PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Balkan Barometer 2018

This project is funded by the European Union

Regional Cooperation Council

SEE2020
SOUTH EAST EUROPE 2020

ISSN: 2303-2594, Year IV, Number 4

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Title:	Balkan Barometer 2018: Public Opinion Survey
Publisher:	Regional Cooperation Council Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1/V, 71000 Sarajevo Bosnia and Herzegovina Tel: +387 33 561 700; Fax: +387 33 561 701, E-mail: rcc@rcc.int Website: www.rcc.int
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Layout:	Stefan Gajić Design
Print:	Printline, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Circulation:	100
ISSN:	2303-2594, Year IV, Number 4

This document is prepared and developed in cooperation between Regional Cooperation Council and the GfK.
This survey has been funded by the Regional Cooperation Council.

RegionalCooperationCouncil
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SOUTH EAST EUROPE 2020

SEE 2020 SERIES

Balkan Barometer 2018

Public Opinion Survey

Analytical report

Group of authors - GfK

Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat (RCC)
Sarajevo, 2018

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* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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Foreword

Welcome to the fourth installment of the Balkan Barometer, a comprehensive survey of perceptions and expectations across the South-East Europe region[1]. The survey results make up a critical part of the monitoring framework for the SEE 2020 Strategy, a bold and ambitious statement of intent by the region's economies committed to improving the quality of life for their citizens.

As we had hoped, the Balkan Barometer has now very much outgrown the SEE 2020 process framework. Due to the wide range of issues surveyed, and the abundance of data available across all topics covered, the Barometer has become a useful yardstick for regional developments used by policy makers, the media, civil society actors and the public at large.

As with most other installments of the survey, this year's Barometer is a collection of both good news and bad. Recovery continues with more economic growth but there are indications that the pace of economic development is likely to slow if structural reforms are not implemented across the SEE. Businesses largely restate their grievances with what they perceive to be a difficult operating environment, with cumbersome taxation and regulatory requirements. Some progress was made, nonetheless, in government performance across a number of indicators that should serve as a precursor for a more serious effort to reform how governments go about their business. As has become custom, both businesses and the general public view their own situation much more favourably than that of their economy; whether the optimism, or indeed pessimism, are unwarranted or excessive remains notoriously difficult to ascertain.

Unemployment is once again the principle concern for the public at large but to a somewhat lesser extent, which is encouraging. There is broad consensus that public investment is needed in infrastructure, industrial development, agriculture and small and medium enterprise development. Anxieties over

[1] For the purposes of this report, South East Europe is used interchangeably with the term Western Balkans, and denotes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Croatia, originally part of the group of economies that developed the SEE 2020 framework has since joined the EU and no longer participates in the SEE 2020 monitoring process. In line with that, Balkan Barometer 2018 was not conducted in Croatia, and all existing comparisons at the regional level were made based on recalculated results not including those obtained in this economy over the previous three waves.

corruption linger but have been somewhat lessened, at least in relation to the region's business sector.

Confidence in democratic processes and institutions remains low and addressing it will require a concerted effort by governments - it is thus encouraging that some economies are making incremental but meaningful effort to engage, albeit primarily with the business sector. The regional economies' European integration ambitions received a small boost in support and popularity but realism about the pace of enlargement has increasingly started to set in.

As ever, the survey is helpful in shining a light on the many problems but also opportunities that abound in the region and its findings should help at the very least in initiating a serious discussion about what is that we want to be reading in this publication in 12 months' time.

The Balkan Barometer is a result of a substantial investment in time, effort and dedication by a number of committed professionals. I would like to acknowledge their contributions in hopes that you will find the report engaging, but above all, useful and informative.

Goran Svilanovic, PhD
Secretary General
Regional Cooperation Council

Introduction

This year's Balkan Barometer is the fourth installment of the annual public opinion survey commissioned by the Regional Cooperation Council to gather and interpret data spanning a number of thematic areas and topics. The Barometer, as in previous years, examines both the region's perceptions of today, and its expectations for tomorrow, giving voice to the SEE's business community as well as its citizens at large.

As with previous editions, the 2018 Balkan Barometer features a number of new questions that have been added in response both to developments in the SEE, as well as global trends that are already making their way across the region. Since its first installment in 2014, the Barometer has undergone numerous changes to stay relevant, with topical questions added and removed to further help interprete trends across the region and through time.

With its ever-evolving baseline, the Barometer continues to serve as an invaluable companion to the SEE 2020 Strategy, helping measure its impact as well as informing any changes that need to be made in implementation.

Bringing together the economies of the region under an umbrella of shared interests and ambitions, the SEE 2020 Strategy was adopted in 2013 by the Ministers of Economy of the seven participating economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The chief thrust behind the document has been the common desire by all partners to foster sustainable growth and promote employment while forging stronger social and economic bonds both within the region and with the European Union as a whole.

The Strategy document is an all-inclusive toolbox of ambitious development policy objectives that are designed to make tangible and sustainable improvements to the quality of life in the region. As something of a mirror image of its European Union counterpart, the EU 2020 Strategy, the document will pursue its goals via a series of inter-linked policy objectives:

- Integrated growth: through the promotion of regional trade and investment policies and linkages that are non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable.
- Smart growth: by committing to innovate and compete on value added rather than labour costs.
- Sustainable growth: by raising the level of competitiveness in the private sector, enhancing connectivity through infrastructure development and encouraging greener and more energy efficient growth.
- Inclusive growth: by placing greater emphasis on developing skills, creating employment, inclusive participation in the labour market and health and wellbeing.
- Governance for growth: by enhancing the capacity of the public administration to strengthen the rule of law and reduce corruption, the creation of a business-friendly environment and delivery of public services necessary for economic development.

Once again, the survey reinforces the need to redouble efforts across a number of different but interrelated fields. Confidence in public institutions has been shaken across much of

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the region while the relationship between public and private sectors, while improving, requires a much more proactive engagement by the relevant governments in the region. Economic growth, such as it has been, is largely spurred on by market forces and seems to have reached its ceiling, unless the governments step up much needed structural reforms. Businesses continue to cite excessive regulation, economic instability and taxation as key barriers to further growth while repeatedly calling for more inclusion of corporate actors in policy making processes. Unfair competition has grown in prominence as a cause of business anxiety.

At the same time, the public overwhelmingly and repeatedly cites unemployment and a lagging economy as key concerns, setting out a very clear list of priorities for action by the region's policy makers.

Once again, there is growing support for more regional and European integration but lagging EU prospects in many of the region's economies have translated into more realistic, if bleaker, forecasts across all walks of life. Weaknesses in innovation, internationalisation, and entrepreneurship are a major source of concern across the SEE.

There is ample room for the region's policy makers to positively influence these perceptions over the coming year(s). The adoption of the Multi-Annual Plan for Regional Economic Area (MAP REA)[2] details ambitious actions to be implemented by the region's governments in the areas of trade, investment, mobility and digital integration. This year's EU Enlargement Strategy ("A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans")[3] also provided a more positive outlook regarding EU accession and outlined a comprehensive road map for the region's governments, economies and societies at large, backed up by six concrete flagship initiatives. This political momentum, in combination with the expanding growth expected over the next three years, is hoped to create a more positive outlook in next year's Balkan Barometer, as well as in those that will follow.

As every year, the results of the Balkan Barometer survey will be combined with statistical data collected by SEE governments and other sources in order to help assess the level of strategy implementation, and general progress made, across the region. The value added by the Balkan Barometer lies chiefly in the nature of its interaction with respondents that ultimately yields the data - while national statistics largely harvest official data, the Balkan Barometer allows for a conversation to take place with the people with most at stake.

[2]Trieste, 12 July 2017

[3]https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-credible-enlargement-perspective-western-balkans_en.pdf

Main Findings

Public satisfaction, while still below average, is steadily improving. Looking at the 2014-2017 period, the Balkans Public Sentiment Index has risen from 35 to 42, an encouraging trend that instills optimism for the coming years. As has become tradition, the region is much more positive about the future than they are of the current state of affairs. Political stability is once again proven a critical prerequisite for a satisfied public as sentiment soared in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia following the conclusion of a protracted political standoff in the economy. The same is true of economic growth, as evidenced by Montenegro where improving economic prospects effected a sharp increase in both present sentiment and outlook for the future. Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, continues to toil under a prevalently pessimistic outlook as its lingering political problems continue to plague the public discourse.

Depressed labour markets, along with concerns over governance and rule of law, are the major factors driving the perceptions. Unemployment is still seen as the most important problem facing the region, although the share of those identifying it as a key concern has gone down from 67% in 2015 to 63% in 2017, reflecting also rising employment rates in the past 3 years. Another signal of the improvements in the labour market in the region is also the declining importance ascribed to contacts in high places as one of two most important factors in getting a job (down to 29% from 38% in 2016). At the same time, qualifications and education (2016: 32%; 2017: 36%) and professional experience (2016: 21%; 2017: 26%) are mentioned more often as important in securing employment. This is an encouraging development that will probably be sustained should the employment growth continue in the next period. Interestingly, brain drain/emigration is increasingly seen as a major challenge by the region's citizens - 12% of respondents pointed to this particular problem as a key concern compared to only 7% two years ago.

While the improving economic situation and growing employment affected positively the sentiments, the political situation is still driving down the perceptions. Low trust in political institutions and widespread citizen apathy is still evident, as the majority of respondents note their reluctance to engage in government decision making, largely because they do not feel they can make a change. This is a major threat to the region's future democratic development. Perceptions of prevalent cronyism and informal political or familial networks translate into a belief, held by almost a third of respondents, that knowing the right people is the most important factor for getting ahead in life.

On the other hand, some progress was made in government performance across a number of indicators that should serve as a precursor for a more serious effort to reform how governments go about their business. For example, a growing share of citizens note improvements in public services, with 62% indicating that citizen treatment by the public institutions is either good, very good or excellent, which is a sizeable increase compared to 56% in last year's survey.

Improvements are evident also in regional attitudes towards EU integration, though the assessment of prospects is more realistic. Following a period of stagnation (2014-2015), support for EU membership has increased for the second year running (42% in 2014; 41% in 2015; 44% in 2016; and 49% in 2017). As last year, some three quarters of all respondents feel regional cooperation is important to prosperity in their society. Serbia, meanwhile, is bucking the regional trend with a high proportion of integration dissenters, both for the region and the EU.

Feelings of social exclusion are widespread in the region with a weak labour market again the chief culprit. Some 39% of the people describe themselves as marginalized because of their inability to find work. Although to a lesser extent, due to a declining level of inward migration, negative attitudes towards refugees prevail across the region.

While a majority of respondents in the region feel there is ample room to enhance equality between genders in the workplace, one fifth claim there is no disparity between working men and women.

Regional Overview

2017, and early 2018, saw a number of major and minor developments across all walks of life.

Clearly, the main event for the region was the end of the political crisis in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, from which hopes emerged of a greater commitment to rule of law and democratisation by the pro-European governing coalition. Most other economies saw incremental political changes, if any. The EU Commission in its recent report on integration prospects for the Western Balkans raises the spectre of "captured states" where both formal and informal rules for doing business are tailored to favour special interests. While this clearly constitutes at least part of the underlying cause for the upheaval in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, there is limited awareness of the phenomenon across the other economies, although perceptions of corrupt and dishonest behaviour by the authorities are widespread.

The region's economy is improving, based on most objective indicators. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is obviously an exception as it was in the throes of a political crisis that took its toll on investments and production (GDP growth was just above zero for 2017). Most other economies did better, with growth edging up to just above 3 percent in real terms. Montenegro did exceptionally well, in large part due to a very good tourist season. By contrast, Serbia recorded a year of uninspiring growth, with GDP increasing by less than 2 percent. The region could conceivably move towards 4 percent growth in the medium term as the likely potential growth rate for the SEE.

Table 1: GDP growth, forecasts

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Albania	3.9	4.1	3.8	3.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.0	3.5	3.6	3.5
Kosovo*	3.9	4.0	3.8	4
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	0.5	3.4	3.5	3.3
Montenegro	4.4	3.0	3.1	3.3
Serbia	1.9	3.0	2.8	**2.9**

Source: wiiw

This potential growth rate could be sustained as long as there is slack in the labour market. In most economies, inactivity is high, especially when it comes to women. Unemployment rates among youth and those who have lost their job are very high. That being the case, until full employment is achieved, 4 percent rate growth is quite achievable simply by removing the slack in the labour market. However, with strong outward migration and with adverse demographic trends, the long-term growth rate will depend on improved productivity and entrepreneurship. Otherwise, the region will quickly drop and stagnate at a relatively low GDP level.

Economic policies in the region leave a lot to be desired, if assessed from a growth-oriented point of view. For the most part, public investment in education, science and innovation is insufficient. Most economies, often acting on advice from the IMF and the World Bank, have relatively passive fiscal policies. The focus is frequently on social security spending meaning that there is a bias towards the older segments of the population. Due to a high reliance on remittances throughout the region, and the fact they are used on consumption almost exclusively, both the trade balance and the labour market are somewhat distorted in the sense that there is a persistent deficit and a relatively high reservation wage, respectively.

Finally, in terms of the macroeconomics of the region they are best summarized by the following statement: *citizens consume, foreigners invest*.

Most economies are characterized by a very low share of savings in the national disposable income. Though that may have advantages from the social sustainability standpoint, it distorts the financial market and limits opportunities for entrepreneurship. From the perspective of economic policy, low national savings are insufficient to support the level of investment needed to drive economic growth making it excessively dependant on foreign capial, thus further growing foreign debt. As this is a group of economies that are not yet members of the European Union, the transfers received are not all that significant. So, while there are grants and official transfers present throughout the region, they are largely insufficient to drive public investment or stem the growth of foreign debt.

Intraregional trade has grown, but there is little scope for further increases going forward. Indeed, in the decade after 2008, exports to the EU have grown at a much faster rate than those within CEFTA, the regional free trade area. This should continue to be the case in the future if the region sustains, or improves, the current growth performance over a considerable length of time. While intraregional trade is demand constrained, trade with the EU and the rest of the world is supply constrained.

Even with improved growth prospects in the region, intraregional trade will have to be balanced with trade with the rest of the world, if trade balances are to be sustained. This is because intraregional trade remains unbalanced, with most economies running deficits and Serbia running a surplus. The trade balance with the rest of the world is different mostly because the supply of tradable goods produced within the region is limited. This is changing rather slowly, with the region finding some of its comparative advantages, primarily when it comes to exports to the EU. Thus, exports to the EU, and the rest of the world, should grow faster than those within the region.

When looking at trade facilitation in the region, there is a clear need to improve the trade flow within the region, i.e. the time it takes to cross the border. This is not trade policy, however, or a substitute for regional integration of markets. While tariffs have been mostly removed within CEFTA, there are non-tariff and non-trade barriers as well as policy divergences. Those would have to be harmonised if a single or common market were to be established. The fastest way to do this, however, is to speed up the process of EU integration or at least to encourage expectations that this process will pick up in the near term.

While the EU has changed its rhetoric on EU accession for the region, it hasn't put in place instruments to excelerate the process.

Political relations within the region are still constrained by underlying and long-standing tensions. The new EU strategy for the Western Balkans has changed strategy from reliance on connectivity, as the means to deal with long-standing issues, to a more hands on approach to identifying direct solutions to persistent regional problems.

This is primarily the case with the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo*, but also with the push to find a solution to the name issue between The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece. All other border issues are expected to be resolved before further significant advances in EU accession are to be made - this will pose a number of serious challenges to the leaders in the region.

Overall, the region has seen improved economic prospects, but is still facing significant economic policy challenges as well as persistent uncertainties in relationships between the economies.

Balkan Public Sentiment Index

Balkan Public Sentiment Index (BPSI) that was designed by GfK to monitor changes in present sentiment and outlook over time was calculated for this cycle of Balkan Barometer as well. As in previous waves of Balkan Barometer, BPSI is composed of the following five questions:

1. How are you satisfied with the way things are going in your society? (answers: 5 point scale)
2. How are you satisfied with the financial situation of your household? (answers: 5 point scale)
3. How are you satisfied with the eco nomic situation of your society? (answers: 5 point scale)
4. What are your expectations for the next year? Do you think that in 12 months your financial situation will be better, worse, the same?
5. What are your expectations for the national economy? Do you think that in 12 months the state of the economy will be better, worse, the same?

BPSI represents a measure of the current state of affairs and expectations for the future regarding the general and economic situation in society, as well as the situation of individual households taking part in the survey. It is a measure that helps in monitoring changes over time at the SEE regional level, as well as at the individual economies' level.

The index is constructed with a five-point scale answers for Q1 to Q3 scored as follows: I'm completely dissatisfied - 0 points, I'm mostly unsatisfied - 25 points, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied - 50 points; I'm mostly satisfied – 75 points, I'm completely satisfied – 100 points. Answers for Q4 and Q5 are scored as follows: better – 100 points, worse - 0 points, the same – 50 points.

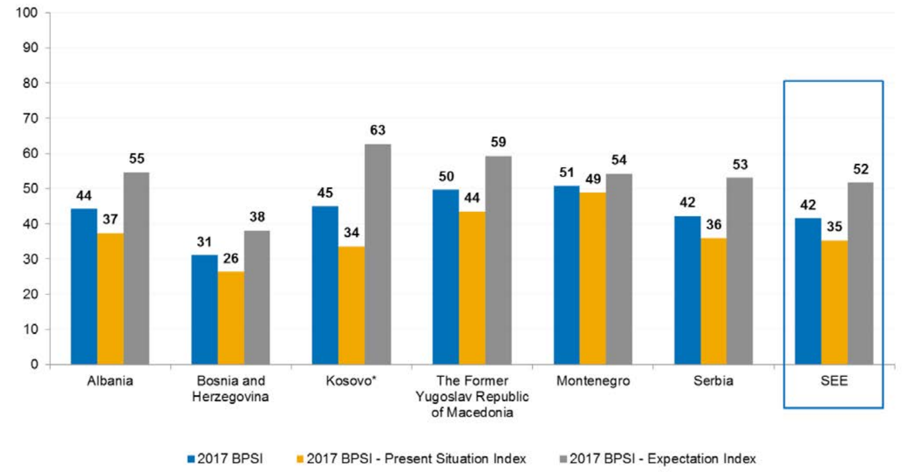
After responses are recoded, the average value is calculated for the entire SEE region, as well as for each economy separately. The index values are expressed on a scale from 0 to 100.

BPSI is further divided along two sub indexes, BPSI – Present Situation Index and BPSI - Expectation Index, with the aim to separately monitor the present sentiment among the population as well as their expectations for the future.

What follows are BPSI results for the present year, and comparison with the results for the three previous cycles (2014, 2015 and 2016), both the SEE region as a whole and for each economy separately.

Figure 1: Balkan Public Sentiment Index

(Scores are on a scale of 0 to 100)

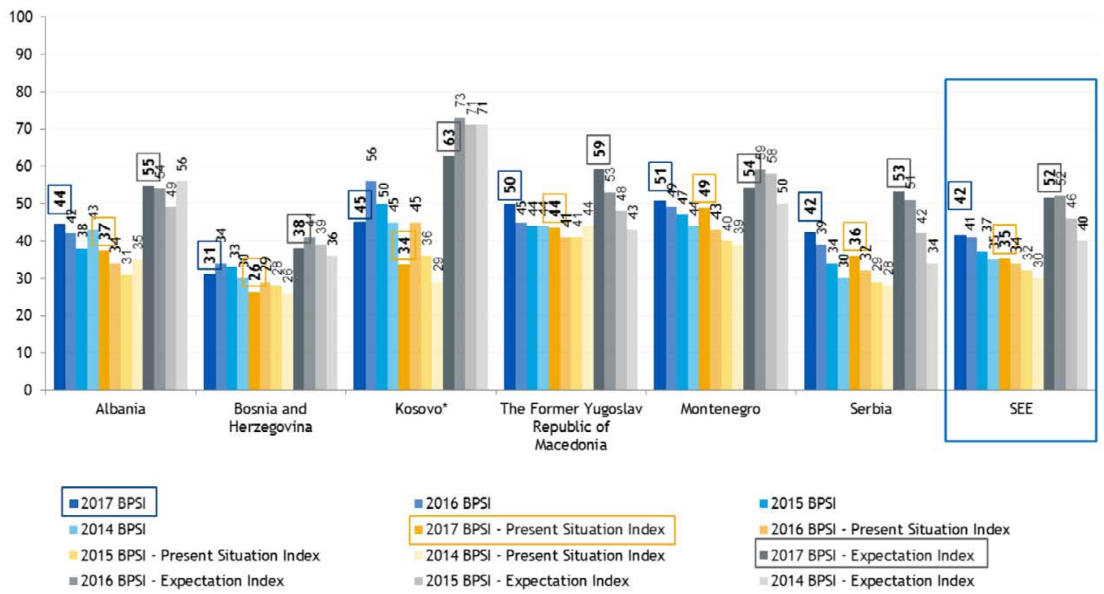


The 2017 Index value for the SEE region is generally holding at last year's level and remains below the average (at 42 out of 100). The expectation index has historically been much more positive than the respondents' assessment of the present situation. This continues to be the case with the latest survey installment, where the value of the expectation index (52) significantly outscores the respondents' assessment of the present situation (35).

Looking at the individual economies, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia once again have the lowest regional scores, 31 and 42, respectively. Montenegro is at the other end of the scale with 51, owing largely to a cheerier assessment of the present by respondents (from 43 in 2016 to 49 in 2017). Kosovo* once more boasts the largest discrepancy in assessment betwen an economy's current state of affairs and its expectations for the future (34 and 63, respectively). Meanwhile, Montenegro, where the discrepancy is the smallest, has seen the gap between two indices shrink to just 5 points (49 and 54).

Figure 2: Balkan Public Sentiment Index - comparison 2014/2015/2016/2017

(Scores are on a scale of 0 to 100)



The figure above illustrates the values of all three indices for the four waves of the Balkan Barometer survey conducted so far. Sentiment in the region continues to improve, if only incrementally; since 2014, the index has grown by 8 points (34/37/41/42), largely due to an improved outlook for the future (BPSI - Expectation Index).

Looking at trends from 2014 to 2017, both present satisfaction and future expectations have improved year on year. The expectation index is now over 50 across all economies, with the sole exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina (38). The respondents' appraisal of the present situation is less positive and remains below 50 in all six economies. Increases in index value thus tend to be driven by heightened expectations.

Looking at the individual economies, the BPSI records an increase in four out of six economies, compared to 2016: Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The latter also boasts the single largest increase in value (around 5 points). At the other end of the spectrum, Kosovo* has dropped 11 points on the BPSI, while recording the single biggest decline in the respondents' appraisal of both the current state of affairs (45 in 2016 to 34 in 2017), as well as their expectations for the future (73 in 2016 to 63 in 2017).

All these changes can be linked to political, economic and societal developments on the ground in the economies most affected. Kosovo*'s initial enthusiasm is becoming more tempered with time and experience, while The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia now rides a wave of optimism following positive political developments over the past year or so (the period of relative instability was temporary while the economy's economic prospects remained favourable throughout). Montenegro continues to perform well in regional terms while Serbia fully expects its economy to pick up going forward (although 2017 was not a particularly good year). Bosnia and Herzegovina remains depressed under the weight of continued political instability.

Life Satisfaction and Assessment of General Trends

A more positive assessment of the respondents' current satisfaction with life, work and finances throughout the region is directly linked to improved economic performance. This is very much evident in Montenegro where the economy moved forward at solid pace, especially in the last year or so. With The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a relatively positive assessment of the current economy has more to do with a sense of relief and optimism that accompanied the conclusion of the prolongued political crisis rather than a somewhat stalled economy that suffered as a result of the instability.

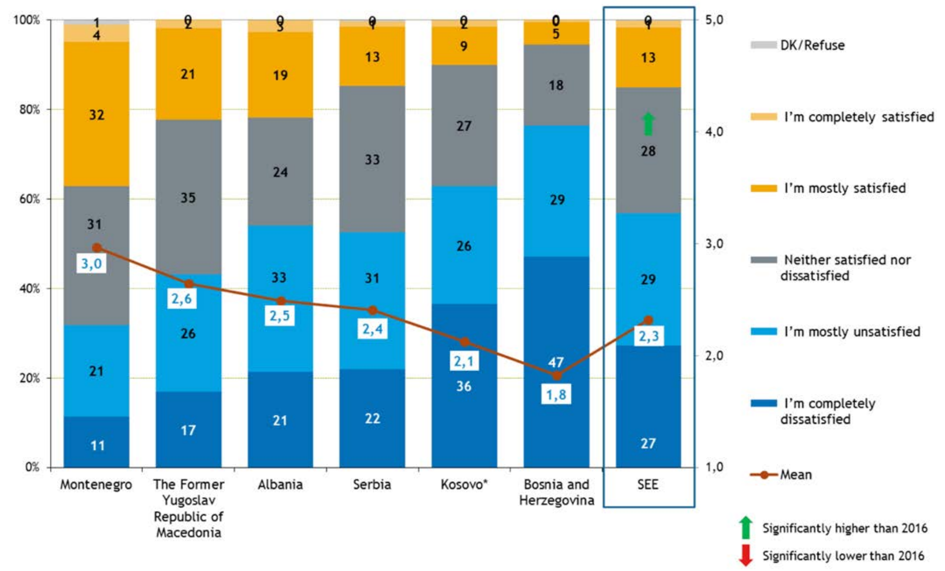
Generally, positive political developments are accompanied by substantial spikes in public satisfaction. Improvements in the overall economic situation, however, are much more gradual and, as such, unlikely to cause major movement in the satisfaction index (i.e. above 50 percent, with the notable exception of Montenegro).

Expectations are more optimistic, as has been the case over the past four years. The gap between current satisfaction and expectations for the future is getting smaller, which is due to both a more realistic set of expectations as well as improvements in current sentiment. Understandably, younger and better educated respondents are more optimistic than their older and unskilled counterparts; the former are turned to the future, while the latter are more prone to dwell on the unhappy past.

The public continues to demand coherent industrial policy, better social security, and more employment opportunities. In all those areas, satisfaction tends to be low which contributes to an overwhelmingly negative assessment of the respondents' economies; nonetheless, higher expectations indicate that not all hope has been lost. As in previous survey installments, the people of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina tend to be both less satisfied and have lower expectations more often than their counterparts across the other four economies.

Figure 3: How satisfied are you with the way things are going in your economy?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %)



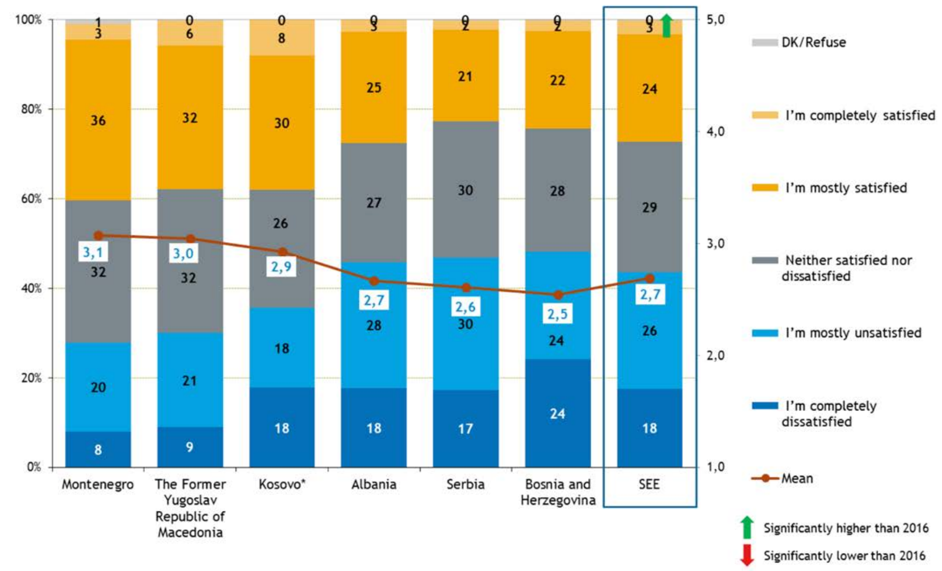
As noted, satisfaction of respondents with the current situation is below average in five out of six economies, with the rate of satisfaction for the entire region measured again at 2.3 (compared to a mean of 3.0). The exception is Montenegro, where satisfaction with the current situation is at an average level (3.0 on a scale of 1 to 5) and is significantly higher than in other economies.

56% of people are not satisfied with the current state of affairs against only 14% who are.

Analysed over time, although still below average, the public's satisfaction with the overall situation continues to grow reaching the highest average level in 2017 (from 2.15 in 2014 to 2.32 in 2017).

Figure 4: How satisfied are you with the financial situation of your household?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %)

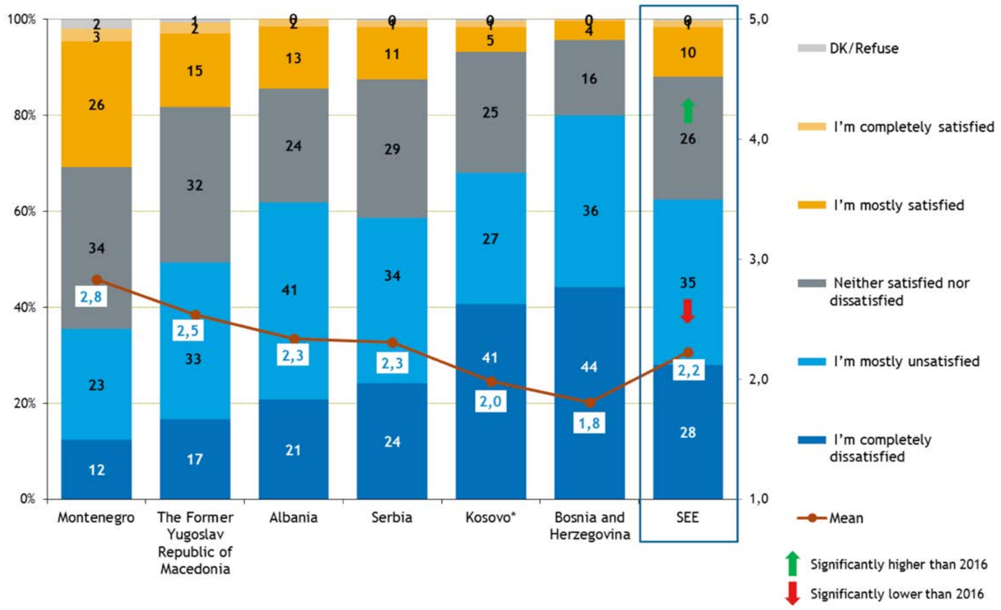


At SEE level, people tend to be overwhelmingly unhappy with the state of their finances (27% are happy while 44% are not). Nontheless, they are still more likely to view their own personal situation more positively than that of the overall economy (a mean of 2.7 versus 2.3, respectively). Furthermore, there is a relatively high proportion of respondents who are neutral in their assessment of their financial standing (29%).

Respondents from Montenegro (mean 3.1), The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (mean 3.0) and Kosovo* (mean 2.9) are significantly more satisfied than people in the other three economies.

Figure 5: How satisfied are you with the economic situation in your economy?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %)



Respondent satisfaction with the economic situation is at a similar level to their happiness with the overall state of affairs in their economy. The ratings across both the region as a whole (mean 2.2.), and each individual economy are below the average. Montenegro boasts the highest regional rating with a mean of 2.8, while respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina rate the economic situation especially poorly (a mean of just 1.8).

While a large proportion of individuals surveyed are unhappy (63% and down from 67% in 2016), only 11% of surveyed individuals are satisfied with the economic situation (up from 10% in 2016). The second most numerous group of respondents are the "neutrals" with 26% (up from 23% in 2016).

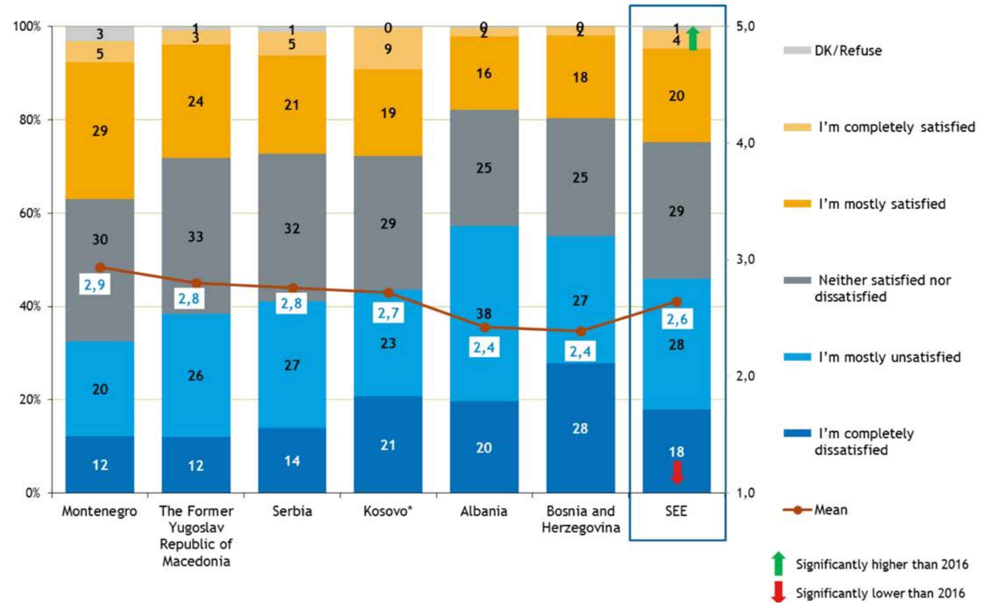
There is a slight upwardly trajectory in average satisfaction across the region over the past four years (mean 1.92 - 2014; 2.03 - 2015; 2.15 - 2016 and 2.22 - 2017). This is corroborated by select objective indicators of improved economic performance, such as GDP growth and improving labour markets (higher employment and lower unemployment).

A comparison of individual economies reveals significantly higher satisfaction rates among the populations of Montenegro (mean 2.8) and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (mean 2.5), compared to those from Albania and Serbia (mean 2.3), Kosovo* (mean 2.0) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (mean 1.8). When looking at figures for Albania and Kosovo*, some correction over time was to be expected given the increased realism that comes with experience; in other words, previous projections were proven to be unrealistically high. Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its regional low score, is historically bleak in its assessments for political, social and economic reasons. With other economies, it is largely economic improvement, or the lack thereof, that influences sentiments, while political prospects influence expectations.

As in 2016, a more detailed analysis by individual demographic categories, and their respective satisfaction ratings, indicates that the youngest respondents (18-29 years old), as well as those who rate their social status as above average, tend to be significantly more satisfied with the economic situation in their own economy than all others.

Figure 6: How satisfied are you with the overall security situation in your economy (as concerns the level of risks of crime, terrorism, problems connected with uncontrolled migration, violent conflicts)?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %)



Satisfaction with the overall security situation in the region remains below average (mean 2.6 in 2017 from 2.5 in 2016). A meagre one out of four respondents is happy with the general level of security in their economy while almost half (46%) are disatisfied. In terms of individual economies, respondents living in Montenegro (mean 2.9) and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2.8) are significantly more satisfied with the overall security situation than their counterparts living in other regional economies.

Viewed by individual demographic determinants, gender and education do not play a role in how satisfied a respondent is with the security situation. At the same time, those with a higher self-ascribed social status are significantly more satisfied (mean 3.0), as well as those from the youngest category of respondents (18-29 years old), as compared to those from older age groups.

Figure 7: What are your expectations for the next year? Do you think that in 12 months your financial situation will be better, worse or the same?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

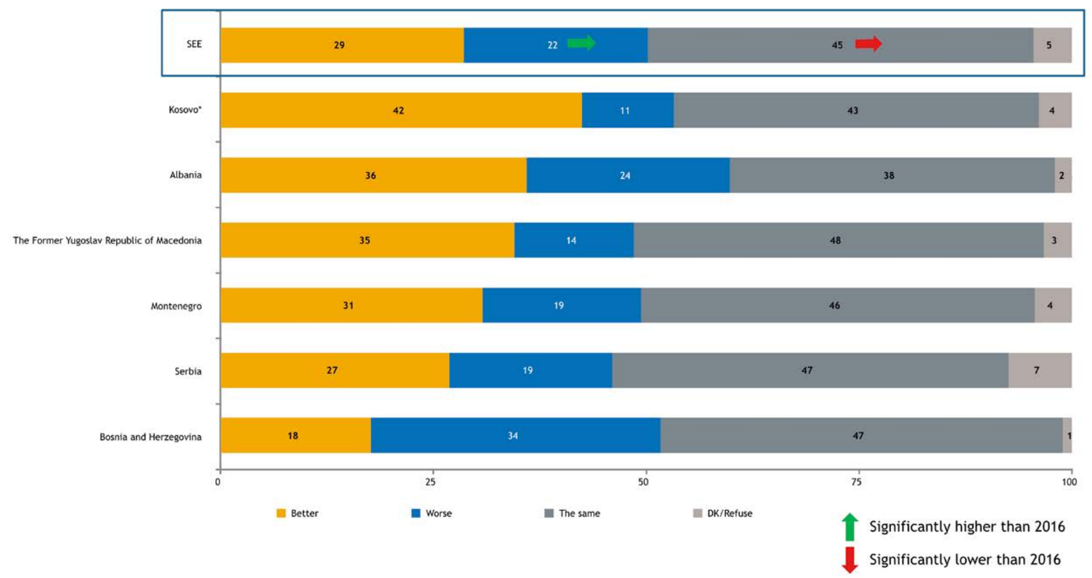
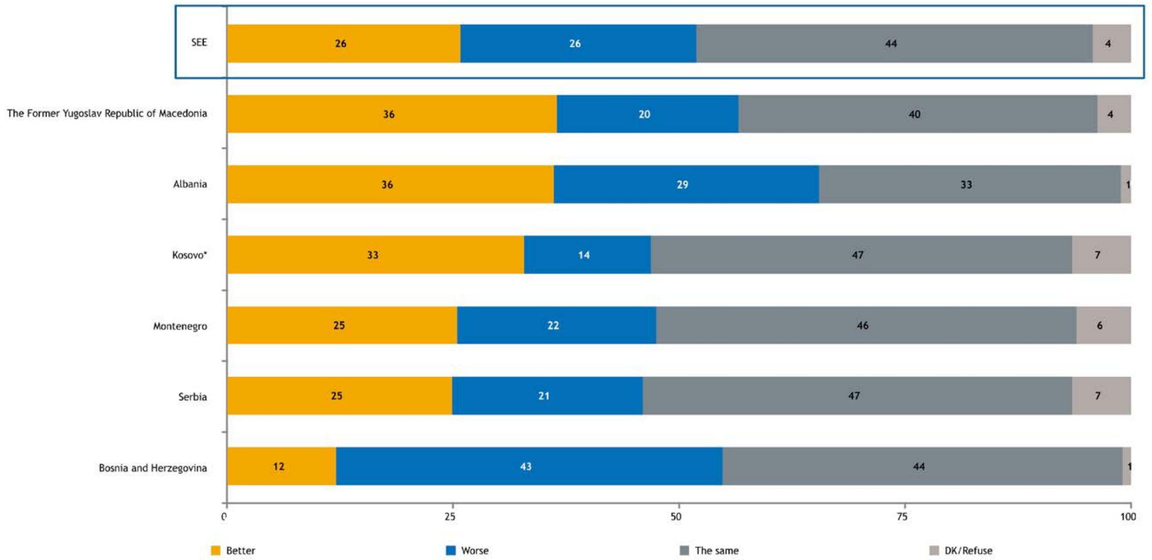


Figure 8: What are your expectations for the national economy? Do you think that in 12 months the state of the economy will be better, worse or the same?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



Respondents have somewhat differing expectations for their own financial situation (29% expect an improvement) and that of their national economy (26% expect an improvement). A similar share of respondents as last year expect to see an improvement in their financial situation (29% in 2017 from 28% in 2016), while a slightly bigger share of the public foresee a worsening in their finances over the coming 12 months (up to 22% from 20% in 2016). The majority of respondents again anticipate no changes but to a somewhat lesser degree (down to 45% from 48%).

As for expectations regarding their economies' future development, respondents' views continue to be divided into two identical groups between those expecting to see improvements (26%) and those who feel the economy will worsen (26%).

Overall, a majority of respondents expects the next 12 months to bring no change to either their personal financial situation or to the state of national economy.

People from Kosovo* are the most optimistic in their expectations regarding their personal financial situation (42% expect to see improvements), while respondents from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (36%) and Albania (36%) are the most optimistic with regards to their national economies.

When it comes to their own financial situation, respondents in all economies, except in Bosnia and Herzegovina, are more likely to expect an improvement in prospects. Looking at the individual economies, optimistic respondents in five out of six assessed economies (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia) outnumber their pessimistic counterparts. Bosnia and Herzegovina boasts the highest proportion of respondents expecting to see a deterioration in both their own finances and the economy in general (34% and 43% respectively).

Observations by different demographic variables show that people with a positive assessment of their financial outlook are more likely to be found among men, the better educated respondents, youth (18-29 years old) and individuals who rate their social status as above average.

Pessimism is more prevalent among individuals who rate their social status as below average as well as people over 40. Female respondents are significantly more likely to anticipate no changes in their own financial situation, alongside individuals who rate their social status as average (the majority of respondents).

As for the demographic breakdown of economy-level expectations, the best educated respondents, as well as those who rate their social status as above average, have a more positive outlook and are significantly more optimistic when it comes to further improvements in their economy. Respondents aged 40-60 and those who rate their social status as below average are more likely to foresee a deterioration in the economy.

Ultimately, the majority of respondents across the region expect stagnation in both their own financial situation and the economy at large. Any increases in optimism are incremental and restricted to personal prospects for the near future.

Table 2: Expectations for financial situation and national economy - comparison 2014/2015/2016/2017

(Share of total, %)

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Will be worse - financial situation in household	31	25	20	22
Will be worse - national economy	42	34	27	26

What follows is a comparison of expectations regarding both the respondents' personal financial situation and that of the national economy for the 28 EU Member States and five candidate countries.[4]

Table 3: What are your expectations for the next twelve months: will the next twelve months be better, worse or the same, when it comes to the financial situation of your household? What are your expectations for the next twelve months: will the next twelve months be better, worse or the same, when it comes to the economic situation in (our society)?

(Share of total, %)

	Better	The same	Worse
The financial situation in household			
Spring 2016	22	62	13
Autumn 2016	22	63	12
Spring 2017	23	62	12
Autumn 2017	24	60	13
The economic situation in your society			
Spring 2016	21	46	26
Autumn 2016	22	47	26
Spring 2017	26	47	21
Autumn 2017	27	46	23

Source: Public Opinion in the European Union, Standard Eurobarometer 85/86/87/88 (Spring 2016/Autumn 2016/Spring 2017/Autumn 2017)

[4]European Commission: Standard Eurobarometer 85/86/87/88 (Spring 2016/Autumn 2016/Spring 2017/Autumn 2017: Public opinion in the European Union

Respondents from the SEE region continue to be more optimistic than their EU counterparts when it comes to the development of their personal financial situation over the next 12 months.

Specifically, 29% of the SEE population expect to see improvements in their households' finances over the next twelve-months, compared to 24% among EU Member States. At the same time, the SEE region also has a higher proportion of respondents who belive that the situation will worsen in the coming year (22% for the SEE versus 13% for the EU). The majority of respondents both in the SEE (45%) and the EU (60%) expect to see no change in their households' financial situation.

As for expectations regarding the national economy, while in 2016 an identical proportion of respondents (26%) from the SEE region and the EU felt that the situation would deteriorate, that number dropped to 23% for the EU while no change was recorded for the SEE (26%).

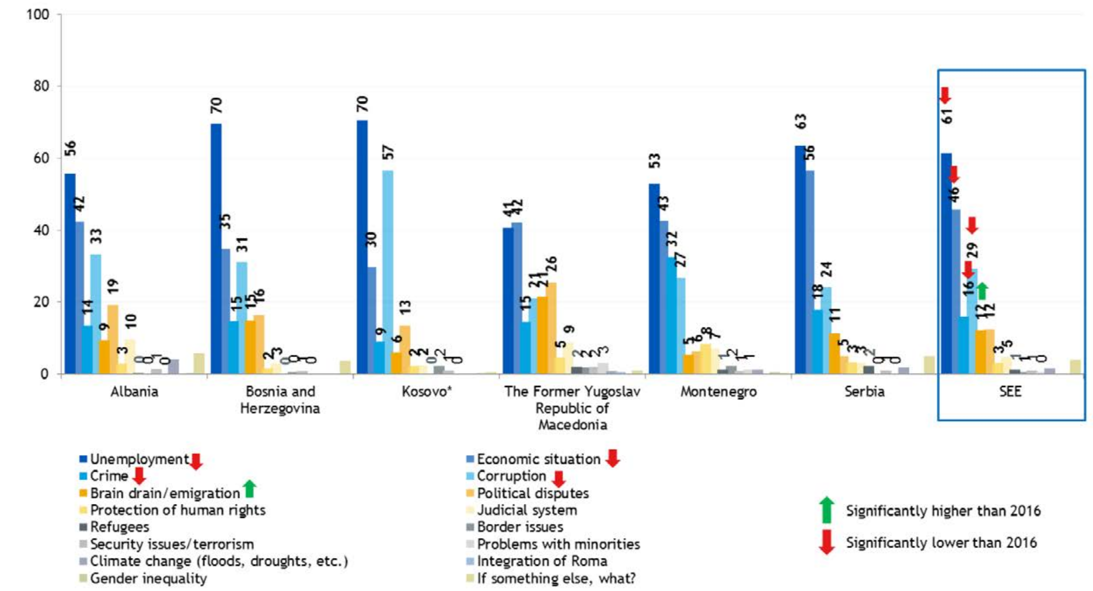
Respondents expecting to see no change make up 46% of respondents in EU and 44% in the SEE. The number of individuals who expect the situation to improve is almost identical across both regions (26% in SEE and 27% in EU). The biggest difference between the two regions is observed in the continuous decline in pessimism in the SEE with regards to national economic prospects.

The proportion of the SEE population that expects the national economic situation to deteriorate has decreased, especially compared to 2014 and 2015. At the same time, respondents from EU Member States foresee minimum, if any, change, in their personal finances while predicting a slight decline in national economic prospects.

The recovery in the EU is very slow with expectations that it will continue to be steady and sustained. In contrast, the recovery in the SEE region, especially in the major economies, is progressing more rapidly, which results in a more optimistic outlook for the future. This conclusion is borne out of a review of individual economies where the level of optimism is directly co-related to national economic prospects, with political changes playing a significant role in some cases.

Figure 9: What do you think are the two most important problems facing your economy?

