



SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

New Means for Regional Analysis



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Dr Mark Thompson

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The South East Europe Public Agenda Survey

International IDEA is exploring the Public Agenda in South Eastern Europe in co-operation with the *South Eastern Europe Democracy Support (SEEDS)* network. SEEDS consists of a network of research organizations and think tanks in South East Europe committed to applying a common research framework and methodology to assess what democracy actually delivers to people, as well as their perceptions of democracy as practiced in the region. Initiated in 2000, the project "South Eastern Europe: New Means for Regional Analysis" is an undertaking of International IDEA to facilitate and promote democratic reform agendas that are owned and established by local stakeholders, principally in civil society and research institutions.

In 2001 International IDEA interviewed 220 politicians and other influential persons in South Eastern Europe on their views on future regional development. 40 focus group interviews with ordinary people were also conducted to establish the hopes, expectations, challenges and concerns on the Public Agenda.

In March 2002 International IDEA released the results of a public opinion poll - the *South Eastern Europe Public Agenda Survey* - of 10,000 people from 9 countries and territories of the region, on topics related to democratic development and regional co-operation. The poll was conducted by local partners throughout South Eastern Europe in January - February 2002.

The full results of the *South Eastern Europe Public Agenda Survey* are available at www.idea.int.

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For more information about International IDEA contact: International IDEA, Strömsborg, 103 34 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel: +46 8 698 37 00 - Fax: +46 8 20 24 22 - E-mail: info@idea.int - Website: www.idea.int.

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Interpreting the International IDEA / SEEDS Survey of Public Opinion in South Eastern Europe

Introduction

This is a commentary – an inductive reading – of the results of the first International IDEA / South Eastern Europe Democracy Support (SEEDS) Survey Report.¹ It concentrates on those entities where the international community has committed its diplomatic and human resources, as well as economic assistance, to try and achieve lasting stability in South Eastern Europe (SEE). After considering these entities in turn, it offers some thematic comments. In essence, the survey results:

- € show that citizens are more concerned about economic than ‘ethnic’ issues;
- € demonstrate people’s awareness that ‘European integration’ is the only game in town for the entities of SEE;
- € suggest that Kosovo has been the international community’s success story *so far*, Republika Srpska – and, to some extent, Bosnia and Herzegovina as such – remains its signal failure, while Macedonia is its work-in-progress;
- € confirm that the region is still some way from achieving self-sustaining stability.

The survey demonstrates people's awareness that 'European integration' is the only game in town for the entities of South Eastern Europe.

Macedonia (FYROM)

The survey results for Macedonia were bound to be exceptionally interesting as well as grim. As the site of an armed (‘ethnic’) conflict last year, which was arrested by a well co-ordinated and timely international political intervention, leading to a peace agreement supported by the deployment of NATO forces and an enhanced OSCE mission, Macedonia is in a highly complex situation, both internally and internationally.

Only here, in Macedonia, did a large number of respondents identify ‘war’ as their foremost fear. (It gained more than twice the support of the second-placed fear: ‘poverty, hunger’.) This finding indicates that the Framework Agreement, signed in August 2001 under international pressure, is not yet self-sustaining and is unlikely to succeed without further substantial and pro-active international engagement.

Revealingly, this fear of war is not partnered by a perception that politics or politicians are responsible for the crisis – or presumably, therefore, able to resolve it. This implies that citizens either see the situation as beyond the reach of politics, or don’t hold politicians responsible for the most important developments affecting the country.

The fear of war is not felt equally by all sectors of society. The better educated and highest earning respondents are more concerned by unemployment and corruption. The same pattern is evident in Montenegro, the other entity where significant numbers of respondents expressed fear of war. The implications are twofold: the poorest sectors of society are quite aware that they will suffer the most casualties in the event of violent conflict; but they are less aware that they are also the main victims of deliberate fear-mongering by politicians and media. In this context, it is interesting that this fear is most keenly felt by respondents in south Macedonia, which was much less affected by last year’s violence than the north-west. ‘Wars begin in the minds of men’, as the UNESCO charter says.

The division between Macedonians and Albanians is very clearly reflected. Twice as many Albanian as Macedonian respondents believe the country is on the right direction. This confirms the general feeling across the country that Albanians benefited most from last year’s mediation by the European Union and NATO.

