



AUDIT OF
POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT
IN SERBIA
-
2018.

In the framework of the Open Parliament initiative, The Centre for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA) conducted the sixth consecutive “Audit of political engagement in Serbia” with the support of Ipsos Strategic Marketing. First two audits (from 2013 and 2014) were supported by the British Embassy in Belgrade and National Democratic Institute.

The aim of this audit was to determine the level of the Serbian citizens’ readiness to participate in democratic processes that imply a series of different forms of citizen participation – from voting at the elections to initiating particular campaigns; and monitoring the changes of the degree of participation in time.

This audit represents a particular overview of the democratic situation in society. The extent to which the citizens are ready to engage in social processes, to exercise their civil rights and to influence the decision makers is an indicator of “the state of health” of a society.

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METHODOLOGY

Citizen participation in democratic processes was examined with three groups of indicators:

- Knowledge of and interest in politics, political system and work of democratic institutions in Serbia
- Engagement and participation in democratic processes
- Satisfaction with the work of the Parliament and confidence in the efficiency of civic engagement.

Besides the fundamental topics monitored during the time, every survey concerned particular topics. The audit this year included the special topic of corruption – the perception of corruption influence on the society and personal lives of citizens.

Data collection method: Face-to-face interviews conducted in respondents' households by using a structured questionnaire

Fieldwork dates:

- From September 15th to September 25th 2013,
- From August 21st to August 25th 2014,
- From July 18th to July 23rd 2015,
- From September 22nd to September 28th 2016,
- From October 21st to October 26th 2017,
- From October 17th to October 26th 2018.

Sample size:

2013. n=1060
2014. n=1040
2015. n=1014
2016. n=1060
2017 n=1078
2018 n=1022

Sample universe: Citizens of Serbia aged 18+

Sample design: Three-stage random stratified representative sample

Strata: Regions (Belgrade, Vojvodina, western Serbia, eastern Serbia, central Serbia, southern Serbia) and type of settlements (urban and other)

Stages (sample type and selection method):

- First stage sample unit: Territories of polling stations (proportional to population size in the unit concerned)
- Second stage sample unit: Households (systematic sample with randomly selected first sample unit and equal selection step)
- Third stage sample unit: Respondents within a household (random selection)

Post-stratification: by gender, age and region (correction by education)

Sampling error: $\pm 3.33\%$ (margin of error)

NOTE: Between first two audits, in March 2014 the extraordinary parliamentary elections were held, and first government of Aleksandar Vučić was formed in April 2014; between third and fourth audit in April 2016, another extraordinary parliamentary elections were held, and regular provincial and local elections too; in April 2017, between fourth and fifth, the regular presidential elections were held with Aleksandar Vučić as a winner, and in June 2017 new Government of Serbia with Ana Brnabić as the Prime Minister was formed; in March 2018, between fifth and sixth audit, Belgrade City Assembly elections were held.

MAIN FINDINGS SUMMARY

After six years of monitoring the participation and attitudes of citizens as regards the democratic processes in Serbia, in general, two basic trends may be observed:

- On one hand, the trend of increasing systematic support for democracy as the best political system for Serbia, with the decline of the support for the politics of “firm hand”; an increasing trend of at least generally declared citizens’ wish to influence the authorities’ decisions in their local communities; an upward trend of interest in particular topics related to political system and work of democratic institutions, but not politics in general

- On the other hand, the citizens’ confidence that by participating in specific actions concerning politics and decision-making they can effect changes is demonstrating a downward trend, including the readiness of citizens to engage in this type of actions

Knowledge and interest

As in previous years, the majority of citizens assess that they have no or very little knowledge about topics related to politics, political system and public authorities in Serbia – however, the upward trend of citizens’ percentage self-assessing themselves as at least moderately informed has been growing this year as well.

Citizens assess that they are best-informed about the politics in Serbia and about the local self-government in their community (48% believe to be at least fairly informed), and as for the previous year, the lowest number of citizens assessed to be at least fairly informed on the programmes of political parties and the role and the work of Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection (29% and 26% respectively). Concerning the institution of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, less than a third of citizens (31%) knew which type of institution it is, which is less than the previous year.

It is the most noticeable that over 60% of citizens assess that they have very little knowledge, or no knowledge at all, on the role of MPs in the Serbian Parliament.

In general, the same as previous years, the citizens demonstrated little interest for topics related to politics and work of democratic institutions in Serbia.

This year, citizens expressed the greatest interest for the negotiations between Belgrade and Priština (we only introduced the topic this year), however less than half of citizens (40%) expressed their interest for this topic. On the other hand, there is a higher number of citizens, 61%, who assess that they have very little knowledge, or no knowledge at all on this topic.

From year to year, this interest varies, but for the last several years in average it increased in comparison to 2013 and 2014.

Regardless of the variations, among the topics systematically monitored, the citizens are stable in demonstrating the highest interest for topics related to the municipality they live (municipal council elections in their community, work of local self-government), and the least interest is demonstrated for the work and organisation of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia and political parties programmes.

Knowledge and attitudes towards the institution of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection and the importance of citizens' right to know

Last year and this year as well we asked citizens several questions related to the knowledge and attitudes concerning the institution of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection and general importance of the citizens' right to know.

The majority of citizens, 58%, believe that their right to know, and/or have access to the information of public importance is extremely important, since it provides them with an insight into the work of government, and the control of the work of government as well.

On the other hand, the substantially lower percentage of citizens believe that the institution of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance has an important role in the protection of this right of citizens and that number dropped in comparison to the previous year – from 45% to 39%.

The number of citizens who are familiar with this institution is even smaller, and in comparison to the previous year, the number of citizens who know about it dropped from 38% to only 31%.

Finally, the number of citizens who believe that the media should be analytical when reporting and critical in over-viewing the work of institutions and public office holders for the purpose of protecting public interest and democracy dropped, from 51% to 46%.

Engagement and participation

Only 28% of citizens believe that there is someone in their community who is in charge of solving their problems, however, the citizens themselves are not that ready to engage in problem-solving initiatives.

A small number of citizens participate in initiatives related to problem-solving and decision-making in their respective local communities. In years, this number varied between 7% and 13%, without systematic changes.

The relatively small number of citizens expressed the real desire to influence the decisions of authorities in their municipality, yet in comparison to the size of participation in problem-solving, that number is significantly bigger and exhibits the upward trend. In comparison to all previous years, this year the higher percentage of citizens - 36%, expressed the wish to influence the decision-making of the authorities in their municipality.

The smaller number of citizens expressed the wish to influence the decisions of authorities at the national level, but that number slightly increased in the last three years, and after the previous year decline it reached 28% again.

On the other hand, in comparison to participation in initiatives concerning the problem-solving in their respective local community, a larger number of citizens declared that they had participated in at least one concrete action, when these included broader initiatives and actions in relation to politics and decision-making (discussion on politics, signing petitions, participation at public gatherings, demonstrations, protests rallies, reporting an issue to the media or police, or other). **This year, however, the percentage of citizens who declared that they had participated in at least one action, dropped from 48% to 39%.**

However, the image of participation is significantly modified if discussing politics with others is excluded as an activity. The citizens were the most involved in an action of discussions about politics with others. Compared to the previous year, the percentage of citizens who declared that they **discussed politics significantly dropped (from 37% to 24%) and, it is at the lowest level ever since we are monitoring the citizens' participation in the democratic processes for the last six years.**

Excluding the discussion about politics, only 26% of citizens participated in at least one action, slightly less than in previous years, when the percentage was 28%.

As in previous years, besides discussing politics, the only action which involved the citizens to a fairly noticeable extent is petition signing. The size of participation in this action also dropped compared to the previous year, from 17% to 12%.

Trust in the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia

The trust and confidence that MPs represent the interests of citizens in the Parliament is generally very low, and in comparison to 2016, in the last two years, it is still decreasing

- Only 13% of respondents think that MPs represent the interests of ordinary people in the Parliament of Serbia (vs. 18% in 2016)
- Only 19%, think that the Parliament efficiently oversees the work of the Government ensuring that the Government pursues its policies in order to realise benefits for all citizens (vs. 24% in 2016)
- Only 10% think that the MPs are available to citizens who wish to contact them (vs. 18% in 2016)

Confidence in the efficiency of civic engagement and readiness to participate

A small percentage of citizens generally think that ordinary people can influence the authorities' decisions by their engagement and change things they are not satisfied with, and that percentage remained relatively stable in the entire six years of monitoring: 17% believe that citizens can change things in their local community by their engagement, and 12% believe they can influence changes at the level of the entire country.

On the other hand, a slightly larger number of citizens assess that through some actions they can influence the changes in the country in comparison to the number of those who generally believe in the efficiency of civic engagement, but in the last two years that confidence has been lower than in previous years.

In 2014, when the confidence in the efficiency of the civic actions increased in comparison to 2013, from 2014 onward, the confidence in the efficiency of the civic engagement demonstrated the downward trend, with an obvious drop in 2017. This year, in comparison to the previous year, the confidence mildly grew, however for the majority of actions it is still lower than during the last years:

- More than one third (35%) believe that citizens can influence changes by diverting media attention to citizens' problems
- Almost every fifth citizen believe that the change is possible through participation in demonstrations and civil protests, and nearly the same percentage think that change can be carried out by organised pressure to the Parliament (such as signing petitions and participation in public hearings)
- Only 16% believe that they can influence changes by connecting with non-governmental organisations and through organised online actions, and 12% think it could be done by contacting MPs in the Parliament

Similarly to previous years, the citizens are mostly confident that changes in the country can be effected by voting at the local and national elections, but this is less than half of the respondents (40%).

As in previous years, the citizens were readier to participate in initiatives aiming to change things, but they were not that confident when it comes to civic actions bringing about changes, however in the previous two years even this declarative readiness to participate decreased.

In the last two years, the citizens readiness to join public protests noticeably declined (compared to one third in the previous years to 26% in the previous two years), to address their councillor or MP (in the previous years it was one third of respondents vs. 22% and 26% in 2017 and this year, respectively) and to come forward to a non-governmental organisation (from 20% and higher in the previous years, it dropped to 15% and 17% in the previous two years). This year, a significant drop in citizens' readiness to participate in petition signing is noticeable. In previous years, over half of the citizens expressed their readiness to sign the petition, and this year only 48% expressed their readiness to do – significantly less than last year 58%.

Elections – the perception of regularity and readiness to support initiatives aimed at better regulation of election process

Over two thirds of citizens believe that in the past several years there were irregularities in the electoral procedures. One third of citizens believe that irregularities at the elections were so severe that they endangered the results of the elections. The other third also believe there were irregularities, but minor and without impact on the results of elections. Yet 11% of citizens believe there were no irregularities during election processes in the previous years.

There is not enough confidence that the single electoral roll is up-to-date and accurate. More than half (59%) of citizens of Serbia believe that the electoral roll is not correct.

The percentage of citizens who believe that independent control of the electoral process is necessary significantly increased in comparison to 2017 and now it is 85%, while the number of citizens who had no opinion on this matter dropped.

Only slightly more than one third of citizens agree that the citizens should launch initiatives themselves for better regulation of election process, however almost one third cannot decide, and only 17% disagree. However, the majority of citizens would support any of the abovementioned initiatives for better regulation of the elections process – and this number is greater than the number of those who believe citizens should independently launch the initiative for regulating the elections.

Corruption – the perception of the importance of corruption and its influence on society and individuals' lives

In the last ten years, the percentage of citizens who perceive corruption as one of the three most serious problems in Serbia varied significantly. The corruption usually comes third, after two problems which cause the greatest concern among the citizens – unemployment and low standard of life. During this year, the issue of Kosovo pushed corruption to the fourth place, so only every fifth citizen (and fewer) mentioned corruption as one of the three most significant problems.

The majority of citizens (between 62 and 87%) assessed that they find various forms of corruptive behaviour (such as tipping doctors and bribing medical staff, paying police officer to avoid fines, using personal connections to get a job, receiving money or gifts in exchange for a vote in the elections...) completely unacceptable. The highest percentage of citizens estimated that receiving money or gifts in exchange for a vote in the elections is completely unacceptable (87%), and the smallest number declared that tipping doctors for successful medical intervention is completely unacceptable (63%) as well as using the help of acquaintances to arrange affairs in the local council (62%).

Majority of citizens, 86%, believe that corruption is very harmful to their society, but a significantly lower percentage (between 45% and 56%) estimated that some forms of corruption are significantly influencing their individual lives. The largest percentage of citizens estimate that their lives are highly affected by the types of corruption more directly observed in their everyday life – bribing health care workers to get better or faster treatment (56%), using personal connections to get a job in public enterprise (55%) and judicial corruption (54%), and their lives are less affected by the mechanisms which they find less understandable – they are least influenced by bid rigging in public procurement (46%) and selling public land for the purpose of investment in construction (45%).

As regards their readiness to report the corruption case, almost half of the citizens (47%) are undecided: 38% say they might report it (depending on the circumstances), and 9% do not know what would they do. Every fourth citizen declared that they would not report corruption, and only slightly more than that (28%) would report corruption.

MAIN FINDINGS

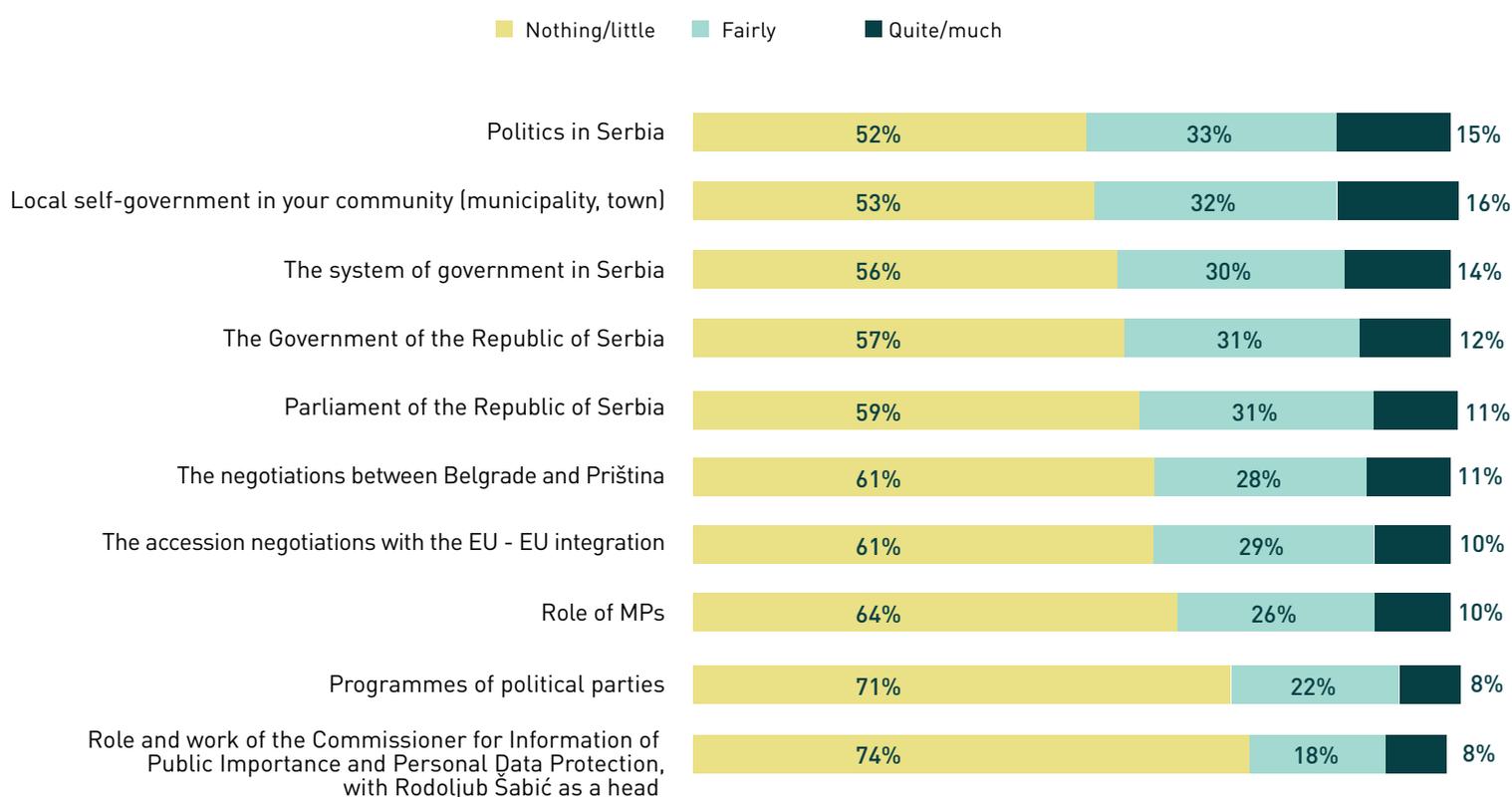
KNOWLEDGE OF AND INTEREST IN POLITICAL TOPICS

Self-assessment of knowledge

As in previous years, the majority of citizens assessed that they have no or little knowledge about topics related to politics, political system and public authorities in Serbia – but the percentage of citizens who consider themselves at least fairly informed continued to grow this year as well.

As in previous years, the citizens assessed that they are best-informed about the politics in Serbia and about their respective local community (48% estimate that they are at least fairly informed on these topics), whilst noticeably smallest percentage estimated that they are at least fairly informed on the role and work of Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection (26%) and programmes of political parties (29%). (Figure 1).

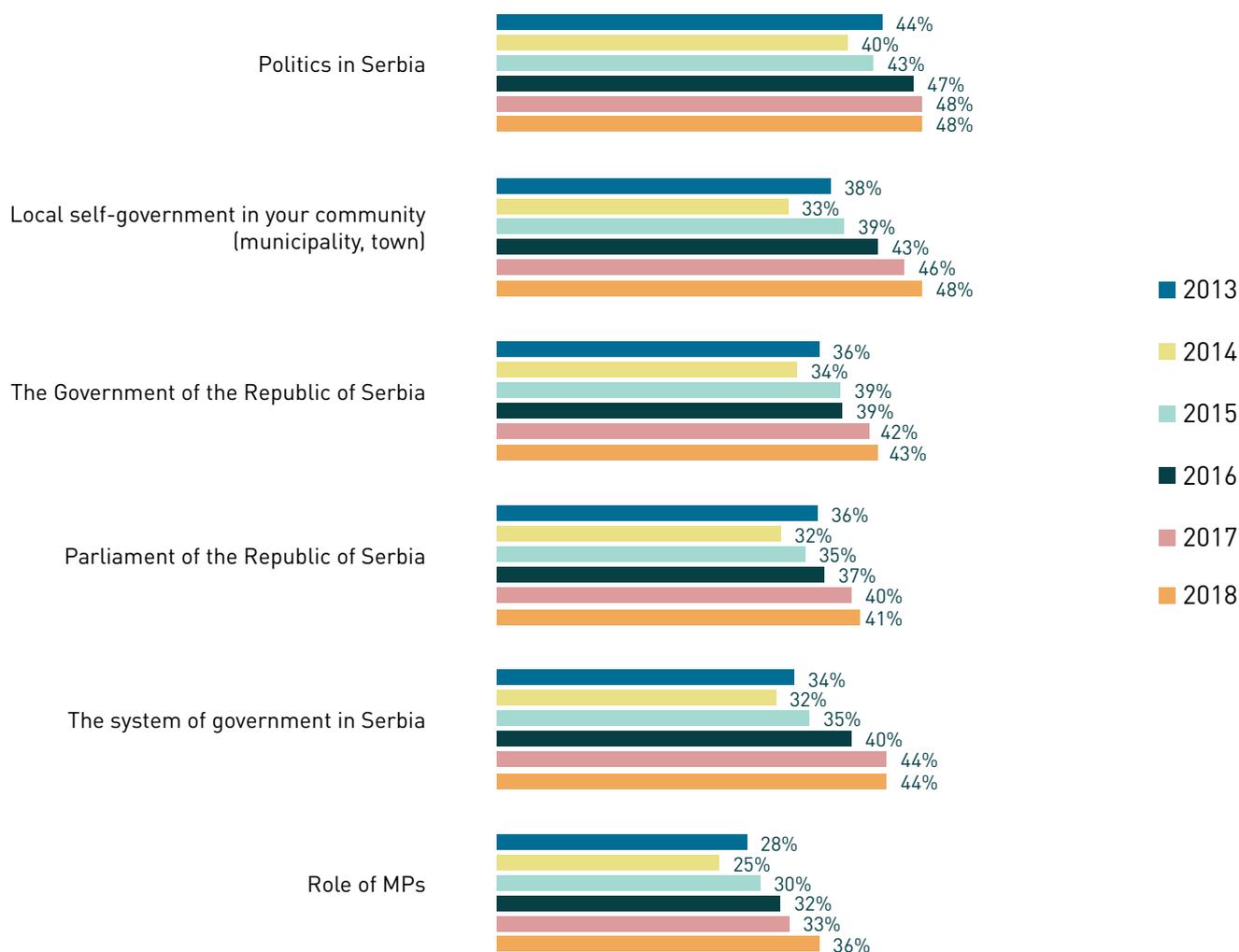
Figure 1: Generally, in your opinion, how much do you really know about...



The percentage of citizens who self-assessed themselves as at least moderately informed about the six systematically monitored topics continues to grow this year slowly. The biggest step forward was observed in knowledge about the system of government in Serbia, as this percentage increased in comparison to 2013 since more citizens are now feeling at least moderately informed (2013: 34%, 2017 and 2018: 44%). (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Generally, in your opinion, how much do you really know about...

% ANSWERES "I KNOW FAIRLY + QUITE + MUCH"



Knowledge of the institution of Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, the importance of citizens' right to know and the role of media

A significantly higher percentage of citizens feels that their right to know is highly important, compared to the percentage of those who think that institution of Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection has a vital role in protecting this right of citizens.

While the majority of citizens, 58%, believe that their right to know, and/or have access to information of public importance, is highly important since it enables them with an insight to the work of the authorities, as well as the control of government work, only 39% believe that the institution of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection has an important role in protection of this right. Moreover, compared to the previous year, the percentage of citizens emphasising their right to know has mildly increased (from 55% to 58%), and the percentage of citizens who believe that the institution of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection has an important role decreased (from 45% to 39%). (Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3: How important is the right of citizens to know, and/or have access to information of public importance- the information public authorities have at their disposal, pertaining to their work and procedures?

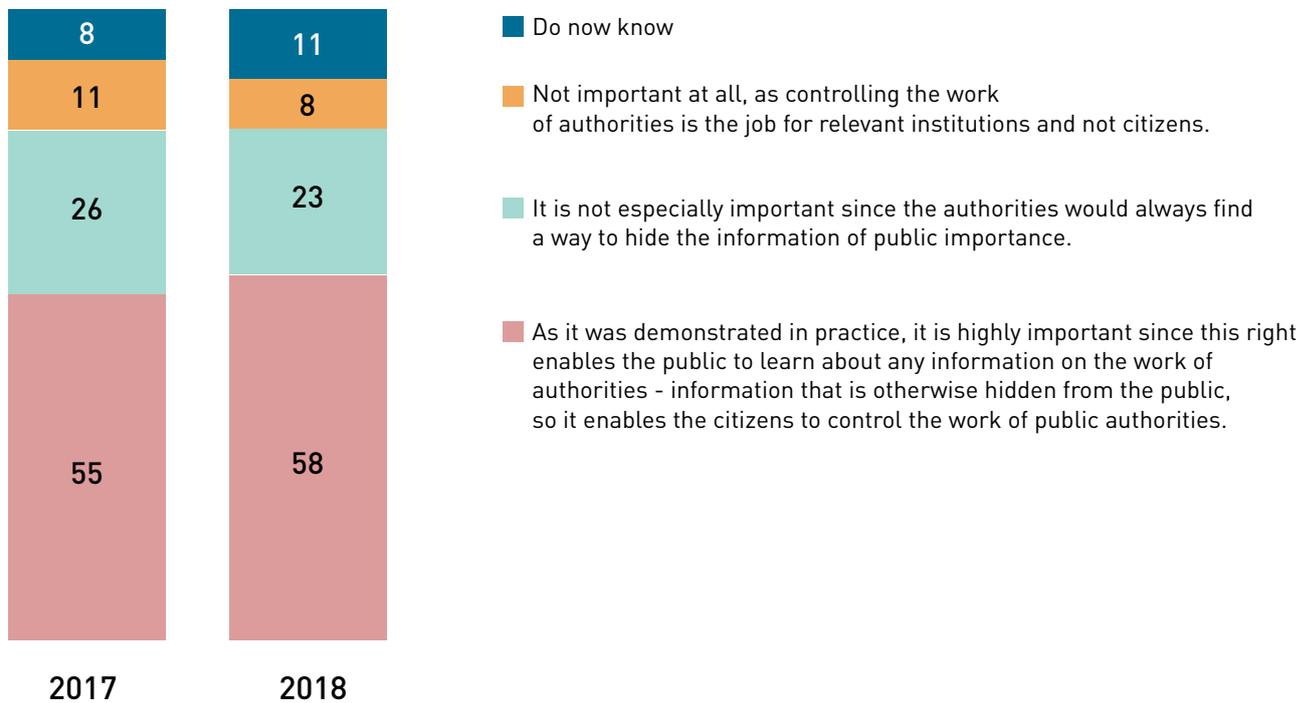
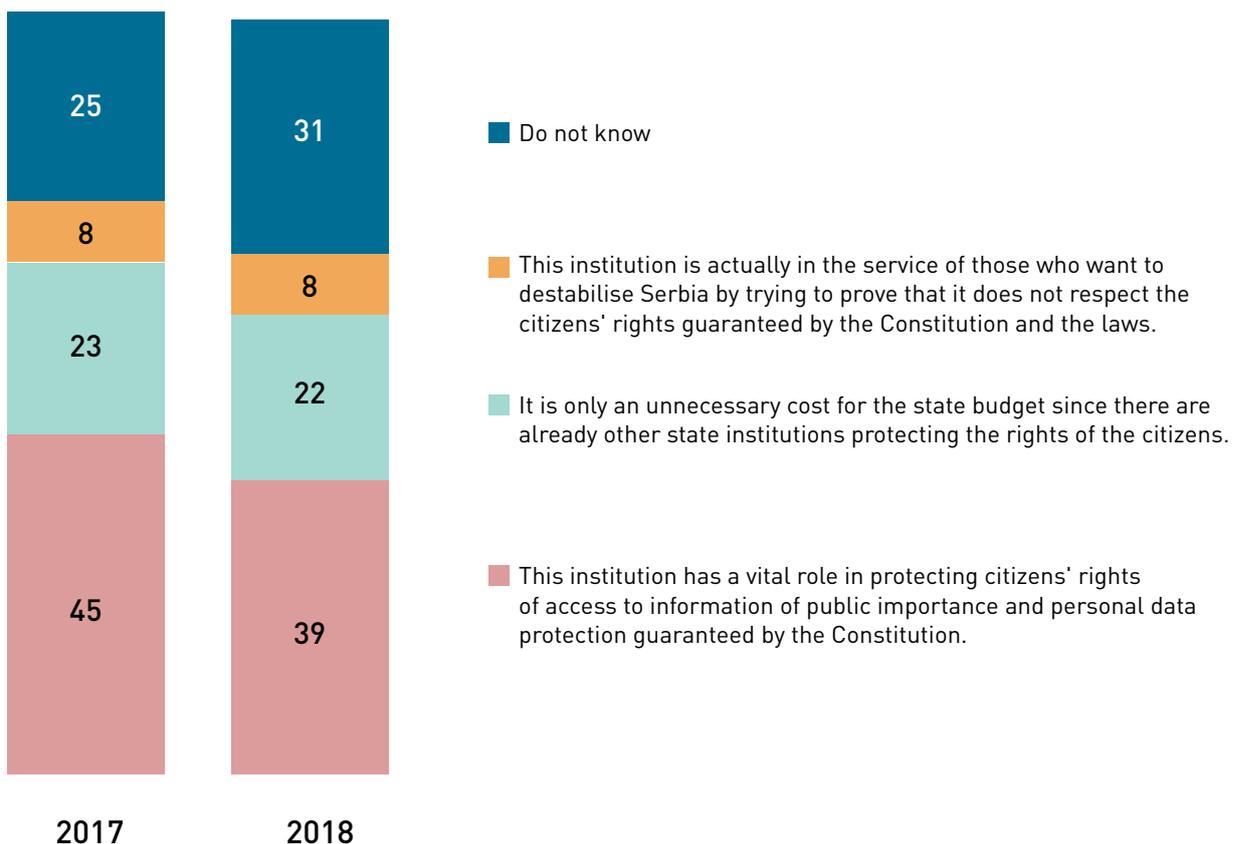
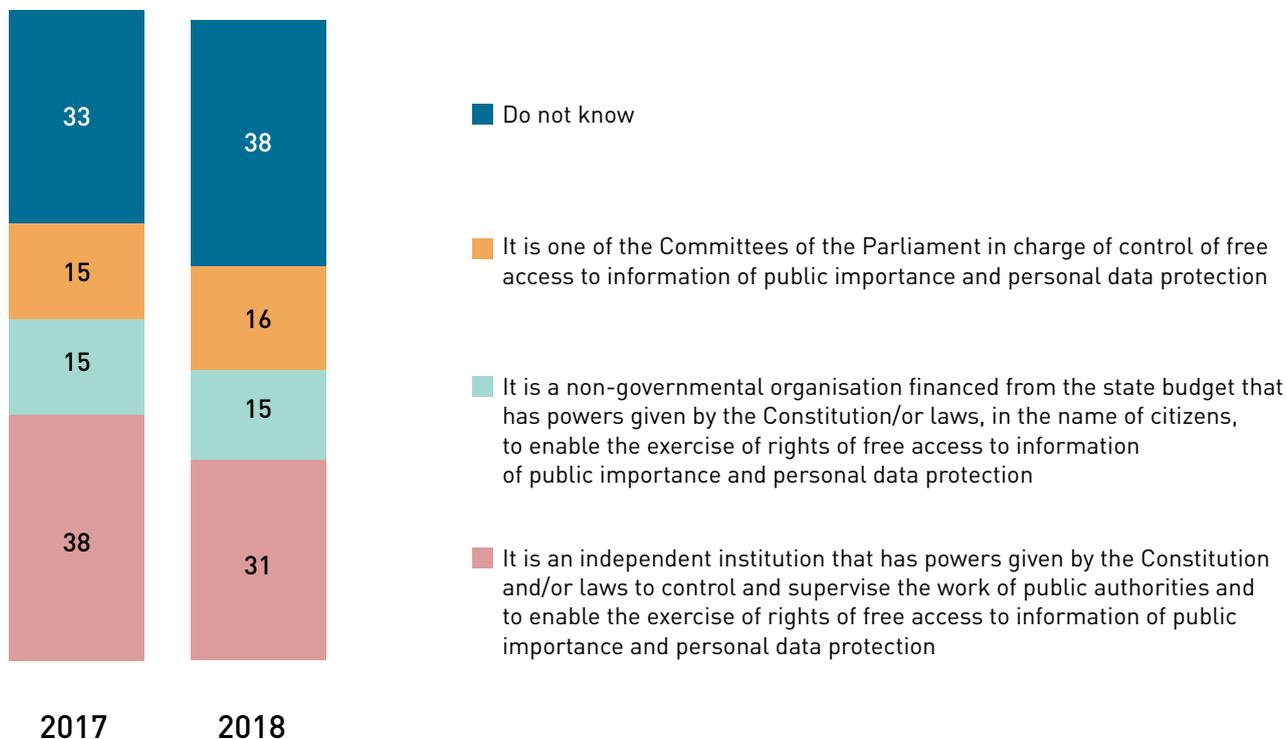


Figure 4: What do you personally think about the institution of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection?



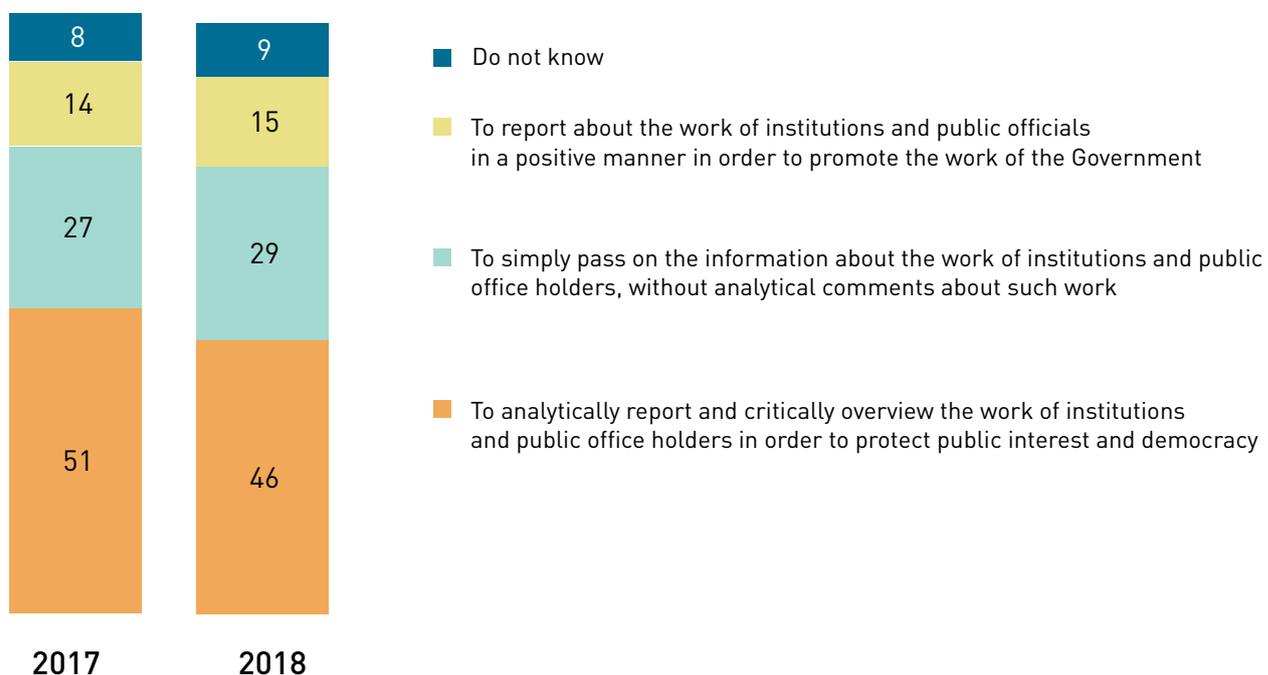
The smaller percentage is really familiar with this institution, and compared to the previous year the percentage of those who know about it dropped from 38% to only 31%. (Figure 5)

Figure 5: We hear a lot about the work of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection. How much do you know what this institution is about?



Finally, the percentage of the citizens who think that the role of media should be analytical reporting and critical over-viewing of the work of institutions and public office holders for the purpose of protecting public interest and democracy dropped from 51% to 46%. (Figure 6)

Figure 6: What should be the role of the media in a society when it comes to informing citizens about the matters of public interest - the work of the state, institutions, public officials...?

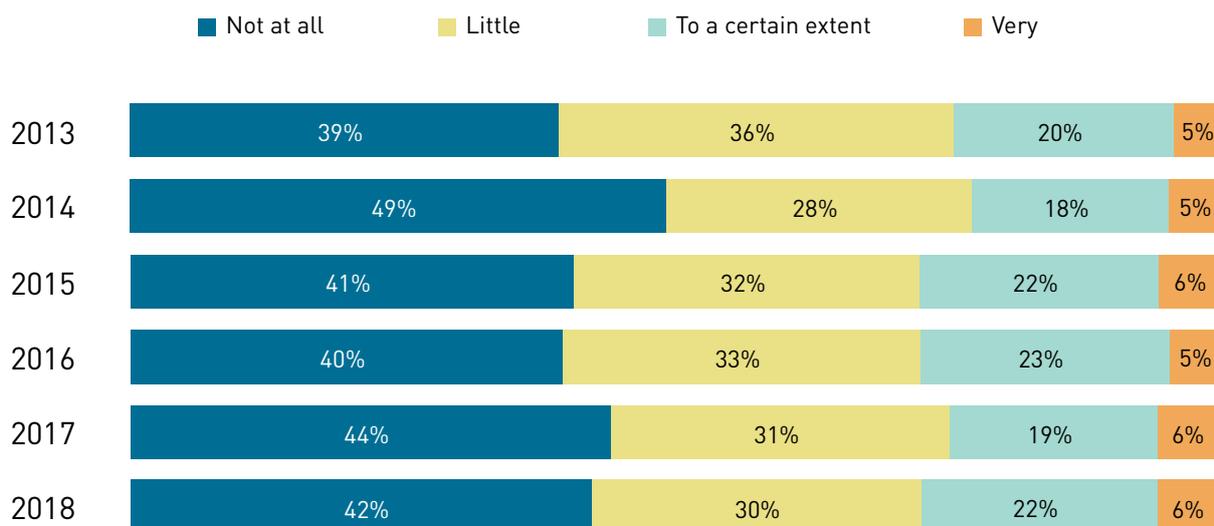


Interest

As in previous years, citizens expressed little interest in topics related to politics and the work of democratic institutions in Serbia.

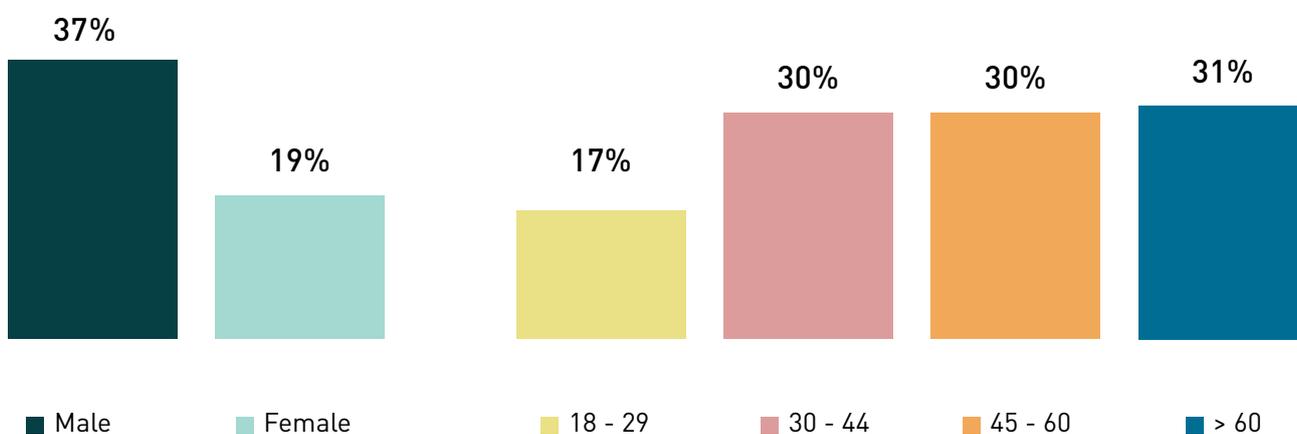
In the past six years, the interest in politics varied between 23% and 28% of citizens who are somewhat interested in politics, and this year it is 28%. (Figure 7)

Figure 7: To what extent are you personally interested in politics?



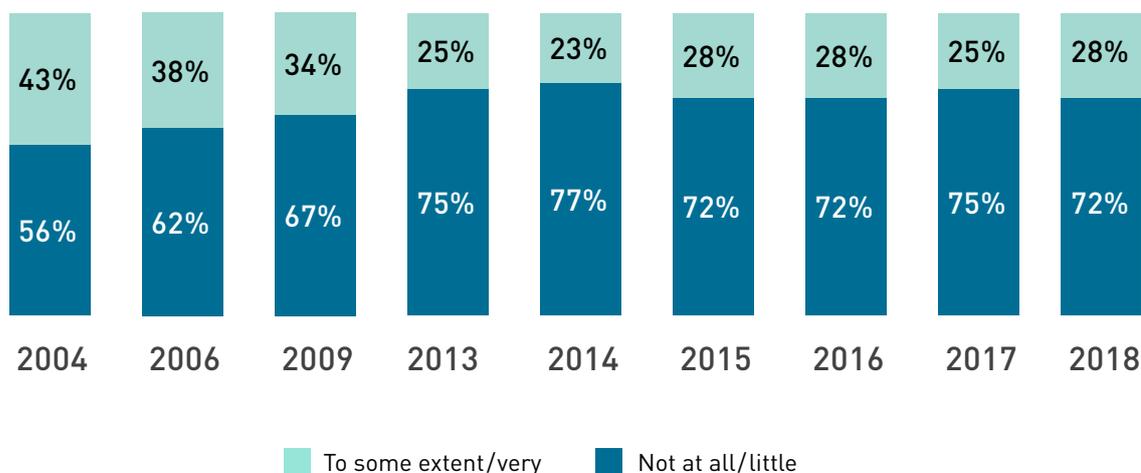
The least interested in politics are women and the age group of 18-29 years-of-age. (Figure 8)

Figure 8: To what extent are you personally interested in politics?



The number of citizens not interested in politics noticeably grew in the past fifteen years. (Figure 9) ¹

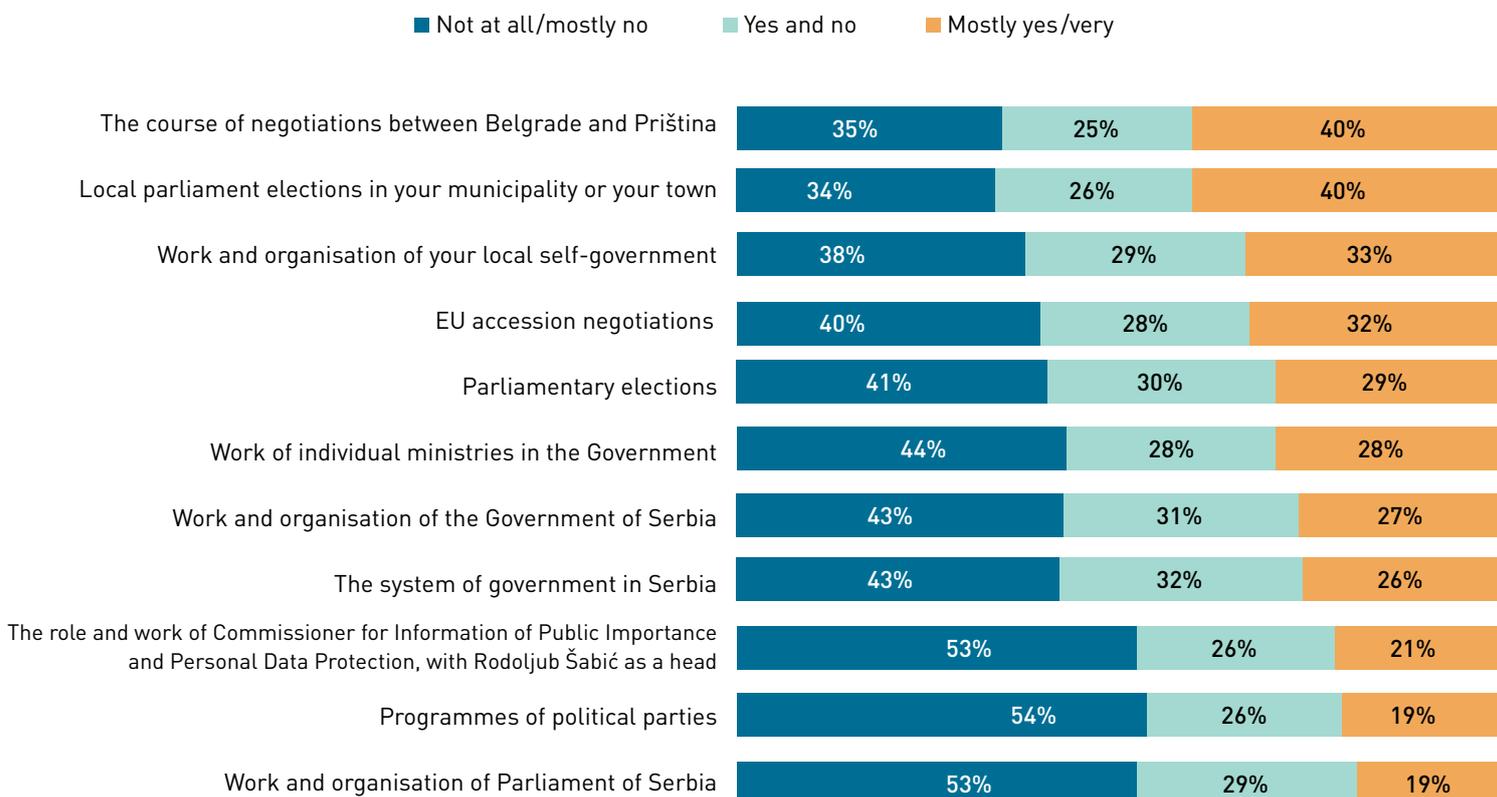
Figure 9: To what extent are you personally interested in politics?



On the other hand, the interest in particular topics related to politics and work of democratic institutions varied in years, but for last years it has in average mildly increased, compared to 2013 and 2014.

This year, the citizens have expressed the greatest interest for the negotiations between Belgrade and Priština (the topic was introduced this year), however, only 40% of citizens expressed interest for this topic. (Figure 8). On the other hand, as it has been observed previously, a significantly higher percentage estimated that they have just a little or no knowledge on this topic, 61%. (Figure 10)

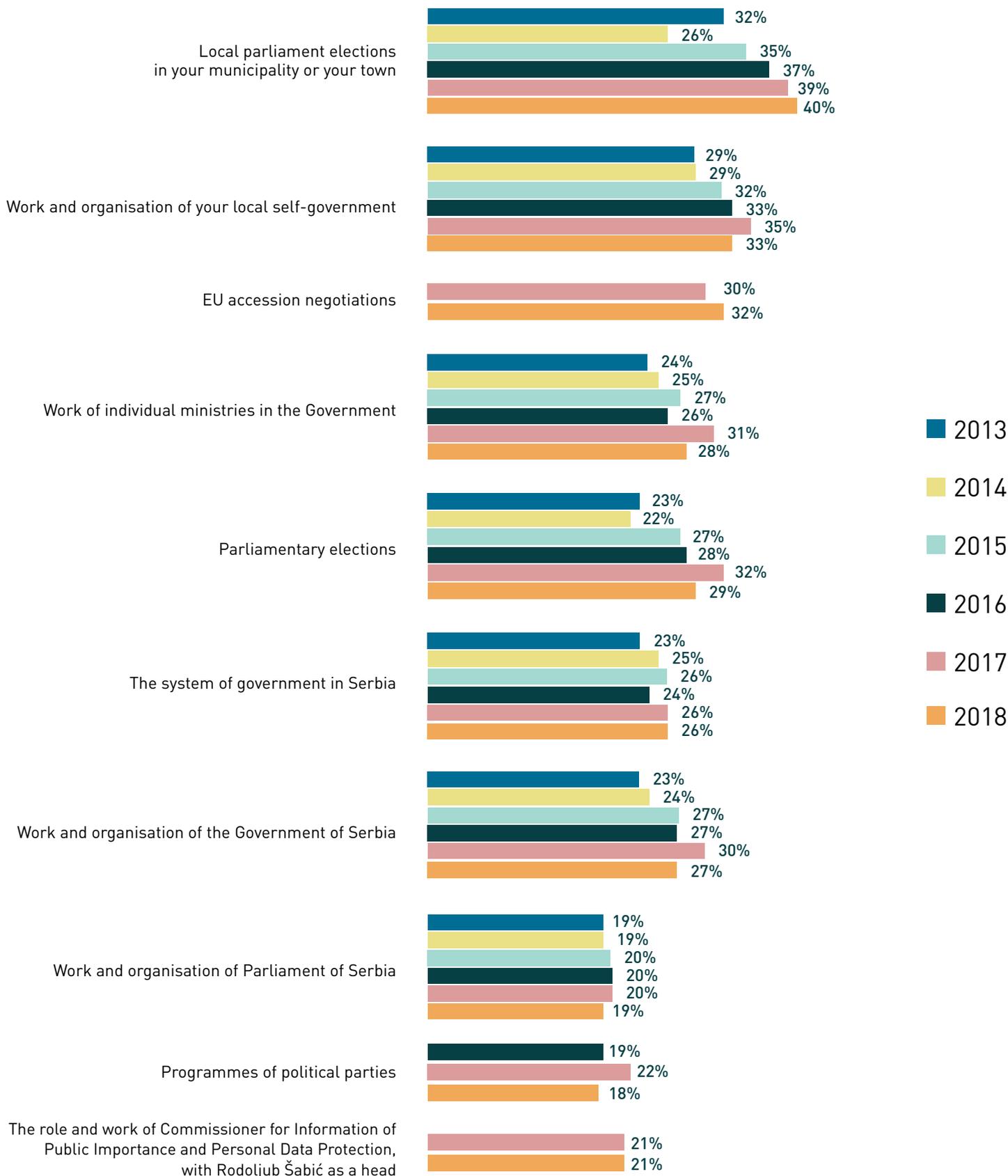
Figure 10: To what extent are you personally interested in these topics...



¹ Source 2004, 2006, 2009: Ipsos public opinion polls for International Republican Institute (IRI)

Notwithstanding the variations of interest in certain topics, among the topics systematically monitored, the citizens have demonstrated stable interest for topics related to municipality/their local community: (municipal council elections in their community, work of local self-government), and they are the least interested in work and organisation of the Parliament of Serbia and programs of political parties. (Figure 11)

Figure 11: To what extent are you personally interested in the following topics?
% TO A CERTAIN EXTENT + VERY INTERESTED



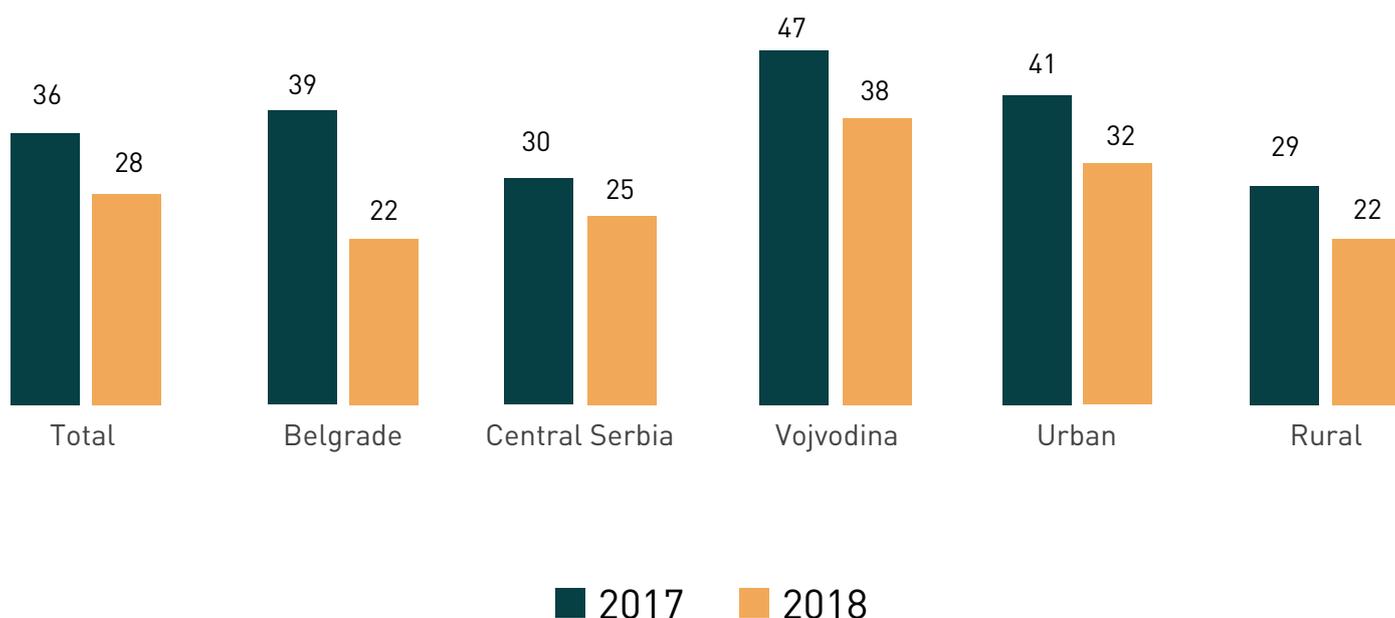
ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

A small percentage of citizens believe that someone in their community will take care of their problems, though the citizens themselves are not very willing to engage in initiatives for problem-solving.

This year, only 28% of citizens believe that someone in their community will tackle problem-solving, and that percentage decreased noticeably in comparison to the previous year when 36% of citizens believed that. Compared to the last year, the decline was especially noticeable in Belgrade, where the percentage decreased from 39% to 22%. (Figure 12).

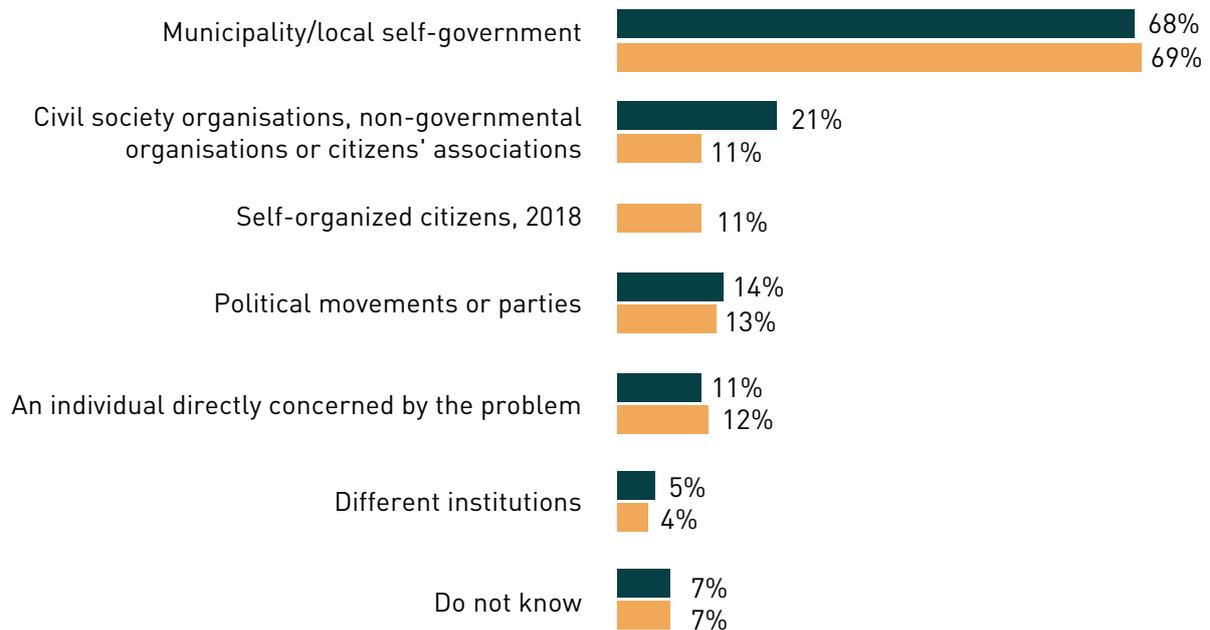
Figure 12: Is there someone in your community who works on solving citizens' problems?

% ANSWERS "THERE IS"



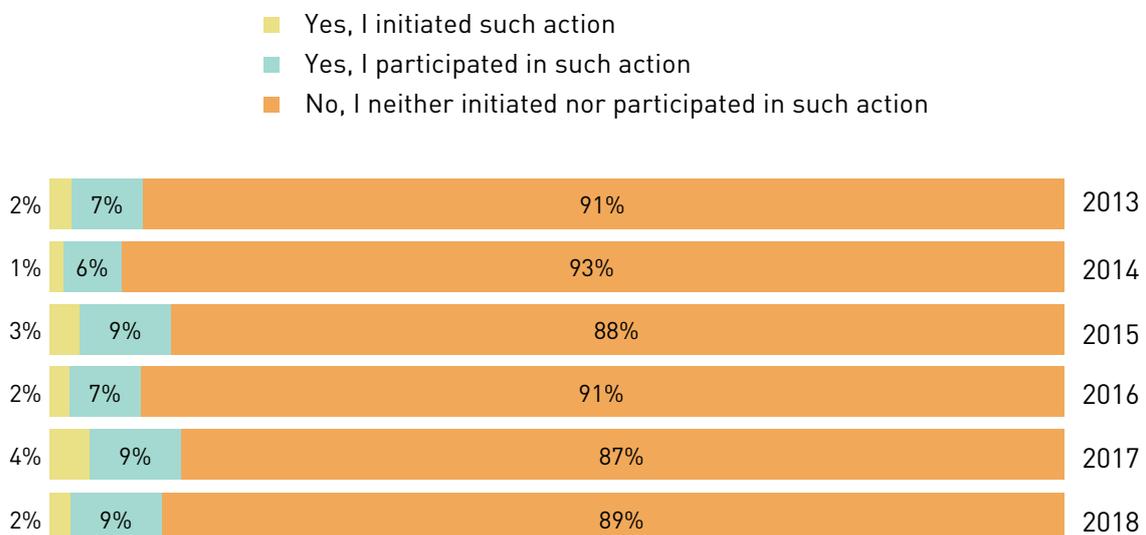
Among the citizens who think that someone in their community works on solving the problems of citizens, this year also the majority of them (69%) declared that it is local self-government, while one in five referred to civic organisations and self-organised citizens. Since the option "self-organised citizens" was introduced this year, the percentage of those who referred to civic organisations and citizens' associations was divided between civic organisations (CSOs or NGOs) and self-organised citizens. (Figure 13)

Figure 13: Who in your community works on problem-solving? (Selection from the predefined list)
 (Basis: those who said that there was someone in their community who worked on solving citizens' problems, 36% in 2017, 28% in 2018)



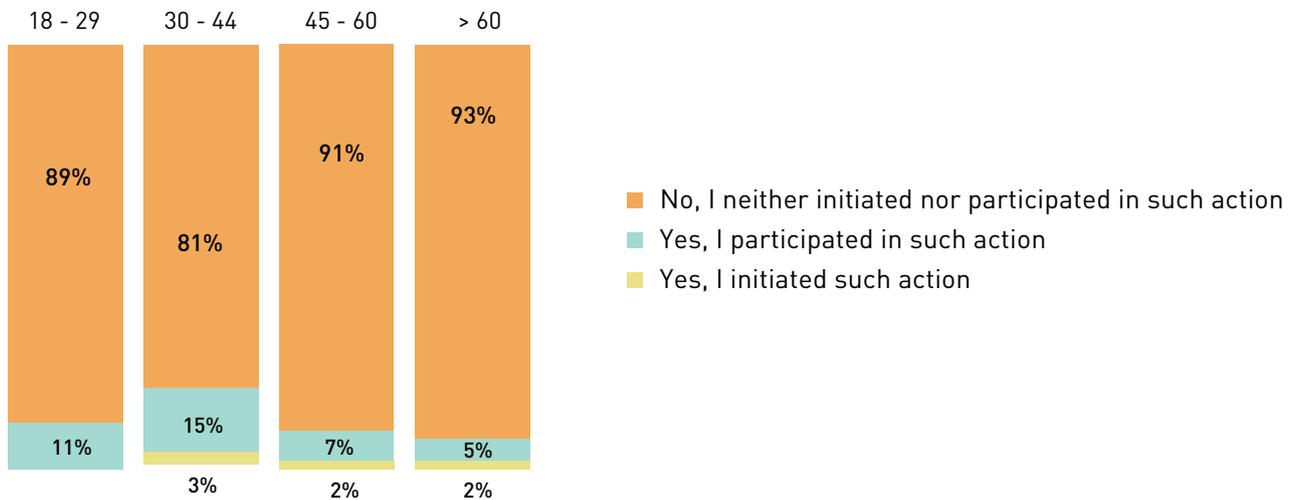
However, the citizens themselves are not very willing to engage in initiatives for problem-solving in their local communities. The small percentage of citizens participated in actions related to problem-solving and decision-making in their local community. **In years, the percentage of participants varies between 7% and 13%, without systematic changes.** This year, 11% of citizens declared that they had individually taken some action or actively participated in any kind of action or initiative related to solving some problem **in the community** (Figure 14)

Figure 14: In last year, have you either initiated or actively participated in action or initiative pertaining to solving some problems in your local community?



The majority of citizens who participate in actions belong to the age group of 30-44 years-of-age. (Figure 15)

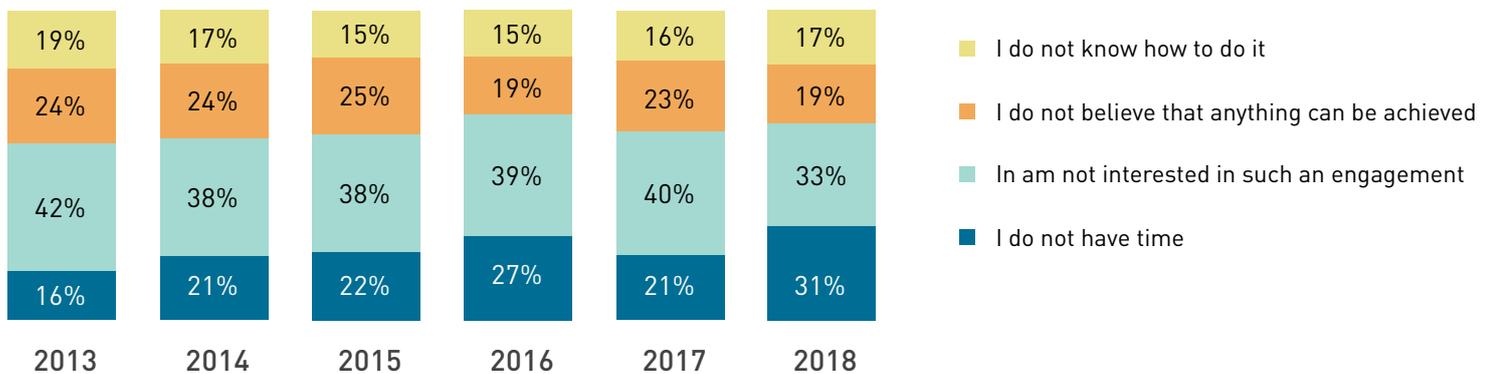
Figure 15: In last year, have you either initiated or actively participated in action or initiative pertaining to solving some problems in your local community?



Compared to previous years, this year, as the reason for non-participation, a **smaller percentage of citizens referred to the lack of** interest for this type of engagement as a reason, and more of them mentioned the lack of time. As in previous years, a **considerably higher percentage declared that they do not participate since they do not know how to do it.** (Figure 16)

Figure 16: What is the main reason you did not participate in or initiate an action?

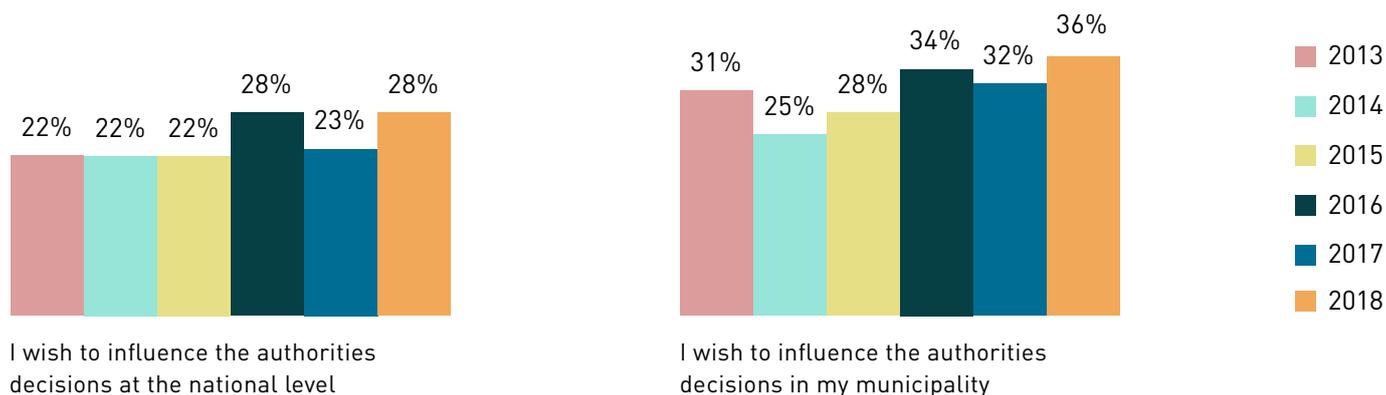
Answers of the citizens who did not participate in any action



A relatively small percentage of citizens expressed any wish to influence the decision-making of the municipal authorities in their community, but in comparison to the percentage of participation in problem-solving, this percentage is significantly higher and demonstrated the upward trend. This year, a higher percentage of citizens, 36%, expressed their wish to influence the decisions of the authorities in their local community compared to previous years. (Figure 17)

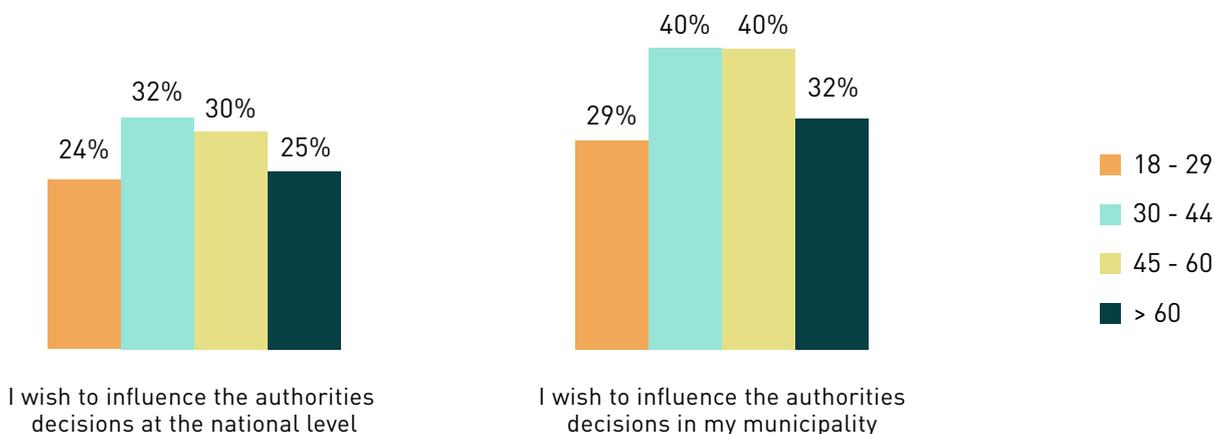
A smaller percentage of citizens expressed a wish to influence the decisions of the authorities at the national level, but this percentage grew moderately in the last three years, so after the last year decline, now it is again 28%. (Figure 17)

Figure 17: To what extent citizens wish to influence the authorities decisions
% AGREE (MOSTLY + COMPLETELY)



Middle-aged generation of citizens expressed more willingness to participate in the decisions of the authorities, and this difference is especially noticeable as regards the influence on the authorities' decisions in their municipality. (Figure 18)

Figure 18: To what extent citizens wish to influence the authorities decisions
% AGREE (MOSTLY + COMPLETELY)



On the other hand, compared to participation in the initiatives for solving problems in the local community, the higher percentage of citizens declared that they had participated in at least one specific action, when these included broader initiatives and actions related to politics and decision-making (discussion on politics, signing petitions, participation at public gathering, demonstrations, protests rallies, reporting an issue to the media or police, or other). However, this year the percentage of citizens who participated in at least one action dropped from 48% to 39%. (Table 1 and Figure 19)

However, if discussing politics with others is excluded from this, only 26% of citizens had participated in at least one action, which is reasonably less than the previous year. (Table 1)

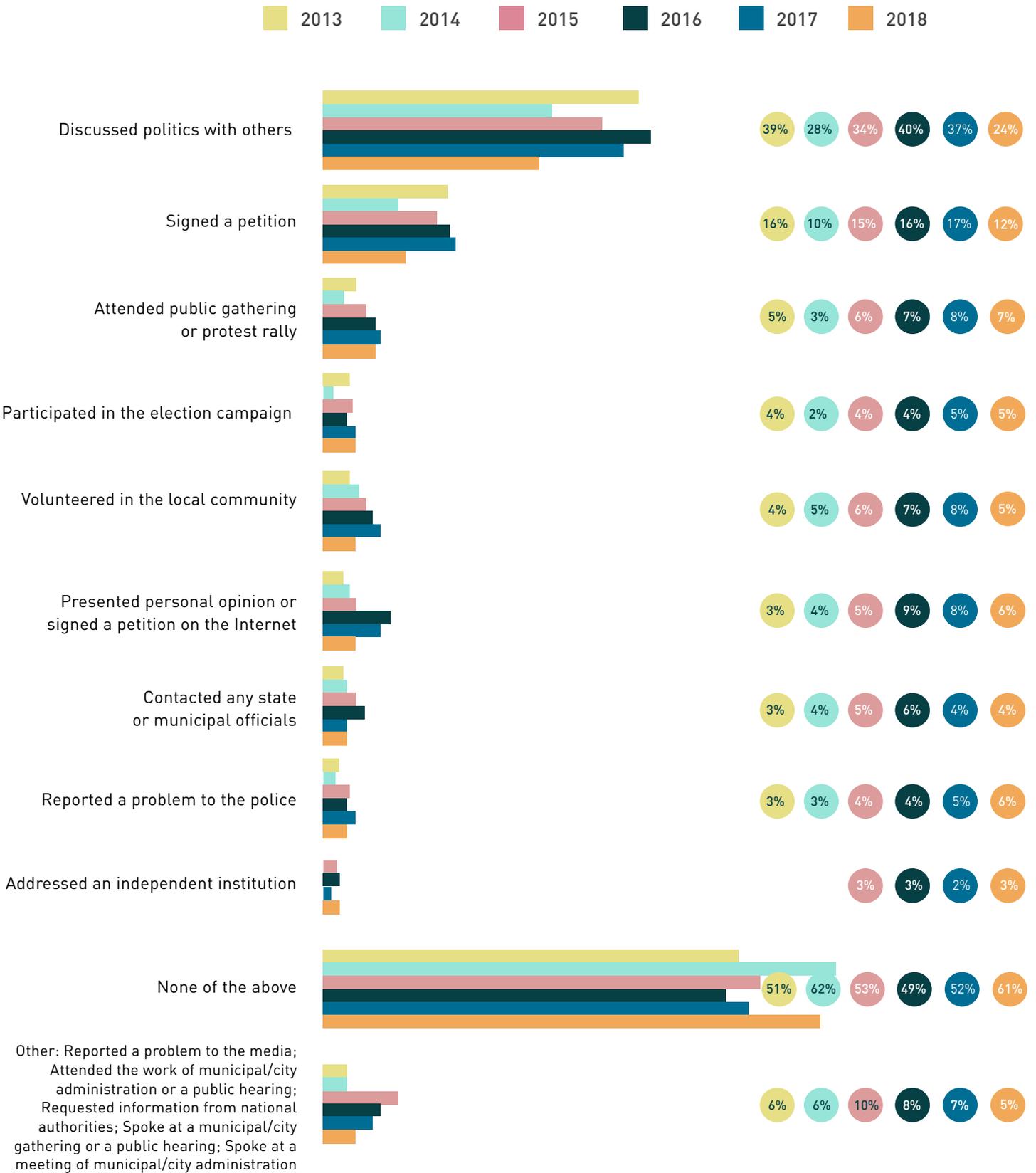
Table 1: PERCENTAGE OF CITIZENS WHO DECLARED THEY PARTICIPATED IN AT LEAST ONE ACTIVITY

Year	Without discussions on politics	With discussions on politics
2013	26%	49%
2014	21%	38%
2015	29%	41%
2016	29%	51%
2017	28%	48%
2018	26%	39%

Discussing politics with other people is an action with the highest participation of citizens. Compared to previous year, the percentage of citizens who declared they discussed politics dropped significantly (from 37% to 24%) and it is at the lowest level in the past six years, ever since we have been monitoring the citizens' participation in the democratic processes. (Figure 19)

The percentage of citizens who declared they had signed a petition noticeably dropped (apart from the activity of discussing politics, this is the activity with the highest participation); while in the previous three years the percentage of petition signing varied between 15% and 17%, it has dropped to 12% this year. (Figure 19)

Figure 19: In the last two-three years, did you engage in any of the following activities? % ENGAGED



For both actions related to problem-solving in the local community and actions that also include broader initiatives pertaining to politics and decision-making, the most engaged were citizens aged 30-44. If the discussions on politics are included, a little more than half of the citizens of this age group participated in at least one activity, and excluding the discussion on politics, this percentage was 44%. Young people aged 18-29 discuss politics less than other age groups, but they participate in other actions more than citizens aged 44+. (Table 2)

Table 2:
THE PERCENTAGE OF CITIZENS DIVIDED BY AGE GROUPS WHO DECLARED
THEY PARTICIPATED IN AT LEAST ONE ACTIVITY (2018)

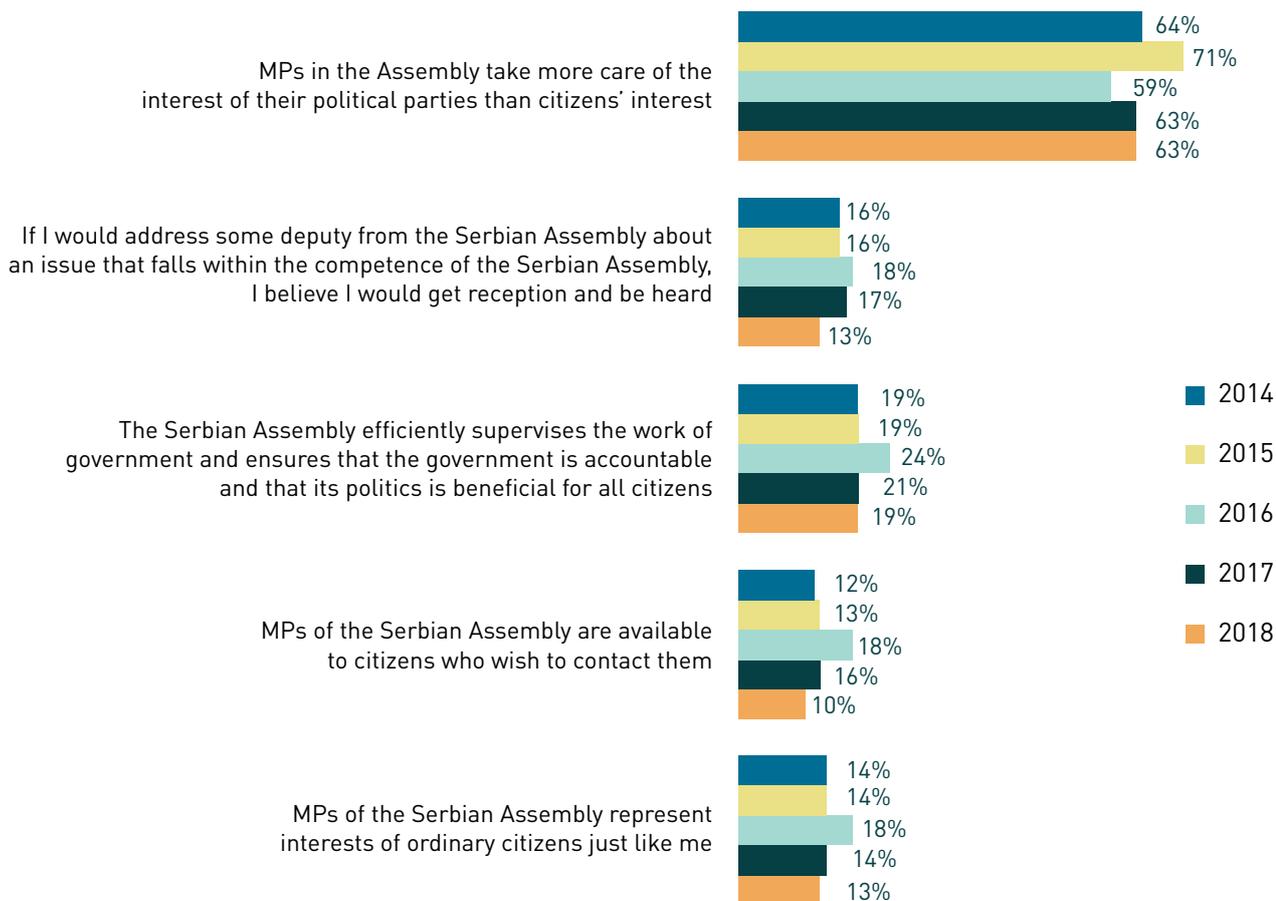
Year	Without discussions on politics	With discussions on politics
18 - 29	31%	37%
30 - 44	44%	52%
45 - 60	22%	37%
> 60	13%	28%

TRUST IN THE PARLIAMENT OF SERBIA

The trust and the confidence that MPs represent the interests of citizens in the Parliament is generally very low, and in the last two years, compared to 2016, this trust is, even more, decreasing (Figure 20)

- Only 13% of respondents think that MPs represent the interests of ordinary people in the Parliament of Serbia (vs. 18% in 2016)
- Only 19% think that the Parliament efficiently oversees the work of the Government ensuring that the Government pursues its policies in order to realise benefits for all citizens (vs. 24% in 2016)
- Only 10% think that MPs are available to the citizens if they wish to contact them (vs. 18% in 2016)

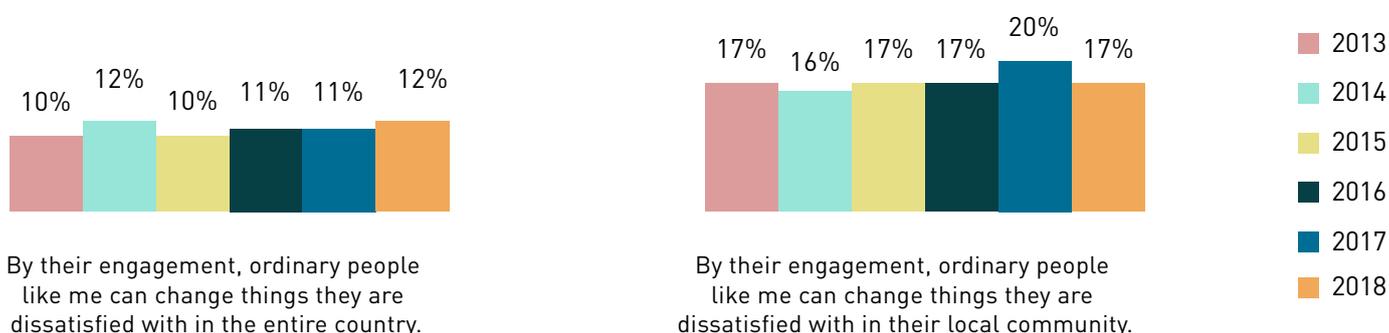
Figure 20: To what extent do you agree or do not agree with the following views of the Serbian Assembly in its present legislature?
% AGREE (Mostly + Completely)



CONFIDENCE IN THE EFFICIENCY OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND READINESS TO PARTICIPATE

Small percentage of citizens generally believe that ordinary people can influence the authorities' decisions by their engagement and change things they are dissatisfied with and that percentage is relatively stable during the six years of monitoring: 17% believe that by their engagement citizens may change things in their local community, and 12% believe they can change things at the level of the entire country. (Figure 21)

Figure 21: Confidence that ordinary people can bring about change by their engagement
% AGREE (MOSTLY + COMPLETELY)



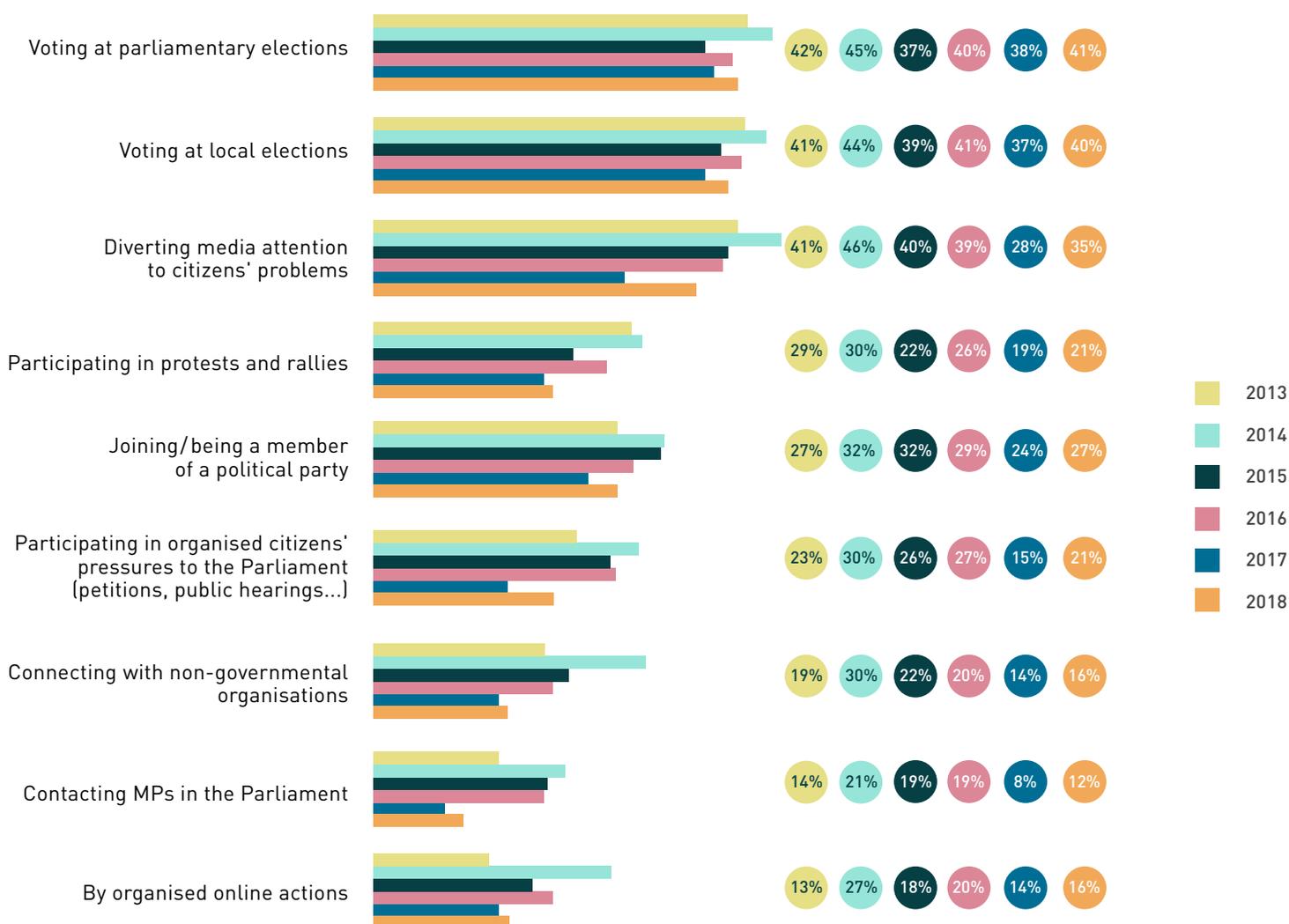
On the other hand, compared to the general confidence in the efficiency of the civic engagement, a bit higher percentage of citizens evaluate that through some actions they can influence the change, however for the last two years that confidence was fairly lower compared to previous years. (Figure 21)

Following the increase of the confidence in the efficiency of civic actions in 2014 compared to 2013, in 2014 the confidence in the efficiency of civic engagement exhibited a downward trend, with a noticeable decline in 2017. Compared to the previous year, the confidence mildly increased again this year, but for the majority of actions it is still lower than in previous years:

- A little more than one third (35%) believe that citizens can influence the changes by diverting media attention to citizens' problems
- Almost every fifth citizen believe that the change is possible through participation in demonstrations and civil protests, and nearly the same percentage think that change can be carried out by organised pressure to the Parliament (such as signing petitions and participation in public hearings)
- Only 16% believe that they can influence changes by connecting with non-governmental organisations and organised online actions, and 12% think it could be done by contacting MPs in the Parliament

Similarly to previous years, the citizens are most confident that they can change things in the country by voting at the elections, but less than half expressed that type of confidence: 41% at parliamentary and 40% at the local elections.

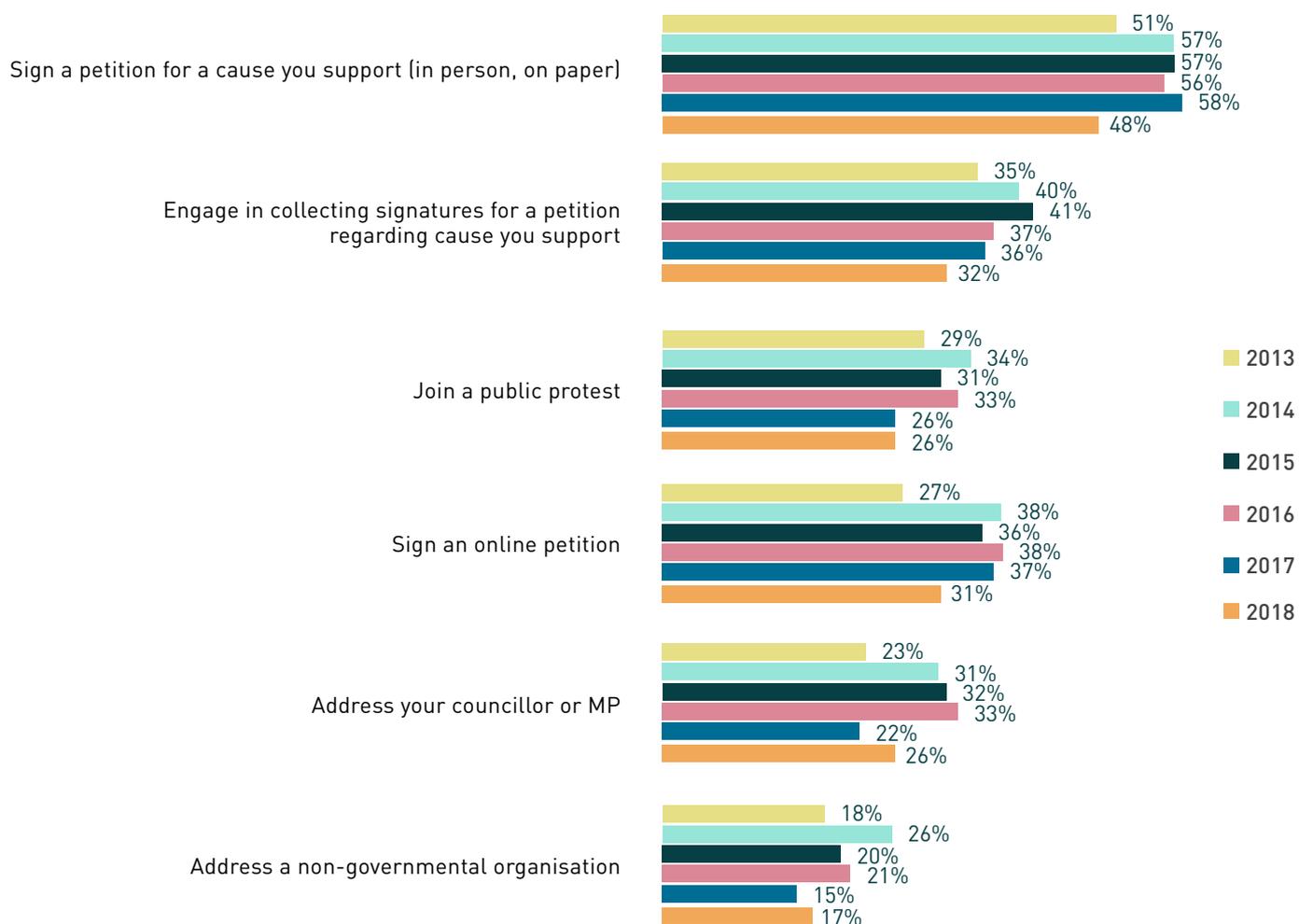
Figure 22: To what extent can you, with each of the following actions, contribute to the changes you believe are needed in our country?
% CAN INFLUENCE THE CHANGE (VERY MUCH + A LOT)



As in previous years, the citizens were readier to participate in initiatives aiming to change things, but they are not that confident when it comes to civic actions bringing about changes, however in the previous two years even this declarative readiness to participate decreased. (Figure 23)

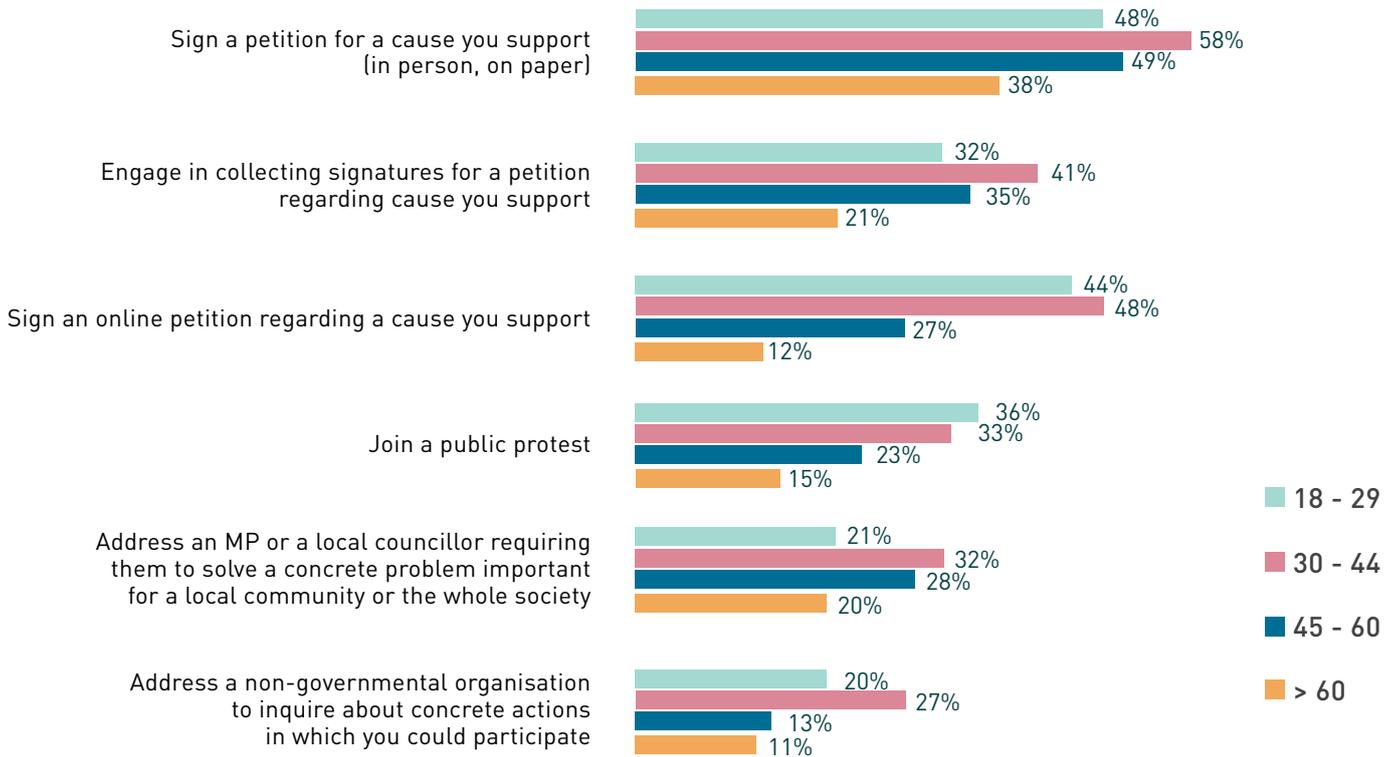
In the last two years, the citizens readiness to join public protests noticeably declined (compared to one third in the previous years to 26% in the previous two years), to address their councillor or MP (over the last years it was one third of respondents vs. 22% and 26% in 2017 and this year, respectively) and to come forward to a non-governmental organisation (from 20% and higher in the previous three years, dropped to 15% and 17% in previous two years). This year, a significant drop in citizens' readiness to participate in petition signing is noticeable. In previous years, over half of the citizens expressed their readiness to sign the petition, this year only 48% expressed their readiness to so do – significantly less than last year 58%. (Figure 23)

Figure 23: How ready are you personally to...?
% READY (MOSTLY + COMPLETELY)



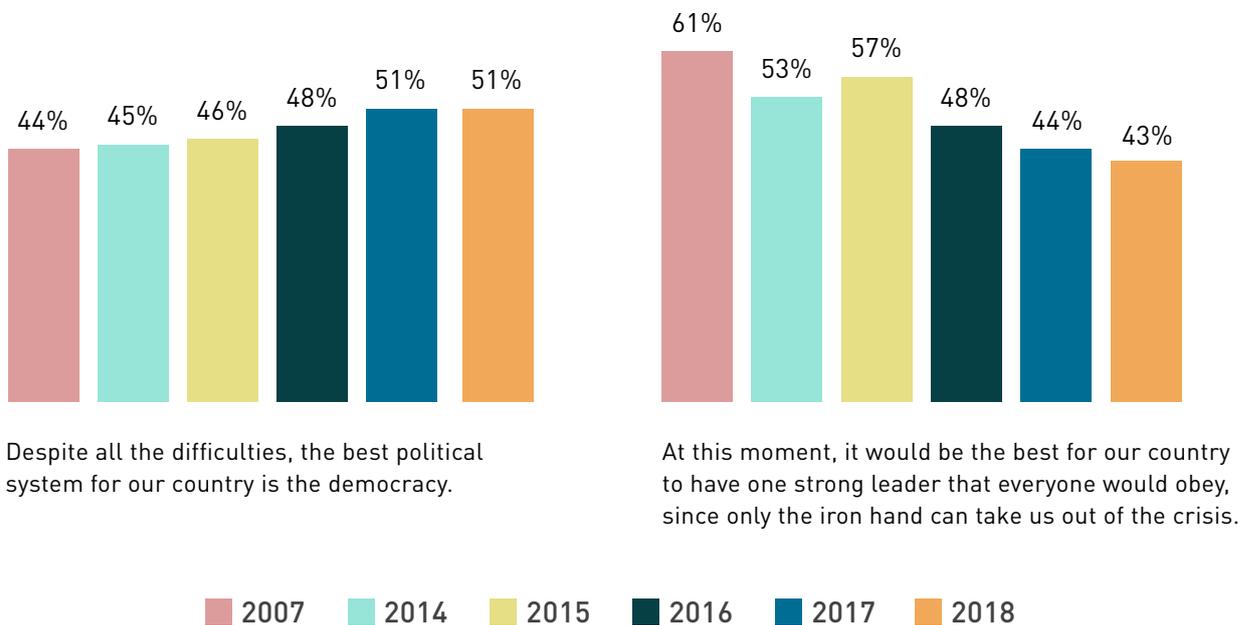
Generation aged 30-44 expressed great readiness to participate in the majority of actions, and equal readiness was expressed by the youngest generations as regards the online petition signing and participation in public protests (Figure 24)

Figure 24: How ready are you personally to...?
% READY (MOSTLY + COMPLETELY)



The confidence of citizens that changes can be influenced by personal engagement and their readiness to participate were both gradually decreasing, the same was true for the belief that only “firm hand” policy can get us out of the crisis, while the support for the democracy as the best political system in Serbia was rising.² In the previous year, the democracy as the best system was supported by more than half of citizens, and for the first time, a higher percentage of citizens supported the democracy compared to those who agreed with the belief that only the policy of “firm hand” can get us out of the crisis. This year there were no changes in that regard. (Figure 25).

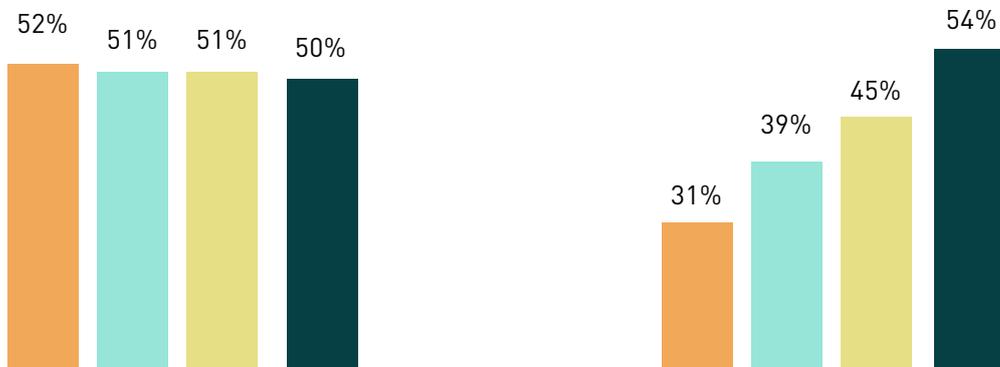
Figure 25: Support for the democracy or the “iron hand”? AGREE (Mostly + Completely)



² Source 2007: Public poll “Potential for Democracy”, 2007 Ipsos Strategic Marketing for Heinrich Bell and LDP

As regards the support for the democracy there are no generational differences, yet support to the politics of “firm hand” was noticeably increasing with age. As less than third of citizens aged 18- 29 believe that only “firm hand” can get us out of the crisis, more than half of citizens over 60 years-of-age believe in that. (Figure 26)

Figure 26: Support for the democracy or the “iron hand”? AGREE (Mostly + Completely)



Despite all the difficulties, the best political system for our country is the democracy.

At this moment, it would be the best for our country to have one strong leader that everyone would obey, since only the iron hand can take us out of the crisis.

18 - 29 30 - 44 45 - 60 > 60

Support to the democracy does not considerably vary due to educational level, but the attitudes towards the “firm hand” rule are noticeably different: the rule of “firm hand” is supported by more than half of citizens with the lowest education 56%, and only by 28% of citizens with high and higher education. (Figure 27)

Figure 27: Support for democracy and “firm hand”? AGREE (MOSTLY + COMPLETELY)



Despite the difficulties, democracy is the best political system for our country

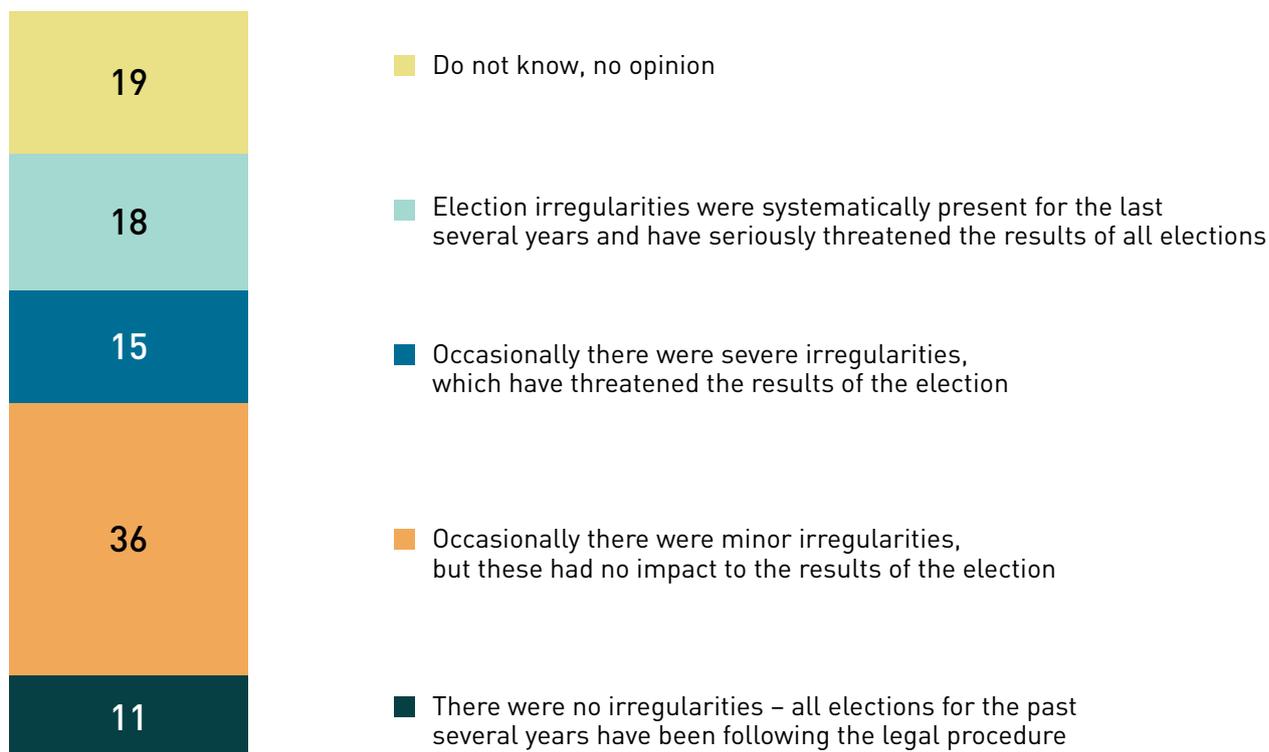
At the moment, it would be the best for our country to have a strong leader that everyone would obey, because only a firm hand can get us out of the crisis

Elementary and lower High school High school

ELECTIONS – PERCEPTION OF REGULARITY AND READINESS TO SUPPORT INITIATIVE FOR BETTER REGULATION OF ELECTION PROCESS

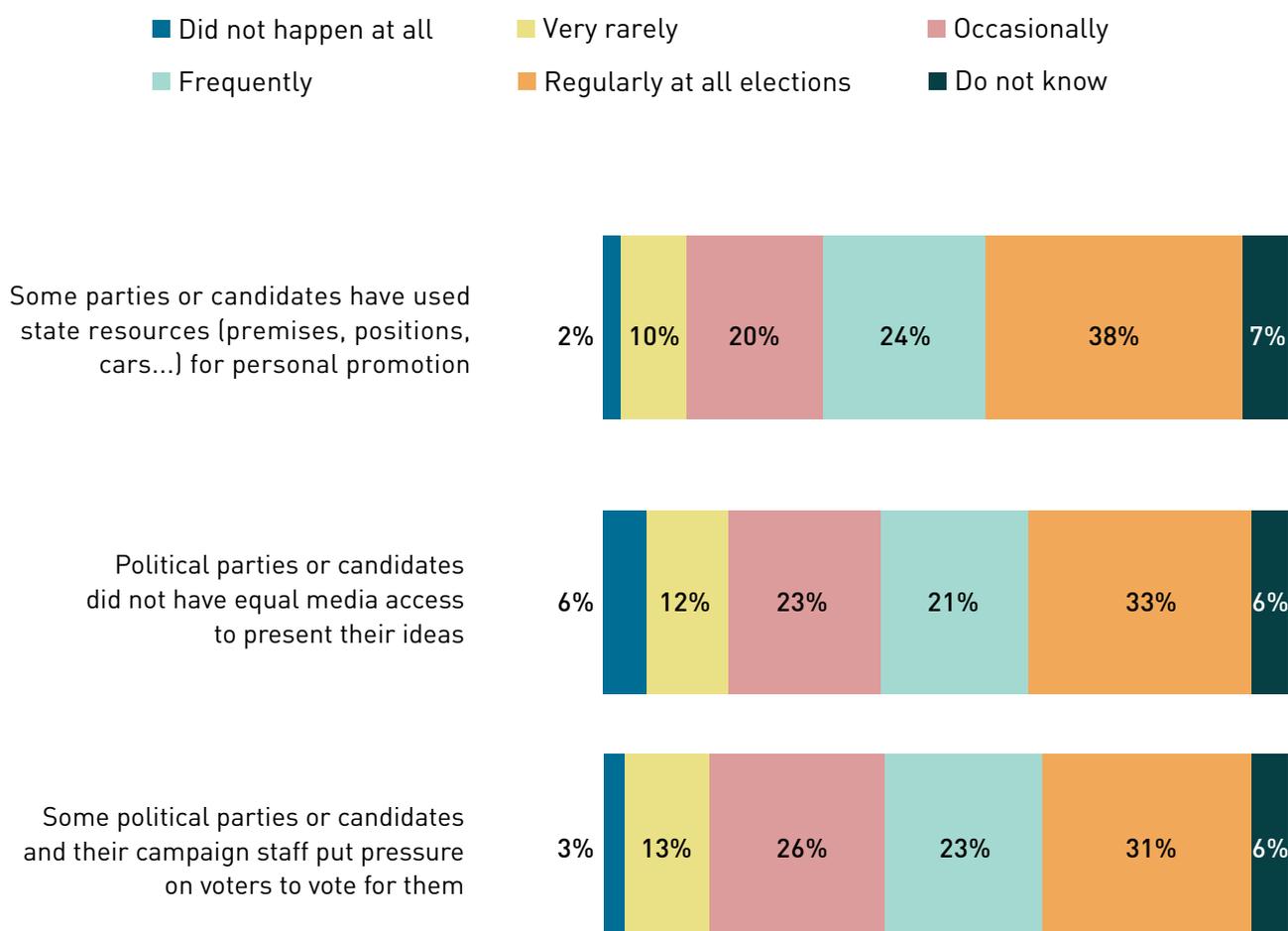
Over two thirds of citizens believe that for the past several years there were irregularities in the electoral procedures. One third of citizens believe that irregularities at the elections were so severe that they endangered the results of the elections. The other third also believe there were irregularities, but minor and without impact on the results of elections. Yet 11% of citizens believe there were no irregularities during election processes in the previous years (Figure 28)

Figure 28: Generally, in your opinion, to what extent were the election process irregularities present for the past several years and how significant was their impact on the results of the election?



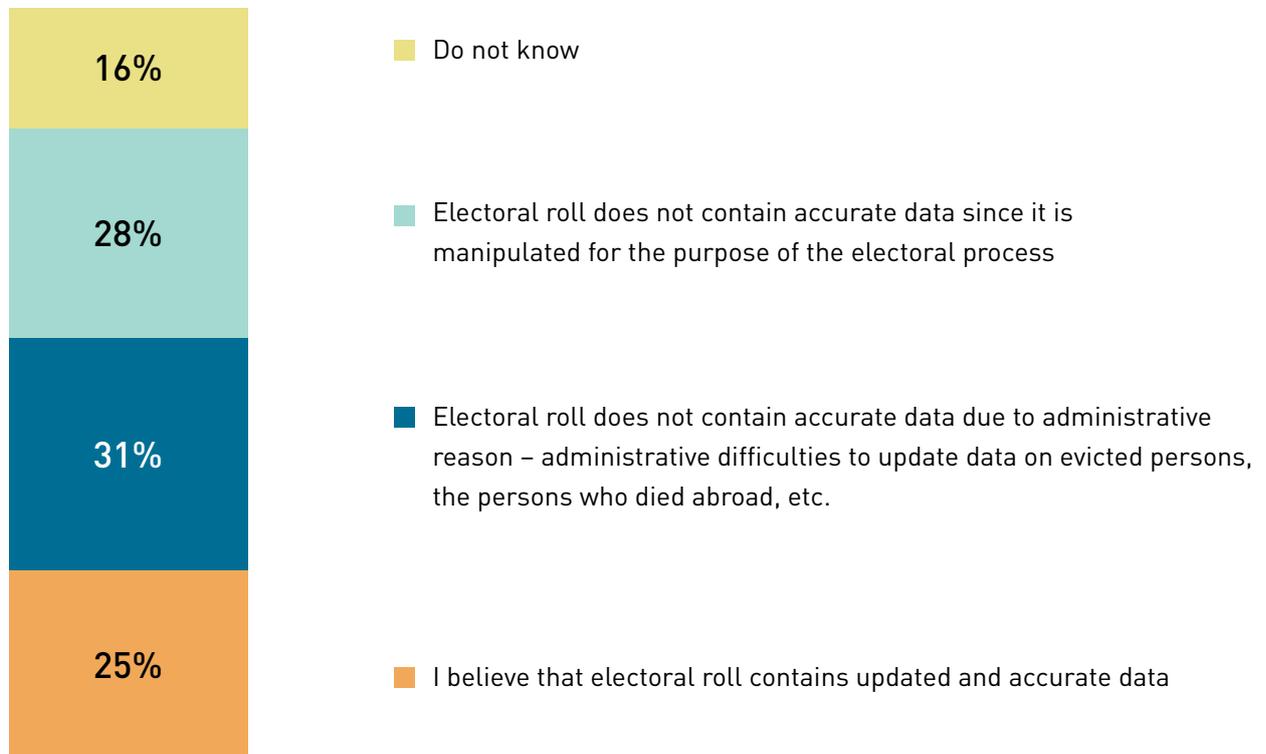
The majority of those who believe that there were at least minor irregularities believe that each mentioned irregularity was often present, or even at every election. Citizens believe that most irregularities occur concerning the misuse of state resources. (Figure 29)

Figure 29: Here we have some irregularities/irregularities most frequently referred. Would you please say for each statement, how often did that happen in the elections in the last several years, regardless of what you think



There is not enough confidence that the single electoral roll is up-to-date and accurate. More than half (59%) of citizens of Serbia believe that the electoral roll does not contain accurate data. Only every fourth citizen of Serbia is confident that the electoral roll is correct. (Figure 30)

Figure 30: As you know, the electoral roll is an official database of all citizens with a right to vote, which is updated by the public authorities. What do you think about the electoral roll?



The percentage of citizens who believe that it is necessary to have independent control of the electoral process increased significantly compared to 2017, and the percentage of those who did not have an opinion on the matter dropped. Citizens still do not agree on who should be primarily in charge of control. Percentage of those who believe that international organisations should implement independent control of elections increased. (Figure 31 and 32)

Figure 31: To what extent does our country need the independent control of election process regularly?

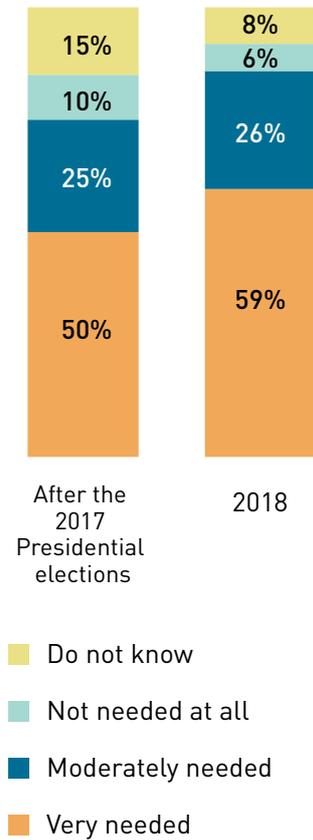
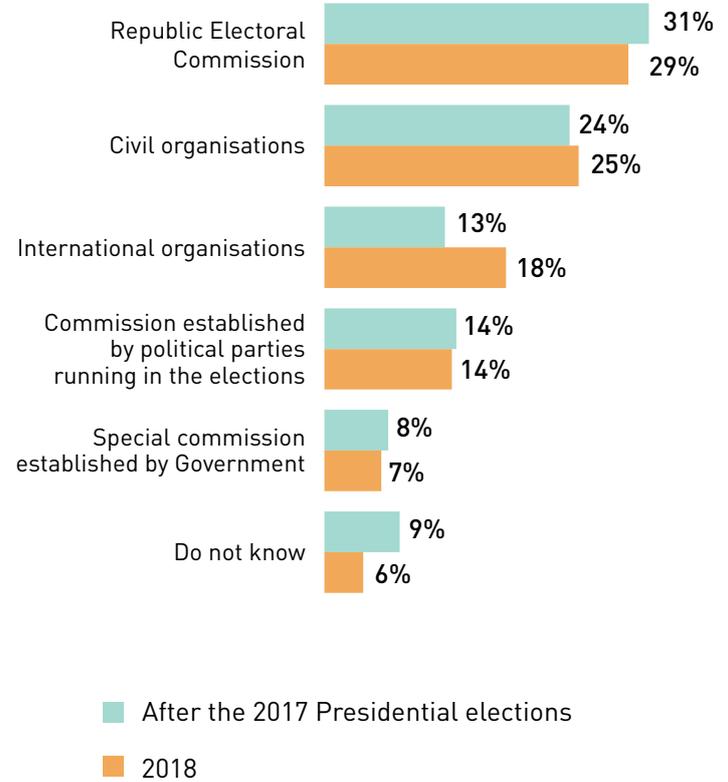
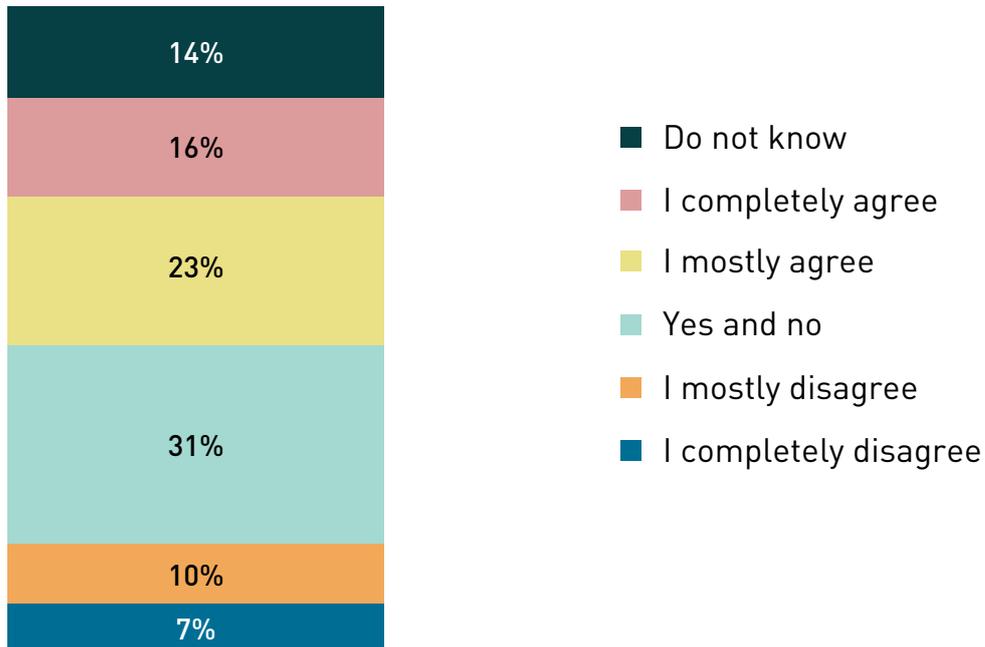


Figure 32: In your opinion, who should primarily implement such control of election regularity?



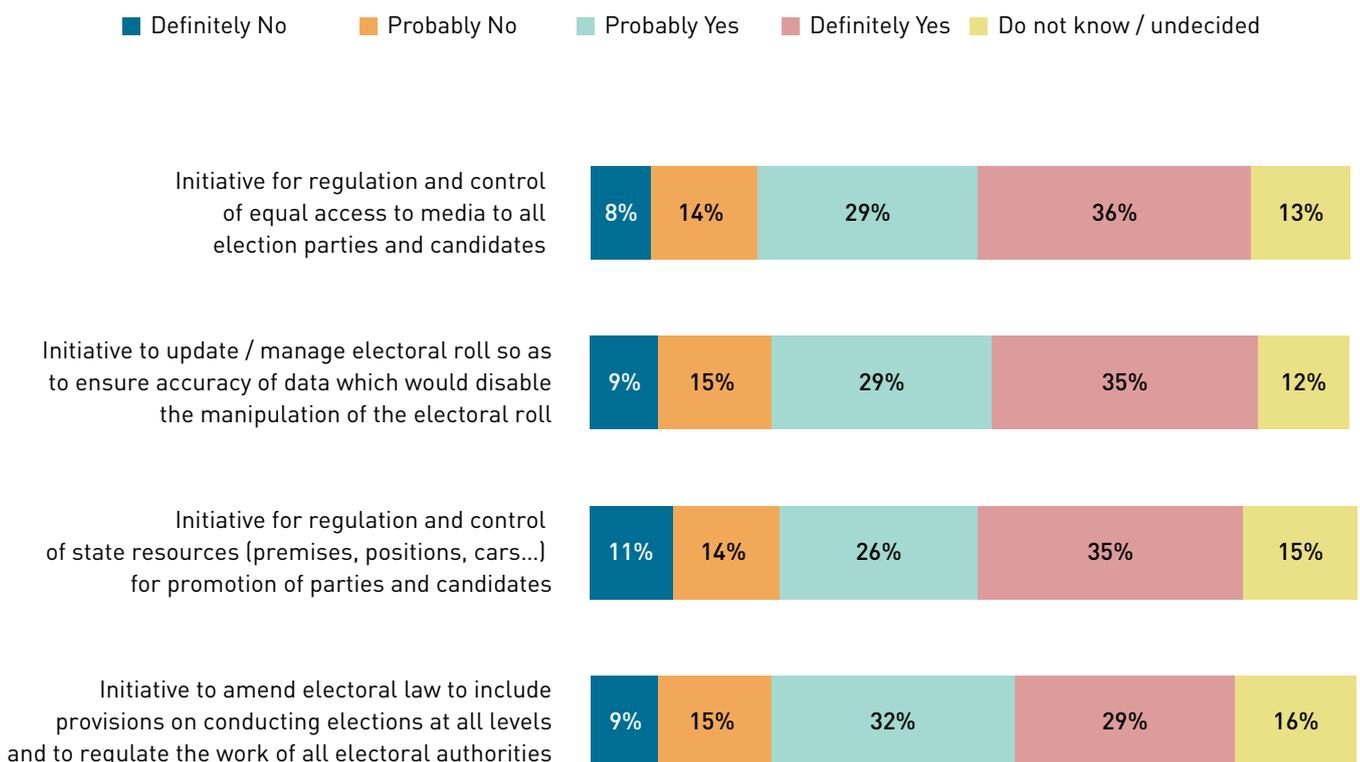
Only a little more than one third of citizens agree that citizens should independently start initiatives to improve regulation of the election process, but nearly one third was undecided, and only 17% do not agree. (Figure 33)

Figure 33: Some people believe that citizens should not leave it to the politicians when it comes to initiatives related to regulation of the election process in our country. Citizens should independently organise and start initiative for better regulation of the election process.



Majority of citizens would support each of the mentioned initiatives – significantly more compared to those who support the position that citizens should independently start the initiative for elections regulations. (Figure 34)

Figure 34: How likely would you personally support following initiatives?



CORRUPTION - PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRUPTION AND ITS INFLUENCE TO SOCIETY AND INDIVIDUALS LIVES

The corruption as the problem causing the greatest worry to the citizens was the major problem for 7% of citizens, and every fourth referred to corruption as one of the three most serious problems. (Figures 35 and 36)

Figure 35: In your opinion, what are the most important problems Serbia is facing at the moment, problems that worry you the most? FIRTS MENTIONED - SPONTANEOUS REFERENCE

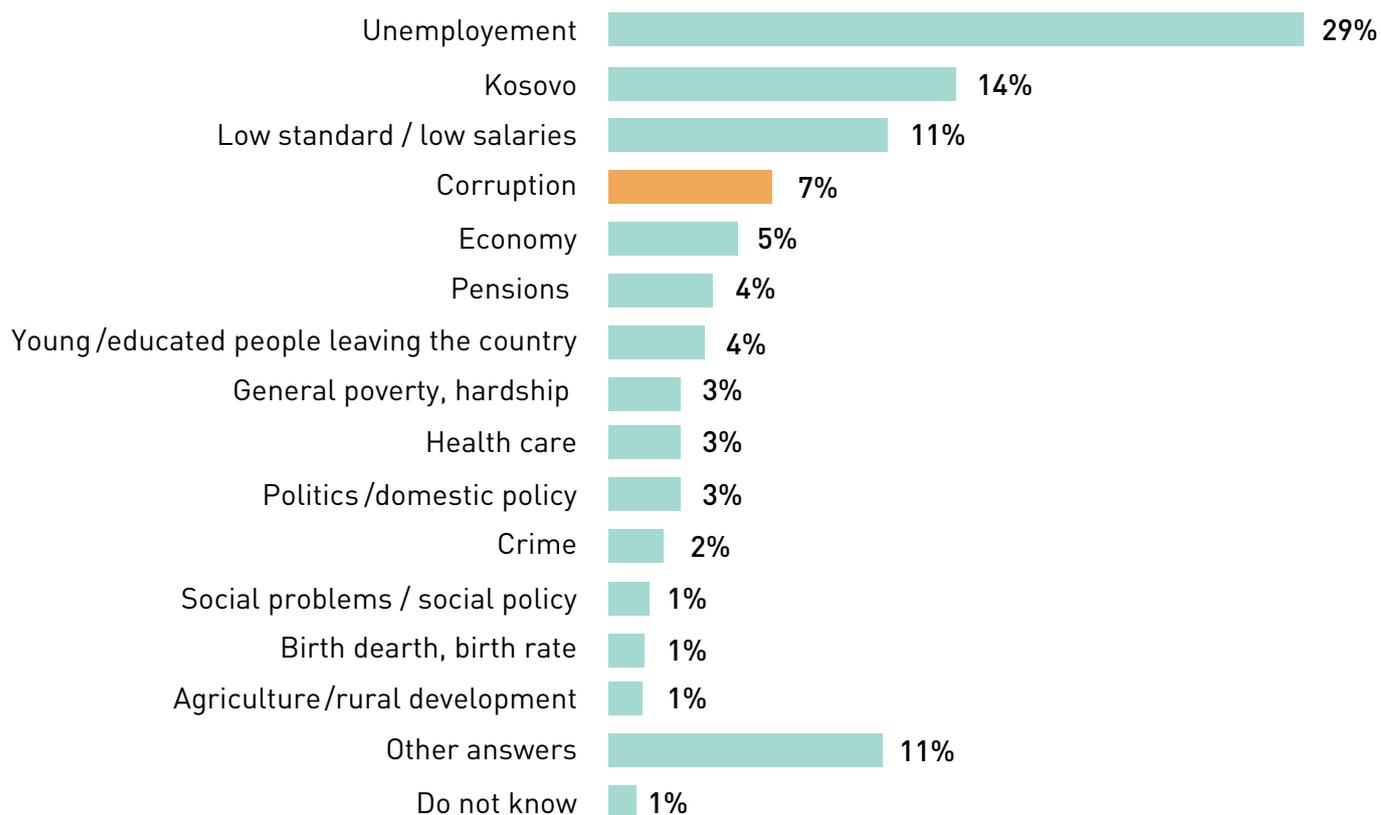
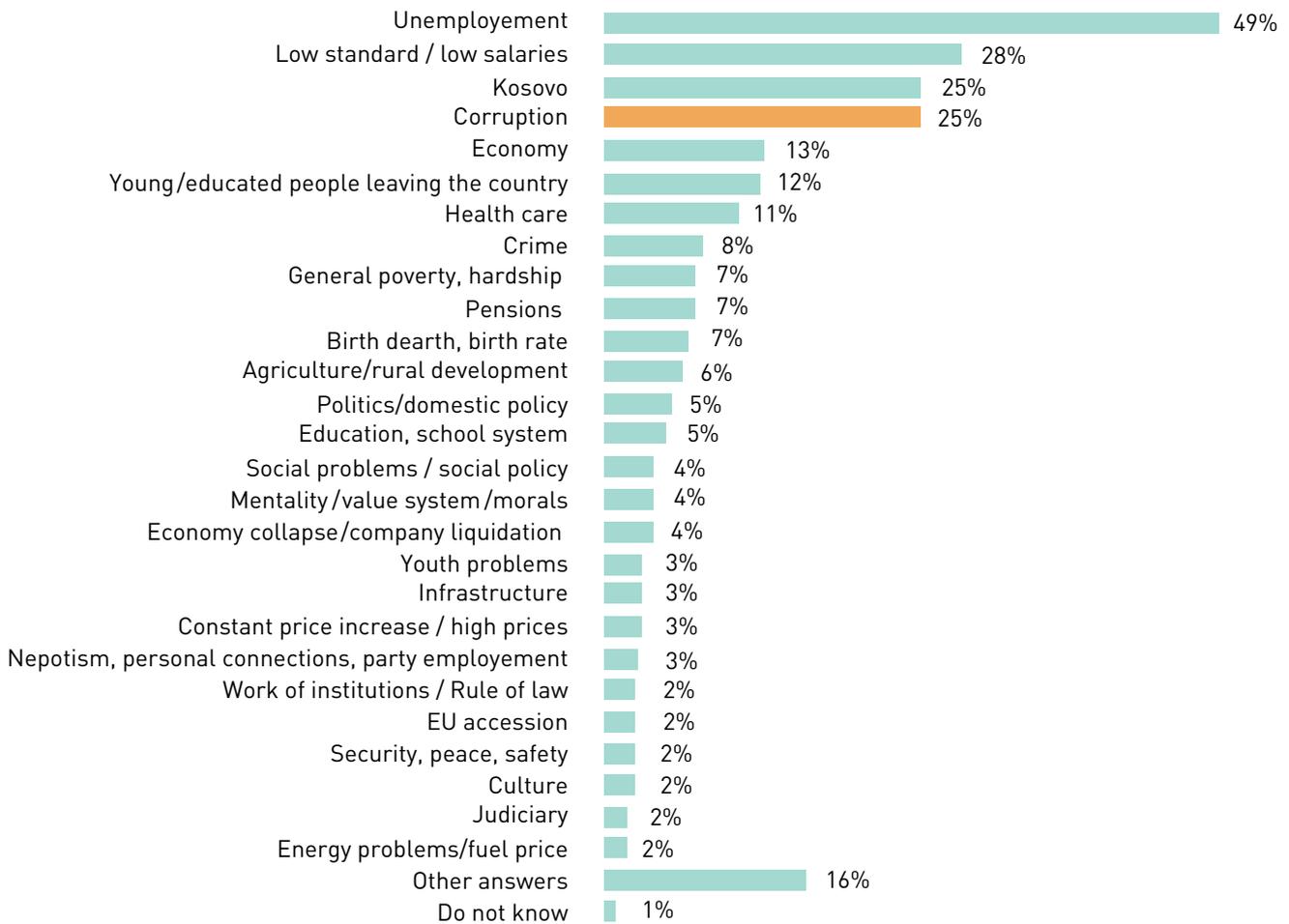
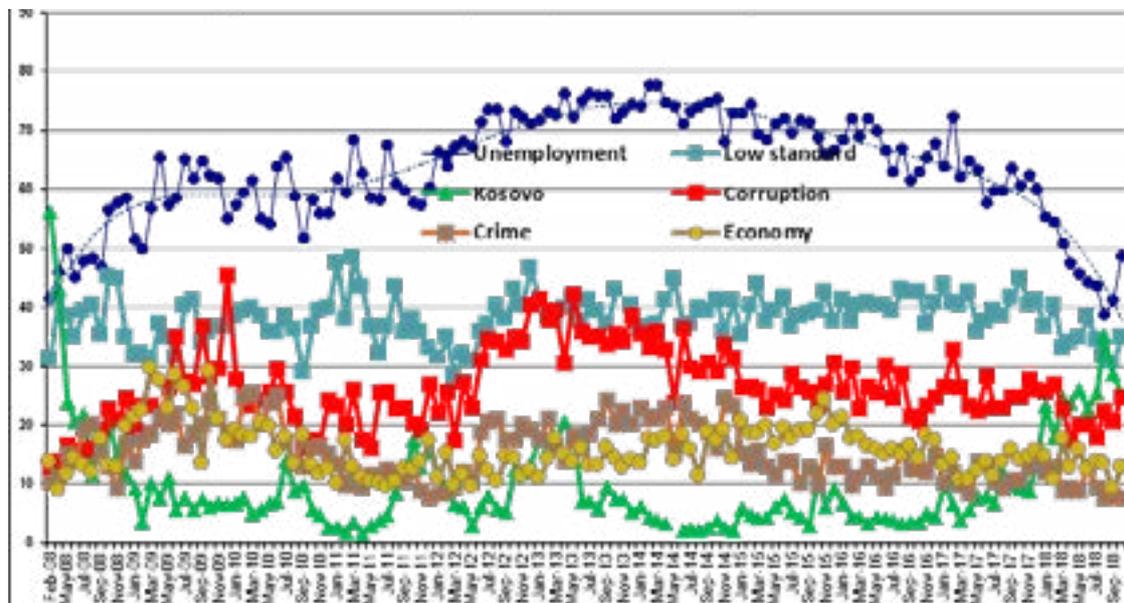


Figure 36: In your opinion, what are the most important problems Serbia is facing at the moment, problems that worry you the most?
THREE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS - SPONTANEOUS REFERENCE



In the last ten years, as the problem causing the greatest concern to the citizens, the corruption varied depending on the topics trending in public, but it was usually positioned just behind unemployment and low standard. During this year, the issue of Kosovo pushed corruption to the fourth place. (Figure 37)

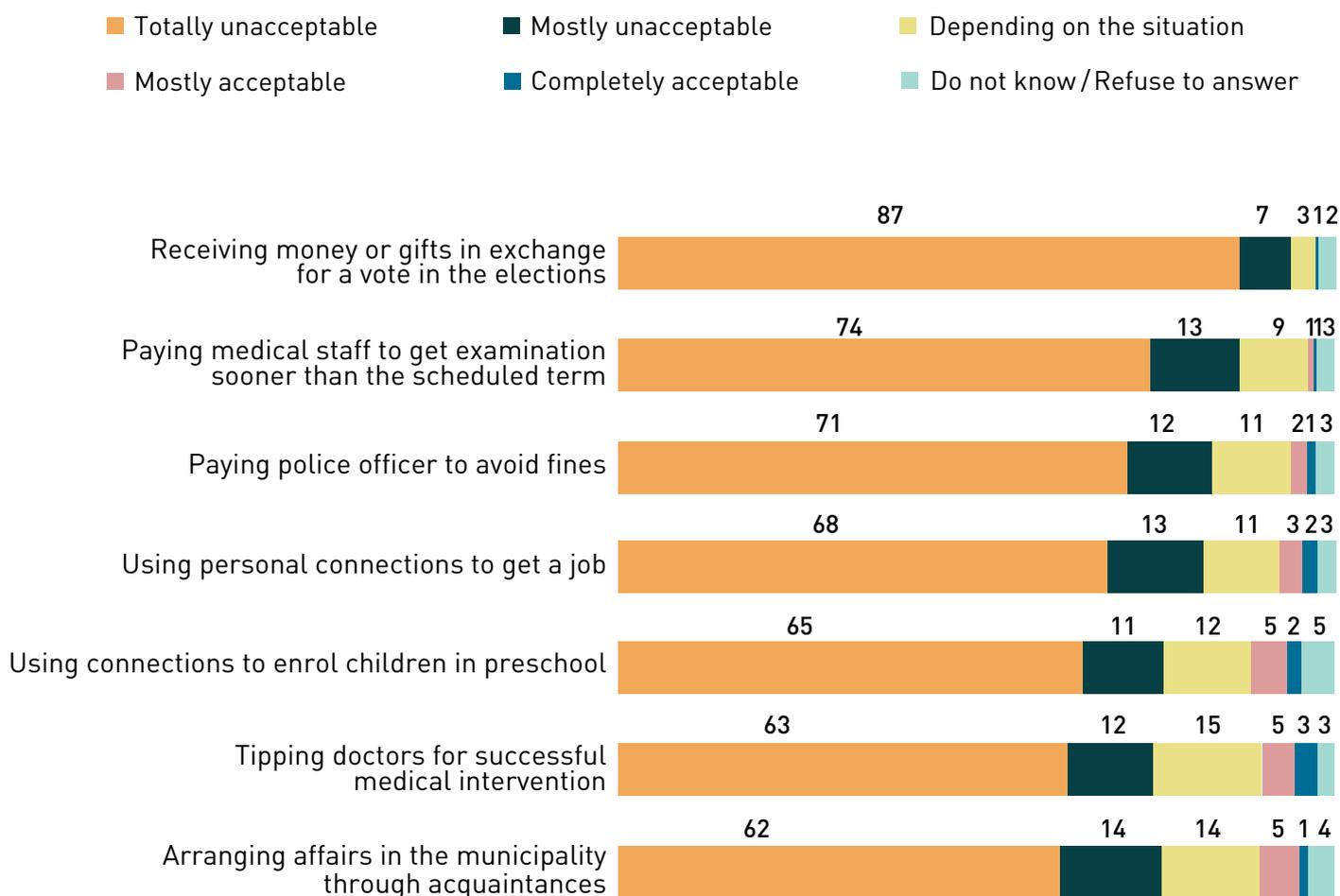


Estimating the scope of acceptability of various types of corruption to them, the majority of citizens declared that they find such behaviour unacceptable, but acceptability significantly varies depending on various purposes of corruptive behaviour. (Figure 38)

The highest percentage of citizens estimated that they find corruption unacceptable for the purpose of achieving election results: 87% estimated that they find receiving money or gifts in exchange for a vote in the elections is completely unacceptable and other 7% that they find it mostly unacceptable. Significantly lower percentage declared that they find unacceptable using personal connections to get things done (using personal connections to get a job, enrol children in preschool, arranging affairs in the local council) and tipping doctors for successful medical intervention.

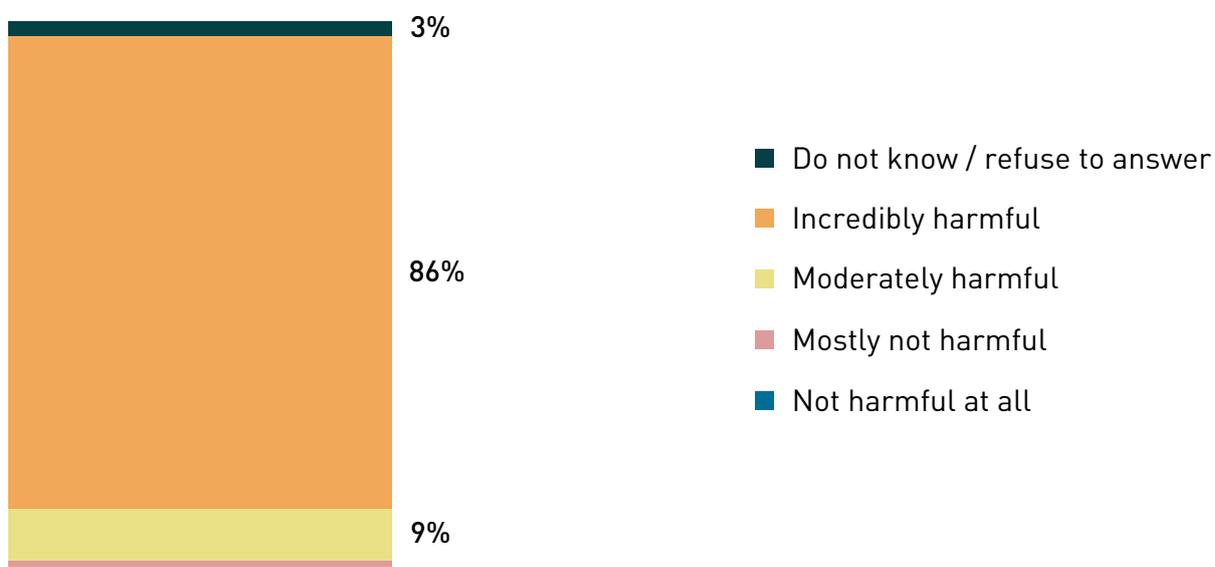
It is noticeable that a significantly higher percentage estimated that paying medical staff to get examination sooner than the scheduled term is unacceptable, unlike tipping doctors after the intervention. (Figure 38)

Figure 38: Which forms of behaviour are acceptable to you?



Citizens are unanimous that corruption is harmful to their society (95%), and a huge majority believe that it is incredibly harmful (86%). (Figure 39)

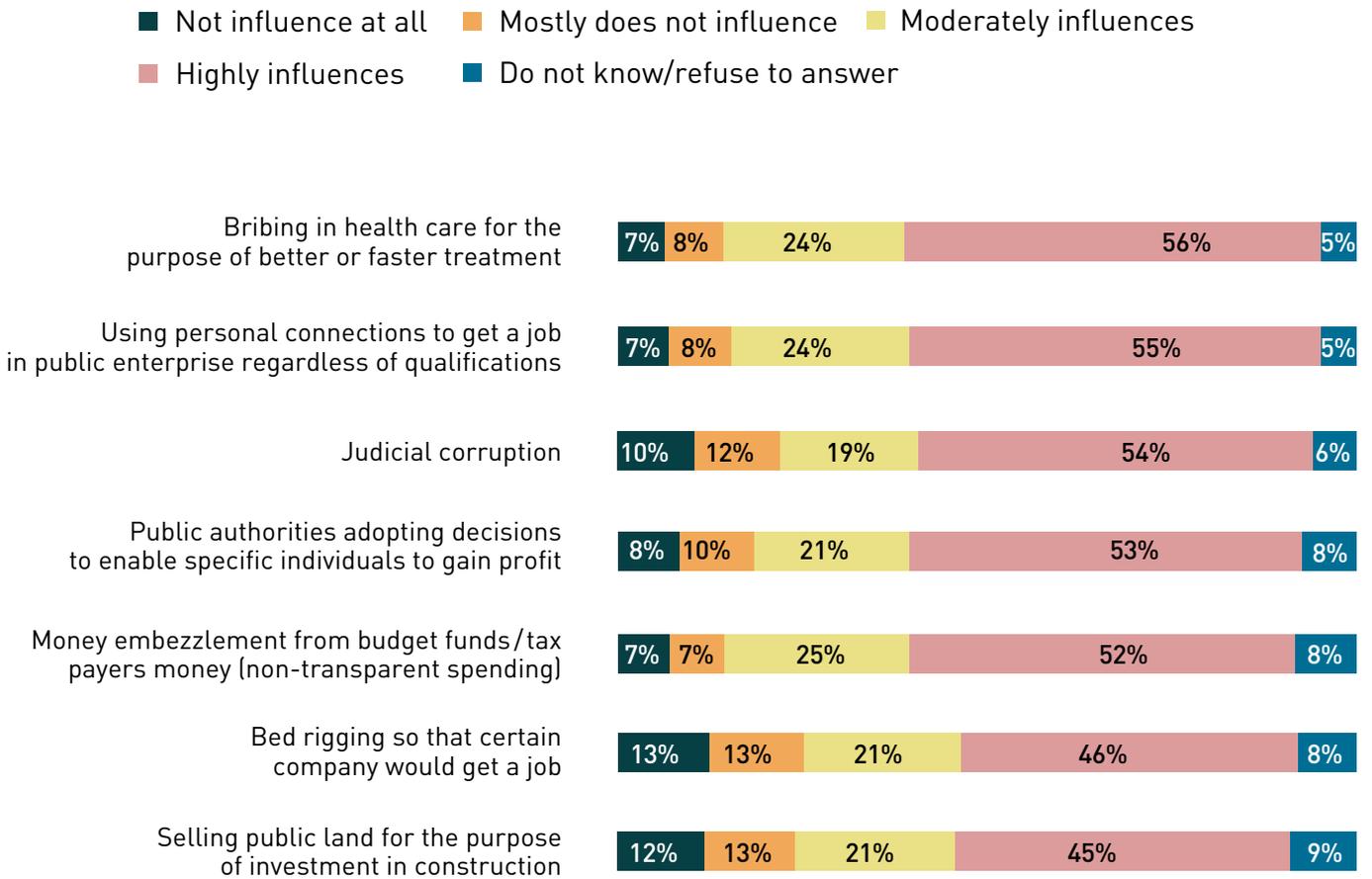
Figure 39: How harmful is the corruption for our society?



Significantly higher percentage estimated that corruption is very harmful to their society compared to the percentage of those who estimate that some forms of corruption are significantly affecting their individual lives.

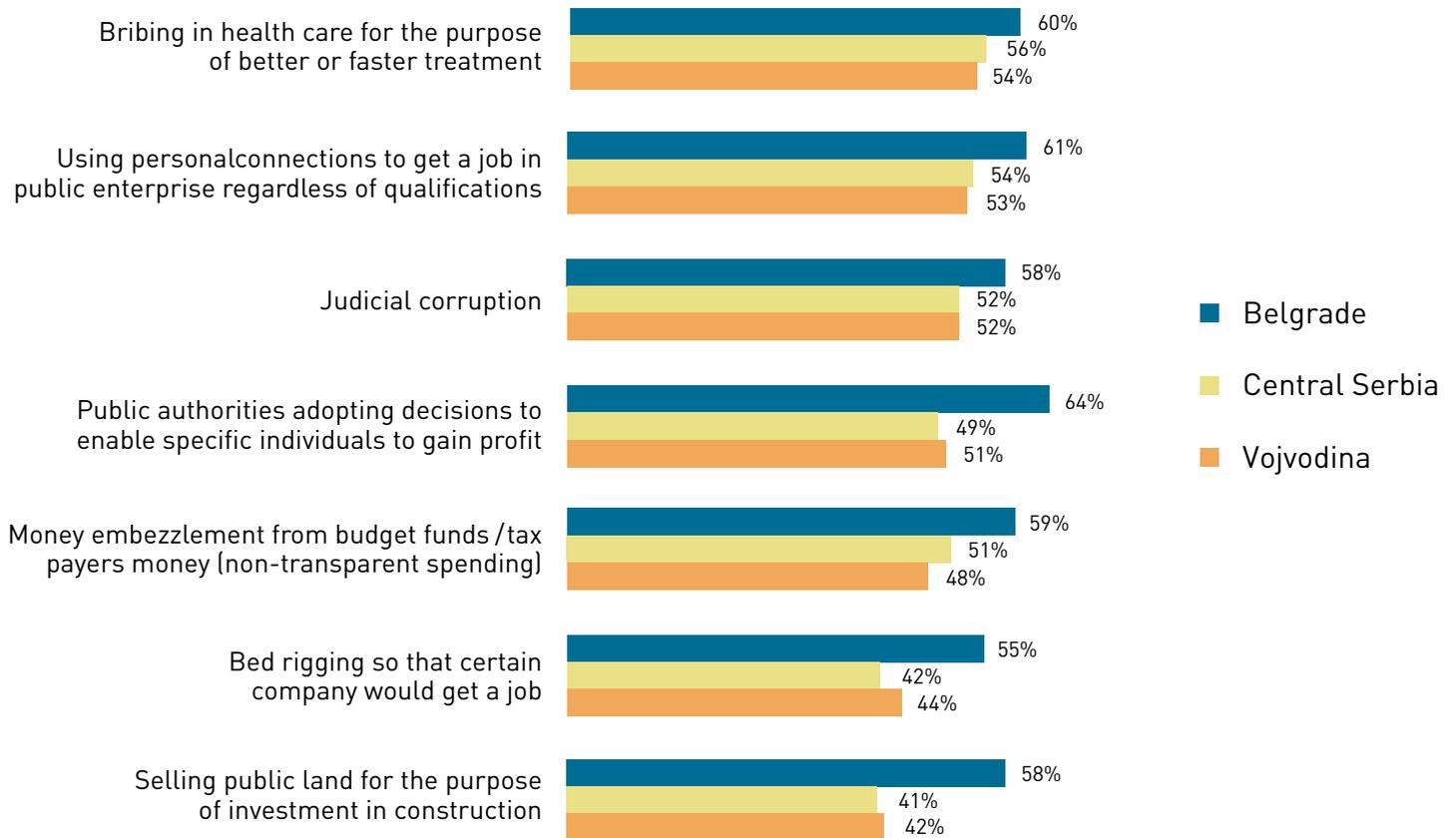
The largest percentage of citizens estimate that their lives are highly influenced by the forms of corruption more directly observed in their everyday life – bribing health care workers to get better or faster treatment (56%), using personal connections to get a job in public enterprise (55%) and judicial corruption (54%), and their lives are less affected by the mechanisms which they find less understandable - they are least affected by the bid rigging in public procurement (46%) and selling public land for the purpose of investment in construction (45%). (Figure 40)

Figure 40: To what extent the following forms of corruption influence your life?



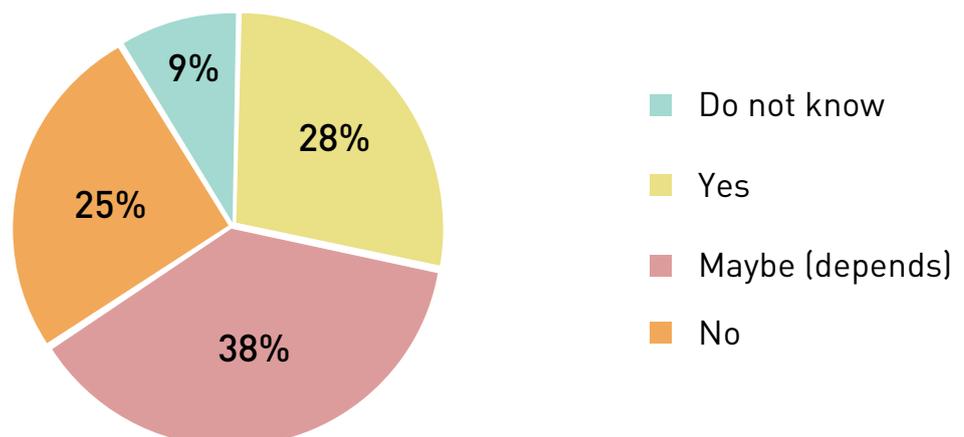
The population of the Belgrade region to the greatest extent estimate that referred corruption forms profoundly influence their lives. The differences are especially noticeable in the areas that are not openly related to everyday lives of citizens - public authorities adopting decisions to enable some individuals to gain profit, money embezzlement from budget funds, bid rigging so that certain company would get a job, selling public land for the purpose of investment in construction. (Figure 41)

Figure 41: To what extent the following forms of corruption influence your life?
% MAJOR INFLUENCE



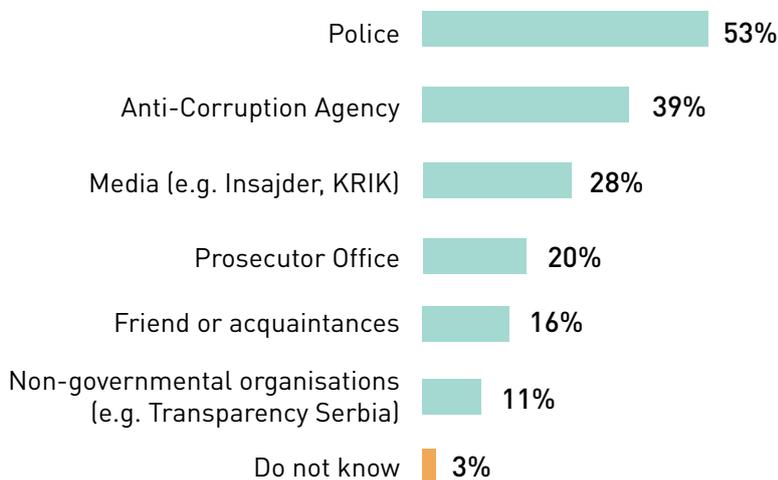
As regards their readiness to report the corruption case, citizens are most often undecided – 47% (38% say they might report it - depending on the circumstances, and 9% do not know what would they do). Every fourth citizen declared that they would not report corruption, and only slightly more than that (28%) would report corruption. (Figure 42)

Figure 42: Would you report a corruption case?



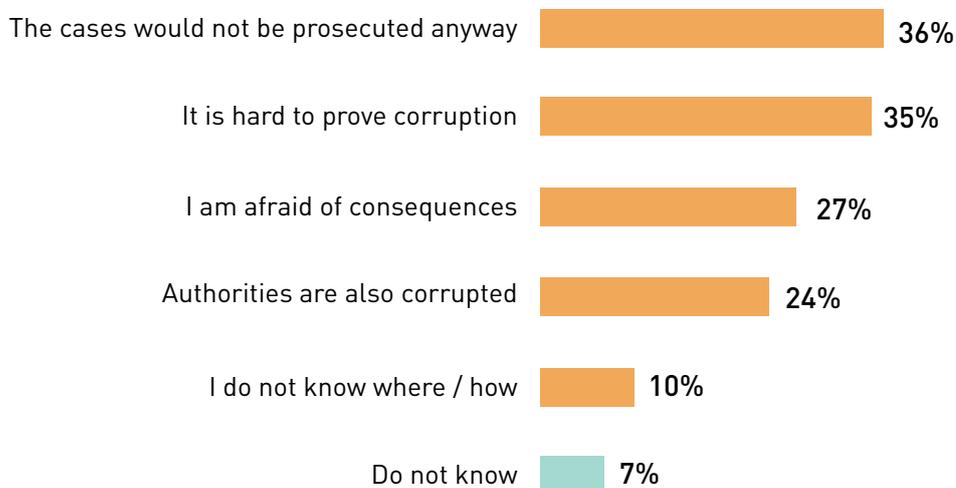
Those who would report corruption (28% of the population) would primarily report it to the police -53%, while 39% would report it to the Anti-Corruption Agency. Only 11% would report it to the non-governmental organisations (such as Transparency Serbia). (Figure 43)

Graph 43: Whom would you report the corruption? (multiple choice answer from the prefinal list)
Basis: those who would report the corruption case (28% of target population)



Those who would not report the corruption case (25% of the population) are divided by the explanations mentioned, but more frequent reasons mentioned are that these cases would not be prosecuted anyway (36%) and that it is hard to prove corruption (35%). Significant percentage mentioned they are afraid of consequences (27%) and that authorities are also corrupted (24%). Every tenth person said that they do not know how and where to report a corruption case.

Figure 44: Why would you avoid reporting corruption? (multiple choice answers from the predefined list)
Basis: those who would not report the corruption case (25% of target population)



Finally, the overwhelming majority of citizens declared they do not know any person from their environment who reported the case of corruption (94%). (Figure 45)

Figure 45: Do you know a person from your environment who has reported corruption ?

