

Report

Are communities in central Kosovo prepared for the potential consequences/benefits of a comprehensive Pristina-Belgrade agreement?



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INTRODUCTION

The report, based on this research, describes the readiness of the Serb community from central Kosovo/south of Ibar River for a potential comprehensive agreement between Pristina and Belgrade, as well as the political and security situation in Kosovo. The survey was based on questionnaires created by the Forum for Society Development and Multiethnic Cooperation - FDMC. The topic of the survey is the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, the most important development for Serbs in Kosovo in recent years. Several agreements have been reached in Brussels, more or less affecting the lives of Serbs in Kosovo. We offer some information about the agreements signed in the next paragraph.

The Brussels dialogue began in 2011, under the auspices of the European Union, ending the post-war "status quo" between Kosovo and Serbia. The Brussels process can be divided into two phases: the so-called phase of "technical negotiations", which led to the signing of several agreements between Belgrade and Pristina in 2011, and the phase of "political dialogue", after which a 15-point agreement was signed in 2013.

A technical dialogue had begun in Brussels on March 8th 2011. Both sides, according to their own claims, came to Brussels ready for dialogue, with proposals that should "improve people's lives". Pristina's delegation was led by then-Kosovo Deputy Prime Minister Edita Tahiri, and Belgrade's political director Borko Stefanovic and mediated by EU (Robert Cooper), and the United States (Washington's three-member delegation was led by Thomas Kantrimen, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia).

In the "technical negotiations", Belgrade and Pristina have reached the following agreements:

- Exchange of liaison officers
- Customs seals
- Cadastral books
- Recognition of university degrees
- Regional representation and collaboration
- Agreement on integrated administrative/border crossing points
- Development Fund for the North (for four Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo)

Within the "*political dialogue*", Pristina and Belgrade have reached a 15-point agreement in 2013, also known as the *Brussels Agreement*.

- Establishment of an Association/Community of Municipalities with Serb majority (Six of the fifteen points of the agreement are dedicated to the Association/Community.)
- Integration of members of the Serbian security structures into Kosovo Police
- Integration of the judiciary into the legal framework of Kosovo
- Organizing local elections in four municipalities in the north
- Telecommunications and energy
- Belgrade and Pristina will not block or encourage third parties to block the other party's progress on their path to the EU
- Kosovo and Serbia Missing Persons Commission
- Cooperation between Chambers of Commerce
- Cooperation between Parliament Members
- Cooperation of civil society.

The Assembly of Kosovo has ratified the Brussels Agreement as an international agreement, which obliges Kosovo institutions to implement it. On the other hand, the Serbian Parliament did not do that. The Constitutional Court of Serbia has concluded that the agreement was a purely political document.

RESEARCH

ARE THE COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL KOSOVO READY FOR POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES/BENEFITS OF POSSIBLE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT PRISTINA-BELGRADE?

METHODOLOGY

Research Method: Survey (450 questionnaires and 50 F2F

questionnaires).

Research Timeframe: July/August 2019.

Number of respondents: 500

Description of respondents:

Age: 12 people 17 years of age and under, as well as 47 people ages 56 or older, were interviewed. Also, 93 people were aged between 18 and 25, 143 of those interviewed were between 26 and 35, and 126 were between 36 and 45. From the age group of between 46 and 55 years, 79 respondents were interviewed.

Place of residence: All respondents are from central Kosovo, mostly from rural areas and all are Serbs.

Education: With the completed vocational secondary school, out of 500 respondents, there were 168 persons, 21 students were interviewed, and 181 respondents had completed higher education, in basic or master studies.

Sample type: Cluster non-random sample.

Target group: Serb population residing in central Kosovo/south of Ibar.

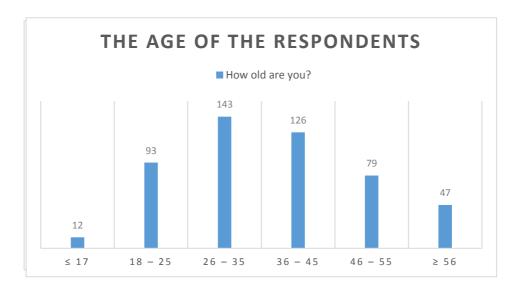
The survey was based on questionnaires created jointly with representatives of the FDMC program. Interviewees were also interviewed using a face-to-face (F2F) technique with an interviewer. Interviewers have applied important rules that influenced the positive representativeness of the research, following previously established steps as from the training, as well as the "First Birthday" rule.

The steps that covered even the smallest details to meet the research objective were followed, while the rule of "first birthday" in choosing a household, where the householder whose birthday was closest to the date of the visit was interviewed, secured avoiding the possibility of the first respondent who opens the door to answer survey questions. Interviewers have surveyed respondents who were over 18 years of age (albeit in some cases, people were 17 years of age). The investigation has begun in a randomly selected street and with the first house on that street, and then every second street and every third house on the street were selected. This ensures a complete diversity of samples, so that the report represents the most realistic social structure in central Kosovo. (age, gender, education ...).

The survey was conducted in several municipalities in central Kosovo (Gračanica, Klokot, Parteš, Štrpce, Ranilug, Novo Brdo), and the number of respondents in the municipality was proportional to the total number of respondents in the survey.

