

# PULS

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MARKET, MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

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## **South-Eastern Europe (SEE) and the Stability Pact: New Means for Regional Analysis CROATIA**

### **IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS**

**March 2001**

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*The Associate Member of*  **GALLUP**  
INTERNATIONAL

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## **INTRODUCTION**

A research project for South Eastern Europe is organised by International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) in co-operation with local research institutes. In Croatia, Puls d.o.o. was responsible for the research part. The main aim of this research was to define principal issues and problems in the country which would then be used for the quantitative research, that is, for developing a questionnaire inquiry to be implemented in all Southeast European countries. The goal of the qualitative research is to monitor the public agenda in the Balkan area.

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## *CONTEXT*

This research was done exactly one year after the change of power in Croatia (January 2000), when the coalition of six parties took over the power, over HDZ, which was in power for ten years (1990-2000). Local authorities, however, remained the same. Local elections are expected in May, this year.

Further more, the situation in Zagreb is very much different from the situation elsewhere in Croatia, especially in war affected areas. In those areas even some basic sources are still a problem, such as water, electricity, transport, and most of all housing and the issue of property. During the war these areas were destroyed and many people fled away. At this time, although some came back, not much has changed.

The results presented here should be viewed in that context.

## METHODOLOGY

### PROCEDURE

Twenty-five in-depth interviews (IDI) were conducted with people from the elite (political, economic, public, etc.) All IDI were conducted in Zagreb during February and March 2001. Participants for IDI were selected primarily by the their sector of work.

The final list of participants in in-depth interviews was the following:

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

<b>POSITION</b>	<b>DOMAINS</b>
Prof. Of Military Sociology, Former Head Of The Croatian Information Service	ARMY
Minister of Defence	GOVERNMENT/ ARMY
President's Advisor For Military Issues	PRESIDENT OFFICE/ ARMY
Head Of Police Headquarters In Zagreb, Deputy Minister For Internal Affaires	POLICE
Lawyer	JUDICIARY
Lawyer	JUDICIARY
Deputy Prime Minister (Economy)	GOVERNMENT
Minister of Environmental Protection and Zoning	GOVERNMENT
Minister of Tourism	GOVERNMENT
representative in the Parliament (SDP)	PARLIAMENT
representative in the Parliament (IDS)	PARLIAMENT
representative in the Parliament (HDZ)	PARLIAMENT
Member of top-management in Zagreb Bank	PRIVATE SECTOR
Strategic manager in McCann-Erickson Croatia	PRIVATE SECTOR
Vice-governor of The Central National Bank	PUBLIC SECTOR
Head of the City office for Cultural Affaires	PUBLIC SECTOR
President's advisor for Internal Affaires	PRESIDENT OFFICE
President's advisor for Public Relations	PRESIDENT OFFICE
Chief of European Comission in Zagreb	INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
President of the Croatian Helsinki Committee	NGO
President of the Open Society in Croatia	NGO
Principal editor of the News, Croatian (National) Television	MASS-MEDIA
Principal editor, Jutarnji list	MASS-MEDIA
President of Socialist Worker's Party and professor at Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences	
President of Croatia	

Most of the in-depth interviews were tape-recorded (N=22), while others are only in a written form.

For reasons of easier understanding of the research results and the data interpretation, the methodology of the research shall be shortly explained.

#### *IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS*

In-depth interviews is a qualitative research method that includes a deep discussion on the proposed issue. It usually serves as basis for studying certain respondents' attitudes or evaluation of certain problem or issue, which can be usefull when preparing a quantitative research. Through a deeper discussion on certain issues, the real problems can be understood and defined more easily, which helps to create a quantitative questionnaire. Results of this kind of research can also be very useful even when interpreting the quantitative results.

However, it has to be emphasized that in the qualitative research all quantities, either numbers or percentages, have to be taken with reserve, as they cannot be generalised to the whole population.

## MAIN FINDINGS

Prior to disclosing some general conclusions, it has to be indicated that answers received from participants were very diverse on most of topics. This diversity is spread out through the report, while more general tendencies, given here, should be taken less firmly. Also, it should be noted that not everyone answered all the questions. Among people from the elite, it can be observed that there are usually two sides; one side trusts the Government more and is more optimistic, and the other side is more sceptic about the pace of solutions and has less confidence in any authority, especially on the national level.

### *THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN CROATIA*

- Problems that Croatian elite most frequently mentioned were economic problems, which they often connected with the basic social issue - the *unemployment*. One of the most important economic issues mentioned throughout the interviews was attracting foreign investors to instigate production and consequently provide employment.
- According to the opinions of the elite, in the second place are issues related to the image of Croatia and its international relations. People from the elite have a critical view of the Croatian society: they said it is a rather conservative society, insufficiently inventive and without a clear vision and development strategy.
- Legal issues, such as the question of state of law, and problems with ineffective national administration and judiciary were also frequently mentioned by the elite.
- Among other mentioned problems there were media, division of Croatian society, continuous creation of civic society, co-operation with the Hague Tribunal, attitude to Croats in Bosnia & Herzegovina, etc.
- When asked about whom they consider to be responsible to solve those problems, people from the 'elite' thought it was first of all the Government, followed by the Parliament.
- There was hardly a consensus about the pace of solving problems in Croatia. Most of the participants from the elite said that good functioning of national administration is one of the crucial issues that has to be solved quickly. They also mentioned decreased budget deficit and foreign capital investments. On the other hand, people from the elite could not agree about the pace of solving two very important problems: unemployment and constituting the legal state. Obviously, more time is needed to solve those problems, but, due to their importance, they should be considered right away.
- It is obvious and understandable that the 'elite', especially politicians, view the problems from the distance. They take a wider perspective on problems, but they are probably not completely aware what certain problem means on individual level, as they are usually not in directly affected by those problems.

