs. Mr. Dimitrijević's personal opinion is that Serbs should participate only in those institutions in which they can improve the quality of those institutions' work. He also added that when it comes to political participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions, the manoeuvring space has been significantly decreased, because now Serbia has consented to the presence of Kosovo institutions on both, the south and the north. Serbia has sent a strong message that the Kosovo institutional system is now acceptable in areas where Serbs are the majority and that it will remain the only one operational in the foreseeable future. The only question is - how will this system work?

Another civil activist, Veroljub Petronić, has a bit different perspective. According to him, it is true that, the further the implementation of the Brussels Agreement progresses, the more Serbia will lose control over the situation in Kosovo, but at the same time, Pristina will have to get used to the increasing number of Serbs in its institutions and, on top of that, they must not underestimate the fact that Serbs will become an important factor in the power struggle between Albanian political parties.

The largest number of respondents said that, in the last election cycle, the majority of population in the north was against participation in the elections and that in the hindsight, they understand that that has been a mistake, since now there are people in power they did not vote for. The prevailing opinion of the respondents in the focus

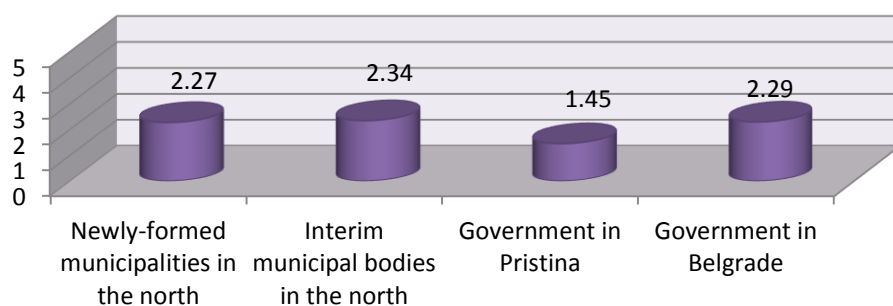


groups is that Serbs should participate in Kosovo's institutions and that this is the only chance for Serbian interests to be represented in Kosovo government, but adequate representation is possible only if Serbs have true representatives of their interests. As for the participants who opposed participation, their main argument, with which they defended their position, was that such an action is equal to the recognition of the Republic of Kosovo.

When asked about the voter turnout in the next local elections, the majority of respondents predicted that it will be higher than the turnout registered in November 2013 elections. Thus, the representative of the former government and a member of the DPS, says that the next elections will be as irregular as they were in 2013, but with potentially higher voter turnout, should more than one party partake in the elections. According to him, the lack of sense for politics among the voters who are already tired of the electoral processes with the same outcome, but with different actors poses a serious problem. As he sees it, the key to the revitalization of political life is the inclusion of young people in the political processes and restoration of the original role of politicians - the creation of political and economic preconditions for self-employment and the exploitation of natural resources.

In regard to the political actions of Serbs within Kosovo institutions, Rada Trajković said that we can detect that after a certain period of time, people got used to politic participation and that nowadays a much larger number of people believe that something meaningful and important can happen or be solved within those institutions that are still in the process of creation. She claims that “it is more responsible to be involved, engaged and in the positions where decisions are made because, for Serbs, it will never be easy”.

Question 7. On the scale from one to five, rate your satisfaction with the work of the following institutions?





This question revealed that the citizens very often do not distinguish between newly-formed municipalities and interim municipal bodies. These findings suggest that the newly-formed institutions still do not have credibility and are not recognisable in the north, in other words, the situation has not changed. Moreover, the answers were often affected by the emotional reaction due to which, a greater level of trust was expressed towards institutions that are still in the process of disintegration and/or transformation and integration, suggesting the feelings of yearning for a better past among the respondents. The political decision to disband institutions gradually in an effort to maintain security situation and political stability, in retrospect, was not unwise.

Further analysis has shown that there are no significant differences in the assessment of the work of these institutions when cross-referenced with the level of education, age or place of residence.

When it comes to Kosovo institutions and whether they can be trusted or not, focus group participants agreed that they do not trust neither local nor central institutions, emphasising that the international community maintains political, but also any other type of stability in Kosovo, and that the pressure Kosovo Albanians put on Serbs will be much larger once "the foreigners" leave Kosovo. Therefore, regardless of the lack of confidence, it is important to be involved in the events.

Question 8. On a scale of one to five, with 1 being "does not agree entirely", and five being "strongly agree", how would you rate the following standpoints on the Community of Serbian Municipalities?

Agrees with the statement

CSM will contribute to improving the status of Serbs in Kosovo	26,9%
CSM will contribute to the integration of Serbs in the legal and political system in Kosovo	26,3%
CSM will provide economic development and employment	18,9%
CSM will have executive power	17,8%

The research was conducted two months prior to signing of the Agreement on the establishment of CSM on August 25, in Brussels. While canvassing, our researchers found that the citizens were somewhat sceptical about the future role of CSM, which is the direct result of the lack of information at that point. Additional reason for distrust towards the Brussels Agreement in general, is the prevailing sense that it will not improve anything. In spite of this, citizens' expectations are still the highest when it



comes to this particular part of the Agreement, related to CSM. When asked "*What is your standpoint on CSM*" and "*Will CSM reinforce the position of the Serbian community in Kosovo,*" focus group participants noted that the establishment of the CSM is primarily important for the functioning of education and health care system, but, at the same time, they agreed that there is no specific information about how this association would work.

Some participants expressed doubts about the whole project, claiming: "the CSM sounds nice; however they are lying to us". They add that such a body can get its form only if approved by Pristina, "and we know that Pristina will not approve anything that is against its interests." Intuitively, the majority of respondents expressed doubt that the Kosovo legal framework will change in order to accommodate CSM. In addition to this, citizens doubt that CSM will have executive competencies. The new Brussels Agreement is unclear about the competencies CSM will hold, this is why, at the moment, before the adoption of the Statute, we cannot venture a guess about the scope of CSM's competencies. What the participants of focus groups mostly realize, was that the government in Belgrade was under a lot of pressure and that under that pressure, it had to accept the conditions of the Brussels Agreement, in spite of dissatisfaction and mistrust of the citizens in the north.

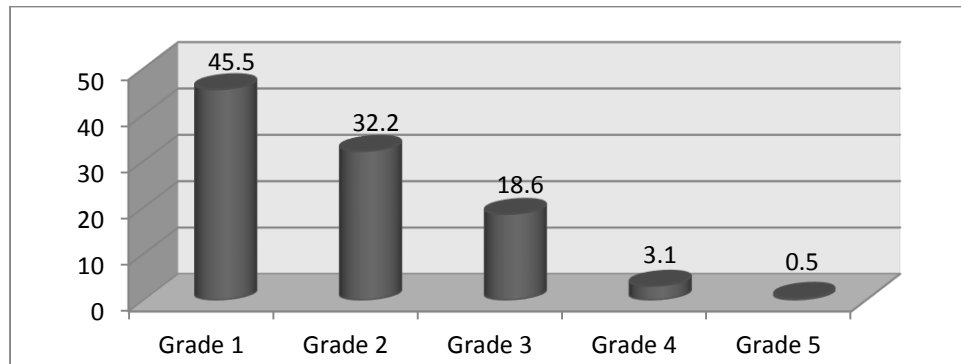
Also, participants stated "that the formation of the CSM is a good plan for the sustainability of the Serbian community in Kosovo, but it is unenforceable in practice, this is why its formation is constantly being postponed." Focus group participants envision the role of CSM in the process of economic development and continuous funding of the Serbian community from Belgrade, as well as the preservation of health and education systems. Unimpaired functioning of health and education systems are the red lines which must not be crossed. Citizens believe that the municipalities, that under Kosovo law do have competencies over primary and secondary healthcare and education, are nevertheless unequipped to coordinate such complicated systems without an umbrella organisation like CSM should be.

Rada Trajković believes that Serbia has made a big mistake with Brussels Agreement, because with its implementation, it withdrew its own institutions from Kosovo territory and allowed Kosovo institution to start functioning, when it should have made sure to create and strengthen the capacity of CSM first. Unfortunately, this has not been done and consequently, Serbs still do not have their CSM.



Citizens' views on economic situation in Kosovo

Question 9. How would you assess the current economic situation in Kosovo?