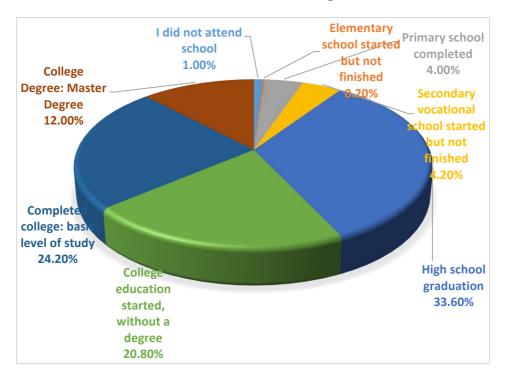
GRAPH PRESENTATION AND EXPLANATION

RESPONDENTS' DATA



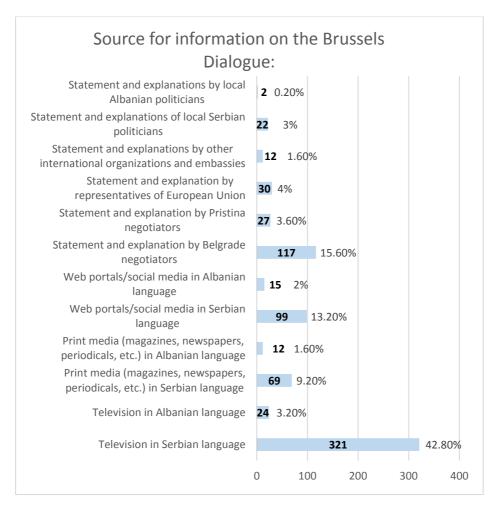
46.20% of women and 53% of men from the Serb community in Central Kosovo have participated in the survey "Is the Serb community in central Kosovo/south of river Ibar ready for the consequences - benefits of a possible comprehensive agreement Pristina-Belgrade?" Most of the interviewed persons were 26 to 35 years old, 143 of them, 126 to 36 were polled, and 93 were 18 to 25 years old. There were 12 respondents under the age of 17, and 79 respondents were between the ages of 46 and 55. 47 people over 56 were also questioned.

Level of education of the respondents

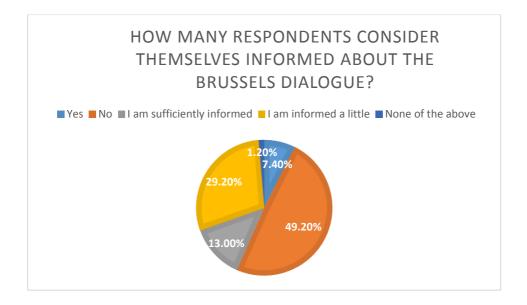


With the completion of the master's degree, 60 respondents (12%) were interviewed, while 121 persons (24.20%) have completed the basic level of studies. With university education started, but without graduation there were 104 (20.80%), and with the completion of vocational secondary school, 168 people answered the questions from our survey. 21 people (4%) who were interviewed have completed primary school, and as many as 21 respondents (4.20%) have started vocational secondary school (but are without a diploma). Without primary school completed, there were 6 (six) or (1.20%) respondents, only one of whom has started primary education.

The level of education of the respondents is diverse. The majority are persons with completed vocational secondary education, 168 of them, which is 33.6% of the total number of respondents. There are 181 completed university education, Master's and basic level of studies, which makes up 36.2% of the respondents.

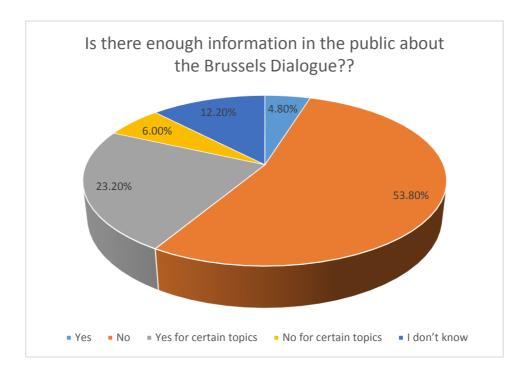


Respondents receive the most information about the Brussels Dialogue through television broadcasting in the Serbian language, 321 (42.8%), and 117 (15.6%) are informed about this important topic through statements and explanations by Belgrade negotiators. 99 (13.2%) respondents are informed through Internet portals, and 69 (9.2%) of them only through the Serbian language web portals. Statements and explanations by representatives of the European Union are the main way of informing about the Brussels Dialogue for 30 (4%) respondents, and only for 22 (3%) respondents it is relevant what local Serbian politicians say.

