

# BiH Public Opinion on the EU Integration Processes 2009-2012





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Neil F. Tuffrey

The Foreign Policy Initiative BH is a non-government, non-profit organization dedicated to debating and analyzing foreign policy, international relations and international commitments of Bosnia and Herzegovina

[www.vpi.ba](http://www.vpi.ba)

[info@vpi.ba](mailto:info@vpi.ba)

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# Summary of the findings of the focus group analysis for the Comparative Report 2011

## I Methodology

As part of the project “Monitoring of the BiH European Integration Process”, VPI BiH conducted public opinion research on the topic of the perception of the EU integration process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its implications for social relations in the West Balkans. The research was quantitative and was conducted on a sample of 1500 citizens, but also qualitative, in the form of focus groups involving target groups. Below is a summary of the findings of focus groups from 2012, dealing with the comments of citizens on the situation in 2011. For the sake of comparison, we also include excerpts from the 2009 and 2010/11 focus group findings.

In order to examine BiH citizens’ qualitative perception of EU integration, four focus groups were organised with a view to contrasting the findings with the opinion of experts. Focus group analysis is a complementary methodological process intended to provide qualitative responses to statistical trends of support for the Bosnian EU integration process given in quantitative public opinion research.

For the purposes of the Comparative Report 2011, the following focus groups were organised between 25.02.2012 and 5.3.2012:

- ♦ Banja Luka, 25.02.: group of men, uniform in terms of ethnicity – Serbs;
- ♦ Banja Luka, 26.02.: group of civil service employees, uniform in terms of gender (men) and ethnicity (Serbs);

- ♦ Međugorje, 03.03: group of students, mixed in terms of gender, uniform in terms of ethnicity – Croats;
- ♦ Goražde, 04.03: group of women, uniform in terms of ethnicity (Bosniaks), mixed in terms of age and education.

For the sake of comparison, the 2010 report also analysed the attitudes of the four focus groups from the period 20.12.2010 to 1.2.2011:

- ♦ Sarajevo: group of civil service employees, mixed in terms of gender and ethnicity;
- ♦ Travnik: group of women, mixed in terms of ethnicity, age and education;
- ♦ Livno: group of men, uniform in terms of ethnicity – Croats;
- ♦ East Sarajevo: group of students, mixed in terms of gender, uniform in terms of ethnicity – Serbs.

The first report for 2009 analysed the attitudes of six focus groups organised in October-November 2009:

- ♦ Mixed group of persons from the business sector in Sarajevo,
- ♦ Bosniak women in Zenica,
- ♦ Serb men in Doboј,
- ♦ Mixed group in Brčko,
- ♦ Civil servants in Mostar, and
- ♦ Croat youngsters/students in Mostar.

The focus group analysis of the attitudes towards the European integration process for 2011 was based on analysis of the transcripts of the recordings made during interviews with each of the focus groups early in 2012, and on the notes and impressions of the moderators. The drawbacks of this method are its descriptive nature and segmented insight into the attitudes of the group under observation. Focus groups do not provide accurate answers; they merely reflect the thoughts of the respondents at a given moment. Moreover, these thoughts are often neither structured nor precise. However, focus groups provide exceptionally good material for gaining insight into people's way of thinking and their perception of certain issues. In addition, they provide guidelines for future activities to make citizens familiar with the European integration process, and they indicate where the focus should be when analysing social trends related to this topic.



The interview questions are divided into several thematic groups whereby one question is primary and the others are supplementary and intended to build upon the discussion and move it from the general and the objective to the particular and the subjective. The areas covered are listed below:

- ◊ The respondents' level of familiarity with the European integration process and the manner in which they keep themselves informed;
- ◊ Their personal view of the process as being either political or technical in nature;
- ◊ Identification of accomplishments and obstacles in the process;
- ◊ Primary obligations, co-operation between institutions and the possibility of expediting Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU accession;
- ◊ The impact of the introduction of EU standards into the Bosnian way of life and the standard of living of the respondents – positive and negative expectations;
- ◊ Commitment to EU integration as a common interest of all citizens and peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- ◊ Their views on the authority of various levels of government for the implementation of Bosnia's EU accession reforms and their attitude towards institutional blockades;
- ◊ Awareness of the EU funds available to Bosnia and Herzegovina and interest in obtaining more information on the European integration process;
- ◊ Opinions on the prospects awaiting Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU as compared to the prospects of other Western Balkan countries, and attitudes towards the quality of life of the citizens of said countries;
- ◊ European vs. Balkan identity;

Additional questions for employees of public institutions:

- ◊ The presence of special departments devoted to EU integration within their institutions and training programmes focusing on the introduction of EU standards with a view to improving coordination and subordination;
- ◊ The introduction of European standards and changes to working methods in the workplace or in the application of regulations in everyday work routines, and experiences with the use of IPA funds;
- ◊ Attitudes towards the progress made by neighbouring countries and the status of their counterparts from the region;

For the purpose of this report, in addition to short analyses of thematic areas, we also quote the statements made by citizens which speak for themselves.

## II Introduction

Generally speaking, in 2012, as before, participants from all three ethnic groups have the same perception of the European integration process. Their priorities, again, are the relieving of tensions, preservation of peace and stability of the country, improvements in the standard of living, investment in youth education, and for politicians to look after the interests of all citizens rather than just their own personal interests. What they also consider important is that compromises should be made in the interests of a common future. They think that people are fed up with negativity and prepared to reward any step forward because too much time has been wasted. They manifest a strong sense of European identity and think that negative aspects of the Balkans are exaggerated, and that Bosnia and Herzegovina has always been part of Europe, but that formal accession to Europe is different today than it was 50 or 100 years ago.

The civil servants who participated may be seen as enthusiasts and qualified people who want changes and who hope that the decision-makers will set themselves the same priorities. However, it should be borne in mind that this sample is not representative of the civil service in Bosnia and Herzegovina where one could find many opposite examples. Citizens keep themselves informed mainly via electronic media, primarily television, with young people using the internet as well. It is interesting that they get more information on the EU integration process from Croatian rather than Bosnian-Herzegovinian media.

The students and young people who participated are generally not well-informed and take very little interest in the EU integration process. What interest they may have is related to European standards in education and job opportunities after graduation.

Yet again, in this research cycle, we see with all focus groups an oversaturation with politics and nationalism in all spheres of society. Particularly stressed is the importance of quality education for competitiveness in the labour market but also for those who are supposed to carry out the accession process. It is admitted that prejudice exists and that difficulties in accepting diversity affects social cohesion, although no one would ever publicly admit to being prejudiced. Both the eagerness of the EU to accept Bosnia and Herzegovina on the one hand and the willingness of Bosnia and Herzegovina to improve its system and earn its membership on the other are questioned. The respondents generally believe that BiH society should take stock, that public institutions and administration should prepare themselves and that the economy should become stronger so as to be able to cope with the pressures of regional and European market competition, before further steps towards the EU are taken. They think that a political acceptance of an ill-prepared Bosnia into the EU may bring more harm than good. They perceive the process of change during

accession as more important than the accession itself. In this improvement of the situation in general they see an opportunity to improve their own standard of living.

Regional neighbours are seen as being more dedicated to meeting EU standards, but their level of cooperation is increasingly explained by western-style pragmatism. Bosnian obstinacy and traditionalism are seen as an obstacle and a virtue at the same time. The European identity of the peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina is stressed, as well as the paramount importance of improving the economy and standards of living. It is evident that a number of the participants consider that Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia lag behind Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU integration process, or that these countries are at best on a par with Bosnia in some aspects of the EU accession process, whereas others believe that Albania is ahead of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is interesting to note that the respondents do not have enough information about this process in Serbia, but they all stress that Croatia is, in a way, already in the EU, and that Serbia is progressing faster because its system is ordered. They do not, however, think that living standards are much better in Serbia and Croatia than in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that this is especially not the case in Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania. Additional hindrances cited for Bosnia and Herzegovina were its complex structure of government, the multi-ethnic character of society, lack of agreement between the three ethnicities, lack of a unified vision and unwillingness to accept differences.

The process of adoption of EU standards and the application of the existing regulations is problematic as it depends on the agreement and goodwill of the six main political leaders. At the same time, many respondents stress that BiH will join the EU when the EU decides so, not when we want to. They wish for a de-politicisation of the European integration process and for the technical process of the adoption of standards to stop being presented to the public as a political process. They advocate a political compromise which would simplify things, as political differences and the complicated system of government waste a lot of precious time of many generations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **III Level of knowledge of, and the manner of keeping informed about, the European integration process**

The responses of the interviewees on this question were almost identical to those in the 2010 report. Almost all the respondents from the interviewed groups of citizens get their information about the European integration process exclusively from the media, especially electronic – primarily from TV, much less from the radio and the internet. The internet is much more widely available to younger and better educated respondents. Public discussions, round tables and promotions figure negligibly as

a means of obtaining information. The situation is somewhat different with the group of civil servants who have greater opportunities than other citizens to gain knowledge by attending specialist and non-specialist training workshops, seminars and conferences. Young people and students keep track of the European integration process to a much lesser extent. An exception to this is the focus group of citizens from Banja Luka whose level of knowledge is higher than average, since most group members were educated people between 30 and 40 years of age.

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*Male - civil servant: MY JOB DOES NOT REQUIRE ME TO FOLLOW EUROPEAN INTEGRATION EXCEPT WHEN IT COMES TO PREPARING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES WHICH INCLUDE APPLYING FOR EU FUNDS... I KEEP MYSELF INFORMED BY ATTENDING WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS, READING THE MATERIALS AND AVAILABLE INFORMATION... IT'S NOT SYSTEMIC.*

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*Male- Banja Luka: MOSTLY THROUGH THE MEDIA, PRIMARILY THE INTERNET AS THE MOST READILY AVAILABLE MEDIUM, WHERE YOU CAN NOT ONLY GET INFORMATION BUT ALSO DOWNLOAD ALL KINDS OF PUBLICATIONS IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THE SPECIFICS...*

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*Female- Goražde: I GET MORE INFORMATION ON THE EU FROM THE CROATIAN MEDIA THAN FROM OURS.*

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*Female student- Međugorje 1: I KEEP MYSELF INFORMED BY WATCHING CROATIAN TELEVISION. I GET MORE INFORMATION ON THE EU FROM WATCHING PROMO CLIPS AND EVENTS. I ALSO USE THE INTERNET.*

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*Female student- Međugorje 2: WE'RE VERY BADLY INFORMED AND WE'RE NOT THAT INTERESTED EITHER. WE MIND OUR OWN BUSINESS AND WE LOOK TO CROATIA IN A WAY.*

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## IV Personal view of the process as either political or technical

The respondents point out, as they did in 2010, that the impression might be gained that the European integration process is political rather than technical in nature. They stress again that everything unfolds somewhere beyond the reach of common people. They are also cautious and think that Bosnia and Herzegovina will not have an easy task progressing on its way to Europe, although the majority is in favour of taking that path. However, they mention the fact that the presentation of the process as political rather than technical is a hindrance to faster advancement.

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*Male- Banja Luka 1: FIRST OF ALL, WE NEED TO REACH A POLITICAL AGREEMENT AND THEN SET OUT TO FULFIL THE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS THE EU PUTS BEFORE US. THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE FIRST CONSIDERED AT POLITICAL AND PARTY LEVEL AND THEN THE EXPERTS GET THINGS DONE IN THE WAY THE POLITICIANS HAVE AGREED, MAKING SURE EVERYTHING IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DEMANDS OF THE EU.*

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*Male- Banja Luka 2: EU INTEGRATION IS PRIMARILY PRESENTED AS A POLITICAL RATHER THAN A TECHNICAL ISSUE AND THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT I WOULD CHANGE IF I COULD. I'D APPROACH IT AS A TECHNICAL CONCEPT AND I'D EDUCATE THE PEOPLE TO MAKE THEM REALISE THAT IT IS ESSENTIALLY A TECHNICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUE, NOT A POLITICAL ONE. THE CRUCIAL PROBLEM WE FACE ARISES PRECISELY BECAUSE THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS IS PRESENTED AS A POLITICAL RATHER THAN A TECHNICAL ISSUE.*

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*Female- Goražde: It's NOTHING BUT A POLITICAL ISSUE. IT'S NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THE POLITICIANS BECAUSE A SYSTEM WOULD BE ESTABLISHED AND THEY WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO THINGS HOWEVER THEY PLEASE. THE EU HAS GOT INTERESTS OF ITS OWN.*

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*Student- Medugorje: It's POLITICAL. I AM IN FAVOUR AND ALL, BUT EVEN IF WE DO JOIN NATO AND THE EU WE STILL WON'T HAVE SORTED OUT OUR INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS. WHY SHOULD WE GO ANYWHERE BEFORE WE SORT THESE THINGS OUT? I PUT MY HOPES IN THE JUDICIARY.*

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## **V Identifying success and obstacles on the path to European integration**

The participants in all focus groups were generally unable to identify a single success except for the liberalisation of the visa regime. Again, they point to politicians as the biggest obstacle in the European integration process, saying that they use nationalism and divisions to manipulate the people. Other obstacles are the complex structure of the state and an uneducated population. The civil servants are somewhat more optimistic, pointing out that the establishment of certain institutions and co-ordination mechanisms is a success too, although they are aware of the many obstacles and challenges, political as well as technical in nature, which must be overcome to achieve any results in the European integration process.

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*Civil servant 1: WHAT IS GOOD IS THAT BOTH BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE RS ARE TRYING TO HARMONISE THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH EU STANDARDS, IN THE AREA OF BUSINESS BUT ALSO IN EVERYDAY LIFE, IN EDUCATION, CULTURE... WHAT REPRESENTS A PROBLEM IN THE PROCESS IS THE BURDEN OF THE PAST, WHERE BOSNIA HAS BEEN LITERALLY DEGRADED IN SO MANY AREAS. A PART OF THE PROBLEM MAY ALSO BE THE FACT THAT THE CITIZENS ARE COMPLETELY UNINTERESTED, AS THEY HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT OTHER ISSUES, SUCH AS MAKING A LIVING. THERE ARE PROBLEMS IN A PART OF OUR ADMINISTRATION, EVEN. THE BUREAUCRATS MAY NOT REALISE THAT THEY ARE SIMPLY FAILING TO SET THE STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE, FOR THE CITIZENS, IN THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS BECAUSE, OFFICIALLY, THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO JOIN THE EU, BUT UNOFFICIALLY IT IS TO CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR A BETTER LIFE AND WORK.*

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*Civil servant 2: BEARING IN MIND THAT BiH IS A POLITICALLY DIVIDED SOCIETY, THAT THE WOUNDS FROM THE PAST HAVE NOT HEALED YET, THAT THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF FRAGMENTATION IN EVERY AREA OF LIFE, I THINK THE VERY FACT THAT WE'RE CLOSE TO GETTING CANDIDATE STATUS IS A HUGE SUCCESS.*

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*Civil servant 3: THE POSITIVE STEPS ARE THE CREATION OF CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS IN CHARGE OF EU INTEGRATION, AND THE FACT THAT CERTAIN LAWS HAVE BEEN HARMONISED WITH EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS, BUT THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM IS THAT THESE LAWS ARE NOT BEING IMPLEMENTED. YES, THERE ARE STANDARDS, BUT THEY ARE NOT IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOWER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT,*

THAT IS, THE HIGHER LEVELS HAVE NOT CREATED THE CONDITIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE LEGISLATION... THIS MAY PRESENT A PROBLEM IN CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH WOULD ENABLE US TO ACHIEVE CANDIDATE STATUS. AS FOR THE ECONOMY, OURS IS NOT READY FOR THE EU MARKET, THIS NEEDS TO BE SAID IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS. WE MUST MOBILISE ALL THE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL GOVERNMENT LEVELS TO WORK ON RAISING THE STANDARDS IN OUR COMPANIES SO THAT THEY MAY COMPETE IN THE EU MARKET. THE CEFTA WOULD PERHAPS BE A GOOD EXAMPLE, WE SIGNED THE TREATY BUT WE ENTERED THE REGIONAL MARKET GAME COMPLETELY UNPREPARED.

