

WHAT ARE THE KOSOVO CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS ON INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS?

**Fostering Inter-ethnic Relations and Reconciliation
Survey Results**



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The data presented in the report derive from the “FIERC – Fostering Inter-ethnic Cooperation and Reconciliation” survey launched in October-November 2022. FIERC is a project implemented by the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) and the New Social Initiative (NSI) aiming to foster inter-ethnic cooperation in Kosovo by opening up space for mutual trust-building interactions, creating opportunities to jointly identify/address common challenges, and collaborate for community solutions. The project is supported by the Stability Pact Fund of the German Federal Foreign Office. The findings demonstrate how citizens percept or are informed about the issues presented in this report. As such, the views presented in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the KCSS, NSI, German Federal Foreign Office or the German Embassy in Kosovo.

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INTRODUCTION

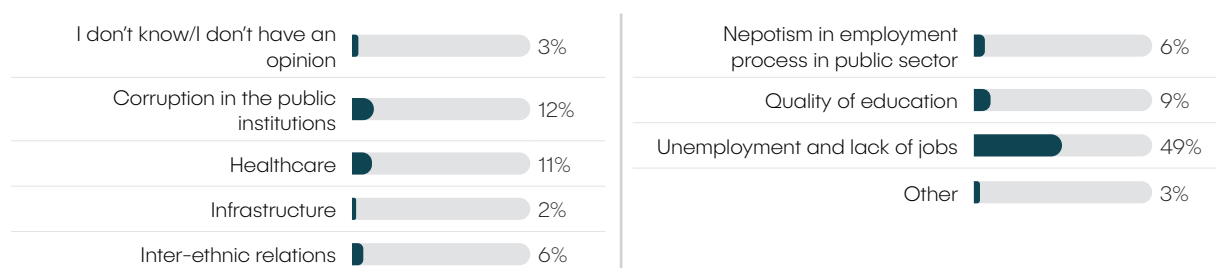
The ongoing political issues and unsolved tensions between communities as a result of the war in Kosovo in 1999 continue to present obstacles for the advancement of inter-ethnic relations in the country. Inter-ethnic cooperation in Kosovo, particularly between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs, is still hampered by the inadequate treatment of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and violations of human rights. To date, efforts to break the impasse in inter-ethnic relations have primarily been made in the margins of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, which began in 2011, thus overshadowing a potential process of societal reconciliation and cooperation. As a result, rather than a societal debate that strives to discover commonality and minimize disparities, the perspective of the Serbian and Albanian population in Kosovo regarding the state of their relations and mutual cooperation has remained somewhat hazy and prone to political processes. Therefore, this report aims to reflect the viewpoint of these two communities on the status of inter-ethnic relations and cooperation in Kosovo based on the findings of the survey conducted as part of the “FIERC – Fostering Inter-ethnic Cooperation and Reconciliation” project, which was launched by the Kosovar Center for Security Studies (KCSS) and New Social Initiative (NSI) at the end of October and beginning of November 2022. The report consists of four key chapters. The first chapter summarizes the citizen perceptions on the state of inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo, while it is followed by the second chapter focusing on the viewpoints of the citizens on inter-ethnic cooperation. On the other hand, chapters three and four provide a summary of the findings of the survey in relation to the perceived representation of the Albanian and Serbian community in municipal and central level institutions, and acceptance of other ethnic groups in their respective communities.

The analysis of this report is based on the results of face-to-face interviews with randomly selected respondents in nine multi-ethnic municipalities in Kosovo. The field research for the needs of this report was conducted between October 28, 2022, to November 3, 2022. The questionnaire for the survey primarily consisted of closed-ended questions in the form of a five-point Likert Scale, followed by several open-ended questions without predefined options. The national sample for the survey featured 1,226 respondents, of whom 729 were Kosovo Albanians and 497 Kosovo Serbs. The sampling of the survey followed the stratified sampling principles. In this respect, the sample first identified nine multi-ethnic sites in Kosovo including Mitrovica South, Mitrovica North, Shterpca, Gracanica, Novoberda, Vitia Rranilluga, Kamenica and Lipjan. The second stage of sampling included the division of the number of surveys conducted in each of the selected municipalities/sites. Since the survey aimed to reflect the perceptions of the population living in multi-ethnic municipalities in general, and not to reflect the perceptions of the population of selected municipalities in particular, in each of the above-mentioned sites the number of conducted surveys was divided proportionally. Further stratification of the sample was based on the last population census in Kosovo. In this regard, having in mind that 51 percent of the total population of Kosovo are male and 49 percent are female, this also reflected on our sample. Furthermore, since 61 percent of the total Kosovo population reside in rural areas as opposed to 39 percent residing in urban areas, around 60 percent of the surveys were conducted in rural sites, while 40 percent were conducted in urban sites.

WHAT IS THE VIEWPOINT OF THE CITIZENS ON THE STATE OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN KOSOVO?

Reconciliation aims to address the root causes and consequences of the conflict through a comprehensive approach. In this regard, a number of processes, each of which might function at the individual, community, or political level, may be involved in fostering reconciliation, including community development, economic growth, social reconstruction, etc.¹ In this regard, the survey's findings, as interpreted in this report, support the significance of social and economic intervention as a mechanism for fostering inter-ethnic harmony and reconciliation. For the majority of the respondents, potential inter-ethnic conflicts and political issues are not considered as the main issues in their respective communities, but rather issues related to civic wellbeing. In this respect, for 49 percent of the respondents, unemployment and lack of jobs is considered the main concern, followed by corruption in public institutions (12%), poor healthcare (11%), and the quality of education (9%).

TABLE 1 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE MAIN CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITIES (N=1226)



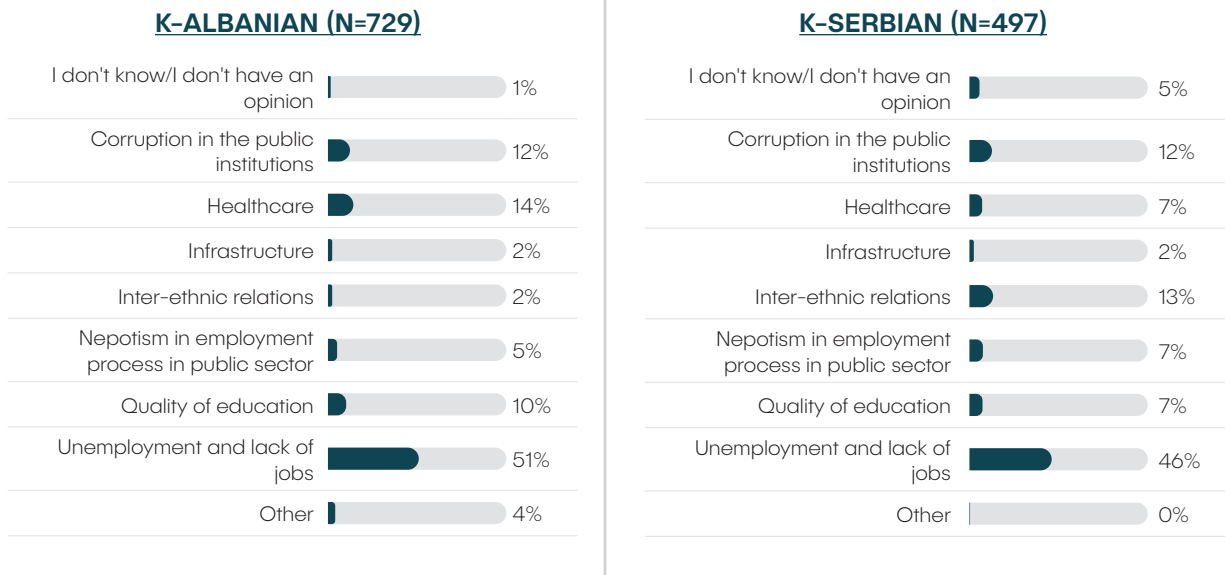
However, despite the fact that survey's findings show that Kosovo Serbs² and Kosovo Albanians³ generally have similar concerns, inter-ethnic relations are listed as one of the three most pressing concerns in the community by K-Serb, accounting for 13 percent of the total, alongside unemployment and lack of jobs (46%) and corruption in the public institutions (12%).

1 Hamber, B. and Kelly, G., 2004. Reconciliation: A working definition. Democratic Dialogue.

2 Hereinafter: K-Serbian

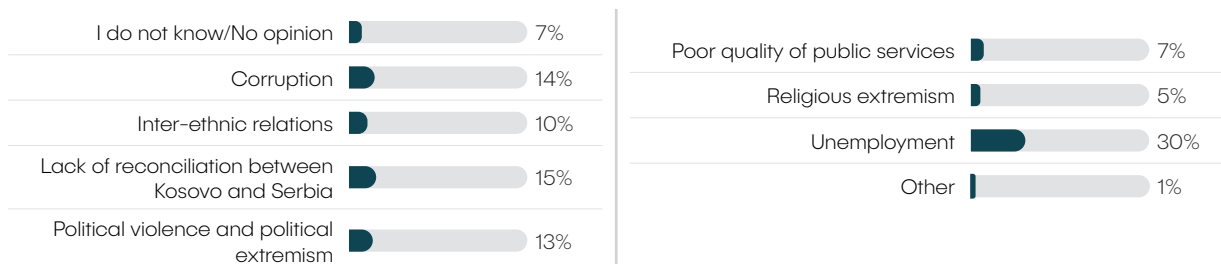
3 Hereinafter: K-Albanian

TABLE 2 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE MAIN CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITIES BY ETHNICITY



