

## CONFLICT SOCIETIES AND THE BASIC ISSUES OF EUROPEAN FUTURE

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### *Abstract*

Future issues - human rights and freedom, democracy as a fundamental principle of life, higher living standards, greater level of security - these are basic questions to which is directed collective energy of European societies. The fulfillment of these conditions is placed as a task in all transitional societies which want to join the EU. The issue of post-conflict societies, however, is a challenge to the theoretical and the pragmatic level, especially if the sources of conflict are in areas such as ethnic or confessional. For some of these societies, it is difficult to be classified into a group of post-conflict societies because a social conflict in them, which they still have, has the intensity that puts them in conflict societies. The case of BiH society is, by its manifestations, a characteristic example of just such a society. And it is, and also some of the issues related to European values in conflict societies, in the center of analysis in this paper. And what is most important, all these issues are connected to a system of public communication.

### **1. Introduction**

Connecting to European system of values is ambition of major part of European transitional societies. It is true, and that will show every serious analysis, that there are significant differences in level of manifestation of presented ambition, especially in correlation with commitment of renunciation of values, or at least one among them, which are in those societies immanent for decades or even longer. If we deeply analyze theoretical analyses of post conflict societies, shown differences are more obvious. Countries, for example, emerged from the disintegration of the SFRY can serve as one of examples. One of them, Slovenia, had become member of EU in May 2004. In July 2013. Croatia will also gain same status as Slovenia. But significant delay, in comparison with them, it can be seen by Serbia and Montenegro. But, development process as trend in near future also in not disputable. Condition in other countries, which are formed after disintegration of former mutual country, is serious. Macedonia, Kosovo and in the end Bosnia and Herzegovina could not be treated as post conflict societies. Totally opposite, and every serious analyze would show that time of conflict is not part of their past then it is a serious problem with which they live today, and it will be forced in the foreseeable future. In the context of

empirical survey, in middle of theoretical interest it was Bosnia and Herzegovina as country and as society. And it is classical example of postwar, but also post conflict society. Or, even more concrete, end of war didn't mean also end of conflict. Nay, they continued also after war – now admittedly with other methods and means, using instruments from pallet of instruments of political democracy. Empirical survey, however, it was not directed on conflict as a style of life but on some other orientations, on which society conflicts have significant impact. In concrete case, as survey subject was questions of different types of identifications – ethnical and identification with different types physical belonging, questions of regionalization as Bosnian and Herzegovinian orientation and in the end, integration in EU as a final goal of BIH as a country.

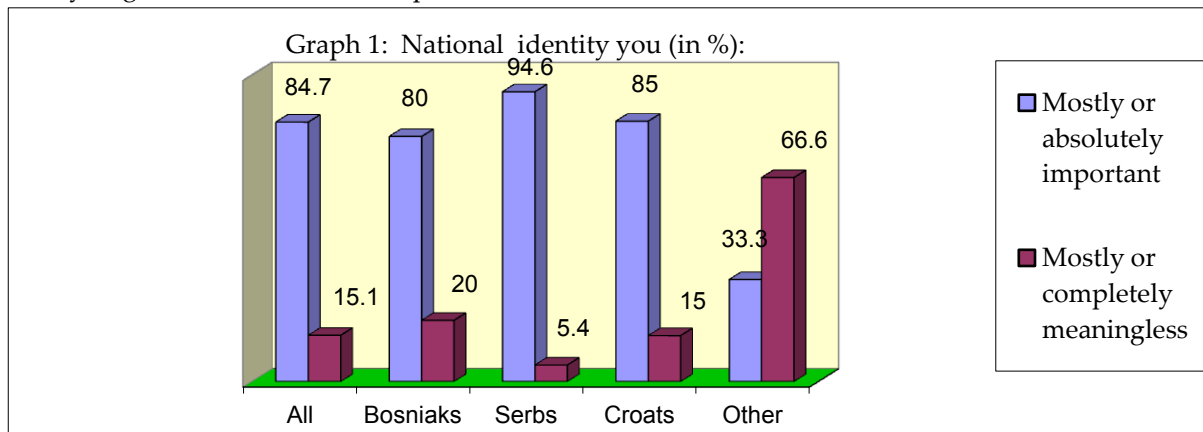
Survey's hypotheses were: *shown level of readiness for integration in European political, social and civilizational area is not followed by same intensity of individual and social identification with Europe in Bosnian and Herzegovina society /1/. Empirical data, needed for theoretical conclusion, was collected with questionnaire on representative population on whole area in BiH. In this analyze, concentration is only at one characteristic of readiness BiH citizens for integration in European political, social and civilizational area – be-*

tween their ethnical belonging and shown readiness.

