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2025 trend analysis

Attitudes of Serb Community in Kosovo

MITROVICA, JANUARY 2026

2025 TREND ANALYSIS

Attitudes of Serb Community in Kosovo

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Mitrovica, January 2026

This paper was published within the framework of the project Increasing the Advocacy Potential of Kosovo Serb Civil Society Organizations, implemented by NGO AKTIV with the financial support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED.) The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of NGO AKTIV and does not necessarily reflect the views of NED.

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TREND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey sample was designed to enable a balanced comparison of the Serbian community in Kosovo across two distinct political - institutional, and security contexts, in the north and in Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar. Such territorial symmetry is not merely a technical issue of representation, but also a key analytical assumption. The north and the south do not operate under the same everyday conditions, nor are they exposed to the same forms of institutional uncertainty, security tensions, and administrative practices.

Respondents' educational structure indicates a relatively high level of education, suggesting that a significant portion of the sample is able to articulate its views through institutional and normative language, rather than relying solely on emotional or experiential stories. Moreover, this may reflect a greater willingness among more educated individuals to participate in surveys compared to the rest of the population. However, nuances between the north and the south are evident. In the north, respondents with secondary education are more prevalent, whereas south of the Ibar there is a more robust representation of individuals with higher and vocational education.

The employment structure further sheds light on the specific social context in which the respondents live. The predominance of employment in the public sector funded by the Republic of Serbia, alongside a considerably smaller share of those employed in Kosovo institutions, indicates a strong institutional attachment of a large segment of the community to a system that is not formally sovereign in the territory in which they reside. This duality of institutional frameworks represents a key framework for understanding political narratives, as issues of legitimacy, security, and rights are not confined to the symbolic level of identity, but are also reflected in everyday work relations, income sources and administrative procedures. At the same time, a significant share of the unemployed individuals, pensioners and students demonstrates the presence of economic and generational uncertainties, that may reinforce a sense of dependence on institutional structures and system expectations, whether these are perceived as Serbia, Kosovo, or as an abstract political authority.

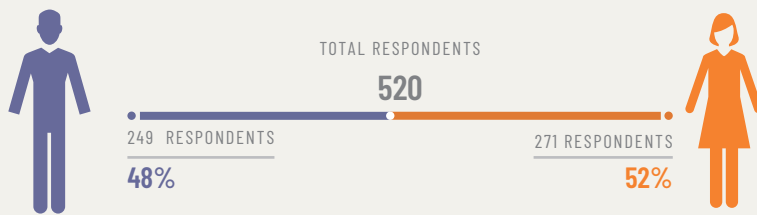
Place of residence

■ NORTH OF KOSOVO
■ SERB-MAJORITY MUNICIPALITIES SOUTH OF THE IBAR



Gender

■ MALE
■ FEMALE



Gender by place of residence

■ NORTH OF KOSOVO
■ SERB-MAJORITY MUNICIPALITIES SOUTH OF THE IBAR



Education level



Education level	Number	%
Higher school / high vocational education	151	29%
Primary school	14	3%
Secondary school	200	38%
University education	155	30%
Total	520	100%

Education by place of residence

	Higher / Vocational	Primary	Secondary	University	TOTAL
NORTH OF KOSOVO	56	12	110	82	260
SERB-MAJORITY MUNICIPALITIES SOUTH OF THE IBAR	95	2	90	73	260
Ukupno	151	14	200	155	520

Level of education by gender



LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF MEN

NUMBER	%	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NUMBER	%
57	23%	Higher school / High vocational education	94	35%
13	5%	Primary school	1	0%
106	43%	Secondary school	94	35%
73	29%	University education	82	30%
249	100%	Total	271	100%

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF WOMEN



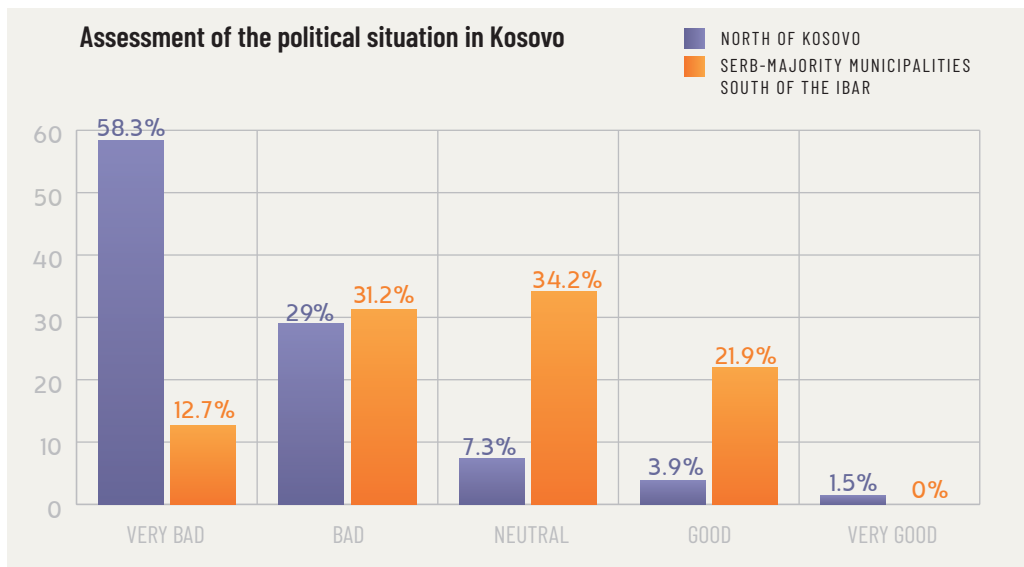
Employment Status	Number	%
Employees in Kosovo public sector	45	9%
Employees in Republic of Serbia public sector	129	25%
Employees in the non-governmental sector (NGO)	14	3%
Private sector employees	58	11%
Pensioners	63	12%
Self-employed (own business)	67	13%
Pupils / students	53	10%
Unemployed	91	18%
Total	520	100%

The most prominent dividing line is evident in the employment structure. In the north, employment is primarily concentrated in the public sector financed by the Republic of Serbia, whereas in municipalities south of the Ibar this share is considerably lower. In the south, there is a more notable presence of the private sector, self-employment, and unemployment. This pattern clearly reflects a dual institutional reality: the north functions within a framework of strong institutional and financial ties to Serbia, while the south demonstrates greater economic diversity and increased exposure to Kosovo institutions and market conditions. It is particularly noteworthy that unemployment rates are significantly higher south of the Ibar. This may give rise to narratives that are less centered on symbolic questions of status and more on issues of livelihood, economic prospects, and the future of youth. Conversely, in the north, the strong reliance on the Serbian public sector may foster narratives that associate legitimacy and security primarily with the state of Serbia, perceived as a guarantor of institutional protection. Overall, the data point to two communities that share a common identity framework, yet operate within partially distinct socio-institutional contexts.

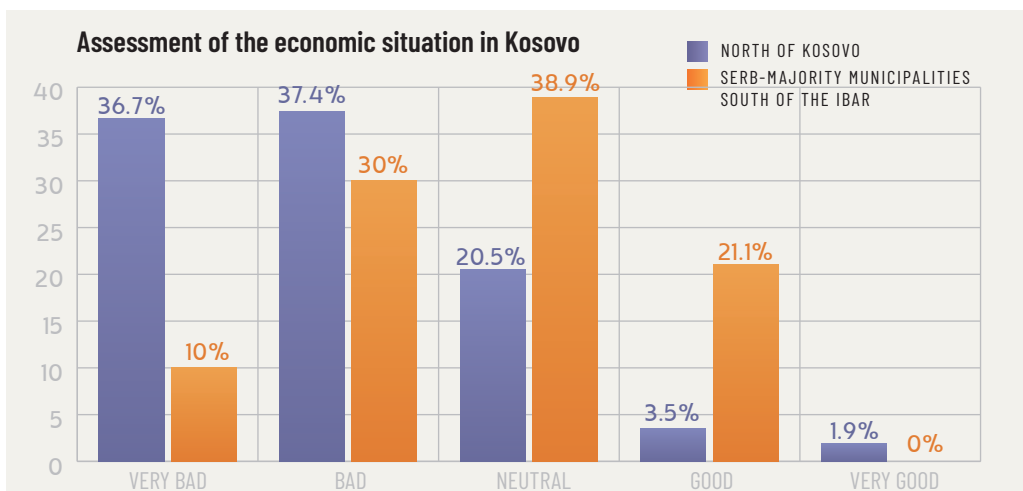


SURVEY RESULTS

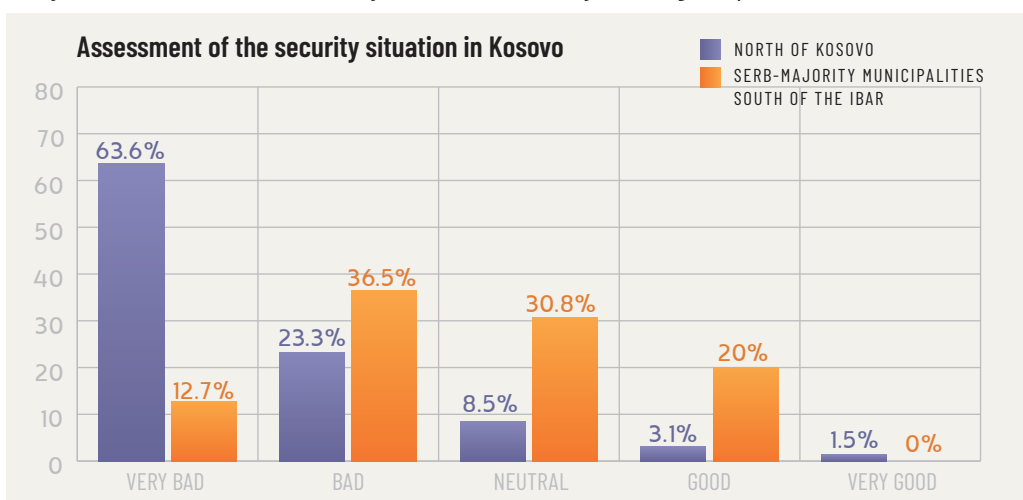
Flowcharts below present four key dimensions of perception: political situation, economic situation, security, and personal material situation. With regard to the political situation, the assessment “very bad” clearly dominates in the north (approximately 58%), while this share is significantly lower in the south (around 13%). South of the Ibar, the most common assessments are “neutral” (approximately 34%) and “bad” (around 31%), while the share of those who assess the political situation as “good” (around 22%) is notably higher than in the north (around 4%). This distribution suggests that the north perceives political reality as highly crisis-driven and severe, while the south demonstrated a more moderate and nuanced pattern of perception, with greater room for neutral and even positive assessments.



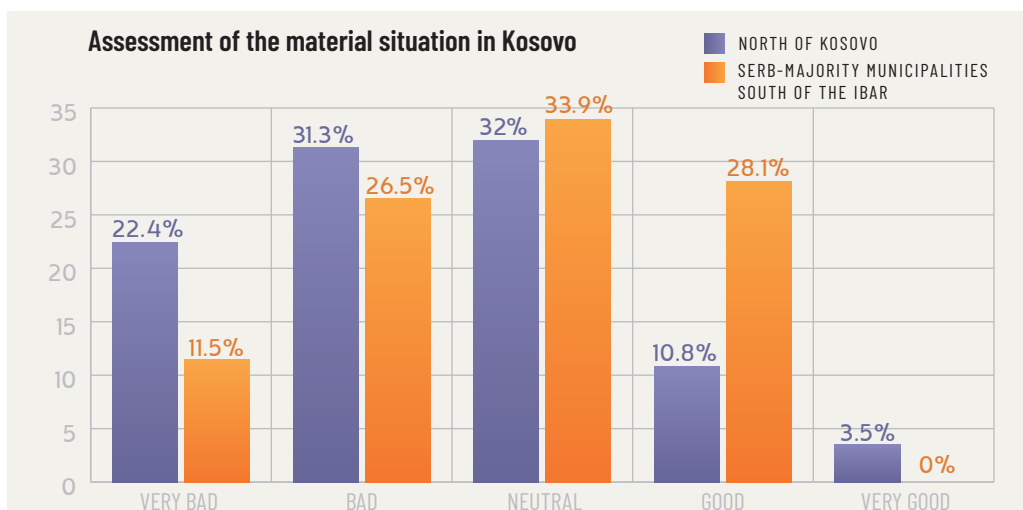
A similar pattern is observed when assessing the economic situation. In the north, the perception of the situation as “very bad” is highly prevalent (approximately 37%), whereas in the south this share is considerably lower (around 10%). South of the Ibar, the “neutral” category dominates (approximately 39%), accompanied by a notable proportion of respondents who assess the economic situation as “good” (around 21%). In contrast, in the north, the share of positive assessments is significantly lower (around 3% rating it “good”), while the “bad” category is also prominent (around 37%). This distribution suggests that the economic situation in the north is largely perceived through a lens of general instability, whereas the south reflects a greater inclination towards moderate and pragmatic assessments.



The most pronounced difference is observed in the assessment of the security situation. More than half of respondents in the north, assess the security situation as “very bad” (approximately 64%), whereas in the south this share is significantly lower (around 13%). South of the Ibar, the largest proportion of responses falls into the “bad” (approximately 37%) and “neutral” (around 31%) categories, while the share of respondents who assess the situation as “good” (20%) is considerably higher than in the north (approximately 3%). This difference clearly points to a stronger subjective sense of insecurity and vulnerability among respondents in the north.



When assessing personal financial circumstances, the differences between the two areas are less pronounced. In the north, the largest share of responses falls under the “neutral” (32%) and “bad” (around 31%) categories, while “very bad” accounts for around 22%. In the south, the “neutral” category dominates (around 34%), followed by “bad” (around 27%), while the share of those who rate their situation as “good” is somewhat higher (around 28%) compared to the north (approximately 11%). These data indicate that perceptions of personal material conditions in both communities are moderately negative overall, but without the strong polarization evident in assessments of the broader political and security situation.



Overall, the north is characterized by a high concentration of responses in the “very bad” category, particularly in the political (approximately 58%) and security (64%) dimensions, while the south showcases a wider response distribution, with “bad” and “neutral” being the dominant categories, paired also with a significant share of positive assessments. This pattern suggests that a narrative of acute crisis and institutional vulnerability is developing in the north, whereas the south of the Ibar, despite evident dissatisfaction, interprets reality through less extreme and more nuanced perceptions.

2025	POLITICAL SITUATION	ECONOMIC SITUATION	SECURITY SITUATION	MATERIAL SITUATION
North of Kosovo	1.63	1.93	1.59	2.39
Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar	2.65	2.71	2.60	2.80

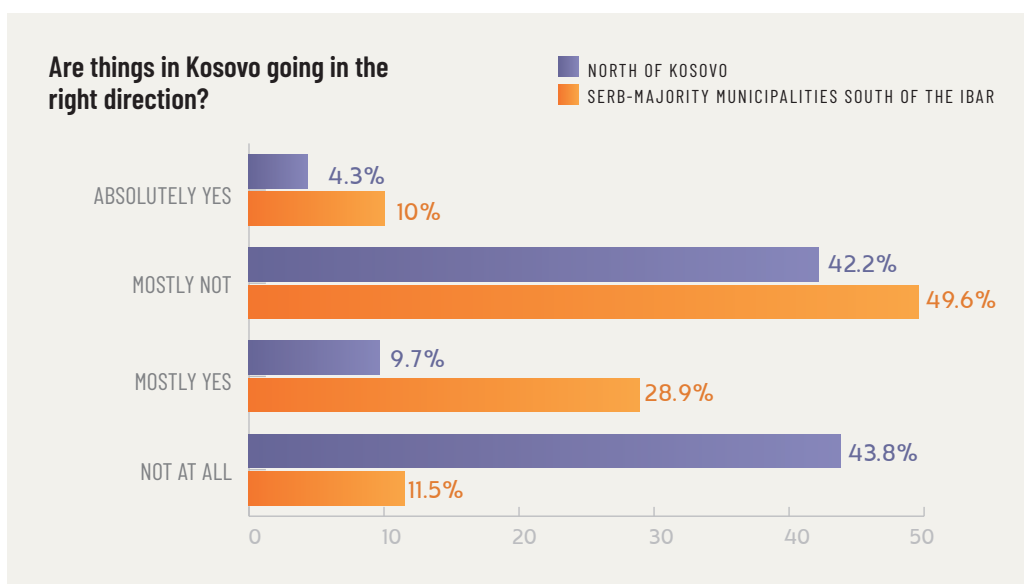
The political situation in Kosovo over the last five years has been assessed predominantly negatively. The worst drop was recorded in 2023, with a score of 1.51, reflecting pronounced dissatisfaction and political instability. Although an increase to 2.16 was observed in 2025 – the highest score in the last five years – it remains below the midpoint of the scale, indicating that citizens continue to perceive the political situation as unfavorable. While this rise may point to limited political shifts, overall negative perceptions persist.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Political situation	2.16	1.79	1.51	2.05	2.01
Economic situation	2.13	1.92	1.85	2.07	2.20
Security situation	2.17	1.76	1.46	2.04	1.93
Material situation	2.60	2.63	2.70	2.60	2.74

The economic situation in Kosovo steadily deteriorated up to 2023, reaching a score of 1.85, which clearly reflects serious economic challenges and widespread dissatisfaction. Modest improvements were recorded in 2024 and 2025; however, overall scores remain low. The security situation continues to represent one of the most critical concerns and is consistently rated the lowest among all indicators. The lowest score was recorded in 2023 (1.46), indicating heightened concerns related to incidents, particularly in northern Kosovo. By contrast, the material situation, although relatively better rated (2.6), still reflects a prevailing sense of stagnation and dissatisfaction.

Direction of changes

Responses to the question of whether developments in Kosovo are moving in a positive direction reveal a predominantly negative perception across the entire sample. A majority of respondents believe that the situation is not progressing favorably (“Mostly not” 46% and “Not at all” 28%), while positive assessments remain limited (“Mostly yes” 19% and “Absolutely yes” 7%). This suggests that a sense of stagnation or decline, rather than progress, prevails among Serbs in Kosovo. In the north, an extremely negative and almost closed pessimism prevails: “Not at all” (44%) and “Mostly not” (42%), with only a minimal share of positive views (“Mostly yes” 10%; “Absolutely yes” 4%). Such a distribution indicates a strong conviction that the political trajectory is not only unfavorable, but also fundamentally flawed, with over 85% of those expressing dissatisfaction.



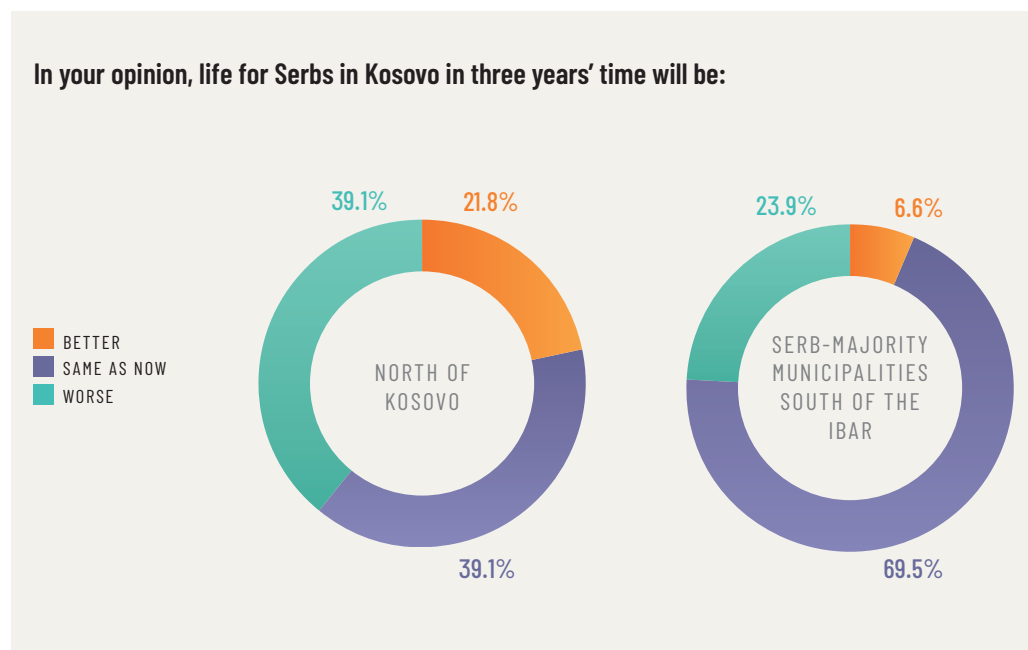
While the prevailing response south of the Ibar, remains “Mostly not” (50%), extreme negative perception is significantly less prevalent (“Not at all” 12%), while the space for a moderately positive attitude is notably higher (“Mostly yes” 29%; “Absolutely yes” 10%). This indicates that, although dissatisfaction is present, it is not accompanied by outright rejection. Instead, respondents south of the Ibar demonstrate a form of cautious realism, combining negative assessment with a degree of adaptation to existing conditions.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Yes	26.2%	8.8%	4.5%	7.3%	11.3%
No	73.8%	91.2%	95.5%	92.7%	88.7%

In 2025, a notable improvement was recorded compared to previous years (in a good direction 26.2%), while 73.8% still perceive the situation as not good. In 2024, 91.2% of citizens had a negative perception, and only 8.8% thought the situation was better, while 2023 marks the most critical period, with as many as 95.5% who considered the situation was going in a bad direction. In 2022 and 2021, there was a low share of those who believed in a positive direction with 7.3% in 2022 and 11.3% in 2021 respectively, while negative assessments dominated. Despite a modest increase in optimism in 2025, the overall five-year trend continues to reflect prevailing pessimism.

Life in three years' time

Responses regarding how Serbs in Kosovo expect their life to be like in three years' time reveal a dominant expectation of stagnation, with marked differences between the north and municipalities south of the Ibar. Across the entire sample, more than half of respondents believe that life will remain the same (54.2%), while a third expect it to worsen (31.7%), and only a minority foresee improvement (14.1%). This indicates a generally pessimistic outlook and a perception of prolonged uncertainty, with little expectation of significant progress.



In northern Kosovo, the responses are almost evenly split between stagnation and deterioration: an equal share of respondents expect life to stay the same as it is now (around 39%) and to be worse (around 39%). Optimism is present among approximately 22% of respondents. This distribution reflects a divided perception of the future: a portion of the population believes in the possibility of improvement; however, a significantly larger proportion of respondents expect deterioration or anticipate that no changes will occur, highlighting a high level of uncertainty and an unclear future trajectory. In contrast, south of the Ibar, expectations are related to the continuation of the current situation (around 69%), with fewer respondents expecting deterioration (around 24%), and a significantly weaker optimism (around 7%). This pattern suggests a more stable but low-ambition anticipation of the future. No significant progress is expected, but neither is a dramatic decline. The south thus exhibits a form of adaptive normalization, accepting the persistence of current conditions without expecting significant improvement or dramatic decline.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Better	14.1%	10.2%	7.5%	7.3%	8.5%
Same as now	54.2%	31%	35.4%	37.5%	52.2%
Worse	31.7%	58.4%	57.1%	55.2%	39.3%
No response	/	0.4%	/	/	/

The perception of the future in Kosovo suggests that the majority of citizens are still not optimistic. Although optimism increased slightly in 2025 with 14% believing life will improve, up from 10.2% in 2024, pessimism still prevails. Around 54% view the situation will remain the same, while 32% believe life will get worse. This pattern recurs across the previous period as well, as the number of those who believe that life will get better is mostly below 10%, while the majority has always held a view that things will stay the same or decline.

Overall, the results suggest that there is no strong collective vision among Serbs in Kosovo of progress in the near future. While the north fluctuates between hope and fear, the south leans more towards predicting prolonged stable uncertainty. These differences reflect varying expectations within the same community, shaped by specific experiences of political and security realities.

Major issues

Responses regarding the major issues faced in Kosovo reveal a multi-layered set of concerns, with security and political matters clearly taking precedence over strictly socio-economic topics. Across the entire sample, security was most often identified as a key issue (50% of respondents), followed by political instability (47%) and crime and corruption (47%), while migration and youth departure were also highly ranked (45%). The economic situation and unemployment were mentioned somewhat less frequently (32%), while the attitude of Kosovo authorities towards non-majority communities (9%) and employment based on family ties (negligible) are significantly less prominent.