¹ The author has no expertise in the methods of public opinion surveys, and has not sought to compare these results with equivalent findings from Central or Western Europe.

*Dr Mark Thompson, Balkans Program Director of the International Crisis Group until early May this year, is the author of **A Paper House. The Ending of Yugoslavia** (1992) and **Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina** (1999). He has worked for missions of the UN and the OSCE in the Balkans.*

The facts that some 70 per cent of respondents think Kosovo presents a threat to Macedonia, with 62 per cent taking the same view of Albania, illustrate the strength of anti-Albanian feeling, and the conviction that Albanians throughout the region share a predatory attitude towards Macedonia. While unfair towards the present authorities in Tirana, this conviction is understandable, and the international community should take it more seriously. This partly explains the majority opposition to an Albanian-language university, and to the use of Albanian for legal purposes.

But the division along national lines does not determine all the responses. The two communities are equally concerned about the threat of war and corruption. Besides, the three most important issues are unemployment, poverty and corruption. The lack of trust in government and parliament seems to be another cross-community phenomenon.

This distrust exceeds that of any other entity surveyed, and is a key element in what might be termed the ‘Macedonia Syndrome’, a condition typified by a sense of bruised entrapment by three factors: an aggressive minority (the Albanians), a hypocritical international community (which flipped overnight from praising Macedonia’s democracy to condemning its shortcomings), and last but not least, bad leadership by venal politicians.

The Army and the Church are the most trusted local institutions. However, respondents seemed to have little faith that developing military strength is the best way to protect national interests. ‘EU and NATO membership’ (as if they were two sides of one coin – which is not surprising, given Macedonia’s recent experience) were preferred as the best way to achieve the overall priority: ‘a strong economy’. As for the Church’s high rating, it is striking that over 80 per cent of respondents stated they did not want to belong to any church. As elsewhere, the church’s high trust rating in Macedonia reflects its symbolic status as a relatively uncompromised bearer of national identity. At the other – bottom – end of the scale, respondents had a lower opinion of their media’s truthfulness and lack of independence than anywhere else.

The fear of war in Macedonia is not partnered by a perception that politicians are responsible for the crisis – or able to resolve it.

Albanian respondents seem even more disillusioned with their elected representatives. The survey indicated a near collapse of confidence in the two main Albanian parties, the DPA and PDP. Regrettably, the survey did not inquire about trust in Ali Ahmeti, the former guerrilla leader who is seen by some as ‘above’ the corruption of professional politics.

Regarding the international community, Macedonian respondents were apathetic and sceptical. No fewer than 88 per cent believe that crucial decisions are imposed on Macedonia from ‘the outside’ – a total exceeded only in Republika Srpska (RS). Albanian respondents, by contrast, shared the confidence that marks the Kosovo Albanians, due to last year’s intervention in Macedonia and to NATO’s action over Kosovo in 1999. Their trust in the Stability Pact was double that of the Macedonian respondents. Otherwise the gloom is relieved only by a somewhat greater than average optimism about longer-term economic prospects, and a relatively high approval of civil liberties NGOs.

Kosovo

Kosovar respondents were more positive and optimistic about their situation and their prospects – individual and collective – than those in any other entity. The level of trust in domestic and international institutions is remarkable. Even the Stability Pact gets a pretty resounding vote of confidence.

Outside observers see Kosovo as profoundly traumatized, devastated and with a deeply uncertain future. According to the survey, this is not at all how people see the situation. It is striking that Kosovars responded to the survey as if the essential political questions facing their society had been satisfactorily answered. Their survey answers reveal no uncertainty about themselves, and little about their society, their government or their future. ‘Stability of the state’ was rated by only 16 per cent as an ‘important issue’ – in sixth place, lower than ‘drug and alcohol abuse’.

Many fewer Kosovars (66.6 per cent) feel that matters affecting them are decided abroad than Macedonians (88 per cent) or Serbians (78 per

cent), even though Kosovo is effectively an international protectorate. In the same vein, Kosovars are much more prone than others in the region to feel that they have real control over their lives.

