



# PERCEPTION ON KOSOVO - SERBIA DIALOGUE AND IDENTITY ISSUES

## KOSOVO AND SERBIA CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE



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The report is jointly written by Kosovar Centre for Security Studies and Belgrade Centre for Security Policy. Perceptions presented in this report are a summary of information gathered from respondents and it only demonstrates how people perceive the issues interpreted on the report. It is in no way a conclusive assessment of the quality of the work of institutions or issues itself subject to this study. It shall serve as an instrument for addressing potential shortcomings but also an indicator of the effectiveness of their communication with the people.

The views presented in this report are perceptions of the respondents and do not necessarily represent the views of Kosovar Centre for Security Studies and Belgrade Centre for Security Policy. Opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

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# CITIZENS PERCEPTION ON KOSOVO - SERBIA DIALOGUE AND IDENTITY ISSUES

KOSOVO AND SERBIA CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE



Prishtina  
JANUARY 2021



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# COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

Written by:

**Ramadan Ilazi, KCSS Senior Researcher**

## **“Pessimism about the future, but some agreement among citizens on the shortcomings of the handling of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue”**

EU-led dialogue for normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia is assumed to be the main issue for both countries, since the process started in 2011. After almost a decade of the process and in some cases negative coverage by the media, the citizens of both Serbia and Kosovo seem to be relatively strong in their support of the dialogue. The percentage in support for the dialogue is slightly different in Kosovo and Serbia. Kosovar citizens seem to have a stronger support with 68 percent compared to the Serbian citizens with 51 percent. This, rather high percentage of the support for the dialogue in both countries challenges the common assumption that the dialogue is not popular. This would seem to suggest that the citizens see a value and a benefit in the dialogue process. However, this assumption is undermined, with the very high percentage of the citizens in Kosovo (80 percent) and Serbia (92 percent) who do not see any personal benefit from the dialogue. When asked percentage of the citizens in Serbia who say they have not personally. This result, can imply that citizens see the dialogue as a responsibility of the elites, or a process happening at the macro level, not touching their lives. Perhaps, the high percentage of the citizens in both countries, that do not perceive the dialogue to have personal benefits to them is a manifestation of a lack of effective communication from the EU and more importantly the governments in Kosovo and Serbia, about the benefits the dialogue.

The negative perceptions of citizens towards the benefits of the dialogue, seem to be connected with the citizen perceptions of the transparency of the process. In Serbia, only 18 percent have said that they are familiar with the content of the dialogue and considered it transparent, where as in Kosovo this figure is even lower at 11 percent. In this sense, a common denominator for both societies emerges, as citizens in both countries seem to agree that the dialogue lacks transparency. In Serbia 82 percent of the citizens said that the dialogue is partly or not at all transparent, while in Kosovo 77 percent said the dialogue is not transparent or completely lacks transparency. Transparency or the extent of it is an inherent challenge with the processes of facilitations/mediation of disputes between parties. Facilitators are faced with the difficult dilemma of when, what and how much to reveal to the public, in order to not spoil or create backlash on potential compromise solutions.

One of the potential consequences of the high perceptions among citizens of the lack of transparency of the dialogue, is also their perception of the impact of the dialogue process. In this context, another common denominator between Kosovar and Serbian citizens, is that majority of them, 60 percent in Kosovo and 71 percent in Serbia, seem to believe that the dialogue has not changed anything. This is also related to the level of awareness among citizens about the actual goals of the dialogue process. In Serbia, 50 percent of the citizens said they do not know the goals of the dialogue process compared to 31 percent in Kosovo. But the result as to concretely what citizen believe the goals are, are very different between Kosovo and Serbia. While 37 percent of the Kosovar citizens believe the goal is mutual recognition, 21 percent of the Serbian citizens believe it is about preserving the territory/Kosovo. This data, implies essential problems with respect to how governments in both countries communicate with their citizens, or more concretely the lack of honesty in this regard. From the start of the process of the dialogue in 2011, the EU has been purposive vague in defining the objectives of the dialogue and what normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia actually means. The EU's approach in the dialogue has been one of constructive ambiguity, which has allowed Kosovo and Serbia to reach agreements, while ignoring the elephant in the room (Status of Kosovo as an independent state), but perhaps inadvertently has created potential serious consequences in managing expectations in both societies. An interesting result with the results

## SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

of citizens' perceptions of the goals of the normalization dialogue is the small percentage of those citizens that identify European integration as one of the goals of the process, with only 6 percent in Kosovo, while in Serbia it does not register at all.

With respect to the different options for a compromise solution that would resolve bilateral dispute between Serbia and Kosovo over the status of the latter as an independent country, the citizens' perceptions are diametrically opposed. While 77 percent of the Kosovar citizens believe that the best outcome of the dialogue would be mutual recognition between Kosovo and Serbia in the existing borders, 48 percent of the Serbian citizens believe it should be return of Kosovo to Serbia with wider autonomy. Important to note in the perceptions of the Serbian citizens is that 18 percent of the citizens consider the establishment of the Association of Serb Municipalities without recognition as best outcome. This is important and encouraging as it indicates the potential for a compromise solution whereby Serbia accepts Kosovo's independence but does not formally recognize it, to be acceptable by an important segment of the society.

The optimism among citizens of Kosovo and Serbia for peaceful relations between Albanians and Serbs in the Balkans are not very strong. While, Kosovar citizen seem more optimistic, with 49 percent believing there will be peace between Serbs and Albanians in the Balkans, in Serbia only 27 percent of the citizens agree with such a prospect. The citizens also are not very positive with respect to the future of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Again, Kosovar citizens are slightly more optimistic, with 47 percent of the citizens' believing that in the near future, there will be peaceful and normal relations with Serbia. In the case of Serbia 27 percent of citizens believe in that. Serbian citizens are very pessimistic about the prospects of a final agreement with Kosovo, with 53 percent believing that will never happen. In the case of Kosovo, 48 percent believe that a final agreement with Serbia will be achieved in the next 3-5 years, compared to 25 percent of the citizens in Serbia.

The differences of the citizens of Kosovo and Serbia with respect to the future relations, is also apparent when they are asked if they anticipate normalization of relations between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs in the near future. The option provided in the survey on this subject: "Yes, but only if there is a final agreement reached" was selected by 43 percent of the Kosovar citizens compared to 29 percent in Serbia. Majority of the Serbian citizens, 63 percent of them, do not believe there will normalization of relations with Kosovo Albanians, regardless of the outcome of the dialogue, which means even if there will be a final or conclusive agreement between Kosovo and Serbia in the framework of the dialogue. This result is very important to consider, as it implies that political elites involved in the normalization of relations, are not carrying the society with them. In this sense, normalization of relations by citizens seems to be perceived as a political necessity, and isolated at political level between leaders. This seems to suggest that even with a final agreement reached between the two countries in the framework of the EU-led dialogue, that would perhaps in the eyes of the EU as a facilitator or other actors constitute achievement of normalization, in reality the citizens of Kosovo, and especially of Serbia would not see it in the same way. What this seems to imply is that normalization of relation that the EU-led dialogue seeks to achieve, would largely extend to state mechanisms of the two countries, and its potential will most likely not translate in the respective societies. Therefore, the conclusion of normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, should mark the start of the process of reconciliation between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs.



# KEY FINDINGS:

- Majority of citizens of Kosovo and Serbia support the dialogue process; however, they have diametrically opposed perception of the goals of the dialogue. While most Kosovo citizens believe the goal of the dialogue is mutual recognition, in Serbia the goal is perceived to be return of Kosovo to Serbia with wider autonomy;
- Citizens of Kosovo and of Serbia largely share their negative perceptions of the dialogue process, with respect to transparency and its impact. Most citizens of Kosovo and Serbia think that the dialogue lacked transparency and it did not change anything or that they had any personal benefits from the process. This suggests significant shortcoming in communication approaches of the EU and governments of Kosovo and Serbia;
- Citizens of Serbia are less optimistic compared to Kosovo citizens about the future of the relations between the two countries. Majority of the Serbs do not expect to see normalization of relations with Kosovo Albanians regardless of the outcome of the dialogue;
- The citizens' perception of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue seems to suggest that they do not view the process to mean normalization between the two societies of the countries, but it is rather seen as normalization between state authorities. Agreements and achievements in the dialogue that are reached in Brussels do not seem to be translated in the same way in the society as a whole. In other words, a final agreement between Kosovo and Serbia that would be seen to constitute achievement of normalization, would not signify the same for the citizens in both countries. Therefore, normalization of the relations process should not supplant the clear necessity that these results show for a process of reconciliation and healing between peoples of Serbia and Kosovo.

