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BALKAN PUBLIC AGENDA
A Focus Groups Study

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Introduction

Objectives of the research

The qualitative approach was designed to deliver information needed for developing a questionnaire inquiry to be implemented in all Southeast European countries. The goal of the qualitative research is to monitor the public agenda in the Balkan area.

The results of the focus group-based research are not to be considered representative for the entire population of a country. They have an intrinsic value and provide an understanding on how people motivate their stand with respect to the situation of the country.

The group interviews were conducted according to the interview guide designed by IMAS in collaboration with IDEA International and with the network or research institutes in all the countries involved in the project.

Recruiting and group composition

Respondents were selected by the defined criteria for the ethnic majority and the major ethnic minority at Macedonia. We recruited 31 persons for all four focus group. None of the attendants work for FORUM or for any media. We chose the persons from the lists or known people of our interviewers network.

All four focus groups were done in Skopje. We invited the persons first at the rented equipped place for sessions in January, and than in April at our specially designed place at our offices.

The table bellow presents the criteria considered in recruiting participants for the four groups:

	Date	Place	No. of participants	Group composition
Group 1	17/04/01	Skopje	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- High education- Age 22-39- Macedonian nationality- M&F- Incomes higher than average
Group 2	12/04/01	Skopje	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Average education- Age 40-55- Macedonian nationality- M&F- Married with children
Group 3	27/01/01	Skopje	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- People from rural environment- Macedonian nationality- M&F
Group 4	26/01/01	Skopje	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Average or high education- Albanian nationality- M&F

1. Main concerns, efforts and hopes of people in the present situation in Macedonia

1.1. Most important issues and problems that our country is facing with now:

- Interethnic relations
- Unemployment
- Economic problems - production development, investments
- Fight against organized crime, corruption
- Educational system and the problem of higher education of Albanians
- Reforms in the health system
- Partisation of the state
- The security situation in the country
- Recognition and affirmation of the state
- Change of the constitution
- Building of democratic institutions
- Drug addiction

1.2. The following issues should be solved in near future

- Resolving the current security situation, because the state can not function under tension and in illusionary peace and in expectation of a civil war
- Solving of the most painful issue - the recognition of our country under its constitutional name, which will solve other related questions.
- Economic problems to be solved in the direction of production development, attracting of foreign investments and decrease of unemployment
- Improvement of the educational system, which is not to be a combination of the old socialist system and new capitalist elements. We need to get closer to European standards, but with a certain adjustment to our characteristics. In this context the question of higher education of Albanians is raised and their request for the legalization of the university in Tetovo. It should be equal with the universities in Skopje and Bitola, and the University of Shtul should be private.
- A priority question is the fight against organized crime and corruption, which is large, and these are the generators of all the condition in the country.
- The Constitution should be changed because that is where ethnic discrimination comes from. We could say that there is ethnic discrimination since 1945. An indicator is the small presence of Albanians in the institutions of the state.
- Unemployment as a problem needs to be solved in the direction of not employing people based on party affiliation, but on certain criteria. There is a great involvement of the parties in the process of employment.

All these issues could be solved. The state is the one who needs to be concerned with their resolution through its institutions and organs. That's why we have an elected legitimate government and legitimate representatives. But our contribution is needed in this. If the right people are elected to the right positions, and if there is no replacing of expert staff and administration with every change of the government, some issues would be solved more quickly.

1.3. Issues that will be most difficult to solve:

- Corruption and a corrupt government. It is necessary to have honest people in the government, prepared to solve the problem of corruption, and it is irrelevant which party they will be from. Some basic methods do not function here in the so-called anti-corruption system. One can also say that crime and corruption are stimulated by higher instances in a certain way.
- If there were adequate valuation of labor there would not be corruption (this is not an excuse for an action), and also to have adequate sanctions for the corrupted.
- In a stable system where there are no cover-ups of financial embezzlements, where the tax system is functioning, there would not be corruption. It is not difficult to discover crime (it is public), there is a problem of how to punish it.
- The most difficult issue to solve for the Albanians is the change of the constitution. It is the generator of crisis related to ethnic discrimination in education and a larger presence of Albanians in the state institutions.

