



*VOX POPULI* ON THE  
**'GRAND  
FINALE'**  
BETWEEN  
**KOSOVO AND SERBIA**  
VOLUME I

February 2019

Supported by:



Norwegian Embassy



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# ***Vox Populi* on the ‘Grand Finale’ between Kosovo and Serbia**

## **Volume I**

February 2019

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**This survey is supported by:**



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February 2019

## Table of contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Methodology</b> .....	<b>3</b>
2.1. Survey Design .....	3
2.2. Survey Procedure.....	3
2.3. Sampling.....	4
2.4. Sample Characteristics.....	6
2.5. Data analysis .....	9
<b>3. Findings: The way forward or backward</b> .....	<b>9</b>
3.1. Halting or not halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia .....	9
3.2. Kosovo's red lines in relation to the final stage of the dialogue.....	11
3.3. Should Kosovo seek unification with Albania?.....	17
3.4. The <i>three scenarios</i> for an eventual deal between Kosovo and Serbia .....	19
3.4.1. First scenario: Continuation of the status quo .....	19
3.4.2. Second scenario: De facto recognition from Serbia, and with extended executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/Community .....	21
3.4.3. Third scenario: De facto and de jure recognition of Kosovo's statehood from Serbia in return for border adjustment/new territorial arrangements between Kosovo and Serbia .....	24
<b>4. Conclusions</b> .....	<b>27</b>

## Executive Summary

The aim of this survey was to understand the perceptions and attitudes of citizens (*Vox Populi*) regarding the scenarios on the 'grand finale' between Kosovo and Serbia. A total of 1110 respondents in our survey (90% Albanians, 9% Serbs and 1% from other ethnic groups) made our sample nationally representative of the Kosovo population. The fieldwork for this survey was completed between 17-26 December 2018. A preliminary questionnaire was first administered to a pilot group, in order to make final adjustments to the questionnaire.

In this survey, *simple proportional sampling* was used for each municipality, based on municipality population size. The questionnaire consisted of open and closed-ended questions. In order to check the work of interviewers during data collection, about 15% (a total of 150 respondents) were re-interviewed. This back-check was done through phone interviews and field visits. As a check, the respondents were asked about 5 questions based on the original interview. The checklist served as a tool of compliance review with the random principles of locality, starting point, house unit, and the principle of selection of the respondent. Responses from the first and the second interview were compared. In addition to the usual screening process, a logical check of the filled-in questionnaires was carried out. The 95% *error margin* of estimates based on the full sample is approximately +/-3 percentage points. However, confidence intervals for estimates based on subsets of the sample, such as the Serb sample of 100 respondents, will be considerably larger.

In terms of the results, in the subsequent paragraphs we present the findings on the following matters/issues:

- i)** halting or not halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia;
- ii)** Kosovo's red lines in relation to the final stage of the dialogue;
- iii)** in the event of a final deal between Kosovo and Serbia, should Kosovo seek to join Albania; and

- iv) the perception of Kosovo's citizens related to **three scenarios** for an eventual deal between Kosovo and Serbia.

**The first group of findings** shows that the majority of the Kosovo population is *against halting the dialogue* between Kosovo and Serbia. Overall, **62%** of all the respondents do not agree with halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. Both Kosovo Albanians and Serbs agree that the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia should continue. There is slightly less support among Serbs for continuing the dialogue, and a significant number of the Serb sample did not have a view on this question (27%). **63%** among Albanians and **54%** among Serbs either 'strongly disagree' or 'somewhat disagree' with halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia.

**The second group of findings** focuses on Kosovo's red lines in relation to the final stage of the dialogue. These are the results:

- Gazivoda lake should remain within Kosovo's territory (96% of Albanian versus 5% of the Serbian sample);
- Trepça should remain part of Kosovo (99% of Albanian versus 9% of the Serbian sample)
- Presevo valley should join Kosovo (69% of Albanian versus 0% of the Serbian sample);
- Presevo valley should remain part of Serbia (13% of Albanian versus 84% of the Serbian sample);
- The North of Kosovo (Zvečan, parts of Zubin Potok and Leposaviç) should **not** join Serbia (91% of Albanian versus 10% of the Serbian sample).

**The third group of the findings** focused on the issue whether Kosovo should seek to join Albania (in the event of a final deal between Kosovo and Serbia). In this context, the opinion is divided with, overall, **43%** supporting the idea that *Kosovo should seek unification with Albania* in the event that it receives de facto and de jure recognition from Serbia and with **50%** rejecting the idea. However, **49%** among Albanians and **76%** among Serbs disagree with the option that

Kosovo should seek unification with Albania in the event that it receives de facto and de jure recognition from Serbia.

The ***fourth and final group of the findings*** is linked with the perception and preferences of Kosovo's citizens related to ***three alternative scenarios*** for an eventual deal between Kosovo and Serbia.

Thus, regarding ***the first scenario - the status quo*** - only a small number of participants (***around 15%***) responded with either 'very much satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' about the current status quo between Kosovo and Serbia. Separate analysis of the Albanian and Serbian samples reveals a somewhat different pattern of responses. In this sense, ***82%*** among Albanians compared to ***50%*** among Serbs are either 'not at all satisfied' or 'very little satisfied' with the current status quo between Kosovo and Serbia.

As to ***the second scenario - granting executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/community' provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo*** - there is even less support than for the first scenario. Only ***10%*** among respondents responded with either 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree' with the second scenario. Again, there is weak support among Kosovo Albanians (***9%***) and Serbs (***16%***) to grant executive powers to the Kosovo Serb association/community provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo.

Regarding ***the third scenario - 'de-facto and de-jure recognition of Kosovo's statehood from Serbia, which would include border adjustment/new territorial arrangements between Kosovo and Serbia'***, the following findings were obtained: There is a somewhat similar, but very small support (12% of Albanians and 5% of Serbs) towards border adjustment scenario-variant in return for Serbia providing de facto and de jure recognition to Kosovo. However, compared to other scenarios-variants, there is more support among the Albanian population (***30%***) and roughly similar support among Serbs (***27%***) for border

adjustment which in return would result in the global recognition of Kosovo and opening the path for UN membership.

Regarding the *three scenarios*, a brief comparative analysis on the interpretation of the results generates the following picture: there is little support among respondents (16% responded with either 'very much satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied') for the continuation of the status quo (**scenario 1**) and even less (10% responded with either 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree') about granting executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/community provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo (**scenario 2**). However, there is more support (30% of respondents responded with either 'definitely should' or 'should') regarding the border adjustment which would result in the global recognition of Kosovo and open the path for UN membership (**scenario 3**).

A comparative evaluation between Albanians and Serbs related to the *three scenarios* engenders the subsequent findings: A small number of Albanian respondents (14%) and more Serbs (29%) expressed their satisfaction with the current status quo between Kosovo and Serbia (**scenario 1**). Similarly, 9% among Albanians and 16% among Serbs expressed their agreement with granting extended executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/community provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo (**scenario 2**). In contrast to the previous two scenarios, 30% among Albanians, but similarly to scenario one, 27% among Serbs supports border adjustment which would result in the global recognition of Kosovo and opened the path for UN membership (**scenario 3**).

Overall, it can be concluded that public opinion is inconsistent and divided with contradictory positions. While question wording can affect the precise percentages favoring or opposing particular options, we should conclude that the Serb and Albanian populations of Kosovo speak with somewhat different voices with respect to their red lines and preferred scenarios, but with one voice on the need to continue the dialogue.



Last but not least, it can be noted that there is no substantial majority support among the Kosovo majority community (Albanians) for any of the three scenarios. This points to the fact that, if any 'grand finale' deal is to be acceptable by the majority of the *vox populi* in Kosovo, it should bring something stable, substantial and functional to Kosovo, otherwise it is doomed to fail.

## 1. Introduction

The data for this survey were collected between 17-26 December 2018. The aim of the survey was to understand the perceptions and attitudes of citizens (*Vox Populi*) regarding the scenarios on the 'grand finale' between Kosovo and Serbia. The dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia has entered its final phase and a number of eventual scenarios have been depicted in various studies and debates. Thus, one other objective of the survey was to understand the public support, or perhaps lack of support, for different Scenarios for the eventual Final Deal between Kosovo and Serbia.

For more than eight years since the beginning of the dialogue process between Kosovo and Serbia facilitated by the EU, a number of agreements have been reached. Whereas, substantial progress has been achieved in terms of border management, freedom of travel, the integration of police, and protection of religious and cultural heritage, many other agreements have been either partially or not at all implemented by both countries<sup>1</sup>.

In fact, the April 2013 agreement on the inclusion of northern Kosovo within Pristina's legal framework, while simultaneously increasing the level of rights for the Serb dominated municipalities in Kosovo, remains one of the most politically controversial and non-implemented agreements by both countries.

Nonetheless, despite successes and failures in implementing agreements, the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia remains among the top priorities on the European Union agenda, with all the parties having already confirmed their commitment to intensify their actions to achieve a comprehensive normalization of relations between them and concrete prospects

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2013) 'Serbia and Kosovo\*: historic agreement paves the way for decisive progress in their EU perspectives', Press Release, 22 April. Available at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-347\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-347_en.htm) (Accessed on: 30/01/2019).

for their EU aspirations<sup>2</sup>. Both, President Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo and President Aleksandar Vučić of Serbia have already stressed their readiness to intensify the work in order to reach a legally binding agreement. In this respect, both countries have already made preparations and established the teams for the final phase of dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia.

