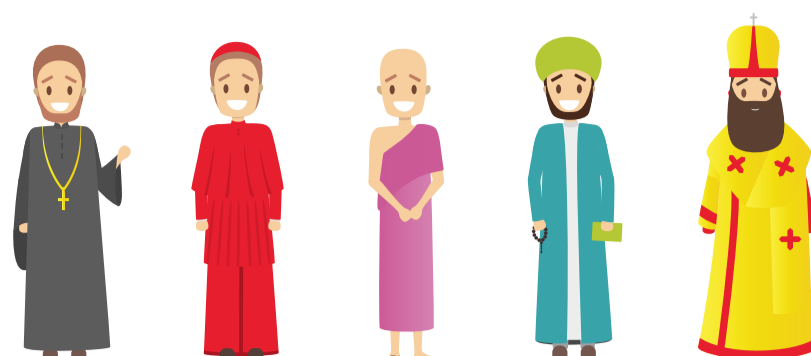


BLOCK THE HATRED AMONG RELIGIONS. SHARE THE LOVE.
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RELIGIOUS LEADERS' INFLUENCE ON COMMUNITIES



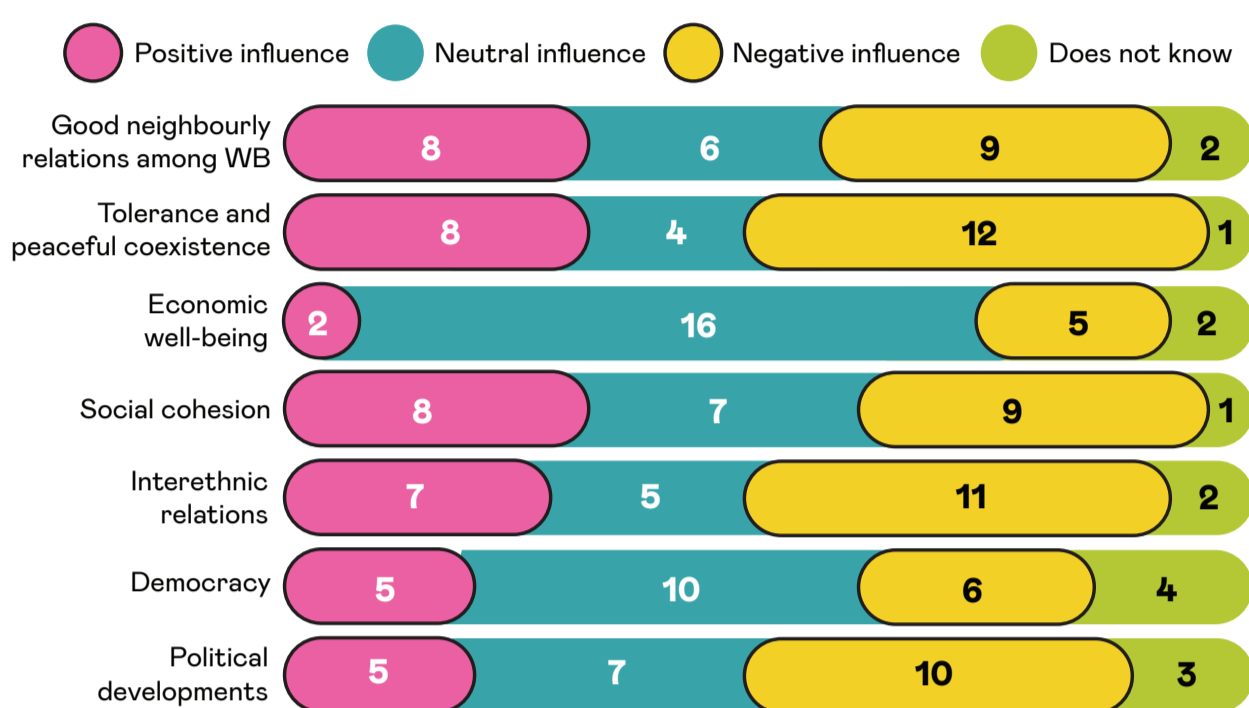
The data contained in this fact-sheet derives from the [proceedings](#) of the first regional conference on the role of religion in the Western Balkans, held in Tirana, June 11-12, 2019, under the auspices of the Institute for Democracy and Mediation*.

MONTENEGRO

◆ **44%** of respondents to the survey saw religion as having a negative influence on the development of inter-ethnic relations.

◆ One of the religious leaders also pointed out the way media reports shape public opinion: "For them [media], the essence is not about the story itself, but rather in the bringing as many readers or viewers to read or watch them. With that kind of approach, all good initiatives and good examples of mutual respect and life in multi-ethnic parts of the country will stay less visible than incidents."

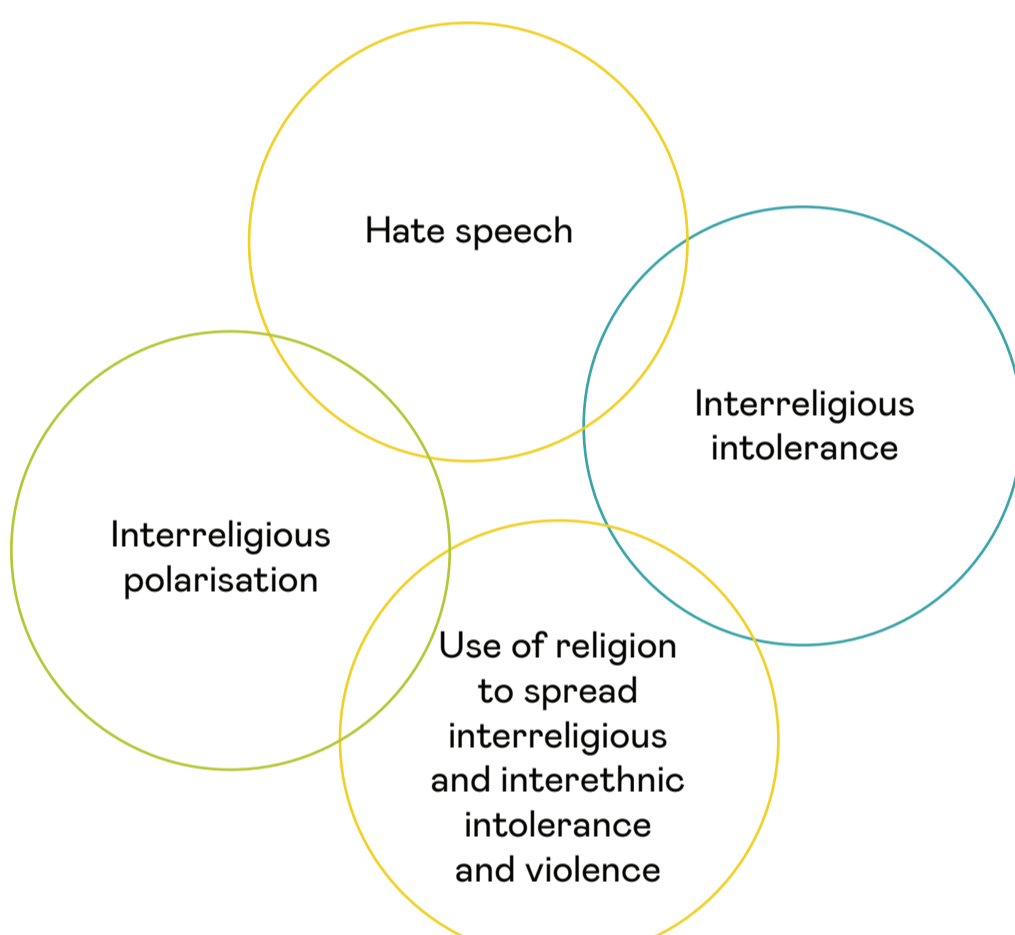
The influence of religion on politics and society in Montenegro



NORTH MACEDONIA

74.4% of the respondents consider that in North Macedonia religion is important or very important to the people.

