



KCSS
Kosovar Centre for Security Studies

KOSOVO-SERBIA DIALOGUE

EXAMINING RESPONDENTS'
PERCEPTIONS

FEBRUARY 2020





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Perceptions presented in this report are a summary of information gathered from respondents and it solely demonstrates how people perceive institutions. It is no way a conclusive assessment on the quality of the work of institutions subject to this study. It shall serve as an instrument to them toward addressing potential shortcomings, but also an indicator of the effectiveness of their communication with the people.

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This special edition of the Kosovo Security Barometer presents deconstruction of Kosovo's public perception on key Kosovo's national security threats, issues pertinent to dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia as well as respondents' opinions towards Western Balkan countries, European countries and global powers that have influence towards Kosovo's foreign policy. This report provides a comprehensive and detailed data interpretation concerning perception of the public opinion based on a pre-defined set of questions on the issue at hand.

In this regard, this report presents the 2019' Kosovo Security Barometer respondents' perception towards partition of Kosovo and territorial autonomy, including Association of Serb Municipalities which are perceived as national security threats to Kosovo by majority of respondents. In the context of Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, the report addresses public perception on Kosovo's customs tariffs towards products imported from Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina and whether tariffs have weakened relations of Kosovo with its international partners. With regard to Kosovo's foreign policy, the report reflects attitudes of respondents on the influence of foreign countries towards Kosovo.

Apart from general interpretation of data survey on these relevant topics, the report offers cross-tabulated data analysis based on regions, rural/urban areas, gender balance and ethnic composition of respondents.

Given that the Kosovo Security Barometer was conducted on mid-October 2019; therefore, it does not reflect some of the developments that occurred from November 2019 to January 2020 in Kosovo.

Key findings of the report are listed below:

- Corruption in Kosovo is perceived as the highest risk towards national security of the state. A large majority of respondents or 91.41 percent of them perceive that corruption is the biggest internal risks in Kosovo.
- Unemployment (90.98 percent) is ranked at the second place and organised crime (89.31 percent) ranked at the third place respectively as risks to Kosovo's national security.
- It is worth mentioning that most topical issues in the framework of Kosovo-Serbia dialogue facilitated by the European Union, more precisely partition of Kosovo or land swap between Kosovo and Serbia (78.48 percent) and territorial autonomy for Kosovo/Association of Serb Municipalities (64.61 percent) are highly perceived as national security risks by respondents.
- As regards the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, majority of citizens are in favour of restarting the dialogue. Almost 50 percent of respondents stated that the dialogue should be continued.

- Another 21 percent of respondents expressed their attitudes that the dialogue should be conditioned towards Serbia for recognizing Kosovo's independence and war crimes committed in Kosovo during the war. Contrary to this, almost 15 percent of respondents posed that dialogue should not continue.
- As regards Kosovo's customs tariffs towards Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the respondents have expressed different attitudes. Therefore, 35.32 percent of them perceived that tariffs should remain in force, while 32.97 percent of respondents shared their opinions that tariffs should be replaced by application of Kosovo's state full reciprocity measures to Serbia.
- However, results indicate that around 22 percent of respondents answered that tariffs should be removed by the Kosovo Government.
- The 2019 edition of Kosovo Security Barometer findings show that respondents have expressed different perceptions whether customs tariffs have faded Kosovo's relations with its international partners. Thus, around 33.47 percent of respondents disagree that tariffs faded relations of Kosovo with international partners. However, around 30.28 percent of them somehow agree that and other 27.33 percent agree that Kosovo's customs tariffs towards Serbia weakened Kosovo's ties with international partners.
- In terms of strategic partners and allies of Kosovo, the survey data indicates that Germany (79.85 percent), United States (78.60 percent), Albania (69.69 percent) and United Kingdom (62.85 percent) are perceived as the friendliest country to Kosovo.
- On the other hand, Serbia is considered as the most harmful influential country towards Kosovo by 89.86 percent of respondents which is followed by Russia (81.35 percent) and China (59.61 percent) as well.

NATIONAL SECURITY RISKS IN KOSOVO

The Kosovo Security Barometer has asked respondents about the most challenging issues that introduce the biggest internal risks to the national security of Kosovo. This was an open-ended question where respondents were free to state their opinions on what is the main internal national security risk within the country.

Similar to previous years, corruption is the biggest risk in Kosovo during 2019 being counted as the major problem in the country by almost 20 percent of respondents followed by unemployment as the second biggest risk to Kosovo's

national security mentioned by respondents. Issues pertinent to Kosovo's relations with Serbia and its interference in internal matters of Kosovo is perceived by respondents as the third biggest risk to national security in Kosovo by almost 15 percent of respondents as indicated in the following figure.

Other risks mentioned by respondents are crime (7 percent), politicians and political parties (less than 7 percent), migration (almost 4 percent) and other risks highlighted in the 2019 survey edition of the KSB.

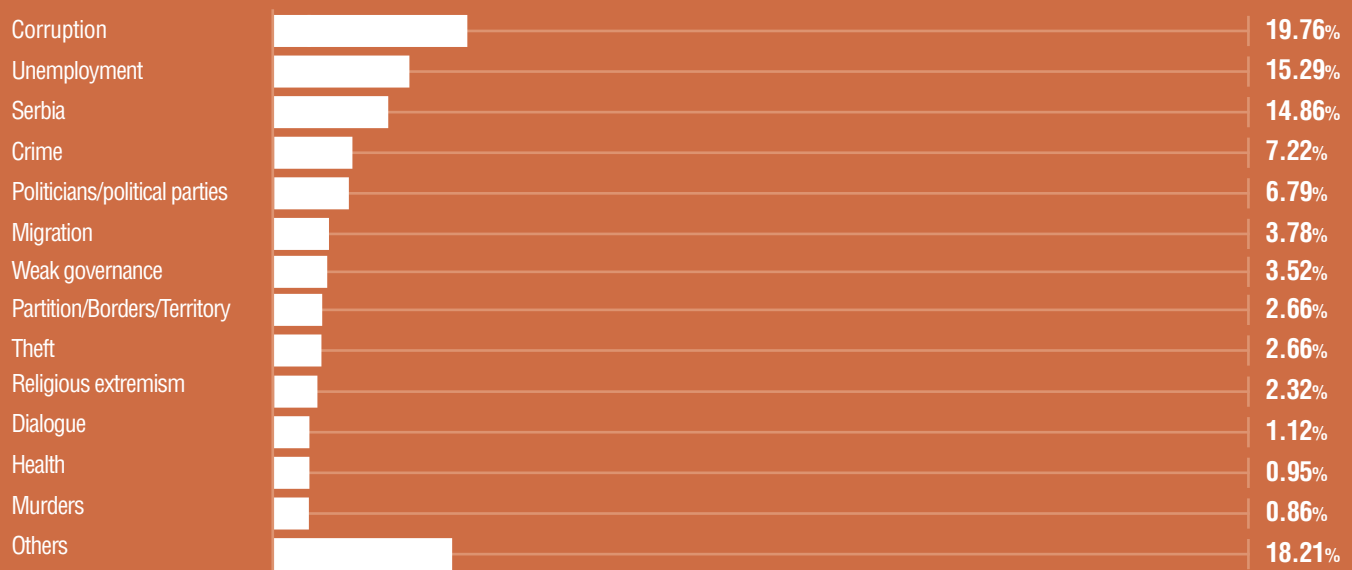


Figure 1 - The biggest internal risks towards national security in Kosovo (open-ended question)

In addition to open-ended question on this issue, the KSB in 2019 has also measured perception of respondents on what are the biggest internal risks to Kosovo's national security through a predetermined options by closed-ended question. Among options listed in the question, corruption in Kosovo is the key and first in the list of internal risks af-

fecting the country's national security. A large majority of respondents or 91.41 percent of them perceive that corruption is the biggest internal risks in Kosovo. It is followed by unemployment (90.98 percent) at the second place and organised crime (89.31 percent) ranked at the third place respectively.



Figure 2 - The biggest internal risks towards national security in Kosovo (closed-ended question)

The following figures (from Figure 3 to Figure 6) indicates deconstruction of respondents' opinions on perceiving partition of Kosovo and territorial autonomy/Association

of Serb Municipalities as high risks vis-à-vis Kosovo's national security.

Partition of Kosovo



Territorial autonomy/Association of Serb Municipalities

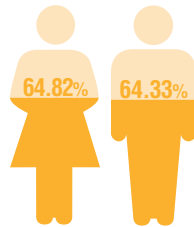


Figure 3 - Perceptions on partition of Kosovo and territorial autonomy/ Association of Serb Municipalities as internal risks towards national security in Kosovo – based on respondents' gender composition

Partition of Kosovo

Rural Zones
79.59%



Urban Zones
78.19%



Territorial autonomy/Association of Serb Municipalities

Rural Zones
64.85%



Urban Zones
64.35%



Figure 4 - Perceptions on partition of Kosovo and territorial autonomy/ Association of Serb Municipalities as internal risks towards national security in Kosovo – based on respondents' areas

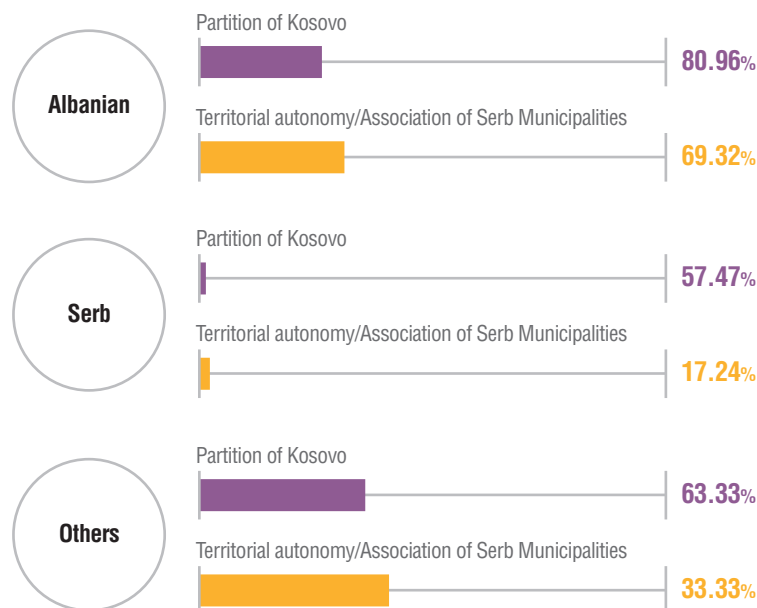
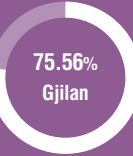
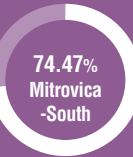
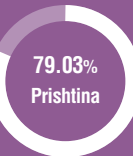


Figure 5 - Perceptions on partition of Kosovo and territorial autonomy/ Association of Serb Municipalities as internal risks towards national security in Kosovo – based on respondents' ethnic composition

Partition of Kosovo



Territorial autonomy/Association of Serb Municipalities

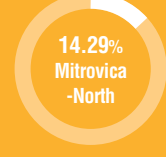
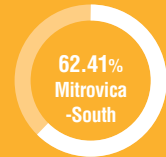
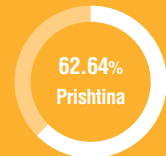


Figure 6 - Perceptions on partition of Kosovo and territorial autonomy/Association of Serb Municipalities as internal risks towards national security in Kosovo – based on respondents' regions

KOSOVO-SERBIA DIALOGUE 2.0

Dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia has been largely depended and influenced by 100% customs tariffs put by the Kosovo Government's decision towards products imported by Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina on late November 2018.¹ Despite the fact that the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue has been temporarily interrupted, majority of citizens are in favour of restarting dialogue.

Consequently, almost 50 percent of respondents stated that the dialogue should continue and agreement should be reached. Other respondents pointed that the dialogue should be conditioned towards Serbia for recognizing Kosovo's independence and war crimes committed in Kosovo during the war. On the other side, almost 15 percent of respondents posed that dialogue should not continue.

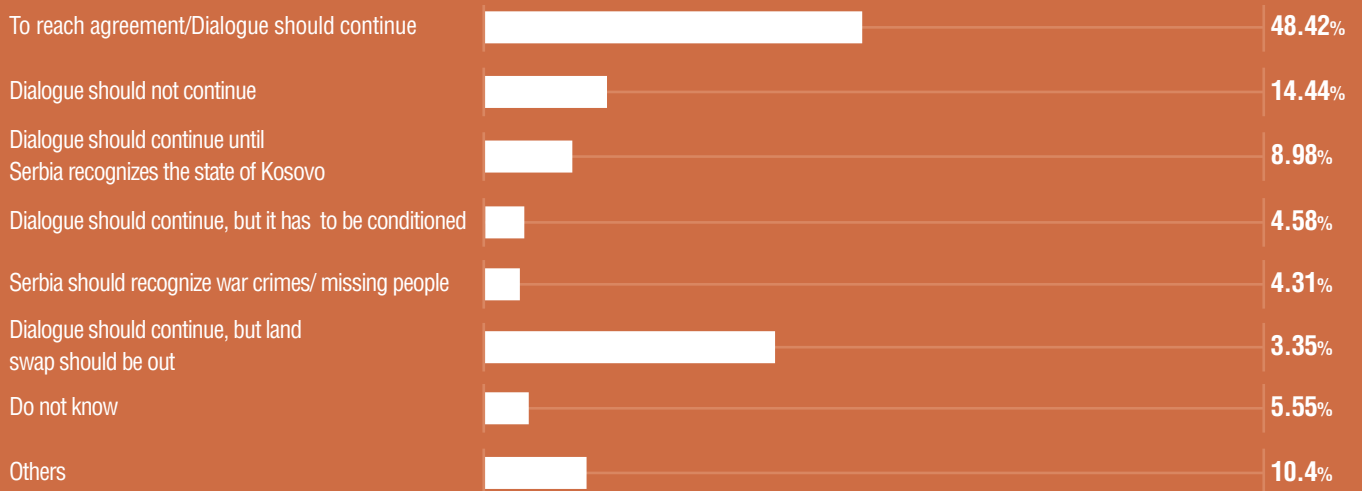


Figure 7 - Respondents' perceptions whether Kosovo-Serbia dialogue should continue (open-ended question)

¹ The Kosovo Government's decision on 100 percent customs tariffs towards Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina can be found here: <https://kryeministri-ks.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Lista-e-mallrave-te-perjashtuara.pdf>.

Kosovar Centre for Security Studies has asked respondents on customs tariffs towards products imported by Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this regard, around 35 percent of them perceived that tariffs should remain in force, while almost 33 percent of respondents shared their opinions that

tariffs should be replaced by Kosovo’s state full reciprocity measures to Serbia. On the other side, results indicate that around 22 percent of respondents think that tariffs should be removed by Kosovo.

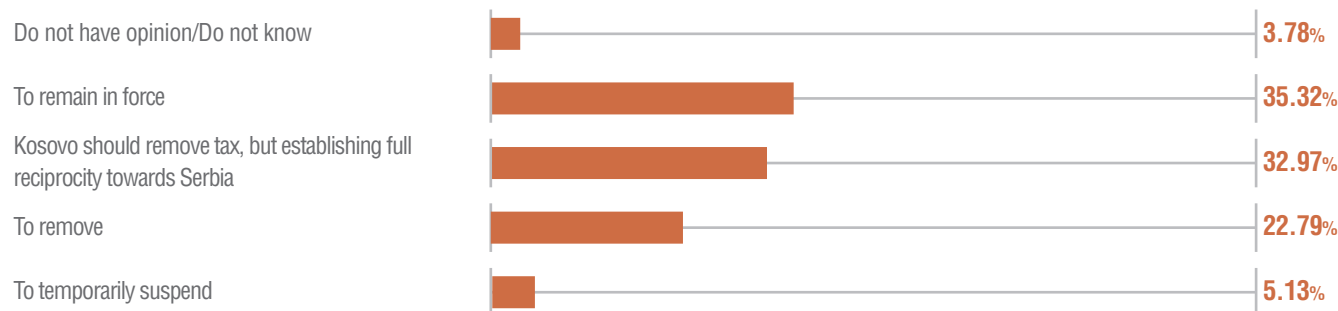


Figure 8 - Perceptions on how should Kosovo react towards its 100% tax on goods imported from Serbia

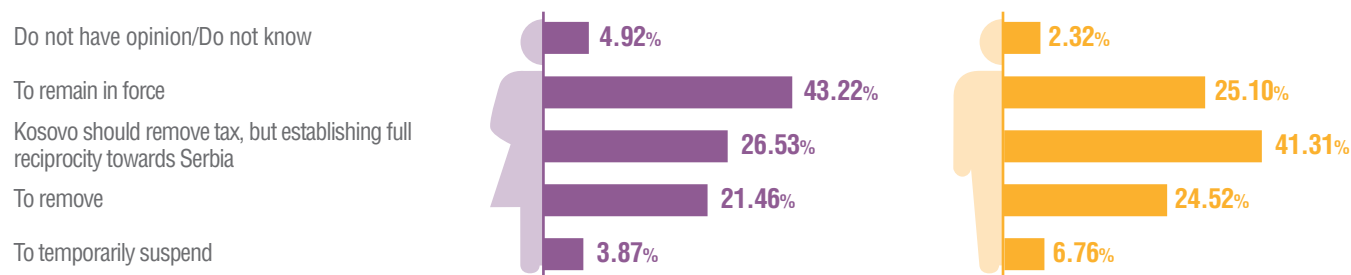


Figure 9 - Perceptions on how should Kosovo react towards its 100% tax on goods imported from Serbia - based on respondents' gender composition

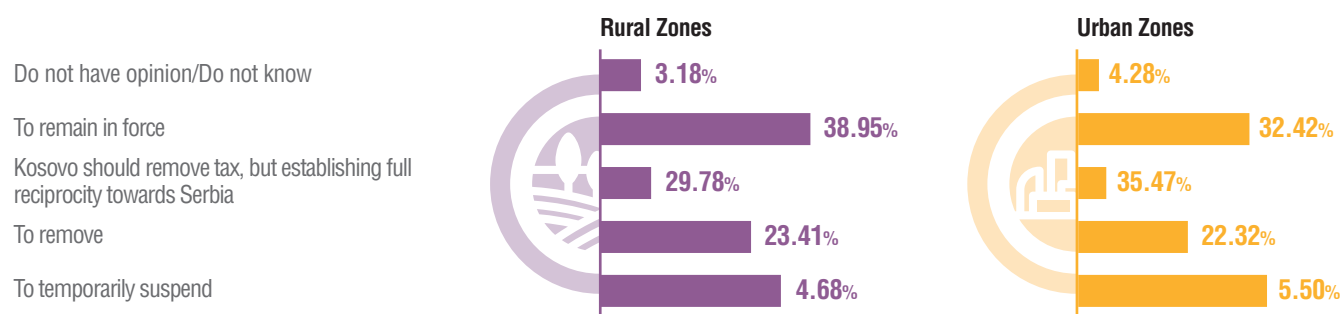


Figure 10 - Perceptions on how should Kosovo react towards its 100% tax on goods imported from Serbia - based on respondents' areas

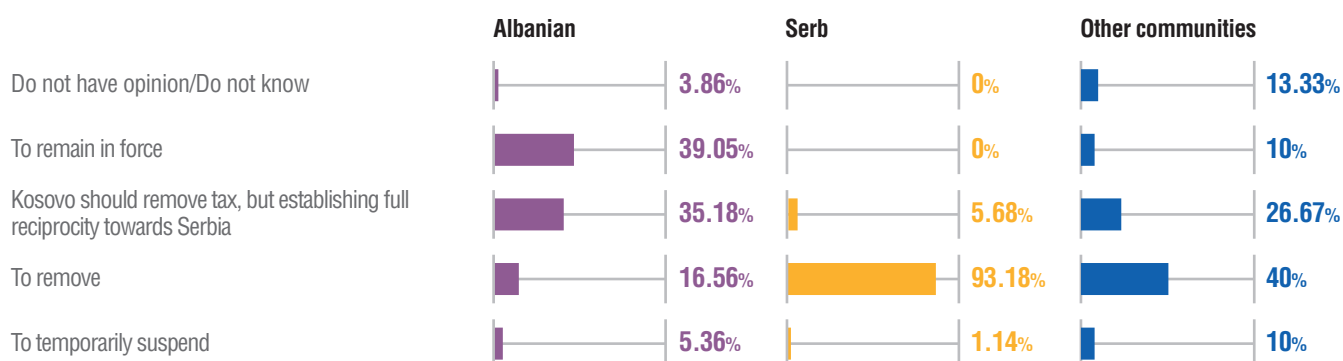


Figure 11 - Perceptions on how should Kosovo react towards its 100% tax on goods imported from Serbia - based on respondents' ethnic composition

