Satisfaction with the situation at the country level and with personal circumstances

Only 9 and 8 per cent of Bosnian respondents believe that the economic and political conditions in their country were better in 2016 than four years prior to the survey in their country. These percentages are much lower than the averages for south-eastern Europe (SEE), both at 17 per cent, as well as the corresponding figures for the transition region (24 and 28 per cent, respectively). About 1 in 10 respondents think that corruption levels improved in the four years preceding the survey which, again, is well below both the SEE average (18 per cent) and the transition region average (23 per cent).

A quarter of those surveyed believe that their household was better off in 2016 as compared with four years prior to the survey, and one in three are satisfied with their current personal financial situation. These percentages are both above the respective SEE averages.

Life satisfaction has increased across all age and income groups since the last survey, particularly among those in the upper income bracket, from 32 per cent in 2010 to 40 per cent in 2016. However, this is still lower than the averages in the transition region, Germany and Italy (43, 72 and 42 per cent, respectively).

The percentage of Bosnian respondents who think that children born now will have a better life than the current generations is virtually unchanged since the last survey: 36 per cent of respondents were optimistic in 2010, as opposed to 37 per cent in 2016. The level of optimism about the future in Bosnia and Herzegovina is, therefore, lower than that in SEE (39 per cent), the transition region (50 per cent) and Germany (46 per cent), but above Italian levels (22 per cent).

Attitudes towards democracy and the market economy

46 and 36 per cent of Bosnian respondents support democracy and the market economy, respectively, two figures that are lower than the respective averages for SEE, the transition region and Germany. In addition, 27 and 30 per cent of respondents believe that, under some circumstances, an authoritarian system or a planned economy might be preferable, while 27 and 34 per cent are indifferent about the different types of political or economic systems, respectively.

Only a minority of those surveyed believe that some basic democratic institutions exist in the country. For instance, 39 per cent of respondents think that peace and stability and freedom of speech are guaranteed, while 36 per cent indicate that gender equality is respected. Only one in four respondents believe that the country has an independent press and a fair court system, while one in five think that a strong political opposition exists.

Priorities for government spending

Of Bosnian respondents, 28 and 26 per cent think education and health care should be the top priorities for extra government spending, respectively, while one in six think that assisting the poor and pensions deserve additional funding. Further analysis of the LITS III data shows that 79 and 76 per cent of respondents would be willing to pay more taxes to improve the quality of their public health system and public education, respectively.
CHART 2. Optimism: percentage of respondents who are optimistic about the future of the younger generation

CHART 3. Market economy and democracy: percentage of respondents who prefer a market over a planned economy and democracy over an authoritarian government

CHART 4. Basic democratic institutions: percentage of respondents who agree that the country has these basic democratic institutions

CHART 5. Priorities for government spending

Panel A: Percentage of respondents who identify a given area as a priority in terms of government spending

Panel B: Breakdown of preferences for the top priority (education)

CHART 6. Sources of information: percentage of respondents who use these different sources of information

CHART 7. Health assessment: percentage of respondents who report themselves to be in good health (self-assessed)

CHART 8. Quality of services: percentage of respondents who are satisfied with the quality of public services, by category

CHART 9. Factors for success: percentage of respondents who identify the given factor as the most important for success, by income level

CHART 10. Attitudes towards women: percentage of respondents who agree with the statements below