



KOSOVO - SERBIA
Policy
Advocacy
Group

KOSOVO - SERBIA

DIALOGUE

PRISHTINA-BELGRADE

TECHNICAL AGREEMENTS:

PERCEPTIONS ON THE GROUND

Prishtinë/Priština,
North Mitrovicë/a,
Belgrade

FEBRUARY 2020



Funded by
the European Union



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KOSOVO - SERBIA DIALOGUE PRISTINA – BELGRADE TECHNICAL DIALOGUE AGREEMENTS: PERCEPTIONS ON THE GROUND

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A/CSM	Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities
BCSP	Belgrade Centre for Security Policy
BFPE	Belgrade Forum for Political Excellence
BPRG	Balkans Policy Research Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
D4D	Democracy for Development
EMinS	European Movement in Serbia
EU	European Union
IBM	Integrated Boundary/ Border Management
KCSS	Kosovar Centre for Security Studies
KPCVA	Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency
KSPAG	Kosovo Serbia Policy Advocacy Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ROSU	Regional Operational Support Unit of Kosovo Police
YUCOM	Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kosovo-Serbia EU-Facilitated Dialogue has come a long way. Despite many difficulties, the process has resulted in fifteen agreements covering a number of fields that were aimed at helping the normalisation of relations between the two parties and improving the lives of their citizens. Nevertheless, many of these agreements face major challenges in implementation due to a lack of political will. Some of them, however, have been meaningfully implemented, providing concrete benefits to citizens.

The overall process of technical dialogue has been accompanied by a lack of transparency from both governments and this has contributed to the limited level of information among citizens about the process and its outcomes. The research conducted by the Kosovo Serbia Policy Advocacy Group (KSPAG) members, Kosovo Centre for Security Studies (KCSS), NGO Aktiv and Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP) explored the perceptions and personal experiences of Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Serbs and Serbian citizens regarding the technical dialogue.

The findings show a negative assessment of the overall implementation of all technical agreements from a clear majority of the groups targeted, with the respondents being sceptical about the benefits brought by the implementation of the agreements. Respondents' overall knowledge of the technical agreements is at an intermediate level. Older respondents (aged 31+) are generally more informed about the implementation of technical agreements than those in younger age groups. Most respondents believe that the dialogue so far has not been beneficial for citizens. Some believe that some things have been improved (freedom of movement, telecommunications, etc.), but they also see improvements as minor.

The recommendations emerging from the responses collected in this research relate to the necessity of stakeholders' additional efforts in sharing information on the outcomes of the EU facilitated technical dialogue and the implementation of its agreements, thus improving the transparency of the process and preventing the political manipulations during the process. The European Union, as the facilitator, should have a better mechanism for compelling Serbian and Kosovan governments to ensure a transparent and adequate implementation of technical agreements.

Revision of the non-implemented technical agreements is also recommended, along with the inclusion of experts, and the engagement of the local population in the process of implementation. The need for a greater role for the media in monitoring the process of implementation and in informing the public about the outcomes of the dialogue was recognised. In this way, a new narrative would emerge – focusing on ethnic Serbs' and Albanians' common problems and common interests.

The report begins with background information and continues with the research methodology and sampling procedures. It then presents an overview of respondents' understanding of the agreements reached within the technical dialogue and their perceptions on the future of the process. Research findings are summarised in the conclusion, and translated into concrete recommendations for current and future stakeholders engaged in the technical dialogue between Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The EU-facilitated dialogue, often referred to as the Brussels Dialogue between Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade was officially initiated at the beginning of 2011, following the introduction of UN General Assembly Resolution 64/298. Representatives of Kosovo and Serbia held official meetings between March 2011 and July 2012, where appointed negotiators on technical matters discussed the main issues of concern to citizens of both Kosovo and Serbia. Due to its nature and the issues it covered, the process was designated a technical dialogue, resulting in technical agreements.

From the summer of 2012, meetings were raised to a higher level of representation, where the prime ministers of Kosovo and Serbia participated in the dialogue, but negotiations also continued at a technical level. This was because of the need to deal with daily problems that ordinary people shared as consequences of undefined legal, economic and communicational relations between Belgrade and Prishtinë/Priština.

With the mediation of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, the two sides have managed

to negotiate matters of higher importance for the citizens of Kosovo and Serbia, and have started to implement the agreements signed. The dialogue itself gained in prominence with the introduction of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations in 2013, commonly known as the Brussels Agreement, and consequent integration of the four municipalities in the north of Kosovo into its system of governance.

After the Brussels Agreement, additional agreements were signed in favour of bridging difficulties that were still present. The implementation of agreements had frequent setbacks caused by political instabilities in Kosovo and Serbia but the challenges of the long pre-negotiation period and delays in dealing with unresolved disputes were partially eliminated. With the facilitation of the EU, the process of normalising relations between Kosovo and Serbia has been recognised by relevant international stakeholders as an important peacebuilding process and therefore significant attention has been given to the process of implementing the technical agreements.

During the dialogue, agreements on the following technical issues have been signed between Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade:

- *Freedom of Movement, 2 July 2011*
- *Civil Registry, 2 July 2011*
- *Cadastral, 2 July 2011*
- *Acceptance of University Diplomas, 2 July 2011*
- *Custom Stamps, 2 September 2011*
- *Integrated Border/Boundary Management, 23 February 2012*
- *Regional Representation and Cooperation, 24 February 2012*
- *Energy, 8 September 2013*
- *Telecommunications, 3 September 2013*
- *Vehicle Insurance, 25 June 2015*
- *Mitrovicë/a Bridge, 25 August 2015*
- *The First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations, 19 April 2013, covering the issues of:*
 - *Integration of the judiciary in four northern Kosovo municipalities*
 - *Integration of law enforcement in four northern Kosovo municipalities*
 - *Integration of members of the Civil Protection Corps into Kosovo institutions*
 - *Establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities*

The process of implementation of the above-listed agreements is still on-going, although with some minor setbacks. At the time when the research was conducted, the dialogue between Belgrade and Prishtinë/Priština had a period of stalemate, but implementation of the agreements did not stop.

2.2. KSPAG RESEARCH

Under the ‘Promoting and Communicating Benefits of the Kosovo-Serbia EU-Facilitated Dialogue’ project funded by the EU, members of the Kosovo – Serbia Policy Advocacy Group (KSPAG), Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS), NGO Aktiv and Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP), conducted research to explore citizens’ perceptions and their personal experiences with the technical dialogue and its outcomes.

The research was conducted among Serbs in Kosovo from five municipalities: North Mitrovica/ë, Gračanica/Graçanicë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Šilovo/Shillovë and Gorazdevac/Gorazhdevc; among Albanians in five other cities of Kosovo (Prishtinë/Priština, South Mitrovicë/a, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Peja/Peć, Prizren), and among both Serbs and Albanians in eight cities in Serbia (Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Novi Pazar, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Vranje, Bujanovac and Niš).

The report is based on the data collected during the period of July - October 2019. A total of 360 respondents took part in the research.

3. METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLES

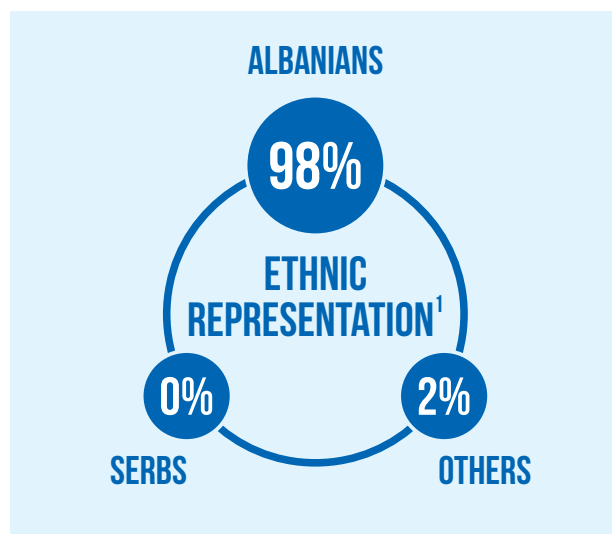
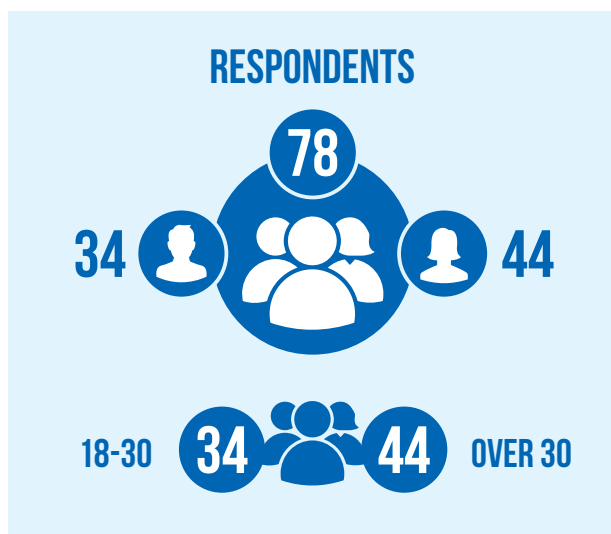
The three organisations applied similar research methodology allowing the comparison of the attitudes and perception of: (1) Albanians in Kosovo, (2) Serbs in Kosovo, and (3) Serbs and Albanians in Serbia. 36 focus groups, 11 interviews and two online surveys were organised in total. The data collection was guided by questionnaires, available in the appendices. The content of the questionnaires was the same for all three methods of data collection, and the three partner organisations applied similar questionnaires in data collection. Some adjustments were made to adapt the questionnaires to the specificities of local contexts and data collection methods.

An introduction was provided to respondents with information about the project, its aim, funders and the implementing consortium of organisations. Respondents were also informed on the use of research data and findings. The research target encompassed two age groups: 18–30 and 31–65 years old, and was attentive to gender representation.

3.1. FOCUS GROUPS

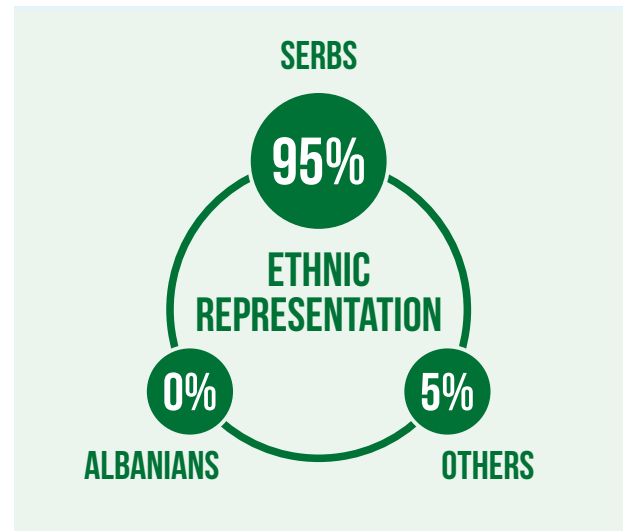
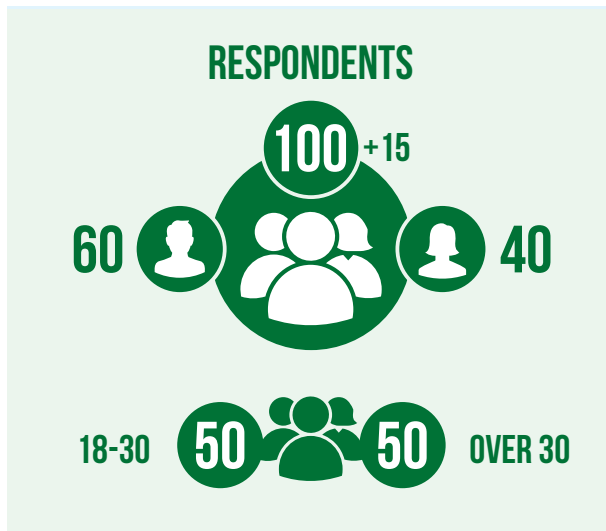
The three partner organisations used focus groups as the main research method. Citizens selected at random from different geographic areas participated in the focus groups, converging in two age groups. The first focus groups consisted of respondents aged 18 to 30, while the second groups brought together respondents aged 31 to 65. This division aimed to identify the differences in the standpoints between the two age groups. Respondents were selected taking into consideration gender, their level of education and their profession, and were offered the option of anonymity. Locations were chosen for the purposes of a wider geographical outreach, with a focus on the areas with distinct social, political and cultural features. Each focus group session lasted between sixty and ninety minutes.

KCSS conducted ten focus groups with Kosovo Albanians in five regions in Kosovo: Prishtinë/Priština, South Mitrovicë/a, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Peja/Peć and Prizren.



¹ Respondents were not explicitly asked about their ethnicity.

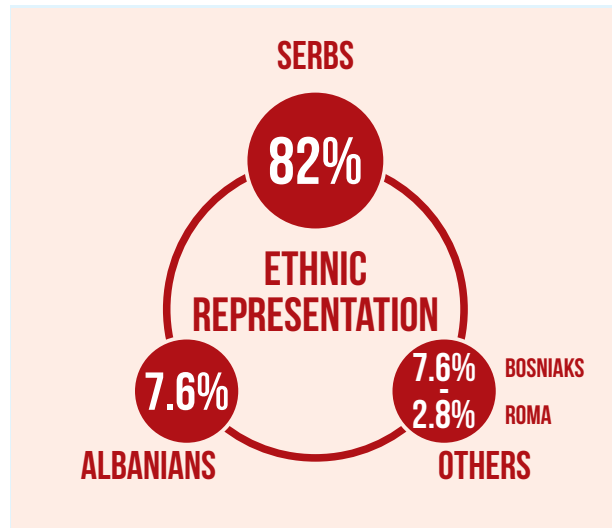
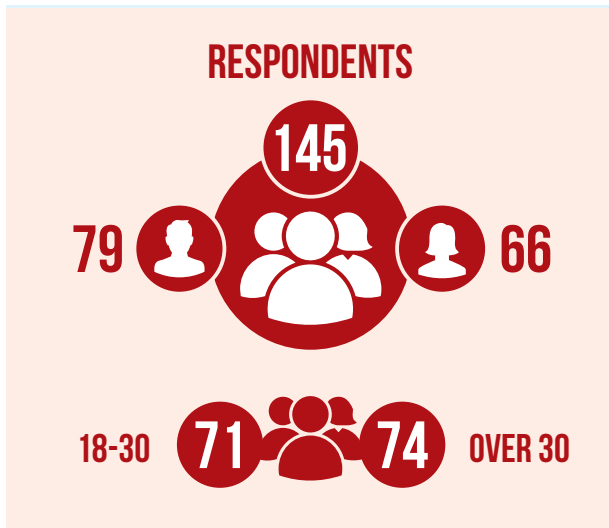
NGO AKTIV conducted ten focus groups with Kosovo Serbs in five regions in Kosovo: North Mitrovica/ë, Gračanica/Gračanicë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Šilovo/Shillovë and Goraždevac/Gorazhdevc.



BCSP conducted focus groups in eight towns throughout Serbia: Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Novi Pazar, Beograd, Novi Sad, Vranje, Bujanovac and Niš. The locations were selected so to secure representation of various geographical regions, national minorities – Bosniaks from Sandzak and Albanians from the Preshevo Valley – and towns with significant population of displaced Kosovo Serbs. A large number of the focus group respondents had their origin from, and personal ties with, Kosovo. Regarding their visits to

Kosovo, the respondents could be divided into several categories:

- Those who had never been to Kosovo;
- Those who had been to Kosovo only before 1999;
- Those who had been in Kosovo for tourism, education, activism, or just passed through; and
- Those who travelled to Kosovo frequently.



3.2. INTERVIEWS

Some interviews were also used for data collection.

- KCSS chose to conduct interviews to fill the gaps in research.
- NGO Aktiv conducted no interviews
- BCSP conducted interviews with experts, civil society activists and independent journalists. Special attention was given to select local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and businesses to get more in-depth understanding of attitudes to and experiences of cooperation with Kosovo.

3.3. ONLINE SURVEY

The online data collection was administered by KCSS and NGO Aktiv to further complement the research data collected through the focus groups and/or interviews. The online questionnaire consisted of closed and open questions, focusing on the most important technical agreements. Partner organisations administering this component agreed that it was essential to conduct the same survey with experts sharing a keen interest in these topics and with opinion makers who play a crucial role in shaping public opinion toward this process. Hence the survey targeted active members of CSOs, members of women's organisations, the business sector, representatives of local communities, media representatives, and members of youth organisations from different backgrounds. The age structure of the targeted group was not of any relevance to the survey itself, as the aim of the online questionnaire was to have an extensive insight into the views of individuals coming from specific social or economic groups. The online questionnaire was also anonymous, hence absence of data on participants' gender, age and ethnic background in this part of the research.

4. INITIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THE DIALOGUE PROCESS

Participants expressed diverse knowledge on the agreements reached during the EU facilitated dialogue. Below are the main reasons for respondents being informed and not.

4.1. MAIN WAYS THAT RESPONDENTS ARE INFORMED ABOUT THE TECHNICAL AGREEMENTS

For most *Kosovo Albanians*, the main reason they are informed on the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia is because the process has received tremendous media attention. Respondents said that they follow media reports and discussions regarding the dialogue: in local news, television debates and newspaper articles. Some of the Kosovo Albanian respondents said that they follow the news on Serbian television channels, to see what their media is showing.

The majority of *Kosovo Serb* community members believes that the basic information on the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia was covered in most of the Serbian-language media. Further, respondents from this community claimed that the areas of the implemented technical agreements are of crucial importance to the Kosovo Serb community.

Respondents from Serbia claimed that they follow the news closely and intentionally to learn about the EU facilitated dialogue. However, according to them, it is not always possible to get clear and accurate information. Some of the respondents received information from their friends and relatives who live in Kosovo, but their knowledge about the EU facilitated dialogue is usually partial (they know only about certain issues) and sometimes biased, based on generalisations of individual cases and experiences. Best informed are journalists and NGO activists, who actively search for information and get it outside of the mainstream media as a part of their jobs.

“Although I’m trying, none of this is entirely clear to me. Previously, I was able to figure out what was signed, and lately it’s been confusing even who signed what.” (Female, 31, Belgrade)

4.2. MAIN REASONS FOR RESPONDENTS NOT BEING INFORMED ABOUT THE TECHNICAL AGREEMENTS

Kosovo Albanian respondents consider the lack of transparency of the dialogue process as the main reason for their lack of information on the agreements. Kosovo Serbs also feel that their limited information on the technical agreements is a result of the lack of transparent briefing by the respective governments on the process of implementing the technical agreements, and lack of publically available (online) sources

on all technical agreements (in one place), especially in Serbian.

According to our research, people in Serbia lack trust in media and politicians to inform them properly about the EU facilitated dialogue. The great majority believe that the information is being withheld and intentionally hidden from citizens.

Especially among younger respondents, a significant number from all ethnic groups covered said that they had lost (or were losing) interest in the EU facilitated dialogue as it had “dragged on for too long”.

“The Brussels Dialogue ought to be ‘translated’ - from the language of Brussels into ordinary language; and people should be told what the dialogue means and what it will bring them.” (Female, 37, Niš)



4.3. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS

INTEGRATED BORDER / BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

The Integrated Border/ Boundary Management (IBM) Agreement was reached on 2 December 2011 and for the purpose of its implementation the initials were also set out in the Technical Protocol three months later, on 24 February 2012. The agreement establishes cooperation between both parties on the management of the crossing points under a balanced presence of police and customs staff. It allows the application of both parties' legal liabilities and responsibilities. As such, the agreement has had a successful implementation rate.

Most Kosovo Albanian respondents reported that they had heard on the news about the IBM agreement but they were not aware of whether the agreement was being implemented. Even those who travelled to Serbia were not sure, since they saw the joint buildings, but did not know if they were functional.

Kosovo Serb respondents had shared a variety of neutral personal experiences at the integrated border checkpoints. Many of them, however, criticised the frequent detailed and lengthy checks at the checkpoints, saying that there is a trend of selective treatment of people. A significant number identified a noticeable growth in discrimination against individuals who are in possession of personal documents issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate, but also those who have Serbian state documents, issued in Serbia.

Mention was also made of traffic jams becoming quite common at most of the checkpoints and that these are the fault of staff employed at the crossings. The latest problem of so-called “reciprocal measures” taken by Kosovo Customs on the matter of recognition of passports issued by Serbia (and their non-validity on the Kosovo side of checkpoints), was mentioned as an example of selective interpretation of Kosovo laws, which should not be the case in the future.

The majority of respondents from Serbia had heard of the IBM agreement, but most of those who travel to Kosovo shared their impression that crossing points are not integrated.

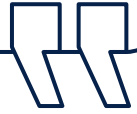
REGIONAL REPRESENTATION AND COOPERATION AGREEMENT

The Agreement on Regional Cooperation and Participation between Kosovo and Serbia was reached on 24 February 2012. It allows for Kosovo taking part in regional initiatives and organisations and representing itself under the usage of an asterisk e.g. “Kosovo*”, which implies that the “designation is without prejudice to the status quo and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/1999 and with the International Court of Justice Opinion on Kosovo’s declaration of independence.”

For Kosovo Albanian respondents, the agreement on regional representation and cooperation in regional initiatives dealing with trade, migration etc. has directly harmed Kosovo’s statehood. They said that this agreement was launched as a technical agreement within the EU-facilitated dialogue but that now it directly affects Kosovo’s statehood while Serbia continues to harm Kosovo’s membership of and participation in international initiatives and organisations while not implementing this agreement.

“This is the Agreement which has harmed Kosovo the most. It is so sad!”

(Male, 50, Peja/Peć)



Kosovo Serbs respondents unanimously said that they were not acquainted with the Agreement on Regional Representation and Cooperation, with a slight difference among a few of them who mentioned that Serbia has agreed not to interfere in Kosovo’s EU path, while Kosovo is to be represented at regional level with a footnote (‘Kosovo*’).

The vast majority of the **respondents from Serbia** have not heard about this Agreement by its name, however, more than half have heard of the asterisk (the footnote), although only a couple of them knew the content of the footnote. On the regional representation of Kosovo, the majority think that the asterisk is meaningless – in other words, the fact that Kosovo participates at regional fora means that Serbia has de facto accepted its statehood.

“This Agreement means recognition. The name means nothing to most citizens. The question is whether that state exists, whether it participates in international institutions - that is the essence.” (Male, 29, Kragujevac)



In contrast, a few participants believe that the asterisk protects the position of the Serbian Government.

“The asterisk is an important thing. It indicates that we didn’t recognise Kosovo; it is a matter of honour.” (Female, 57, Belgrade)



The second division of the participants is between those who think that Kosovo should be represented at regional fora, and those who disagree.

“In general, I do not agree that Kosovo has the right to be represented, but if it is going to make life easier for people then it should be, and if it must be, then it is OK to be so.” (Male, 20, Novi Sad)



“Kosovo should not participate. As a citizen of Serbia, I have a duty to respect the Constitution which says that Kosovo is part of Serbia.”

(Male, 29, Kragujevac)



On the other hand, for the Albanian community living in Serbia the first thing that comes to mind when this agreement is mentioned is that Serbia obstructs Kosovo's participation in international

organisations and initiatives. In their opinion, the Agreement does not contribute in any way to citizens' wellbeing.

“Although Serbia signed the agreement, it does not implement it. It obstructs its implementation.” (Male, 30+, Bujanovac)



FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

The Agreement on Freedom of Movement was reached on 2 July 2011 and its practical implementation began on 26 September 2011. It seeks to normalise the free movement of people between Kosovo and Serbia using each other's official documents, including driving licences and vehicle registration plates. The agreement allows residents of Kosovo and Serbia to move freely within their respective territories. It requires that the administrative boundary can be crossed using ID cards to avoid the use of passports, thus enabling the mobility of citizens without directly addressing Kosovo's status. An

additional agreement was reached on 10 August 2015 on the mutual recognition of car insurance.

Kosovo Albanians respondents are aware that they can travel to Serbia with their ID cards. A clear majority of them noted that before this agreement they could not travel to or through Serbia, which was quite harmful to them. They repeatedly highlighted that there is no problem at the individual level between people in Kosovo and Serbia. Some mentioned that they used this agreement to travel to Serbia to meet friends they used to have who now live there.

“Now we travel to Serbia freely. Last year when I went to Belgrade, I met my old friend Stefan who used to live in Prizren.” (Male, 35, Prizren)



In their opinion, it is the political elite and media that spread propaganda regarding the general situation. Nevertheless, respondents repeatedly claimed that this is a great agreement on paper, but that people still do not feel safe to travel to Serbia. When asked where this insecurity derives from, various incidents were mentioned that have harmed citizens' belief that they could travel without any problems.

A significant number of respondents said that they have travelled to Serbia thanks to this agreement. It was evident that trade, health issues, and cultural visits are key reasons for

Kosovo Albanians traveling to Serbia. To them, traveling to Serbia is now the same as to Montenegro or North Macedonia.

On the other hand, respondents had less experience of travelling to Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo. It was claimed that unlike the Kosovo Serb citizens who can move freely everywhere in Kosovo, for Kosovo Albanians it is almost impossible to visit the north of Kosovo as it is highly unsafe for them.

“It is safer to travel to Serbia than to the north of Kosovo since the Kosovo government lacks access to that part of the territory and the situation is very insecure.” (Male, 58, Gjilan/Gnjilane)



The approach of the European Union in this regard was criticised.

“The fact that Serbian citizens can move freely with their vehicle registration plates while Kosovan citizens have to change their registration plates when entering Serbia is highly unfair and shows how biased the EU is.”

(Female, 47, South Mitrovicë/a)



Many participants saw this agreement as undermining Kosovan identity. Participants in various municipalities found it problematic to be given an identity paper when crossing the border. To most of them, getting their “Serbian ID” written in Cyrillic on an A4 sheet of paper directly harms their national identity. Similarly, to some, this agreement is not a freedom of movement agreement since they cannot pass with their own state’s passport, as Serbia does not recognise their state.

According to *Kosovo Serb respondents* the implementation of the Agreement has been a huge step towards improving the freedom of movement. However, members of the Kosovo Serb community still feel isolated, due to the selective and sometimes discriminatory institutional treatment regarding the issuing of identity documents. In particular, respondents who reside south of the Ibër/Ibar river say that they have adapted to the new circumstances, but that they are still struggling with the fact that documents issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate aren’t recognised as valid and that they encounter barriers to obtaining Kosovo IDs. Many members of the Kosovo Serb community living in the so-called enclaves thus feel isolated and discriminated against by public institutions. Our research shows that 87.6% of the respondents have travelled no more to Serbia after the Agreement on Freedom of Movement was introduced.

Nevertheless, respondents regarded the Agreement on Freedom of Movement as one of the examples of relatively well implemented agreements, since it has - at least partially - regulated a very important dimension of the community’s life – the freedom to travel within and outside of Kosovo.

As noted by many respondents, the difficulties with the implementation of this agreement are its provisions for Kosovo citizens such as their inability to travel to Serbia with Kosovo-issued passports, the issuing of temporary documents by Serbia at boundary/border crossings as a means of documenting the non-recognition of Kosovo-issued documents, and the requirement to cover number plates.

Several respondents strongly criticised the staff working at border checkpoints between Kosovo and Serbia, due to their tendency to demand certain additional documents which are legally not required when crossing the border checkpoints.

Most Kosovo Serb respondents are acquainted with the regulations on number plates, since a clear majority have had the opportunity to cross the border between Kosovo and Serbia. In this regard, they responded positively to the regulatory measures brought about in the process of implementation, although listing numerous specific problems that they have encountered.

One of the main issues noted by many respondents was the unclear and sometimes complicated administrative procedures for obtaining Kosovo RKS number plates. There were several cases mentioned by the respondents where it wasn't possible to complete transfer from Serbia-issued or UNMIK-issued KS number plates to Kosovo ones. As stated by some respondents, this usually happens due to a lack of clarity in the law, but also the opportunistic attitude and individual interpretation of the law by public officials. Moreover, many complained about the high costs of preregistration procedures, as well as the high expenditures on certain tariffs imposed when crossing integrated border checkpoints.

Respondents from northern Kosovo brought up the unresolved situation with number plates issued by Serbia referencing Kosovan cities (KM for Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, PR for Prishtinë/Priština, GL for Gjilan/Gnjilane, PZ for Prizren, PE for Peja/ Peć, ĐA for Gjakovë/Đakovica and UR for Ferizaj/Uroševac), which are (informally) allowed to move only within the four northern municipalities. Respondents suggested that this grey zone, as they called it, should be addressed as soon as possible, since it only perpetuates the lack of freedom of movement for owners of vehicles with these number plates.

The reduction of costs for obtaining vehicle insurance, as well as their respective recognition between Kosovo and Serbia, was highly praised by the majority of the respondents (those who are in possession of a personal vehicle or have personal experience of the issue). Some respondents pointed out that the costs for obtaining insurance for RKS-registered vehicles are higher than for KS-registered vehicles, and that this should be better regulated, with a reduction of costs.

Some of the respondents mentioned the introduction of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding vehicle insurance as an adequate move towards a more dynamic and free movement in transportation. It was

also noted not only as a regulation of vehicle insurance, but also as an overall approach towards advancing the freedom of movement between Kosovo and Serbia.

Although most respondents from Serbia have heard of the Agreement on the Freedom of Movement, they are not familiar with its content. Respondents are divided on whether freedom of movement in Kosovo, in Serbia, and between Kosovo and Serbia, exists. Some of them – those who had travelled to Kosovo – spoke about personal experiences, while others talked about what they had heard from people they know, or from the media.

Some of the respondents believe that freedom of movement is fully respected. For example, one of the respondents from Kragujevac said that his neighbour travelled to Kosovo by car with Serbian number plates – both to Serbian majority municipalities and to Prishtinë/Priština. This respondent said that his neighbour did not experience any problems. Many other respondents from almost all focus groups listed similar examples. The great majority of those who had travelled to Kosovo said that they crossed the border with their ID cards, and without any problems.

However, some of the respondents mentioned certain problems with freedom of movement – several of them said that they had heard that buses from Serbia are not always allowed to enter Kosovan territory – sometimes without any apparent reason; some mentioned that vehicles with Serbian number plates need police escort within Kosovo territory, to guarantee their security.

“I have friends, nationalists, who visit Serbian monasteries in Kosovo. They say they have had negative experiences and that their bus was stoned.” (Male, 22, Novi Sad)



Some of the respondents also mentioned the fact that Serbian government officials need permission to enter Kosovo – which they perceive as a violation of freedom of movement. One respondent, who is originally from Kosovo

but lives in Belgrade, said that she needed two ID cards – one Serbian and one Kosovan – to cross the border, because her Serbian ID card states Kosovo as her place of residence.

“I show two ID cards at two crossings: Serbian to Serbs, and Kosovan to Kosovo.” (Female, 45, Belgrade)



It is indicative that several participants pointed out that only Serbs have problems with freedom of movement in Kosovo, while Kosovo citizens move freely in Serbia. Only one participant (from Kragujevac) mentioned the example of a lorry driver from Kosovo who had Kosovo documents, including a driving licence, and who was stopped by the police in south Serbia and eventually had to pay a fine.

Serbia to go to Kosovo then vice versa.

Several respondents of Albanian ethnicity pointed out that Kosovo Albanians are afraid to come to Serbia, and that even they themselves – Albanians from the Preshevo Valley – are reluctant to speak Albanian in Serbian-majority towns. Consequently, they see their own freedom of movement within Serbia as limited.

On the other hand, an Albanian respondent from the focus group in Bujanovac said that he had family in Kosovo and that they did not come to visit in Serbia any more, since it was too complicated – Kosovo citizens have to change car plates at the border, the lines at the crossing point are much longer than in the other direction, they have to fill out forms, etc. He added that it was much easier for citizens of

Interviewees were well informed about freedom of movement issues, particularly due to frequent travel and professional contacts with people from Kosovo. They all agree that this is one of the most important issues because it helps significantly with bringing people closer and stimulates the economy. They were also better informed about the difficulties in implementation.

“When the agreement was reached, it meant a lot to the people from here (south Serbia): many of them had left for Prishtinë/Priština to work or study: normal movement of people on both sides is therefore very important. It is more important for the Albanians; Serbs from Kosovo also benefit from it but they are fewer in numbers.” (Journalist, Male, Vranje)



“I frequently travelled to Kosovo by car and never had a single problem. However, I did hear about the issues with entry into Serbia and annulment of Kosovo border stamps in Serbian passports. I also know that people from Kosovo sometimes have issues when transiting through Serbia.”

(Journalist, Male, Niš)



“I have seen Albanians with Kosovo documents on a bus to Sarajevo; I have witnessed on several occasions the issues they had. Sometimes the whole bus is kept at the border for at least an hour, after the regular procedure has been completed. They (border police) take people out and ask them questions on a regular basis. So I guess the agreement is being implemented, in the sense that they are allowed to continue their journey, yet they and all the other people on the bus are suffering from this bad treatment.”

(CSO activist, female, Novi Pazar)



When they were asked whether the Agreement on Freedom of Movement benefits citizens, the majority replied that the situation is more or less the same as before the Agreement. Only a couple of respondents, from Vranje and Bujanovac,

said that before the Agreement they had to pay 20 EUR for vehicle insurance (for seven days) when they went to Kosovo, while now they do not have to pay it. A respondent from Belgrade commented on freedom of movement in general:

“Ordinary people have bureaucratic problems, while things that should not cross the border - drugs, smuggled goods, etc. - are moving freely.”

(Male, 34, Belgrade)



AGREEMENT ON THE REVITALISATION OF THE MITROVICĚ/A BRIDGE

The agreement on the revitalisation of the Mitrovicë/a Bridge was reached in August 2015. The “main bridge” in Mitrovicë/a has been closed for vehicles and opened for pedestrians only. There is another bridge in Mitrovicë/a open for vehicles, and the main bridge functions primarily as a symbolic division between the southern part of the city, inhabited by Albanians, and the northern part with a Serb majority.

The agreement on the revitalisation of the Mitrovicë/a Bridge foresees the bridge opening to all traffic, with the financial assistance of the EU. To date, the bridge has not been opened for cars and other vehicles.

The overall sentiment among the Kosovo Albanian respondents is that the bridge should be functional, not blocked as it is for the moment. Its revitalisation is going to happen quite soon: there might be a delay but there is no going back.

“Bridges serve to connect people but unfortunately the one in Mitrovicë/a is being used to keep them apart.” (Male, 26, Mitrovicë/a)



Likewise, they said that the wall and the park that were built on the bridge were highly unnecessary. Also mentioned was this agreement

being an internal problem of Kosovo, and that it should therefore not be discussed in Brussels. A participant in Mitrovicë/a noted that:

“While UNMIK was still in Mitrovicë/a, it opened the bridge and tested whether there would be any incidents but there were none; however, it is of some obscure interests for it to be closed.” (Male, 35+, Mitrovicë/a)



When asked whether it would affect the life of citizens, young respondents in Prishtinë/Priština said that this would be only a formality and would not affect the life of citizens in Kosovo,

since “we have already lost the North. There is no Albanian language in that part, you see only Serbia’s flag”. Besides, a participant noted that:

“I find it difficult to understand that we see that we have lost that part of our country and we are still okay with it: we do not protest or ask for accountability from our government: we are quite passive.” (Male, 50, Prishtinë/Priština)



On the other hand, to young Kosovo Albanian respondents from South Mitrovicë/a the revitalisation of this bridge would directly impact their everyday life. They added that such revitalisation would even make the traffic easier, since that is the main bridge and its closure causes many traffic problems as there is only one main road in Mitrovicë/a for the moment. To older participants in South Mitrovicë/a, the stable situation in North Mitrovicë/a is temporary and subject to change at any moment.

The opinion of the Kosovo Serb respondents on the revitalisation of the Mitrovicë/a Bridge is limited to the local population as the question was only posed during the two focus groups held in North Mitrovicë/a and to interviewees in the online questionnaire.

The large majority of young Kosovo Serb respondents said that the main bridge in Mitrovicë/a should be opened for traffic and that it would eventually, under special circumstances such as enhanced security control over the bridge and its surroundings, bring a more stable and secure multi-ethnicity to this ethnically divided city.

On the other hand, the older Kosovo Serb respondents were unanimously in opposition to the opening of the Main Bridge for traffic. Members of this group pointed out that if the bridge was to be opened soon, without any preparatory period, it would only endanger the local Serb population living in North Mitrovicë/a. They noted that to the Kosovo Serb community the Main Bridge is still a significant

symbol of their resistance (during and after the war). Even if the bridge was opened with high security protection, older Kosovo Serb respondents were not convinced of a positive outcome. Adding to this argument, respondents said that the existence of periodic low-level inter-ethnic conflicts proves that communities are still not ready for such a big step towards reconciliation, even if it is symbolic.

Kosovo Serbs' responses to the online questionnaire indicate polarised standpoints regarding the opening of the Main Mitrovicë/a Bridge for traffic. Ten out of fifteen respondents (67%) listed their reasons for not being in favour of the opening of the Bridge for traffic as above. Contrary to these views were the answers of 5 respondents (33%), who stressed the fact that the bridge already functions as a pedestrian zone and that a shift towards traffic wouldn't bring drastic changes, especially when it comes to overall security in the divided city. Some argued that the presence of international forces on and around the bridge would be required in the beginning of adapting the bridge to its new/ old role.

The great majority of the respondents from Serbia have heard of the Mitrovicë/a Bridge. Some of the first things they associate with the bridge are "riots", "ethnic division", "barricades", "KFOR", "Berlin wall", "cheaper shopping in the southern part", "border", "17 March 2004". However, only a few of them were aware that the Mitrovicë/a Bridge was one of the topics in the EU facilitated dialogue. Roughly one half of the respondents did not know whether the bridge was open for all traffic or not. Those who travel to Kosovo regularly are familiar with the state of the Bridge. Interestingly, although most first associations with the Mitrovicë/a Bridge were negative and indicative of a firm ethnic division, the majority of participants pointed out that pedestrians cross the bridge normally, and go to the southern part of the town without fear. A couple of respondents mentioned that Serbs are afraid to speak Serbian in the southern part of Mitrovicë/a. One of the respondents from Belgrade, who is originally from Kosovo and visits Kosovo often, said:

"I'm more afraid when I come back from the south crossing the bridge that some Serbs will see me and attack me for coming back from that side."

(Female, 45, Belgrade)



It is important to note that the respondents who are ethnic Serbs are divided regarding the question of whether the Mitrovicë/a Bridge should be open for all traffic, as stipulated by the agreement. Some of them think that the bridge

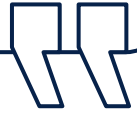
should be open, and see it as an indispensable part of the normalisation of relations. In the second group are those who are concerned with the security of Kosovo Serbs if the bridge is open.

"I agree to a certain extent [that the bridge should be open for all traffic], but it is too burdened with pragmatic things; first, it is necessary to assess if it is safe to do so and then to open it." (Female, 20, Belgrade)



2 The date of the violent riots in Kosovo during which Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs clashed at the Ibër/Ibar Bridge.

“In principle, it would be good if [the bridge] was open, but it depends on the situation and conditions, if it would start problems then maybe we should first solve the problems and then open the bridge.” (Male, 38, Novi Sad).



On the other hand, respondents of Albanian and Bosniak ethnicity all agree that the Mitrovicë/a Bridge must be open for all traffic and see that as a necessary part of freedom of movement.

CUSTOM STAMPS AGREEMENT

The Agreement on Custom Stamps aiming to facilitate the normal exchange of goods between Kosovo and Serbia was reached on 2 September 2011 and its implementation began on 16 September 2011. Kosovo stamps and all the accompanying documentation with the inscription “Kosovo Customs” were agreed as acceptable.

Kosovo Albanian respondents in general were highly sceptical regarding the impact of the technical agreements on trade, business and employment. To them, the agreements are known only by the people who are directly affected by them. Agreements regarding trade and business are known only by people who work in business while the average citizen lacks information on such agreements. They believe that trade and business work independently from politics, and people who work in business overcome any current barriers and choose to cooperate for profit.

To a great number of Kosovo Albanian respondents, these agreements were not mutually beneficial to both states. Many said that the trade agreements have never been implemented by Serbia. Therefore, Kosovo has only lost through the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) since it was 90% in favour of Serbia, as Kosovo was Serbia’s main export destination. During 2018, the Kosovan Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj increased the tax on Serbian products from 10% to 100%.

Most participants expressed their opinion on how this tax affected agreements on trade. The 100% tax on Serbian products has also affected the agreement in line with CEFTA. Meanwhile, Serbian products are still on the Kosovan market, entering illegally through the north of Kosovo.

In contrast, to some, the agreements on trade were beneficial since they offered a variety of products on the market, offering choice to customers. While most perceived the tax as necessary and that many people are buying domestic products, it has definitely affected the less wealthy sectors, who would rather make choices about a product based on price rather than on its place of origin. It should be noted that the majority of respondents mentioned that an agreement of reciprocity would be better since it would be mutual to both sides.

The majority of **Kosovo Serb respondents** said that they are not familiar with the Agreement on Custom Stamps and its actual content. Some of the participants said that they did not know that Kosovo and Serbia had mutual recognition of custom stamps as a way of facilitating trade. Only a few of the respondents were informed about the Agreements on Revenue Collection. One of the participants speculated that the collected customs revenues from the Jarinjë/Jarinje and Brnjak/Bërnjak border checkpoints were transferred to the Fund for Development of Northern Kosovo. The discussion about these agreements was frequently directed at criticising the 100% tariffs recently imposed.

Although the Development Fund for Northern Kosovo was established as an instrument of economic development for the four northern municipalities, neither participants of the focus group organised in North Mitrovicë/a, nor those

who took part south of the Ibar/Ibër, confirmed their knowledge of the existence of the Fund itself. A considerable number of respondents criticised the Fund's lack of transparency, concluding that the fact that they were not in possession of any information regarding the functioning of this institution is sufficient proof of the deficient and non-transparent activities of the Fund. When asked their opinion about the trade agreements between Kosovo and Serbia,

the first association of the great majority of respondents from Serbia was the 100 percent import tariffs for goods from Serbia introduced by the Kosovo government. Since then, the Serbian media discourse on Kosovo has been heavily dominated by the news about the alleged humanitarian crisis in its northern part caused by the tariffs. One of the participants, who works as a journalist, shared her experience of reporting on the situation in northern Kosovo:

“I entered a grocery store, and they asked me if they should remove the goods from the shelves. I said, no, and asked why they would do that; they told me that they were usually asked to do so when journalists come, so the camera records empty shelves.” (Female, 28, Kragujevac)



As for the period before the tariffs, the majority of the respondents believe that trade between Serbia and Kosovo was well developed and beneficial for both sides. Some of the respondents said that they had not heard anything about the trade before the news about tariffs. A couple of participants pointed out that the fact that we talk about import and export implies that there are two states, which is, as they see it, contradictory to the official position of the Serbian government.

In regard to the most recent period – after the introduction of tariffs – the respondents are

divided as to whether the tariffs affected the flow of goods or not. Some participants from Novi Pazar pointed out that the tariffs caused the most damage to entrepreneurs from the Sandzak region who provide shipping between Kosovo and Serbia. Several respondents made general statements about the tariffs harming trade. However, the majority of respondents expressed the belief that the trade continued – but through illegal channels. The majority also believes that news about the humanitarian crisis in northern Kosovo is exaggerated and propagandistic.

“Tariffs are imposed, which was a bad move by the [Kosovo] government, but they did not affect the supply to [northern] municipalities: everything is still well supplied, illegal crossings are being used and Serbs in Kosovo are not harmed by the tariffs. The impact is zero and it is purely a political move.”

(Male, 21, Belgrade)



“I have a friend who is a shop owner [in northern Kosovo], I called him right away to ask. He said: don't be foolish [...], you act like you've never lived here: my shop is full of everything.” (Female, 45, Belgrade)



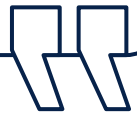
“Everything we see in the media has nothing to do with reality. For example, this story about tariffs is fabricated. They [the tariffs] exist, but it’s not a humanitarian crisis.” (Male, 29, Vranje)



Interviewees believe that free trade and economic cooperation are crucial for the normalisation of relations and that it can spill over into other

sectors. It is of particular importance for the regions in proximity to Kosovo.

“Cooperation between the two Chambers of Commerce went far ahead of other forms of cooperation. There is a large number of entrepreneurs who attend business fairs: there was a small one in Bujanovac that hosted some local producers from Kosovo as well. This type of cooperation has also opened doors toward Albania for the Serbian economy, which has never been the case before. Some companies even came together and jointly presented at a fair in Istanbul.” (Journalist, Male, Vranje)



“In addition to my regular work, I also own a small company that produces rakija (plum brandy) and we cooperate very well with Kosovo: we even sell our product over there and we have participated in several fairs. There has never been an issue, except that it is difficult to connect with other producers in Kosovo.” (Activist, Male, Kraljevo)



CIVIL REGISTRY BOOKS

The Agreement on Civil Registry Books was reached in Brussels on 2 July 2011 and has been fully implemented. Serbia returned to Kosovo 12,036 scanned copies of EULEX-certified civil registry books that were obtained during wartime. Books containing data on births, marriages and deaths of Kosovo citizens have been scanned, certified and returned to Kosovo under the Civil Status Registry Data Processing Process.

The great majority of *Kosovo Albanian respondents* were informed about the Agreement on Civil Registry Books. To them, it has made it easier for Serbian citizens to obtain their Kosovan documents. However, they highlighted that very few Serbs in Kosovo choose to obtain Kosovan documents, leading to a situation where this agreement has not been that effective.

Although questions about the agreement on Civil Registry Books were not included during the NGO AKTIV research, *Kosovo Serb respondents* mentioned this agreement due to

its importance for the Kosovo Serb community and shared their views on this matter. Most of the participants said that they are not informed about the process of implementation, but that they hope it will be implemented soon, due to its importance for this community's everyday life.

The great majority of the *respondents from Serbia* have either never heard of the Agreement on Civil Registry Books, or have only heard of it, without having knowledge about its contents. Those who have heard of the agreement do not

think that it has benefited citizens. Interestingly, although the Agreement on Civil Registry Books is usually promoted as an example of successful implementation, our only respondent who was directly affected by it has an extremely negative experience. He and his wife are originally from Kosovo, and they currently live in Novi Sad. His wife cannot get a copy of her birth certificate – they tried both in Serbia (Kragujevac) and in Kosovo (Klina), but without any success. The negative consequences of this affect their child too.

“I cannot register my wife at the address where we live – we cannot get her birth certificate. She has a Kosovo ID card. When she gets sick, she has problems at the hospital: the police have to come to identify her. They [the hospital staff] did not want to deliver our baby until they established my wife's identity; now I can't register my own child at our home address. I turned for help to some NGOs; they took us to Kragujevac, to Klina [to try to find his wife's birth certificate]... Now, our child does not have health insurance. If they think that Kosovo is a part of Serbia, then they must give us the documents.”

(Male, 24, Novi Sad)



Most interviewees - and particularly those who live in the cities (Kragujevac, Niš) where Civil Registry Books were transferred after the Kosovo war - have heard of the Agreement. One interlocutor from Kragujevac works in an organisation that helps Roma people obtain personal IDs and with their reintegration process after readmission from the EU countries, so he had extensive experience about the issues people face.

A second interviewee, a civil activist also from Kragujevac who works in the city administration unit that handles these files, was the only one who was aware of the level of implementation of the Agreement because she was personally involved in copying the books.

CADASTRAL REGISTERS

The agreement on cadastral registers was reached on 2 July 2011. It foresees the establishment of a reliable cadastre in Kosovo through the return of the scanned copies of Kosovo's pre-1999 cadastral records from Serbia, and the establishment of a technical agency that would identify the existing gaps in the Kosovo Cadastre. Both parties have continuously delayed the implementation of this agreement.

Initially the Kosovo side delayed the adoption of the law on the new technical agency, the Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency (KPCVA) for several years, while a decision of the Constitutional Court of Serbia ruled that the cadastral agreement is inconsistent with its Constitution.

Many *Kosovo Albanian respondents*, mostly over 35 years old, were informed about the agreement on cadastral registration. They said how important this agreement is to the people who worked before the war. However, they noted that they were not aware whether the agreement was being implemented and said that they doubted that Serbia would give back all the cadastral registry books.

Kosovo Serb respondents were not asked about this agreement.

This agreement is generally unknown to all the *respondents from Serbia*. Only a small minority have heard of it, but no-one is familiar with its content or the level of implementation.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF UNIVERSITY DIPLOMAS

The agreement on mutual recognition of university diplomas was reached on 2 July 2011. Kosovo and Serbia had agreed on an international diploma certification mechanism to be carried out by the European Association of Universities (AEU). However, the agreement has not been fully implemented. As a result, Albanian citizens in Serbia (mainly in the Preshevo Valley) who are educated in Kosovo cannot be employed or continue their education in Serbia. A little better is the recognition of Serbian diplomas in Kosovo, though their number remains quite symbolic.

Kosovo Albanian respondents mentioned the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Diplomas

as a key agreement which Serbia does not implement, while Kosovo recognises Serbia's diplomas. Many respondents referred to this agreement as an example that shows that the technical dialogue has not been effective at all.

Most of the *Kosovo Serb respondents* did not have an insight into the details of the Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Diplomas. The young people in all the targeted municipalities were relatively well informed about verifying diplomas obtained at the University of Prishtinë/Priština in North Mitrovicë/a in the Kosovo educational system. Problems were raised regarding the nostrification and recognition of diplomas obtained at universities in Serbia, where the respondents mentioned that the administrative process is complicated and slow.

Respondents commented that the process of verifying diplomas should be accelerated, since numerous young Kosovo Serbs would be willing to be employed by Kosovo institutions. In this way, younger generations would have the opportunity to have stable incomes, which would allow them to stay and live in Kosovo.

Roughly half of all the respondents from Serbia had heard of this Agreement. Among them, some thought that it was implemented, while others knew that it was not. A great number of participants – Serbs and Bosniaks – thought that it was implemented since Serbia recognises the diplomas from universities in Kosovo that function as a part of the Serbian system. When it was explained that the Agreement envisages recognition of diplomas from all the universities in Kosovo, including those belonging to the Kosovo system – and vice versa – the majority agreed that it should be implemented, saying that it would significantly improve people's lives. Some of the respondents expressed their doubts about the quality of education in Kosovo. One of them said:

“It is questionable how the schools are down there, in Priština. Why would we let him [a doctor] treat people here?” (Male, 30s, Vranje)



Nonetheless, the prevailing opinion among the respondents is that diplomas should be mutually recognised, provided that they are from officially accredited universities.

Unlike Serbs and Bosniaks, Albanians from the Preshevo valley are well aware of the fact that the

Agreement on Mutual Acceptance of Diplomas has not been implemented, since they are the part of the population that suffers the most from its non-implementation. The majority of the Albanian ethnicity respondents study or have studied at universities in Kosovo. One of them said:

“I tried to nostrify my diploma in 2013 and 2014. Now I’m going through the same procedure again. You can start the procedure – but you never get an answer.” (Male, 20-30s, Bujanovac)



All ethnic Albanian respondents in Serbia agree that Albanians in Serbia are not well integrated into state institutions – police, judiciary, hospitals, or universities. As pointed out by a number of respondents, there are virtually no Albanians in high-ranking positions at these

institutions. Moreover, respondents of Albanian ethnicity believe that Kosovo Serbs are better integrated into the Kosovo system and that their rights are better protected than the rights of the Albanian minority in Serbia.

“The Serb minority in Kosovo is more integrated and more respected by the authorities, than Albanians in Serbia. There are not enough Albanian judges, police officers in senior positions – given the size of the Albanian population in Bujanovac.” (Male, 20s, Bujanovac)



Most of the interviewees were aware of the agreement, yet only those living in the regions affected by it were informed about the implementation.

“Diplomas are a huge issue and were even before the agreements were reached. Ever since 2002 there have been attempts to resolve the issue yet it has never been resolved. Albanians do not have alternatives to studying in Priština/Prishtinë, Tirana, or North Macedonia. If they opt for Priština/Prishtinë they cannot return and work in Bujanovac because their diplomas will say they were issued by the Republic of Kosovo.”

(Journalist, Male, Vranje)



ENERGY AGREEMENT

The Energy Agreement was signed on 8 September 2013 and it foresees the establishment of cooperation between transmission system operators and energy regulatory authorities. The agreement reaffirms the commitment of both parties to meet the obligations stemming from the Energy Community Treaty, the EU energy acquis. In accordance with the opening up of the energy market, the agreement foresees the opening of a new company to supply energy to the northern municipalities in Kosovo, abiding by Kosovan laws.

Most *Kosovo Albanian respondents* have heard of the Agreement on Energy. However, the vast majority of them said that they only recognised its name but they did not know what it meant or how it affected Kosovo and its citizens. A small number of respondents were more informed. It should be noted that respondents older than 35 were more informed regarding this agreement than younger ones. They said that it was a highly important agreement to Kosovo but that Serbia was blocking its implementation.

“By this, Kosovo is losing millions of euros every year and this does great harm to Kosovo’s budget. This is one of the most important agreements, since Kosovo buys from Albania and it cannot buy from Hungary; the energy corporation is not independent as it should be. We still do not have an independent domain”. (Male, Prizren, 30s).



Related to this, another respondent noted that Kosovo still does not have control over its air space, while Kosovars are listed only as residents not as citizens. It was also mentioned that Kosovan citizens have been paying for the electricity bills of Kosovan Serbs in the north of Kosovo.

All the *Kosovo Serb respondents* had a lack of information regarding the content and the implementation process of the Agreement on Energy.

The majority of respondents from Serbia had not heard of the Agreement on Energy. Some of them – in almost all focus groups – wrongly associated this agreement with the regulation of ownership and management of the Gazivoda Lake and Trepça/Trepča Mine. None of the respondents was familiar with the contents of this agreement. It should be noted that in almost all focus groups some of the respondents pointed out that people living in Kosovo (both Serbs and Albanians) do not pay electricity bills,

and that citizens of Serbia indirectly bear the costs of their electricity consumption.

As for the interviewees, most of them had heard about the Agreement, yet none of them could spell out what exactly had been agreed upon.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT

Telecommunications was one of the topics discussed throughout the technical dialogue, and the final agreement was reached on 8 September 2013, with the signing of the action plan for the implementation of the Telecommunications Agreement. The agreement provided Kosovo with its own telecommunication code in line with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) standards, and enabled a ban on illegal telecommunication companies operating in Kosovo. It permitted the opening of a new mobile company for the north of Kosovo

and provided a guarantee for the operation of the Serbian subsidiary company for fixed telecommunication services in the North – NewCo – both in accordance with Kosovo’s legal framework. The agreement encourages the process of additional agreements on interconnection, roaming and postal services. It foresees the reduction of local charges for citizens of both sides.

All *Kosovo Albanian respondents* were informed regarding the agreement on telecommunications. To them, this is the only agreement that has been fully implemented and the one that has most affected their everyday life.

One of the participants articulated his concern:

“This agreement is not being fully implemented since the code +383 does not properly work outside of Kosovo. It is not such a sustainable agreement as it is believed to be.” (Male, 32, Peja/Peć)



Observations from both focus groups and the online questionnaire were consistent in showing discontent among *Kosovo Serb respondents* about the implementation of the Agreement on Telecommunications. Respondents’ criticism was mostly aimed at the functioning of the daughter company of Serbian national telecommunication company MTS d.o.o., which was established as part of the Agreement. A sizeable number of respondents complained about the fact that MTS d.o.o costs are quite high, especially when compared to the poor quality of service provided by this company.

What upset Kosovo Serb respondents the most was the fact that MTS d.o.o. does not have signal coverage throughout Kosovo, but only in areas inhabited by members of the Kosovo Serb community. Inconvenience arising from this fact has decisively influenced many of the participants, specifically those who live south of the Ibër/Ibar River, to change their mobile operator. Respondents noted that the complicated system of contacting users of other Kosovo mobile operators can be a great inconvenience. Even though the MTS d.o.o. network was established in some of the settlements south of the Ibër/

Ibar river as a consequence of the introduction of the Agreement, the services provided afterwards were considered poor. Furthermore, respondents objected to the MTS d.o.o. policy requiring customers to have Kosovo-issued IDs in order to become a user of their services.

For the reasons above, all respondents had negative opinions of the work of MTS d.o.o. and thus of the Agreement on Telecommunications.

Some of the respondents from Serbia had heard about the Agreement on Telecommunications, and the majority had heard that Kosovo now had its own country code – which is a part of the Agreement. Some respondents who travel to Kosovo, and those who have relatives and friends there, said that Serbian mobile numbers still function in areas with a Serb majority, while others mentioned that when they travelled to Kosovo, they were either in roaming or did not have signal at all. Meanwhile, Albanians from the Preshevo valley are mostly satisfied with this Agreement and with its level of implementation – many identified that it had facilitated their mobile communications with relatives and friends in Kosovo.

“Before the agreement we couldn’t text people in Kosovo. Now everything functions normally.” (Male, 30s, Bujanovac)



The interviewees, although aware of the agreement on telecommunications, are not certain as to how it is supposed to work and what is regulated.

“I do not know any details of the agreement, except for the new code for Kosovo and that one can make calls there, because I do often. However, I can call people in Priština via mobile phone yet I can’t call anyone in Uroševac via mobile phone and I don’t know why that is.” (Activist, female, Novi Pazar)



OPENING OF LIAISON OFFICES

To advance relations between the two countries, and facilitate communication and permanent representation, with a focus on implementing the EU facilitated technical dialogue agreements and administering official visits, Kosovo and Serbia agreed to appoint a liaison officer with functional offices within EU delegation facilities in both countries. The exchange of Liaison Officers took place on 31 May 2013 and the parties agreed on the provisions that would apply to the Liaison Officer and their staff.

A clear majority of young *Kosovo Albanian respondents* were not informed that Kosovo has a liaison office in Belgrade and that Serbia has a liaison office in Kosovo. Furthermore, they said that it was bad that they were not informed about such offices, and had various questions concerning the use of Kosovo’s name, flag and other symbols in this office. There was a low number of respondents who said that they were informed regarding the existence of such offices. Still, they were sceptical about the power and influence that Kosovo’s liaison office in Belgrade has. This was an instance where the lack of transparency was mentioned again since participants noted that they do not know if this office is still functioning.

Without exception, *the Kosovo Serb respondents* said that they were not aware of the work of Liaison Offices in Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade.

A very small minority of the respondents from Serbia have heard about the Liaison Officers. Even those who have heard do not know the purpose or competences of the Liaison Officers. Four respondents – from Novi Pazar, Belgrade, Niš and Vranje – said that they see Liaison Officers as some sort of replacement for ambassadors, since Serbia and Kosovo do not have official diplomatic relations. Most respondents of Albanian ethnicity are familiar with the Liaison Officers, but in general they say that these officers should be called Ambassadors. Only one respondent (from Novi Pazar, 30+ years old group) knew the name of the Serbian Liaison Officer. Virtually all the respondents think that this institution does not contribute to the wellbeing of citizens in any way.

JUSTICE AND POLICE INTEGRATION

The Agreement on the principles governing the normalisation of relations, known as the Brussels Agreement, signed initially in 2013, foresees among other things the integration of the police (arrangements signed in 2013) and judiciary (arrangements signed in 2015), operating in the north of Kosovo, with additional arrangements on these issues signed in 2013 by Kosovo institutions and working under their legal framework. This and subsequent agreements on police and justice enabled the establishment of a unitary police and justice systems in the north of Kosovo and the integration of Serbian personnel into state-run justice institutions in Kosovo. Under the justice agreement, a basic

court and a prosecutor's office for the seven municipalities of the Mitrovicë/a region were established, as defined in the Law on Courts of the Republic of Kosovo.

The vast majority of *Kosovo Albanian respondents* were well informed about the agreements on justice and police integration. They made a direct reference to the dissolution of the Serbian parallel structures in northern Kosovo. Respondents over 35 were better informed about this agreement. However, it should be noted that they were not fully positive, since they were sceptical as to whether such structures can in good conscience claim to feel part of the Kosovan justice system and the Kosovo government.

The integration of the police was welcomed rather neutrally among the local population of northern Kosovo, after a long period when a security vacuum existed in this part of Kosovo. As a large majority of *Kosovo Serb respondents* said, the process of integration of the police in the North was initially successful, although there were negative opinions of the engagement and performance of the officers. Feedback from both focus groups in North Mitrovicë/a showed that there is a widespread lack of trust in the members of Kosovo Police, and a belief that they do not contribute to public safety.

Respondents commented that there is a need for a change in staff in the North, since in their opinion the old age of current personnel renders them ineffective. Respondents believe that such a change would enable more effective and active law enforcement.

Nearly all the Kosovo Serb respondents lacked information about the integration of the former members of the Civil Protection Corps. Several respondents said that they had informally heard of cases where the Civil Protection personnel were integrated into Kosovo institutions and

that some of them received pensions from Serbia, but nothing more than that.

Regarding the integration of the judiciary in northern Kosovo, respondents of both focus groups conducted in North Mitrovicë/a agreed that the process of integration was slow and that it needed further intervention from the international community.

Participants of focus groups listed many misapplications of the Agreements, such as the lack of adequate translation of judicial documents and laws from Albanian into Serbian, trials that last for many years, shortage of experienced and educated staff, and disproportionate sentences. Even though the structure of the court in North Mitrovicë/a was positive in terms of its multi-ethnic staff, respondents considered that it did not guarantee just court judgements.

Generally, respondents are not satisfied with the implementation of this Agreement, adding that trust among the local population in the integrated judiciary is still low. In their view, this distrust is also a consequence of the general confidence of the local population in the judicial system of Serbia, rather than that of Kosovo.

Virtually all respondents from Serbia have heard of the Brussels Agreement, but only a minority of them are familiar with its contents. Only a few respondents knew that the Brussels Agreement regulates the integration of police and judiciary, although the majority has heard about the integration of police and judiciary in northern Kosovo. It is important to note that in several focus groups the respondents (ethnic Serbs) said that Serbia has fulfilled all its obligations as per the Brussels Agreement, while Kosovo has not fulfilled anything. However, the majority of them admitted that they did not know the details, and that this was what they were getting from the media.

“Everything that Kosovo had to fulfil didn’t happen, and on our part – everything.” (Female, 45, Belgrade)



Regarding the police and judiciary integration, the respondents have different opinions on whether the integration is good or not. The majority is in favour of the integration.

“The integration is important – people are connected to one another and they have to live together, so they need to get used to the police and the judiciary being multi-ethnic.” (Male, 20s, Novi Pazar)



“I think it’s good [the integration], because if you live down there you have to integrate. Like the Kosovars [Kosovo Serbs] here - they don’t want to integrate, they go on as they used to. They don’t socialise at all: they have kept their traditions, speech, no-one has friends among the locals. And you need to integrate where you live. I see Kosovo as a part of Serbia.”

(Female, 49, Kraljevo).



All the respondents of Albanian ethnicity believe that Kosovo Serbs should be fully integrated in the Kosovo system, pointing out that the integration will help them protect their rights.

“Every citizen of the Republic of Kosovo should be integrated.”

(Male, 20s, Bujanovac)



On the other side are those who believe the police and judiciary integration does not benefit Kosovo Serbs and that it does not contribute to their safety.

“I think it would be safer for these people who live there [in Serb-majority municipalities] to have a police officer working for the state of Serbia. For example, in schools. Now they work for another country.”

(Male, 29, Vranje)



It should be noted that a significant number of the respondents thought that the integration of police and judiciary had not been achieved, and that some did not understand what integration

means. For example, one respondent asked (referring to a recent action of a Kosovo Police Regional Operational Support Unit [ROSU] in northern Kosovo):

“If there were Serbian policemen down there, why did they allowed ROSU in? They should have defended the people from ROSU.” (Male, 67, Novi Sad)



Interviewees were slightly better informed about the integration of the police and judiciary than the focus groups participants were. However, they still considered that the arrangements and

the outcomes are not communicated properly and that it takes enormous efforts just to comprehend what is taking place on the ground.

“Police, courts and prosecution have all been integrated. Some of them who were not came to Serbia, I know for sure. Something also happened to the court in Vranje: it either took the same cases or something else. I do not know exactly, there are so many events and it is like a circus at the moment. At the end no-one knows anything and I think the actual goal is to confuse people on purpose.” (Activist, female, Vranje)



ASSOCIATION OF SERB MUNICIPALITIES

Following the Brussels Agreement, the Agreement on the General Principles of the Association of Serb Majority Municipalities in Kosovo was signed on 25 August 2015. The Agreement defines the legal basis for the establishment of the Association, its objectives, organisational structure, relations with the central authorities, legal capacity and funding. On the subject of the association or community of Serb-majority municipalities, most of the *Kosovo Albanian respondents* did not think that this agreement would be implemented. To all of them, this was a really dangerous idea since it would directly affect Kosovo’s sovereignty and its citizens’ everyday life. It would be a replica

of Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and there was no chance that it would be an NGO, as was being presented. Furthermore, there were fears about the future impact and the internal functioning of Kosovo, in the context of what was perceived as Belgrade’s plan to extend its political influence.

Internally, it was considered as harmful to the free movement of people within Kosovo, as it was believed that Kosovan citizens would not be able to stay in or even pass through municipalities with a Serb majority. Furthermore, it was believed that it would raise ethnic tensions, making the situation much worse than currently.

On the other hand, it would also harm Kosovo’s cultural heritage.

“What would happen to the Ancient City of Ulpiana? It sits between Gračanica, a Serb-majority municipality, and Prishtinë/Priština, Kosovo’s capital?” (Female, 50s, Prizren)



To them, there is no need for such internal division since Serbs living in Kosovo have good lives and there are no ethnic tensions.

The feedback from focus groups and the online questionnaire with Kosovo Serb respondents showed a different opinion on the potential creation of the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities (A/CSM). While all the respondents criticised the fact that this entity had not yet been created and that too much time had passed since Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade agreed to establish it, their standpoints on its nature and potential role and importance for the Kosovo Serb community differ.

A slight majority of the respondents said they believed that the establishment of the A/CSM would be of great importance for the community, but under one important condition – the entity has to have executive power. Otherwise, as articulated by this group of respondents, the interests of this community would not be institutionally guaranteed and sufficiently

protected. Without executive powers, the A/CSM would resemble an NGO in terms of carrying out its potential authority.

Of those who said that the A/CSM would not ensure the protection of the Kosovo Serb community's rights, no matter whether it had executive power or not, it was consistently concluded that this entity is not the right arrangement or institutional design for the community. Belonging to the same group were respondents from Šilovo/Shillovë and Goraždevac/Gorazhdevc, whose argument against the formation of the A/CSM was that the population and territory of these two villages would not be included within the entity itself.

All **respondents from Serbia** knew that the ASM had not been established. The prevailing opinion among the respondents of Serbian ethnicity is that the ASM should be established and that it would be a good model for protecting the rights of Kosovo Serbs. Some of the Bosniaks from focus groups in Novi Pazar share this view:

“The ASM is important for the protection of minority rights in Kosovo. It would also be good for Serbia to regionalise and for the regions to be granted a greater degree of autonomy.” (Male, 20s, Novi Pazar)



Only a few respondents of Serbian ethnicity think that the ASM is not a good idea. One of them explained her stand as follows:

“It’s better that it [the ASM] is not formed in this political climate, I know people who are currently in power in Kosovska Mitrovica. The mentality and the attitude of these people is absolute obedience to Belgrade. With such people, the ASM is not a good idea at the moment, as far as Serbs are concerned.” (Female, 45, Belgrade)



One respondent from Vranje (youth group) said that Republika Srpska should be the model for the future ASM.

On the other hand, our respondents of Albanian ethnicity either think that the ASM should not be established or that it should be formed without executive competences, as an equivalent to the Albanian National Minority Council in Serbia, a body with the mandate to contribute

to the protection of minority rights in the fields of culture, education and information. Furthermore, Albanian respondents all agree that reciprocity must be introduced in all aspects of negotiations. This would mean that if the ASM is established for Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo, an equivalent body should be established for Albanians living in the Preshevo valley.

“The agreement should also include the Preshevo Valley – what applies to Serbs in Kosovo should be applied to Albanians here. If the ASM is established in Kosovo, then some form must be found for the Preshevo Valley too.”

(Male, 30s, Bujanovac)



Interviewees are split on whether and how the ASM should be established, and they are aware of the sensitivity of this issue. In addition, some feel that the current moment is not conducive to

the implementation of this provision although it could be a good thing for the Serbian community in Kosovo.

“When the ASM was mentioned for the first time, it sounded to me like something really useful, something that could bring together a community that is spread around in Kosovo, in a meaningful way. However, the behaviour of Republika Srpska at the time was so out of line that it terrified everyone, and because of this even the thought of cultural autonomy for Serbs in Kosovo was unacceptable. Decision makers were terrified of the destructive potential of the ASM and this perception influenced the implementation.”

(Activist, female, Novi Pazar)



Some believe that the ASM is deliberately being used to block further progress on key issues that remain unresolved, although, in their opinion,

it is clear that it should mean no substantive autonomy for Serbs in Kosovo.

“I know it is not implemented and I do not see the ASM as any kind of autonomous region for Serbs in Kosovo. The ASM is not even a key issue, I believe it has been purposely made a big issue so that it keeps us away from dealing with more important problems in our relationship.”

(Activist, Male, Kraljevo)



4.4. GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE TECHNICAL AGREEMENTS

The table below compares how well the three different target groups are informed about agreements reached during the EU facilitated dialogue.

AGREEMENT	Target Group	Least informed					Most informed					
FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT	Kosovo Albanians	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Kosovo Serbs	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Citizens in Serbia	■	■	■	■	■	■					
CIVIL REGISTRY BOOKS	Kosovo Albanians	■	■	■	■	■	■					
	Kosovo Serbs	■	■	■								
	Citizens in Serbia	■	■									
CADASTRE	Kosovo Albanians	■	■	■	■	■	■					
	Kosovo Serbs	■	■	■								
	Citizens in Serbia	■										
UNIVERSITY DIPLOMAS	Kosovo Albanians	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
	Kosovo Serbs	■	■	■	■	■						
	Citizens in Serbia	■	■	■	■	■	■					
CUSTOM STAMPS	Kosovo Albanians	■	■	■	■	■	■					
	Kosovo Serbs	■	■									
	Citizens in Serbia	■	■									
IBM	Kosovo Albanians	■	■	■								
	Kosovo Serbs	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
	Citizens in Serbia	■	■									
REGIONAL REPRESENTATION & COOPERATION	Kosovo Albanians	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
	Kosovo Serbs	■	■									
	Citizens in Serbia	■	■	■	■	■						

5. PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FUTURE OF THE DIALOGUE

A clear majority of the focus groups showed a negative opinion on the overall implementation of all technical agreements, with respondents being sceptical about the benefits brought by the implementation of agreements. Feelings of irritation, scepticism and pessimism are noticeable in most respondents, regardless of their background and/ or origin. Responses to the online questionnaire rate the overall impact of the implementation of technical agreements as negative, without any direct (positive) influence on respondents' personal lives.

Moreover, respondents claimed that Kosovo citizens have not benefited from the process of implementation of the technical agreements, while several said that politicians were the only ones who took advantage of this process for the purposes of self-promotion. As a consequence of such attitudes, all the respondents had a higher degree of suspicion in regard to the future of the dialogue.

The following reasons/ concerns were put forward as the main barriers for the future of the dialogue:

- *lack of transparency about the process of implementation,*
- *irresponsibility and inability of relevant stakeholders to implement agreements,*
- *insincerity and lack of will from political leaders to commit to the continuation of the dialogue,*
- *absence of many important issues that sides are not willing to tackle,*
- *international actors are reluctant to actively facilitate Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, and*
- *widespread distrust of positive outcomes.*

Kosovo Albanian respondents believe that the dialogue is only in Serbia's interest, since it helps in progressing its EU integration path while Kosovo still struggles to gain full recognition by all EU member states. For some, since Serbia has agreed to sit at the negotiation table with Kosovo it has de facto recognised it as a state; hence the process has been "in our own best interest" so far.

To most respondents, the "end game" is uncertain and mysterious, which is why key actors remain secretive about the content and purpose of the agreements reached. It seems that only the political elites in power know what a "grand finale", including the eventual agreement on normalisation of relations, might bring. While some respondents think that the mediator should be changed, several participants gave their opinion that the dialogue must remain within the EU framework.

A number of respondents, in almost all focus groups, suggested that there should be no mediator in the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. They believe that the disputes would be solved more easily if there were no mediators: that mediators unnecessarily complicate the process.

The respondents of Albanian ethnicity believe that the main condition for the successful continuation of the EU facilitated dialogue is mutual recognition - that is recognition of Kosovo's statehood by Serbia. Most respondents believe that not only high-level politicians but many other actors from society should participate in the dialogue, since the process remains highly centralised and closed to the public.

"...both Serbia and Kosovo aspire to the EU, so some common ground must be found, and if that is the EU, then we should start from there".

(Female, 20, Belgrade)



6. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

These conclusions help to better understand the perceptions of the dialogue process from ordinary citizens from different backgrounds, as well as to design any possible future intervention more successfully.

In general, members of the Kosovo Serb community are dissatisfied with the process of implementation of technical agreements and with the dialogue itself. They feel they are not acquainted with the content and implementation process of several agreements they find important, such as the Agreements on Energy, Telecommunications, University Diplomas, and more.

The influence of daily politics on political and social narratives have sidelined the importance of the process of implementation of technical agreements, intensified by the misuse of the negotiation process by political stakeholders for the purposes of self-promotion.

Lack of transparent reporting by Belgrade and Prishtinë/Priština on the process of the dialogue and its consequences has been identified as one of the main obstacles for informing citizens about the topics covered by this research.

The qualitative feedback of this research has shown that most of the perceptions regarding the dialogue are strongly related to the war of 1999. When asked about the dialogue process so far, participants said that this dialogue did not tackle the urgent issues that it needed to tackle, such as war crimes, missing people and the need for an apology. To the vast majority of research participants, these were topics that should have been included and that are of more weight than the agreements reached through the technical dialogue.

Most participants believe that if the agreements were implemented they would bring certain tangible benefits for the citizens.

“The majority of agreements remained only on paper. [...] Citizens do not feel any benefits.” (Male, 30+, Bujanovac)



The majority of respondents from Serbia said that they do not know whether the EU facilitated technical dialogue agreements contribute to a better life for Kosovo Albanians. However, it is important to note that most respondents from the towns with significant Kosovo Serbs (Kraljevo and Kragujevac) showed a considerable resentment towards Kosovo Serbs who moved to their towns – before or after the Kosovo war. These respondents believe that Kosovo Serbs enjoy preferential treatment in

Serbia, which leads to discrimination of the “locals”. They mentioned that Kosovo Serbs get financial aid from the state and preferential treatment in employment. Some of the respondents also referred to the alleged cultural differences between local Serbs and Serbs who came from Kosovo.

Some of the respondents blame the media – which they see as being under the control of political elites – for fuelling ethnic tensions and

inciting fear and hatred.

Furthermore, a significant number of our respondents noted that the current state of the dialogue benefits not only politicians in power, but also criminals, who profit from the legal vacuum and the de facto state of emergency.

However, all the respondents - both the focus group participants and the interviewees - believe that dialogue is the only way forward and that instead of abandoning it, it should be improved.

Regarding the differences among ethnic groups, the great majority of ethnic Serbs respondents reject the idea of independent Kosovo, while all

ethnic Albanians see Kosovo as an independent state. This difference to a large degree structures their opinions and views on all other issues related to Kosovo. Serbs and Albanians also have opposing views regarding telecommunications and, to some extent, freedom of movement (specifically, who benefits from it). A certain level of cognitive dissonance is present in several focus group participants (from Serbia) who, at the same time, hold two opposing views: first, “we should accept reality” and second, “I see Kosovo as a part of Serbia”. It seems that, when it comes to Kosovo, (a certain degree of) nationalism is a thread that runs across all the generations.

7. MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE REPORT

Analysing the results of the research, the following are the main findings,

- The overall implementation of all technical agreements has been negatively evaluated by the vast majority of targeted groups, where the respondents have been sceptical about the benefits brought by the implementation of agreements.
- The vast majority of respondents are not familiar with the content of technical agreements. They are aware of certain issues, but do not know about the agreements concerning these issues. Interviewees are better informed, but still admit to having a certain amount of confusion about the process and its outcomes.
- The Agreement on Freedom of Movement is one of the few agreements where the majority of participants were well informed and have personal experiences of its implementation.
- The overall knowledge of targeted groups in terms of technical agreements is at an intermediate level. Older generations (aged 31+) are generally more informed about the implementation of technical agreements than younger generation.
- In regards to the differences among ethnic groups, the vast majority of ethnic Serb respondents reject the idea of independent Kosovo, while all ethnic Albanian respondents see Kosovo as an independent state. The attitudes of the majority of ethnic Serbs towards Kosovo seem to be influenced by nationalist discourses about Kosovo – even when some of them explicitly dissociate themselves from Serbian nationalism.
- The majority of respondents believe that the dialogue so far has not been beneficial for citizens. A minority believes that some things have been improved (freedom of movement, telecommunications, etc.), but they also admit that the improvements are minor. Regardless of their ethnicity, education, or age, all respondents agree that the dialogue – as it has been so far – benefits political and other elites.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above conclusions, research results and findings, the following recommendations should be considered by relevant stakeholders:

- The governments of Kosovo and Serbia should put more effort into informing their respective populations on the outcomes of the EU facilitated dialogue and the implementation of technical agreements, in a language easily understandable to all citizens;
- Conclusions, reports and briefings on the process of implementation technical agreements need to be more transparent and frequent. The governments should have more meetings and discussions with citizens in relation to the agreements and the dialogue itself;
- The process of implementation should not be used for the purposes of promotion of political actors both in Kosovo and Serbia;
- Non-implemented technical agreements should either be revised within the EU facilitated dialogue framework, or substituted with more effective ones;
- Experts need to have a greater role in the process of implementation and dialogue at the expense of the role of political representatives of Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade within the process;
- Local populations should be included in the process of implementing technical agreements, which will have a double effect: grassroots participation and a higher level of familiarity with the content of agreements;
- The media should have a greater role in monitoring of the process of implementation and consequently informing populations about the outcomes;
- The European Union, as the facilitator in the process of implementation, should ensure a transparent and adequate implementation of all technical agreements, including a greater role in monitoring Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade's efforts in this;
- The EU should have a better mechanism to push Serbia and Kosovo to implement existing agreements;
- There is a need to reframe the dialogue in such a way that all activities and efforts are evaluated in the light of their tangible benefits for citizens;
- A new narrative should be created and pushed forward focusing on the common problems and common interests of ethnic Serbs and Albanians.
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The contents of this research are the sole responsibility of the Kosovo-Serbia Policy Advocacy Group Consortium and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

APPENDICES

1. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FOCUS GROUPS

Introductory questions

- Are you interested in topics related to the Brussels Dialogue? Do you follow the news on the Brussels Dialogue and technical agreements signed and implemented by Belgrade and Prishtinë/Priština?
- Do you know what has been achieved so far within the technical dialogue between Belgrade and Prishtinë/Priština?
- Has the overall implementation of technical agreements influenced your everyday life in Kosovo? If yes, could you say how?

Practical outcomes of technical agreements. A step forward or a step back?

- In your opinion, has the agreement on freedom of movement (allowing free movement of people between Kosovo and Serbia with their personal IDs) been fully implemented? How has the implementation of this agreement influenced you personally?
- How would you evaluate the implementation of the agreement on number plates? Has the implementation of this agreement been useful to you personally when it comes to free movement/travelling within Kosovo and Serbia? Please elaborate and give any examples from your experience.
- Similarly, has the implementation of the agreement on vehicle insurance been useful in terms of free movement/ travelling? Please elaborate and give any examples from your experience.
- Do you think that the agreement on free movement of goods (in accordance with CEFTA) has helped the Serbian community (or you personally) in developing/ easing economic activities in Kosovo? Has it had any influence on your buying habits or your personal business? Please give reasons for your answer.
- Related to the free movement of goods, are you acquainted with agreements on customs revenue collection and the mutual recognition of certificates on dangerous goods? If yes, please elaborate.
- Are you familiar with the agreement on cooperation between the chambers of commerce? If yes, please give us your opinion on their cooperation.
- How would you assess the work of the Development Fund for Northern Kosovo, established as a consequence of the Belgrade-Prishtinë/Priština agreement? Are you informed about its activities and benefits for local people?
- Did the implementation of the agreement on telecommunications facilitate the use of landline and mobile telephony in Kosovo among the Kosovo Serb community? Has the establishment of MTS d.o.o. been useful in practical terms? Did this agreement impact the way you use channels of (tele)communication(s)? Please provide any examples from daily life.
- Are you aware of the work of liaison offices in Belgrade and Prishtinë/Priština, which were created after the agreement on liaison offices was signed? If yes, please elaborate.

- Are you familiar with the agreement on mutual recognition of diplomas? If yes, please share your opinion on this topic.
- How would you evaluate the implementation of the agreement on Integrated Border Management (IBM)? Have you had any personal (positive/ negative) experience when crossing borders? If yes, please elaborate on that.
- How would you assess the agreement between Belgrade and Prishtinë/Priština on customs stamps?
- Are you familiar with the agreement on regional representation and cooperation? If yes, how would you rate it?
- How would you rate the agreement on energy? Are you familiar with it?
- Do you think that the revitalisation of the main bridge in Mitrovicë/a, as agreed in Brussels, would improve everyday life/ multi-ethnic relations in both parts of Mitrovicë/a? Please specify the reasons for your answer. (This question will be posed only to interviewees in the two focus groups that are going to be held in North Mitrovicë/a)

Matter of essential importance to the Serbian community in Kosovo

- Do you think that the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities would improve the position of the Serbian community in Kosovo? Do you think that it would improve your personal life? Please specify the reasons for your answer.
- How would you describe the influence of the implementation of the agreement on the judiciary on the Serbian community in Kosovo? Have you had any experience with the (integrated) judicial system? Please elaborate on these questions and provide any examples from daily life.
- How would you rate the implementation of the agreement on police (integration)? How would you assess its role within your community?
- What is your view on the integration of the personnel of the former Civil Protection Corps? Did it change the level of safety in your community/ neighbourhood?

Manoeuvring space?

- How would you rate the overall success/ failure of the implementation of technical agreements so far?
- Do you think that the further implementation of technical agreements will improve your life, or the life of your family and community?

2. ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

- Are you interested in topics related to the Brussels Dialogue?
- Can you list at least three agreements reached as part of the technical dialogue?
- How were you informed about the technical dialogue and the agreements?
- Do you consider that the government has been effectively informing citizens about the outcomes of the technical dialogue and the implementation of the agreements?
- Did the dialogue tackle the urgent issues between Kosovo and Serbia as faced by citizens?
- Have you personally used the opportunity to travel to Serbia after the agreement on freedom of movement was signed?
- How would you evaluate the implementation of the agreement on the IBM? Have you had any positive/ negative personal experiences while crossing border checkpoints? Please elaborate.
- Do you think that the revitalisation of the main bridge in Mitrovicë/a, as agreed in Brussels, will improve everyday life/ multi-ethnic relations in both parts of Mitrovicë/a? Please give reasons for your answer.
- Are you familiar with the Agreement on Energy, and its stages of implementation? Which aspects of energy are important for citizens in their daily life? Please elaborate.
- Are you familiar with the Agreement on Telecommunications? Which aspects of it are important for citizens in their daily life?
- Did the implementation of the agreement on telecommunications facilitate the use of landline and mobile telephony in Kosovo among the Kosovo Serb community? Has the establishment of MTS d.o.o. been useful in practical terms? Did this agreement impact the way you use channels of (tele)communication(s)? Please provide any examples from daily life.
- Do you think that the establishment of the Association/ Community of Serb-majority Municipalities would improve the position of the Serb community in Kosovo? Do you think that it would improve your life? Please give reasons for your answer.
- Has the overall implementation of technical agreements influenced your everyday life in Kosovo? If yes, how?
- Which of the agreements has been the most successful in implementation, and which one do you consider to have failed completely?
- Who is benefiting the most from the technical dialogue? Is the technical dialogue beneficial for citizens in Serbia and Kosovo? If yes, what are the benefits? If you think that the dialogue is not beneficial, what is the reason for that?

Kosovo Serbia Policy Advocacy Group (KSPAG) represent a consortium of think tanks and NGOs who strongly believe in the process of normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. The organisations were brought together by a shared energy to renew support Kosovo-Serbia dialogue when there was little civil society interest in such initiatives. The individual and joint efforts synergise to create innovative approaches to sustain the dialogue and transform the narrative for the public. KSPAG activities aim to better inform the citizens and other actors about the dialogue process, increase the support and generate new ideas for the process of normalisation between Kosovo and Serbia.

The Kosovo-Serbia Policy Advocacy Group Consortium is comprised of eight organisations including Balkans Policy Research Group (BPRG), Democracy for Development (D4D), Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) and NGO Aktiv from Kosovo, and Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence (BFPE), Belgrade Center for Security Policy (BCSP), The Lawyers' Committee For Human Rights (YUCOM), European Movement Serbia (EMinS) from Serbia.



**For more on our
consortium and
activities visit
our website:**

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