



# Informal care and gender equality in the Western Balkans

4th BBinar: 16 March, 11h-12h30 CET

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND RESEARCH

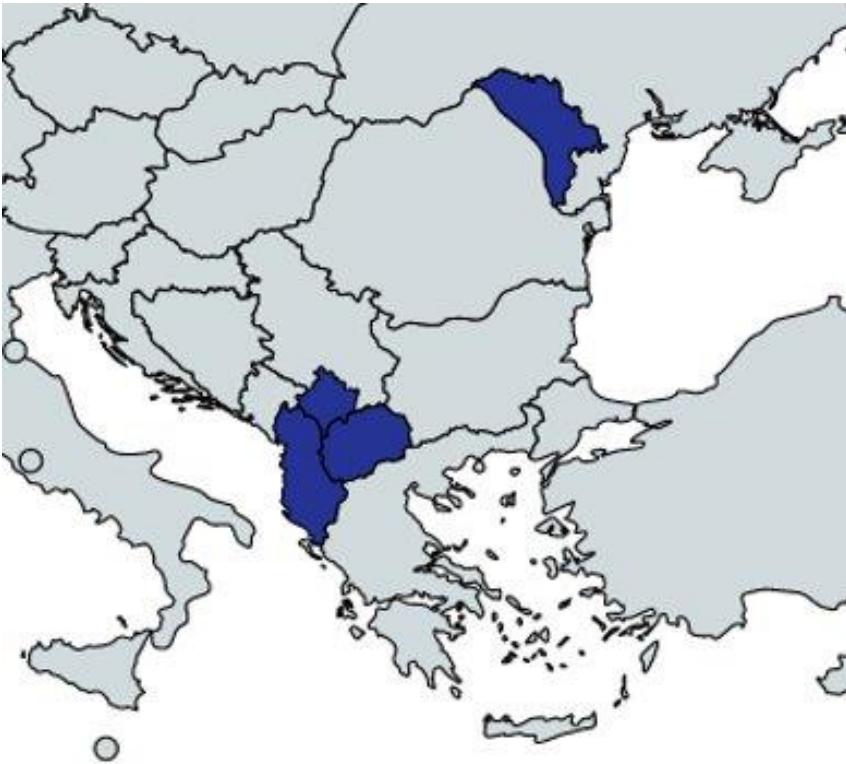


# Informal Care & Gender Equality

- Declining populations & rising number of older adults needing care
- Lack of support for persons with disabilities
- Important role of informal care
- Gender equality implications
  - Labour market outcomes
  - Income & security in old age
  - Well-being
- Solutions?
  - Development of formal care services
  - Support for informal carers



