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REPORT ON THE SURVEY OF CITIZENS' SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL SERVICES

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1 Introduction and Purpose of the Survey

Local self-government represents one of the key pillars of the democratic system, where citizens have the opportunity to directly influence the decision-making processes that affect their daily lives. The relationship between local authorities and citizens is the foundation for effective, transparent, and accountable governance. Through the election of local representatives, citizens entrust them with a mandate to represent their interests, provide public services, and improve living conditions within the community.

This relationship should be built on principles such as public participation, transparency, and accountability. Decentralization, as a process that enabled the transfer of competences and resources to municipalities, was envisioned as a means to improve efficiency and strengthen local democracy. However, despite the progress achieved, challenges remain — many municipalities face limited capacities, and citizen participation in local decision-making continues to be weak.

This survey on citizens' satisfaction with local services was conducted as part of the "Strengthening Municipal Councils – Phase 2" Project, which is funded by the Government of Switzerland and the Ministry of Local Self-Government, and implemented and co-financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Other partners involved in the implementation of the project include the Ministry of Finance, the Association of the Units of Local Self-Government (ZELS), the Association of Financial Officers (AFO), UN Women, NALAS, civil society organizations, as well as the local self-government units in the Republic of North Macedonia. The main purpose of the project is to enhance support for the development of local self-governments, primarily by strengthening municipal councils so that they can effectively fulfill their assigned roles in representation, oversight, and municipal decision-making, with the active involvement of citizens. Furthermore, the project aims to improve the system of local self-government, decentralization, and the overall quality of life in local communities through better development policies and the legal framework for local development and decentralization, digitalization of municipal services, increased transparency and citizen participation at the local level, as well as combating corruption. Promoting the principles of gender equality and equal opportunities for all, social cohesion, environmental protection, and strengthening inter-municipal and cross-sectoral cooperation are among the cross-cutting themes of this project.

In order to understand citizens' perceptions and measure the progress in addressing community needs, and to gather comprehensive information on citizens' satisfaction with local government services, UNDP hired Indago to design and conduct a comprehensive survey of citizens' satisfaction with local services on a representative sample of respondents.

The main goal of the project is to obtain data on citizens' satisfaction with local services for 2025, which will serve to design basic indicators of citizens' perceptions of the quality of local service delivery based on the results of the public opinion surveys conducted in the period 2017-2024. The findings of the survey may serve as a basis for the decision-making for all national institutions, international organizations and other entities active in the field of local government and for identification and selection of potential activities to be implemented in this area according to the 2021-2023 Action Plan for the implementation of the 2021-2026 Program for Sustainable Local Development and Decentralization.

The report that follows is composed of a brief description of the methodology used, key findings, a detailed analysis of each question, as well as a comparison (where possible) with the findings of previous surveys conducted in the period 2017-2024.

2 Methodology

The methodology used by Indago for the implementation of this quantitative survey, i.e., public opinion survey, was direct, face-to-face interviews at the home of the respondent, using the CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview) data collection technique. Face-to-face interview is the most common method of collecting data from the target groups of respondents, especially in public opinion surveys. The main advantage of this method, especially when it comes to a representative sample, is that the results are objective and can easily be used to define general conclusions and findings. Face to-face interviews are used when the survey topic requires a deeper and more detailed analysis and when the representativeness of the sample is equally important.

In line with the project objectives, in cooperation with UNDP and the Ministry of Local Self-Government, Indago finalized the structured questionnaire. It consisted of about 123 questions divided into the following thematic areas:

- 1) General satisfaction with the quality of life in the municipality and trust in the municipality as institution
- 2) Satisfaction with services provided by the municipality
- 3) Satisfaction with the level of democracy, transparency and accountability in the work of the municipalities
- 4) Minorities, vulnerable categories of citizens and youth
- 5) Corruption
- 6) Mechanisms for citizen participation in decision-making in the municipality
- 7) Information about municipal operation and services
- 8) E-services in the municipality
- 9) Non-governmental organizations – citizens' associations
- 10) Respondent's demographic data.

The target group of the survey was the general population in the Republic of North Macedonia aged 18 and over. The survey was conducted on a sample of 1,000 respondents that is nationally representative by statistical regions, place of residence (urban/rural), age, gender and ethnicity.

The data collection was conducted in Macedonian and Albanian, in the period from 10 to 26 September 2025.



3 Key Findings

In continuation is an overview of the more specific key findings within the thematic sections of the research conducted.

General satisfaction with the quality of life in the municipality and trust in the municipality as institution

- Citizens continue to be generally satisfied with the quality of life in their municipality, including: the municipality as a place to live; the quality of life in the municipality; the municipality as a place to raise children; the municipality as a place for retirees (the elderly); the municipality as a place to live for vulnerable groups of citizens; and the safety of the community within the municipality. In relation to all six (6) observed aspects of quality of life in the municipality, the percentage of citizens who are satisfied or completely satisfied is higher than those who are dissatisfied. The highest percentage of respondents are satisfied with the municipality in general as a place to live in (55%). Regarding satisfaction with the municipality as a place for vulnerable groups of citizens to live in, respondents expressed the highest level of dissatisfaction — 35% are not satisfied (completely dissatisfied and dissatisfied) with this aspect.
- A comparative analysis of the average scores for each aspect related to the quality of life in the municipality with those from the period 2017–2024, generally does not show significant changes in the overall level of citizens' average satisfaction. The trend of the lowest satisfaction levels continues to be in relation to the municipality as a place of living for vulnerable groups of citizens, which once again indicates a serious need for municipalities to make efforts to identify specific needs and provide better living conditions for these groups. However, compared to the 2024 data, the latest results show that citizens' average satisfaction is declining across all aspects assessed in this section, with the exception of satisfaction with the quality of life in the municipality, which has increased from 3.0 to 3.2.
- Over half of the respondents (54%) once again stated that they can differentiate between the services provided by the central government and those provided by the local government, and that they clearly know whom to address. The remaining respondents either rarely know whom to address (31%) or cannot differentiate that at all (15%). Compared to data from previous waves of this survey, the latest results show a slightly lower percentage than in 2019 (56%), 2021 (57%), and 2022 (58%), and almost the same percentage as in 2018 (53%), 2020 (50%), and 2024 (56%) of those who know whom to address because they can differentiate between the services offered by the central government and the services offered by the local government.
- The total average satisfaction of citizens with the way the municipality and public enterprises operate — that is, the total average score across all six (6) evaluated aspects (2.9) — is lower than in 2024 (3.2), but remains almost at the same level as in previous years (2.9 in 2023, 3.0 in 2022, and 2.9 during the period 2018–2021).
- The comparative analysis of the average scores by year shows almost the same level of citizen agreement across all evaluated aspects for the period 2017–2021. A lower average level of satisfaction is observed compared to the 2022 data and also compared to the previous year, namely: 1) I am satisfied with the way the municipality is managed – from 3.2 to 3.0; 2) I am satisfied with the way public enterprises are managed – from 3.1 to 2.9; 3) the mayor and the council take citizens' views and opinions into consideration – from 3.1 to 2.8; 4) my municipality's representatives demonstrate responsible treatment of persons with special needs – from 3.1 to 2.9; 5) my municipality's representatives undertake measures to

to ensure non-discrimination of non-majority ethnic communities – from 3.4 to 3.1; and 6) citizens in the municipality are informed of the municipality's activities and plans – from 3.1 to 2.9.

- Trust in the municipality as an institution is moderate, with 38% of citizens expressing trust, which is a positive sign. However, 28% do not trust it, which is significant and indicates the presence of a critical attitude among some citizens. Particularly noteworthy is that one-third of citizens (around 33%) are undecided, meaning they neither trust nor distrust the municipality, which can be interpreted as a sign of insufficient information, reservation, or indifference toward the municipality's work. This high percentage of undecided citizens indicates room for institutional improvement and for building a stronger connection with the public.
- Citizens' trust in the municipality as an institution largely depends on practical results and visible efficiency. Specifically, 54% of citizens base their trust on the effective resolution of problems, making this the most important factor for a positive perception. Additionally, although at a lower percentage, transparency, accountability (34%), respect for the laws (34%), and good communication (33%) also play a significant role, with about one-third of citizens citing them as reasons for trust.
- On the other hand, distrust is linked to negative experiences and perceptions of inefficiency and corruption. The main reason for distrust is the ineffective resolution of problems (63%), followed closely by perceptions of corruption and misuse of funds (57%) and political influence over decisions (40%).

Satisfaction with services provided by the municipality

- In 2025, 38% of citizens have a positive opinion of the performance of local authorities, indicating that slightly more than one-third of the population believes that municipalities do generally good or very good work. On the other hand, 31% of respondents have a negative view, while 29% are neutral, considering that local authorities do neither good nor bad work. The high percentage of dissatisfied and neutral citizens shows that a significant portion of the population either does not see notable results or is undecided. The average score of local authorities work is 3.0, which also reflects a moderate or average perception among citizens.
- Around 39% of respondents reported being satisfied or completely satisfied with the services provided by their municipalities, while about 31% are not satisfied. Over one-third (35%) are neutral, meaning they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The results show that in 2025, there is again a decline in overall citizen satisfaction with municipal services, now standing at 39%. This percentage represents a return to the levels of previous years, after a brief increase in 2022 and 2024. Although the highest satisfaction levels to date were reached in 2022 (44%) and even 48% in 2024, this year's data indicate that the positive trend has not been maintained. In fact, following that peak, satisfaction has declined again, similar to the period from 2017 to 2021, when the percentage consistently remained around 39–41%.
- Regarding satisfaction with the specific areas and services provided by municipalities, a continuous trend is observed in which the highest average level of citizen satisfaction remains in the area of fire protection services, with an average score of 3.60. On the other hand, satisfaction is lowest in the area of environmental protection, with an average score of 2.57. This contrast points to structural weaknesses in certain municipal responsibilities, particularly in the field of ecology. When analyzing the overall average level of satisfaction with municipal services, a decline is observed compared to some previous years. In 2025, the average score is 3.04, which is at the same level as in 2023, but lower than the scores in 2022



(3.20) and 2024 (3.31), and still slightly higher than the score in 2021 (2.97). Compared to 2024, a lower average level of satisfaction is noted across all areas.

Minorities, vulnerable categories of citizens and youth

- As in previous years, the highest level of dissatisfaction (45%) was expressed by citizens regarding municipal activities aimed at improving the lives of youth. Regarding the other two aspects, 37% of citizens (38% in 2021, 39% in 2022, 43% in 2023, and 31% in 2024) reported being either completely dissatisfied or dissatisfied with municipal activities to improve the lives of vulnerable groups of citizens, while 29% (26% in 2021, 25% in 2022, 31% in 2023, and 18% in 2024) were either not satisfied at all or not satisfied with the activities undertaken by the municipality to improve the lives of minorities.

Corruption

- The percentage of respondents who share the opinion that corruption is very (28%) or somewhat prevalent (37%) in municipalities in the implementation of municipal competencies is nearly at the same level as in 2022 and 2023, but higher than in 2024. The percentage of those who think corruption is not prevalent at all (4%) remains significantly lower.
- According to citizens' perceptions, inspectors (26%), directors of public enterprises and institutions at local level (24%), and mayors (18%) are the most susceptible to misuse of local functions. A comparative analysis with results from 2021–2024 shows no significant changes in citizens' perceptions regarding which municipal functions are most susceptible to misuse.
- As in previous years, the majority of respondents (79%) stated that they had not been asked for a bribe in any form, while those who confirmed that, in the past 12 months, they or someone from their immediate family had been asked for money, goods or services to have a municipal service provided or expedited were significantly fewer (11%).
- Citizens' opinions on the level of corruption in municipalities today, compared to 12 months ago, have not changed significantly compared to previous years. Specifically, those who believe that there is significantly less or somewhat less corruption in their municipalities today (16%) compared to 12 months ago remain at nearly the same level as before. Similarly, the percentage of those who think there is somewhat more or significantly more corruption today (22%) has remained stable. Also, as in previous years, the largest share of respondents (45%) believe that there has been no change in the presence of corruption in municipalities compared to 12 months ago and that it remains at the same level, which indicates that municipalities either do not take sufficient measures to curb this phenomenon at the local level or that such measures are not sufficiently effective.

Mechanisms for citizens' participation in decision-making in the municipality

- Over half (51%) of respondents believe that the way the municipality is organized does not at all or only to a very small extent enable citizens to participate in local decision-making processes. Those who are more positive and believe that people like them are enabled to be involved in local decision-making are significantly fewer than before (12%).
- Compared to the results from 2021–2024, the percentage of those who believe that the municipality's organization does not at all or to very small extent enables citizen participation in local decision-making processes (51%) is lower than in 2021 (59%) and 2023 (56%), but higher than in 2022 (50%) and especially 2024 (37%). Compared to last year, fewer citizens (12% versus 22% in 2024) believe that their suggestions are taken into account, while 26% (29% in 2024) think that their participation is somewhat enabled through the way

municipalities are organized. On the other hand, compared to last year, the percentage of respondents who do not believe that the organization of local government enables people like them to influence local decisions is higher (increase from 42% to 53%).