Conflict does not feature as an issue or a fear. Unemployment was overwhelmingly the priority issue, followed by corruption (for better-educated and paid groups) and poverty (for others); and – for non-Albanians – crime. EU and NATO membership is seen as more than three times as important as relying on ‘a strong army’.

These findings reflect the majority’s continuing euphoria at its release from Serbian or Yugoslav bondage in 1999. In the nature of case, they do not reflect much experience of the institutions concerned – or, in some cases, any experience at all. For example, even though the province did not actually have a government when this survey was conducted, due to prolonged haggling among party leaders after the November 2001 elections, respondents still expressed the highest trust in their parliament and government of any entity in the survey!

Kosovo's most precious resource may be the high hopes of its inhabitants. Unfortunately, the international community tends to see these as liabilities.

Likewise, although Kosovar Albanians feel so few political qualms, the fact is that Kosovo’s final constitutional status remains unresolved. Moreover, the international community has so far refused so much as to contemplate a resolution. This radiant confidence is highly, even perilously idealistic. It reflects support for institutions that have not been tested. It is also contingent on the expectation of a favourable eventual solution to the status question.

National identity counted for little in respondents’ sense of their own economic situation over the past year, or to their optimism about economic improvement over the shorter and longer terms. However, non-Albanians are more prone to see the economic transition as too fast, and their level of dissatisfaction was significantly higher.

Veton Surroi’s popularity rating (47 per cent, though he holds no elected office) is consistent with the general belief that international integration is Kosovo’s chief priority. For Surroi is the most cosmopolitan and ‘liberal’ figure among

Kosovar Albanian leaders. In this context, it is striking that respondents assessed co-operation with Albania as mattering less than with Germany, the US and UK. Such pragmatism hardly suggests nationalist obsession.

Yet the results from Kosovo are not free of anxiety and chauvinism. Some 72 per cent of respondents believe RS poses a threat to Kosovo. It might be argued that, while the RS can hardly threaten Kosovo directly, there is some logic behind the fear that the Serb extremists who prevail in the RS can make common cause with like-minded elements in Serbia proper to deny Kosovars the freedom from Belgrade that they crave. However, there is no such rationale for the fear of

Macedonia expressed by 30 per cent of the respondents. In the difficult relationship between Macedonia and Kosovo, the real threat is posed by Kosovo.

As for minority rights, if they were put to a popular vote, Serbs would not be allowed to use their own language for legal purposes in Kosovo – or, possibly, in higher education

either.

The contrast with Macedonia also dominates the ratings of international figures. Whereas Vladimir Putin ranked top for the Macedonians (35.4 per cent), the Kosovars placed him bottom (4.3 per cent). In each case, ‘Putin’ is a cipher or projection of Moscow’s perceived traditional anti-Western, pro-Orthodox geopolitics.

In conclusion, the province’s most precious resource may be the high hopes of its inhabitants (and not exclusively, as we saw, of the Albanian majority). Unfortunately, the international community tends to see those hopes as liabilities – as expectations that contain a potential threat. For what sort of backlash might follow if frustration over Kosovo’s final constitutional status should eventually turn those hopes sour?

While the international reluctance to address final status is understandable, it is mistaken. Although it will be some time before a final status decision could be enacted in the near future, there seems no very convincing reason to delay further the

identification of a diplomatic process to address the issue.

The still inadmissible truth about Kosovo is that the democratic wishes of the overwhelming majority overlaps with the international community's wish for a durable, stable solution. The name of the overlap is 'conditional independence'.²

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Republika Srpska (RS)

The results from RS, the Serb-controlled entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), reveal a population well practised in its version of 'double-think'.³ People want economic betterment more than anything else, but without the concomitant baggage of democratic, or merely civilised, standards.

Respondents in this entity – where the politics of nationality have caused more bloodshed than anywhere else in the region – expressed relatively little concern about conflict and ethnic issues, which ranked only seventh in importance (13.6 per cent: far behind Macedonia's 31.7 per cent). True, ethnic conflicts were listed third among 'personal fears', but with a count of only 10.4 per cent. As elsewhere, unemployment is the main issue, closely followed by corruption.