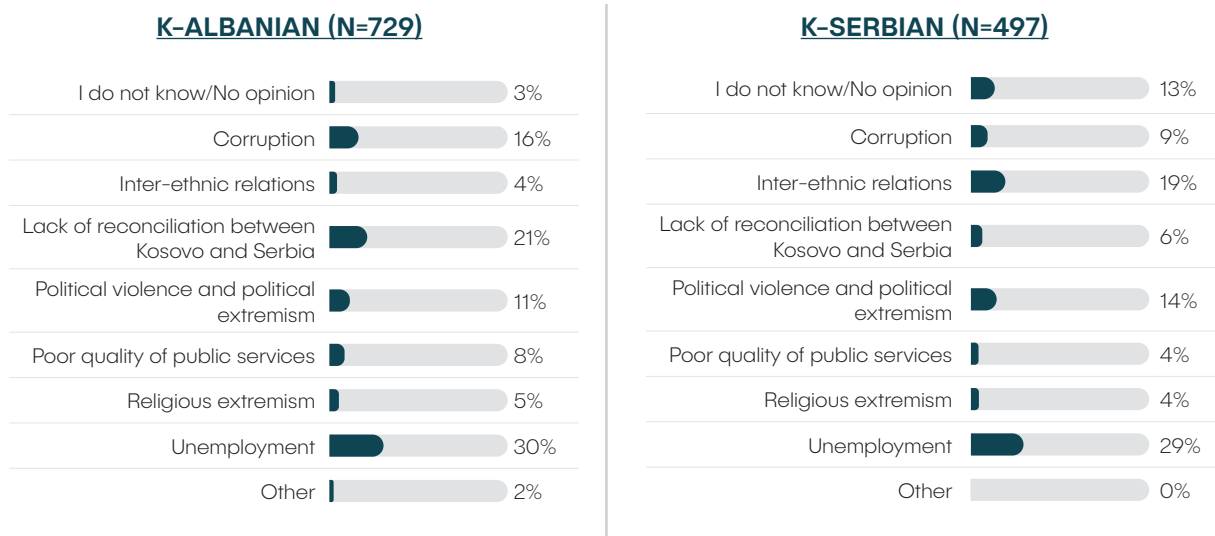
30 percent of the respondents also cited unemployment as the primary threats to the peace and security of the communities in Kosovo. However, when the community threats are elaborated in the margins of peace and security, in addition to unemployment, 15 percent of the respondents consider lack of reconciliation between Kosovo and Serbia as a key threat to peace and security, followed by corruption (14%), political violence and political extremism (13%), and inter-ethnic relations (10%).

TABLE 3 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING KEY THREATS TO PEACE AND SECURITY OF COMMUNITIES (N=1226)



When the results are examined independently for the Albanian and Serbian communities, similar perceptions are also noted. Although the lack of reconciliation between Kosovo and Serbia is considered one of the major threats by 21 percent of the K-Albanian respondents, this issue does not rank among the top three concerns for the K-Serb community. Apart from unemployment, which is seen by 30 percent of K-Serbs as the greatest threat to peace and security, inter-ethnic relations are considered as the second greatest threat with 19 percent of the K-Serb respondents declaring so. This shows that this community is more impacted by this issue, as opposed to four percent of K-Albanians who consider it as a threat.

TABLE 4 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING KEY THREATS TO PEACE AND SECURITY OF COMMUNITIES BY ETHNICITY



These minor differences between the two communities’ assessments of the threats to peace and security appear to mirror the perceived sense of safety both communities have in Kosovo. In this regard, the overwhelming majority of the Albanian community—84 percent of them—said they felt safe as members of their ethnic group in Kosovo, compared to 44 percent of the Serbian community that held such an opinion. Additionally, a significant percentage of respondents (17%) from the Serbian community said they had no opinion on the matter, which may indicate a reluctance to discuss safety issues due to a more vulnerable context among this community.

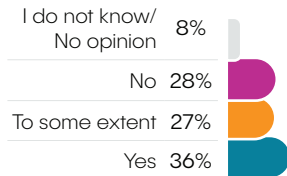
TABLE 5 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE FEELING OF SAFETY IN KOSOVO SOCIETY BY ETHNICITY



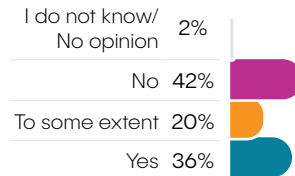
Differences in the two communities’ attitudes are also evident in their opinions of whether minorities are discriminated against in Kosovo. For 56 percent of K-Albanian and 76 percent of K-Serbian respondents there is, or is to some extent, discrimination against minority groups, whereas 42% of K-Albanians and 8% of K-Serbians believe that such discrimination is not present.

TABLE 6 PERCEPTIONS WHETHER THERE IS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MINORITY GROUPS IN KOSOVO. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY

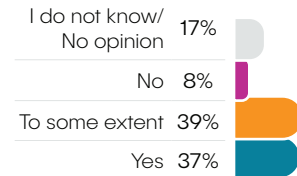
ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1226)



K-ALBANIAN (N=729)



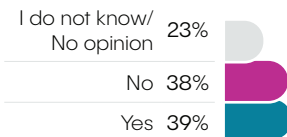
K-SERBIAN (N=497)



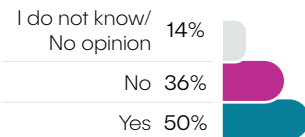
In a similar context, 50 percent of K-Albanian respondents believe that violence against minority groups in Kosovo has been punished adequately, compared to 24 percent of K-Serbian respondents sharing such perception. For 41 percent of the K-Serbian and 36 percent of the K-Albanian respondents the violence against minority groups has not been punished adequately. However, in this case, both communities were less willing to respond, with 36 percent of K-Serbian and 14 percent of K-Albanian respondents saying they don't have an opinion.

TABLE 7 PERCEPTIONS WHETHER VIOLENCE AGAINST MINORITY GROUPS IN KOSOVO HAS BEEN PUNISHED ADEQUATELY. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY

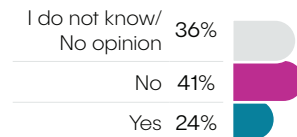
ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1226)



K-ALBANIAN (N=729)

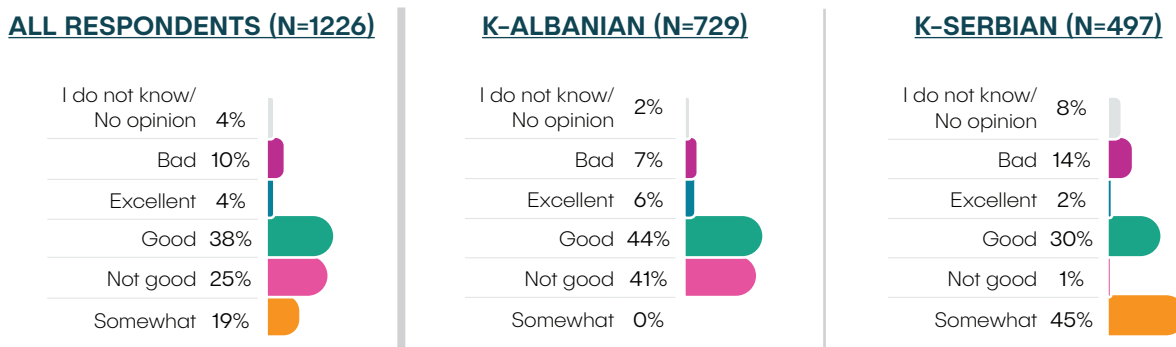


K-SERBIAN (N=497)



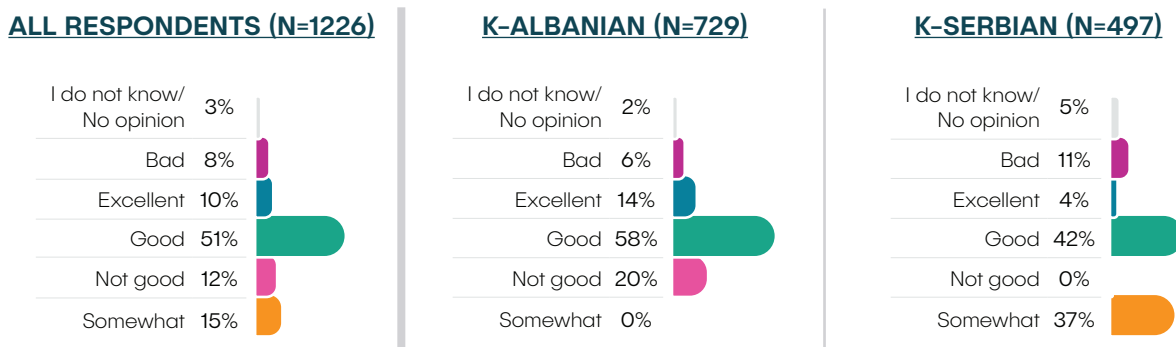
Regardless of the common challenges identified by the respondents of both communities, the survey's findings also show that Kosovo's residents are generally pessimistic about how inter-ethnic relations are faring right now. In this context, 38 percent of respondents think inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo are good, compared to 35 percent who think they're bad or not good, and 19 percent who think they're somewhat good. Moreover, for 32 percent of the K-Serbian respondents the current state of inter-ethnic relations is considered good or excellent, while 50 percent of the K-Albanian respondents share such an opinion. Furthermore, 48 percent of K-Albanian respondents consider the state of inter-ethnic relations as not good or bad. On the other hand, 15 percent of K-Serbians share this opinion, and 45 percent of them view the state of inter-ethnic relations somewhat good.

TABLE 8 THE ASSESSMENT OF THE RESPONDENTS FOR THE OVERALL STATE OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN KOSOVO. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY



However, more favorable responses from the respondents are observed when the same issue is addressed at the local level. In this case, 61 percent of the respondents said that the state of inter-ethnic relations is good or excellent in their respective municipalities. The state of inter-ethnic relations at the local level is viewed more favorably by the two communities as well, with 46% of Serbs and 71% of Albanians believing that this matter stands good or excellent in their municipalities.

