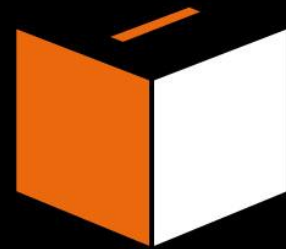


CRTA:

**PRELIMINARY
REPORT ON
OBSERVING THE
ELECTION DAY**

APRIL 3, 2022



ELECTIONS: 2022

CRTA: Preliminary report on the Election Day

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PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The election of members of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia, the presidential election, and local elections in 13 local self-government units, including Belgrade, were held simultaneously on April 3, 2022. The parliamentary and presidential elections were organized with the Republic of Serbia as one constituency. The parliamentary and local elections were conducted using a proportional electoral system, and parliamentary mandates are distributed by the system of the highest quotient between candidate lists that have crossed the electoral threshold of 3 percent of all valid votes. The presidential elections were conducted using the majority electoral system, through direct voting for presidential candidates.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić called early parliamentary elections on February 15th. On the same day, the President of the National Assembly, Ivica Dačić, called the local elections, and then the regular presidential elections on March 2.

6,502,307 citizens had the right to vote in the parliamentary and presidential elections, which were held at 8,267 polling stations.¹ In Belgrade, 1,600,463 voters were able to vote at 1,170 polling stations.

CRTA's Observation Mission monitored the parliamentary, presidential, and elections for members of the Belgrade City Assembly in two representative and random samples of 500 polling stations in Serbia and 450 in Belgrade (without foreign countries, penitentiaries, and voters from Kosovo). Based on the results collected from the polling station samples, the turnout was higher in all elections than in previous election cycles: 58.7 percent in the parliamentary elections (margin of error 0.9%), 58.6 percent in the presidential elections (margin of error 0.9%), and 57.2 percent in Belgrade (margin of error 0.5%).

The results of the elections on the sample of polling stations show that 7 electoral lists crossed the 3% threshold in the parliamentary elections, and 4 minority lists that do not have an electoral threshold will have seats. The current ruling coalition won the majority of 250 seats. In the presidential elections, the incumbent candidate Aleksandar Vučić won an absolute majority of votes, so there will be no second round of elections. In the elections for the Assembly of the City of Belgrade, based on the results from the sample, 7 lists passed the census, and the current ruling coalition would have 56 seats, however, the final election results could change after the results at all polling stations have been finally determined and voting in some areas is repeated due to irregularities.

CRTA's Observation Mission's preliminary report on the election day is based on information collected from more than 3,000 accredited short-term observers and primarily examines the quality of the voting process. CRTA's observers, trained to the highest international standards, monitored election day from the preparation and opening of polling stations to their closure and the publication of voting results at the observed polling stations. In addition to observation within

¹ Included in the total number of 8,267 polling stations are: 1,170 polling stations in Belgrade, 77 abroad, 29 in penitentiary institutions, and 46 polling stations for voters from Kosovo.

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the polling stations, some of the observers were deployed in mobile teams that monitored the events in front of and around the polling stations.

The main conclusion of CRTA's preliminary analysis is that the elections at most polling stations were held in accordance with laws and procedures, but also in an atmosphere full of tension, which occasionally escalated into physical violence, with an evident lack of preparedness of polling boards to adequately organize and conduct voting at polling stations.

An extremely poorly organized and tense election day was the expected outcome, due to the ongoing collapse of the integrity of the whole election process. Various types of electoral corruption have been strengthened and improved and the voting rights of citizens were endangered before and during the election campaign. The greatest damage to the quality of elections was done before election day, in the harmful collaboration of the ruling parties to gain support through undemocratic means, institutions' failure to protect the law and public interest, and the unprofessionalism of the majority of the most influential media.

The quality of the election process is threatened by changes in the election legislation that were passed less than two months before the elections. The result of these changes was that there was not enough time for all election participants, primarily the election administration, to adequately train and prepare for the elections. The new laws introduced tectonic changes to the decades-long established practice of conducting elections. The timing of their adoption is contrary to existing international standards and good practices. Inadequate organization and omissions in the work of polling stations are a consequence of, among other things, the manner and timeframe in which key election laws were changed, which CRTA has pointed out on several occasions².

During election day, 5 percent of polling stations in Serbia and Belgrade recorded continuous, repeated, gross violations of the rules, which seriously endangered the integrity of the election in those places. However, the prevalence of irregularities did not affect the final results of the elections in Serbia and Belgrade, i.e., the number of votes from those polling stations that saw irregularities did not determine whether the list crossed or stayed below the election threshold, or in other words, to win different seats.

During election day, CRTA's monitors noted polling boards' reluctance to ensure that voting took place per the procedures. The most common irregularity was the keeping of parallel records of voters inside and around polling stations, followed by violation of the secrecy of the ballot, recording of events, and the presence of unauthorized persons at the polling station. Also, violations of procedures for voting outside the polling station (voting "from home") were noted.

² [Crtini komentari na nacрте novih izbornih zakona](#)

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During the day, there were crowds and queues of voters in front of some polling stations. CRTA's observers also noted cases where voters who were waiting in line to vote were prevented from doing so, even though they were at the polls at 8 p.m.

Organized transportation of voters from other places, gathering of people around the polling station, and allegations of vote-buying or carousel voting, are just some of the phenomena that CRTA's observers noticed on the ground. In the interior of Serbia, more often than in Belgrade, observers noticed vehicles circling polling stations. CRTA's Observation Mission submitted seven reports to the police, regarding five cases of vote-buying and two cases of carousel voting.