The apparent normality of respondents' principal concerns is deceptive because it depends on maintaining a coercively abnormal state of affairs: the preservation of wartime 'ethnic cleansing' of non-Serbs in order to ensure the continued monopoly of political authority by one nationality. This ab-

normality is underwritten, so to speak, by NATO, which is the highest power in the land.

Overall, however, the findings exude something worse than apathy: a sort of pathological depression. Respondents feel impotent, with fully 89 per cent – the highest rating in the region – believing that decisions affecting their future are taken outside. They are pessimistic: 61 per cent think their economic situation will be the same or worse a year hence – a total exceeded only in Macedonia. (Oddly, only 50 per cent are 'dissatisfied' with their economic situation: apathy again, perhaps?) And – Kosovo's opposite – they are sweepingly distrustful, with the lowest ratings of international organizations and foreign leaders in the region (except for Putin, who rates 24.7 per cent: more than double anybody else, and three or four times more than Western leaders). In sum, the 'controlled insanity' (Orwell's phrase) at the heart of RS stands clearly revealed:

- € Indicted war criminals Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic head the table of most trusted personalities, ahead of current political leaders Ivanic and Sarovic.
- € The Serb Democratic Party (founded by Karadzic, its first president) remains far and away the most popular party, with twice the support of its nearest rival.
- € 45 and 40 per cent of respondents, respectively, think Albania and Kosovo present threats to RS. Turkey and Croatia also figure very high in this list.
- € 37 per cent think the other BH entity presents a threat. (The perception is not mutual: only 19 per cent in the Federation saw the RS as a threat.)
- € The Army and [Serb Orthodox] Church – which respectively committed and extenuated, or denied, massive war crimes – are the most trusted institutions.
- € The top four countries for preferred cooperation are Serbia, Russia, Greece and Montenegro.
- € Only 14 per cent favour joining the European Union...
- € ...Yet more than half the respondents think economic marketization is happening too slowly, and say that economic development is the top priority.

² The case for proceeding towards this solution is examined in the International Crisis Group's recent two-part report, *A Kosovo Roadmap (I): Addressing Final Status*, and *A Kosovo Roadmap (II): Internal Benchmarks*, 1 March 2002.

³ The term is George Orwell's, of course, from *1984*. It is worth remembering the definition: "Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them. ... [I]t is a vast system of mental cheating. ... If human equality is to be for ever averted... then the prevailing mental condition must be controlled insanity."

The Federation

The general impression of the results from Bosnia and Herzegovina's second entity, the Federation, is of a society in the midst of an arduous post-conflict normalization, a process that is delayed and warped by the nature of the peace settlement (the Dayton Accords). Fully 43.3 per cent of respondents think BiH is on the wrong track, presumably (in the present writer's opinion) because neither the Federation itself, nor BiH as such, are seen to be functioning in any sort of effective way.

Public opinion seems to lack the strong undertow of mania that characterises the RS. For example, only 23 per cent see Serbia as a significant threat (a reasonable number, given recent history and Belgrade's continuing interference in the other entity); and only 19 per cent see the RS itself in this light. The favoured countries for co-operation are Germany, the U.S. and Slovenia.⁴

There is greater confidence in private enterprise. More people are hopeful of economic improvement over the longer term than they are in the RS, and people's fears in the Federation are more 'normal', being economic rather than political. Also, there is less of the worrying faith in the church and the army that marks the RS (as well as Kosovo, Serbia and Romania).

There seems less of a sense of ownership of domestic institutions and government, except where these are overseen by international organizations, as is the case with the police and, arguably, the main media.

Conclusion

These findings confirm that the RS is the international community's great failure in the region. It has been a compound failure, starting with the refusal to prevent, then confront Serb belligerence (1991-93); continuing through the presentation of increasingly pro-Serb peace plans (1993-95), followed by the legalisation of the RS itself, an entity

founded on acts of genocide; and leading to the persistent refusal to use available leverage to make the RS uphold the democratic standards accepted at Dayton.

The shortest route towards stabilizing Bosnia and Herzegovina, and turning it into a minimally responsible member of the international community, lies through the imposition of systemic change. Unfortunately, there appears to be no appetite in Western capitals for more than the present policy led by the European Union of incremental 'localization'.

