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AUSTRIAN RED CROSS

ACCESS TO LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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DRUŠTVO CRVENOG KRSTAKRIZA BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE
ДРУШТВО ЦРВЕНОГ КРСТА КРИКА БОСНЕ И ХЕРЦЕГОВИНЕ
RED CROSS SOCIETY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



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Research on access to long-term care services

- The research is one of the components of the project "Strengthening resilience of older persons and persons with disabilities during COVID-19 and future disasters".
- The project is coordinated by the Red Cross of Serbia and supported by the European Union, Austrian Development Agency and the Austrian Red Cross. The research was conducted in 6 project locations: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo*, Albania and North Macedonia.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Methodology

- The goal of this research is to provide information that will serve as a basis for formulating recommendations aimed at increasing the capacity of service providers and civil society organizations (CSOs) as well as improving public policies to ensure better access to long-term care services for older persons and persons with disabilities in regular circumstances, and especially in case of emergency situations.
- The data were collected using the CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) method.

Sample	
Perons over 65 in need of long-term care	550 persons
Persons with disability 18-64	100 persons

Definition

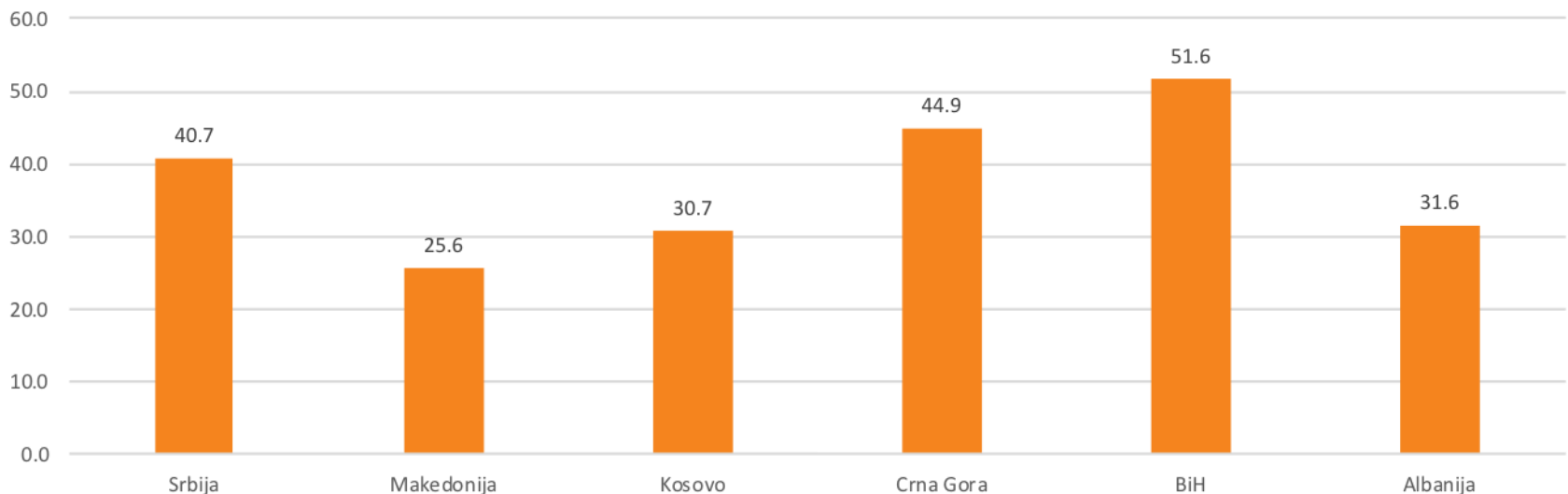
- In order to ensure comparability of data, but also to highlight the specifics of the functioning of the long-term care system in the Western Balkans, the methodology in this study is based on the definition of long-term care proposed by the **European Commission and the Social Protection Committee (SPC) in 2014:**

"Long-term care is defined as a set of services and forms of support for persons who, due to mental and/or physical weakness and/or disability for a long period of time, depend on support in performing daily life activities and/or have a need for more permanent medical assistance. Daily activities that require support may include personal care activities that a person needs to perform daily (activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, eating, getting out of bed or a chair, going to bed, moving, using the toilet, controlling bladder and bowel functions), or activities related to independent living (such as preparing meals, managing money, shopping, doing housework, and using the phone)."

Key Findings

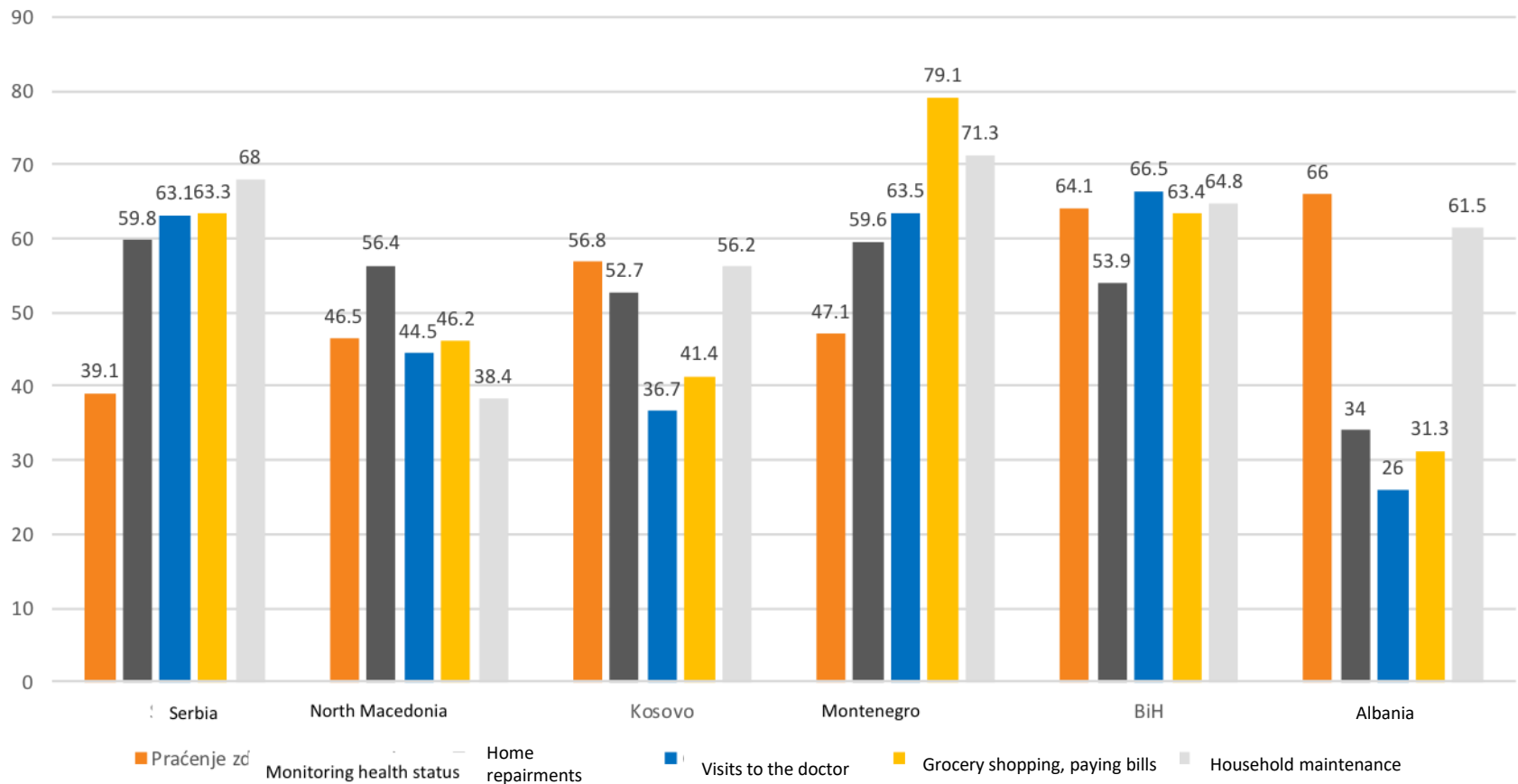
- The share of people over 65 years old in the Western Balkans who believe that they have great difficulties in their daily functioning differs significantly.

Share of people over 65 years of age with major difficulties in performing daily activities in the total population of the age group (%).



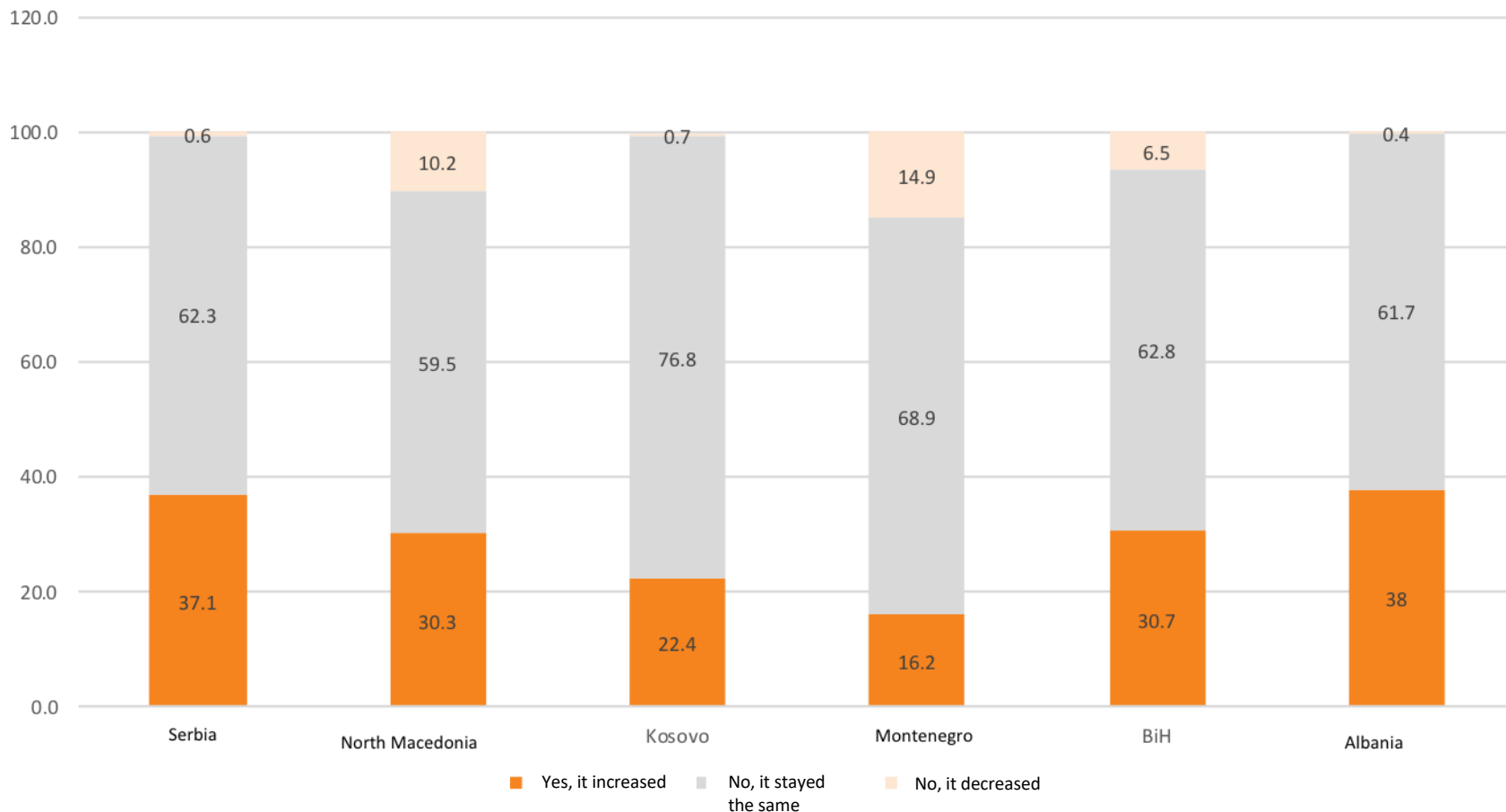
Key Findings

Activities in which the persons 65+ need support

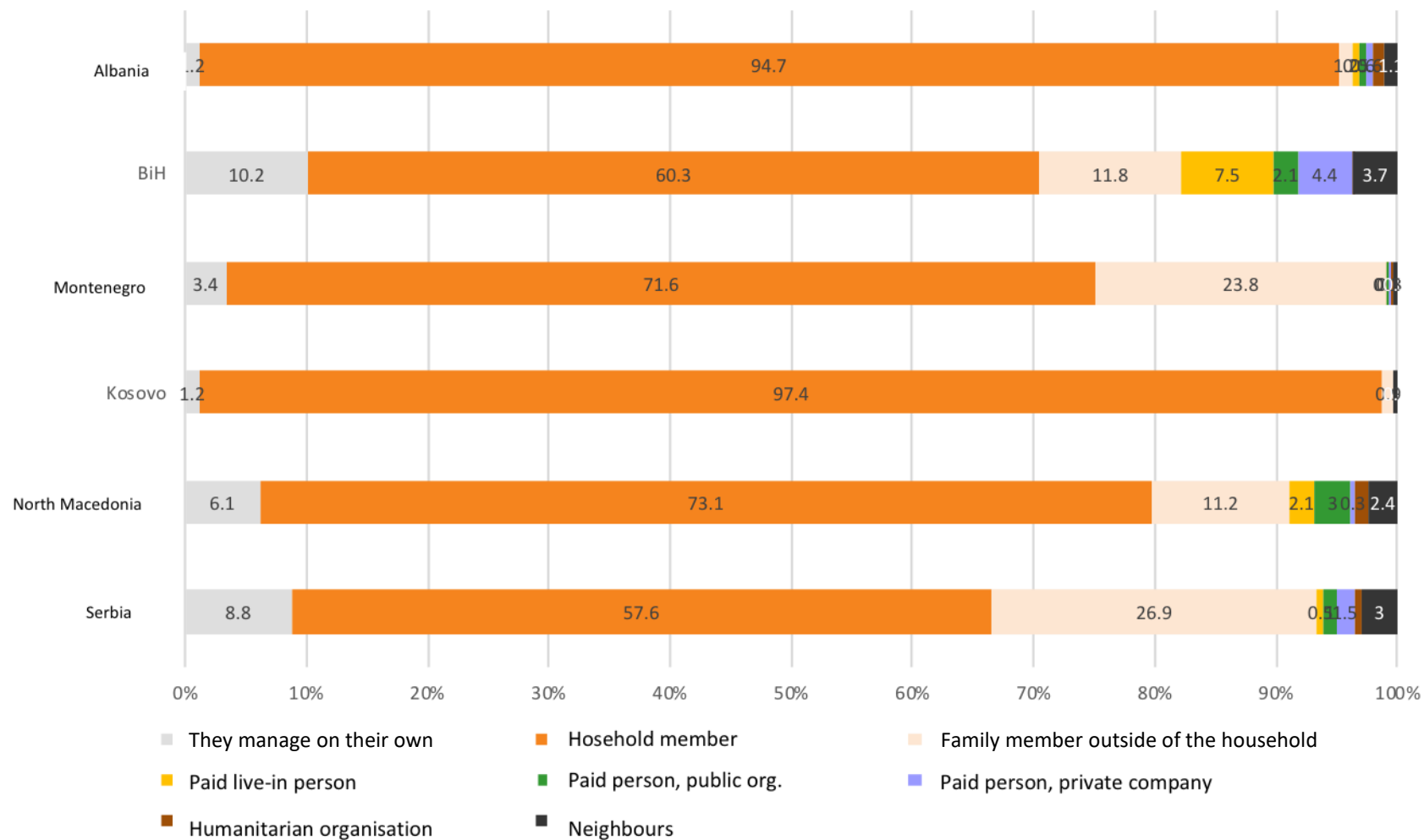


Key Findings

Need for support during the COVID-19 pandemic



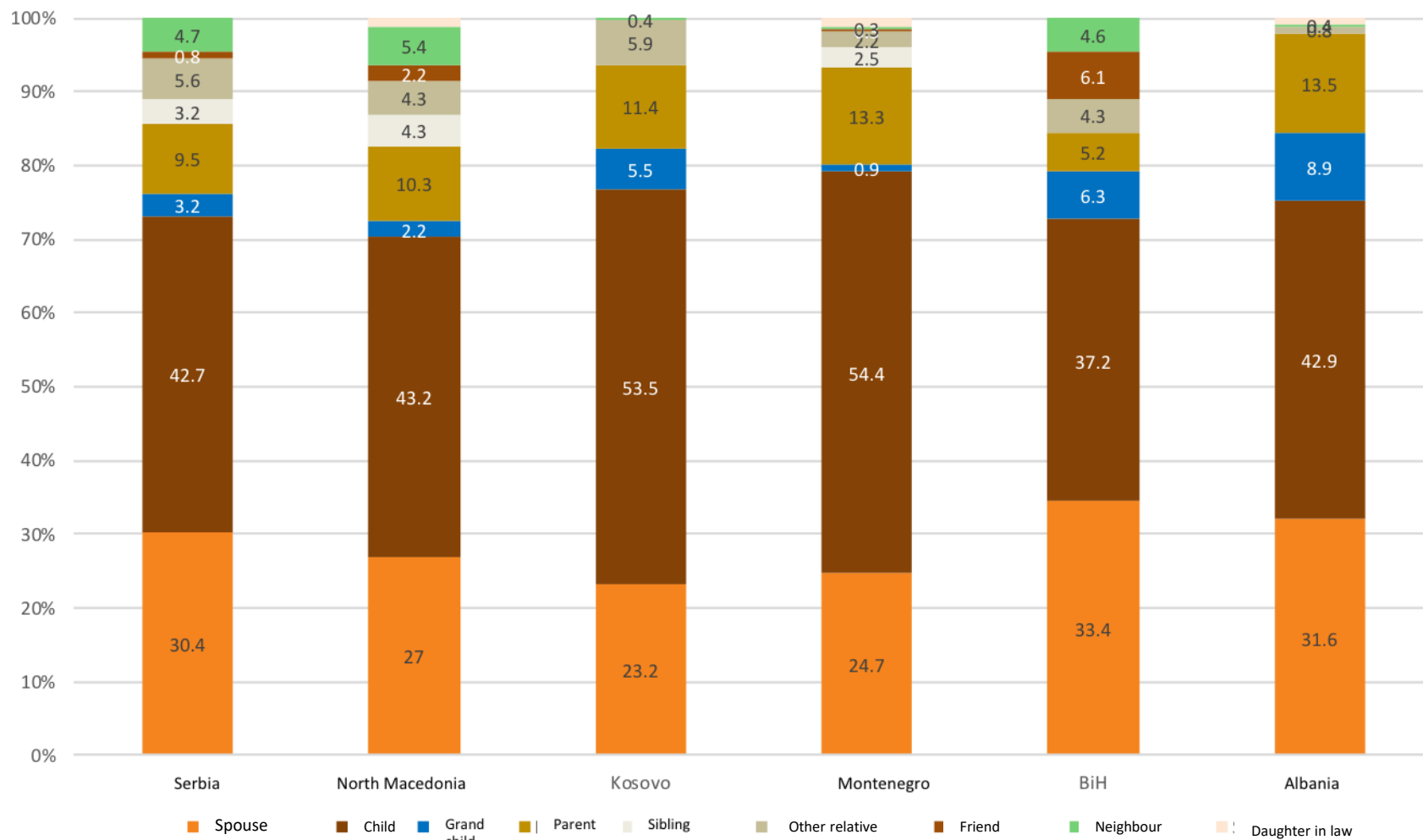
A way to meet the need for long-term care



Key Findings

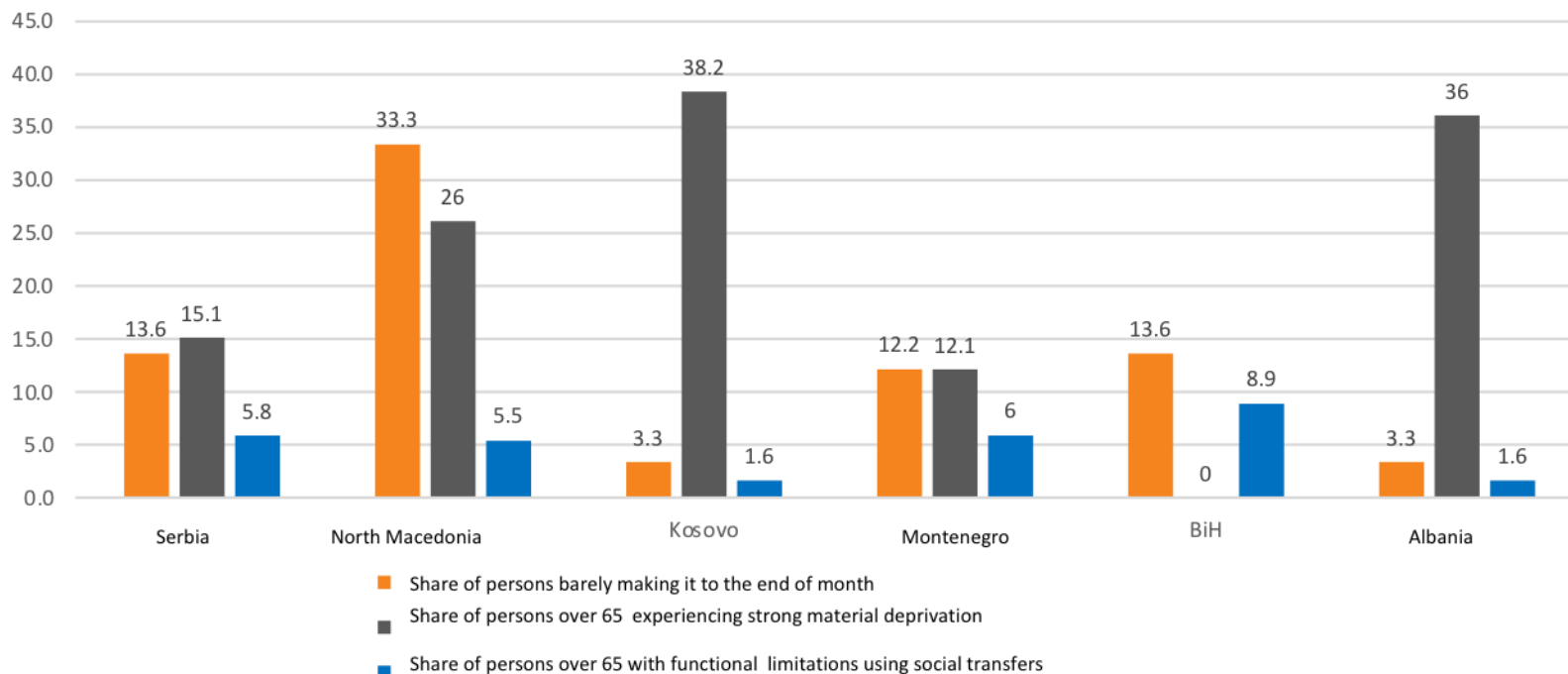
- Older persons who face functional difficulties rely most on the support of household members. The dominant family models come to the fore again. In Albania and Kosovo, household members provide majority of support to respondents compared to other countries. The above ratios quite consistently match the average household size in these states. Namely, a larger average number of household members in a society means a greater reliance on the support of household members.
- The share of older persons who primarily rely on some form of formal support is significantly smaller. However, even such a small share of those who rely on formal support is twice the administratively recorded number of users of social services, which indicates a developed gray market in long-term care.

Informal care providers



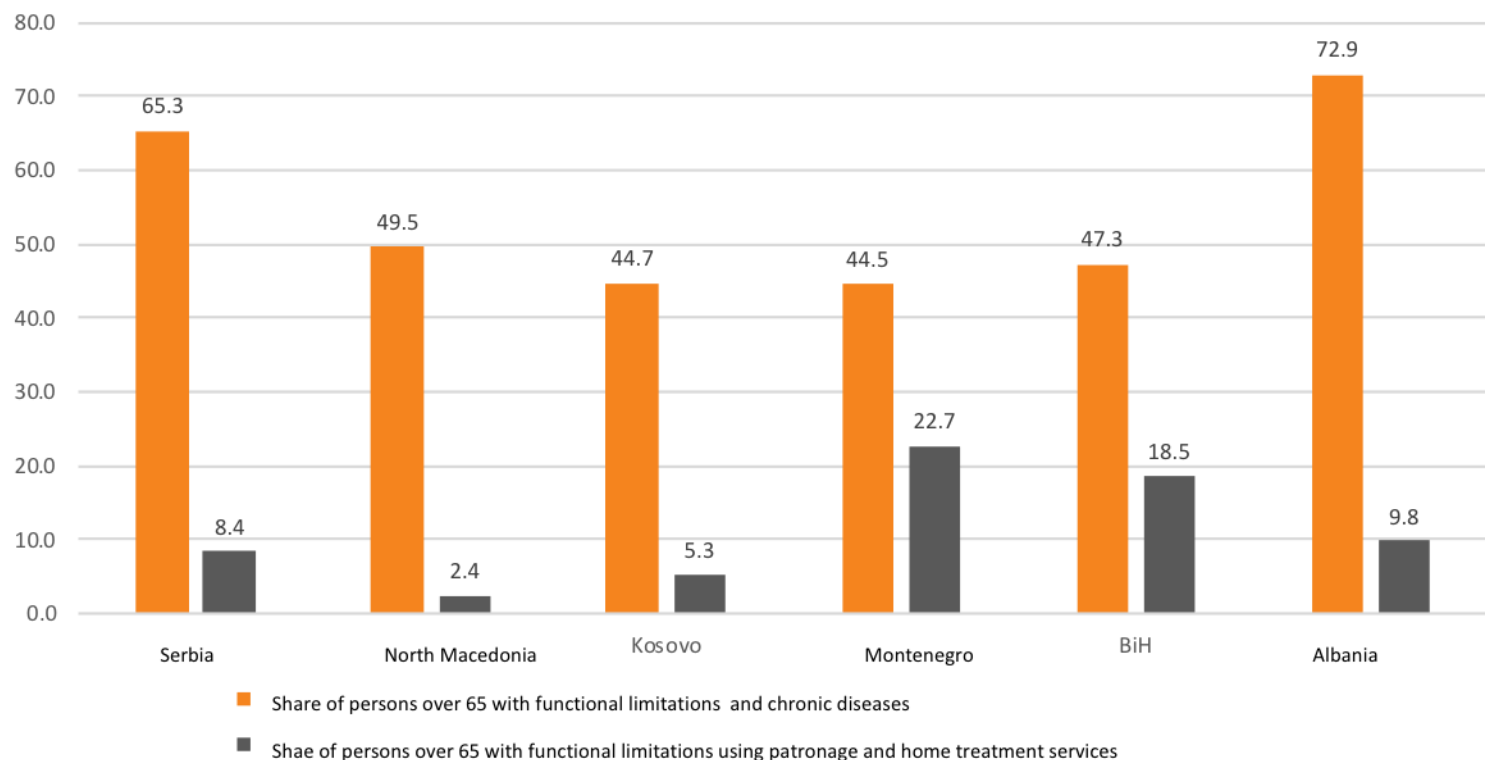
Income of people over 65

- Older persons with functional difficulties in the Western Balkans rely almost entirely on pension income.
- The subjective perception of the material situation of older persons with functional difficulties also indicates the distinct weaknesses of the monetary social benefits program. Here, once again, family models come to the fore.

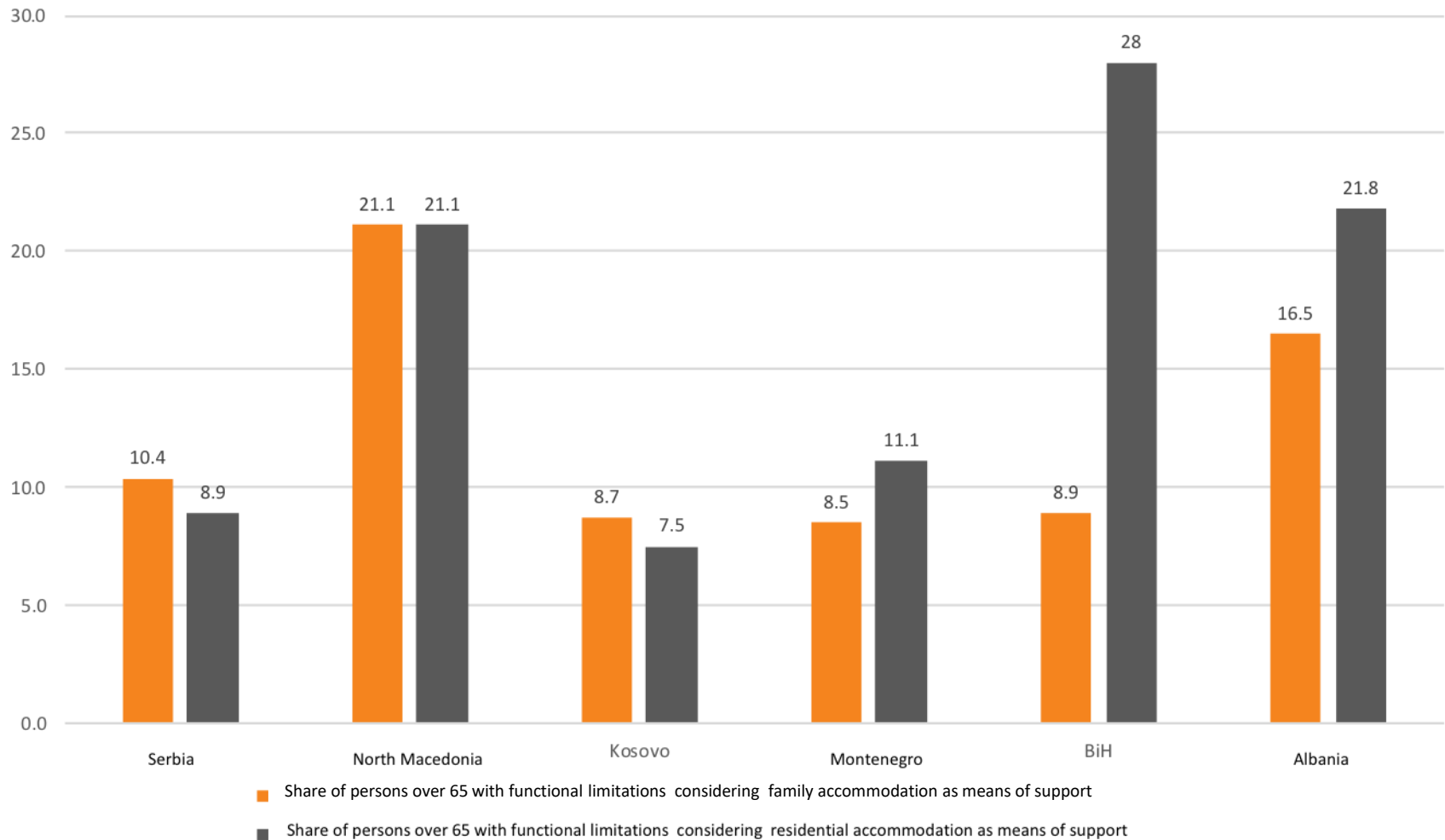


Home treatment/ patronage services

- Although about one half of older persons with difficulties in performing daily activities suffer from chronic diseases that affect their functionality, the availability of health care at home is extremely low in most of the region.



Family/ residential accommodation



Institutional accommodation

- The majority show **reluctance to residential care institutions**, which reflects a completely expected attitude towards life in an institutional environment, which is significantly different from the acquired habits in one's own home. However, this attitude also reflects the reputation that residential care facilities have in society.
- Another important reason for avoiding the use of residential care services is the high cost of these services, which is in agreement with the previously described financial situation of older persons with functional difficulties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Long-term care, considering the projected growth of the need for this type of support, should be formulated through integrated policies that would define the projected intent and the outcomes of this type of support. There is no doubt that more significant effects would be achieved by formulating a **single-entry system** that would focus on long-term care, but it is certain that this would require a major change in the existing institutional framework, for which it would be necessary to engage significant capacities, so it makes sense to think about this as the long term goal.
- **Demographic projections** indicate that the need for long-term care will be even more pronounced in the future, and there are justified doubts that the existing institutional design can respond to the challenges that will inevitably follow.