2. Economic issues

2.1. Economic problems. Causes of economic problems:

- Privatization, which is still not completed, or in some places not adequately performed and needs to be re-examined. The largest crime in the country comes from privatization.
- Many factories that were excellent facilities were destroyed in the transition period. They were devaluated and purchased for small amounts of money by their own managers.
- The lack of foreign investments and the way to attract them is also a problem for the country. We are still an area with a high risk for investments.
- There are problems in the pay system. The turnover is not well organized. (ZPP does not function as good as SOK did). The banks are ineffective and do not have good credit conditions, to attract citizens to save. They do not have an effective stimulating policy.
- The economy is overburdened with taxes. The profit of the firms after paying all the taxes is very small, and this forces owners to avoid them.
- The turnover itself in the economy (not paying the invoices on time) is also a cause for the bad condition in the economy.

2.2 Obstacles to solving the economic problems

- The political situation in the country;
- Disobeying the laws in the country;
- Non-functioning of the judicial system;
- Distrusting the state mechanisms;
- Too great bureaucracy;
- The badly governed privatization, which was a robbery, and the destroying of the firms, with the aim of buying them for cheaper prices, and, on the other hand, the creation of powerful individuals;
- Lack of financial initiative and financial discipline, and in that context, the inability of the management teams to make their way on the foreign markets;
- No investments in the production facilities and the dependence of the Macedonian economy upon the Yugoslav market;
- The corruption and the corrupt Government.

2.3. Factors that could help solving economic problems

- Change of our mentality in the sense of greater appreciating of someone's labor and creativity, and in that direction the people themselves should come out on the streets and protest against some injustices;
- Preventing all the spheres of life from partitionation.

2.4. The role of international organizations and institutions in our economy

- Controlling the work of the Government and the funds that they give (IMF);
- Giving financial assistance to our poor industry;
- Stabilizing the denar in the last 2-3 years (The World Bank);
- Granting favorable credit lines and direct investments, mainly in the sector of production;
- The role of the privatization in the state-owned enterprises;

Generally speaking, their role is necessarily positive, but their demands to us in conducting the reforms should be more elastic and more flexible, because their economic standards are unreachable for a small country like ours.

However, there is also an opinion that they are only profiteers and that they do not have any influence over our economy.

2.5. Economic perspectives for the following year

Generally speaking, the respondents expect the economic situation to get better. This depends on whether the reforms will be conducted faster, if there are foreign investments, projects. If not, the situation will remain status quo.

A change in the financial regulative is necessary, then functioning of the legal state and organization of the work and thinking on a European level.

2.6. What do people understand by market economy?

- to give opportunity and room for everybody that wants to participate on the market and to shape the price and the production. The party companies that don't allow equal participation of the other companies that are not connected to the Government disable this.
- free initiative of everybody that wants to try his/her own capability of conducting business. Transparency of the market and working without losses, with effects in the sense of quality of people and quality of work.

The market economy should function according to some European standards, but some people in our country still don't understand it. The economy in our country is of some hybrid type that not even the greatest economists can understand it. A negative thing of the market economy is that in our country people profit mainly from services, we have import and trade, and not production.

Another negative thing of the market economy in our country is that profitable companies that had a monopoly are sold.

As a negative effect of the market economy, people point to firing from work - unemployment.

2.7 The role of the Government in the economy

- The role of the Government in the economy of our country is irrefutable, but it is limited by many instruments of the World Bank and the IMF.
- The Government plays a role in selling the enterprises
- The Government should find ways for attracting foreign capital through tax relieves, relieves in the transport (permits, visas), insurance of foreign investments, etc.
- to find ways for overcoming the problem of too great bureaucracy and the interpretation of the laws, because all this leads to corruption.
- It is necessary to expand the role of the Government in the sphere of controlling, more specifically controlling the Ministries of Finance and Economy.
- Mechanisms for protecting the country from all that is done in the economy in our country should be constructed. It should have greater role in the market economy (it hasn't done anything for the economic development in years).
- The Government should enable the economic processes to be dictated by the market, and not by some party's politics according to which the companies that are close to the authorities (the Government) will form monopolies and corruption will spread.
- The role of the Government will be greater or smaller depending on the established game rules, the established legal regulative.