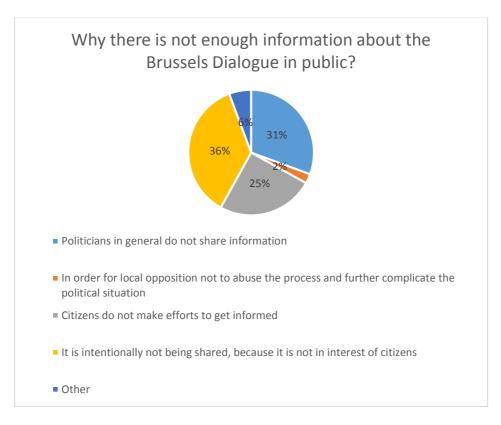


Respondents believe that they are not sufficiently informed about the Brussels Dialogue, it is and as many as 246 (49.2%), 149 (29.2%) claim that they are poorly informed, only 65 (13%) have been sufficiently informed. 37 (7.4%) respondents gave an explicit affirmative answer, while 6 (1.2%) respondents believe that there is no answer offered for them to answer the question.

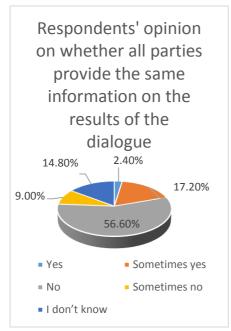
Characteristically, almost half of the respondents felt that they were not sufficiently informed about the Brussels Dialogue. Very few respondents were informed about the Brussels Dialogue so far, only 102 (20.4%).

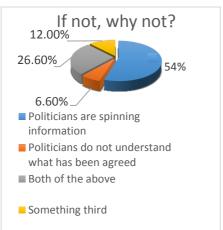


Regarding the amount of information on the Brussels Dialogue in public, 269 (53.8%) of respondents think that they are not available, 116 (23.2%) say that they are available for certain topics, 30 (6%) that they are not available for certain topics, and 61 (12.2%) said they did not know. Only 24 (4.8%) of respondents think that there is enough information about the Brussels Dialogue, and 30 (6%) think that there is enough information only about certain topics.



The majority of respondents who said that there was not enough information about the Brussels Dialogue in public, thought that it is deliberately not shared because it is not in the interest of citizens. 192 respondents (36%) think so, while 132 (25%) say that citizens do not bother to get informed. 162 respondents (31%) think that politicians generally do not share information, and 13 (2%) think that the local opposition would abuse the process and would further complicate the political situation if all information was shared in public. A small number, 30 of them (6% of the total number of respondents) do not have an opinion or they think that something else is at stake.



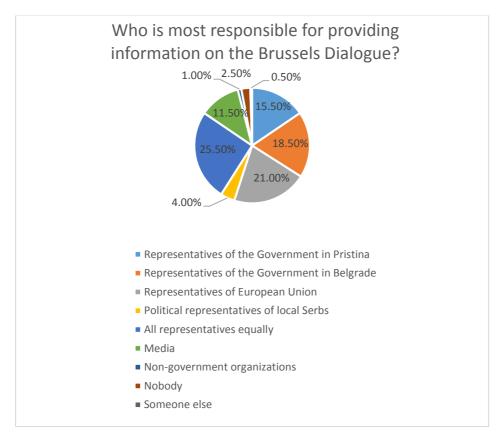


The majority of respondents from central Kosovo, 263 (56.6%), say that the same information is not provided by all parties on Brussels Dialogue, which indicates the non-transparency of talks in Brussels, as well as the insincere public speaking of representatives of negotiating teams. 86 (17.2%) of the respondents think that sometimes all parties give the same information, 74 (14.8%) of respondents do not know if all parties provide the same information, while only 12 (2.4%) of the respondents affirmative gave answer. an **Sometimes** 45% (9%)ofrespondents say that not all parties provide the same information.

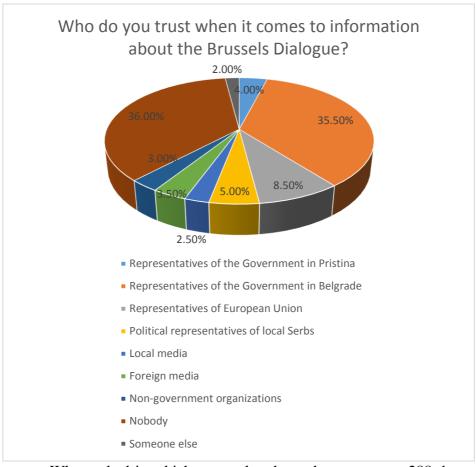
274 (54.8%) of respondents think that political representatives present a deliberately changed interpretation of information to show themselves as winners, 33 (6.60 %%) think that even political representatives themselves do not

understand what was agreed in Brussels, while 133 or 26.6% of respondents think that both of those are true.

The majority of respondents believe that negotiators, due to their desire to present themselves as winners, deliberately present changed information about the negotiations to the public, which is why the public is informed in different ways by mediators and by different negotiation teams.

