

in partnership with the **European** Fund for the **Balkans**

2008 Summary of Findings

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Insights and Perceptions: Voices of the Balkans

The Western Balkans is a constantly changing region that often finds itself in the spotlight. Although its development seems marked by dynamic growth, there is also the difficult legacy of numerous conflicts and crises. Kosovo's declaration of independence, the arrest in Serbia of former Bosnian Serb leader and top war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic and the increasing political tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina are just a few of the many developments that have recently taken place in the region.

However, despite the high interest in the Balkans, not much is known about its people, their expectations and feelings, and their points of view about the changes taking place around them. Journalists often have to write about individuals and their stories or rely on anecdotal evidence due to the lack of evidence-based research originating from the Western Balkans; in turn, decision-makers focus their attention at the political and institutional levels.

However, in order for administrations to be effective, there must be a close link between the authorities and the people they represent. In this case, it shows the need for a greater understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of the people of the region. To meet that requirement, Gallup has launched a multi-year project – the Balkan Monitor (see www.balkan-monitor.eu) – that examines changes in how various aspects of life are perceived in the Western Balkans over time.

The Monitor aims to provide behavioural economics data to answer key questions, such as:

• How do the people of the region evaluate their economic situation and their living standards?

- What are their views on the developments in their respective countries?
- How do the region's people feel about their neighbours?
- To what extent do citizens trust their local institutions?
- Do people feel that sufficient opportunities for employment exist in their home countries?

The region has also embarked on a steady course towards full EU integration and, so far, 2008 has been an important year in that respect. All of the region's countries, with the exception of Kosovo, have now signed preaccession agreements (Stabilisation and Association Agreements, SAAs), as well as visa facilitation agreements. However, the progress towards EU membership has been uneven. Although Croatia is expected to conclude membership negotiations by the end of 2009 and Serbia seems likely to receive official EU candidacy status by that date, the situation in regard to EU candidate Macedonia is stagnating and the lack of progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been heavily criticised.

Given the rather uneven progress towards the Balkans' integration into the EU, other questions arise:

- How strong is the support for EU membership in the region?
- Do the people of the region feel wanted and welcomed by the European Commission and by EU citizens?
- What date do they find realistic for their respective countries to join the EU?

Aiming to respond to many such questions on a wide variety of topics, the Balkan Monitor was conducted in cooperation with the European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) – a joint initiative of the Robert Bosch Foundation, the Compagnia di San Paolo, the Erste Foundation and the King Baudouin Foundation supporting projects aimed at bringing the Western Balkans closer to the EU.

The survey is representative of the adult population (15 years and older) in the Western Balkan countries. Per country, at least 1,000 face-to-face interviews were conducted in September and October 2008, each one lasting for about one hour. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 3%.

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Main findings

LIFE SATISFACTION AND COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT

- The two countries that turned independent most recently, Kosovo and Montenegro, were the only countries where a majority of respondents (62% and 59% respectively) were optimistic about their country's future. Pessimism was widespread in Croatia (where 64% saw their country going in the wrong direction) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (61%).
- With the exception of Croatia and Kosovo, more than half of the people of the region were dissatisfied with their standard of living. Approximately two-thirds of interviewees in Serbia (62%) and Macedonia (64%) were not satisfied with their living standards.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE EU

- Kosovo and Albania viewed the EU particularly positively; citizens in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina – especially within the Serbian entity – were the most negative. In Albania, 83% of respondents believed that their country's EU membership would be a good thing. Kosovars, however, trusted NATO even more than the EU institutions.
- While there were more Croats who believed that it was a good thing for their country to become a EU member than those who did not, the relative majority took a middle position: agreeing with the statement that it was neither good nor bad. Almost

half (47%) of the Croats who were willing to judge the mood of the country believed that their compatriots were supporting EU membership; just over half (53%) believed that the majority were against joining the EU.

• The two official candidate countries, Croatia and Macedonia, were the only ones where the majority felt well-informed on the EU.

SATISFACTION AND TRUST IN THE REGION'S INSTITUTIONS

- Kosovo (53%) and Montenegro (55%) were the only territories where a majority of respondents spoke positively about their government's performance. In comparison, dissatisfaction was the most blatant in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where 67% gave a negative assessment.
- The people of the region did not show much trust in their countries' political bodies. Indeed, the national political institutions only achieved a low-middle ranking in terms of trust; the church (and other religious organisations) came top in almost all of the countries.
- Kosovo and Albania were exceptions: there, instead of the religious organisations, NATO was said to be most trusted.

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION

• Except for Albania, not more than one in

10 Balkan respondents reported an encounter that could be interpreted as a need to bribe a government official in the year prior to the survey. In Albania, this figure reached 32%.

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 Macedonia was the only country where those who agreed that their government was doing enough to fight organised crime outnumbered those who felt the opposite (49% vs. 35%).

MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

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- Three-quarters (73%) of interviewees in Kosovo thought there were better opportunities abroad.
- Approximately two-thirds of Albanians (69%) and Kosovars (66%) felt that people who went to live in another country were a "big help for the country".
- Ideally, approximately 20% of the respondents from each country said that they would move to another country – the only exception was Croatia, where only 7% would like to move temporarily or permanently.
- Montenegro and Croatia were the only states where most people believed that their country offered sufficient opportunities.

BALKAN CHALLENGES: KOSOVO, THE FUTURE STABILITY OF THE REGION AND THE ICTY

• With the exception of Kosovo, Albania and Croatia the relative majority of respondents feared that Kosovo's independence

would have a negative impact on the stability of the region.

- Only 17% of the Kosovo Serbs said it would be possible to live peacefully with Kosovo Albanians; of the latter, seven in ten (72%) felt peaceful coexistence was viable.
- Six in 10 (61%) of the Serbian residents said Kosovo's independence would never be accepted; a quarter thought this would be possible within 10 years.
- A clear majority across all countries thought the future of the region would be peaceful. Around one in four Serbs and Macedonians (22% and 29% respectively), however, felt there could be another war in the region.
- Almost half of the Serbian respondents thought that Radovan Karadzic was innocent of the crimes of which he is accused (47%); on the other hand, 45% believed that his arrest was good for the future of Serbia.
- With the exceptions of Albania and Kosovo, one-third or fewer of the people in each country believed that the ICTY proceedings were impartial and the outcomes open.