- Direct citizen participation through municipal activities and mechanisms related to policymaking or local decision-making, as well as through submitting proposals/initiatives, continues to be at low level. Specifically, the majority of citizens (84% in 2021, 87% in 2022, 83% in 2023, 74% in 2024, and 79% this year) have neither participated in activities related to local policymaking or decision-making nor submitted a proposal/initiative to address an issue within the municipality's competence. As in previous years, a small percentage (11%) confirmed that they participated in one or more municipal activities, and only 10% reported having submitted a proposal or initiative.
- Regarding the reasons why citizens do not participate in the local decision-making process, there have been no significant changes. As before, slightly more than one-quarter (26%) of respondents reported no specific reason for not participating in activities related to local policymaking or decision-making, nor for not submitting a proposal/initiative to address an issue within the municipality's competence. On the other hand, 20% of respondents remain skeptical that their participation can make a difference, 15% said they do not want to get personally involved, and another 15% cited lack of time. According to 13%, the municipality would not be interested in their participation.
- Fewer surveyed citizens (44%) compared to last year (49%), but the same as in 2023, agree that women participate equally in the local decision-making process as men. Those who do not share this opinion (40%) are more than in 2022 (36%), less than in 2023 (44%), but at the same level as last year (41%).

Information about municipal operation and services

- Regarding the level of self-assessed citizen awareness about municipal operations, the percentage of informed citizens (33%) is identical to those with a neutral attitude (33%), which may indicate insufficient transparency or ineffective communication channels, but also a lack of interest among citizens. Additionally, almost the same percentage (34%) of citizens reported being not informed, representing a significant portion of the population. Compared to previous years, no significant changes are observed in the level of citizen awareness regarding municipal operations.
- Local media continue to be the primary source of information about municipal operations and services for nearly half of the respondents – 48%. Other sources mentioned include the municipal website (34%), public debates and gatherings (10%), as well as friends, colleagues, family, and relatives (9%). The trend of low level of information from social media/Facebook, the municipal bulletin, bulletin boards in neighborhood units and municipalities, and the municipal newspaper persists.

E-services in the municipality

- This year, citizens' awareness and knowledge of municipal e-services continue to be low. The largest share of respondents (58%) do not know whether their municipality provides e-services, 29% said their municipality does not provide e-services, and only 13% answered affirmatively. Compared to 2024, there is a lower level of citizen awareness about municipal e-services.
- Respondents who confirmed that their municipality provides e-services specified the following services: personal documents (11%), municipal website/information on activities



(11%), urban planning (10%), cadastre and geodetic works (8%), building permits/authorization for construction (7%).

- The majority (66%) of those surveyed who confirmed that their municipality provides e-services do not use them, while 27% reported using them. Compared to previous years, there is a lower level of e-service usage among respondents.
- Despite increased digitalization, 75% of citizens still do not have a clear idea of what e-services they expect from municipalities, indicating a potential gap between supply and expectations. Among those who do have an idea about these types of services, the largest percentage (4%) indicated that they would like them to include certificates, all municipal activities/services, as well as property deeds, and taxes and fees (2%).

Non-governmental organizations – citizens' associations

- The latest survey results do not indicate more significant changes in citizens' self-assessed awareness of NGOs in their municipalities. Namely, the citizens' awareness remains almost at the same level as in previous years – a smaller share (22%) of respondents reported being familiar with NGOs, while nearly half (47%) said they were not familiar.
- Similarly, motivation to participate in activities of citizens' associations remains low. Unlike 2020 and 2021, when the level of motivation was at its highest, this year, as in the past few years, the majority of respondents reported not being motivated (47%), while a significantly smaller share (22%) said they were motivated.
- Regarding citizens' perception of cooperation between municipalities and the NGO sector, the share of those who believe such cooperation exists, after a three-year increase (28% in 2022, 35% in 2023, 40% in 2024), has declined again to 31%. Those who do not believe such cooperation exists (29%) remain at roughly the same level as last year (28%). Nevertheless, as before, there is a significant percentage (40%) of those who do not know whether this type of cooperation exists.
- As in the previous two (2) surveys, this year too the largest percentage (33% in 2021, 34% in 2022, 41% in 2023, 51% in 2024, and 43% this year) share the opinion (mostly or completely agree) that cooperation between citizens' associations/NGOs and the municipality will improve the services provided by the municipality.
- Approximately one-third (30%) share the view that citizens' associations/NGOs in their municipality take actions according to citizens' priorities, while 22% disagree with this view. Similarly, regarding the statement "citizens' associations/NGOs in the municipality encourage citizens to propose solutions to local issues and to be involved in the work of local government," 31% agree, but 21% disagree. At the same time, a larger portion (33%) of citizens believe that some services would improve if the municipality handed them over entirely to NGOs, compared to 22% who do not believe this. Similarly, regarding whether some services would improve if the municipality handed them over entirely to companies – 33% of respondents share this view, while 23% do not believe that handing over some services to companies would improve their quality.

4 Results and Analysis by Thematic Areas

This section of the Report contains a detailed analysis and graphic presentation of the results for each question from the separate thematic areas covered by the questionnaire. As mentioned earlier, wherever possible, the survey results have been compared to the results of the previous surveys conducted between 2017 and 2024.

4.1 General Satisfaction with the Quality of Life in the Municipality and Trust in Municipality as Institution

The introductory section of the survey aimed at assessing the general satisfaction level of the respondents with their municipalities, primarily as a place to live, but also the level of satisfaction with the municipal management. In this section, respondents were also asked to rate their knowledge of their ability to differentiate between the services provided by the central and those provided by the local government, i.e. the municipalities. In this section, new questions have been added regarding the level of trust in the municipality as an institution, as well as the reasons for trust or distrust.

Citizens continue to be generally satisfied with the quality of life in their municipality, specifically: with the municipality as a place to live; with the quality of life in the municipality; with the municipality as a place to raise children; with the municipality as a place for retirees (the elderly); with the municipality as a place for vulnerable groups of citizens; and with the safety of the community in the municipality (Chart 1). Regarding all six observed aspects of quality of life in the municipality, the percentage of citizens who are satisfied or completely satisfied is higher than those who are not satisfied. The highest percentage of respondents are satisfied with the municipality in general as a place to live in (55%).

Regarding satisfaction with the municipality as a place for vulnerable groups of citizens to live in, citizens expressed the highest level of dissatisfaction – 35% are not satisfied (completely dissatisfied or dissatisfied) with this aspect.

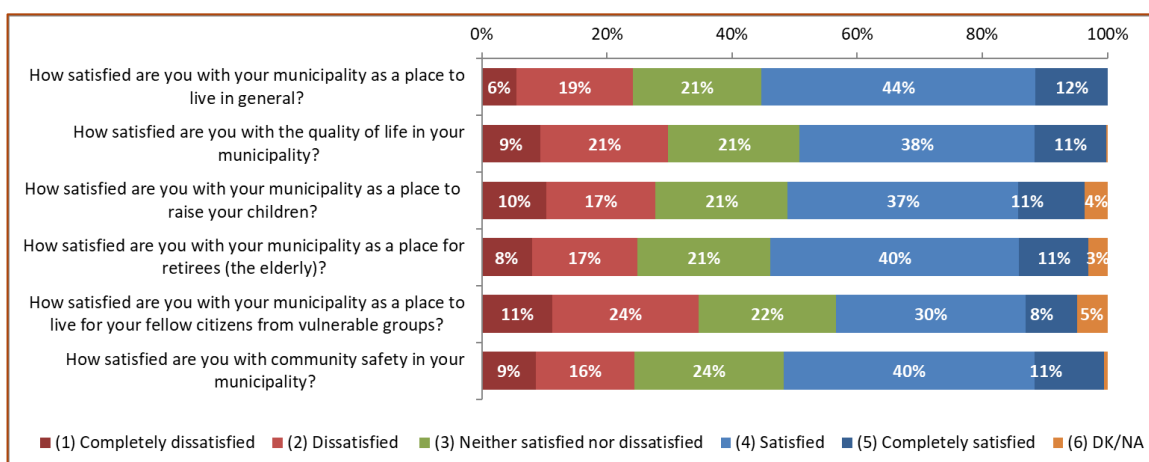


Chart 1 – Level of citizens' satisfaction with the quality of life in the municipality - % (2025 год.)

The average scores for the aspects included in this research (Chart 2) show the highest level of citizen satisfaction (3.4) regarding satisfaction with the municipality in general as a place to live, whereas citizens rated the next four (4) observed aspects slightly lower: satisfaction with the municipality as a place for retirees (the elderly) to live in and satisfaction with community safety in the municipality

both received an average score of 3.3; satisfaction with the quality of life in their municipality and satisfaction with the municipality as a place to raise children were rated with an average score of 3.2. The lowest average level of satisfaction (3.0) was expressed by citizens regarding municipality as a place to live for vulnerable groups of citizens.

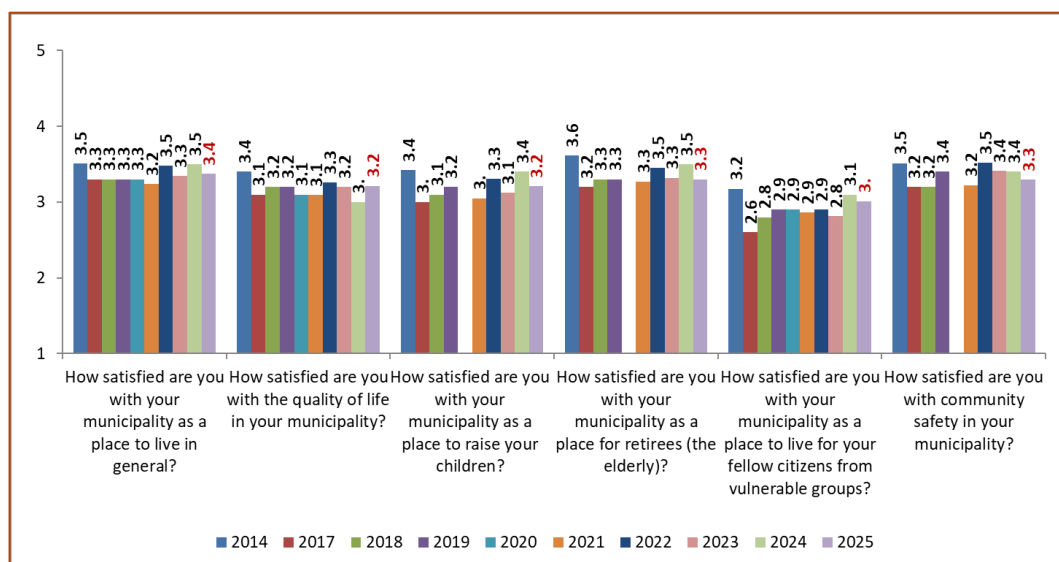


Chart 2 – Level of citizens' satisfaction with the quality of life in the municipality – average scores by years

A comparative analysis of the average scores for each aspect related to quality of life in the municipality with those from the period 2017–2024 generally does not show more significant changes in the level of average citizen satisfaction. The trend of the lowest level of satisfaction continues to be in relation to the municipality as a place to live for vulnerable groups of citizens, which again indicates a serious need for municipalities to make efforts to identify the specific needs and provide better living conditions for these groups of citizens. However, compared to the data from 2024, the latest data indicate that the level of average citizen satisfaction is declining for all aspects assessed in this section, with the exception of satisfaction with the quality of life in the municipality, which increased from 3.0 to 3.2.

The analysis of data from this research by the respondents' demographic characteristics shows certain statistically significant differences in the level of citizen satisfaction regarding living in their municipalities. Specifically, while there are no significant differences in the level of satisfaction by place of residence (urban/rural) or age, women expressed a higher level of satisfaction than men regarding the municipality as a place to raise children (52% compared to 43%, or, expressed in average scores, 3.3 compared to 3.1), the municipality as a place for retirees (elderly people) (55% compared to 47%, or expressed in average scores, 3.4 compared to 3.2), and the municipality as a place to live for vulnerable groups of citizens (42% compared to 35%, or expressed in average scores, 3.1 compared to 2.9).

Regarding ethnic affiliation, respondents from other ethnic groups as well as those of Albanian ethnicity expressed a higher level of satisfaction than respondents of Macedonian ethnicity concerning the quality of life in the municipalities (60% and 53% compared to 45%), and the municipality as a place to raise children (55% and 53% compared to 44%).

On the other hand, respondents from the Macedonian ethnic group are less satisfied with all aspects analyzed in this section compared to those from the Albanian and other ethnic groups living in the country.

When asked, “Do you differentiate between services provided by the central government and those provided by the local government, i.e. the municipalities?”, more than half of the respondents (54%) stated again that they do make a distinction and clearly know whom to address, while the others either rarely know whom to address (31%) or do not make any distinction at all (15%) (Chart 3). Compared to data from previous waves of this survey, the latest results show a lower percentage than in 2019 (56%), 2021 (57%), and 2022 (58%), and nearly the same percentage as in 2018 (53%), 2020 (50%), and 2024 (56%) of those who know whom they should address because they can differentiate between the services provided by the central and local governments. The highest number of citizens who stated that they make this distinction was recorded in 2017 (68%), while the lowest was in 2014 (44%). This again indicates the need for greater public awareness about the services provided by local governments, using a wider range of available information channels.

