

Political Barometer 1/2009

Long term project of public opinion research concerning the situation and actual political events in Kosovo

Lulzim Pllana*

Abstract

With the emergence of a multi party system in Kosovo, the Kosovo politics respectively the parties or political personalities take different orientations and the creation of such a project helps in estimating the perception of public opinion about these orientations.

The political barometer aims to be the picture and guidance of public opinion with regard to the policy and current events in the country.

A long-term realization of the project raises the awareness and the level of the political leadership and arouses the public interest to judge the political topicalities in the country.

This work includes a selection of the Political Barometer whereas the full results can be subscribed at the Center for Public Opinion Research.

Key words: *Research, Political Barometer, Kosovo Politics, Democracy, Material situation, President, Prime Minister, Parliament, Ministry, Political Parties, Elections.*

The Political Barometer is a research project about political topics initiated by AAB-RIINVEST University, namely by the Center of Public Opinion Research-QHO. This first experimental research is financed by AAB-RIINVEST University and is realized in cooperation with the University of Ljubljana, the Center for Public Opinion Research and Mass Communication of this University.¹

The canvass was realized in the period of 30-31 March 2009, based on standardized questionnaires and the „Face-to-face“

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¹ www.cjm.si

method throughout the territory of the Republic of Kosovo, respectively in the areas of Pristina, Gjilan, Ferizaj, Prizren, Gjakovo, Peje and Mitrovica including the localities with inhabitants of other nationalities. The way of distributing the questionnaires is based on the number of inhabitants according to the records of the Kosovo registration office.² From 880 planned persons about 878 (99%) persons with voting right were polled, a result which makes the project representative. The canvass throughout the communes or more detailed in the respective canvass points was realized by 30 persons. The time for the completion of one questionnaire varied from 5 to 10 minutes. The data were analyzed by means of the statistical Software SPSS.³

The questionnaire was composed by the Head of the Center Lulzim Pllana MA, in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Niko Tos, Head of the Center for Opinion Research and Mass Communication and Dr. Slavdo Kurdija, professor and collaborator of the Center at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia.

The questionnaire consists of the fix part containing the same questions throughout all stages of the canvass and the variable part, containing questions concerning the actual situation during the realization of the canvass.

In general, the questionnaire aims the definition and political orientation of the public opinion concerning the current political situation and evaluation of political events especially those in Kosovo. Apart from the evaluation of trust in the national institutions such as the President, Government, Prime Minister, Parliament, Police, Political Parties, KLMDNJ, Trade Unions and the Ombudsman the questionnaire offers also the evaluation of the trust in international institutions like those from the United Nations, European Union as well as those from the United States of America.

Another evaluation point is the trust in media by differentiating between the public and private ones.

² See registration office of Kosovo www.ks-gov.net/esk.

³ Statistical Programme for Social Science.

The most important question of the “Political Barometer” is the so called “Election question” or “for which party would you vote”; this can be seen as the essence of the Political Barometer. In order to compare and decide on the developments of the trends concerning the respective parties, in this work is also included the opinion of the respondents of the previous Barometer.⁴ As a consequence of this, an evaluation of the political personalities, which are in the current political scene of Kosovo and went through the previous Barometer⁵, is also made. This method of evaluation, by means of the Barometer, enables to estimate the decisions made by the political personalities and their elaboration based on their political activities for a long period of time. This evaluation can be gained the best by posing the question if there are changes in the field of social life, economy, education, healthcare, standard of living, energy supply etc. since the last elections meaning November 2007.

The variable part of the Barometer contains the questions which can or cannot be repeated in the questionnaire of the Barometer depending on the present situation.