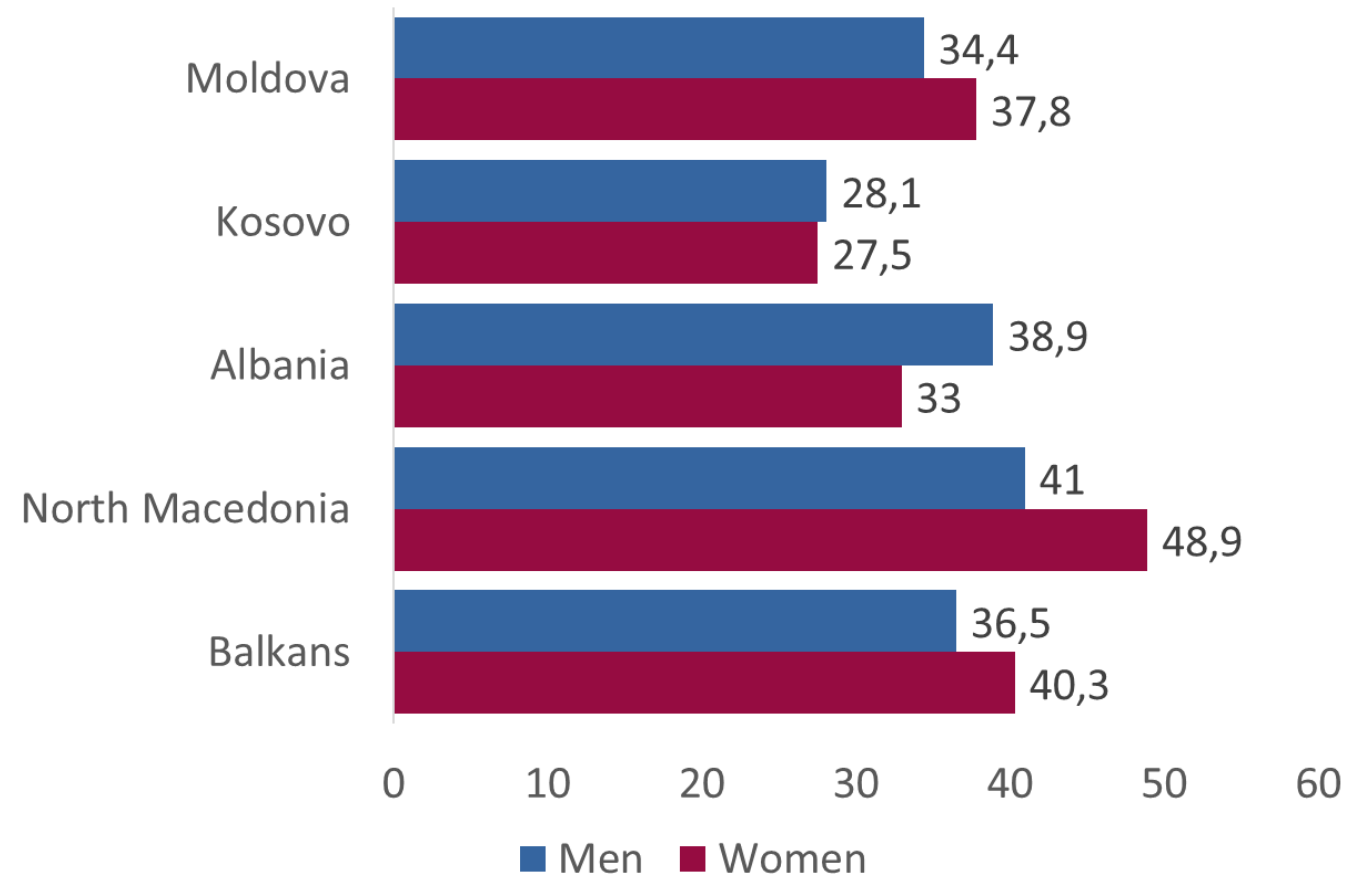
# InCARE Survey: data collection



- Survey on attitudes, preferences and expectations for long-term care
- September 2021 and March 2022
- Western Balkans (n=879); Moldova (n=336), Albania (n=129), North Macedonia (n=331) and Kosovo (n=83)
- Non-representative: skewed towards women, middle aged (30-59), higher educated, in urban areas
- Bias towards those providing care and experience with LTC

# Prevalence of informal care

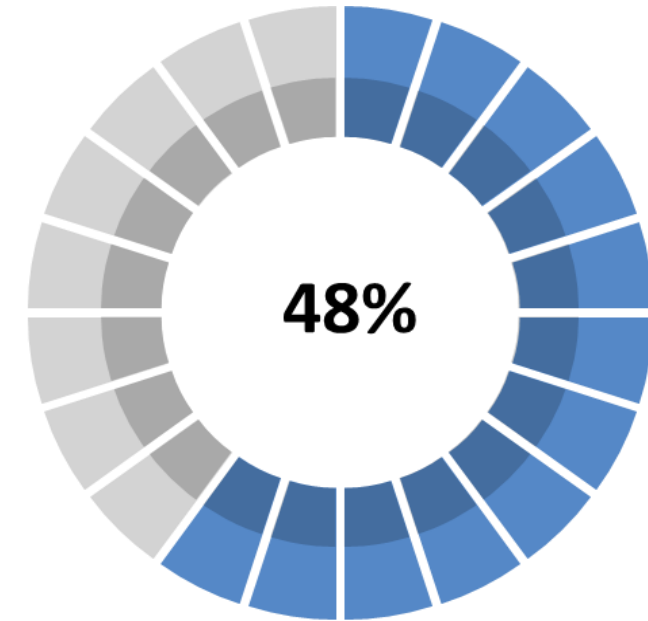
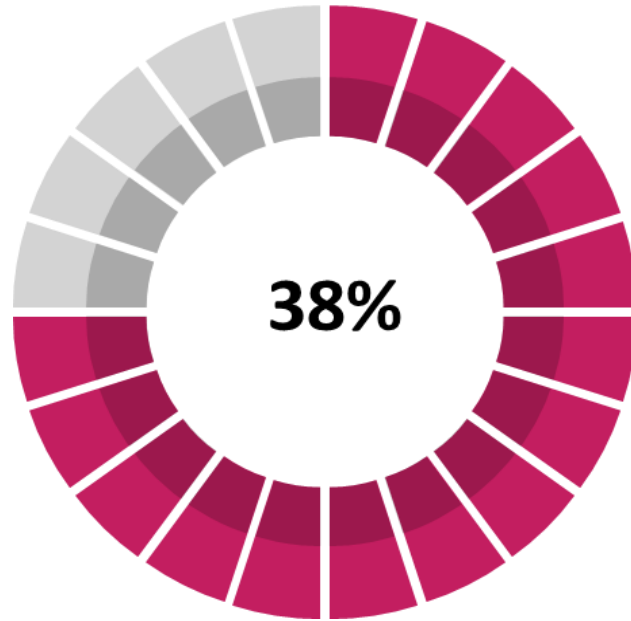
- Gender gap in care
- Mostly to parents, followed by grandparents and other relatives
- Women more likely to provide care to parent (in-law) than men (41% vs 26%)



\*Note: low sample sizes for Albania & Kosovo. Figures subject to sample bias.

Source: InCARE Survey data (2021-2022)

# Gender values



*% of individuals that agree that caregiving is more natural for women*

Source: InCARE Survey data (2021-2022)

# Impact on wellbeing

Many feel obligated to care despite negative impacts on their wellbeing

*% of individuals that felt obligated to provide care despite negative impacts on their health and well-being*

	67.8	77.4	73.9	86.7	77.5
	54.5	80.9	66.7	90.0	73.1
	Total	North Macedonia	Albania	Kosovo	Moldova

Source: InCARE Survey data (2021-2022)

