

Western Balkans SecuriMeter 2022

BALKAN BAROMETER PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON

“Attitudes towards security: Perceptions of security and threats in the Western Balkans”

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Contents

FOREWORD	9
INTRODUCTION	10
KEY FINDINGS	12
REGIONAL OVERVIEW	14
PUBLIC OPINION SECURITY SENTIMENT SURVEY	16
A. General Security Perception	21
B. Perceptions of the Fight against Terrorism, Organised Crime and Border Security	30
B.3 Border Security	34
B.1 Terrorism	41
B.2 Organised Crime	46
C. Perceptions on Gun Ownership and Fighting against Illicit Possession, Trafficking and Misuse of SALW	51
D. Perceptions of Irregular Immigrations, Asylum Seeking and Humanitarian Dimension of Migratory Movements	55
E. Perceptions of Disaster Prevention and Disaster Preparedness	62
F. Hybrid Threats and Disinformation as a New Security Challenge	69
G. Perceptions of Corruption	77
H. Perceptions of Domestic Violence	89
CONCLUSIONS	94
METHODOLOGY	96

List of Figures

Figure 1.	Balkan Public Security Sentiment Index (BPSSI) & Present Situation and Expectation Index–2022	17
Figure 2.	Balkan Public Security Sentiment Index (BPSSI)–Comparative results 2021, 2022	18
Figure 3.	Balkan Public Security Sentiment Index (BPSSI)–Present Situation Index –Comparative results 2021, 2022	19
Figure 4.	Balkan Public Security Sentiment Index (BPSSI)–Expectation Index –Comparative results 2021, 2022	20
Figure 5.	How satisfied are you with the way things are going in your economy?	21
Figure 6.	How satisfied are you with the security situation in your economy?	22
Figure 7.	How satisfied are you with your personal security situation?	23
Figure 8.	What are your expectations for the next year? Do you think that in 12 months your personal security situation will be better, worse, the same?	24
Figure 9.	What are your expectations for the security in your economy? Do you think that in 12 months the state of security will be better, worse, the same?	25
Figure 10.	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about public/general security: The Western Balkan region is a secure place to live in.	26
Figure 11.	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about public/general security: My economy is a secure place to live in.	27
Figure 12.	Which 4 (four) of the following have the most negative impact on your feeling of security?	28
Figure 13.	In your opinion, how important is the work on addressing the following CHALLENGES for the internal security of Western Balkan economies? –Results for the Western Balkans region	30
Figure 14.	Would you say that the following challenges to the security of the Western Balkans are likely to increase, decrease or remain unchanged over the next (3) three years?–Results for the Western Balkans region	32
Figure 15.	In your opinion, do you think that the current level of border security of your economy is sufficient in terms of efficient management of an influx of migrants?	34
Figure 16.	In your opinion, to what extent is it likely that the current situation in Ukraine will generate an influx of migrants/refugees to your economy and the WB region?	35

Figure 17.	Do you think that a regional contingency plan could help mitigate a potential influx of migrants and strengthen border security in your economy and the WB region?	36
Figure 18.	Do you think that the borders of your economy are secure enough to prevent transnational organised crime?	37
Figure 19.	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I anticipate that border security of the economy will be strengthened in the next 12 months in a way that contributes to the efforts of curbing various forms of transnational crime?	38
Figure 20.	Do you agree with the following statement: The police and other law enforcement authorities in your economy are doing enough to fight irregular migration?	39
Figure 21.	In your opinion what should the law enforcement authorities be doing in order to fight irregular migration more effectively?	40
Figure 22.	The Western Balkans economies decided to allow the return of foreign terrorist fighters and their families to their economy of origin, applying the law accordingly. Do you agree with this decision?	41
Figure 23.	To what extent are you afraid of your children or young relatives and friends being radicalized online?	42
Figure 24.	How do you feel the return of foreign terrorist fighters and their families to their local communities would impact your sense of personal security?	43
Figure 25.	Do you agree with the following statement: The police and other law enforcement authorities in your economy are doing enough to fight terrorism?	44
Figure 26.	In your opinion what should the law enforcement authorities be doing to fight terrorism more effectively?	45
Figure 27.	Is organised crime a serious threat in Western Balkan region?	46
Figure 28.	Is organised crime a serious threat in your economy?	47
Figure 29.	Do you agree with the following statement: The police and other law enforcement authorities in your economy are doing enough to fight organised crime?	48
Figure 30.	In your opinion what should the law enforcement authorities be doing in order to fight organised crime more effectively?	49
Figure 31.	In your opinion, which are the reasons that your economy is not doing enough to fight organised crime effectively?	50
Figure 32.	Would you consider owning a gun?	51
Figure 33.	What would be/is the main reason for you to own a gun?	52
Figure 34.	Would/Does having a gun at home make you feel:	53

Figure 35.	How threatened do you feel by the illegal possession and misuse of weapons in your neighbourhood (as in crime, domestic violence, celebratory shooting, etc.)	54
Figure 36.	Do you agree that migrants entering your economy increase security risks for the economy?	55
Figure 37.	Have you ever had a negative experience from an interaction with an irregular migrant(s) in your economy?	56
Figure 38.	Irregular migrants violate migration regulations of the [ECONOMY] because they have crossed the borders illegally and without permission and legitimising documents. If irregular migrants have not committed other criminal offences, do you think that illegal border crossing as such should be:	57
Figure 39.	International conventions give irregular migrants the same access to judicial system (and courts) as the local population. Do you think that this access to justice:	58
Figure 40.	Irregular migrants are accommodated and catered by a host country as long as they are on its territory. Do you think that irregular migrants:	59
Figure 41.	Among irregular migrants there are vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, mothers with young children, elderly, people with disabilities In your opinion, your economy:	60
Figure 42.	The governmental and judicial procedures to expel or readmit irregular migrants take very long time, sometimes many years and can be very expensive. Do you think that the Governmental Administrations and the Judiciary:	61
Figure 43.	To what extent do you agree with the following statements: Natural disasters present a serious security threat to economy?	62
Figure 44.	In your opinion, do you think that the WB region would benefit from regional cooperation and joint preparedness system for natural disasters, including pandemics?	63
Figure 45.	Which underlying factors do you think contribute the most to occurrence of natural and man-made disasters?	64
Figure 46.	To what extent are you familiarised with the main natural disaster risks in your area?	65
Figure 47.	How safe do you feel by knowing the response capacities of your local fire and rescue service?	66
Figure 48.	Would you consider joining community-based voluntary initiatives to increase disaster preparedness?	67
Figure 49.	In your opinion, is the educational system providing the necessary knowledge and skills for children to recognise and react to disasters?	68
Figure 50.	To what extent do you agree or disagree that disinformation is a security threat to your economy?	69

Figure 51.	News or information that misrepresent reality or that are even false are called fake news. Which 3 (three) of the following institutions and media actors should act to stop the spread of fake news?	70
Figure 52.	In your opinion, which are the actors who spread disinformation the most in your economy?	71
Figure 53.	How self-confident do you feel to identify news that misrepresents reality?	72
Figure 54.	How often do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresents reality or is even false?	73
Figure 55.	In your opinion, is the existence of fake news or misinformation a problem in your economy?	74
Figure 56.	In your opinion, is the existence of fake news, fake narrative a problem for democracy in general?	75
Figure 57.	In which of the following areas of public life in your economy can intentional disinformation cause harm?	76
Figure 58.	In your contact or contacts with the public institutions, have you or anyone living in your household paid a bribe in any form in the past 12 months?—Results for the Western Balkans region	77
Figure 59.	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following categories are affected by corruption in your economy?—Results for the Western Balkans region	79
Figure 60.	Do you agree that the WB economies have independent and effective institutions for investigating, prosecuting and sanctioning the high-level corruption and organised crime cases?	82
Figure 61.	Do you feel that a strong and safe corruption reporting system exists in your economy?	83
Figure 62.	What would discourage you from reporting a wrongdoing?	84
Figure 63.	Do you think that women are more affected by corruption/Do women and men experience corruption in the same way?	85
Figure 64.	In your opinion, do you think that women are more affected by corruption in the following categories?—Results for the Western Balkans region	86
Figure 65.	To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Domestic violence presents a serious security threat in [ECONOMY]?	89
Figure 66.	Do you know someone (from your family, neighbourhood or community) who experienced domestic violence?	90
Figure 67.	The response of institutions (such as police, social welfare centre, etc.) to provide protection from domestic violence makes me feel safe?	91
Figure 68.	Would you call police/social centre in case of domestic violence?	92

Figure 69.	How often are you worried that someone may sexually attack or hurt you?	93
Figure 70.	Sample structure by gender	98
Figure 71.	Sample structure by age	98
Figure 72.	Sample structure by education	99
Figure 73.	Sample structure by marital status	99

List of Tables

Table 1.	In your opinion, how important is the work on addressing the following CHALLENGES for the internal security of Western Balkans economies?–Results by economies	31
Table 2.	Would you say that the following challenges to the security of the Western Balkans are likely to increase, decrease or remain unchanged over the next 3 years?–Results by economies	33
Table 3.	In your contact or contacts with the public institutions, have you or anyone living in your household paid a bribe in any form in the past 12 months?–Results by economies	78
Table 4.	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following categories are affected by corruption in your economy?–Results by economies	80
Table 5.	In your opinion, do you think that women are more affected by corruption in the following categories?–Results by economies	87
Table 6.	Sample structure by region	97

FOREWORD

Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) has the pleasure to present the second edition of Security Barometer Survey (#SecuriMeter). The publication was compiled based on the results of a comprehensive survey commissioned by the RCC on attitudes, experiences and perceptions of the general public in the Western Balkans concerning the security situation, and also in the context of implementation of the Common Regional Market (CRM) 2021–2024 agenda. Being the only instrument that measures sentiments related to security, SecuriMeter has become a valuable resource in developing policies on individual economy and on regional level as well as contributing to monitoring their effects and impact in the security environment of the Western Balkans.

The perceptions revealed through the SecuriMeter complement other data on quantitative and qualitative indicators being collected by the Balkan Barometer but also data collected by public administrations and regional and international partners. This provides a comprehensive overview of security challenges, and citizens' needs and perceptions, and provides a fact-based context to the WB authorities that will help shaping the future legal and institutional interventions needed to address such challenges.

As in the last year's report, the added value of this particular survey lies in the fact that it was conducted in coordination with and full participation of the regionally owned organisations such as Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI), Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (DPPI-SEE) and the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) as a standalone project within the Regional Cooperation Council. Contributions were received also from the Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT).

Compared to the 2021 report, this year's questionnaire has been slightly amended to introduce new while dropping some of the questions used in the previous survey. An anti-corruption chapter has been introduced acknowledging the potential of corruption to pose a significant threat to security and stability in the region, thus offering an adequate view of citizens' perceptions on the need to implement effective anti-corruption models and mechanisms. A set of questions related to domestic violence has been introduced this year. In addition, questions related to other existing chapters have been amended to properly capture the most-pressuring security challenges of our region and pave the way to designing effective policies.

INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) and the Western Balkans share many evolving trans–national security issues, from radicalisation and violent extremism and returnee Foreign Terrorist Fighters to disinformation and cyber–attacks, and organised crime more broadly. Such challenges–vital to our economies, citizens, and political life–call for a strong regional security and home affairs alliance as well as collective coordinated actions in order to be effectively addressed. The content of the 2022 Security Barometer issue reflects the intertwining of Western Balkans, EU and even global reality, especially in the context of the Ukraine conflict. In this context, the citizens' views, concerns, and perceptions are essential to successful policy development and critical to success in the region's collective security efforts.

The research is organised in the following chapters:

- A. General security perception
- B. Perceptions of the fight against terrorism, organised crime, and border security
- C. Perceptions of gun ownership and fighting illicit possession, trafficking and misuse of SALW
- D. Perceptions of irregular immigration, asylum–seeking and the humanitarian dimension of migratory movements that can help measure sentiments of people but also the responsiveness of institutions
- E. Perceptions on disaster prevention and disaster preparedness
- F. Perceptions of disinformation and cyber security as a form of hybrid threat
- G. Perceptions on corruption
- H. Perception on domestic violence

The [SecuriMeter](#) provides a clear understanding of what security challenges mean on the ground, and what their consequences are for our societies. Findings of this round of the Security Barometer indicate that citizens of the Western Balkans region are slightly less satisfied than a year ago with both the present security situation and future expectations. After a more positive trend in the last edition of Security Barometer, in this round the Balkan Public Security Sentiment Index (BPSSI) has made a U–turn back towards a slightly more pessimistic outlook. It is important to point out that the survey was conducted during March–April, after the war in Ukraine had started and its impact in terms of pessimism among respondents could have been present in this year's findings. The overall satisfaction with the security situation in the region has not improved. Addressing serious and organised crime (91%), financial crime (89%) and terrorism (88%) are top priority concerns to citizens in all economies of the region.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

While it is true that the development of perceptions may not necessarily correspond with the existing risks, however, they have to be seriously analysed and discussed in order to prepare effective and adequate policy responses. In this context, we are confident that policy makers, decision makers, researchers, academics and think tanks will continue using the [SecuriMeter](#) data with confidence because the results will withstand challenges and will allow longitudinal studies and economy-level and regional comparisons.

KEY FINDINGS

After a more positive trend in the last edition of *SecuriMeter*, in this round the **Balkan Public Security Sentiment Index (BPSSI) has made a U-turn** back towards a slightly more pessimistic outlook. The overall BPSSI has decreased by 5 points, from 54 in the previous round to 49 in this one. The present situation BPSSI has decreased by 4 points, from 54 to 50. The future expectations BPSSI has decreased most significantly, by 10 points (from 56 to 46).¹

The **overall satisfaction with the security situation in the region has not improved** significantly since the last round of *SecuriMeter*, with 39% of respondents who claim to be completely or mostly satisfied, and 33% who are mostly or completely dissatisfied. With 58% satisfied respondents and 14% dissatisfied ones in this report, Kosovo* has improved most significantly in terms of perception of security: it has 45% more satisfied respondents and 23% less happy ones than in the previous edition. While 52% of respondents are satisfied with their personal security situation, 57% consider the region as a whole a secure place to live in and 66% consider their economies so, yet only 20% expect the security situation to improve over the next year.

It remains highly important to citizens in all economies of the region to address security challenges, particularly serious and organised crime (91%), financial crime (89%) and terrorism (88%). Tackling serious and organised crime is expected most urgently by citizens in Serbia (97%), Albania (95%) and North Macedonia (95%). Most expect these challenges to remain the same in magnitude over the next three years, unlike migrants' influx, which a relative majority (41%) expects to become a bigger security problem. In this regard, nine out of ten (89%) believe that the crisis in Ukraine will bring an influx of refugees to the Western Balkans.

The belief that **incoming migrants increase security risks for the region remains nearly as widespread as a year ago**, as it is shared by 65% of respondents. This is despite the fact that most (61%) reported that they personally have not had negative experiences with irregular migrants. Worryingly, two-thirds (66%) favour fines against irregular migrants and fining them followed by sending them back to their countries of origin, while over half (53%) favour placing them in locked detention centres.

Most respondents (79%) still find gun ownership unattractive. However, the share of those considering owning one has doubled since the last BSB edition, from 6% to 12%. Despite a relative majority (39%) of respondents would do so for protection, as owning a gun would make most of them feel safer (68%), these figures should be considered with priority by the authorities to raise awareness and work collectively towards building safer societies.

Natural disasters are perceived as a serious security threat to the region by a vast majority (80%), more than a year ago (77 %). This sentiment is especially widespread in Albania (90%)

¹ The BPSSI is explained in more detail in the relevant section on page 17

* 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

and Serbia (76%). The following factors are seen as most responsible for natural and man-made disasters: deforestation and environmental degradation (65%), urbanisation and lack of planning of urban spaces (57%), and climate change (51%). These findings confirm once more the need to speed up collective efforts to further develop disaster preparedness and prevention through regional cooperation.

Western Balkans remains very highly aware of and alerted by hybrid threats, particularly disinformation. Three-quarters (74%) of respondents agree that disinformation represents a security threat to their economies. Most think that journalists, press and broadcasting management, and online social networks are the main actors/areas of social interaction seen as contributing to fake news as a security problem, and also responsible for tackling it. Despite a high level of awareness, authorities should prioritise the management of hybrid threats and disinformation campaigns, from both domestic and international sources, in order to prevent such campaigns and increase public resilience to misinformation and disinformation.

Previously covered under the main Balkan Barometer, **corruption still draws the attention of audiences in all economies of the region.** Sectors such as judiciary, healthcare, customs, police and political parties remain the most corrupt in the eyes of citizens in all economies.

Covered in the BSB, for the first time, **nearly three-quarters (72%) of respondents consider domestic violence a serious security threat.** A large part of respondents (40%) claim to have witnessed this form of violence directly. Even more (41%) do not trust that the response by institutions such as police and social services makes them feel safe. Coordinated responses involving all stakeholders in developing and implementing policies and procedures that lead to more uniform responses to domestic violence must be at the centre of reform efforts in this field.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Western Balkans region features a specific set of political and geographical circumstances that makes the security of this region a highly important topic for the regional economies as well as for its partners, particularly the European Union. A relatively recent history of armed conflict, geographical and geopolitical positioning, lagging socio-economic development and much needed reforms in the area of rule of law make this region vulnerable to a range of security threats, with implications on the overall quality of life and economic progress.

From illegal migrations, border security, organised crime and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, to cyber security, disinformation and natural and man-made disaster risk, security issues have been evolving, illegal activities and actors adapting, and cooperation within the region and between the region and the EU increasing in importance. Each of the threats and risks has a multidimensional character, requiring a holistic and coordinated approach rather than simplification or reductionism.

Western Balkans region has emerged as a key transit route for refugees and migrants. The numbers of newly registered migrants and asylum seekers in the region have been steadily raising prior to the COVID pandemic. The year 2021 caused a large spike in irregular migration, but also a shift in the routes of irregular migrants.

The Western Balkan route saw a further 124% increase of reported detections of illegal border-crossings in 2021 compared to 2020. The route marked an increasing trend until September and a slight decrease in the subsequent months. The majority of detected illegal border crossings can be traced back to people who have been in the region for some time and who repeatedly try to reach their target country in the EU.² The border control, reception and return systems in the region are overburdened by the high inflows experienced in 2021, turning them almost into natural targets for migrant smuggling networks. With Western Balkan borders overburdened by such high flows, migrant smuggling networks are estimated to continue.³

In the past, Western Balkan economies saw a wave of their citizens joining foreign fighters or terrorist cells in other parts of the globe—it is estimated that between 2012 and 2017 about 1,000 Western Balkan citizens travelled to Syria and Iraq. Since the mid-1990s, more than 200 people have been sentenced to more than 1,100 years in prison in six Western Balkan economies for terrorist acts, or for leaving to fight in a foreign war.⁴ In the last decade, more than 160 fighters were jailed for joining the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, part of a wave of foreign fighters from the Western Balkans that prompted Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, and Montenegro to outlaw such actions in 2014 and 2015. Kosovo* and Serbia have sentenced the largest number of foreign fighters, while Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia have had the most convictions for domestic terrorism. Albania has yet to convict any returning foreign fighter in the

2 FRONTEX EU external borders in 2021

3 ICMPD Migration Outlook 2022

4 <https://detektor.ba/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Balkan-States-Find-Prosecuting-Terrorism-a-Challenge.pdf>

second instance, while there have been no final verdicts for domestic terrorism in Montenegro. Now, the economies will be faced not only with the priority of preventing radicalisation in segments of their societies, but also with reintegrating returnees, particularly women and children. By the end of 2019, there have been some 485 returnees from the foreign battlefields, and additional 475, mostly children and women, still remain. At the moment, Western Balkans is the region with the highest concentration of returned foreign terrorist fighters in Europe. The return of foreign fighters is associated with security challenges across the region but also in the EU, given the geographical proximity.

Western Balkan economies have been hard at work, under the guidance and support of UNDP/SEESAC, to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Still, in 2021 there have been 2895 firearm-related incidents, of which 529 occurred in a criminal context. A strong gender dimension is evident in firearm violence, with men prevailing as both perpetrators and victims, whereas notably, in 2021 only 2% of perpetrators were women while comprising 20% of the victims. Moreover, Western Balkans is often either the source of or the smuggling route for illicit firearms particularly on their way to the European Union, resulting in the proposal by the European Commission to implement a single action plan for both the EU and South East Europe partners for 2021–2025.

Western Balkans region is particularly prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, fires and similar, thus making it of a paramount importance to contribute to the capacity building of disaster management organisations and to enhance regional disaster prevention and preparedness initiatives. There is a slight growth in respondents' awareness (80%, compared to 77% in the previous report) on the potential of natural disasters to present a serious security threat to their economies.

Proliferation of disinformation and/or misinformation poses a security threat on its own, or may exacerbate existing security issues by spreading panic, providing harmful advice or diminishing trust in government and public institutions. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, Western Balkans has struggled with the negative impacts that disinformation has and the need to build awareness. There is more or less the same level of awareness and concerns about disinformation as a security threat across the region of the Western Balkans as in the previous round of [SecuriMeter](#): 74% of respondents agree that this phenomenon is a security threat to their economies (75% in 2021), while only every fifth respondent (21%) disagrees. However, as this is rather complex phenomenon, there is a need to further examine it and scrutinise trends regularly.

The data of [SecuriMeter](#) has to be understood under a challenged security environment which has substantially changed after the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine, thus making our societies more than ever aware that the European perspective cannot be only a matter of socio-economic progress but first and foremost of security and stability. Being a region with a recent past affected by conflicts, the war in Ukraine has influenced the way respondents have portrayed security concerns in their economies. In addition, security threats related to energy, taking into consideration the vast dependence on Russia in this sector (67% of imports) and the lack of diversification of energy in the region, might have played a considerable role in their responses. This might be even higher as an impact for those economies which import most of the gas from Russia.

PUBLIC OPINION SECURITY SENTIMENT SURVEY

As in the first [SecuriMeter](#) report, the second year also includes a measurement of the public sentiment and optimism related to security. The Balkan Public Security Sentiment Index (BPSSI) considers several aspects of security, and respondents were asked about the present situation and their expectations for 2022, comparing the responses to previous year. The BPSSI is composed of five questions:

1. How satisfied are you with the way things are going in your place of living? (Answers: 5–point scale)
2. How satisfied are you with the security situation in your economy? (Answers: 5–point scale)
3. How satisfied are you with the security situation of your household? (Answers: 5–point scale)
4. What are your expectations for the next year? Do you think that in 12 months your security situation will be better, worse or the same?
5. What are your expectations for the security in your economy? Do you think that in 12 months the state of security will be better, worse or the same?

BPSSI represents a measure of the current and future state/expectations regarding the general situation, situation at economy level as well as the situation of individual households. It is a measure that helps monitor changes in time at the regional level (Western Balkans) and the level of individual economies.

The index is constructed with the answers on five–point scales 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 the Q4 and Q5 are scored as follows: better–100 points, worse–0 points, the same–50 points. After responses are recorded, average value is calculated for the whole WB region as well as for each economy separately.

The index values are expressed on a scale of 0 to 100. BPSSI was further divided in two sub–indexes with the aim to monitor separately the present sentiment among population and their expectations for the future or their degree of optimism.

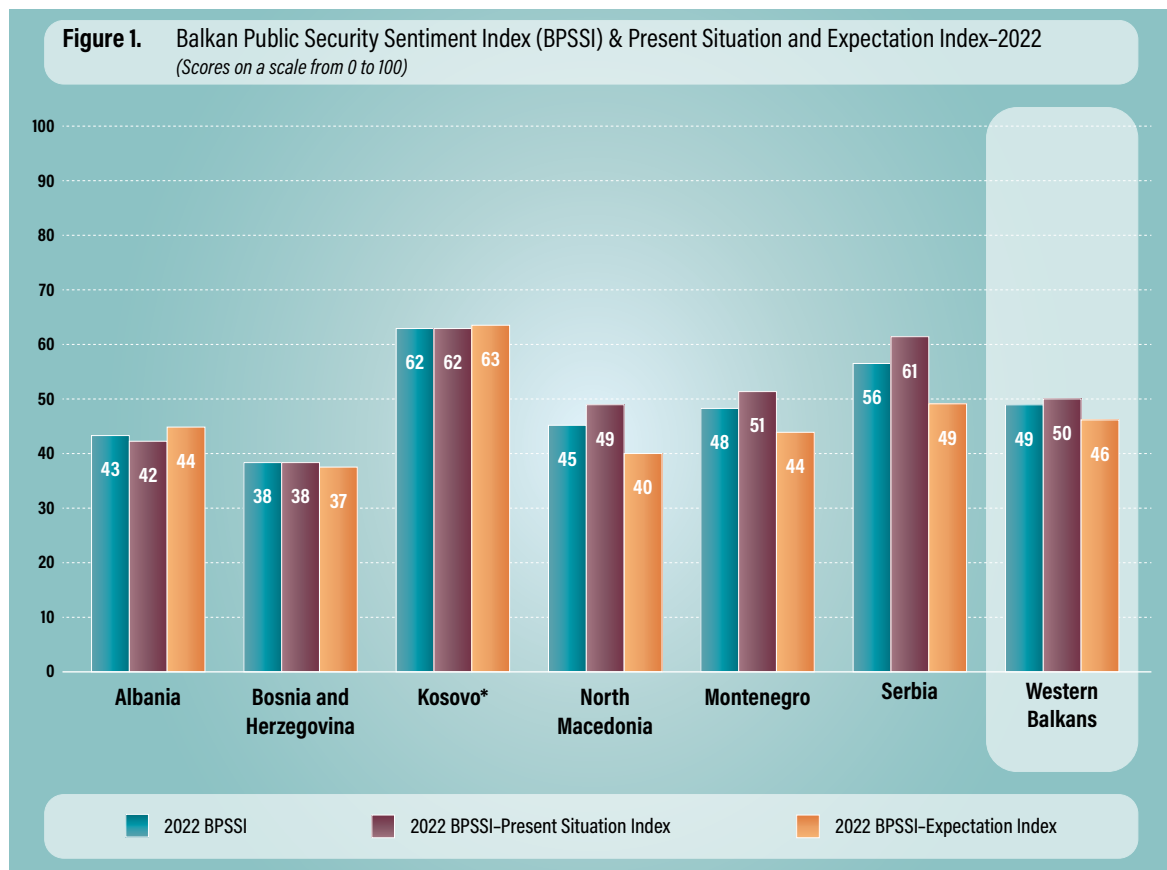
PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

- a) BPSI–Present Situation Index
- b) BPSI–Expectation Index⁵

It is not unusual that expectations are more optimistic than the assessment of the current state of affairs. However, there is no bigger discrepancy between the expectations and the perceptions of present situation with the BPSI–present situation index standing at 50 and BPSI–expectation index at 46, thus bringing the BBSI to 49 points on the scoreboard.

Large discrepancies are observed between individual economies in relation to sentiment index. The most optimistic economy is shown to be Kosovo*, with present sentiment index scoring 62. Slightly higher (63) is its expectation index, still leaving Kosovo* on the top of the scale.

Montenegro is followed by Serbia representing a shift from previous year, where Montenegro was first, and Albania second. BPSI in Serbia stands at 56. However, the future expectation index in Serbia is at 49. This trend is also observed in North Macedonia with the expectation index being lower than the current satisfaction.



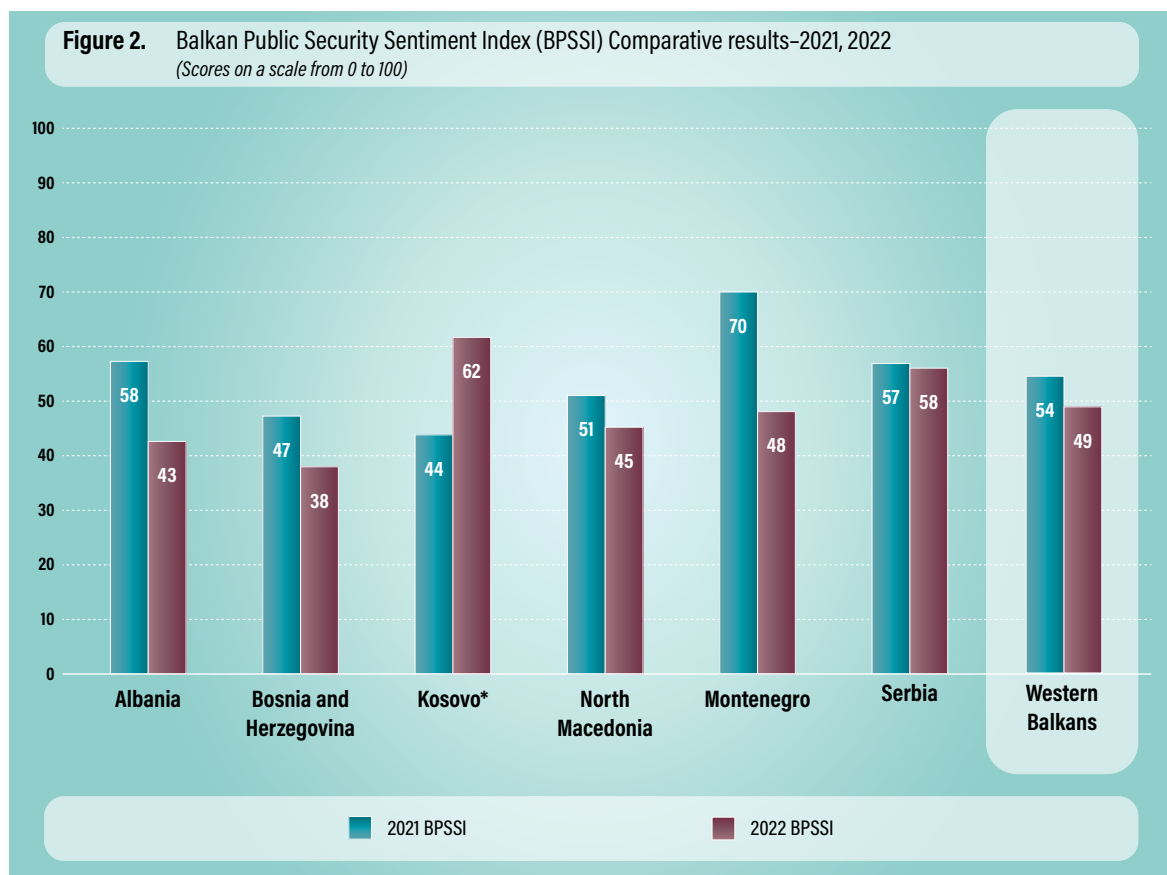
Findings of this round of Security Barometer indicate that citizens of the Western Balkans region are slightly less satisfied than a year ago with both the present security situation and future expectations. The overall index of satisfaction with the security situation has decreased by 5 points, from 54 in the previous round to 49. The present situation index has seen a less significant

⁵ The approach replicates the one taken by the Balkan Barometer general annual surveys on public and business opinion in the SEE

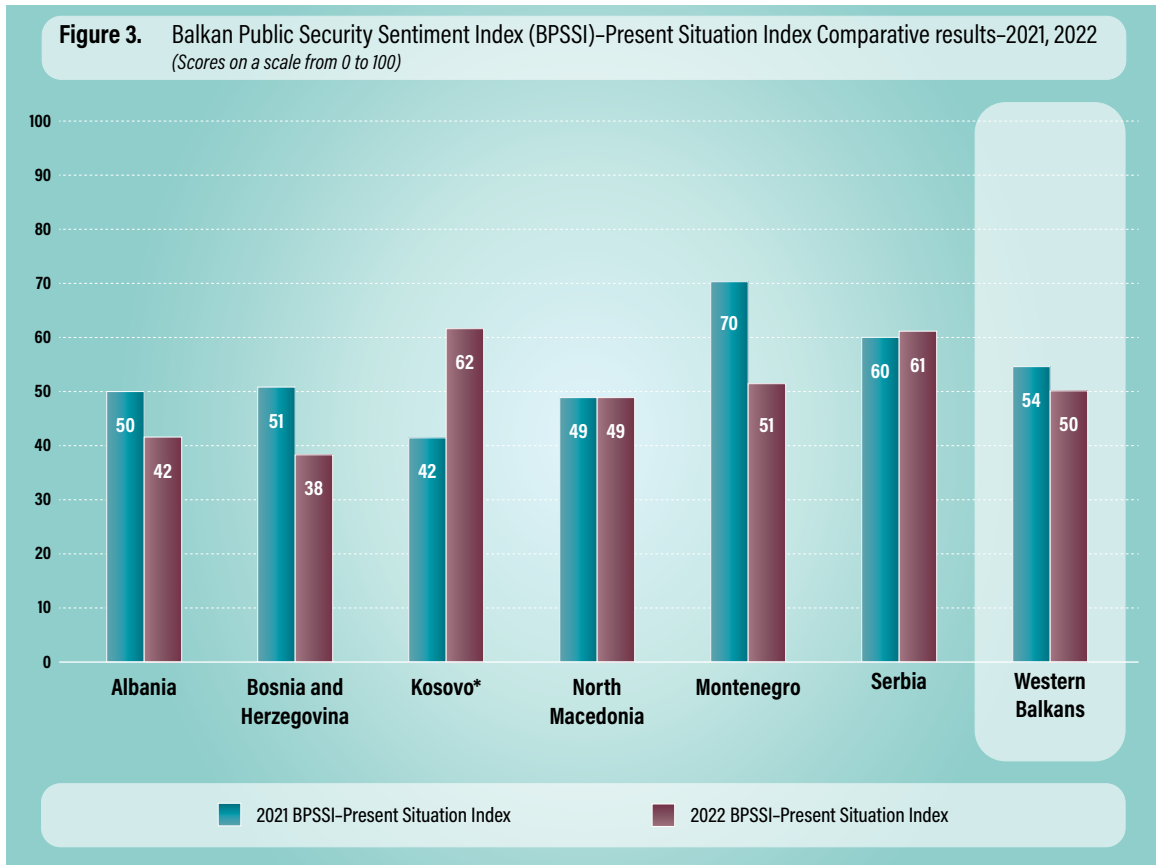
PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

decrease, by 4 points, from 54 to 50. Moreover, the future expectations index has decreased more significantly—by 10 points, from 56 to 46 in this round.

At the economy level, results of the survey show that Kosovo* has made the biggest improvement in security situation, reflected in citizens' sentiment going from one of the two most pessimistic economies to the most optimistic one. Its overall BPSSI is 62, having improved by 18 points (from 44 in 2021). The present situation BPSSI in this economy, also at 62, has improved by 20 points (from 42 in the previous report). The future expectations BPSSI, at 63, has improved by 16 points (from 47 points in 2021). While Serbia is a close second, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, remains the most pessimistic, with overall BPSSI at 38, present situation BPSSI at 38 and future expectations BPSSI at 37. Albania is home to the second most pessimistic population, while Montenegro and North Macedonia are in the middle.

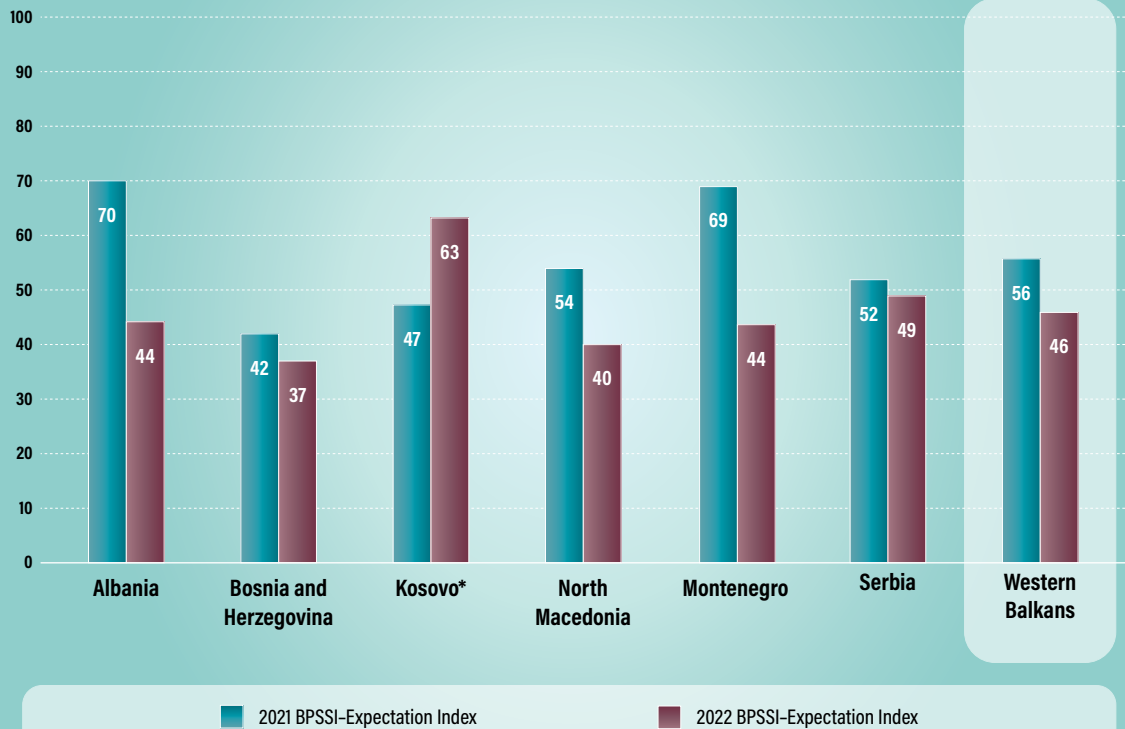


Looking at individual economies, Kosovo* is notable as the economy that has made the biggest improvement, by 18 points, whereas Montenegro has seen the opposite trend, namely a deterioration by 22 points. Serbia and North Macedonia have both stagnated, the former having seen a downward trend by one point and the latter only by six points.



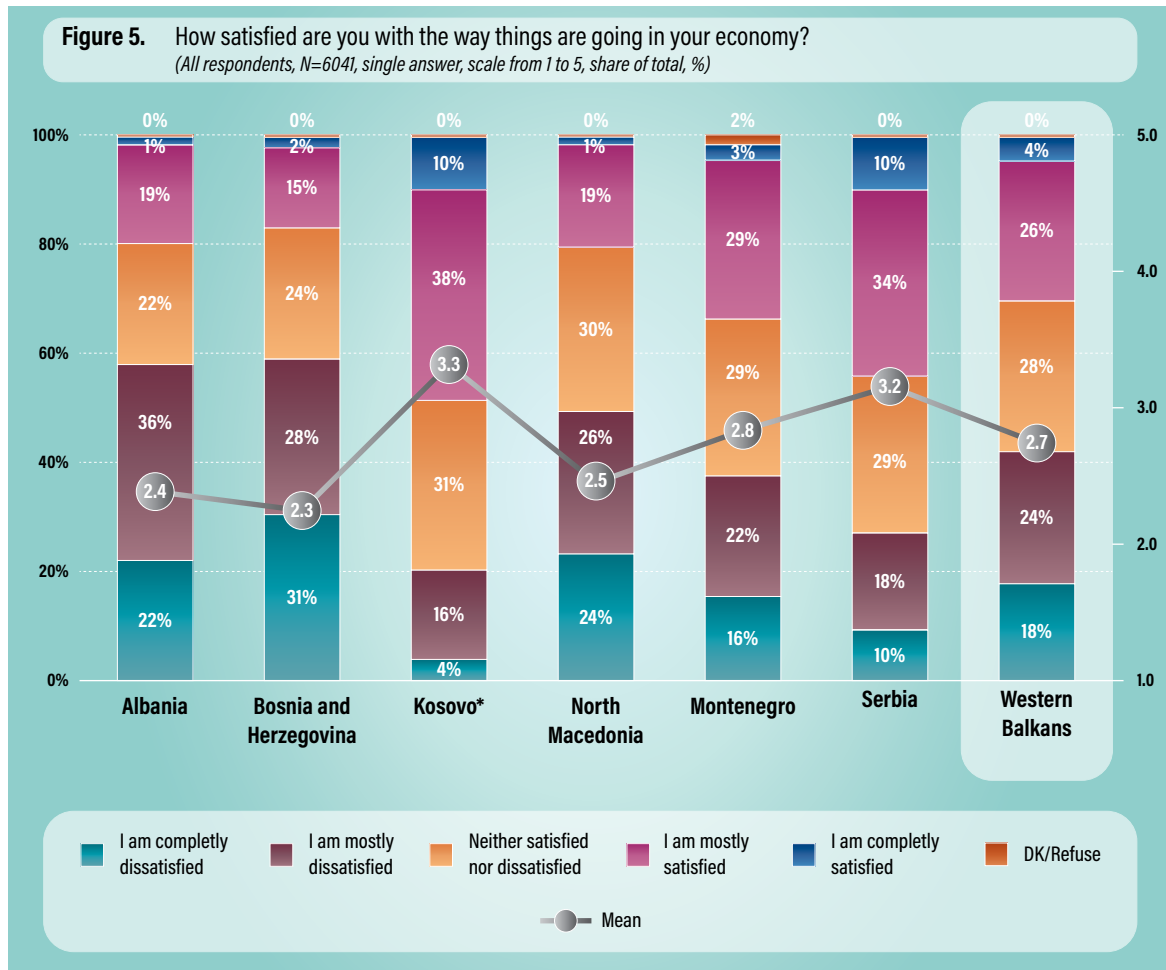
A similar trend can be seen with regard to the present situation BPSSI index, from 54 to 50 on average at the regional level. Within economies, Kosovo* again stands out as the economy with the biggest improvement, by 20 points. Montenegro has followed the opposite trend on this as well, having deteriorated most significantly, by 19 points. On the other hand, having also deteriorated significantly, by 13 points, Bosnia and Herzegovina is the most pessimistic. North Macedonia is the only economy that has stagnated absolutely on this, maintaining the same BPSSI as in the previous round, slightly under 50. Serbia, having a better standing, has only improved by one point on this.

Figure 4. Balkan Public Security Sentiment Index (BPSSI)–Expectation Index Comparative results–2021, 2022
(Scores on a scale from 0 to 100)



The region is overall significantly more pessimistic when it comes to future expectations regarding the security situation, having seen a mean 10–point deterioration of this dimension of BPSSI. Kosovo* has improved by 16 points, thus replacing Montenegro as the most optimistic. Albania, on the other hand, has seen the most notable negative trend, by over one-third: its BPSSI index deteriorated by 26 points, from 70 in 2021 to 44 points in this round. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the least optimistic economy, has seen a downward trend by 5 points. Serbia, as the second most pessimistic economy, has seen its BPSSI index deteriorate less significantly (by 3 points).

A. General Security Perception

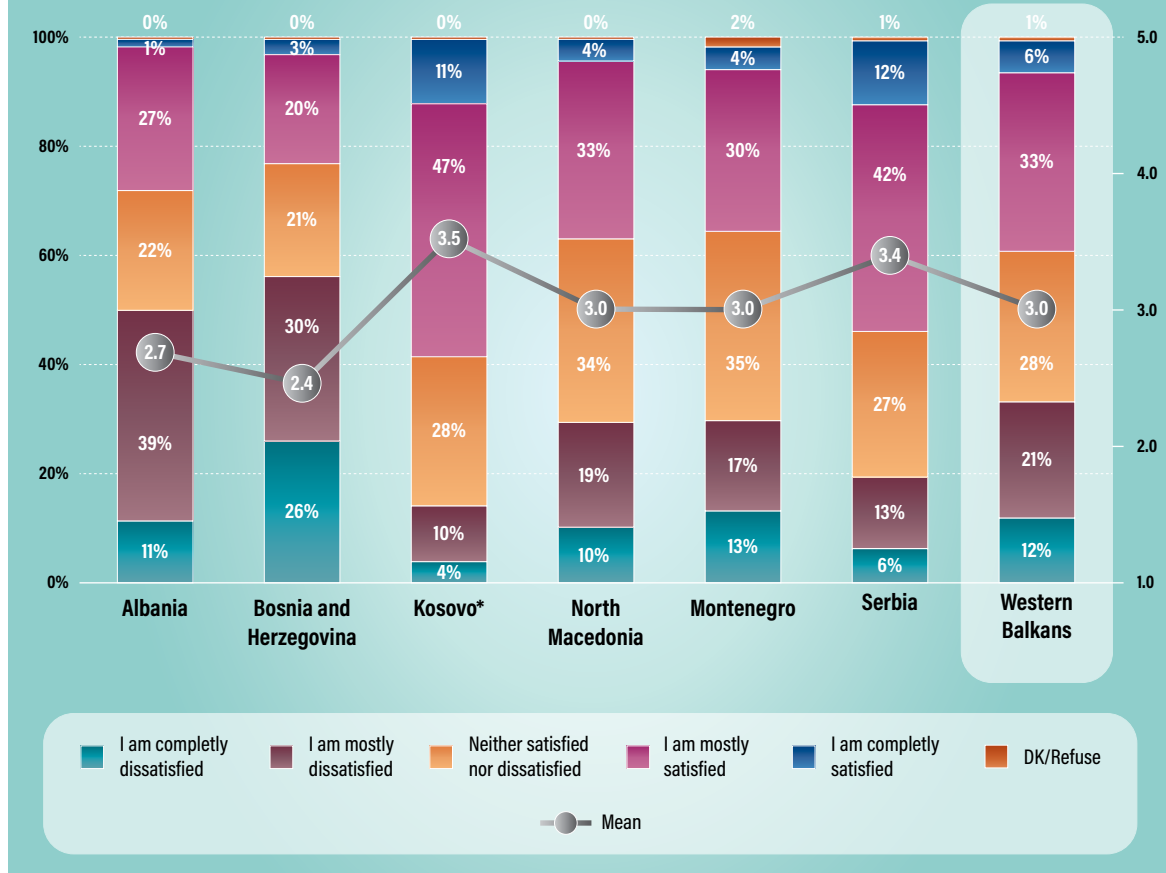


The perception of the security situation has changed for the worse since the last round, with more dissatisfied respondents than satisfied ones. On average, over four out of ten respondents (42% of them) are dissatisfied with the way things are going in their economies, an increase by 6%, from 36% in the previous round. The share of satisfied ones, nearly a third of them (30%), has decreased by 3%, whereas almost the same share (28%, a 3–point decrease since 2021) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

At the economy level, Kosovo* has replaced Montenegro as the most satisfied economy: almost half of those polled there (48%) are satisfied, a dramatic 36–point increase from 12% in 2021. Only one in five (20%) in this economy have expressed dissatisfaction, an 18–point improvement, while the share of neutral respondents has shrunk even more, from about half (49%) of the survey population to under a third (31) of them. Bosnia and Herzegovina, where only 17% said they were happy with how things are going there and over six in ten are unhappy, remains the most pessimistic economy. Compared to a year ago, it has 13% less happy respondents and 16% more unhappy ones.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

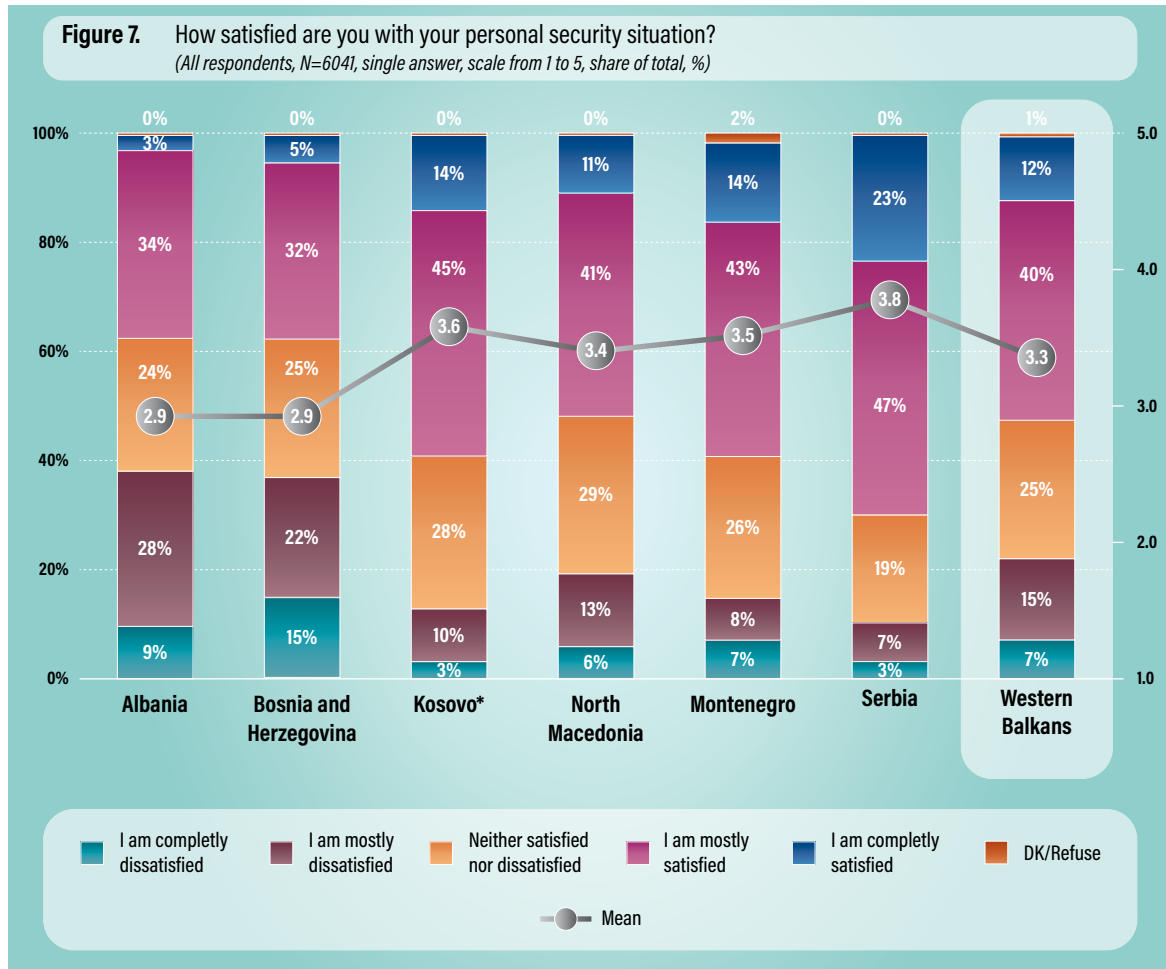
Figure 6. How satisfied are you with the security situation in your economy?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %)



The region is more satisfied with the security situation (39%) than with how things are going in general in their economy (30%, figure 5). Compared to last year's report, there is a slight improvement by 2 points. Nearly one in four (39%) of those polled are happy with the security situation in their economies, as opposed to one in three (33%) of them who are unhappy. The happy ones grew by 2% (37% in 2021), while the dissatisfied ones by 4 points (29% in 2021).

On the other hand, Kosovo* is the single economy that has made the most significant improvement in terms of its citizens' perception of the security situation: at 58%, it has the highest share of satisfied respondents, a whopping 45% increase from only 13% in 2021. It also has the lowest share of dissatisfied ones amongst the survey population, namely 14%, having shrunk by 23% (from 37% in 2021). A similarly dramatic trend is notable in Montenegro, where the share of satisfied respondents has nearly halved (from 62% to 34%). As it has become customary across many aspects covered by this survey and the Security Barometer, Bosnia and Herzegovina is home to the biggest number of unhappy respondents (56%) and the lowest number of happy ones (23%). The former group has grown 20% bigger (from 36% in 2021 to 56% now) and the latter has grown 13% smaller (from 36% in 2021 to 23% now).

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

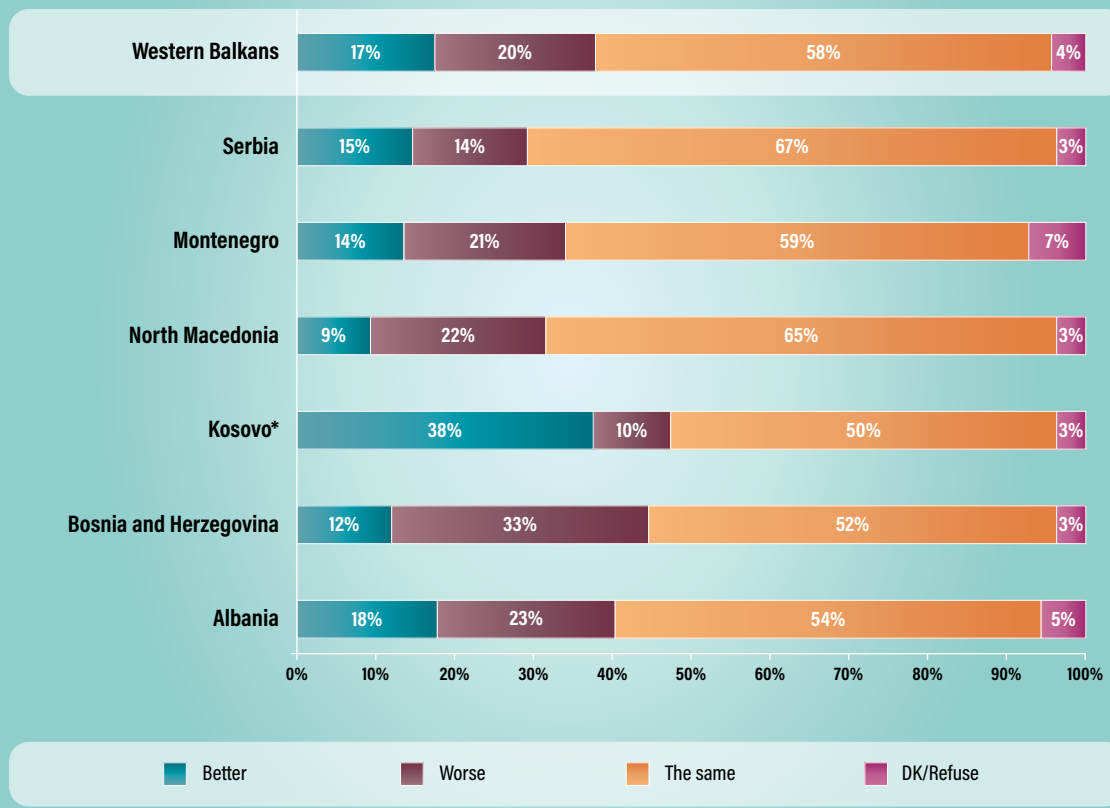


Though on average the majority of citizens of the region are satisfied with their personal security situation (52% of them), this category of respondents is slightly smaller compared to the previous round (by 4%). The share of unhappy ones has also increased slightly, by 3% (from 19% in 2021 to 22% in this round).

Within individual economies, Serbia has the highest share of respondents who are satisfied with their personal security situation (70%), the same as in the previous round. It has overrun Montenegro, where optimism is still quite high (at 57%) albeit a significant drop in optimism since the last round, by 28 points, from 85%. Moreover, in line with the trend of perception of the overall security situation in their economies, Kosovo* has seen the most dramatic trend, where the number of respondents who are satisfied with their personal security situation has tripled, from 20% in the previous round to 59% in the current one. Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with equal shares of satisfied and dissatisfied respondents in both of them—over a third (37%), are the least optimistic economies. The number of satisfied respondents has dropped by 8% and 16%, respectively, while the share of dissatisfied ones has increased more in Bosnia and Herzegovina (by 13%) than in Albania (by 10%).

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 8. What are your expectations for the next year? Do you think that in 12 months your personal security situation will be better, worse, the same?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)

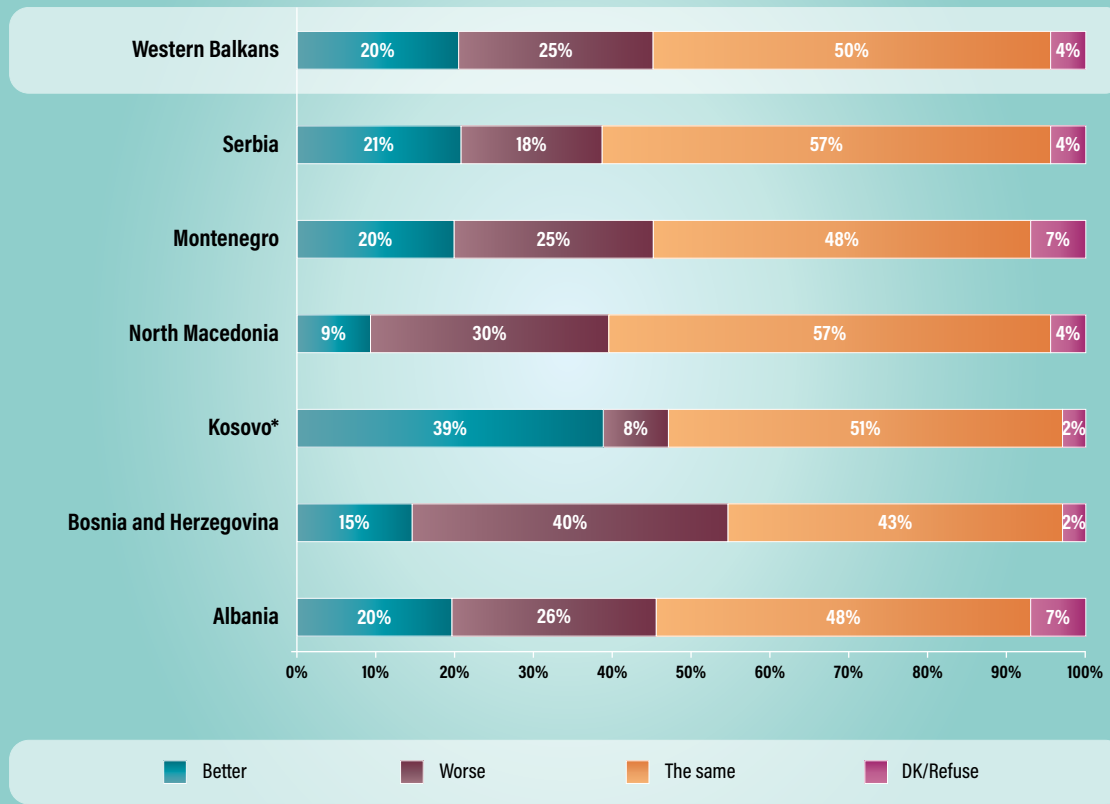


Regionally speaking, a pessimistic trend is notable, since the share of respondents who expect their personal security situation to improve over the next year has decreased by 7% on average, from 24% in 2021 to 17% in this round, while the share of those expecting it to get worse has also increased (by 6%, from 14% to 20%). About six in ten (59%), the same as in the last round, expect their personal security situation to remain the same.

Within individual economies, Kosovo* exhibits the most dramatic trend on this as well, with almost four out of ten respondents (38%) expecting their personal security situation to improve over the next twelve months, a 24-point improvement from 14% in the previous round. This economy has thus overtaken Albania as the most optimistic one on this indicator of perception of security, whereas the latter is notable for having seen the opposite trend—a dramatic 31-point fall (from 49% to 18%) in the number of survey participants expecting their personal security situation to improve. On the other hand, North Macedonia is home to the lowest number of optimistic respondents (at only 9%), a significant decrease by over two-thirds (15 points) from 26% in 2021. A third of respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina (33%, an upward trend from 25% in 2021), the highest in the region, expect their personal security situation to get worse. Serbia is the economy with the highest number of those polled (two thirds, 67%) who expect no change in this regard, as opposed to Kosovo* (50%).

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 9. What are your expectations for the security in your economy? Do you think that in 12 months the state of security will be better, worse, the same?⁶
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



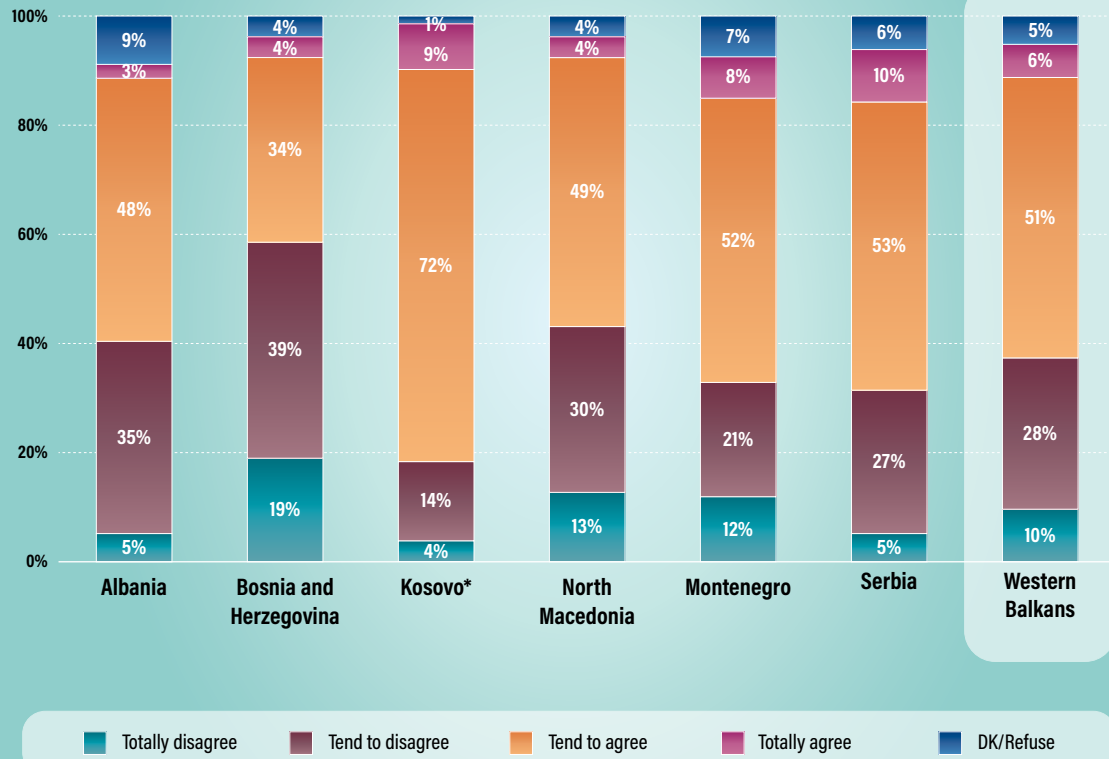
Similar to the perception of personal security, only one in five (20%) respondents, overall in the region, think that the security situation in their economies will improve, while a quarter of them expect it to get worse and half of them think it will remain the same. This shows a negative trend compared to the 2021 survey: 11% less respondents (31% in 2021) expect the security situation in their economy to improve and 7% more (18% in 2021) expect it to deteriorate.

Kosovo* is the most optimistic economy on this indicator as well, with about four out of ten respondents (39%) expecting the security situation in this economy to improve over the next year, a 24-point improvement from 15% in the previous round. The pessimistic group has shrunk by 13%, from 21% in the previous round to 8% now, the smallest of all economies. The neutral group has also shrunk by 13%, from nearly two-thirds (64%) to about half of them (51%). This economy has replaced Albania in this position, where the size of the optimistic group has also shrunk enormously, by 29% (from 49% to 20%).

⁶ The figures might not add to 100% due to rounding.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

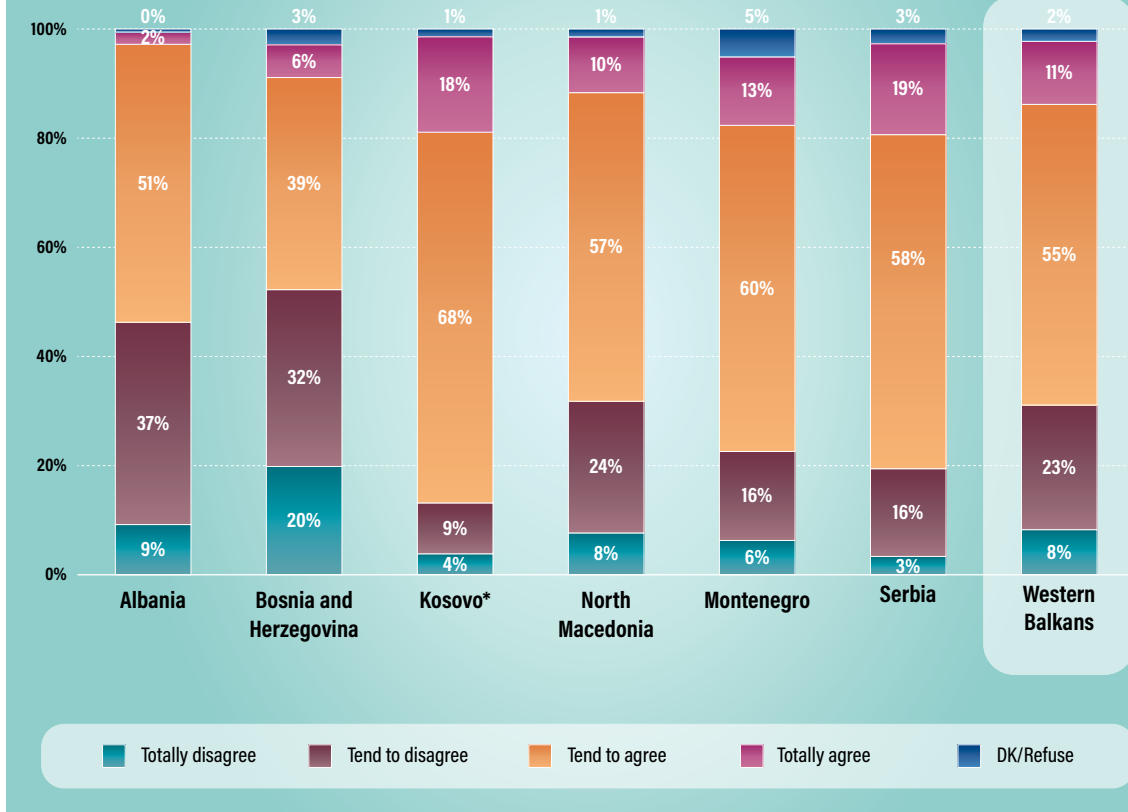
Figure 10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about public/general security: The Western Balkan region is a secure place to live in.
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



This year there is moderately less optimism in the region than a year ago on how secure it is as a place to live in. An average of 57% of respondents, 7% less than in the previous round, gave positive answers, while 38% (30% in 2021) disagree that this is the case. Of individual economies, Kosovo* is the most optimistic, with 81% positive answers (15% more than in 2021) and 18% negative ones (13% less than in 2021). The most pessimistic economy on this, Bosnia and Herzegovina, has seen the opposite trend, with 38% of positive answers (18% less than in 2021) and 58% of negative ones (17% more than in 2021).

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

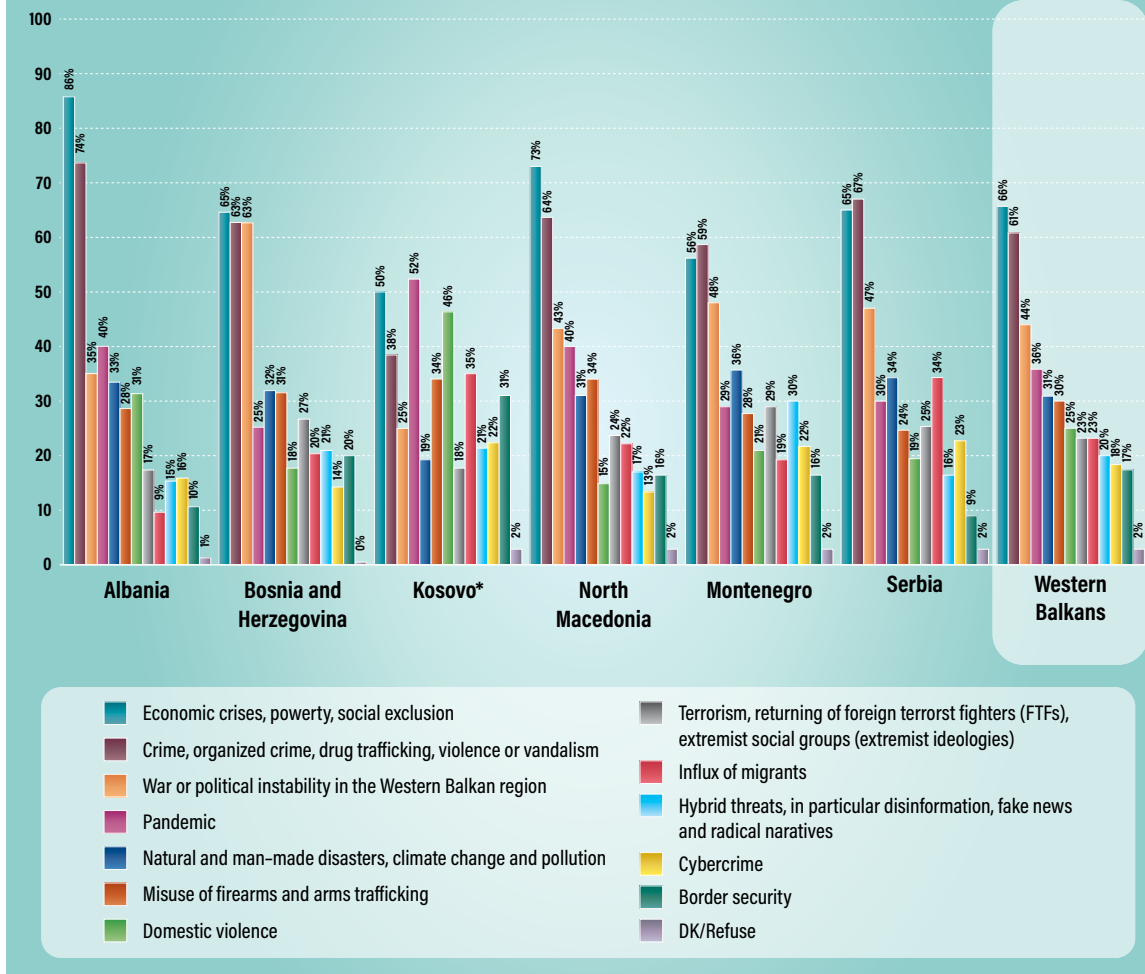
Figure 11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about public/general security: My economy is a secure place to live in.
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



On average, considerably more citizens consider their economies secure places to live in than the entire region. Two-thirds (66%) of those polled have said so, as opposed to 31% who disagree. This is an incremental trend towards more pessimism: a 4-point decrease in the number of positive answers (70% in 2021) and a 2-point increase in the number of negative ones (29% in 2021).

Within individual economies Kosovo* is again the most optimistic one, with over three-quarters (86%) of those polled finding their economy a secure place to live in, as opposed to only 13% who do not find it so. Again, Bosnia and Herzegovina is found on the opposite end of the scale, with over half (52%) disagreeing that their economy is a safe place to live in and 45% agreeing. Kosovo* has grown more optimistic, as seen in a 16-point increase (70% in 2021) in positive answers and 17% (30% in 2021) decrease in negative ones.

Figure 12. Which 4 (four) of the following have the most negative impact on your feeling of security (All respondents, N=6041, maximum/top 4 (four) answers, share of total, %)



Of the four top problems identified in the previous round of Security Barometer affecting the sense of security in the Western Balkans—economic crises, poverty and social exclusion; crime, organised crime, drugs trafficking, violence or vandalism; the pandemic; and natural and man-made disasters, climate change and pollution—the last one is in this round replaced by war or political instability. Economic crises, poverty and social exclusion remains the top concern, perceived so by two thirds of respondents on average (66%, a 3-point increase since 2021). Crime, organised crime, drugs trafficking, violence, or vandalism comes a close second (at 61%, also a 3% increase since the previous report). The third top concern—war or political instability—has moved up the ladder from the seventh place in the previous round: it is now seen as having a negative impact on citizens’ feeling of security by many more respondents than in the last round (44% now, 22% in 2021). The pandemic has moved up from the third to the fourth place, considered as a concern by a regional median of over one-third (36%) of those polled, a significant decrease by 17% compared to the previous round (53%).

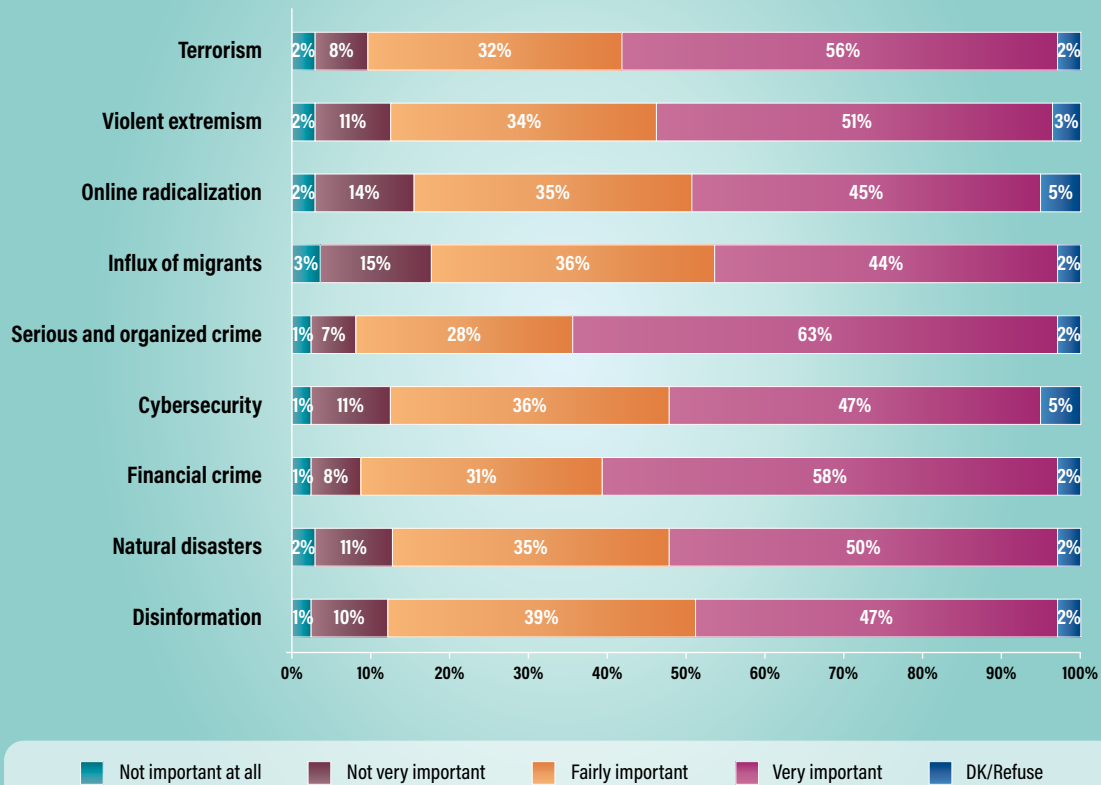
Natural and man-made disasters, climate change and pollution (at 31%, 29% in 2021), and misuse of firearms and arms trafficking (at 30%, 22% in 2021) rank the fifth and sixth top concern, respectively. Domestic violence, a new entry in the list of problems, ranks the seventh top concern. It is considered as undermining the feeling of security by a regional median of quarter of survey participants (25%).

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

On economy level, economic crises, poverty, social exclusion is seen as the biggest problem in Albania (86%), an economy that maintained its lead since the previous edition, when it was seen as a problem by 3% more of those polled (89%). It is the least concern in Kosovo* (at 50%, down from 58% in 2021). Albania is also the leading economy on the second top problem—crime, organised crime, drugs trafficking, violence or vandalism—seen as undermining the citizens’ feeling of security by about three-fourth (74%) of survey participants. It replaced Montenegro, where this was seen as a problem by over two-thirds (67%). Kosovo* is on the positive end on this as well, with 38% of its respondents viewing it as a security-related problem, a huge 22-point improvement from 60% in the previous edition. War or political instability is of most concern in Bosnia and Herzegovina, seen as such by a large majority (63%), as opposed to only a quarter (25%) in Kosovo*. The latter economy followed an opposite trend on the COVID-19 pandemic, with the share of its survey population considering it as affecting citizens’ feeling of security having nearly doubled (from 27% in 2021 to 52% in this edition). On the other end of the scale, pandemic is viewed as such a problem by every fourth (25%) respondent in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the previous edition Albania was a leading economy on this (at 72%), as opposed to Kosovo* (45%).

B. Perceptions of the Fight against Terrorism, Organised Crime and Border Security

Figure 13. In your opinion, how important is the work on addressing the following CHALLENGES for the internal security of Western Balkan economies?—Results for the Western Balkans region
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



Addressing security challenges remains highly important to citizens in all economies of the region. This is especially the case with the following five biggest challenges: serious and organised crime (91%), financial crime (89%) and terrorism (88%), as well as disinformation (86%), violent extremism (85%) and natural disasters (85%).

Compared to the previous edition of Security Barometer, three challenges covered there—terrorism, violent extremism and influx of migrants—remain as important. Addressing the problem of terrorism is considered important by 88% of the survey population, that of violent extremism by 85% (the same as in 2021) and influx of migrants by 80% (86% in 2021). The latter is considered the least important problem to tackle out of all nine problems covered by the survey, while serious and organised crime is seen as important to tackle by the highest number of respondents (91%).

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Table 1: In your opinion, how important is the work on addressing the following CHALLENGES for the internal security of Western Balkans economies?—Results by economies

A—Terrorism; B—Violent extremism; C—Online radicalisation; D—Influx of migrants; E—Serious organised crime; F—Cybersecurity; G—Financial crime; H—Natural disasters; I—Disinformation

(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)

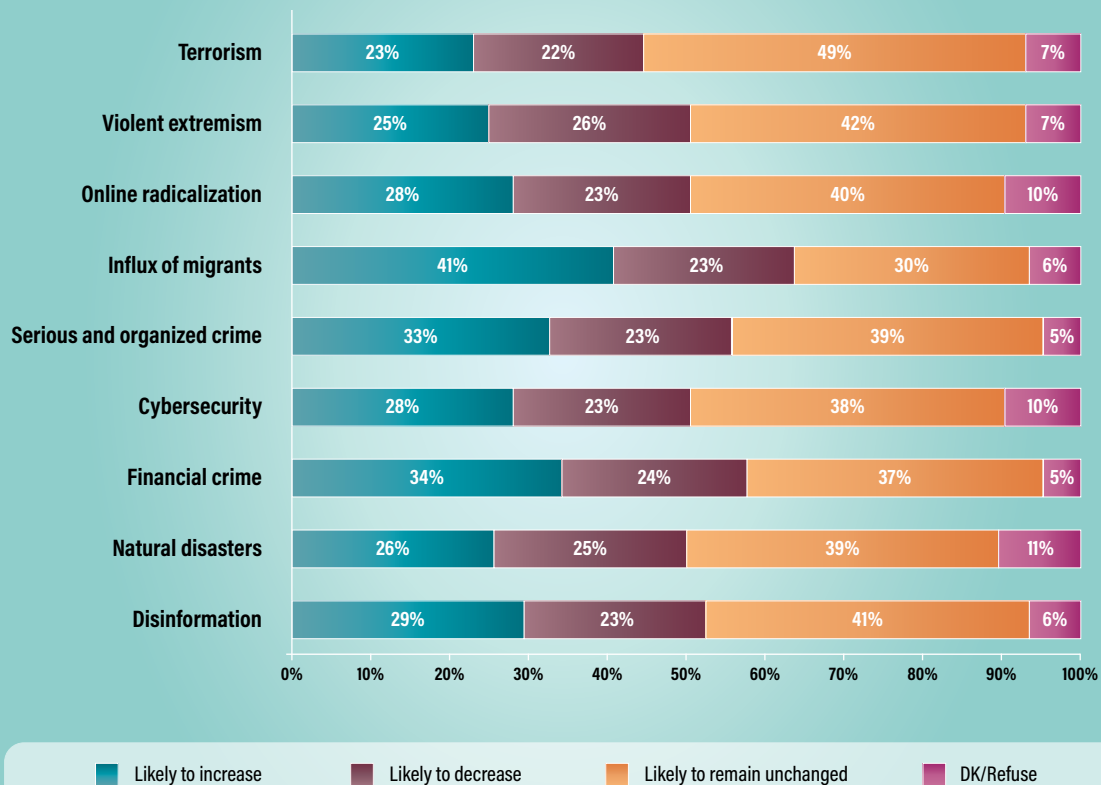
		Not important at all	Not very important	Fairly important	Very important	DK/Refuse		Not important at all	Not very important	Fairly important	Very important	DK/Refuse	
Albania	A	2%	10%	29%	58%	1%	North Macedonia	A	1%	5%	17%	76%	2%
	B	2%	16%	33%	45%	3%		B	1%	8%	26%	63%	2%
	C	2%	13%	36%	41%	8%		C	2%	11%	28%	53%	5%
	D	4%	24%	41%	31%	1%		D	3%	8%	27%	60%	1%
	E	0%	4%	27%	68%	0%		E	1%	3%	16%	79%	1%
	F	1%	12%	38%	39%	10%		F	1%	8%	26%	59%	6%
	G	0%	6%	33%	59%	2%		G	1%	2%	18%	78%	1%
	H	1%	10%	38%	50%	1%		H	2%	8%	23%	66%	2%
	I	1%	13%	45%	39%	2%		I	2%	10%	29%	58%	1%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	A	1%	11%	34%	53%	2%	Montenegro	A	4%	7%	40%	43%	6%
	B	1%	7%	40%	50%	2%		B	2%	6%	38%	47%	6%
	C	1%	10%	44%	42%	2%		C	3%	8%	37%	45%	7%
	D	1%	8%	44%	46%	2%		D	3%	10%	38%	41%	8%
	E	0%	6%	29%	64%	1%		E	2%	5%	27%	59%	7%
	F	1%	8%	42%	46%	2%		F	2%	7%	37%	47%	7%
	G	1%	6%	32%	61%	1%		G	2%	5%	32%	54%	7%
	H	2%	8%	39%	50%	1%		H	2%	7%	36%	50%	6%
	I	2%	10%	40%	48%	0%		I	2%	7%	37%	47%	6%
Kosovo*	A	2%	9%	45%	43%	1%	Serbia	A	1%	5%	29%	64%	1%
	B	1%	24%	35%	39%	1%		B	1%	6%	29%	63%	1%
	C	1%	32%	38%	27%	1%		C	1%	7%	29%	59%	4%
	D	5%	34%	38%	22%	1%		D	1%	6%	29%	64%	2%
	E	1%	24%	44%	30%	1%		E	0%	2%	21%	76%	1%
	F	1%	26%	43%	29%	2%		F	0%	6%	27%	64%	3%
	G	1%	25%	44%	29%	1%		G	0%	3%	27%	69%	1%
	H	2%	29%	46%	23%	1%		H	2%	3%	31%	64%	1%
	I	0%	13%	53%	32%	2%		I	1%	9%	33%	55%	2%

On economy level, tackling the problem of serious and organised crime has received support by vast majorities in all economies. It got the most widespread support in Serbia (97%), followed by Albania and North Macedonia (95% in both). Terrorism is considered as less of a problem in need to tackle, seen so by majorities, between 93% (in North Macedonia and Serbia) and 87% (in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Tackling the problem of financial crime has received strong support

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

in Bosnia and Herzegovina (93%). Dealing with influx of migrants is supported by relatively smaller majorities, the smallest being in Kosovo* (60%), as opposed to Serbia (93%).

Figure 14. Would you say that the following challenges to the security of the Western Balkans are likely to increase, decrease or remain unchanged over the next (3) three years?—Results for the Western Balkans region
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 3, share of total, %)



On future expectations, relative majorities in the region are of the opinion that security challenges in the next three years are likely to remain the same. The most notable change compared to the previous round is that the influx of migrants is seen as a problem in the next three years by only 30% of respondents (8% down compared to 38% in 2021), while 41% (9% more than in 2021) think that it is likely to increase. This security issue is seen as most likely to increase of all nine problems surveyed, while terrorism is viewed as least likely to increase (23%), whereas nearly half of respondents (49% of them, the biggest majority) think it will remain unchanged.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Table 2: Would you say that the following challenges to the security of the Western Balkans are likely to increase, decrease or remain unchanged over the next 3 years?—Results by economies

A—Terrorism; B—Violent extremism; C—Online radicalisation; D—Influx of migrants; E—Serious organised crime; F—Cybersecurity; G—Financial crime; H—Natural disasters; I—Disinformation

(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 3, share of total, %)

		Likely to increase	Likely to decrease	Likely to remain unchanged	DK/Refuse		Likely to increase	Likely to decrease	Likely to remain unchanged	DK/Refuse	
Albania	A	21%	17%	55%	7%	North Macedonia	A	35%	17%	42%	7%
	B	17%	22%	50%	11%		B	35%	18%	40%	7%
	C	22%	14%	49%	15%		C	34%	14%	37%	14%
	D	48%	16%	27%	9%		D	59%	12%	24%	5%
	E	38%	17%	43%	2%		E	48%	13%	34%	5%
	F	22%	17%	45%	16%		F	38%	13%	35%	14%
	G	38%	18%	38%	6%		G	52%	13%	31%	4%
	H	27%	17%	39%	17%		H	32%	16%	35%	17%
	I	24%	19%	49%	8%		I	44%	16%	35%	5%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	A	27%	26%	43%	5%	Montenegro	A	18%	19%	51%	11%
	B	33%	23%	40%	5%		B	20%	25%	44%	10%
	C	31%	23%	40%	6%		C	20%	22%	45%	13%
	D	44%	27%	25%	5%		D	25%	22%	42%	11%
	E	40%	19%	36%	4%		E	20%	22%	49%	9%
	F	35%	22%	35%	7%		F	20%	23%	44%	12%
	G	45%	21%	32%	3%		G	21%	24%	43%	11%
	H	38%	24%	34%	4%		H	16%	24%	43%	16%
	I	37%	23%	37%	4%		I	25%	23%	42%	10%
Kosovo*	A	13%	31%	55%	2%	Serbia	A	24%	19%	48%	9%
	B	17%	47%	34%	2%		B	26%	20%	45%	8%
	C	25%	49%	24%	2%		C	36%	14%	42%	9%
	D	26%	46%	27%	2%		D	43%	15%	34%	7%
	E	18%	51%	30%	2%		E	33%	17%	44%	5%
	F	14%	52%	32%	3%		F	41%	12%	38%	9%
	G	13%	50%	35%	1%		G	35%	16%	41%	7%
	H	9%	54%	34%	3%		H	31%	12%	47%	10%
	I	10%	46%	41%	3%		I	36%	13%	44%	6%

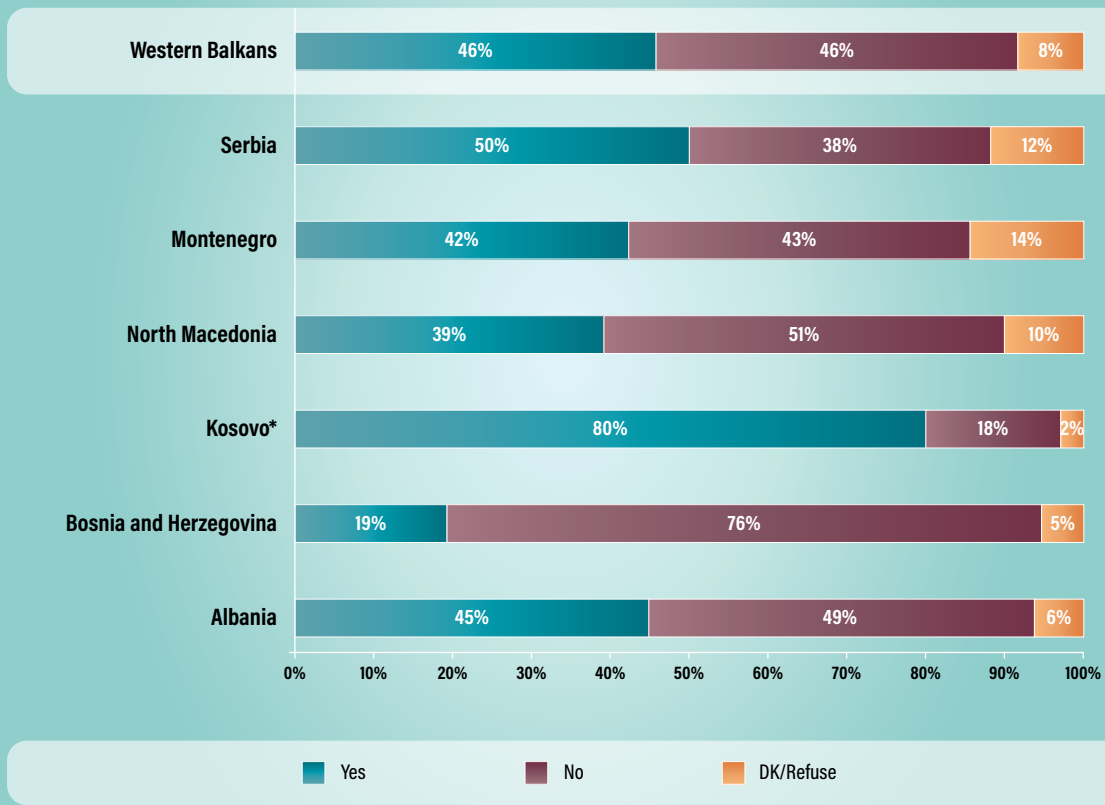
Within individual economies, in all of them except Kosovo* only a minority of respondents (up to roughly a quarter) think that security challenges will decrease in the next three years. On the other hand, comparably bigger majorities in Albania believe that most of these challenges will remain the same, most notably terrorism (55%), violent extremism (50%) disinformation and online

radicalisation (both at 49%). Terrorism is believed to remain the same by most of those polled in Kosovo* (55%), Montenegro (51%) and Serbia (48%) as well.

In other notable results, influx of migrants is perceived as an increasing challenge particularly in North Macedonia (59%) and Albania (48%). Kosovo* is an exception because around half of those polled there believe that five of these nine challenges will decrease in significance in the next three years: natural disasters (54%), cybersecurity (52%), serious organised crime (51%), financial crime (50%) and online radicalisation (49%).

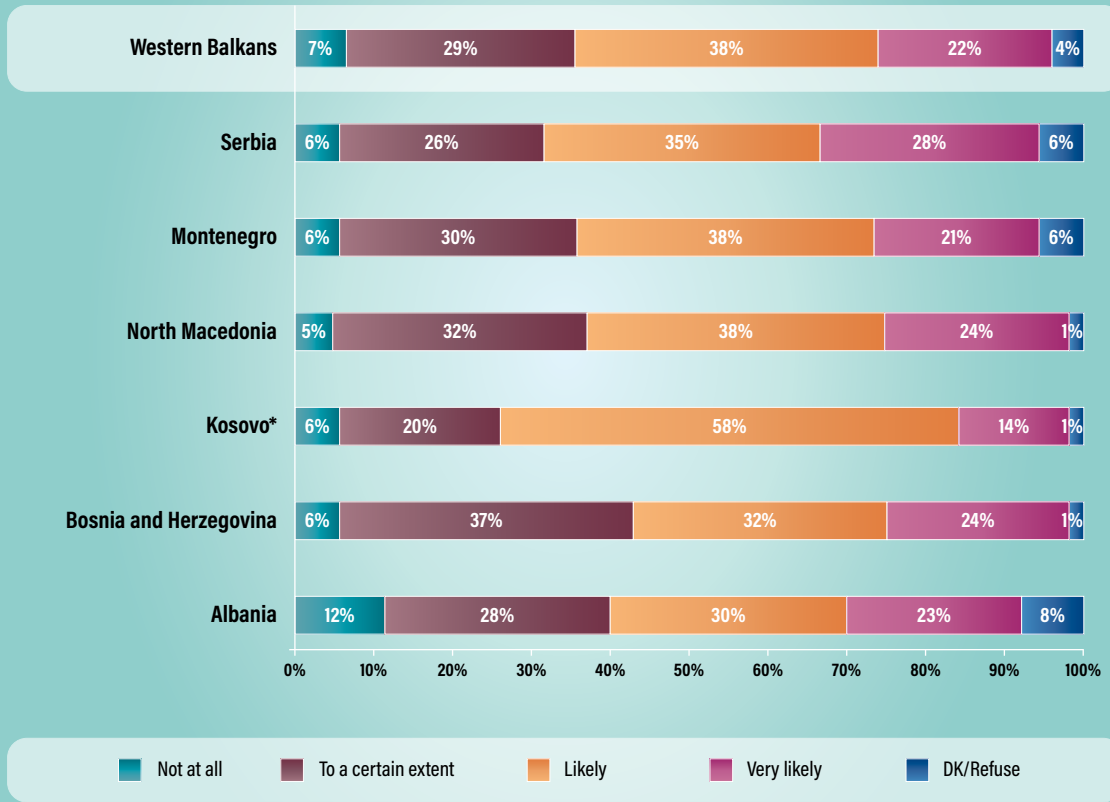
B.3 Border Security

Figure 15. In your opinion, do you think that the current level of border security of your economy is sufficient in terms of efficient management of an influx of migrants?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



When it comes to whether border security is sufficient to allow for efficient management of a potential influx of migrants, opinion is divided equally between negative and positive (both at a regional average of 46%). Regarding individual economies, Kosovo* has the highest number of respondents who think that this economy can ensure sufficient border security to manage such an influx (80%). Bosnia and Herzegovina—the economy with the highest share of those polled who think that their economy cannot ensure a sufficient level of border security for this purpose (76%)—lies on the opposite end of the scale.

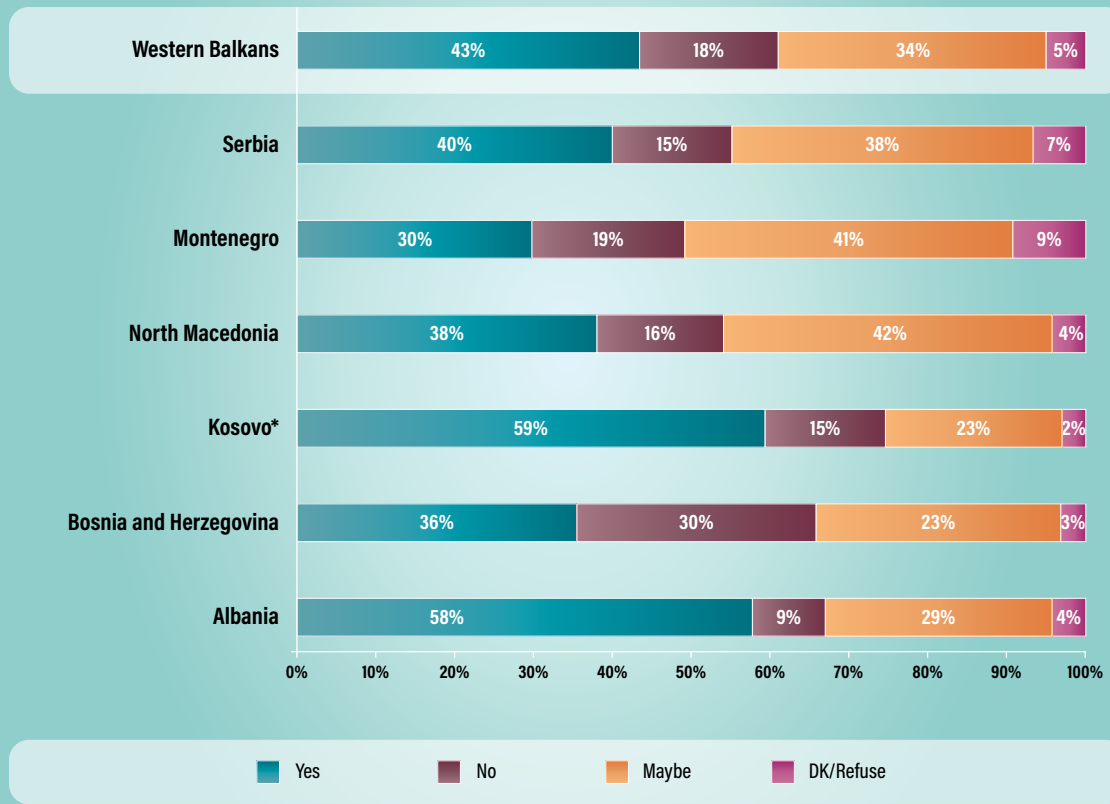
Figure 16. In your opinion, to what extent is it likely that the current situation in Ukraine will generate an influx of migrants/refugees to your economy and the WB region?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



Given the ongoing war in Ukraine and the fact that there are economies in the region that have already provided shelter to Ukrainians fleeing the war, it is reasonable to expect a high level of alertness for a potential influx of refugees from there. At the regional level, nearly nine out of ten respondents (89%) find such an eventuality as possibly occurring, while only 7% think it is not at all possible. Such an influx is seen to occur most likely in North Macedonia (by 94% of respondents) and least likely in Albania (by 81%).

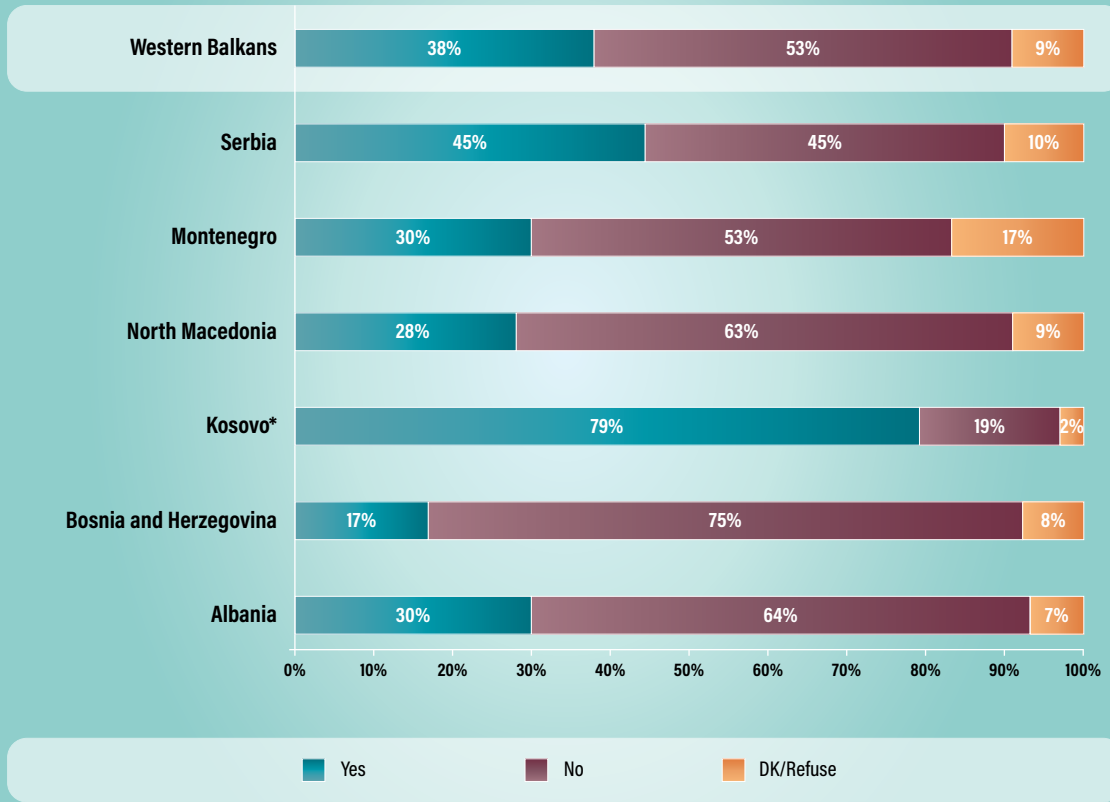
PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 17. Do you think that a regional contingency plan could help mitigate a potential influx of migrants and strengthen border security in your economy and the WB region?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



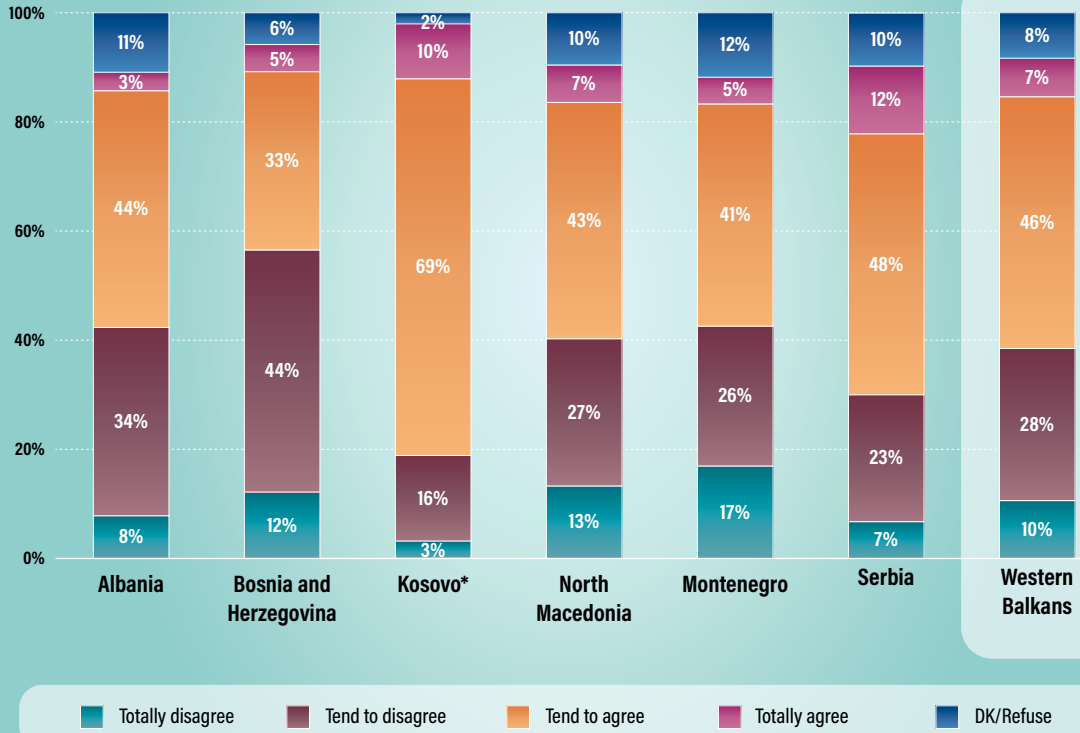
A regional contingency plan as a way to deal with a potential migrant influx is seen as helpful to mitigate it and strengthen border security by relative majorities in most economies. Overall, over four out of ten respondents (43%) in the region view such a plan as helpful, less than every fifth of them (18%) do not find it helpful, and over a third (34%) are unsure of its usefulness. Kosovo* is the leading economy in terms of the share of those polled who find such a plan helpful (59%), as opposed to half of that (30%) in Montenegro.

Figure 18. Do you think that the borders of your economy are secure enough to prevent transnational organized crime?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Compared to the previous round of *SecuriMeter*, there is a general perception in the region that borders have since become less secure in preventing organised crime. A regional median of 53% of respondents (5% more than in 2021 report) think that their economies' borders are not secure enough to prevent such crimes, as opposed to 38% (8% less than 46% of 2021 report) who believe that they are secure to ensure this. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, three-fourth (75%) of respondents gave negative answers and 17% answered positively. The share of those polled in this economy who think that its borders are not secure enough to prevent this type of crime has increased by 20% (from 55% in 2021 report) and the share of those who think that they are secure enough for this purpose has decreased by the same margin (from 37% in the first edition).

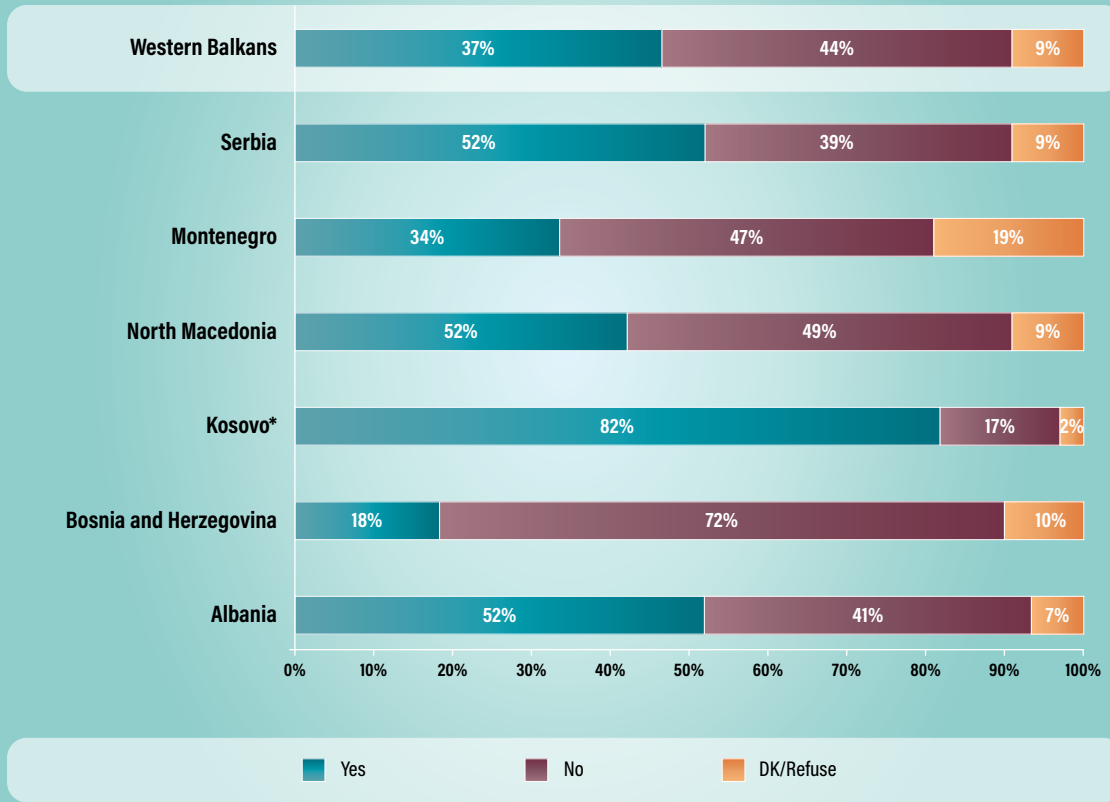
Figure 19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I anticipate that border security of the economy will be strengthened in the next 12 months in a way that contributes to the efforts of curbing various forms of transnational crime?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



Focusing on future expectations with regard to border security to curb transnational crime, a slight increase in pessimism is a notable trend in the region. Though still a majority (53%), on average 8% less respondents in the region than in 2021 round (61%) believe that borders of their economies will be strengthened over the next year to contribute to curbing transnational crime.

Kosovo* is the most optimistic economy on this issue: 79% of respondents (23% up from 56% in 2021) believe that during the next 12 months their economy will strengthen border security to curb transnational crime. Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, grew more sceptical in this regard: 56% (12% up from 44% in 2021) of those polled there do not think that their economy will be able to strengthen border security to prevent such crimes.

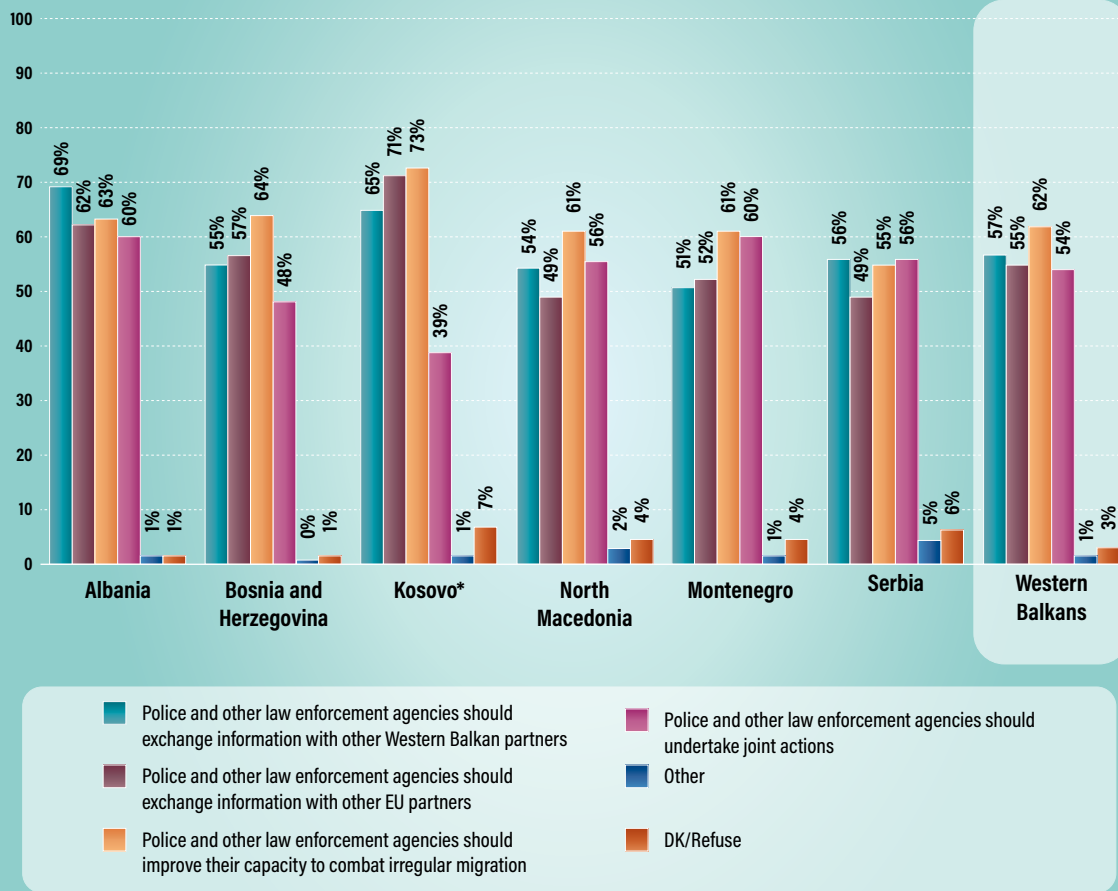
Figure 20. Do you agree with the following statement: The police and other law enforcement authorities in your economy are doing enough to fight irregular migration?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Opinion in the region on whether law enforcement authorities are doing enough to fight irregular migration is split almost equally between optimists and sceptics. While a mean 47% (6% less from 53% in 2021) believe that they are doing enough, 44% do not think so.

Kosovo* is, by a large margin, the leading economy by the number of those polled who answered positively (82%), while 72% of respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina gave negative answers. For Kosovo* this is a positive trend, since the optimistic group grew 26% bigger (56% in 2021), while the sceptical one grew 25% smaller (42% in 2021). In contrast, Bosnia and Herzegovina has followed a negative trend—the sceptical group grew 14% bigger (58% in 2021) while the optimistic one halved to 18% (from 36% in 2021).

Figure 21. In your opinion what should the law enforcement authorities be doing in order to fight the irregular migration more effectively?
 (All respondents, N=6041, maximum/top 4 (four) answers, share of total, %)

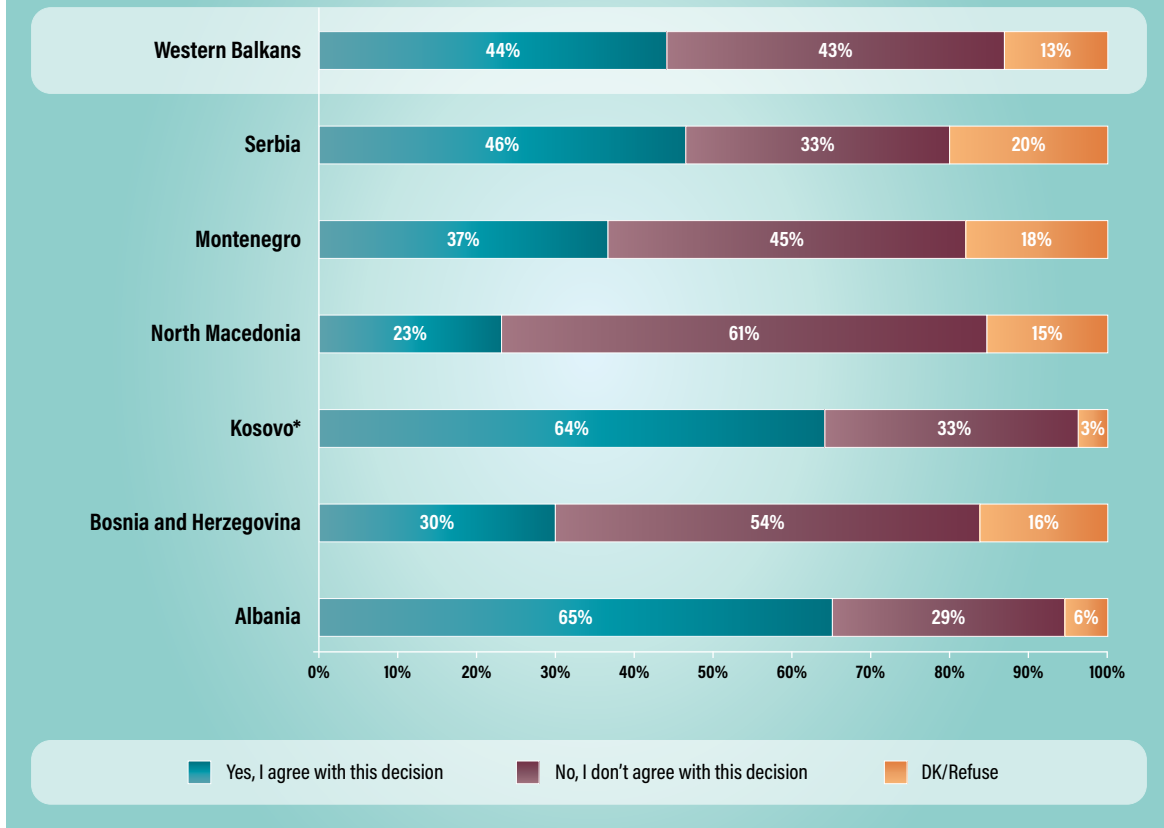


When it comes to measures to be taken by law enforcement authorities in order to fight irregular migration more effectively, improving their capacities is preferred by slightly more respondents (a regional average of 62%) than other three measures (between 54% and 57% on average). This shows moderate fluctuations by, for instance, 5% since the 2021 round, with 5% more favouring exchange of information with counterpart institutions within the region (52% in 2021) and 5% less favouring joint actions (59% in 2021).

Kosovo* remains the economy with the largest majority of respondents who prefer the first three measures: exchange of information within the region (65%, 79% in 2021) and with counterparts in the EU (71%, 82% in 2021) and capacity building (73%, 83% in 2021). Joint actions are least favoured in Kosovo* (39%) and most favoured in Albania and Montenegro (60%). Exchange of information within the region is most favoured in Albania (69%) and least in Montenegro (51%). Exchange of information with EU partners is least preferred in North Macedonia and Serbia (49% in both) and capacity building in Serbia (55%).

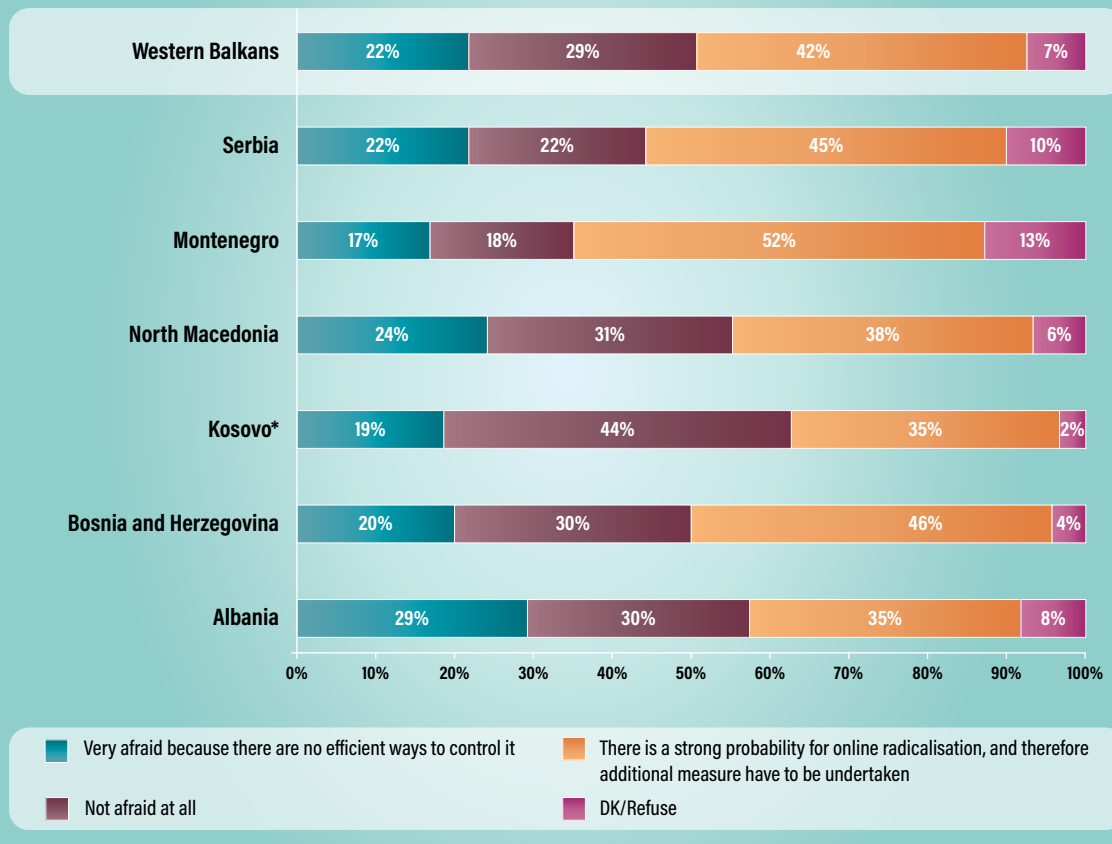
B.1 Terrorism

Figure 22. The Western Balkans economies decided to allow the return of foreign terrorist fighters and their families to their economy of origin, applying the law accordingly. Do you agree with this decision?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Opinion in the region is divided nearly equally between those who agree with decisions to return foreign fighters and their families and those who disagree (44% versus 43%, overall). The rejecting group has grown 6% smaller since the previous round (from 49%). Respondents in Albania are most accepting of such a decision (65% in 2021, in the same economy), while those in North Macedonia are least accepting of it (with 61% rejecting it, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina with 54%).

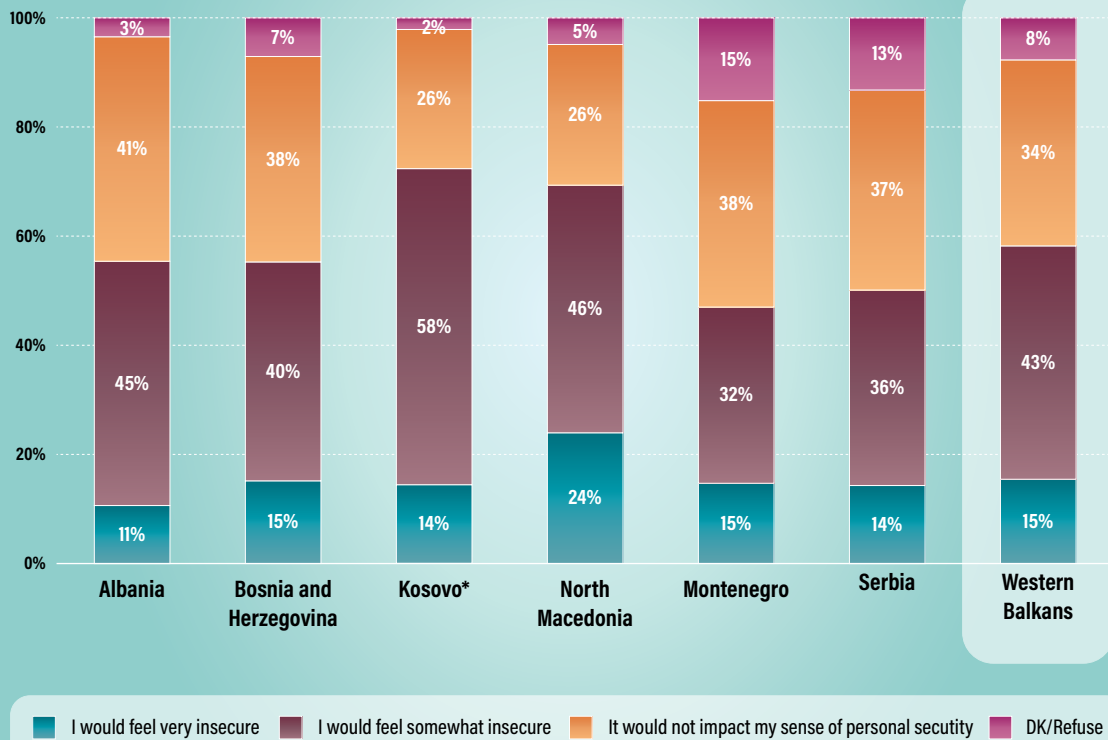
Figure 23. To what extent are you afraid of your children or young relatives and friends being radicalized online?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



On average, a considerable majority in the region (64% in this edition and 70% in the previous) is afraid of a strong probability of online radicalisation of children and young people, and demand additional measures to be taken or believe that it cannot be controlled. Furthermore, 29% (24% in 2021) are not afraid at all and 22% (26% in 2021) fear it because of lack of efficient ways to control this negative phenomenon.

Within individual economies, Montenegro has the largest group of those polled who fear a strong probability of online radicalisation (52%), as opposed to Albania and Kosovo* (both at 35%). In 2021 the largest such group was in Kosovo* (50%, 15% more than in this round) and the smallest in Montenegro (35%). In this round Kosovo* has the biggest group of respondents who are not afraid at all (44%) and Montenegro the smallest (18%), while in the previous round the biggest group was in Montenegro (44%) and the smallest in Kosovo* (9%). Lastly, Albania has the biggest group of those who are very afraid because of lack of ways to control it, as opposed to Montenegro (17%). In 2021 the biggest such group was in Kosovo* (39%) and the smallest in Montenegro as well (7%).

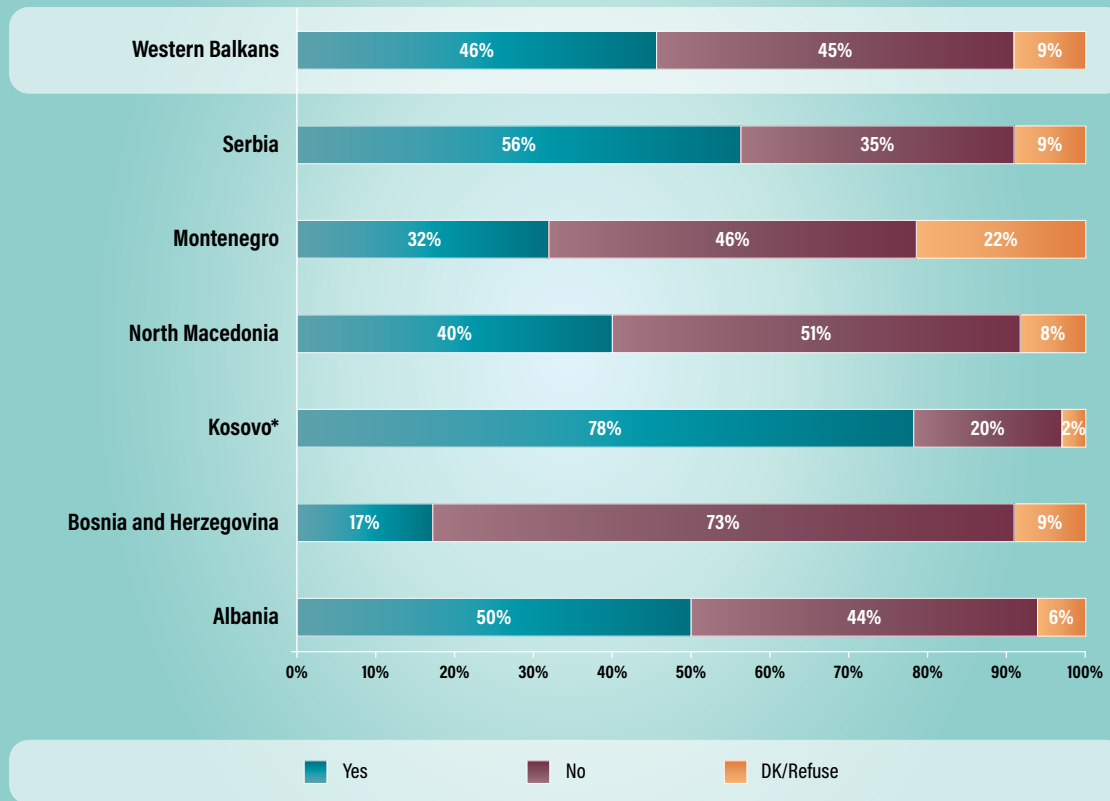
Figure 24. How do you feel the return of foreign terrorist fighters and their families to their local communities would impact your sense of personal security?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Slightly less respondents than in the last round of this Barometer said that the return of FTFs and their families to their local communities would not impact their sense of personal security, namely 34% of them (6% less, from 40% in 2021). A strong majority (58%), 55% in 2021) said this would affect their sense of personal security. Such a fear is most present among respondents in Kosovo* (72%) and least in Montenegro (47%). In the last round, 68% in North Macedonia expressed such a fear from FTFs and their families' potential return, as opposed to 34% in Serbia.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

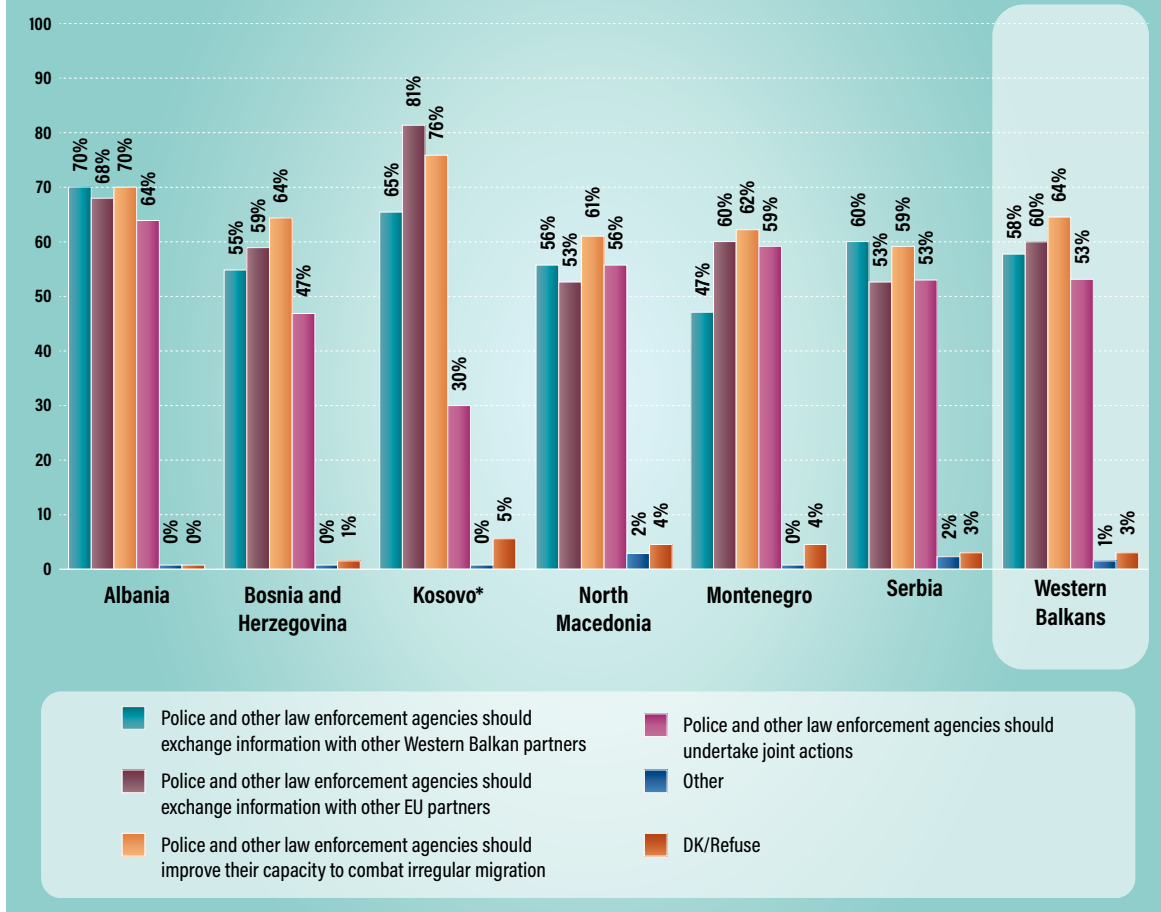
Figure 25. Do you agree with the following statement: The police and other law enforcement authorities in your economy are doing enough to fight terrorism?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



At the regional level, the share of respondents who think that law enforcement authorities are doing enough to fight terrorism has decreased by 10% (from 56% in 2021). Notably within individual economies, 78% in Kosovo* (30% up from 48% in 2021) answered positively, as opposed to 17% in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the latter having kept its position as the least optimistic economy on this (45%). In 2021 the most optimistic economy on this was Montenegro (77%).

Figure 26. In your opinion what should the law enforcement authorities be doing in order to fight terrorism more effectively?

(All respondents with answer No at Q20, N=2730, multiple answer, share of total, %)



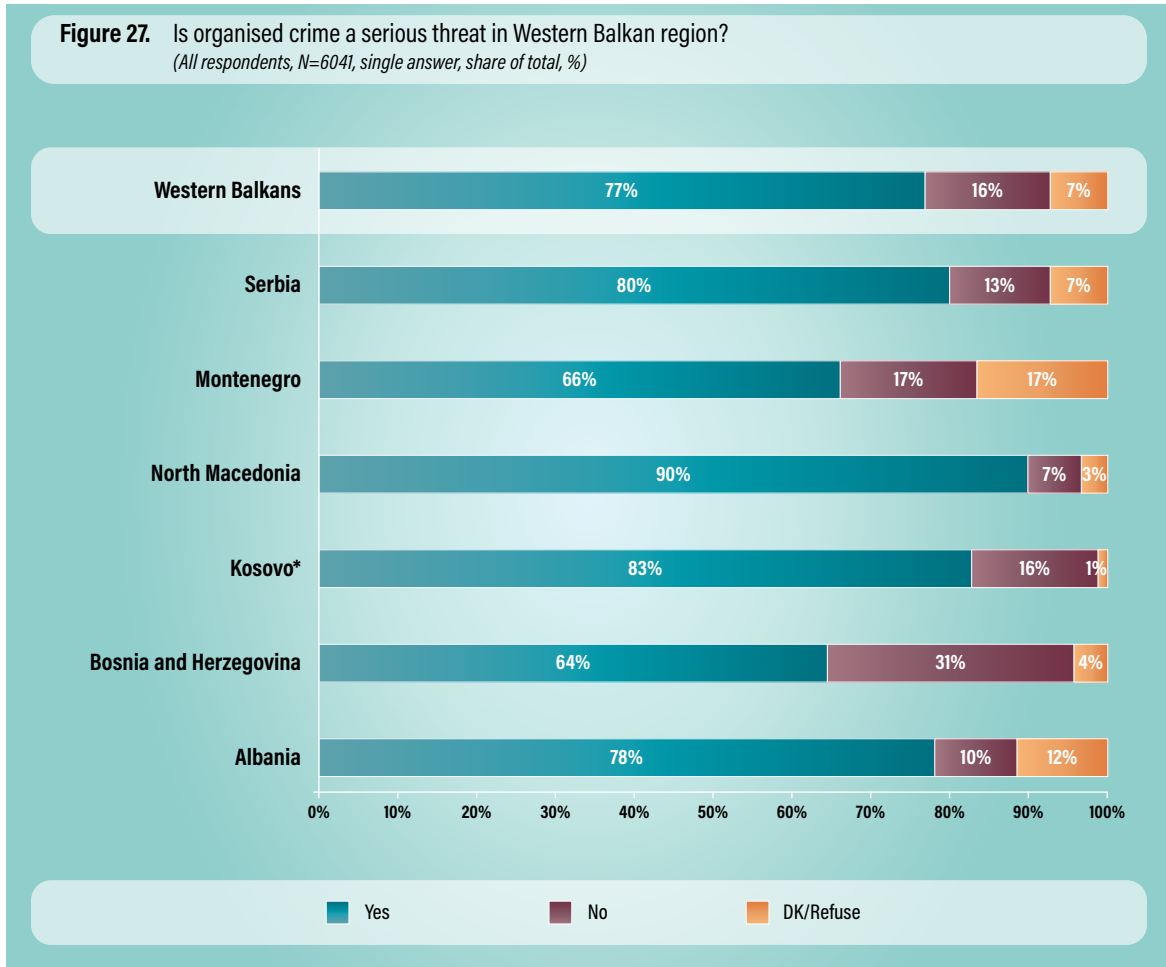
There is little difference in the region compared to the last year regarding the measures that survey population think should be taken by law enforcement authorities to fight terrorism more effectively, and all four measures are favoured almost equally. The following measures, ranked from the most to the least favoured, are supported by average majorities:

- ♥ Capacity building (64%, 67% in 2021);
- ♥ Exchange of information with partners in the EU (60%, 58% in 2021);
- ♥ Exchange of information with counterparts within the region (58%, 53% in 2021); and
- ♥ Undertaking joint actions (53%, 59% in 2021).

Exchange of information with partners in the EU is most supported in Kosovo* (81%) and least in North Macedonia and Serbia (53% in both). Likewise, capacity-building is also most favoured in Kosovo* (76%), as opposed to Serbia (59%). Exchange of information with counterparts within the region is the most preferred measure in Albania (70%) and the least preferred in Montenegro (47%). Albania also leads by the percentage of respondents who favour undertaking joint actions (64% of them), as opposed to Kosovo* (30%).

B.2 Organised Crime

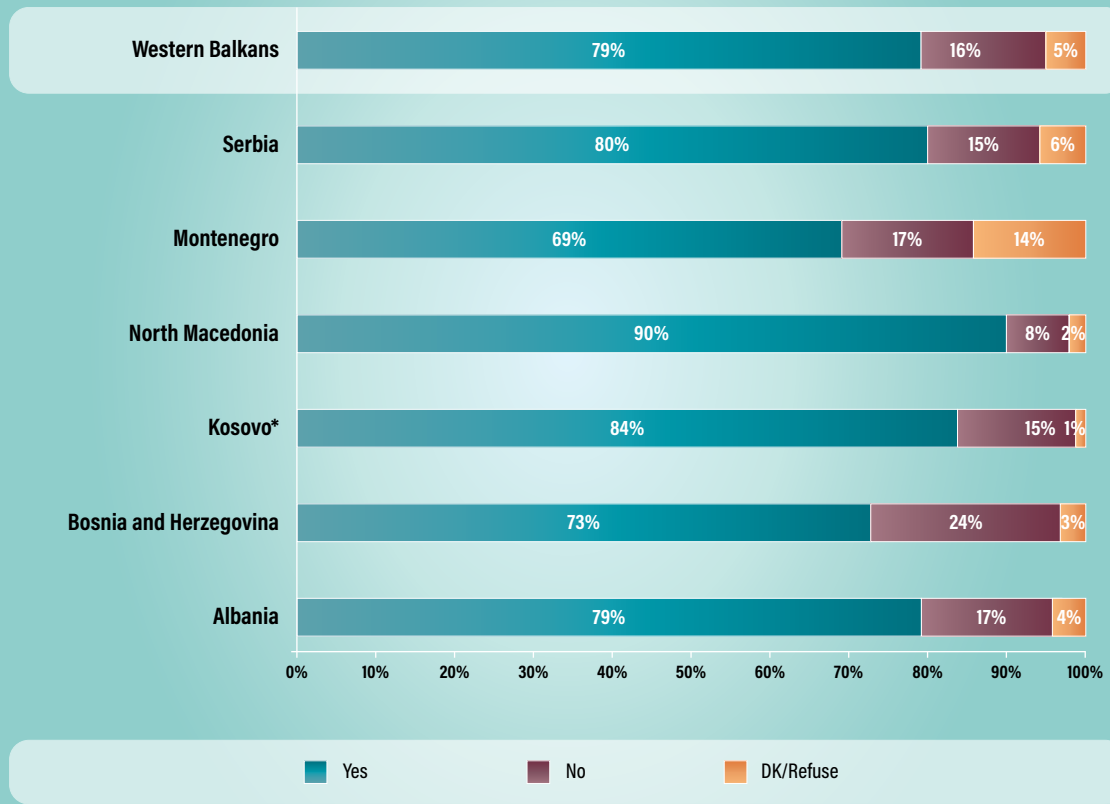
Figure 27. Is organised crime a serious threat in Western Balkan region?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Looking at the region as a whole, organised crime remains perceived a serious threat to the region by over two-thirds of those polled (77%, while it was 82% in 2021). North Macedonia is in this round home to the most worried that organised crime is a serious threat to the region (90%). Respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the least worried by it (64%).

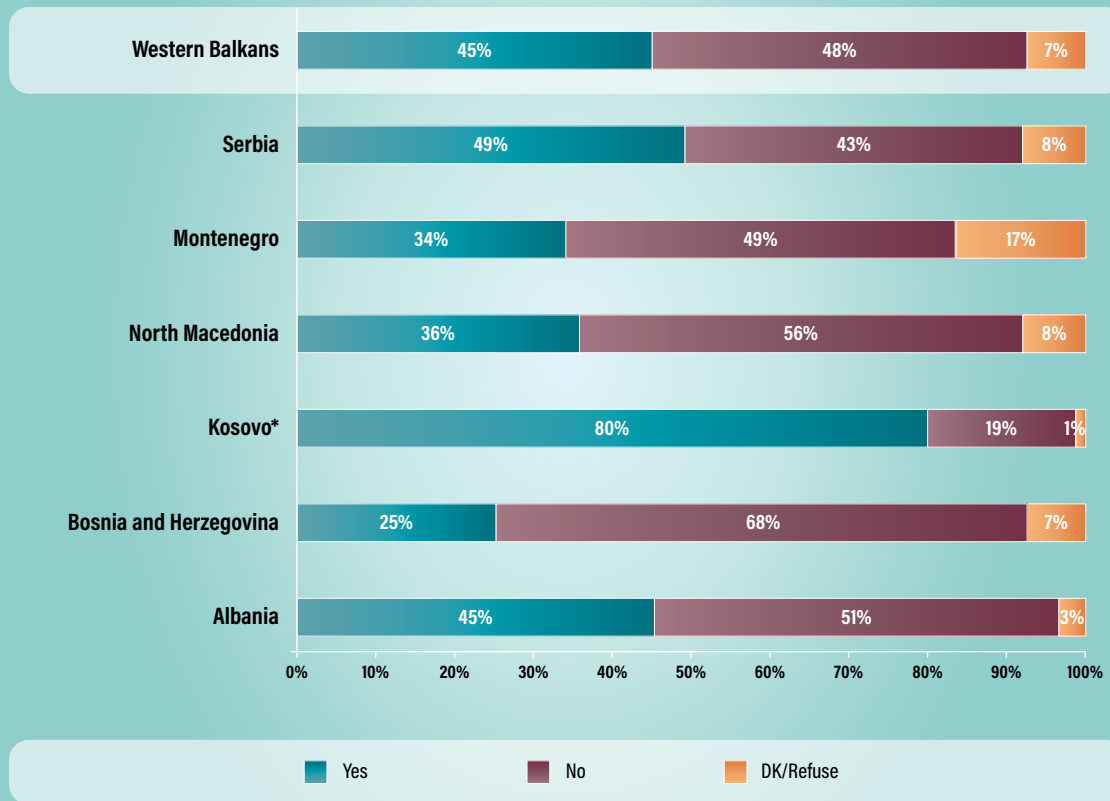
PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 28. Is organised crime a serious threat in your economy?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Along similar lines, about eight out of ten respondents (79%) consider organised crime a serious threat to their economies, roughly the same as in 2021 (78%). North Macedonia is the leading economy on this as well, with the same number of respondents who consider organised crime a threat to the entire region (90%). Montenegro lies on the other end of the scale: 69% of respondents in this economy are of opinion that organised crime is a threat to their economy.

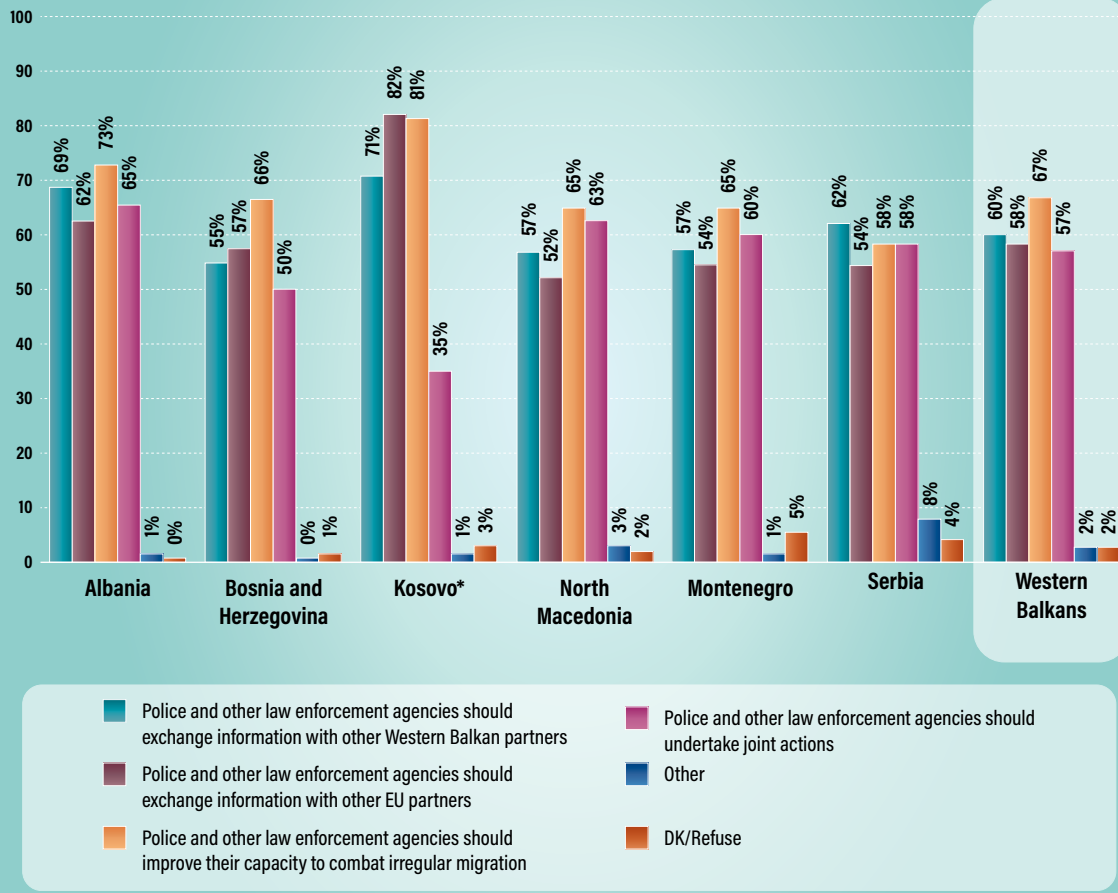
Figure 29. Do you agree with the following statement: The police and other law enforcement authorities in your economy are doing enough to fight organised crime?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



At the regional level, though nearly half of participants (48%) do not think that law enforcement authorities in their economies are doing enough to fighting organised crime, the share of those who think that they are doing enough (45%) is lower by a small margin. This is an incrementally improving trend since 2021 when 6% more of those polled (54% of them) believed that law enforcement authorities in their economies were not doing enough to fight organised crime.

On the other hand, Kosovo* is the economy with the biggest majority of those who view law enforcement authorities there as doing enough to fight organised crime (80%), as opposed to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where only a quarter (25%) share a positive assessment of the performance of law enforcement authorities there in fighting organised crime.

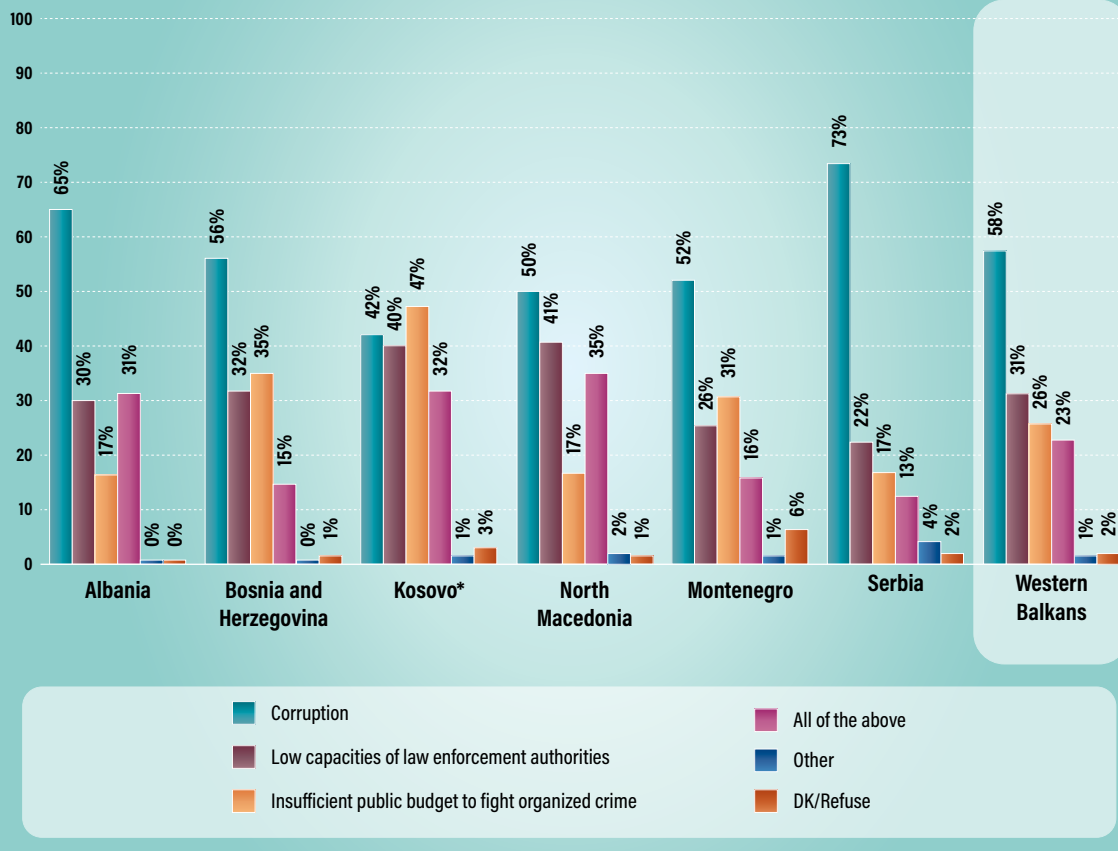
Figure 30. In your opinion what should the law enforcement authorities be doing in order to fight organised crime more effectively?
 (All respondents with answer No at Q23, N=2899, multiple answer, share of total, %)



Two-thirds (67%) of respondents in the region as a whole think that their law enforcement authorities would perform better in fighting organised crime if they would improve their capacities. The second most favoured measure (at 60%) is exchange of information between law enforcement agencies within the region. In the 2021 round 69% mentioned capacity building as such a measure, while exchange of information between law enforcement agencies within the region was favoured by 53%.

In individual economies, considerably bigger majorities in Kosovo* than in other economies have mentioned exchange of information with counterparts in the EU (82%) and capacity building as two most important measures to improve performance of law enforcement authorities there in fighting organised crime. The latter measure is favoured by almost three-quarters of respondents in Albania (73%), while Serbia (at 58%) lies at the other end of the spectrum on this. Joint actions is the third top measure mentioned by respondents in Albania (65% of them) and is least favoured in Kosovo* (by 35% of the survey population there).

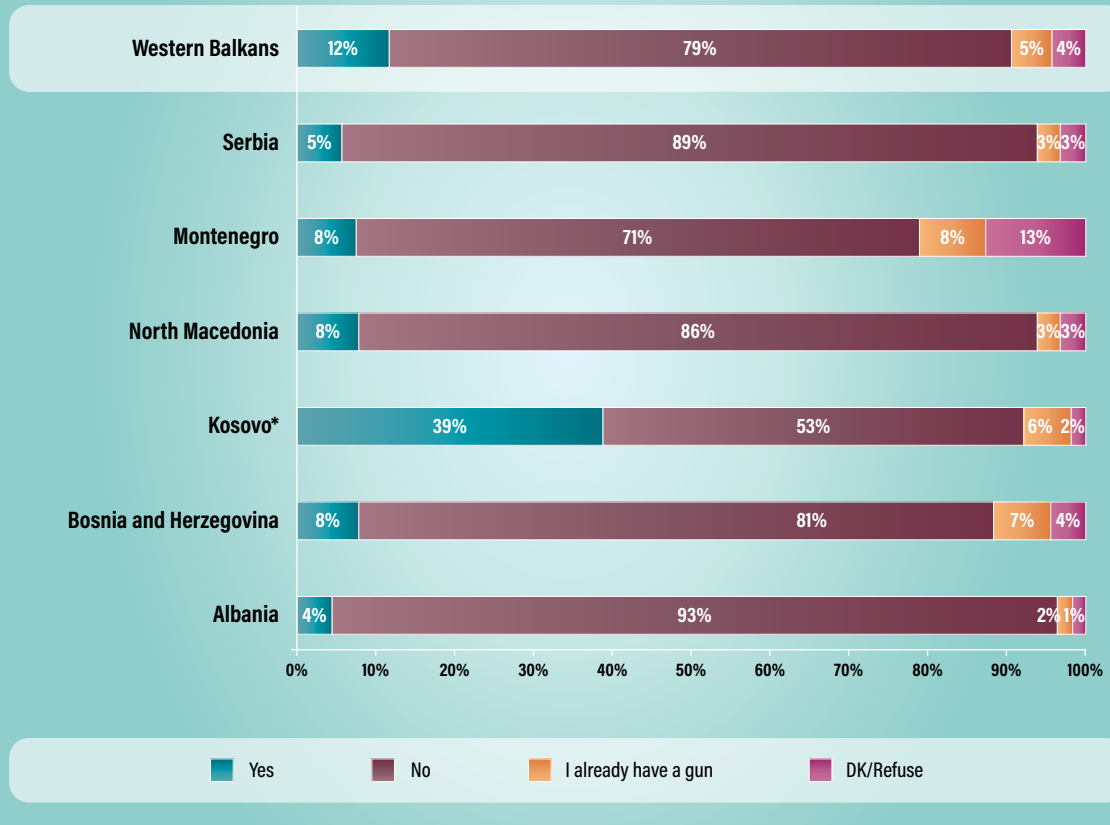
Figure 31. In your opinion, which are the reasons that your economy is not doing enough to fight organised crime effectively?
 (All respondents with answer "No" at Q23, N=2899, multiple answers, share of total, %)



Corruption is considered in most economies as the biggest reason for them not to be doing enough to effectively fight organised crime. On average, about six out of ten of those polled (58%) consider corruption the reason, followed by insufficient capacities of law enforcement authorities (31%) and insufficient public budgets. Nearly every fourth (23%) considers all these three factors as reasons for this. In individual economies, corruption is seen as the main reason in Serbia (by 73%), as opposed to Kosovo*, where 42% mentioned it as the reason. The main reason in the latter economy, mentioned by nearly half (47%) of respondents, is insufficient public budget. Low capacities of law enforcement authorities is considered as a reason by 41% of respondents in North Macedonia, on one end, and 22% in Serbia, on the other. Along similar lines, over one third (35%) in North Macedonia view all these three reasons as contributing to insufficient fight against organised crime, as opposed to only 13% in Serbia.

C. Perceptions on Gun Ownership and Fighting against Illicit Possession, Trafficking and Misuse of SALW

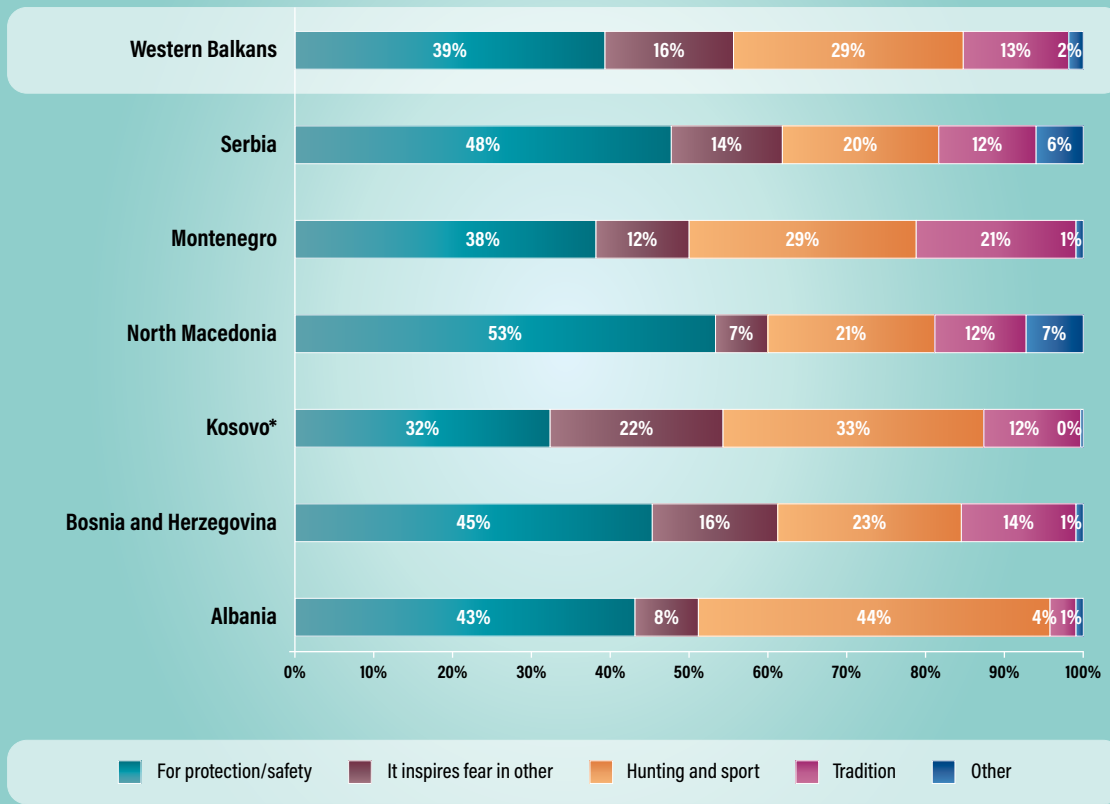
Figure 32. Would you consider owning a gun?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Although the number of survey respondents who said that they would consider owning a gun doubled (from 6% to 12%), the vast majority of citizens (79%) in the region would not consider this option. Despite doubling of the number of those among survey population who said they would considering consider the option of owning a gun (from 6% to 12%), such an option remains overwhelmingly not considered by a vast majority of citizens (79% of those polled) in the region as a whole.

In terms of individual economies, the 2022 *SecuriMeter* reveals a substantial rise in the percentage of respondents who would consider owning a gun in Kosovo* from 7% in the 2021 *SecuriMeter* to 39% in this round. In addition, comparison of data for 2021 and 2022 *SecuriMeters* indicates that apart from North Macedonia and Serbia, an increase was documented in all other economies although to a much smaller scale than in Kosovo*. North Macedonia is the only economy where the number of respondents who would consider owning a gun decreased (from 14% to 8%).

Figure 33. What would be/is the main reason for you to own a gun?
 (Respondents with answer "Yes" and "I already have a gun" at Q24, N=1006, single answer, share of total, %)

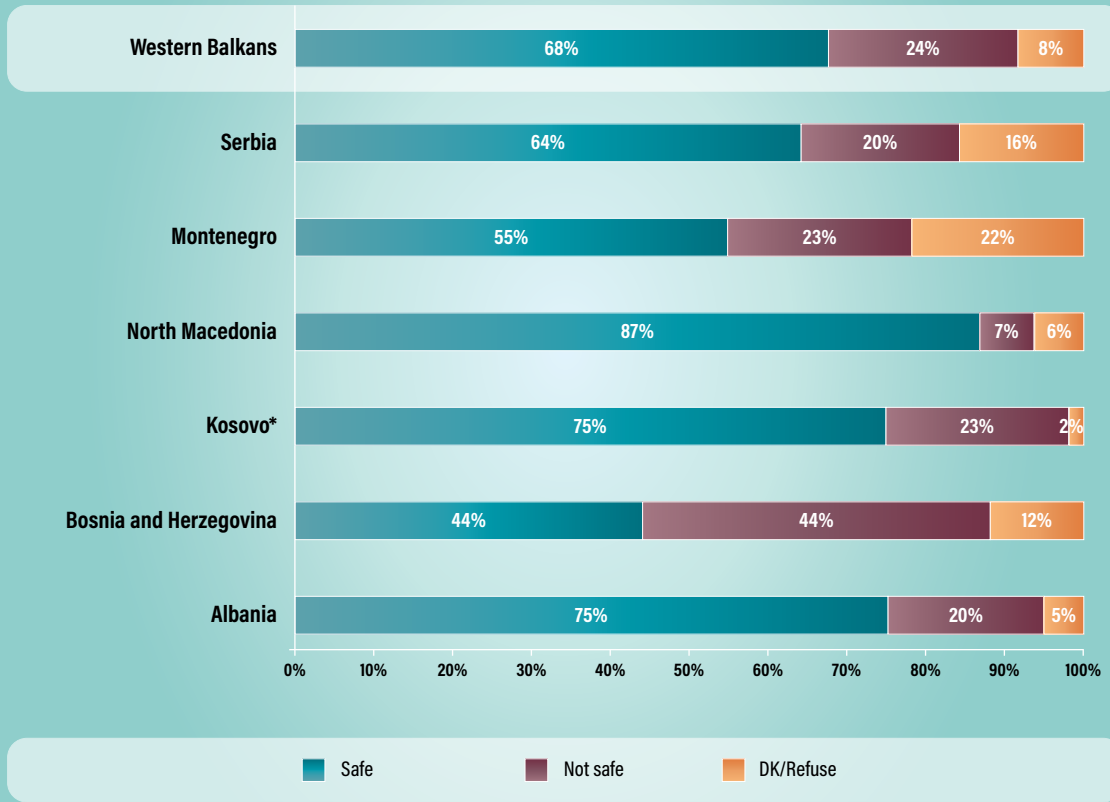


39% of the survey respondents from the region who stated that they would consider owning a gun or that they already had a gun, cite protection as the main reason for it (which is 9% less, from 48% in 2021 [SecuriMeter](#)). Hunting and sport is the second most indicated reason, mentioned by 29% of respondents who said that they would consider owning a gun or already had a gun (25% in 2021 [SecuriMeter](#)). Inspiring fear in others is a reason cited by 16% (up from 2% in 2021 [SecuriMeter](#)) and tradition cited by 13% (16% in 2021 [SecuriMeter](#)).

Respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia most frequently cited protection/safety as the main reason for owning a gun, while in Albania and Kosovo*, hunting and sport come first, closely followed by protection and safety.

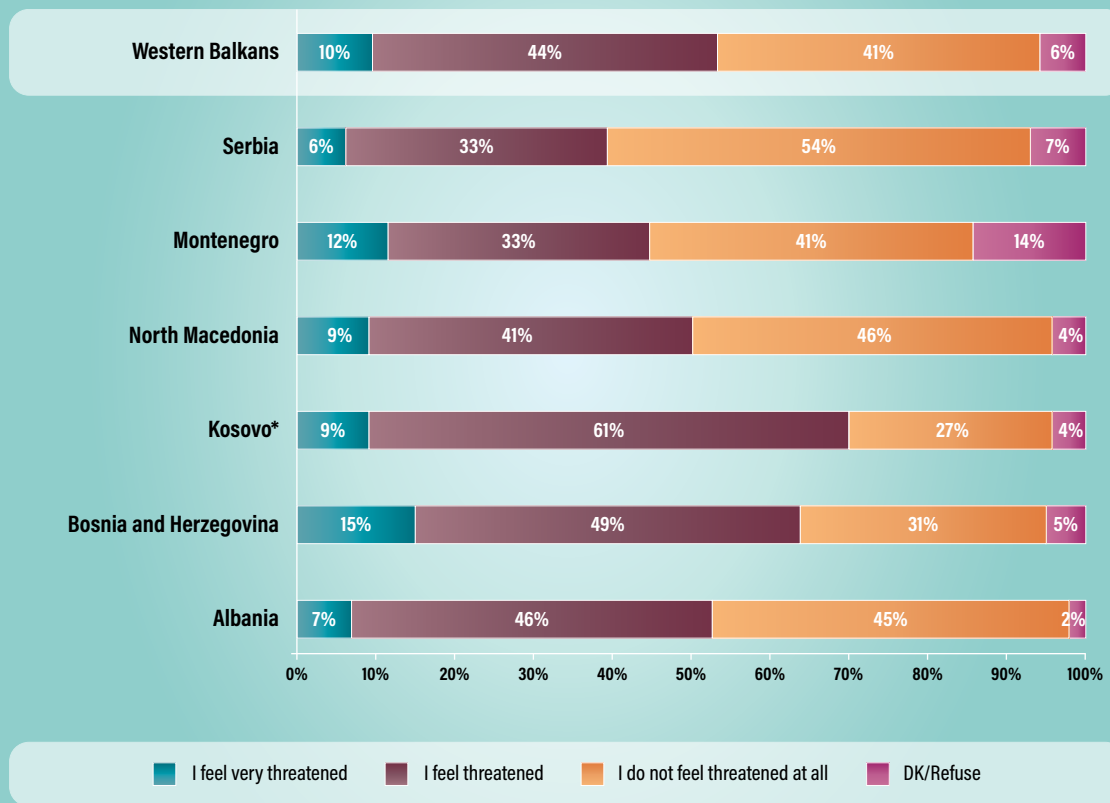
Compared to [SecuriMeter](#) 2021, changes in respondents' attitudes were documented at the level of each economy. Most notably, in all economies, apart from Montenegro, the share of respondents who cited protection/safety as a main reason for owning a gun significantly decreased. In addition, an increase was documented in all economies in the share of respondents who said that they would own a gun because it inspires fear in others.

Figure 34. Would/Does having a gun at home make you feel:
(Respondents with answer "Yes" and "I already have a gun" at Q24, N=1006, single answer, share of total, %)



In the perception of 68% of respondents across the region, owning a gun at home would make them feel safer (a 7% decrease from 2021 [SecuriMeter](#)). Of those who said that they would consider owning a gun or have one, respondents from North Macedonia were significantly more likely (87% of them) than others to say that having a gun at home would make them feel safer. On the other hand, respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina were more likely than respondents from other economies to say that having a gun at home would make them feel not safe (44%).

Figure 35. How threatened do you feel by the illegal possession and misuse of weapons in your neighborhood (as in crime, domestic violence, celebratory shooting, etc.)
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



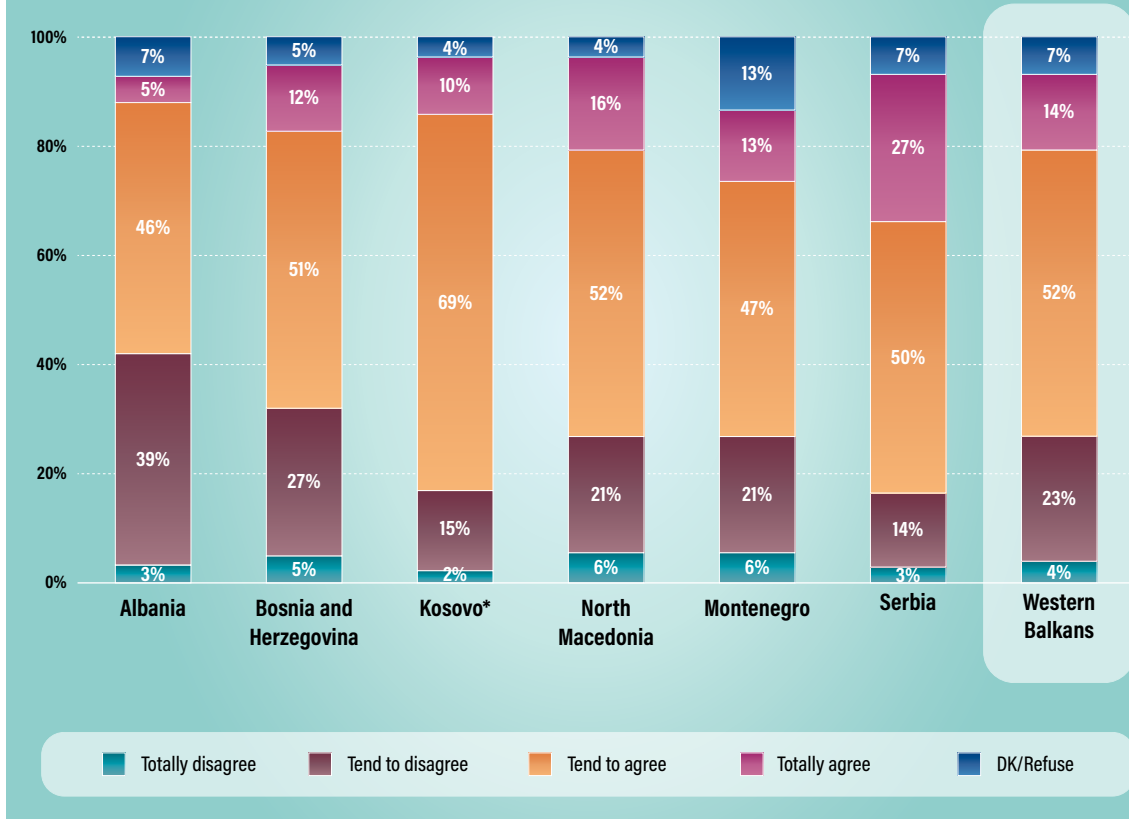
Findings indicate that citizens in the region are quite divided over risks that illegally owned weapons pose on their security. While the majority of respondents in the region (55%) does not feel threatened by illegal possession and misuse of weapons in their neighbourhoods, significant share of respondents (45%) feels threatened to certain extent (35% threatened and 12% very threatened).

At economy level, respondents from Montenegro (62%) and Serbia (61%) were most likely not to feel threatened by risks associated with firearms, followed by North Macedonia (56%), Albania (53%) and Kosovo* (51%). Bosnia and Herzegovina is the jurisdiction with the highest percentage of respondents feeling threatened from the illegal possession and misuse of firearms (56%).

Compared to 2021, the share of respondents who said they did not feel threatened increased slightly—from 49% to 55%. Such increase was recorded in each economy in the Western Balkans, except for Montenegro where a minor decrease was documented (1%).

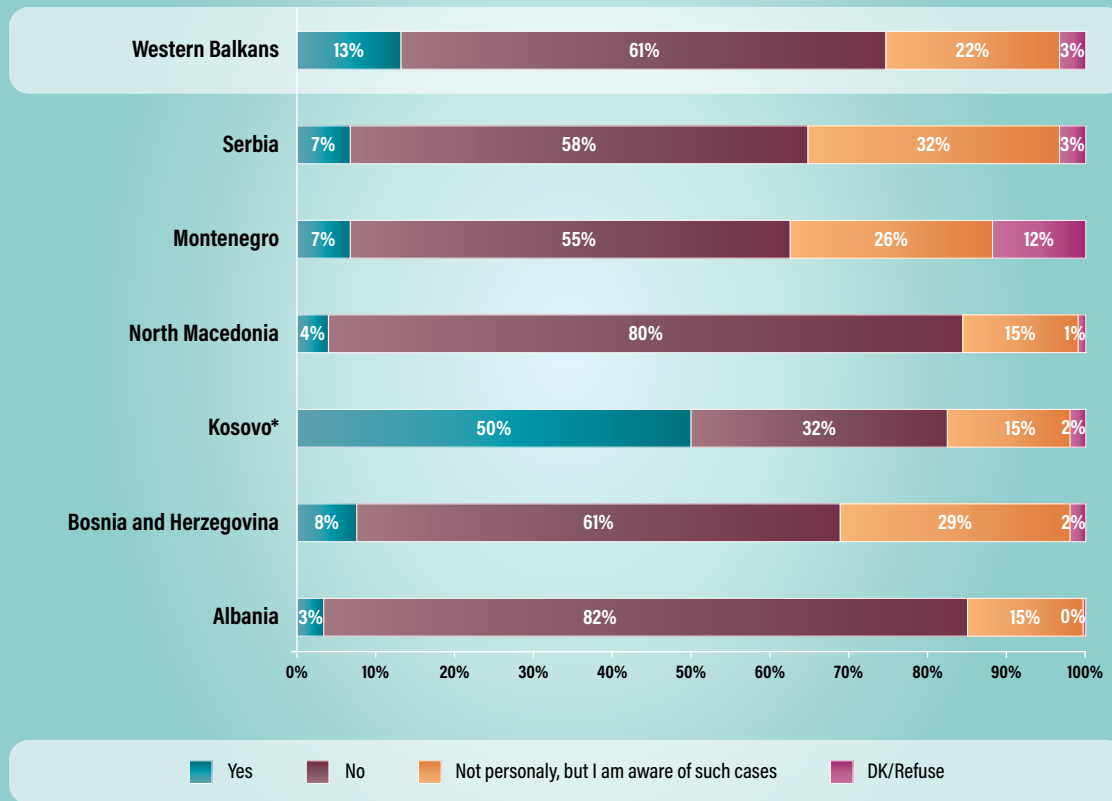
D. Perceptions of Irregular Immigrations, Asylum Seeking and Humanitarian Dimension of Migratory Movements

Figure 36. Do you agree that migrants entering your economy increase security risks for the economy?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



Looking at the regional average, an overwhelming majority of 66% of respondents (70% in 2021) consider that migrants entering their economy increase security risks, as opposed to 27% sharing such a sentiment. At economy level, such a security risk is perceived by the biggest majority in Kosovo* (79%), as opposed to 51% in Albania considering it so.

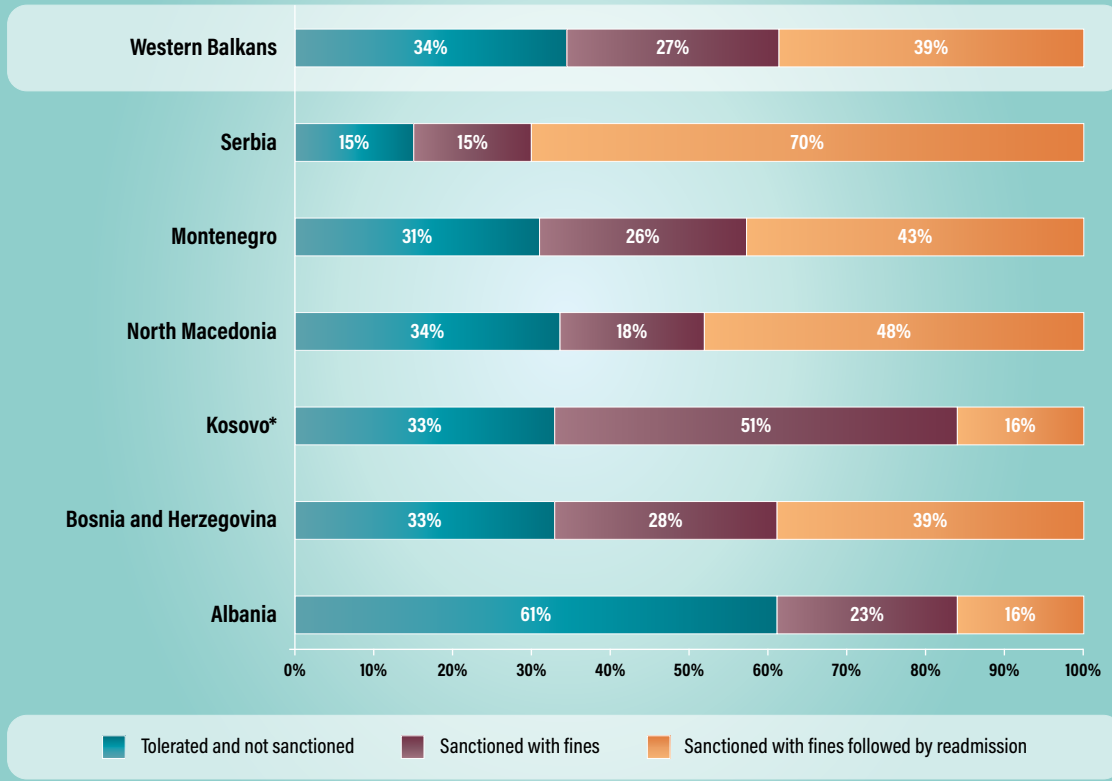
Figure 37. Have you ever had a negative experience from an interaction with an irregular migrant(s) in your economy?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



As survey findings in this new entry into the Security Barometer show, the vast majority of those polled in the region did not have negative experiences in their interaction with irregular migrants in their economies. Over six out of ten (61%) of them did not have such experiences, as opposed to 13% who claim to have had and about every fifth (22%) who said that they did not have them personally but were aware of such cases.

Of individual economies, Albania has the highest number of respondents who did not have negative experiences with irregular migrants (82%), followed by North Macedonia (80%). Kosovo*, on the other hand, is home to the highest number of those polled who reported having had negative experiences with irregular migrants—half of them—while a third (32%) did not. Serbia has the highest number of those polled who did not experience such cases personally but are aware of them (32%), as opposed to Albania and North Macedonia (15%).

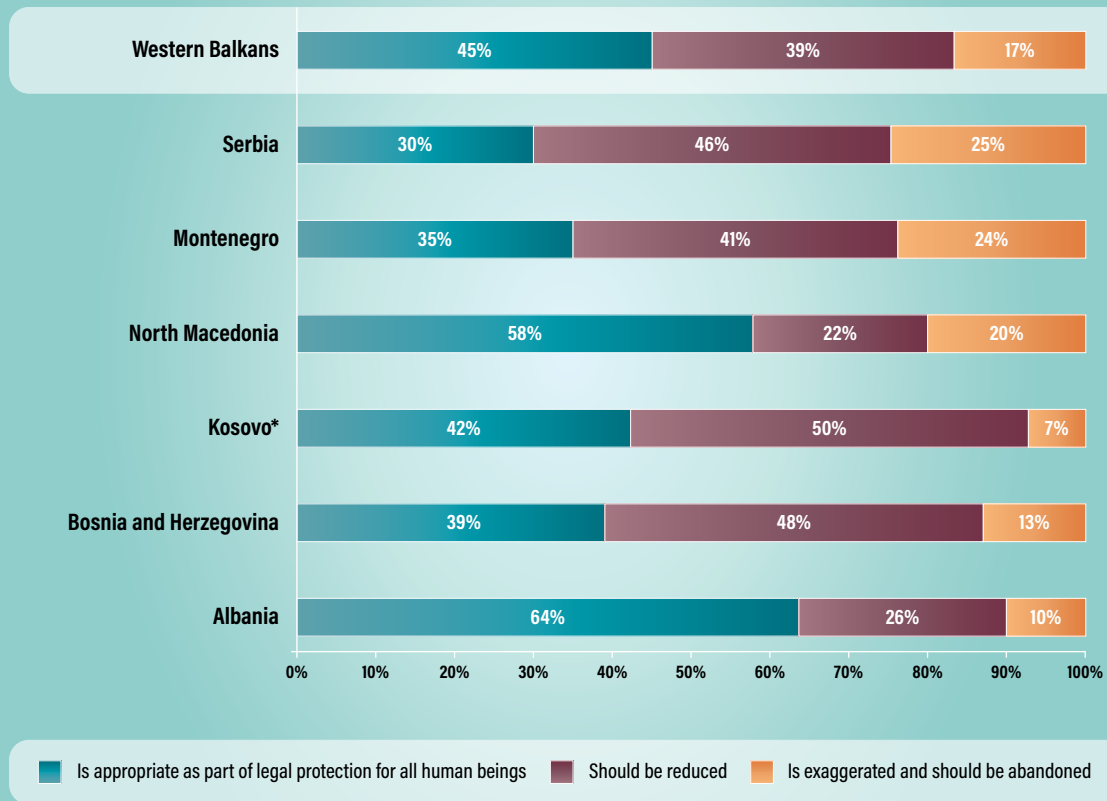
Figure 38. Irregular migrants violate migration regulations of the [ECONOMY] because they have crossed the borders illegally and without permission and legitimising documents. If irregular migrants have not committed other criminal offences, do you think that illegal border crossing as such should be:
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Taking the region as a whole, only one third of respondents (34%) favour tolerating and not sanctioning illegal migrants entering their economies, showing an upward trend from 28% in the last edition of this Barometer. Even more of them (39%) would prefer sanctioning and proceeding with their readmission back to their countries of origin, while over one in four (27%) of respondents would opt for fining them.

Albania remains the only economy where most respondents—61%, 62% in 2021—favour a policy of not sanctioning migrants engaged in illegal border crossing into this economy. Only 16% support the more punitive policy of fining and readmission which might be explained by Albania’s recent experience with massive irregular emigration. In Serbia, in contrast, only 15% support such a liberal policy, instead favouring a policy of fining illegal migrants entering this economy followed by readmitting them back to their economies of origin.

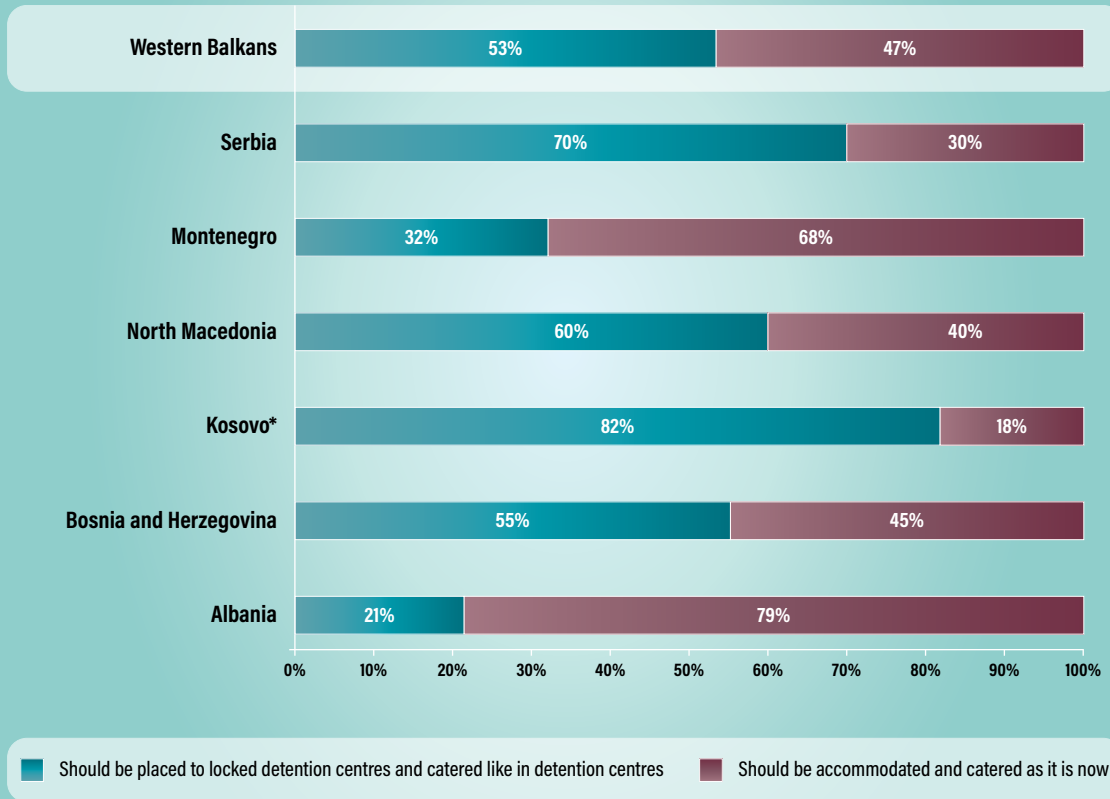
Figure 39. International conventions give irregular migrants the same access to judicial system (and courts) as the local population. Do you think that this access to justice:
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



On average, a relative majority (45%) of the survey population in the region agree that illegal migrants should be given access to justice systems in their economies in equal measure to the local population, while a large minority (39%) think that such access should be reduced, and there is even a considerable share (17%) of those who think that such an idea is exaggerated and should be abandoned altogether. Compared to the last round, the public opinion in the region has become slightly less accepting of giving illegal migrants equal access to their justice systems, as the share of those considering it appropriate declined by one percentage point (from 46%) and the number of those polled who consider that such access should be reduced increased by 6% (from 33%).

Of individual economies Albania (at 64%) is most accepting to equal access of irregular migrants to the justice system there, while Serbia is the least given that only under one-third (30%) of its respondents find it appropriate, 46% think such a right should be reduced, and a quarter (25%), the highest in the region, think it should be abandoned altogether.

Figure 40. Irregular migrants are accommodated and catered by a host country as long as they are on its territory. Do you think that irregular migrants:
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)

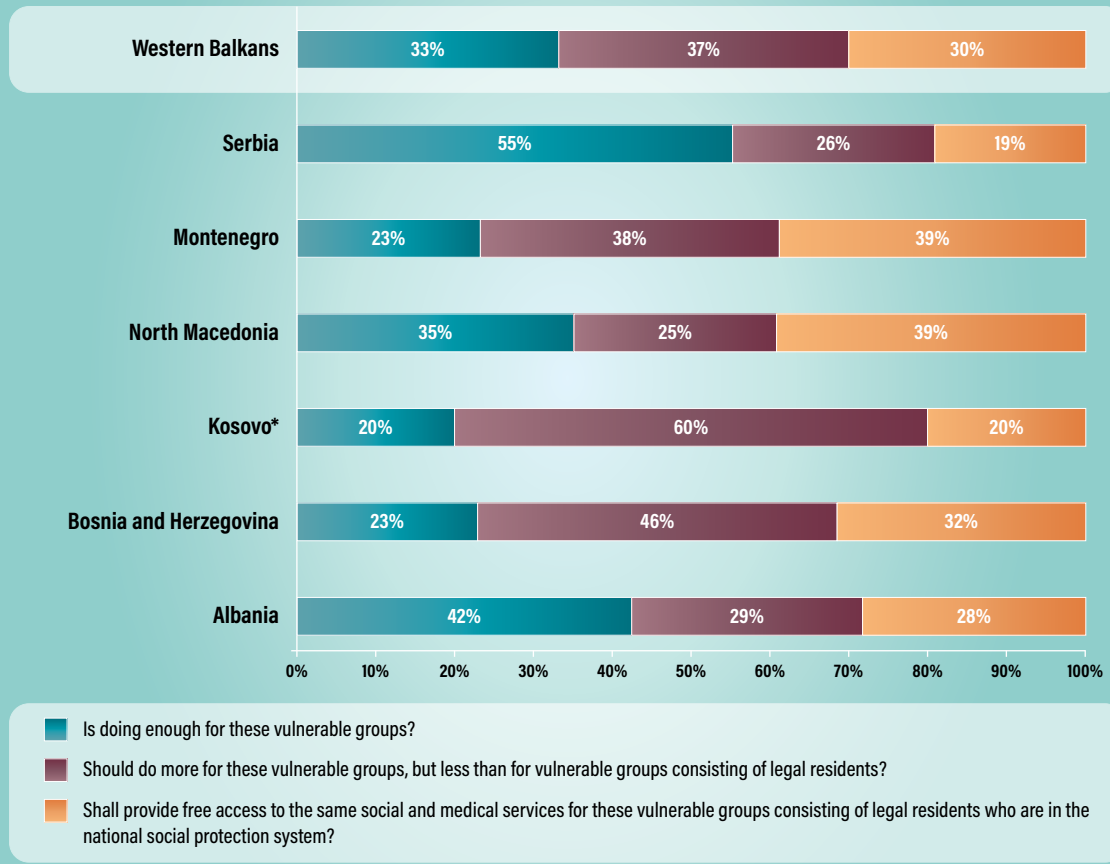


On treatment of irregular migrants in regional economies hosting them, the number of those polled who think that they should be placed in locked detention centres and catered in conditions provided in such centres still constitutes a majority (53%), though considerably lower than a year ago (68%). Conversely, the proportion of those polled who agree with the sometimes-used practice of accommodating illegal migrants at hotels and catering them at the host economy costs (47) has increased by 15%, from 32% in 2021.

Of all individual economies, Albania (at 79%) is again, by a large margin, most accepting to accommodating migrants at hotels rather than in detention centres, as opposed to Kosovo*, where 82% think that they should be placed in locked detention centres.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 41. Among irregular migrants there are vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, mothers with young children, elderly, people with disabilities. In your opinion, your economy:
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



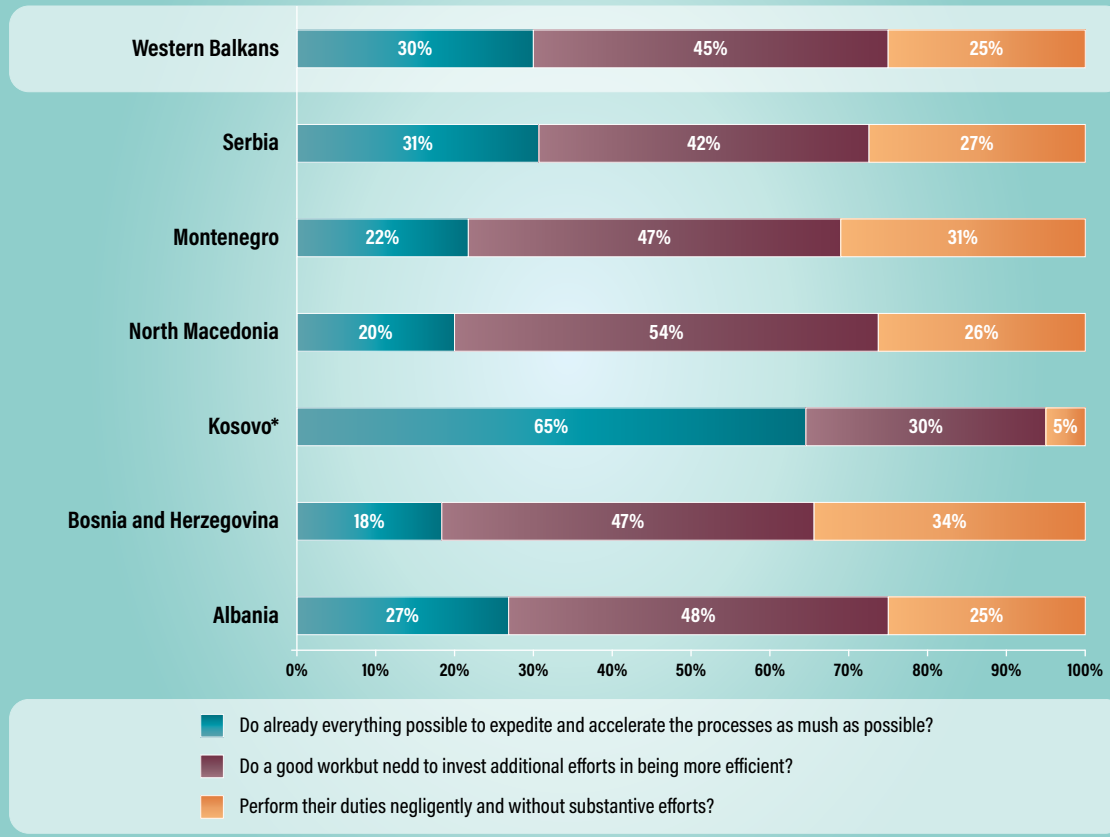
When it comes to the treatment of vulnerable groups among irregular migrants in their economies, the public opinion in the Western Balkans region is divided roughly equally into three groups: those who think more should be done for such people but less than for vulnerable people who are residents of respective economies (37%), those who think that enough is being done already (33), and the more generous ones who are of the opinion that vulnerably people among irregular migrants should be granted free access to the same social and medical serviced as local residents (30%). The most notable trend is the decrease by 15 percentage points (from 48% to 33%) of the share of respondents who are of the opinion that their economies are already doing enough for vulnerable people among irregular migrants.

Of individual economies, North Macedonia and Montenegro turn out to be most generous, with the biggest groups of those polled (39% in each) who share the opinion that vulnerable groups among irregular migrants should have access to social and medical services of the host economy in equal measure as vulnerable people who are local residents. Moreover, the biggest group in Serbia (55%) consists of those who think that enough is being already done by this economy for vulnerable irregular migrants, as opposed to Kosovo*, where only one in five (20%) belongs to such a group. Most respondents in the latter economy (60%) belong to the group of those who think that more should be done for this category of irregular migrants but less than for the same categories of legal local residents.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 42. The governmental and judicial procedures to expel or readmit irregular migrants take very long time, sometimes many years and can be very expensive. Do you think that the Governmental Administrations and the Judiciary:

(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)

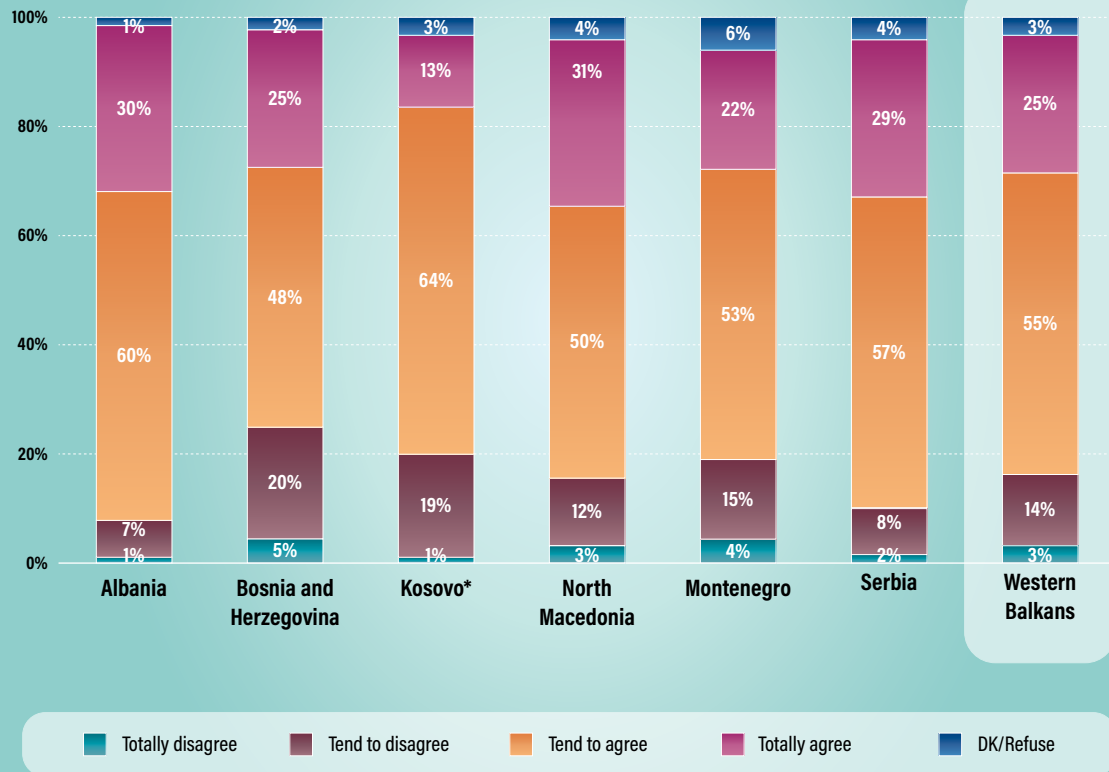


On average, a relative majority of the survey population in the region (45%) agree that their economies already do a good work in terms of governmental and judicial procedures to expel or readmit irregular migrants but additional efforts are needed, while under a third (30%) said that their economies already do everything possible to expedite and accelerate such a process, and a quarter (25%) of them think that respective institutions in their economies perform their duties on this negligently and without substantive effort. A shift by the largest margin compared to the previous round of this Barometer is the reduction by 14% (from 44%) of the share of those who think that everything possible is already being done. Conversely, the group who thinks that additional efforts are still needed to make this process more efficient has grown 10% bigger (from 35%).

Kosovo* is the only economy where the absolute majority of survey participants (65%) think that everything possible is already being done, as opposed to Bosnia and Herzegovina where this group makes up only 18% of the entire survey population. Over half in North Macedonia (54%) believe that additional efforts are needed, while this opinion is shared by less than one-third (30%) in Kosovo*.

E. Perceptions of Disaster Prevention and Disaster Preparedness

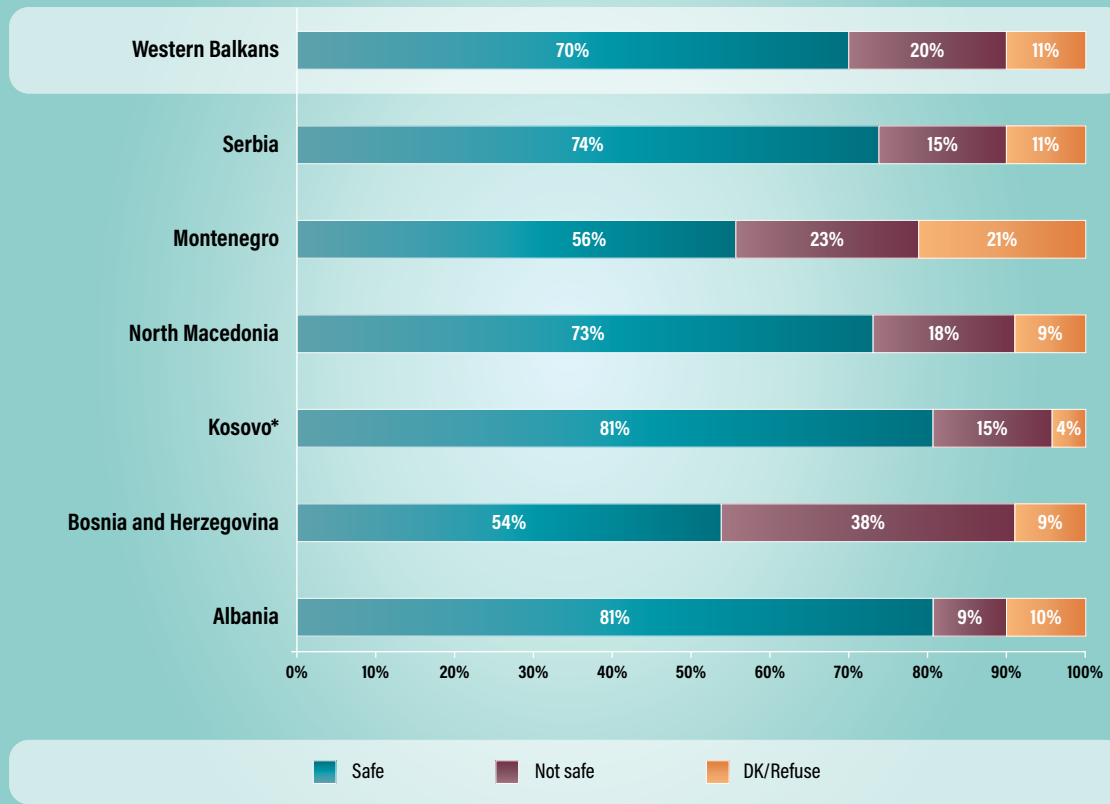
Figure 43. To what extent do you agree with the following statements: Natural disasters present a serious security threat to economy?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



On average, more respondents in the Western Balkans region than a year ago (80%, 77% in 2021) agree with the statement that natural disasters present a serious security threat to their economies. This overwhelming consensus opinion is considerably stronger in Albania (by 90% of respondents), followed by Serbia (76%). Bosnia and Herzegovina lies on the other end of the scale: 73% of those polled in this economy share the opinion that natural disasters present a serious security threat to their economy.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

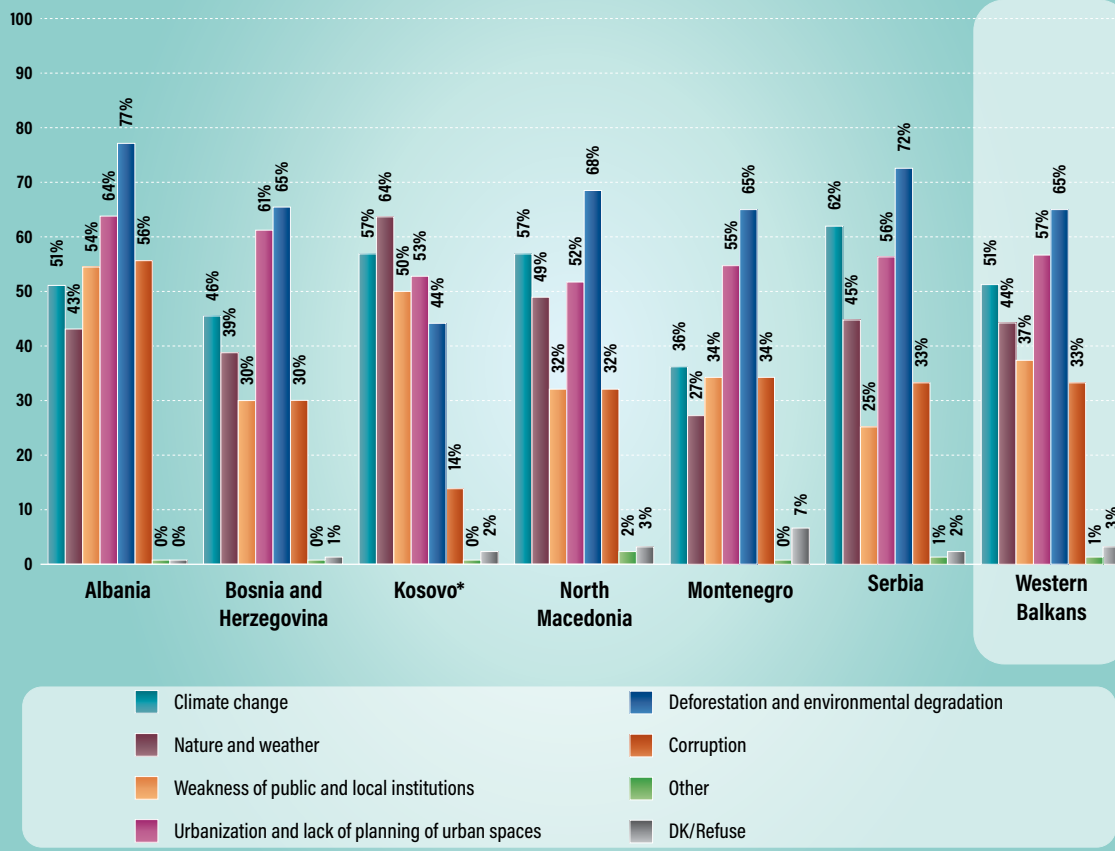
Figure 44. In your opinion, do you think that the WB region would benefit from regional cooperation and joint preparedness system for natural and man-made disasters, including pandemics?
All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, (%)



Somewhat in line with the perceived magnitude of security threats posed by natural disasters, a vast majority of seven out of ten respondents (70%) across the region agree that regional cooperation and a joint preparedness system for natural disasters, including pandemics, are beneficial. Support for such a level of regional cooperation in this area has dropped by 8%, from 78% in the last round of this Barometer.

Albania and Kosovo* are the two economies where this idea enjoys the highest level of support among survey participants (81% in both), followed by Serbia (74%). On the other hand, least supportive are respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina (54%).

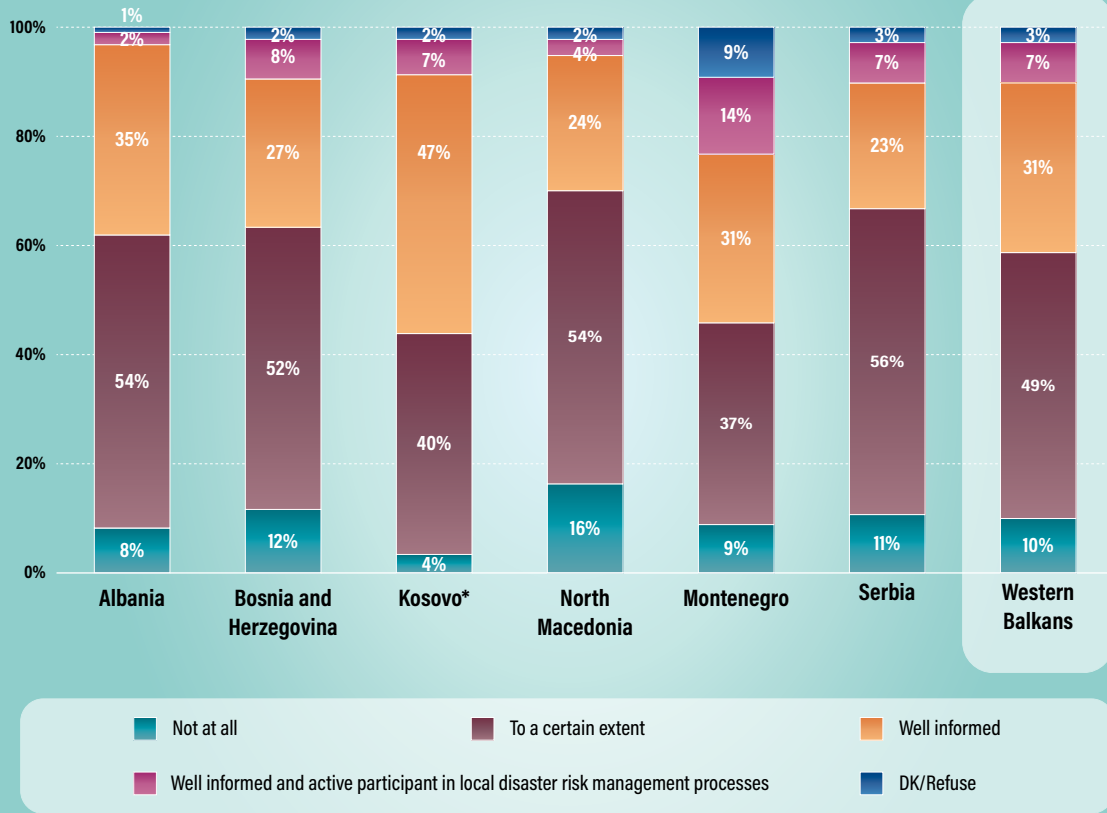
Figure 45. Which underlying factors do you think contribute the most to occurrence of natural and manmade disasters?
 (All respondents, N=6041, multiple answers, share of total, %)



Of underlying factors contributing to the occurrence of natural and man-made disasters, three most impactful for respondents across the region are the following: deforestation and environmental degradation (65%), urbanisation and lack of planning of urban spaces (57%) and climate change (51%). In terms of the overall trend, there are incremental fluctuations in perception: deforestation and environmental degradation is considered a factor by 7% more respondents (58% in 2021), urbanisation and lack of planning of urban spaces by 5% more (52% in 2021) and climate change by 6% fewer survey participants (57% in 2021).

The most impactful factor—deforestation and environmental degradation—is perceived as such by the vast majority of over three-fourth of the survey population in Albania (77%), in contrast to Kosovo*, where it is seen as such by 44% of respondents. Along similar lines, the second one—urbanisation and lack of planning of urban spaces—is a contributing factor in the eyes of 64% of participants in Albania and 52% in North Macedonia. Serbia (at 62%) is the leading economy on the third factor—climate change. This factor is seen as impactful by less than half (46%) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

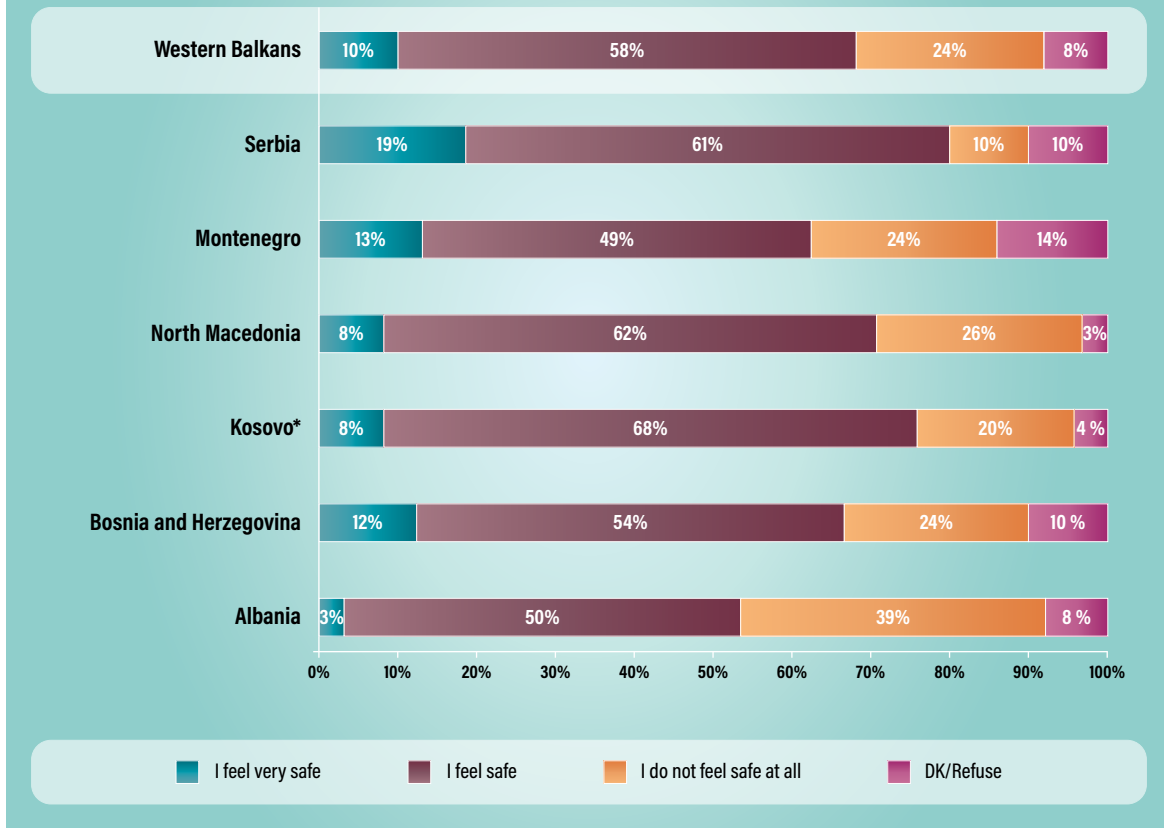
Figure 46. To what extent are you familiarised with the main natural disaster risks in your area?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Results of this edition’s survey indicate that the region is on average less aware and informed about the main natural disaster risks facing their economies: 49%, 10% more than in the previous round (39%), said that they were familiar to a certain extent, 10% not at all, and 38% (a 9% downward trend from 47% in 2021) claim to be either well informed or both well informed and active participant in local disaster risk management processes. Looking at individual economies, North Macedonia is the least informed one (54% of respondents to some extent and 16% not at all), as opposed to Kosovo*, where over half (54%) are either well informed or both well informed and active participant in local disaster risk management processes, 40% are informed to some extent and only 4% totally uninformed.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

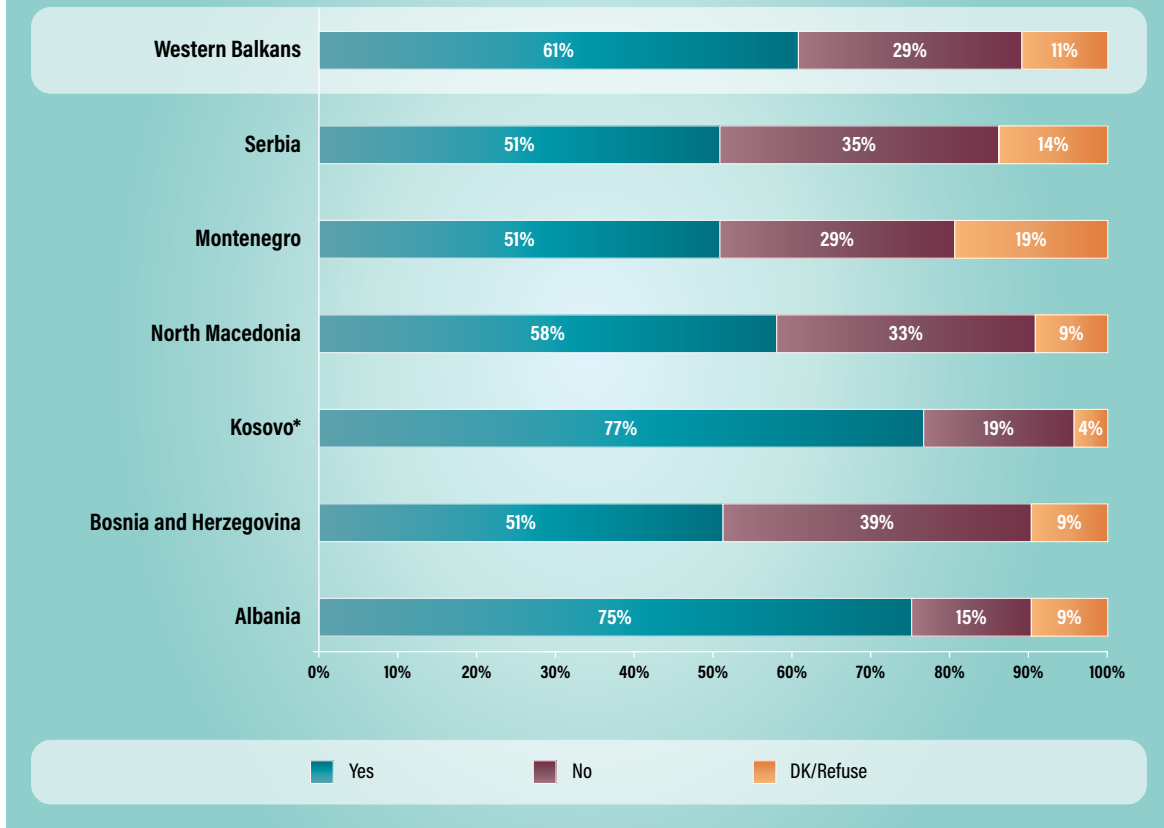
Figure 47. How safe do you feel by knowing the response capacities of your local fire and rescue service?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



On the other hand, close to seven out of ten respondents (68% of them) on average in the region, claim to feel safe knowing response capacities of fire and rescue services in their economies. This shows a more or less flat trend in this regard (70% in 2021). The survey has found the highest level of trust in such services in specific economies in Serbia (at 80%), in contrast to Albania (53%).

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

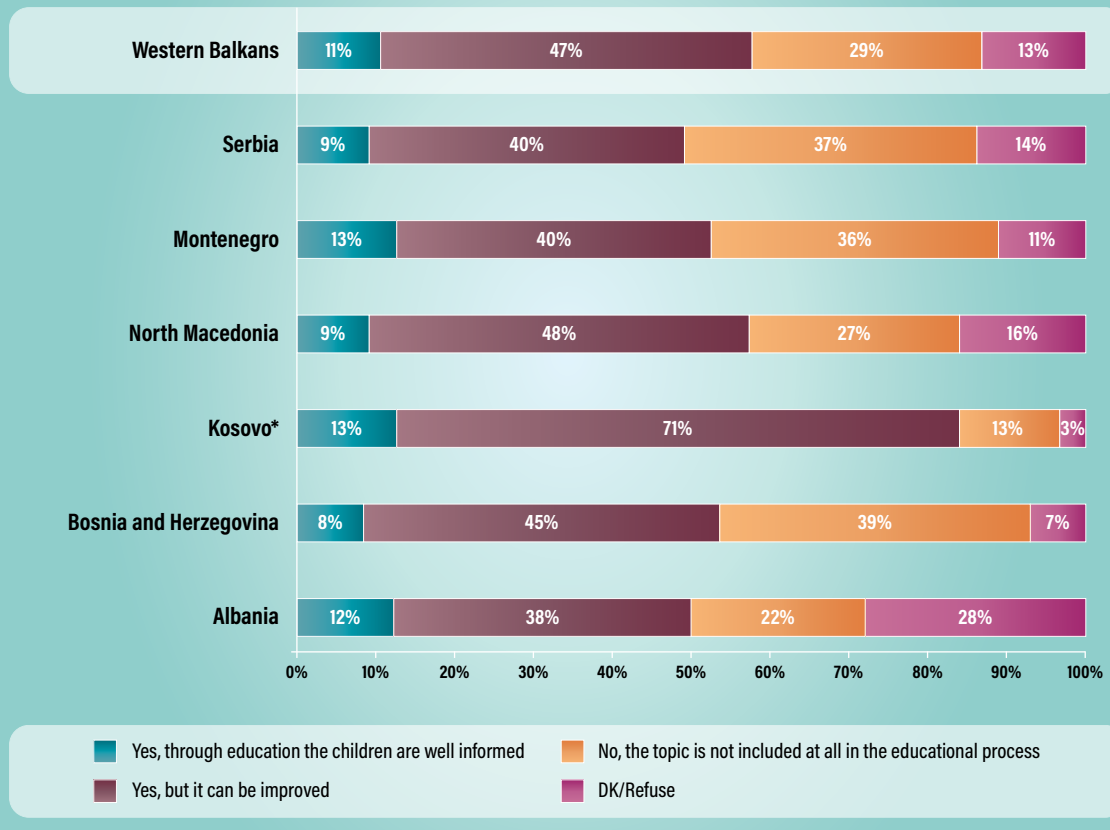
Figure 48. Would you consider joining community-based voluntary initiatives to increase disaster preparedness?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Overall, there is slightly less willingness than a year ago among citizens of the Western Balkans to join community-based voluntary initiatives to increase disaster preparedness: 61% (65% in 2021) would consider joining them, as opposed to under half of that share (29%) not contemplating such an idea. The highest level of willingness is found in Kosovo* (77%), in contrast to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia (all at 51%).

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 49. In your opinion, is the educational system providing the necessary knowledge and skills for children to recognise and react to disasters?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)

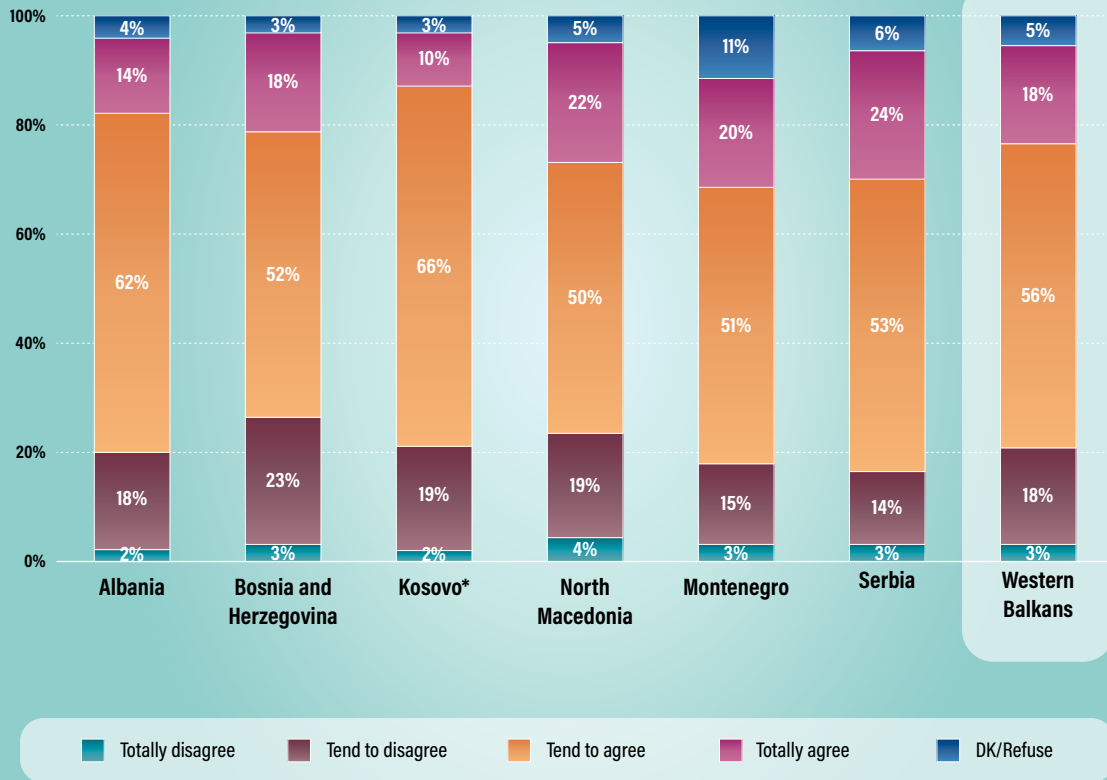


In this new entry to this round of [SecuriMeter](#), results show that, on average, about half of those polled (47% of them) think the educational system in their economy provides children with necessary knowledge and skills to recognise disasters and respond to them but it can be improved. About every three out of ten (29%) think that this topic is not at all part of the educational process.

Kosovo* is the economy with the highest proportion of respondents (71%) who think the educational system in their economy provides children with necessary knowledge and skills to recognise disasters and respond to them but it can be improved, as opposed to Albania (38%). Bosnia and Herzegovina leads by the share of respondents who are of the opinion that their educational system does not provide disaster-related education (39%), as opposed to Kosovo* (13%).

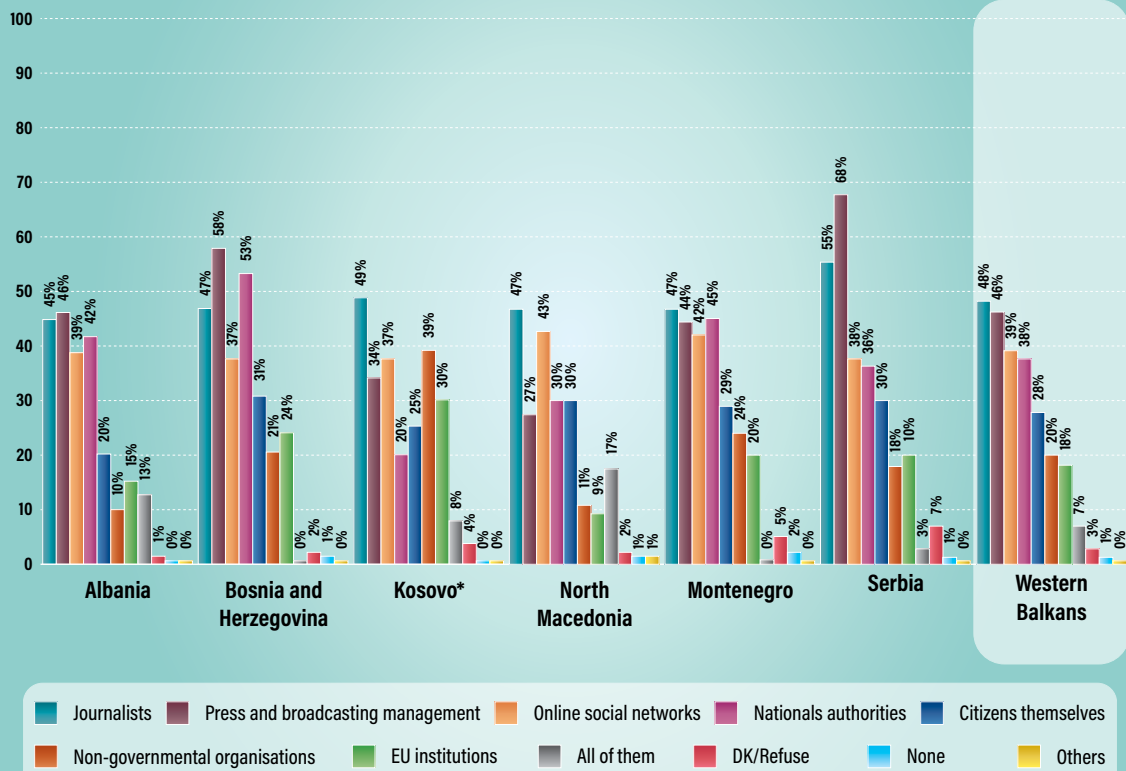
F. Hybrid Threats and Disinformation as a New Security Challenge

Figure 50. To what extent do you agree or disagree that disinformation is a security threat to your economy?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



There is more or less the same level of awareness and concerns about disinformation as a security threat across the region of the Western Balkans as in the previous round: 74% of respondents agree that this phenomenon is a security threat to their economies (75% in 2021), while only every fifth respondent (21%) disagrees. This threat is perceived as such by vast majority of at least seven out of ten respondents in all economies, at the greatest extent in Serbia, by more than three-quarters of the survey population (77%). On the other end of the scale, 70% of those polled in Bosnia and Herzegovina find disinformation to be a threat to their economy.

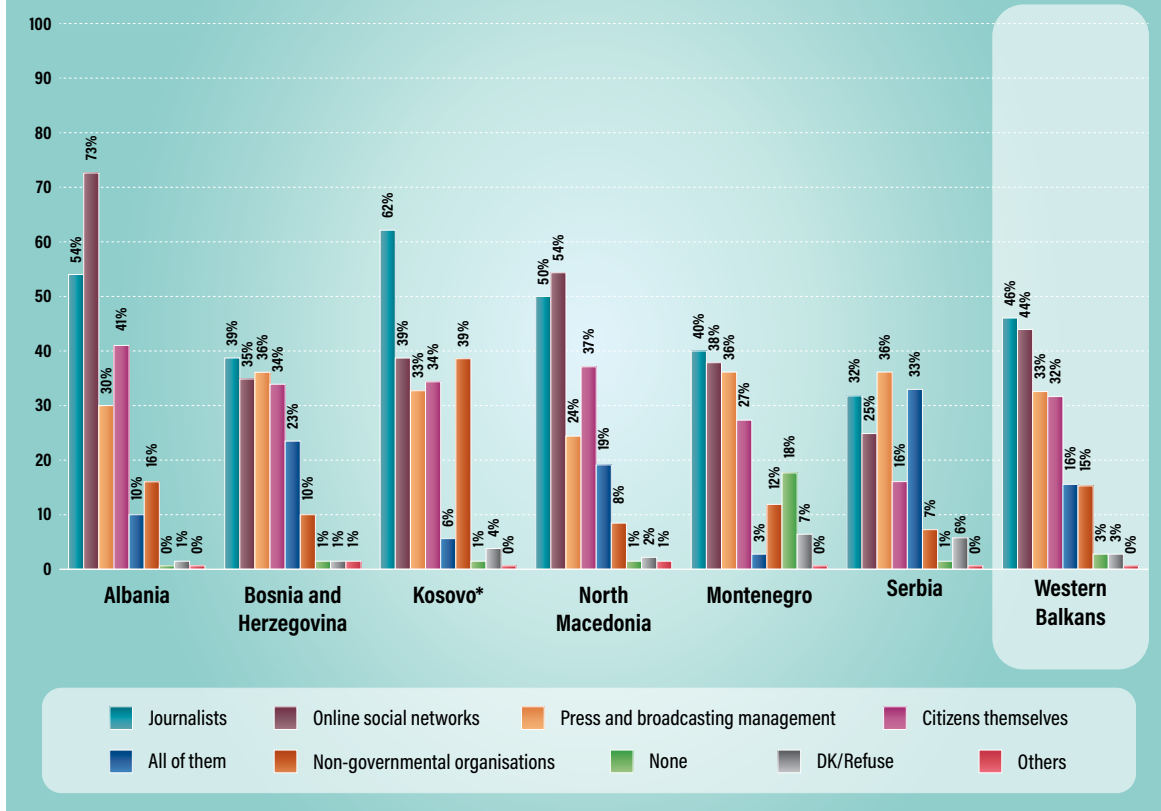
Figure 51. News or information that misrepresent reality or that are even false are called fake news. Which 3 (three) of the following institutions and media actors should act to stop the spread of fake news? (All respondents, N=6041, multiple (max 3) answers, share of total, %)



In line with findings on actors perceived as the biggest spreaders of disinformation presented in the above figure, the following three institutions, namely media actors, are considered most responsible to stop the spread of fake news: journalists (48%), press and broadcasting management (46%) and online social networks (39%). It is interesting to notice that data shows that perception of risk of social networks is correlated with the level of education (the higher the degree of the respondent, the higher was the perceived risk).

Focusing on individual economies, Serbia leads by the share of respondents (68%) who consider that press and broadcasting management are most responsible for stopping the spread of fake news, in contrast to North Macedonia where this category is considered the least responsible to do so (27%). Serbia also leads by the share of those polled who think that journalists are most responsible to halt the spread of fake news (55%), otherwise seen as responsible by 45% of those polled in Albania. Online social networks are viewed as most responsible to do so in North Macedonia (43%) and the least in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* (both at 37%).

Figure 52. In your opinion, which are the actors who spread disinformation the most in your economy?
(All respondents, N=6041, multiple answer, share of total, %)



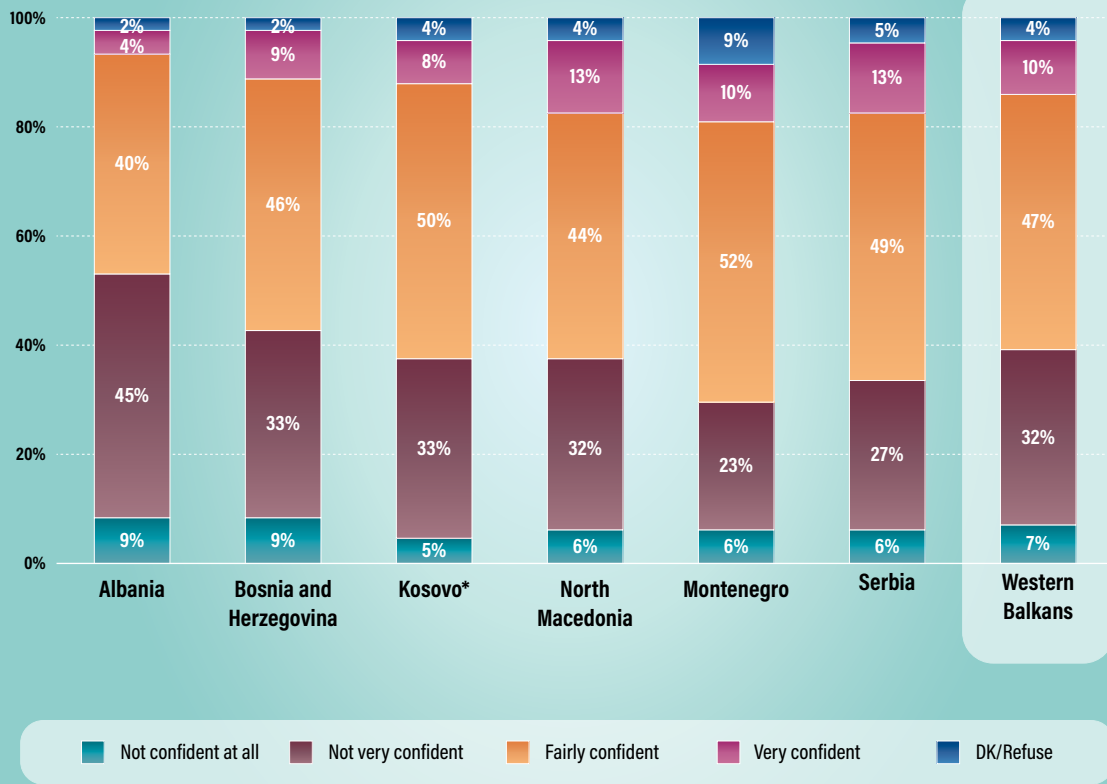
Results of the survey on this new entry to this round of the Security Barometer mean bad news for media themselves, because in the eyes of the public opinion journalists and press and broadcasting management are among three top spreaders of disinformation, considered so by an average of nearly half of respondents (46%), and a third (33%) of them, respectively. Two other top spreaders of disinformation are online social networks (at 44%) and citizens themselves (at 32%).

Looking at individual economies, Albania is the economy where the belief that online social networks and journalists are top spreaders of disinformation is most widespread: 73% consider the former so and 54% the latter. As many respondents in North Macedonia (54%) consider social media as the top spreader of disinformation, while journalists are seen as top spreaders in Kosovo*, by nearly two thirds (62%) of survey participants and as the second top spreaders in North Macedonia, by half of those polled in this economy. Kosovo* also has the highest number of respondents in the region who share the belief that non-governmental organisations are top spreaders of disinformation (39%). NGOs are seen as one of top three spreaders of disinformation, at the same level as online social networks. Serbia comes a close second on this (at 33%).

Moreover, Serbia lies on the low end of the scale on journalists and social media as top spreaders: only about a third (32%) view the former as top spreaders and only a quarter consider the latter so. Press and broadcasting management lead as top spreaders in this economy (at 36%). Serbia is, on the other end, the economy that leads by the belief that all categories covered by this survey question spread disinformation, shared by a third (33%) of those polled, as opposed to Montenegro (3%). Regarding Montenegro, it is also interesting to notice that it is the only economy where 18%

of respondents claim that none of these sources is spreading disinformation (while this answer has been given almost by no respondent in other economies).

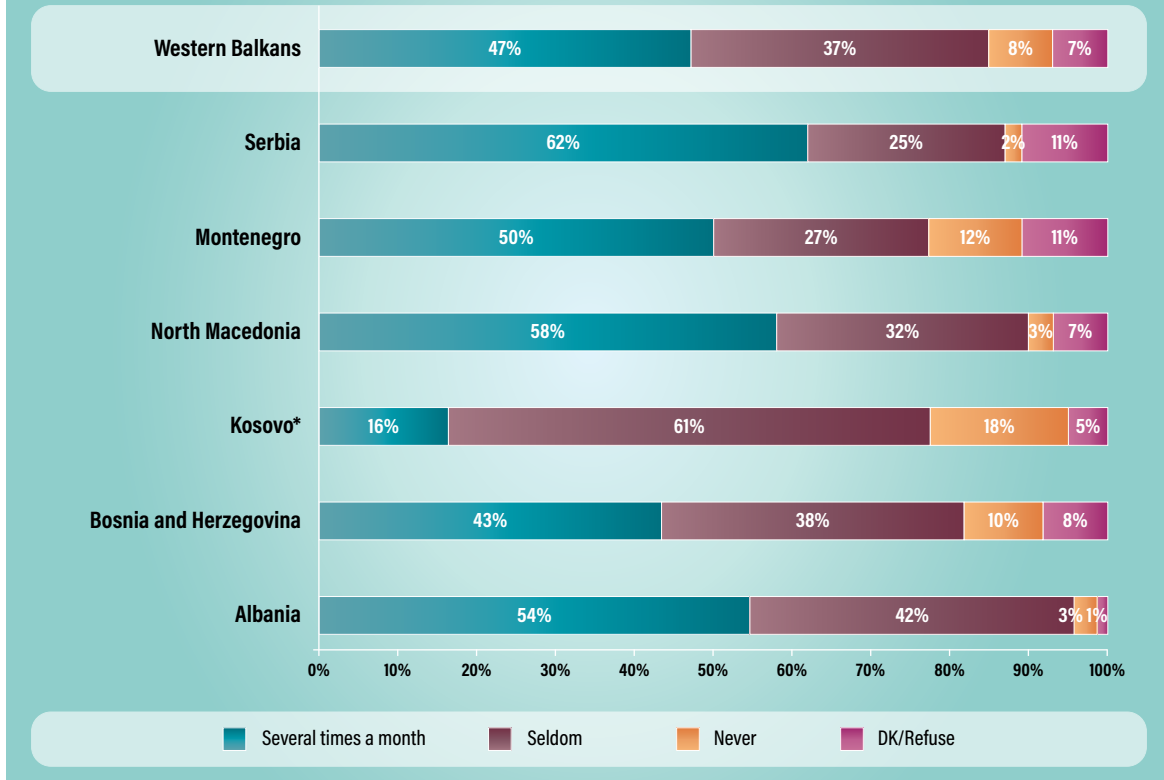
Figure 53. How self-confident do you feel to identify news that misrepresent reality?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



From the perspective of citizens as being responsible to counter disinformation themselves, solid majorities in the region feel confident that they are able to identify news misrepresenting reality: 57% on average think so, 12% less than in the previous edition. Focusing on individual economies the most capable turns out to be those polled in Montenegro, where 62% of them claim to be able to identify such news. Albania is home to the biggest share of those polled who do not believe being able to identify news that misrepresents reality (54%).

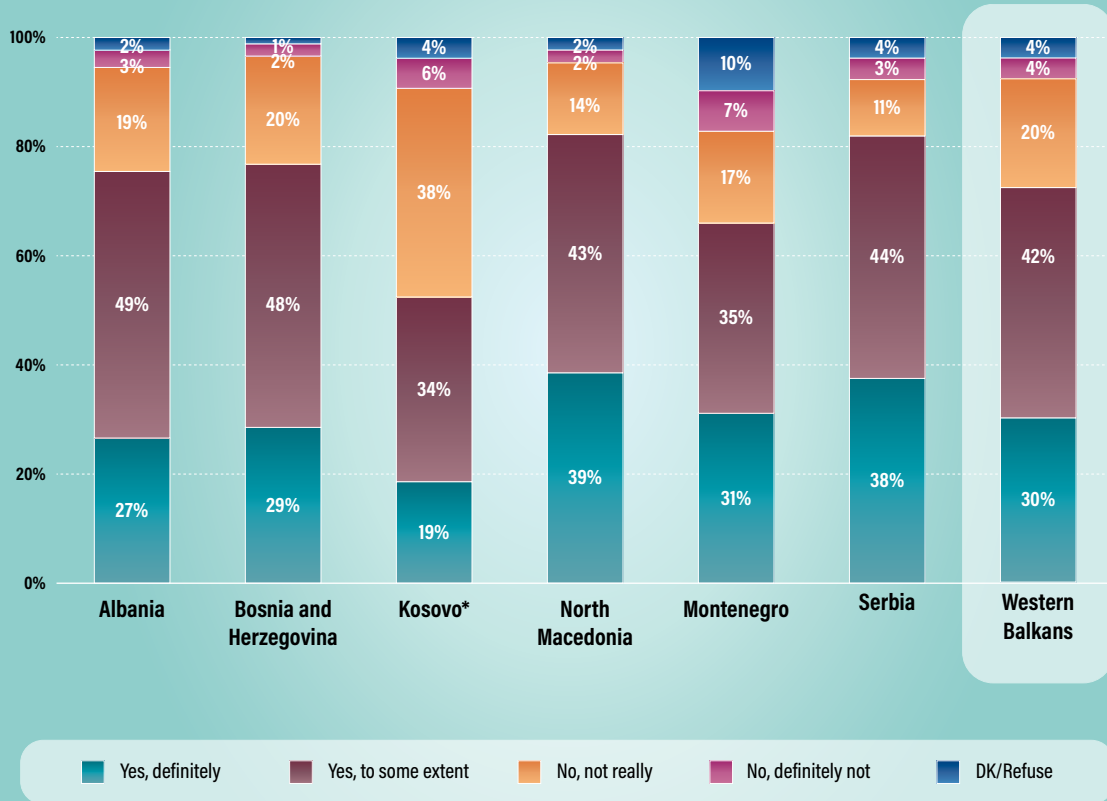
PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 54. How often do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresent reality or is even false?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



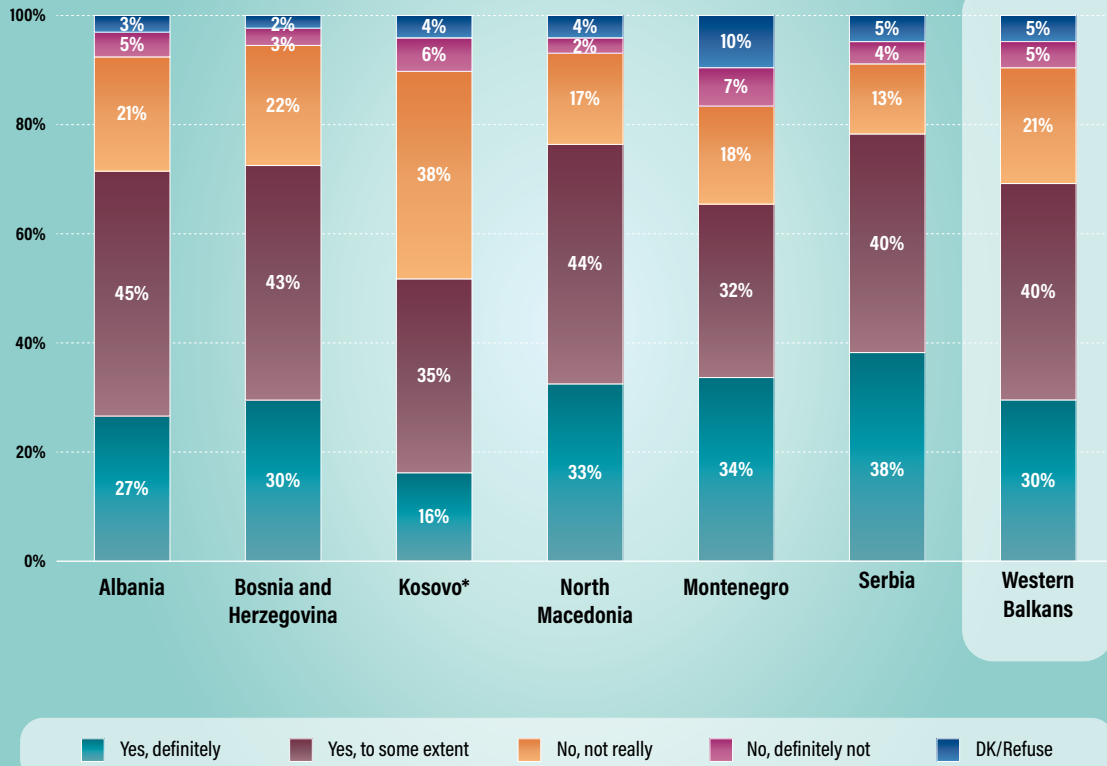
In general, survey findings show that news misrepresenting reality or that are false remain almost as widespread as in the last round: 47% of those polled (54% in 2021), as opposed to 37% of them having come across such news rarely and only 8% who claimed to have never encountered it. The most exposed seem to be respondents in Serbia (62% of them encountering it several times monthly) and the least exposed in Kosovo* (16%). Most respondents in the latter economy (61% of them) claimed to encounter news that misrepresents the reality or is even false rarely and comparably the biggest share in the region of those who have never come across it (18%).