- The elite trusts mostly the Government, then the Prime minister and the President. The least trust is placed with political parties.
- The role of international institutions in Croatia is, in principle, positively evaluated.
- Other countries in the Region are oftenly seen as the potential market, that is, cooperation on economic basis.

A possible explanation for diversity of answers would be that, after the changes in Croatia (January 2000), people in power are more oriented to their more specific duties, especially those related to legal coordination with the European Union, rather than creating a more general overview and speaking in public, which would ensure more congruent opinions



## MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN CROATIA

PROBLEMS	f (IDI) No of participants	EXPLAINED SOLUTION <i>(by elite mostly)</i>
<b>ECONOMIC ISSUES</b>		
• attracting foreign investors	7	Production shall be initiated by attracting foreign investors. Stable tax system, macroeconomic stability and effective judiciary are needed for that.
• to create new strategy of development	5	Taking over successful models of Asian countries, Czech republic and Hungary
• tax system and macroeconomic conditions must be stable	4	Exchange rate should instigate export, and stable macroeconomic conditions will create preconditions for incoming of foreign capital and investments
• lack of entrepreneurship/ non-encouragement of initiatives for development of small and medium entrepreneurship	4	Reduce bureaucracy and paperwork to make it easier for entrepreneurs.
• Initiating production	1	
• lagged technology	2	
• budget deficit	2	
• reforms of health and pension sectors	1	Reforms of pension and health systems will decrease the budget deficit
<b>SOCIAL-ECONOMIC ISSUES</b>		
• decreasing unemployment	7	Production should be instigated by attracting foreign capital. And before all, to create long-term strategy of development.
• low salaries	1	
• aid to threatened ones (before all pensioners and part of young generations)	1	
<b>IMAGE OF CROATIA &amp; INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</b>		
• Attitude toward Europe, regional co-operation, anti-European, xenophobic mood	5	We cannot ignore huge associations that are our neighbours and which open our path to the world
• Conservative Croatian society - lack of inventiveness	2	
• Lack of clear and positive vision - forming a strategy and perspective of development/ <b>Lack of identity of the state</b>	1	
• Lack of public discussion on problems	1	
• lack of faith and optimism	1	
• divided Croatian society	1	

LEGAL ADMINISTRATION	ISSUES AND STATE		
• functioning of state of law and rule of law		4	Solve the problem of crime
• Effective state administration and judiciary, need to decrease state apparatus / the state is extremely expensive		3 (1g.)	Restructuring of state administration aimed at minimising and rationalising
• Reform of local administration, decentralisation		1	increase local authority
• Co-operation with the Hague tribunal		1	
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CIVIL SOCIETY			
• Media		2	They are unobjective, and not very informative
• Democratic procedure		2	
• Building civil society, lack of civil consciousness		1	
• Extremes rule the politics		1	
• Attitude toward Croats in B&H		1	

Most frequently disclosed **reasons** of the problems were:

- A. Bad economic policy in the last ten years, while HDZ was in power, bad monetary and banking policy, and laws that allowed for malversations;
- B. Laggard production technology

Different issues were named as **obstacles** in solving those problems. They could be viewed in three more general aspects:

- A. *Economic-political and historic* – wrong concept of privatisation that destroyed domestic economy; frequent political changes and unstable macroeconomic environment; centralisation; shortage of professional management (which is also a problem of education); slow reform of the state administration system.
- B. *Social* – mentality of people in Croatia, which was described as insufficiently open for new ideas to Europe and the West, and lacking spirit of entrepreneurship;
- C. *Educational* – school system is not adjusted to the needs of economy

The following **factors** were usually referred to as possibly helping to speed up a solution to economic problems:

- A. Consultancy and professional help by international economic institutions
- B. Developing a scenario of the present dynamics of processes in Europe and a long-term development strategy accordingly
- C. Change of mentality
- D. Reduced bureaucracy
- E. Giving loans to small entrepreneurs

When asked about the trend of development of Croatian economy in the next year, people from the elite have quite different opinions.

- About half of them think positive, and they mostly see the following trend: incentives will start the entrepreneurship, and new laws will help establish legal security. Also, foreign investors will start production, and thereby reduce unemployment.
- On the other hand, there is an opinion that big companies should still go bankrupt because the current government has no concept for their restructuring, and that shall trigger even higher unemployment. They also brought up a decrease in purchasing power, which means that domestic products will not sell well.
- A third side is probably the most realistic side, and it is about many difficulties lasting until summer, when a good tourist season might be an impulse for inverting trends, but without spectacular changes (slowly but steadily). These people expect the EU's standards to be met in 5-10 years.