Serbia

The results for Serbia suggest a population that is both hungry for economic progress and deeply unready for an honest reckoning with the recent past. As in Kosovo, ethnicity does not feature among the main issues or fears. And 'war' is only the sixth-ranking fear, with less than 5 per cent. (In a separate category, however, some 16 per cent agreed that civil war posed a danger.) There is widespread optimism about longer-term economic prospects, and university graduates are confident in the government's economic reform program. Two economic officials (the Minister of Economy and National Bank Director) feature on the list of most trusted public figures. Notably, Serbia runs second only to Kosovo in the proportion of respondents who think their country is on the right track.

As in the RS, the Orthodox Church and Army are the most trusted institutions. Trust in international leaders and institutions runs very low. In line with the objective of joining the EU (preferably without NATO), the preferred international institutions are the EU, the World Bank and the IMF (meaning 'the money'). ICTY and NATO sit at the bottom of this list. Among foreign leaders, Putin and Chirac (or rather 'Russia' and 'France', those stand-bys of nationalist mythology) top the list, but without much sign of enthusiasm.

Absurdly, Greece and RS are the most preferred countries for better co-operation. Support for co-operation with Montenegro is lukewarm, ranking

Results from the BiH Federation give the impression of a society in the midst of arduous post-conflict normalization.

⁴ Slovenia's hardworking diplomats and trade delegations in Sarajevo have given their country something like the role-model status that it enjoys in Montenegro.

below Norway, Hungary, Slovenia and Macedonia. This is interesting, especially in light of other recent surveys within Serbia that show a sharp rise in support for *Serbian* independence.

Nearly 60 per cent of respondents believe Albania poses a threat, and fully 19 per cent believe the same of Croatia. Extremist political parties – those that waged or supported belligerence in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo – would garner more than a quarter of the votes.

Only 8.3 per cent see Serbian interference in other states as a risk. Given Serbia's role over the past decade, and its continuing attitudes to Bosnia (RS) and Kosovo (albeit the latter is not a 'state'), this very low rating may indicate an allergy to the mere suggestion that Serbia could be 'aggressive'. Another indicator of a wish to avoid retrospection is the popularity of TV Pink, a skilled purveyor of escapist entertainment that is far and away the favourite television station.

It is much the same pattern as in the RS. All one can say is that the implicit contradiction ('we want the material benefits due to responsible members of the international community, but without acting responsibility towards our neighbours or the international community') is somewhat less acute in Serbia's case.

Montenegro

The timing of the historic 14 March 2002 framework agreement, brokered by the European Union, to dissolve the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and replace it with a new 'state community', to be called 'Serbia and Montenegro', was unlucky for this survey. It renders moot a number of salient findings (including 'right direction of the country', 'personal fears' and 'trust in international institutions'). Presumably more than 56 per cent (a relatively low figure: Serbia had 78 per cent) would now agree that vital decisions affecting Montenegro are taken abroad. Whether 27 per cent of respondents would still rank war, conflict or instability as their major fear would be worth knowing.

That having been said, the significance of the 14 March agreement should not be overstated. Mon-

tenegro's internal divisions over sovereignty date back to 1918, became explicit again in the late 1990s, and have not been erased. In fact, the results confirm their depth. Consider, for example, the following paradox: while trust in the church scores lower in Montenegro than anywhere else, Metropolitan Amfilohije, the extremist primate of the Serb Orthodox Church in Montenegro, appears to be the most trusted church figure in the entire survey, even though he is detested by the pro-independence camp, i.e. more than half the electorate. Likewise, the marginal preference for co-operation with RS rather than with Serbia (a priority that the RS does not reciprocate) can only be explained by the anti-Belgrade passion of some pro-independence Montenegrins.

The sense of economic loss over past year is high. Almost 56 per cent thought their economic situation had deteriorated over the previous twelve months – a total surpassed only in Bulgaria. Expectations of near-term improvement are low.

Although Vladimir Putin is the most trusted international figure, anti-Western scepticism is much less pronounced in Montenegro – meaning, presumably, among pro-independence citizens – than in the other Orthodox-majority entities of the former Yugoslavia, and higher than in Croatia. Slovenia seems to be the preferred role model: a small, self-possessed, Adriatic country on the highway to European integration.

Attitudes to NGOs, on the other hand, are distinctly unenlightened. As in Serbia and RS, more respondents were against joining an environmentalist NGO than for it. So much for environmental awareness in Europe's first 'ecological state'.⁵

The results as they stand broadly indicate that the international community has been justified in treating Montenegrin–Serbian relations as a low-key issue, without explosive potential. (Only 4.2 per cent see Serbia as a threat – which is strikingly low, and confirms that the long-running constitutional dispute is just that: a constitutional dispute.)

⁵ The former pro-Belgrade regime of Momir Bulatovic proclaimed Montenegro to be an 'ecological state' in 1991.

Anti-Western scepticism is much less pronounced in Montenegro than in the other Orthodox-majority entities of former Yugoslavia.

Croatia

These results give an impression of stability and discontent. On one hand, Croatian respondents recorded the second highest disapproval of the general trend. (At 45 per cent, it was exceeded only by hapless Macedonia.) Given Croatia's position as a regional front-runner (discounting Slovenia), this seems surprising. On the other hand, a higher proportion thought their economic situation had not changed in the past year; and fewer than anywhere else except euphoric Kosovo felt that their economic situation had deteriorated. Longer-term expectations are more optimistic than in most of the region, and Croatia scored the highest approval rating for private enterprise.

The late Franjo Tudjman's legacy is apparent in the very low levels of trust in most domestic institutions. Perhaps more surprisingly, the church and armed forces have not been spared the effects of this disenchantment. It would be worth knowing whether the lower than average trust in the Army portends popular alienation from the politicised and corrupt military that was bequeathed by the former regime, or from the partly reformed military of today.

Trust in international organizations runs lower than the regional average. The lack of belief that EU and NATO membership will advance the country's interests is sobering. Likewise, the 16 per cent ratings for the Stability Pact and the OSCE express a customary suspicion of regional initiatives. As for the OSCE, it has deployed a high-profile mission in Croatia for four years now. While the mission's task is not to curry favour with the host government or public, its presumable failure to impress citizens with its usefulness should prompt some reflection at mission headquarters and in Vienna. And fully 30 per cent of respondents viewed Serbia as a threat.

In sum, these findings imply a mild but clear warning to the international community, especially to the European Union, the Stability Pact and the OSCE. For the past two years, Croatia has been undergoing a double transition: a post-authoritarian political transition from the former (Tudjman) regime – with all the internal disruption

entailed – and a delayed economic and institutional adaptation to Western norms. This was bound to be a difficult process, and the coalition government's indecisiveness over certain reforms has made it harder still. If the risk of a return to power by right-wing parties is to be minimised, Croatia should receive highly visible international support for some major infrastructural project, perhaps in transport or communications.

Themes

€ 'Europe'

The survey confirms that 'Europe', meaning the European Union (EU), now dominates the SEE entities' vision of their own future. The launch of the Stabilization and Association process (SAP) in 1999 set the seal on the EU's strategic pre-eminence as the body that defines objectives and sets standards for the region.

Less than a decade ago, Western Europe was divided and disoriented over the Balkans. The turnaround has been remarkable as well as historic. With the exceptions – respectively perturbing and inevitable – of Croatia and the RS, people in the region appear to accept the international community argument that integration with the EU is not only in their best interest: it is the only way to make progress.

How then to account for such low levels of trust in the institutions of governance, challenging their very legitimacy, given that the approach enshrined in the SAP focuses precisely on democratic institution-building and capacity-strengthening? One obvious explanation is that the process is still in its infancy, and has a long way to go. An additional explanation, less welcome to international ears, might be that people's sense of trust cannot outrun their sense of stability and security – Kosovo being both the best evidence of this rule, and the exception that proves it.

To press the second argument: the EU's preferred approach cannot overcome the remaining obstacles to stabilization. These obstacles have been reduced and confined over the past two years, but are still not susceptible of technocratic solutions,

Survey findings for Croatia imply a mild but clear warning to the international community.

overseen by European Commission experts. The EU's admirable endeavours in the region need, therefore, to be partnered by more decisive diplomacy to close the remaining issues of sovereignty. Macedonia's future needs to be assured; this is likely to require more and broader international engagement with Skopje, not less. Kosovo's separation from Serbia needs some kind of international, formal ratification. The basic constitutional architecture in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not viable, hence not finished. Serbia and Montenegro will need continuing outside help to redefine their relationship.

