

# Balkan Public Agenda

Focus Group Study  
Montenegro

February 2001  
KEY FINDINGS

Realized by  
SMMRI Group

## TABLE OF CONTENT

Introduction .....	2
Summary of the key findings.....	5
Key Findings.....	8
1. Aspirations, fears and concerns.....	8
2. Economic Issues.....	11
3. Political Institutions.....	13
4. Civil Society.....	15
5. Public Services.....	17
6. International relations.....	18
7. Individual characteristics and feelings.....	20
8. Final comments.....	24

## 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 was 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 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 of research institutes in all the countries involved in the project. SMMRI qualitative research director Svetlana Logar have moderated the groups.

### **Recruiting and group composition**

Persons belonging to the majority ethnic group and people belonging to Muslims as the major minority ethnic group were invited to attend the focus group sessions.

Participants were selected through quasi random sampling procedure, so that typical members of the population were included. The findings can only be considered as typical for population, but can not be used in any way for the assessments of their quantitative distribution in the population, (proportion of the typical attitudes). Due to quasi random sampling procedure or/and small sample, the sampling error cannot be identified.

## Structure of the groups

	Date	Place	No. subjects	Group composition
Group 1	14.02	Podgorica	8	Urban Age: 18-35 Sex: 5 F, 3 M Occupation: 1 Engineer of metallurgy, 1 chemical technician, 3 students, 2 clerks, 1 unemployed Nationality: Montenegrins
Group 2	14.02	Podgorica	9	Urban Age: 37-44 Sex: 5 F, 4 M Occupation: 5 engineers, 1 businesswoman, 1 doorman, 1 pharmacist, 1 technician Nationality: Montenegrins
Group 3	14.02	Podgorica – neighbouring villages	8	Rural Age: 36-50 Sex: 5 F, 3 M Occupation: 3 technicians, 1 owner of private firm, 2 engineers, 1 worker, 1 housewife, Nationality: Montenegrins
Group 4	15.02	Podgorica	8	Urban Age: 32-47 Sex: 5M, 3F Occupation: 1 engineer, 1 technician, 1 typists (unemployed), 1 waiter, 1 owner of the café, 2 workers, 1 worker (unemployed) Nationality: Muslim

## SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

- ♦ **The most important issues the country was facing at the present time were perceived to come from the four domains: Politics, economy, society, and Information.**
- ♦ **The main political issue was the one of Montenegro's sovereignty. The standpoint towards this issue was a demarcation line in people's attitudes towards all the other important problems in the country.**
- ♦ **In spite that most of the problems were expected to be accomplished after the status of Montenegro will be solved, the economic problems were perceived as more difficult to be accomplished than political ones.**
- ♦ **The mentality of people, was named to be one of the most difficult issues to accomplish.**
- ♦ **Economic problems were spontaneously named among the most difficult issues the country was facing at the present time: Unemployment, low salaries, housing problem, and corruption.**
- ♦ **The main causes of the economic crises were seen in wrong politics which lead the country into the wars, sanctions, and eventually ruined the whole economy. Political quarrels, corruption, but the people's attitude as well, were also named as factors which increased further the decay of economy.**
- ♦ **The main obstacles to solving the economic problems were found again in political crises of relations between Montenegro and Serbia.**
- ♦ **People give credit to the role of international institutions, especially the EU, in financial help, but the most common opinion was that the internal factors – the attitudes of politicians as well as citizens - are the crucial ones for solving the crises in politics and economy.**
- ♦ **Development of tourism and agriculture were expected to be the factors that, once the political crises is solved, would most effectively accelerate the growth of economy.**
- ♦ **The expectation for future development in economy were strongly connected to ones expectations of future development in politics. Most of the people were rather optimistic expecting the fast improvements in economy, based on the expectations of Montenegro to become an independent country in the nearest future.**
- ♦ **People fully consented that they are not living in democracy: Media, judiciary system, big companies' managers, and workers, were all perceived to be under the strong control of the politicians.**