Almost all participants support the idea of market economy, but feel that Croatian economy is still far from liberal market economy. They believe that we must first stabilise institutions that regulate the 'market race' and then let the game be played on freely. Some of the participants, however, thought the market economy is not necessarily something positive, but still something that cannot be avoided.

#### *SPECIFIC ECONOMIC ISSUES*

A cycle that was usually mentioned as the one leading toward a remedy for unemployment is the following:

- attracting foreign investors will bring to initiating production and providing employment for people in Croatia. But preconditions for that are a stable tax system, macroeconomic stability and effective legal functioning.

In explaining that cycle, one of respondents - an economic expert - explained that the two most important economic issues in it were the following:

- deficit in national budget
- attracting foreign investors

The first one deals with structural changes causing budget deficit, and these would basically tackle the health and pension systems. Those two systems will, consequently, need to be reformed. Both of these reforms have to be carried out by the end of next year.

Foreign investments cannot be separated from the general economic and political situation, and thus need to be different and more incentive. Basic conditions would include a stable tax system and effective legal system that protects the tax collection. Those would provide legal and tax security necessary for foreign investments. Macroeconomic stability would result from all those changes and reforms, but at same time it would be the biggest incentive for long-term foreign investments.

#### *ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION*

Croatian economic interest is mostly directed at SEE markets, especially ex-Yugoslavia, because 'we are not yet ready for the Western market competition, and our economy is complementary with the ex-Yugoslav countries'. In that sense, it was mentioned that it is to be expected for co-operation with B&H, Slovenia, Hungary, Montenegro and FRY to increase. On the other hand, although in minority, some people thought that Croatia should focus on the EU, beside intensifying economic relations with the former Yugoslav countries.

## POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

### *HOW PEOPLE FROM THE 'ELITE' ESTIMATE THEIR ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES*

Participants from the elite seemed realistic in estimating importance of their own role / role of their institution in decision-making processes in the country.

In that sense, they expressed the following opinions:

- Their role is neglectable / worthless: 3 (Croatian Helsinki Committee, Ministry of Tourism, HDZ's MP, lawyer)
- They have a key role / important role : 3 ( president's advisors, Zagrebačka bank, SDP's MP)
- Their role in terms of political decisions is important, but it is not direct / influence on public opinion: 2 (journalist, president's advisor)
- Their role is determined by law / it is not political: 2 (Ministry of Interior, Croatian Central bank)

### ***Trust in local & national authorities and perceived greatest influence***

The elite trusts mostly the Government, then the Prime minister and the President (Table 1). The least trust is placed with political parties and judiciary, followed by administration, both on local and national level. Among authorities of greatest influence, the elite chose the Government on top and then the Prime minister, while the President doesn't seem to have much influence, in the opinion of the elite.

These results are mostly congruent with the results of the general satisfaction with actions and functioning of particular authorities. (Table 2)

**Table 1.** Whom do you trust most and whom least in the country?

Who has greatest influence in the country?

	most	least	Greatest influence
Mayor			
Local administration		3	
President	3		2
Prime minister	3		5
Government	7	1	9
<i>Ministers Ivanisevic and Kovacevic</i>	1		
Parliament	1	1	

Political parties		<b>6</b>	1
<i>politicians in general</i>		1	
<i>HSLs, Budisa</i>		1	
State administration		2	1
International community			
Director of National Central Bank	1		
Judiciary	1	<b>4</b>	

**Tables 2.** How do you evaluate functioning and activities of the following institutions, on the scale 1-10?

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Prime minister	16	<b>6.25</b>
President	16	<b>5.88</b>
Government	16	<b>5.68</b>
International community	12	<b>5.66</b>
Parliament	15	5.26
Mayor	14	4.50
State administration	14	4.07
Local administration	13	4.00
Political parties	14	3.57

**Tables 3.** Usual comments from both sides on individual subjects of government:

	<b>ELITE</b>
Government and the Prime Minister	They are the most effective, they deal with practical things, do hard work and deal with problems very well, they stick to principles and solved a great deal of tough issues.  Despite being the most concrete, they had some failures. Level of the prime minister's communication with the public is shameful.
President	He is co-operative, makes friends abroad, initiates discussion on important issues
Parliament	That is a pluralistic body where different attitudes are expressed, their internal rules make sure that each representative in the best possible way contributes to making good decisions  Paste of law-making is relatively quick, but not all solutions are good
State administration	Does not respect decisions of the Constitutional court, incompetent and inert

Local administration	They all expect the state authorities to solve their local problems They are dealing with things that have nothing to do with them (for example: relations with the Hague)
Political parties	Their role is too big in other social segments and also in terms of Parliament's decisions They are not democratically structured
Judiciary	Inefficacious

