

2017

“Active citizen (non) participation in Western Balkan”

Albania, Kosovo, Serbia

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PROINSIGHT

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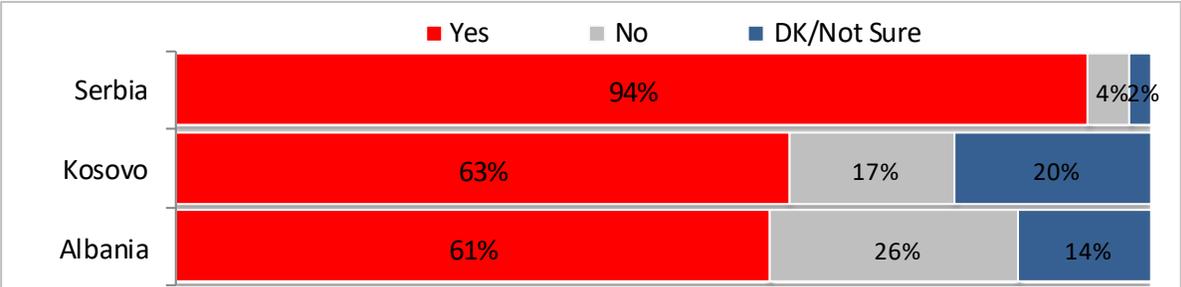
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METHODOLOGY

REALIZATION	Research conducted in period from 10.01.2017 to 30.01.2017
SAMPLE	Population – 18+ years of age - eligible voters SERBIA – 300 questionnaires cities: KNJAZEVAČ PIROT POŽEGA KOSOVO – 100 questionnaires cities: PEJA ALBANIA – 200 questionnaires cities: TIRANE VLORE
TYPE OF RESEARCH	F2F questionnaire average length 10 minutes
SAMPLING	Sampling is conducted by method of Convenience sample/Availability sample - data is collected from population members who are conveniently available to participate in study.

KEY FINDINGS (NARRATIVE REPORT)

As starting question for interviews we wanted to know does people know at all what is citizens participation process. We gave definition and asked respondents do they know that this is their constitutional right.

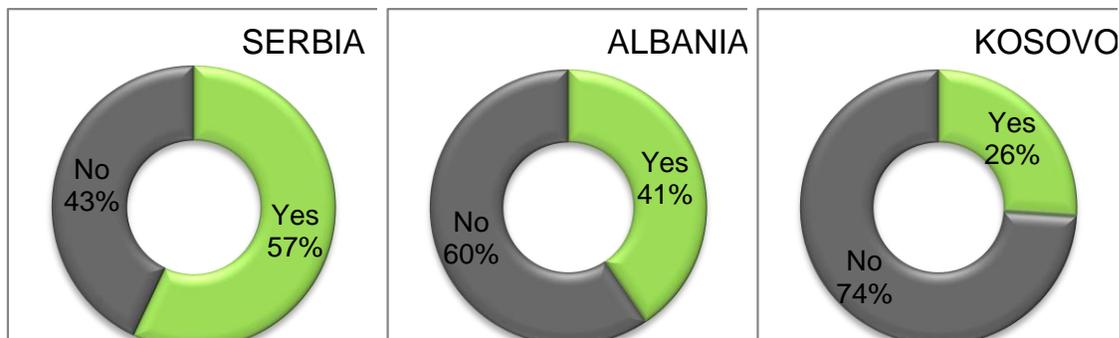


Almost all respondents from Serbia (94%) have said that they are informed about citizens participation process. Respondents from Kosovo and Albania are informed much less, 63% of respondents from Kosovo and 61% of them from Albania. There are 17% of people from Kosovo and 1/4 of respondents from Albania who are “Not Sure” about awareness on opportunity to influence a topic of interest to citizens in local community. Regarding those two percentages there is a space for improving knowledge of people from Kosovo and Albania on citizens participation and how to influence government in their community

When asked on importance about different parts that comprise citizen’s participation process answers from all three countries are very much the same. Statement “Continuous flow of information from the government to citizens” is of importance to respondents from all three countries 3/4 of respondents from Albania and Serbia think that flow of information from government to citizens is important, while for 69% of respondents from Kosovo this is important. Importance on statement “Flow of information from citizens to government” is the same for all three countries – around 70%. Statement “Informing citizens to understand their constitutional right to participate in decision making process” is important for 3/4 of respondents from Serbia and a little more than 2/3 for respondents from Kosovo and Albania.

