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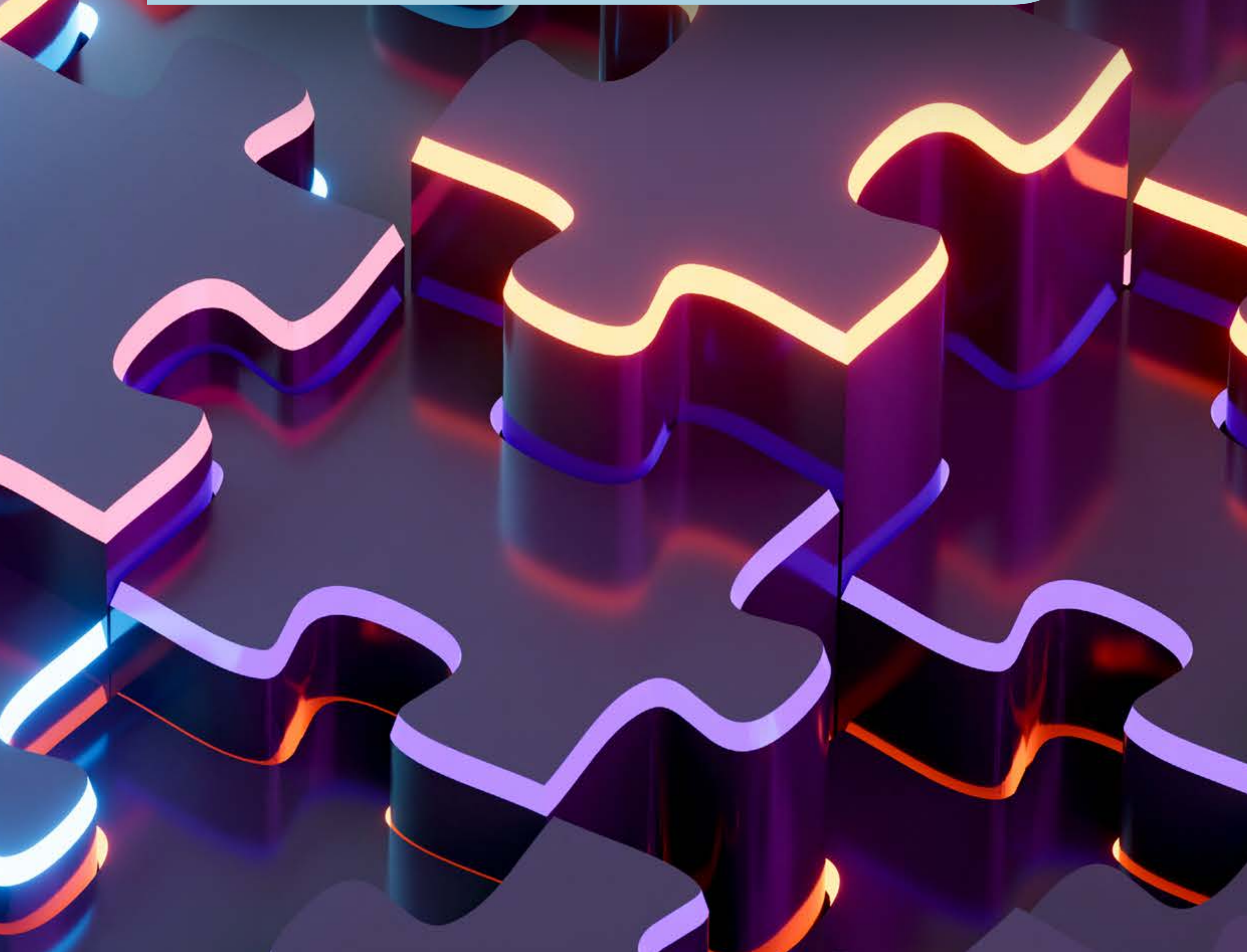
Balkan Barometer 2025

PUBLIC OPINION



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBPO	Balkan Barometer Public Opinion
BPSI	Balkan Public Sentiment Index
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
SEE	South East Europe
WB6	Western Balkans Six
DNK/DA	Do not Know/ Did not Answer (as in survey responses)

ABOUT BALKAN BAROMETER

Balkan Barometer is an annual survey conducted by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) that measures public perceptions and business attitudes across the Western Balkans Six (WB6): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The survey consists of two complementary components: the Public Opinion Survey, which captures citizens' views on economic conditions, governance, regional cooperation and European integration, and the Business Opinion Survey, which examines the business climate, competitiveness, investment dynamics and entrepreneurial expectations.

Since its launch in 2015, Balkan Barometer has become the most comprehensive regional perception survey in the WB6, providing comparable data across jurisdictions and over time. The survey offers an evidence base for policymakers, researchers, businesses and international partners seeking to understand key economic and societal developments in the region.

The 2025 Balkan Barometer surveys were conducted between 21 May and 30 June 2025 across the WB6. The Public Opinion Survey interviewed 6,012 citizens through 39 main questions, while the Business Opinion Survey collected responses from 1,216 business owners, managers and executives through 36 main questions. As in previous editions, the responses are analysed and presented in two separate reports: the Public Opinion Survey and the Business Opinion Survey.

The 12th edition of Balkan Barometer is conducted in a period marked by geopolitical tensions, higher prices and costs, and slower economic activity affecting developments across the region. In 2025, businesses across the WB6 continue to identify high prices, the informal economy and unfair competition as key challenges, alongside corruption in society, labour shortages, limited access to finance, and inefficiencies in public administration and institutions.

* 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

FOREWORD

The 2025 Balkan Barometer Public Opinion Survey provides a consistent evidence base on how citizens across the WB6 perceive economic development and regional cooperation. As the twelfth survey cycle, it contributes to a growing body of comparable data that allows developments in public attitudes to be tracked over time and across WB6.

The findings confirm that regional cooperation remains widely regarded as an important condition for economic and social progress. Majorities across the WB6 associate closer regional ties with improved economic prospects and express similarly positive expectations with regard to wellbeing, security and political stability. Nearly half of respondents consider that what unites people in the region outweighs what divides them, while only a small minority takes the opposite view. Regional cooperation is thus understood primarily as a practical framework for development rather than a purely political project.

Beyond descriptive results, the 2025 edition introduces a Regional Cooperation Model developed by RCC that provides a structured explanation of public attitudes towards cooperation. The analysis shows that support for regional cooperation is shaped primarily by stable social and institutional characteristics rather than by short-term economic or political developments.

Education emerges as the most consistent determinant of support for regional cooperation. Respondents with secondary and tertiary education display substantially higher levels of support than those with only primary schooling, a pattern that holds across WB6 and model specifications. This relationship highlights the role of education not only in economic development but also in fostering openness to intraregional interaction.

Institutional trust represents a second central factor. Citizens who express confidence in public institutions are significantly more likely to support regional cooperation than those who do not. The strength of this relationship exceeds that observed for general evaluations of economic or political conditions, indicating that support for cooperation is closely linked to people's trust in institutions.

The analysis also confirms the close relationship between **regional cooperation and European integration**. Individuals who view EU membership positively and who trust EU institutions display consistently higher levels of support for regional cooperation. Once EU-related attitudes are taken into account, age differences largely disappear in support of regional cooperation, indicating that younger respondents appear more supportive primarily because of their stronger orientation towards European integration. Regional cooperation and EU accession are therefore widely perceived as mutually reinforcing processes.

By contrast, several factors often assumed to shape public opinion prove to be of limited importance once structural determinants are taken into account. Gender, place of residence and short-term evaluations of economic or political conditions show no systematic relationship with support for cooperation. Men and women, urban and rural residents, and respondents with more optimistic or pessimistic assessments of domestic developments express broadly similar attitudes towards regional cooperation and do not constitute any difference with statistical significance.

Taken together, the findings suggest that regional cooperation in the WB6 rests on durable social and institutional foundations. Support for cooperation reflects longer-term orientations associated with education, people's trust in their institutions and European integration rather than short-term fluctuations in domestic circumstances.

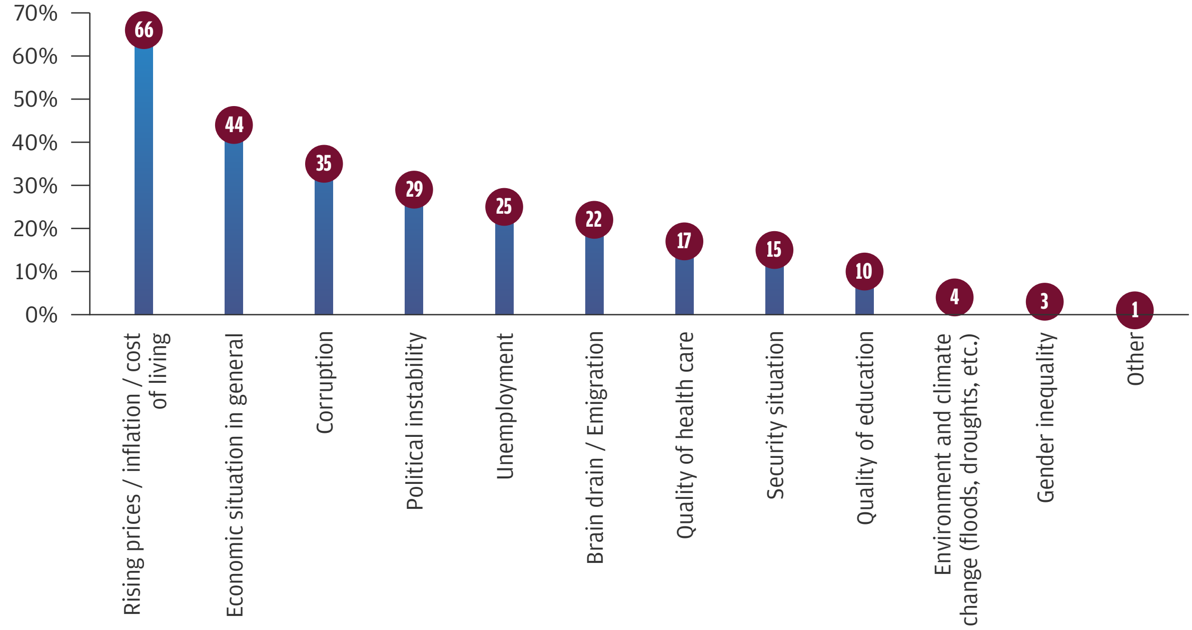
As a multi-annual cross-sectoral regional dataset, Balkan Barometer makes it possible to observe how these structural drivers evolve over time. Evidence from the 2025 cycle indicates that regional cooperation continues to be supported by stable underlying conditions, providing a consistent basis for further economic and institutional integration across the WB6.

KEY FINDINGS

Rising Prices and Inflation Remain the Top Public Concern

In 2025, rising prices and inflation remain the dominant public concern across the WB6, cited by 66% of respondents, slightly above the 64% recorded in 2024[1]. The general economic situation ranks second at 44%, continuing a gradual decline from previous years, while corruption remains a persistent concern at 35%. Economic pressures therefore continue to shape public perceptions despite easing inflation.

Figure 1. Top 3 key issues facing the jurisdiction of the respondents



Regional Cooperation Viewed as Key to Wellbeing and Stability

Citizens across the WB6 continue to associate regional cooperation with economic and social progress. Majorities link closer regional ties to improved economic prospects (mean 3.7 on a 1-5 scale; 64% agreement) and express similarly positive views regarding wellbeing and security (3.6) and political stability (3.5; 54% agreement). Nearly half consider that what unites people outweighs what divides them.

1 In line with the previous report design, the findings for the WB6 are based on aggregated results from all WB6, with each jurisdiction contributing equally to the overall dataset. No weighting was applied, ensuring that the regional perspectives are balanced.

Figure 2. Regional cooperation in the WB6 can contribute to better economic, political, and security situation, and overall wellbeing

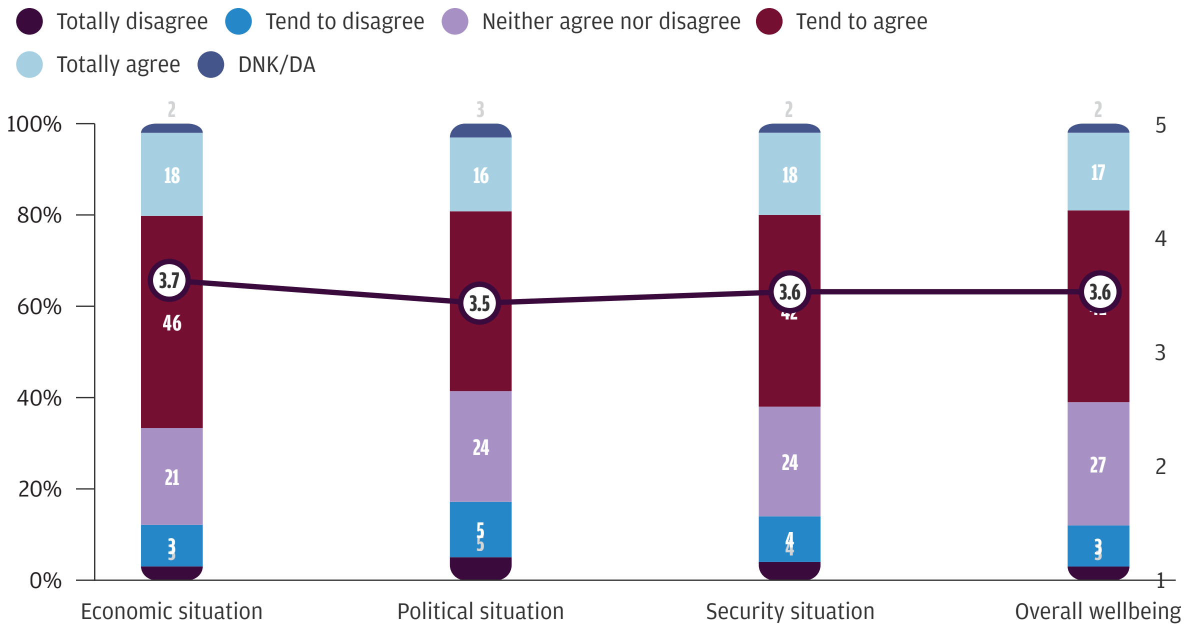
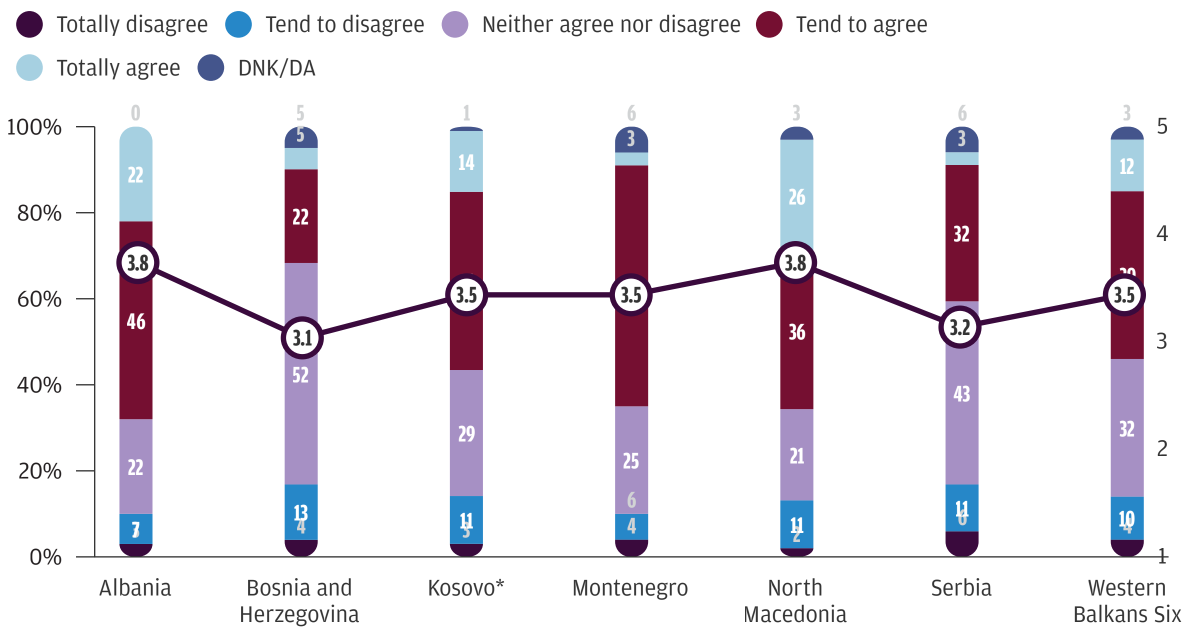


Figure 3. What brings WB6 citizens together is more important than what separates them

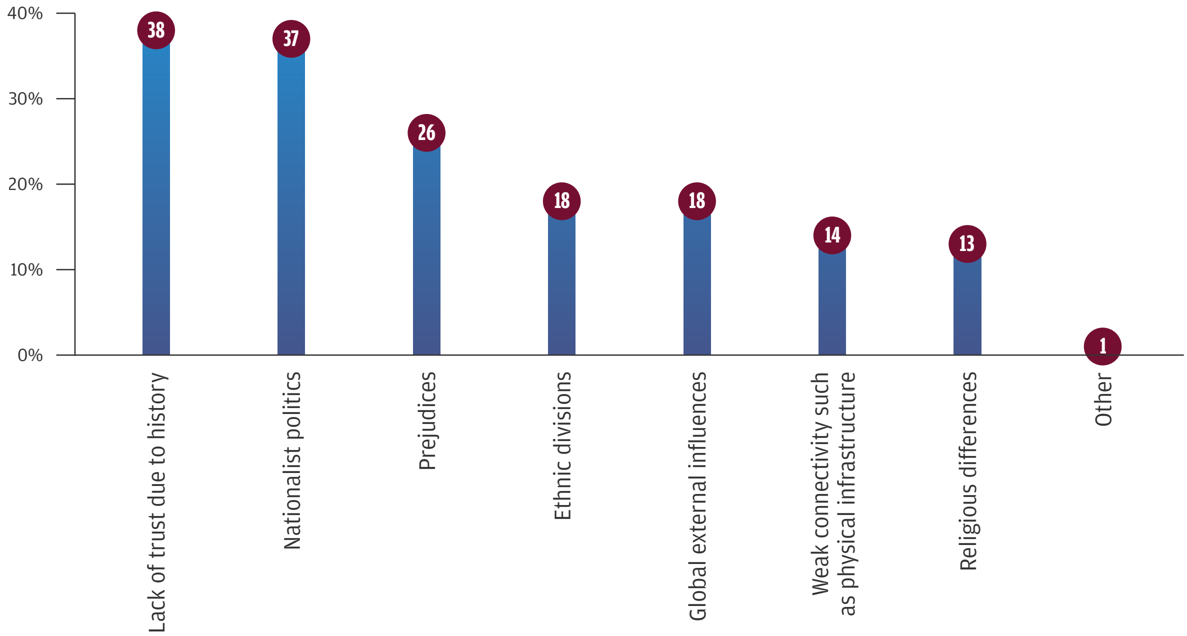


KEY FINDINGS

Historical mistrust and nationalist politics remain key barriers to regional cooperation

Historical mistrust and political tensions remain the most frequently cited barriers to cooperation. Lack of trust rooted in historical issues is cited by 38% of respondents, while nationalist politics are mentioned by 37%. Prejudices are identified by 26%. Concerns about nationalist politics declined compared to 2024.

Figure 4. In your opinion, what hampers regional cooperation between WB6?



Growing Optimism Towards EU Integration

Support for EU membership reached 64% in 2025, up from 54% in 2024. Albania and Kosovo* continue to record the highest levels of support, while increases are observed across the region. Economic prosperity remains the most frequently cited expected benefit, followed by freedom to travel and opportunities to study and work abroad.

Figure 5. Do you think that EU membership of [JURISDICTION] would be good, neither good nor bad, or bad?

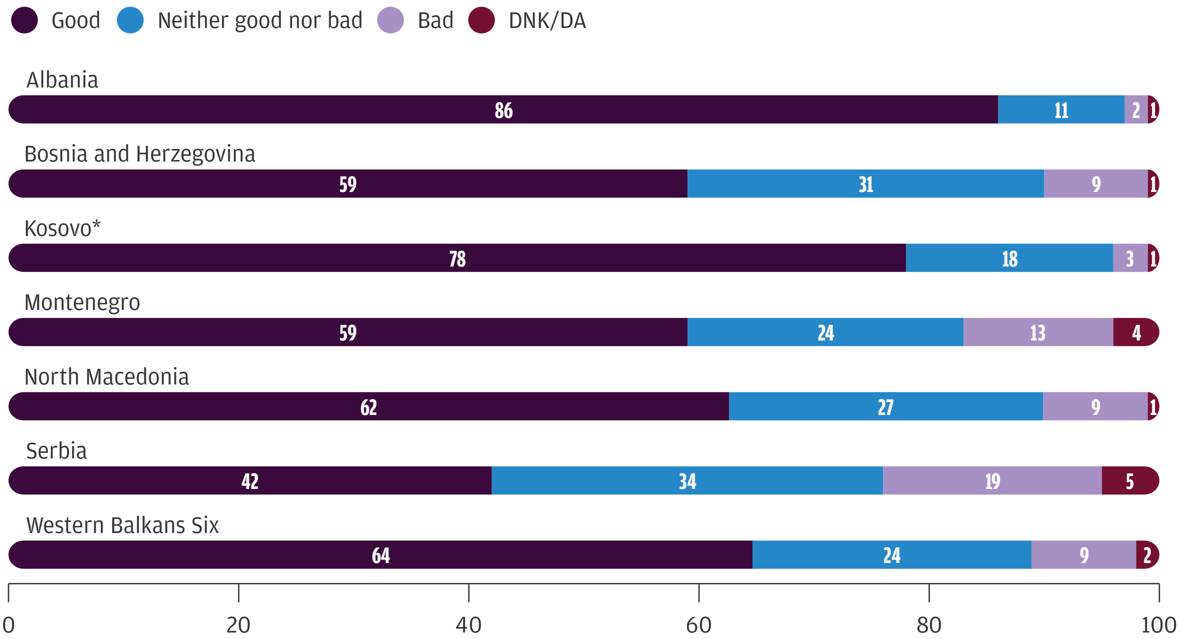
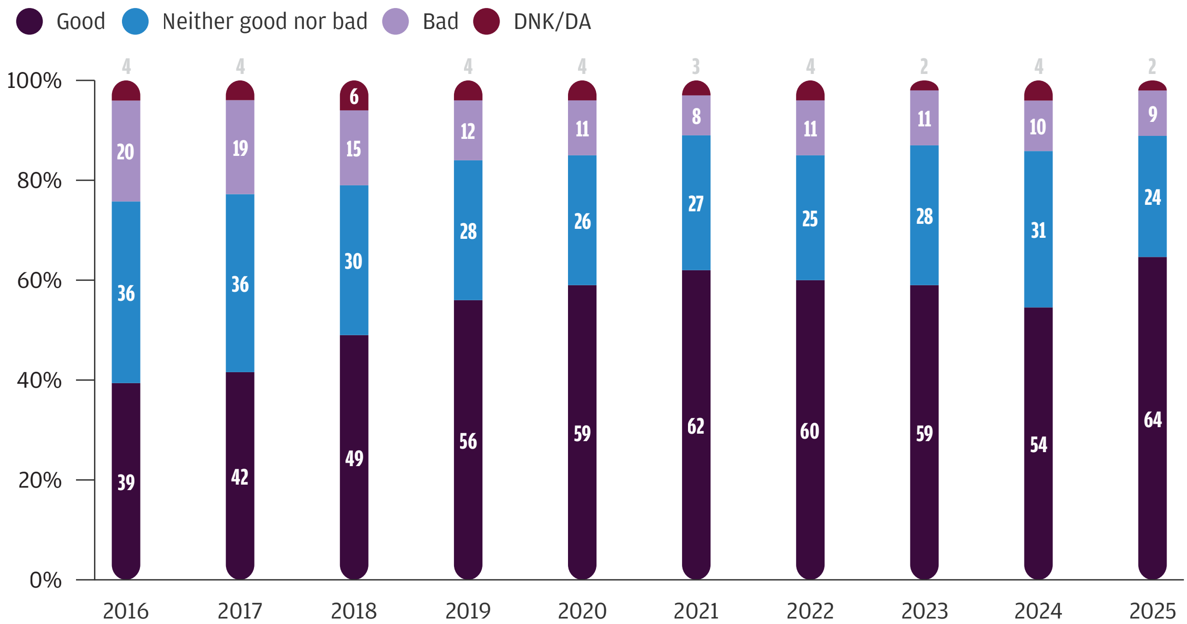
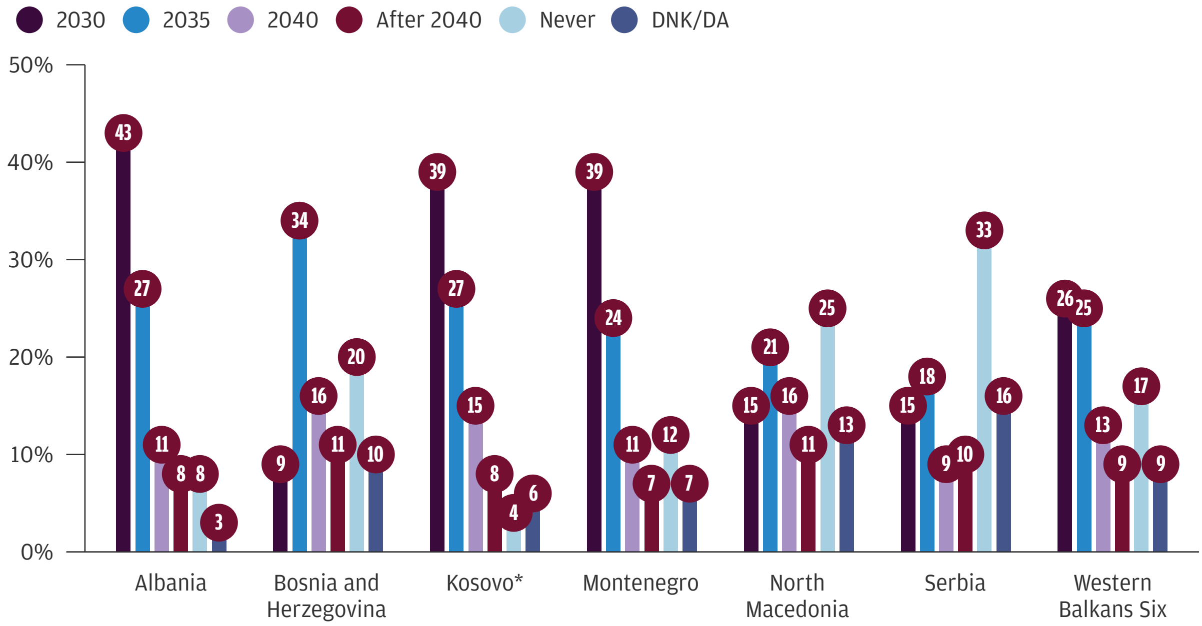


Figure 6. Support for EU membership in the WB6



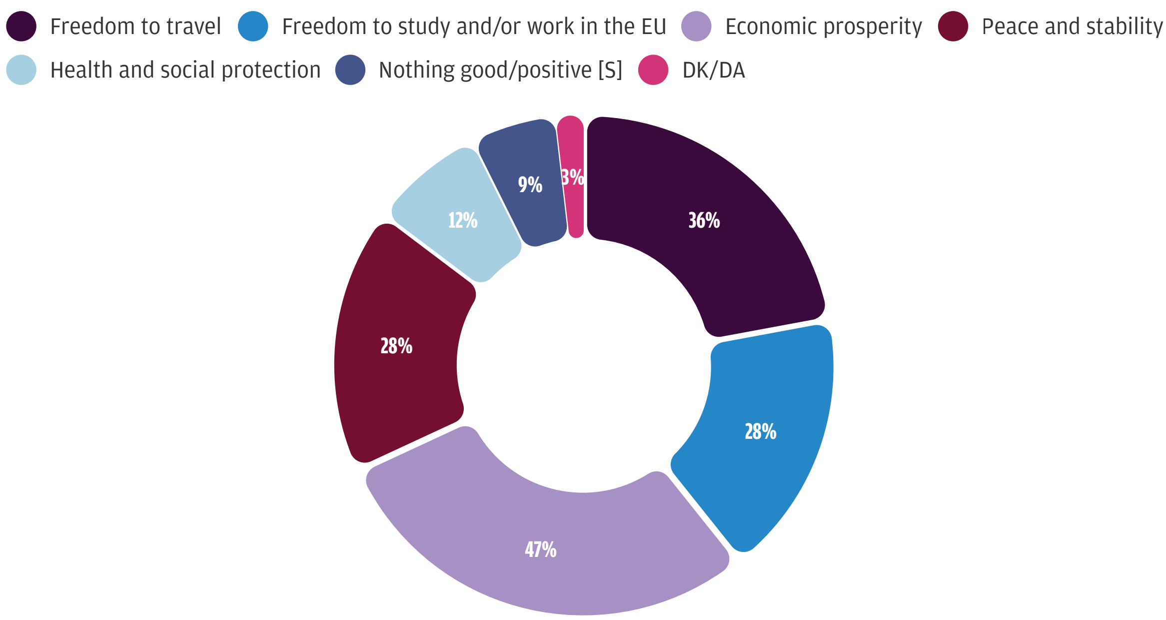
Expectations for EU accession in the WB6 have become slightly more optimistic in 2025. A growing share of respondents now perceive accession could happen by 2030 (26%, up from 20% in 2024) or by 2035 (25%, up from 23%). At the same time, fewer expect it to take place after 2040 (9%, down from 11%) or believe it will never happen (17%, down from 18%), while views that accession will occur around 2040 remain broadly stable (13% vs. 14%).

Figure 7. When do you expect the EU accession to happen?



Citizens in the WB6 increasingly associate EU membership with benefits, particularly economic gains and mobility. Economic prosperity remains the leading expectation, cited by 47% of respondents (up from 43% in 2024), followed by freedom to travel, which has risen to 36% (from 27% in 2024). Freedom to study and work in the EU, as well as lasting peace and stability, are each mentioned by 28% of respondents (compared to 35% and 27% respectively in 2024).

Figure 8. EU membership: What it means for you personally



Expanding Digital Use, Growing Concerns

Use of digital services continues to expand. Online shopping and online banking remain the most widely used services, while reported use of artificial intelligence tools increased compared with 2024. The safety and wellbeing of children online remains the main concern, followed by internet crime and online payment security.

Figure 9. Online services used in the past year

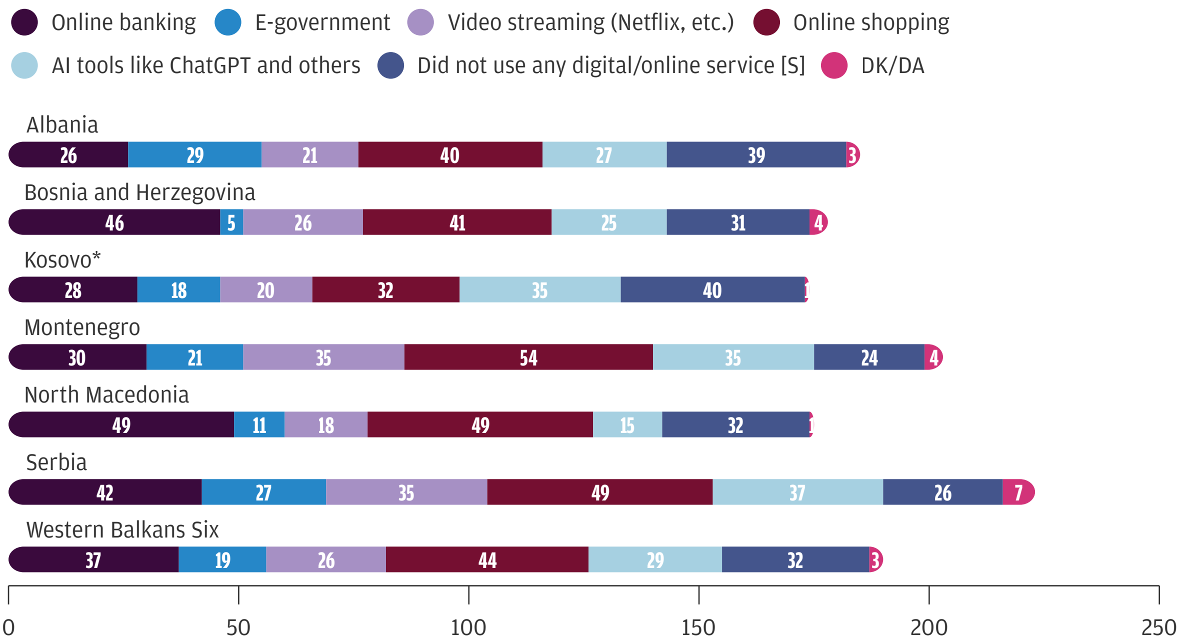
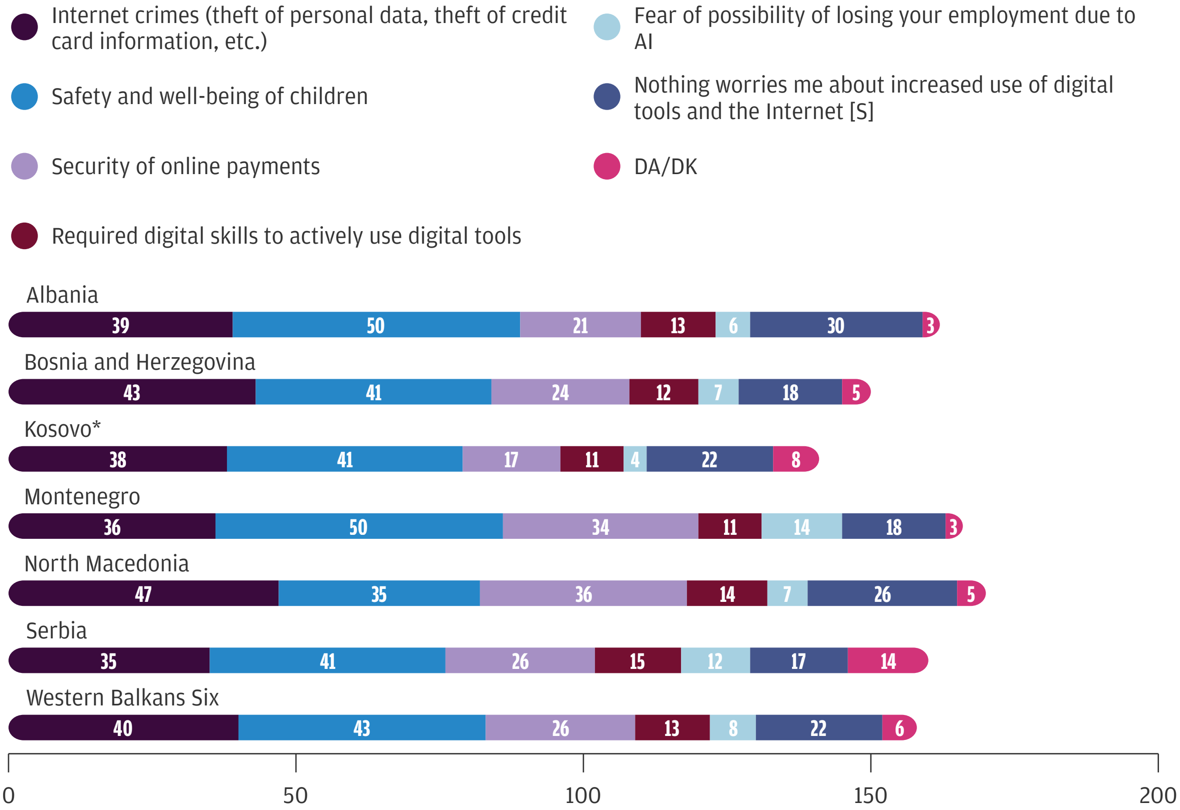


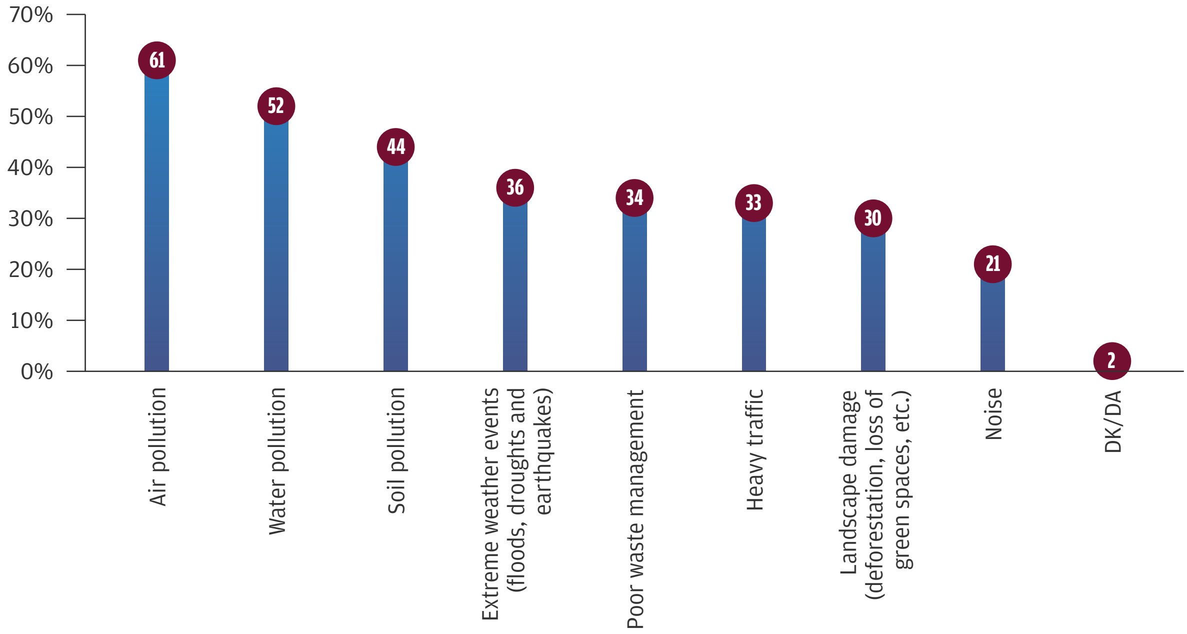
Figure 10. What worries you most about the increased use of digital tools and the internet?



Air and Water Pollution Dominate Community Environmental Concerns

In 2025, environmental concerns remain concentrated on local pollution. Air pollution is cited most frequently (61%), followed by water pollution (52%) and soil pollution (44%). Concerns about waste management declined slightly compared with 2024.