**FIGURE A** KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM KOSOVO AND SERBIA CITIZENS PERCEPTION ON THE DIALOGUE (WBSB2020)

MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS IN BOTH COUNTRIES ARE IN FAVOUR OF DIALOGUE:

**KOSOVO**  
68%

**SERBIA**  
51%

THEY FAIL TO IDENTIFY ANY PERSONAL BENEFITS FROM DIALOGUE:

**KOSOVO**  
80%

**SERBIA**  
92%

VAST MAJORITY OF THEM ARE UNFAMILIAR ABOUT THE CONTENT OF DIALOGUE:

**KOSOVO**  
11%

**SERBIA**  
18%

APPROXIMATELY 3/4 OF THEM THINK DIALOGUE PROCESS IS PARTIALLY OR COMPLETELY NON-TRANSPARENT:

**KOSOVO**  
77%

**SERBIA**  
82%

CITIZENS IN SERBIA SEEM MORE PESSIMISTIC ON PEACEFUL RELATIONS BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES THAN THOSE IN KOSOVO:

**KOSOVO**  
49%

**SERBIA**  
27%

# CHAPTER I:

# KOSOVO CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE

**Data Interpreter:**  
**Plator Avdiu, Researcher**

**Research Assistant:**  
**Arta Berisha**

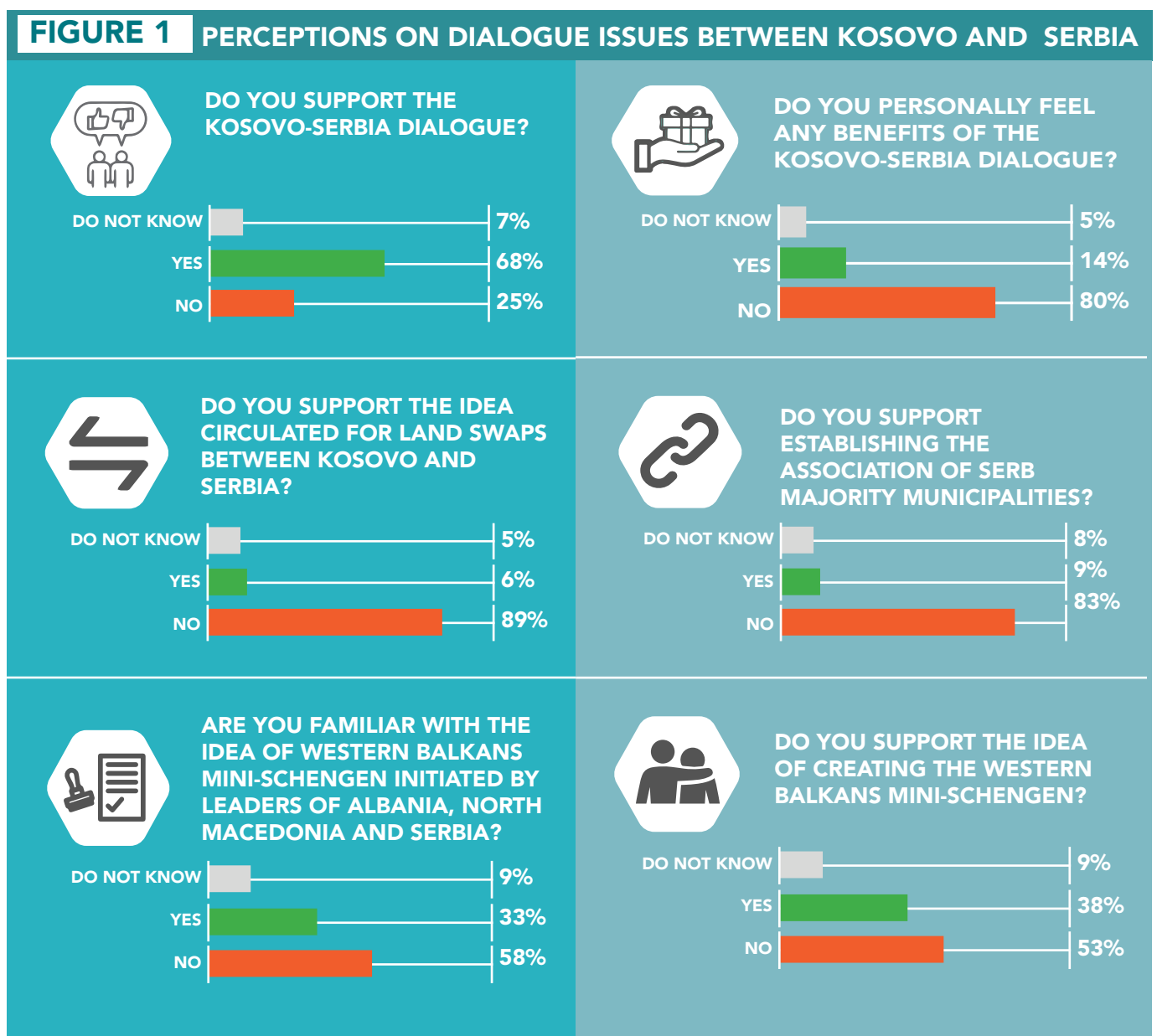
# 1.1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Vast majority of respondents in Kosovo (68 percent) are supportive of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue. Nevertheless, it is alarming for the Kosovo institutions and dialogue facilitators that 80 percent of them do not perceive to have had any personal benefits by the dialogue per se;
- Another 77 percent of Kosovar respondents shared their views that the dialogue process has been mostly or completely non-transparent in front of the public, whilst 60 percent of them think that the Brussels Agreements have not changed anything at all towards Kosovo-Serbia mutual relations. Thus, around 31 percent of all respondents have no information as to what is the Kosovo Government's goal on the dialogue with Serbia;
- As decidedly expected, more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  respondents (77 percent) believe that the best solution of the dialogue should be concluded by mutual recognition between Kosovo and Serbia. When considering the land swaps and establishing Association of Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo, respondents are posed extremely against both options – 89 percent of respondents oppose the land swaps and another 83 percent object the Association;
- The report highlights that 58 percent of respondents do not know what is the Western Balkans Mini Schengen's idea, and only 38 percent of Kosovars would support establishing Mini Schengen in the region;
- Kosovars are not very optimistic as to when the final agreement between Kosovo and Serbia will be concluded – around 48 percent of respondents believe that the agreement will be reached in the next 3-5 years. Despite this, in case there will be no agreement between Kosovo and Serbia, then around 70 percent of respondents perceive that Kosovo is going to face with severe negative consequences;
- Respondents believe that Kosovo's membership into the EU is directly depended from the dialogue with Serbia – by 79 percent of them sharing perceptions the EU integration of Kosovo could be reached only if there would be a final agreement of both countries. On the other hand, Special Envoys of the US and the EU have very low level of trust among respondents in Kosovo for their role in the dialogue;
- As regards practical issues of Kosovo with Serbia, around 67 percent of respondents would not feel safe to travel to Serbia with Kosovo's car plates. Additionally, communication between Kosovo Albanians and Serb citizens is rather sporadic due to around 60 percent of respondents in Kosovo have answered that they have never met any Serb citizen.

# 1.2. VIEWS OF KOSOVARS ON KOSOVO-SERBIA DIALOGUE

The WBSB’s fieldwork in Kosovo conducted in 2020 has produced thought-provoking results on the current Kosovo-Serbia dialogue facilitated either by the European Union or the United States. Even though respondents in the country are not against the dialogue (68 percent of them support dialogue), however more than ¾ of respondents (80 percent) perceive that no personal benefits have felt by the dialogue itself to date.

Not surprisingly that some of ideas circulated in the public discourse, such as land swaps between Kosovo and Serbia or Association of Serb majority municipalities are brutally opposed by vast majority of respondents of Kosovo ranging from 80 around 89 percent of them not supporting these options. The survey has highlighted that more than half of respondents (58 percent) do not know what is behind of the Western Balkans Mini Schengen’s idea, whilst only 38 percent of Kosovars are supportive to establish the Mini Schengen.

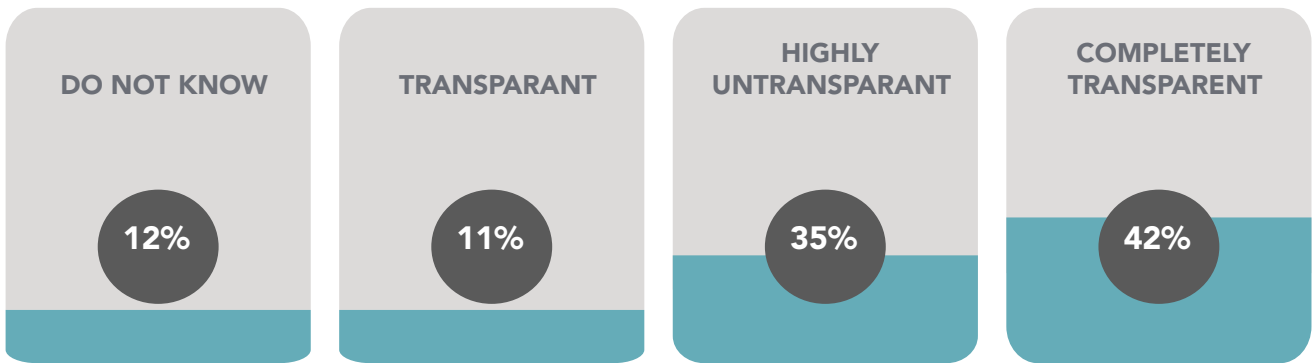


The respondents have expressed that they are not familiar with the content of Kosovo-Serbia dialogue due to the process has not been transparent – ¾ of respondents (around 77 percent) perceive that the neither Kosovo Government nor dialogue facilitators have been

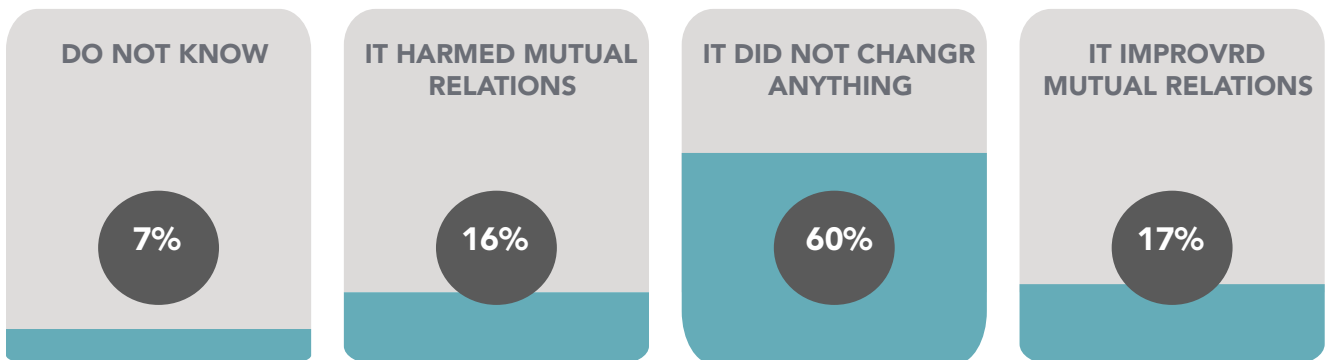
transparent in this regard. Furthermore, more than half of respondents or 60 percent of them have shared the views that the dialogue agreements (Brussels Agreement concluded by Kosovo and Serbia) have not changed anything.

Due to lack of transparency and accountability in the dialogue process, Kosovar respondents in relatively high numbers do not know what is the goal of Kosovo Government in the dialogue with Serbia. Thus, whilst 37 percent of them stated that mutual recognition of both countries is Kosovo’s target, however more than ¼ (or 31 percent) of respondents asked do not know what is the goal of Kosovo in the dialogue as the below figure shows.

**FIGURE 2 ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE CONTENT OF DIALOGUE?**



**FIGURE 3 HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE DIALOGUE SO FAR?**

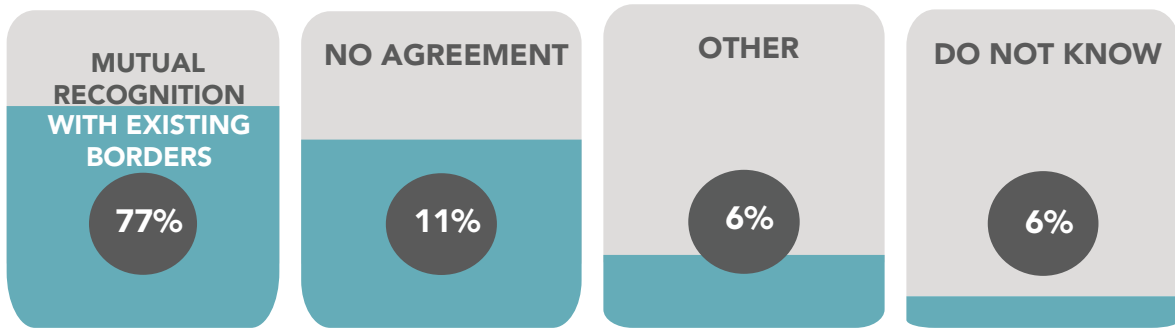


**FIGURE 4 DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS KOSOVO’S GOAL IN DIALOGUE WITH SERBIA (OPEN-ENDED QUESTION)?**

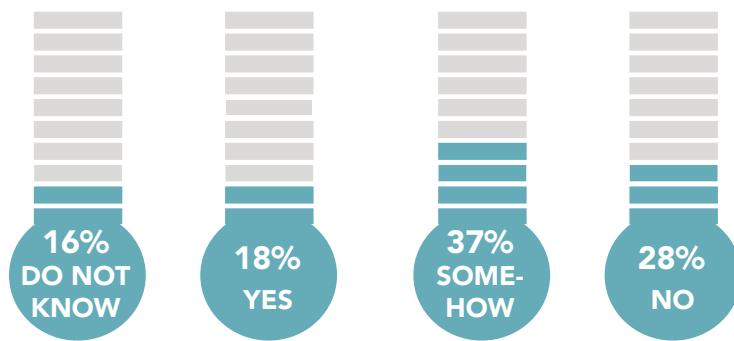


When asked on the best solution for Kosovo deriving from the dialogue, around 77 percent of respondents have stated that mutual recognition of Kosovo by Serbia within existing borders should be the ideal solution of the dialogue compared to 11 percent of respondents posed against to reach any agreement with Serbia. On the other hand, only 18 percent of Kosovo respondents support the Kosovo Government’s stance on the dialogue with Serbia, thus showing that the current Kosovo’s Government is facing with a crisis of public trust on the dialogue.

**FIGURE 5** WHAT WOULD BE BEST SOLUTION FOR DIALOGUE?

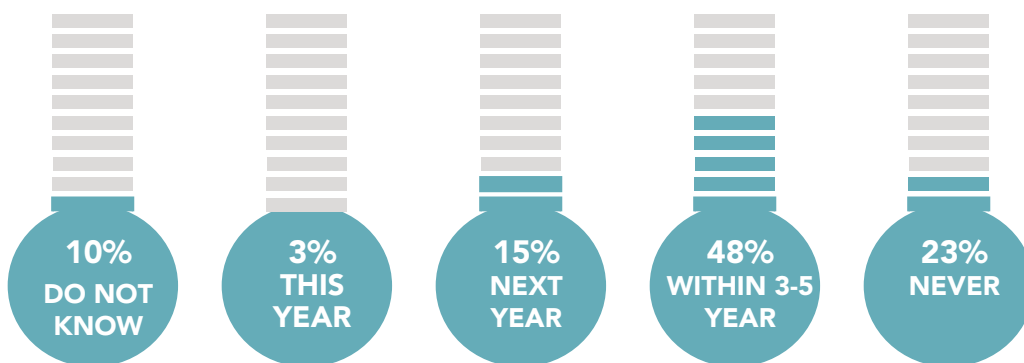


**FIGURE 6** DO YOU SUPPORT THE CURRENT STANCE OF KOSOVO ON DIALOGUE?



The respondents in Kosovo are not highly optimistic as to when the final agreement between Kosovo and Serbia will be fully reached. Nevertheless, it is worth to mention that almost half of them or 48 percent of respondents think that the agreement will be reached in the next 3-5 years, whilst other 43 percent of them anticipate normalization of relations between both states only if there is a final agreement reached. In addition, almost ½ of respondents believe that Kosovo and Serbia will have normal and peaceful relations in the near future.