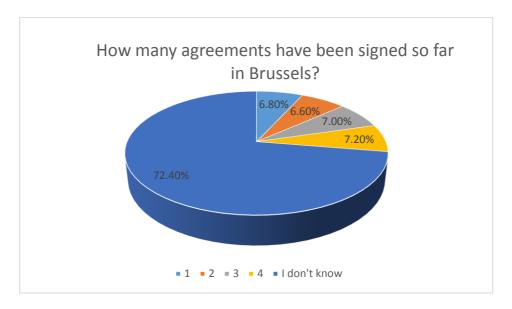


According to the opinion of the Serb community south of river Ibar, 204 (25.50%) respondents think that representatives from both sides are equally responsible for providing information on the Brussels Dialogue. A total of 168 (21%) persons think that the representatives of the European Union are the most responsible for providing information. With the opinion that the representatives of the authorities in Belgrade are the most responsible for providing information, there are 148 (18.5%) respondents, while 124 (15.5%) say that the most responsible are representatives of the authorities in Pristina. 92 (11.5%) respondents believe that the media are responsible for providing information on the Brussels Dialogue. (Eight) 8 or (1%) of respondents see responsibility in NGOs, while 20 (2.5%) of them think that no one is responsible. 32 people (4%) think that local Serb representatives are responsible for providing information, while 4 people (0.5%) think it is someone else.



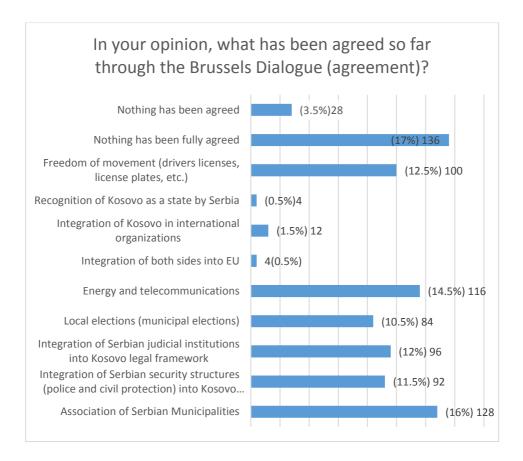
When asked in which actors they have the most trust, 288 do not trust anyone, which was the most common answer with a share of 36%. Respondents in the survey trust mostly the representatives of the authorities in Belgrade, 284 or 35.5%. Representatives of the European Union are trusted by 68 (8.5%) persons, while 40 (5%) respondents trust political representatives of local Serbs, and 28 (4%) respondents trust foreign media. Very few respondents trust the authorities in Pristina, NGOs and the local media.

AWARENESS ABOUT THE FLOW OF THE BRUSSELS DIALOGUE

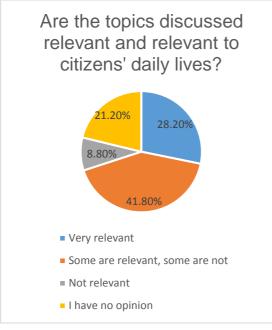


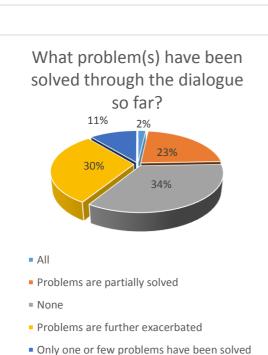
Respondents were not informed how many agreements were signed in Brussels, as many as 72.4% or 362 respondents said exactly that, while 35 (7%) said that 3 (three) agreements were signed, 36 (7.2%) said 4 (four), 33 (6.6%) that 2 (two) were signed and 34 (6.8%) considered that only one agreement was signed.

Most respondents do not know how many agreements have been signed, which indicates that respondents have not been informed about the dialogue so far and that the process is not transparent enough.



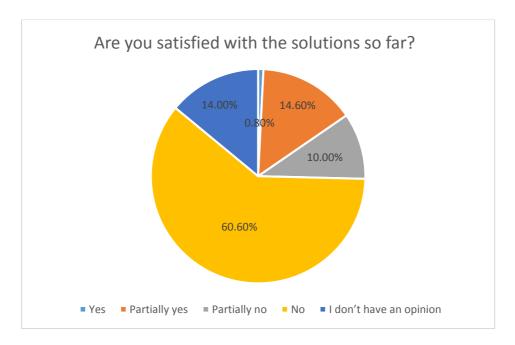
Respondents have different opinions on what has been agreed through the Brussels Dialogue so far, with 136 (17%) of respondents claiming that nothing was fully agreed, 100 (12.5%) said that freedom of movement, as well as driving licenses, registration was agreed, license plates and the like, 128 (16%) said that an agreed community/association of municipalities with a Serb majority (Serbian: ZSO). 116 (14.5%) of respondents think that an agreement on energy and telecommunications has been reached, 28 think that nothing has been agreed, 96 (12%) say that the integration of Serbian judicial institutions in the Kosovo legal framework has been agreed, 84 (10.5%) say that local elections and the elections of local representatives are the result of the agreement in Brussels, and 92 (11.5%) say that the integration of Serbian security structures is one of the results of the Brussels dialogue.





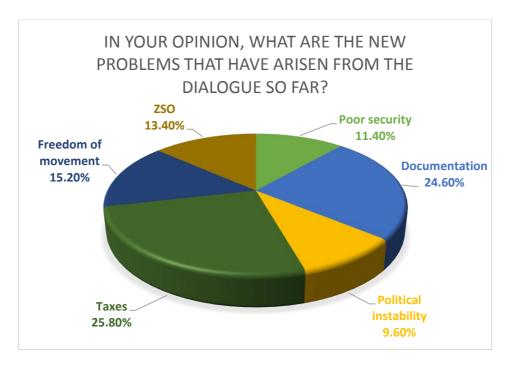
That they do not have a specific position on topics discussed Brussels, that is, the topics of the discussion both are and aren't relevant and important for the everyday life of citizens, 209 of the interviewed respondents think so (41.8%),141 (28.2%) say that they are very relevant and important, 106 (21.2%) said they did not have an attitude, while others, 44 (8.8%) said these topics are not relevant.