CRTA's observers saw several cases of physical and verbal violence at and around polling stations throughout Serbia and received information about several other violent incidents. Cases of intimidation and verbal insults directed at CRTA's observers by polling board members (at five polling stations) and unknown persons in front of polling stations (at three polling stations) were also noted.

The situation from the referendum held in 2022, in which voters from Kosovo did not have the same conditions to exercise the right to vote like other citizens of Serbia, was repeated almost identically. At 46 polling stations that were specially prepared for those voters, the voting process was extremely poorly organized. The crowds were so large that dozens of voters were occasionally present at the polling stations, which violated the secrecy of voting. Other irregularities were also noted: not using UV lamps and sprays, keeping parallel records, voting on behalf of other voters, and the presence of unauthorized persons. Many voters were brought to polling stations from elsewhere by buses in an organized manner, and there were cases of people collapsing while waiting in lines.

ELECTION LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION

CHANGES IN ELECTION LEGISLATION

On September 30, 2021, the government established a working group to propose new texts of the laws regulating the election process: the Law on the Election of MPs, the Law on the Election of the President of the Republic, the Law on Local Elections, the Law on Amendments to the Law on Prevention of Corruption, and the Law on Financing Political Activities. Four public hearings were organized in turn for each of these laws. The final public hearing ended on December 13, 2021.

The most important changes that were adopted by the proposer of the law following the public debates concern the decisions that change the number of representatives in the Republic Electoral Commission (REC). More specifically, the number of deputy members that the authorized proposers can propose was altered. Additionally, the procedure according to which the destruction of surplus election material will be attended by representatives of the REC,

CRTA: Preliminary report on the Election Day

which will propose at least three different proposers with at least one of them being a member of the opposition, was also accepted. Also, it was prescribed that the request for control of the minutes according to the sample can be submitted within 48 hours, which is twice more than the originally planned 24 hours. After the public debates, the jurisdiction of the higher courts over local elections was abandoned, and a random draw was kept as a way of determining the order in which the presidential candidates appear on the ballot paper.

After they were adopted by Parliament, the President promulgated these laws by decree on February 7, 2022, just eight days before the elections were called. Thus, the election administration had only 54 days to adjust to the significant changes that these laws brought and to organize the elections in a considerably different way.

The introduction of local election commissions (LIK) was particularly challenging. This difficult process led to many irregularities in the work of election bodies and greatly reduced the quality of the election process. Given the extremely short deadlines, members of local election commissions had little time to familiarize themselves with the regulations.

You can see the most important changes in the election laws in 2022 [here](#).

POLLING STATIONS FOR VOTERS FROM KOSOVO

On March 24, the Office for Kosovo and Metohija informed the REC in a letter that the temporary administrative institutions in Pristina would not allow the organization of elections on the territory of Kosovo. It was proposed to REC that it should make a decision that would enable the citizens of the Republic of Serbia who live in Kosovo to exercise their right to vote.

At the 45th session of the REC, the local governments of the municipalities of Bujanovac, Kuršumlja, Raška, and Tutin were given the task of organizing elections for the city of Pristina and the municipalities of Gjilan, Gora, Kosovska Mitrovica, and Peja. Specifically, the municipalities in central Serbia are in charge of providing the administrative bodies of the mentioned municipalities with the space and other necessary conditions for conducting the elections for citizens from Kosovo.

It was decided to provide special polling stations for voters from Kosovo. Also, the REC would submit a proposal of members and deputies of the permanent and expanded membership of polling boards at those polling stations to the Local Election Commissions (LEC). The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government was tasked by REC with submitting the necessary details from the Voter Register.

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THE CITY ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S (CEC) LETTER AND ITS WITHDRAWAL IMMEDIATELY BEFORE ELECTION DAY

Article 90 of the Law on the Election of MPs prescribes the way the voting room must be arranged, including a clearly prescribed sequence of actions performed during the voting. More detailed rules for arranging the polling station are prescribed by the Instruction on the Manner of Arranging the Polling Station and the Voting Booths. The local election commission, the polling board, and the municipal or city administration are in charge of arranging the polling stations.

However, just a few days before the elections, the REC president informed all local election commissions by letter that a change in the layout of polling stations, concerning the layout prescribed by the Instruction on the Manner of Arranging the Polling Station and the Voting Booths, will not be considered a violation. This procedure caused confusion and led to violations, which had no legal basis, of the norms determined by law and bylaws.

Just one day after the letter from the President of the REC, the President of the City Electoral Commission (CEC) sent a letter to all local election commissions in the city municipalities of the City of Belgrade, recommending the arrangement of the voting room. This recommendation explicitly delineated a different layout from the one prescribed by Article 90. Although the letter from the President of the CEC of the City of Belgrade is legally non-binding, it acted contrary to the imperative norms of the law. After the REC session held on April 1 in which the REC's members and deputy members provided numerous criticisms of these letters, the president of the CEC sent a new letter on April 2 to all local election commissions in the city municipalities of Belgrade, withdrawing his previous letter. Nevertheless, the fact that these letters were sent at the last minute, and the confusion they caused, negatively affected the electoral process.

KEY FINDINGS OF LONG-TERM OBSERVATION

CRTA's Observation Mission conducted long-term observation of the elections. Based on information gathered on relevant events and election conditions in the period preceding election day, the quality of the election process was assessed in the light of the atmosphere in which the elections were called.

The preliminary report³ by CRTA's Observation Mission on the quality of the election campaign showed that the institutions responsible for law enforcement and the protection of the right to vote did not sufficiently protect the public interest, nor did they contribute to greater respect for the standards required for free and democratic elections. Institutions that responded to

³ Crta: [Drugi preliminarni izveštaj o izbornoj kampanji](#)

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violations of the law during the campaign did not change the behaviour of those election actors who abused institutional advantages in the elections.

The election atmosphere was shaped by the events that took place before the official start of the campaign. This includes illegal influencing voters, which is a practice that was intensified during the campaign. Almost a tenth of the political activities watched by CRTA's observers had features of clientelism, i.e., direct, or indirect vote-buying, according to the findings of CRTA's long-term observation of the 2022 elections.⁴

A significant amount of pressure on voters was recorded, through coercion or vote-buying. This shows that during the election campaign, the right to vote and freedom of choice were endangered for certain groups of the population in Serbia. All cases of pressure that CRTA's long-term observers noted were related exclusively to the ruling parties, and most were also connected to state institutions.

The practice of abusing state institutions, which was documented by CRTA's observers in the period before the official start of the campaign⁵, continued during the election campaign. The prominent tendency of government representatives to use state institutions as a channel to provide support to their party has led to a further blurring of the border between state and party interests, a trend to which the most influential media have significantly contributed.

Instead of competing with policies and programs, the election campaign was marked by a more pronounced abuse of institutions, their resources, names, and the services they provide than in previous elections. CRTA's observation showed that the institutions of the state system represent the dominant channel for exercising political influence on citizens through blackmail and rewards, but it also led to serious allegations of unauthorized access to the personal data of citizens that political actors obtained through institutions.

Employees in the public sector, as well as minority and socio-economically vulnerable groups, primarily Roma citizens, were the most exposed to pressure. This group was even exposed to the suspension of their civil rights ahead of the elections (this refers to cases in which party activists held the ID cards of Roma citizens until election day), as well as threats, intimidation, and even physical violence.

Also noted during the campaign were frequent promotional activities carried out by the ruling parties together with communal services. The penultimate week of the campaign was marked by the use of the coat of arms and the flag of the state of Serbia on the uniforms of activists of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party in various places in Serbia, which could mislead citizens into thinking that the party's activists represent state bodies or services.

⁴ Crta: [Izborna kampanja u lošijim uslovima nego 2020.](#)

⁵ Crta: [Izbori 2022: Kampanja pre kampanje](#)

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Serious allegations of the falsification of voters' signatures in the candidacy process, which provided one of the electoral lists with a place on the ballot, as well as allegations of Voter Register manipulation, further contributed to undermining citizens' trust in the integrity of the electoral process. Voting notices also confused citizens during this election process, strengthening doubts about the accuracy of the Voter Register, to which the timely and appropriate reaction of the relevant ministry was lacking.

The period that preceded the official start of the campaign can be characterized as a period in which political pluralism was almost non-existent⁶ in the media. However, according to CRTA's Observation Mission,⁷ there was a change in the trend of representation and reporting on opposition election actors during the election campaign (from 15% in the pre-campaign period to 36% during the election campaign).

The increase in the representation of the opposition was the result of the introduction of obligatory electoral blocs in the schedules of television stations with national coverage. The results also show that the regular segments of the news programs of these broadcasters were predominantly allocated to government representatives (75 percent), while the parts of the program dedicated to elections were mostly (94 percent) given to opposition representatives/

Although there have been quantitative changes in the representation of election actors, the tone of reporting on government actors has remained unchanged from the pre-campaign period. During the election campaign, government representatives were mostly represented neutrally (73 percent), then positively (24 percent) and negligibly negatively (3 percent). On the other hand, there was an increase in the time in which the opposition was reported in a neutral tone (on average from 59 to 73 percent) and a positive tone (on average from 4 to 12 percent), while the time in which they were presented in a negative tone fell (from, on average, 36 to 14 percent). The short duration of the election campaign, as well as the fact that the opposition was usually given the parts of the television schedules in which the public is less interested, meant that these changes in how the opposition was presented were not enough to undo months of biased media treatment in favour of the ruling parties over opposition election actors.

In his capacities as the President of Serbia and the President of the Serbian Progressive Party, 74% of the time intended for presidential candidates was dedicated to Aleksandar Vučić. All presidential candidates were presented mostly neutrally, then positively, except for Zdravko Ponoš, who had mostly neutral coverage (52 percent), followed by negative (39 percent).

⁶ CRTA Observation Mission, Elections 2022: Campaign Before the Campaign, <https://crt.rs/en/elections-2022-campaign-before-the-campaign/>

⁷ In accordance with media monitoring methodology, in the period from October 1, 2021, to March 4, 2022, CRTA assessed over 370 hours of programs dedicated to election actors in prime time (extended prime time from 5.30 pm to midnight) on all television stations with national coverage (RTS, TV Pink, TV Prva, TV Happy and TV B92). You can read more about CRTA's media monitoring methodology here: <https://link.crt.rs/3c>

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ELECTION DAY ANALYSIS

TURNOUT AND RESULTS

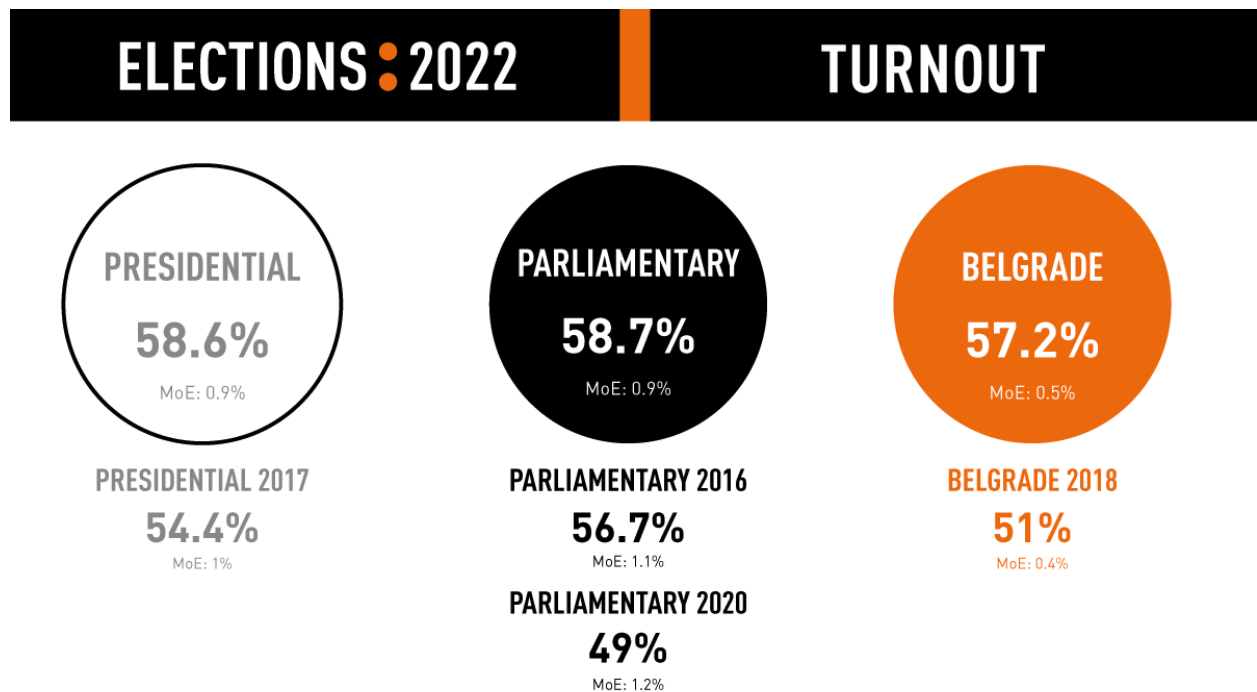
Regular presidential elections in Serbia, regular local elections in 13 local self-government units, including Belgrade, and early parliamentary elections were held on April 3, 2022.

In the parliamentary and presidential elections, 6,502,307 voters had the right to vote at a total of 8,267 polling stations, while in the Belgrade elections 1,600,463 voters had the right to vote at 1,170 polling stations.

Based on the results collected from random and representative polling stations (500 polling stations across Serbia, 450 in Belgrade, and those located abroad, in penitentiaries, and for voters from Kosovo), the turnout in all elections was higher than in previous election cycles.

The turnout in the parliamentary elections was 58.7 percent (margin of error 0.9%), which is two percentage points higher than in the parliamentary elections in 2016 and 9.7 percentage points more than in 2020 (when some of the main opposition parties boycotted the elections). The presidential elections also saw a higher turnout than the previous presidential elections in 2017, by 4.2 percentage points, amounting to 58.6 percent (margin of error 0.9%).

Almost 100,000 more voters participated in the Belgrade elections than in 2018, when the last city elections were held. The turnout of 57.2 percent (margin of error 0.5%) is 6.2 percentage points more than in 2018.

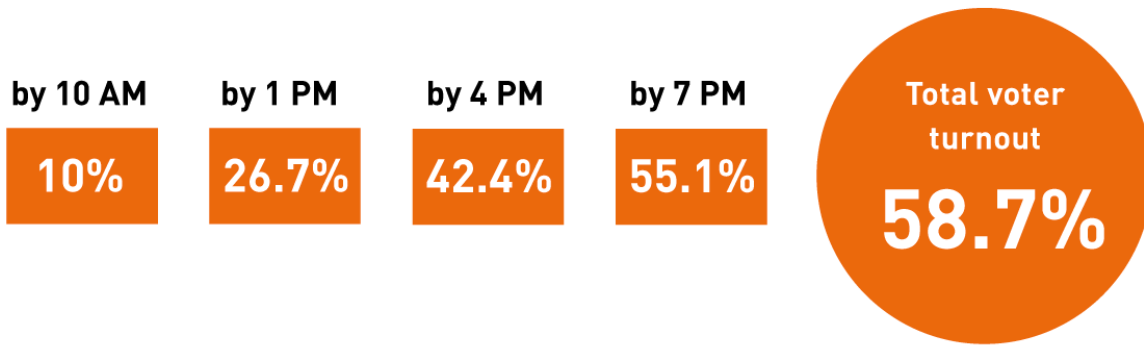


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CRTA received turnout updates from observers four times during the day - at 10 am, 1 pm, 4 pm, and 7 pm. At the time when the REC announced the turnout (9.6 percent at 10 am and 41.6 percent at 4 pm), these data were within the margin of error of data from CRTA's sample.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS : 2022

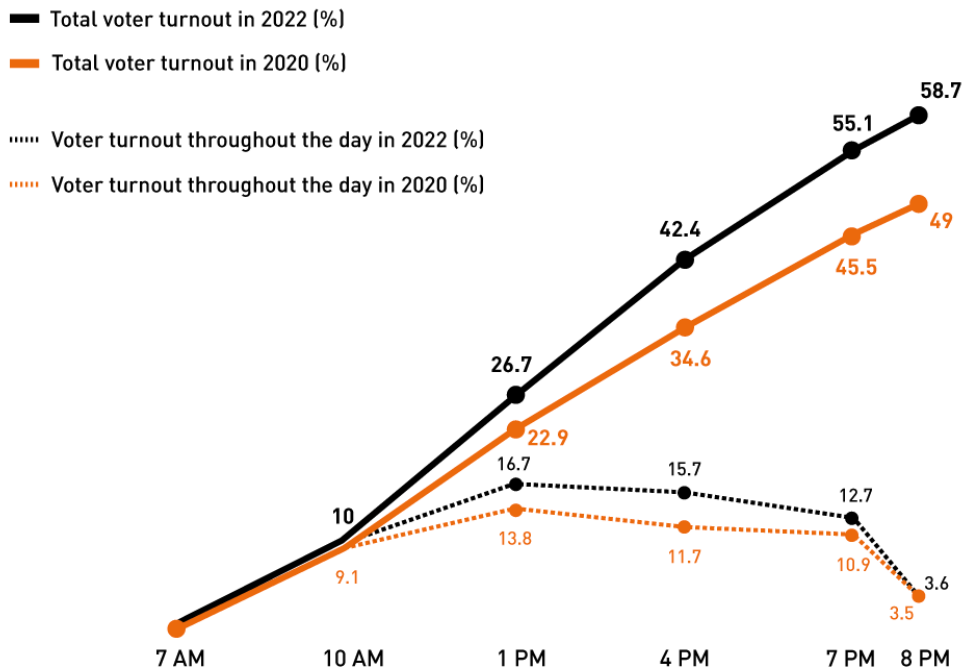
VOTER TURNOUT THROUGHOUT THE DAY



The highest turnout during election day was recorded between 10 am and 1 pm. During this period, 16.7 percent of citizens went to the polls.

In the beginning of the Election Day, until 10 am, there was no significant difference in turnout compared to the 2020 parliamentary election. A greater difference was registered in the period between 10 am and 7 pm, when about 9% more citizens went to the polls compared to 2020. In the last hour of both the 2020 and 2022 Election Day, about 3.5 percent of citizens came out to vote.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS • 2022



A total of 19 electoral lists participated in the parliamentary elections, and 11 passed the threshold (seven majority and four minority – one Hungarian, two Bosniak, and the Croatian-Ruthenian coalition).

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2022

RESULTS

100% OF PROCESSED SAMPLE

1. Aleksandar Vučić - Together We Can Do It All	42.4%	MoE: 1.3%
2. Marinika Tepić – United for the Victory of Serbia	14.1%	MoE: 1%
3. Ivica Dačić - Prime Minister of Serbia	11.1%	MoE: 0.4%
4. Dr Miloš Jovanović – Hope for Serbia	5.4%	MoE: 0.2%
5. We Must	4.7%	MoE: 0.4%
6. Boško Obradović – Serbian Movement DVERI	3.9%	MoE: 0.2%
7. Serbian Party Patrons	3.8%	MoE: 0.2%
8. Sovereignists	2.5%	MoE: 0.3%
9. Dr Vojislav Šešelj – Serbian Radical Party	2.2%	MoE: 0.1%
10. Boris Tadić – Let’s Go People	1.7%	MoE: 0.1%
11. Vojvodina Hungarians Alliance	1.4%	MoE: 0.5%
12. Mufti’s Trust – Justice and Reconciliation Party	1%	MoE: 0.5%
13. Kidnapped Babies Ana Pejić	0.8%	MoE: 0.1%
14. Democratic Action of Sandžak Party	0.7%	MoE: 0.4%
15. Together for Vojvodina	0.7%	MoE: 0.2%
16. Russian Minority Alliance	0.2%	MoE: 0.1%
17. Coalition of Albanians from the Valley	0.2%	MoE: 0.2%
18. Roma Party	0.2%	MoE: 0.1%
19. Albanian Democratic Alternative	0.1%	MoE: 0.1%
INVALID BALLOTS	3%	MoE: 0.1%
TURNOUT	58.7%	MoE: 0.9%

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In the presidential elections, the candidate Aleksandar Vučić won an absolute majority of votes, so the second round of elections will not be held.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2022

RESULTS

100% OF PROCESSED SAMPLE

1. Aleksandar Vučić	57.8%	MoE: 1.5%
2. Zdravko Ponoš	19%	MoE: 1.3%
3. Miloš Jovanović	5.9%	MoE: 0.3%
4. Boško Obradović	4.4%	MoE: 0.2%
5. Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski	4.3%	MoE: 0.2%
6. Biljana Stojković	3.2%	MoE: 0.2%
7. Branka Stamenković	2.1%	MoE: 0.2%
8. Miša Vacić	0.9%	MoE: 0.1%
INVALID BALLOTS	2.4%	MoE: 0.1%
TURNOUT	58.6%	MoE: 0.9%

A total of 12 electoral lists participated in the elections for the Assembly of the City of Belgrade, and based on the preliminary results, 7 lists passed the census.

BELGRADE ELECTIONS • 2022

RESULTS

100% OF PROCESSED SAMPLE

1. Aleksandar Vučić - Together We Can Do It All	38.1%	MoE: 0.8%
2. Vladeta Janković - United for the Victory of Belgrade	21.4%	MoE: 0.7%
3. We Must	10.8%	MoE: 0.4%
4. Ivica Dačić - Prime Minister of Serbia	7%	MoE: 0.2%
5. Dr Miloš Jovanović - Hope for Belgrade	6.3%	MoE: 0.1%
6. Serbian Party Patrons	3.5%	MoE: 0.1%
7. Boško Obradović - Serbian Movement DVERI	3.4%	MoE: 0.1%
8. Duško Vujošević - Let's Go People	2.8%	MoE: 0.1%
9. Sovereignists	2.2%	MoE: 0.1%
10. Dr Vojislav Šešelj - Serbian Radical Party	1.6%	MoE: 0.1%
11. Nemanja Šarović - For Normal People	0.6%	MoE: 0.1%
12. Russian Minority Alliance	0.4%	MoE: 0.1%
INVALID BALLOTS	2.1%	MoE: 0.1%
TURNOUT	57.2%	MoE: 0.5%

CRTA: Preliminary report on the Election Day

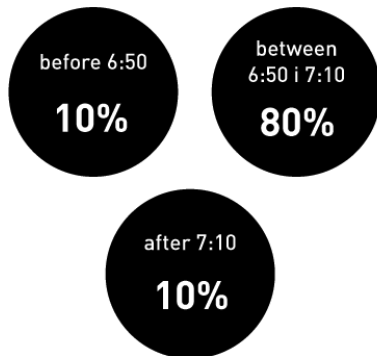
OPENING OF POLLING STATIONS

During election day, the lack of capacity of polling boards to fully ensure that the voting process was conducted per the procedures was noted. The letter of the president of the CEC, by which local election commissions in the city municipalities of Belgrade were sent a recommendation about the layout of the voting room, was withdrawn, after being heavily criticised, just one day before election day, which caused confusion and further damaged the elections.

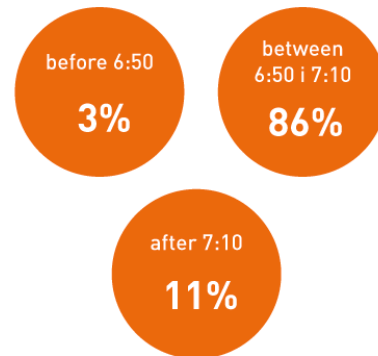
Almost 10% of polling stations in Serbia and Belgrade were late opening, but after the initial delay, all polling stations were opened.

ELECTIONS : 2022 Polling stations were open:

PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY



BELGRADE



In the parliamentary and presidential elections, more than half of the polling stations were not accessible to people with disabilities (55 percent). In Belgrade, slightly more polling stations were better-equipped and were more accessible to persons with disabilities.

ELECTIONS : 2022

Polling stations accessible to persons with disabilities

PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY

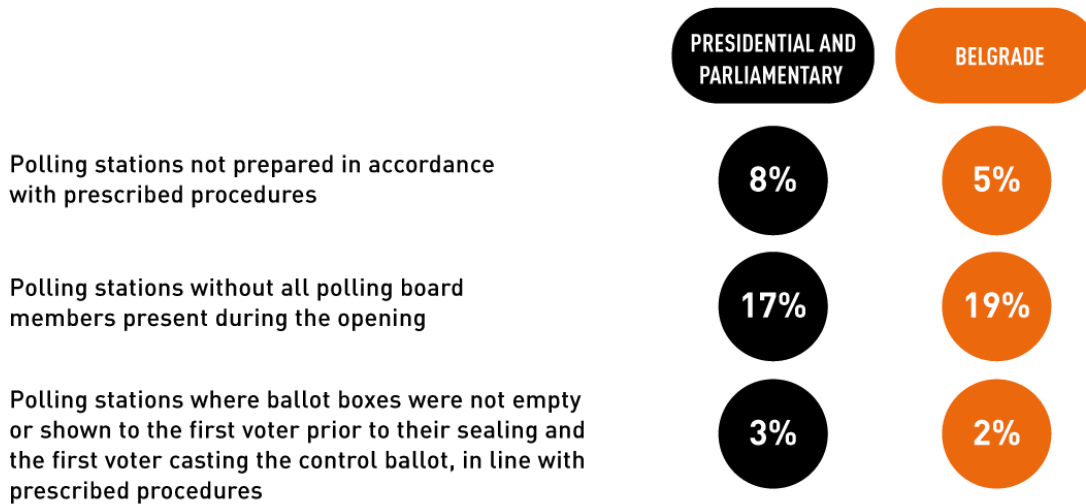


BELGRADE



At a significant number of polling stations in Serbia (17% in Serbia as a whole and 19% in Belgrade) not all polling station members were present at the opening of the polling station. In Serbia as a whole, 8% of polling stations were not prepared according to the procedures, while in the territory of Belgrade, the figure was 5%. The bags with the election materials were not secured using a zip-tie when they were delivered at 2% of polling stations, both in Serbia and Belgrade. Also, at 3% of polling stations in Serbia and 2% in Belgrade the ballot box was not sealed, the control form was either not shown to the first voter or not put in the ballot box.

ELECTIONS : 2022

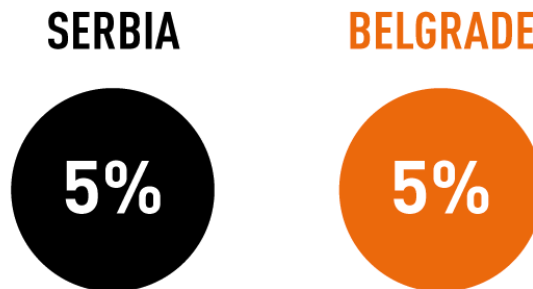


THE VOTING PROCESS

Preliminary analysis shows that **elections at most polling stations were held in accordance with laws and procedures, but also in an atmosphere full of tension, which occasionally escalated into physical violence, with an evident lack of preparedness of polling boards to adequately organize and conduct voting at polling stations.** The extremely poorly organized and tense election day was the expected outcome due to the ongoing collapse of the integrity of the entire election process. This is evidenced by the number, severity, and territorial distribution of irregularities recorded in 5 percent of polling stations in Belgrade and 5 percent of polling stations in Serbia as a whole.

ELECTIONS : 2022

Polling stations with serious irregularities



During the day, the percentage of recorded irregularities changed, as observers reported continuously and CRTA's legal team monitored the progress of the reported irregularities. At the end of election day, it was determined that in both samples, in Belgrade and Serbia, serious irregularities and incidents were recorded at 5 percent of polling stations, but they did not affect the overall regularity of the elections. More precisely, the number and intensity of observed irregularities at these polling stations did not, at the end of the day, affect the final election results at all levels.

The percentage of polling stations with serious irregularities and incidents is slightly higher compared to the 2020 referendum and the 2016 parliamentary elections (4 percent), as well as the 2017 presidential election (3 percent), but it is lower than the percentage in the 2020 parliamentary election (8-10 percent) and the 2018 Belgrade elections (8 percent). In the remaining polling stations, election day was largely conducted in line with the legal framework, with sporadic irregularities.

CRTA: Preliminary report on the Election Day

One of the most frequently noticed irregularities during election day was the keeping of parallel records of voters within polling stations. This was recorded at 6 percent of polling stations in Serbia and 10 percent in Belgrade. In both Serbia and Belgrade, there were cases of violations of the secrecy of the ballot in 7% of polling stations. Polling station members or voters recorded these events at 4% of polling stations in Serbia and 6% of polling stations in Belgrade. The presence of third parties, who were not authorized to attend the voting process, was recorded in 6% of polling stations in Belgrade, while in Serbia this was the case in 3% of polling stations.

Another of the most frequently noted irregularities is the violation of procedures for voting outside the polling station (voting "from home"). Irregularities were recorded in 6% of polling stations in Serbia, while in Belgrade it occurred at 9% of polling stations.

The tense atmosphere of the election day was influenced by the presence of vehicles circling polling stations, which was especially noticeable in the interior of Serbia (at 4% of polling stations, while in Belgrade this was the case at 2% of polling stations). Organized transportation of voters from elsewhere was recorded at 2% of polling stations in Serbia, and 2% of polling stations in Belgrade. Gatherings of people around polling stations, with allegations of vote-buying or carousel voting, were recorded at 2 percent of polling stations in Serbia and 4 percent of polling stations in Belgrade.

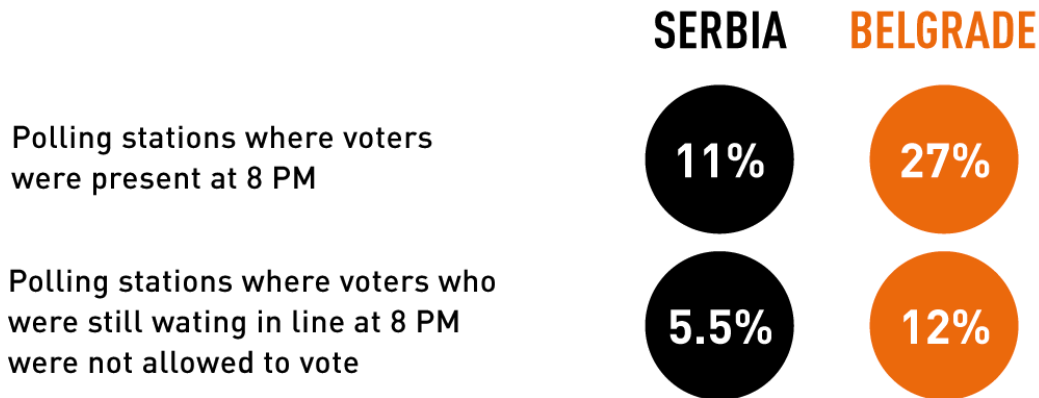
Cases of intimidation and verbal insults directed at CRTA's observers by polling board members (at five polling stations) and unknown persons in front of polling stations (at three polling stations) were also documented. It was also noted that CRTA's observers were pressured by preventing or forcing them to sign the observers' minutes at 9 polling stations in Belgrade, and 15 polling stations in total in Serbia.

Local or foreign observers were present at 18 percent of polling stations in Serbia, and as many as 85 percent at polling stations in Belgrade.

THE PROCESS OF CLOSING POLLING STATIONS AND COUNTING THE VOTES

During the day, there were crowds at polling stations throughout Serbia, especially in larger cities. The reason for this was the holding of elections at several levels (presidential, parliamentary, and local), as well as the insufficient organization of polling stations in some places, especially given the high turnout. At 8 pm, the scheduled time for the end of voting, 11 percent of polling stations in Serbia had citizens at the polling stations who wanted to vote. They were not allowed to do so in almost half of those polling stations. In Belgrade, more voters wanted to vote at 8 pm at 27 percent of polling stations, and they were denied their right to vote at 12 percent of polling stations.

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THE WORK OF THE ELECTION ADMINISTRATION DURING ELECTION DAY

On election day, the REC held six regular press conferences at which turnout figures were announced. REC coordinators were deployed region by region to provide technical support to local election commissions and polling stations. Real-time turnout monitoring has also been introduced as a new innovation. Also, unlike in previous elections, the REC did not announce the election results on election day immediately after the polls closed. Namely, the new Law on the Election of People's Deputies, adopted in February 2022, stipulates that the REC should publish preliminary results within 24 hours of the closure of polling stations. Although the REC did not break the law, the public was not adequately informed about the new legal obligations. As a result, the REC's failure to address the public on election night provoked violent reactions and deepened citizens' distrust in the work of the election administration.

THE VOTING PROCESS FOR VOTERS FROM KOSOVO

As already happened with the referendum on constitutional changes, the authorities in Pristina did not allow elections to be held on the territory of Kosovo, so the REC decided that 93,527 voters from Kosovo would be allowed to vote at 46 polling stations in Raška, Tutin, Bujanovac, and Kuršumljija. Unlike the referendum, special polling stations were organized for Serbian

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citizens from Kosovo, but this did not ensure that they could exercise their voting rights under the same conditions as other Serbian citizens.

Although polling stations for Kosovo residents were not included in the random and representative sample, more than 30 observers monitored the voting process at all 46 polling stations. They reported on events at and in front of the polling stations throughout election day.

From the opening of the polling stations until 6 pm, large crowds were seen. Voters from Kosovo arrived via organized buses, but also by personal transport. Notably, on election day the police regulated the entry of voters to the polling stations at several polling stations.

Crowds, a poorly organized voting process, and ignorance of procedures from polling board members led to irregularities and inaccuracy during election day. At several polling stations, observers noticed that polling board members kept parallel voter records and saw that voting on behalf of others and without valid documents took place. Cases of endangering the secrecy of the ballot were also noticed, as well as the selective use of UV lamps and sprays.

Problems caused by the Voter Register being out of date were also recorded at the polling stations for voters from Kosovo. CRTA's Observers noted cases of voting by voters who were not in the Register, but also, some voters could not exercise their right to vote because they were not in the Voter Register.

Some citizens collapsed due to the extended queues and long waits in front of polling stations, and there were verbal conflicts between voters and members of polling stations.

Observers also reported that in some polling stations there was mistrust and intolerance between polling board members, which slowed down the counting process in some cases. The minutes of the work of polling boards at these polling stations were not compiled until late in the evening.

Although no major incidents were reported, the poorly organized election process, as well as the incompetence and unwillingness of the election administration to meet the required standards, undoubtedly harmed the quality of the election process.

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HOW WE MONITOR THE ELECTION PROCESS

THE PERIOD BEFORE ELECTION DAY

CRTA's Observation Mission began long-term election observation before the official campaign even began, using a methodology based on international standards.

Since December 2021, a field team of long-term observers, trained to the highest standards, has been deployed to monitor the atmosphere and course of the election campaign in 160 cities and municipalities in Serbia on a daily basis.

The long-term observation methodology involves collecting data daily on how electoral actors are presented to voters across Serbia to mobilize their support. This includes the frequency of communication and placement of promotional content, message types, and program content prepared by political actors. In addition to the course and content of regular party activities, field observers monitor and report on anomalies, i.e., irregularities and abuses in the election campaign, in the following categories: clientelism, vote-buying and pressure on voters, misuse of public resources, state-resourced campaigns, misuse of public functions, and pressure on political actors.

To better understand the atmosphere suggested by the numbers in the statistical analysis, on the eve of the 2022 elections, the research team of the CRTA's Monitoring Mission began qualitative research. Its primary goal is to identify and if possible, classify the frequency of different types of pressure, abuse, and vote-buying and gain a deeper insight into the mechanisms that support these phenomena.

A combination of several sampling techniques is used: intentional sampling, the so-called snowball technique and convenience sampling. The survey included people who were pressured or participated in abuses or vote-buying, as well as those who directly or indirectly witnessed such occurrences. Also, among the participants are journalists, activists, and political actors who are either victims of pressure or have knowledge that could provide a deeper understanding of the context of these phenomena and mechanisms. Interviews were also conducted with several citizens who contacted CRTA to report irregularities and cases of pressure on voters. 68 interviews were conducted (total duration of recorded conversations: 49 hours 23 minutes 13 seconds) with interviewees from 29 municipalities.

ELECTION DAY

On election day, April 3, 2022, more than 3,000 observers were deployed in a random and representative sample of 450 polling stations in Belgrade and 500 polling stations in Serbia, excluding Kosovo. The sample did not include voters abroad and penitentiaries. Observing the

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election process through this sample enabled CRTA to report on the course of the elections, whether the law was followed, and election procedures at all polling stations in Serbia. In addition to observers at polling stations, mobile teams of CRTA observers also monitored events in front of and around polling stations.

Observers were present at the polling stations from the moment the polling station was prepared for opening until the members of the polling boards published the election results for the polling station. This provided a comprehensive insight into the events at the polling stations during election day.

Given that voters from Kosovo voted at special polling stations in four municipalities (Kuršumljija, Raška, Tutin, and Bujanovac), CRTA did not include these polling stations in the sample. But more than 30 observers from CRTA monitored the voting process at all 46 polling stations and day reported on the atmosphere at and in front of the polling stations throughout election day.

THE PERIOD AFTER ELECTION DAY

CRTA's Observation Mission monitors the work of the election administration until the official results are announced, as well as the process of potential objections and requests for annulment of the elections.

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ABOUT CRTA

CRTA is an independent, non-partisan civil society organisation dedicated to promoting the democratic culture and civic activism. By creating public policy proposals, advocating for the principles of responsible conduct and accountable authorities and state institutions, and educating citizens about their political rights, CRTA advocates for the establishment of the rule of law and democratic dialogue development.

Since 2016, CRTA has been conducting election observation on the national and local level. CRTA coordinates the “Citizens On Watch” network, counting several thousand citizens trained to observe the regularity of the vote. Continuous efforts to improve conditions for fair and free elections is at the very core of all CRTA activities.

CRTA observes elections in accordance with international standards and rules of citizen observation. So far, CRTA has observed the 2016 and 2020 parliamentary elections, the 2017 presidential elections, local elections in Zaječar and Pećinci in 2017, the 2018 Belgrade and local elections in Lučani, as well as the 2022 referendum on constitutional changes. The CRTA Observation Mission’s projections and results on Election Day have been confirmed by the official results of the Republic Electoral Commission (REC), while CRTA’s findings and recommendations from previous electoral cycles are complementary to findings and recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR international observation mission. CRTA is a member of the global and the European networks of election observation organisations - ENEMO and GNDEM.

The aim of the CRTA Observation Mission during the 2022 election campaigns is to efficiently monitor and analyse the implementation of the legal framework and international standards in preparing and conducting the elections, inform citizens about the quality and the democratic character of the election process and events during the campaign, and ensure timely reactions in case of breaches to electoral procedures and processes. Additionally, election observation should bring about the development of recommendations to improve the quality of the election process.