Country overview

ALBANIA: SUPPORTIVE OF THE EU, HAPPY TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY

Albanians believed that their country would be welcomed by the EU as a new member state. The European Union, in fact, was seen to be having a strong impact: the majority of Albanians trusted the EU institutions and 83% believed that EU membership would be good for Albania. Bribery towards government officials and civil servants was reported as being by far the highest in the region with one-third of respondents having to pay a bribe in the year prior to the survey. Only 29% believed that the government was doing everything it could to fight organised crime. Albanians seemed to be the most mobile of the region's people with over two-fifths of respondents stating that they had a family member working or studying abroad. Over one-third of Albanians said they wanted to move away from the country.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: FEELING DISILLUSIONED

The majority of Bosnians were dissatisfied with the current economic situation (87% were unhappy) and expressed little hope for any improvement in the future. (Two-thirds of respondents in the Federation believed that economic conditions were getting worse, while less than half – 44% – felt that way in Republika Srpska, with 31% actually seeing signs of improvement.) The government was seen as performing extremely badly (with a 67% negative rating – the worst in the region: 70% in the Federation and 56% in Republika Srpska) and as being ineffective in its fight against organised crime. Of those who answered the question, 45% of respondents in the Federation had little or no trust in the European institutions; in the Serbian entity, 77% of the respondents gave the same response. The Republika Srpska also reported the highest proportion of people in the region (48%) who felt rejected by the EU citizens; in the Federation, only a third (30%) felt that the EU citizens did not want them to join the Union.

CROATIA: HAPPY WITH PERSONAL LIFE, UNHAPPY WITH THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

While Croatian respondents were satisfied with life (72%), they had a very negative outlook about their country's economic future (61% felt it was getting worse). This was also reflected in dissatisfaction with the government and its actions against organised crime (78% were unhappy). However, the Croatian interviewees saw good opportunities in their country and only a low percentage (7%) felt forced to leave for economic reasons. The majority felt well-informed about the EU (54%) and were the most optimistic about the accession date: on average, Croats expected to join the EU in 2013. There were more Croats who believed that membership in the EU was good for the country (29%), than those who judged it to be bad, (26%). However, with the accession date getting closer, the relative majority (38%) were not taking sides (saying it was neither good nor bad). When respondents were asked if they thought that the majority of their fellow citizens were supporting or opposing EU membership, 39% felt that overall there would be support for EU accession, while 45% thought there would be opposition.

KOSOVO: UPBEAT ABOUT LIFE AND THE EU, BUT NOT ABOUT THE ECONOMY

Respondents in Kosovo were upbeat about their lives and extremely hopeful for the country's general and economic future (59% were positive). The current economic situation was seen in a much darker light, though, which explained why over 70% of the respondents saw better opportunities outside of the country and the high percentage of those having a family member abroad. Kosovo respondents were generally optimistic about the hopes for future peace in the region. While 72% of Kosovo Albanians thought a peaceful coexistence with Kosovo Serbs was possible, only 17% of Kosovo Serbs were convinced of such a possibility. Less than half (45%) of Kosovar Albanians agreed that "the Kosovo Albanian leadership has to do everything to protect Serbs living in Kosovo" while 47% disagreed. Just under two-thirds (63%) of respondents in Kosovo had a "lot of trust" in NATO while less than half (43%) placed "a lot of trust" in the EU institutions.

MACEDONIA: DEJECTED ABOUT LIFE AND FEARFUL OF AN ARMED CONFLICT

Many Macedonian respondents were dissatisfied with both their life (at 46%, this was the lowest ranking in the region) and with their standard of living. One-third, however, felt the economy was improving. Respondents condemned corrupt behaviour and were relatively satisfied with the government's efforts in fighting organised crime (49% were satisfied). Three in 10 Macedonians felt there was a likelihood of another armed conflict in the region (29%). While 70% of the Albanians in Macedonia believed that the Ohrid Agreement provided a good long-term solution for Macedonia's ethnic problems, only 30% of Macedonians agreed. According to 69% of the Macedonian Albanians, Macedonia should join NATO and the EU even if it meant losing or changing the official name of the country – a notion that was only supported by 3% of the Macedonians (majority of the population). The majority of both communities agreed that the country's membership of the EU would be a good thing – (84% of Albanians, 57% of Macedonians).

MONTENEGRO: AN OVERALL FEELING OF ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE

The respondents in Montenegro were satisfied with their life (71%) and rather positive about the economy and its future development (49%). Trust in the government was high (63%). With opportunities in the country being seen as sufficient, there was little desire to leave the country. Montenegrin interviewees had relatively relaxed views about acceptance of questionable practices. Regarding the EU, the population felt rather ill-informed (60%).

SERBIA: DISSATISFIED ABOUT LIFE TODAY, DIVIDED ABOUT THE FUTURE

Serbian respondents showed a high dissatisfaction with life (42%). Respondents were divided in their anticipation of the future with 47% believing that things in general were going in the wrong direction and 41% thinking the opposite. Close to half of the interviewees (46%) had a "lot" or "some" trust in the Serbian government. However, at the same time, the majority (58%) said the government was not able to fight organised crime effectively. Three-fifths

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of the interviewees thought that Kosovo's independence would never be accepted by Serbia and one-fifth feared another armed conflict in the region – the second highest proportion in the region after Macedonia. Radovan Karadzic was deemed to be innocent by almost half of the respondents. Despite that, about the same share (49%) agreed with the statement that his arrest allowed Serbia to focus on the future.

Life satisfaction and country development

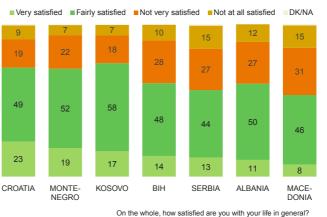
The Western Balkan region's recent history has been marked by conflicts and ethnic tensions. Looking ahead, it is therefore essential to see how its inhabitants view their lives today, how satisfied they are with their situation and how they perceive their future.

Less than 15 years after the 1992–1995 war, the Balkan Monitor shows a rather fragmented picture of the Western Balkans:

- Although the majority of citizens are satisfied with their lives in general, many are unhappy about the economic situation and their future prospects;
- While there are some extremely optimistic 'new states' Montenegro and Kosovo for example <u>SATISFAC</u> others are more disillusioned <u>Very states</u> especially Bosnia, Serbia and <u>9</u> Macedonia;
- There is a general feeling of satisfaction throughout the Balkans with Montenegrin and Kosovar interviewees proving the most optimistic about the future.

said they were at least fairly satisfied with their lives. In Croatia, approximately one in five insisted that they were very satisfied.

Dissatisfaction with life in general was particularly high in Serbia and Macedonia, where less than six in 10 respondents were satisfied with their lives and more than four in 10 were not. Fifteen percent of the citizens in both countries even said they were not at all satisfied.