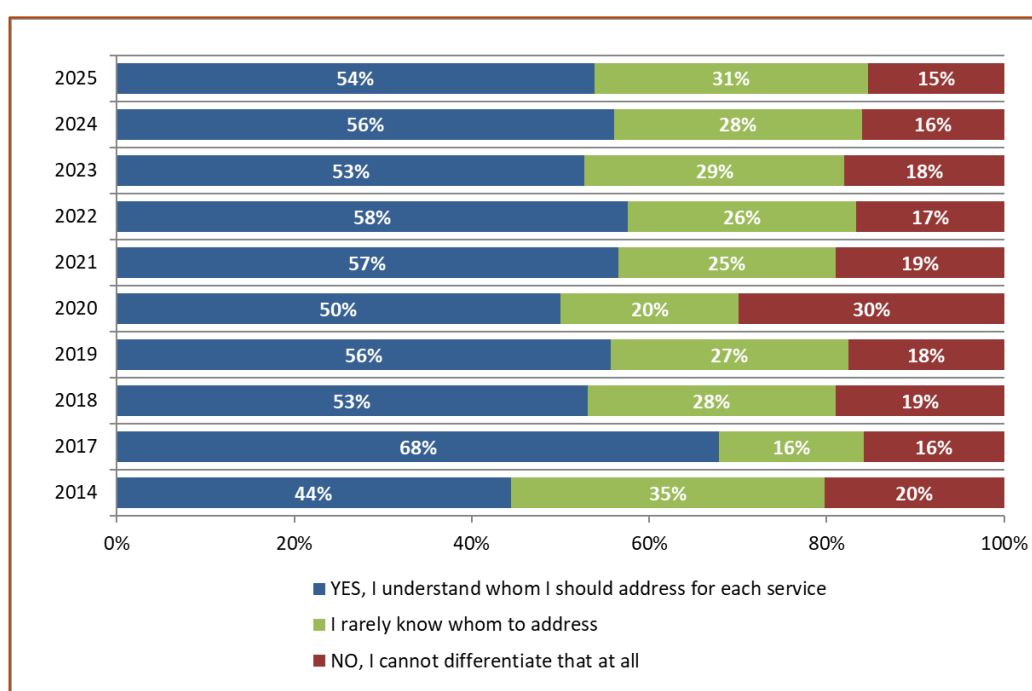


Chart 3 – Can you differentiate between services offered by the central government and services offered by local government, i.e., municipalities? – % by years

Those who cannot differentiate between the services offered by the central government and those offered by the local government are found mostly among the oldest respondents, aged 65 and over (25%), as well as among those living in Vardar (24%) and Polog (24%) statistical regions.

The following section analyzes the citizens' perceptions of several aspects related to the work of the municipalities.

Data from the latest survey show that the largest percentage of respondents (40%) agree or completely agree with the statement that municipal representatives undertake measures to ensure non-discrimination of non-majority ethnic communities, while 39% are satisfied with the way their municipality is managed (Chart 4).

Furthermore, around 36% agree or completely agree that the citizens in the municipality are informed about the municipality's activities and plans, while 35% agree or completely agree that their municipal representatives demonstrate responsible treatment of persons with special needs.

Similarly, 34% agree or completely agree that they are satisfied with the way public enterprises are managed. The lowest level of agreement is observed regarding the statement *“The mayor and the council take citizens views and opinions into consideration.”* — only 31% agree or completely agree.

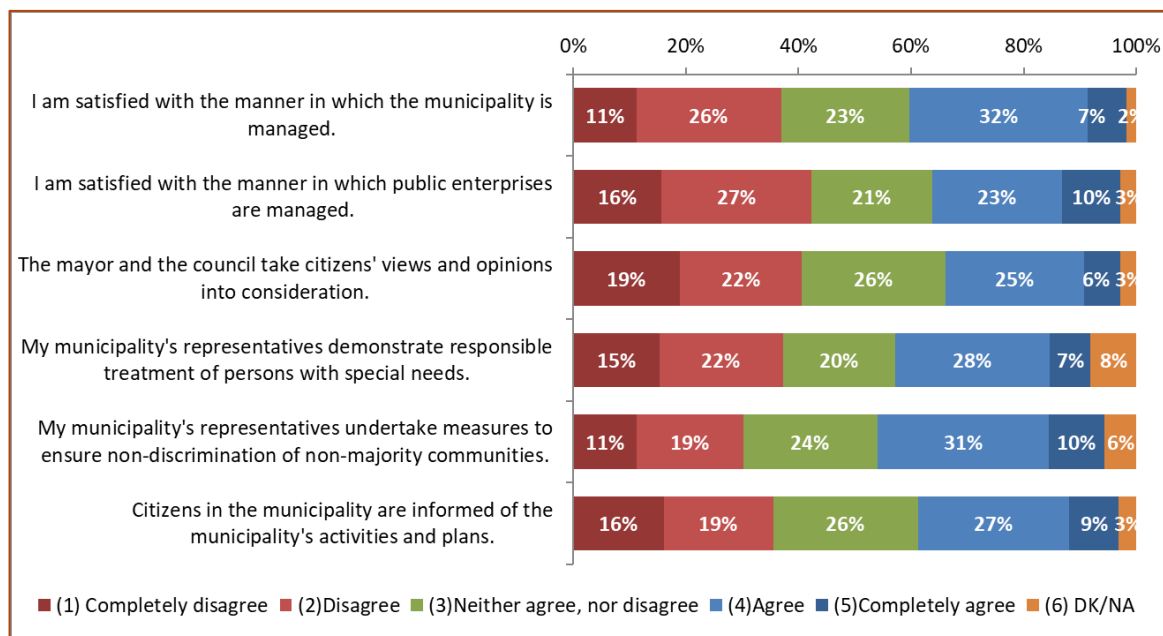


Chart 4 – Level of citizens' agreement with certain aspects related to the work of the municipality – % (2025 rod.)

The percentage of those who agree (aggregated responses of agree and completely agree) is higher than those who disagree (aggregated responses of completely disagree and disagree) regarding 2 (two) out of the 6 (six) evaluated aspects in this part of the research, namely:

- My municipality's representatives undertake measures to ensure non-discrimination of non-majority ethnic communities (40% agree, while 30% disagree);
- I am satisfied with the manner the municipality is managed (39% agree, while 37% disagree).

Regarding the following three (3) aspects, the percentage of those who disagree is higher than the percentage of those who agree, namely:

- I am satisfied with the manner public enterprises are managed (42% disagree, while 34% agree);
- The mayor and the council take citizens' views and opinions into consideration (41% disagree, while 32% agree);
- My municipality's representatives demonstrate responsible treatment of persons with special needs (37% disagree, while 35% agree).

An equal number of citizens agree and disagree (36%) with the statement *“The citizens in the municipality are informed of the municipality's activities and plans.”*

The total average satisfaction of citizens with the way the municipality and public enterprises operate (Chart 5), that is, the total average score for all six (6) evaluated aspects (2.9), is lower than in 2024 (3.2), but almost at the same level as in previous years (2.9 in 2023, 3.0 in 2022, and 2.9 during the period 2018–2021).

The comparative analysis of the average scores by years shows an almost identical level of agreement among citizens with all evaluated aspects compared to the period 2017–2021. A lower average level

of satisfaction is observed compared to the data from 2022, as well as compared to the previous year, specifically:

- I am satisfied with the manner the municipality is managed – from 3.2 to 3.0;
- I am satisfied with the manner public enterprises are managed – from 3.1 to 2.9;
- The mayor and the council take citizens' views and opinions into consideration – from 3.1 to 2.8;
- My municipality's representatives demonstrate responsible treatment of persons with special needs – from 3.1 to 2.9;
- My municipality's representatives undertake measures to ensure non-discrimination of non-majority communities – from 3.4 to 3.1;
- Citizens in the municipality are informed about the municipality's activities and plans – from 3.1 to 2.9.

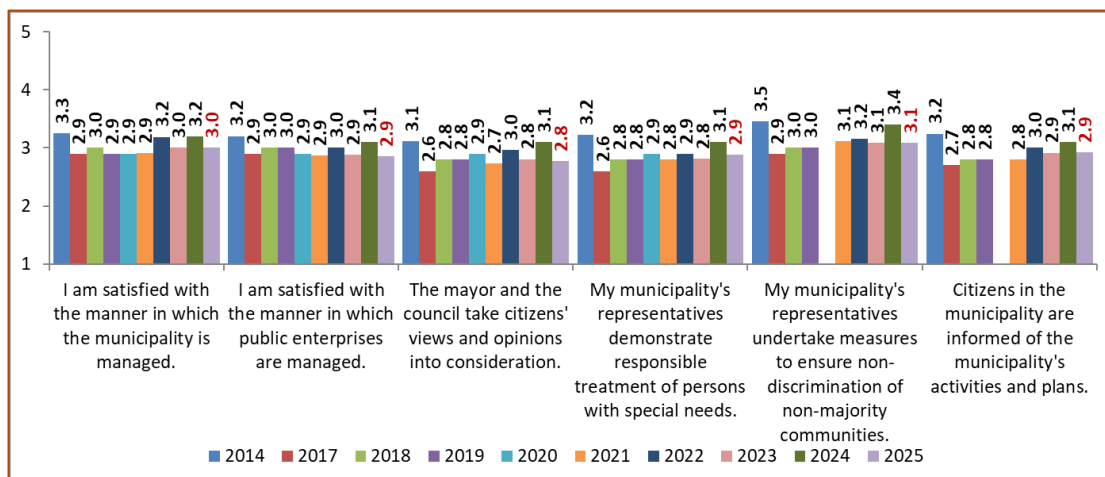


Chart 5 – Level of citizens' agreement with certain aspects related to the work of the municipality and the public enterprises – average scores by years

The largest decline in citizens' average satisfaction compared to the 2024 data is observed regarding satisfaction with how much the mayor and the municipal council take into consideration the views and opinions of citizens (from 3.1 to 2.8), as well as satisfaction with how much municipal representatives undertake measures to ensure non-discrimination of non-majority communities (from 3.4 to 3.1).

The decrease of the average scores across all these categories indicates an overall decline in trust and in the perception of the efficiency and accountability of local government. These results may indicate insufficient communication with the public, a lack of transparency and accountability, inadequate care for vulnerable groups and ethnic communities, as well as a general perception of ineffective governance.

This trend signals the need for improved public communication, more responsible actions, and greater commitment to inclusiveness and the protection of the rights of all communities. A more detailed analysis of the reasons behind the decline in citizens' satisfaction with these aspects could help identify more concrete measures for improvement.

When it comes to the level of citizens' trust in their municipalities, 38% stated they trust them, while 28% do not. A significant portion of citizens (33%) are neutral, and neither trust nor distrust their municipality (Chart 6).

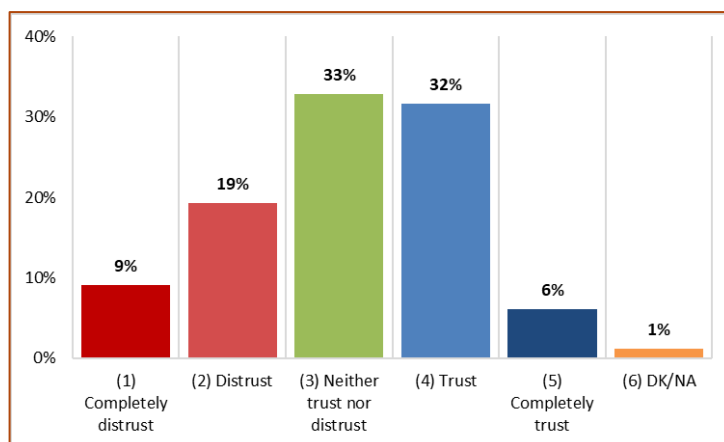


Chart 6 - Level of citizens' trust in their municipality as an institution – % (2025)

The level of trust in the municipality as an institution is higher among respondents of Albanian ethnic background (45%) compared to those of Macedonian (35%) or other ethnic groups (38%), as well as among respondents from Northeast statistical region (58%) compared to those from other regions. On the other hand, respondents of Macedonian ethnic background (31%) and other ethnic groups (32%) expressed higher distrust in municipalities as institutions than those of Albanian ethnicity (20%), as did respondents from the Southwest, Southeast, and Pelagonia statistical regions (38% each) compared to those from other regions.

In terms of gender, place of residence, and age, no significant differences are observed in the level of trust or distrust toward the municipality as an institution.

When it comes to citizens' trust in the municipality as an institution, the data from this survey show that it depends primarily on practical results and visible efficiency. Specifically, 54% of citizens base their trust on the effective resolution of problems, making this the most important factor for a positive perception (Chart 7). Additionally, although to a lesser extent, transparency and accountability (34%), adherence to laws (34%), and good communication (33%) also play an important role, with about one-third of citizens citing these as reasons for their trust.



Chart 7 – Main reasons for trust in municipality as institution – % (2025)

On the other hand, distrust is associated with negative experiences and perceptions of inefficiency and corruption. The main reason for distrust is the ineffective resolution of problems (63%), followed closely by perceptions of corruption and misuse of funds (57%) and political influence over decisions (40%) (Chart 8).