- ♦ **The general trust in political institutions was found to be quite low. Most of the people believe that political fights were more motivated by personal benefits in getting the political power, than by benefits of the country and citizens.**
- ♦ **Trust in political leaders and institutions was primarily determined by ones political attitude towards the issue of the relation between Montenegro and Serbia.**
- ♦ **Voting is the engagement the people are the most aware of. In general, people showed not to be used to finding out any other direct way of engagement in changing society except by voting.**
- ♦ **TV and newspapers were found to be the main sources of information. Both were found to be of low credibility, rather presenting the point of view of political party they are controlled by, than unbiased information.**
- ♦ **In general, low awareness on the activities of non-governmental organizations was found. More information on their work, and more transparency would be appreciated.**
- ♦ **Professional organizations were found to be practically non existent.**
- ♦ **The role of Church was perceived to be more in the service of the politics than religion. The religious organizations were found to be deeply involved with politics, which was perceived as one of the important problems in the country.**
- ♦ **On average, people felt quite discontent with public services. The worst evaluated public service was public transportation. The other services evaluated most often with extremely low rates were military, social assistance and electricity.**
- ♦ **In general, there was a consent that international institutions do influence the agenda of Montenegro as well as FRY as a whole, and the attitudes were mainly positive. The influence was found to be both political and financial, but primarily based on the country's need for financial help.**
- ♦ **The role of European institutions was more positively evaluated than the American ones. In general, the European institutions were perceived to influence the country agenda towards the peaceful resolution of the actual conflict.**
- ♦ **The key of the security in the region was comprehended in the same way as the one felt to be the base of the security in Montenegro: Democratization of the political system, and definition of the state frontiers.**
- ♦ **The participants stated to deeply feel to belong to their country, no matter all the problems and complexity of the political and economic situation. The main reason making some people to consider about leaving the country was of**

**the poor living standard.**

- ♦ **The relations between people seemed to be influenced more by political attitude than by nationality. More tension was found between people belonging to Orthodox religion, either Montenegrins or Serbs, supporting opponent political attitudes than between the ethnic groups.**
- ♦ **The feelings expressed towards the SEE countries were rather reserved. In general, the prevalent attitudes were that rational partnership, not emotions should be the bases of the relations between the countries and people.**
- ♦ **A lot of optimism was expressed towards the life in SEE region in the next years. Most of the participants expect the living standard to be improved in the whole region.**
- ♦ **Most of the participants were optimistic for the future life in Montenegro. More hopes than fears were expressed. The hopes were primarily related to higher living standard, democracy, opening to the rest of the world, normalization of life.**
- ♦ **The most striking fear was related to possible conflict among the political opponents, as well as the political crises to continue further blocking the economic problems to be resolved.**

## KEY FINDINGS

### 1. ASPIRATION, FEARS AND CONCERNES REGARDING THE CURRENT SITUATION IN MONTENEGRO

#### 1.1 What is the most important problem people in the country are facing now days?

- ◆ **The most important issues the country was facing at the present time were perceived to come from the four domains: Politics, economy, society, and Information.**

- ***Politics:***

**In general, actual political crises was found to be the issue of highest priority for most of the people.**

**At the same time people feel overwhelmed by politics, and find the constant political crises to be the main barrier of solving the problems that should be of greater priority, the pour living standard at the first place.**

**The main political issue was the one of Montenegro's sovereignty. The standpoint towards this issue was a demarcation line in people's attitudes towards all the other important problems in the country.**

All issues named with relation to political situation were actually related to the question of the relations between Serbia and Montenegro, i.e. to the one of the future status of Montenegro:

- Lack of the country's identity.
- Conflicts between political parties.
- Citizens preoccupation with politics, and the harsh division in the opinions holding back the other problem (like economy) to be accomplished.

*Illustrative statements:*

- *We have a conflict between different political parties and political options, those that are in favor of the federal union of states and those who are in favor of independent Montenegro. There are extremists on both sides. It takes just a spark to set the whole situation on fire. I only hope that all people included in this conflict are reasonable. (F7, G1).*
- *We must deal with politic because it affects us, and we are all involved in politics. But people don't speak about it where they should, in the right place; instead, they speak about it in their families or among their friends...*

*Probably because they are scared, people are cowards, you know. (F6, G1).*

- *People don't have the right attitude to work, they don't think about their jobs; they waste their time thinking about politics. Because it suits those who hold the power. We are on a standstill. There are too many uneducated people, who live in the country, work hard all day, come home to watch TV, they believe what they see, and their consciousness is blocked and they are rather ignorant. But I believe this is the moment when they will find out that they have been cheated. I hope we will now talk about politics less and less. (F4, G1)*

- ***Economy:***

**In spite that most of the people is primarily preoccupied with political issues, they actually feel their everyday lives to be more affected by problems in economy.**

**The main issues in economy were related to low living standard. The problems named most often were:**

- **Ruined economy, especially the big state owned companies and factories**
- **Unemployment,**
- **Low salaries,**
- **Housing problem, and**
- **Corruption**

- ***Society:***

**The problems out of direct scope of politics and economy were much less frequently mentioned:**

- **Value system (education, work, family, religion),**
- **Drug addictions and prostitution**
- **The state of mind – attitude towards work and responsibility**

- ***Information:***

- **Low credibility of the sources of public information (TV, newspapers)**

- ◆ **The consensus was found that politics and economy are the most important issues.**

Most of the other problems were found to result from the ones in politics and economy.

The main differences in opinions were if politics caused the problems in economy or vice versa. In dependence of this attitude the problem ranked as the first one was either politics or economy.

People opting for Montenegro as the sovereign country were more prone to find this political issue to be of priority, since they believe that none of the other problems can be resolved until Montenegro become an independent country.

*Illustrative statements:*

- *The independence issue is the first thing to start from, and whatever the solution might be, it has to be finished so that we can start solving other problems. Economic status is connected to political problems. (F3, G2)*
- *-If we solved the issue of our status as a country we would be able to begin dealing with problems and start having normal lives. That seems to be the main obstacle. (F3, G3)*
- *All this is a consequence of bad economic situation. If we lived better, we wouldn't be obsessed with politics so much. We would focus on our personal lives. (M5, G1)*
- *At the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century they started teaching us who we are, Serbs or Montenegrins, we don't know who we are in terms of a nation. At least we should understand that. (F3, G2)*

## **1.2 Problems having the greatest chance to be solved in the near future**

- ◆ **In general, the agreement was found in the opinions that the problem of the status of Montenegro will be the first achieved in the nearest future.**

**No matter the result of the expected referendum, the identity of the Montenegro was expected to be defined in the near future. The accomplishment of all the other problems was stated to be impossible before the status of the Montenegro is solved.**

### **1.3 Problems most difficult to solve**

- ◆ **In spite that most of the problems were expected to be accomplished after the status of Montenegro will be solved, the economic problems were perceived as more difficult to be accomplished than political ones.**

*Illustrative statement:*

- *Political problem is the easiest to solve and economic one is the most difficult. We have had economic problems for a long time. (F6, G2)*

**The mentality of people, was named to be one of the most difficult issues to accomplish.**

- *Our mentality is not ready for democracy, we are that kind of people, we need a firm hand to rule us. (M1, G3)*
- *People should realize that others are entitled to a different opinion based on their knowledge and experience. Even when they realize that one option is wrong, people feel great animosity towards different options, they don't want to change their mind. (M1, G1)*
- *If our people worked as hard as when they go abroad and get a job, our standard will be better. It's not a shame to do any kind of a job, however low paid it was, if it provides you with money and the means to live better. (F4, G1)*

**These problems were expected to be solved only with recovery of the economy and people having opportunity to getting well paid jobs.**

- ◆ **People from rural area appeared to be more strongly opinionated and more eager in their attitudes towards the issue of Montenegro sovereignty, than people from urban area, no matter if they were opting for Montenegro to become an independent country, or to stay within FRY.**

**Muslims were united in their supporting the idea of Montenegro as the independent country.**

**Older people were more concerned with poor living conditions than the young ones.**

## **2. ECONOMIC ISSUES**

- ◆ **Economic problems were spontaneously named among the most difficult issues the country was facing at the present time: Unemployment, low salaries, housing problem, and corruption.**

## **2.1 Causes of the economic problems**

- ◆ **The main causes of the economic crises were seen in wrong politics which lead the country into the wars, sanctions, and eventually ruined the whole economy. Political quarrels, corruption, but the people's attitude as well, were also named as factors which increased further the decay of economy.**

*Illustrative statements:*

- *We will have the same situation as long as politicians are in charge of the economy. (M7, G1)*

## **2.2 Obstacles to solving economic problems**

- ◆ **The main obstacles to solving the economic problems were found again in political crises of relations between Montenegro and Serbia.**
- ◆ **In spite that the main factor of acceleration of solving the economic crises was stated to be the solution of the problem of Montenegro's status in whichever way, the people opting for Montenegro as sovereign country gave more importance to this very factor as blocking the recovery of the economy.**