## CIVIL SOCIETY

### MEDIA

Negative judgement on the media is overwhelming. To get reliable and true information from the media, most of the participants find very hard. Therefore, many of them use many different sources of information. Primarily, almost everyone from the elite reads different daily newspapers, watch national TV and listen to radio (both national and local). They evaluated rather positively local radio stations, especially Radio 101, and Novi list among daily newspapers. However, they pointed out informal sources (colleagues, friends, secret sources), professional and governmental publications and Internet as being more reliable sources. This relates to the fact that Croatian media were not highly independent during the last ten years. Despite the change of Croatian authorities, there are still no significant changes in the impartiality and professionalism of the media, which is obvious from the following statements of the participants:

- *Newspapers are in fact a mean of emotionally mobilising people.*
- *Media must be intermediary, but now they became independent and manipulative. They produce news instead of transferring them. That made people reading newspapers to see the stories as being fiction. Information, in fact, are collected from gossip, whispering, etc.*
- *You cannot rely on them. Sensationalism is the rule*
- *They are not professional and impartial, and reporters do not have enough knowledge in comparison with journalists from the world's papers.*
- *Worst evaluated press was the one filtering and forming information in respect to the political background.*
- *Media are politically biased*

As other reliable source of information are foreign media, that view situation from wider perspective and report more realistically because of not being involved in events here, but are not always entirely relevant sources of information. Most oftenly mentioned were CNN, BBC and SKY News.

### NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

In general, participants support the basic idea of NGOs, seeing them as organisations that:

- Take part in building the civil society
- Offer alternative development concepts
- Indicate specific problems and help resolve them
- Make it possible for citizens to realise their interests

However, when asked about NGOs in Croatia opinions among the elite vary a lot:

#### *Positive trend*

- *They had an important role in democratic changes in Croatia, especially since 1995.*
- *They had courage to overcome fear and say the truth.*

*Negative trend* – one radical opinion from a military professional

- *It was proven that they are not non-governmental organisations, but organisations connected with some political parties, and they were the parties' main support in getting to power. They should be critical about the Government and political parties and force them, in such a way, to work better*

A comment of one of the NGO professionals gives maybe the best picture of the current state of NGOs in Croatia:

- *They should not be underestimated or overestimated. They were significant when HDZ came down from power. Afterwards, some people from those organisations entered the government, and part of them became passive. Now they are marginalised because they are not needed by those who needed them recently. Most of the NGOs were founded in the beginning of the '90s, and largely that was motivated by quantity of money that came from abroad. Non-governmental scene softened the problem of unemployed intellectuals. A part of those organisations lost out of sight their mission and do only for what they can get the money. Role they played during the parliamentary election campaign is extremely important. They are important for building civil and democratic society, but at the moment very unprofessional.*

#### PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

When asked about professional associations, participants usually think of trade unions and entrepreneurs' organisations. Although participants mostly agree on the role of professional organisations, which they see as protecting their members and pursuing ethics, professionalism and capabilities, their satisfaction with the work of professional organisations in Croatia tends to be more negative than positive. This evaluation, however, usually refers to the period before the last elections. This can be seen from the following statements:

	<i>f</i>	
Positive trend	2	<i>It is good that they are active, but they started lately dealing more with representing interest of the people they stand for.</i>
Negative trend	7	<i>Trade unions, during the first part of Croatian state, too much hung to patriotism and passively observed sacking of people from work. The biggest trade union is close with new Government. Also other unions are unprofessional, they are dealing with politics too much, and too little with what is written in their minutes. They are disorganised and unprofessional</i>
Shared opinion	3	<i>They all defend their interests, and it depends on people how they would do it. When it is about reasonable people, things function well and everything can be discussed and agreed upon. They do not have to have necessarily a positive role, they represent interests of their members which can be contrary to common interests. They are still in process of profiling and forming.</i>



## **RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS**

As for religious institutions, participants actually thought of Catholic church, which has a major role in Croatia, and they tended to evaluate it rather negatively. The main reason for this can easily be seen from the following statements:

- *It did not react to mass crimes and fraud. It placed itself in function of daily politics and its short-term interest. Now it holds an arrogantly privileged position (Vatican agreements), so that priests' salaries are paid from taxes the citizens pay regardless of being religious or not.*
- *After the government changed, it is somewhat more critical to negative things in society, but it does not accept public critique. Large part of priests is clearly siding with the HDZ.*
- *It only criticises, and it should more actively participate in solving problems*
- *In principle, it attempts to be a positive social factor, but it should not approach non-religious subjects in a political manner*

But there was also one very positive comment

- *It had extremely positive role in protecting Croatian integrity, Croatian culture, and in creating Croatian state and mobilising Croatian people.*

Participants thought that the Catholic church and other religious institutions should have following role:

- *Authorities of the Church and the state should be clearly separated and defined. The church should not interfere with politics, and it should deal with individual unfortunate cases and social aid.*
- *Church should be clearly divided from civil institutions and it should not deal with everyday political and social issues. It should deal with believers and religious issues*
- *Church should even more contribute to moral and spiritual renewal of Croatian man*
- *Church could contribute to understanding of the other man, to love and tolerance*

## **Evaluation of political literacy of citizens and politicians**

The elite evaluated political literacy of citizens as better than political literacy of politicians!

Politicians do not have rhetorical, technical capabilities, as neither the attitude to comprehensibly represent certain positions, and they are frequently amoral. They are not aware that they could be replaced and do not have responsibility to voters.