There is a difference in importance for quality of life on statement “An open and transparent government, involving citizens in decision making process”. Respondents from Albania think that this is very important (85% of them), while, only, 58% of respondents from Kosovo see open and transparent government as a part of citizens participation process that can improve their quality of life. For 3/4 of respondents from Serbia this is important.

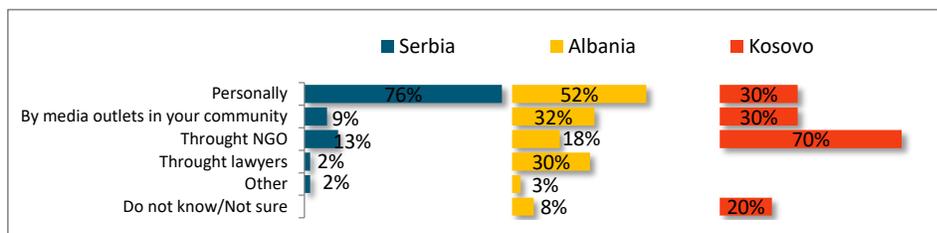
When asked did they ever have had issue in local community that they wanted to solve by contacting government representatives we see that 57% respondents from Serbia have had such issue, from Albania 41% and from Kosovo only 26%. Those lower percentages from Kosovo and Albania could be seen through knowledge about their constitutional rights which is lower than in Serbia. Especially respondents from Kosovo do not practice their constitutional right. GDP per capita in Kosovo is lowest of those three countries so we could conclude here that higher the GDP of one country there would be higher percentage of contacting government representatives through citizen’s participation process.



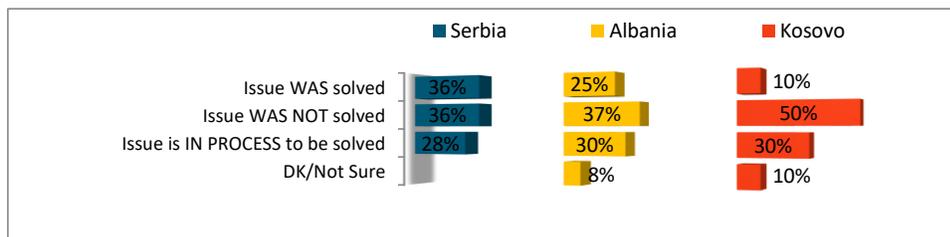
Of those who have had issue 54% from Serbia, 74% from Albania and 39% from Kosovo have been able to contact government representatives.



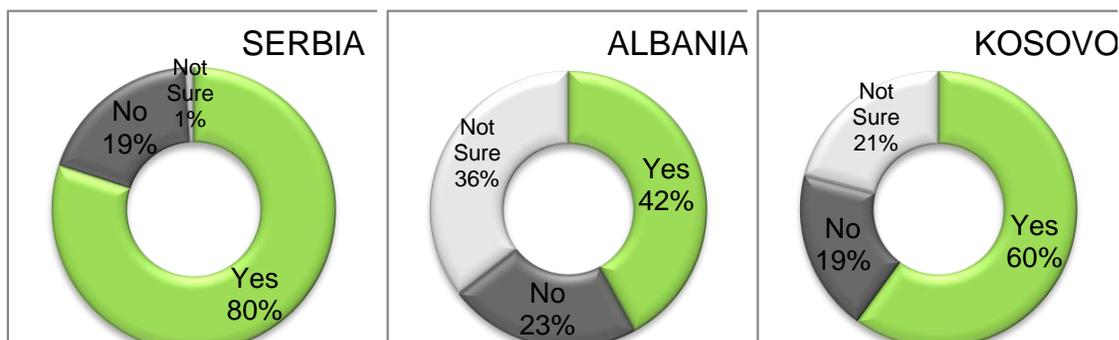
Preferred way of contacting representatives in Serbia and Albania is by personal contact (76% from Serbia, 52% from Albania). Preferred way of contact in Kosovo is through NGO’s where 70% of people said that they contacted government representatives in this way. Respondents could make contact through 2 or more channels. In Serbia respondents used mostly one way of contacting while in Albania they used media outlets (32%) and lawyers (30%). In Kosovo respondents used, besides NGO, personal contact (30%) and media outlets (30% of those who have been able to contact representatives).



