

NATO's NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT

A view from the Western Balkans

Report on the key findings of IDM regional Survey in the WB countries

Background

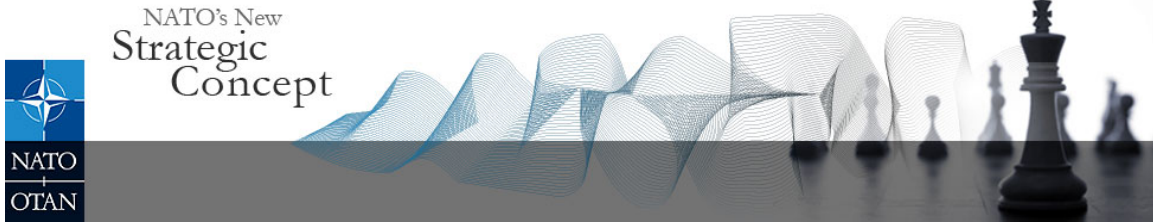
Under the framework of the Regional Conference on "*NATO's NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT A view from the Western Balkans*", the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) in cooperation with its regional partners in the Western Balkans – Center for Security Studies (Sarajevo), Analytica (Skopje), Kosovar Center for Security Studies (Prishtina), CEDEM (Podgorica), Croatian Atlantic Council (Zagreb) and Atlantic Council of Serbia (Belgrade) – carried out a series of mini-surveys with approximately 233 respondents. The survey sample includes eminent representatives of media, academic and civil society, decision / policy – makers, business sector, governmental and independents experts and practitioners who are familiar with or involved in the public and specialized debate on NATO's transformation challenges and the new Security Concept.

The survey has been carried out in all seven countries in the period January – February 2010 with an average of 30 – 40 respondents in each country. Given the chosen sample, the survey data may be interpreted as indicative only for a general population of opinion makers, civic and academic society, policy and decision makers.

Acknowledgment

IDM would like to express its gratitude and also to congratulate its regional partners – Center for Security Studies (Sarajevo), Analytica (Skopje), Kosovar Center for Security Studies (Prishtina), CEDEM (Podgorica), Croatian Atlantic Council (Zagreb) and Atlantic Council of Serbia (Belgrade) – that have carried out the survey in their respective countries with a high level of professionalism and dedication.

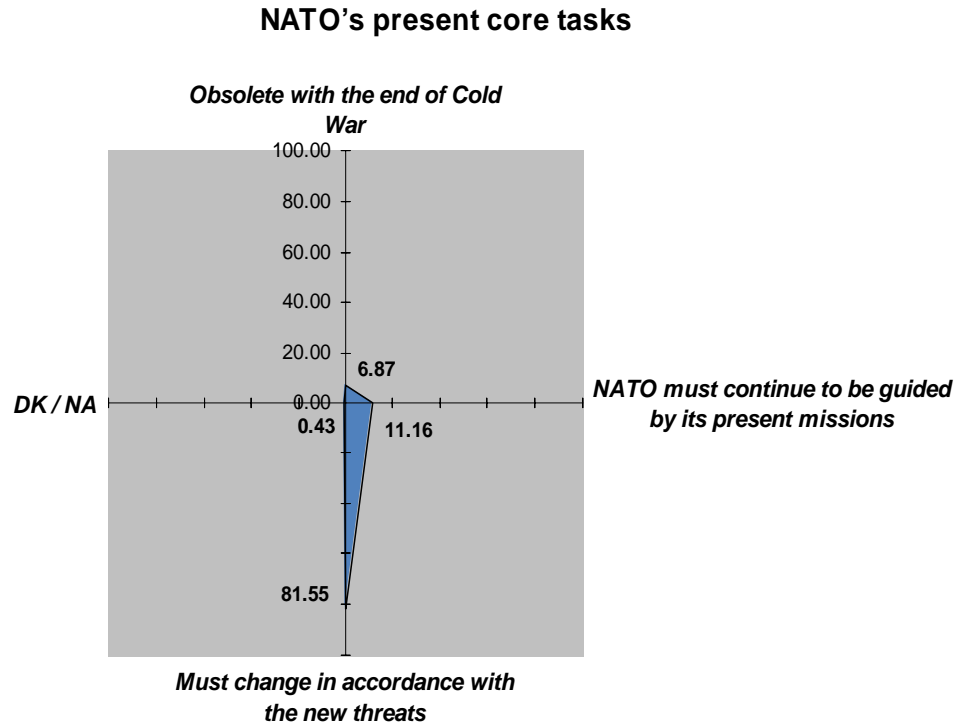
Also, special thanks go to the NATO Public Diplomacy Division for supporting this endeavor that aims to provide food for thoughts not only to participants at the regional conference in Tirana (11 – 12 March 2010) but also to the general debate on NATO's new Strategic Concept.