Figure 55. In your opinion, is the existence of fake news or misinformation a problem in your economy?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



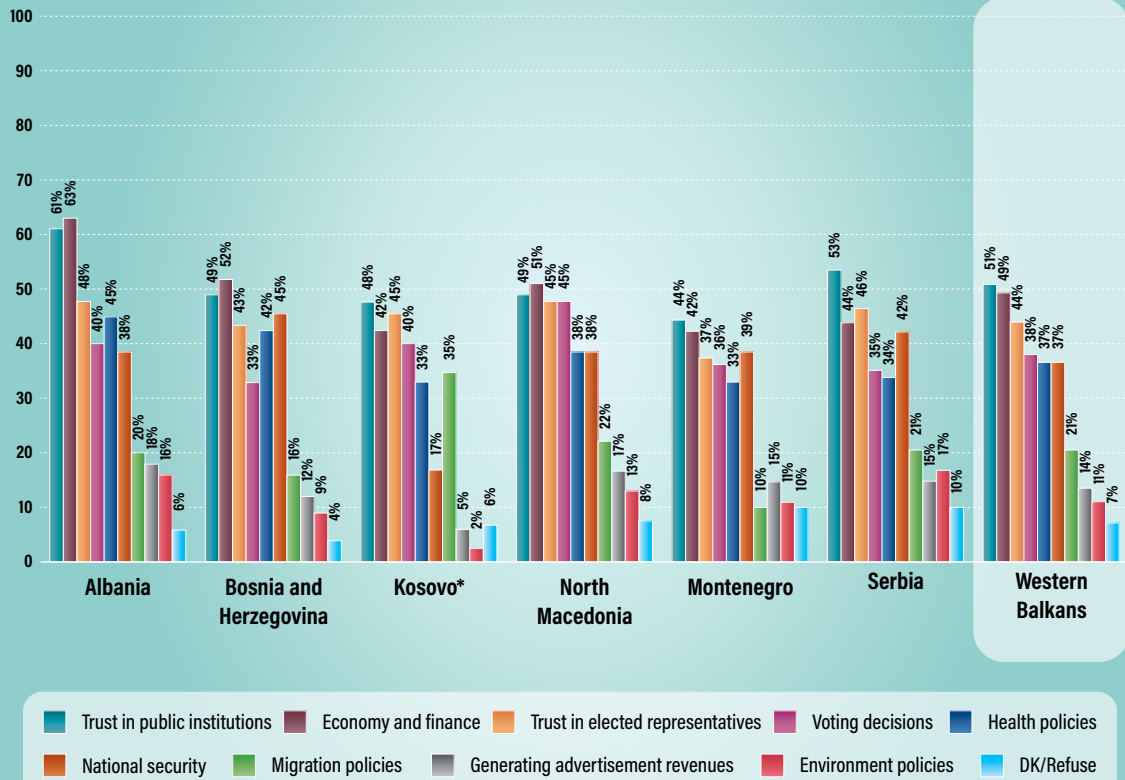
In line with the findings presented in the previous figure on how often citizens come across news or information that misrepresents reality or is entirely false, citizens in the Western Balkans remain as convinced as a year ago that fake news or misinformation is a problem in their economies: 72% think so (with an improvement from 2021, when it was 76%), as opposed to less than a quarter (24%) of them who do not think this is the case. Within individual economies, fake news is most seriously perceived as a security problem in North Macedonia and Serbia (82% in both). On the other hand, it is seen as less of a security problem by 44% of those polled in Kosovo*. At a regional level, there is a slight improvement of perception from the 2021 [SecuriMeter](#) of those not considering it a problem (a change by 2 points).

Figure 56. In your opinion, is the existence of fake news, fake narrative a problem for democracy in general?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



In line with the findings presented in the previous figure on the magnitude of misinforming and false news as a problem, on average seven out of ten (70%) agree that fake news and fake narrative represent a problem for democracy in general, though this group of respondents has decreased by 5% since the previous round (75%). As in the previous figure, fake news and fake narrative is perceived as a problem for democracy by the highest number of respondents in Serbia (78%), in contrast to Kosovo*, where half (51%) of those polled think it to be a problem for democracy there. More than 26% of respondents in the region believe that fake news are not a problem for democracy, showing an increase in the percentage of respondents by 3%.

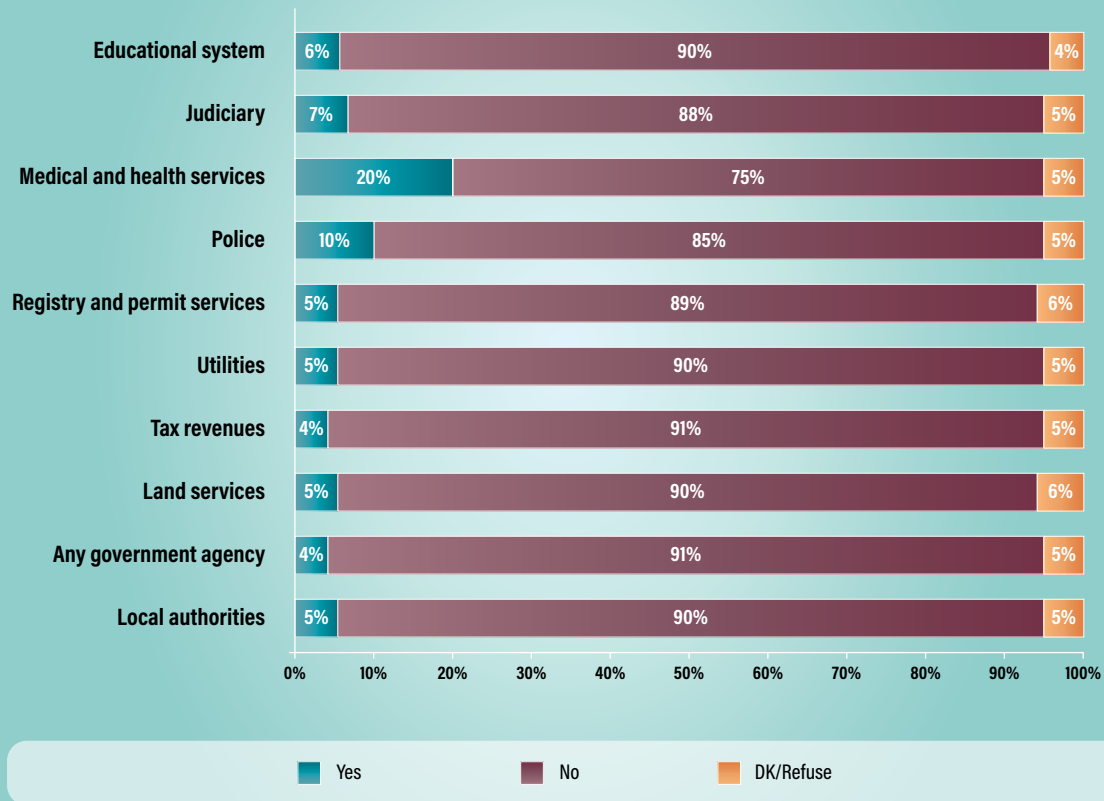
Figure 57. In which of the following areas of public life in your economy can intentional disinformation cause harm? (All respondents, N=6041, multiple answer, share of total, %)



Three areas of public life are perceived as vulnerable to harm caused by intentional disinformation: trust in public institutions, economy and finance, and trust in elected representatives. The first two areas are considered so at roughly equal measure, by about half of respondents (51% and 49%, respectively). The third one is seen as such by 44%. An interesting result is related to the response of Kosovo* participants to the survey, where more than a third (35%) indicate migration policies as an area where disinformation cause harm. This is considerably above the regional average (21%), which might show a higher sensitivity of the topic in this economy. On the other hand, disinformation is seen as a threat to national security mostly in Bosnia and Herzegovina (45%), Serbia (42%) and Montenegro (39%).

G. Perceptions of Corruption

Figure 58. In your contact or contacts with the public institutions, have you or anyone living in your household paid a bribe in any form in the past 12 months?—Results for the Western Balkans region
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



At the regional level, the healthcare sector is most corrupt in terms of bribes respondents claim to have given during the last 12 months. Healthcare has become significantly more vulnerable to bribes, reaching 20% (6% more than in 2021). The second most corrupt sector in terms of bribes allegedly paid to is police services (10%, 2% up from 8% in 2021). The third most corrupt sector in this sense are judiciary systems (7%, 2% up from 5% in 2021). On the other hand, tax administrations and government agencies are least corrupt in terms of bribes respondents claim to have given during the last 12 months.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Table 3: In your contact or contacts with the public institutions, have you or anyone living in your household paid a bribe in any form in the past 12 months?—Results by economies

A—Educational system, **B**—Judiciary, **C**—Medical and health services, **D**—Police, **E**—Registry and permit services, **F**—Utilities, **G**—Tax revenues, **H**—Land services, **I**—Any government agency, **J**—Local authorities

(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)

	Yes	No	DK/Refuse		Yes	No	DK/Refuse		
Albania	A	15%	84%	1%	North Macedonia	A	3%	92%	4%
	B	21%	74%	5%		B	4%	91%	5%
	C	55%	45%	1%		C	16%	80%	4%
	D	20%	77%	3%		D	7%	88%	5%
	E	8%	85%	7%		E	6%	90%	5%
	F	10%	88%	1%		F	2%	94%	4%
	G	8%	87%	5%		G	2%	94%	4%
	H	8%	85%	7%		H	3%	92%	5%
	I	7%	89%	4%		I	2%	93%	5%
	J	14%	84%	2%		J	2%	93%	5%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	A	4%	88%	7%	Montenegro	A	8%	83%	10%
	B	4%	88%	8%		B	6%	84%	10%
	C	22%	70%	8%		C	14%	75%	11%
	D	16%	76%	8%		D	8%	82%	10%
	E	6%	86%	9%		E	8%	81%	11%
	F	5%	86%	9%		F	7%	83%	10%
	G	3%	88%	9%		G	5%	84%	10%
	H	4%	87%	9%		H	6%	83%	11%
	I	4%	87%	9%		I	6%	84%	10%
	J	4%	87%	9%		J	5%	85%	10%
Kosovo*	A	1%	99%	1%	Serbia	A	3%	96%	2%
	B	3%	96%	1%		B	3%	95%	2%
	C	5%	95%	1%		C	8%	89%	3%
	D	6%	93%	1%		D	4%	94%	2%
	E	3%	97%	1%		E	3%	95%	2%
	F	4%	96%	1%		F	3%	95%	2%
	G	3%	96%	1%		G	2%	96%	2%
	H	4%	95%	1%		H	2%	96%	2%
	I	3%	96%	1%		I	2%	96%	2%
	J	1%	98%	1%		J	2%	96%	2%

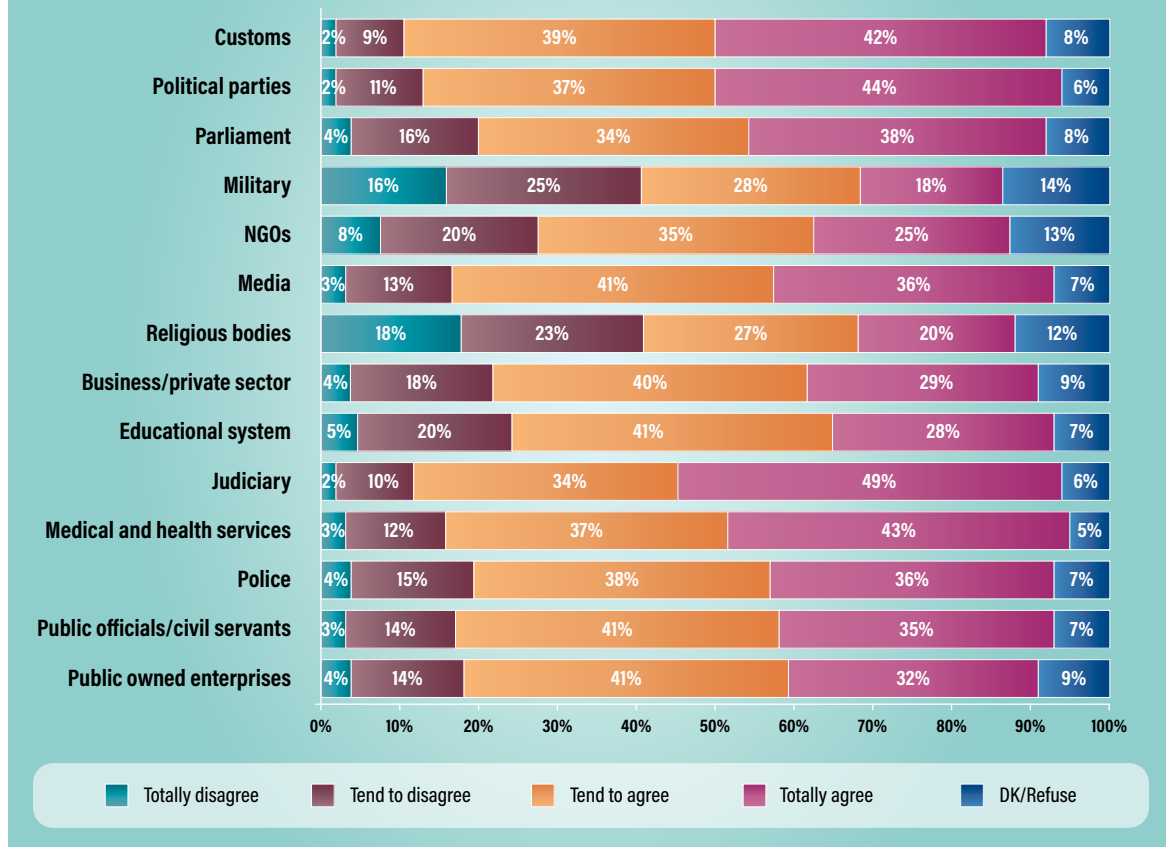
Focusing on individual economies, Albania remains the economy that is most prone to bribing in most areas covered by this survey. More specifically, the sector of healthcare in this economy has been allegedly bribed by 55% of the survey population, having largely gone up by 19% (from 36% in 2021)⁷ and the second most corrupt in Bosnia and Herzegovina (22%). In Kosovo* this sector

⁷ See figure 120 at the Balkan Barometer 2021—Public Opinion, pg. 123

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

turns out to be least corrupt to bribery (5%). Police is also most corrupt to bribery in Albania (20%) and least in Serbia (4%). The judiciary system also turns out to have been most bribed in Albania (21% of respondents), in contrast to Kosovo* and Serbia (3% for both).

Figure 59. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following categories are affected by corruption in your economy?—Results for the Western Balkans region
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



Looking at the region as a whole, all thirteen categories surveyed in this round remain perceived as corrupt as a year ago. Judiciaries have overtaken political parties as the most corrupt sector in citizens' perception: they are viewed as such by 83%, a 7-point increase compared to a year ago. The second most corrupt are political parties and customs services (both at 81%), showing an upward trend of 3% (from 78% in 2021) for political parties and 6% (from 75% in 2021) for customs services. Healthcare as the third most corrupt sector (at 81%) has also become 7% more corrupt since the previous round of Security Barometer (74%). On the other end of the scale, militaries and religious organisations are perceived as the least corrupted in the region, reaching 41% of respondents for both groups. NGOs (28%) and education system (25%) follow.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Table 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following categories are affected by corruption in your economy?—Results by economies

A—Customs, **B**—Political parties, **C**—Parliament, **D**—Military, **E**—NGOs, **F**—Media, **G**—Religious bodies, **H**—Business/private sector, **I**—Education system, **J**—Judiciary, **K**—Medical and health services, **L**—Police, **M**—Public officials/civil servants, **N**—Public owned enterprises

(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)

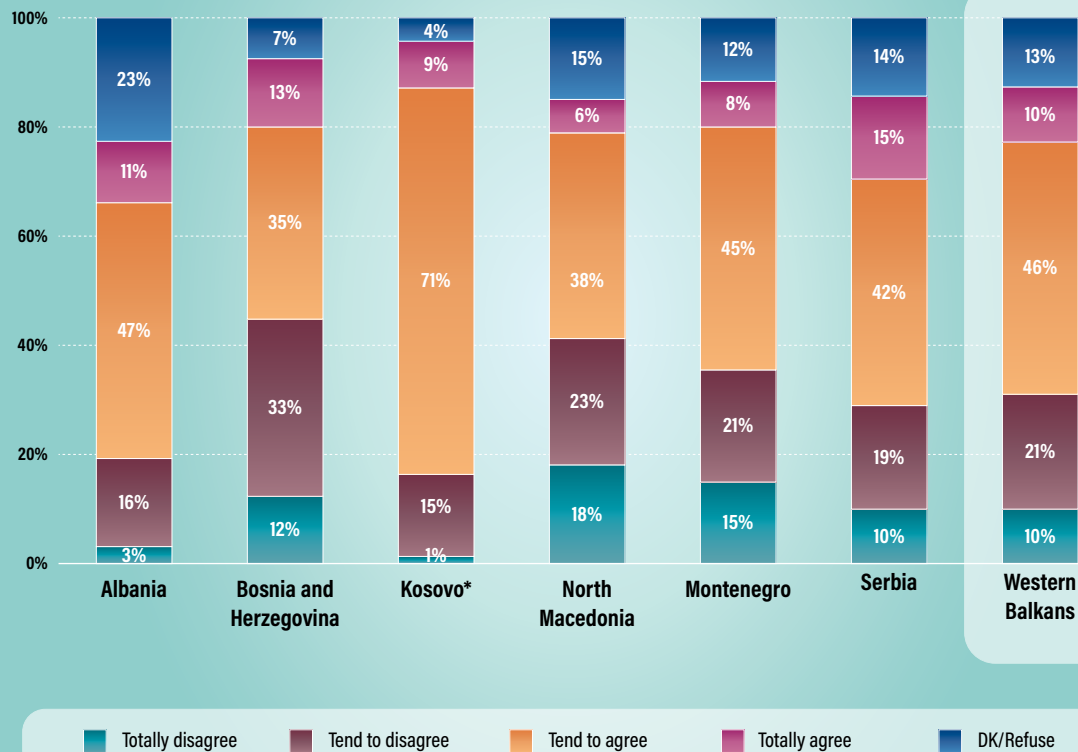
		Totally disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Totally agree	DK/Refuse			Totally disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Totally agree	DK/Refuse
Albania	A	0%	7%	38%	43%	11%	North Macedonia	A	1%	4%	28%	58%	9%
	B	1%	9%	44%	43%	3%		B	4%	6%	28%	55%	7%
	C	3%	17%	40%	37%	3%		C	5%	8%	26%	52%	9%
	D	20%	35%	19%	10%	16%		D	18%	20%	24%	25%	14%
	E	5%	25%	36%	17%	17%		E	8%	15%	33%	30%	14%
	F	2%	12%	53%	29%	3%		F	2%	10%	35%	46%	7%
	G	29%	31%	20%	8%	12%		G	16%	18%	26%	26%	14%
	H	6%	22%	40%	23%	8%		H	3%	12%	34%	43%	8%
	I	5%	25%	45%	21%	3%		I	6%	16%	37%	36%	6%
	J	0%	1%	32%	65%	1%		J	2%	3%	21%	68%	6%
	K	0%	4%	41%	53%	1%		K	3%	5%	30%	57%	5%
	L	3%	19%	47%	27%	6%		L	4%	10%	29%	51%	6%
	M	3%	15%	54%	25%	3%		M	3%	10%	35%	45%	7%
	N	9%	19%	43%	18%	11%		N	3%	10%	36%	43%	8%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	A	2%	16%	38%	39%	5%	Montenegro	A	4%	8%	52%	25%	11%
	B	2%	9%	39%	48%	2%		B	3%	8%	44%	34%	11%
	C	2%	12%	37%	44%	5%		C	3%	14%	41%	28%	14%
	D	11%	22%	32%	26%	10%		D	7%	19%	37%	19%	19%
	E	13%	23%	30%	27%	8%		E	5%	15%	41%	23%	16%
	F	2%	14%	40%	41%	3%		F	3%	9%	43%	32%	13%
	G	13%	21%	30%	28%	8%		G	17%	17%	29%	20%	17%
	H	2%	15%	40%	38%	4%		H	3%	11%	46%	24%	15%
	I	4%	15%	40%	36%	4%		I	5%	15%	43%	23%	14%
	J	1%	8%	38%	49%	5%		J	3%	8%	43%	33%	13%
	K	2%	12%	39%	45%	3%		K	4%	12%	41%	30%	13%
	L	1%	11%	39%	46%	3%		L	3%	11%	41%	29%	15%
	M	2%	11%	38%	44%	4%		M	4%	11%	42%	30%	13%
	N	2%	13%	38%	43%	4%		N	4%	12%	46%	25%	13%

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

		Totally disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Totally agree	DK/Refuse			Totally disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Totally agree	DK/Refuse
Kosovo*	A	1%	7%	42%	46%	3%	Serbia	A	2%	9%	37%	40%	11%
	B	3%	25%	33%	36%	2%		B	2%	6%	32%	50%	11%
	C	6%	35%	33%	22%	3%		C	4%	10%	29%	44%	13%
	D	21%	30%	33%	10%	5%		D	19%	23%	23%	19%	17%
	E	9%	28%	41%	17%	5%		E	5%	14%	30%	35%	16%
	F	7%	29%	43%	18%	4%		F	2%	7%	32%	49%	10%
	G	10%	35%	33%	17%	5%		G	23%	18%	22%	21%	16%
	H	4%	34%	42%	14%	5%		H	4%	14%	37%	32%	13%
	I	4%	33%	43%	17%	4%		I	5%	14%	36%	35%	10%
	J	2%	33%	40%	22%	3%		J	3%	6%	27%	55%	9%
	K	4%	32%	42%	20%	3%		K	3%	6%	29%	54%	8%
	L	6%	30%	45%	14%	4%		L	4%	8%	29%	48%	11%
	M	3%	30%	49%	14%	4%		M	3%	7%	29%	50%	11%
	N	2%	22%	55%	17%	5%		N	3%	9%	31%	45%	12%

Focusing on most corrupt sectors in individual economies, judiciary as the most corrupt sector in the region is most corrupt in Albania, as perceived by almost all citizens surveyed in this economy (97% of them), in contrast to Kosovo* (62%). Compared to the last edition of *SecuriMeter*, Albania has deteriorated by over 18% (79.6% in 2021) while an improvement of around 10% has been observed in Kosovo* (72.4% in 2021). Customs services, seen as one of the second most corrupt categories of public institutions at the regional level, are seen as such by 88% of the survey population in Kosovo*, compared to 77% in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. This shows a significant deterioration in Kosovo* by over 17% (70.7% in 2021), in contrast to incremental improvements in Montenegro (by nearly 10% from 67.1% in 2021), Bosnia and Herzegovina (by over 6% from 83.5% in 2021) and in Serbia (by nearly 5% from 72.2% in 2021).

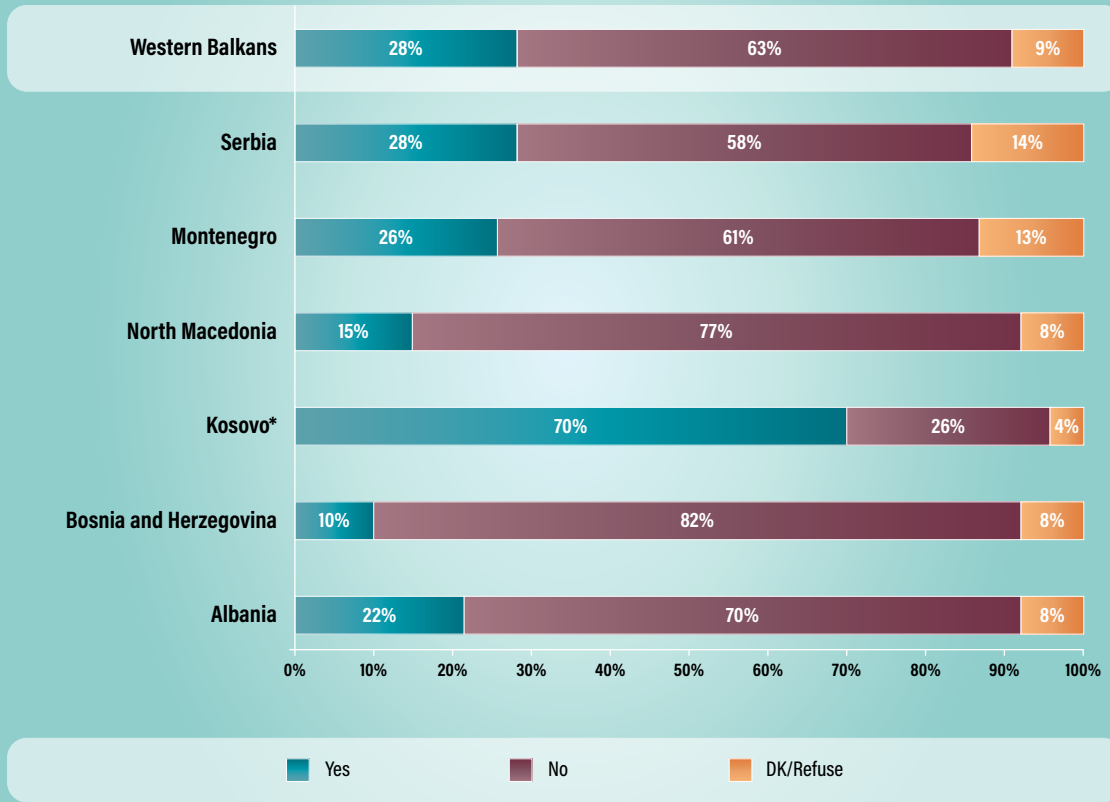
Figure 60. Do you agree that the WB economies have independent and effective institutions for investigating, prosecuting and sanctioning the high-level corruption and organised crime cases?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



A somewhat surprising result of this round of Balkan SecuriMeter is a dramatic increase in the share of respondents who believe that high-level corruption and organised crime in their economies is being fought successfully. At the regional level, more than a half of those polled (56%) agree with this suggestion, a 21% surge from 35% in 2021. On the other hand, 31% disagreed when asked whether high-level corruption and organised crime is being fought successfully, which represents a 28% improvement (59% in 2021).

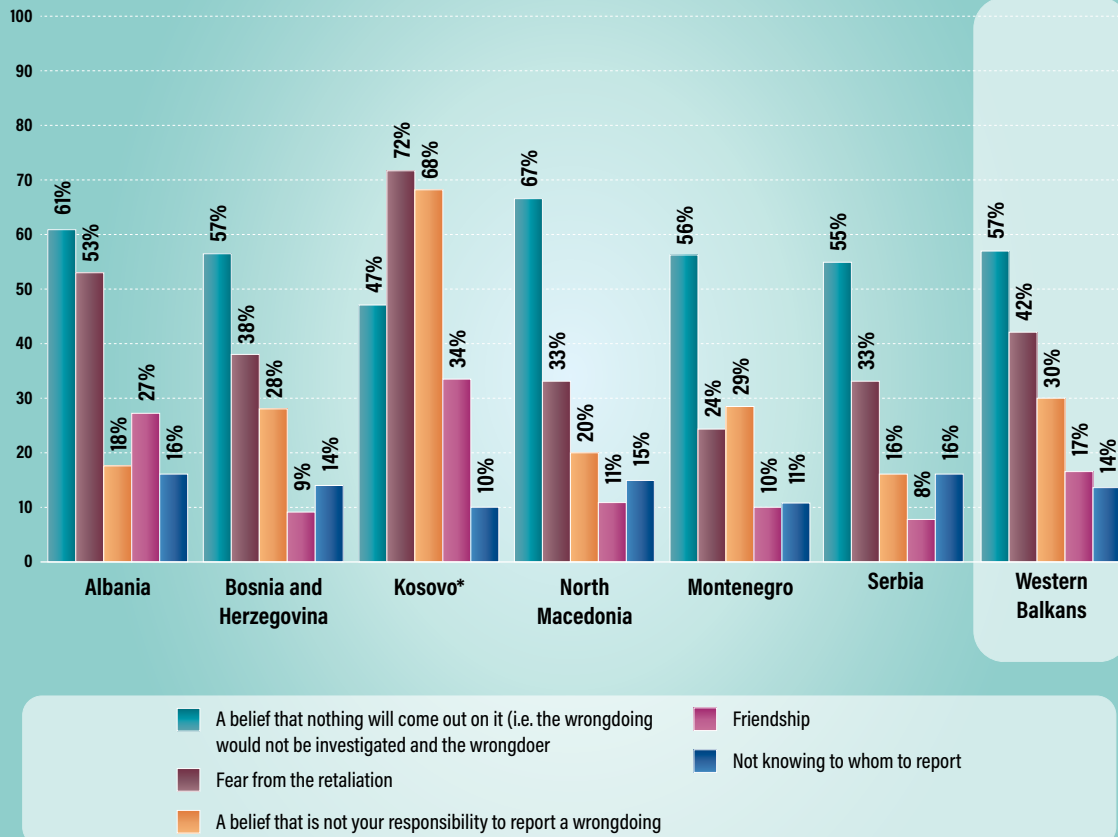
Focusing on individual economies, Kosovo* and Bosnia and Herzegovina are found on opposite ends of the scale. In the former, a vast majority of eight out of ten respondents (80%) believe that high-level corruption and organised crime in this economy is being fought successfully. In contrast to that, nearly half of those polled in Bosnia and Herzegovina (48% of them) share this belief about their economy.

Figure 61. Do you feel that a strong and safe corruption reporting system exists in your economy?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Large majority of citizens in the region share the opinion that their economies lack strong and safe corruption reporting systems. Almost a mean two-thirds (63%) share this belief, while only over a quarter (28%) of them think that there are such systems in place. Within individual economies, Kosovo*—where as many as 70% of the survey population think that their economy has a strong and safe corruption reporting system and a quarter (26%) think it does not—is a rather surprising exception to the widespread pessimism on corruption reporting. Bosnia and Herzegovina is most pessimistic, with an overwhelming 82% of those who gave negative answers and only 10% answered positively.

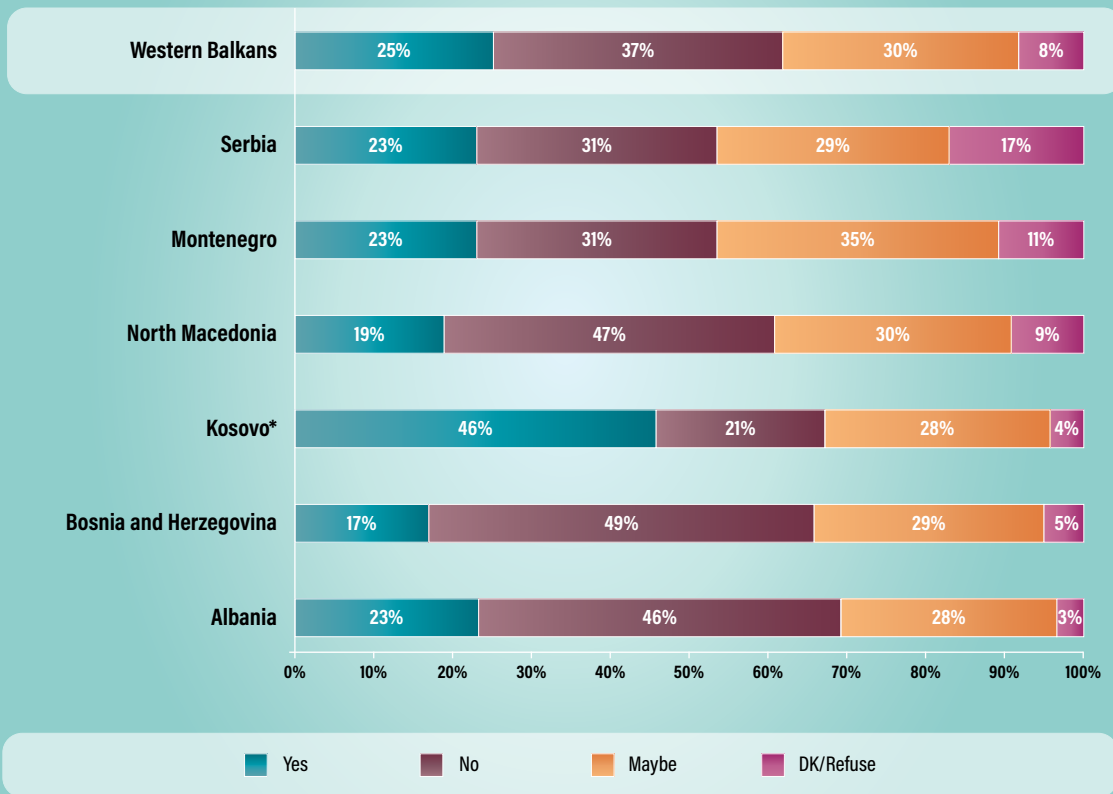
Figure 62. What would discourage you from reporting a wrongdoing?
 (All respondents, N=6041, multiple answer, share of total, %)



In correlation with the strong perception that all economies lack functional corruption reporting systems is the belief, shared by strong majorities, that nothing would come out of reporting corruption, namely that it would not lead to investigating wrongdoings and wrongdoers. A regional average of nearly six out of ten (57%) of those polled have given this as the reason for not reporting corruption, followed by the fear of retaliation as the second most often reason (shared by 42%) and lack of the feeling of responsibility to do so (shared by 30%). The latter is supported by the fact that only 14% are not aware whom to report, meaning that most citizens are aware the authorities to report corruption to.

The belief that nothing would come out of reporting corruption is the most common reason discouraging citizens from reporting corruption in all economies. This reason was given by two-thirds (67%) in North Macedonia, as opposed to less than a half (47%) in Kosovo*. The latter economy leads by the number of respondents who cited fear from retaliation as the most common result, shared by over three quarters (72%), as opposed to roughly a quarter (24%) in Montenegro. Kosovo* is also the economy where citizens cited the belief that it is not their responsibility to report corruption as the most common reason for not doing so—68% of them—while in Serbia only 16% share this sort of sense of civic apathy.

Figure 63. Do you think that women are more affected by corruption/Do women and men experience corruption in the same way?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)

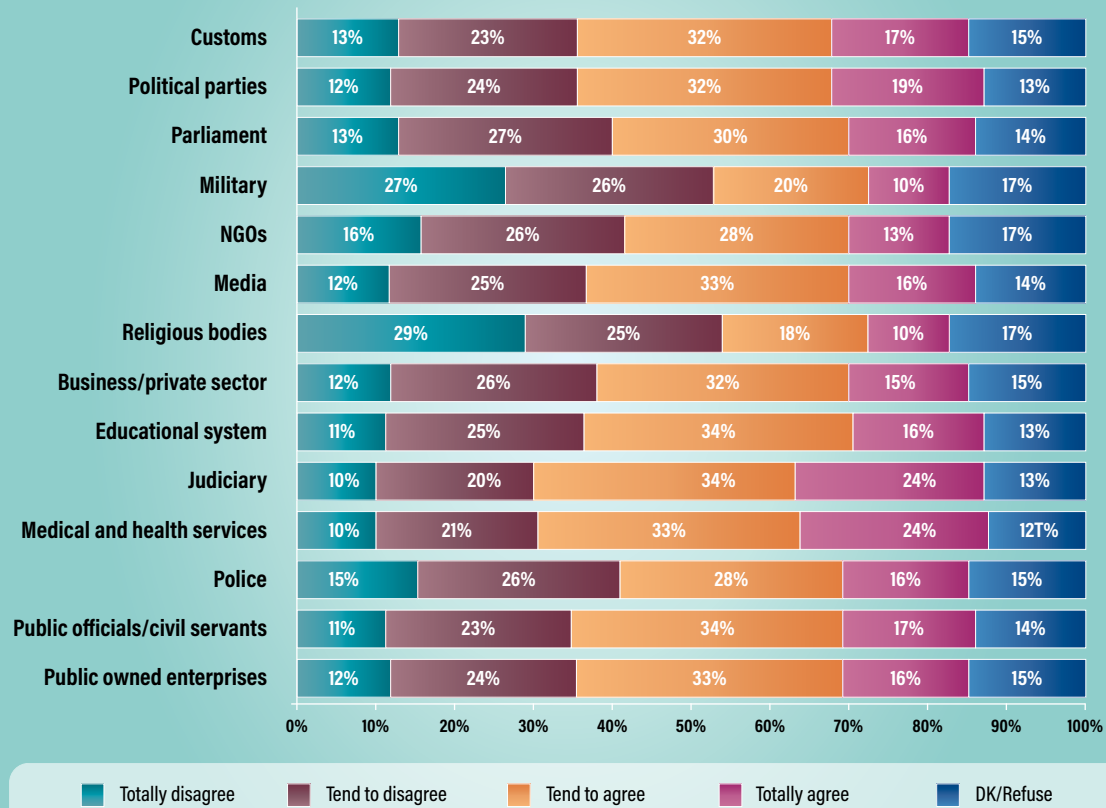


At the regional level, only a quarter of respondents agree that women are more affected by corruption than men. A bigger portion (37%) claim the opposite, while a considerable remaining group (30%) is not sure.

The opinion that women are more affected by corruption than men is most widespread in Kosovo*, where it is shared by almost every second respondent (46% of them), while this opinion is shared by only 17% of survey participants in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Conversely, the latter is the economy with the highest number of those polled who do not think that women are more affected by corruption than men (49%), as opposed to Kosovo*, where less than half that (21%) share disagree with this proposition.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 64. In your opinion, do you think that women are more affected by corruption in the following categories? Results for the Western Balkans region
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



In the region as a whole judicial system (58%), and medical and health services (57%) are the sectors where women are considered more affected by corruption than men, followed by political parties and public administration (public officials) (both at 51%). Expectedly, military (30% agreeing versus 53% disagreeing) and religious bodies (28% agreeing versus 54% disagreeing) are seen as the least corruption sensitive sectors for women.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Table 5: In your opinion, do you think that women are more affected by corruption in the following categories?—Results by economies

A—Customs, B—Political parties, C—Parliament, D—Military, E—NGOs, F—Media, G—Religious bodies, H—Business/private sector, I—Education system, J—Judiciary, K—Medical and health services, L—Police, M—Public officials/civil servants, N—Public owned enterprises

(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)

		Totally disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Totally agree	DK/Refuse			Totally disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Totally agree	DK/Refuse
Albania	A	6%	27%	38%	13%	16%	North Macedonia	A	24%	20%	24%	16%	17%
	B	5%	29%	45%	14%	6%		B	25%	20%	24%	17%	15%
	C	7%	34%	40%	14%	6%		C	26%	20%	21%	16%	17%
	D	37%	35%	9%	3%	15%		D	37%	18%	14%	12%	19%
	E	10%	31%	31%	13%	15%		E	29%	19%	21%	12%	20%
	F	6%	35%	44%	11%	5%		F	25%	20%	22%	17%	16%
	G	45%	31%	8%	2%	13%		G	39%	16%	13%	12%	20%
	H	10%	35%	36%	9%	10%		H	23%	18%	24%	19%	15%
	I	6%	33%	43%	15%	4%		I	22%	17%	27%	20%	14%
	J	1%	12%	49%	35%	3%		J	21%	15%	25%	24%	15%
	K	2%	12%	45%	40%	2%		K	21%	16%	25%	24%	14%
	L	18%	33%	24%	12%	14%		L	26%	19%	22%	19%	14%
	M	6%	24%	48%	17%	5%		M	23%	19%	24%	19%	15%
	N	11%	26%	37%	13%	12%		N	23%	21%	22%	18%	16%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	A	13%	33%	31%	15%	8%	Montenegro	A	13%	23%	36%	9%	18%
	B	12%	27%	34%	20%	6%		B	9%	20%	38%	16%	17%
	C	11%	29%	32%	22%	7%		C	9%	22%	35%	14%	19%
	D	20%	27%	29%	15%	10%		D	12%	25%	26%	15%	21%
	E	19%	30%	28%	13%	10%		E	10%	22%	32%	15%	21%
	F	8%	27%	35%	23%	7%		F	9%	18%	34%	19%	19%
	G	21%	28%	24%	16%	11%		G	23%	21%	22%	12%	22%
	H	9%	26%	32%	24%	8%		H	9%	19%	37%	15%	21%
	I	11%	26%	32%	24%	7%		I	10%	20%	33%	16%	20%
	J	8%	23%	33%	28%	7%		J	8%	17%	35%	20%	20%
	K	9%	27%	32%	25%	7%		K	8%	19%	33%	20%	19%
	L	12%	28%	33%	21%	6%		L	10%	20%	33%	17%	21%
	M	11%	28%	31%	24%	7%		M	10%	19%	36%	16%	19%
	N	9%	29%	32%	23%	7%		N	10%	21%	35%	15%	19%

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Kosovo*	A	3%	9%	41%	41%	7%	Serbia	A	17%	24%	23%	9%	27%
	B	3%	27%	32%	32%	6%		B	16%	23%	21%	13%	27%
	C	7%	38%	31%	18%	6%		C	17%	21%	20%	13%	29%
	D	19%	33%	30%	10%	8%		D	33%	21%	9%	6%	31%
	E	9%	33%	35%	15%	8%		E	17%	20%	21%	11%	31%
	F	7%	34%	37%	15%	8%		F	14%	18%	27%	14%	27%
	G	9%	36%	33%	14%	8%		G	35%	20%	10%	6%	29%
	H	6%	36%	37%	13%	7%		H	16%	22%	23%	10%	29%
	I	5%	35%	40%	12%	7%		I	15%	18%	28%	12%	27%
	J	3%	34%	40%	16%	7%		J	15%	19%	20%	20%	26%
	K	4%	34%	39%	15%	7%		K	14%	16%	24%	20%	25%
	L	6%	34%	41%	12%	7%		L	21%	20%	17%	13%	28%
	M	4%	30%	45%	13%	7%		M	15%	19%	24%	15%	27%
	N	3%	24%	52%	13%	8%		N	15%	21%	21%	15%	28%

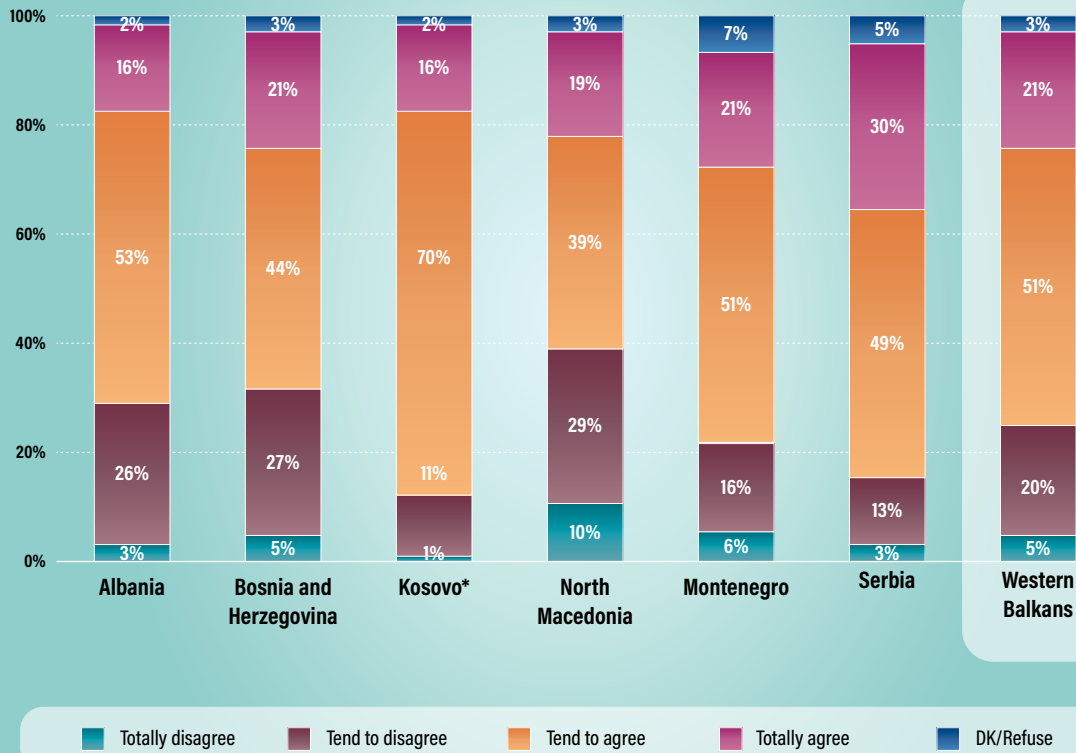
A common thread for all economies is that the judiciary is seen as one of the three top sectors where women are more affected by corruption. The judicial system in Albania is seen as affecting women disproportionately by an overwhelming majority of 84% of the survey population, as opposed to only 40% in Serbia. Next comes the medical and health services sector seen as one of the top three sectors affecting women disproportionately over men in four economies. It is considered so by 85% of respondents in Albania, as opposed to 44% in Serbia.

A third group perceived among top three in terms of affecting women more than men in three economies includes public administration, education and private sector. Women civil servants are perceived as affected by corruption more than men by around two thirds (65%) in Albania, as opposed to 43% in North Macedonia. Next, women are seen as more affected by corruption in the education sector by nearly six out of ten respondents (56%) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as opposed to 40% in Serbia. The private sector is perceived as affecting more women than men by the same share of respondents as the education sector (56%) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as opposed to 47% in North Macedonia.

On the other hand, a closer look at sectors seen as affecting women more than men by the fewest shares of those polled in each economy reveals three of them: religious bodies, militaries and NGOs. Religious bodies are seen as such by 10% in Albania, a quarter (25%) in North Macedonia and about a third (34%) in Montenegro. Militaries are viewed as such by 15% in Serbia and 40% in Kosovo*. Lastly, corruption in NGOs is perceived as affecting women more than men by 41% in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

H. Perceptions of Domestic Violence

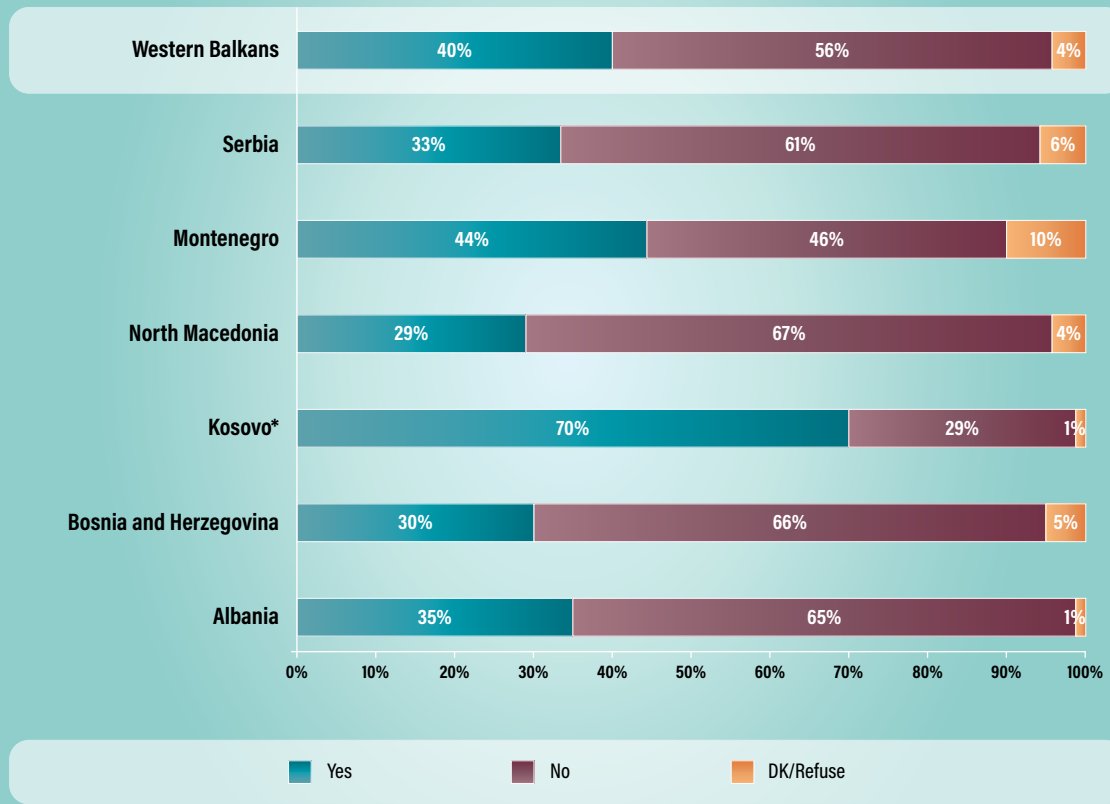
Figure 65. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Domestic violence presents a serious security threat in [ECONOMY]?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



Results of this round's survey show high level of public awareness of the importance of preventing and fighting domestic violence in all economies of the Western Balkans. Overall, in the region 72% consider domestic violence a serious security threat in their economies, as opposed to a quarter (25%) who do not consider it so. Kosovo* is home to the largest majority of respondents who agree (86%), as opposed to 58% in North Macedonia.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

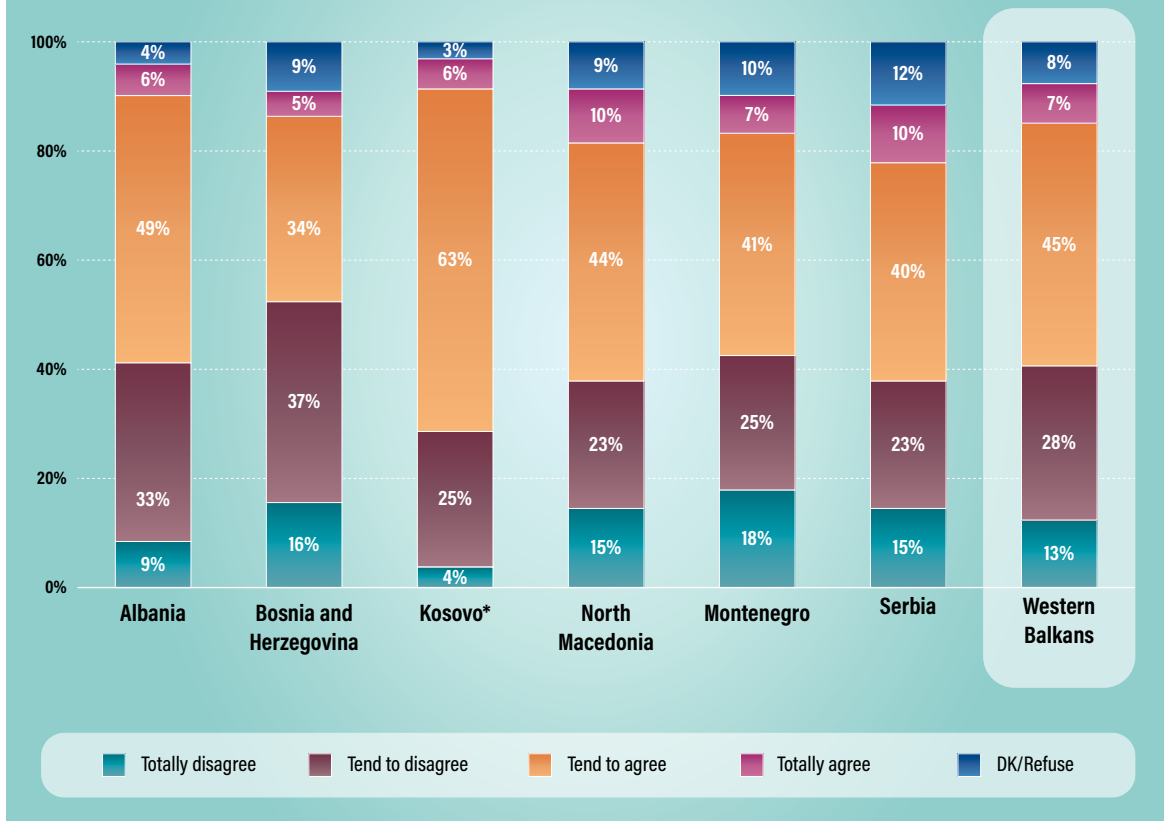
Figure 66. Do you know someone (from your family, neighborhood or community) who experienced domestic violence?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



Judged by the extent to which citizens in the region witness domestic violence in their families, neighbourhoods and communities, this form of violence is quite widespread. Four out of ten respondents (40%) claimed to have witnessed such occurrences, as opposed to 56% of those who answered negatively. As far as individual economies are concerned, Kosovo* leads by a large margin with the share of those who claimed to have witnessed domestic violence in their families, neighbourhoods and communities (70%), as opposed to North Macedonia (29%). In terms of gender distribution, it is relevant to note that women replied positively to this question at a larger share (44%), while men were 8 points less (36%).

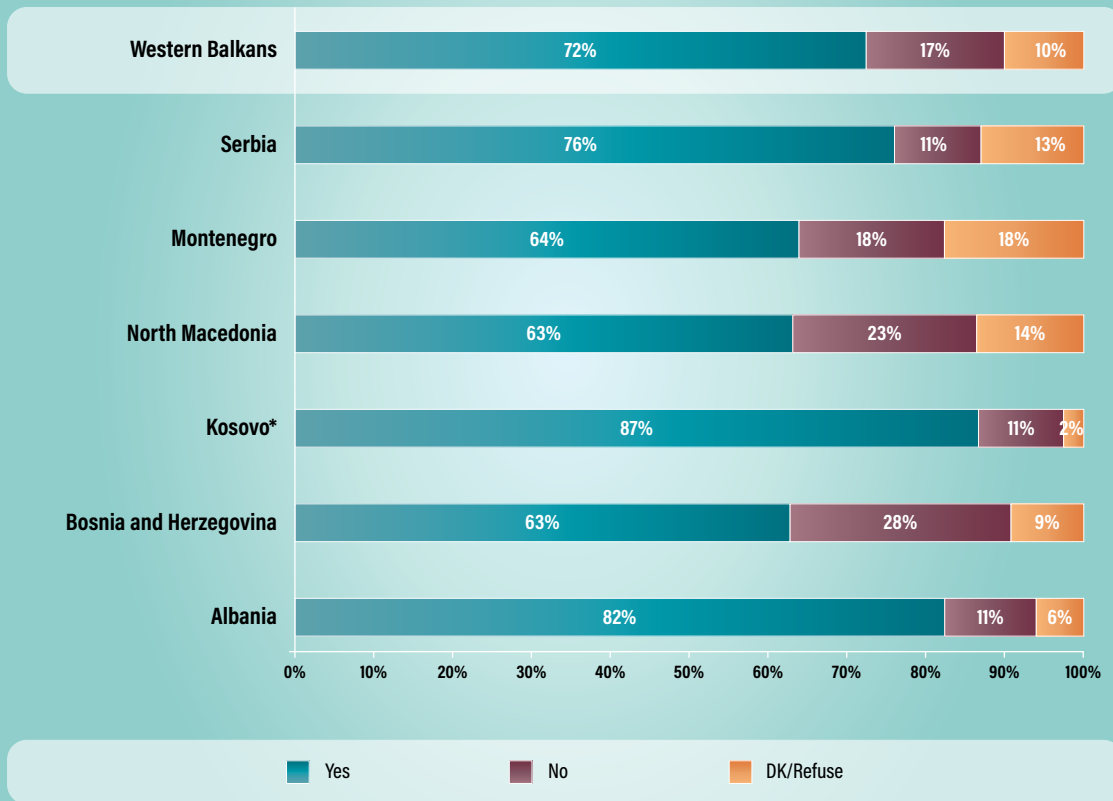
PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 67. The response of institutions (such as police, social welfare center, etc.) to provide protection from domestic violence makes me feel safe?
(All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %)



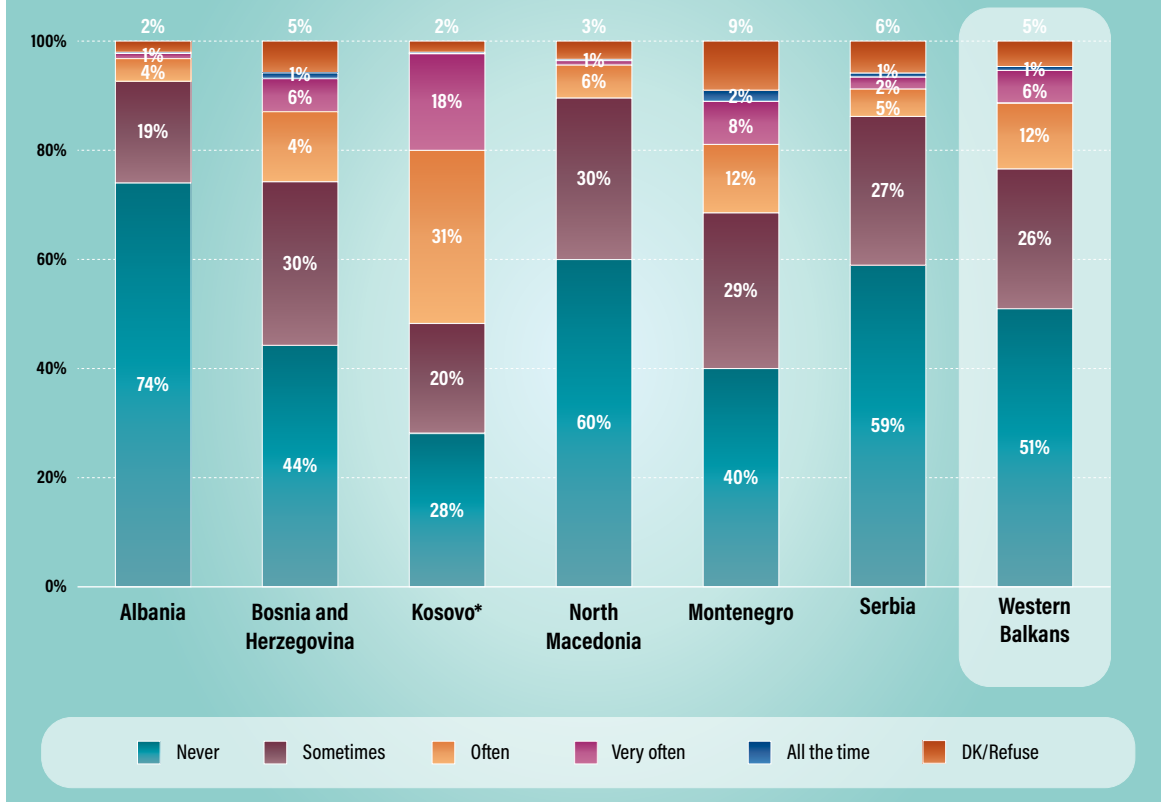
It is somewhat encouraging that solid majorities in all economies claim that institutional response to domestic violence makes them feel safe. At the regional level, over half of them (52%) said so, as opposed to 31% who disagree. Within individual economies, this feeling is shared by the largest majority in Kosovo* (69%), while only 39% in Bosnia and Herzegovina reported to feel so.

Figure 68. Would you call police/social center in case of domestic violence?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, share of total, %)



It is even more encouraging that vast majorities in all economies are willing to report domestic violence to the relevant institutions such as police and social protection centres. Overall, 72% of those polled in the region said they would call such services in case of domestic violence. At the level of individual economies, Kosovo* is home to the largest majority of those who would call them in such cases (87%), while 63% would do so in Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia.

Figure 69. How often are you worried that someone may sexually attack or hurt you?
 (All respondents, N=6041, single answer, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %)



Regarding worries of being sexually attacked, half of respondents (51%) at the regional level do not have this concern. A quarter of them fear that sometimes this might happen to them, while 18% claim that they perceive this worry often or very often. Albania and North Macedonia appear to be the safest economies in this regard, where a considerable majority claims to never have this concern (74% and 60% respectively), followed by Serbia with 59%. The situation appears more worrying in Kosovo*, where half of respondents (49%) declare having this fear often or very often. Kosovo* is followed by Montenegro and Bosnia Herzegovina, but at a considerable distance (reaching 20% and 19%, respectively).

When analysing the data further, 65% of men answered that they are never worried about this type of danger, while only 38% of women answered the same. Young people constitute the highest share of respondents who claim to fear sexual attacks, as compared to other age groups.

CONCLUSIONS

As findings of this round of Balkans [SecuriMeter](#) demonstrate, the general security outlook in the region is a positive one despite negative trends in some security indicators and stagnation in some others. Thus, all indicators of BPSSI are on the positive side despite incremental downturns. Likewise, citizens in all economies are more or less satisfied with their personal security situation, as well as with the security situation in the region as a whole and in their economies. Thirdly, they find the region as a whole and their economies safe for living.



On the less positive side, the region has seen deterioration in many security indicators. For one, declining citizen satisfaction with the overall security situation and with institutions' performance in tackling security challenges shows that their expectations are higher than what government systems relevant for the security sector in all economies are capable to deliver under given conditions. Next, only a few of survey participants expect the security situation in the region as a whole and in their economies to improve soon. Thirdly, complex security problems (be them current or potential ones) that governments of all economies and other actors need to tackle – such as serious and organised crime, financial crime, terrorism, migrants' influx – require preconditions that have yet to be put in place. One of such preconditions mentioned by respondents is more regional cooperation.



On the other hand, dealing with 'negative preconditions' is also critical. This means addressing challenges that could become security problems if left unsolved for a long time or become such problems in themselves. Three main groups of such challenges identified in the present BSB as having negative impact on people's feeling of security are the following: (1) economic crises, poverty and social exclusion; (2) crime, organised crime, drug trafficking, violence and vandalism; and (3) natural and man-made disasters, climate change and pollution.



In addition to 'old' security challenges such as serious and organised crime, terrorism and financial crime, there are also 'new' security challenges such as disinformation, violent extremism and natural disasters. As findings of this BSB survey show, citizens demand from governments and other actors to tackle them as seriously as the 'old' ones. However, these 'new' security threats are more intractable and therefore an entirely new and more complex level of preparedness is required by both institutions and citizens.



Of specific security areas, three are sufficient to illustrate the main conclusions drawn from the results of this BSB round: serious and organised crime, hybrid threats and migration. Fighting serious and

organised crime is the most critical one given its complexity and interrelatedness with other areas and aspects of security. Given that organised crime is considered a serious security threat to both the region as a whole and individual economies, it follows that citizens demand better and swift results in countering it. Citizens are aware of the complexities involved, yet at the same time more than half of them in most economies think that their law enforcement institutions are not doing enough to fight this type of crime. As in the previous edition, they expect more capacity building, more exchange of information among counterpart institutions within the region and with those of EU Member States, as well as more joint actions.



On hybrid threats, survey results seem to show some encouraging signs that such threats could be countered at some extent. One is that most citizens in all economies are aware of a phenomenon of disinformation and of its implications as a security threat. A second one is that citizens are mostly self-confident that they are able to identify news that misrepresents reality and false news. Third, survey results have identified the main sources of disinformation– journalists, press and broadcasting management, social media networks, citizens themselves, and so on. Fourth, most citizens agree that more or less the same actors are responsible for stopping the spread of disinformation as a hybrid threat.



Another security sector area that is increasingly growing in importance and will continue this trend is that of migration. In this regard, entry of migrants into economies of the region is considered a security threat by nearly as many respondents as organised crime. Secondly, possibly because of the lack of comprehensive experience in dealing with inward migratory movements and equally developed systems for this purpose in all economies, there seems to be an exaggerated fear and protectiveness vis-à-vis migrants. This is shown by the fact that considerable number of respondents still think that migrants, particularly irregular ones, are not to be granted equal access to rights and public services and should be kept in locked detention facilities. Many of those polled in all economies of the region favour the same restrictive policies even for vulnerable persons among migrants residing in their economy.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology used for Public Opinion Survey is quantitative research and data collection method CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing). The surveys were conducted via phone household interviews carried out by trained interviewers from Indago in the period from 25 March to 11 April 2022 in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

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

Questionnaire

The initial draft questionnaire was provided by RCC/IISG, while the final design was prepared by Indago. The questionnaire of 47 questions in total with additional demographic questions was originally written in English and subsequently translated into related local languages by Indago. Since the CATI methodology was used in the research, all questionnaires were converted/programmed to a digital form to include all the scripting and the interviewers' instructions.

Interviewers

The surveys were conducted by experienced interviewers in all economies. All interviewers were given detailed instructions containing general description of the project objective and the method of selecting the respondents, and the questionnaire. In addition, project coordinators reviewed the programmed questionnaires jointly with the interviewers and emphasised all important elements (especially the need to read individual answers where one or more answers were possible, etc.).

Sample

Public Opinion Survey was conducted among minimum N=1000 respondents in each economy, aged 18+ with the total sample size in six (6) economies of N=6041 respondents for the entire Western Balkans region.

The target 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.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Table 6: Sample structure by region

Economy	Region	%
Albania	Berat	5.3%
	Dibër	4.5%
	Durrës	9.3%
	Elbasan	10.4%
	Fier	11.2%
	Gjirokastrë	2.8%
	Korçë	8.2%
	Kukës	2.7%
	Lezhë	4.6%
	Shkodër	7.5%
	Tiranë	27.1%
	Vlorë	6.5%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Federacija BiH	62.1%
	Republika Srpska	35.5%
	Brčko Distrikt	2.4%
Kosovo*	Ferizaj	10.5%
	Gjilan	10.6%
	Peja	10.1%
	Mitrovica	11.0%
	Prizren	18.8%
	Gjakovë	11.4%
	Prishtinë	27.7%
North Macedonia	Vardar	7.9%
	East	9.3%
	Southwest	10.5%
	Southeast	8.6%
	Pealgonia	12.4%
	Polog	13.9%
	Northeast	8.4%
	Skopje	29.0%
Montenegro	North	28.3%
	Centre	47.2%
	South	24.5%
Serbia	Belgrade	23.2%
	Vojvodina	21.8%
	Central and Western Serbia	28.1%
	South and Eastern Serbia	26.8%

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 70. Sample structure by gender

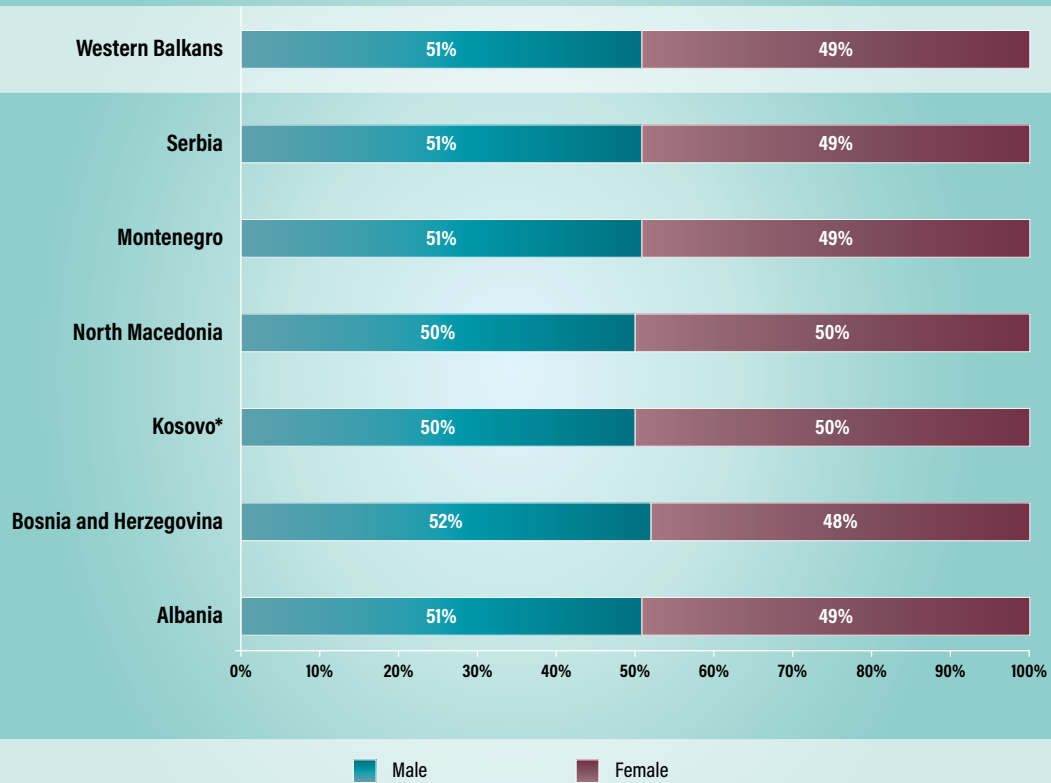
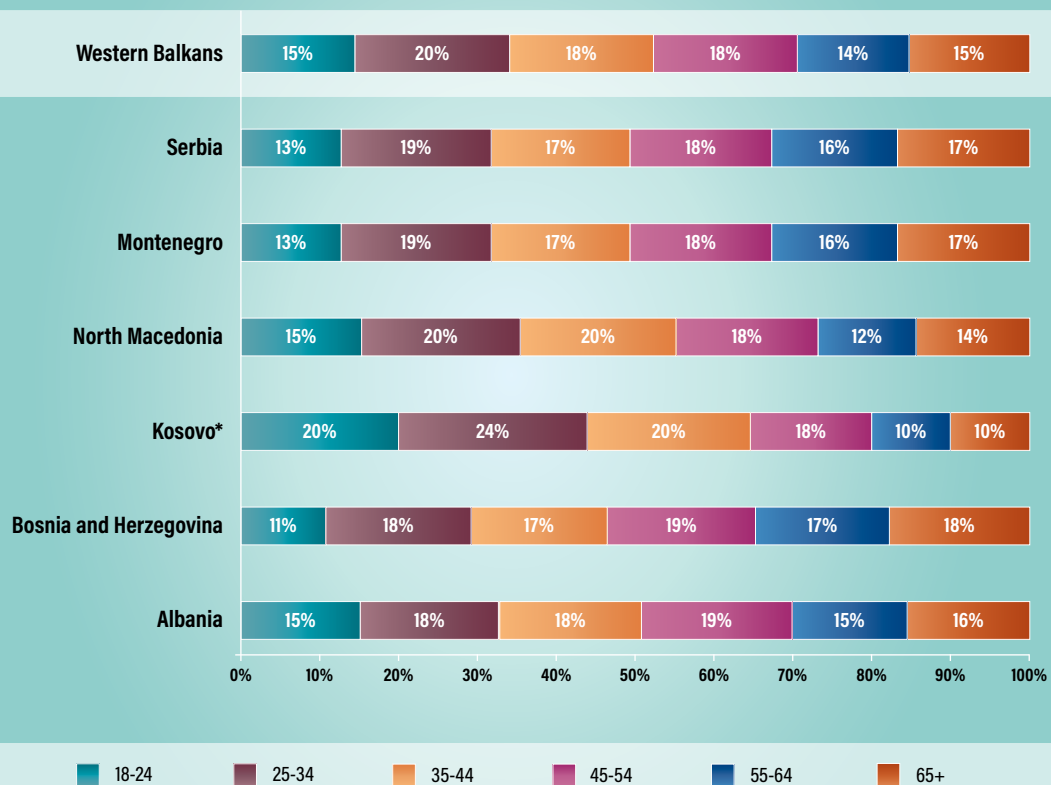


Figure 71. Sample structure by age



PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON SECURITY

Figure 72. Sample structure by education

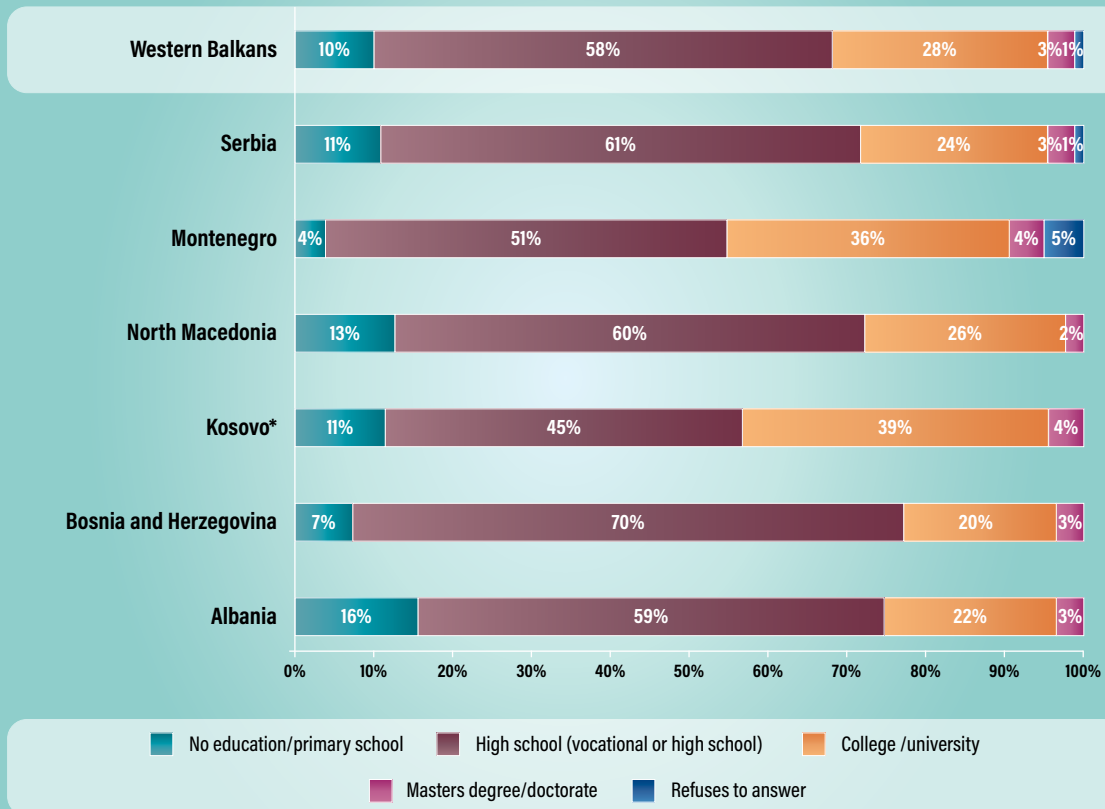
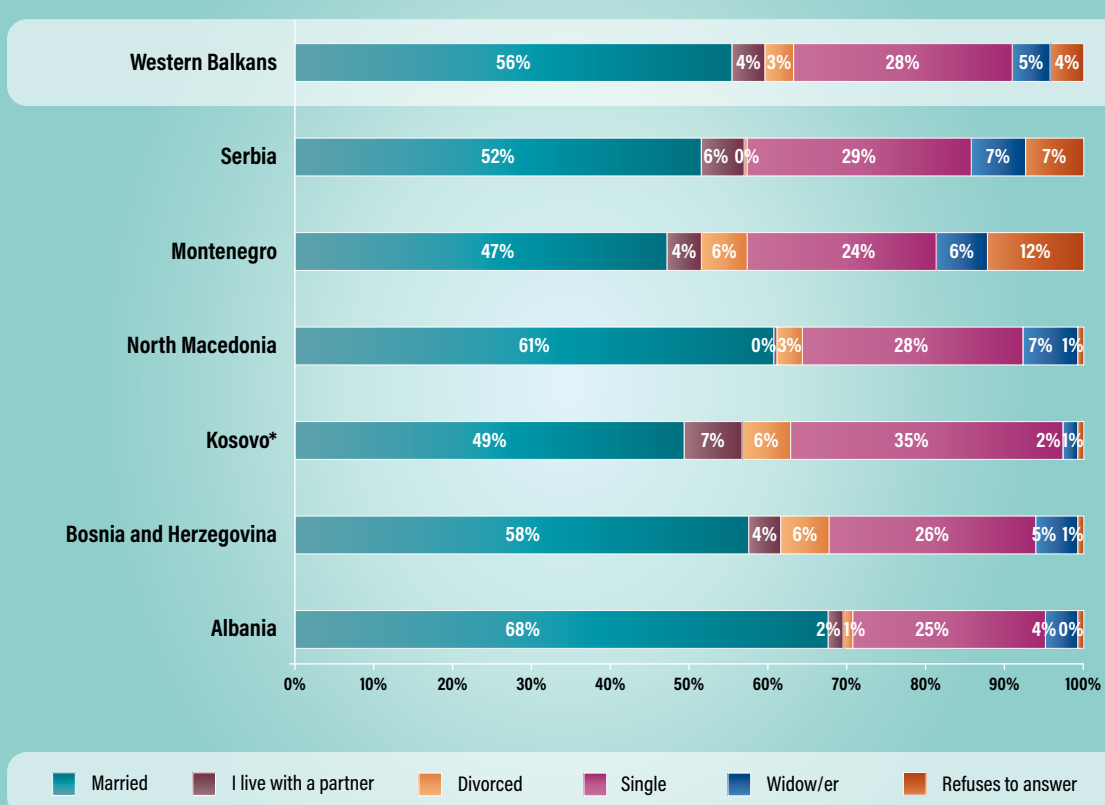


Figure 73. Sample structure by marital status





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