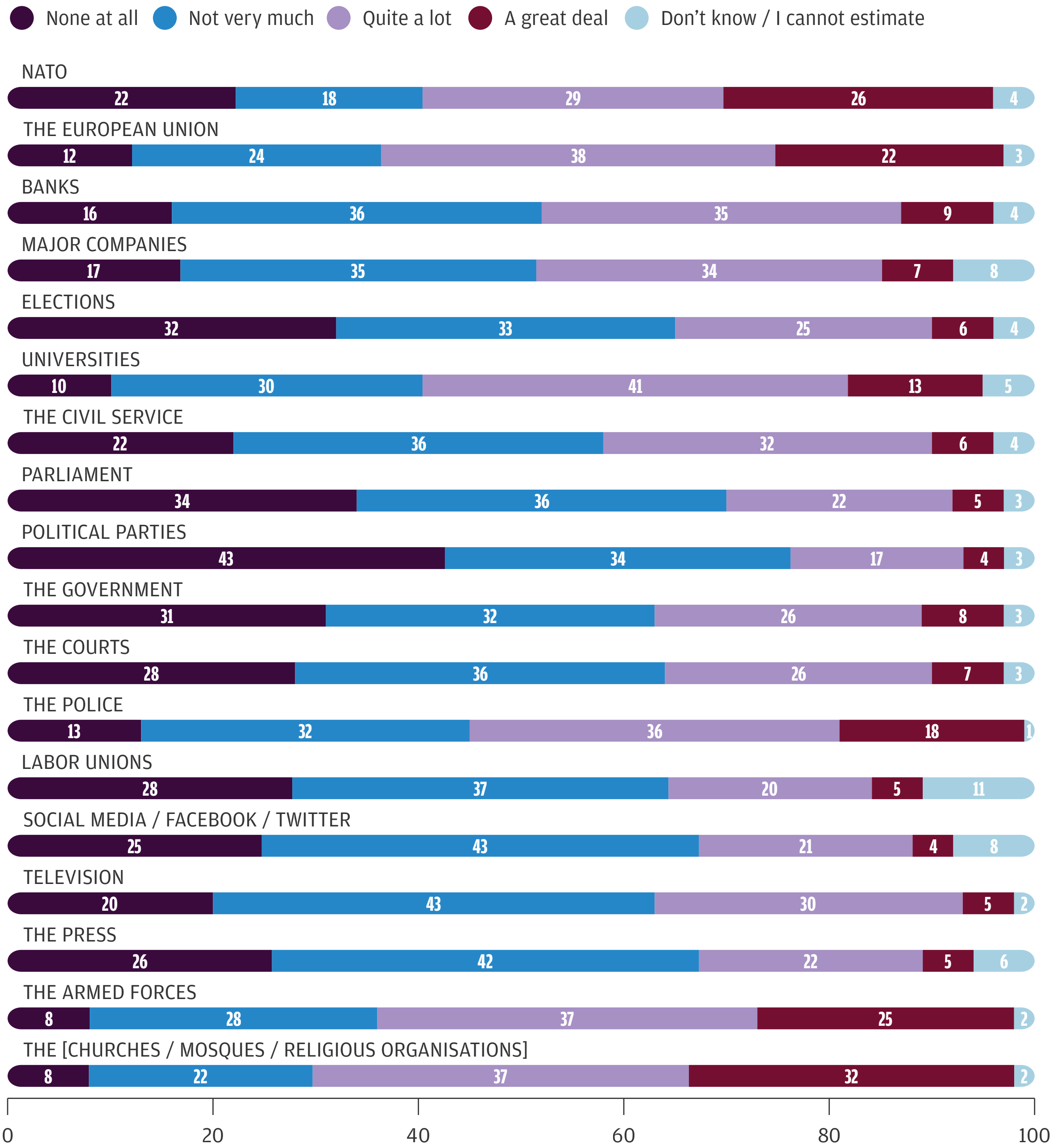
Figure 11. Community concerns: What are your greatest environmental concerns in your community?



Higher Trust in the EU and Other External Institutions than in Domestic Politics

Across the WB6, trust remains higher for non-political than for core political institutions. Religious organisations and the armed forces receive the highest levels of confidence, followed by the European Union. Political parties and parliaments continue to attract the lowest levels of trust.

Figure 12. Measuring confidence: How do you rate these institutions?

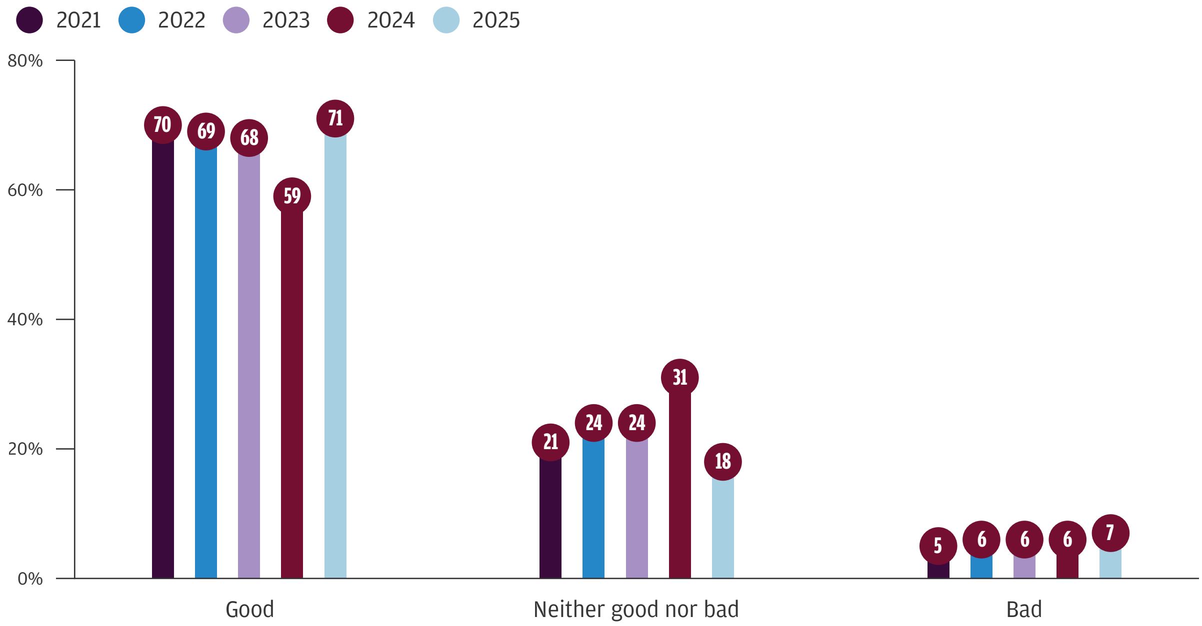


Zooming in on Youth Perceptions

Renewed Youth Confidence in EU Membership

Young people display particularly strong support for EU integration and mobility. Confidence in the benefits of EU membership increased in 2025, while majorities express willingness to live or work abroad. Rising prices and economic conditions remain their main concerns.

Figure 13. Youth opinion: Do you think that EU membership would be a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad for economy?



From Inflation to Brain Drain: Key Economic Concerns Among Youth

Youth see rising prices/inflation (58%), economic situation (37%), and corruption (36%) as the main economic challenges, while giving more weight than the overall population to brain drain/emigration (28%) and quality of education (20%). Unemployment (27%) remains a key concern, similar to the general population (25%).

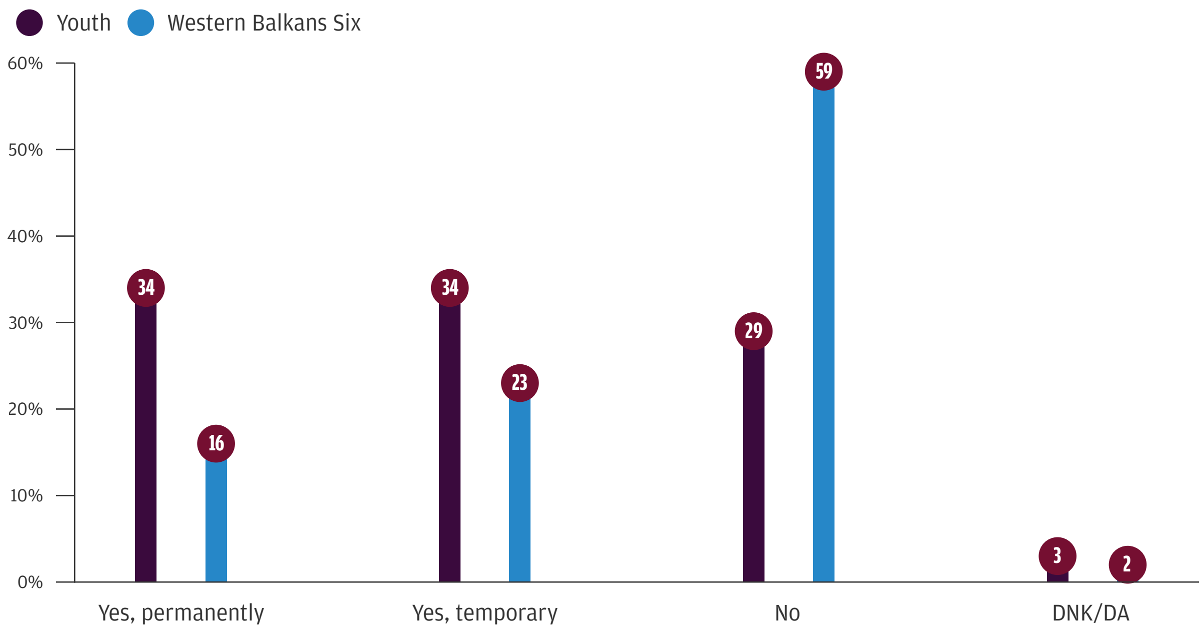
Figure 14. Youth opinion: What do you think are the 3 (three) most important problems facing jurisdictions?

KEY FINDINGS

Youth in the WB6 Show High Willingness to Work or Live Abroad

In 2025, 68% of youth in the WB6 are willing to go abroad for work or residence, 34% permanently and 34% temporarily, while only 29% prefer to stay. Compared to the overall population, youth are far more open to mobility, as only 16% of the general population consider permanent relocation, 23% temporary, and a majority of 59% prefer to remain in their home jurisdictions.

Figure 15. Youth willingness to live or work abroad



REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The WB6 have demonstrated notable economic resilience amid persistent global uncertainties. According to the data, the region's combined real GDP growth was estimated at 3.5% in 2024, a marginal improvement from 3.4% in 2023, and remains above the EU average, indicating a continuation of gradual convergence in living standards with European counterparts.

Growth varies across WB6. Montenegro and Kosovo* remain the fastest-growing, mainly due to the base effect of their jurisdiction sizes while the rest record more moderate growth. Domestic demand and public investment remain the main growth drivers.

Inflation declined following the increases recorded in 2022 and 2023. Average consumer price inflation is expected to fall below 3% by 2025, supporting real incomes and consumption. Despite this improvement, price developments continue to shape public perceptions of economic conditions.

Table 1. Real GDP growth in the WB6 (2022 - 2025 comparison in %)

Individual WB6	2022	2023	2024e	2025f
Albania	4.8	3.9	3.9	3.2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4.2	2.0	2.6	2.7
Kosovo*	4.3	4.1	4.4	3.8
Montenegro	6.4	6.3	3.0	3.0
North Macedonia	2.8	2.1	2.8	2.6
Serbia	2.6	3.8	3.9	3.5
WB6	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.2

e = estimate; f = forecast

Source: World Bank Group Western Balkans Regular Economic Report No. 27, Spring 2025.

External balances weakened moderately in 2024 as export growth slowed and import demand remained strong. Current account deficits widened and fiscal balances deteriorated moderately. Foreign direct investment remains an important financing source, although inflows are expected to decline slightly.

Table 2. Selected economic indicators for WB6 (2022 - 2025 comparison in %)

	2022	2023	2024e	2025f
Real GDP growth components (percent)				
Consumption	2.7	0.7	3.3	3.2
Investment	1.1	0.1	2.9	1.1
Net Exports	-1	2.3	-2.7	-1.1
Consumer Price Inflation (percent, period average)	11.9	9	3.4	2.9
External sector (percent of GDP)				
Current Account Balance	-7.7	-4.1	-6.9	-7.6
Foreign Direct Investment	6.8	5	5.6	4.9

	2022	2023	2024e	2025f
Public sector (percent of GDP)				
Fiscal Balance	-2.4	-1.5	-2.2	-2.8

e = estimate; f = forecast

Source: World Bank Group Western Balkans Regular Economic Report No. 27, Spring 2025.

Overall, WB6 continue to show some resilience supported by domestic demand and improving price stability, particularly thanks to the currency peg anchoring their local currencies with Euro except for Albania and Serbia. External vulnerabilities and fiscal pressures persist, underscoring the need for continued structural reforms.

BALKAN PUBLIC SENTIMENT INDEX

The Balkan Public Sentiment Index (BPSI) is an instrument used to observe the changes of citizens' sentiment over time, which allows capturing changes and comparisons between periods and jurisdictions. The BPSI measures perceptions of economic conditions and future expectations across the WB6 and has remained relatively stable over the past decade. It combines indicators on current economic assessments and expectations for the year ahead. Results are presented for 2025 and compared with previous survey cycles.

In this edition, the BPSI is based on responses to the following seven questions:

- Q1.1. How satisfied are you with your life as whole? (10-point scale)
- Q1.2. How satisfied are you with your job? (10-point scale)
- Q1.3. How satisfied are you with financial situation of your household? (10-point scale)
- Q2. How would you judge the general POLITICAL situation in [JURISDICTION]? (5-point scale)
- Q3. Do you agree that political relations in the WB6 IN GENERAL are better now than 12 months ago? (5-point scale)
- Q4. How would you judge the general ECONOMIC situation of [JURISDICTION]? (5-point scale)
- Q5. What are the expectations for your financial situation in the next 12 months? (5-point scale)

Scoring methodology:

- For the 10-point scale questions (Q1.1 to Q1.3), responses were recoded as follows: 1-2 = 0, 3-4 = 25, 5-6 = 50, 7-8 = 75, 9-10 = 100.
- For the 5-point scale questions (Q2 to Q5), responses were recoded as: 1 = 0, 2 = 25, 3 = 50, 4 = 75, 5 = 100.

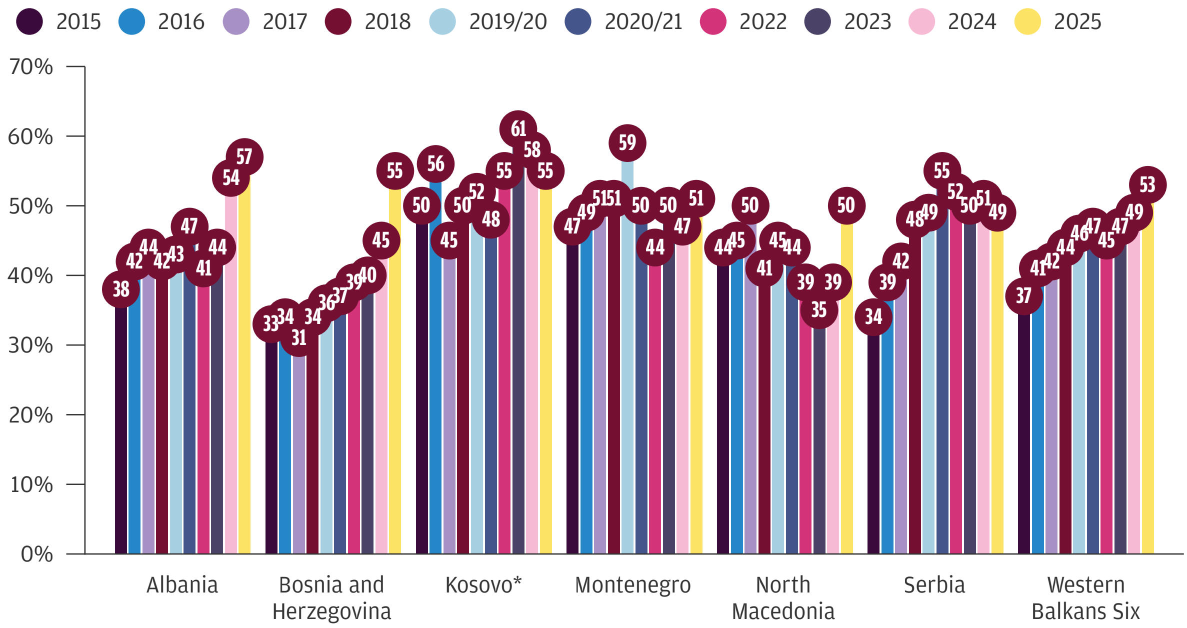
BPSI consists of two subindexes, BPSI-Present Situation Index and BPSI-Expectation Index, which separately observe the present sentiment and future expectations of respondents from the region.

Subsequently, BPSI results are compared with those from previous cycles, both at the regional and individual WB6 levels.

BPSI INDEX OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS

Figure 16 presents the trend in the BPSI from 2015 to 2025 across the WB6. The aggregate sentiment for the WB6 increased from 49 to 53 in 2025, indicating a moderate improvement in overall public sentiment. The most notable increases in 2025 were observed in North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In contrast, Kosovo* and Serbia recorded slight declines in sentiment compared to the previous year. Albania reached its highest score to date, at 57, while Montenegro registered a 4-point increase, reaching 51 out of 100.

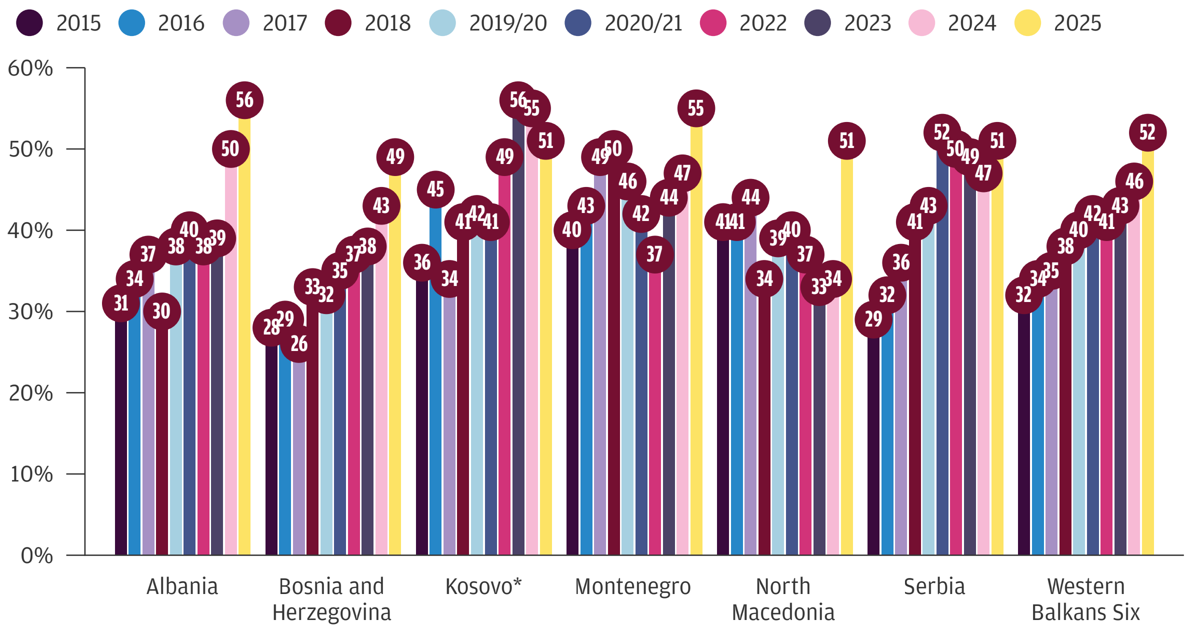
Figure 16. Balkan Public Sentiment Index Trend 2015 - 2025



BPSI INDEX - PRESENT SITUATION

Figure 17 illustrates the behaviour of the BPSI - Present Situation from 2015 to 2025 across the WB6. The overall index for the WB6 increased from 46 in 2024 to 52 in 2025, continuing a steady upward trend. North Macedonia saw the most significant rise, reaching 51 in 2025 - its highest level in the past decade. Montenegro's score increased by 8 points, reaching 55. Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina both experienced a 6-point increase, reaching 56 and 49 points, respectively. Serbia's sentiment score rose modestly to 51, while Kosovo* registered a slight decline.

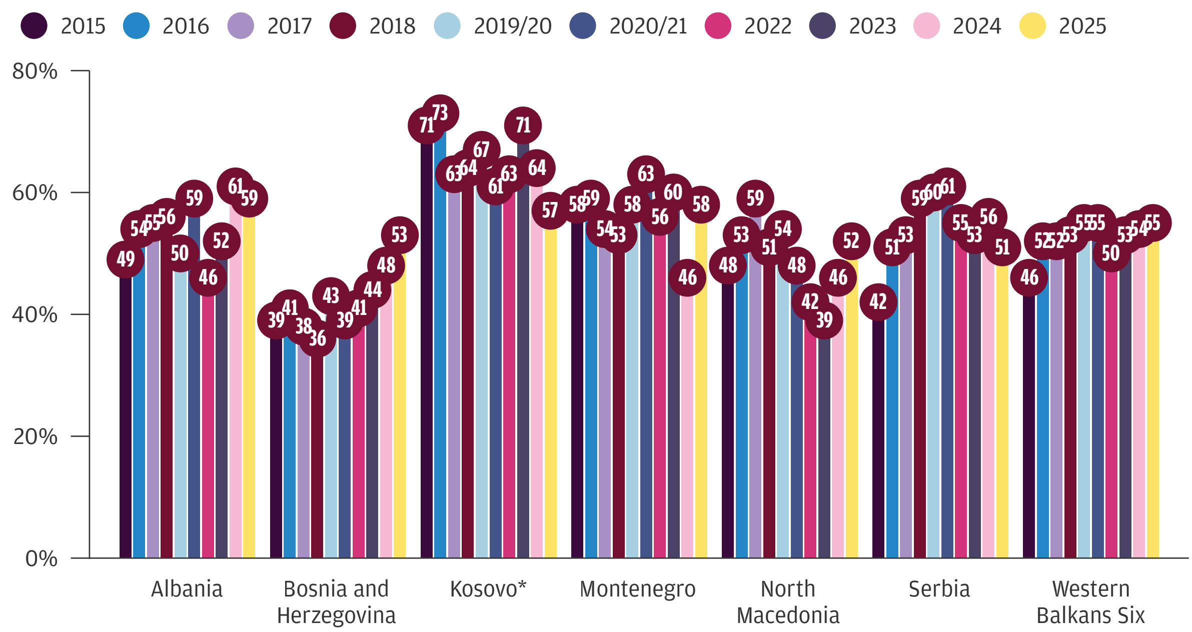
Figure 17. BPSI - Present Situation Index Trend 2015 - 2025



BPSI - EXPECTATION INDEX

The Expectations component of the BPSI shows that citizens' outlook across the WB6 has recovered after declining during the post-pandemic period between 2022 and 2024, returning to levels comparable to those recorded prior to the pandemic. Albania and Montenegro record expectation scores above the WB6 average.

Figure 18. BPSI - Expectation Index Trend 2015-2025



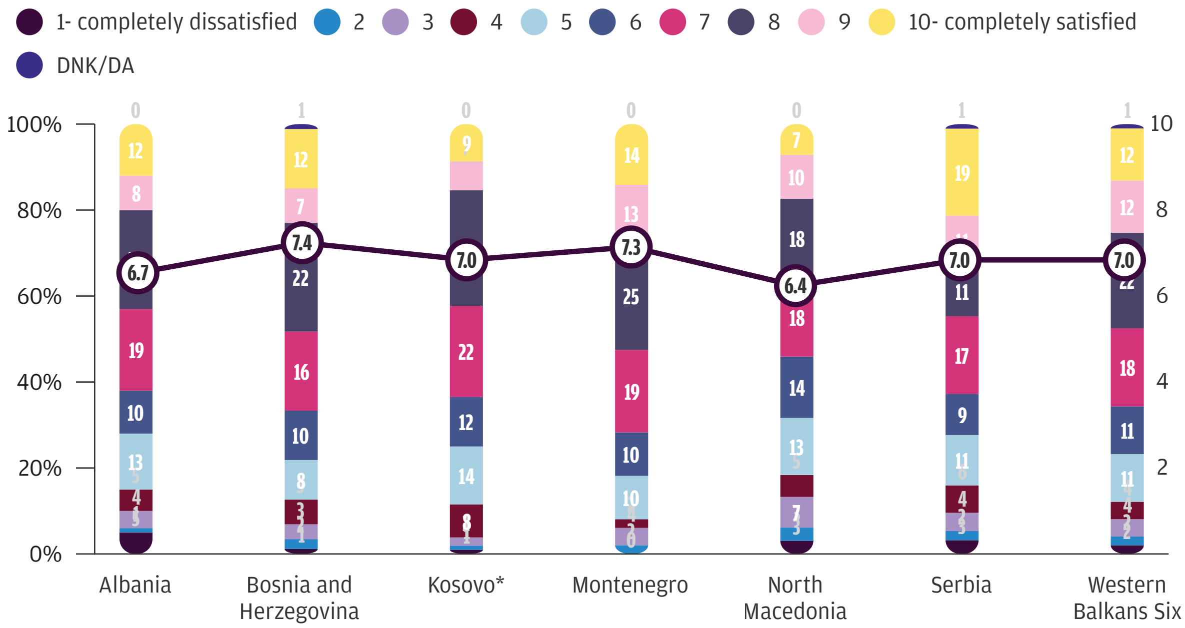
LIFE SATISFACTION AND ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL TRENDS

This chapter presents indicators on life satisfaction and perceptions of general economic and political trends. Respondents evaluated their personal situation and broader developments in their jurisdiction through key indicators, starting with individual contentment in three core areas: overall life, job, and household financial situation. It then expands to public sentiment on the broader political and economic landscape, examining current perceptions on conditions, as well as future expectations. Furthermore, it explores regional political relations and identifies the most pressing problems as seen by the public.

Figure 19. Assessing overall life satisfaction

Q1.1. All things considered, how satisfied are you with: your life as whole

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

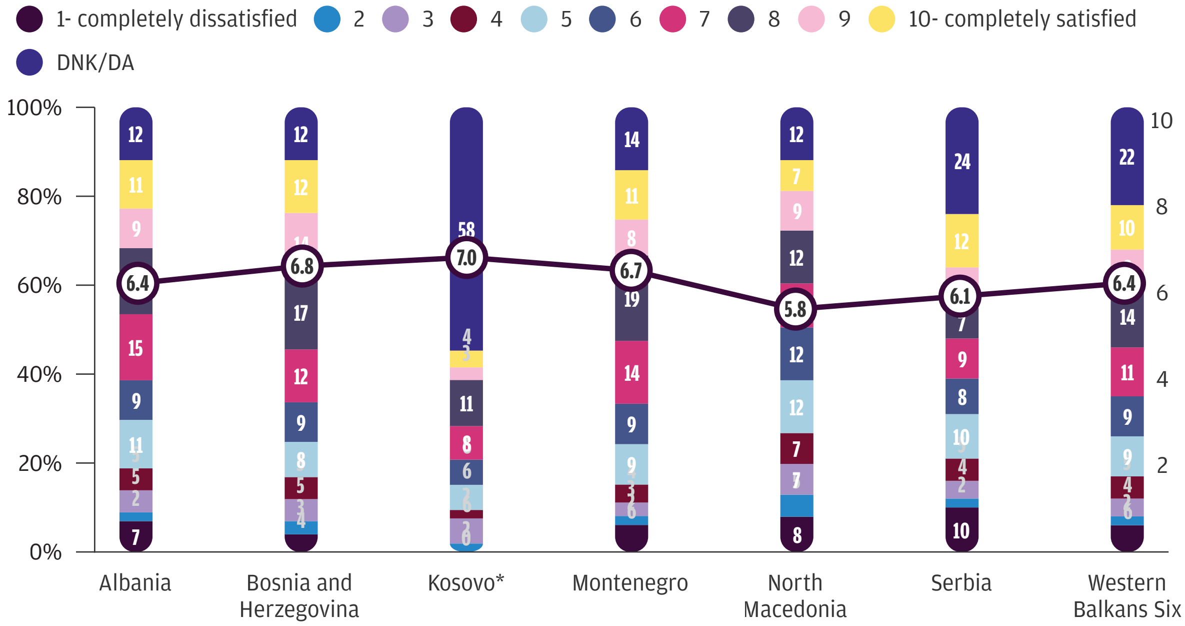


Average life satisfaction across the WB6 stands at 7.0 on a 10-point scale. Bosnia and Herzegovina (7.4) and Montenegro (7.3) record the highest averages, with Bosnia and Herzegovina also showing the largest share of respondents reporting very high satisfaction (scores 9-10, 34%). Albania (6.7) and North Macedonia (6.4) report lower averages, with North Macedonia recording the highest dissatisfaction rates. Kosovo* and Serbia (7.0 each) align with the regional mean. While overall satisfaction is relatively high, cross-jurisdiction variation remains notable.

Figure 20. Assessing job satisfaction

Q1.2. All things considered, how satisfied are you with: your job

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

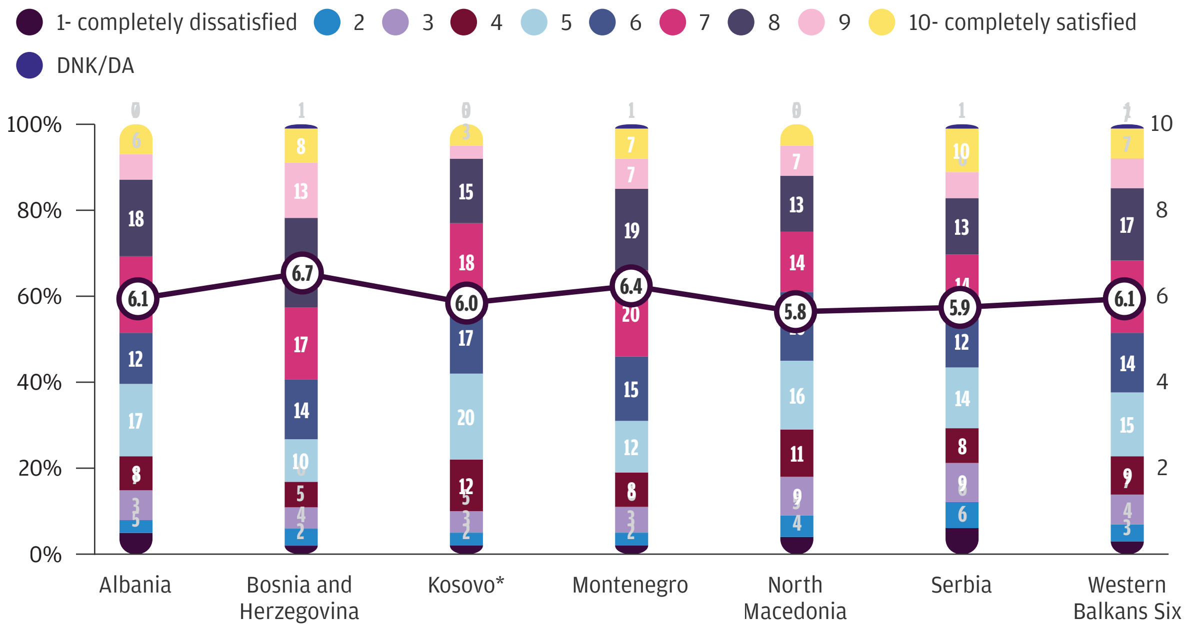


Job satisfaction averages 6.4 across the region, below overall life satisfaction. Kosovo*, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro report comparatively higher levels. Just over half of respondents (52%) indicate satisfaction (scores 6-10), but only 18% rate their job very highly (9-10). The results indicate moderate satisfaction overall, with limited intensity at the upper end of the scale.

Figure 21. Assessing household financial satisfaction

Q1.3. All things considered, how satisfied are you with: financial situation of your household

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

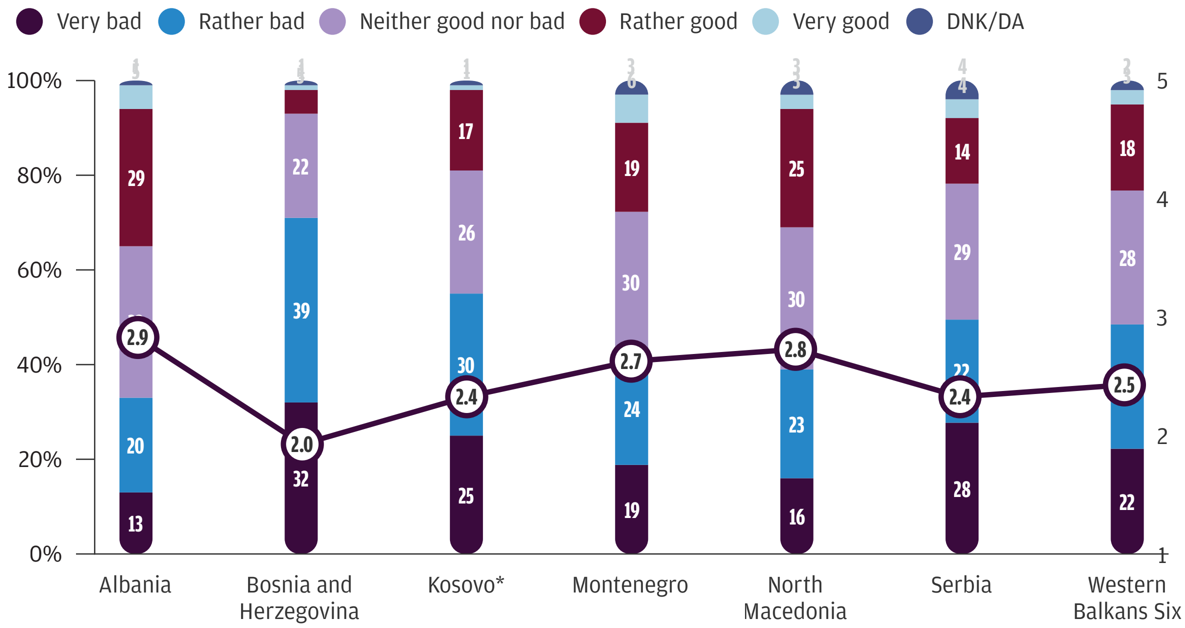


Household financial satisfaction averages 6.1 regionally and remains broadly unchanged from 2024. While 62% report satisfaction (scores 6-10), only 14% indicate very high satisfaction (9-10). Bosnia and Herzegovina (6.7) and Montenegro (6.4) record the highest averages. Financial sentiment remains moderate, with persistent pockets of concern.

Figure 22. Assessing the general political situation: A spectrum from very bad to very good

Q2. How would you judge the general POLITICAL situation in [JURISDICTION]?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

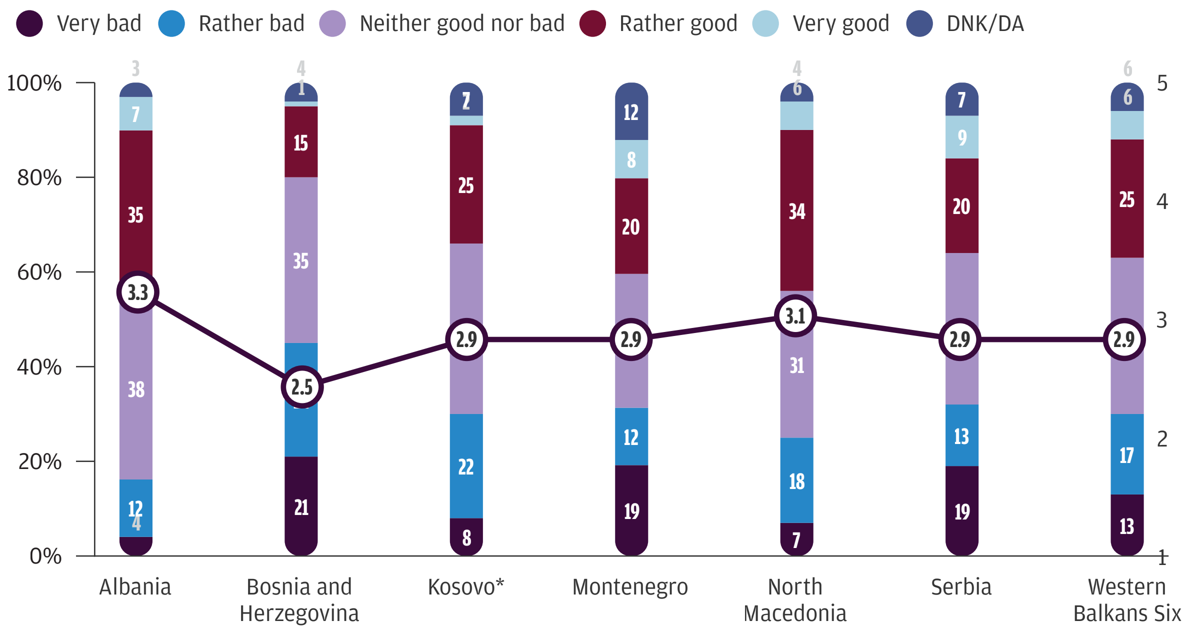


Perceptions of the political situation remain negative overall, with a regional mean of 2.5 on a 1-5 scale. Albania reports the highest score (2.9), though still below the neutral midpoint. Across the region, assessments indicate sustained dissatisfaction with political conditions.

Figure 23. Assessing perception of change in regional political relations

Q3. Do you agree that political relations in the WB6 IN GENERAL are better now than 12 months ago?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

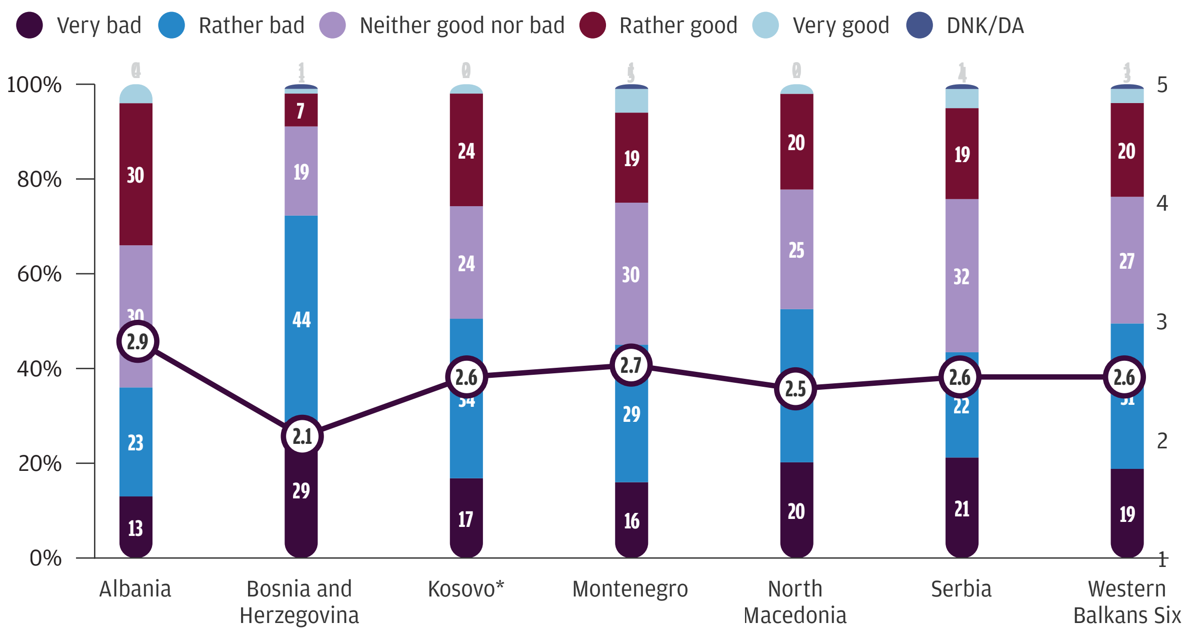


Perceptions of change in regional political relations are evenly distributed: 31% agree relations improved, 30% disagree, and 33% remain neutral. Albania records the most positive average (3.3), while Bosnia and Herzegovina records the lowest (2.5). Most other WB6 cluster around the midpoint, indicating limited consensus regarding progress over the past 12 months.

Figure 24. Assessing the general economic situation: A spectrum from very bad to very good

Q4. How would you judge the general ECONOMIC situation of [JURISDICTION]?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

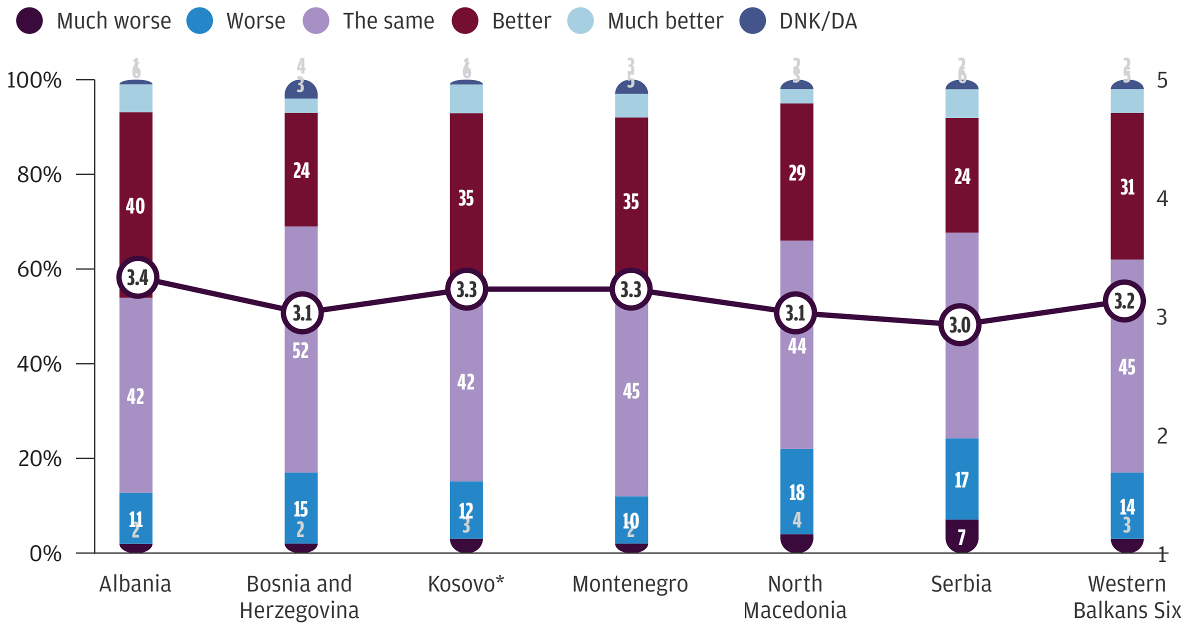


The regional average for perceptions of the economic situation declined to 2.6 (from 2.8 in 2024). Approximately half of respondents evaluate the situation negatively, while 23% provide positive assessments. Economic sentiment remains cautious across the region.

Figure 25. Expectations for the respondent's financial situation in the next 12 months

Q5. What are the expectations for your financial situation in the next 12 months?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)



Financial expectations have improved compared to 2024. Thirty-six percent expect improvement (up from 26%), while 17% expect deterioration (down from 24%). Forty-five percent expect no change. The regional mean stands at 3.2. Albania records the highest optimism (3.4), followed by Kosovo* and Montenegro (3.3). Expectations are cautiously positive overall.

Table 3. Top 3 key issues facing the jurisdiction of the respondents

Q6. What do you think are the 3 (three) most important problems facing [JURISDICTION]?

(All respondents, N=6012, multiple answers, share of total, %)

Issues	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia	WB6
Rising prices/inflation/cost of living	72	60	77	65	70	54	66
Economic situation in general	56	44	58	37	43	28	44
Corruption	31	34	12	31	53	48	35
Political instability	9	51	28	32	18	35	29
Unemployment	28	24	35	22	17	23	25
Brain drain/Emigration	37	19	20	16	27	13	22
Quality of health care	16	14	11	18	27	17	17

Issues	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia	WB6
Security situation	11	16	16	21	10	19	15
Quality of education	8	9	6	12	11	18	10
Environment and climate change	4	4	1	5	4	7	4
Gender inequality	2	2	2	5	1	3	3
Other	2	0.1	2	1	0	2	1

Across the WB6, inflation (66%), general economic conditions (44%) and corruption (35%) remain the dominant concerns. While inflation leads in all WB6, secondary concerns vary: political instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina (51%), corruption in North Macedonia (53%) and Serbia (48%), and unemployment in Kosovo* (35%). Brain drain features prominently in Albania (37%). Despite cross-jurisdiction differences, economic pressures remain central across the region.

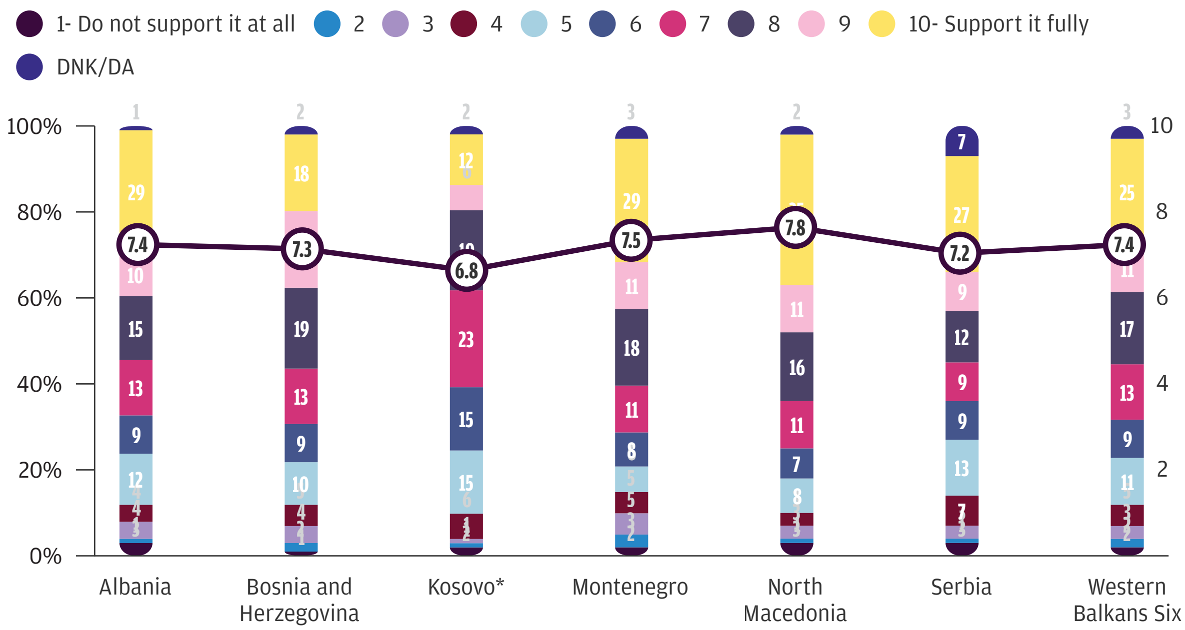
ATTITUDES TOWARDS REGIONAL COOPERATION AND EU INTEGRATION

This chapter presents findings on public attitudes towards regional cooperation and European integration in the WB6. The results combine indicators on perceptions of regional cooperation, reported cross-border/boundary experiences and expectations regarding EU membership.

Figure 26. Support for regional cooperation in the WB6

Q7. If we assume that regional cooperation in the WB6 influences how individuals can travel, collaborate, socialise and develop other aspects of their life, to what extent do you support regional collaboration between diverse jurisdictions in this region on scale 1- do not support it at all to 10 support it fully.

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

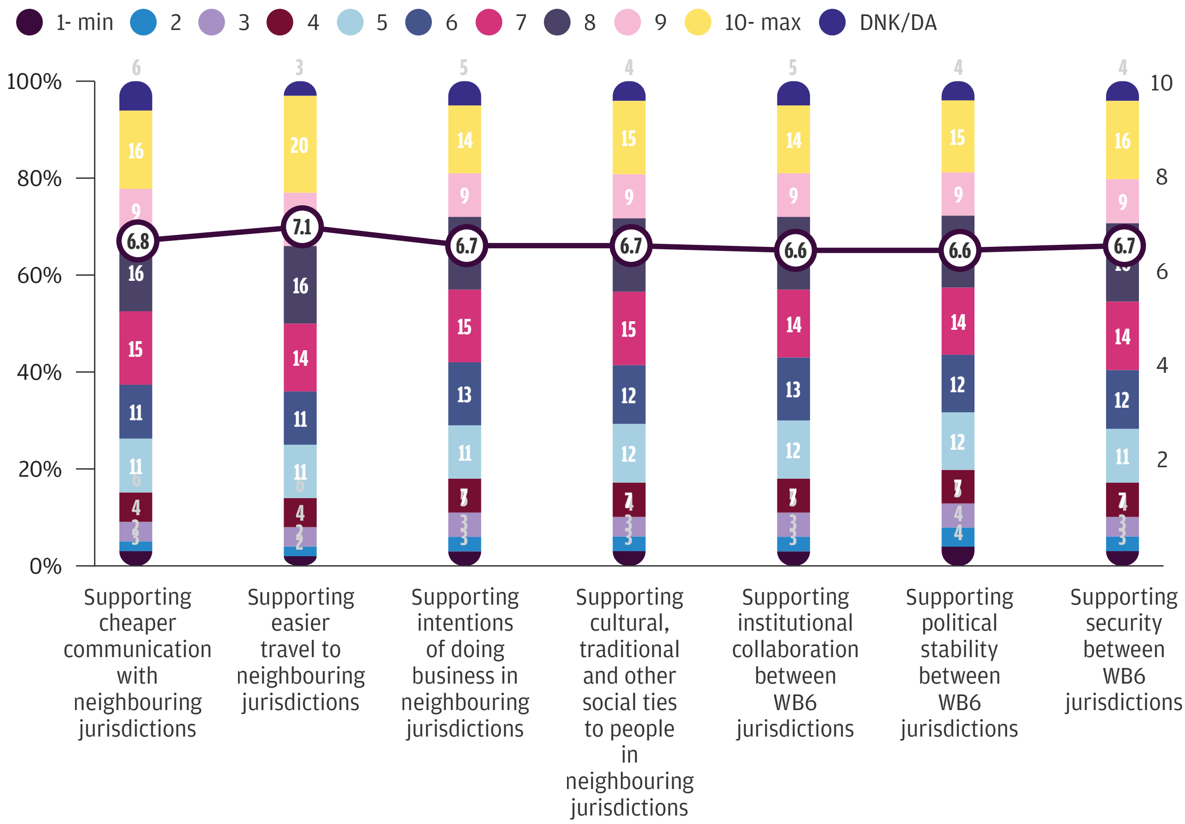


Support for regional cooperation remains high, with a regional mean of 7.4 on a 10-point scale. North Macedonia (7.8) and Montenegro (7.6) record the highest support levels. Kosovo* (6.8) reports the lowest score, though still above the midpoint. Support for cooperation is consistently strong across WB6.

Figure 27. Perceived efficiency of regional cooperation across key areas

Q7.1-Q7.7. Now, I would like to ask you to mark how the current regional cooperation is efficient on the scale 1-min to 10-max:

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

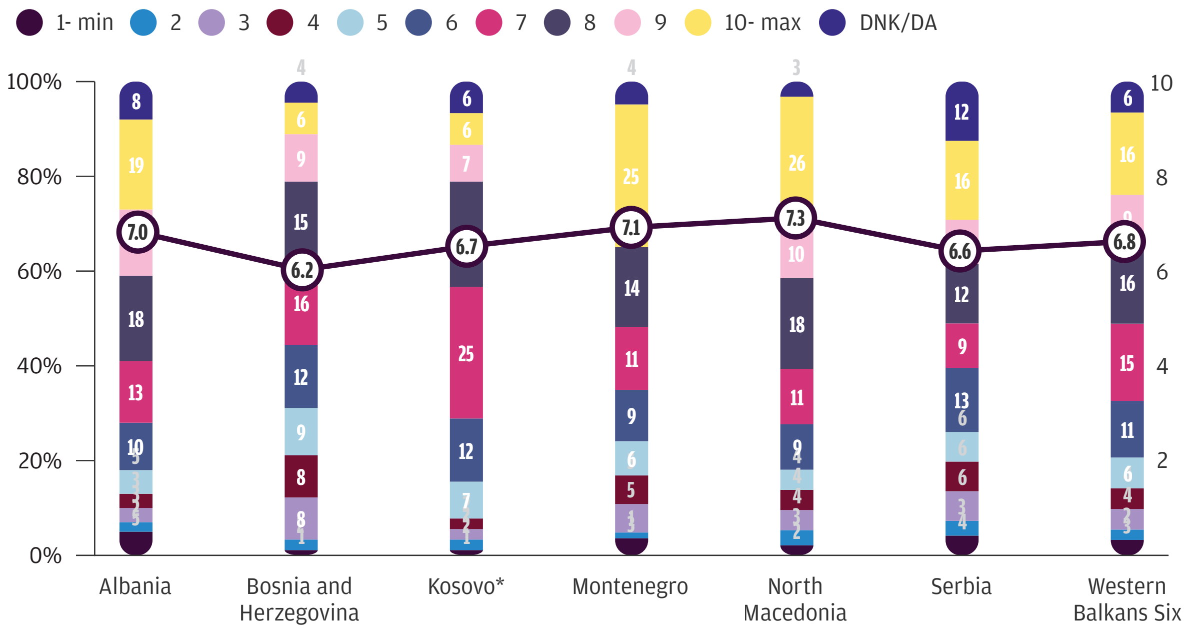


Perceived efficiency scores range between 6.6 and 7.1. Easier travel (7.1) and cheaper communication (6.8) receive the highest evaluations. Business facilitation, cultural ties, institutional cooperation, political stability, and security score between 6.6 and 6.7. Assessments suggest moderate to strong perceived effectiveness across all dimensions.

Figure 28. Perceived impact of regional cooperation in supporting cheaper communication

Q7.1-Q7.7. Now, I would like to ask you to mark how the current regional cooperation is efficient on the scale 1-min to 10-max:
Q7.1. Supporting cheaper communication with neighbouring jurisdictions

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

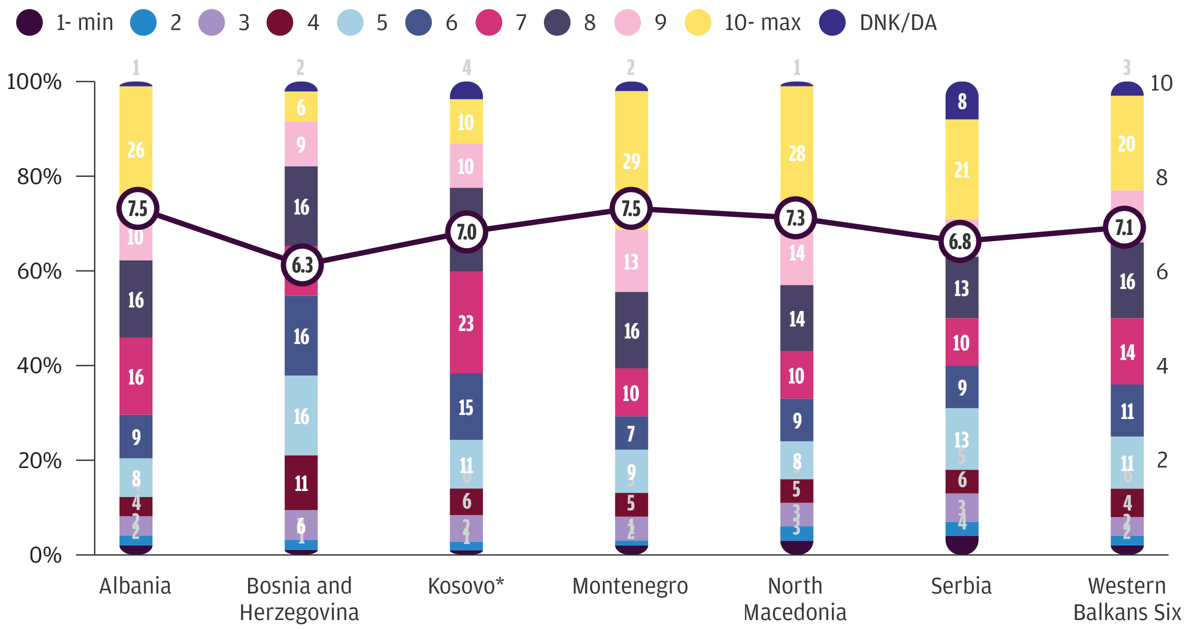


Regional cooperation in facilitating cheaper communication receives a regional average of 6.8. North Macedonia (7.3) and Montenegro (7.1) lead, while Bosnia and Herzegovina (6.2) reports the lowest score. All WB6 score above the midpoint.

Figure 29. Perceived impact of regional cooperation in supporting easier travel

Q7.1-Q7.7. Now, I would like to ask you to mark how the current regional cooperation is efficient on the scale 1-min to 10-max
Q7.2. Supporting easier travel to neighbouring jurisdictions

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

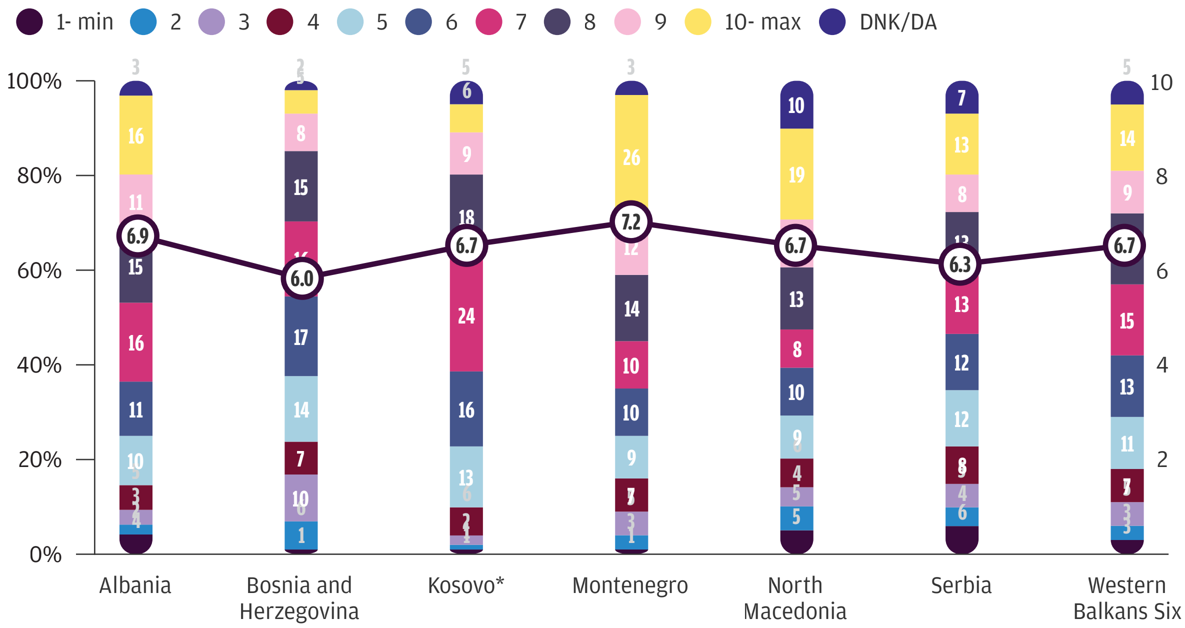


Regarding regional cooperation in facilitating cross-border/boundary travel, citizens in the WB6 hold a very positive view, with a regional average score of 7.1. Albania and Montenegro lead (7.5), followed by North Macedonia (7.3), Kosovo* (7.0), Serbia (6.8), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (6.3) which also report strong scores, indicating that citizens across the region generally view this form of cooperation as effective. (Figure 29).

Figure 30. Perceived impact of regional cooperation in supporting intentions of doing business in neighbouring jurisdictions

Q7.1-Q7.7. Now, I would like to ask you to mark how the current regional cooperation is efficient on the scale 1-min to 10-max:
Q7.3. Supporting intentions of doing business in neighbouring jurisdictions

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

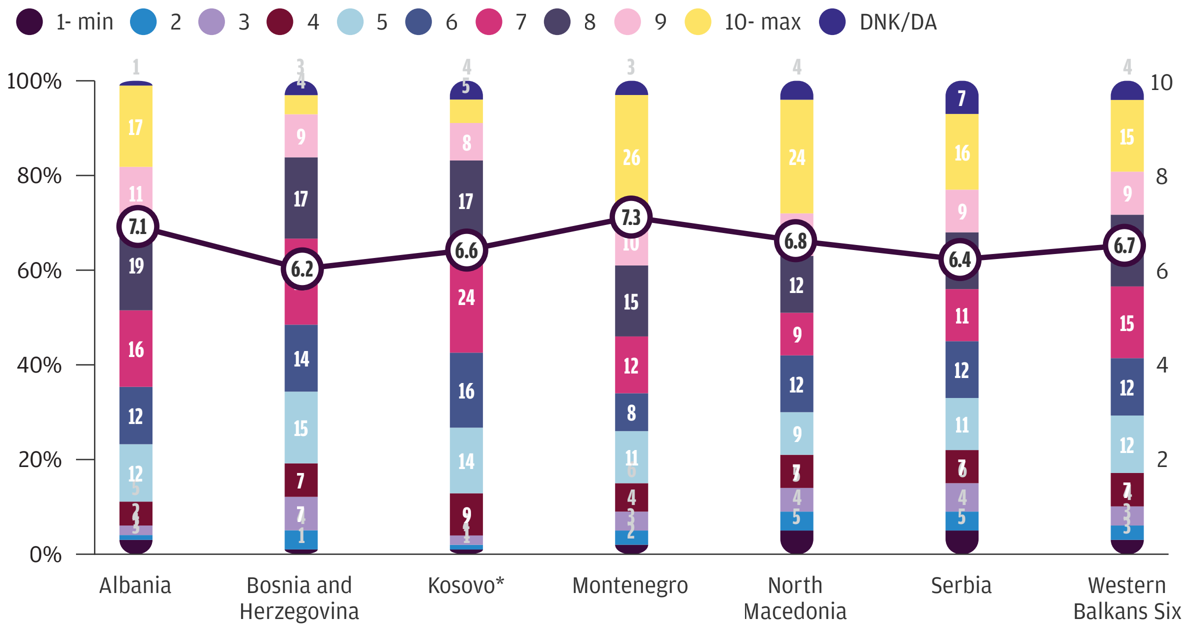


The perceived contribution of supporting business intentions in neighbouring jurisdictions is moderately positive across the WB6, with a regional average of 6.7 (Figure 30). Montenegro and Albania lead in perceived impact, scoring 7.2 and 6.9, respectively, while Kosovo* (6.7) and North Macedonia (6.7) align with the regional average. Serbia (6.3) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (6.0) report slightly lower scores, yet all WB6 remain above the midpoint, suggesting a general belief that regional cooperation contributes, to some extent, to facilitating business activities.

Figure 31. Perceived impact of regional cooperation in supporting cultural, traditional, and social ties with people in neighbouring or other WB6

Q7.1-Q7.7. Now, I would like to ask you to mark how the current regional cooperation is efficient on the scale 1-min to 10-max:
Q7.4. Supporting cultural, traditional and other social ties to people in neighbouring or other WB6

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

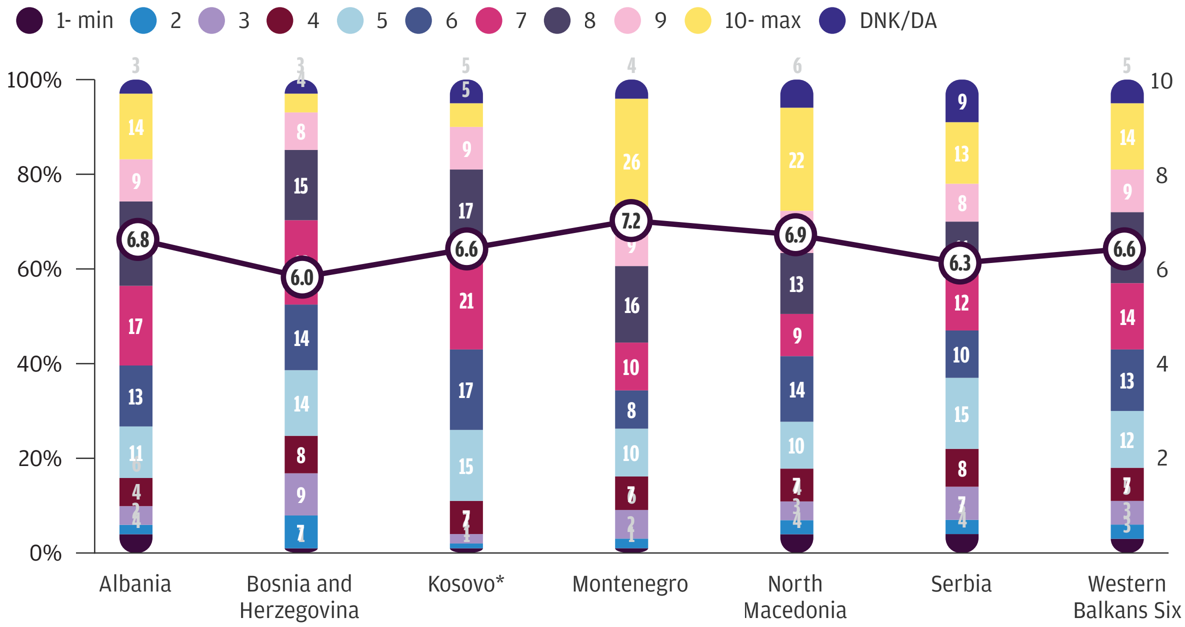


Support for cultural and social ties averages 6.7. Montenegro (7.3) and Albania (7.1) record the highest scores. Bosnia and Herzegovina (6.2) and Serbia (6.4) record comparatively lower averages. Perceptions remain generally positive that regional cooperation effectively fosters cultural and social connections.

Figure 32. Perceived impact of regional cooperation in supporting institutional collaboration between WB6

Q7.1-Q7.7. Now, I would like to ask you to mark how the current regional cooperation is efficient on the scale 1-min to 10-max:
Q7.5. Supporting institutional collaboration between WB6

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

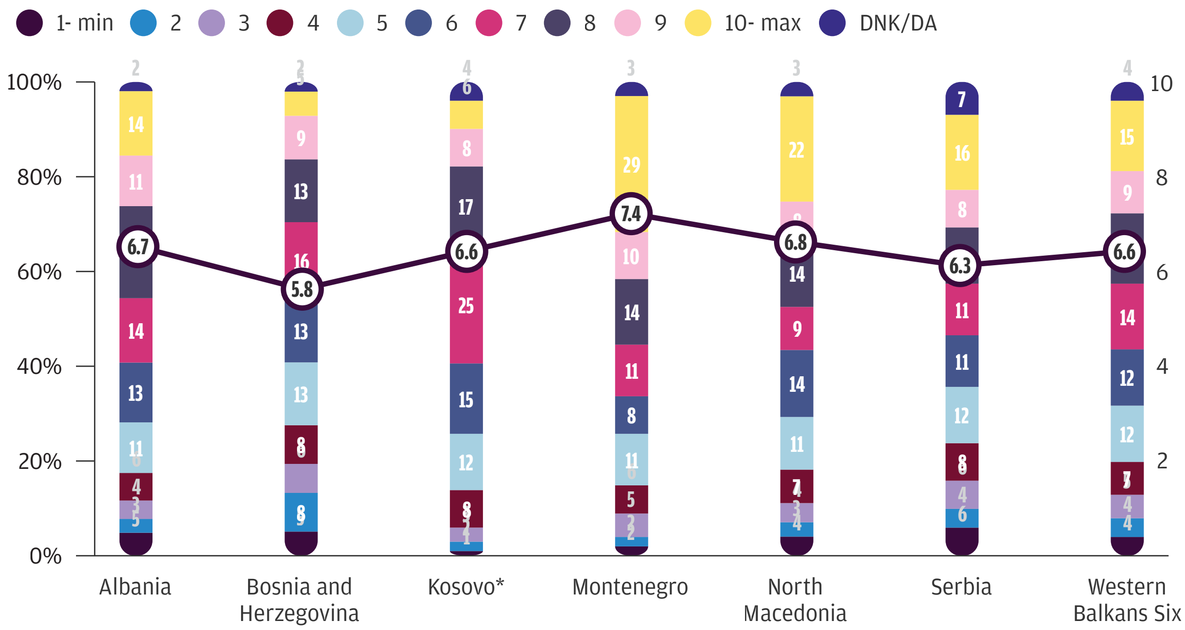


Institutional cooperation averages 6.6 regionally. Montenegro (7.2) and North Macedonia (6.9) lead. All WB6 remain above the midpoint.

Figure 33. Perceived impact of regional cooperation in supporting political stability between WB6

Q7.1-Q7.7. Now, I would like to ask you to mark how the current regional cooperation is efficient on the scale 1-min to 10-max:
Q7.6. Supporting political stability between WB6

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

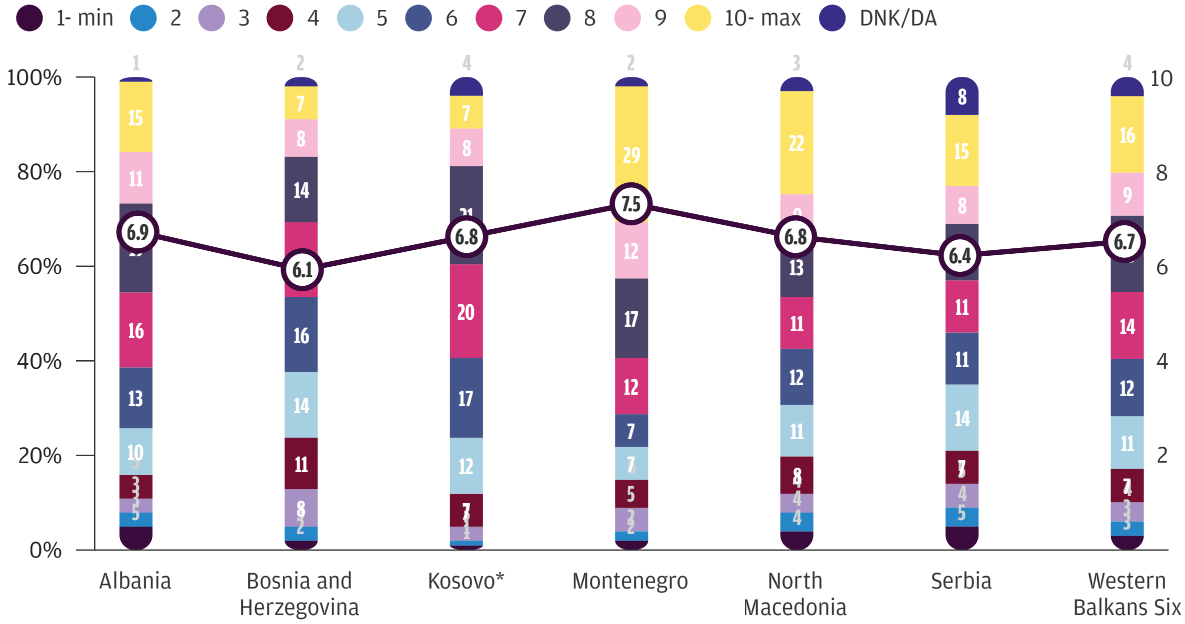


Perceived contribution to political stability also averages 6.6. Montenegro (7.4) leads, followed by North Macedonia (6.8).

Figure 34. Perceived impact of regional cooperation in supporting security between WB6

Q7.1-Q7.7. Now, I would like to ask you to mark how the current regional cooperation is efficient on the scale 1-min to 10-max:
Q7.7. Supporting security between WB6

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)



Security cooperation averages 6.7. Montenegro (7.5) leads, followed by Albania (6.9). Bosnia and Herzegovina (6.1) reports the lowest score. Overall perceptions remain positive.

Table 4. WB6 travel: Destinations visited in the past 12 months

Q8. Which of the WB6 did you travel to during the past 12 months?

(All respondents, N=6012, multiple answers, share of total, %)

Jurisdiction	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia	WB6
Albania	0%	6%	**66%**	**28%**	31%	4%	**27%**
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4%	0%	2%	**39%**	13%	**18%**	15%
Kosovo*	**38%**	3%	0%	11%	**32%**	5%	18%
Montenegro	**20%**	**36%**	**18%**	0%	25%	**26%**	**25%**
North Macedonia	18%	5%	16%	9%	0%	14%	12%
Serbia	2%	**38%**	4%	**51%**	**34%**	0%	**26%**
None of them	**52%**	**48%**	**28%**	**28%**	**41%**	**58%**	**43%**
DNK/DA	0.1%	1%	0.1%	3%	0%	1%	1%

Forty-three percent report no travel within the region in the past 12 months albeit the facilitation of travel requirements through visa liberalisation and ID-based travel. Albania, Serbia and Montenegro are the most frequently visited destinations. Serbia records the highest share of non-travellers (58%), while Kosovo* and Montenegro record the highest mobility rates (72% reporting at least one visit).

Figure 35. Your travels to WB6: Total trips in the past 12 months

Q9. Approximately how many times in total did you travel to the WB6 during the past 12 months?

(Those who travelled in the region, n=3416, single answer, %)

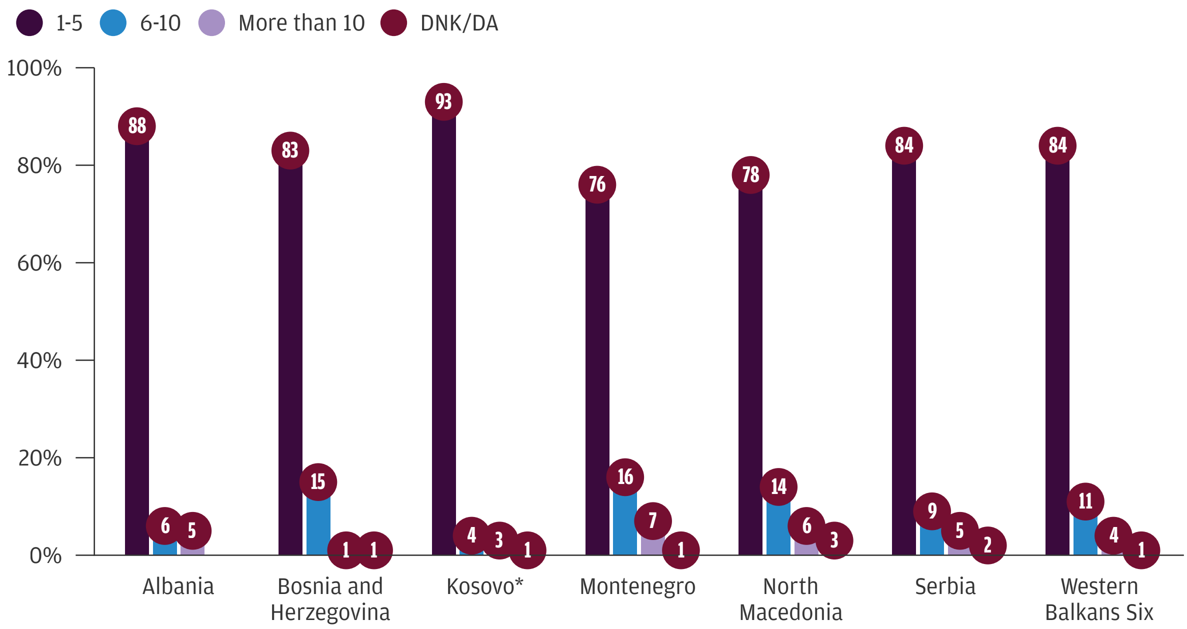
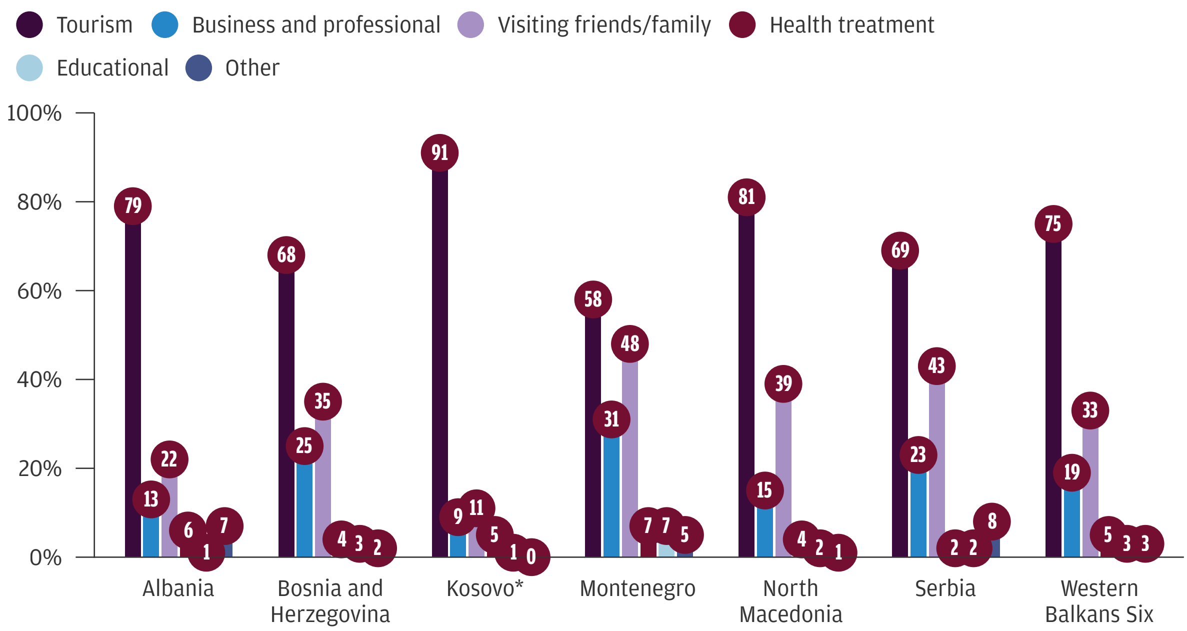


Figure 36. The purpose of travels

Q10. What was the purpose of this/these travel(s)?

(Those who travelled in the region, n=3416, multiple answers, %)



Among those who travelled, 84% made between one and five trips. Tourism (75%) and visiting friends or relatives (33%) dominate travel purposes. Business, education and health travel account for smaller shares.

Table 5. The jurisdiction in the WB6 the respondents have never visited

Q11. Which of the WB6 have you never visited?

(All respondents, N=6012, multiple answers, share of total, %)

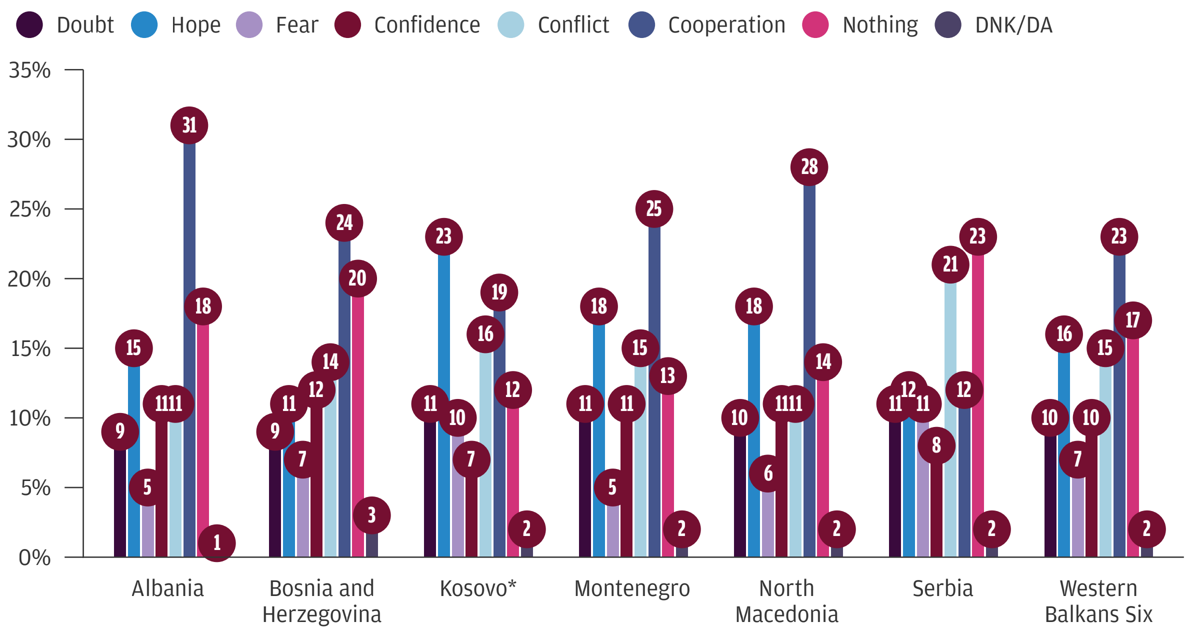
Jurisdiction	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo*	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia	WB6
Albania	0	**60**	4	25	**29**	**68**	**37**
Bosnia and Herzegovina	**66**	0	**79**	12	**50**	22	**46**
Kosovo*	20	**60**	0	**40**	25	**41**	**37**
Montenegro	36	8	32	0	24	7	21
North Macedonia	**38**	**55**	32	**42**	0	**25**	**38**
Serbia	**72**	11	**67**	6	15	0	34
None of them	21	**22**	1	**36**	**30**	22	22
DNK/DA	1	0.1	0	0.1	2	0	1

Forty-six percent report never visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina. Coupling of WB6 not visiting each other displays the destination preferences being in line with the above-mentioned reasons for intraregional travels and shows likely their socioeconomic entanglement. Montenegro records the lowest "never visited" share. Twenty-two percent report never visiting any other WB6.