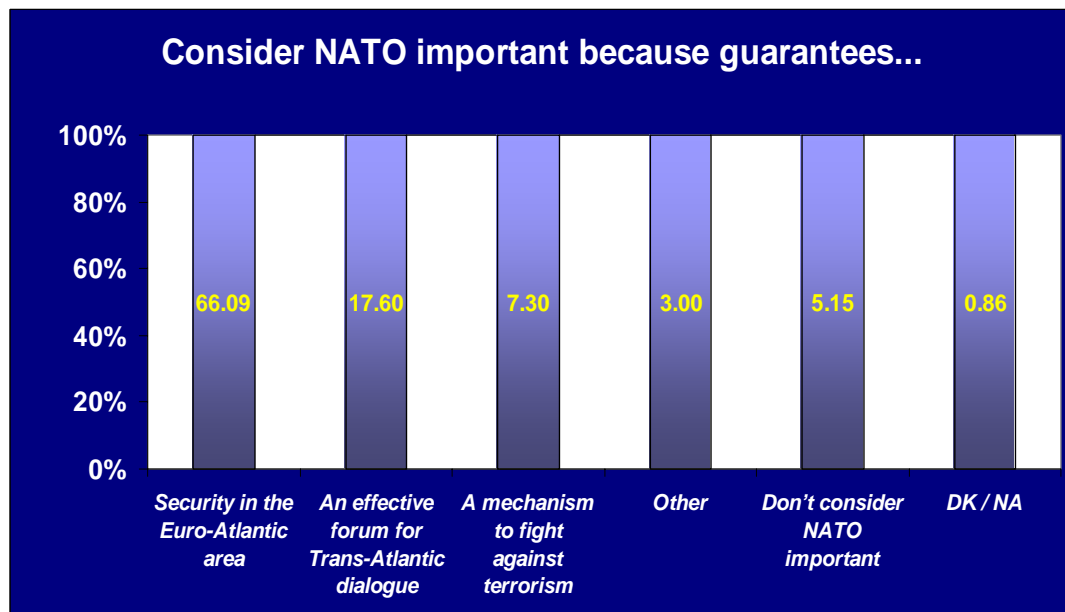
Key Findings

The need to adjust to the changing dynamics of global developments and challenges is largely supported by respondents (81.55%) in the WB countries when it comes to NATO's present core tasks. Approximately 11.2% hold that the Alliance must stick to the present ones.

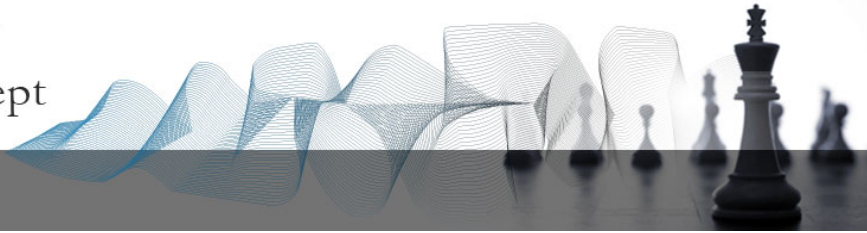
See Figure 1. NATO's Present core tasks



The vast majority of representatives of WB countries' elites perceive NATO as an important institution because it guarantees security in the Euro-Atlantic area (66.09%) or because it provides an effective forum for Trans-Atlantic dialogue (17.6%). Merely 7.3% of respondents see NATO as a mechanism to fight against terrorism.



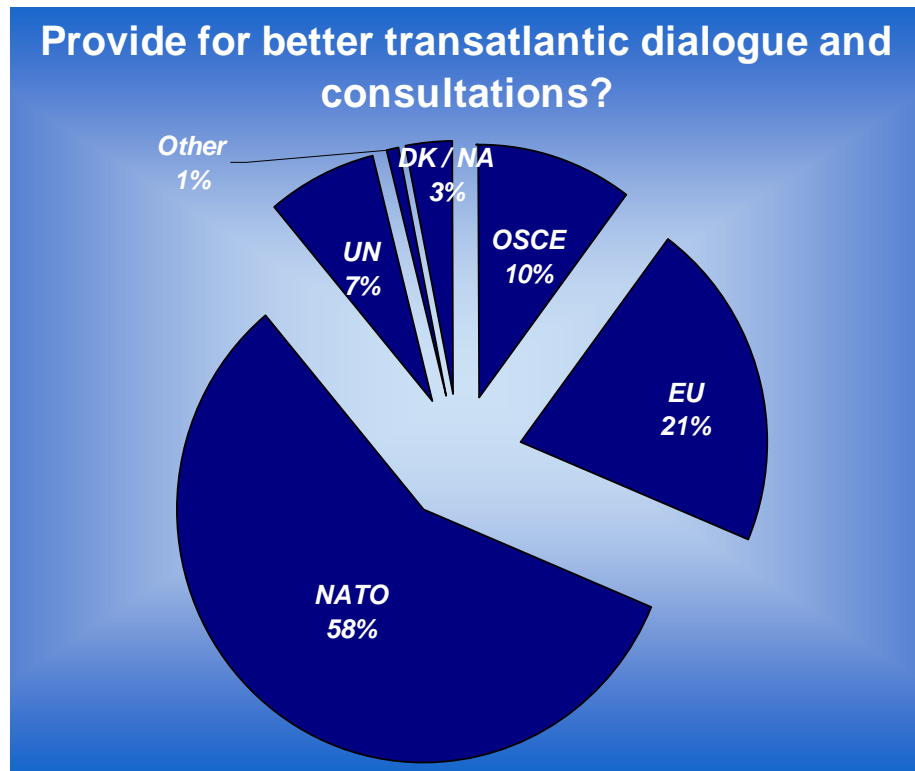
See Figure 2. Why do you consider NATO an important institution?