A potential scenario that is already being discussed publicly both in Kosovo and Serbia is land swap, which would entail that Kosovo might gain some parts in Presevo valley in exchange for territory in the north of Kosovo and recognition of Kosovo by Serbia<sup>3</sup>. Taking stock of this scenario and potential other scenarios identified in previous research papers in Kosovo<sup>4</sup>; this research report aims to outline the extent of public support among Kosovo citizens for potential scenarios on the comprehensive Final Agreement/Deal that would be legally binding between Kosovo and Serbia.

Beyond other issues which are discussed in the following sections, this research report provides a detailed analysis of the findings on the main potential scenarios for a final agreement between Kosovo and Serbia. It focuses on three main potential scenarios: a) continuation of the *status quo*; b) de facto recognition from Serbia, in exchange for extended executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/community; and c) de-facto and de-jure recognition of Kosovo's statehood from Serbia, which would include border adjustment/new territorial arrangements between Kosovo and Serbia. While these are the key

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<sup>2</sup> EUEA (2018) 'Federica Mogherini hosted a meeting of the High Level Dialogue with President Thaçi of Kosovo and President Vučić of Serbia' Press Release, 08 November. Available at: <https://eas.europa.eu/diplomatic-network/eu-facilitated-dialogue-belgrade-pristina-relations/53466/federica-mogherini-hosted-meeting-high-level-dialogue-president-tha%C3%A7i-kosovo-and-president-en> (Accessed on: 30/01/2019).

<sup>3</sup> ECFR (2018) 'The price of normalization: Serbia, Kosovo and a risky border deal', *Commentary*, 13 November. Available at: [https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_the\\_price\\_of\\_normalisation\\_serbia\\_kosovo\\_and\\_a\\_risky\\_border\\_deal](https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_the_price_of_normalisation_serbia_kosovo_and_a_risky_border_deal) (Accessed on: 30/01/2019).

<sup>4</sup> RIDEA & BPRG (2017) 'Scenarios for the 'Grand Finale' between Kosovo and Serbia'. Available at: <http://ridea-ks.org/uploads/SCENARIOS%20FOR%20THE%20GRAND%20FINALE%20BETWEEN%20KOSOVO%20AND%20SERBIA.pdf> (Accessed on: 30/01/2019).

scenarios examined in this report, a number of potential variants and options will also be discussed.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Survey Design**

The questionnaire consisted of both open and closed-ended questions with the following structure: demographic data about the participants, their understanding, and attitudes and support, or lack of support, for the potential Scenarios/Options for the Final Agreement/Deal between Kosovo and Serbia. The questionnaire was first administered to a pilot group of 30 respondents in order to test its comprehensibility for respondents and in order to make final adjustments to the questionnaire.

### **2.2. Survey Procedure**

The research team consisted of 15 field interviewers (2 per each of the 7 regions of Kosovo, plus a special interviewer for Serb respondents in the South of Kosovo) and 4 researchers, Key Expert, 2 Senior Experts, and a junior researcher. Their work resulted in the current research report. Field interviewers administered the questionnaires with paper and pen. The questionnaire was filled by field interviewers to ensure that there were no missing data. However, the respondents were free not to respond to the questions. In order to avoid interviewing bias, the research team trained all field interviewers in the conduct of the survey.

In order to check the work of interviewers during data collection, about 15% (a total of 150 respondents) were re-interviewed. This back-check was done through phone interviews and field visits. As a check, the respondents were asked about 5 questions based on the original interview. The checklist served as a tool for compliance review with the principle of randomized selection of respondents (covering selection of locality, starting point, house unit, and selection of the respondent). Responses from the first and the second interview

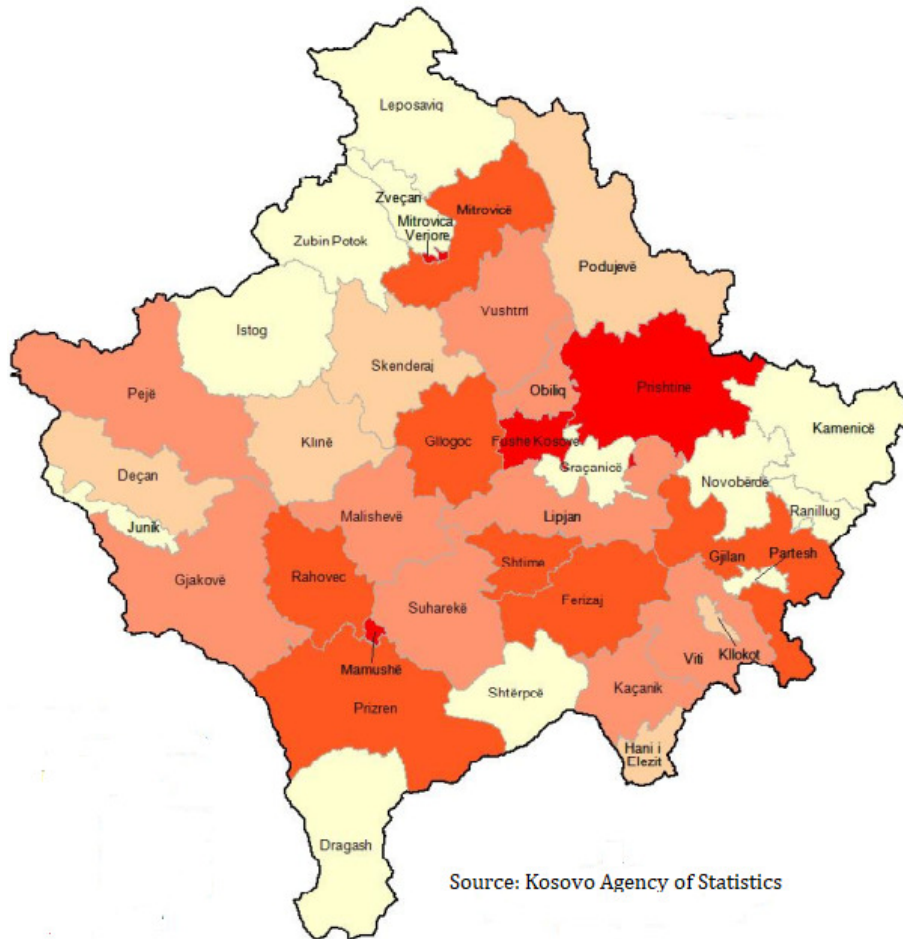
were compared. In addition to the usual screening process, a logical control of the filled-in questionnaires was carried out.

### 2.3. Sampling

The survey was carried out in 38 Kosovo municipalities of the 7 main regions in Kosovo: Prishtina, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Prizren, Peja, Gjakova and Mitrovica (North and South, see the map below). Kosovo has a population of 1,798,506 inhabitants<sup>5</sup>. In this survey, the simple proportional sampling is used for each municipality being based on municipality population size. The calculation of the percentage of participation consists of the ratio of the number of registered population in a certain municipality to the total number of registered inhabitants in Kosovo. The resulting percentage determines the weight of each municipality in the sample. The baseline of the registered population was derived from the Kosovo Statistical Agency.

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<sup>5</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2018) 'Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Kosovo 2018'. Available at: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4369/statistical-yearbook-2018.pdf> (Accessed on: 30/01/2019).



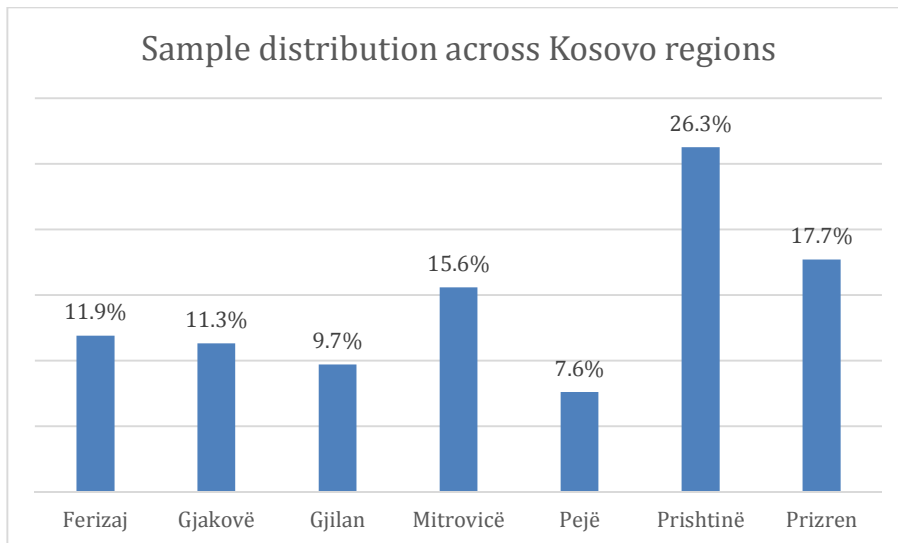
The questionnaires were administered in respondents' houses and apartments. A random route sampling procedure was used to determine the study sample, with prescribed rules for the choice of starting point, and the subsequent selection of street, building, apartment and respondent. The questionnaire was administered to only 1 family member. This was done as such, in order to avoid bias of the respondents in the sample.

