



CRTA:

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**WORK
REPORT**

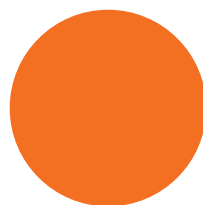
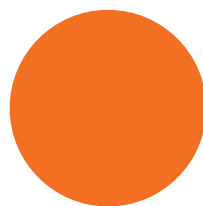


About CRTA

CRTA is a civil society organisation dedicated to the development of democratic culture, democratic institutions and improving the conditions for free and fair elections in Serbia. CRTA analyses the work of state institutions, the role of the media and professional information in the democratisation of society, and the attitudes and beliefs of citizens about social and political processes. Since 2016, CRTA has been observing elections at the local and national level, with the help of thousands of citizens, trained according to the highest international standards for citizen observation of elections and advocating the improvement of conditions for fair and free elections. CRTA conducts research and, guided by the principles of the rule of law and the protection of human rights, offers solutions based on its findings. CRTA also informs and educates citizens about the state of democracy and their political rights, encouraging them to get directly involved in solving problems in their communities, and in other political processes.

In 2018, CRTA received the Democracy Defender Award from the OSCE, a global recognition for its outstanding contributions to the promotion of democracy and the defence of human rights. In 2013, it was also honoured with the W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award, an international accolade presented by the National Democratic Institute, for its innovations, dedication, and contributions to democracy. In 2018, CRTA was also awarded the [Prize of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection](#) for outstanding contribution in the field of citizens' right to access information of public importance.

[Read more](#)



Our team

At the end of 2022, the CRTA team consisted of 77 individuals organised in thematic programme departments dealing with elections, quantitative and qualitative research, legal analytics, media monitoring, support for formal and informal activist initiatives, communications, media and field campaigns, finance, administration and IT. Under the auspices of CRTA, there are the Open Parliament, an initiative aimed at enhancing the transparency and quality of the National Assembly's work as a key democratic institution in the parliamentary democracy system, and Istinomer (Truth-o-Metre), the first online fact-checking media outlet in the Western Balkans region.

The work of the organisation is managed by the director Vukosava Crnjanski and the programme director Raša Nedeljkov.

The CRTA Board of Directors is composed of Rastko Petaković, solicitor (President of the Board of Directors), Olivera Medar, university professor, Svetlana Logar, retired university professor, Tamara Skrozza, journalist, Hajrija Bugujevci, public finance expert, Dušan Spasojević, university professor and Ilija Vojnović, programme manager and director of the Turkish International Republican Institute

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What marked 2022?



Vukosava Crnjanski, director:

/ NORMALISATION OF THE INSTITUTIONS' INSTABILITY

"At the beginning of the year, a referendum was held on changes to the Constitution, soon after followed by elections at several levels. From the beginning of the election campaigns until the formation of the Government, in autumn, the institutions were 'frozen', and speculations about personal solutions suppressed the debate on important political topics. Arbitrarily putting a fixed term to the Assembly and the Government legislature ending in spring of 2024 prolonged that temporariness and contributed to the further centralisation of power."



Raša Nedeljkov, programme director:

/ FEAR PRODUCTION AND THE CULT OF PERSONALITY

"The man controlling the public debate in Serbia continued to sow fear and produce crises. The most influential media were routinely informing us, even through the weather forecast, that danger was constantly lurking. In this way, day after day, the citizens were told that they should be happy if misfortune passed them by and that the safest thing was not to 'seek trouble'. At the same time, there was a dramaturgical opening for the president's 'deus ex machina' appearances, whose cult of a hero and a martyr was carefully nurtured."



Tamara Branković, deputy programme director:

/ UKRAINE AS LITMUS

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the suffering of civilians and the growing fear of Putin's arbitrariness marked the year in the world. In Serbia, the war exposed a democratic deficit in the political scene and revealed a lack of genuine commitment to the European path. Efforts to preserve friendly relations with Russia have been accompanied by intense anti-Western rhetoric in the mainstream media, amidst the echoes of the global Putin's campaign of disinformation spreading."

What marked 2022?



Aleksandra Srećković, media research manager:

/ LACK OF PLURALISM, ANTI-WESTERN SENTIMENT AND MANIPULATION IN THE MEDIA

“The irresponsible granting of licences for national broadcasting to televisions enabled the further narrowing of the space for pluralism and the strengthening of the negative perception of the West and the EU, the defamation of critics and opponents of the government and the glorification of the president. The government dominated around 95 percent of the time in central news programmes. At the same time, there is more and more information manipulation, above all coming from those that encourage intolerance towards the West.”



Radovan Kupres, creative director:

/ CITIZENS UNDER PRESSURE

“The CRTA research showed that one in five citizens was a witness, accomplice or immediate target of some kind of political pressure. With blackmail, threats and a ‘bear’s paving stone’, the political engagement of citizens was discouraged, and even their fundamental right to decide freely and according to their own conscience has been trampled upon.”

What did we do?