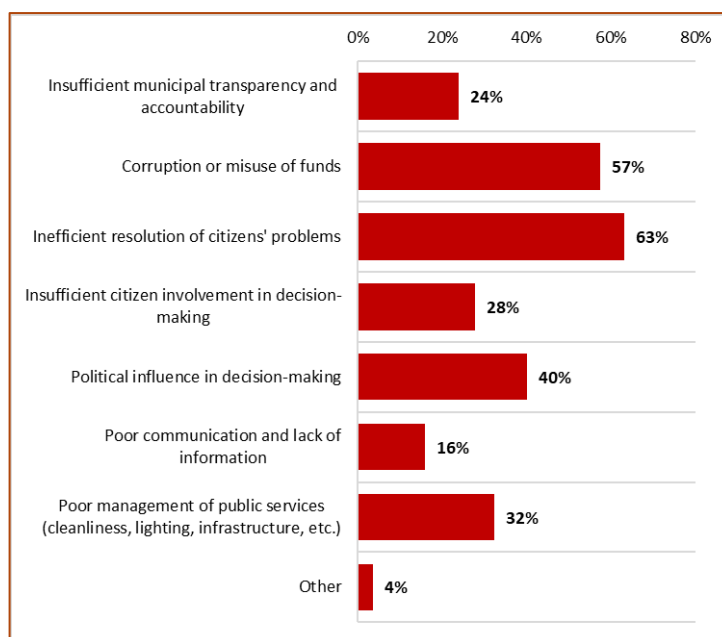


Chart 8 - Main reasons for distrust in municipality as institution – % (2025)

These results indicate that citizens value the functionality and integrity of the municipality the most, while the lack of these qualities directly undermines trust. To increase trust, municipalities should focus on effective and fair problem-solving, transparent governance, and depoliticizing local-level processes.

4.2 Satisfaction with Services Provided by the Municipality

The second thematic area of the survey was aimed at providing answers about the citizens' opinions with respect to the overall work of local authorities in their municipalities, which was introduced as a new question. At the same time, the questions in this section were focused on obtaining information about the level of citizens' satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality, on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "completely satisfied" and 5 means "completely dissatisfied", in terms of the general satisfaction with the services, as well as with the individual services within the scope of the municipal competencies, with regard to the following areas: 1) Education, culture, sports and recreation, 2) Urban development and planning, 3) Local economic development, 4) Communal services, 5) Social welfare, 6) Environmental protection, 7) Fire protection, 8) Health care, 9) Democracy, transparency and accountability.

Also, in this section, citizens were asked to express their satisfaction with the work of the municipal administration, as well as their opinion about a possible increased role of the neighborhood units in local self-government.

4.2.1 Citizens' Opinion about the Overall Work of Local Authorities

In 2025, 38% of citizens have a positive opinion about the overall work of local authorities, indicating that slightly more than one-third of the population considers municipalities to be doing generally good work and very good work (Chart 9). On the other hand, 31% of respondents hold a negative view, while 29% are neutral, believing that local authorities do neither good nor bad work. High percentage of neutral citizens shows that a significant portion of the population is undecided or does not perceive substantial results, representing a potential group that could shift either positively or negatively in the future. The average score of the overall work is 3.0, reflecting a moderate or average perception among citizens.

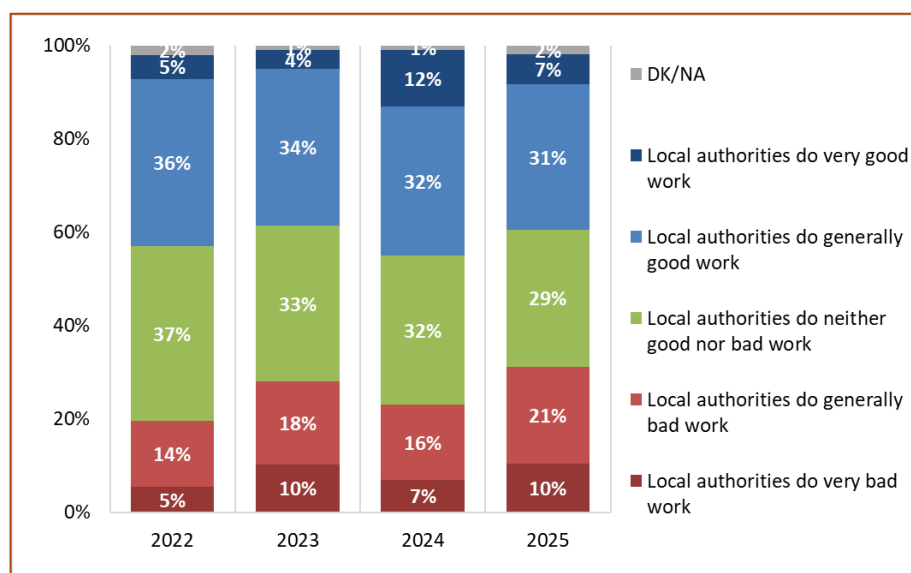


Chart 9 – Citizens' opinion about the overall work of local authorities (2025)

Compared to 2024, there is a significant change in attitudes. Although positive views are still the most prevalent, they are declining, while negative views are increasing. Specifically, negative opinions have risen from 23% to 31%, while positive opinions have fallen from 44% to 38%, indicating a decrease in satisfaction with the work of local authorities. This trend signals growing dissatisfaction and potentially weakened support for local institutions. High percentage of neutral respondents, meanwhile, suggests the possibility of influence in either direction, depending on the future work of the municipalities.

The analysis by demographic characteristics of respondents indicates certain differences in their assessment of the overall municipal work in 2025. While no significant statistical differences are observed by gender (34% of men and 29% of women are dissatisfied) or by place of residence (30% of respondents living in urban areas and 34% of those in rural areas are dissatisfied), respondents from other ethnic groups (35%) and those of Macedonian ethnic background (33%), respondents aged 55–64 (40%), those from the Southeast statistical region (43%), and the unemployed (38%) evaluate the overall work of local authorities more negatively than the rest.

On the other hand, those with a more positive assessment of the work of local authorities are mainly found among respondents of Albanian ethnic background (44%), respondents aged 35–45 (44%) and the most senior age group aged 65 and over (43%), those living in the Northeast statistical region (56%), and public sector employees (51%). Regarding place of living (urban or rural) and gender of the respondents, no significant differences are observed when it comes to a positive assessment of municipal overall work.

4.2.2 General Satisfaction with Services Provided by the Municipalities

When asked how satisfied they are in general with the services provided by their municipalities, 39% of respondents said they are satisfied or completely satisfied, while about 31% are dissatisfied (Chart 10). Over one-third (35%) are neutral, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

The results show that in 2025, there is again a decrease in overall citizen satisfaction with municipal services, now at 39%. This percentage represents a return to the levels of previous years after a short-term increase in 2022 and 2024. Although 2022 saw the highest level of satisfaction to date (44%), and in 2024 even 48%, this year's data indicate that this positive trend was not maintained. In fact, following that peak, satisfaction declined again, similar to the period from 2017 to 2021, when the percentage consistently remained around 39–41%.

This indicates instability in the perception of the quality of municipal services and suggests that citizens do not see consistent improvement in municipal performance; on the contrary, their satisfaction is variable and sensitive to specific events or changes in local governance.

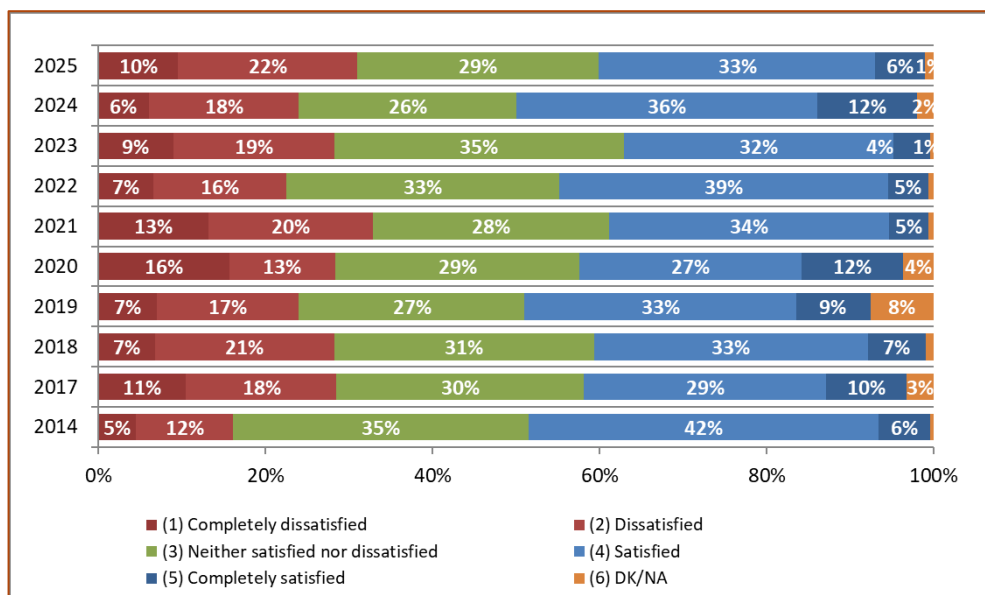


Chart 10 – General satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities – % by years

The analysis by demographic characteristics of the respondents indicates statistically significant differences in overall satisfaction with municipal services based on gender and place of residence. Specifically, men (35%, average score 3.0) are less satisfied than women (27%, average score 3.1), while respondents from urban areas (42%, average score 3.1) are more satisfied with municipal services than those from rural areas (35%, average score 3.0).

Regarding statistical regions, respondents living in the Northeast region (51%) are more satisfied with municipal services than those from other regions, while the least satisfied are respondents from the Vardar (44%) and Southeast (43%) regions. In terms of ethnic affiliation, respondents of Macedonian ethnicity (33%) and other ethnic groups (31%) are more dissatisfied than respondents of Albanian ethnicity (26%).

The lower level of the citizens' general satisfaction with the services provided by the municipalities can be noticed in the decreased average scores compared to last year, which is 3.04 this year.

	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
GENERAL satisfaction with services provided by the municipality	3.34	3.09	3.12	3.21	3.10	2.97	3.20	3.04	3.31	3.04

Table 1 – General satisfaction with services provided by the municipality – average scores by years

4.2.3 Satisfaction with Individual Areas and Services Provided by the Municipalities

Regarding satisfaction with individual areas and services provided by municipalities, a continuing trend is observed in which the highest level of citizen satisfaction remains with fire protection services, with an average score of 3.60 (Table 2). On the other hand, satisfaction is lowest regarding environmental protection, with an average score of 2.57. This contrast indicates structural weaknesses in certain municipal responsibilities, particularly in the area of ecology.

For all areas under municipal responsibility that were assessed, the latest survey shows a decrease in the overall average level of citizen satisfaction compared to 2024. This trend suggests that citizens are increasingly dissatisfied with the services provided by their local governments, which may be due to insufficient effectiveness, poor budget implementation, or unmet expectations.

When analyzing the total average level of satisfaction with municipal services, there is a decline compared to some previous years. In 2025, the average score is 3.04, which is the same as in 2023 but lower than in 2022 (3.20) and 2024 (3.31), and still slightly higher than in 2021 (2.97). This indicates deterioration, suggesting that recent policies or measures have not succeeded in maintaining a positive trend.

Compared to 2024, a lower average level of satisfaction is noted across all areas. Particularly concerning are the data showing a decline in satisfaction in key sectors such as communal services and environmental protection. Compared to 2024, the average score for communal services has decreased from 3.26 to 2.92, and for environmental protection from 3.10 to 2.57. This decline indicates increased citizen dissatisfaction with essential services that directly affect their daily lives.

The general trend indicates a need for a systematic approach and improvement in local governance, with particular emphasis on the services where citizens perceive the greatest deficiencies.

	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
General satisfaction with services provided	3.34	3.09	3.12	3.21	3.10	2.97	3.20	3.04	3.31	3.04

	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
by the municipality										
Education, culture, sport and recreation¹	3.58	3.16	3.15	3.20	3.40	3.24	3.23	3.19	3.31	3.19
Urban development and planning	3.26	2.67	2.78	2.73	2.93	2.71	2.84	2.73	2.98	2.77
Local economic development	2.90	2.44	2.43	2.46	2.60	2.51	2.54	2.54	3.02	2.69
Communal services	3.30	2.89	2.94	2.99	3.02	3.04	3.10	3.13	3.26	2.92
Social welfare	2.99	2.33	2.32	2.58	2.82	2.65	2.59	2.61	3.06	2.70
Environmental protection	3.22	2.52	2.48	2.68	2.70	2.60	2.75	2.72	3.10	2.57
Fire protection	3.80	3.50	3.50	3.36	/	3.40	3.59	3.52	3.78	3.60
Health system and healthcare at the local level	3.25	3.08	3.08	3.01	3.10	2.89	3.00	2.74	3.23	2.86
Democracy, transparency and accountability	3.04	2.54	2.61	2.70	2.70	2.66	2.81	2.76	2.95	2.84

Table 2 – Satisfaction with individual areas and services provided by the municipalities – average scores by areas by years

4.2.4 Education, Culture, Sport and Recreation

The first group of local competencies for which an assessment of citizens' satisfaction was requested is *Education, culture, sports and recreation*. The total average score for 2025 is 3.19 for all 13 aspects that were the subject of the citizens' satisfaction assessment.

Overall, citizens expressed higher satisfaction than dissatisfaction with all services they receive from municipalities in this area, with the exception of food offered to students, where citizens reported slightly higher dissatisfaction than satisfaction.