3. Political institutions

3.1 What do you understand by democracy?

- Democracy is the opportunity for everybody to say what he/she thinks freely, without being prosecuted or sentenced. The opportunity to say one's opinion publicly and to realize the rights that absolutely all the citizens are entitled to. Democracy means equal rights for all the citizens.
- Democracy as rule of people and freedom of speech is on a very low level in our country. It is understood in the negative sense - everybody to do what he/she wants, to say what he/she wants, without bearing any responsibility, if there are negative reactions.
- There is too much disorder in our country to say that we have democracy, and there is no feeling of responsibility for the actions, so it goes into anarchy.
- There is democracy for certain circles, and for the other there is no democracy. It exists only for the people on power and those that are close to the government, but it doesn't exist for the common people. There is no institution where the citizen can complain of abuse by the state organs and institutions. The ombudsman as an institution does not function.
- If you are on the right side, then you have the free right of choice, right of freedom of speech, right to good earning and other rights. But, you cannot say there is democracy if the laws exist only for one group of people and for the other they don't exist when they should.
- Democracy can be felt only during elections when the citizen exhibits his/her right to vote. Until we clearly learn about our rights and obligations towards the system, we will have certain problems towards the democracy that we practice. For a nation like ours, with our mentality, ten years is too short a period to say that we have become democrats.
- As regards the question whether the Government is democratic, it should be democratic because it receives legitimacy based on elections. In our country, the Government doesn't bear any responsibility (until now, one or two ministers have submitted resignations).

3.2 What is the role of ordinary people in the decision-making processes in their towns or cities and the country?

Most of the respondents think that the role of the ordinary people in the decision-making processes should be great and very important. They express their

opinions and attitudes through the elected state organs and the local government.

But, their role in that process is absolutely marginalized. It is only about fulfilling their citizen duty to vote and elect

their own representatives in the government, which is a decision of some importance, but it has no further effects. In their choice of representatives, the quality of the candidates is not considered at all, it is only about punishing the previous set of representatives in the institutions.

The allying of the political parties is still not democratic enough. They function as leader parties, which causes bad

functioning of the Parliament as an institution.

People witness everything that is going on in their towns and cities and directly feel the consequences from the decisions of their elected representatives, so they should have impact on the decision-making process, if certain procedure of work and action is obeyed.

3.3 Confidence towards institutions

The opinions of the respondents about the local, national and international institutions and their activities are divided. They said the following things:

- The role of the local government (the mayor, the administration) as representatives of the citizens is to solve the local problems in the municipality.
- The mayor should be a common man, open for talking to every citizen. His work should be focused on the development of the municipality he represents, but, while doing that, he should spend the allocated funds on right investments and meeting the dead lines, which is not a case with our mayors.
- The local government is active only in the period before elections, and after elections their activity is reduced, and for certain individuals it can be said that they don't do anything. They don't use the allocated funds correctly so that people can see some results, or what they do first is to put some money aside for themselves.
- It is necessary that they bear responsibility for their activities, because corruption is also present in this sphere.
- The non-functioning of the local self-government results from the fact that it has very small funds at its disposal, there are no finances, its budget is catastrophic. It works with funds obtained from projects and foundations.
- Another negativity is that everything in the local self-government is politicized. Once the representatives are elected, it is necessary that they put aside their party interests.
- The local self-government has very small authorizations. Many things are centralized, including the local self-government, which reflects on its unsatisfactory functioning.
- As a bad side of the mayor who should be consultative, careful, steady person is that he is at the same time a leader of a party, so there is the notion prevailing that he may be using his authorizations for his party interests.

3.4 Performances of the political institutions, the administrative institutions, the armed forces, the judiciary and the international community

- The respondents have positive opinion about the President of the country.
- The Prime Minister, the Government and the governmental institutions are not working the way they should work. Partisation is present here, and people that should reexamine their own knowledge and abilities come on power. The Prime Minister performs his function regarding his party interests.
- As far as the Parliament is concerned, there is the opinion present that party interests prevail in the course of the decision and law-making processes. It is composed of unserious MPs that don't attend parliament sessions regularly and don't make any solutions. The Parliament is under the influence of the Government, i.e. it doesn't control the executive power successfully.
- The opinions about the judiciary are the following: they are slow in performing their duties and as long as the Parliament elects them, there won't be independent judiciary (they work for the Parliament interests). The confidence towards judiciary has been lost in our country.
- The prevailing opinion about the political parties is that they are numerous, national and that they are most interested in obtaining power instead of promoting the country and the relations in it. The political parties should free themselves from the influence of some mason groups that incorporate criminal activities.
- The armed forces are considered to perform their function well, bearing in mind what they have at disposal and their financial situation. The citizens don't have much information about the activities of the armed forces in peacetime, but they think that in the current crisis situation they have shown great weakness. (It is a Macedonian syndrome to undertake actions for solving the problem only after something happens).
- The opinions are divided when it comes to the police. The negative attitudes are that it is corrupt and politicized, inefficient in prosecuting and arresting criminals. (Certain cases of arresting criminals are exaggerated so that to show their efficiency). In certain cases the policemen don't undertake the necessary measures or if they do, the measures undertaken are not strict enough. Another disadvantage of the police is the lack of sufficient number of district policemen. The Albanians point to the fact that they are present in a very small number in the police.
- The international community serves as protection for us. But, here raises the question whether it is always properly informed about the situation in our country. Our country is under a great pressure from the international community both in the financial and the security aspect. We have to be compatible and to respond to certain demands that they direct to us.

3.5 Participation of the citizens in certain activities with the aim of changing something in the society

- The respondents pointed out that the possibility for them to express themselves with the aim of being involved in certain activities is limited. Many of them involve primarily with the aim of realizing certain interests of their own, and not to help in solving the problems of the society.
- The power of the citizens shows only at elections. The referendum should be a form practiced by the citizens.
- Most of the respondents say that they would take part in some non-political organizations, citizens' associations, but the fear of consequences is present, which is an obstacle to the formation of such organizations and associations and the possibility of their undertaking activities.
- It was pointed out that some time should pass before the citizens as members of non-governmental organizations could have influence of some kind and before they could achieve some results in the direction of changing certain things in the society.
- There is the opinion present that protests, strikes and petitions are not the most convenient forms that the citizens would use to express themselves.
- The activities that are done within the political parties are aimed at benefiting and solving the existential issues of the members.

4. Civil society

4.1 Main sources of information for the citizens about public affairs

- As main sources of information about public affairs, the respondents pointed to the electronic media, i.e. TV and radio, and the printed media. But, they think that at this moment none of these informs correctly, objectively and also they don't possess the right information.
- The situation in the media is that they present the situation depending on who finances their work. There are media that are inclined to the position and media inclined to the opposition, so their objectivity in informing depends on this. The television as a medium should be neutral instead of close to some political option.
- The respondents watch all the TV stations, and most objective TV stations, according to them, are A1 TV and SKAJ NET TV. They as the most realistic TV stations are fastest in presenting the information to the public.
- The national TV station is the least objective TV and SITEL TV has been pointed out as biased to the opposition.
- As far as the printed media are concerned - the daily newspapers as sources of information - the bias with the government or the opposition are also present. It is up to the readership to decide on which newspaper they would read without turning the press into some brainwashing apparatus.
- The Albanian respondents pointed out that they are handicapped in reference to informing through the printed media because they have only two newspapers and it is difficult to analyze which one of these two has the true and objective information.

4.2 Performances and role of the non-governmental organizations in our country

The respondents have a positive attitude towards these organizations, which take on a rather balanced variant of acting in the society and they are a moving force, but they have to be non-politicized and independent. Such organizations are those that are financed by some international organization and those that are not will exist with many difficulties to undertake any activities in the society.

The NGOs in our country are also politicized and those NGOs function that are headed by people close to the government. Their role is also minimized by the existence of some quasi NGOs that are

formed solely for making an easy profit and many of the funds donated for the NGOs are spent in some quasi projects of their own that have no effects on the society.

The citizens are not informed about the role of the NGOs so it is difficult for them to take part in these organizations and contribute in a way to solving the problems that the NGOs deal with.

The role of the NGOs is the following: promoting positive values aimed at giving help to underdeveloped regions, monitoring and preparing reports on the situation with the media, reporting on the breaking of human rights and their

development and opening up a dialogue between the different ethnic groups, i.e.

development of civil society in general.

4.3 Performances and role of the professional organizations in our country

The respondents pointed out that the professional organizations are specialized expert organizations that have to play a certain role in finding solutions for improved legislation, working opportunities, etc. The negativity is that their daily activity depends upon the daily politics. They try to realize the activity for which they were established in the first place, but its realization is connected with the political institutions, the Government and their commentaries and suggestions are rarely accepted, even though they are the ones that are most familiar with those problems. (the Doctors' Chamber, the Lawyers' Association, the Judges' Association, etc.)

The professional organizations are still not active enough in our country. They don't function professionally because they are under the influence of politics. (ex. The independent trade union is under the

influence of one political party and the association of trade-union members under the influence of another political party, or the case with the students that have two students' organizations, which belong to two different political parties)

The professional organizations are services of the leading structures and they don't have self-initiative, but they are governed by the higher instances in our country (ex. The Economic Chamber is a service of the Government). There is a lot of corruption in them and they are active only when it comes to their personal interests (ex. The Lawyers' Association).

Also it was pointed out that the professional organizations work very little for the interests of the people and for the protection of people's rights (ex. The Doctors' Association, the Lawyers' Association).

4.4 Performances and role of the religious organizations in our country

The respondents pointed out that in these difficult periods for existence, the religion is like a sort of opium for the people. Otherwise, religion is the identity of the people, a way of survival.

The religious organizations have an influence over the activities in our country, especially the church. The church should be separated from the state. The church is consulted for every problem of national importance, which is not the case with the Islamic Community, pointed out the Albanian respondents. They also think that the orthodox religion has the status of a national religion, even though the Constitution stresses the equality among all the religions.

As far as the other religious organizations-sects are concerned, the respondents think that they are religious associations with great amounts of money spinning around them. It is not known whether the state has insight in their functioning, so it is an excellent opportunity for money laundry. The sects are financed from abroad with certain goal and their legality should be investigated.

The role of those organizations in the sense of imposing certain religious attitudes different from our religion can succeed only with uneducated people that are seduced and financially exhausted.

5. Public services

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	
Health	5.7	4.7	4.5	2.4	4.3
Education	6.3	5.4	5.2	3.4	4.0
Social welfare	4.7	2.0	5.0	3.8	3.9
Public transport	6.0	4.0	5.4	5.1	5.1
Heating	7.2	6.2	3.9	6.2	5.9
Electro distribution	7.0	6.7	6.7	5.7	6.5
Water supply	6.7	6.3	5.0	5.7	5.9
Police	7.3	4.7	5.2	1.4	4.6

5.1 Assessment of the public services: the two of them with highest grades and the two with lowest grades

The public services that were given the lowest grades by the respondents are: health and social welfare.

Social welfare - was negatively assessed due to the following reasons: it is very low, it comes very late, it doesn't come

into the right hands (it is received by able people who should be engaged in doing something and, on the other hand, employed people receive social welfare, which they shouldn't receive it).

New criteria for being entitled the right to social welfare and child allowance, which is also very low, should be made and the way of being entitled the right to a social apartment should be reexamined. There is an emphasized need for establishing special commissions that would investigate the matter thoroughly to see whether those people that request social welfare meet the conditions for realizing that right.

The situation in this public service is bad also because the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has the worst organization and the same people (from the same political party (PDP) have always headed it

Health - most of the respondents think that the situation in the health area is catastrophic in terms of insufficient equipment of the health institutions with apparatuses (x-rays, etc.)

Also it was pointed out that the health institutions possess insufficient material resources, they don't have good working conditions (as is the case with the private ordinations), and the medical workers should have higher salaries. When all this would be present, then the situation

would improve and the medical workers would work better.

The reasons for this condition should be looked for in the established legal system that regulates that area. A long procedure is necessary if someone wants to realize his/her right to healing.

The respondents assessed the condition bad also because of the chaos that is present during the supply of medicaments (agents, distributors, supply permits), which is without any established criteria, terms,

conditions, procedure and a manner of making decisions. This is a pre-condition

for the appearance of corruption in this sector.

The situation in this area is a reflection of the overall situation in our country and the Ministry of Health should deal with the problems.

The public services that were given the highest grades by the respondents are the following: the electric distribution and the heating.