Citizens, however, are capable of accepting a row of damaging injustices without objections, they are incapable of articulating well their interests, they lack awareness that something could be done and that they are entitled to actions.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

It can be observed there are two rather distinct groups in evaluation of public services. First group would consist of basic public services such as water, heating, city transportation and electricity which were evaluated rather well. Other group would contain all other public services. It can be noted that the elite evaluates the police rather positively. Another big problem about which they all mostly agree is the army that definitely needs to be transformed.

**Tables 4.** How would you rate the following public services on the scale 1-10?

	N	Mean
Water	13	<b>6.15</b>
Heating	10	<b>5.9</b>
City transport	10	<b>5.7</b>
Electricity	13	<b>5.69</b>
Police	13	<b>5.38</b>
Health system	16	4.93
Communal services	12	4.91
Education system	15	4.46
Army	13	4.38
Social care	15	3.66

### *PRIVATISATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES*

Most participants are rather suspicious of privatisation of public services. Although many of them actually agreed with it, they had some objections: so the criteria of privatisation should be transparent, there should be a public tender, any kind of monopoly should be prevented and the law adjusted. It could be also noted that many participants supported partial privatisation, where the military, police, and water would be completely excluded.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN CROATIA**

In principle, role of international institutions in Croatia is positively evaluated, but there are still different opinions.

*Positive trend* – it helps Croatia adapt to European standards in professional, technical and financial reforms: those are needed and Croatia is unable to do it itself.

*Negative trend* – International institutions pressure Croatia while 'looking after their own interest' and they are not absolutely positive.

- *We talk here about inflexible, bureaucratic and rigid organisations, that frequently do not consider specific characteristics of a certain country.*

### *Shared opinions*

- *We have to define our aims, decide what we want and what we would not accept, since we are now halfway between the planned and market economy, and international institutions do not care about that.*
- *International institutions seem to be better while performing their influence on Croatia than they really are.*

Generally speaking, main strategic objective of Croatia is to become the EU and the NATO member, and it is therefore necessary for Croatia to open up to the international community and its influence.

## **EU**

Positive attitude toward EU is prevailing.

- *The EU has determined development of whole eastern and south-eastern Europe. It plays a positive role in trying to connect different nations, regions, cultures and countries of different levels of economic development. It helps us establish democratic standards, as we do not have democratic tradition. It is our only chance to get out of crisis.*
- *The EU cannot solve our problems for us, it can only help us, but we have to solve them ourselves.*

The positive attitude is somewhat undermined by more sceptic opinions, such as:

- *The EU membership is wishful for political, but not for economic reasons. Croatia is economically not strong enough to join the EU.*
- *Getting near to the EU should be done in a way that it is not of servant nature by imitation and serving the centres of power.*
- *The EU does not always have a clear politics. Regional approach is a huge mistake. If it will be in the EU's interest to aid Croatia in solving problems, it will do it. The problem is that some countries can still not reconcile with the breakdown of Yugoslavia.*

What can the EU do for us?

- *The EU finances development programs. It could help us in liberalisation of trade and with limitless opening of European market for Croatian products. Through investments, it eminently influences economic and political development.*

- *It can teach us standards of democracy, decency, production.*
- *By urging us to fulfil conditions for the EU membership, it stimulates us to do something we could not do ourselves.*

## **NATO**

Attitudes toward the NATO are very diverse, but there are still a few more participants from the elite being supportive of Croatian membership to the NATO.

### *Positive trend*

- *The NATO's role in stabilising South-eastern Europe is significant, and for us its support is useful as well as joining the Partnership for peace*
- *Joining the NATO is positive for us for security reasons but also for diminishing military costs. However, joining the NATO will cost us a lot for purchase of modern weapons and equipment.*
- *When we become a member, our military will be depoliticised, and military force decreased because membership will bring us protection, and also investments will be more easily done*
- *Our goal is full membership in the NATO and that would guarantee security, and also the security and defence costs will be lower.*

### *Negative trend*

- *It protects only the interests of the USA*
- *Their services are not free of charge*
- *Against the NATO, because it is useless, anachronic institution, but with a powerful lobby; however, their actions in Croatia are positive*
- *The NATO is mystifying itself in order to survive. Croatia cannot live up to the NATO's armament standards. Joining it would bring us more problems than solutions. We should co-operate only on diplomatic level.*

Most frequently mentioned conditions to enter NATO were:

- *Co-ordinating with the NATO standards the military organisation, technical conditions, legal background and control over the military*
- *Croatian participation in the NATO's military interventions*

## **UN**

A rather negative attitude prevails on the UN, because it did not seem to be very effective in Croatia, and it is viewed as representing the interests of 'the big'.

## **STABILITY PACT**

Very diverse opinions were expressed in case of the Stability Pact among the elite. Generally speaking, the attitude toward the idea of the Stability Pact is not negative, but disappointment arises while evaluating its effectiveness. Some participants believed it could actually help countries in the Region.