In order to obtain a sufficiently large sample of Serbs for useful analysis, the two major predominantly Serbian municipalities Mitrovica North (in the north of Kosovo) and Graçanica (in the South of Kosovo) were oversampled. This yielded a sample of 100 Serbian respondents instead of the 50 respondents that would have been obtained without oversampling.

## 2.4. Sample Characteristics

The total number of respondents is 1110. With a sample of this size, estimates will have a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points (at the five percent level of significance). Note however that the sampling error will be considerably larger when estimates are just for the Serb sample of 100 respondents: with a sample of 100, the 95% confidence interval will be approximately plus or minus 10 percentage points. All differences between the Serb and Albanian samples have therefore been checked for statistical significance.

As noted above, the study has been conducted across all (seven) Kosovo regions and (thirty-eight) municipalities. See below the sample distribution in the seven regions.



The number of interviews for each municipality was assigned based on the number of the population in each municipality and the distribution of the achieved sample thus corresponds closely to the distribution of the population. See below the table depicting the size of the population based on Kosovo Agency of Statistics<sup>6</sup> and number of interviews per municipality.

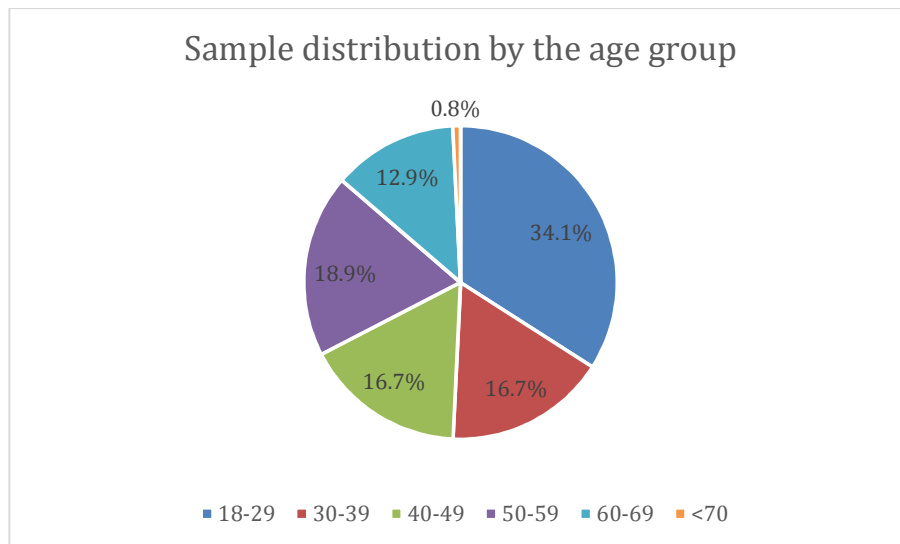
<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

Table 1. Population size and the number of interviews per municipality			
No	Municipality	Population	No. of Interviews
1	<i>Ferizaj</i>	103,003	63
2	<i>Shtime</i>	27,654	35
3	<i>Kaçanik</i>	33,409	20
4	<i>Shtërpcë</i>	6,773	8
5	<i>Hani i Elezit</i>	9,998	6
6	<i>Gjakovë</i>	95,340	58
7	<i>Rahovec</i>	59,102	36
8	<i>Deçan</i>	41,808	27
9	<i>Junik</i>	6,370	4
10	<i>Gjilan</i>	80,162	48
11	<i>Kamenica</i>	30,750	19
12	<i>Viti</i>	47,615	29
13	<i>Ranillug</i>	3,810	3
14	<i>Novobërdë</i>	7,160	5
15	<i>Partesh</i>	1,730	2
16	<i>Klllokot</i>	2,753	2
17	<i>Mitrovicë</i>	69,346	42
18	<i>Vushtrri</i>	64,468	39
19	<i>Mitrovica Veriore</i>	12,211	40
20	<i>Zveçan</i>	7,376	5
21	<i>Zubin Potok</i>	6,616	5
22	<i>Leposaviq</i>	13,587	10
23	<i>Skenderaj</i>	52,343	32
24	<i>Pejë</i>	99,568	61
25	<i>Istog</i>	40,380	11
26	<i>Klinë</i>	40,122	12
27	<i>Prishtinë</i>	211,755	131
28	<i>Obiliq</i>	19,144	12
29	<i>Fushë Kosovë</i>	38,607	24
30	<i>Lipjan</i>	57,733	35
31	<i>Podujevë</i>	83,445	51
32	<i>Glllogoc</i>	61,133	19
33	<i>Graçanicë</i>	12,091	20
34	<i>Prizren</i>	191,565	114
35	<i>Suharekë</i>	60,247	21
36	<i>Malishevë</i>	58,269	36
37	<i>Mamushë</i>	5,950	4
38	<i>Dragash</i>	34,316	21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,798,506</b>	<b>1110</b>



90% of the study sample were Albanians, 9% Serbs and 1% were from other ethnic groups in Kosovo. The Albanian percentage of the sample closely corresponds to that recorded in the 2011 census, which shows that 91% were Albanian, 3.4% Serb and 5.6% 'Other'. Since the percentage for Albanians in the sample is close to the Census figure, we have not weighted the data for ethnicity. (The small number of 'other' ethnic groups is too small for useful analysis and does not provide a reliable basis for weighting.)

58% of the sample is male and 42% is female. The mean age of the sample is 38 years old and the age range is 18-84 years old. Below is the distribution of the sample by the age group.



Compared with census figures for 2011, men and younger people are over-represented in the achieved sample. We have therefore checked all results using weights to adjust for this, using the age by gender breakdown published in the 2011 Kosovo census. In practice this weighting only had a small effect on the estimates as neither age nor gender are strongly related to the distribution of the variables on which this report focuses. We have therefore simply reported the unweighted percentages.

Regarding education level, 1% of the sample reported having no school degree, 3% reported elementary education only (1-5 classes), 9% reported lower secondary education (6-9 classes), 40% upper secondary school (gymnasium or vocational), 5% the post-secondary vocational education, 35% reported university (Bachelor) degree, 7% mostly with Master, and few with PhDs. As is usual with surveys, there is some over-representation of those with higher education.

Regarding the employment level of our sample, 45% reported to have been employed at the time of interview, 34% unemployed, 9% students, 7% retired, 4% fulfilling domestic tasks, and 1% unspecified.

## 2.5. Data analysis

Participants' responses were entered in SPSS. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and cross-tabulations by ethnic groups were used to analyze the data. We have also checked whether results varied by age, gender, educational level and employment situation. Open-ended questions entered in SPSS were analyzed separately.

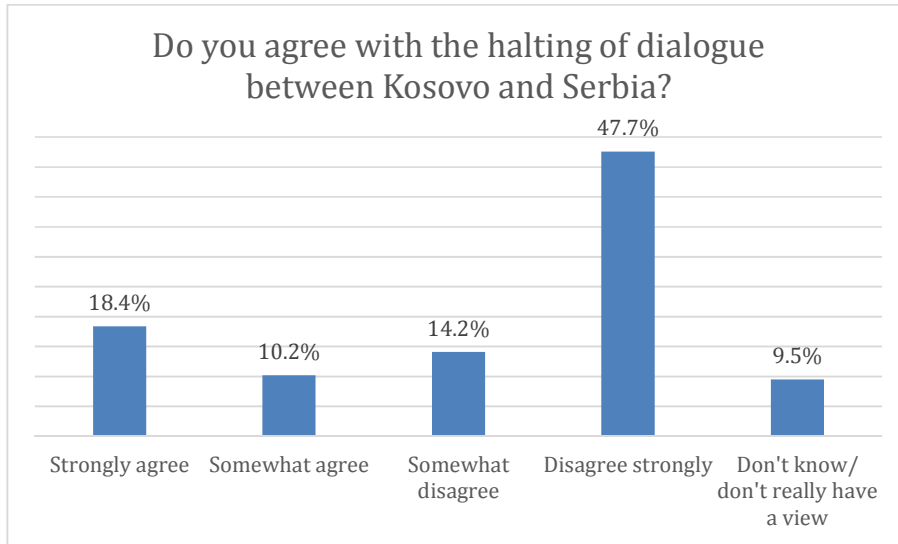
## 3. Findings: The way forward or backward

This section outlines the findings of this survey under four sub-sections: **(i)** halting or not halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia; **(ii)** Kosovo's red lines in relation to the final stage of the dialogue; **(iii)** in the event of a final deal between Kosovo and Serbia, should Kosovo remain as a state or join Albania; and **(iv)** the perception of Kosovo's citizens related to *three scenarios* for an eventual deal between Kosovo and Serbia.

