ADVANCING NORMALIZATION BETWEEN KOSOVO AND SERBIA
ADVANCING NORMALIZATION BETWEEN KOSOVO AND SERBIA

Council for Inclusive Governance
New York, 2017
Contents

4 Preface and Acknowledgments

7 Comprehensive Normalization

11 Parliamentary Cooperation

22 Serb Integration and Serb Albanian Relations

32 Challenges of Establishing the Association/Community

39 Serbia’s Internal Dialogue on Kosovo

© Council for Inclusive Governance 2017
Almost twenty years after the war in Kosovo, resolution of the Kosovo-Serbia conflict remains a piece of unfinished business in the Balkans. The process is entering a critical stage. An agreement on comprehensive normalization or a peace treaty under which both sides will commit to mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and hopefully cooperation is within reach. Comprehensive normalization with Kosovo is an obligation for Serbia’s accession to the European Union and is also needed by Pristina in order to move forward. It is unclear, however, what is the most efficient way of getting there. It is not clear how to produce a document that will be acceptable to both sides and a document in the spirit of win-win rather than of win-lose.

Since 2010, Serbia and Kosovo have been on a quest to normalize their relations. In Brussels, in 2013, their prime ministers reached the first agreement of principles governing normalization of relations. Implementation deadlines were agreed upon as well. However, five years later the agreement remains to be implemented in full, most notably the provisions on establishing the Association/Community of Serb-Majority Municipalities and on energy. Kosovo’s institutions are not fully functioning in Kosovo’s predominantly ethnically Serb north and Serbia’s parallel administrative institutions continue their existence across Kosovo. A tough economic situation and a rickety rule of law complicate matters. A sense of frustration about the process is the prevailing feeling among the people on both sides.

The implementation of the Brussels agreement and the entire normalization process could have been done more effective and quicker. While a number of agreements have been implemented in 2014-2015 especially those on police, civic protection, border/boundary management, freedom of movement, and judiciary, the dynamism was lost in 2016. 2017 was a slow year for normalization. Political instability and frequent elections slowed things down. Elections are often a means of managing issues. The Kosovo opposition’s disapproval of the Association/Community essentially derailed its establishment.

Geopolitically speaking, the Kosovo-Serbia dispute is no longer among the top priorities of the EU or the US. Other more pressing issues took precedence. While the EU and the US remain committed to finalizing the normalization, it remains for Pristina and Belgrade to display the political will and agree on details of a new agreement. At the same time, other geopolitical actors are entering the regional
scene. A piece-meal approach of constructive ambiguity is no longer working. A concrete, precise, comprehensive, and legally binding agreement is needed. It is clear without resolving this issue there is no stability and no EU membership neither for Serbia nor for Kosovo. Time is short.

Under these complex circumstances, the Council for Inclusive Governance (CIG) in cooperation with and with the generous support of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) conducted in 2016 and 2017 an initiative on normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo in order to address these issues and help mitigate shortfalls of the normalization process as well as to enlarge it beyond the negotiating table in Brussels. The participants in the CIG-FDFA process included government, parliament and party officials of Kosovo and Serbia and representatives of the civil society. Senior European and American diplomats took part as well. This CIG-FDFA process also involved the main negotiators of both governments, other key officials, not only from the governing but also from the opposition parties contributing to the sustainability of the normalization process.

Through multiple roundtables, workshops, panels, briefings, small-group and individual discussions, and other activities CIG facilitated the participants’ joint exploration of possible solutions. The participants moved the process of normalization beyond the official Brussels framework and the initiative opened new channels and venues for cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo.

The following pages provide summaries of the most important discussions within this CIG-FDFA process, presenting to the reader the dynamic picture of the participants’ evolving views, agreements and disagreements, and their ideas and proposals.

CIG takes full responsibility for this publication, which has not been reviewed by the participants. They took part in the activities in their personal capacities under the Chatham House Rule. Five major themes of our work in the last two years are highlighted in this publication: (1) a future comprehensive agreement between Kosovo and Serbia; (2) cooperation between members of their parliaments; (3) Serb integration and Serb-Albanian relations in Kosovo; (4) establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-Majority Municipalities in Kosovo; and (5) advancing Serbia’s internal dialogue over Kosovo.

We at CIG are proud of our association with Switzerland and its FDFA and are especially grateful to Ambassadors Heidi Grau, Philippe Guex, Jean-Hubert Lebet,
Krystyna Marty Lang, and Jean-Daniel Ruch, to Pauline Menthonnex Gacaferri, Tamara Murer, Roland Salvisberg, Saskia Salzmann, Kuno Schläfli, and Talia Wohl for their support of CIG’s activities, confidence in our work and mission, and their thoughtful involvement. Without FDFA’s essential contributions this initiative would not have been possible.

We also take this opportunity to thank members of CIG’s Board of Directors Dr. Steven L. Burg, Dr. Gordon N. Bardos, Michael W. Elf, Esq., and Dr. Pierre Mirel for their many contributions to CIG’s work and their continuing good advice.

This initiative would not have been possible without the work and many essential contributions of CIG’s Vice President Shpetim Gashi who also prepared this report. We are grateful for the contributions of our colleagues in Belgrade and Pristina Dr. Igor Novaković and Arbër Kuçi. CIG is committed to continue contributing to normalizing relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

Alex Roishvili Grigorev, President
New York City
December 2017
COMPREHENSIVE NORMALIZATION

Reaching a Comprehensive Normalization Agreement between Kosovo and Serbia: Components and Preconditions

CIG began in 2016 an initiative on the comprehensive normalization between Serbia and Kosovo. It focused on developing a set of points to be included in an eventual agreement on comprehensive normalization between Pristina and Belgrade and the preconditions required for a successful negotiating process. The initiative engaged a number of political experts from Kosovo and Serbia, including analysts, journalists, and former and current politicians who jointly drafted the points.

The draft has two sections: the first section includes fourteen points covering various issues that the comprehensive normalization agreement should include, and the second section includes a list of issues that need to be addressed before starting the negotiations on comprehensive normalization. The objective of the draft is to promote innovative and pragmatic thinking and accelerate the normalization process between Serbia and Kosovo. The recommendations are intended to contribute to the normalization of relations between both governments and societies of Kosovo and Serbia.

The draft is based on broad agreement among the participants, who took part in the initiative in their personal capacities and whose positions do not necessarily reflect those of the organizations to which they belong. The draft is being discussed with local and international stakeholders involved in the normalization process between Kosovo and Serbia.

Components of the Comprehensive Normalization Agreement

1. Serbia commits not to oppose Kosovo’s membership in international organizations. Belgrade will not lobby against Kosovo’s membership, will not vote against it, and will not use its veto when applicable. Belgrade committed in the 2013 Brussels agreement not to oppose Kosovo’s path to EU integration. The same model should be applied for membership in other international organizations.

2. Serbia and Kosovo will adjust their constitutions and laws in line with the principles of the Brussels Agreement, the Comprehensive Normalization Agreement, and the EU membership criteria. This includes mutual recognition of each other’s legal systems and jurisdictions.
3. Kosovo and Serbia commit to conclude the process of uncovering the fate of the missing persons. They agree to share information and intelligence reports about potential burial sites, allocate funds, and intensify institutional cooperation at all levels to resolve the issue fully. Serbia and Kosovo commit to recognize each other’s personal documents permanently.

4. Kosovo and Serbia commit to adopt amnesty laws based on best regional and international practices.

5. Serbia and Kosovo commit to resolve the issue of Kosovo’s pension fund covering the period before and after 1999.

6. Kosovo and Serbia agree to exchange permanent missions.

7. Serbia and Kosovo commit to cooperate on the implementation of the rights of minority communities. The agreement regulates the level and areas of cooperation between Pristina and Belgrade. Governments agree to support the integration of communities into their respective societies.

8. Kosovo and Serbia agree to formalize the border/boundary within one year upon signing of the agreement.

9. Serbia and Kosovo commit to cooperate on security and humanitarian issues.

10. Kosovo and Serbia commit to ensure safe and free movement of all citizens in their territories.

11. Serbia and Kosovo agree to form a mechanism to address the property claims that both sides have on each other’s territories based on the principles of resolution of such disputes in the area of former Yugoslavia.

12. Kosovo and Serbia commit to create conditions for a sustainable return of IDP’s and refugees.

13. Serbia and Kosovo commit to resolve their disputes exclusively through peaceful means and dialogue. They commit to contribute to regional security in accordance with the EU Common Foreign Security Policy and other best security practices.
Preconditions for the Comprehensive Normalization Agreement

1. Full implementation of all agreements. All the Brussels agreements should be fully implemented. Belgrade and Pristina should keep the implementation process on track and ensure it does not derail because of short-term tensions. The remaining points of the Brussels Agreement, primarily the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-Majority Municipalities and implementation of the energy agreement, should be concluded in parallel.

2. The negotiating process should have a clear vision, consensual principles, and a time frame. Though the negotiating process may face uncertainties at the outset, the sides should commit not to interrupt the process, regardless of short-term tensions that might arise. The comprehensive normalization agreement should promote the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbian institutions and Serb and Albanian societies and integration of the Kosovo Serb community into Kosovo's political and economic system as well as in its social fabric.

3. Reaching and implementing a comprehensive normalization agreement should be a strict condition for EU membership for Serbia and Kosovo. Such conditioning should serve both as a ‘stick’ and a ‘carrot’ for Pristina and Belgrade. It should encourage Belgrade and Pristina to do their homework more effectively and eliminate any doubt that they could become members of the European family without first establishing good relations and resolving all outstanding issues between them. The EU is not likely to import another ‘frozen conflict.’ In this context, EU representatives should become more vocal and engaged in the process and offer political and financial support. The EU should also show to Serbia and Kosovo that their accession remains a priority for the EU. For instance, supporting the construction of a highway from Nis to Pristina could have a significant impact on intensifying social interactions and economic cooperation between Serbian and Kosovo societies.