### Identity as an ethnic and geographical determinants

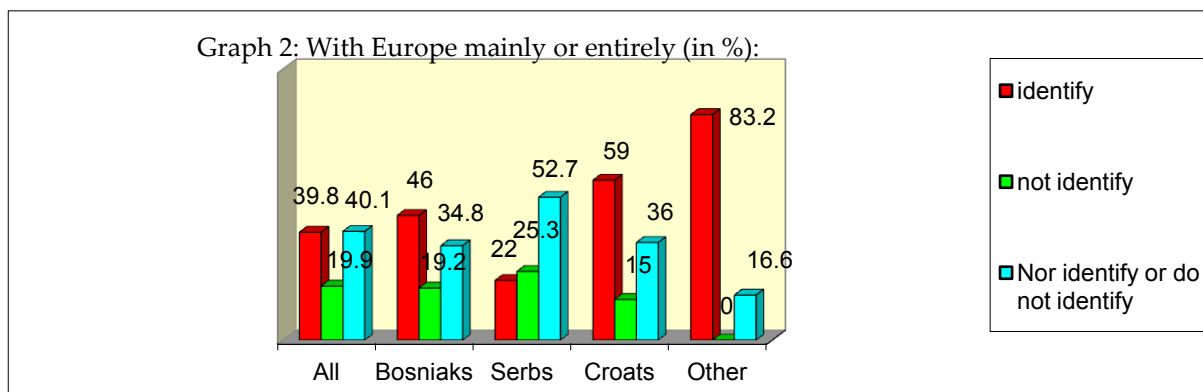
Question of collective identities is, for sure – survey begun with that as assumption – one of

the most important for citizens of BiH. It was assumed, that because of character of social conflicts, national identity is unquestionable. Assumption is, for sure, from perspective of level of total population but also from members of three constitutive nations empirically wholly confirmed (Graph 1).



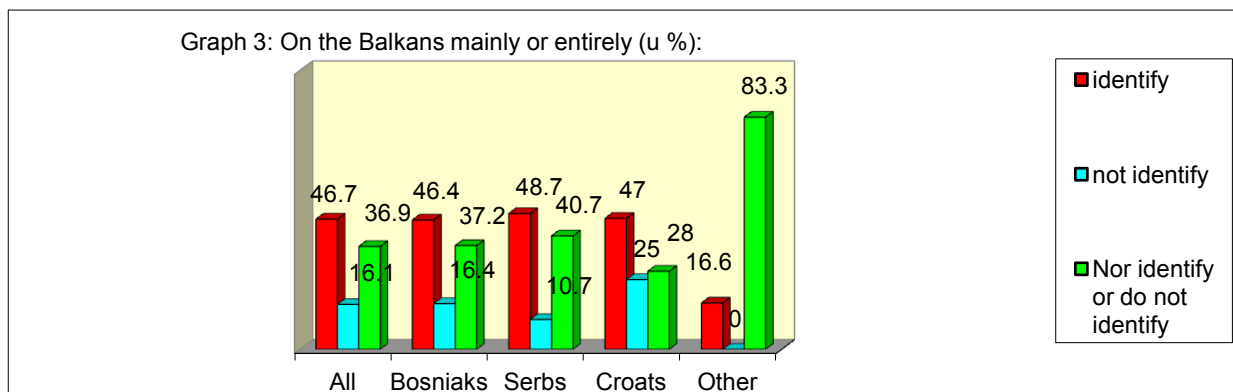
In stressed assessment, it's needed to stress two more details. If it's shown separately, significant of national identity is relatively the most prominent at citizens of Serbian nationality, and also what it could be expected, at Bosnian Muslims. In the other hand, if we can speak about significant deviation from general situation, it is only with those who doesn't belong neither one of three ethnic groups – whom members declared as members of national minors or as national undecided citizens ( in further analyses – „others“). However, their percentage in whole population is, by all seriously assessments – because real data are not available due non-implemented census – is irrelevant, so shown deviation does not have significant theoretical meaning. In expressed general opinion, however, it is necessary to add two more details. If they are observed separately, importance of national identity is relatively most pronounced among the citizens of Serbian nationality, which is also expected, with the Bosnian Muslims. So, question

of national identity was not doubtful, because their high percentage of importance was assumed, lot more interesting, from the beginning, was level of importance of some other Bosnian and Herzegovinian citizens identities – level of their identification with Europe, Balkan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, their entities and regional belonging or even local community in which they live. Gained empirical results are also intriguing. Survey also begun with assumption that could exist significant level of identification of Bosnian and Herzegovinian citizens with Europe. Empirical indicators are under expectation. Identification with Europe is not disputable at 2/5 of total adult citizens. It's also true that there is significant potential in 1/5 of BiH population – those which is characterized as undecided. But, theoretical provocation is surely in fact that even 2/5 of total BiH population does not explicit identify itself with Europe. And that means that among that part of population could be tomorrow opponents of joining BiH of EU (Graph 2).



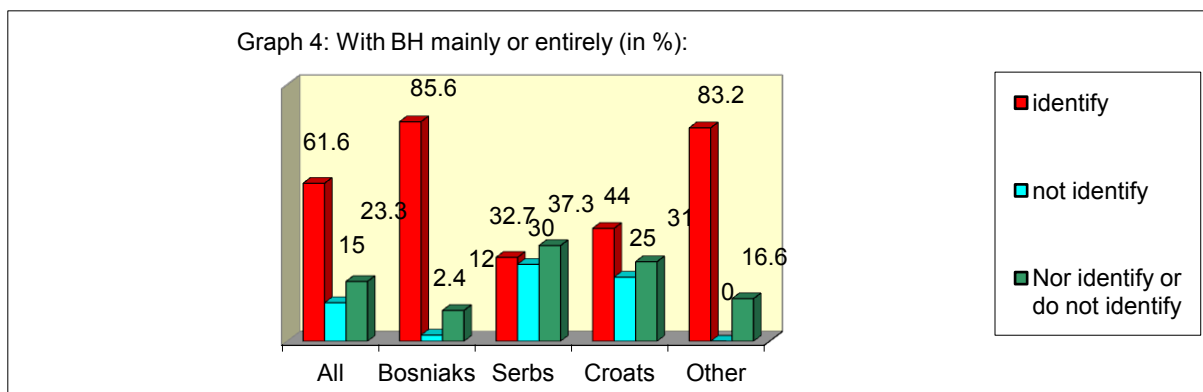
It's interesting, for sure, question where to look for reasons of absence this kind of identification? By the empirical results, debatable is not only European identification of group „others“and BiH Croats /2/. Also it could be significant European identification by Bosnian part of population – especially by identification between neutral part of this ethnic group. Politicians should be worried by level of identification which is noticed at Serbian ethnic group. Just little over 1/5 of this part of population, in moment of survey, was ready to identify itself with Europe. The way of making decisions in BiH could, because of that fact, create

problems in ambition of catching European integration train. In difference of identification with Europe, identification with Balkan is, when it is considered meaning of all adult citizens of BiH, is relatively pronounced. It's non-questionable by half of total adult population. And not just that. Possibility of this type of identification, with coordinated political, media and other aspects of acting, it should not be excluded at 2/5 of total population. It is characteristic, in the end, that level of identification with Balkan, if it's observed between individual ethnic groups, at three of constitutive nations almost identical (Graph 3).



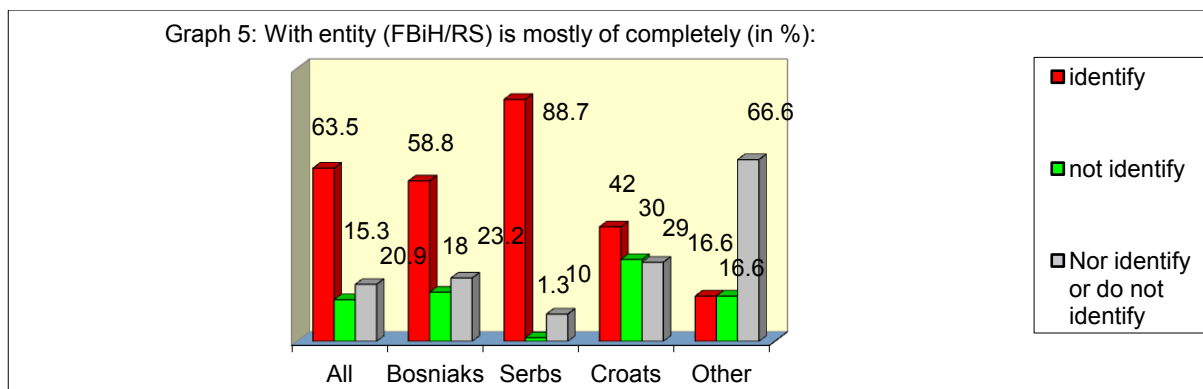
And what is with identification with its own country? Can we say today, because of type of conflicts which were in BiH in past two and a half centuries, about identification which could be considered enough guarantees for future of BiH as a country and as a society? On the level of total

population that identification could be. Confirmation of that shows two groups of data. Over 3/5 of total population identify itself with BiH as its own country. Besides that, at just 15% of respondents is identified – shown in different intensity – lack of stated identification (Graph 4).



Prevailing identification can't form conclusion that BiH, as it is now, is outside of any kind of danger for its existence. As confirmation of that stands some results from Graph above. It's obvious that identification with BiH as a country and society – in form that exist today – by constitutive nations in BiH, is not questionable, maybe just by citizens of Bosnian Muslims as ethnic group. By Croats, and especially by Serbs, it cannot be said about that kind of identification. It's true that at relatively significant part of population and by this ethnic groups it can still notice negative identification in identification with its own country /3/. And that means that with right ethnic and country strategy could significantly affect on growth of identification of attachment at all of this

ethnic groups. Shown image of identification with its own country by itself produce question of identification with one of two its administrative parts – entities, which are product of BiH war cataclysm? And what is with that identification? Is it higher or lower in comparison with one stated before, and does it exist any differences between major ethnic groups which are, by this survey, tested? At first sight on empirical data, can be concluded that by major part of BiH population is developed identification with one of two administrative parts of country – entities in which they live. That, for sure, is not something out of expectation. Entities are part of BiH reality almost two centuries, so it's logical identification with them (Graph 5.)