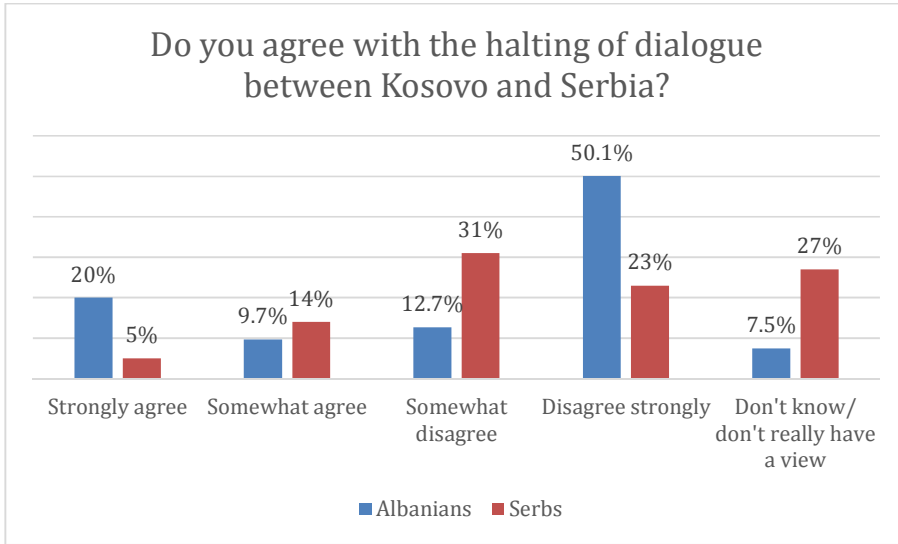
### 3.1. Halting or not halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia

In relation to this issue, the following question was asked: **Do you agree with the halting of dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia?**

The findings concerning this issue produced the following landscape: 29% of the total sample either 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree' about halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. In contrast, the majority of our participants (62%) either 'strongly disagree' or 'somewhat disagree' about halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. In contrast, around 10% among participants 'do not know/do not really have a view' on this issue.



Assessment of responses for the Albanian and Serbian samples reveals a somewhat similar pattern of responses (although differences between the two groups are statistically significant): 30% among Albanians and 19% among Serbs either 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree' about halting the dialogue between Kosovo. 63% among Albanians and 54% among Serbs either 'strongly disagree' or 'somewhat disagree' about halting the dialogue between Kosovo. 8% among Albanians and 27% among Serbs 'do not know/do not really have a view' about this issue (see the bar below).



### 3.2. Kosovo’s red lines in relation to the final stage of the dialogue

Turning to the red lines, we asked respondents:

**What do you think should be the red lines of Kosovo in the new phase of dialogue?**

All participants were made aware about the conception of the red lines: the interviewers explained “By the red lines I mean conditions which the government should maintain at all costs and not be willing to compromise”. Based on public debates and previous publications, four issues were selected as potential ‘red lines’, namely jurisdiction over Gazivoda Lake, the Trepça mine, whether the Presevo valley should join Kosovo, and whether some parts of the north of Kosovo should join Serbia.

**Gazivoda Lake**

The Gazivoda Lake is a key asset of the larger Iber-Lepenc multipurpose water project developed by Kosovo’s provincial institutions in Yugoslavia in the late 1960s as part of a master plan to develop the principal rivers in Kosovo, namely the Iber and Lepenc, in order to provide water for industry, communities, irrigation and power generation. The Gazivoda Lake has an area of 11.9 km<sup>2</sup> of which 9.2km<sup>2</sup> reside in Kosovo’s territory and 2.7 km<sup>2</sup> in Serbia’s territory.

The Gazivoda Lake/Reservoir is accumulated from the river Iber, a major river in Kosovo that together with its tributaries forms one of the five key water basins

in Kosovo – the Iber Basin - which covers an area of 4044.21 km<sup>2</sup>. The Reservoir itself is some 24 km long and 12 km wide and represents the largest water reserve in the country. This makes it a strategic asset of paramount importance for Kosovo not only in terms of water security, but also economic development (both agriculture and industry) and human security.



Photo of Gazivoda Lake<sup>7</sup>

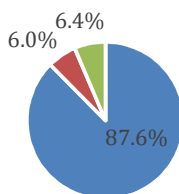
The majority of participants, 88%, responded that '*Gazivoda Lake should remain within Kosovo's territory*' (see the pie chart below). Analysis of the Albanian and Serbian samples reveals a significant difference in responses. 96% among Albanians and 5% among Serbs responded with '*Gazivoda Lake should remain within Kosovo's territory*'. 0.6% among Albanians and 60% among Serbs responded with '*Gazivoda Lake should not remain within Kosovo's territory*'. 3% among Albanians and 35% among Serbs responded with '*I have no idea which path to follow*'. Further analysis reveals that the majority of Serbs (69%) from Mitrovica region opted for the alternative '*I have no idea which path to follow*'.

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<sup>7</sup> Tripadvisor (2012) 'Mitrovica Photo, Gazivoda Lake' A.M. Available at: <https://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g774868-i47688133-Mitrovica.html> (Accessed on: 30/01/2019).

What do you think should be the red lines of Kosovo in the new phase of dialogue?

**Gazivoda Lake should remain within Kosovo's territory**



- Yes, definitely should remain within Kosovo's territory
- No, definitely should not remain within Kosovo's territory
- I have no idea which path to follow

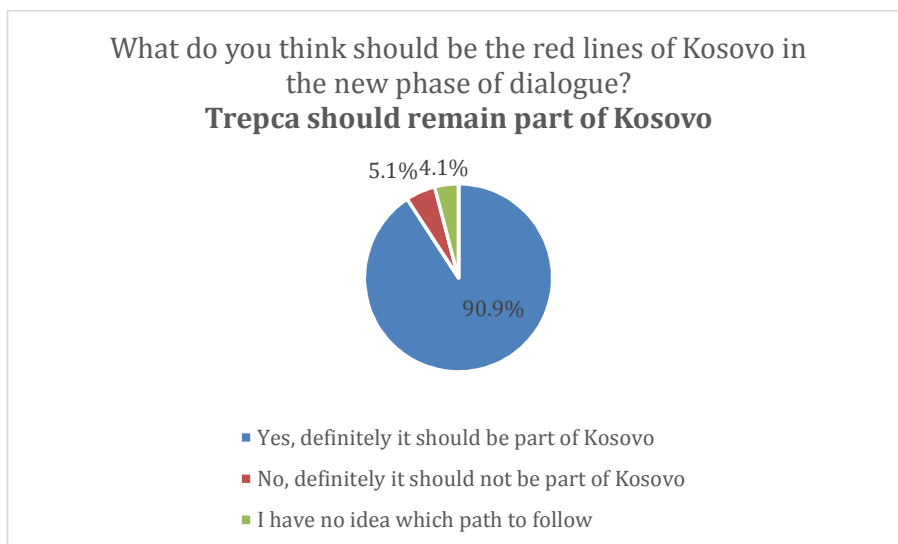
### **Trepça**

The Trepça mine in Stantërg belongs to the city of Mitrovica. Mitrovica is undoubtedly one of the most important cities not only in Kosovo but also in the entire Balkan Peninsula and beyond, for mineral resources<sup>8</sup>. In fact, Trepça exported goods worth 103 million dollars in 1983, ranking itself as the 5<sup>th</sup> largest exporter in the former Yugoslavia<sup>9</sup>. For 58 years of manufacturing, Trepça produced 33 million tons of ore. Basically, the reserves of ore and the mines in Trepça are the basis of the contest over Trepça. Our findings related to this enterprise are presented below.

An overwhelming majority of participants 91% responded with *'Trepça should remain part of Kosovo'* (see the pie chart below). Analysis of the Albanian and Serbian samples again reveals a significant difference in responses. 99% among Albanians and 9% among Serbs responded with *'Trepça should remain part of Kosovo'*. 0.6% among Albanians and 50% among Serbs responded with *'Trepça should not remain part of Kosovo'*. 0.4% among Albanians and 41% among Serbs responded with *'I have no idea which path to follow'*. Further analysis reveals that the majority of Serbs (83%) from the Mitrovica region opted for the alternative *'I have no idea which path to follow'*.

<sup>8</sup> Trepça 'Ndërmarrje në Administrim të AKP'. Available at: <http://www.trepca-akp.com/pages/posts/2/> (Accessed on: 30/01/2019).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

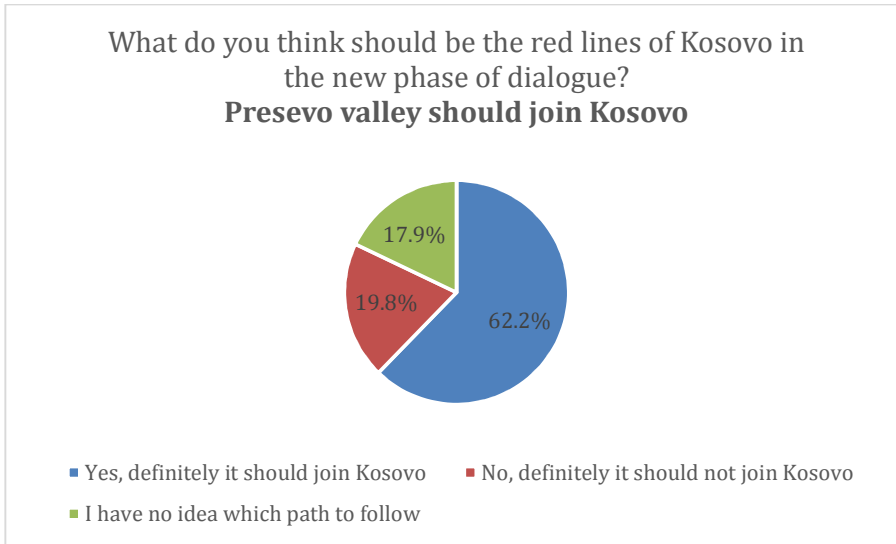


### **Presevo valley should join Kosovo**

Though part of Serbia, Presevo Valley (Presevo, Bujanoc and Medvegja, covering an area of approximately 1249 km<sup>2</sup>) is intrinsically linked to Kosovo. The region's Albanians point out they have far fewer self-governing rights than Kosovo already gives to the Serbs; already before Kosovo declared independence, Presevo Valley's leaders passed a resolution stating they would agree to remain in Serbia but "in case of an eventual change of Kosovo's borders the Valley will work toward unification with Kosovo"<sup>10</sup>. The finding below represents the attitudes of citizens in Kosovo, regarding the future of Presevo valley.