4. Pristina and Belgrade should aim at reaching broad support, if not a national consensus, for the comprehensive normalization agreement. Consensus or broad support could be reached through the inclusion of all sectors of both societies, including independent experts, the media, and opposition parties. To ensure wider participation and transparency, the parliaments should also be engaged actively in the process, including regular discussions about the content of the agreements. However, when the consensus is not possible, the governments should retain the monopoly of decision-making. Kosovo Serbs should be part of Kosovo’s negotiating team. Kosovo Serbs
should offer advice, input, and feedback to the negotiating team and also explain to their own community the impact the agreements have on them. This way they would be able to guard the interests of their community and better articulate the community’s diverse problems and issues.

5. The international involvement in negotiating a comprehensive normalization agreement should be strengthened. EU and US mediation is essential for reaching and implementing such an agreement. Upon reaching a comprehensive normalization agreement, EU should commit itself to start accession talks with Kosovo and open more negotiation chapters with Serbia.

6. Pristina and Belgrade both should support integration of the Serb community in Kosovo. All rights prescribed for the Serbs in Kosovo’s laws should be implemented. For example, Pristina should fully implement the Law on Languages and establish the Association/Community of Serb-Majority Municipalities, and Belgrade should dismantle its institutions in Kosovo and support Serb participation in all Kosovo’s institutions. At the same time, Serb-majority municipalities should fully implement all Kosovo laws.

7. Full freedom of movement should be guaranteed. Pristina and Belgrade should ensure unhindered movement of all citizens between and within Kosovo and Serbia. The Brussels agreement on freedom of movement should be reviewed with the goal of removing remaining procedural problems, such as accompanying documents for Kosovo ID cards and car license plates.

8. More progress should be achieved in uncovering the destiny of the missing persons. Political and judicial institutions should make concrete progress in supporting the work of regional initiatives such as RECOM and of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Uncovering the fate of the missing persons is an essential contribution to normalization of relations. Resolving the issue of missing persons could result in greater public support for the dialogue. The governments should ensure stable financing and implementation of the priorities for the work of the relevant institutions.

9. Pristina and Belgrade should create a positive climate in preparation for negotiating the comprehensive normalization agreement. Civil society should be involved in creating such a climate. Agreements should not be presented as temporary solutions—like the one on freedom of movement, which had to be addressed repeatedly—but as long lasting resolution of disputes. Communication between the governments and their respective publics about the content of the agreements and their benefits for the population should be improved. Belgrade officials should intensify their communication with the Serbian public about the need to resolve the
Kosovo dispute. Their rhetoric should change and become good neighborly. Pristina should do the same.

10. Mechanisms for resolving private property issues in Kosovo should become functional. The following steps should be taken to return usurped private property to their legal owners: a) establish working groups to examine the property disputes; b) identify usurped property and order usurpers to return it to their owners; and c) put more pressure on legal institutions, including courts and police, to speed up return of property.

11. Resolve the issue of wanted people in Kosovo and Serbia. Belgrade and Pristina should exchange data on investigations and indictments, including those that have been sent to the Interpol, and to cooperate on these issues. An amnesty law could resolve the issue.

12. Improve communication about the dialogue. To have an unambiguous interpretation and greater transparency of the dialogue, after each meeting, the participants (EU, Belgrade and Pristina) should inform the public about the results of the dialogue through a single unambiguous message.

PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION

Role of Parliaments in the Normalization Process

CIG organized its fourth roundtable for members of parliaments of Serbia and Kosovo in June 2016 in Podgorica, Montenegro. The first three roundtables were organized in 2015. The objective of the meeting was to search for ways to contribute to the resolution of outstanding issues.

Relations between Serbian and Kosovo Albanian societies continue to suffer from the past. Anger and revenge are not giving way to reconciliation and compromise. The participants called on their colleagues in Kosovo’s and Serbia’s governments to resolve the dispute now and not leave it to future generations. Many said that politicians could reverse the hostile process of the past decades with a “little extra effort and some political will.”

Regarding the role of the parliaments, a speaker called on the participants to establish more rigorous monitoring and oversight over their executives, invite government officials to parliamentary hearings more often, and engage in public outreach. He concluded that normalization is not simply a process of two groups of people from the two governments but rather a process between the two societies, and thus parliamentarians should take a more active role in this process.
A Kosovo parliamentarian said that politicians in Kosovo and Serbia have entered a vicious circle, mostly because they are not speaking openly about the reality to their own people. As an example of regress in relations, he took the integration of Kosovo Serbs into the Kosovo society and system of governance. The Serbs, he said, have taken steps back in this integration and blamed both Pristina and Belgrade for this outcome. The speaker argued that Serbs and Albanians should do more themselves rather than wait for the EU to come up with solutions and compromises for them.

Some argued that parliamentarians could contribute to change the negative public discourse on normalization and to improve the already reached agreements and their implementation. A speaker noted that some of agreements made the lives of the people even harder, some are untenable, and many of those have not even been implemented. Specifically, the speaker singled out the agreement on the freedom of movement which created many new hurdles for Kosovo drivers, including not recognizing Kosovo RKS license plates and ID cards, but rather replacing them with some temporary Serbian papers.

**Minority Integration**

The lack of Serb integration in Kosovo remains a major obstacle to normalization of relations between the two societies. Belgrade insists on the implementation of the agreement on establishing the Association/Community of the Serb-majority Municipalities while Kosovo’s governments says it should be based on the Kosovo Constitutional Court’s decision. At the same time, Kosovo’s largest opposition party, the Self-Determination Movement, is altogether against the formation of the Association/Community.
A speaker said that the people in Kosovo are against the Association/Community and the government is obliged to respect the will of the people. Furthermore, the speaker said that the Association/Community would not integrate the Serbs but rather create segregation and undermine Kosovo’s central institutions. Serbs believe that the Association/Community would safeguard their interests and rights in Kosovo. A Serbian participant said that it is difficult for Belgrade to trust the Brussels process and show good will if the Association/Community is not established more than three years after the April 2013 agreement.

The rights of the Albanian minority in south Serbia was another issue discussed at the roundtable. A speaker said that Belgrade should give them the same rights it wants for the Serbs in Kosovo. Another speaker spoke of much higher unemployment rate than the Serbian average and of the lack of economic opportunities, adding that the level of the government investment is also a lot lower than the Serbian average. Also, the Albanians there have not been able to use textbooks from Kosovo. “We have given Kosovo Serbs a double majority, while Albanians in Serbia cannot get even books from Kosovo.”

**Missing Persons**

According to the Humanitarian Law Center, from January 1998 to December 1999 there were 13,146 killed and missing in Kosovo: 10,495 Albanians, 2,077 Serbs, and 574 others. Today there remain over 1,650 missing persons. The participants encouraged a public discourse and initiatives that take into account victims of all ethnicities. They pointed out that photos of only Albanian missing persons are placed in front of the Kosovo parliament and only photos of Serbs in front of the Serbian parliament.

There was a consensus that the Kosovo and Serbian governments could do more to uncover the fate of the missing persons by providing more financial resources, sharing information about potential gravesites, and increase cooperation and coordination of their delegations to the Working Group on Missing Persons. A number of participants also recommended that the issues be addressed between the two governments in the Brussels dialogue.

In parallel with the efforts to uncover the fate of the missing, the justice systems should intensify their efforts to find and prosecute the perpetrators.
Conclusion
The participants offered a number of recommendations in the area of education, sports, culture, and other social activities that would contribute to the normalization of relations between the two societies.

• Replicate the cooperation between Kosovo’s and Serbia’s chambers of commerce. Participants suggested inviting representatives of the chambers of commerce to one of the next roundtables to discuss their approach of cooperation and how they handle political hurdles, especially those related to the status issue. Many speakers said that focusing on economic cooperation and trade should take precedence over political issues because these are areas that produce immediate benefits and connect people.

• Offer opportunities to learn Albanian for the Serbs in Kosovo. Speaking Albanian would not only improve social relations between Serbs and Albanians but would also create better employment opportunities for the Kosovo Serbs, especially in the private sector. Currently, there are very few Serbs employed in private companies.

• Establish an exchange program between the University of Belgrade and the University of Pristina. Cooperation on education more likely since it is not too politically sensitive. Though Serbia does not recognize the University of Pristina, it was recommended that the heads of the two universities find ways to circumvent political hurdles and establish such a program.

• Organize a football match between former players of Partisan and Pristina football teams. There was consensus that normalization of relations requires communication between all sections of societies, not only between the two governments, it was recommended to organize such a football match to promote reconciliation and better social relations.

• Organize joint government meetings. Though a far-fetched idea for the moment, a speaker suggested a joint meeting of Kosovo and Serbian governments, similar to the Kosovo government’s meetings with those of Macedonia and Albania or Serbia’s with those of Hungary and Romania.

• Organize joint visits of MPs in Kosovo and Serbia. Members of Parliaments could organize joint visits to Albanian-majority areas in Serbia and Serb-majority areas in Kosovo. The objective of such visits is to get informed directly about the challenges facing the communities and promote social interactions.
The participants discussed the possibility of issuing a joint statement on the missing persons. They had broad agreement on the content of a statement drafted during the discussions but were not able to reach consensus on some of the wording and ideas proposed in the statement.

Parliaments Advancing Normalization

CIG organized its fifth roundtable for members of parliaments of Serbia and Kosovo in October 2016 in Mavrovo, Macedonia. The parliamentarians discussed ways to advance the normalization process and to strengthen their effectiveness and influence in decision-making.

Serbia and Kosovo have specific interests and objectives in normalizing their relations: Serbia hopes to gain EU membership and improve political and economic relations with the EU. Kosovo hopes to conclude the process with membership in international organizations and eventual recognition by Belgrade. Belgrade is in favor of normalization but opposes Kosovo’s membership in major international organizations and says it will not recognize Kosovo. Different expectations and visions of dialogue lead to a slow normalization process. In this context of conflicting goals, many participants said that Pristina and Belgrade should “rationalize debate, rationally articulate their opportunities, and decrease their inflammatory rhetoric.”

