



Press Release

NEW REGIONAL OPINION SURVEY SHOWS THE PUBLIC IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE CARE MORE ABOUT DOMESTIC THAN INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

The public in South East Europe is more concerned about domestic problems such as unemployment, corruption and crime than the ethnic, historical and international issues that continue to preoccupy some of the region's political leaders, according to the *South East Europe (SEE) Public Agenda Survey*, a new opinion survey released by **South East Europe Democracy Support (SEEDS)**, a network of regional survey organizations and think tanks supported by the **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)**. But despite pervasive mistrust and the widely-held belief that many key decisions are made outside their own country, the majority of the public in South East Europe are none the less optimistic about their own – and their country's – future economic prospects.

The survey poll – the first ever professional measurement of public opinion undertaken simultaneously throughout South East Europe – involved a total of 10,000 face-to-face interviews conducted during January and February 2002 in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (with two separate surveys, one for the Federation and one for Republica Srpska), Croatia, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania.

Key areas covered in all 9 countries and territories surveyed in the poll include:

- **Attitudes towards economic, social and political issues**
- **Trust in public figures and domestic institutions**
- **Trust in international institutions**

Reacting to the release of the *SEE Public Agenda Survey* **Martti Ahtisaari**, former President of Finland, European Union Balkans envoy and a member of the Board of International IDEA, commented: “The report contains very useful material for local authorities throughout the region as well as for the international community to help design their policies and actions in the Balkan countries. I see this survey as a tool to promote democratic governance by making the opinions of citizens heard on the key questions confronting their societies.”

“I am particularly delighted that International IDEA has used the expertise of think tanks and research institutes from the region in conducting the survey,” continues Ahtisaari, “as I believe that international organizations should utilize local expertise far more widely in their activities in the Balkans.”

MEDIA BACKGROUND:

OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEY FINDINGS

Serbia

The economy and future prospects. When asked, “What do you fear most in the present?” the public in Serbia put **unemployment** first (19%) followed by **economic problems/living standard deterioration** (15%) and **poverty** (12%). And while 52% pronounce themselves somewhat or very dissatisfied with their present economic situation, a narrow majority (50%) state that they expect to see an improvement in their living standards during the next year. On a further positive note, too, almost half of the Serbian population (50%) express the belief that the country is broadly speaking heading in the right direction, making them the second most optimistic in the region after Kosovo on this topic.

Domestic institutions. On national institutions the survey finds that the public in Serbia has the greatest trust in the **Church**, which scores a 64% moderate to high trust rating, followed by the **Army** with 55%. **The least trusted** institutions are the **Local Authorities** with an 19% rating, the **Trade Unions** (20%) and **Courts** (22%).

Public figures. According to the survey the **most trusted public figures** in Serbia today are Vojislav Kostunica – with 47% of respondents indicating fair to high levels of trust in the Yugoslav President – and narrowly ahead of him Deputy Federal Prime Minister Miroljub Labus, who scores a trust rating of 47% followed by Finance Minister Bozidar Djelic (41%). At the bottom end of the scale the survey records a trust rating of 12% for President of the Vojvodina League of Social Democrats Nenad Canac, 14% for Serbian Radical Party (SRS) leader Vojislav Seselj and 14% for Slobodan Milosevic - though 17% indicated that they did not even wish to answer such questions about their former leader.

International institutions. Only 8% express even moderate levels of trust in the **Hague Tribunal (ICTY)**, where former President Slobodan Milosevic is currently on trial for alleged war crimes. Among other international institutions covered in the survey the **European Union (EU)** scores highest trust ratings in **Serbia** (31%), with **NATO** ranked the lowest (6%). In addition, a large majority (78%) express partial or full agreement with the statement ‘many things in my country are decided from the outside’.

Commenting on the Serbia survey findings **Srdjan Bogosavljevic**, Executive Director of the Belgrade-based public opinion research institute SMRI, who conducted the poll, notes: “The most important thing about this poll is that it confirms a major change in Serbian public opinion over the last year. Today people want to talk about real, day to day problems – poverty, crime, corruption – where previously they focused on big political issues – Kosovo, relations with Montenegro and so on.”

“Concerning trust in Milosevic”, Bogosavljevic continues, “it is notable that many people simply didn’t want to answer questions about him. For years ordinary people were taught that Milosevic was the greatest, and now they are told that they are supposed to be against him. Many of them simply can’t do this, so their response is simply to say ‘I don’t know’ or refuse to answer.”