(All respondents - N=6025, maximum two answers, share of total, %)



The main concerns of the SEE population continue to be unemployment (61%), the overall economic situation (46%) and corruption (29%).

Unemployment is listed as a primary concern by a majority of respondents across most economies. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is the sole exception with the economic situation perceived as a slightly more pressing concern than unemployment (42% and 41%, respectively). When viewed by economy, unemployment is a far greater concern in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* (70%) than in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (41%). The overall economic situation is the second most commonly noted concern in all economies except in Kosovo*, where corruption is ranked second after unemployment. Corruption is perceived as the third most significant problem across the SEE region. Other notable concerns include political disputes and crime.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continues to deal with the fallout of its recent political crisis – political disputes feature more prominently on the list of concerns for this economy, along with brain drain. The economic situation is a significantly more pronouced concern in Serbia than in other economies – the same is true of crime in Montenegro and corruption in Kosovo*.

Statistics and other objective indicators seem to corroborate most of the perceptions presented. Labour markets remain depressed, though improving of late. Corruption appears widespread, but due to overarching political and economic concerns does not receive due attention. Anxieties over unemployment and the economic situation are a practical expression of furustration with inadequate economic policy by the region's governments.

Table 4: The main concerns in SEE region - comparison 2015/2016/2017

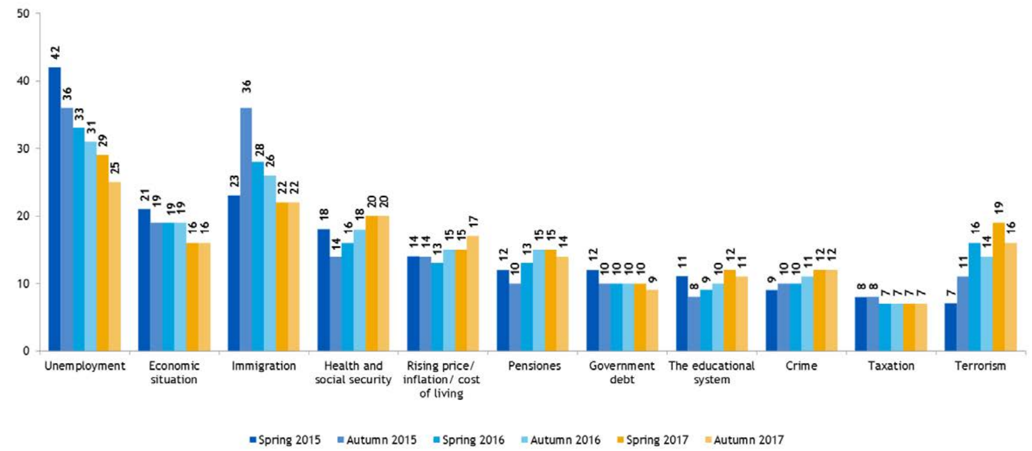
(Share of total, %)

	2015	2016	2017
Unemployment	67	66	61
Economic situation	55	48	46
Corruption	28	32	29
Crime	14	17	16
Brain drain/emigration	7	10	12

Concerns regarding unemployment remain dominant, although to a lesser degree than in previous years. The economic situation, corruption, and crime are also perceived as problematic by fewer respondents. At the same time, anxieties over "brain drain" are more prevalent compared to previous years.

Demographic differences in public opinion reflect the diversity of interests and attitudes among respondent groups. Women are significantly more concerned about unemployment and the overall economic situation, whereas men are significantly more concerned about crime and corruption. Individuals who rate their social status as below average are more concerned about unemployment and the economic situation. The two younger cohorts (18-29 and 30-45 years old) are significantly more concerned about brain drain/emigration, while older age-groups are more worried about crime. While unemployment is more of a concern to respondents with a basic level of education, university educated individuals, as well as those who see themselves as belonging to a higher social class, are significantly more concerned about brain drain/emigration and the operation of the legal system.

Figure 10: What do you think are the two most important issues facing (our society) at the moment?[5]



The figure above illustrates the results of the Standard Eurobarometer for the 28 EU and five candidate countries (the most recent survey was conducted in the autumn of 2017). Although its survey questions are not identical to those of the Balkan Barometer, the general trends are still comparable.

Unemployment remains a major concern across the EU, albeit to a significantly lesser degree than in previous years (from 42% in spring 2015 to 25% in the autumn 2017). Similarly, concerns over the economic situation are decreasing and have stabilised at 16% for the last two surveys.

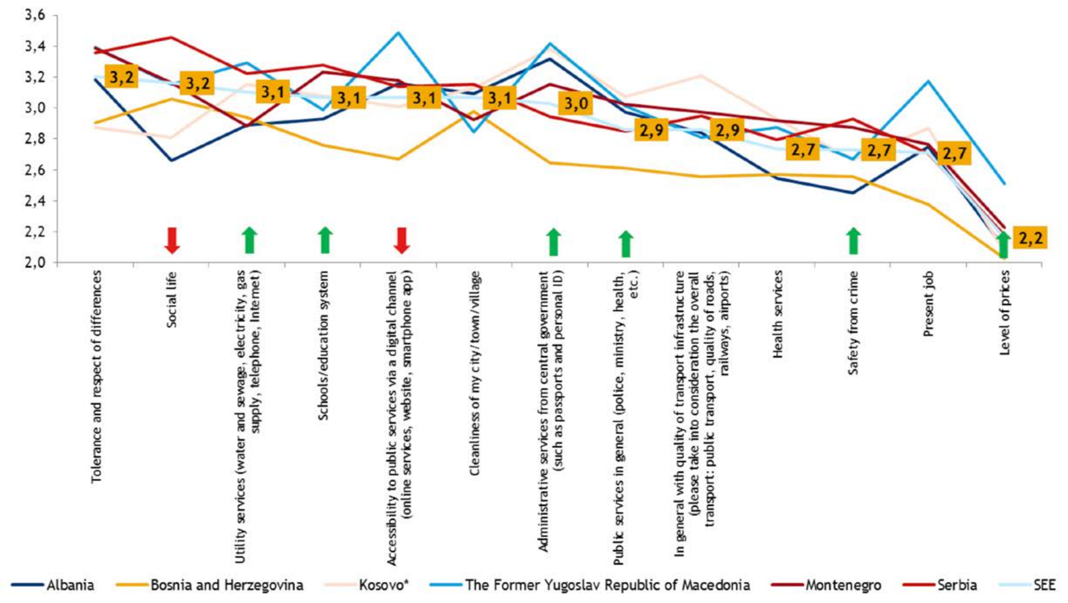
After peaking in autumn 2015, immigration concerns have stabilised at 22% for the last two surveys. Concerns over terrorism have declined from 19% in spring to 16% in the autumn 2017.

Unemployment continues to be the predominant concern across both the EU and the SEE, although the numbers of concerned respondents are significantly higher in the latter (61% in the SEE against 42% in the EU). Concern about the economic situation has declined across both regions, although it is still ranked second in the SEE. The population of the SEE region is slightly more concerned about crime than their EU neighbours.

[5] European Commission: Standard Eurobarometer 83/84/85/86/87/88 (Spring 2015/Autumn 2015/Spring 2016/Autumn 2016/Spring 2017/Autumn 2017): Public opinion in the European Union

Figure 11: How satisfied are you with each of the following in your place of living?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, mean)



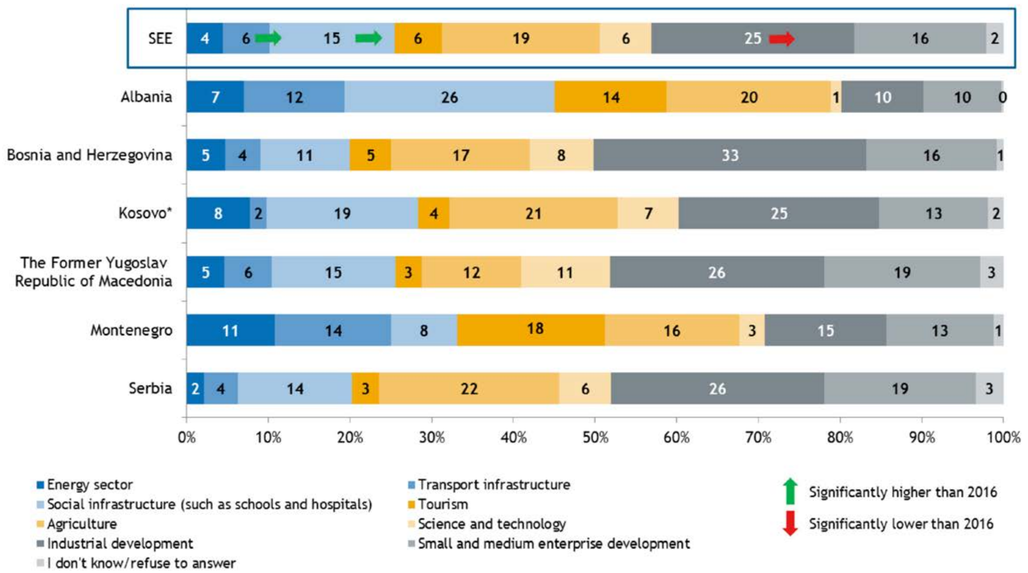
Looking at all aspects of life surveyed here, the population of the SEE region is most satisfied with tolerance and respect of differences, and social life (mean 3.2), while they are most unhappy with the level of prices (mean 2.2). Respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina (mean 2.7) and Albania (mean 2.8) are the least satisfied across all aspects under review, while the highest overall satisfaction is noted among people from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (mean 3.1).

In comparison with 2016 survey results, satisfaction with social life, and accessibility of public services via digital channels (online services, website, smartphone app) are lower across the SEE region. At the same time, the respondents' satisfaction has increased across a host of areas: utility services (water and sewage, electricity, gas supply, telephone, Internet), schools/education system, administrative services from central government (such as passports and personal ID), public services in general (police, ministry, health, etc.) and safety from crime.

People who rate their social status as above average are significantly more satisfied than others across all evaluated aspects of life. The youngest cohort (18-29 years old) are generally more content than others with social life, level of prices, accessibility to public services via digital channels (online services, website, smartphone app), while the oldest age group (60+ years old) are more satisfied with quality of schools/education system, transport infrastructure (the overall transport: public transport, quality of roads, railways, airports) and tolerance and respect of differences.

Figure 12: When it comes to social and employment issues, in your opinion, in which of the following areas should your government invest its resources as a priority?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



Respondent priority areas for national government investment remain largely unchanged and include industrial development (25%), agriculture (19%), small and medium size enterprise development (16%), and social infrastructure (15%).

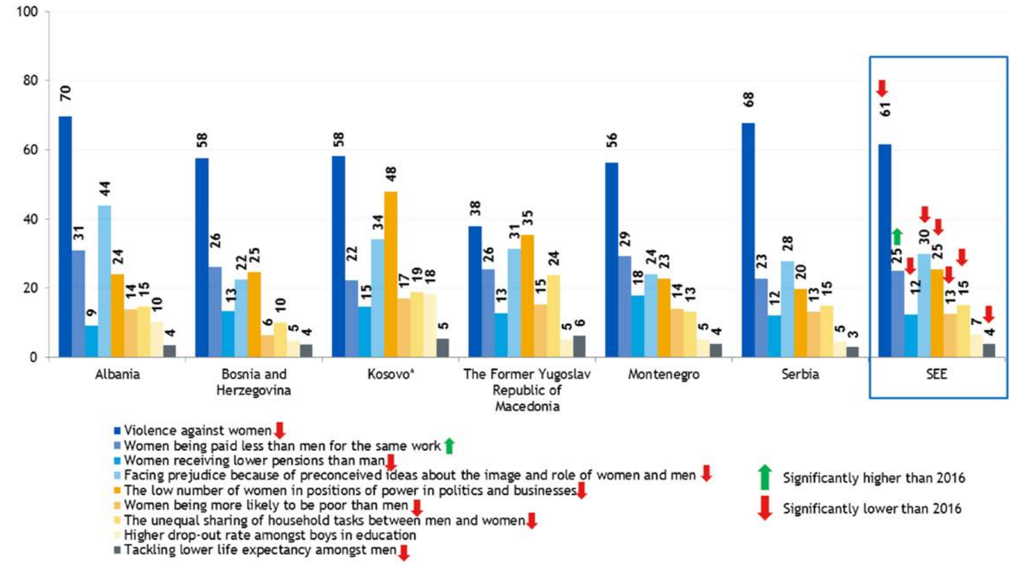
There are some variations at individual economy level; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo* prioritize industrial development for public investment; social infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, is the chief priority in Albania; and tourism is prioritized by a majority of surveyed Montenegrins. Agriculture is the second ranked priority across all economies surveyed, with the exception of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (small and medium enterprise development).

While men prioritize energy, transport and agriculture, women overwhelmingly support investement in social infrastructure (such as schools and hospitals). Science and technology are prioritized by the youngest age group (18-29 years old), as well as the university educated, and inidividuals who rate their social status as above average.

Compared to the results of the 2016 survey, people in the region place a significantly greater emphasis on transport and social infrastructure and less on industrial development. This is likely an acknowledgment of the changing nature of the region's economy, as well as a reflecton of an increased focus on quality of life considerations by respondents.

Figure 13: I will read you a list of inequalities which men or women can face. In your opinion, which area should be dealt with most urgently in your economy?

(All respondents - N=6025, maximum three answers, share of total, %)



Out of nine different manifestations of gender inequality surveyed, the vast majority of respondents continue to identify violence against women as the most pressing issue. Other issues of concern to at least 20% of respondents include facing prejudice because of preconceived ideas about the image and role of women and men (30%); women being paid less than men for the same work (25%) and women receiving lower pensions than men (25%).

Observations across individual economies show that, as in 2016, respondents from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are significantly less likely to consider violence against women as most problematic (38%) but are significantly more likely to prioritize the issue of equal sharing of household tasks between men and women.

Equal pay is seen as more important issue in Albania and the least pressing in Kosovo*. Increased involvement of women in politics (48%) and higher school drop-out rates amongst boys (18%) are rated as significantly more important by respondents from Kosovo*, and facing prejudice because of preconceived ideas about the image and role of women and men by respondents from Albania (44%).

While women are significantly more concerned about issues of direct gender discrimination like violence against women; unequal pay and pensions; low participation of women in positions of power in politics and businesses; and unequal sharing of household tasks; men are again more likely to focus on issues affecting them directly, such as lower life expectancy, higher drop-out rate amongst boys in education, as well as prejudice about the image and role of women and men. Youngest respondents (18-29 years old) are significantly more likely to perceive violence against women as an issue requiring urgent attention, whereas the oldest (61 and older) are significantly more likely to cite lower pensions for women.

The highly educated much more frequently note the prejudice about the image and role of women and men, as well as the low number of women in positions of power in politics and business. Respondents without formal education, or with a primary school diploma only, are more likely to focus on the material disparity in status between the two genders.

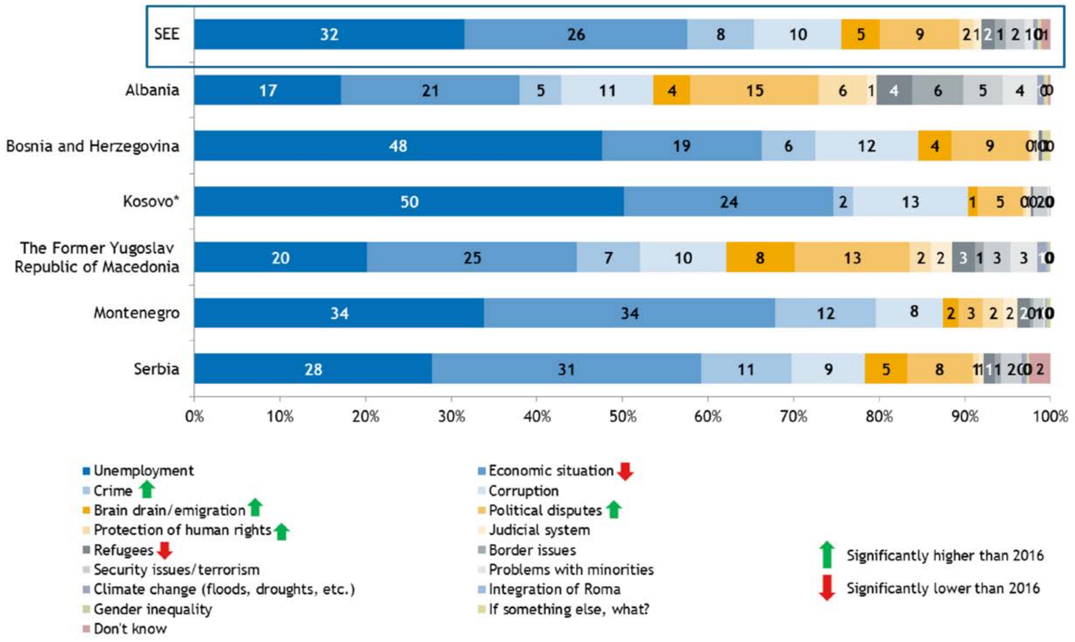
Attitudes on Regional Cooperation and EU Integration

Regional cooperation continues to enjoy moderate support across the region, but with a steady decline in numbers for several years now. Although finding CEFTA hugely beneficial, Serbian respondents remain highly sceptical of closer regional ties. This may have something to do with a limited level of awareness on regional data available.

There is some improvement in attitude towards EU integration, although accession prospects are greeted with increasing realism by the public. Serbia remains the region's leading Eurosceptic even though its economic and political ties with the EU continue to grow and contribute to development. The Serbian public is clearly influenced by the narratives hostile towards the EU, and the West in general, permeating public discourse. In Kosovo* and Albania, there is much enthusiasm although accession prospects remain bleak. Bosnia and Herzegovina`s public remains the most depressed in the region.

Figure 14: What do you think are the most important problems facing the entire SEE region at the moment (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



Unemployment is once more perceived as the most important problem (32%) facing the SEE region, followed by the overall economic situation (28%), and corruption (10%). All other issues are ranked as "most important" in fewer than 10% of the cases across the region.

Respondents from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia once again highlight "brain-drain" as a key regional problem, while the public in Montenegro and Serbia cite the economic situation and crime more frequently than their regional counterparts.

Compared to the 2016 survey, there are no changes in ranking of regional issues by respondents. There has been some increase in concern over crime, brain drain/emigration, political disputes and protection of human rights, while the economic situation and refugees elicit less of a response compared to the previous survey period.

Figure 15: Do you agree that the relations in SEE are better than 12 months ago?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %).

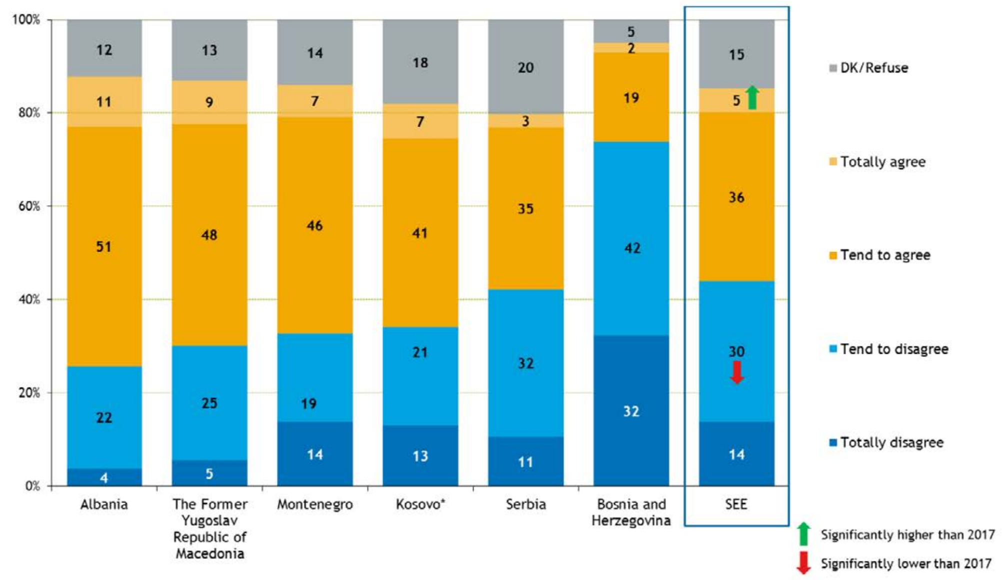
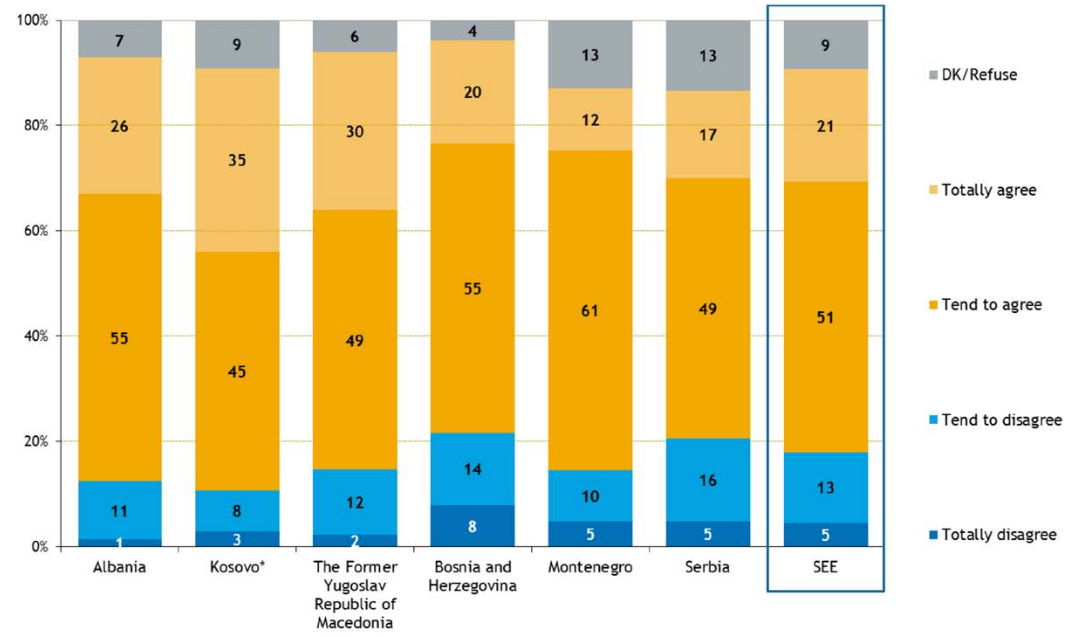


Figure 16: Do you agree that regional cooperation can contribute to the political, economic or security situation of your society?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



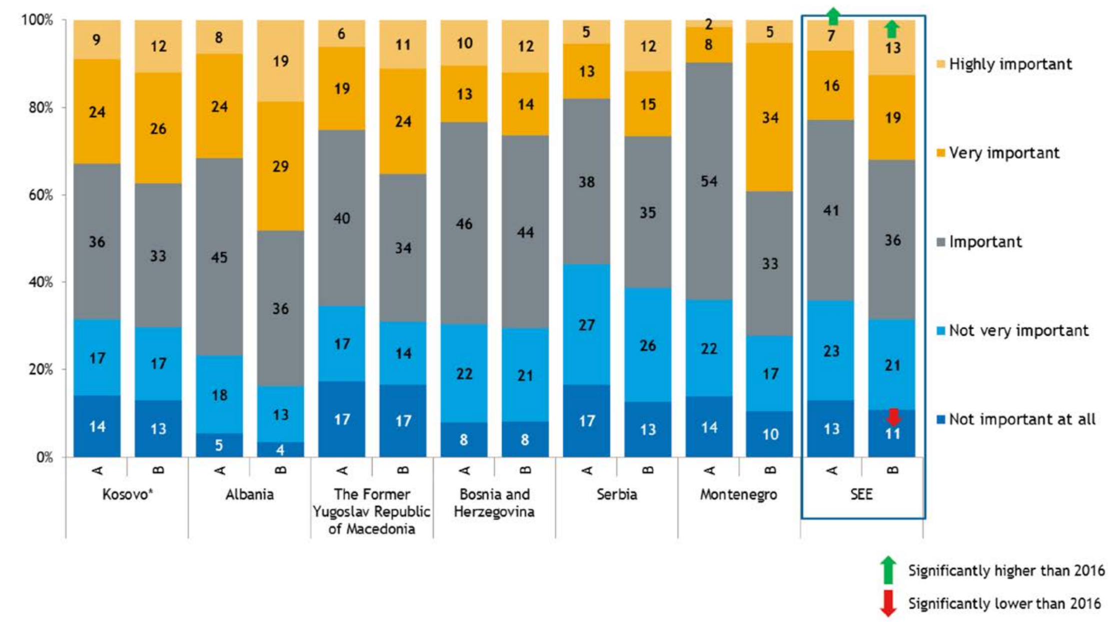
Somewhat encouragingly, this year's survey notes an increase in the number of respondents who describe developments in regional cooperation positively, i.e. they agree that the relations in SEE are better than 12 months ago (up to 41% from 37% in 2016), alongside a sizable decline in the ranks of those who do not (down to 44% from 50% in 2016). Nonetheless, the region's population seems to still be divided almost down the middle on this issue.

Respondents in Albania, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Montenegro are particularly positive in their assessment of recent regional developments, whereas the clear majority of respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina report no change for the better (74%).

As last year, some three quarters of all respondents feel regional cooperation is important to prosperity in their society. The populations of Albania, Kosovo* and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are more likely than others to ackowledge benefits of regional cooperation to the political, economic and security situations in their society (Albania: 81%; Kosovo*: 80%; The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: 79%; SEE average: 72%). Serbia boasts the smallest proportion of respondents who believe in the benefits of regional cooperation (66%).

Figure 17: How important would you assess the issue of integration of Roma on a scale from 1-5 for: A - Regional cooperation; B - EU accession?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %)



On a scale of 1 to 5, the importance of Roma integration for regional cooperation is estimated at below the average (mean 2.8). The context of EU accession only brings about a minor improvement in this regard (mean 3.0). Nonetheless, this still indicates a modest surge in perception to last year (2.6 and 2.7, respectively).

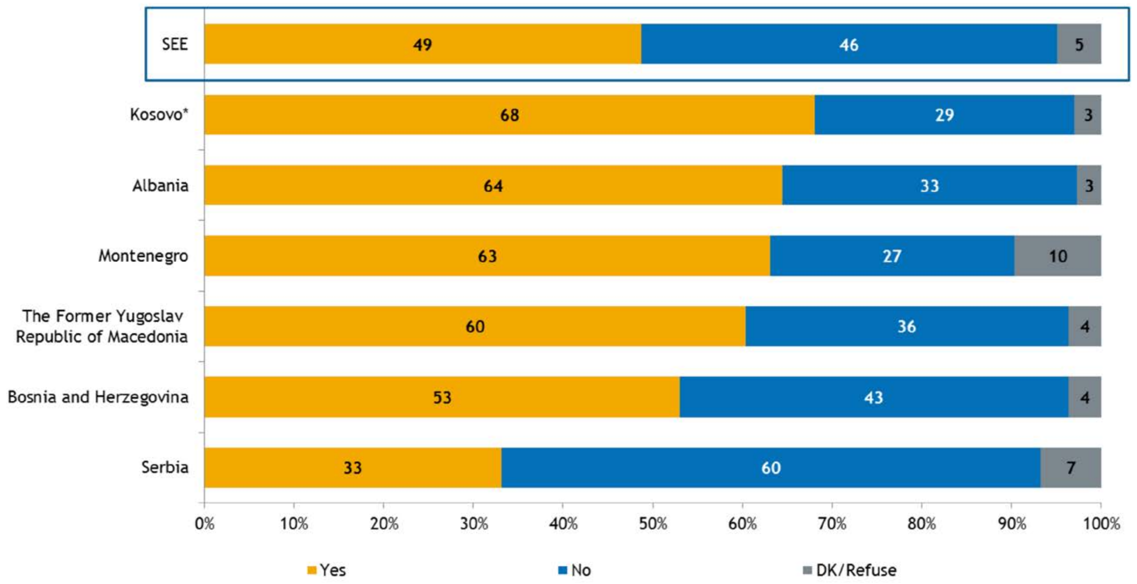
Looking across the region, the importance of Roma integration for both regional cooperation and EU accession is ranked the highest in Albania (mean 3.1 and 3.5, respectively) and the lowest in Montenegro and Serbia for regional cooperation (mean 2.6 in both economies), i.e. in Serbia for EU accession (mean 2.9). Public opinion shows no correlation between the size of the Roma population[6] across the economies to the degree of importance given to their integration (from an estimated 0,42% in Albania to an estimated 2,05% in Serbia).

Across all demographic variables, the only significant outlier are the highly educated who are significantly more likely to believe that integration of Roma is important for both regional cooperation (mean 2.9) and EU accession (3.1).

[6] https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/pages/3/roma-in-the-region

Figure 18: Overall, are you interested in news and information about the rest of the SEE region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



Almost half of all respondents (49%) are interested in news and information about the rest of the SEE region, while a slightly lower number (46%) are not. Again, this indicates a relatively polarized view of the region by its citizens at large. Respondents in Serbia are the least interested in regional news and this further corroborates earlier findings with regards to this economy's view of the region.

Looking across demographic variables, the youngest respondents (18-29 years old) are also the least interested in regional developments, while individuals with the highest level of education as well as those who rate their social status as above average, and average, are significantly more interested in news and information on the region.

Figure 19: Do you think that EU membership would be a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad for your economy?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

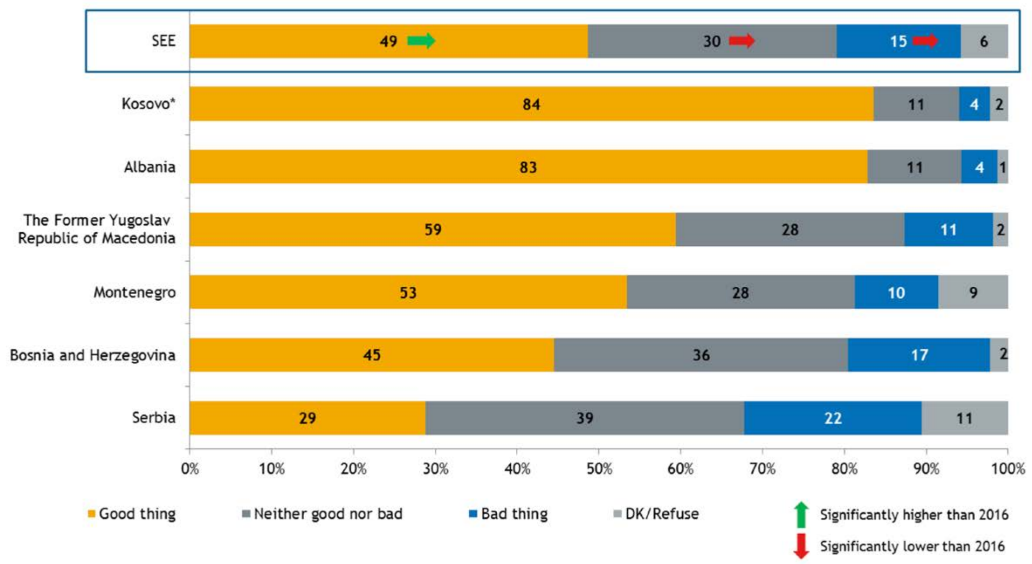
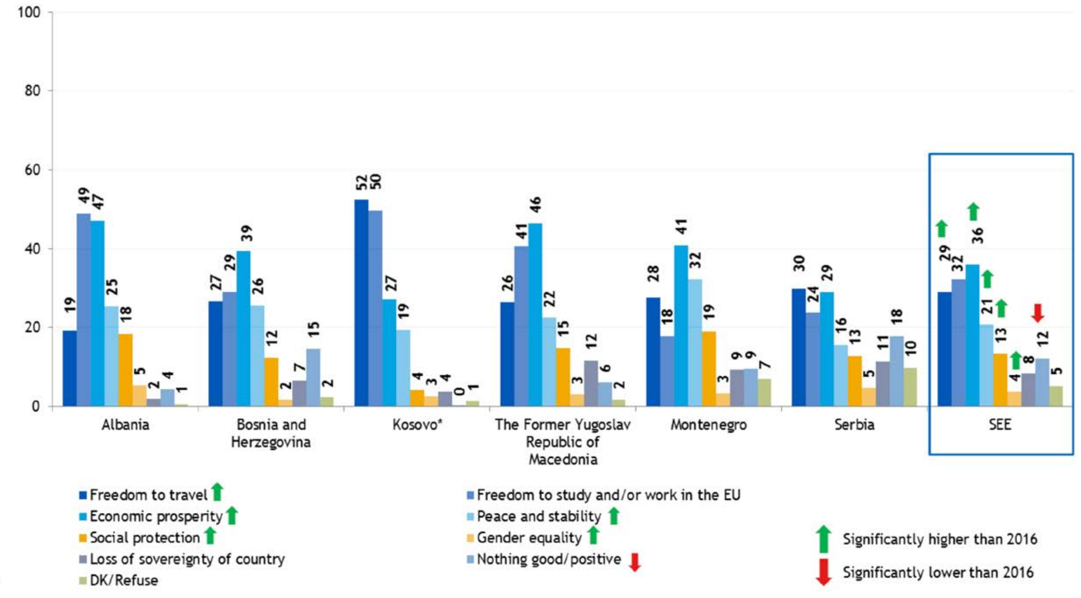


Figure 20: What would EU membership mean to you personally?

(All respondents - N=6025, maximum two answers, share of total, %)



Following a period of stagnation (2014-2015), support for EU membership has increased for the second year running (42% in 2014; 41% in 2015; 44% in 2016; and 49% in 2017).

While this indicates a significant and positive change in perception aross the region, close to one third of all respondents (30%) still see EU accession as neither good nor bad while 15% (down from 19% in 2016) see it in a purely negative light.

With the exception of Serbia, respondents across all of the region's economies are more likely to favour than oppose EU membership. The populations in Kosovo* (84%) and Albania (83%) are most enthusiastic. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro still has a higher proportion of those who consider it a good thing (59% and 53%, respectively). Serbia is the only economy in the region where those who are neutral on EU membership (39%) outnumber those in favour (29%). There is still a significant number of respondents who see accession as a bad thing (22%).

From a demographic perspective, the youngest cohort (56%), and individuals who rate their social status as above average (59%) are significantly more likely to favour EU membership, whereas the most senior respondents (20%) and those who rate their social status as below average (24%) are significantly more likely to be negative.

EU membership is primarily associated with economic prosperity (36%), freedom to study and/or work in EU (32%), and freedom to travel (29%).

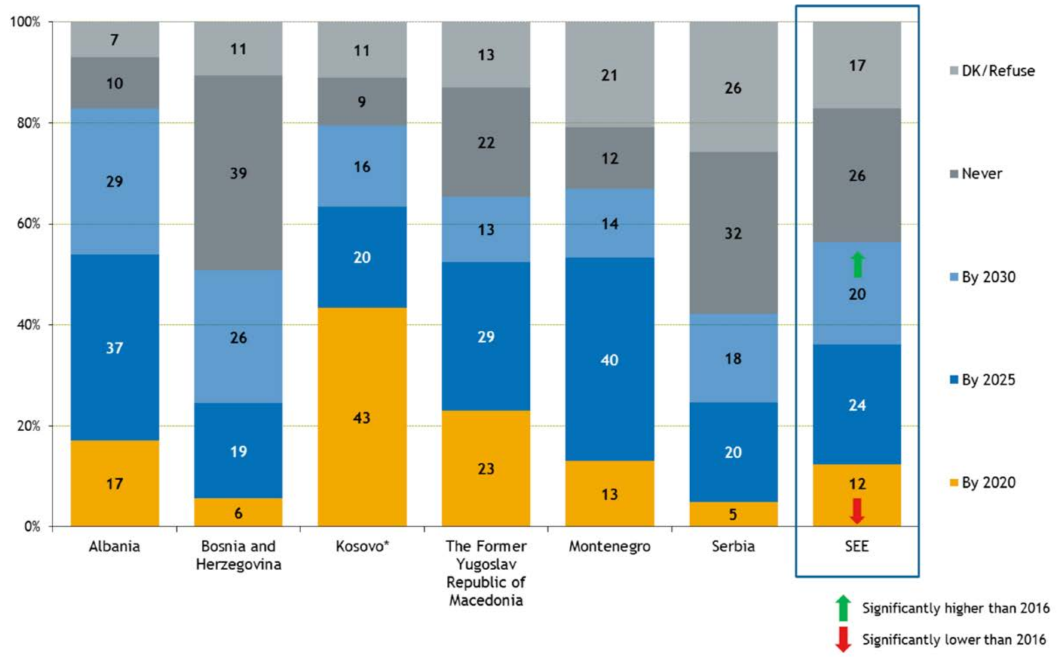
A comparative analysis with 2016 survey data shows a significantly higher number of those who associate EU membership with economic prosperity, freedom to travel, but also with peace and stability, social protection and gender equality.

There are notable differences between the economies: in Kosovo*, where an overwhelming majority perceive the EU as a good thing, more than half of the population (52%) prioritize freedom to travel, largely due to the fact that they are yet to benefit from EU visa liberalisation. In Montenegro, where the percentage of EU supporters is 53%, a significantly higher proportion of respondents than anywhere else across the region see peace and stability as one of the biggest membership benefits (32%). Together with Albania (49%), Kosovo* (50%) stands out with a high number of respondents who associate EU accession with freedom to study and/or work in the EU.

As expected, the youngest cohort (18-29 years old) are significantly more likely to see the benefits of the EU in the freedom to study and work (45%). The freedom to travel, as well as to study and work are significantly more pronounced among highly educated people (32% and 38% respectively). Those who rate their social status as below average are significantly more likely to see nothing positive or good about EU membership.

Figure 21: In general, when do you expect the accession of your economy to the EU to happen?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



There is growing pessimism, as well as realism, in regard to the region's economies' accession prospects. Compared to 27% in 2014, only 12% of respondents today foresee their economy joining the EU as early as 2020. At the same time, there is a marked increase in the number of respondents who anticipate accession by 2030 (up to 20% from 14% in 2016). The highest proportion of respondents still feel that their economy will never integrate into the EU (26%), with said pessimists especially numerous in Bosnia and Herzegovina (39%) and Serbia (32%). The population of Kosovo* (43%) are the most optimistic as they forecast EU accession as early as 2020 to a considerably greater extent than any other.

People who rate their social status as below average are particularly likely to be pessimistic and convinced that their economy will never join the EU (35%). On the other hand, those who rate their social status as above average are the most optimistic about EU accession as early as 2020 (21%).

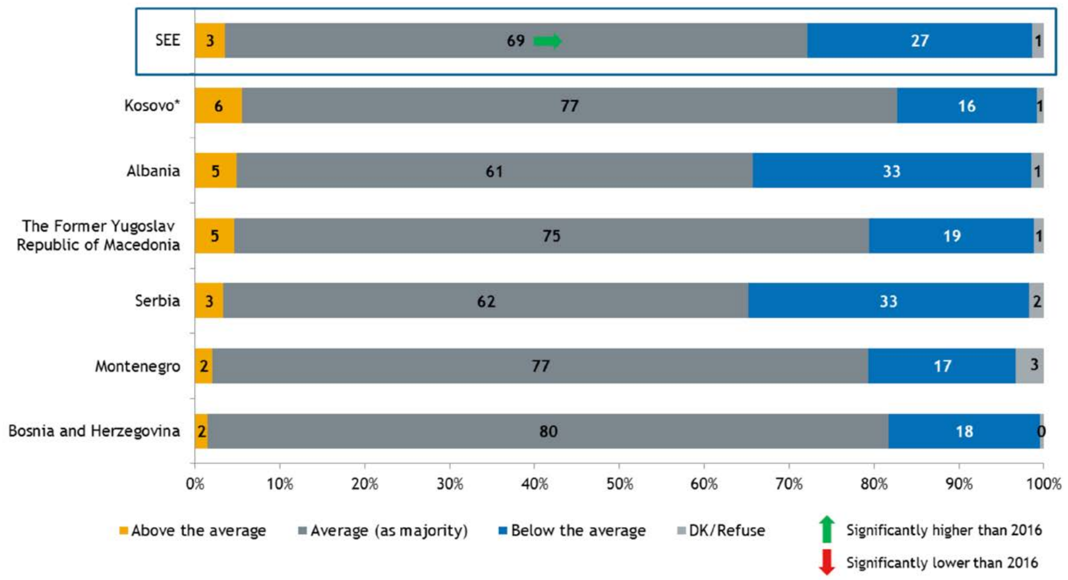
Unemployment and Risk of Poverty

The state of the labour market continues to greatly influence sentiment and expectations. While some positive developments have been noted across the board, there is concern whether outward migration is the chief cause of declining unemployment figures rather than economic growth at home. Equally, job creation has largely happened in low-pay and low-producitivity sectors.

The perceived risk of poverty has remained largely unchanged, with about a third of respondents describing themselves as under threat. As in the past, the dependence on remittances is striking with both Albania and Kosovo* highly reliant on this form of income.

Figure 22: How would you estimate your current socio-economic status? Do you live above the average, average (as majority) or below the average? (Self-estimation)

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

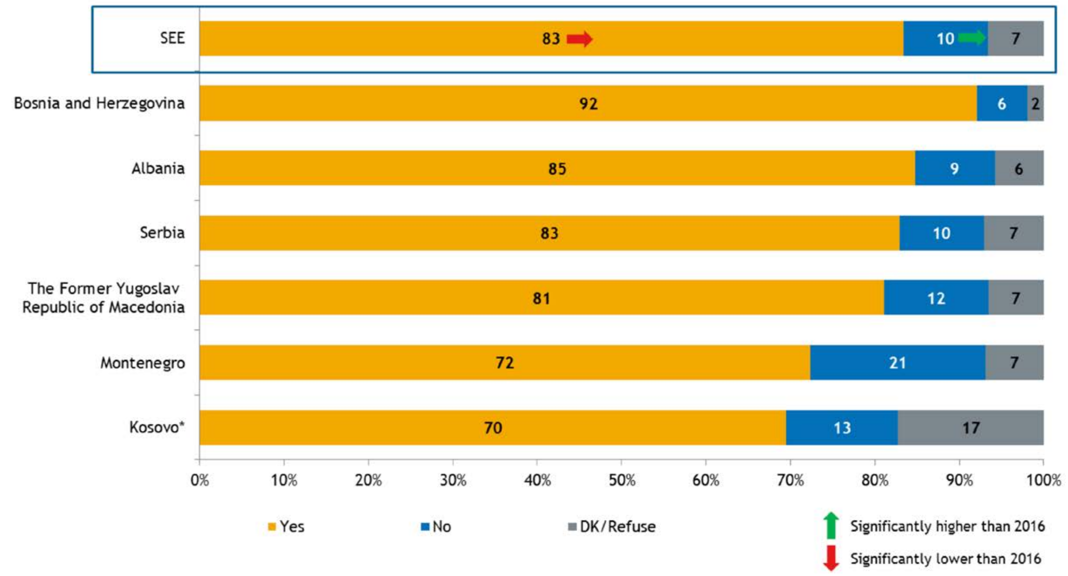


Based on social self-positioning (where the respondent sees him or herself against the majority, i.e. better, worse or average), more than two thirds of respondents from SEE identify themselves as average (69%), 3% believe their living standard to be above average and 27% below. Compared to the 2016 findings, there is a moderate increase in the size of the group who self-estimate their social status as average (2016: 67%; 2017: 69%). In all probability, this is a reflection of a slight uptake in the labour market, i.e. an increase in employment and a decrease in unemployment (though the levels are stiil rather unsatisfactory).

The largest proportion of the population across all surveyed economies rate their social status as average. Nevertheless, in Serbia and Albania, there is a higher proportion of those who rate their status below average (33%). Highly educated people are significantly more likely to rate their status as above or as average (above average: 6%; average: 78%). The youngest segment of the population are notably more likely to rate their living standard as average (78%), while the oldest (39%) and the low-skilled (43%) are significantly more likely to assess their status as below average.

Figure 23: Do you think that the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing in your economy?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



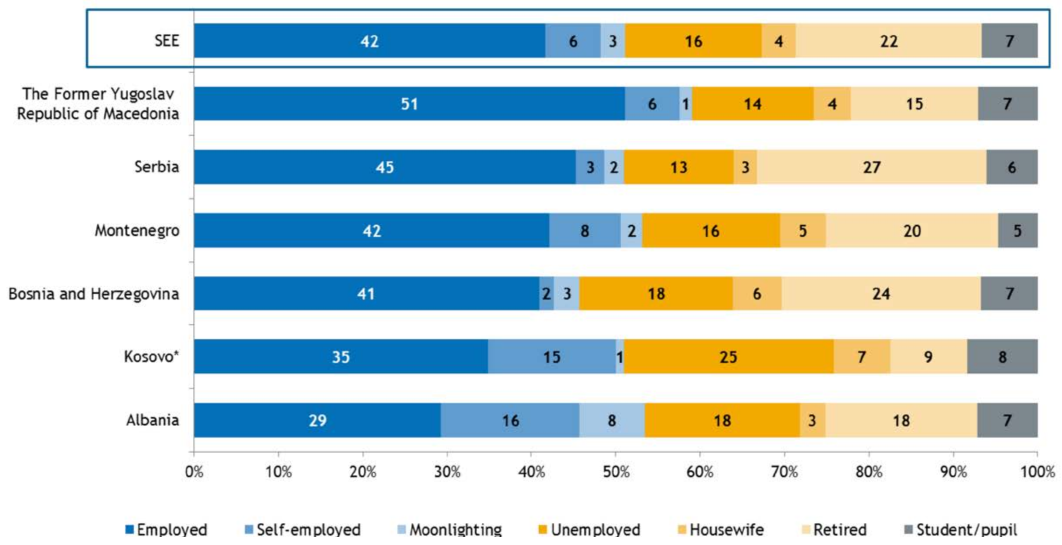
The vast majority of respondents in the SEE region (83%) describe the gap between the rich and the poor as widening in their economies, with numbers particularly high in Bosnia and Herzegovina (92%). Kosovo*, which is at the opposite end of the spectrum, with the fewest affirmative responses in the region, still boasts a high number of respondents who see the gap as growing (70%).

The responses are in correlation with the respondents' self-estimated social status - those who rate their social standing as above average are significantly less likely to perceive the gap between the poor and the rich as widening (20% feel the gap is not growing), as opposed to those who rate their social status as below average (94% feel the gap is growing).

Available survey data for the full four year period covered by the BPSI show a decrease in the number of respondents who feel the gap is indeed growing (from 86% in 2014, 88% in 2015 and 87% in 2016 to 83% in 2017).