Regarding the evaluated aspects in the area of education (Chart 11), citizens remain the most satisfied with the school proximity (61% stated they are satisfied or completely satisfied), followed by general satisfaction with primary education (58% of respondents said they are satisfied or completely satisfied). The lowest level of satisfaction continues to be related to food offered to students, with only 30% of respondents reporting that they are satisfied or completely satisfied.

¹ For the needs of the survey conducted in 2021, in the part that referred to the area of Education, culture, sport and recreation, 4 new aspects were added to the list of 9 aspects that were part of the surveys conducted in the period 2014 and 2017-2019.

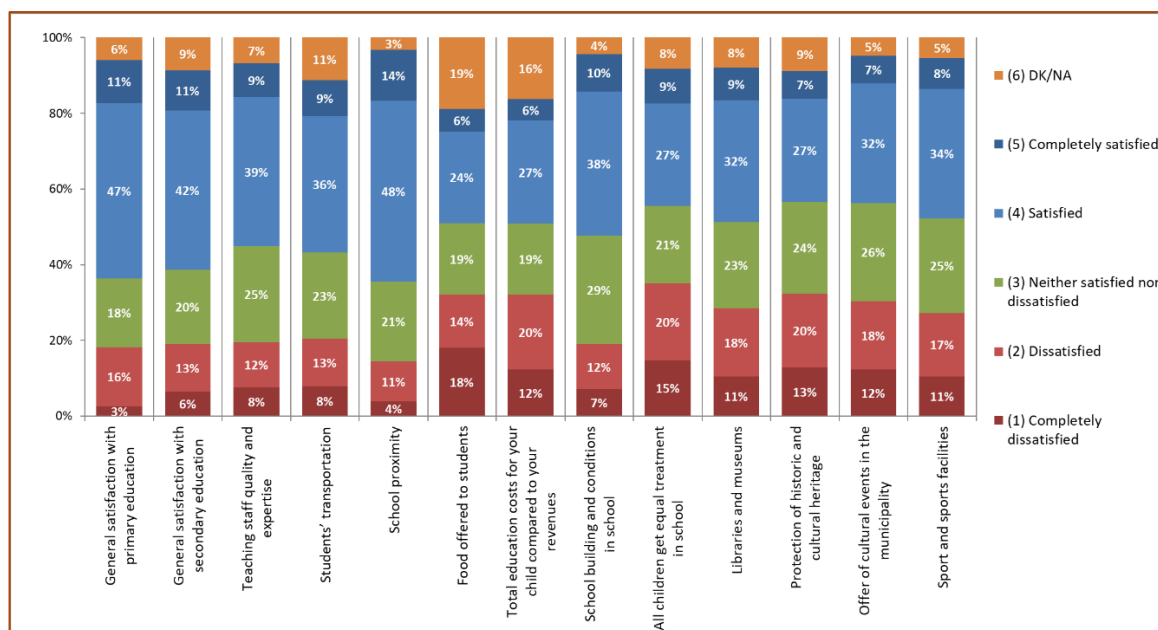


Chart 11 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of education, culture, sport and recreation – % (2025)

Regarding culture, sports, and recreation, citizens are most satisfied with sports and sports facilities (43% of respondents said they are satisfied or completely satisfied), while the lowest satisfaction is with regard to the protection of historical and cultural heritage (35% of respondents reported being satisfied or completely satisfied with the municipal services in this area).

In 2025, the total average score for citizen satisfaction in the area of education, culture, and sports is 3.19 (Chart 12), representing a decrease compared to 2024 (3.32) and remaining at the same level as in 2023 (3.19). Among the 13 evaluated aspects, the school proximity was assessed with the highest average score (3.58), while food offered to students received the lowest average score (2.83), indicating a significant issue in this area.

Compared to 2024, there is a decrease in average satisfaction in relation to 10 out of 13 aspects, while the general satisfaction with secondary education, teaching staff quality and expertise, and school proximity remained unchanged. This indicates a trend of declining perception of quality in most areas and highlights the need for a more detailed analysis of the underlying causes, as well as specific measures for improvement.

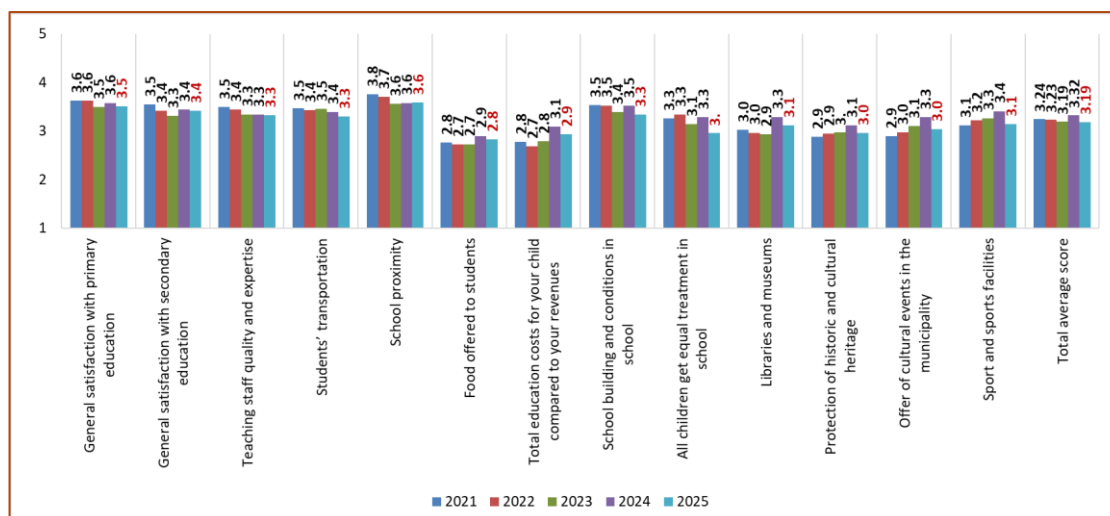


Chart 12 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the field of education, culture, sport and recreation – average scores for 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025

4.2.5 Urban Development and Planning

The total average score for this area is 2.77. In relation to all assessed aspects of municipal services in the area of urban planning, which was the second area for which citizen satisfaction was assessed, there is a higher level of dissatisfaction than satisfaction among the respondents (Chart 13).

Among those who reported being satisfied or completely satisfied, the largest percentage was in relation to the urban development of the municipality (38%), while the smallest was in relation to the urban planning in rural areas (23%), where, at the same time, the highest level of dissatisfaction is recorded (44%).

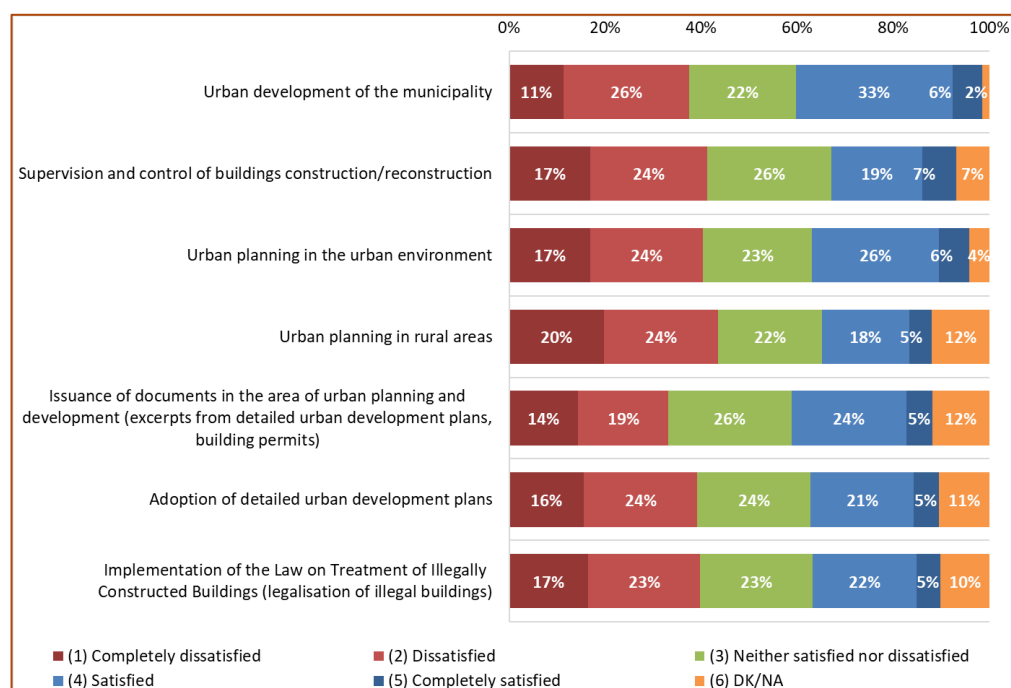


Chart 13 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of urban development and planning – % (2025)

The total average score for the area of urban development and planning (2.77) is lower compared to 2022 (2.84) and 2024 (2.98), higher compared to 2017 (2.67), 2019 (2.73), 2021 (2.71), and 2023 (2.73), and at the same level as in 2018 (2.78) (Table 3). As for the survey carried out in 2020, some aspects were not included therein and therefore it is not possible to make an adequate comparison of the results.

Among individual aspects, the urban development of the municipality is assessed with the highest average score (2.96), while urban planning in rural areas is assessed the lowest (2.60). Compared to 2024, there is a decline in satisfaction in relation to all aspects, indicating a deterioration in citizens' perception in this area.

	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Urban development of the municipality	3.37	2.72	2.83	2.77	3.10	2.84	3.03	2.92	3.04	2.96
Supervision and control of buildings construction/reconstruction	3.19	2.59	2.72	2.65	2.90	2.68	2.75	2.70	2.87	2.73
Urban planning in the urban environment	3.35	2.61	2.69	2.71	/	2.70	2.90	2.79	2.97	2.81
Urban planning in rural areas	3.01	2.40	2.64	2.61	/	2.61	2.62	2.54	2.77	2.60
Issuance of documents in the area of urban planning and development	3.28	2.83	2.85	2.80	2.90	2.77	2.91	2.79	3.24	2.85
Adoption of detailed urban development plans	3.19	2.61	2.70	2.70	2.80	2.59	2.79	2.68	2.88	2.75
Implementation of the Law on Treatment of Illegally Constructed Buildings	3.42	2.91	3.01	2.90	/	2.76	2.90	2.69	3.07	2.72
Total average score	3.26	2.67	2.78	2.73	2.93	2.71	2.84	2.73	2.98	2.77

Табела 3 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of urban development and planning – average scores by years

4.2.6 Local Economic Development

The third competence for which the level of citizens' satisfaction was assessed is local economic development. This area is ranked second with the lowest average score (2.69), just after environmental protection, which this year records the lowest level of citizen satisfaction with an average score of 2.57.

The percentage of respondents who are dissatisfied (completely dissatisfied or dissatisfied) with each of the assessed aspects continues to be significantly higher than the percentage of those who reported being satisfied (satisfied or completely satisfied). The highest percentage of respondents (32%) are satisfied or completely satisfied (Chart 14) with the promoting and stimulating local economic development, while the lowest percentage (26%) expressed satisfaction with the provision of services for agricultural development and the participation of citizens and businesses in the drafting of municipal strategic development documents. On the other hand, the highest percentage of respondents are completely dissatisfied or dissatisfied with participation of citizens and business

entities in the drafting of the municipal strategic documents for development (47%) and with activities aimed at improving employment (46%).

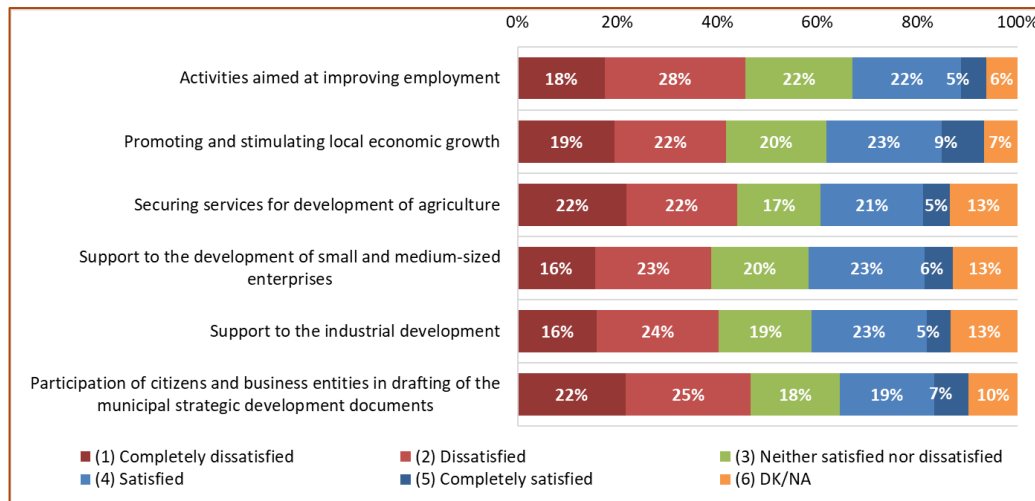


Chart 14 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of local economic development – % (2025)

Analyzed by average scores (Table 4), in 2025, the area of local economic development is assessed a slightly better (2.69) compared to the previous survey cycles conducted in the period 2017-2023, but worse compared to last year (3.03).