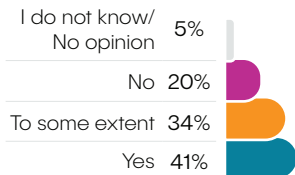
TABLE 9 THE ASSESSMENT OF THE RESPONDENTS FOR THE OVERALL STATE OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THEIR MUNICIPALITY. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY



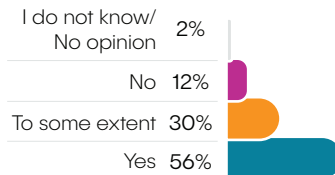
Furthermore, 41 percent of the respondents believe that inter-ethnic relations have improved in Kosovo over the past years, while 79 percent express hopefulness that they will further improve in the future. However, higher levels of skepticism are noted among the K-Serbian respondents, 32 percent of whom consider that the inter-ethnic relations have not improved, as opposed to 12 percent of the K-Albanian respondents that hold such opinion. However, both communities see the potential of improvement with 88 percent of K-Albanian and 65 percent of K-Serbian respondents declaring that they are hopeful for better inter-ethnic relations in the future.

TABLE 10 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE IMPROVEMENT OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN KOSOVO OVER THE PAST YEARS. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY

ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1226)



K-ALBANIAN (N=729)



K-SERBIAN (N=497)

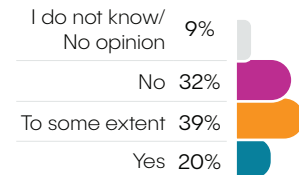
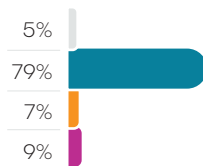


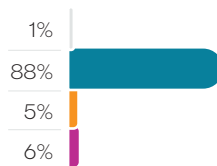
TABLE 11 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN KOSOVO IN THE FUTURE. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY

- I do not know/No opinion
- I am hopeful for better inter-ethnic relations in the future
- I am not hopeful for better inter-ethnic relations in the future
- I am not sure inter-ethnic relations will improve

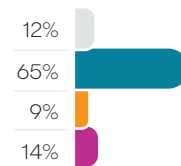
ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1226)



K-ALBANIAN (N=729)

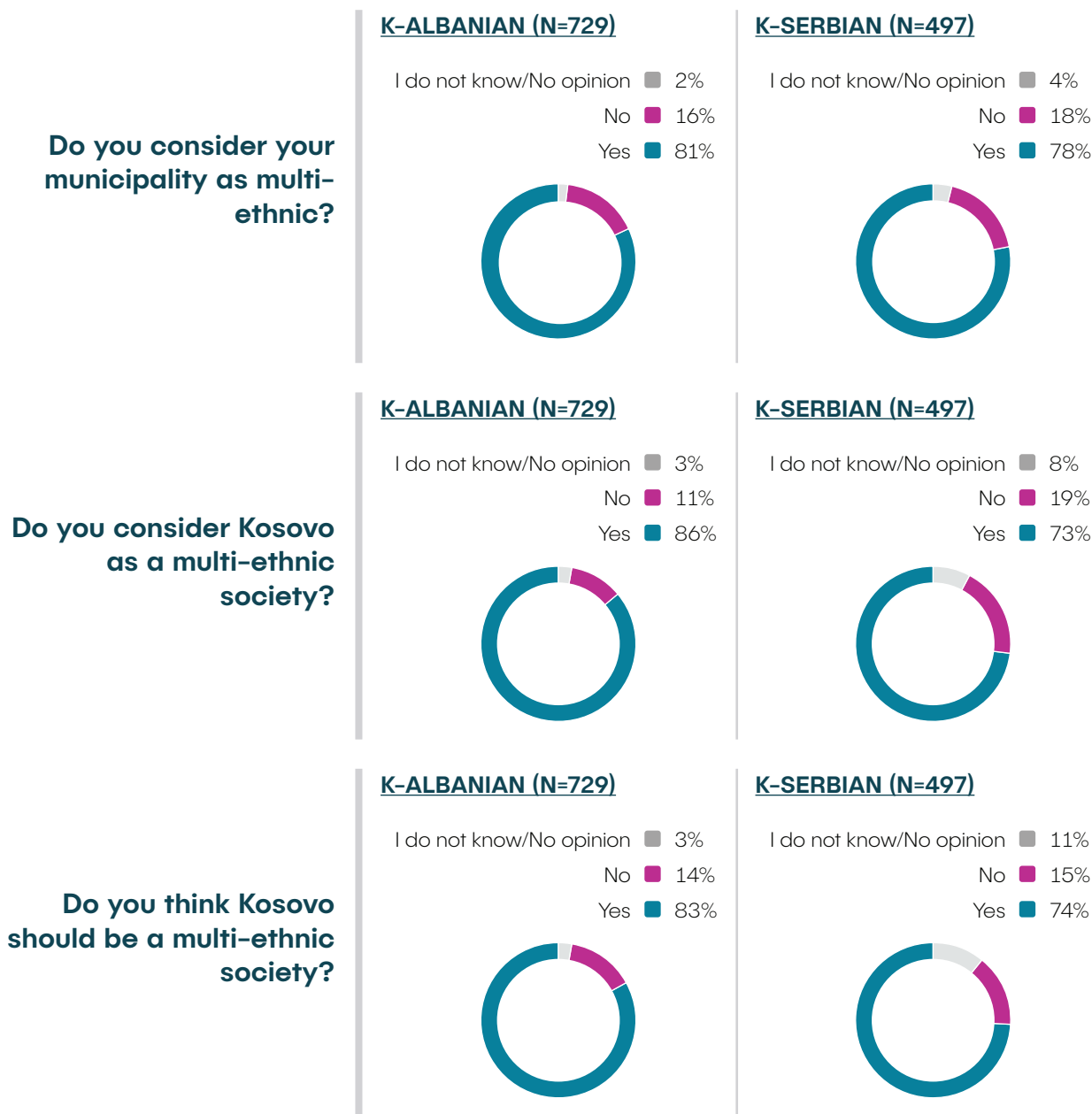


K-SERBIAN (N=497)



Although the respondents express a degree of skepticism about the state of inter-ethnic relations, their perception of Kosovo’s multi-ethnic nature indicates will and readiness for the advancement of inter-ethnic relations at the community level. In this respect, 86 percent of K-Albanian and 73 percent of K-Serbian respondents respectively consider Kosovo as a multi-ethnic society. Similarly, 81 percent of K-Albanian and 78 percent of the K-Serbian respondents see their municipality as such. Additionally, 83 percent of K-Albanian and 74 percent of K-Serbian respondents believe that Kosovo should be multi-ethnic, showing the potential of local communities to advance inter-ethnic relations as they demonstrate understanding and embracement of founding principles of Kosovo.

TABLE 12 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING MULTI-ETHNICITY BY ETHNICITY



Although the aforementioned findings demonstrate the community's willingness to enhance inter-ethnic relations, the majority of respondents, or 68 percent of them, believe that political factors, specifically the behavior and language of political leaders in Kosovo, have an impact on inter-ethnic relations. Such perception is shared by 74 percent of K-Albanian and 59 percent of K-Serbian respondents, while 1/4 of the K-Serbian respondents declared that they have no opinion on this matter, which, as in the case of safety aspects elaborated earlier in the report, indicates an increased reluctance of this community to express their positions on issues related to politics. Furthermore, when the respondents were asked whether they consider that they have freedom in their municipalities to speak openly about political issues, 35 percent of K-Serbian respondents declared that they do not have the

freedom to do so, while 33 percent consider they have such freedom only to some extent. On the other hand, 71 percent of the K-Albanian respondents believe that they have the freedom to openly speak about political issues in their municipalities.

TABLE 13 PERCEPTIONS WHETHER THE BEHAVIOR OF POLITICAL LEADERS AND THEIR LANGUAGE HAVE AN IMPACT ON INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY

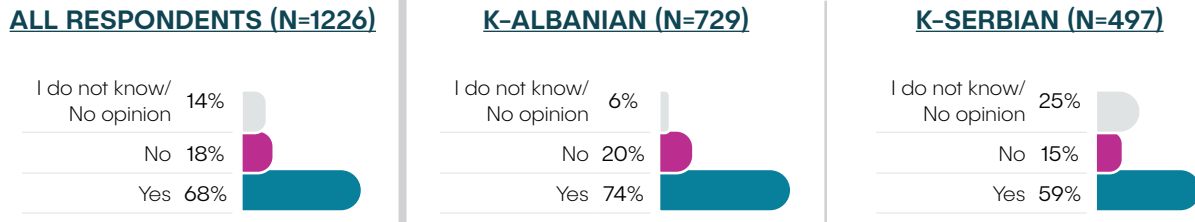
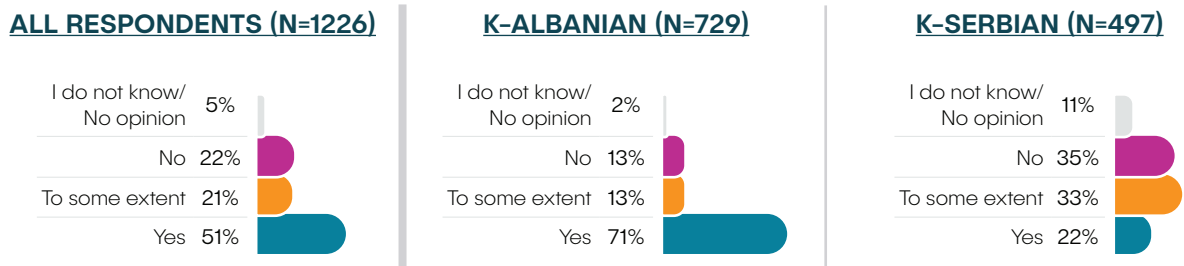


TABLE 14 PERCEPTIONS WHETHER THERE IS FREEDOM IN THE RESPONDENTS' MUNICIPALITIES TO SPEAK OPENLY ABOUT POLITICAL ISSUES. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY

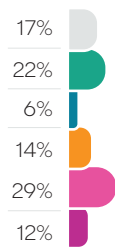


When the respondents were asked to assess the language used by the political leaders when it comes to inter-ethnic relations and cooperation, most of them were determined for the answers that categorize the language used as non-unifying. For 51 percent of the K-Albanian and 61 percent of the K-Serbian respondents the language used by the political leaders regarding inter-ethnic relations is considered hostile, somewhat hostile or very hostile. On the other hand, 41 percent of the K-Albanian community view the language used as friendly or very friendly, as opposed to 8 percent of the K-Serbian respondents.

