

TREND ANALYSIS

ATTITUDES OF SERB COMMUNITY IN KOSOVO



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INTRODUCTION

The annual public opinion survey “Trend Analysis 2023”, conducted by the non-governmental organization AKTIV, represents a detailed study of changes in attitudes and perceptions of the Serb community in Kosovo on important socio-political topics. From its beginning in 2016 in four municipalities in the north, until its expansion to all Serb-majority municipalities in 2019, this research has become crucial for understanding the needs, priorities, and concerns of the Serb community. This year’s results showed an even greater degree of pessimism than in previous years, which is the result of growing fears of a possible open conflict.

The 2023 Survey reflects a significant deterioration in all segments - from interethnic relations to the perception of the security situation. This year, the growing fear of conflict and heightened political tensions have resulted in profound pessimism within the Serb community. In particular, negative trends were recorded in relation to the expectations for the future and the general feeling of safety.

Events that have marked the previous year, including political decisions and failed materialization of the dialogue between the Government of Kosovo and Serbs, have caused serious concern in the community. It is expected that these events will have long-lasting negative consequences on interethnic relations and overall cooperation between communities.

The research showed that despite the continuation of some forms of communication and cooperation, there is a growing sense of insecurity and mistrust, which further complicates the already complex political and social dynamics. These findings represent a clear signal for the urgent need for new and more comprehensive approaches to crisis resolution, with a special focus on protecting the rights and improving the quality of life of the Serb community in Kosovo.

The essence of this year’s results is the ubiquitous fear which is a consequence of issues that remained unresolved, such as the formation of the Association/Community of Serb Municipalities (A/CSM), as well as the kind of apathy that is present in relation to the potential for achieving a long-term solution that would provide protection (both institutional and other) that is needed to stop the departure from Kosovo. No matter how these results are interpreted, policy makers and decision makers ought to perceive them as a reminder of the urgent need to launch new and comprehensive efforts aimed at improving institutional respect for the laws that protect the rights of non-majority communities and most certainly at increasing the level of their quality of life.

The most significant trends for 2023 are presented briefly in this chapter, while all of the available data are presented in detail in the text below. When it comes to key trends:

95.5%

of respondents believe that the situation in Kosovo is not moving in a good direction

57.1%

of respondents believe that life for Serbs in Kosovo will be worse in three years' time

69.2%

of respondents believe that political instability is the main problem in Kosovo

88.9%

of respondents in the north of Kosovo have pointed out that they or members of their families were directly threatened

83.6%

of respondents stated that there are no political parties or politicians they trust in Kosovo

1.35

according to the assessment of residents of the north, the lowest level of trust is towards the Government and the Kosovo Police

56.9%

of respondents stated that there are no political parties or politicians they trust in Kosovo

18.9%

of respondents believe that the A/CSM will be formed

40.5%

of respondents have opined that the Agreement between Belgrade and Pristina is the most acceptable for Kosovo Serbs

14.8%

of respondents support the idea of demarcation

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

The research was conducted in the field, while the survey method was used as the primary tool. The questionnaire that consists of 36 questions has served as the basis for relevant data collection. The time frame of the research extended from June to August 2023, and during that period, a wide range of information was encompassed. A sample of 536 respondents formed the basis of the analysis, providing relevant insights and results based on collected responses. Of that number, 270 of them reside in the northern part of Kosovo, while 266 respondents live in municipalities south of the Ibar River, which have a significant presence of Kosovo Serbs.

Sample structure according to the respondent's place of residence

Northern Kosovo

50.4%

Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar River

49.6%

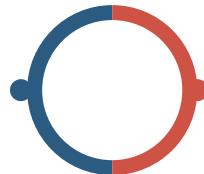


Sample structure according to the respondent's gender

Male



51.9%

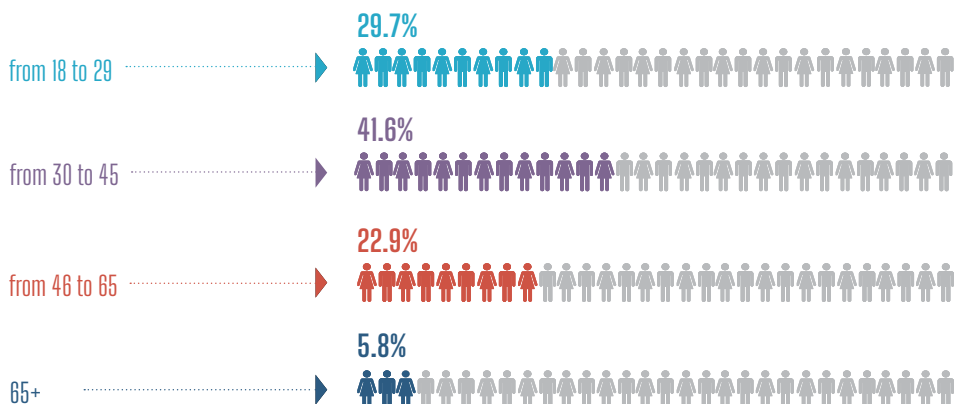


48.1%

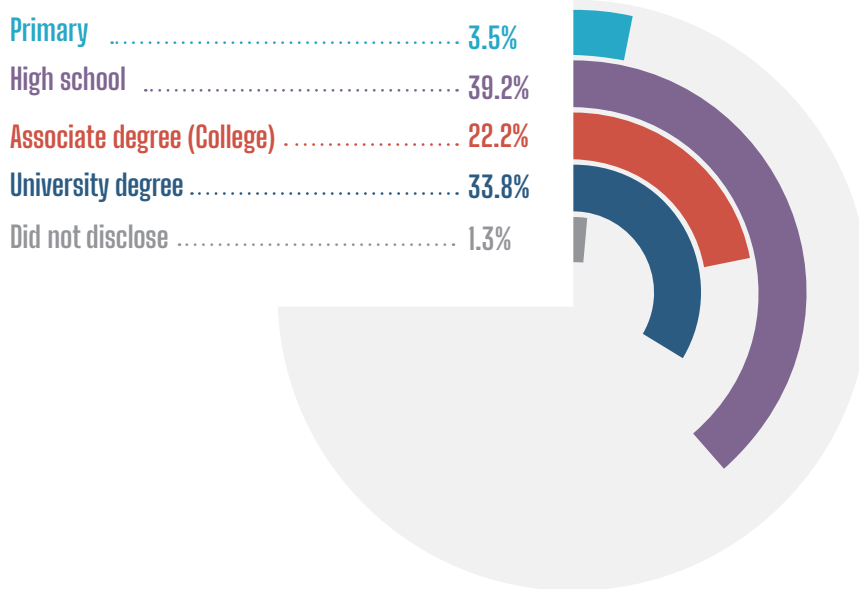
Female



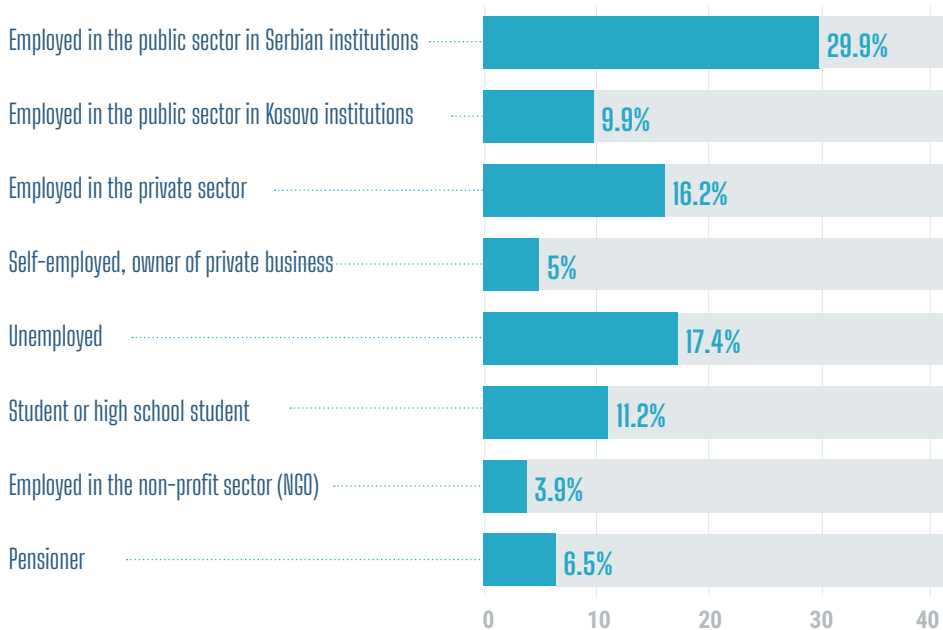
Age distribution of respondents



Sample structure according to the level of education of respondents



Sample structure according to respondent's employment status



RESEARCH RESULTS

GENERAL ATTITUDES

1

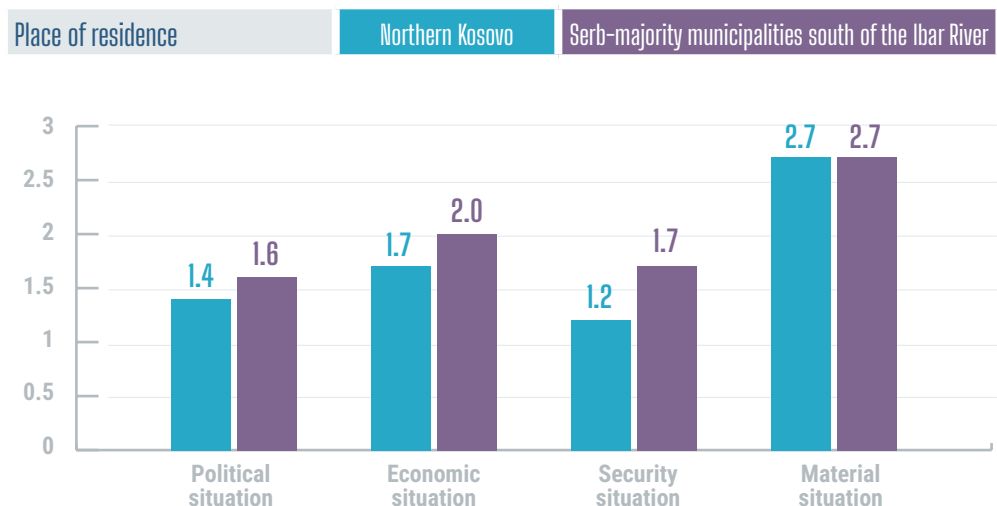


1. Regarding the political, economic, security and financial situation in In Kosovo, respondents of Serbian nationality gave ratings for each of these categories on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest rating:

	Average rating
Political situation	1.51
Economic situation	1.85
Security situation	1.46
Material situation	2.70

The data obtained from this year's survey show that satisfaction with the current political, economic, security and material situation in Kosovo is extremely low. Compared to the results of the previous three years, a significant drop in satisfaction with the political and security situation is noticeable. Also, the downward trend of financial power of residents of Serb nationality in Kosovo continues, while the material situation is the only one within the approximate results of earlier research. Viewed cumulatively, the overall experience of various fundamental aspects of the life of Serbs in Kosovo is extremely bad.

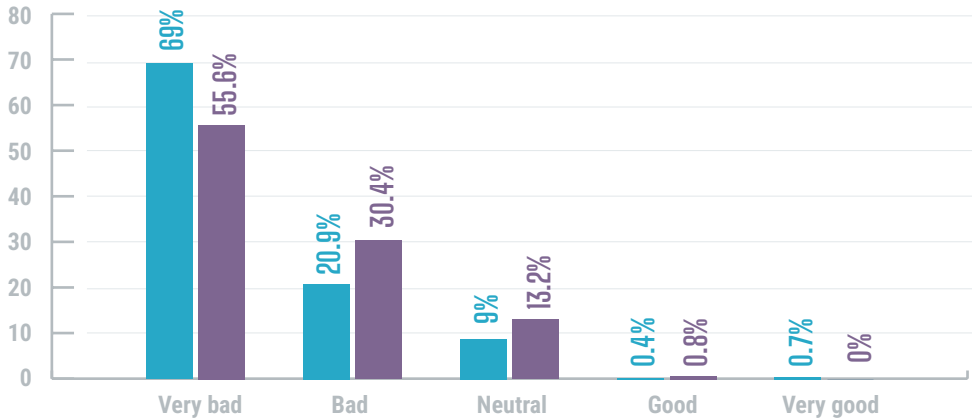
	2023	2022	2021	2020
Political situation	1.51	2.05	2.01	2.06
Economic situation	1.85	2.07	2.2	2.08
Security situation	1.46	2.04	1.93	2.17
Material situation	2.70	2.60	2.74	2.84



Political situation

Northern Kosovo

Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar River

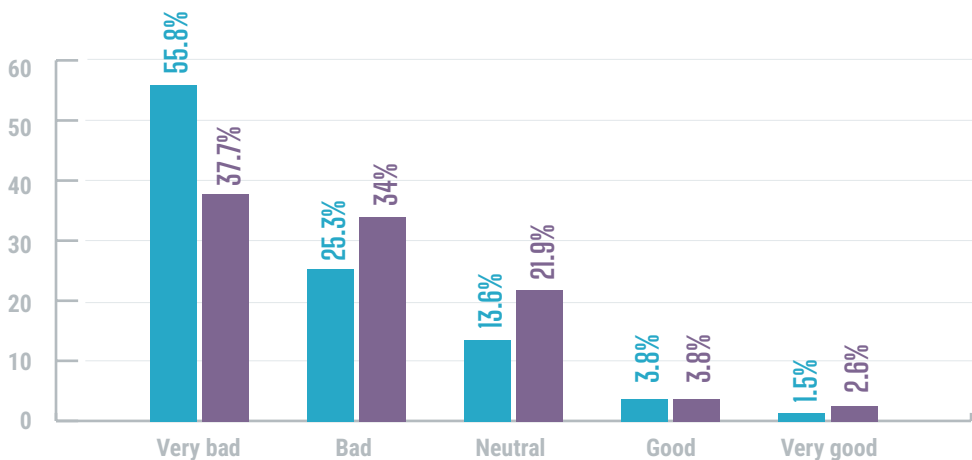


Viewed through the difference based on the place of residence, it is noticed that the citizens south of the Ibar rate the political situation slightly better than the respondents from the north of Kosovo. While 69% of respondents from the north of Kosovo rate the political situation as very bad, respondents south of the Ibar dominantly agree with this perception of the political situation, but the frequency of such a perception is slightly more than 13% lower than among respondents from the north of Kosovo. Analyzed segmentally, about 20% of Serbs from the north define the situation as bad, while this percentage in the south is 10% higher. Compared to last year, there was a sudden spike in number of respondents who define the situation as very bad and a significant drop in the percentage of those who perceive the political circumstances as good, which indicates a significant change in the context for Serbs living in Kosovo.