Securing services for the development of agriculture (2.60) and participation of citizens and business entities in drafting the municipal strategic development documents (2.61) are the lowest-rated aspects in the area of local economic development, while a relatively higher average level of satisfaction is observed regarding the promotion and stimulation of local economic development and the support for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (2.77 for both aspects).

	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Activities aimed at improving employment	2.71	2.36	2.27	2.35	2.50	2.32	2.48	2.51	2.99	2.67
Promoting and stimulating local economic growth	2.97	2.46	2.38	2.42	2.60	2.51	2.59	2.56	3.04	2.77
Securing services for the development of agriculture	3.13	2.51	2.46	2.46	/	2.62	2.49	2.52	2.96	2.60
Support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises	3.02	2.55	2.59	2.60	2.70	2.66	2.64	2.58	3.10	2.77
Support to the industrial development	2.93	2.45	2.48	2.46	/	2.45	2.55	2.54	3.06	2.73
Participation of citizens and business entities in drafting the municipal strategic development documents	2.86	2.30	2.36	2.44	/	2.48	2.51	2.52	3.04	2.61
Total average score	2.94	2.44	2.42	2.46	2.60	2.51	2.54	2.54	3.03	2.69

Table 4 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of local economic development – average scores by years

4.2.7 Communal Services

Of the many competencies that the units of local self-government have in the area of communal services, as part of this survey, the citizens' satisfaction was again assessed in relation to: 1) water supply, 2) sewage and wastewater disposal, 3) solid waste management (collection, transport and disposal), 4) local roads and streets and traffic signs, 5) public street lighting, 6) parking facilities, 7) traffic regulation and public transport, 8) parks and greenery, 9) markets for consumption goods (green markets), 10) graveyard's maintenance, 11) riverbeds' maintenance, 12) irrigation and drainage canals maintenance, and 13) management of stray animals. The total average score for this area is 2.92.

The largest percentage of respondents (62%) reported being satisfied or completely satisfied with water supply, while the lowest satisfaction was again noted regarding the management of stray animals (18% said they were satisfied or completely satisfied, while the majority of 61% reported being dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied with this service) (Chart 15). A larger dissatisfaction with the parking facilities by the citizens is noted, with 45% stating that they were completely dissatisfied or dissatisfied or dissatisfied.

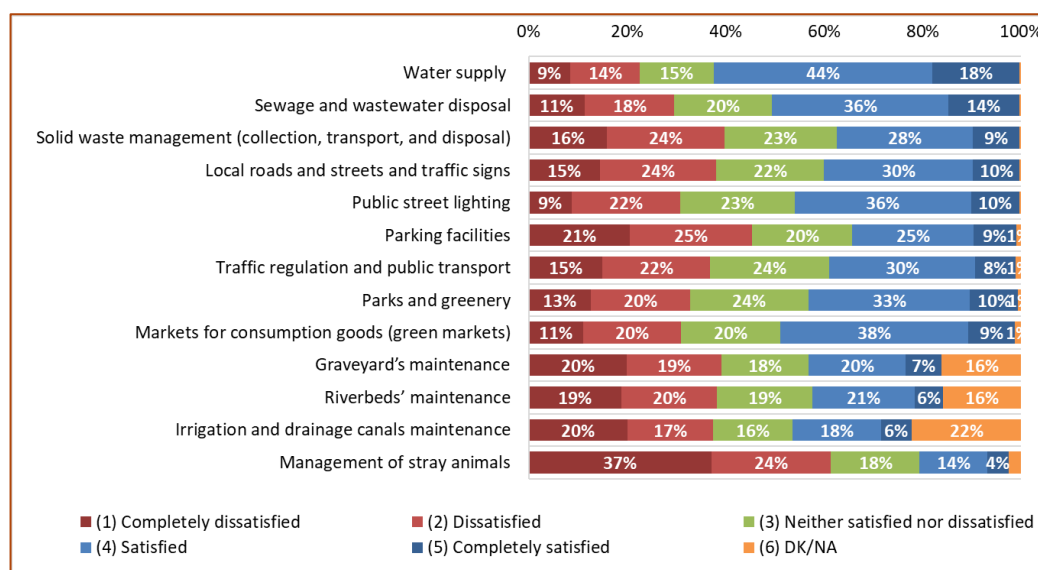


Chart 15 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of communal services – % (2025)

The analysis of the average scores confirms the previously reported results – the highest average score was observed for water supply (3.49), and the lowest for the management of stray animals (2.22). Compared to the total average scores for this area from previous surveys, the results of the latest survey show a decline in citizens' total satisfaction.

Compared to previous years (Table 5), the latest research shows a decline in total average satisfaction with all services in the area of communal services, which is further confirmed by the comparison with 2024, where all aspects record lower average scores. This indicates the need for more serious interventions and improvements in the quality of services in this area, especially since communal services are essential for citizens' everyday lives, as they provide the basic conditions for hygiene, health, safety, and quality living. Regular water supply, waste collection, street lighting, and maintenance of public spaces directly affect public health and the environment. Well-organized communal services create a sense of security, satisfaction, and trust in institutions, and their quality is one of the most visible indicators of the efficiency of local government.

	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Water supply	3.74	3.43	3.67	3.49	3.60	3.62	3.72	3.75	3.72	3.49
Sewage and wastewater disposal	3.47	3.29	3.39	3.37	3.40	3.35	3.41	3.50	3.60	3.24
Solid waste management	3.59	3.29	3.28	3.33	/	3.23	3.46	3.39	3.30	2.91
Local roads and streets and traffic signs	3.33	2.88	2.89	3.05	/	3.00	3.12	3.09	3.12	2.97
Public street lighting	3.49	3.30	3.30	3.32	/	3.48	3.44	3.25	3.39	3.16
Parking facilities	2.96	2.59	2.66	2.79	/	2.71	2.89	2.95	2.98	2.76
Traffic regulation and public transport	3.38	2.93	2.96	3.09	/	2.99	3.14	3.25	3.07	2.94
Parks and greenery	3.50	2.98	3.04	2.92	/	3.30	3.16	3.29	3.45	3.07
Markets for consumption goods	3.47	3.24	3.24	3.07	/	3.31	3.26	3.22	3.63	3.15
Graveyard's maintenance	3.25	2.83	2.86	2.95	/	3.06	3.16	3.09	3.12	2.71
Riverbeds' maintenance	3.25	2.48	2.57	2.79	3.00	2.79	2.77	2.94	3.15	2.71
Irrigation and drainage canals maintenance	3.14	2.40	2.58	2.65	2.90	2.66	2.69	2.77	3.09	2.65
Management of stray animals	2.76	1.87	1.78	2.09	2.20	2.01	2.13	2.18	2.76	2.22
Total average score	3.33	2.89	2.94	2.99	3.02	3.04	3.10	3.13	3.26	2.92

Table 5 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of communal services – average scores by years

4.2.8 Social Welfare

The fifth area in the questionnaire for which citizens' satisfaction with municipal services was assessed is social protection, namely the following more specific aspects: 1) kindergartens and childcare, 2) social welfare and support for the poor, 3)) social welfare and support for the elderly and the infirm, 4) services for persons with special needs (special schools, physical accessibility, inclusion in everyday life, etc.), 5) homes for the elderly, 6) homes for orphaned children, and 7) institutions for people abusing alcohol and drugs. The total average score for this area is 2.70.

As shown in Chart 16, the largest percentage of respondents (55%) responded that they are satisfied or completely satisfied with kindergartens and childcare services. On the other hand, 53% of respondents said that they are dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied with homes for orphaned children, and 50% expressed the same opinion regarding homes for elderly and institutions for people abusing alcohol and drugs.

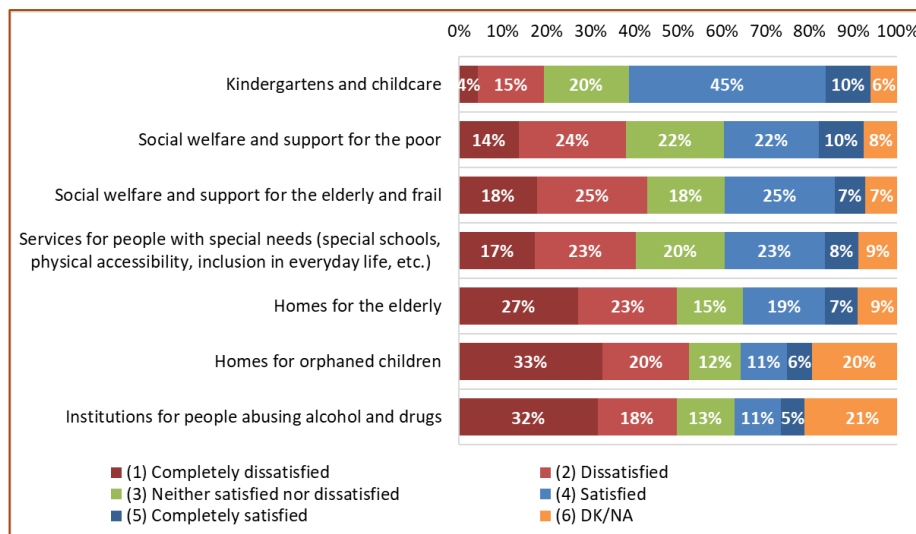


Chart 16 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of social welfare – % (2025)

The Table 6 below presents the average scores for the assessed aspects in this area, both for the latest survey and for previous years. Compared to the surveys conducted during the period 2017–2024, the total average score for this year (2.70) indicates a slightly higher average satisfaction of citizens with the services in this area compared to the results from 2017 to 2023, but lower compared to the results from 2024. Additionally, the comparative analysis of the average scores for each aspect with those from 2024 shows a decrease in citizens' satisfaction across all seven (7) assessed aspects. This points to the need for concrete measures to improve service quality and increase public trust, especially since these services are essential for promoting social justice, protecting vulnerable groups, and ensuring an inclusive and humane society.

	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Kindergartens and childcare	3.72	3.24	3.15	3.34	3.50	3.48	3.53	3.43	3.60	3.45
Social welfare and support for the poor	3.09	2.35	2.40	2.70	2.90	2.71	2.78	2.72	3.02	2.90
Social welfare and support for elderly and frail persons	3.08	2.32	2.36	2.60	2.80	2.72	2.67	2.72	3.09	2.76
Services for people with special needs	3.09	2.30	2.38	2.63	2.70	2.70	2.65	2.69	3.06	2.79
Homes for the elderly	2.80	2.15	2.25	2.47	2.60	2.52	2.46	2.40	3.06	2.52
Homes for orphaned children	2.54	1.97	1.82	2.12	2.40	2.19	2.06	2.15	2.65	2.21
Institutions for people abusing alcohol and drugs	2.65	1.96	1.89	2.23	/	2.19	2.01	2.15	2.73	2.24
Total average score	3.00	2.33	2.32	2.58	2.82	2.65	2.59	2.61	3.03	2.70

Table 6 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of social welfare – average scores by years

When asked “In your opinion, which would be the most suitable entity to deliver the aforementioned services?” (Chart 17), as in previous years, the largest percentage of respondents (48%) answered that it would be the local government, while the percentage of those who believe that it would be the central government (18%) — as the current provider — remains at the same level as last year and is lower compared to previous years. Significantly smaller percentages of respondents believe

that these services should be provided through a public-private partnership (10%), by citizens' associations (7%), or by the private sector (6%).

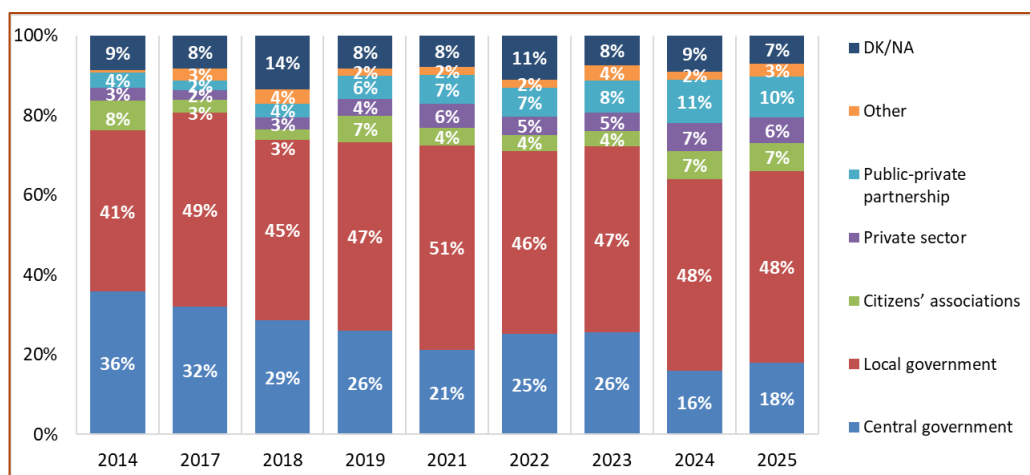


Chart 17 – Citizens' opinion on the most suitable entity to deliver services in the area of social welfare – % by years

This, yet again, confirms that the citizens continue to share the opinion that the services of importance for the local population are best provided by the local authorities. It can also be noted from the results that the citizens' awareness of alternative ways of delivering local services, such as public-private partnership, or cooperation with the private or civil sector, continues to be at a low level.

4.2.9 Environmental Protection

With respect to this local government competence, which was also the aim of the citizens' satisfaction survey, the following aspects were analyzed: 1) environmental protection and nature conservation, 2) protection from and prevention of soil pollution (pesticides, wastewater, etc.), 3) protection from and prevention of water pollution, and 4) protection from and prevention of air pollution. The total average score is 2.57. This area records the lowest average level of citizens' satisfaction among all areas covered by this survey.

The largest percentage of respondents (59%) stated that they are dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied with the protection from and prevention of air pollution, while the highest level of satisfaction (30%) is expressed regarding the protection from and prevention of water pollution (Chart 18). In all the assessed aspects in this area, the percentage of dissatisfied citizens is significantly higher than the percentage of satisfied ones.

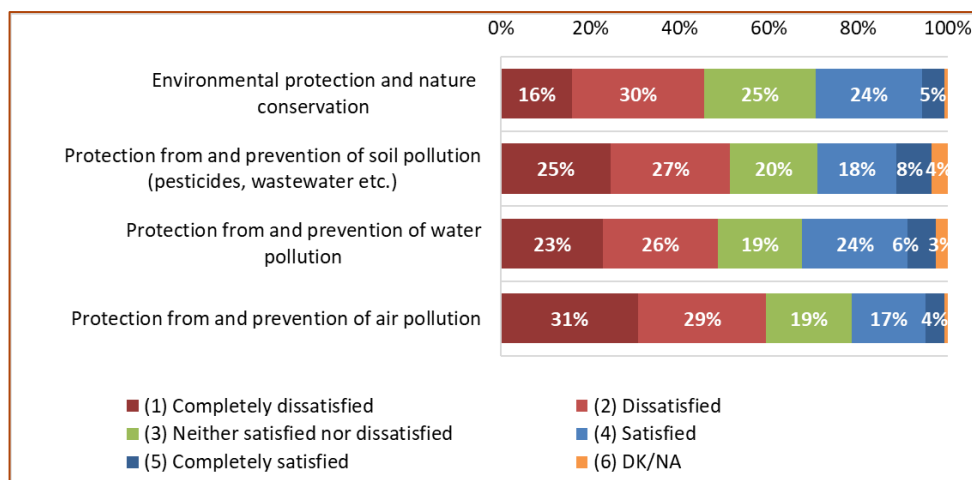


Chart 18 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of environmental protection – % (2025)

Compared to all previous years, from 2017 to 2024 (Table 7), there is a noticeable decrease both in the total average scores and in the average scores for all aspects that were assessed in terms of citizens' satisfaction in this area. As mentioned earlier, citizens expressed the lowest average level of satisfaction with the services in this area compared to all other areas covered by the survey.

	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Environmental protection and nature conservation	3.28	2.67	2.68	2.77	2.90	2.78	2.98	2.92	3.04	2.72
Protection from and prevention of soil pollution	3.06	2.49	2.47	2.56	/	2.54	2.66	2.63	2.87	2.56
Protection from and prevention of water pollution	3.30	2.56	2.61	2.83	/	2.68	2.75	2.73	3.04	2.64
Protection from and prevention of air pollution	3.18	2.37	2.14	2.55	2.50	2.38	2.61	2.61	2.84	2.34
Total average score	3.21	2.52	2.48	2.68	2.70	2.60	2.75	2.72	2.95	2.57

Table 7 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of environmental protection – average scores by years

4.2.10 Fire Protection

The overall average score for fire protection, which was the seventh municipal competence also evaluated when assessing the level of citizens' satisfaction, is 3.60. As previously stated, fire protection has the highest overall average level of citizens' satisfaction when compared to other competencies.

More than two-thirds of respondents (64%) are satisfied or completely satisfied with the services provided by municipalities in the area of fire protection, while significantly fewer (14%) stated that they are dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied with these services (Chart 21).

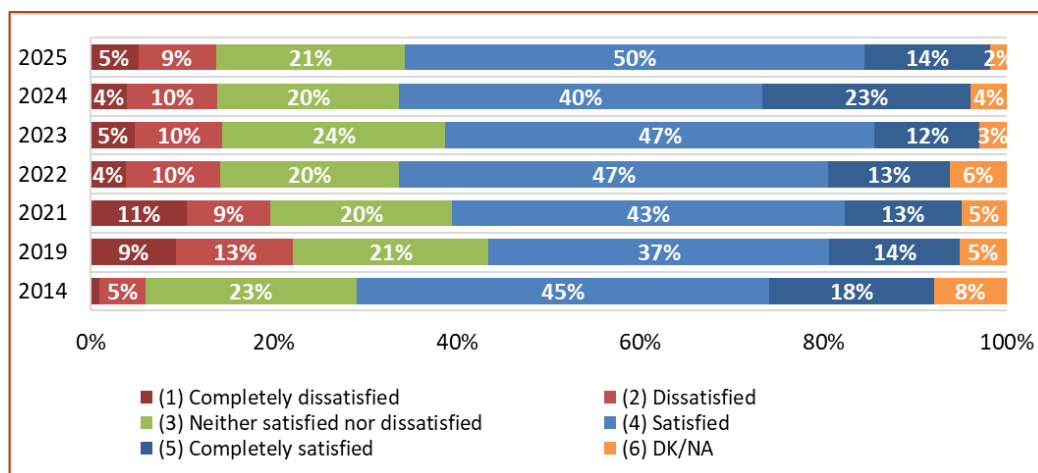


Chart 19 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of fire protection – % by years

Compared to the results of the surveys conducted in 2019, 2021, and 2023, there is an increase in citizens' satisfaction in this area, while in relation to last year, the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction—remains almost unchanged. The upward trend in the percentage of citizens who stated they are satisfied or completely satisfied with fire protection, which showed continuous growth up to 2022 (from 52% in 2019, 56% in 2021, to 60% in 2022), experienced a slight decline to 58% in 2023, after which an increase was again recorded—to 63% in 2024 and 64% this year.

4.2.11 Healthcare

The services provided by the municipalities in the area of healthcare are assessed with a total average score of 2.86.

Approximately the same percentage of respondents stated that they are satisfied or completely satisfied (36%) with services in this area, as those who are not dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied (38%), while 25% were neutral, indicating that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Chart 20).

Between 2017 and 2025, citizens' satisfaction with healthcare has shown significant fluctuations. The percentage of dissatisfied citizens varied over the years, with the lowest values recorded in 2020 and 2024 (30% each) and the highest in 2023 (45%). In 2025, dissatisfaction increased again to 38% from 30% in 2024. On the other hand, the highest satisfaction with healthcare was recorded in 2020 (46%), followed by a drop to 33% in 2023. In 2024, satisfaction rose to 45%, but in 2025 it fell again significantly to 36%.

This may indicate that the healthcare system faces challenges in providing consistently high-quality services and that citizens have varying experiences with healthcare at different times. Therefore, it is important for the system to be continuously improved to meet the needs and expectations of citizens and to reduce the level of dissatisfaction.

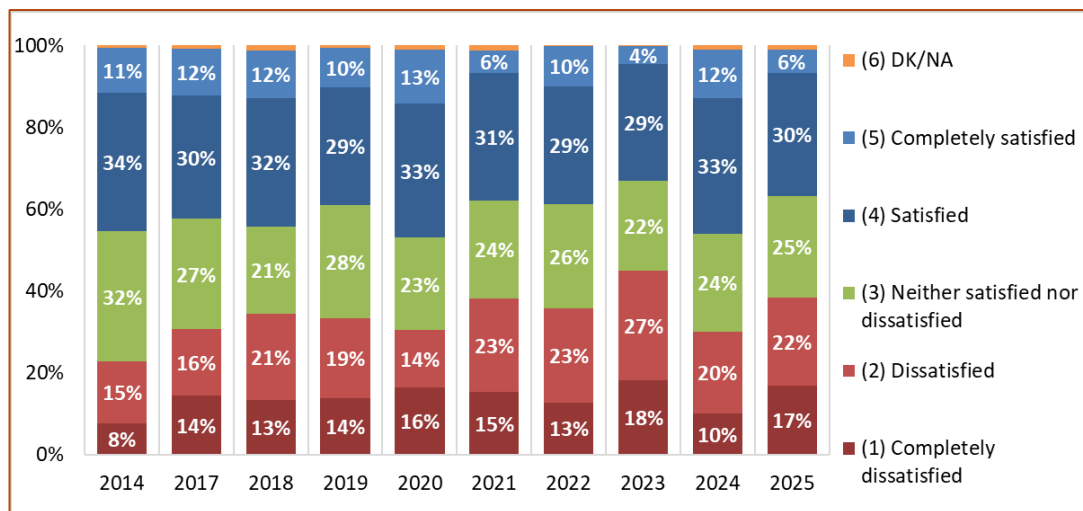


Chart 20 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of healthcare – % by years

4.2.12 Democracy, Transparency and Accountability

In terms of democracy, transparency and accountability, the following several aspects were the subject of assessment of citizens' satisfaction: 1) access to municipal information (municipal bulletin, website, local television/radio), 2) access to information about municipal services and activities, 3) access to information about the work of the municipal council, 4) access to information about central government services and activities, 5) citizen participation in strategic decision-making on local issues, 6) informing citizens on the execution of the municipal budget, 7) promoting cooperation between different ethnic communities, and 8) fighting corruption. The total average score in this area is 2.84.

The two aspects for which the largest percentage of respondents stated that they are satisfied or completely satisfied are access to municipal information (municipal bulletin, website, local TV/radio) and access to information about municipal services and activities—40% in both cases—while the highest dissatisfaction (52%) was expressed regarding fighting corruption (Chart 21).

With the exception of access to municipal information (municipal bulletin, website, local TV/radio), access to information about municipal services and activities, and access to information about the work of the municipal council, the percentage of dissatisfied citizens is higher than that of satisfied citizens for the other aspects assessed in this area. Regarding access to information about central government services and activities, citizens are evenly divided between satisfied and dissatisfied (33% in both cases).

Specifically, the respondents stated that they are completely dissatisfied or dissatisfied, primarily with fighting corruption (52%), citizen participation in strategic decision-making on local issues (45%), as well as with informing citizens on the execution of the municipal budget (42%). Additionally, over one-third of the surveyed respondents (35%) reported that they completely dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the promotion of cooperation between different ethnic communities, while one-third are completely dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the access to information about the work of the municipal council and the access to information central government services and activities.

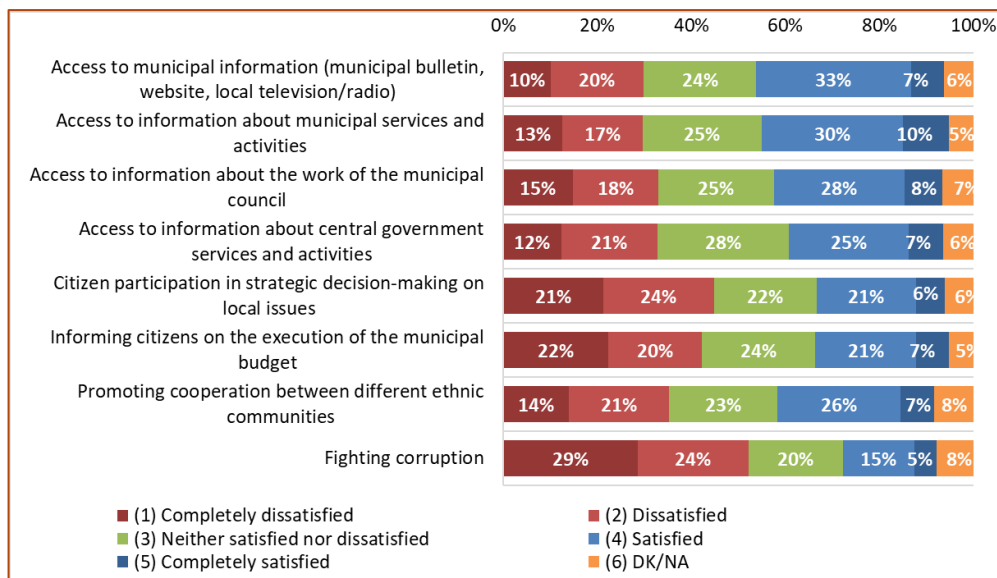


Chart 21 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipalities in the area of democracy, transparency and accountability – % (2025)

The average scores for each of the assessed aspects in this area are shown in Table 8 below, including average scores from the previous surveys. The analysis of data by year indicates a lower level of average satisfaction with all assessed aspects compared to the results of 2024 when a higher level of citizen satisfaction was observed in relation to all considered aspects in this area compared to all previous years starting from 2017.

	2014	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Access to municipal information	3.33	2.95	2.94	2.99	3.10	3.03	3.17	3.09	3.13	3.07
Access to information about municipal services and activities	3.18	2.80	2.91	2.92	/	2.89	3.08	2.95	3.15	3.08
Access to information about the work of the municipal council	3.05	2.65	2.79	2.75	/	2.74	2.93	2.85	3.00	2.95
Access to information about central government services and activities	3.21	2.67	2.81	2.84	/	2.77	2.91	2.83	3.05	2.95
Citizen participation in strategic decision-making on local issues	2.84	2.33	2.45	2.59	2.60	2.48	2.63	2.61	2.86	2.65
Informing citizens on the execution of the municipal budget	2.75	2.22	2.24	2.40	2.40	2.36	2.50	2.54	2.74	2.69
Promoting cooperation between different ethnic communities	3.20	2.63	2.55	2.74	/	2.85	2.86	2.87	3.23	2.91
Fighting corruption	2.75	2.08	2.23	2.39	/	2.16	2.37	2.31	2.80	2.39
Total average score	3.04	2.54	2.62	2.70	2.70	2.66	2.81	2.76	3.00	2.84

Table 8 – Satisfaction with services provided by the municipality in the area of democracy, transparency and accountability – average scores by year

4.2.13 Satisfaction with the Work of the Municipal Administration

The penultimate question in the section on satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality referred to the level of citizens' satisfaction with the work of the municipal administration. As part of this question, the respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the following four (4) aspects of the work of the local government administration, namely: 1) professionalism, 2) knowledge and competence, 3) politeness and helpfulness, and 4) timely provision of services/information.