### *Positive trend*

- *That is a well composed model of bringing countries in the region together around projects that matter to them*
- *It can help us getting the means, but we have to be more active*

### *Negative trend:*

- *It cannot result in more significant economic or political effects. It is about fire brigade measures*
- *Until now it was not proven to be an overly useful institution and it let down our expectations. Its goal is actually questionable.*
- *Stability pact was launched as to-be-channel through which the money will come. It seems that the Stability pact is only a matter of marketing.*

### *Shared opinion on the Pact*

- *It is about regional co-operation of limited character, but necessary after the experience of war.*
- *Well conceived project, but insufficient number of concrete actions*
- *The Pact is an evil we have to take, and it enables us to connect to the world*

## **Key of regional security**

Although there were many different opinions on what is the key of security in SEE region, most of the opinions could be observed on two levels;

- *Internal level* – internal problems of all or particular countries that need to be solved by democratic changes - primarily by constitution of legal state and the rule of law.
- *External level* – foreign relations with countries in the Region, especially on political and economic issues, and more individual problems of other countries in the Region.
  - *Solving internal problems of each country and democratisation: establishing state of law, rule of law, establishing civil control over the military and police. By Schengen agreement, the members accepted to solve a part of security issues as a joint problem.*
  - *Cherishing good neighbourhood relations, by political bilateral meetings of all with all, economic co-operation, joint projects.*
  - *Political integration of all countries in the EU, but of each separately, according to its rhythm.*
  - *Paste of democratic changes in FR Yugoslavia and B&H.*
  - *Reason and the end of «war in heads of people ».*
  - *Solving the Kosovo issue.*
  - *Economic development of countries in the region.*
  - *Balance of power.*

One participant gave a more thorough explanation on what he understood as being security in the Region:

- *Security means that all countries in the region would accept to solve mutual confrontation issues by democratic ways, through talks. That will be reached when all these countries will be integrated in the EU and when they realise that openness toward a neighbour and wider international community is a condition for its better living. Basic problem is the international community not understanding that there have been international disputes in this area for centuries, and that they should be solved in a different manner from the way they are solving them now.*

**How will the life of people from South-eastern European region develop in the next several years?**

- *Mutual relations will slowly normalise when all understand that neighbours should not be loved, but that also does not mean that they should make wars. Cultural and Economic co-operation shall intensify, and that will contribute to tolerance and mutual understanding.*
- *Turbulent; despite progress there will be steps backward.*
- *It could be good with significant help from Europe and the USA.*
- *They will struggle with their economic problems and for joining the EU as soon as possible.*

## **INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS AND FEELINGS**

### *COUNTRIES IN THE SEE REGION*

Participants were asked to express their feelings toward different countries in the Region using just a word or short sentence that comes first to mind when particular country is mentioned. The answers were, as in most previous questions, very diverse. It is interesting to note that associations - especially negative - were given mostly from an impartial perspective. It can be assumed that participants with less recent information on the country expressed more personal/ biased judgements. The associations lay the ground for conclusion that the attitude toward ex-Yugoslav countries is clearer than for other countries in the Region, especially Romania and Bulgaria, but also Macedonia. This might be the consequence of rather weak information on those countries in Croatian media.

One of the most frequent associations on most of the countries in the Region is 'the potential market', which allow for a rather pragmatic view of Croatia, but also its wish for progress and development.

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## SLOVENIA

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**Northwest - geographically and in terms of progress / prosperity and  
democracy / we envy them for having gone far forward compared to us and we  
were on the same level +**

**neighbours / trading partners +**

Bay of Piran -

Wonderful and neat country, like a candy box / organised, little cute country +  
small, closed country 0

Ljubljanska banka -

soft fascism -

by their capabilities they are not better than we are -

they have a complex because of Croatia -

they are making money thanks to us -

we cannot co-operate more intensely in politics because they want to depart away  
from countries of ex-Yugoslavia as much as possible -

skiing +

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## BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

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**political and economic partner/ joint interests / future partner/ necessary  
neighbour for good co-operation +**  
**thorn by war / finished with Dayton/ Balkan multiplied -**  
**international community/ experiment of international community / it should stay  
longer under international protection mandate -**

chaos/ total disorder / is not a state -

dear and poor country +

Soft border -

tiger's fur

many problems / will need long time to get back into normal -

it must recognise that Croats are constitutive people -

we paid a lot for interfering with B&H affairs -

one-day guests on Adriatic coast -

somewhat sentimental for Sarajevo +

ćevapi (kebab) +

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## SERBIA

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**black hole / apocalypse / destabilising factor / huge question mark / tough future -**  
**still existing frustrations, but economic interest will prevail, hence normalised relations are to be expected / potential partner if they get rid of Milosevic's politics an its protagonists / prospectively long-term co-operation +**  
aggression / they must excuse themselves for what they have done -  
Milošević -  
still a huge problem -  
only started transition which will last long -  
if they remain quiet it will be okay +  
problem until yesterday only 0  
emphasis on rural aspect -  
it depends on us if it becomes favourable Croatian market +  
they are not our enemies +  
they regressed last ten years -  
Koštunica is transitional solution 0  
frequent guests in future +

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## KOSOVO

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**permanent problem/ solution not in view -**  
**barrel full of gun powder / total disorder / cancer of Europe for the next 50 years**  
-  
**potential problem/ main Serbian problem -**  
tensions and dissatisfaction / hatred will not easily disappear as it is inherited by generations -  
problem of human rights -  
south of Serbia -  
Albanian Gandhi position is still supported +  
Croatia should not have special relations with Kosovo -  
insufficiently defined -  
Strike of coal-miners in 1989

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## VOJVODINA

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**well being / prosperity/ more developed and civilised part of FRY +**  
**crossroads of different cultures / intercultural and correct decent atmosphere /**  
**only multinational unit that survived on the territory of ex Yugoslavia +**  
**autonomy +**  
different circumstances than in Kosovo/ significant test for judging Yugoslav democratisation 0  
internal affair of fry/ part of Serbia -  
Co-operating neighbour / positive attitude +  
problem/ next bomb to explode -  
Čanak  
nothing special will happen 0  
Balašević +

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## MONTENEGRO

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**independent / prosperous / huge potentials +**  
**Divided by issue of independence / two confronted options / discouraged but**  
**still tendency toward independence 0**

most dynamic part of fry/ independent within fry +  
disagreement between wishes and possibilities / they have no influence and need  
international allies -  
regional question mark -  
Third bomb in Serbia -  
they excused themselves to us and became awoken +  
potential tourist partner +  
have this crazy idea to be Monte Carlo on the Adriatic 0  
the cleanest water I ever drank +  
independent / prosperous / great potentials +

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## MACEDONIA

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**galloping national problems due to growth of Albanian population / unsolvable**  
**and permanent problems between Albanians and Macedonians -**

**politically unsolved problem/ worse problem than B&H/ numerous problems -**  
the only post Yugoslav republic that reached its independence without a bloodshed /  
potentially it was the most unstable, but it succeeded in avoiding all dangers +  
more a problem for Greece and Serbia / litmus paper because of interest of Serbia  
and Greece -  
economic problems/ it has half as many inhabitants, and the same number of  
unemployed people as Croatia -  
nice and patient people / friends / small, nice and friendly country +  
small chance for deteriorating situation 0  
numerous problems, but promising future 0  
hard situation to survive -  
we have no political problems +  
possible Croatian partner/ economic partner +  
not too interesting as tourists 0

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## ROMANIA

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**does not have a clear political element / functions without state identity -**  
**poor / bad economy / undeveloped/ poor country with little to offer -**  
perspective/ promising, but too slow +  
we have no special relations and co-operation / we have no traditional connections 0  
possibly a partner more likely than Bulgaria +  
trade partner +  
huge problems -  
it is too far away 0

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## BULGARIA

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**perspective/ promising, but too slow / it is expected to progress more fast than Romania +**  
**unclear relations with neighbours / Macedonia -**  
poor / bad economy -  
political confrontations / problems -  
clear idea about identity / clear concept on own geopolitical role in Europe +  
far away / we are not too connected /we don't have traditional connections 0  
interesting development 0  
Balkan associations -  
possible partner, but without significance 0  
trade partner +

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## ALBANIA

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**undeveloped / sorrow / total chaos / breakdown of society / economic chaos / poor -**  
**confrontations / tribal clashes / anarchy -**  
weight of Kosovo and poverty is pulling them down -  
long period for normalisation is needed -  
possible partner/ space for Croatian economy / interesting for tourism out of curiosity / partner in further future +  
unused market / economically small -  
long-term problems/ complex -  
positive attitude +  
perhaps has a chance for development for being a one-nation state +  
for us it is politically insignificant 0  
dealing more with others than with themselves -

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## GREECE

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**the clearest national politics on the Balkans / potential source of insecurity because of relations with its neighbours / seems more like its Balkan neighbours than the EU/ together with Europe, but uncivilised arguments with neighbours / Turkey/ Macedonia/Cyprus -**  
**important for its EU membership / important in Balkan region / member of NATO +**  
economically well-being +  
nice country +  
it is useful to co-operate with them +  
possibly slowing down Croatian joining of the EU -  
hoping that Adriatic -Ionic road will put us together +  
in terms of tourism Greece is our competition -

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### *ETHNIC MINORITIES IN CROATIA*

Instead of an explanation here is an answer of one of the participants who gives a rather clear and objective view on the relation between Croats and other ethnic groups in Croatia.

Thereafter follow lists of answers on relations with particular ethnic minorities.

*It all depends on the kind of Croats we are dealing with, «big ones» or «small ones». For «big» Croats, you are either a Croat or an enemy. They were produced by ideology that ruled past ten years. However, xenophobia, intolerance, aggressive attitude toward other national minorities is significantly lesser than earlier. Whole climate changed so that you can - on political level and from the largest part of the media - hear mainly civil rhetoric which does not differentiate people based on nationality, as it was during the past ten years. Although, in smaller settlements where war left its traces, where many people were killed or are still sought after, there are still quiet huge tensions between nationalities, but I think the time will cure that slowly.*