Figure 24: What is your current working status?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



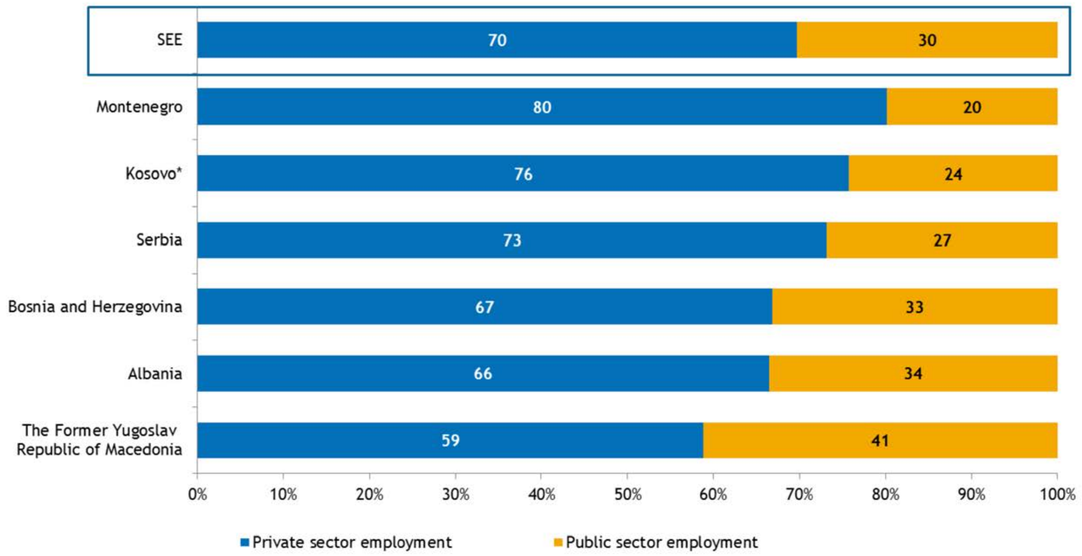
More than half of all respondents surveyed across the region are working; this includes those that are employed (42%), self-employed (6%) and moonlighting (3%).

Looking at data across the region's economies, there are significantly more self-employed people in Albania (16%), along with those that moonlight (8%), whereas Kosovo* has the most unemployed (25%).

Viewed over time, survey data indicates a considerable increase in employment from 2014 (37%) to 2017 (42%). This is broadly in line with the findings of the relevant labour force surveys conducted in the region.

Figure 25: If you are employed is it a private or public sector employment?

(Employed - N=2520, share of total, %)

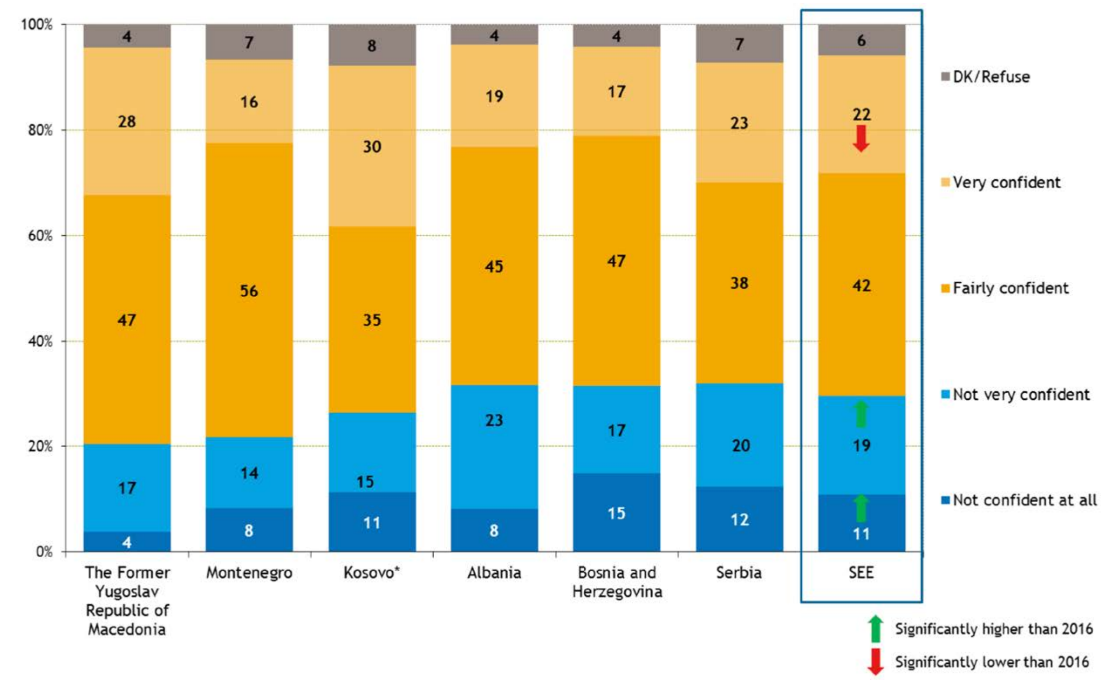


Among the people employed in the region, a clear majority work in the private sector (70%) whereas 30% are employed in the public sector or in state-owned enterprises. In The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia there are considerably more employees in the public sector (41%) than in the other economies, indicating a large public administration.

The youngest population cohort (18-29 years old) are much more likely to work in the private sector (83%), while those aged 46-60 years (41%) are more frequently found in the public sector. No statistically significant differences are noted between people of varying social status with regard to the sector in which they work.

Figure 26: How confident are you in keeping your job in the coming 12 months?

(Employed or self-employed - N=3032, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



The employed and the self-employed are predominantly optimistic about keeping their job in the next 12 months. Comparisons with 2016, however, indicate a worrying decline in respondent confidence when it comes to job retention - the number of people concerned about their jobs has grown from 21% in 2016 to 30% in 2017. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has the highest regional proportion of employed individuals who are confident of continued employment over the next 12 months (75%).

Demographically speaking, the most educated respondents (69%), and those who rate their social status as above average (82%), are more likely to be confident about their future job prospects.

Figure 27: How many people in your family, who are able to work, are employed?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

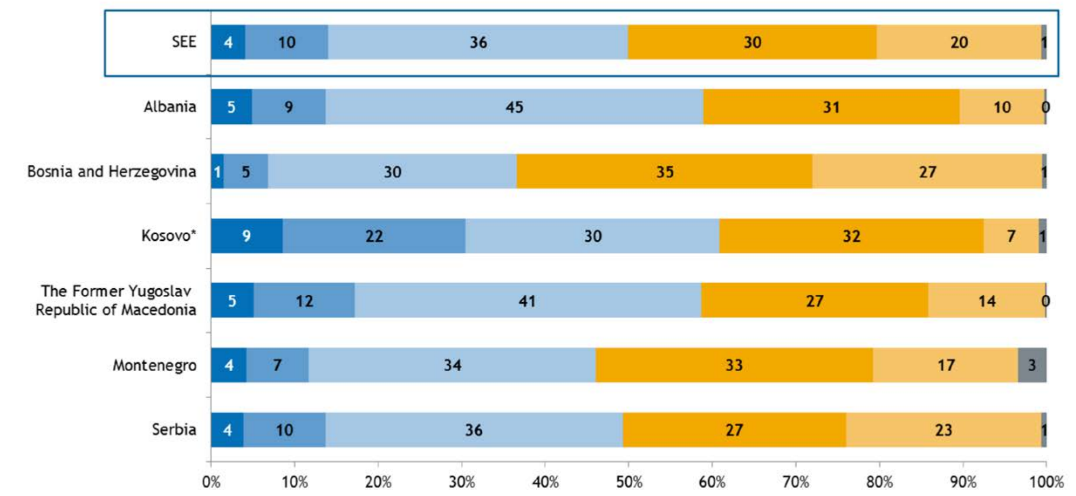
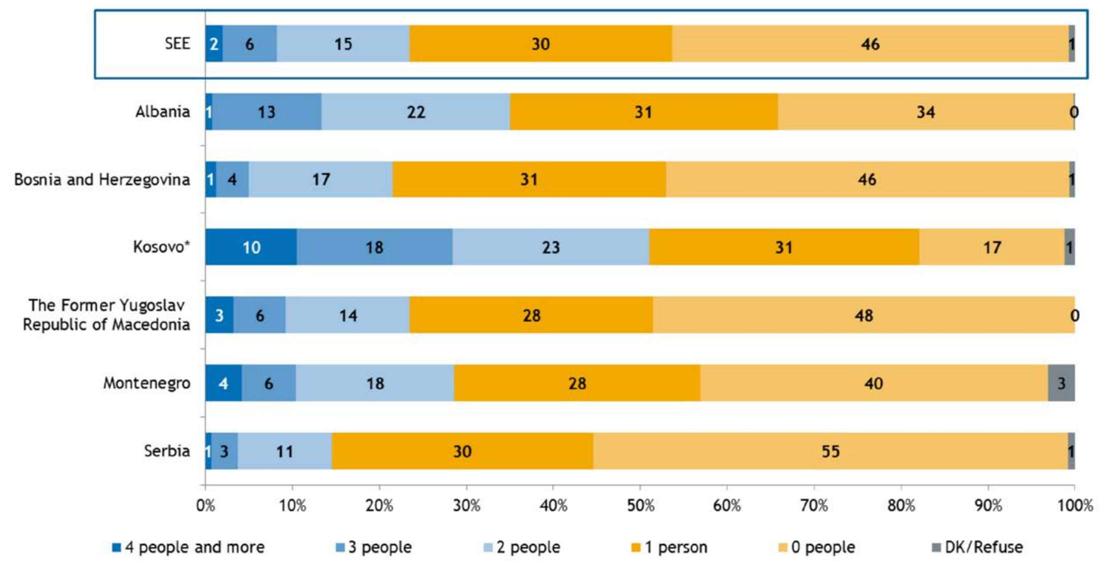


Figure 28: How many people in your family, who are able to work, are unemployed?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



Survey findings indicate that one out of five households surveyed have no employed members, whereas 66% have one or two. Compared with 2016 findings, the number of households with no employed members has decreased by a small margin (from 22% in 2016 to 20% in 2017).

Looking across the individual economies, Kosovo* stands out with the highest share of households with three members employed (22%).

At the same time, respondents from this economy report a significant decrease in the number of households with two or three working members (from 73 in 2016 to 52% in 2017), as well as a simoultaneous increase in the number of families with only one employed member (from 19% in 2016 to 32% in 2017).

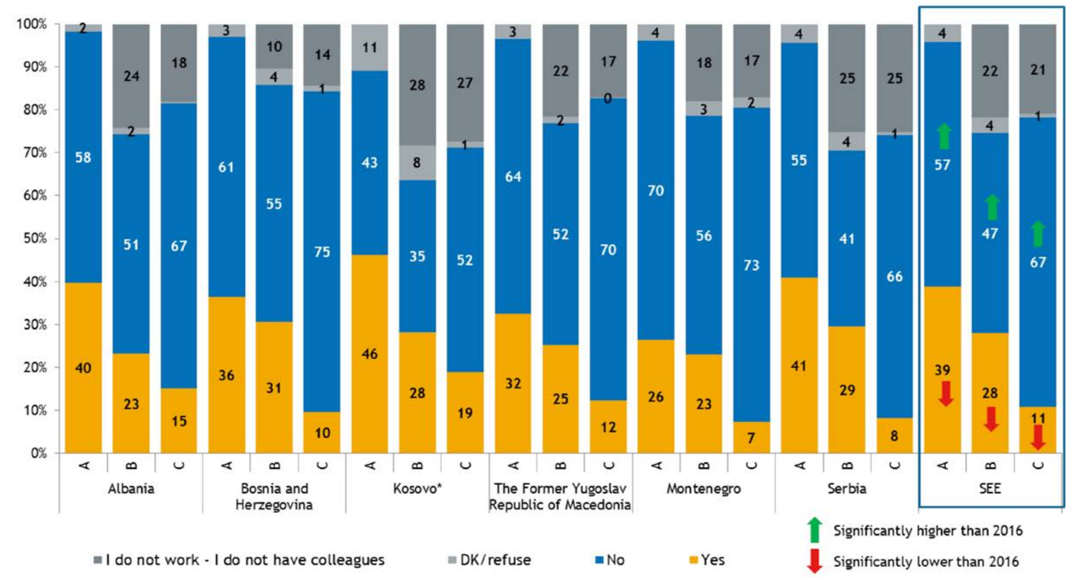
Bosnia and Herzegovina has the highest percentage of families without a single member employed (27%), and those with only one (35%).

46% of families across the region have no unemployed members (out of those who are able to work), while 30% have only one.

There are significantly more families without unemployed members in Serbia (55%) while Kosovo* stands out with a higher number of unemployed persons per family (51% of households have two or more unemployed persons who are able to work). As in 2016, Kosovo* is statistically unusual as it features both the highest number of employed and unemployed household members, something that can be attributed to the larger average size of families in this economy. Across the region, the employment rate for women tends to be lower than for men, with Kosovo*'s the lowest.

Figure 29: Did any of the following situations happen to you in the past three years? A - Someone from your family, a relative, or a friend lost their job?; B - One of your colleagues has lost their job?; C- You lost your job

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

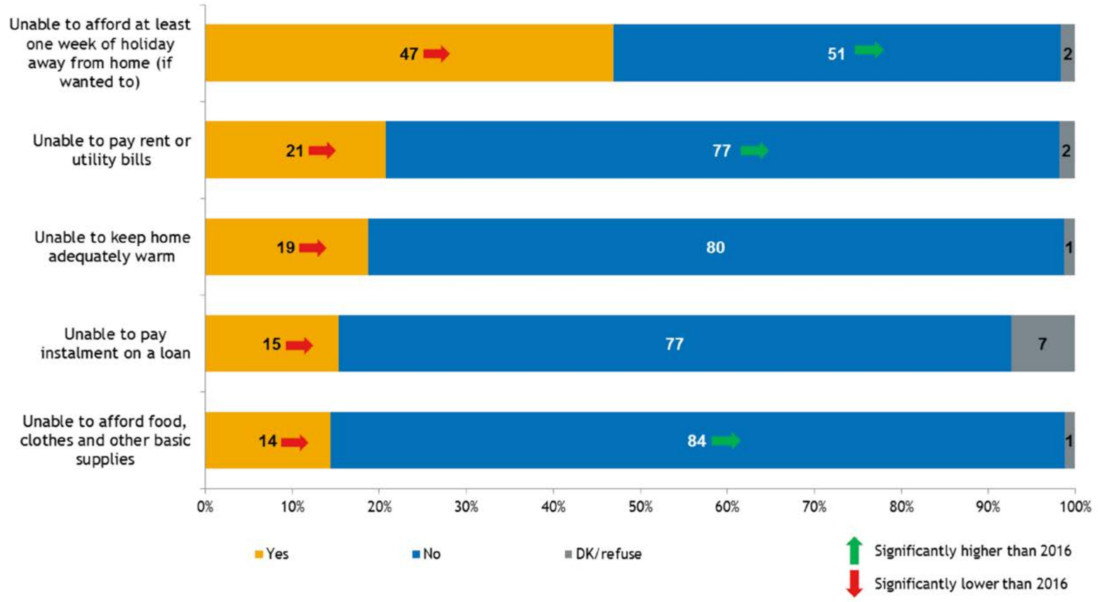


Compared to the results of the previous three survey installments, where the number of respondents reporting job loss remained largely unchanged (13.5% in 2014 through 13% in 2015:13% and 13% in 2016), this number is somewhat lower for 2017 (11%).

Looking at individual economies, Albania is again top of the table with 15% of respondents losing their jobs over the past 3 years.

Figure 30: Did your household face the following problems (even at least once) during the past 12 months? (SEE region)

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

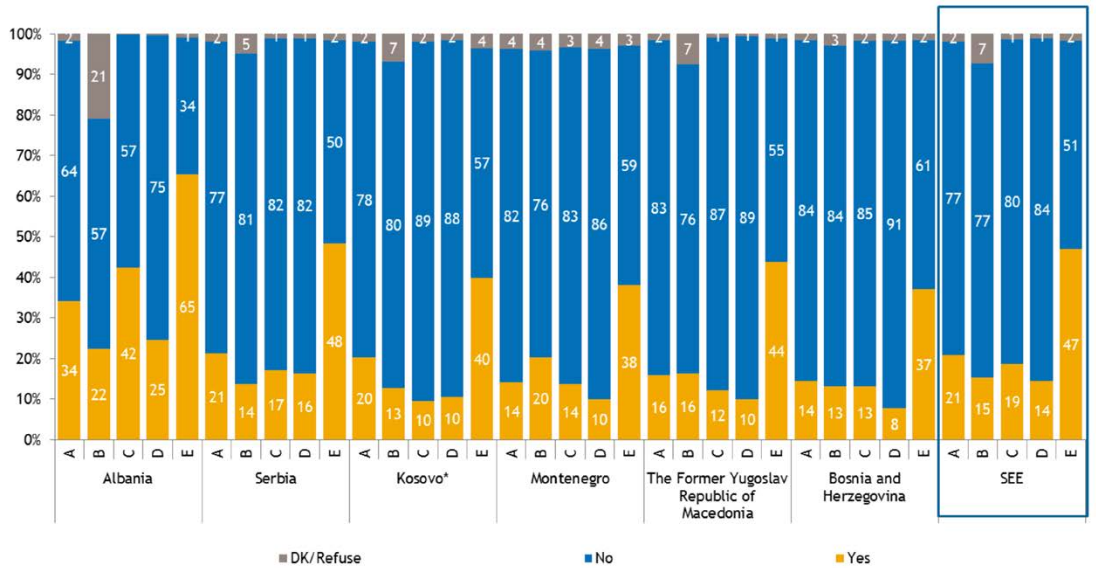


One of the five things that the majority of people in the region were unable to afford over the past 12 months is a week-long holiday away from home (47%). A sizable number of respondents also report not being able to afford basic living expenses - 21% of the population could not pay all the bills, 19% were unable to keep their home adequately warm, while 14% were unable to afford basic supplies, such as clothes, food and the like.

Compared to earlier surveys (2014-2016), the situation has improved across all observed parameters, with fewer people now unable to pay or afford basics.

Figure 31: Did your household face the following problems (even at least once) during the past 12 months? (By economies): A - Unable to pay rent or utility bills; B - Unable to pay installment on a loan; C - Unable to keep home adequately warm; D - Unable to afford food, clothes and other basic supplies; E - Unable to afford at least one week of holiday away from home (if wanted to)

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

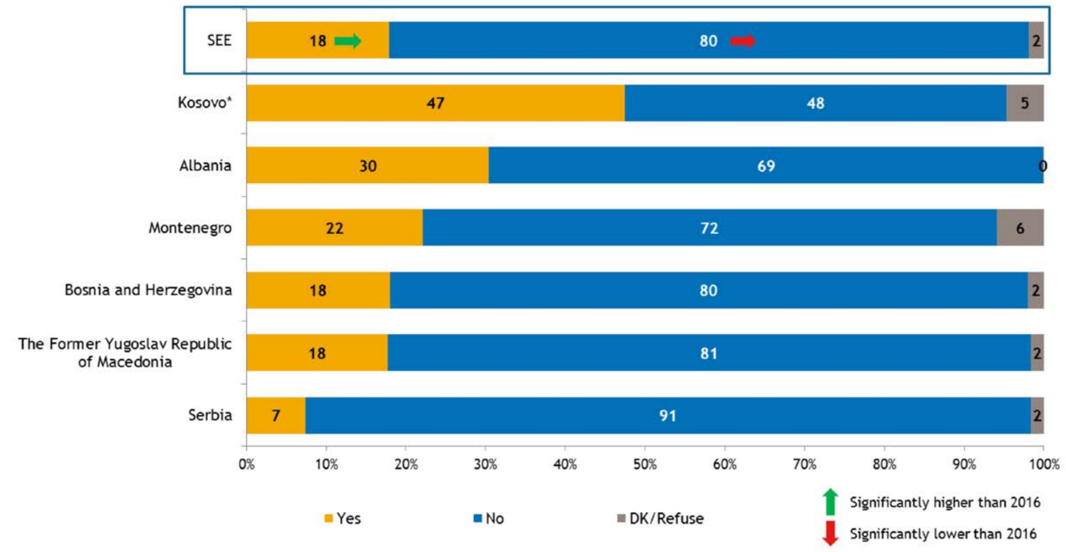


A cross-economy analysis of the five surveyed items indicates that Albania stands out with a higher proportion of people unable to afford all of the five items surveyed. In Albania, as many as 34% of households were unable to pay utility bills at least once and 42% were unable to keep their home adequately warm.

Observed problems were notably more prominent among those who rate their social status below average and within the respondent group without a formal education, or with a primary school diploma only. People in the age group of 46-60 years were unable to pay utility bills and make loan payments more often than others.

Figure 32: Did your household receive help, at least once in the past 12 months, in the form of money or goods from another individual living abroad?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %) %)



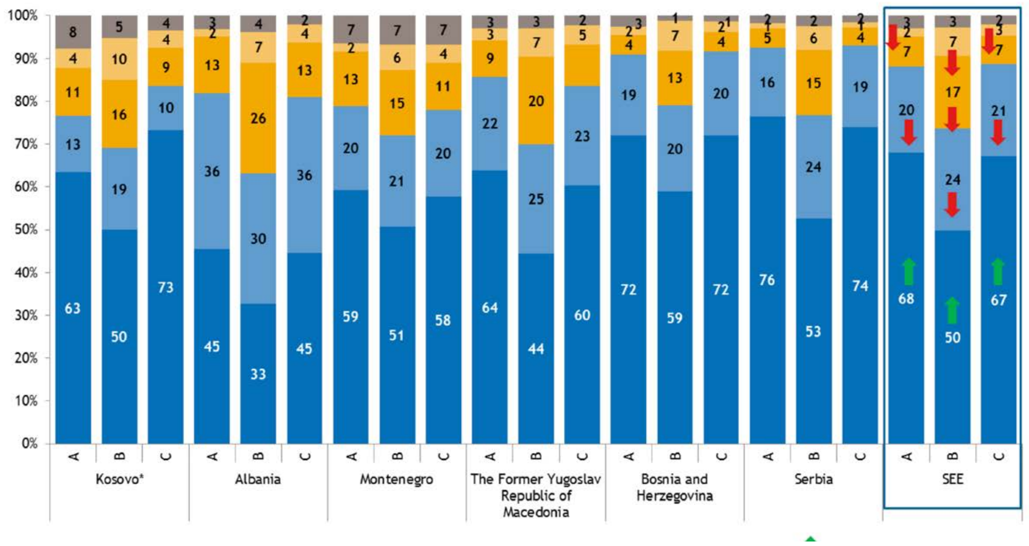
A clear majority of respondents (80%) have received no assistance from persons living abroad in the past 12 months, although the trend observed across the past four survey installment indicates an increase in the number of remittance recipients (from 14% in 2014 to 18% in 2018). These findings correspond to national income statistics collected by the region's governments.

As a rule, remittances reflect consumption needs of the recepients, so the higher the need, the larger the amount of the remittance. At the same time, economic conditions in host economies play a major role as they affect the availability of funding that makes up remittance payments.

Looking at the individual economies across the region, Kosovo* records the most significant fluctuations in the percentage of the population receiving remittances; in 2016, the percentage dropped from 45% to 28%, before going up to 47% in 2017. Kosovo* is also home to the highest proportion of remittance recipients in the region; Serbia has the fewest (7%).

**Figure 33: To what extent do you agree with the following statements:
A - Some people look down on you because of your income or job situation; B - I feel that there is a risk for me that I could fall into poverty; C - I feel left out of society.**

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



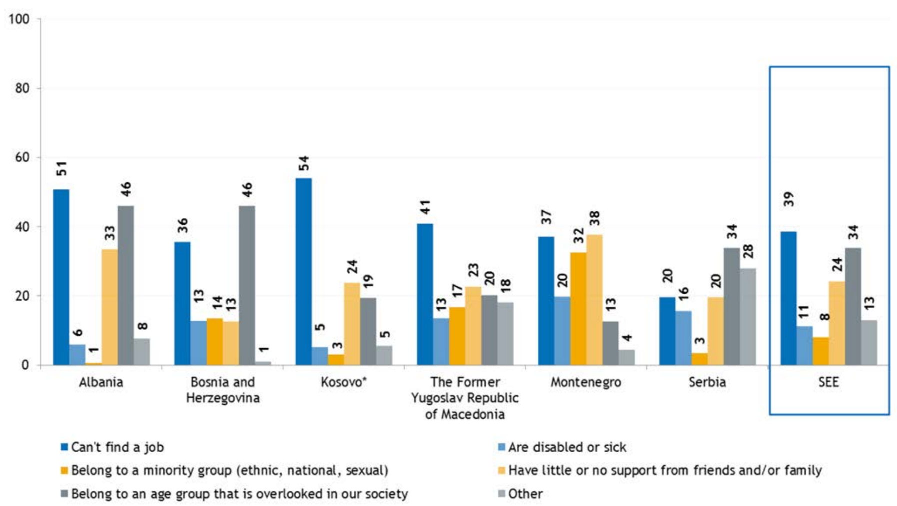
Some 10% of respondents describe themselves as socially excluded while a similar number feel that people look down on them because of their income or job situation (9%). Almost a quarter (24%) of the population fear they are at risk from poverty.

Respondent anxiety over being looked down upon because of income or job situation has lessened (down to 9% in 2017 from 17% in 2014) while concerns over falling into poverty have declined steeply in that same period (from 40% in 2014 to 24% in 2017). People in Albania are more likely to feel socially excluded and at risk of falling into poverty.

As expected, the findings are closely linked to education level and social status. Respondents who rate their social status as below average and less educated are significantly more likely to agree with all three statements. In addition, the oldest segment of the population (61 and older) is notably more likely to fear falling into poverty than others.

Figure 34: You feel left out because you:

(Respondents who feel left out of society, N=720, multiple answers, %)



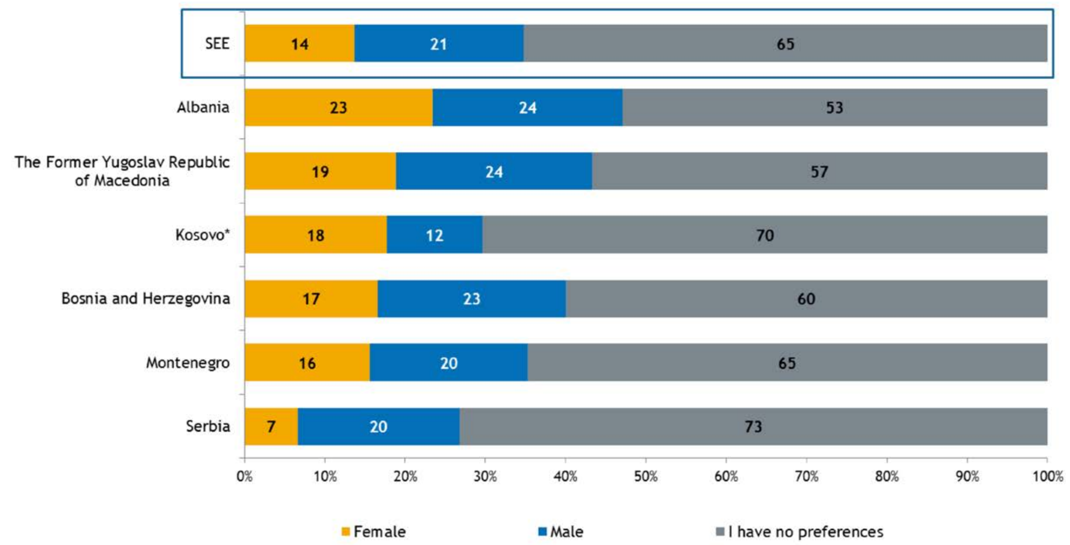
The predominant reasons for feeling socially excluded are the inability to find a job (39%), and belonging to an age group that is overlooked in society (34%). A significant portion of the SEE population (24%) feel left out of society as a result of having little or no support from friends and/or family.

With the exceptions of Montenegro and Serbia, the inability to find employment is the single most common reason for feeling excluded. In Montenegro, the chief cause for feeling left out is the lack of a support infrastructure with family and friends (38%); for Serbia, exclusion is most commonly linked to belonging to an age group that is overlooked in society (34%). Belonging to a minority group, whether ethnic, national or sexual, as well as being disabled or sick, are more likely to generate feelings of social marginalization in Montenegro (32% and 20%, respectively) than anywhere else across the region.

Analysis by demographic variables indicates that the most senior respondents (61 and older), and those with the lowest education level, are likely to feel significantly more socially excluded than others because they belong to an age group that is overlooked in society. Meanwhile, highly educated respondents tend to feel excluded mainly due to a perceived absence of a support mechanism in the form of family or friends.

Figure 35: Do you prefer to have a female or male boss at work?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total %)

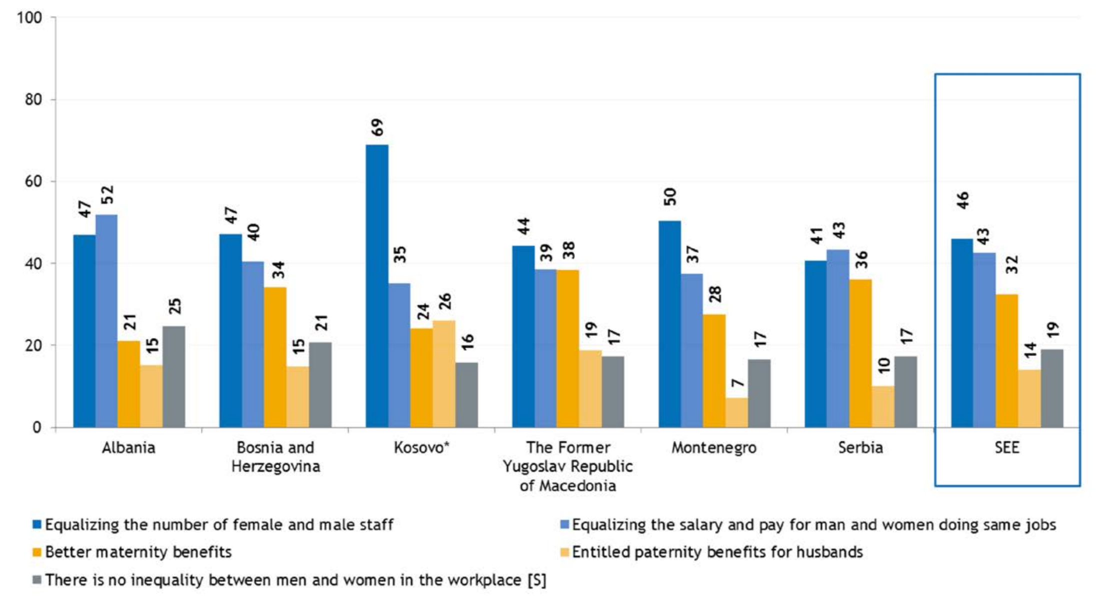


While a majority of respondents (65%) have no preference when it comes to the gender of their supervisor, out of those that do, a majority prefer male (21%) over female (14%). The proportion of respondents who prefer a male boss outnumber those who favour a female supervisor across all economies, except in Kosovo*, where a higher proportion favour woman managers (18% for women and 12% for men). In Albania, the two groups are almost identical (23% for female and 24% for male). Looking at preferences across all of the economies, Albania has the highest proportion of respondents who would prefer a female boss over a male one.

Women and respondents who rate their social status as above average are significantly more likely to favour a female boss than a male one.

Figure 36: Gender equality at work can be improved by:

(All respondents - N=6025, multiple answers, %)



Although a majority of respondents in the region feel there is ample room to enhance equality between genders in the workplace, a sizable number of respondents (19%) claim there is no disparity between working men and women.

Equality in numbers (46%), and equality in pay (43%) are the two most popular strategies suggested in the survey by those who ackowledge the gender gap in the workplace.

Equal pay is the most popular tactic in Albania (52%), while respondents in Kosovo* overwhelmingly favour equality in numbers between men and women (69%). Albania is the regional leader in inequality denial, with a quarter of respondents claiming there is no disparity issue between the two genders.

As expected, the gender of the respondents influences their thinking in this area. Namely, women significantly outnumber men in believing that gender equality can be achieved by equalizing the number of female and male staff, equalizing the salary and pay for man and women doing same, and better maternity benefits. At the same time, men are notably more likely to believe there is no gender inequality in the workplace.

Employability and the Labour Market

As noted repeatedly, the labour market is key to public perceptions of both the present and the future. Its continued depression across the region, caused by high unemployment and inactivity rates, will thus need to be addressed if a significant improvement in not only perception but actual quality of life is to be achieved.

The inefficiencies in the labour market can in large part be attributed to its excessive reliance on informal connections over formal recruitment channels that prioritize skills and knowledge over contacts. This is also strongly suggestive of a dysfunctional system of employment facilitation across the region.

Reliance on skills and performance is relatively rare and restricted to instances where those skills are vital, scarce and indispensable. Regardless, statistical evidence indicates that the probability of employment increases proportional to level of skill; this is especially true in economies struggling with skills shortages. This represents an early indication that the market has started to correct some of its inherent flaws when it comes to workplace talent management.

As in previous survey installments, job security is the key advantage of public sector employment while jobs in private companies tend to offer better compensation and career prospects – this is especially true where the employer is a foreign firm.

Figure 37: What do you think is the most important for getting ahead in life?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

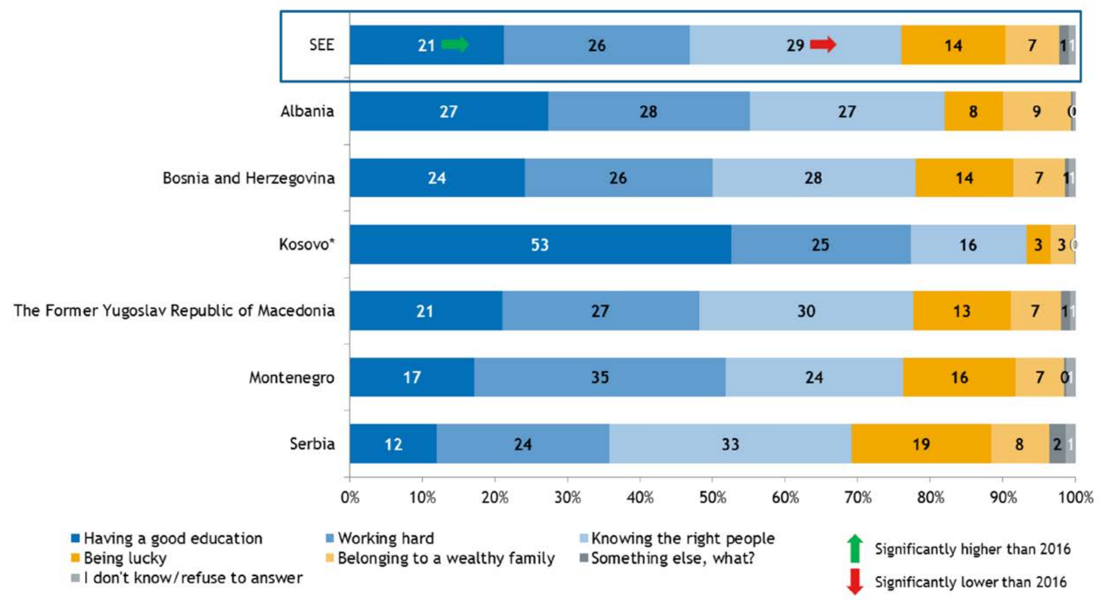


Table 5: What do you think is the most important for getting ahead in life? - Comparison 2014/2015/2016/2017

(Share of total, %)

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Working hard	25	25	25	26
Having a good education	23	22	19	21
Knowing the right people	23	28	32	29

Knowing the right people continue to be considered as the most important factor (29%) for getting ahead in life. Working hard comes in second (26%), while a good education is third (21%). Nevertheless, compared to 2016, slightly more importance is ascribed to having a good education and slightly less to knowing the right people.

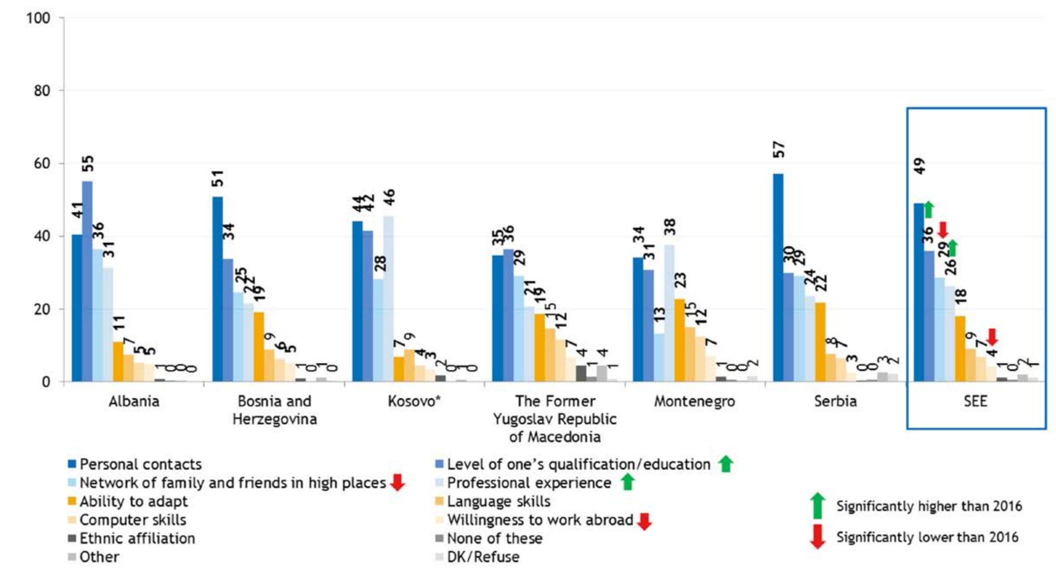
Across all six economies, the largest statistical discrepancy from the mean is recorded in Kosovo* where education is considerably more important (53%). It is important to note that Kosovo* has the youngest population in the region.

Knowing the right people is considered significantly more important in Serbia (33%) and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (30%). Hard work, as a prerequisite for success, is likely to be seen as more important in Montenegro (35%).

The youngest category of respondents (27%), and those highly educated (28%), attribute success in life to good education significantly more than the other groups. Working hard as a key to success is considered more important by the oldest segment of respondents (31%), people with the lowest education level (30%) and people who rate their social status as above average (35%). Those who rate their social status as below average largely believe that knowing the right people (35%) and belonging to a wealthy family (13%) are essential for success in life.

Figure 38: In your opinion, which two assets are most important for finding a job today?

(All respondents - N=6025, maximum two answers, share of total, %)



Almost half of all respondents consider personal contacts as vital in landing a job, while 36% believe that education is most important. Only a quarter (26%) of the population feels that professional experience is among the two most important considerations in finding a job today.

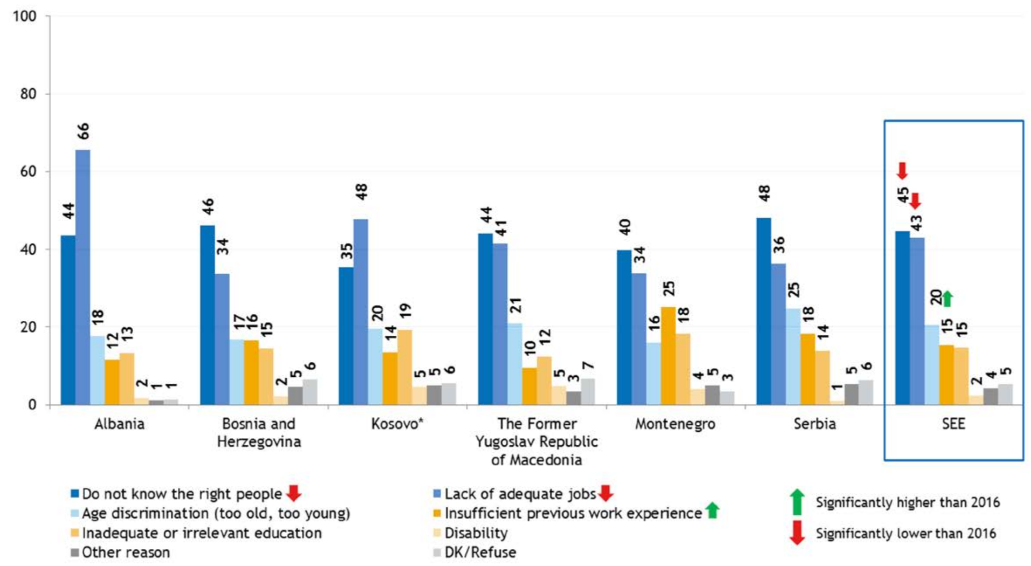
Compared to 2016, the importance ascribed to a network of contacts in high places as one of two most important factors in getting a job is declining (down to 29% from 38% in 2016). At the same time, qualifications and education (2016: 32%; 2017: 36%) and professional experience (2016: 21%; 2017: 26%) are mentioned more often as important in securing employment. These may be indication of some improvement in labour markets across the SEE region.

There are variations among individual economies in terms of what is considered as most important for securing employment. While most respondents in Serbia see personal contacts (57%) as one of most important factors in getting a job, Albanians are more likely to consider qualifications and education (55%), and knowing people in high places (36%) as more important compared to respondents from other economies.

Highly educated, and those who rate their social status as above average, are more likely to feel that professional experience is the most important factor in getting a job. Those who rate their social status as below average more often mention personal contact and the network of contacts in high places as key to securing employment. At the same time, the youngest cohort (18-29 years old) is more likely to consider computer and language skills as a prerequisite for getting a job.

Figure 39: What are the two main obstacles to those in your household who do not work, to get a good job?

(Households with at least one unemployed person - N=3604, maximum two answers, %)



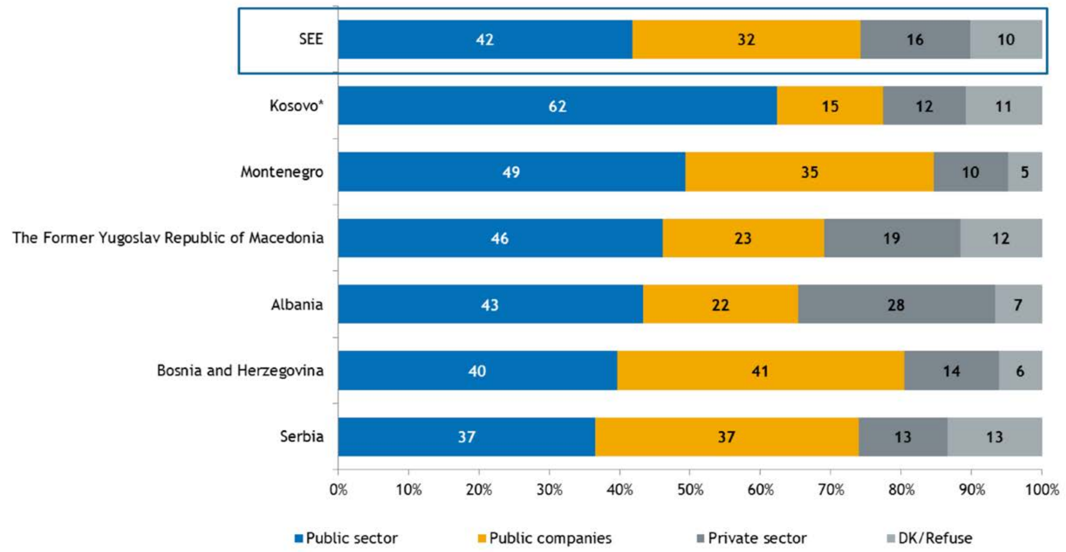
The most frequently cited obstacles to employment in the SEE region are the scarcity of jobs on offer (45%), and not knowing the right people (43%). Age discrimination is ranked third (20%).

A lack of adequate jobs is considered the biggest obstacle for securing employment in Albania and Kosovo* (66% and 48%, respectively); not knowing the right people is the biggest barrier across the other four economies. Respondents in Serbia, to a greater extent than others attribute their inability to get a job to age discrimination (25%).

Respondents who rate their social status as below average are more likely to feel that the main barrier to securing employment is not knowing the right people (58%), but also a lack of adequate jobs (48%).

Figure 40: If you could choose, would you prefer to work in the public (public administration and public companies) or private sector?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



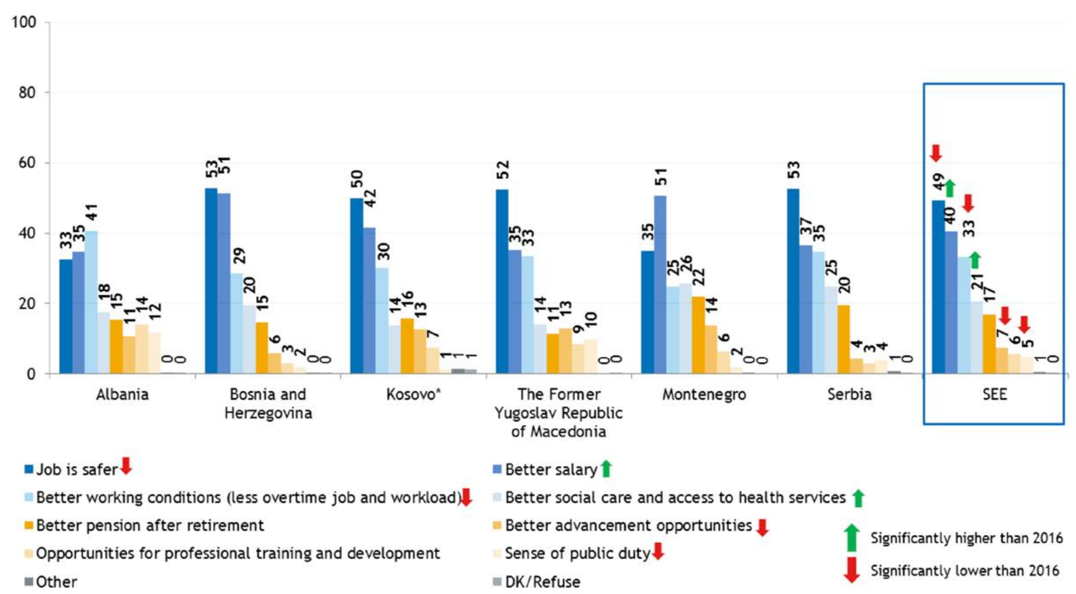
Preferences of the SEE population regarding their favoured sector of employment have not changed over the past year. A clear majority (76%) would prefer to work for a public empoyer, against 16% who prefer a job in the private sector. Public companies are less popular with prospective employees than government institutions, such as ministries, as well as public service providers, such as schools and hospitals.