The electric distribution functions good due to the great income of funds and investing those incomes in new facilities. They also have a high-quality development

program and a plan for increasing the consumption. The electro distribution has a good organization and they offer high-quality services.

The situation with the *heating* was assessed positively in terms of their good organization, the services they offer and the way of payment.

5.2 Privatization

When it comes to privatizing the Health, respondents think that an overall privatization of the Health is not necessary, because there should be a state-owned health institution - a clinic. Beside this, doctors shouldn't have two simultaneous jobs - both in state-owned institutions and in private ordinations.

As far as the privatization of the electric distribution is concerned, respondents think that at the beginning it wasn't going so well because wrong sectors were privatized.

Regarding the privatization of the heating, there is no obvious confrontation among the respondents.

6. International relations

6.1 The influence of the international organizations on the public agenda in our country

There can be no doubt that the international organizations have influence over the public agenda. We see that influence through the EU, the IMF, the World Bank that give financial assistance to our country only if we fulfill the tasks that they had previously given to us. We see their help through the directions and the instructions that they give us in conducting the reforms in our country. They have big influence in Central and East Europe, as well as on the Balkans in terms of the stabilization of the region (Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia).

We should be cooperative with those institutions, we should accept their projects and financial assistance in those areas that

are of interest to us. They have to set some conditions whenever they give money and it is up to us to negotiate about those conditions and depending on our skill for negotiation, to get what we request. Those measures that were assessed as negative for us should still be undertaken. We should accept the measures gradually to a certain degree.

Their standards and rules that may seem strict to us are moral and we should accept them, because without their help, we will have difficulties in surviving. But, we should deal with certain matters on our own, matters regarding the economy, bribe, corruption and crime.

6.2 The role of the international community

The role of the international community is big. Its security structures (NATO) have a great influence on not disturbing the security in the region and in not changing the borders. The great forces should learn that it is high time they dealt with the situation in Kosovo. As far as the relations with the neighbors are concerned, some think that our problem with the neighboring countries has been made up to enable the NATO forces stay in our country.

It was pointed out by the respondents that we should deal by ourselves with the interethnic relations in our country, to build up a relation of self-respect as humans and respect for the system without overemphasized domination of one nation. It is also necessary to have greater cooperation with our neighboring countries, co-existence and more intensive cooperation with the European Union.

6.3 Significance of the Stability Pact

The Stability Pact is a factual initiative for help in Southeast Europe, for this region in reference to the economic development, the security structure, the corruption, the infrastructure, etc. The Stability Pact incorporates principles, rules for support of a stable politics and

cooperation in that direction, with a specific area of action - infrastructure, education and relations with the neighboring countries. It is a model for cooperation in the region and taking part in the modern trends of living in Europe, and also giving help for certain

projects that have to be undertaken in our country.

The projects of the Stability Pact should help, in economic terms, in the countries' development, the regions that have suffered war, and also to help in dealing with the corruption. The proper use of the funds of the Stability Pact can help our joining the EU.

The opportunities for a regional cooperation are good, and the cooperation

6.4 Advantages/disadvantages of joining NATO

The opinions about our country's joining NATO are mainly positive. It would contribute for our better positioning in Europe and we would avoid being placed in the group of the most risky regions for investments. Also, it would solve the problems in reference to the security and incidents and it represents a guarantee for avoiding aggression from other countries. But, we should deal with the internal problems regarding the security.

By joining NATO our armament would become lesser, but we don't know whether they will be satisfied with our

with the countries of the region should be paid more attention, but the Kosovo problem should be solved previously.

The improved relations with the EU would mean higher standard, employments, liberalization of the market, easier communication, transport of people and goods (improved visa regime, abolishment of some customs tariffs, etc.).

armament. Their requests for our joining are realistic, but the problem is that there are many issues that are unsolved in our country (the problematic issues with Greece, Bulgaria, Albania).

There has to be a political consensus in our country for joining NATO even if the price that we will have to pay for it will be high, but the price of stability and security is incomparable. (Before their intervention in Yugoslavia, many of the citizens were in favor of joining NATO, but after that had happened, many of them were against joining NATO).

6.5 What would our country have to do if it was to join NATO?

According to the respondents, we would have to reduce our Army in the direction of increasing the number of professional soldiers in it. The Army should secure the borders and to intervene in the domestic disputes because that is what the

job of the police. Our country should introduce new standards in our army.

