



Regional Cooperation Council



SEE2020  
SOUTH EAST EUROPE 2020

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RCC'S BALKAN BAROMETER 2017

## THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE from the Western Balkans

The 2017 edition of BALKAN BAROMETER (BB) is yet another instalment in the series of annual public opinion surveys commissioned by the Regional Cooperation Council.

It collects and analyses data across a host of thematic areas, examining aspirations and expectations of the region's populations and its business community on life and work, prevalent socio-economic and political trends as well as regional and European integration, among others.

Check it out at:

<http://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-opinion-barometer>

<http://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/3/balkan-business-barometer>

Balkan Barometer pocket edition features the main thoughts of people and businesses on prevailing issues facing our economies, through infographics.

This survey, conducted by GfK among 8000 citizens and 1600 companies in the course of 2016 throughout our part of Europe, is an easy-to-access source of information. The RCC website [www.rcc.int](http://www.rcc.int) permits download of both components of the Balkan Barometer - Public Opinion Survey and Business Opinion Survey - as well as their datasets which are easily searchable.

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## SUMMARY

The findings of BB 2017 survey illustrate the need to pursue regional cooperation objectives with increased vigour and at greater speed.

Unemployment continues to dominate thinking, while the perception of traditional democratic institutions, for reasons both complex and manifold, leaves much to be desired in terms of both performance and public confidence. Despite notional support for regional and

European integration there continues to be widespread scepticism about the ability of regional and European arrangements to address pressing economic and political problems. At the same time, an upturn in economic performance by the region's economies has brought about an increasingly optimistic outlook for the future that needs to be solidified through decisive government policy.



**The Most Distinctive  
Perceptions in Each of  
Western Balkan Economies**

## People in Albania



23%

SAY THEY ARE UNEMPLOYED, which is the highest percentage recorded among respondents in the region

Albanians are an unfortunate regional leader in this category

With 17%



OF RESPONDENTS SAYING THEY LOST THEIR JOB OVER THE PAST 3 YEARS

30%

say they were unable to afford food, clothes and other basic supplies during the past 12 months



Overwhelming, and the highest in the region,

54%

SAY THEY OR THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS PAID BRIBES FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

## People in Bosnia and Herzegovina

76%

SAY THEY ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THEIR SOCIETY,

and

39%

expect that the state of their economy will be worse in the next 12 months,

WHICH MAKES THEM THE LEAST SATISFIED AND MOST PESSIMISTIC IN THE REGION



Although unemployment has been recognized by all in SEE as the most important problem facing their economy, people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are worried about it the most

WITH OVERWHELMING

73%



82%

SAY THEY DO NOT TRUST THE GOVERNMENT



80%

THINK MEDIA IS AFFECTED BY CORRUPTION



## People in Serbia



# 43%

WOULD CONSIDER LEAVING HOME TO WORK ABROAD

# Only 55%

say the government should do more to ensure better housing conditions of Roma,



### WHICH IS THE LEAST SUPPORTIVE IN THE REGION

# 51%



graded the time required to obtain public services

POLICE, HEALTH SYSTEM, JUDICIARY, TOWNSHIP, ETC.

as poor or very poor



# 80%

### THINK CUSTOMS ARE AFFECTED BY CORRUPTION

## People in Montenegro

# 32%

the highest in the region, think that people from other parts of the region

COMING TO LIVE AND WORK IN THEIR ECONOMY IS A BAD THING



# 70%

### THINK POLITICAL PARTIES ARE AFFECTED BY CORRUPTION

# 71%

graded transparency of public services (school, police, health system, judiciary, public transport, etc.)



# 63%

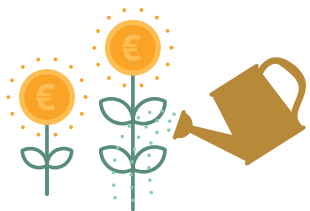
### THINK PUBLIC OFFICIALS/CIVIL SERVANTS ARE AFFECTED BY CORRUPTION

## People in Kosovo\*

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

# 50%

**EXPECT THEIR ECONOMY TO IMPROVE IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS**



# 81%

say they are confident or fairly confident in keeping their job in the coming 12 months,

WHICH IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN THE REGION

THE IMPORTANCE OF ROMA INTEGRATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION AND EU ACCESSION WAS RANKED THE HIGHEST ACROSS THE REGION

With **81%** AND **84%** **Respectively**



# 62%

see corruption as the second most important problem facing their economy,

WHICH IS ALMOST DOUBLE THAN IN OTHER SEE ECONOMIES



## People in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

# 82%

AGREE THAT REGIONAL COOPERATION CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC OR SECURITY SITUATION IN THEIR SOCIETY



# 51%

say they are employed or self-employed,

WHICH IS THE REGION'S HIGHEST RECORDED PERCENTAGE



# 66%

SAY THEY DO NOT TRUST COURTS AND JUDICIARY

# 38%

of people, more frequently than elsewhere in SEE,

**AGREE THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT FIGHTS CORRUPTION EFFECTIVELY**

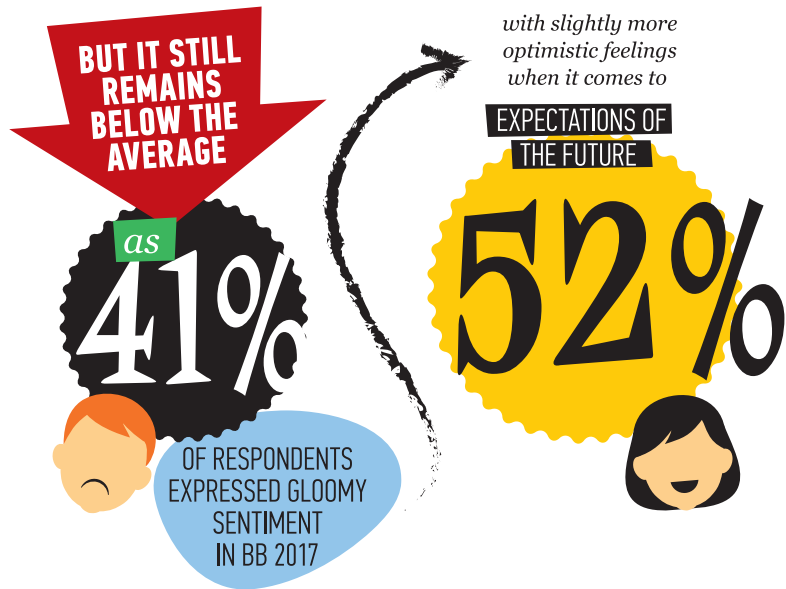
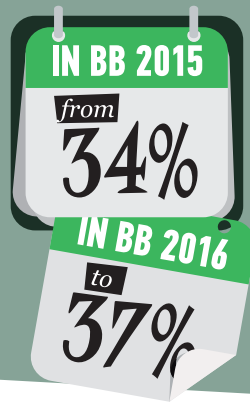






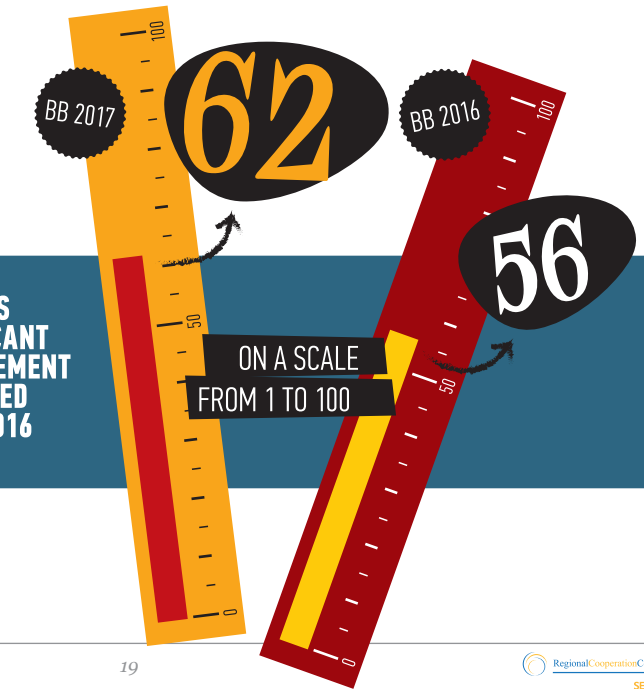
**Balkan Public and  
Business Sentiment  
Index**

THE OVERALL LEVEL OF SATISFACTION HAS BEEN INCREASING AMONG THE POPULATION OF THE REGION



South East European businesses positively assessed both the present situation and prospects,

WHICH IS SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT COMPARED TO BB 2016





**Life Satisfaction  
Index**

## The main concerns of the region's population are:



### UNEMPLOYMENT

67%

leads as the primary concern for citizens across the region



### ECONOMIC SITUATION

46%

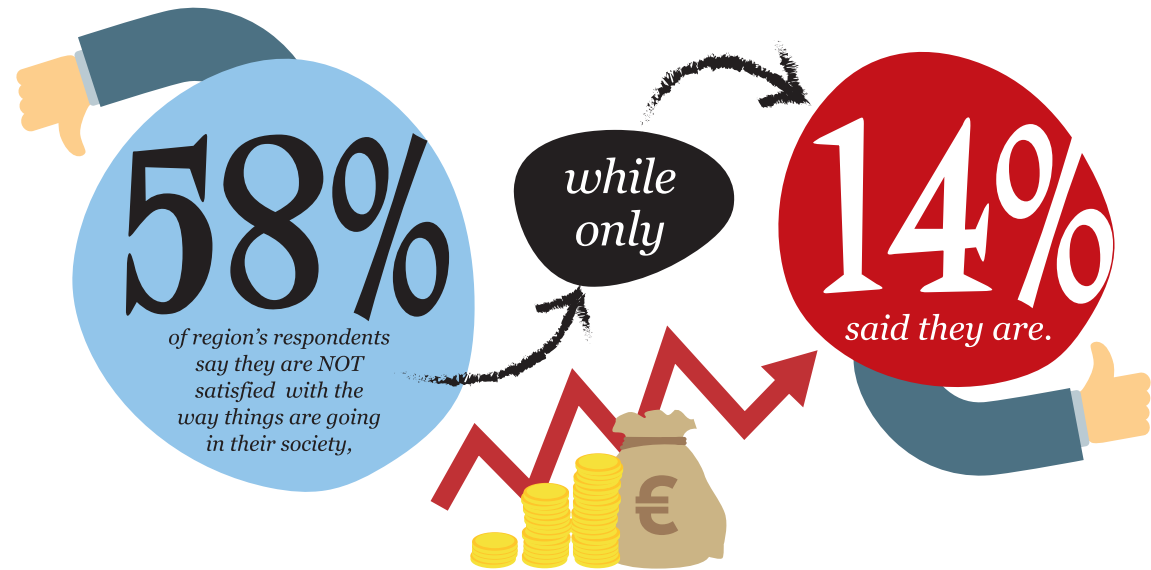
compared with the last year's results, the worry over this decreased by 9%



### CORRUPTION

32%

the worry over corruption has risen by 5%





of company leaders from the region report improvement in their business situation over the past 12 months,



**SEE NO CHANGE**



report deterioration in their business operations  
**LESS THAN 23% IN BB 2016**



**43%**

of heads of large enterprises had a more positive attitude towards economic developments over the past 12 months

**THAN THOSE MANAGING SMALL-TO-MEDIUM FIRMS**



**23%**

*In general*

**43%**



of SEE businesses expect to see improvement of economic situation in the coming 12 months,

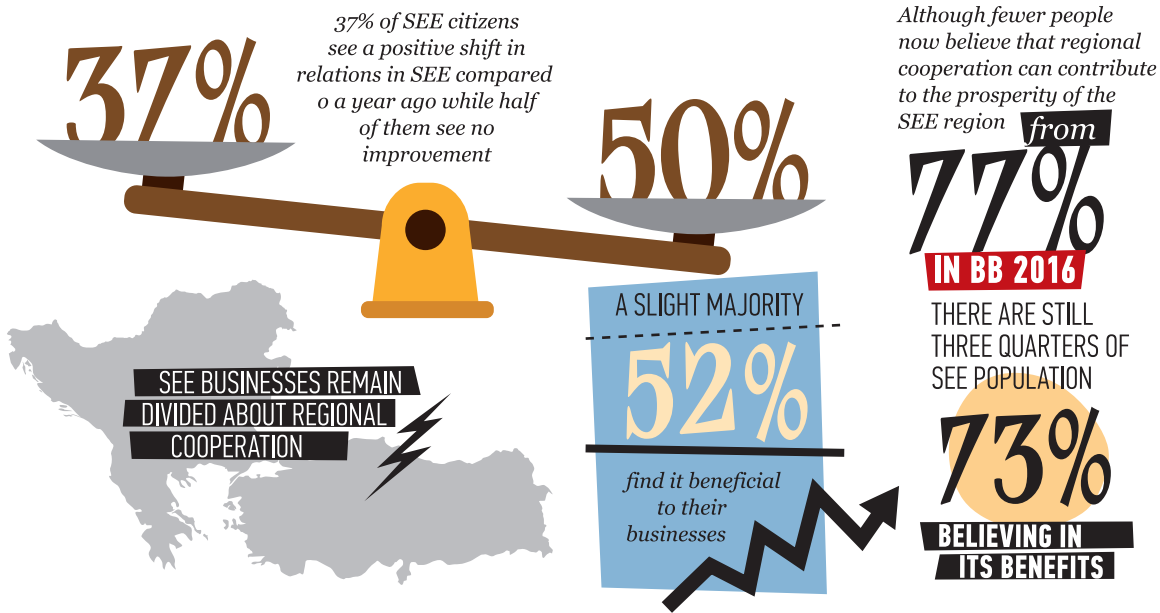
**COMPARED TO**

**37%**

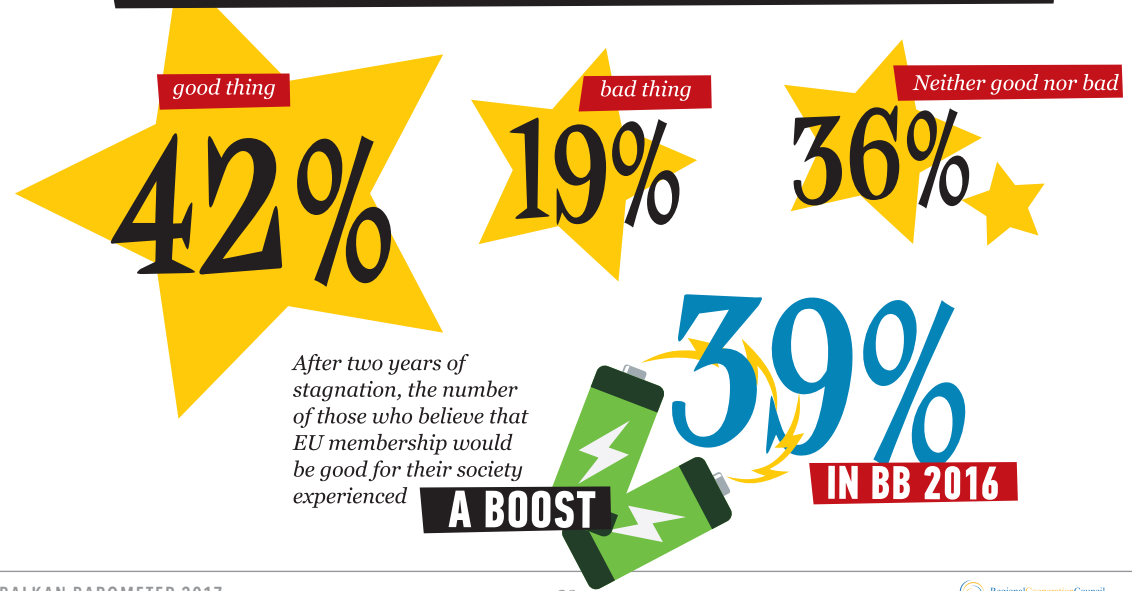
**IN BB 2016**



**Attitudes on Regional  
Cooperation and EU  
Integration**



**People of the region think that EU membership is:**



# Pessimism

continues to grow in South East Europe given that there are fewer people now who forecast accession to the EU as early as 2020

only

19% 28%

think it would never happen

while

IN BB 2015

27%

BELIEVED IT TO HAPPEN BY 2020

AND IN BB 2016

24%

OF SEE CITIZENS THOUGHT SO



ON EU MEMBERSHIP, THE MAJORITY OF SEE BUSINESS LEADERS,

57%

FEEL THAT ACCESSION WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO THEIR COMPANY,



1/3 OF RESPONDENTS IS UNSURE

7%

while

VIEW MEMBERSHIP THROUGH A NEGATIVE LENS





**Unemployment and  
Risk of Poverty**

IN THE SEE ECONOMIES, ALMOST HALF OF THE POPULATION,

**46%**

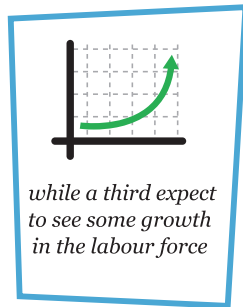
say they are employed, including those self-employed and those moonlighting.



On the other hand,

**56%**

OF BUSINESSES FROM SEE EXPECT TO SEE NO CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF STAFF THEIR COMPANIES EMPLOY,



On the South East Europe's average, in the past 3 years citizens have faced the following situations:

**49%** say someone from their family, a relative, or a friend lost their job

**33%** say a colleague lost his/her job

**13%** say they lost their job



Compared to BB 2016 a larger number of firms say they have increased their employment

**34% vs. 27% in BB 2016**

Most SEE companies

**53%**

HAVE NOT SEEN A CHANGE IN THE LEVEL OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT OVER THE PAST YEAR.

49%

of people say they were unable to afford a weeklong holiday away from home over the past 12 months.

23%

OF THE POPULATION SAY THEY COULD NOT PAY ALL THE BILLS

while 17%

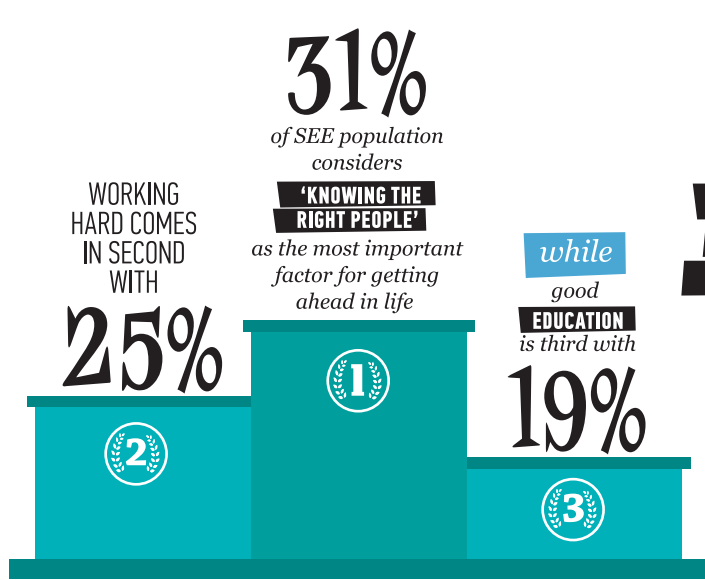
report they were unable to afford basic supplies, such as clothes, food and the like

19%

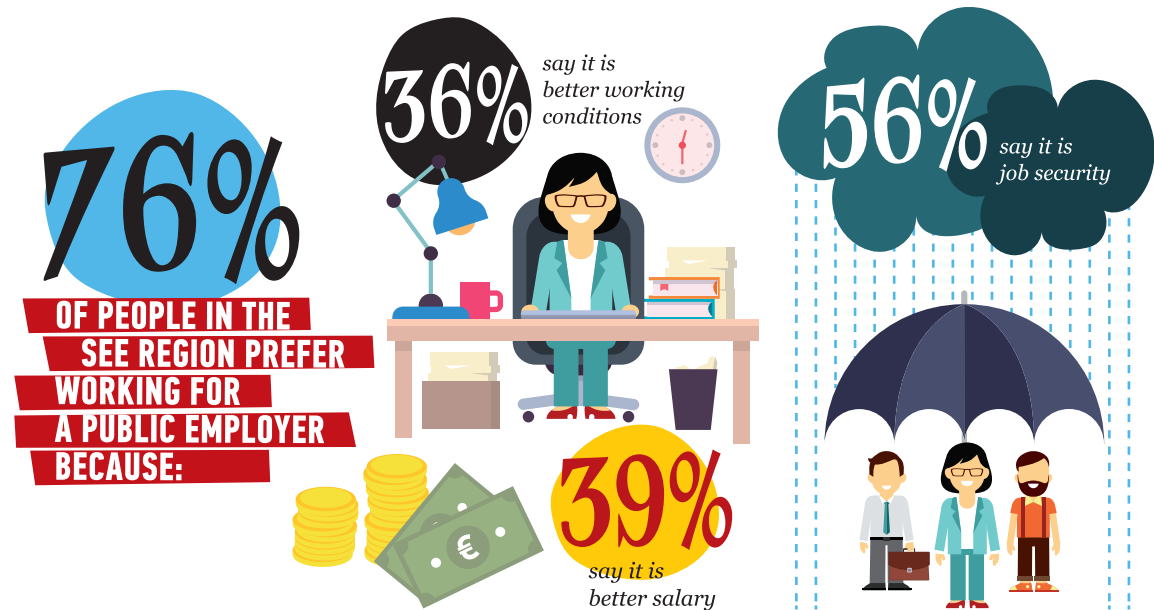
SAY THEY WERE UNABLE TO KEEP THEIR HOME ADEQUATELY WARM

Compared to the **BB 2016** survey, the situation has changed only in terms of payment of loan instalments. The number of people who were unable to pay instalments has increased (**BB 2016: 15% / BB 2017: 18%**).

## Employability and the Labour Market



- 48%** shortage of jobs on offer
- 46%** not knowing the right people
- 22%** age discrimination



Most people from South East Europe

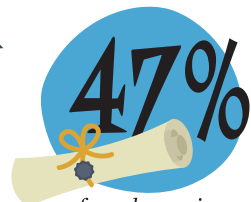
**63%**

AGREE THAT THEIR EDUCATION MEETS THE NEEDS OF THEIR JOB

while only

**23%**

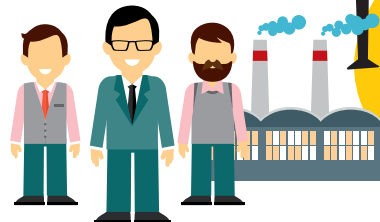
**DISAGREE**



while



while only



**54%**

of SEE business leaders think the education system produces labour meeting the needs of their enterprise

**IN CONTRAST,**

**31%**

consider the present schooling system inadequate

**14%**

HOLD THIS VIEW STRONGLY

## Attitudes towards Mobility

Slightly less than  
half of the region's  
population,  
**45%**  
**HAVE  
CONSIDERED  
MOVING  
ABROAD,**



but only  
**13%**

WOULD BE WILLING  
TO MAKE THE SAME  
MOVE WITHIN  
THE REGION



**38%**

of SEE population  
has travelled  
within the region  
in the past  
12 months



**32%**

say they have  
NOT visited any  
other city in the  
region



Among those  
who travelled,

**THE MAJORITY,  
60%**  
FELT WELCOME  
IN ANY CITY,

whereas

**28%**  
FELT WELCOME  
ONLY IN SOME  
CITIES

Only

**4%**

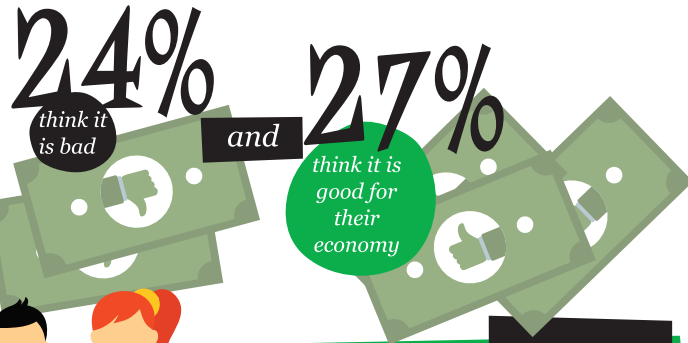
did not feel  
welcome in  
any city in  
the region



**MOST OF THE SEE POPULATION,**

**44%**

HAVE A NEUTRAL  
ATTITUDE TOWARDS  
PEOPLE COMING  
INTO THEIR ECONOMY  
FROM WITHIN THE  
REGION



*In comparison with the last year' survey, there are more people who think that the arrival of other people from the region is good*

**BB 2016: 22%**  
**BB 2017: 27%**

**AND FEWER  
OF THOSE  
WHO THINK  
IT IS BAD**

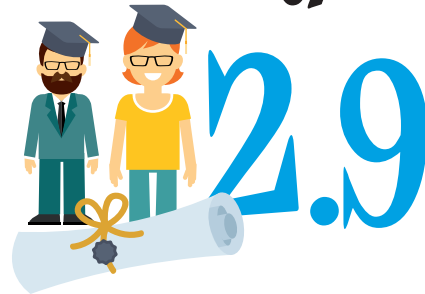
**BB 2016: 31%**  
**BB 2017: 24%**

## **Attitudes to Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups**



With **2.6** ON THE SCALE OF **1-5**

Highly educated citizens were significantly more likely to believe that integration of Roma was important for both regional cooperation and EU accession



Roma integration was not ranked highly as a consideration for EU accession either,

WITH ONLY

**2.7**

**2.9**

**73%**

of SEE population believes their governments should provide affirmative measures and promote opportunities



**FOR EQUAL ACCESS OF ROMA POPULATION WHEN APPLYING FOR A SECONDARY SCHOOL OR UNIVERSITY**

**16%**

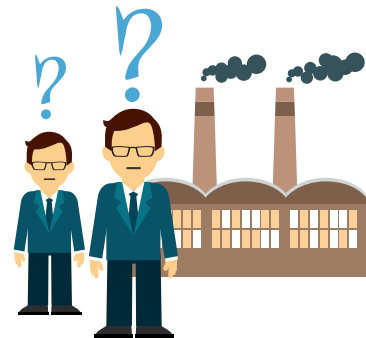
of SEE business leaders say they would



**HIRE ROMA REGARDLESS OF JOB QUALIFICATIONS**

**19%**

**ARE UNSURE EITHER WAY**





18%

of SEE companies feel that Roma employees would affect the work environment while the majority disagrees



74%

of those who feel that hiring Roma would impact their business operations see that influence

AS OVERWHELMINGLY NEGATIVE



and only

18%

FEEL THAT SUCH A PRACTICE WOULD AFFECT COMPANY SALES IN A

POSITIVE MANNER

SEE private businesses say they employ:



65% OF MEN

35% OF WOMEN



46%

of companies from education, arts, science or related sectors say they

EMPLOY WOMEN MORE OFTEN THAN OTHERS



**Perceptions of Trade  
and Investments**

**THE VAST MAJORITY OF SEE POPULATION.**

**90%**

are confident that their products and goods can compete well with those from other SEE economies,



**AS WELL AS THOSE FROM THE EU**

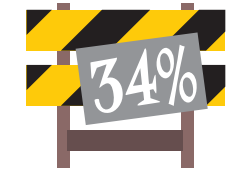
**82%**



While **62%**

of all businesses say they are still focused exclusively on the domestic market

Inferiority of goods and services on offer, as said by



OF SEE BUSINESSES, IS THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO EXPORT



Lack of interest/plans is the second most common reason,

cited by **29%** MANAGERS,

while almost a quarter

**23%**

see issues with capacities as a barrier to export





**EQUALLY REGARDLESS OF THEIR ORIGIN**

**UP TO 21% FROM 19% IN BB 2016**



**30% ARE UNSURE**



**While 28%**  
would not recommend investing there

# 62%

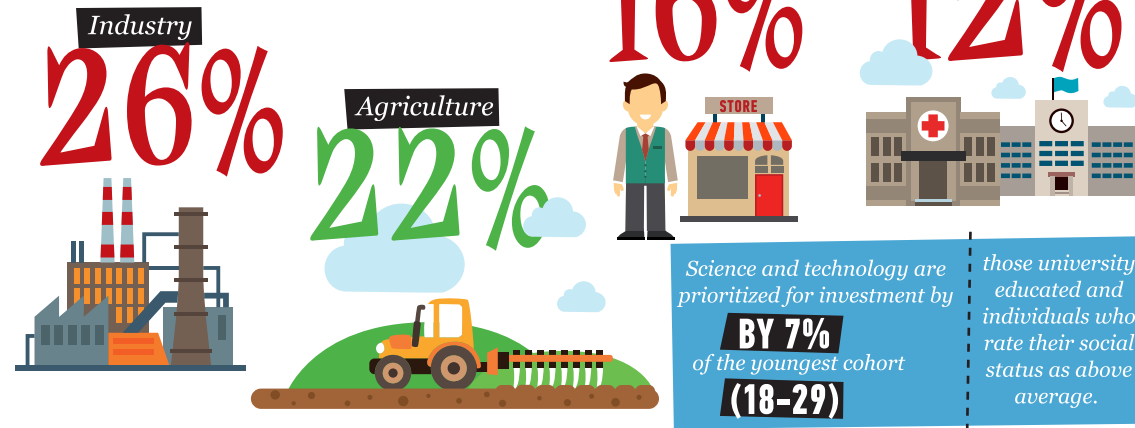
of SEE businesses said it is difficult to start a private business in their respective economy



## Obstacles to doing business by the region's corporations:



## SEE citizens think that their government should set investment priorities as follows:



**In 2016 SEE companies say  
they mostly invested in:**

**43%**

property, plants and  
equipment



**13%**

intangible  
assets



**12%**

long-term  
financial  
investments



*Demand for products  
and services continued  
to record significant  
growth over the  
past year, as*

**42%**

of SEE companies

vs. 36% in BB 2016

REPORT  
DEMAND  
INCREASE

**Perceptions of Transport  
and Infrastructure**

**IN THE SEE REGION**

**68%**

*of households say they own at least one car*

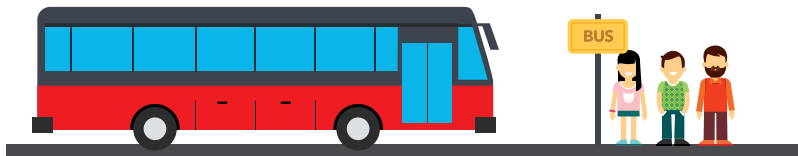
*and*

**32%**

**DO NOT**



**South East Europeans say they use public transportation:**



**Of all means of transport, people in SEE region report traveling mostly by:**

**53%**  
**AUTOMOBILE**



**35%**  
**BUS, WHEN LEAVING THEIR PLACE OF RESIDENCE**



**AIRPLANE WAS USED BY ONLY 1% of the population**

**MORE PEOPLE FROM SOUTH EAST EUROPE,**

**53%** think that travelling by road in their own economies is safe

than those who don't

**44%**

The road improvements are seen as having the most beneficial impact on travelling, as

**75%**

OF PEOPLE IN SEE SAY SO

**16%**

of population in the SEE region believe that improved railroads would have

**GREATEST POSITIVE IMPACT ON TRAVEL**

**MORE THAN HALF OF SEE BUSINESSES,**

**51%**

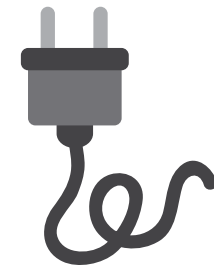
believe that upgrading roads would have the most positive effect on their business

Telecommunications come second

WITH A RELATIVELY HIGH NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

**16%**

prioritizing this infrastructure upgrade,




and electricity

RANKED THIRD

with

**10%**





**Attitudes towards  
Climate Change  
and Energy**

**MOST PEOPLE IN  
THE SEE REGION,**

**73%**

perceive climate  
change as a problem,

**with only**

**22%**

of those who do  
not consider climate  
change a serious  
problem at all



THE UPWARD TREND  
RECORDED IN 2015  
CONTINUES

**77%**

of SEE companies  
have taken some  
measure or action  
to reduce their  
harmful impact on  
environment.

**Still,**

**21%**

admits they do  
nothing to mitigate  
their risk to the  
environment.

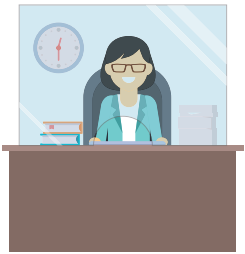


## Perceptions of Public Institutions and Services

(independence, freedom, corruption)

**ON A SCALE OF 1-4**

SEE citizens expressed their views on implementation of laws and the efficiency of administrative procedures by agreeing or disagreeing with the statements:



**43%**  
agree that the administrative procedures in public institutions **ARE EFFICIENT**

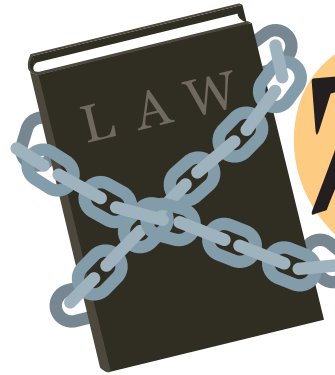


**83%**  
disagree that the law is applied to everyone **EQUALLY**



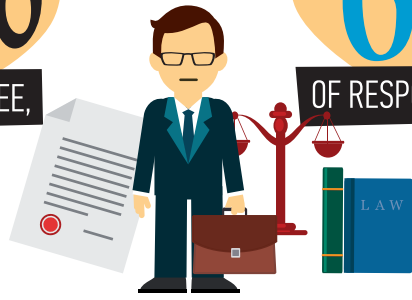
**73%**  
disagree that the law is applied and enforced **EFFECTIVELY**

The legal system is considered least independent,



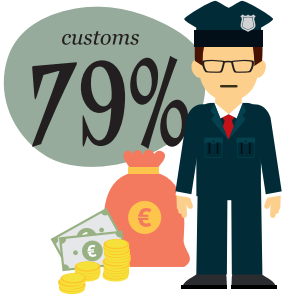
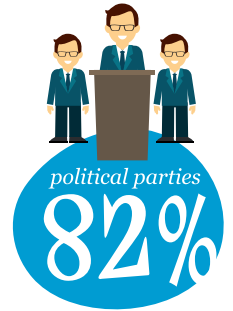
**SAY 78%**  
OF PEOPLE IN SEE,

whereas the ombudsmen are considered the most independent, or rather the least dependent,



**SAID 64%**  
OF RESPONDENTS

**These are considered the most corrupt by the SEE population:**



**47%**

of the population believe that religious authorities are corrupt

and

**55%**

BELIEVE THE SAME FOR NGOs



**THE MAJORITY OF SEE POPULATION,**

**73%**

do not perceive their government as effectively combating corruption



**34%**

of SEE managers agree that reporting wrongdoing to people in authority, via official channels, is the most efficient way to

**COMBAT CORRUPTION**

LESS THAN IN BB 2016

**39%**

**The fact that**

**28%**

of businesses feel that there is no recourse to corruption is alarming



# 45%

OF THE ENTIRE SEE POPULATION

say they do not even discuss government's decisions,



while

# 35%

SAY THEY DISCUSS THEM ONLY WITH PEOPLE THEY PRIVATELY KNOW AND OUTSIDE OF A PUBLIC SETTING



Only 8%

of South East Europeans reported protesting, while

# 5%

admit commenting the government's decisions on social networks

# AND 3%

say they participated in public debates

Compared to the BB 2016 survey, there are slightly more people who are actively involved in activities that could affect the government's decisions.

South East Europeans stated the reasons for not being actively involved in government decision-making:

# 47%

of those who are actively involved feel that an individual



decisions made by government

# 24%

fear public exposure



# 23%

DO NOT CARE



**Perception of  
Security**

44%

of South East Europeans  
say they are

**DISSATISFIED**

with the level of  
security in their  
own economy,



whereas

27%

RATE THEMSELVES  
AS SATISFIED

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