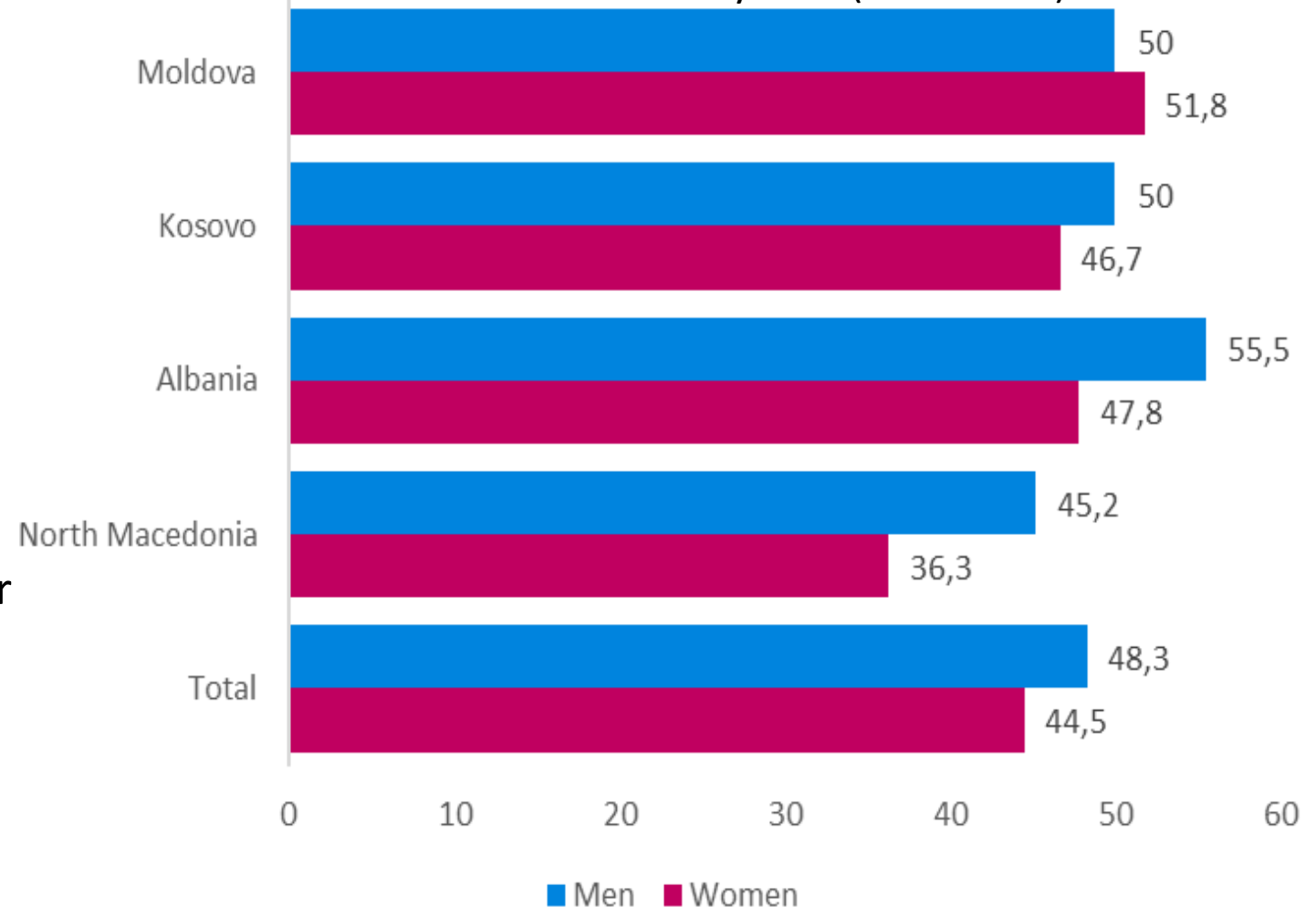
\*Note: low sample sizes for Albania & Kosovo

# Impact on career

- Clear impact of providing care on one's career
- Results show men are more likely to reduce their hours or quit their jobs (likely sample bias of InCARE survey)
- IMPORTANT: women less likely to enter the labour market to begin with

*% of individuals that had to reduce their working hours or quit entirely*

Source: InCARE Survey data (2021-2022)



## Community voices

*“The older population is in a very bad situation because home health care is hard to come by, people are experiencing financial problem when it comes to being placed in private homes for elderly, and the public homes for elderly do not have enough space nor provide the adequate conditions. Everything is based on the informal care of the family relatives/children, and we all need to manage this, although we must work full-time alongside this because of the seniority for retirement and salary.”*

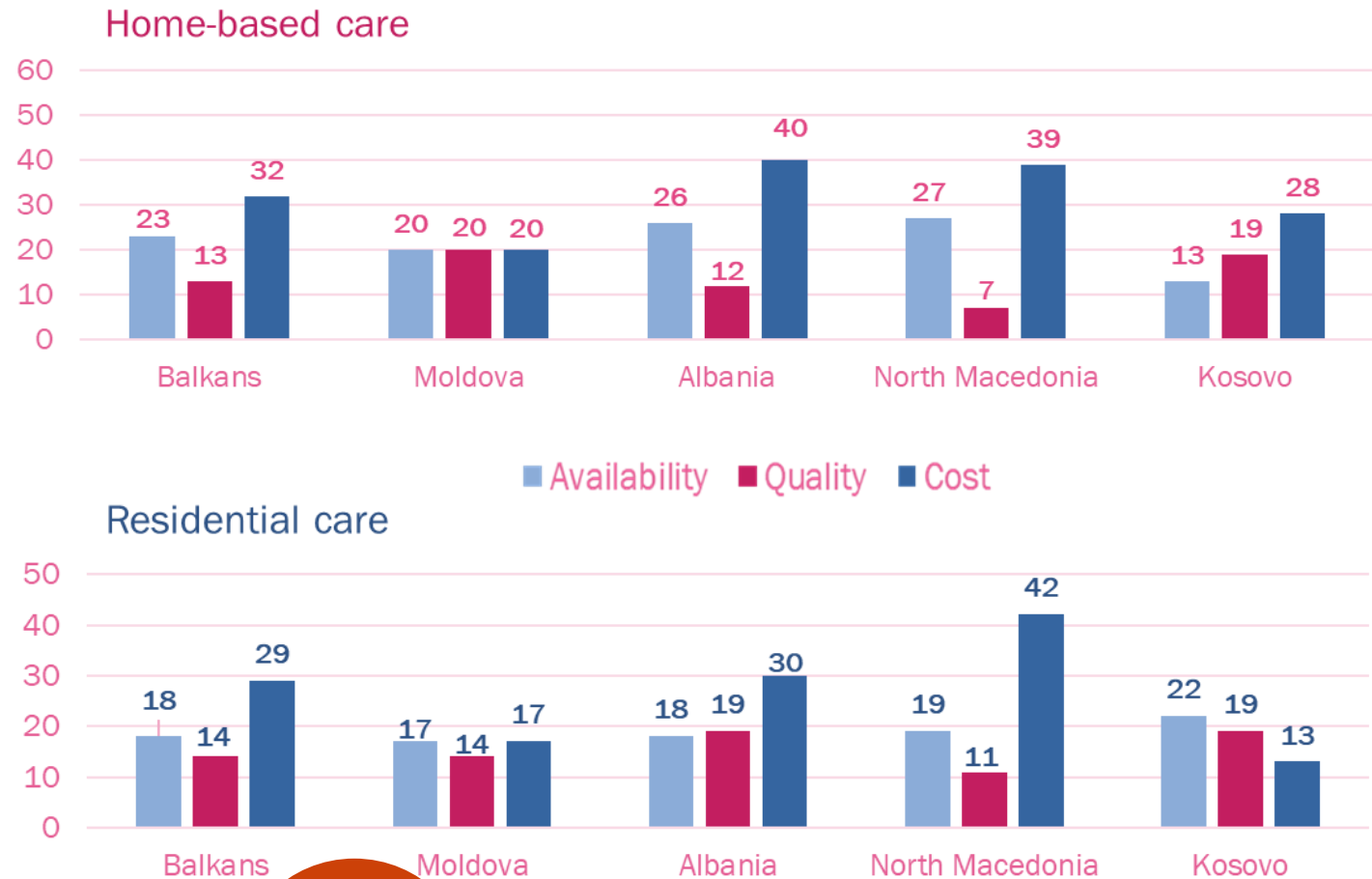
*– Woman, 56, North Macedonia*



# Perception of formal care services

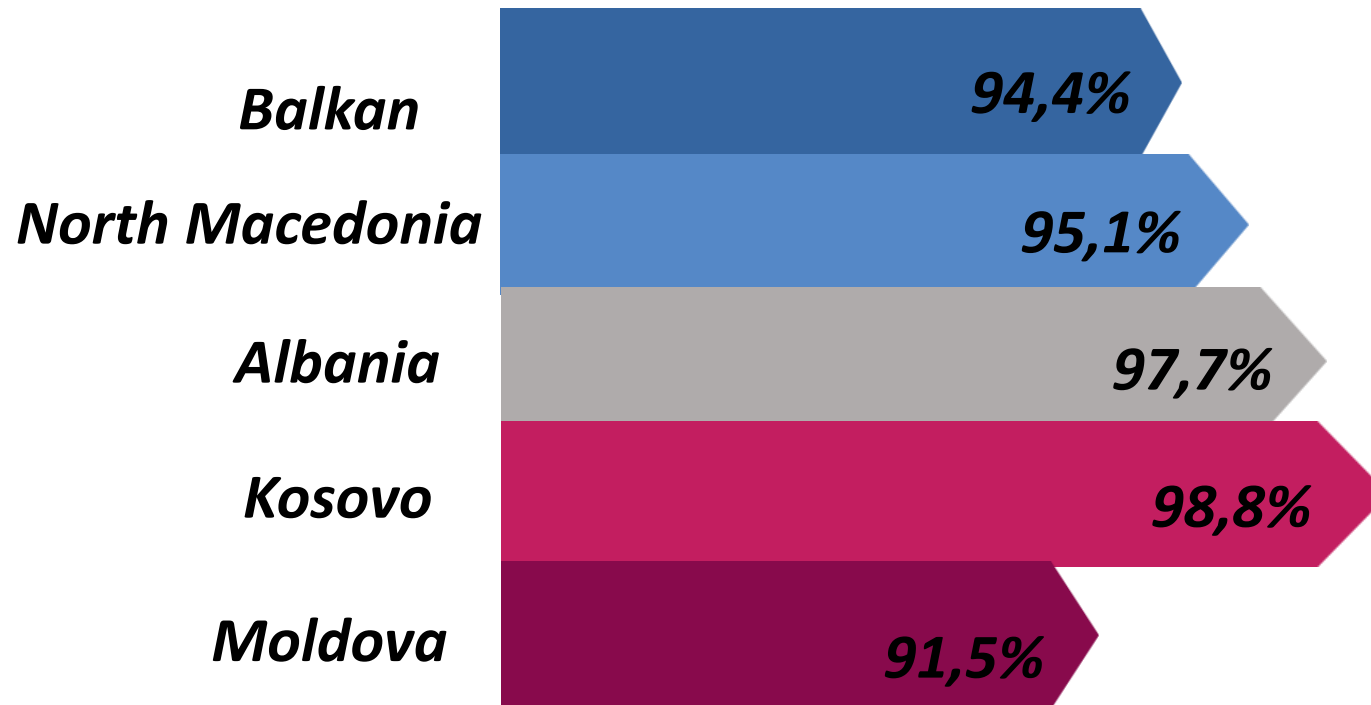
*% of individuals finding care unavailable, unaffordable and of low quality*

- Same issues seen across home-based and residential care, universally across countries
- Cost as largest issue, followed by availability



# State responsibility

*% of individuals that believe the state should  
organise and provide long-term care*

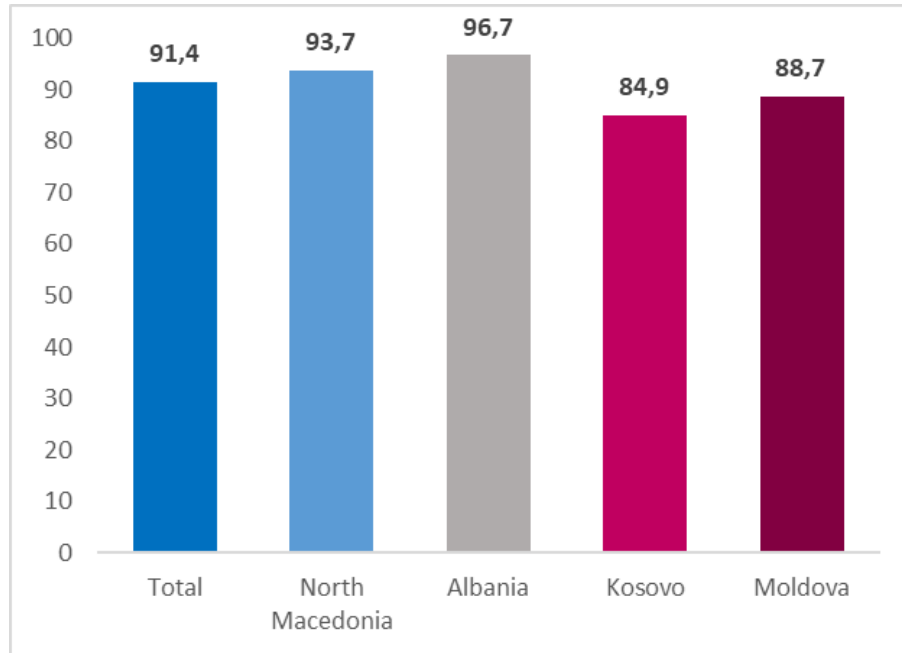


High support for public  
authorities organising  
and providing long-  
term care (94%)

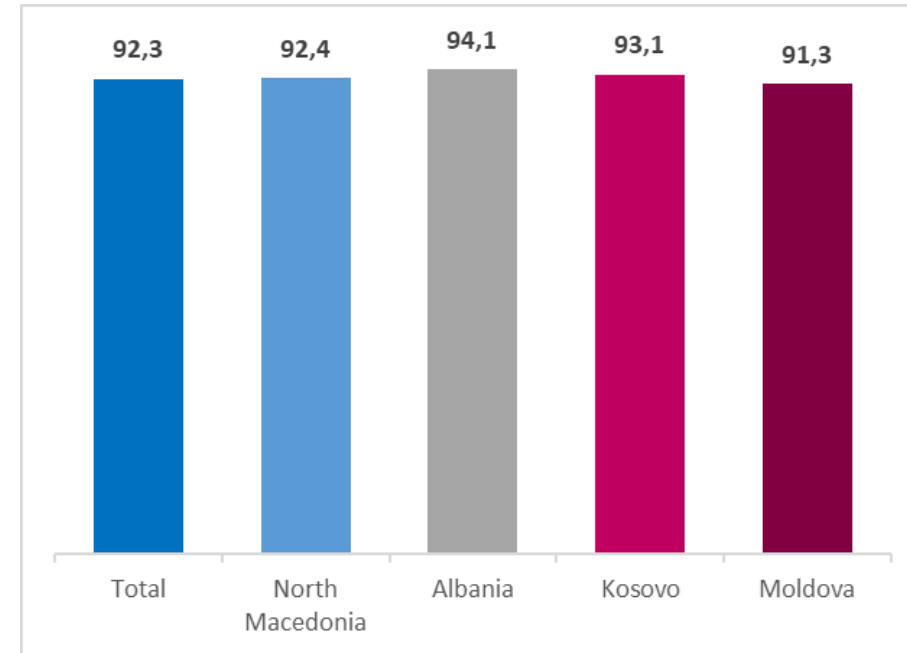
Source: InCARE Survey data (2021-2022)

# Support for informal carers

*% of individuals that agree with the statement...*



*"Providing care for a family member should be recognised as work and bring the same benefits as formal employment, including social insurance and a stable income"*



*"The state should pay an income to those who have to give up working or reduce their working time to care for an older person"*

## Community voices

*"I consider the health care system in Albania to be in very bad condition, so I don't expect its revitalization in the near future. We are taking care of our parents because we have seen this model of care with our grandparents. But the dynamic life and long distances will make it difficult for our children to take care of us in the future."*

- Woman, 43, Albania

*"Only a small percentage of the population in North Macedonia is able to financially afford to have quality in [older age]."*

- Woman, North Macedonia

*"In the Republic of Moldova, the extended family does not want to take care of the elderly at all, they expect the state to give them everything [...]. But at the same time the services offered by the state are poorly developed, inaccessible to the person, expensive in relation to his income, harsh eligibility criteria. In general the elderly are left to their fate and die within days."*

– Woman, 36, Moldova