Interestingly, the preferences of the SEE population are in stark contrast to the actual situation, given that 70% of respondents are presently employed in the private sector. The continued preference for public jobs lies in the fact that they are commonly viewed as more secure and less demanding.

There are significantly more people in Kosovo* (77%) who prefer public jobs, while respondents in Albania (28%) favour working in the private sector to a greater extent than others in the region. The private sector is more often preferred by those who rate their social status as above average (31%), as well as by younger respondents aged 18-45.

Figure 41: If you prefer to work in public sector, what is the main reason for that?

(Respondents who prefer working in public sector - N=4564, maximum two answers, %)



What makes the public sector more appealing to people across the region is its job security (49%), followed by a better salary (40%) and superior working conditions (less overtime and less workload) (33%). Compared to the 2016 survey data, the percentage of individuals who believe that public sector jobs are more secure has decreased somewhat (down to 49% from 53% in 2016), as has the number of respondents who feel the public sector offers better working conditions (down to 33% from 37% in 2016). At the same time, the percentage of individuals who believe that the public sector offers superior remuneration has increased (up to 40% from 38% in 2017), along with those who feel that public jobs equal better social care and access to health services (up to 21% from 17% in 2016).

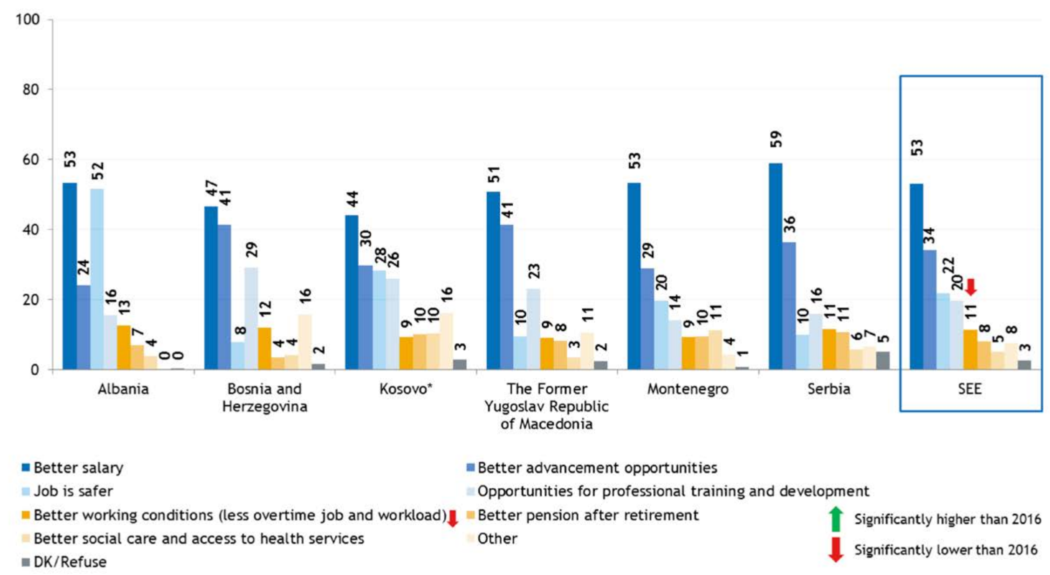
The perception of public sector job security as the determining factor in choosing public over private employment is common to all economies except for Albania, where a significantly higher proportion of people highlight better working conditions (less overtime and lighter workload) (41%) and opportunities for professional development (14%). Montenegrins largely prefer the public sector for better salaries (51%).

Unlike the other economies, respondents in Albania and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are more likely to prefer public sector jobs out of a sense of public duty (12% and 10% respectively), and in Serbia for better pension after retirement (20%).

The youngest cohort, highly educated individuals and those respondents who rate their social status as above average base their preferance for public sector employment on better advancement and education opportunities. Those who rate their social status as average and below average are more likely to choose the public sector for job security considerations.

Figure 42: If you prefer to work in private sector, what is the main reason for that?

(Respondents who preferred work in private sector - N=961, maximum two answers, %)



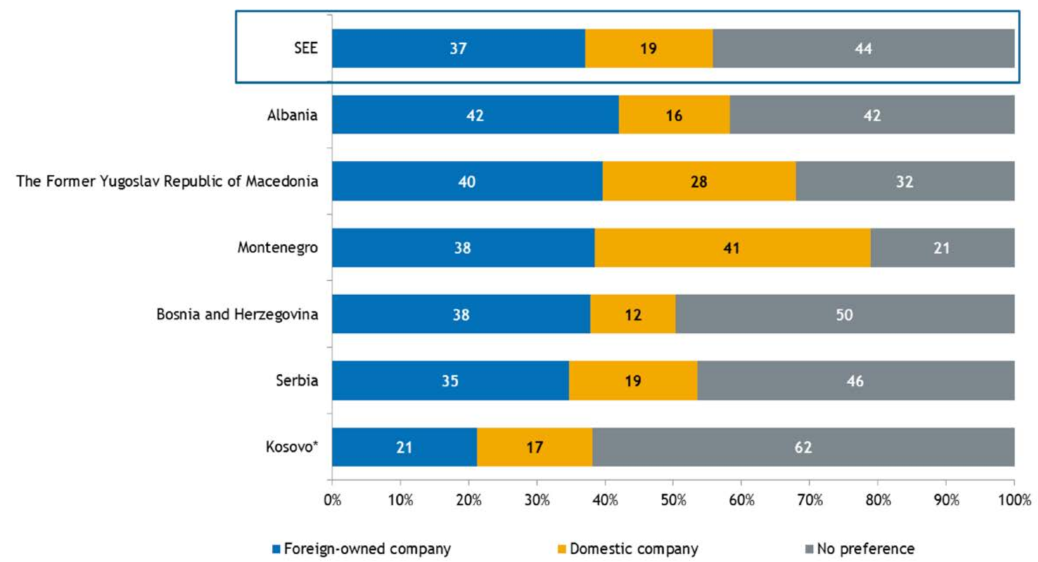
Respondents who favour private sector employment do so largely for higher salaries (53%) and better advancement opportunities (34%). Compared to the 2016 survey, the number of individuals who prefer private sector employment for reasons of remuneration has remained unchanged (53%).

In Albania, respondents prioritize private sector employment for reasons of job security to a greater extent than the rest of the region (52%), while individuals from Bosnia and Herzegovina and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are more likely to favour private sector work due to better advancement opportunities on offer (41%).

The youngest cohort (18-29) prefers working in the private sector more than others, primarily because of better salaries and superior professional development opportunities.

Figure 43: Would you rather work for a...?

(Respondents who prefer working in private sector - N=961, %)



Among prospective private sector employers, foreign-owned companies are preferred to a larger extent (37%) to domestic ones (19%). Still, largest portion of SEE population has no preference in this sense. Montenegrins, notably more than others in the region, prefer domestic companies (41%), while the majority of the population in Kosovo* (62%) has no preference.

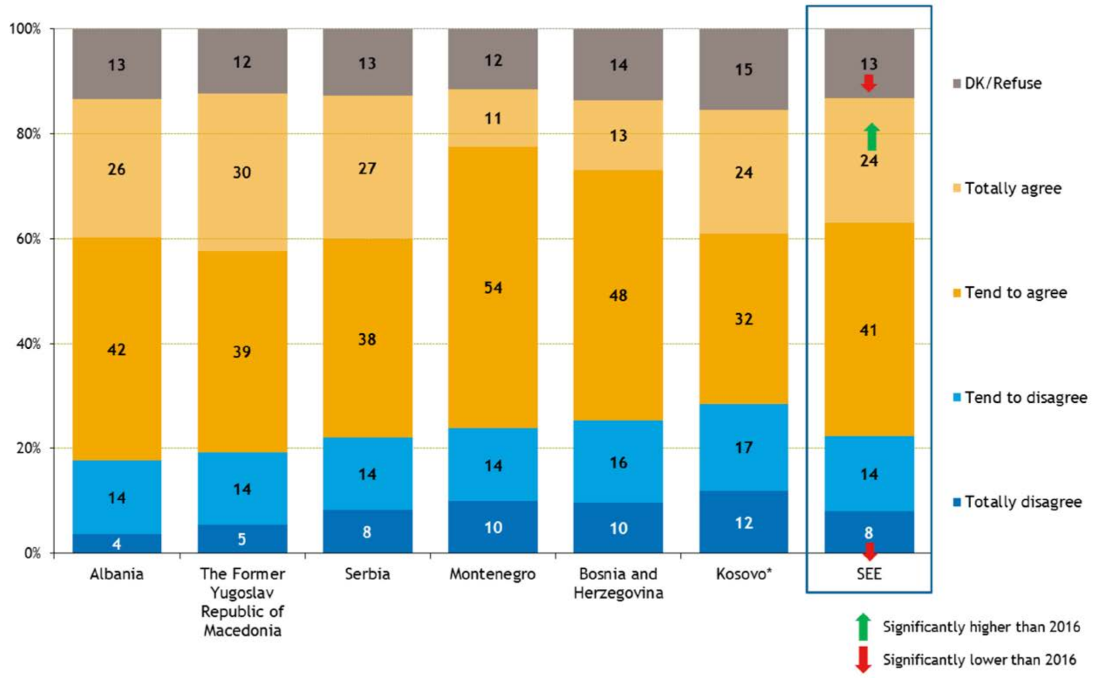
Table 6: Reasons for work in the private or public sector - comparison of the results at the SEE level

(Share of total, %)

Reasons for work in private or public sector (SEE region)	Public sector	Private sector
Job is safer	49	22
Better working conditions	33	11
Better salary	40	53
Better advancement opportunities	7	34
Better pension after retirement	17	8
Better social care and access to health services	21	5
Better opportunities for professional development	6	20

Figure 44: Would you agree that the skills you learned in the education system meet the needs of your job?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



Most people (64%) consider the skills acquired throghout their education to be suitable to the needs of their job, while 22% disagree. Respondents in Kosovo* (29%) are more likely to belong to the latter category, compared to the other five economies, while the highly educated are more likely than others to agree with this statement (80%).

Figure 45: Has your job required you to learn new or advance your skills in the past 12 months?

(Employed or self-employed people - N=3032, %)

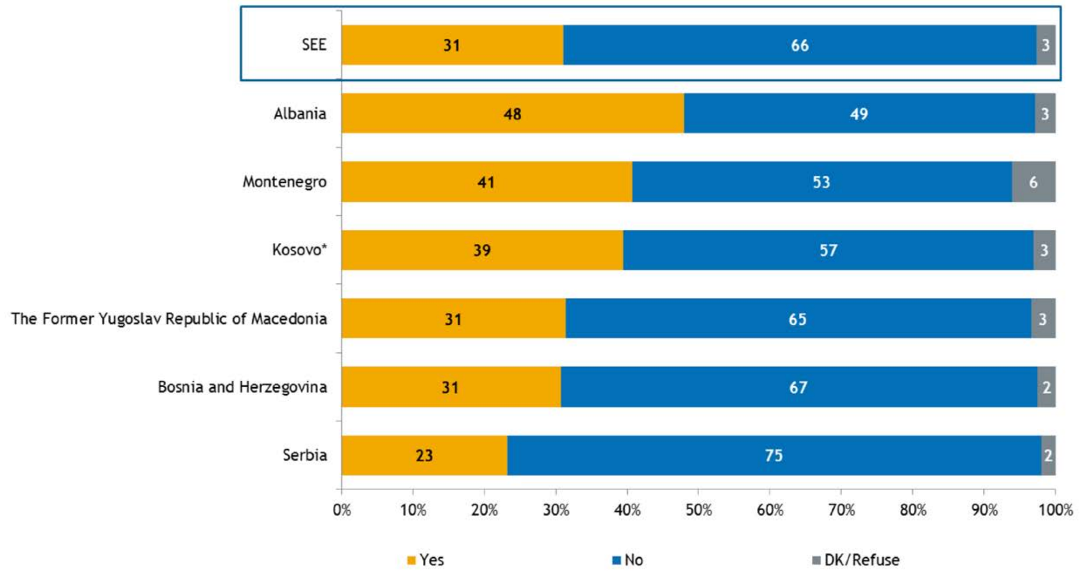
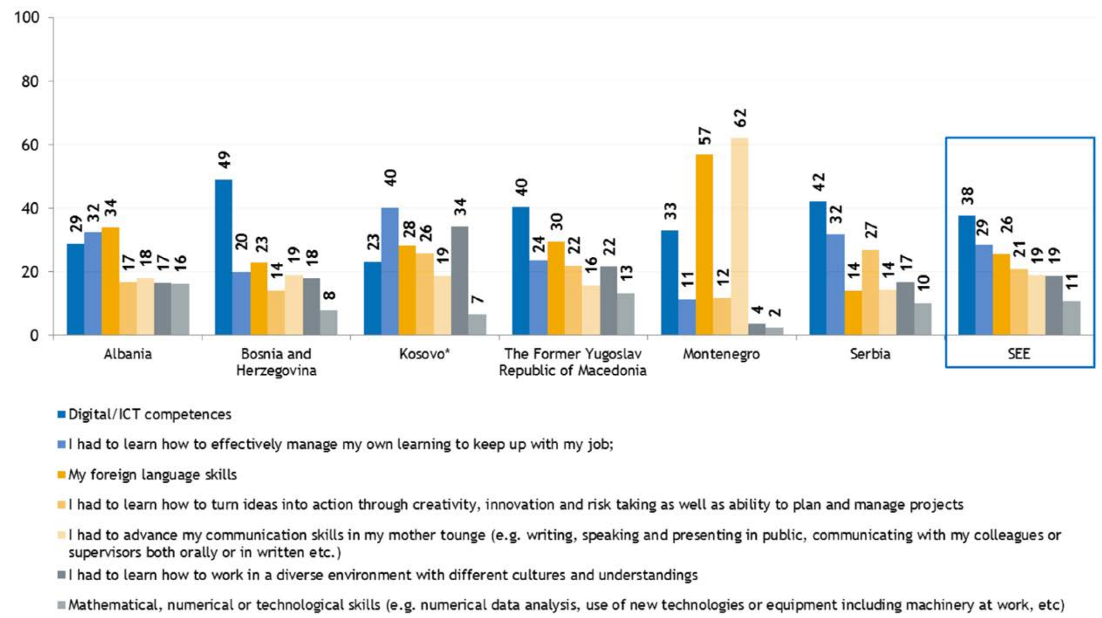


Figure 46: Which of these competences did you need to learn or advance:

(Respondents whose job required learning new or advancing skills in the past 12 months - N=1076, multiple answers, %)



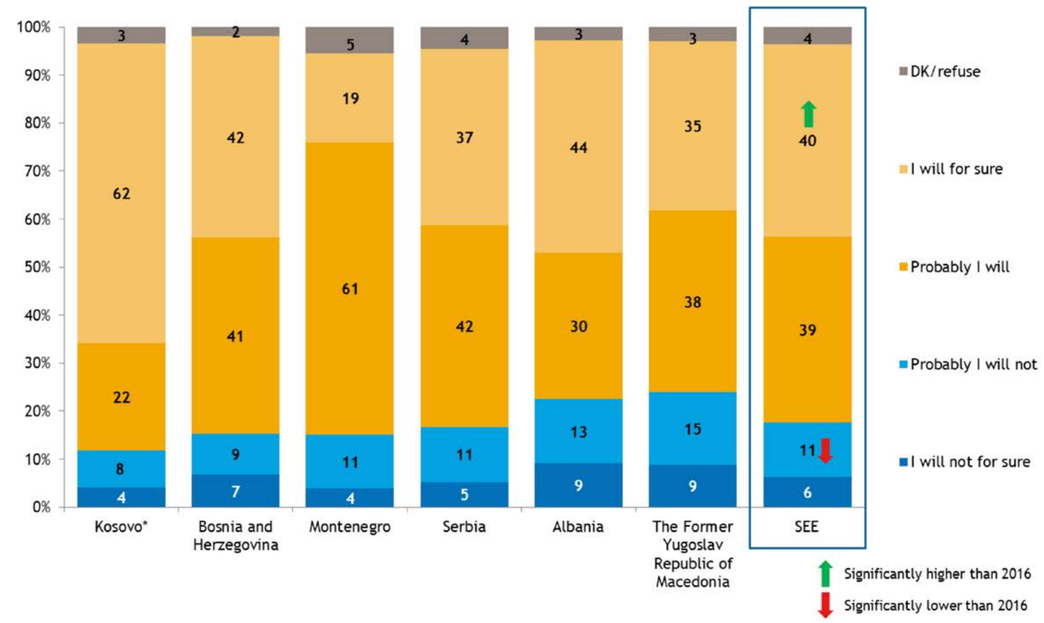
As many as two thirds of respondents were not required to learn new, or advance existing, skills over the past 12 months. Respondents in Albania were obliged to upgrade their skills significantly more often than their counterparts in other economies (48). This is also true of the youngest cohort (18-29), highly educated individuals, and respondents who rated their social status at above average.

Skills targeted for upgrade are predominantly ICT/digital-related (38%), followed by understanding how to effectively manage own learning to keep up with their jobs (29%), and foreign languages (26%).

Montenegrins advanced their communication (62%) and foreign language skills (57%) more than others, while respondents in Kosovo* were asked to learn how to perform in a diverse working environment (34%) more than others. Observed by respondents' demographic variables, the highly educated reported having to learn digital/ICT competences (47%) in the past year significantly more than others.

Figure 47: Would you be ready to acquire additional qualifications to advance at work?

(Employed or self-employed people - N=3032, %)



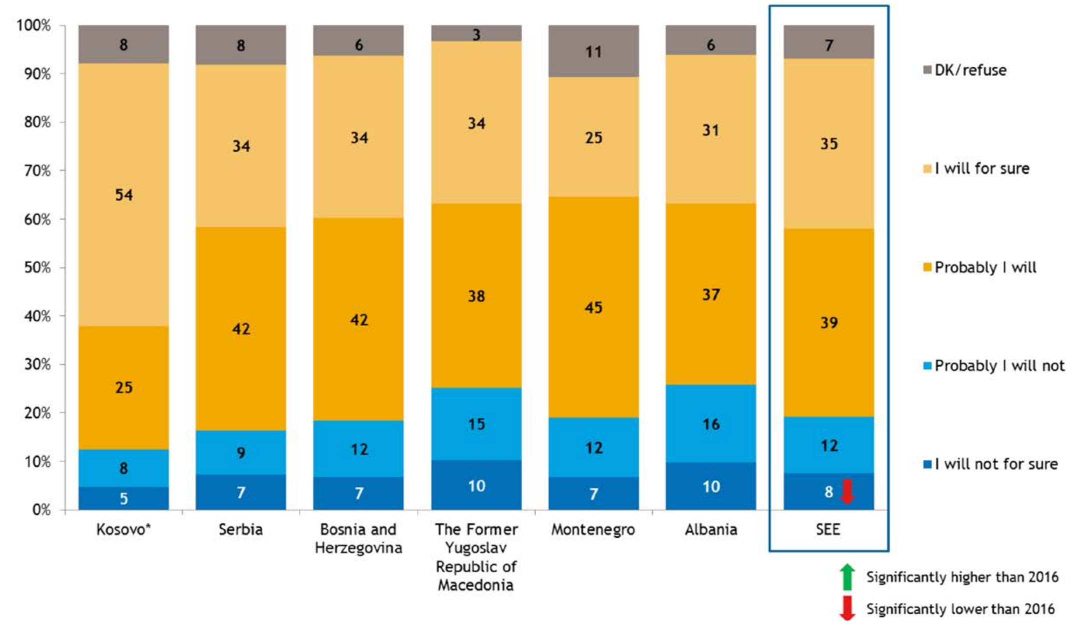
A clear majority of employed respondents (79%) are happy to acquire additional qualifications in order to advance at work, a slight decrease in interest since 2016 (83%).

Kosovo* has the largest number of people who are eager to pursue additional qualifications (85%) to advance their employment prospects.

Those who rate their social status above average (90%), the youngest cohort (87%) and the highly educated (86%), are more willing to learn in order to advance.

Figure 48: Would you be ready to acquire additional qualifications in order to get a job?

(Moonlighting or unemployed people - N=1311, %)



Among the unemployed, 74% would readily pursue additional qualifications in order to land a job, whereas 19% would not. This is a worrying statistic as it suggests a certain passivity by one fifth of prospective job seekers. Kosovo* has the lowest percentage of respondents not willing to acquire additional qualifications for the purposes of securing employment (13%).

Digital Literacy and Digital Skills

Digitalisation represents a major opportunity for the region, albeit one that remains underutilized as of yet. To fully harness its potential, digitalisation will require structural changes to the economy so it becomes more ingrained in the nascent exporting sector rather than in the presently dominant sectors of economic activity. Digitalisation is also a potential game changer when it comes to the provision of e-services and good governance.

Figure 49: Have you carried out any of the following learning activities to improve your skills relating to the use of computers, software or applications in the last 12 months? - A - Free online training or self-study; B - Training paid by yourself; C - Free training provided by public programmes or organisations (other than your employer); D - Training paid or provided by your employer; E - On-the-job training (by e.g. co-workers, supervisors, etc.)

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

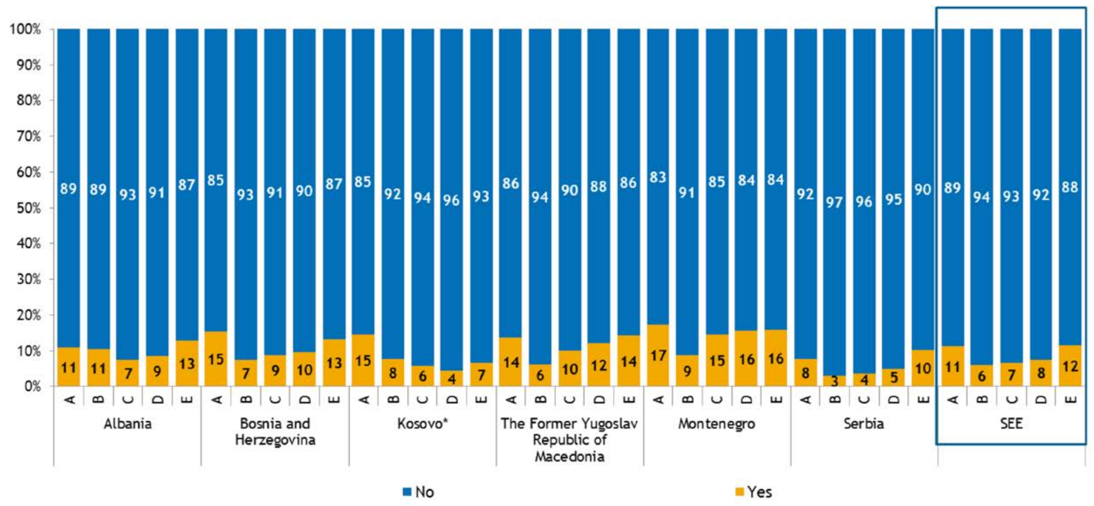
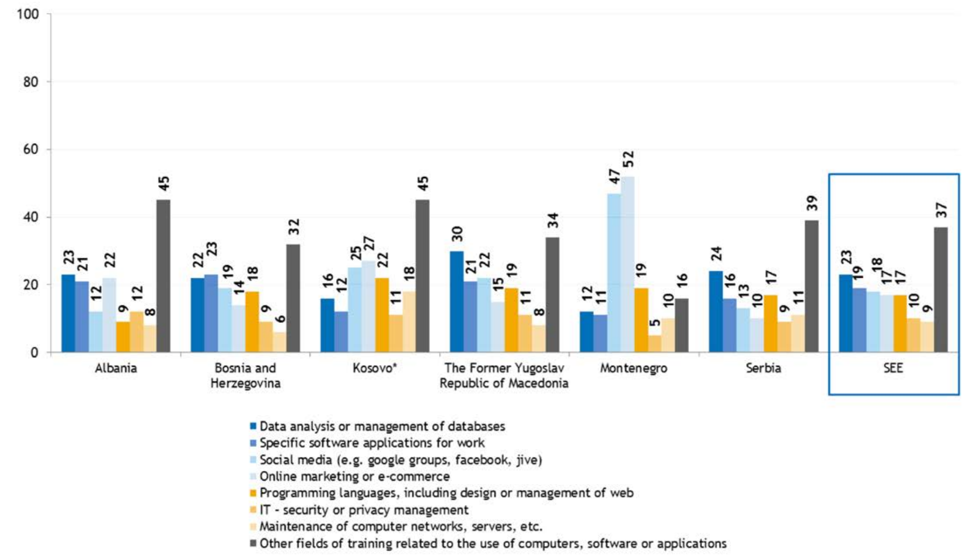


Figure 50: In which of the following fields relating to the use of computers, software or applications did you carry out the training in the last 12 months?

(Respondents who carried out training to improve their skills relating to the use of computers, software or applications in the last 12 months - N=1463, multiple answers, %)



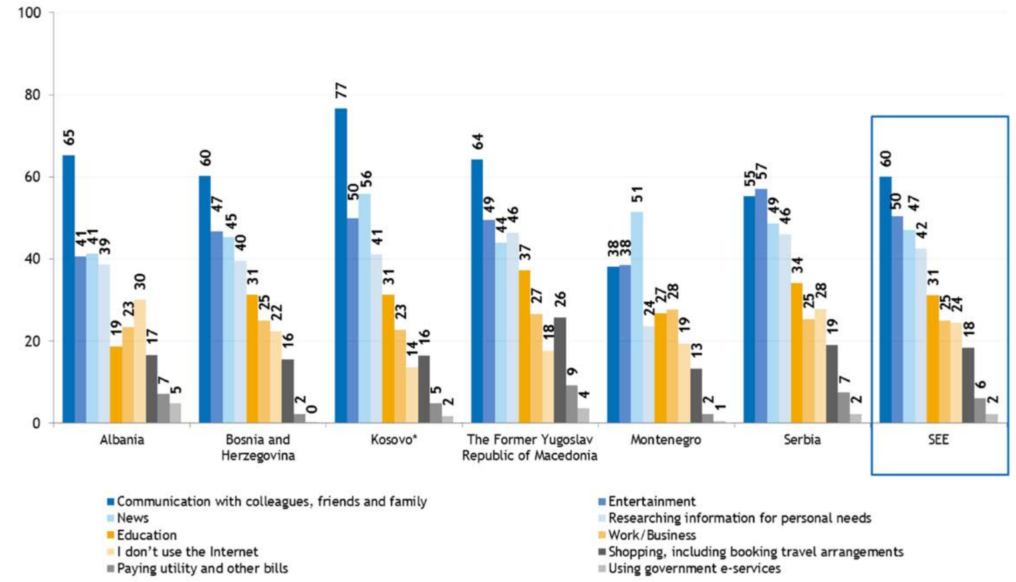
A significantly smaller percentage of people in the region have pursued learning activities in order to improve their skills related to the use of computers, software or applications over the past 12 months. The most frequently utilized methods of improving digital literacy are on-the-job training (12%) and free online courses or self-study (11%).

Viewed by individual economies under survey, Serbia reports the lowest level of learning activity across all listed topics. Data by demographic variable suggests that the younger respondents (18-45), the highly educated, and those who rate their social status as above average worked on improving their skills to a notably greater extent than others.

As for specific training fields most frequently cited by respondents, 37% note the use of computers, software or applications, and 23% list data analysis or management of databases. Montenegrin respondents most frequently undertook training in online marketing or e-commerce (52%), and social media (47%).

Figure 51: Have you used the Internet for the following?

(All respondents - N=6025, multiple answers, %)

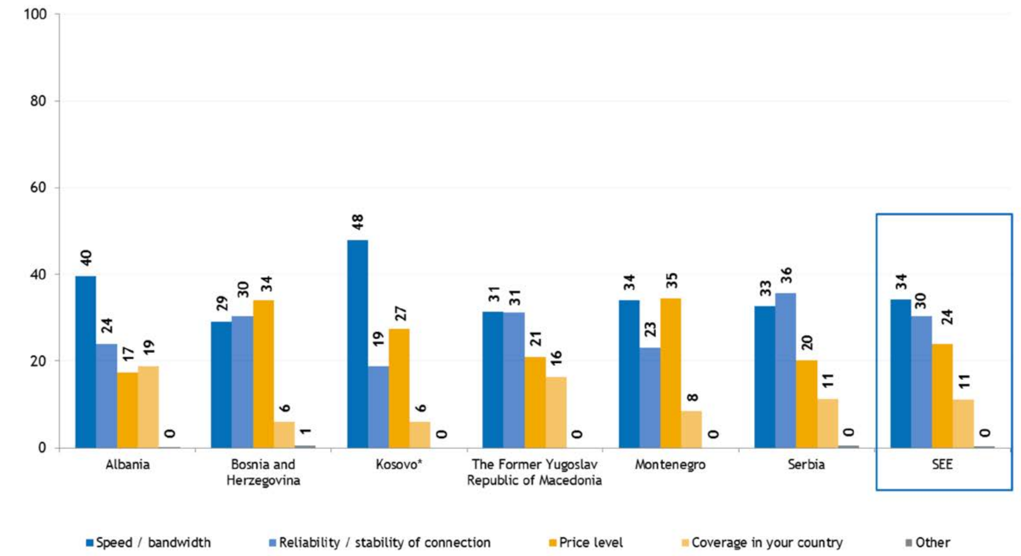


The Internet is predominantly used for communication with colleagues, friends and family (60%), as well as for entertainment (50%) and news (47%). At the same time, online services – paying utility and other bills (6%) and government e-services (2%) were listed by fewest responders.

While communication with close ones is the main purpose of Internet use by the majority of people across all economies, except in Montengro, where 51% report using it primarily for researching information for personal needs. People in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are likely to use Internet for education purposes (37%), but also for shopping, including booking travel arrangements (26%) and paying utility and other bills (9%) more than others.

Figure 52: Which feature is the most important aspect for you regarding your internet access?

(Respondents who have used Internet - N=4934, %)

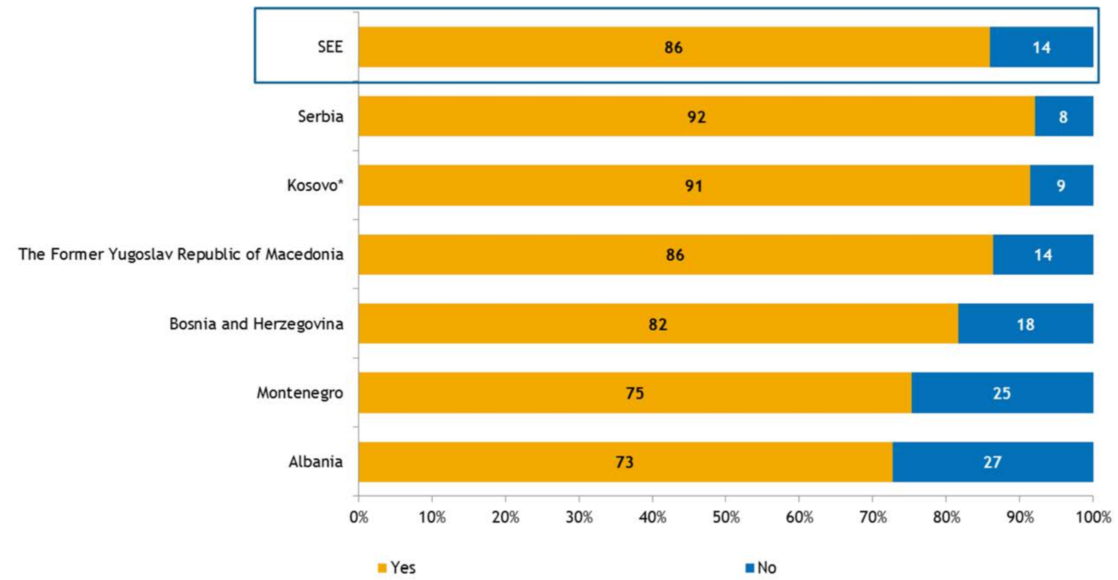


Speed / bandwidth (34%) and reliability / stability of connection (30%) are the most important aspects of Internet use, while price level (24%) comes in third.

Internet speed is especially important for Kosovo* Internet users (48%), as well as the youngest cohort (43%) while those with higher education (33%) seek reliability and stability of connection. Oldest respondents (61+), and those who rate their social status below average, note cost of service as the most important feature.

Figure 53: Are you satisfied with your Internet connection?

(Respondents who have used Internet - N=4934, %)

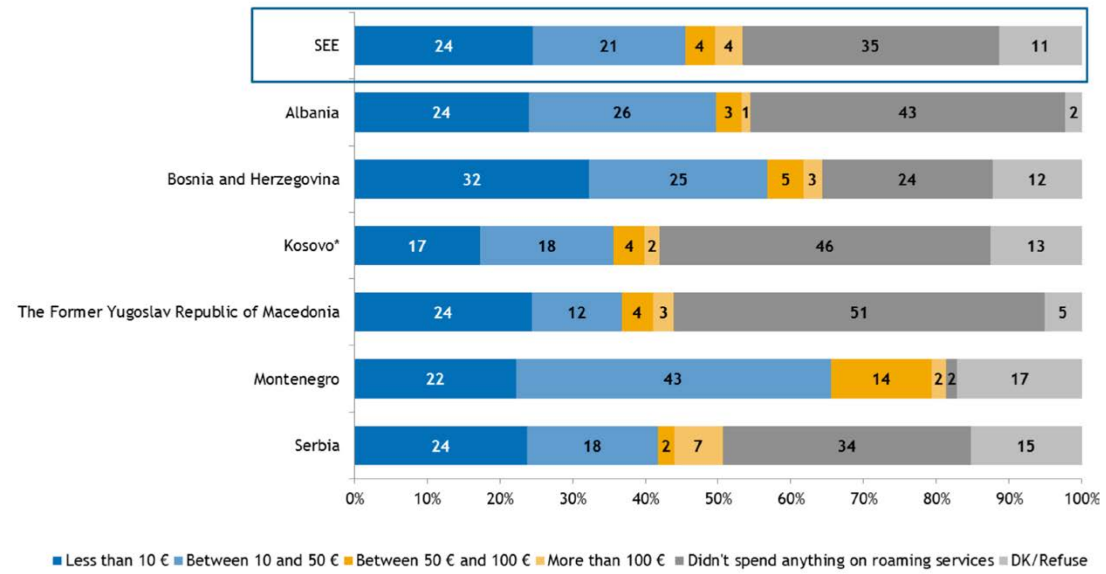


A clear majority of respondents are satisfied with their Internet connection (86%), while 14% are not.

Looking across the region, the largest proportion of users unhappy with their Internet connection are found in Albania (27%) and Montenegro (25%). As for differences based on demographics, the youngest cohort are the least satisfied (17%).

Figure 54: Can you estimate the money you spent during the previous year on roaming services (voice calls, data traffic and SMS) when travelling in the SEE region?

(Respondents who travelled to SEE region - N=2629, %)



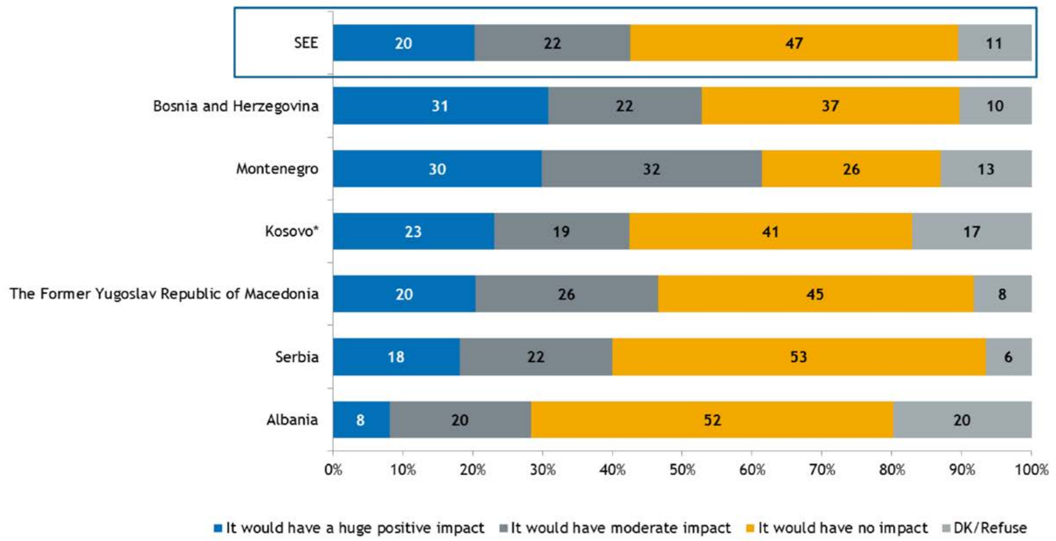
More than one third (35%) of people in the region reported spending no money on roaming services in the past year, one quarter spent less than 10 Euros, and about a fifth spent anywhere between 10 and 50 Euros. An equal number of respondents (4%) spent between 50 and 100 Euros, and more than 100 Euros, respectively.

Viewed by individual economy, Montenegrins spent the most on roaming services while respondents from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia spent the least (51% did not incur any roaming costs), followed by those from Kosovo* (46%) and Albania (43%).

There are marked differences across demographic variables. As they are less likely to have travelled in the last year, the most senior respondents (53%), those without education or with primary school diplomas only (54%), and respondents who rate their social status below average (43%), spent significantly less than others.

Figure 55: Would the removal of mobile phone roaming charges when travelling to SEE have a positive impact on your household budget?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

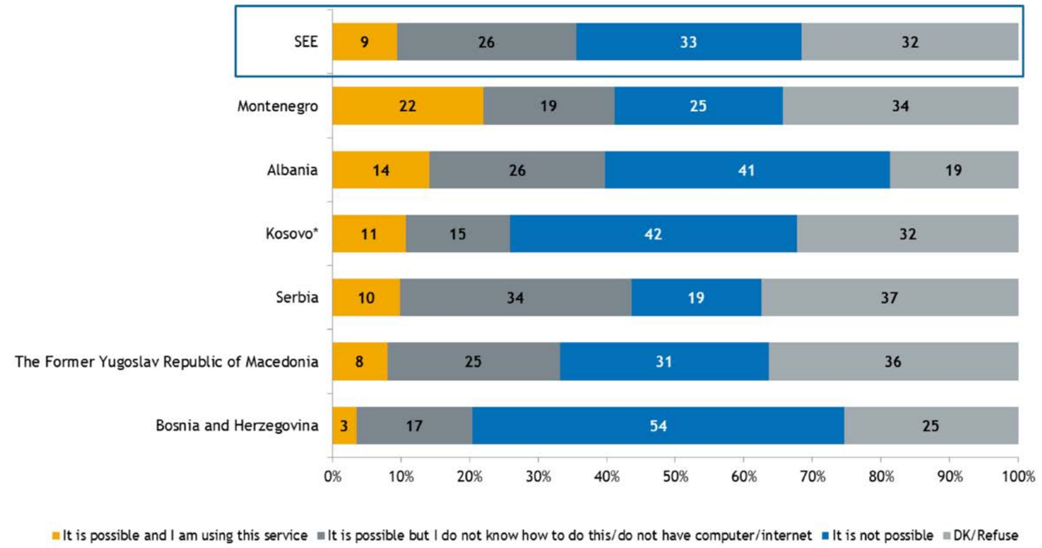


Findings indicate that mobile phone roaming charges are not a significant enough annual household expense (only 8% reported having spent from 50 to more than 100 Euros over the last year) for its removal to have an impact on the household budget for almost half of the region's population (47%). Another 42% of respondents are almost equally divided among those who believe the removal of SEE roaming charges to be hugely beneficial to their finances (20%) and those who describe the impact as moderate (22%).

In Serbia and Albania, respondents who foresee no positive impact on their budget outnumber those who do (53% and 40% for Serbia, and 52% and 28% for Albania). In Montenegro, where the population reported spending the most on roaming services over the past year, the situation is the opposite - some 62% of the population expect to see some financial benefit from the roaming charge removal.

Figure 56: Is it possible to get your personal documents (birth certificate, citizenship, etc.) or permits or any other document - online?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



Only 9% of respondents confirm using e-government services to get personal documents (birth certificate, citizenship, etc.), or permits, whereas 26%, although aware of the services on offer, are still not using them. Another 33% of respondents are not aware that these services are available online. Finally, a very sizable 32% of all respondents either did not know enough to answer the question or simply refused. The latter figure indicates a certain degree of discomfort with new technologies by a large proportion of the population.

There are notable differences among economies under survey in terms of availability and use of online services. While Montenegrins report using available online services more often than in any other economy (22%), the respondents in Serbia, although aware of online opportunities, do not utilize them (34%). The population in Bosnia and Herzegovina are most likely not to think it possible to get the documents online (54%).

Men (10%), respondents aged 30-45 (15%), people with higher education (17%), as well as those who rate their social status at above average (20%), more frequently use available online services to secure personal documents or permits.

Attitudes towards Mobility

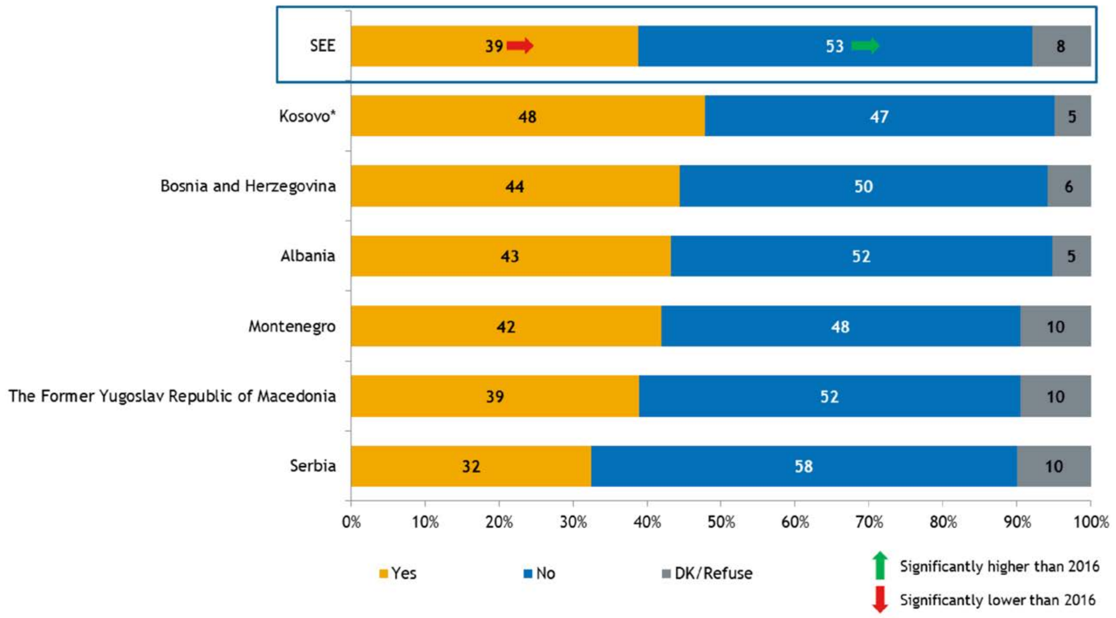
Outward migration remains a very attractive proposition, especially for the more mobile segments of the region's population. High numbers of respondents report an inclination to move out of their economy, and out of the region - this is likely more an indicator of dissatisfaction than a statement of intent but there are increasing anxieties over brain-drain.

Foreign labour markets continue to compete strongly with domestic ones especially in some economies, such as Kosovo* and Albania, and for younger and more skilled individuals. Workers with fewer skills are more likely to have a stronger incentive to move, given their restricted employment opportunities at home, but they are unlikely to secure employment abroad either, at least not without securing new skills. This is reflected in the relatively low number of unskilled workers considering the move abroad.

The attitude towards refugees remains negative, though mostly when there is a risk of them staying rather than just passing through. With a decrease in risk, the hostility seems to have gone down as well.

Figure 57: Would you consider leaving and working abroad?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



Some 39% of all respondents have considered moving abroad for work, a significant drop from 45% in 2016).

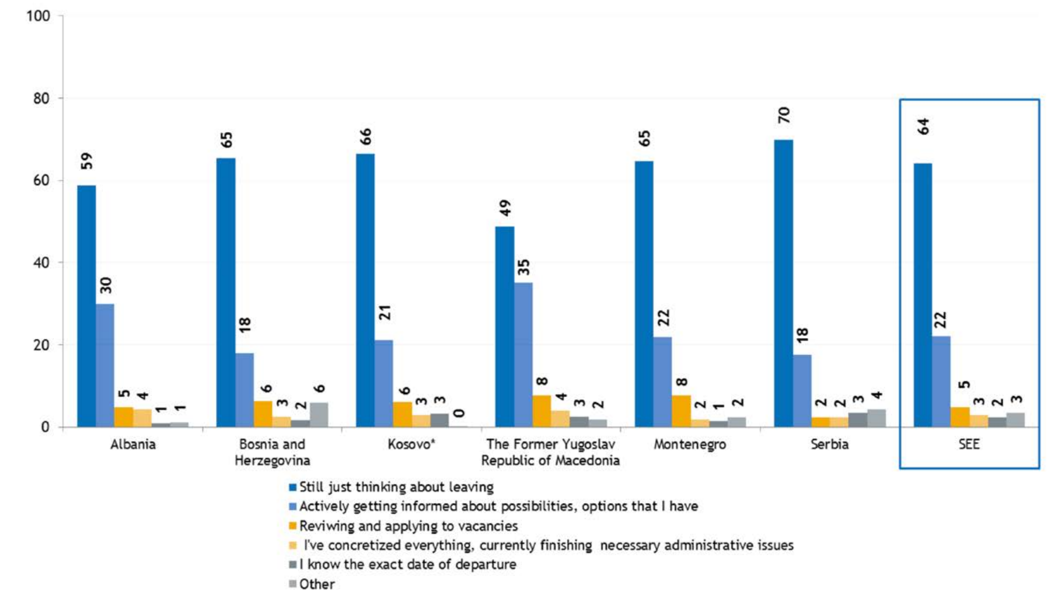
Looking at the economies individually, the leavers are outnumbered by the stayers, with Serbia boasting the highest proportion of the latter category (58% would not consider moving abroad versus 32% who would). Kosovo* is the only exception with its population divided into two almost equal halves (48% would consider leaving and 47% would not).

Men (42%) consider going abroad more often than women (36%), as do the youngest respondents - aged 18-29 years - (63%), and the higly educated (43%).

Prospective emigrants are fewer among the low-skilled respondents, who would likely struggle for work abroad (74% are not considering leaving); individuals who are well off in the economy in which they live (65% are not considering leaving); and those over the age of 61 (86% would not consider leaving).