SATISFACTION WITH LIFE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

A MAJORITY IN THE BALKANS ARE HAPPY WITH THEIR LIVES

Throughout the Western Balkan countries, a majority of respondents said they were generally satisfied with their lives. These feelings were particularly high in Croatia, Montenegro and Kosovo: around three-quarters of respondents

OVERALL GLOOM ABOUT THE WESTERN BALKANS ECONOMY

Across the Western Balkans, a large majority of respondents considered the economic situation in their country to be bad. The people in Bosnia and Herzegovina were the gloomiest,

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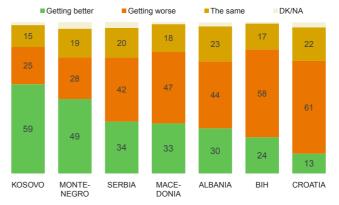
as nearly nine in 10 respondents thought that their country's economy was not doing well (87%). In Croatia and Serbia, eight out of 10 respondents shared that view. Three-quarters of respondents in Macedonia said the same about their country's economy, as did seven in 10 Albanians and two-thirds of the respondents in Kosovo. Respondents in Montenegro gave the most positive assessment about their country's economy: while half of the respondents thought economic conditions were

not good (53%), one-third were positive about the current economic situation (34%).

Most people were negative about their personal living standards. Except for Kosovo and Croatia, more than half of the respondents said they were dissatisfied with their standard of living. The level of dissatisfaction was especially high in Serbia and Macedonia, where approximately two-thirds of respondents were unhappy with their living standards and only around a third were satisfied. In Kosovo, a majority of respondents were satisfied with their standard of living (59%); in Croatia, equal numbers were satisfied and dissatisfied (both 49%).

THE FUTURE: A MIXTURE OF OPTIMISM AND DISENCHANTMENT

While Kosovars and Montenegrins were the respondents most frequently predicting a bright future for their countries, there was pessimism in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Indeed, across the Western Balkan countries, only Kosovo (62%) and Montenegro (59%) had a majority of respondents thinking that things



EVOLUTION OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Right now, do you think that economic conditions in this country, as a whole, are getting better or getting worse?

were going in the right direction. In the remaining countries, a majority were worried about their country's future. Pessimism was particularly widespread in Croatia (64%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (61%), where approximately six out of 10 respondents thought their country was heading in the wrong direction and less than three in 10 respondents took an opposite view.

There were high proportions of respondents who expected their living standards to improve in Kosovo (59%) and Montenegro (47%), whereas Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had the highest share of respondents who thought the opposite (both 44%). It was not all gloom in Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, as it had approximately the same share of respondents who thought that their living standards would improve as the remaining Western Balkan countries: Albania, Macedonia and Serbia (approximately one-third in each). Attitudes were strongly divided about the development of the economies. Only the Kosovars (59%) had a majority that thought that economic conditions in their country would improve, while Croatia (61%) and BIH (58%) were the only countries where a majority of respondents

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were pessimistic about the future. In Serbia, Albania and Macedonia the respondents who were worried (approximately 45%) outnumbered the confident ones (about one-third). The remaining proportion of the interviewees – approximately one in five – thought that economic conditions would remain the same.

Attitudes toward the EU

In the aftermath of the Irish rejection of the Lisbon Treaty earlier this year, the enlargement process has stalled and several member states have spoken out against the acceptance of new countries until the EU's own institutional impasse has been resolved.

Nevertheless, and with the notable exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina, support for EU membership in the Balkan countries is still high.

MOST RESPONDENTS FEEL ILL-INFORMED ABOUT THE EU

In most of the states of the Western Balkans, a majority of respondents said they did not feel they had sufficient knowledge about the EU. This negative view was par-

ticularly high in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina: approximately six in 10 respondents said they were not informed about the EU and one in five didn't feel informed at all. Only a minority of 35% in Montenegro and 38% in Bosnia and Herzegovina felt knowledgeable about the EU.

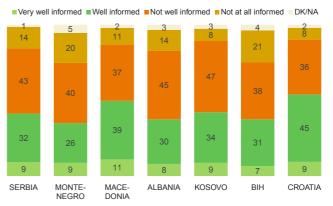
Macedonia and Croatia were the exceptions: in Macedonia, as many respondents felt they were sufficiently aware about the

EU (50%) as those taking an opposite position (48%). In Croatia, a majority actually felt informed about the EU (54%) as opposed to a minority that lacked knowledge (44%).

CROATIA AND BOSNIA MOST SCEPTICAL ABOUT THE EU

Looking at the responses to a series of questions about the EU and the eventual membership of the Balkan countries, a consistent pattern of attitudes could be seen: while respondents from Kosovo and Albania seemed to be eagerly looking forward to EU membership, those in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia proved to be more cautious and sceptical about everything labelled "EU".

STATE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE EUROPEAN UNION



Please rate how much you are informed about the European Union?

For example, asked whether membership of the EU would be a good or a bad thing, nine out of 10 respondents from Kosovo answered positively and few said it was either a bad thing or neither good or bad (both 4%). In Albania, more than eight in 10 respondents were upbeat Balkan Monitor 2008

about their country's membership of the EU (83%), and less than one in 10 interviewees gave a neutral response. Hardly any Albanians thought that membership would be a bad thing

Commission would welcome their country into the EU. In Republika Srpska, that figure reached only 30%, while in the Federation it was 52%. However, even if only a minority of respondents

(2%). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, only half of the respondents (48%) thought that membership of the EU would be good for their country, approximately one-third thought it would be neither good nor bad and one in 10 thought that it would be a bad thing (11%).

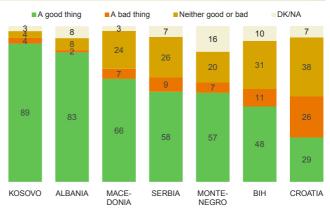
The respondents most undecided about EU membership could be found in Croatia: it had the most respondents who expected neither a good nor a bad (38%) result from Croatia joining the

EU. The proportion of those who expressed a positive opinion about the possible consequences of EU membership (29%) was slightly higher than those who were convinced that the consequences would be bad for the country (26%).