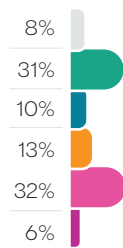
TABLE 15 THE ASSESSMENT OF THE RESPONDENTS FOR THE LANGUAGE USED BY POLITICAL LEADERS IN KOSOVO WHEN IT COMES TO INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS AND COOPERATION. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY

- I do not know/No opinion
- Friendly and Unifying
- Very friendly and Unifying
- Hostile/Not unifying
- Somewhat hostile/Not unifying
- Very hostile/Not unifying

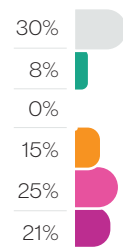
ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1226)



K-ALBANIAN (N=729)



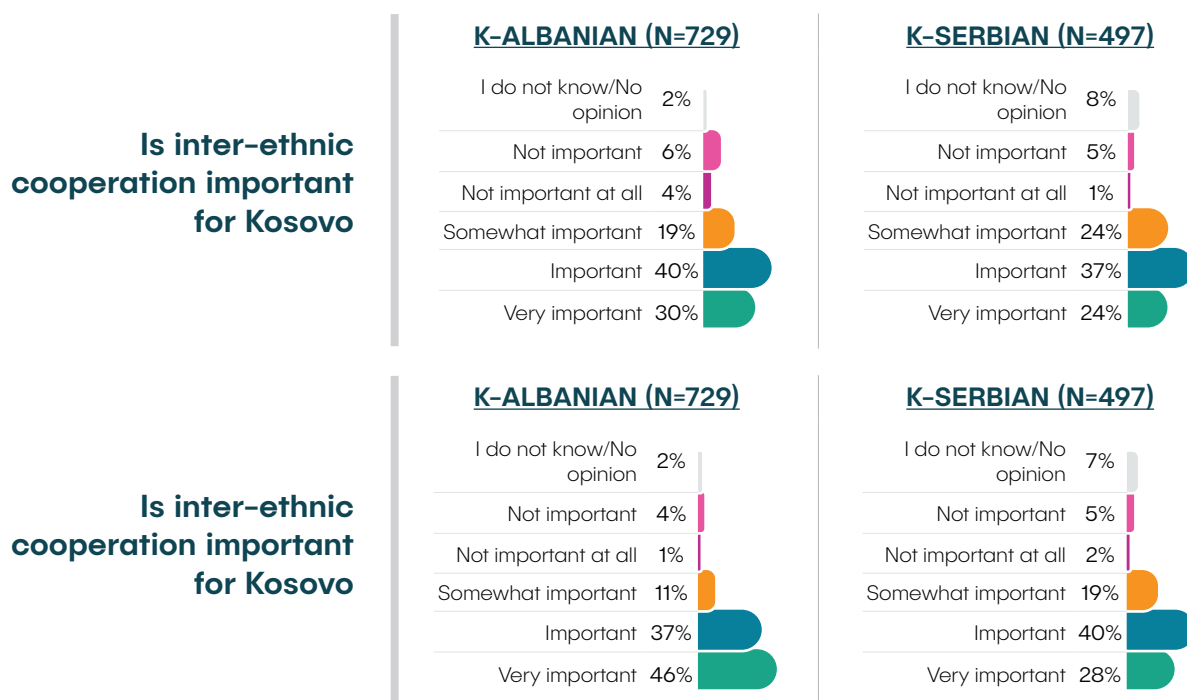
K-SERBIAN (N=497)



HOW DO THE CITIZENS PERCEIVE INTER-ETHNIC COOPERATION?

The political cooperation between the Government of Kosovo and the political representatives of the Serbian community in Kosovo continues to have an impact on inter-ethnic cooperation in Kosovo.⁴ In this regard, the opinions of local communities toward these two entities influence to some extent how those communities view one another and the degree of cooperation between them. The literature, on the other hand, acknowledges the identification of shared interests as a mechanism that can reduce in-group bias and foster inter-ethnic cooperation.⁵ Starting with the survey results, which showed that over 50 percent of both communities, or 70 percent of K-Albanian and 61 percent of K-Serb respondents, respectively, declared inter-ethnic cooperation to be important or very important for them, it can be noted that inter-ethnic cooperation can be highlighted as the shared interest of various ethnic communities in Kosovo. Furthermore, 83 percent of the K-Albanian and 68 percent of the K-Serbian respondents perceive inter-ethnic cooperation as important or very important for Kosovo.

TABLE 16 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF INTER-ETHNIC COOPERATION BY ETHNICITY

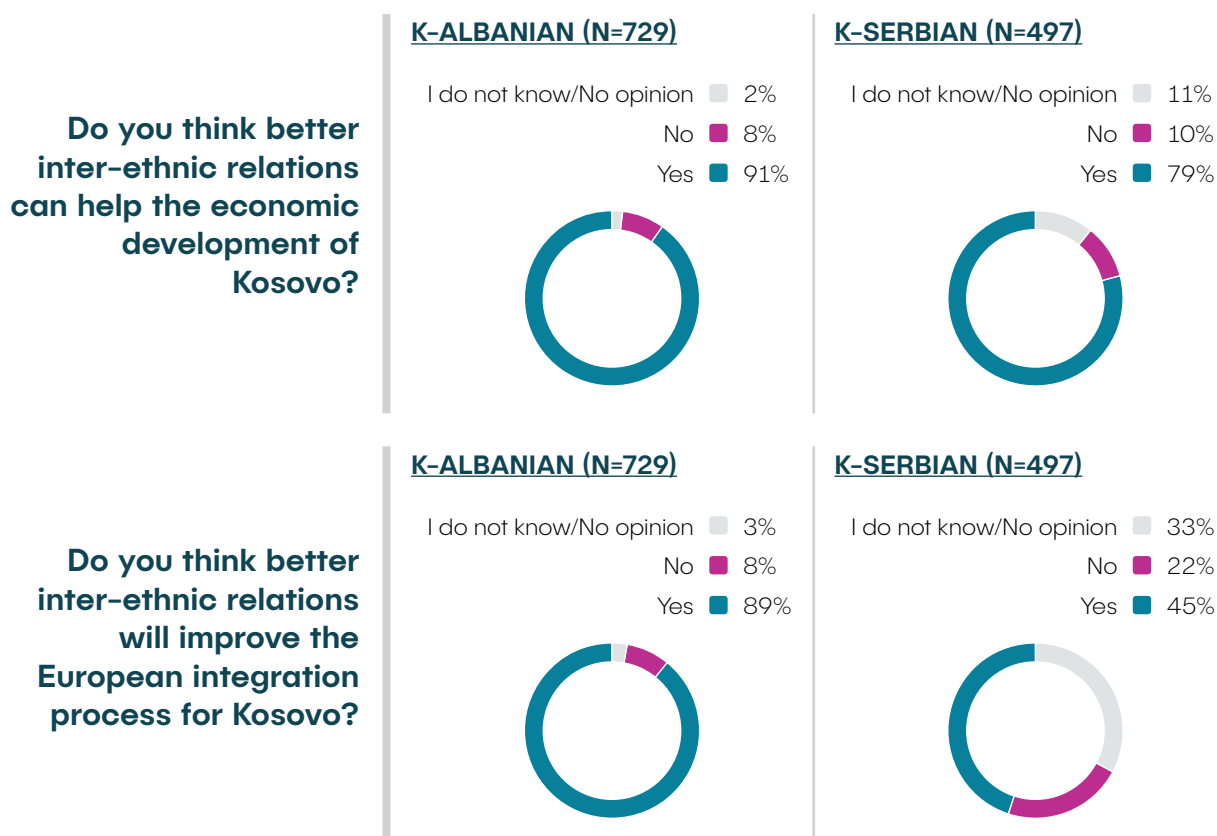


4 Orana, A. (2021) "Can Kurti Use the Moment to Start Genuine Inter-Ethnic Cooperation?," *Kosovo 2.0*. Kosovo 2.0. Available at: <https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/can-kurti-use-the-moment-to-start-genuine-inter-ethnic-cooperation/>.

5 Butler, D. and Tavits, M. (2020) "Shared interests foster interethnic cooperation among politicians," *Political Science Research and Methods*, 9(3), pp. 627–640. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2019.60>.

The respondents from both groups also acknowledge the significance of inter-ethnic cooperation in terms of its contribution to Kosovo’s development, such as in the economic sphere or European integration. For 98 percent of K-Albanian and 89 percent of K-Serbian respondents, better inter-ethnic relations help the economic development of Kosovo. On the other hand, when this matter was analyzed in the margins of European integration, 33 percent of the K-Serbian respondents declared that they have no opinion on this matter, while 45 percent of them hold the opinion that better inter-ethnic cooperation improves the European integration process for Kosovo. Such opinion is shared by 89 percent of the K-Albanian respondents.