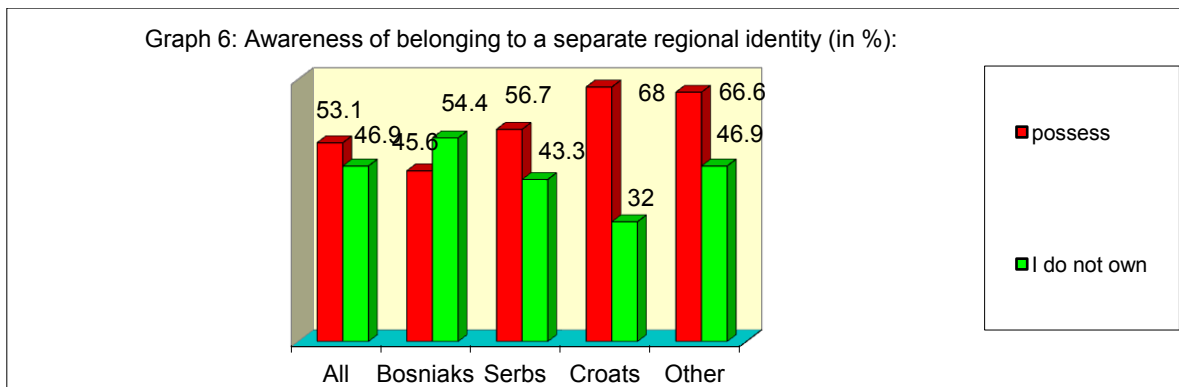


It's also important distribution of shown identification on separate ethnic communities. For sure, the most pronounced level of identification with its own entity is by citizens of Serbian nationality. And that means – because of 9/10 of this ethnic group in BiH live on area of one entity – that they view that entity as separate entity, separate country. This kind of view, on the end, is reasonable because of every day messages of that

type emitted from Serbian politicians in BiH. Also, relatively smallest – by category „others“ for this kind of self-identification is reasonable - identification with entity is by citizens of Croatian nationality. Why? Although survey doesn't offer ground for conclusion, is possible to assume that in neither of two entities they doesn't recognize area or guarantee for its own national importance. If it's, based on whole population, non-

questionable identification with administrative parts of country as a result of war conflicts and war control one of two parts of BiH, can we talk about same identification also in case existing awareness about belonging to a separate regional identity – which has whole longer history and it's

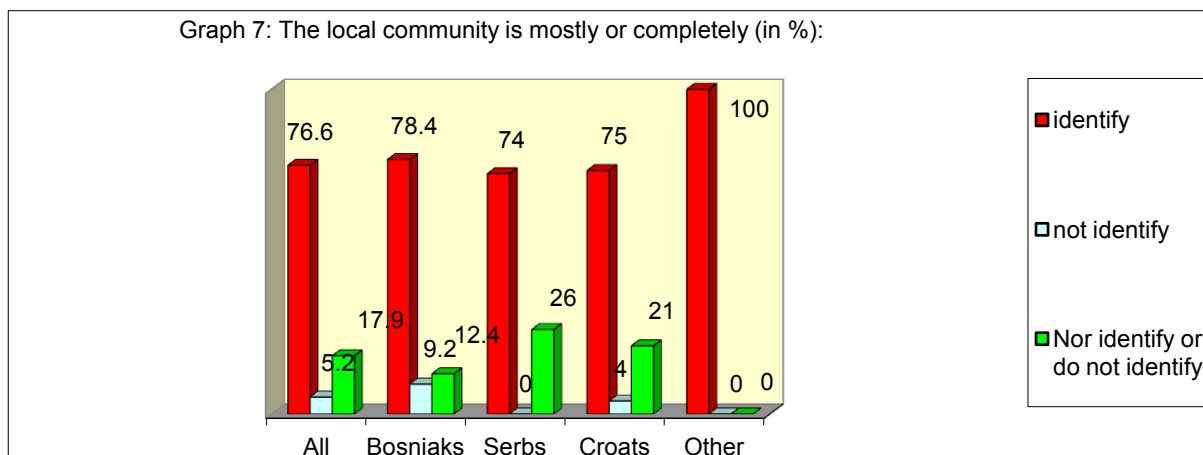
in correlation with geographical, historical, traffic or economical regionalization of some parts of BiH? Results of empirical survey suggest confirmation. Or more concretely, over half of total population confirm existing such a consciousness as a part of its own identity (Graph 6).



If we observe awareness of belonging to a separate regional identity in ethnically structured strata, differences are more than recognizable. High awareness of regional identity in the group of "others", could of course before survey assumed. If, however, we compare the three dominant ethnic groups, the members of the three constituent people, awareness of belonging to a separate regional identity was obviously in relation to the level of identification with the BiH. Or more concrete, the strongest identification with BiH, which is registered at Bosnian Muslims, as a result has some less emphasize on awareness of regional identity. And vice versa, lower level of identification with BiH as country, recorded among Serbian and Croatian part of BiH population, results with stronger awareness about belonging to a separate regional identity. This type of regularity can't be concluded without any reserve. Higher level of

identification with BiH as a country compared with BiH Serbs, at Croatian citizens in BiH is not impediment for even most prominent awareness about their regional status. And vice versa, relatively lower level of identification at citizens of Serbian nationality should be one of assumption of distinguished regional identity. However, by comparing it with the Croats in BiH, it did not happen. In the end, with this survey goal was also to test level of identification of BiH citizens with their local community.

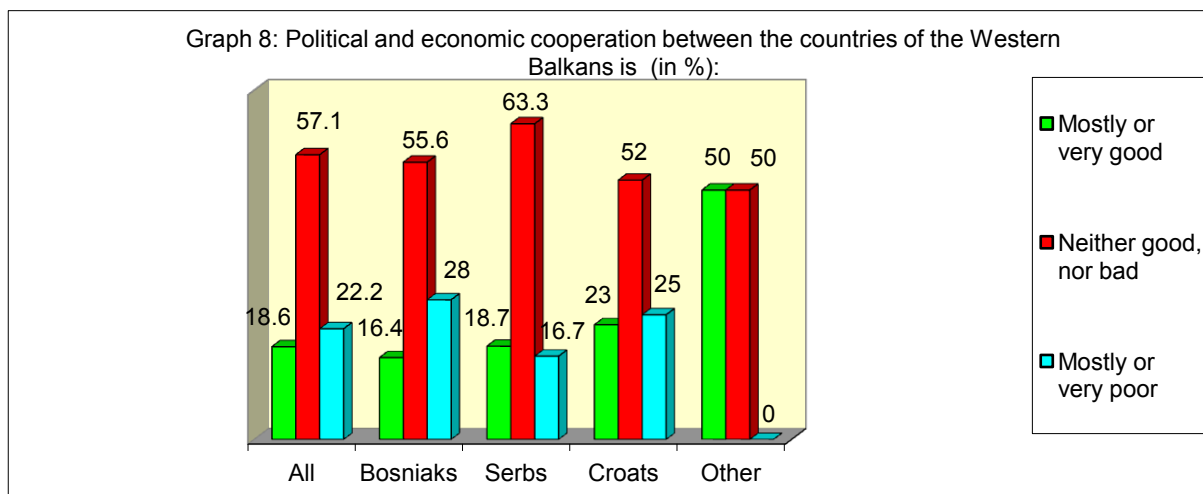
In the survey entered with assumption that that level of identification could be the most distinguished. Empirical results confirmed that assumption. Identification is, at the level of total sample, spotted at over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of total population. And also, by the way, differences among most significant ethnic strata are irrelevant (Graph 7).



If we want, in the end, based on empirical research, perform some theoretical regularity, one of the arguments was unquestionable. The smaller geographical area is, on which and with whom identification of citizens is tested, the higher level of their identification is. Or more concrete, the strongest citizens identification with their local community, and relatively the smallest with Europe. Fall of identification could be followed even on area between these two geographical determinants - from entities to the country and the Balkan. In this regularity partly does not fit only awareness of regional identity as the narrow space of the two-level entities. But, in that case it possible to offer a relevant scientific argumentation. Term "awareness of belonging to a separate regional identity" is, compared to others in tested identities as part of survey, relatively less defined, and with that is also relatively significant possibility of separately doubts on the question of what exactly is. Consequence of that fact is, result that differs from general theoretical regularity.

## 2. Relationship to regional and European integration

A higher degree of identification with a narrower geographic areas suggests that the relatively more could be expressed and readiness for cooperation and integration BiH in regional than in the general European Association. And how much the empirical research is supporting this assumption? Results of survey, first of all, confirm assumption how between citizens of BiH exist agreement that political and economic cooperation between countries of west Balkan is not on level on which should and can be. Or more concrete, almost 3/5 of total population share believes how achieved level of cooperation is not good or even bad. And that means that exist significant scope for its extension. In support of the same meaning, of course, stand two more indicators. Not even one fifth of total population, for example, don't share same belief how for standing cooperation could it be stressed that is mostly or totally good. What is, more importantly, for the confidence of the citizens cannot even be said that is explicitly painted negatively, or how the existing cooperation in the countries of western Balkan experiencing explicitly bad. (Graph 8).

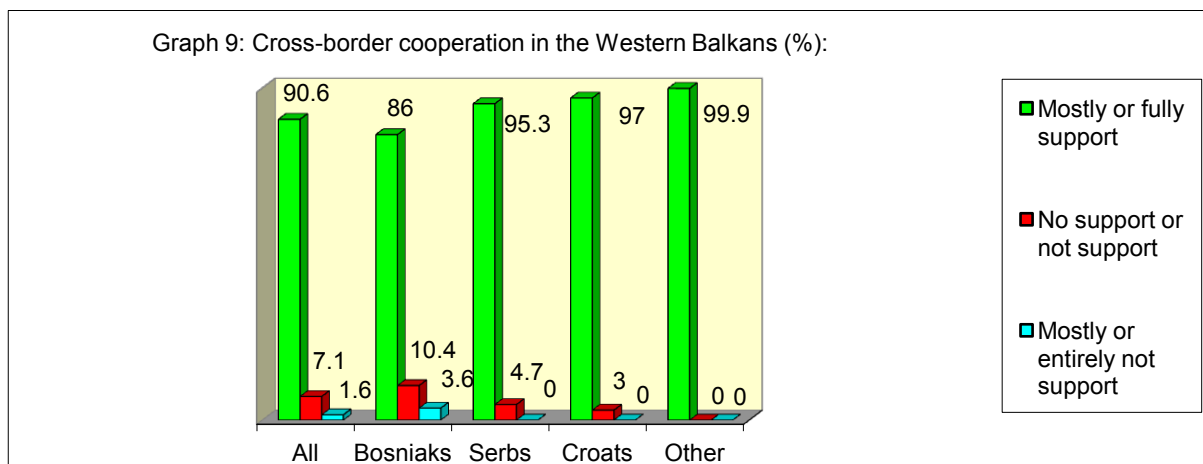


The similar conclusions, which is just as important, are reached through analyze of certain ethnic strata. Previously shown conclusions for level of country more or less are indicative for each of the three most dominant ethnic groups. If there are some differences, they do not have the intensity that they could be considered theoretic-

cally relevant. Although from the previous paragraphs can be drawn conclusions about how, among the citizens, exist support towards intensive cooperation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with its neighbors, and other countries of west Balkan, that kind of support is throughout empirical survey explicit confirmed. Over nine tenths of the

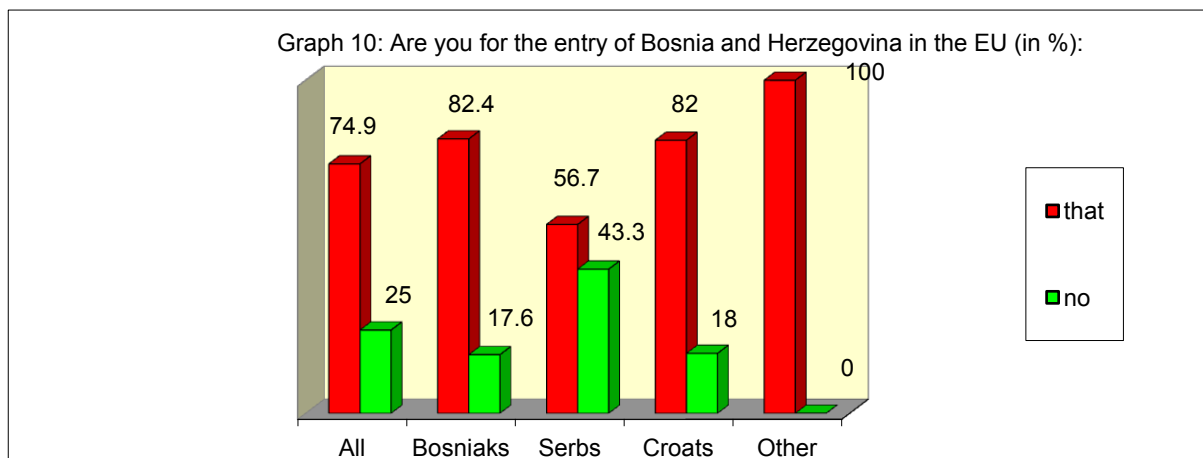
total adult population, according to research – although with varying degrees of intensity – support cross-border cooperation in the countries of

western Balkan. And also, stated support is unquestionable in observed ethnic strata (Graph 9).



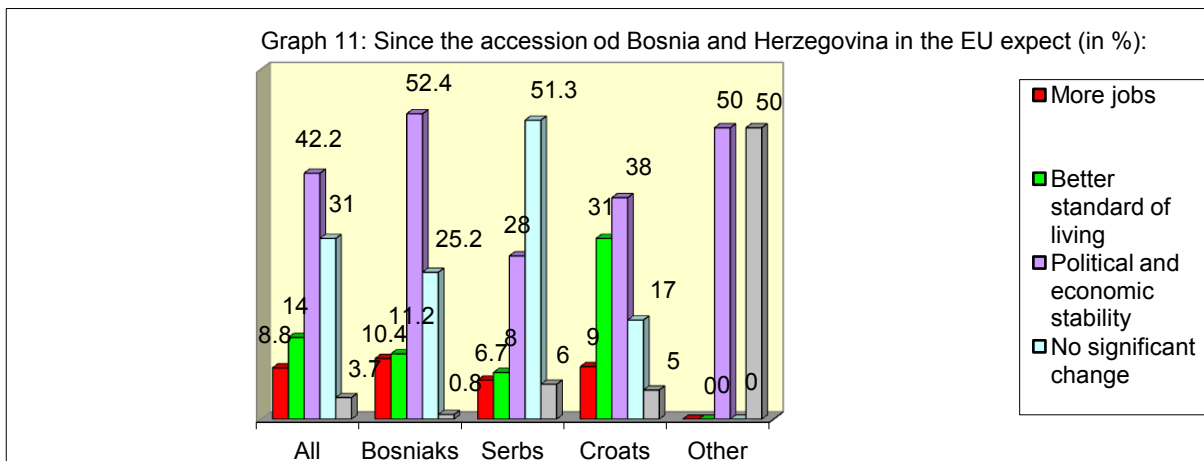
It is not questionable – although it is less than the previously identified – support to accession BiH to EU. Three quarters of citizens for join-

ing BiH to EU was even before empirical survey (Graph 10).



Conclusions stated before sends optimistically signals. But in them can be recognized signals of possible changes that could face BiH in near future. It is interesting, for example, that integration BiH in EU relatively most intense confront citizens of Serbian ethnic group. Past few years was marked by strong anti-European orientation and rhetoric of Serbian politicians in BiH. Consequence of that orientation and rhetoric could not be nothing else then increased share of those who joining in EU don't consider lucky or wise choice. Support joining EU, which is not disputable even on level of total sample or even on level of ethnic strata, also don't mean neither expectation how

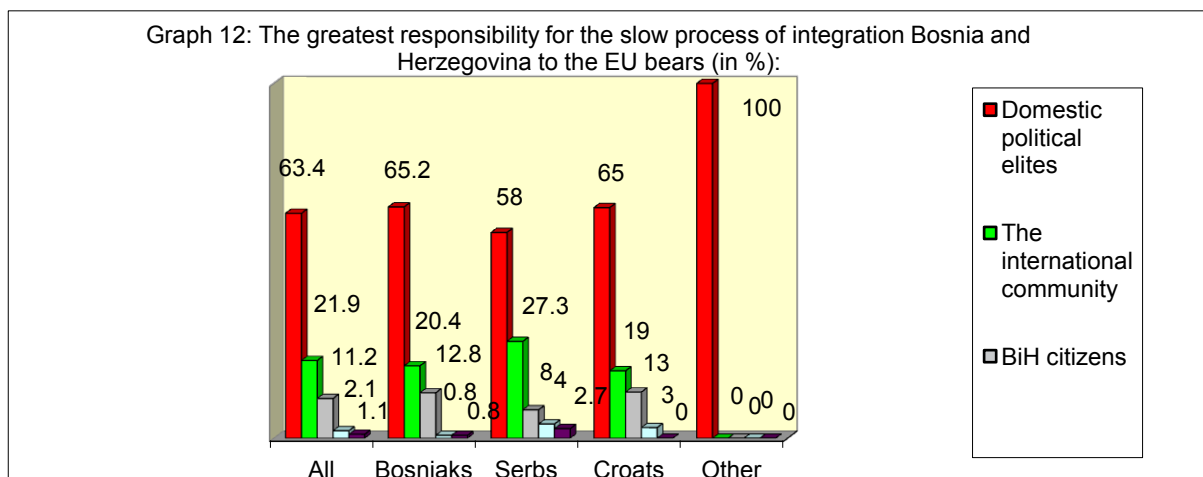
joining to EU could solve all problem that country have. But, certain expectations are not disputable. What are those expectations? Observed on country level, that is, first of all, political and economic stability which would BiH joining to EU should get. This type of expectations is spotted at over 2/5 of total population. It is not insignificant share of those who believe how integration for consequence could have better living standard for citizens of BiH. But, the others should not be ignored – those who from the admission to the EU does not expect any significant change to life in BiH. This is, more concrete, almost every third adult citizen of BiH (Graph 11).



If we observe expectation from joining EU from level of analyzed ethnic stratum, differences are more than recognizable. Higher level of political and economic stability is characteristic for citizens of Bosnian national group and for those who are treated as “others”. This type of expectation, although relatively with less intensity shown, characterizes also Croats in BiH. But the same could not be claimed in case of citizens of Serbian nationality. At this part of population is, totally contrary, dominant belief that joining EU for BiH will not bring some significant change. In the end, expectation that joining EU will bring better standard of living thanks to the citizens of Croatian ethnic group (Graph 12). Starting from unquestionable general commitment to joining EU and from dominant expectation how it could have positive effects on living of citizens, it is logical to ask the question does the citizens of BiH share same belief that the process of integrating their country in EU is delayed? And if they share, why is that process of integration delayed? Or more concrete, by citizens thinking, who is re-

sponsible for that slow tempo of integration? The result of the empirical research does not leave a large space for dilemmas. It’s registered, first of all, general social consensus related with that the process of integration BiH in EU is too slow /4/. Also there doesn’t exist doubts about who is considered to be responsible for that. Predominant is a belief that the greatest responsibility falls on the domestic politicians. Also responsible is considered international community. More than every fifth adult citizen marks it as responsible for BiH not being already member of EU. This distribution of responsibility, however, is not only characterized by the total study sample included. Nay, same distribution – with minor deviation in intensity of responsibility of domestic politicians or institutions of international community – it’s characteristics of the three largest ethnic strata, those that include in themselves members of the three constituent people (Graph 12).





### 3. Conclusion

Aim of this empirical survey was to relate inner turmoil in conflict societies at one side and European values which are for them immanent at the other side. On the example of BiH – which is, as characteristic example of conflict society used as surface for empirical research – goal was to investigate how much are – beside national identity as one of cause inner conflict, immanent same other identities – readiness to identify itself with local community, non-administrative natural parts and administrative parts in country, with country itself, wide region of Balkan and in the end, with Europe as a goal toward their politicians, according to public manifestation, aspire. The study, due to the goals laid out, entered with the hypothesis *that the reported level of readiness for integration into the European political, social and civilizational space does not follow the same intensity of individual and social identification with Europe within BiH society.* To test the hypothesis empirical research was conducted on a representative sample of five hundred respondents, adult citizens from the area the entire country. Research produced two groups of cognitions. First is about question of identities. It is confirmed, first of all, assumption that national identity is not questionable. With conducted research that assumption is confirmed. National identity is, as value indicative for almost 85% of entire BiH population. It is surprisingly, but only partially, cognition that this kind of identity is relatively most significant among the citizens of the Serbian ethnic group, in which it's possible to talk about a general feature of. At the identity related to geographical area,

research show regularity: narrower geographical area – higher level of identification. Or more concrete, most significant is identification of citizens with their local community, and relatively weakest with Europe as civilization framework which they, by their nature, belong. Shown regularity, does not mean also negative attitude of citizens BiH as members of conflict society, toward different types of integration in EU. Nay, with survey is identified critical attitude to accomplished level of political and economic cooperation of countries from west Balkan and almost plebiscitary support to the intensification of cross-border cooperation between the countries of this region. It's also stated  $\frac{3}{4}$  support for joining EU because of benefits which could for BiH and all its citizens bring. And because of that, among other things, an indicative critical attitude towards the measures, which on the path of integration of BiH into the EU, take the politicians - domestic, primarily, but also the institutions of the international community, under the Dayton peace agreement, of course, are parts of the constitutional structure of BiH.

#### Notes

/1/ The survey was conducted in the period between 20th November 2011. and 15th March 2012. Year. The study included 500 subjects - among them, 49.8% were women and 50.2% men. The sample took into account the educational structure - in the sample is 0.4% of the population with no education, 16.9% with primary school, 48.2% completed secondary school, and 34.3% with a college or university. The sample is varied according to the criterion of working status - it is, in fact, 15.8% of the unem-

ployed, 14.2% of employees in state institutions, 13% of employees in public enterprises, 16.9% of employees in the private employer, 34.5% students and 5.3% of pensioners. In the sample are then represented by different social groups according to the criterion of average monthly income - without receiving them is 41.6%, with incomes up to 250 euro 13.8%, those in the range of 250-500 euros, 24.3%, in range from 500-750 euros, 10.4% in the range of 750-1000 euros and 5.5% above 1000 euros 4.1%. Among the respondents 32.2% of them belong to one of the political parties, and 67.8% of them is outside of this form of belonging. Care was taken, however, about regional dispersion of respondents - in the sample were 69.9% from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 30.1% from Republic of Srpska area. Finally, special attention is paid to the national belonging - in the sample are included 49.4% Bosnians, 29.6% Serbs, 19.7% Croats, and finally, 1.1% of members of national minorities and national undecided citizens.

/2/ For 66.6% of members of national minorities and nationally undeclared BiH citizens - that will in the analysis, and just because of economy of the space, use the term "others" - the national identity is mostly or absolutely meaningless.

/3/ After all, 30% of Serbs and 25% Croats have identification vague relationship - not identify itself or do not identify itself with BiH as a state and society.

/4/ That kind of belief, in fact, not only have 1.1% of the total population, the part of BiH citizens who still believe that the process of integrating their countries to the EU is not slowed.

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## KONFLIKTNA DRUŠTVA I TEMELJNA PITANJA EUROPSKE BUDUĆNOSTI

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### *Sažetak*

Pitanja budućnosti – ljudska prava i slobode, demokracija kao temeljni princip života, viši životni standard, veći stupanj sigurnosti – temeljna su pitanja prema kojima je usmjerena kolektivna energija evropskih društava. Ispunjavanje tih uvjeta stavljeno je u zadatak i svim tranzicijskim društvima koja se žele pridružiti EU. Pitanje post-konfliktnih društava, međutim, je izazov i na teorijskoj i na pragmatičnoj ravni, posebice ako su izvori konflikta u sferama kakve su etničko ili konfesionalno. Neka od tih društava se, potom, teško i mogu svrstavati u skupinu post-konfliktnih jer društveni konflikti u njima i danas imaju intenzitet koji ih svrstava u konfliktna društva. Slučaj bosansko-hercegovačkog društva je, po svojim manifestacijama, karakterističan primjer upravo takvog društva. A ono je, odnosno neka od pitanja koja se tiču evropskih vrijednosti unutar konfliktnog društva, u središtu analize ovog rada. I što je najvažnije, sva ta pitanja su u vezi sa sustavom javnog komuniciranja.