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CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

BULGARIA

Prepared by:

Krasimira BAKARZDHIÉVA

ASPECT



2015

CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Bulgaria, a country of roughly 7 million inhabitants is a multi-ethnic society with two major denominations: Orthodox Christianity and Islam. According to the latest census, conducted in 2001, about 84% of the population are ethnic Bulgarians and 12.3% ethnic Turks.

The total number of mosques in the country to 2005 is 1050, of which 950 are operational/ in use. In 2005, also are built 15 new mosques and 5 new is expected to be opened. In comparison, 23 are newly built churches in 2005 in Bulgaria. Total number of Orthodox temples, churches, monasteries and chapels in the country are 3750.

The Sherif Halil Pasha Mosque, more commonly known as the Tombul (or Tumbul) Mosque, located in Shumen, is the largest mosque in Bulgaria and one of the largest on the Balkan.

Build between 1740 and 1744, the mosque was initially located in the north-eastern Bulgarian town's centre, but is now in Shumen's south-west parts as the town centre moved as a result of the enlargement of the town. The mosque's name comes from the shape of its dome.



The mosque and the associated buildings is the largest in Bulgaria and after the Soultan Selim Mosque in the Turkish town of Odrin (Edirne) it is the second largest on the Balkan peninsula. The Tombul Mosque is considered to be a cultural monument of national importance.

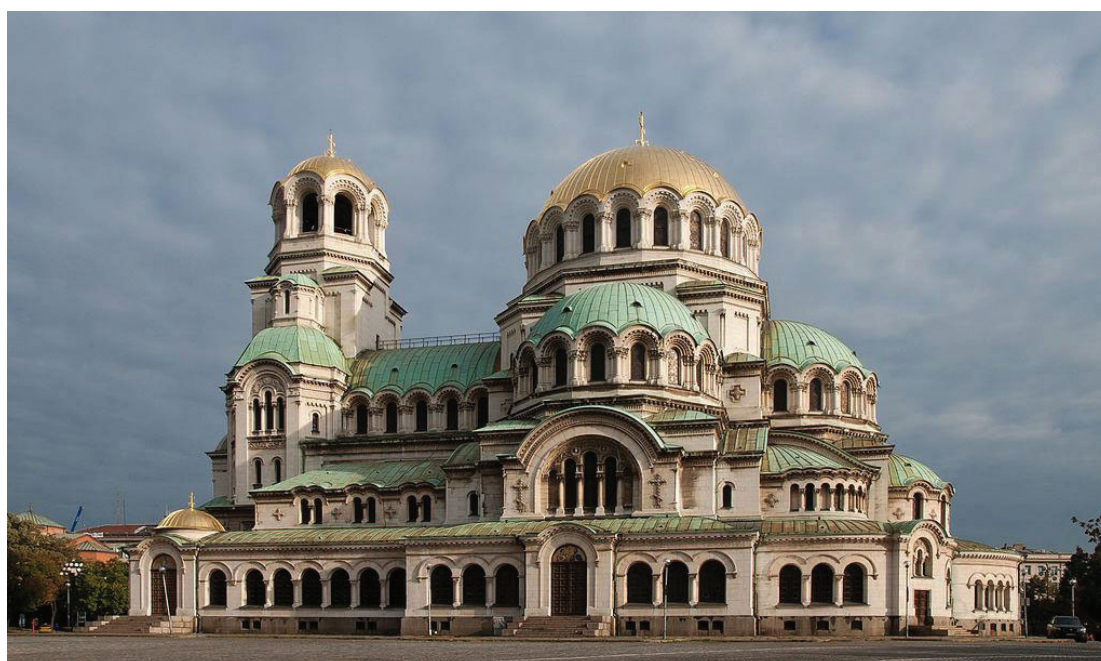
The building of the mosque was financed by Sheriff Halil Pasha who was born in the village of Madara, 17 km east of Shumen.

The mosque's complex consists of a main edifice (a prayer hall), a yard and a twelve-room extension (a boarding house of the madrasa). The main edifice is in its fundamental part a square, then becomes an octagon passing to a circle in the middle part, and is topped by a spherical dome that is 25 m above ground. The interior has mural paintings of vegetable life and geometric figures and inscriptions

of Arabic, phrases from the Qur'an. The yard is known for the arches in front of the twelve rooms that surround it and the minaret is 40 m high.



The St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral is a Bulgarian Orthodox cathedral in Sofia. Built in Neo-Byzantine style, it serves as the cathedral church of the Patriarch of Bulgaria and is one of the largest Eastern Orthodox cathedrals in the world, as well as one of Sofia's symbols and primary tourist attractions. The St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia occupies an area of 3,170 square metres and can hold 10,000 people inside. It is the second-largest cathedral located on the Balkan Peninsula, after the Cathedral of Saint Sava in Belgrade.



The Alexander Nevsky Cathedral is a cross-domed basilica featuring an emphasized central dome. The cathedral's gold-plated dome is 45 m high (148 ft), with the bell tower reaching 53 metres (174 ft). The temple has 12 bells with total weight of 23 tons, the heaviest weighing 12 tons and the lightest 10 kilograms (22 lb). The interior is decorated with Italian marble in various colours, Brazilian onyx, alabaster, and other luxurious materials. The central dome has the Lord's Prayer inscribed around it, with thin gold letters.

The construction of the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral started in 1882 (having been planned since 19 February, 1879), when the foundation stone was laid, but most of it was built between 1904 and 1912.

The cathedral was designed by Alexander Pomerantsev, aided by Alexander Smirnov and Alexander Yakovlev, as the initial 1884-1885 project of Ivan Bogomolov was radically changed by Pomerantsev. The final design was finished in 1898, and the construction and decoration were done by a team of Bulgarian, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and other European artists, architects and workers, including the aforementioned architects, as well as Petko Momchilov, Yordan Milanov, Haralampi Tachev, Ivan Mrkvička, Vasily Bolotnov, Nikolay Bruni, Alexander Kiselyov, Anton Mitov and many others.

The marble parts and the lighting fixtures were created in Munich, the metal elements for the gates in Berlin, while the gates themselves were manufactured in Karl Bamberg's factory in Vienna, and the mosaics were shipped from Venice.

The St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral was proclaimed a monument of culture on 12 September 1924.



LEGAL SETTINGS

In 2003, Bulgaria adopted the Protection against Discrimination Act, which came into force in 2004 as part of the harmonization process of national legislation with EU equality standards. The law protects against discrimination all individuals on the territory of Republic of Bulgaria and regulates the protection against all forms of discrimination and promotes its prevention.

It is a single equality law that bans discrimination on various grounds (race/ethnicity, sex, religion/belief, sexual orientation, social status, disability and age among others), and provides uniform standards for protection and remedy.

The act also established the Protection against Discrimination Commission (PADC) – an independent specialized equality body, which functions beyond the duration of one government mandate. The Commission monitors the implementation and compliance with this or other laws governing equal treatment.

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), established by the Council of Europe, recommended in both its third and fourth reports, that Bulgaria should ratify Protocol No.

12 to the European Convention on Human Rights as soon as possible. Bulgaria has still neither signed nor ratified this instrument. No explanation was given as to any possible obstacles.

Referring to the ECRI report on Bulgaria (fifth monitoring cycle), published on 16 September 2014 progress has been made in a number of fields. For example, amendments to the Criminal Code introduced enhanced penalties for murder and causing bodily harm committed with hooligan, racist or xenophobic motives. However, despite the progress achieved, ECRI recommended some issues to be developed in a number of areas:

The authorities should insert a provision in the Criminal Code expressly stating that racist motivation for any ordinary offence constitutes an aggravating circumstance. Sexual orientation and gender identity should be included in all the articles of the Criminal Code addressing hate speech and hate crime.

The Anti-discrimination Act should be amended to include an obligation to suppress public financing of organisations or political parties which promote racism.

The Commission for Protection against Discrimination should produce and publish information about discrimination, and explaining the procedures for discrimination complaints, in a variety of languages used in the country and disseminate it widely.

The Council for Electronic Media should be encouraged to take action in all cases of dissemination of hate speech.

ECRI considers that the authorities should draw up and adopt an action plan to increase tolerance in the country.

There are lack of mechanism for collecting official statistics on crimes arising from hatred and racist motives and measures taken in this regards. Following these recommendations the authorities set up and run local offices of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination in all 28 districts of Bulgaria and provide them with adequate financial and human resources to function effectively and publishes information about discrimination, and explaining the procedures for discrimination complaints.

NGO/OFFICIAL FOUNDATIONS

The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee is an independent non-governmental organisation for the protection of human rights.

The objectives of the committee are to promote respect for the human rights of every individual, to stimulate legislative reform to bring Bulgarian legislation in line with international human rights standards, to trigger public debate on human rights issues, to carry out advocacy for the protection of human rights, and to popularise and make widely available human rights instruments.

The BHC monitors the human rights situation in the country and gives information on the state and development of human rights in the country and reports on human rights violations with a special emphasis on the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, refugees and asylum-seekers, rights of the child, protection from torture and ill-treatment, freedom of expression and association, problems of the criminal justice system.

The BHC offers free legal help to the victims of human rights abuses. The committee also works in the sphere of human rights education, organizes conferences, workshops, public actions and other forms of public activities aimed at bringing the concept of human rights to the attention of the general public.

RACISM IN MASS MEDIA



Катедрала и джамия

май 18, 2015 Брой прочитания: 224

Гледайте “Светът на живо” този понеделник от 22:00 часа по БНТ!

The city of Rhine and the second largest church in Europe, built some 600 years. Today every tenth is a Muslim. Even Muslims sometimes say “our cathedral”, not because they want to seize it, but because they also feel it in their heart. However, they want in the city of cathedral to build a mosque. Mosque and Cathedral can they are together? “No problem, every religion should have a place of gathering and prayer”, says German philosopher Richard David Precht.

The story of Europe, Islam, foreigners and model multi culty. Magnificent story gathered all points, presented by our leading television journalist and producer Boyko Vassilev.

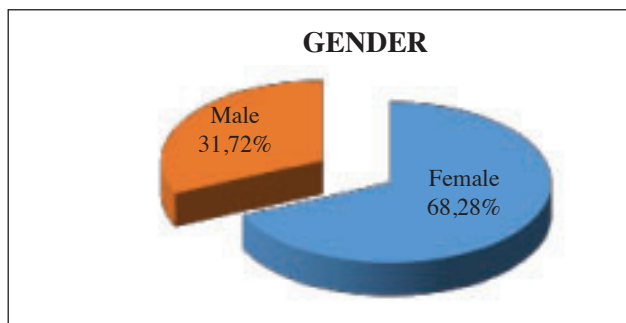
STATISTICS/SERVEYS DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The survey “The current situation of racism and xenophobia in Bulgaria” is based on research which encompassed 145 questionnaires with representatives of cultural and educational institutions, administration, business organizations and citizens.

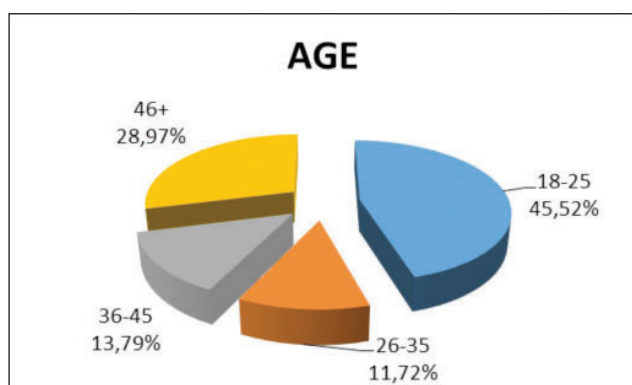
65 questionnaires are conducted at Plovdiv University, 32 questionnaires are conducted in the Community Centre in Lubimets and administration in the municipality of Svilengrad, where a large number of refugees are concentrated, 30 questionnaires are sent over the Internet from Plovdiv library and 18 from business organizations and citizens.

1. SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE.

The distribution by sex shows significant differences – women are more active in participating in such acts 68.28% than men 31.72%.

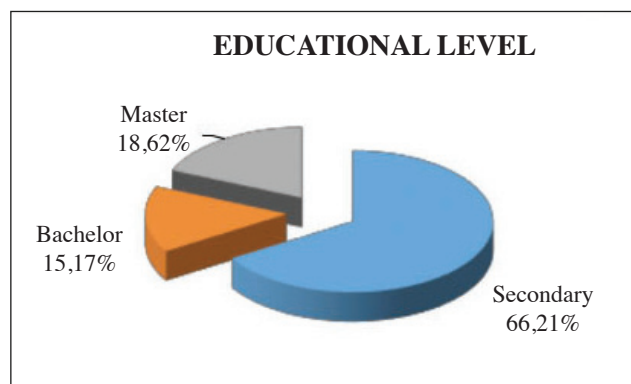


The average age of respondents is 18-25 years- 45.52%, almost half of the respondents. The second main group of respondents is on age 46 and more- 28.97%. There is some parity among respondents' aged 26-35 years -11.72% and 36-45 years -13.79%.

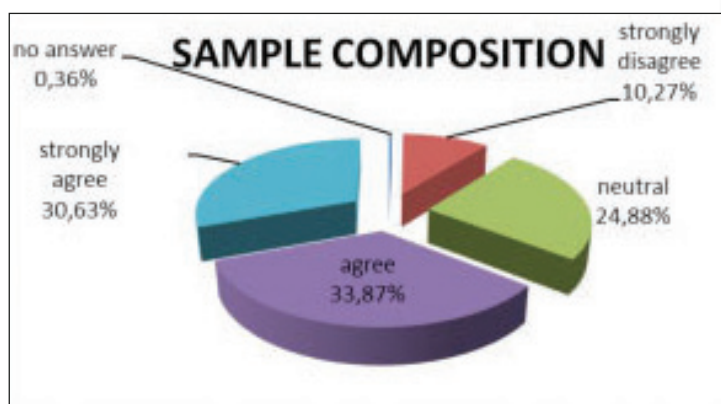


Educational profile is also different – has an increased presence on people with secondary school

66.21%, while people with higher education are 34% of respondents. When interpreting the data should be taken into account that majority of young people between 18-25 years are in the process of education of graduate and postgraduate programmes. Bachelors and Masters have similar shares in the sample, respectively 15.17% and 18.62%.

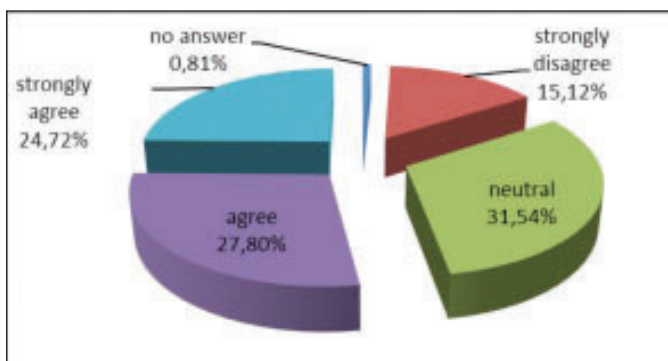


In general, respondents give definitive answers to the questions put to them, as the share of questions without answers is 0.36%, Neutral 24.88% .The trend for definitive answers remains throughout the entire study.

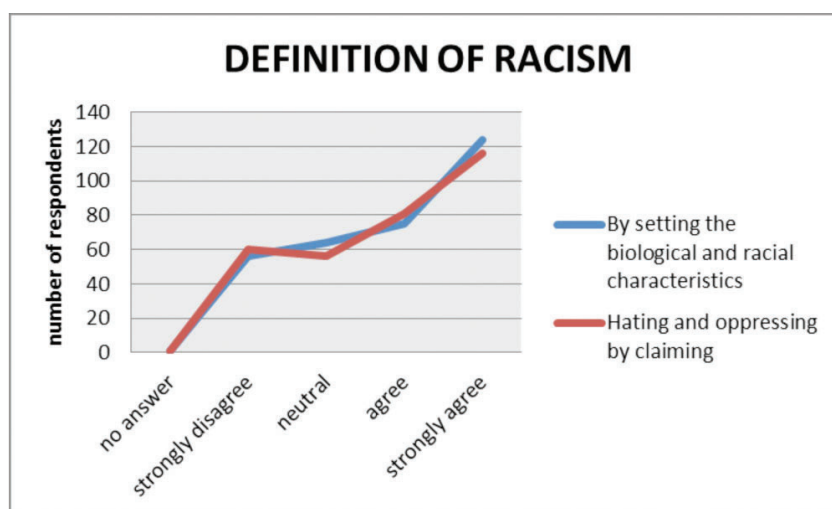


2. DEFINITION OF RACISM

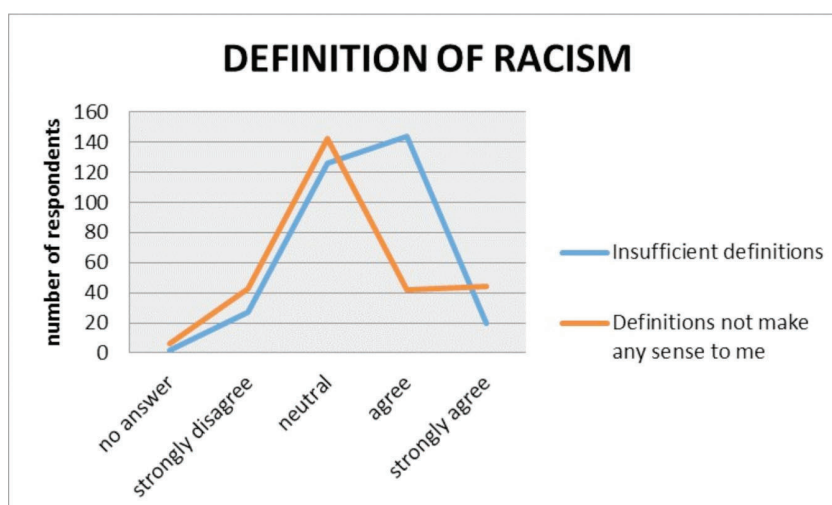
The survey results clearly show that respondents are familiar with the term “racism”. It is logical, having in mind the occurred changes during the resent years and the huge number of refugees in the country. More than half of the respondents give definitive answer 68% of agreement and not agreement, while the number of neutral answers is relatively small 32%.



There has been some parity in determining the basic definition of racism. Even though not as definitely the respondents define “By setting the biological and racial characteristics of one society in order to claim superiority of one race over the others” as their own definition of racism with 26.2% to “Hating and oppressing by claiming that one race is superior to the other” with 25.53%.

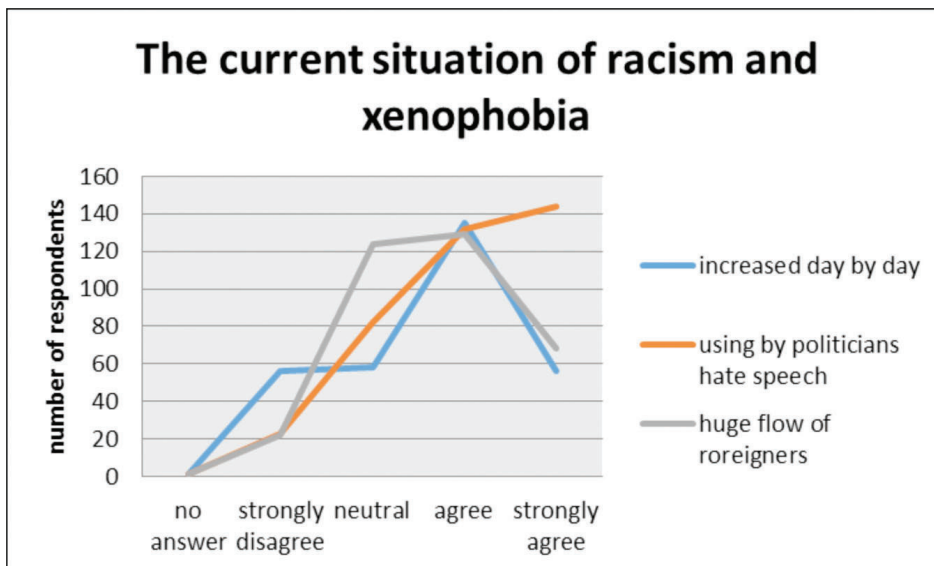


A relatively large is the number of respondents under which those definitions do not make any sense to them – 22.52%, which is probably due to the large number of respondents unsatisfied with such proposed definitions of racism-25.93%.



3. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

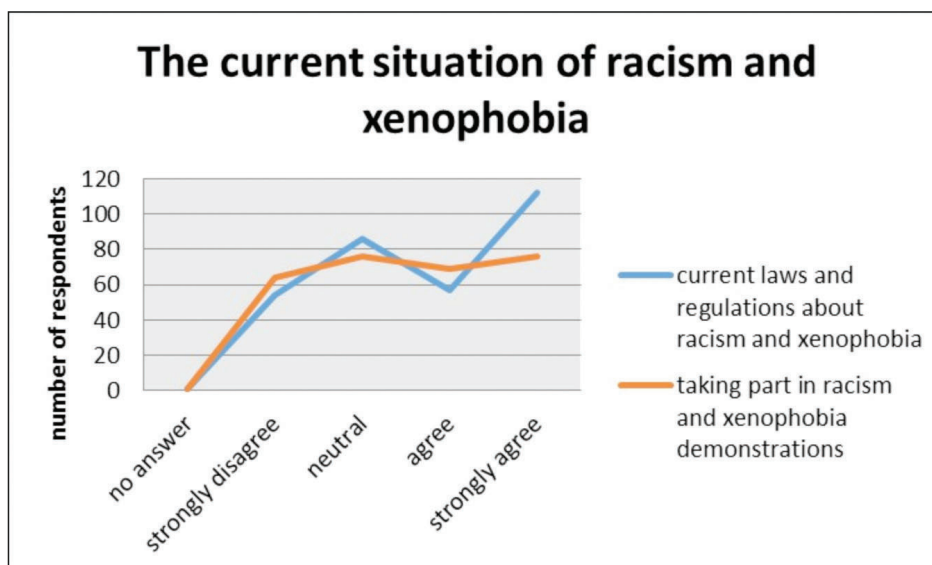
Respondents believe that racism and xenophobia have increased day by day 18.8% as a result of using by politicians language of hatred-23.46% and huge flow of foreigners/refugees coming out of the country and increasing tension among locals-21.13%.



It should be noted that the answer to this question is very clear -72%. Insignificant is the share of neutrals 21% strongly disagree 6%.

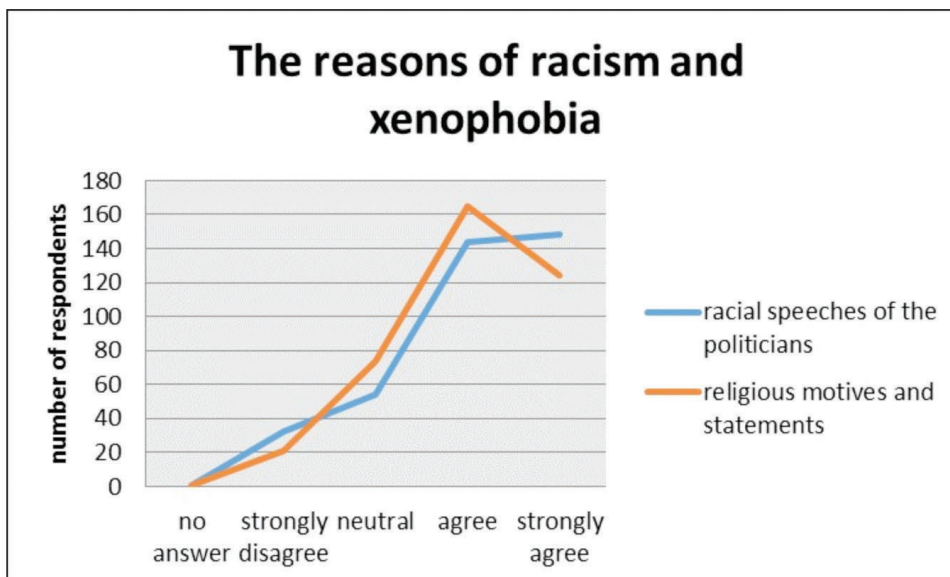
More definitive is the answer – 62% of those who are strongly agree and agree, that racism and xenophobia in Europe enhance day by day, which is probably due to the language of hatred between politicians and secondly, coming out of the country foreigners.

There is still hesitation and lack of interest in taking part in racism and xenophobia demonstrations, relatively large is the share of neutrals and strongly disagree - 49%. It is noticeable that respondents believe that the current laws and regulations about racism and xenophobia are sufficient – 55%.



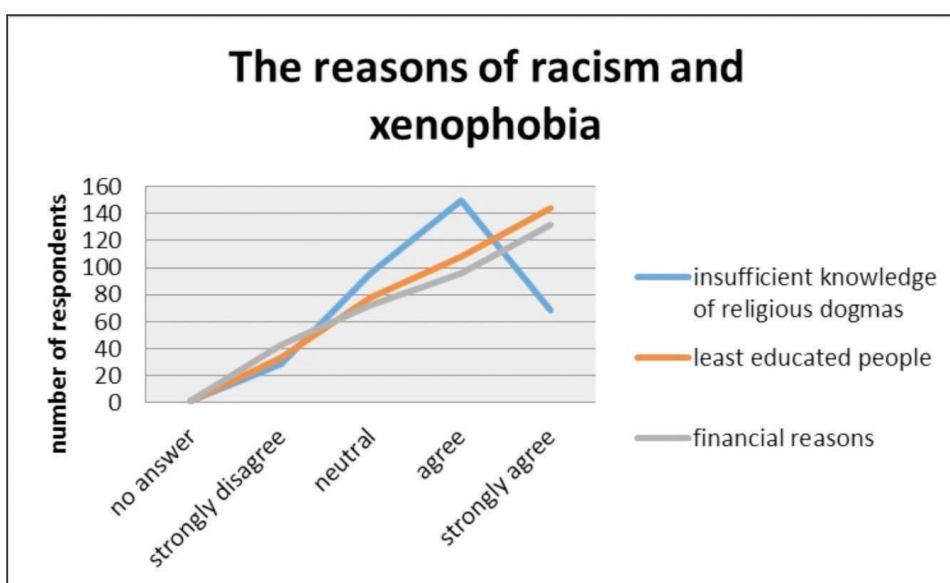
4. THE REASONS OF RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

The collected data shows that religious motives and statements are identified as the main reasons of racism and xenophobia – 21.20%. One of the leading positions as reason of racism and xenophobia is set the racist speeches of the politicians for the sake of one vote 20.87%.



Politicians are again recognized as the main carriers of the language of hatred, as nearly 77% of respondents declare that in the recent years have heard statements expressing disapproval, hatred and aggression against members of ethnic and religious minorities.

It should also be noted that according to the respondents' racism and xenophobia is emerged mostly among the least educated people – 20.04%. There has been parity in the opinions of respondents regarding the insufficient knowledge of religious dogmas and lack of funds– 18.94%.



5. THE EFFECTS OF RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

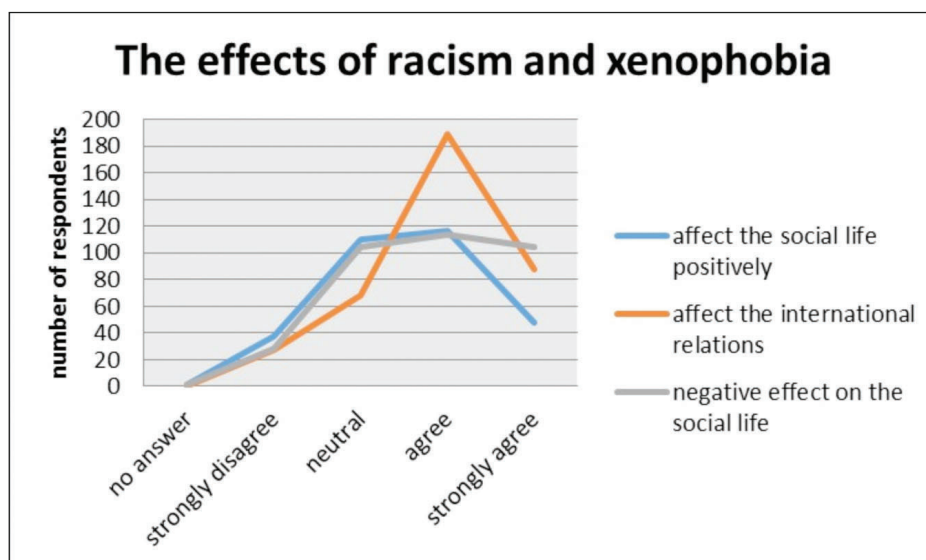
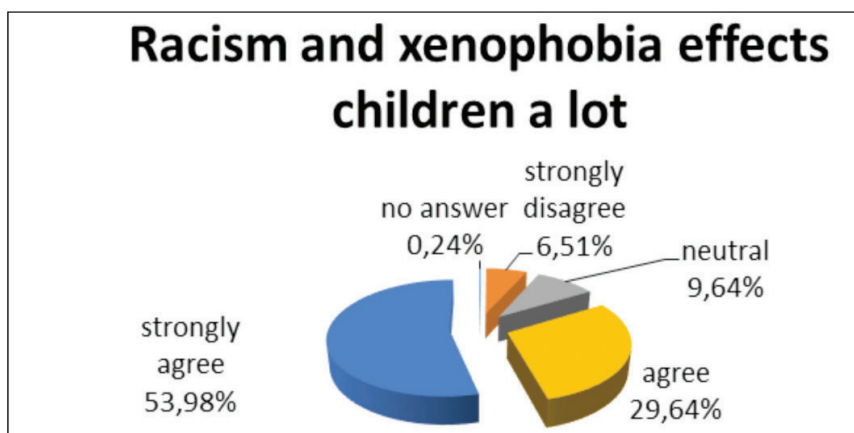
Three are the main effects that racism and xenophobia have on the relationship between people. The most important is considered the growth of racism and xenophobia that affect the children a lot 29%. Firstly it should be noted the definitive response that respondents give 84%, on the assumption that the growth of racism and xenophobia affect children a

lot. It is an only question of the questionnaire, in which the proportion of strongly disagree and neutral is insignificant – 16%.

Follows, the negative way that racism and xenophobia have on international relations 26% and the negative effect they have on the social life 24%. Only 22% believe that diversities contribute to life and affect the social life positively.

In the same definitive way is seen agreement 74%, that racism and xenophobia affect the international relations in a negative way, and 62% of their negative effect on social life. The study takes into account variation in the perception that diversities contribute to life and affect the social life positively – 53%.

The study shows a huge effect that racism and xenophobia have on the peoples' social life in the local and international level, and the huge concern they have for the future of children. It to a great extent is due to the growing number of unemployed in the country, lack of financial resources for training, as well as the growing number of refugees.



Fifth additional question is set to 80 of respondents- Do you agree with the idea that racism and xenophobia beget racism and xenophobia (just like violence begets violence) – in which 78% of respondents have a similar concept.

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR REMOVING THE RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

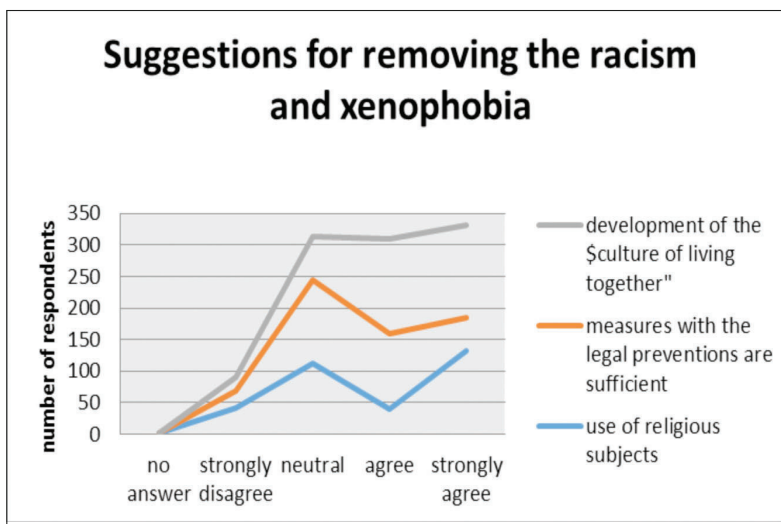
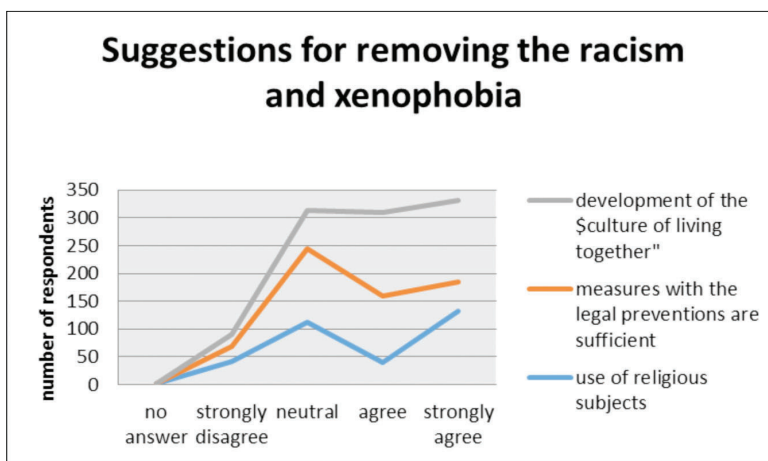
There is still hesitation and certain parity with the proposal to remove racism and xenophobia. The study finds difficult to specify concrete measures to remove racism and xenophobia. In general respondents are more optimistic 37%, that the development of the „culture of living together“ could help to remove racism and xenophobia. The only definite answer of agreement 76% occurs here.

At the same time even though not as definitely with 52%, respondents believe that other measures along with the legal preventions are sufficient enough in the prevention of racism and xenophobia-

31.52% , as well as the use of religious subjects- 31.14%. This is probably as a result of serious gaps in the country in collecting official statistics on crimes arising from hatred and racist motives and measures taken in this regard.

Two additional questions are set to 80 of respondents: Do you agree with the idea that the “ethical and moral values” should be developed in order to deal with the racism and xenophobia problems? and Do you agree with the idea that the “globalization” can be a solution to remove racism and xenophobia?

There has been again parity in both proposals. With 51.50% frequency is defined globalization as a solution to remove racism and xenophobia, in the second place with 48.50% are defined the development of the „ethical and moral values“. It is noticeable that the answers are more definite, respectively 73% and 78%, as the share of the neutrality and disagreement is insignificant. This is probably due to the larger number of participants aged 36-45 and 45 and more.



7. EVENTS TRIGGER RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA MORE

The survey registers series of events that cause more or less racism and xenophobia among respondents. On the first place an event triggering more racism and xenophobia is defined offences/assaults to religious and praying institutions (church, mosque, synagogue etc.) - 8.97%. With frequency 8.73% on the second place is identified disperse of radical religious attitudes, and immediately after it rank offences/assaults at social facilities (wedding saloons, beaches, etc.) The significant challenges for respondents are the speeches of the politicians on racism and xenophobia 8.23%.

As insignificant are defined not establishing relationships with neighbors 5.6% and discrimination at police and other official institutions 5.82%.

	%	
The less triggering	5,60	Not establishing relationships with neighbors
2	5,82	Discrimination at police and other official institutions
3	6,28	Verbal assault in public places
4	6,42	The against-cheering behaviors at sports activities
5	6,56	Non-development on the culture of living together
6	6,78	Insufficiency of knowledge on religion and education
7	6,95	Globalization
8	7,00	The insufficiency of articles of laws and regulations on racism and xenophobia
9	7,27	Racist and xenophobic incidents from other countries
10	7,41	The racist and xenophobic broadcasting/publishing of the mass media
11	8,23	The speeches of the politicians on racism and xenophobia
12	8,34	Offences/Assaults at social facilities (wedding saloons, beaches, etc.)
13	8,73	The disperse of radical religious attitudes
The most triggering	8,97	Offences/Assaults to religious and praying institutions (church, mosque, synagogue etc.)

It should be noted that these events are proposed to the 80 of respondent, aged over 30 years old.

Involving the young people and removing the globalization as an option for selection, the results are not more different.

It is noticeable, even though slightly ahead; as an event triggering more racism and xenophobia is determined disperse of radical religious attitudes - 9.04%. It is probably due to the fact that young people are subject of strong attacks by such organizations. Secondly, with frequency 8.92% is defined offences/assaults to religious and praying institutions (church, mosque, synagogue etc.), followed by the speeches of the politicians on racism and xenophobia – 8.58%.

As insignificant are defined not establishing relationships with neighbors 6.19% and discrimination at police and other official institutions 6.59%.

	%	
The less triggering	6,19	Not establishing relationships with neighbors
2	6,59	Discrimination at police and other official institutions
3	6,82	Verbal assault in public places
4	7,01	The against-cheering behaviors at sports activities
5	7,06	Non-development on the culture of living together
6	7,06	Insufficiency of knowledge on religion and education
7	7,77	The insufficiency of articles of laws and regulations on racism and xenophobia
8	7,85	Racist and xenophobic incidents from other countries
9	8,11	The racist and xenophobic broadcasting/publishing of the mass media
10	8,53	Offences/Assaults at social facilities (wedding saloons,
11	8,58	beaches, etc.)
12	8,92	Offences/Assaults to religious and praying institutions (church, mosque, synagogue etc.)
The most triggering	9,04	The disperse of radical religious attitudes

EVALUATION/GENERAL FINDINGS DEFINITION OF RACISM

- Racism is perceived as the setting of biological and racial characteristics of one society in order to claim superiority of one race over the others.
- Respondents remain dissatisfied with the proposed two definitions of racism and xenophobia, they consider as insufficient and with a lack of sense, which explains the hesitation in making particular decision.

CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

Prevailing believe that racism and xenophobia have increased day by day as a result of using by politicians hate language.

- As a second fundamental problem is considered huge flow of foreigners/refugees coming out of the country and increasing tension among locals.
- There is hesitation for participation in organized events related to racism and xenophobia, despite the belief of good knowledge and sufficiency of current laws and regulations in the country.

REASONS FOR RACISM

- As a main reason for racism and xenophobia are defined the religious motives and statements as a result of the language of hatred between the politicians for the sake of one vote.
- As a second main threat is considered the least educated people and lack of financial resources. Not well knowing the religious tenets is ranked last.

EFFECTS OF RACISM

- There are serious concerns about the impact of racism and xenophobia on children.
- The negative impact of racism and xenophobia on international relations is ranked second, which respectively have an effect on the social life of people in a negative way.
- There has been some parity with the idea that diversities contribute to life and affect the social life positively.
- Respondents are unrelenting that racism and xenophobia beget racism and xenophobia.

SUGGESTIONS FOR OVERCOMING THE RACISM

- Even though not as definitely as a proposal for overcoming the racism and xenophobia is defined the idea of developing the “culture of living together”.
- The development of “ethical and moral values” and globalization are among the preferred possible solutions to overcome racism and xenophobia.
- The use of religious subjects and other measures along with the legal prevention, even though not as definitely, are indicated by respondents.

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