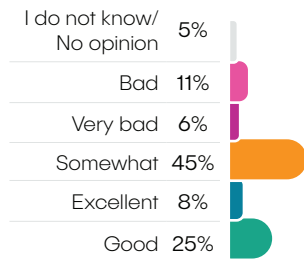
TABLE 17 PERCEPTIONS ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN KOSOVO AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION BY ETHNICITY



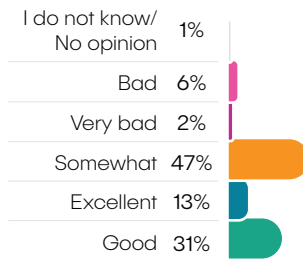
However, differences in opinions between the two communities are noticed in their assessment of the current inter-ethnic cooperation in Kosovo. While 44 percent of the K-Albanian respondents rate the inter-ethnic cooperation in Kosovo as good or excellent, 17 percent of K-Serbian respondents share such an opinion. On the other hand, 32 percent of the K-Serbian respondents assess the inter-ethnic cooperation as bad or very bad, as opposed to eight percent of the K-Albanian respondents that hold such views.

TABLE 18 THE ASSESSMENT OF RESPONDENTS FOR THE STATE OF INTER-ETHNIC COOPERATION IN KOSOVO. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY

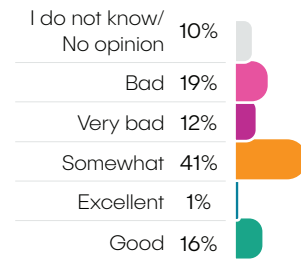
ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1226)



K-ALBANIAN (N=729)



K-SERBIAN (N=497)

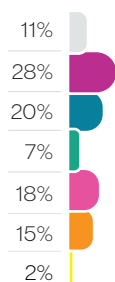


The two communities share similar views when it comes to the obstacles that inter-ethnic relations face in Kosovo. For the K-Albanian community, lack of justice for crimes committed during the war in the 90s (36%), the refusal by Serbia to accept the independence of Kosovo (26%), and lack of reconciliation between Kosovo and Serbia (19%), are the most important obstacles for better inter-ethnic relations. On the other hand, the K-Serbian community ranks the prejudices against each other in the community (23%) and lack of reconciliation between Kosovo and Serbia (21%) as the key obstacles. Furthermore, 22 percent of the K-Serbian respondents did not provide an opinion on this issue, while 15 percent of them see lack of justice for crimes committed during the war in the 90s as an important obstacle.

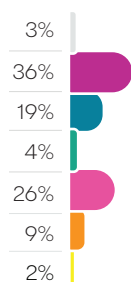
TABLE 19 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE MOST IMPORTANT OBSTACLES FOR BETTER INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN KOSOVO. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY

- I do not know/No opinion
- Lack of justice for crimes committed during the war in the 90s
- Lack of reconciliation between Kosovo and Serbia
- Lack of trust between different communities in Kosovo
- The refusal by Serbia to accept the independence of Kosovo
- Prejudices against each other in the community
- Other

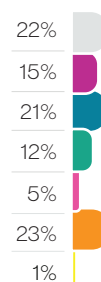
ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1226)



K-ALBANIAN (N=729)

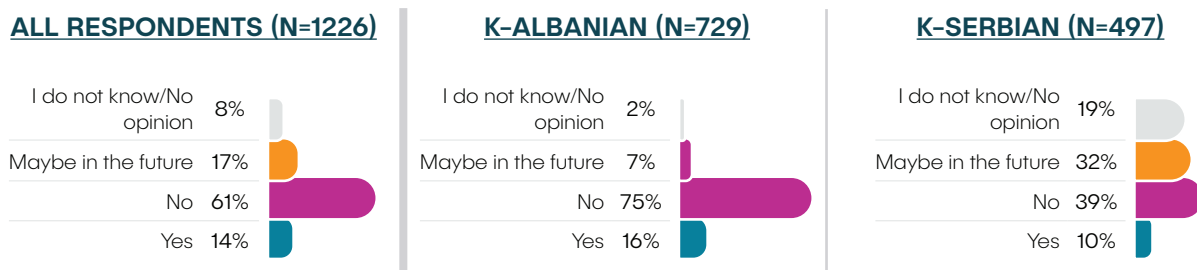


K-SERBIAN (N=497)



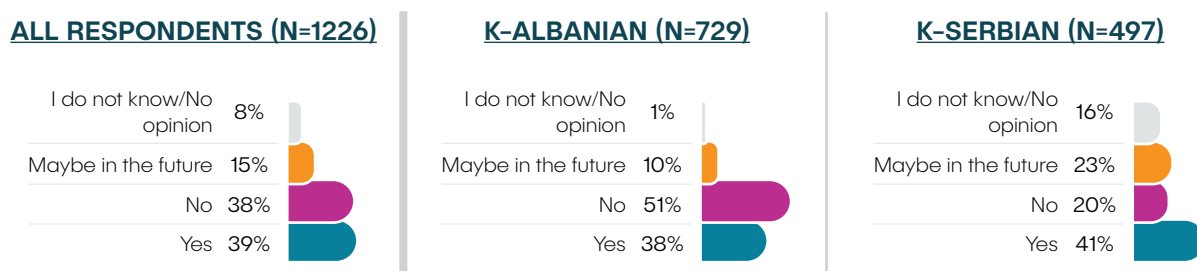
The willingness of citizens to support a political party from a different ethnic group and their perceptions of the potential for learning the languages of other ethnic communities, such as Albanian and Serbian, in schools, are also taken into consideration when analyzing citizens' perceptions of inter-ethnic cooperation. With regard to the political support, K-Albanian respondents are more explicit, with 75% of them stating that they would not vote for a political party that does not represent their ethnic group, as opposed to 39% of K-Serbian respondents who hold this view. However, seven percent of K-Albanian respondents and 39 percent of K-Serbian respondents said they might do so in the future, while 16 percent of the K-Albanian and 10 percent of the K-Serbia respondents remain open to vote for a political party that does not represent their ethnic group.

TABLE 20 THE WILLINGNESS OF RESPONDENTS TO VOTE FOR A POLITICAL PARTY NOT REPRESENTING THEIR ETHNIC GROUP. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY



As for the support of the respondents for learning the languages of other ethnic groups, such as Albanian and Serbian, 38 percent of K-Albanian respondents and 41 percent of K-Serbian respondents think that local communities in Kosovo should learn languages of other ethnic groups in schools. In contrast, 51 percent of K-Albanians and 20 percent of K-Serbians think that this shouldn't happen, but 23 percent of K-Serbians and ten percent of K-Albanians consider the possibility that it might in the future.

TABLE 21 PERCEPTIONS WHETHER THE LANGUAGES OF OTHER COMMUNITIES, SUCH AS ALBANIAN AND SERBIAN, SHOULD BE LEARNED AT SCHOOLS. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY



ARE THE CITIZENS SATISFIED WITH THE WORK OF MUNICIPAL AND CENTRAL LEVEL INSTITUTIONS IN ADVANCING INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS?

The representation of ethnic communities in political life is a crucial aspect of inter-ethnic relations because it affects how citizens view institutions and their capacity to represent their interests. Moreover, it also has an impact on how local communities view and interact with citizens from other ethnic groups, thus enabling a better social cohesion in a multi-ethnic society.⁶ In this regard, a portion of the survey was focused on citizens' impressions of their representation in Kosovo society and at the local level, as well as their perceptions of the role played by institutions in the improvement of inter-ethnic relations.

In contrast to 69 percent of the K-Albanian respondents, 15 percent of the K-Serbian community have declared that they feel represented in Kosovar society, while 26 percent feel represented to some degree. On the other hand, 31 percent of the K-Serbian respondents do not feel represented in the Kosovar society, while 11 percent of the K-Albanian respondents share such a view. The sense of representation grows when this topic is viewed from the local perspective. While 83 percent of K-Albanian respondents agree that they feel fully or to some degree represented in their municipality, 51% of K-Serbian respondents say the same.

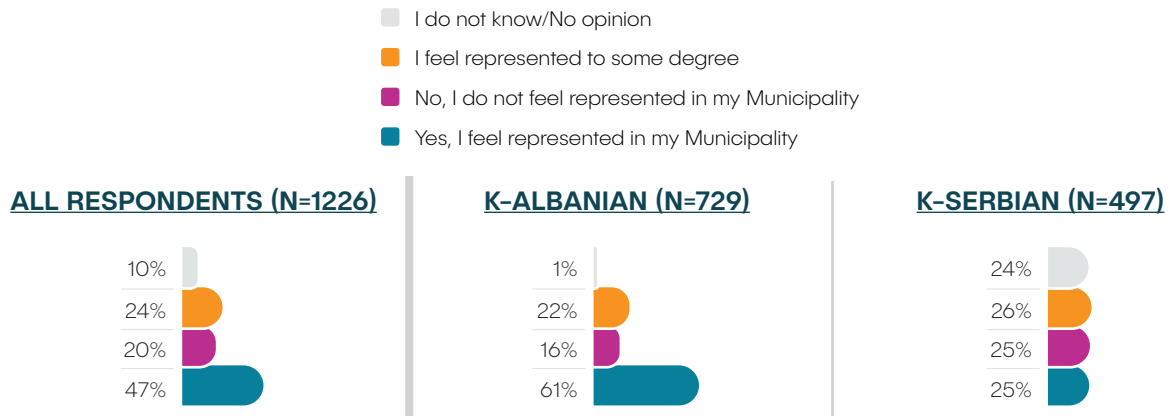
TABLE 22 PERCEPTIONS WHETHER THE CITIZENS OF KOSOVO FEEL REPRESENTED IN THE KOSOVAR SOCIETY. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY



⁶ O'Brochta, W. (2021) "Citizen responses to ethnic representation," *Political Studies*, p. 003232172110198. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217211019834>.

