



OTVORENI PARLAMENT

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AUDIT OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT 2015

PUBLIC OPINION POLL ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES IN SERBIA



September, 2015.

The Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA), as part of initiative Open Parliament and in partnership with agency Ipsos Strategic Marketing, has conducted a third consecutive survey titled "Citizen participation in democratic processes in Serbia." Two previous polls were backed by the British Embassy in Belgrade and the National Democratic Institute.

The research aimed to establish a level of Serbian citizens' readiness to participate in democratic processes, which imply a series of different forms of civic engagement: from voting in elections to initiating concrete campaigns.

The survey represents a specific display of the democratic situation in the society. The extent to which the citizens are ready to engage in social processes, exercise their civil rights and influence decision makers is the indicator of "the state of health" of a society.

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METHODOLOGY

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

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

Data collection method: Face-to-face interviews conducted within households of the respondents using structured questionnaire

Fieldwork dates

February 15 to 25, 2013

August 21 to 25, 2014

July 18 to 23, 2015

Sample size:

2013 n=1060

2014 n=1040

2015 n=1014

Sample universe: Citizens of Serbia aged 18+ years

Sample design: Three-stage random stratified representative sample

Stratums: Regions (Belgrade, Vojvodina, western Serbia, eastern Serbia, central Serbia, southern Serbia)

Stages (sample type and selection method):

First stage sample unit: Territory of polling stations (probability proportional to size -PPS;

Method of selection: Cumulative (Lachirie method)

Second stage sample unit: Households (SRSWoR - randomly selected first sample unit which will not be replaced in the population pool)

Third stage unit: Respondents within a household (Kish grid)

Post-stratification: by gender, age and region

Sampling error: Margin of error: $\pm 3.31\%$

NOTE: Parliamentary elections were held in March 2014, between two surveys. The circumstance that the second survey was carried out in the election year, four months following the vote, sure did affect assessments and opinions of the respondents expressed in the research.

MAIN FINDINGS SUMMARY

Findings of the survey conducted in 2015 show that despite mild indications of positive changes, less than one third of the respondents take part in Serbia's political life, or believe in the efficiency of civic engagement. Like in previous years, the only political action involving more than one half of the population is voting in elections.

Compared with the past two years, there is a mild upward trend in the interest in politics and other topics related to the political system and public authorities in Serbia, with an increase also reported in citizen participation in actions related to problem solving in local communities and at the general level and also with the expressed desire to influence decisions of the authorities at the local level.

Compared with 2014, the respondents' self-assessment of knowledge about the situation in the country is somewhat higher, which following a decline in 2014, returned to the 2013 level. The actual knowledge (tested with two knowledge quizzes), on average remained at the last year's level, which was somewhat higher than in 2013.

On the other hand, the **confidence that certain actions can bring about changes in the state declined against 2014, while the readiness to participate mainly remained at the last year's level, little above that in 2013.** The confidence that the engagement in certain civil actions could bring about changes in the state rose in 2014 against 2013, which could probably be attributed to the post-election optimism.

- 28% are interested in politics (2013: 25%, 2014: 23%)
- 27% are interested in at least 4 of 8 specific topics related to politics, political system and public authorities in Serbia (2013: 24%, 2014: 22%), that is 28%, taking into account the work of independent institutions (question added in 2015)
- 27% answered correctly to at least half of 8 quiz questions (2013: 27%, 2014: 33%)
- 29% participated in at least one political action related to problem solving and decision making in the last 2, 3 years (2013: 26%, 2014: 21%), that is 30% taking into account addressing independent institutions (question added in 2015)
- 23% believe that the majority of 9 listed actions (5 and more) could contribute to changing things that they believe should be changed in the state (2013: 22%, 2014: 30%), that is 26% taking into account addressing independent institutions (added in 2015)
- 29% expressed readiness to engage in 4 of 6 listed actions (2013: 23%, 2014: 30%), that is 36% in 4 of 8 actions if 2 actions related to independent institutions (question added in 2015) are included

KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST

A majority of citizens, like in previous years, believe that they have no or very little knowledge of topics related to politics, political system and work of public authorities:

- 78% of the surveyed (2013 & 2014: 79%) say they are not well informed about any of 7 topics related to the political system and public authorities (on politics in Serbia, the Serbian parliament, the role of MPs and aldermen, the Serbian government, local self-government, system of government in Serbia, on the Autonomous Province (AP) of Vojvodina

government), and 43% that they are not even fairly informed about any of the mentioned topics (2013 & 2014: 46%).

- 57% believe they have no or very little knowledge about politics in Serbia (2013: 56%, 2014: 60%)
- More than 60% believe they have no or very little knowledge about local self-government, the republican government, the Serbian parliament and the system of government, while as many as 70% have no or very little knowledge about the role of MPs and aldermen (2013: 72%, 2014: 75%)
- Finally, 75% say they have no or very little knowledge about the work of independent institutions (question added this year)

The actual knowledge expressed in two quizzes is around the 2014 level, and somewhat better than in 2013:

- In the first quiz, comprising 8 questions, about one in three respondents, or 31%, answered correctly to 4 or more questions (2013: 27%, 2014: 33%)
- In the second quiz, requiring true or false answers, 31% answered correctly to 3 or more than 5 questions, down from 34% in 2014.

Like the past two years, the least knowledge was demonstrated about Serbia's election system:

- 7% believe there is a single election unit in Serbia (2013: 5%, 2014: 6%)
- 17% knew that mandates of MPs do not belong to their respective parties on which tickets they ran as candidates (2013: 23%, 2014: 16%)
- 18% knew that parliamentary elections are held by a proportional representation system (2013: 17%, 2014: 16%)

A low percentage of the respondents answered correctly to questions about the Serbian parliament:

- Less than one third, 32%, knew the number of seats in the parliament (2013: 31%, 2014: 32%)
- Slightly above one half of the respondents, 53%, knew the name of the parliament speaker (2014: 50%)

About one in four respondents, 24%, knew that the Serbian president has a five-year term in office (2013: 25%, 2014: 22%).

Slightly more than one third of the respondents, 36%, knew what independent institutions are (question added this year).

Although the respondents expressed little interest in topics related to politics and the work of democratic institutions, a mild upward trend is reported compared to the past two years:

- About half of the respondents, 52%, are not interested in any of 8 listed topics related to politics, political system and public authorities in Serbia (2013: 57%, 2014: 59%)
- 27% are interested in 4 or more of listed topics (2013: 24% 2014: 22%)
- 28% are interested in politics (2013: 25%, 2014: 23%)

As in 2014, **the least interest was expressed in topics related to the work and organization of the Serbian parliament**, 20% of the surveyed, (2013 & 2014: 19%), while the lack of interest is especially present for **the work of provincial assemblies and the government** - 14% (2013: 11%, 2014: 13%).

The topics of least interest for respondents also include **the work of independent institutions** (question added this year), which **draws the interest of as few as 17% of the respondents**.

The surveyed expressed **most interest in municipal elections in their respective local communities**, 35%, (2013: 32%, 2014: 26%) and **the work and organization of their respective local self-governments**, 32%, (2013: 29%, 2014: 29%).

ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN ACTIONS RELATED TO PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING

A low percentage of the respondents are actively engaged in Serbia's political life, but the number somewhat increased compared to previous years.

Similarly to previous years, the largest number of respondents participated in political life through elections: if parliamentary elections were held at the time of this survey, 67% of the respondents would most likely cast ballots, but only 42% would definitely vote.

Citizen participation in actions related to decision-making and problem solving increased from 2014:

- 12% participated in the past year in some action or initiative related to problem solving in their respective local community (2013: 9%, 2014: 7%)
- 34% discussed politics with others (2013: 39%, 2014: 28%)
- 29% participated in the past 2,3 years in at least one action related to problem solving or decision-making at municipal or national level (2013: 26% 2014: 21%)
- Like previous years, the action which most involved respondents is petition signing, 15%, (2013: 16%, 2014: 10%); while all other actions, similarly to previous years, engaged between 1 % and 6%.

A small percentage of the respondents even express the desire to influence decisions of the authorities, with the percentage of those wishing to influence decision at local level reporting a mild growth compared with 2014:

- 28% expressed the desire to influence decisions of authorities in their respective municipalities (2013: 31% 2014: 25%)
- 22% expressed the desire to influence decisions of authorities at national level (same as in previous two years)
-

SATISFACTION WITH WORK OF PARLIAMENT & GOVERNMENT AND CONFIDENCE IN EFFICIENCY OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The number of the surveyed dissatisfied with the work of the Serbian parliament and the government is considerably larger than of those satisfied, with the number of those dissatisfied constantly growing since 2013:

- 48% are dissatisfied with the work of the Serbian parliament, up 10% up from 2013 (2013: 38%, 2014: 43%); 18% are satisfied (2013: 21%, 2014: 19%); 35% have divided opinion - equally satisfied and dissatisfied (2013: 42%, 2014: 38%)
- 43% are dissatisfied with the work of the Serbian government, up 10% from 2013, (2013: 33% 2014: 39); 26% are satisfied (2013: 29%, 2014: 26%); 31% have divided opinion - equally satisfied and dissatisfied (2013: 38%, 2014: 35%)

General trust in politicians and the confidence that MPs represent interest of citizens is very low, and despite a somewhat more engagement, it reports some negative trends compared with 2014:

- 68% think that politicians are not truthful to citizens (2013: 62%, 2014: 62%); 23% are undecided (2013: 31% 2014: 29%), while 8% believe they are mainly truthful (2013: 8% 2014: 10%);
- As few as 14% believe that MPs represent the interests of common citizens (2013: 11%, 2014: 14%)
- 71% believe that MPs care more about the interests of their respective political parties than about the citizens' interests (2013: 69%, 2014: 64%)

A small percentage of the surveyed have confidence in the availability of MPs and aldermen in their respective local self-governments:

- As in the past two years, 16% believe that an MP would listen to a problem addressed to him/her, which falls under the parliament's jurisdiction
- 21% believe that they would be heard by an alderman in their municipal assembly, a slight increase from 2014, but a drop from 2013 (2013: 26%, 2014: 19%)

In general, similarly to the two past two years, a small percentage of the respondents in principal believe that common citizens with their engagement can influence decision-making or change things they are not satisfied with:

- 17% generally agree with the opinion that common citizens through their engagement can change things they are dissatisfied with in their respective local communities (2013: 17%, 2014: 16%)
- 10% agree with the opinion that common citizens through their engagement can change things they are dissatisfied with at the national level (2013: 10%, 2014: 12%)

Similarly to previous years, citizens' confidence that certain concrete actions could bring about changes is somewhat higher than the general belief that common citizens can change things in the state. However, following an increased confidence in the efficiency of own engagement in 2014, (which could probably be attributed to the postelection optimism), the confidence declined again:

- 23% believe that the majority of 9 listed actions (5 and more) could contribute to changing things which citizens believe should be changed in the state (2013: 22%, 2014: 30%), that is 26%, taking into account addressing independent institutions (added in 2015)

The confidence that civic engagement could bring about changes declined from 2014 concerning most of the listed actions, particularly voting in elections (by 8%), participation in street protest and rallies (by 8%), connecting with non-governmental organizations (by 8%), and organized campaigns on the Internet and social networks (by 9%):

- 40% believe things can be changed by diverting media attention to citizens' problems (2013: 41%, 2014: 46%)
- 39% believe things can be changed by voting in local elections (2013: 42% 2014: 45%)

- 37% believe things can be changed by voting in parliamentary elections (2013: 41%, 2014: 44%)
- 32% believe things can be changed by joining political parties (2013: 27%, 2014: 32%)
- 26% believe things can be changed by participating in organized citizen pressure on the parliament, such as public debates and petition signing (2013: 23%, 2014: 30%)
- 22% believe things can be changed by networking with non-governmental organizations (2013: 19%, 2014: 30%)
- 19% believe things can be changed by contacting MPs and aldermen (2013: 14%, 2014: 21%)
- 18% believe things can be changed with campaigns on the Internet and social networks (2013: 13%, 2014: 27%)
- As few as 16% believe that things can be changed by addressing independent institutions (this question was not asked in previous years)

Citizens' readiness to engage in actions aiming to change things in the state and decisions of the authorities mainly remained at the last year's level, which is slightly higher than in 2013:

- 29% expressed readiness to engage in at least 4 of 6 listed actions (2013: 23%, 2014: 30%), and 36% in at least 4 of 8 actions if 2 actions related to independent institutions are included (question added in 2015)

Citizens' readiness to engage in certain civic actions was higher in 2014 than in 2013 (as is the case with the confidence in the efficiency of such engagement), but the trend discontinued in 2015. The expressed readiness for participation in certain actions mainly remained at the 2014 level, with the exception of networking with civil society organizations, which dropped by 6%:

- 57% expressed readiness to sign a petition for a cause they support (2013: 51%, 2014: 57%)
- 41% expressed readiness to engage in signature collection for a petition (2013: 35%, 2014: 40%)
- 36% expressed readiness to sign an online petition (2013: 27%, 2014: 38%)
- 31% expressed readiness to participate in a public protest (2013: 29%, 2014: 34%)
- 32% expressed readiness to address his/her alderman or MP for problem solving in local community or at state level (2013: 23%, 2014: 31%)
- 20% expressed readiness to address a civil society organization and inquire about actions which he/she could join (2013: 18%, 2014: 26%)
- 22% expressed readiness to address an independent institution, and 36% to join or support an action for solving a problem they consider important and which would be initiated by an independent institution (question added this year)

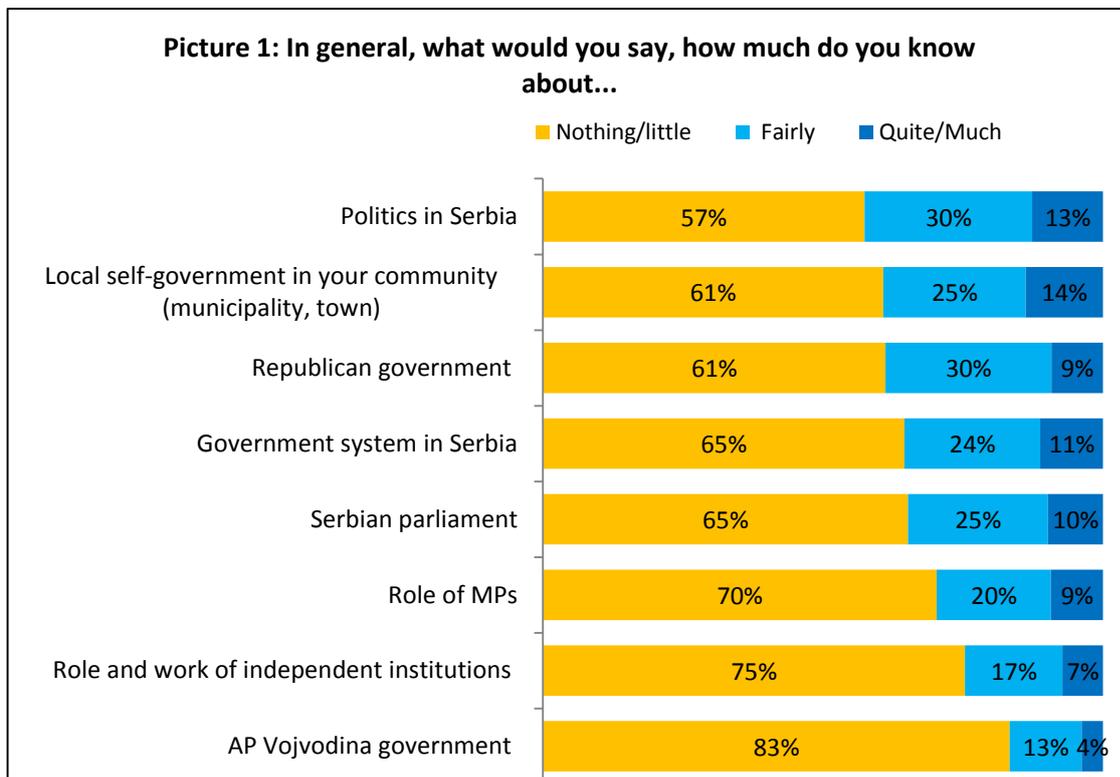
MAIN FINDINGS

A. KNOWLEDGE OF & INTEREST IN POLITICAL TOPICS

Self-assessment of knowledge

As in previous years, a majority of citizens believe that they have no or little knowledge about topics related to politics, political system, public authorities and the work of independent institutions in Serbia. The percentage of those who consider themselves informed slightly rose from 2014, returning to the 2013 level.

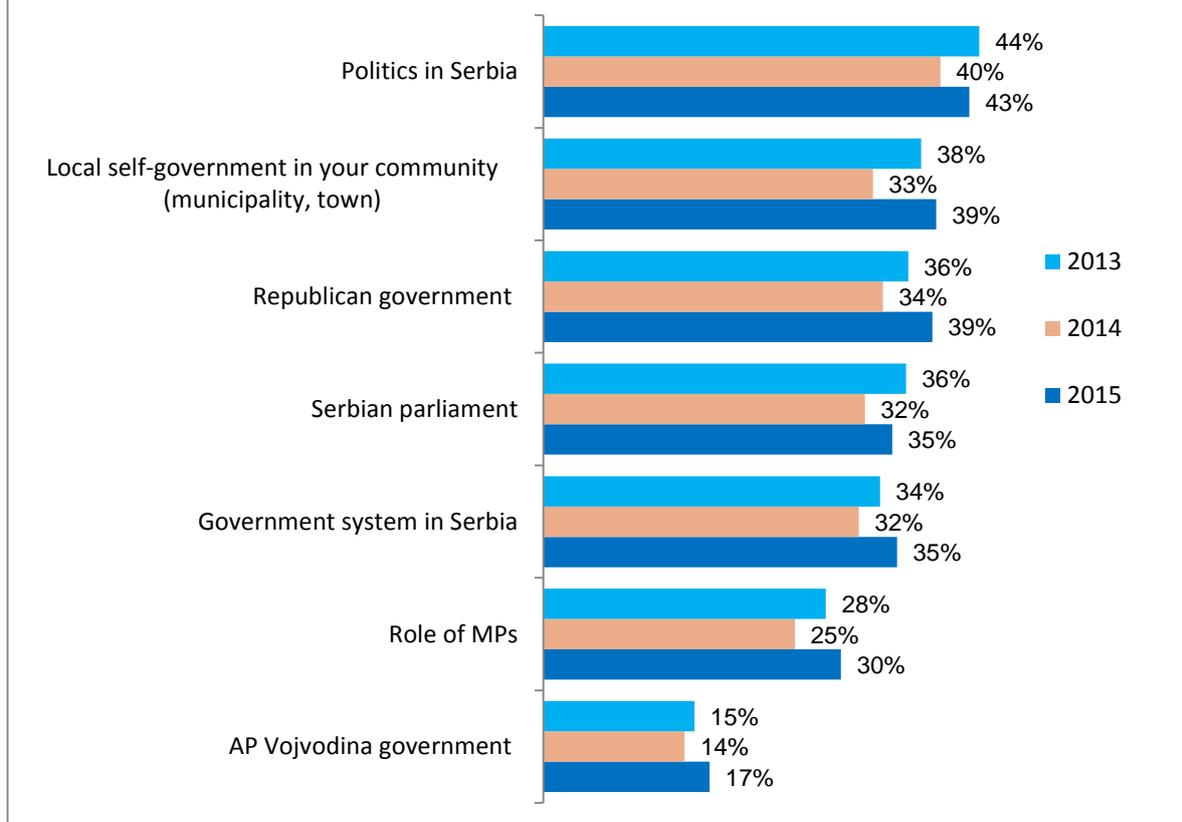
Most of the surveyed, 57%, believe that they have no or little knowledge about politics in Serbia, while more than 60% believing they have no knowledge or very little about the Republican government, local self-government, the Serbian parliament and the system of government. As many as 70% say they have no or very little knowledge about the role of MPs and aldermen, 75% about the work of independent institutions, and as many as 83% about the AP Vojvodina government. (Picture 1)



As in previous years, women, age group from 18 to 29 years, and citizens with low education level, have the lowest self-assessment of knowledge. (Picture 2)

Compared with 2014, a somewhat larger percentage of the respondents feel they have at least a fair knowledge about all listed topics, with self-assessments mainly returning to the 2013 level. (Picture 3)

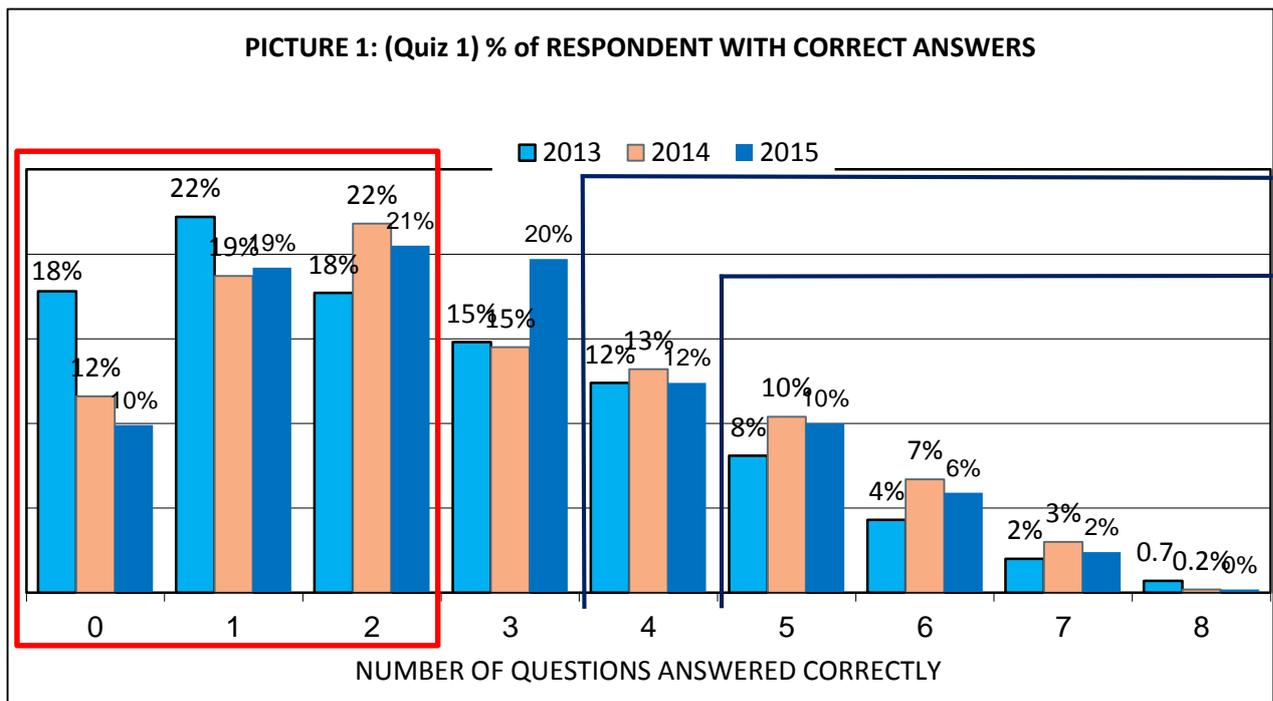
**PICTURE 3: In general, what would you say, how much you actually know...
% answers "I know fairly+ quite + much"**



Knowledge

The knowledge of most politics-related topics remains at the last year's level, but is somewhat higher than in 2013.

In the first quiz, comprising 8 questions, little above half of the surveyed, 50%, answered correctly to no more than 2 questions (2013: 58%, 2014: 53%); 31% knew answers to 4 and more questions (2013: 27%, 2014: 33%), while 19% answered correctly to 5 and more questions (2013: 15%, 2014: 33%). (Picture 4)



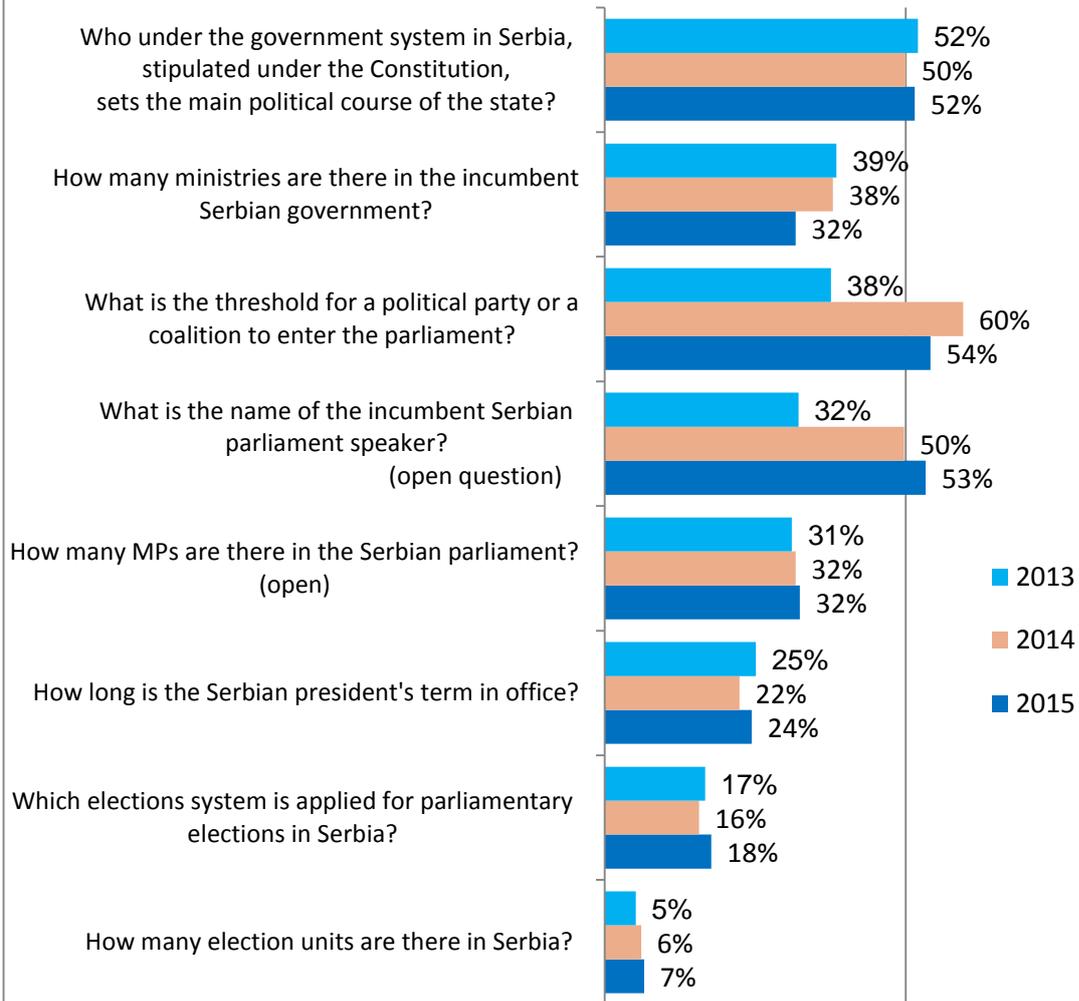
The largest number of respondents (more than half) provided correct answers to three questions: *What is the threshold for entering the Serbian parliament; Who, under the Constitution, defines the main political course of the state; What is the name of the Serbian parliament speaker.* (Picture 5)

The least knowledge, like in 2014, was shown to questions relating to Serbia's election system: only 18% knew that parliamentary elections are held by a proportional representation system, while as few as 7% knew that there is a single election unit in Serbia (Picture 5)

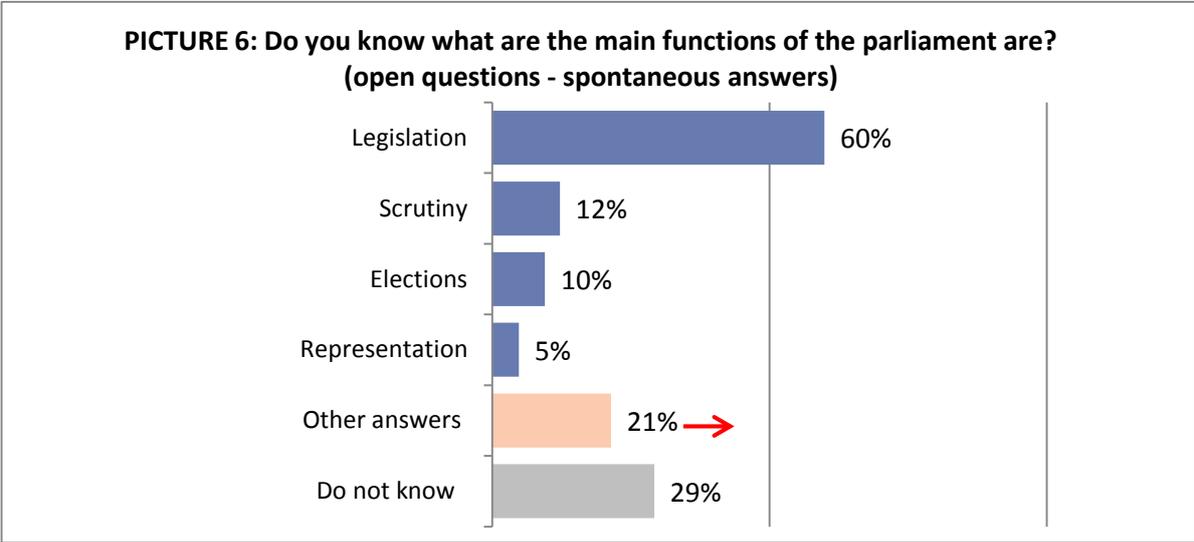
As in 2014, less than one third of the respondents, 32%, knew the number of MPs in the parliament, and the same percentage, 32%, the number of ministries in the incumbent Serbian government (down 6% from 2014). (Picture 5)

Only 24% knew that the Serbian president's term in office lasts five years (2013: 25%, 2014: 22%). (Picture5)

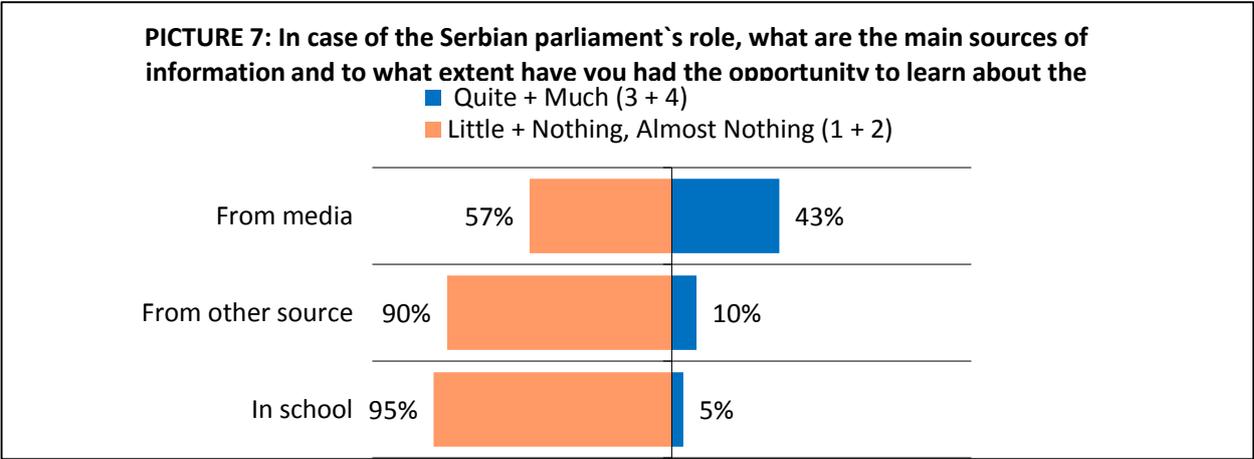
PICTURE 5 (Quiz 1) % OF RESPONDENT WITH CORRECT ANSWERS



There is a little knowledge about the basic functions of the parliament. The only function known to the surveyed is its legislative function, while the least number of the respondents knew about its representative function. Legislation was mentioned by 60% of the surveyed, scrutiny by 12%, election by 10%, and representation by 5%. ¹ (Picture 6)

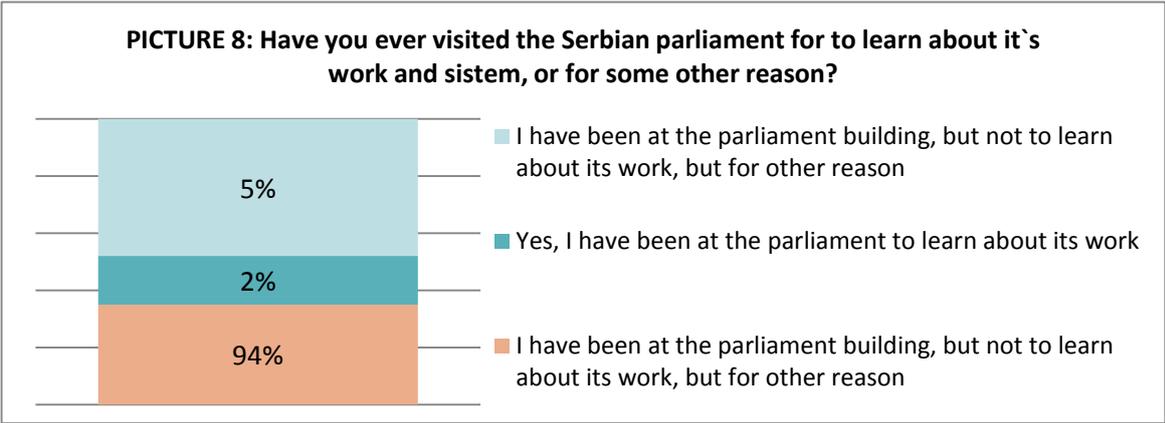


As the source providing most information about the role and work of the Serbian parliament, media was cited by 43% of the respondents, and school by as few as 5%. (Picture 7)

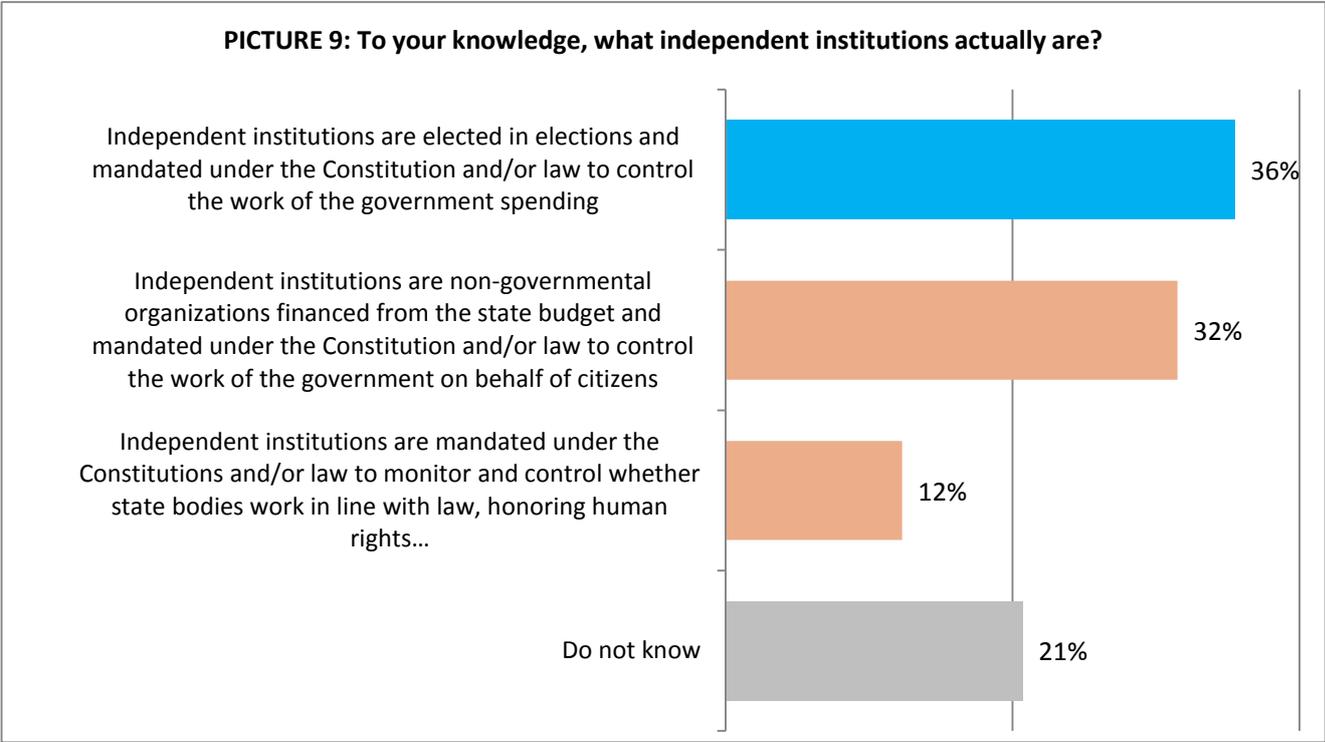


As few as 7% of the surveyed have visited the Serbian parliament and only 2% to learn about its work. (Picture 8)

¹ All answers containing a description of the given function in the respondents' own words, although not offering precise definitions, were accepted as correct.

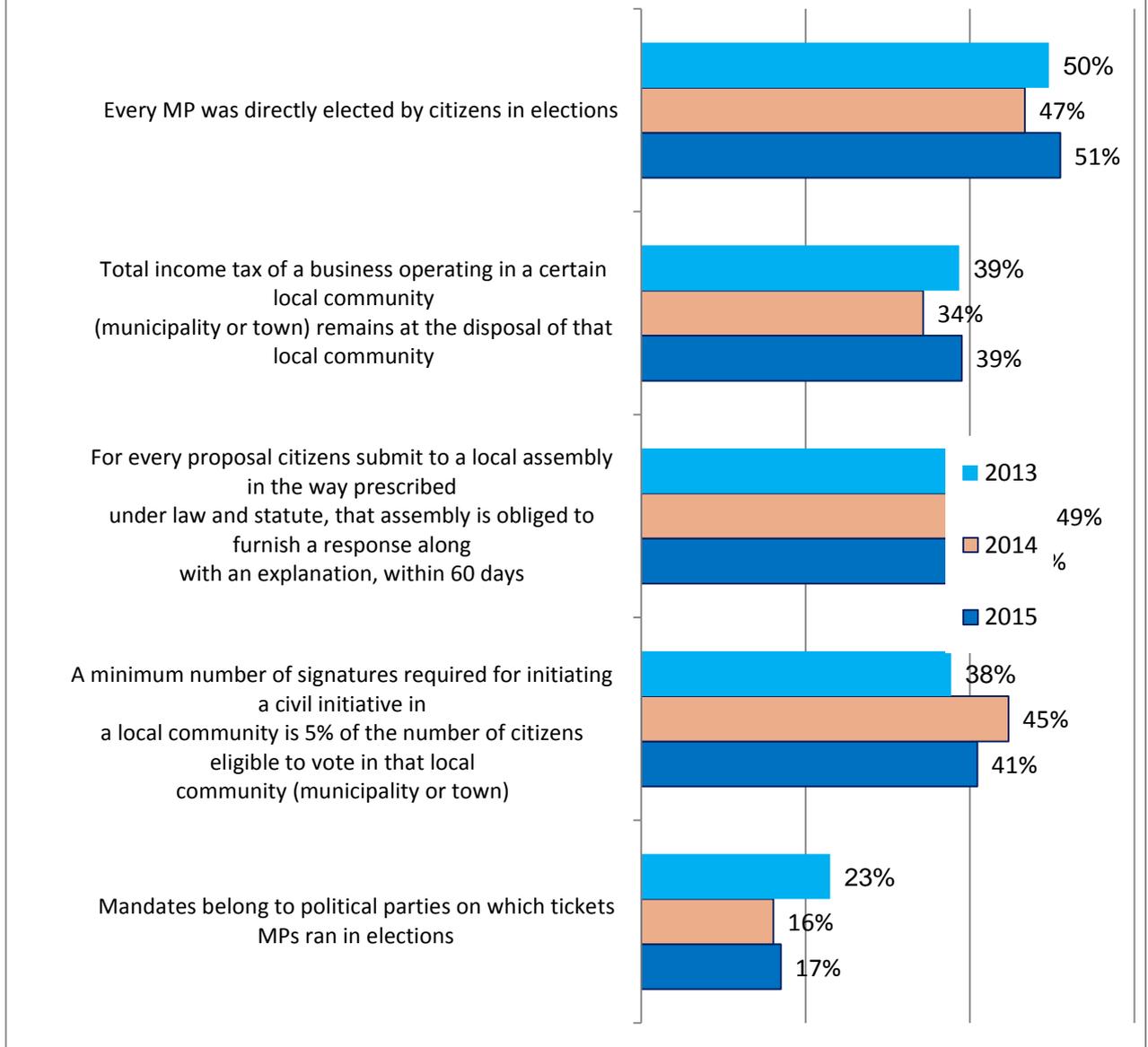


Little above one third of the surveyed knew what independent institutions are. (Picture 9)



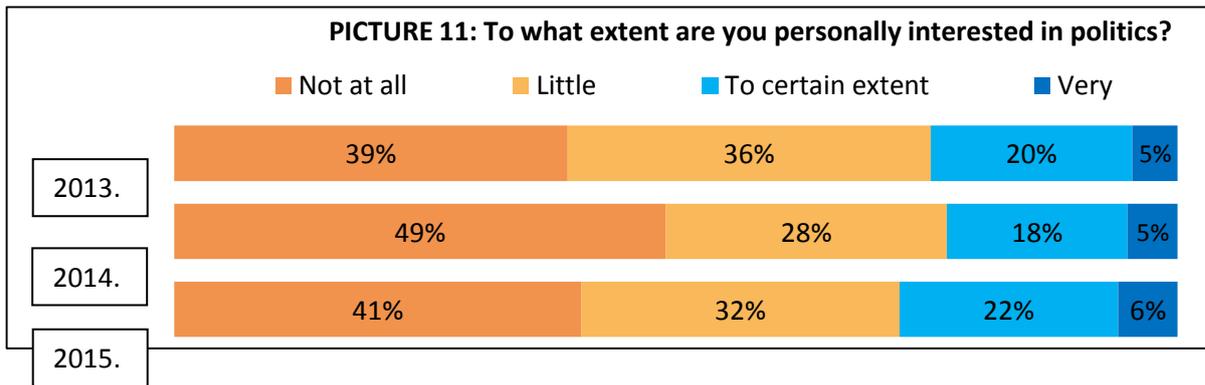
In the second quiz, containing true or false questions, the surveyed demonstrated a somewhat better knowledge than the year before. Nearly one third of the respondents chose correct answers to 3 and more than 5 questions, slightly below the previous two years' level (2013 & 2014: 34%). (Picture 10)

**PICTURE 10: Are the following questions true or false?
% OF RESPONDENTS
WITH CORRECT ANSWERS**

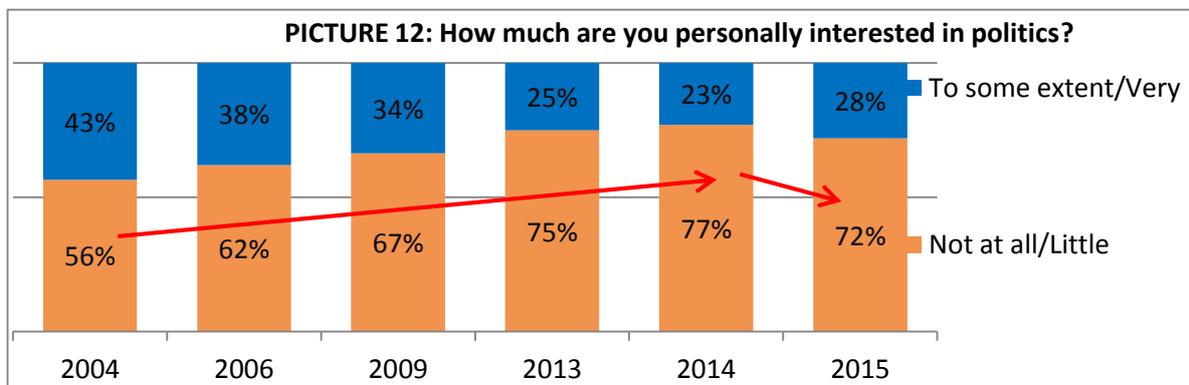


Interest

Similarly to previous years, a low interest was expressed in topics related to politics and the work of democratic institutions in Serbia. However, compared to the past two years, the interest reported a mild growth: 28% are somewhat interested in politics, if not very much, up 5% from 2014 (2013: 25%, 2014: 23%) (Picture 11)



Following a constant rise in the number of those not interested in politics, the interest reported a somewhat increase this year. (Picture 12)²



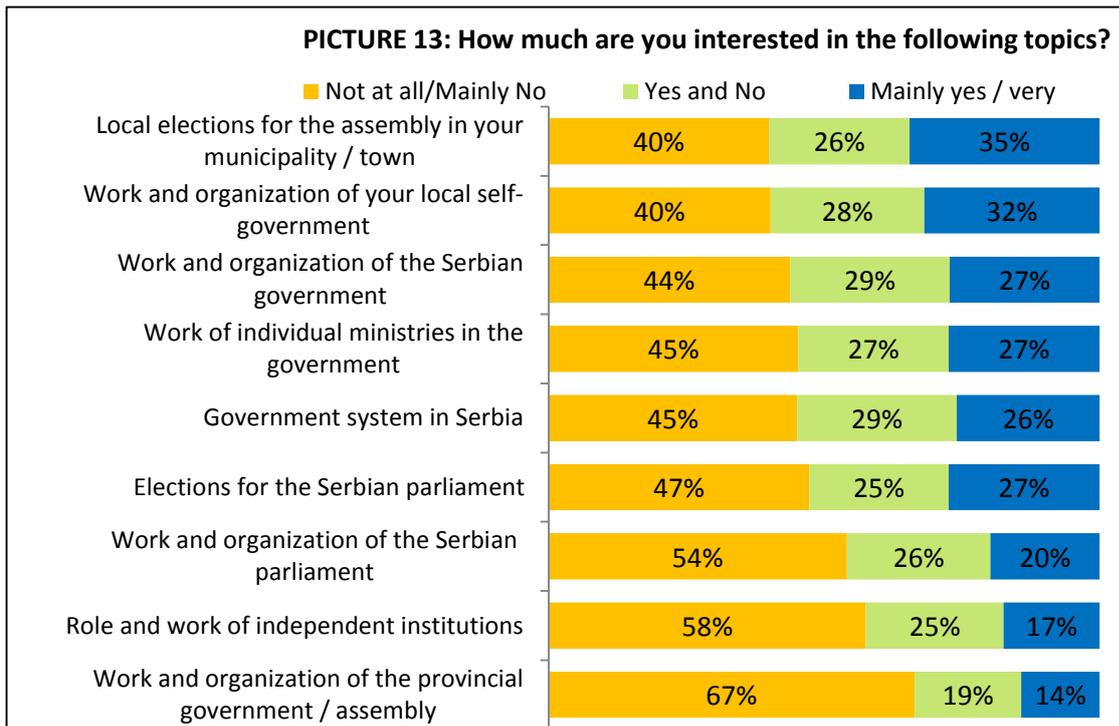
More than half of the respondents, 51%, are not interested in any of 9 listed topics. (Picture 13)

The surveyed expressed the highest interest in elections for local assembly in their local community and the work of their local self-governments, but only about third of citizens are interested in these topics. (Picture 13)

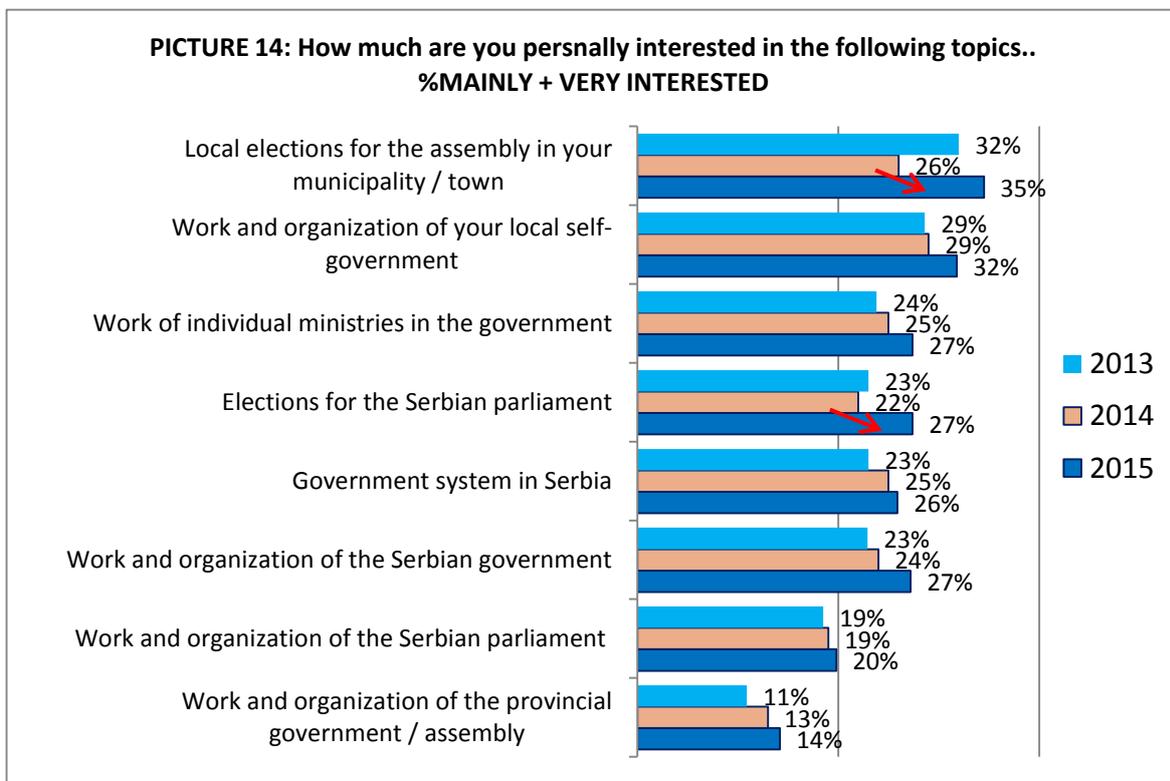
The respondents expressed the least interest in topics related to the work and system of the Serbian parliament, 20%, the work and organization of independent institutions, 17%, and the work and system of the provincial government and assembly, 14%. (Picture 13)

Considerably under one third of the surveyed, 27%, are interested in the work and organization of the Serbian government, the work of ministries individually, the system of government in Serbia and parliamentary elections in Serbia. (Picture 13)

² Source 2004, 2006, 2009: Ipsos public opinion polls for the International Republican Institute (IRI)

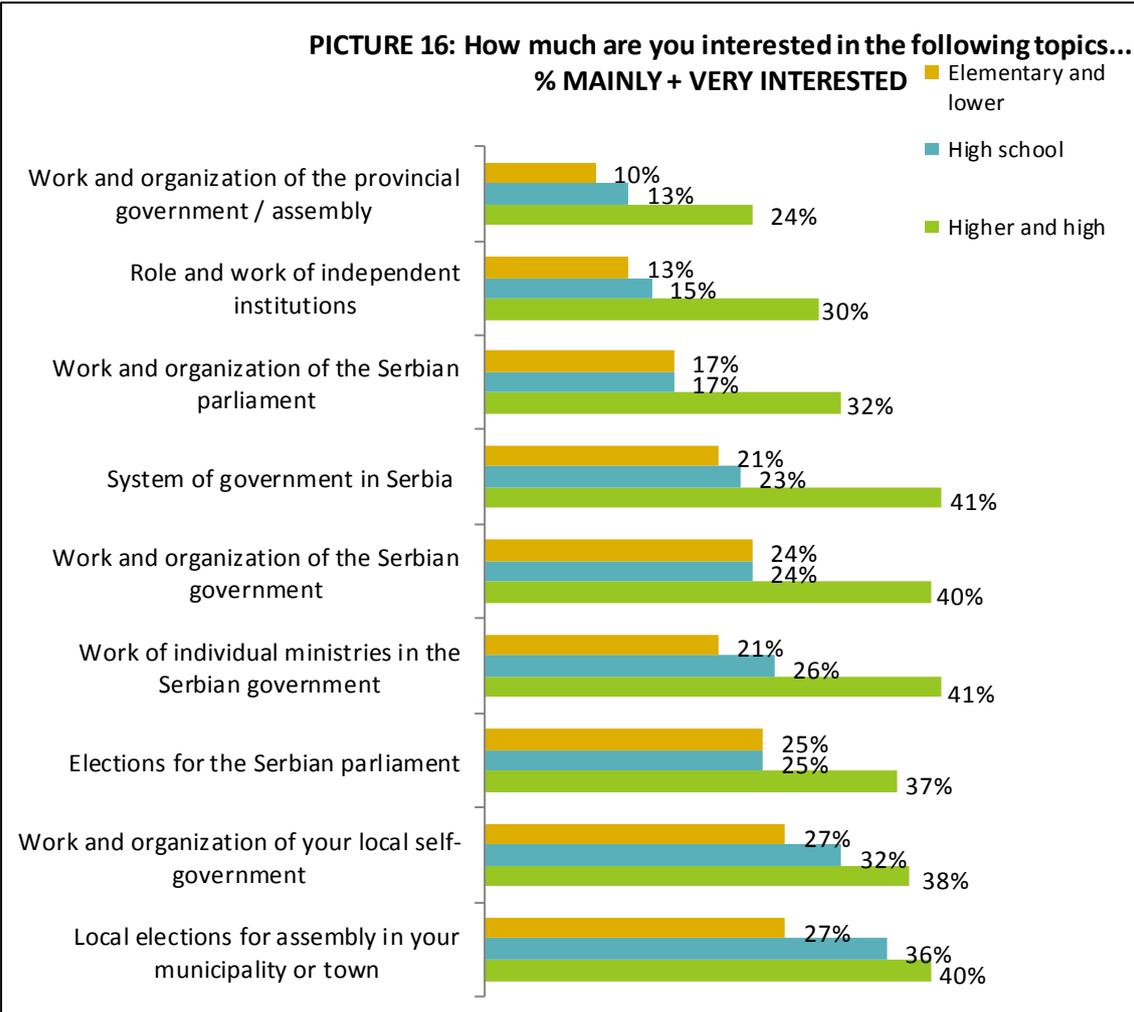
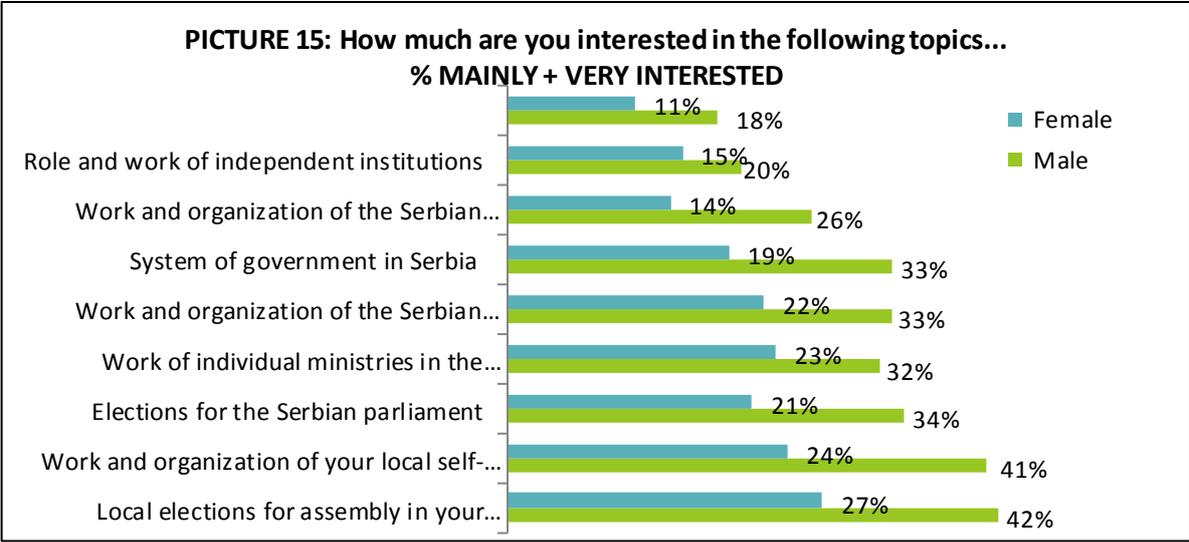


Compared with 2014, the interest in political topics increased, particularly in local elections, by 9%, and somewhat in parliamentary elections.³ (Picture 14)

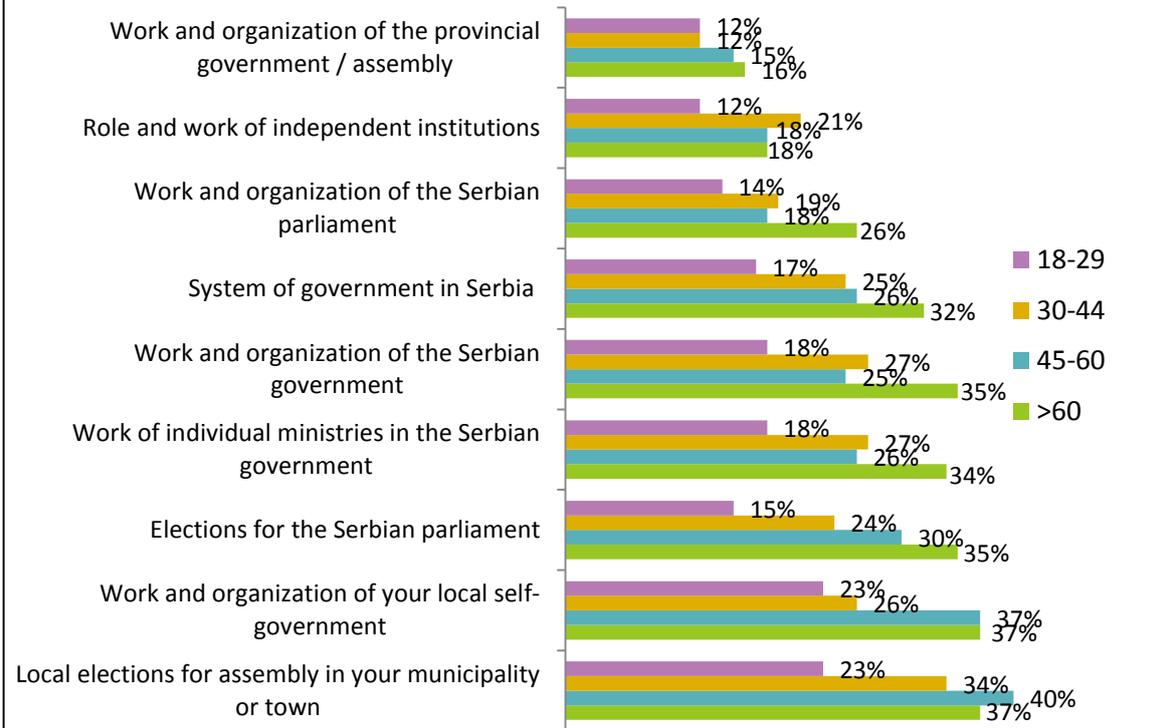


³ Increased interest could probably be linked with frequent media reports on the upcoming local and provincial elections and possible a snap vote

Like in the knowledge segment, differences are also noticeable in the interest domain between male and female, respondents of different education profile and age. Women expressed considerably lower interest than men, while interest grows with the level of education. The age group from 18 to 29 years is less interested than older respondents. (Pictures 15, 16 and 17)



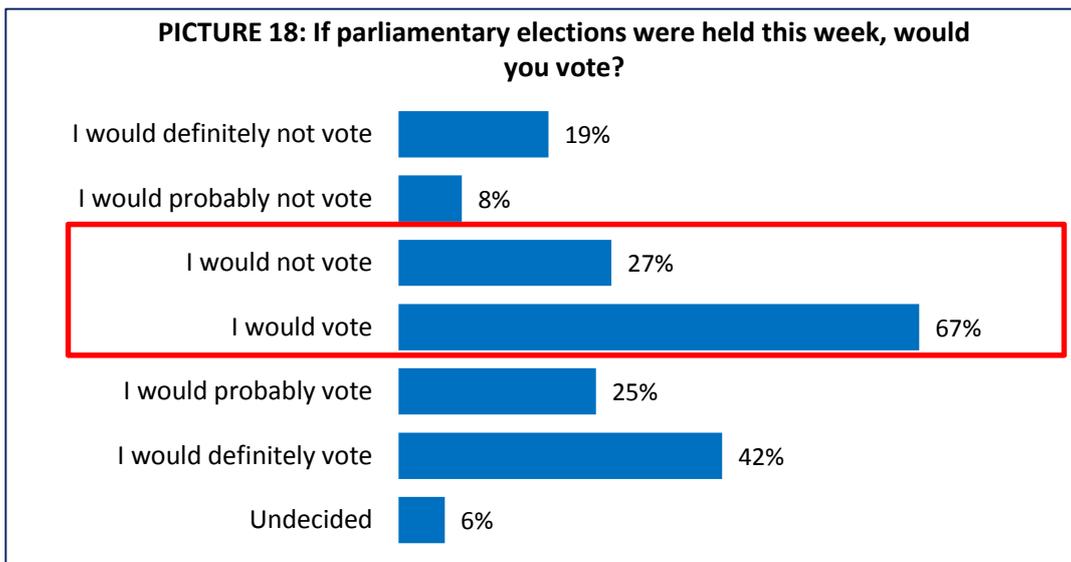
**PICTURE 17: How much are you interested in the following topics...
% MAINLY + VERY INTERESTED**



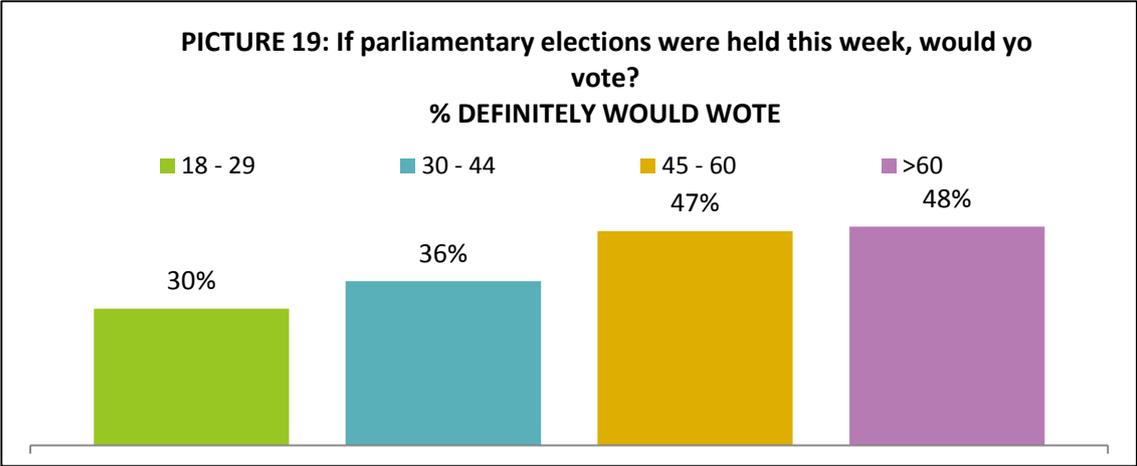
B. ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION

As regards citizen participation in democratic processes, elections remain the only action involving the majority of citizens. Other actions related to problem solving and decision-making involve a relatively small percentage of citizens, but the figures somewhat increased compared to previous years.

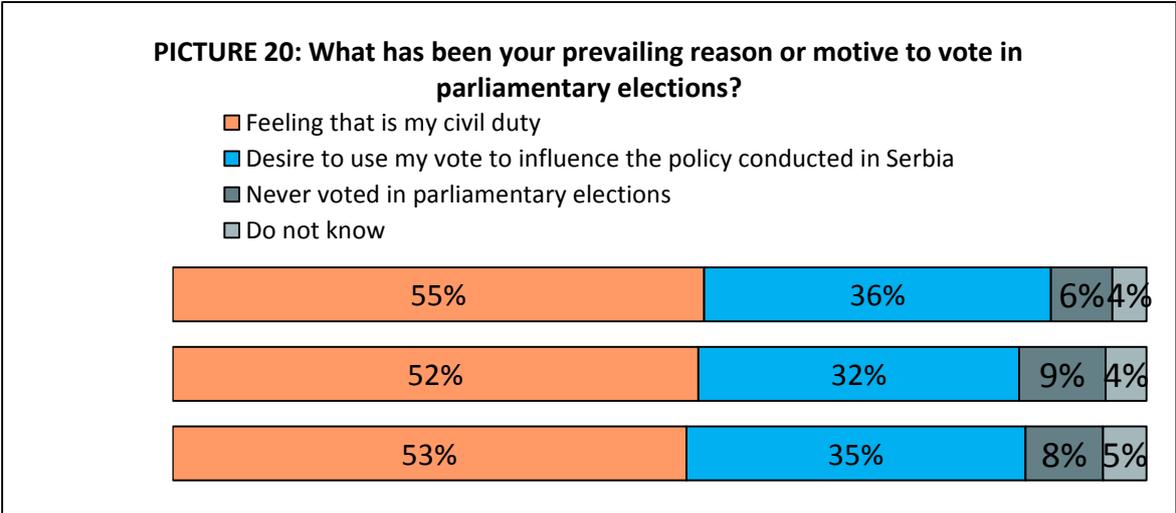
A majority of the surveyed, 67%, said they would probably, if not definitely, vote in elections if they were held during this survey, while 42% would definitely vote. (Picture 18)



Definite voters are much more often older than younger citizens. Of the surveyed above 60 years of age, 48% would definitely vote in elections if they were held during the poll, while of the age group from 18 to 29 years, 30% would vote. Considering that some 30% of Serbia's electorate comprises voters older than 60, and only 18% of those aged from 18 to 29 years,⁴ the influence of older citizens on the country's political course becomes even more obvious. (Picture 19)

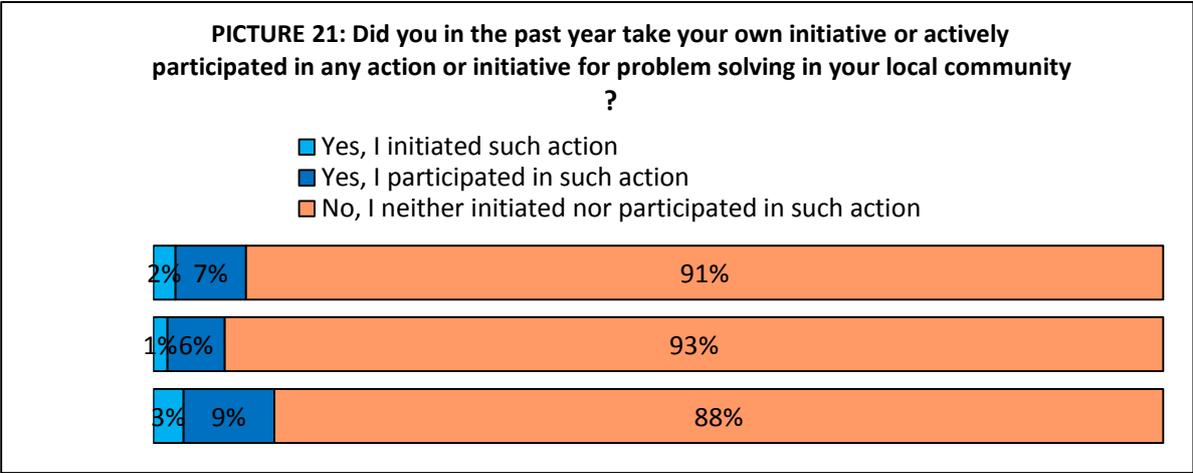


Similarly to previous years, a considerably higher percentage of citizens cast ballots for believing that it is their civil duty, 53%, than for wishing to influence the policy conducted in Serbia, 35%. (Picture 20)

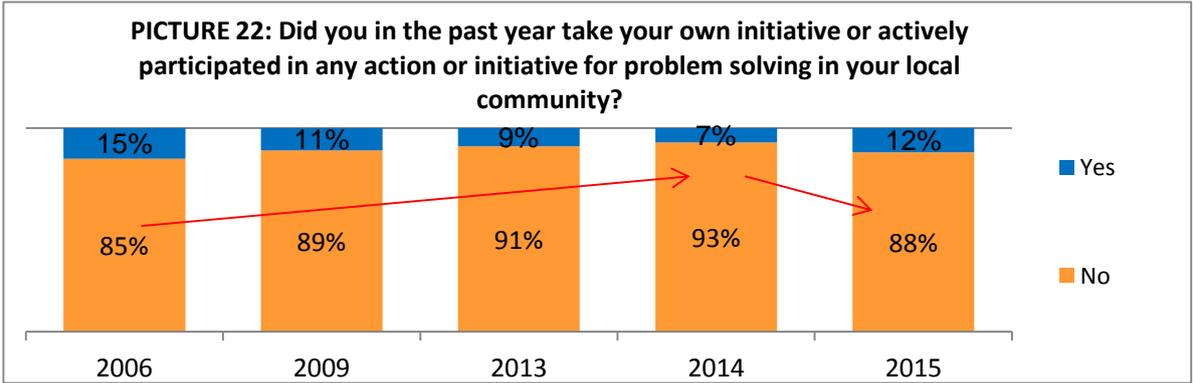


⁴ According to 2011 population census in Serbia.

Other democratic change related actions engage a relatively small percentage of citizens, but the figure somewhat increased from 2014. (Pictures 21 and 22)



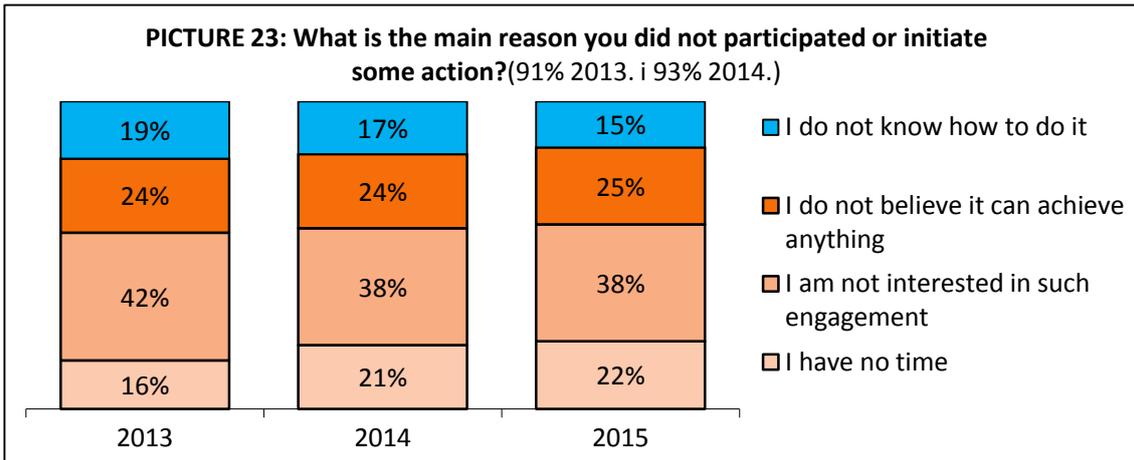
The percentage of those participating in some initiative for problem solving in a local community is up 5%⁵ from 2014.



Similarly to previous years, the most frequent reason cited for non-participation is the lack of interest, 38%, followed by the lack of time, 22%.

Like previous years, one in four respondents as the reason for non-participation cited the lack of confidence that such an engagement could achieve something, while 15% said they do not know how to do it. The percentage of those who do not know how to do it has been mildly, but constantly reducing since 2013. This year this reason was cited by 15% of the respondents, 17% in 2014, and 19% in 2013. (Picture 23)

⁵ Source: Public polls in 2006 and 2009, Ipsos Strategic Marketing for the Institute for Sustainable Community (ISC) and USAID



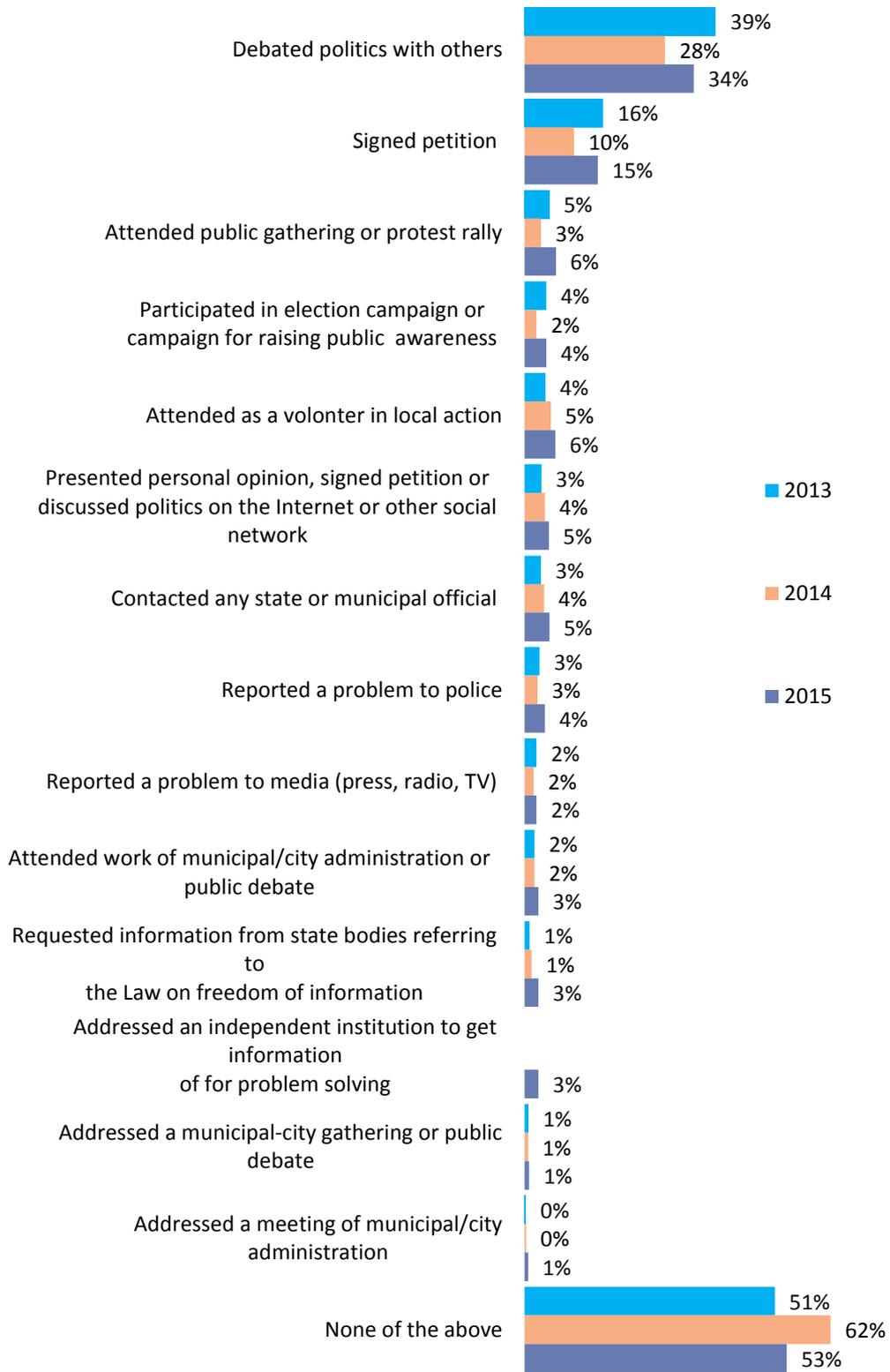
A considerably higher percentage of the respondents said they took part in some concrete action related to political life, than in an initiative or action related to problem solving in a local community. Compared to 2014, (comparing the same 13 actions in previous years), the percentage of participation increased by 9%. This year, 47% of the respondents said they participated in at least on of 13 listed actions (2013: 49%, 2014: 38%). (Picture 24)

Similarly to the past two years, the action which most engaged the respondents was a political debate with others. Corresponding to the increased interest in politics, the percentage of the respondents debating politics also grew. This year, this action was cited by 34% of the respondents, up 6% from 2014, but still lower than in 2013. (2013: 39%, 2014: 28%)

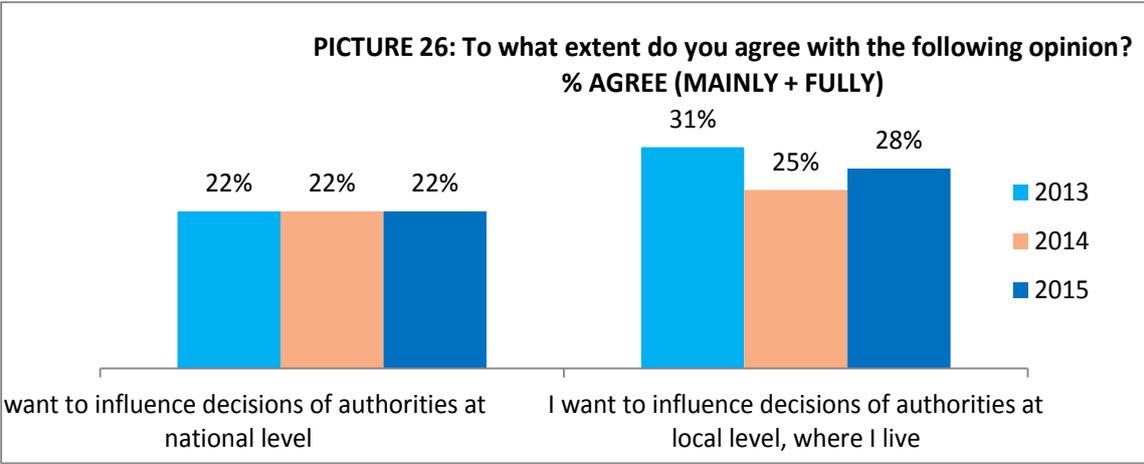
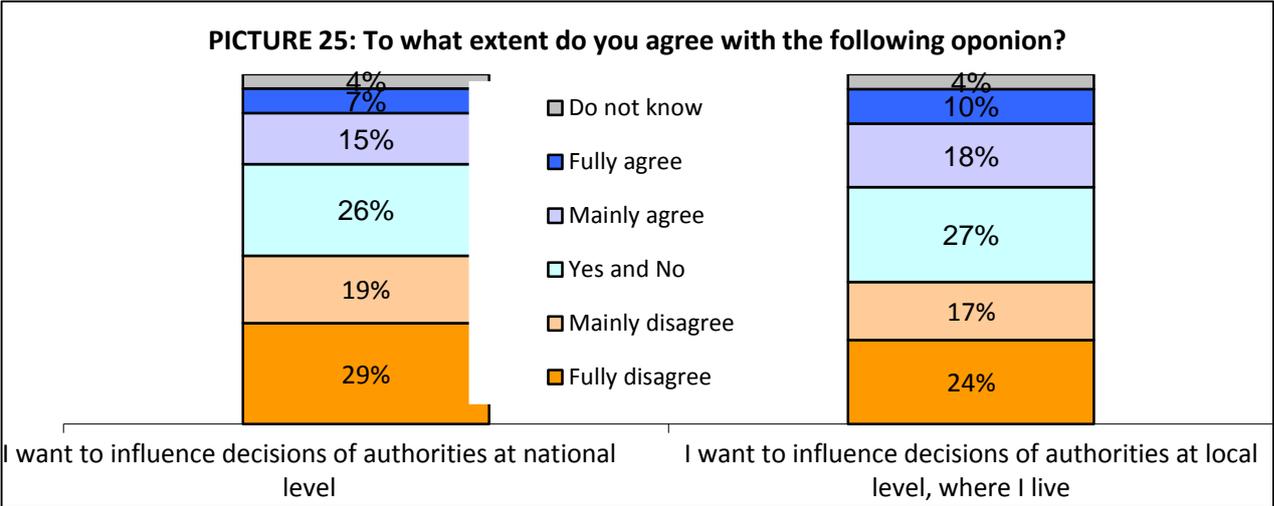
Apart from a political debate, this year 29% of the respondents said they participated in at least one of 13 listed actions, an increase of 8% against 2014, and 3% from 2013. (Picture 24)

Finally, asked whether they addressed any independent institutions over the past 2, 3 years for to get informed or solve problem, 3% said they engaged in such action. (Picture 24)

PICTURE 24: Did you in the past 2, 3 years engage in any of the following actions?



Similarly to previous years, a relatively small percentage of the respondents even have the desire to influence decisions of the authorities: 22% want to influence decisions of the authorities at the national level, and 28% in their local municipality. Compared to previous years, the percentage of the respondents who want to influence decisions of the authorities at the national level remained unchanged, but the percentage of those wishing to influence decisions at the local level reported a slight rise against 2014 (from 25% to 28%). (Picture 25 and 26)

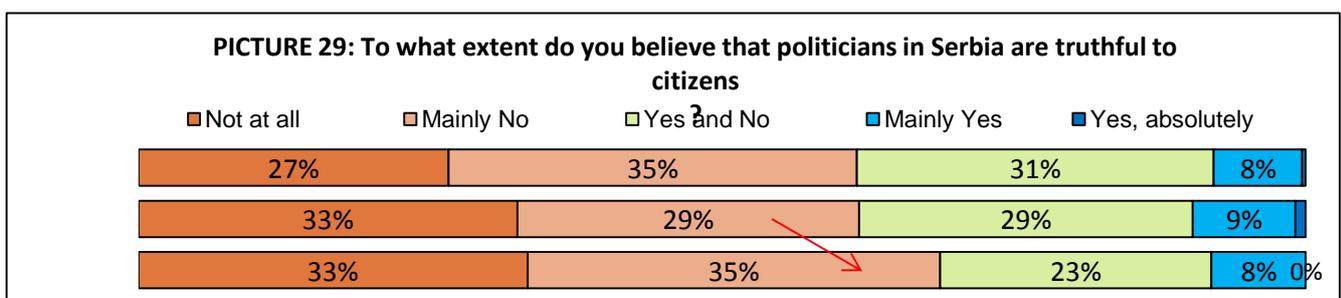
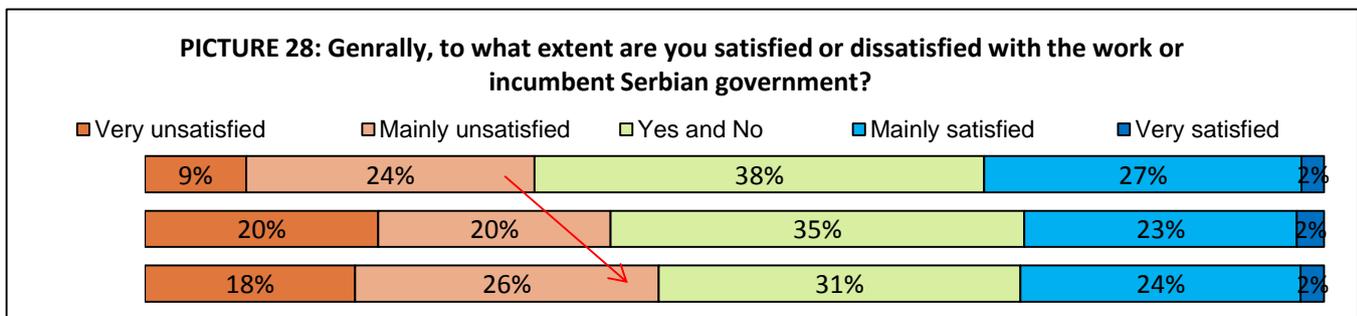
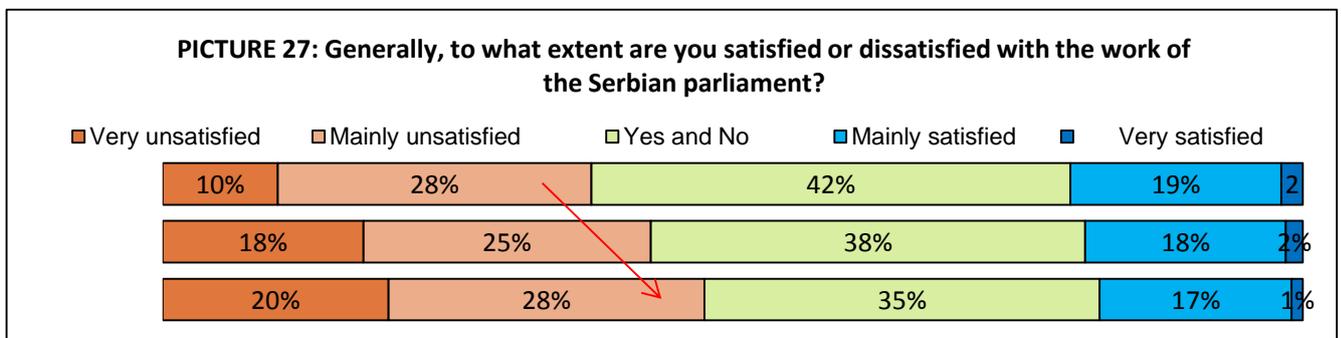


C. SATISFACTION WITH WORK OF PARLIAMENT & GOVERNMENT AND CONFIDENCE IN EFFICIENCY OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Satisfaction with work of parliament and government

Considerably higher number of the surveyed is dissatisfied than satisfied with the work of the Serbian parliament and the government, with dissatisfaction growing in the past two years. Dissatisfaction with the work of the Serbian parliament is expressed by 48% of the surveyed, (2013: 38%, 2014: 43%), and satisfaction with only 17%. Dissatisfaction with the work of the Serbian government is expressed by 44% of the polled, (2013: 33%, 2014: 39%), and satisfaction by 26%. (Picture 27 and 28)

General confidence of citizens in politicians and the trust that MPs and aldermen represent the interest of citizens is very low. As many as 68% of the respondents believe that politicians are not truthful to citizens, with the figure increasing against the past two years. (Picture 29)

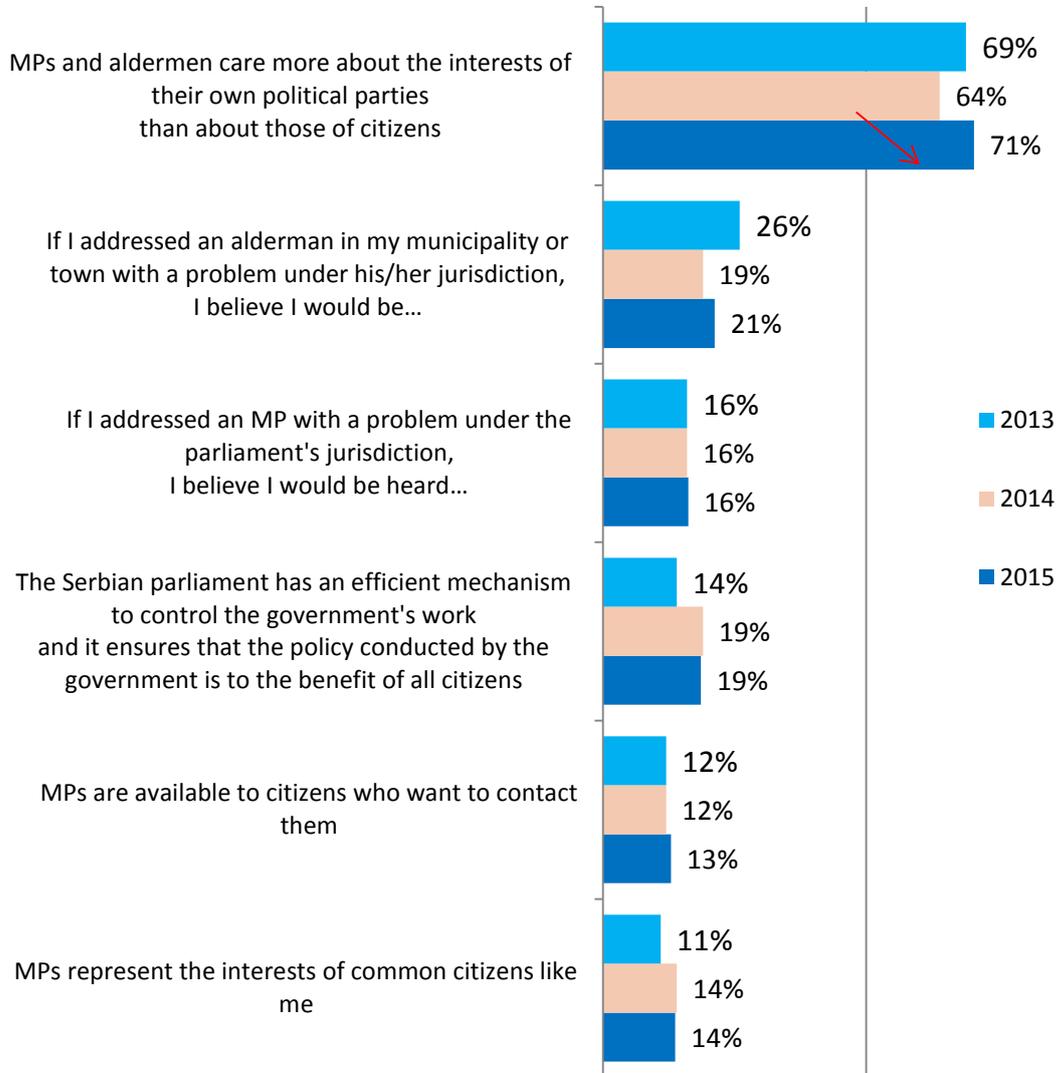


Most of the citizens surveyed believe that MPs and aldermen do not represent the interests of the citizens, that is, that they do not discharge the function for which they were elected, with opinions getting somewhat more negative compared with previous years.

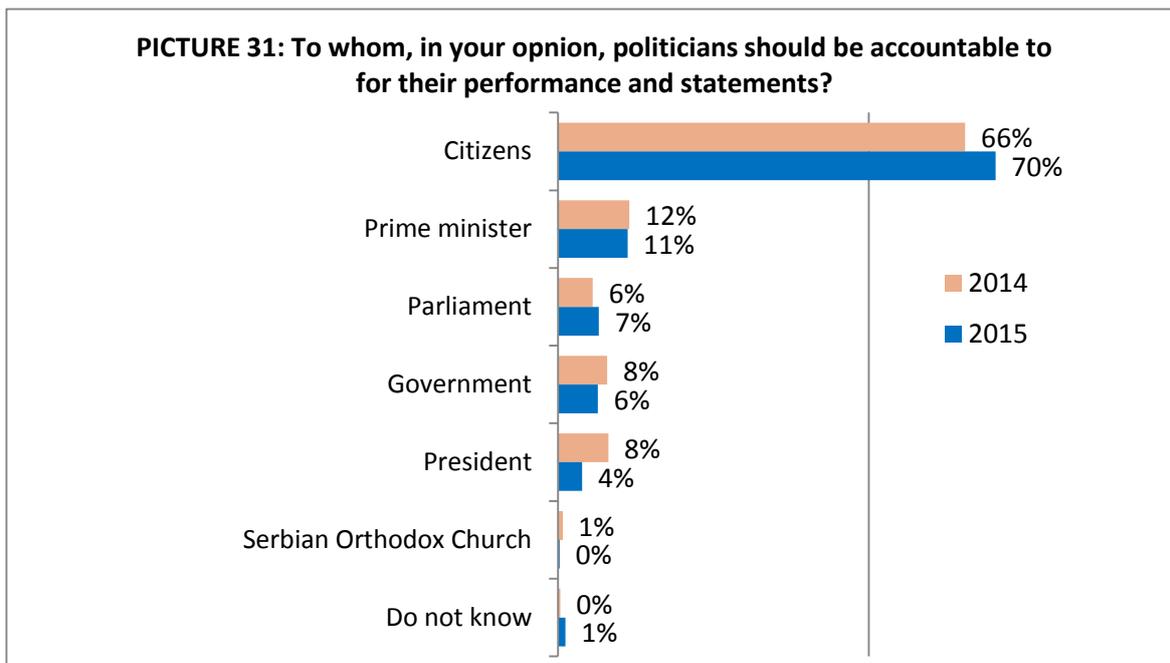
The majority of those surveyed, 71%, believe that MPs and aldermen care more about the interests of their respective political parties than about those of citizens (2013: 69%, 2014: 64%), while as few as 14% believe that MPs and aldermen represent the interests of common citizens (2013: 11%, 2014: 14%). As few as 19% believe that the Serbian parliament has an efficient oversight tool for controlling the government's work, ensuring that the policy conducted by the government is to the benefit of all citizens (2013: 14%, 2014: 19%). (Picture 30)

One in five participants believe that aldermen in their respective local assembly would listen to a problem addressed to them (2013: 26%, 2014: 19%), while only 16% believe that an MP would listen to them, which is at the previous years' level. (Picture 30)

**PICTURE 30: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following view of the Serbian parliament and local self-government?
% AGREE (MAINLY + ABSOLUTE)**

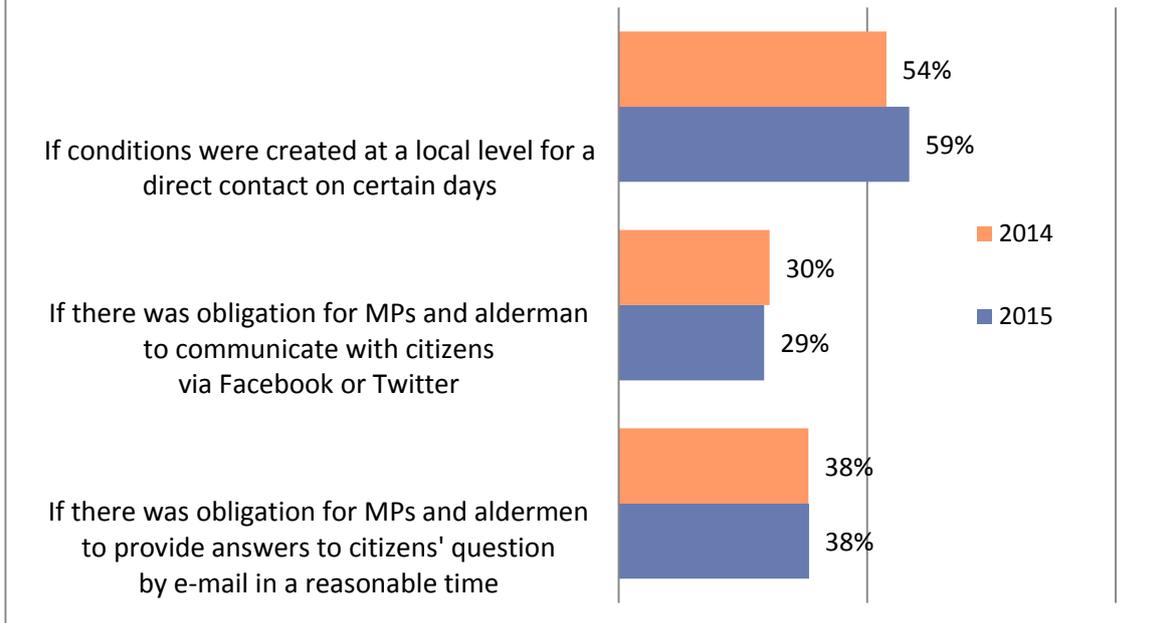


The majority of the respondents, 70%, believe that politicians, for the way in which they discharge their posts and speak, should be primarily accountable to citizens, up 4% from 2014. (Picture 31)



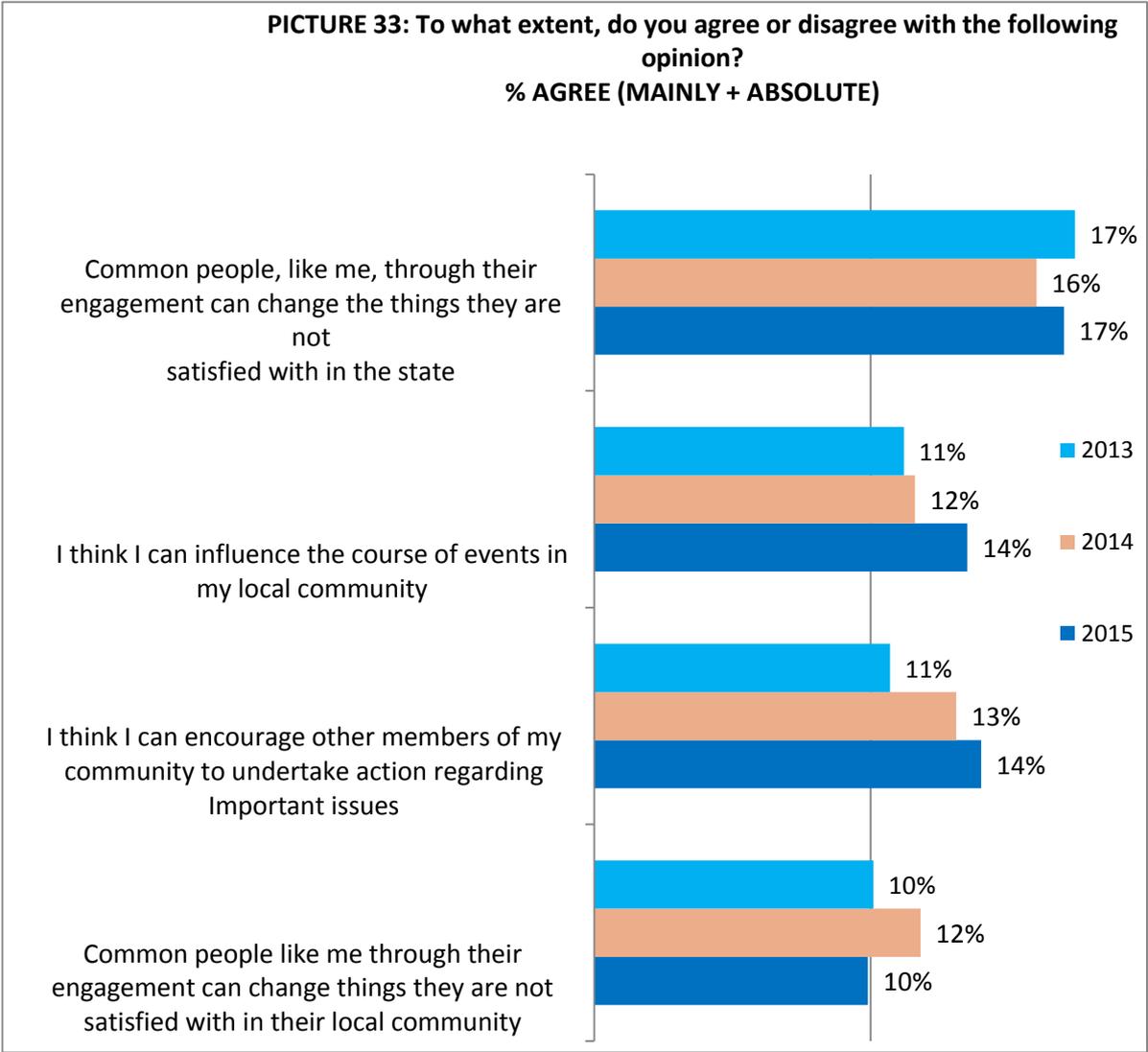
The surveyed citizens believe that introducing the obligation for MPs and aldermen to communicate with citizens would render a greater accountability to citizens. The majority, 59%, slightly up from 2014, believe that MPs and aldermen would have a greater accountability if conditions were created to enable a direct contact with citizens on certain days, but a considerable number of the participants, 38%, believe that it could be achieved by introducing the obligation for MPs and aldermen to answer to citizens' questions by e-mail, and 29% by the obligation to communicate with citizens via Facebook and Twitter. (Picture 32)

PICTURE 32: To what extent, in your opinion, the action given below could increase accountability of MP's and aldermans to citizens?



Confidence in efficiency of civic engagement and readiness to participate

A small percentage of the surveyed believe that common people through their engagement could influence decisions of authorities and change the things they are dissatisfied with, and this picture remains unchanged from the past two years. As few as 17% believe in principal that their engagement could change the things they are not satisfied with in their local community, and 10% at the state level. (Picture 33)



The picture displaying confidence in the efficiency of civic engagement is somewhat different when the extent to what concrete actions could influence changes is assessed. A majority of the polled believe that at least one action could bring about changes.

However, despite a somewhat increased civic engagement, the percentage of those believing in the efficiency of such actions reduced against 2014.

The majority, 67%, believe that with at least one of 9 listed actions (same actions listed in previous two years) common citizens could contribute to changing things (2013: 65%, 2014: 71%), but only 23% have confidence in the efficiency of most of actions (5 and more) of nine listed actions, down 7% from 2014. (2013: 22%, 2014: 30%)

Similarly to previous years, though with a somewhat lower percentage, the surveyed have most confidence in changing things in the state by diverting media attention to citizens' problems, 40%, voting in local elections, 39%, and voting in parliamentary elections, 37%. (Picture 34)

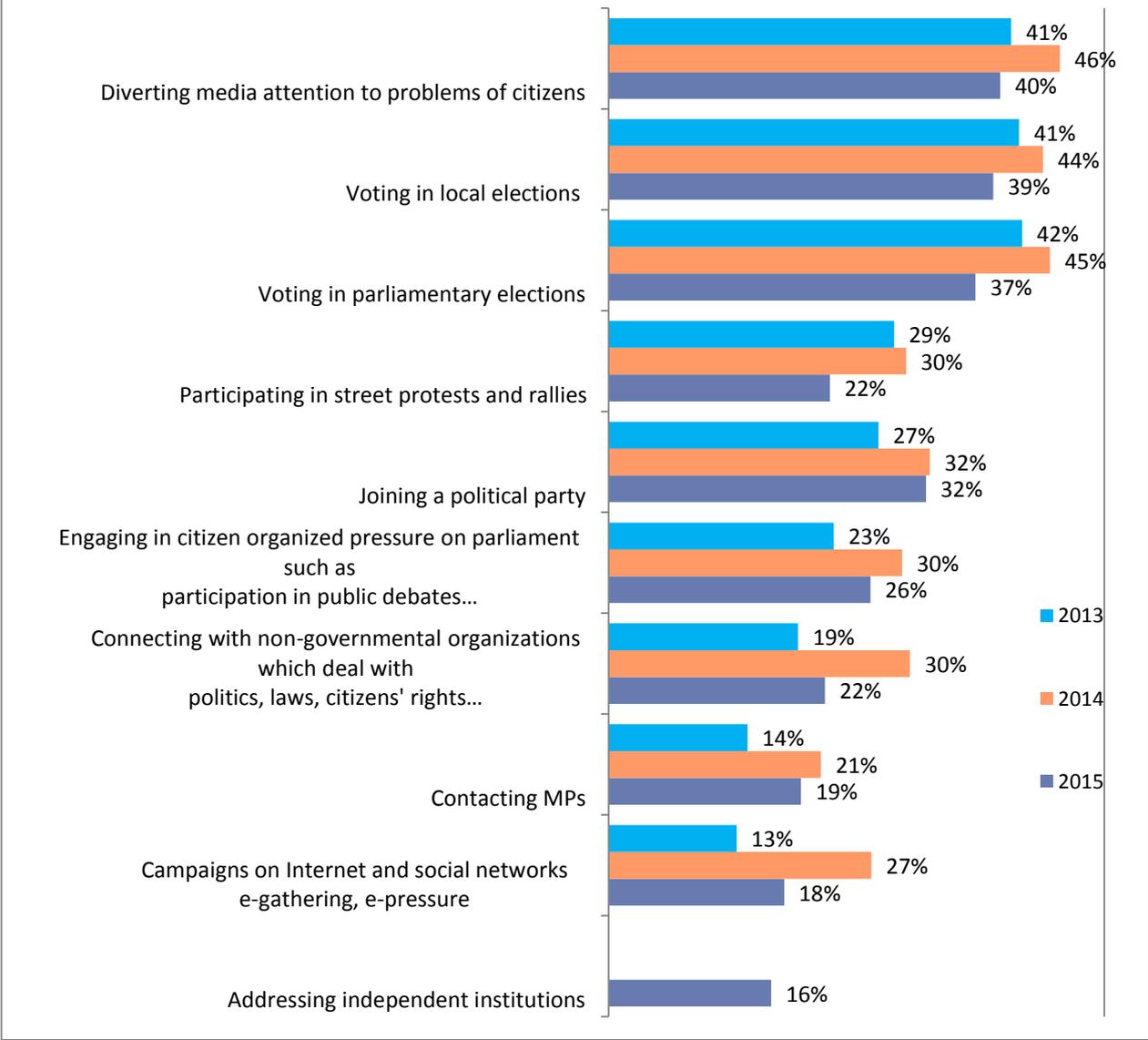
A considerably lower percentage of the polled believe that changes could be made by joining a political party, 32%, street protests and rallies, 22%, participation in public debates and signing petitions, 30%, and connecting with non-governmental organizations, 22%.

The surveyed least believe that changes could be made by contacting MPs, 19%, and campaigns on the Internet and social networks, 18%. (Picture 34)

Compared to 2014, the confidence in the efficiency of most of the listed forms of civic engagement reduced. The confidence in changes which would result from campaigns on the Internet and social networks reported the biggest decline of 9%, followed by connecting with civil society organizations, 8%, voting in parliamentary elections, 8%, and participation in street protests and rallies, 8%. (Picture 34)

Finally, only 16% of the polled believe that changes could be achieved by addressing independent institutions.

**PICTURE 34: To what extent can you with each of the following actions contribute with changing in the state you are not satisfied with?
% CAN AFFECT THE CHANGE(PRETTY MUCH+ A LOT)**

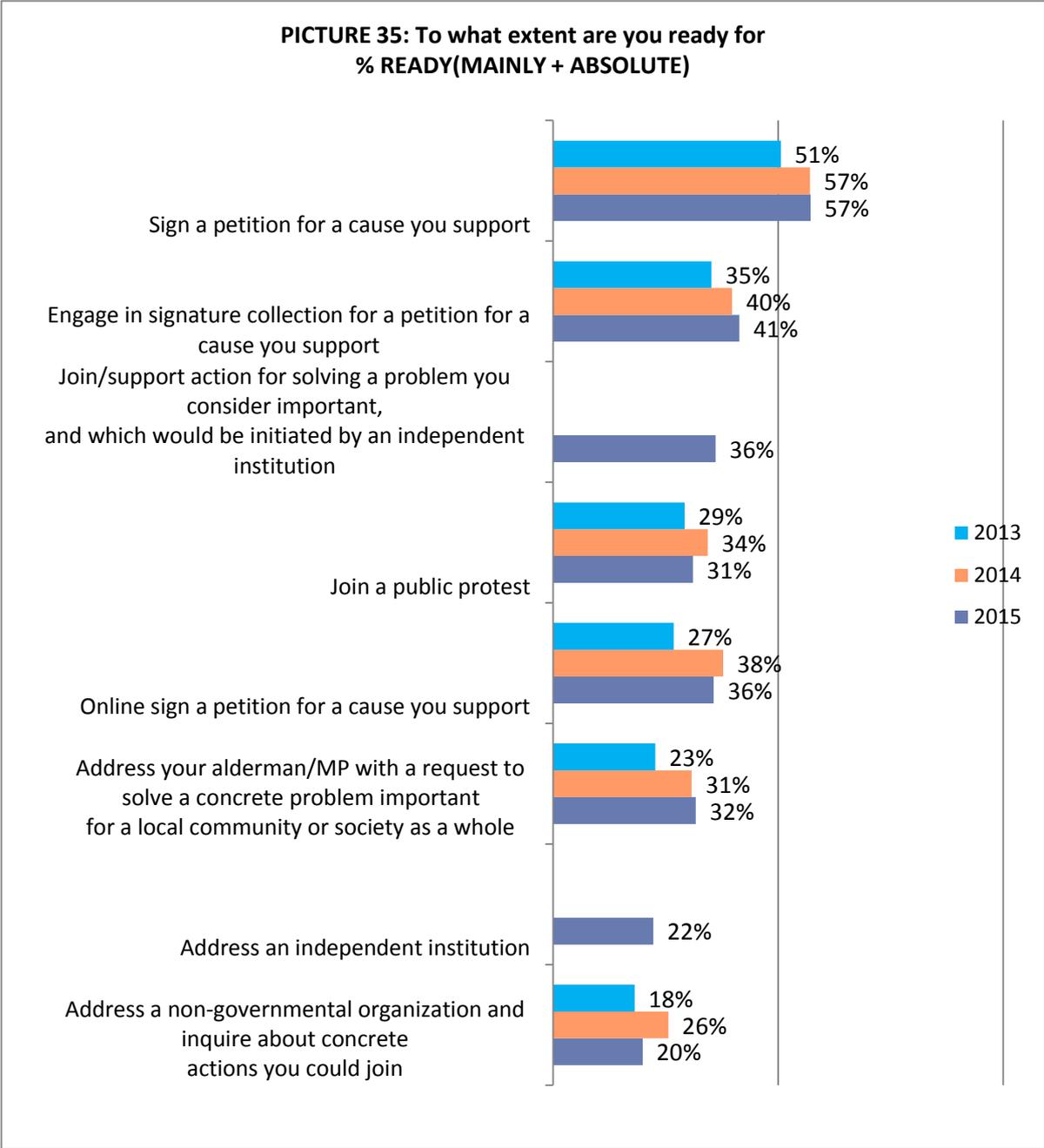


Like previous years, the expressed readiness to participate in actions for changing things in the state and their local communities was significantly higher than the actual engagement. Despite a drop of the confidence in the efficiency of civic engagement, the expressed readiness to participate mainly remained at the 2014 level, which was somewhat higher than in 2013. Like in 2014, 66% of the surveyed said they are ready to participate in at least one of six listed actions (same actions offered in previous years), with 29% expressing readiness to participate in at least 4 of 6 actions (2013: 23%, 2014: 30%). Addressing a civil society organization is actually the only action for which the readiness reported a considerable decline of 6% from 2014. (Picture 35)

Similarly to the previous years, the only action for which the majority of the surveyed, 57%, expressed readiness to participate is petition-signing (in person). The considerably lower percentage of the polled expressed readiness to sign petition online, 36%, join a public protest, 31%,

and even fewer to address their alderman or MP, 32%. **The least readiness was expressed for addressing a civil society organization or inquiring about concrete actions they could join, by 20% of the respondents.** (Picture 35)

This year's survey researched citizens' readiness to support an action for solving a problem they consider important and which would be initiated by an independent institution, and also the readiness to personally address an independent institution. **Somewhat above one third of the respondents, 36%, expressed readiness to support an action they consider important and which would be initiated by an independent institution, while only 22% to personally address an independent institution.** (Slika 35)



Finally, general confidence in democracy as a political system remains relatively low. Similarly to last year, less than half of the respondents, 46%, agree that democracy, regardless of all

difficulties, is the best political system for Serbia. Those disagreeing account for 26%, and undecided for 29% (21% would opt for both "yes and no," while 7% do not know). (Picture 31)