€ **The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)**

The ICTY is the most controversial and 'political' of the international institutions active in the Balkans. It is the only one dedicated to investigating wartime events, and adjudicating responsibility for crimes against humanity. It comes as no surprise that the Tribunal divided respondents so sharply (spanning differences of 80 per cent), or that their opinions conformed so clearly to the national blocs that waged – and were forged in – the wars. In essence, Albanians and Muslims tend to trust the Tribunal, while Serbs and Croats tend to distrust it.

Trust appears proportionate to people's feeling that the Tribunal is prepared to take action against their wartime enemies; the highest level was expressed in Kosovo and the BiH Federation, but also in significant measure by Serbs in Croatia. By the same token, the Tribunal is distrusted insofar as people are convinced that it tends to 'victimise' them by sharing, to some extent, the biased and hostile attitude which they attribute to the Western powers (the European Union and North American states). Hence the relatively low level of trust in Croatia, and the very low levels in Serbia and the RS.

Perception is, as ever, more decisive than actual performance. The Tribunal is less trusted in Macedonia, although no indictments have been brought against citizens of that country, than in Montenegro, which is under investigation for at-

tacking southern Croatia.⁶ On the other hand, younger Macedonians are about twice as likely to trust the ICTY as the oldest age-group – and more than their contemporaries in Croatia. This differential is less marked elsewhere, but only in Kosovo and the RS are young people *less* inclined to trust the Tribunal. Only in the RS and Macedonia did university education not clearly correlate with greater trust. In the RS, the correlation is inverse: the more education (and social status), the less trust.

The findings are a reminder that the ICTY's task is not to be popular but to deliver justice – and be seen to do so.

These findings are a reminder that the ICTY's task is not to be popular, but to deliver justice – and be seen to do so. Justice can only be converted into the currency of reconciliation by domestic actors. The ICTY cannot substitute for efforts by politicians, NGOs, and a range of opinion-makers in each entity to reckon with their responsibility for the events of the past decade.

€ **Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe**

The findings will hardly encourage the Stability Pact's Special Co-ordinator, Erhard Busek, or his team in Brussels, and may tend to confirm suspicions about the Pact in many other capitals. While one can agree that the Pact was initially oversold, has subsequently under-performed and now urgently needs overhauling (or dismantling?), it should in fairness be mentioned that the Pact is hardly an organization to compare with the other international institutions mentioned in the survey – the big IGOs and the IFIs. The Stability Pact is a 'virtual' organization, a clearing house with little independent agency or operational capacity, lacking its own budget, attempting to channel other people's money. Compared with the other institutions, it is poorly placed to convince the public of whatever added value it could bring to the region.

⁶ The finding that more than twice as many Romanians as Bulgarians expressed trust in the ICTY seems unaccountable, given that neither country is involved with the Tribunal, until it is recalled that Romanians showed greater trust in all the other international institutions as well.

€ Minorities

The results concerning minorities are of limited use, because the survey did not specify approximate sizes of minority groups that could or should obtain the rights specified. Judging by the data, Kosovars are slightly more tolerant of minorities, while RS and Macedonia are the least liberal. Given the plight of Kosovar Serbs since 1999, and the pro-minority agreement reached in Macedonia last year, this result seems ironic, though it may nonetheless be an accurate measure of *attitudes*.

Yet these differences may signify less than the fact that absolute majorities in all entities felt that minorities were demanding ‘too much’. Predictably, the biggest such majority (77 per cent) was found in Macedonia. More encouragingly, the narrowest (54 per cent) was in Montenegro, whose treatment of minorities is the best in the region. Even here, however, 50.9 per cent of respondents would deny minorities the use of their language(s) for legal purposes.

In Serbia and Montenegro, the optimism and moderation of Muslim minority respondents are striking. Three quarters of those in Serbia think the country is on a good course; they are much less worried than their compatriots about poverty and corruption. They even believe in the Stability Pact. In Montenegro,⁷ too, they are very confident that their country is on the right track, and achieving economic transition at the right pace. They are less worried than their Montenegrin and Serb compatriots about unemployment, poverty and violent conflict. Rather like the results in Kosovo, these findings glow with relief that the Milosevic era is over.