Figure 37. First feeling when you think about WB6

Q12. When you think of the WB6, what is the first feeling that comes to your mind?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)

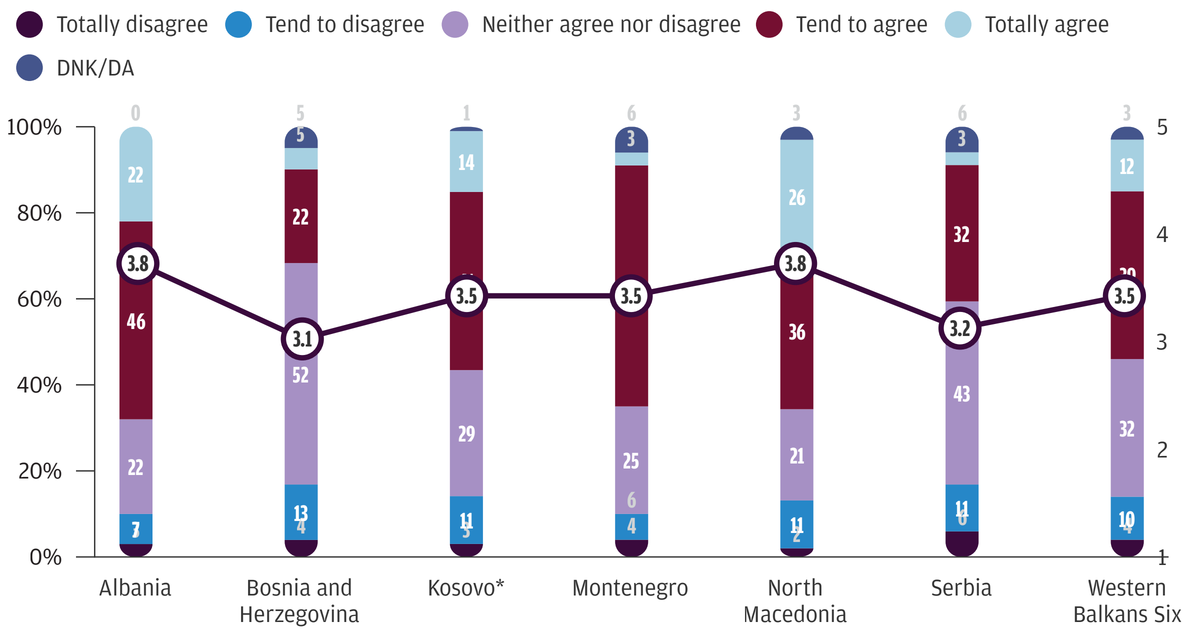


Cooperation (23%) and hope (16%) are the most frequently cited associations, followed by conflict (15%). Seventeen percent report no particular feeling. Albania shows the strongest association with cooperation (31%).

Figure 38. Unity over division: WB6 shared value

Q13.A. Do you agree with the statement: What brings WB6 citizens together is more important than what separates them?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

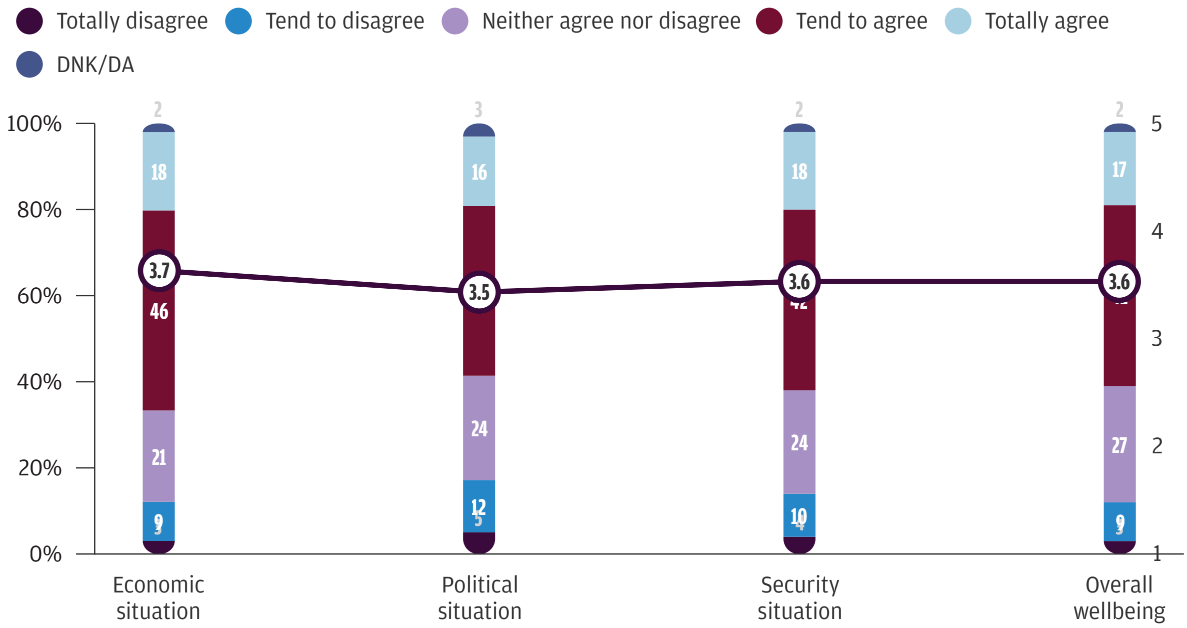


Fifty-one percent agree that what unites WB6 citizens outweighs what divides them; 32% are neutral and 14% disagree. Albania records the strongest agreement (68%).

Figure 39. Regional cooperation: A pillar for prosperity in the WB6

Q13.1-4 Regional cooperation in the WB6 can contribute to better ...

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

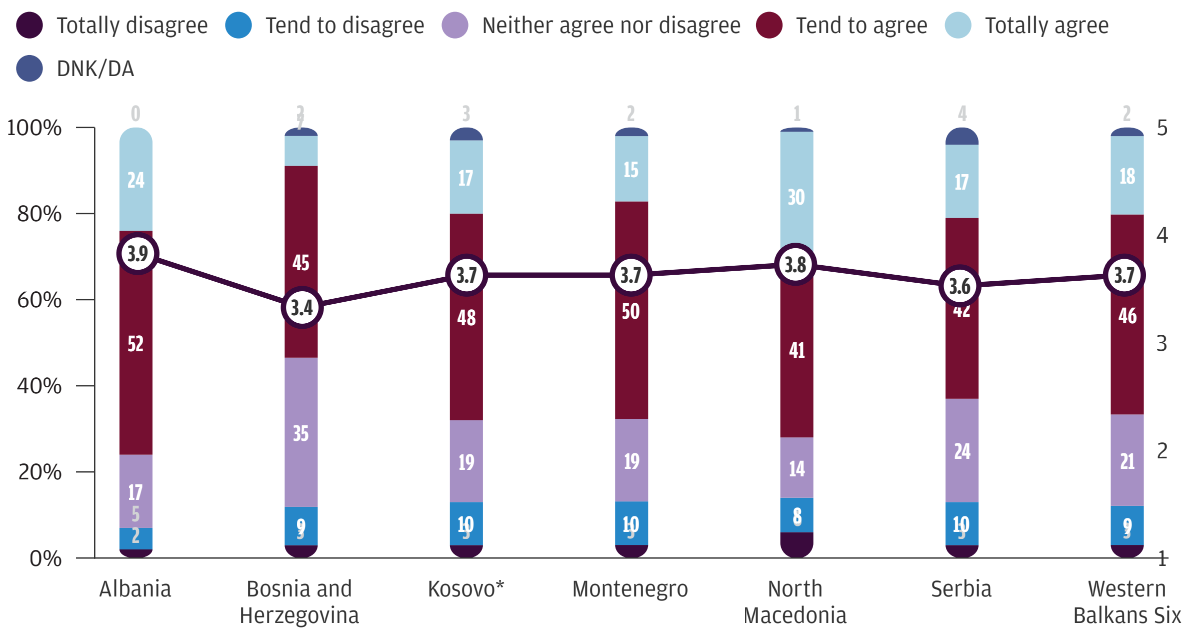


Furthermore, citizens across the WB6 perceive that regional cooperation can significantly contribute to their well-being and stability. Across all four dimensions (economic, political, security, wellbeing), mean scores range from 3.5 to 3.7. Economic contribution receives the highest rating (3.7; 64% agreement).

Figure 40. Contribution of regional cooperation to economic situation

Q13.1-4 Regional cooperation in the WB6 can contribute to better...
Q13.1. Economic situation

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

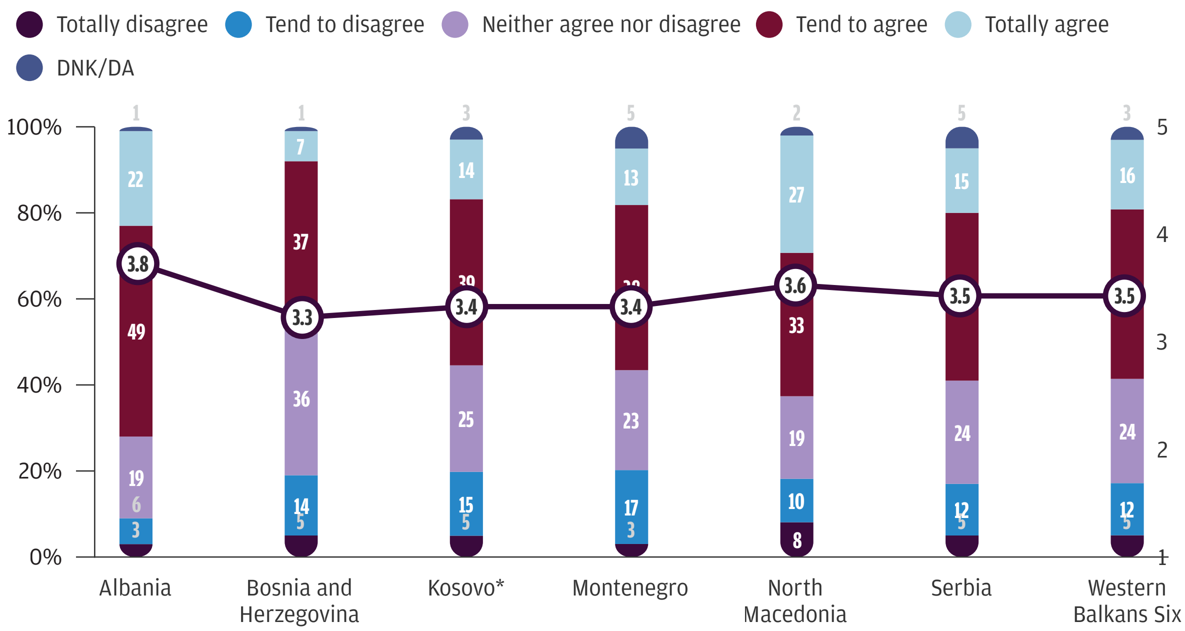


The thought that regional cooperation in the WB6 can contribute to better economic situation is higher in Albania, which has a mean score of 3.9, where 76% of respondents agree. While Bosnia and Herzegovina has the lowest score at 3.4, it is still a positive evaluation, with 52% of its citizens agreeing that cooperation helps the economy.

Figure 41. Contribution of regional cooperation to political situation

Q13.1-4 Regional cooperation in the WB6 can contribute to better...
Q13.1. Political situation

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

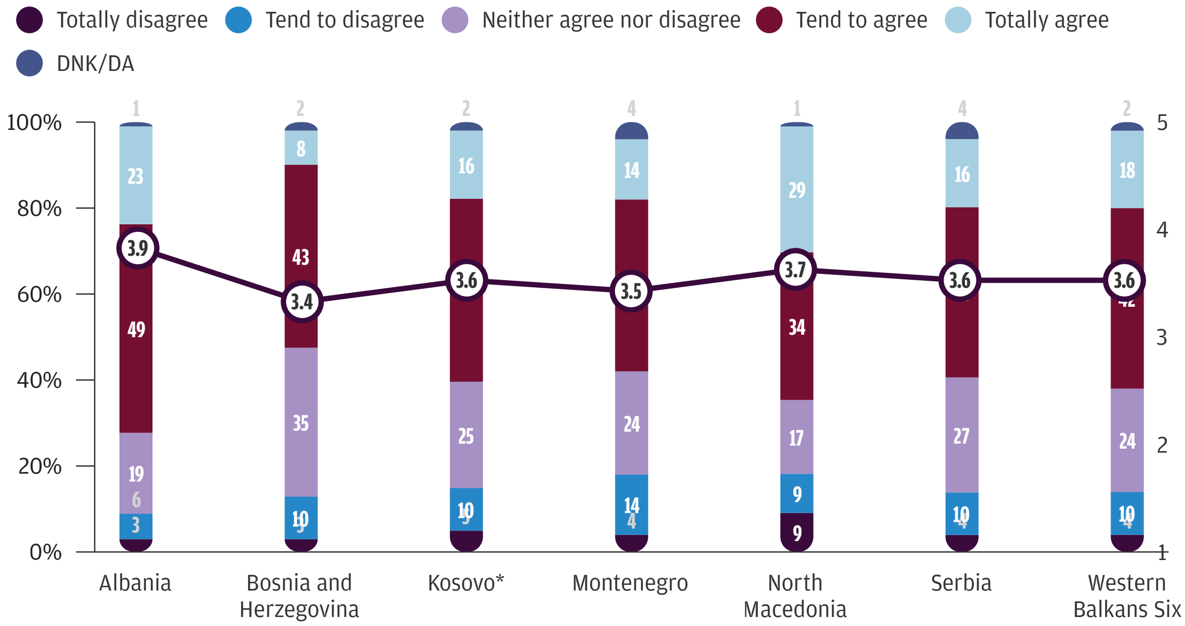


Similarly, the belief that cooperation can improve the political situation is particularly high in Albania, which has the highest score of 3.8, and a majority of its citizens (71%) either tend to agree or totally agree with the statement. North Macedonia also shows a strong belief, with a score of 3.6, while Kosovo* and Montenegro both score 3.4. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina has the lowest score at 3.3, it is still above the neutral midpoint, indicating a general perception across the region that regional cooperation can be a positive force for political improvement.

Figure 42. Contribution of regional cooperation to security situation

Q13.1-4 Regional cooperation in the WB6 can contribute to better...
Q13.1. Security situation

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

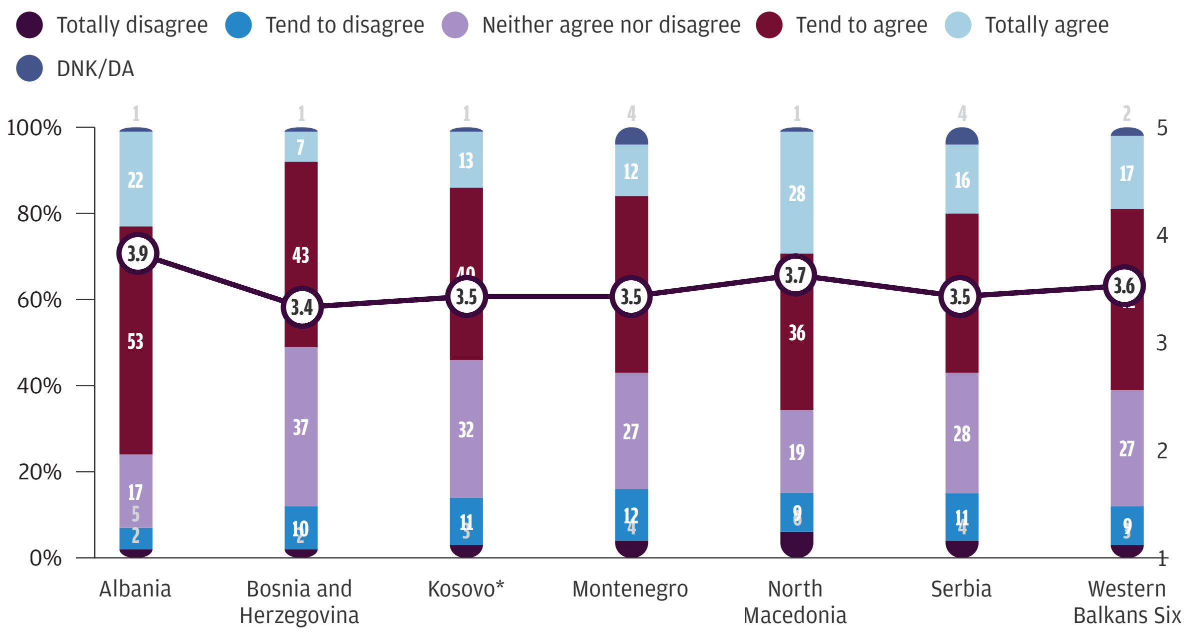


The perception that regional cooperation in the WB6 can contribute to better security situation is particularly strong in Albania, which has the highest score of 3.9, with 72% of its citizens either tending to agree or totally agreeing with the statement. North Macedonia also has a high score of 3.7. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina has the lowest score at 3.4, it is still above the neutral midpoint, indicating a widespread belief that regional cooperation is a positive force for improving security.

Figure 43. Contribution of regional cooperation to overall wellbeing

Q13.1-4 Regional cooperation in the WB6 can contribute to better...
Q13.1. Overall wellbeing

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

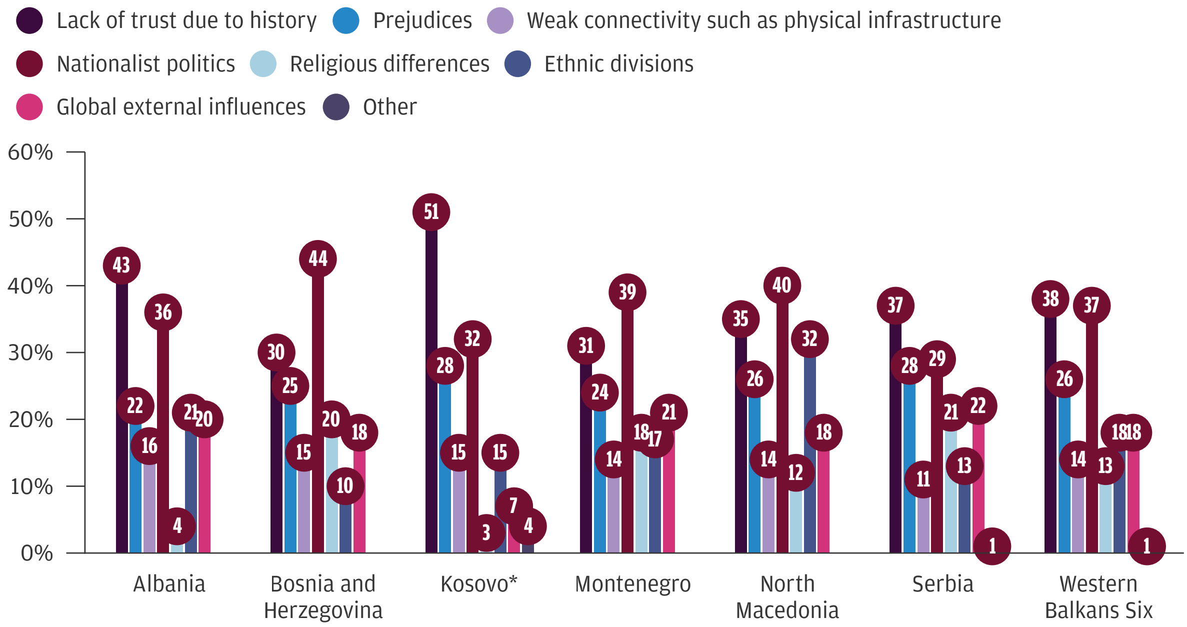


Citizens across the WB6 perceive that regional cooperation can contribute to their overall wellbeing, with a regional average score of 3.6 on a 1-5 scale. This conviction is highest in Albania, which has a mean score of 3.9, where a significant majority of citizens (75%) either tend to agree or totally agree with the statement. While Bosnia and Herzegovina has the lowest score at 3.4, it is still above the neutral midpoint, indicating a widespread positive view across the region that regional cooperation can improve the overall quality of life.

Figure 44. Barriers to unity: Challenges in regional cooperation among WB6

Q14. In your opinion, what hampers regional cooperation betweenWB6?

(All respondents, N=6012, multiple answers, share of total, %)

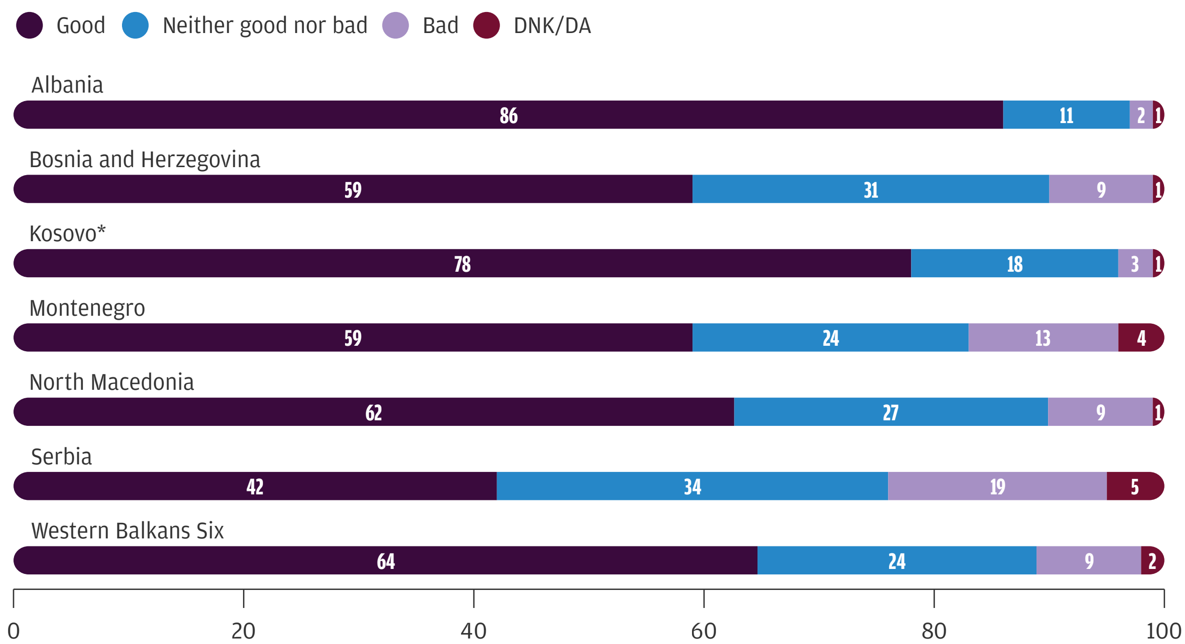


The most cited barriers are lack of trust due to history (38%), nationalist politics (37%) and prejudices (26%). Historical and political factors dominate responses.

Figure 45. EU membership: Weighing the impact

Q15. Do you think that EU membership of [JURISDICTION] would be good, neither good nor bad, or bad?

(All respondents, N=6012, share of total, %)

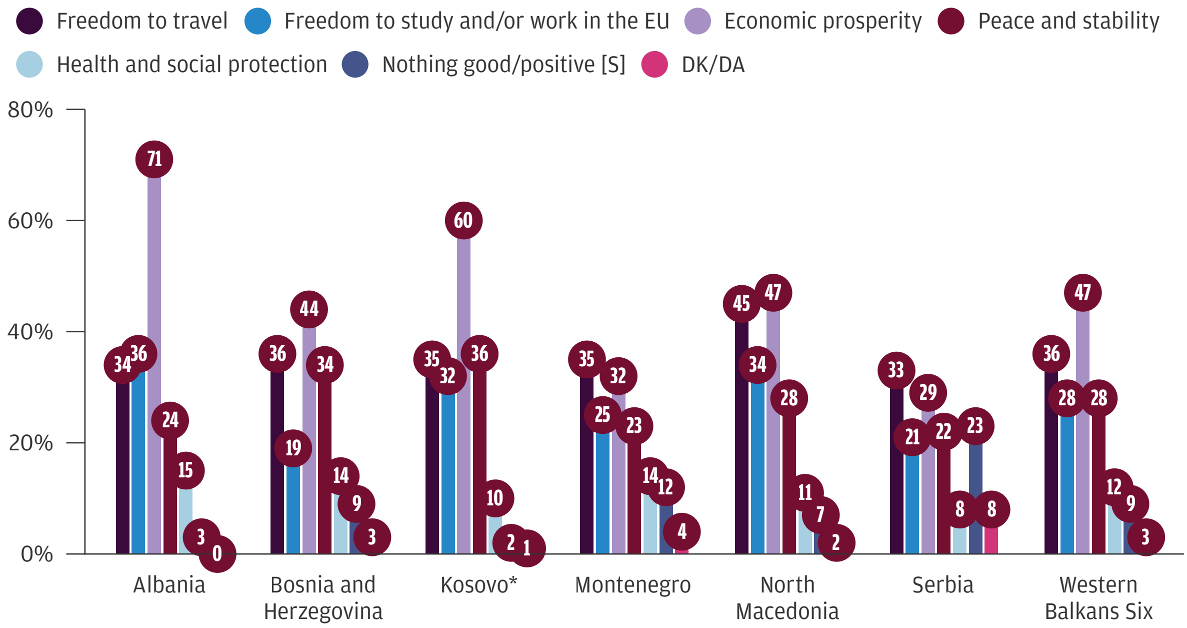


Support for EU membership increased from 54% in 2024 to 64% in 2025. Montenegro records the largest increase (39% to 59%). Albania maintains the highest support (86%). Increases are recorded across all WB6.

Figure 46. EU membership: What it means for you personally

Q16. What would EU membership mean to you personally?

(All respondents, N=6012, multiple answers, share of total, %)

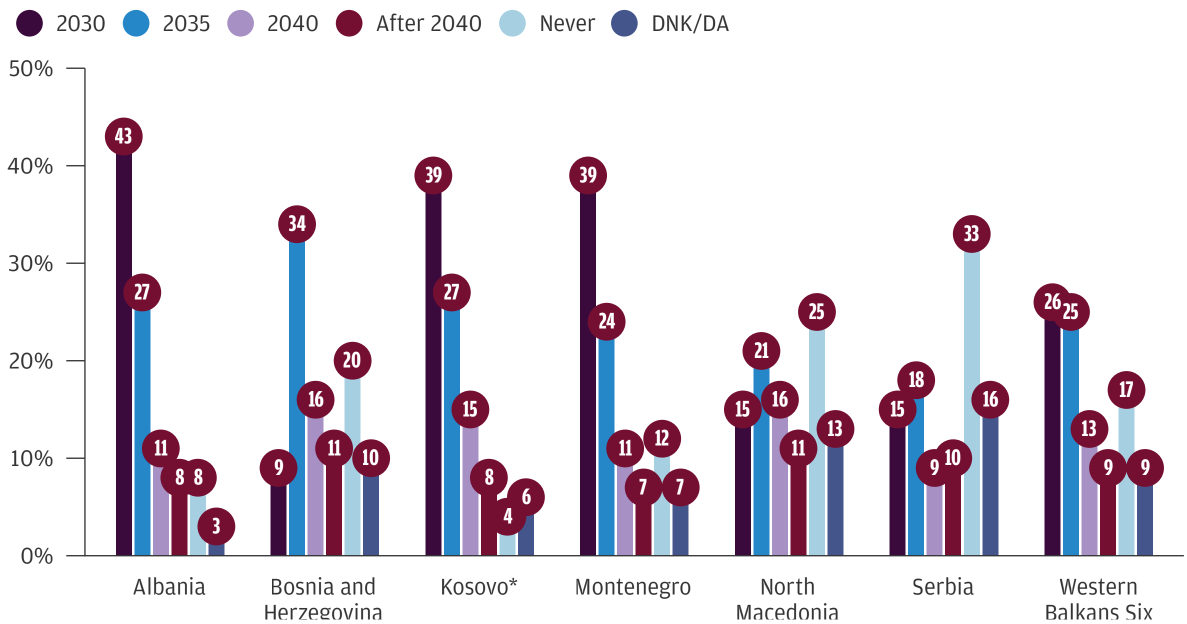


Economic prosperity (47%) and freedom to travel (36%) are the most cited expected benefits. Freedom to study/work and peace/stability are each cited by 28%. Expectations vary by individual WB6 but remain primarily economic and mobility-oriented.

Figure 47. Future EU membership: When will jurisdiction join

Q17. Would you say that [JURISDICTION] will become a member of the EU by the year 2030, 2035, 2040, after 2040 or it will never become a member?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)



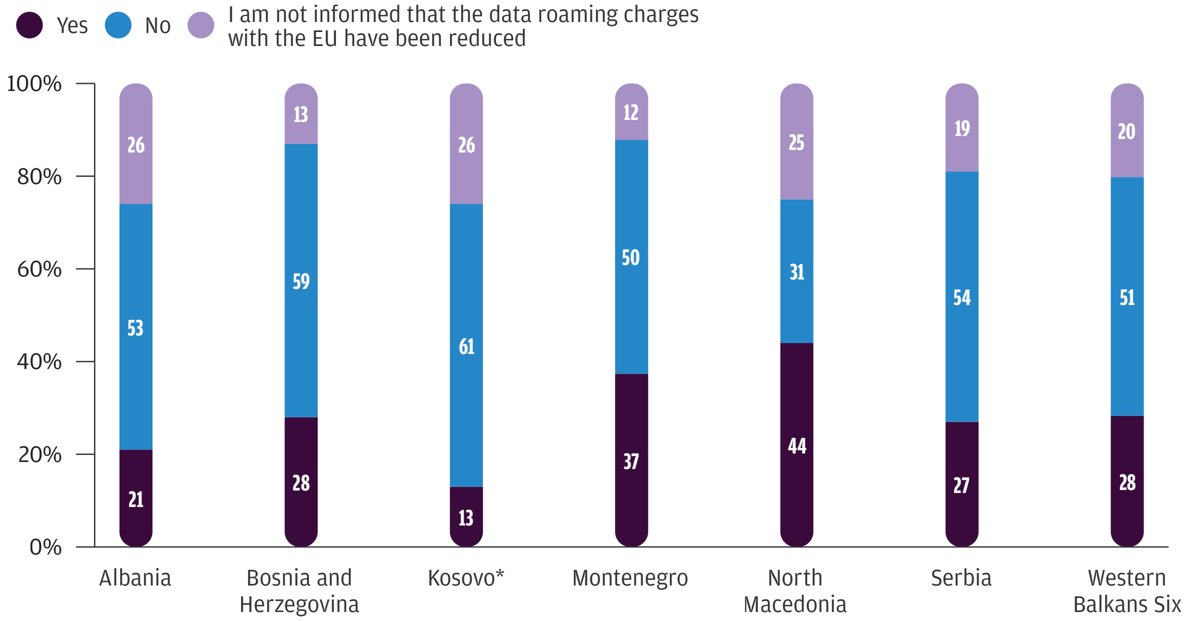
ATTITUDES TOWARDS REGIONAL COOPERATION AND EU INTEGRATION

Twenty-six percent expect accession by 2030, and 25% by 2035. Seventeen percent believe membership will never occur. Albania records the highest share expecting accession by 2030 (43%). Expectations vary across WB6.

Figure 48. Data roaming charges reduction with the EU

Q17.1. Have you benefited from the data roaming charges reduction with the EU?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)



Twenty-eight percent report benefiting from roaming charge reductions, while 51% report no benefit and 20% report no awareness. North Macedonia (44%) records the highest reported benefit; Kosovo* (13%) the lowest.

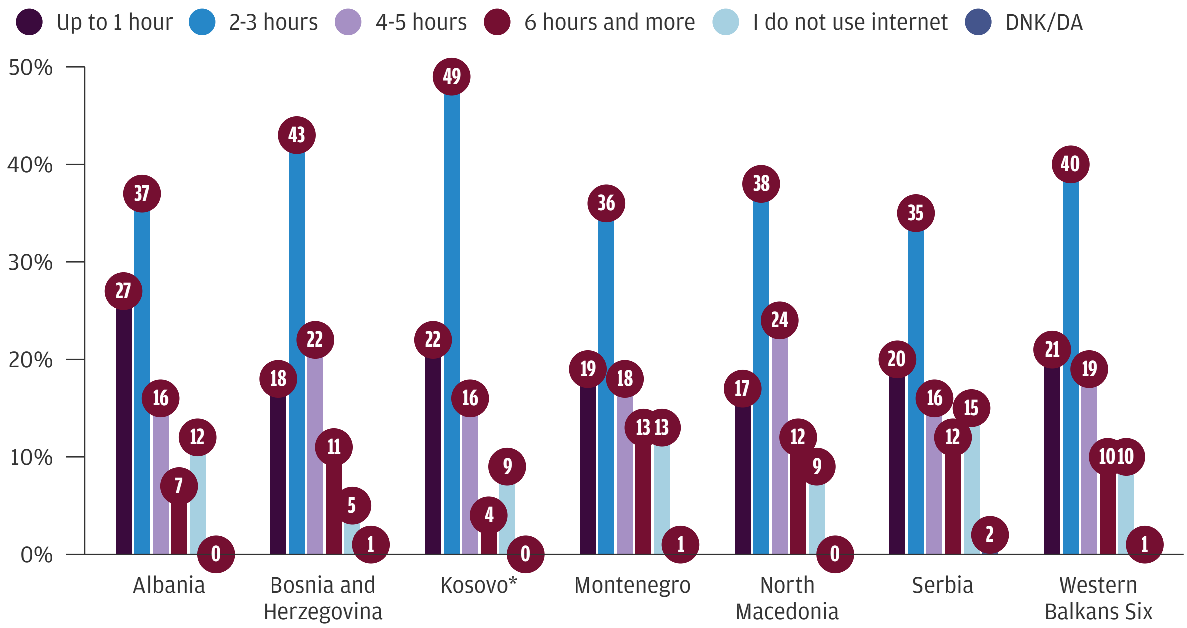
DIGITAL TOOLS AND THE INTERNET

The rapid digital transformation of recent years has reshaped how people in the WB6 communicate, work, and access services. From social media engagement to online banking and e-commerce, digital platforms are now embedded in daily life. Yet, this growing reliance on the internet also brings new challenges, ranging from concerns over privacy and data security to the societal implications of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI). This section explores citizens' online habits, the range of digital services they use, their concerns about the expanding digital environment, and their familiarity with AI tools.

Figure 49. Daily digital dive: How many hours do you spend online?

Q18. Approximately how many hours per day do you spend on Internet at home or at work (e.g. on social media, web browsing, online shopping, etc.)?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)

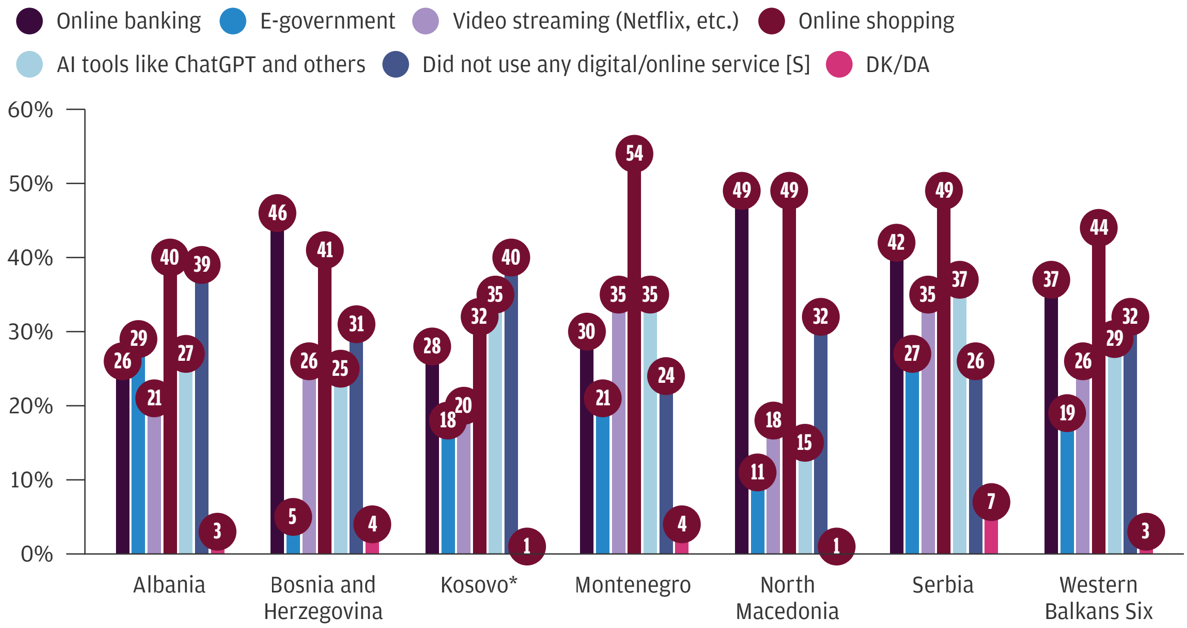


Forty percent spend two to three hours online daily. Kosovo* (49%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (43%) record the highest shares in this category. Heavy use (six hours or more) remains limited (Figure 49).

Figure 50. Your digital footprint: Online services used in the past year

Q19. Which digital/online services have you used in the last 12 months?

(All respondents, N=6012, multiple answers, share of total, %)



Online shopping (44%) and online banking (37%) are most common. AI tool usage increased to 26% (from 10% in 2024). Digital inactivity remains high in Kosovo* (40%) and Albania (39%).

Figure 51. Digital dilemmas: Top concerns about rising internet use

Q20. What worries you most about the increased use of digital tools and the Internet?