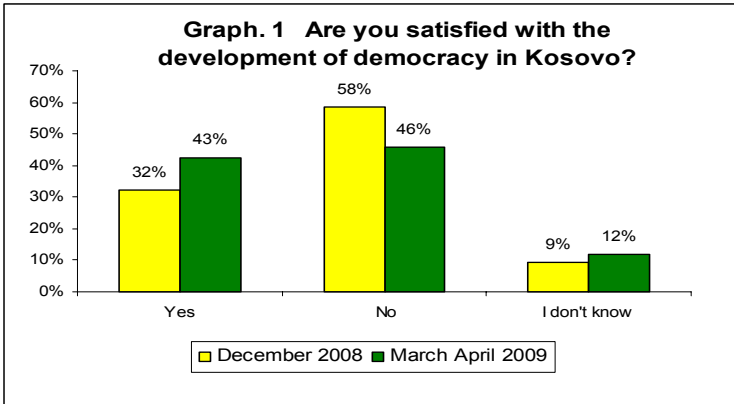
This work presents one part of the Political Barometer whereas the complete results can be subscribed at the Center for Public Opinion Research of AAB-RIINVEST University.

Development of the democracy

It seems that the respondents are now more satisfied with the development of democracy in Kosovo than at the end of last year. Although almost the half of them is not satisfied with the development of democracy there is a tendency of improvement. There is an increase in satisfaction with the development of democracy from 32% to 43%, and a decrease of dissatisfaction from 58% to 46%.

⁴ See Lulzim Pllana, *Political Barometer 1/2008*, Graph.9. p.12, December 2008.

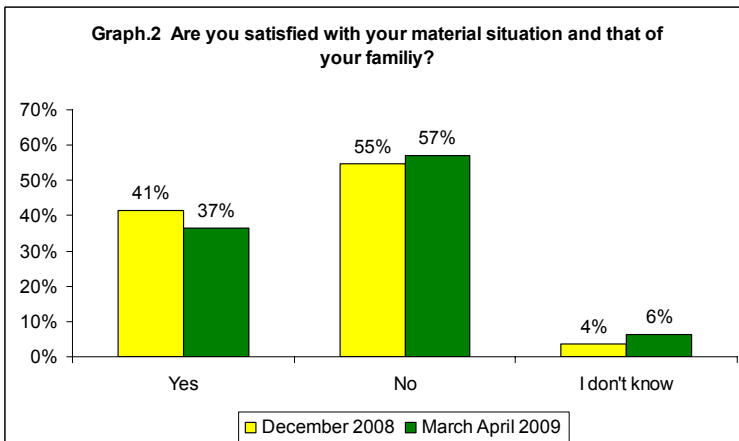
⁵ Op.cit.



Source: QHO n=878

Material situation

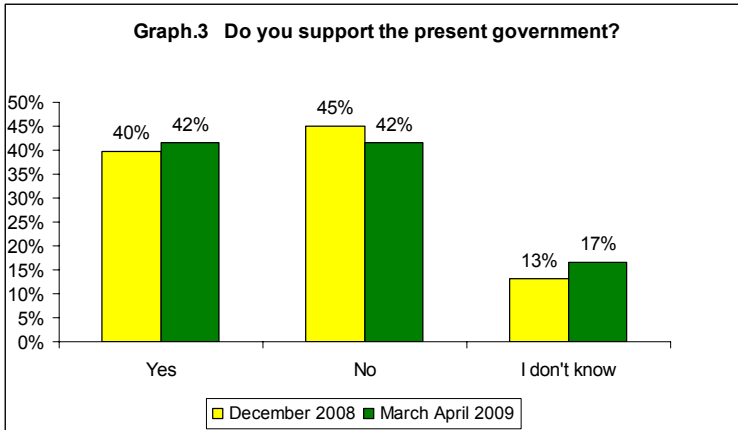
The population of Kosovo seems to be dissatisfied with the material situation. Both response options show negative tendencies of increase. From 41% of satisfied persons in December last year the percentage decreased to 37% in March. And from 55% to 57% of the respondents are dissatisfied. It seems that Kosovo is already affected by the global financial crisis. See graphic 13 and 14.



Source: QHO n=878

Supporting the government

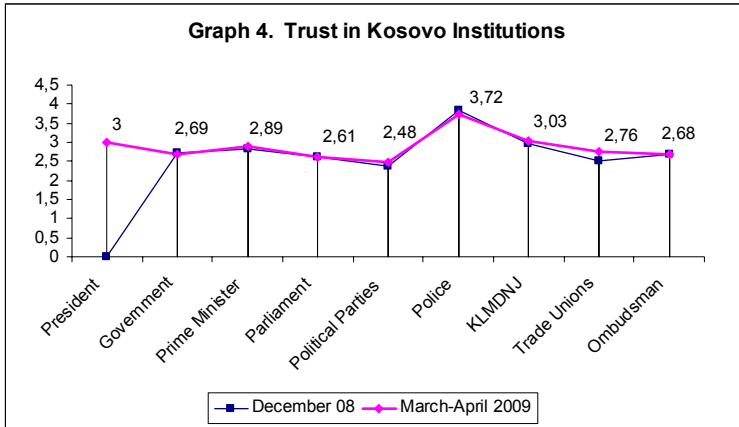
In comparison to the last measurement it seems that the government today has a greater support. The percentage which does not support the government is decreasing. The number of waverer is a bit higher meaning that they can change their mind at any time.



Source: QHO n=878

Trust in the institutions of Kosovo

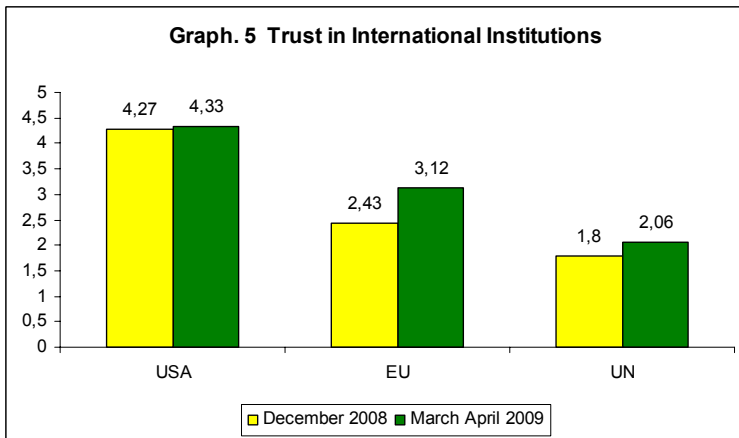
Concerning the trust in institutions of Kosovo we have different developments. The credibility of the President is measured for the first time and shows an average of 3 whereas the Police mark the first place although with a slight decrease followed by KLMDNJ and the Prime Minister. In comparison to the Barometer of December there is a great increase of credibility in the Trade Unions, KLMDNJ and the Prime Minister. The Government, Parliament and the Ombudsman don't show any change whereas the political parties show a tendency of slight increase.



Source: QHO n=878

Trust in international institutions

Concerning the question “Do you trust the international institutions” the respondents give distinctive evaluations about these institutions. All of them show an increase, except the European Union (EU) which achieved the highest increase. The United States of America (USA) leads with an increase from 4,27 to 4,33, the European Union from 2,43 to 3,12, and the United Nations (UN) from 1,8 to 2,06.

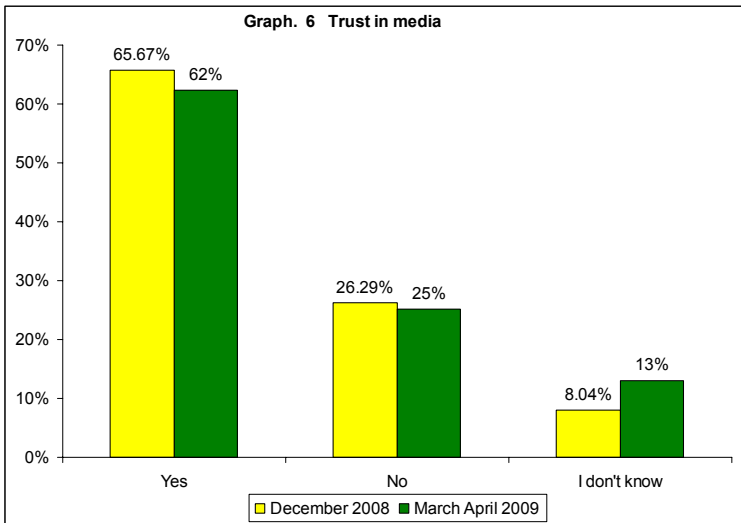


Source: QHO n=878

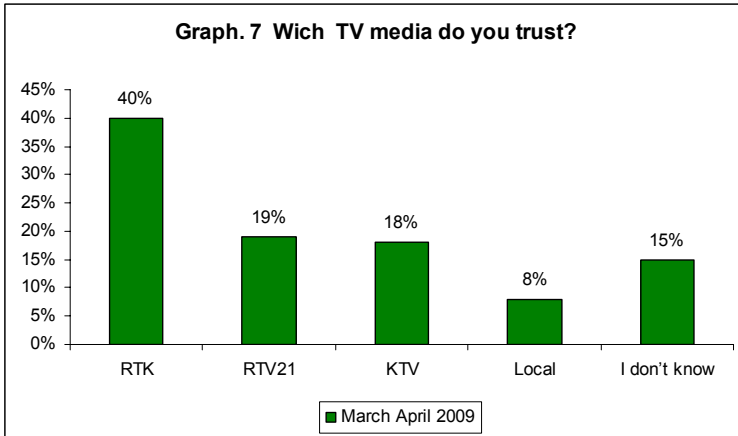
Trust in media

The trust in media measured in this Barometer presents a decrease in comparison to that of last December although the rate of credibility continues to be quite high. It decreases from 66% to 62%. There is also a slight increase of the respondents which do not know whether to trust them or not, meaning from 8% to 13%.

Regarding the question of which media they trust the most, the graphic shows that the 40% of the respondents trust RTK, 19% TV 21, 18% KTV and 8% of them trust the local ones. About 15% of the respondents did not have any opinion, meaning this number of respondents do not know which media they should trust.



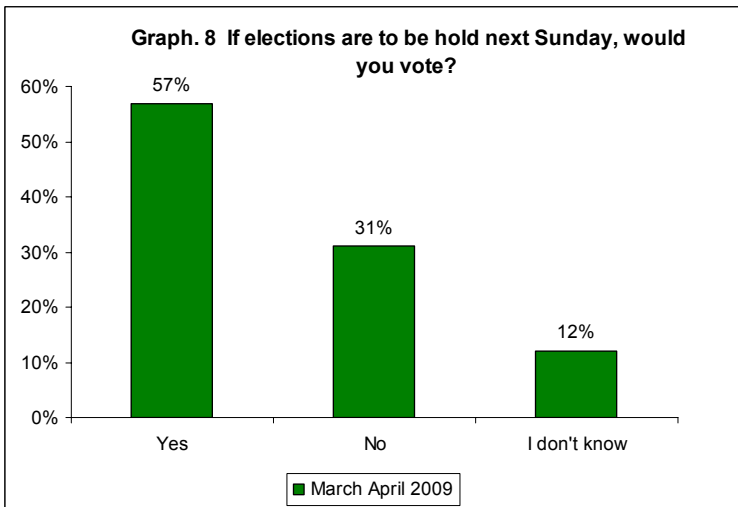
Source: QHO n=878



Source: QHO n=878

Elections

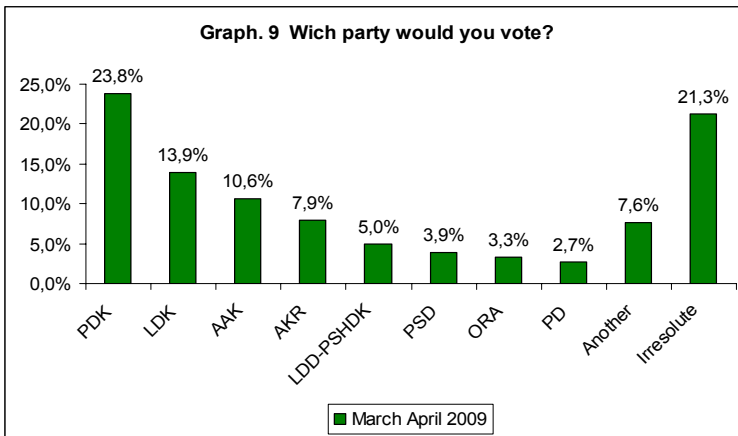
With regard to question “if elections are to be hold next Sunday, would you vote”?, the respondents present a clear picture. About 57% of the respondents would go to vote, if elections are to be hold and 31% would not go. About 12% of them are not sure whether they would go or not.



Source: QHO n=878

Voting

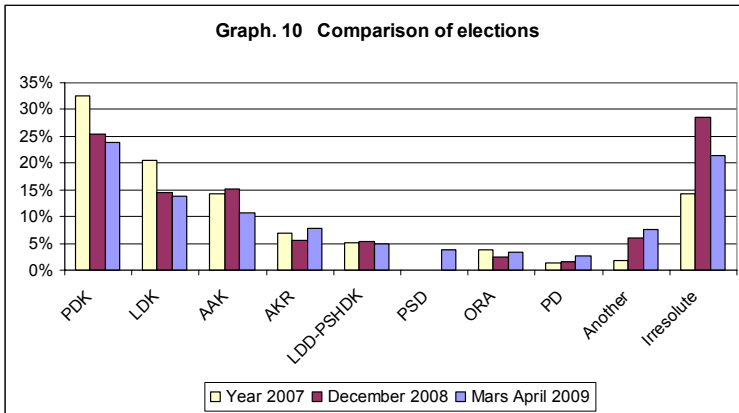
Regarding the next question which party the respondents would vote if elections are to be hold we see in the next graphic different results. PDK leads with 23,8%, LDK with 13,9%, AAK with 10,6%, AKR 7,9%, coalition LDD-PSHDK 5,0%, PSD 3,9%, ORA 3,3% and PD with 2,7%. The number of them which would vote another party is 7,6%, whereas the number of those which still do not know is evidently higher with 21,3%.



Source: QHO n=878

Comparison of elections

When comparing these elections with the previous ones we see that the political parties present different results, in most cases there is a tendency of decrease. This fluctuation can be usually explained based on the behavior of the political parties towards the public. PDK and LDK show a slight decrease, AAK more obviously, whereas AKR has an increase in comparison to the previous ones. LDD-PSHDK does not show any change which is worthwhile mentioning. It must be stressed that the presentation of PSD reached in general an increase. The number of waverer is decreasing when comparing it with the previous elections but is still high as it could change the situation.



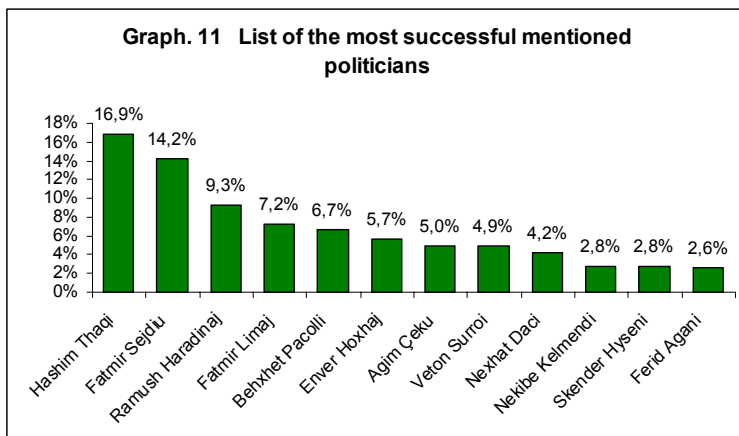
Source: QHO n=878

Political personalities

The question about the political personalities is also a part of the fix part of the political barometer. Here, the respondents were asked to name the most successful political personalities of Kosovo. Only the personalities with at least 2,5% stated by the respondents are included in the graphic.

Prime Minister, Hashim Thaqi, is the outrider on the list of the most successful politicians of the Republic of Kosovo followed by Fatmir Sejdiu, the President of the Republic and Ramush Haradinaj, Chairman of AAK.

