Group for Legal and Political Studies

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Potential Migrant's Profile 2.0:

Who are the citizens most likely to migrate?

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I. Introduction

After more than 20 years of post-war period, Kosovo continues to face the same socio-economic and political challenges. According to the latest data available, 18 percent of the Kosovar population live below the national poverty line, and an estimated 5.1 percent is reported to be extremely poor. These figures are almost identical to 2015 rates.[1] The poverty assessments for 2012-2017 suggest that poverty is estimated to be higher among female-headed households during the whole period, except for 2017, where the ranks have shifted.[2] Similarly, the official data show that only 40.5 percent of the working-age population is economically active, females being particularly under-represented. Furthermore, Kosovo has consistently recorded high unemployment rates. In 2019, 25.7 percent of the economically active population was reported to be unemployed, the rates being the highest among females (34.4%) and the youth (49.4%).[3] Economic growth, although perceived solid over the last decade, is largely considered to have been fuelled by donor-funded reconstruction efforts and international transfers, including remittances; however, very little can be attributed to production and returns from capital investments. Kosovo has maintained a large trade deficit, with most of the money leaving the country due to a disproportionate share of imports.[4]

Kosovo's years after the war have been marked by numerous political deadlocks, which have harmed the functioning of institutional life, key reform processes and economic development, amongst others. Fragile and dysfunctional coalition governments, abuse of public finances, scandalous political decisions and galloping cabinet sizes have characterized the country. Over a one-year period, Kosovo has had three governments and new elections loom on the horizon. There is a constant lack of political will to push forward key reform processes, and the highly polarized political context continues to hinder the country's sustainable development, with an unsteady Assembly that constantly fails to push forward its legislative agenda.

Due to the pandemic outburst, severe consequences have been reported. The President of the Independent Trade Union of the Private Sector of Kosovo, Jusuf Azemi, declared that by the end of June about 40 thousand workers lost their jobs. This number could rise to 60 thousand by September, if the trend was to continue.[5] Although an Emergency Package was swiftly approved, the government's intervention was much delayed. The implementation of the Package was ground to a halt for some groups of the population, and assistance was properly provided only in October.

1 Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2017). Poverty Statistics 2012-2017. Available at: https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4882/statistikat-e-varfërisë-2012-2017.pdf
2 Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2018). Consumption Poverty in the Republic of Kosovo 2012-2017. Available at: https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4882/statistikat-e-varfërisë-2012-2017.pdf
3 Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2020). Labour Four Survey 2019. Available at: https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5369/anketa-e-fuqisë-punëtore-afp-2019.pdf
4 For more details see: Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2020). Foreign Trade Statistics 2019. Available at: https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4575/statistikat-e-tregtis%C3%AB-s%C3%AB-jashtme-stj-janar-2019.pdf
5 RTV 21.tv article "40 thousand individuals lost their job in Kosovo due to the pandemic". Available at: https://rtv21.tv/rreth-40-mije-persona-humben-punen-ne-kosove-shkak-pandemia// Accessed on December 2020.

On the other hand, due to lack of quorum in the Assembly, the Draft Law on Economic Recovery COVID-19[6] passed the first reading after six failed attempts[7], and it was finally voted on December 4th with 72 votes.[8] In this law, the government proposed the citizens' withdrawal of 10 percent of their pension savings *(Trusti)* as a means to increase the aggregate demand and stimulate consumption.[9] Experts argued that this initiative would not contribute to support the most vulnerable groups, such as the unemployed and those in need of social and financial assistance.[10]

Kosovo's diaspora and its remittances, on the other hand, have traditionally played an important role in improving the welfare of the country's citizens. Even to date, migration continues to be a widespread phenomenon amongst Kosovars. In this context, migration and remittances have been an effective tool for mitigating poverty in Kosovo, as well as a coping mechanism for disadvantaged households with no or little employment and earning opportunities. The high dependence of households on remittances suggests that poverty rates would be much higher without the safety net provided through these migration-based income networks. Against the current context of pandemic, official 2020 data revealed that the diaspora had transferred €769.5 million until October, €19 million more than over the same period in 2019.[11]

Survey data suggested that, during the 2010-2014 period, between 35 to 43 percent of the population in Kosovo was willing to migrate. Moreover, between December 2014 and March 2015, Kosovo experienced one of the largest migrant flux toward European Union (EU) countries since the wartime in 1999, which saw a large population exodus. In 2015, Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS) measured the willingness to migrate through a representative survey. The data showed that 37.2 percent of individuals surveyed were willing to migrate. The results of another survey conducted in December 2019 suggested that the willingness had increased to 39.2 percent. Among the key motives for migration, respondents listed the lack of prospects that the socio-economic and political situations would improve in the near future, the deteriorating economic situation, and the search for a better life. On the other hand, three main factors that would convince respondents not to migrate were finding a stable job with an average salary, employment for other members of the family, and the EU's disadvantageous visa regime.[12]

6 The Assembly of Kosovo, Draftlaw on Economic Recovery COVID -19 (document). Via: **http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/Uploads/Data/Documents/ProjektligjiperrimekembjenekonomikeCOVID-19_CDhzU5wMhv.pdf**

7 The Assembly of Kosovo, Draftlaw on Economic Recovery COVID -19 (document). Via: **http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/Uploads/Data/Documents/ProjektligjiperrimekembjenekonomikeCOVID-19_CDhzU5wMhv.pdf**

8 "Economic Recovery Packages passes first reading at seventh attempt", Prishtina Insight, 12 October 2020. Via: **https://prishtinainsight.com/economic-recovery-package-passes-first-reading-at-seventh-attempt/**

9 The Law on Economic Recovery and Discrimination for some of the citizens is approved", Koha Ditore, 04 December 2020. Via: **https://www.koha.net/arberi/248451/sot-seance-e-jashtezakonshme-per-pakon-e-rimekembjes-ekonomike/**

10 "The 10% Dilemma: The benefits and drawbacks of the early withdrawal of pension savings", Institute GAP, July 2020. Via: **https://www.institutigap.org/documents/46547_trusti_10_en.pdf**

11 Media report on the flux of remittances during the pandemic situation. Available at: **https://kallxo.com/gjate/ne-kohe-pandemie-diaspora-dergoi-rreth-800-milione-euro-ne-kosove/**. Accessed on 19 November 2020. **https://www.koha.net/arberi/247973/kete-vit-diaspora-dergoi-afer-800-milione-euro-ne-kosove/** accessed on 1 December 2020.

12 Loxha, A., and Elshani, D. (2015). Potential Migrant's Profile: Who are the most likely Kosovars willing to migrate? Group for Legal and Political Studies. Available at: **http://www.legalpoliticalstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/GLPS-Potential-Migrants-Profile-Who-are-the-Kosovars-most-willing-to-migrate.pdf**

On a positive note, it seems that the high willingness to migrate is not translating into illegal migration. European Statistical Office (EUROSTAT) statistics suggest that the number of asylum seekers/requests in the EU and other Schengen countries has considerably decreased in 2019 compared to 2015, from 73,240 requests in 2015 to 2,970 in 2019. So has the number of readmitted citizens, from 18,789 in 2015 to 2,395 in 2018.[13] This could be due to Kosovo signing more than 20 readmission agreements with European countries.[14] Over the last few years, migration is rather manifested via legal ways, such as working visas.

Given the persisting political instability, the many socio-economic challenges and the current status of pandemic, this Policy Analysis aims to update Kosovo's potential migrant's profile and to identify the main characteristics of the citizens willing to migrate, hence constructing the 'Potential Migrant's Profile 2.0'. To this purpose, in December 2019 and June 2020, GLPS conducted two surveys aiming to measure the willingness to migrate in Kosovo. A novelty of the June 2020 survey is that it allows for an assessment of whether the lockdown and the consequences of the pandemic have affected the citizens' willingness to migrate, remittance inflow and frequency, as well as employment. This Analysis also aims to provide a comparative approach by pinpointing any differences between the willingness to migrate, and the migrant's profile, before and after the pandemic. The Analysis is organized as follows: Section II presents the data and descriptive statistics of the survey results. Section III then provides information on the potential migrant's profile, marking the main characteristics of those citizens willing to migrate. It also provides a comparison of the main results from the survey conducted in 2015 and 2019. Section V analyses the social and economic effects of the pandemic on respondents. Section VI provides an overall conclusion of the analysis.

13 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Enlargement_countries_-_statistics_on_migration,_residence_permits,_citizenship_and_asylum&oldid=485831#Asylum_applicants_and_first_instance_decisions_in_the_EU

14 European Commission (2019) Kosovo* 2019 Report. Brussels, May 2019 Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-kosovo-report.pdf

II. Data and descriptive statistics

This policy analysis utilizes data from a nationally representative survey titled "Measuring Public Opinion on Migration" with a sample of 1,065 respondents. The survey includes 23 questions which focus on individual and household characteristics as well as perceptions.

A novel feature in the survey is the addition of four questions related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with regards to remittances and employment status. Due to the particular relevance of this last set of questions, they will be delved into in a separate block of content (Section IV).

More than half (56.5 percent) of population live in the rural areas and the remaining in the urban ones. The majority of respondents, precisely 92 percent of the respondents are Albanian, 4 percent are Serb, whereas the remaining 4 percent of respondents belong to other ethnic groups. Regarding gender, the respondents are almost similarly distributed and the majority of them belong to age cohorts of 25 to 44 (45.4%). Nearly every second respondent has achieved up to a secondary education level (44.4%) and one-sixth has completed primary education (16.0%), whereas over one-fifth has completed up to a Bachelor degree (22.3%). Data on employment suggest that majority of the respondents are employed in the private sector (26.3%), followed by the unemployed looking for a job (18.6%) and housewives (15.7%). The majority of respondents belong to the service (22.9%) and trade sector (19.2%).

Data regarding income sources suggest that almost one-third of the respondents claimed they received no personal monthly income during the last month (32.0%) and almost a fourth reported an income ranging from €150 to €300 (22.6%). The majority of respondents reported a household monthly income ranging from €301 to €450 during the last month (23.0%), followed by those who earn a monthly household income from €451 to €600 (19.2%). Almost two-thirds of the respondents consider their socio-economic situation as average (62.3%). Similar to other survey waves, 24.6 percent of the respondents have received remittances in the last four months. Of these, half has received an average monthly amount of up to €200 (50.6%). However, the results regarding the frequency of remittance receipt suggest that the share of the population that receives remittances overall is higher than the share of those that claimed to have received remittances during the last four months. More precisely, around 70 percent of households claim to receive remittances whenever their sender has the opportunity to do so. Regarding asset ownership, 85.8 percent of the respondents own land and real estate, 85.2 percent own a car, and 20.3 percent own livestock.

Poor working conditions, weakened labour rights and a lack of occupational prospects are to a major extent paving the way for potential migration out of Kosovo. Out of all respondents claiming to be currently employed, the majority works on a fixed-term contract (51.6%) whereas, worryingly, more than a third works without a contract (32.2%). While more than half receives the salary through bank transfer (56.8%), more than one-third receives it in cash (39.3%). One out of every two workers claims that their employer pays taxes and pension contributions (56.0%), whereas over one-third claims this not to be the case (37.8%). In terms of workers' rights to use their annual leave according to the labour law and to be financially compensated for the days of unused leave, 46.6 percent of respondents claim to exercise these two rights fully, whereas 20.0 percent can exercise neither. These data suggest that on average, above 30 percent of respondents employed in the private sector have at least one of the characteristics (proxies) of informal employment.[15]

15 Informal employment is also defined as compromising all legal production activities deliberately concealed from the public authorities for the following types of reasons: to avoid paying financial benefit, value added or other taxes; to avoid paying social security contributions; to avoid the obligation to meet certain legal standards equal to minimum wages, maximum hours, and safety or health standards [Williams,C., and Lansky, M. (2013) Informal employment in developed and developing economies: Perspectives and policy responses, International Labour Review, Vol.152 (2013), No.3-4.]

This suggests that, on average, at least 30 percent of respondents are informally employed.

The data suggest that respondents largely prefer the public over private sector. The unfavourable working environment in the private sector seems to lead almost three out of four respondents to want to work in the public sector (74.4%), mostly because of the higher salaries public servants usually enjoy (78.9%). Nepotism and the lack of vacancies matching the applicant's profile are the two main reasons respondents consider make finding a job difficult.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Proportion
Willingness to migrate	48.4
Form of migration	
Permanent	64.3
Temporary	27.7
Seasonal	8.0
Regions	
Prishtina	24.2
Mitrovica	17.8
Prizren	16.0
Peja	9.3
Gjilan	11.2
Ferizaj	9.3
Gjakova	12.2
Residence	
- Urban	43.5
- Rural	56.5
Gender	
- Male	51.5
- Female	48.5
Perception of household's socio-economic situation	
- Very bad	2.2
- Bad	15.1
- Average	62.3
- Good	18.9
- Very good	1.6
Received remittances in the last four months	24.6
Monthly amount of remittances received	
Up to €200	50.6
€201 - €400	36.6
€401 - €600	7.1
€601 - €800	1.4
€801 - €1000	1.3
Over €1000	3.0

Variables	Proportion
Frequency of remittances received	
Every month	5.6
Every 3 months	6.8
Every 6 months	3.6
Once a year	5.0
Whenever possible	68.3
Never	10.7
Land and real estate ownership	85.8
Tractor, tool and/or other machinery ownership	27.9
Car ownership	85.2
Livestock ownership	20.3
Ethnicity	
Albanian	92.0
Serb	4.0
Other	4.0
Marital status	
Married	64.6
Single	28.9
Divorced	1.5
In cohabitation	2.1
Widowed	2.9
Age	
Age 18 - 24	17.7
Age 25 - 34	24.4
Age 35 - 44	20.9
Age 45 -54	15.8
Age 55- 64	10.7
65 and over	10.5
Personal income during the last month	
Up to €150	11.5
€151 - €300	22.6
€301 - €450	13.0
€451 - €600	8.6
€601 - €750	3.2
€751 - €900	2.3
€901 - €1200	0.5
Over €1200	0.2
No income	32.0
Refused to answer	6.3

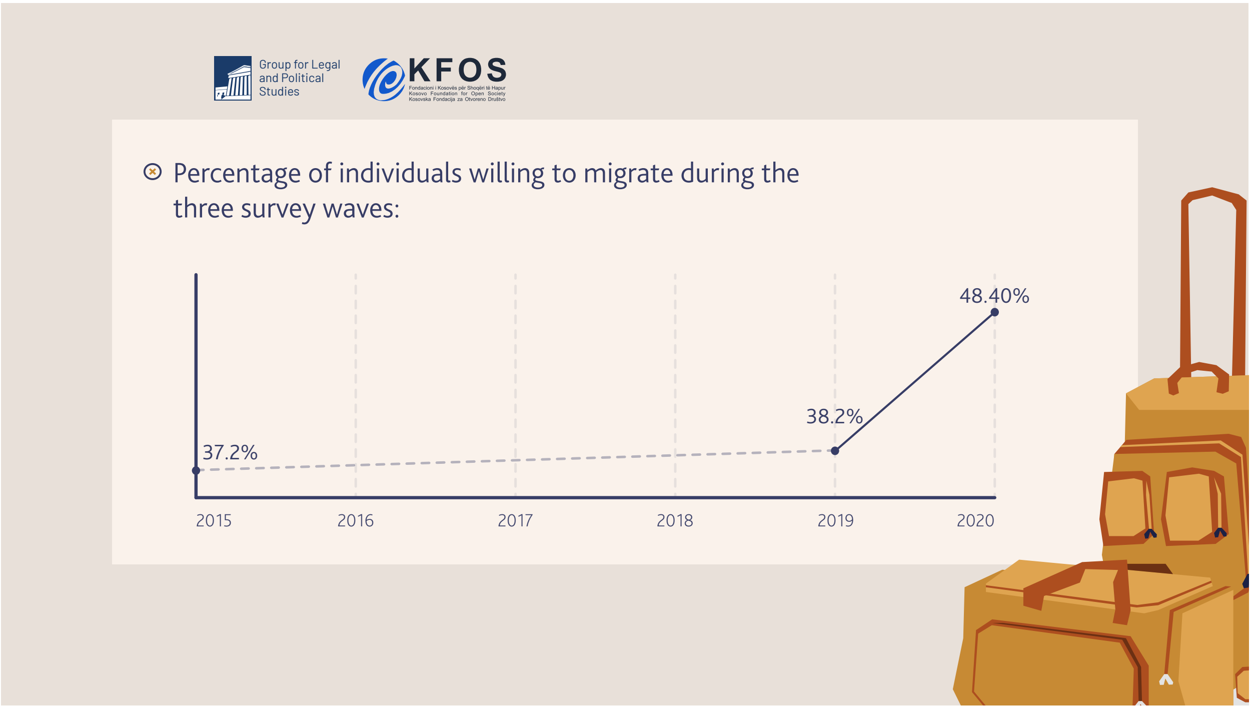
Variables	Proportion
Household income during the last month	
Up to €150	3.7
€151 - €300	17.3
€301 - €450	23.0
€451 - €600	19.2
€601 - €750	9.2
€751 - €900	6.8
€901 - €1200	3.2
Over €1200	2.9
No income	2.9
Refused to answer	11.6
Education	
Some years of primary education	3.6
Primary education	16.0
Some years of secondary education	3.2
Secondary education	44.4
Student	7.3
Bachelor degree	22.3
Masters or PhD	3.2
Occupation	
Unemployed - looking for a job	18.6
Unemployed - not looking for a job	6.5
Employed in the public sector	11.1
Employed in the private sector	26.3
Employed from time to time	4.1
Retired	10.7
Housewife	15.7
Student/pupil	5.1
Other	1.7
Job sectors	
Public sector (administration, education, health)	3.9
Trade	19.2
Production	10.2
Services (restaurants, hotels, cafés)	22.9
Telecommunications	3.0
Architecture and design	0.4
Construction	13.7
Health	1.2
Education, private sector	9.0
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1.8
Non-governmental organizations	4.8
Finances, insurances and real estate	3.9
Media	0.1
Other	5.9

III. Survey results: the potential migrant's profile

This section aims to provide an analysis of the June 2020 survey results. It attempts to construct the potential migrant's profile, as well as to compare the willingness to migrate and the main reasons that motivate this decision. In addition, this analysis aims to identify potential changes in any of the characteristics between the three survey waves.

The survey suggests a disturbing result regarding the willingness to migrate, as the data point to the highest reported percentage from all survey waves conducted, even higher than during the highest migration wave in 2015 (Figure 1). More precisely, 48.4 percent of the respondents are willing to migrate, out of which 64.3 percent would consider permanent migration (66.3% in 2019). The willingness to migrate has increased by 23 and 21 percent in 2020 compared to 2015 and 2019, respectively. This suggests that the willingness to migrate has followed an increasing trend irrespective of the fact that the number of asylum seekers has sharply decreased (see Section 1). This increase is recorded to be more evident in June 2020 compared to the recent December 2019 data, which is an indication that the pandemic consequences have further inflamed the willingness to migrate.

Figure 1. Percentage of individuals willing to migrate during the three survey waves:



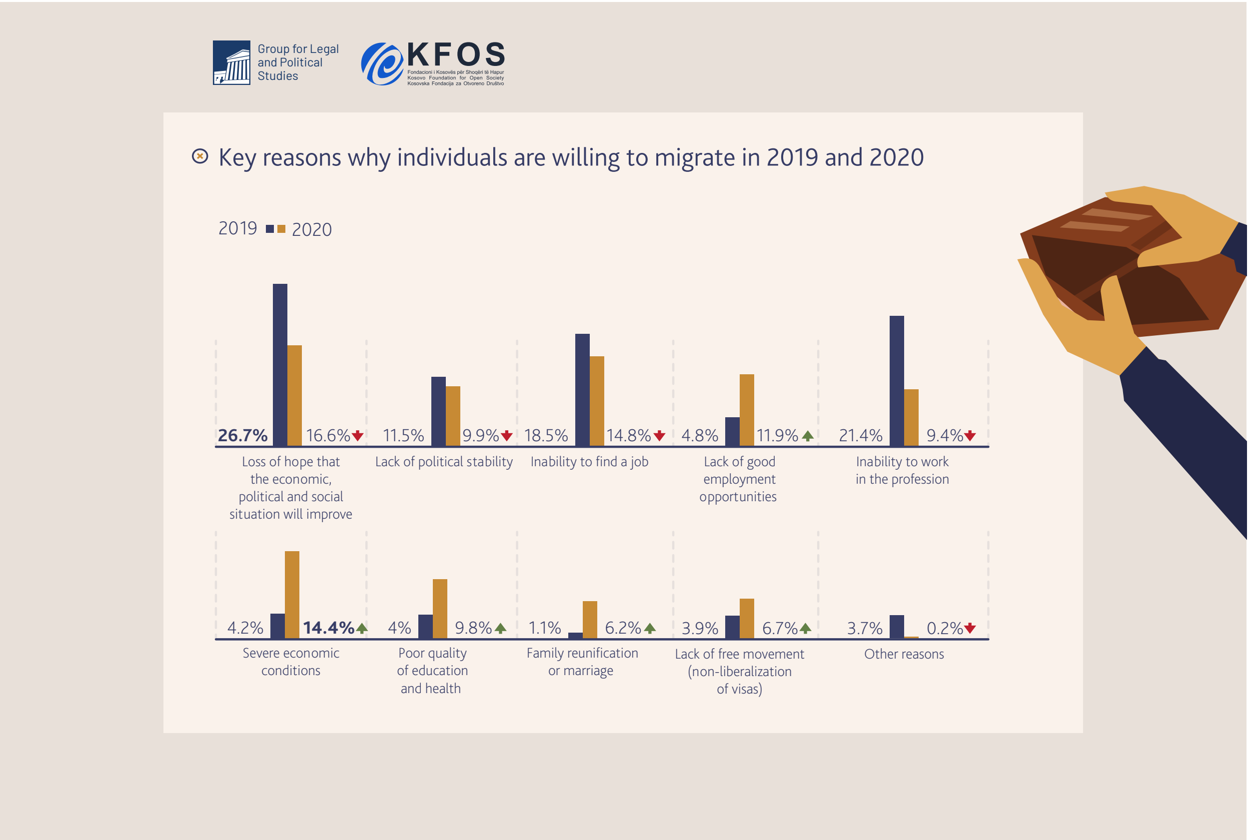
It must be noted that the migration indicator shows merely the will to migrate, but cannot in any way be taken as willingness to engage in illegal migration. Therefore, the indicator of 'willingness to migrate' should not be associated with illegal migration. Also, this analysis should not be interpreted to reflect any type of causality. This section provides an analysis of the survey, hence it exclusively provides an interpretation of the survey data.

Reasons to migrate vs reasons to stay

The latest results (June 2020) suggest that the main reasons why individuals are willing to migrate remain more or less the same as in 2015 and 2019. A standing result across the three survey waves is that the lack of hope that the economic, political, and social situation will improve is one of the most listed reasons that would motivate individuals to migrate. As one would expect theoretically, poverty or severe economic conditions is another top-listed motivation to migrate, across the three waves. Poorer households may have higher incentives to migrate – as a means to improve their economic situation and risk diversification. Poorer households may decide to migrate due to the lack of job opportunities in their home country, especially in countries with high unemployment rates. Another top reason relates to welfare or income generation, precisely, the inability to find good job opportunities. This indicates that citizens do not see an improvement in their overall welfare.

It is worth noting that, while the other listed options were only considered as a reason to migrate by, on average, 3 to 4 percent of respondents in 2019, their share has largely increased in 2020. This could be a reflection of worsened economic conditions and the loss of tens of thousands of jobs in the private sector due to the pandemic situation.

Figure 2. Main reasons why individuals would migrate



In line with the 2015 and 2019 results, the majority of respondents that are willing to migrate blames the government (70.5%), followed by political parties (18.6%) and the justice system (7.0%) for their motivation to migrate (Figure 2). The municipalities, the health and education systems and other reasons are listed by only 3.8 percent of respondents.

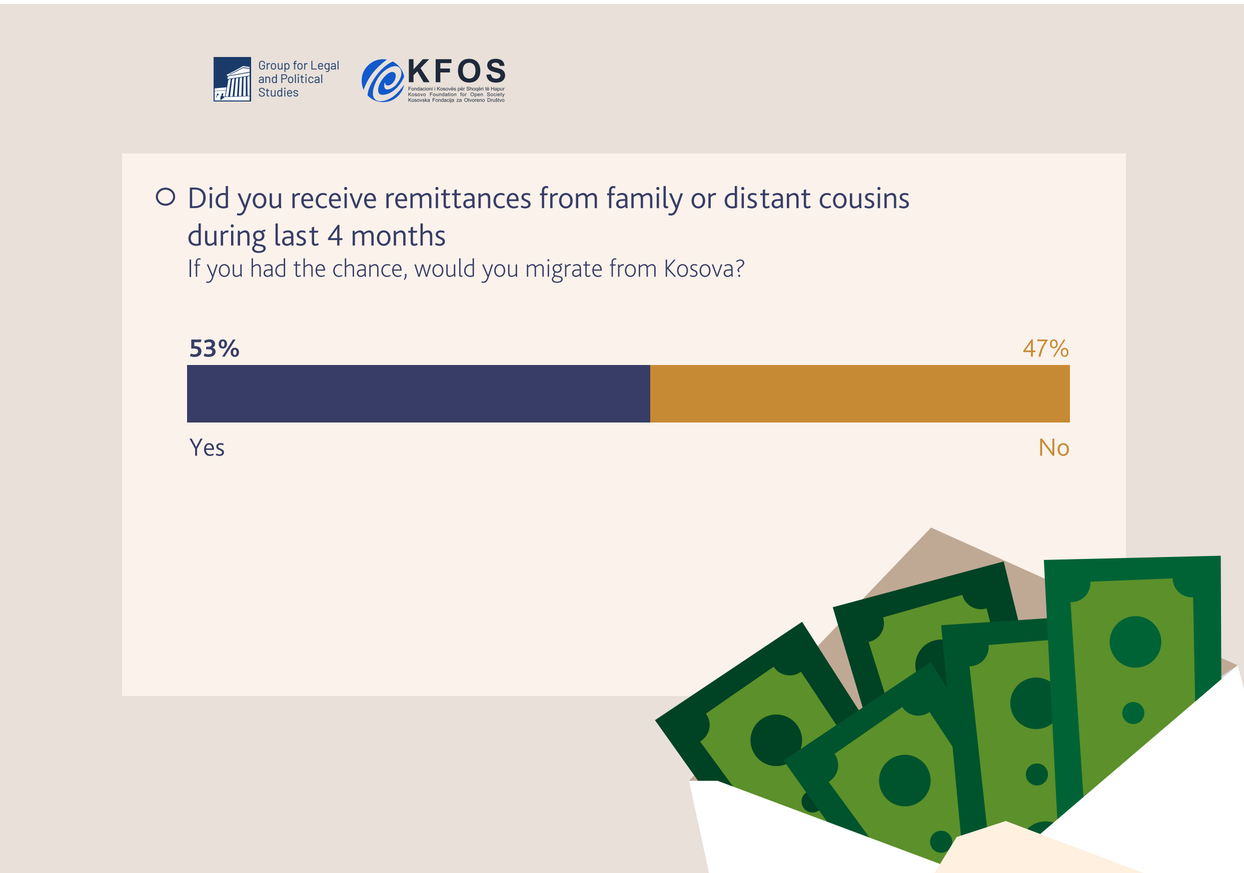
Differently from the previous survey[16], the three main reasons that would convince individuals not to migrate are the employment of other members of the household (53.3%), finding a stable job with an average salary (47.1%) and political stability (36.9%). An improved economic situation is deemed an important reason not to migrate by 28.8 percent of respondents. Moreover, around 64.3 percent would consider permanent migration compared to only 27 and 8 percent, that would consider temporary or seasonal migration, respectively (Figure 4). This indicates that a considerable share is willing to permanently settle in another country. Even more alarming is the finding that the majority of respondents aged 18 to 24 are willing to permanently migrate, suggesting that they do not see any perspective in their homeland. The persistently high youth unemployment[17] rates and poor prospects for improvement could be the reasons behind this result.

Willingness to migrate in:

Remittance receiving/households with migrants

The data suggest that the willingness to migrate is higher among households that have received remittances. Around 53 percent of respondents from households that received remittances are willing to migrate in comparison to 47 percent of those that did not (Figure 3).

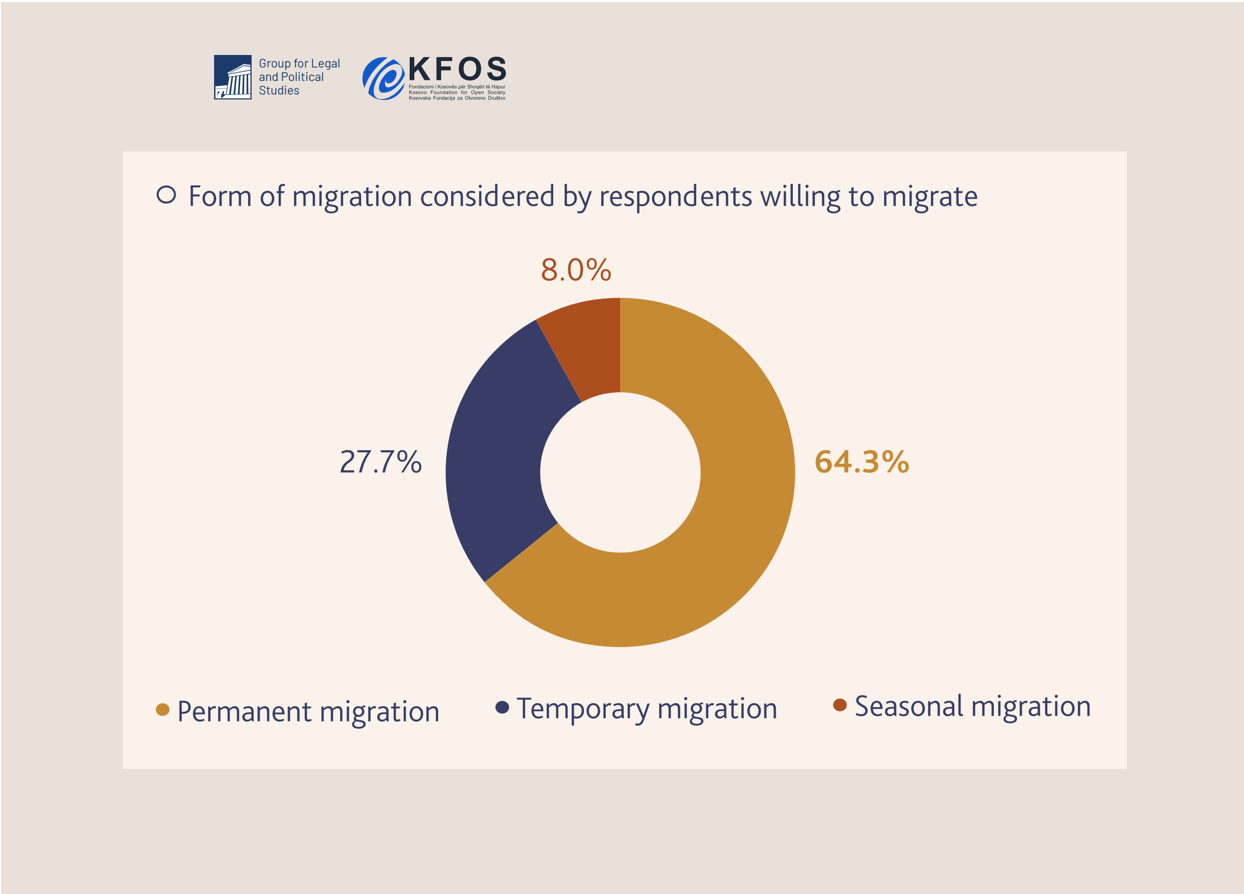
Figure 3. Willingness to migrate amongst remittance receiving households



16 The improvement of the economic situation (70.5%), employment of other members of the household (40.6%) as well as and improvement in the health and education system (37.1%) are found as three main reasons that would convince individuals not to migrate in December 2019. For more details see the report for 2019 available at: For comparative purposes see 2015 report available at: http://www.legalpoliticalstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/GLPS-Potential-Migrants-Profile-Who-are-the-Kosovars-most-willing-to-migrate.pdf

17 Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2020) Labour Market Survey 2019. Available at: https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5369/anketa-e-fuqis%C3%AB-pun%C3%ABtore-afp-2019.pdf

Figure 4. Form of migration considered by respondents willing to migrate



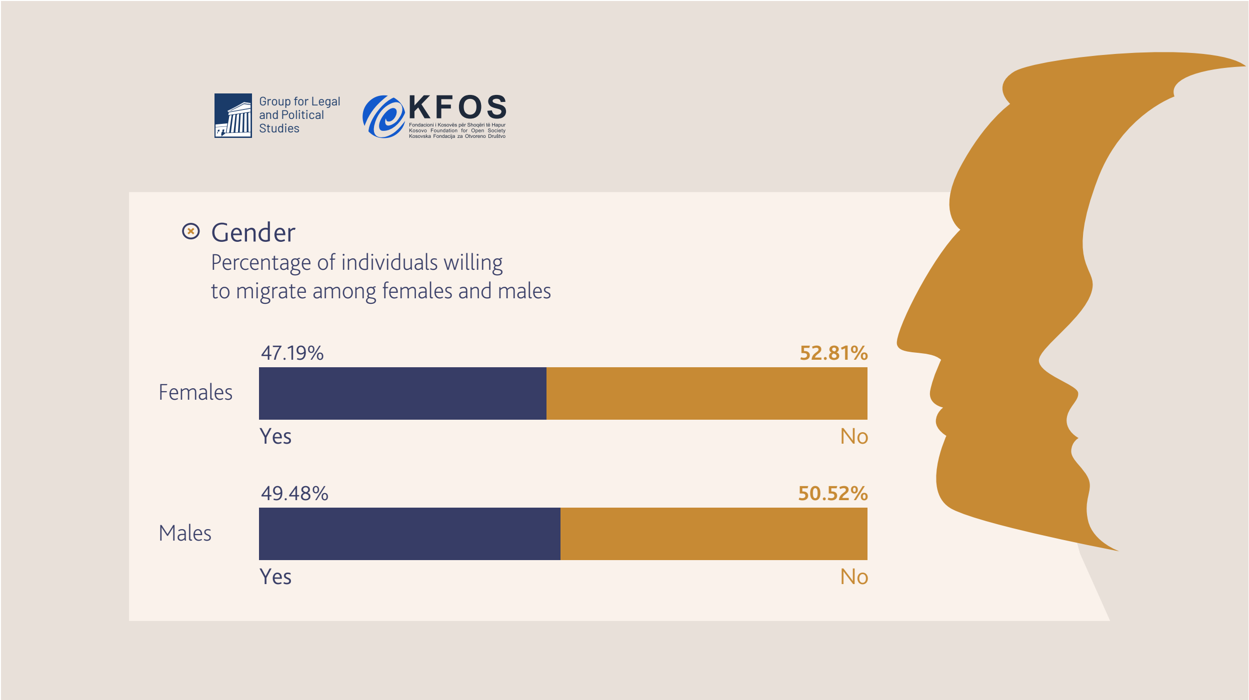
Data in Figure 5 suggest that the willingness to migrate is slightly higher among males (49.5%) compared to females (47.2%), although the unemployment rate is reported to be considerably higher among females, and so is the poverty rate (see Section 1). It is worth noting that, compared to the rate in 2015 (36.1%) and 2019 (38.3%), this presents an increase in the willingness to migrate among females. One reason could be the increased opportunities that the legal migration is offering in healthcare and ICT professions. The share of female graduates is reported to be higher than that of males, according to the latest official statistics.[18] According to a study developed by the Federation of the Health Trade Union of Kosovo, around 61 percent of nurses surveyed are willing to migrate, the main reasons being a higher salary (29%) and professional development (27%).[19] According to a study published by GAP Institute, "professional, scientific activities and technology and the ICT sector are particularly prone to risks due to migration, given their high productivity in Kosovo, low labour supply and growing prospects of migration through the new law, the Law on Qualified Immigration."[20] Moreover, the same study claims that professionals in the field of healthcare and social work are in high demand in Germany.

18 KAS (2020). Education sector statistics 2019/2020. Available at: https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5636/arsimi-201920120-shqip.pdf

19 For more details see https://www.institutigap.org/documents/82484_emigrimi_gjermani_.pdf

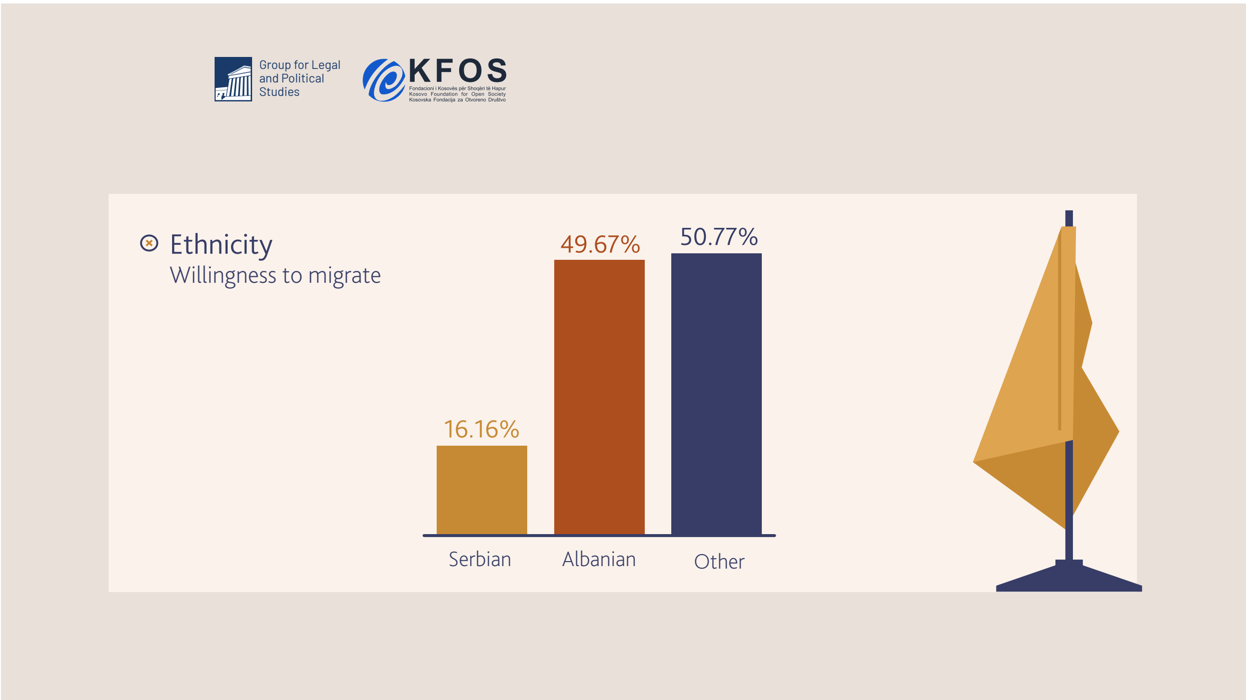
20 GAP Institute (2020). Emigration of Kosovo labor force to Germany Brief evaluation of positive and negative returns (p. 27). Available at: https://www.institutigap.org/documents/82484_emigrimi_gjermani_.pdf

Figure 5. Percentage of individuals willing to migrate among females and males



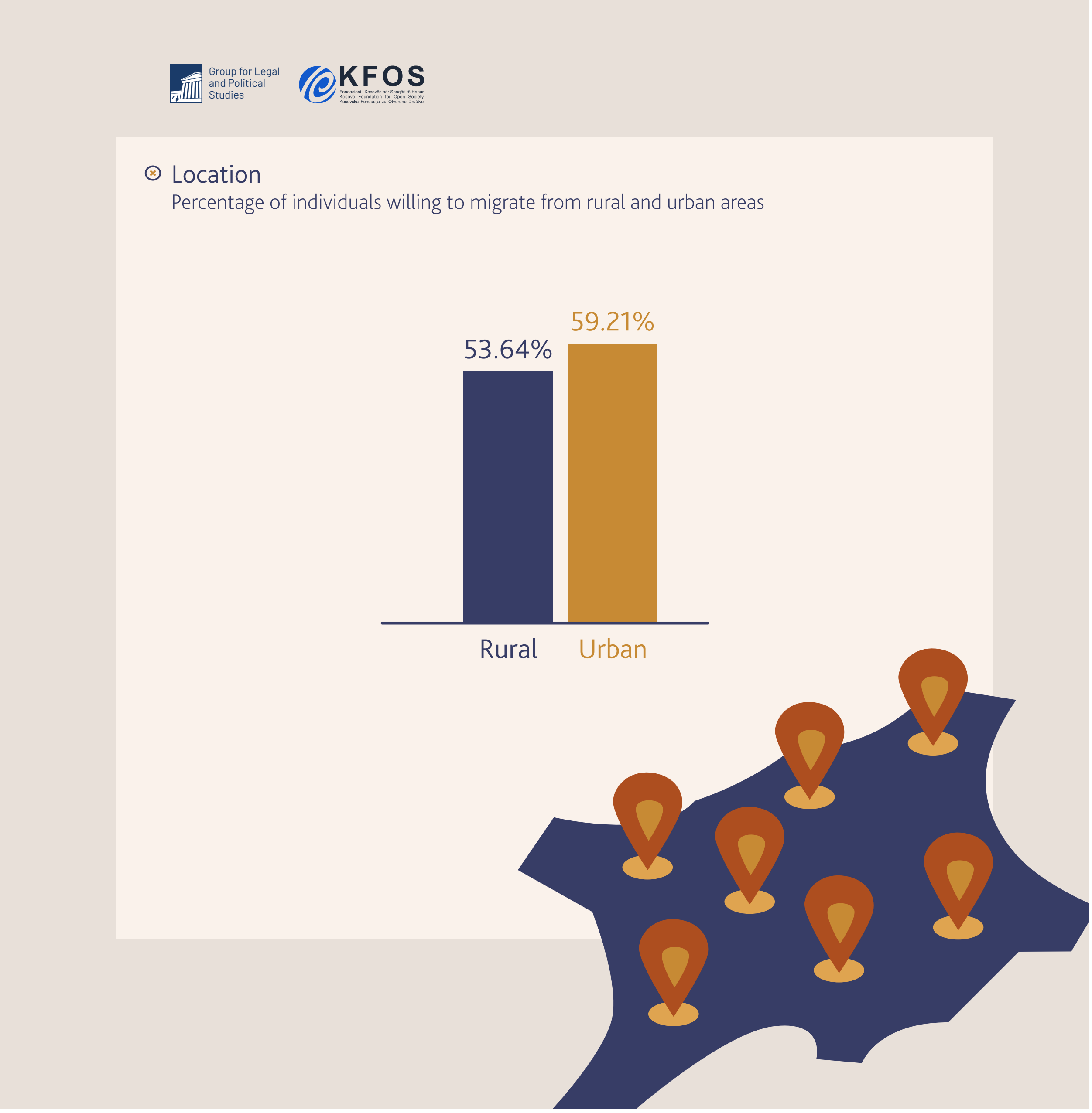
In addition, citizens with higher willingness to migrate belong to the Albanian and other ethnic groups (49.7 and 50.8%), in stark contrast to the lower numbers within the Serb community (16.2%) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Willingness to migrate among main ethnic groups



In line with previous survey results, the latest results indicate that those residing in urban areas have a slightly higher willingness to migrate (51.6%) than their rural counterparts do (45.8%) (Figure 7).

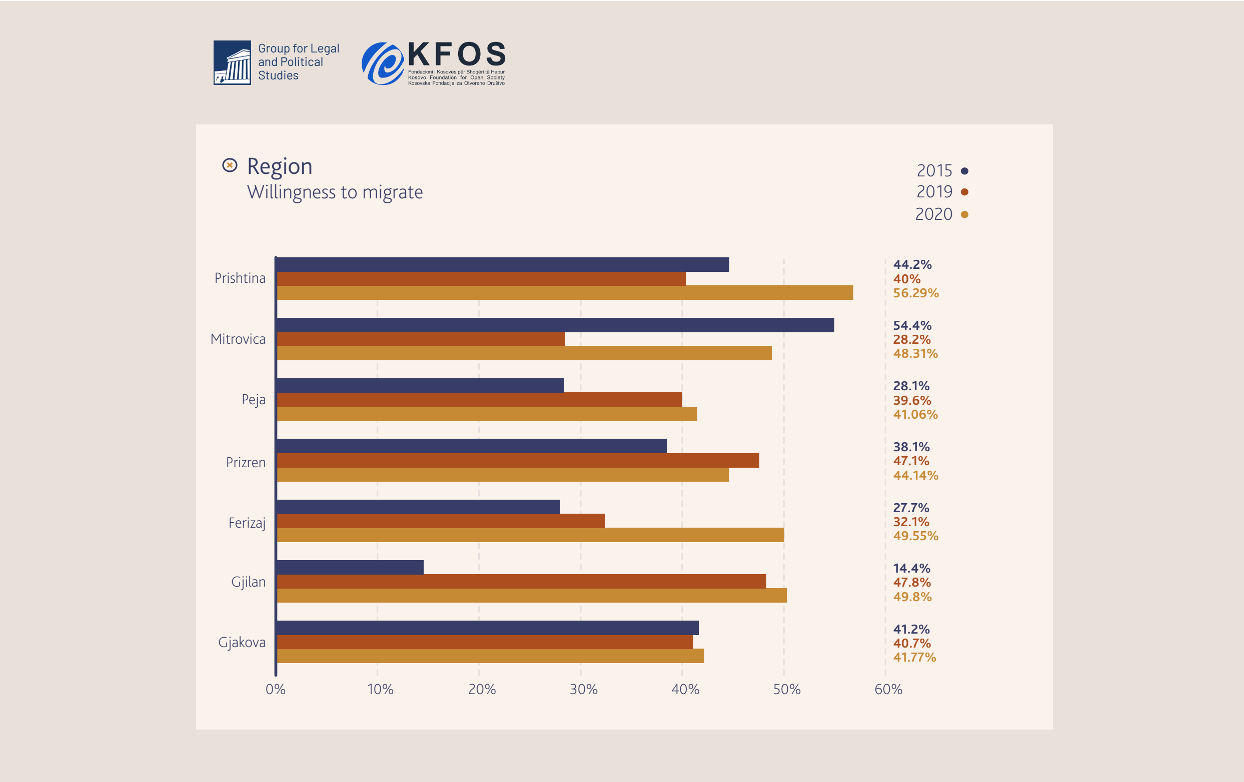
Figure 7. Willingness to migrate according to location of residence during the three survey waves



Digging in deeper, the data based on region suggest that willingness to migrate is highest amongst respondents from Prishtina (56%), whereas it ranges from 41 to 49 percent across other regions (Figure 8).

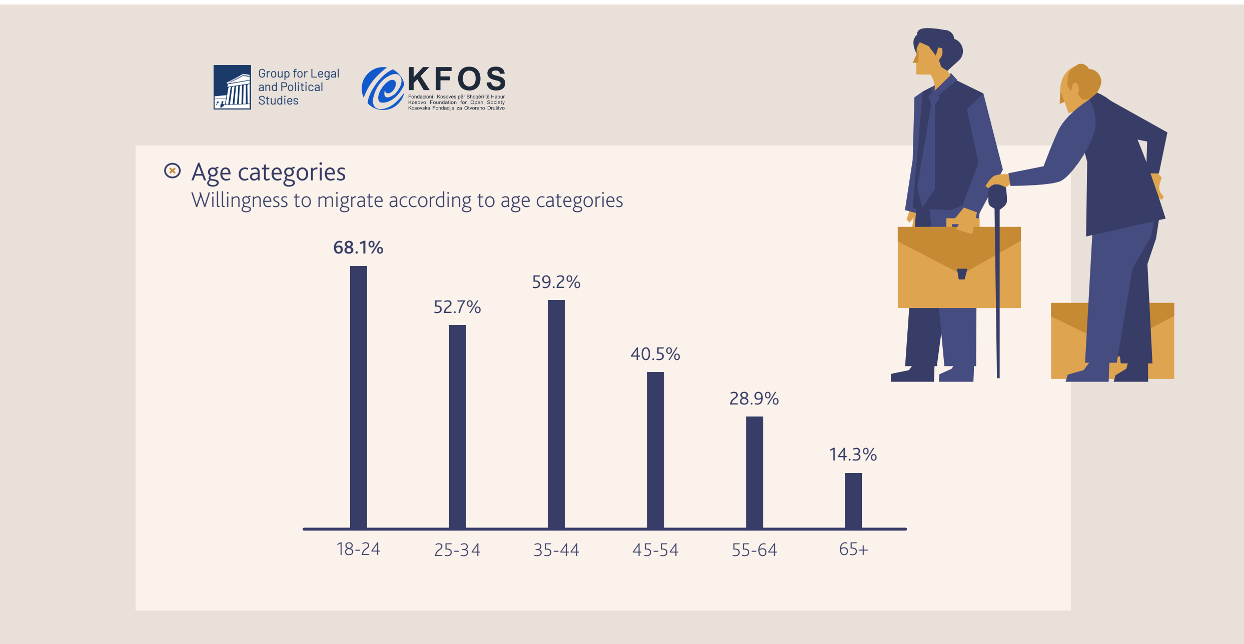
Contrary to the results of 2015, where the willingness to migrate was higher among citizens of Mitrovica and Prishtina, the 2019 survey results portray a higher willingness to migrate among individuals living in Gjilan (47.8%) and Peja (47.1%). However, it should be noted that, worrisomely, the willingness to migrate among respondents from Peja, Gjilan and Ferizaj has doubled (or more) in 2020 compared to 2015, whereas in Prishtina it has increased by 26 percent (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Willingness to migrate according to region (%)



The data based on age groups suggest that willingness to migrate remains higher among the younger segments of the population, in 2020 as well. Individuals belonging to age cohorts 18 to 24, 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 have a higher willingness to migrate, at 68.1, 52.7 and 59.2 percent, respectively, compared to other age cohorts (Figure 9). These results, however, portray a much higher willingness to migrate compared to waves in 2015 and 2019, in particular for the age cohort 35 to 44.

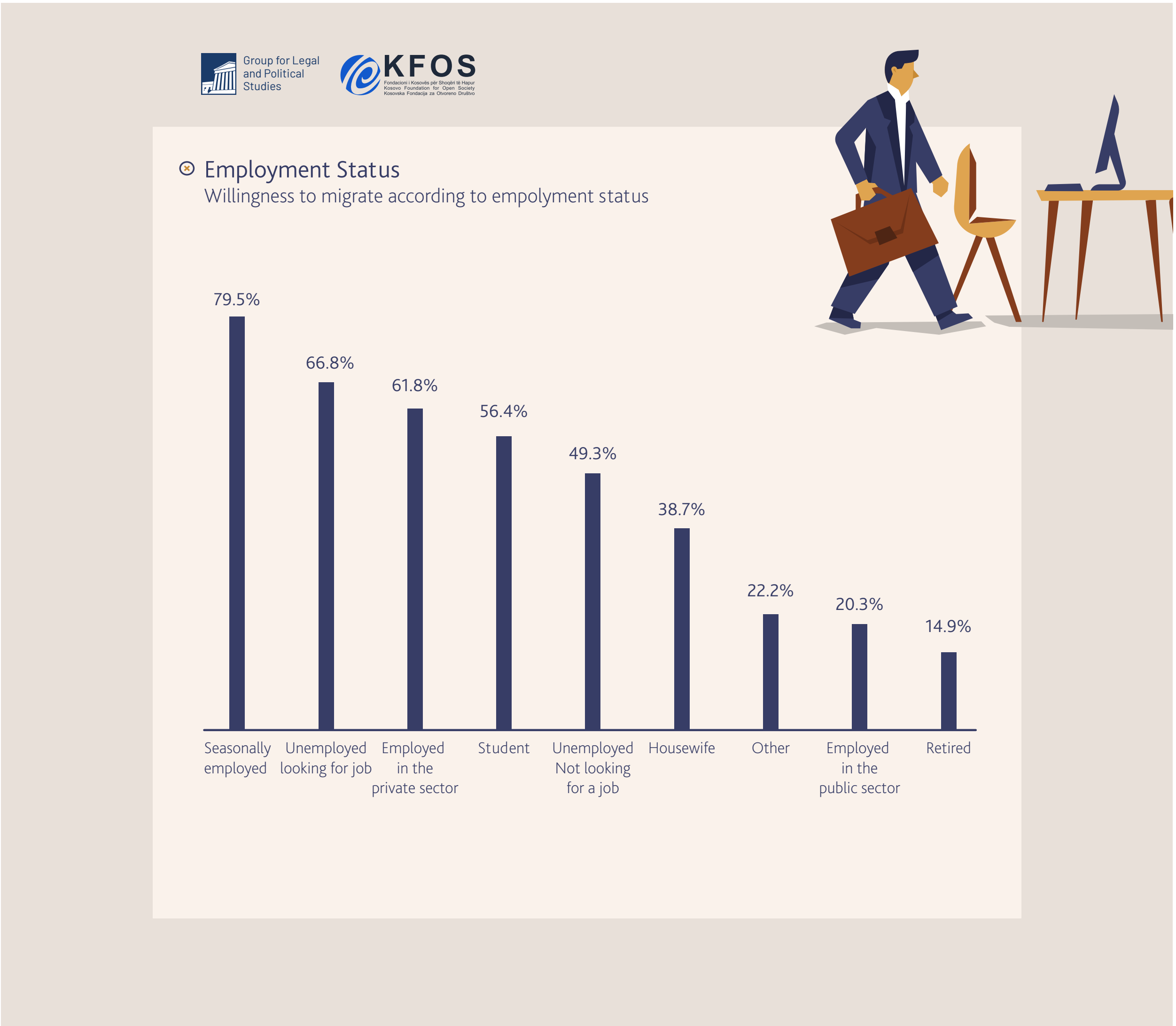
Figure 9. Willingness to migrate according to age cohorts



In economic theory, the migration decision is motivated by wage differentials in the host and home countries, as well as by employment possibilities or security.[21] Along the same line, the results show that, in line with the 2019 results, and as expected theoretically, the unemployed, those with unstable working situations or unsatisfactory working conditions, have a higher willingness to migrate. More precisely, the willingness to migrate is highest among seasonally-employed individuals (78.8%), unemployed looking for a job (66.8%), private sector employees (61.8%) and students (54.5%).

However, it should be noted that the share among all categories, except for students and respondents with other occupations, has considerably increased in 2020 compared to 2019. The increase is particularly substantial among private sector employees, seasonally-employed and unemployed respondents, both those looking and not looking for a job (Figure 10). These are, at the same time, groups that have been mostly affected by the pandemic-derived crisis.

Figure 10. **Willingness to migrate according to employment status in 2019 and 2020**[22]

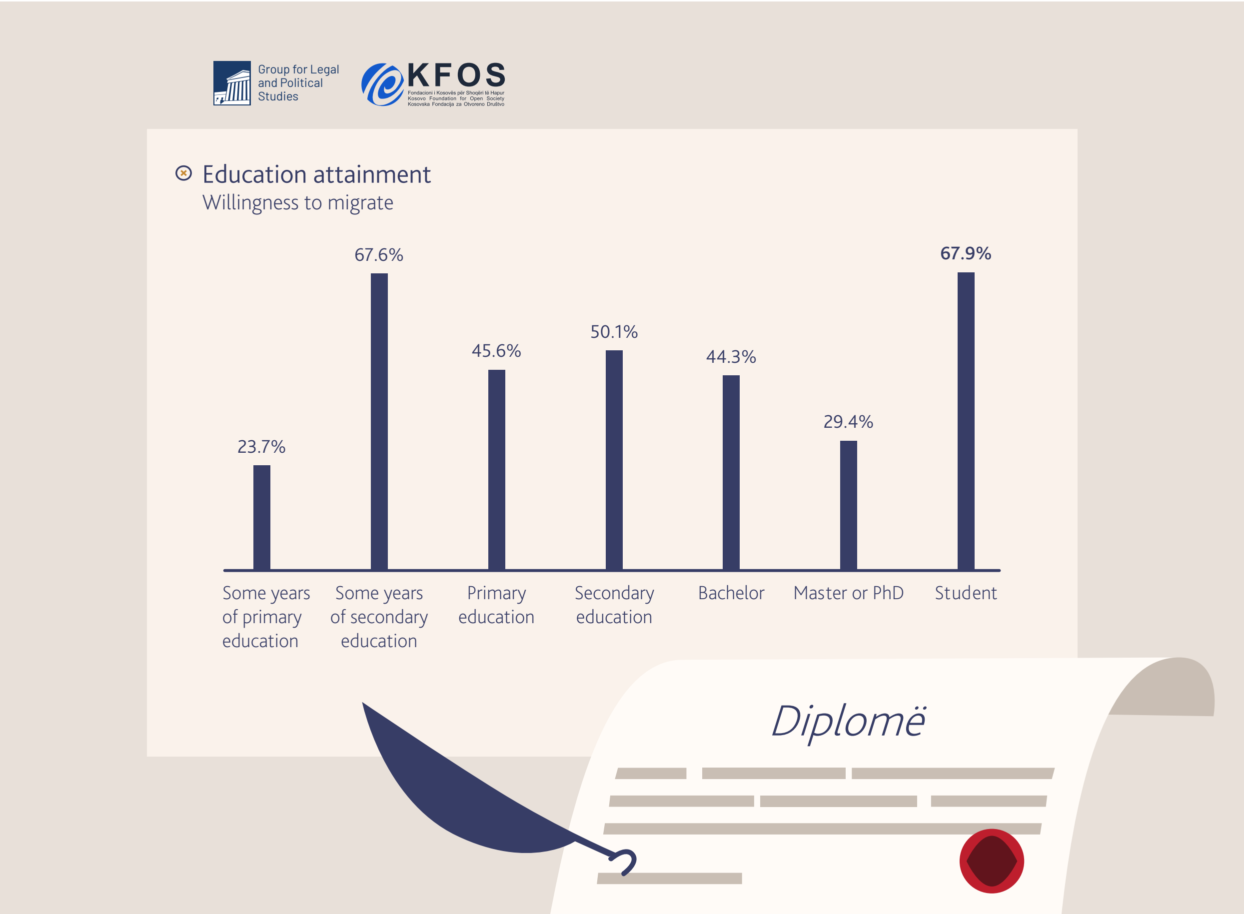


21 Litchfield, J., and Waddington, H., (2003). Migration and Poverty in Ghana: Evidence from the Ghana Living Standards Survey. University of Sussex, Sussex Centre for Migration Research, Working Paper, No. 10.

23 Due to a change in the survey questionnaire, the table does not provide data for 2015 due to lack of comparability.

Regarding education, the willingness to migrate is highest amongst those with some years of secondary education, those with secondary education attainment, and students. Worryingly, the share among respondents from the latter two groups is disproportionately higher, at more than 65 percent. Moreover, in comparison to the 2019 results, the proportion of respondents with primary education and with some years of secondary education attainment that are willing to migrate has considerably increased, particularly among the latter (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Education attainment of those willing to migrate in 2019 and 2020[23]

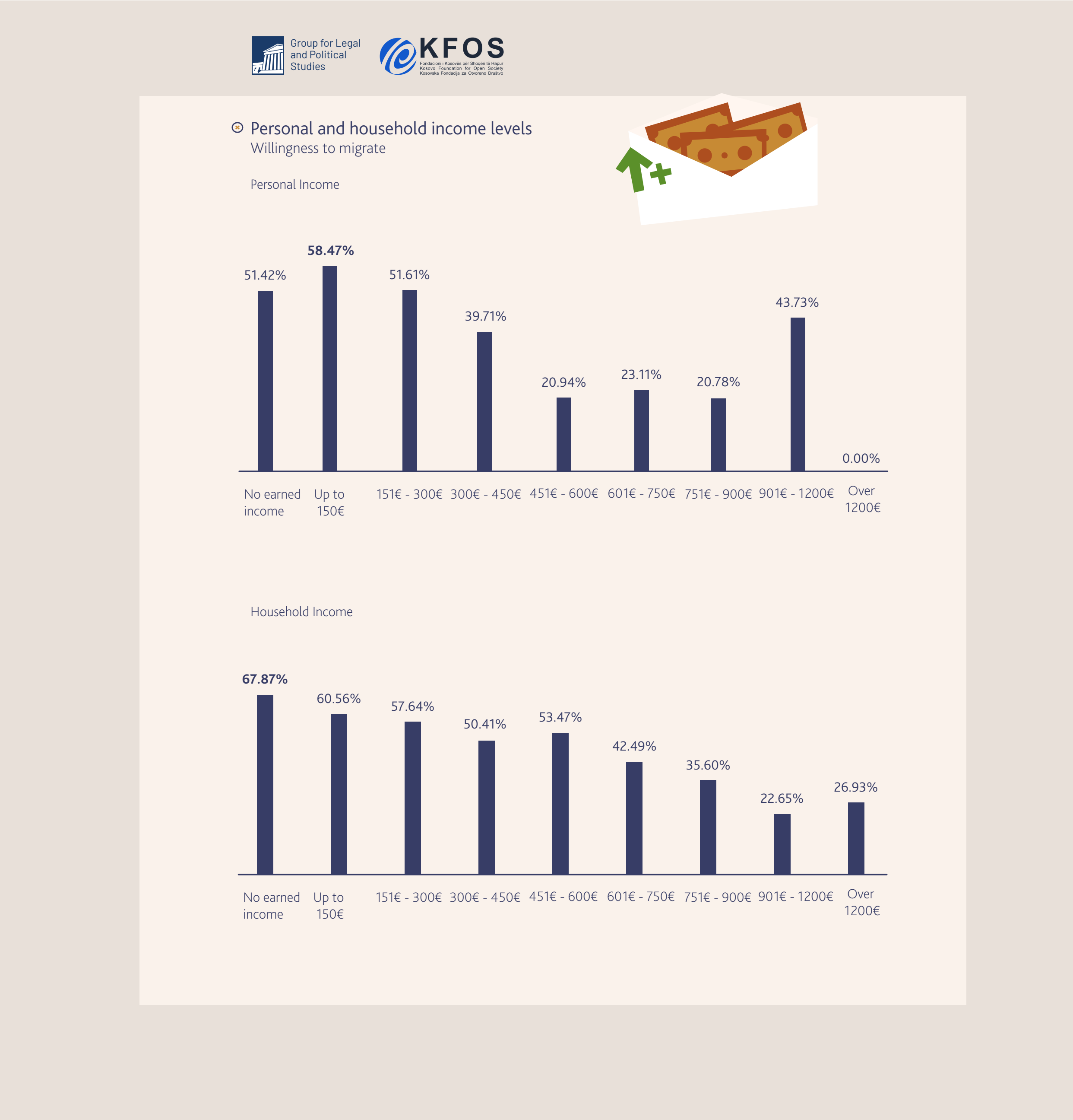


Survey results according to personal and household income groups portray a largely similar situation to the previous surveys. In line with theoretical expectations, individuals belonging to the lowest income groups, precisely, no income, up to €150 and €151 to €300, are more willing to migrate (Figure 12). However, in line with the 2015 and 2019 results, the share of respondents in the highest personal income group (€901 to €1200) is relatively high, as 43.7% of them are willing to migrate.

This suggests that the high inclination to migrate among this group is rather motivated by political factors. This is supported by survey data which show that 100 percent of respondents with personal income of €1201 and above consider their socio-economic situation as good, while 53 and 26 percent of those with personal income of €900 to €1200 consider it as good and very good, respectively, and none of them as bad or very bad. However, it should be noted that they comprise only a small share of the total sample of respondents.

23 Due to a change in the survey questionnaire, the table does not provide data for 2015 due to lack of comparability. More precisely, categories in 2015 survey are grouped into 3 main categories, less than primary or primary education; b) less than secondary or secondary education and c) tertiary or higher.

Figure 12. Willingness to migrate according to personal income group categories



In terms of household income, the willingness to migrate is highest for respondents belonging to households with low monthly income; however, as one would theoretically expect, the willingness to migrate decreases the higher the household income group. Poorer households may have higher incentives to migrate – as a strategy to improve their economic situation and risk diversification. The survey results suggest that those that consider their socio-economic situation to be bad (53.4%) or very bad (72.6%) have a much higher willingness to migrate, compared to those that consider it as very good or good (Figure 13).

Figure 13. The willingness to migrate based on personal monthly income across the three survey waves

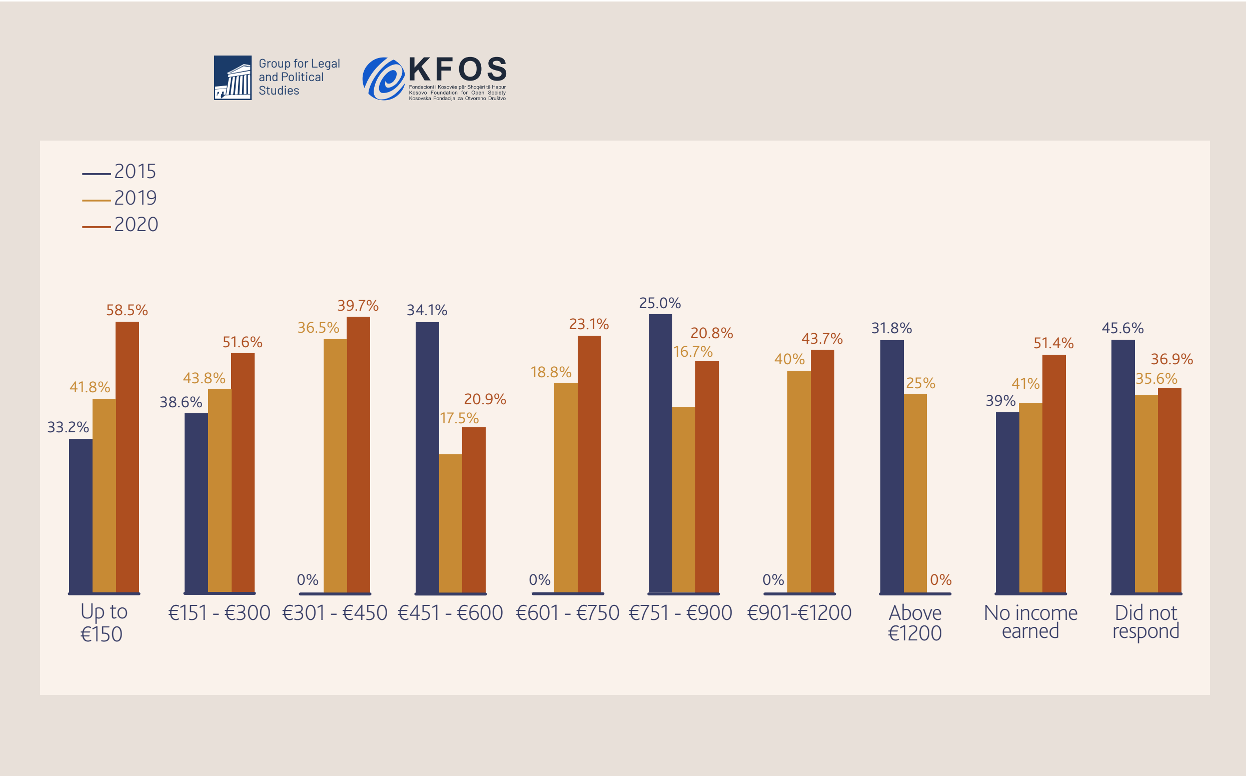
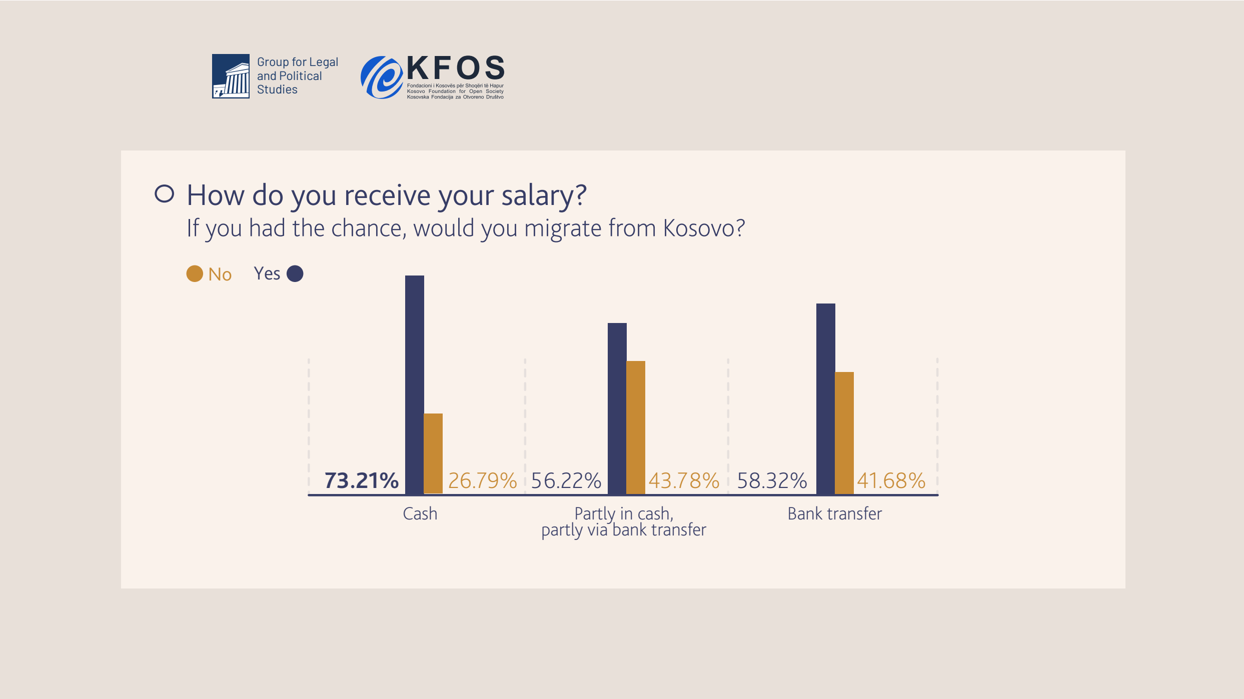


Figure 14. Willingness to migrate according to respondent's perception about their household social wellbeing

Migration, remittances and informality

Theories of international migration underline the lack of economic opportunities in home countries as a primary motive for migration.[24] As theoretical predictions suggest, informality is expected to increase migration rates because salaried informal workers are more dissatisfied with their working conditions.[25] In line with this, analysis of the results for informality indicators included in the survey suggest that informal employees tend to have a higher willingness to migrate compared to the formal ones. The willingness to migrate is the highest amongst those that receive their salary in cash compared to those that receive it via bank transfer (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Willingness to migrate according to the means of receiving the salary



24 Neoclassical economy (Borjas 1999; Todaro and Maruszko 1987; Massey et al. 1993). New Economics of Migration ((Durand et al. 1996; Lindstrom 1996; Stark and Bloom 1985) Segmented Labor Market Theory (Portes and Bach 1985; Taylor 1992; Maloney 2004; Perry et al. 2007; Portes and Haller 2005). For a more thorough discussion on migration theory see: Loxha, A. (2016). The effect of education on poverty in Kosovo and Albania. PhD thesis. Staffordshire University, UK. Available at: http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/3465/1/LoxhaA_PhD%20thesis.pdf

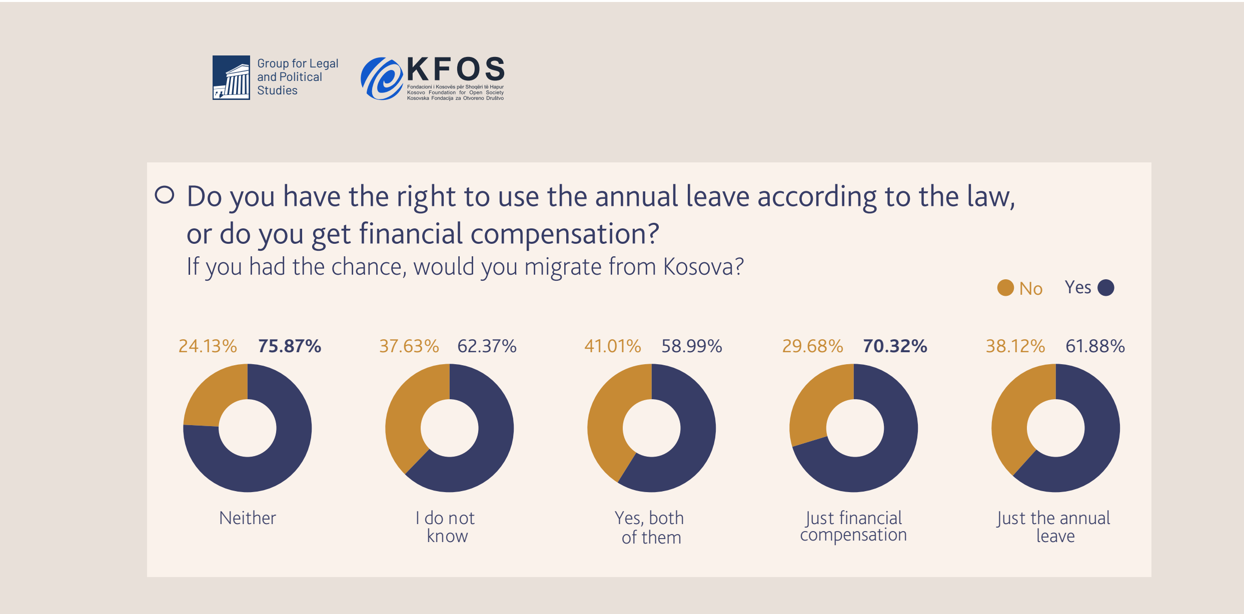
25 Rightly, Villareal and Blanchard (2013) argue that "...we must distinguish between self-employed workers, who often choose such informal jobs voluntarily for the greater autonomy and flexibility that they provide, and salaried workers in the informal sector, who are indeed often excluded from more desirable jobs in the formal sector and are therefore more likely to migrate." https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4865380/

Similarly, the data suggest that willingness to migrate is higher amongst those that do not have a permanent contract, and vice-versa (Figure 16). The share is particularly higher amongst those on internship contracts and individuals working without a contract, 100 and 71.5 percent of which are willing to migrate, respectively. Alike, more than 60 percent of respondents with a service contract are willing to migrate.

Figure 16. Willingness to migrate according to the type of contract of the employed respondents

The data for another informality proxy suggest that 70 and 64 percent of respondents whose taxes and contributions are not paid by the employer or paid sometimes, respectively, are willing to migrate. Willingness to migrate is particularly high among employees that are not entitled to annual leave or financial compensation in case of not being able to use the leave guaranteed by law. Specifically, around 76 percent of them are willing to migrate (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Willingness to migrate based on the legal right to annual leave



IV. The effect of COVID-19 on willingness to migrate, remittances and employment

A novel feature in the survey is the inclusion of questions related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with regards to remittances and employment status. The responses obtained will be analysed in this section. Overall, the data suggest that the lockdown measures imposed have negatively affected the remittance inflow and amount, the employment of the respondents, as well as their socio-economic situation.

Table 2. The extent of the effect of the pandemic on the amount and frequency of remittances

Has the pandemic affected the amount and the frequency of the remittances that you have received?	YES
Very little	4.2
Little	14.2
Average	15.0
A lot	5.0
Have not received at all	61.6
TOTAL	100.0

Since the virus outbreak, the vast majority of respondents claim to have not received any remittances (61.6%), whereas one-third consider that, despite having received remittances, the extent to which the pandemic has affected their amount or frequency is very low, low or average (more than 30%) (Table 2). Only a very small share of respondents claim that the pandemic has taken its toll on remittances to a relatively high extent (5.0%). This is in line with the latest official data, which suggest that remittance inflow has not been affected by the pandemic situation. More precisely, the diaspora has sent remittances worth around €800 million until October 2020.

However, the lockdown seems to have adversely affected the remittance inflow of households that reported to have received the lowest amounts of remittances during the last four months (Table 3). More specifically, around 50 percent of households that received an amount of up to €200 and €201 to €400 in remittances have seen the frequency and inflow of remittances change at an average level or a lot by the pandemic, whereas above 90 percent of those that received €800 to more than €1000 have reported little or very little impact.

Table 3. **The extent of the effect of the pandemic on the amount and frequency of remittances received according to the categories of the amount of remittances received**

Amount of remittances	Did not receive	Very little	Little	Average	A lot	Total
Did not receive/no response	80.88	1.65	5.86	7.94	3.67	
Up to €200	0.80	9.92	39.70	36.51	13.08	
€201-€400	4.27	12.61	40.14	36.07	6.91	
€401-€600	3.07	8.20	46.17	40.88	1.67	
€601-€800	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	
€801-€1000	7.90	51.98	40.12	0.00	0.00	
Above €1000	13.68	43.16	39.70	16.56	0.00	

Although the pandemic does not seem to have affected the remittance inflow, nearly two out of ten respondents claim that their employment situation has changed since the pandemic started (19.1%), among which over half of them has not received a salary (58.8%) and almost one-quarter has seen their salary reduced (20.9%). A remarkable 15.7 percent claims to have lost their job. Against this backdrop, only 18.7 percent of all respondents have benefited from the government-sponsored Emergency Package. Despite the Package benefits, eligible businesses received a monthly assistance of €290 for each employee from the fund of €60 million initiated by the government in October. This approach has been criticized given that all businesses have uniformly benefited from the fund, regardless of the extent to which they were affected; but also for being an extremely delayed assistance. The government, nevertheless, failed to pass the Economic Recovery draft-law in the Assembly for six consecutive times[26] and the draft-law has only been approved in early December.[27]

The appropriateness and effectiveness of measures foreseen by the Law is beyond the scope of this analysis, on top of the extensive delay related to voting of the draft-law, most of the measures require some time before they are made effective and can produce tangible results. This said, one can expect the consequences produced by the pandemic to further deteriorate in the upcoming months.

The majority of those that have seen a greater change in their working situation since the start of the pandemic are predominantly males, 65 percent, compared to only 34.8 percent of females (Table 4), although 52 percent of those that did not benefit from the emergency package are females. One reason why males have seen their working situation change more could be due to females being largely underrepresented in the labour market. Labour market participation and employment of females was reported to be only 17.6 and 12 percent, respectively, in the second quarter of 2020.[28]

26 To date, the economic recovery package has been finally passed in the first reading in the assembly, after 6 failed attempts. Currently, it is being reviewed in the Assembly and is expected to be put on the agenda of the upcoming Assembly sessions during the first part of November 2020.

27 Top Channel "Kosove: The law on economic recovery is approved", 4 December 2020. Available at https://top-channel.tv/2020/12/04/kosove-miratohet-ligji-per-rimekembje-ekonomike/

28 KAS (2020). Labour Market Survey Quarter II 2020. Available at: https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5815/afp-tm2-2020.pdf

Table 4. The effect of the pandemic on the working situation based on gender

Has your working situation changed during the pandemic?	Female	Male	Total
No	51.77	48.23	100.00
Yes	34.80	65.20	100.00

However, males have benefited less from the government funds (37%) in comparison to females (63%), and every second male would not be eligible for these funds compared to 46.5 percent of females (Table 5).

Table 5. Receipt of benefits of the government emergency fund based on gender

Did you benefit from the government emergency fund?	Female	Male	Total
No, I did not	52.28	47.72	100
No, I was not in the beneficiary category	46.49	53.51	100
Yes, I received the funds	62.98	37.02	100
Yes, I am waiting to receive the funds	55.54	44.46	100

Regarding ethnicity, Turks and Albanians are the largest groups that claimed to have experienced changes in their working situation (Table 6). Cases where respondents have lost their jobs are highest among the Turk and Egyptian minority respondents, whereas Turks are the ethnic group that has the highest share of respondents whose salary has been reduced. Albanians, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians and Turks have the highest share of respondents that, temporarily, did not receive a salary.

Table 6. Changes in working situation according to ethnicity

What is your ethnic background?	If yes, which of the alternatives stands?					
	None	I lost my job	My working situation improved	My salary decreased	I temporarily did not received a salary	TOTAL
Ashkali	87.05	1.98	0	0	10.97	100
Bosniak	100	0	0	0	0	100
Egyptian	92.37	7.63	0	0	0	100
Roma	91.71	0	0	0	8.29	100
Serbian	89.91	0	3.49	1.32	5.28	100
Albanian	80.22	3.09	0.81	4.24	11.64	100
Turkish	72.05	12.49	0	7.73	7.73	100

However, the data on Table 7 suggest that the respondents belonging to Ashkali and Egyptian minority groups are those who benefited most from the funds (80.4%), followed by Albanians (13.8%) and Turks (13.9%).

Table 7. Benefits from government emergency fund according to ethnicity

What is your ethnic background?	Did you benefit from the government emergency fund?			
	No, I did not	No, I was not in the beneficiary category	Yes, I the received funds	Yes, I am waiting to receive the funds
Ashkali	23.43	43.71	28.84	4.02
Bosniak	100	0	0	0
Egyptian	21.39	26.37	38.31	13.93
Roma	61.89	31.35	6.76	0
Serbian	34.73	55.25	6.81	3.21
Albanian	39.38	41.87	13.84	4.91
Turkish	41.41	44.62	13.97	0

In terms of how the pandemic affected the amount or frequency of remittances received, the data suggest that rural respondents have, on average, reported to be disproportionately affected (Table 6).

Table 8. The effect of the pandemic on the amount and frequency of remittances based on location

Has the pandemic affected the amount and the frequency of the remittances that you have received?	Residence	
	Rural	Urban
Very little	44.2	55.8
Little	61.05	38.95
Average	58.27	41.73
A lot	57.24	42.76
I did not receive any at all	55.84	44.16

There is no major difference among rural and urban dwellers in terms of changes in their working situation. Regarding the means of change, urban respondents have been more affected in terms of suppression of salary and job loss (Table 9). Rural respondents, on the other hand, have been affected more in terms of temporarily not receiving a salary. However, on a positive note, 62 percent of them have seen an improvement on their working situation. This could be due to the 'formalization process' required in order to be eligible to benefit from the Emergency Package.[29] In order to be able to benefit from the package, it was required that the employees were officially registered.

29 See for more details the article of Kallxo.com on the registration of employees available at: https://kallxo.com/lajm/803-punetore-te-rinj-regjistrohen-per-te-perfituar-nga-pakoja-emergjente/

Table 9. Changes in working situation according to location

If yes, which of the alternatives below stands?	Residence	
	Rural	Urban
I lost my job	46.99	53.01
My working situation improved	62.16	37.84
My salary decreased	42.45	57.55
I temporarily did not receive a salary	56.77	43.23

The data on Table 10 indicate that urban respondents have benefited or are to benefit more from the government funds (53.2% and 54.7%, respectively) compared to rural ones.

Table 10. Benefits from government emergency fund according to location

Did you benefit from the government emergency fund?	Residence	
	Rural	Urban
No, I did not	55.41	44.59
No, I was not in the beneficiary category	62.01	37.99
Yes, I received the funds	46.78	53.22
Yes, I am waiting to receive the funds	45.34	54.66

Respondents aged between 18 to 34 have seen their working situation change to the largest extent compared to older age cohorts (Table 11).

Table 11. Impact in working situation during the pandemic movement restrictions according to age

Did your working situation change during the pandemic movement restrictions?						
	Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Yes	15.78	23.84	20.21	16.67	10.64	12.86
No	25.83	26.91	23.46	12.23	10.88	0.69

The data suggests that respondents that have seen changes in their working situation since the start of the pandemic largely consist of those that completed high school and a Bachelor degree, at 43 and 22 percent, respectively (Table 12).

Table 12. Impact in working situation during the pandemic movement restrictions based on education

Did your working situation change during the pandemic movement restrictions?							
	Some years of primary education	Primary education	Some years of secondary education	Secondary education	Student	Bachelor degree	Master degree/PhD
Yes	4.21	17.75	2.80	43.27	7.04	22.13	2.80
No	1.16	8.79	4.77	49.20	8.57	22.86	4.65

Respondents with secondary education attainment seem to have been mostly affected by the pandemic, as they consist of the highest share of those that lost their jobs (70.6%), temporarily did not receive a salary (45.5%), and experienced a salary reduction (46%). Nevertheless, they are also the group that has seen its working situation improve, followed by those with a Bachelor degree (29%) and students (22%) (Table 13).

Table 13. Means of change in working situation during the pandemic movement restrictions based on education

	Some years of primary education	Primary education	Some years of secondary education	Secondary education	Student	Bachelor degree	Master degree/PhD
I lost my job	1.44	11.74	3.32	70.66	4.13	8.70	0.00
My working situation improved	0.00	14.06	0.00	34.57	22.41	28.96	0.00
My salary decreased	0.00	5.61	3.29	45.53	5.59	24.97	15.01
I temporarily did not receive a salary	1.58	8.72	6.05	45.95	9.72	25.39	2.58

This comes to no surprise, as the respondents with secondary education consist of the highest share of respondents in the sample. The group of respondents with few years of primary education (32.7%) and those with a Master degree or PhD (22%) reported to have benefited most from the government emergency funds.

Lastly, the analysis of the data suggests that the seasonally-employed (those employed from time to time) have seen their remittances most affected in amount and frequency since the start of the pandemic (Table 14). Seasonally-employed respondents and those employed in the private sector have seen their working situation change the most, at 58.5 and 46.8 percent, respectively.

Table 14. Impact in working situation during the pandemic movement restrictions based on employment status

What is your employment status?	Did your working situation change during the pandemic movement restrictions?	
	Yes	No
Housewife	0.65	99.35
Unemployed, looking for a job	7.16	92.84
Unemployed, not looking for a job	6.51	93.49
Employed from time to time	58.53	41.47
Employed in the private sector	46.81	53.19
Employed in the public sector	9.99	90.01
Retired	0.00	100.00
Student	3.85	96.15
Other	70.48	29.52

The main reason in these segments was, overwhelmingly, the deprivation of salary and temporary lack of salary (Table 15). The groups that have benefited the most from the government funds are those employed in the private sector (55%) and pensioners (22%), whereas other segments from the active population, including the unemployed and housewives, have majorly not received any funds, at rates of over 85 percent (Table 16).

Table 15. Means of change in work situation during the pandemic movement restrictions based on employment status

What is your employment status?	If yes, which of the alternatives below stands?				
	None	I lost my job	My working situation improved	My salary decreased	I temporarily did not receive a salary
Housewife	99.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.65
Unemployed, looking for a job	92.84	3.73	0.00	0.00	3.43
Unemployed, not looking for a job	93.49	0.00	0.00	3.44	3.07
Employed from time to time	41.47	13.26	0.00	5.41	39.86
Employed in the private sector	53.19	4.68	1.44	11.34	29.35
Employed in the public sector	90.01	1.54	2.79	3.90	1.76
Retired	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Student	96.15	0.00	3.85	0.00	0.00
Other	29.52	20.32	0.00	7.28	42.88
TOTAL	80.88	2.99	0.89	3.99	11.25

Table 16. Benefits from government emergency fund according to employment status

What is your employment status?	Did you benefit from the government emergency fund?			
	No, I did not	No, I was not in the beneficiary category	Yes, I received the funds	Yes, I am waiting to receive the funds
Housewife	31.07	67.87	1.06	0.00
Unemployed, looking for a job	46.31	47.43	3.64	2.62
Unemployed, not looking for a job	45.85	46.32	4.02	3.81
Employed from time to time	61.45	27.25	3.44	7.85
Employed in the private sector	39.17	19.99	29.07	11.77
Employed in the public sector	45.83	40.30	12.37	1.50
Retired	23.77	45.85	29.16	1.22
Student	27.30	70.77	1.93	0.00
Other	40.14	17.74	21.80	20.32

The share of respondents that belong to households that have seen remittances diminish during the lockdown is high across all socio-economic categories (Table 17). Nevertheless, the share of households which characterize their socio-economic situation as average and poor is the highest, at 55.9 and 34.8 percent, respectively. This is an indication that medium-wealth and poor households might have been adversely affected by lockdown in terms of flow of remittances.

Table 17. The effect of the pandemic on the amount and the frequency of the remittances received based on assessment of their household's socio-economic situation

	How do you assess your household's socio-economic situation?				
Has the pandemic affected the amount and the frequency of the remittances that you have received?	Very good	Good	Average	Bad	Very bad
Did not receive any at all	1.74	18.05	62.78	14.95	2.47
Very little	0.00	23.50	65.39	11.11	0.00
Little	2.31	23.56	62.45	9.14	2.54
Average	1.51	19.78	61.61	15.59	1.51
A lot	0.00	9.18	55.19	34.78	0.85
Total	1.63	18.87	62.29	15.06	2.15

The frequency and amount of remittances for respondents with lower individual and household incomes were relatively more affected in the wake of the pandemic, a trend that was likewise reflected in terms of changes in the working situation (Table 18). A major share of individuals and households whose working situation had changed had done so mostly due to a deprivation of salary, which did not quite translate into benefiting from the government funds: at individual level, the segments benefitting the most from the funds were the €451 to €600 (27.5%) and €601 to €750 income groups (33.3%).

Table 18. Remittance inflow during the pandemic according to personal income categories

Personal income	Did not receive	Very little	Little	Average	A lot
No income	33.37	30.88	32.65	26.17	30.82
Refuses to respond	6.29	6.01	7.99	6.44	0.58
Up to €150	11.47	11.13	10.47	11.63	15.2
€151-€300	21.36	24.61	17.13	27.72	35.57
€301-€450	11.60	12.17	14.86	16.79	13.77
€451-€600	9.20	3.93	9.71	8.88	0.61
€601-€750	3.45	2.34	5.38	0.66	1.54
€751-€900	2.53	6.01	0.88	1.70	1.91
€901-€1200	0.36	2.92	0.93	0.00	0.00
Above €1200	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

V. Concluding remarks

In 2015, GLPS constructed the potential migrant's profile following one of the large waves of migrants towards the EU, using the data from a nationally representative survey. In December 2019 and June 2020, GLPS also conducted two nationally representative surveys with 1,069 and 1,065 respondents, respectively, aiming to provide an update to the potential migrant's profile and to identify the main characteristics of the citizens willing to migrate, ultimately pointing out any evident differences between the three survey waves. A novel feature in the latest 2020 survey is the inclusion of questions related to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest survey, conducted in June 2020, allowed us to assess whether the lockdown and the consequences of the pandemic have affected the citizens' willingness to migrate, the effects on remittances and on employment status.

The survey results portray a disturbing result regarding the willingness to migrate, as the data point to the highest reported percentage from all survey waves conducted, even higher than during the highest migration wave in 2015. More precisely, 48.4 percent of the respondents are willing to migrate. The willingness to migrate has increased by 23 and 30 percent in 2020 compared to 2015 and 2019, respectively. On a positive note, it seems that the high willingness to migrate is not being translated into illegal migration, as EUROSTAT statistics suggest that the number of asylum seekers/requests in the EU and other Schengen countries has considerably decreased in 2019. Worryingly, more than 60 percent of those willing to migrate would consider permanent migration, both in 2019 and 2020. Adding to this, the fact that the increase is recorded to be much more pronounced in June 2020, following the appearance of COVID-19, suggests that the consequences of lockdown could have fuelled an increase in the willingness to migrate.

The latest results from the June 2020 round indicate that the main reasons why individuals are willing to migrate remain more or less the same. A standing result across the three survey waves is that the lack of hope that the economic, political, and social situation will improve is one of the most listed factors that would make individuals migrate. Similarly, the majority of respondents that are willing to migrate blame the government and political parties for their motivation to migrate in 2020 as well, clearly portraying the failure of public institutions and political elites to live up to citizens' expectations and to address their main concerns and problems.

Differently from the previous survey, the three main reasons that would convince individuals not to migrate relate to better employment and salary options, political stability and improvement of the economic situation. The data suggest that the willingness to migrate is higher among households that have received remittances. The willingness to migrate is found to be slightly higher among males compared to females. Nevertheless, compared to the rate in 2015 and 2019, the results portray an increase in the willingness to migrate among females. In addition, citizens with higher willingness to migrate belong to Albanian and other ethnic groups, in stark contrast to the lower numbers within the Serb community. Similar to other survey waves, urban residents are more willing to migrate. Digging in deeper, the data according to region show that willingness to migrate is highest amongst respondents from Prishtina (56%). However, it should be noted that, worrisomely, the willingness to migrate among respondents from Peja, Gjilan and Ferizaj has doubled (or more) in 2020 compared to 2015, whereas in Prishtina has increased by almost one-quarter.

The data based on the age groups of respondents suggest that willingness to migrate remains higher among the younger segments of the population in 2020 as well. What is more, 64.3 percent of respondents belonging to the 18 to 24 age group, willing to migrate, would consider permanent migration. In line with the 2019 results and, as expected theoretically, the unemployed, those with unstable working situations or unsatisfactory working conditions have a higher willingness to migrate. However, it should be noted that the share among all categories, except for students and respondents with other occupations, has considerably increased in 2020 compared to 2019. Regarding education, those with lower or secondary education attainment and students have more willingness to migrate, whereas the contrary could apply to those with tertiary education attainment (Bachelor, Master and PhD).

Survey results according to personal and household income groups portray a largely similar situation to the previous surveys. In line with theoretical expectations, individuals belonging to the lowest income groups, precisely, no income, up to €150 and €151 to €300 are more willing to migrate. Moreover, according to the data based on the perception of respondents regarding their socio-economic situation, the willingness to migrate increases the worse the perception. Those that perceive their socio-economic situation as bad or very bad, have the highest willingness to migrate.

In line with this, the analysis of the results for informality indicators included in the survey suggest that informal employees tend to have a higher willingness to migrate compared to formal ones.

The results on the effect of the pandemic suggest that, since the COVID-19 outbreak, the vast majority of respondents claim to have not received any remittances (61.6%), whereas one-third considers that, despite having received remittances, the extent to which the pandemic has affected their amount or frequency is very low, low or average. However, the lockdown seems to have adversely affected the remittance inflow of households that reported to have received the lowest amounts of remittances during the previous four months.

Last, but not least: although the pandemic does not seem to have affected the remittance inflow, nearly two out of ten respondents claim that their working situation has changed since the pandemic started (19.1%), among which over half of them has not received a salary (58.8%) and almost one-quarter has seen their salary reduced (20.9%). A remarkable 15.7 percent claims to have lost its job. Against this backdrop, only 18.7 percent of all respondents have benefited from the government-promoted Emergency Package.

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