Considering the importance of the trans-Atlantic dialogue, respondents are also asked to point out the organization that best serves this purpose. As shown in Figure 3, NATO takes the first place with 58% of respondents and with quite a large “distance” as compared to the second one – EU (21%). Despite the global membership, the UN is seen as least “useful” in this regard (7%).

Question: Which of the following organizations provides for better transatlantic dialogue and consultations?

See Figure 3. ↗



The same rating is preserved for the above organizations also when respondents are asked the following question: “*In your opinion, which of the following organizations guarantees more security and regional stability in the Western Balkans?*”. Namely, 66.09% of respondents chose NATO, followed by 26.61% of them who believe EU is performing better in this context, while in the last places come OSCE and UN with 3.86% and 0.86% respectively.

As regards enlargement plans of the Alliance in the Western Balkans, it seems that respondents have generally no fears that NATO’s transformation and challenges related to the new strategic concept would eventually diminish attention.

Question: Do you think that the challenges related to NATO’s transformation and the New Strategic Concept will diminish attention on further enlargement including Western Balkans?

As shown in Figure 4, there are almost 51.5% of those asked who firmly answer no to this question, while around 43% declare “Yes” or “To a certain extent”.

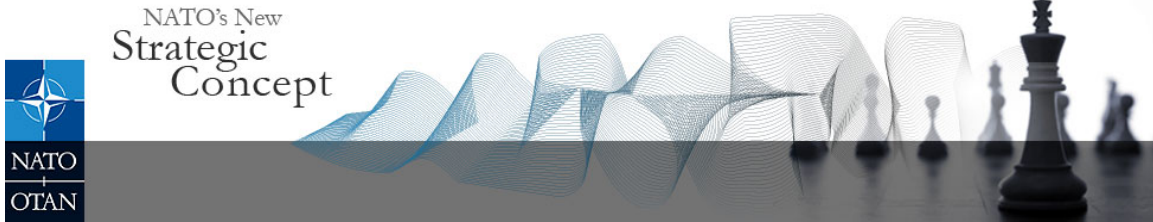
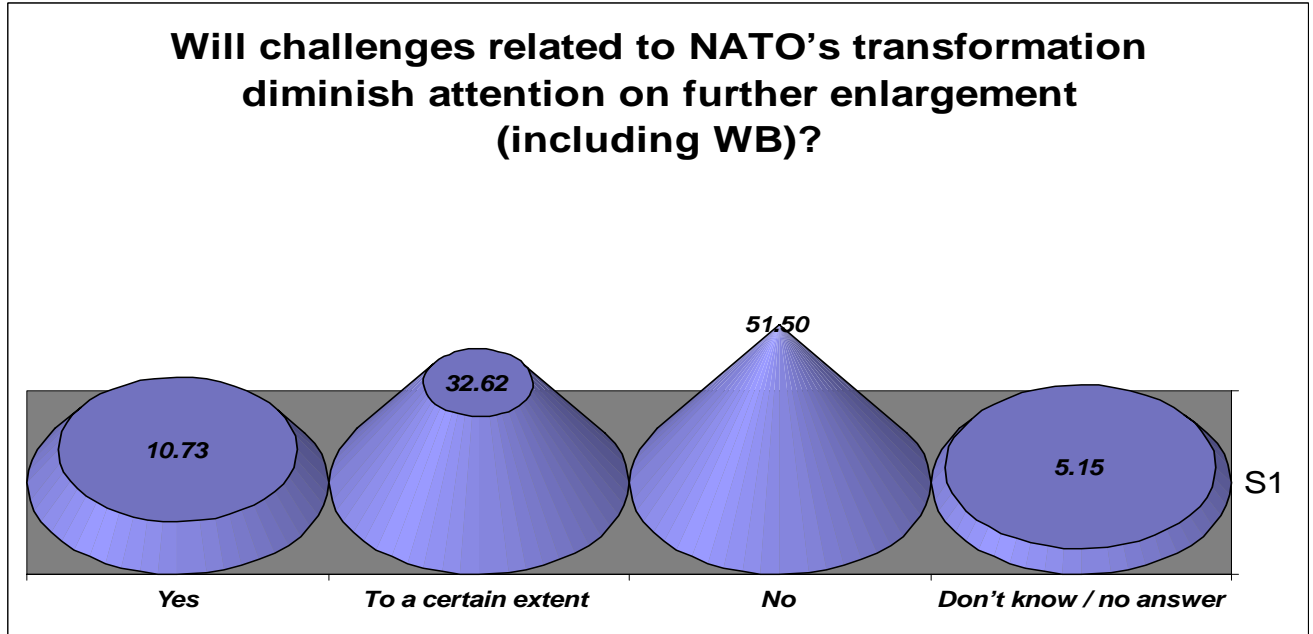
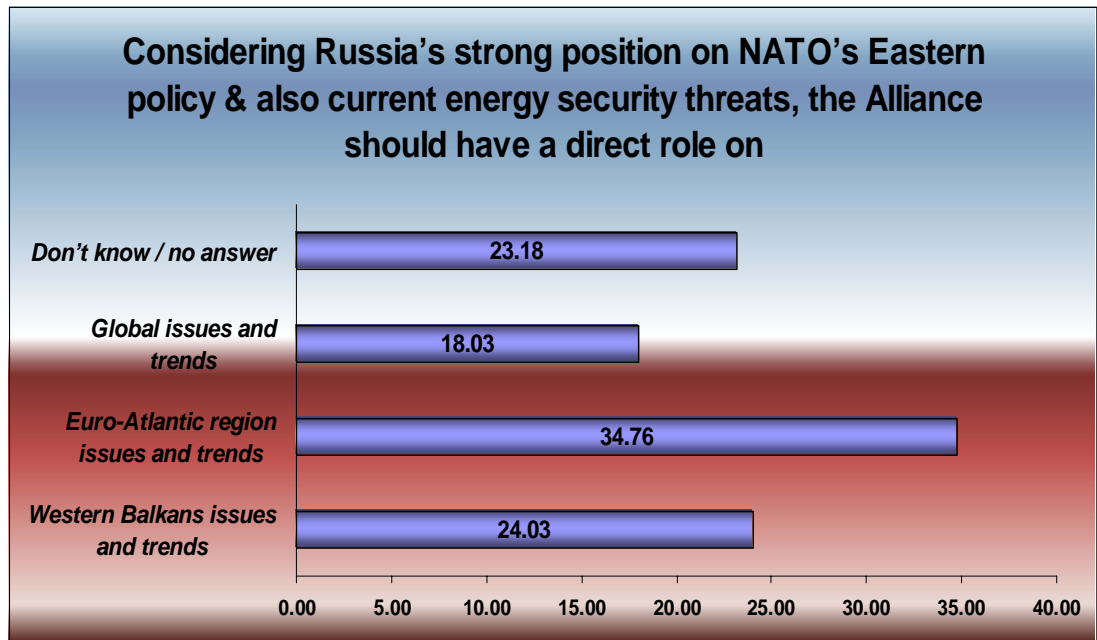


Figure 4. Impact of NATO's transformation & new Strategic Concept on further enlargement



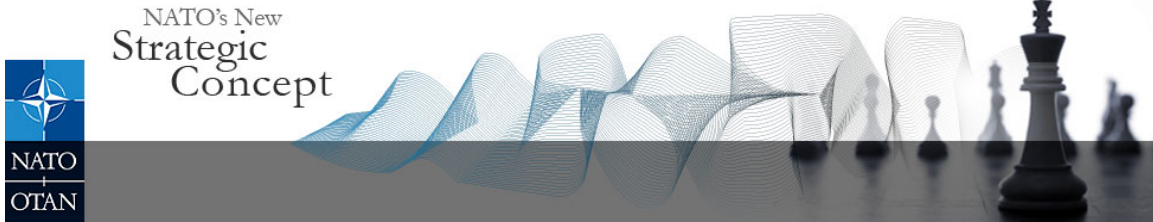
The next graph (Figure 5) shows that respondents are at odds when it comes to the choice NATO has to do with regard to Russia's strong position on NATO's Eastern policy and the current energy security threats. A considerable number of them have no opinion on the matter (23.18%) while among those who do, the prevailing answer is that the Alliance should focus on Euro-

Atlantic Issues and trends.