Major issue in Kosovo	North of Kosovo	Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar
Security	21.1%	22.7%
Political instability	22.8%	16.4%
Crime and corruption	18.6%	23.4%
Attitude of Kosovo authorities towards non-majority communities	4.6%	2.3%
Migration, youth departure	20.2%	18.8%
Economic situation/Unemployment	12.7%	16.2%
Employment based on family ties	0%	0.2%

Major issues in Kosovo (respondents could mark multiple answers)	North of Kosovo	Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar
Security	62.5%	37.3%
Political instability	67.6%	26.9%
Crime and corruption	55.2%	38.5%
Attitude of Kosovo authorities towards non-majority communities	13.5%	3.8%
Migration, youth departure	59.8%	30.8%
Economic situation/Unemployment	37.5%	26.5%
Employment based on family ties	0%	0.4%

However, the differences between the north and the municipalities south of the Ibar further nuance this picture. In the north, political instability is the most prominent concern (around 68% of respondents from the north), followed by security (around 63%) and migration (around 60%). Perceptions of crime and corruption are also high and prevalent (55%). This pattern indicates that the north predominantly views reality through the lens of political and institutional crises. Security and instability are not seen as isolated problems, but as part of a broader sense of systemic uncertainty. South of the Ibar, the structure of concerns differs. While security (37%) and crime/corruption (around 39%) are significant, political instability is less frequently highlighted (around 27%). Migration continues to be important (around 31%), but to a lesser extent than in the north.

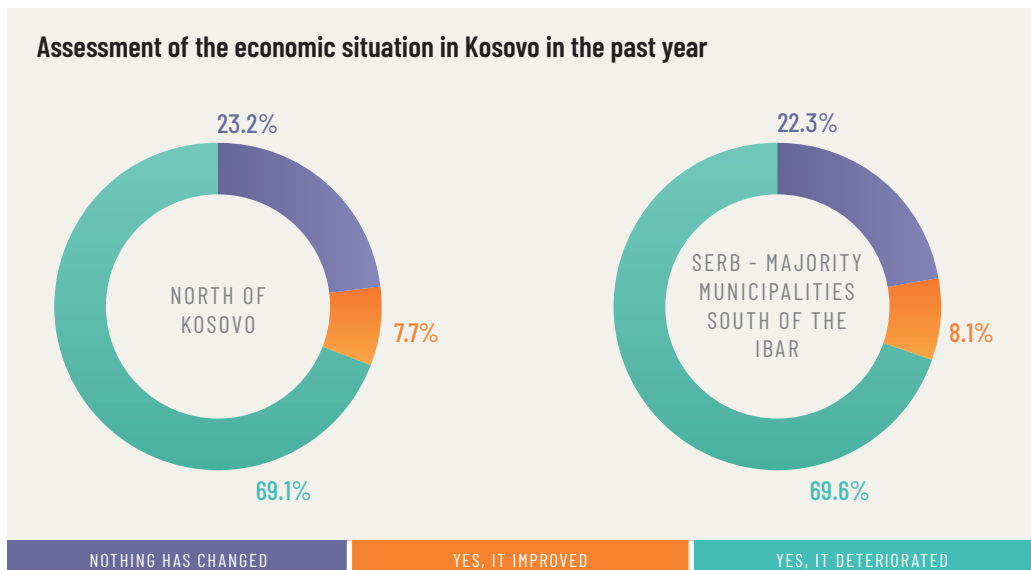
Interestingly, the attitude of Kosovo authorities towards non-majority communities is cited significantly more often in the north (14%) than in the south (4%). This suggests that citizens perceive Pristina’s focus on “integration” as both forced and concerning.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Political instability	47.1%	57.9%	69.2%	39.2%	52.6%
Economic situation/Unemployment	32.1%	57.1%	58.4%	65.4%	25.2%
Security	50%	51.1%	64.6%	38.8%	47.4%
Crime and corruption	46.7%	42.9%	46.6%	40.6%	43.7%
Migration, youth departure	45.4%	54.9%	52.2%	53.5%	51.1%
Attitude of Kosovo authorities towards non-majority communities	8.7%	/	/	/	/

Over the past five years, the concerns among Serbs in Kosovo when it comes to key issues, have fluctuated, but pessimism remains dominant. Political instability, which peaked in 2023 (69.2%), decreased significantly by 2025 (47.1%), while the economic situation and unemployment were previously a serious challenge, though the concern fell from 65.4% in 2022 to 32.1% in 2025. Security remains a major issue (50% in 2025), albeit down compared to 2023 (64.6%). Crime and corruption, along with migration and youth departure, continue to be key concerns. While some optimism exists, major issues such as political instability and economic uncertainty still dominate public perceptions.

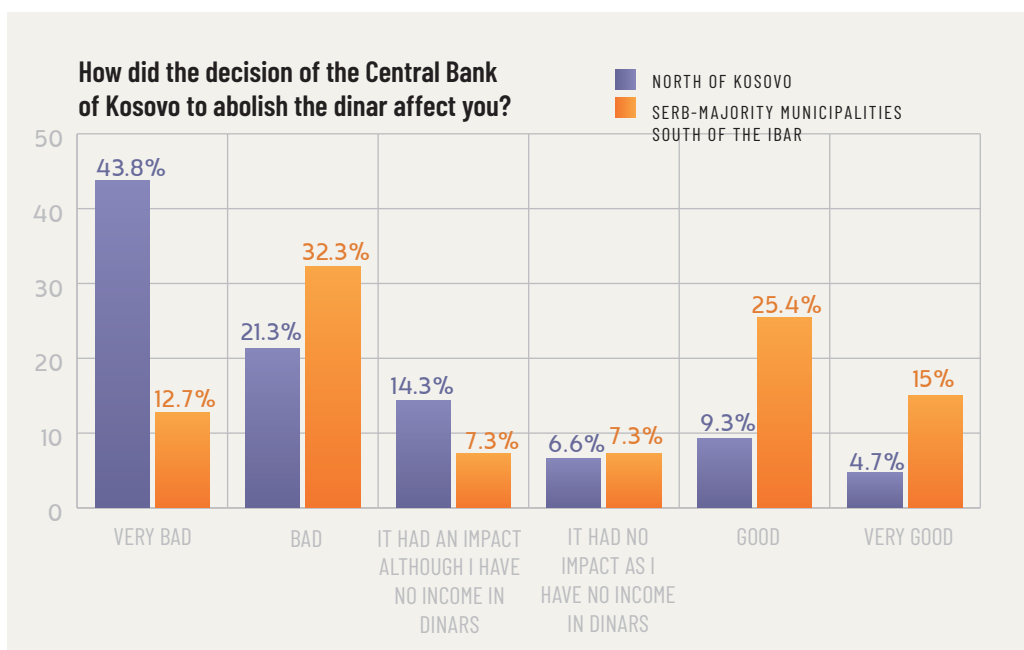
Economic situation

Assessment of the economic situation over the past year shows a distinctly negative perception, almost identical in both the north and the municipalities south of the Ibar. In both areas, the majority of respondents believe the situation has worsened, with 69% of respondents in the north and 70% south of the Ibar. At the same time, around a fifth of respondents in both regions assess that nothing has changed (23% in the north and 22% in the south), while only a small proportion see an improvement (8% each in both regions). Such a distribution indicates an almost consensual perception of economic decline, without notable territorial differences. Unlike the political or security issues, which display marked north-south variation, the economic assessment shows a high degree of homogeneity within the Serbian community in Kosovo. This suggests that economic challenges are perceived as general and systemic, rather than specific to a particular part of the territory.



Ban on the use of dinar

Perceptions of the Central Bank of Kosovo’s decision to abolish the dinar show a marked differentiated pattern between the north and municipalities south of the Ibar, clearly reflecting a differing degree of economic and institutional dependence on the system of the Republic of Serbia. In the north, the impact is viewed very negatively: nearly half of respondents believe that the measure had a “very bad” impact (around 44%), while an additional 21% say that it had a “bad” impact. Overall, two-thirds of respondents in the north perceive this decision negatively, while positive assessments are marginal (“good” 9%, “very good” 5%). Even respondents not formally receiving income in dinars, report being affected by the decision (14%), indicating broader indirect effects – via market interactions, family transfers, or trade.



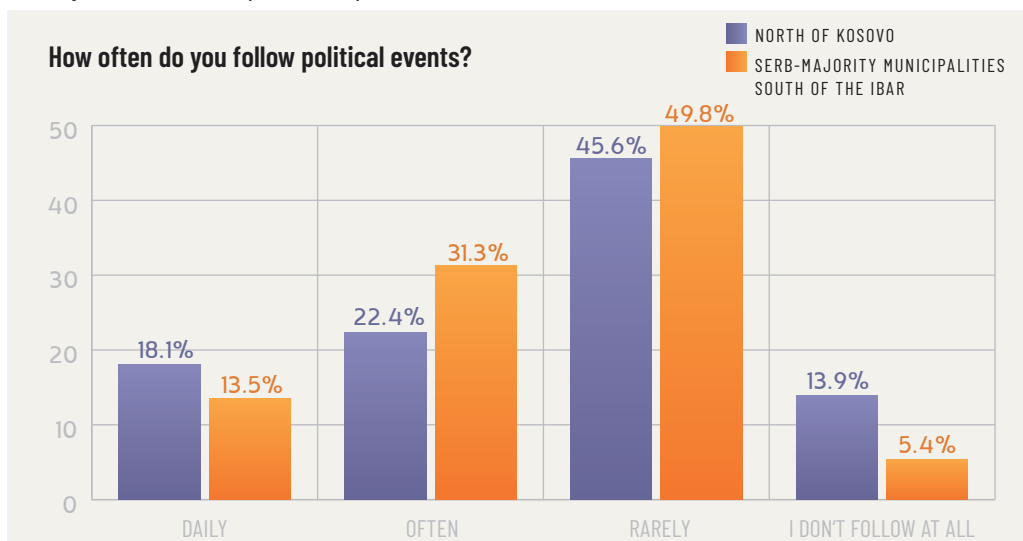
South of the Ibar, the picture is much more balanced. Although there is a negative perception (“very bad” 13% and “bad” 32%), it is not as dominant as in the north. A notable share of respondents assessed that the measure had a positive effect (“good” 25% and “very good” 15%), implying that as many as 40% of respondents in the south see this decision in a positive light. In addition, a smaller share of respondents reported indirect effects of the decision despite not receiving any income in dinars (7%), with an equal proportion indicating no effect at all (7%). Society-wise, these results highlight the profound economic and symbolic divide between the north and the south. In the north, where ties to Serbian institutions and financial systems are stronger, the abolition of the dinar is perceived as a direct threat to everyday economic security and a political signal of exclusion. South of the Ibar, where economic strategies are more hybrid and integration into Kosovo institutional framework greater, perceptions are significantly more pragmatic and moderate.



TRUST IN DECISION MAKERS

Political situation monitoring

Data on the frequency of following political developments indicate a relatively low level of sustained political engagement across the entire sample. The majority of respondents report that they rarely follow political events (48%), while 27% do so often and 16% on a daily basis. At the same time, 10% of respondents do not follow political processes at all. This distribution suggests that political information is largely episodic, rather than continuous, which may be linked to overexposure to crisis narratives, a sense of political powerlessness, or limited confidence in the ability to influence political processes.



Territorially, differences between the north and the municipalities south of the Ibar are present, but not pronounced. In the north, the share of respondents who follow political developments daily is slightly higher (around 18%) compared to the south (around 14%), while the proportion of those who do not follow politics at all is significantly higher in the north (14%) than south of the Ibar (5%). South of the Ibar, the dominant category is “rarely” (around 50%), although the share of those who follow political developments frequently is noticeably higher (around 31%) than in the north (around 22%). This pattern indicates a more stable but moderate level of political engagement, without marked polarization between active monitoring and complete lack of interest.

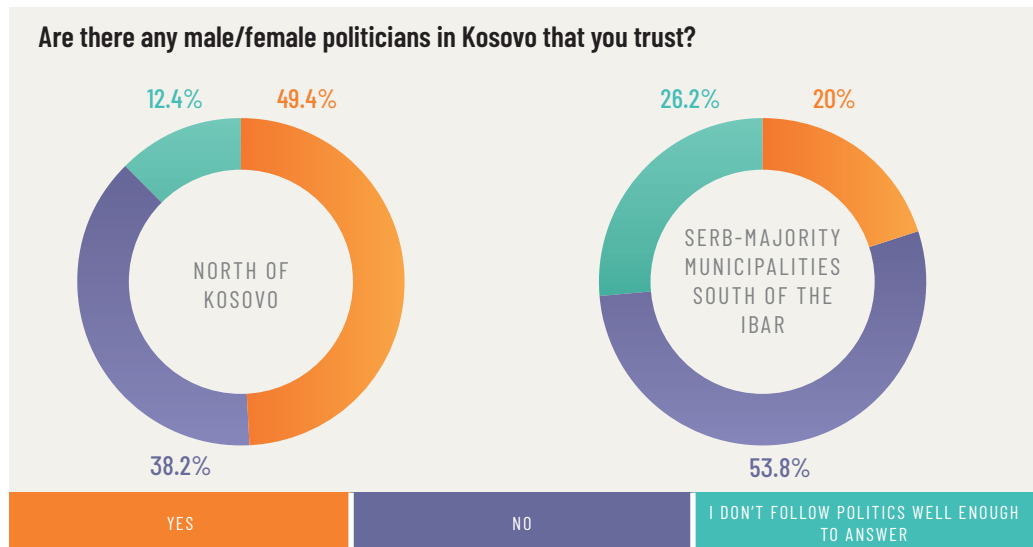
	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
I don't follow at all	9.6%	11.3%	7.8%	10.1%	15%
Rarely	47.6%	30%	32.6%	40.9%	44.1%
Often	26.8%	37%	34.6%	36.4%	30.9%
Daily	16%	21.7%	25%	12.6%	10%

Interest in political developments in Kosovo has declined over time. In 2025, 9.6% of respondents reported not following politics at all, an improvement compared to 15% in 2021, while the share of those who rarely follow politics increased to 47.6%. The proportion of respondents who frequently follow politics declined to 26.8%, and those who do so daily to 16%. These trends point to growing apathy and decreasing civic engagement in political matters.

Overall, these findings suggest that, despite the prominence of political and security issues in public perceptions, most respondents follow political processes only occasionally rather than regularly, which may have implications for levels of political participation, mobilization, and long-term trust in institutional processes.

Trust in political actors

Findings on trust in political actors point to a pronounced crisis of representation within the Serbian community in Kosovo, alongside clear territorial differences between the north and municipalities south of the Ibar. Across the entire sample, the majority of respondents do not trust any politician or political party in Kosovo (46%), while approximately 35% report trusting at least one actor. Approximately one-fifth of respondents indicate that they do not follow politics sufficiently to provide an opinion, reflecting a degree of political distance or apathy on the part of the population. Overall, these findings suggest that trust in the political elite is generally low, though not entirely absent.



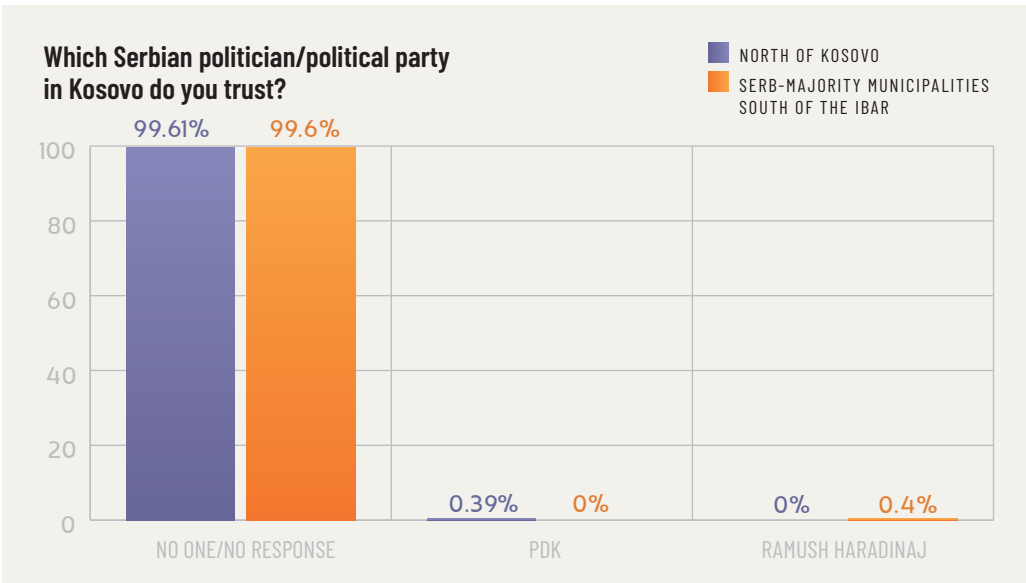
However, differences between the north and the south are significant. In the north, nearly half of respondents (around 49%) report trust in a political actor, whereas this share is considerably lower in the south (20%). At the same time, distrust is more pronounced in the south (around 54%) along with a higher proportion of respondents who state that they do not follow politics closely enough to respond (around 26%, compared to around 12% in the north). These findings indicate that the north is more politically mobilized and structured around identifiable actors, while the south reflects greater fragmentation, distance, and weaker identification with the available political offers.

When examining which actors enjoy trust, this distinction becomes even more evident. Among respondents who expressed trust, the Serbian List holds a dominant position (27% overall, 29% in the north and 21% in the south). This renewed trust compared to previous years may be linked to expectations of re-engagement with local institutions following the period of illegitimate governance by Albanian representatives in northern municipalities. In the north, support is also more dispersed among other individuals and initiatives (GI Pravda i Jednakost, Marko Jakšić, Zlatan Elek and others), indicating a more dynamic political landscape within the Serbian political scene in the north.

In contrast, 65% of respondents in the south actually left the question open without naming a specific actor, suggesting weaker personalized identification and a more cautious or ambivalent stance towards political elites.

Which Serbian politician/political party in Kosovo do you trust?	North of Kosovo	Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar
Serbian List	28.9%	21.2%
GI "Pravda i jednakost"	7.8%	1.9%
Marko Jakšić	9.4%	0%
Zlatan Elek	7.8%	0%
Ivan "Tozo" Zaporožac	3.9%	0%
Aleksandar Lazović	3.9%	0%
Aco Arsenijević	3.9%	0%
Ivan Miletić	3.1%	0%
Miloš Perović	3.1%	0%
Srpska demokratija	3.1%	0%
Other named individuals (individual responses)	19.6%	11.5%
None/No response	5.5%	65.4%

It is also notable that trust in Albanian politicians or parties is practically non-existent. As many as 95% of respondents who expressed trust in a political actor did not mention any Albanian politician or party. Individual responses (PDK or Ramush Haradinaj) are statistically negligible. This finding clearly reflects a highly ethnically segmented political space, where trust is almost exclusively confined to one's own ethnic political infrastructure.



Are there any politicians in Kosovo that you trust	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Yes	34.6%	8.9%	6%	8.4%	10.9%
No	46.2%	72%	83.5%	67.1%	60.2%
I don't follow politics well enough to be able to respond	19.2%	19.1%	9.9%	24.5%	28.9%
No response	0%	0%	0.6%	0%	0%

Perceptions of trust towards politicians in Kosovo show growing pessimism, but also a slight improvement in the last year. In 2025, around 35% of respondents reported trust in politicians, a significant increase compared to 2024, when only 8.9% trusted them. With positive responses on the rise, in 2023 only 6% of citizens trusted politicians, and negative responses dominated. These data indicate that while there is a modest shift in perceptions of trust, the political scene in Kosovo is still unable to instill wider trust among citizens.



TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Across the entire sample, dissatisfaction with almost all institutions is predominant. The following Kosovo system institutions stand out in particular: Kosovo Government records an extremely high level of overall dissatisfaction (53% “Not satisfied at all” and an additional 38% “Not satisfied”), while similar patterns may be observed among Serb MPs in the Assembly of Kosovo (45% + 44%) and Serb ministers in the Kosovo Government (51% + 40%). Kosovo Police, UNMIK, EULEX, the EU Office and the OSCE are also assessed predominantly negatively. Even international security missions like KFOR, despite a somewhat more moderate distribution of responses, receive overall negative evaluations.

North of Kosovo	Not satisfied at all	Not satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Interim local self-government bodies	35.7%	31%	7.8%	3.1%	22.4%
Municipalities in the Kosovo system in Serb-majority areas	58.5%	33.6%	7.1%	0%	0.8%
Office for Kosovo and Metohija	36.4%	30%	6.3%	3.6%	23.7%
Government of Serbia	37.6%	27.7%	7.5%	0.4%	26.8%
Government of Kosovo	73.4%	22.2%	4%	0%	0.4%
Serbian MPs in the Assembly of Kosovo	62.8%	31.4%	2.7%	1.3%	1.8%
Serbian ministers in the Government of Kosovo	65.9%	29.2%	3.1%	1.3%	0.5%
Kosovo Police	66.1%	26.2%	6%	1.3%	0.4%
UNMIK	58.8%	32.8%	6.3%	1.3%	0.8%
EU Office in Kosovo	56.7%	31.2%	9.2%	2.1%	0.8%
EULEX	56.9%	31.5%	9.5%	1.7%	0.4%
KFOR	39%	40.1%	16.1%	2.8%	2%
OSCE	53.7%	32.4%	11.9%	1.2%	0.8%

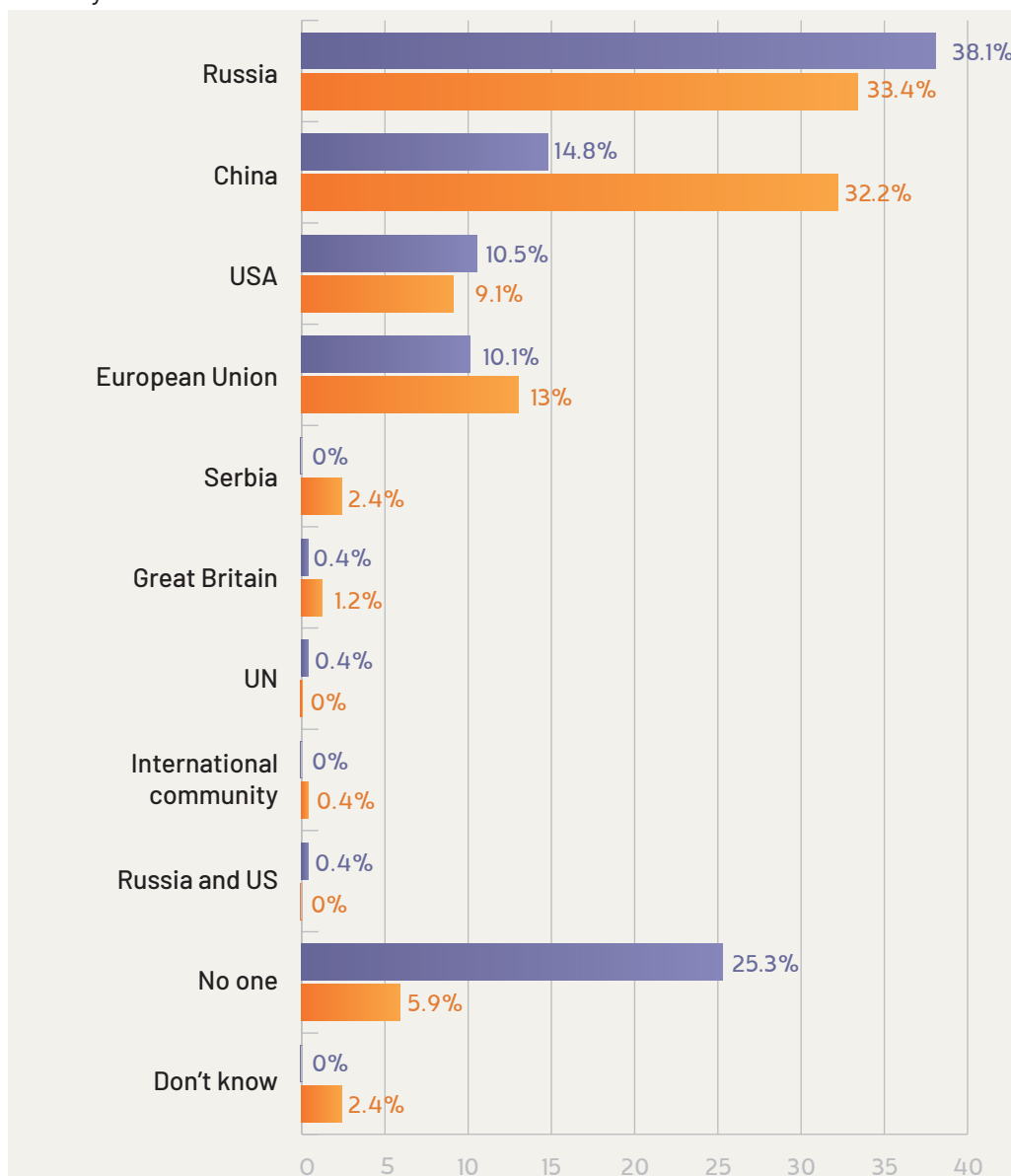
At the same time, institutions of the Republic of Serbia do not enjoy significantly higher levels of trust. Although assessments are somewhat more favorable compared to Kosovo institutions, both the Government of Serbia (28% “Not satisfied at all”, 38% “Not satisfied”) and the Office for Kosovo and Metohija (26% + 40%) still record predominantly negative ratings. This suggests that this extends beyond Kosovo’s institutional framework and reflects broader discontent with broader political governance system.