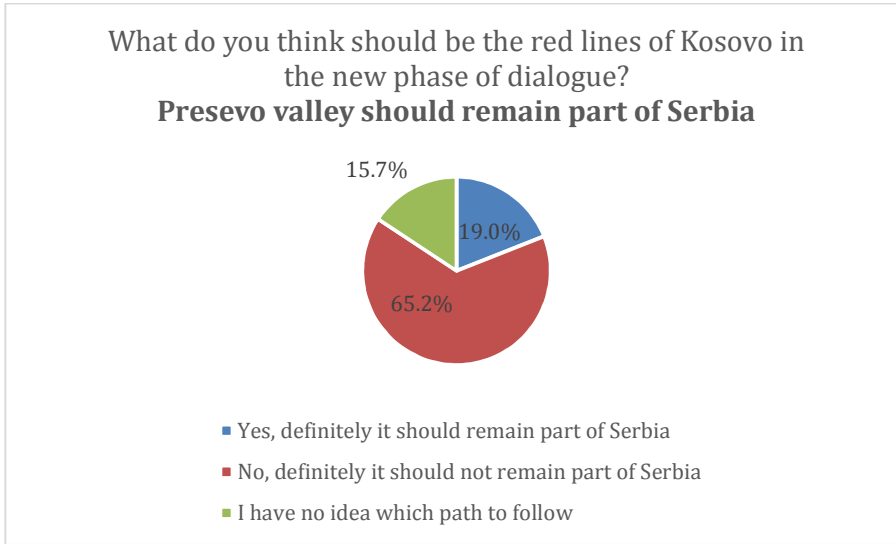
The majority of participants (62%) responded that '*Presevo valley should join Kosovo*' (see the pie chart below). Analysis of the Albanian and Serbian samples reveals a substantial difference between their responses. 69% among Albanians and 0% among Serbs responded with '*Presevo valley should join Kosovo*' while 13% among Albanians and 81% among Serbs responded with the option '*Presevo valley should **not** join Kosovo*'. 18% among Albanians and 19% among Serbs responded with '*I have no idea which path to follow*'.

<sup>10</sup> Marko Prelec (2013) 'Preševo's grievances and the Kosovo-Serbia talks,' Crisis Group, 1 February. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/balkans/presevo-s-grievances-and-kosovo-serbia-talks> (Accessed on: 30/01/2019).



When the question was asked in the opposite way, namely whether the **Presevo valley should remain part of Serbia**, the pattern of findings was basically the same. The majority of participants (65%) responded that '*Presevo valley should not remain part of Serbia*' (see the pie chart below). Analysis of the Albanian and Serbian samples again reveals a significant difference among their responses. 13% among Albanians and 84% among Serbs responded with '*Presevo valley should remain part of Serbia*' compared with 72% among Albanians and 16% among Serbs who responded with the option '*Presevo valley should not remain part of Serbia*'. 16% among Albanians and 0% among Serbs responded with '*I have no idea which path to follow*'.

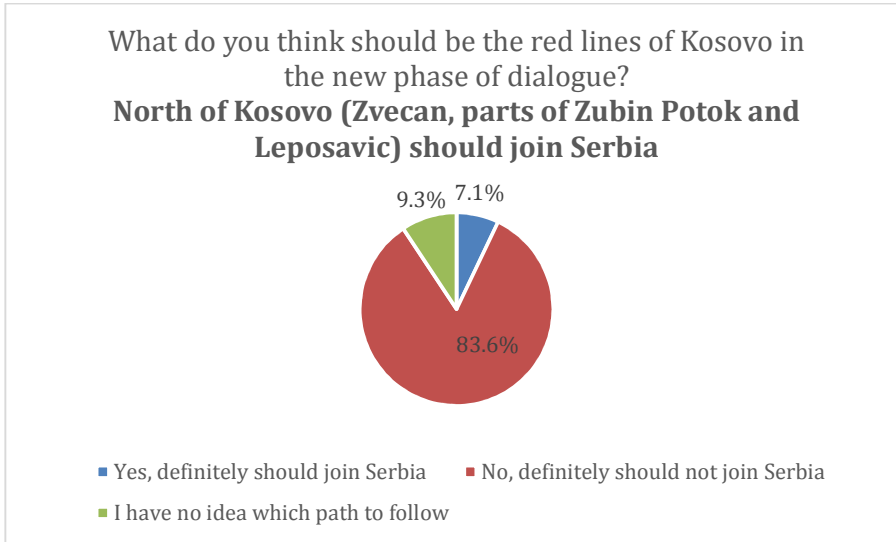




**The North of Kosovo (Zveçan, parts of Zubin Potok and Leposaviç) should join Serbia**

Northern Kosovo (Zveçan, parts of Zubin Potok, and Leposaviç,) includes an area of approximately 1000 km<sup>2</sup> and in its majority is inhabited by ethnic Serbs. The section below presents the opinions of Kosovo’s citizens about the future of this territory.

The majority of participants (84%) responded that ‘North of Kosovo (Zveçan, parts of Zubin Potok and Leposaviç) should **not** join Serbia’ (see the pie chart below). Analysis of the Albanian and Serbian samples again reveals a significant difference among their responses. 4% among Albanians and 41% among Serbs responded with ‘North of Kosovo (Zveçan, parts of Zubin Potok and Leposaviç) should join Serbia’ while 91% among Albanians and 10% among Serbs responded with the option ‘North of Kosovo (Zveçan, parts of Zubin Potok and Leposaviç) should not join Serbia’. 5% among Albanians and 49% among Serbs responded with ‘I have no idea which path to follow’.



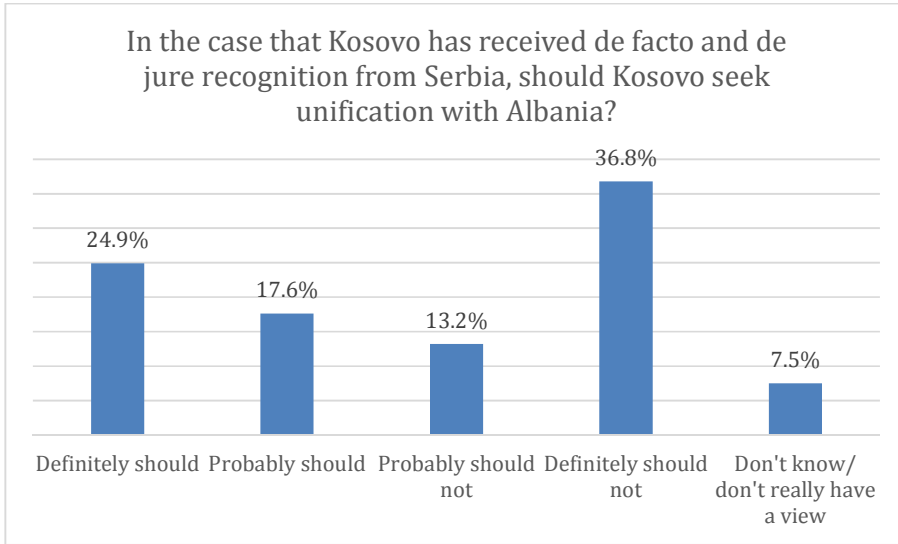
### 3.3. Should Kosovo seek unification with Albania?

Turning next to the question whether, should recognition from Serbia be achieved, Kosovo should join Albania, the survey asked the following question:

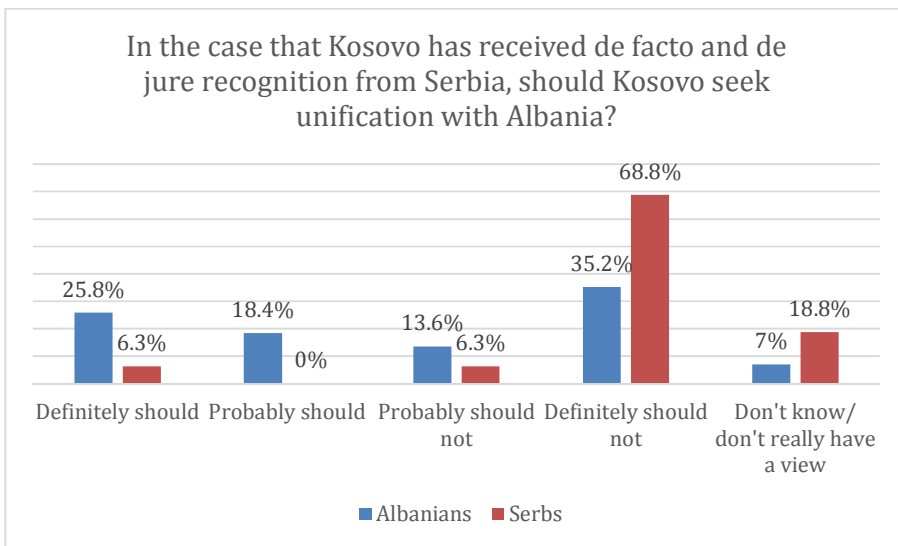
**Should Kosovo seek unification with Albania in the case it receives de facto and de jure recognition from Serbia?**

In relation to this question (in the case that Kosovo receives de facto and de jure recognition from Serbia, should Kosovo seek unification with Albania?), the findings were as following:

43% of the total sample responded with Kosovo either 'definitely should' or 'probably should' seek unification with Albania in case it receives de facto and de jure recognition from Serbia. Whereas, half of the sample (50%) responded that *Kosovo* either 'definitely should not' or 'probably should not' seek unification with Albania in case it receives de facto and de jure recognition from Serbia. 8% among participants 'do not know/do not really have a view' on this issue.



Evaluation of responses of the Albanian and Serbian samples reveals a somewhat different pattern of responses: 44% among Albanians and 6% among Serbs responded with Kosovo either 'definitely should' or 'probably should' seek unification with Albania in case it receives de facto and de jure recognition from Serbia. 49% among Albanians and 75% among Serbs (a statistically significant difference) responded with Kosovo either 'probably should not' or 'definitely should not' seek unification with Albania in case it receives de facto and de jure recognition from Serbia. 7% among Albanians and 19% among Serbs 'do not know/do not really have a view' about this issue.



### 3.4. The *three scenarios* for an eventual deal between Kosovo and Serbia

Participants were exposed to the following options/alternatives for an eventual deal between Kosovo and Serbia: a) continuation of the status quo; b) de facto recognition from Serbia, and with extended executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/community; and c) de-facto and de-jure recognition of Kosovo's statehood from Serbia in return for border adjustment/new territorial arrangements between Kosovo and Serbia. To clarify, interviewers explained to respondents, and it was also written down in the survey, what was meant with the status quo<sup>11</sup>, de-facto and extended executive powers<sup>12</sup>, and de-jure<sup>13</sup>.

#### 3.4.1. First scenario: Continuation of the status quo

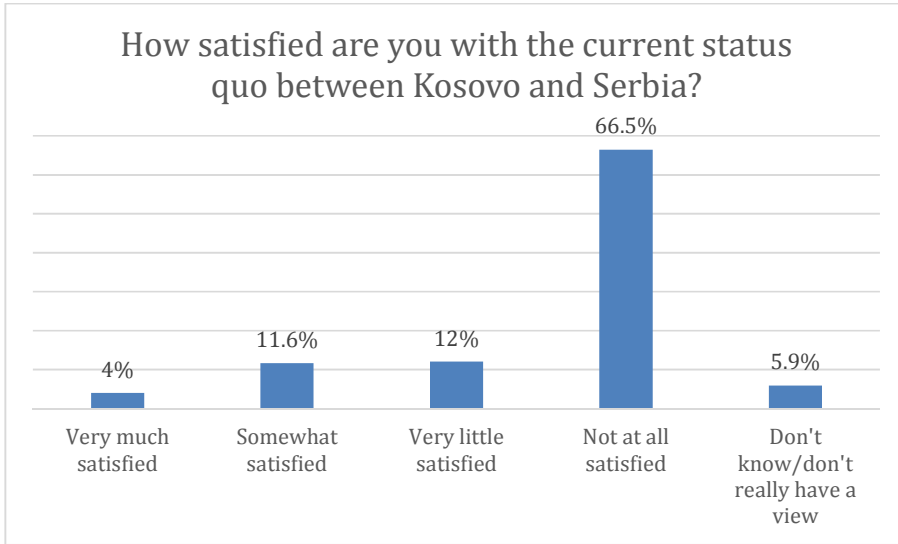
Regarding the first scenario, we asked the following question: How satisfied are you with the current status quo between Kosovo and Serbia? 15% responded with either 'very much satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' about the current status quo between Kosovo and Serbia (see the chart below). The majority of participants (79%) responded with either 'very little' or 'not at all satisfied' about the current status quo between Kosovo and Serbia. 6% responded with 'do not know/do not really have a view' on this issue.

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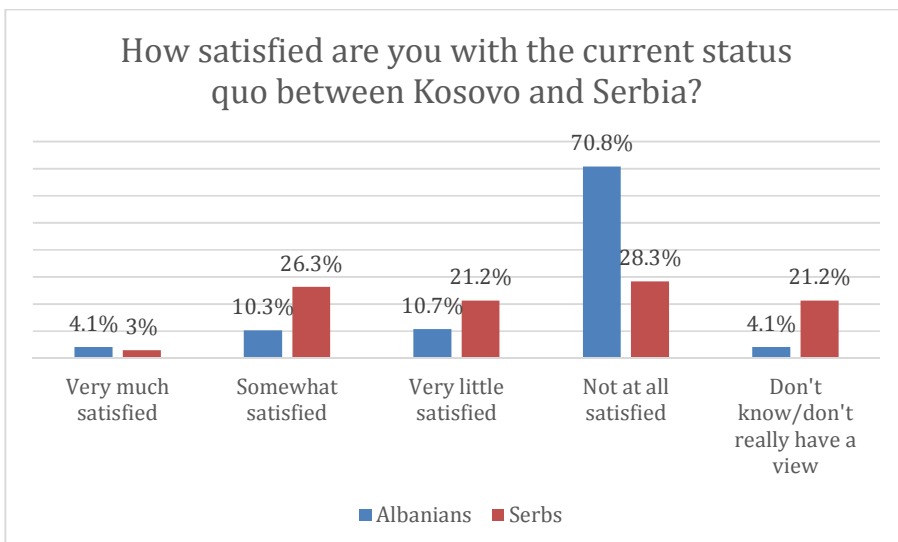
<sup>11</sup> By status quo, I mean lack of mutual recognition and pending political and diplomatic relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

<sup>12</sup> By de facto recognition, I mean that Serbia recognizes Kosovo's institutions but it will not recognize Kosovo's statehood; by extended executive powers, I mean powers that would include constitutional change in Kosovo and would create new political entity in Kosovo, that would be a semi-autonomous entity.

<sup>13</sup> By de jure recognition, I mean that Serbia will recognize Kosovo's borders and its statehood.



Separate analysis of Albanian and Serbian sample reveals a somewhat different pattern of responses. 14% among the Albanian sample and 29% among Serbs are either 'very much satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with the current status quo between Kosovo and Serbia. 82% among Albanians compared with 50% among Serbs are either 'very little satisfied' or 'not at all satisfied' with the current status quo between Kosovo and Serbia". 4% among Albanians and 21% among Serbs responded with 'I do not know or do not really have a view' about the current status quo between Kosovo and Serbia. These differences are statistically significant (at the 0.05 level), but the results are in line with the idea that there is, in both communities, a mood for change.

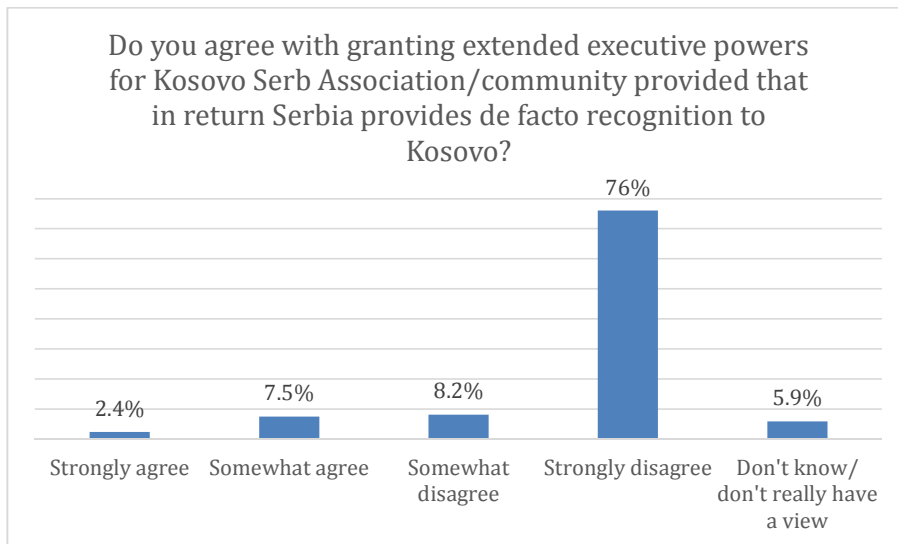


### 3.4.2. Second scenario: De facto recognition from Serbia, and with extended executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/Community

Concerning this scenario, participants were asked the following questions:

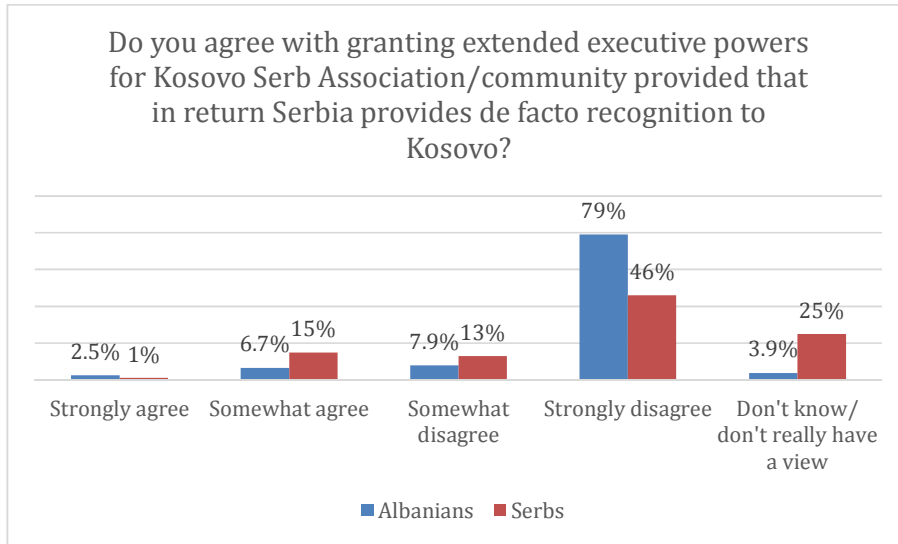
**(a) Do you agree with granting extended executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/community provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo?**

A small number of participants (10%) either 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree' about granting extended executive powers for Kosovo Serb Association/community provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo. The majority of participants (84%) either 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' about granting extended executive powers for Kosovo Serb Association/community provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo.



Analysis of responses among Albanian and Serbian sample reveals a somewhat similar patterns of responses. 9% among Albanians compared to 16% among Serbs either 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree' about granting extended executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/community provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo. 87% among Albanians

compared to 59% among Serbs either 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' about granting extended executive powers for Kosovo Serb Association/community provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo (although the difference is nonetheless statistically significant). 4% among Albanians and 25% among Serbs 'do not know/do not have a view on this' issue.

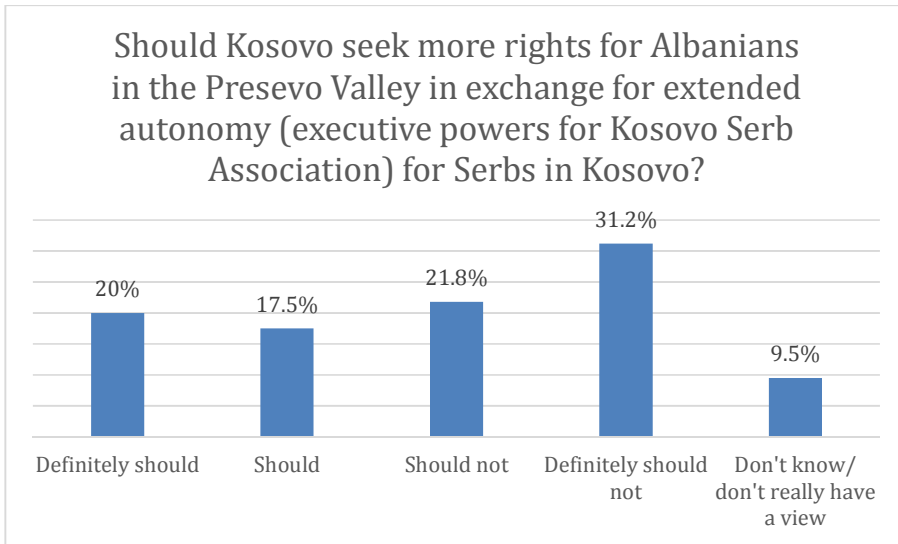


A somewhat different perspective, however, was obtained when the question raised the possibility of trading rights for Albanians in the Presevo valley with executive powers for the KSA. We asked:

**(b) Should Kosovo seek more rights for Albanians in the Presevo Valley in exchange for extended autonomy (executive powers for Kosovo Serb Association) for Serbs in Kosovo?**

Opinion was more divided on this question than it had been when the two issues were asked about separately. 38% think that Kosovo either 'definitely should' or 'should' seek more rights for Albanians in the Presevo Valley in exchange for extended autonomy (executive powers for Kosovo Serb Association) for Serbs in Kosovo. In contrast, 53% among respondents opted for *Kosovo* either 'should not' or 'definitely should not' seek more rights for Albanians in the Presevo

Valley in exchange for extended autonomy (executive powers for Kosovo Serb Association) for Serbs in Kosovo.



Analysis of responses among Albanian and Serbian sample reveals relatively significant difference in their responses. 41% among Albanians compared to 5% among Serbs view Kosovo either 'definitely should' or 'should' seek more rights for Albanians in the Presevo Valley in exchange for extended autonomy (executive powers for Kosovo Serb Association) for Serbs in Kosovo.

Conversely, 51% among Albanians compared to 72% among Serbs feel that Kosovo either 'should not' or 'definitely should not' seek more rights for Albanians in the Presevo Valley in exchange for extended autonomy (executive powers for Kosovo Serb Association) for Serbs in Kosovo. 8% among Albanians and 23% among Serbs 'do not know/do not have a view on this' issue (see the bar graph below).



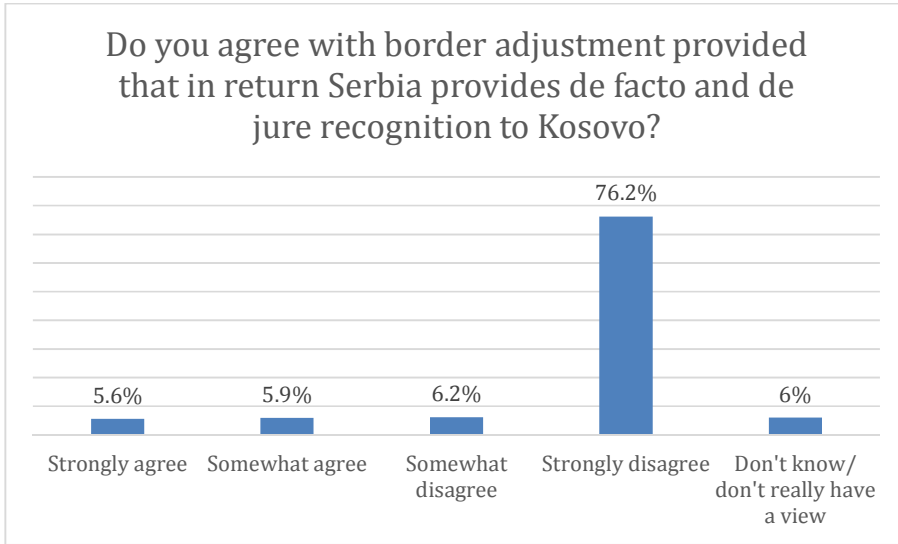


3.4.3. Third scenario: De facto and de jure recognition of Kosovo’s statehood from Serbia in return for border adjustment/new territorial arrangements between Kosovo and Serbia

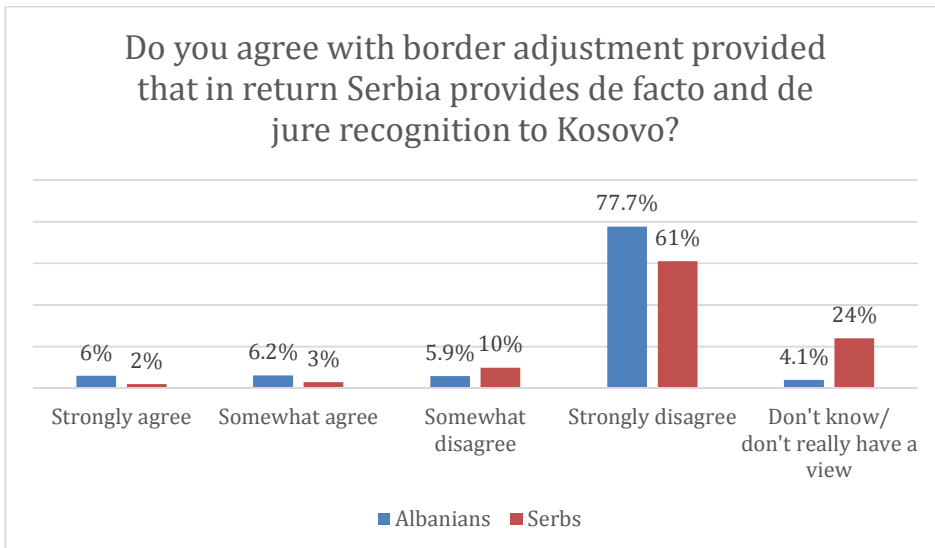
As far as this scenario is concerned, respondents were asked the following questions:

**(a) Do you agree with border adjustment provided that in return Serbia provides de facto and de jure recognition to Kosovo?**

A small number of participants (12%) either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘somewhat agree’ about the border adjustment provided that in return Serbia provides de facto and de jure recognition to Kosovo. In contrast, the majority of the participants (82%) either ‘somewhat disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ with the border adjustment provided that in return Serbia provides de fact and de jure recognition to Kosovo (see the bar below). 6% ‘do not know/do not really have a view’ on this issue.



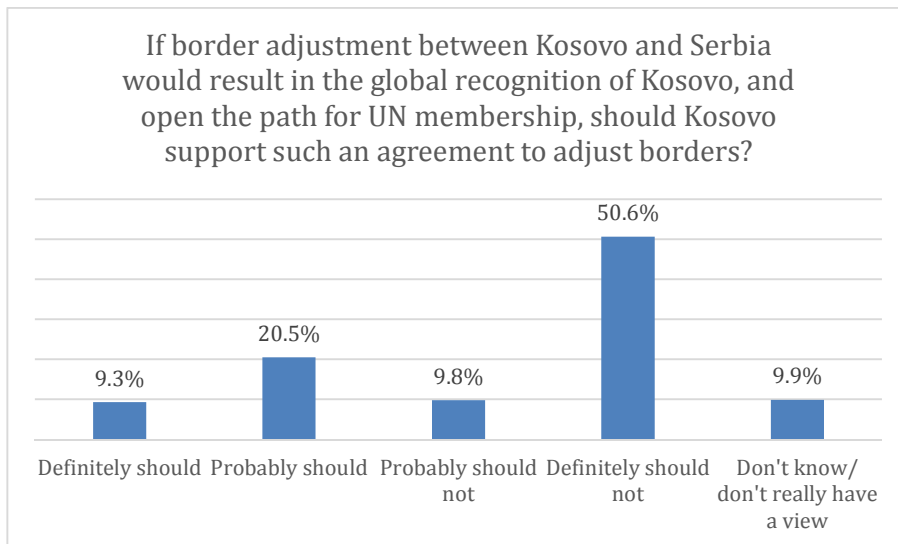
There is a somewhat similar pattern (see further on the bar below) of responses among Albanian and Serbian respondents. 12% among Albanians and 5% among Serbs either 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree' about this border adjustment option. 84% among Albanians and 71% among Serbs responded with either 'somewhat disagree' or 'strongly disagree' about the border adjustment provided that in return Serbia provides de facto and de jure recognition to Kosovo. 4% among Albanians and 24% among Serbs 'do not know/do not really have a view' on this issue.



The next question related to the border adjustment was:

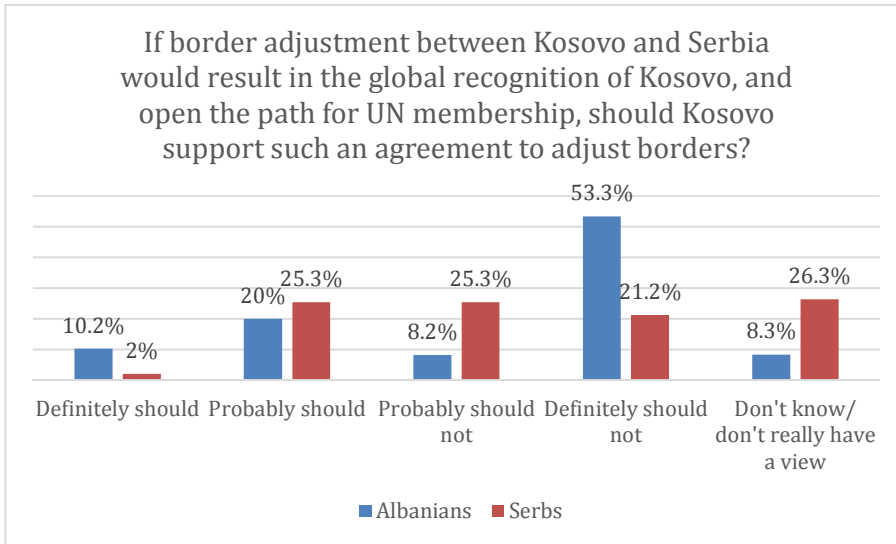
**(b) If border adjustment between Kosovo and Serbia would result in the global recognition of Kosovo and open the path for UN membership, should Kosovo support such an agreement to adjust borders?**

Alternatively, when participants were asked if Kosovo should accept the border adjustment if this would result in global recognition for Kosovo and open the path for UN membership, the answers were slightly different. Thus, in this respect, 30% of the sample responded with Kosovo either 'definitely should' or 'probably should' support the border adjustment option which would result in the global recognition of Kosovo and open the path for UN membership (see the chart below). Conversely, 60% responded with Kosovo either 'probably should not' or 'definitely should not' support the border adjustment option which would result in the global recognition of Kosovo and open the path for UN membership. 10% 'do not know/do not really have a view' on this issue.



Separate analysis of Albanian and Serbian sample (see more on the bar graph below) reveals a somewhat similar pattern of responses. 30% among Albanians and 27% among Serbs responded that Kosovo either 'definitely should' or 'probably should' support the border adjustment option if it resulted in the global recognition of Kosovo and open the path for UN membership. 61% among

Albanians and 47% among Serbs responded that Kosovo either 'probably should not' or 'definitely should not' support the border adjustment option even if it would result in the global recognition of Kosovo and open the path for UN membership. 8% among Albanians and 26% among Serbs 'do not know/do not really have a view' on this issue.



#### 4. Conclusions

The aim of this survey was to understand the perceptions and attitudes of citizens (*Vox Populi*) regarding the scenarios on the 'grand finale' between Kosovo and Serbia. A total of 1110 respondents in our survey (90% Albanians, 9% Serbs and 1% from other ethnic groups) make our sample nationally representative of the Kosovo population.

The survey shows that the majority of the Kosovo population is *against halting the dialogue* between Kosovo and Serbia. Overall, 62% of all the respondents do not agree with halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. Both Kosovo Albanians and Serbs agree that the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia should continue. 63% among Albanians and 54% among Serbs either 'strongly disagree' or 'somewhat disagree' with halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. However, a substantial number of the Serb sample did not have a view on this question (27%).

Although the majority of the Kosovo population is against halting the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, the survey shows however that Albanians and Serbs have very little agreement on the way forward regarding the deal between Kosovo and Serbia. There are extreme differences (all statistically significant) about the *red lines* on the next phase of the dialogue:

- Gazivoda lake should remain within Kosovo's territory (96% of Albanian versus 5% of the Serbian sample)
- Trepça should remain part of Kosovo (99% of Albanian versus 9% of the Serbian sample)
- Presevo valley should join Kosovo (69% of Albanian versus 0% of the Serbian sample)
- Presevo valley should remain part of Serbia (13% of Albanian versus 84% of the Serbian sample)
- North of Kosovo (Zvečan, parts of Zubin Potok and Leposaviç) should not join Serbia (91% of Albanian versus 10% of the Serbian sample). It should be noted that 49% of the Serbian sample opted for "I have no idea which path to follow")

The survey shows that opinion is divided regarding *Kosovo's unification with Albania* in the event that it receives de facto and de jure recognition from Serbia. Overall, 43% support the idea that Kosovo should seek unification with Albania in the event it receives de facto and de jure recognition from Serbia. However, 49% among Albanians and 75% among Serbs *disagree* with the option that Kosovo should seek unification with Albania in this case.

Regarding the *three scenarios*, there is little support among respondents (16% responded with either 'very much satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied') for the continuation of the status quo (**scenario 1**) and even less (10% responded with either 'strongly agree' or 'somewhat agree') about granting executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/community provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo (**scenario 2**). However, there is more support

(30% of respondents responded with either 'definitely should' or 'should') regarding border adjustment which would result in the global recognition of Kosovo and open the path for UN membership **(scenario 3)**.

Differences between Albanians and Serbs on the *three scenarios* were also considerably smaller than they were with respect to the *red lines*. Only a minority of Albanian respondents (14%) and of Serbs (29%) expressed their satisfaction with the current status quo between Kosovo and Serbia **(scenario 1)**. Similarly, only 9% among Albanians and 16% among Serbs expressed their agreement with granting extended executive powers for the Kosovo Serb Association/community provided that in return Serbia provides de facto recognition to Kosovo **(scenario 2)**. In contrast to previous two scenarios, 30% among Albanians and 27% among Serbs support border adjustment which would result in the global recognition of Kosovo and opened the path for UN membership **(scenario 3)**.

Overall, public opinion in Kosovo is dissatisfied with the status quo, would like the dialogue to continue, but Albanians and Serbs hold strong and opposing *red lines* on several issues on the final phase of the dialogue. With respect to the three scenarios, there are some divides between Albanians and Serbs, but it seems there is similar support, albeit less than a majority, regarding *scenario three*.

While question wording can affect the precise percentages favoring or opposing particular options, we should conclude that the Serb and Albanian populations of Kosovo speak with somewhat different voices, especially with respect to their red lines, but with one voice on the need to continue the dialogue. Finally, it can be concluded, that there is no substantial majority support among the Kosovo majority community (Albanians) on any of the three scenarios. This points to the fact that any 'grand finale' deal, if it is to be acceptable to the majority of the *vox populi* in Kosovo, should bring something stable, substantial and functional to Kosovo, otherwise it is doomed to fail.