Economic situation

Northern Kosovo

Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar River

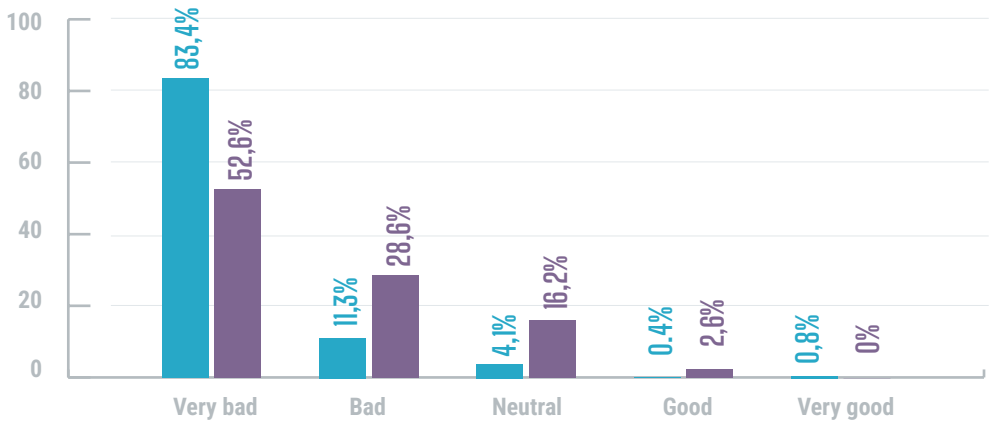


When it comes to the perception of the economic situation, there is a noticeable decrease in satisfaction with the economic situation among the respondents from the north of Kosovo. In both areas, the economic situation was assessed by the majority as very bad, but the difference is about 18% in a more negative perception among respondents in the north. Cumulatively, more than two-thirds of citizens south and north of the Ibar perceive the economic situation as bad or very bad.

Security situation

Northern Kosovo

Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar River

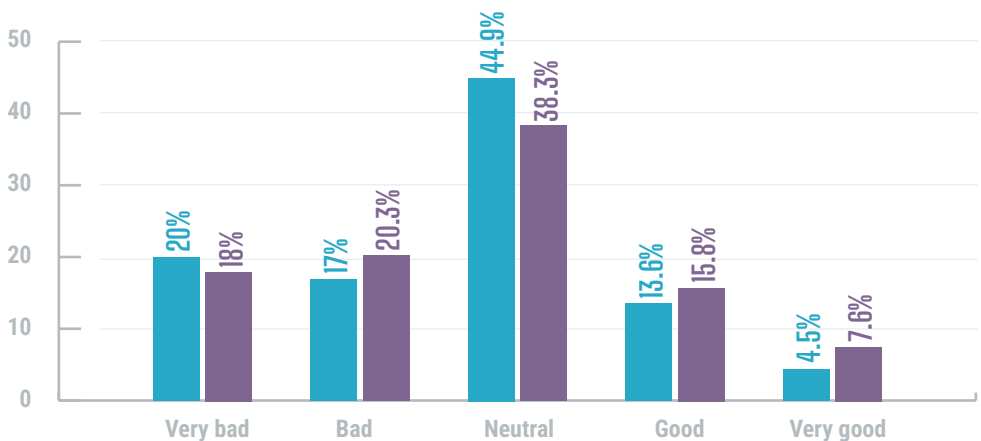


Compared to last year, due to frequent extreme situations, it was expected that this year there would be a very negative assessment of the security situation by respondents both north and south of the Ibar River. It is also interesting to note that despite of the bigger problems in the north, the variability in relation to the place of residence has decreased, thus more than 90% of the inhabitants in the north and more than 80% in the south consider that security is bad or very bad. Cumulatively, the Serbian community almost unanimously perceives that it lives in a threatened security environment.

Material situation

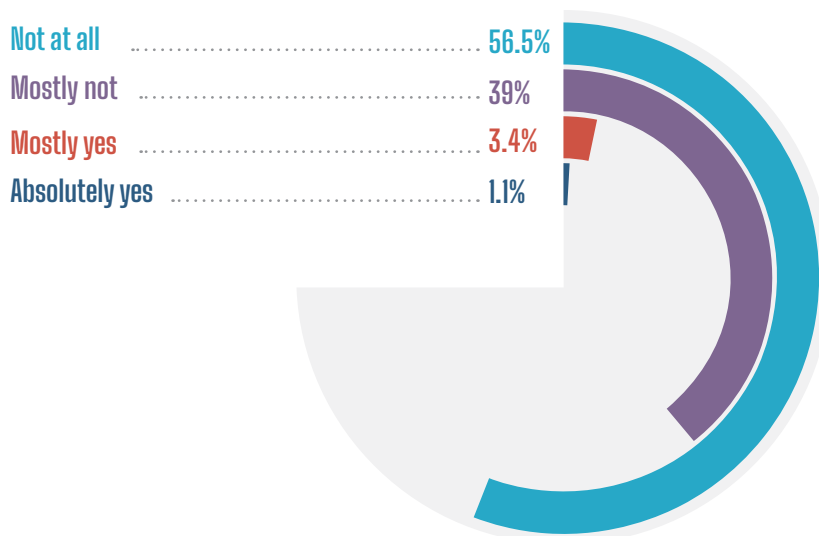
Northern Kosovo

Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar River

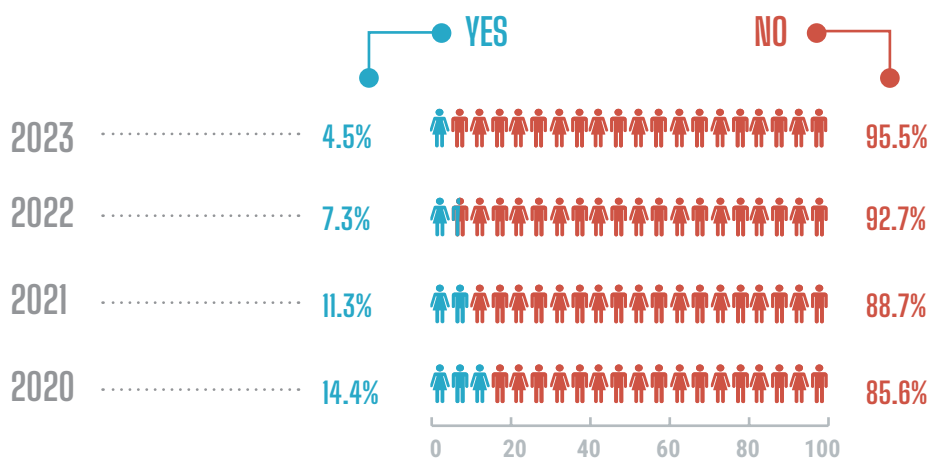


The perception of the material situation of the respondents was the only one that remained within the approximate survey results of earlier trend analyses. The largest percentage of respondents evaluated the material situation neutrally, as neither good nor bad. Compared to last year, what is noticeable is a decrease in the number of respondents who consider that their material situation is good. This percentage was between 16.8% and 21% last year, while this year it ranges between 13.6% and 15.8%. The decline in the Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar, despite of their successful integration, indicates the existence of a serious socio-economic problem. These data, together with the data related to the perception of the overall economic situation, do not provide the reason for existential optimism to citizens of Serbian nationality in Kosovo.

2. Are things in Kosovo going in the right direction?

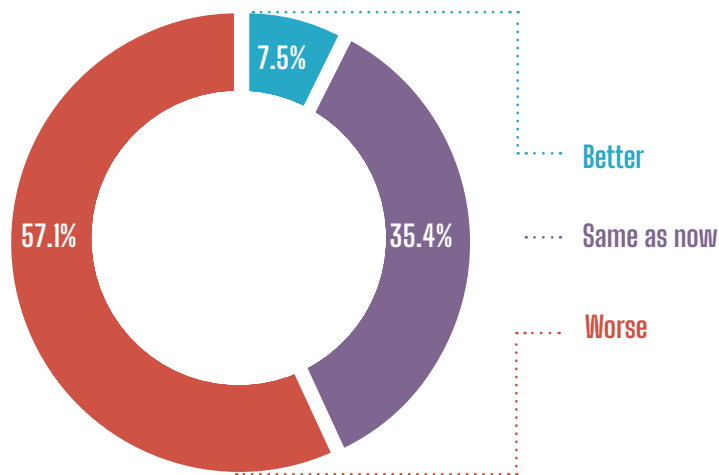


Since 2020, political evaluations of the overall situation in Kosovo have been evaluated very negatively, ranging from 85.6% to this year's 95.5% of respondents who believe that things are moving in a bad direction in Kosovo. It is worrisome that the trend is continuously increasing in favor of pessimistic forecasts. Namely, from 2020 to today, the percentage of respondents who believe that Kosovo is moving in the right direction has decreased from 14.4% to 4.5%.

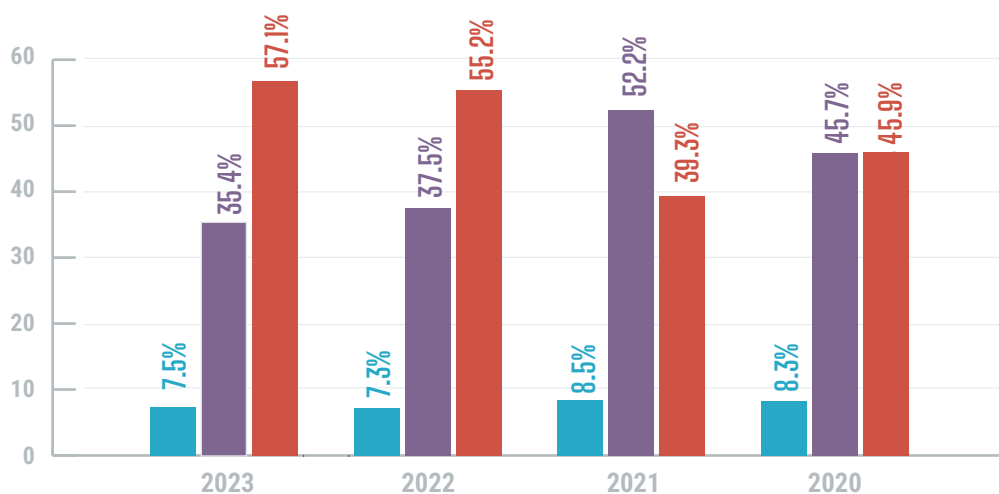


From the situation in 2020, where every seventh respondent believed that Kosovo is moving in the right direction, it has come to the point that in 2023 only every 15th respondent shares an optimistic attitude about the future of Kosovo.

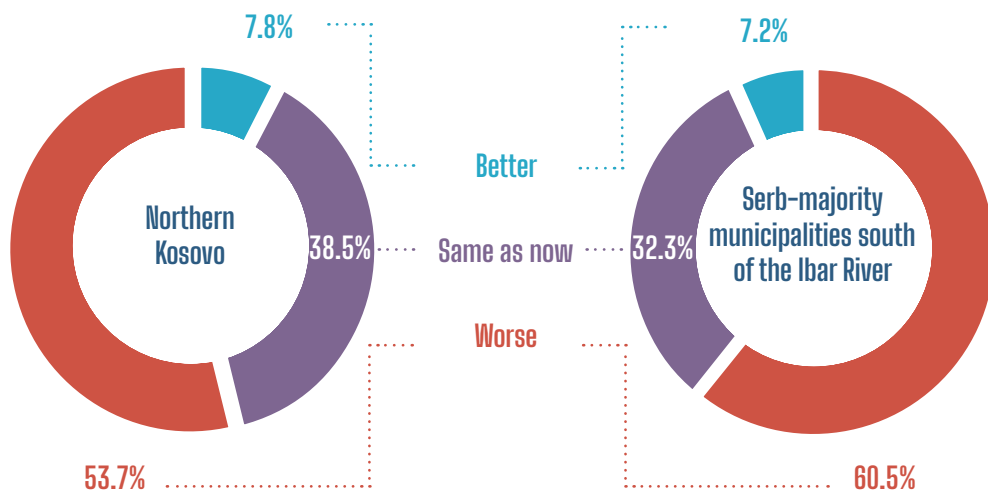
3. In your opinion, life for Serbs in Kosovo in three years' time will be..?



In accordance with the data on the perception of the overall life in Kosovo, this year's survey shows that there has been an increase in the number of respondents who believe that life for Serbs in Kosovo will be even worse in the next three years. Compared to last year, the already high percentage increased by an additional 2%. If we add to this the fact that only 7.5% of respondents believe that life in Kosovo will be better in the next few years, we get a clearer image of the hopelessness, fear and pessimism that dominate the perceptions of citizens north and south of the Ibar River.



When this question is further analyzed according to the place of residence, we can see that there are no significant differences between the inhabitants of the north of Kosovo and the inhabitants south of the Ibar. The difference can be observed if we are to compare the answers to this question from this year's survey with last year's. The data show that a significant number of respondents south of the Ibar who thought last year that things would get worse increased by almost 7% this year, while in the north it is higher by about 3%.



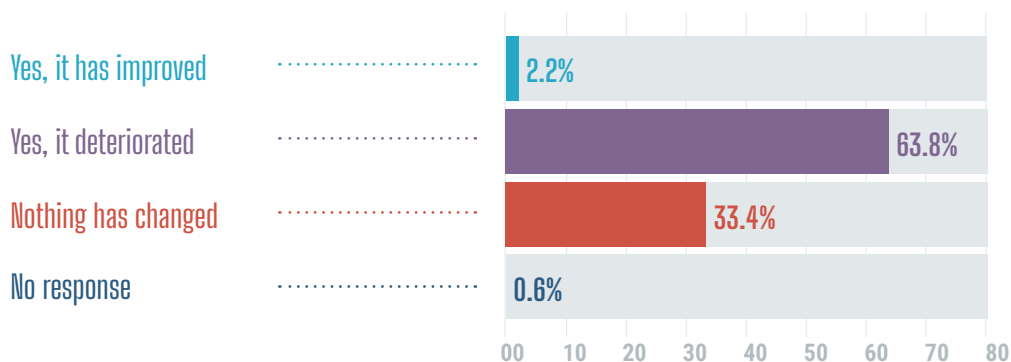
4. In your opinion, what is the biggest problem in Kosovo?

What is noticeable is a significant increase in the perception of political instability as the main problem in Kosovo in 2023, it went from 39.2% in 2022 to 69.2%. This almost double increase indicates a great growth of political tensions and a sense of insecurity among citizens of Serbian nationality. In 2023, economic situation and unemployment are recognized by 58.4% of citizens as a problem, which is a decrease compared to the previous year when this problem was more pronounced with 65.4%. This decline may reflect the recovery from the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a change in the perception of economic priorities in relation to the growing political and security problems. Security has become a more significant concern in 2023, with 64.6% compared to 38.8% in 2022, which represents a significant increase and may signal a justified fear of repetition of extreme situations, especially in the north of Kosovo. Issues of crime and corruption are also recognized as a problem by a greater number of citizens in 2023 (46.6%) than in 2022 (40.6%), which shows that there is continued concern for these social problems. Migration and the departure of young people remain a significant concern, albeit decreased in 2023 to 52.2% from 55.5% in 2022. This still indicates that there are problems in keeping the young and educated citizens within the country, which may have long-term consequences for the demographic and economic structure of society.

THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN KOSOVO	2023	2022	2021
Political instability	69.2%	39.2%	52.6%
Economic situation/unemployment	58.4%	65.4%	25.2%
Security	64.6%	38.8%	47.4%
Crime and corruption	46.6%	40.6%	43.7%
Migration in general and youth migration	52.2%	53.5%	51.1%

Overall, the trend analysis shows growing concerns about the political and security situation in Kosovo, while the economic crisis and social problems such as crime, corruption and migration remain high on the list of challenges which the citizens are faced with.

5. Has the economic situation in Kosovo changed in the last year?



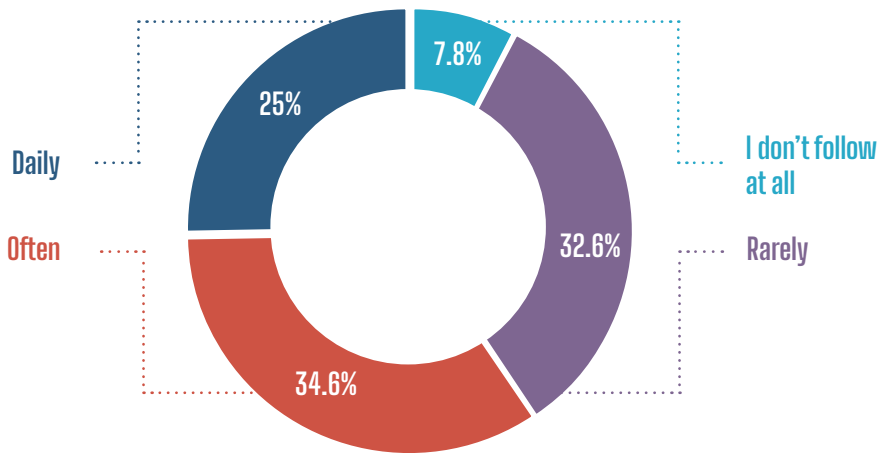
By analyzing the perception of the economic situation in Kosovo among the Serb community, one can conclude that pessimism is widespread. Most of the respondents, more precisely 63.8%, have opined that the economic situation has deteriorated in the past year. This data clearly indicates deep-rooted dissatisfaction with current economic trends. A relevant percentage of 33.4%, i.e. a third of respondents believe that there have been no changes in the economic situation, which may indicate that certain economic conditions have already been strengthened, regardless of the political and security circumstances.

When observed cumulatively, the results reflect the profound concern and pessimistic view of the Serb community in Kosovo regarding the economic prospects. A significantly high percentage of those who feel that the situation has deteriorated might have an implication on social peace, political stability, and the potential for economic development.

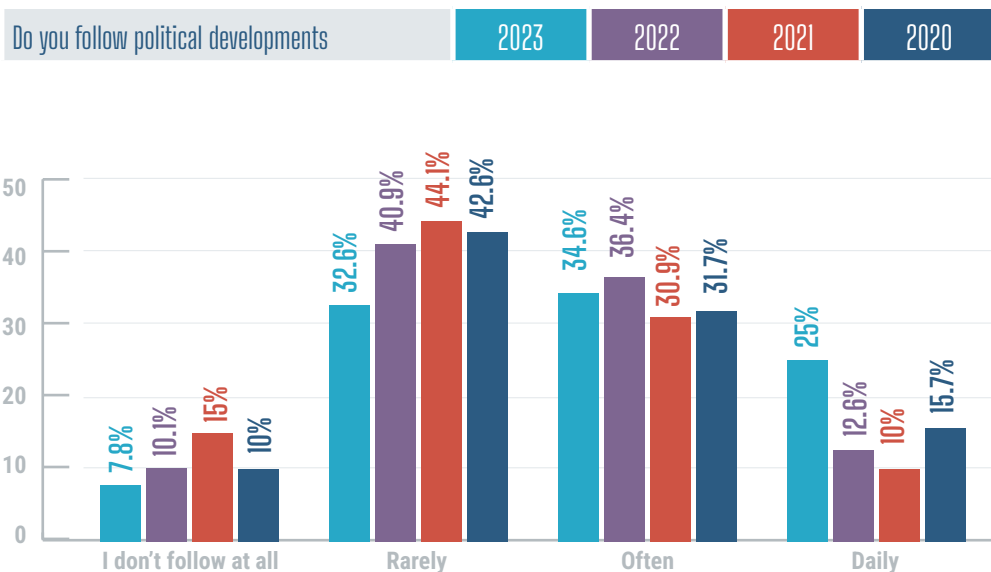


RESEARCH RESULTS
TRUST IN DECISION MAKERS

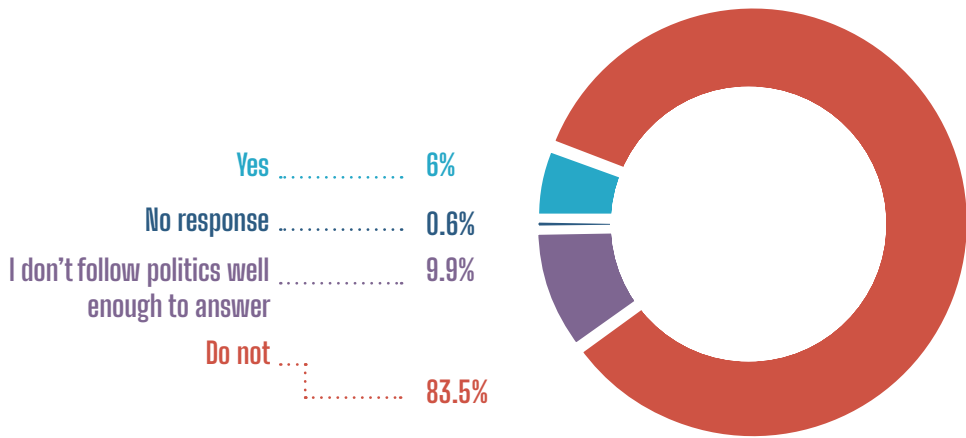
6. How often do you follow political events?



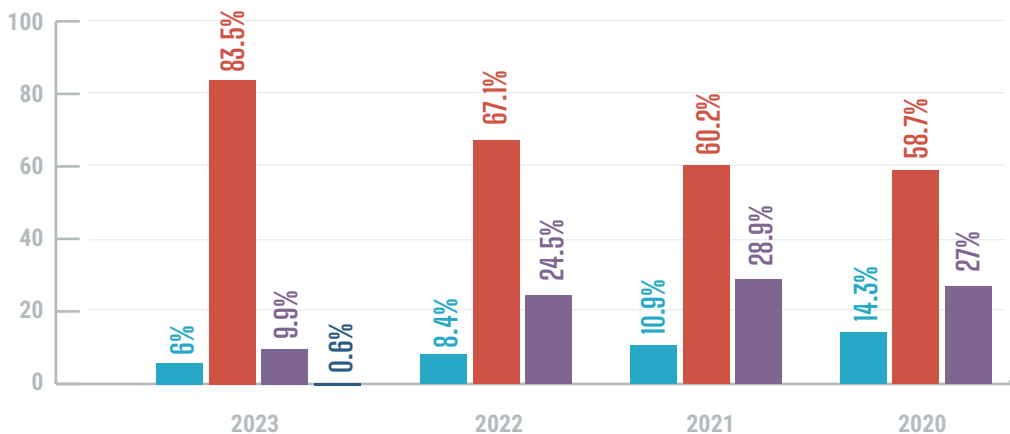
When it comes to public information, this year's research shows that the frequency of following of political events on a daily level has doubled compared to last year. Also, the trend among the population that traditionally stated that they rarely follow political events has decreased, and for the first time this percentage is below 40% of respondents. The reasons for this are probably related to the need for citizens to be informed in a timely manner due to the growing crisis in the north of Kosovo, increase in unilateral activities of the authorities in Pristina, as well as the frequency of extreme situations.



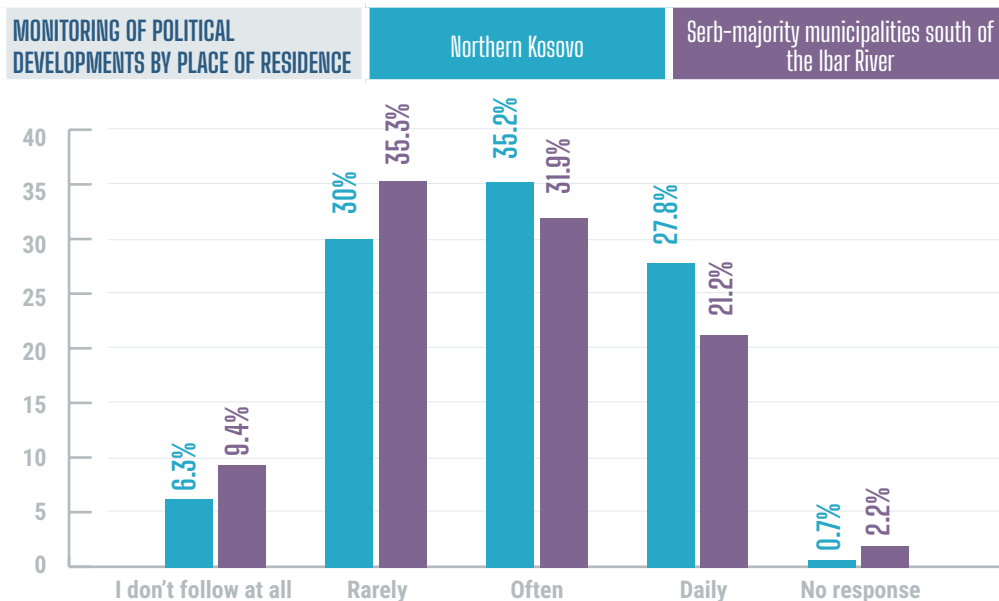
7. Are there any politicians or political parties in Kosovo that you trust?



Trust in political leaders is a key element for the survival and prosperity of any political community, and this is even more important in societies which are facing the unresolved consequences of war conflicts. Such communities, including the Serbian community in Kosovo, require significantly higher levels of mutual trust both in Albanians and their own political representatives. Long-term research efforts in surveying Serbs in Kosovo indicate a trend of decreasing trust in politicians. This year, a record 83.5% of respondents declared that there is no politician or political party they trust. Since 2020, the trend of growing mistrust has nevertheless made a significant discrepancy between last year and this year, i.e. a spike of over 15%.



Data from the survey show that the degree of following of political events according to the place of residence of politicians is quite uniform, although it is noticeable that this year, certain percentage of the residents of the north of Kosovo follow political events more often (3.3% or rather 6.6%).



8. Which Serbian politician/political party in Kosovo do you trust?

The analysis of the collected data indicates a very low level of trust of respondents in Serbian politicians and political parties in Kosovo. Despite the perception that there is almost unanimous support for Aleksandar Vučić and the Serbian Progressive Party, they enjoy the trust of 2.6% of respondents, which puts them in first place compared to the other listed options. It was found that 1.8% of respondents trust the Serbian List, which is slightly less than SNS. Even new political figures like Aleksandar Arsenijević, who only 0.4% of respondents voted for, do not enjoy trust, but this should be placed in the context of disavowal of any political organization outside of the proclaimed Serbian List.

WHICH SERBIAN POLITICIAN OR PARTY DO YOU TRUST?	% of respondents
Aleksandar Vučić – SNS	2.6%
Serbian list	1.8%
Aleksandar Arsenijević	0.4%
Socialist Party of Serbia	0.2%

9. Which Albanian politician/political party in Kosovo do you trust?

WHICH ALBANIAN POLITICIAN OR PARTY DO YOU TRUST?	% of respondents
Albin Kurti	0.2%
LDK – Rugova’s party	0.2%
Veton Surroi	0.2%

Data show that trust in Albanian politicians and political parties among the Serb community in Kosovo is extremely low. Each of the listed names and parties - Albin Kurti, LDK – Rugova’s party, and Veton Surroi - enjoys the trust of only 0.2% of respondents. This equally low level of trust towards various Albanian political figures indicates a strong distrust in the political options of the majority community and at the same time it showed that any serious integration of the Serb community into Kosovo society is not possible.



RESEARCH RESULTS

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

3

10. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate how satisfied you are with the performance of the following institutions?

The two institutions rated best by citizens of Serbian nationality are the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Office for Kosovo and Metohija. The interim bodies of local self-government are almost equal to KFOR, and the reason for the drop in support can be found in the non-participation of Serbs in local institutions. Although all three institutions continue to have a decline in support, they are still rated far better than any Kosovo institution, including the police with a rating of 1.79.

ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 5, HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU BY THE PERFORMANC OF THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS	2023	2022	2021	2020
Interim bodies of local self-government	2.17	2.55	2.59	2.56
Municipalities in the Kosovo system	2.15	2.5	2.6	2.45
Office for Kosovo and Metohija	2.46	2.74	2.82	2.54
Government of Serbia	2.53	3.07	3.22	2.89
Government of Kosovo	1.61	1.77	1.73	1.95
Serbian MPs in the Assembly of Kosovo	1.8	2.14	2.21	2.12
Serbian ministers in the Government of Kosovo	1.74	2.08	2.25	2.12
UNMIK	2.09	2.08	1.95	2.19
EU office in Kosovo	1.95	1.99	1.95	2.09
EULEX	1.99	1.96	1.79	1.96
KFOR	2.18	2.31	2.09	2.23

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE KOSOVO POLICE

Kosovo Police

2023

1.79

The analysis of the collected data indicates a general tendency of greater trust in institutions by respondents from municipalities with a Serb-majority south of the Ibar compared to those from the northern part of Kosovo. It is noticeable that all institutions, from local self-governments in the Serbian or Kosovo system, through representatives of the governments of Serbia and Kosovo to international bodies, have a higher average degree of trust among respondents south of the Ibar. This could indicate differences in perception and experience between the two groups of the Serb community, since the respondents south of the Ibar in the past period, in addition to Serbian institutions, were also referred to having a greater interaction with the Kosovo system as well as various international institutions.