KOSOVO AND ALBANIA FEEL WANTED BY THE EU

While a large majority of respondents in Kosovo and Albania felt that the European Commission wanted their country to join the EU, only a minority in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina agreed. Indeed, eight in 10 respondents from Kosovo (82%) and two-thirds of respondents from Albania (67%) agreed that their country was welcome at the political level and only a small minority disagreed (5% in Kosovo and 12% in Albania). In Croatia (46%) only slightly more than four in 10 respondents felt the

SUPPORT FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE EU



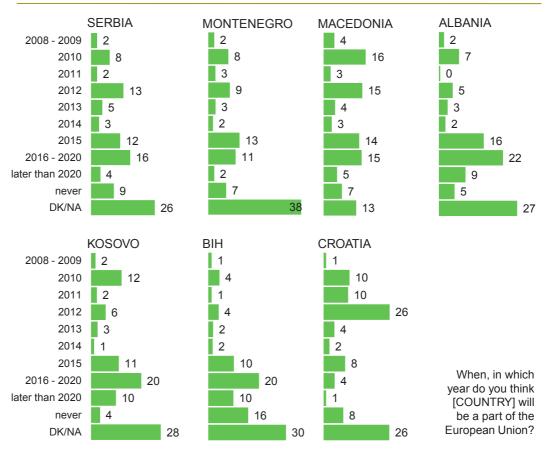
Generally speaking, do you think that [COUNTRY]'s membership of the European Union WOULD BE a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good or bad?

from those countries spoke positively, they still outnumbered those who thought their country wasn't welcome (Croatia: 31%, BIH: 38%). In the remaining countries, Montenegro (57%), Serbia (55%) and Macedonia (53%), a majority thought that their country was welcome at the political level.

In all of the Western Balkan countries – from 13% in Kosovo and Macedonia to 29% in Montenegro – a significant number of respondents simply didn't know how to judge the Commission's attitude towards their country or refused to answer.

These differing opinions and uncertainty about EU accession were also reflected in the respondents' judgments about the attitudes of EU citizens. Again, with the exception of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, a majority of respondents thought that EU citizens would like their country to join the Union. In

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MOST LIKELY EU ACCESSION DATE

those two countries, however, only slightly more than four in 10 respondents shared that view (in Bosnia and Herzegovina the overall figure was 46%, but respondents in Republika Srbska – only 30% – thought that EU citizens' support would be less likely than did those in t-he Federation – 58%, in Croatia, 42% thought there would be a welcome). A significant number of people didn't know how to judge the EU citizens' attitude towards their country's accession (between 12% in Macedonia and 30% in Montenegro).

However, respondents felt they would be slightly less welcomed by EU citizens than by

the European Commission. This was especially true in Albania, where only 55% of respondents felt that EU citizens would like their country to join the Union, compared to twothirds (67%) who felt they would be welcomed by the European Commission. In Kosovo as well, respondents felt that the EU citizens were less welcoming than the Commission (75% vs. 82%). Exceptions to this were Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where slightly more respondents felt welcomed by the people than by the Commission (Macedonia: 57% vs. 53%; BIH: 46% vs. 43%).

CROATS EXPECT TO JOIN THE EU BY 2013

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When asked when they thought their country would join the EU, Croatian respondents were the most optimistic: on average, they expected their country to become a member state by 2013. Of the other countries next in line, the average dates forecasted were 2015 for Macedonia and 2018 for Serbia. The interviewees in Albania and Kosovo were less optimistic, as they forecast accession to be in 2020. Uncertainty about the future accession dates was rife, however. Across the countries, a significant number of respondents didn't know when their country would become a member of the EU. In Montenegro, over a third of respondents (38%) didn't know or gave no answer. In Macedonia, on the other hand, people seemed confident in their knowledge about a possible accession date, as only 13% didn't have an opinion.

Satisfaction and trust in the region's institutions

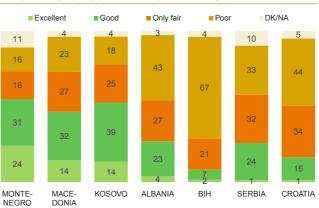
The opinions about the region's institutions were examined at two levels. Respondents were initially asked to rate how their government was performing overall and they were then presented with a list of institutions, from the church to the police and from the government to NATO. For each of those institutions, the interviewees were requested to say how much trust they placed in each one – from a lot to none at all.

SATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENTS – A POLARISED PICTURE EMERGES

There were significant differences in the respondents' views about their national political institutions. The Western Balkans seemed to be polarised between the rather positive attitudes in the newly created countries of Montenegro and Kosovo and a visible disenchantment in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Indeed, only Montenegro (55%) and Kosovo (53%) had a majority of the interviewees who spoke positively about their govern-

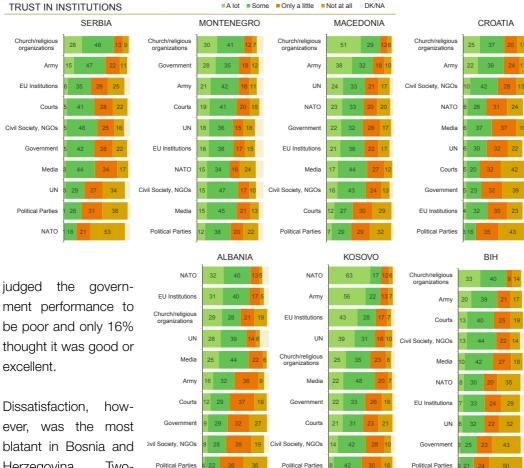
ment's performance. Satisfaction was particularly high in Montenegro, where not only onethird of respondents judged the government's performance to be good, but a quarter even considered it to be excellent (24%). Only onethird of interviewees thought that their government's performance was poor (16%) or only fair (18%). In Kosovo, while a majority of respondents were also positive, more of them were likely to judge the performance as good (39%) rather than excellent (14%). A quarter of the respondents in Kosovo thought the government was only doing a fair job and one in five felt performance was poor (18%).



PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION

For each of the following levels of government, please indicate how good of a job the government does – excellent, good, only fair, or poor. [COUNTRY] GOVERNMENT

In the other Western Balkan countries, a significant number of respondents spoke negatively about their countries' governments. For example, approximately four out of 10 Albanians (43%) rated the job their government was doing as poor. Serbs were divided with a quarter (24%) judging the performance to be good and an additional third (32%) saying it was fair. In Croatia, after a very close election, 44%



blatant in Bosnia and ³ Herzegovina. Twothirds of respondents gave the worst grade possible by saying that

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For each of the following institutions, please indicate how much trust you put in them

the performance was poor (67%). One in five only judged it to be fair (21%) and just one in 10 said it was either good (7%) or excellent (2%). The government 's performance was judged to be poor in the Federation part by a full 70%, and was only seen in a slightly better light in the Serb entity, where 56% regarded it as poor.