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*Male- Banja Luka:* IN MY VIEW, THE ONLY GOOD THING THAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED LAST YEAR IS THE LIFTING OF THE VISA REGIME. THAT'S A GOOD THING. AS FOR THE OBSTACLES, I THINK THAT THESE EUROPEAN STANDARDS COULD... IT'S JUST OUR MENTALITY... I DON'T THINK WE WILL ADJUST TO EUROPEAN STANDARDS ALL THAT WELL.

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*Female- Goražde 1:* THE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM AND THE CUMBERSOME ADMINISTRATION; WE CAN'T JOIN THE EU BEFORE WE TAKE CARE OF THAT.

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*Female- Goražde 2:* THE LIFTING OF THE VISA REGIME IS A SUCCESS. ABOVE ALL, IT'S A WAY TO TEST HOW RESPONSIBLE OUR CITIZENS ARE. IN SPITE OF ALL THE CASES WHERE THEIR RULES HAD BEEN VIOLATED, THEY[THE EU] ISSUED A POSITIVE REPORT ON THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE CITIZENS OF BiH. IT TURNED OUT, AFTER ALL, THAT PEOPLE DO HAVE SOME AWARENESS...

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*Female student- Međugorje:* THE GREATEST OBSTACLE IN THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS IS THE POLITICIANS THEMSELVES. THEY'RE ACCUSTOMED TO THIS SO AN ORDERLY SYSTEM IS NOT TO THEIR LIKING. WE WILL NEVER MEET ALL THE CRITERIA AND JOIN, THE EU WILL PULL US IN IF IT NEEDS US IN THE FIRST PLACE.

## **VI Primary obligations, co-operation between institutions and the possibility of expediting Bosnia's accession**

Co-operation between various institutions has yet again been described as insufficient and uncoordinated. The views of the civil servants from the RS are somewhat more optimistic. The participants, especially the civil servants, mentioned a multitude of examples which point to the shortcomings of the system and the influence of political elites on the processes of drafting legislation, which are the domain of experts. Still, they were unable to identify the primary obligations, except for the Sejdić-Finci ruling. Unlike the other participants, the civil servants are aware of the basic set of priorities which the EU stresses (the census, the law on state aid, the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the Sejdić&Finci vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina case), and they stress the need to draft National integration programme which would clearly define and divide the obligations and deadlines from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the responsible institutions of the state and the entities, and, accordingly, they are in favour of better co-ordination. At the same time, the citizens from Banja Luka were able correctly to define the obligations such as census, law on state aid and the question of military property. They stress the importance of political will among the elites as a precondition for things to start moving forward.

They also think that achieving better co-ordination among institutions requires overcoming past conflicts, whereas it is precisely these conflicts which are insisted upon and reproduced. Many participants from different cities mentioned the necessity of changing the way common people think as one of the preconditions for expediting the accession process.

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*Civil servant 1: THE NEED TO ADOPT A NATIONAL INTEGRATION PROGRAMME. WITHOUT SUCH A PROGRAMME WE CAN'T, WE DON'T KNOW, IF YOU LOOK AT THE NATURE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA YOU'LL SEE HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO WORK ON THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS. THERE'S A STRUGGLE OVER COMPETENCIES BETWEEN THE INSTITUTIONS, WHICH ONE OF THEM IS IN CHARGE OF A CERTAIN LAW OR CERTAIN SECTOR, AND THIS, AGAIN, IS A POLITICAL ISSUE. AS FOR CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE INSTITUTIONS, THE RECENT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FORUM FOR PARLIAMENTARY CO-OPERATION DESERVES TO BE MENTIONED.*



Civil servant 2: WE HERE IN BOSNIA ACT REACTIVELY, AS OPPOSED TO PROACTIVELY... THE CROATIAN ACCESSION PROCESS WILL SERVE AS A PROPELLANT WHICH WILL PUSH US FORWARD... WHEN WE FACE PROBLEMS EXPORTING TO CROATIA. MILK IS ALREADY A TOPICAL ISSUE, SOON WE WILL BE TALKING ABOUT EVEN THOSE FOODSTUFFS WE WERE ABLE TO EXPORT, SUCH AS FISH, WHERE YOU NEED TO PASS A MULTITUDE OF BORDER CONTROLS, OBTAIN A LOT OF DOCUMENTS... THE CONTROL HAS TO BE STANDARDISED, CONDUCTED BY ACCREDITED LABORATORIES, AND OUR LABORATORIES ARE NOT ACCREDITED. ALL THIS WILL HELP IMPROVE CO-OPERATION, AND THE CONSTITUTION SAYS INSPECTION IS THE PREROGATIVE OF ENTITIES... HOWEVER, IT HAS TO BE STANDARDISED IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY, IN BOTH ENTITIES... THE SITUATION WILL FORCE US TO IMPROVE CO-OPERATION, THERE ARE ALREADY SIGNS THAT THINGS ARE MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION...

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Male- Banja Luka 1: I WOULD CHANGE THE WAY RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS COMMUNICATE, THOSE WHICH ARE COMPETENT TO DECIDE ON THESE MATTERS. I'D MAKE THE COMMUNICATION CLOSER, FASTER... MORE EFFICIENT THAN IT'S BEEN SO FAR. IF WE'RE LEANING TOWARDS THE EU THE COMMUNICATION SHOULD GO THROUGH REGULAR CHANNELS, WITHOUT HURDLES AND OBSTACLES WE HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT...

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Male- Banja Luka 2: IF I COULD CHANGE ANYTHING, THE FIRST THING I WOULD CHANGE IN THE RS AND BiH AS A WHOLE IS THIS CONTAMINATION WITH NATIONALISM. THAT'S THE FIRST THING I WOULD DO, I THINK THAT'S THE MAIN PROBLEM. THAT'S IT FROM ME.

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Male- Banja Luka 3: IN AN IDEAL WORLD, IF AN INDIVIDUAL COULD HAVE THAT KIND OF POWER, MAYBE ONE COULD FORCE THE LEADERS OF THE SIX POLITICAL PARTIES, THE SIX HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE, TO SIT DOWN AND REACH AN AGREEMENT ONCE AND FOR ALL, FOR THE SAKE OF THE COMMON GOOD, NOT FOR THE SAKE OF INDIVIDUALS, AN ENTITY, AN ETHNIC OR RELIGIOUS GROUP.

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Male- Banja Luka 4: WE SEE HOW LONG IT'S TAKEN US TO IMPLEMENT CERTAIN THINGS, LIKE THE AGREEMENT ON THE CENSUS- IT LOOKS SO SIMPLE, YET IT'S SO COMPLICATED. THEY CONSIDERED IT A TECHNICAL ISSUE; WE THOUGHT IT WAS A POLITICAL ONE.

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*Male- Banja Luka 7: WE'VE GOT PROMISES FROM THE PRIME MINISTER WHO'S COME UP WITH A NEW PLATFORM, SO THIS SUMMER MAY PROVE CRUCIAL. HOWEVER, THE WAY THINGS ARE, THAT WOULD MEAN SHIFTING FROM REVERSE GEAR STRAIGHT INTO FIFTH. I'M NOT AN OPTIMIST; WE NEED TO GO THROUGH THE OTHER GEARS FIRST.*

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*Female- Goražde 1: THE PROBLEM IS THEY HAVEN'T GOT A COMMON GOAL, OF COURSE THEY DON'T CO-OPERATE. IF THEY HAD A COMMON GOAL THEY'D BE WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE IT. THE WAY THINGS ARE, IT'S EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF. CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE ENTITIES IS THE BASIS OF EVERYTHING ELSE.*

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*Male student- Međugorje: CO-OPERATION DEPENDS ON WHO IS IN POWER AT WHICH LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT. THERE IS CO-OPERATION IF THE SAME PARTY IS IN POWER AT ALL LEVELS. IF IT'S DIFFERENT PARTIES, THEY BLOCK EACH OTHER.*

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## **VII The impact of the introduction of EU standards to BiH on the way of life and the standard of living of the respondents – positive and negative expectations**

As in the previous research, all the focus group participants thought that the introduction of the EU standards would influence their standard of living and way of life. They were aware of both the positive and the negative impact. They expressed concern about the preservation of tradition and customs, and the impact of EU standards on the people who make their living in a traditional manner. All the respondents, in all three cycles, were concerned that others would seize the natural resources of Bosnia and Herzegovina although they recognise the need to develop the economy. They thought the authorities should do more to help domestic companies cope with the pressures of competition, both regionally, within CEFTA, and in the European market. They generally think that Bosnia and Herzegovina, the way it is now, should not join the EU, as it would be in an inferior position because of the shortcomings of its political, social and economic system. They think a system should first be established and economy strengthened so that the country would be able to compete in the EU.

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*Male- Banja Luka: AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, IT'S NOT SO MUCH AN ECONOMIC MATTER AS CULTURAL, AND ALSO A MATTER OF RESPONSIBILITY. I DOUBT IF WE'D BE ABLE TO GET USED TO THIS NEW WORLD, THE WORLD OF STANDARDS AND RESPONSIBILITY, IF WE'D BE ABLE TO ADOPT SOME SORT OF ETHICS... EVERYONE WILL HAVE TO CHANGE CERTAIN THINGS, SMALL THINGS, SO WE COULD COME CLOSER TO THIS WORLD WE'RE ABOUT TO JOIN. BULGARIA AND ROMANIA ARE STRUGGLING TO DO SO, AND WE'VE ALL SEEN HOW GREECE ENDED UP WITH ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ECONOMY.*

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*Female- Goražde: THERE ARE GOOD THINGS AND THERE ARE BAD THINGS, BUT IT'LL BE WORTH IT, TO PUT IN SOME EFFORT FOR THE SAKE OF A BETTER FUTURE. WHAT WE'VE GOT NOW IS A VICIOUS CIRCLE.*

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*Female student- Međugorje: A POSITIVE THING IS THAT THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE MORE ORDER. WE WILL HAVE TO ADJUST OUR MENTALITY ACCORDINGLY.*

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## **VIII Commitment to EU Integration as a common interest of all citizens and peoples in BiH**

Almost all focus group participants, upon consideration of all the positive and negative aspects of EU integration, are still in favour of it. While Bosniaks and Croats do not consider that the process is at odds with the interests of their respective ethnic groups, they do express scepticism as to their ability to prevail against the interests of the big powers in the EU. Unlike them, Serbs do express some unease with regard to the effect of EU integration on preservation of the Republic Srpska's competences, but they do not consider that one is contrary to the other. They stress peace, security, higher standards of living, employment opportunities and ordinary life unburdened by the politics of the past as primary interests of all citizens. In addition to this, focus groups in Banja Luka stress the importance of protecting the Dayton Agreement.

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*Male- Banjaluka 1: I BELIEVE THAT THE GENERAL POSITION OF THE RS HAS LATELY BEEN, ...THAT THE MAIN INTEREST CONSISTS OF PRESERVING AND PROTECTING THE DAYTON AGREEMENT AS IT IS...BECAUSE THE DAYTON AGREEMENT ALLOWS FOR THE ENTITIES TO CONTINUE TO EXIST IN THE CURRENT FORM. ALL THAT IS DONE CONTRARY TO THE DAYTON AGREEMENT WOULD UNDERMINE THE PRINCIPLES SET IN '95. THE MOST CURRENT ISSUE, PERTAINING TO THE THE COURT AND THE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE OF BiH..THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST CURRENT AND PRESSING ISSUES THE RS IS INTERESTED IN...AND IT HAS BEEN WORKING IN THAT DIRECTION AND WITH THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE TO PROTECT THE DOCUMENT.*

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*Female- Goražde 1: PEOPLE ARE YEARNING FOR POSITIVITY AND THEY ARE NOT FOCUSING ON WHAT IS NEGATIVE. THERE IS NO IDEAL SITUATION, BUT ANYTHING WOULD BE BETTER COMPARED TO HOW IT IS HERE.*

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*Female-Goražde 2: It IS IN EVERYBODY'S INTEREST. ALTHOUGH I AM NOT CERTAIN THAT EVERYTHING WOULD SUIT US. I DOUBT THAT EVERYTHING IS GOOD IN THE EU.*

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*Student- Međugorje: I DO NOT THINK THAT BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA WILL EVER BE UNITED ON AN ISSUE. I CANNOT FATHOM THAT. HERE EVERYBODY'S OPINION DIFFERS FROM THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS. IT IS THAT COMPLICATED THAT I NO LONGER UNDERSTAND WHAT THE PROBLEM IS.*

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*Student- Međugorje: We COULD STILL FORMULATE A JOINT POSITION IF WE SHARE A COMMON GOAL.*

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## **IX Their views on the authority of various levels of government for the implementation of BiH accession reforms and their attitude towards institutional blockages**

The participants in the focus groups mostly see the solution in improved communication and coordination between institutions at different levels of government. This attitude is predominant with the civil servants and in Republika Srpska. At the same time, they are all aware of the complexity of the state structure in BiH. As before, Bosniak respondents deem that the best solution lies in unified

legislation and coordination of the entities in implementation of the legislation. Respondents from the RS deem that the Dayton Agreement, as the guarantee of existence of the entities and their competences, should be protected for various reasons; however, they are not unified in their views as to how. Focus is shifted back to the topic of what falls within the realm of politics and what falls within the technical realm, and they stress the issue of politicisation of the EU integration process which slows down the process of integration that all citizens of BiH strive for.

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*Male- Banjaluka 1: GIVEN THAT THE PREVAILING TENDENCY IN EUROPE IS THE TENDENCY TOWARDS REGIONALISATION...AND SMALLER REGIONS AND THEIR MUTUAL COOPERATION, EVEN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION,...WHICH IS DESIRABLE, I BELIEVE THAT THE STATE BiH, AS IT IS, SHOULD HAVE THE MAIN FEATURES OF A STATE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MONETARY POLICY, EVEN THE ARMY IF YOU WILL, I MAY HAVE OMITTED SOMETHING.*

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*Male- Banjaluka 2: I THINK WE SHOULD GO FOR CENTRALISATION PROVIDED THAT THERE IS A STATE IN WHICH NATIONAL AFFILIATION WOULD NOT PLAY A ROLE, AND THAT INDIVIDUAL PARTS WOULD GO FOR DECENTRALISATION, IN ORDER TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO THE CITIZENS.*

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*Male- Banjaluka 3: THERE IS NO EITHER-OR. THE ONE DOES NOT JEOPARDISE THE OTHER. THE ACCESSION CONDITIONS SET BY EU DO NOT JEOPARDISE THE STATE OR THE ENTITIES. ONLY A SUFFICIENT LEVEL OF COORDINATION, SO THAT EVERYBODY IS DOING THEIR JOB. THERE IS NO NEED TO ASK THE EITHER-OR QUESTION...THE PROBLEM HERE IS THAT THIS IS OFTEN POSED AS A GENERAL POLITICAL ISSUE THAT SOMETHING JEOPARDISES SOMETHING ELSE. THERE IS NOTHING HERE THAT JEOPARDISES EVERYBODY COMPLETING THEIR SHARE OF WORK AND FOLLOWING THE PATH OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. THE SYSTEM, AS IT IS, ALLOWS FOR SOMETHING TO BE DONE. THEREFORE IT IS NOT THE MATTER OF EITHER-OR, AND THE SYSTEM AS IT IS CAN FUNCTION WITHOUT PROBLEMS.*

*Male- Banjaluka 4: THE VERY SYSTEM OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IS SET UP IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT IS IMPLEMENTED ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, FROM THE LOCAL TO THE STATE LEVEL. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT CAN ALL FUNCTION IF EVERYBODY IS DOING THEIR JOB WELL AND IF EVERYBODY IS INVESTING MAXIMUM EFFORTS...THIRDLY, EVERYTHING SHOULD BE A MATTER OF AGREEMENT, AND I VERY MUCH DISLIKE TO SEE THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION ISSUE BROUGHT UP WHEN NECESARY AND IGNORED WHEN NOT. IT IS THE CASE WITH BOTH POLITICAL AND TECHNICAL ISSUES. THE TECHNICAL AND THE POLITICAL HAVE BECOME ABSOLUTELY INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM EACH OTHER...AND I AM NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THINGS MOVING FORWARD SOON.*

## **X Awareness of EU funds available to BiH and interest in obtaining more information about the European integration process**

The level of awareness about the EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina is low. Educated participants and the employees of state institutions are somewhat better informed. They mostly perceive EU assistance as infrastructure reconstruction or technical assistance projects. They also question the capacity of the civil service to realise EU funds. For more information about EU integration the respondents turn to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate for European Integration, international and nongovernmental organisations, and to university professors. They believe that not enough information is available. Respondents from Banja Luka are more aware of the existence and the activities of local organisations which promote EU integration. This results from increased interaction that takes place in a larger urban area. The focus group of students did not express interest in EU integration related topics and they do not have any idea who to turn to if they want to learn something. Croat respondents are mostly aware of projects in Croatia, but not about those in Herzegovina. In addition, smaller communities such as Goražde show a lack of knowledge about using IPA funds.

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*Student- Međugorje 1: I WOULD ENQUIRE ABOUT EDUCATION REFORMS AND WHAT IT IS THAT I WOULD BE ABLE TO DO WITH MY DIPLOMA ABROAD.*

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*Student- Međugorje 2: I HEARD THAT IN CROATIA THEY ALLOCATED OVER THREE MILLION KUNA FOR RURAL AREAS.*

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*Female- Goražde 1: WELL, I WOULD GO TO SOME INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OR THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF BIH, I WOULD GO TO THEIR WEB SITE. AND I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HEALTH, EDUCATION, THOSE STANDARDS...*

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*Male- Banja Luka 1: WEB PAGE OF THE DIRECTORATE FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION (DEI) AS A BODY FUNCTIONING AS A UNIT OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WHICH IMPLEMENTS EVERYTHING RELATED TO EU INTEGRATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ... WHERE ONE CAN FIND AN ITEMISED DESCRIPTION OF THE ENTIRE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS IN BIH ... OR, AS A COMPLEMENTARY SOLUTION, ACIPS WITH THEIR ANALYSES, SUGGESTIONS, COMMENTS.*

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*Male- Banja Luka 2: I FIND THIS WHOLE STORY ABOUT IPA FUNDS RATHER FUNNY. THEY CANNOT REACH AN AGREEMENT TIME AND AGAIN. THEY PLAY THE ROLES OF PATRIOTIC SERBS, BOSNIAKS, CROATS. THEY USE NATIONALIST ARGUMENTS TO BICKER OVER UNUSED MONEY WHICH SHOULD BE SPENT ON PROJECTS IN BIH UNTIL THE DEADLINES ARE UP... AND THEN WITHIN FIVE DAYS THEY MEET AND REACH AN AGREEMENT ON A COMPLETE LIST OF PROJECTS FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR, WORTH MILLIONS... AND IT ALL GOES ON AS IF NOTHING HAPPENED. I KNOW FOR CERTAIN ABOUT SOME PROJECTS FUNDED FROM THE IPA FUNDS, I THINK THE LAST ONE WAS RELATED TO THE KASTEL FORTRESS IN BANJA LUKA, AND I AM AWARE OF CERTAIN PROJECTS INVOLVING THE VRBAS RIVER.*

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## **XI Opinions on the prospects awaiting Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU as compared to the prospects of other Western Balkan countries and attitudes towards the quality of life of the citizens of said countries**

It is noticeable that one group of participants think that Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia are lagging behind Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU integration process, or are at best equal in certain aspects of EU accession, while the other group is of the opinion that even Albania made more progress in this regard compared to BiH. It is interesting to note that respondents do not have enough information about this process in Serbia, but they all point out the fact that Croatia is already an EU member state in some way and that Serbia has made more progress because of its system which is better organised. Overall, however, they do not consider that the

standard of living is significantly better in Serbia and Croatia compared to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and especially not so in the case of Montenegro, Macedonia or Albania. As an aggravating circumstance in this case they quote the complex structure of BiH state authorities, multiethnic society, the absence of agreement between the three ethnic groups, lack of a common goal and unwillingness to accept something different.

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*Female Student- Međugorje 1: IT IS TRUE THAT CROATIA HAS MADE MORE PROGRESS, BUT I THINK THAT THEY ARE NOT MATURE AND THAT THEY SHOULD FIRST SOLVE THE PROBLEMS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY. HOWEVER, CROATIA DOES NOT REPRESENT AN ELITE STATE COMPARED TO BiH. HERE, PEOPLE ARE AFRAID OF DIVERSITY. ONCE WE LEARN TO RESPECT IT, WE WILL JOIN THE EU. WE WERE THE EU IN MINIATURE.*

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*Male student- Međugorje 1: CROATIA CONTINUES TO MAKE PROGRESS AND BiH STILL HAS NOT SET ITS GOALS ... CROATIA IS TEN YEARS AHEAD OF US IN EVERY ASPECT. I FEAR THAT WE WILL BE AMONG THE LAST TO JOIN THE EU BECAUSE WE ARE STUCK IN THE PAST.*

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*Female student- Međugorje: SERBIA HAS BETTER POLITICIANS THAN WE DO. THEY DO NOT HAVE IT BETTER WHEN IT COMES TO STANDARD OF LIVING, THOUGH. ONE SHOULD PAY ATTENTION TO ORDINARY PEOPLE. MACEDONIA IS NOT A WELL-DEVELOPED COUNTRY AND I THINK THEY ARE NOT MUCH BETTER OFF THAN US. STANDARD OF LIVING IS THE SAME BUT THEY HAVE MORE AMBITIOUS POLITICIANS.*

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*Male student- Međugorje 2: SERBIA IS NOT IN A MORE FAVOURABLE POSITION, ALTHOUGH IT WAS GRANTED CANDIDATE STATUS FOR EUROPEAN UNION MEMBERSHIP. AND FOR ALBANIA WE ARE LIKE CROATIA.*

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*Female- Goražde 1: EACH ONE OF THOSE COUNTRIES HAS A SMALL ADVANTAGE OVER US, BUT BOSNIA, CROATIA AND SERBIA FACE SIMILAR PROBLEMS AND, ON TOP OF THAT, WE STILL HAVE THAT DIVERSE ETHNIC STRUCTURE.*



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*Female- Goražde 2: I VISITED ALBANIA AND I MUST TELL YOU THAT, DESPITE OUR PREJUDICES AND WHAT WE KNEW AND IMAGINED PREVIOUSLY, ALBANIA MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS COMPARED TO BiH. HIGHWAYS ARE BEING BUILT, THE ECONOMY IS DEVELOPING AND I MUST SAY THAT I WAS POSITIVELY SURPRISED.*

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*Female- Goražde 3: THE FINANCIAL SITUATION IS STILL SIMILAR. NOWHERE IS PERFECT. THEY ARE JUST BETTER ORGANISED. IN THE HEALTH SECTOR THEY ARE AHEAD OF US, BOTH CROATIA AND SERBIA. NOT MACEDONIA. IT'S SIMILAR THERE.*

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*Male- Banja Luka 1: WE HAD A GREAT START BUT A BAD FINISH. I THINK THAT EVEN ALBANIA IS AHEAD OF US IF I AM NOT MISTAKEN ... IN ALL THESE PROCESSES AND INTEGRATION AND AT ONE POINT WE HAD MADE MORE PROGRESS THAN THEY HAD.*

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*Male- Banja Luka 2: SINCE SERBIA IS EXPECTED TO BE GRANTED EU CANDIDATE STATUS ON MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup> ... WE REMAIN FAR BEHIND SOME OF THOSE COUNTRIES IN THE REGION, BUT I HOPE THAT THE FORTHCOMING CROATIAN ACCESSION TO THE EU WILL FORCE OUR POLITICIANS TO TACKLE THIS ISSUE IN A MORE SERIOUS MANNER. IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO EXPORT A LARGE NUMBER OF BiH PRODUCTS LIKE WE DO NOW SINCE STRICTER CRITERIA FOR BORDER CONTROL WILL BE INTRODUCED TOGETHER WITH MANY OTHER THINGS THAT WILL MAKE US RECONSIDER OUR SITUATION.*

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*Male- Banja Luka 3: IN POLITICAL TERMS, WE CANNOT BE COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE COMPLICATED CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL SETUP OF THE COUNTRY. PERHAPS WE CAN ONLY BE COMPARED TO MACEDONIA WHICH IS MOST SIMILAR TO US BECAUSE OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO ETHNIC GROUPS AND SINCE IT IS AN UNOFFICIALLY DIVIDED STATE DESPITE ITS INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED OFFICIAL STATUS. IN THIS SENSE AND WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS WE WERE MORE OR LESS AT THE SAME LEVEL AND TOGETHER WE LAGGED BEHIND IN DEALING WITH THE SAME PROBLEMS.*

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## **XII European vs. Balkan Identity**

All focus group participants have a sense of a clearly defined European identity and are aware of their multiple identities. The Balkans is seen as part of Europe, not particularly different from other parts of Europe that also have their peculiarities. They think that Europeans exaggerate negative aspects of the Balkans, but that there is truth to the perception of our apathetic and inert mentality which, however, may also be characterised as responsible, business-like and even appealing in the environment of an organised system. As in previous years, it has been pointed out that local people rapidly integrate into the European environment when faced with a modern system of values.

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*Male- Banja Luka: THIS IS BOTH GEOGRAPHICALLY AND HISTORICALLY AN INTEGRAL PART OF EUROPE... IT IS A QUESTION OF IDENTITY, AND I AM A SERB, A BANJA LUKA RESIDENT AND A PERSON FROM BOSNIA KRAJINA AND I LIVE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, AND, TOMORROW I'LL RESIDE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION. IT IS MORE OF A MYTHOLOGICAL QUESTION THAN A PRACTICAL ONE.*

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*Female- Goražde: THE BALKANS - WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF EUROPE, IT'S JUST THE APPROACH TO EUROPE WHICH IS DIFFERENT. THE EUROPEAN APPROACH MAY NOT SUBSTITUTE THE ONE FOUND IN THE BALKANS AND VICE VERSA. WE AS A PEOPLE ACCEPT CHANGES FASTER AND EASIER. YOU REMAIN "TRUE" TO YOURSELF, BEING AT THE SAME TIME AN INTEGRAL PART OF EUROPE.*

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*Male student- Međugorje: PEOPLE FROM THE BALKANS HAVE A BAD REPUTATION, BUT WE ALSO TEND TO INTEGRATE MORE EASILY. WE CAN BECOME SUCCESSFUL QUICKLY. PEOPLE FROM THE BALKANS ARE ABLE BUT THEY NEED ENCOURAGEMENT. IT IS POSSIBLE TO REPRESENT THE BALKANS, EUROPE AND THE WORLD AT THE SAME TIME AS WELL AS YOUR BIRTHPLACE.*

### **XIII Additional questions for the employees of public institutions**

**The presence of special departments devoted to EU integration within their institutions and training programmes focusing on the introduction of the EU standards with a view to improving coordination and subordination**

In the key institutions of the RS such as the National Assembly, the Government of the RS, the Ministry of Economic Relations and Coordination and some administrations, there exist separate departments dealing with the EU integration process. Also, an increasing number of institutions in the RS plan to systematically solve the problem of harmonising entity-level regulations and their implementation with EU standards, without waiting for the state-level institutions or those of the Federation of BiH. In addition, some local communities in the RS have departments that are focused on creating projects in relation to the EU IPA funds.

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*Civil servant- Banja LUKA 1: AN INTEGRAL PART OF MY JOB IS TO MONITOR EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS IN THE EU, GOOD OR BAD...WE MONITOR PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT IT.*

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*Civil servant- Banja LUKA 2: THERE IS AN INITIATIVE TO ESTABLISH AT LEAST A SPECIAL DEPARTMENT AND GATHER A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD DEAL WITH THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS, IN TERMS OF GATHERING INFORMATION AND NOMINATION OF PROJECTS THROUGH THE PRE-ACCESSION FUNDS IN ORDER TO COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES OF THIS INSTITUTION WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS REQUIRED BY FUTURE EU ACCESSION.*

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*Civil servant- Banja LUKA 6: THERE AROSE A NEED TO ELABORATE THE PROPOSED INITIATIVE TO SET UP A SEPARATE ORGANISATIONAL UNIT IN THE INSPECTORATE WHICH WOULD DEAL WITH THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS IN THIS BODY.*

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*Civil servant- Banja LUKA 7: AS FOR THE AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES OF REPUBLIC SRPSKA, IT HAS NO SEPARATE DEPARTMENT DEALING WITH THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS, BUT IT ALSO MEANS THAT EVERY SEGMENT OF THIS INSTITUTION'S ACTIVITIES IS COORDINATED AND MONITORED AGAINST THAT WHICH IS TAKING PLACE IN THE EU.*

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## The introduction of European standards and changes to working methods in the workplace or in the application of regulations in everyday work routines, and experiences with the use of IPA funds

It is evident that the RS institutions want to be able to independently harmonise entity legislation with EU Community acquis, which also represents the current government policy which emphasises the need for an independent approach to European integration processes, thereby limiting the jurisdiction of state-level institutions. Such government policy and ensuing procedures created the need for the recruitment of educated young people who are able to participate in these processes and the formation of specialised bodies that provide support to institutions in enforcing said policy. The civil servant focus group has shown a remarkable level of competence in specialised areas and in connecting the overall European integration process with the practical tasks they perform in their fields. Therefore, it was clearly demonstrated that there is a direct correlation between the introduction of European standards and changes to working practices, application of regulations in their daily work, as well as the use of IPA funds.

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*Civil servant- Banja LUKA 1: MUCH HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS IN ORDER TO CONNECT THE AGENCY WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION... TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR MODELS OF FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ENTERPRISES AND THE WAY THEY APPLY FOR FUNDING, NOT SO THAT WE MAY APPLY FOR THEIR FUNDING, BUT TO LEARN ... AND USE THIS PARTNERSHIP WITH THEM IN ORDER TO GAIN THE NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE WHICH WILL BE APPLIED WHEN THE FUNDS BECOME AVAILABLE TO BiH AND RS ... SO THAT WE CAN BE READY TO USE THESE FUNDS. THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IS LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND PROPER INFORMATION AND THIS APPLIES TO CITIZENS AND INDIVIDUALS AS WELL AS INSTITUTIONS, ENTREPRENEURS AND COMPANIES. IN THIS PERIOD, IT IS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE EU INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN SIMILAR ACTIVITIES ... SO THAT WE MAY PROGRESS BEYOND THE STAGE OF TRAINING AND PREPARATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE, AND KEEP TRACK OF SYSTEMS APPLIED IN EUROPE AT SOME FUTURE STAGE.*

Civil servant- Banja Luka 2: ALTHOUGH THE INSPECTORATE IS NOT PART OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WHICH NEEDS TO DRAFT BILLS AND AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS, BUT A BODY IN CHARGE OF IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS, IT IS, OF COURSE, NECESSARY TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH EU REGULATIONS AND PRACTICES. IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE AN INSPECTOR WHO IS ABLE TO ENFORCE THE REGULATIONS.

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Civil servant- Banja Luka 3: OUR WORK IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS IN TERMS OF VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE OF THE REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHICH ARE, IN GENERAL, PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THIS HAS TO DO WITH THEIR COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNITY ACQUIS. EACH DRAFT LAW OR BILL THAT WE MOSTLY GET FROM THE RS GOVERNMENT IS CHECKED, THAT IS, ITS COMPLIANCE WITH EU COMMUNITY ACQUIS IS VERIFIED, WHERE EACH PROPOSER OF A REGULATION FROM A PARTICULAR MINISTRY HAS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMITTEE AND ELABORATE ON THE REGULATION ITSELF AND RESPOND TO QUESTIONS. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND EXTERNAL EXPERTS ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DIRECTIVES OBSERVED IN THE HARMONISATION PROCESS.

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Civil servant- Banja Luka 4: IN THE RS THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT STRENGTHENING OF CAPACITIES IN THE FIELD OF THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS. UNTIL NOW, EVERYONE HAD THEIR OWN BOSS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PYRAMIDAL HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE IN THE INSTITUTIONS. NOW, IT IS NECESSARY TO CREATE PROJECT TEAMS COMPRISING PEOPLE COMING FROM DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION, AND WHERE THERE IS AN INFORMAL TEAM COORDINATOR. TASKS PERFORMED BY THE INSTITUTIONS ARE GETTING MORE COMPLEX. THE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF THE RS NOW PRESSURES THE GOVERNMENT AND THE RS INSTITUTIONS TO PARTICIPATE MORE ACTIVELY IN CREATING LEGAL REGULATIONS THAT ARE IN LINE WITH EU STANDARDS.

## The relationship toward the advancements made by the neighbouring countries and the position of their counterparts in the region

Similar to the responses provided by the citizens, the civil servants realistically perceive Croatia as leading the way and Serbia as having the capacity to expedite its progress toward the EU, while the other Western Balkan countries are seen as occupying the same rank as Bosnia and Herzegovina regardless of their formal status. The advantages of Croatia in particular and of Serbia as well have been identified as the organisation of state administration and a greater number of educated and qualified people, i.e. in human resources necessary for the association process implementation. In addition, the advantages of Serbia and Croatia as compared to Bosnia and Herzegovina have been associated with a larger number of powerful economic operators that are better able to compete in the regional and European market, while the inability of Bosnia and Herzegovina to find a way to utilise its own natural resources was identified as a weakness by the respondents. However, when it comes to the standard and position of their counterparts, the civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not find their counterparts to be in a better position either in terms of their status or in terms of their working conditions.

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*Civil servant- Banjaluka 1: WE CANNOT SAY THAT THE SUN IS SHINING BRIGHTER IN CROATIA OR SERBIA AND THAT THEY HAVE SOMETHING MORE THAN WE DO IN A SPECTACULAR WAY. MOREOVER, IN CERTAIN ASPECTS, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA HAS SOME COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES OF ITS OWN, RESOURCES THAT PEOPLE TALK AND LEARN ABOUT... THERE IS ALWAYS MENTION OF FORESTS, WATER POTENTIAL AND MINING. IN COMPARISON TO OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE REGION AND EU MEMBER STATES, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA HAS SOME GOOD ADVANTAGES. WE HAVE GOOD QUALITY RESOURCES, BUT OUR APPROACH TO THEM IS OBSOLETE.*

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*Civil servant- Banjaluka 2: WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH LOCAL COMPANIES THAT OFFER FINISHED PRODUCTS INSTEAD OF JUST SELLING RAW MATERIALS. WE CANNOT BE COMPARED TO CROATIA OR TO SERBIA FOR THAT MATTER, IRRESPECTIVE OF HOW MANY PROBLEMS THEY ARE FACING. THEY HAVE MORE EDUCATED PEOPLE, A MUCH GREATER NUMBER OF EXPERTS, A MUCH GREATER NUMBER OF HIGH QUALITY COMPANIES CREATING FINISHED PRODUCTS, ALL OF WHICH BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IS LACKING AT THIS MOMENT. MONTENEGRO – CRIMINAL AND CORRUPT, THEY HAVE NOT GONE VERY FAR COMPARED TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA. ALBANIA IS A STORY IN ITSELF AND I DO NOT THINK THAT IT IS GOING TO ACHIEVE FAST-PACED PROGRESS. I FIND ALBANIA TO*

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BE DEMOCRATICALLY AND POLITICALLY IMMATURE, WHILE THE ECONOMIC SPHERE ONLY COMES LATER. AS BAD AS BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IS DOING RIGHT NOW, IT CANNOT BE COMPARED TO ALBANIA.

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*Civil servant- Banjaluka 3: WHEN IT COMES TO OUR COUNTERPARTS FROM THE REGION, I DO NOT THINK THAT THEY ARE IN A BETTER POSITION OR THAT THEY ARE ENJOYING BETTER CONDITIONS THAN WE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ARE.*

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*Civil servant- Banjaluka 4: WE ARE DEFINITELY NOT LEADING, WE ARE A STEP OR TWO BEHIND BOTH CROATIA AND SERBIA, BUT THAT WAS ALSO THE SITUATION IN YUGOSLAVIA AND THE RECENT WAR BROUGHT ABOUT ADDITIONAL DIFFERENCES. NOT EVERYTHING IS HARMONISED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL AND THE IMPLEMENTATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL POSES A PROBLEM, LIFE IS TAKING PLACE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.*

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*Civil servant- Banja LUKA 5: AS REGARDS THE ISSUE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE REGION, THE FACT IS THAT THE COUNTRIES IN THE REGION ARE CLOSER TO THE EU AND THEY ARE REAPING BENEFITS IN TERMS OF THE AMOUNT OF GDP PER CAPITA AND THE NUMBER OF COMPANIES PER CAPITA. THE CLOSER TO THE EU THEY ARE, THE BETTER THEIR PARAMETERS BECOME.*

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## **XIV Conclusion of the focus group analysis**

All three ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina perceive the European integration process in almost the same way. Moreover, a certain approximation of views has been observed in the last two research cycles (2010 – 2011). Participants in Banjaluka, Goražde and Međugorje equally find that we need to have a common goal and they have defined joining the European Union as that goal. If there is a common goal, there is also reason to implement reforms. All of them have pointed out relieving tensions, peace and stability as their priorities, which should bring about improvements in the standard of living. However, they think that it is obvious that a regulated system is not in the politicians' interest. Considering the fact that, as was the case in the last three research cycles, electronic media, primarily television, was the dominant source of information, the image of reality created by daily politics results in the same view as last year i.e. the view that the ruling political structures and the organisation of government represent an obstacle to European integration processes in Bosnia

and Herzegovina. At the same time, as it was the case with the research performed in 2009, there are visible differences in the fact that the participants of Serb ethnicity perceive the Dayton Constitution as “something sacred”, while Bosniaks request changes to Dayton’s concept of the state.

Therefore, the participants find compromise in the interest of a common future to be positive progress made as too much time has already been lost. Moreover, they would have enough patience to endure reforms if these would lead Bosnia and Herzegovina in the right direction. They do not expect changes to happen overnight because “one cannot shift from reverse into fifth gear”, but they expect them to be constant. Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina think that a precondition for the possibility of expediting progress along the European path is to stop bringing up themes from the past. This standpoint is a result of an obvious stagnation, but it differs from the views stated in 2009, which were focused more on issues related to serving of justice i.e. setting right the various wrongs resulting from the war, as a precondition for the continuation of the European integration process. As in 2009 and 2010, most of the respondents still think that ethnic divisions are more pronounced in Bosnia and Herzegovina than in other countries in the region, which represents an additional reason for Bosnia and Herzegovina to lag behind its neighbours. They clearly stated the view that Bosnia and Herzegovina, unlike other countries in the region, has not achieved the necessary level of internal social integration. However, unlike the research performed in 2009, this research cycle, in the case of all focus groups, shows repeated examples of oversaturation with politics and nationalism in all spheres of society. They admit though that prejudices exist and that they need to be dealt with. This leads to the conclusion that the citizens think that Bosnia and Herzegovina could keep pace with the region if it got rid of “political and national passions”, “poisoning by nationalism” and if politicians started “working for greater social good” and not only “for their own personal interests”. In order to make the association process more efficient, all participants of the focus groups insist on greater coordination among different institutions at the state and entity level, as they did in previous years. However, at the moment, they find the process of adoption of EU standards and the implementation of existing regulations problematic, because these depend on the goodwill of the leaders of the ruling parties, which they bitterly describe as the “Six Horsemen of the Apocalypse”. They object to their “not being able to reach an agreement in months while raising tensions and boasting of being great Serbs, great Bosniaks or great Croats, only to eventually come to an agreement in a single day”.

However, as in the last two research cycles, both the true willingness of the EU to accept Bosnia and Herzegovina on the one hand, and the willingness of Bosnia and Herzegovina to improve its system in order to earn its membership on the other are questioned. Unlike the research in 2009, when they mainly insisted on political



accession to the EU prior to fulfilling the obligations, this time, as last year, the respondents generally think that BiH society needs to implement reforms. In line with this standpoint, they think that political acceptance of an ill-prepared Bosnia and Herzegovina into the EU may bring more harm than good. The reason for this is the fact that they perceive the process of change during the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU as more important than the act of accession itself. This is probably a result of multiple cognitions gained through the regional media about the preparations of Croatia to join the EU, as well as of criticism addressed to the current member states: Bulgaria, Romania and Greece. Yet again, they still perceive the rare accomplishments of Bosnia and Herzegovina such as visa liberalisation as exceptions within the system.

It is evident that the respondents do not have a unified stance on the issue of comparison of Bosnia and Herzegovina with Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia. A number of participants find Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia to lag behind Bosnia and Herzegovina in the process of EU integration or, in the best case scenario, to be on a par with Bosnia and Herzegovina in certain aspects of EU accession, but this is primarily because these countries face similar national, ethnic, political and economic problems. The remaining participants think that these countries, even Albania, are ahead of Bosnia and Herzegovina, showing appreciation for the good marketing that these countries have or the more favourable situation with respect to privatisation and entrepreneurship, putting it bitterly in the context of what Bosnia and Herzegovina used to be in comparison to these countries. However, they are unified in pointing out that Croatia has already practically entered the EU and that Serbia is progressing faster because its system is ordered. Still, they do not think that living standards are much better in those countries than in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such views do not differ from the views provided in the previous two research cycles.

At the same time, a great number of respondents stress that Bosnia and Herzegovina will join the European Union when the EU decides so, and not when we want to, but they also reiterate that the reform path itself is what makes the situation gradually better. All of them agree, as they did last year, that BiH society will need to adapt, change its mentality and become more responsible and enterprising on this path, but they simultaneously fear that the natural resources of the country will be sold out. This conclusion is somewhat different from the majority opinion in 2009 when EU integration was seen as a political issue without a direct impact on citizens' lives. Additionally, they see a lack of human resources, i.e. a lack of educated and qualified staff trained to lead the European integration process and help Bosnia and Herzegovina obtain a better position in negotiations, as a negative factor for BiH. This applies equally to politicians, civil servants, entrepreneurs and academic citizens.

The participants: – civil servants may be evaluated as enthusiasts and qualified

people who want changes, hoping for de-politicisation of the technical process of European integration, and who do not find their counterparts in the region to be in a better position than they are, while students and young people in general are poorly informed about and show little interest in the EU integration process. It has been stated, as in the last two cycles, that the inflow of low quality and inadequate staff resulted in a large number of employees quantitatively increasing the volume of administration without any improvements to its quality. The civil servants stress the fact that separate departments dealing with EU integration rarely exist in their institutions, while training programmes on the introduction of EU standards appear sporadically and are given over to the NGO sector and foreign projects. Even if they do exist at lower levels of government, they are focused on the issues of utilising IPA funds. However, the civil servants in Republika Srpska have opportunities for more structured training with the aim of establishing specialised EU integration departments which even political leaders in the RS Government are increasingly insisting on. It can be concluded that the introduction of European standards and changes to working methods are more prominent in specialised institutions at the state level and in RS institutions, while experience in utilisation of IPA funds is quite limited, but nonetheless more prevalent and systematic in the RS than in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Having all these differences in mind, the participants in the 2012 focus groups appear to be a little more optimistic than previous years. Considering their views, this optimism seems to be groundless, but it is based on the hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina will eventually manage to build its society based on modern norms and overcome fears from the past. All of them, regardless of the differences in their age, gender or national background wish for the de-politicisation of the European integration process and for the technical process of the adoption of standards to stop being presented to the public as a political process. Therefore, they advocate a political compromise which would simplify things because political differences and the complicated system of government have wasted a lot of precious time of many generations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



# Results of the public opinion polls 2009.- 2011.- 2012.

## Methodology

<b>Method of interviewing:</b>	Face-to-face interviews in the households of respondents
<b>Method of selecting households:</b>	Random selection – Random walk technique
<b>Method of selecting respondents:</b>	Most recent birthday principle (respondent is an adult aged 18 or over with the most recent birthday, living in each household)
<b>Sample size:</b>	2009 : N= 1050 respondents 2011 : N= 1500 respondents 2012 : N= 1014 respondents
<b>Representativeness:</b>	Sample is representative of adults aged 18 or over in BiH according to available estimates on ethnic representation, administrative entities, majority areas, gender, age, education, rural and urban areas as well as employment status.
<b>Dates of interviewing:</b>	December 20-31, 2009; March 02-28, 2011, May 04-09, 2012
<b>Instrument:</b>	Questionnaire designed by Prism Research

## Comparison of the main findings

In 2011, compared with the current year, significantly more citizens of BiH considered that the situation was worsening in BiH in terms of European integration. In 2012, compared with the year before, citizens stated significantly more often that they were not certain of the direction in which the country was moving in terms of European integration. At the end of 2009 the citizen's views were divided. About 45.5% of the citizens thought that the situation was improving while 44.7% thought that the situation was worsening. In the beginning of 2011 that ratio was 41.4% / 50.1%, and in the middle of 2012 it was 40.8% / 39.6%. The results from 2012 are most likely the consequences of the formation of the Council of Ministers after 16 months of hold up and the adoption of a few „European“ laws.

It appears that in 2012 the support of BiH citizens for joining the EU has dropped compared with the year before. FBiH respondents are significantly more supportive of the accession of BiH to the EU than those from the RS. Measured within the index scope of 1 to 5, the level of support in 2009 was 3.3, equal as it was in 2011. In 2012, the support index was 3.2. In the Federation of BiH, the index is the same as it was before, while in the RS there was a noticeable drop from 3.2 index in 2009 to 3.0 index in 2012.

As in 2011, BiH citizens most often cited Croatia as the regional leader in fulfilling EU accession obligations. This year, BiH citizens ranked their country ahead of Albania, which was deemed as the country lagging the farthest behind in terms of meeting these obligations, unlike last year when they ranked their country as the one lagging behind the farthest in this regard. FBiH respondents were more optimistic about the accession of BiH to the EU compared with those from the RS, while the latter were more optimistic about Serbia's accession to the EU than those from FBiH. It is most likely the consequence of the candidate status recently awarded to Serbia.

In 2012 BiH citizens rated the activities aimed at meeting EU accession requirements at all levels of government in BiH less favorably than the year before. The ratings of FBiH respondents were more favorable than RS respondents. Compared to the estimates from 2009 it still represents the improvement in rating because the index of the positive score was 2 in 2009 where the index in FBiH was lower (1.8) and in the RS was higher (2.3).

The highest percentage of BiH citizens, approximately one third, considered that no level of government is successfully implementing the tasks required for the accession of BiH to the EU. Approximately one quarter of the citizens cited the state level government as the most successful in this regard. RS respondents cited the entity government significantly more often than FBiH respondents, while the latter cited cantonal government significantly more often than RS respondents. BD

respondents cited Brčko District significantly more often than either entity in this particular context. The trend of the replies in this issue has been maintained since 2009.

Although a majority of BiH citizens, both in 2011 and in 2012, declined to answer the question about which government institution was doing the best job in implementing the tasks required for the accession of BiH to the EU; those that did answer cited politicians and ministries significantly more often in 2012 than in 2011 in this particular context. RS respondents cited the entity government and the Council of Ministers as the government institutions that did the best job in implementing tasks and leading BiH towards the EU. The same trend was noted in 2009.

This year, as in 2011, a majority of citizens stated that local politicians stood as the greatest obstacle to the implementation of the EU accession obligations of BiH. Politicians and the BiH Constitution were cited significantly more often the year before, while in 2012 the business community was cited as an obstacle to EU accession significantly more often than in 2011. While FBiH respondents cited the constitution significantly more often than RS respondents in this regard, RS respondents cited the business community, the European Union and OHR significantly more often than those from FBiH. These views are different compared to those from 2009 when politicians, Constitution and the administration were seen as the dominant obstacles, however, in general overview they are still seen as greatest obstacles.

When asked to rank their city, canton, entity, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Europe by importance, in 2012 BiH citizens cited their cities as most important and Europe as the least important, as was the case the previous year. However, in the current year, significantly lower importance is attributed to their own cities and significantly higher importance is attributed to entities, BiH and Europe. RS respondents attribute importance to city and entity significantly more often than respondents from FBiH and BD, while the FBiH and BD respondents attribute significantly greater importance to canton and BiH than those from the RS.

Although more than half the citizens believed that BiH was closer to the European Union than to a new conflict, in 2012 the citizens stated that BiH was closer to a new conflict significantly more often than in the year before. Thus in 2011, 31.3% of the citizens stated that BiH is closer to a new conflict than it is to the EU. In the middle of 2012, this view was held by 36.4% of the interviewees. At the same time, the number of those who believe that BiH is closer to the EU rather than to a new conflict has suffered a significant drop from 57.5% (2011) to 50% (2012). Furthermore, 12.3% of the citizens does not know how to explain this situation to themselves and are not clear on this issue. Drastic example is Brčko District where 97% citizens in 2011. Believed that BiH is closer to EU, while in 2012. Same opinion had 57,3% of respondents.

The percentage of those who believe that BiH is closer to conflict in District Brčko increased from 0% to 30% , while the number of those who are not sure in which direction situation goes increased from 2.2% up to 12,8%.

In the current year, BiH citizens were significantly more pessimistic in their views of whether the economic situation in BiH will be improved by meeting EU standards. This year's index of trust in the improvement of the economic situation of 2.4 (measured in the values from 1 to 4) has a negative trend which returns to the situation from 2009 (2.1), while in 2011 it value was 3.0.

BiH citizens tended to agree that BiH companies were capable of competing with international companies once BiH joins the European Union. Comparison between the current year and the previous calendar year shows no difference in attitudes regarding this question. RS respondents were more convinced than FBiH respondents that BiH companies were capable of competing with those in the European Union. This is where there was a twist in regard to 2009 when the interviewees from the FBiH had a significantly greater belief in businessmen. In most cases the citizens who believed that BiH companies were not competitive in the European market considered that the responsibility for this situation lay with the state structure; this attitude was found more often in FBiH and BD than in the RS.

In the year 2012 citizens were less convinced that civil servants were trained to implement EU accession requirements than in the year before. It could be stated that this trend has been identical since 2009 while all of the inconsistencies are within margin of error.

A majority of BiH citizens believed that civil servants were neither ready nor willing to work in the interests of accelerating the EU accession of their country, the same response as in 2011. In 2012 citizens were more pessimistic regarding this issue than in 2011. In addition, RS respondents were more optimistic regarding this issue than FBiH respondents, however in percentages, the level of this belief has dropped from 43.3% in 2009 to 38.6% in 2012.

In 2012 BiH citizens rated activities of the local non-governmental organizations significantly less favorably than in 2011. The rate has gone from 2.7 in 2009, to 3.0 in 2011, in order for it to drop to 2.3 in 2012. However, it is an unusual result that those aimed at informing the BiH public about the European integration process have a higher mark which has grown from 2.3 in 2011 to 2.5 in 2012. This could be a consequence of greater expectations the citizens have from the civil sector in the sense of pressure exerted to the public institutions. Although television is the main source of information about European integration, in 2012 BiH citizens sought information on this subject from newspapers, the radio, television and the

internet significantly more often than in 2011. RS respondents seek information in the print media significantly more often than FBiH respondents, while the latter seek information on the radio significantly more often than RS respondents. Special attention must be given here on the significant drop in following the TV as a medium. While gathering the information on EU integration via TV in 2009 was 73.6% (FBiH – 67.1%; RS – 82.1%), in the middle of 2012, this percentage dropped to 49.3% (FBiH – 47.2%; RS – 52.5%). Even without entering into a more detailed analysis of the cause of this drop, the saturation of citizens with issues of daily politics from which they cannot find out anything concrete on what is expected on further BiH's road to the EU is more than evident. This data corresponds to the findings of the focus groups that were held at the beginning of 2012.

In 2012 BiH citizens were more pessimistic in terms of the question of whether the future of their country is truly in the EU, compared to the year before. FBiH respondents were significantly more convinced that the future of BiH is in the European Union than RS respondents. All things considered, 65.7% of the citizens still believe that the future of BiH is in the EU, while 13.9% finds that there is simply no alternative to this. That means that 79.6% of the citizens give their support to the European integration of BiH. Just 14.4% of the BiH citizens are against EU membership of BiH. Compared to 2011, we can see that the direct support to the EU integration of BiH has increased in 2.5%. With this, the percentage of those who found that there was no alternative has decreased for 21% since 2009/2011 to 13.9% in 2012. This decrease noted a small increase in number of citizens who gave their full support to the EU integration, while a much more significant increase in the number of citizens (14.1%) of the citizens who are against the EU integration, unlike the year 2011 when only 9.6% of the citizens were against the EU integration or 11.7% in 2011. The support to the process of EU integration of BiH in FBiH has been at almost identical level in the past two years (68.1% and 69.2%). However, a significant increase has been noted in the support to this process in the RS where the percentage has risen from 51.7% to 62.3%. It should be noted here that the support to the BiH EU integration process in 2009. was 63.6% with 21.5% of those who thought that there was no alternative to this and the ratio was almost identically distributed in both entities.

A majority of respondents supported the accession of BiH to the EU even if this was conditional on the transfer of certain competencies from the entity to the state level. Just like in the previous year, 72% of the citizens at the BiH state level still give their support even with that condition. Respondents from FBiH and BD expressed support significantly more often than those from the RS. It is important to highlight that the trend of accepting the transfer of competences for fulfillment of the obligations in the process of joining the EU has been in a constant rise even in the RS despite of a different political rhetoric's. At the end of 2009, the support on this issue was 45.3%, at the beginning of 2011 it was 46.1% and in the middle of 2012 it was 47.4%.

Combined with the previous indicators from the RS, this speaks of the constantly rising importance that the future of BiH in the EU has for the citizens of the RS. This is also a consequence of the fact that there is a decrease in number of those who needed to yet make a decision on this issue.

Although a majority of BiH citizens believed that EU Member States do want BiH to join the European Union, the respondents were considerably more pessimistic regarding this question in 2012 than in 2011. FBiH respondents were considerably more optimistic regarding this question than RS respondents. Furthermore, the percentage of those in the RS who believe in this has decreased from 57.8% to 51.5%, and in the FBiH it has increased from 63.7% to 56.6%. At the end of 2009 the situation was quite reversed where 58.2% of the citizens from the RS believed that the other EU member states wanted BiH to join the EU, unlike in the FBiH where 52.5% of the citizens shared that belief. It is possible that this situation was a consequence of a then postponed validation of the visa free regime for BiH.

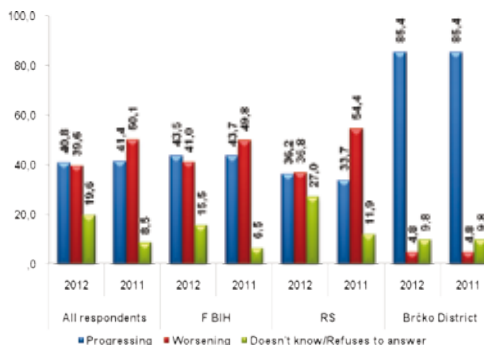
A majority of respondents supported BiH membership in NATO, with respondents from FBiH and BD expressing greater support than respondents from the RS. Approximately one third of respondents, the highest percentage, believed that membership in NATO would provide greater security. FBiH respondents expressed this opinion significantly more often than RS respondents. However, strengthening the fight against terrorism and regional stability were cited significantly more often in 2012 than the year before. Respondents from FBiH and BD expressed the opinion that membership in NATO would provide regional stability, a precondition for the EU accession of BiH, significantly more often than those from the RS. Respondents from the RS cited imposing the political agenda of the West, direct military influence of the West, and concerns about sending BiH troops to war zones, significantly more often than those from FBiH. It is important to point out the fact that in spite of a cautious politics over NATO issues by the RS officials, the support to the BiH membership in NATO among the Serbs in the RS has been continually increasing from 30.2% in 2009 to 31.4% in 2011 to 37.6% in May 2012. This is quite possibly the result of an ever more open story of NATO as a stabilization factor, not just as a military but as a security organization and of fulfillment of conditions that lead BiH in a further process of Euro-Atlantic integrations, which was considerably noticeable before the Chicago NATO Summit.



## Q1. In which direction is BiH moving in terms of European integration? -Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



Whilst in 2011 respondents expressed the opinion that the situation in BiH with regard to European integration was worsening significantly more often than in 2012; in 2012 they expressed the view that they are not certain in which direction BiH is moving with regard to this issue significantly more often than in the previous survey.

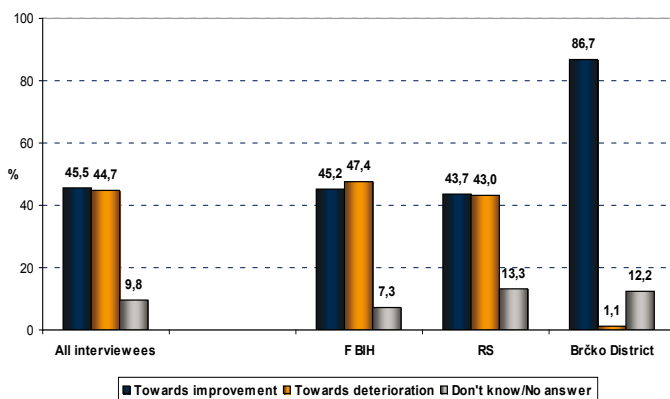


While in 2011 it was established that BD respondents were more optimistic in their assessments of whether BiH was moving in the wrong or in the right direction, no statistically significant differences regarding this question were observed in 2012.

## Q1. In which direction do you think BiH is heading as far as EU integration is concerned? -Total and entities 2009-



N=1050



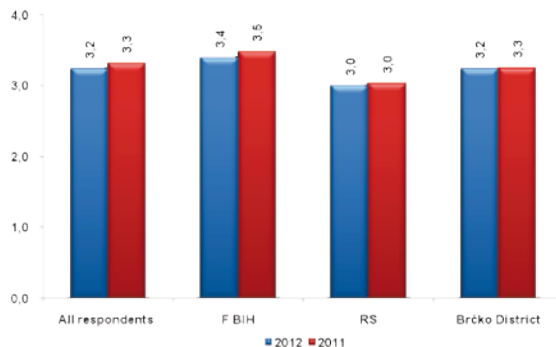
The interviewees from Brčko District are far more optimistic where it concerns their estimate of which direction BiH is heading where European integration is concerned – to a large extent they estimate that BiH is heading towards improvement, compared with the interviewees from the FBiH and RS. Next to that, data analysis indicates that men, compared with women, are more prone to give an estimate that BiH is heading towards improvement.

## Q2. To what extent do you support or oppose BiH joining the EU?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012

The analysis excludes the responses "I do not know/I do not want to respond"

The chart shows the respondents' average rating of their support for or opposition to the accession of BiH to the EU. Ratings are given on a 4-point scale, with 1 meaning "strongly opposes" and 4 meaning "strongly supports". Thus the higher the average rating, the greater respondents' support for the accession of BiH to the EU.



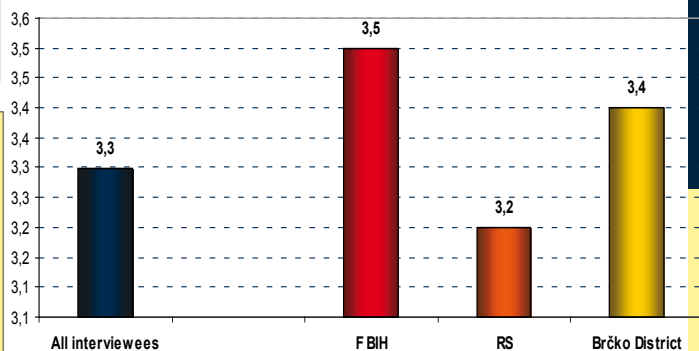
Although the recorded difference is not considerable, respondents expressed significantly more support for the accession of BiH to the EU in 2011 than they did in 2012. In 2012 it was established that respondents from FBiH were considerably more supportive of the accession of BiH to the EU than those from the RS, which corresponds to the previous trend.

## Q2. To what extent do you support or don't support BiH joining the EU?

-Total and entities 2009-

N=1050,  
The answers  
"doesn't know/  
refuses to answer"  
were excluded from  
the analyses

The chart presents average scores that the interviewees gave in the question to what extent they support BiH entering into the EU. The scores range from 1 to 4, 1 meaning "strongly opposes" and 4 "strongly supports". So, the higher average score is, the higher is the support for BiH entering the EU.



The interviewees from the FBiH support BiH joining the EU significantly more than those from the RS. Also, the interviewees of Bosniak nationality, and those who live in rural areas, more often state that they do support BiH joining the EU than the interviewees of other nationalities and those who live in cities.

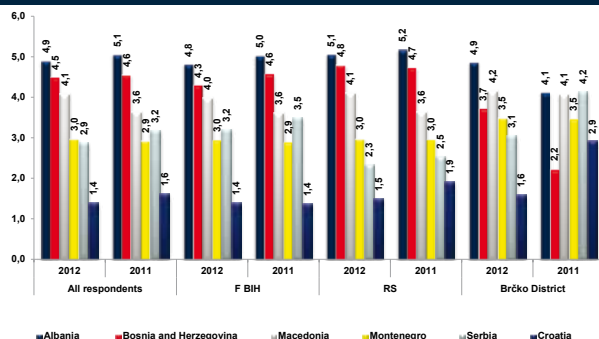
**Q3. Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia and Albania are in the same process of European integration as BiH. Please rank them in such a manner that the first-mentioned country is the country you consider to be leading in terms of fulfilling obligations in the EU accession process and the last-mentioned country is the country you consider to be the least successful in fulfilling its obligations.**

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



The analysis excludes the responses "I do not know/I do not want to respond"

The chart shows the average ratings assigned to the above mentioned countries. Respondents gave lower ratings to the countries that are leading in the process of EU accession, while the higher rating is given to the countries that are lagging behind in the process of the EU accession.



In response to the question which country is the regional leader in terms of fulfilling its obligations in the process of EU accession, Macedonia was ranked considerably higher in 2012 than the year before. On the other hand, Croatia, Serbia and Albania received considerably higher ratings in 2011 than in 2012. Respondents from FBiH and BD gave a considerably higher rating to Serbia in terms of joining the European Union compared with those from the RS i.e. the former considered the chances of Serbia joining the EU to be lower, compared to the RS respondents. RS respondents gave a considerably higher rating to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania than FBiH respondents.

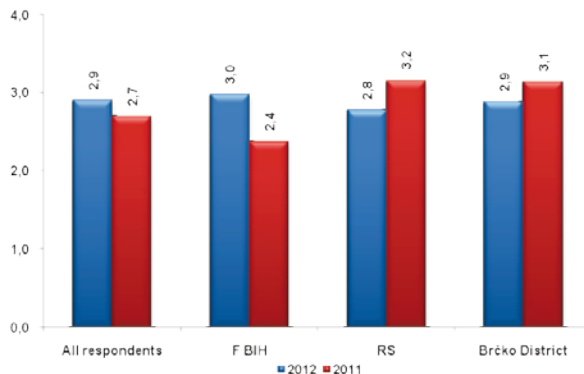
**Q4. How would you rate activities at all levels of government in terms of meeting EU accession requirements?**

-Total, comparison 2011 and 2012



The analysis excludes the responses "I do not know/I do not want to respond"

The chart shows respondents' average ratings of the activities of BiH authorities aimed at meeting EU accession requirements. Ratings are given on a 4-point scale, with 1 meaning "very unfavourably", and 4 meaning "very favourably". Therefore, the higher the average rating the more favourable respondents' assessment of the abovementioned activities of BiH authorities.



The respondents rated the activities of BiH authorities aimed at meeting EU accession requirements significantly more favourably in 2012 than in 2011.

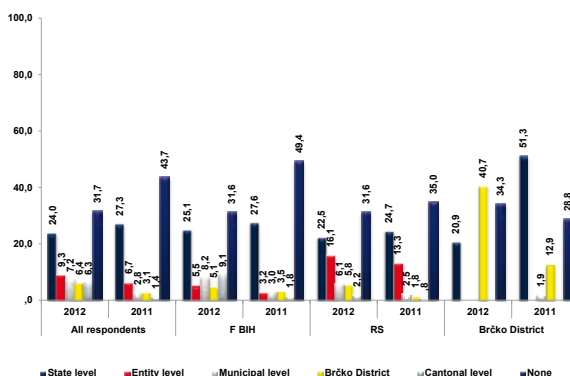
While RS respondents rated the activities of the authorities aimed at meeting EU accession requirements more favourably in 2011; in 2012 it was the FBiH respondents that rated the activities more favourably than their RS counterparts.

# Q5. In your opinion, which level of government is doing the best job in implementing the tasks required for the future EU accession of our country?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



In 2012, significantly more often than in 2011, respondents stated that the authorities at the levels of entities, cantons, municipalities and Brčko District were doing the best job in implementing the tasks required for the future EU accession of BiH. In 2011 respondents stated significantly more often that no level of government stood apart in this regard, while they declined to answer the question significantly more often than in 2012.



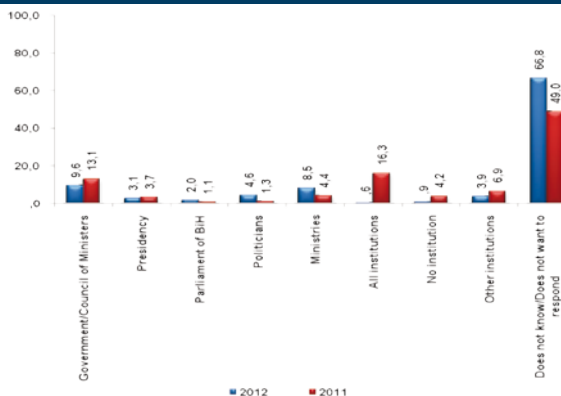
In 2012 RS respondents cited the entity level as the level of government that does the best job in implementing the tasks required for the future accession of BiH to the EU significantly more often than FBiH respondents, which corresponds to the 2011 findings. In addition, BD respondents cited Brčko District as the level of government that does the best job in this respect significantly more often than those from either of the two entities, which also corresponds to the 2011 findings. FBiH respondents cite cantonal level as the level of government which is doing the best job in implementing the tasks required for the accession of BiH to the European Union significantly more often than RS respondents.

# Q6. Which institution at the cited level of government do you consider to be doing the best job in the interests of the EU accession of BiH?

-Total, comparison 2011 and 2012



Only respondents who stated that state, entity and cantonal levels and the level of Brčko District were doing the best job in implementing the tasks required for the accession of BiH to the EU.



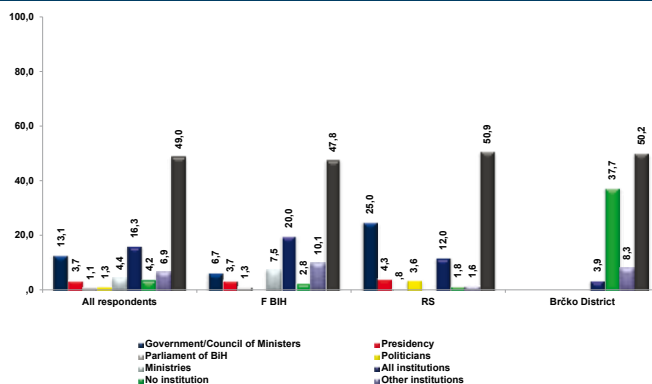
In 2012 respondents stated that politicians and ministries were doing the best job in the interest of the accession of BiH to the EU significantly more often than in 2011.

# Q6. Which institution at the cited level of government do you consider to be doing the best job in the interests of the EU accession of BiH?

-Total, comparison 2011 and 2012



Only respondents who stated that state, entity and cantonal levels and the level of Brčko District were doing the best job in implementing the tasks required for the accession of BiH to the EU.



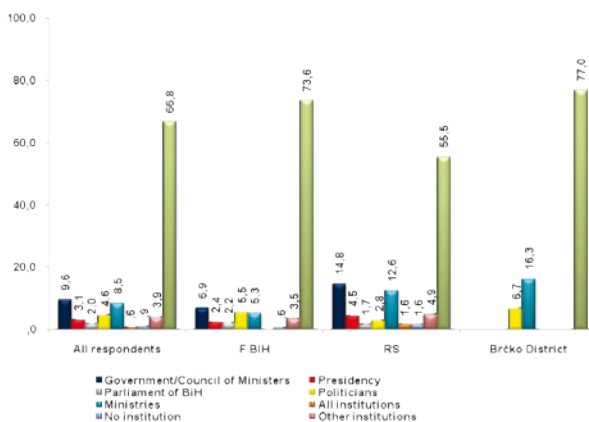
The survey conducted in 2011 showed that respondents from the RS, significantly more often than those from FBiH, stated that government institutions, i.e. the Council of Ministers of the RS as well as the government institutions and the Council of Ministers of BiH are doing the best job in the interests of BiH joining the EU. FBiH respondents opted for the responses "All" and "Other" significantly more often than RS respondents.

# Q6. Which institution at the cited level of government do you consider to be doing the best job in the interest of the accession of BiH to the EU?

-Total, comparison 2011 and 2012



Only respondents who stated that state, entity and cantonal levels and the level of Brčko District were doing the best job in implementing the tasks required for the accession of BiH to the EU.



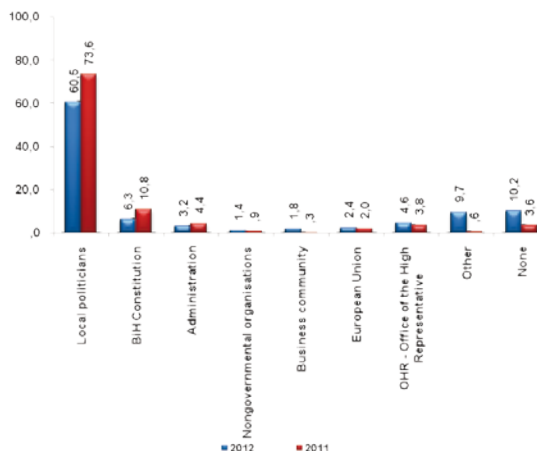
In 2012 RS respondents cited the government and the Council of Ministers as the government institutions that do the best job in the interests of the accession of BiH to the EU considerably more often than FBiH respondents, which corresponds to the survey conducted the year before. FBiH respondents declined to answer this question significantly more often than those from RS.

## Q7. What do you consider to be the greatest obstacle to implementation of the EU accession obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



While local politicians and the BiH Constitution were cited as obstacles to implementation of the accession obligations of BiH significantly more often in 2011, companies were cited in this particular context significantly more often in 2012.

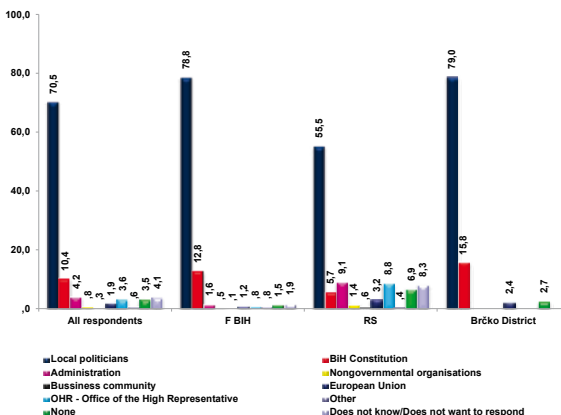


## Q7. What do you consider to be the greatest obstacle to implementation of the EU accession obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



Analysis of the 2011 survey showed that FBiH respondents cited local politicians and the BiH Constitution as the greatest obstacles to implementation of the accession obligations of BiH, significantly more often than RS respondents. RS respondents cited the business community, OHR and the European Union itself in this context significantly more often than those from FBiH.

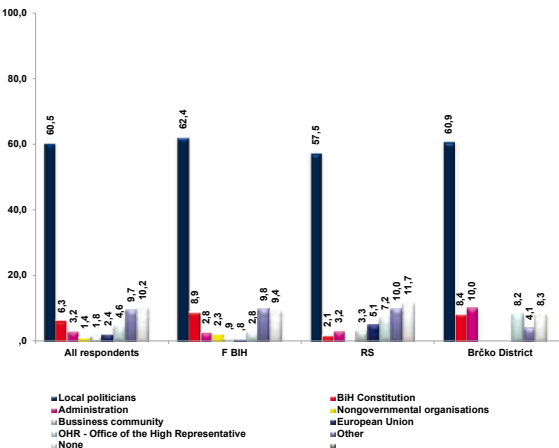


# Q7. What do you consider to be the greatest obstacle to implementation of the EU accession obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



In 2012 the BiH Constitution was cited as an obstacle to implementation of EU accession obligations significantly more often in FBiH than in the RS, corresponding to the survey conducted the year before. RS respondents cited the business community, the European Union and OHR significantly more often than FBiH respondents.



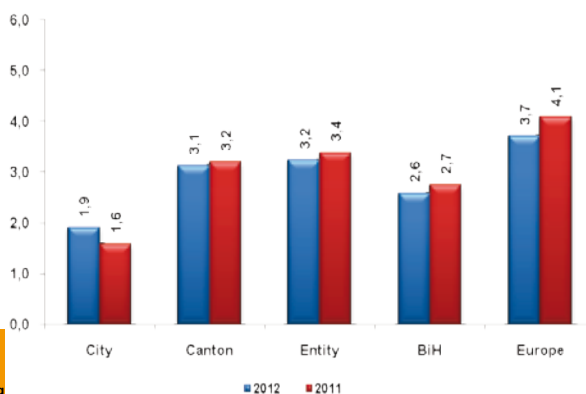
# Q8. Please rank the following by importance: your city, canton, entity, BiH, Europe.

Please assign first place to the most important!

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



Note: higher ranking is interpreted as lesser importance, while lower ranking indicates greater importance!



When ranking their own city, canton, entity, BiH and Europe by importance, the respondents attributed a significantly higher ranking i.e. lower importance to their own cities in 2012 than in 2011. In contrast to this, a significantly higher ranking was given to entities, BiH and Europe in 2011 than in 2012.

Q8. Please rank the following by importance: your city, canton, entity, BiH, Europe.

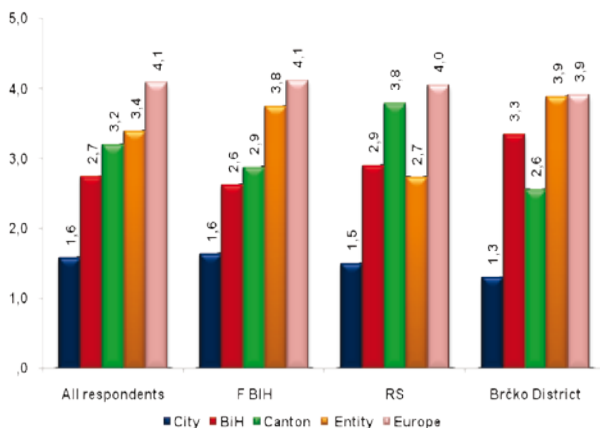
Please assign the first place to the most important!

-Total 2011. comparison between the entities



Note: higher ranking is interpreted as lesser importance, while lower ranking indicates greater importance!

In 2011 FBiH respondents gave a significantly higher ranking, i.e. attributed lower importance, to their own city and entity as compared to RS respondents. RS respondents gave a significantly lower ranking to entity and higher ranking to canton, in comparison to the FBiH respondents.



Q8. Please rank the following by importance: your city, canton, entity, BiH, Europe.

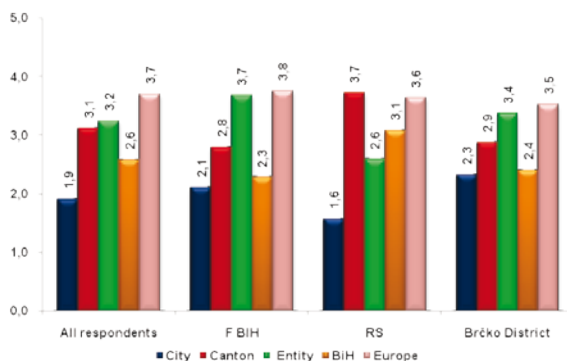
Please assign the first place to the most important!

-Total 2012 - comparison between the entities



Note: higher ranking is interpreted as lesser importance, while lower ranking indicates greater importance!

In 2012 RS respondents attributed higher importance to entity, as well as their own city, compared to respondents from FBiH and BD. Respondents from FBiH and BD attributed higher importance to canton and BiH.

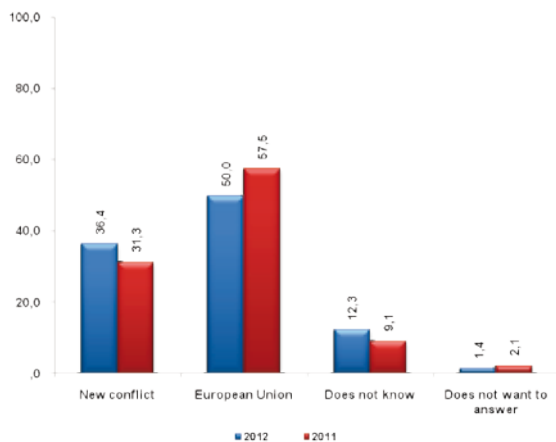




### Q9. In your opinion, is BiH closer to a new conflict or to the European Union?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012

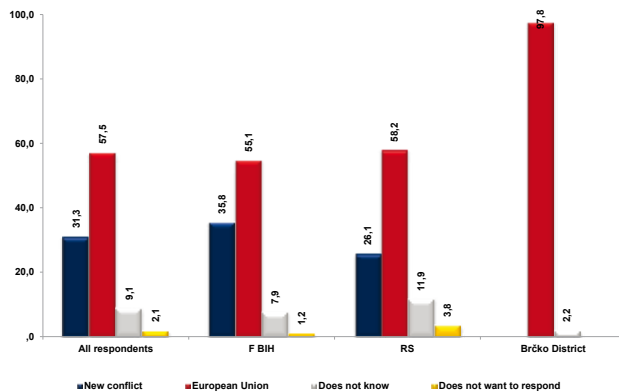
In 2011 respondents stated that BiH is closer to the EU than to a new conflict significantly more often than in 2012; whereas in 2012 the respondents stated significantly more often that BiH is closer to a new conflict than to the EU accession.



### Q9. In your opinion, is BiH closer to a new conflict or to the European Union?

-Total 2011 – comparison between entities

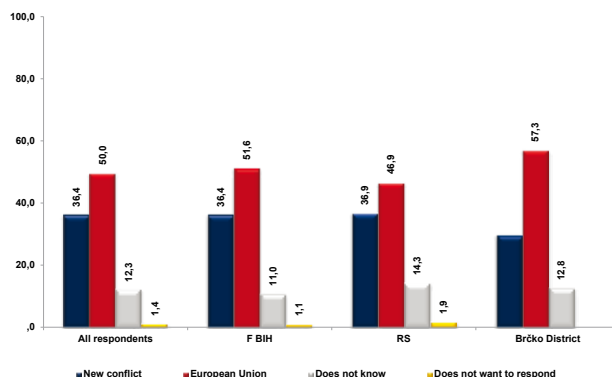
In 2011 FBiH respondents stated that BiH was closer to a new conflict than to the EU significantly more often than RS respondents, who opted for the responses "I do not know" or "I do not want to answer" more often than FBiH respondents. BD respondents stated that BiH was closer to the EU than to a new conflict significantly more often than those from the RS and FBiH.



### Q9. In your opinion, is BiH closer to a new conflict or to the European Union?

-Total 2012 – comparison between entities

In 2012 no statistically significant differences were established between FBiH, RS and BD in terms of the question whether the country is closer to the European Union or to a new conflict.

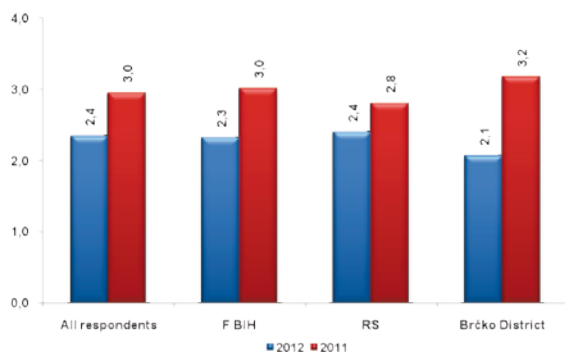


### Q10. How convinced are you that the economic situation in BiH will be improved by meeting EU standards?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012, entities-

The analysis excludes the responses "I do not know/I do not want to respond"

The chart shows respondents' average ratings in terms of how convinced they were that meeting EU standards would improve the economic situation in BiH. Ratings are given on a 4-point scale, with 1 meaning "I am entirely unconvinced", and 4 meaning "I am entirely convinced". Therefore, the higher the average rating given the more convinced the respondents were that meeting EU standards would result in an improved economic situation in BiH.



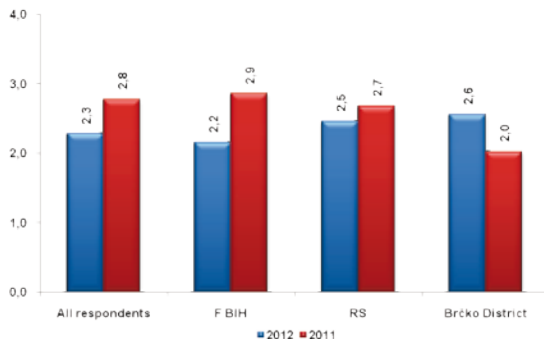
In 2011 respondents were significantly more optimistic in terms of whether meeting the standards of the European Union would improve the economic situation in BiH, compared to the views expressed regarding this issue in 2012. Results of the 2011 survey showed that FBiH and BD respondents were significantly more convinced that the economic situation in BiH would be improved by meeting EU standards than those from the RS. No statistically significant differences were established in 2011 regarding this issue.

# Q11. In your opinion, how capable are BiH companies of competing with international companies once BiH joins the EU? -Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012, entities



The analysis excludes the responses "I do not know/I do not want to respond"

The chart shows respondents' average ratings in terms of how capable BiH companies are of competing with international companies once we join the EU. Ratings are given on a 4-point scale, with 1 meaning "entirely incapable", and 4 meaning "fully capable". Therefore, the higher the average rating the more convinced respondents are that BiH companies are capable of competing with international companies once we join the EU



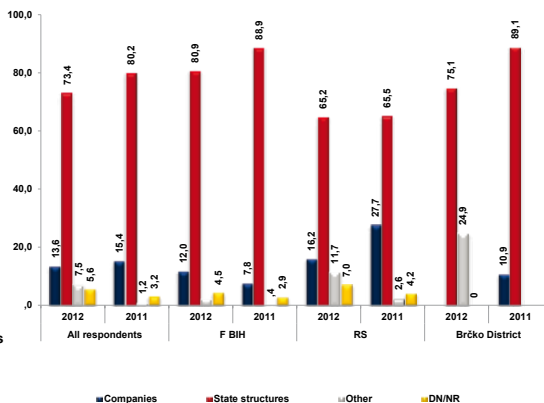
No difference was established between the opinions expressed in 2011 and 2012 regarding the capability of BiH companies to compete with international companies once BiH joins the EU. In 2011 FBiH respondents were more convinced of the capability of BiH companies to compete with international companies in the EU than those from the RS. This year RS respondents were somewhat more convinced of this than FBiH respondents.

# Q12. Does the problem rest with the companies or the state structures? -Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



Only the respondents who stated that our companies are not capable of competing with international companies once we join the EU.

In 2011 respondents were convinced, significantly more often than in 2012, that the state structures were the reason why BiH companies would not be capable of competing with European companies following the accession of BiH to the European Union. The 2011 survey established that respondents from FBiH and BD, significantly more often than those from the RS, stated that the problem lay with the state structures. The same difference was established in 2012. In 2011 RS respondents stated significantly more often than the problem rests with the companies. In 2012 respondents from the RS and BD opted for the answer "Other" significantly more often than respondents from FBiH. When opting for the answer "Other" respondents most often meant that the problem rested with both the state structures and the companies themselves.

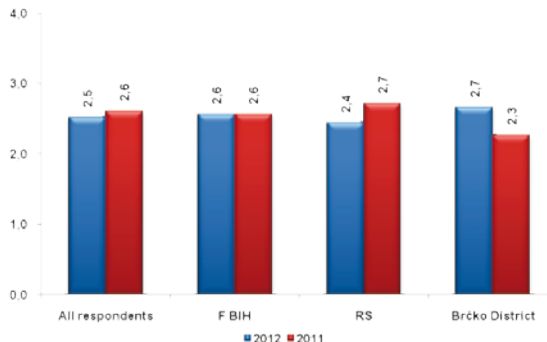


### Q13. In your opinion, how well trained are civil servants and how familiar are they with the EU accession requirements of Bosnia and Herzegovina? -Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012 -



The analysis excludes the responses "I do not know/I do not want to respond"

The chart shows respondents' average ratings in terms of how convinced they are that civil servants are well trained and familiar with the EU accession requirements of BiH. Ratings are given on a 4-point scale, with 1 meaning "not trained or familiar at all", and 4 meaning "fully trained and familiar". Therefore, the higher the average rating the more convinced the respondents are that civil servants are trained and familiar with the said requirements.



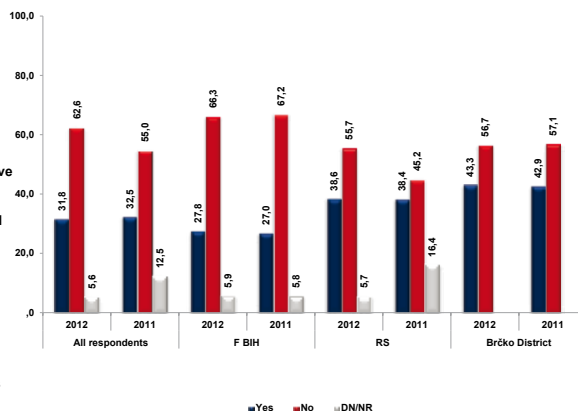
In 2011 respondents were significantly more convinced than in 2012 that the civil servants are familiar with the EU accession requirements of BiH and that they are trained to fulfill these requirements. The 2011 survey showed that respondents from the RS were significantly more convinced that the civil servants are trained and familiar with the EU accession requirements of BiH than those from FBiH.

In 2012 no statistically significant differences between the entities were established in terms of this question.

### Q14. Do you believe that civil servants are willing and ready to work in the interests of the citizens and the state and to accelerate the EU accession of BiH? -Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



In 2012 respondents stated significantly more often than in 2011 that civil servants lacked both the readiness and willingness to work in the interests of BiH and its citizens and to accelerate the accession of BiH to the European Union. In 2011 respondents tended to state that they did not know how to answer this question more often than in 2012. The 2011 survey showed that RS respondents provided affirmative answers to this question significantly more often than FBiH respondents, i.e. they believed that civil servants were ready and willing to work in the interest of the citizens and the country for the purpose of EU accession. FBiH respondents opted for the response "no" significantly more often than RS respondents. The same trend was observed in 2012; RS respondents continued to state that civil servants had willingness and readiness to work in the interests of citizens for the purpose of the EU accession of the country significantly more often than FBiH respondents, while the latter have the opposite opinion about civil servants significantly more often than the former.

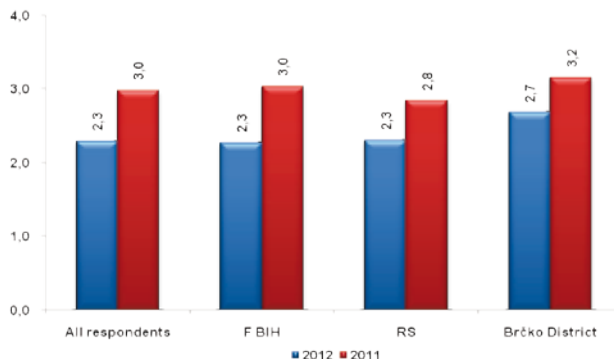


## Q15. How do you rate the activities of non-governmental organisations?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012

The analysis excludes the responses "I do not know/I do not want to respond"

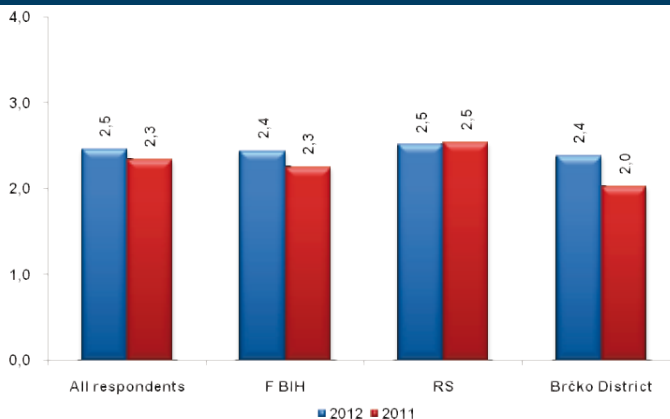
The chart shows respondents' average rating of the activities of non-governmental organisations. Ratings are given on a 4-point scale, with 1 meaning "very unfavourably", and 4 meaning "very favourably". Therefore, the higher the average rating the more favourably the respondents assessed the work of non-governmental organisations.



Respondents rated the activities of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) significantly less favourably in 2012 than in 2011. The 2011 survey showed that respondents from BD rated the activities of NGOs significantly more favourably than those from FBiH and the RS, and that respondents from FBiH rated the activities more favourably than RS respondents. In 2012 no statistically significant differences were established between the entities regarding this issue.

## Q16. How active are non-governmental organisations in terms of informing citizens about the EU integration process?

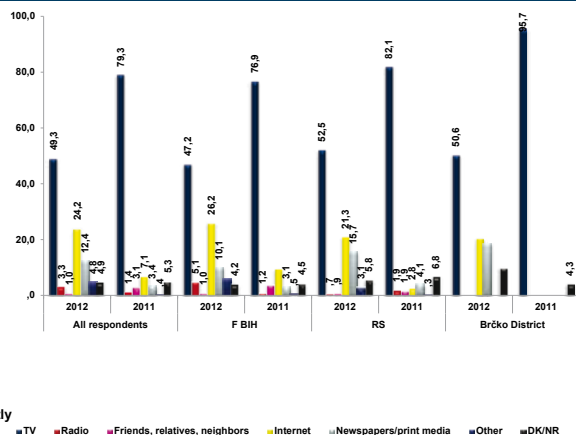
-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



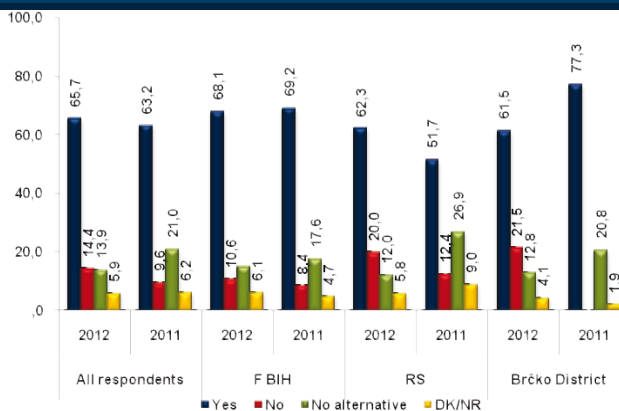
Results of the survey conducted in 2011 showed that RS respondents stated that non-governmental organisations were active in terms of informing citizens about the European integration process significantly more often than those from FBiH and BD, while no statistically significant differences were observed regarding this question in 2012.

### Q17. What is your principal source of information about the EU integration process? -Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012

While respondents cited TV and friends and acquaintances as sources of information about EU integration in 2011, newspapers, radio and internet were cited significantly more often in this context in 2012. The 2011 survey established that respondents from BD used TV as a source of information about the EU integration process significantly more often than respondents from FBiH and that respondents from FBiH used the internet and friends, relatives and acquaintances as sources of information significantly more often than RS respondents. The 2012 survey established that RS respondents used print media as a source of information significantly more often than FBiH respondents, while the FBiH respondents cited radio and other sources of information -by which they mean a combination of all the media mentioned - significantly more often than RS respondents. BD respondents declined to answer this question significantly more often than FBiH respondents.



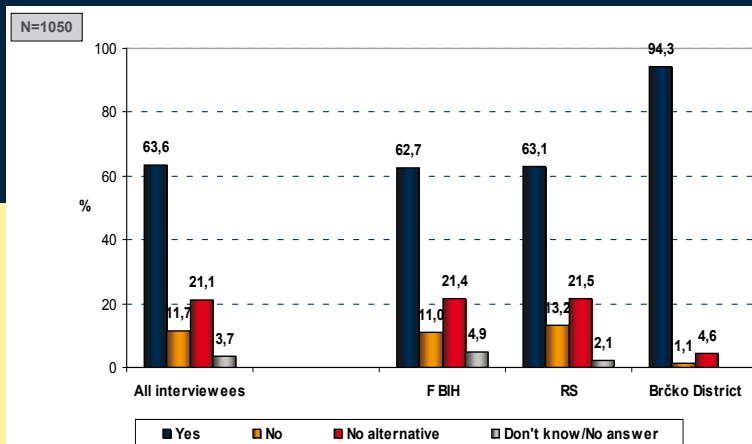
### Q18. Finally, considering all the advantages, disadvantages and the time required, do you think that the future of BiH is in the European Union? -Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



In 2012 respondents stated that the future of BiH was not in the EU significantly more often than the year before. The 2011 survey showed that respondents from FBiH and BD stated significantly more often than those from the RS that they believed the future of BiH was in the EU. The same difference was established in 2012; however only between FBiH and RS, while the difference between opinions of respondents from RS and BD was not statistically significant.

Q18. In the end, when you take everything into consideration, all the advantages and disadvantages, do you think that the future of BiH is in the EU?

-Total and entities 2009-



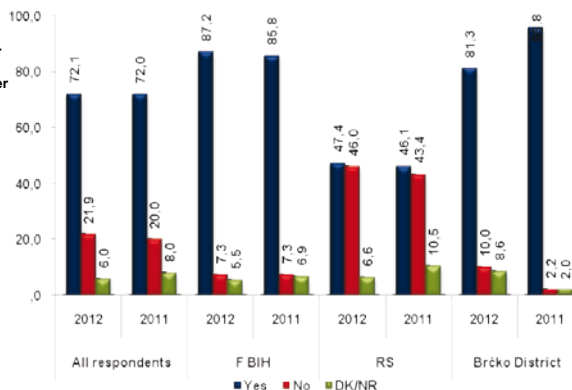
The majority of the interviewees from BD, as well as interviewees that are unemployed, feel that the future of BiH is in the EU.

Q19. Do you support the accession of BiH to the EU, even if this requires transferring certain competencies from entity to state level?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012

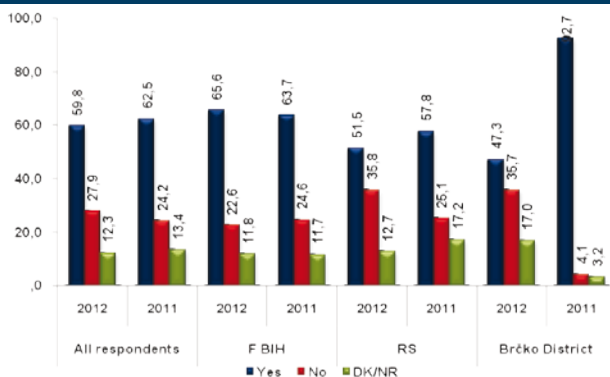


In both 2011 and 2012 respondents expressed a similar level of support for the accession of BiH to the EU even if it was conditional on the transfer of certain competencies from entity to state level. The survey conducted in 2011 showed that respondents from FBiH and BD expressed support for the EU accession of BiH significantly more often than respondents from the RS, even if that meant that certain competencies would have to be transferred from entity to state level. RS respondents provided "no" as the response to this question significantly more often than respondents from FBiH and BD. Differences in the same direction were established in 2012 as well.



## Q20. Do you think that the citizens of EU Member States want to see BiH as a member of the EU in the future?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



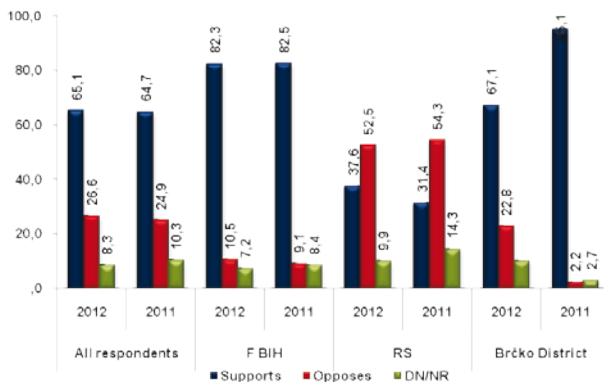
In 2012 respondents stated significantly more often than in 2011 that they considered that citizens of EU Member States did not want to see BiH as an EU member state in the future.

The survey conducted in 2011 showed that BD respondents most often stated that they considered the citizens of EU Member States did want to see BiH as a future EU member.

The new trend showed that FBiH respondents considered that EU Member States want BiH to be an EU member significantly more often than those from the RS while respondents from RS stated the opposite considerably more often than their counterparts in FBiH.

## Q21. What is your position regarding BiH membership in NATO?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



Respondents expressed a similar level of support for BiH membership in NATO in both 2011 and in 2012.

The 2011 survey results showed that respondents from FBiH and BD expressed support for BiH membership in NATO significantly more often than those from the RS, which corresponds to the 2012 results. Respondents from the RS opposed BiH membership in NATO significantly more often than those from FBiH and BD.

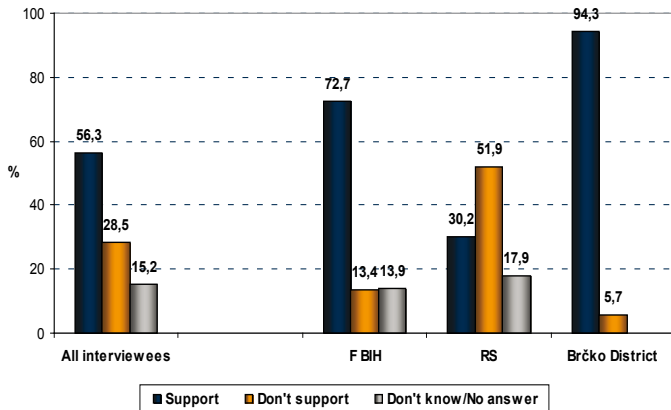


## Q21. What is your opinion on BiH membership in NATO?

-Total and entities 2009-



N=1050



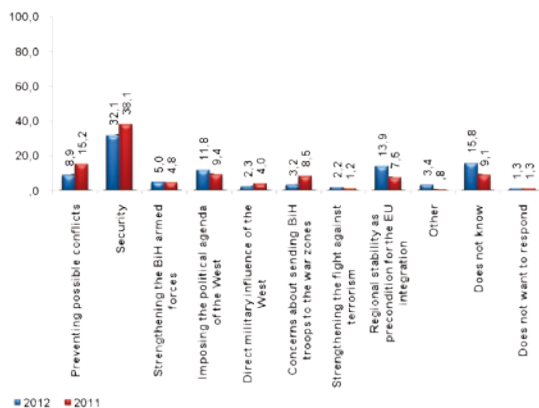
Interviewees who live in the RS are the least supportive of NATO membership of BiH, while interviewees who live in the rural areas, younger interviewees and those of Bosniak nationality, more often than interviewees who live in cities, older interviewees and those of other nationalities, support BiH NATO membership.

## Q22. What does BiH membership in NATO primarily mean to you?

-Total, comparison between 2011 and 2012



In 2012 respondents stated considerably more often than in 2011 that NATO membership provided regional stability and a strengthening of the fight against terrorism. In contrast, respondents cited prevention of possible conflicts, security, direct military influence of the West and concerns about BiH troops being sent to war zones significantly more often in 2011 than in 2012.

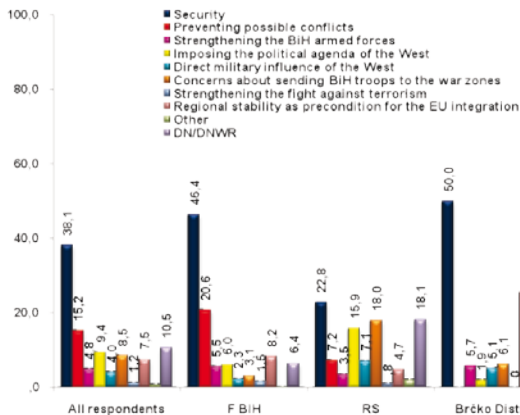


## Q22. What does BiH membership in NATO primarily mean to you?

-Total 2011, comparison between entities



In 2011 FBiH respondents stated more often than RS respondents that membership in NATO primarily meant security and prevention of possible conflicts. Respondents from the RS cited imposition of the political agenda of the West, direct military influence of the West and concerns about sending BiH troops to the war zones significantly more often than FBiH respondents.



## Q22. What does BiH membership in NATO primarily mean to you?

-Total 2012, comparison between entities



In 2012 respondents from FBiH stated significantly more often than those from the RS and BD that BiH membership in NATO meant security. In addition, respondents from FBiH and BD mentioned regional stability as a precondition for EU accession significantly more often than RS respondents. RS respondents mentioned imposition of the political agenda of the West, and concerns about sending the BiH troops to war zones significantly more often than FBiH respondents.