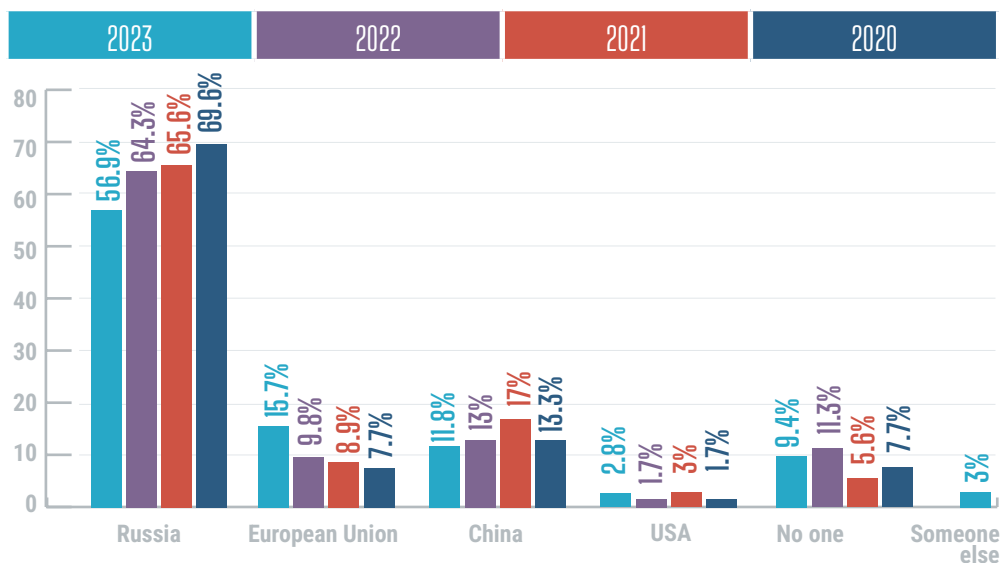
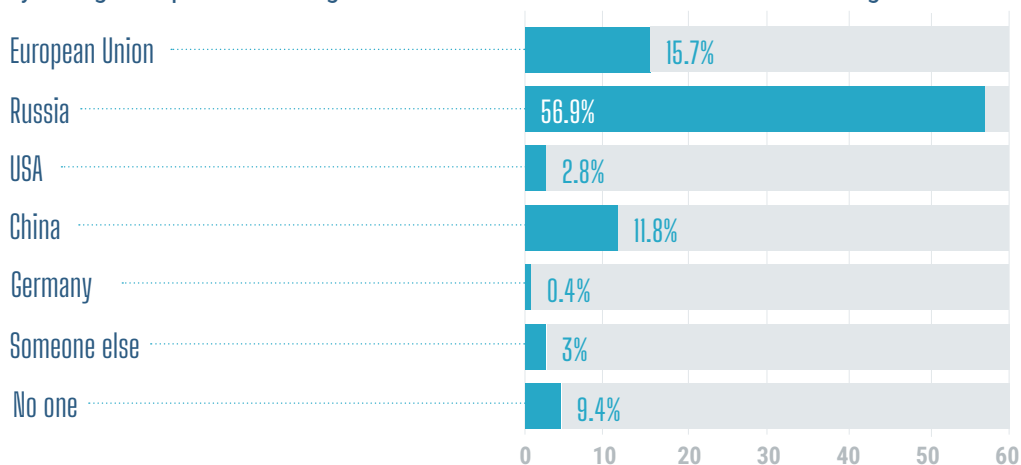
	Northern Kosovo	Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar River
Interim bodies of local self-government	1.84	2.50
Municipalities (Serbian) in the Kosovo system	1.74	2.56
Office for Kosovo and Metohija	2.16	2.76
Government of Serbia	2.12	2.95
Government of Kosovo	1.35	1.87
Serbian MPs in the Assembly of Kosovo	1.61	1.99
Serbian ministers in the Government of Kosovo	1.57	1.91
Kosovo Police	1.36	2.23
UNMIK	1.74	2.44
EU office in Kosovo	1.59	2.32
EULEX	1.59	2.38
KFOR	1.68	2.69

11. In your opinion, which of the key international factors is the best defender of the interests of Serbs in Kosovo?

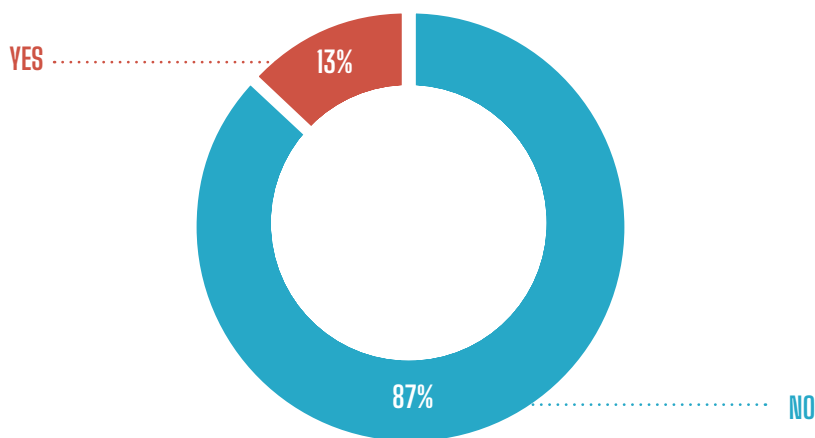
Although marked by turbulent events, the year 2023 did not bring about significant changes in the attitudes of citizens of Serbian nationality in Kosovo when it comes to international actors. Despite the continuation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and Russia's continued isolation on the international level, in the eyes of respondents of Serbian nationality in Kosovo, Russia remained perceived as the best defender of interests of Kosovo Serbs with as many as 56.9%, although this represents a drop compared to last year's 64.3%. This decline may be an indication of a partially changed perception of its role and limited influence in the Balkans.

European Union as an international actor follows, for which 15.7% of respondents consider that it best defends the interests of Serbs in Kosovo, with a significant increase of almost 6% over the period of one year.

China is facing a slight decline in support, from 13% in 2022 to 11.8% in 2023, suggesting that its influence remains relatively stable but limited among the Serb community in Kosovo. The lowest percentage in favor of the United States of America is almost constant, with only 2.8% in 2023, indicating that the USA is still perceived by the majority as a global power working to the detriment of the interests of Serbs living in Kosovo.



12. Do you have any personal documents issued by Kosovo institutions (identity card, passport, driver's license, birth certificate and citizenship (extract))...?



Based on the trends from the last six research cycles, it becomes clear that since 2017, the share of respondents of Serb nationality who have some kind of personal documents issued by the institutions of Kosovo has increased significantly. The data show that a higher percentage of members of the Serbian community in Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar River have Kosovo documents, with 91.4% who answered in the affirmative, while in the northern part of Kosovo, it is 81.8%. Despite of claims that in northern Kosovo, the resistance to Kosovo documents is higher, it is clear that the vast majority got Kosovo identity cards. It remains an open question whether 18% of the population in the north are unable to obtain personal documents due to systemic obstructions or whether it is a matter of free choice.

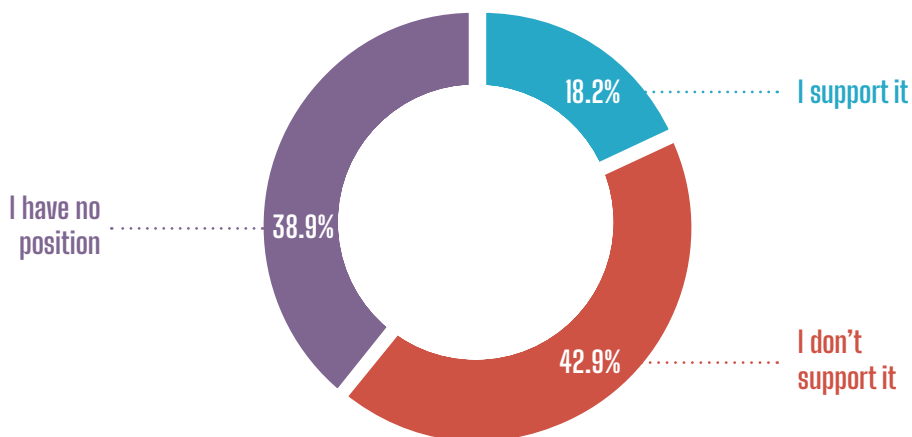
DO YOU OWN KOSOVO DOCUMENTS?	Northern Kosovo	Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar River
Yes	81.8%	91.4%
Do not	18.2%	7.5%
They did not respond	0%	1%



RESEARCH RESULTS

**STANCES TOWARDS ACTIVE
PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL
PROCESSES**

13. What is your stance towards the continuation of negotiations/talks between Belgrade and Pristina under the auspices of the EU (*Brussels Dialogue*)?



Support for the Brussels Dialogue is more pronounced in municipalities with a Serb majority south of the Ibar River, the percentage is twice as high compared to residents in the north of Kosovo (24.1% versus 12.2%). When we add to this that almost half of the respondents from northern Kosovo, 49.6%, do not support the Brussels dialogue, one can justifiably point to the fear of Serbs in the north that the continuation of the dialogue will not yield the expected results, or rather, that certain agreements may even be perceived as harmful to the Serbian community.

STANCE ON THE BRUSSELS DIALOGUE	Northern Kosovo	Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar River
I support it	12.2%	24.1%
I do not support it	49.6%	35.3%
I don't have any position	37.4%	39.8%
They did not say	0.8%	0.8%

From a comparative point of view, variability was observed in the opinion about the Brussels dialogue. In 2023, support for continuation of the negotiations increased slightly to 18.2% compared to 17.5% in 2022 but is still lower compared to 2021 and 2020. This slight increase may indicate the belief that the current crisis on the ground can only be resolved peacefully and through EU-mediated dialogue.

Opposition to the continuation of negotiations in Brussels increased to 42.8% in 2023, which is a slight increase compared to 40.5% in 2022 and significantly higher than in previous years. This indicates a constantly growing dissatisfaction or pessimism regarding the effectiveness of the dialogue in the context of a possible change in the situation on the ground.

POSITION ON CONTINUATION OF NEGOTIATIONS IN BRUSSELS	2023	2022	2021	2020
I support it	18.2%	17.5%	22.4%	20.6%
I don't support it	42.8%	40.5%	25.9%	28.7%
I have no position	39%	42%	51.7%	50.7%

On the other hand, the number of those who do not have a stance on the negotiations is decreasing, which may reflect better public information or the profiling of opinions on the negotiations over time. Cumulatively, the data show that there is a tendency of increase of the negative stances towards the negotiations in Brussels, while at the same time there is a decrease of the indecisiveness among the respondents.

14. In your opinion, how will the continuation of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina affect the Serbian community in Kosovo?

HOW WILL THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN BELGRADE AND PRISTINA INFLUENCE THE SERB COMMUNITY	2023	2022	2021
It will improve the quality of life of the Serb community	14.1%	15%	18.9%
The quality of life of the Serb community will deteriorate	35.9%	38.1%	23.7%
Everything will remain the same	50%	46.9%	57.4%

The reduction of support for the continuation of the dialogue is closely related to the perception on the effects that the dialogue can potentially have on the quality of life of Kosovo Serbs. Analyzing the respondents' perceptions, it can be seen that in the last year there has been an increase in the number of respondents who believe that the continuation of the dialogue will not lead to any change. On the other hand, the percentage of those who think that the dialogue will have an effect on additional drop (35.9%) is in a slight decline, or rather an improvement in the quality of life of members of the Serbian community in Kosovo (14.1%).

15. Will the Association/Community of Serb Municipalities be formed?

The obtained results are shown in comparison with the results of previous years:

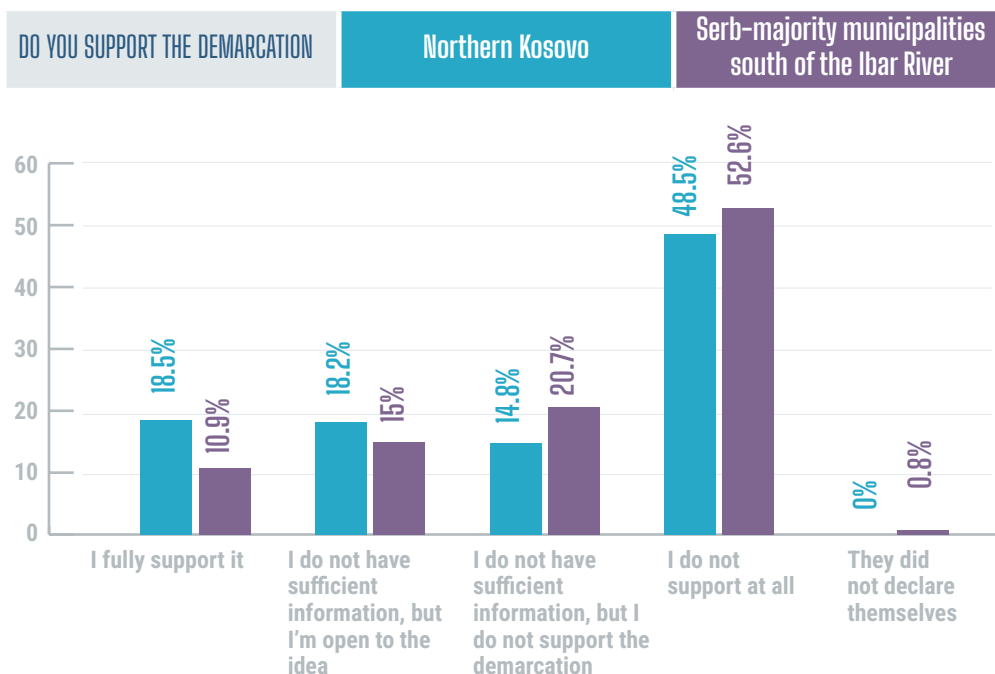
Will A/CSM be formed?	2023	2022	2021	2020
Yes, it will	19%	14%	14.1%	10.5%
It will, but not this year	33.5%	27.3%	38.5%	31.5%
It will not be formed	47.5%	58.7%	47.4%	58%

The data show that almost every fifth respondent believes that the Association/Community of Serb Municipalities (A/CSM) will soon be formed, which represents an increase compared to 14% in 2022 and significantly more compared to 10.5% in 2020. Although more than half of the respondents believe that the A/CSM will be formed but without a clear timeline, 47.5% believe that the A/CSM will not be formed, which is a less pessimistic stance compared to last year when that percentage was 58.7%. The increase in the number of respondents who believe that the A/CSM will be formed, but not this year (33.5%), also suggests growing, but cautious optimism regarding the realization of this institutional framework.