Montenegro

The economy and future prospects. Asked about their main current fears the Montenegrin public rank **corruption** first, identified by just under half (47%) as one of the three most important issues facing the country, followed by **unemployment** (44%) and **poverty** (40%). In addition, in the light of recent political developments in Montenegro it is notable that in January 2002 the **stability of the state** was identified as one of their three most important issues by 21% of the population. Compared to a year ago only 16% think that their personal economic situation has improved, with over half (56%) asserting that it has deteriorated. While a majority (53%) report themselves somewhat or very dissatisfied with their present economic circumstances, 36% expect to see an improvement in their personal economic situation in the coming 12 months.

Domestic institutions. Nationally the **most trusted** institutions are the **Universities** with a 54% rating, followed by the **Church** with 44% and the **Presidency** with 41%. **Least trusted** are the **Mass Media** with 22%, followed by the **Trade Unions** (26%) and **Police** (27%). The **Government** scores a middling trust rating of 33%.

Public figures. President Milo Djukanovic emerges from the survey as the public figure with the **highest current trust rating** (39%) in Montenegro, followed by Prime Minister Filip Vujanovic with 35% and Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro Amfilohije Radovic (33%). These findings can be contrasted with the **trust rankings for international figures** such as Romano Prodi, head of the European Commission, who is found to be trusted by 19% of the Montenegrin public, or Vladimir Putin with 29% – the highest trust rating for an international political figure in Montenegro. General Secretary of NATO George Robertson emerges as the least appreciated international leader in the country, ranked trustworthy by only 16% of interviewees. Domestically, Montenegro's **least trusted public figures** at the present are Montenegrin Orthodox Metropolitan Miras Dedeic with a 8% rating, Prime Minister Dragisa Pesic (16%) and leading Montenegrin economist Veselin Vukotic (18%).

International institutions. In Montenegro the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** scores the highest moderate to high trust ratings among international institutions covered by the survey (41%). Next equal come the **European Union** and the **World Bank** with a 39% rating. The survey finds that the **least trusted** international organization in Montenegro is **NATO**, with a moderate to high trust rating of 21%, followed by the **ICTY** (24%) and **Stability Pact** with 26%.

Kosovo

The economy and future prospects. Just under half the public in Kosovo (44%) view their economic situation as having improved either moderately or significantly over the past 12 months, with a slightly higher figure (47%) declaring themselves to be either somewhat or very satisfied with their present economic circumstances. According to the survey the most important problem facing ordinary people in Kosovo today is **unemployment**, highlighted as a key issue by 77%. Next comes **poverty**, noted by 39% of the public as a key concern, **corruption** (33%) and **crime** (28%). Despite these concerns, however, the Kosovo public are most upbeat in the region when asked for their assessment of the course of current developments, with almost two thirds (64%) supporting the statement that 'generally speaking, things in our country are going in the right direction'.

Domestic institutions. According to the survey the most trusted institutions in Kosovo are **Universities** (84%) followed by the **Army** (83%) and the **Police** (76%). Least trusted are the **Mass Media** (35%), **business and private enterprise**, with a 37% moderate to high trust rating, and **NGOs** with (40%) – none the less all still high trust figures on a regional comparison.

Public figures. The survey finds that the **most trusted public figure** in Kosovo today is President Ibrahim Rugova with a 54% rating. Rugova is followed by Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) leader Ramush Haradinaj (50%), journalist and *Koha Ditore* publisher Veton Surroi and Christian Democratic Party of Kosovo (PShDK) leader Mark Krasniqi, both with 47%. **Least trusted** public figures are Social Democratic Party of Kosovo (PSDK) deputy leader Iljaz Kurteshi and PSDK Chairwoman Kaqusha Jashari, both with 21%, and Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) leader and Minister of Public Services Jakup Krasniqi (25%).

International institutions. Somewhat lower down the scale from Serbia, two-thirds (67%) of Kosovars agree with the statement that 'many key decisions about the country are made outside it'. In stark contrast to their northern neighbours, however, the population of Kosovo displays the highest levels of trust in international institutions found throughout the survey. Unsurprisingly perhaps, **NATO** emerges as the most **trusted international institution**, with a massive 91% reporting fair to high degrees of trust in the Western military alliance. Next most trusted is the **United Nations** (77%), closely followed by the **European Union** (72%) and the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**, with a 70% moderate to high trust rating. According to the survey, the **least trusted** and – significantly – least known among the international institutions in Kosovo are the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** (48%), **Stability Pact** (50%) and **IMF** (57%).