€ Media and Freedom of Speech

The survey included several items relating to the media and freedom of expression. They concern trust in the mass media, importance of the freedom to criticise government, and media truthfulness.

People's sense of trust in the institutions of governance cannot outrun their sense of stability or security.

Within the former Yugoslavia, the lowest levels of trust in the mass media were expressed in those entities (Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) which have seen little or no international effort to restructure the media sector. The highest trust was expressed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo, which have both benefited from comprehensive international attempts to reorganise their media sectors along democratic lines, comprising a public service broadcasting network, private broadcasters and press, media laws, professional organizations and codes of conduct.

Moreover, the state or public broadcasters that have undergone some measure of restructuring by international organizations seem to have retained higher levels of credibility than those which have not. The Serbian state broadcaster, RTS, is now favoured by only 14 per cent of respondents. Its opposite number in Croatia, HTV, has held up better – in part because Croatia, unlike Serbia, has been slow to open up the private broadcasting market. RTK in Kosovo, on the other hand, which was designed and launched by OSCE in 1999, is favoured by 63 per cent, far ahead of its two local competitors. The RS television network is favoured by 42.7 per cent, more than triple its nearest rival. The Federation equivalent showed almost as strongly.

Does this reflect positively on the international organizations in Bosnia and Kosovo, from the OSCE down to the patchwork of non-governmental organizations, that have worked to democratize and professionalize the media? Critics might demur, arguing that the narrow margins of difference do not allow for certainty, and that anyway the international community loaded the dice by donating heavily to favoured outlets. Others – including this writer – would see a deserved plaudit, and an encouragement for a more intrusive international role in restructuring Serbian and Macedonian state media.

€ Anti-Albanianism, ‘Pan-Albanianism’?

Albania and Kosovo top the list of entities regarded by their neighbours as presenting a threat. In the case of Macedonia, the suspicion rests on a solid foundation: last year, Albanian guerrillas

⁷ Presumably ‘Muslim’ subsumes Albanian, for Montenegro has a significant Albanian minority.

quickly brought the country to the brink of war, triggering a Western diplomatic intervention which, most Macedonians fervently believe, favoured their enemies. Many of these guerrillas were based in Kosovo, whose own leaders (Rugova, etc.) were extremely reluctant to condemn Albanian violence in Macedonia. The fact that Kosovo and Albania are seen as threats needs little comment, beyond noting that the international community should factor this reasonable concern into their assessments when considering the future of the NATO presence in Macedonia.

The attitude of RS to Albanians is another matter. It reflects standard Serb hatred of Albanians. Respondents in Montenegro, which unlike RS shares borders with both Kosovo and Albania, were much less alarmed.

The common element in these fears is the suspicion that different Albanian communities in the region share, at some level, ‘pan-Albanian’ ambitions. These suspicions receive enough nutriment from unguarded statements, occasional manifestos and fringe extremists to stay in business. In the prevailing climate, the fact that it would be impossible to prove the existence of a conspiracy uniting Tirana, Pristina and Tetovo is not the point. These suspicions will probably prove impossible to allay before the different entities have been stabilised and accepted as legitimate by all segments of the population.

€ Space for civic politics?

Civic politics emerge when people do not feel impelled to act and react publicly in terms of a collective identity. These results suggest that, for the most part, the public is most concerned about economic issues, and desires economic betterment more than anything. There may be a much greater popular readiness for a more individualistic, positive-sum kind of politics than the region’s elites have acknowledged. Yet other responses show that the public is not ready to abandon the ‘politics of identity’. Moreover, various influential institutions, groups and individuals stick to their wartime convictions. Issues involving sovereignty are their meat and drink.

In such circumstances, reformist leaders tread warily. (Serbia is the clearest case in point.) This

slows the pace of transition, so feeding popular disenchantment. Until the questions of sovereignty – the essential sources of instability – have been resolved in ways acceptable to the populations concerned, and hence legitimate in their eyes, it will be hard to break this particular circle. All in all, the International IDEA / SEEDS survey suggests that public opinion is *not* the reason why local political elites and international powers hesitate to tackle those questions.