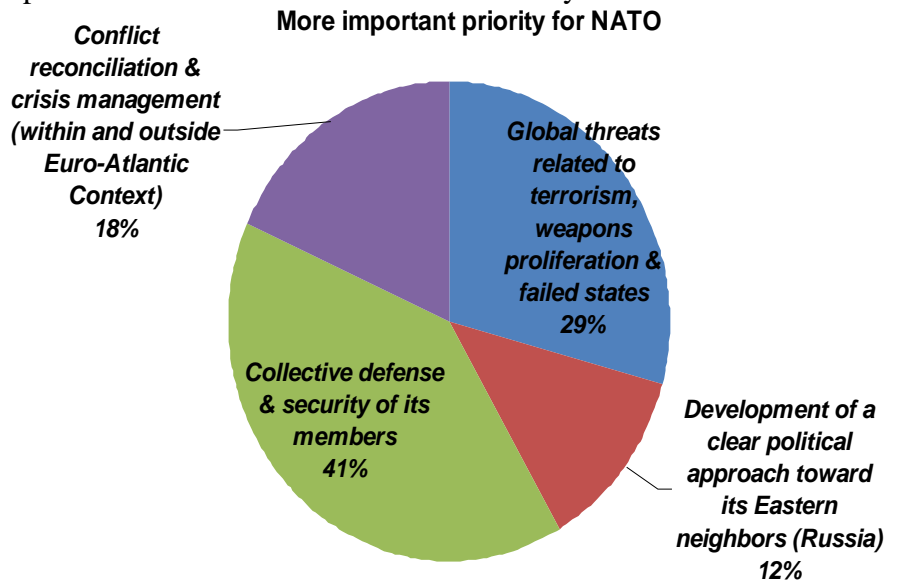


Atlantic Issues and trends.

See Figure 5 ↗

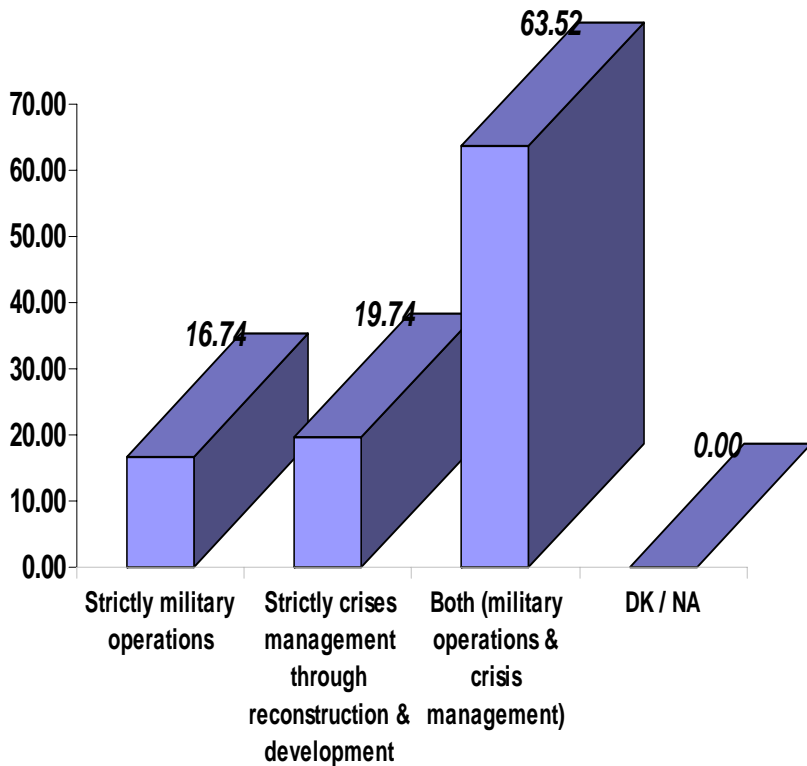


Respondents are also asked to choose as “a more important priority” for NATO among four statements. Also on this subject it seems that they are undecided, which may well be a result of the lack of informed debate and familiarity with NATO contemporary issues and challenges. Most respondents (41%) attach highest importance to “Collective defense & security of members” as a priority while least supporters has the priority of “Developing clear political approach towards the Eastern neighbors (Russia) with 12% of total answers.



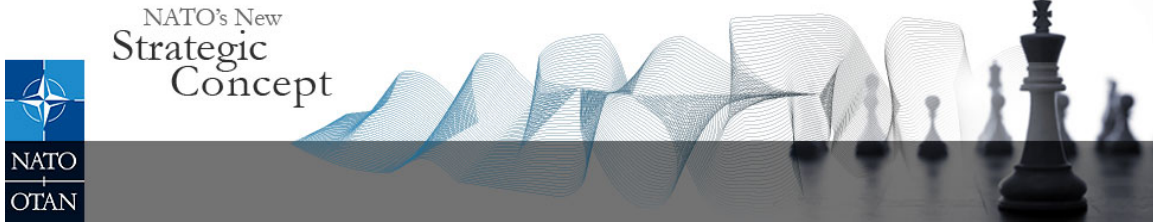
See Figure 6. ↩

NATO should focus on...



Differently from the previous questions, respondents seem to be quite clear and firm when asked about the areas on which NATO should continue to focus. Namely, according to Figure 7 the prevailing opinion is that the Alliance should consider both, military operations and crisis management. Of those who have made a “single choice” it’s interesting to see that there are more respondents (19.7%) who see NATO focusing on crisis management than those who see it as “focusing on strictly military operations” (16.7%)

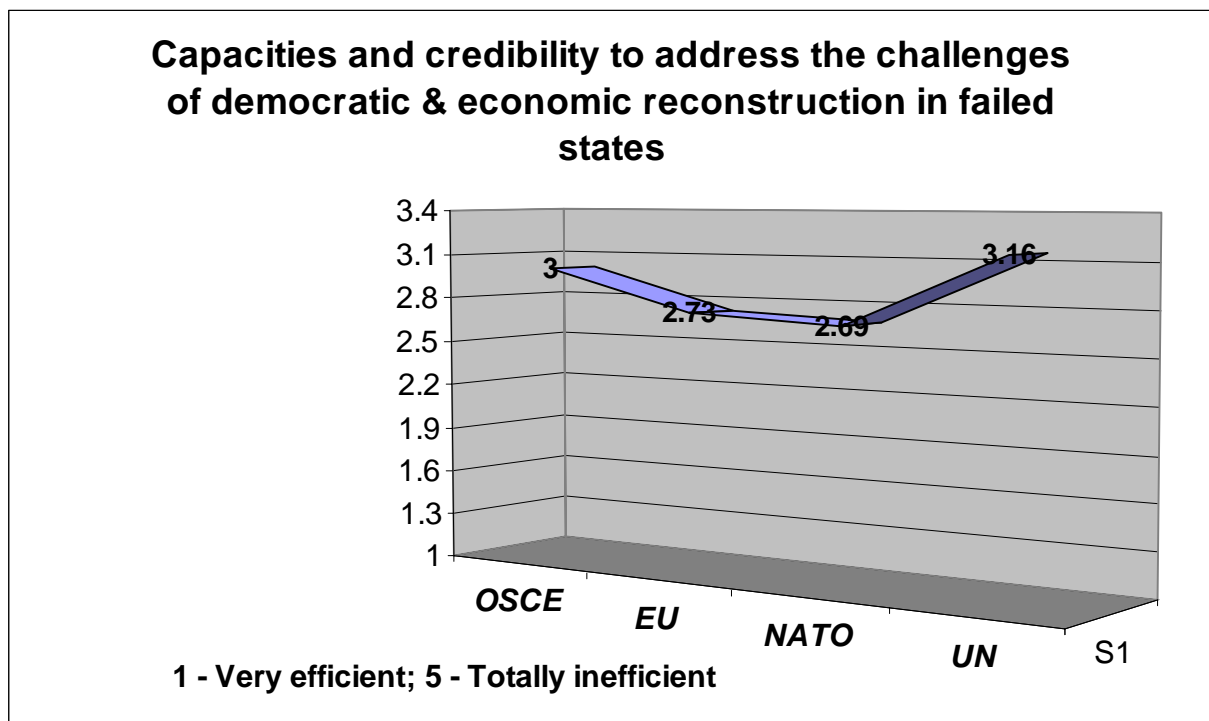
↩ Figure 7



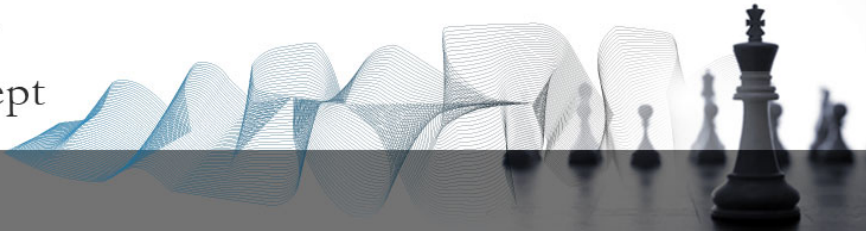
The relatively positive image about NATO and EU is confirmed by respondents also when asked about these organizations' credibility and capacities to assist democratic and economic reconstruction. Interestingly, respondents' answers show the same rating of organizations as in Figure 3 above.

Question: Please assess on a scale from 1 (very effective) to 5 (totally ineffective) the operational capacities and credibility to address the challenges of democratic & economic reconstruction in failed states of the following organizations!