Inter-ethnic relations. While only 6% agree with the statement that ‘our people is endangered by a civil war’, marginally over a third (34%) fully agree with the proposition that ‘ethnic minorities have too high demands in their struggle for their rights’. At the same time, only 6% rank ethnic conflicts among the three most important issues confronting Kosovo today.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The economy and future prospects. The survey finds the public in the **Bosnian Federation** very pessimistic concerning the country’s general direction. A little under half (43%) think the Federation is moving in the wrong direction, with only 22% taking the opposite view. The mood in **Republika Srpska (RS)** is similarly gloomy, if somewhat less polarized, with 34% believing that things are moving in the right direction, and 24% that RS is on the wrong path. Asked to state their main personal concerns the public in the **Federation** rank **poverty** first (27%), followed by **unemployment** (25%). By contrast the **unstable political situation** comes out as biggest current concern in **RS** (30%), followed by **poverty** (23%).

Domestic institutions In the Federation the **Army** is the most trusted domestic institution (50%), followed by the **Church** (48%) and the **Police** (44%). Least trusted are the **Parliament** and **Local Authorities** (18%) and the **Government** (20%) – after Macedonia the lowest trust rating in this category on a comparative regional basis. With a moderate to high trust rating of 76% the **Church** emerges as by far the **most trusted** domestic institution in **RS**, followed by the **Army** (54%) and **Universities** (50%). The **Government** scores a trust rating of 32%, while the **least trusted** institutions are **Local Authorities** (21%), followed by **business and private enterprises** and **NGOs** (22%).

Public figures. In the **Federation** the **most trusted** public figures are Minister of Foreign Affairs and Social Democratic Party (SDP) leader Zlatko Lagumdžija, with a moderate to high rating of 39%, followed by Party for Democratic Action (SDA) leader Alija Behmen (28%) and Federation Presidency member Beriz Belkic (27%). The Federation’s **least trusted** public figures are found to be Presidency member Zivko Radisic with a 6% rating, former President of the Federation Parliament Enver Kreso with 10% and Chairman of the Party for Democratic Action (SDA) Sulejman Tihic with an 12% trust rating.

Significantly, in **RS** the most trusted public figures are Hague Tribunal indictees Ratko Mladic, with a moderate to high trust ranking of 53%, and Radovan Karadzic with 47%. Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic ranks only third for trust, with a rating of 38%. According to the survey, **RS’s least trusted public figures** are Constitutional Court President Snjezana Savic (17%), Presidency member Zivko Radisic (18%) and former Prime Minister Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNDS) leader Milorad Dodik (20%).

International institutions. Trust in the international organizations covered by the survey is markedly higher in the Bosnian Federation than RS. For the **Federation** the most trusted **international institution** is the **Hague Tribunal (ICTY)**, with a moderate to high trust rating of 51%, followed by the **World Bank**, with 43%. The **World Bank** also emerges as the most trusted international organization in **RS**, though its moderate to high trust rating of 18% is still significantly lower than in all of the other territories covered by the survey. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the **Hague Tribunal** is ranked as trusted by only 4% in RS.

Croatia

The economy and future prospects. When asked, “what do you fear most in the present?” the Croatian public rank **unemployment** first (29%), followed by **poverty and a low standard of living** (24%). Overall, Croatians are fairly gloomy about the current economic situation, with 33% positive about their current position, and 44% negative. A narrow majority (50%) think that there will be no major change in their standard of living in the next 12 months. However, there is more optimism in the long run, with 55% asserting the belief that things will get better in the next 5 years.

Domestic institutions. According to the survey the **most trusted** institutions in Croatia are the **Church** with a 60% moderate to high trust rating, **business and private enterprises** (55%) and the **Army** (43%). By

contrast the three **least trusted** are **Mass Media** with a 25% rating, the **Local Authorities** (22%) and the **Courts** (17%).

Public figures. The survey finds that Croatia's three **most trusted** public figures are currently President Stipe Mesic with a 41% moderate to high trust rating, Prime Minister Ivica Racan (36%) and President of the Parliament Zlatko Tomcic (32%). The two **least trusted** personalities are Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) leader Ivo Sanader, with a 45% 'no trust' rating, and Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLS) President Drazen Budisa, with a 41% rating in the same category.