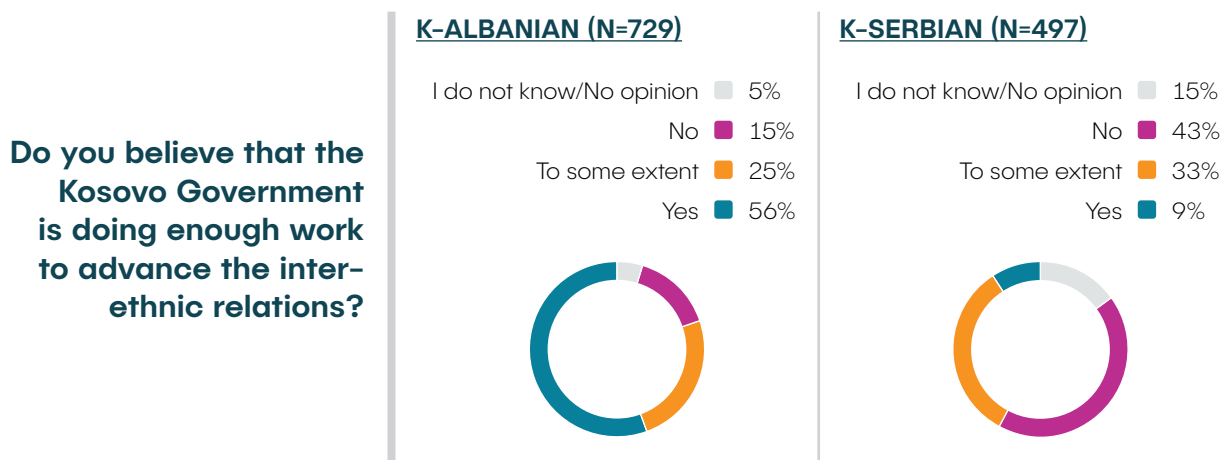
Are the citizens satisfied with the work of municipal and central level institutions in advancing inter-ethnic relations?

TABLE 23 PERCEPTIONS WHETHER THE CITIZENS OF KOSOVO FEEL REPRESENTED IN THEIR RESPECTIVE MUNICIPALITIES. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY



The feeling of representation in the society of Kosovo also reflects the perceptions of the citizens about the work of institutions in advancing inter-ethnic relations. In this respect, while the K-Albanian respondents believe that both the Government of Kosovo as well as their respective municipalities are doing enough work to advance the inter-ethnic relations, the K-Serbian community remain skeptical towards the Government's work, while express better assessments on the municipalities work in this matter. For 56 percent of the K-Albanian respondents the Government is doing enough work for the advancement of the inter-ethnic relations, while 54 percent share such opinion regarding their respective municipalities. On the other hand, while 21 percent of the K-Serbian respondents assess the work of their municipalities as positive for the inter-ethnic relations, nine percent of them share such a view for the Government of Kosovo.

TABLE 24 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE WORK OF KOSOVO GOVERNMENT AND THE MUNICIPALITIES IN ADVANCING THE INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS BY ETHNICITY

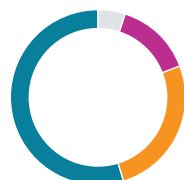


Are the citizens satisfied with the work of municipal and central level institutions in advancing inter-ethnic relations?

Do you believe that your municipality is doing enough work to advance the inter-ethnic relations?

K-ALBANIAN (N=729)

I do not know/No opinion 5%
 No 14%
 To some extent 26%
 Yes 54%



K-SERBIAN (N=497)

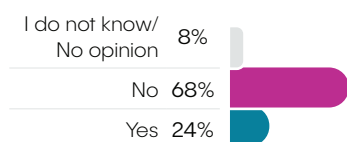
I do not know/No opinion 12%
 No 26%
 To some extent 40%
 Yes 21%



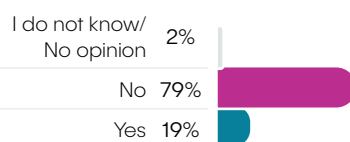
Although there is generally a more favorable perception of local efforts to advance inter-ethnic relations, citizens of Kosovo show a lack of familiarity with municipal bodies like the Municipal Community Safety Councils that exist in all Kosovo municipalities and are responsible for discussing local communities' safety issues. In this regard, 68% of respondents, or 79% of K-Albanians and 52% of K-Serbians, respectively, stated that they were not familiar with the Municipal Community Safety Council in their respective municipality.

TABLE 25 PERCEPTIONS WHETHER THE CITIZENS ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY SAFETY COUNCIL IN THEIR RESPECTIVE MUNICIPALITIES. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY

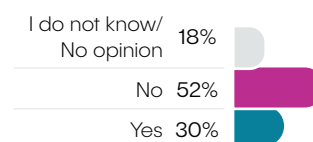
ALL RESPONDENTS (N=1226)



K-ALBANIAN (N=729)



K-SERBIAN (N=497)



Moreover, the respondents seem to be unaware of the laws that are in place to defend citizens from discrimination and advance the rights of communities. In this aspect, when asked whether they were aware of Law No. 05/L-021 on the Protection from Discrimination, 48% of K-Albanians and 53% of K-Serbians responded that they were not. In addition, 50% of K-Albanian respondents and 45% of K-Serbians respondents said they were unaware of any laws protecting their rights.

Are the citizens satisfied with the work of municipal and central level institutions in advancing inter-ethnic relations?

TABLE 26 RESPONDENTS AWARENESS OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE LAWS PROTECTING THEIR RIGHTS

Are you aware of the Law on protection against Discrimination?

K-ALBANIAN (N=729)

I do not know/No opinion 2%
 No 48%
 Yes 50%



K-SERBIAN (N=497)

I do not know/No opinion 16%
 No 53%
 Yes 32%



Are you aware of any legislation that protects your rights?

K-ALBANIAN (N=729)

I do not know/No opinion 2%
 No 50%
 Yes 48%



K-SERBIAN (N=497)

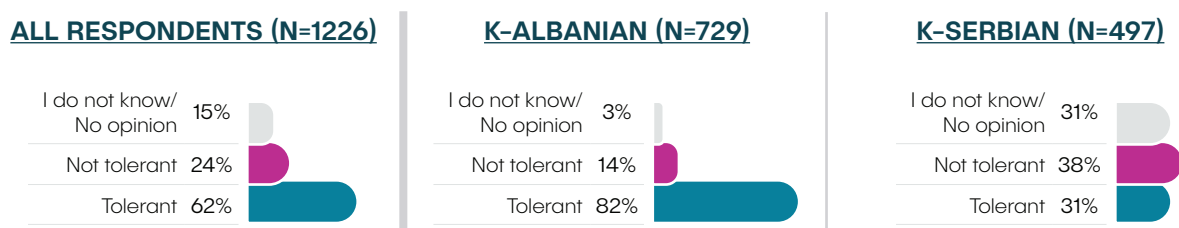
I do not know/No opinion 12%
 No 45%
 Yes 42%



HOW ACCEPTING ARE KOSOVO CITIZENS OF ONE ANOTHER?

The likelihood of intolerance is reduced by exposing various ethnic groups to one another and fostering more interactions between members of various communities.⁷ The increased interaction between various ethnic groups also makes it possible to form perceptions based on experience and direct contact, thus reducing the likelihood of social prejudices as well. In this regard, the FIERC survey has examined the opinions of Kosovo citizens for the Kosovar society's tolerance. Kosovar society is perceived as being tolerant of other ethnicities by 82 percent of K-Albanians and 31 percent of K-Serbian respondents. On the other hand, 38% of the K-Serbians community think Kosovar society is intolerant of other ethnicities, while 31% of them have refused to express a view on the subject.

TABLE 27 PERCEPTIONS WHETHER KOSOVAR SOCIETY IS TOLERANT OF OTHER ETHNICITIES. GENERAL + BY ETHNICITY



The perceptions regarding tolerance were further analyzed through assessing the citizens' willingness to accept various communities on a range of scales, from the wider to the more personal relationships. Both the K-Albanian and the K-Serbian respondents in this case describe themselves as being more willing to accept the other communities residing in Kosovo as well as one another in larger community contexts as opposed to on a personal level. In this regard, more than 50 percent of K-Albanian and K-Serbian respondents said they would accept one another as well as the Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Turkish, and Bosnian communities to live in their neighborhoods, work beside one another, or be friends. Over 50 percent of K-Albanian respondents said they would accept all the aforementioned communities as public officials in their country, compared to less than 40 percent of K-Serbians who were open to accepting the respective communities as public officials in their country. There is a wider gap between the communities when it comes to the personal level, as evidenced by the fact that most respondents from both ethnic groups would not have approved of someone from these communities marrying

⁷ Laurence, J. (2013) "Reconciling the contact and threat hypotheses: Does ethnic diversity strengthen or weaken community inter-ethnic relations?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37(8), pp. 1328–1349. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.788727>.

How accepting are Kosovo citizens of one another?

any member of their family. In general, the K-Albanian respondents are more receptive to the Turkish community, whilst the K-Serbian respondents show more proximity to the Bosnian community in Kosovo.

TABLE 28 THE K-ALBANIAN RESPONDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT VARIOUS COMMUNITIES ON A RANGE OF SCALES, FROM THE WIDER TO THE MORE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ⁸

WOULD YOU ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITIES TO:

SERBIAN	Yes		No
Live in your neighborhood, street, apartment building	60%		39%
Be your colleague at work	68%		30%
Be your superior at work	49%		49%
Be a teacher to your children or grandchildren	35%		63%
Be your friend	52%		47%
Be a public official in your country	55%		44%
Be married with a family member of yours	9%		91%
ROMA			
Live in your neighborhood, street, apartment building	66%		33%
Be your colleague at work	70%		29%
Be your superior at work	56%		43%
Be a teacher to your children or grandchildren	47%		52%
Be your friend	63%		36%
Be a public official in your country	62%		37%
Be married with a family member of yours	11%		88%
ASHKALI			
Live in your neighborhood, street, apartment building	66%		33%
Be your colleague at work	68%		30%
Be your superior at work	56%		43%
Be a teacher to your children or grandchildren	49%		50%
Be your friend	62%		37%
Be a public official in your country	62%		38%
Be married with a family member of yours	11%		88%

⁸ The option "I do not know/No opinion" is not included in this table, thus adding up the results will not sum up to 100%

How accepting are Kosovo citizens of one another?

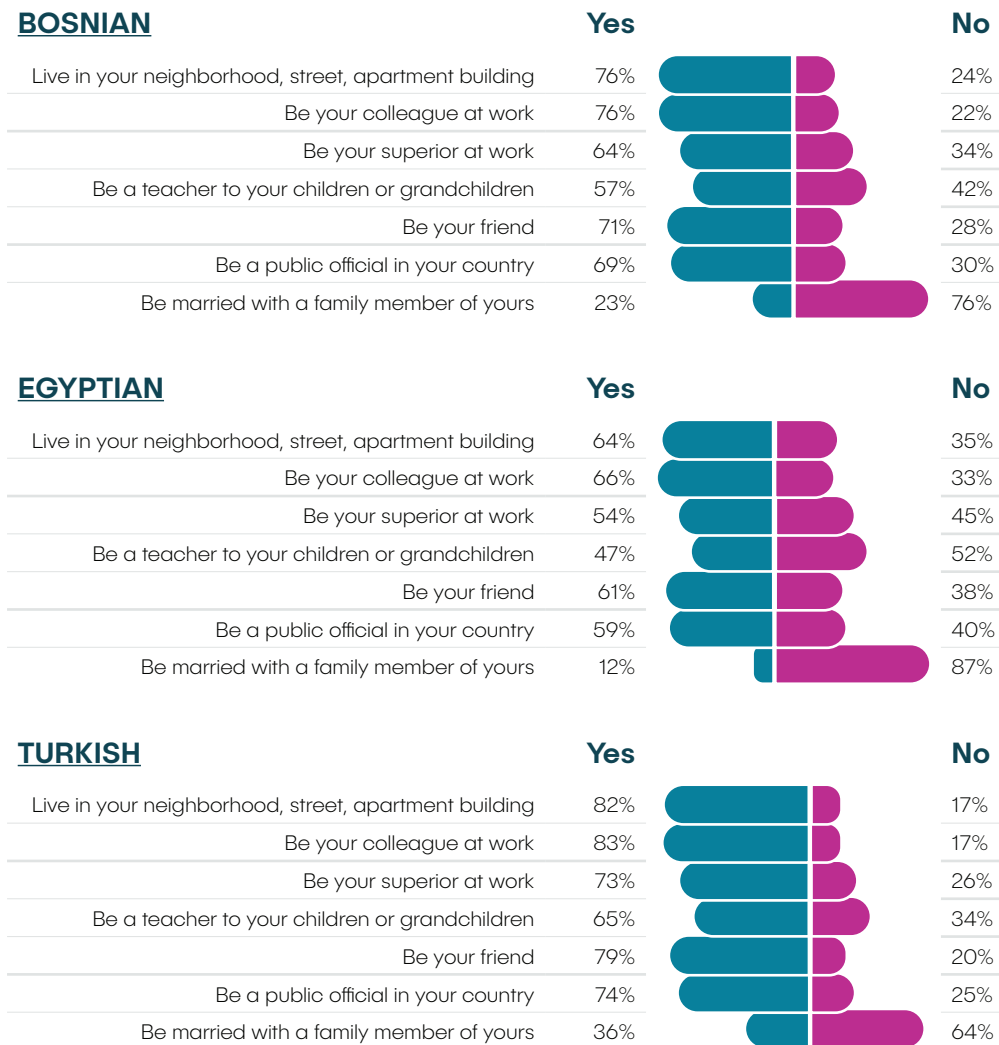
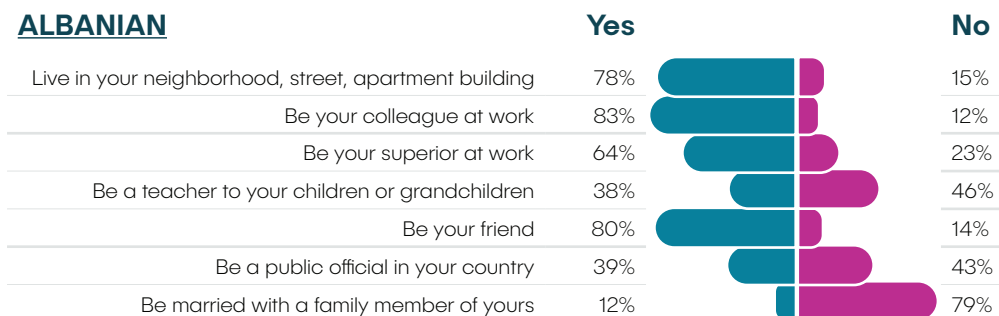


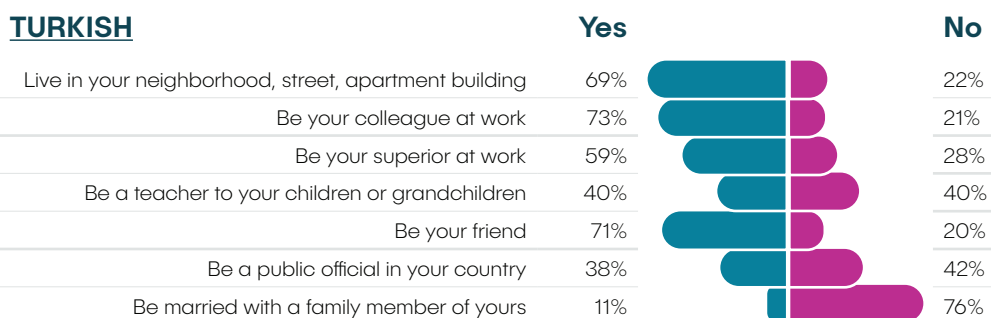
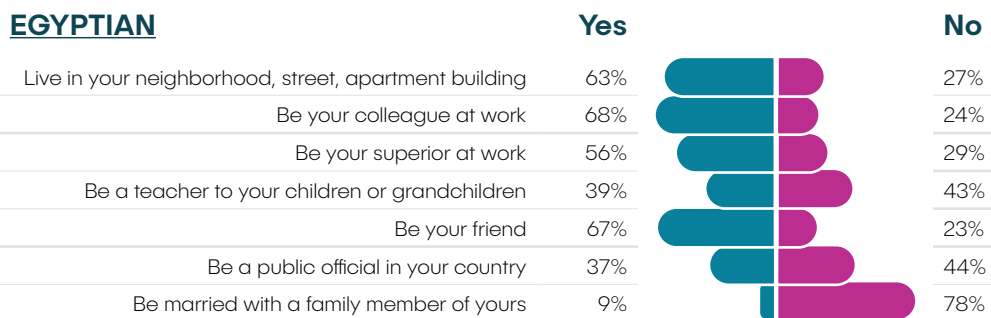
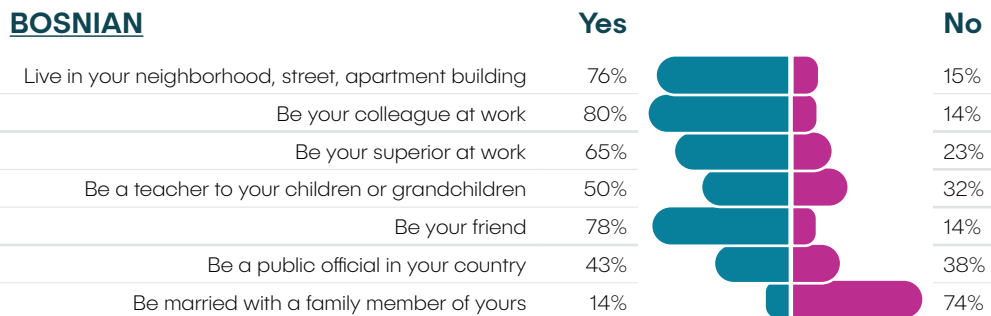
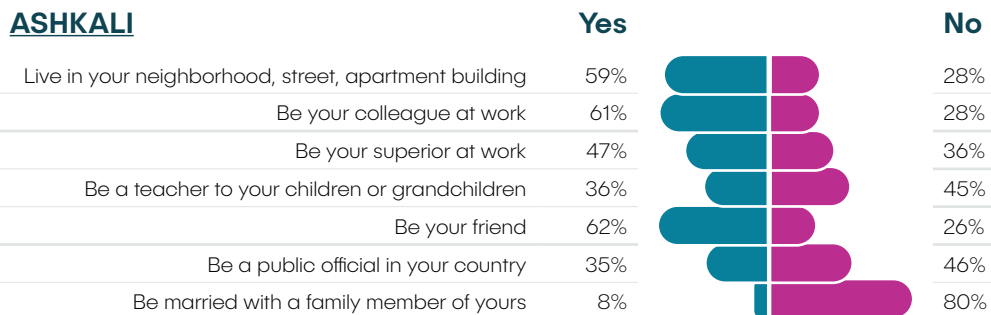
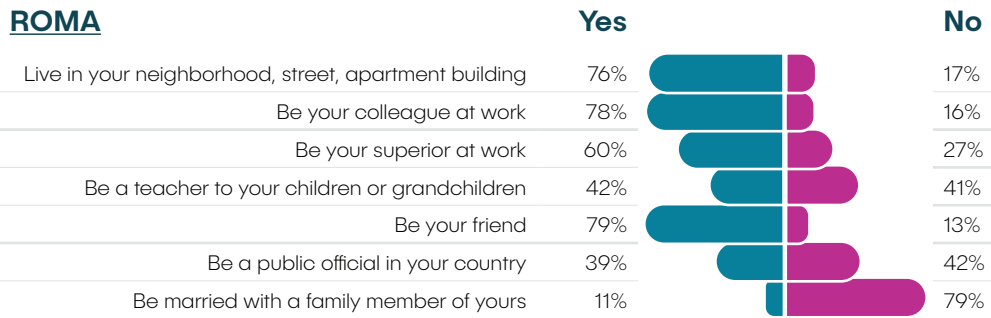
TABLE 29 THE K-SERBIAN RESPONDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT VARIOUS COMMUNITIES ON A RANGE OF SCALES, FROM THE WIDER TO THE MORE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ⁹

WOULD YOU ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITIES TO:



⁹ The option "I do not know/No opinion" is not included in this table, thus adding up the results will not sum up to 100%

How accepting are Kosovo citizens of one another?



KEY TAKEAWAYS

The will to improve interethnic relations may be seen in the citizens of Kosovo perceptions of their society as being multi-ethnic and their positioning that Kosovo should remain as such. The Serbian community, however, displays a stronger sentiment that they do not feel represented in Kosovar society, while also generally assessing the work of the Kosovo institutions in improving inter-ethnic relations poorly. This suggests that greater efforts are required on the part of Kosovo's institutions to get closer to non-majority communities to better understand their needs. The fact that municipalities' efforts to improve inter-ethnic relations are seen more positively than those of central institutions, demonstrates the crucial roles that contact with institutions, adequate representation, and accessibility to them play in ensuring that all ethnic communities are fairly represented.

The findings demonstrate that the Albanian majority community in Kosovo feels safer than the Serbian community, whereas the more pronounced reluctance of the Serbian community to respond to questions about the political climate and safety issues also suggests more skeptical perceptions for the safety and political environment within this community. This is also demonstrated by the fact that, in contrast to the Albanian community, which widely acknowledges these potential problems but does not place them on the same level as the Serbian community, the perceptions of discrimination and the failure to adequately address potential violence against ethnic minorities are higher among the Serbian community.

Political maturity is crucial in addressing inter-ethnic issues, as evidenced by the perceptions of the citizens of the detrimental effects of the political elite's rhetoric in connection to inter-ethnic relations. Additionally, since for most of the respondents' inter-ethnic cooperation is seen as important, political efforts to advance this goal should be grounded in the community, and as such, must reflect the needs and requirements of the citizens. Additionally, having in mind that the 1990s war crimes and the failure to reach reconciliation between Kosovo and Serbia are perceived as barriers to improved inter-ethnic cooperation, political solutions must be in line with public opinion to have an impact on inter-societal reconciliation as well.

Given that both the Albanian and Serbian communities view issues like unemployment, corruption, a weak education system, etc. as major threats to the community, addressing social welfare issues can be viewed as one of the common denominators of Kosovo citizens. In this respect, a system focusing on the practical issues of all communities in Kosovo presents an important mechanism for improving inter-ethnic relations and would enable a more inclusive process of integration of non-majority communities.

ABOUT THE FOSTERING INTER-ETHNIC COOPERATION AND RECONCILIATION (FIERC) PROJECT

FIERC (Fostering Inter-Ethnic Cooperation and Reconciliation) is an 18-month project funded by the Stability Pact Fund of the German Federal Foreign Office, and it is implemented by the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) in partnership with the New Social Initiative (NSI). Fostering Inter-ethnic Cooperation and Reconciliation (FIERC) project works to increase cooperation among communities in order to improve development opportunities and energize active citizenry in municipal decision-making processes in order to advance public interest in divided communities in Kosovo, with a focus on Albanian and Serbian communities. The overall objective of the project is to foster inter-ethnic cooperation in Kosovo by opening up space for mutual trust building interactions, creating opportunities to jointly identify/address common challenges, and collaborate for community solutions.

FIERC project has three components:

Component I: Research and Analysis: The goal of the first component of research and analysis is to provide a deeper understanding of how citizens and community leaders perceive inter-ethnic relations in their community and what obstacles prevent better cooperation. The research and analysis will be accompanied and supported by external academic advisers, in the form of reviews of research activities and workshops on quantitative and qualitative research methods and research ethics. As part of the first component a public opinion survey will be conducted in ethnically diverse sites in Kosovo, about community perception of inter-ethnic relations and cooperation. Also, motivational and awareness raising videos with community leaders and citizens will be developed and promoted.

Component II: Capacity Building Development and Training: The goal of the second component is to provide direct support to support development of skills and know-how among non-government organizations, public institutions, community leaders, private sector and business community to engage more actively in the national decision-making processes. This will be done through training, mentoring and on the job-coaching which will improve the soft skills of the citizens to help them to move forward with economic and start-up initiatives which will support them in their project development ideas.

Component III: Advocacy and engagement: The goal of the third component is to directly support inter-ethnic cooperation through engagement at the community level (grassroots). The main focus of this component will be to increase civic activism of the targeted community and municipalities and doing activism for common community interests such as: protecting their basic community rights, protecting the environment, tackling domestic violence, etc. The main result of this component will be the creation of the informal Community Forums for Public Interest (CFPI) which will serve as a coordinating mechanism. FIERC will support with small grants up to 10 community initiatives which are designed to address a community issue or interests, with up to 500 Euro. In addition to this FIERC will support six start up business initiatives with up to 1, 500 Euros for each initiative.

Katalogimi në botim **(CIP)**

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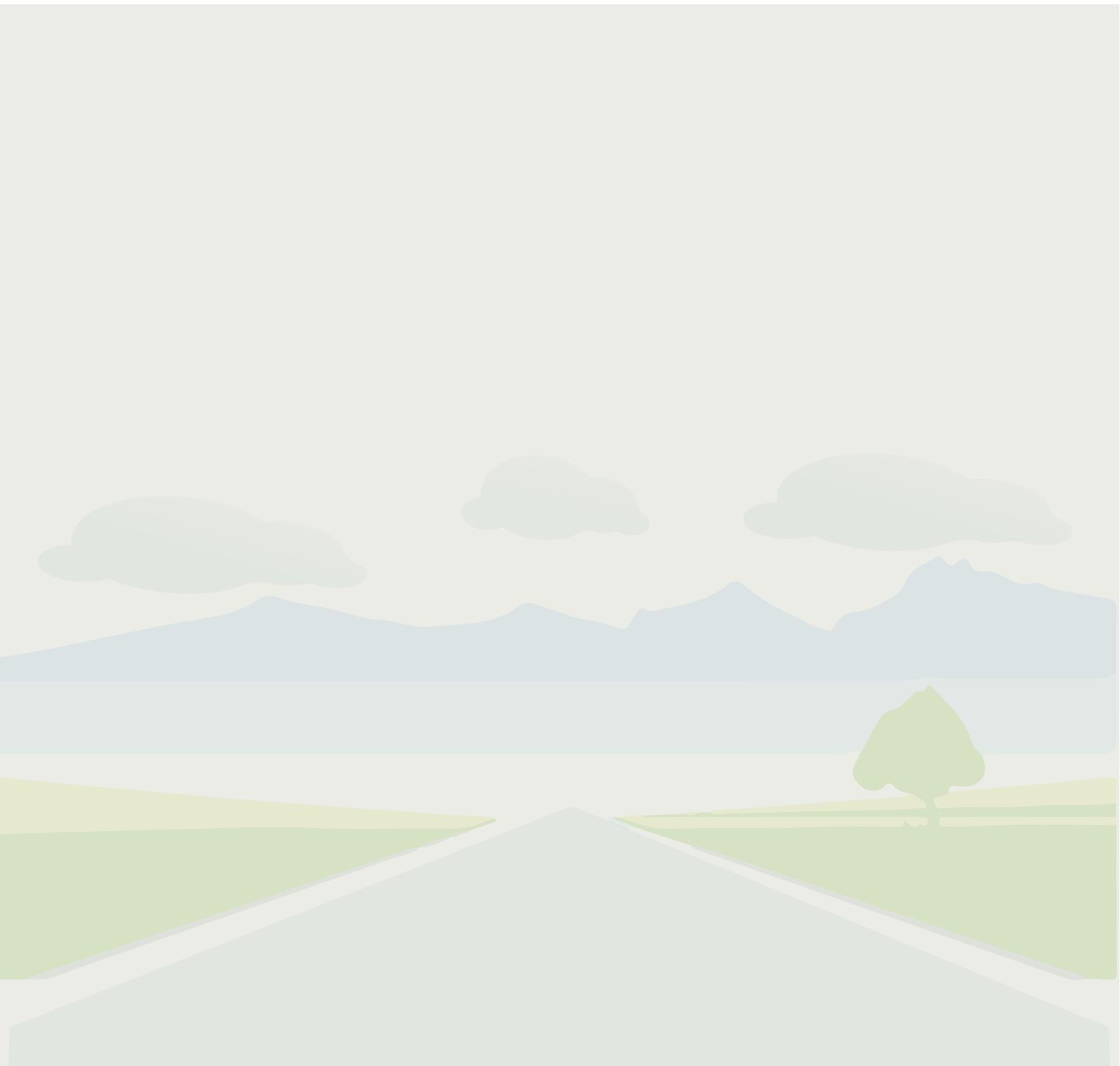
Balaj, Shpat

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