16. Do you support the idea of demarcation?

DO YOU SUPPORT THE IDEA OF DEMARCATION	2023	2022	2021	2020
I fully support it	14.8%	4.2%	4.3%	4.8%
I do not have sufficient information, but I'm open to the idea	16.7%	12.1%	20.6%	12.2%
I do not have sufficient information, but I do not support the demarcation	17.8%	32.7%	21.1%	24.3%
I do not support at all	50.7%	51%	54.1%	58.7%

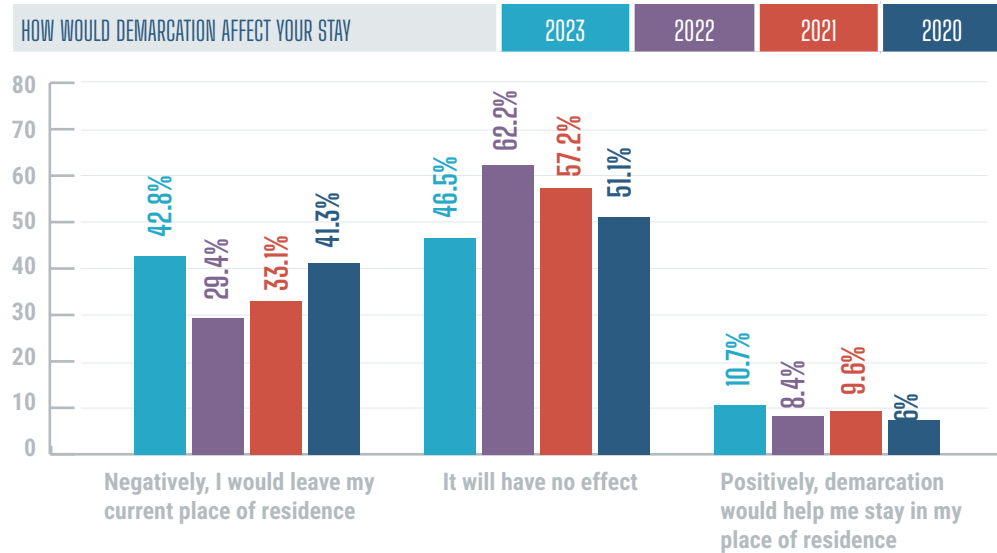
In recent years, various initiatives have been launched in order to resolve the status of Kosovo, including the demarcation proposal. However, the idea of demarcation failed to significantly garner support among citizens. On the contrary, only a small percentage of respondents, 14.8%, fully support this idea in 2023, which is a significant increase compared to the previous year (4.2%). The number of those who do not support this proposal is significantly higher, with 50.7% of respondents openly opposing it, which is a stable percentage of the population that has been against it for years. The data indicate that while there is some increase in openness to discussion, the vast majority either continue not to support the idea of demarcation or feel uninformed to take a clear position.



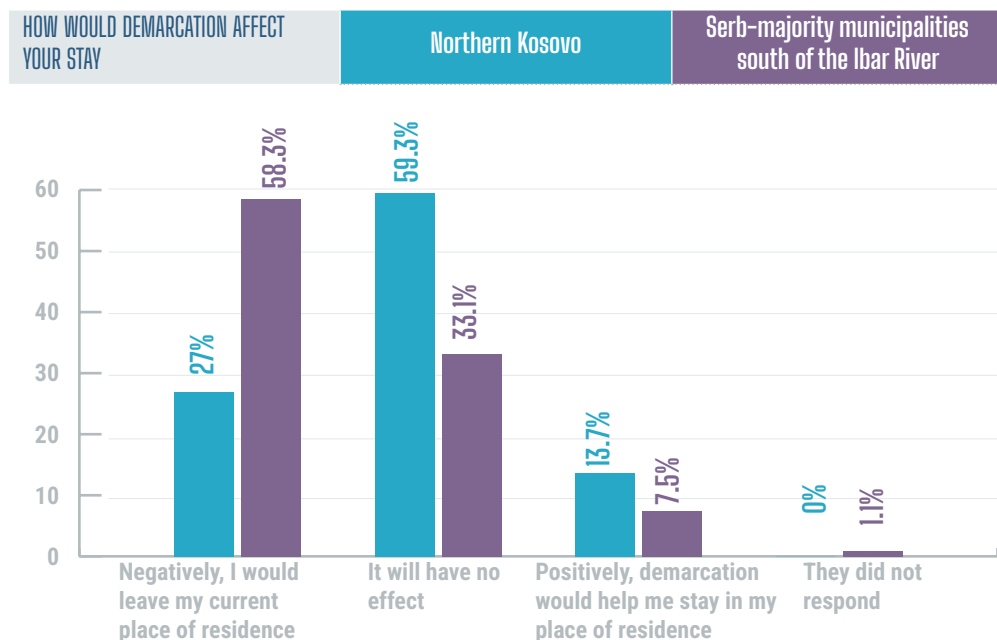
The differences that stem from the unique geographical location and social dynamics of the Serb-inhabited areas of Kosovo often lead to different beliefs and attitudes on key issues such as the idea of demarcation. Serbs living in the north of Kosovo show a greater preference for the idea of demarcation, with 18.5% of respondents who fully support it, while Serbs south of the Ibar are less inclined to support it, with 10.9% who fully support it. Nevertheless, the percentage of those who do not support this idea at all is quite even in the north and south of the Ibar.

17. How would the possible demarcation affect your decision to remain in Kosovo?

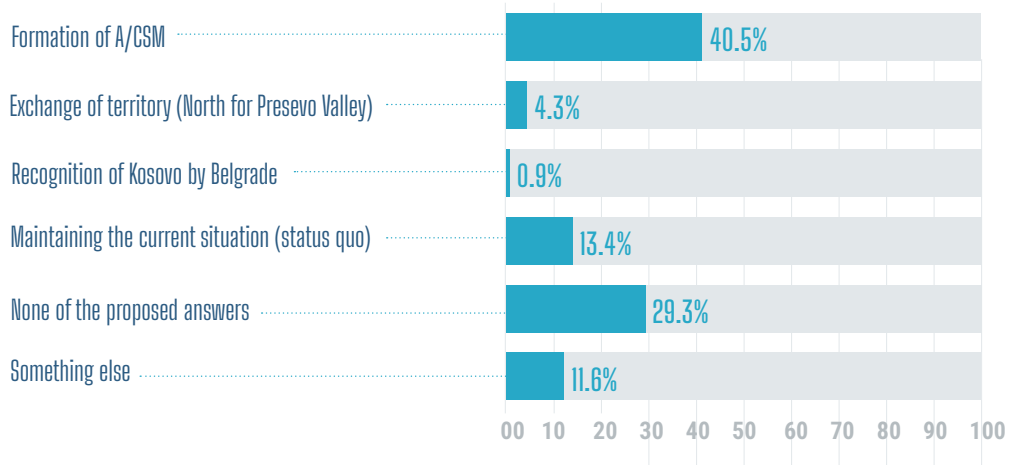
Analysis of the data shows how the attitudes of Serbs in Kosovo regarding the impact of possible demarcation on their decision to remain living in Kosovo change over time. In 2023, 42.8% of respondents believe that demarcation would negatively affect their decision to stay, which is a significant increase compared to 29.4% in 2022.



However, when the sample is stratified by place of residence, it can be seen that there is a significant discrepancy in attitudes between the north of Kosovo and the municipalities south of the Ibar River. As expected, the fear of the population in central Kosovo was expressed through the fear that they would bear the brunt of the possible demarcation so 58.3% of respondents stated that they would leave their place of residence compared to 27% of respondents in the north.



18. Apart from Kosovo remaining in the constitutional and legal system of Serbia, which of the offered scenarios of a possible comprehensive agreement between Belgrade and Pristina would be the most acceptable for Kosovo Serbs?



The options offered to respondents regarding the future status of Kosovo did not receive wide support among citizens of Serbian nationality. Recognition of independence and exchange of territories are options that attract minimal support. The most supported options are the formation of the Association/Community of Serb Municipalities or the retention of the current status. It is interesting to note two key changes compared to the previous year - the number of those who support the formation of the Association/community of Serb Municipalities has doubled and went from 20.4% to 40.5% and there is also a decrease of those who believe that preservation of the status quo is an acceptable long-term solution, from 25.9% to 13.4%. The data imply that the respondents believe that in the current circumstances it is not possible to preserve the status quo and that the A/CSM represents an institutional framework that can offer a better perspective for the Serb community in Kosovo.

BASED ON WHAT DO YOU FORM YOUR STANCES ON POLITICS AND POLITICAL EVENTS?	2023	2022	2021	2020
Formation of A/CSM	40.5%	20.4%	31.3%	29.0%
Exchange of territory (North for Presevo Valley)	4.3%	4.6%	2.4%	2.4%
Recognition of Kosovo by Belgrade	0.9%	1.3%	0.6%	2.6%
Maintaining the current situation (status quo)	13.4%	25.9%	21.3%	27.6%
None of the proposed answers	29.3%	47.8%	44.4%	38.5%
Something else	11.6%	●	●	●

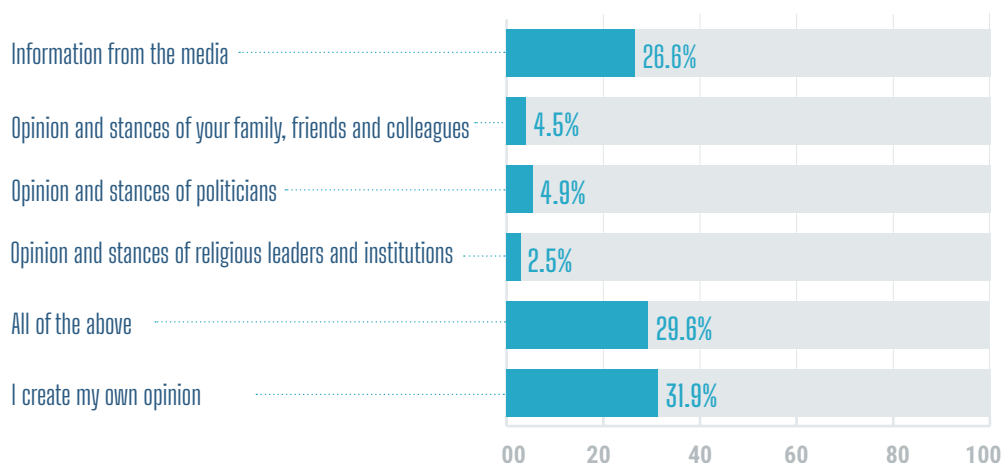


RESEARCH RESULTS

**FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
AND ACCESS TO THE MEDIA**

5

19. How do you form your views on politics and political developments?

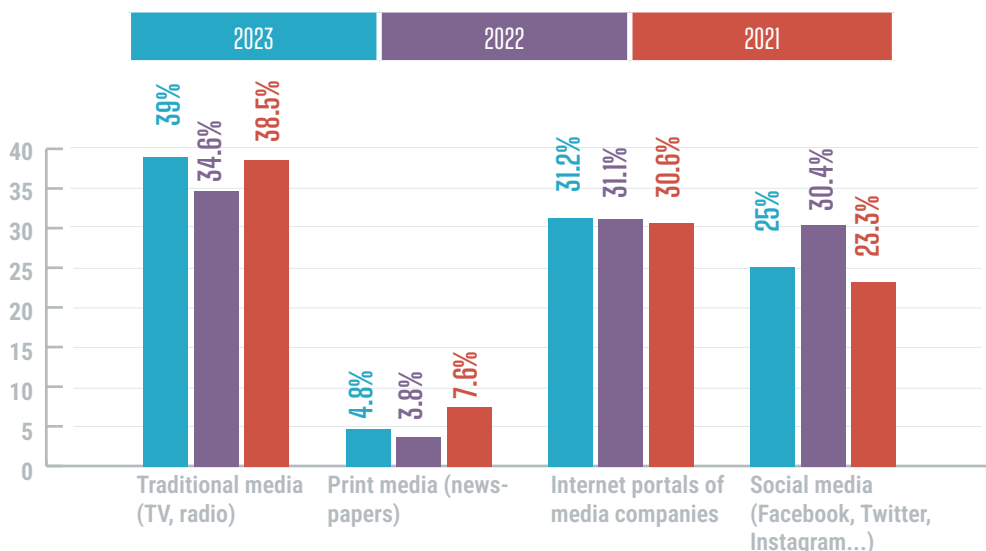


This year, there was an increase of the number of respondents who build their political views more and more based on the information they receive from the media, while the number of those who create their views based on the opinions and views of family, friends and colleagues was halved. The role of politicians and religious leaders is slightly rising but remains small and negligible. The largest percentage of respondents declared that they “form their own opinion,” which testifies to a high degree of mistrust towards any source of opinion and information.

BASED ON WHAT DO YOU FORM YOUR STANCES ON POLITICS AND POLITICAL EVENTS?	2023	2022	2021	2020
Information from the media	26.6%	19.3%	20.6%	22.7%
Opinion and stances of your family, friends and colleagues	4.6%	8.7%	12.4%	16.4%
Opinion and stances of politicians	4.9%	2.8%	2.0%	3.5%
Opinion and stances of religious leaders and institutions	2.5%	1.7%	2.0%	0.7%
All of the above	29.6%	29.7%	29.1%	32.2%
I create my own opinion	31.9%	37.8%	33.9%	24.5%

20. What type of media do you most often get information from?

Despite of the trend of digitization of information on politics and political developments, traditional media (TV, radio) still play the biggest role in public information, which recorded an increase compared to the previous year. Internet portals have a stable and continuous support, while social media follow a decline of more than 5%. The reason for this can be found in the placement of unverified and tendentious content, especially in the crisis situations which were abundant in the north of Kosovo during 2023.

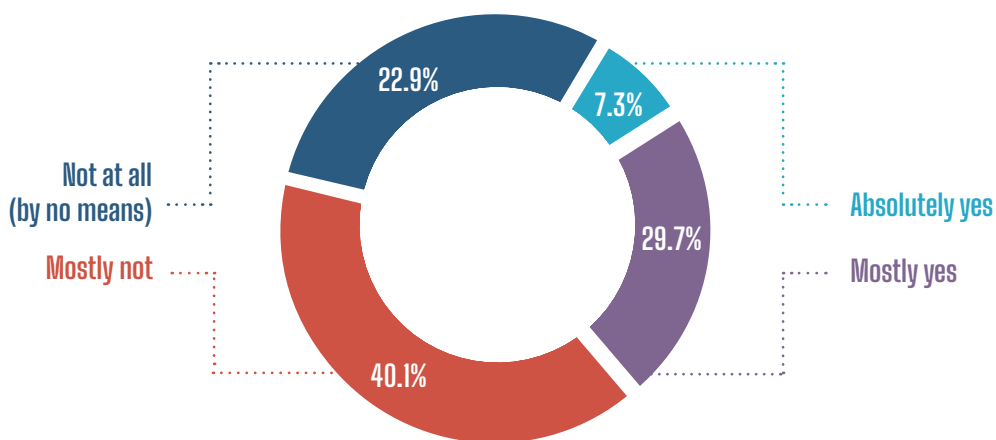


21. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “I don’t trust at all” and 5 means “I fully trust”, how much do you trust the following media:

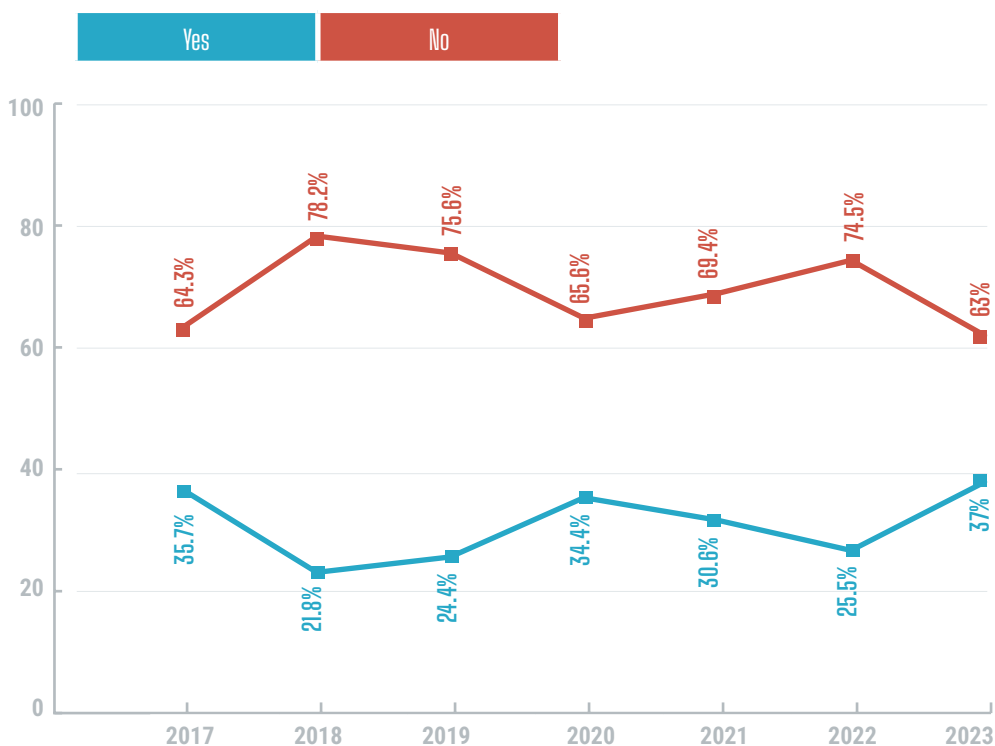
HOW MUCH DO YOU TRUST THE FOLLOWING MEDIA ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 5	2023	2022	2021	2020
Media with a national frequency from Belgrade	2.69	3.35	3.29	2.85
Independent media from Belgrade	2.88	2.97	3.12	2.69
Serbian media in Kosovo	2.94	2.92	2.82	2.79
Albanian-language media in Kosovo	1.72	1.6	1.57	1.61

Trust in the media in Serbia shows variations over the period of last four years. Citizens express the lowest level of trust in the media in the Albanian language in Kosovo, and the highest level of trust in the Serbian media in Kosovo. Independent media and media with a national frequency from Belgrade recorded a decrease in trust. Compared to 2022, what is noticeable is a significant decrease in the rating of trust in media with a national frequency from Belgrade, which in the analysis of trends for years has occupied the first place. This change may indicate that there is disappointment of the Serb community in Kosovo with the media reporting from Belgrade on the events that marked 2023.

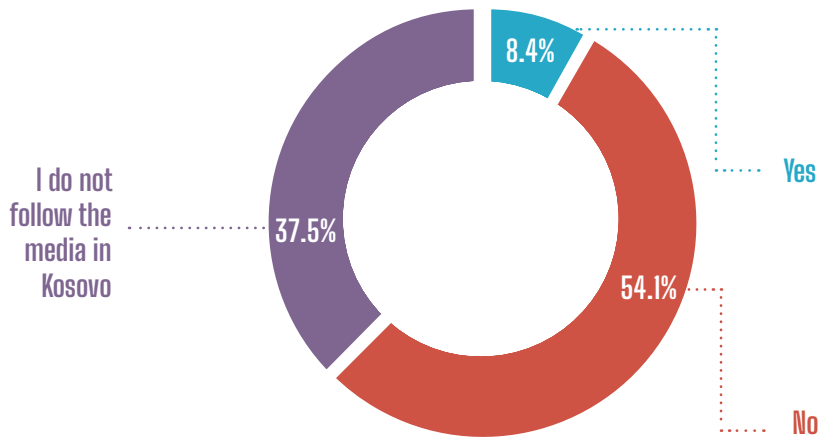
22. Do you think you can freely and publicly express your political views?



The overall socio-political context that reigns in Kosovo for years is certainly not a fertile ground for fostering the autonomy of opinion and the freedom of public expression. However, compared to last year, what is noticeable is a sharp increase in the respondents' belief that they feel free to publicly express their political views, from 25.5% to 37%. Compared to 2022, the number of those who claim that they do not feel free to publicly express their political views decreased by more than 10%.



23. Are independent views and critical thinking sufficiently represented in the media in Kosovo?



The absolute majority of respondents believe that independent views and critical thinking are not sufficiently represented in Serbian-language media in Kosovo. However, compared to last year, there was a slight drop when it comes to this perception of media freedom and media content. On the other hand, there is a significant decrease in the number of respondents who claim that independent views and critical thinking are sufficiently represented in Serbian-language media in Kosovo. Based on the increase in the percentage of those who declare that they do not follow the media in Kosovo, it can be concluded that there is apathy and that there is no belief in the possibility of having the media develop a critical opinion.

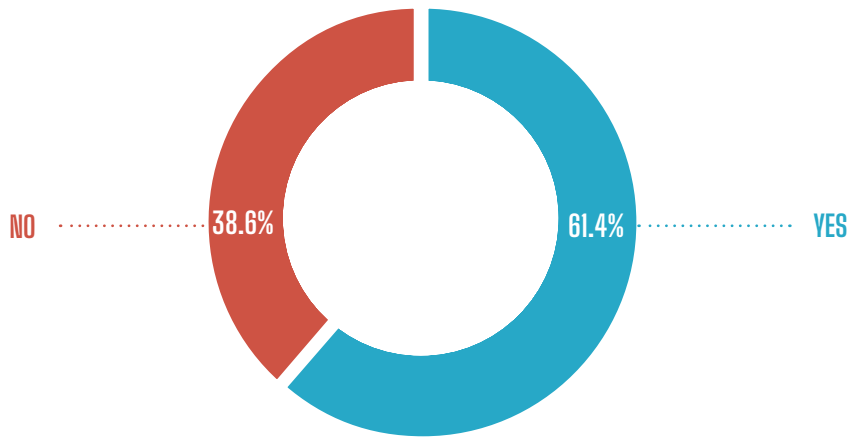


RESEARCH RESULTS

SAFETY OF CITIZENS

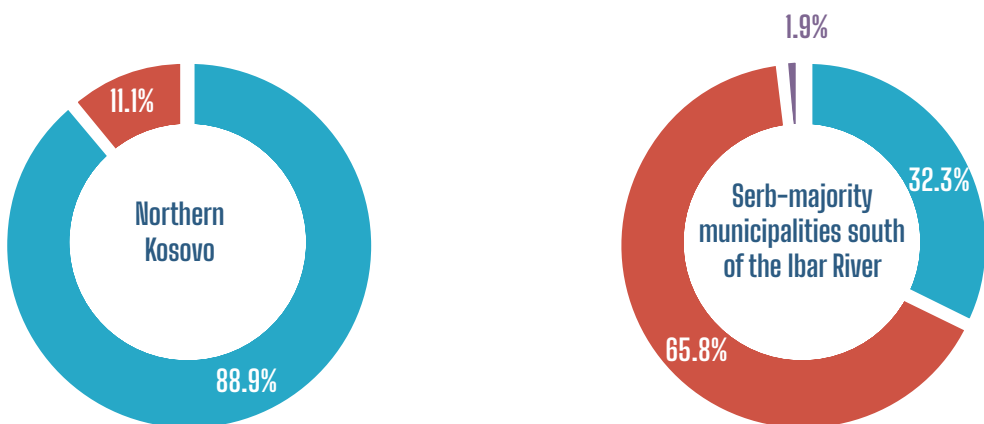
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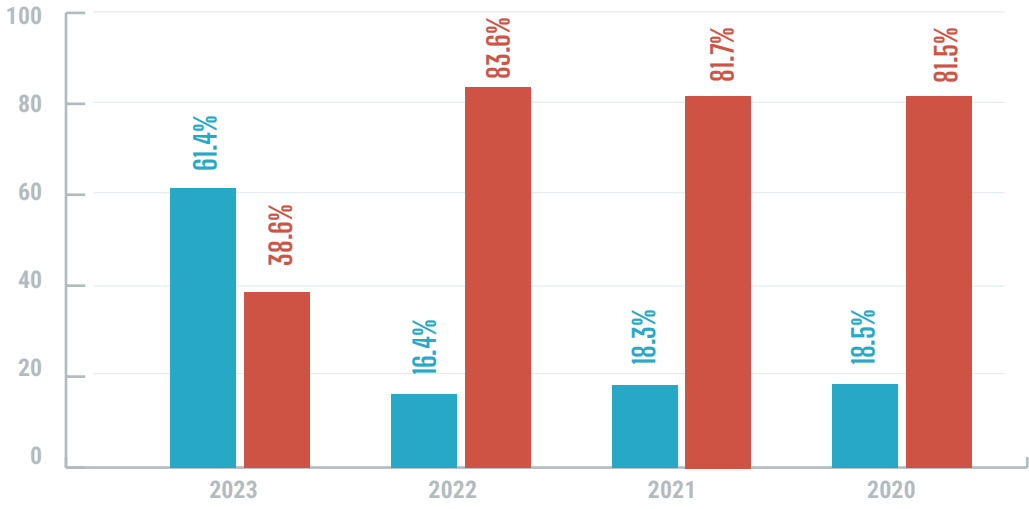
24. Has your safety or the safety of your immediate family been threatened in the past year?



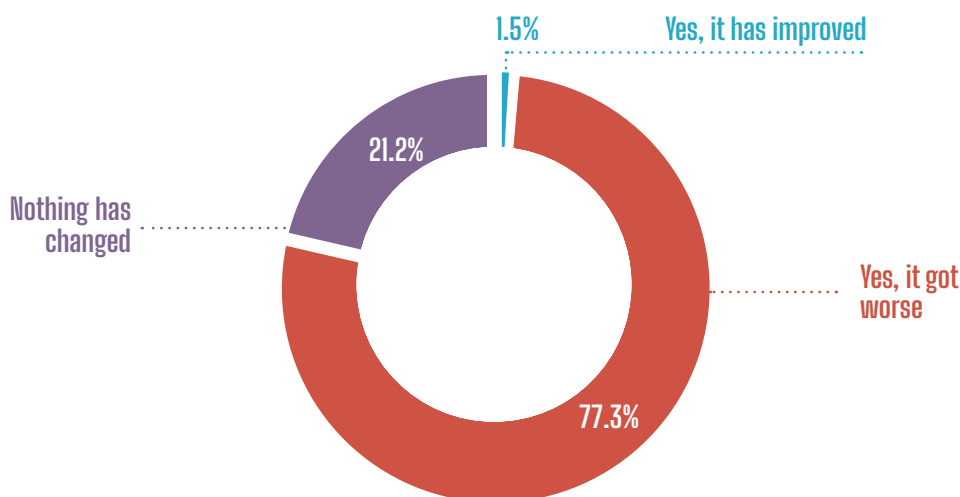
The perception of the security situation in Kosovo of residents of Serb nationality has changed significantly compared to the previous three years. As many as 61.4% believe that they were threatened, compared to 16-18% during the previous years. When the stratification is carried out according to the place of residence, this percentage increases significantly, and so in the north of Kosovo, almost 89% of respondents had experienced that their personal safety or safety of their family members was threatened. This data is alarming and indicates that the fear of political instability and violence in the near future is justified.

HAS YOUR OR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY BEEN THREATENED IN THE PAST YEAR? Yes No They did not say

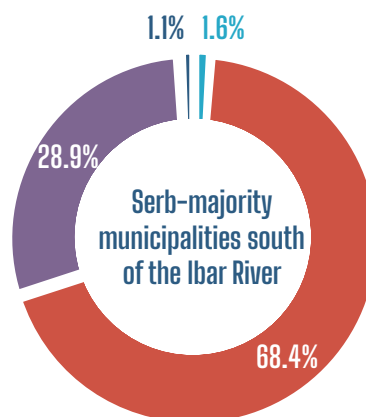
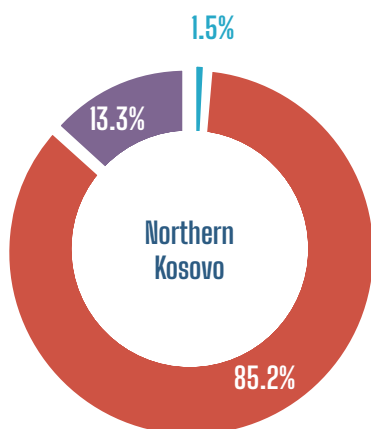




25. Has the security situation changed in the previous year?



The majority of Serbs in Kosovo express concern for their safety, which is reflected in a large percentage of those who believe that the security situation has deteriorated (77.3%). This feeling of deterioration can be caused or reinforced by actual incidents or violence, but also by a general feeling of uncertainty or political changes at the local level. The difference is particularly prominent compared to last year, when 39.9% declared that they were worried about their security. The group that does not see a change (21.2%) may be the one that has adapted to the existing circumstances or believes that movement in the current direction is inevitable.

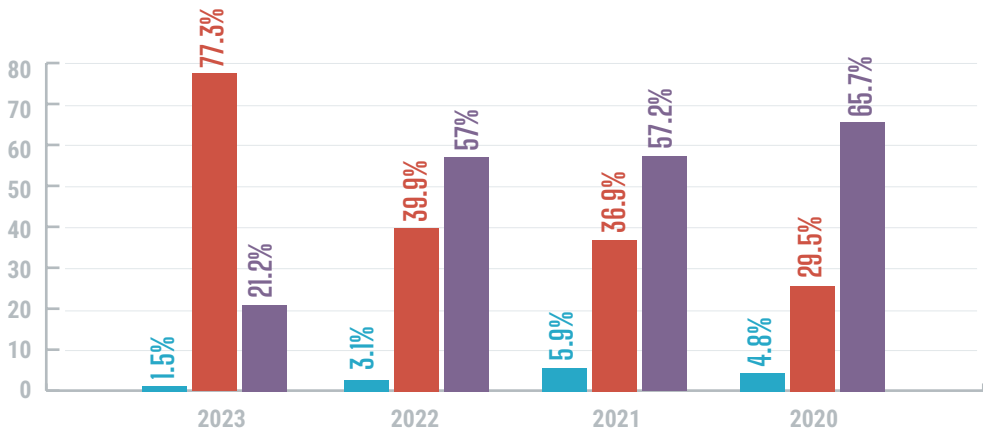


This perception of the security situation probably affects the attitudes about the departure of Serbs from Kosovo. Young people, who are naturally more inclined to migrate in search of better opportunities, may be particularly sensitive to these perceptions.

Yes, it has improved

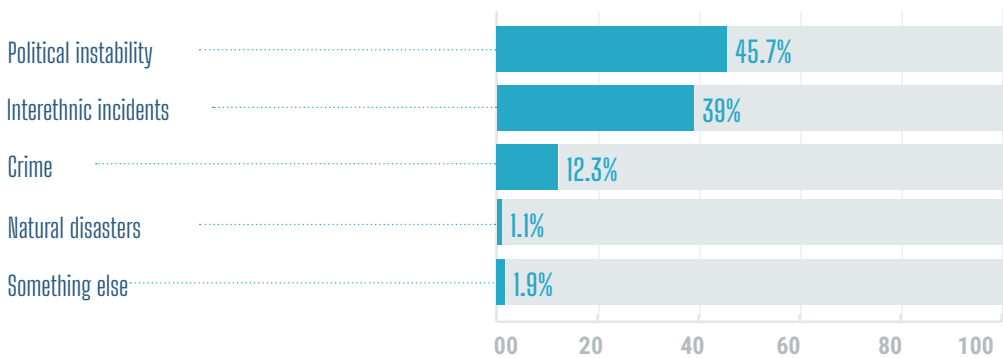
Yes, it got worse

Nothing has changed



26. In your opinion, what are the biggest security risks in your environment?

The largest number of respondents, 45.7%, consider political instability as the primary risk. This indicates that political tensions and insecurity are the dominant factors affecting the sense of security of Serbs in Kosovo.



Inter-ethnic incidents were identified as the second most important risk, with 39% of respondents seeing them as a major security problem. This reflects concerns about ethnic tensions and conflicts, which may be related to the context of conflicts in the recent past and current events that have potentially led to interethnic conflicts or incidents in recent times.

Cumulatively, the data highlight political and ethnic factors as major causes of concern for Serbs in Kosovo, potentially indicating that sociopolitical dynamics and interethnic relations are crucial in shaping their sense of security. The security situation, as perceived by respondents, can have a direct impact on their lives, migration decisions, and the general sense of well-being in the community.



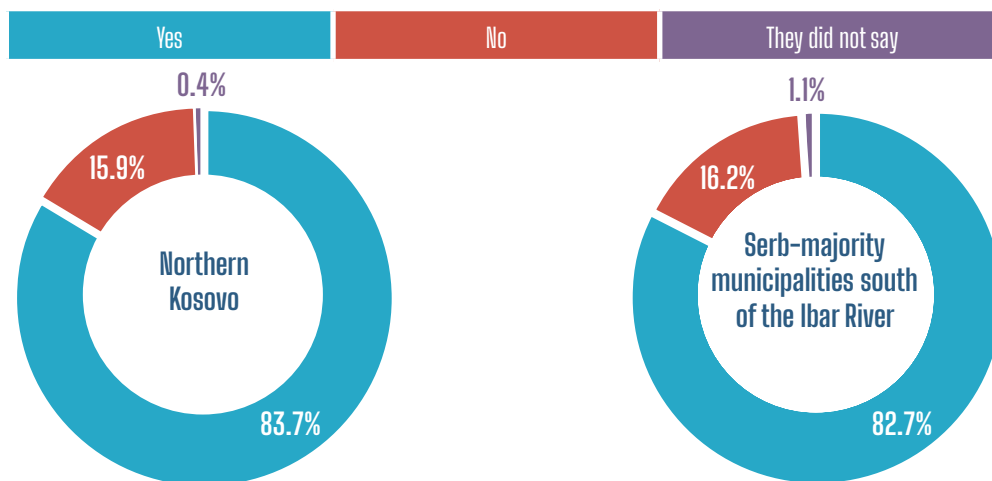
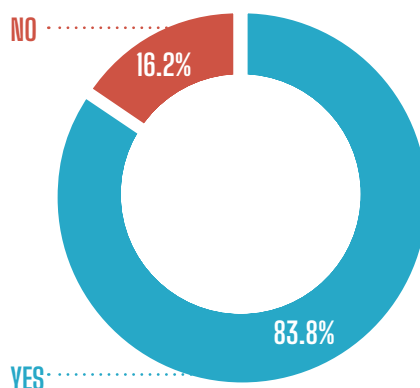
RESEARCH RESULTS

MIGRATION TENDENCIES

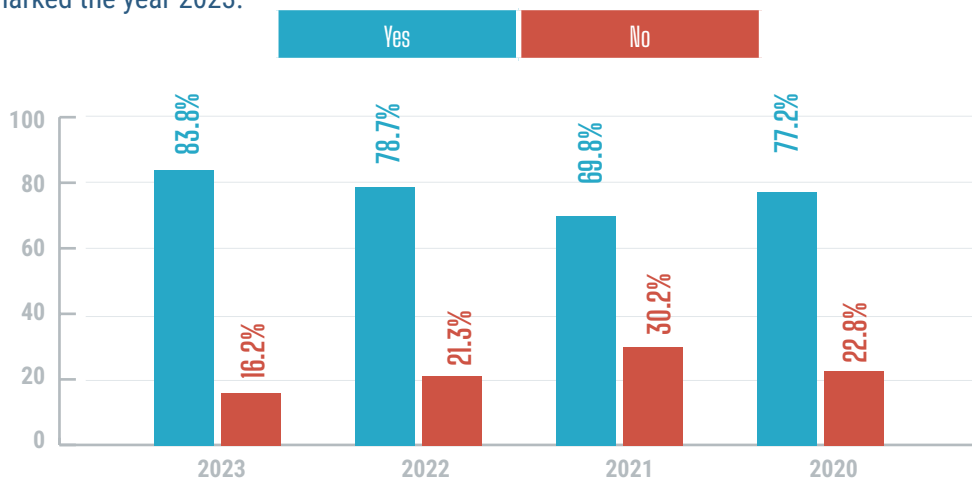
7

27. Did anyone from your immediate family and/or friends/acquaintances leave Kosovo last year?

The overall social environment of Kosovo that altogether has a disincentive effect and which is dominated by political instability, economic problems, absence of institutional support and lack of security, stimulates citizens of Serb nationality to leave Kosovo. This year's survey shows that more than 80% of respondents have in their surroundings a person who has left Kosovo in the last year. Viewed in the long term, one of the main problems of the social and political community of Serbs in Kosovo is depopulation, primarily through the emigration of young people.

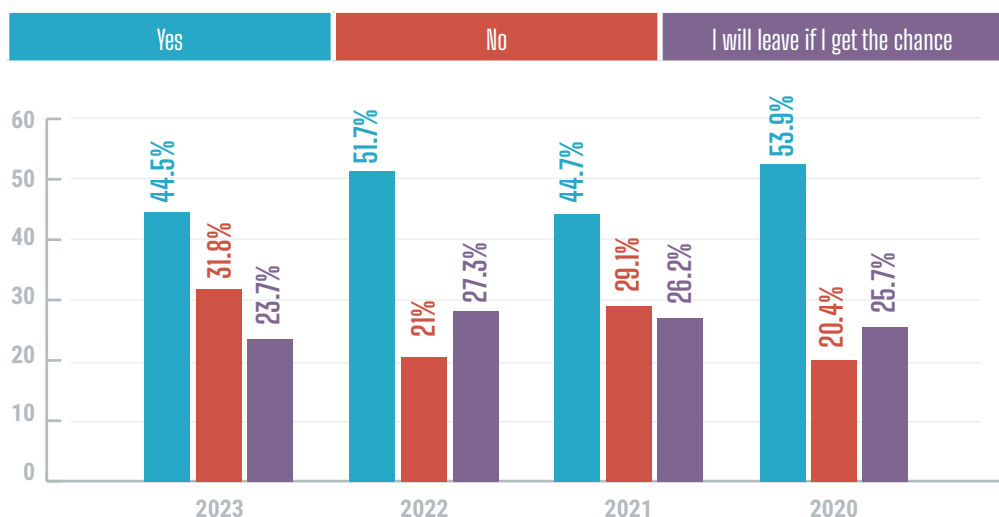


The number of people who point out that someone from their community has left Kosovo is slightly different in the municipalities south of the Ibar and in the north of Kosovo. Compared to last year, there is a significant increase of as much as 13% of those who experienced having someone from the closest circle in the north of Kosovo leave, which, viewed contextually, is a direct consequence of the extreme situations that marked the year 2023.

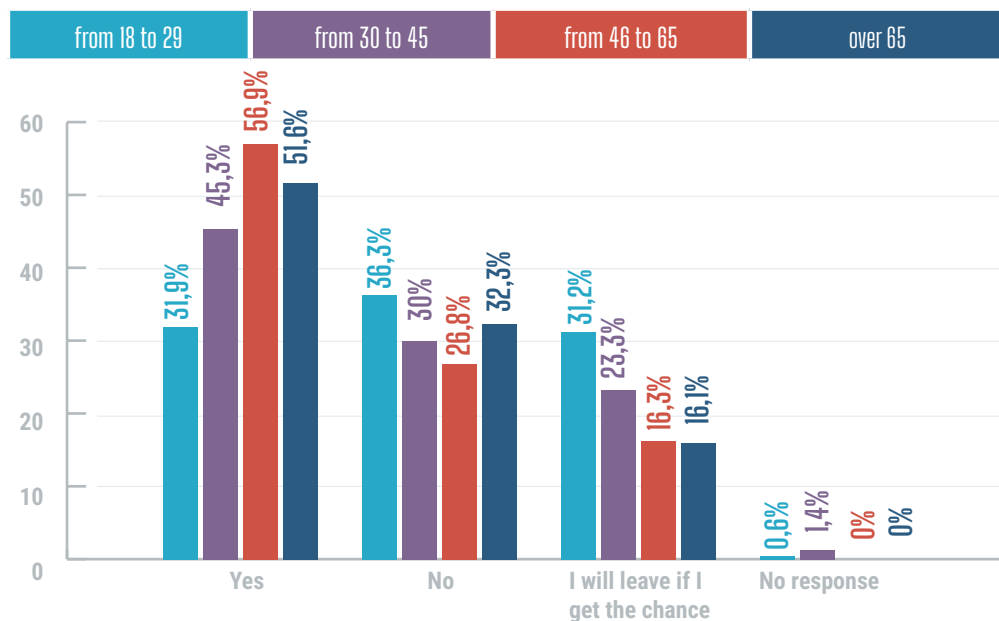


28. Do you see yourself in Kosovo in the next 5 years?

This year an increase of those who do not see themselves in Kosovo in the next five years was observed, while a stable percentage of respondents are waiting for the opportunity to leave Kosovo. For years, this information points towards the alarmingly bad situation in which the Serbs in Kosovo live for years, and for many of them, leaving Kosovo is perceived as the only solution. Observed segmentally, the data show that there is no significant difference between respondents from the north of Kosovo and south of the Ibar.



What is additionally alarming and worrisome is the fact that the smallest number of respondents who are planning to stay in Kosovo belongs to the most economically and socially powerful generation of citizens aged 18 to 29. Only every fourth respondent from this generation plans to stay in Kosovo. In the case of the first following generation, aged 30 to 45, every second respondent sees himself or herself in Kosovo in the next five years. Therefore, the majority of those who are supposed to build some better futures do not see themselves in Kosovo.



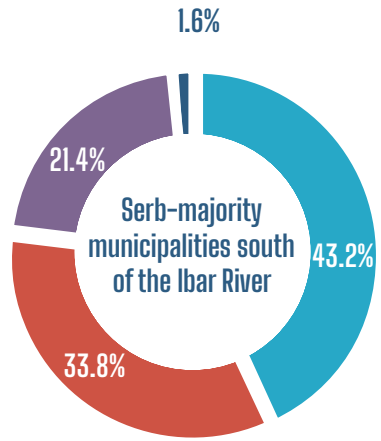
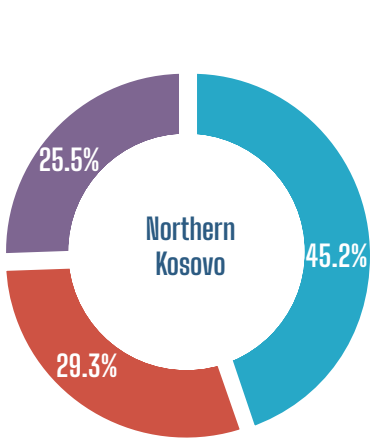
DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN KOSOVO IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS

Yes

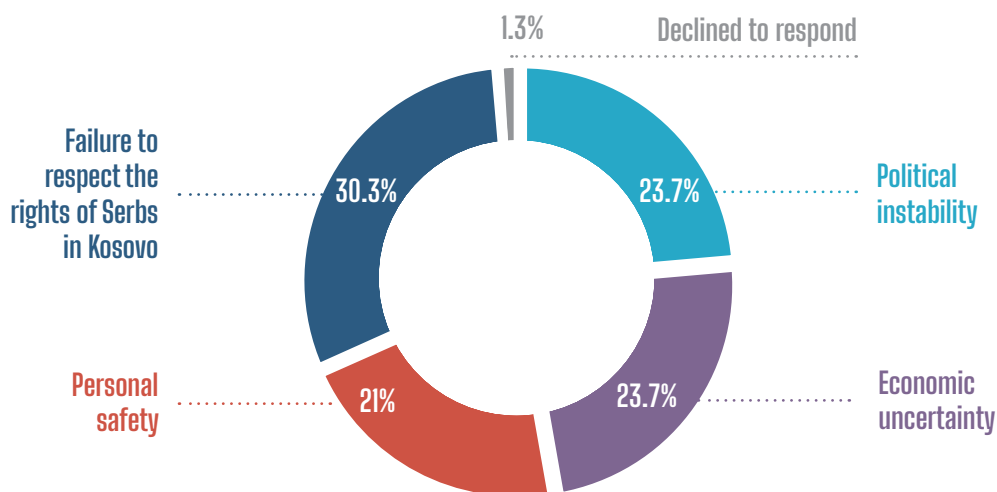
No

I will leave if I get the chance

No response



29. What is the main reason why you would leave Kosovo?



Summarizing the events in the north of Kosovo during 2023, it is not surprising that the main reason for leaving Kosovo is the lack of respect for the rights of Serbs in Kosovo. Almost a third of respondents were motivated by this reason to leave Kosovo. As for the second reason, political instability and economic uncertainty were listed by the same percentage of respondents. Personal safety was listed by a high percentage of respondents, 21%, and thus more than 75% of the members of the Serb community are contemplating leaving Kosovo due to systemic discrimination, fear of insecurity and political instability.

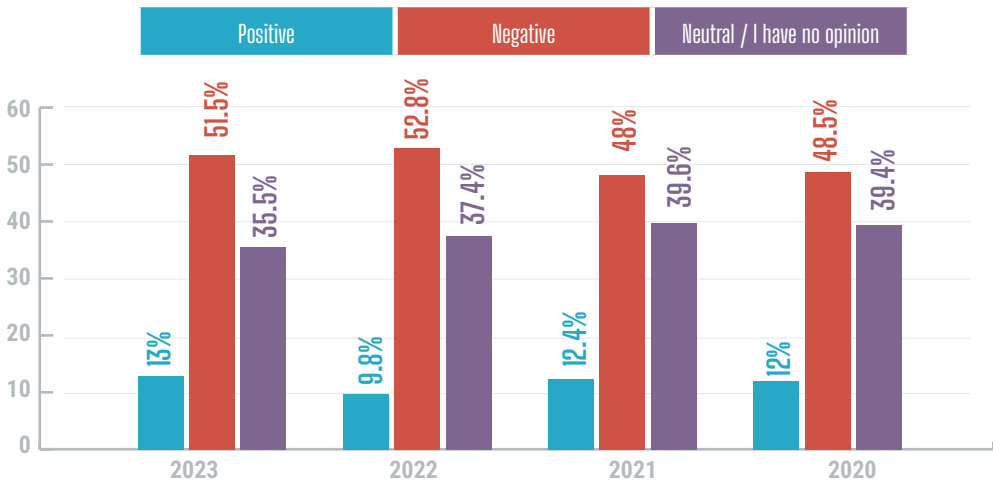


RESEARCH RESULTS

**STANCES TOWARDS THE
EUROPEAN UNION**

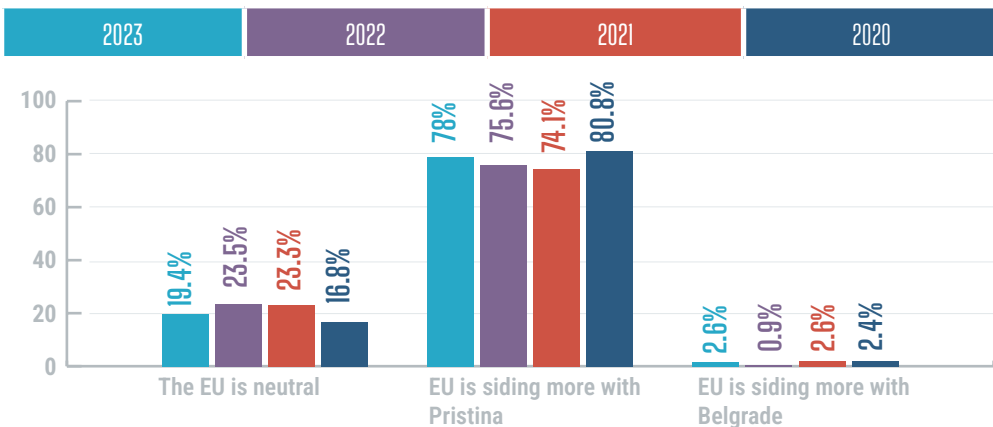
9

30. When you hear “European Union”, is your first association positive or negative?



Compared to last year, there is a noticeable trend of a slight increase in the positive perception and a slight decrease in the negative perception of the European Union among respondents of Serb nationality in Kosovo. Currently, only every tenth respondent has a positive perception of the European Union. The reason for this attitude comes precisely from the perception that the European Union is not neutral in the negotiation process between Belgrade and Pristina, but that it favors the Albanian side and is working on the international recognition of Kosovo’s independence. Data from several recent surveys show, while this year’s research confirms it, that a large percentage of respondents believe that the European Union supports Pristina more than Belgrade in the negotiations, but it is not negligible that one third of respondents has a neutral stance when mentioning the EU.

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



From the graphic presentation of the perception of the position of the European Union in the negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina, it can be concluded that there is a continuity of a high percentage of respondents (almost 80%) who think that the EU is siding with Pristina. There is a noticeable downward trend in the number of those who consider the EU to be a neutral party in the negotiations, which points to a growing perception of a biasness. The latest diplomatic initiatives, together with the majority support for Kosovo’s independence by the member-states, thwarts any relevant percentage of respondents who would declare that the EU is on Belgrade’s side.

32. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 5 is “strongly agree”, rate the veracity of the following statements:

	2023	2022	2021	2020
EU has a key role in solving the problems of the Serb community in Kosovo	2.76	3.35	2.60	2.42
EU plays a key role in inter-ethnic reconciliation in Kosovo	2.49	2.38	2.44	2.24
EU invests sufficiently in Serb-majority areas in Kosovo	2.00	1.89	2.20	2.00

Perception of the European Union’s role in solving the problems of the Serb community in Kosovo indicates a decline in trust in the effectiveness of the EU. In the context of interethnic reconciliation, a slight increase was observed compared to the previous year, which leads to the conclusion that despite of the inefficiency in realization of the guaranteed rights for Serbs, the EU is still seen as a necessary actor in overcoming the troubled past. A slight increase in trust in the EU was also observed in the context of investments in Serbian areas.

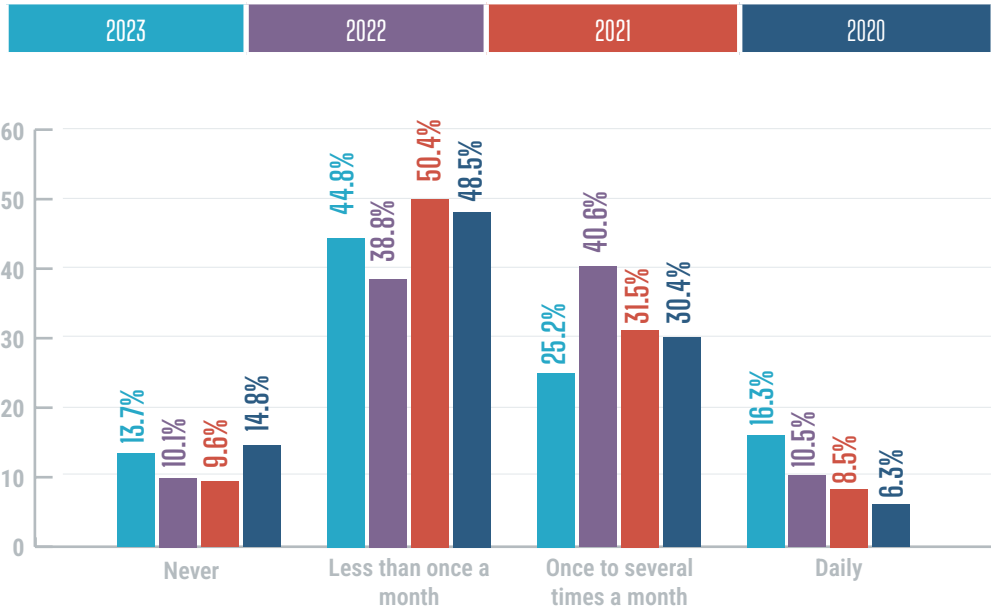


RESEARCH RESULTS

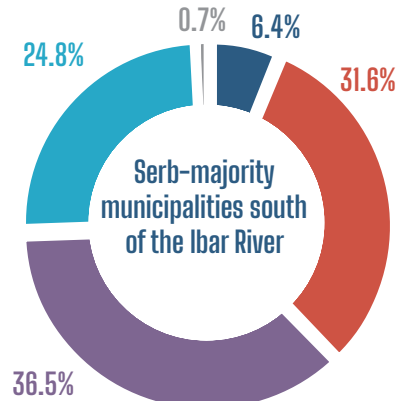
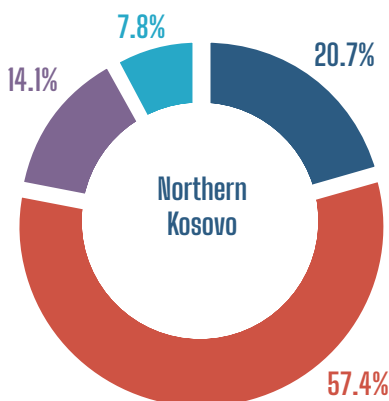
ETHNIC DISTANCE

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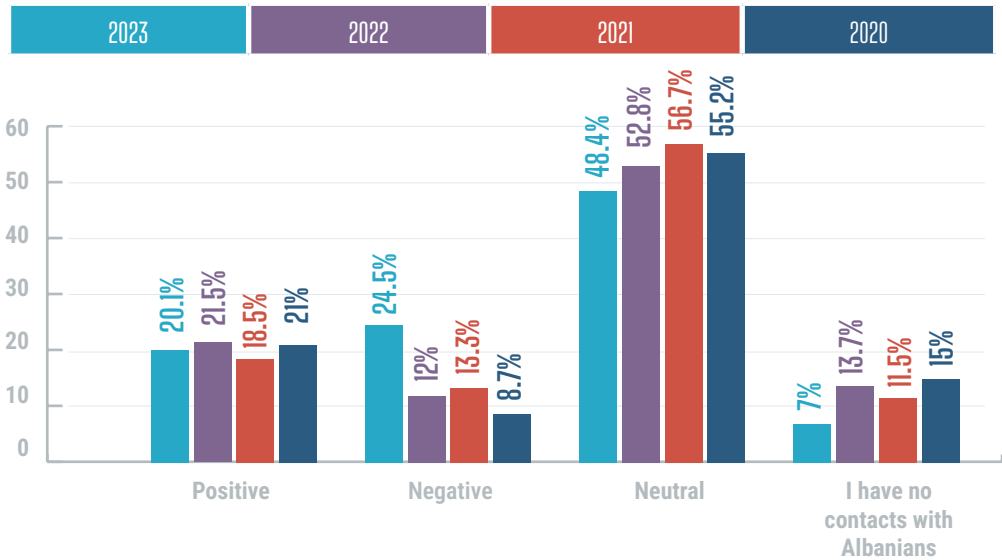
33. How often do you go to areas where Albanians are the majority?



Viewed through the data from the previous three surveys, we can see that there is a significant fluctuation in the responses, or rather the responses regarding the Serbs who go to the areas where Albanians are the majority. More than 50% of respondents go once or several times a week to daily visits. While the number of those who go once to several times a month has significantly decreased, the number of those who go daily to the Albanian-majority areas has also increased. As expected, respondents who live in municipalities south of the Ibar are at the forefront in visiting areas with a predominantly Albanian population, while a fifth of respondents from the north of Kosovo never go to Albanian areas, and more than half of them go less often than once a month.



34. Your experiences from personal contacts with Albanians are mostly:



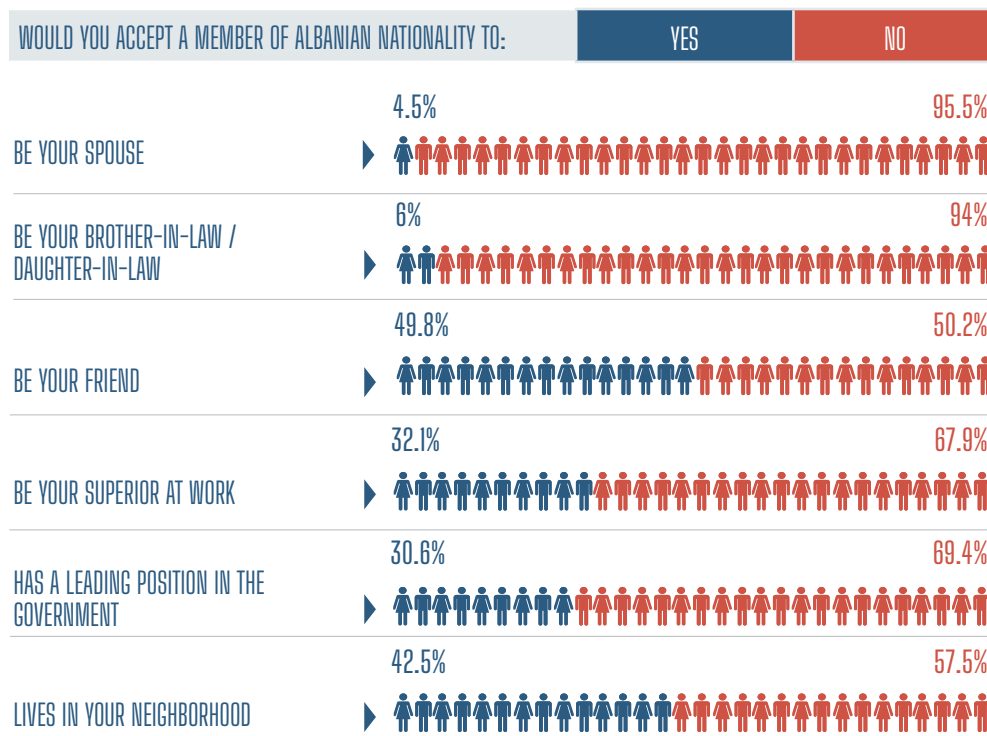
Personal experiences of Serbs in contact with the Albanians vary, but in general, certain trends can be observed during the last four years. In 2023, 20.1% of respondents report positive experiences, which is a slight decrease compared to the previous year (21.5%). Negative experiences have doubled and amount to a total percentage of 24.5%. Neutral experiences are still dominant in the perceptions, despite of a slight drop in percentages. The most interesting data is the decrease of the number of respondents who stated that they have no contact with Albanians, from 13.7% in 2022 to 7% in 2023, which suggests an increase in inter-ethnic interactions, regardless of the nature of these relationships.

35. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “extremely bad” and 5 is “excellent”, rate the current state of interethnic relations between communities in Kosovo:

Rate from 1 to 5 the state of current interethnic relations between communities in Kosovo	2023	2022	2021	2020
Serbs and Albanians	1.97	2.22	2.17	2.23
Serbs and Bosniaks	3.24	3.12	3.12	3.06
Serbs and Gorani	3.72	3.69	3.53	3.65

Same as in previous years, the relations between Serbs and Albanians were rated the worst, while the relations between Serbs and Bosniaks and Gorani were perceived as significantly better. Kosovo, as a post-conflict society with unresolved status issues and ethnic divisions, is fertile ground for maintenance of ethnic distance between the competitive nationalisms of Albanians and Serbs, which is reflected on the perspective of building a common society.

36. Ethnic distance between Serbs and Albanians



The high degree of ethnic distance between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo is expressed through trend analysis as continuity. Individual relationship forms show that ethnicity has the most negative effect on the option of a marriage partner or family ties. However, almost half of the respondents, 49.8%, would accept an Albanian as a friend, which suggests that in perspective, interethnic friendship is an area where ethnic distance can be reduced. Also, very high percentages of ethnic distancing were observed when it comes to political positions. Almost two-thirds of members of the Serb community would not accept an institutional connection that implies Albanians as holders of the highest positions.

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