International institutions. Viewed regionally, trust in international institutions in Croatia is around average. Institutions with the **highest trust ratings** are the **EU** (39%), **UN** (38%) and **NATO** (32%). **Least trusted** are the **Stability Pact** and **OSCE**, with a joint 16% rating and the **ICTY** (21%).

Macedonia

The economy and future prospects. Asked to identify the three most important problems facing the country today the Macedonian public rank **unemployment** first (70%), followed by **poverty** (41%) and **corruption** (40%). In addition, 59% pronounce themselves to be somewhat or very dissatisfied with their present economic situation – the third highest figure for the region after Bulgaria and Romania. On a somewhat more optimistic note, 29% state that they expect to see an improvement in their living standards during the next year. Asked to look at things from a long term (5 year) perspective, just over half (52%) express the belief that their own economic situation will improve during that time. At the same time 57% view the country as going in the wrong direction – regionally the highest figure in this category. Significantly, too, 48% of Macedonians identify the **threat of war** as their **strongest current fear** – by far the highest figure regionally.

Domestic institutions. Nationally, the **most trusted** institutions in Macedonia are the **Army** (55%), followed by **Universities** (40%) and the **Police** (39%). The survey finds the **least trusted** institutions are the **Government** (12%) and **Parliament** (13%) – the lowest regional ratings for both institutions recorded in the survey. **Business and private enterprise** scores a trust rating of 29%, a middle-order ranking by regional standards.

Public figures. Macedonia **most trusted public figure** today is Minister of Finance Nikola Gruevski 24%, followed by Minister of the Interior Ljube Boskovski (23%) and Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) party leader Branko Crvenkovski (21%). The survey finds the **least trusted public figures** to be Public Prosecutor Stavre Dzikov with a 9% rating, Speaker of Parliament and Liberal Party (LP) leader Stojan Andov (10%) and Prime Minister Ljubco Georgievski (13%).

International institutions and personalities. Among international institutions covered in the survey the **European Union** emerges as the **most trusted** in Macedonia, with a 35% moderate to high trust rating, followed by the **UN** (34%) and **World Bank** (32%). **Least trusted** are the **Stability Pact** and **Hague Tribunal**, both with a 22% rating. Among international figures Vladimir Putin is the most trusted, with a 35% moderate to high trust rating – jointly with Bulgaria the highest regional trust rating for the Russian President. Putin is followed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (26%), and US President George Bush (25%).

Bulgaria

The economy and future prospects. The survey indicates high levels of popular dissatisfaction with the current state of the economy in Bulgaria. 81% of Bulgarians state that they are somewhat or very dissatisfied with their present personal economic situation – the highest figure for the region – with only 7% indicating a moderate to high level of satisfaction with their current standard of living. Asked to identify their three biggest personal concerns **unemployment** scores the highest among the Bulgarian public, with a 72% rating, followed by **poverty** (66%) and **crime** (33%). In addition, the pace of transition to a market economy is too slow according to 63% of Bulgarians. Adding to the gloom, only 12% expect to see their own economic

situation improve in the next 12 months: even viewed from a 5 year perspective, the number of those expecting to see an improvement in their situation only rises to 26%.

Domestic institutions. The **Mass Media** emerges as the **most trusted national institution** in Bulgaria, with a moderate to high trust rating of 57% – the second highest figure for the media in the region. Next most trusted are the **Presidency** and **Army**, both of which score a trust rating of 53%. **Least trusted** institutions are **NGOs** and **Trade Unions** (9%) and the **Courts** (12%). In addition, the **Government** is trusted by 31%, the **Parliament** by 19%.

Public figures. Despite the evidence of deep public dissatisfaction with the country's current course Prime Minister Simeon Sacs Coburg Gotta emerges as Bulgaria's **most trusted political personality**, with a fair to high trust rating of 54%. Next most trusted is TV talk show presenter Slavi Trifonov with a 50% rating, followed by former President Petar Stoyanov with 46%. **Least trusted** public figures are former Deputy Prime Minister Evgenii Bakardjiev (4%), opposition Democratic Forces Union (SDS) party leader Ekatarina Mihailova (10%) and former Prime Minister and SDS leader Ivan Kostov (11%).

International institutions. The **EU** emerges from the survey as Bulgaria's **most trusted international organization** (52%), followed by the **UN** (38%) and **NATO** (37%). The **Stability Pact** is only known to 17% of the Bulgarian public, and among those that are aware of its existence, only 17% say they trust it. Bulgaria's three **least trusted** international organizations are the **WTO** with a 13% rating, the **Stability Pact** (17%) and the **OSCE** (20%). When asked which countries it would be good for Bulgaria to co-operate more closely with, Russia and Greece come out joint top (89%), followed by Turkey (85%) and the USA (85%).

Romania

The economy and future prospects. Asked to identify the three most critical problems facing the country Romanians rank **corruption** first (64%), closely followed by **poverty** (61%) and **unemployment** (39%). And while 64% pronounce themselves to be somewhat or very dissatisfied with their present economic situation, only 27% state that expect to see an improvement in their living standards during the next year. Additionally, asked to look at things from a long-term (5-year) perspective, less than a half (37%) express the belief that their own economic situation will improve moderately or significantly. On a more encouraging note, however, 34% of the Romanian public express their agreement with the view that the country is headed in the right general direction.

Domestic institutions. The **Church** emerges as by far the most trusted domestic institution in Romania, with a moderate to high trust rating of 91%, followed by the **Army** (79%) and **Mass Media** (69%) – the highest media trust figure for the whole region. In addition the **Police** scores 46% – regionally their second highest trust rating after Kosovo. The survey further reveals that Romania's **least trusted institutions** are **NGOs** (24%) and the **Parliament** (32%). The **current government** receives a 44% trust rating, a fairly high figure on a regional comparison.

Public figures. According to the survey currently the most **trusted public figure** in Romania is Prime Minister Adrian Nastase, who gets a moderate to high trust rating of 61%. Nastase is followed by Democratic Party (PD) leader Traian Basescu with 56%, Foreign Affairs Minister Mircea Geoana (50%) and narrowly behind him President Ion Iliescu (49%). The **least trusted** personalities are Bucharest independent municipal councillor George Padure with a trust rating of 5%, National Liberal Party (PNL) leader Valeriu Stoica and Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR) leader Marko Bela, both with a 12% rating.

International organizations. The survey finds the three **most trusted international institutions** in Romania to be the **EU**, with a 59% moderate to high trust rating, followed by **NATO** (58%) and the **UN** (49%). **Least trusted** international institutions among the Romanian public, according to the survey, are the **WTO** with a 19% rating, the **Stability Pact** (26%) and the **IMF** (32%).

Regional Trends

Significant regional trends to emerge from the *SEE Public Agenda Survey* include:

- **Issues of public concern.** Across the region the three issues most consistently identified by the survey as causes of public concern are **unemployment, corruption** and **crime**, with **unemployment** ranked number one issue of concern in seven of the nine countries and territories covered. The exceptions are Romania and Montenegro, where **corruption** is identified as the highest-ranking issue of public concern. **Unemployment** registers the highest levels of public concern in Bosnian Federation (79%), closely followed by Kosovo, Croatia, Bulgaria and Macedonia, with on or above 70% placing joblessness in the top category of concern in all of these territories.
- **The economy and future prospects.** Regionally speaking inhabitants of Kosovo are the most optimistic about the future: 64% give a positive rating to the direction the country is heading, 43% pronounce themselves satisfied with their present economic situation and 54% think it will improve over the coming 12 months. At the other end of the scale the survey finds Bulgarians to be the most pessimistic on the same counts, with 45% reporting agreement with the statement ‘the country is going in no direction’, 82% dissatisfied with their present economic situation, and 32% supporting the view that things will be even worse one year on from now.
- **Trust in national institutions.** Among the institutions covered in the survey trust in **Mass Media** ranks highest in Romania, with 69% reporting fair or high levels of trust, followed by Bulgaria with a corresponding rating of 57%: at the other end of the scale Mass Media gets its lowest rating in Montenegro (22%). The **Police** score their highest trust ratings in Kosovo (75%), the lowest in Serbia (24%), while with the **Army** trust is again highest in Kosovo (83%), closely followed by Romania (79%), and lowest in Montenegro (31%) and Croatia (41%). For the **current government** Kosovo (58%) is again followed by Romania (44%) at the top of the regional trust rankings, with Serbian and Macedonian interviewees giving the political authorities their lowest regional ratings – 29% and 12% respectively. For **business and private enterprise** Montenegro shows the highest trust ranking (54%), followed by Croatia (51%), and Bulgaria the lowest (30%).
- **Trust in international institutions.** For the international institutions covered in the survey trust in **NATO** is highest in Kosovo (91%) and Romania (58%), lowest in Republika Srpska (RS) (5%) and Serbia (6%). For the **European Union** highest levels of trust are again found in Kosovo (72%) and Romania (59%), and the lowest in RS (17%). For the **Stability Pact** a similar pattern is evident, with trust ratings for the Pact highest in Kosovo (50%), Montenegro (26%) and Romania (26%), lowest in Serbia (13%) and RS (8%). For The **Hague Tribunal (ICTY)**, according to the survey trust ratings are highest in Kosovo (83%) and the Bosnian Federation (51%), lowest in Serbia (8%) and RS (4%).