Normalization between Serbia and Kosovo is complicated also by internal political dynamics. Normalization of relations between governing and opposition parties in both Pristina and Belgrade is essential for building national consensus on difficult decisions, which, some speakers said all know what they are: Serbia will have to
relinquish its claim on Kosovo, while Kosovo will have to offer the additional rights to Kosovo Serbs through the establishment of the Association/Community. In addition to building national or at least interparty consensus, the international community, primarily the EU, should become engaged more substantially in mediating an agreement that closes all the disputes.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

- The status dispute and the narrative of the past remain major obstacles to moving towards comprehensive normalization and reconciliation between the two societies. The format, substance, and the goals of the Brussels dialogue should be restructured to include the status issue. Parliamentarians could encourage and support rational debates about the past and thus directly contribute to the reconciliation process. Some speakers said that it would be difficult to make significant progress towards reconciliation “as long as we have leaderships connected to the wars themselves,” a condition which does not allow to articulate a rational explanation of what happened during the war.

- Normalization of relations between governing and opposition parties in Kosovo and Serbia is essential for building national support for the resolution of the remaining disputes. Many speakers said that the governing parties not only did not make any effort to include opposition in the process, but also kept it in the dark about the negotiations and the agreements. However, some said that many members of parliaments in Kosovo and Serbia have been indifferent to the dialogue and made few efforts to compel the government to report more often.

- A speaker suggested forming a group of parliamentarians from Kosovo and Serbia to identify and articulate concrete issues and lobby jointly for their resolution. Although the parliamentarians have no direct mechanisms to resolve problems, they have a strong voice and could have an impact on several areas. A number of speakers supported the idea of dealing more with specific issues, such as those heard by a number of parliamentarians in Velika Hoča/Hoça e Madhe, during a CIG-organized visit to the majority-Serb village in central Kosovo.

- Parliamentarians in Kosovo and Serbia should do a “scanning of the dialogue and the agreements” and prepare a document where they could set some principles and identify areas of cooperation. In other words, parliamentarians should become more active, constantly pressuring the governments to report to them rather than “just waiting quietly for government officials to come to them,” which rarely happens.
• Kosovo Serbs should be included in the dialogue. Some speakers said that Pristina has not invited Kosovo Serb representatives to become part of its team. Kosovo Serbs have been involved indirectly with Belgrade's team. A speaker said that Pristina should understand that Belgrade is important for Kosovo Serbs not only financially, but also emotionally.

• The role of the European Union should go beyond that of a soft facilitator; it should find ways to also impose some solutions in areas where Pristina and Belgrade fail to agree. Some speakers argued that the international community has also been sidelinging "politicians with common sense" and only works with those it thinks can deliver. But those that can "deliver" care more about maintaining their own power than about bringing solutions to the problems, a number of speakers argued.

• A number of parliamentarians reported about their visit to Velika Hoča/Hoçe e Madhe, a Serb village of about 700 people, where they had lunch with about fifteen residents and visited a number of local businesses. The Velika Hoca residents reported that the village offers no prospects for the young, and that most of them are leaving. The small businesses face challenges such as difficulties in finding markets for their products. In addition to regular problems that other communities face (unemployment, inadequate economic development, prevalence of garbage, quality of education, lack of medications, etc.), they said that they still do not have access to some of their private property that remains usurped by their Albanian neighbors. Given their small voting base, they did not manage to elect representatives in their municipality's (Rahovec/Orahovac) local assembly. However, some residents are employed in the municipal institutions. The local residents called on the parliamentarians, and specifically on the Serb List representatives, to make more frequent visits to village, get informed about their problems, and resolve them through institutional mechanisms.

Public Debates

In April 2017, CIG organized two public panels with Kosovo and Serbian parliamentarians: one in North Mitrovica and one in Pristina. The events were widely covered in the media. The discussions focused on the integration of Kosovo's north. Questions from the audience reflected public dissatisfaction with the current situation in the north and Serb reservations about integration into Kosovo's institutions. The parliamentarians stressed that this integration has no alternative and that the Serbs in the north should engage more in bringing up their concerns to Belgrade and Pristina. It was also stressed that Serbia and Kosovo are obliged by EU to sign a bilateral agreement on comprehensive normalization.
Members of Parliaments of Serbia and Kosovo meet International Officials in Brussels

CIG organized a policy discussion roundtable for six members of parliaments of Kosovo and Serbia and several meetings with international officials on February 23-24, 2017 in Brussels, Belgium. At the discussion, the parliamentarians reached a number of conclusions and recommendations—some of them by consensus—and then presented them to the international officials. This report lays out a number of challenges to the dialogue, the vision of the participants, suggested changes to the current approach, a list of remaining issues, and some recommendations for the next steps.

Challenges to Dialogue

- Sporadic incidents—train, wall in Mitrovica—complicate the normalization process. As a result, a lot of domestic and international resources concentrate on damage management rather than on the implementation process. On a positive note, these events have not resulted in a single interethnic incident in Kosovo, showing that relations between the two communities are stable and can no longer be destabilized by symbolic incidents. Also, the reaction of the people in the north to these incidents was peaceful. The EU could help by becoming more proactive to prevent the occurrence of such incidents in the future.

- Inflammatory rhetoric coming from both sides remains a constant burden to the process, causing confusion and suspicion about the dialogue and its objectives. The same leaders that speak of war in the morning speak of peace in the evening. Publics in Kosovo and Serbia are understandably disoriented and as a result have lost trust in their political leaderships.

- The dialogue lacks clear principles; it is more of an ad hoc process. Other processes, such as Vienna negotiations, were based on some broad principles. However, setting principles at this stage might not be possible so the resources should focus on the implementation of the agreements. Future dialogues, though, should be based on clear and transparent principles.

- Dialogue is not sufficiently inclusive at home. The governments operate in secrecy and rarely share information about the dialogue with their legislatures. Parliamentarians are usually informed only after the agreements have been signed.
- EU's credibility is decreasing in Serbia and Kosovo. EU membership is increasingly considered a distant outcome, which in turn results in less enthusiasm for the dialogue process. The delay of visa liberalization for Kosovo because of non-ratification of the border agreement with Montenegro—while visa liberalization is granted to Ukraine and Georgia with real border issues—is undermining hopes for EU integration.

- Constructive ambiguity, while it may have been a necessary asset at the outset of the process for reaching agreements, is becoming a liability for the implementation process. Constructive ambiguity should be replaced with constructive clarity and transparency.

- The continuing resistance of five EU non-recognizers to recognize Kosovo is considered a serious problem for Kosovo’s EU prospect.

- There is a lack of domestic support for the dialogue. Governments should engage more in public campaigns to increase support of citizens for the normalization and EU integration.

**Vision of Parliamentarians**

- The process is not sufficiently inclusive at home. More space for substantive engagement of parliamentarians in the dialogue should be created.

- The facilitator (EU) should offer more explanations on the details of the agreements when tensions arise (e.g., the wall), not necessarily get involved in domestic debates in Serbia and Kosovo, but simply explain the terms of the agreements.

- Constructive ambiguity should be replaced with constructive transparency, the process should become more understandable, clearer, and principle-based.

- The normalization process should become more dynamic and efficient, not to allow too much distance between the agreeing and the implementing (time distance allows for conflicting interpretations and confusion).

- EU should find a way to include Kosovo Serbs in the dialogue.
Changes to Current Approach

- Just like Serbia, Kosovo should also have clear and credible EU integration prospects. Visa liberalization is a good start (search for a solution for de-conditioning visa liberalization with border demarcation with Montenegro).

- The governments should be more transparent with their parliaments. How to balance transparency with efficiency? Is the process not transparent and inclusive enough at home (Kosovo, Serbia) or in Brussels? What can Brussels do? What models of transparent negotiations exist out there? These were some of the questions posed during the discussions.

- Normalization should be supported through other outside complementary activities such as sports, arts, and education.

- Kosovo Serbs feel excluded, with many feeling not represented by the Serb List since it came to power through an allegedly manipulated electoral process. EU and other international and local institutions should prevent the manipulation of Serb votes in the next elections in Kosovo. A free and fair election is the only way to help ensure democratic representation of Kosovo Serbs into Kosovo’s institutions.

Remaining Issues for the Dialogue

- The Association/Community (an institution where municipalities cooperate and coordinate activities, joint projects; it cannot assume powers of municipalities, the statute should be clear, not ambiguous; Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs insist on it having real powers); the Government of Kosovo should draft a letter of commitment and invite the Serbs to return to the institutions to begin the work on the Association/Community. It is a challenge for all involved to transform the issue of the Association/Community from a political to a technical one.

- Energy.

- Courts in the north.

- Serbia’s parallel institutions in Kosovo.

- Missing persons.

- Pension fund of Kosovo contributors before 1999.

- The status issue.
Recommendations

- All sides should show constructive transparency of the normalization process, less ambiguity: offer details of the agreements and prepare progress reports on implementation backed up by data—such as in the case of diploma recognitions—when applicable.

- EU should offer more explanations and guidance in the implementation process and warn parties internally of the consequences of their actions.

- EU should make the prospect for EU membership for both Serbia and Kosovo more credible and visible. When possible, it should support infrastructure projects and institutional reform through concrete actions.

- In the event of border agreement non-ratification, EU and Kosovo should try to delink or find some alternative solution for border demarcation with Montenegro to ensure the visa liberalization.

- EU together with Kosovo and Serbian stakeholders should define a set of broad principles for the normalization process.

- Kosovo political parties should be helped join their sister pan-European parties.

- Kosovo and Serbia are no longer at the top of the agendas of international actors. This is an opportunity for Belgrade and Pristina to work out a common agenda on issues of mutual interest, including regional cooperation and EU integration.

SERB INTEGRATION AND SERB-ALBANIAN RELATIONS IN KOSOVO

Integration, Resisted but Inevitable

If you organize a referendum on Serb integration in Kosovo’s north, the results would be overwhelmingly against it. Though Pristina and the Albanian population publically support integration, they do not seem to want it either. “Nobody wants integration, but it is an inevitable evil and we have to find a way to do it, the sooner the better.” Albanians are not ready to share state responsibilities with the Serbs. Serbs are also not ready to assume such responsibilities. As a result, we have a superficial integration largely depending on the whims of political leaders who can strengthen or weaken it with a few political statements, many speakers concluded at a roundtable organized by CIG in Pristina in February 2016.
Many Kosovo Serbs feel stateless. Serbia is phasing out its institutions while the newly established Kosovo local institutions aiming to replace the Serbian ones do not function when it comes to offering services to citizens, especially in the north. “We have elected mayors and assemblies, but two years after the only people they serve are themselves,” a speaker argued. They receive salaries and other benefits, but have not established any services.