Figure 8. Capacities & Credibility of IGOs to assist failed states



Differently from the case of the impact of NATO's transformation on further enlargement policy (See Figure 4, above), the majority of respondents however do fear that an increased focus on global issues & threats will sidestep important security issues in the regional transatlantic area.

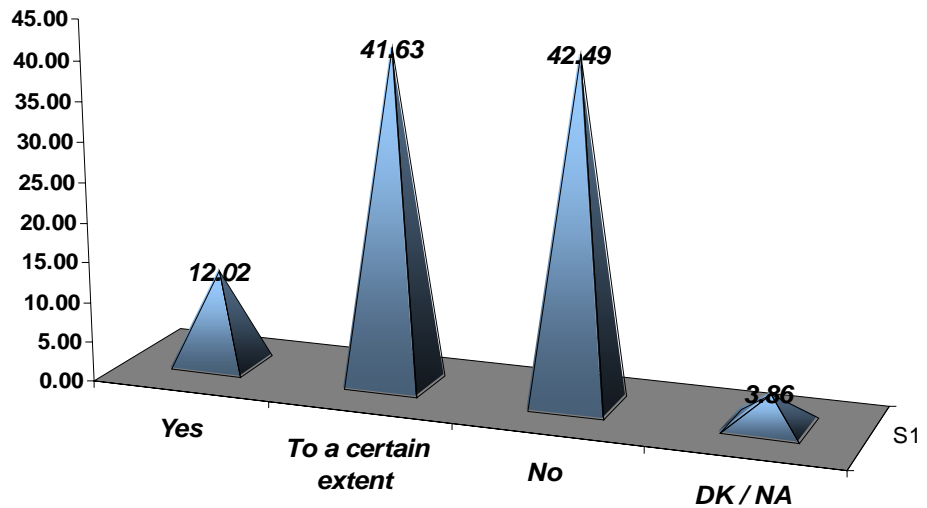


Question: Do you think that NATO's increased focus on global issues & threats will sidestep important security issues in the regional transatlantic area?

Almost 53% of respondents confirm this statement with a firm "Yes" (12.02%) or "To a certain extent" (41.63%).

See Figure 9. ↗

NATO's increased focus on global issues & threats will sidestep important security issues in the regional transatlantic area?

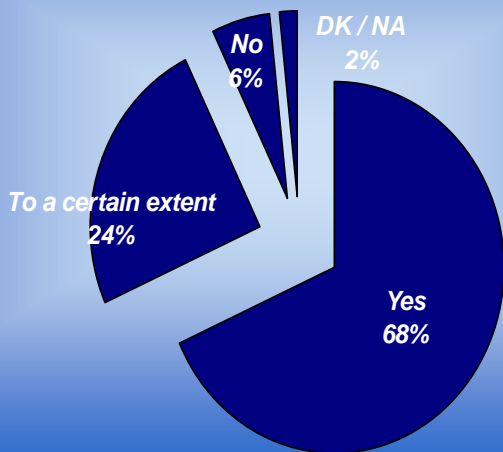


A vast majority of respondents – approximately

92% - believe that there is space for more substantial dialogue and consultation between the two most highly appreciated organizations – NATO and the EU – in the fight against global threats to

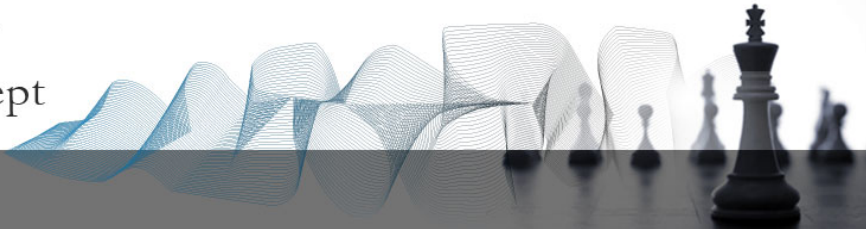
security. Among respondents of this “community”, 68% fully believe in this statement while 24% answer “To a certain extent”.

Space for more substantial dialogue / consultation between NATO & EU in the fight against global security threats?