According to 172 (34%) respondents, none of the problems were solved through the dialogue Brussels, as many as 151 (30%)think that the problems further are deepened, 113 (23%) think that all problems are partially solved, and 55 (11%) say that only one or few problems have been resolved. Only 9 (nine) (2%) respondents think that all problems have resolved.



The solutions from Brussels were not satisfactory for 303 (60.6%) respondents, 70 (14%) did not have an attitude, 50 (10%) were partially dissatisfied, while 70 (14.6%) said that they were partially satisfied. Only 4 (0.8%) respondents said they were satisfied with the solutions agreed so far in Brussels between Belgrade and Pristina.

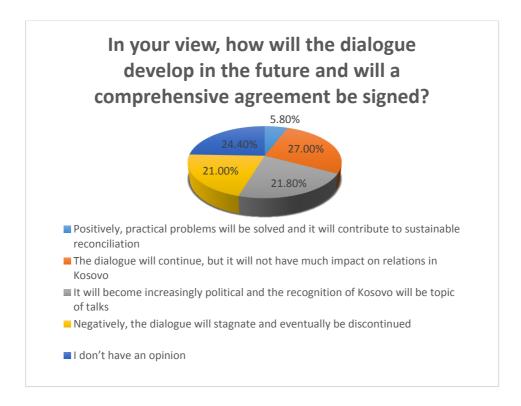
It is obvious that the Serb community in central Kosovo is not satisfied with the solutions so far from the Brussels Dialogue, as indicated by the fact that more than half, namely 303 or 60.6% of respondents, have answered this question saying that they were not satisfied.



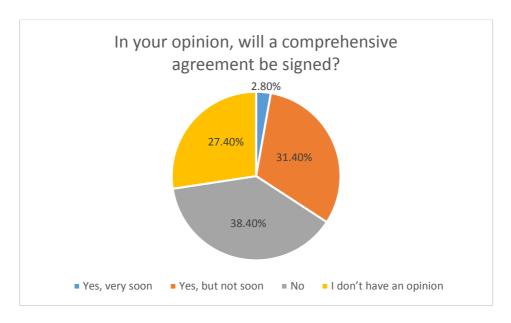
Respondents have different opinions about what new problems have arisen from the dialogue so far, so 129 (25.8%) said that this was the introduction of a 100% tax on Serbian goods, 123 (24.6%) said that there were documentation problems, i.e. non-recognition of certain Serbian documents by Kosovo institutions, 67 (13.4%) of respondents said that it is the agreed Community/Association of Municipalities with a Serb majority (ZSO), which has not yet been implemented. 57 (11.4%) of them claim that security has been worsened, 48 (9.6%) think political instability has occurred, and 76 (15.2%) say freedom of movement is impaired.

In November 2018, the Government of Kosovo had imposed taxes of 100% on goods from Serbia, which affected mostly the Serbian community in central Kosovo.

ZSO = Association/Community of Municipalities with Serb majority



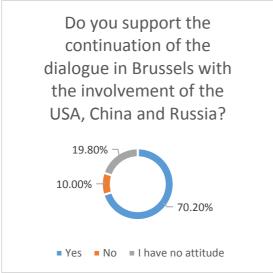
122 (24.4%) of respondents have no opinion on how the Brussels Dialogue will develop in the future, and that 105 (21%) respondents will stagnate and interrupt the dialogue. 109 (22%) respondents think that the dialogue will become more and more political and discuss the recognition of Kosovo, while 135 (27%) say that the dialogue will continue but will not have much impact on relations in Kosovo. Only 29 (5.8%) said that the dialogue would develop positively, that practical problems would be solved and that the talks would contribute to sustainable reconciliation.



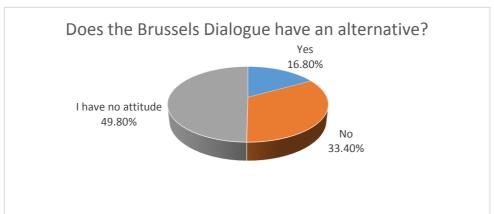
When asked if a comprehensive agreement would be signed, 192 (38.4%) respondents said no, and 157 (31.4%) thought they would, but not soon. Of the 500 respondents, 137 (27%) have no position on this issue, and only 14 (2.8%) think that a comprehensive agreement will be signed between Belgrade and Pristina very soon.



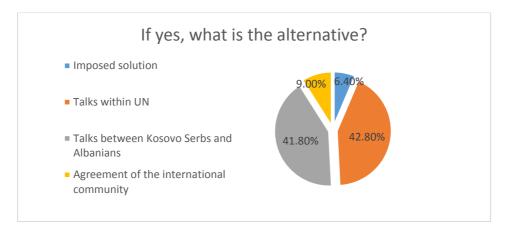
In the opinion of 304 (61%) respondents, the dialogue should continue, 81 (16%) think that it should not be continued, while 115 (23%) say that they do not have an attitude.