**FIGURE 7** WHEN DO YOU THINK THE FINAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN KOSOVO AND SERBIA WILL BE REACHED?



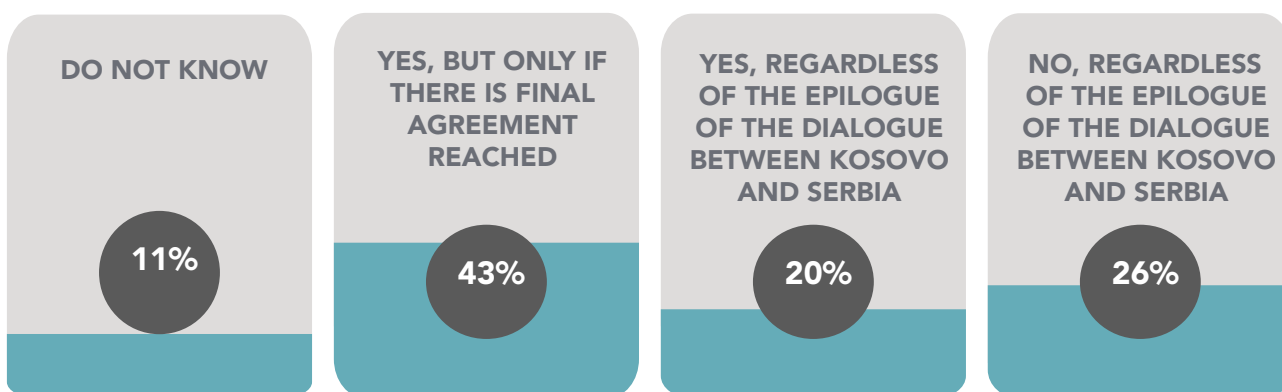
**FIGURE 8** DO YOU THINK THERE WILL BE PEACE BETWEEN ALBANIANS AND SERBS IN THE BALKANS?



**FIGURE 9** DO YOU BELIEVE THAT KOSOVO AND SERBIA, IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WILL HAVE PEACEFUL AND NORMAL RELATIONS WITH EACH OTHER?

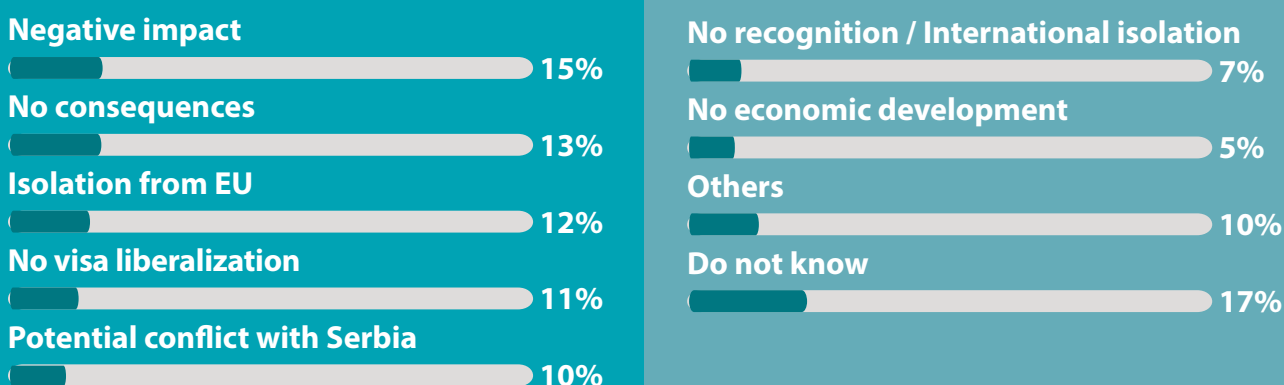


**FIGURE 10** DO YOU ANTICIPATE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN KOSOVO ALBANIANS AND SERBS IN THE NEAR FUTURE?



The survey data reveals that respondents are in favour of reaching the final agreement through dialogue, and based on their perceptions, the lack an agreement would produce negative consequences for Kosovo in domestic and foreign dimensions. As the following figure shows, around 70 percent of respondents perceive that in terms of no agreement between Kosovo and Serbia there will be consequences compared to 13 percent of respondents perceiving that Kosovo will face no consequences at all.

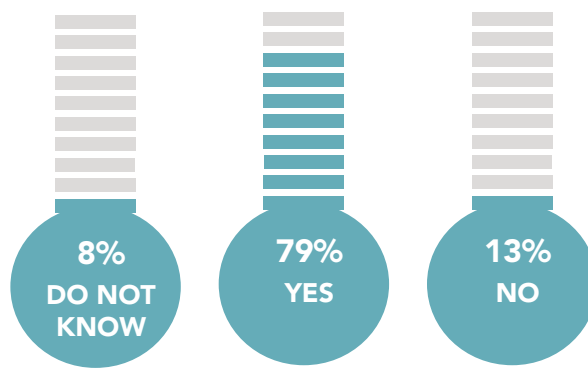
**FIGURE 11** WHAT WOULD BE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ABSENCE OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN KOSOVO AND SERBIA (OPEN-ENDED QUESTION)?



Accordingly, the dialogue process concluded with resolution of bilateral disputes between Kosovo and Serbia, including the final agreement of both countries is more than necessary for Kosovo to joining the European Union. This derives from 79 percent of respondents who believe that Kosovo’s membership into the EU could be reached only if there would be a final agreement with Serbia.

Moreover, it is interesting to highlight that Special Envoys of the dialogue – representing the US (Richard Grenell) and the EU (Miroslav Lajčák) – enjoy very low level of trust among respondents in Kosovo

**FIGURE 12 IS IT NECESSARY TO REACH FINAL AGREEMENT WITH SERBIA FOR KOSOVO’S MEMBERSHIP TO EU?**



**FIGURE 13 HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE ROLE OF EU AND US SPECIAL ENVOYS IN DIALOGUE?**



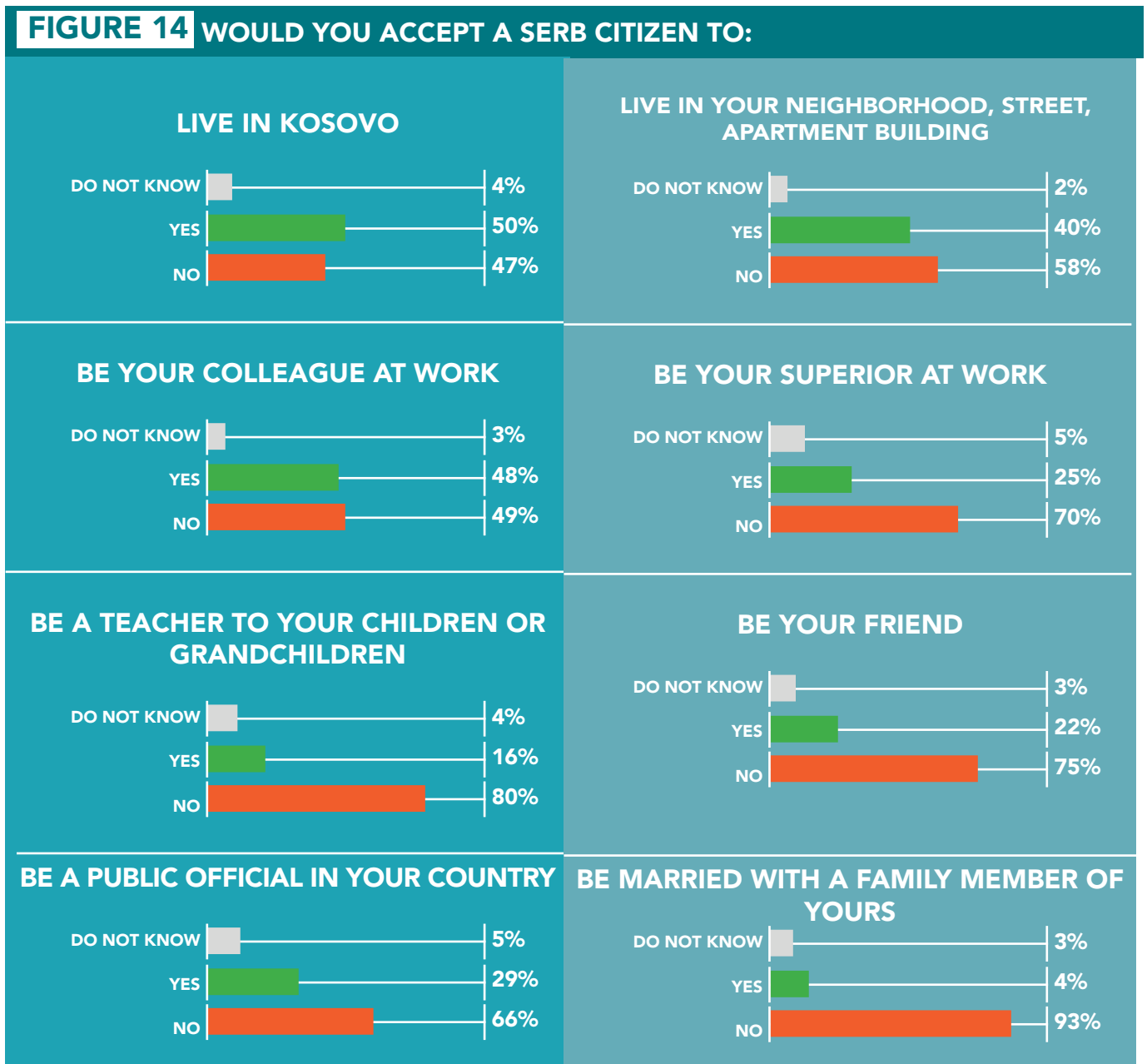


# 1.3. IDENTITY PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS SERBIA

Given the sensitive political situation with Serbia, and especially the repression which ended in conflict resulting on the atrocities committed by Serbia's Milosevic's regime in Kosovo against Kosovo Albanian population back in the 1990s of the last century, therefore Kosovar respondents (with particular emphasis Albanian majority population) still share rather negative perceptions towards citizens of Serbia (not including here citizens of Kosovo Serb community living in Kosovo).

In this regard, almost all respondents in Kosovo or 93 percent of them would not accept their family members to get married with a Serb nor being a teacher of their children/grandchildren. Around 2/3 of respondents are against that Serb citizens being public officials in Kosovo, while for 70 percent of them would not be acceptable to have a Serb as a superior at the work.

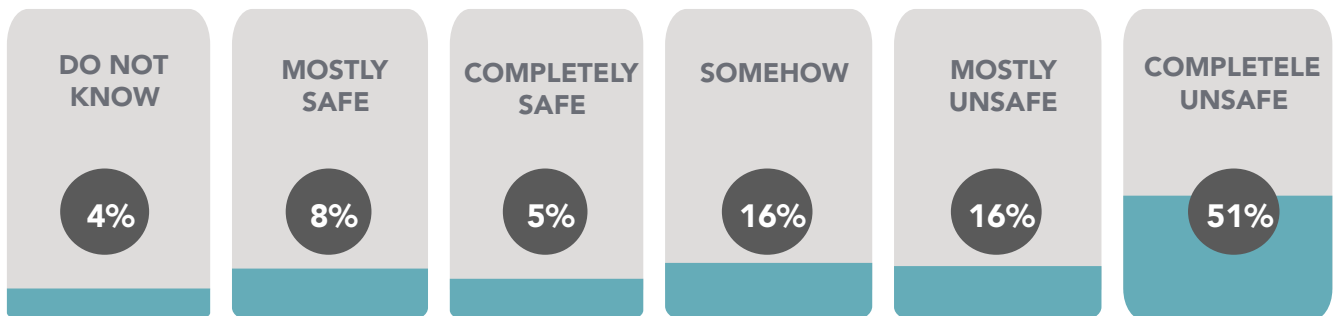
On the other side, considering other areas, such as living in Kosovo or having a Serb citizen colleague at work, the respondents in Kosovo have shared somewhat balanced perceptions.



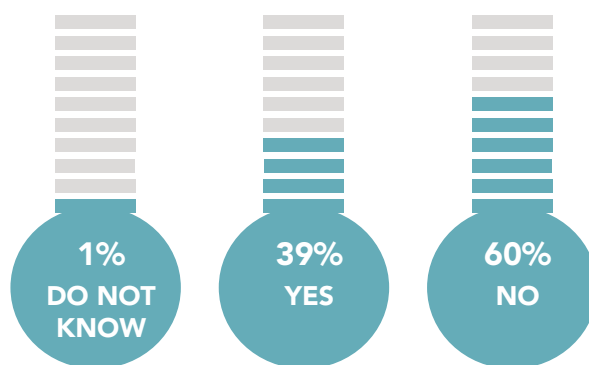
Another important security-related issue which have been largely discussed in the EU-facilitated dialogue is the freedom of movement for Kosovo citizens to travel to/through Serbia. However, there is a major concern that around 67 percent of respondents would not feel safe to travel to Serbia with Kosovo’s car plates compared to only 14 percent who responded that would feel safe.

Furthermore, it seems that interaction between Kosovo Albanian and Serb citizens is rather sporadic given that around 60 percent of respondents in Kosovo have answered that they have not met anytime a Serb citizen. Whilst, less than 40 percent have met any Serb. Despite these results, it is highly important to note that main sources of information related to Kosovo-Serbia relations for Kosovar respondents are TV (70 percent) and Internet (25 percent).

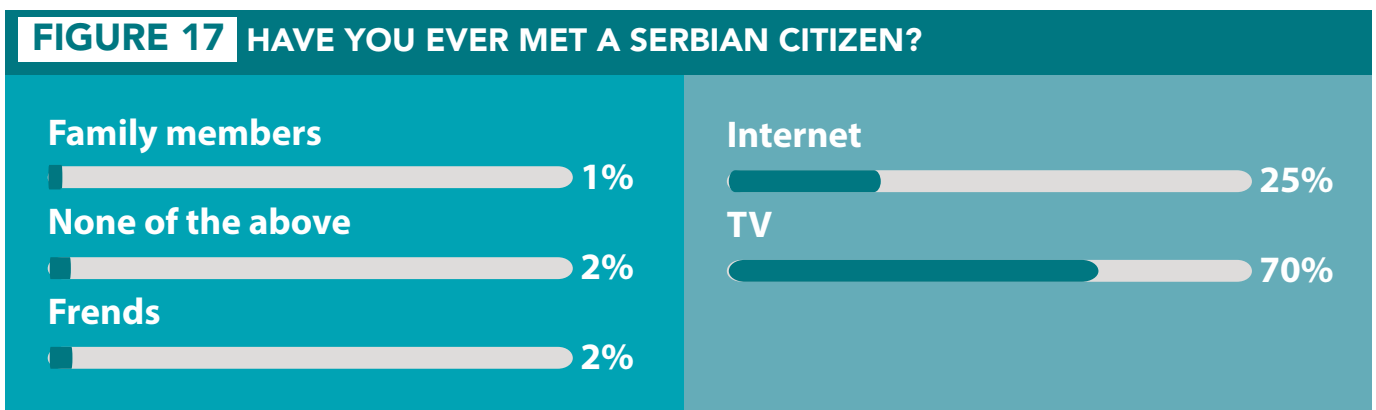
**FIGURE 15** HOW SAFE WOULD YOU FEEL TO TRAVEL IN SERBIA WITH KOSOVO CAR PLATES?



**FIGURE 16** HAVE YOU EVER MET A SERBIAN CITIZEN?



**FIGURE 17** HAVE YOU EVER MET A SERBIAN CITIZEN?





**BCSP** Belgrade Centre  
for Security Policy

# CHAPTER II:

# SERBIAN CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE

**Data Interpreter:**

**Bojan Elek, senior researcher (BCSP)**

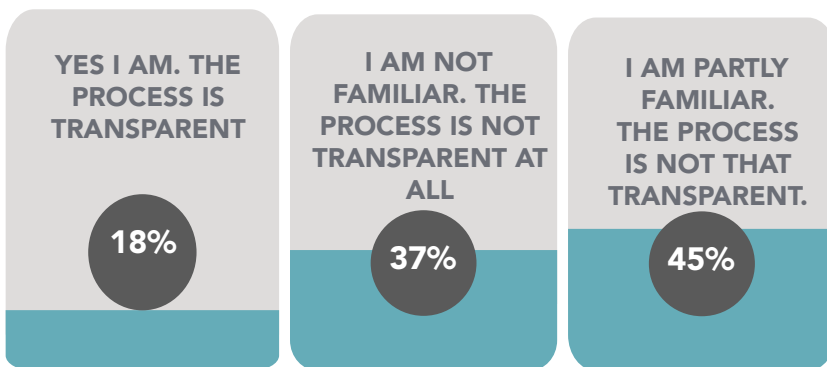
## 2.1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although majority of Serbian citizens trusts the Government and supports the agreement that would resolve the Kosovo issue, half of them is not aware of what is the end goal in negotiations with Pristina. Only one fifth thinks that the goal is to preserve territorial integrity of Serbia (in line with UN SC Resolution 1244) whereas half believes this to be the ideal outcome of negotiations as well. However, Serbian citizens have predominantly negative opinions of Kosovo Albanians which, coupled with scepticism regarding outcomes of the dialogue and the possibility of peace between the two ethnic groups, show the existence of cognitive dissonance. In other words, citizens have a strong desire of returning Kosovo, but would not accept Kosovo Albanians having any prominent roles in public life in Serbia. The existence of these contradictory ideas can be traced throughout time: Serbian citizens support the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue but cannot imagine a peaceful coexistence between Serbs and Albanians; they show support for the agreements reached in Brussels, but do not see any benefits from them, etc. Data clearly shows significant soft power in the hands of the Serbian Government and their ability to affect and shape public opinion of the citizens, especially when taking into account that a significant majority (64 percent) predominantly relies on television for information, particularly on public broadcaster (RTS). Therefore, the Government obviously has the tools to influence citizens and gain their unwavering trust, yet these are not used to normalize relations between the two communities and the peoples.

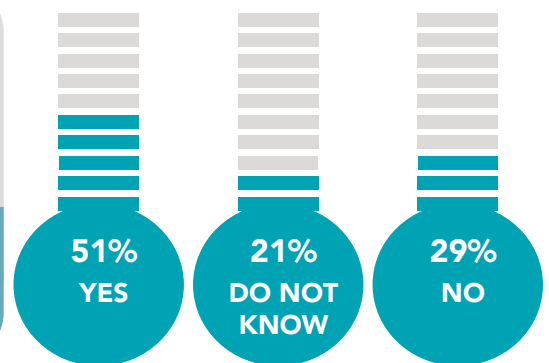
## 2.2. CITIZENS PERCEPTION TOWARDS DIALOGUE BETWEEN KOSOVO AND SERBIA

Serbian citizens are only partially informed about the content of Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and a majority thinks the whole process is not transparent enough. Despite this, half of them support the dialogue, although 90 percent feel no tangible benefit and ¾ think it had almost no effects. Thus, the citizens seem to believe that the dialogue has the potential to resolve the outstanding issues yet feel it has been wasted on dealing with secondary issues that bring no positive results. The roles of special envoys, both that of the US Richard Grenell and the EU Miroslav Lajcak, are viewed positively by a thin majority.

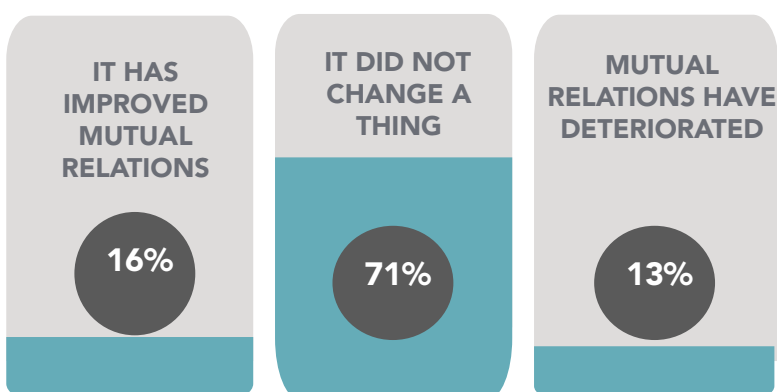
**FIGURE 18** ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE CONTENTS OF THE KOSOVO-SERBIA DIALOGUE?



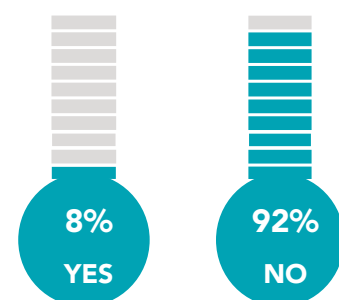
**FIGURE 19** DO YOU SUPPORT THE KOSOVO-SERBIA DIALOGUE?



**FIGURE 20** WHAT IS YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE KOSOVO - SERBIA DIALOGUE TO DATE?



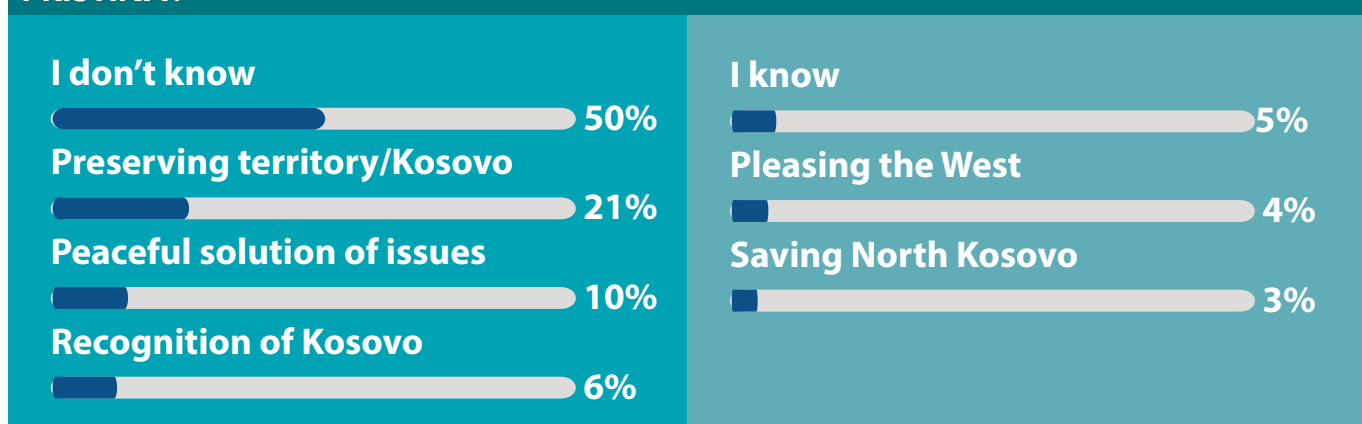
**FIGURE 21** HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY PERSONAL BENEFITS FROM THE KOSOVO - SERBIA DIALOGUE?



Half of the citizens do not know what the goals of Serbia are in negotiations with Kosovo (Figure 22). One fifth thinks it is to preserve Kosovo within Serbia, 10 percent believes it is peaceful resolution of the conflict and only 6 percent expect mutual recognition. However, 2/3 support Serbia's agenda in the dialogue, a fact that shows little critical examination of the Government's decisions but also speaks volumes about immense, blind trust in their intentions. Since 2/3 of citizens primarily get their information on Kosovo by watching TV, the lack of knowledge regarding goals can also be due to predominantly process-focused reporting with little analysis of the

content, but also unclear communication by the Government and the lack of clear policy direction.

**FIGURE 22** DO YOU KNOW WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRISTINA?



A whopping 85 percent of citizens found the 'land swap' proposal unacceptable, although this idea has been unofficially discussed as a possible solution at some point.

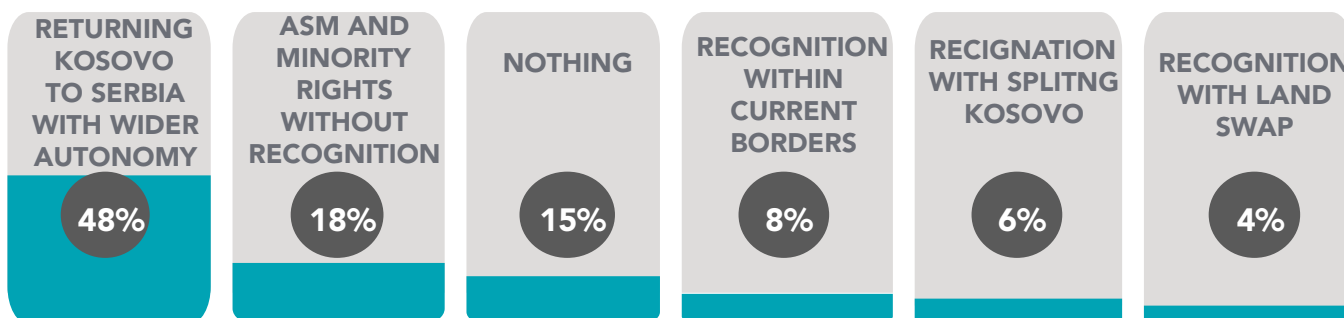
## ON THE IDEAL OUTCOMES OF THE DIALOGUE

Almost half of all citizens thinks that returning Kosovo to Serbia, with granting of wider autonomy, would be the best outcome of the dialogue (Figure 23). One fifth thinks the best solution is establishment of the Association of Serbian Municipalities with minority rights guarantees, without recognition. Not reaching agreement is ideal for 15 percent of citizens, 8 percent supports mutual recognition within existing borders, 6 percent supports the division of Kosovo and attaching north municipalities to Serbia, whereas only 4 percent is in favour of the land swap. At the same time, 40 percent thinks that recognizing Kosovo's independence would not affect their lives at all, 1/4 would in this case feel like losing their identity, and 1/5 would feel humiliated. These figures point to the fact that attachment to Kosovo is predominantly a matter of emotional or spiritual nature, and it is not necessarily based on rational arguments.

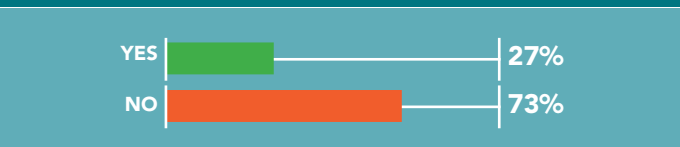
This interpretation is corroborated by the fact that the most frequent association to Kosovo among the respondents are monasteries and Serbian heritage, the heart of Serbia and the cradle of Serbs and Serbian identity. It comes as a no surprise that citizens believe Kosovo was taken away from Serbia, they strongly identify with it and think the only solution is to have it returned to Serbia.

Therefore, the citizens do not give up on Kosovo, while at the same time they desire reconciliation and normal relations, although they feel the current negotiations are not heading in that direction. This is where the scepticism regarding the outcomes of the dialogue come from, with half of citizens not believing the final agreement will ever be reached and only 1/4 thinking it could happen within next 3-5 years. Two thirds of citizens think that there are no prospects for normalization of relations in the short run regardless of the outcomes of the dialogue, whereas the remaining ones think reaching an agreement is a precondition for that. This is also why 70 percent think there cannot be peace among Serbs and Albanians in the Balkans in the foreseeable future. In addition to the lack of tangible results from the dialogue, this pessimism can also be understood considering a big ethnic distance towards Albanians, which is constantly present and promoted in public sphere.

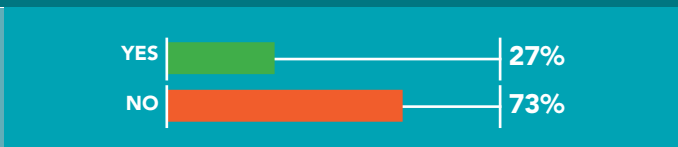
**FIGURE 23** WHAT WOULD BE THE IDEAL OUTCOME OF THE DIALOGUE?



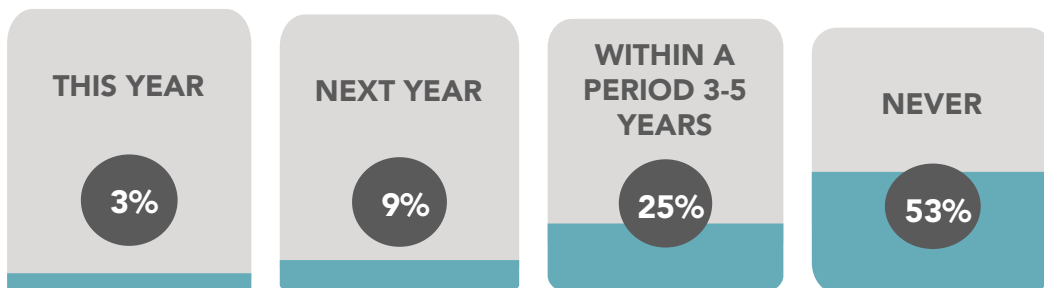
**FIGURE 24** DO YOU BELIEVE THAT SERBIA AND KOSOVO WILL HAVE PEACEFUL AND NORMAL MUTUAL RELATIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE?



**FIGURE 25** DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THERE WILL BE PEACE BETWEEN ALBANIANS AND SERBS IN THE BALKANS?



**FIGURE 26** IN YOUR OPINION WHEN WILL A FINAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN SERBIA AND KOSOVO BE REACHED?

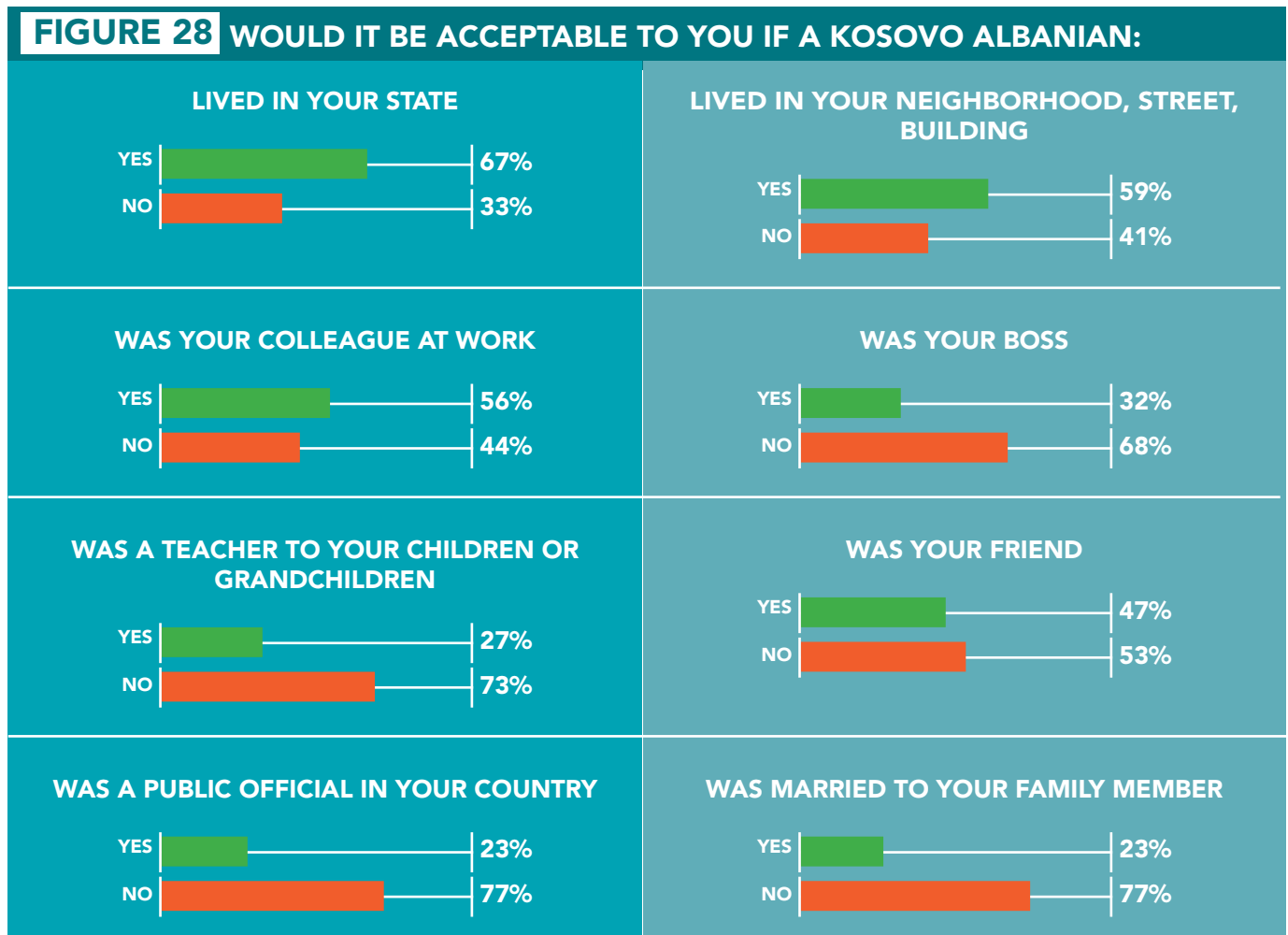


**FIGURE 27** ARE YOU EXPECTING TO SEE A NORMALISATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN KOSOVO ALBANIANS AND SERBIA IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

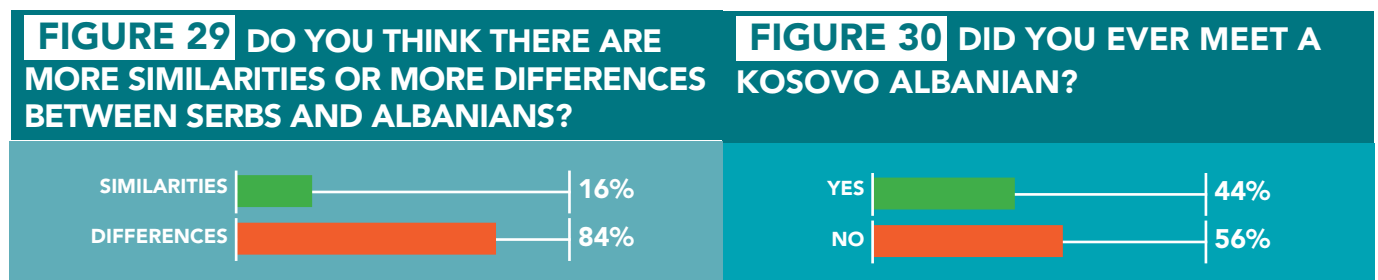


## 2.3. CITIZENS PERCEPTION ON IDENTITY ISSUES

Although half of Serbian citizens have a strong desire to see Kosovo returned, a big majority finds it unacceptable to have Kosovo Albanians in any significant position in the society because they consider the existing differences are too great an obstacle. A whopping  $\frac{3}{4}$  would not accept Kosovo Albanians as public officials in Serbia or to be married within their families, whereas  $\frac{2}{3}$  would not like to see them as supervisors at work.



At the same time,  $\frac{2}{3}$  have no contacts in Kosovo and more than a half have never even met a Kosovo Albanian in their life. However, those who met the Kosovo Albanian have a very positive impression of their meeting. An encouraging finding is that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of citizens would accept Kosovo Albanians as their compatriots or neighbours. Regardless,  $\frac{4}{5}$  still think the differences prevail over similarities between the two ethnic groups, citing religion, language and culture as the biggest ones.







# METHODOLOGY

The Western Balkans Security Barometer consists of a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods that provide objective and credible results. Its data are collected through face-to-face interviews technique with randomly selected respondents conducted throughout the entire territory of both countries - Kosovo and Serbia. The field research in both countries took place from late September to early October 2020 conducted by the respective field research teams of Kosovar Centre for Security Studies in Kosovo and Sprint agency in Serbia.

The questionnaire mostly consisted of closed-ended questions in the form of five-point Likert Scale, followed by several open-ended questions that allow respondents to provide their thoughts without predefined options. The national sample in Kosovo from which the research was drawn, featured 1,132 households, thus constituting a representative sample of the population above 18 years old in Kosovo. The sample frame was based upon telephone code areas, and, as such included the following 8 districts: Ferizaj, Gjakova, Gjilan, Mitrovica South, Mitrovica North, Peja, Prishtina and Prizren. The first stage of geographical clustering was based on the 2012 Kosovo Census Report. The second stage involved clustering samples by municipal area with a stratified rural/ urban sample as per the number of households. The last stage followed a random sampling method using the nearest 'birthday method'. Random sampling ensures that each resident in Kosovo has an equal probability of being chosen for an interview. With the sample used for this study, the results of the survey mirror trend in attitudes and perceptions amongst the entire adult population of Kosovo in general.

As regards Serbia, the survey was conducted on a representative sample of 1,095 adult respondents from covering 120 polling stations stratified into nine strata according to the polling station size (small/ medium/ large) and it included the region of Vojvodina, Belgrade and Central Serbia. In each strata, the number of polling stations where field research took place was determined in accordance with the share of the population in that strata in relation to the total population of voters according to the voter list from the 2020 parliamentary elections: "Vojvodina small" - 1; "Vojvodina medium" - 10; "Vojvodina big" - 20; "Belgrade small" - 0; "Belgrade medium" - 4; "Belgrade big" - 26; "Central Serbia small" - 9; "Central Serbia medium" - 20; "Central Serbia big" - 30. Within each of the nine strata, sampling was random, three-stage: the sampled polling stations within each strata were determined by the PPS method (probability proportional to size sampling), the households in which the survey was conducted were determined randomly depending on the type of settlement - rural/urban; type of building - houses/buildings; storeys of buildings - low/high buildings; while the respondent in a household was determined by the criterion of the first following birthday.

The data were verified in real time through field coordinators that visited a predefined sample of households after the completion of the survey in the respective households. This was further undertaken through telephone contact with all respondents to confirm the adherence to the methodology and some of the key answers as well as analysing the logical consistency of the answers when processing and analysing the data. The margin of error is 3 percent with a confidence interval of 95 percent. Data processing and analysis has been completed using the SPSS software.

The following figures present the demographic data of the respondents in Kosovo and Serbia within the framework of the WBSB 2020:

**FIGURE I** RESPONDENTS OF THE WBSB 2020 BY REGION

KOSOVO		SERBIA	
REGION	% OF RESPONDENTS	REGION	% OF RESPONDENTS
Prishtina	22%	Vojvodina	27%
Mitrovica South	11%	Belgrade	24%
Gjilan	12%	Western Serbia and Sumadija	27%
Peja	13%	Southern and Eastern Serbia	21%
Gjakova	11%		
Prizren	15%		
Ferizaj	12%		
Mitrovica North	4%		

**FIGURE II** RESPONDENTS OF THE WBSB 2020 BY AREA

KOSOVO		SERBIA		
AREA	% OF RESPONDENTS	AREA	% OF RESPONDENTS	
RURAL	50%	RURAL	SUB-URBAN	URBAN
URBAN	50%	35%	19%	46%

**FIGURE III** RESPONDENTS OF THE WBSB 2020 BY GENDER REPRESENTATION

KOSOVO		SERBIA	
GENDER	% OF RESPONDENTS	GENDER	% OF RESPONDENTS
MALE	45%	MALE	49%
FEMALE	55%	FEMALE	51%

**FIGURE IV** RESPONDENTS OF THE WBSB 2020 BY AGE

AGE	% OF RESPONDENTS	
	KOSOVO	SERBIA
18-25	20%	18-34 27%
26-35	16%	35-54 36%
36-45	18%	55 and over 37%
46-55	18%	
56-65	14%	
66+	14%	

**FIGURE V** RESPONDENTS OF THE WBSB 2020 BY ETHNIC BACKGROUND

ETHNICITY	% OF RESPONDENTS	
	KOSOVO	SERBIA
K-Albanians	90%	Serbs 91%
K-Serbs	8%	Others 9%
K-Other	2%	

The other communities in Kosovo (K-Other) in the WBSB include: Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Bosniaks, Croatians, Turkish and Gorani respondents.



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