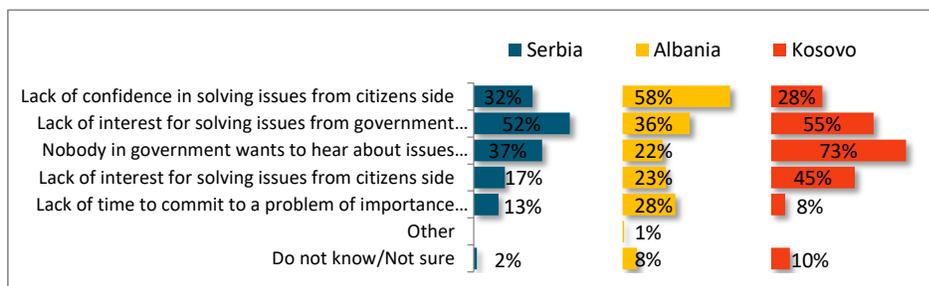
In Serbia contacting representatives solved issue for 30% of those who have contacted representatives, while 28% of them are waiting for issue to be solved. In 36% of cases issue was not solved. In Albania 1/4 of issues was solved, 37% was not solved and 30% are in process. Kosovo has smallest number of solved issues – only 10%, 50% of issues was not solved and 30% are in process to be solved,



Regarding confidence in solving problems through citizen’s participation process, when this question is asked to whole population, no matter did they have issue to be solved or not, highest confidence have respondents from Serbia (80%), following by Kosovo with 60% (although lowest number of solved cases is from Kosovo – only 10%) and with lowest confidence is Albania with 42%. There is high number of respondents who said that they are not sure – Albania 36% and Kosovo 21%. These numbers we should watch as lack of confidence.



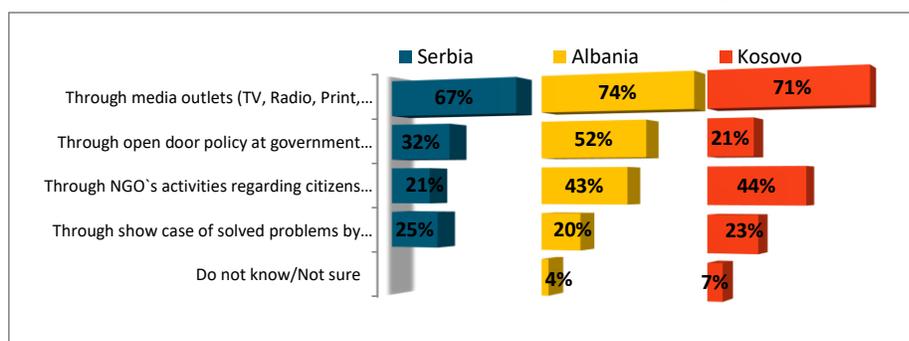
Those respondents who said that they DO NOT have confidence or are NOT SURE in solving issues through citizen’s participation process mentioned main reasons, from their perspective why issues cannot be solved. Respondents from Serbia as a main reason mentioned “Lack of interest for solving issues from government side” (52%). Main reason from Albanians perspective is “Lack of confidence in solving issues from citizen’s side” (58%), and for Kosovo respondent’s main reason is “Nobody in government wants to hear about issues from group of citizens”. Those are the main reasons, but different reason overlap and they are mix of reasons in table below:



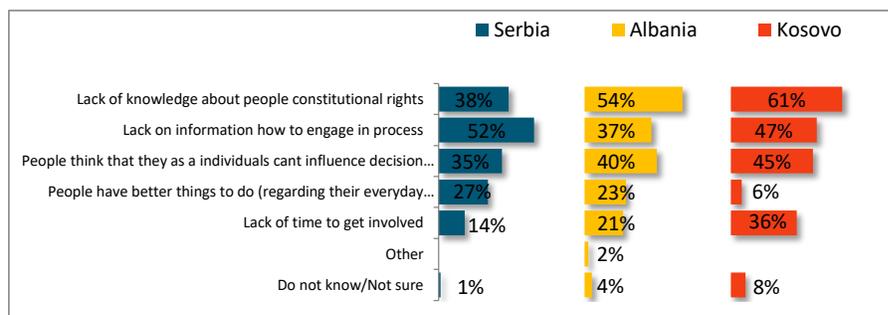
When asked are they well informed about possibility to change things through citizens participation process 55% of respondents from Serbia think that they are well informed, 50% of Kosovo respondents are well informed and 38% of people from Albania think that they are well informed.



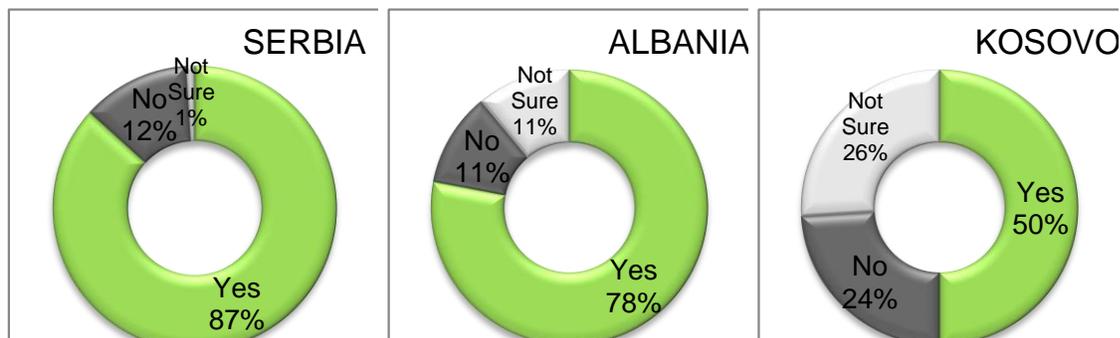
Regarding ways to be informed on citizen’s participation process there is a mix of methods/ways that are convenient from respondent’s perspective. One way that stands out is getting informed by media outlets (TV, Print, Radio, internet ...) 2/3 of respondents from Serbia put this way in first place of methods to be informed, 74% of respondents from Albania and 71% of respondents from Kosovo thinks the same. The best way is to have a mix of different ways to get informed – as in table below.



When asked why citizens do not participate in citizens participation process respondents from Serbia in first place put “Lack on information how to engage in process” (52%), respondents from Kosovo (61%) and Albania (54%) put in first place “Lack of knowledge about people constitutional rights” as a reason to not get involved – this is confirmed in research with answers on awareness of their constitutional rights regarding citizens participation process. Although it is a mix of different reasons – as in table below.



Knowledge about referendum as a citizens participation process is highest in Serbia (87%), followed by Albania (78%) and Kosovo (50%)



There is large interest in attending training courses conducted by NGO`s on learning rights and ways of citizens participation process. All three countries have almost the same interest by respondents – Serbia 69%, Albania 71% and Kosovo 68%.

SUMMARY

All three countries have their own specifics when we look at development level, natural growth, prevailing faith of the population, but when we speak about the citizens participation these three countries are not so different. While in Serbia the residents easier recognize their constitutional rights, the situation in Albania and Kosovo can easily be changed in a few actions implemented in order to raise awareness of constitutional rights. Respondents recognize the importance of information flow in both directions, and by state institutions towards them and from themselves to the institutions. Citizen`s support and request open and transparent government and have a desire for more information about their constitutional rights.

With increasing awareness about citizen participation, there will be more demands by citizens of all three countries to solve the problem, and therefore more people who are willing to contact government representatives in order to solve these problems. Citizen participation is not only a way for citizens to solve problems, in this way the authorities itself have an insight into the problems that citizens face. Training for government representatives is also needed, particularly in Kosovo because there is the smallest percentage of problem solving. Population of all three countries have trust in the authorities and theirs desire to solve their problems even though the percentage of problem solving is low for all three countries.

There is a certain percentage of population that believes that citizen`s participation cannot solve their problems, and it is reflected mainly in the transfer of responsibilities to the authorities for its inability to solve the problem, but also in the lack of confidence of citizens in the possibility of solving the problems. Both positions, citizens and authorities, can be changed through increased awareness about the process of citizen participation and the methods of raising specific questions regarding problems they face, of course, those problems/issues which have a legal basis to be solved. One part of the citizens of all three countries said that they are not familiar with the process of citizen participation and has a desire to participate in trainings provided by NGO`s where they can learn ways to change the problems which are of importance for their local community or the country itself.