(All respondents, N=6012, multiple answers, share of total, %)

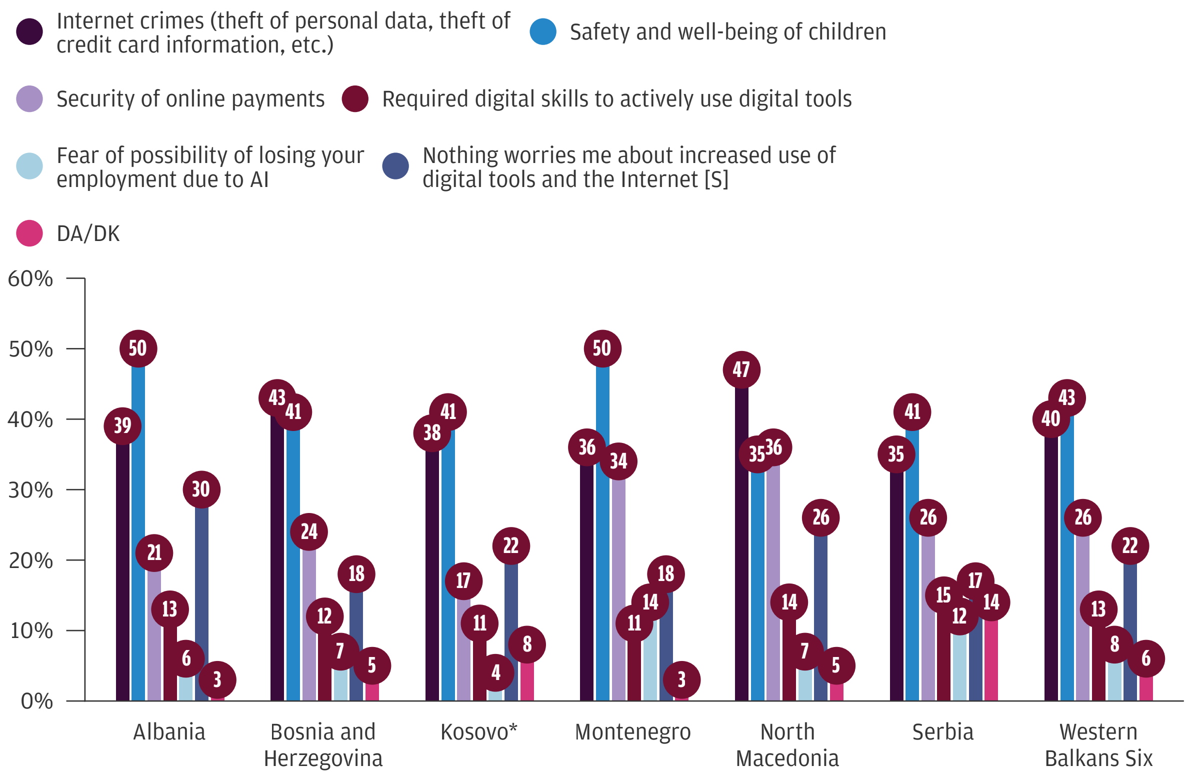


Figure 52. Artificial intelligence tools usage

Q21.1. Do you use artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT or similar applications?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)

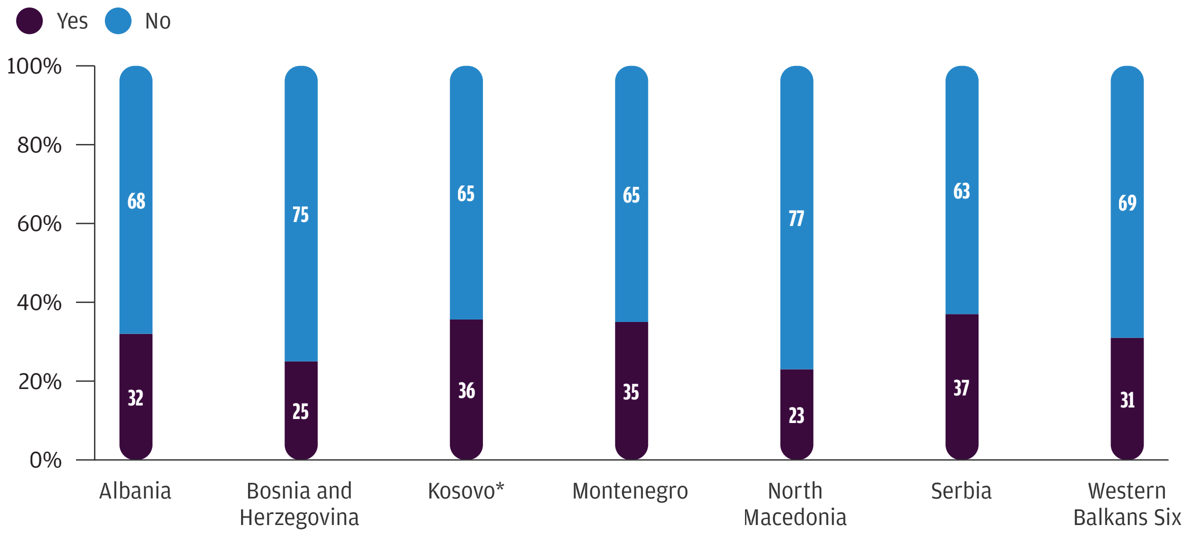
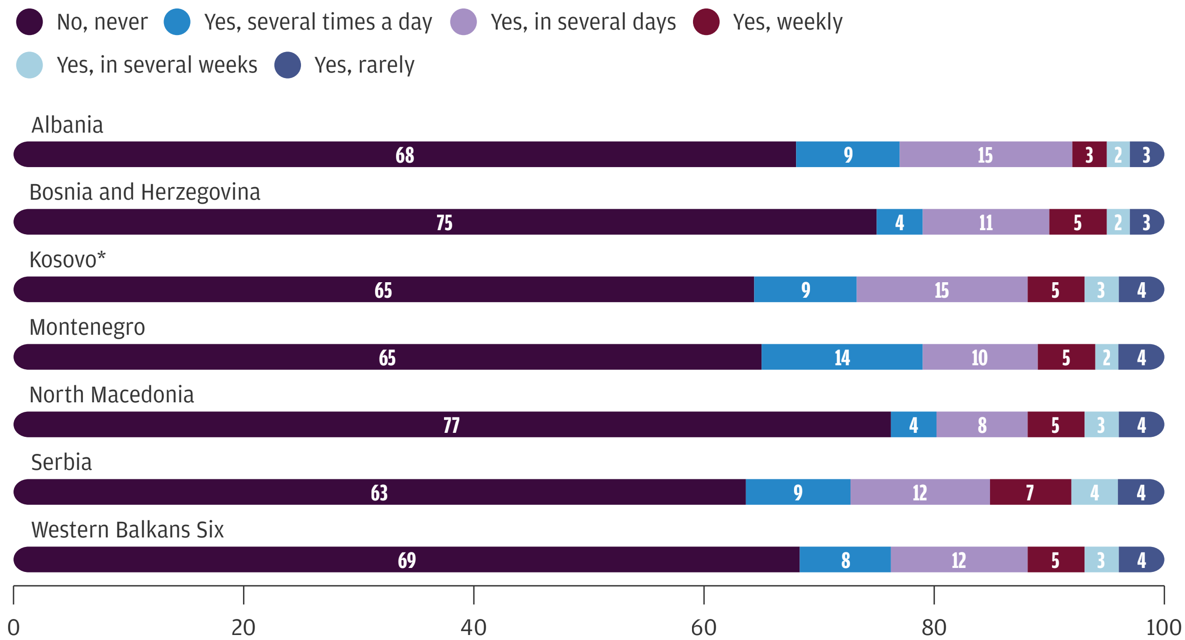


Figure 53. Frequency of AI tool usage

Q21.2. How often you use AI tools:

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)



A WB6 average of 69% percent report not using AI tools. Albania records the highest adoption (32%), North Macedonia the lowest (23%). Frequent use remains rare (3% several times per day).

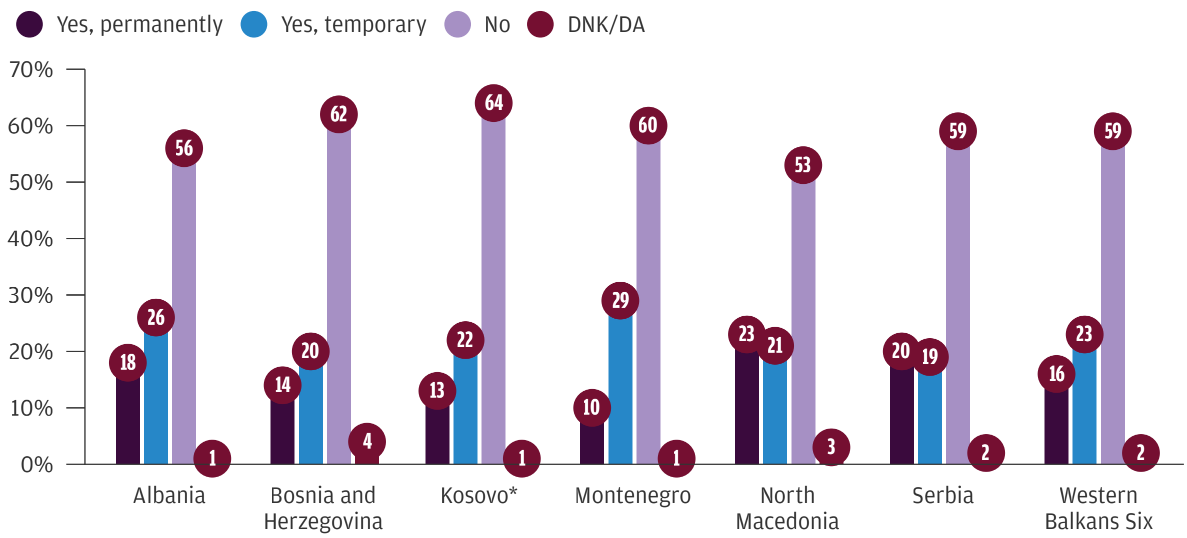
ATTITUDES TOWARDS MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

This section explores attitudes towards migration and mobility among respondents as one of the most important issues in the WB6, focusing on their aspirations, preferences, and levels of preparedness for living and working abroad. Results show that there is a strong regional preference for the EU as a destination for living or working abroad with some specific differences among the WB6.

Figure 54. Willingness to live or work abroad

Q22. Would you like to go to live or work abroad if you had a chance?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)

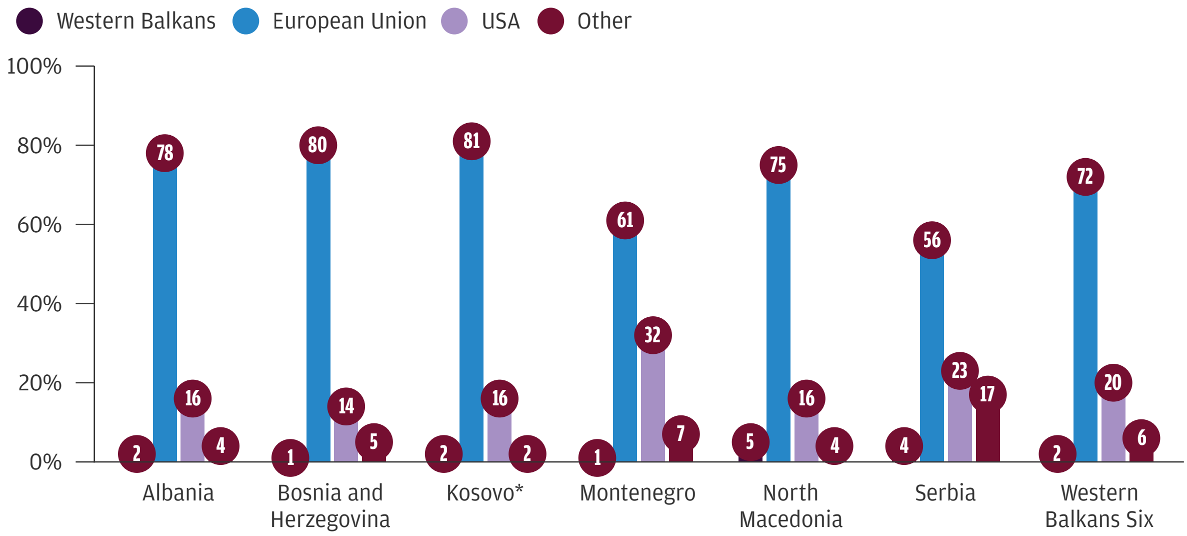


Less than half are willing to live or work abroad. North Macedonia (45%) and Albania (44%) record the highest willingness.

Figure 55. Dream destinations to live or work in the next five years

Q22a. Where would you prefer to go:

(Those who would like to go to live or work abroad, n=2342, single answer, %)



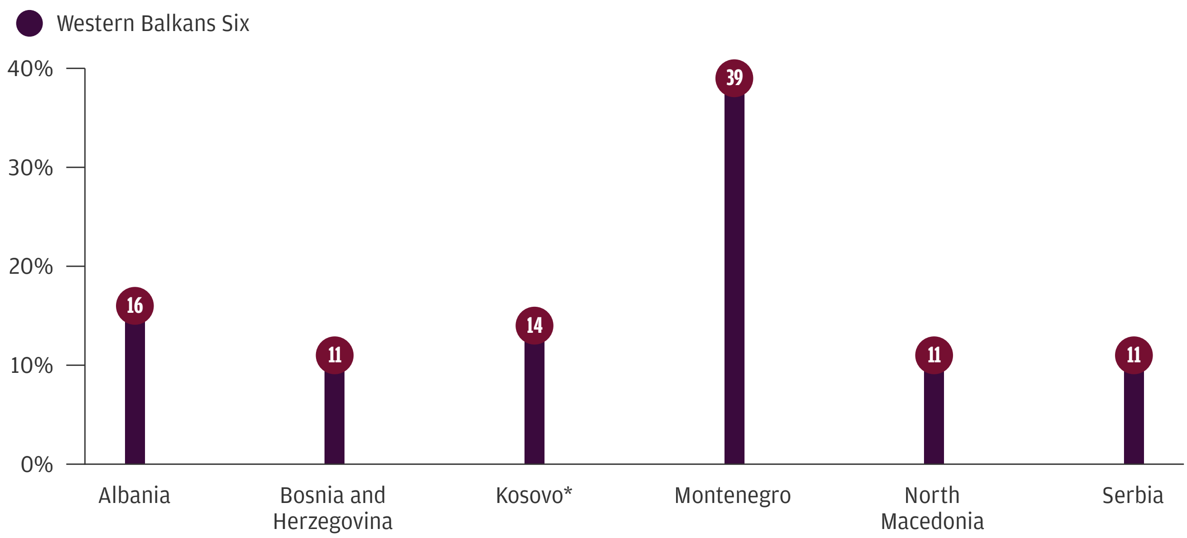
As in the 2024 survey, the European Union remains the preferred destination for those in the WB6 who are willing to live or work abroad in the next five years. Interest in relocating to the EU is particularly high among respondents from Kosovo* and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The EU remains the primary destination, the United States ranks second but at significantly lower levels, except with particularly strong interest shown by respondents from Montenegro (32%) and Serbia (23%).

Figure 56. Preferred intraregional emigration destinations

Q22b. In which of the WB6 would you like to live or work if you had a chance:

(Those who would you like to go to live or work in the WB6, n=57, single answer, %)

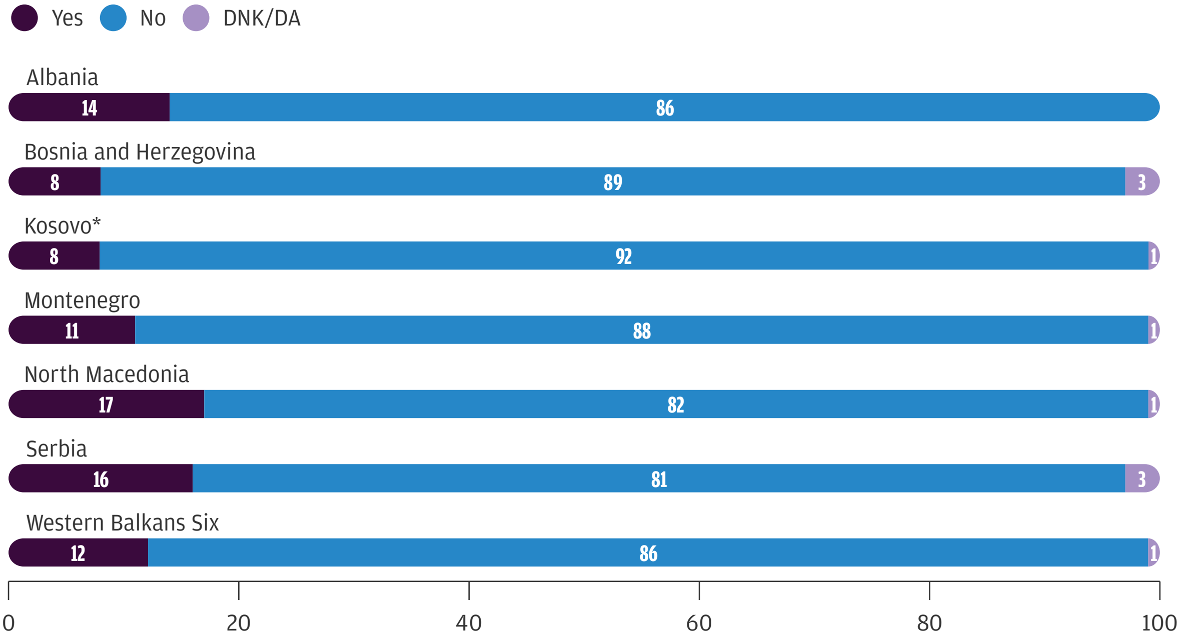


Among those preferring regional relocation, Montenegro (39%) leads.

Figure 57. Taking the leap: Have you prepared for living and working abroad?

Q23. Have you made any current plans or preparations for purpose of emigration, such as applying for legal migration, work visa, employment, studying language, etc.?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)



When asked about their readiness to live or work abroad, only a small percentage of respondents indicated that they had taken concrete steps towards emigration, such as applying for legal migration, obtaining a work visa, seeking employment, or studying the language.

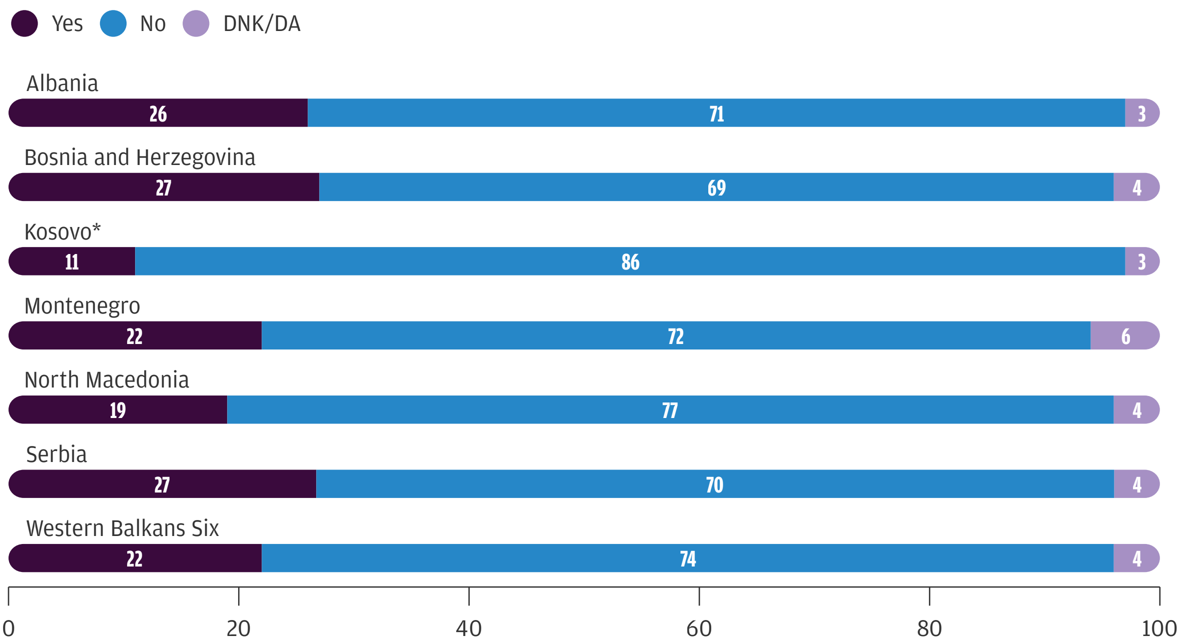
ATTITUDES TOWARDS CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

This section of the report examines public attitudes towards climate change, environmental issues, and energy across the WB6. Air pollution emerges as the region's most pressing environmental concern. The analysis also explores respondents' awareness of key concepts like the circular economy, their primary environmental concerns at the community level, and the barriers they encounter in adopting more sustainable behaviours. Additionally, it assesses the extent to which individuals have adjusted their daily routines to minimise environmental impact. Findings indicate that, on average, fewer than half of respondents across WB6 have made lifestyle changes such as reducing energy consumption, recycling, or using public transportation.

Figure 58. Awareness of circular economy

Q24. Are you familiar with the concept of circular economy and its principles?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)

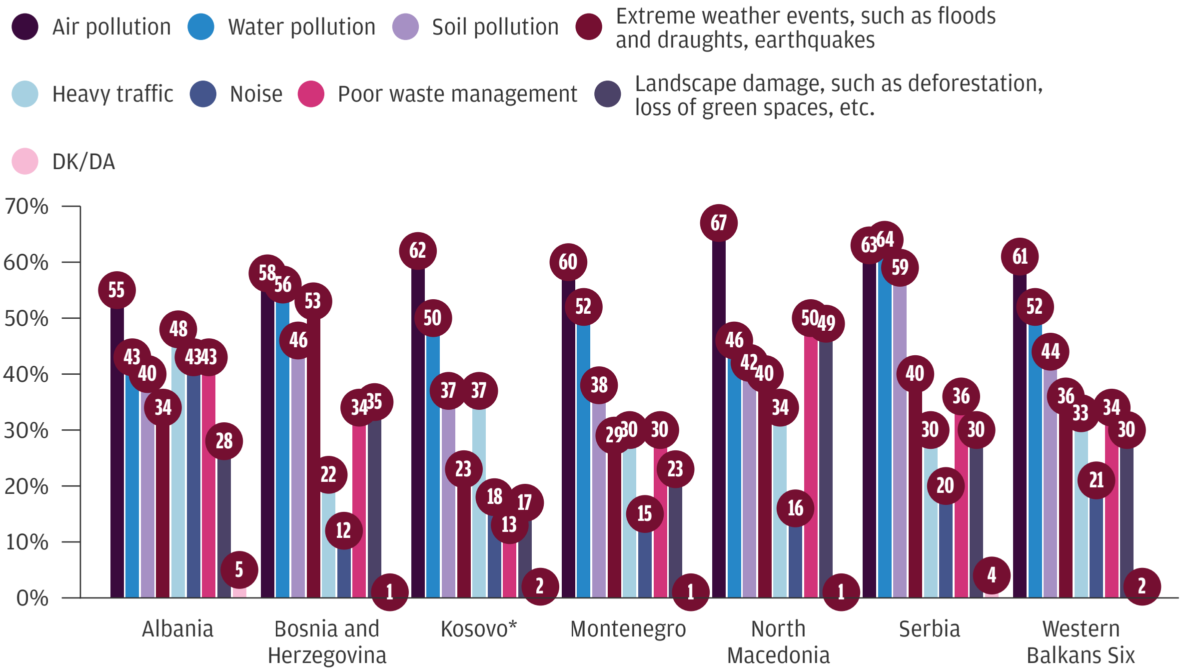


Approximately three-quarters of citizens in WB6 report unfamiliarity with the circular economy concept. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia record the highest awareness (27%).

Figure 59. Community concerns: What are your top environmental worries?

Q25. What are your greatest environmental concerns in your community?

(All respondents, N=6012, multiple answers, share of total, %)

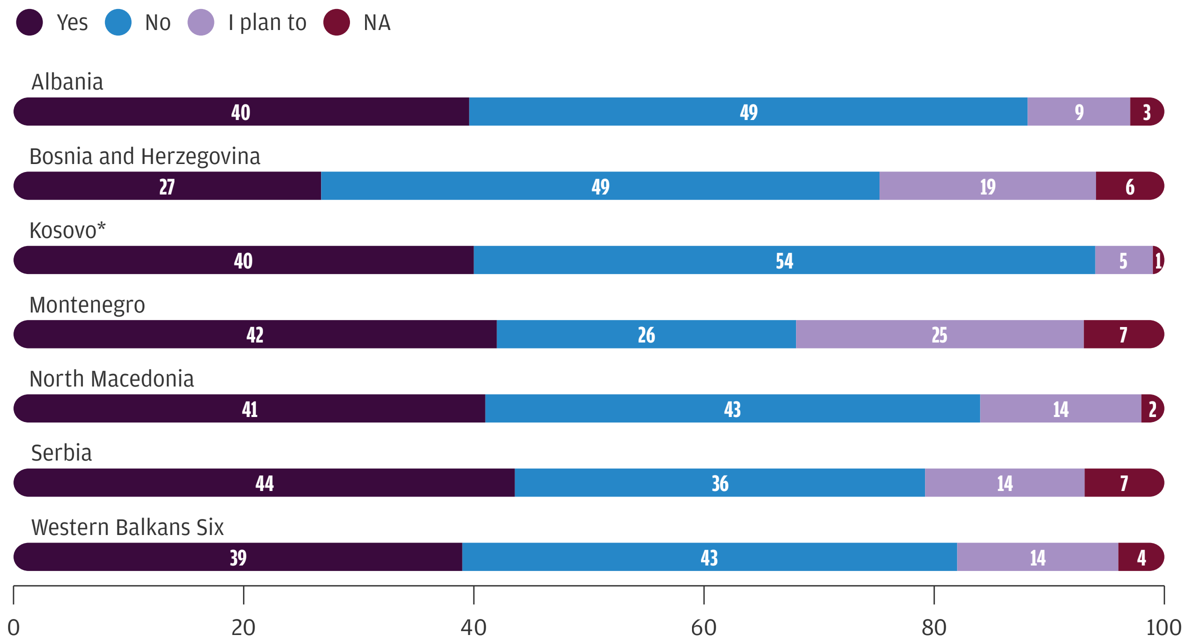


Air pollution remains the most cited environmental concern across the WB6 by the respondents, consistent with the findings from the 2024 study. Water pollution is another major worry, especially in Serbia (64%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (56%), Kosovo* (50%), and Montenegro (52%). Serbia also stands out for concerns about soil pollution (59%), while Bosnia and Herzegovina (53%) reports significant worries about extreme weather events, a concern also noted in North Macedonia and Serbia. In Albania, heavy traffic (48%) emerges as a distinct environmental issue, while in North Macedonia poor waste management (50%) is highlighted. Together, these findings underscore that, while pollution, particularly air and water quality, dominates environmental concerns across the region, jurisdiction-specific issues such as heavy traffic, waste management, and extreme weather also feature prominently.

Figure 60. Your climate impact: Actions taken in the past year to combat climate change

Q26. Have you made any changes in your daily life to reduce your environmental impact (e.g. reducing energy use, recycling, using public transport)?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)

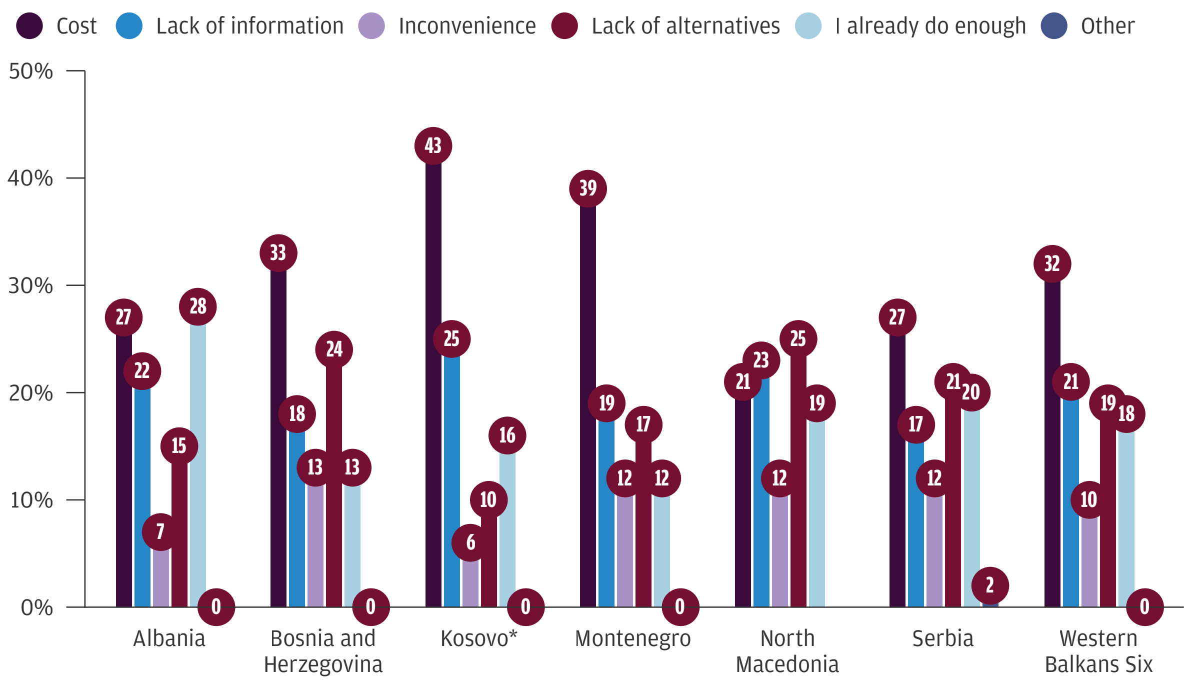


The results regarding actions taken to combat climate change are fairly consistent across most WB6 except Bosnia and Herzegovina, with between 40% and 44% of the respondents in each remaining jurisdiction reporting that they have taken such actions in the past year (Figure 60).

Figure 61. Barriers to adopting environmentally friendly behaviours

Q27. What prevents you from adopting more environmentally friendly behaviours?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)

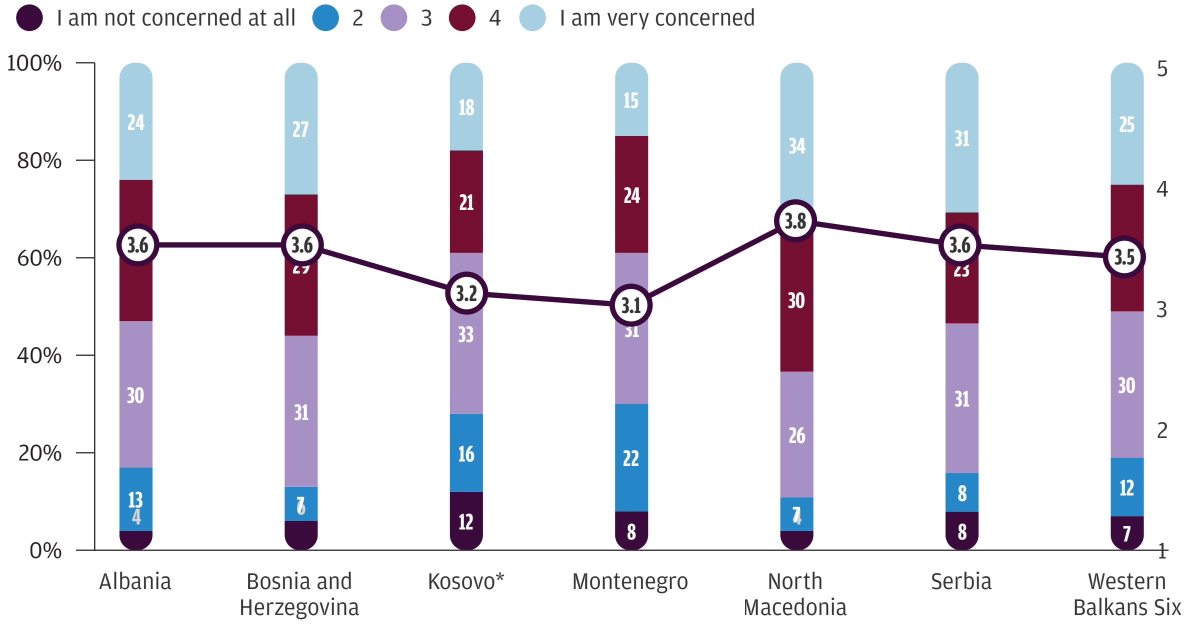


Cost remains the primary barrier to environmentally friendly behaviour. In Albania, many respondents report having already made changes in their daily lives, such as reducing energy use, recycling, or using public transportation, and some feel they are already doing enough.

Figure 62. Concern about the effects of climate change

Q28. How concerned are you about the effects of climate change in your jurisdiction (e.g. floods, heatwaves, droughts)?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

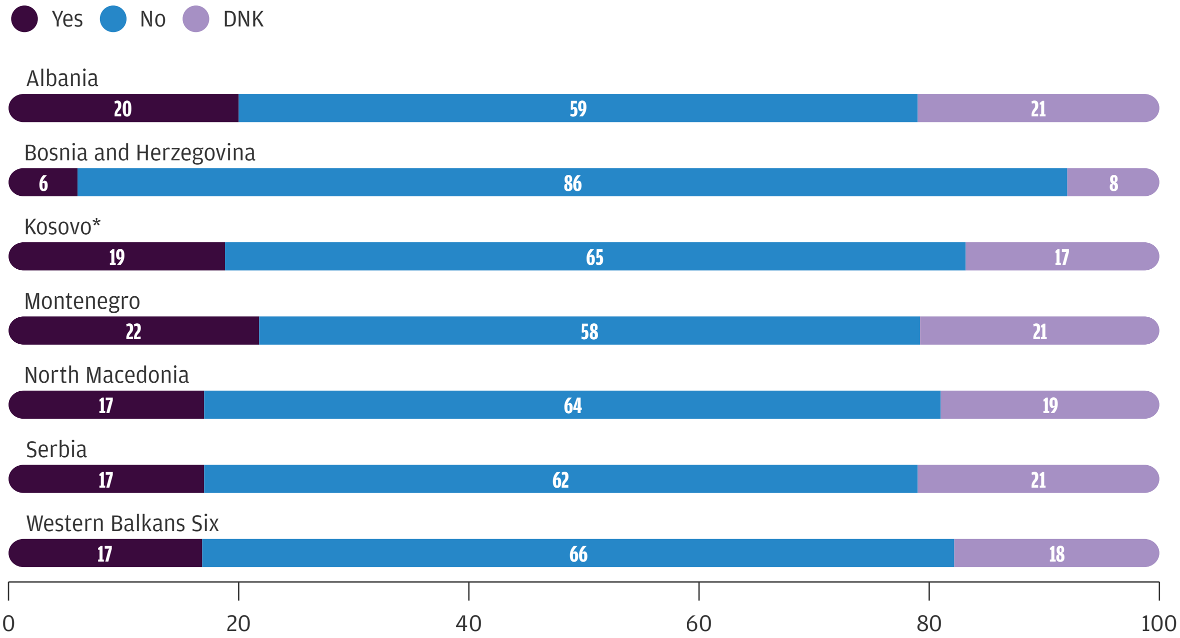


On average, about one-quarter of the WB6 population expresses a high level of concern about the effects of climate change, including floods, heatwaves, and droughts (Figure 62). Concern levels vary across WB6 with North Macedonia showing the greatest worry (34%).

Figure 63. Perception of government efforts to address climate change and protect the environment

Q29. Do you believe your government is doing enough to address climate change and protect the environment?

(All respondents, N=6012, share of total, %)

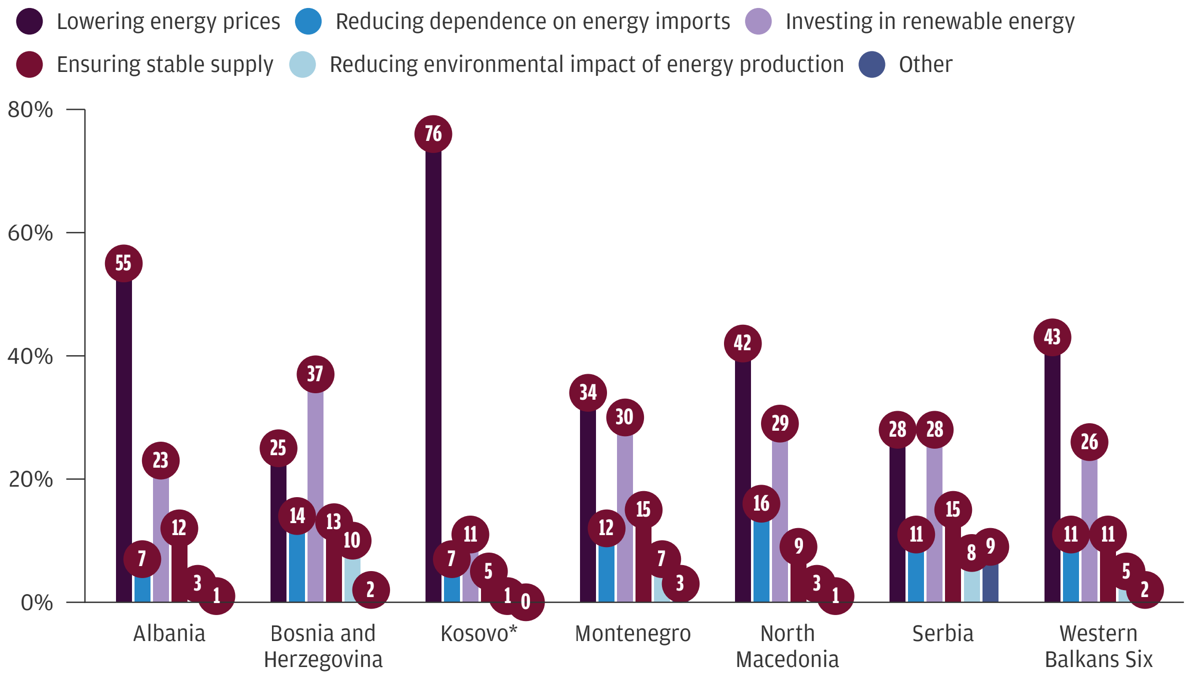


Assessments of government efforts to address climate change and environmental protection remain moderate. Positive evaluations remain limited, while a substantial share of respondents express neutral or negative views. Perceptions vary across WB6, but overall results suggest that public confidence in environmental policy implementation is significantly constrained.

Figure 64. Perceived most important energy priority for the jurisdiction

Q30. What do you think is the most important energy priority for your jurisdiction?

(All respondents, N=6012, single answer, share of total, %)



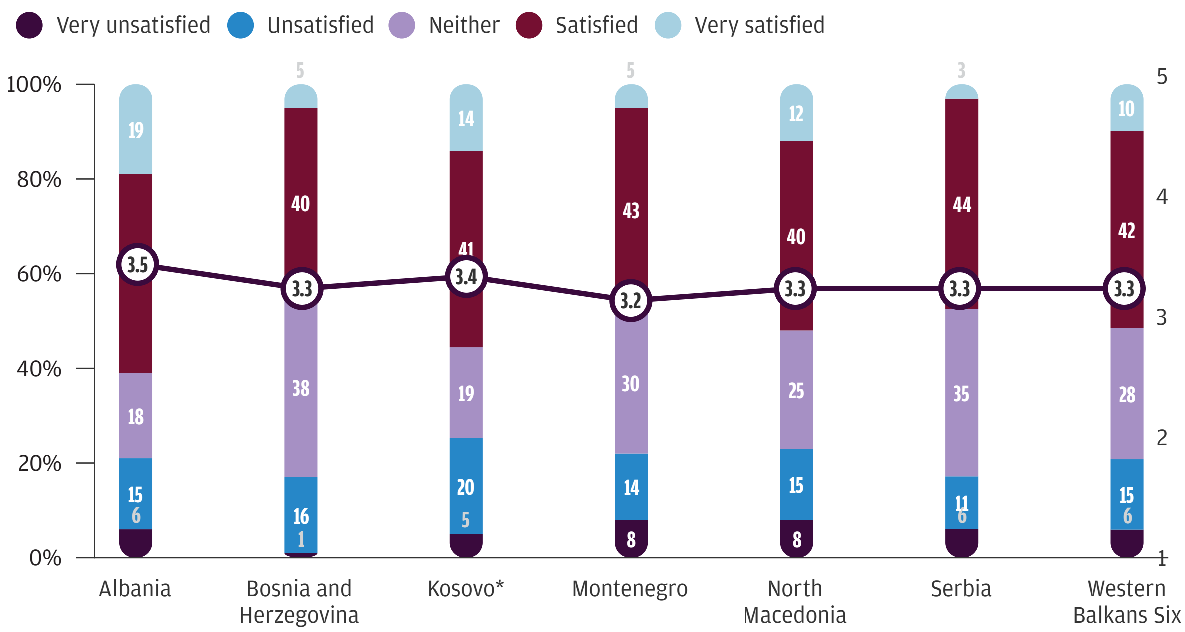
Lowering energy prices is the top energy priority for most WB6, with Kosovo* standing out, 76% of respondents there identify it as the most important issue, significantly above the regional average of 43%. Analysis shows that lowering energy prices ranks highest in nearly all WB6, except Bosnia and Herzegovina, where investing in renewable energy is the leading priority (37%), followed by lowering energy prices (25%). In Serbia and Montenegro, these two priorities are nearly equally important, both cited by 28% of respondents in Serbia, and by 34% and 30% respectively in Montenegro.