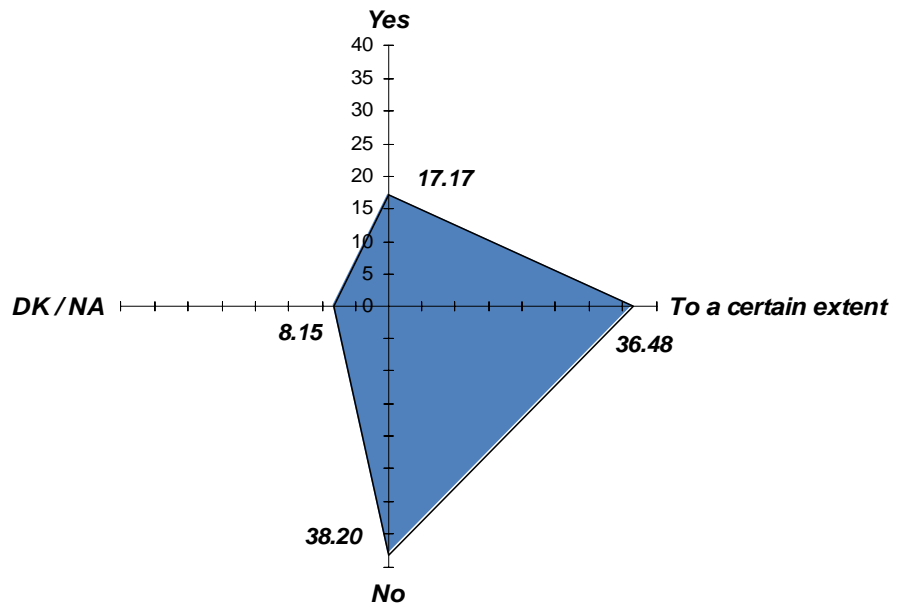
↖ See Figure 10

Closely related to this context, respondents have been asked also on the eventual impact that global membership in the Alliance would reflect in the status and importance of other international



organizations like UN. As Figure 11 reveals, the only common position among respondents is that they tend to disagree, with the majority of answers varying between options “NO” (38.2%) and “To a certain extent” (36.48%).

Will global membership in NATO (Japan, Australia) undermine the role of other IO's (UN)?

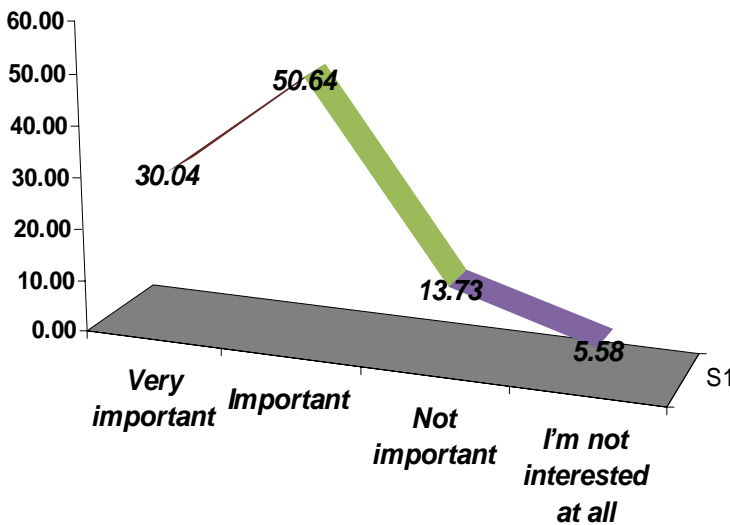


See Figure 11. ↗

Public support to NATO missions and operations at global level represent another

essential topic on which account the survey has asked respondents in the WB countries. Generally,

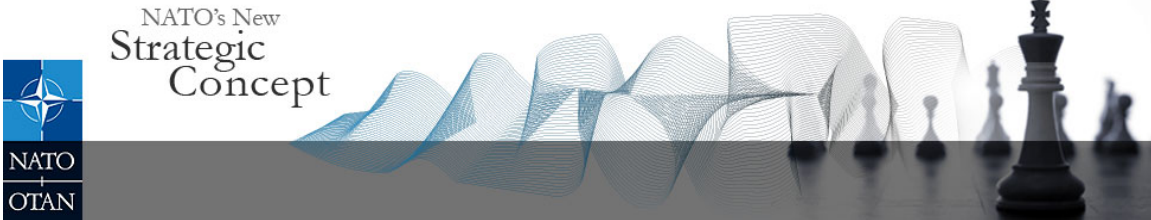
Consider NATO's success in Afghanistan as...



there is a high percentage of respondents (73.39%) who state that their countries must contribute (troops, military equipment & military infrastructure etc.) to NATO's global operations and missions, with only 18.03% opposing and 8.58% having no opinion about the issue.

Also, more than 80% of WB respondents consider important or very important NATO success in Afghanistan.

↗ See Figure 12



Yet, this majority of respondents that agree on a certain position as regards the Alliance's role in Afghanistan is not evident when the survey asks them about NATO's future strategy in this country. Rather, Figure 13 shows that they are at odds on this matter and perhaps the only issue on which more than half of them agree is that NATO should continue its involvement in Afghanistan, either through "Sending more troops" (40.34%) or through "Not changing the strategy" at all (18.45%). See Figure 13 below.

Figure 13. NATO's involvement in Afghanistan