Commenting on the overall findings of the regional survey **Alin Teodorescu** notes: “The main findings show that public opinion in those nine countries and territories is in very varying stages of development. At one end is Kosovo, and to some extent Romania, where there is a high appreciation of international organizations coupled with high levels of optimism about the future. At the other end of the scale are Bulgaria, Macedonia and Montenegro, where we see evidence of widespread disappointment over the current course of developments, low optimism concerning the future, low appreciation of international organizations and even low self-esteem.”

“With the notable exception of Kosovo, the survey also reveals a critical lack of trust in official institutions of all kinds across the region as a whole,” continues Teodorescu. “And this in itself is an important obstacle to development, as lack of trust means a lack of respect for rules and laws.”

“What we can see across the region, moreover, is that public opinion is dominated by day to day concerns such as poverty, inflation and corruption that have little connection with what at least a section of the ruling elite in the region considers important. Simply put, the ethnic, historical or anti-globalizing agenda of these elites is not supported by the people of the region.”

“The research we are presenting,” concludes Teodorescu, “is a good basis for policy making because it shows the kind of policies for which there is genuine public support – policies designed to reduce unemployment and inflation, social policies to combat poverty and marginalization. And if governments in the region want to achieve greater public support in their own countries then they need to focus on policies dealing with the public’s primary concerns.”

Commenting on the survey’s findings on levels of optimism around the SEE region **Dr. Deyan Kiuranov** of the Sofia based think-tank the Centre for Liberal Strategies, who is heading the regional team of analysts involved in the SEEDS survey, notes: “Looking at the data on comparative levels of optimism and pessimism, it is tempting to conclude that people in South East Europe do not tie their attitudes to their own performance. For example, economically Bulgaria has been performing reasonably well recently, while Kosovo has not. At the same time, Kosovars are twelve times more optimistic than Bulgarians. The probable reason is that in South East Europe political issues serve at best as a drug. Kosovars are still high on their own particular political trip. Bulgarians, however, are experiencing the results of abstinence, combined with a difficult everyday life.”

About the International IDEA/SEEDS survey initiative

The regional survey poll involved a total of over 10,000 in-home face-to-face interviews, conducted in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (with a special survey for Republika Srpska), Croatia, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania. Issues covered include:

- Attitudes to democracy, political participation, minority rights and mass media
- Attitudes regarding the present state of economy and the transition to market oriented policies
- Trust in national and international public personalities
- Trust in national institutions including the Police, Army, Church and Parliament
- Trust in international institutions including the European Union, NATO, World Bank and United Nations
- Attitudes to regional and international co-operation, including the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe

Describing the objectives of the regional survey initiative **Tanja Petovar**, a former Yugoslav human rights lawyer and project co-ordinator of the SEEDS network, comments: “In co-operation with local think tanks and research institutes, we want to identify and promote a public agenda that can influence the political agenda and its priorities, and to enrich debates on further democratic reform in the Balkans with solid information about the aspirations and concerns of the public.”

The full text of the *SEE Public Agenda Survey* report produced by the SEEDS network with the support of International IDEA is available at:

www.idea.int

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- Information on the official launch of the *SEE Public Agenda Survey* is available from the Belgrade Media Centre. Contact: Gordana Budjinski, tel. +381 11 3343 225, email: budjinski@mediacenter.org.yu. Website: www.mediacenter.org.yu

The **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance** (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization headquartered in Sweden with 20 member states and 4 international NGO associate members, that exists to sustain and promote democracy around the world. Global in membership and scope, independent of specific national interests, and quick in its response, International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization with a unique mandate – to support the growth of genuine, sustainable democracy.

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