Notably, ensuring a stable energy supply is a significant concern in Serbia and Montenegro, mentioned more frequently than in other WB6. In North Macedonia, lowering energy prices is also the leading concern (42%), followed by investing in renewables (29%).

Figure 65. Satisfaction with the current energy supply

Q31. How satisfied are you with the current energy supply in your area (e.g. reliability, affordability)?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 5, share of total, %, mean)

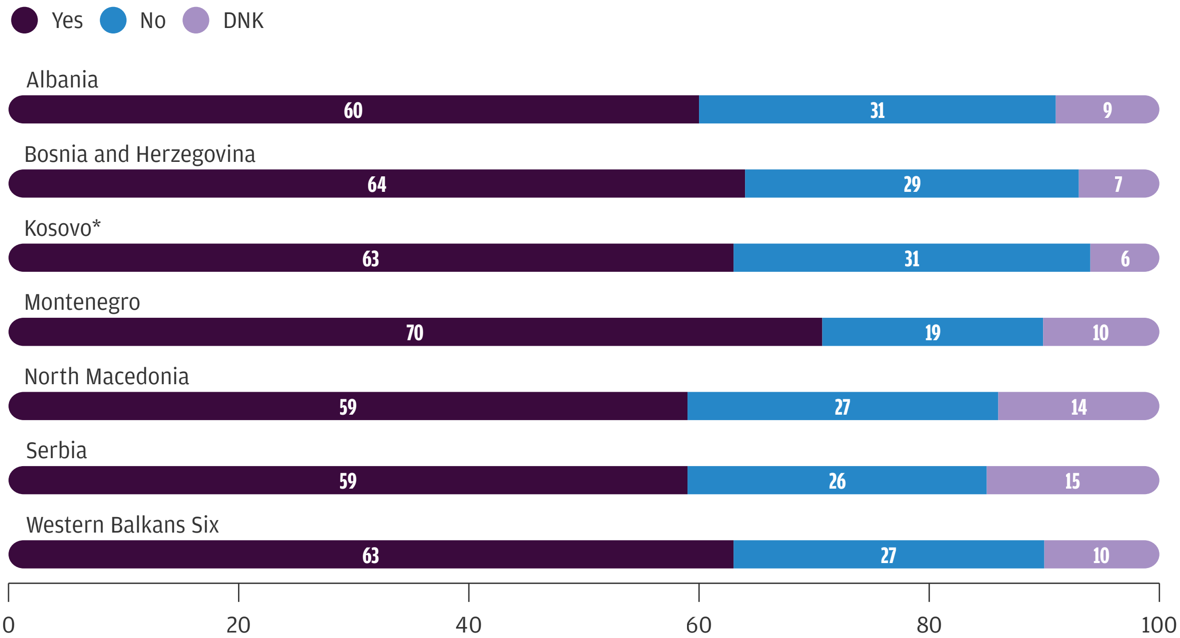


Satisfaction with the current energy supply is moderate across the region. While most respondents rate supply as adequate, strong positive assessments remain limited. Variations across WB6 reflect differences in price levels, reliability, and recent energy developments.

Figure 66. Support for greater investment in renewable energy

Q32. Would you support greater investment in renewable energy sources (e.g. solar, wind, hydro) in your jurisdiction, even if it means higher energy costs in the short term?

(All respondents, N=6012, share of total, %)



Support for greater investment in renewable energy remains strong across the WB6. A majority in each jurisdiction favours increased renewable energy development, indicating broad acceptance of the energy transition in principle, despite cost-related concerns highlighted elsewhere.

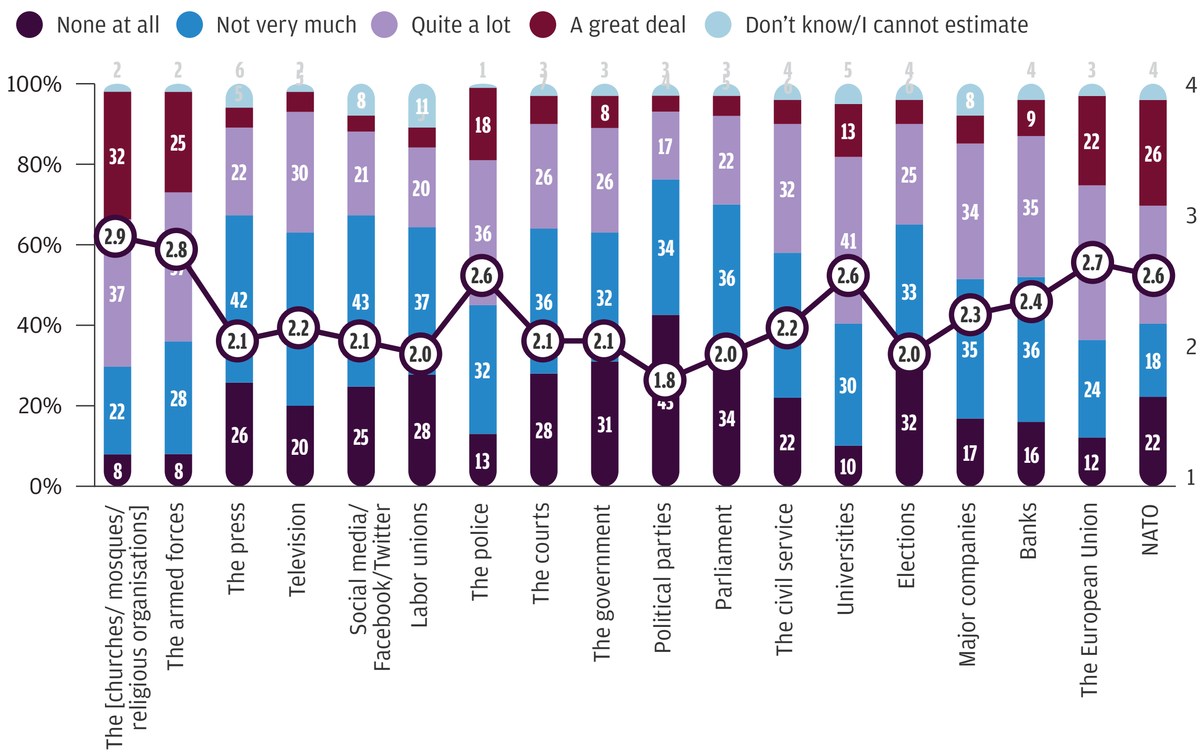
PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICES

This section examines citizens' confidence in key public institutions and services, their levels of trust, and their perceptions of the reliability of various information sources. It also explores attitudes towards disinformation and fake news, assessing whether respondents believe the problem has worsened over the past year. Taken together, these findings provide a comprehensive picture of how people in the WB6 perceive both formal institutions and the wider information environment.

Figure 67. Measuring confidence: How do you rate these institutions?

Q33. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

Q33. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?



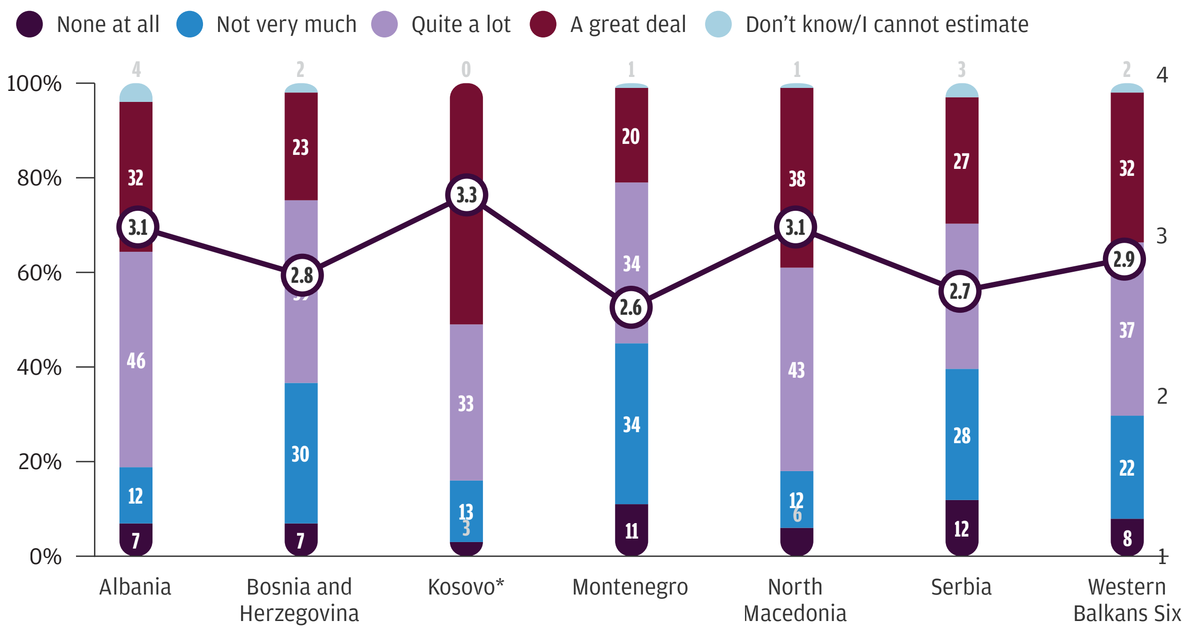
Across the WB6, confidence levels differ significantly by type of institution. Religious organisations and the armed forces receive the highest average trust ratings. The European Union also scores higher than most domestic political institutions. Political parties and parliaments record the lowest confidence levels, with negative evaluations exceeding positive ones in most of WB6.

Trust patterns remain consistent across specific institutions (Figure 68 - 84).

Figure 68. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: The [churches/ mosques/ religious organisations]

Q33.1. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

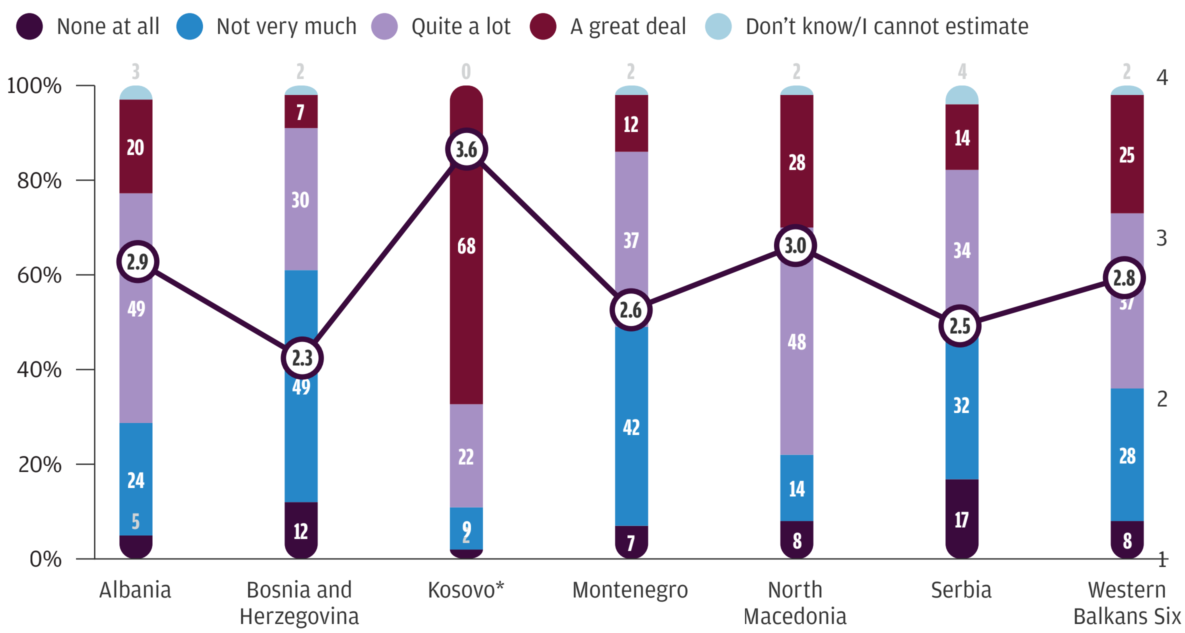


Religious institutions (Figure 68) receive relatively high confidence, though levels vary by individual WB6.

Figure 69. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: The armed forces

Q33.2. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

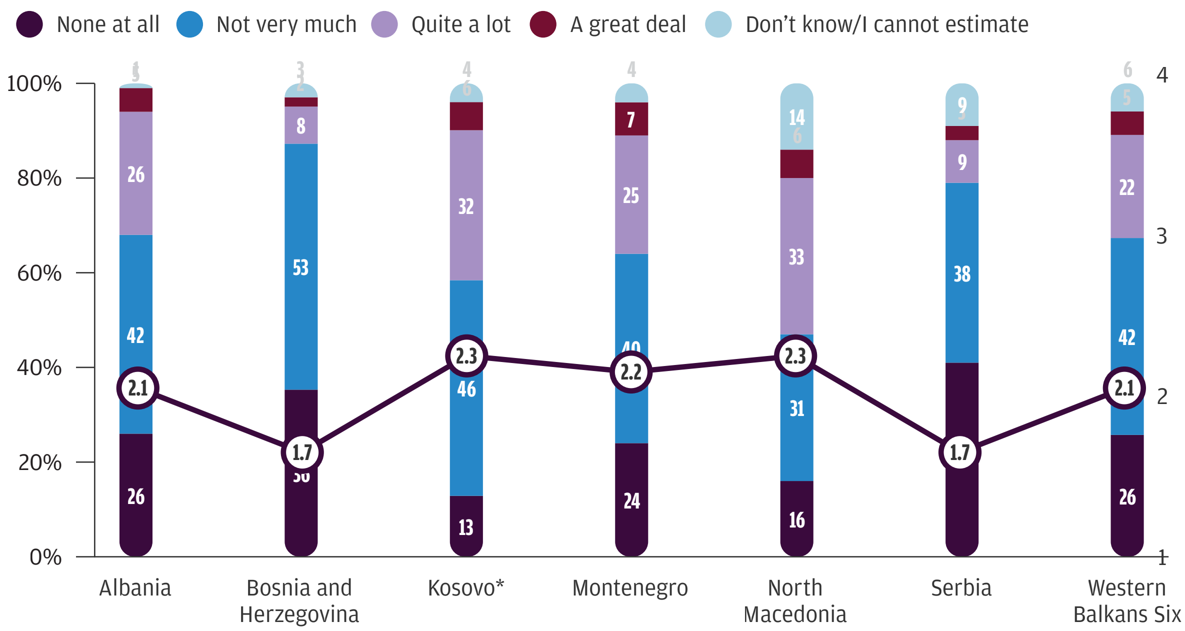


Armed forces (Figure 69) rank among the most trusted domestic institutions.

Figure 70. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: The press

Q33.3. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

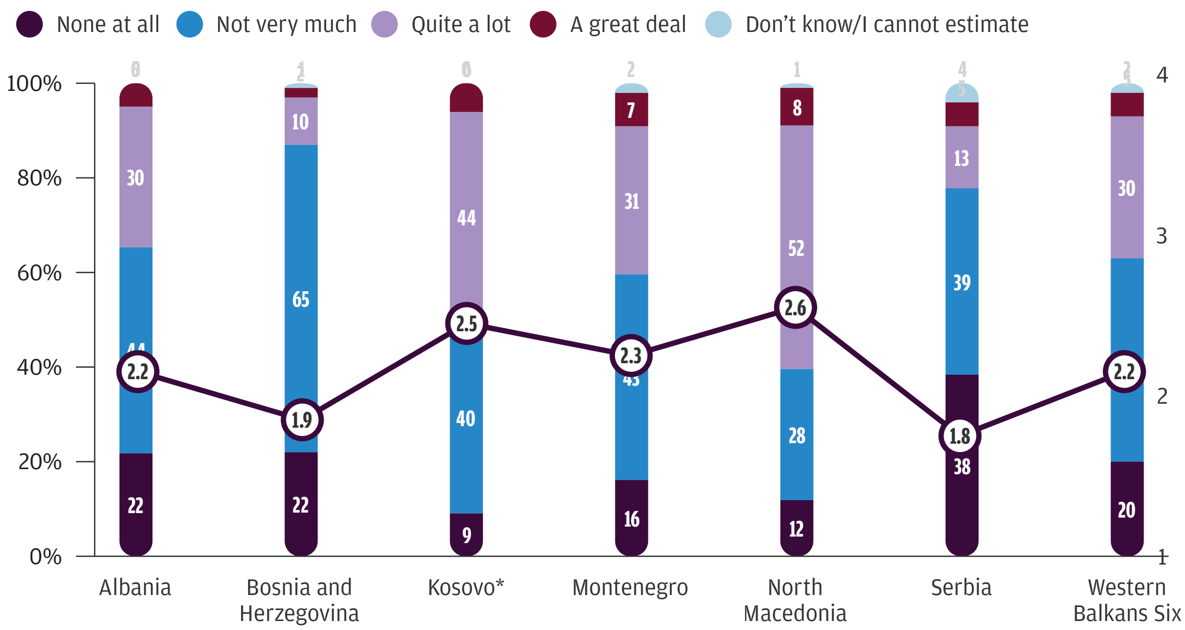


Press and television (Figures 70-71) receive moderate but divided evaluations.

Figure 71. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: Television

Q33.4. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

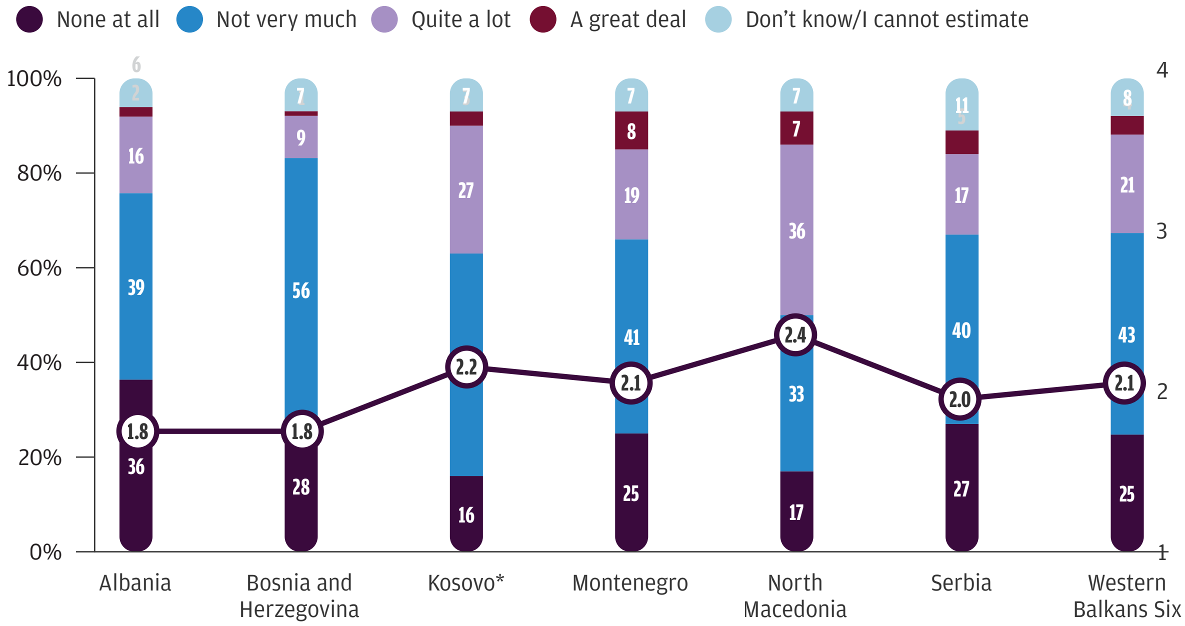


Both the press and television are among the least trusted institutions in the WB6, with regional average confidence scores of just 2.1 and 2.2, respectively (Figures 70 and 71).

Figure 72. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: Social media/Facebook/Twitter

Q33.5. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

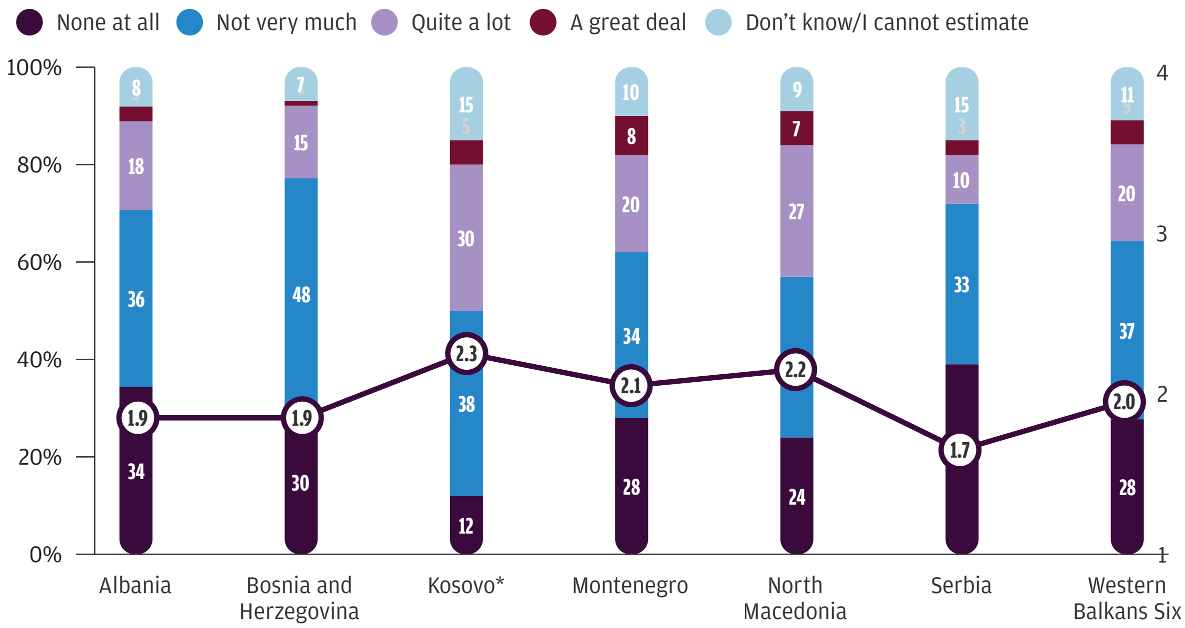


Social media (Figure 72) attracts lower confidence compared to traditional media.

Figure 73. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: Labor unions

Q33.6. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

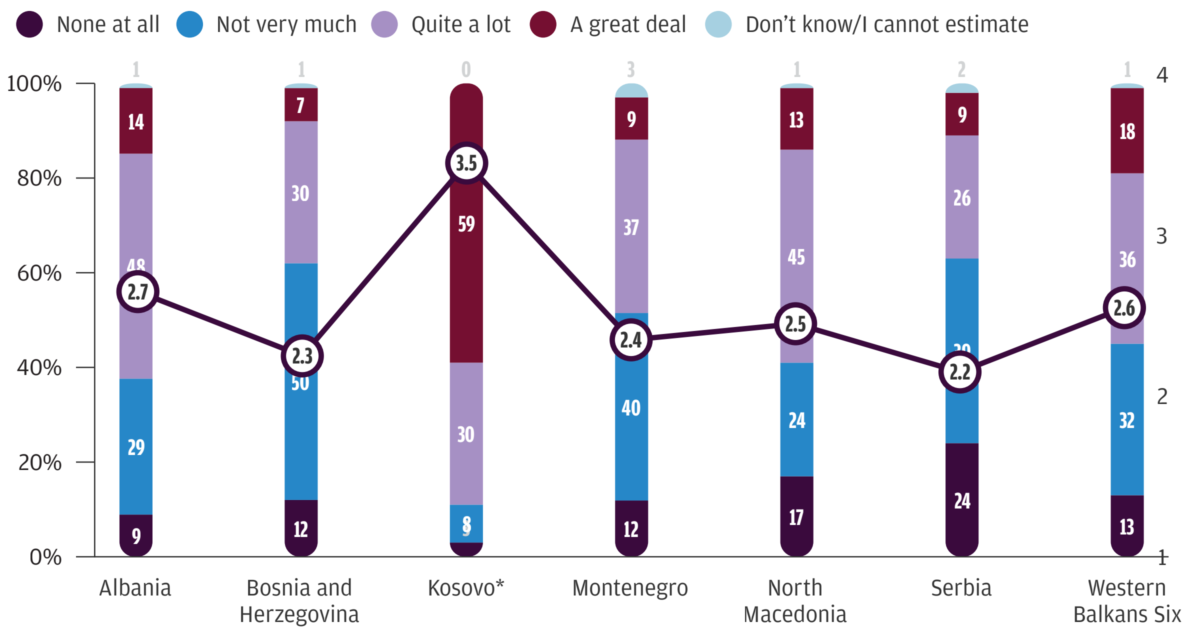


Labour unions (Figure 73) record limited trust across most WB6.

Figure 74. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: The police

Q33.7. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)



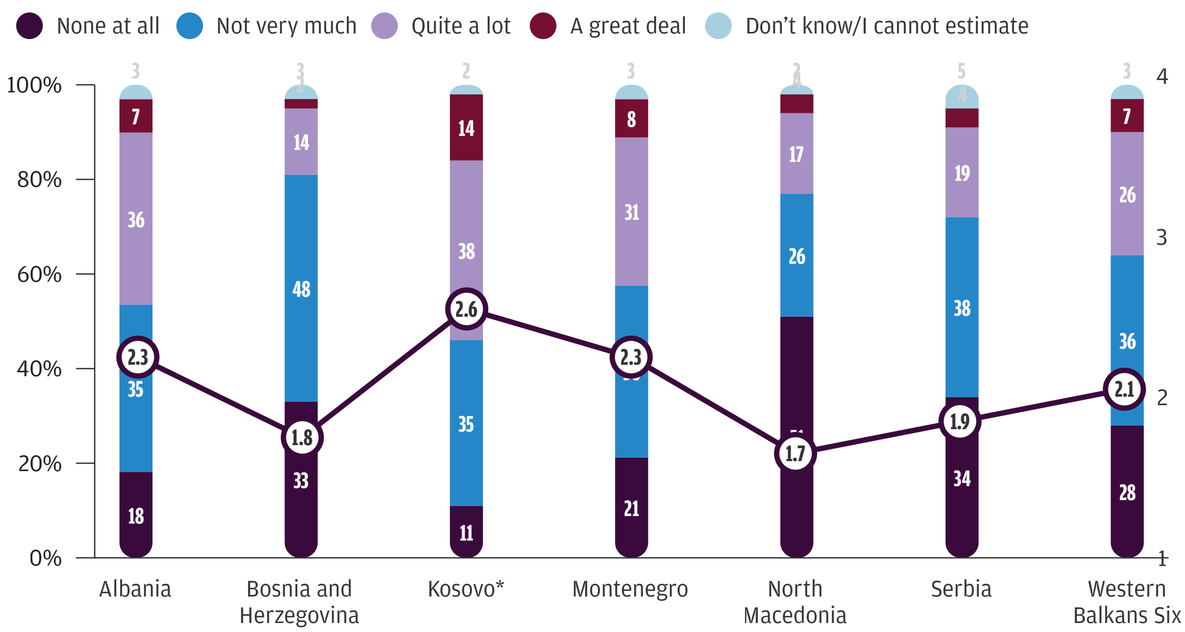
Police (Figure 74) generally receive moderate confidence, exceeding that of courts and political institutions.

Kosovo* stands out with the highest level of trust (3.5), where a clear majority of respondents express confidence in the institution (89%).

Figure 75. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: The courts

Q33.8. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)



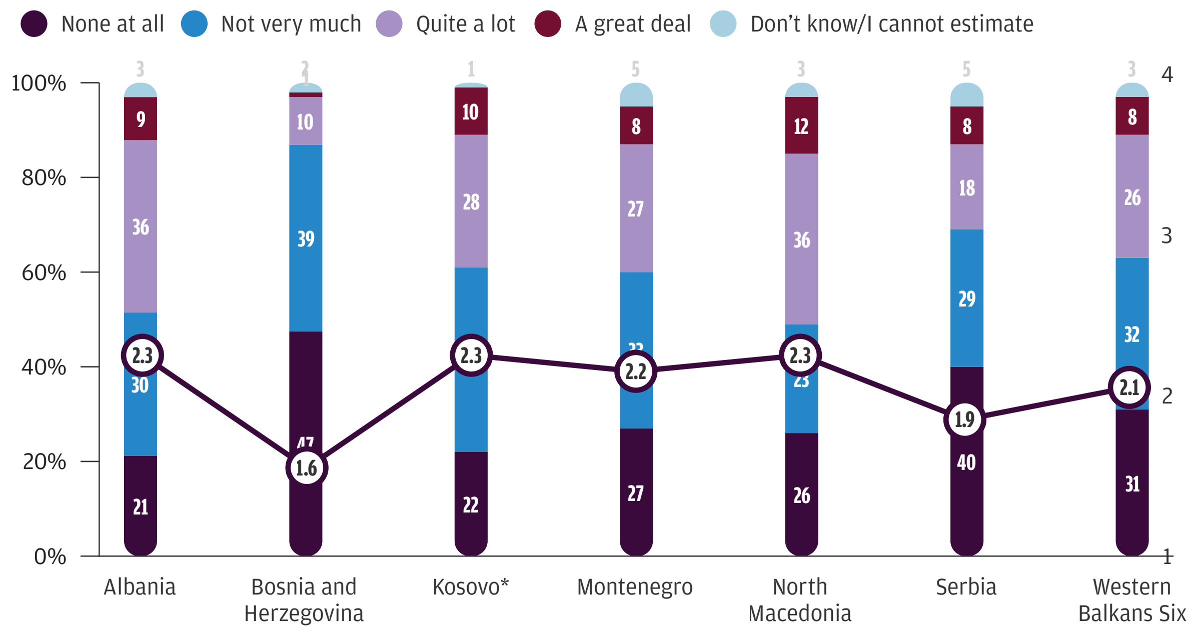
PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICES

Courts (Figure 75) show mixed but often critical assessments. About one out of two respondents cite they do not have confidence in the courts at all.

Figure 76. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: The government

Q33.9. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

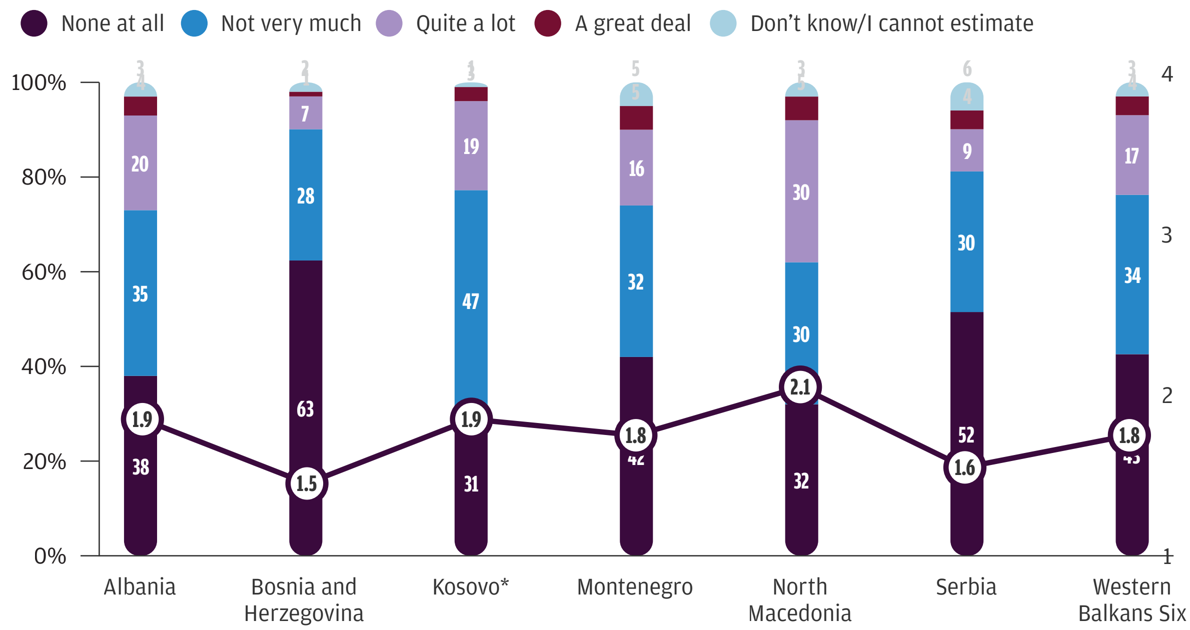


Government (Figure 76), political parties (Figure 77), and parliaments (Figure 78) consistently rank among the least trusted institutions.

Figure 77. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: Political parties

Q33.10. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)



Confidence in political parties remains the weakest among all institutions assessed, with citizens across the WB6 assigning an overall mean score of just 1.8 on a 1-4 scale.

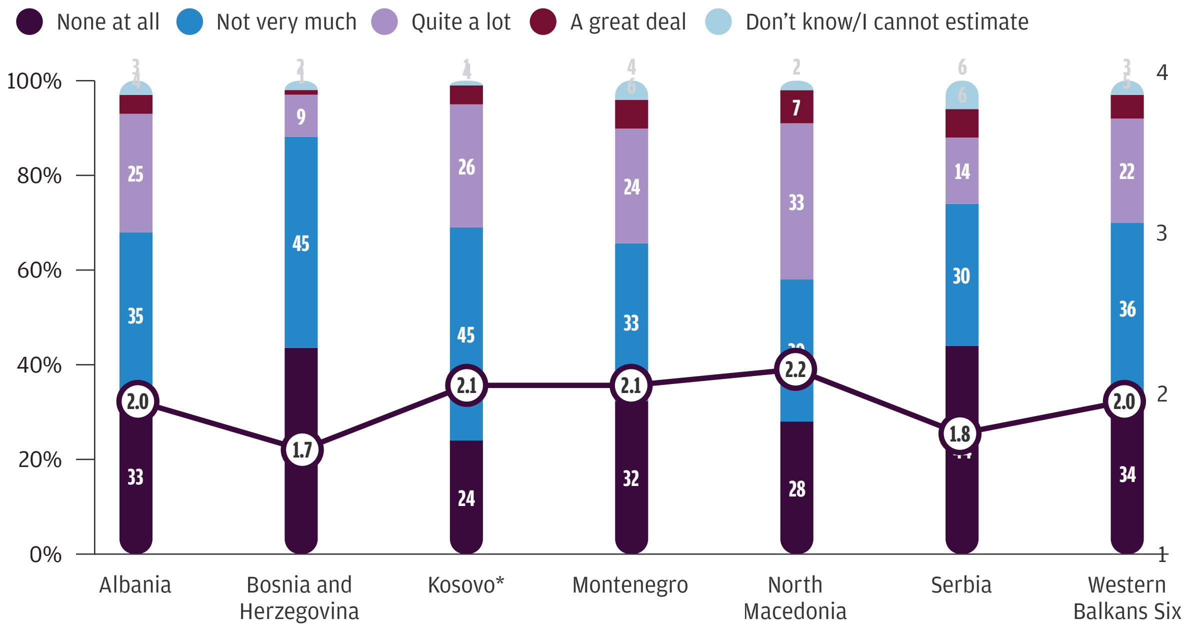
Comparisons with 2024 data indicate a decline in Montenegro (from 2.2 to 1.8) and North Macedonia (from 2.6 to 2.1), suggesting a downward trend in the perception of political parties.

Overall, the WB6 average of 1.8 reflects widespread perceived scepticism and limited trust in political parties across the region.

Figure 78. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: Parliament

Q33.11. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

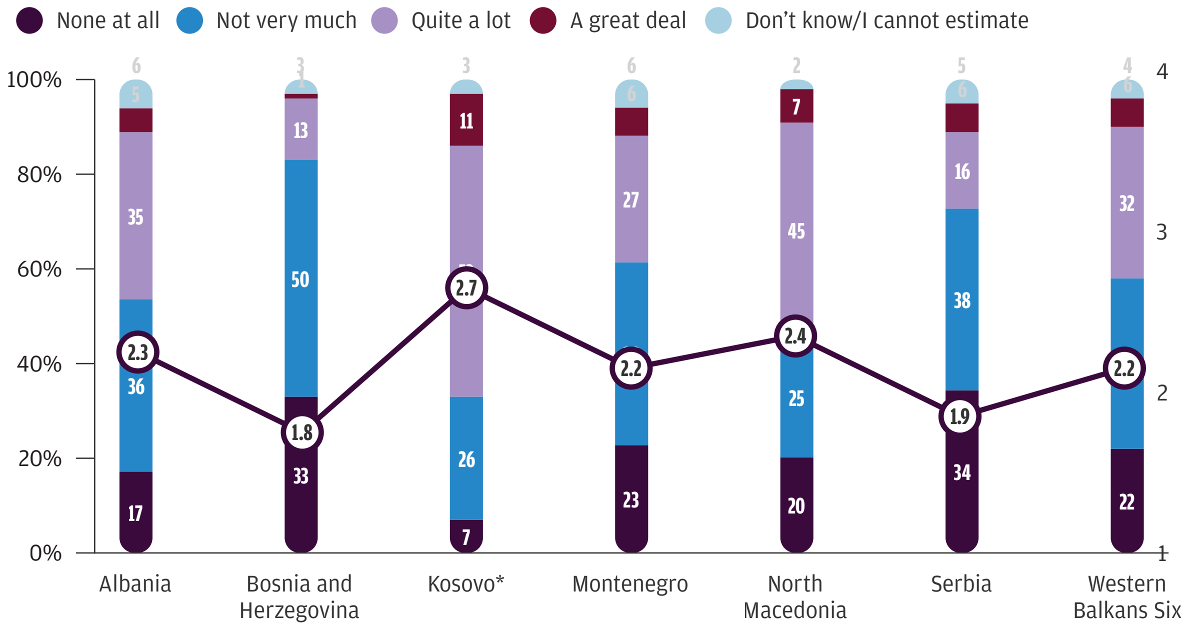


Confidence in parliaments across the WB6 remains low to moderate, with an overall regional mean score of 2.0 on a 1-4 scale.

Figure 79. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: The civil service

Q33.12. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

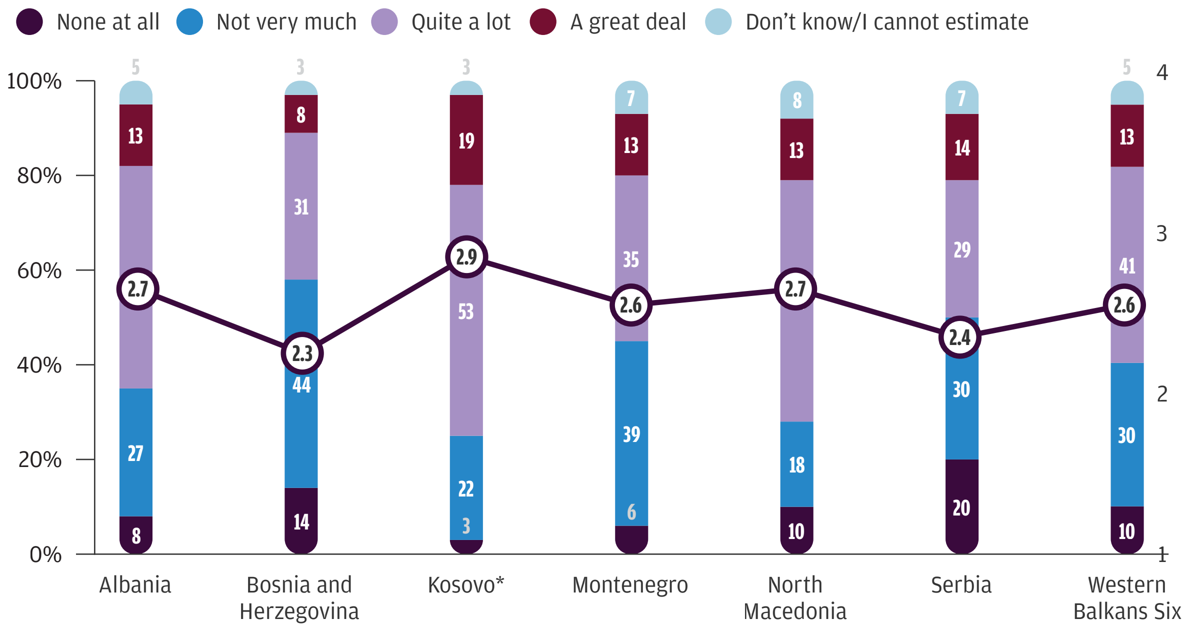


Confidence in the civil service across WB6 is moderate but restrained, with an overall regional mean score of 2.2 on a 1-4 scale.

Figure 80. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: Universities

Q33.13. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

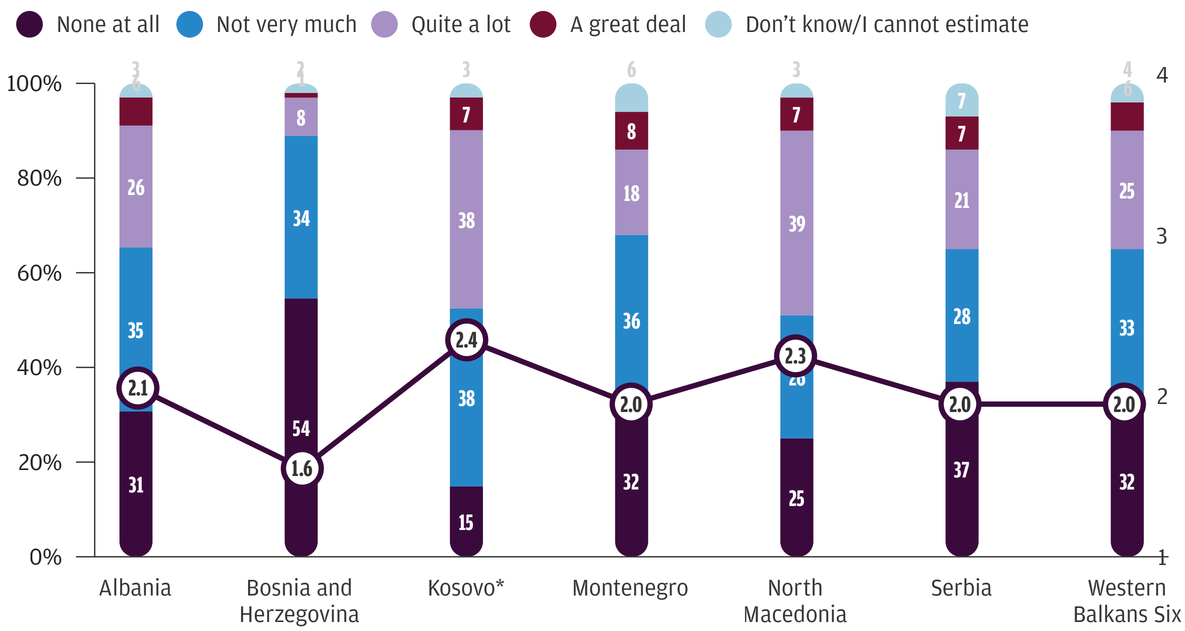


Universities (Figure 80) rank among the more positively assessed institutions, with an overall regional mean score of 2.6 on a 1-4 scale.

Figure 81. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: Elections

Q33.14. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)



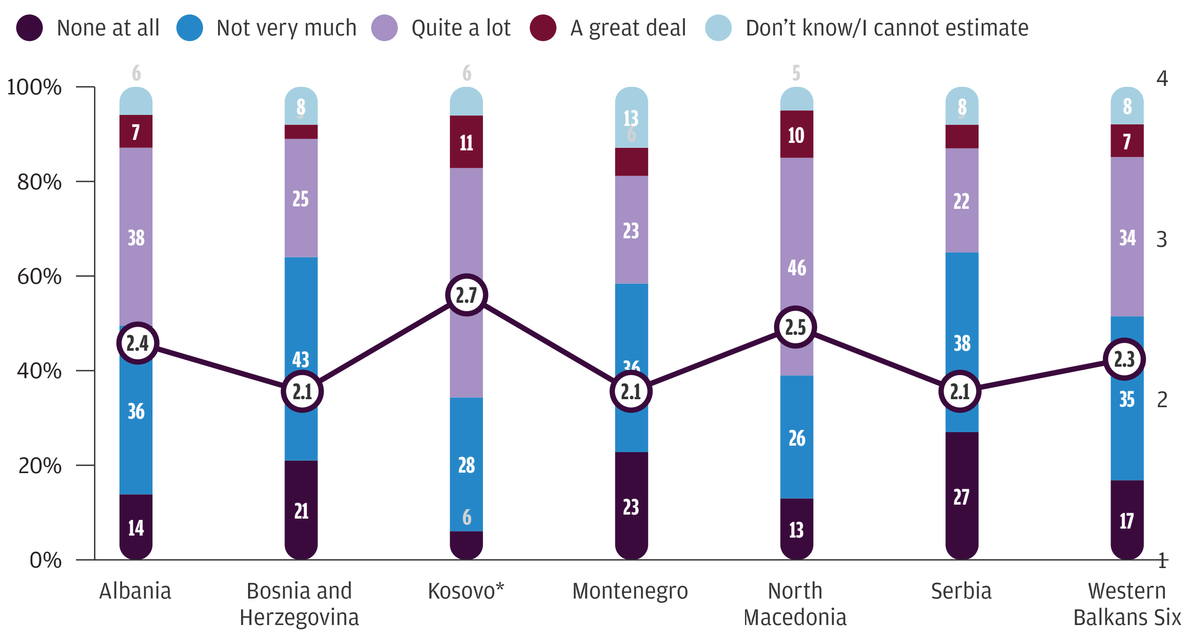
Elections (Figure 81) attract mixed perceptions, reflecting varied confidence in electoral processes.

Confidence in elections across the WB6 remains relatively low, with an overall regional mean score of 2.0 on a 1-4 scale. Overall, these results indicate that citizens generally express limited trust in elections, highlighting ongoing challenges in strengthening electoral integrity in the region.

Figure 82. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: Major companies

Q33.15. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)



Major companies and banks (Figures 82 - 83) receive moderate confidence, generally higher than political institutions.

Figure 83. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: Banks

Q33.16. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)

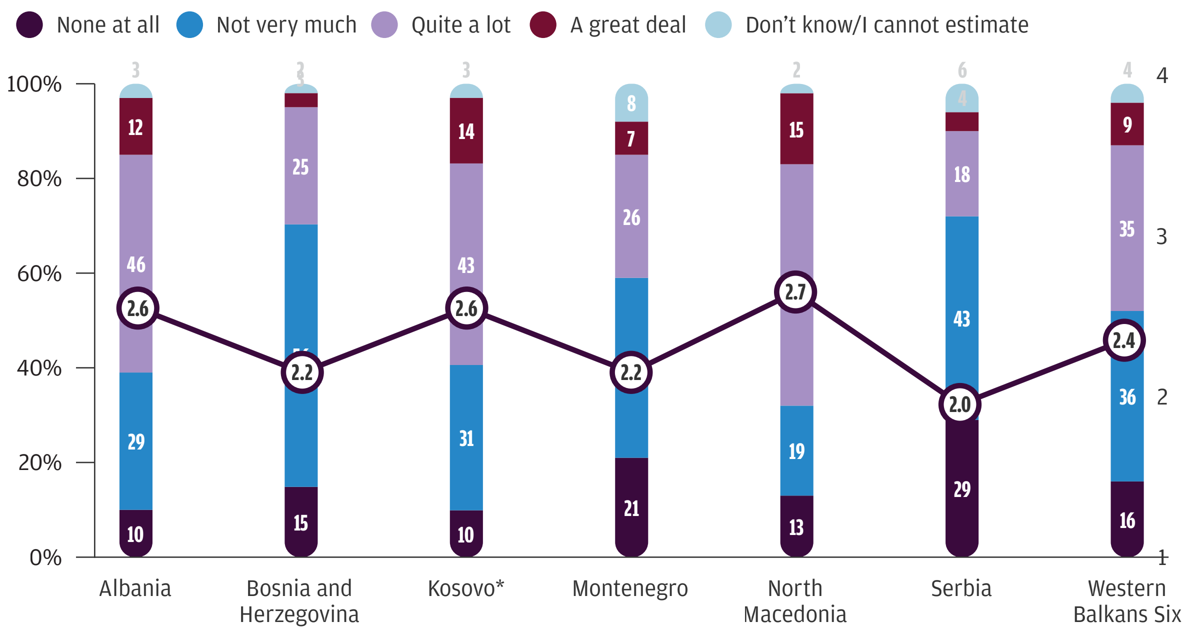
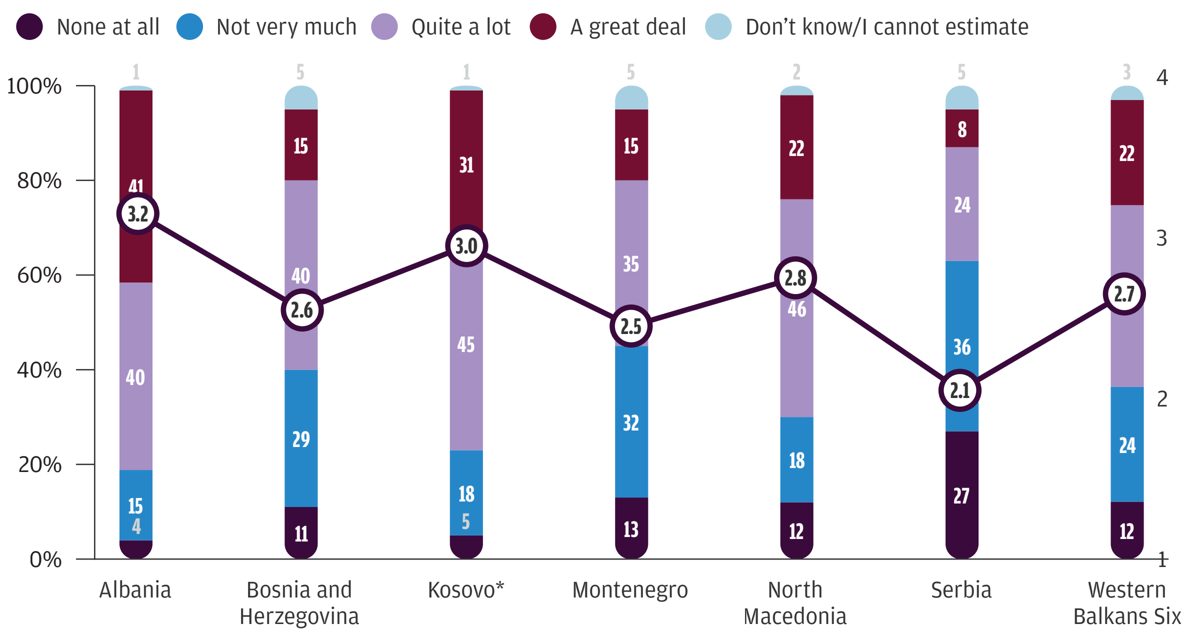


Figure 84. Evaluating confidence in key institutions: NATO

Q33.18. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 4, share of total, %, mean)



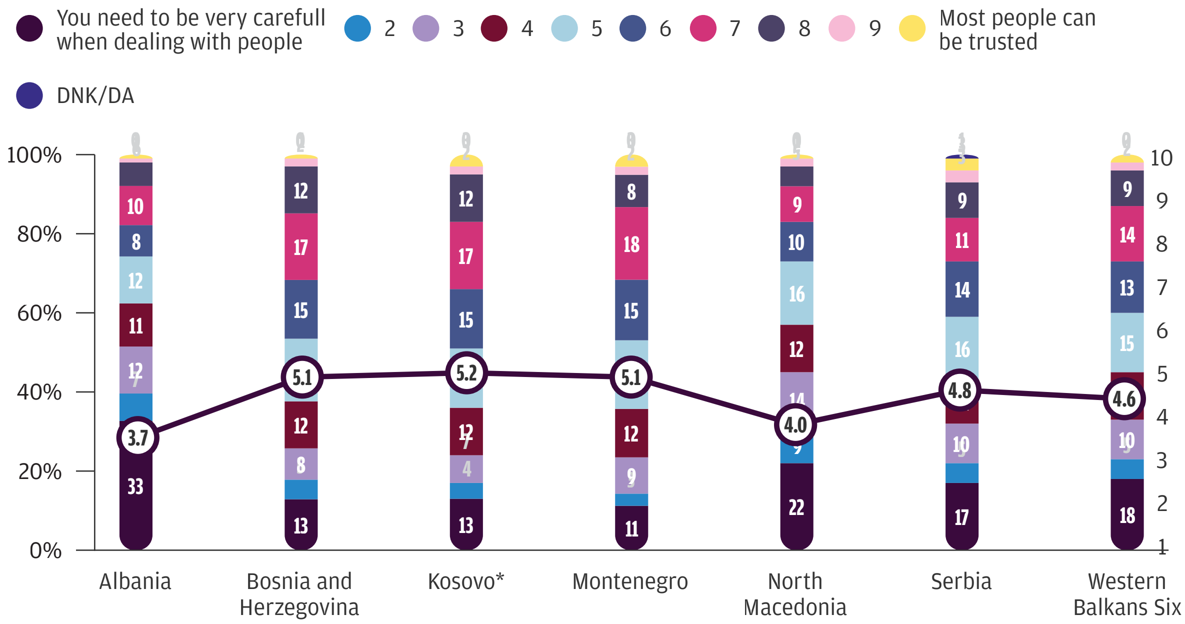
NATO (Figure 84) shows differentiated support across the region, reflecting geopolitical orientation differences.

Overall, non-political and external institutions tend to attract higher trust than core domestic political institutions.

Figure 85. General trust in people

Q34. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people.

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

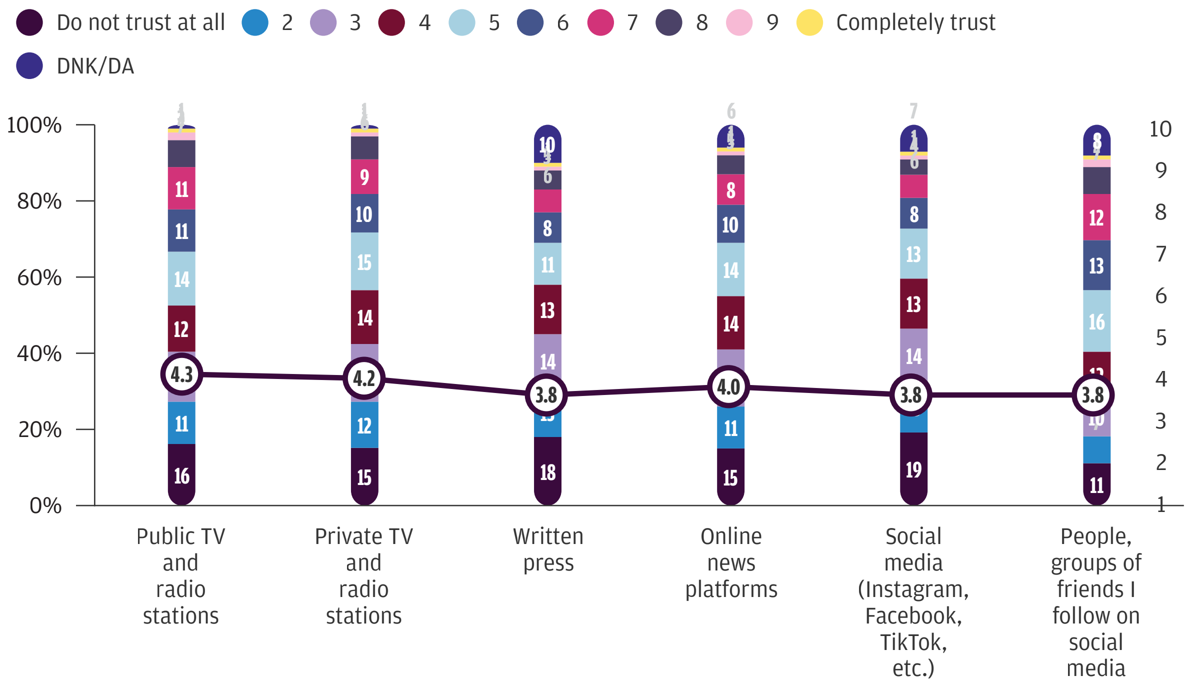


Generalised interpersonal trust remains limited. A minority of respondents believe that most people can be trusted, while a larger share express caution. Trust levels vary across WB6 but remain modest overall.

Figure 86. Trust and reliability: Evaluating your information sources

Q35. How much trust and reliability of information do you have in the following sources?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)



Trust in information sources follows a clear hierarchy (Figures 86 - 92):

- Public broadcasters generally receive higher trust than private media.
- Online platforms and social media receive lower reliability ratings.
- Trust in information from social media influencers or informal online networks remains limited.
- Traditional written press attracts moderate confidence, though below that of public broadcasters in most WB6.
- Overall, trust in media remains fragmented.

Figure 87. Trust and reliability: Evaluating your information sources - public TV and radio stations

Q35.1. How much trust and reliability of information do you have in the following sources?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

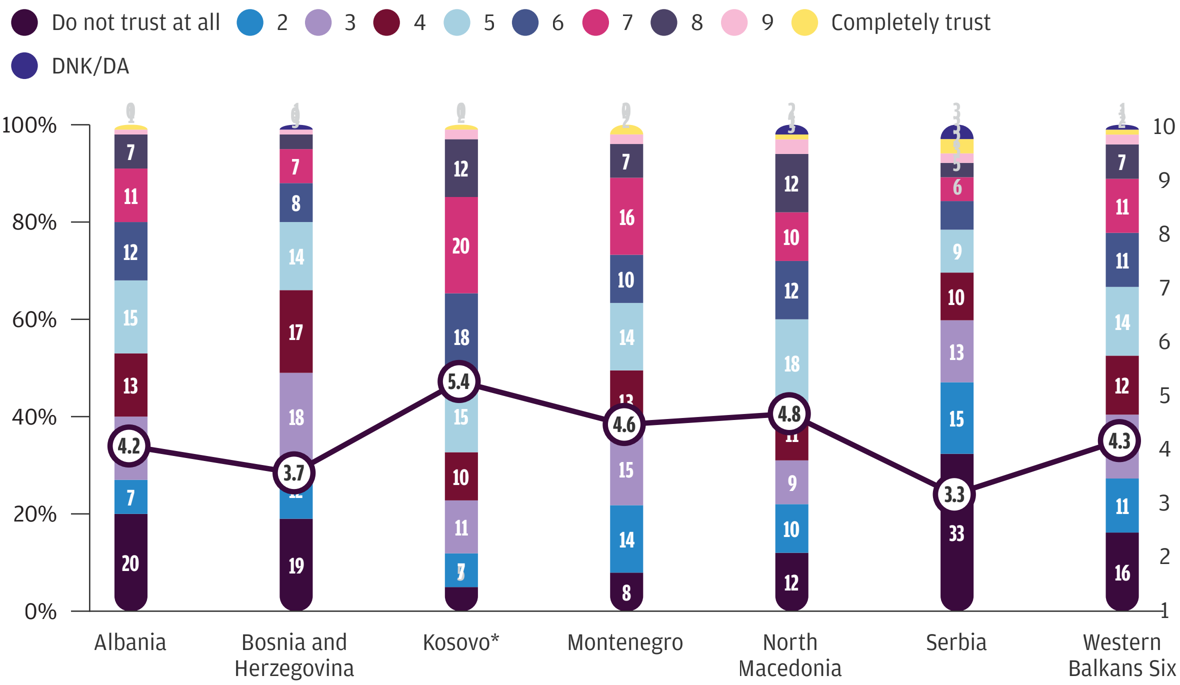
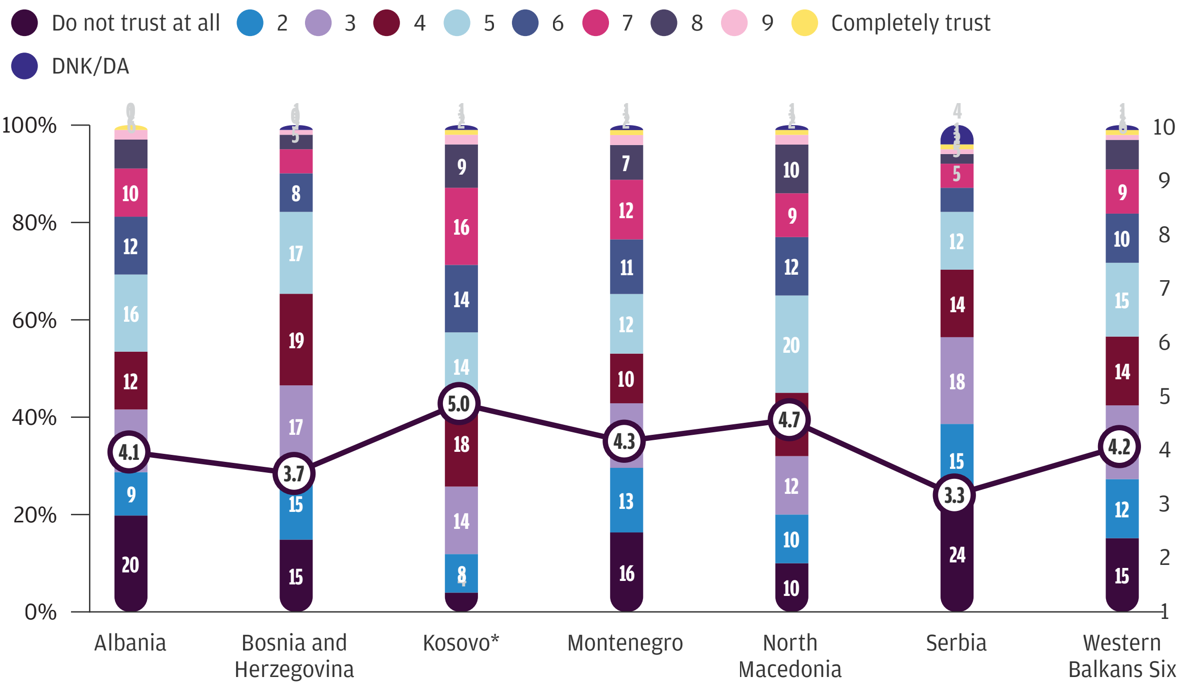


Figure 88. Trust and reliability: Evaluating your information sources - private TV and radio stations

Q35.2. How much trust and reliability of information do you have in the following sources?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)



Public trust in public TV and radio stations shows considerable variation across WB6, with a regional average score of 4.3 out of 10 (Figure 87).

Trust in private TV and radio stations across the WB6 shows notable variation (Figure 88). Overall, the regional average stands at 4.2 out of 10.

Figure 89. Trust and reliability: Evaluating your information sources - written press

Q35.3. How much trust and reliability of information do you have in the following sources?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

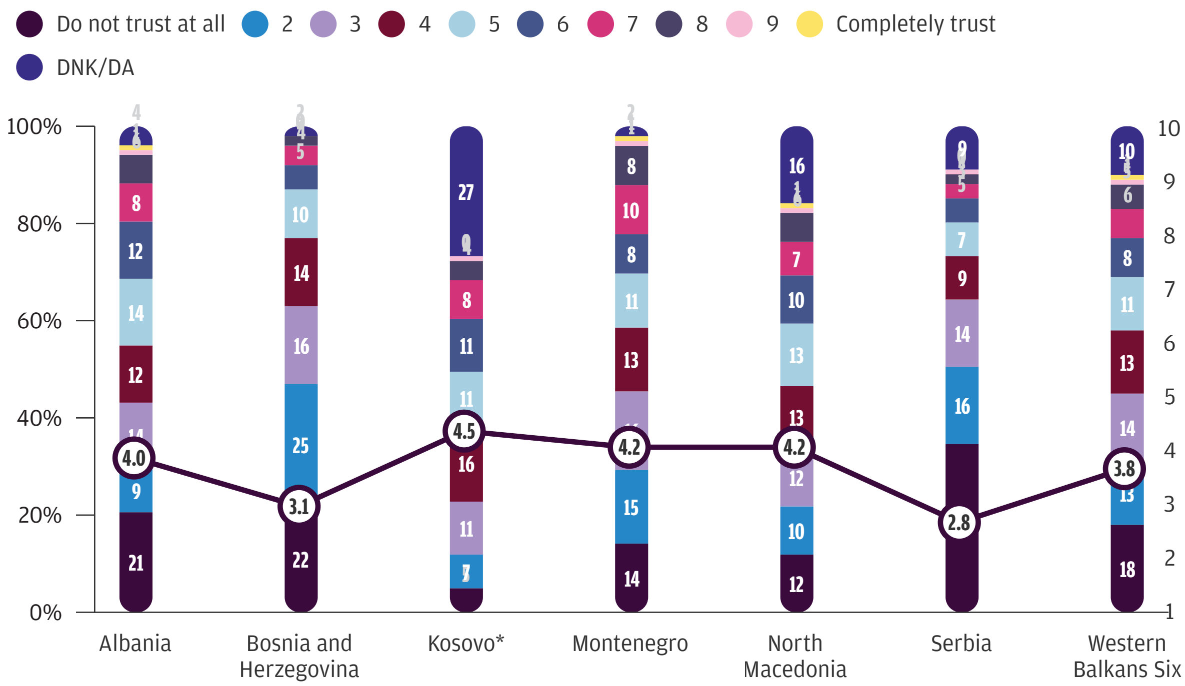
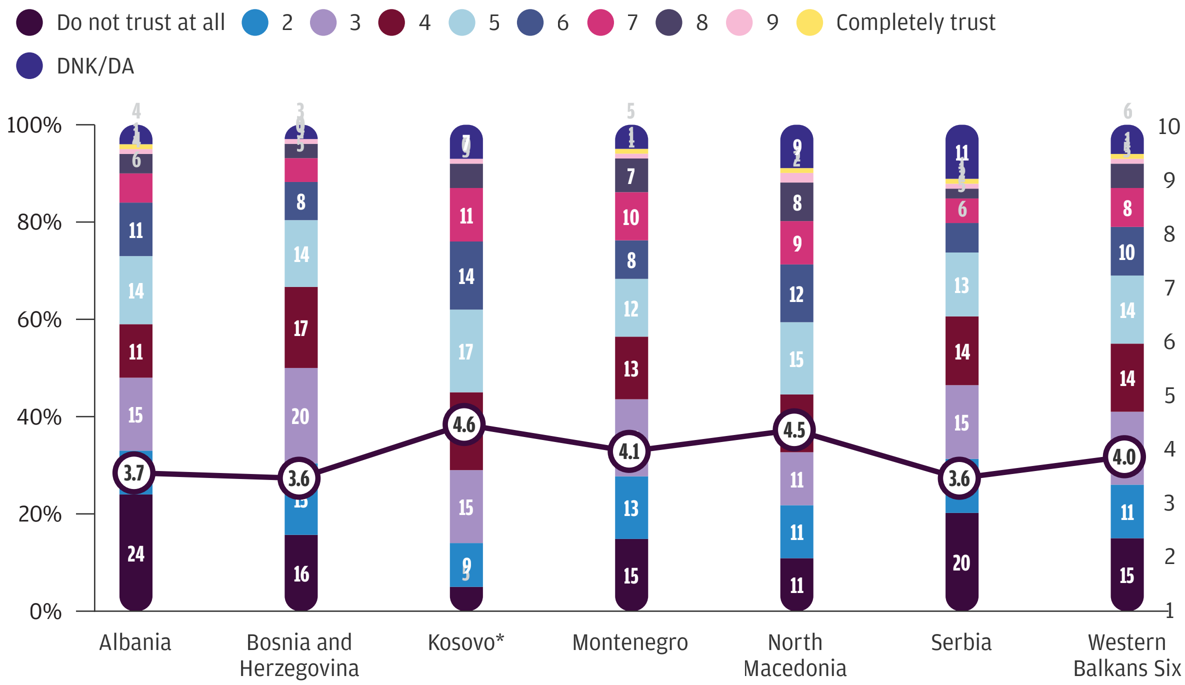


Figure 90. Trust and reliability: Evaluating your information sources - online news platforms

Q35.4. How much trust and reliability of information do you have in the following sources?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)



Public trust in the written press is low across the WB6, with a regional mean score of 3.8 on a 1-10 scale (Figure 89).

Trust in online news platforms is slightly higher than in the written press, with a regional mean score of 4.0 out of 10 (Figure 90).

PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICES

Figure 91. Trust and reliability: Evaluating your information sources - social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc.)

Q35.5. How much trust and reliability of information do you have in the following sources?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)

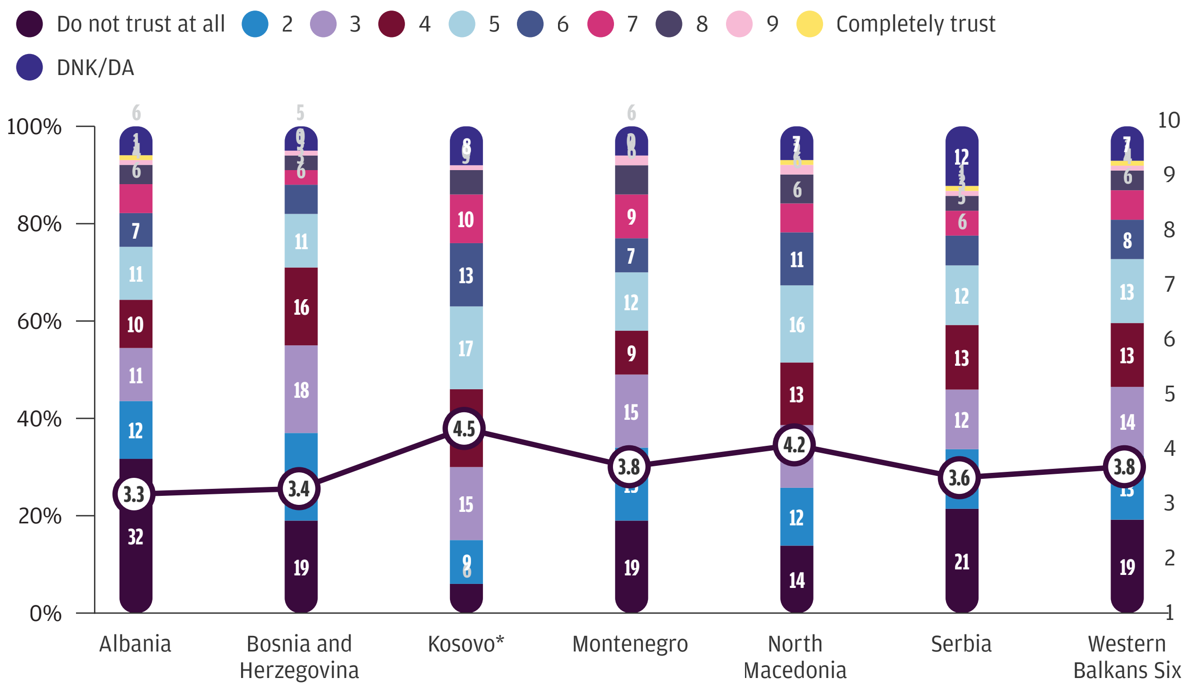
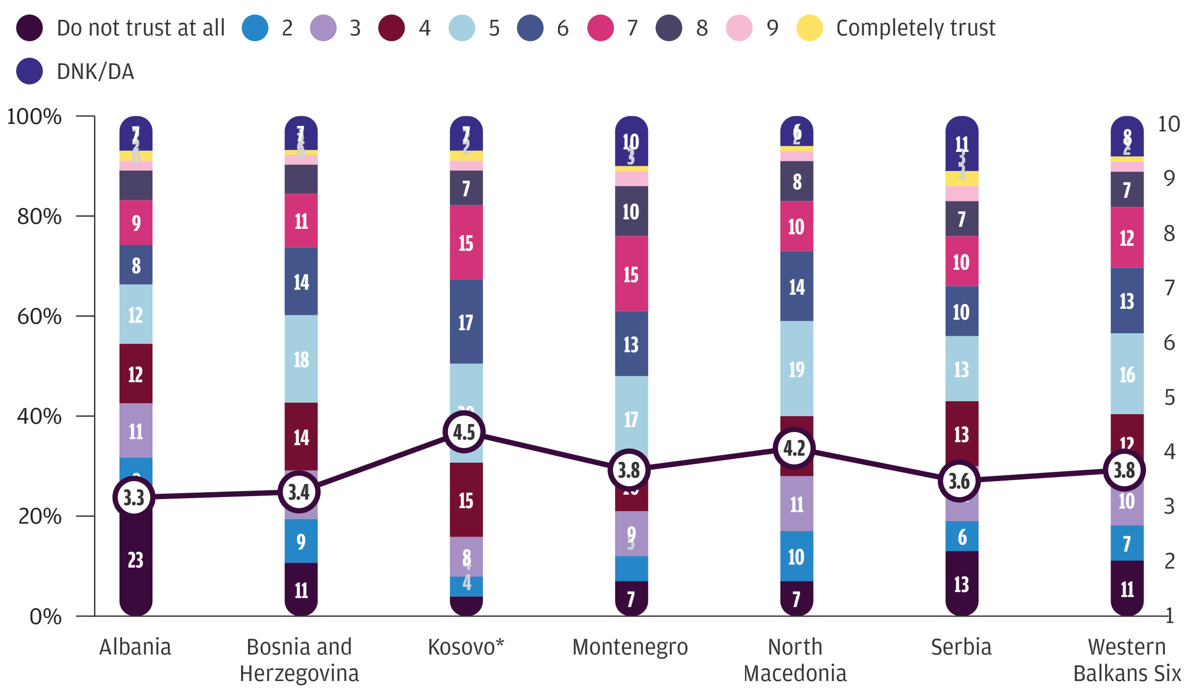


Figure 92. Trust and reliability: Evaluating your information sources - people, groups of friends I follow on social media

Q35.6. How much trust and reliability of information do you have in the following sources?

(All respondents, N=6012, scale from 1 to 10, share of total, %, mean)



PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICES

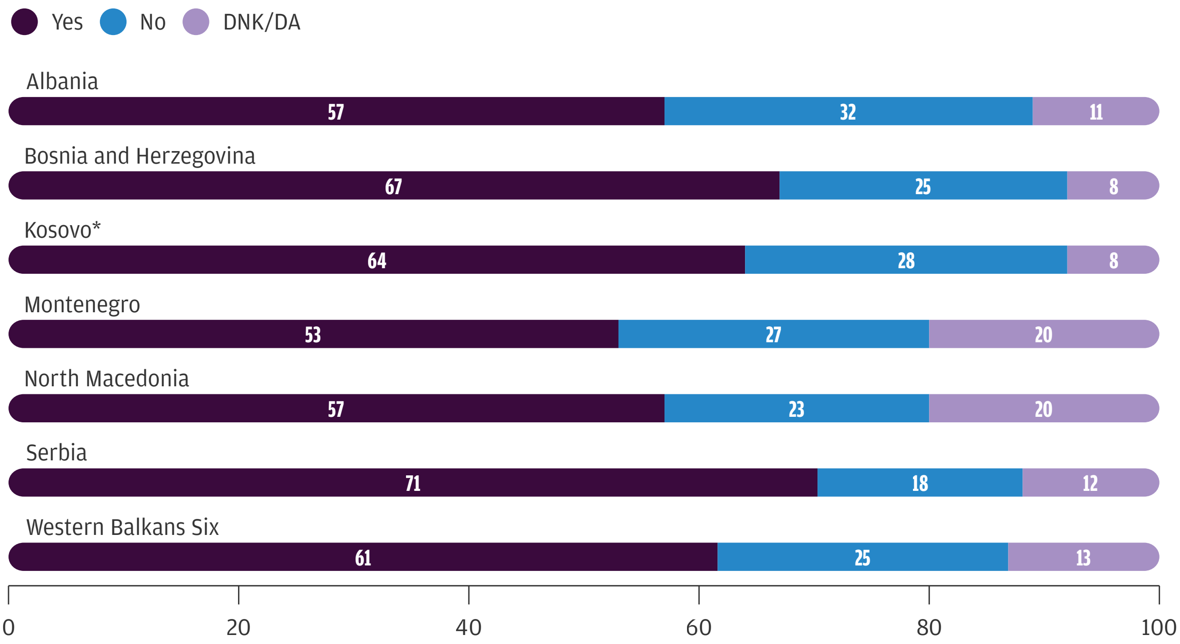
Results show that public trust in social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc.) is generally low across the WB6, with a regional mean score of 3.8 out of 10 (Figure 91).

Similarly, trust in information from 'People, groups of friends I follow on social media' is also low, with a regional mean score of 3.8 (Figure 92).

Figure 93. The surge of fake news and disinformation

Q36. In your view, has there been a raise in fake news and disinformation in [JURISDICTION] in the past 12 months?

(All respondents, N=6012, share of total, %)



A majority of respondents report encountering fake news or disinformation. The perception of misinformation as a widespread phenomenon is consistent across the WB6, reinforcing concerns about media reliability and information quality.

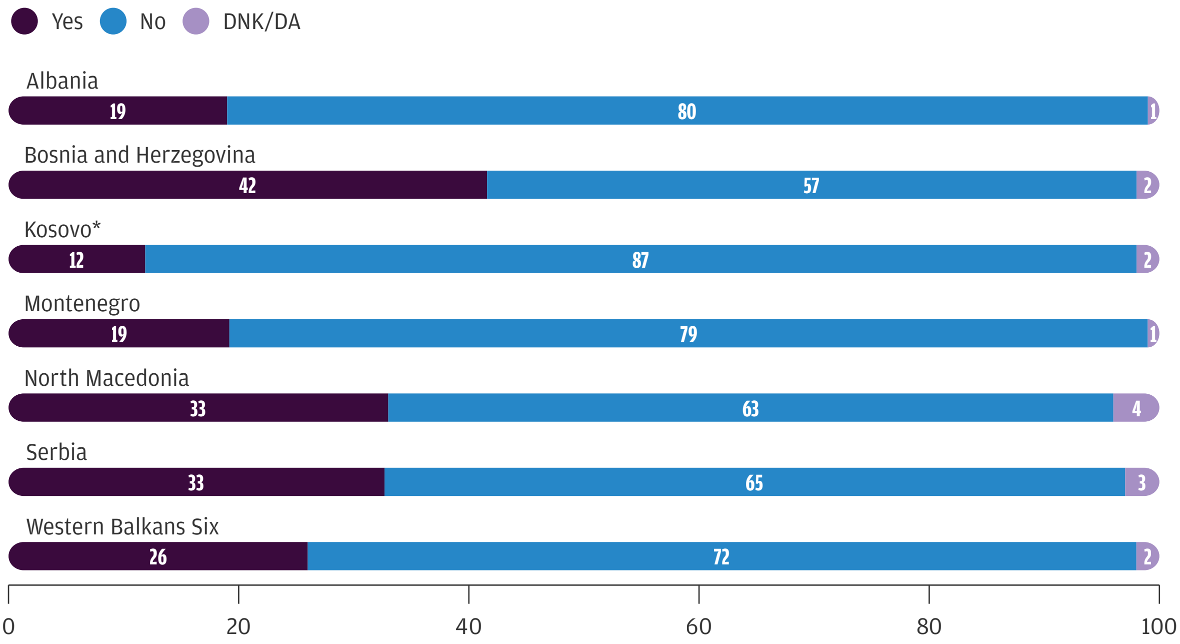
REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL

This section explores public awareness of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) across the WB6. It examines whether respondents have heard of the RCC, the context in which they became aware of it, and the sources through which they received this information.