Macedonia was divided – with 28% of those living in the Albanian regions judging the government performance to be good or excellent, compared to 56% of the rest of the country.

GREATER TRUST IN RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS, NO FAITH IN POLITICAL PARTIES

Participants in the survey were presented with a list of institutions like the church, the government, the president and political parties; they were then asked how much they trusted each organisation.

Generally, the respondents in the Western Balkans did not show much trust in their countries' political bodies. Indeed, the national political institutions only achieved a low-middle ranking in terms of trust; the church (and other

religious organisations) came top in almost all of the countries. Exceptions to this rule were Kosovo and Albania: there, instead of the religious organizations, NATO was said to be the most trusted institution.

Apart from this generally held low opinion about the political national institutions, the survey revealed a familiar polarisation between the Western Balkan countries: in Montenegro and Kosovo, respondents tended to have more trust in the newly established institutions than in the other Balkan countries, while distrust in the political institutions was most visible in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Indeed, across the Western Balkans, the Montenegrin respondents had the most trust in their government (28% had a lot of trust and 35% had some trust). A similar picture was seen in Kosovo, where a clear majority trusted the government a lot (22%) or to some degree (33%), while a minority had only a little (26%) or no trust at all (16%). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, barely any respondent had a lot of trust in these institutions (3%) and only approximately a guarter of the respondents had some trust in them. Most of the respondents in the country indicated that they either had no trust at all in the government (43%) or only a little (23%).

The distrust about the political parties in the Western Balkans was striking. Indeed, in most

countries they were the most distrusted institution of all those presented in the survey. Once again, this distrust was the most visible in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where one in two respondents said they did not trust the party system at all. It was Kosovo that had the most respondents with confidence in the political parties: only one in six (16%) said they had no trust at all in the party system, whereas most had at least some trust in the parties (42%). However, Kosovo also demonstrated less trust in the political parties than in any of the other listed institutions.

A noticeable result of the survey was the very low level of trust in the judicial system in most countries in the region. At least "some" level of trust in the courts is a basic requirement of a well functioning society, but that is missing in most countries here. Croatia is experiencing a crisis with only a quarter of the people saying that they had either a lot (5%) or some (20%) trust in the courts. On the bright side, however, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the respondents placed the courts among the five most trusted institutions.

The army was the most trusted organisation after the religious institutions in Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Kosovo, the army ranked second after NATO, reflecting the role these institutions have played in the recent history of the region.

Good governance and corruption

The break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s and the wars that followed have left a heavy burden on the people: the development of strong criminal networks and the rise of a "grey" sector of the economy. Today, the different "mafias" operating in the region have the reputation of being among the strongest in Europe and some of the most difficult to dismantle.

Subsequently, the high levels of corruption and organised crime are highlighted as some of the main problems in the Western Balkans and as issues that are difficult to eradicate. Some observers feel that the phenomena are so deeply rooted that they are now seen as a way of life.

The Gallup Balkan Monitor's examination of people's attitudes towards corruption showed

that it was not accepted by the majority; however, the results varied in the different countries and were dependent on the type of corruption being examined. The survey also highlighted the respondents' general dissatisfaction with the development of their countries, reflected by their negative attitudes towards politics and the way in which they are being governed. 94% of those in Macedonia said that corruption should be eliminated in order to stabilise the region and facilitate future development. However, with the exception of Albania, the levels of bribery among government officials and civil servants that were actually reported were not particularly high. Indeed, across all of the Western Balkan countries, one in 10 or fewer respondents said they had had to offer



During the past one year, has any government official or a civil servant in [COUNTRY], asked you or expected you to pay a bribe for his service?

REPORTED LEVELS OF BRIBERY LOW EXCEPT IN ALBANIA

The survey results indicated that corruption was seen as a problem across all of the Western Balkan countries. For example, between 79% of respondents in Montenegro and a bribe to a government official or civil servant. In Albania, however, one-third of respondents had experienced such corruption (32%).

The officials asking for a bribe were most frequently reported to be police officers and

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personnel from the medical services. In Serbia, for example, more than half of all bribes were paid to police officers (54%), whereas this was mainly the case for doctors and nurses in Albania (50%).

SUPPORT FOR USING RELATIONS' INFLUENCE TO OBTAIN BETTER HOSPITAL CARE

Most respondents in the Western Balkan countries thought that corruption was unacceptable. Indeed, asked whether it was cor-

rect or not to use contacts or offer inducements to get things done (i.e. to seek the influence of relations, to give small gifts or to offer money in order to get better care in hospital, to ensure their child had access to a better school, to avoid paying traffic fines or for small businesses to get a profitable government contract), only a minority across all of the Balkan countries gave their agreement in most of the scenarios.

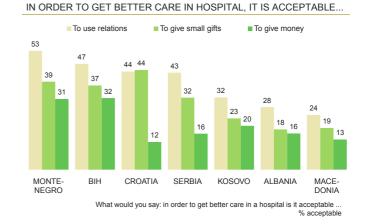
In Montenegro, however, there

was more acceptance of such questionable practices in order to get things done. Requesting the help of relations seemed to be quite common there (e.g. this was the only country where a majority favoured such an approach, 53%).

In general, using the influence of relations was seen to be far more acceptable than the practice of offering small gifts or giving extra money. For example, in regard to getting better care in hospital, almost four times as many Croatian respondents would try to use the influence of relations as those who would offer extra money for that purpose (44% vs. 12%).

GOVERNMENTS MUST DO MORE TO FIGHT ORGANISED CRIME

Across all of the Western Balkan countries, only a minority of interviewees felt that their government was doing enough to fight organised crime. Macedonia was an exception, being the only country where supportive respondents outnumbered those who felt there were insuf-



ficient efforts to fight organised crime (49% vs. 35%). In Montenegro (45%), Kosovo (48%) and Albania (48%), nearly half of the interviewees were unimpressed by their government's efforts to tackle organised crime efficiently, and only a minority of approximately three in 10 in Albania (29%), a third in Kosovo (32%) and one in four (38%) in Montenegro were convinced by their government's actions.

While in Serbia, only a quarter of respondents thought there was sufficient resolve to fight

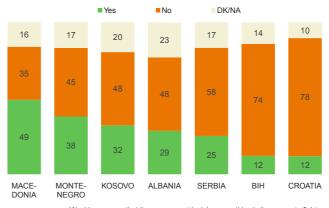
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organised crime (vs. six out of 10 who disagreed), respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were again the most critical about their governments' actions: around three-quarters found fault with their government and only one in 10 considered the actions to be sufficient (both 12%)

Across all Western Balkan countries, a considerable share of respondents did not know how to answer or refused to answer when asked to judge the govern-

ment's actions against organised crime. This was most often the case in Albania (23%) and Kosovo (20%).

IS THE GOVERNMENT DOING ENOUGH TO FIGHT ORGANISED CRIME?



Would you agree that the government is doing everything in its powers to fight organised crime?

Migration and mobility

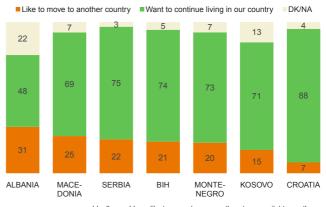
Today, with the people of the region's freedom to travel being even more restrictive than it was under the communist regimes, migration is one of the region's key issues. Although its citizens often express their frustration at the difficulty of obtaining visas and travelling abroad, there are few signs that the situation is changing.

Today, observers say the visa facilitation agreements that most countries have already signed with the EU have not produced the hoped-for results and that their implementation is somewhat defective. Consequently, a significant number of respondents to the Gallup Balkan community to give assistance in that domain (56%). They were not alone, however, as similar requests were made by four in 10 respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina (45%) and Macedonia (41%) and approximately one-third of the interviewees from Montenegro (35%)

Monitor have identified the liberalisation of visa and travel regulations as being among the issues where the international community could be of the greatest assistance.

A significant proportion of participants also believed that they could find better opportunities to realise their potential abroad, although most would prefer not to leave their home country forever.

OPINIONS ABOUT MOVING TO ANOTHER COUNTRY



Ideally, would you like to move (permanently or temporarily) to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in [COUNTRY/ENTITY]?

A CALL FOR TRAVEL AND VISA RESTRICTIONS TO BE LIFTED

When the Balkan Monitor asked survey participants how they thought the international community could best help the Western Balkans, interviewees in many countries asked for a relaxation of the travel and visa restrictions.

Such help of the international community on the ease of travel and visa regulations would be most welcomed by the Albanians: over half of those respondents wanted the international and Kosovo (30%). The need to ease travel and visa restrictions was less pressing in Serbia (21%) and Croatia (16%).

MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS SEE BETTER PROSPECTS ABROAD

In most of the Western Balkan countries, a majority of respondents thought that people had better opportunities away from their own

24

country. Montenegro and Croatia were exceptions, as approximately half of the respondents gave a positive assessment of the existing opportunities at home.

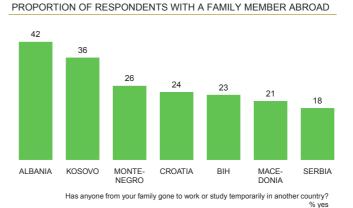
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leave and in Montenegro, (20%) Bosnia and Herzegovina (21%) and Serbia (22%), around one in five respondents were ready to pack their bags. In Macedonia, this proportion even

In Kosovo, people were particularly envious of the opportunities abroad: more than seven in 10 respondents felt that way and one in five thought that the opportunities were just as good or even better in their own country. In Albania, twothirds of respondents assessed the opportunities in other countries to be better than those at home and only on-third disagreed.



The respondents in Croatia (64%)

and Montenegro (54%) were most likely to see opportunities in their own countries. Only a minority of four out of 10 respondents in Montenegro (38%) and three in 10 interviewees in Croatia (31%) saw more chances beyond the country's borders than within them.

Looking at the Western Balkans in total, approximately one in 10 respondents or less thought that their country would offer people better chances than any other country in the world.

Asked whether they would prefer to move to another country or to stay in their own country, a majority of seven in 10 or more respondents across the Western Balkan countries, with the exception of Albania, said they would like to continue living in their own country. However, a significant minority of respondents declared their willingness to leave their own borders. The Croats (7%) were the least liable to say they would like to move to another country. In Kosovo, one in seven (15%) were ready to reached one in four (25%). Albanians were indeed the respondents the most willing to go and live abroad as only half of the respondents preferred to continue living in Albania, while one-third were ready to move to another country. In Albania and in Kosovo, two-thirds of people even thought that people who go to live permanently or temporarily in another country were a "big help to the country". With the exception of the interviewees in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, the majority of those respondents who said they would like to move to another country also said they would prefer to return to their homeland one day. Respondents from Kosovo and Macedonia, who had previously declared their willingness to leave, envisaged temporary stays (70% and 67%, respectively). Only a quarter (27%) of those respondents in Kosovo and 31% in Macedonia had definite plans to emigrate.

Respondents in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina were the most likely to think about emigrating for good. In the latter, a majority of

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respondents wanted to stay abroad permanently (52%), while only 44% planned to return. In Montenegro, approximately one in two respondents had definite emigration on their minds, and 48% wanted to return to their home countries at some time in the future.

HIGH MOBILITY: OVER ONE-FIFTH HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER ABROAD

Across most Western Balkan countries, between one-fifth (Serbia: 18%) and a quarter of respondents (Montenegro: 26%) said they have a family member working or studying abroad.

With distinctively more respondents who said that one of their family members had left the

country for work or study (42%), Albanians again led the way. However, there was also one in three Kosovar respondents who had a family member abroad (36%).

The results indicated that economic conditions were one of the main reasons for people in Albania and Kosovo to work outside of their borders. Indeed, out of the respondents in those two countries who said they had a family member living abroad, eight out of 10 said that this person was providing financial assistance. In Macedonia and BIH, although a majority said they received financial help from family member(s) abroad, they were not so likely to say this was the case (59% and 52%, respectively). In Serbia, such financial help was more uncommon (31%).

Balkan challenges: Kosovo, the future stability of the region and the ICTY

Regardless of Belgrade's strong opposition and its categorical refusal to recognise the new state, Yugoslavia's disintegration was completed earlier this year when Kosovo declared its independence. Despite the warnings about the possible impact on the region's stability that preceded the unilateral declaration of independence and with a few exceptions of violent protest in the weeks following the event, the Balkans have not been profoundly shaken by the creation of this new state.

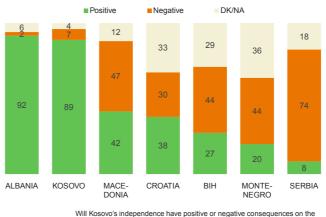
However, the various countries' views on the issue do vary, with an overwhelming majority of respondents from Kosovo and Albania saying independence has had a positive impact on the region, but only a minority of Serb and Montenegrin participants in the survey sharing this position.

After a number of recent verdicts seen as controversial in some Balkan countries, the views of respondents about the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) also varied across the region; only Albanian and Kosovar interviewees expressed a clearly positive opinion about the Tribunal's role.

KOSOVO'S INDEPENDENCE: A DISTINCT DIVISION ABOUT THE OUTCOME

The results of the Balkan Monitor mirrored the polarisation in attitudes on Kosovo's declaration of independence between respondents from Kosovo and Albania on the one hand and Serbia on the other:

While a huge proportion of respondents in



INDEPENDENT KOSOVO'S IMPACT ON THE STABILITY OF THE REGION

stability of the region?

Albania and Kosovo were convinced of the positive impact of an independent Kosovo on the stability of the region (92% and 89%, respectively), respondents in Serbia obviously took an opposite view (74% negative). Few people were opposed to the majority views: in Albania in particular, barely any respondents

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thought that an independent Kosovo could have a negative impact (2%, 7% in Kosovo). In Serbia, only a few people (8%) felt that Kosovo's Independence was positive for the stability of the Balkans.

In the remaining countries, the views were more split: Kosovo's independence was seen more negatively in Macedonia, BIH and Montenegro (44%-47% held such a view), while Croatia had more positive respondents (38% vs. 30% negative). However, between 29% and 36% of re-

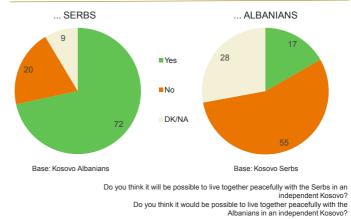
spondents in Croatia, BIH and Montenegro offered no opinion on the matter. In BiH, the views were deeply divided along ethnic lines: in the Republika Srpska, 69% saw negative consequences, while in the Federation only 28% felt that way. Similarly in Macedonia, this was one of the most divisive issues, with only 9% of Albanians seeing any negative impact, while two-thirds (67%) of the rest of the country were worried about the consequences.

to say they did not know or refused to answer (28% vs. 9% of Kosovo Albanians).

MOST SERBS THINK THEIR GOVERNMENT WILL NEVER RECOGNISE KOSOVO

Respondents in Serbia were asked when they thought that their country's government was going to recognise Kosovo's declaration of independence.

POSSIBILITY TO LIVE TOGETHER PEACEFULLY IN KOSOVO WITH THE ...



KOSOVO SERBS SEE NO CO-EXISTENCE WITH KOSOVO ALBANIANS

Approximately seven in 10 Kosovo Albanians thought that living together in peace with Kosovo Serbs was possible (vs. one in five who did not agree). The majority of Serbs, however, did not agree that living together peacefully with Kosovo Albanians was possible. Less than one in five of the interviewed Kosovo Serbs agreed that peaceful co-existence was possible (17%). Kosovo Serbs were more likely A majority of six out of 10 respondents thought that this would never happen. Only a handful expected immediate recognition (5%), while one in five felt it would be within the next five to 10 years. One in seven Serbs (15%) did not know or refused to answer when their government would accept the independence of Kosovo.

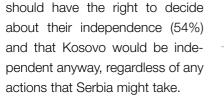
Eight in 10 respondents in Serbia felt that the country's pride was hurt by the secession of Kosovo and seven out of 10 felt that Kosovo must remain part of Serbia. However, nearly two-thirds of respondents opposed the idea

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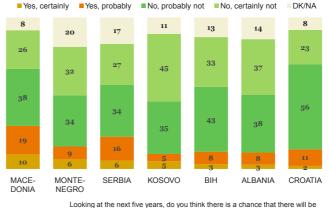
that, as a last resort, the breakaway had to be prevented by arms (64%) – an idea that one in five Serbs supported (22%).

However, slightly more than half of respondents were of the opinion that people in Kosovo

(76%) and Croatia (79%) were optimistic about the stability of the region and only slightly more than one in 10 foresaw armed conflicts in the near-term future. In Montenegro (66%), Macedonia (64%) and Serbia (61%), a majority of approximately two-thirds believed there



Only one-third of respondents in Serbia thought that Kosovo would belong to Albania one day (29%), whereas nearly half of the interviewees couldn't even imagine that scenario (45%). CHANCE OF AN ARMED CONFLICT IN THE BALKANS



at the next five years, do you think there is a chance that there will be an armed conflict somewhere in the Balkans?

MACEDONIANS AND SERBS ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT THE DANGER OF WAR IS OVER

Around one in four Serbs and Macedonians (22% and 29% respectively) felt there could be another war in the region. However, despite those views, a large majority of respondents across all Western Balkan countries thought that in the next five years there would be no armed conflict in the region.

Respondents from Kosovo were particularly optimistic that the Balkans' near-term future would be peaceful. Eight out of 10 respondents thought that there would be no future regional war and nearly half even thought that there was certainly no danger of an armed conflict in the next five years (45%). Only one in 10 respondents anticipated future armed conflicts. More than three-quarters of the respondents in Albania (75%), Bosnia and Herzegovina would be stability.

In Montenegro and Serbia, approximately one in five respondents didn't know whether there was a risk of war during the next five years. In the remaining countries of the Western Balkans, approximately one in 10 interviewees did not know or did not answer.

PUBLIC OPINION DIVIDED OVER THE ROLE OF THE ICTY

Respondents were divided about whether the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (the ICTY) played a positive or negative role in the Western Balkans. In Albania (69%) and Kosovo (68%), approximately seven out of 10 respondents thought that the tribunal was helping reconciliation and strengthening

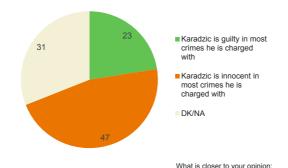
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peace while only a small minority of 12% in Albania and 17% in Kosovo disagreed.

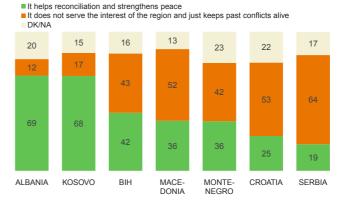
In Macedonia (52%), Croatia (53%) and – most importantly – in Serbia (64%), a majority of respondents thought that the ICTY did not serve the interest of the region and was simply fuelling past conflicts. Croatia and Serbia were the countries that were the least supportive of the view that the tribunal was helping peace and reconciliation.

In Montenegro, there were more negative opinions about the tribunal (42% vs. 36% positive), and in Bosnia & Herzegovina, the views were split between those living in Republika Srpska and the Federation (9% and 61%, respectively, seeing the tribunal as helping reconciliation and strengthening peace). Asked about the ICTY's partiality, with the exception of Albania and Kosovo, less than one-third of

KARADZIC: INNOCENT OR GUILTY OF WAR CRIMES



THE ROLE OF THE ICTY IN THE REGION'S FUTURE



In your views what is the role the ICTY plays in the future of the region?

the people in each country believed that the ICTY proceedings were impartial and the outcomes were open.

KARADZIC: POLARIZING SERB PUBLIC OPINION

The polarising effect of the war crimes issue is best illustrated by the positions of Serbs on the recently arrested Radovan Karadzic: the respondents were strongly divided with almost a quarter seeing him as guilty, a relative majority of almost half (47%) feeling he was innocent and a near-third being undecided. However, 45% agreed that his arrest was good for the future of Serbia, and 53% believed that it was good for Serbia's EU integration process. More people agreed than disagreed with the statement (49% vs. 32%) that his arrest allowed Serbia to concentrate on the future.

Conclusions

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The Western Balkans is a multi-faceted region situated between growth and gloom, between crises and creativity. The Gallup Balkan Monitor reflects this diversity in presenting a mixed picture of today's Western Balkans. Although most of the respondents were generally satisfied with their lives, they also expressed a concern that their countries were not developing as they should or could be. This resulted in many respondents saying that the best opportunities could still be found abroad.

There seems to be a clear polarisation between the region's newest countries – Kosovo and Montenegro, who are highly optimistic about the future, and the remaining states – that are much less positive. However, it will be interesting to see how long this 'honeymoon' period lasts and how it will develop in the coming years. In Kosovo's case, in particular, many analysts have been warning about the fragile economy of the new state. Additionally, Serbia's categorical refusal to recognise its former province's independence – reflected by the results of the Balkan Monitor – is likely to hinder certain aspects of Kosovo's future development.

The survey also underlines the need for the regions' politicians to deliver better results to their constituents in many aspects of life. For example, although corruption and organised crime are recognised as being major obstacles to the region's development, there is a general feeling of unease about the governments' inactions.

Nevertheless, more than a decade after the end of the Balkan wars, the region seems to have regained a certain level of stability, with only a minority of respondents believing a new armed conflict could take place in the coming years. However, around one in four Serbs and Macedonians (22% and 29% respectively) felt there could be another conflict. At the same time, in most countries, with the exception of Albania and Kosovo, interviewees have remained sceptical about the role of Kosovo's independence in bringing peace and reconciliation to the region.

Today, the countries of the Western Balkans are moving towards an eventual full EU membership and support for this process remains high. In this respect, the region's citizens have adopted a rather realistic approach to EU accession, with only a minority of respondents in all countries imagining that their nation would become a full EU member within the next few years. The opinions about the reception that the countries of the Western Balkans are likely to receive are mixed, with respondents feeling that the European Commission would offer a warmer welcome than the EU citizens themselves.

The Balkan Monitor's objective has been to cover as wide a range of questions as possible in order to show a realistic and much needed picture of the Western Balkans... as seen from the inside. This report is but a snapshot of the total survey: the accompanying website (see www.balkan-monitor.eu) will contain a comprehensive range of tools that allow further

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examination of the data. In such an extremely dynamic region, many changes are likely to occur in the years to come. These will be in the political, social and economic landscapes of the countries concerned, as well as in the public opinion on the ground. They will all be well worth following as we approach the next Gallup Balkan Monitor survey in 2009.

About the Fund

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BRINGING THE WESTERN BALKANS CLOSER TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Fund for the Balkans is a multiyear joint initiative of European foundations including the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the King Baudouin Foundation, the Compagnia di San Paolo and the ERSTE Foundation.

The Fund is designed to undertake and support initiatives aimed at bringing the Western Balkans closer to the European Union through grant-making and operational programmes; as such, it is focused on individuals and organisations from the Western Balkans region.

As a direct follow-up to the International Commission on the Balkans (2004-2006), the Fund embodies the "EU Member State Building Strategy" with its priorities focusing on the development of functioning state administrations and constituency-building.

The Fund was established in 2007 with a Secretariat in Belgrade. The initiative was presented to the region at a public launch in Sarajevo, in June 2008.

OBJECTIVES

The Fund's objectives are:

- to encourage broader and stronger commitment to the European integration of the Western Balkan countries and societies;
- to strengthen efforts undertaken by a range of stakeholders in this process, with a view to developing effective policies and practices in the region and in the EU;

 to support the process of member state building as envisaged by the International Commission on the Balkans; in particular by building constituencies in the societies of Southeast Europe that will be offered an opportunity to gain experience of – and learn about – Europe and the EU.

PROGRAMMES

To pursue its goals, the Fund develops grantmaking and operational programmes in four main areas:

1. Envisaging Europe

Supporting research and policy development projects as well as media outreach initiatives.

2. Practicing Europe

Enhancing the professional and administrative capacities of young Balkan government officials in the EU integration process.

3. Experiencing Europe

Allowing young generations in the Western Balkans to gain experience of – and learn about – Europe and the EU.

4. Developing Policies For The Balkans

Enhancing the public image of the Fund and its contribution in policymaking for the EU integration of the Balkans through joint initiatives and partnerships.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The Fund is open to other private and public donors and it is designed to engage not

only European funders already active in the Balkans, but also public and private donors which have not worked in the region until now, or wish to leverage their own funding and increase their impact.

The Fund is currently hosted by the Network of European Foundations – NEF (Brussels) which provides legal and administrative assistance.

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About Gallup

THE PREMIER TRUSTED SOURCE IN UNDERSTANDING HOW CITIZENS THINK AND FEEL

For more than 70 years, Gallup has built its reputation on delivering relevant, timely, and visionary research on what people around the world think and feel. By exploring citizens' opinions and attitudes, Gallup helps decisionmakers shape their agendas.

GALLUP IN ACTION

Gallup's Brussels' office coordinates polling activities in Europe, utilising staff from across the worldwide Gallup Organization. Offering all standard survey techniques, Gallup's tailor-made solutions can be complemented by in-depth statistical analysis and cutting-edge data visualisation tools.

MAKING SENSE OF OPINIONS & FEELINGS

As a pioneer in applied social research, Gallup measures citizens' awareness and attitudes towards social, political and economic matters. Gallup has also become a champion at assessing the impact of policies, services and media campaigns in all areas.

As the provider of the Commission's Flash Eurobarometer, Gallup conducts over 400,000 interviews per year on subjects ranging from entrepreneurship and employment to education, and from European values to global challenges.

Gallup believes that collecting and sharing information is a vital part of policy-making and a key step in empowering citizens.

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in partnership with the **European** Fund for the **Balkans**