## **2.3 The role of international institutions in solving economic problems**

- ◆ **People give credit to the role of international institutions, especially the EU, in financial help, but the most common opinion was that the internal factors – the attitudes of politicians as well as citizens - are the crucial ones for solving the crises in politics and economy.**

*Illustrative statements:*

- *Serbia and Montenegro should resolve the problem on their own, without any foreign meddling. (F4, G1)*
- *We should deal with it ourselves, just like we do in our homes... we need to get down to work, we will see no improvement in economy until than. (M7, G1)*

## **2.4 Factors that could help solving the economic problems**

- ◆ **Development of tourism and agriculture were expected to be the factors that, once the political crises is solved, would most effectively accelerate the growth of economy.**
- *A small country like Montenegro doesn't need strong production, we can focus on agriculture and tourism. We used to be an agricultural country and they all of a sudden we became a worker's country. (M4, G4)*

- ◆ **No matter how vaguely understood, market economy was believed to be an important factor of progressive economy. The actual economy was thought not to be based on market economy but rather on monopoly and corruption.**

## **2.5 Expectations for the economic situation in the year 2001**

- ◆ **The expectation for future development in economy were strongly connected to ones expectations of future development in politics.**

**Most of the people were rather optimistic expecting the fast improvements in economy, based on the expectations of Montenegro to become an independent country in the nearest future.**

**The less optimistic were frightened of the political conflicts to intensify, and further hold back the issues in economy.**

- ◆ **In general there was more consent than differences between the people in their opinions in economic issues.**

**Differences in opinions were found mainly in the expectations for future development in the country's economy and was more related to political attitude than age or ethnic group.**

**In spite that optimism was prevalent feeling, people supporting the idea of Montenegro as the sovereign country were much more optimistic in their expectations of fast economic recovery if Montenegro become the independent state.**

## **3. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

### **3.1 Perception of democracy**

- ◆ **People fully consented that they are not living in democracy: Media, judiciary system, big companies' managers, and workers, were all perceived to be under the strong control of the politicians.**

**People feel that by discussing openly political issues among themselves they gets the false impression of living in democracy. They feel, however, that their opinions do not have any influence in decision making processes.**

*Illustrative statement:*

- *Politics dictates the work of media and the other sectors. In my opinion there's no democracy, not even a trace of it. In the previous period in order to get a job you were supposed to be morally and politically correct, to belong to a certain party, now it's all about party membership, that's all-important. (M7, G1)*

### **3.2 Confidence in political institutions and political leaders**

- ◆ **The general trust in political institutions was found to be quite low. Most of the people believe that political fights were more motivated by personal benefits in getting the political power, than by benefits of the country and citizens.**
- ◆ **Trust in political leaders and institutions was primarily determined by ones political attitude towards the issue of the relation between Montenegro and Serbia.**

- **People opting for Montenegro to stay within FRY have most trust in president of FRY, Vojislav Kostunica.**

Kostunica was perceived as consistent in following his ideas, and his role in changing the previous regime was appreciated as the crucial one.

**People with these attitudes choused political parties as the subjects they trust the least. The fight between political parties was perceived as struggle for personal benefits of political leaders.**

**The ruling political parties were perceived as spreading the hatred among the people that could lead eventually to civic war.**

- **People opting for Montenegro as a sovereign country have most trust in republic institutions, and least in the federal ones.**

**President of FRY was perceived as nationalist and his politics as continuation of Milosevic's political standpoint.**

**The president of Montenegro, Milo Djukanovic, was found trustworthy in defending the interests of Montenegro. This attitude was supported by his role in setting aside Montenegro during the NATO intervention in FRY.**

**Political parties opting for Montenegro as sovereign country, DPS and LSCG were found most trustworthy.**

**Montenegrins more on the extreme positions have most trust in LSCG.**

**Muslims gave preferences to DPS, because of its multinational structure. Some of the Muslims found LSCG too nationalistic.**

- **People opting for Montenegro separation from FRY had more trust in International community.**
- **In general, people from urban area were more distrustful in political institutions, and / or less opinionated, and less zealously involved in**

**actual politics (or at least, less ready to show it).**

### **3.3 Readiness for personal engagement in order to influence the changes in society**

- ◆ **Voting is the engagement the people are the most aware of.**

**In general, people showed not to be used to finding out any other direct way of engagement in changing society except by voting.**

**Most of the people were found to be rather reluctant to become member of political parties, partly because of the general mistrust in politicians, but due to the lack of time for political engagement as well. People feel to be too engaged in coping with everyday economic difficulties to be able to spare time for political engagement.**

**To get out and vote on referendum dealing with future status of Montenegro was the engagement people were the most preoccupied with at the time.**

## **4. CIVIL SOCIETY**

### **4.1 Sources of information and their credibility**

- ◆ **TV and newspapers were found to be the main sources of information. Both were found to be of low credibility, rather presenting the point of view of political party they are controlled by, than unbiased information.**
  - Low credibility of media was spontaneously mentioned as one of the important issues in actual political situation in the country.
  - People find truth for themselves by comparing information from different sources and by reading “between the lines”.
  - More opinionated people were more definite in their choice of TV channel or newspapers they believe.

*Illustrative statements:*

- *The regime has the state TV and papers. I read different papers, “Vijesti” and “Dan” but I don’t trust anybody absolutely and I try to find the middle. (M1, G3)*
- *The media is very biased. I read the “Vijesti”. Even the sports area is a field of expressing political views. On the sports pages you can read on and on about Montenegrin clubs even when they lose a game, while at the same time, the Yugoslav team, for example the handball team which won the third place in some competition, was presented in the papers as brief piece of news, nothing else. This is the proof of how objective our media is. I don’t support either side, but democracy can be seen on this example. (M1, G1)*

#### **4.2 The role of NGOs**

- ◆ **In general, low awareness on the activities of non-governmental organizations was found. More information on their work, and more transparency would be appreciated.**

People were found to be somewhat better informed in the activities of the non-governmental organizations in the area of education and humanitarian aid, and these activities were mainly evaluated as positive.

Just a few of the participants were better informed and highly enthusiastic in their evaluation of the importance of non-governmental organizations activities.

Some doubts in the non-governmental organizations to be really independent from the political influence in their work were expressed.

#### **4.3 The role of professional organizations**

- ◆ **Professional organizations were found to be practically non existent.**

#### **4.4 The role of religious organizations**

- ◆ **The role of Church was perceived to be more in the service of the politics than religion. The religious organizations were found to be deeply involved with politics, which was perceived as one of the important problems in the country.**
- ◆ **The position of Orthodox church was found to be one of the urgent issues:**
  - Conflict between the Serbian and Montenegrin church was perceived as another tension provoking political issue, further splitting the people apart.
  - In spite of the unanimously spoken attitude that church should be independent of politics, people's involvement in the issue was based again on their political stance.

The attitudes towards this conflict were in accordance with the general attitudes towards tensions between Serbia and Montenegro.

- ◆ **In general, majority of the participants were of the opinion that church should have more important role in bringing back the moral values, and bring back people together instead of taking them apart.**

Several of the participants thought that religious teaching should be included in elementary school's agenda.

- ◆ **Muslims especially felt that both Orthodox and Muslim religious organizations should cooperate more among themselves and with citizens in order to teach**

**people tolerance and appreciation of different religions.**

## **5. PUBLIC SERVICES**

- ◆ **On average, people felt quite discontent with public services.**
- ◆ **The worst evaluated public service was public transportation. The other services evaluated most often with extremely low rates were military, social assistance and electricity.**

### **Grades percentages**

Grades	Health	Education	Social Assistance	Transport	Electricity	Water	Military
1	0	3.0	24.2	45.5	21.2	21.2	34.4
2	3.0	6.1	12.1	21.2	6.1	0	3.1
3	12.1	9.1	9.1	15.2	21.2	3.0	9.4
4	18.2	12.1	6.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	15.6
5	21.2	18.2	18.2	3.0	3.0	15.2	12.5
6	18.2	21.2	6.1	3.0	6.1	3.0	3.1
7	3.0	6.1	6.1	3.0	15.2	3.0	9.4
8	3.0	9.1	9.1	0	15.2	24.2	3.1
9	3.0	3.0	0	0	3.0	3.0	3.1
10	18.2	12.1	9.1	6.1	6.1	24.2	6.3
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### **Mean grades**

Groups	Health	Education	Social Assistance	Transport	Electricity	Water	Military
1	4.75	5.87	4.50	1.50	5.75	8.87	5.00
2	6.11	4.88	5.66	3.66	6.77	8.33	5.37
3	5.88	5.88	1.66	1.66	2.33	2.11	3.55
4	6.71	6.42	5.85	3.71	4.14	5.71	1.57
Total	5.84	5.72	4.33	2.60	4.75	6.21	3.93

- ◆ **The reasons for the problems were mainly found to be in a low budgets, but in chaotic organization, and manipulations as well.**
- ◆ **The attitudes towards privatization as a way to problem solving were quite indistinct.**

The advantages of the privatization of some public services like transportation and health were supposed to be better organization and higher quality of services, but much higher living standard was stated to be needed in order for the citizens to be able to afford the costs of private services.

- ◆ **The attitudes towards military were again connected with general political standpoint towards the position of Montenegro within FRY.**

**People having negative attitudes towards the federal institutions had negative**

**attitudes towards military as well.**

The problems named were chaos and lack of discipline, but the crucial factors of negative attitudes were rather found in army's attitude during the NATO intervention which was perceived as deliberate attempt to involve Montenegro in the war.

Muslims stated to feel uncomfortable in doing the regular military service in the federal army.

## **6. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **6.1 The influence of International institutions**

- ◆ **In general, there was a consent that international institutions do influence the agenda of Montenegro as well as FRY as a whole, and the attitudes were mainly positive.**
  - **The influence was found to be both political and financial, but primarily based on the country's need for financial help.**

### **6.2 The role of International institutions (European Union, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and NATO)**

- **The role of European institutions was more positively evaluated than the American ones. In general, the European institutions were perceived to influence the country agenda towards the peaceful resolution of the actual conflict.**

*Illustrative statements:*

- *International community is not united. There are 2 different standpoints, American, and European. America has its secret goals, its hidden agenda. It seems that the worse the situation Europe is the better it is for American. It is their interest to have trouble spots in Europe. On the other hand, Europe's interest is to have peace in Europe. (M9, G2)*
- ◆ **However, the attitudes were different, and again, strongly connected with general political standpoint with relation to the issue of Montenegro as the independent country.**

**People opting for Montenegro to stay in FRY were more suspicious in the intentions of international institutions and found them guilty for break of the former Yugoslavia, NATO intervention and pollution with depleted uranium.**

*Illustrative statements:*

- *If they wanted to get rid of Milosevic, they should have found another way of doing it, without so many victims. Now we have a problem of depleted uranium, their own soldiers are dying, so what can we expect from them?(F3, G1)*

- ◆ **In general, there was a lot of consent that cooperation's of the government and other political institutions is not constructive enough in order for international institutions to effectively help in solving the problems in the country.**
  - **Doubts were expressed on financial donations from international institutions to be abused for personal benefits.**

*Illustrative statements:*

- *EU gave us the money, the government said they got the money, so probably the money went to some private pockets. (M7, G3)*

- ◆ **People have most confidence in EU, least in NATO.**
- ◆ **People were most aware of EU and NATO, least aware of the Stability Pact.**
- ◆ **The role of EU was more related to financial help, the role of Stability Pact with peaceful resolution of the conflicts and helping countries from Balkan region to become part of Europe.**

But several of the participants perceived the role of the Stability pact right in the opposite direction: The role of Stability Pact is to promote the interests of Western European countries and USA in Balkan region.

- ◆ **NATO was the least positively assessed international institution.**

**The attitudes varied from extremely negative to rather neutral and less emotional.**

**In general, most of the participants do not have confidence in NATO to help solving the problems in the country.**

**Most of the participants were of the opinion that joining NATO would have more negative than positive consequences for the country.**

**Disadvantage of joining the NATO would be the lost of political independency (being pressed to follow the NATO policy), while the advantage would be the protection from potential aggression on the country.**

**Several of the participants (especially among Muslims) would prefer to see Montenegro as demilitarized zone (like Switzerland), than a member of NATO.**

*Illustrative statements:*

- *The problem is that when you join NATO you have to obey the rules, even if you disagree. There were a lot of countries which objected to NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia, but they didn't have a say in any decisions and they had to agree to that decision. (F3, G2)*
- *It would be a tragedy. We have never participated in any blocks. New technologies and new weapons would be here. Who would finance that?(M1, G2)*
- *It would be positive for Montenegro, there would be no more wars or conflicts. I see no reason why that should be negative. All the countries aspire to become NATO members, why should we be any different?(M1, G3)*

### **6.3 The key security in the region**

- ◆ **The key of the security in the region was comprehended in the same way as the one felt to be the base of the security in Montenegro: Democratization of the political system, and definition of the state frontiers.**

## **7. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS AND FEELINGS**

### **7.1 Perceptions of the people's lives in South Eastern Europe in the next years**

- ◆ **A lot of optimism was expressed towards the life in SEE region in the next years. Most of the participants expect the living standard to be improved in the whole region.**

### **7.2 Belonging to the community and readiness to leave the region**

- ◆ **The participants stated to deeply feel to belong to their country, no matter all the problems and complexity of the political and economic situation.**
- ◆ **The main reason making some people to consider about leaving the country was of the poor living standard.**

**This attitude was rather found among the older participants and was motivated by worries about their children's future.**

**Political conflicts and future status of Montenegro were stated not to be the points of considerations in the people's attitudes towards possible moving from the region.**

**Only one participants stated decisively that he will live the country in the case Montenegro do not become a sovereign state.**

### **7.3 The attitudes towards the SEE countries**

- ◆ **The feelings expressed towards the SEE countries were rather reserved. In general, the prevalent attitudes were that rational partnership, not emotions should be the bases of the relations between the countries and people.**
- ◆ **The first associations of several of the participants on the countries from the former Yugoslavia was a regret that former Yugoslavia break apart.**
- ◆ **Most of the associations were rather neutral and dispassionate.**
- ◆ **In general, people feel much closer to the western European countries than to the countries from SEE.**

#### **Croatia**

**Mainly negative attitudes by pro-federation people, more positive by the pro-separation people:** Unpleasant, because of clashes; Split; Positive feelings towards their culture; People is fine; Cooperation; Nationalism; Beautiful country; Music; Actual government is great; For me it does not matter at all; Sea side; Democracy; Tourism; People are more laborious than people from Montenegro.

#### **Slovenia**

**Emotionally indifferent, appreciation of economic prosperity:** People are cold; We should take them as a model;

#### **Macedonia**

**Distant, somewhat sympathizing:** Nice people; I feel sorry for them, because of NATO presence; Their politics was smart in the moment of break of the former Yugoslavia; beautiful country; Poor living standard.

#### **Bosnia & Herzegovina**

**Positive attitudes, sympathizing:** Good people; Hospitable people; It is sad what happened there; Good memories; Destroyed country; Serbs, Croats and Muslims cannot live together.

#### **Bulgaria**

**Negative attitudes:** They were enemies in World war; They were always against us; Nothing; Smuggled goods; Dirty; Cheese, Poverty.

#### **Romania**

**Mainly negative attitudes:** They were our allies for a long time; Similar to Bulgaria.

**Greece**

**Positive attitudes:** Orthodox friends; Positive; The source of culture; Vine, sea.

**Turkey**

**Mixed feelings:** Battle of Kosovo; Smuggled goods; Strong economy; Strong position in Europe; Civilization.

**Table 7.3 Attributes associated to the perception of SEE countries**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Group 3</b>	<b>Group 4</b>
<b>Slovenia</b>	Very cold people, driven by their own interests, they are like Germans, example of prosperous life	Intelligent people, we should cooperate with them		Work and discipline
<b>Croatia</b>	Extremist – U (Ustasa), sentimental memories, Split, Brac, unpleasant because of the conflicts, pleasant because of their coast	We were friends, we have done many bad things to each other, it's time that changed	Too nationalistic, they don't exist any more for me,	We will have normal relations with them, sea coast, good neighbors, democratic country, tourism, ecology
<b>Macedonia</b>	Poor is the country having Albania on the west	They had most intelligent politicians when Yugoslavia split. Refugees, suffered because of Kosovo problems, we should have contact with them	Bad economic and political situation, International community contributed to deterioration They have a lot of enemies Albanians, Bulgarians	Good relations, delicious food, They let NATO on their territory, lake Ohrid, nice people
<b>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</b>	Three separate countries, good people used to live there, Bosnians were real Yugoslavs	Feel sorry for them, I hope that in the future there will be new Yugoslavia as it was in the past	It's sad what happened there, I would like RS to be independent, Bosnia should divide	Good food, similar to Montenegro, the same stubborn mentality as ours
<b>Bulgaria</b>	The second world war, the conflicts, smuggling	Nothing special, more negative, they were against us during the bombing	Bad situation	Hard working people, political instability, selfish and closed
<b>Romania</b>	Not interesting, negative feelings	We always had good relationship, they had a system similar to ours	Similar to us	Same as all the others in this part of Europe
<b>Greece</b>	Orthodox nation, olive oil, culture, tradition	Orthodox country, real friends, cradle of science and culture	Orthodox country	Alexander the Great, good wine, sirtaki, we are closer to Greece than to Bulgaria or Romania
<b>Turkey</b>	Islam, the battle of Kosovo, Harems	Trade, smuggling		Same as Greece, They would have been on the margin if they didn't join NATO

#### **7.4 Perception of the relations between the ethnic groups**

- ◆ **The relations between people seemed to be influenced more by political attitude than by nationality. More tension was found between people belonging to Orthodox religion, either Montenegrins or Serbs, supporting opponent political attitudes than between the ethnic groups.**

**The relations between the ethnic groups were somewhat differently perceived by ethnic majority and Muslims.**

**Montenegrins were of the opinion that all the ethnic groups have equal rights and found the relations between people belonging to different ethnic group to be completely correct.**

*Illustrative statement:*

- *They have all the rights; they have seats in parliament, and all functions. They have citizens' rights. (M1, G2)*

**Muslims stated to have had problems in private relations with people, but mainly with political opponents.**

*Illustrative statement:*

- *-I had a very embarrassing situation at work because I am a Moslem. They accused the Moslems for supporting Djukanovic and keeping him afloat politically. Muslims and Albanians voted for Montenegro and its better future. (M6, G4)*

**Muslims feel to belong to Montenegro and are opting for being treated and labeled as Montenegrins of Muslim religion, and not "Bosnjaks".**

#### **8. FINAL COMMENTS**

- ◆ **Most of the participants were optimistic for the future life in Montenegro. More hopes than fears were expressed.**

**The hopes were primarily related to higher living standard, democracy, opening to the rest of the world, normalization of life.**

**However, hopes were quite contingent on the outcome of the future referendum.**

**Majority of the participants expressed hope for referendum just to be fair enough. Fair referendum was expected to be the main factor of preventing the potential clashes between political opponents.**

**Minority of the participants more strongly related their hopes to the specific outcome of the referendum, either for Montenegro to become sovereign**

**country, or to stay within Fry.**

**The most striking fear was related to possible conflict among the political opponents, as well as the political crises to continue further blocking the economic problems to be resolved.**

*Illustrative statements:*

- *I want both Montenegro and Serbia to be independent and to become members of European Union. I wish both countries will be economically stronger. I suppose that the people had learned their lesson in the previous conflicts. We have had enough bloodshed. Even if we have some extremists now, they will not prevail. (M4, G4)*
- *The fear of war and the hope that we will be more successful in tourism. (F3, G1)*
- *I am thinking about better life, there will always be some tensions, the only way for us to feel that we belong to this country and to establish our identity as a country would be a democratic referendum. (M7, G1)*
- *-I don't think the situation will change a lot. I hope it won't be worse. (F2, G2)*
- *I fear drugs. I saw on TV that drug use is increasing among young people and I think it should be prevented. (F6, G2)*
- *I fear deterioration of relationships, conflicts. I come from the north of the country. I know the situation, I fear conflicts over referendum, the north of the country supports Federation, so there can be conflicts. I hope things will end without shooting. (M9, G2)*
- *Those who support conflicts as way of solving the problem always hope that someone else's children will go to fight for their ideas. (F6, G2)*

Table 8.1 Major fears and hopes

	Fears	Hopes
Group 1	Fear of war	Success in tourism, better life, democratic referendum
Group 2	Deterioration of relationship, conflicts over referendum	I hope things will be settled in the civilized way. We all hope there will be no more conflicts.
Group 3	The situation to deteriorate, Economic situation to become worse, I fear that things will not only stay the same, but to become worse	Montenegro to become independent and sovereign, The economic situation to improve, to have normal life, holidays, I would like new Yugoslavia to be formed from Serbia and Montenegro and to be a normal country which guarantees equal rights to all its citizens
Group 4	Related to Serbia Fears are behind us, we will decide our fate on the elections	Montenegro to be independent, civil, democratic country