We cannot meet the conditions set by NATO in this moment and also we cannot support them financially. It is questionable whether we can meet their standards at all

6.6 The key to the security in the region

Most respondents think that the international community and NATO should take care of the security in the region. Besides this, solving the greatest problem in the region - turning Kosovo into a protectorate - was pointed out as a key to the security in the region. Because of the scenarios for destabilization of our country and the region, the international community should accept that all the citizens of our

country, which is not the case with the Albanians, should obey the Constitution, so it shouldn't avoid such important issues.

The security in the region involves not changing the borders, which would mean establishing the status of Kosovo, establishing the borders with Yugoslavia and solving the unsolved issues with our neighboring countries.

7. Individual communications and feelings

7.1 Attributes associated to the perception of the Balkan countries

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Republic of Albania	-instability -obsolete - having territorial pretensions towards Macedonia	- extremism - anarchy - arms - smuggling - poverty	- chaos - gangs - tribes	- our motherland - poverty - our history and culture
Republic of Bulgaria	- not recognizing the Macedonian minority - joining the EU faster than us	- negating the Macedonians as a nation	- crime - higher standard than us - privatization conducted better than ours	- vacation - girls abuse at the customs office
Romania	- misery - not having democracy	- Chausescu's regime - nationalism	- poverty - underdevelopment	- poverty - Chausescu - orthodoxy
Hungary	- culture - tradition	- European-like country - formula 1	- big leap in development	- Soros - architecture - formula 1
Croatia	- joining the EU - culture - Tudzman	- interference in the domestic affairs of Bosnia - democracy according to Tudzman	- narcissism - isolation	- Tudzman - sea - basketball
Bosnia and Herzegovina	- poverty - instability - national division - isolation	- a country that cannot function the way it is established	- unsettled affairs	- war - Sarajevo - Mostar - barbecue
Yugoslavia	- war - the status of Montenegro	- a country in process of another development	- good neighboring country - better cooperation with their current government - fast development	- Milosevic - genocide - Kalemegdan - Karagjic

7.2 How do you see people's lives in the Southeast Europe and the region developing in the next years?

The respondents see the development of life in Southeast Europe through the Stability Pact, which if succeeds, it will provide better communication among the countries and the peoples. Greater cooperation with the countries of the region is necessary, primarily in solving the problems that are

present in all the countries of the region, which would mean attracting foreign investments, greater export, opening up new employments, improving the standard of life. For all these to happen, one of the most important things that have to happen first is the change of our mentality.

7.3 Belonging to the community

The respondents feel like members of the community, but they think right now the belonging to a certain nationality is more expressed. In our society, individuals

always wait for someone else to solve their problems (there is lack of initiative). The sole way of involving citizens in the work of the community is through politics.

7.4 The relations between members of different ethnic groups

Generally speaking, the relations are good, except the relations with the Albanians that are disturbed at this moment. There is a tacit support for a politics that promotes break-up of a mutual country and living separately.

In reference to the relations between the Macedonians and the Roma people there is the attitude present that there are citizens of first and second rank.

The relations between the Macedonians and the Albanians didn't use to be so bad. Today's politics have made them the way they are right now.

As far as the relations between the other ethnic groups are concerned (Turks, Serbs, Vlachs), it can be said that they are good and that there aren't any specific problems in their mutual relations.

7.5 Have you ever thought of moving to another country?

Those respondents that pointed out that they would move to another country said that they would do it from the aspect of personal safety and fulfilling their ambitions for education and career. The reasons for staying in their own country, according to the respondents, are its ability to provide opportunities to show what they are able of,

to make a career and thus contribute to the society.

Those that said that they wouldn't move to another country, as a reason for this pointed out to their level of education with which they wouldn't be able to find better job and provide better existence in another country.

8. Main fears and hopes regarding the situation in your country

8.1 Main fears

The main fears that the respondents pointed to are disturbing the peace and the security in our country and the region, the

disturbed interethnic relations, high rate of crime and corruption in our country.

8.2 Main hopes

The main hopes of the respondents are improving the situation in the economy by faster conduct of the necessary reforms,

functioning of the legislative, executive and judicial authorities, joining the EU, improving the educational system