The development of democratic culture



Jovana Đurbabić, communication director

“We want a free and pluralistic Serbia, resistant to anti-democratic tendencies and fundamentally oriented towards Europe. That is why we support initiatives that defend democratic values and encourage citizens to resist populist trends and authoritarianism. We provide the public with reliable information, above all in relation to issues of the rule of law and abuse of media power”

/ Data were collected as a basis for advocating democratic policies (through public opinion surveys, monitoring and analysis of the work of institutions and the media);

/ Media and field campaigns were conducted to mobilise citizens in defence of democratic values;

/ Pressure was exerted on the institutions to fulfil their legal obligations in order to protect the public interest;

/ The public was informed about the obstruction of institutions, threats to freedom of expression, the spread of disinformation, and media manipulation.

Research on the political attitudes of the citizens of Serbia

- Although the majority of citizens blame the West for the war in Ukraine and are closer to the Russian side in the war, there is a noticeable shift away from the Russian position in comparison to the first months of the war. Nonetheless, the majority of citizens still think that Serbia should maintain good relations with Russia even at the cost of leaving the EU path. More than a third of citizens would be indifferent to joining the European Union, almost a third would be happy, and a third would be worried. Regarding a potential break in negotiations with the EU, 43 percent of citizens would be indifferent..

Democracy on the margins of war – citizens’ attitudes regarding the state of democracy in the country, particularly in relation to the quality of the elections held on April 3rd, as well as in relation to foreign policy issue

- For citizens of Serbia, television is still the main source of information, but since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, information via Internet portals has been on the rise. Almost one half of the citizens are satisfied with the results of the elections, and opinions are divided on the issue of whether there was electoral theft on the Election Day in April. Three months into the Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, most of the respondents would have been happy with the eventual withdrawal from the EU and the formation of an alliance with Russia.

Citizens’ views on the 2022 election process

- The largest number of citizens assess that the state of democracy in Serbia has improved in the last five years. Nonetheless, almost one third of them believe that the state of democracy has worsened. Likewise, almost a third of citizens did not know that presidential elections were to be held in April, almost a half did not know that parliamentary elections were being held, while more than a half did not know that there would be local elections.

Serbian citizens’ attitudes on participation in democratic processes in 2021

- Slightly more than a third of citizens are either completely uninterested or just somewhat interested in politics. During this period, the negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina have become the sole topic that has piqued heightened interest of citizens. Internal processes, such as the work of local self-governments and the National Assembly attract citizens’ attention less than a year ago. That citizens should be active participants in political life is felt mostly by those who believe in critical media, who lean towards opposition parties, the youngest, more educated citizens who live in Belgrade and other urban centres.

The campaign “We seek accountability and everything else”

- On the occasion of International Democracy Day, a campaign has been launched inviting citizens to resist the normalisation of undermining democratic principles and the rule of law. In one month, the campaign reached more than 2,000,000 people through various media channels (television, online, OOH). As part of the campaign, CRTA’s YouTube channel aired the **Algorithm of society**, series, which deals with topics important for the development of a democratic society, the responsibility of institutions and the motivation of citizens to participate in decision-making processes.

The campaign “Mature Serbia”

- The campaign was launched with the aim of focusing the public’s attention on society’s attitude towards the elderly. Although people over 65 make up 21 percent of the total population, this group is often neglected in public policies and perceived as a “voting machine”. An additional goal of the campaign was to motivate older generations to participate in political processes. The documentary series “Mature Serbia”, as the main content of the campaign, was viewed by about 1,500,000 people.

The campaign “Citizens have the power”

- The goal of the campaign was to celebrate activists and activist groups who bravely defend the public interest and thus encourage a greater number of citizens to engage in the fight for the protection of their own rights. In 2022, the campaign reached more than 2,000,000 people, and had more than 800,000 views on CRTA’s YouTube channel alone.

“Brave voice” award

- The recognition by which CRTA traditionally rewards individuals and groups who fight with particular courage for the common good was awarded to the citizens’ association Krokodil, for the solidarity and concrete help that the association provided to the citizens of Ukraine, i.e. to the Perinatal Centre in Kharkiv.

Academy for Democracy ---

104 citizens attended nine modules of the Academy for Democracy. 30 of them acquired knowledge and skills for independent election observation in observation missions, polling station committees, political organisations’ election teams and for media coverage of elections within the [School of Independent Election Observation](#), while 24 of them acquired knowledge important for advocating policy changes and management practices, through communication with the authorities within the [Summer School of Activism](#). Thanks to the [School of Parliamentarism](#) 27 participants were trained to participate in the work of the National Assembly, while 23 participated in the Simulation of the work of the National Assembly.

Citizens have the power – a programme supporting citizens’ initiatives

With the help of CRTA, 37 organisations from 22 cities and municipalities successfully implemented their projects, and 208 activists from more than 50 cities and municipalities were trained to be involved in decision-making processes and the implementation of civic initiatives, gaining knowledge and skills in the field of public advocacy, access to information of public importance, negotiation and crisis communication.