Serbia’s political structure in Kosovo has been gradually dismantled and integrated into Kosovo’s system. Police and Civil Protection, considered the most sensitive, have already been integrated. An agreement on courts has been reached, though its implementation is being delayed. Kosovo Serbs are worried what is going to happen with the service structures: education, healthcare, and a number of other institutions, such as Serbian post service. Many speakers said that the Serbian service institutions should be regulated, and Belgrade should be allowed to fund them.

Conclusions and Recommendations

• Draft the Association/Community’s statute. The Association/Community is the main issue dividing Serbs and Albanians. There is an evident fear among some of the Albanian parties about the Association/Community, believing “it would return Serbia to Kosovo.” A speaker said that the best way to “disarm these parties from their fears” is to write the statute so that everyone would be able to see that the Association/Community is not “a state within a state,” but simply an organization that aims to improve practical conditions for the Serb community.

• Organize debates on the substance of the Association/Community. The debate over the Association/Community has been mostly about symbolism and how it would advance national issues, but its role and substance remain unclear to both Serbs and Albanians. Kosovo Serbs should have public debates about the concrete role and responsibilities of the Association/Community: how it would improve services for Kosovo Serbs? How it would improve education and health? What would the Serb-majority municipalities benefit from such an umbrella organization? How to respond to the fear it has created within the Albanian community? How would it specifically improve economic development? What about urban planning, will it be able to stop illegal construction? How it would create more jobs?

• Establish regular substantive discussions between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo’s opposition parties. Although Kosovo’s opposition supports the integration
of the Serb community, some of their actions, especially their opposition to the Association/Community, indicate the opposite. Kosovo Serbs fear the program of the Self-Determination Movement (VV) the most. Although they preach a civic state—equal individual rather than ethnic rights—there are inconsistencies between what they say and what their party program promotes. VV’s main objective is unification with another state based on shared ethnicity. It prefers Albanian ethnic symbols over Kosovo’s civic ones. Many speakers expressed doubts about any substantive cooperation with VV, but supported an eventual initiative for discussions with them. The good news is, a speaker added, that ethnic issues, whether among Serbs or Albanians, are not as effective as before in mobilizing people.

- Belgrade funding should become fully transparent to alleviate Kosovo Albanian fears. Serbian funding for Kosovo Serbs is critical, just like Kosovo’s diaspora remittances for Kosovo Albanians. Neither Serbs nor Albanians could survive without such financial assistance. However, to alleviate the fear of the Albanians, many speakers suggested that Belgrade become fully transparent with its funding, to show that its funding is dedicated to improve the wellbeing of the Serb community, and not to undermine Kosovo’s institutions. A speaker argued that a community of 90 percent should not feel threatened by a community of 5 percent.

Inclusion of Kosovo Serb Civil Society in Policy-Making

CIG organized in June 2016 in Pristina a roundtable for Kosovo government officials, including the prime minister and the minister for dialogue, and a number of Kosovo Serb civil society representatives. The objective of the meeting was to discuss ideas about including Kosovo Serbs civil society in the discussions and formulation of policies.
The following points are based on the roundtable discussions.

- Government officials said that without the telephone code, energy, and dismantling of Serbia’s parallel structures, they will not establish the Association/Community. However, they said that a management team is already in place and will start drafting the statute soon. In addition, the government will form another team that will deal with the dismantling of parallel structures. A speaker complained that three years after the agreement, the government is still working on the statute, but a government official replied that the existence of parallel institutions is delaying the process and that their dismantling is a non-negotiable precondition for the formation of the Association/Community.

- Parallel structures should not be dismantled before a model for their integration is found. Many speakers said that parallel structures are there not only for political but also for practical reasons. They offer services—such as distribution of pensions—that no other institution offers. In addition, closing them would leave over 5,500 people without jobs. So closure of parallel institutions would cause chaos, panic, and lots of people might leave Kosovo, disintegrating rather than integrating the Serb community, many speakers said. Pristina should know that preserving jobs is important. Kosovo itself has an overloaded administration, with over 80,000 people in the public sector, and despite repeated calls by the EU and IMF to reform and downsize the administration, Pristina has so far not taken any steps in such direction, primarily because it is aware that sacking employees massively would create chaos and would not be politically beneficial for the governing parties.

- Privatization of public companies in Serb-majority municipalities will give priority to Kosovo Serb investors, government officials said. Some speakers said that privatization of Brezovica should be given priority as it would offer employment opportunities for many people.

- More offices offering services to the Serbs in the north should be opened. The nearest office for Leposavic residents to apply for ID cards is 15 kilometers away. Without offering details, many speakers suggested easing the administrative procedures for obtaining documents.

- Some funds from the Development Fund for the north should also go for grants for civil society organizations, though most of it is dedicated to municipalities.

- Belgrade is engaged more than it should in Kosovo politics, but this is not the Kosovo Serbs’ fault, but Pristina’s. Pristina says working with Belgrade is
easier because it “delivers.” Kosovo Serbs should not be blamed for Belgrade’s increasing role in Kosovo’s politics and policy-making, a number of speakers said.

The participants agreed to organize regular communication on the issues addressed in Brussels as well as on local issues. One of the strongest and consensual recommendations from the meeting was that the inclusion of Kosovo Serbs in the process is key.

Self-Determination Movement and Kosovo Serbs, An Uneasy Relationship

VV and Kosovo Serbs have had an uneasy relationship. VV says Belgrade is the culprit, arguing that its actions are directed against Belgrade and Kosovo’s current government, not against Kosovo Serbs. Kosovo Serbs say many of Belgrade’s positions, including on the Association/Community, reflect their interests. Consequently, if you are against Belgrade and the Association/Community, you are also against Kosovo Serbs. Belgrade and Kosovo Serb interests, in most cases, are inseparable, many Serbs argue. Then Kosovo Serbs should themselves define and present their interests is VV’s response. If the proposal for the Association/Community had come from Kosovo Serbs, VV’s approach would have been different. It would have discussed its merit with Kosovo Serbs. But when proposals come from Belgrade, VV rejects them outright. VV’s problem is rather with the demander, Belgrade, than with the demand, the Association/Community.

The allocation of political favors and economic benefits rather than ideology constitutes the core of the current political system. Providing favors to their militants and oligarchs is the way parties maintain and strengthen their power. They support the continuation of this system because it allows them unlimited access to the national wealth and to run the country unchecked. Only a powerful political and economic society could undermine the corrupt elites, reform the system, and place Kosovo on an irreversible path to democratic consolidation. But reforming a system embedded in corruption is not an easy task.

These are some of the conclusions of a roundtable on the relations between VV and Kosovo Serbs organized by CIG in June 2016 in Pristina for a number of VV representatives and members of the Kosovo Serb civil society.
No Integration Without ‘Liberation’

Albanian and Serb politicians have successfully integrated themselves, gained wealth and political power, and obtained the support of the international community as guarantors of peace and stability, but the society remains disintegrated, massively unemployed, politically weak, and ethnically divided. Many speakers said that politicians occasionally make “patriotic” statements to “ensure” their voters that they care about national interests. But away from public attention, Serb and Albanian politicians get along very well, doing business together and becoming rich. They knock on their voters’ doors only days before an election to ‘reconfirm’ their own legitimacy. Some participants argued that the society votes but is not involved in policy-making. “It is simply a spectator.”

Neither Serbs nor Albanians are integrated in the system. Many reported that only party militants and staunch supporters are able to find jobs. Replying to a Serb speaker’s concern about the low number of Serbs employed in public companies, a participant agreed that, for instance, very few Serbs are employed in the Kosovo Energy Corporation or Post and Telecommunications of Kosovo, but also there are very few employed Albanians not affiliated with major parties. They singled out Kosovo’s public television as one of the largest ‘political’ employers and whose only public service is the production of bad news. The public sector employs over 80,000 people. To keep their jobs, people have to vote for the party that hired them. In essence, Serbs and Albanians face the same problem: institutional capture by their politicians. They do not need simply a process for interethnic integration, but a process for political and economic liberation, without which there cannot be interethnic integration.

How is this “liberation” made possible? Kosovo needs brave and professional prosecutors and judges that can take on the rich and powerful. The existing system is not in position to assume such responsibility. It is weak, unprofessional, and controlled by politicians. Only massive public pressure, including street protests, could bring about such a change. Some participants invited Serbs to join the Albanians in such efforts, including taking part in protests in Pristina’s squares. The society should take the leading role in the political change and “turn politicians into spectators; not simply serve them as a voting machine.”

Many participants claimed that the politicians also control the private sector, which relies not as much on production but rather on privileged access to the public wealth. Economic liberalization has been pushed only as far as allowing the privatization of public assets, largely ‘bought’ by those running the state or their business friends. Some say that powerful political and economic individuals
‘collude’ to preserve their access to the national wealth and run the country unchecked. This collusion undermines the adoption of reforms that would weaken monopolies and correct the market distortions, which currently provide rents for the powerful individuals and companies while imposing high costs on Kosovo’s society. A speaker said that the entire Kosovo’s government is characterized by an alliance between political and business elites expressed in terms of “rent-seeker and rent-giver relationship.” Some of the top businessmen are also in politics, including members of parliament and ministers. Some speakers fear that continuation of this unchecked process may reverse the post-war democratic process.

Political parties and businessmen have a reciprocal relationship. Parties rely on the businessmen for financial support—such as funding of electoral campaigns—while businessmen rely on the powerful party and government officials for favors and privileged access to economic resources. VV representatives hint on re-privatization of some assets if they come to power and would also make it difficult to acquire new wealth without abiding the law. VV is not popular among the business crowd. Some reported that the existing regulatory agencies are controlled by those who carry out the “selling and buying of assets,” so making implementation of a fair process of privatization impossible. Transformation of public property into private has been one of the biggest challenges to institutional building and a great opportunity for massive corruption in Kosovo. Many find suspicious the suicide of the former head of the Privatization Agency of Kosovo who reportedly stabbed himself over 12 times.

VV representatives said that the relation between the state and society should be restructured, aiming to weaken political and economic elites and strengthen the society and institutions. In this context, VV suggests overhauling the tax system—introducing progressive taxation where the rich would pay more—and adopt policies that stimulate production so transforming Kosovo’s consumption society into a production society and companies from rent-seekers to producers.

VV representatives argue that their party is best positioned to lead such a process, saying that they showed in Pristina, where VV has the mayor, that they could take on the powerful and the corrupt. Pristina municipal authorities have stopped the illegal construction business, which is run by the most powerful, including President Hashim Thaci’s brother, a speaker said. The speakers agree that VV has triggered a lively, though somewhat controversial, debate on the country’s future direction. However, for a party to translate its ideas into political action requires
the acquisition of power. “VV is stubbornly idealistic for the circumstance,” an interlocutor said. Many say that without employing more pragmatism to “bring their ideals and principles closer to Kosovo’s reality,” VV may not be able to acquire power.

**Serb Skepticism about Self-Determination Movement**

The Serbs share most of the VV’s concerns on the state capture, corruption, and organized crime. They confirm that the Serb community is becoming weaker and weaker politically and economically, much weaker than the Albanian community. They also acknowledge that they have no power to go against the powerful politicians in Pristina or Belgrade, especially when a large section of the Serb community depends on Belgrade for jobs and salaries, just as a large number of Albanians depend for jobs on their party connections. The Serbs face similar political challenges. Though they have elections, their representatives are ‘selected’ by officials in Belgrade rather than ‘elected’ by voters in Kosovo. Once you get your position, then you have to show loyalty to the party to preserve the job. Professionalism is not a standard required for public jobs. It is not even an asset. Politicians fear professionals and those with integrity.

Despite sharing many concerns, Serbs are skeptical about VV’s actions and ideology. They say VV has frequently contributed to raising tensions between Serbs and Albanians by focusing disproportionately on issues of ethnic character. VV’s public rhetoric and some of the methods are extreme. They used violence in protests against former minister Aleksandar Jablanovic for reportedly calling mothers of the missing persons “beasts.” However, they did not react even mildly when a tapped phone call revealed that the then Prime Minister Hashim Thaci had referred to the people of Malisheve/Malisevo as ‘hunting dogs.’ Then their actions and statements against the Association/Community are a lot stronger than their actions against corruption and organized crime, even though the latter is a lot more threatening to Kosovo’s future. As a result, Serbs consider VV as primarily an anti-Serb party. It could partly be because the Serbs are not familiar with VV’s overall ideology and actions, but it is largely because of the way VV represents itself through its extreme actions towards the Serbs.

VV’s representatives deny that their actions are against Kosovo Serbs, saying that their problem is with Belgrade, not with Kosovo Serbs. They acknowledge that extreme measures are often required to counter Belgrade’s extreme campaign to undermine Kosovo domestically through the formation of exclusively Belgrade-controlled bodies—such as the Association/Community—and internationally
through intense lobbying to prevent Kosovo from joining international institutions such as UNESCO. They also explained that none of their actions were against the Serb community. VV does not protest against the Serb community, but against government policies and public officials. The anger about Aleksandar Jablanovic’s statement was expressed in the main square in Pristina, not in Serb villages like in 2004.

Serbs are concerned not only with VV’s rhetoric, but also with their policy positions on decentralization, reserved seats, double majority, and other aspects of affirmative action. VV representatives have often said that they would abolish these “positive discrimination” benefits if they acquire power. Serbs say that VV should unambiguously explain whether they respect these rights for the Serbs. If not, Serbs would remain suspicious of VV.

VV representatives offered an explanation. They said that equality is VV’s guiding principle in building a civic democracy and state but acknowledged that vulnerable groups might need additional mechanisms to ensure they have equal opportunities in the system. However, demands for such additional mechanisms should come from the community itself, not from Belgrade. “Our problem is not with the demand, but with the demander.” VV would not have had issues with the Association/Community had it been proposed by Kosovo Serbs, but it would not agree to establish mechanisms that are requested by and would serve another state, rather than by a vulnerable community in Kosovo. VV representatives confirmed they will continue to object the formation of the Association/Community but are open to discussions with Kosovo Serbs about their needs. VV would positively respond to Kosovo Serbs’ requests and needs, but would strongly object to Belgrade’s requests. They said that Serbia’s Aleksandar Vucic does not
mean well for Kosovo and his plan to form the Association/Community is not to strengthen the Serb community in Kosovo, but to create a small Serbia within Kosovo.

Kosovo Serbs believe VV’s fear of the Association/Community and of Belgrade’s influence are exaggerated. A community of five percent, politically and economically weak, cannot undermine an overwhelming majority. They invited VV representatives to have direct discussions on why they need the Association/Community and look for approaches that address fears of both sides. Serbs agreed that the issues have been extremely politicized even before anything was put on paper. The Association/Community has already been characterized as a Republika Srpska, a Trojan horse, and a state within a state even though it still does not have a statute.

Unification of Kosovo with Albania is another VV position that makes Kosovo Serbs nervous. They believe they would become an insignificant community in an almost pure Albanian state. It would also have regional ramifications, especially for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. VV representatives argued that their approach includes only peaceful means. “If it’s not possible to unite peacefully, then we move on as Kosovo.”

Overall, the Serb perceptions about VV are mixed. Many believe with VV in power, Kosovo Serb issues would be addressed genuinely, but are not sure the solutions would satisfy the Serb community. Though VV representatives reiterated that they are against Belgrade’s meddling into Kosovo internal affairs, not against Kosovo Serbs, many Kosovo Serbs remain skeptical. Also, though not fully, many Serbs say most of the Belgrade’s positions on Kosovo reflect the interests of the Serb community, thus being against Belgrade’s positions means one is also against Kosovo Serb interests. The overwhelming majority of the Serb community considers VV an extreme organization. VV representatives said that sometimes they may have not been careful enough with their statements but will make sure that their real message gets out. They also promised to translate their party program into Serbian.

**Conclusion**

Albanians and Serbs alike suffer from political exclusion and economic deprivation. Both politics and economic activity have been monopolized and controlled by a small group of people. Only economic growth coupled with social justice would liberate the society from this state capture. Cooperation between Serbs and
Albanians on practical matters is essential to strengthen the society overall. “We need to cooperate with each other; not simply tolerate each other.” Tolerance has a negative connotation, meaning the other community is bad, but please tolerate it. Socio-economic cooperation and development neutralizes ethnic and identity issues.

Political integration without social and economic integration is inadequate because while the former takes place in nice government offices among largely corrupt politicians, the latter takes place in factories and universities among people who earn their living through hard work. To promote social integration, a bottom-up dialogue and cooperation on practical matters—agriculture, environment, access to markets, and education—is necessary and where Serbs and Albanians take part as individuals in their civic rather ethnic capacities. Common interest on these issues is stronger than identity.

More frequent and substantial communication between VV and Serbs would contribute to increasing understanding of each other’s positions. “We can still disagree but at least we will have a better idea about what we are disagreeing about.” VV confirmed that it wants to strengthen cooperation with Kosovo Serbs but will continue to oppose Belgrade’s policies. “VV needs partners in the Serb community, not Belgrade’s spokespersons.” VV representatives said that most of the characterizations of VV as an extreme party are simply portrayals of government-controlled media and hoped that direct communication would clarify these media portrayals. Kosovo Serbs, on the other hand, should become more active politically and socially, taking more homemade initiatives, including forming an independent Kosovo Serb party.

The approach to integration should change. Interethnic integration should not be a goal, but a consequence of social and economic integration, so the focus should be on the latter. A precondition for this integration is authentic and independent politics that is based on concepts, not on individuals. But the international community and the governments in Pristina and Belgrade have excluded the authentic and the independent Kosovo Serbs from the process, mostly because they, unlike “corrupt politicians,” do not offer “easy solution and quick fixes.” Interethnic relations should be based on civic cooperation, gradually making ethnic identification irrelevant.
CHALLENGES OF ESTABLISHING THE ASSOCIATION/COMMUNITY

Association for North’s Integration: A Fair Deal?

Kosovo Serbs got the Association/Community while Pristina got the north’s integration, and this is a good deal, a Serb analyst argued. Many Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo’s governing parties agree that this is a fair deal, but Kosovo’s opposition parties and a number of Kosovo Serbs remain skeptical, the former arguing it is a tool for Belgrade to defy the state of Kosovo while the latter saying it integrates them “too much” into Kosovo. Three years after the agreement, the Association/Community has not been established and its principles continue to be renegotiated.

Few expected the formation of the Association/Community would be as complicated. It has created unforeseen legal and political implications in Kosovo. Legally, Kosovo’s Constitutional Court weakened the original agreement substantially. Politically, the Kosovo opposition parties mounted an unprecedented resistance that has essentially brought government’s efforts to a complete halt.

To renew the efforts and build momentum for finding a solution for the Association/Community, CIG organized three activities in April 2016: a workshop with Kosovo Serbs analysts, a meeting of Kosovo Albanian political party officials, and a roundtable of Serbs and Albanian political and civil society representatives.

The Serb speakers argued that the Association/Community is a “fair price” for Kosovo to pay for the north’s integration. They disputed the Constitutional Court’s ruling and considered it in contradiction with the spirit of the Brussels process. A speaker said that, “if Pristina and Belgrade begin to send the agreements to their constitutional courts, they will all be declared invalid.” The idea of the Brussels, according to these speakers, is to circumvent to an acceptable degree the existing legal systems.

The Albanian speakers are not as united about the Association/Community. Members of the governing and some opposition parties support the Association/Community in line with the Court’s ruling. Representatives of the largest opposition party, the Self-Determination Movement, oppose any Association/Community, arguing that it is a mechanism that would serve Belgrade rather than Kosovo Serbs.
Challenges Facing the Formation of the Association/Community

- The Constitutional Court’s decision weakens substantially the powers of the Association/Communities as foreseen in the 2015 Agreement on Principles. Though Belgrade had agreed for the agreement to be taken to Kosovo’s Constitutional Court, it does not agree with its ruling. Serb participants said that it would be difficult for Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs to accept less than what was agreed upon in Brussels. They say the Association/Community without executive powers does not serve sufficiently the interests of Kosovo Serbs. Kosovo officials, on the other hand, say that the Court’s ruling is “by definition non-negotiable.” The Court’s ruling, however, is not straightforward. As a speaker said, it explains what the Association/Community cannot have, but not what it should have.