The average value of the economic situation in Kosovo is 1.84. The poorest average value was registered in the answers of respondents from Zubin Potok (1.57), while North Mitrovica residents were the ones whose answers had the highest average value (1.91). Further analysis shows that the respondents gave similar answers, regardless of employment status and source of income.

Focus group participants singled out two causes of the stagnation of the economy and discontent: the extremely high unemployment rate and lack of productive enterprises or economic entities that generate profits.

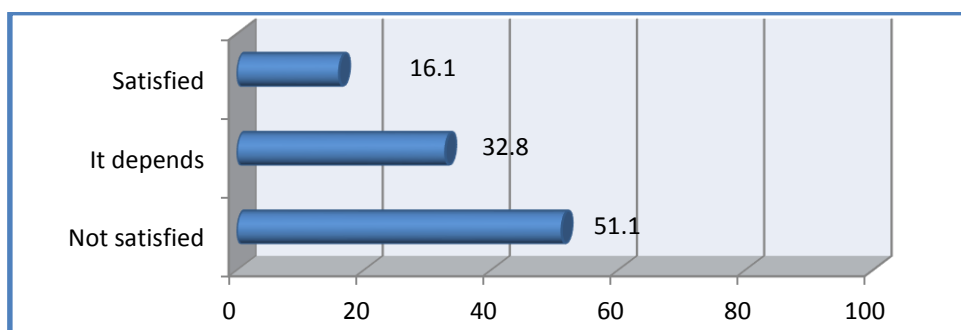
We talked to Ljubiša Mijačić on a matter of how the Brussels agreement reflects on the economy of northern Kosovo. Mr. Mijačić stated that the economic integration of the north increased, but only to the point Belgrade allowed it to advance, and to the point Belgrade was able to pressure Pristina. Mijačić describes the current level of economic integration as „a narrow funnel“ which is, for now, limited to transition of goods and services through IBMs and which changed the way local entrepreneurs do business. They can no longer operate with registrations from the Serbian Agency of Business Registers and are now required to register as business entities in Kosovo. However, with the integration of police structures and pending integration of the judiciary system, the whole process of socioeconomic integration will “become well-rounded” and the existing narrow funnel will expand “and not one subject in the economic system will be able to function according to the principles that were valid in the Agency of Business Registers”.

Mijačić stated two main causes of the underdeveloped private, productive sector. Firstly, for the past 15 years, Serbs in the north have lived in politically unstable and



unsafe environment which was not suitable for investments and planned entrepreneurship. Secondly, majority of Serbs were “cushioned” by public spending and Serbian salaries.

Question 10. On the scale from 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your current financial situation?



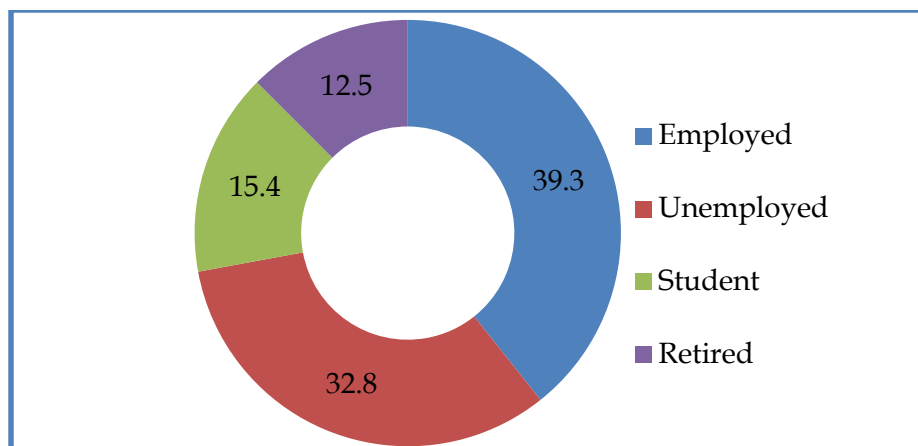
Residents of North Mitrovica are the most satisfied with their financial situation, rating it with an average grade of 2, 66. On the other end of the scale are residents of Zubin Potok whose financial situation was graded with an average grade of 1, 99. When we examined additional elements of post-stratification, we found that the financial situation is worst with respondents with elementary education (2,1) and best with respondents who graduated from faculty (2, 77).

According to the data provided by the director of the Center for Social Work in North Mitrovica, Dejan Đinović, approximately 1300, residents of the six municipalities which fall under this Centre's competency (Kosovska Mitrovica, Zvečan, Peć, Istok, Klinë and Oraovac) receive financial help, while approximately 166 families receive compensation for treatment costs of the diseased members of family. Mr. Đinović states that the position of the most sensitive social groups has not changed after the signing of Brussels Agreement. He also added that there are no hints that the process of normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina will entice talks about changes in the social sector.

Question 11. What is your employment status?



Views of Serbian community in north Kosovo on major social challenges



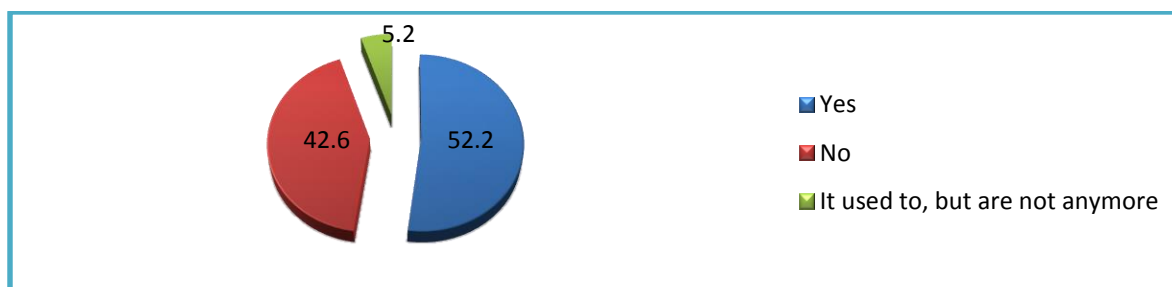
Employment rate is the highest in North Mitrovica and lowest in Leposavić.

North Mitrovica	29,4%
Zubin Potok	34,1%
Zvečan	34,9%
Leposavić	35,1%

When we cross-referenced this data with age groups, we found that the employment rate is the lowest among people aged 18-29 (43,8%). This information is disconcerting, as the lack of employment opportunities is one of the main reasons why 40% of young respondents plan on leaving Kosovo.

During interviews conducted with public servants from the National Employment Bureau, we discovered that craftsmen are the most wanted educational profiles and that IT sector is gravely underdeveloped.

Question 12. Does your income come from the budget of the Republic of Serbia?

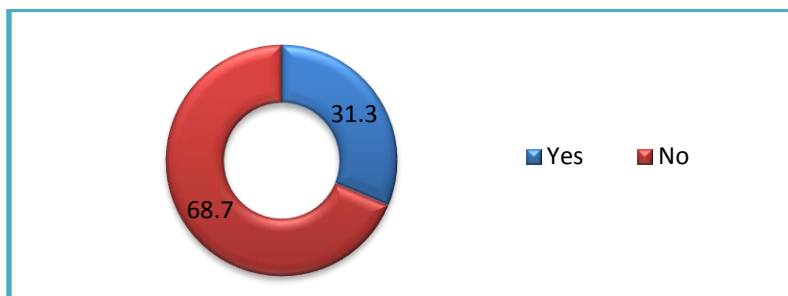


When it comes to the part of the population who receive money from the budget of Republic of Serbia, the majority of them (93,2%) belong to the older generation 66+.



then follow 46 – 65 year-olds who comprise (65,4%) of population who receive money from the budget of Republic of Serbia, 30 – 45 year-olds constitute (49,6%) of this population, and finally, the lowest number of beneficiaries of the Serbian budget belong to the youngest age group 18 - 29 year-olds (35,8%). This data sheds more light onto the fears of the community in the north regarding the Brussels Agreement and formation of CSM. Taking into consideration, the fact that socioeconomic stability and security of the majority of citizens depend on the cash flow from Belgrade, we can safely conclude that the fears of the citizens about continuous financing in the future, especially when it comes to the preservation of the existing jobs and financing of infrastructural projects and social welfare, were not unwarranted. The citizens trust that the financial aid from Belgrade must not be questioned if the stability and quality of life in the north is to be maintained. If, as a result of the Brussels Agreement, financing from Belgrade is to be diminished, leading to loss of jobs, a social crisis that will lead to prolonged migration of Serb community from north Kosovo can be awakened. In general, the opinion that incomes are too low and that only a handful of citizens in the north live a comfortable life is prevailing.

Question 13. Do you plan on starting your own business in the next two years?



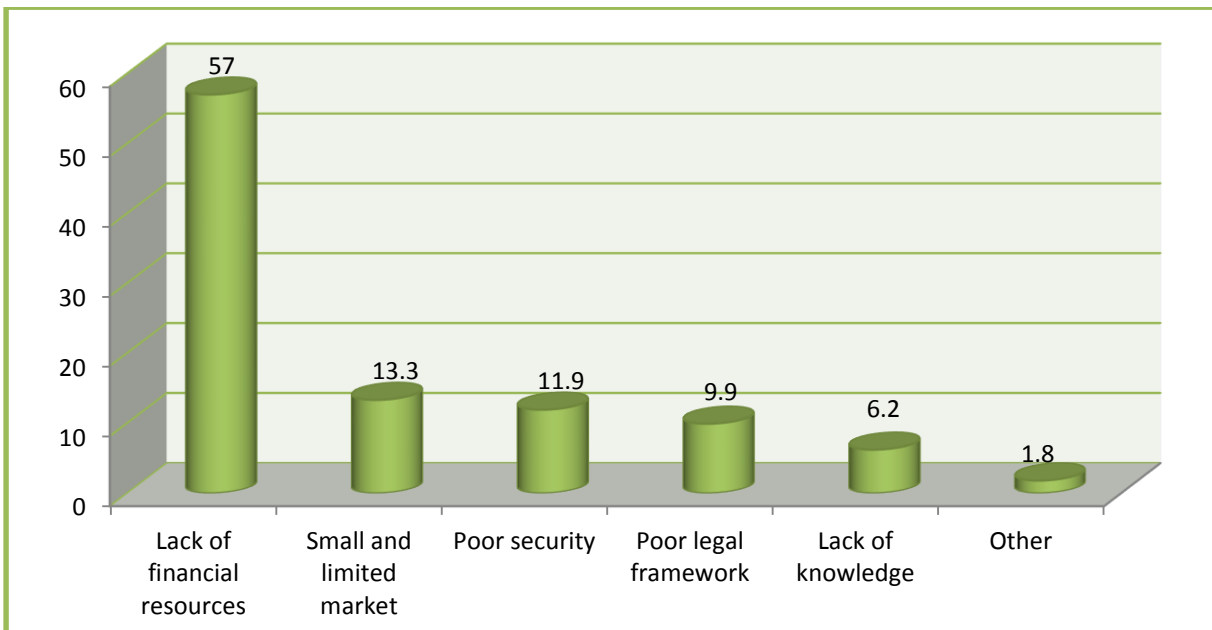
The majority of respondents plan on starting a private business. When this data is cross-referenced with the level of education, we can see that the majority of those who plan on starting a business have graduated from a faculty (37,5%), while the lowest rate of potential business owners is among those with elementary education (10,9%). Entrepreneurial spirit and private initiative do exist in the north and are ever-growing. A significant number of citizens understand that the future is not in the public sector, but in the private start-ups that could generate continuous profit ample enough to sustain a family.

Our interviewer got a first-hand insight into the experiences of a business owner in the north from a conversation with entrepreneur Rade Utvić. According to Utvić “there is nothing good to say about the economy of north Kosovo, as the whole system is set up in a wrong way. Honestly, we can only do so much to stay in business, but the



conditions are very harsh, and this is the first thing our business partners notice when they come here”. When asked about the problems that he, as an entrepreneur from the north might encounter when trying to access the market south of the Ibar, Utvić says that, in that respect, he has no major problem, although “you can always come across some extremists”.

Question 14. What, in your opinion, is the biggest obstacle for starting a business in Kosovo?



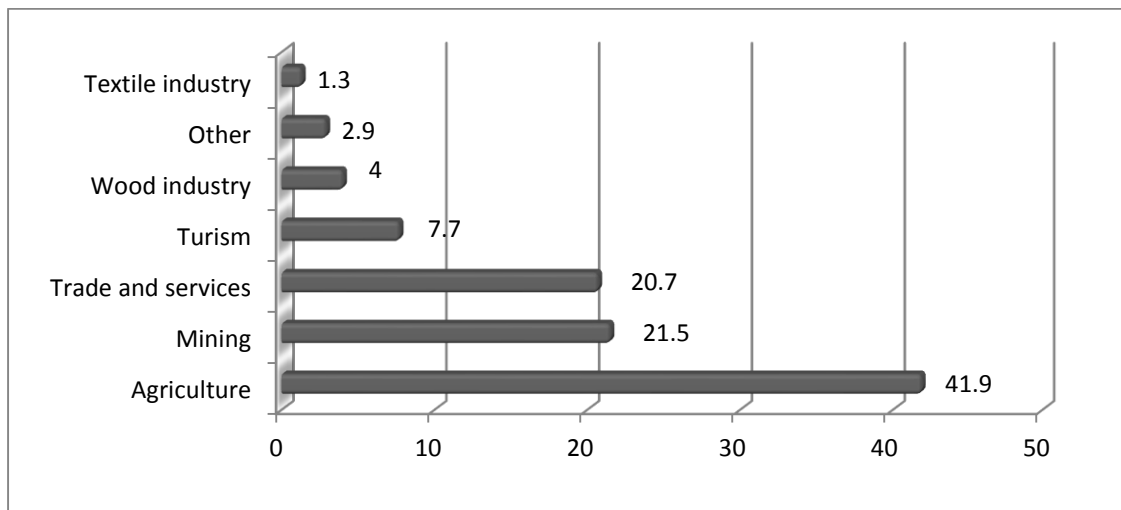
Even though the respondents in focus groups stated that private business initiatives are one of the possible problems for the mitigation of the poor economic situation, they also understand that there are a lot of obstacles to the expansion of private businesses. Those obstacles are: lack of interest and self-initiative, the necessity to choose between two legal systems (Serbian and Kosovo), monopolism, avoidance of risk, and lack of capital and qualified educational profiles. Financial resources that can be obtained through various donations of international donor agencies, governments and local self-governments, are the most realistic opportunity to acquire initial capital, because the option of corporate borrowing with local banks is limited and characterised with high interests due to risky business environment. In such circumstances in which lack of initial capital is widespread, a good business idea is not sufficient to start a business. On the other hand, many believe that a sizeable group of citizens expect to find a job in state institutions and the reason is obvious – risk-free employment.

Furthermore, the respondents pointed out to some concrete problems, such as, the



lack of fitosanitar standards and introduction of custom duties which gravely impede the progress of entrepreneurs. One of the entrepreneurs, participant of a round table, pointed out that retroactive computation of taxes for Serbian firms registered in UNMIK from 2001 onward is a serious problem because the interests are too high and represent a significant financial strain for any firm, no matter how much profit it made.

Question 15. Which area has the most potential for economic development of Serbian municipalities in the north?

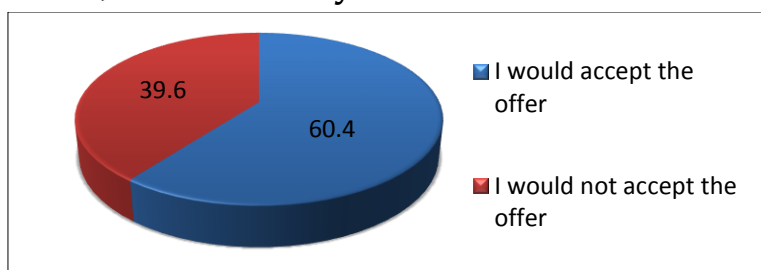


Ljubiša Mijačić claims that economic conditions of the Serbian community in Kosovo are sustained with the money that comes from Serbia and its externalities in the form of the service industry: “When you pump up a certain amount of money into a system, then its participants: restaurants, shops, cafes and other service providers have a lot to gain from it, in such situations the private sector grows stronger. However, the system itself is not viable, because the Serbian community throughout Kosovo does not participate in the market and their products are not competitive. When asked about the Development fund for the north, Mr. Mijačić stated that what is known about this Fund is that it is deposited until 2017 under Kosovo law provisions, and that 6 million Euros is the current amount of money in this Fund, however, it is still not clear how this money is going to be spent.” Some claim that it is going to be spent on infrastructural projects; others claim that it is going to be spent on socioeconomic projects. I myself would prefer to see it as a chance to start a local credit fund for the development of entrepreneurship, because there are a lot of opportunities to fund infrastructural projects through numerous donors, or through USAID and EU Munifra schemes, what is really lacking, are simulative credit and financial products for entrepreneurs.”



The director of Agricultural Household Zubin Potok, Rade Utvić, points out to two types of economic potentials of the north: strategic resources (electric power, coal, mines) which require huge investments and where individual's capital plays no role, and those potentials which can be developed further throughout Kosovo, no matter the ethnicity of the population, those are agricultural potentials: "we have no place in industrialization, neither Serbia, nor Kosovo. Industrialisation made sense way back when we had planned economy and when the firms had to be interconnected to survive; nowadays, we are faced with the open market and if you find yourself in need of a simple screw, you won't buy it from a local factory, because somebody has already imported it from China". Mr. Utvić also pointed out that livestock breeding does not have much perspective, at least not in the current conditions when provender is up to 20% more expensive due to the import duties. Until this situation is altered, only extensive livestock farming where most of the food for cattle comes from pastures has some perspective, while, intensive livestock farming is hardly payable.

Question 16. If you, or somebody close to you, were offered a job in Kosovo institutions, what would you do?

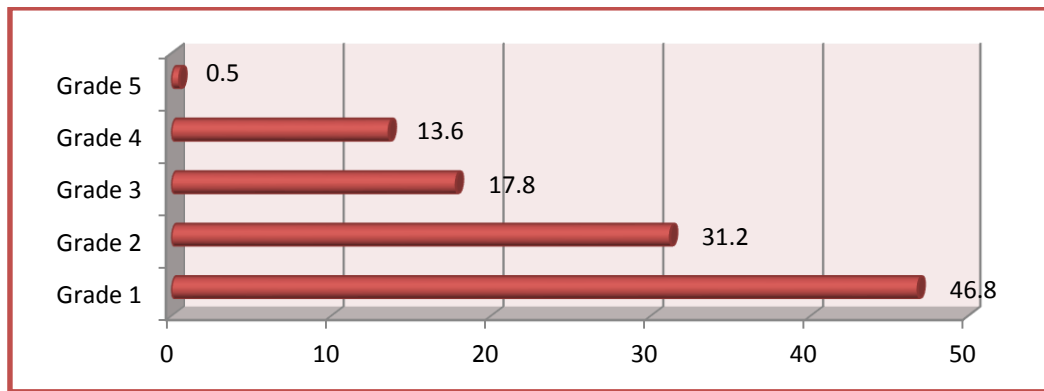


The respondents of all age groups, levels of education and places of residence gave similar answers.

Citizens' views on security situation in Kosovo



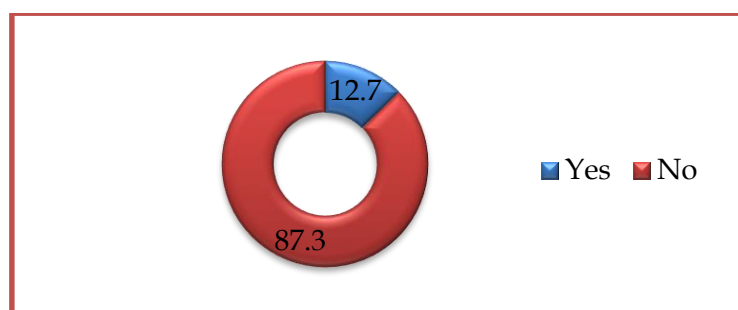
Question 17. How would you grade the current security situation in Kosovo?



The security situation in Kosovo is graded with an average grade of 1, 8. Leposavić citizens give the security situation the highest grade (1, 94), while Zubin Potok citizens give it the lowest grade (1, 58). Respondents in focus groups also stated that the security situation is very poor. Most of them claim to feel safe only in their own yard and neighbourhood and that they do not feel safe in other parts of Kosovo. The respondents point out that the freedom of movement is violated in every sense of that word. They also claim that the integration of the Serbian police into Kosovo Police did not bring any major changes, except that a larger number of officers can be seen patrolling the streets. Tension, fear and mistrust are still the main terms used in connection to the security situation.

Evaluating the security situation in the north, a EULEX representative notices that the situation now is significantly calmer than it used to be and that there are some security threats that are more prominent in the south of Kosovo, such as the emergence of terrorists from Syria and Iraq.

Question 18. Has your safety or safety of your family members been threatened in the last six months?

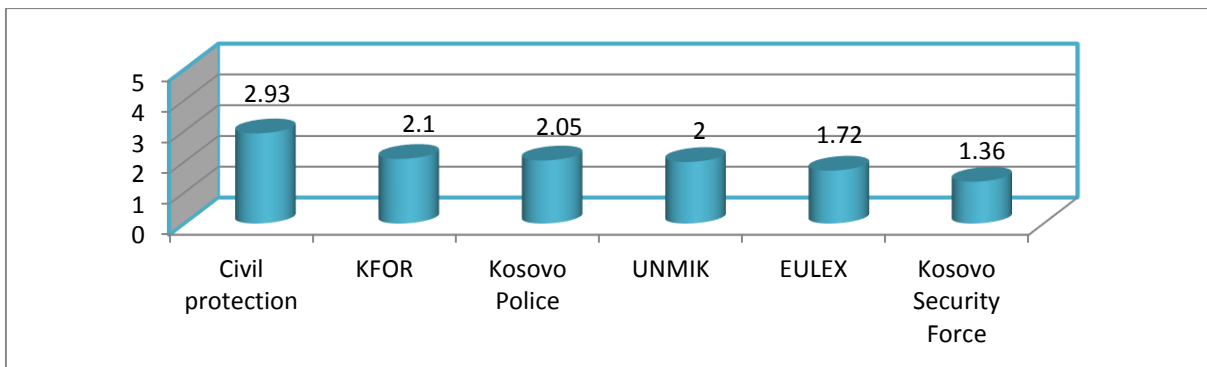




The most of the respondents who claim that their, or safety of their family members has been threatened come from Zubin Potok (19, 3%) and North Mitrovica (16, 8%). The perception of threat is significantly lower with respondents from Leposavić (7, 2%) and Zvečan (6, 3%).

Even though they have not been physically endangered themselves, most of the participants in focus groups generally perceive the situation in the north as unsafe. One of the citizens mentioned a large number of charges that have been brought mostly against citizens of Zubin Potok – which further contributes to the sense of fear and distrust in the institutions. These attitudes are shaped by the constant increase of tension caused by political elites via printed and electronic media. Most of the citizens find politicians' statements ill-considered and destabilising.

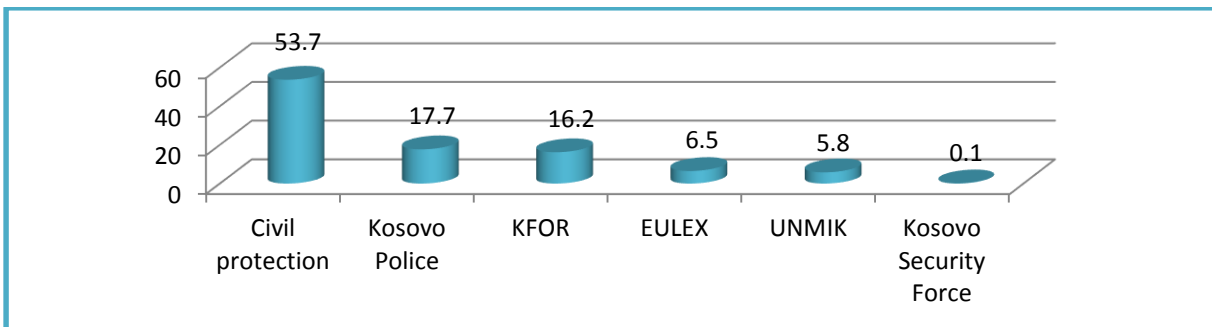
Question 19. How satisfied are you with the performance of the following organisations?



All of the respondents, regardless of age, level of education and their place of residence are the most satisfied with the work of Civil Protection, and the least with the work of Kosovo Security Force. The survey was conducted before the full integration of CP and while it was still functioning in its full capacity, so these results are expected. Generally speaking the citizens have the most confidence in KFOR which, according to them, is functioning within its mandate given by the UN Resolution 1244 and is status-neutral. Also, we have detected a slight increase in confidence in KP after the integration or the Serbian police structures. During the interview with Rada Trajković she expressed her opinion that “our [Kosovo Serb’s] main ally when it comes to security forces are international security forces, namely - NATO”. At the same time, Kosovo Serbs must look into the future and realize that those forces will eventually leave Kosovo, at which point they will have to rely on “cooperation with goodhearted Albanians” and establish a partnership with them.



Question 20. When it comes to ensuring security of the Serbian community, which organizations do you trust the most?



Not unlike the previous question, many of the respondents trust the Civil protection the most. The CP enjoyed the trust of the citizens up until the moment when the agreement of its disbandment was reached. It was respected as an institution which protected the citizens during crisis situations and natural disasters, such as fires, floods, avalanches and which lead the search parties in cases of missing or drowned persons. When it comes to international organizations, even though the respondents understand their importance for the overall security situation, they still resent the fact that Serbs “have no say whatsoever, and only do as they are told”. Furthermore, the respondents believe that the international organizations lack consistency, which is represented by the constant change of policies. As one of our respondents said: “Should they find it necessary, they will award Serbs and give a penalty to the Albanians and vice versa”. The core problem which impedes the functioning of the existing services in charge of security in Kosovo is political will. Most of the respondents feel that it is on the political level of the decision-making where obstacles are created and security situation further destabilised.

The representative of EULEX said to our interviewer that the integration of Serbian police structures into Kosovo institutions turned out to be a positive instance, despite the fact that there has been some opposition to it at the beginning. “When the police structures have a bad image, the whole security system is in danger and ceases to function; this is why it is of grave importance to build up the image of KP after the integration”. 287² policemen have been integrated after the signing of the Brussels Agreement. In addition to this, our correspondent states that it is of significant

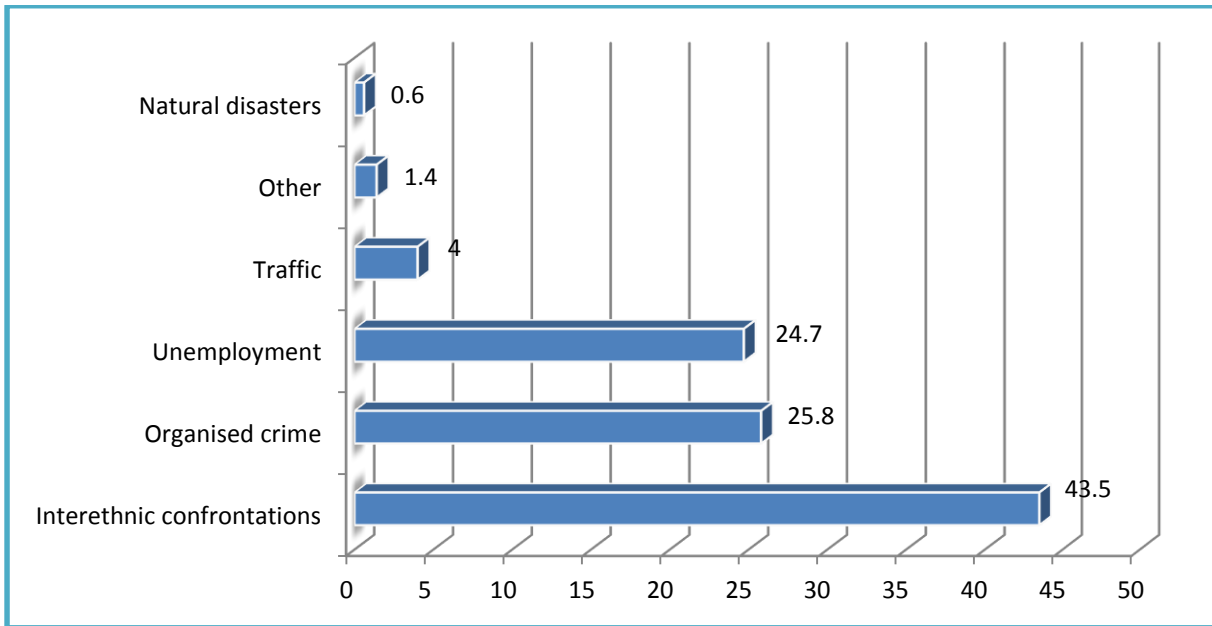
² Government of the Republic of Serbia, Office for Kosovo and Metohija: “Progress report on the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina”, April 2015, pg. 7. Available at: <http://www.kim.gov.rs/doc/Finalni%20Izvestaj%20KiM%20april%202015%20engl.pdf>



importance that meaningful cooperation was established and joint trainings held between police stations south and north of the Ibar.

MA in security studies, Veroljub Petronić, says that after the signing of the Brussels Agreement legal responsibility for the security situations in Kosovo falls entirely on Kosovo security structures.

Question 21. In your opinion, what are the greatest security risks in your environment?



54% of respondents in North Mitrovica marked interethnic confrontation as the biggest threat to the peace, in Zubin Potok and Zvečan 40% of respondents claim the same, while in Leposavić this number is 32, 3%. Taking into consideration that the research was conducted during the period of increased inter-ethnic tensions and incidents on the Ibar Bridge, this result comes as no surprise.

When asked about the security threats, a significant number of respondents opted for criminal structures, especially organized crime which flourished in the north for the past 15 years due to unclear legal and political status.

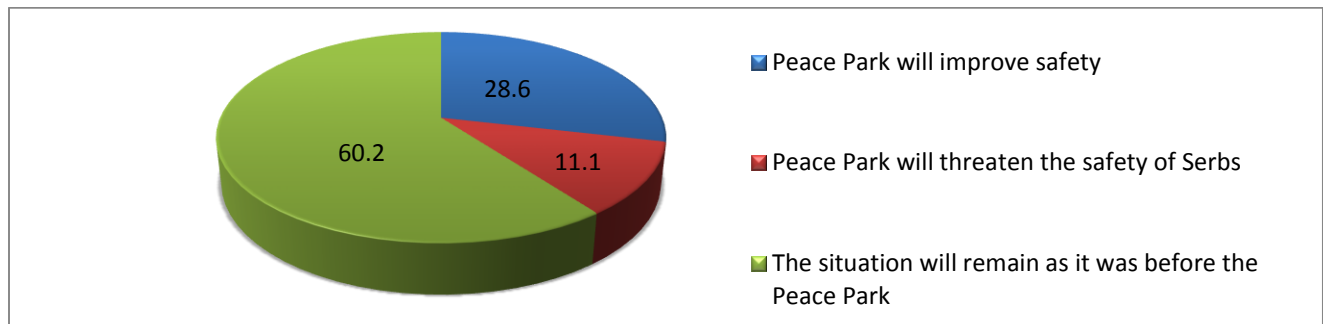
In her interview, Rada Trajković, stressed out that, lately, a strong effect of “powerful Islamic factor” can be sensed; this poses a security threat not only for the Serbs, but for Albanians as well, since it can potentially cause an inter-Albanian confrontation “because it is important to say that there exist Kosovo Albanians who do



not share their [Islamists'] points of view, who are fed up with war and destabilisation, and who want to stride the road of progress".

Veroljub Petronić gave his interpretation of actions of ISIS in Kosovo. In his opinion terrorist groups' actions are threefold and have following goals: physical elimination, expulsion of population and entangling Kosovo into conflict crisis which could spread out throughout the region and cause dismantlement of the existing institutions and modification of population structure of Kosovo.

Question 22. How do you perceive the Peace Park?



The youngest respondents (18-29 year-olds) are the least inclined to think that the Peace Park will improve the safety of citizen's in the north (23,8%), while the highest expectations from the Park's security function have respondents older than 66 (39,2%). There are no significant differences between the answers of the residents of the four municipalities.

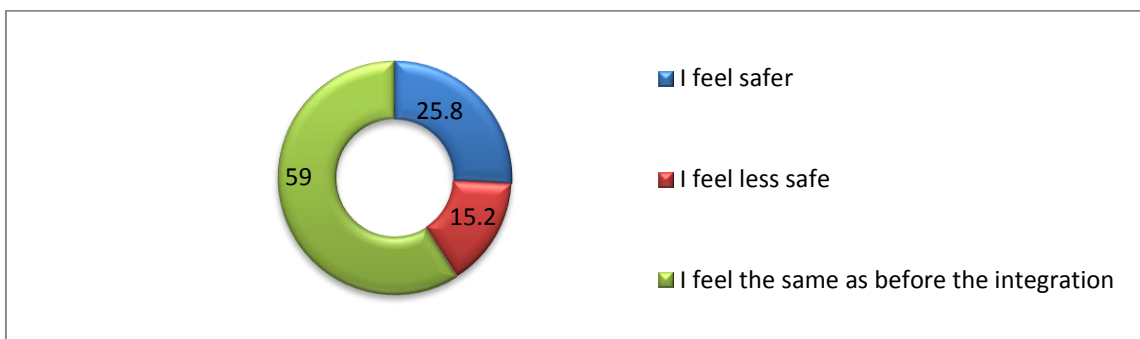
Moderators of focus groups posed the question "*What does, in your opinion, Peace Park represent*"? According to the viewpoints of the majority of the participants in focus groups, Peace Park is a symbol of resistance and sovereignty of Serbs, while the Albanians see it as a provocation and an obstacle to effectuation of their independence. One of the respondents christened the Peace Park a "modern barricade".

When asked about the removal of Peace Park, the EULEX representative pointed out that it is necessary to do a serious impact analysis, which will show the effects such an action would have on the security. Removal of the Peace Park offers no easy answer, because the problem with Kosovo is that people here are willing to die for symbols. "The pressure to remove the Peace Park comes from the narrow circle of Pristina's political elite in charge of integration. If you are the Prime Minister and your constituency believes that your job is to integrate Serbs, which you are not able to do, you will be perceived as incompetent. On the other hand, most of the citizens of South



Mitrovica are not interested in this; they are interested in their jobs, communal services, Lake Gazivode, Trepča mine”.

Question 23. How do you feel after the integration of Serbian police structures into the Kosovo Police Service?



According to the results, respondents from Zvečan appear to feel safer than the residents of the other three municipalities (32, 9%), then follow Leposavić residents (26, 2%), North Mitrovica residents (23, 3%) and, finally, Zubin Potok residents, who feel the least safe after the integration of police structures to KP (19, 5%).

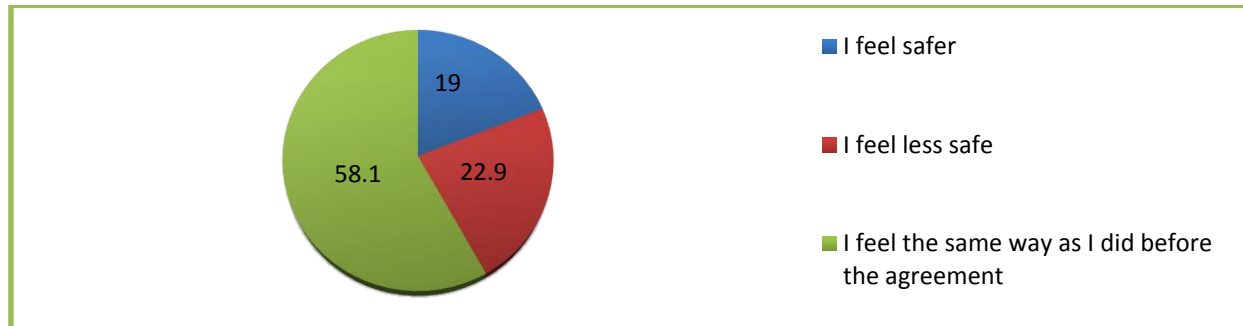
The majority of the participants of focus groups agreed that the integration of police structures was completed relatively quietly and spontaneously. At the same time, the participants state that KP could potentially be the institution that will improve the security situation, but in order to achieve this, its officers must be subject to additional trainings. Participants of focus groups see the Regional Commander as a pawn whose moves will be predetermined by political decision-makers in Pristina. However, it is noteworthy that the majority of the participants could not answer Moderator's question: *Who is the current Regional Commander for the north?*

An already integrated former Serbian police officer shared his experience of the integration with our interviewer. In his opinion KP, as it is at the moment, cannot be of any service to the citizens and it cannot contribute to the normalisation. This is a consequence of numerous problems: unskilled and corrupt staff, unnecessary and complicated paperwork, inadequate technical equipment, indolent officers, complicated chain of command, poisonous interpersonal relations, etc. Our correspondent also pointed out to some of the oversights in the process of integration because, as he claims, integrated officers were not assigned to their new posts in the most effective way. There have been cases where police officers experienced in investigations have been assigned to traffic police and traffic officers have been reassigned to administration or street patrols, etc. Interethnic confrontations, emergence of radical Islamism and criminal



groups which grew strong enough that they can threaten to undermine the government apparatus are the biggest security threats according to this police officer.

Question 24. How do you feel after the integration of the members of Civil protection into Kosovo institutions?



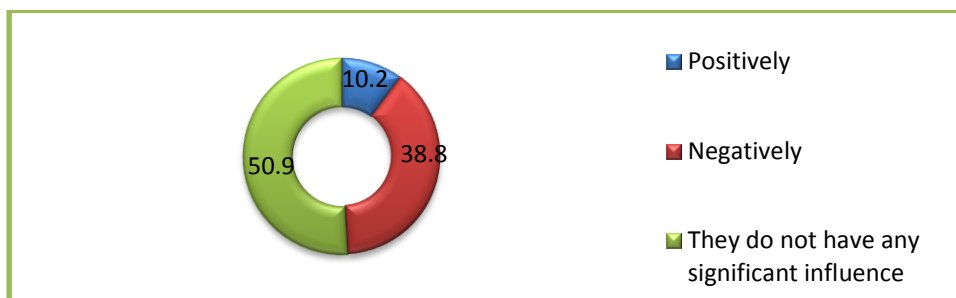
Residents of all of the four municipalities gave similar answers to this question. The situation is the same when the answers are cross-referenced with age and level of education. Given the analysis of this and the previous questions, we can safely conclude that Civil protection was the best graded security organization with favourable performance evaluation (even though, at the time this part of the research was conducted its disbandment was imminent). What is also interesting is that, while most of the citizens state that they feel relatively safer after the integration of KP, the situation is reversed when CP is question.

Participants of focus groups had similar comments about CP; however, they did have some reserves when expressing positive opinion about its work. Several participants emphasized that the government in Pristina sees CP as a paramilitary formation whose mandate is disputable; they also noted that such interpretations by Pristina are not based on facts.

We talked with Mr. Petronić about formation of Kosovo Army. We asked him how realistic is such a scenario and he claims that it is very realistic. However, in his opinion, Kosovo Army would not represent any kind of threat to the security of the Serbian community. He is convinced that future investigation conducted by KP against Kosovo Serbs and remnants of still existing KLA pose a much more serious threat to the security.

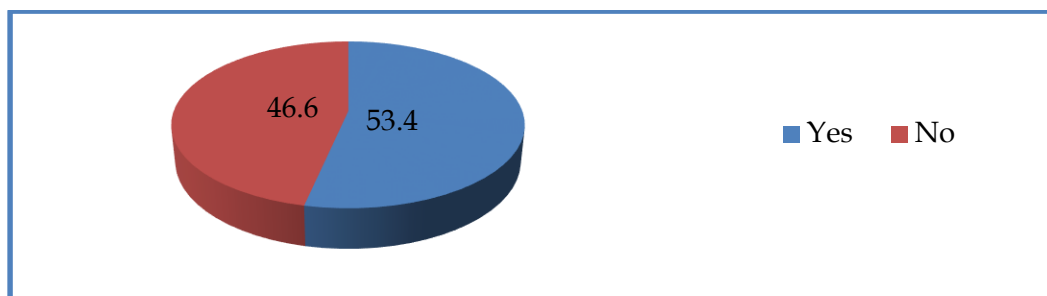


Question 25. Generally speaking, how do politicians' statements affect the security situation in Kosovo?



Our respondents think that most political statements can contribute to the increase of general insecurity. It is because of this that the responsibility of politicians is heightened at such moments when they should abstain from inflammable speeches that can lead to unwanted mobilisation of the citizens. Focus group respondents emphasised the role, members of “Self-determination” have whose aggressive rhetoric does not contribute to stabilisation and understanding between communities. Regular communication between Mayors of South and North Mitrovica and their avoidance of radical rhetoric is valued as positive and beneficial to the protection of fragile stability obtained after the incidents on the Bridge.

Question 26. Can the cooperation of South and North Mitrovica Mayors improve the security situation?



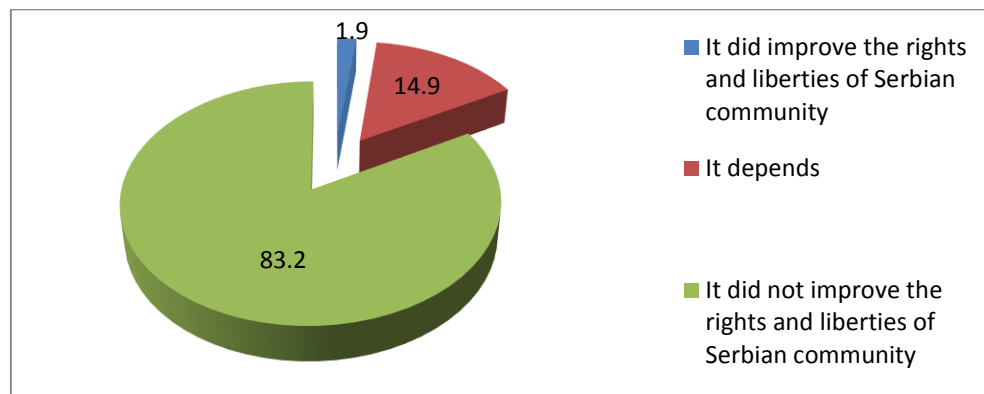
Our EULEX correspondent said that recent events (stabbing of Serbian and drowning of Albanian teenagers) and incidents around the Ibar Bridge can easily compromise the already unstable security situation in Mitrovica if the reactions to those events are not appropriate. He pointed out that in such cases cooperation of the two Mayors can contribute to stabilization and appease the residents of the two cities. A lot of energy has gone into the investigation of the facts of these two cases and cooperation between police managements in the north and in the south. “You can never know



which spark can cause the explosion” says our interlocutor “and this is why the key lies in the cooperation of the two Mayors”.

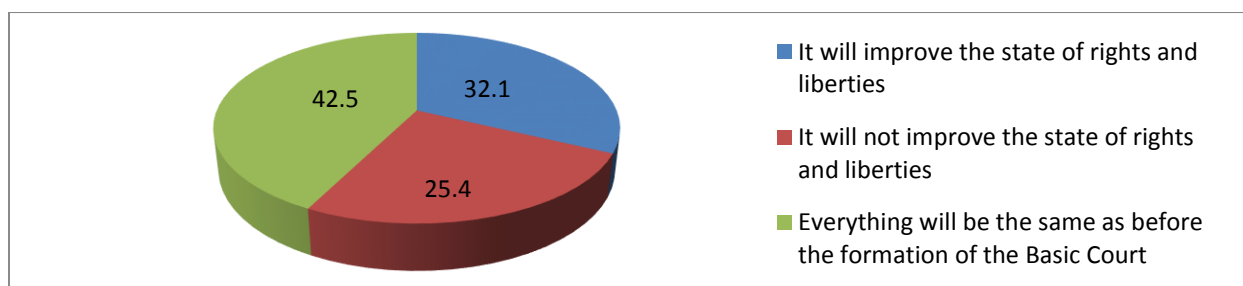
Citizens' views on the state of rights and liberties in Kosovo

Question 27. On the scale from 1 to 5, rate how has the Brussels Agreement improved the rights and liberties of the Serbian community in Kosovo?



The participants of focus groups said that the situation has not improved after the signing of the Brussels Agreement. The only noticeable change is the fact that there are a lot more police officers on the streets, but regardless of this, the overall position and rights of the Serbian community have not been changed, the rights and liberties are continuously being violated and limited. Better traffic security is singled out as one of the positive, visible changes. Unfortunately, apart from the improved traffic safety, the participants mention that they do not feel safer in other respects. The participants described personal experiences of ethnically motivated attacks against Serbs all over Kosovo.

Question 28. What is your opinion about the role of the Basic Court in North Mitrovica which is about to be formed?





Question 29. To which extent are the following rights and liberties respected?
On the scale from 1 to 5

The right to freedom of religion	4.17
Language rights	4.03
The right to education	3.99
The right to health	3.79
The right to freedom of expression	3.63
The right to freedom of movement	3.39
The right to employment	2.49

The average rate with which the respondents grade the overall situation when it comes to the respect of rights and liberties is 3.6. In almost every category, the respect of rights and liberties is given the best grade by the residents of North Mitrovica, and the worst by residents of Zubin Potok. Up until now, citizens in the north seem satisfied with the respect of their rights, but this is not a consequence of a job well done by newly-established institutions, but of the level of interconnectedness with Belgrade.

Participants in the focus groups provided similar answers, emphasizing that the extent of respect for human rights is directly dependent on the will of some politicians and political structures. In the words of one of them: “At the moment, we have rights to the extent which is in accordance with politicians’ needs. This means that, if we should have a right to vote in order to ensure that the form and procedures of the elections are being followed, we will get that right, apart from that right to vote, there is no real will to listen to Serbian representatives, let alone offer a solution to their problems.”

Even though none of the participants mentioned the role of international organizations in creating suitable conditions for the respect of human rights directly, several participants did agree that gradual retreat of international missions from Kosovo will trigger the quiet exodus of the Serbian people as well, because the respect of their rights and liberties will be even more problematic at that point. “The that moment the international community starts to decrease their presence in Kosovo, I expect that, if nothing changes drastically, Serbs will start to leave Kosovo as well, because they will not be able to sustain the psychological pressure coming from every future government in Pristina”. On the other hand, the participants point out that the major responsibility for the position Serbs find themselves in, rests on the shoulders of the Serbian community itself, whose reactions to the violations of their rights are either

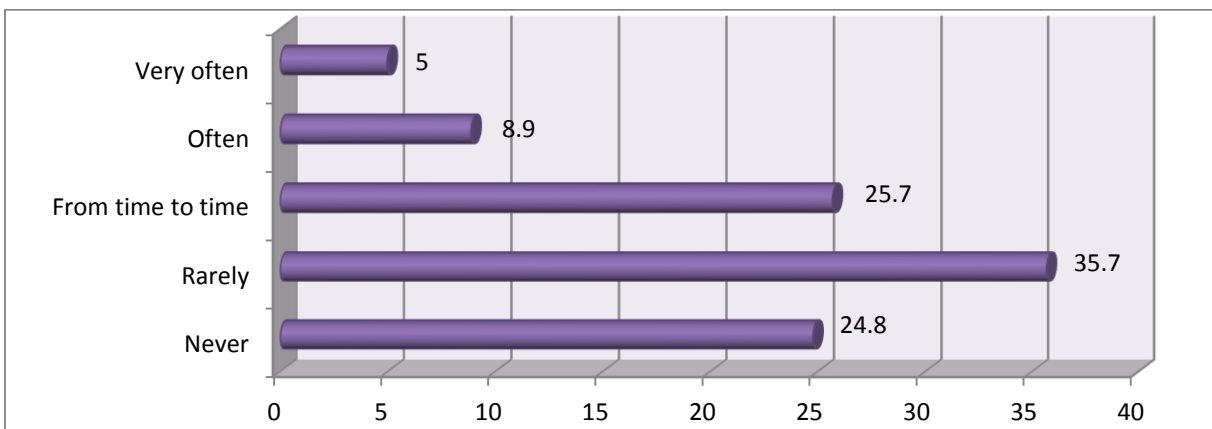


mild or completely absent. In spite of this, one of our correspondents says that even though the Serbs in the north are currently “in the state of anaesthesia” there are still some sparks that can ignite their will fight since the Serbs in the north have always shown will to create their own policies and organize their life.

All of the participants in focus groups agree that Kosovo institutions are responsible for the poor security situation and the violation of rights and liberties, the cause of this is: inefficiency and unprofessionalism of the police service when it comes to solving ethnically motivated attacks. According to the participants, the right to the use one's own mother tongue is widely violated by Pristina, some instances of that violation include: either lack of, or inadequate translation of official documents and web sites, untimely response to the complaints filed with Language Commissioner, and overall sense of fear some of the correspondents claim to feel when they speak Serbian south of the Ibar.

The participants made it clear that there are also some rights which are violated by Serbian institutions: passports of the Serbian Coordination Directorate, which, unlike the rest of the passports issued to Serbian citizens, do require a visa, and displacement of administrative centres for issuance of IDs and passports to Raška and Belgrade. Such treatment of Kosovo Serbs by Serbia makes them feel like “second-grade citizens”. Finally, part of the blame for the worsened position of the Serbian community, falls on themselves because they are disinterested and uninformed.

Question 30. How often do you go to Albanian-majority neighbourhoods?

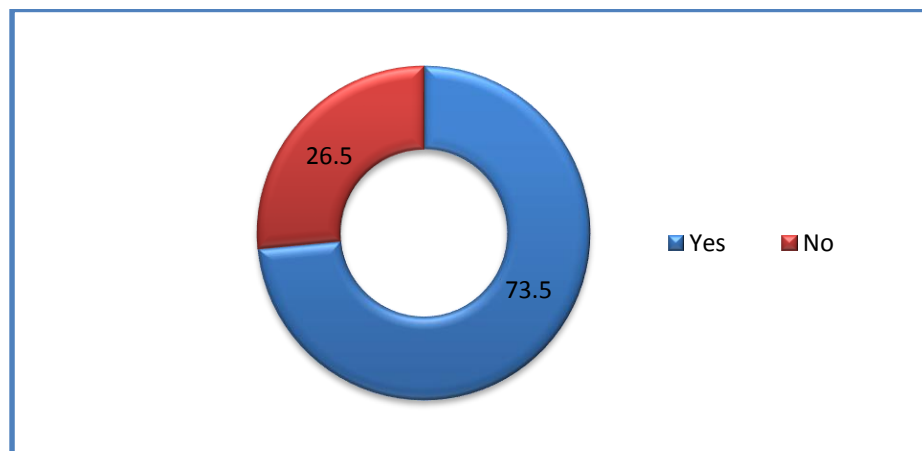


Residents of South Mitrovica are the ones who visit the Albanian-majority neighborhoods most often, while residents of Leposavić interact with Albanians the least. They note that they travel to Pristina by taxi because they lack the courage to use public transportation.



When asked about how the citizens perceive their safety and freedom of movement, EULEX representative told us that, in the north, citizens move freely. However, the situation is different in the south, due to fear and historical circumstances related to the conflict. In order to corroborate his claim, our correspondent used the example of local EULEX employees of Serbian nationality who are afraid to cross over to the south and adds: “it is almost unbelievable how deep the fears of both communities run”. This insecurity is connected to the lack of information and deeply rooted beliefs, claims our correspondent, and suggests that this has to be changed. One big problem is the facts that “fear of the unknown creates hatred that leads to resistance and opposition to any sort of cooperation from both sides”. He sees the civil sector as an important element in the process of reconciliation, as it can give its contribution by creating a safe space for dialogue and joint projects.

Question 31. Do you see yourself in Kosovo in the next five years?



Residents of all of the four municipalities answered in the similar way. On the other hand, when we divide the respondents into age groups, we will find that a large percent of young correspondents (40%) aged between 18-29 said that they do not expect to live in Kosovo in the future. We got the similar results from respondents with faculty education, as every third highly educated respondent plans to leave Kosovo. The thoughts of leaving Kosovo are the most common with students and unemployed people.

Participants of focus groups consider that Serbs are in a difficult and depressing position, without any perspective, where the sense of uncertainty and fear is predominant. The way out of this situation is the struggle for better socioeconomic position of northern Serbs, eradication of corruption and nepotism, investments in small and medium-sized businesses, strengthening of democratic institutions and rational use of financial resources coming from the Kosovo budget.



Conclusions

- Two years after the signing of “First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations” between Belgrade and Pristina, little has changed for the Serbian community in the north. In spite of this, the Serbs believe that their position has gone from bad to worse, now resembling the position Serbs in the rest of Kosovo struggle with for years. This brings into question the effectiveness of the Agreement because the normalization of the relations between the two governments did not normalize the situation on the field. This poses a serious question: *Who will remain to live the Brussels' reality?* because 40% of young Serbs do not see a future in Kosovo. Similarly, 60, 5% respondents from the north state that they rarely or never visit Albanian-majority towns. These results point out to the fact that the ethnic distance between Serbs and Albanians does not subside.
- Legal framework, or lack thereof, complicates the everyday life and activities (“invalid” documents create the most difficulties: personal IDs, drivers’ licences, licence plates and registrations, diplomas; then follow: inability to ratify agreements, get cadastral extracts, non-recognition of marriages entered into after 1999, etc.).
- Although the level of trust and the overall satisfaction with the performance results of international institutions are very low, Serbs are still afraid of the withdrawal of international representatives from Kosovo, because, consequently, with this they expect their own mass departure from Kosovo. These results show that the international institutions, which in the eyes of the Serbs are among the first to blame for the current situation, are, at the same time, the only ones who can guarantee that the situation does not aggravate.
- Our respondents agree that the main source of income for the citizens in the north is the budget of the Republic of Serbia. The majority of the citizens have some source of income from the Serbian budget (52, 2%); however, most of the respondents consider that this situation creates a false image of a sustainable social system. The participants cannot agree on the ways to overcome this situation: some believe that the key lies in production systems of great capacities, which could employ a significant number of people; while others trust in the potential of small, family businesses which are the most flexible and resistant to the economic crisis.
- Even though they are not satisfied with the work of their political representatives, more and more Serbs from the north supports their participation in Kosovo



institutions (56,3%), but they keep underlining that political participation has to be conducted in a significantly more effective and constructive way.

- Community/Association of Serbian Municipalities is mostly perceived as a mechanism created in order to protect the rights of the Serbian community and as one of the few positive outcomes of the Brussels Agreement, but notwithstanding this, the respondents have humble expectations about its formation and possible competencies.



Expression of gratitude

This research would not have been realized without the financial help of the EU Office in Kosovo, cooperating citizens and, most of all, our researchers, members of Platform for Analysis and Research:

Moderators of focus groups: Dušan Milunović, Lazar Aksić, Stevan Đokić, Milica Andrić, Dragana Aleksić, Ivan Božović, Miloš Timotijević and Ivana Vukašinović;

Interviewers: Branislav Nešović, Lazar Rakić, Dušan Milunović, Lazar Milić, Milica Andrić, Jelena Vićentijević and Igor Dašić;

Moderators of round tables: Lazar Rakić, Luka Radulović, Dejan Mirić, Aleksandar Zdravković, Marko Marjanović and Darko Stanković.

Polltakers: Milica Rakić, Miljan Stanišić, Dušan Milunović, Luka Radulović, Milica Andrić, Lazar Rakić, Igor Dašić, Haris Čekić, Dejan Mirić, Aleksandar Zdravković, Ivana Vukašinović, Lazar Aksić, Miloš Timotijević, Lazar Milić, Darko Stanković, Tijana Ilić, Jelena Perović, Marko Ćirković, Mirjana Đurić, Marko Marjanović, Milija Biševac, Ivan Božović, Marko Rakić, Dragana Aleksić, Svetlana Đurić, Stevan Đokić and Nikola Bošković;

Data-entry coordinators: Lidija Kuljača, Katarina Bakalić, Milica Stanković, Aleksandar Klarić and Veljko Jovanović.

Participating organisations

Platform for Analysis and Research is coalition consisted of the following organisations:



Center for Development of Local Communities Kosovska Mitrovica



Under the Lucky Star



3E institute

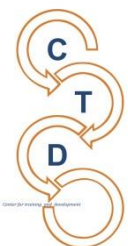


Youth Association "Putokaz"



ACDC
Advocacy Center For Democratic Culture

**Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture
(ACDC)**



Center for Training and Development



DOMOVIK

NGO Domovik



**Centar za
razvoj zajednica**

Center for Communities Development



Human Centre



NGO Santa Marija



The Upgrade Society



Institute for Development of Civil Society "Innovate"

Institute for Development of Civil Society Innovate