A more detailed picture shows the following graphic.



Source: QHO n=878

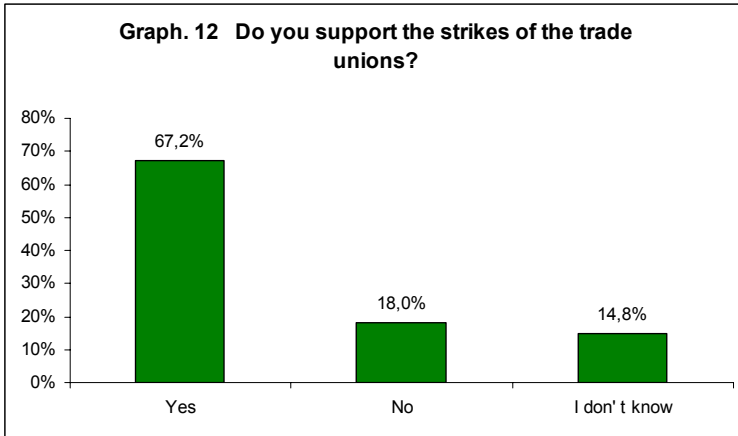
Political topicalities of the country

Concerning the political topicalities in the country, the political barometer was focused on the matters discussed in the Kosovo media: the strikes of the Kosovo trade unions, economic crisis, the reduction of the number of KFOR soldiers, the general security situation in Kosovo, the freedom of movement for minorities, the support of the EULEX mission, normalization of the relations Kosovo-Serbia as well as a specific question concerning the parliamentary elections in Albania.

Hereinafter only some of these topics are presented, the others will be published completely in the brochure by the Center of Public Opinion Research.

The strikes of the trade unions of Kosovo

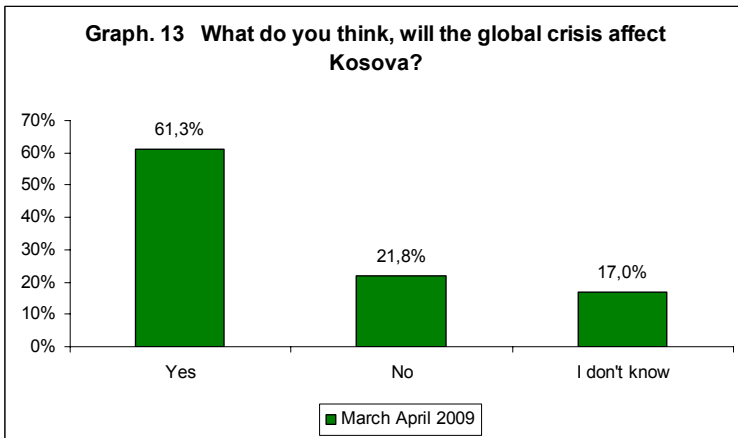
The respondents say that they support the strikes. The graphic shows that about 67,2% of the respondents support them, whereas 18,4% do not support such a thing. Only 14,8% do not have any opinion concerning that topic.



Source: QHO n=878

The impact of the global economic crisis on Kosovo

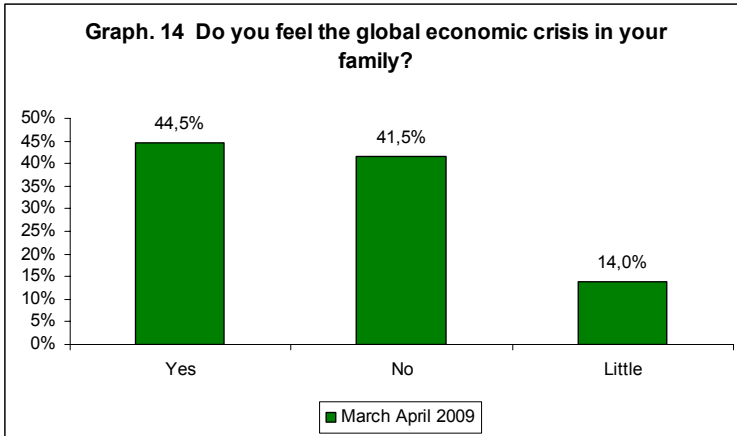
To the question whether the global economic crisis will have any impact on Kosovo, the respondents say that the economic crisis will affect Kosovo. About 61,3% of them say “Yes”, whereas 21,8% say the opposite. Only 17% of the respondents do not have any opinion.



Source: QHO n=878

Concerning the question “whether the global economic crisis has affected your family?”, more than the half of the respondents say that the crisis has already affected their families.

Thesis Kosova, no. 1, 2009

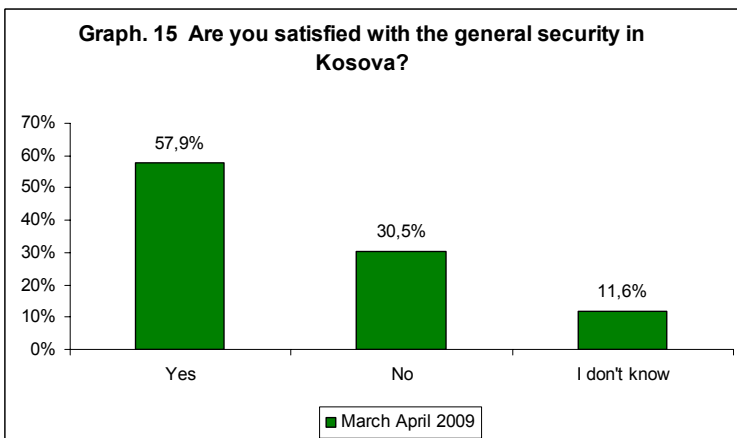


Source: QHO n=878

About 44,5% of the respondents have already felt the crisis. Only 14% feel it “little” and a considerable number of 41,5% of the respondents still have not felt it.

The general security situation in Kosovo

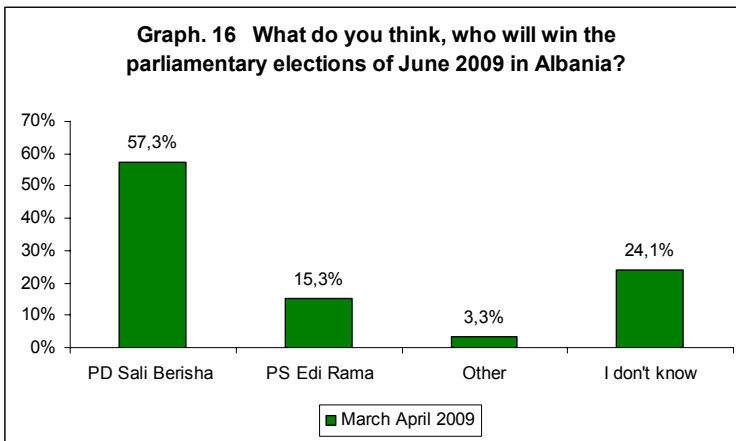
The majority of the respondents are satisfied with the security situation in Kosovo. 57,9% say that they are satisfied, 30,5% are not satisfied and 11,6% of them do not know how to estimate the security situation.



Source: QHO n=878

Parliamentary Elections in Albania

The respondents show a clear opinion concerning the parliamentary elections in Albanian this year. The respondents were posed a so-called closed question about who will win the parliamentary elections of June this year in Albania.



Source: QHO n=878

The majority of the respondents say that Sali Berisha, Democratic Party, will win the parliamentary elections in Albania. About 15,3% say that Edi Rama or Socialist Party and 3,3% say other parties, whereas 24,1% of the respondents in Kosovo do not know that.

Conclusion

The Political Barometer 2 presents a clear picture of the evaluation of political activities during the period of March-April 2009. Among others, it offers also a comparison between the current developments of the politics in Kosovo and those in December of last year, in some cases also since the last elections of 2007. It follows especially the political events which happen in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. By means of this publication or further publications, the Barometer aims to

become the picture of the public opinion with regard to current politics of the country.

Translated by Dafina Vezej