Figure 58: In what phase of consideration are you?

(Respondents who consider leaving and working abroad - N=2674, %)

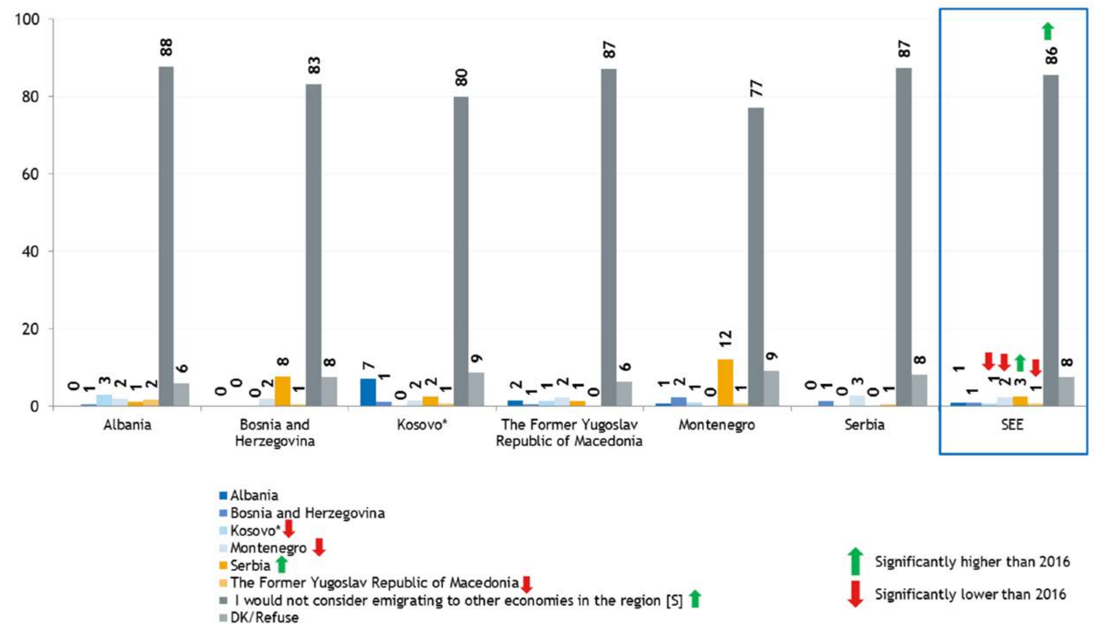


Some two thirds (64%) of respondents who would consider leaving and working abroad are still just thinking about it, while 22% are getting actively informed about options and opportunities. A far smaller number are taking concrete action, such as reviewing and applying to vacancies (5%), or currently dealing with the necessary administrative issues (3%). Those who know the exact date of departure make up only 2% of all respondents. The discrepancy between the high number of people considering leaving and a relatively small proportion of individuals taking concrete action to make it happen is more suggestive of an overall level of discontent rather than a new wave of migration from the SEE.

Respondents in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are more proactive in getting informed about opportunities abroad (35%), followed by Albania (30%).

Figure 59: Would you consider leaving and working in another place in the SEE region? If yes, where?

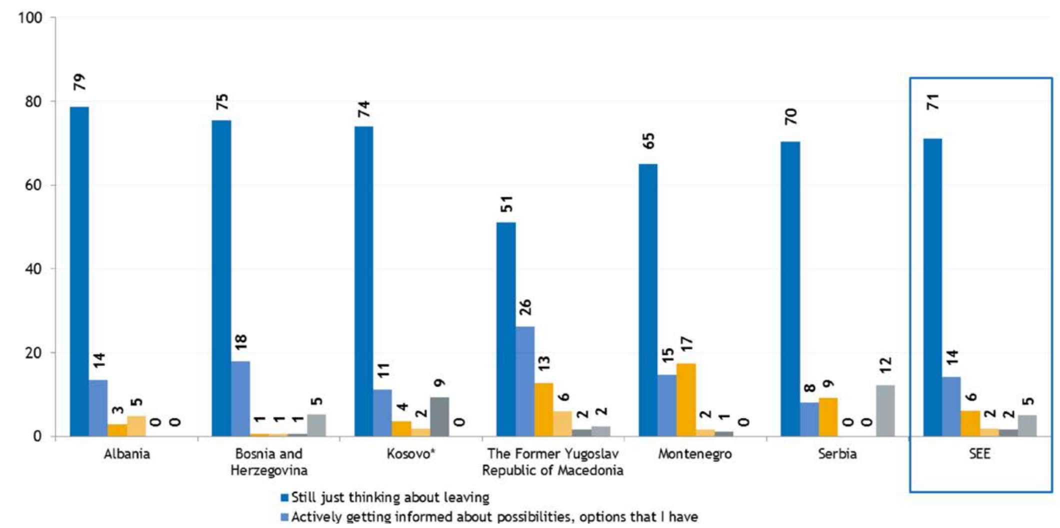
(All respondents - N=6025, multiple answers, %)



Emigrating within the region is less appealing and a clear majority would not consider it (86%). Against 39% who would move abroad, only 8% would be willing to move within the SEE. In terms of preferred destinations, Serbia is favoured by 12% of respondents from Montenegro and 8% from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Compared to the 2016 survey, there are significantly more people who would not consider leaving to go work in another SEE economy (up to 86% from 79% in 2016).

Figure 60: In what phase of consideration are you?

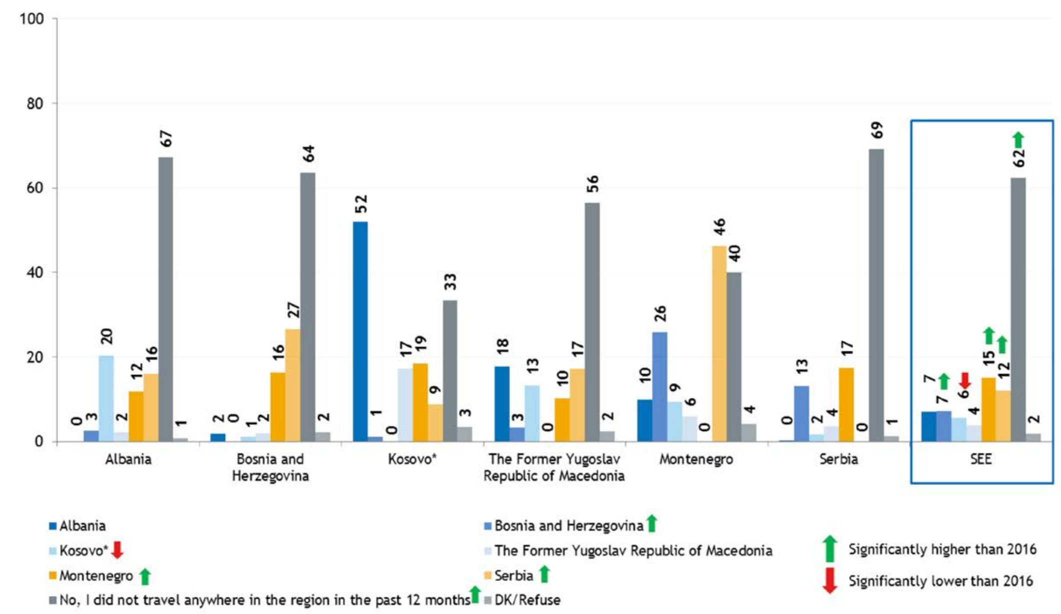
(Respondents who consider leaving and working in the SEE region - N=540, %)



As with potential emigrants abroad, a large majority of those who would consider leaving and working within SEE region have still not undertaken any concrete steps (71%). A far smaller number are getting actively informed about opportunities (14%) while another 6% are reviewing and applying to vacancies. Only 2% each are either currently finishing the necessary administrative issues, or know the exact date of their departure. Across the region's economies, potential emigrants in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (26%) are more likely than others to get actively informed about possibilities and options they have, while those in Montenegro (17%) are more likely to be reviewing and applying to vacancies already.

Figure 61: Did you travel anywhere in the region in the past 12 months? If yes, where?

(All respondents - N=6025, multiple answers, %)

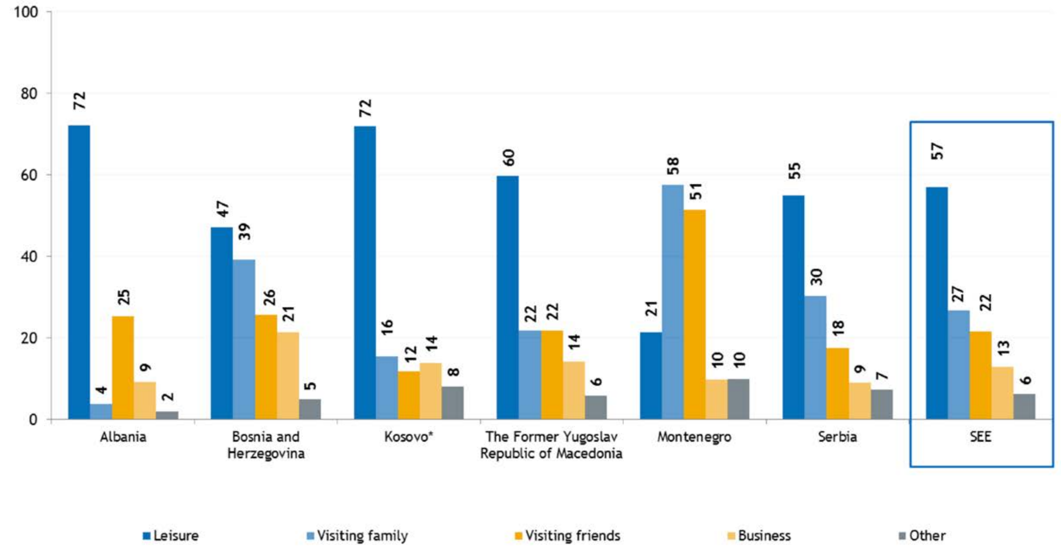


In the past 12 months, 38% of the SEE population has travelled within the region. People from Kosovo* have travelled the most (67%) and those from Serbia (31%) and Albania (33%) the least.

Last year, people from Albania mostly travelled to Kosovo* (20% of those who travelled), people from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Serbia (27%), people from Kosovo* (as many as 52%) travelled to Albania, people from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to Albania (18%) and Serbia (17%), people from Montenegro to Serbia (46%) and people from Serbia to Montenegro (17%).

Figure 62: What was the purpose of your travel?

(Respondents who travelled - N=2629, multiple answer, %)



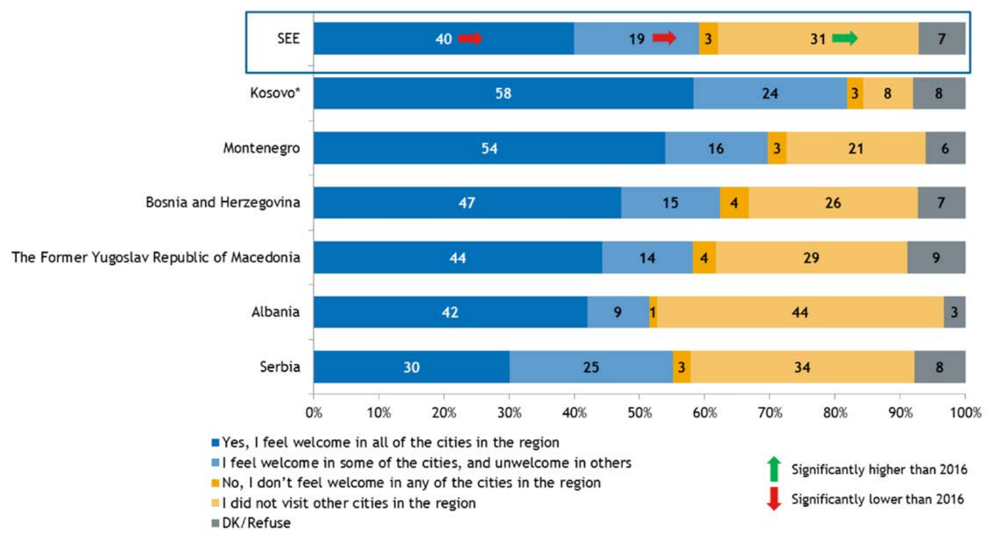
Reasons for travelling within the SEE region have not changed compared to last year. Leisure (57%) continues to be the predominant reason for regional travel, followed by visits to family and friends, while travelling for business is ranked last (13%).

Kosovo* (72%) and Albania (72%) had the most regional leisure travellers, while people from Montenegro visited friends and family in the region more often than others (family - 58%; friends - 51%). People from Bosnia and Herzegovina had the largest number of business trips within the region (21%).

Men travelled more for business and to visit friends, while women travelled more to visit family and for leisure. The youngest cohort (18-29), and the highly educated, are more likely to travel for leisure (66% and 65% respectively), while the older group visit family more frequently (45%).

Figure 63: Do you feel welcome abroad, when traveling to other cities in SEE region either for business or leisure?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



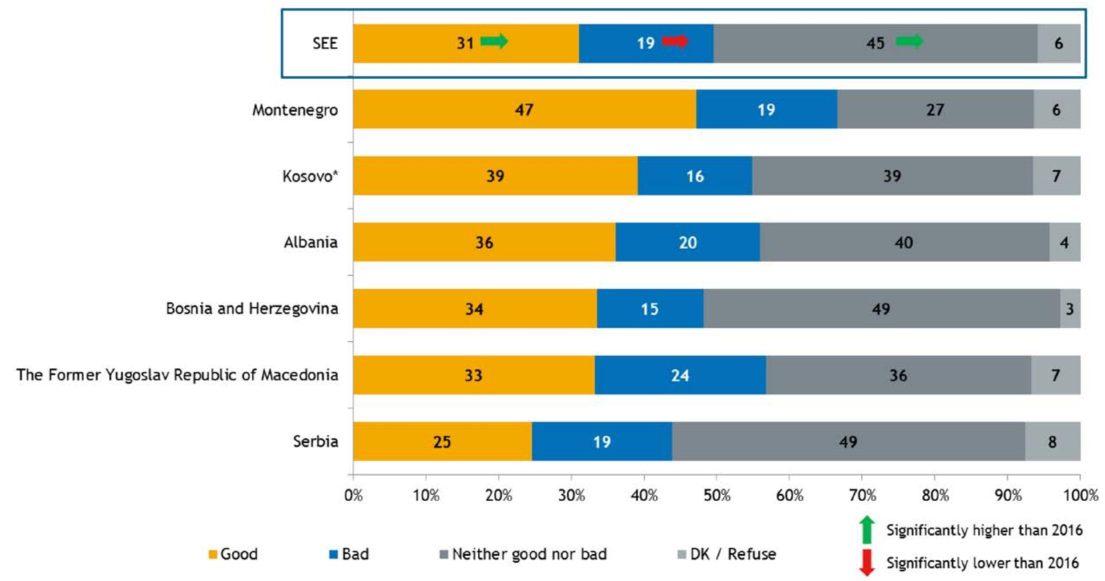
At regional level, 31% of people have not visited any other city in the region. These are mostly people from Albania (44%) and Serbia (34%). People from Kosovo* are most likely to have visited cities in the region over the past year (84%).

Older adults (45%), the low-skilled (54%) and those who rate their social status as below average (47%) had fewest visits to cities in the region. At the same time, the highly educated (58%), and those who rate their social status as above average (55%), were most likely to feel welcome in the cities visited.

The majority feel welcome in any city (40%), whereas 19% feel welcome only in select cities. Only 3% do not feel welcome in any city in the region. Compared to the 2016 survey, there is a slight decrease both in the number of respondents who feel welcome in all the cities they visited (down to 40% from 42% in 2016), and those who feel welcome in some cities only (down to 19% from 21% in 2016). Serbia boasts both the highest proportion of people who feel welcome only in some cities in the region (25%) and the fewest individuals who feel welcome in all the cities they visit (30%).

Figure 64: What do you think about people from other parts of the region coming to live and work in your economy? Is it good or bad for your economy?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



Most of the region's population are neutral towards people coming into their economy from within the region (45%); 19% have a negative opinion and 31% are positive in their assessment of the impact of people from the region on their economy.

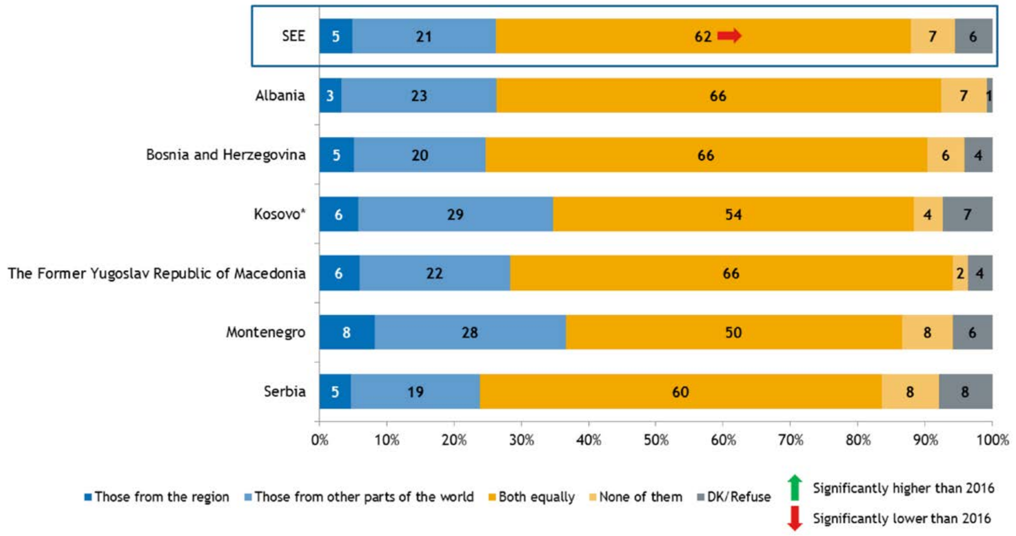
In comparison with the previous wave, there are more of those who are positive about the arrival of people from the region (up to 31% from 28% in 2016), but also of those who are neutral (up to 45% from 43% in 2016) - this trend has also translated into fewer negative respondents (down to 19% from 23% in 2016).

People from Montenegro (47%) are significantly more positive towards regional arrivals, whereas people from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (24%) are more likely to oppose them.

Those who rate their social status as above average (43%), and the highly educated (36%), are more likely to support arrivals of people from the region, whereas those who rate their social status as below average (25%), and the oldest respondents (22%), are more likely to feel threatened by immigrants from other parts of the region.

Figure 65: Which tourists would you like to have more in your economy, those from the SEE region or from other parts of world?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)

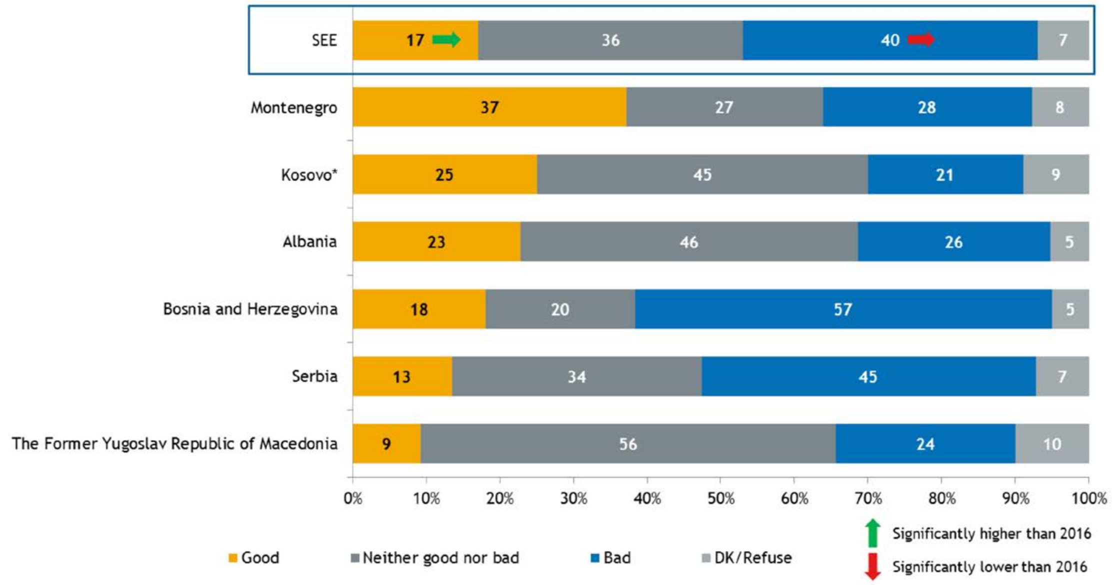


More than half of the SEE population are equally accepting of tourists from the region and those from the rest of the world (62%). Tourists from outside the region are preferred by 21% while only 5% prefer tourists from the SEE.

People from Kosovo* and Montenegro are more likely to prefer tourists from other parts of the world (29% and 28% respectively), while Montenegrins are also slightly more inclined to welcome tourists from the region (8%). The populations of Albania and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia mostly have no preference (66%).

Figure 66: What do you think about refugees from other parts of the world coming to live and work in your city? Is it good or bad for your economy?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



With regards to refugees, the largest proportion of the population has a negative attitude (40%), followed by those that are neutral (36%). Compared to 2016, a slight change in attitude has been noted: the number of respondents who regard refugees as a threat to their economy has declined (down to 40% from 42% in 2016) while the number of those who think their presence beneficial has increased (up to 17% from 14% in 2016).

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia are the two economies where the majority of respondents have a negative attitude towards refugees (57% and 45%, respectively). All in all, with the exception of Kosovo* and Montenegro, there are more people who have negative attitudes towards refugees than those who are positive across all of the region's economies. Refugees enjoy the least amount of support in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (9%).

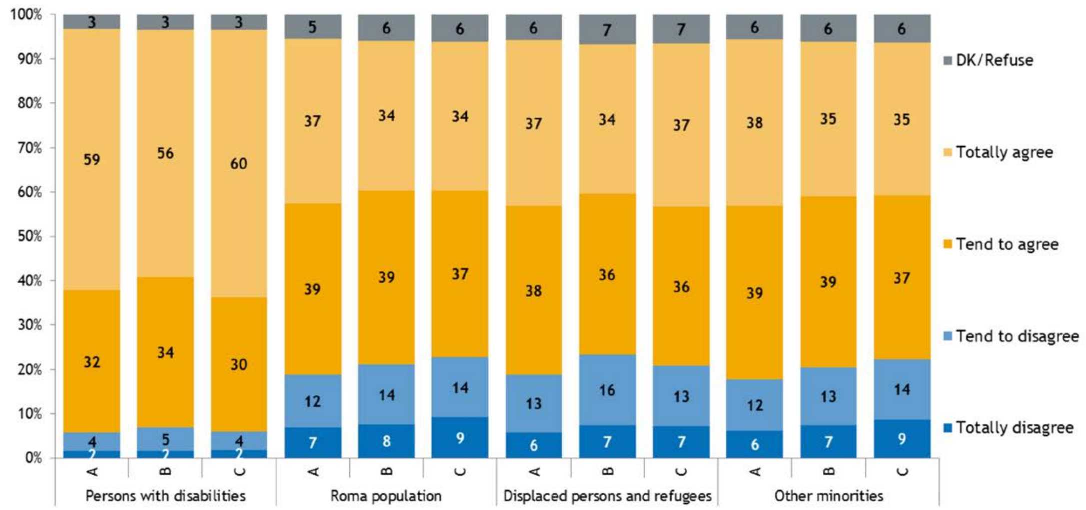
People who rate their social status as above average (29%) are more likely to support refugees in their city.

Attitudes to Social Inclusion of Vulnarable Groups

While there is declarative support for individuals or groups suffering from some form of social exclusion or vulnerability, concrete measures, such as affirmative action, to improve the status of minorities, or women, are resisted en masse.

Figure 67: To what extent do you agree with the following statement - The Government should provide affirmative measures - promote opportunities for equal access - to persons belonging to the groups listed below in the following circumstances (SEE region): A - When applying for a secondary school or university; B - When applying for a public sector job; C - The Government should do more in order to ensure better housing conditions

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



In this part addressing vulnerabilities and social exclusion, attitudes on government action to affirm the rights of individual groups were examined. Respondents presented their standpoints in terms of agreement or disagreement with statements offered as part of the survey. The questions were related to the government's agenda in terms of ensuring equal access to secondary schools or universities, public sector jobs as well as greater government involvement to ensure better housing conditions, in particular for persons with disabilities, displaced persons and refugees, Roma population and other ethnic minorities.

The respondents were again overwhelmingly supportive of their governments' involvement when it comes to persons with disabilities. Roughly equal support was given to affirmative action in the realms of education, public employment and housing (ranging from 90% to 91%). As for the other three vulnerable groups under review (Roma, other minorities and refugees), they were afforded varying degrees of support across the region and across the sectors examined. There are no demographic variations on these issues.

Table 7: People who agree with the statement that the Government should provide affirmative measures - promote the opportunities for equal access to the groups listed below: A - When applying for a secondary school or university; B - When applying for a public sector job; C - The Government should do more in order to ensure better housing conditions

(Respondents who agree ("totally agree + tend to agree") with statements, %) - Top % & Bottom %

		Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Persons with disabilities	A	93	94	96	84	84	90
	B	89	95	96	80	87	89
	C	94	94	95	86	87	88
Displaced persons and refugees	A	75	89	87	49	76	74
	B	65	87	83	42	67	69
	C	79	88	86	51	68	67
Roma population	A	79	84	83	69	78	71
	B	74	83	78	67	73	68
	C	76	84	82	64	71	62
Other minorities	A	80	87	83	68	76	72
	B	75	86	77	67	75	68
	C	78	85	82	62	73	63

Respondents from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are least supportive of affirmative government measures in favour of displaced persons and refugees (from 42% to 51% across the three areas) while only 62% of surveyed individuals is Serbia agree that the government should help provide better housing conditions for Roma.

Overall, the numbers across the region, while moving in a relatively positive way, still show a concerning lack of empathy for categories of population suffering from one form of social exclusion or another.

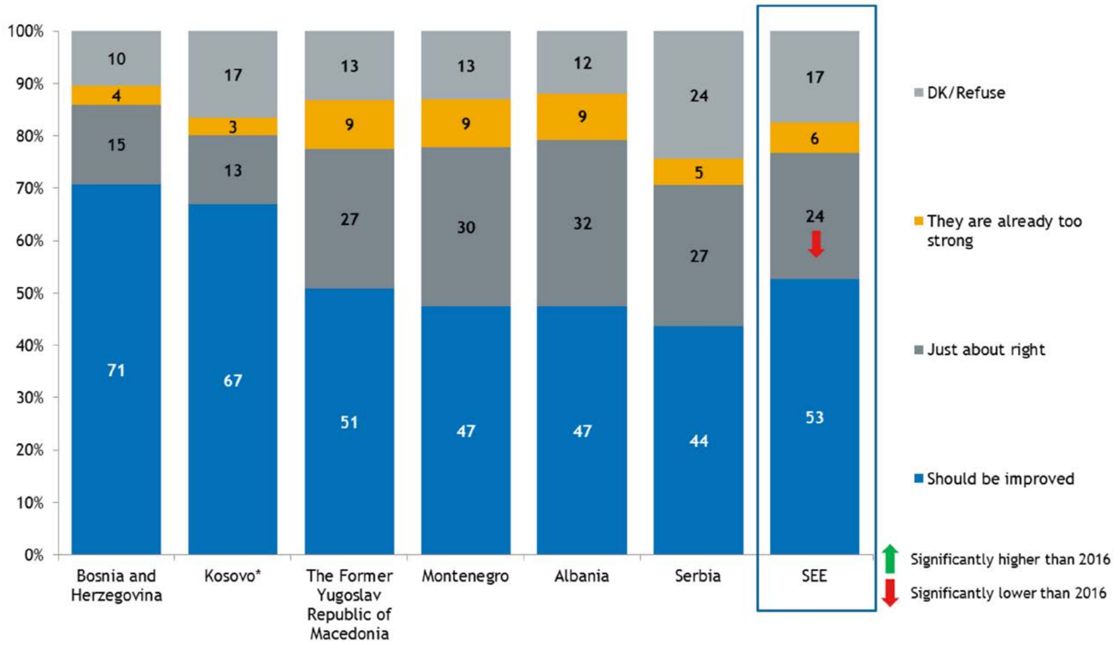
Perceptions on Trade

Free trade continues to enjoy overwhelming support in the region, largely due to a high dependence on imports throughout the SEE. Strong confidence in the competitiveness of the local economies also plays a role, although empirical data show that much of it is unfounded considering the realities of foreign trade in the region. Interestingly enough, Serbia is the leading detractor of intraregional trade although it remains its main beneficiary. This is illustrative of the effects of long-standing narratives present in the economy.

Home bias is strong both in the preference for domestic products and in support of protectionist measures that prioritise domestic producers and entrepreneurs. By contrast, and somewhat inconsistently, foreign investments are generally welcomed.

Figure 68: How would you describe commercial and trade links with SEE region?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



More than half of the SEE population (53%) feel that trade links between their respective economies and the SEE region should improve; 24% consider the links appropriate, while 6% consider them already too strong. In comparison with the previous wave, there are fewer people who believe that trade links are where they should be (down from 27% in 2016 to 24% in 2017).

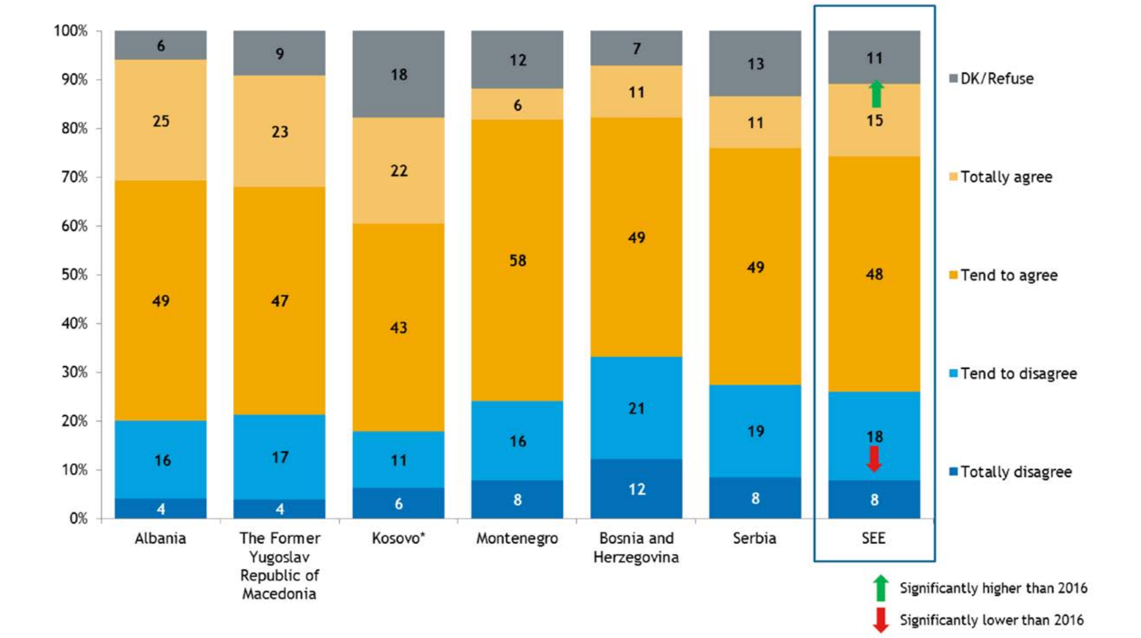
Respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina (71%) and Kosovo* (67%) are more supportive of the need to further reinforce regional ties, while their counterparts from Albania view the links as appropriate most frequently (32%).

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania boast the highest number of respondents who feel the ties are already strong as they are (9% in all three economies).

With the exception of men (56%) who are of the opinion that commercial and trade links with the region should be improved significantly more than women (49%), no other differences in public opinion are noted across other demographic variables.

Figure 69: Do you agree that in general entering of foreign companies in the market of your economy will improve choice and decrease prices for consumers?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



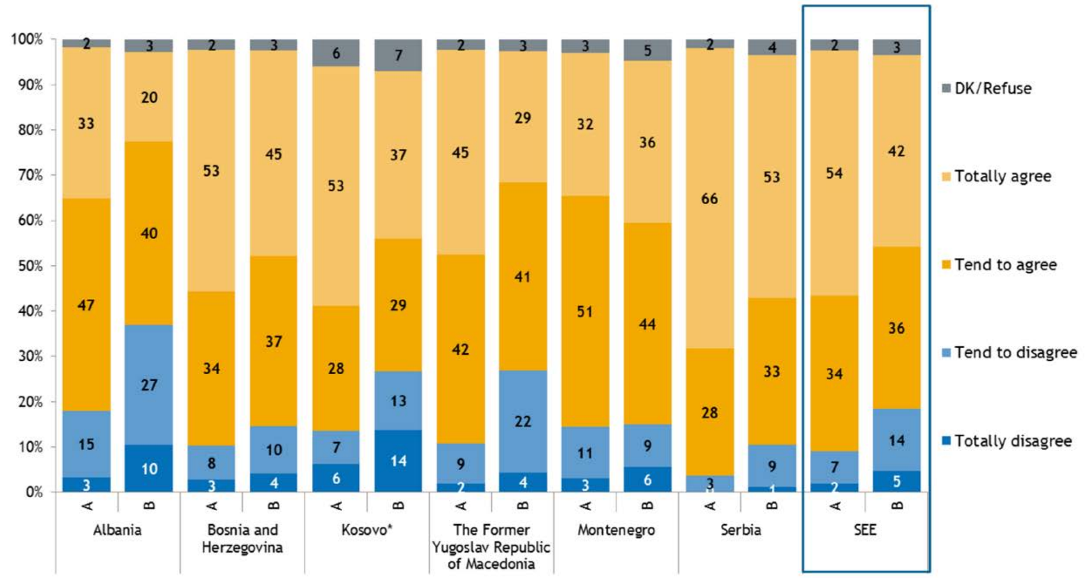
At SEE level, 63% of respondents feel that the introduction of foreign companies will result in a positive outcome for consumers versus 26% who disagree. Compared to the previous three years, the number of individuals who perceive foreign companies entering the market as advantageous continued to rise (2014: 58%; 2015: 57%; 2016: 59%; 2017: 63%).

There are certain variations across the demographic groups: the younger segments of the respondent population, as well as the highly educated, and those who rate their social status as above average, are more likely to feel that foreign companies in a domestic market will improve choice and decrease prices for consumers.

Respondents from Albania (74%) and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (70%) are more likely to agree with this statement, whereas people from Serbia are likely to be more sceptical (59%).

Figure 70: Do you agree with the following statements? A - Products and goods of my economy can compete well with products and goods from other SEE economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia); B - Products and goods of my economy can compete well with products and goods from the EU

(All respondents, N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



The vast majority of the SEE population exhibits notable confidence in their own economy through the widely held belief that their products can compete with those from other SEE economies, as well as the EU. However, resdpondents tend to show a greater degree of certainty in relation to other SEE economies (89%) than in regard to products coming from the EU (78%).

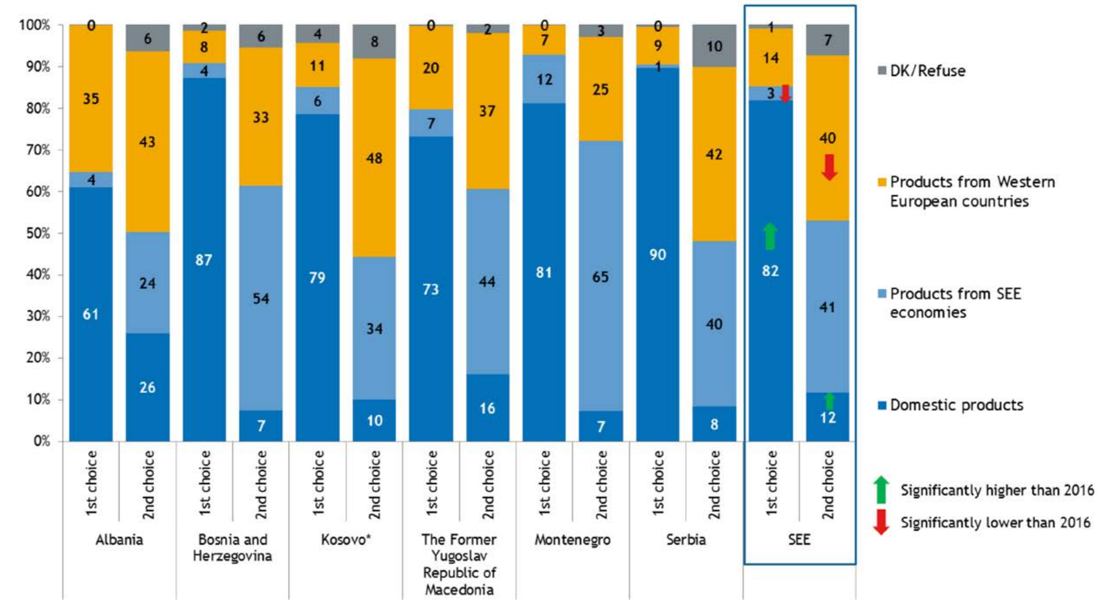
No significant variations were noted in the results as they compare to those of 2016.

Respodents from Serbia are considerably more confident in the competetiveness of their domestic products, both in the SEE region (94%) and with the EU (86%).

Respondents in Albania are the least likely to consider domestic products competitive in the SEE region (18% disagreed with the statement), and even more with the EU (37% disagreed with the statement).

Figure 71: If you could choose a food or beverage product from three different sources: domestic product, product from SEE region and product from Western European countries, which one would be your first choice and which would be second?

(All respondents, N=6025, share of total, %)



Domestic food and beverage products are preferred as first choice (82%), while products from Western Europe (40%) and the SEE region (41%) are equally opted for as second choice.

Compared with the 2016 survey, more people would opt for domestic products both as their first and second choice (first choice: 2016: 75%; 2017: 82%, second choice: 2016: 9%; 2017: 12%).

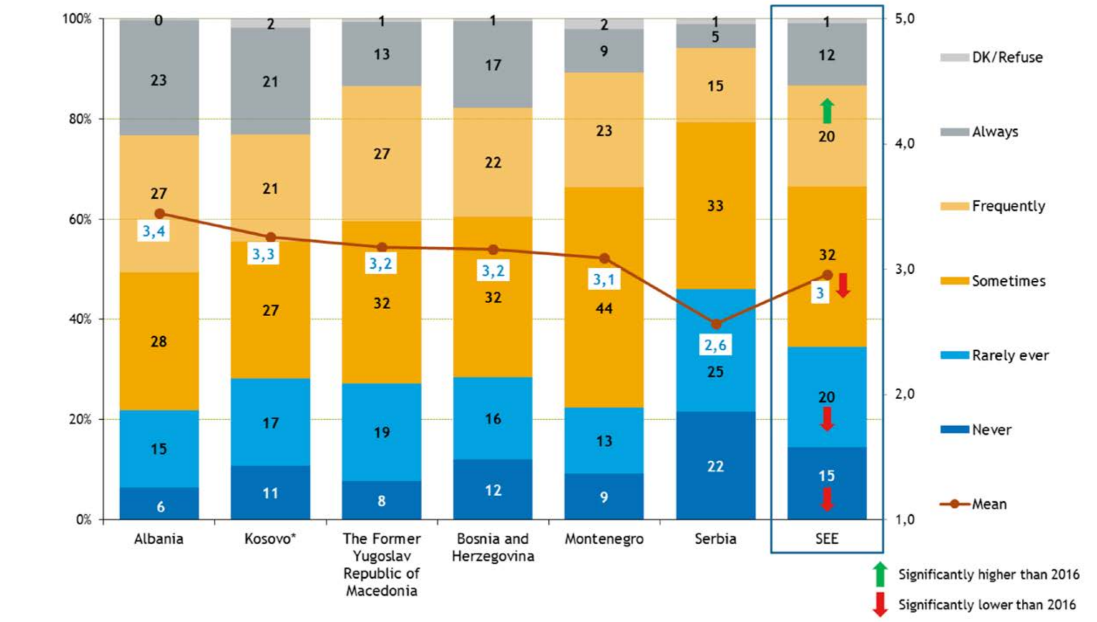
Domestic products are prevalently first choice across all economies, with the exception of Albania where the preference lies with products from Western Europe (35%). People from Serbia, significantly more often than others, choose domestic products (90%) and people from Montenegro products from other SEE economies (12%).

As for second choice, respondents from Albania (26%) and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (16%) are more likely than others to choose domestic products. People from Kosovo* are more likely to choose products from Western Europe (48%) as their second choice, while people from Montenegro (65%) will go for products from SEE economies.

With regard to first choice of food and beverage products, the youngest respondents (18-29 years old), the highly educated, and those who rate their social status as above average are more likely to choose products from Western Europe, while the oldest age group tends to choose domestic products. As for second choice, the younger segment of the population (18-45 years old) are more likely to prefer domestic products.

Figure 72: When purchasing products in supermarkets, how often do you look at the labels to see the economy of origin?

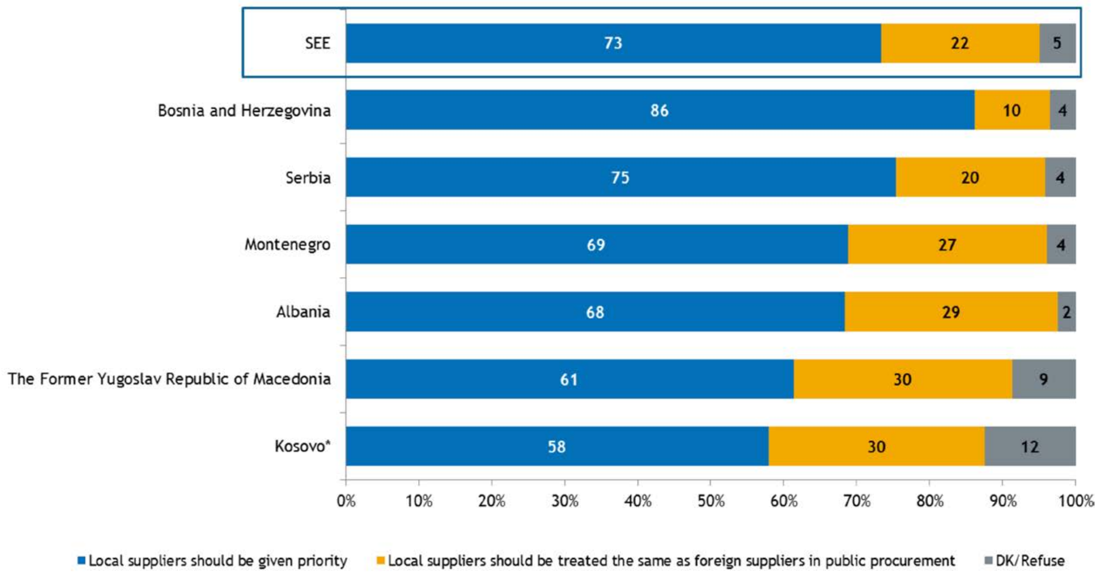
(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



People in the SEE region tend to pay attention to the origin of the products they buy in supermarkets. In fact, around two thirds (65%) of all respondents do so (12% always look at the labels to check origin, 20% frequently do so, and 32% sometimes), while 35% never or rarely check the label for product origin. Respondents from Albania and Kosovo* are more likely to pay attention to the origin of products (mean 3.4 and 3.3 respectively), while people from Serbia do so the least (mean 2.6).

Figure 73: When procuring products and services, should your Government give priority to local suppliers or should they be treated the same as foreign suppliers (provided price and quality is equal)?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



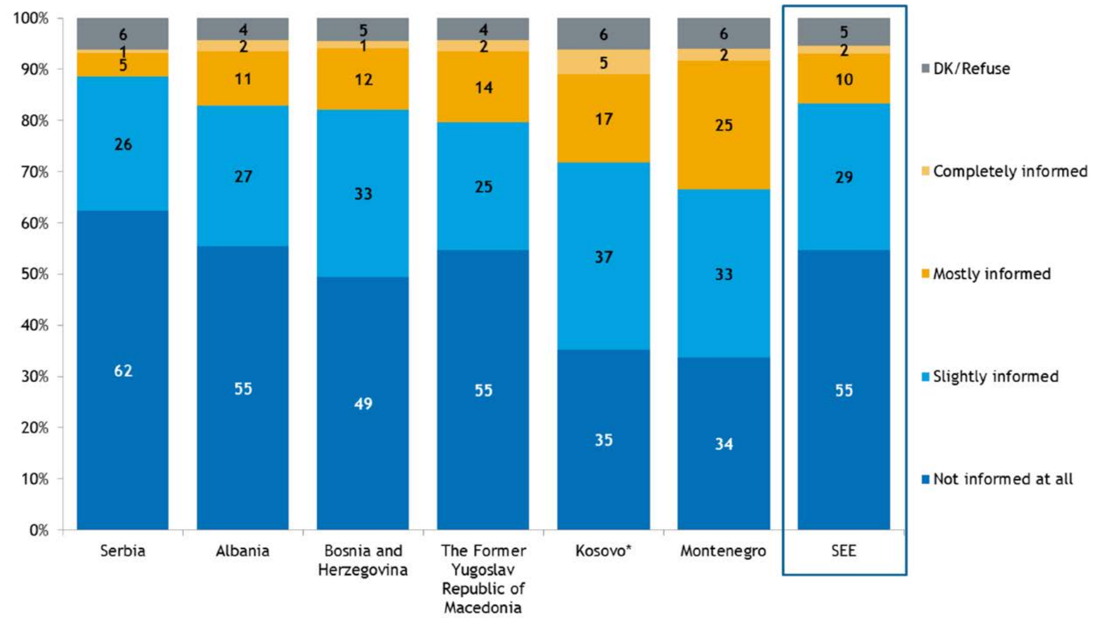
As in 2016, a clear majority of people in the SEE region (73%) believe that their government should prioritize local suppliers over foreign ones when procuring goods and services. Respondents who feel that local suppliers should be treated the same as foreign ones in public procurement make up 22% of all respondents.

People from Bosnia and Herzegovina are more likely to prioritize local suppliers (86%) while respondents from Albania, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo* are more likely to favour equitable treatment of all vendors regardless of origin (Albania: 29%; The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: 30%; Kosovo*: 30%).

The older category of respondents (46-61 and older) are more likely to support prioritization of local suppliers (76%), as well as respondents who rate their social status as average, and below average (74%).

Figure 74: To what extent do you think that you are informed about the regional free trade agreement (CEFTA 2006)?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



More than half of people surveyed feel they are not informed at all about CEFTA (55%), while less than a third describe themselves as slightly informed. Only 12% think they are completely or mostly informed. Compared to previous survey installments, the number of people who consider themselves uninformed has remained steady (2015: 54%, 2016: 55%; 2017: 55%).

Montenegro boasts the highest number of individuals informed (27%) while the highly educated, and those who rate their social status as above average, tend to be better informed about the regional free trade agreement (18% and 28%, respectively).

Perceptions on Transport and Infrastructure

There is little change in attitudes towards transport and infrastructure, as expected, given that any upgrades in these sectors will happen incrementally and over time.

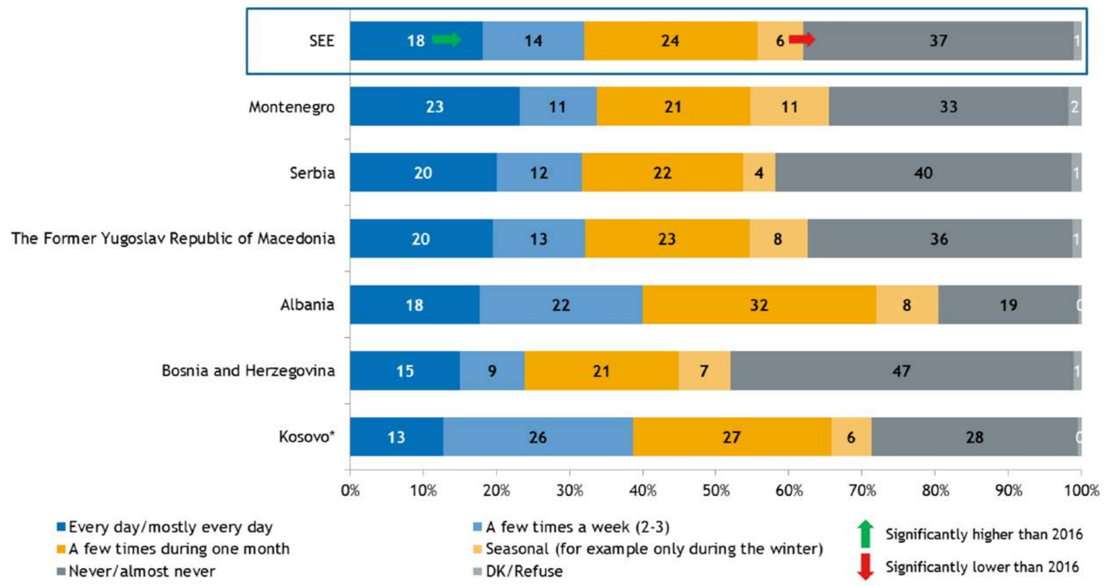
Demands for improvement in road infrastructure, and motor vehicles as the dominant mode of transport, continue to feature in this section, year after year.

Infrastructure problems are especially keenly felt in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, to a lesser extent, in Montenegro. Years of investments in infrastructure projects in Albania and Kosovo* have started to pay off, it seems.

Support for improvements in rail transport is low. That suggests that perceptions are much more heavily swayed by current sentiment than future needs, suggesting an absence of vision when it comes to industrial development and policies support thereof.

Figure 75: How often do you use public transportation?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



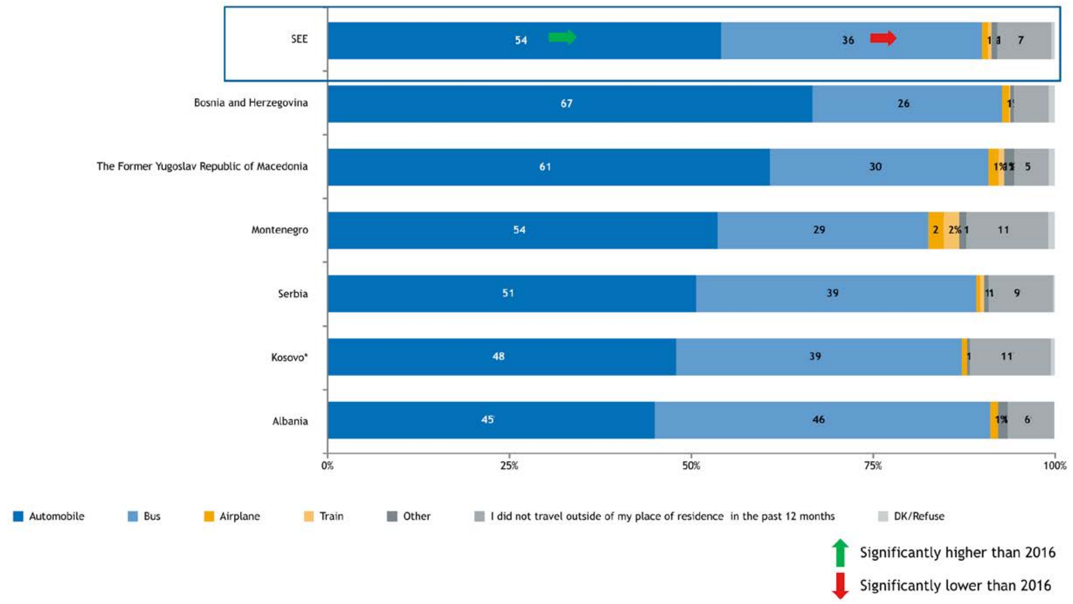
In the region, 62% of the population use public transportation at least occasionally, 18% use it daily, 14% a few times a week, 24% a few times a month and 6% seasonally. Compared with 2016 survey data, there is an increase of the number of respondents using public transportation daily (up to 18% from 15% in 2016) and a decrease among those using it seasonally (down to 6% from 9% in 2017). Comparisons with 2014 and 2015 data show no significant difference in relation to the use of public transportation in the region.

Respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia (47% and 40%, respectively, never/almost never use public transportation) are less likely than others to use public transportation, while people from Albania (80%) and Kosovo* (71%) use it more often. Public transportation is used on a daily basis most frequently in Montenegro (23%) and least commonly in Kosovo* (13%).

The youngest respondents, the 18-29 age group, are more likely to use public transportation on a daily basis or a few times a week (29% use it on a daily basis, 18% a few times a week), whereas more than half (52%) of those who rate their social status as above average never use it.

Figure 76: Which mode of transport did you most often use when travelling outside of your place of residence in the past 12 months?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



Of all the means of transport, people in the region most commonly used an automobile (54%) or a bus (36%), when travelling outside of their place of residence in the past 12 months. Airplanes were used by only 1% of the population. In the past 12 months, 7% of the people surveyed did not travel at all outside of their place of residence.

Four-year comparative data show that the automobile is the dominant mean of transport, followed by the bus. Compared with the 2016 survey, an increase in the use of automobiles is noted (up to 54% from 51% in 2016), alongside a decrease in the number of bus trips (down to 36% from 39% in 2016). The highest number of bus travellers is found in Albania (46%), while people aged 30-45 years use cars more often than others (66%), along with the highly educated (62%) and people who rate their social status as above average (76%). The youngest group (18-29 years old) were more likely than others to travel by bus (43%) as well as individuals who are low-skilled (47%) and those who rate their social status at below average (50%).

Figure 77: How do you estimate the quality of transport infrastructure and connections within your economy?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %)

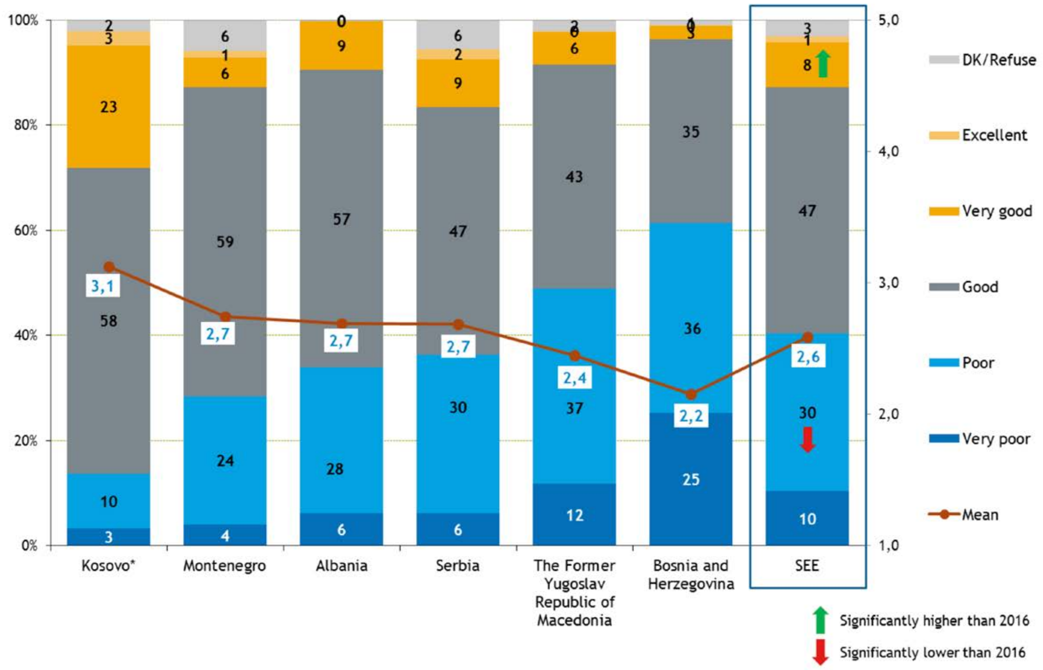
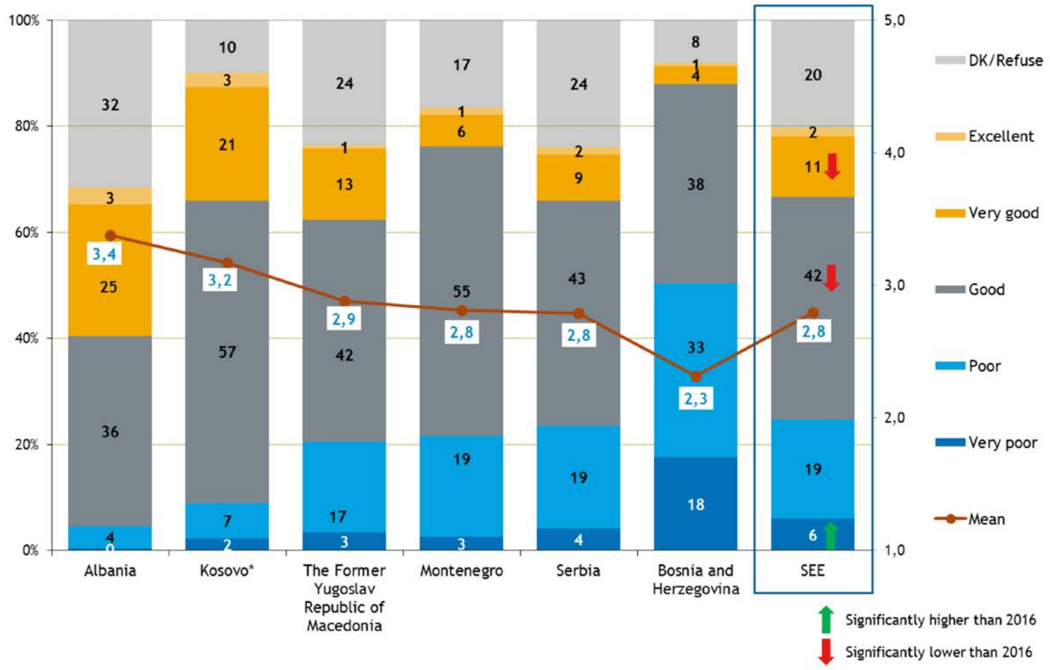


Figure 78: How do you estimate the quality of transport infrastructure and connections within SEE region?

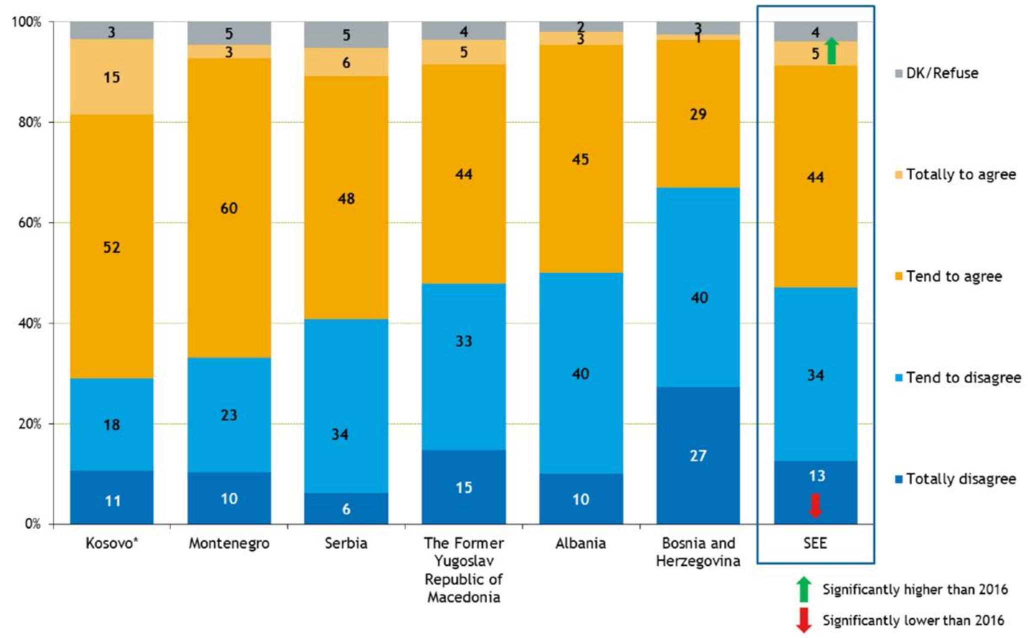
(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %)



The quality of transport within the SEE region (mean 2.8) is assessed better than that of the respective respondent's economy (mean 2.6). Respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina rated both their own transport infrastructure and that of the region (2.3) as lowest in the SEE (2.2 and 2.3, respectively).

Figure 79: Would you agree that travelling by road in your economy is safe?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)

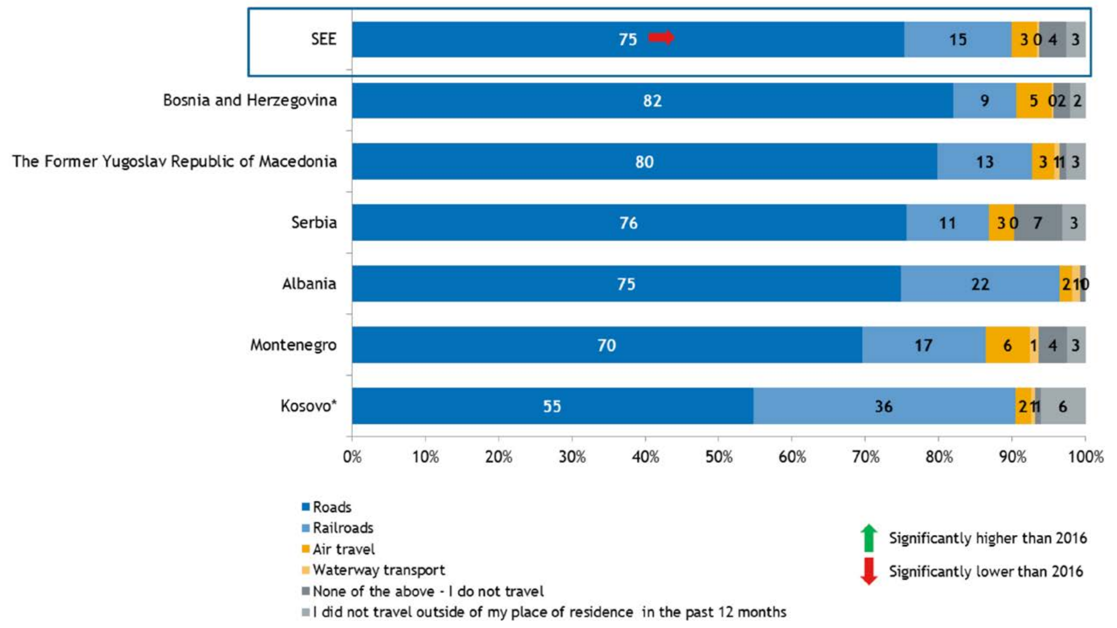


At SEE level, respondents are divided almost down the middle in their assessment of road safety – while 49% deem road travel safe, 47% disagree. The former are found most frequently in Kosovo* (67% find road travel safe), while the latter opinion is held most commonly by respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina (67% find road travel unsafe). In addition to Bosnia and Herzegovina, respondents in Albania who believe that travelling by road in their own economy is not safe outnumber those that do.

A comparative analysis with the 2016 survey shows a modest increase in the number of people who describe road travel as safe (up to 49% from 47% in 2016) and an almost proportional decrease in the number of respondents who disagree with this statement (down to 47% from 50% in 2016). In addition, people who rate their social status as above average (69%) are more likely to believe that travelling by road is safe.

Figure 80: In your opinion, which passenger transport mode improvements would have the highest beneficial impact on your travelling?

(All respondents - N=6025, multiple answer, share of total, %)



Roads improvements are seen as having the most beneficial impact on travelling (75%) in the region. This is compatible with an earlier finding about road transport being the most common mode of travel. 16% of the population in the SEE region believe that improved railroads, as a mode of passenger transport, would have the greatest positive impact on their travel, and only 3% think it should be in the area of air travel.

While roads are still predominantly emphasized by vast majority as priority passenger transport mode, the numbers have slightly decreased since the 2016 survey (from 78% to 75% in 2017).

In terms of intra-regional differences, Kosovo* (36%) has significantly more people who believe that improvements in rail transport would have the most beneficial impact on their own travel.

People from Bosnia and Herzegovina (82%) and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (80%) are significantly more likely to see road improvements as most beneficial to their travel.

Those highly educated (4%), persons who rate their social status as above average (8%), and the younger population (18-29 years old - 5%), see improvements in air travel as most beneficial.

Attitudes towards Climate Change and Energy

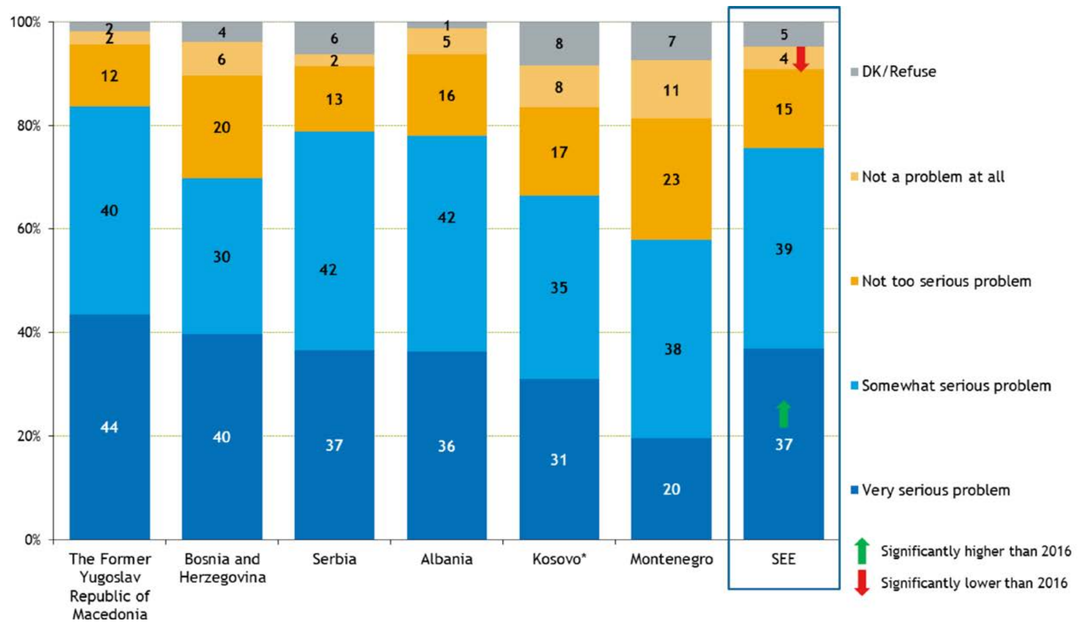
Given the relatively high levels of pollution throughout the region, largely due to its excessive reliance on carbon-generated energy, there is a prevalent, if declarative, commitment to dealing with climate change and reducing pollution.

The public appears ready to take steps in mitigating ongoing environmental degradation but respondents have high expectations of both the government and the private sector.

At the same time, it is unclear how realistic the expectations are given that there is a strong preference for coal-generated energy across the region.

Figure 81: Is climate change a problem?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



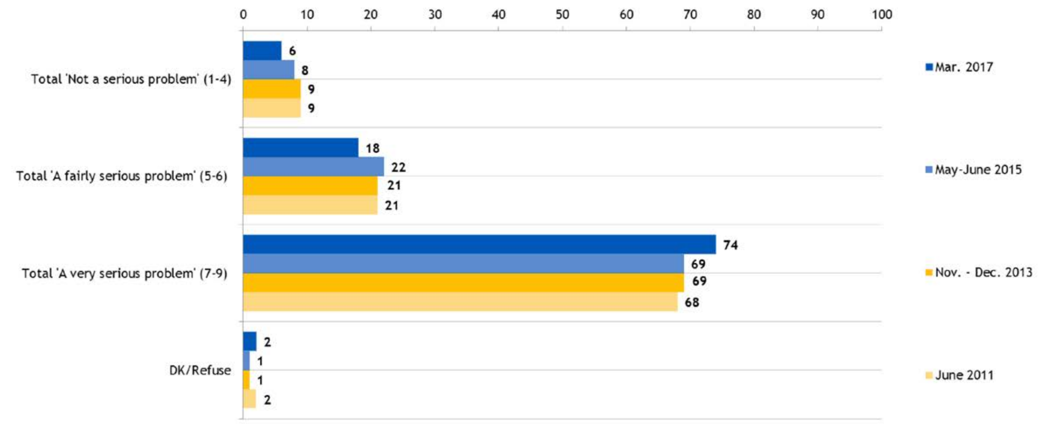
Most people in the SEE region perceive climate change as an issue (76%), with 37% viewing it as a very serious problem. The number of respondents who do not see climate change as a problem at all make up only 4% of the public.

Compared to the 2016 survey, there are more people who see climate change as a problem (up to 76% from 72% in 2016). This reflects a growing trend over time, as 2015 saw only 68% of respondents identify climate change as a problem.

The highest proportion of people who do not see climate change as a problem are in Montenegro (35%).

Figure 82: And how serious a problem do you think climate change is at this moment?

(Scale from 1 to 10, with '1' meaning it is "not at all a serious problem" and '10' meaning it is "an extremely serious problem")[7]

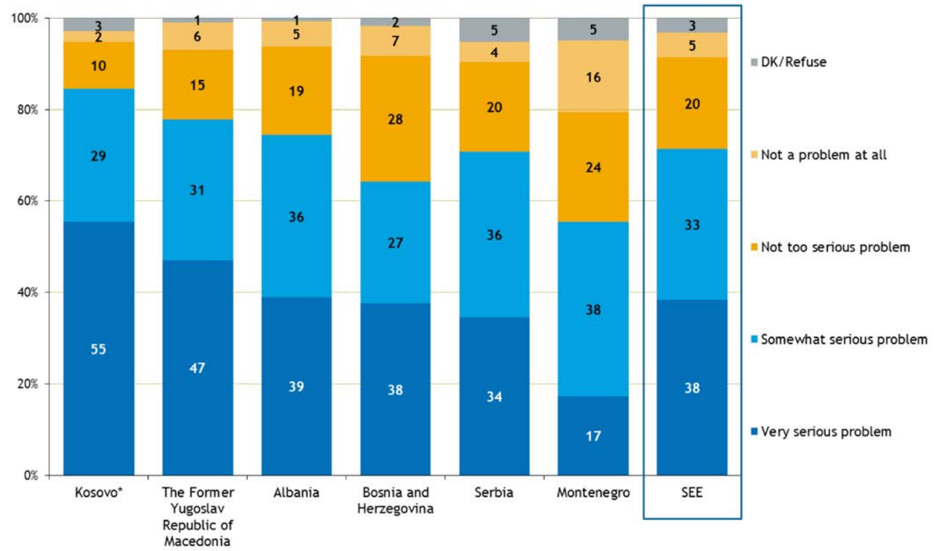


The Special Eurobarometer on Climate Change, March 2017, includes a question on the importance of climate change. Although a different scale was used to the one in the Balkan Barometer, the difference in the degree of importance is evident. The findings indicate that climate change is a very serious problem for a larger number of people in the EU compared to their counterparts in the SEE region (SEE: 37%, EU: 74%). On the other hand, while only 9% among the 28 EU member states do not perceive climate change as a serious problem, in the SEE region that percentage is considerably larger (19%). This discrepancy is likely a result of many other more pressing concerns in daily life within the SEE community as compared to the EU respondents.

Public debates on climate change are more widespread in the EU. In addition, the agendas of governments and parliaments in the EU include mitigation measures that have an impact on the quality and cost of life, unlike in the SEE. There is actually a large proportion, more than a third, of those who see climate change as an important issue in the SEE. This is probably the result of fairly significant climate impacts on economic trends, which are more significant in the SEE than in the EU, for example, when it comes to flooding and agricultural production in general.

Figure 83: Do you consider pollution to be a problem in your place of living?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)

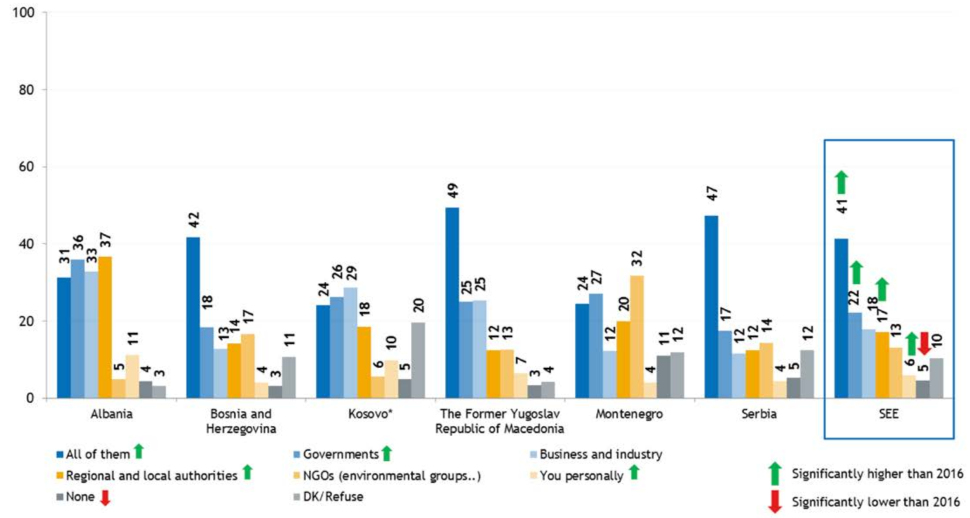


[7] European Commission: Special Eurobarometer 459, Climate Change, March 2017

A large proportion of the SEE population (71%) see air pollution as a problem and they outnumber those that do not across all economies under survey. Montenegro is notable for the smallest difference between the two groups; while 55% of its population consider air pollution as a problem, 40% do not. Viewed across demographic variables, the highly educated (75%) are likely to consider air pollution as a problem more than others.

Figure 84: In your opinion, who within your economy is responsible for tackling climate change?

(All respondents - N=6025, multiple answer, share of total, %)



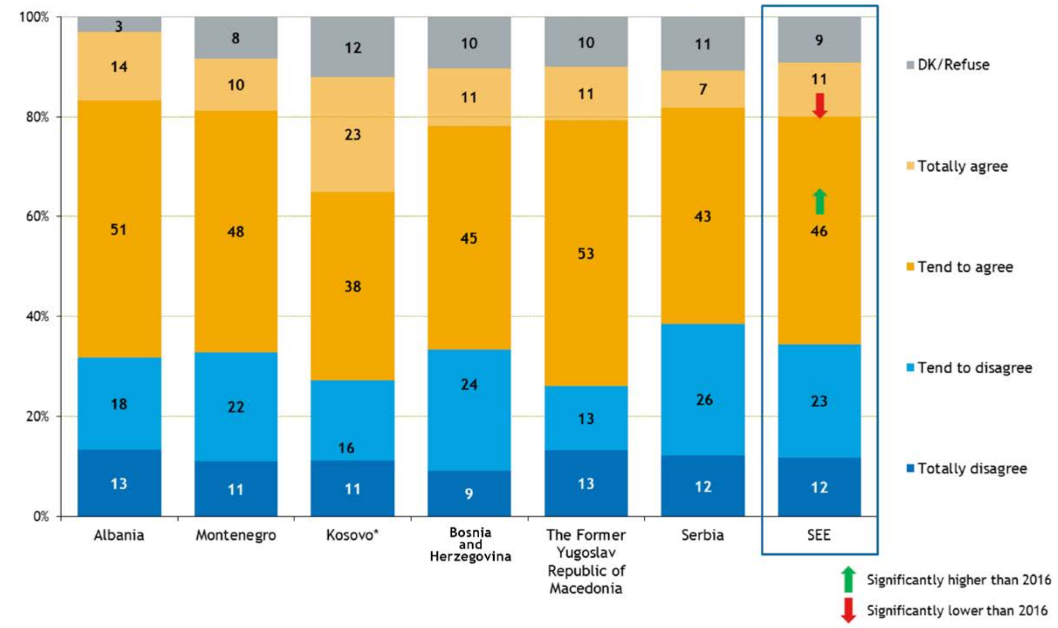
Most of the SEE population (41%) believe that the responsibility for tackling climate change lies with all the relevant stakeholders (governments, business and industry, regional and local authorities NGOs, but also individuals). Governments are flagged as primarily responsible by some 22%, while business and industry, as well as regional and local authorities (18% and 17% respectively) come in as third and fourth in the ranking.

Compared to 2016, survey findings show an increased willingness by respondents to place responsibility on a specific actor; the number of respondents who answered "none" to the question of primary responsibility is down to 5% from 9% in 2016.

Respondents in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (49%), Serbia (47%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (42%) predominantly believe in shared responsibility of all the relevant stakeholders, wheareas those in Albania (36%), Montenegro (27%) and Kosovo* (26%) are likely to hold the government primarily responsible for climate change mitigation.

Figure 85: Do you agree with the following statement: I am ready to buy environmentally friendly products even if they cost a little bit more.

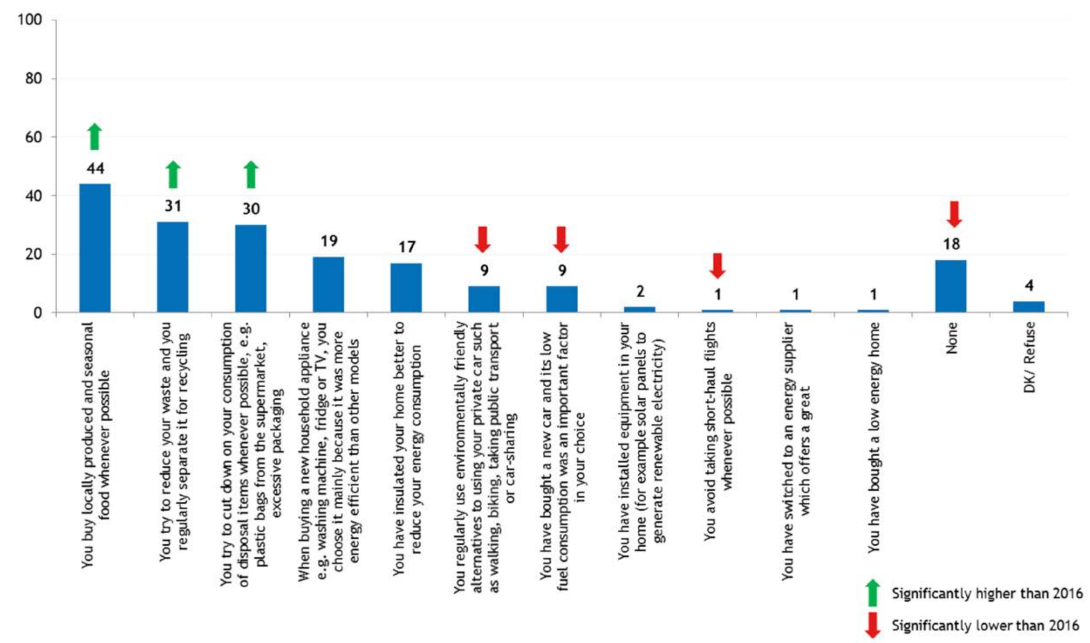
(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



Slightly more than half the people surveyed are ready to buy environmentally friendly products, even if they are more expensive (56%). This type of behaviour is more prevalent in Albania (65%) and Montenegro (64%) The youngest age group (60%), the highly educated (65%) and those who rate their social status as above average (79%) are particularly more likely than others to agree with this statement. There are no changes in this respect compared to 2016.

Figure 86: Which of the following actions have you taken, if any? (SEE region)

(All respondents - N=6025, multiple answers, share of total, %)



Of all the mitigation actions surveyed, the SEE population most often buy locally produced and seasonal food whenever possible (44%). Among other actions related to environmental protection, respondents also try to reduce the amount of waste by regularly separating it for recycling (31%) as well as reducing the consumption of disposable items such as plastic bags whenever possible (30%). Still, some 18% of the SEE population have not taken any of the listed actions. Comparative analysis with 2016 survey data shows an increase in the frequency of the three most commonly used strategies, and a slight decrease in the use of environmentally friendly alternatives to using a private car such as walking, biking, taking public transport or car-sharing; buying a new car with low fuel consumption; and avoiding taking short-haul flights whenever possible. Most importantly, a significantly smaller group report not taking any mitigation measures (down to 18% from 25% in 2016) and this is a good indication of increasing awareness about the environment.

Table 8: Which of the following actions have you taken, if any? (By economies)

(All respondents - N=6025, multiple answers, share of total %)

	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Try to reduce your waste and you regularly separate it for recycling	27	30	25	31	44	32
consumption of disposal items whenever possible, e.g. plastic bags from the supermarket, excessive packaging	32	27	26	31	34	31
Buy locally produced and seasonal food whenever possible	50	41	25	41	45	47
When buying a new household appliance e.g. washing machine, fridge or TV, you choose it mainly because it was more energy efficient than other mode	28	11	35	30	15	16
I regularly use environmentally friendly alternatives to using your private car such as walking, biking, taking public transport or car-sharing	11	5	14	11	8	10
I have insulated your home better to reduce your energy consumption	11	11	25	25	11	19
I have bought a new car and its low fuel consumption was an important factor in your choice	4	9	9	12	10	11
I avoid taking short-haul flights whenever possible	1	2	6	2	1	0
I have switched to an energy supplier which offers a greater share of energy from renewable sources than your previous one	1	1	3	2	2	1
I have installed equipment in your home (for example solar panels to generate renewable electricity)	4	1	2	10	1	1
I have bought a low energy home	2	1	1	2	0	0
None	23	16	27	17	12	17

Findings by individual economy show that the population in Montenegro is more likely to recycle waste (44%) and avoid the use of disposable items, such as plastic bags and the like, (34%), whereas half the population in Albania (50%) report buying locally produced and seasonal food whenever possible. The largest number of those who have not taken any of the listed actions are found in Kosovo* (27%).

The highly educated are significantly more likely to take all of these actions. People who rate their social status as above average are notably more likely to pay attention when buying a new household appliance e.g. washing machine, fridge or TV, to choose it mainly because it is more energy efficient than other models. The youngest cohort (18-29 years old), more often than others, use a bicycle, walk or use public transport, instead of driving their car, which is connected to their lifestyle.

Perceptions on Public Institutions and Services

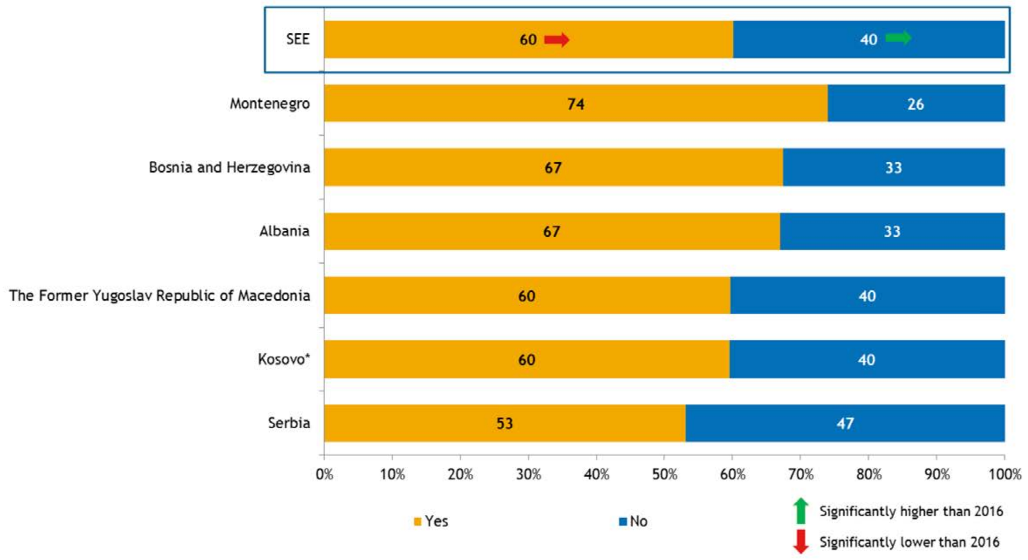
Confidence in and Perceptions on Independence of Public Institutions

Governments continue to be rated poorly by their citizens across the region. Policy making and public service delivery are described in somewhat more positive terms while trust in government and rule of law considerations are reviewed especially poorly. Information is becoming more available, but responsiveness by public institutions is not improving.

Independent institutions are rated better than representative ones, a poor reflection on the state of democracy in the region.

Figure 87: Have you had contact with public services in the last year?

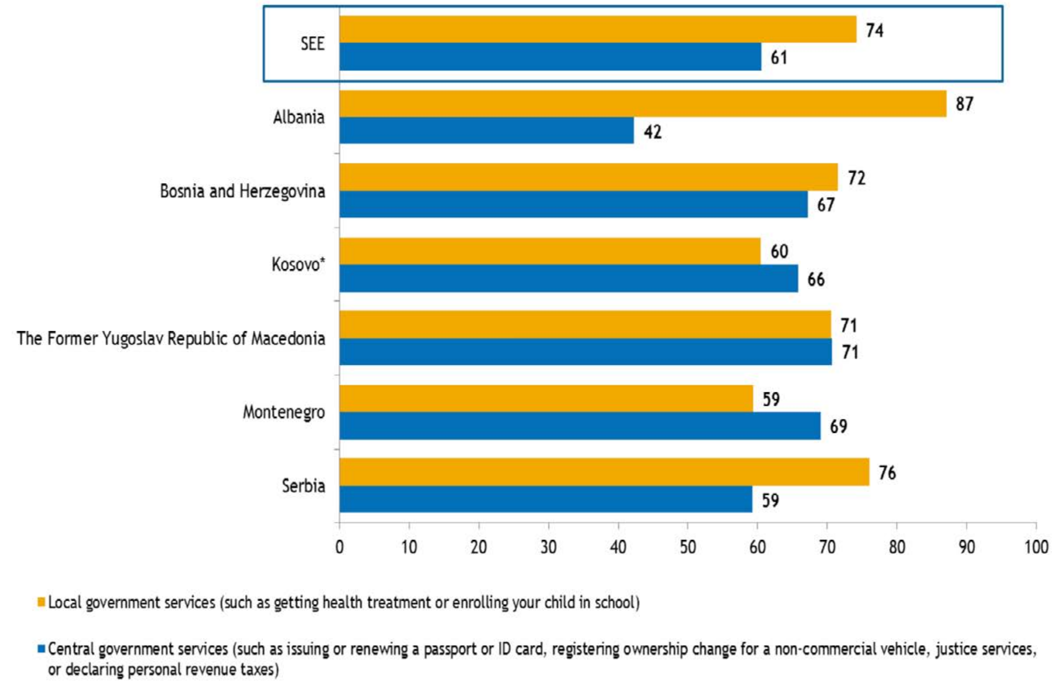
(All respondents - N=6025, share of total %)



Over the last year, 60% of the SEE population used some public services. Montenegrins had significantly more contact with public service providers (74%) than people in Serbia (53%). Public services were used more by the middle-aged population (30-45 and 46-60 years old: 63%/63%) and the highly educated (65%).

Figure 88: Were those central or local government services?

(Respondents who have had contact with public services, N=3820, share of total, %)

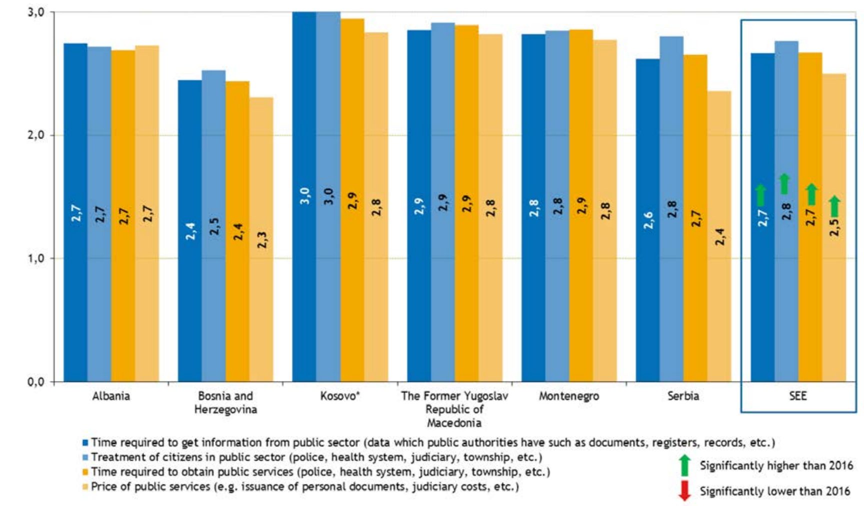


Local government services were used more frequently (74%) than those provided by the central government (61%), likely because local authorities are responsible for the delivery of the majority of public services and are, by default, much more accessible to citizens. Montenegro and Kosovo* are outliers with more people likely to use central government services (69% and 66% respectively). Respondents from Albania used local government services more frequently than others (87%).

Respondents that are highly educated (71%) were more likely than others to use central government services relating to the issuance of passports and registration of ownership, among others. The oldest respondents (83%), and those who rate their social status as below average (81%), used local government services more frequently.

Figure 89: How would you grade the following issues:

(All respondents - N=6025, scores from 1 to 5, share of total, mean)



All four aspects of government performance under review are rated poorly at SEE level and receive a score of below average (under 3.0). The turnaround time to get information from the public sector (data which public authorities have such as documents, registers, records, etc.) was given the highest grade by respondents (2.8), while the price of public services received the lowest (2.5).

Governments in Kosovo*, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro are generally better evaluated than the regional average, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina government performance was rated the lowest across all four areas.

Respondents who rate their social status as above average rated all four aspects of government performance better than others.

Table 9: How would you grade the following issues:

(All respondents - N=6025, scores from 1 to 5, share of total %)

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Treatment of citizens in public sector	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.7
Time required for obtaining public services	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.8
Time required for getting information in public sector	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.7
Price of public services	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.5

In comparison with previous survey installments, ratings have improved across all aspects and this is suggestive of an overall improvement in performance by the region's governments, rather than a statistical fluke.

The graphs that follow display the rating of each surveyed aspect of the public sector separately for each economy, and for the region as a whole.

Figure 90: How would you grade time required to get information from public sector (data which public authorities have such as documents, registers, records, etc.)

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total %)

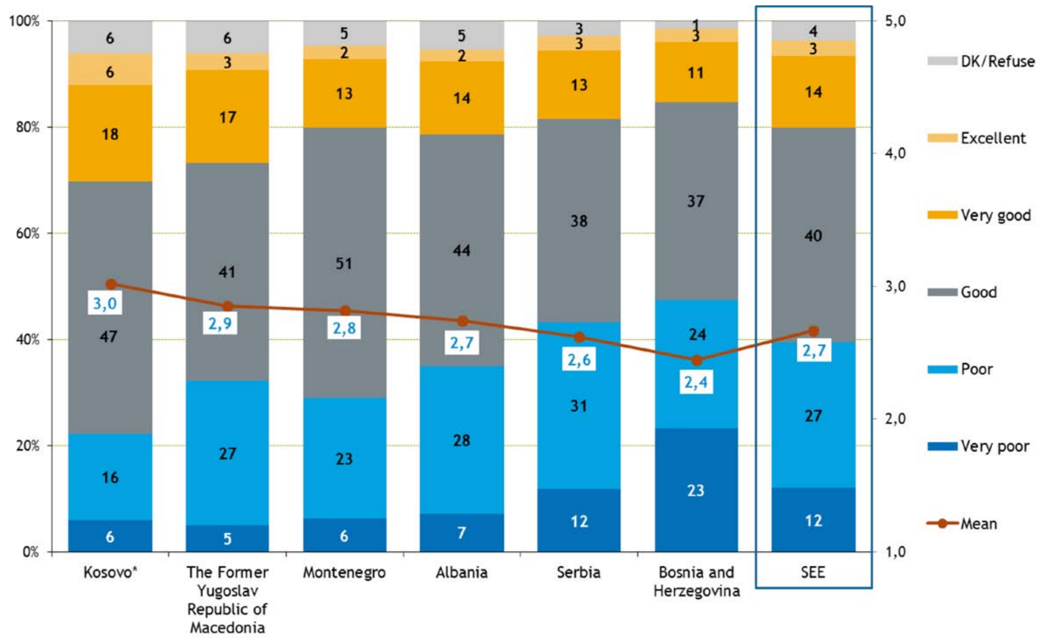


Figure 91: How would you grade treatment of citizens in public sector (police, health system, judiciary, township, etc.)?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total %)

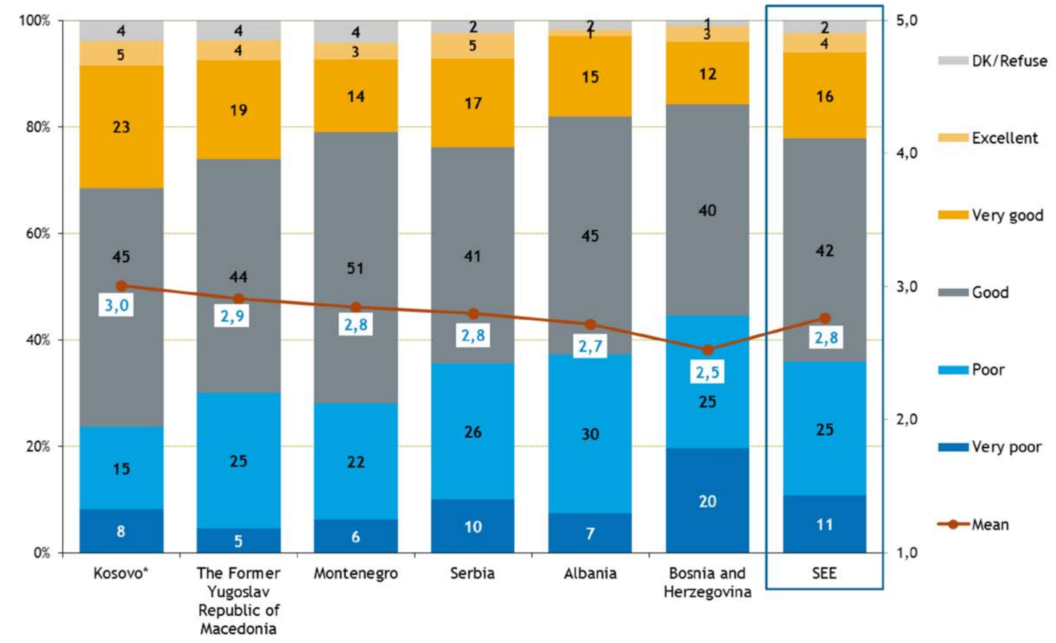


Figure 92: How would you grade time required to obtain public services (police, health system, judiciary, township, etc.)?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total %)

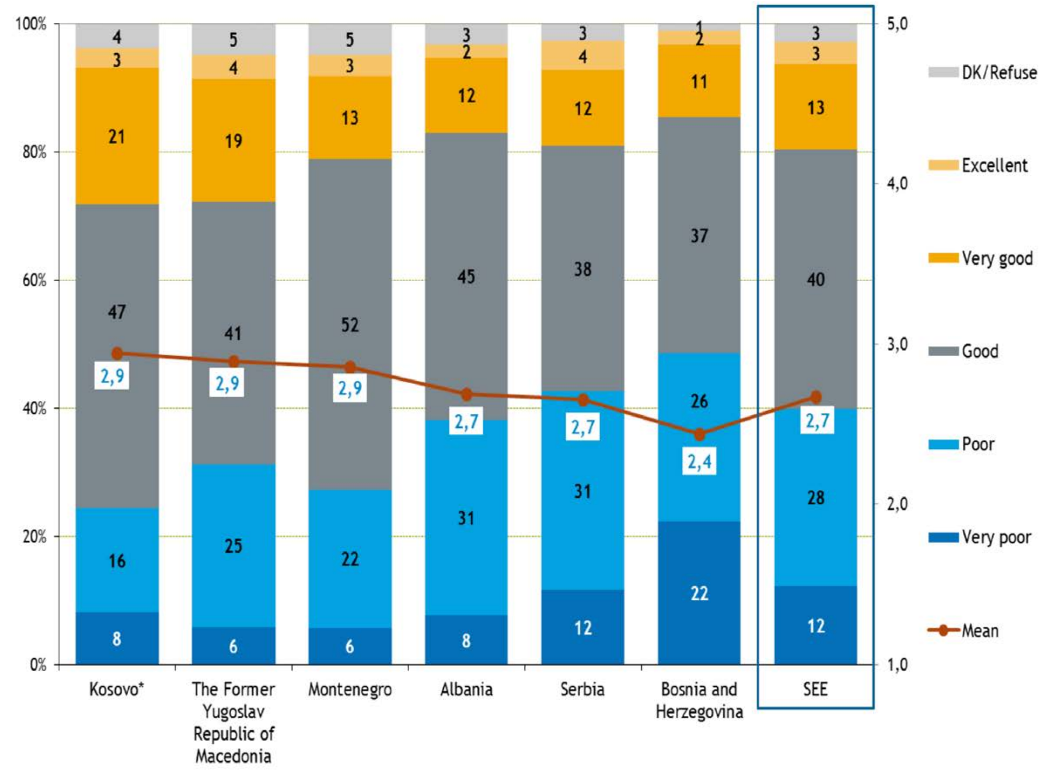


Figure 93: How would you grade price of public services (e.g. issuance of personal documents, judiciary costs, etc.)?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 5, share of total %)

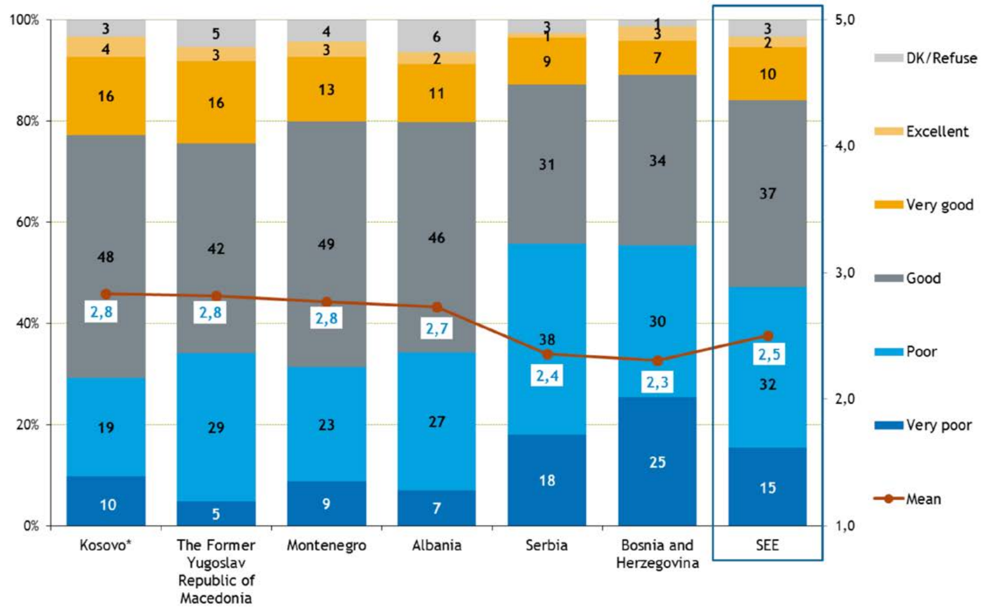
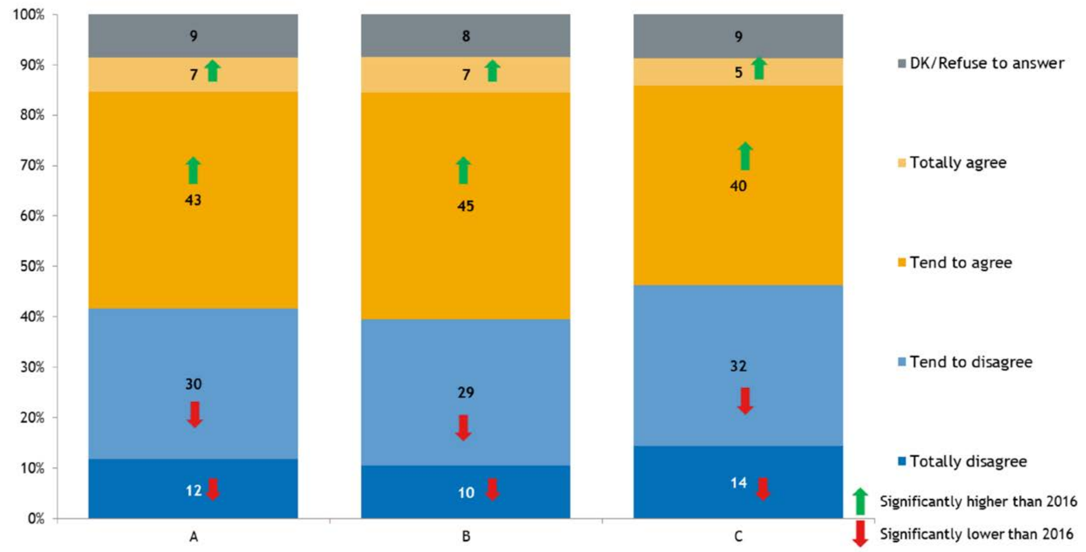


Figure 94: Do you agree with the following statements? (SEE region) A - Requests for information held by a government agency are granted in timely manner; B - The information provided by a government agency is pertinent and complete; C - Requests for information by a government agency are granted at a reasonable cost

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total %)



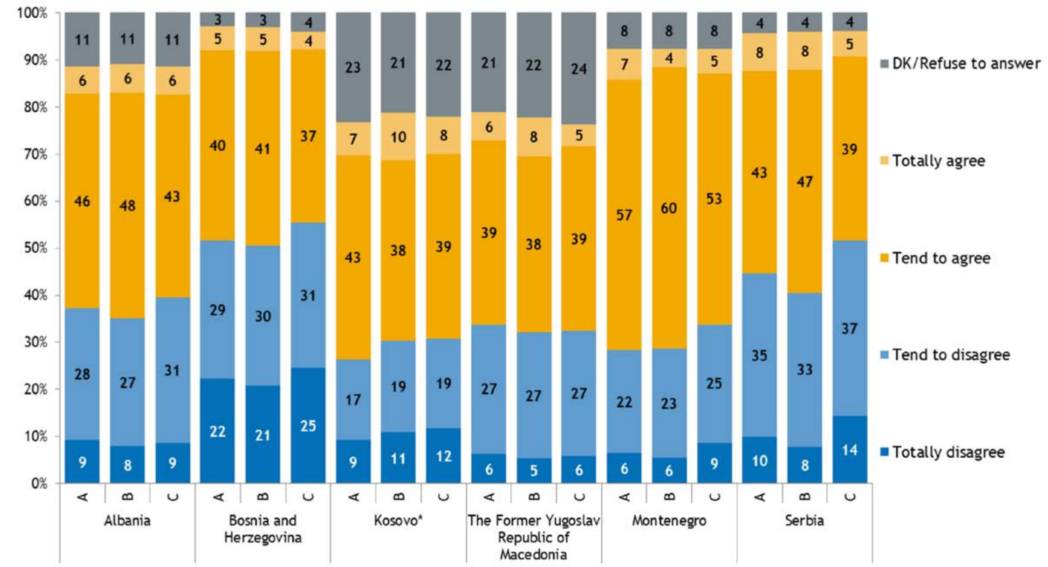
Government agencies provide the information requested in a timely manner, according to half of all respondents in the region; meanwhile, 42% disagree.

The breakdown is similar with regard to the appropriateness and completeness of government information (52% agree, 40% disagree). As for the cost of information provided by government agencies, the respondents are almost equally divided between those who find it reasonable (45%) and those who disagree (46%).

In relation to all three aspects of access to government information under review, compared to last year, more people agree and fewer disagree that information is provided in a timely manner, that it is pertinent and complete, and that the cost of service is reasonable.

Figure 95: Do you agree with the following statements? (By economies) A - Requests for information held by a government agency are granted in timely manner; B - The information provided by a government agency is pertinent and complete; C - Requests for information by a government agency are granted at a reasonable cost

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total %)

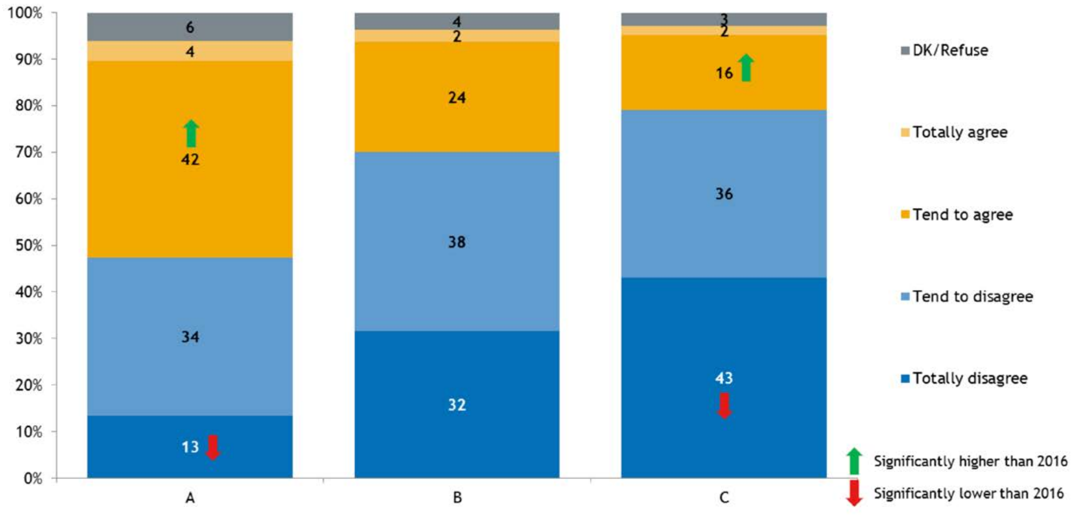


The results of the survey regarding access to information held by government agencies across the individual economies, show that respondents from Montenegro are more likely to give a better performance rating to government (requested information is granted in a timely manner - 64%; it is pertinent and complete - 64%, costs are reasonable - 58%). On the other hand, citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina are least likely to positively assess government performance across the three questions (ranging from 40% to 46%).

Those who rate their social status as above average are the only demographic group more likely to agree with all of the above statements (requests are granted in a timely manner - 59%; the information is pertinent and complete - 60%, costs are reasonable - 59%).

Figure 96: Do you agree with the following statements: (SEE region) A - That the administrative procedures in public institutions are efficient; B - That the law is applied and enforced effectively; C - That the law is applied to everyone equally

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total %)



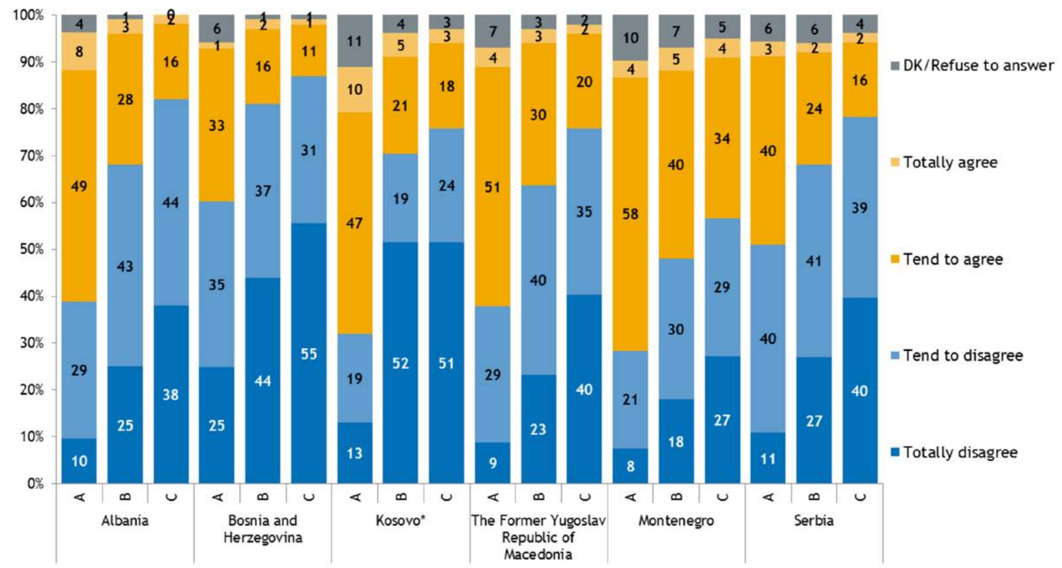
Respondents were asked to express their views on implementation of laws and the efficiency of administrative procedures by agreeing or disagreeing with the statements offered on a scale of 1 to 4. Looking at the results at SEE region level, the most positive responses were given with regards to efficiency of administrative procedures in the public sector (46% agree with the statement). On the other hand, the vast majority disagree with the other two statements relating to the legal system: 79% disagree with the statement that the law is applied to everyone equally, and 70% disagree with the statement that the law is applied and enforced effectively. Put in simpler terms, the administration is working better, the legal system is not.

Analyzed over a four-year period, there is an increasing trend of those who believe, i.e. agree, that administrative procedures in public institutions are efficient (2014: 35%; 2015: 36%; 2016: 43%; 2017: 46%). In relation to the other two aspects of the implementation of laws and the efficiency of administrative procedures assessed here, although there is some positive movement across both, the number of respondents who assess the two aspects negatively remains much higher.

People who rate their social status as above average are considerably more likely to agree with all of the statements (efficiency of the administrative procedures in public institutions: 62% agree; the law is effectively applied: 45% agree; the law is applied to everyone equally: 41% agree).

Figure 97: Do you agree with the following statements (By economies): A - That the administrative procedures in public institutions are efficient; B - That the law is applied and enforced effectively; C - That the law is applied to everyone equally

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total %)



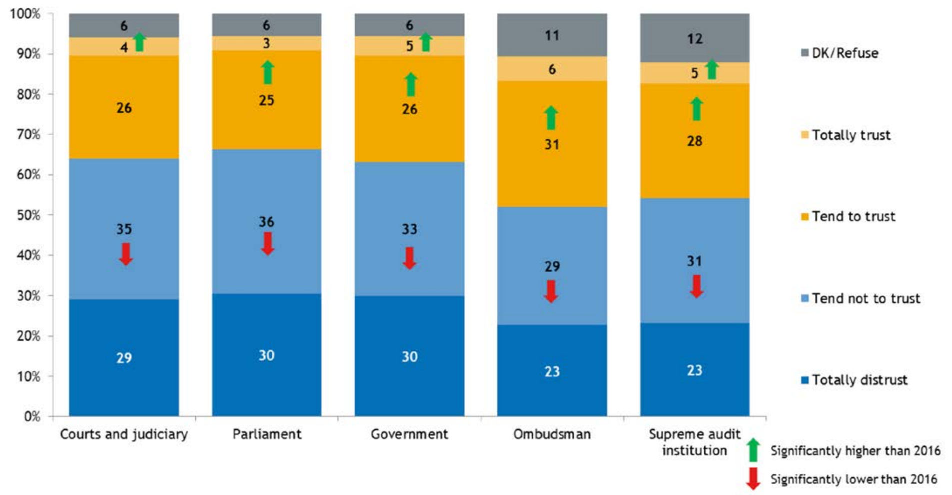
People from Montenegro are most likely to agree with all of the statements on offer. Meanwhile, respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina are the most negative: 34% find the relevant administrative procedures efficient; 18% feel that laws are enforced effectively; and a mere 12% feel that laws are applied to all equally.

As noted earlier, respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina tend to view its government as both inefficient and excessively influenced by outside actors. The small percentage of people who believe the government to be equitable in the treatment of its citizens indicates an overwhelming belief that public institutions have been captured by external interests.

At the same time, Montenegro is doing quite well in economic terms, and that leads to an improved outlook across all aspects surveyed; that could change quickly should the economy stall.

Figure 98: How much trust do you have in certain institutions? (SEE region) A - Courts and judiciary; B - Parliament; C - Government; D - Ombudsman; E - Supreme audit institution

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)

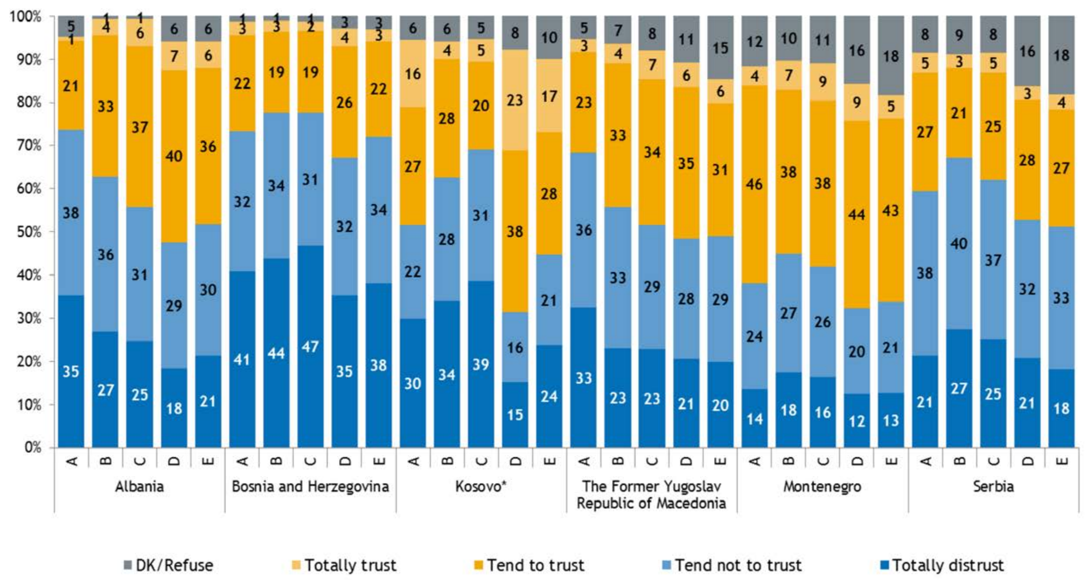


There is a worrying lack of trust in the institutions under review with negative responses ranging from 52% to 66% of all respondents. The least trusted institution at regional level is parliament (28%), whereas the ombudsman enjoys the highest degree of public trust (37%).

Respondents who rate their social status as above average express a significantly greater degree of trust in all of the listed institutions (ranging from 50% of those who trust ombudsman and supreme audit inistitution, to 47% who trust courts and parliament).

Figure 99: How much trust do you have in certain institutions? (By economies) A - Courts and judiciary; B - Parliament; C - Government; D - Ombudsman; E - Supreme audit institution

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



At individual economy level, less than half of their populations trust the institutions listed, with the exception of the ombudsman in Kosovo* (61%) and Montenegro (52%), and the judicial system in Montenegro (50%).

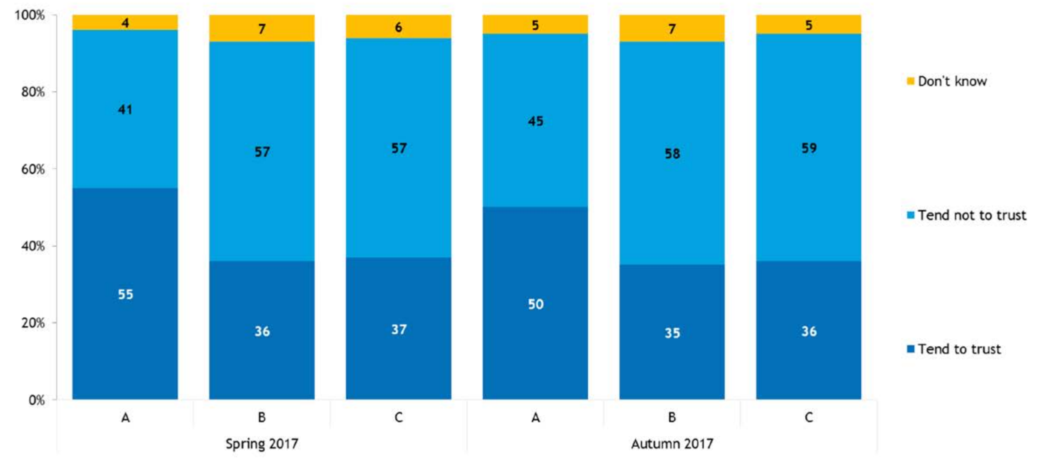
The Ombudsman, as the official charged with representing the interests of the public, is trusted the most across all economies, although in Serbia, it shares top billing with the courts and the supreme audit institution. Most of the region's economies place the least amount of trust in their governments and/or parliaments, with the exceptions of Albania and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where people trust the judiciary the least.

In other words, independent institutions, even if they operate with limited actual independence, are trusted more than political ones. That is not unusual although the level of distrust in representative institutions is exceptionally high.

Respondents from Albania are most inclined to distrust their courts (22% trust them), whereas people from Bosnia and Herzegovina report the least amount of trust in all other institutions under survey here.

Figure 100: For each of the following institutions, please state if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it: A Justice / the (Nationality) legal system; B The (Nationality) Parliament; C The (Nationality) Government

(Share of total, %)

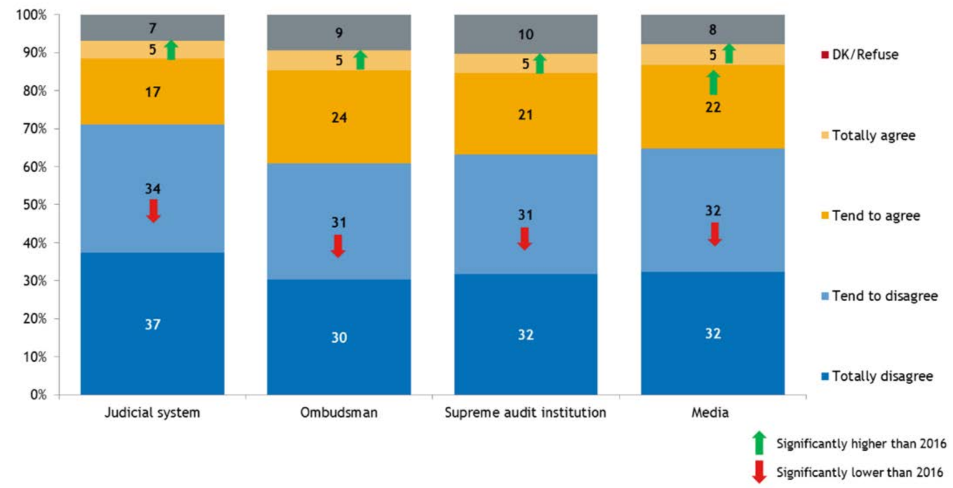


The Standard Eurobarometer survey asked the people of the 28 EU Member States about their trust in the national justice/legal system, parliament and government. As in Spring 2017, the latest Eurobarometer survey conducted in Autumn 2017 shows much greater trust in the national legal systems within the EU (50%) than in the national parliaments (35%) and governments (36%). The SEE population almost equally (dis)trusts all three pillars of government, ranging from 28% for parliament, 30% for the courts, to 31% for the executive.

The SEE region is characterized by a low level of trust in the rule of law and a continued dissatisfaction with the political landscape. The actual differences in government performance between the SEE region and the EU are also reflected in the survey findings, as the trust in all three pillars of government is higher in the EU than in the SEE.

Figure 101: Do you agree that the following institutions are independent of political influence? (SEE region) A - Judicial system; B - Ombudsman; C - Supreme audit institution; D - Media

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)

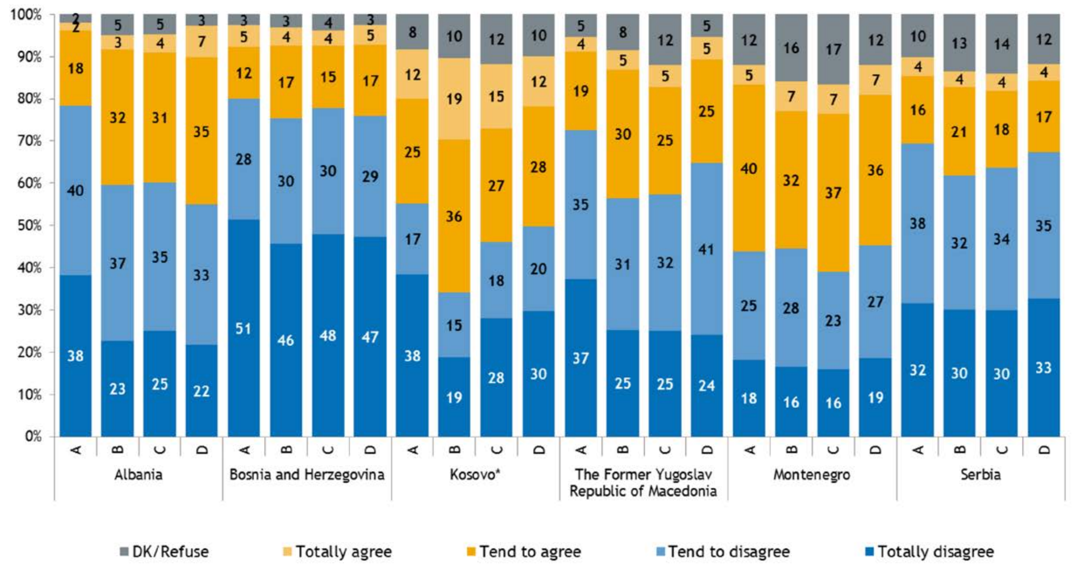


A clear majority of the SEE population describe the legal system, the ombudsman institution, the supreme audit authority and the media as not independent from political influence. The judicial system is considered the least independent (71% disagree with the statement that it is independent), whereas the ombudsman is considered the most independent, or rather the least dependant among the listed institutions (61% disagree with the statement that it is independent).

Respondents who rate their social status as above average are likely to believe more than others in the independence of the listed institutions from political influence.

Figure 102: Do you agree that the following institutions are independent of political influence? (By economies) A - Judicial system; B - Ombudsman; C - Supreme audit institution; D - Media

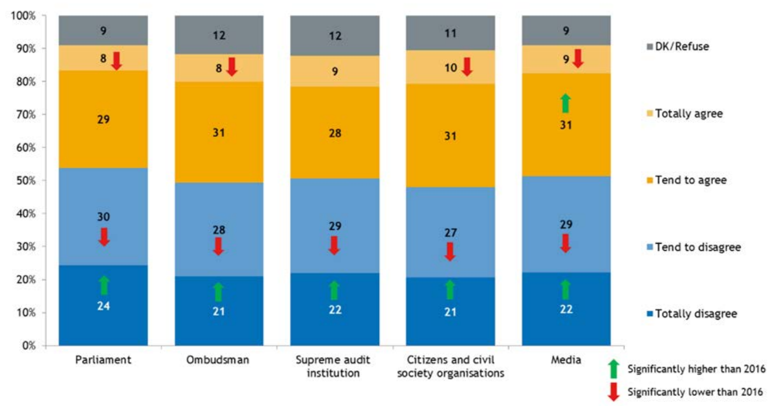
(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



Respondents from Kosovo* and Montenegro are more likely to believe in the political independence of democratic institutions than their counterparts in other economies, especially those from Bosnia and Herzegovina, who rated their institutions the least independent from political influence.

Figure 103: Do you agree that the following institutions can effectively scrutinize the government and make it accountable to citizens? (SEE region) A - Parliament; B - Ombudsman; C - Supreme audit institution; D - Citizens and civil society organisations; E - Media

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)

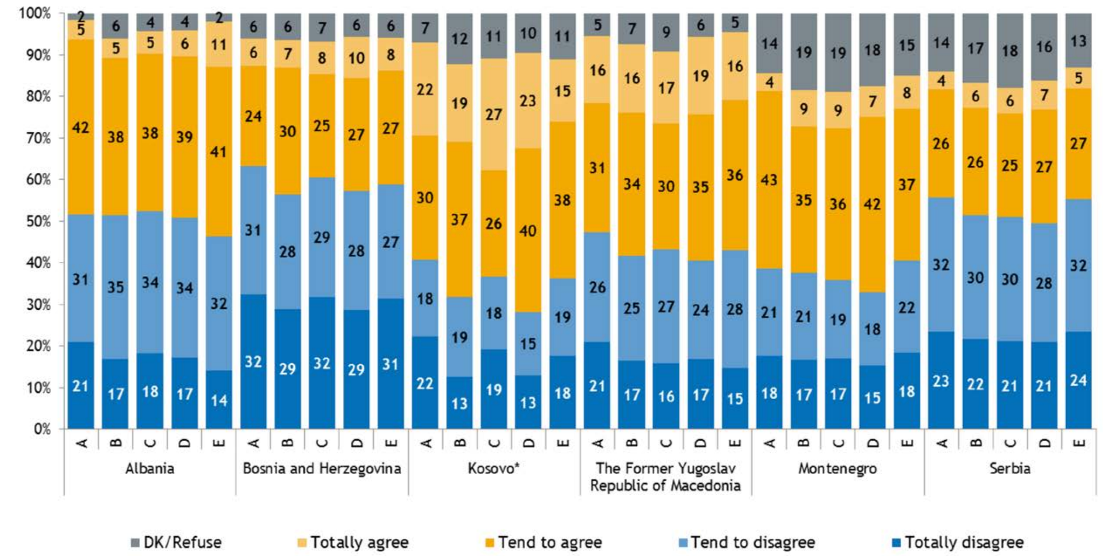


Less than half of the SEE population believe that the institutions listed have a critical attitude towards the government and that they help make it accountable to citizens. Citizens and civil society organizations are believed to be the most critical of the government (41% agree with the statement), while parliament and supreme audit institution are viewed as the least likely to effectively scrutinize or criticize the work of the government (37% agree in both cases).

To a notably greater extent than others, the respondents who rate their social status as above average believe in the listed institutions' capacity to effectively scrutinize the government and make it accountable to citizens.

Figure 104: Do you agree that the following institutions can effectively scrutinize the government and make it accountable to citizens? (By economies) A - Parliament; B - Ombudsman; C - Supreme audit institution; D - Citizens and civil society organisations; E - Media

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



Analysis by economies surveyed shows that Kosovo* population is most likely to feel that all of the institutions listed can help scrutinize the work of the government, from 52% (for parliament and supreme audit institution) to 62% (for citizens and civil society organizations).

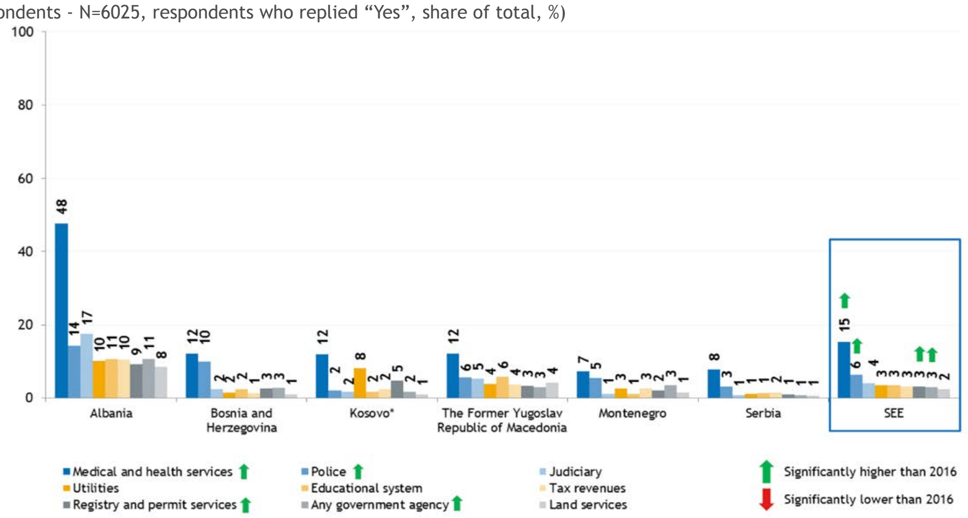
Meanwhile, the numbers are lowest for Serbia. Apart from respondents from Kosovo*, the people from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are more likely to agree with the statements relating to the critical attitude of all the listed institutions towards the government. In case of parliament, citizens of Albania, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro equally (47%) agree that it can effectively scrutinize the government and thus make it more accountable.

Perceptions of Corruption

Corruption continues to be seen as a serious problem as not much has changed over the years. As with the workings of the labour market, the perception here is that informal connections are more important than performance or merit, though there are differences across the region with hard work likely to be more rewarded in Kosovo* than in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Figure 105: In your contact or contacts with the public institutions, have you or anyone living in your household paid bribe in any form in the past 12 months?

(All respondents - N=6025, respondents who replied "Yes", share of total, %)



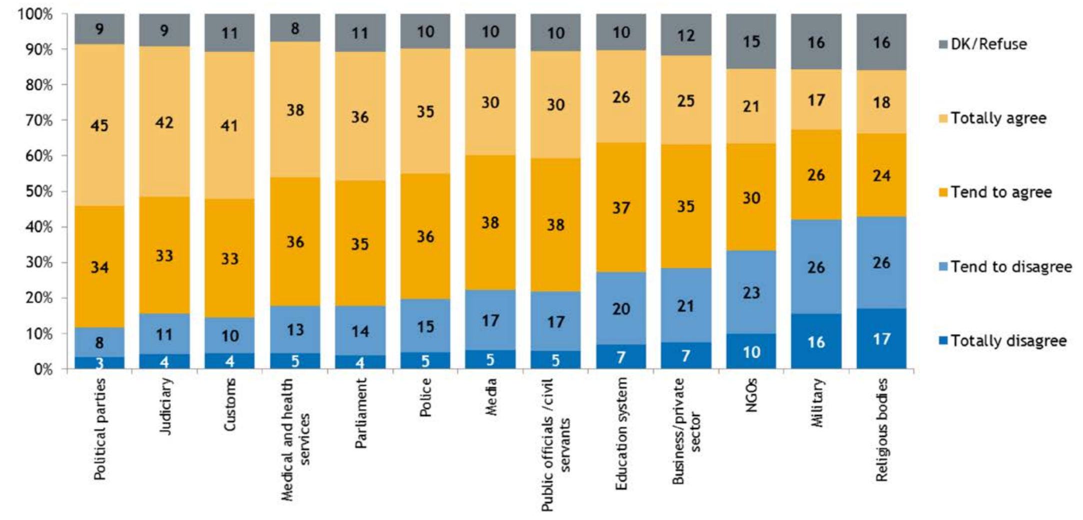
Looking at regional data, bribes appear to be the most prevalent in healthcare (15%), while less frequent in other sectors listed (2% to 6%). As in 2016, Albania continues to be notably ahead of other economies in the region when it comes to the prevalence of giving gifts or money or other inducements in exchange for a favour or service. A little less than half of respondents (48%) report paying bribes for medical and health services in the last 12 months, whereas a significant number (8% - 17%, depending on the sector) report bribing the judiciary, the police, education providers, utilities and taxation authorities.

Although to a considerably smaller proportion, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia comes in as the second economy in relation to bribes given in the last 12 months. Respondents from this economy are more likely to pay bribes to education providers, the judiciary, utility companies and land services.

No major differences are noted across demographic variables in relation to the act of giving money, goods or other forms of recompense in exchange for a personal benefit/interest of the giver. Some variations do exist, though: the low-skilled (20%), and those who rate their social status as below average (20%), are more likely to have paid a bribe for medical and health services; the youngest category (18-29 years old) are more likely to have bribed the police (9%), and the low-skilled are more likely to have paid bribes for land services (4%).

Figure 106: To what extent do you agree or not agree (see) that the following categories in your economy are affected by corruption? (SEE region)

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



Between 51% and 80% of respondents in the SEE believe that as many as 11 of the 13 surveyed institutions are affected by corruption. Military and religious bodies are considered to be less corrupt (42% and 41% respectively agree these two institutions are affected by corruption). While in the case of military, an equal number of respondents (42%) disagree and agree that it is corrupt, religious bodies are alone in being considered by respondents as slightly less likely to be corrupt (43%) than corrupt (41%).

Political parties (80%), the judiciary (85%), customs (75%) and health care institutions (74%) are considered the most corrupt by the SEE population. In addition to military and religious bodies, NGOs are also believed to be corrupt by significantly fewer respondents (51%) than other institutions under survey.

Those who rate their social status as below average tend to see more corruption across the institutional landscape, with the exception of the military and religious bodies. Other demographic variables seem not to have an influence on respondents' beliefs related to corruption prevalence.

Table 10: To what extent do you agree or not agree that the following categories in your economy are affected by corruption? (By economies)

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, "totally agree + tend to agree", %)

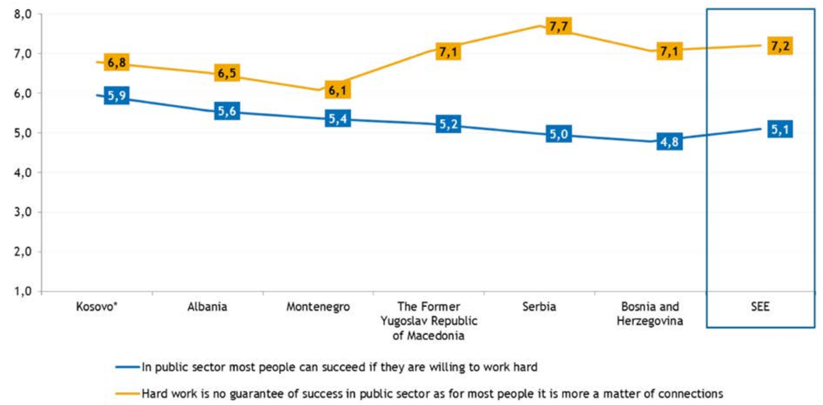
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Political parties	88	83	82	72	69	77
Judiciary	87	81	63	74	65	72
Customs	81	79	62	73	70	74
Medical and health services	82	80	61	67	67	74
Parliament	77	82	76	61	61	67
Police	69	81	45	62	69	73
Media	56	77	57	64	64	71
Public officials /civil servants	59	80	56	57	67	70
Education system	59	73	57	52	59	63
Business/private sector	47	79	53	46	61	60
NGOs	48	62	33	48	47	52
Military	31	65	20	27	44	44
Religious bodies	21	61	27	38	41	42

Bosnia and Herzegovina leads the corruption perception chart with a high proportion of respondents reporting corrupt practices across the surveyed institutional landscape. Along with respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina, individuals from Albania are more likely to perceive political parties, judiciary, customs and medical and health services as more corrupt than the rest of the region.

The lowest corruption perception ratings were ascribed to the institutions in Kosovo* and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Religious bodies were assessed as the least corrupt in all the economies with the exception of Kosovo* and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where the majority of respondents found the military to be least corrupt.

Figure 107: To what extent do you agree or not agree with the next statement?
- In public sector most people can succeed if they are willing to work hard.
- Hard work is no guarantee of success in public sector as for most people it is more a matter of connections.

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 10, mean)



Respondents were asked to express their views by agreeing or disagreeing with the two statements by using a scale of 1 to 10. The resulting finding is rather discouraging: both in the region as a whole, and in every individual economy, the majority of people feel that hard work means less than connections when it comes to succeeding in the public sector (mean at the level of the SEE region is 7.2). There are much fewer respondents who feel that success is directly linked to hard work (mean at the level of the SEE region is 5.1).

People from Kosovo* (5.9) are significantly more likely than others to believe that hard work is the key to success in the public sector, whereas respondents from Serbia are significantly more likely to agree with the statement that success in the public sector depends on connections and acquaintances (7.7).

Those who are likely to believe more in hard work are the oldest segment, aged 61 and older (5.3), the low-skilled (5.6), and those who rate their social status as above average (6.0). On the other hand, those who think that connections are more important than hard work in the public sector are the respondents aged 30-45 (7.4), those with secondary and higher education (7.2 and 7.3 respectively), and individuals who rate their social status as below average (7.5).

Figure 108: Do you agree that written information of your Government (such as laws, decisions, web pages, forms) is overall easy to understand and uses plain language?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)

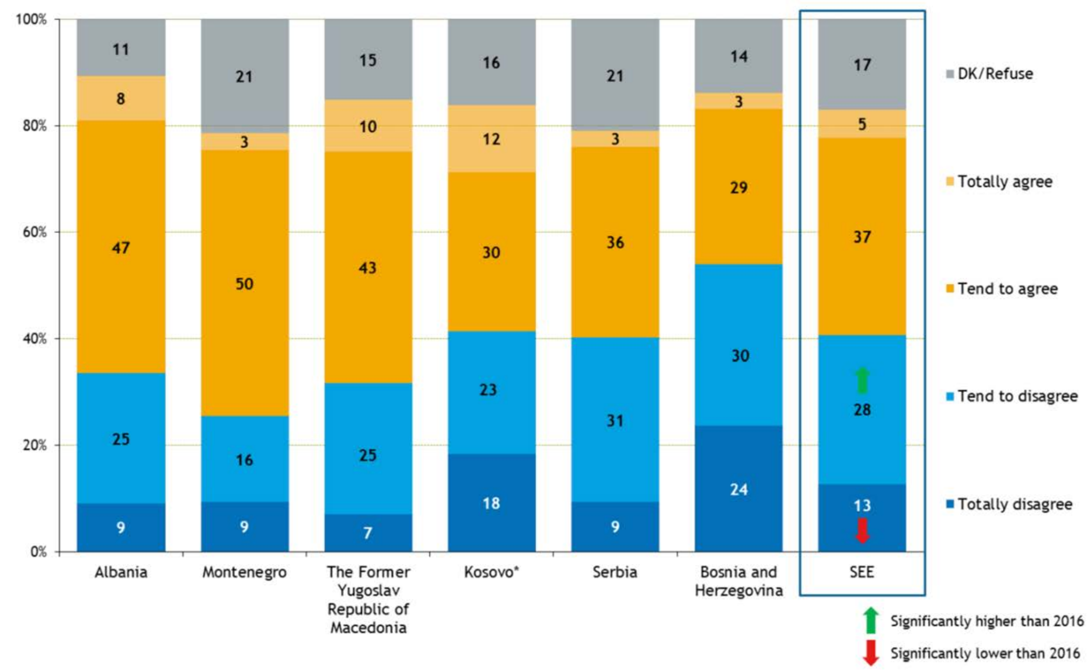
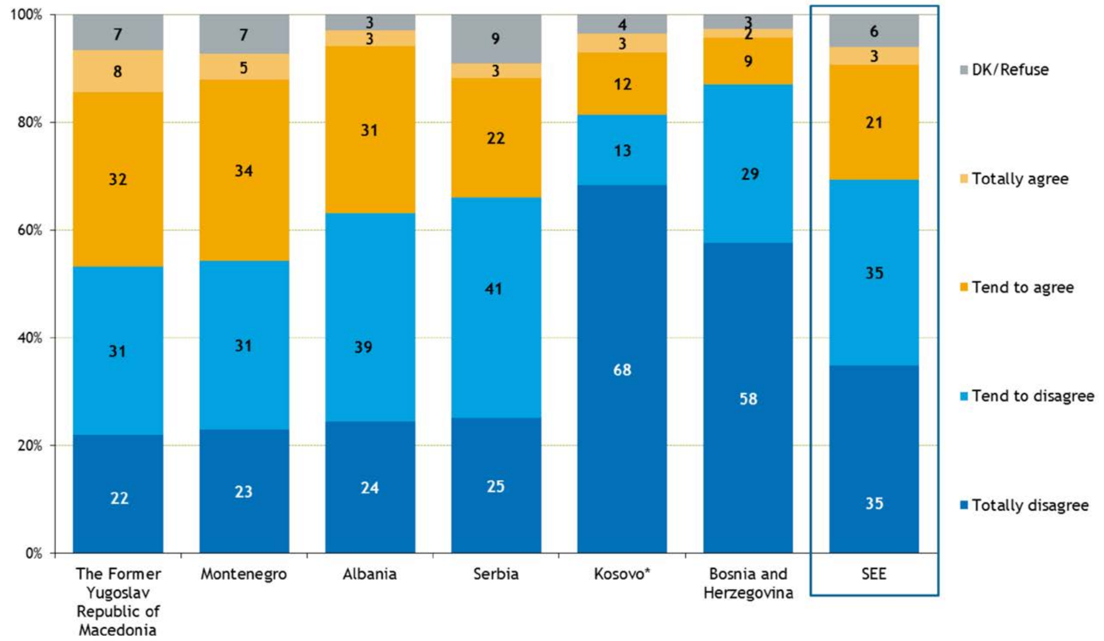


Figure 109: Do you agree that in your economy the government fights corruption successfully?

(All respondents - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



The SEE population is split almost down the middle when it comes to understanding written information provided by the government (such as laws, decisions, web pages, forms). Some 42% find the information generally understandable while a sizable 41% do not. This is cause for some concern.

In addition, as many as 70% do not perceive their government's efforts in combating corruption to be effective, compared to less than a quarter (24%) who do. This assessment is in line with the European Commission's latest enlargement reports on the Western Balkans partners and Turkey[8], which note that while most regional economies have "some level of preparation in the fight against corruption" or are "at an early stage/has some level of preparation in the fight against corruption" in case of Kosovo*. Although individual economies mostly have legislative and institutional frameworks in place to prevent corruption, and should be able to investigate and prosecute allegations of corrupt behaviour, the results in this area remain poor. The reports warn that corruption remains prevalent in many areas and continues to be an issue of concern across the region.

Respondents from Albania (55%), Montenegro (53%) and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (53%) are more likely to agree that the government provides information in a way that is easy to understand. Against that, less than a third of respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina find the information provided comprehensive (32%).

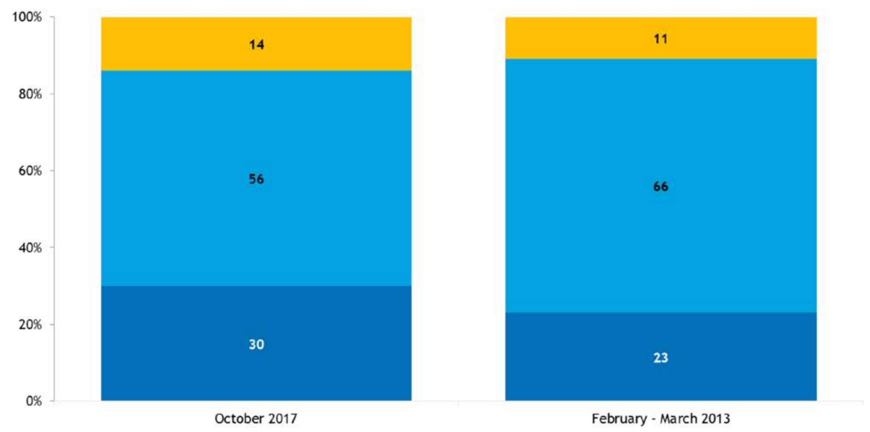
Meanwhile, people from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (40%) and Montenegro (39%) more frequently agree that their government effectively fights corruption. At the opposite end, respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina are the least likely to agree that the government is effective in its efforts to combat corruption (only 11% agree).

No significant variations have been noted compared with the results of the 2016 survey, especially with regards to the effectiveness of government efforts in fighting corruption.
The most senior respondents' cohort (28%) and those who rate their social status as above average (39%) are more likely to agree that their government effectively fights corruption.

[8] European Commission - Press release, Enlargement package: Commission publishes reports on the Western Balkans partners and Turkey, Brussels, 17 April 2018, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3342_en.htm

Figure 110: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree that (nationality) government efforts to combat corruption are effective.[9]

(Share of total, %)



The Special Eurobarometer on Corruption includes the question on government efforts in combating corruption, directed at the population of the 28 EU members. The results are broadly similar in thinking to the perceptions prevalent in the SEE.

Around a quarter of respondents across both areas (23% in EU; 24% in SEE) believe that their government is fighting corrupt practices effectively, while the majority disagrees (69% for the SEE and 66% for the EU).
Both surveys clearly illustrate the overwhelming public dissatisfaction with the efforts of governments across the two regions in curbing corruption.

[9] European Commission: Special Eurobarometer 470 - Wave EB88.2, October 2017

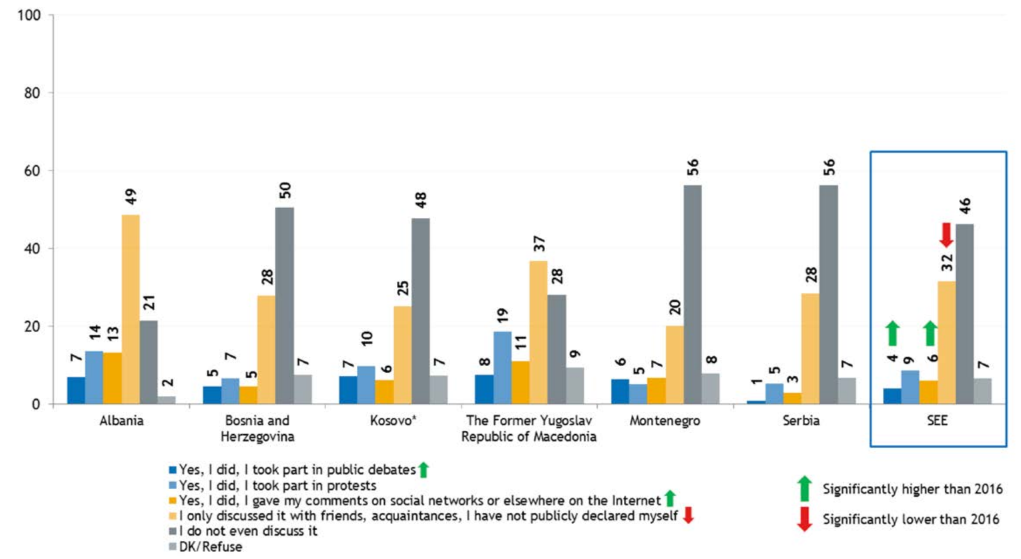
Participation in Decision Making

This section is an attempt to measure the government's responsiveness towards the public in shaping public policy and allocating available financial resources. Overall, the findings suggest that the public seems to be rather well informed about the business of government but does not feel that it can exert much influence.

This is evidenced by the recurring nature of critical issues in this survey across time which suggests that public priorities are not necessarily internalized by the governments.

Figure 111: Have you ever done something that could affect any of the government decisions?

(All respondents - N=6025, multiple answer, share of total, %)



Citizen participation in government decision making is at an extremely low level across the SEE region. In fact, 46% of the population do not even discuss the government's decisions, while 32% discuss them privately and outside of a public setting. Only 9% protest, 6% comment on the government's decisions on social networks and 4% participate in public debates. Participation in public debates is more or less the same across all economies, with the exception of Serbia where it is at the lowest level (1%). People from The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have participated in protests to a notably greater extent than the rest (19%), but this is a sharp surge from the previous year (12%) and can likely be attributed to passing political turbulence in the economy.

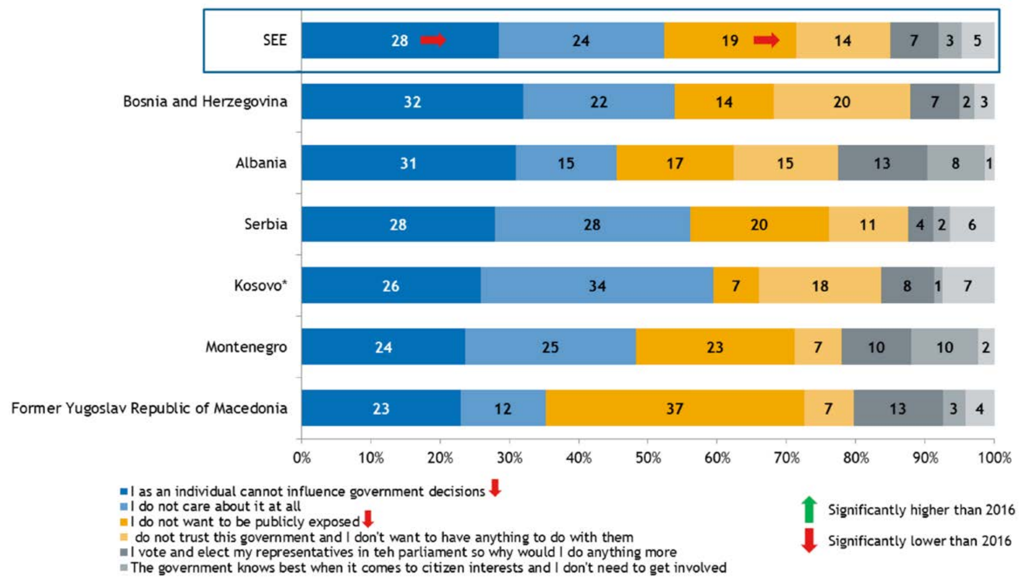
Albania boasts a significantly higher proportion of people who discuss the government's decisions, but not publicly (49%), whereas most people in Montenegro and Serbia (56%) do not even bother engaging in such discussions (56%).

The youngest respondents (18-29 years old) are significantly more likely to comment on social networks (9%), as are those aged 30-45 (9%); the former, however, are also much more likely not to discuss politics with others (51%). Highly educated people are significantly more active than others through frequent involvement in public debates (7%), participation in mass protests (11%), and commenting on social networks (10%). While people who rate their social status as above average are more likely to take part in public debates (10%), those who rate their social status below average are more involved in public protests (11%). Women are more likely not to discuss politics at all (54%).

Compared with the 2016 survey, there is a slight increase in citizen involvement - it remains to be seen whether this is a passing trend caused by political turmoil, or a more durable development indicative of the region's democratic development.

Figure 112: What is the main reason why you are not actively involved in government decision-making?

(Respondents who have never done anything which could affect government decision - N=4464, %)



The most common reasons for not becoming actively involved in government decision-making are a belief that an individual cannot influence decisions made by government (28%) and apathy (24%). Compared to 2016, there is a marked decrease in the number of people who feel powerless to influence public policy (down to 28% from 44%) and a slightly less pronounced drop in respondents apprehensive about public exposure (down to 19% from 24% in 2016).

Certain cross-economy variations are noted in relation to the reasons provided for the lack of public involvement in decision-making. The prevailing reason cited in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania is the sentiment that an individual cannot do much to influence government decision-making (32% and 31%, respectively). In Serbia and Montenegro, there is an almost equal proportion of respondents who feel powerless to influence government decisions (28% in Serbia, 24% in Montenegro) and those who cite apathy (28% in Serbia, 25% in Montenegro). In Kosovo*, most respondents cite a lack of interest in geting involved as the chief barrier (34%).

People in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are significantly more likely than others to cite fear of public exposure (37%). The youngest (18-29 years old) (29%), and the low-skilled (31%), are significantly more likely to cite a lack of interest; the highly educated a reluctance to be publicly exposed (22%); the oldest, a belief that individuals cannot change anything (33%); and those who rate their social status below average do not trust the government and don't wish to have anything to do with them (16%).

Business Opinion v.s. Public Opinion

Given that the Balkan Barometer Survey targets two different population categories - the business community and the general public - this section compares and contrasts the views of the two groups on the same set of topics.

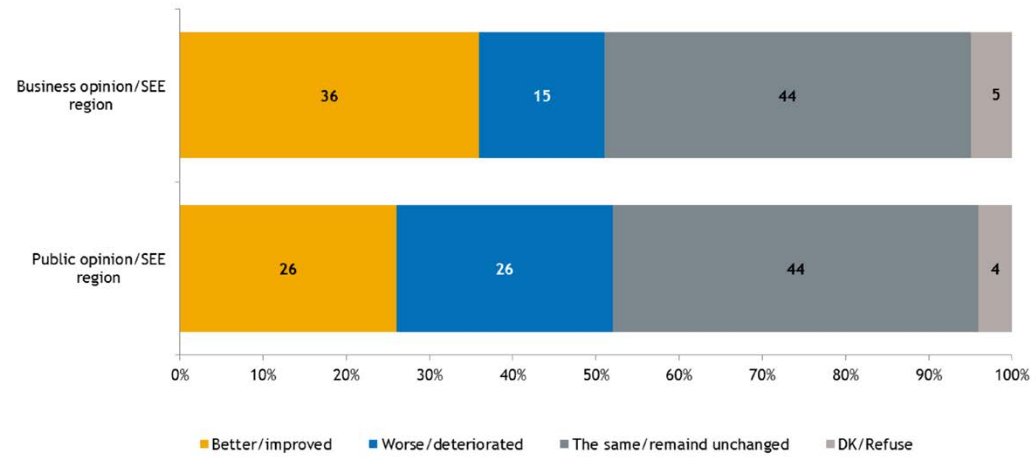
Businesses tend to be significantly more positive and optimistic than the public, following on from the general improvement in the economic situation felt more readily in company balance sheets than employee paychecks.

Figure 113: How do you expect the general economic situation in your place of living to develop over the next 12 months? Will it mostly deteriorate, remain unchanged or improve?

(All respondents - N=1203, share of total, %)

What are your expectations for the national economy? Do you think that in 12 months the state of the economy will be better, worse or the same?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



The business sector is more optimistic about the economic outlook of the SEE region (36% see the situation improving) than the general publicm which is more reserved in its projections (26% think it will get better). The private sector tends to reap the benefits of the improving economy more quickly than individual citizens who have to wait until the effects of the recovery trickle down into their salaries.

An identical percentage of respondents from both groups expect the situation to stagnate over the next 12 months (44%), while the differences in expectations become pronounced within the group that expects the situation to deteriorate - 26% of the general public foresee a worsening in the economic situation, while that proportion in notably smaller in the business sector (15%).

Table 11: How important is the quality of regional cooperation in SEE to your business? / Do you agree that regional cooperation can contribute to the political, economic or security situation of your economy?

Business opinion		Public opinion	
How important is the quality of regional cooperation in SEE to your business? (N=1203; %)		Do you agree that regional cooperation can contribute to the political, economic or security situation of your economy? (N=6025; %)	
Not important at all	21	Totally agree	21
Not very important	21	Tend to agree	51
Important	37	Tend to disagree	13
Very important	19	Totally disagree	5
DK/Refuse	1	DK/Refuse	9

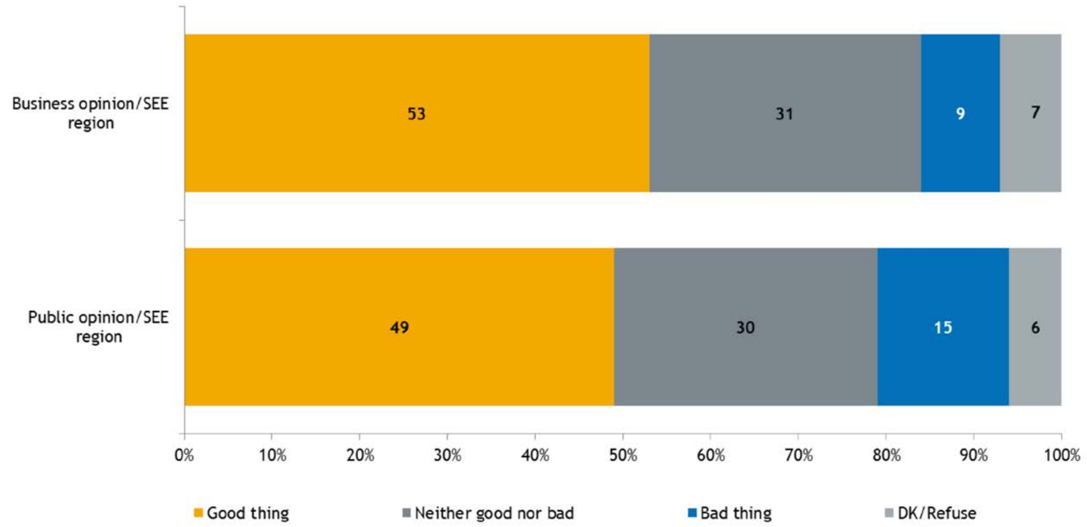
The business community gives less importance to regional cooperation compared to the general public. A litle over a half of the business community (56%) find the quality of regional cooperation to be important for their business, whereas 72% of the general public feel that regional cooperation can contribute to political stability and economic prosperity.

Figure 114: Do you think that EU membership would be/is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad for your company?

(All respondents - N=1203, share of total, %)

Do you think that EU membership would be/is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad for your economy?

(All respondents - N=6025, share of total, %)



At the same time, the business sector appears to be slightly more aware of the benefits of EU accession compared to the general public. In fact, more than a half of all surveyed companies believe that EU membership will have a positive impact on their operations (53%) and only 9% think it will be bad for business. This is likely a result of the business sector being more aware of trading benefits that the European single market brings, to include greater competition in services (good for both businesses and consumers), removal of trade barriers, reduction of business costs, greater business efficiency, elimination of anti-competitive practices - such as monopolies and cartels, and similar.

When it comes to the general public, a smaller percentage of respondents see EU membership as a good thing (49%), and as many as 15% consider it a bad thing. Looking at the percentage of neutral respondents, the numbers are almost identical across the two groups 30% for business and 31% for the public).

Looking at the individual economies, Kosovo* and Albania are most aware of the benefits of EU accession, across both the business community and the general public. Serbia, on the other hand, is at the opposite end of the spectrum with the lowest number of respondents who see EU accession as beneficial across both groups.

Compared to 2016, the business community's positive perception of EU membership is holding at a similar level across the past four years (56% in 2014; 54% in 2015; 57% in 2016; 53% in 2017).

As for the region's public, comparative Balkan Barometer data for the period 2014-2017 shows a growing trend of support for EU accession among the SEE population (41% in 2014 and 2015; 44% in 2016; 49% in 2017).

Table 12: If you prefer to work in public sector, what is the main reason for that? / In your opinion, what is the main reason why someone prefers to work in public sector?

(Top 3 reasons)

Business opinion		Public opinion	
In your opinion what is the main reason why people prefer to work in public sector? (N=1203; only one answer, %)		If you prefer to work in public sector, what is the main reason for that? (those who preferred work in public sector - N=4564; maximum two answer; %)	
Job is safer	32	Job is safer	49
Better working conditions (less overtime job and workload)	21	Better working conditions (less overtime job and workload)	33
Better salary	18	Better salary	40

The Public Opinion Survey indicates that a clear majority of the SEE population prefers to work in the public sector (74%). Perceptions of executives surveyed in the Business Opinion Survey largely corroborate this sentiment. The prevalent view across both sectors is that public sector jobs offer much more security, primarily because there are fewer protections against summary dismissal. In addition to job security, respondents across both groups believe that public sector employment also offers better salaries, and superior working conditions.

The appeal of public jobs tends to spike in times of high unemployment, economic crisis and uncertainty, and this is largely what the findings of this section can be attributed to.

Table 13: And why does someone rather choose to work in private sector? / If you prefer to work in private sector, what is the main reason for that?

Business opinion		Public opinion	
And why does someone rather choose to work in private sector? (N=1203; only one answer %)		If you prefer to work in PRIVATE sector, what is the main reason for that? (those who prefer work in private sector - N= 961; maximum two answers, %)	
Better salary	32	Better salary	53
Better pension after retirement	5	Better pension after retirement	8
Better social care and access to health services	5	Better social care and access to health services	5
Job is safer	8	Job is safer	22
Better working conditions (less overtime job and workload)	4	Better working conditions (less overtime job and workload)	11
Better advancement opportunities	19	Better advancement opportunities	34
Better education opportunities	9	Opportunities for professional training and development	20

When it comes to reasons for choosing private sector employment, both the business community and the general public recognize a similar set of advantages, such as better salary and superior advancement opportunities.

However, both reasons are significantly more prevalent among the general public (as many as 53% of the population note better remuneration as the reason to work in the private sector compared to 32% of the business community). While job security (22%) is ranked in third place by the general population, the business community notes better education opportunities (9%) as the third reason for preferring to work for a private employer.

Interestingly, the survey data shows the public with a more favourable view of private sector employment than the hiring executives themselves.

Table 14: Would you agree that the skills taught in the educational system meet the needs of your company? / Would you agree that the skills you learned in the education system meet the needs of your job?

Business opinion		Public opinion	
Would you agree that skills taught in the educational system meet the needs of your company? (N=1203; %)		Would you agree that the skills you learned in the education system meet the needs of your job? (N=6025; %)	
Fully disagree	7	Totally disagree	8
Disagree	9	Tend to disagree	14
Neither agree, nor disagree	19		
Agree	44	Tend to agree	41
Fully agree	19	Totally agree	24
DK/Refuse	2	DK/Refuse	13

Both the general public and the business community mostly agree that the skills learned in the education system meet the needs of their job (65% of the public), and, alternatively that the skills taught in the educational system meet the needs of their company (63% of business). Nonetheless, members of the public seem to be more aware of their skills not matching the needs of their job (22%) compared to business executives (16%).

Survey data also shows that respondents overwhelmingly expressed their readiness to pursue additional education and training to advance at work, but also to get a job.

Table 15: Over the past 12 months, has your business funded or arranged any training and development for staff in the organisation, including any informal on-the-job training, except training required by the law? / How would you assess the readiness of employees in your company to acquire additional qualifications in order to advance and get promoted? / Would you be ready to acquire additional qualifications to advance at work?

Business opinion			Public opinion	
Over the past 12 months, has your business funded or arranged any training and development for staff in the organisation, including any informal on-the-job training, except training required by the law? (N=1203; %)	How would you assess the readiness of employees in your company to acquire additional qualifications in order to advance and get promoted? (N=1203; %)		Would you be ready to acquire additional qualifications to advance at work? (N=3032; %)	
	They are not interested at all	2	I will not for sure	6
No 62	They are not interested	9	Probably I will not	11
Yes 37	Neither interested nor disinterested	25		
	They are interested	45	Probably I will	39
	They are very interested	14	I will for sure	40
	DK/Refuse	5	DK/Refuse	4

As many as 79% of the general public are willing to pursue additional training in order to advance at work. At the same time, only 59% of the business community think that their employees are interested in additional training. This shows that the readiness to pursue additional training by employees is signficantly greater than that perceived by their employers. Finally, a little over a third (37%) of the companies surveyed provided additional training opportunities for their staff over the past 12 months, although not required by law. The mismatch between the interest in additional training, and actual training provided by employers, clearly indicates a need for companies to introduce, or improve, a training needs assessment system, as well as to increase the number of training opportunities available to staff.

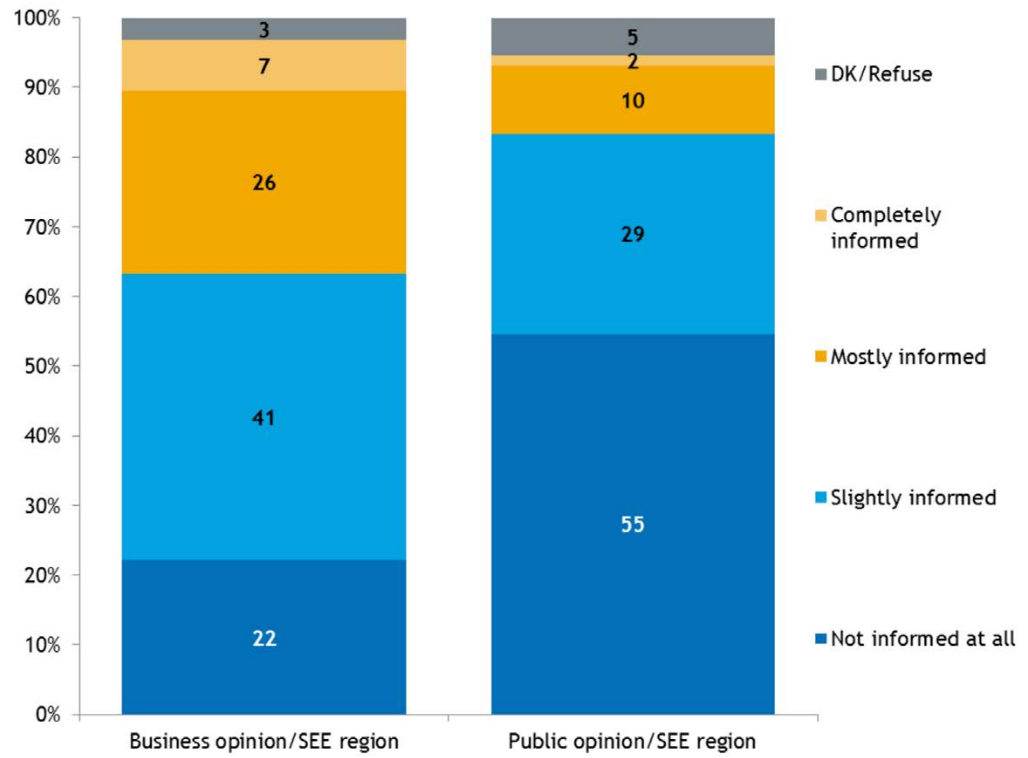
Table 16: How likely would you employ workers from the region in your company? / What do you think about people from other parts of the region coming to live and work in your economy? Is it good or bad for your economy?

Business opinion		Public opinion	
How likely would you employ workers from the SEE region in your company (N=1203; %)		What do you think about people from other parts of the region coming to live and work in your economy? (N=6025, %)	
Not likely at all	10	Bad	19
Not likely	16		
Neither likely nor unlikely	20	Neither good nor bad	45
Likely	35		
Very likely	15	Good	31
DK/Refuse	5	DK/Refuse	6

Although the questions are not identical, it is possible to extrapolate and compare attitudes of the two groups on the openess of individual economies to intra-regional arrivals pursuing economic opportunities. The findings indicate that the business community is more open to people coming in from other parts of the SEE region looking for employment (50% would employ them); the general public, however, is less welcoming with fewer respondents welcoming regional arrivals (31%). The variance in attitude between the two groups can be attributed to their different interests - while the public is concerned about the impact of a foreign labour influx on the already high unemployment numbers, employers are more concerned with the steady supply of qualified labour wherever it may come from.

Figure 115: To what extent do you think that you are informed about the regional free trade agreement (CEFTA 2006)?

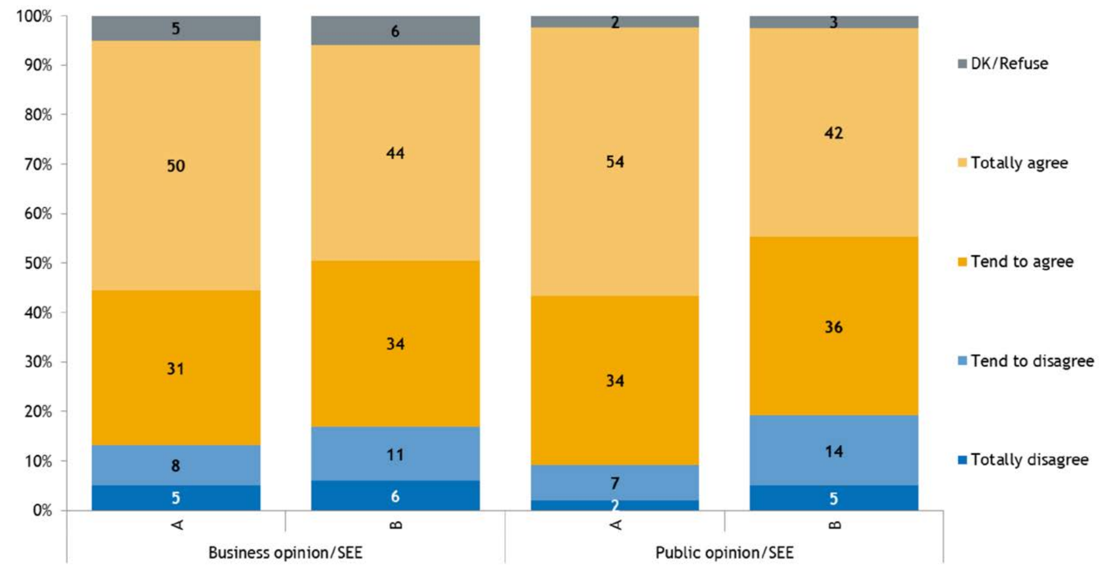
(Business opinion - N=1203; Public opinion - N=6025, share of total, %)



The business community is expectedly more aware of CEFTA 2006 (33%) than the general population (11%). Nevertheless, there still remains a large proportion of companies that are either unfamiliar with the agreement or know it to a lesser extent (63%).

Figure 116: Do you agree with the following statements:
Business opinion: **A - My company's products, goods and services can compete well with products and goods from SEE economies. / B - My company's products, goods and services can complete well with products and goods from the EU.**
Public opinion: **A - Products and goods of my economy can compete well with products and goods from other SEE economies. / B - Products and goods of my economy can compete well with products and goods from the EU.**

(Business opinion - N=1203; Public opinion - N=6025, scale from 1 to 4, %)



As part of the survey, the business community was asked to assess the competetiveness of its own products, while the public compared products from their own economy to those from the region, and the EU. Both groups agree that domestic products are highly competitive in the SEE region and the European Union – to a somewhat greater extent with the former than the latter (business opinion: SEE: 81%; EU: 78%; general public opinion: SEE: 88%; EU: 78%).

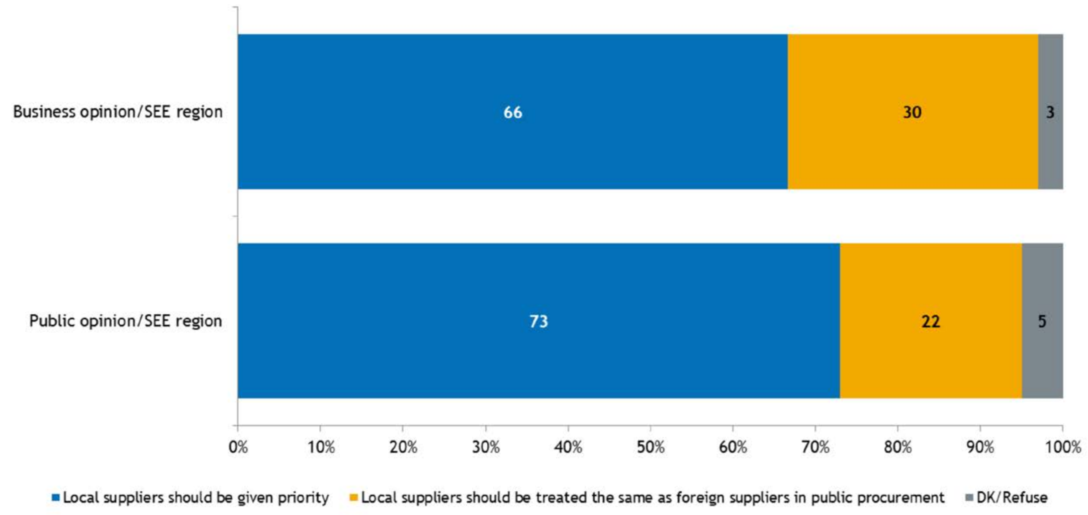
The results suggest that both the public and the business sector feel that, when available on foreign markets, domestic products will match, or even exceed, the quality of the competition.

Figure 117: In your opinion, when procuring products and services, should the governments in the region give priority to local suppliers, or should they be treated the same as all other suppliers (provided price and quality is equal)?

(Business opinion - N= 1203, %)

When procuring products and services, should your Government give priority to local suppliers or should they be treated the same as foreign suppliers (provided price and quality is equal)?

(Public opinion - N=6025, %)



A clear majority of respondents from both groups, public and private, feel that local suppliers should be given preferential treatment by the government when procuring products and services (73% for the general public and 66% for business). Respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina are much more likely to favour local businesses across both groups (86% - public; 83% - business) while Kosovo* boasts the lowest proportion of protectionists in the region (only 58% - public; 51% - business).

Home bias of consumers is hardly surprising and is a common, and global, trend, especially in economies with high rates of import; the prevalent sentiment is that the only way to protect domestic producers, and jobs, is to tilt the playing field in favour of local companies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Political stability remains the chief driver of public perception across the region, both positively, as in the case of Montenegro, and negatively, as continues to be the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Unemployment is seen as the most important problem facing the region, followed by the economic situation and corruption. There is little trust in institutions that are meant to bring about solutions to these problems. Better governance, improved rule of law and democratic consolidation are a must to address a crisis in public confidence but also a rising level of apapthy in the region's citizenship. In addition to improvements in how the regional economies are governed, structural reforms are needed to upgrade regulations that can bring the most out of the region's economic potential.

There is pressing demand for coherent industrial and, more generally, developmental policy that will harness domestic potential but also encourage foreign trade and foreign investment. Significant scope exists for economic advancement through digitalisation. While underutilised across the region, the importance of digitalisation is growing across a host of sectors, not just in business.

The survey notes some improvement in attitudes towards EU integration, though the assessment of the prospects is more realistic. At the same time, the vast majority of the region's public is supportive of regional cooperation, with the exception of Serbia. Nonetheless, the region's governments should do more to educate their public of the benefits of both regional and EU cooperation.

A large segment of the population feels marginalized, due to a depressed job market and an absence of a social support network. Economic opportunities spurred on by structural reform should result in some improvements in this area as well. Negative attitudes towards refugees prevail across the region, although to a somewhat lesser degree, commensurate to a decrease in the number of regional arrivals.

Rather depressingly, knowing the right people continues to be considered as the most important factor in getting ahead, though to a lesser extent than in previous years. Although a majority of respondents in the region feel there is ample room to enhance equality between genders in the workplace, a sizable number of respondents claim there is no disparity between working men and women.

Overall, polices of economic openness, and regional and EU integration, are significant drivers of economic development and should be pursued by all economies.

Note on Methodology

Methodology used for Public Opinion Survey is quantitative research and data collection method was CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing). The survey was conducted via personal household interviews carried out by trained interviewers from GfK.

As a part of project set-up phase, some preparations and adjustments were undertaken as necessary for the successful implementation of the survey:

QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was provided by the RCC. It was composed of a total of 103 questions as well as nine demographic questions (region, size of the settlement, gender, age, education, nationality, marital status, household income and self-assesed social status of the respondent). The questionnaire was originally written in English and subsequently translated into six local languages. In Kosovo* both Albanian and Serbian versions of the questionnaire were used, and in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, both Macedonian and Albanian were used. The RCC reviewed and approved all the translations of the questionnaire.

Since the CAPI methodology was used in the research, all questionnaires were converted to a digital form and installed on interviewers' laptops/tablets. The programmed questionnaires were reviewed by a responsible person in each economy.

INTERVIEWERS

The survey was conducted by GfK in all economies, except Montenegro where De Facto Consultancy was hired as a sub-contractor. All interviewers were given written instructions containing general description of the questionnaire, of the method of selecting addresses for the interviews and of the respondent selection method. In addition to the written instructions, all interviewers were trained to understand research goals, interviewing method and eligible respondent selection (a random route and last birthday method). Moreover, project coordinators examined the entire digital questionnaire jointly with the interviewers and emphasised some important elements (especially the need to read individual answers where one or more answers were possible, etc.). Since a random route method was chosen for the research, all GfK interviewers were given the initial addresses for sampling points, and later on they used a random route method for a selection of a household.

SAMPLE

Public Opinion Survey was conducted among N=1000 respondents in each economy, aged 18+ with the total of 6000 respondents for the entire SEE region.

The respondents were persons:

- aged 18 or older who reside in private households;
- whose usual place of residence is in the territory of the economies included in the survey;
- who speak the national language(s) well enough to respond to the questionnaire.

A stratified two-stage clustered design sample with random route for the selection of addresses and respondents (last birthday method) was used in the survey. The described sample was used as most similar to probability sample which would be too costly. The sampling selection process is random in the following stages: the selection of the sampling points, the selection of addresses, the selection of households and the selection of individuals aged 18 and older.

Only Primary sampling units (PSU – counties/regions) and Secondary sampling units (SSU-size of settlements) were defined in advance, as quotas. In order to create the sample design, the most recent available statistical data for each economy was used. The sample structure by region and size of settlement for each economy is presented in Table 19 and Table 20.

STRATIFICATION/ SELECTION PROCEDURE:

In order to obtain the same structure of the population, firstly the sample was stratified according to the region or county (depending on economy). At the beginning of the sampling procedure, the number of persons to be interviewed in each PSU (region or county) was defined according to census data and the share of the region in the total population.

The number of respondents was calculated based on the number of inhabitants in each size of settlements for individual region/county, while the number of sampling points was defined based on the obtained number of respondents (for each region/county and in each size of settlement). The maximum number of respondents per one sampling point was 15. After defining their number, the sampling points were chosen randomly according to the last census data. Households in each sampling point were chosen by a random walk method. In a selected household, the respondent was the person whose birthday came latest (last birthday method).

Table 17: Total 18+ population for each economy

Weighted results were presented for the SEE region based on the described data.

Economy	Population 18+
Albania	2.060.324
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.107.754
Kosovo*	1.147.289
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	1.497.017
Montenegro	474.655
Serbia	5.923.734

Table 18: Sample structure by region

Country	Region	%
Albania	Berat	5
	Diber	4
	Durres	9
	Elbasan	10
	Fier	11
	Gjirokaster	3
	Korce	8
	Kukes	3
	Lezhe	5
	Shkoder	8
	Tirane	27
	Vlore	6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Federacija BiH	62
	Republika Srpska	36
	Brcko district	2
Kosovo*	Ferizaj / Urosevac	10
	Gjilan / Gnjilane	11
	Peja / Pec	10
	Mitrovica	11
	Prizren	19
	Gjakove / Djakovica	11
	Prishtine / Pristina	28

Country	Region	%
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Vardar	8
	East	9
	Southwest	11
	Southeast	9
	Pelagonia	12
	Polog	14
	Northeast	8
	Skopje	29
Montenegro	Central region	47
	North region	28
	South region	24
Serbia	Belgrade	23
	South and East Serbia	22
	Central and West Serbia	28
	Vojvodina	27

Table 19: Sample structure by size of settlement

Country	Size of settlement	%
Albania	Up to 2.000	1
	2.001 - 10.000	22
	10.001 - 50.000	31
	50.001 - 100.000	20
	Over 100.001	26
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Up to 5.000	38
	5.000 - 19.999	23
	20.000 - 49.999	16
	50.000 - 99.999	6
	Over 100.000	18
Kosovo*	Up to 2.000	40
	2.001 - 5.000	20
	5.001 - 10.000	7
	Over 10.001	33
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Up to 2.000	24
	2.001 - 5.000	13
	5.000 - 10.000	9
	Over 10.001	54

Country	Size of settlement	%
Montenegro	Up to 5.000	44
	5.001 - 10.000	11
	10.001 - 20.000	14
	20.001 - 30.000	6
	30.001 - 50.000	6
	50.001 - 70.000	1
	70.001 - 100.000	11
	Over 100.000	7
Serbia	Up to 5.000	26
	5.001 - 10.000	5
	10.001 - 20.000	7
	20.001 - 50.000	12
	50.001 - 100.000	17
	100.001 - 150.000	9
	150.001 - 250.000	8
	Over 250.000	16

Figure 118: Sample structure by gender

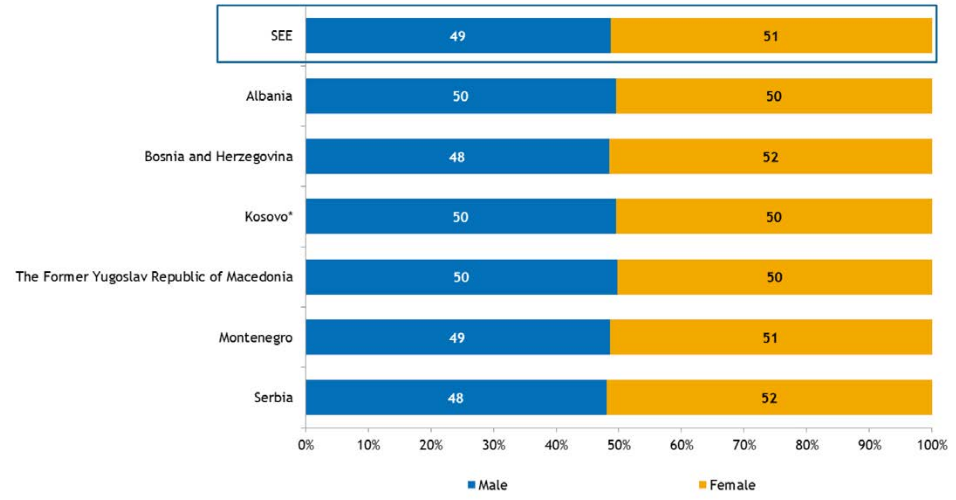


Figure 119: Sample structure by age

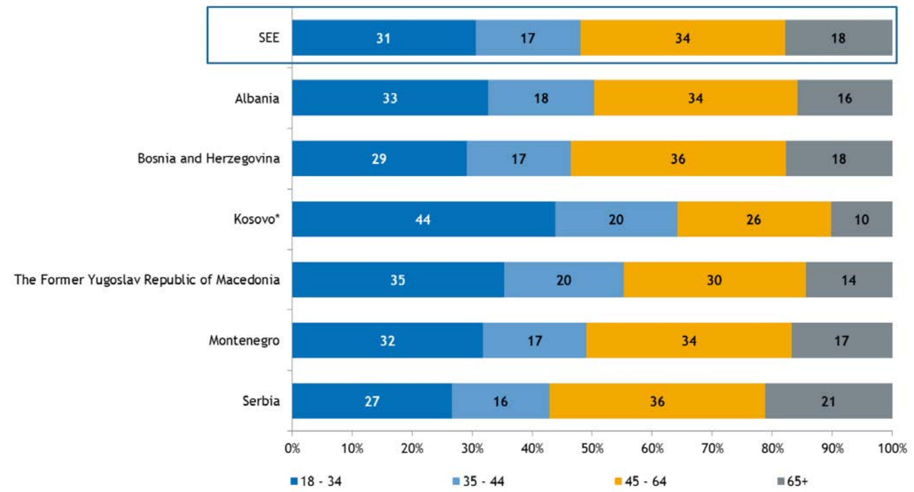


Figure 120: Sample structure by education

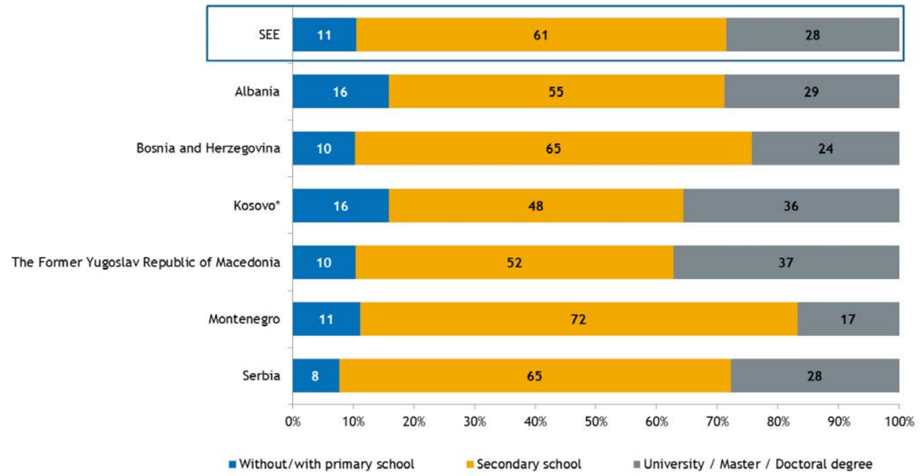


Figure 121: Sample structure by marital status

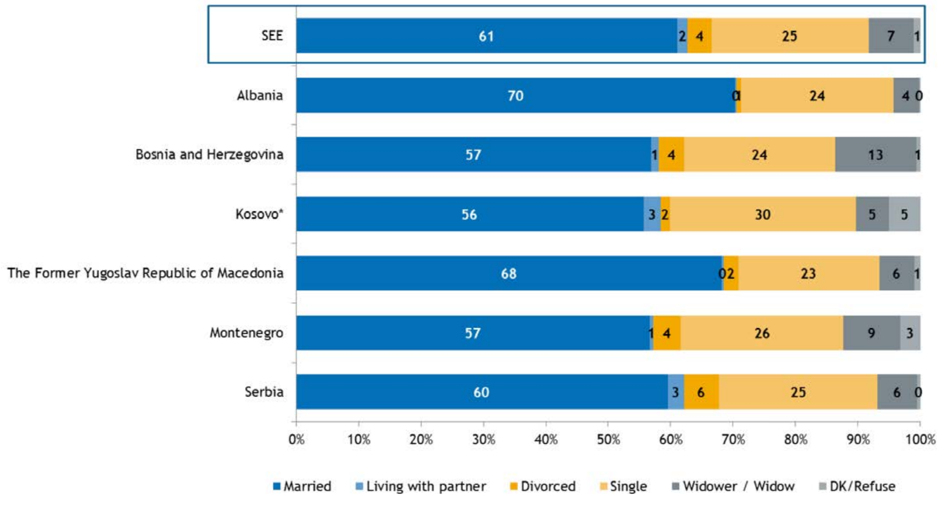
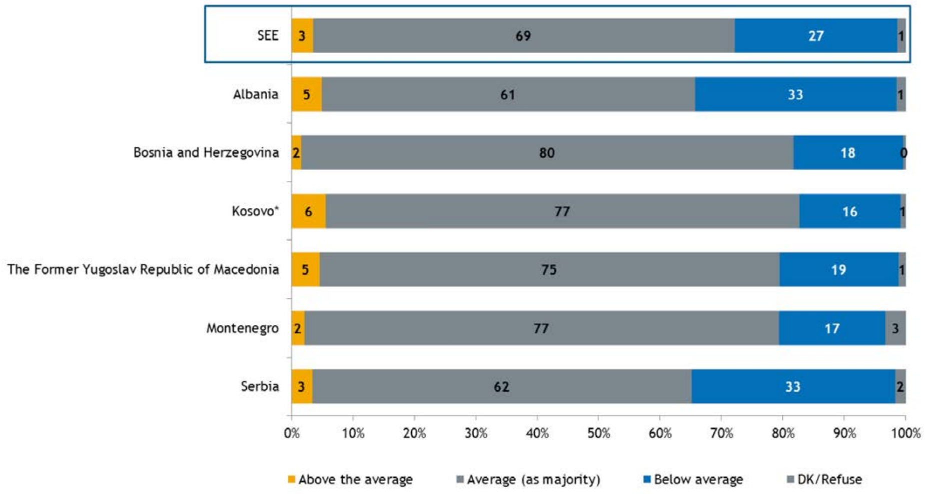


Figure 122: Sample structure by social status (self estimation)



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