Group and bilateral meetings

During dozens of group and bilateral meetings, decision-makers in Serbia, representatives of the European countries, the USA, Canada and representatives of the international community – the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and others were regularly informed about the findings of research on the citizens’ attitudes, the media, the work of institutions and other topics important for the state of democracy in Serbia. Those actors were also informed about the recommendations based on the CRTA’s research and their support for the democratic changes included in those recommendations was sought.

International conference “Democracy: a Minimal Consensus”

The conference brought together more than 200 representatives of state institutions of the Republic of Serbia, the EU, EU countries, the USA, national and international organisations, the media and experts. The work was organised through three working tables: Media, Parliament and Elections, and the goal was to reach a minimum consensus about standards, the implementation of which would prevent further erosion of democracy in Serbia in these areas, and enable progress towards the EU. The conclusions of the conference – [from the working table related to the work of the National Assembly](#), [from the working table on elections](#) i [from the working table on the role of REM and RTS in encouraging pluralism](#) will serve for the preparation of practical policy recommendations and for the further activists’ work.

The annual report on the monitoring of media representation of actors and processes in foreign and regional politics in Serbia: The war in Ukraine in the media shadow of the ‘war’ in Kosovo

The war in Ukraine significantly altered the media reporting in Serbia. In contrast to previous years, when out of all foreign actors the USA had had the most visibility, in the previous 12 months Russia came to the first place. The glorification of Russia was not as open as in the previous four years, but Russia remains presented far more positively than the EU, USA and NATO

Report on the monitoring of political pluralism in the media reporting in Serbia: Televisions report about the government in chorus

In central news on television stations with national coverage in the period from May to November 2022, all reports related almost exclusively to the representatives of the authorities, while other political actors were nearly invisible in the political life of Serbia. The strong bias is also reflected in the tone of the reporting, i.e. the polarisation between the positively presented authorities and the negative image of the opposition. The President of Serbia is a political actor who is given by far the most time in central news broadcasts.

Report on the media monitoring in the pre-election period: Deceptive pluralism in the election campaign

After a months-long period in which there was almost no political pluralism due to the clear dominance of the authorities' representatives on television with national coverage, during the first three weeks of the campaign there was a change in the representation and in the way of reporting on the opposition electoral actors. Greater representation of the opposition was a consequence of the introduction of mandatory electoral blocs in television programmes with national coverage. Despite this, the bias in reporting on the authorities' candidates and on some opposition candidates remained.

Daily briefing on the reporting of the most influential media on the actors and processes of foreign and regional politics, as well as on the possible information manipulation

In response to the growing interest of representatives of the international public in the reporting of the most influential media in Serbia, an overview of front pages of the daily newspapers and central news headlines is prepared daily and shared via the mailing list.



Underpinning information manipulations

72 statements of state officials and politicians in traditional media on topics of public interest were fact-checked: infrastructure projects, energy crisis, economy, EuroPride, elections, vaccines against Covid-19, war in Ukraine, environmental protection, and the like. [The archive of fact-checked statements](#) can be searched by actors and by types of statements. With the use of digital tools, 180 viral contents on the social network Facebook were fact-checked, mostly those related to the war in Ukraine and public health issues. [The archive of fact-checked content from social networks](#) can be searched chronologically. As a part of the global network of fact-checkers, Istinomer was engaged in checking information related to the war in Ukraine, as part of the #UkraineFacts initiative.

Informing about political actors

Based on publicly available information, Istinomer maintains and supplements the database of Serbian political actors' biographies. [Political actors' biographies](#) are searchable by name, function, party, profession, education and place

Informing about current political issues and about the phenomenon of information manipulation

Within the [In the Focus](#) section on Istinomer's website, 46 analyses were published on topics that marked the year in Serbia, the region and the world. Through a series of articles, [the danger of information manipulation was explained](#), and detailed explanations of [the methods and tools through which citizens can verify the accuracy of information are provided](#).

Development of democratic institutions



Vladana Jaraković, legal expert

“We want the state institutions in Serbia to work accountably, transparently, and in accordance with the principles of the rule of law, primarily keeping in mind the interests of the citizens. Observing the work of institutions, we investigate and propose ways to improve it. We also inform citizens about the work of the National Assembly and independent bodies, especially the Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media, and encourage them to get directly involved in the work of institutions wherever this possibility exists.”

/ It is easier for the public to see the functioning and the results of the work of the National Assembly;

/ Citizens got knowledge about the importance of the National Assembly and were encouraged to actively monitor its work;

/ Measures were proposed to improve the work of the National Assembly and independent institutions;

/ The obligations and omissions in the work of REM were pointed out to the public; Legal actions were initiated regarding the REM's (in)action.



INITIATIVE: OPEN PARLIAMENT

Regular publication and updating of information that enable a comprehensive insight into the work of the National Assembly

Throughout 2022, 50 transcripts of plenary sessions, 348 MPs' speeches, 157 minutes of voting, 221 minutes of committee meetings, 165 texts of adopted

laws and 8 summaries of laws were published. Data on MPs, their activities and the activities of parliamentary committees are regularly updated, as well as data on adopted, rejected and withdrawn acts and acts in the procedure.

Publication of periodical and thematic analyses

In addition to regular announcements, information booklets ('Parliamentary notebook') and newsletters ('Parliament under the magnifying glass'), analyses also contributed to the understanding of the Parliament's work: [Speeches in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia – discourses about the government and the opposition](#), [Discourses about the EU and foreign countries](#), [Does every place has its own MPs? – analysis of the structure of the new convocation](#), [Summary of proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly](#), [The most important changes to electoral laws](#), [Annual report on the work of the National Assembly in 2021](#), and many other. Versions in English enabled the public outside of Serbia to be informed about the work of the National Assembly.

Ongoing informing of citizens about the work, and education about the importance of the National Assembly

Seven editions of the video series [Couplet, Chorus, Rebuttal](#), were published as well as 348 Twitter and 142 Facebook posts, 18 videos were uploaded to the [Open Parliament YouTube channel](#), seven analyses were published on the Cenzolovka portal, while the Istinomer initiative published 33 analyses of the work of the National Assembly. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the initiative, besides the online campaign "[Parliament, not ornament](#)", a public forum was held in Belgrade on the topic of the National Assembly functioning and the quality of debate in that body, from the perspective of its role in preserving democracy.

Street actions "What do (should) they do in the Assembly"

In Požega, Gornji Milanovac, Negotin, Bor, Čićevac, Paraćin, Knjaževac, Aleksinac, Kula, Irig and Belgrade, street actions were held during which we discussed with 1,500 citizens about what MPs can do for them. The question that citizens would address to MPs were also collected.

Support for citizens' initiatives to get involved in the work of the National Assembly

Within the programme of support for citizens' initiatives, through seven supported local initiatives, citizens were connected with MPs. At sittings, citizens' questions were asked, initiatives for public hearings were launched, etc...

Analysis of the role of the National Assembly in ensuring compliance with the independent institutions' recommendations

After a period of neglecting reports from independent institutions, the practice of reviewing them in the plenary session of the National Assembly has been reinstated, albeit with questionable quality of debate and its outcomes. The analy-

sis points out ways to improve cooperation between the National Assembly and independent bodies, which should be recognized as key allies in overseeing the executive branch's work.

Recommendations for improving the work of independent institutions

Recommendations for improving the situation in the areas dealt with by the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, the Commissioner for Protection of Equality, the Protector of Citizens and the Anti-Corruption Agency are the result of years of monitoring the work of independent institutions. Their goal is to improve the situation in the field of human rights and the fight against corruption, and they are directed towards independent institutions, the National Assembly and other authorities.

Contributions to the annual reports of the European Commission and the European Parliament

Contributions were prepared for the reports of the European Commission and the European Parliament on Serbia's progress in the field of work of the National Assembly and independent institutions.

Informative article on the REM licensing procedure

In connection with the competition for the allocation of national television and radio licenses for broadcasting, an article has been published explaining the entire procedure, broadcaster requirements, and the obligations of the Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media.

The campaign "Can REM proceed differently?"

In connection with the competition for the allocation of national frequencies, through [a public call](#) and a series of video clips distributed via social media, CRTA reminded the Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media (REM) and citizens of the unacceptable behaviour of television programme broadcasters that the REM had not sanctioned despite its legal obligations to do so.

21 complaints were submitted to the REM

Complaints were submitted against several broadcasters: Studio B, B92, TV Pink, Belle Amie Niš, TV Most Novi Sad, TV Sat Požarevac, TV Zona plus Niš, TV SOS Kanal plus Beograd, TV Subotica, RTS 1 and RTV Novi Pazar – due to violation of the ban on hate speech, violation of the ban on election advertising outside the pre-election campaign, violation of the obligation to provide true, complete and objective information, the obligation to provide registered political parties, coalitions and candidates with representation without discrimination during the election campaign, etc.

Lawsuit against the REM, filed together with the Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation

The Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation and CRTA filed a lawsuit with the Administrative Court against the Decision by which the REM re-awarded broadcasting licences for national coverage to television stations that have for years failed to comply even with the minimum prescribed conditions for providing media services. The lawsuit alleges that the REM's decision to grant licences to Pink, Happy, Prva and B92 television stations was made on the basis of a selective and incorrect interpretation of the facts, which violated the criteria and rules regulating the procedure for granting broadcast licences.

Improving the conditions for free and fair elections



Pavle Dimitrijević, chief legal officer

“We are fighting to make the election process in Serbia democratic – to meet international standards for free and fair elections. This implies the existence of appropriate regulations and their full implementation in order to ensure the equality of all participants in the election race and protect the voters’ rights. We monitor the implementation of regulations during the pre-election period, during and after the Election Day, we inform the public about issues important for the democratic character of the election and we invite citizens to participate in political life with their vote and oppose attempts that deny them that right.”

/ The public was informed about the issues related to the referendum on constitutional changes;

/ The observation mission observed the referendum and the April elections;

/ The public was informed about issues related to the April elections, and citizens were mobilised to vote;

/ Regarding the observed irregularities, complaints were submitted to the competent authorities, and it was made easier that citizens report irregularities;

/ Measures were proposed to improve the conditions for free and fair elections and the support of decision-makers was requested for their implementation;

/ The public was informed of the prevalence of political pressure on citizens, particularly in connection with elections.

Informative article about the upcoming referendum

In the period preceding the referendum, the public was presented with a detailed explanation of the legal nature of the referendum, proposed changes, possible consequences of the referendum outcome, the implementation procedure and rules related to the referendum campaign and the protection of voting rights.

#Referendum2022 (INITIATIVE ISTINOMER)

[Referendum Guide](#) and a series of articles dedicated to the referendum, Istinomert brought the topic closer to the public and enabled monitoring of the voting process and results.

Long-term observation

A team of long-term observers of the [CRTA observation mission](#) followed the referendum campaign and collected information about its intensity and content on the ground throughout Serbia. Our team observed the activities of political parties, authorities and other relevant actors. Simultaneously, the media monitoring team monitored the presence and content of the referendum campaign on all televisions with national coverage, as well as on selected local televisions. The CRTA accredited observers monitored the work of the Republic Electoral Commission before the day of the referendum and on the day of the vote. After the referendum day, the observers continued monitoring the work of the Republic Electoral Commission and the announcement of the final results of the referendum.

Observation on the referendum day

The observation mission consisted of about 800 trained and accredited short-term observers who were deployed to 300 polling stations determined on the basis of a random sample, representative of Serbia, without voters from Kosovo. Observing the voting process on such a sample made it possible to report on the course of voting, compliance with laws and procedures, turnout and results of the referendum. Observers were present at 300 polling stations from the moment the stations were being prepared for the opening, from 6 o'clock in the morning, until the members of the polling station committees announced the results of the referendum for the monitored station, which provided a comprehensive insight into the events at each of the monitored polling stations.

Referendum observation report

Observation of the campaign on the ground showed that neither the referendum process nor the referendum question was a priority for the incumbent parties, while the opposition parties dealt with this topic more often, although their campaigns were limited in scope. The CRTA observation mission processed turnout data collected from 300 polling stations from a random and representative sample. Based on the findings from this data, the conclusion is that the voting day passed mostly in accordance with the law, but that the lack of preparation of the administration, primarily of the polling station committees and local sub-committees, was obvious. When it comes to their scope and intensity, the ob-

served irregularities did not affect the final outcome, however, their seriousness and the absence of reactions from the institutions illustrate the worrying state of election conditions in Serbia, especially bearing in mind the elections in April 2022.

Report “Campaign before the campaign” based on the findings of media monitoring

In contrast to earlier pre-election periods, and in the parliamentary environment without opposition, the state institutions were strongly involved in campaigning before the campaign, that is, before the election was announced. A key feature of that period was the production of narratives in favour of the government and against critical voices. The institutions of the legislative and executive authorities and the President of the Republic, as well as the most influential media, were a channel for strengthening the advantages of the incumbent majority and for building the personality cult of Aleksandar Vučić – through the promotion of work and confrontations with political opponents, civil society and the independent media. The abuse of institutional advantages also included intensive one-time cash support programmes for the population.

Conference “Elections of 2022 – from calling the election to the Election Day”

The results of the “Campaign before the campaign” research were presented to representatives of the media, state institutions and the international community. The goal of the conference was to point out the fact that the competent institutions did not sufficiently contribute to the fuller realisation of standards for free and democratic elections, and even when there were reactions to violations of the law, they did not influence the change in the behaviour of electoral actors who were abusing institutional advantages.

#Izbori2022 (INITIATIVE ISTINOMER)

[The notebook of pre-election promises](#) provided a tabular overview of the pre-election promises of the candidates in the previous elections, and at the same time helps the voters to make up their minds about voting in the upcoming elections. Through the [series of texts “Everything you wanted to know about the elections, but you had no one to ask”](#) as well as through a series of texts dedicated to the April elections, Istinomer explains various aspects: polling station and election materials, administration and acts related to the elections, information about the candidates, parties, coalitions, etc.

Campaigns inviting to the polls: “Hence, vote”, “Vote, my young friend” and invitations to citizens to check whether they are registered in the Voters’ Register

Bearing in mind that higher voter turnout always contributes to stronger legitimacy of elections, CRTA implemented the media campaign “Hence, vote”, primarily aimed at citizens who hesitate between voting and abstaining.

An online campaign “Vote, my young friend” was created specifically for young voters, which was accompanied by street actions in university centres – Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš and Kragujevac.

Citizens were invited mostly through social media, to check whether they are registered in the Voters' Register.

Campaigns aiming at higher turnout reached more than 2,000,000 people, and the number of voters was significantly higher than in previous elections.

Long-term observation

[The Crta observation mission](#) monitored the period before and during the election campaign applying [international standards for independent citizens' election observation](#). The team for long-term field observers reported on the atmosphere leading up to the elections and prepared a [Preliminary Report](#) one of the key findings of which is that citizens from socially vulnerable groups and public sector employees are exposed to daily pressures to ensure or provide support to the incumbent party. It also highlights that the practice of illegal influence on voter preferences is present not only during the pre-election period but is more pronounced during the campaign. The [Second Preliminary Report](#) indicated that the institutions responsible for the protection of voting rights did not sufficiently contribute to the fuller realisation of the standards of democratic elections.

Observation on the Election Day

2.673 observers trained according to international standards were deployed to 950 polling stations, from the beginning of preparations for their opening to the publication of the minutes of voting at the polling station, and they were supported by 65 operators in the call centre. The observation was carried out using the [Parallel Vote Tabulation Methodology](#), which enables an impartial assessment of the official results and voter response with a small but measurable possibility of error. Citizens were informed about the course of voting and turnout on the Election Day. The mission prepared a [Preliminary Report on the Election Day Monitoring](#), the main conclusion of which is that the elections at most polling stations took place in accordance with laws and procedures, but also in an atmosphere full of tensions that occasionally escalated into physical violence, with the manifest unwillingness of polling station committees to effectively organise and conduct voting.

Final Report with Recommendations

Based on the findings of long-term and short-term observation, the CRTA Election Observation Mission prepared a Final Report with recommendations, in which it assesses that the integrity of the election was significantly threatened as the equality of participants was undermined in favour of the incumbent parties; voters were deprived of equal and objective information about electoral offer, and the freedom of choice was threatened for certain groups of the population. Comprehensive changes to election laws that were implemented before the elections were called, alongside the discontinuation of a practice spanning multiple decades, burdened the election administration and contributed to legal uncertainty. The elections were marked by widespread clientelistic practices,

pressures and intimidation, pronounced media inequality and abuse of institutional advantages that blurred the line between the state and the incumbent party. Attempts to protect the integrity of the election remained without a timely institutional response and without an epilogue.

Reports have been submitted to the competent authorities

On the basis of the findings of the CRTA Observation Mission and on the basis of notifications received from citizens and their organisations, CRTA submitted 34 complaints to the Anti-Corruption Agency, the Regulatory Body of Electronic Media and the Education Inspection in connection with the observed irregularities.

Online tool Report irregularities

An online tool was developed in order to allow citizens to report violations of election-related rules and suspicions of election-related corruption, divided into 4 parts: vote buying, pressure on voters, abuse of public functions and public resources. Each part contains a form that citizens fill in to report irregularities. Almost 200 cases of potential irregularities have been reported.

Campaign to raise awareness about irregularities

“Election corruption – What is spoiling the elections?”

The most common examples of violations of election rules, i.e. electoral corruption, are shown in video form, with the aim of educating and motivating citizens to report suspicious actions using the online tool [Report irregularities](#). Through various communication channels, this campaign was seen by more than 1.000.000 people.

Recommendations for free and fair elections

Forming on the observation mission's report, a set of comprehensive recommendations was prepared with the aim of bringing the electoral process in Serbia in line with international standards for free and fair elections. The recommendations are grouped into five units: equality of campaign participants, equal media representation, freedom of choice and voting rights, protection of electoral rights and the work of the election administration.

Consulting, prioritisation of recommendations and bilateral meetings

Starting from the [Recommendations for free and fair elections](#), and from the [Conclusions of the working table on elections](#) of the Conference “Democracy: a minimal consensus”, consultations were held with experts and practitioners from the fields essential to the improvement of the electoral process on three topics: protection of voters’ rights in the electoral process through the improvement of election administration, ways to ensure equal media representation of candidates and protect the freedom of voters to form an opinion through public information and protection of freedom of choice through prevention of pressure on voters. Based on these consultations, key recommendations were extracted from the comprehensive set of suggestions, prioritised, and potential implementation methods explored.

As part of the advocacy of the recommendations, a series of meetings were held with representatives of the institutions that organise and conduct elections in Serbia (Republic Electoral Commission, local electoral commissions), as well as with representatives of other state bodies that have different roles in the election process (Anti-Corruption Agency, Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, Commissioner for Equality). The CRTA’s recommendations were presented to the largest number of parliamentary groups in the National Assembly.

Comments and suggestions relating to the Draft Rulebook on the manner of performing the obligations of public media services during the election campaign

In addition to the repeated criticism of the fact that the Regulatory Body of Electronic Media proposes that reporting rules during the pre-election period should be mandatory only for public media services and not for commercial broadcasters, during the public discussion held on February 3rd, CRTA raised a series of other concerns regarding the Draft Rulebook on the behaviour of RTS and RTV, despite the discouraging fact that the representatives of the media companies that should adhere to the Rulebook did not participate in the conversation.

Contributions to the annual reports of the European Commission and the European Parliament

Exhaustive contributions were prepared for the reports of the European Commission and the European Parliament on Serbia’s progress in the field of free and fair elections.

Research on pressures on citizens

The research was prompted by the findings of the CRTA Observation Mission and contains the testimonies of citizens who were victims or witnesses of political pressures, which are especially exacerbated in the period before the elections. Citizens often experience pressures as a form of regular party activities and legitimate struggles of political actors. Clientelism and corruption are perceived as indispensable features of political life in Serbia.

Campaign aiming to inform citizens about pressures

Onlajn kampanja je usmerila pažnju javnosti na nalaze istraživanja o pritiscima. Klipovi na YouTube kanalu Crte i kampanja na društvenim mrežama imali su skoro 850.000 reakcija i motivisali su građane da kontaktiraju Crtu i podele sopstvena iskustva s političkim pritiscima.

Organisational development



In accordance with the goals of the organisation, three programme units were consolidated – Democratic culture, Democratic institutions and Elections.



When it comes to human resources, **flexible program teams** that implement programmes within those three units have been consolidated – a team for media, law, quantitative research, qualitative research, empowerment of citizens and their initiatives, communications, elections, field campaigns, as well as teams of the Open of Parliament and Istinomer, and the programme support teams – finance, administration and IT.



Internal communication procedures have been updated, facilitating synergy between different programme teams and increasing work efficiency.



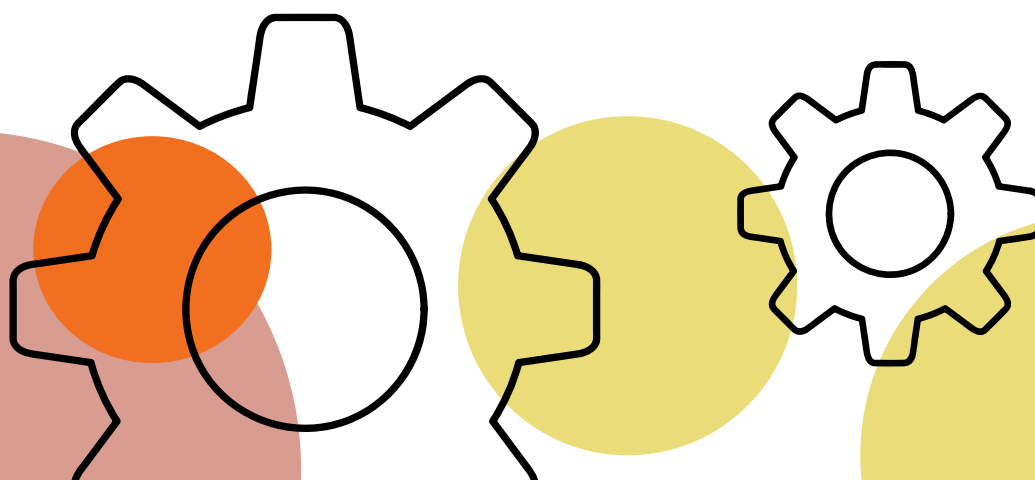
Employees and associates are trained to better understand the audience, to use modern platforms and tools for work and for crisis communications.



A comprehensive **internship programme** was launched for **young people** who want to improve their knowledge in the areas covered by CRTA, which was also a way of attracting and retaining young talents.



Around 3,800 citizens engaged through the CRTA Observation Mission are included in the “Citizens on Watch” network, through which they will participate in the CRTA’s activities in the period between elections, whenever needed. During 2022, **a part of the network underwent interviewer training** and was involved in field and telephone surveys within the scope of public opinion research.



The year in numbers

200+ content for communication with the general public was seen by about **2,000,000** people

3.810 media announcements, which is an increase of **60%** in comparison to 2021

The reach of CRTA's Facebook profile increased by **60%** in comparison to 2021, the reach of the Instagram profile by **213%** and the reach of CRTA's YouTube channel by **280%**

25+ public reports on elections, media monitoring findings, work of independent institutions, work of the National Assembly, including reports with practical policy recommendations

200+ daily briefings on the reporting of the most influential media on actors and processes of foreign and regional politics, as well as on possible manipulation of information

1.500+ citizens participated in **13** street actions across Serbia and asked MPs questions

800+ members of the CRTA Observation Mission observed the referendum in January

The campaign on political pressure on citizens engaged **850,000** people

365 days
of monitoring
political pluralism
in the media and
media representation
of foreign policy
actors

4 public
opinion surveys
on a sample
covering the
entire Serbia

236 citizens
were trained for inclusion
in the work of the National
Assembly, for analytical
monitoring of elections
and for advocating changes
in management policies
and practices through
communication with
state authorities

37 civic initiatives
across Serbia received
financial and mentoring
support for actions,
and **208** citizens
were trained
in activism

21 objections
to the work of
the Regulatory Body
of Electronic Media
were submitted

As part of the
Istinomer initiative,
72 politicians'
statements and **180** viral
contents from social
networks were
fact-checked

Almost
3.000 members
of the CRTA
Observation Mission
monitored
the general elections
in April

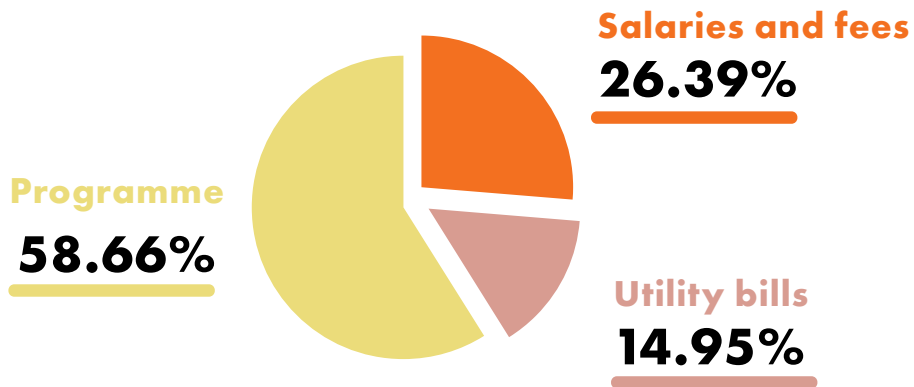
50 transcripts of
plenary sessions of
the National Assembly,
348 MPs speeches and
157 minutes of voting,
221 minutes of
committee meetings,
165 texts of adopted
laws and **8** summaries
of laws were published

Citizens reported
200+ irregularities
related to the
election process

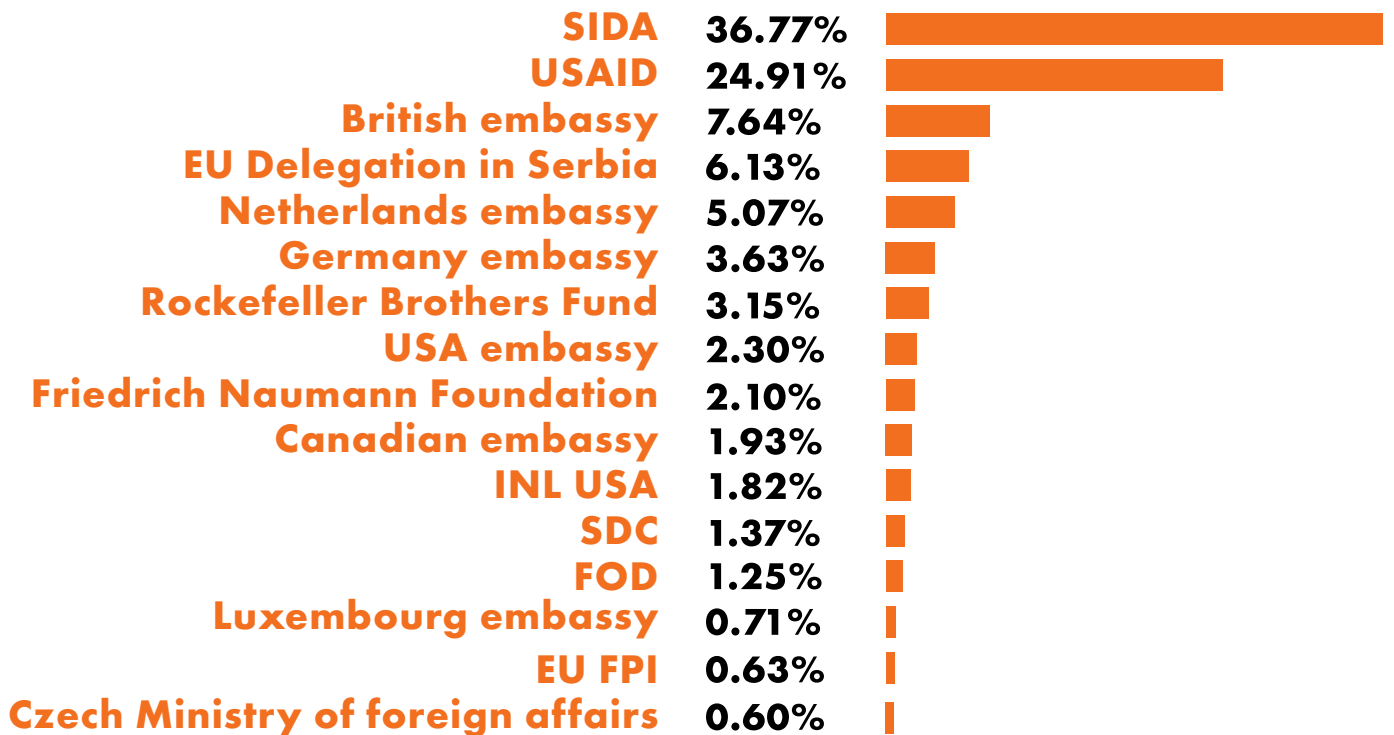
Expenses and income

Expenses: 2,816,253.50 EUR

Expense structure



Income structure



Partners

- **Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Belgrade**
- **Embassy of the United States in Belgrade**
- **European Commission**
- **Government of Canada**
- **Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg**
- **Government of the Netherlands**
- **Google**
- **Microsoft**
- **Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic**
- **Open Society Foundation Serbia**
- **OSCE**
- **Rockefeller Brothers Fund**
- **Swiss Confederation**
- **The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency**
- **United States Agency for International Development**
- **U.S. Department of State**



CRTA: