



ПРОГРАМА ЗА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНА ПОДДРШКА
PROGRAMI PËR MBËSHETJE PARLAMENTARE
PARLIAMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME



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Analysis of the public opinion no. 10/2023

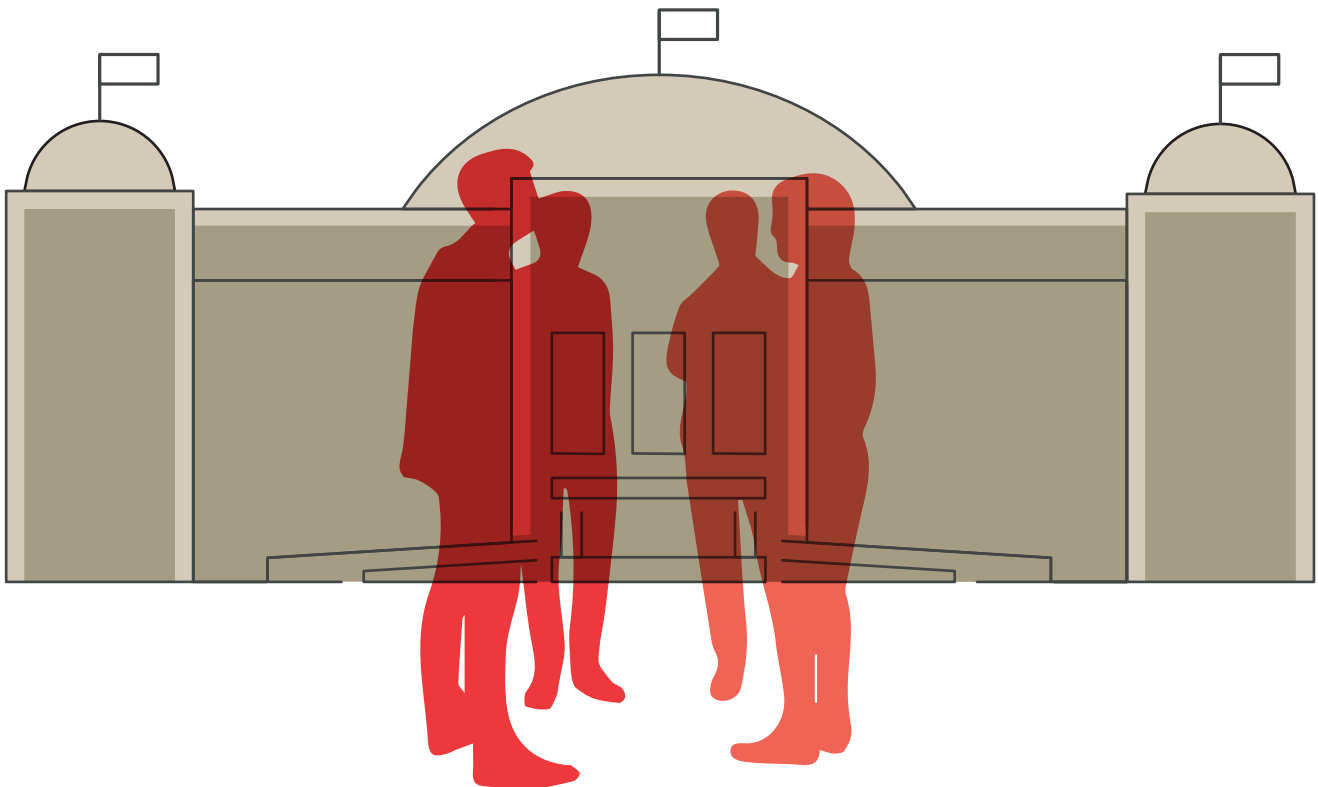
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PARLIAMENT WATCH: CITIZEN PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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MAY 2023



IMPLEMENTED BY:



This publication was prepared by the Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis - Skopje (IDSCS) within the Parliamentary Support Programme (PSP) financed by the Government of Switzerland, and implemented by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis - Skopje (IDSCS) and the Center for Change Management (CCM). The contents of this publication in no way reflects the views of the Swiss Government.

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IMPRESSUM

Title: Parliament Watch: Citizen Perceptions of the Work of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia - 2023

Publisher: Institute for Democracy 'Societas Civilis' - Skopje

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Translation from Macedonian language: Jane Bozinovski

Design: Dejan Kuzmanovski

Printing house: Royal Art

Place and date of publication

Skopje 2023

Circulation

130 copies

I. METHODOLOGY

Between February and April 2023, the Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis - Skopje, within the Parliamentary Support Programme (PSP), **implemented a combined research of a field survey and nine focus-groups in order to better analyze the public perception of the work of the Assembly and the political parties, the quality of life, the political issues and the trust in North Macedonia.** The field survey was carried out between February 22 and March 9, 2023, over in a sample of 1002 respondents over 18 years of age throughout the territory of the country, using the face-to-face method. The questionnaire used for the survey research contains 60 questions (Annex I), subject to a statistical error of $\pm 3\%$.

The focus group study was carried out in eight planning regions in North Macedonia: Skopje (the Skopje region), Shtip (the Eastern region), Gevgelija (the Southeast region), Kumanovo (the Northeast region), Bitola (the Pelagonija region), Kavadarci (the Vardar region), Struga (the Southwest region), Gostivar (the Polog region) and Tetovo (the Polog region).

The focus group discussions were carried out with 77 participants, demographically separated by age, gender, occupation, ethnicity, residence and political preference. Out of the total number of participants in terms of ethnicity, 47 were Macedonians and 28 Albanians, there was one Roma and one Vlach. In order to better grasp the differences in opinion from a demographic perspective, two focus groups were run exclusively with Albanian participants, four exclusively with Macedonian participants and three focus groups were run proportionally to the ethnic makeup of the region. The focus-group data has been analyzed thematically and has been incorporated throughout the study.

II. POLITICAL CONTEXT

In line with the Constitution, the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia has legislative power and comprises 120 MPs in this term. MPs are elected by means of proportional electoral lists for a four-year term. In line with the informal custom, in October 2019, Zoran Zaev, the prime minister of the then-government led by the Social Democrats (SDSM), announced a leadership meeting at which he proposed early parliamentary elections, the fifth¹ in a row in the country. The elections came about as a result of the fact that the country was unable to launch the negotiations with the European Union (EU) because of the French veto and the broken trust in the SDSM-led government, whose platform was mainly based on the country's uninterrupted path towards the EU. In February 2020, the Speaker of the Parliament, Talat Xhaferi, in line with his constitutional and legal powers, announced the elections² for April 12.³ Despite the plans for the parliamentary elections to be held in April, due to the deteriorating situation with the Covid 19 pandemic, they were postponed and were finally held on July 15, 2020.

At these elections, SDSM and the Mozhome coalition won 46 seats, VMRO-DPMNE and the Obnova za Makedonija coalition won 44 seats, while the Demokratska unija za integracija (Democratic Union for Integration - DUI) won 15 seats. The Alijansa za Albancite coalition and Alternativa won 12 seats, Levica won 2 seats, while the Democratic Party of the Albanians won 1 seat. A government coalition was established between SDSM and the Mozhome coalition, DUI and DPA, after several weeks of negotiations between the political parties. With this coalition, the Government secured a majority in the Parliament with 62 MPs, while the opposition was joined by VMRO-DPMNE and the Obnova za Makedonija coalition, the Alijansa za Albancite coalition, Alternativa and Levica.

At the end of 2021, the Assembly did not hold a single session from September 23, 2021, until the end of the local elections. The President of the Parliament explained that he made such a decision preemptively, in order to avoid allowing the political campaign shift to the Assembly sessions.⁴ So, in such conditions, until the end of the second electoral round of the local elections on October 31, 2021, not a single Assembly session was organized.

1 Zaev: We're off to quick, early elections, Deutsche Welle, October 19, 2019 Accessed at: <<https://p.dw.com/p/3RYux>>(last visited on: March 10, 2020)

2 A Decision for announcing early elections for MPs in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. The decision was downloaded from the website of the State Election Commission (SEC). Accessed at: <https://www.sec.mk/parlamentarni-izbori-2020/?_thumbnail_id=6946> (last visited on: March 9, 2020)

3 Pankovski, M. et al. (2020). The 2020 handbook on parliamentary elections in the Republic of North Macedonia: Second and updated edition. Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Institute for Democracy 'Societas Civilis' - Skopje

4 Slobodna Evropa radio (2021): Xhaferi announces local elections, the Assembly is to close down during the campaign. Accessed at: <<https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/31397318.html>> (last visited on March 30, 2022)

The majority in the Assembly will be changed in November 2021, after the local elections. After Zoran Zaev announced his resignation from the position of the leader of SDSM and Prime Minister, Dvizenje Besa (Besa Movement) joined the opposition in an attempt to achieve a no-confidence vote for the SDSM-led government. The no-confidence vote initiative failed due to the change of heart of one of the MPs from Dvizenje Besa. After the negotiations that lasted for weeks, SDSM managed to form a coalition with the opposition Alternativa, and thus as of December 2021, the Assembly started with its regular work with a new majority formed by SDSM and the coalition of DUI, DPA and Alternativa, with a total of 64 MPs. On December 29, 2021, President Pendarovski gave Dimitar Kovacevski, who was elected President of the ruling SDSM after Zaev's resignation, the mandate to establish a new government. On January 16, 2022, with 62 votes 'for' and 46 'against' and with no abstentions, the Assembly voted the new Government, and Dimitar Kovacevski was elected as its new president.⁵

During the French presidency of the European Council, on June 30, 2022, a negotiating framework for the EU accession negotiations was enacted for North Macedonia in accordance with the new enlargement methodology. During the first intergovernmental conference, the general position of the EU was proposed. The negotiating framework, known as the French Proposal, was published by the government on June 1,⁶ during the Assembly hearing on the proposal on its 81st session, between July 14 and 16, 2022.⁷ On July 16, the Assembly adopted the conclusions for the French Proposal with 68 votes 'for', and the opposition, that is VMRO-DPMNE and Levica (the Left Party)⁸, were absent.

During February and March 2023, the Assembly discussed the election of new ministers and deputy ministers, that is a reconstruction of the Government. This reconstruction came about after Alijansa za Albancite (Alliance for Albanians) entered the ruling majority which caused their partner, the party Alternativa (Alternative), to move to the opposition.⁹ The 104th Assembly session was held in 12 extensions, where the dismissal of ministers and deputy ministers was discussed, along with the appointment of new ones. Some of the ministries were assumed by the new governmental partner, Alijansa za Albancite.

One of the main criticisms from the European Union for this mandate of the Assembly was the adoption of a large number of laws using an expedited procedure and EU-flagging them.¹⁰ The use of an expedited procedure to adopt legislation results in legal insecurity, ill-conceived laws and dysfunctional, costly processes that they are trying to regulate, while citizens are left in the dark about the consequences of

5 Zekjirovic, E. (2022) Dimitar Kovacevski assumes the position of prime minister from Zoran Zaev. Accessed from: <[https://www.aa.com.tr/mk// Dimitar Kovacevski assumes the position of prime minister - from - Zoran Zaev/2475876](https://www.aa.com.tr/mk//Dimitar%20Kovacevski%20assumes%20the%20position%20of%20prime%20minister%20-%20from%20-%20Zoran%20Zaev/2475876)>

6 The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia (2022) The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia publishes the proposal of the French presidency. Accessed from: <https://vlada.mk/node/29432>

7 The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (2022) 81st Assembly session. Accessed from: <https://www.sobranie.mk/detali-na-sednica.nsp?sessionId=cbbb67ad-f889-4c4f-9aa4-a611a9f9d157>

8 Deutsche Welle (2022) The Assembly votes in support of the French Proposal conclusions. Accessed from: <https://www.dw.com/mk/собранието-ги-изгласа-заклучоците-за-францускиот-предлог/a-62498288>

9 Ognen Chancharevic (2023) The Assembly selects the new Government ministers. Accessed from: <<https://mk.voanews.com/a/6981395.html>>

10 European Commission: 2022 North Macedonia Report https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/north-macedonia-report-2022_en

certain laws that are not examined thoroughly at the Assembly. The tactic of EU-flagging legislation in order to circumvent the legislative process and the parliamentary debate was considered unwarranted by the European Union delegation to North Macedonia.¹¹

Generally speaking, the effectiveness of this parliamentary composition has been greatly reduced, both because of the conditions it is operating in due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the active blockades by MPs from different political parties, the use of filibustering methods, as well as due to the political instability about the EU-integration process and the fragile parliamentary majority. The lack of stability and the obstruction of laws important for the well-being of citizens have a negative effect on citizens' quality of life.

¹¹ A1on (2023) EC Delegation: Use of 'EU flag' procedure should be limited and used only when justified. Accessed from: <<https://a1on.mk/macedonia/delegacija-na-ek-oznachuvanje-na-zakoni-so-evropsko-zname-da-se-ograni-chi-i-da-se-upotrebuva-samo-koga-e-opravdano/>>

III. SUMMARY

The research implemented in 2023 shows that citizen perception of the work in the Assembly is generally in line with the public opinion shared in the last four years. Such attitudes have remained virtually unchanged in terms of most of the questions related to the Assembly functions, its openness towards the public, the work of the MPs and the reforms in the Assembly. On a scale of 1 - the worst to 5 - the best, for 2023, citizens gave the work of the Assembly an average score of 2.2, which is lower than in the last four years.

■ HOW WELL ARE CITIZENS INFORMED ABOUT THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

Virtually all of citizens believe that the Assembly plays a significant role in the country's political life, but more than half of respondents are not well acquainted with the work done by the Assembly in the past. In terms of the work carried out by this MP composition that stood out the most, the majority of the surveyed citizens chose *the Draft Law for Amending and Supplementing the Law on Minimum Wage and Information sheet on the Content of the Draft Negotiating Framework for the EU Accession Negotiations of the Republic of North Macedonia, proposed on June 30, 2022 by the French presidency of the Council of the European Union*. The television is still the most popular information source among citizens when it comes to the work of the Assembly, while the Assembly TV-channel and website are still underutilized as official information sources for Assembly-related matters.

■ ASSEMBLY CONTROL AND OVERSIGHT OF THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT

The perception of most of citizens is that the Assembly does not exercise fully its constitutional authority to control the Government, ie. 27% of respondents believe that the Government has absolute control over the Assembly. Nearly half (46%) of respondents believe that the Assembly has exacerbated corruption, rather than achieving the opposite effect. Bearing in mind the MP questions as one of the tools of the Assembly to supervise the executive government, citizens are divided in their opinion whether they are being used appropriately or to criticize or advertise.

■ FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Even though the perception of most of citizens is that the MPs influence the quality of the legislation, they are unhappy with their quality and believe that they are being amended frequently. It is precisely the adoption of the best quality legislation possible, the supervision of the spending of the budget and the care invested in the implementation of laws and policies that most of citizens highlighted as the key functions of the Assembly. Still, the bulk of citizens believe that the Assembly does a poor job of executing these functions.

■ THE PUBLIC IN THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

When it comes to the openness of the Assembly towards the public, most of respondents believe that the Assembly is fully or partially closed to the public, and the MPs do not consider the remarks of the public when drafting the laws. Most of citizens believe that the MPs from their constituencies are unavailable for citizen meetings and fail to inform citizens of their work to a sufficient extent, and they do not even know about the MP offices. Citizens remark that the MPs do not pay sufficient attention to the issues faced by the municipalities and the local communities.

Unlike in the previous year, citizens are less aware of who the MPs in their constituencies are. Most stated that they have not been informed about the ways in which they can participate in the work of the Assembly, which has resulted in the fact that only a handful of respondents have attempted to participate in the work of the Assembly.

■ WHO DO THE MPS IN THE ASSEMBLY REPRESENT?

Respondents are relatively divided in terms of their impression about the degree to which the MPs represent the interests of citizens in the Assembly. On the other hand, most of them believe that the MPs always represent their personal interests, the interests of the political parties as well as the interests of the businesses. A major portion of citizens that were surveyed also believe that the MPs are to some extent dependent on the will of the leaders of the political parties they hail from.

■ THE DEBATE IN THE ASSEMBLY

The majority of citizens believe that most of the MPs are not ready to make decisions on behalf of citizens. In addition, half of them believe that the MP statements have weak arguments, if any. Citizens believe that civic associations should be allowed to be more involved in the work of the Assembly. When it comes to the relationship between MPs, most of citizens have described it as hostile and competitive. In addition, citizens are under the impression that MPs at their sessions frequently or always use demeaning and degrading language with colleagues from other political parties. Citizens have a negative perception (it does not contribute at all or only partially) when it comes to all coalitions and parties and their contribution to better quality work of the Assembly.

■ REFORMS

In terms of the reform processes of the country, citizens are generally divided in their impression of the readiness of the Assembly to implement reforms that would normalize the political crisis. Most citizens believe that neither the boycott of the work of the Assembly nor delays of the debates in order to prevent the adoption of a law is a valid method for expressing political opinion in the work of the Assembly. Citizens agree that the political crises should be resolved in the Assembly, rather than by meetings of political party heads behind closed doors. Respondents are generally confused about the benefits of electoral reforms such as the introduction of open lists or single constituencies, however, most respondents believe that the change of the electoral model could make the MPs less dependent on their party leaders. Respondents failed to identify a dominant marginalized group whose interests are the focus of MP representation.

■ POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Most citizens believe that the life in this country has headed in the wrong direction in comparison to citizens believing the opposite. The biggest optimists are citizens in the southwestern part of the country, where more than half have responded that life is moving in the right directions. Most of the negative responses, that is the statement that life is headed in the wrong direction, came from the Vardar region, the Southeast region, the Pelagonija region, the Polog region and the Northeast region. In terms of trust, on a scale of 1 - lowest to 10 - highest, citizens gave the highest score to the President of the country - 3.6, then the Assembly - 3.4 and the Government - 3.3. The judiciary received the lowest score of 2.7.

IV.

HOW WELL ARE CITIZENS INFORMED ABOUT THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY



IV. HOW WELL ARE CITIZENS INFORMED ABOUT THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

The perception of citizens in terms of the role of the Assembly in the political life of the country has not changed in the last two years. The 2023 results show that more than half of citizens surveyed (60%) believe that the role of the Assembly is significant, while 31% of citizens believe that the role of the Assembly is insignificant. Nearly one in 10 respondents do not know if the Assembly is significant, which points to the lack of knowledge or lack of interest in the work of the Assembly (Chart 1). This perception of the role of the Assembly is poorer compared to 2022, when 71% believed that the Assembly plays a significant role.

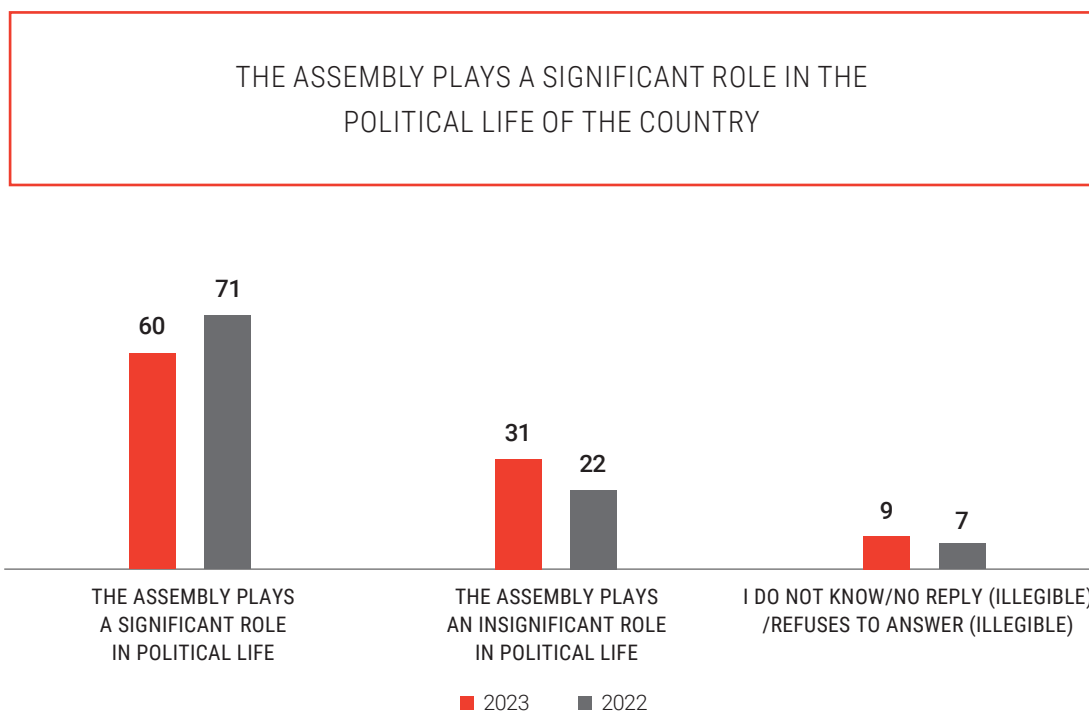


Chart 1. What is the role of the Assembly in the political life in North Macedonia? (%)

In terms of the work of the current composition of MPs, that was elected at the July 2020 elections, 41% of citizens responded that they are partially or fully aware of what the MPs have accomplished from January until December 2022, while 60% responded that they are aware of the work of the MPs only superficially or not at all. In comparison to the results from last year, when 42% of citizens responded that they are aware of what the MPs have accomplished in 2022, and 58% were not aware, one can recognize a decline in interest of citizens in terms of what was being done in the Assembly (Chart 2).

THE CITIZENS ARE NOT AWARE OF WHAT THE ASSEMBLY HAS ACCOMPLISHED IN 2022

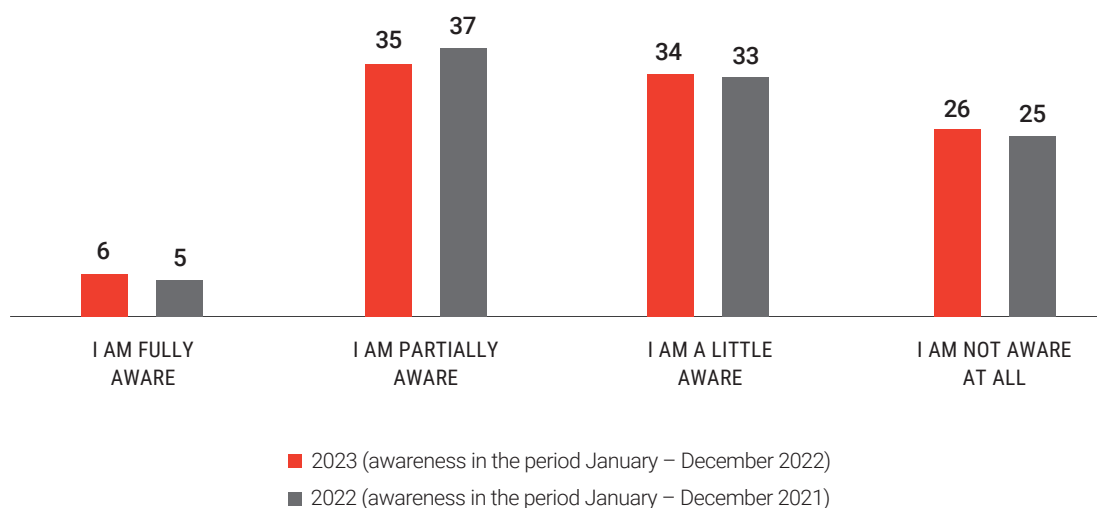


Chart 2. To what extent do you believe that you are aware of what the Assembly has accomplished? (%)

When asked what would be the most characteristic accomplishment in the work of the MPs in 2022, the things that left the greatest impression on citizens were the Draft law for amending and supplementing the Law on minimum wage (39%), then, according to their answers, the information sheet on the content of the draft negotiating framework for the EU accession negotiations of the Republic of North Macedonia, proposed on June 30, 2022 by the French presidency of the Council of the European Union (35%), and then the 2023 Draft budget of the Republic of North Macedonia (33%). The harmonization of the Criminal Code to the Istanbul Convention was mentioned by only 4% of respondents. (Chart 3).

THE ASSEMBLY REMEMBERED MAINLY DUE TO THE DRAFT LAW ON
MINIMUM WAGE AND THE FRENCH PROPOSAL

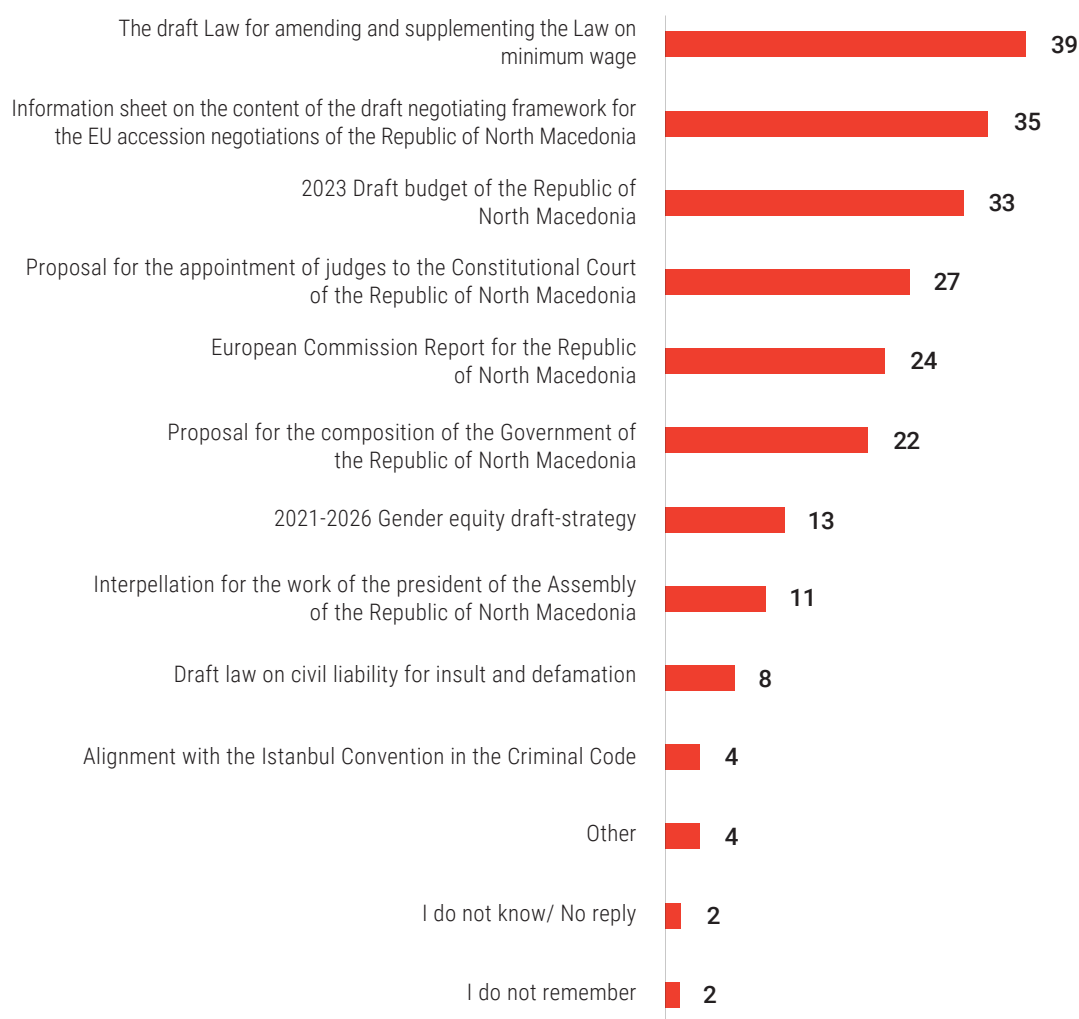


Chart 3. What will you remember year 2022 in the Assembly by? (%)

We asked respondents how satisfied they were with the work of the Assembly in the previous year, 2022. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means they are not satisfied at all, while 5 means they are really satisfied, they assessed their satisfaction with the work of the Assembly for the previous year with an average score of 2.1. Most of them (38%) gave a score of 1 for their satisfaction from the work of the Assembly, while half of respondents (51%) gave a score of 2 (26%) or 3 (23%). Around 10% of respondents said they were satisfied - 4 (9%) or quite satisfied 5 (2%) with the work of the Assembly in the previous year, 2022 (Chart 4).

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY IN THE PAST (JANUARY - DECEMBER 2022) ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5 (WHERE 1 IS THE LOWEST, WHILE 5 IS THE HIGHEST SCORE)

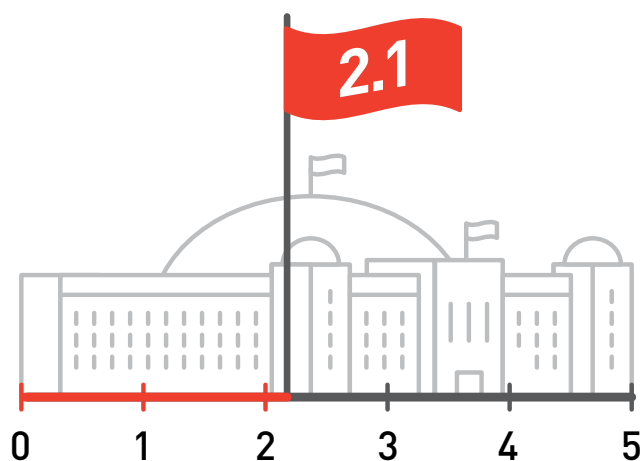


Chart 4. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 means you are not satisfied at all, while 5 means you are quite satisfied), how satisfied are you with the work of the Assembly in the last year?

For the work of the Assembly, more than half of citizens that were surveyed usually keep up to date by using television (63%), while 29% of citizens get their updates from internet portals and the social networks. A mere 5% of citizens that were surveyed answered they are getting updated from the TV-channel of the Assembly, while only 2% of citizens that were surveyed are using the Assembly website. 26% of respondents answered that they are getting informed about the work of the Assembly through internet news portals, while 12% of respondents answered they do not want to get updated about the Assembly or that they are not interested (Chart 5).

TELEVISION, SOCIAL NETWORKS AND INTERNET PORTALS ARE THE MOST
FREQUENTLY USED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

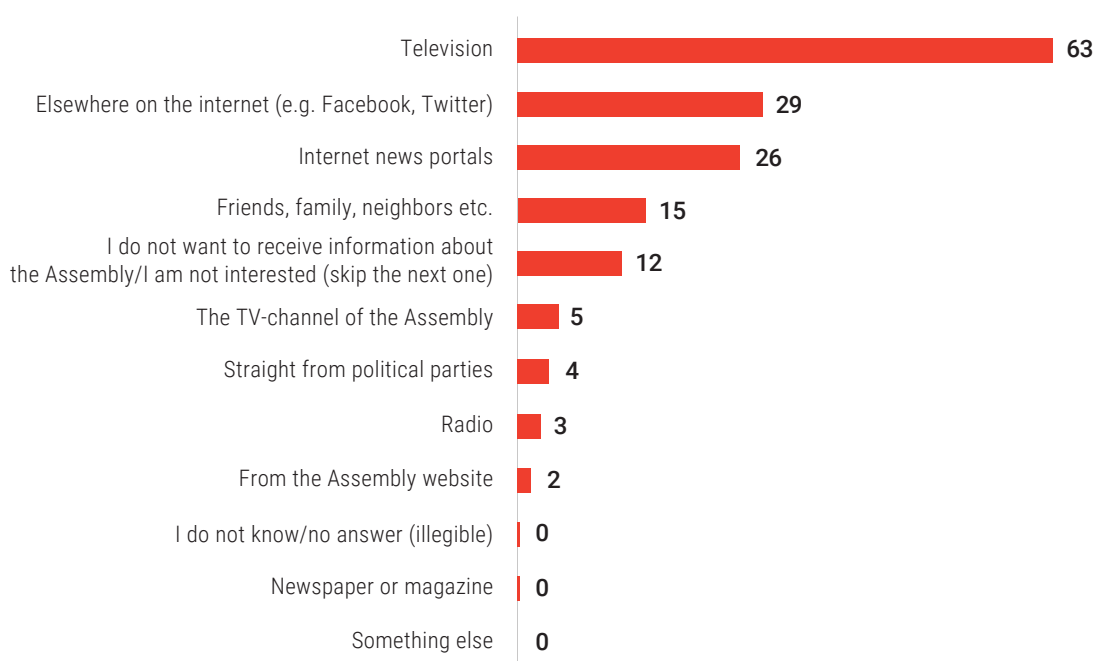


Chart 5. If you would like to get informed about the work of the Assembly, what source of information do you use the most? (%)

If the analysis is carried out according to the age of respondents, television is the main source of information about the Assembly for all age groups except the youngest respondents. Television is the main source for citizens at an age 30 and above, while respondents aged 18 to 29 use the internet and social networks as their main source of information. The official sources for information about the Assembly, the TV-channel and the website of the Assembly, remain underutilized by citizens. Thus, the TV channel of the Assembly is the most popular among the most senior group of citizens (65+), 9% of which stated that they are using it as their main source of information. The Assembly website, on the other hand, remains used marginally by all age groups (Chart 5.1).

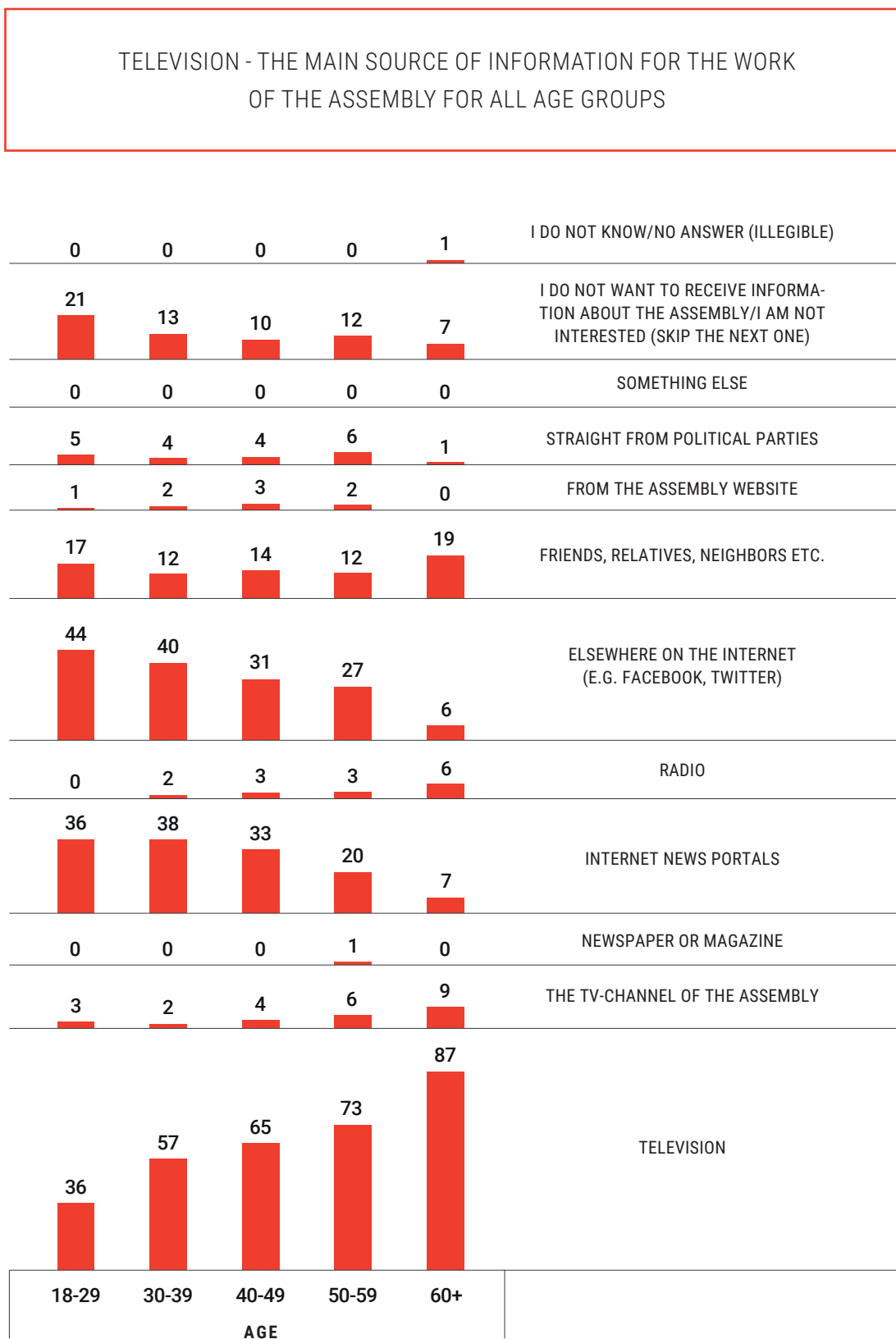


Chart 5.1. Sources of information for the work of the Assembly by age group (%)

When they were asked what type of content should be more prevalent on the TV channel of the Assembly, 15% of citizens believed that there should be more expert interpretations of the laws and amendments that were adopted, 14% of citizens thought that more political debates on topics related to the work of the Assembly are needed, 11% stated that they would like to see more educational content on the legislative process and the work of the Assembly, while 12% responded that there is a need for more promotional content for the opportunities available to citizens for the opportunities available to citizens to get involved in the work of the Assembly and to have meetings with the MPs. According to respondents, the next things we need include: a presentation of the activities of the parliamentary groups (11%), field visits of the parliamentary committees (12%), talk shows (11%), while 7% of respondents would like more content related to the diplomatic activities and events of the MPs (Chart 6).

INTERPRETATIONS OF EXPERTS, POLITICAL DEBATES AND EDUCATIONAL CONTENT ARE THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER CONTENT AT THE TV CHANNEL OF THE ASSEMBLY



Chart 6. What kind of content do you believe should be more represented on the TV channel of the Assembly? (%)

In terms of the type of content citizens believe should be more available on the website of the Assembly, 13% of respondents claimed that they would like to have an opportunity for communication with the MPs and the same share of respondents answered that they would like to be able to ask the MPs questions (13%). The next thing on the list of available content, according to the replies of citizens, should be recordings of the public debates (12%) and the speeches of the MPs (8%). Each of the following three categories was supported by 6% of respondents: more educational content for the role and competences of the Assembly, the voting process of the MPs on certain points and more information about and the degree of the activity of their MPs. Citizens, in addition, would like to be able to use the website to watch the adoption of laws in all its phases (4%), live streams of the parliamentary sessions (6%) and to have the committee proceedings available (5%) (Chart 7).

THE MOST DEMANDED CONTENT ON THE WEBSITE OF THE ASSEMBLY IS A MORE ACTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH THE MPS (%)

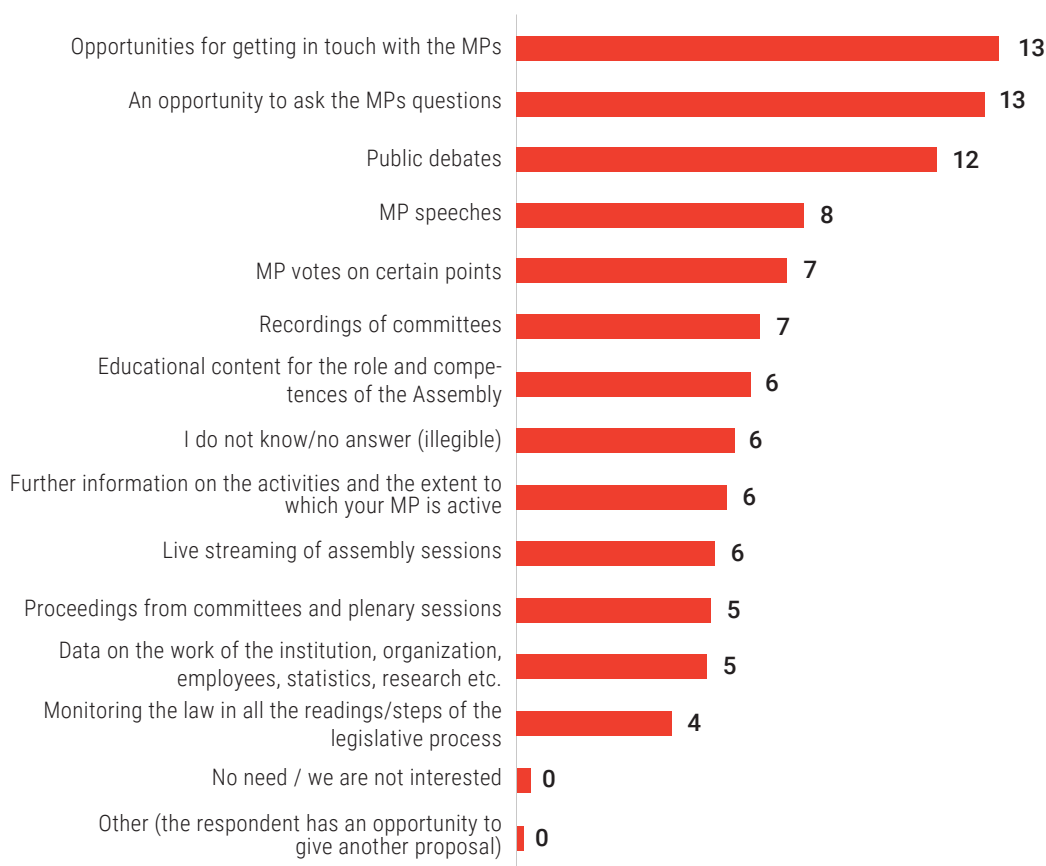


Chart 7. What type of content you believe should be available on the website of the Assembly? (%)

For 68% of respondents, the information they receive through the media are fully or partially sufficient so that they are up to date with the most important legal regulations discussed or voted in the Assembly, 24% of which believe the information is completely available to them, while 44% think they are partially available. On the other hand, 29% of respondents believe that the information published by the media is partially sufficient or insufficient for them to be able to be up to date with the laws adopted by the MPs, 17% of which think they are partially insufficient, while 12% think they are not sufficient at all. In comparison to 2022, this perception of citizens remains relatively the same. (Chart 8).

THE INFORMATION FROM THE MEDIA ARE SUFFICIENT SO THAT THEY ARE UPDATED WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT LEGAL REGULATIONS THAT ARE BEING DISCUSSED OR VOTED FOR IN THE ASSEMBLY

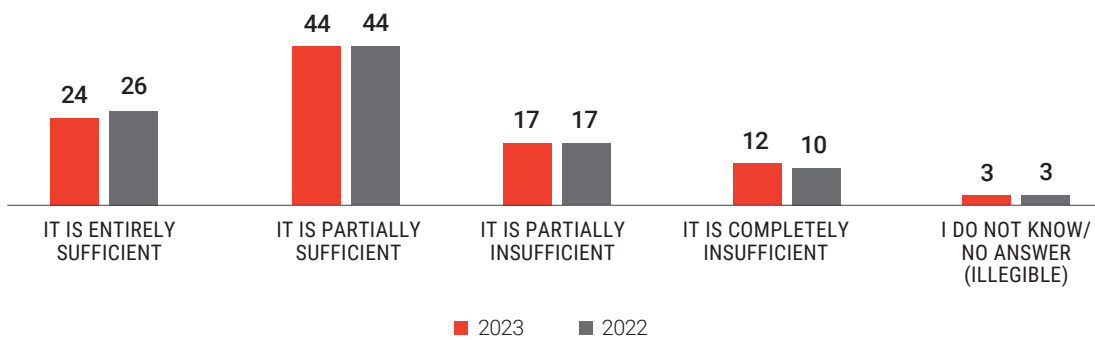


Chart 8. To what extent is the information you receive through the media for the work of the Assembly sufficient so that you are up to date with the most important legal amendments? (%)



**ASSEMBLY CONTROL
AND OVERSIGHT OF THE
EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT**



V. ASSEMBLY CONTROL AND OVERSIGHT OF THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT

The perception of citizens is that the executive government has greater control over the Assembly than the control the Assembly exercises over the Government, in line with its constitutional authority. Respondents grade the degree of control which, in their view, the Assembly has over the Government, that is the Government over the Assembly. Namely, on a scale from -3, which means that the Government has full control over the Assembly to 3, which means that the Assembly has full control over the Government, 27% of respondents stated that the Government has full control over the Assembly, while a mere 4% of citizens believe that the Assembly has full control over the Government. Furthermore, 30% of citizens stated that the Government is in control over the Assembly, but they still believe that this control is not complete, that is the Assembly exhibits a certain degree of independence. On the other hand, 12% of citizens believe that the Assembly is in control over the Government, but that this control is not complete, that is the Government exhibits a certain degree of independence. 27% of respondents had no specific opinion on the extent of the control the Assembly has over the Government, that is the amount of control the Government exercises over the Assembly (Chart 9).

THE CITIZENS BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS
GREATER CONTROL OVER THE ASSEMBLY

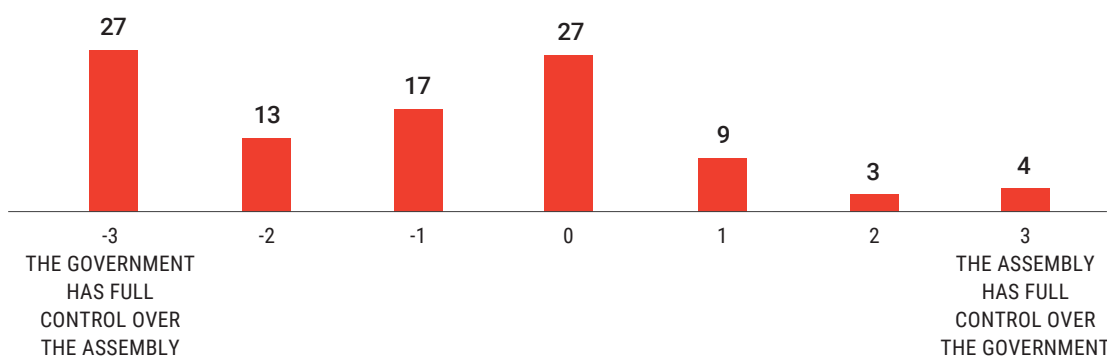


Chart 9. To what extent does the Assembly have control over the Government, that is the Government over the Assembly?

Bearing in mind the legislative and supervisory role of the Assembly and its role over the societal processes, we asked citizens about what role they think the Assembly has in the fight against corruption. According to 37% of respondents, the Assembly neither reduces nor fuels corruption in the country, while virtually half (46%) believe the Assembly contributes to increasing corruption, which means that the perception has worsened in comparison to 2022, when more than a third of citizens were of the same opinion. Unlike last year, when 12% of respondents believed the Assembly helps reduce corruption, in 2023 only 7% of respondents believe that the work of the Assembly contributes to the reduction in corruption (Chart 10).

THE ASSEMBLY NEITHER REDUCES, NOR FUELS CORRUPTION

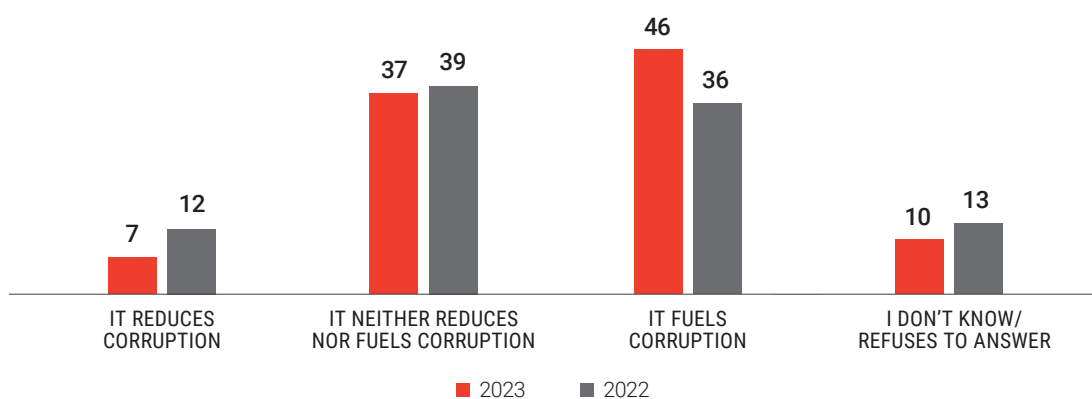


Chart 10. In your opinion, what kind of role does the Assembly have in the fight against corruption? (%)

In terms of the MP questions, that are one of the instruments that the Assembly uses to control the work of the ministries and the Government in general, more than half of respondents (58%) partially or fully agree that the MP questions are used “to advertise the Government”. More than half of citizens (52%) also partially or fully agree that they are used to “criticize the Government”. The MP questions “provide for supervision of the work of the ministries” according to 46% of respondents, while 47% of respondents partially or fully agree that the questions are useful “for the Government to report in front of the MPs” and “for informing citizens about the work of the Government and the other institutions”. 47% believe that they “have a bearing on ensuring institutional accountability”. Generally speaking, citizens are divided between whether they believe that the MP questions are used suitably or for criticism or advertisement (Chart 11).

THE MP QUESTIONS AS A TOOL FOR CRITICISM OR ADVERTISEMENT

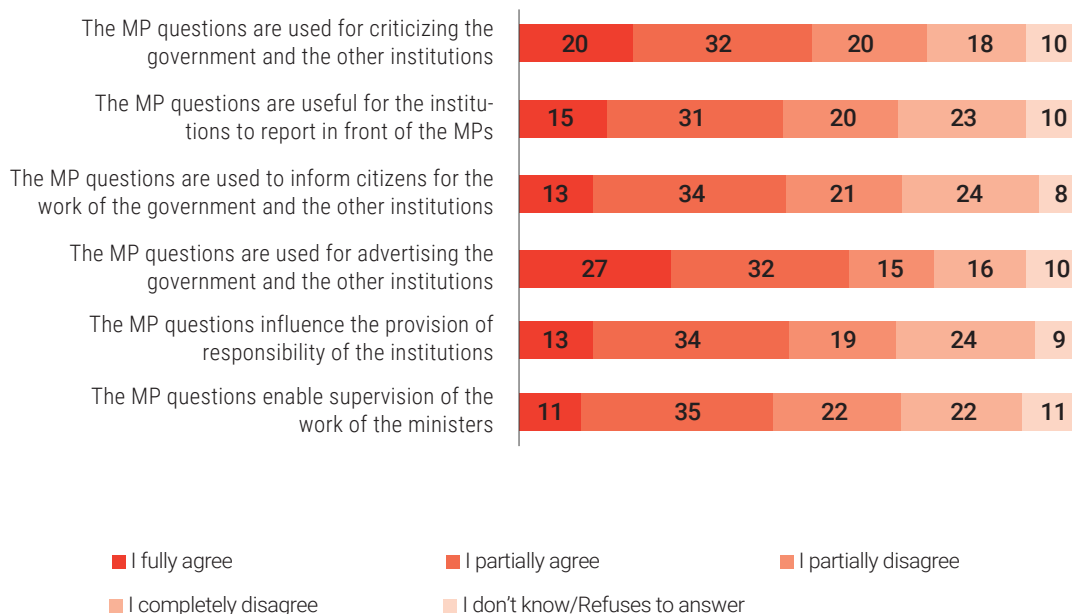


Chart 11. The MP questions (%)

VI.

FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY



VI. FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY

More than half (58%) of citizens believe that the MPs influence the quality of the laws moderately or a lot. On the other hand, 38% of respondents believe that the MPs influence the quality of the laws moderately or not at all, while 3% of citizens stated that they are undecided on this issue (Chart 12).

THE CITIZENS BELIEVE THAT THE MPs SERIOUSLY INFLUENCE THE QUALITY OF THE LAWS

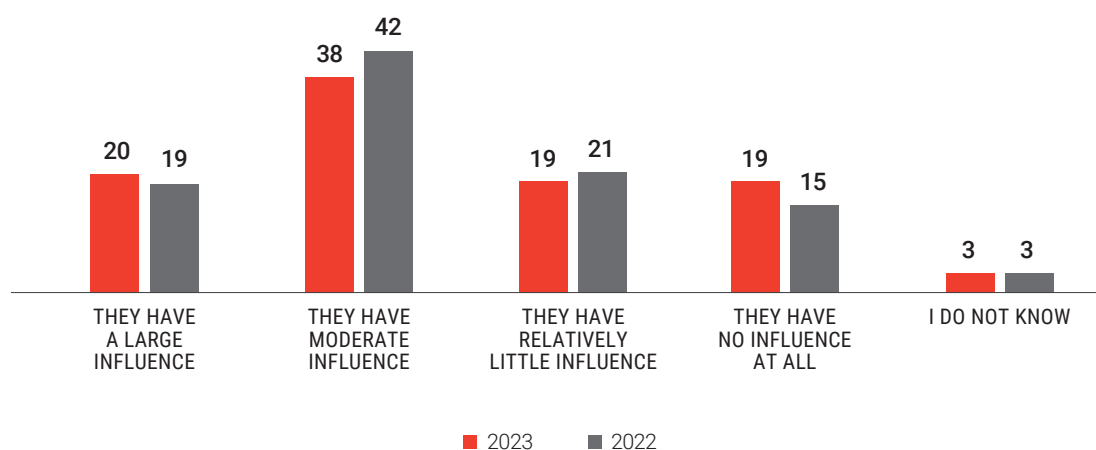


Chart 12. To what extent do the MPs influence the quality of the laws in our country? (%)

Still, despite the fact that most citizens believe that the MPs have some influence on the quality of the laws, 65% of respondents are fully or partially dissatisfied by their quality, which is worse than 2022 by 9%, when 56% of respondents were of that opinion. On the other hand, only a third of respondents believe that the quality of the laws is good or moderately good (33%). This situation, in comparison to the previous period, marks a minor, but significant worsening of the perception (Chart 13).

MOST OF THE CITIZENS ARE PARTIALLY OR FULLY DISSATISFIED BY THE QUALITY OF THE LAWS

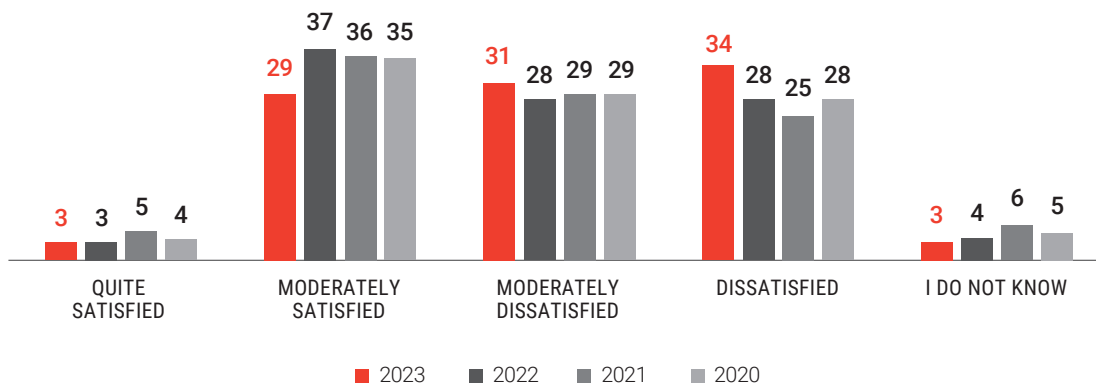


Chart 13. How pleased are you by the quality of the laws enacted in the Assembly? (%)

More than half of respondents (54%) believe that the laws in North Macedonia are being amended frequently or too frequently; 24% of respondents believe the laws are amended too frequently, and 30% believe they are amended frequently. According to 29% of respondents, the laws are being amended in sufficient frequency. Only 9% of respondents believe the laws are being amended rarely, out of which 7% think they are being amended rarely, and 2% too rarely. Bearing in mind the results from past years, one may conclude that, generally speaking, citizens believe that the laws are being amended too frequently (Chart 14).

THE LAWS ARE BEING AMENDED FREQUENTLY OR TOO FREQUENTLY

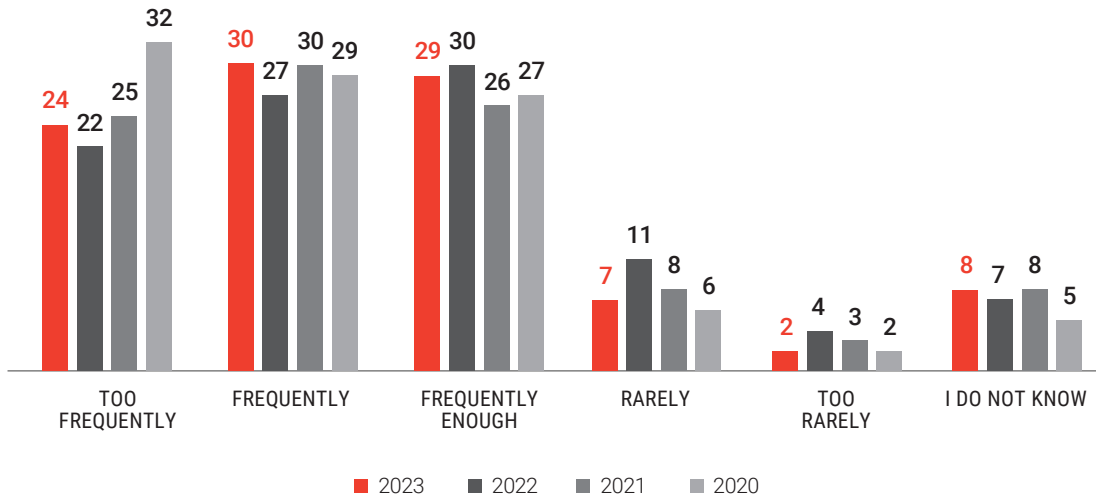


Chart 14. How frequently are the laws being amended? (%)

On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 means not important at all, and 10 means very important), respondents assessed the importance of specific functions of the Assembly. Respondents were also asked to score the extent to which they believe the MPs carry out these functions on a scale of 1 to 10. Thus, it is believed that the most important function of the Assembly is to supervise the way the state budget is being spent, and this function received a score of 8.7. The second spot, with a mean score of 8.6, was awarded to the functions of the Assembly to adopt the highest quality laws possible, to take care of the way in which the laws and policies are implemented, and to control the Government and the ministries. However, citizens believe that the MPs are carrying out these functions only partially, that is the budget supervision received a score of 4.4, while the adoption of higher quality laws, caring about how the laws are implemented and the control of the Government and the ministries received a score of 4.3.

The functions of organizing public debates and enabling the public to participate in the drafting of the laws and policies were awarded the mean scores of 8.3 and 8.2, respectively. In terms of how citizens assess the extent to which these functions are implemented, the organization of public debates received a score of 4.1, while the extent to which the function of organizing meetings with citizens and enabling the public to participate in the drafting of laws and policies received a score of 3.9.

According to citizens, the least important function of the Assembly is to adopt as many laws and legal amendments as possible, and it received a mean score of 7.9. Respondents believe that even though they think this is the least important, compared to the other functions of the Assembly that were itemized, this is precisely what the MPs did the most - which received a score of 5.1, that is the highest mean score in comparison to the extent to which the Assembly fulfills its basic functions (Chart 15).

A MEAN SCORE ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 10 IN REGARDS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY ARE FULFILLED BY THE MPs

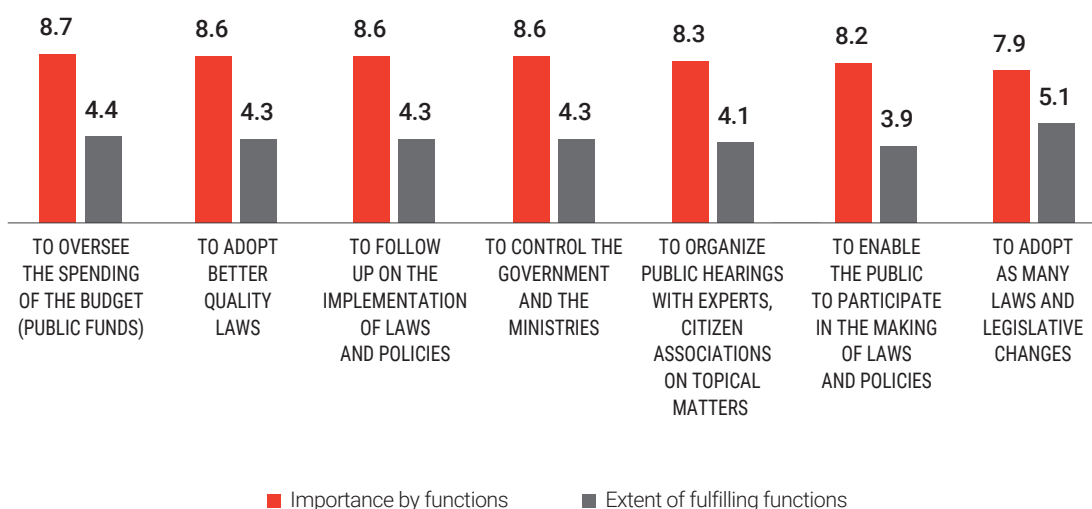


Chart 15. A mean score on a scale from 1 to 10 in regards to the importance of the functions of the Assembly and the extent to which they are fulfilled by the MPs

VII.

THE PUBLIC IN THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY



VII. THE PUBLIC IN THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

Во поглед на отвореноста на Собранието кон јавноста, две третини од испитаниците (65%) сметаат дека Собранието е целосно или делумно затворено за јавноста што претставува зголемување за 6 процентни споредено со 2022 година (59%), односно за 10 процентни поени споредено со 2021 година (55%). Собранието е целосно или делумно отворено за учество на јавноста според 26% од испитаниците, додека 9% од нив немаат мислење за оваа прашање. Имајќи ги предвид резултатите од минатиот период, може да се забележи дека оваа година има мало влошување на перцепцијата на граѓаните за отвореноста на Собранието (графикон 16).

THE ASSEMBLY IS FULLY OR PARTIALLY CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

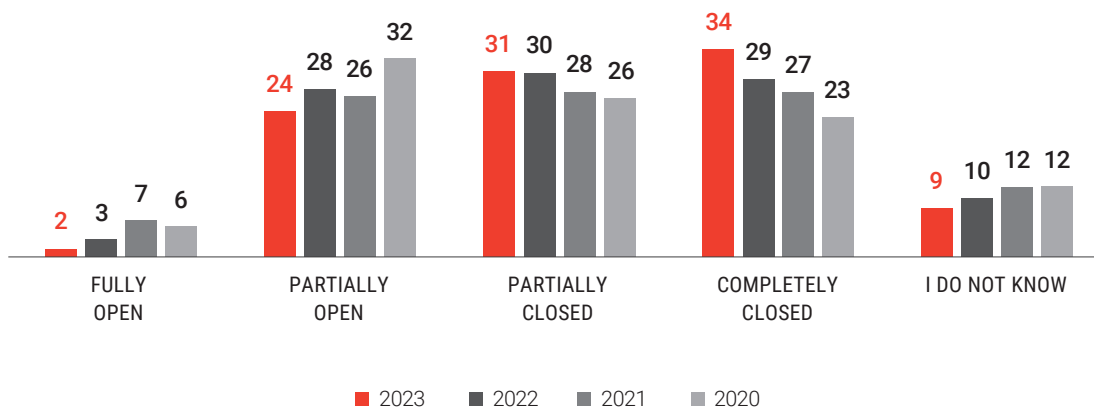


Chart 16. To what extent do you believe that the assembly is open to public participation in its work? (%)

Virtually two thirds of respondents (62%) believe that the MPs are inaccessible for the remarks from the public and the civic organizations when they draft laws. Out of them, 32% believe that the remarks are given rarely, while 30% believe that the MPs fully ignore them. According to 9% of respondents, the MPs frequently or always take the proposals of the public and the organizations into account, while 23% of respondents believe that the MPs seldomly consider the remarks from the public and the civic organizations when they draft the laws. In comparison to the previous year, the percentage of citizens who believe that the MPs never take into account the remarks of the public have increased by 4 percentage points in 2023 (2022 - 26%). (Chart 17).

THE MPs RARELY OR NEVER TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE REMARKS OF THE PUBLIC WHEN THEY ARE DRAFTING LAWS

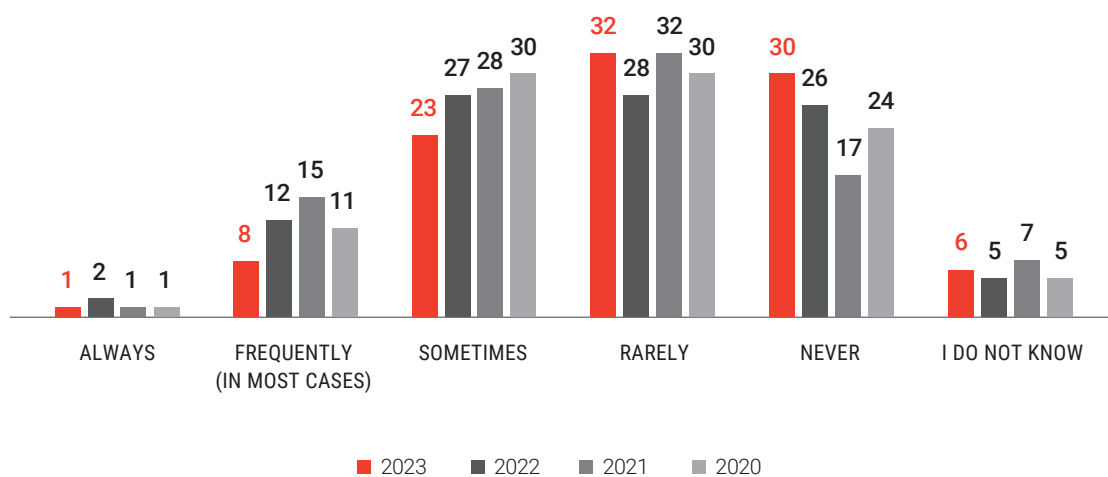


Chart 17. How often do MPs consider the remarks from the public and the civic organizations when they draft the laws? (%)

The names of the MPs from their constituency/municipality/region were read to respondents. Thus, virtually half of citizens (46%) were not familiar with the names of the MPs from their constituency/municipality/region. More than half of respondents (52%) gave an affirmative answer to the question whether they know who their elected representatives from their constituency/region/municipality in the Assembly are. In comparison with the previous year, when 38% of respondents answered they do not know the representatives from their constituency, in 2023 this figure has increased by 8 percentage points. This change is partly due to the frequent changes of the MP mandates for mayor and executive positions (Chart 18).

THE CITIZENS ARE FAMILIAR WITH THEIR MPs

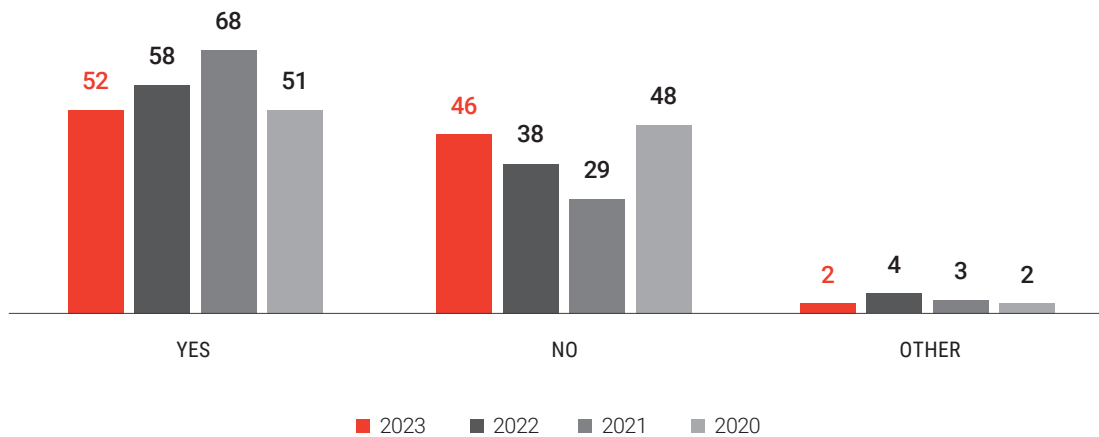


Chart 18. Do you know the name of the MP in your constituency? (%)

More than half of respondents believe that the MPs from their constituencies are unavailable for meetings (53%). 20% of respondents believe that the MPs are available for meetings. In comparison to the past, this year the perception of the availability of the MPs has declined, so in comparison to 2022, when 25% of respondents believed that the MP from their region was available for a meeting, in 2023 this percentage has reduced by 5 percentage points. A little more than a quarter (27%) of respondents are not informed about the availability of their representatives (Chart 19).

FOR THE CITIZENS, THE MPs ARE UNAVAILABLE FOR MEETINGS

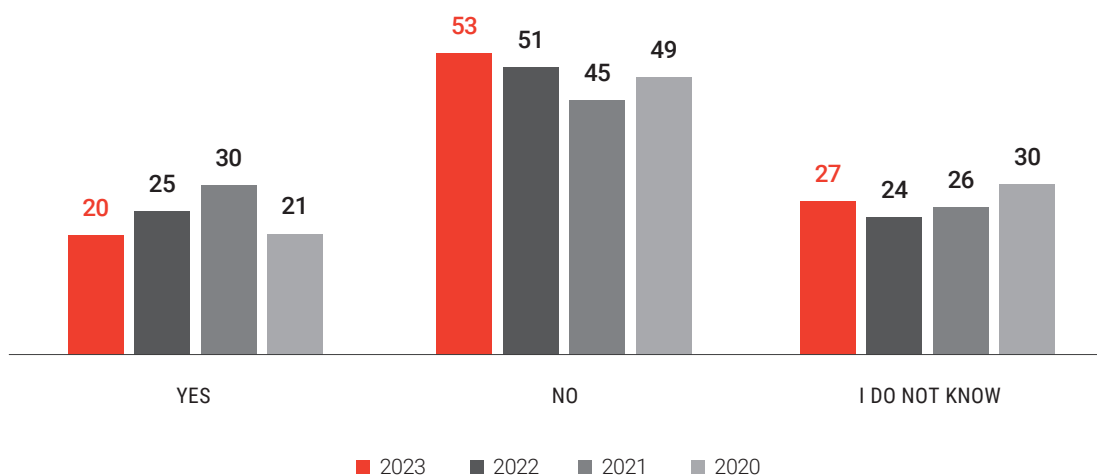


Chart 19. The MP from your region (municipality, constituency) is available to meet citizens? (%)

Only 20% of respondents stated they are aware of the MP offices in their region/municipality, while only 7% said they have paid them a visit. On the other hand, more than two thirds of citizens (76%) are unaware of the MP offices, and a staggering 91% have never paid them a visit (Chart 20).

MP OFFICES UNKNOWN TO THE CITIZENS

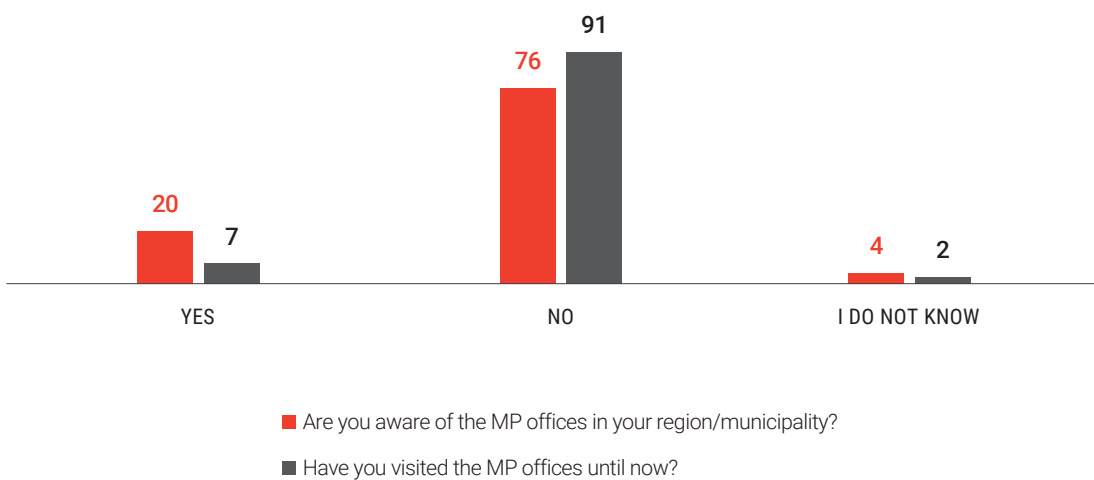


Chart 20. Are you aware of the MP offices in your region/municipality and have you visited the MP offices until now? (%)

According to 26% of citizens that were surveyed, the MPs from their region completely fail to inform them on what they do. The same share of respondents (20%) believe that the MPs do that using the media and social networks. According to 7% of respondents, the MPs from their region inform them at the meetings in the MP offices, while 9% believe they do that by means of meeting citizens at public places and through public addresses. Generally speaking, the perception of citizens remains relatively unchanged compared to that of last year. In most of the cases, citizens are informed about the work of their MPs by means of third-party actors/tools, such as the media and the social networks, while this happens by a direct contact very rarely (Chart 21).

THE MEDIA AND THE SOCIAL NETWORKS AS THE MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR THE CITIZENS

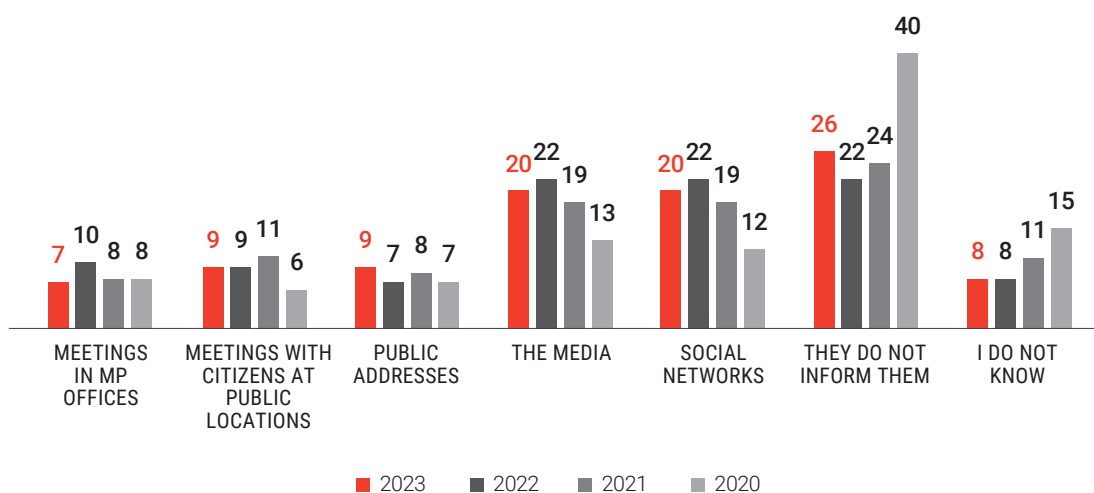


Chart 21. The MPs from your region inform citizens about what they do through? (%)

When they were asked about the way they think the MPs should inform them about what they do, the largest share of respondents (23%) said that it should be done by means of meetings with citizens at public locations. 21% believe that they should be informed by means of public addresses, 19% think they should be informed through the media, while 16% believe the information should be shared at meetings in the offices of the MPs. Also, 16% believe that social networks are an appropriate channel for informing citizens. The perception of respondents in terms of the largest number of channels they believe are the appropriate means of informing citizens about the work of the MPs has been relatively constant in the last 3 years, and citizens generally prefer direct contact with the MPs as a form of communication (Chart 22).

MEETINGS AT PUBLIC LOCATIONS AND MP OFFICES ARE THE PREFERRED WAY OF GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE MPs

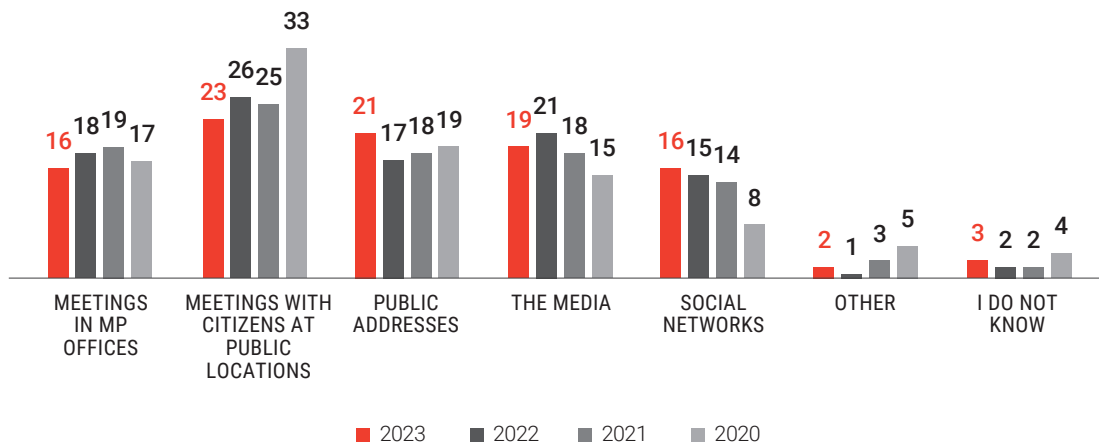


Chart 22. In what way, in your view, should your MPs inform citizens about what they do? (%)

The sweeping perception of citizens is that the MPs do not pay sufficient attention to the issues faced by the municipalities and the local communities. More than half of respondents (55%) replied that it has never happened for an MP from their region to launch an initiative at the Assembly for a local issue, while only 17% of respondents stated that their MP has done so. The percentage of respondents who believe that the MPs reflect on local issues in 2023 has increased by 7 percentage points in comparison to 2022 - 48% (Chart 23).

THE MPs DO NOT PAY SUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO THE ISSUES FACED BY THE MUNICIPALITIES AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES

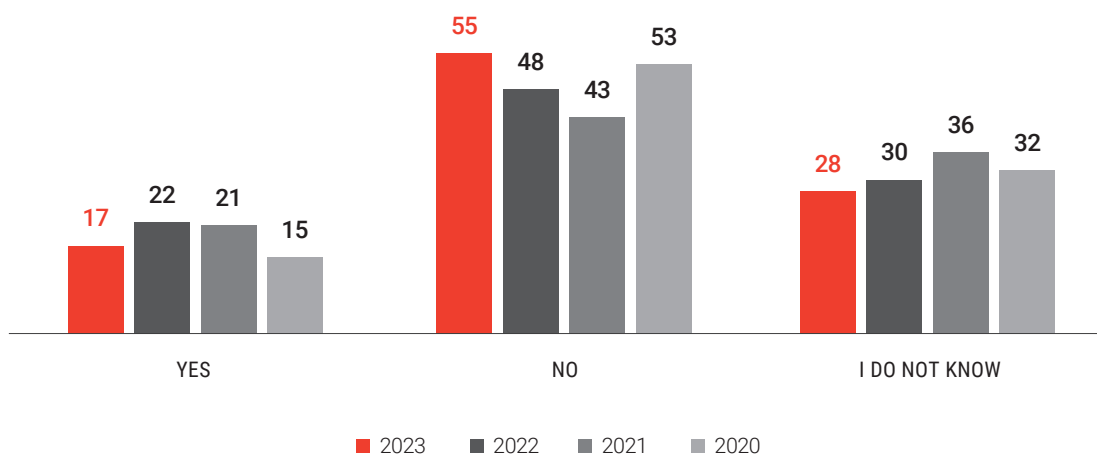


Chart 23. Has the MP from your region taken an initiative in the Assembly for an issue faced by your municipality? (%)

The majority of respondents - 86% replied that they have not been informed about the way they can participate in the work of the Assembly, while 14% replied that they have been informed. Bearing in mind the results from the past four years, one can conclude that a significant number of citizens have not been informed about the possibilities for taking part in the work of the Assembly (Chart 24).

THE CITIZENS ARE NOT INFORMED ABOUT THE WAYS THEY CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

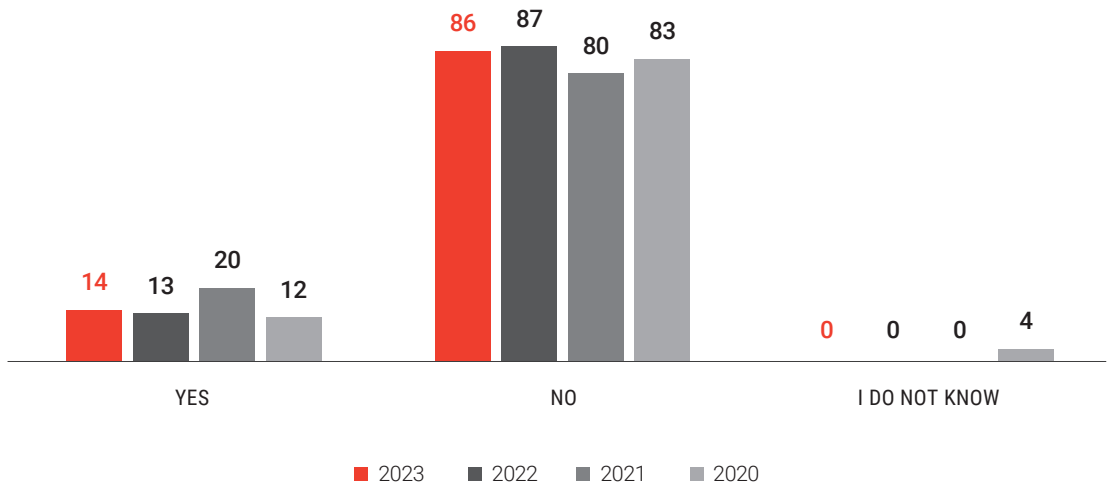


Chart 24. Are you informed about the ways you can participate in the work of the Assembly? (%)

A whopping 94% of respondents have not yet tried to get involved in the work of the Assembly, which, among other things, is also due to the relatively little information (14%) they have for the mechanisms of participation. Only 5% of respondents have attempted to take part in the work of the Assembly. This situation has remained virtually unchanged in the last 4 years (Chart 25).

THE CITIZENS ARE NOT TRYING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

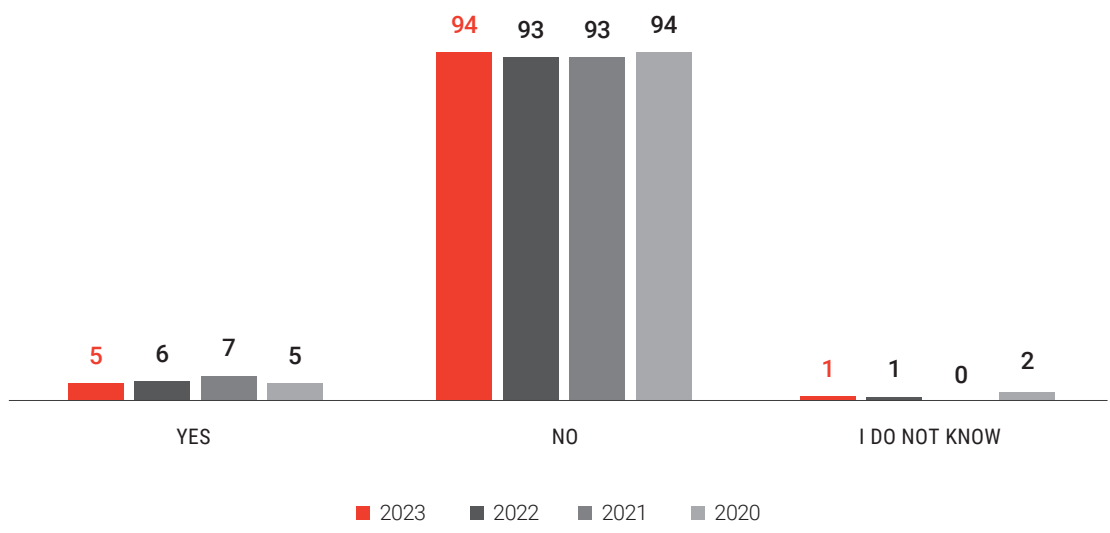


Chart 25. Have you tried to participate in the work of the Assembly until now? (%)

Citizens were read a few mechanisms available to them that would help them participate in the work of the Assembly. Out of the options on offer, most of respondents (20%) were informed that they could ask for a meeting with an MP or ask the MPs questions. Still, most of respondents (26%) were not aware of a single mechanism for participation in the work of the Assembly that was read to them and available to them (Chart 26).

QUESTIONS FOR MPs AND MEETINGS WITH THEM AS THE MOST
FAMILIAR TOOLS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

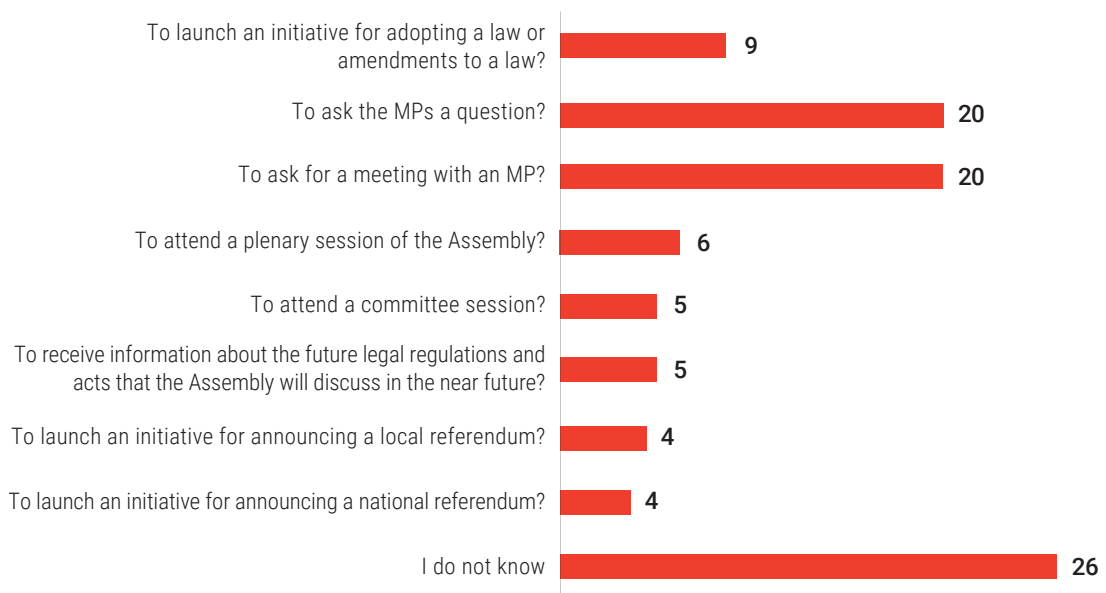


Chart 26. In what way do you think you can participate in the work of the Assembly? (%)

Virtually half of citizens (48%) fully or partially agree with the statement that the (online) internet petitions are a good way/tool for getting citizens involved in the work of the Assembly. 19% of citizens partially disagree with the statement, while 15% disagree fully. 17% did not know or did not want to answer this question.

The analysis of the view of respondents in the last four years shows that citizens generally support the (online) internet petitions and believe they are a good way/tool for getting citizens involved in the work of the Assembly (Chart 27).

INTERNET PETITIONS SEEN AS A GOOD TOOL FOR GETTING THE CITIZENS INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

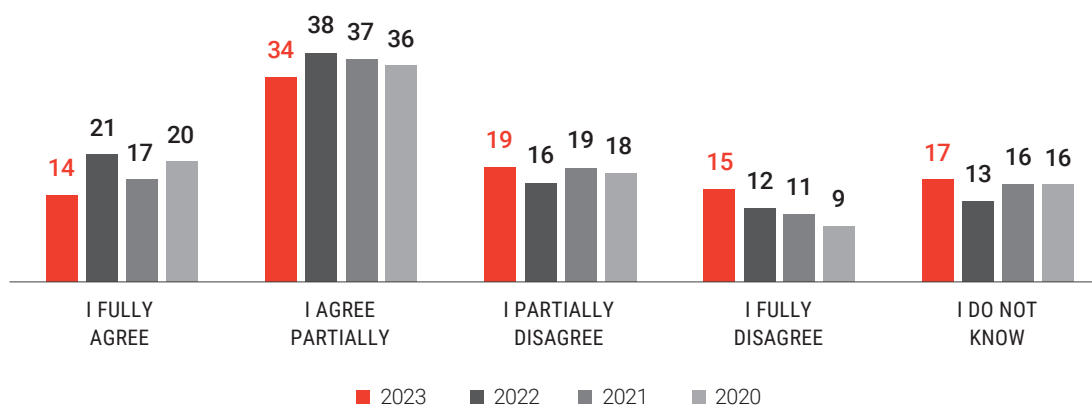


Chart 27. The (online) internet petitions are a good way/tool for getting citizens involved in the work of the Assembly (%)

VIII.

**WHO DO THE MPS IN THE
ASSEMBLY REPRESENT?**



VIII. WHO DO THE MPS IN THE ASSEMBLY REPRESENT?

Citizens are relatively divided in terms of their impression about the degree to which the MPs represent their interests in the Assembly. 40% of respondents think that the MPs partially represent the interests of citizens, while 53% think that the MPs do not represent the interests of citizens at all. Only 4% of respondents stated that the interests of citizens have been fully represented by the MPs.

In comparison to the analyses of 2022, one can conclude that the perception of citizens in terms of whether the MPs represent their interests has worsened. Bearing in mind the last four years, the perception of citizens in 2023 is the most negative, even though a slight improvement was recorded in 2022 and 2021. Namely, 45% of citizens in 2020 believed that the MPs do not represent the interests of citizens at all, which is 8 percentage points less than in 2023. Generally speaking, citizens' opinion in the last four years about the extent to which the MPs represent their interests in the Assembly is divided (Chart 28).

THE CITIZENS BELIEVE THAT THE MPS USUALLY DO NOT REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS

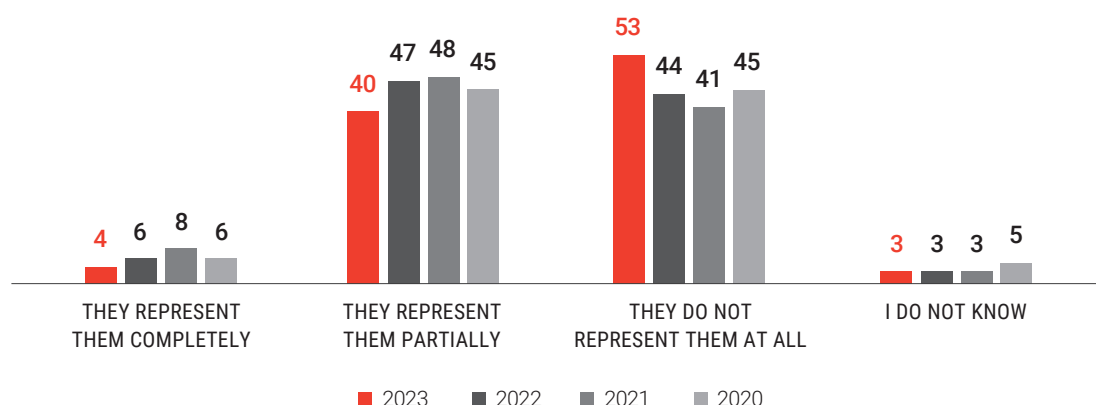


Chart 28. To what extent do you think that the MPs represent the interests of citizens? (%)

An amazing 80% of citizens that were surveyed believe that the MPs always represent their own interests at the Assembly, while only 3% of respondents believe that such a thing never happens. In addition, 75% believe that they always represent the interests of their political parties, while only 18% of respondents believe they do that seldomly. 64% of respondents believe that the MPs always represent somebody's business interest, while 24% of them believe that it is being done only seldomly.

On the other hand, 51% of respondents believe that the MPs never represent their interests, while 42% of them believe they do this only seldomly. The situation is similar when we asked them how frequently the MPs represent the interests of citizens from their constituencies. 25% of respondents believe they always represent the interests of the ethnic community they belong to, while 48% of respondents believe this is so only seldomly (Chart 29).

THE ASSEMBLY MPS REPRESENT THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND THOSE OF THEIR POLITICAL PARTIES

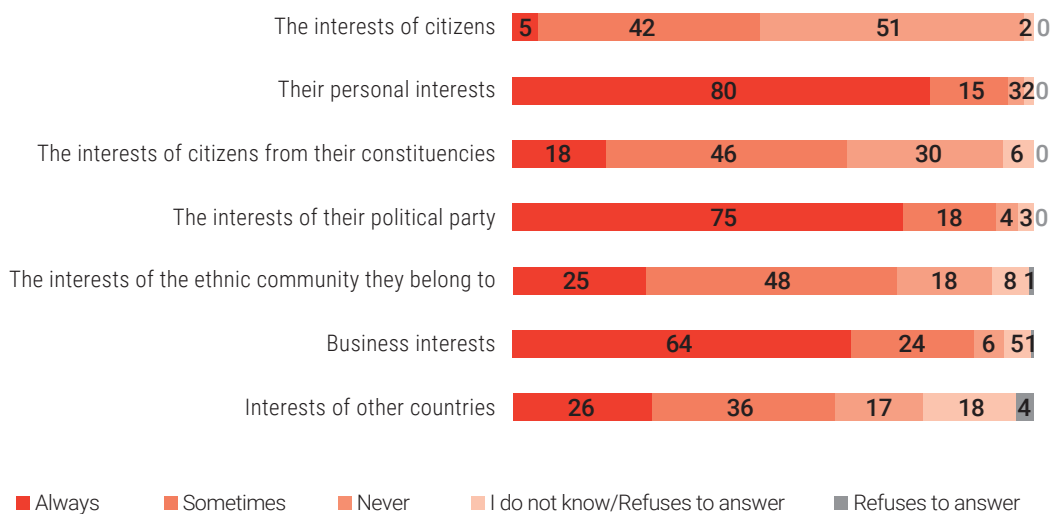


Chart 29. How frequently do the MPs represent the following interests? (%)

The perception of most citizens that were surveyed (79%) is that the MPs are fully or partially dependent on the will of the leaders of the political parties they hail from. More than half of citizens that were surveyed (52%) fully agree with this statement, while 27% agree only partially. Only 10% of respondents partially disagree, while 5% fully disagree with this statement. Even though the last four years have seen minor fluctuations in the perception of citizens when it comes to this statement, generally speaking, the opinion that the MPs depend on the will of the leaders of their political parties prevails (Chart 30).

THE MPs ARE DEPENDENT ON THE WILL OF THE POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS

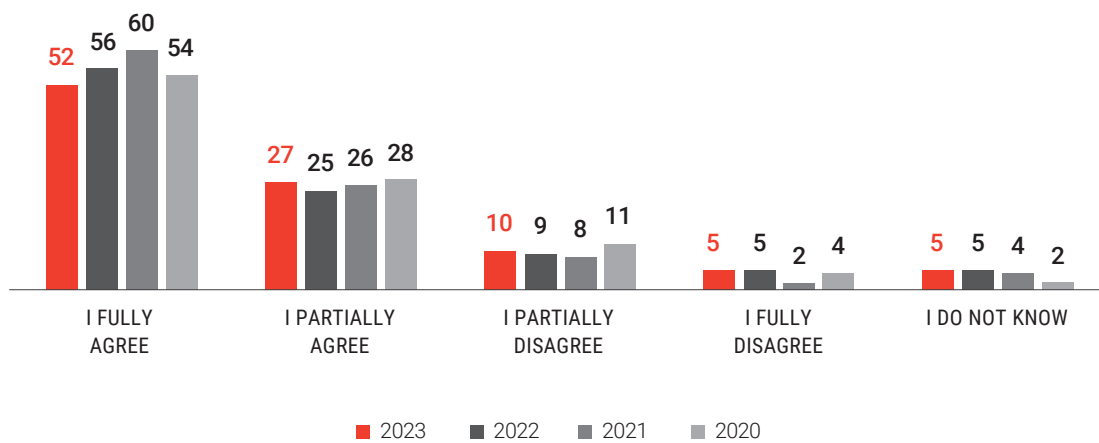


Chart 30. The MPs are fully dependent on the will of the political party leaders (%)

IX.

**THE DEBATE IN THE
ASSEMBLY**



IX. THE DEBATE IN THE ASSEMBLY

A whopping 70% of respondents believe that most of the MPs are not ready to make decisions on behalf of citizens. Additionally, only one quarter of respondents (25%) believe that most of the MPs possess sufficient knowledge to be able to decide on behalf of citizens. In comparison to the results from last year, the perception of citizens that the MPs are not at all ready to make decisions on behalf of citizens has increased by 11 percentage points. The perception of the knowledge and readiness of the MPs to make decisions on behalf of citizens has fluctuated superficially in the last four years (Chart 31).

THE MPs ARE UNPREPARED TO MAKE DECISIONS ON BEHALF OF THE CITIZENS

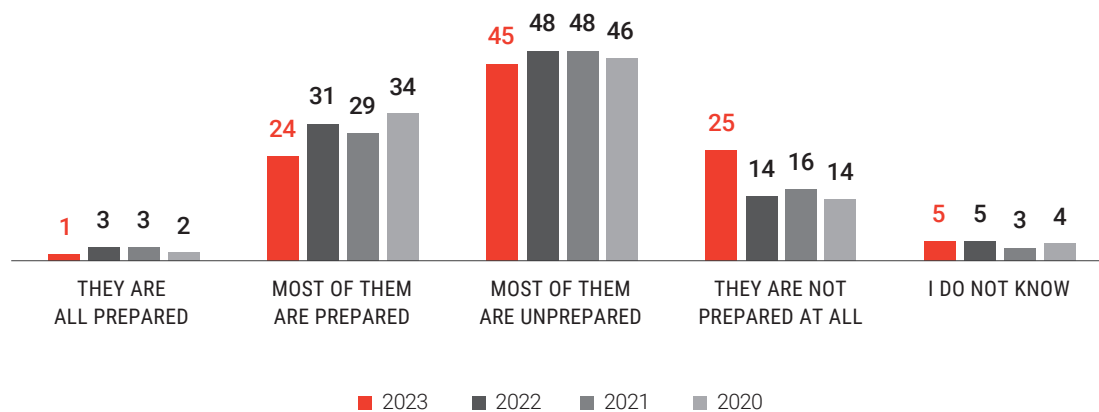


Chart 31. To what extent do you believe that the MPs are knowledgeable and ready to make decisions on behalf of citizens? (%)

More than half of respondents (51%) believe that the MPs rarely (43%) or never (8%) use arguments in their addresses. On the other hand, more than a third of respondents (36%) believe that the MPs frequently or always use arguments in their speeches at the Assembly. In comparison to the previous years, one can conclude that the perception of citizens in terms of this issue has been generally the same, with some minor fluctuations (Chart 32).

THE CITIZENS ARE DIVIDED ON THE ISSUE OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE MPs USE ARGUMENTS IN THE DEBATE AT THE ASSEMBLY

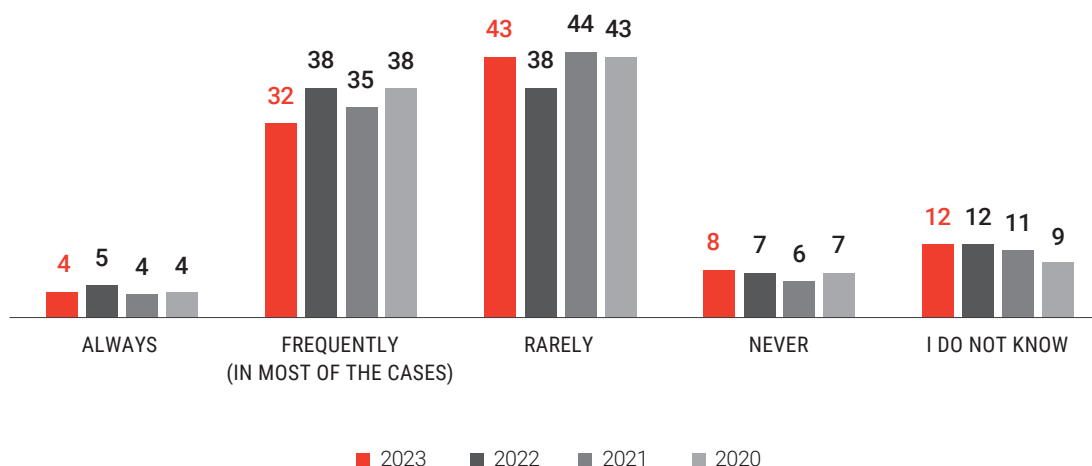


Chart 32. How frequently are arguments used in the debate between the MPs at the Assembly? (%)

The perception of more than two thirds of citizens that were surveyed (71%) is that in the parliamentary debates, the ruling majority usually or always neglects the arguments of the opposition when it makes decisions. For 18% of respondents, the majority usually takes these arguments into account, while only 1% have responded that the government fully considers the arguments of the opposition. This perception of citizens has remained virtually unchanged in the last four years (Chart 33).

THE MPs FROM THE MAJORITY DO NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT
THE ARGUMENTS OF THE OPPOSITION MPS WHEN MAKING
DECISIONS IN THE ASSEMBLY

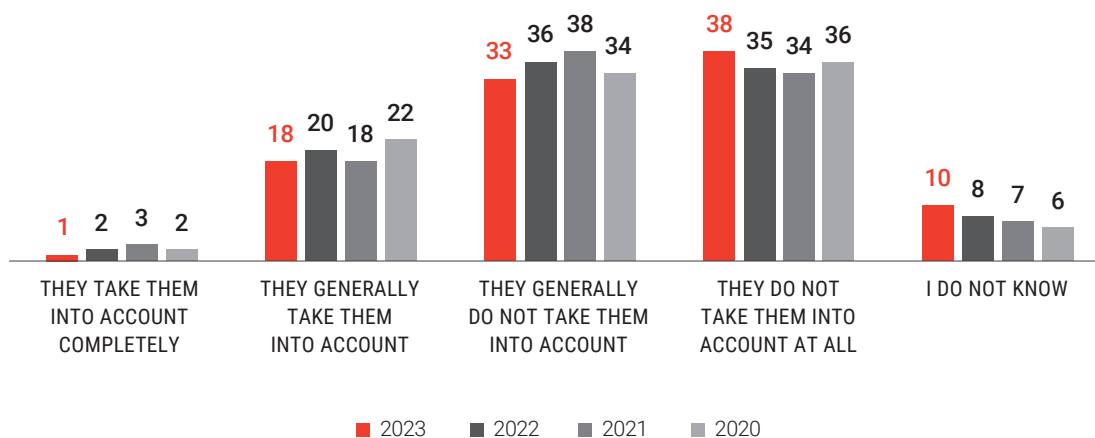


Chart 33. The MPs from the ruling majority consider the arguments of the opposition MPs when making decisions in the Assembly (%)

More than two thirds of respondents (70%) believe that the parliamentary majority needs to be more mindful of the views of the opposition, while only 15% of respondents believe the opposite. In the last four years, there have been minor fluctuations in this perception by citizens, so citizens expect greater cooperation between the MPs in the Assembly and a more open majority (Chart 34).

THE MAJORITY IN THE ASSEMBLY NEEDS TO BE MORE MINDFUL OF THE VIEWS OF THE OPPOSITION

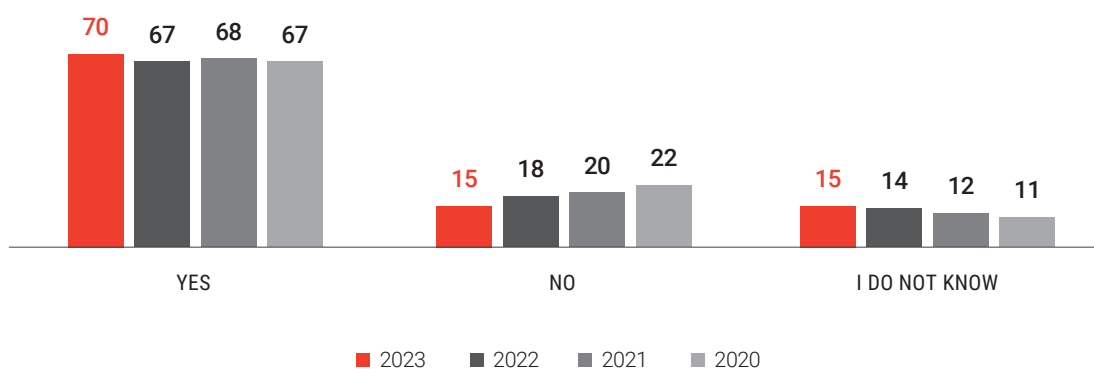


Chart 34. Do you believe that the majority in the Assembly needs to be more mindful of the views of the opposition? (%)

More than two thirds (69%) of citizens that were surveyed have an impression that the MPs at their sessions frequently or always use demeaning and degrading language with their political opponents on the basis of their political, ethnic, religious or gender affiliation. Out of the total number of respondents, 51% believe that the MPs do that frequently, while for 18% of citizens, the MPs always use demeaning and degrading language against their 'opponents'. A total of 22% of citizens that were surveyed say that the MPs usually or never use such language.

The perception of citizens in terms of this issue has fallen back to the level in 2020, improved in comparison to 2021, but it is marginally worse compared to 2022. Even though throughout the years the general perception has been that the MPs use demeaning and degrading language at the Assembly, this perception of citizens fluctuates depending on the atmosphere at the Assembly (Chart 35).

THE CITIZENS BELIEVE THE MPs FREQUENTLY USE DEMEANING AND DEGRADING LANGUAGE AT THE ASSEMBLY

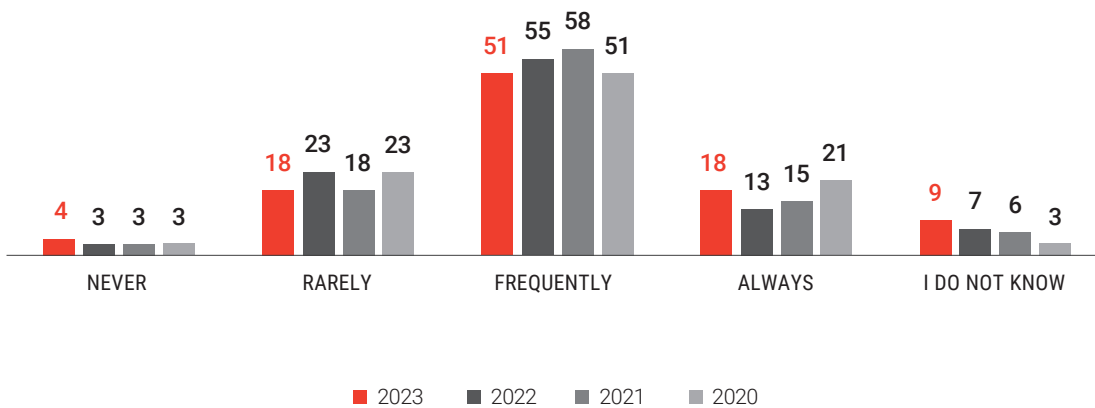


Chart 35. How frequently do the MPs use language that demeans and degrades their collocutors at the Assembly on the basis of their political, ethnic, religious and gender affiliation? (%)

42% of citizens that were surveyed in 2023 believe that the relationship between the MPs in the Assembly is hostile, while 40% believe that the relationship between the MPs is competitive. Only 7% believe that the relationship between the MPs is tolerant and that the MPs cooperate. In comparison to the answers of citizens from previous years, one can note that citizens this year believe that there is less tolerance, and greater competition between the MPs (Chart 36).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MPs AT THE ASSEMBLY IS BELIEVED TO BE HOSTILE

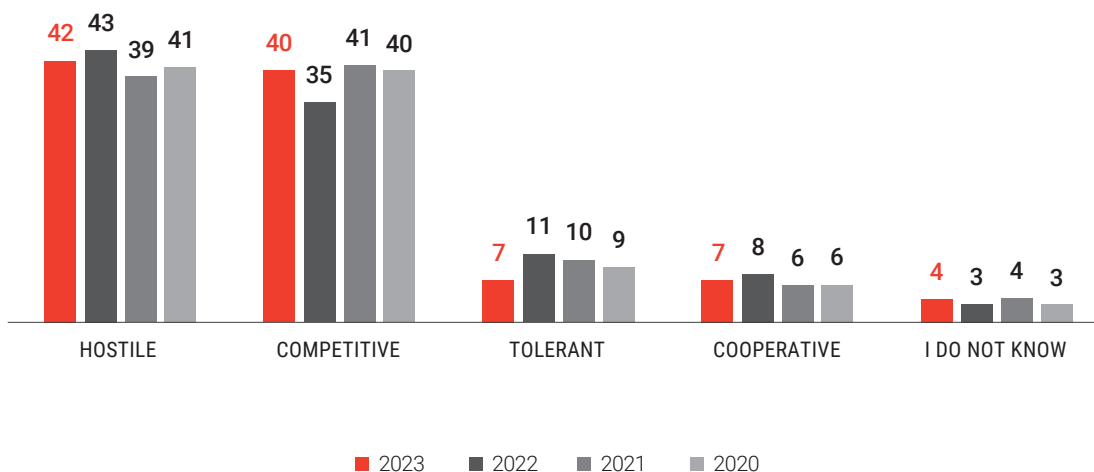


Chart 36. How do the MPs treat each other in the Assembly? (%)

A considerably large number of respondents (79%) agree that civic associations need to be more involved in the work of the Assembly. Out of those, 49% agree fully, while 30% agree partially. Another 15% of citizens that were surveyed did not agree with this statement; 10% of them do not agree partially, while only 5% of respondents do not agree at all that the civic organizations need to get more involved in the work of the parliament. The perception of the majority of respondents that civic associations should be more involved in the work of the Assembly has been virtually the same in the last four years (Chart 37).

THE CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS NEED TO GET MORE INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

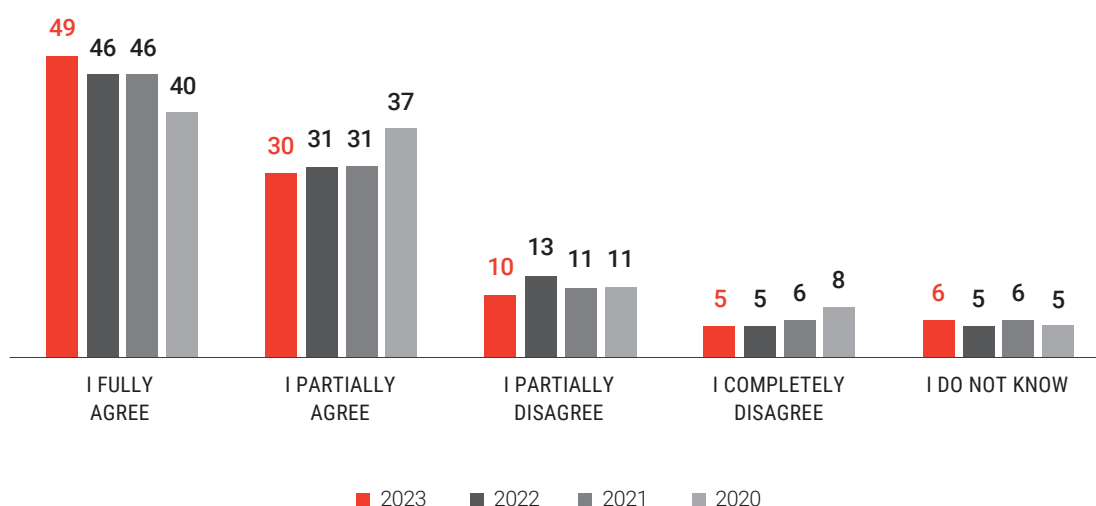


Chart 37. Civic associations need to get more involved in the work of the Assembly (%)

In terms of the extent to which each of the parliamentary parties contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly, citizens have a negative perception (it does not contribute at all or only partially) when it comes to all coalitions and parties. Namely, more than two thirds of citizens believe that the Demokratska partija za Albancite, Alternativa and Besa do not contribute to a better quality of work of the Assembly fully or partially. In addition, more than half of respondents are of the same opinion also about the coalitions led by VMRO-DPMNE (53%) and SDSM (58%), as well as Alliance for Albanians (66%), the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) (65%) and Levica/Left (61%) (Chart 38).

THE COALITION OR THE PARTY CONTRIBUTES TO A HIGHER QUALITY WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

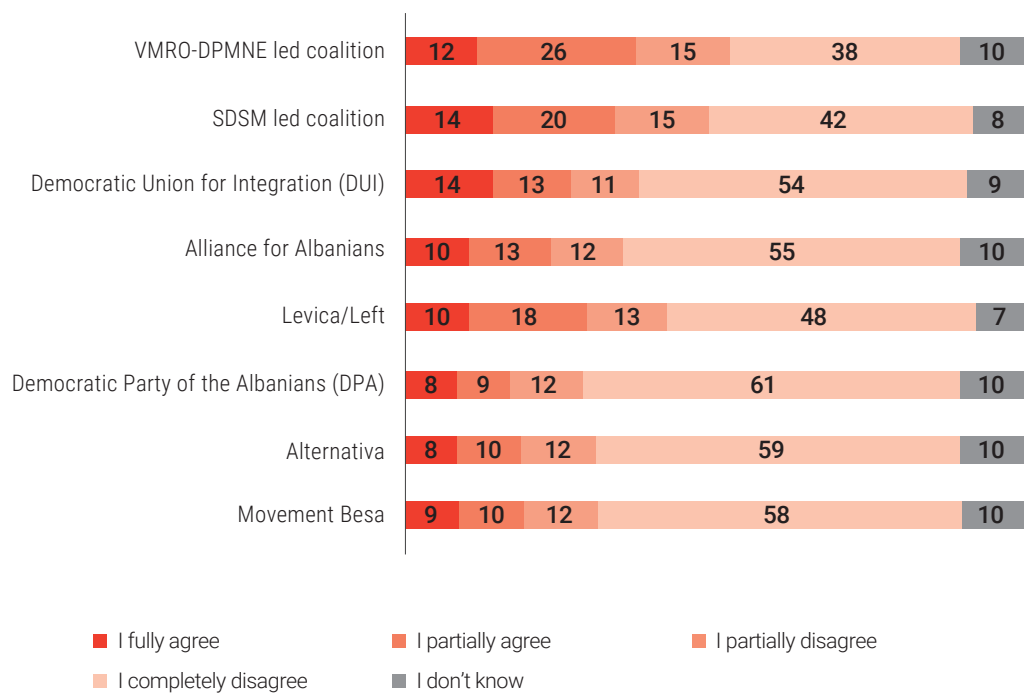


Chart 38. The coalition or the party contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly (%)



REFORMS



X. REFORMS

Citizens are divided in their impression of the preparedness of the Assembly to implement reforms that would normalize the political situation in the country. A total of 39% of respondents agree that the Assembly is prepared to implement reforms to normalize the political situation. Out of those, 16% agree fully, while 23% agree partially. More than half of respondents (51%) do not see such preparedness, out of which 27% disagree completely, and 24% disagree partially. 11% of respondents did not have an answer to this question. The perception on this issue has fluctuated only minimally in the last four years. However, in 2023 citizens have been more skeptical, since 3 percentage points more of citizens do not agree that the Assembly is prepared to carry out reforms in comparison to 2022 (Chart 39).

THE ASSEMBLY IS PARTIALLY PREPARED TO IMPLEMENT REFORMS AND NORMALIZE THE POLITICAL SITUATION

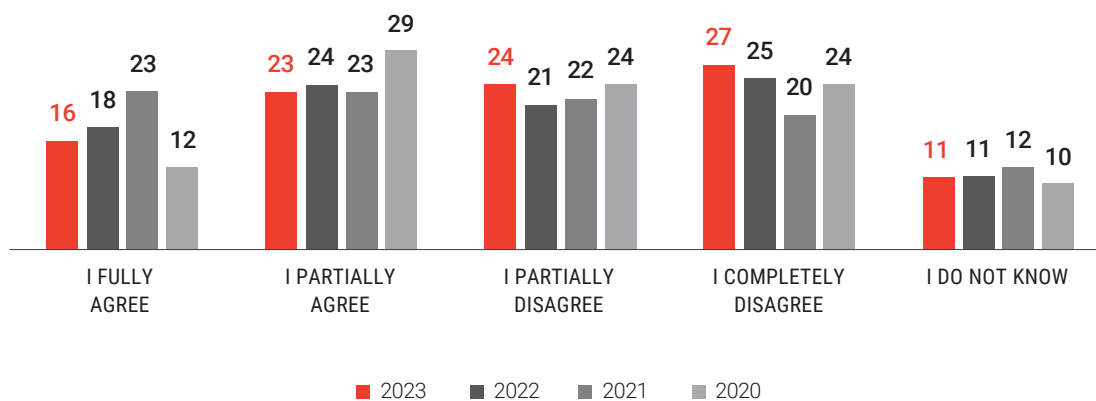


Chart 39. The Assembly is prepared to implement reforms and normalize the political situation (%)

When it comes to the urgency of the reforms, 62% of respondents believe that for this country, at present, it is more important to implement quick reforms instead of reforms that would last longer, but they will provide broader participation of citizens and all stakeholders. Out of the citizens who agreed with this statement, 34% agreed fully, while 28% agreed partially. More than a quarter (29%) of citizens do not agree with this statement, out of which 15% of respondents do not agree partially, while 13% disagree completely.

Despite the minimal fluctuations that have been recorded in terms of the extent to which citizens are convinced in this statement, the total number of citizens who fully or partially believe that, for the sake of the country, it is more important to implement quick reforms, has been relatively steady in the last four years, with the exception of 2020 (Chart 40).

AT THE MOMENT, FOR THE SAKE OF THE COUNTRY IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO IMPLEMENT QUICK REFORMS INSTEAD OF LENGTHIER DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE REFORMS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE CITIZENS

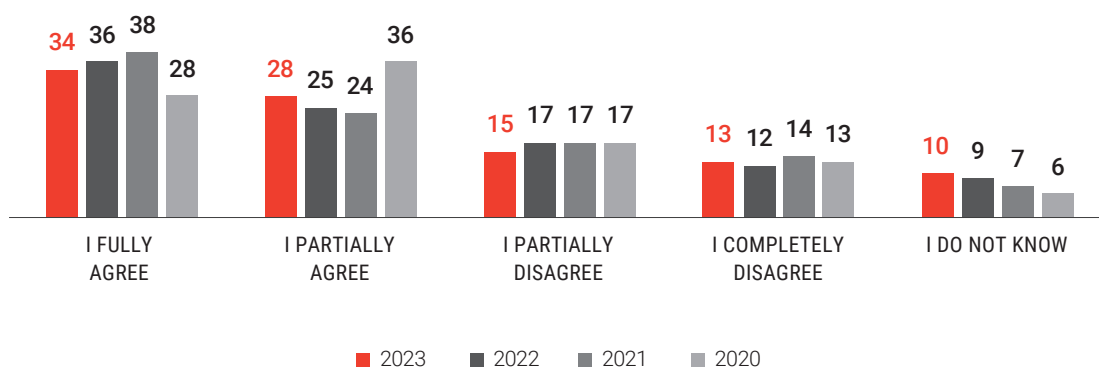


Chart 40. At the moment, for the sake of the country it is more important to implement quick reforms instead of lengthier discussions about the reforms with the participation of citizens (%)

In terms of the two priority areas that the Assembly should focus its reform efforts on, 27% of citizens stated that the reforms are a priority for the legislative function. Following this, citizens prioritized the reform in its supervisory function in the sense of the supervision of the work of the Government (22%), and then the oversight function of the regulatory bodies (14%), the representative function (12%) and the oversight of the security/intelligence structures. The perception of citizens in terms of this question in 2022 is similar to that in the past years (Chart 41).

THE REFORMS IN THE LEGISLATIVE AND SUPERVISORY FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY - TOP PRIORITY

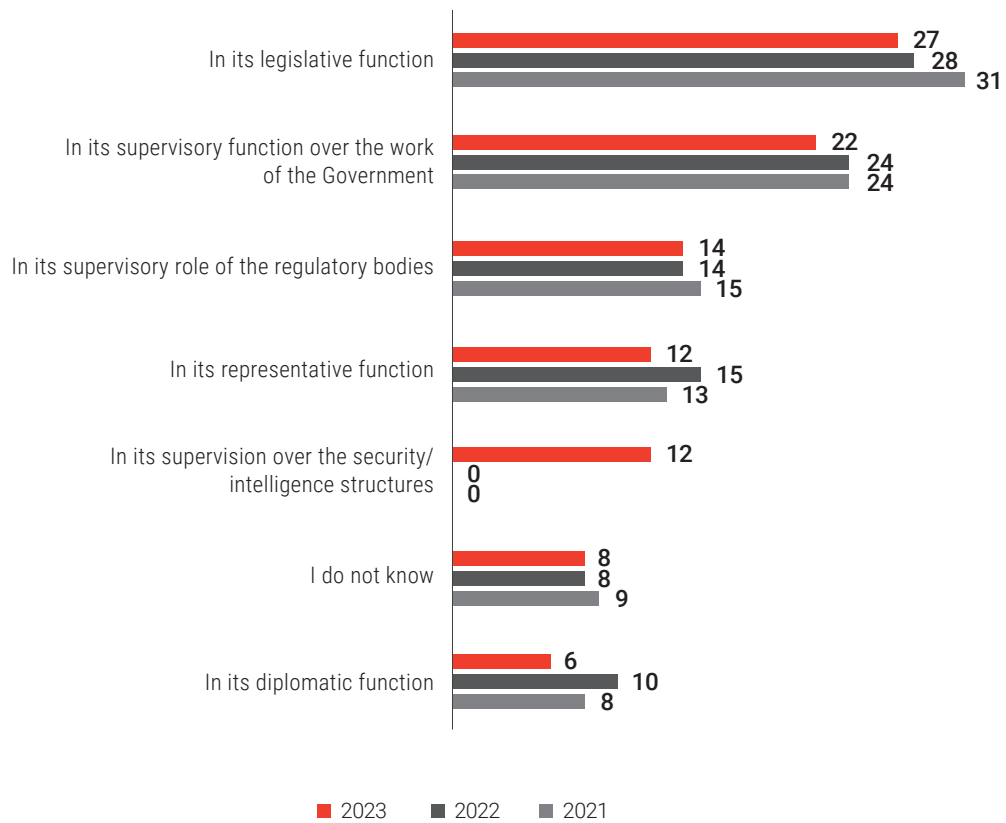


Chart 41. Which reforms do you believe should be a priority for the Assembly? (%)

According to the majority of citizens (63%), the boycott is not the right way of expressing one's political views in the work of the Assembly. Just over a quarter (29%) of respondents believe that the boycott is the right way of expressing one's political views at the Assembly. The perception of citizens in terms of this question has remained virtually unchanged in the last four years (Chart 42).

THE BOYCOTT IS NOT THE RIGHT WAY TO EXPRESS ONE'S POLITICAL VIEWS IN TERMS OF THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

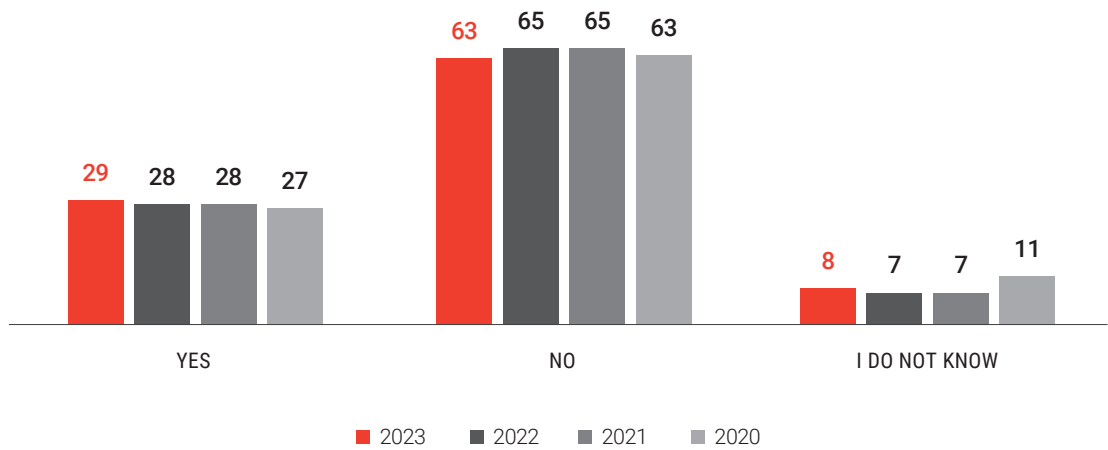


Chart 42. Do you believe that the boycott is the right way to express one's political views in terms of the work of the Assembly? (%)

Nearly two thirds (63%) of citizens do not believe that protraction and delays of the debates in order to prevent the adoption of a law or a decision is the right method for expressing political opinion in the work of the Assembly. Such practice is acceptable only to a quarter (24%) of citizens. The perception of citizens about this practice of the MPs has remained unchanged in the last four years (Chart 43).

THE PROTRACTIONS AND DELAYS OF THE DEBATES IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE ADOPTION OF A LAW OR A DECISION IS A WRONG METHOD FOR EXPRESSING POLITICAL OPINION IN THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

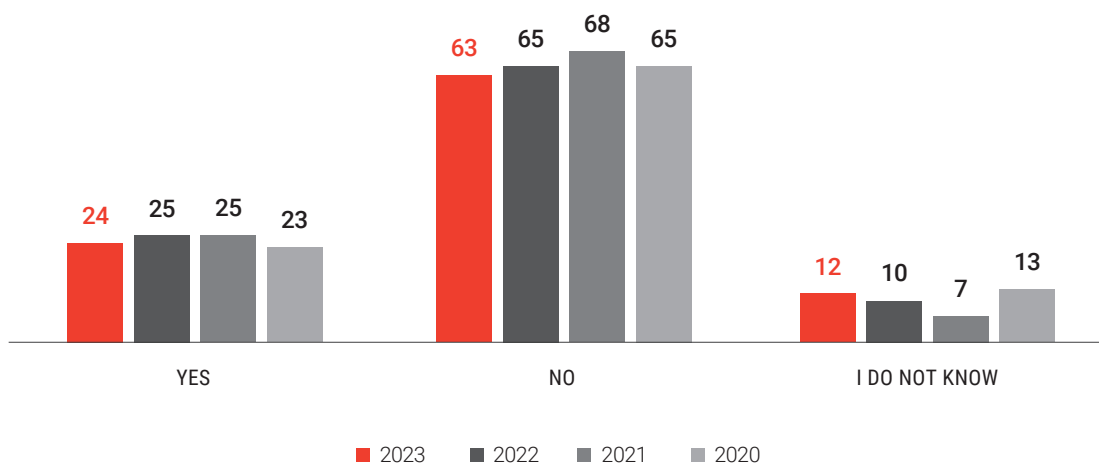


Chart 43. Do you believe that protraction and delays of the debates in order to prevent the adoption of a law or a decision is the right method for expressing political opinion in the work of the Assembly? (%)

An impressive 75% of respondents agree with the statement that the political crises should be resolved in the Assembly, rather than by meetings of political party heads behind closed doors. Out of those, 44% agree fully, while 21% agree partially with this statement. On the other hand, a total of 17% of citizens have said that they do not agree with the statement that the Assembly is the setting where political crises should be resolved, out of which 11% disagree partially, while 6% disagree completely. The opinion of citizens about this statement generally fluctuates depending on the crisis the country is facing that particular year (Chart 44).

THE POLITICAL CRISES SHOULD BE RESOLVED IN THE ASSEMBLY, AND NOT AT LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

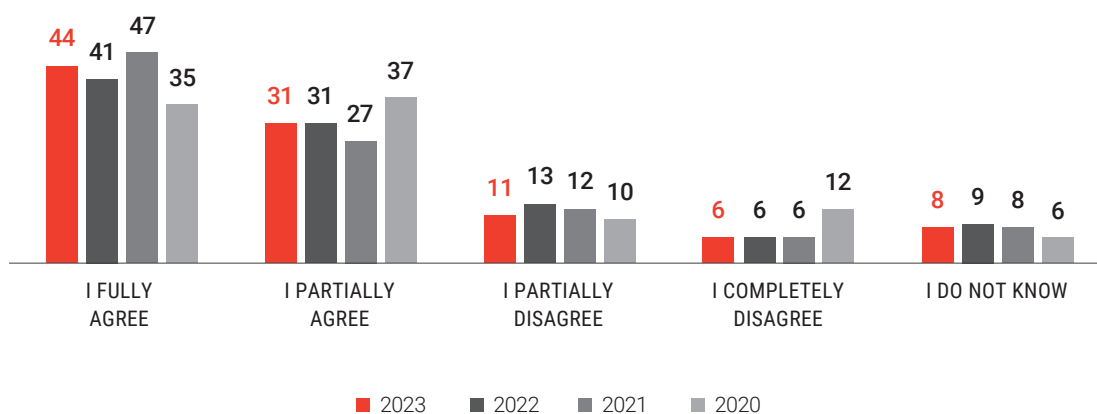


Chart 44. The political crises should be resolved in the Assembly, and not at leadership meetings. (%)

For more than half (56%) of respondents, the introduction of open lists, which would enable them to vote for a person, instead of a party list at the parliamentary elections, would contribute to a higher quality MP composition at the Assembly. 20% of respondents fully agree with this statement, and 36% agree partially. A total of 25% of citizens believe that the introduction of open lists will have no bearing on the quality of the MP composition at the Assembly. 17% of them partially disagree, while 8% fully disagree with this statement. 19% stated that they do not know if the introduction of open lists is a positive change. The fact that there is no firm view on the matter demonstrates that citizens need to be better informed about the consequences of potential electoral reforms (Chart 45).

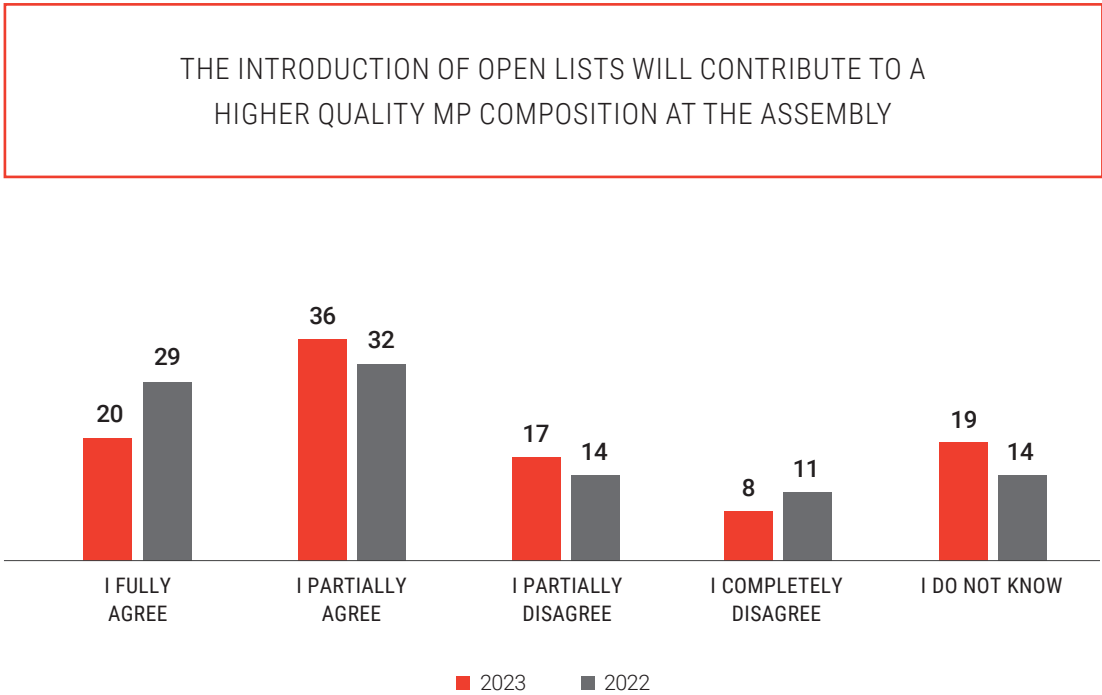


Chart 45. The introduction of open lists, which would enable them to vote a person, instead of a party list, would contribute to a higher quality MP composition at the Assembly (%).

According to more than half (59%) of respondents, the introduction of a single constituency at the parliamentary elections will contribute to a better representation of citizens at the Assembly. 22% of respondents fully agree with this statement, and 37% agree partially. On the contrary, according to approximately one quarter (22%) of citizens the introduction of a single constituency will not improve their representation at the Assembly. 14% of them partially disagree, while 8% fully disagree with this statement. 19% stated they do not know whether the introduction of a single constituency at the parliamentary elections will improve the representation of citizens at the Assembly. The lack of firm views points to the fact that, as voters, it would mean more to citizens if those who proposed such changes were to better inform them than if a single constituency were introduced (Chart 46).

THE INTRODUCTION OF A SINGLE CONSTITUENCY AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO A BETTER REPRESENTATION OF THE CITIZENS AT THE ASSEMBLY

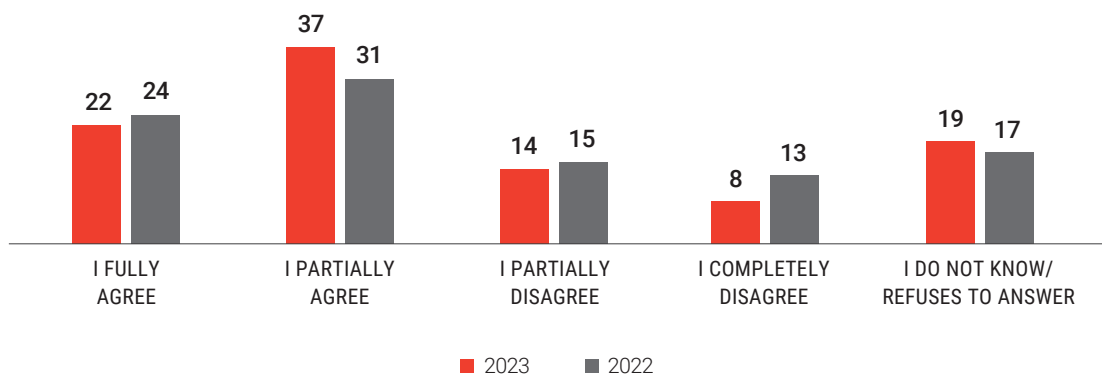


Chart 46. The introduction of a single constituency at the parliamentary elections will contribute to a better representation of citizens at the Assembly (%)

Just over half of respondents (52%) agree that the change to the electoral model may contribute to a situation where the MPs are less dependent on their party leaders. 15% of respondents fully agree with this statement, and 37% agree partially. On the other hand, 27% of respondents believe that the change to the electoral model will not contribute to a reduction in dependency on party leaders. 16% of them partially disagree, while 11% disagree completely. 29% did not answer this question. There is a change in the perception of citizens in regards to this question - citizens are less certain whether a change to the electoral model would boost MP independence from their party leaders (Chart 47).

THE CHANGE TO THE WAY THE MPs ARE ELECTED WOULD
CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR INDEPENDENCE FROM PARTY LEADERS

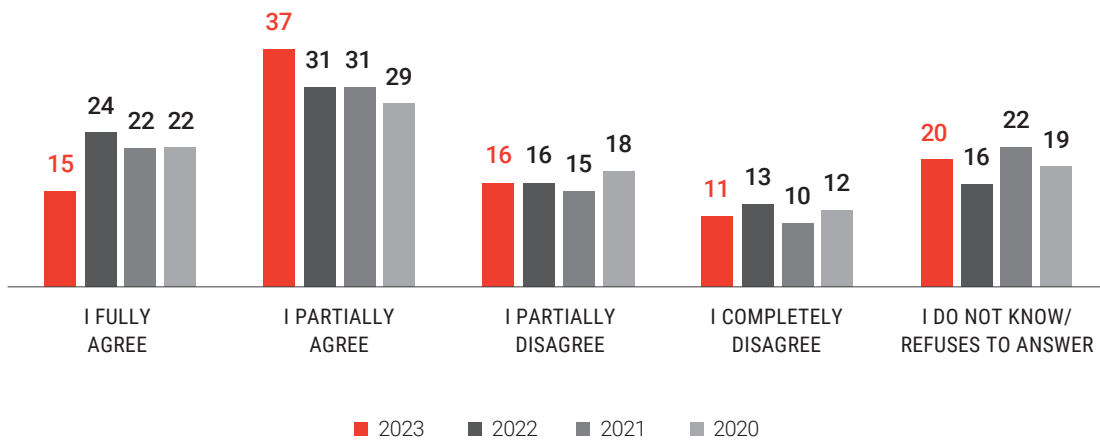


Chart 47. The change to the way the MPs are elected (the electoral model) at the parliamentary elections would contribute to MP independence from party leaders (%)

More than half of respondents (53%) believe it is important that multi-party groups are established where MPs from various parties would unite on the same questions, while 26% of respondents do not agree with that. 20% did not have an opinion or did not want to answer this question. Bearing in mind the results from previous years in regards to this question, in 2023 there is an increase in the positive perception of citizens about the need for establishing multi-party groups (Chart 48).

AT THE ASSEMBLY, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT MORE THEMATIC PARTY GROUPS ARE ESTABLISHED, WHERE THE MPs FROM DIFFERENT PARTIES WOULD UNITE ON THE SAME ISSUES

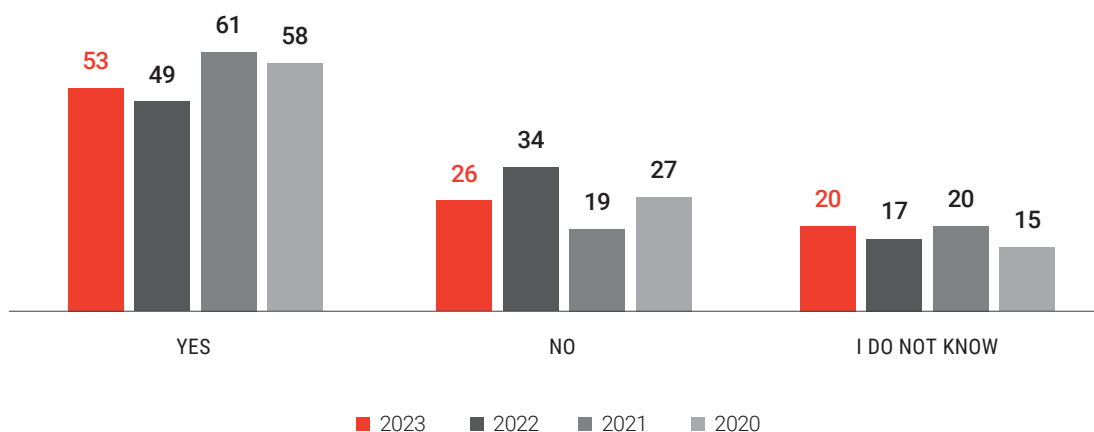


Chart 48. Do you believe that it is important that multi-party groups are established at the Assembly (for example, the Female MP Club) at which MPs from different parties would unite on the same issues? (%)

Generally speaking, citizens are divided on the question of which citizen group warrants the establishment of a multi-party group. According to 16% of respondents who gave a positive answer to the previous question, multi-party groups need to be established for the unemployed, while 15% believe that multi-party groups need to be established for people with disabilities. 14% think that such groups should be established for young people, while 12% think that such groups need to be established for the needs of single parents. They are the most skeptical of the need of establishing multi-party groups for the needs and rights of women (5%), the Roma (3%) and the LGBTI+ community (1%). The fact that respondents underline the need for establishing multi-party groups for issues which are already covered by such groups in the Assembly shows that there is also a need for getting citizens better informed about the work of these parliamentary groups (Chart 49).

THE CITIZENS ARE UNSURE WHICH ISSUES WARRANT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MULTI-PARTY GROUPS AT THE ASSEMBLY

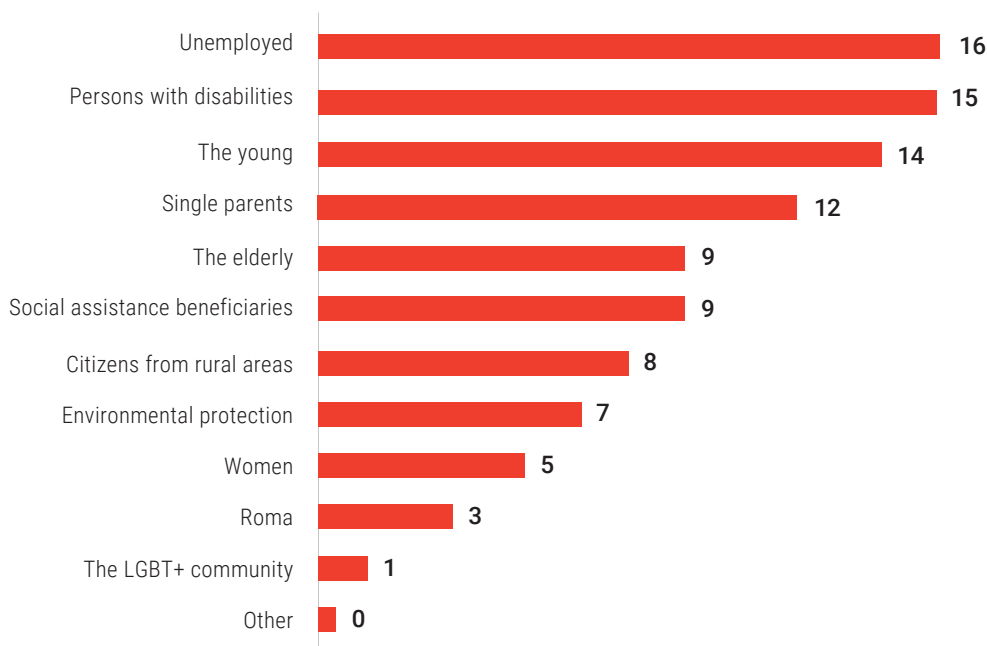


Chart 49. Which issues in your view warrant the establishment of such groups? (%)

Respondents failed to identify a dominant marginalized group whose interests are the focus of MP representation. The largest percentage of respondents do not know which marginalized group's interests are best represented or they do not have an answer to this question (21%). Citizens who responded are divided in their perception, thus the largest percentage (15%) believe that the MPs best represent the interests of social assistance beneficiaries. Furthermore, they also think that the interests that are best represented at the Assembly are those of the LGBTI+ community (11%) and of the people with disabilities (11%). According to the people that were surveyed, the interests of citizens of the rural areas (4%), women (4%), the unemployed (5%), the young people (5%), the unemployed (5%) and the young people (5%) are the least represented (Chart 50).

THE INTERESTS OF THE CITIZENS OF RURAL AREAS, THE WOMEN, THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE UNEMPLOYED ARE REPRESENTED THE LEAST

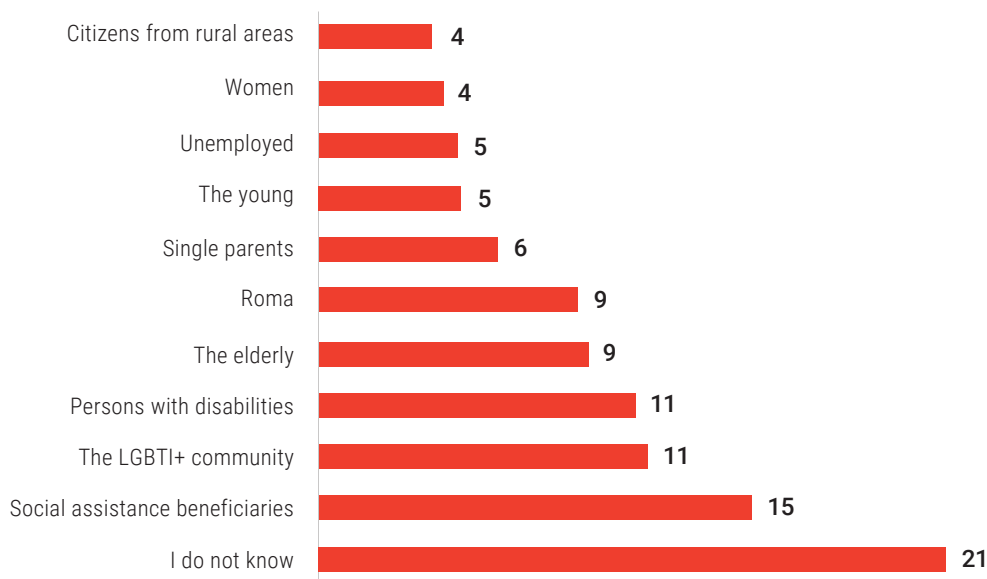


Chart 50. Out of the following citizen groups, whose interests do you believe are best represented by the Assembly: (%)

XI.

**MEAN SCORE ABOUT THE
WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY**



XI. MEAN SCORE ABOUT THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest, and 5 is the highest score, respondents assessed the work of the Assembly with a mean score of 2.2. This year there is a reduction of 0.3 points in comparison to 2022 and a reduction of 0.4 points in comparison to 2021. The score for the work of the Assembly has fluctuated throughout the years, and so the Assembly in 2017 received its highest mean score (3.4) since 2009, all the way to this year's research. The mean score of 2.2 this year demonstrates the fact that the public thinks less of the work of the Assembly (Chart 51).

THE MEAN SCORE FOR THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY IS 2.2

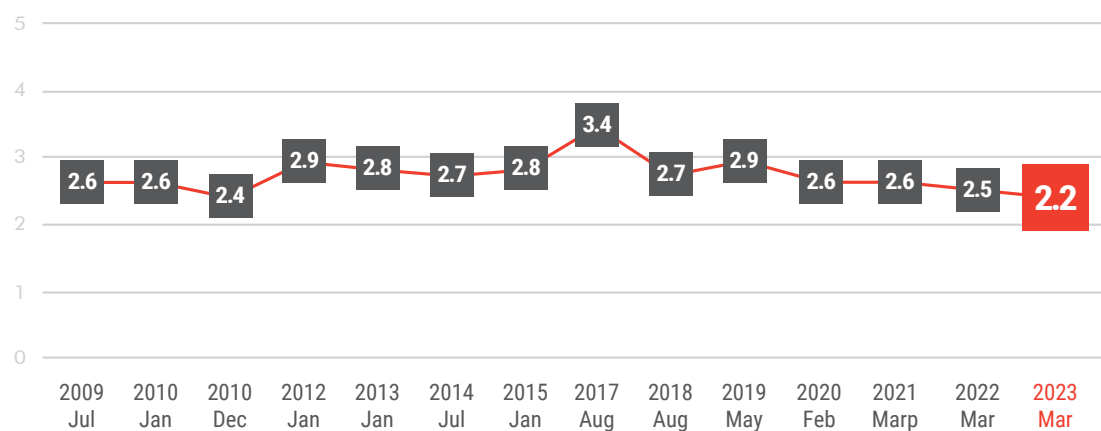


Chart 51. The mean score for the work of the Assembly (on a scale of 1 - the lowest to 5 - the highest)

XII.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH - FOCUS GROUP REPORT



XII. THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH – FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Respondents were asked what direction they believe life in North Macedonia has taken. More than two thirds believe that life in this country is moving in the wrong direction (69%), while only a quarter of respondents (24%) think that life is moving in the right direction. 7% of respondents did not know how to respond to the question. This year, in comparison to 2022, the percentage of respondents who believe life is moving in the right direction has declined by 4%. On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who believe that life in North Macedonia has been moving in the wrong direction has increased by 6%. Generally speaking, the citizen perception has worsened in comparison to the past three years (Chart 52).

THE CITIZENS BELIEVE THAT LIFE IN THIS COUNTRY, IN GENERAL, IS MOVING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION

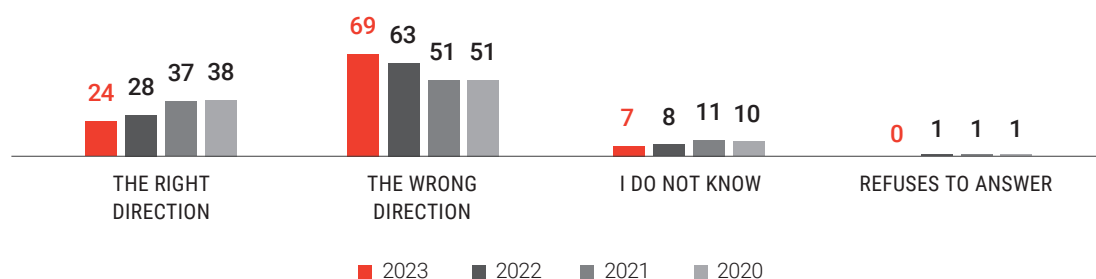


Chart 52. Do you believe that, generally speaking, life in North Macedonia is moving in: (%)

The focus-groups reveal that even though citizens are by and large dissatisfied with the quality of life, they are noticing changes in terms of Euro-integration. These views were most common among the Albanian mono-ethnic focus-groups, where respondents believed that there is a lot of determination in the negotiations with the European Union and that the country is determined in terms of EU membership 0 “the country is moving slowly, but in the right direction, in the sense of entering NATO/EU” (female ethnic Macedonian, Gevgelija, 65+) or “it is a fact that we took a few steps forward, but we can see that the political structures have lost their ideology, since there was great hope, and now the disappointment has overshadowed it” (Ethnic Albanian, Struga, 18-30). Still, the dominant view is that the country is not moving in the right direction, that we are still in transition, while the political structures have lost their ideologies – “The exodus of the young people is a testament to the fact that things are out of kilter” (female ethnic Albanian, Tetovo, 31-50). The dissatisfaction

with the direction taken by the country is usually linked with the economic situation, the quality of education, corruption, the low-skilled administration, the decrepit health system – *“I am unhappy as a student. It is disastrous. The student standard and the scholarships in comparison to the general situation”* (male ethnic Macedonian, Shtip, 18-30).

If we analyze the survey data according to the regions respondents belong to, it turns out that the biggest optimists are citizens of the Southeast (54%), where more than half answered that life has been moving in the right direction. Most of the negative responses, that is the statement that life is headed in the wrong direction, came from the Vardar region - 80%, then the Southeast region - 76%, and then the Pelagonija, the Polog and the Northeast region – 73% (Chart 52.1).

THE CITIZENS BELIEVE THAT LIFE IN THIS COUNTRY, IN GENERAL, IS MOVING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION - PER REGION

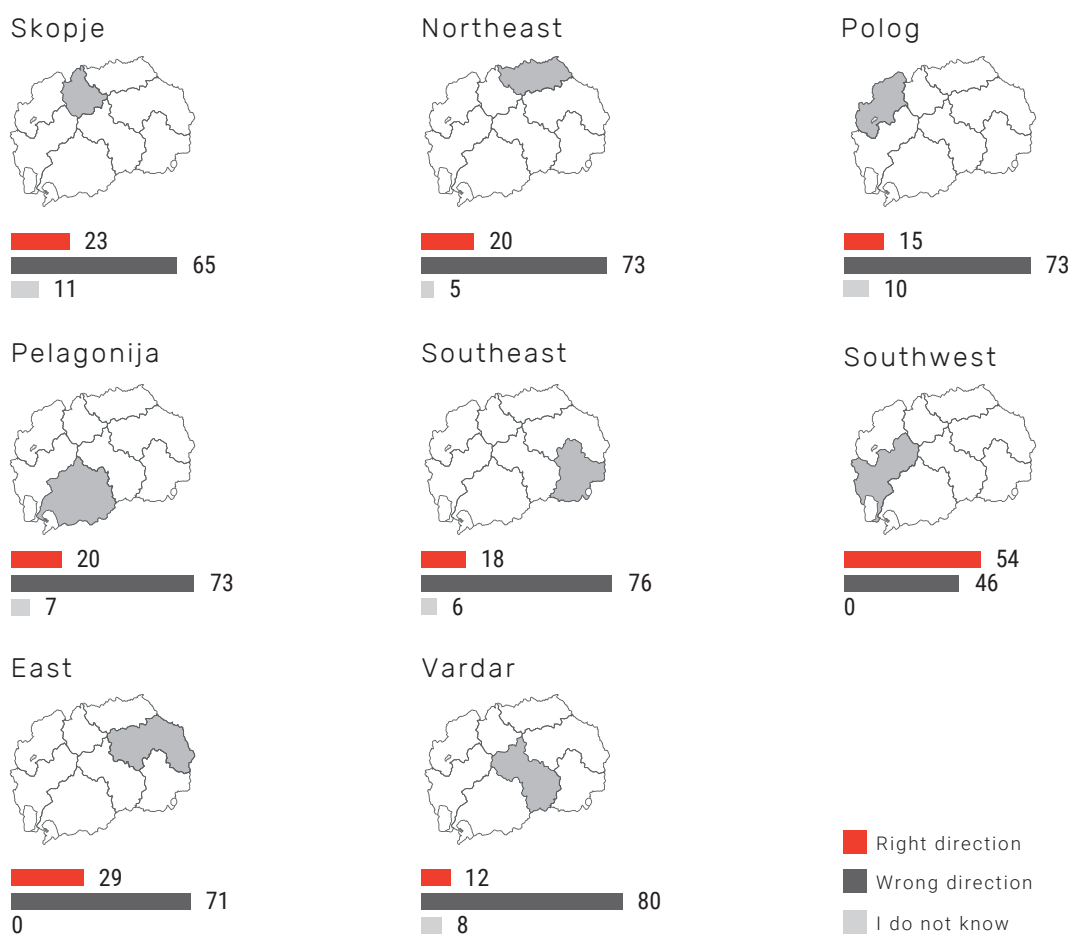


Chart 52.1. Do you believe that, generally speaking, life in North Macedonia is moving in: (per region) (%)

Citizens identify inflation and high prices, as well as the low salaries/pensions as the biggest issues. Unemployment is the third most common issue, while brain drain is considered to be a significant issue. Corruption is the fifth most common issue among respondents (Chart 53). They believe that the MPs should focus more on the everyday issues they are facing - *“There should be greater focus on the everyday issues of citizens, not only on high politics”* (female ethnic Macedonian, Bitola, 31-50).

THE INFLATION, THE LOW SALARIES AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT
ARE THE MAIN ISSUES FACED BY THE CITIZENS

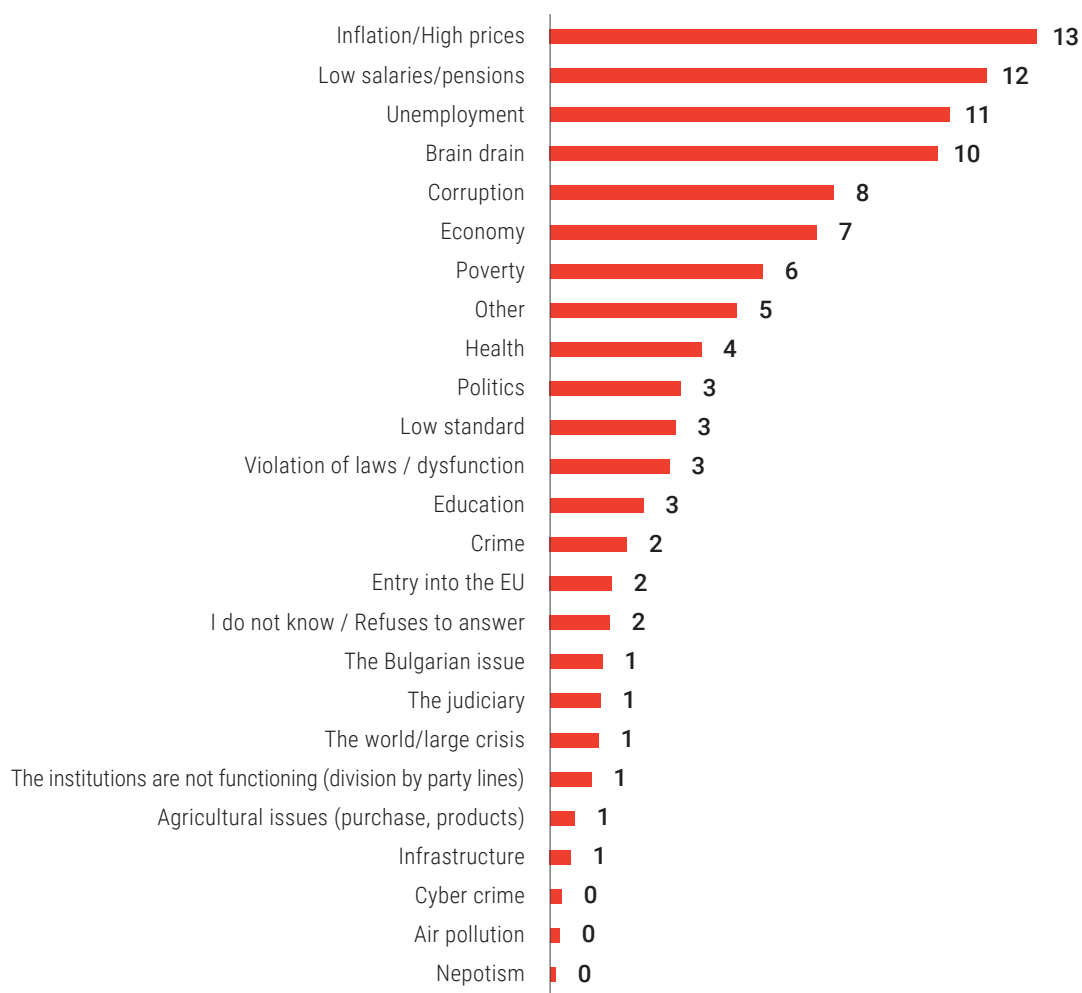


Chart 53. According to you, what are the main issues faced by citizens in this country? (first + second mention)

The general view is that the country is not moving in the right direction, which is a perception shared by all participants in the focus-groups. The perception that life in the country has taken a wrong turn is nothing new, which can be seen in the previous years of the survey research, but there is a common perception that the quality of life has worsened in recent years. Despite the general dissatisfaction, some issues appear more frequently in the focus groups. They start with concerns about the economic crisis and the lack of significant investments - *"You can't meet your basic needs with the salary"* (male ethnic Macedonian, Kavadarci, 31-50). All age groups refer to the economic conditions and the financial situation as issues, while the senior population is concerned about the uncertainty and social isolation caused by the recent economic crisis and the high inflation. The younger population, in general, is concerned by the limited potential for applying their skills and knowledge at the small labor market. The focus-group participants also believe corruption and brain drain to be key issues in the Macedonian society - *"In education, one couldn't work properly in the last few years - the parents were using threats, there was corruption. In the small towns, the well-skilled individuals are moving out due to pressure, there is large-scale corruption even for the minor issues"* (male ethnic Macedonian, Gostivar, 65+), while a participant from Struga said *"you educate the young people and then they are absorbed by Germany and the policy of depopulation"* (ethnic Albanian, Struga, 65+).

The question "How often do you talk about politics with your friends and family" was answered in the following way: 11% of respondents answered "daily", 28% said "a few times a week", while 35% responded "a few times a month". On the other hand, 26% of respondents replied that they never discuss politics. Bearing in mind the answers of citizens in the previous years, it is evident that they have talked politics with their family and friends the least during 2023. Namely in 2021, 16% of citizens said that they talk about politics with their loved ones every day, while in 2023 this percentage is reduced by 5 percentage points (11%). In line with this, in comparison to 2021, there is an increase of 10 percentage points of the percentage of citizens who have said they never talk politics with their friends and family (Chart 54).

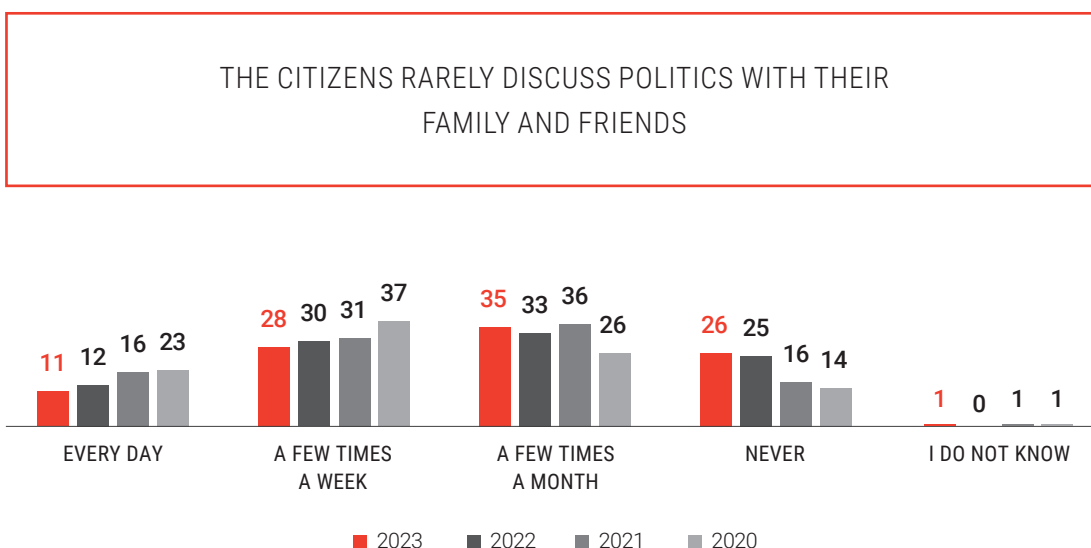


Chart 54. How frequently do you discuss politics with your friends and family? (%)

Respondents were asked to score their trust in a number of societal actors and state institutions. Citizens, as expected, placed their greatest trust in the religious communities (5.1), the military (5.1) and the police (4.3). All the other institutions received below average scores, including the non-governmental organizations (4.0), the public health institutions (3.6), the media (4.0), the public administration (3.8) and the municipalities (4.2). Among the most significant state institutions in the political system, the highest score was awarded to the president – 3.6, while the lowest score was given to the judiciary, 2.7. Trust in the Assembly (3.4) and the Government (3.3) was scored virtually the same. Citizens also do not place great trust in the public prosecutor's office (2.7), the political parties (3.0), the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (2.9) and the State Audit Office (3.1). Generally speaking, one can note limited trust in all societal actors and state institutions, which is alarming (Chart 55).

**THE CITIZENS PLACE THE LEAST TRUST IN THE JUDICIARY
(ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10)**

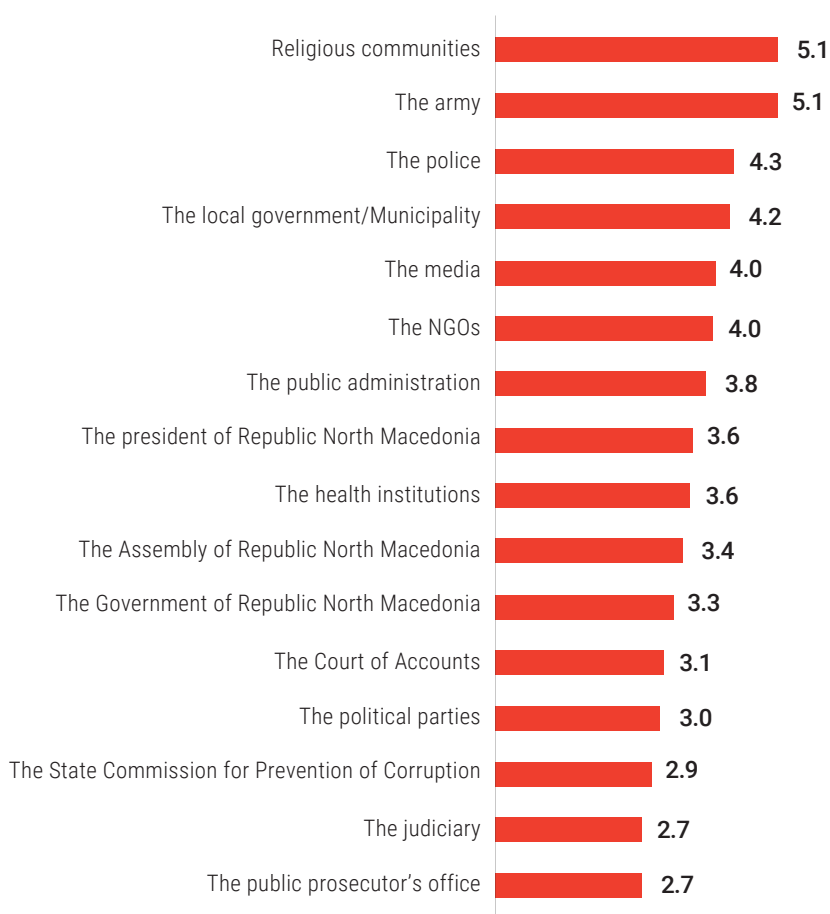


Chart 54. Trust in the institutions - on a scale of 1 - 10, describe your trust in the following institutions:

If we compare data on trust in the four most important institutions in the country, we can see that it is on the decline. In comparison to last year (2022), it is evident that there is lower trust in all institutions. The judiciary still receives the lowest scores among all four institutions (2.7), while the Assembly received a score lower by 0.6 points, from 4.0 points in 2022 to 3.4 points in 2023. Trust in the president of the country has also deteriorated in 2023 (by 0.6 points), which is in fact the lowest score this institution has received in the last four years, even though he is the highest ranked in trust in comparison to the other institutions. The government has also received a lower score by 0.6 points, from 3.9 in 2022 to 3.3 in 2023. In general, if the 2020 analyses are taken into account, there is a significant drop in the score of all institutions in the last few years (Chart 55.1).

THE TRUST IN THE INSTITUTIONS PLUMMETS

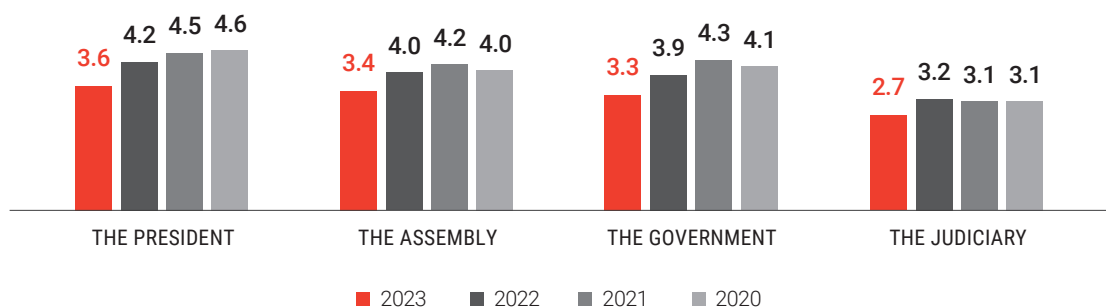


Chart 55.1. Trust in institutions - on a scale of 1 - 10, describe your trust in the following institutions (results from the last 4 years)

Citizens, generally speaking, do not trust the Assembly, the MPs and the political parties. They believe that MPs work only for personal interests – *“They are not trying, they only care for their personal interests. When they come to power, their goal is to score a few tenders, they don’t care about the issues of citizens”* (female ethnic Macedonian, Skopje, 31-50).

According to a focus-group participant in Skopje *“The Assembly is an arena where parties are flexing their muscles, their sole interest is to clash in order to earn political points. The legislation is custom-made for the interests of the party, not of the people. They are pushing the agenda of their party leader”* (male ethnic Macedonian, Skopje, 31-50). A similar opinion was shared by the participants in all focus-groups – *“when it comes to personal interest, they get along; for the people, they show populism”* (male ethnic Macedonian, Gevgelija, 31-50). They ascribe

the low trust to the past disappointments, but mostly to the fact that they believe MPs work only to meet their personal interests *“the Assembly is adopting laws for their own interests, not for the working classes. They adopt them with big gaps that they can then exploit”* (male ethnic Macedonian, Kumanovo, 51-65). They have a similar opinion for the political parties, as well, which explains the low trust in the political actors. The focus-group participants, generally speaking, believe that political parties are also working for their own interests, instead of in the interests of citizens.

They believe that MPs are not managing to solve the issues they have identified. When they are talking about the work of the Assembly, they have very little information and they believe this institution is not transparent towards citizens, that MPs are using language which is incomprehensible to the population, and that they do not have a direct line of communication with them. They believe that most of the laws are voted on using the expedited procedure, which means there is no real debate in the Assembly. The laws may be good, but they are not being implemented – *“There are many things missing, for example the law on young people is not being implemented. The adoption of laws is followed by a new struggle for its implementation”* (female ethnic Macedonian, Bitola, 18-30). They believe MPs are not ready for the function they have, they doubt their abilities – *“don’t study too hard, you’ll become an MP”* (male ethnic Albanian, Tetovo, 65+). The participants in the Albanian focus-groups believe that the Macedonian MPs are much more active than their Albanian counterparts. There is an overarching view that MPs are not prepared for the obligations that stem from the EU integration process, but also that deep down they do not support it – *“they just argue, but they do not want us to join Europe, because they will lose what they have, the free reign to do what they please”* (male ethnic Macedonian, Kumanovo, 65+). The participants also believe that all MPs are the same and that they are not constructive in the Assembly *“they are not focused on finding the solution, but only on airing the dirty laundry”* (male ethnic Macedonian, Gevgelija, 51-65). They do not see any hope in new MPs and parties and they think that even if they come into power, they will be the same as the other parties. When they were asked what MPs could do to demonstrate political will for reforms and improvement of quality of life, participants largely expressed a desire for consensus and cooperation between political parties – *“if something is for the general good of the country, there should be consensus”* (female ethnic Macedonian, Shtip, 51-65).

Citizens are also generally unaware who their MPs are and they could recognize only a handful of MPs from the most recent mandate. On the other hand, participants were able to identify MPs from the previous mandates – *“the issue is that we are voting for a party, not a person - in the Assembly you have a bunch of people from political parties”* (male ethnic Macedonian, Gostivar, 18-30). They believe the Assembly is not independent and it is frequently under the influence of political parties and the Government *“the Assembly is a puppet of the Government, that is the political elites”* (male ethnic Macedonian, Bitola, 65+).

As the survey data demonstrate, the focus-group participants stated that they do not have an opportunity to participate in the work of the Assembly, that they usually use the media, social networks and internet portals to get information, and that they find it difficult to navigate the website of the Assembly. The contact with the Assembly and MPs is, generally speaking, anecdotal, and depends on how much personal initiative citizens take to participate in the work of the Assembly. They still believe that most MPs are unresponsive, with a few exceptions.

XIII. THE DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Sex	Male	50%
	Female	50%

Age	18-29	20%
	30-39	19%
	40-49	22%
	50-64	16%
	65+	22%

Ethnicity	Macedonian	69%
	Albanian	26%
	Other	5%

Economic status	Formally employed full-time in the state sector	20%
	Formally employed in the state sector part-time	0%
	Formally employed full-time in the private sector	27%
	Formally employed in the private sector with less than 30 hours	1%
	Self-employed (works in their own company or store)	4%
	Informal employment which is paid regularly	2%
	Informal employment which is paid sporadically	3%
	Student	8%
	Retired person	17%
	A person with disability who is not able to engage in employment	0%
	Not employed and has not sought employment in the last 30 days	7%
	Not employed and is actively monitoring the job advertisements and is looking for a job	8%
Does not want to answer	2%	

Residence (region)	Vardar region	8%
	Eastern region	9%
	Southwest region	10%
	Southeast region	8%
	Pelagonija region	12%
	Polog region	14%
	Northeast region	8%
	Skopje region	30%
Residence	Urban	56%
	Rural	44%

XIV. CHARTS

- Chart 1. What is the role of the Assembly in the political life in North Macedonia? (%)
- Chart 2. To what extent do you believe that you are aware of what the Assembly has accomplished? (%)
- Chart 3. What will you remember year 2022 in the Assembly by? (%)
- Chart 4. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 means you are not satisfied at all, while 5 means you are quite satisfied), how satisfied are you with the work of the Assembly in the last year?
- Chart 5. If you would like to get informed about the work of the Assembly, what source of information do you use the most? (%)
- Chart 5.1. Sources of information for the work of the Assembly by age group (%)
- Chart 6. What kind of content do you believe should be more represented on the TV channel of the Assembly? (%)
- Chart 7. What type of content you believe should be available on the website of the Assembly? (%)
- Chart 8. To what extent is the information you receive through the media for the work of the Assembly sufficient so that you are up to date with the most important legal amendments? (%)
- Chart 9. To what extent does the Assembly have control over the Government, that is the Government over the Assembly?
- Chart 10. In your opinion, what kind of role does the Assembly have in the fight against corruption? (%)
- Chart 11. The MP questions: (%)
- Chart 12. To what extent do the MPs influence the quality of the laws in our country? (%)
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- Chart 17. How often do MPs take into account the remarks from the public and the civic organizations when they draft the laws? (%)
- Chart 18. Do you know the name of the MP in your constituency? (%)
- Chart 19. The MP from your region (municipality, constituency) is available to meet citizens? (%)

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- Chart 20. Are you aware of the MP offices in your region/municipality and have you visited the MP offices until now? (%)
- Chart 21. The MPs from your region inform citizens about what they do through? (%)
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- Chart 23. Has the MP from your region taken an initiative in the Assembly for an issue faced by your municipality? (%)
- Chart 24. Are you informed about the ways you can participate in the work of the Assembly? (%)
- Chart 25. Have you tried to participate in the work of the Assembly until now? (%)
- Chart 26. In what way do you think you can participate in the work of the Assembly? (%)
- Chart 27. The (online) internet petitions are a good way/tool for getting citizens involved in the work of the Assembly (%)
- Chart 28. To what extent do you think that the MPs represent the interests of citizens? (%)
- Chart 29. How frequently do the MPs represent the following interests? (%)
- Chart 30. The MPs are fully dependent on the will of the political party leaders (%)
- Chart 31. To what extent do you believe that the MPs are knowledgeable and ready to make decisions on behalf of citizens? (%)
- Chart 32. How frequently are arguments used in the debate between the MPs at the Assembly? (%)
- Chart 33. The MPs from the ruling majority take into account the arguments of the opposition MPs when making decisions in the Assembly (%)
- Chart 34. Do you believe that the majority in the Assembly needs to be more mindful of the views of the opposition? (%)
- Chart 35. How frequently do the MPs use language that demeans and degrades their interlocutors at the Assembly on the basis of their political, ethnic, religious and gender affiliation? (%)
- Chart 36. How do the MPs treat each other in the Assembly? (%)
- Chart 37. Civic associations need to get more involved in the work of the Assembly (%)
- Chart 38. The coalition or the party contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly (%)
- Chart 39. The Assembly is prepared to implement reforms and normalize the political situation (%)
- Chart 40. At the moment, for the sake of the country it is more important to implement quick reforms instead of lengthier discussions about the reforms with the participation of citizens (%)
- Chart 41. Which reforms do you believe should be a priority for the Assembly? (%)
- Chart 42. Do you believe that the boycott is the right way to express one's political views in terms of the work of the Assembly? (%)

- Chart 43. Do you believe that protracted and delays of the debates in order to prevent the adoption of a law or a decision is the right method for expressing political opinion in the work of the Assembly? (%)
- Chart 44. The political crises should be resolved in the Assembly, and not at leadership meetings. (%)
- Chart 45. The introduction of open lists, which would enable them to vote a person, instead of a party list, would contribute to a higher quality MP composition at the Assembly (%).
- Chart 46. The introduction of a single constituency at the parliamentary elections will contribute to a better representation of citizens at the Assembly (%)
- Chart 47. The change to the way the MPs are elected (the electoral model) at the parliamentary elections would contribute to MP independence from party leaders (%)
- Chart 48. Do you believe that it is important that multi-party groups are established at the Assembly (for example, the Female MP Club) at which MPs from different parties would unite on the same issues? (%)
- Chart 49. Which issues in your view warrant the establishment of such groups? (%)
- Chart 50. Out of the following citizen groups, whose interests do you believe are best represented by the Assembly: (%)
- Chart 51. The mean score for the work of the Assembly (on a scale of 1 - the lowest to 5 - the highest)
- Chart 52. Do you believe that, generally speaking, life in North Macedonia is moving in: (%)
- Chart 52.1 Do you believe that, generally speaking, life in North Macedonia is moving in: (per region) (%)
- Chart 53. According to you, what are the main issues faced by citizens in this country? (first + second mention)
- Chart 54. How frequently do you discuss politics with your friends and family? (%)
- Chart 55. Trust in the institutions - on a scale of 1 - 10, describe your trust in the following institutions:
- Chart 55.1. Trust in the institutions - on a scale of 1 - 10, describe your trust in the following institutions (results from the last 4 years)

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Swiss Parliament Support Programme (PSP) supports the efforts of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia for achieving independence by building a consensus, structural reforms and building the capacities in its legislative and supervisory roles, as well as in its institutional transparency and accountability efforts.

The program is giving support to the strategic planning of the Assembly; for reforms in human resource management; for an improved assessment of the regulatory impact and the procurement processes; for the efforts for greater openness and open data and for greater civic engagement in the policymaking processes. In addition, it also offers support by measuring public opinion and by monitoring the reform efforts, which includes this public opinion survey.

The Parliament Support Programme is supported by the Swiss Government and is being implemented by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis - Skopje (IDSCS) and the Center for Change Management (CUP).

INFORMATION ON THE INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY

The Institute for Democracy is a think-tank that carries out research of the development of good governance, rule of law and the European integration of Macedonia. The IDSCS mission is to assist civic involvement in the decision-making process and to reinforce the participative political culture. By reinforcing freethinking values, IDSCS contributes towards the coexistence of differences.

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XV. ANNEX 1 - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SURVEY ON THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY

1. Do you believe that, generally speaking, life in North Macedonia is moving in:

- 1. The right direction
- 2. The wrong direction
- 98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
- 99. Refuses to reply (illegible)

**2. According to you, what are the main issues faced by citizens in this country?
(spontaneous reply)**

First mention:
Second mention:

3. How frequently do you discuss politics with your friends and family?

- 1. Every day
- 2. A few times a week
- 3. A few times a month
- 4. Never
- 98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

4. According to you, what is the role of the Assembly in the political life in North Macedonia?

- 1. The Assembly plays a significant role in the political life
- 2. The Assembly plays an insignificant role in the political life
- 98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
- 99. Refuses to reply (illegible)

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5. Trust in the institutions - On a scale of 1 - 10, describe your trust in the following institutions:

	1-the least amount of trust					10-the largest amount of trust					I don't know	Refuses
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The judiciary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The president of the Republic of North Macedonia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The local government/ municipality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
Public Administration	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The Court of Accounts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The Public Prosecutor's Office	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The health institutions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The political parties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The non-governmental organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The religious communities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The army	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
The police	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99

6. To what extent do you believe you are aware of the work of the Assembly in the past from January 2022 until December 2022? (Explanation: How did it adopt laws and what did it debate)	1. I am fully aware
	2. I am partially aware
	3. I am little aware
	4. I am not aware at all – jump to the next question

7. What will you remember the period of (January 2022 until December 2022) in the Assembly?

Current topics discussed in the Assembly	Mentioned
1. Draft 2023 budget of the Republic of North Macedonia	
2. Information on the content of the draft negotiating framework for the pre-accession negotiations of the Republic of North Macedonia with the European Union, proposed by the French presidency of the Council of the European Union on June 30, 2022	
3. Proposal for the appointment of judges to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia	
4. 2022 European Commission Report for the Republic of North Macedonia	
5. 2021-2026 Gender equity draft-strategy	
6. Proposal for the composition of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia	
7. Draft law for amending and supplementing the Law on minimum wage in the Republic of North Macedonia	
8. Interpellation for the work of the president of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, Talat Xhaferi	
9. Draft law on civil liability for insult and defamation	
10. Alignment with the Istanbul Convention in the Criminal Code	
11. Other	

8. How satisfied are you with the work of the Assembly in the past (January - December 2022) on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is the lowest, while 5 is the highest score)

1 lowest					5-highest
1	2	3	4	5	

<p>9. If you would like to get informed about the work of the Assembly, what source of information do you use the most?</p>	1. Television
	2. The TV-channel of the Assembly
	3. Internet news portals
	4. Newspaper or magazine
	5. Radio
	6. Elsewhere on the internet (e.g. Facebook,
	7. Friends, relatives, neighbors etc.
	8. From the Assembly website
	9. Straight from political parties
	10. Something else
	11. I do not want to receive information about the Assembly/I am not interested (skip the next one)
98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)	

<p>10. What medium/TV do you use the most to get information?</p>	1. Sitel
	2. Telma
	3. Kanal 5
	4. Alsat
	5. TV Sonce
	6. TV 21
	7. Alfa-M
	8. TV 24 Vesti
	9. TV Klan
	10. TV Shenja
	11. Nasha TV
	12. Other
98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)	

11. To what extent is the information you receive through the media for the work of the Assembly sufficient so that you are up to date with the most important legal amendments?	1. It is entirely sufficient
	2. It is partially sufficient
	3. It is partially insufficient
	4. It is completely insufficient
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
12. What kind of content do you believe should be more represented on the TV channel of the Assembly	1. Educational content for the legislative process and the work of the Assembly
	2. Promotional content for the opportunities available to citizens for the involvement in the work of the Assembly and meetings with MPs
	3. Political debates on topics related to the work of the Assembly
	4. Expert interpretation of laws and amendments that have been adopted
	5. Field visits of parliamentary committees
	6. Presentation of the activities of the MP groups
	7. Diplomatic activities and events of MPs
	8. Other (the respondent has an opportunity to give another proposal)
	9. Talk shows
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
13. What type of content you believe should be available on the website of the of the Macedonian Assembly?	1. MP speeches
	2. Recordings of committees
	3. Public debates
	4. Opportunities for getting in touch with the MPs
	5. An opportunity to ask the MPs questions
	6. Educational content for the role and competences of the Assembly
	7. MP votes on certain points
	8. Proceedings from committees and plenary sessions
	9. Monitoring the law in all the readings/steps of the legislative process
	10. Further information on the activities and the extent to which your MP is active
	11. Live streaming of assembly sessions
	12. Data on the work of the institution, organization, employees, statistics, research etc.
	13. Other (the respondent has an opportunity to give another proposal)
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

14. I will read a few statements related to the MP questions as a tool for supervising the executive government. Please let me know to what extent you agree with each of the statements.

	I fully agree	I partially agree	I partially disagree	I completely disagree	I don't know	Refuses
1. The MP questions enable supervision of the work of the ministers	1	2	3	4	98	99
2. The MP questions influence the provision of responsibility of the institutions	1	2	3	4	98	99
3. The MP questions are used for advertising the government and the other institutions	1	2	3	4	98	99
4. The MP questions are used to inform citizens for the work of the government and the other institutions	1	2	3	4	98	99
5. The MP questions are useful for the institutions to report in front of the MPs	1	2	3	4	98	99
6. The MP questions are used for criticizing the government and the other institutions	1	2	3	4	98	99

15. To what extent do the MPs influence the quality of the laws in our country?	1. They have a large influence
	2. They have moderate influence
	3. They have relatively little influence
	4. They have no influence at all
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

16. How frequently are the laws being amended?	1. Too frequently
	2. Frequently
	3. Frequently enough
	4. Rarely
	5. Too rarely
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

17. How pleased are you by the quality of the laws enacted in the Assembly? (to what extent do the laws regulate the relations in society/provide fairness and equality and/the needs of citizens with high quality)	1. Quite satisfied
	2. Somewhat satisfied
	3. Somewhat dissatisfied
	4. Dissatisfied
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

18. In your opinion, what kind of role does the Assembly have in the fight against corruption?	1. It reduces corruption
	2. It neither reduces nor fuels corruption
	3. It fuels corruption
	98. I don't know
	99. Refuses to answer

19. I will read a few functions of the Assembly. On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 means not important at all, and 10 means very important), please tell me how important you find the function I read to you

	1-not important at all										10-very important										I don't know	Refuses
1. To adopt as many laws and amendments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
2. To adopt the best laws possible in the interest of and in line with the needs of citizens	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
3. To control the Government and the ministries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
4. To care for the way the laws and policies are being implemented	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
5. To enable the public to participate in the preparation of the laws and policies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
6. To organize debates with experts and civic organizations on current issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
7. To supervise the way the Budget (the public money) is being spent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99

20. I will read a few functions of the Assembly. On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 means does not fulfill at all, and 10 means it completely fulfills), please tell me to what extent do you believe that the Assembly fulfills the following functions

	1-Does not fulfill them at all										10-It fulfills them completely										I don't know	Refuses
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
1. To adopt as many laws and amendments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
2. To adopt the best laws possible in the interest of and in line with the needs of citizens	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
3. To control the Government and the ministries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
4. To care for the way the laws and policies are being implemented	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
5. To enable the public to participate in the preparation of the laws and policies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
6. To organize debates with experts and civic organizations on current issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99
7. To supervise the way the Budget (the public money) is being spent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98	99

<p>21. To what extent do you believe that the assembly is open to public participation in its work?</p> <p>(by 'open' we mean that citizens can get information at any time for the work of the Assembly and there are ways to participate in its work)</p>	1. Fully open
	2. Partially open
	3. Partially closed
	4. Completely closed
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
<p>22. According to you, how often do MPs take into account the remarks from the public and the civic organizations when they draft the laws?</p>	1. Always
	2. Frequently (in most of the cases)
	3. Sometimes
	4. Rarely
	5. Never
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
<p>23. Do you know the name of the MP in your constituency?</p>	1. Yes (if the person has given a correct answer and has recognized at least one MP)
	2. No
	9. Other (I know that there is no MP from my municipality)
<p>24. Are you aware of the MP offices in your region/ municipality?</p>	1. Yes
	2. No
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
<p>25. Have you visited the MP offices so far?</p>	1. Yes
	2. No
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
<p>26. Do you believe that the MP from your region (municipality, constituency) is available to meet citizens?</p>	1. Yes
	2. No
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
<p>27. What communications channel do the MPs in your region use to inform you about their job?</p>	1. Meetings in MP offices
	2. Meetings with citizens at public locations
	3. Public addresses
	4. The media
	5. Social networks
	6. They do not inform us
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

28. In what way, in your view, should your MPs inform citizens about what they do?	1. Meetings in MP offices
	2. Meetings with citizens at public locations
	3. Public addresses
	4. The media
	5. Social networks
	6. They do not inform us
	98. I do not know / no reply

29. Over the course of the last year, has an MP from your region taken an initiative in the Assembly for an issue faced by your municipality, community etc.?	1. Yes
	2. No
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

30. To what extent do you think that the MPs represent the interests of citizens?	1. They represent them completely
	2. They represent them partially
	3. They do not represent them at all
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

31. How frequently do the MPs represent the following interests?

	Always	Sometimes	Never	I don't know	Refuses
1. Citizens' interests	1	2	3	98	99
2. Their own, personal interests	1	2	3	98	99
3. The interests of citizens from their constituencies	1	2	3	98	99
4. The interests of their political party	1	2	3	98	99
5. The interests of the ethnic community they belong to	1	2	3	98	99
6. Business interests	1	2	3	98	99
7. Interests of other countries	1	2	3	98	99

32. Ќе ви прочитаме неколку изјави. Во која мера се согласувате со нив?

	I fully agree	I partially agree	I partially disagree	I completely disagree	I don't know	Refuses
1. The MPs are fully dependent on the will of the political party leaders	1	2	3	4	98	99
2. The political crises should be resolved in the Assembly, and not at leadership meetings	1	2	3	4	98	99
3. Civic associations need to get more involved in the work of the Assembly	1	2	3	4	98	99
4. At the moment, for the sake of the country it is more important to implement quick reforms instead of lengthier discussions about the reforms with the participation of citizens	1	2	3	4	98	99
5. The Assembly is prepared to implement reforms and normalize the political situation	1	2	3	4	98	99

33. Are you informed about the ways you can participate in the work of the Assembly?	1. Yes
	2. No

34. In what way do you think you can participate in the work of the Assembly:
1. To launch an initiative for adopting a law or amendments to a law?
2. To ask the MPs a question?
3. To ask for a meeting with an MP?
4. To attend a plenary session of the Assembly?
5. To attend a committee session?
6. To receive information about the future legal regulations and acts that the Assembly will discuss in the near future?
7. To launch an initiative for announcing a local referendum?
8. To launch an initiative for announcing a national referendum?
98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

35. Have you tried to participate in the work of the Assembly until now?	1. Yes
	2. No
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

36. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement: - The (online) internet petitions, organized by the Assembly, are a good way/tool for getting citizens involved in the work of the Assembly?	1. I fully agree
	2. I partially agree
	3. I partially disagree
	4. I completely disagree
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

37. To what extent do you believe that the MPs are knowledgeable and ready to make decisions on behalf of citizens?	1. All of them are ready
	2. Most of them are ready
	3. Most of them are not ready
	4. They are not ready at all
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

38. Do you agree with the statement: - The MPs from the ruling majority take into account the arguments of the opposition MPs when making decisions in the Assembly	1. They take them into account completely
	2. They generally take them into account
	3. They generally do not take them into account
	4. They do not take them into account at all
	98. I do not know / no reply

39. According to you, how frequently do the MPs use language that demeans and degrades their collocutors at the Assembly on the basis of their political, ethnic, religious and gender affiliation?	1. Never
	2. Rarely
	3. Frequently
	4. Always
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

40. According to you, how do the MPs treat each other in the Assembly?	1. In a hostile manner
	2. In a competitive manner
	3. With tolerance
	4. They cooperate
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

41. According to you, how frequently are arguments used in the debate between the MPs at the Assembly?	1. Always
	2. Frequently (in a large number of cases)
	3. Rarely
	4. Never
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

42. Do you believe that the majority in the Assembly needs to be more mindful of the views of the opposition?	1. Yes
	2. No
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

43. We will read a few statements to you. To what extent do you agree with them?

	I fully agree	I partially agree	I partially disagree	I completely disagree	I don't know	Refuses
The coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly	1	2	3	4	98	9
The coalition led by SDSM contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly	1	2	3	4	98	9
Demokratska unija za integracija (DUI) party contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly	1	2	3	4	98	9
The Alijansa za Albancite party contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly	1	2	3	4	98	9
Levica contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly	1	2	3	4	98	9
The Democratic Party of the Albanians contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly	1	2	3	4	98	9
The Alternativa party contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly	1	2	3	4	98	9
The Dvizenje Besa party contributes to a higher quality work of the Assembly	1	2	3	4	98	9

44. Which reforms do you believe should be a priority for the Assembly? - In what segments, in your view, should the Assembly reform most?	1. In its supervisory function over the work of the Government
	2. In its representative function
	3. In its legislative function
	4. In its supervisory role of the regulatory bodies
	5. In its supervision over the security/intelligence structures
	6. In its diplomatic function
	99. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

45. Do you believe that the boycott is the right way to express one's political views in terms of the work of the Assembly?	1. Yes
	2. No
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

46. Do you believe that protracted and delays of the debates in order to prevent the adoption of a law or a decision is the right method for expressing political opinion in the work of the Assembly?	1. Yes
	2. No
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

47. Do you believe that the introduction of open lists (a change in the electoral model) of the parliamentary elections may contribute to an improvement of the quality of the composition of the Assembly?	1. I fully agree
	2. I partially agree
	3. I partially disagree
	4. I completely disagree
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

48. Do you believe that the introduction of a single constituency at the parliamentary elections may contribute to an improvement of the quality of the composition of the Assembly?	1. I fully agree
	2. I partially agree
	3. I partially disagree
	4. I completely disagree
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)

49. Can the change to the way the MPs are elected (the electoral model) at the parliamentary elections contribute to reducing the dependence of MPs on their party leaders?	1. I fully agree
	2. I partially agree
	3. I partially disagree
	4. I completely disagree
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
50. Out of the following citizen groups, whose interests do you believe are best represented by the Assembly: (2 answers are selected)	1. Persons with disabilities
	2. The LGBT community
	3. Roma
	4. Single parents
	5. Women
	6. The elderly
	7. Unemployed
	8. Social assistance beneficiaries
	9. Young people
	10. Citizens from rural areas
98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)	
51. Do you believe that it is important that there are more thematic party groups established in the Assembly (such as the Female MP Club, the Inter-party group for supporting the rights of the Roma, their inclusion and integration etc.) in which MPs from different parties will unite on similar issues?	1. Yes
	2. No (skip question 47)
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
52. If yes, which issues in your view warrant the establishment of such groups?	1. Persons with disabilities
	2. The LGBT community
	3. Roma
	4. Single parents
	5. Women
	6. The elderly
	7. Unemployed
	8. Social assistance beneficiaries
	9. Young people
	10. Environmental protection
	11. Citizens from rural areas
	12. Other

53. For some countries it is said that the Government exercises control over the Assembly, while for others it is said that the Assembly exercises control over the Government. To what extent do you agree with the following statement about our country?

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
The Government has full control over the Assembly						The Assembly has full control over the Government

54. Assess the work of the most recent composition of the parliament on a scale of 1 to 5 (whereby 1 is the lowest, and 5 is the highest score)

1 lowest		5-highest		
1	2	3	4	5

POLITICAL CONTEXT

55. If the elections are to take place next week, which party would you vote for?	1. VMRO-DPMNE led coalition
	2. SDSM led coalition
	3. Democratic Union for Integration (DUI)
	4. Alliance for Albanians
	5. Alternativa
	6. Movement Besa
	7. Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA)
	9. Levica/Left
	10. Other
	11. I would not vote
	98. I do not know/no answer (illegible)
99. Refuses to reply (illegible)	

56. I will read out the names of a few political parties. Please let me know how close you feel to each one of them on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very distant, and 10 means too close.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	I don't know	Refuses
VMRO-DPMNE												
SDSM												
DUI												
Alijansa za Albancite												
Levica												
BESA												
Other:												

57. I will read a few statements related to the EU-integration process of the country. Please let me know to what extent you agree with each of the statements.

	I fully agree	I partially agree	I partially disagree	I completely disagree	I don't know	Refuses
The MPs are suitably prepared for fulfilling their share of the obligations in the EU-integration process	1	2	3	4	98	9
The ethnic Bulgarians should be included in the constitution of North Macedonia	1	2	3	4	98	9
The relationship between North Macedonia and Bulgaria is improving	1	2	3	4	98	9

58. I will read a few statements related to the regional collaboration of the country. Please let me know to what extent you agree with each of the statements.

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest, and 5 the highest, how well acquainted are you with the benefits of the Berlin process?				
1 lowest		5-highest		
1	2	3	4	5

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest, and 5 the highest, how well acquainted are you with the benefits of the Open Balkans initiative?				
1 lowest		5-highest		
1	2	3	4	5

59. According to you, which of our neighboring countries is our biggest economic partner?	1. Albania
	2. Bulgaria
	3. Greece
	4. Kosovo
	5. Serbia

60. According to you, which of our neighboring countries is our biggest security partner?	1. Albania
	2. Bulgaria
	3. Greece
	4. Kosovo
	5. Serbia