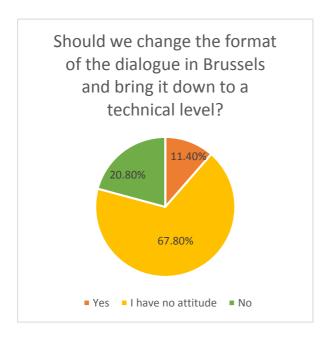
Should the US, China and Russia be included in the continuation of the dialogue in Brussels, 351 (70%) said yes, 99 (20%) have no position, and 50 (10%) said that the Brussels dialogue should not involve the world's largest powers.



Asked if the Brussels Dialogue had an alternative, 167 (33.4%) of those questiond said "no". 84 (16.8%) said that the Brussels Dialogue had an alternative, while 249 (49.8%) of the respondents had no opinion on this issue.

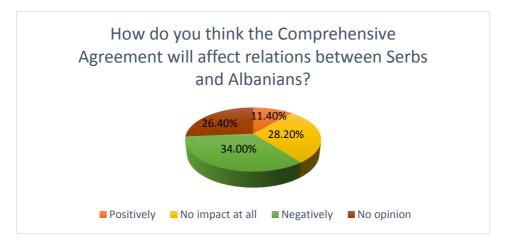


Respondents who said that the Brussels Dialogue had an alternative, 214 (42.8%) saw this alternative in talks with the United Nations, 209 (41.8%) said the alternative would be a dialogue between Kosovo Serbs and Albanians, 45 (9%) said that it should have been an agreement of the international community, while 32 (6.4%) of those asked said that an imposed solution was needed.

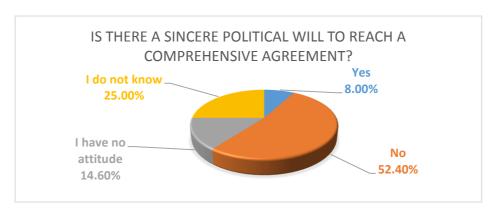


Most of the respondents, 339 (67.8%), have no attitude when it comes to changing the format of the dialogue in Brussels and reducing it to the technical level. Of the number of total respondents, 104 (20.8%) said that the format should not be changed, and only 57 (11.4%) of respondents thought that the format should be changed.

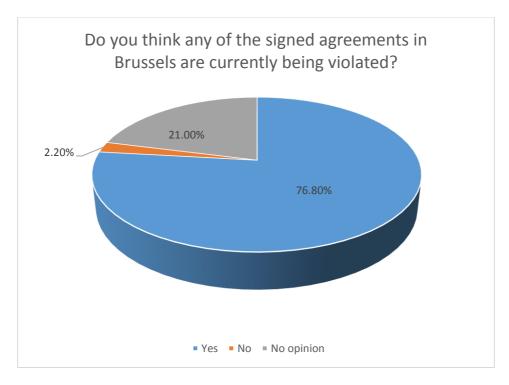
POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE/CONTEXT OF A POSSIBLE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT



Among the respondents, 170 (34%) said that a comprehensive agreement would negatively affect relations between Serbs and Albanians, without certain attitude were 132 (26.4%) of them, and 141 (28.2%) said it would not have an effect. Only 57 (11.4%) of the respondents said that it would make a positive impact.

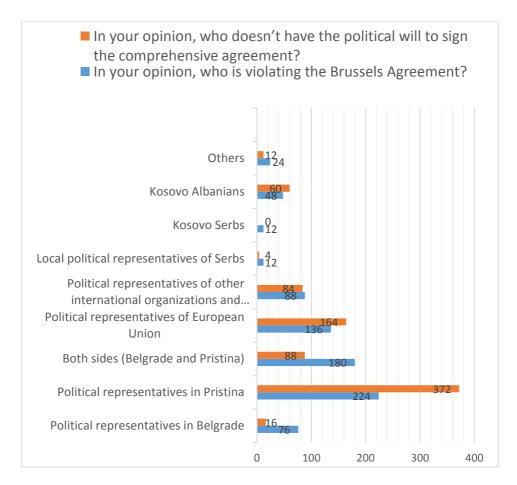


Most respondents, or 262 (52.4%), believe that there is no political will to reach a possible comprehensive agreement, while 125 (25%) say they do not know if there is a will. 40 (8%) of the respondents answered the affirmative, and 73 (14.6%) have no opinion on this issue.



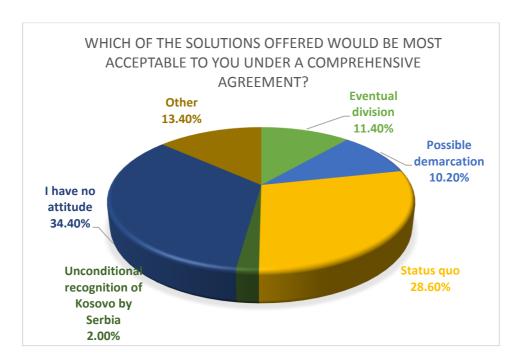
As our research shows, most of the respondents answered this question affirmatively, that is, some signed agreements are being violated, namely 384 (76.8%), only 11 (2.20%) said 105 and 21 (21%)were with no opinion.