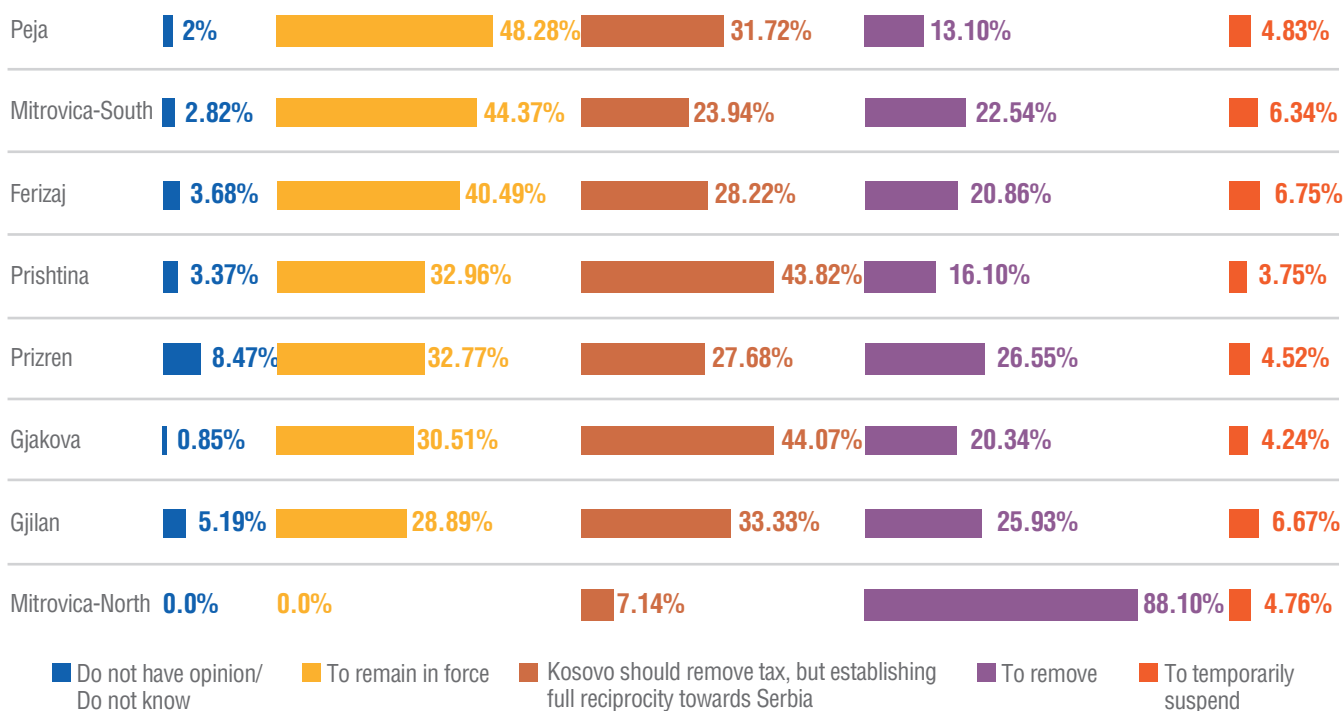


Figure 12 - Perceptions on how should Kosovo react towards its 100% tax on goods imported from Serbia - based on respondents' regions

Respondents have expressed quite different perceptions whether Kosovo's customs tariffs towards Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina have faded or weakened relations of the state of Kosovo with international partners. Accordingly, around 33 percent of respondents disagree that tariffs faded relations of Kosovo with its international partners. However, around 30 percent of them somehow agree that and other 27 percent agree that Kosovo's customs tariffs towards Serbia weakened Kosovo's ties with international partners.

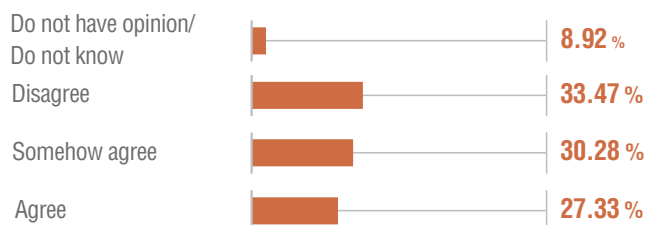


Figure 13 - Perceptions if 100% tax towards goods imported from Serbia faded relations of Kosovo with its international partners

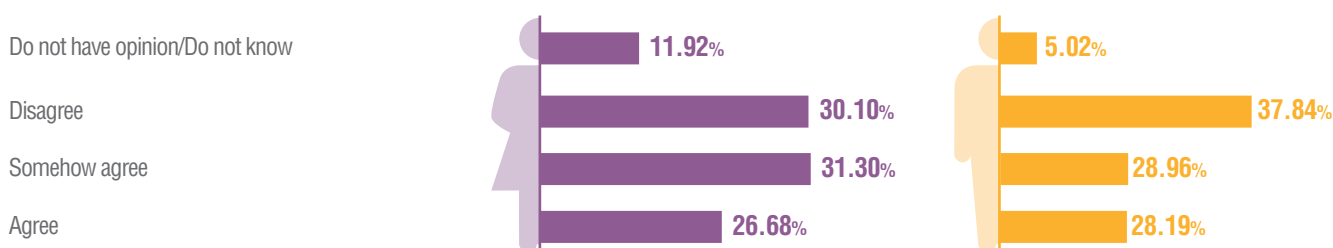


Figure 14 - Perceptions if 100% tax towards goods imported from Serbia faded relations of Kosovo with its international partners - based on respondents' gender composition

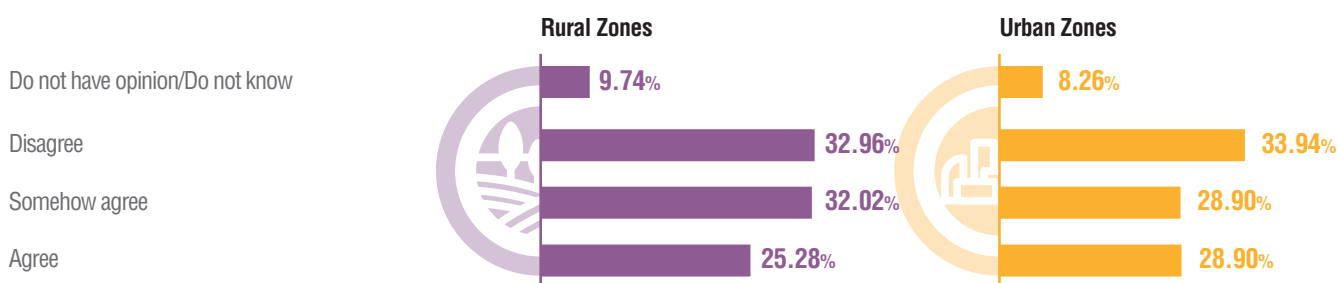


Figure 15 - Perceptions if 100% tax towards goods imported from Serbia faded relations of Kosovo with its international partners - based on respondents' areas

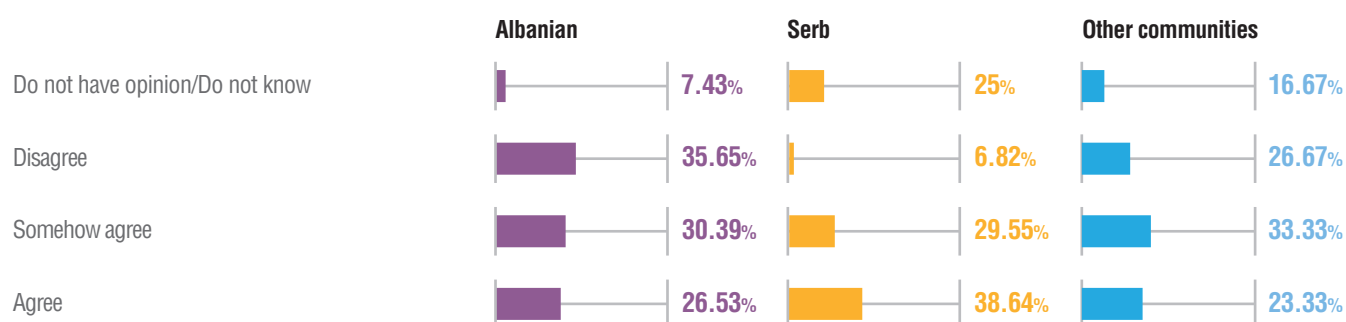


Figure 16 - Perceptions if 100% tax towards goods imported from Serbia faded relations of Kosovo with its international partners - based on respondents' ethnic composition

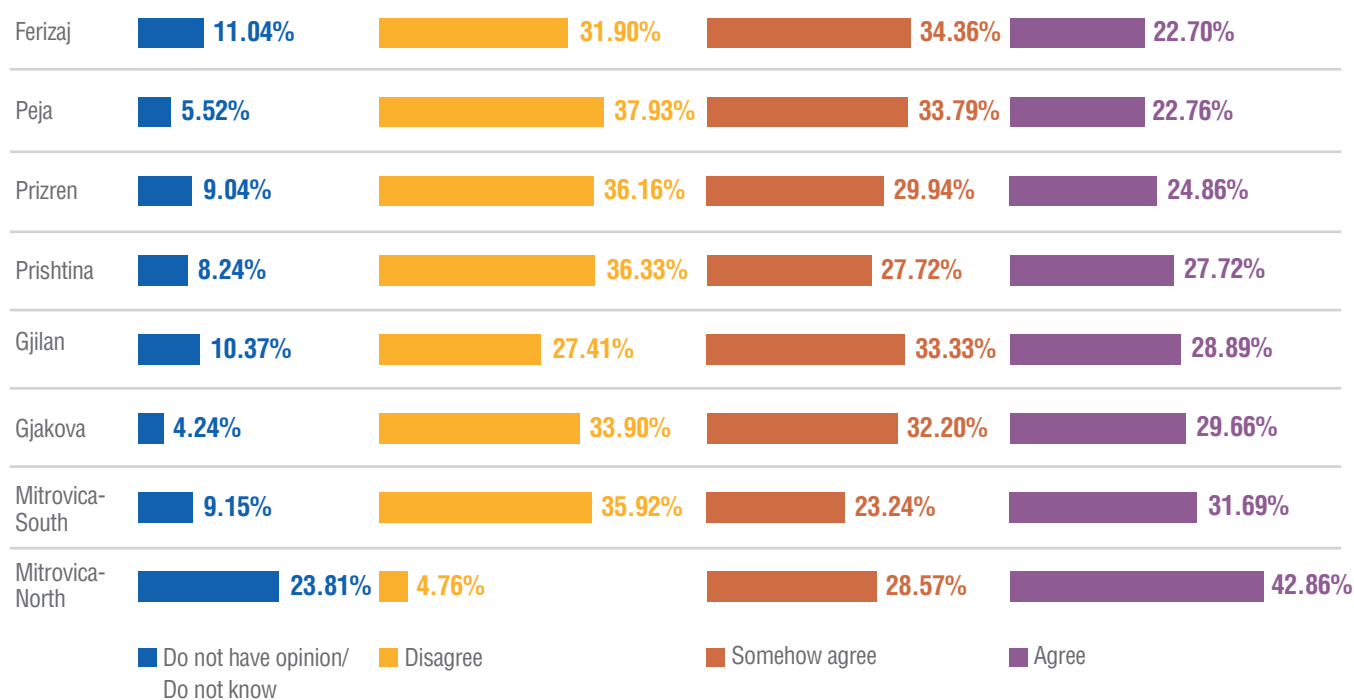


Figure 17 - Perceptions if 100% tax towards goods imported from Serbia faded relations of Kosovo with its international partners - based on respondents' regions

RELATIONS BETWEEN KOSOVO AND ITS REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

The 2019 edition of Kosovo Security Barometer has measured also public perceptions of respondents towards Western Balkan countries, European countries as well as global powers that have influence in Kosovo. It is important to highlight that Germany (79.85 percent), United States (78.60 percent), Albania (69.69 percent) and United King-

dom (62.85 percent) are perceived as the friendliest country to Kosovo.

They are followed by Croatia (42.46 percent) and France (41.20 percent).

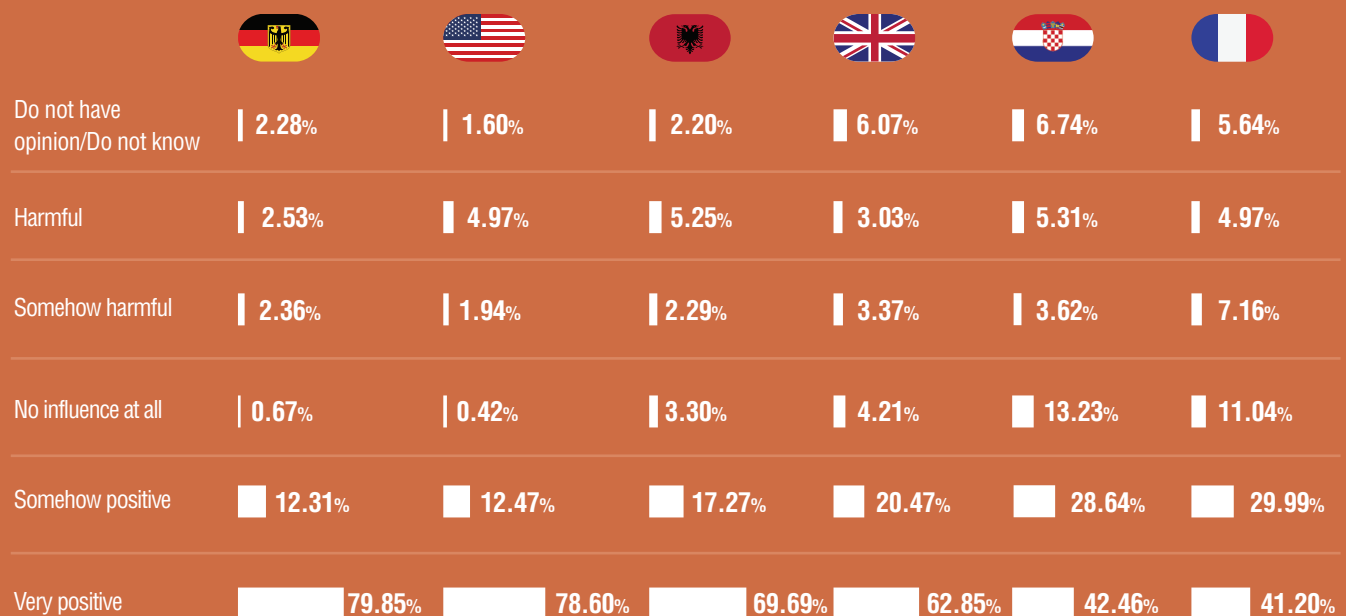


Figure 18 - The most influential strategic partners and allies of Kosovo based on respondents' perceptions

Besides this, other countries listed as least influential partners in Kosovo are Turkey by around 34 percent as very

friendly, North Macedonia by around 20 percent as very friendly and Montenegro by around 16 percent respectively.

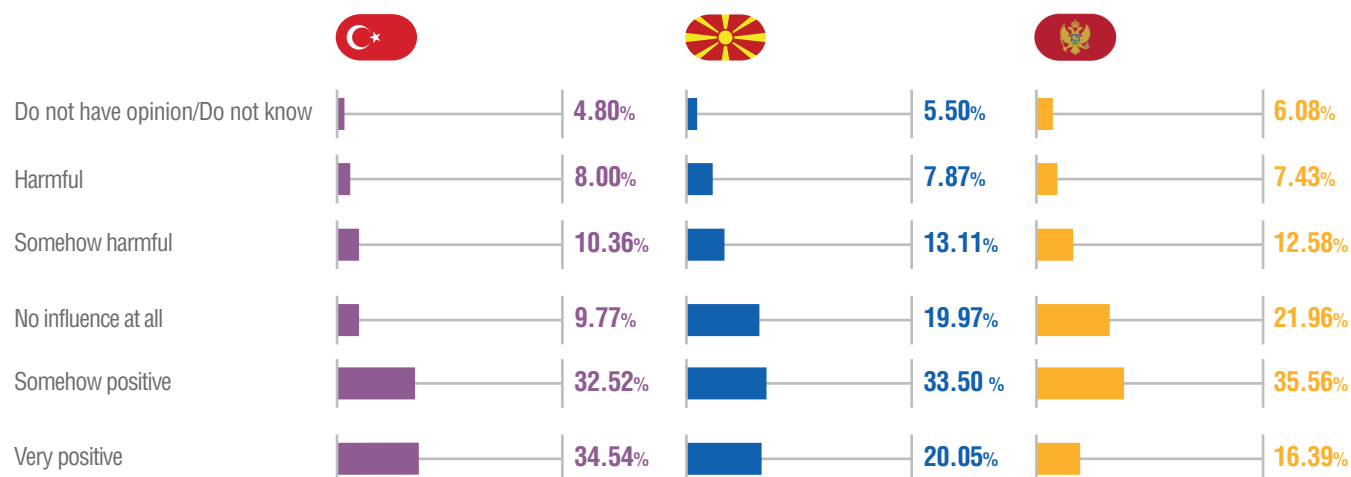


Figure 19 - Least influential partners and allies of Kosovo based on respondents' perceptions

While countries which oppose Kosovo's independence by not recognizing it as a state have been largely perceived as harmful by respondents according to the survey results of the Kosovo Security Barometer. Therefore, Serbia is considered as the most harmful influential country by around

89 percent of respondents which is followed by Russia (by around 81 percent seeing it as harmful) and China (almost 60 percent perceiving its influence as harmful towards Kosovo) as well.

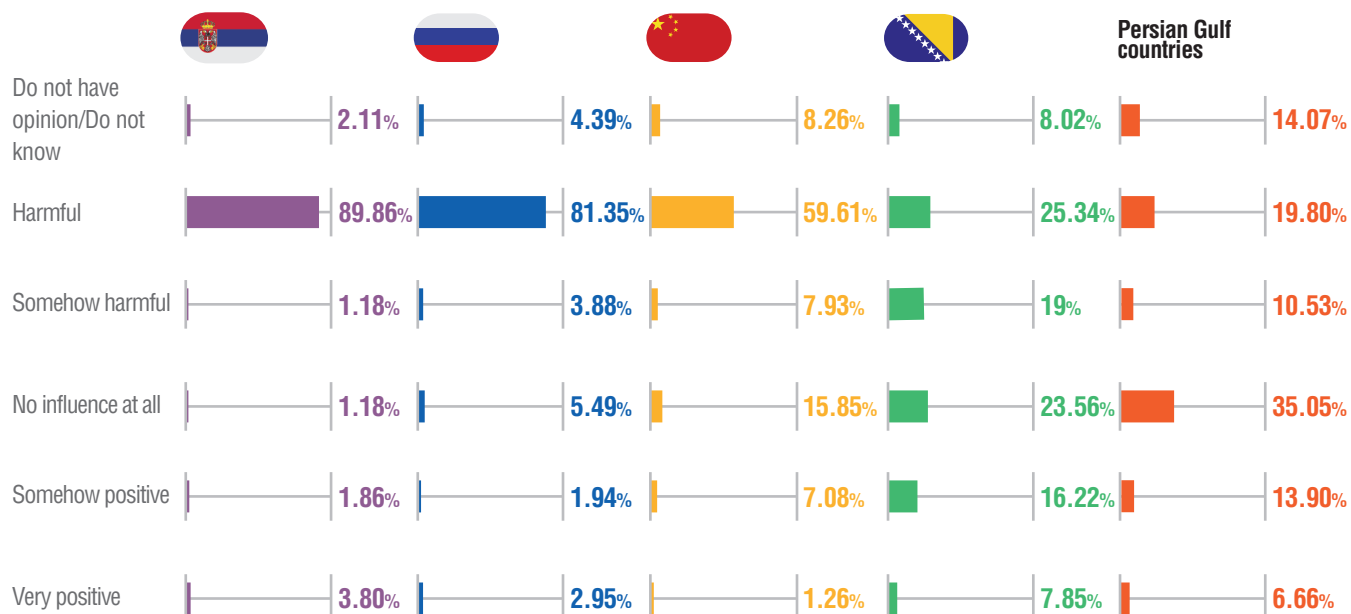


Figure 20 - The most harmful influenced countries towards Kosovo's foreign policy based on respondents' perceptions

Additional cross-tabulated in terms of ethnic background are provided in order to analyse in holistic manner perceptions of ethnic communities in Kosovo towards the most and least influential countries on Kosovo's foreign policy.

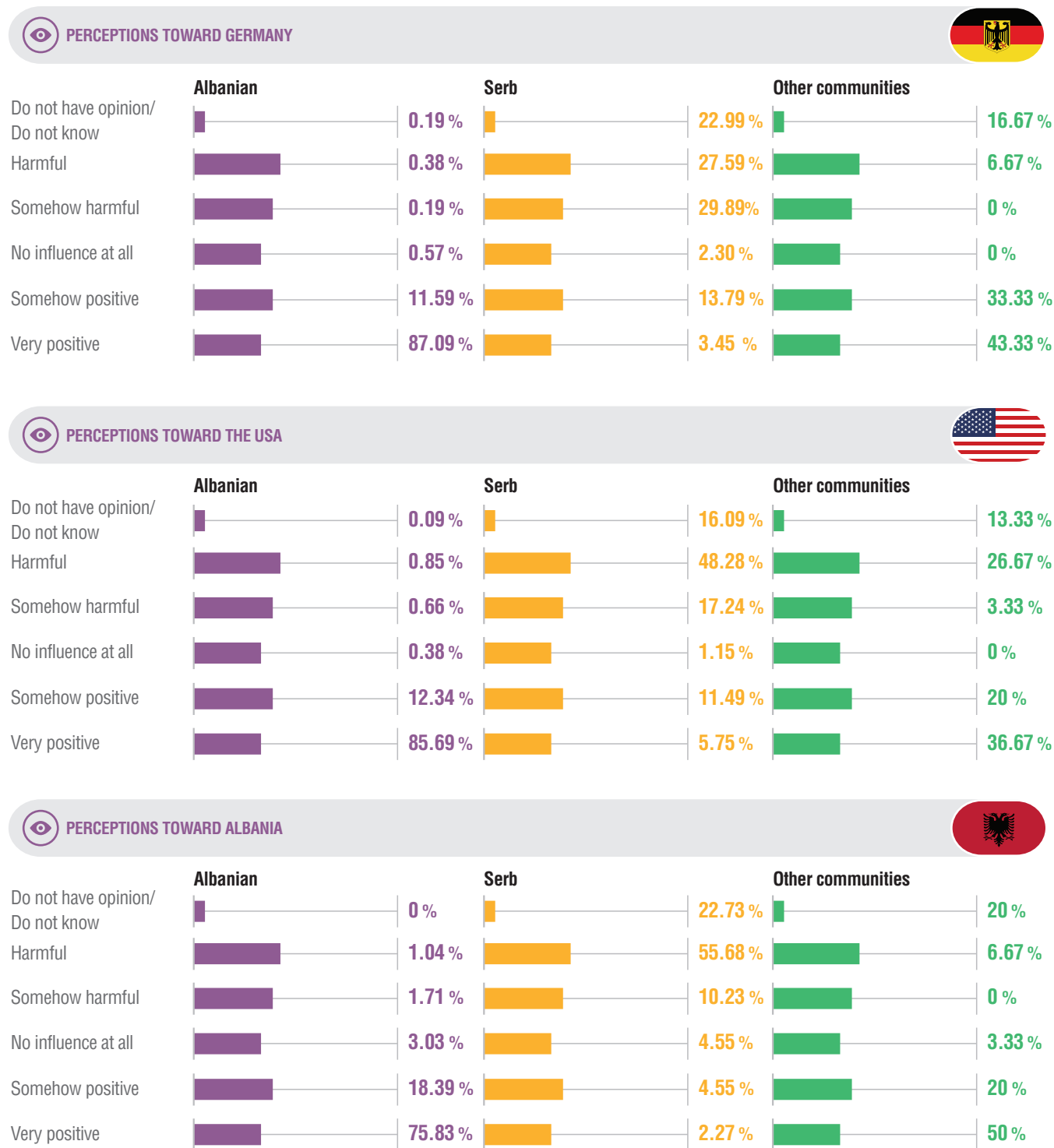


Figure 21 - Perceptions towards Germany, United States and Albania - based on respondents' ethnic composition

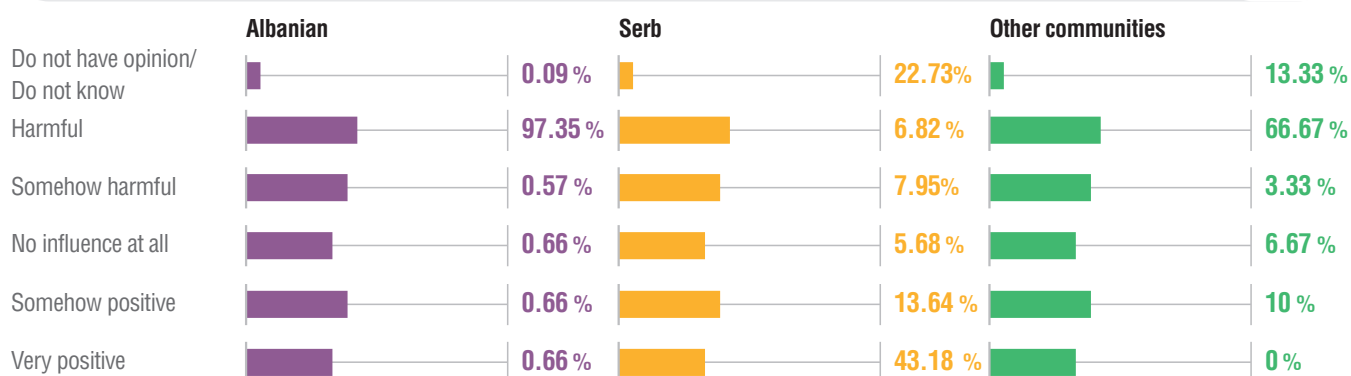
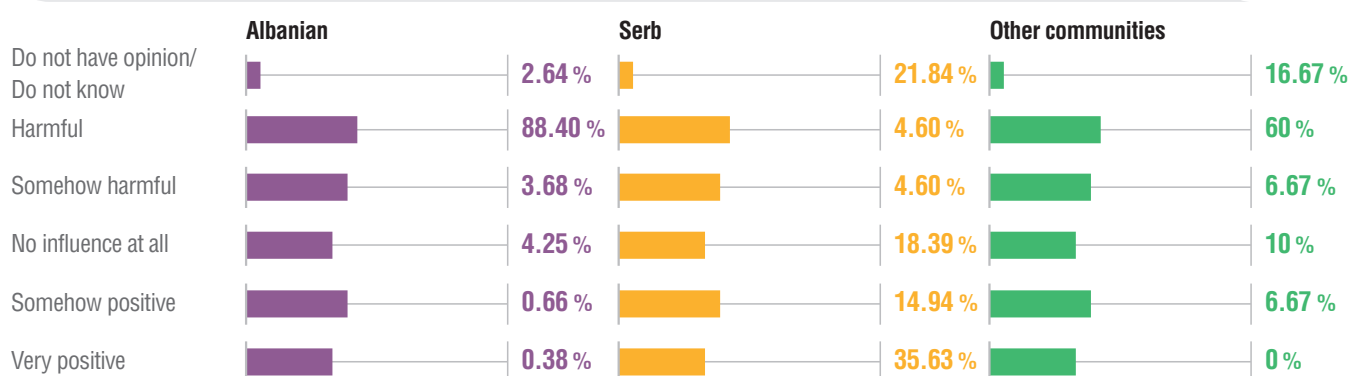
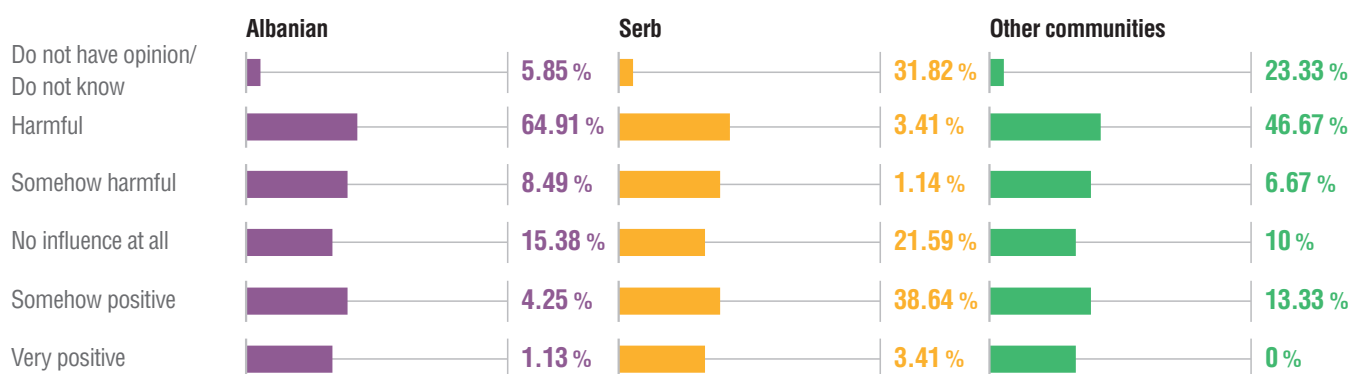
 PERCEPTIONS TOWARD SERBIA

 PERCEPTIONS TOWARD RUSSIA

 PERCEPTIONS TOWARD CHINA


Figure 22 - Perceptions towards Serbia, Russia and China - based on respondents' ethnic composition

METHODOLOGY

WHAT IS THE KOSOVO SECURITY BAROMETER?

The Kosovo Security Barometer (KSB) is a special program of the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) which was established in September 2012. Its primary focus is to measure public trust towards Kosovo security, justice and central institutions, as well as to measure citizens' perception of the internal and external security threats posed to Kosovo.

The KSB is the first and the largest undertaking of this kind designed, implemented, and communicated by a local think tank in Kosovo. The KSB's uniqueness in Kosovo is its political neutrality. As an independent think-tank, KCSS has no political constraints in communicating any of the findings and messages of the survey.

The KSB is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods that provides objective and credible results. Its data are collected through face-to-face interviews with randomly selected respondents conducted by KCSS field researchers throughout the entire Kosovo. The KSB questionnaire mostly consisted of closed-ended questions in the form of five-point Likert Scale, followed by several open-ended questions that allow respondents to provide their thoughts without predefined options.

The KCSS team of 29 researchers conducted the piloting and interviews. The national sample from which the research was drawn, featured 1,189 households, thus constituting a representative sample of the population above 18 years old in Kosovo. The ethnic background of respondents was: 89 percent Kosovo Albanians, 7.4 percent Kosovo Serbs and 2 percent others (Kosovo Turks, Bosniaks, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and Gorani) mirroring Kosovo's ethnic make-up. The sample frame was based upon telephone code areas, and, as such included the following 8 districts: Ferizaj, Gjakova, Gjilan, Mitrovica South, Mitrovica North, Peja, Prishtina and Prizren.

The first stage of geographical clustering was based on the 2012 Kosovo Census Report. The second stage involved clustering samples by municipal area with a stratified rural/urban sample as per the number of households. The last stage followed a random sampling method using the nearest 'birthday method'.

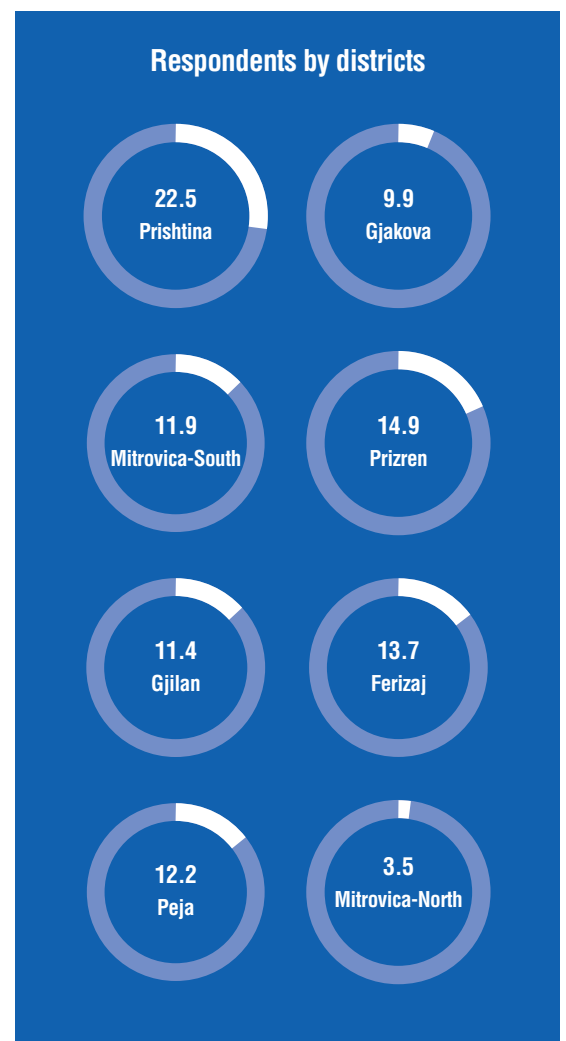
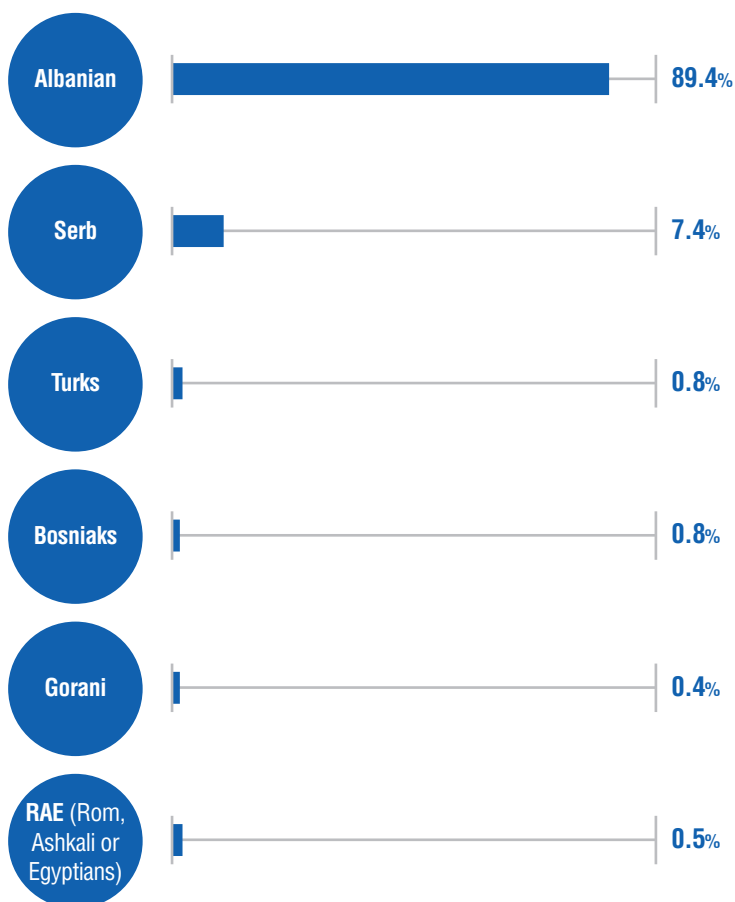
Random sampling ensures that each resident in Kosovo has an equal probability of being chosen for an interview. With the sample used for this study, the results of the survey mirror trends in attitudes and perceptions amongst the entire adult population of Kosovo in general.

The margin of error is 3 percent with a confidence interval of 95 percent.

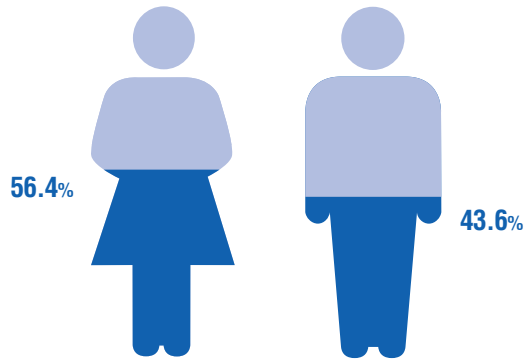
A pilot interview was conducted at the end of September 2019 to test the feasibility of the questionnaire prior to the commencement of fieldwork. The research team subsequently reported that the pilot interview was successful, and no problems were encountered with the pilot instrument.

All interviews were conducted from October 9th to October 16th, 2019. Data processing and analysis has been completed using the SPSS software.

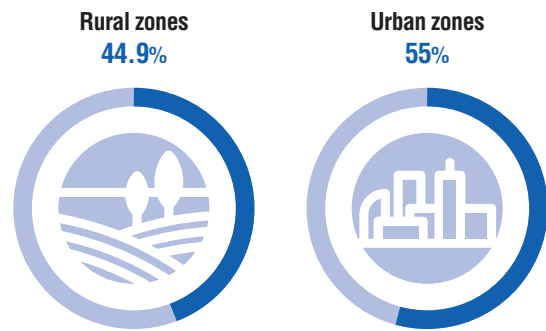
Perceptions presented in this report are a summary of information gathered from respondents and it demonstrates how people perceive the Kosovo institutions.



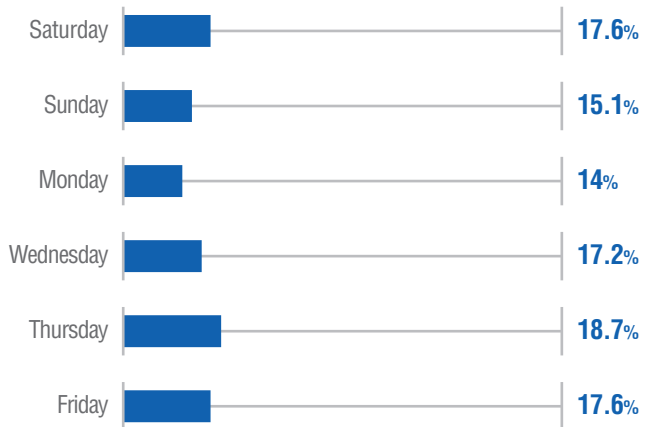
Respondents by gender



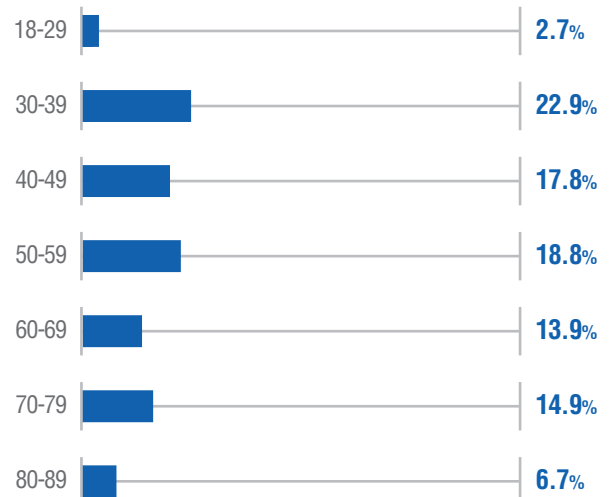
Respondents by zones



Conducted surveys by field research



Age of respondents



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