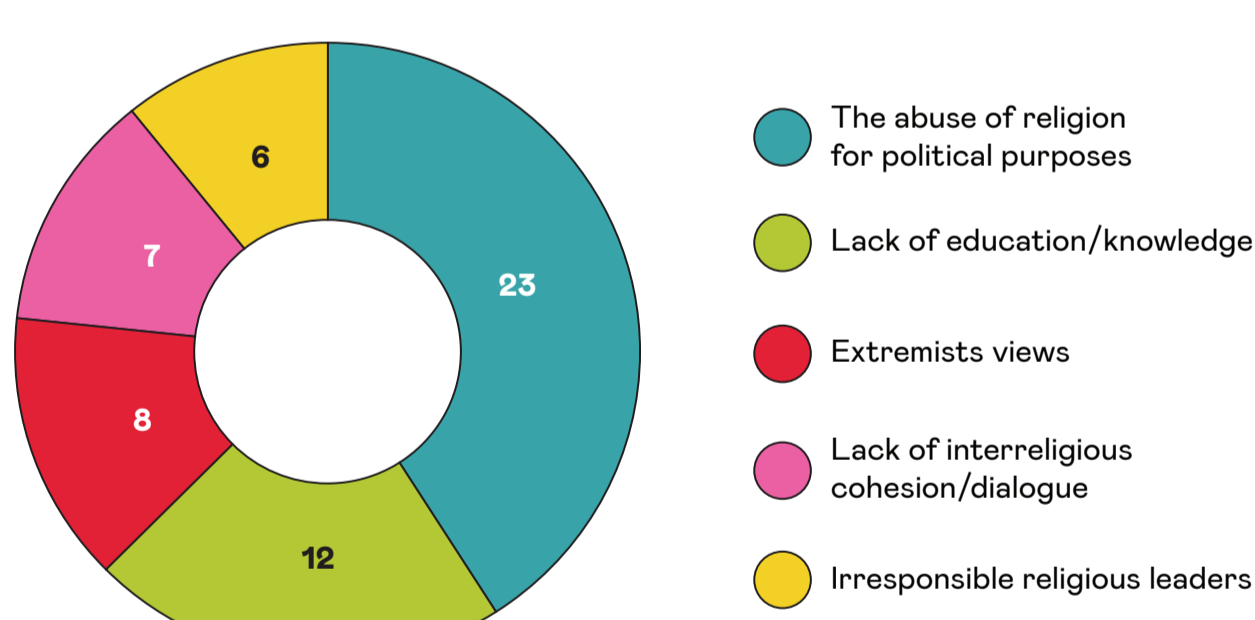
Respondents identified the following threats to interreligious relations:



SERBIA

The interfaith relations will continue to be determined by political factors in Serbia and in other Western Balkan countries. Some of those political factors are the rise of the right and nationalism, interests of political elites etc.

Biggest threats to interreligious relations in Serbia



Hate speech is not free speech!

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance addressed issues related to religious intolerance in its General Policy Recommendations.

General Policy Recommendation No.5 deals with combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. This Recommendation advocates the adoption of a number of specific measures for combating intolerance and discrimination directed against Muslims. In this Recommendation ECRI also expresses regret that Islam is sometimes portrayed inaccurately on the basis of hostile stereotyping, the effect of which is to make this religion seem a threat.

ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No.9 is devoted to the fight against antisemitism. It sets out a comprehensive set of legal and policy measures to help Council of Europe member States fight against antisemitism, which should be systematically included in a broader policy against all forms of racism. Such measures include, inter alia, strengthening criminal law provisions, stepping up awareness-raising efforts in schools and the systematic collection of information about antisemitic offences.

GOOD PRACTICE

NGO Youth for Peace, from Bosnia and Herzegovina, in partnership with the Somborski Edukativni Centar from Serbia and Udhetim i Lire from Albania has been implementing the [#ALTerHate campaign](#) within the #Speech4Change platform. #Speech4Change is a platform created by young people gathered around the European Interfaith Youth Network of Religions for Peace, which aims to combat hate speech through activities of education, sensitization, and advocacy for acceptance of diversity and inclusion through the creation of alternative narratives.

* (2019) "Role of Religion in the Western Balkans' Societies - Full Text," Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe: Vol. 39: Iss. 5, Article 2.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ree/vol39/iss5/2>