One of the causes of such an indicator is, according to the respondents, the lack of will of the Albanian representatives to start with the implementation of the agreement on the establishment of the Union of Municipalities with Serbian Majority (ZSO), which is of the greatest interest for the Serbs from central Kosovo.

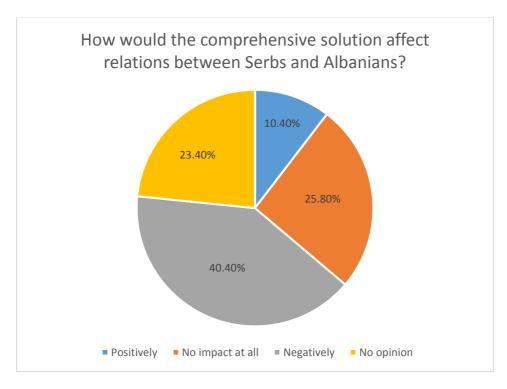


When it comes to breach of agreements signed in Brussels, 372 (46.5%) of respondents say that Pristina's political representatives violate the agreements, and that 164% (20.5%) of respondents think that EU representatives do. According to 60 (7.5%) respondents, that the Brussels Agreement is violated by Kosovo Albanians. Political representatives of other international organizations and embassies are blamed by 84 (10.5%) respondents. Regarding the failure to show political will to sign a comprehensive eventual agreement, the respondents blame the political representatives in Pristina mostly, 224 (28%), then 180 (22.5%) both sides (Belgrade and Pristina), while the European Union was blamed by 136 (17%) respondents.

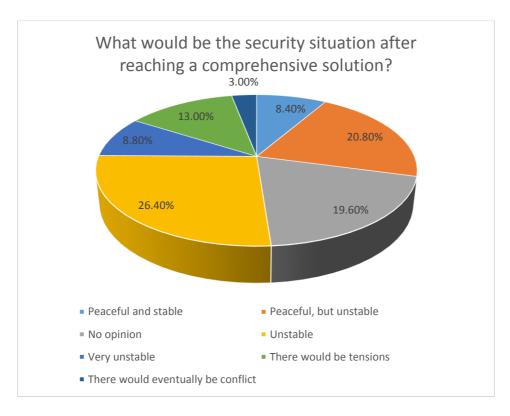
SOCIETY OVERVIEW AND THE GENERAL IMPACT OF A POSSIBLE COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION IN KOSOVO



When asked, "Which of the solutions offered would be most acceptable to you under the Comprehensive Agreement", 172 (34.4%) of the respondents have no attitude, while for 143 (28.6%) of them the most acceptable is the "status quo" solution. There were 57 (11.4%) respondents for the eventual division, 51 for them (10.2%) are for delineation of borders, while only 10 (2%) are for the unconditional recognition of Kosovo by Serbia. 67 (13.4%) respondents believe that there is some other solution.

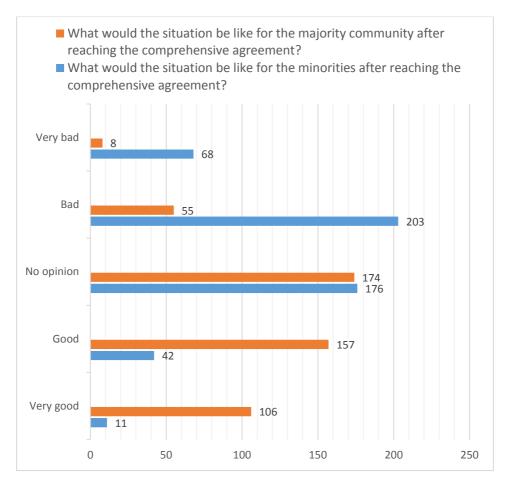


Among respondents, 202 (40.4%) said that a comprehensive agreement between Pristina and Belgrade would have a negative impact, 129 (25.8%) said that it would not have any impact at all, while 117 (23.4%) have no opinion. Only 52 (10.4%) respondents think a comprehensive Pristina-Belgrade agreement would positively affect Serb-Albanian relations.

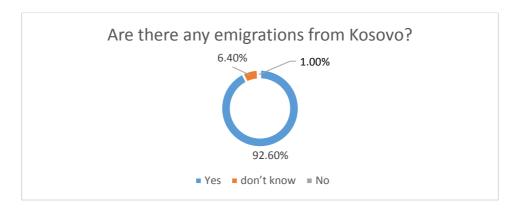


The assessment of the security situation in Kosovo by questioned Serbs from central Kosovo after the eventual comprehensive agreement is worrisome. Only 42 (8.4%) said the situation would be calm and stable, 104 (20.8%) said it would be calm but unstable, 98 (19.6%) had no attitude, 132 (26.4%) thought it would be unstable, for 65 (13%) it would bring tensions, 15 (3%) think it will create possible conflict, and 44 (8.8%) think it will make the security situation very unstable.

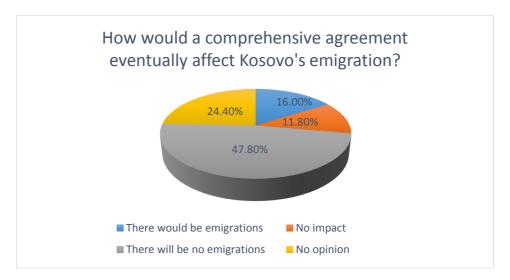
The Serbs from central Kosovo, according to poll, are very concerned about security situation after eventual comprehensive agreement is reached.



After reaching a comprehensive agreement, the respondents also say that the situation for the minorities would be bad and this is thought by 203 (40.2%) respondents, 176 (35.2%) have no attitude, 42 (8.4%) that the situation is good, 68 (13.6%) said that it is very bad, and only 11 (2.2%) that it is very good. When it comes to the position of the majority community, respondents, 174 (34.4%) have no opinion, 157 (31.4%) that it is good, 106 (21.2%) that it is very good, 55 (11%) that it is bad, and only 8 (1.6%) of the respondents think that the situation after a comprehensive agreement would be very bad.



A large number of Serb respondents from central Kosovo say there is emigration from Kosovo, 463 (92.6%), while 32 (6.4%) said they did not know, and only 5 (1%) said no emigration.



239 (47.8%) of those interviewed said that comprehensive agreement would not affect emigration from Kosovo, while 122 (24.4%) did not have an opinion. That any comprehensive agreement will have a negative impact on emigration, i.e. 80 (16%) said that emigration from Kosovo would increase if it occurred, and 59 (11.8%) said a comprehensive agreement would not affect the emigration.

CONCLUSIONS

- Serbs from central Kosovo are not sufficiently informed about the progress of the Brussels Dialogue, the number of agreements, as well as the relevance of the topics discussed by Belgrade and Pristina, with EU mediation.
- The Serb community in central Kosovo considers the talks to be non-transparent and very little information is available.
- Serbs from central Kosovo are informed mostly by the media in their own language, as well as by politicians (negotiators) from Belgrade, and very rarely or almost never they receive information from the other negotiating party.
- There is insufficient information about the Brussels Dialogue in the public because what has been agreed is not in the interest of the citizens and is deliberately not shared by the negotiators.
- Negotiating parties do not provide the same information to the public on the course and results of the dialogue.
- Political representatives, i.e. negotiators, deliberately adjust the information to portray themselves as winners.
- The Belgrade authorities, followed by the media, are most responsible for providing information on the Brussels Dialogue.
- Serbs from central Kosovo have most trust in the authorities in Belgrade.
- Most respondents do not know if the topics discussed in Brussels are of priority.
- Most Serbs from central Kosovo believe that nothing has been fully agreed in Brussels.
- No problems have been solved by the dialogue in Brussels, according to the majority of Serbs interviewed, and a slightly smaller number of them think that the problems have been further deepened.
- Respondents are not satisfied with the Brussels' solutions.

- Respondents do not have a clear stance on support for the Brussels Dialogue, whether they support the dialogue, or whether the Brussels Dialogue has an alternative, and also whether the format of the dialogue should be changed.
- Most Serbs think that the Brussels Dialogue process will last long.
- Respondents blame Kosovo's negotiators for violating and disobeying the agreement in Brussels.
- The life of the majority community in Kosovo will be good after a comprehensive solution.
- The life of the minority community in Kosovo will be poor after a comprehensive solution.
- For Serbs, the security situation will be poor after a comprehensive solution.
- Serbs from central Kosovo believe that there is emigration from Kosovo and that it will continue on a larger scale once a comprehensive agreement is reached.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Increase transparency on the topics, the flow of talks and the results of the Brussels Dialogue, by giving more publicity to all participants in the negotiations.
- 2. The sponsor, the European Union, must become a more active participant in the process and prevent the negotiators from Belgrade and Pristina from presenting deliberately altered information.
- 3. The governments of both Serbia and Kosovo must create the conditions for regular and accurate information for public on the Brussels Dialogue.
- 4. There is a need for more intensive involvement of civil society organizations and the professionals in the negotiation process and in the implementation of what has been agreed.
- 5. Establish well-defined deadlines for the implementation of the agreement in Brussels.
- 6. Organize more public debates and roundtables between citizens and negotiators on both sides.
- 7. Establish better media monitoring of the flow of dialogue and implementation of what has been agreed.
- 8. Increase the activities of Kosovo institutions in order to increase the security and sense of security of the Serbian community.
- 9. More frequent participation of politicians in public debates and roundtables on dialogue.

- 10. The European Union should offer more explanations and guidance in the process of implementing the Brussels Dialogue and warn the parties internally of the consequences of its activities.
- 11. The governments of Kosovo and Serbia need to become more involved in public campaigns in order to gain the support of citizens for signing the Comprehensive Agreement as soon as possible.

Are communities in central Kosovo prepared for the potent	ial consequences / benefits of
a comprehensive Pristina-Belgrade agr	eement??

"Report on a Community Readiness Study in Central Kosovo for the Potential Consequences / Benefits of a Possible Comprehensive Pristina-Belgrade Agreement"

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In case of translation: This report is initially written in Serbian language, and in case of inconsistencies the valid version will be the one in Serbian language.