Figure 94. Awareness of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)

Q37. Have you heard of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)?

(All respondents, N=6012, share of total, %)

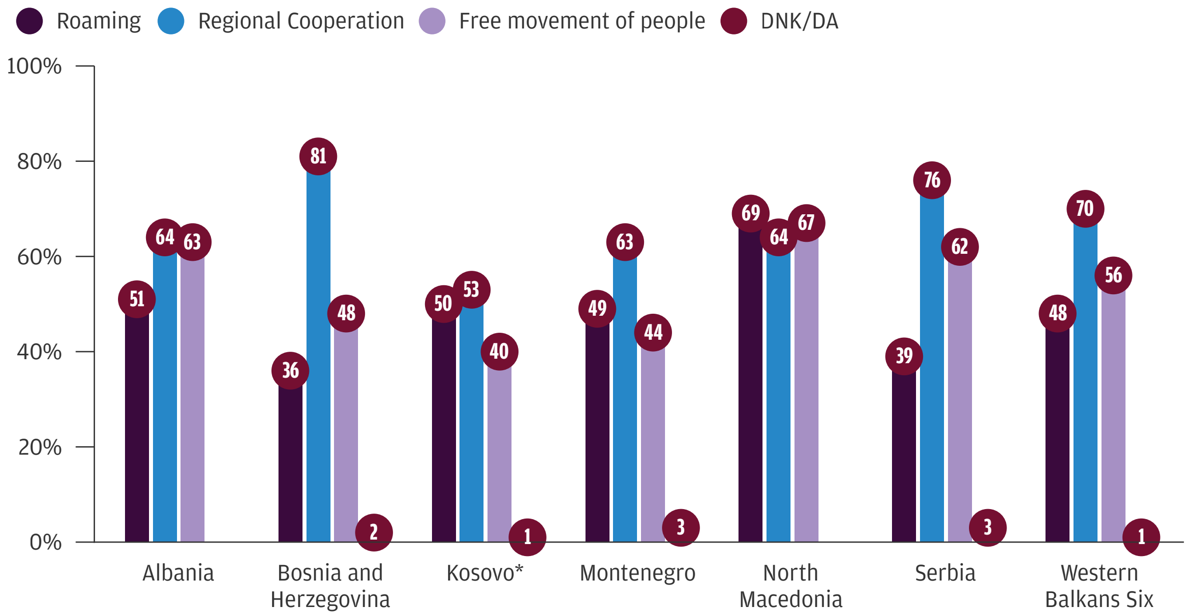


Awareness of the RCC varies across the WB6. A minority of respondents report being familiar with the institution, while a larger share indicate limited or no awareness. Awareness levels differ across WB6.

Figure 95. In what context have you heard about the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)?

Q38. In what context have you heard about the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)?

(Those who heard of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), n=1578, multiple answers, %)

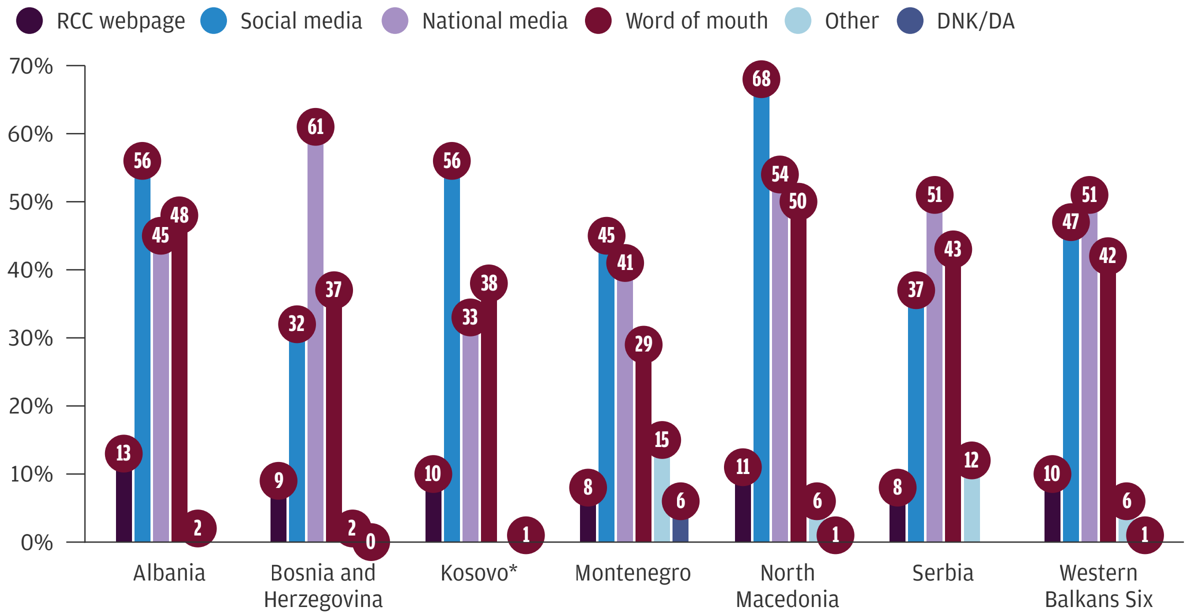


Among those aware of RCC, exposure most commonly occurs through media reporting, institutional communication, or professional engagement. Public visibility remains uneven.

Figure 96. Awareness of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)

Q39. How did you hear about the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)?

(Those who heard of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), n=1578, multiple answers, %)



On average, citizens in WB6 have learned about the RCC primarily through domestic or social media, with 51% citing domestic media and 47% social media (Figure 96).

NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

The Public Opinion Survey was conducted as a quantitative research study, with data collected through the CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) method. Interviews were carried out face-to-face at the household level by trained interviewers from CeSID Ltd and IDRA Research & Consulting.

The survey was implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia, covering a representative sample of the adult population in each.

The fieldwork took place between 21 May and 30 June.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey questionnaire was developed and provided by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). It consisted of 39 questions, including both thematic content and demographic variables such as region, gender, age, education, employment status, marital status, personal and household income.

Originally written in English, the questionnaire was subsequently translated into the relevant local languages: Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, and Serbian. A back-translation process was used to ensure the accuracy and consistency of translations. The Kosovo* Albanian version underwent an additional review and localisation by the IDRA team in Pristina to ensure contextual and linguistic relevance.

The final versions of the Balkan Barometer Public Opinion (BBPO) questionnaire were reviewed and formally approved by the RCC, marking the completion of the questionnaire development phase.

As the survey was conducted using the CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) method, all questionnaires were digitised and installed on interviewers' tablets. The programmed versions were reviewed by a designated quality control person in each participating WB6 to ensure technical accuracy and consistency.

INTERVIEWERS

The survey was conducted by a team of experienced interviewers across all participating WB6. All interviewers were trained and given instructions containing general description of the questionnaire, of the method of selecting addresses for the interviews, and of the respondent selection method, and were trained to understand research goals, interviewing method and eligible respondent selection. Regional fieldwork coordinators supervised the data collection process to ensure that interviewers adhered strictly to the established methodology and ethical research practices. This oversight also helped verify the quality and consistency of the data collected.

SAMPLE

Public Opinion Survey was conducted on at least N=1,000 respondents, aged 18+ in each WB6, with a total of 6,012 respondents for the entire WB region. The survey targeted individuals who met the following criteria:

- Age 18+, residing in the household at the time of the interview,
- Residents of the specific WB6 included in the survey.

Detailed breakdowns of the sample structure for each WB6 are provided in the tables below in the section Sample Structure.

Stratification/selection procedure

To ensure a fully representative sample of the target population, a multistage stratified cluster sampling method was applied, based on the most recent official census data available in each WB6.

Stratification was carried out by administrative area/regions and types of settlements (cities and villages). Within each administrative area/region, a predetermined number of starting points was selected in proportion to the population size.

Households were then chosen using the random route method, with interviewers approaching every third household from each starting point. When the household is selected the interviewer lists all the members of the household aged 18 years and over on their birthday and gender. The interviewer selects the member of the household who had celebrated the last birthday from the day of the interview. Enumerator cannot interview more than one respondent per household.

The number of respondents per region and settlement was also allocated proportionally to the population, and the number of sampling points was calculated accordingly. On average, a maximum of 10 respondents were interviewed per sampling point.

This rigorous sampling design ensured that the survey results are statistically representative of the adult population (18+) in each of the WB6 included in the study.

SAMPLE STRUCTURE/DEMOGRAPHICS

This section provides a descriptive overview of the sample structure for the Balkan Barometer 2025 Public Opinion Survey.

Table 6. Sample structure by region

WB6	Region	%
Albania	Berat	6
	Diber	5
	Durres	10
	Elbasan	9
	Fier	10
	Gjirokaster	2
	Korce	7
	Kukes	3
	Lezhe	4
	Scutari	6
	Tirana	32
	Valona	6
	Total	100
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Una-Sana	9
	Posavina	1
	Tuzla	12
	Zenica - Doboj	10
	Bosnia-Podrinje	1
	Central Bosnia	7
	Herzegovina Neretva	6
	West Herzegovina	3
	Sarajevo	13
	Canton 10	3
	Region Banja Luka	13
	Region Doboj	6
	Region Bijeljina	3
	Region Pale	5
	Region Zvornik	4
	Region East Herzegovina	2
	Brčko District	2
	Total	100

WB6	Region	%
Kosovo*	Pristina	32
	Prizren	17
	Peja	9
	Mitrovica	12
	Ferizaj	11
	Gjilan	9
	Gjakova	10
	Total	100
Montenegro	Central region	50
	North region	24
	South region	26
	Total	100
North Macedonia	Vardar Region	8
	East Region	8
	Southwest Region	9
	Southeast Region	8
	Pelagonia Region	11
	Polog Region	14
	Northeast Region	9
	Skopje Region	33
	Total	100
Serbia	Belgrade	25
	South and Eastern Serbia	21
	Central and West Serbia	28
	Vojvodina	26
	Total	100

Table 3 presents the sample structure by region, highlighting the geographic distribution within each WB6, as reflected in the shares of key cities and regions.

In Albania, Tirana dominates the sample with 32%, reflecting its central economic and administrative role. Durres and Fier follow with 10% each, and Elbasan with 9%. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the sample is broadly distributed, with notable concentrations in Sarajevo and Banja Luka with 13% each, and Tuzla (12%) underscoring their domestic significance. In Kosovo*, Pristina dominates the sample with 32%, reflecting its role as the capital and main economic centre. In Montenegro, the sample is evenly distributed, with the Central region at 50%, the South at 26%, and the North at 24%. In North Macedonia, Skopje leads with 33%, followed by Polog (14%) and Pelagonija (11%). In Serbia, Belgrade accounts for 25%, with Central and West Serbia at 28% and Vojvodina at 26%.

Figure 97. Sample structure by gender

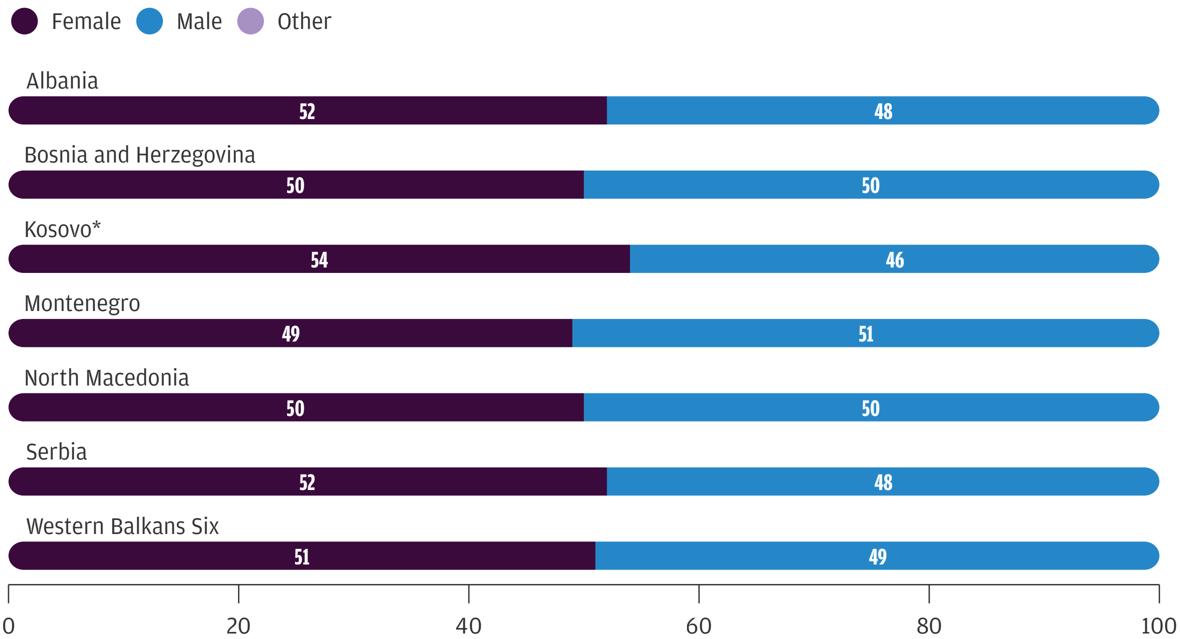
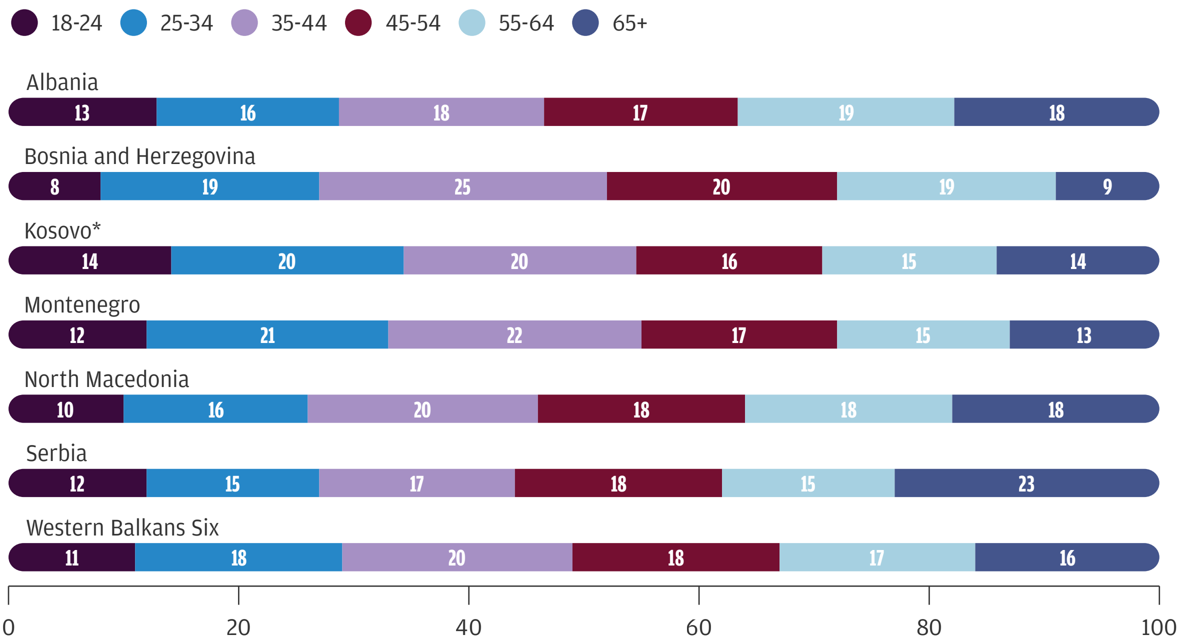


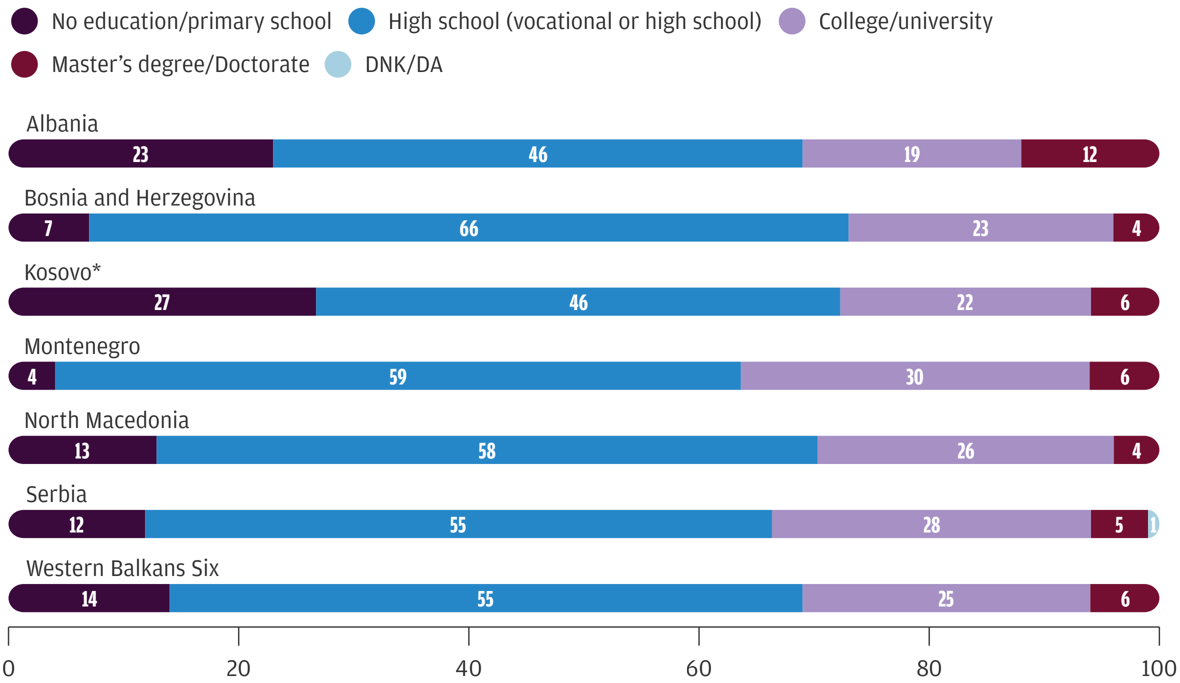
Figure 97 shows an almost equal gender distribution across the WB6, with females accounting for an average of 51% and males 49% in the region as a whole.

Figure 98. Sample structure by age



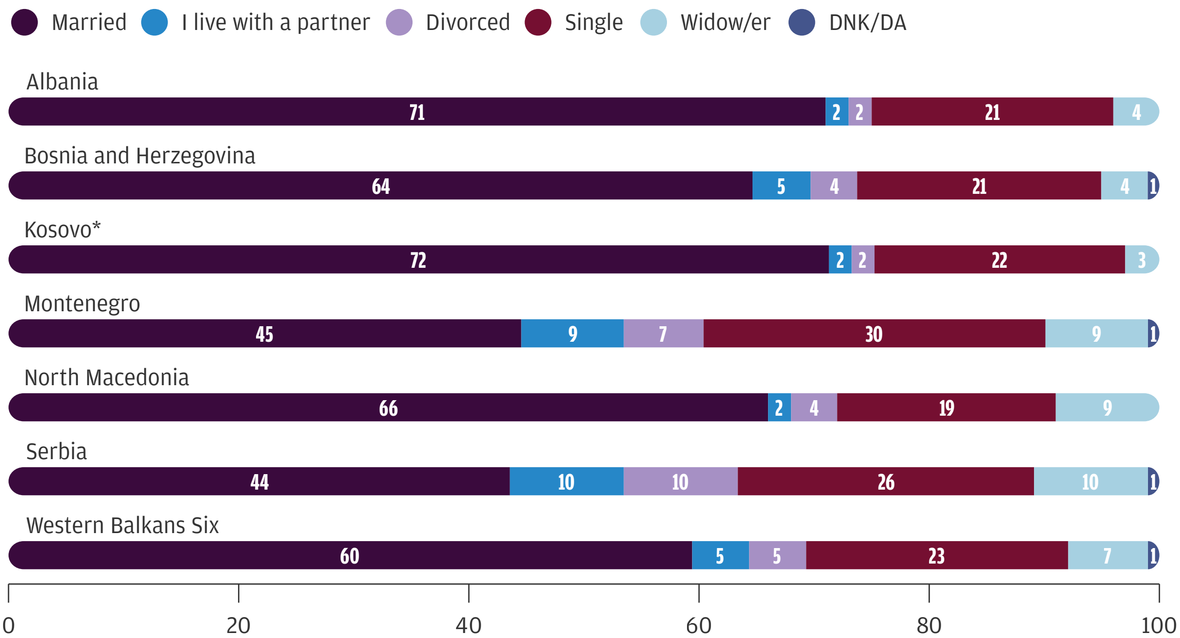
Data in Figure 98 indicate that, on a regional average, 29% of respondents fall within the 18-34 age group, 38% within the 35-54 group, while the remaining 34% are aged 55 and above. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro record the lowest share of respondents aged 55+, at 28%, whereas Kosovo* stands out with the highest proportion of young respondents (18-34 years), at 34%.

Figure 99. Sample structure by education



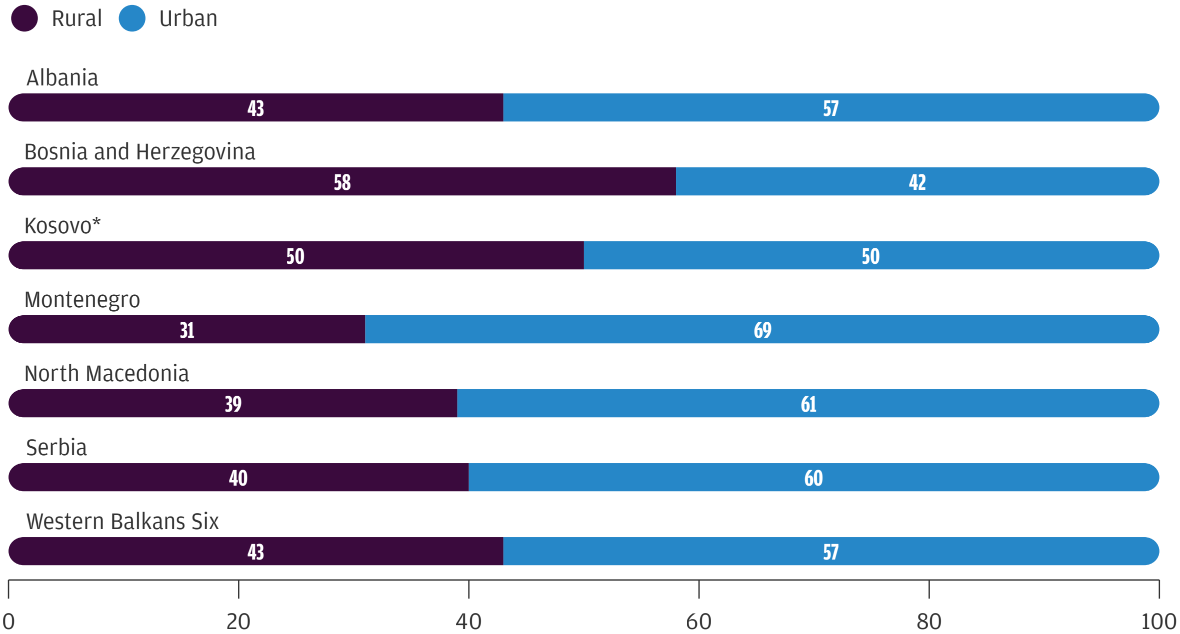
The graph above (Figure 99) indicates that, on average, the majority of respondents hold an educational degree, with 55% having completed high school and 25% holding a university degree. Montenegro records the highest share of respondents with a university degree (30%), while Bosnia and Herzegovina has the largest proportion of respondents with a high school education (66%). Notably, Albania has the highest proportion of respondents holding a master's or doctoral degree, at 12%.

Figure 100. Sample structure by marital status



The graph above (Figure 100) paints the picture of marital status of region's respondents where majority of respondents are married, at 60% on average, followed by 23% of responders being single and 7% of widowed respondents.

Figure 101. Sample structure by urbanisation



From an urbanisation perspective, the majority of respondents reside in urban areas, with an average of 57% living in urban locations compared to 43% in rural areas. In Kosovo*, the distribution is evenly split, with 50% of respondents living in each category. Bosnia and Herzegovina differs from the other WB6, recording the highest share of respondents in rural areas (58%), compared to 42% in urban areas.

Figure 102. Sample structure by personal monthly income

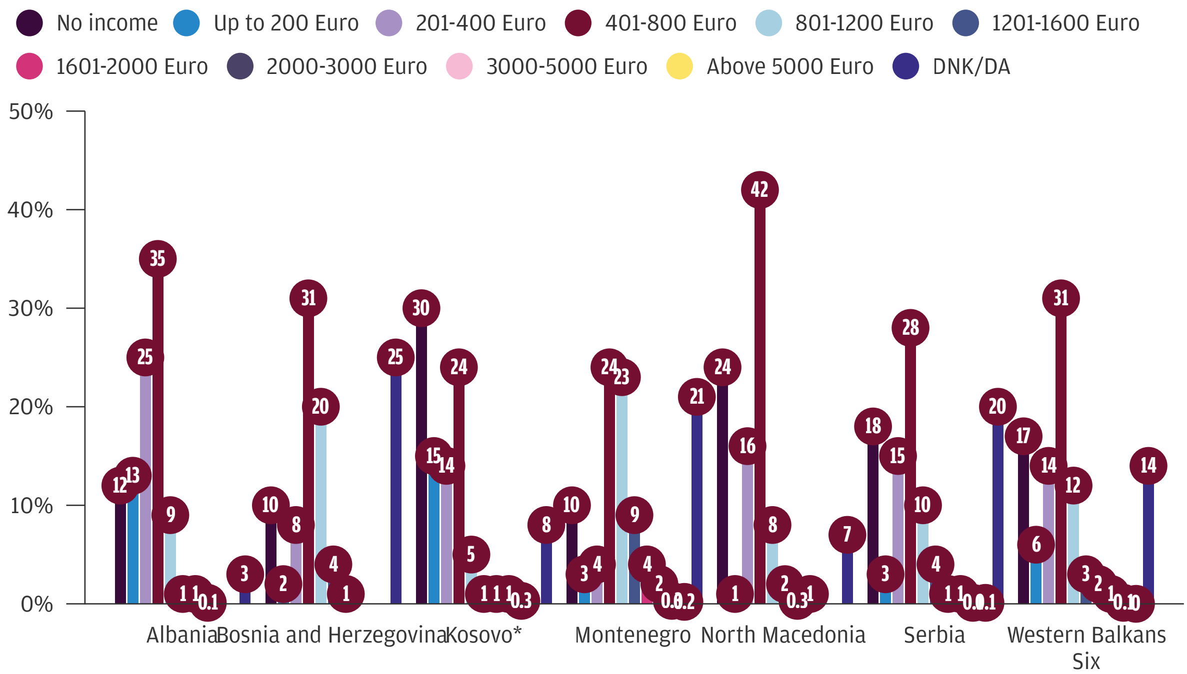
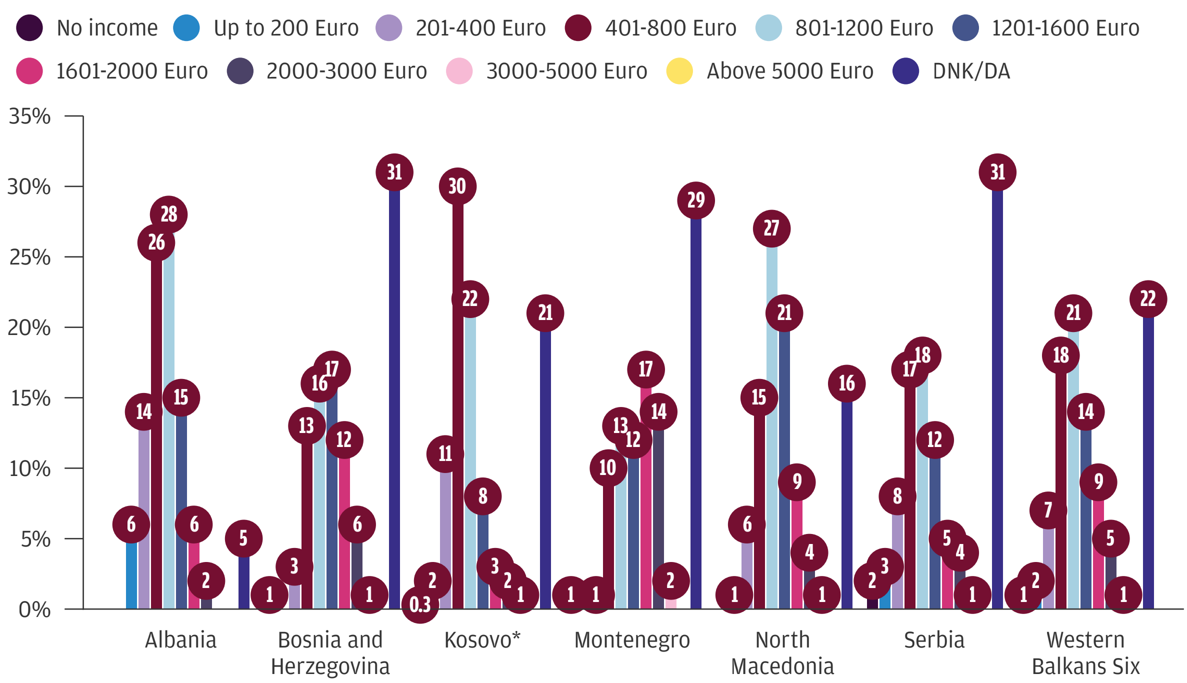


Figure 102 presents the sample structure by personal monthly income. On average, 14% of respondents did not disclose their income. The largest share (31%) report earning between EUR 401 and 800 per month. North Macedonia records the highest proportion in this income bracket (42%), followed by Albania (35%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (31%). Montenegro has the highest share of respondents earning EUR 801-1,200 (23%) and above EUR 1,201 (15%), while Kosovo* has the largest low-income group, with 45% earning up to EUR 200.

Figure 103. Sample structure by monthly income in the household



SAMPLE STRUCTURE/DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 103 illustrates the sample structure by household monthly income. On average, 22% of respondents did not disclose their household income. The largest share of respondents (21%) reports a household monthly income between EUR 801 and 1,200. Montenegro records the highest proportion of households earning EUR 1,201 or more (45%), followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (36%), North Macedonia (35%), Albania (23%), and Serbia (22%). Kosovo* reports the lowest share at 14%.

Figure 104. Sample structure by employment status

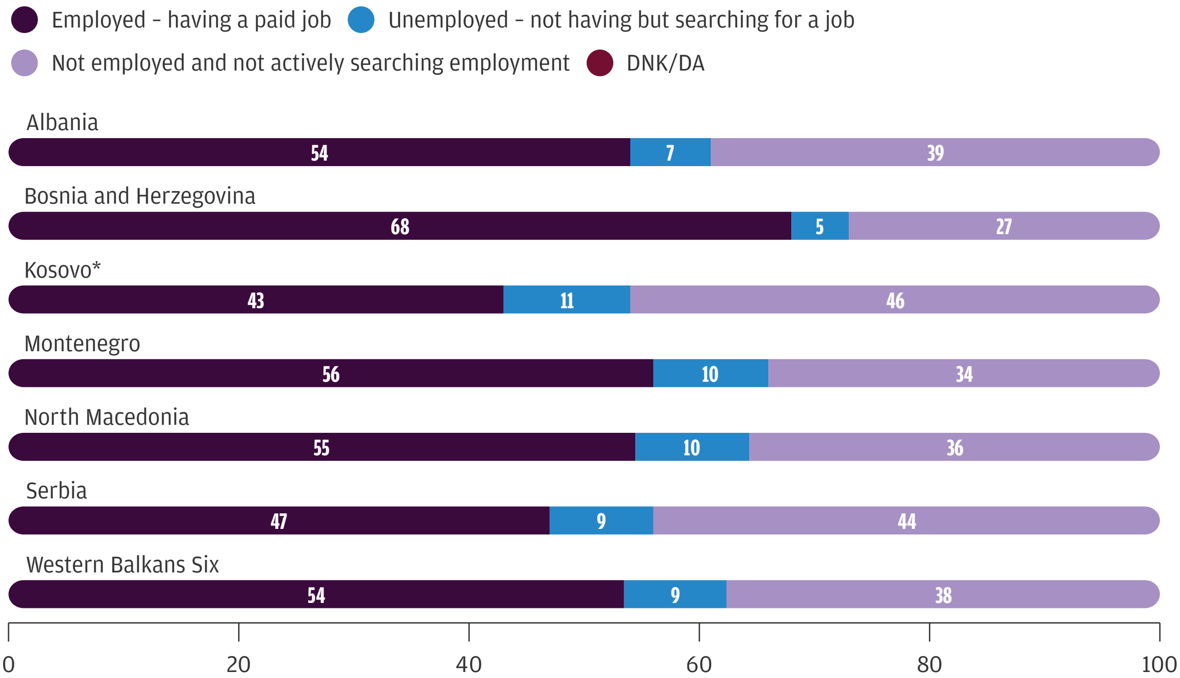


Figure 104 indicates that, on average, 54% of respondents are employed, 38% are not employed and not actively seeking work, while 9% are unemployed but actively searching for a job. Bosnia and Herzegovina records the highest share of employed respondents (68%), followed by Montenegro (56%), North Macedonia (55%), Albania (54%), Serbia (47%), and Kosovo* (43%).

Figure 105. Sample structure by employment sector

(those who are employed)

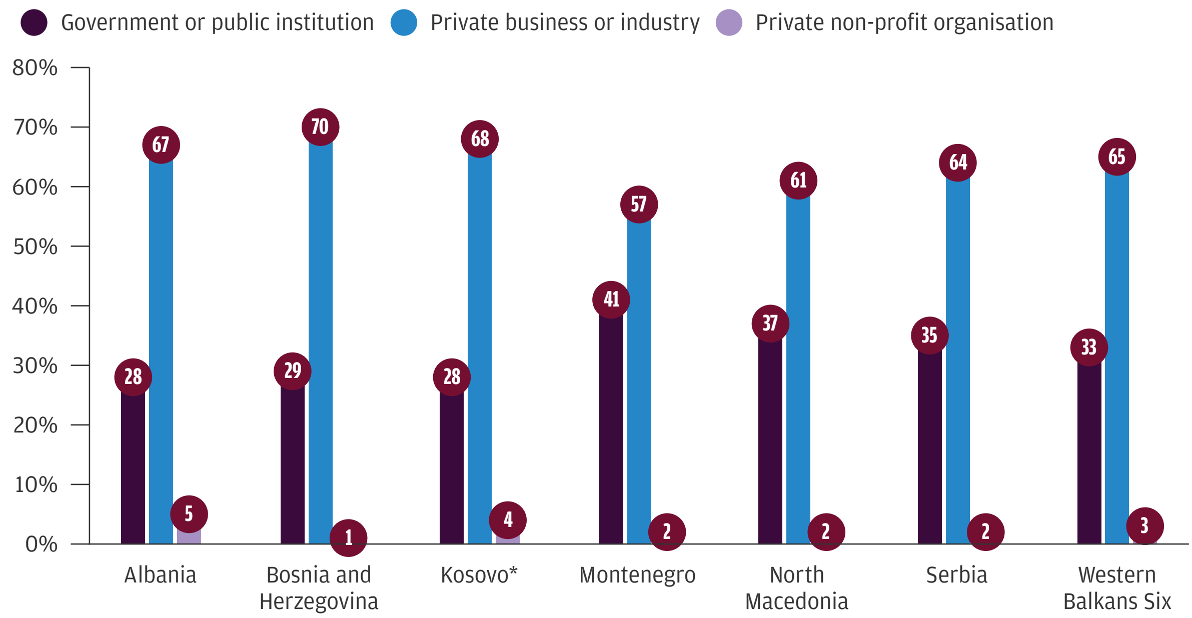
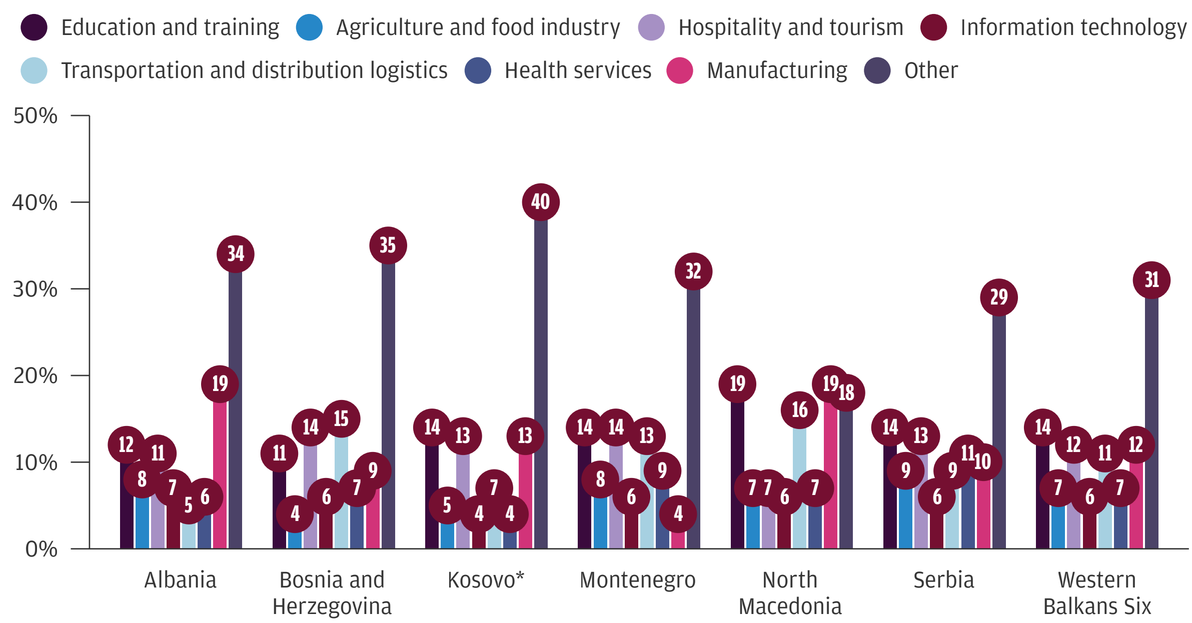


Figure 105 presents the employment sector distribution among employed respondents. On average, 65% work in private business or industry, 33% in government or public institutions, and 3% in private non-profit organisations. Bosnia and Herzegovina has the highest share of respondents employed in private business or industry (70%), while Montenegro records the highest share in government or public institutions (41%) compared to other WB6.

Figure 106. Sample structure by employment industry

(those working for the government, public institution or private business)



SAMPLE STRUCTURE/DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 106 shows employment distribution by industry for respondents in government, public institutions, or private business. Among specified industries, 14% are in education and training, 12% in hospitality, tourism, and manufacturing, 11% in transportation and logistics, 7% in agriculture and health services, and 6% in information technology.

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