Serbs	<p>We still have collective attitude that they are the ones to blame for the war, there is no awareness that Croatia failed with a part of its citizens of Serb nationality, and that is a source of possible problems.</p> <p>Mistrust and a dose of alertness, problem could be solved in approximately ten years.</p> <p>Some Serbs are completely integrated and feel like Croatian citizens, and others not, while others see the Serbs still as actually members of another entity.</p> <p>The wounds of war have not healed, but the situation is becoming normal, there are no tensions.</p> <p>Many problems, I hope for less emotions.</p> <p>No relations at all, dissatisfactory. ff</p> <p>There are problems in some settlements.</p>
Moslems	<p>They have been through three stages: real Croatian brethren, Turks or <i>balia</i> (or enemies), and current stage is an attempt to neglect them. FFF</p> <p>There are problems in some settlements with many refugees from B&amp;H.</p> <p>Progress and less mistrust, good relations. fff</p> <p>Relations between Croats and Muslims are important in B&amp;H, they bear more responsibility.</p> <p>That issue will be solved relatively quickly. A constructive element in Croatia.</p> <p>Many prejudices toward them.</p>
Italians	<p>They are something that Croatia does not comprehend to be its indirect connection with the EU, they were an obsession of HDZ, underwent a lot of pressure.</p> <p>No problems, the problem is more of media nature.</p> <p>No tensions, no.</p> <p>No problems, good relations. Ff</p> <p>Very significant partner, Istrian minority is a bridge of co-operations, I think that historical burden should be lifted.</p>
Roma	<p>They are not acknowledge as an ethnic group, they are associated with dirt, ignorance, stupidity and larceny, racist perception is most clearly shown in this case, catastrophic relations. Fff</p> <p>There is a guilt of the state, because their people are outsiders to legal system, 90% do not have a permanent address, their children mainly do not go to school, they lack minimum social and other rights envisaged by the Constitution. However, they are to be blamed because they do not function as community and do not express their interests to the Government.</p> <p>Croatia will have to start treating the Roma as minority in real sense of that word, but they will also have to transform their own social position. Ff</p> <p>It will be hard to adjust them to a cultural level, but there will be no problem.</p> <p>They are lost in space.</p>
Hungarians	<p>They had positive image, it is forgotten nowadays that Croatian nationalism evolved exactly from confrontation with the Hungarians</p> <p>No problem. f fFff</p> <p>Maybe the best relations.</p>
Jews	<p>Twofold attitude, there is metaphysical anti-Semitism in Croatia, but also appearing is the negative perception of flattery to the Jews, there is very few of them but they do have their parliamentary representative. People would be happy if they could hate Jews equally publicly as the Serbs.ff</p> <p>They were not treated correctly until recently, now some moves have partially satisfied them for it.</p> <p>Swift progress.</p> <p>Good relations. Integral and constructive part of society.</p> <p>Small group, but sensitive relations, relations of Croatian cultural institutions with Jewish community should be developed, and the Jews should get integrated into Croatian society.</p> <p>They are dealing with history too much, but relations are generally very good.</p>

***Do you feel that you belong to your national community?***

Feelings of belonging to the national community are quite important to people from the Croatian elite. However, although a majority of them feel they belong to their national community, those feelings are mostly related to the culture of our society, history, people living here and the place where they grew up and do not seem to be radical or nationalistic in their nature.

On the other hand, some participants hardly have any feelings of national belonging.

The following answers could illustrate those feelings and quantitative relation between the two groups.

YES: 7

- *I'm a Croat, but not a nationalist. Those who do not want good for their people don't want good for others. We fulfil our needs before all within our nation, which does not mean that we should be close to others. Using differences, we can co-operate well and live in our joint home*
- *I like it in Croatia, I feel good here.*
- *I feel I belong here because of culture and history.*

NO: 4

- *If I feel I belong here, in my hometown. I have more things together with urban guys from Belgrade or Ljubljana, who grew up listening to same type of music or reading same books, than with some Croats.*
- *My parents didn't teach me that. I am of civil orientation.*
- *I cannot say that I feel some national belonging. I don't think that is relevant for my political awareness.*

***Have you ever thought of moving from this region?***

YES: 5

- *Because of nationalism and economic problems.*

NO: 7

- *Just for a short while, but not for good.*
- *I was offered to work abroad, but I reviewed the offer and decided to live in Croatia. Here are my roots and friends. I am not that much tied to Croatia that I could not leave.*
- *two respondents would never move out, they think it would benefit their children if they moved out of region*

## HOPES AND FEARS

### Hopes

- *That we will economically progress and recover faster than until now and that we will become a developed country where it is nice to live 6*
- *That the citizens will become more constructive and active in building their future 1*
- *That democratic potentials have already been created to, hopefully, create one democratic civil society*
- *That we shall culturally and mentally become part of Europe*

### Fears

- *Retrograde processes (collective paranoia, chaos, witch hunt) which could happen due to economic problems and dissatisfaction of majority of citizens. We are progressing much slower than we could, because of insufficiently courageous and fast moves. 3*
- *No national energy and awareness of what should be done. Private interest and conflicts are ruling, and those conflicts could deteriorate because it seems like that would be in somebody's interest. 2*
- *From Croats choosing the worst parts of their history and turning them into a vision for the future (NDH, ustashe)*
- *That my generation will be remembered by failure, because there will be no changes for the better and that I will be sad because all my children did not move abroad.*
- *That young educated people will continue to emigrate.*
- *That we will remain the Balkanians*