- Pristina’s conditioning of the formation of the Association/Community with the dismantling of the remaining Serbia’s parallel institutions in Kosovo could delay the process. Such conditioning was not put in writing in the Brussels agreement, but Pristina says it was an understanding of both sides that the dismantling would have to take place before the formation of the Association/Community. Belgrade does not share the same view. Kosovo Serbs believe the parallel institutions are still a necessary instrument for the Serbs. One option is for the dismantling of parallel institutions and formation of the Association/Community to take place in parallel. A clear agreement on how to do this need to be reached between Pristina and Belgrade. Serbia says that about 5,500 are employed in these institutions across Kosovo. Finding employment for them is another serious challenge.
• Kosovo's government faces strong opposition from opposition parties and public in regard to the Association/Community. Furthermore, a number of members of the governing parties are also skeptical about the need to form the Association/Community. Serb representatives explain that the Association/Community is not a threat to Kosovo. They argue that the establishment of the Association/Community ensures the north's integration and transparent financing from Belgrade.

• The level of Association's responsibilities in the four areas, especially on education and health, remains unclear. Pristina insists the municipalities should manage these areas. The Court’s ruling also confirmed that the municipal responsibilities cannot be transferred to another institution. Kosovo Serbs and Belgrade say the Association/Community should take over education and health. Currently, Serbia’s respective ministries manage health and education for Serbs in Kosovo. If there is an agreement, the Serbian Ministry of Education and Health will have to transfer their responsibilities to the Association. Even politics aside, technically this could be a complicated process.

Steps to Begin Implementation
• Pristina and Belgrade should begin working on the formation of the Association/Community without conditions. Pristina insists on first dismantling of the remaining parallel institutions, but this condition was not part of the agreement. As a compromise, Pristina could ask for a gradual dismantling and that it be complete by the time the Association/Community is established. Many Serbs argue that some parallel institutions remain necessary for the time being to offer a number of services for the Serb population. The main parallel institutions—police, civil protection, and courts—have either been already integrated or agreements for their integration have been reached. The Kosovo opposition parties, however, say this is a superficial integration or an “integration of uniforms.”

• The existing team composed of four Kosovo Serb representatives tasked with drafting the statue has not produced any draft. A new team for drafting the statute of the Association/Community should be formed and should include representatives of Kosovo's government (including Kosovo Serbs), Serbia’s government, and the international community. While some Kosovo representatives object to Belgrade's participants, their representation would commit Belgrade to implementation.
• The team should first define the aspects of the four areas—education, health, urban planning, and economic development—the Association/Community is supposed to “overview” according to the agreement. Experts and members of civil society should also offer their expertise in this regard.

• Kosovo’s opposition parties should at least tacitly support the formation of the Association/Community according to the Constitutional Court’s ruling. While they are not expected to become part of the statute team, they should remain engaged through recommendations and suggestions, or even objections.

• Kosovo Serbs should become more engaged and play a bigger role in shaping the substance of the Association/Community. They should articulate in more concrete terms the responsibilities of the Association/Community and how it would serve as a mechanism to protect their interests. It would be helpful if they engage more publicly in addressing the fears of Albanians that the Association/Community is there to protect Belgrade’s rather than Kosovo Serb interests. Albanian representatives favor a more independent Serb community, relying less on Belgrade and better engaged with Pristina. They say that Belgrade is misusing the Serb community to advance Serbia’s interests and not those of the Kosovo Serbs. Some asked what kind of relationship exists between Kosovo Serbs and Belgrade, interdependent, subordinate or dependent? Who is benefiting more from whom? Would a stronger relationship of Kosovo Serbs with Pristina offer them more benefits? A speaker said that maybe votes were manipulated in the north, but the Serb List won also in other parts of Kosovo. The speaker added that people voted for it, meaning they see benefits in a stronger relationship with Belgrade.

• A “brainstorming process” between Kosovo Serbs and Albanians should be launched. This would not simply be a dialogue but rather a substantive discussion of problems, including the Association/Community. Some speakers recommended that this dialogue be focused on economic development and economic cooperation between communities in Kosovo. This process should also include grassroots groups such as culture, sports, and youth. The relationship between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo and public support for the Brussels dialogue and the implementation will not improve unless there is a greater improvement in relations between Belgrade and Pristina. However, it will also not happen if there is not internal dialogue in Kosovo either. Greater political will in Pristina is needed for such a dialogue to start and stronger institutions for its results to be implemented.
• Strengthen trust and cooperation between Kosovo institutions and Kosovo Serbs. Such trust is essential in the process of establishing the Association/Community and in the overall integration of the Serb community. Such trust is gained through increased communication, joint projects and more stress on resolving social and economic issues. Such issues include respecting employment quotas and resolving private property issues.

Concessions and compromises are necessary for the formation of the Association, the north’s integration, and for the continuation of the Brussels dialogue. Parties should find ways to circumvent political and legal hurdles. For instance, Pristina considered the 2013 Agreement as an international one, thus avoiding its review by the Constitutional Court. Belgrade does not consider these international agreements but is neither sending them to its Constitutional Court.

**What Should the Association/Community of Serb-Majority Municipalities in Kosovo Look Like?**

CIG organized on April 20, 2017 in Belgrade a discussion for a number of Serb representatives on the Association/Community of Serb Majority Municipalities in Kosovo. The objective of the discussion was to demystify the debate about the Association/Community and to focus on concrete areas of responsibility for the institution. The participants said that the debate should not be whether the Association/Community should be formed or not but what responsibilities it should have. Not forming it is not an option. Kosovo has assumed legal responsibilities through the 2013 Brussels Agreement to establish it.

The participants argued that the Association/Community is not a threat to Kosovo’s functionality, as often portrayed by groups of politicians in Kosovo, and that it should be established without further delay. The debate in Kosovo should be focused on responsibilities the Association/Community should have. Such a debate would show that the Association/Community is not a threat to Kosovo’s functionality. On the contrary, it is in Kosovo’s own interest, as it would enable the closure of the remaining Serbian parallel institutions in Kosovo.

There are three main documents on which the Association/Community should be based: the 2013 Brussels Agreement, the 2015 Agreement on Principles, and the 2015 Decision of Kosovo’s Constitutional Court. These documents have many contradictions and do not offer a clear path towards forming the Association/Community. Furthermore, some of Kosovo parties strongly oppose the formation of the Association/Community altogether, claiming that it undermines Kosovo’s
functionality, making comparisons with the way Republika Srpska undermines the functionality of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The participants said that debate about the Association/Community should be demystified and focus exclusively on the areas of responsibility for the Association/Community.

The Association/Community, according to the Serb participants, should integrate all the remaining Serbian institutions in Kosovo: health, education, social services (pensions, welfare, salaries, etc.), and public services (water supply, garbage collection, etc.). Though according to Kosovo law, these are municipal responsibilities, the participants said that it is in the interests of both sides to be a bit elastic in the interpretation of the law: Kosovo through the Association/Community ensures that Serbia is out of Kosovo, while Kosovo Serbs gain some level of self-governance at the local level.

Arriving at a solution has proved to be more difficult than expected in 2013. Then both Belgrade and Pristina agreed to form the Association/Community but without going into the details on its responsibilities. Then two years later, the Agreement on Principles defined some responsibilities for the Association/Community Pristina. In the same year, Kosovo's Constitutional Court, though reconfirming that the formation of the Association/Community is a legal requirement for Kosovo, found that a substantial number of principles were not fully in compliance with Kosovo's constitution and its laws on local governance. It primarily said that responsibilities of municipalities can neither assumed by nor delegated to the Association/Community.

Belgrade insists that the Association/Community should only be based on the Brussels Agreement and the Agreement on Principles, but not on Kosovo's Constitutional Court's decision. Pristina says the latter should be the basis for the Association/Community. The roundtable participants said that only the international community could break the deadlock. Otherwise, the parties will remain barricaded in their positions. A speaker, however, said that the EU has lost its power of persuasion in Kosovo and this is why the Association/Community has not yet been formed.

Many speakers suggested that Kosovo Serbs should become more active in the process, offering their suggestions and recommendations to both convince Kosovo Albanians that it is not a threat to them and that it would help the Serb Community to improve its conditions. Some participants noted that the existing divisions within the Serb community in Kosovo have also contributed to delays in the formation of the Association.
The participants recommended including the Association/Community in a package with other remaining agreements, such as energy. “We have learned that many things are implemented only if they are part of package deals,” a speaker said. Though all the speakers said the Association/Community should be formed in 2017, they were not very optimistic. Many said the discussions on the statute could take up to two years.

The participants recommended to speed-up the debate on the Association/Community and to make it more substance-oriented and less political by publishing a draft of the statute and establishing a debate around that issue. Presently there is no dialogue between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo on the Association/Community, just political statements. A good way to start such a debate is for each side to say what is acceptable for them.

Improved relations between Serbs and Albanians in the institutions are also a key in making progress towards the Association/Community. A speaker said that these relations have deteriorated to a point of animosity in the last mandate. It is impossible to establish the Association/Community without good working relations between two sides or when the two are in conflict. In addition, Serbs in the institutions should actively participate in the institutions’ work and become important for the Albanians. Only then their demand for the Association/Community will be considered seriously.

SERBIA’S INTERNAL DIALOGUE ON KOSOVO

Searching for Consensus

Serbia began in early 2017 an internal dialogue on Kosovo with the goal of eliciting institutional and grassroots input for concluding the Kosovo conflict. To contribute to the dialogue, CIG organized in October 2017 in Belgrade a roundtable on the potential options. The meeting gathered representatives of civil society, academic community, media, as well as Kosovo Serb civil society representatives.

The following is a list of conclusions and recommendations that came out of the roundtable.

The dialogue should have a clear vision. The dialogue should offer the opportunity to the Serbian society to confront the core issues, including the status of Kosovo. A number of participants said that the government’s approach should be inclusive
and take into account alternative opinions if the government wants to share responsibility for the final outcome.

The dialogue should address Chapter 35. Serbia is obliged to implement Chapter 35, which foresees a comprehensive normalization between Belgrade and Pristina, to become an EU member. In this context, many speakers suggested that the dialogue should be based on this chapter's framework.

The dialogue should help articulate new proposals. In addition to comprehensive normalization, the dialogue should address the implementation of the Brussels Agreement, the missing persons, IDPs and returns, Kosovo Serb private property, the Serb cultural and historical heritage in Kosovo, and Kosovo’s membership in international organizations. Mutual cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo needs to be discussed as well. The dialogue should be structured in such a way that the participants could speak freely and bring up “out of the box” ideas.

The dialogue should define the normalization of relations with Pristina. The internal dialogue should address options for settling the relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Some participants said that it is not enough to have just a European perspective or the fast track EU integration as incentives for Serbia, and claimed that the internal dialogue would most probably result in a proposal for partition of Kosovo or an exchange of territories. Others were skeptical about these options and said that Serbia at best could normalize relations without recognizing Kosovo. In any case, the majority of participants agreed that the government has changed its approach to Kosovo-related issues—when it came to power in 2012 the official focus was on the position of the Serbs in Kosovo and now it has switched (again) to a territorial discourse.

Specifying the results of the dialogue, reporting to the public, the decision-making and clear deadlines. It is unclear how the organizers will process outcomes of the internal dialogue and who and how will decide about its final results. Participants brought up various options mentioning that decisions could be made by the president, the government or the parliament or could be subject to a referendum. It is still unclear who is tasked with reporting about the dialogue’s outcome and if they show a plurality of options or a single decision. The dialogue also needs a roadmap with clearly articulated concrete phases and deadlines.

A successful dialogue must be inclusive. The opposition and the civil society in Serbia should take part in the dialogue to ensure that their positions are included. The dialogue organizers should invite all potential relevant stakeholders to participate. The dialogue among politicians should be conducted within the institutions, especially inside the parliament. Regardless of whether the
representatives of the opposition participate in the dialogue or not, the civil society must be ready to take part and offer its input. The dialogue cannot be conducted without the Kosovo Serbs. Representatives of their different political options and of their civil society must have a place at the table.

The opposition does not have the luxury to stay out of the dialogue and Kosovo-related issues. If the opposition does not want to take part in the government-led dialogue, it should make public its options through other public channels. This dialogue is not just about the issue of Kosovo, it is much larger and goes into the essence of Serbia’s own future and its democratic development.

**Options for a Potential Solution**

CIG organized in Belgrade in November 2017 its second roundtable on Serbia's internal dialogue on Kosovo. The meeting gathered representatives of Serbia’s leading civil society organizations, academic community, and media. The discussions focused on the preliminary options articulated so far and on ways to include in the dialogue the Kosovo status issue.

The Serbian government’s Working Group will present to the president and the government by March 2018 a report on the results of the ongoing dialogue. The institutions are supposed to use the internal dialogue’s conclusions to build a platform for negotiations with Pristina.

The dialogue so far resulted in a wide spectrum of options for resolving the Kosovo issue, but they can be summed up in four basic options, according to the dialogue organizers:

- Serbia should not give up Kosovo.
• Serbia should keep the conflict frozen until better geopolitical conditions for Serbia emerge.

• Serbia should continue the dialogue with Kosovo and reach agreements on normalization but not address the status issue.

• The dialogue is also offering different modalities of recognition of Kosovo’s independence.

Conclusions and Recommendations

• Different interpretations exist among the Serbian public and political elites about Serbia’s interests in resolving the Kosovo conflict. Public is divided on whether Serbia should address the status now and make the necessary compromise on the issue.

• Consensus exists among the Serbian elite and public on some issues, such as that there is no possibility for Serbia to reestablish its control rule over Kosovo and to reintegrate the Kosovo Albanians into its state. Another point of consensus is about the cultural heritage and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo—they must be protected and preserved under a solution that surpasses the provisions of the Ahtisaari plan.

• Lack of consensus about the status issue brings Serbia to basically two possible solutions: “freezing” of the status quo or an “elastic” solution on normalization that would not include recognition. The main reason why Serbia cannot officially recognize Kosovo is the feeling of defeat and humiliation among the population if that happens, a number of participants said. Humiliation is not just caused by the defeat(s) in the 1990s and the way the declaration of independence happened, but it is also instigated by with the fact that there are still three critical issues which are not being properly addressed (from the point of view of the citizens of Serbia): a) usurped properties in Kosovo, b) status of the cultural heritage and the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo, and c) war crimes against the Serbs in Kosovo. In addition, the majority of the Serbian citizens feel that during the past seventeen years, Kosovo elite did not manage to prove that they want and are able to achieve a democratic and inclusive society based on rule of law, especially when it comes to actual implementation of the Kosovo Constitution and laws regarding the status of Serbs and other minorities. Some participants claimed that the internal dialogue is prompted by foreign pressure and is only focused on the issue of status, while other urgent problems remain off the agenda, like the above-mentioned three points.
• It would be hard to consider possible options without taking into account the framework of Chapter 35 of Serbia’s EU accession negotiations, and for this reason the Serbian institutions should be more transparent about the implications of Chapter 35. Serbia has committed to engage in a process aiming to reach a comprehensive normalization agreement with Kosovo and that it would not create obstacles for Kosovo in its EU process. It is important to emphasize that almost every other aspect of negotiations urges Serbia to regulate its relations with Kosovo. E.g., Serbia will have to define where its borders are. Therefore, from this standpoint of Serbia’s EU integration processes, there are only two viable options: a) to fully normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia based on the model that is similar to the one reached between two Germanys in 1972; b) recognition of Kosovo’s independence. However, some participants claimed that the dilemma “Kosovo or the EU” is wrong, since for Serbia Kosovo represents its identity and the EU represents its future, and Serbia cannot give up on either of them.

• Some roundtable participants recommended that the parliament and the political parties should be included the dialogue. Some said that it is logical to include the parliament at the conclusion of the process to debate its outcomes. Others, however, disagreed that key participants in the dialogue should be the political parties, arguing that it would lead to the politicization of the debate.

• The “internal dialogue” events should have more focused discussions, agendas, and the organizers should present to the participants lists of concrete topics. Furthermore, the events should have a space for debate and a direct exchange of opinions. The Working Group should offer the conclusions from each roundtable to the participants in these events. The consequence of the current approach is that most of the contributions and the inputs from the three official roundtables were in a sharp contrast to the purpose of the internal dialogue as it was expressed in the opinion piece published by President Vucic himself: “We need altogether to find an answer that will be lasting, that will exclude conflict as an option and that will bring benefits to everyone in the region.”

**Kosovo Serbs and Serbia’s Internal Dialogue**

Kosovo Serbs are following Serbia’s internal dialogue on Kosovo with interest. What do Kosovo Serbs think about the dialogue? How do they see its outcomes? What options do they recommend? These were some of the questions a group of Kosovo Serbs addressed at a roundtable in Gracanica, Kosovo, in December 2017.
The participants argued that a final settlement of the Kosovo-Serbia dispute would benefit Pristina, Belgrade, and the Serb community in Kosovo. They support Belgrade's internal Kosovo dialogue initiative and hope that Kosovo Serb interests would be taken into account. Ideal options for a final settlement do not exist. Kosovo's return under Serbian jurisdiction, Serbia's favorite option, is not possible. Serbia's outright recognition of Kosovo, Kosovo's favorite option, is not likely either. So both sides should aim for a political compromise that brings to an end the decades-long conflict. But what should this political compromise look like? Kosovo Serbs do not have a detailed answer either. But they would prefer an option that brings comprehensive normalcy to the relations between Belgrade and Pristina and that safeguards their rights and guarantees some degree of self-governance through the establishment of the Association/Community of the Serb-Majority Municipalities. Kosovo Serbs are mostly concerned about resolution of their concrete problems, especially of healthcare and education.

The majority of Kosovo Serbs, however, hope that “nothing changes,” a speaker said. “Fear dominates their thinking.” They believe some agreement will be reached but are anxious about its effect on them. Many feel it is better to support the status quo than an unpredictable change. The speaker argued that the Brussels dialogue did not change the situation for the better: it has strengthened some groups, especially those in power, but weakened the societies. The societies should have their own positions and be influential in shaping the official positions. The Kosovo Serb society is an important player but is left out of the process. Some speakers said that Belgrade should include a diverse group of Kosovo Serbs in its internal dialogue.

**Final Settlement Scenarios**

Participants argued that a final settlement between Pristina and Belgrade is inevitable. The international community is running out of time and patience and might increase its pressure on the sides. Belgrade is checking its options and possibilities through its internal dialogue and also trying to find out how far it can go.

There was consensus among the participants that any option should include the formation of the Association/Community.

**Freeze the status quo:** Maintaining the existing relations is perhaps the least likely option, mostly because it incurs a high cost for both Belgrade and Pristina. Belgrade’s path to EU membership will most likely be frozen too. Chapter 35
clearly and decisively conditions Serbia’s EU integration with comprehensive normalization of relations with Kosovo. Status quo does not benefit Pristina either. It would mean that the north’s integration would also be frozen and Kosovo’s European integration prospect would become even more distant.

Partition or exchange of territories: It is also not a likely option, mostly because the international community is determined not to allow border changes in the region, largely because of regional security implications. A speaker said that the classic partition whereby Serbia incorporates Kosovo’s north is not likely, but what he called a “soft partition of the north” is becoming a reality. A soft partition means that the north remains under Serbia’s de facto control, but de jure the institutions operate within Kosovo’s legal framework, allowing Kosovo officials to claim control of the territory. Also, classic partition would be the worst option for the Serbs in the south. Many say that under the partition scenario, the rights of the Serb community—guaranteed parliamentary and government seats, employment quota, double parliamentary majority—may be suspended. Exchange of territories is even a riskier option. It may start with Kosovo and Serbia, but most likely will end up with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. But even if it remains limited to Kosovo and Serbia, the exchange of territories option would inevitably lead to a massive population movement. Many say this would also lead to a new violent conflict in the region.

Normalization without recognition: This option includes Kosovo’s de facto recognition but officially Serbia remains against independence. Serbia, however, will have to shut down its parallel institutions in Kosovo. It is the most likely scenario. It seems that under this scenario, Serbia would be able to join the EU and normalize relations with Kosovo without alienating the Serbian public. The
international community also seems to support such an option. Pristina might not be happy but it would have no choice if the option is supported by the US and EU. Under this scenario, Belgrade and Pristina continue their Brussels dialogue to address the remaining disputes and reach a final settlement that satisfies the criteria for European integration. The final outcome of this scenario would be membership for Serbia in the EU, a guaranteed prospect for Kosovo’s EU integration and membership in international organizations, as well as removal of all political restrictions in the relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

Recognition of independence: Recognition, according to the participants, is not a likely option, at least not in the short and medium term. Also, a speaker said that Serbia’s potential recognition of Kosovo is not as important as many make it sound. Serbia’s recognition does not guarantee UN membership, EU membership, or recognition of Kosovo by the five EU member states. There are different sets of criteria for EU membership; UN seat depends on other countries, and the five EU members do not recognize Kosovo because of their internal issues, not because of their solidarity with Serbia. Some said that perhaps a strong Association/Community could be formed in exchange for recognition. Some participants pointed out that establishing a strong Association/Community is a much better option than the north’s much coveted partition idea.

Despite the international efforts to begin the process for reaching a final settlement, Pristina and Belgrade seem to be asking for more time. Pristina because it has a weak government, which might even get weaker by day, and Belgrade because it is not ready to make more compromises. Belgrade and Pristina are asking for more time, but, many speakers concluded, the international community does not have “unlimited time,” and that is why makes a final agreement likely in the medium term.
PARTICIPANTS

English Alphabetical Order

Miroslav Aleksic, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Social Democratic Party
Dejan Anastasijevic, Columnist, Vreme
Milica Andric, Project Manager, Aktiv
Valdete Bajrami, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Nisma
Belul Beqaj, Political Analyst
Besim Beqaj, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Democratic Party of Kosovo
Milivoj Beslin, Scientific Associate, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade
Sonja Biserko, Executive Director, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights
Maja Bjelos, Researcher, Belgrade Center for Security Policy
Balsa Bozovic, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Democratic Party
Jan Braathu, Ambassador of Norway to Kosovo
Nikola Burazer, Executive Editor, European Western Balkans
Gordana Comic, Deputy Speaker, Parliament of Serbia, Democratic Party
Ilir Deda, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Alternativa
Gordana Delic, Director, Balkan Trust for Democracy
Blerta Deliu Kodra, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Democratic Party of Kosovo
Aida Derguti, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Self-Determination Movement
Ivan Djuric, Program Coordinator, Youth Initiative for Human Rights
Marko Djuric, Director, Office for Kosovo and Metohija, Government of Serbia
Bojan Elek, Researcher, Belgrade Center for Security Policy
Sadri Ferati, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Democratic League of Kosovo
Arben Gashi, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Democratic League of Kosovo
Shpetim Gashi, Vice President, Council for Inclusive Governance
Bajram Gecaj, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Local Government Administration
Ardian Gjini, Deputy Chairman, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
Dukagjin Gorani, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Self-Determination Movement
Alex Roinishvili Grigorev, President, Council for Inclusive Governance
Philippe Guex, Ambassador of Switzerland to Serbia
Fatmir Hasani, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Party for Democratic Action
Teuta Haxhiu, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
Enver Hoti, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Nisma
Oliver Ivanovic, Chairman, Civic Initiative SDP
Jovana Jakovljevic, Institute for Territorial and Economic Development
Bosko Jaksic, Columnist
Dalibor Jevtic, Minister for Communities and Return, Government of Kosovo
Aleksandra Jerkov, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Democratic Party  
Damjan Jovic, Deputy Director, Office for Kosovo and Metohija, Government of Serbia  
Donika Kadaj Bujupi, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Self-Determination Movement 
Adriatik Kelmendi, Senior Producer, TV Kohavision  
Fahurudin Kollcaku-Mullhaxha, Deputy Director, Office for Kosovo and Metohija, Government of Serbia 
Glauc Konjufca, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Self-Determination Movement  
Dragisa Krstovic, Member, Parliament of Kosovo  
Arber Kuci, Associate in Kosovo, Council for Inclusive Governance  
Blerim Kuci, Member of Presidency, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo  
Albin Kurti, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Self-Determination Movement  
Nada Lazic, Member, Parliament of Serbia, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina  
Sonja Licht, President, Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence  
Jean-Hubert Lebet, Ambassador of Switzerland to Kosovo  
Vladimir Marinkovic, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Social Democratic Party of Serbia  
Aleksandar Markovic, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Serbian Progressive Party 
Predrag Markovic, Research Fellow, Institute for Contemporary History  
Krystyna Marty Lang, Ambassador of Switzerland to Kosovo  
Pauline Menthonnex Gacafferi, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland in Kosovo 
Milivoje Mihajlovic, Director, Radio Beograd  
Dragisa Mijacic, Director, Institute for Territorial Economic Development  
Ljubisa Mijacic, Analyst, Zubin Potok  
Petar Miletic, Analyst  
Miodrag Milicevic, Executive Director, Aktiv  
Tanja Miscevic, Head of Negotiation Team for Serbia’s Accession to EU, Government of Serbia  
Slavisa Mladenovic, Language Commissioner, Government of Kosovo  
Valon Murtezaj, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Kosovo  
Isa Mustafa, Prime Minister of Kosovo  
Igor Novakovic, Associate in Serbia, Council for Inclusive Governance  
Vladimir Orlic, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Serbian Progressive Party  
Zoran Ostojic, Journalist  
Zenun Pajaziti, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Democratic Party of Kosovo  
Snezana Paunovic, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Socialist Party of Serbia  
Lulzim Peci, Director, Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Development  
Natasa Petrovic, Senior Program Officer, Balkan Trust for Democracy  
Aleksandar Popov, Director, Center for Regionalism  
Dejan Radenkovic, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Socialist Party of Serbia
Jovana Radosavljevic, Director, New Social Initiative  
Nenad Radosavljevic, Director, RTV Mir, Leposavic  
Lazar Rakic, Executive Director, Mediation Center Mitrovica  
Zivojin Rakocic, Director, Culture Center, Gracanica  
Naim Rashiti, Executive Director, Balkans Policy Research Group  
Nenad Rasic, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Progressive Democratic Party  
Jean-Daniel Ruch, Ambassador of Switzerland to Serbia  
Branko Ruzic, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Socialist Party of Serbia  
Roland Salvisberg, Head, Peace Policy, Human Security Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland  
Saskia Salzmann, Regional Human Security Adviser, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland  
Marko Savkovic, Executive Director, Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence  
Kuno Schaefli, Regional Human Security Adviser, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland  
Korab Sejdiu, Member, Parliament of Kosovo  
Besa Shahini, Independent Analyst  
Blerim Shala, Dialogue Coordinator, Government of Kosovo  
Aleksandra Sanjevic, Program Officer, Foundation for an Open Society  
Igor Simic, Member, Municipal Assembly of North Mitrovica  
Dragan Sormaz, Member, Parliament of Serbia, Serbian Progressive Party  
Sonja Sovrlic, Journalist, RTV Mir  
Stefan Surlic, Teaching Assistant, Political Science Department, University of Belgrade  
Sonja Stojanovic Gajic, Executive Director, Belgrade Center for Security Policy  
Edita Tahiri, Minister for Dialogue, Government of Kosovo  
Uros Todorovic, Coordination Affairs Office for Negotiations with Pristina, Government of Serbia  
Rada Trajkovic, Former Member, Parliament of Kosovo  
Angelika Viets, Ambassador of Germany to Kosovo  
Arber Vllahiu, Advisor to Prime Minister of Kosovo  
Natasa Vuckovic, Secretary General, Center for Democracy  
Samuel Zbogar, European Union Special Representative in Kosovo  
Armend Zemaj, Member, Parliament of Kosovo, Democratic League of Kosovo  
Bodo Weber, Senior Associate, Democratization Policy Council  
Talia Wohl, Program Officer, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland  

Several participants have changed their titles during the duration of this project. Only the title at the time of their latest attendance are listed.
BOARD

- Steven L. Burg (Chairman), Brandeis University
- Gordon N. Bardos, SEERECON
- Michael W. Elf, Springer Nature
- Pierre Mirel, European Commission, Honorary Director General
- Alex Roinishvili Grigorev, Council for Inclusive Governance, Arcadia University

STAFF

- Alex Roinishvili Grigorev, President
- Shpetim Gashi, Vice President
- Robert K. Aitkens, Accountant
- Burbuqe Brahimi, Associate
- Igor Novakovic, Associate
- Max Rueti, Assistant
The Council for Inclusive Governance (CIG) is an international nonprofit, nonpartisan, and non-governmental institution that promotes inclusive and responsive governance. It facilitates constructive dialogue as a means of fostering interparty cooperation, interethnic accord, and interstate collaboration, and carries out analyses of contemporary policy issues. The goal of CIG activities is to build confidence in democratic institutions of governance and contribute to the cohesiveness of political systems and societies.

CIG is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Foundation for an Open Society, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Balkan Trust for Democracy of the German Marshall Fund of the United States and private contributions.

**CIG activities include:**

- Conducting innovative and transparent policy dialogues for major stakeholders;
- Facilitating interstate cooperation through international dialogues and exchange of experience;
- Promoting cooperation and consensus on national issues through dialogues between government and opposition;
- Supporting multiethnic states and strengthening common democratic institutions by facilitating consensus-building on issues that divide ethnic communities;
- Fostering trust and inclusive approaches in decision making;
- Providing informed advice and policy analysis;
- Publishing analytical reports and policy papers to advance public understanding of inclusive governance.

---

**Council for Inclusive Governance**

[cig@cigonline.net](mailto:cig@cigonline.net)

Online at [cigonline.net](http://cigonline.net)

**Program supported by**

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun sviza

**Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA**