

Glimpse of an Image in the Mirror

Usually a self-portrait of the society gives some clues about the potential forthcoming changes in the social system. What we face in a post-war Kosova at present is a social and political reality, which develops very dynamically. While in the morpho-social aspect house reconstruction and building are fairly visible, the socio-political fibres of the community are ever more characterised by tensions and antinomies. As it has been before, and much more nowadays, the International Community has played significant role in the social and political reality of Kosova. Its attitude towards different Kosovan ethnicity was the topic of a survey, conducted in July by INDEX KOSOVA, joint venture with BBSS Gallup International. Similar to previous polls, survey covered 1000 respondents, grown-ups of 18 and over years, selected from all over the Kosova and figures are representative for the Albanian portion of the population.

Question posed to the interviewees reads:

Now that a year has passed since the end of the war, do you think that the attitude of International Community towards Kosovan Albanians has changed or not?

Respondents were subsequently asked to measure up International Community's attitude towards Kosovan Serbs, Kosovan Turks, Kosovan Bosniaks, Gorans, Roma and Hashkalia. For those answering Yes to each of mentioned ethnicity, the following question was addressed: What direction in your opinion has this change taken? Has it become much more positive, more positive, more negative or much more negative? Closing the subject was question, which invited to share the main reason for so perceived changes.

Findings reveal that while Kosovan citizens' opinion of International Community's attitude towards other ethnic minorities has not come to some clear vision, perceived attitude towards Kosovan Serbs and Albanians has changed a lot. One third of respondents (33.1%) say that International Community's attitude towards Albanians has changed and almost one in four (24.3%) say that the attitude has changed towards the Serbs also. What do citizens think - has this change taken a positive or a negative direction - can be seen from the following data. There is a polarisation in citizens' opinions, addressing the direction that the change of International Community's attitude towards Kosovan Albanians has taken (13.1% answer that the change has been on the positive side and 17.4% answer that this change has taken a negative direction; others don't know or refuse to answer. Respondents assess the International Community's attitude towards Kosovan Serbs three times more positively (16.3% answer that this change has taken a positive direction and 6.2% think that this change has taken a negative direction; others refuse/don't know).

Although the percentage of those who think that International Community's attitude towards other ethnic minorities is not so big, their opinion however adopts a movement in positive direction.

Responses to the query What do you see to be the MAIN reason of this change? (for change of the attitude towards Kosovan Albanians), give different grounds. The breakdown of reasons as structured in a typified set of answers present the following:

Of those who see the change to be taken positive direction, most

of the answers read International community knows better now the reality and Kosova problem (2.6%) and Kosovan Albanians have shown themselves as co-operative and hard workers (2.3%). There are also answers like: As a result of manifested potential of the Kosovan Albanians to govern, to establish and build civil society (1.9%) and Kosovan Albanians proved to be civilised and peaceful people (1.6%), etc.

Out of those who think that the change has taken a negative direction, the most frequent answers are: Killings, thefts, crime and corruption (4.5%) and International community is in favour of Kosovan Serbs (3.5%). With a less frequency, there are answers like: Bad behaviour of Kosovan Albanians - revenges (2.2%) and Divide among political parties and dirty, messy politics among Kosovan Albanians (1.8%), etc.

Following on the lead of cross-ethnic perceptions, the issue of local definitions has been touched. To outline the distances and potential basis for future mutual understanding between specific ethnic groups, respondents were addressed with the question: How do you personally estimate Kosovan Albanians relationship with the following ethnic minorities in Kosova - as very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative? When respondents give answers on relations of Albanians with other minorities, except for Serbs and Romas, they do not use the extreme categories like very positive or very negative, but they evaluate with a dosage of moderation, although results are characterised by visible biases, sometimes on the positive and sometimes on the negative side.

Only 5.3% of respondents positively estimate relations of Albanians with Serbs, while 86.9% estimate these relations as very negative or negative. 7.8% refuse or do not know.

Relations with Montenegrins are positively estimated by 17.0% of respondents and negatively by 70.5%. 12.5% refuse or do not know.

Relations with Turks are positively estimated by 68.3% of respondents and negatively by 16.8%. 14.9% refuse or do not know.

Relations with Muslims are positively estimated by 75.4% of respondents and negatively by 10.7%. 13.9% refuse or do not know.

Relations with Gorans are positively estimated by 44.8% of respondents and negatively by 35.8%. 19.4% refuse or do not know.

Relations with Romas are positively estimated by 17.9% of respondents and negatively by 65.5%. 16.6% refuse or do not know.

Relations with Hashkalia are positively estimated by 34.3% of respondents and negatively by 45.0%. 20.7% refuse or do not know.