Territorial differences further deepen this picture. In the north, dissatisfaction with Kosovo institutions is particularly intense and radical: approximately 73% of respondents report being “Not satisfied at all” with the work of Kosovo Government, 66% with the work of Kosovo Police, and 63% with Serbian MPs in the Assembly of Kosovo. These figures point to an almost complete delegitimization of Kosovo institutional framework among the northern part of the community. Even the international missions are also assessed very negatively (e.g. 59% “Not satisfied at all” with UNMIK, 57% with EULEX). South of the Ibar, dissatisfaction remains dominant but is less extreme. Instead of the category “Not satisfied at all”, the milder category “Not satisfied” appears more frequently. For example, in terms of the Government of Kosovo, 34% are “Not satisfied at all”, while 53% are “Not satisfied”, indicating a critical but less radical stance. A similar pattern is observed for international missions and the Kosovo Police, where negative evaluations remain high but are more evenly distributed across response categories.

Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar	Not satisfied at all	Not satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Interim local self-government bodies	15.9%	50.8%	26.4%	5.4%	1.5%
Municipalities in the Kosovo system in Serb-majority areas	13.9%	51.2%	26.5%	6.9%	1.5%
Office for Kosovo and Metohija	16.4%	50%	27%	4.7%	1.9%
Government of Serbia	18.9%	49%	24.3%	5.8%	2%
Government of Kosovo	34.1%	52.7%	10.5%	1.5%	1.2%
Serbian MPs in the Assembly of Kosovo	30.5%	55.6%	9.7%	2.3%	1.9%
Serbian ministers in the Government of Kosovo	38.6%	49.8%	8.5%	2.3%	0.8%
Kosovo Police	28.1%	48.1%	19.6%	3.4%	0.8%
UNMIK	27%	45.5%	19.3%	7%	1.2%
EU Office in Kosovo	27.9%	47%	17%	7.3%	0.8%
EULEX	30.5%	48.3%	15.8%	5%	0.4%
KFOR	29.1%	45.3%	17.4%	7%	1.2%
OSCE	29.1%	43.8%	16.7%	8.9%	1.5%

Protectors of Serb interests

In terms of perceptions of the “best protector of Serb interests” across the entire sample, Russia stands out as the dominant actor (36%), followed by China at the second place (23%). The EU (12%) and US (10%) hold significantly weaker positions, while trust in Serbia itself as a protector is almost symbolic (1%). At the same time, as many as 16% of respondents believe that “no one” protects Serb interests, reflecting a pronounced sense of political vulnerability and defeatist collective identity.



Territorial differences further nuance this picture. In the north of Kosovo, Russia remains the most convincing choice (around 38%), however particular emphasis is paid to a significantly high share of responses “no one” (around 25%).

This suggests that, despite a strong symbolic orientation towards Moscow, there is also substantial doubt about the actual effectiveness of any actor.

The north is characterized by more pronounced geopolitical skepticism and a sense of abandonment. South of the Ibar, while Russia remains the first choice (around 34%), China records a notably high share (around 32%), significantly higher than in the north (around 15%). This data may indicate a more pragmatic perception of international relations and openness towards a multipolar order, whereas China is seen as an alternative center of power, as opposed to the West. In southern municipalities, the share of respondents who believe that “no one” protects Serb interests (around 6%) is considerably lower, suggesting a less pronounced sense of complete political isolation than in the north.

The EU and the US remain secondary when it comes to the perception of protecting interests (22% combined), reflecting the limited legitimacy of Western institutions in the eyes of respondents. It is particularly notable that Serbia itself is rarely perceived as a key protector, which may point to a divergence between symbolic national affiliation and perceptions of actual international power.

When it comes to the perception of international “protectors” of Serb interests, the tone of interviews with prominent representatives of the Serbian community is primarily marked by disappointment and realism. Editor-in-Chief of Radio Goraždevac, Darko Dimitrijević, clearly points out that global politics is driven by interests, not friendships, emphasizing that it is illusory to expect consistent external protection. Founder of the NGO “Institute for Civil Society Development – Innovate”, Miloš Vukadinović, even goes a step further stating: “In principle, people have become aware that Serbs in Kosovo have no active protector. It seems to me that we have been left to ourselves for quite some time now.” He observes that “the myth about Russia” has significantly lost its prominence, and that traditional expectations have, for quite some time, lacked any realistic foundation—despite the fact that Kosovo’s political leadership has continuously promoted and repeated this unfounded narrative.

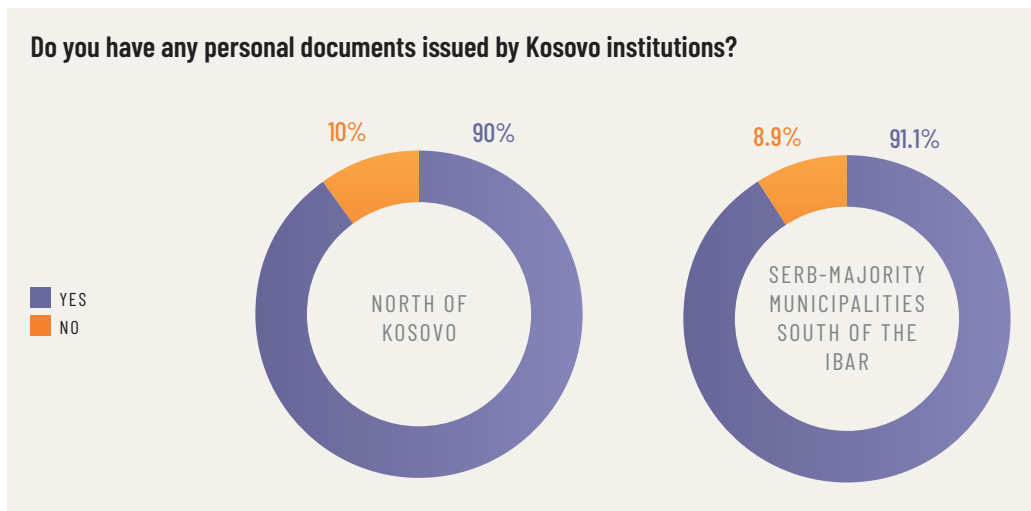
Editor-in-Chief of RTV Kim, Goran Avramović, offers a more detailed geopolitical perspective, assessing that the perception of Russia as a protector of Serb interests is “a remnant of past times”, and that “Russia has long ceased to care about Kosovo, except when it mentions it in the context of Crimea or other occupied Ukrainian territories”. He further notes that China is using Kosovo exclusively in the context of its own Taiwan issue, while the European Union is “completely preoccupied with its internal challenges” whereas Belgrade is constrained by its own political considerations. In such a context, the conclusion that prevails is that “no one represents their interests on the ground anymore.”

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
European Union	11.5%	21.9%	15.7%	9.8%	8.9%
Russia	35.8%	44.7%	56.9%	64.3%	65.6%
USA	9.8%	2.4%	2.8%	1.7%	3%
China	23.5%	14.1%	11.8%	13%	17%

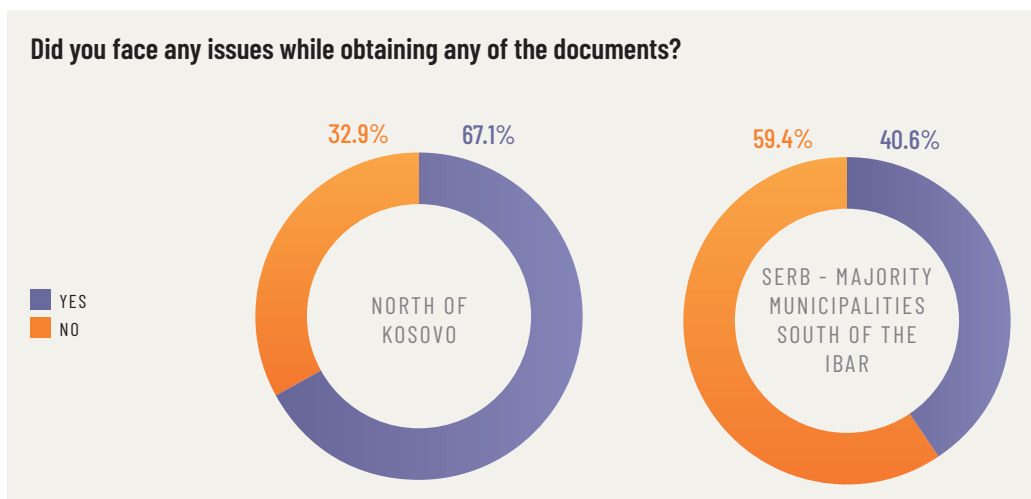
Kosovo Serbs' perception related to international actors as defenders of their interests has evolved over the past five years. Despite its declining influence, Russia continues to receive the highest support for years, while support for the European Union is declining. In 2025, Russia was supported the most with 35.8%, although a decline there is noticeable compared to previous years (44.7% in 2024 and 56.9% in 2023), potentially pointing towards a collapse of its idealized image of Russia as a protector. The European Union reduced its support to 11.5% in 2025, a drastic drop compared to 2024 (21.9%). China has gained prominence, rising to 23.5% in 2025, a significant increase from 14.1% in 2024 and 11.8% in 2023, while the US remains the least supported actor with 9.8% in 2025.

Id cards

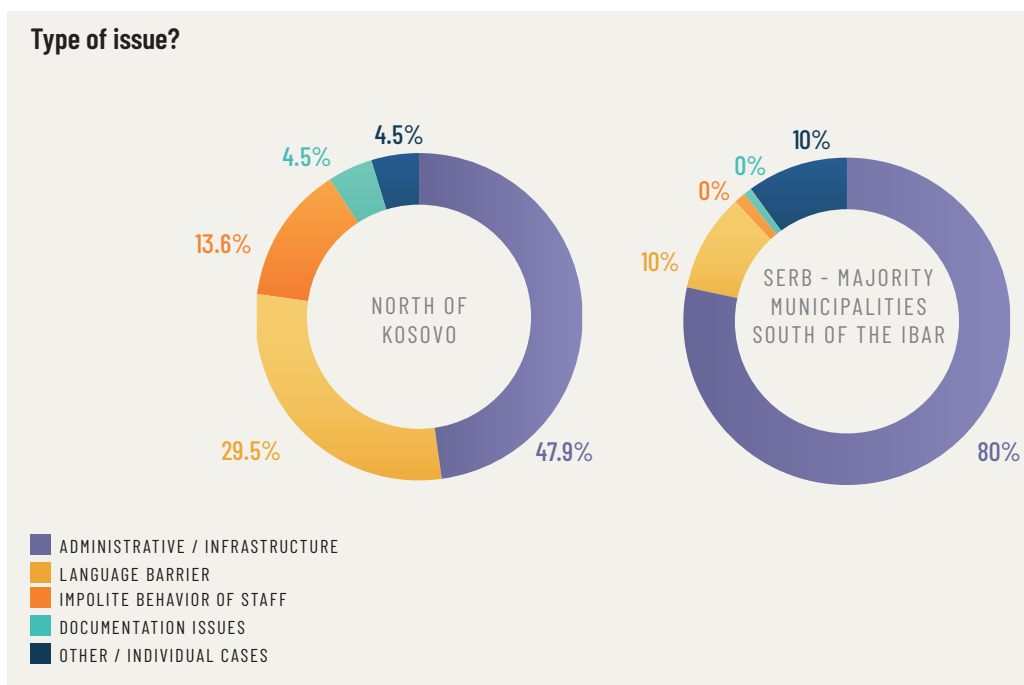
Data on the possession of Kosovo-issued personal documents indicate a high degree of formal integration of Serbs into the Kosovo administrative system. As many as 91% of respondents possess documents issued by Kosovo institutions, while only 9% do not. This pattern is consistent in the north (90%) and in municipalities south of the Ibar (91%), suggesting that, despite political differences and varying levels of institutional trust, the majority of citizens engage with the Kosovo administrative framework for pragmatic reasons.




However, nearly half of respondents (46%) report facing issues in obtaining documents. These challenges are more pronounced in municipalities south of the Ibar, where 59% of respondents report issues, while this percentage is significantly lower (33%) in the north. In the north, the majority (67%) report no difficulties, compared to 41% in the south. These differences may reflect variations in administrative conditions, institutional practices, or the extent to which local structures are adapted to community needs.



In terms of the nature of the challenges faced, administrative and infrastructural issues prevail (54%), including technical, procedural or organizational obstacles. These are particularly pronounced south of the Ibar (80% of all reported issues in that region). In the north, reported issues are more diverse: in addition to administrative challenges (48%), language barriers are significant (around 30%), alongside reports of impolite behavior by officials (around 14%) and documentation-related issues (around 5%). South of the Ibar, language barriers and communication issues are reported far less frequently, potentially reflecting differences in institutional interaction or more adapted administrative procedures.

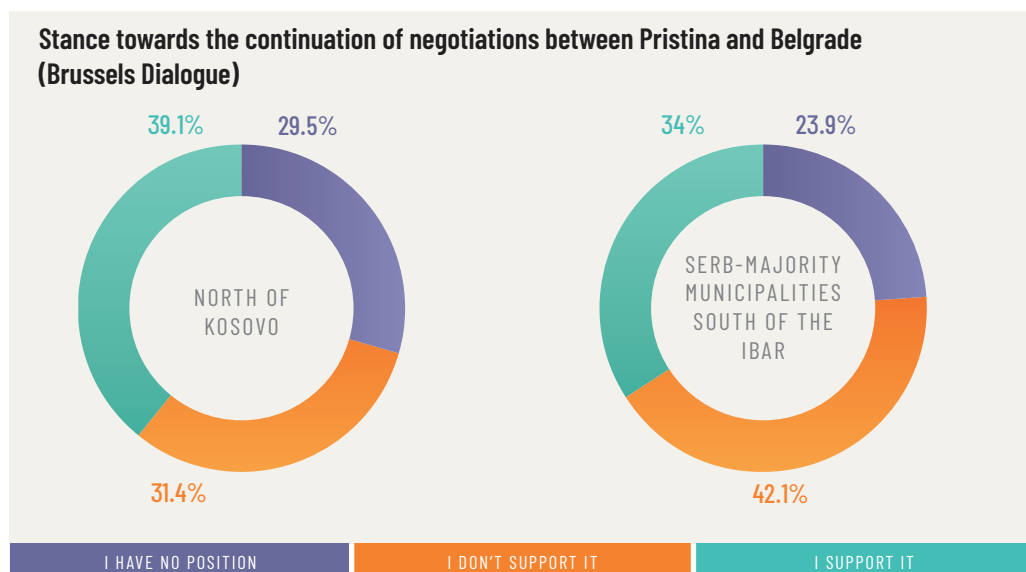




The background features a dark blue overlay with faint, large-scale text reading 'ANALIZA TRENDOVA' (Trend Analysis) and 'TRENDOVA' (Trends). Overlaid on this are several semi-transparent data visualization elements: a 3D bar chart with five bars of varying heights and colors (green, purple, blue, green, grey), a 3D pie chart with several slices, and a line graph with a fluctuating trend. A grid pattern is also visible across the background.

CONTINUATION OF BELGRADE - PRISTINA DIALOGUE

Attitudes towards the continuation of the Belgrade–Pristina dialogue (Brussels Dialogue) reveal a deeply divided Serbian community in Kosovo, alongside notable territorial differences in political perceptions of the negotiation process. Across the entire sample, attitudes are almost evenly split: 37% of respondents support the continuation of negotiations, the same number (37%) oppose it, while 26% do not have a clearly formed opinion. This distribution indicates the absence of social consensus and highlights strong normative and political ambivalence regarding the outcomes of the dialogue thus far.

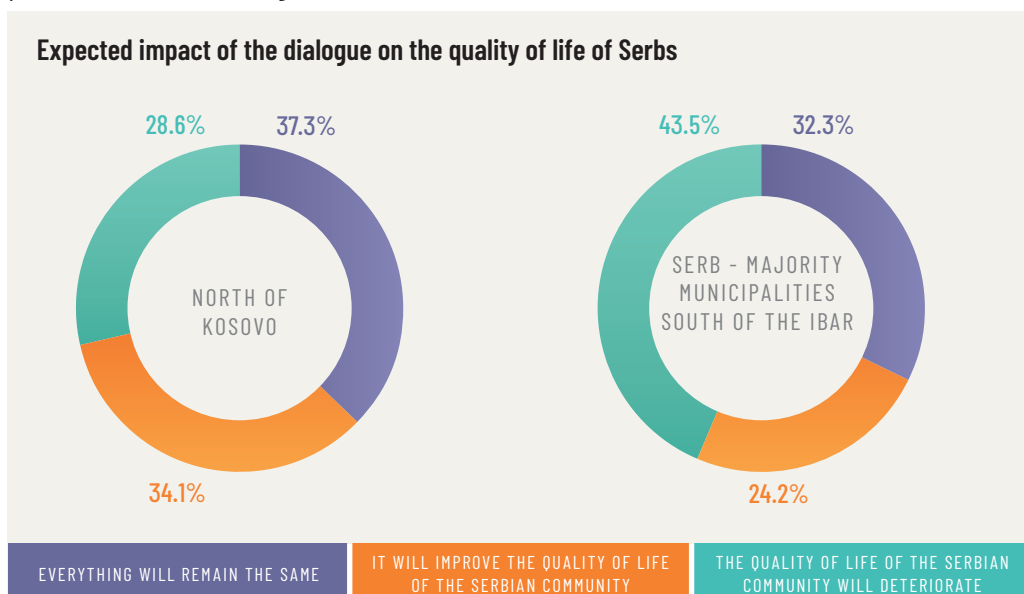


However, when the data is disaggregated by place of residence, the differences become more apparent. In the north of Kosovo, support for dialogue is somewhat higher (39%) compared to municipalities south of the Ibar (34%), while opposition is lower in terms of continuation of negotiations (31% in the north versus 42% in the south). At the same time, the north also records a higher share of undecided respondents (around 30%) compared to the south (around 24%).

These findings suggest that despite strong political polarization and pronounced institutional distrust towards Kosovo institutions, the north is somewhat more open to the negotiation process itself as a political mechanism. This may reflect a pragmatic view of dialogue as a necessary channel for addressing security and institutional issues affecting their daily lives.

In contrast, municipalities south of the Ibar exhibit a higher level of opposition to the dialogue (42%), which may reflect disappointment with the outcomes of previous negotiations or a perception that the dialogue has not yielded tangible improvements for the community. The lower share of undecided respondents in the south suggests more firmly established attitudes, whether positive or negative. The high proportion of undecided respondents further points to a lack of transparent communication and trust in the negotiating elites, as well as the lack of a widely accepted narrative about what dialogue actually means and what consequences it may have for the community.

Expectations regarding the impact of the Brussels Dialogue on quality of life of Serbs underscore the absence of an optimistic outlook. Across the entire sample, 36% of respondents believe that the dialogue will deteriorate the quality of life of the Serbian community, 35% expect no change, and 29% anticipate improvement. Therefore, negative and neutral expectations combined account for more than two-thirds of responses, indicating prevailing skepticism towards the potential positive effects of negotiations.



In municipalities south of the Ibar, pessimism is more pronounced, with around 44% of respondents expecting deterioration in the quality of life, 32% foresee no change, and only 24% anticipate improvement. Compared to the north, the south demonstrates lower optimism and higher levels of negative expectations. Analytically speaking, these findings point to a broader lack of trust in the transformative potential of the dialogue. Notably, even where support for continued negotiations exists, expectations regarding tangible life improvements remain limited. It is particularly worrying that the south, where institutional integration in the Kosovo system is more pronounced, reflects a higher degree of concern due to potential negative outcomes of the dialogue.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
I support it	36.7%	29%	18.2%	17.5%	22.4%
I do not support it	36.7%	29%	42.8%	40.5%	25.9%
I have no position	26.6%	41.7%	39%	42%	51.7%
No response	0%	0.3%	0%	0%	0%

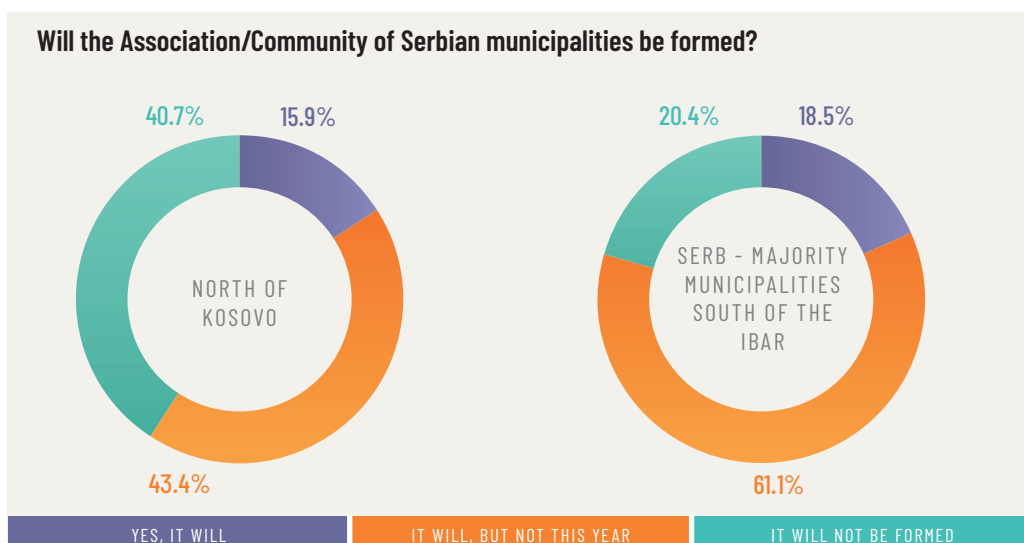
In 2024, 29% supported negotiations, the same percentage of respondents opposed them, while 41.7% held a neutral stance. Although the number of those who support the negotiations increased in 2025 (36.6%), at the same time, the number of those who do not support them remained high, indicating a deep division within the Serbian community. In previous years, such as 2023 (18.2% support), the share of respondents supporting the negotiations was significantly lower, while neutral positions were high, especially in 2021, when 51.7% of respondents held no positions. This trend indicates a gradual decrease in neutrality and an increase in polarization, although a significant share of respondents remains undecided related to further negotiations.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
It will improve the quality of life of the Serbian community	29.1%	19.9%	14.1%	15%	18.9%
The quality of life of the Serbian community will deteriorate	36%	31.4%	35.9%	38.1%	23.7%
Everything will remain the same	34.9%	48.5%	50%	46.9%	57.4%
No response	0%	0.2%	0%	0%	0%

Compared to 2024, when 19.9% of respondents believed that the dialogue would lead to improved quality of life, and 48.5% believed that everything would remain the same, an increase was observed in the number of those who believe that dialogue could have a positive impact (in 2025, 29.1% believe that dialogue will improve the quality of life). In 2023 and 2022, the number of those who believed that dialogue would improve life was even lower (14.1% and 15%), in 2023, 50% expected no changes. In 2021, 18.9% were optimistic, while 57.4% expected no changes. This data indicates a gradual increase in optimism in 2025, with prevailing pessimism and a sense of stagnation, while the majority believes that dialogue will not produce any significant life improvements or deterioration.

Formation of the A/CSM

Expectations regarding the formation of the Association/Community of Serbian Municipalities (A/CSM) reflect a specific combination of “conditional optimism” and deeply rooted doubts about the final outcome. Across the entire sample, the dominant attitude is neither open optimism nor entire pessimism, but rather deferred expectations. The majority believes that the A/CSM will eventually be formed (52%). This suggests that respondents do not dismiss the idea as impossible, but at the same time they do not believe that there is political will in Pristina or international pressure strong enough to ensure its timely implementation. In other words, the A/CSM is perceived more as a persistent political promise, than as a short-term realistically achievable outcome.



At the same time, a substantial share of respondents believe that the A/CSM will not be formed at all (30%). This group reflects not only skepticism about the timelines, but also a deeply rooted distrust in the negotiating framework itself and the actors implementing it. In this sense, the view “It will not be formed” can therefore be interpreted as a sign of delegitimization of the Brussels process: The A/CSM is perceived as a political bargaining chip or symbolic commitment used to calm down the pressures, however with no intention of being implemented. A smaller portion of respondents that believe that the A/CSM will still be formed in the near future (17%) indicate that, despite the long-standing stalemate, a part of population either recognizes new political signals as groundbreaking, or retains faith in the possibility of an agreement under external pressure.

Territorial differences are particularly important as they highlight two different political rationalities within the same community. The expectations are significantly “more hardcore” when it comes to the north of Kosovo and more polarized: almost equal share of respondents believe that the A/CSM will be formed later (43%) and that it will not be formed at all (41%). This means that the north is caught between two interpretations: one viewing the A/CSM as a delayed but possible, and another considering it fundamentally unattainable.

South of the Ibar, a more moderate, but distinctly “delayed” optimism prevails: 61% expect that the A/CSM will be formed, though not this year, while the percentage of those who believe that it will not be formed is significantly lower (20%). This suggests that the south, while skeptical about the pace of the process, still maintains stronger belief in a long-term institutional outcome. A possible interpretation provides that Serbs south of the Ibar, who are more likely to interact with Kosovo institutions on daily basis, tend to develop a more pragmatic attitude towards institutional changes: expecting less sudden political upheavals, but believing in gradual, slow agreements and “technical” implementation with international mediation. In this context, the A/CSM is perceived more as a future administrative framework than as an urgent political safeguard of survival.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Yes, it will	17.4%	25.8%	19%	14%	14.1%
It will, but not this year	52.2%	27.5%	33.5%	27.3%	38.5%
It will not be formed	30.4%	46.7%	47.5%	58.7%	47.4%

The prevailing perception, when it comes to the establishment of the Association/Community of Serbian Municipalities (A/CSM) in Kosovo also shows variations over the past five years. The greatest optimism regarding the formation of the A/CSM was recorded in 2024, when 25.8% believed that the A/CSM would be formed, the highest in the last five years. This rise appears to be linked to hope for situation to stabilize, but was not caused by a specific political development. The least optimistic data were recorded in 2022 and 2021, with only 14% expressing that the A/CSM would be formed, indicating pessimism regarding the fulfilment of these political goals. In 2025, 17.4% believed that the A/CSM would be formed, while the majority of people (52.2%) believed that it would not be formed within the year, reflecting continued uncertainty and low faith in achieving this goal.

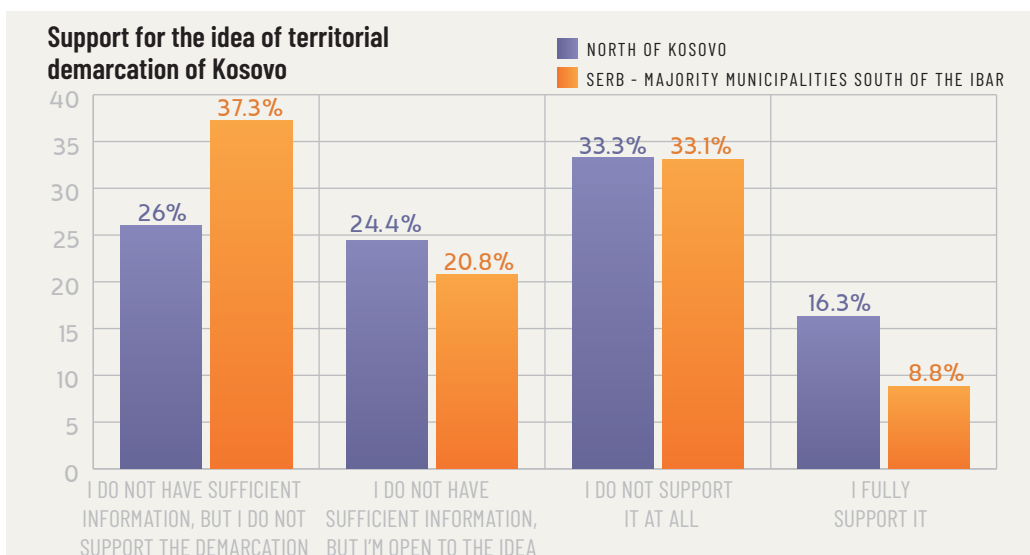
More broadly, perceptions about the A/CSM serve as an indicator of trust in three interconnected dimensions: (1) effectiveness of the negotiation process, (2) the ability of international mediators to ensure implementation, and (3) the willingness of political elites in Pristina to carry out the agreement. The prevailing view “It will happen, but not soon” suggests that respondents have internalized the logic of permanent delay, as a normal state of politics in Kosovo.

Territorial division

Data in support of the idea of territorial demarcation reveal a predominantly cautious, even skeptical attitude within the Serbian community towards this concept, despite recurring crises in the recent past. Across the entire sample, the dominant pattern is negative: a third of respondents (33%) explicitly oppose the idea, while an additional 32% state that they lack sufficient information and therefore do not support it. This implies that nearly two-thirds of respondents distance themselves or openly reject the concept of demarcation. At the same time, 23% state that they do not have sufficient information, but are open to the idea, while only 13% fully support it. Such a distribution goes on to show that the idea of territorial demarcation does not enjoy broad legitimacy, but neither has it been completely dismissed, i.e. it remains a possible scenario.

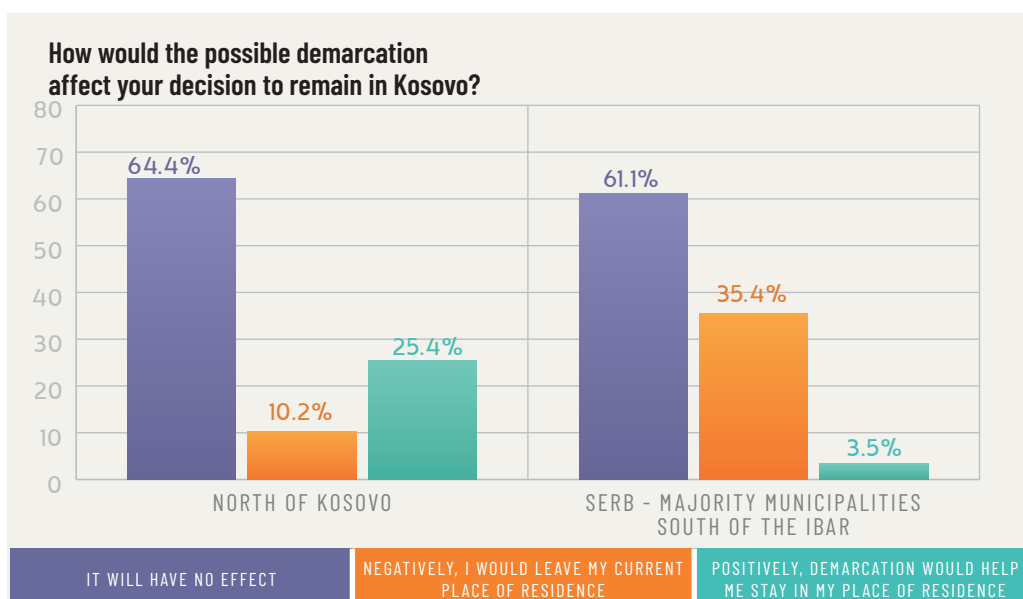
It is particularly significant that a high proportion of responses include a reference to “insufficient information”. In other words, demarcation is not perceived as a clearly defined political project with well-defined implications, but rather as a concept that prevents citizens to have sufficient information and take a firm position. Territorial differences further shed light against this political dynamics. In the north of Kosovo, 16% fully support the idea, whereas that percentage south of the Ibar is significantly lower (around 9%). At the same time, there is a higher share of respondents in the north who are “Open to the idea, but do not have sufficient information” (24%), while south of the Ibar there is a higher share of respondents who do not have sufficient information and do not support it (37%). This suggests that the north is more inclined to consider demarcation as a potential option, while the south demonstrates greater caution and a tendency toward rejection, particularly in the absence of clear guarantees.

It is also important to note that the category “I do not support it at all” is almost identical in both regions (33%), showing a stable core of opposition regardless of the territorial context.



However, the key difference lies in the degree of openness: the north exhibits slightly greater room for normative flexibility, while the south combines skepticism with informational uncertainty.

At the level of the entire sample, the prevailing view is that it would have no effect against the decision to stay (63%). This suggests that most respondents do not directly base their decision about life and survival on a single political decision, but rather on broader factors, such as family, economic conditions, identity, or security. In this sense, one can speak of a certain rootedness of the community, where political arrangements, although important, are not the only determinants of migration decisions. However, almost a quarter of respondents (23%) indicate that demarcation would negatively affect their decision and would lead them to leave their current place of residence. This is a politically extremely significant information: although a minority, this group of population perceives the demarcation as a potential threat to existential security. The data shows that this is logically particularly pronounced in municipalities south of the Ibar (35% would leave their place of residence).



	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
I fully support it	12.5%	8.9%	14.8%	4.2%	4.3%
I do not have sufficient information, but I'm open to the idea	22.5%	18.3%	16.7%	12.1%	20.6%
I do not have sufficient information, but I do not support the demarcation	31.8%	24.7%	17.8%	32.7%	21.1%
I do not support it at all	33.2%	48.1%	50.7%	51%	54.1%

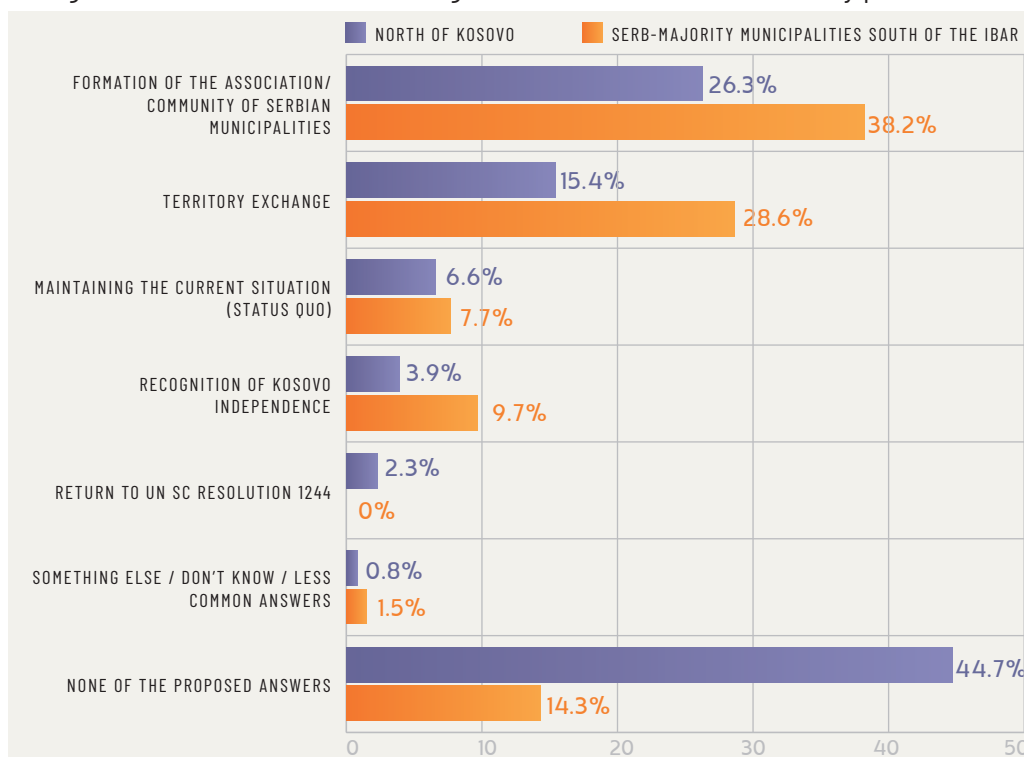
2025 recorded the highest combined level of support and openness to ideas (35% – 12.5% fully support + 22.5% open to the idea), indicating a growing interest, but still a significant number of those opposing it (33.2%). The second highest total was recorded in 2023 (31.5% – 14.8% fully support + 16.7% open to the idea), but even then, 50.7% were against it. Between 2022 and 2024, the number of those who supported or were open to the idea fluctuated, while the number of opponents remained stable. Although 2025 saw an increase in support, demarcation remains a deeply polarizing issue among Serbs in Kosovo.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Negatively, I would leave my current place of residence	22.8%	37.8%	42.8%	29.4%	33.1%
It will have no effect	62.8%	46.3%	46.5%	62.2%	57.2%
Positively, demarcation would help me stay in my place of residence	14.4%	14.9%	10.7%	8.4%	9.6%
No response	-	1%	-	-	-

Perceptions of impact of demarcation on the decision to remain in Kosovo shows a gradual decline in negative attitudes. In 2025, 22.8% believe that demarcation would prompt them to leave, while 62.8% believe that it would have no impact. This decrease in negative responses compared to 2024 (37.8%) indicates greater accommodation of this idea among members of the Serb community. The share of those who believe that demarcation would encourage them to stay remains low (14.4%). In previous years, the number of negative responses was higher, while the view that demarcation would have no impact whatsoever remained fairly stable. Although there are deviations, the majority continue to hold the view that demarcation will not significantly affect their decision to remain in Kosovo.

Possible solutions outside of the legal framework of Serbia

Data on the preferred solution, under the assumption that Kosovo does not remain part of the Serbian legal system, reveal a high degree of fragmentation and absence of a unified political consensus within the Serbian community. Across the entire sample, the most frequently chosen option is the formation of the Association/Community of Serbian Municipalities (32%). This suggests that the A/CSM continues to be perceived as the primary institutional framework through which a significant portion of respondents envision collective protection and autonomy under the new political circumstances. However, the response “None of the proposed answers” (29%), follows closely behind, serving as a politically extremely significant signal. Rather than reflecting a passive attitude, it shows deep dissatisfaction or lack of recognition of offered models as legitimate, realistic, or sufficiently protective.



The third most frequent option is territorial exchange (22%), showcasing that the idea of territorial satisfaction still has a relevant, though not dominant, place among the potential scenarios. The status quo and recognition of independence enjoy more marginal support (7% each), while the return to Resolution 1244 is almost symbolic (1%), suggesting that the 1999 legal-international framework no longer holds strong mobilizing power in public perception.

In the north of Kosovo, the response “None of the proposed answers” (approximately 45%) prevails. This is an extremely high percentage that suggests strong political disengagement or rejection of the range of compromises offered. The north shows the highest degree of distancing from all the offered solutions, including the A/CSM (26%) and territorial exchange (15%).

This pattern may indicate a perception that none of the above solutions guarantee long-term security or a status that would be acceptable to the community. In this sense, the north continues to exhibit higher expectations regarding institutional guarantees. In contrast, in municipalities south of the Ibar, the most frequently selected option is the A/CSM (38%), while territorial exchange receives significantly higher support than in the north (around 29%). At the same time, the share of respondents selecting “None of the proposed answers” is considerably lower (14%). This pattern reflects a more pragmatic approach: the south is more willing to consider specific institutional or territorial models, although they involve substantial political compromises. It is also notable that recognition of Kosovo’s independence is significantly more common south of the Ibar (around 10%) than in the north (around 4%), possibly reflecting a different experience of institutional integration and everyday interaction with Kosovo system. The key finding is that there is no cohesive vision of the future. The north and the south differ in not only the degree of support for individual solutions, but also in their political logic: the north shows stronger resistance to compromise models and greater skepticism towards the proposed frameworks, while the south exhibits greater openness to institutional and territorial alternatives.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Formation of the Association/Community of Serbian Municipalities (in accordance with previously reached agreements)	32.2%	40%	40.5%	20.4%	31.3%
Exchange of territory (north of Kosovo for Presevo Valley)	22%	6.6%	4.3%	4.6%	2.4%
Recognition of Kosovo’s independence by official Belgrade	6.7%	6.2%	0.9%	1.3%	0.6%
Maintaining the current situation (status quo)	7.1%	11.3%	13.4%	25.9%	21.3%
None of the proposed answers	29.5%	33.8%	29.3%	47.8%	44.4%
Something else	1.3%	2.1%	11.6%	0%	0%
Return to UN SC Resolution 1244	1.2%	/	/	/	/

The formation of the Association/Community of Serbian Municipalities (A/CSM) remains the most acceptable option for Kosovo Serbs over time, however 2025 saw a decline in support compared to 2024. Territorial exchange, which was marginal up to 2024, gained traction in 2025, indicating an increased interest in this option, although it remains less supported compared to A/CSM. Recognition of Kosovo’s independence by Belgrade has persistently been the least popular scenario, consistently receiving minimal support. Maintaining the current situation is declining, with a significant drop in 2025 compared to previous years, while the number of those who are not satisfied with the options offered remains high, albeit gradually declining. Overall, while support for change is growing, there is still significant share of respondents who continue to oppose the majority of the solutions offered.

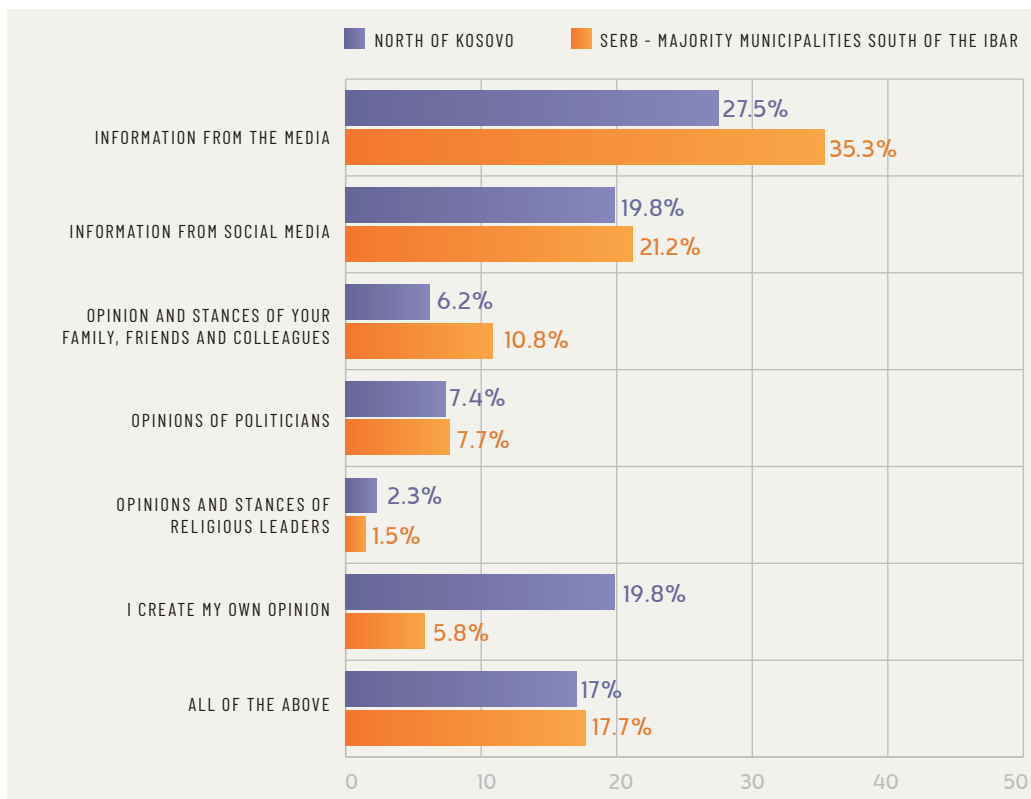


FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Principal opinion-formers

When examining the main source that influences the forming of political opinions, the findings indicate that political socialization of the Serbian community in Kosovo is dominantly media-mediated. Across the entire sample, the most important single source includes mainstream media (around 32%). When combined with the 20% of respondents who primarily identify social networks, it becomes evident that more than half of respondents shape their political views through the media. If we also include the 17% of those who selected “All of the above”, media and digital channels become an even more significant part of the information environment. This points to high dependence on media information and a potentially strong influence of narratives, frameworks and political communication.

A relatively small share of respondents cites politicians (around 8%) or religious leaders (around 2%) as their primary sources, suggesting that formal authorities do not play a dominant role in directly shaping attitudes. In addition, family and friends (around 8%) play a secondary role, indicating that political opinions are shaped more by the broader media environment than by the immediate community. Approximately 20% of respondents in the north of Kosovo say “I create my own opinion”, while that percentage south of the Ibar is around 6%. This difference clearly suggests a stronger sense of individual political autonomy in the north. The north showcases a greater tendency to perceive themselves as politically independent, while the south relies more on external sources of information.



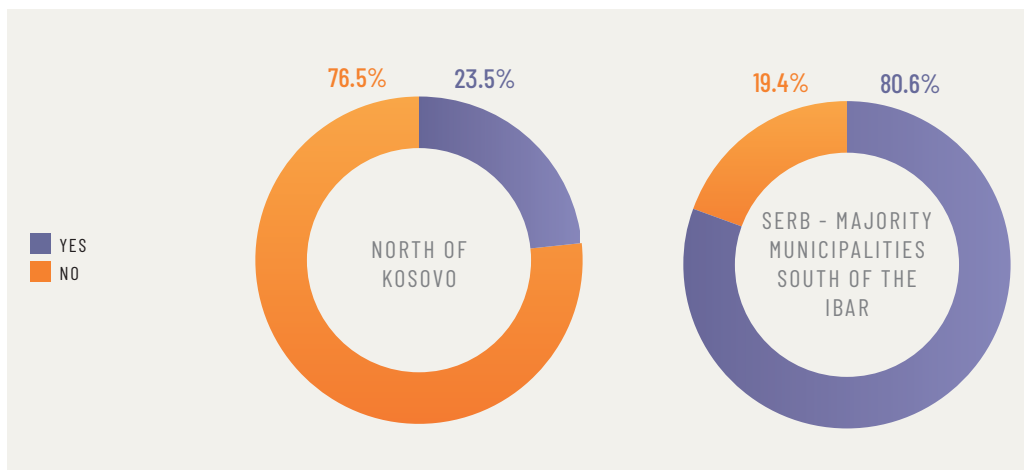
At the same time, the media have an even more pronounced role south of the Ibar (35%) compared to the north (around 28%). This may reflect greater integration of southern municipalities into broader information flows or a greater reliance on institutional and media interpretation of political developments. In addition, family and friends play a somewhat greater role south of the Ibar (around 11%) than in the north (6%), suggesting a stronger interpersonal network in political opinion-forming within more dispersed communities.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Information from the media	31.6%	22.5%	26.6%	19.3%	20.6%
Information from social media (i.e. Facebook, Telegram group, etc.)	20.4%	11.7%	-	-	-
Opinion and stances of your family, friends and colleagues	8.5%	8.5%	4.6%	8.7%	12.4%
Opinions and stances of politicians	7.5%	2.2%	4.9%	2.8%	2%
Opinions and stances of religious leaders and institutions	1.9%	1.6%	2.5%	1.7%	2%
All of the above	17.4%	19.5%	29.6%	29.7%	29.1%
I create my own opinion	12.7%	34%	31.9%	37.8%	33.9%

Over the past five years, notable shifts have occurred in attitudes on which citizens base their opinions when it comes to politics and political developments. Compared to previous years, information from the media has grown stronger, while the influence of social media still remains significant. In 2024, independent opinion formation had the largest share (34%), while the percentage of respondents relying on the media was lower (22.5%). In previous years (2021-2023), independent opinion formation was very popular, reaching 37.8% in 2022, but this trend has been declining in the past two years. Interestingly, the number of those who rely on the opinions of family, friends, and colleagues has remained relatively stable, with only minor variations (from 8.5% in 2025 to 12.4% in 2021).

Census participation

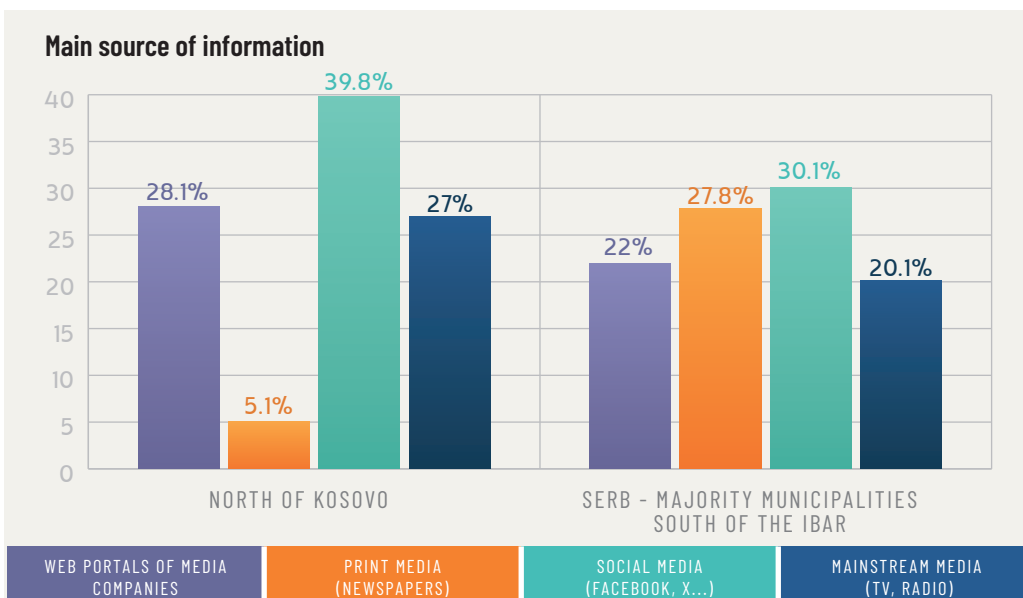
Data on 2024 census participation show a formally almost divided community (52% participated, 48% did not), but behind this overall balance lies an extremely strong polarization south and north of the Ibar.



In the north of Kosovo, only 23.5% of respondents reported that they participated in the census, while as many as 76.5% did not. In contrast, in municipalities south of the Ibar, as many as 81% participated, and only 19% did not. This difference is not marginal, but structural. This pattern suggests that the census in the north was perceived primarily as a political issue, likely closely related to the institutional legitimacy and a broader status dispute. South of the Ibar, however, the census was treated to a much greater extent as an administrative and practical exercise, rather than as a political act.

Information sources

Across the entire sample, social media emerge as the primary source of information (35%), followed by news portals (25%) and traditional, mainstream media such as television and radio (24%), while print media have the smallest, yet still relevant, role (16%). This indicates that the information environment is predominantly digitalized, with a strong reliance on fast and direct communication channels.



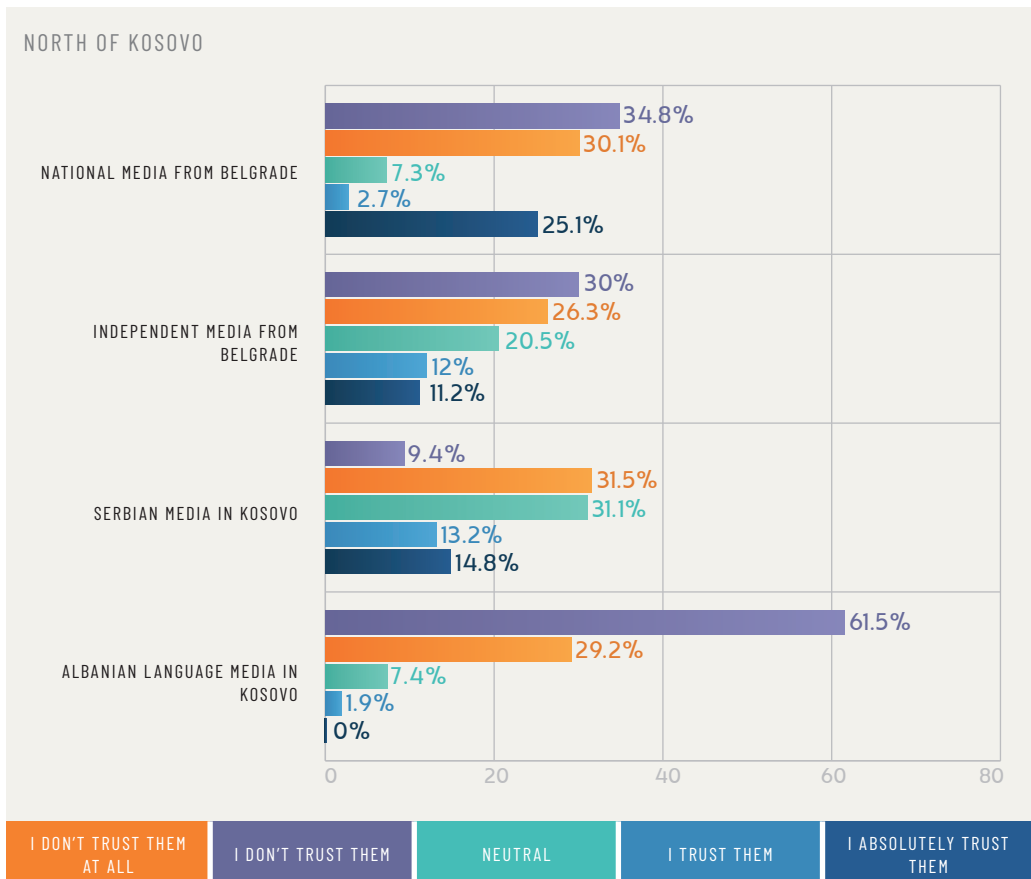
In the north of Kosovo, social media are particularly dominant (around 40%), followed by news portals (28%) and mainstream media (27%), while the print media plays an almost marginal role (5%). The north is, therefore, highly digitally oriented and relies on dynamic, often politically intensive online channels. South of the Ibar, the picture is different: although social media remain significant (30%), print media play a considerably greater importance (28%), almost equal to social media. News portals (22%) and mainstream media (20%) play a more balanced role. This suggests information pluralism and a somewhat more traditional media pattern.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Mainstream media (TV, radio)	23.6%	32%	39%	34.6%	38.5%
Print media (newspapers)	16.5%	2.6%	4.8%	3.8%	7.6%
Web portals of media companies	25%	43.3%	31.2%	31.1%	30.6%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter...)	34.9%	21.7%	25%	30.4%	23.3%
No response	-	0.4%	0%	0%	0%

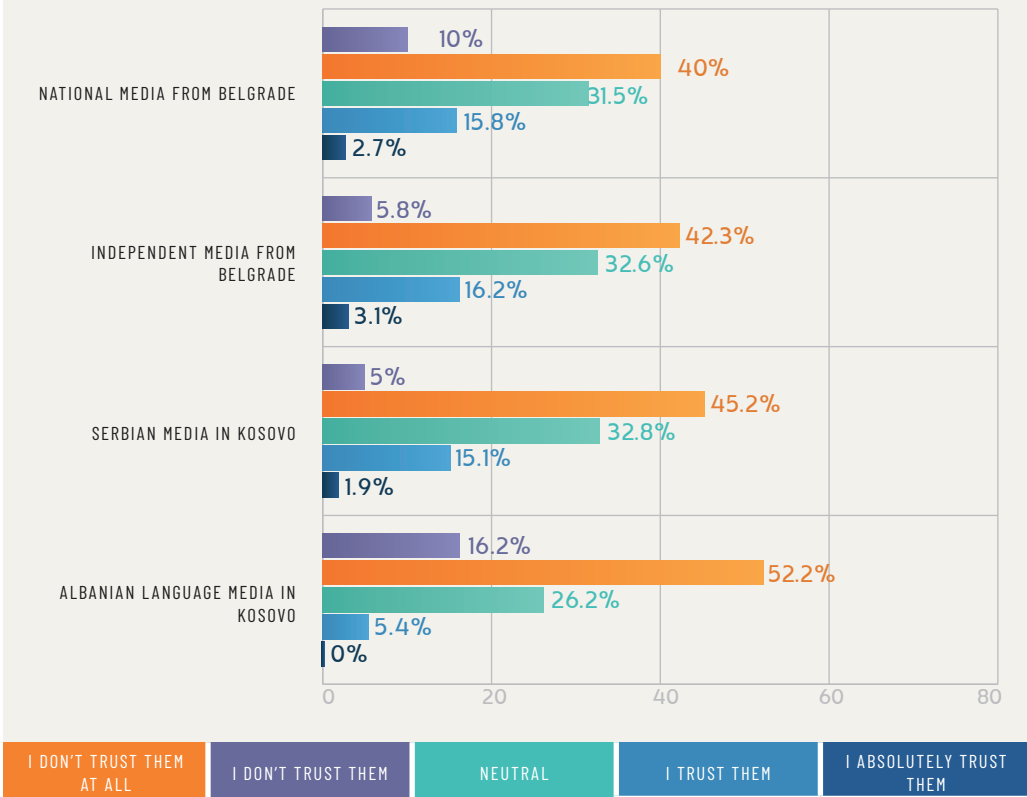
Trust in media

Overall, the dominant pattern is one of distrust. More than half of respondents express their distrust (57%) into national media from Belgrade while independent media from Belgrade (52%) show a similar trend. Serbian media in Kosovo have a somewhat more balanced structure, but still with a majority negative or ambivalent attitude. The most pronounced distrust is directed towards the Albanian media in Kosovo, with as many as 80% of respondents expressing explicit distrust, and not a single respondent reporting full trust. This indicates that media perceptions are strongly shaped by ethnic and political frameworks, with Albanian media often being perceived as the “other side” in political and identity terms.

In the north of Kosovo, an extremely polarized attitude towards the national media from Belgrade still prevails. On one hand, a significant portion of respondents do not trust them at all, but at the same time there is a relatively high percentage of those who trust them completely. This reflects a strong political polarization – the media from Belgrade are not perceived as neutral sources of information, but as political actors whose legitimacy is assessed through the lens of political affiliation and positions on Kosovo status.



SERB - MAJORITY MUNICIPALITIES SOUTH OF THE IBAR



In municipalities south of the Ibar, attitudes towards the media are less extreme, but remain predominantly skeptical. Trust in national media from Belgrade is lower in the category “I absolutely trust them”, and higher in the categories “I don’t trust them” and “Neutral”. This suggests a more distant, less emotionally driven attitude towards the Belgrade media. In addition, although distrust against the Albanian media prevails here, it is less pronounced than in the north – there is a higher share of neutral responses, which may indicate greater everyday interaction with Albanian-language institutions and information sources.

All interviewees contributing to this analysis share broadly similar views on the media landscape in Kosovo, particularly regarding the distinction between Serbian-language media operating within Kosovo and those based in Serbia.

Goran Avramović, editor-in-chief of Radio Kim, points out that there is a clear distinction between the media in Kosovo and those from Serbia, noting that “independent Serbian-language media in Kosovo reflect the everyday lives of people and treat their real-life concerns”, whereas media from Serbia proper, according to him, “are under the direct control of the ruling regime in Belgrade” and often report only on “high-level” politics. He emphasizes that independent media from Kosovo, despite financial struggles, have greater influence as they are “close to people”, while media from Serbia lack a deep understanding of the situation on ground.

A similar perspective is shared by Miloš Vukadinović, founder of the NGO Institute for Civil Society Development “Innovate”. He argues that trust in local Serbian media in Kosovo is higher compared to the media from Serbia as “the media operating in Kosovo share the fate of the people,” while the media from Serbia proper are less connected to the everyday life of Serbs in Kosovo, making their reporting more formal and informational rather than substantial.

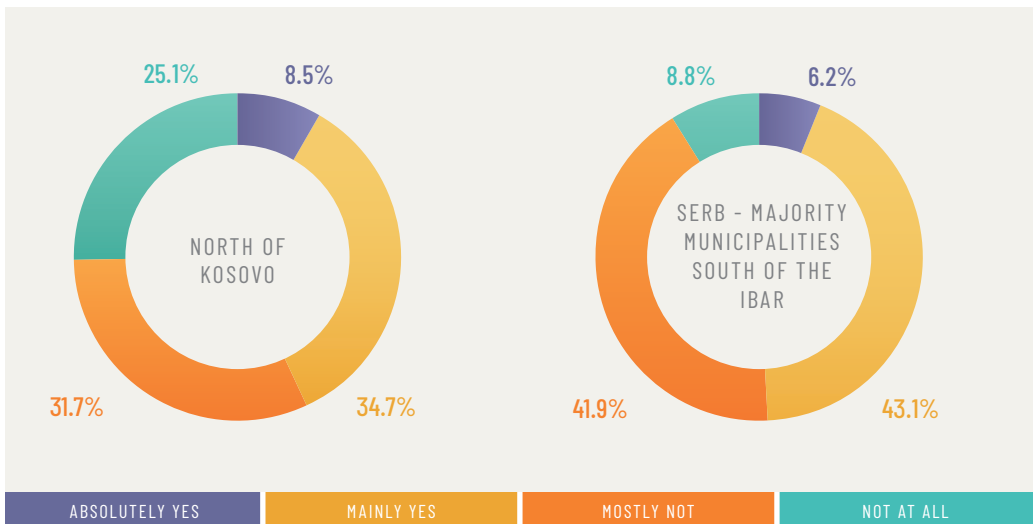
Darko Dimitrijević, editor-in-chief of Radio Goraždevac, agrees with previous interlocutors, stating that the media in Kosovo are much more relevant to people’s everyday lives as they “do not depend on Serbia” and cover real-life issues better. He adds that media from Serbia often “do not report on very important topics or just get by with something,” further undermining their credibility among Kosovo Serbs. Overall, all interviewees agree on one thing: Serbian-language media operating within Kosovo enjoy greater strength and trust as they are more “independent” and better connected to everyday experiences of the community. On the other hand, the media from Serbia, despite their breadth and resources, are often viewed as susceptible to political manipulation and controlled by the ruling structure, affecting the public trust.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
National media from Belgrade	2.57	2.75	2.69	3.35	3.29
Independent media from Belgrade	2.58	2.99	2.88	2.97	3.12
Serbian media in Kosovo	2.78	3.28	2.94	2.92	2.82
Albanian language media in Kosovo	1.86	1.73	1.72	1.60	1.57

In 2025, national broadcast media from Belgrade received a score of 2.57, which is a decrease compared to 2024 (2.75) and 2023 (2.69). This decline is a continuation of the decline in trust that began as of 2022, when these media outlets had a rating of 3.35, which was the highest in the last five years. A similar downward trend was recorded among independent media from Belgrade, which received a score of 2.58 in 2025, also a decline compared to 2024 (2.99) and 2023 (2.88). In contrast, Serbian media in Kosovo maintained a relatively stable level of trust, with a rating of 2.78 in 2025, which is slightly lower compared to previous years, when the rating was higher (3.28 in 2024 and 2.94 in 2023). Although they are on the decline, they still enjoy the highest trust among all the options offered. Albanian-language media in Kosovo remain at the bottom of the trust list, with a score of 1.86 in 2025, a slight increase compared to 2024 (1.73), but still a very low level of trust. These media outlets have consistently received the lowest ratings throughout the years, reflecting the deep distrust of the Serbian community.

Freedom of expression

Data on the perception of freedom of expression reveal deep ambivalence and clear regional distinctions in the experience of political space. While 46% of respondents believe that they can freely (absolutely or mostly) express their political views, as many as 54% state that they can do so only to a limited extent or not at all. It is particularly indicative that 17% say they cannot freely express their political views at all. These data indicate that the political space is perceived as unsafe or potentially risky for public expression.



In northern Kosovo, the perception is significantly more restrictive. A quarter of respondents (25%) believe that they cannot freely express their political views at all, while 32% indicated that they generally cannot. Therefore, more than half of respondents in the north (57%) perceive the political space as limited or closed. This points to an atmosphere of political pressure, fear of consequences, or strong social oversight within the community. In contrast, the perception is more balanced in municipalities south of the Ibar. Although here too a significant percentage of respondents state that freedom of expression is not complete (42% “mostly not”), only 9% say that they cannot speak freely at all. At the same time, a higher percentage of respondents south of the Ibar believe that they can freely express their views (43% “Mainly yes”). This suggests that the political climate in the south is perceived as less repressive, or at least less based on open fear.

When analyzing actors perceived as limiting (in the subsample of those who stated that they did not enjoy full freedom), the differences are even more pronounced. In the north of Kosovo, responsibility is primarily attributed to political and institutional actors. A significant portion of respondents directly name Albin Kurti (22%), local politicians (21%), police or security structures (14%), as well as Pristina institutions (12%). This pattern indicates that restrictions on freedom of speech are perceived as politically structured and tied to specific centers of power. The north demonstrates personalized and clearly directed attribution of responsibility.

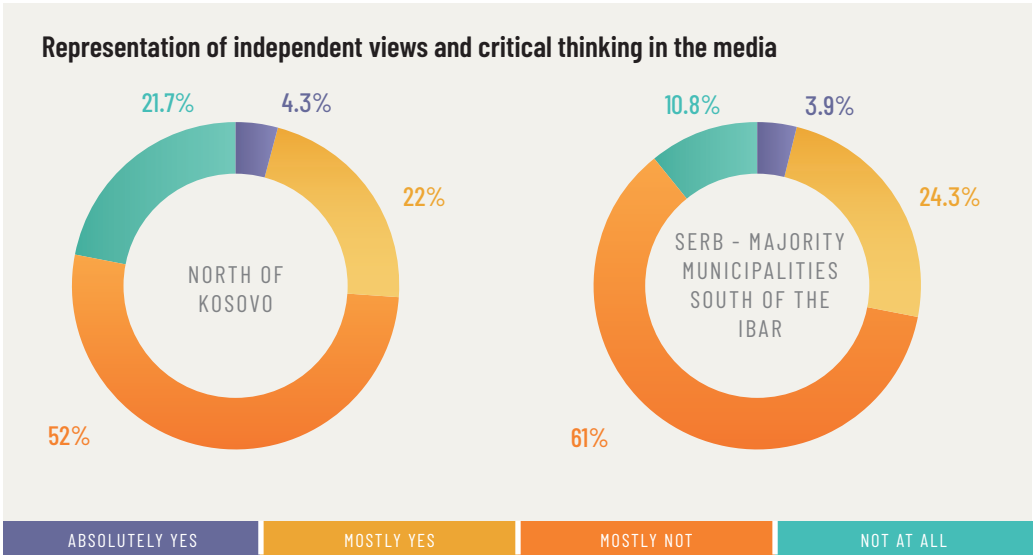
The picture is different south of the Ibar. The most striking information is that as many as 53% of respondents in this region do not want to name anyone (“Don’t know / Refuse to answer”). This information can have multiple meanings: either there is a lower perception of a clear actor of pressure, or there is caution in naming those responsible. In this region, the Serbian List (15%) is more often cited as a limiting factor than Kosovo institutions, painting a completely different structure of perception of political pressure – more intra-community than external one. Together, these findings suggest there are two distinct political environments. The north of Kosovo is characterized by a more pronounced perception of political pressure and clearly identified political actors as sources of constraints. South of the Ibar, the political climate seems less directly repressive, but there is strong ambivalence and caution in publicly naming those responsible.

More broadly, the perception of freedom of expression is a key indicator of political security. When more than half of respondents in a region feel they cannot speak freely, it implies a lack of political trust and a sense of potential sanction – whether formal, institutional or social. These data therefore speak not only about freedom of speech, but also about the degree of political fragmentation, internal control, and perception of power in the Serbian community in Kosovo.

Actors perceived as those restricting freedom of expression	North of Kosovo	Serb - majority municipalities south of the Ibar
Government of Kosovo/Pristina authorities	12.1%	0%
Local politicians/Local authorities	20.6%	9.4%
Politicians (general, unspecified)	12.1%	11.3%
Police/security institutions (individually or in combination)	14%	0%
Albin Kurti (directly mentioned)	21.6%	1.9%
Serbian List (Serbian political actors)	3.7%	15.1%
Control over media, public pressure	1.9%	0%
Multiple actors/ “all”, “numerous factors”	2.8%	0%
Don’t know/Refuse to answer	5.6%	52.9%
Other isolated responses	5.6%	9.4%

Media capacity

The data indicate a pronounced lack of trust in the capacity of the media to present independent views and foster critical thinking. As many as 72% of respondents believe that the media in general do not (56%) or do not at all (16%) represent independent perspectives, while only 27% assess that they do so (4% absolutely, 23% mostly). This indicates a dominant perception of media closure, political control, or lack of pluralism.

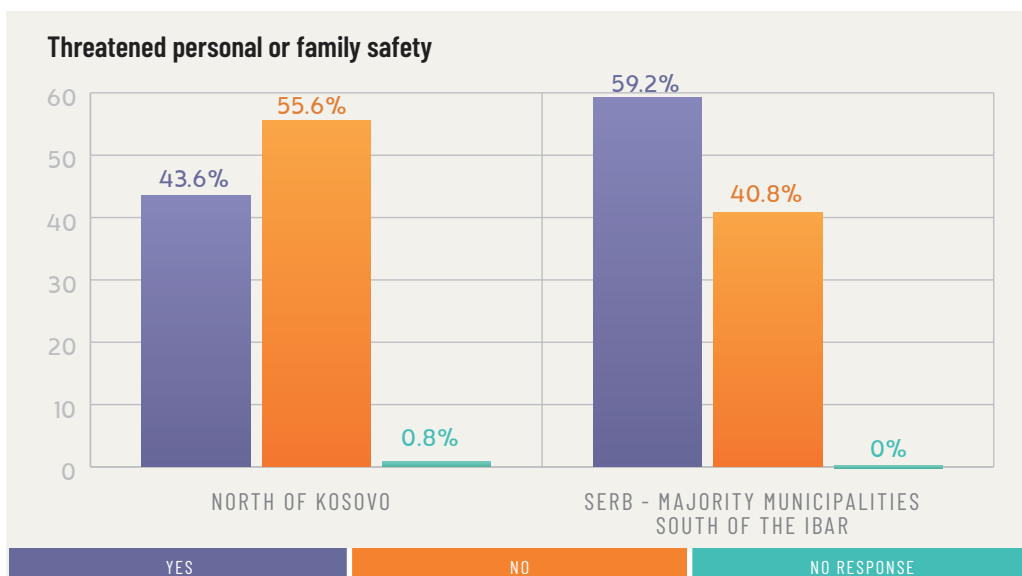




SAFETY OF CITIZENS

Feeling of lack of personal safety

Data on perceptions on personal and family safety reveal one of the most critical dimensions of lack of safety within the Serbian community in Kosovo. The fact that more than half of respondents (51.3%) report feeling that their personal or family safety was threatened is an extremely strong indicator of subjective insecurity.



In municipalities south of the Ibar, as many as 59% of respondents report feeling threatened, while in the north that percentage reaches around 44%. So, although the north is often perceived as politically more unstable, the subjective feeling of insecurity is more pronounced south of the Ibar. This may indicate a different structure of everyday tensions, a heightened sense of minority exposure, or a weaker perception of institutional protection in ghettoized communities.

When analyzing who is perceived as a threat (in the subsample of those who reported being threatened), the picture becomes even more complex. The most striking is the fact that 72% of respondents did not name a specific actor. This high share of those who had “No response” can be interpreted twofold: as a fear of naming those responsible or as a diffuse perception of lack of safety without a clearly identifiable source. In both cases, this points to an atmosphere of vague but tangible concern. Among those who identified specific actors, Kosovo Police was most frequently mentioned (14%), followed by Albanians as a group (7%), while criminal actors and political structures were cited far less often. This pattern suggests that safety threats are perceived to a significant extent as institutional or ethnically colored, rather than as a consequence of classic crime.

Actors perceived as a threat to personal or family safety	North of Kosovo	Serb - majority municipalities south of the Ibar
Kosovo Police (individually or in combination)	26.5%	0%
Albanians (individually or in combination)	14.2%	1.3%
Criminal groups	2.7%	1.3%
Political authorities/Politicians	4.4%	0%
Online threats/Social media	2.7%	0%
Refused to answer/Don't know	5.3%	1.3%
No response	44.2%	96.1%

Regional differences in the attribution of responsibility are particularly significant. Perception is significantly more personalized and specific in the north of Kosovo. As many as 27% of respondents from this region cite Kosovo Police as a threat, and 14% Albanians. Political authorities and security structures are also mentioned. The north, therefore, has more clearly identified actors perceived as sources of insecurity. This points to a perception of institutional or political pressure. In contrast, south of the Ibar, as many as 96% of respondents in this subgroup did not name any specific actor. This may reflect greater caution in publicly naming those responsible, but also a sense that the threat is systemic, environmental, and diffuse.

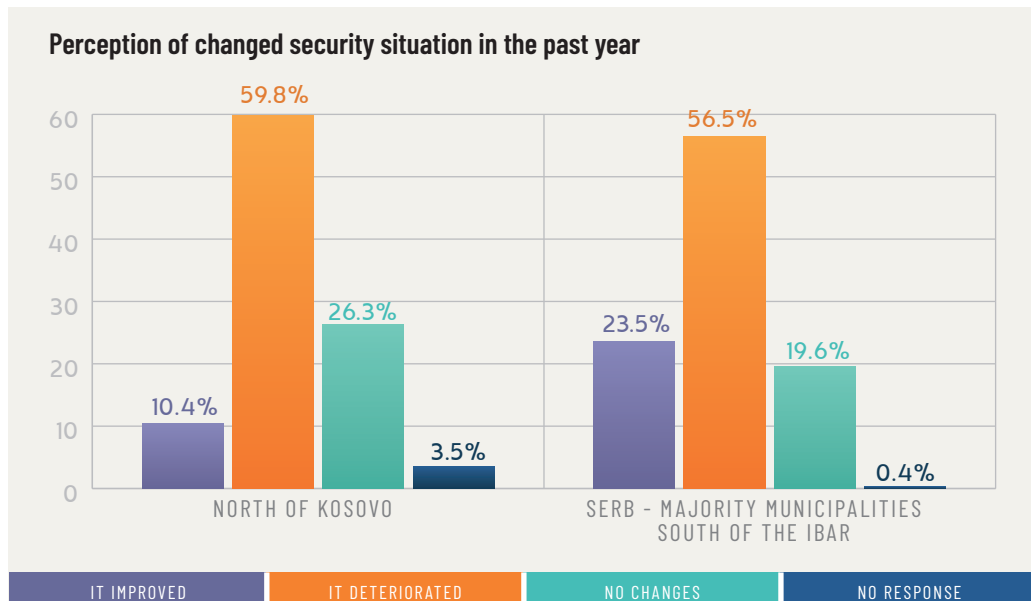
	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Yes, it was threatened	51.3%	18.1%	61.4%	16.4%	18.3%
No, it wasn't	48.3%	81.3%	38.6%	83.6%	81.7%
No response	0.4%	0.6%	0%	0%	0%

The perception of safety threats among Kosovo Serbs over the past five years has shown significant fluctuations, with dramatic increases in certain years. In 2023, as many as 61.4% of respondents, believed that their safety was at risk, the highest in the last five years. This period was marked by high tensions and uncertainties, which led to a significant increase in concerns. In 2025, the percentage of those who felt their safety was threatened decreased to 51.3%, which is still high, but lower than in 2023. In 2024, only 18.1% felt that their safety was at risk, a drastic drop compared to 2023. Similarly, low levels of concern were recorded in 2022 (16.4%) and 2021 (18.3%). Such a sharp rise in concern in 2023, as well as the decline in 2024, suggests that specific events and periods of political and security tensions have had a significant impact on perceptions of safety among Kosovo Serbs.

Security situation changes

Perceptions of the changing security situation over the past year further reinforce the prevailing sense of insecurity in the Serbian community in Kosovo. Nearly six out of ten respondents (58%) believe that the security situation deteriorated, while only 17% assess that it improved. A quarter of respondents (24%) do not see any significant changes. Such a distribution clearly indicates that the dominant narrative is not stagnation, but a perception of continuous decline.

Regional differences exist, but they do not change the overall trend. Approximately 60% of respondents in the north of Kosovo consider that the situation deteriorated, while that percentage south of the Ibar is around 57%. Therefore, in both regions, the majority perceives a negative trajectory, which speaks to a widespread sense of destabilization. However, the difference is more pronounced when it comes to the perception of improvement. South of the Ibar, 23% of respondents say that security improved, while in the north that percentage accounts for only 10%. This suggests that, although the sense of deterioration prevails, south of the Ibar there is somewhat greater room for interpreting positive changes or at least relative stabilization. In the north, by contrast, such optimism remains much less pronounced.



Structured interviews further confirm these claims. Miloš Subotić, a lawyer from Mitrovica North, notes that both 2025 and 2023, saw a significant rise in the perception of threatened safety among Serbs in Kosovo. Subotić further argues that “under the guise of implementing the rule of law, pressure is constantly being exerted against the Serbian community” and shares his personal experience: “In addition, the police and judiciary are ethnically motivated and operate to the detriment of Serbs, which I have experienced firsthand.

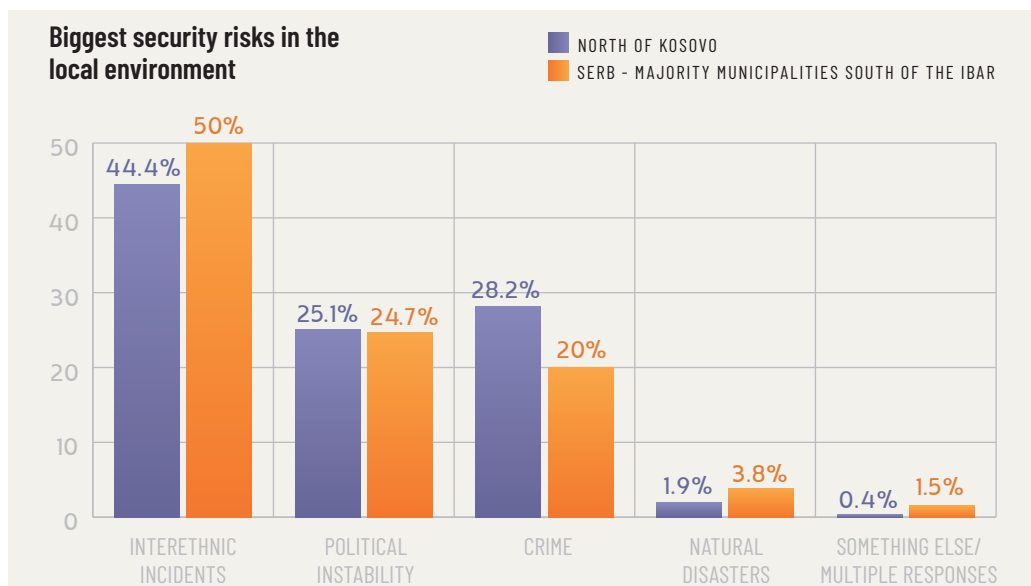
For an act of protest, a misdemeanor case was initiated against me, the first-instance proceeding was initiated and concluded within 28 days, while in the case where I was harmed due to excessive use of force, not a single hearing has been held for a year and a half.”

Sanja Vuković, a primary school teacher from Klokot in Kosovo Morava region, emphasizes that the overall sense of security among Serbs in Kosovo has significantly deteriorated, although, as she notes “there is no specific and direct danger.” “The general feeling of safety is at a significantly lower level than in previous years,” she points out, adding that the reasons for this are primarily related to changes in police behavior. “The reasons for such perceptions are primarily related to the change in police behavior, a high number of newly recruited young police officers who are not sufficiently trained to work with citizens, lack culture of interacting with citizens, and are especially arrogant in dealing with non-Albanians,” says Vuković. Miloš Vukadinović, founder of the NGO Institute for Civil Society Development “Innovate” from Leposavić, highlights a broader sense of injustice among Serbs in Kosovo. He shares a personal experience, stating: “In my village, abandoned houses have been broken into twice, and because of that, regardless of the presence of the police, we do not feel safe enough.” According to him, the main reason for this situation lies in the conduct of the police, who, as he claims, “do not act professionally and do not operate within their legal authority.” Judging from the turn of events, this even raises suspicions that police officers themselves may have been involved in such actions.

Biggest security risk

Data on the major perceived security risks in the local environment clearly indicate that security is primarily perceived through the lens of interethnic relations. Overall, interethnic incidents represent the dominant concern – listed by 245 respondents, or almost half of the sample. Interethnic incidents are even more pronounced south of the Ibar (50%) than in the north (44%). Although both percentages are high, the fact that half of the respondents south of the Ibar identify this very category as the major risk points to a heightened sense of minority vulnerability and sensitivity to interethnic tensions in these areas.

Political instability ranks second and is equally represented in both regions (around 25%). This suggests that the political dynamics of institutional crisis, uncertainty and institutional tensions represent a structural source of insecurity across both the north and the south. Crime is the third most frequently cited concern, but with a notable difference: 28% in the north compared to 20% south of the Ibar. This may reflect a stronger perception of everyday security challenges or informal structures in the north. However, even in this case, crime remains secondary to interethnic and political concerns.



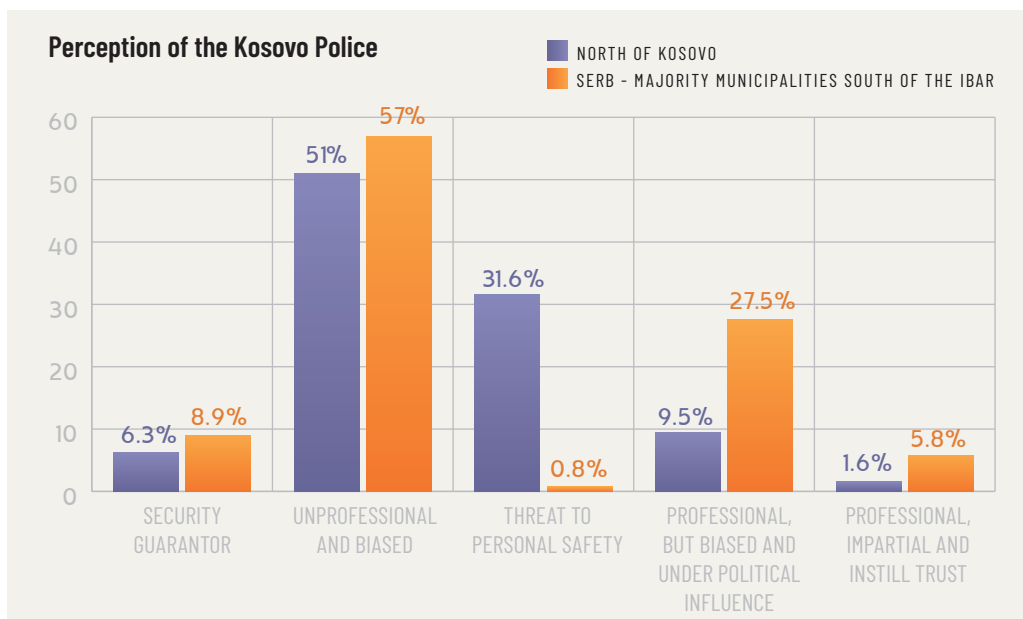
When it comes to prominent representatives of the Serb community, Miloš Subotić shares the expressed concern of his compatriots and points out that “the pressure against the Serbian community is mounting, as Serbs are being dehumanized at the top, and it is a matter of days before someone decides to attack Serbs in order to take revenge. Exhibitions about Albanian victims are being organized, monuments are being erected, fake news are being spread about the vulnerability of Albanians... Hence, there could very easily be another March violence.” Sanja Vuković points out that in Klokot, fear is primarily driven by “political decisions” that affect the everyday life. For Miloš Vukadinović from Leposavić, “everything comes from politicians at the top.”

He particularly highlights the statements of political representatives in Pristina, as contributing to the escalation of tensions. As an example, Vukadinović cites Prime Minister Albin Kurti's statement that 11,000 Albanians were expelled from Mitrovica, adding that such statements "lead to inter-ethnic incidents." He points out that, although this is a statement from Pristina, during the five years of Self-Determination governance and since Kosovo's independence, there have been no statements of Albanian politicians regarding the expulsion of more than 200,000 Serbs from Kosovo. Goran Avramović, editor-in-chief of Radio Kim from Čaglavica/Gračanica, points to specific forms of institutional interethnic conflicts that further deteriorate the situation for Serbs in Kosovo. According to him, "situations in which Kosovo Police receives orders to arrest due to clothing that the mysterious fashion minister considers inadequate (T-shirts with various, sometimes religious motifs), songs that individuals sing (Gazimestan 2025), or symbols that they carry or intend to carry or just bring into their own homes, are particularly concerning."



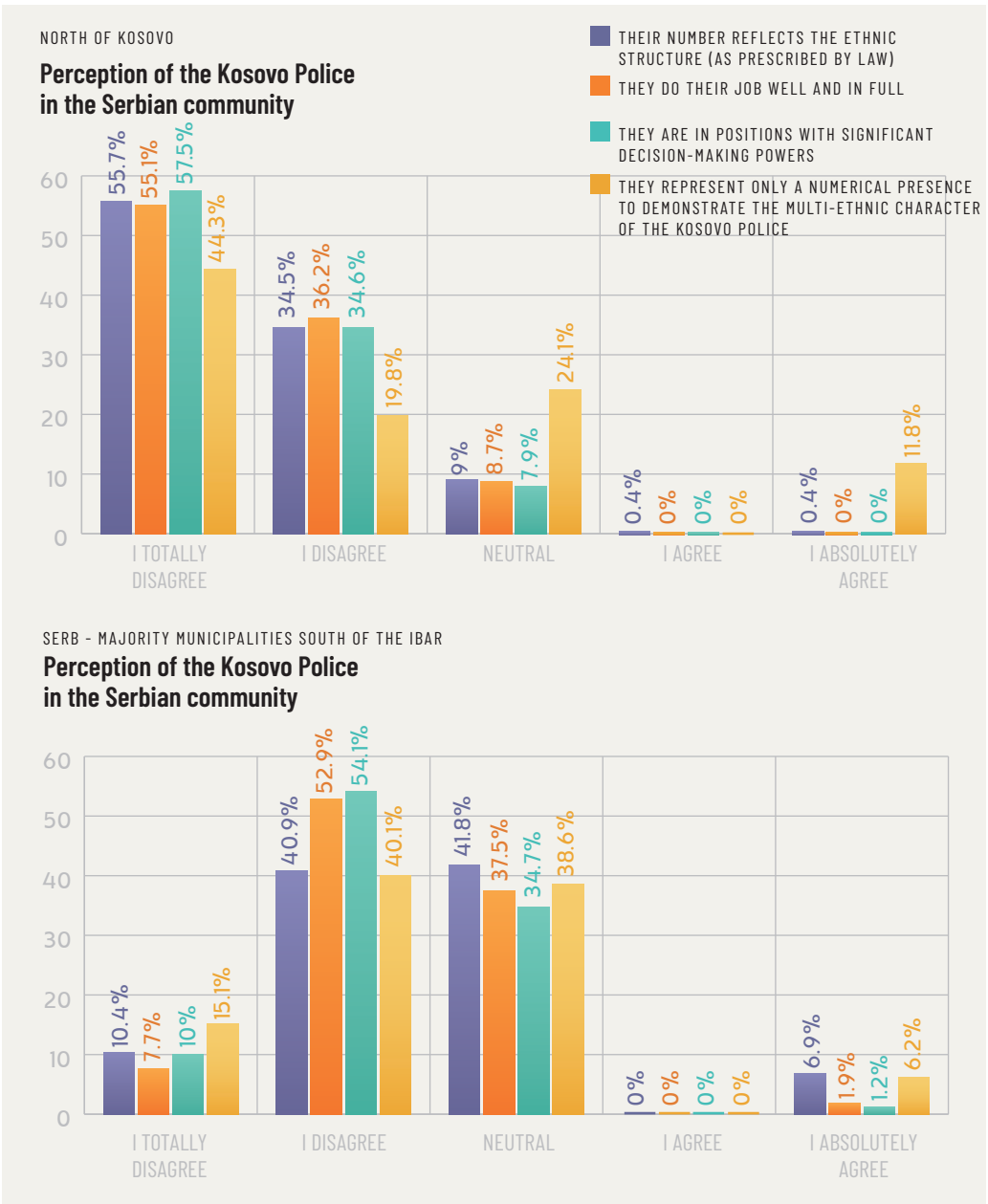
KOSOVO POLICE

Perceptions of the Kosovo Police are overwhelmingly negative and point to a deeply rooted crisis of trust in this institution within the Serbian community. Across the entire sample, assessments that describe the police as unprofessional, biased, or politically instrumentalized prevail. As many as 29% of respondents believe that the police are “unprofessional and biased”, additional 24% believe that they are “unprofessional and politically biased”, while 19% believe that they are “professional, but biased and under political influence”. In total, more than 70% of respondents perceive the police as an institution that is in some way compromised by bias or political influence.



It is particularly concerning that 16% of respondents see the police as a direct threat to personal safety. In contrast, positive assessments are marginal: only 8% view the police to be a warrant of security, and only 4% describe it as a professional, impartial, and trustworthy institution. This means that only about 12% of respondents express clear trust in the police.

In both regions, the majority of respondents see the police as “unprofessional and biased” (51% in the north and 57% south of the Ibar), indicating widespread distrust. However, differences appear in the intensity of negative perception. In the north of Kosovo, as many as 32% of respondents perceive the police as a direct threat to personal safety, while that percentage south of the Ibar is almost negligible (around 1%). This indicates a significantly stronger perception of a conflictual relationship between the community and police structures in the north, where security interventions are likely to be perceived as politically motivated or repressive.



Perceptions of the Kosovo Police from the angle of the Serbian community reinforce a deeply rooted distrust, especially when it comes to the actual involvement and impact of Serbian police officers within the institution. Overall, the majority of respondents reject claims that suggest substantial integration and professionalism. As many as 71% (33% completely + 38% mostly) disagree with the statement that the number of Serb police officers reflects the ethnic composition of the municipality, while only 4% completely agree. Similarly, 76% of respondents believe that police officers do not do their job well and in full (31% strongly disagree + 45% disagree). An almost identical percentage (78%) rejects the claim that Serbs hold meaningful decision-making positions in the police.

The response to the claim that Serbian police officers represent “only a numerical presence aimed at demonstrating the multiethnic character” of the Kosovo Police is particularly indicative. Here, the image is reversed: 29% completely agree with this statement, and an additional 32% remain neutral, while only 9% completely reject it. This suggests a widespread perception that Serb participation in the police is symbolic rather than substantive.

South of the Ibar, attitudes are somewhat more nuanced, but still predominantly negative. Most respondents “disagree” (rather than “completely disagree”) with the statements about professionalism and decision-making power, suggesting a milder, but still skeptical, attitude. The share of respondents who completely agree that the presence of Serbs in the police is only symbolic (15%) is lower than in the north (44%). Overall, data shows that the Serbian community does not perceive the Kosovo Police as an institution in which Serbian officers have substantial, institutionally guaranteed and operational power.

Interview findings further reinforce these perceptions. Miloš Subotić expresses the view that the Kosovo Police in the north has a mission of colonial administration, that many Serbs in the north have experienced firsthand. According to him, “not a single case initiated before the PIK against police officers in the north of Kosovo received a final conclusion in court.” This, he claims, creates enormous distrust, as it is clear that the police are acting only for the benefit of one community, at the detriment of the others. Goran Avramović, editor-in-chief of Radio Kim, points out that the Kosovo Police has become a threat to the security of Serbs, particularly in the north of Kosovo. He notes that the police in the north acts like a “colonial administration”, with greater use of force while police officers act as if they are not accountable for their actions. He believes that the police, like many other institutions in Kosovo, displays ethnic bias, favoring one community at the detriment of the other. Darko Dimitrijević, editor of Radio Goraždevac, highlights that experiences with the Kosovo Police in the north and south of Kosovo differ. In the north, according to him, the police has a robust presence, with special units and the use of force, while the situation is much calmer in the south. He points out that police officers in the north are mostly outside of the local community, which is why there is discomfort among citizens, while the relationship is way better in the south, where police officers come from the local community.



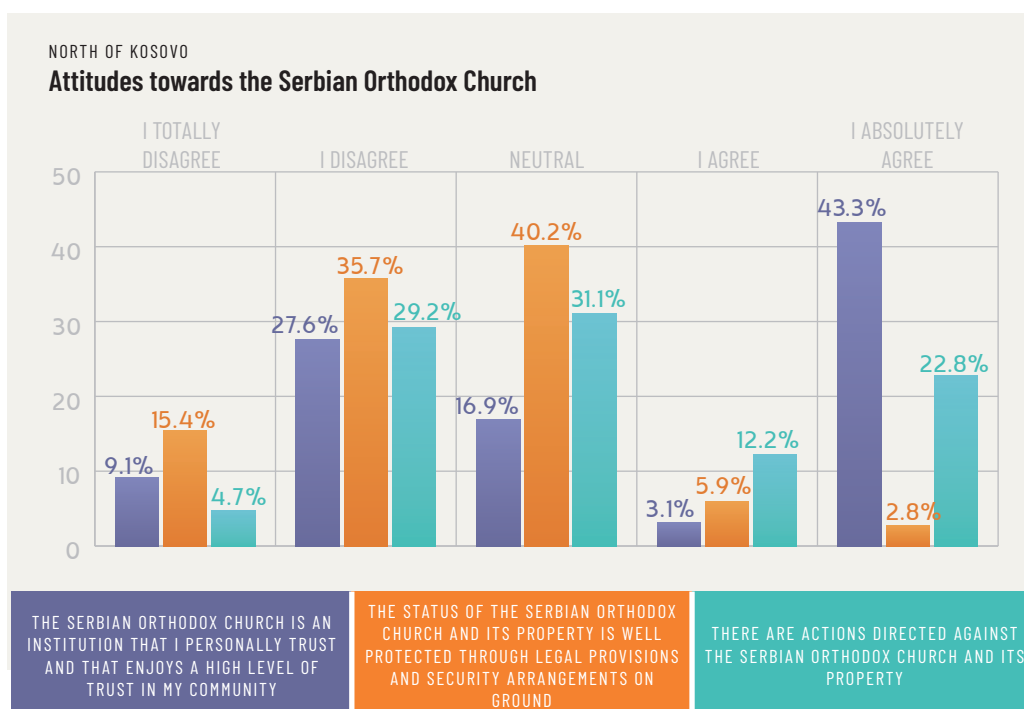
SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Attitudes towards the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) reflect a complex relationship of trust, perceptions of institutional protection, and feelings of vulnerability, which combined reflect broader political-identity dynamics within the Serbian community in Kosovo.

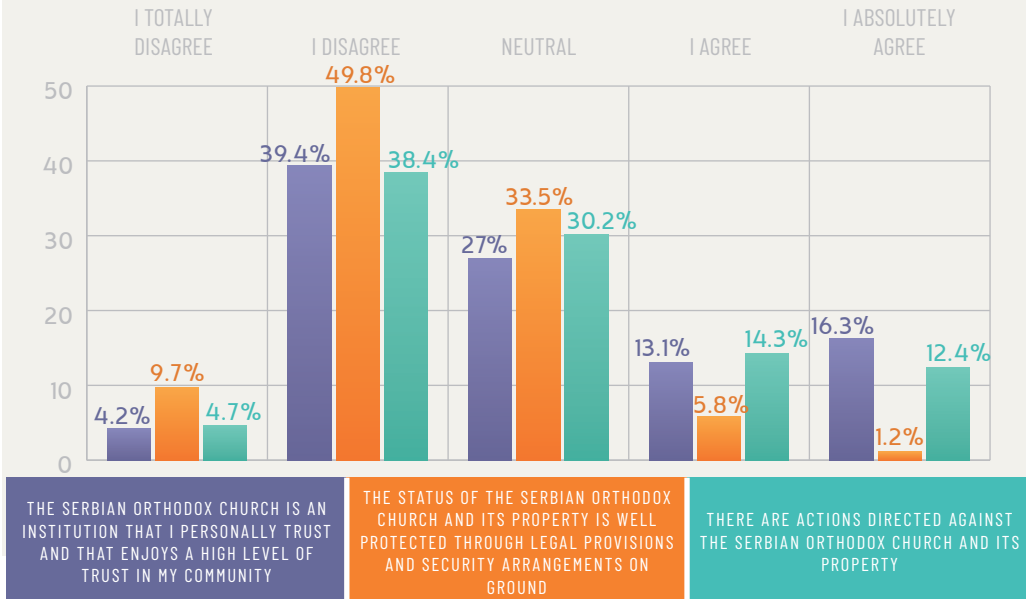
Overall, SOC remains an important institution. Although 30% of respondents state that they “completely agree” with the statement that SOC enjoys their personal and community trust, an additional 8% agree, meaning that a total of 38% express explicit trust. However, at the same time 40% (7% completely + 33% mostly) reject this statement, while 22% remain neutral. This goes on to show that, although the SOC still remains a strong symbol of identity, it does not represent a universally unquestionable institution – trust is significant, but not dominant.

When it comes to protecting the status and property of the SOC, skepticism prevails. As many as 55% of respondents believe that the status and property of the SOC are not adequately protected by legal and security mechanisms, while only 8% agree with the statement that they are well protected. The high percentage of those with neutral opinions (37%) further points to uncertainty or lack of clear belief in institutional guarantees. This finding suggests a perception of vulnerability of church property and the institutional position of the SOC.

The third claim – that there are actions directed against the SOC and its property – shows a notable perception of threat. A total of 30% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement, while 39% reject it and 31% remain neutral. Although no absolute majority confirms the existence of such actions, a substantial portion of the population perceives the SOC as potentially vulnerable.



Attitudes towards the Serbian Orthodox Church



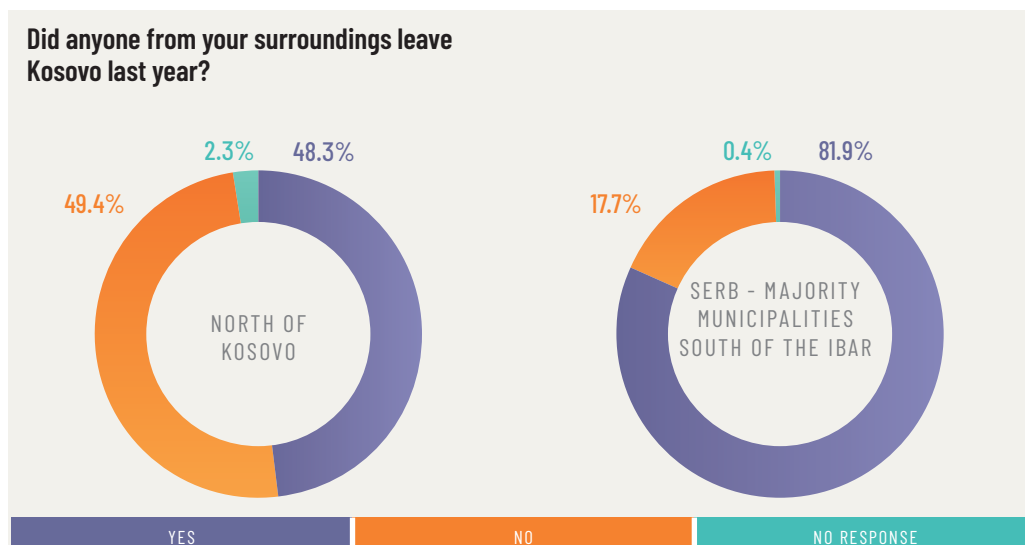
Overall, the SOC retains a strong symbolic importance, particularly in the north, however at the same time there is a widespread perception of its institutional vulnerability. Trust in the church as a moral and identity authority is not matched by confidence in its legal and security protection. This combination, identity importance paired with the perception of vulnerability, further reinforces the narrative of broader insecurity and a sense of lack of institutional protection within the Serbian community in Kosovo.



MIGRATION TENDENCIES

Departure from Kosovo

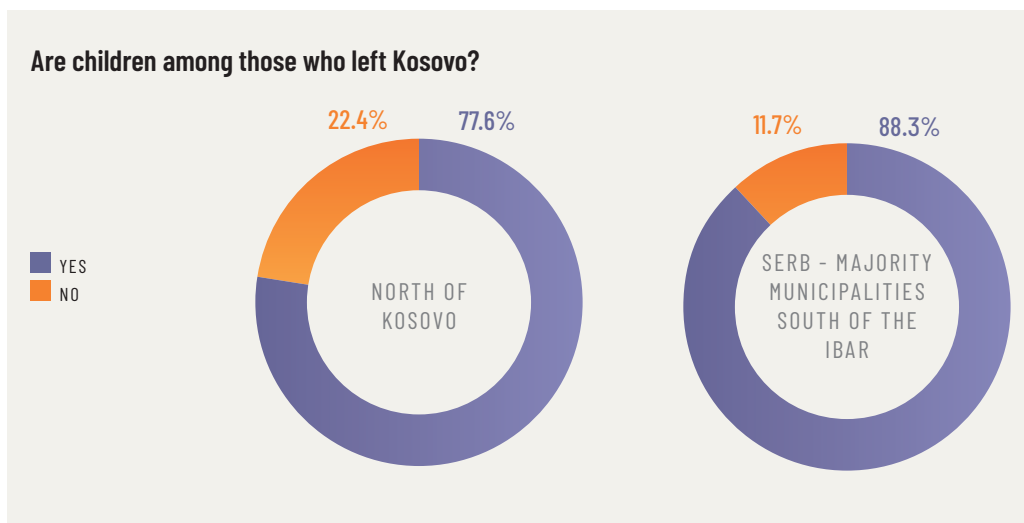
Data on migration from respondents' immediate surroundings indicate a strong and deeply rooted migration process within the Serbian community in Kosovo. The fact that 65% of respondents state that someone from their close circle left Kosovo in the past year underscores that migration is not a marginal phenomenon, but a widespread experience shaping the everyday social reality.



Regional differences are particularly pronounced. While 48% of respondents in the north of Kosovo reported that someone from their immediate environment had left, that share rises to almost 82% in municipalities south of the Ibar. This means that departures are almost universal in southern areas. Such a gap suggests a significantly greater demographic and existential pressure south of the Ibar, where the sense of minority vulnerability, institutional insecurity, and long-term uncertainty is likely to be more pronounced. The north, despite political tensions, demonstrates relatively greater stability compared to the more dispersed communities in the south.

The destination of those who left	North of Kosovo	Serb - majority municipalities south of the Ibar
Serbia	35.2%	18.9%
Abroad	4%	2.3%
Belgrade	0.8%	4.2%
Serbia proper	1.6%	1.4%
Serbia and abroad	0.8%	1.4%
Other locations	8%	0.9%
Don't know	3.2%	5.6%
No response	46.4%	65.3%

Regarding destinations, Serbia clearly emerges as the dominant one. The most respondents who gave a specific answer specifically mentioned Serbia, including Belgrade and other cities in Serbia proper. There are instances of migration abroad, but they are considerably less common. This pattern suggests that migration is not primarily driven by global economic emigration, but rather as relocation within national and identity framework. Serbia functions as a security and symbolic point of gravity, a space in which higher institutional security and long-term stability are expected.



One of the most significant findings relates to the fact that among those who left, as many as 84% included families with children. This indicates that migration is not only limited to temporary departure of individuals, but instead reflects a permanent relocation of entire households. Regionally, this trend is even more pronounced south of the Ibar, where 88% of departures involve children, while in the north the share is 78%. Such a migration structure has profound demographic implications, as it involves the disruption of generational continuity, the weakening of local communities, and a long-term decline in population potential.

In the context of previous findings on the deteriorating security conditions, the perception of interethnic incidents as the major risk, and deeply rooted distrust in institutions, these migration trends gain additional significance. Migration can be interpreted as a rational coping strategy in response to perceived long-term instability. When families with children decide to leave their surroundings, it serves as a reflection of the assessment that the prospect of remaining is not sufficiently secure or sustainable.

The analysis can highlight key drivers of departure of Serbs from Kosovo, presented through interviewee testimonies. Miloš Subotić, a lawyer from Mitrovica North, argues that mass migration is primarily prompted by ethnic cleansing carried out through legislative measures by the Kosovo Government under the guise of rule of law. According to him, many families cannot obtain the necessary documents, and many businesses end up getting closed due to unfavorable working conditions.

He highlights that the legal uncertainty fostered by the police and judiciary poses a serious challenge, making life in Kosovo increasingly less sustainable for Serbs, leading to an increase in the number of those deciding to leave.

Sanja Vuković, a primary school teacher from Klokot, sees institutional insecurity and the economic situation as the key drivers of departure of Serbs. According to her, “irresponsible governance”, “artificially induced crises”, as well as uncertainty related to the status of education and healthcare, unemployment and overall political instability are key factors prompting migration of many. According to her, particularly in the south, departures are strongly linked to the inability of people to secure basic living conditions and employment.

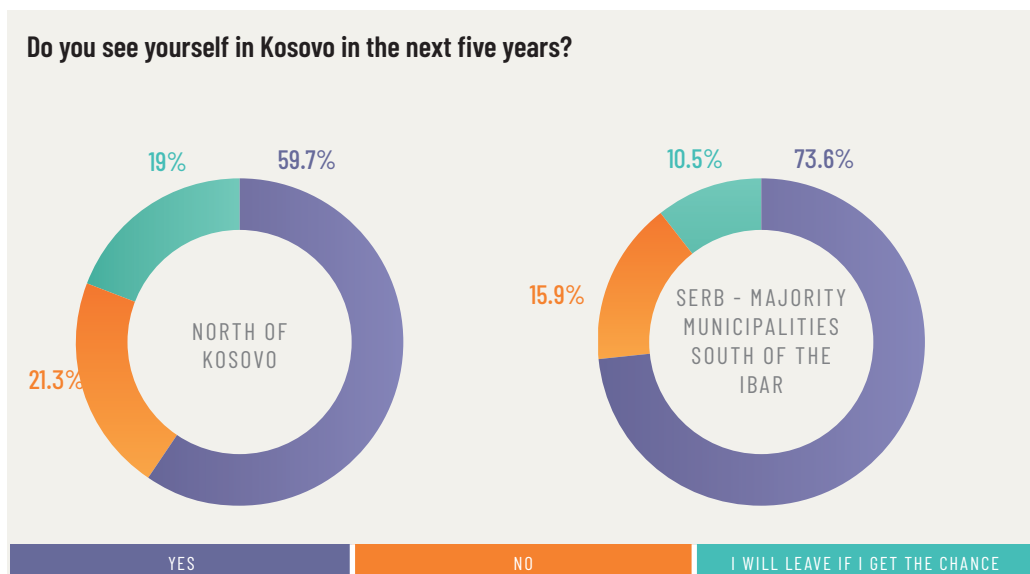
Darko Dimitrijević, editor-in-chief of Radio Goraždevac, mentions that although a fewer number of people left Kosovo, the reason for leaving in his community, was primarily of economic nature. Serbs are mostly moving to Serbia, and among them there are those who found better jobs, while some are leaving due to poor living conditions, unemployment, and low wages. Although there are still families in his community who have stayed, he believes that systemic issues and the poor situation with education and healthcare are influencing young people to decide to leave. Miloš Vukadinović warns of a negative emerging trend among children, particularly those in the final years of elementary school, who increasingly wish to continue their education in Serbia. “The reasons are no longer special – for example, to study or for some other reason. Earlier, due to uncertainty or concern, parents influenced their children to enroll in schools in Serbia, but now I believe there is an established trend among children asking their parents to allow them to continue their education in Serbia” he concludes.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Yes	65.2%	66%	83.8%	78.7%	69.8%
No	33.5%	34%	16.2%	21.3%	30.2%
No response	1.3%	-	-	-	-

Over the past five years, the number of people from the Serbian community who left Kosovo declined, but migration rates remain high. In 2025, 65% of respondents reported that someone from their community had left Kosovo, a slight decrease compared to 2024 (66%). The peak was recorded in 2023 with the highest (83.8%) number of those who left Kosovo, while in 2022 it was 78.7%. While the decline in the past two years may point to a decrease in the pace of migration, the number of those leaving Kosovo still remains high, reflecting the continued demographic erosion of the Serbian community in Kosovo.

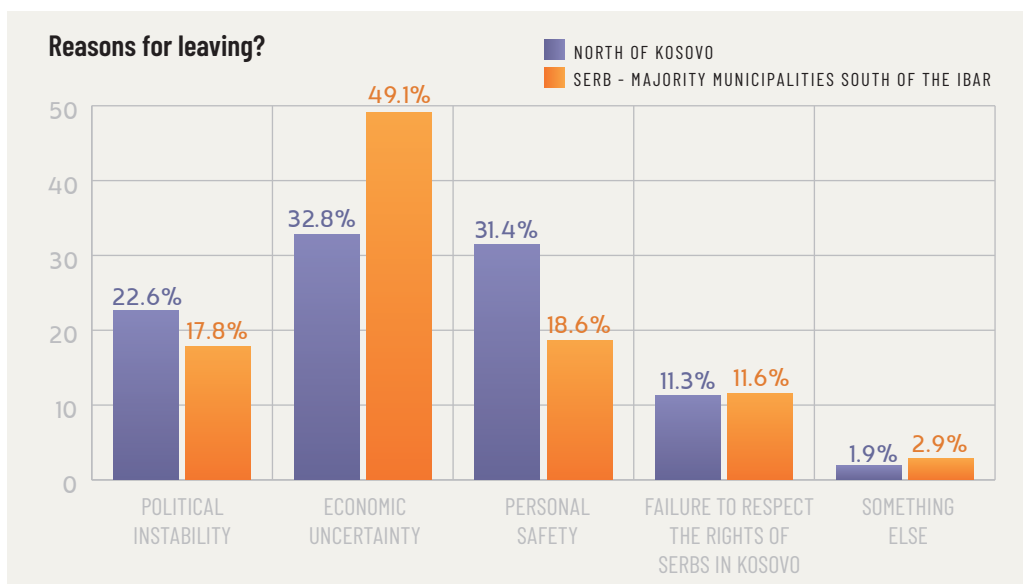
How do they see themselves in the next five years?

Data on whether respondents see themselves in Kosovo in the next five years reveal a complex relationship between staying, latent migration potential, and structural insecurity. At first glance, the dominant response is “Yes” - 67% of respondents say they see themselves in Kosovo in the next five years. However, nearly a third of population expresses an explicit or potential intention to leave: 19% say they do not see themselves in Kosovo, while an additional 15% say they would leave if they had the chance. In other words, although the formal majority plans to stay, a significant portion of the population keeps the option of leaving open, reflecting a fragile and conditional stability.



In municipalities south of the Ibar, around 74% of respondents see themselves in Kosovo in the next five years, compared to approximately 60% in the north. The north displays more pronounced ambivalence: 19% say they would leave if they had the chance, compared to around 11% south of the Ibar, while 21% in the north explicitly do not see their future in Kosovo (compared to around 16% in the south). This pattern suggests that the north, despite greater institutional and territorial cohesion, is more heavily burdened by political and security concerns when considering long-term prospects.

When analyzing the reasons for leaving, the economic factors prevail. As many as 43% of respondents considering leaving cite economic uncertainty as the primary driver. This finding highlights that livelihood issues: employment, income, development prospects - are the key drivers of migration. However, the economic factor does not stand in isolation. Personal safety (24%) and political instability (20%) combined account for almost half of all reasons, while 12% cite noncompliance with their rights. This confirms that the departure results from the combination of economic, political and security considerations, and not solely market conditions.



Regional structure further reveals different priorities. South of the Ibar, economic uncertainty is far more dominant (49%), while in the north this percentage reaches around 33%. Conversely, in the north, personal safety (31%) and political instability (around 23%) are more prominent than in the south (19% and 18%, respectively). This suggests that migration considerations in the north are more closely tied to the political and security context, while south of the Ibar, the socio - economic rationale for leaving prevails.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Yes	66.8%	47.3%	44.5%	51.7%	44.7%
No	18.5%	20.3%	31.8%	21%	29.1%
I will leave if I get the chance	14.7%	31.8%	23.7%	27.3%	26.2%
No response	-	0.6%	0%	0%	0%

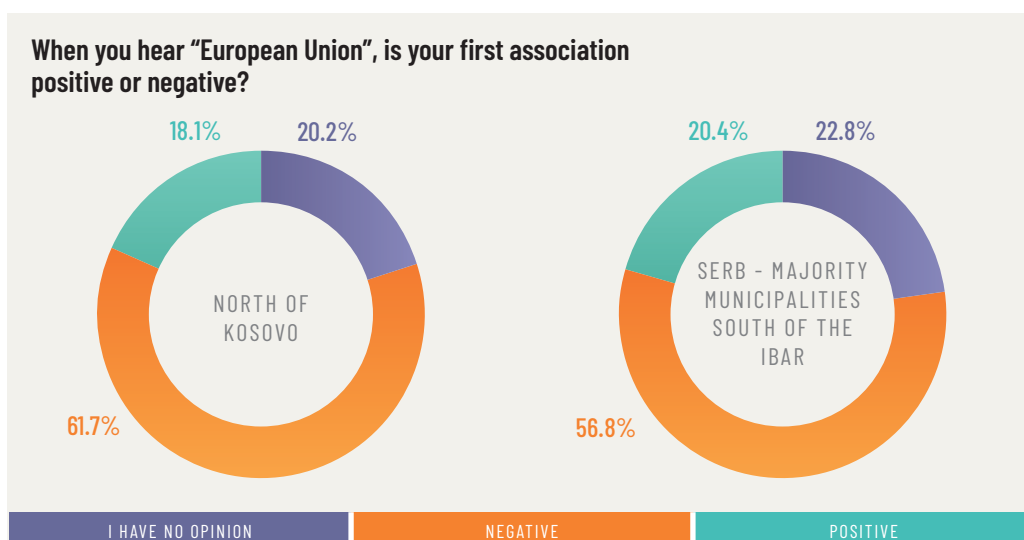
The rise in the share of Kosovo Serbs who see themselves in Kosovo in the next five years, to 66.8% in 2025, indicates a shift in perception, but also the fact that those who stayed are likely willing to stay despite all the challenges. This rising trend is significant compared to previous years, when the number of those who wanted to remain was significantly lower (47.3% in 2024 and 44.5% in 2023). Considering that a high number of people had already left Kosovo, the number of those who decided to stay can be interpreted as a sign of determination and adjustment, indicating that those who stayed behind are likely convinced that they will not leave Kosovo, even in the face of persistent political and security challenges.



STANCES TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN UNION

Data on associations with the term “European Union” indicate a predominantly negative perception within the Serbian community in Kosovo. As many as 59% of respondents report a negative association, while around 22% have no clear opinion, while only 19% express positive views. This distribution reflects deeply rooted skepticism towards the European Union, with negative perceptions being more than three times more prevalent compared to the positive ones.

These findings suggest that in the eyes of respondents, the European Union is not primarily associated with stability, development, or integration, but rather perceived as a political actor whose actions give rise to distrust or disappointment. The high share of negative associations may be related to the broader political context, including dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, perceived international pressures, selective application of standards, or the belief that it does not adequately protect the interests of the Serbian community.



At the same time, the fact that 22% of respondents have no clear opinion implies a certain level of detachment or fatigue from European integration narratives. This group may represent a population that does not perceive the EU as directly relevant to their everyday lives, or that lacks a clear idea of its role. The negative association is more pronounced (around 62%) in the north of Kosovo, compared to south of the Ibar (around 57%), while positive perception is slightly higher south of the Ibar (20% compared to 18% in the north). This suggests that skepticism towards the EU is stronger in the north, where the political dynamic tends to be more confrontational, while the south of the Ibar allows more room for ambivalence or more moderate attitudes.

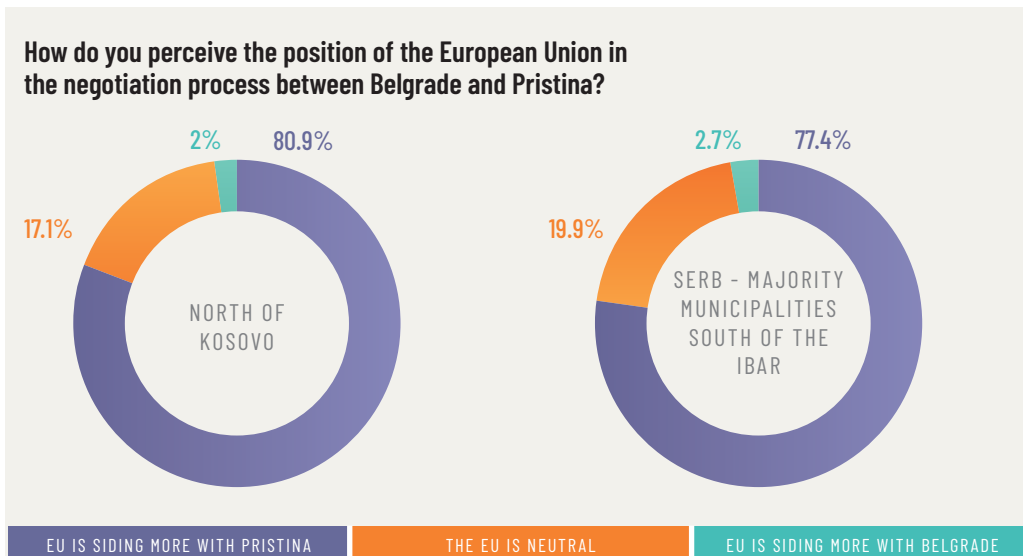
	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Positive	19.3%	16.9%	13%	9.8%	12.4%
Negative	59.1%	46.5%	51.5%	52.8%	48%
I have no opinion	21.6%	36.6%	35.5%	37.4%	39.6%

The perception of the European Union among Kosovo Serbs shows a fluctuating increase in negative attitudes, with 46.5% of negative associations in 2024, 51.5% in 2023, and 59.1% in 2025. Positive perceptions increased from 13% in 2023 to 19.3% in 2025, albeit they have not significantly altered the overall negative perception. The share of respondents who have no opinion is declining, from 36.6% in 2024 to 21.6% in 2025, indicating a clearer attitude of citizens, although the negativity towards the EU still prevails.

EU role in the dialogue

Perceptions of the European Union’s role in Belgrade-Pristina dialogue reveal an almost consensual position within the Serbian community in Kosovo: The EU is largely seen as aligned to Pristina compared to Belgrade. As many as 79% of respondents believe that the European Union is “more on the side of Pristina”, while only 18% assess it as neutral, and a negligible 2% assess it sides more with Belgrade. Such a distribution indicates a deeply rooted belief on the EU’s bias in the dialogue process.

This finding is particularly significant given the fact that the dialogue formally operated under the auspices of the EU as a mediator and guarantor of balance between the two parties. When nearly four-fifths of respondents perceive the mediator as biased, this points to a serious deficit in the legitimacy of the European role in the eyes of this community. Rather than being viewed as a neutral facilitator, the EU is perceived as a political actor with a clearly defined preference.



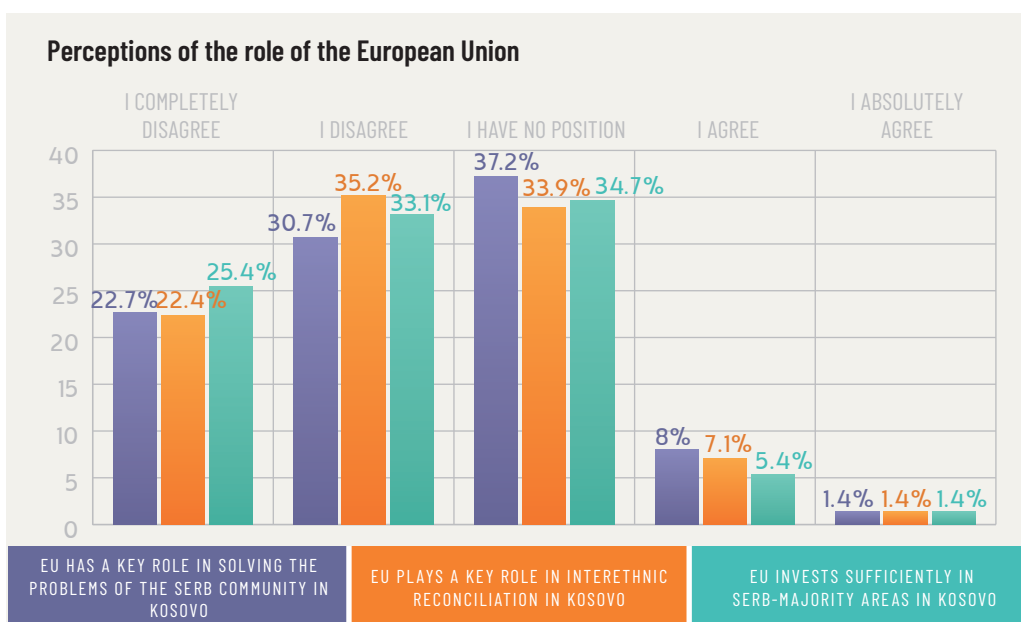
In the broader context of previous findings on negative associations related to the European Union, these data further illustrate the erosion of trust in the EU as a political actor. If the EU is perceived as biased in relation to the most sensitive political issue, the dialogue on status and institutional arrangements, then its role as a guarantor of stability and driver of European perspective loses its symbolic and political weight in the eyes of the community.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
The EU is neutral	18.5%	24.9%	19.4%	23.5%	23.3%
EU is siding more with Pristina	79.1%	73.2%	78%	75.6%	74.1%
EU is siding more with Belgrade	2.4%	1.6%	2.6%	0.9%	2.6%
No response	-	0.3%	0%	0%	0%

The perception of the European Union’s position in the negotiation process between Belgrade and Pristina reflects a consistent view that the EU favors Pristina. In 2025, as many as 79.1% believed that the EU is more on Pristina’s side, an increase compared to previous years (73.2% in 2024 and 78% in 2023). At the same time, the share of those perceiving the EU as neutral fell from 24.9% in 2024 to 18.5% in 2025, indicating a decline in the perception of the EU’s neutrality. Across the years, a very small percentage of respondents (around 2%) believe that the EU is siding more with Belgrade, thereby further confirming the perception of the EU as being biased in favor of Pristina. These trends indicate a stable but pronounced concern among Kosovo Serbs that the EU is siding with the Albanians.

EU and differences north and south of the Ibar

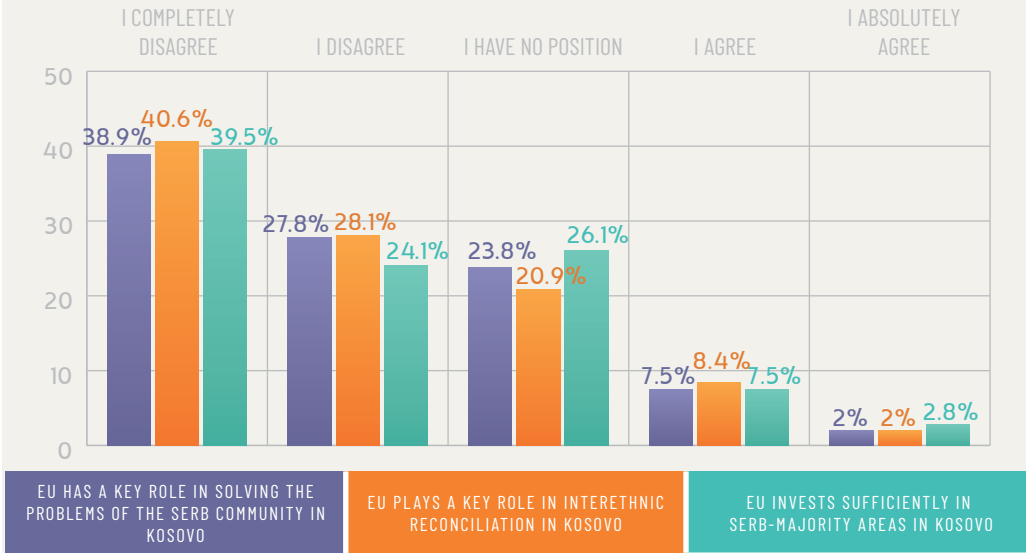
Data on perceptions of the role of the European Union indicate a consistent pattern of skepticism, accompanied with pronounced regional differentiation between the north of Kosovo and the Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar. Across the entire sample, the majority of respondents do not perceive the EU as a key actor in addressing the issues of the Serbian community, promoting interethnic reconciliation, or investing sufficiently in areas with a majority Serb population. Regarding the claim that the EU plays a key role in resolving the issues of the Serbian community, as many as 54% of respondents express disagreement (approximately 23% fully, around 31% partially), while 37% remain neutral. Only 9% agree or strongly agree with this statement. A similar pattern is observed in relation to interethnic reconciliation: 57% of respondents do not see the EU as a key actor in this process, while a third remain neutral. The most pronounced skepticism relates to investments – 58% of respondents believe that the EU does not invest enough in Serb-majority areas, while the positive assessment is almost marginal (6%).



However, regional analysis reveals a deeper structure of these attitudes. In the north of Kosovo, strong and intense disagreement prevails. Across all statements, around 40% of respondents chose the option “Completely disagree”, reflecting a strong and normative rejection of the role of the EU. For example, 39% in the north completely reject the claim that the EU contributes to resolving the issues of the Serbian community, with an additional 28% expressing disagreement, implying that two-thirds of respondents in the north has a clearly negative view. A similar pattern appears when asked about reconciliation and investments. Such a distribution of responses suggests a deeply rooted distrust that goes beyond the mere reservation and translates into outright rejection.

NORTH OF KOSOVO

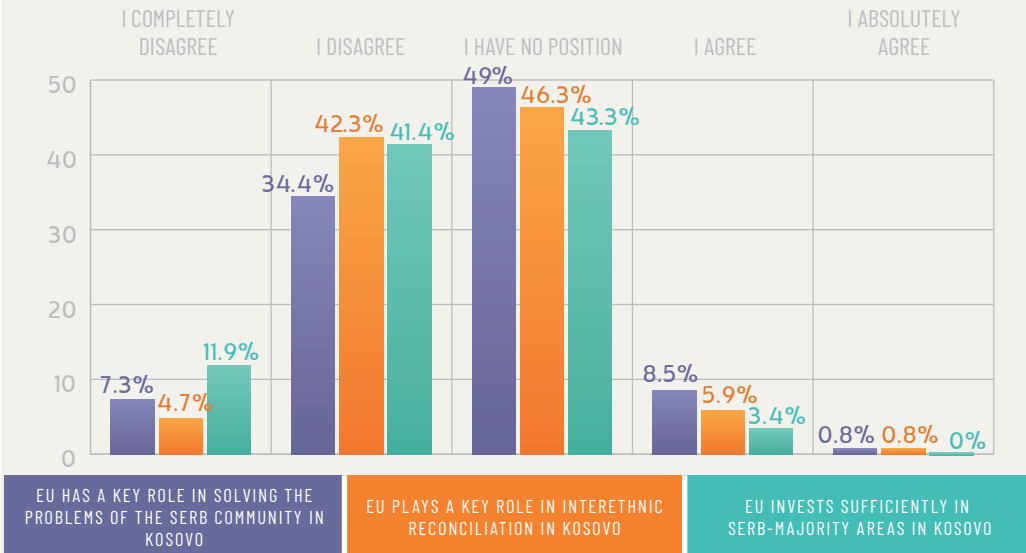
Perceptions of the role of the European Union



South of the Ibar, perceptions are more nuanced. “Soft skepticism” and ambivalence dominate here. The highest share of respondents selects the neutral option (49% for problem solving, 46% for reconciliation, 43% for investments). At the same time, a significant portion of respondents express disagreement (34–42%), although the share when it comes to complete disagreement is significantly lower than in the north (5–12%). This indicates a different structure of perception: while in the north strong normative resistance is dominant, south of the Ibar there is a mixture of skepticism and ambivalence, without pronounced polarization.

SERB - MAJORITY MUNICIPALITIES SOUTH OF THE IBAR

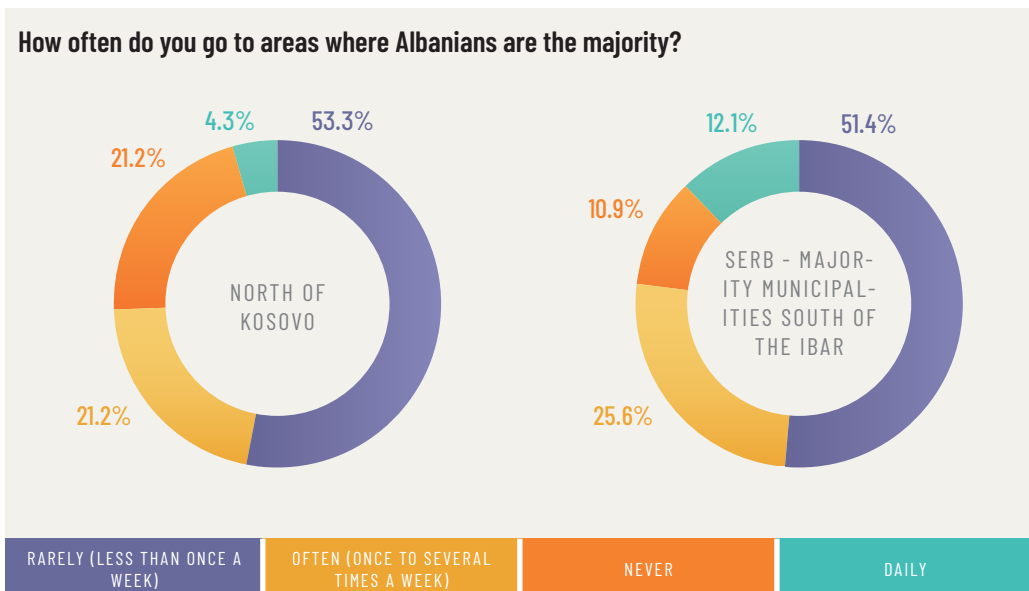
Perceptions of the role of the European Union



ETHNIC DISTANCE

Visit to predominantly Albanian areas

Data on visits to Albanian-majority areas reveal a complex pattern of social distance, selective interaction, and regional variation within the Serbian community. Across the entire sample, the dominant pattern reflects limited, but not entirely absent interaction: 52% of respondents report visiting such areas rarely (less than once a week), 23% frequently (once to several times a week), 16% never, and 8% daily. In other words, nearly three-quarters of respondents maintain at least an occasional contact, but for the majority, that contact remains sporadic and limited. Such a distribution suggests that complete isolation is not the prevailing model, but neither is intensive everyday integration. “Rarely”, as the most common answer, suggests functional, instrumental mobility - visits to Albanian areas for practical reasons (work, administrative tasks, shopping, healthcare), but without any deeper social engagement.



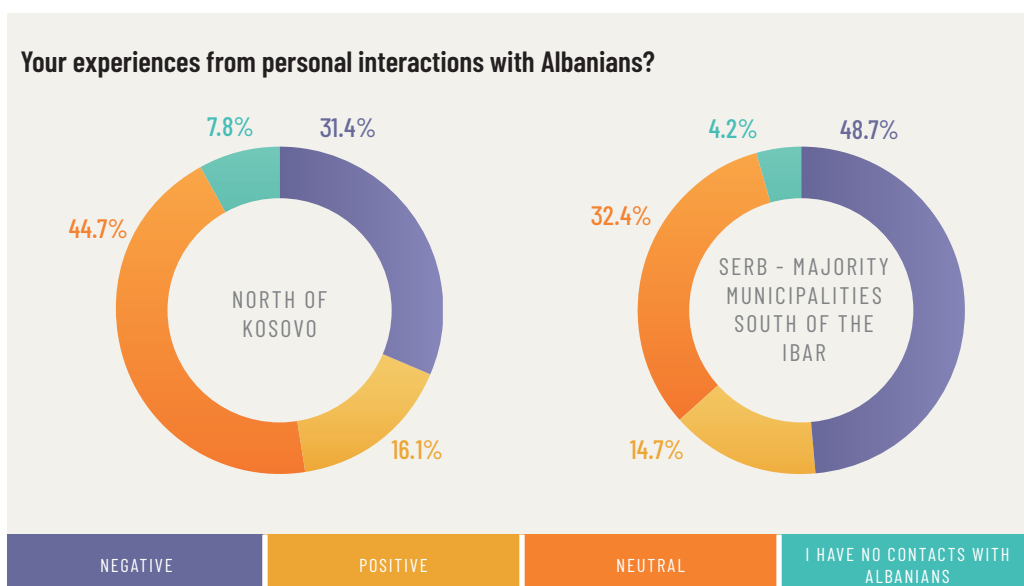
In the north of Kosovo, the pattern of distance is more pronounced: 21% of respondents report never visiting Albanian - majority areas, nearly twice as many than south of the Ibar (around 11%). Moreover, daily visits are significantly less frequent in the north (4%) than south of the Ibar (12%). This indicates that physical and social separation is more pronounced in the north, where ethnic boundaries are more territorially defined. In contrast, municipalities with Serb majority south of the Ibar display a higher degree of daily and frequent interaction (around 26% often, 12% daily). Although the majority there also rarely visits Albanian areas (51%), the higher percentage of daily interactions indicate a higher level of functional integration and interethnic interdependence in everyday life. This difference may be linked to geographical dispersion as well as the already demonstrated greater institutional integration. However, it is interesting to note that the category “rarely” remains almost identical across both regions (53% north, 51% south), pointing to an overall cautious and limited pattern of interaction.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Never	16%	12.7%	13.7%	10.1%	9.6%
Rarely (less than once a week)	52.4%	33.6%	44.8%	38.8%	50.4%
Often (once to several times a week)	23.4%	31.2%	25.2%	40.6%	31.5%
Daily	8.2%	22.5%	16.3%	10.5%	8.5%

If we compare 2025 with previous years, there is a clear decline in the number of Kosovo Serbs who regularly travel to majority Albanian areas. In 2025, only 8.2% respondents report daily visits, a sharp drop compared to 2024 (22.5%) and 2023 (16.3%). Similarly, the share of those who visit frequently (once to several times a week) dropped to 23.4% in 2025, while in 2024 it was 31.2%. The share of those who never visit increased (16% in 2025 compared to 12.7% in 2024), indicating reduced interaction and growing separation. In 2021, nearly 50% of respondents visited rarely, while 31.5% did so frequently, suggesting that over time the number of those who do not visit at all, or visit only rarely, has seen a gradual increase over the last four years.

Personal contacts with Albanians

Data on experiences from personal interactions with Albanians reveal an ambivalent, but overall, predominantly negative pattern of interethnic relations, with clear territorial differences. Across the entire sample, 40% of respondents report negative experiences, 38% neutral, 15% positive, while 6% indicate they had no personal contact. Such a distribution shows that negative experiences continue to make up a relative majority, while a nearly equal share of respondents report neutral interactions, suggesting absence of a uniformly negative image.



In the north of Kosovo, neutral perceptions prevail (around 45%), while 31% report negative experiences and 16% positive ones. Neutrality as a dominant category may point to a distanced coexistence, characterized by interaction without express trust or open conflict. In contrast, municipalities with Serb majority south of the Ibar, report more pronounced negative experiences (around 49%), while neutral ones account for 32% and positive ones for approximately 15%. This suggests that greater integration of Serbs south of the Ibar does not necessarily translate into more positive interactions, but that rather negative experiences with members of the Albanian community still prevail.

Nevertheless, interview data provide valuable contextual insights. Bojan Tomić, a journalist from Štrpce, offers a nuanced view of the relationship between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, particularly in the context of his local community. Štrpce, as a multiethnic municipality, remains relatively calm when it comes to interethnic incidents. Tomić notes that no serious interethnic conflicts were recorded in 2025, which is noteworthy for a municipality that, while Serb-majority, also includes an Albanian minority. However, he does not hesitate to point out that politics and political rhetoric have the potential to escalate tensions.

However, Tomić sheds positive light into everyday life in Štrpce, particularly in the context of tourism and economy. The ski centre, a prominent landmark, attracts both Serbs and Albanians, and there are also businesses that employ members from both communities.

Additionally, he also mentions the introduction of new services such as restaurants and bakeries, that offer employment opportunities for both Serbs and Albanians, thereby contributing to positive dynamics at the local level. This goes on to show that, despite political tension, economic activities can serve as a bridge between communities.

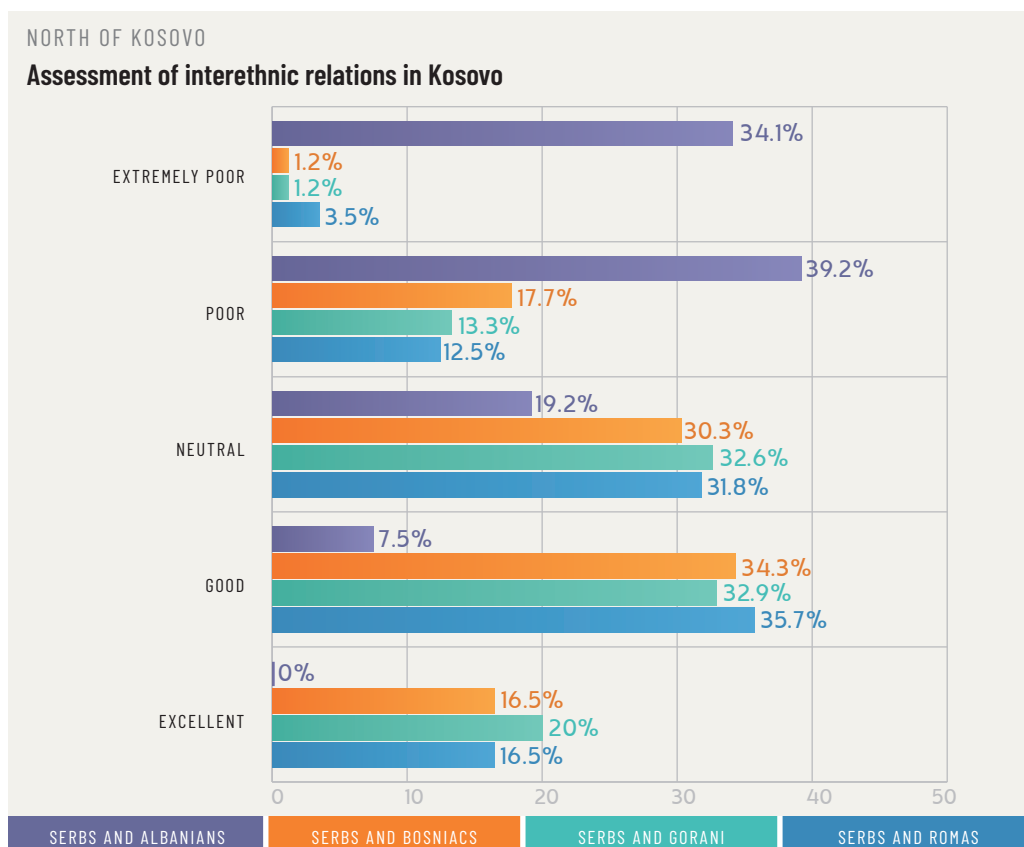
	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Positive	15.3%	31.4%	20.1%	21.5%	18.5%
Negative	40.2%	12.3%	24.5%	12%	13.3%
Neutral	38.5%	50.9%	48.4%	52.8%	56.7%
I have no contacts with Albanians	6%	5.2%	7%	13.7%	11.5%
No response	-	0.2%	0%	0%	0%

Comparing 2025 with previous years, a notable shift can be observed in the perception of Kosovo Serbs' interactions with Albanians. In 2025, 15.3% of respondents expressed a positive perception, down from 31.4% in 2024, indicating a decline in optimism regarding relations between Serbs and Albanians. Negative perceptions rose to 40.2% in 2025, a significant jump from 12.3% in 2024. In 2025, neutral perception remains high (38.5%), but has declined compared to 50.9% in 2024. Also, the share of respondents who reported no contact with Albanians remained relatively stable (6% in 2025), but is slightly higher compared to 5.2% in 2024. Overall, this trend reflects an increase in negative attitudes towards Albanians and a decline in neutrality, with a decrease in positive perceptions in 2025 compared to previous years.

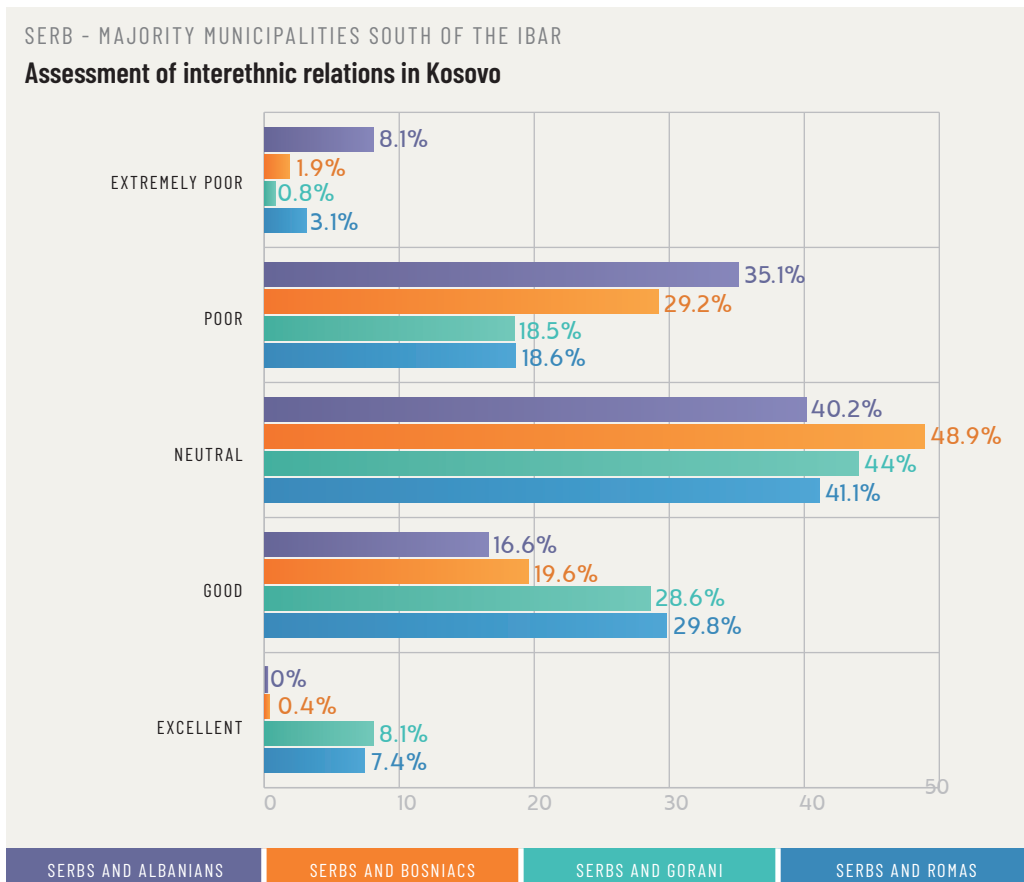
Assessment of interethnic relations

Assessment of interethnic relations reveals a clear hierarchy of perceptions within the Serbian community, where relations with Albanians are viewed most negatively by far, while the relations with other minority communities are perceived significantly more positively. Across the entire sample, relations between Serbs and Albanians were assessed as “extremely poor” or “poor” in 58% of cases (21% + 37%), while only 12% of respondents considered them good, and none rated them as excellent. Neutral responses accounted for 30%, pointing to a segment of the population that either refrains from taking a clear stance or cannot do so, but does not change the fact that the dominant perception remains negative.

In contrast, relations with Bosniacs, Goranis and Romas were assessed significantly more positively. In the north of Kosovo, the perception of relations between Serbs and Albanians is particularly negative: as many as 73% of respondents rate them as extremely poor or poor (34% + 39%), while only 7% consider them good, and no respondent rates them as excellent. South of the Ibar, the picture is somewhat more nuanced. Negative assessments of relations between Serbs and Albanians account for 43% (8% extremely poor + 35% poor), while neutral responses prevail (40%), and around 17% assess them as good. Although negative perceptions still prevail, the intensity of negativity is significantly weaker than in the north, and the space for neutrality and moderately positive assessments is wider.



These data indicate a clear ethnic differentiation of perceptions: while relations with Albanians are heavily influenced by strong political and security concerns, relations with other communities are assessed through everyday coexistence, without the same level of symbolic conflict. Albanian-Serbian relations have the status of a “central dividing line”, while other interethnic relations are defined by the conflict to a much less degree.



Prominent individuals within the Serbian community also note negative trends. Darko Dimitrijević, editor-in-chief of Radio Goraždevac, believes that relations between Serbs and Albanians have changed, in a negative sense, which is particularly evident in everyday communication. He points out that although there is good communication between the city government and the Serbian community in his municipality, during the last local elections, this relationship was politicized by Self-Determination. “It was presented as an act of betrayal of Albanians rather than something positive,” Dimitrijević explained, pointing to a political shift in the perception of interpersonal relations.

He further explains that Self-Determination, in his opinion, has given rise to the idea that nobody should talk to Serbs and that the Serbian language should not be used. “I also notice this with Albanians, whom I interview often. They used to speak Serbian in public, but today they are afraid to speak Serbian in the media.”

This phenomenon, according to Dimitrijević, is not only political but also a societal one, as the fear of using the Serbian language implies a growing societal polarization. He adds that the Serbian List, in conjunction with Belgrade tabloids, has exacerbated the situation through what he calls a “cancerous attitude towards the Serbian society,” further intensifying mutual aversion between Serbs and Albanians.

Miloš Vukadinović from Leposavić argues that Albin Kurti’s rise to power has significantly deteriorated the relations between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. He points out that, first and foremost, institutional cooperation between the central authorities and the Serbian List is lacking, further deepening the gap between the Serbian and Albanian political representatives. Vukadinović points to the negative atmosphere that dominates the public space, stating that “the Serbian community and its political representatives – are being called by derogatory names and criminalized.” This hate speech, he believes, has a serious impact on broader societal behavior, encouraging the majority Albanian community to act negatively toward the minority Serbian community.

In his opinion, the negative narrative in the media and public discourse contributes to the deterioration of mutual relations, but also creates polarization within the Serbian community itself. He notes that not only that inter-ethnic relations are disrupted, but also everyday interactions within the community itself. Polarization, as explained by Vukadinović, is evident in everyday interactions, creating additional tension within a community already facing serious external challenges.

Ethnic distance

Data on acceptance of Albanians in various life situations clearly exhibits presence of pronounced social distance in the intimate sphere, but at the same time significantly greater openness in professional and everyday contexts. Across the entire sample, only 18% of respondents would accept an Albanian man or woman as a spouse, and 13% as son-in-law or daughter-in-law. Conversely, 81% would accept an Albanian as a friend, 80% as a work colleague, 64% as a superior, and 73% as a neighbor.

This contrast between the private and public spheres is stark. While marriage and family integration are almost universally rejected (over four-fifths of respondents do not accept them), professional cooperation and neighborly relations are to a large degree acceptable. This suggests that the ethnic boundary is strongest when it comes to issues of identity, family, and symbolic continuity of the community, while it is more flexible in everyday functional interactions.



In the north of Kosovo, acceptance is significantly lower across nearly all categories. Only 24% would accept to marry an Albanian, and 12% to have an Albanian son-in-law or daughter-in-law. Although 71% are open to friendship, professional acceptance is significantly lower in the north than south of the Ibar: 42% would accept an Albanian as a superior, 65% as a colleague, and 51% as a neighbor. As a particular indication, almost half of respondents in the north are against an Albanian living in their neighborhood (49%), pointing to a stronger territorial and social distance.

SERB - MAJORITY MUNICIPALITIES SOUTH OF THE IBAR

Would you accept a member of Albanian nationality to be



South of the Ibar, the picture is almost the opposite when it comes to the public and professional acceptance. Although acceptance of marriage still remains very low (12% for marriage, 15% for son-in-law/daughter-in-law), the willingness for daily coexistence is extremely high: 90% accept a friendship, 85% a superior, 95% a colleague and 94% a neighbor. This pattern demonstrates a high level of pragmatic integration and functional interethnic cooperation, despite the preserved symbolic barrier in the domain of family and intimacy.

Overall, these findings show that social distance is selective rather than absolute. Intimate integration remains largely unacceptable for the majority, while public, professional and neighborly relations have largely normalized, especially in Serb-majority municipalities south of the Ibar. The north of Kosovo is characterized by a higher degree of distance and reservation in all spheres, while the south demonstrates a significantly higher readiness for everyday interaction, without crossing the symbolic boundary of family closeness.