According to the results of this most recent survey (Chart 22), a larger percentage of citizens continue to be generally more satisfied than dissatisfied with all assessed aspects of the municipal administration's work. Citizens are most satisfied with politeness and helpfulness (42% responded that they are satisfied or completely satisfied), while 41% stated that they are satisfied or completely satisfied with professionalism as well as knowledge and competence. The lowest level of satisfaction is observed regarding the timely provision of services/information (37% responded that they are satisfied or completely satisfied).

Although the results of the latest survey indicate that the majority of citizens remain generally more satisfied than dissatisfied with the municipal administration's work, a decline in satisfaction is noted compared to previous year, indicating a need to improve efficiency while maintaining existing positive aspects such as politeness, professionalism, and competence.

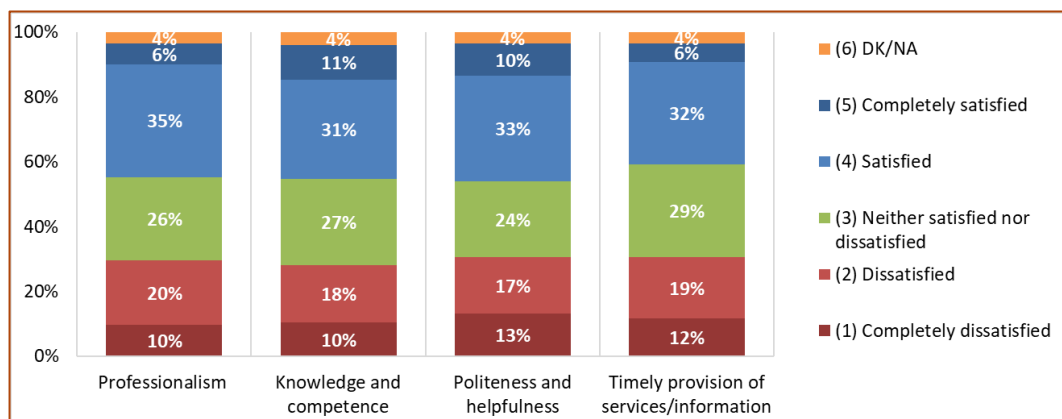


Chart 22 – Citizens' satisfaction with the work of the municipal administration – % (2025)

The last question in this section concerns neighborhood units, specifically citizens' views on whether they should have a bigger role in local government. As in previous years, the majority (73%) share this view, while 14% disagree, and 14% have no opinion on this issue (Chart 23).

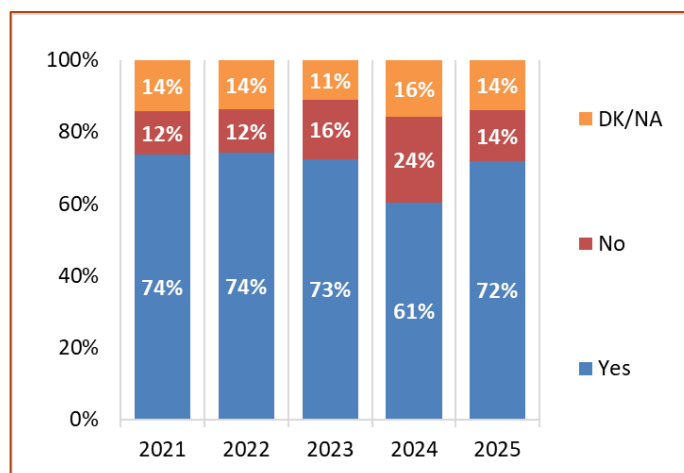


Chart 23 – Citizens' opinion on whether the neighborhood units should have a bigger role in local government – % by year

4.2.14 Minorities, Vulnerable Categories and Youth

This section of the survey aimed at assessing the citizens' satisfaction with the activities that the municipality undertakes to improve the quality of life separately for: 1) minorities, 2) vulnerable categories of citizens and 3) youth.

As in previous years, citizens expressed the highest level of dissatisfaction (45%) regarding municipal activities aimed at improving the quality of life of young people (Chart 24). Regarding the other two aspects, 37% (38% in 2021, 39% in 2022, 43% in 2023, and 31% in 2024) of citizens responded that they are completely dissatisfied and dissatisfied with municipal activities aimed at improving the quality of life of vulnerable groups, while 29% (26% in 2021, 25% in 2022, 31% in 2023, and 18% in 2024) are completely dissatisfied and dissatisfied with the activities undertaken by the municipality to improve the quality of life of minorities.

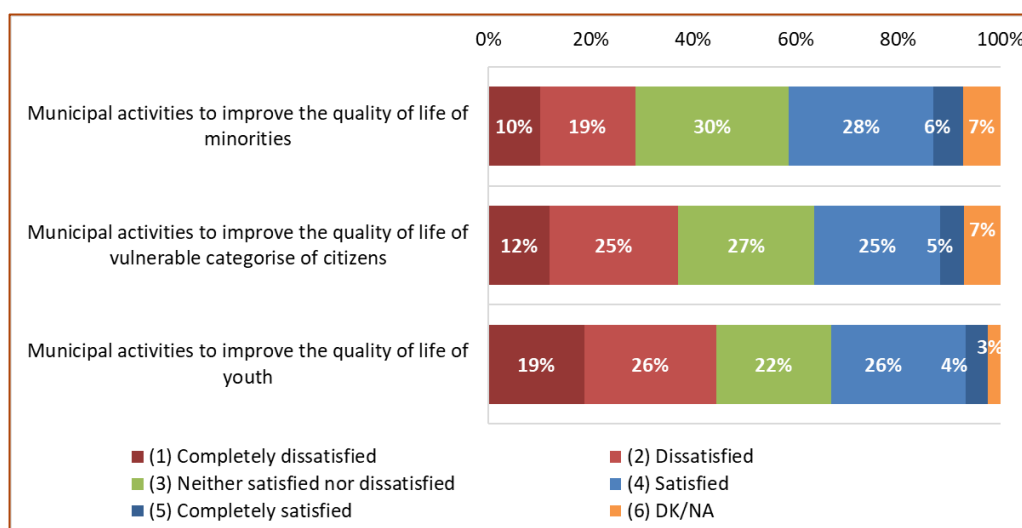


Chart 24 – Citizens' satisfaction with the activities undertaken by the municipality to improve the quality of life of: 1) minorities, 2) vulnerable categories of citizens and 3) youth – % (2025)

The analysis of the demographic variables of the respondents reveals some statistically significant differences concerning those who are dissatisfied with these three aspects.

Specifically, regarding municipal activities aimed at improving the quality of life of minorities, respondents from rural areas (33%) are significantly more dissatisfied with this aspect than those from urban areas (26%). Respondents from other ethnic groups (41%) are more dissatisfied compared to those of Albanian (28%) and Macedonian (27%) ethnic groups. Similarly, respondents from the Southwest and Polog planning regions (43% in both regions) are more dissatisfied than those from other regions, as well as the unemployed respondents (38%).

Regarding municipal activities aimed at improving the quality of life of vulnerable groups, respondents from other ethnic groups (42%) and those of Macedonian ethnic background (40%) are more dissatisfied compared to respondents of Albanian ethnic background (28%). Citizens from the Pelagonia planning region (63%) are more dissatisfied compared to those from other planning regions, as well as the unemployed respondents (53%).

Concerning municipal activities aimed at improving the quality of life of young people, higher levels of dissatisfaction are noted among respondents of Macedonian ethnic background (53%) compared to those from other ethnic groups (45%) and respondents of Albanian ethnicity (24%). Greater dissatisfaction is also seen among the youngest age group (18–24 years), respondents from the Pelagonia (68%) and East (67%) planning regions, as well as among the unemployed respondents (61%).

4.3 Corruption

The purpose of this section of the survey was to investigate the citizens' perception of the prevalence of corruption in the implementation of municipal competencies, their opinion about the municipalities' functions which are most susceptible to misuse, their experience with corruption and whether there has been an improvement with regard to the presence of corruption in the municipalities and their work compared to the period 12 months ago.

The percentage of respondents who believe that corruption is very prevalent (28%) or somewhat prevalent (37%) in municipalities in the implementation of their competencies is roughly at the same level as in 2022 and 2023, but higher than in 2024 (Chart 25). At the same time, the percentage of those who consider that corruption is not at all prevalent (4%) continues to remain significantly lower.

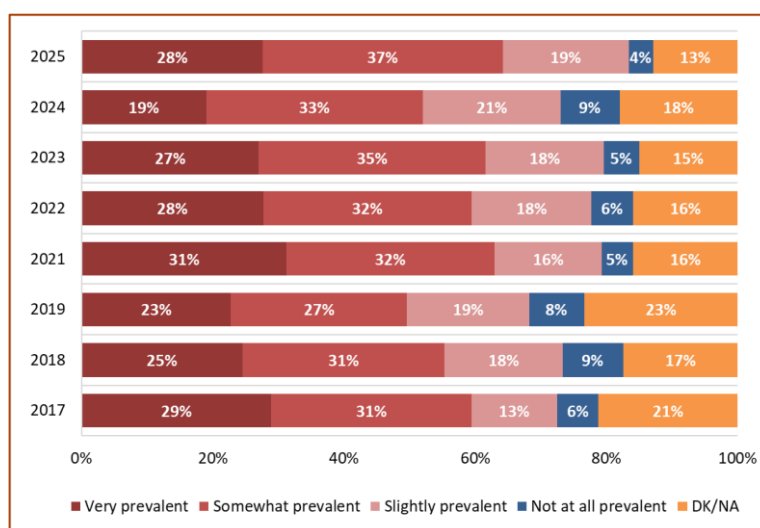


Chart 25 – Prevalence of corruption in the implementation of the municipal competencies – % by years

Those who believe that corruption is very prevalent in the work of municipalities are found more among respondents of Macedonian (33%) and other ethnic groups (32%) than among those of Albanian ethnic background (14%). Higher percentages are also noted among respondents from the Pelagonia planning region (47%) compared to other regions, as well as among the unemployed respondents (36%).

Inspectors (26%), directors of public enterprises and institutions at local level (24%), and mayors (18%) are perceived by citizens as the most susceptible to misuse of local functions (Chart 26). A comparative analysis of the results for the period 2021–2024 does not show significant changes in citizens' perceptions regarding which municipal functions are most susceptible to misuse.

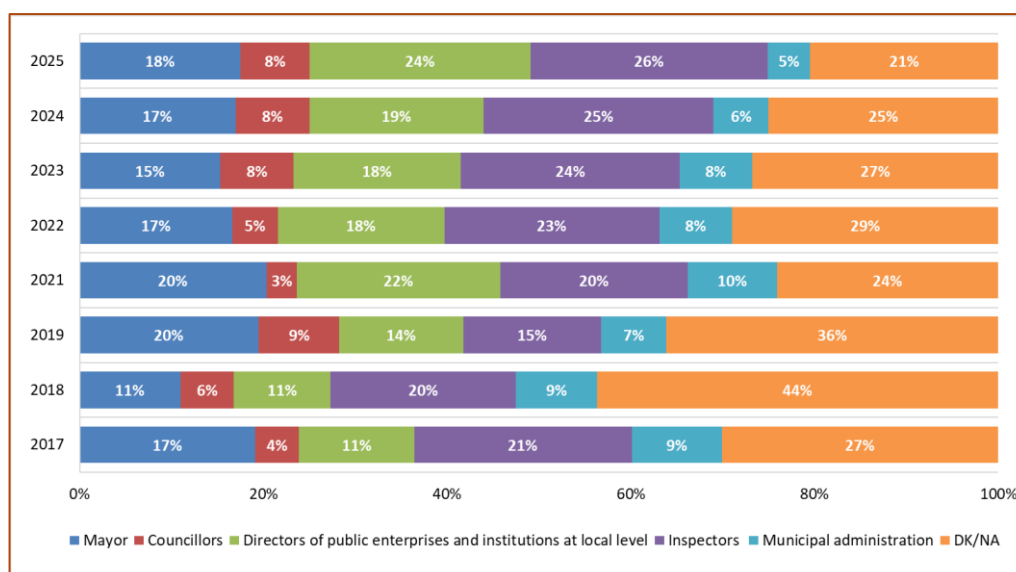


Chart 26 – Citizens' perception of the functions in the municipality that are most susceptible to misuse – % by years

As in previous years, the majority of respondents (79%) stated that they were not asked for a bribe of any kind (Chart 27), while those who confirmed that, in the past 12 months, they or someone from their immediate family had been asked for money, goods or services to have a municipal service provided or expedited were significantly fewer (11%).

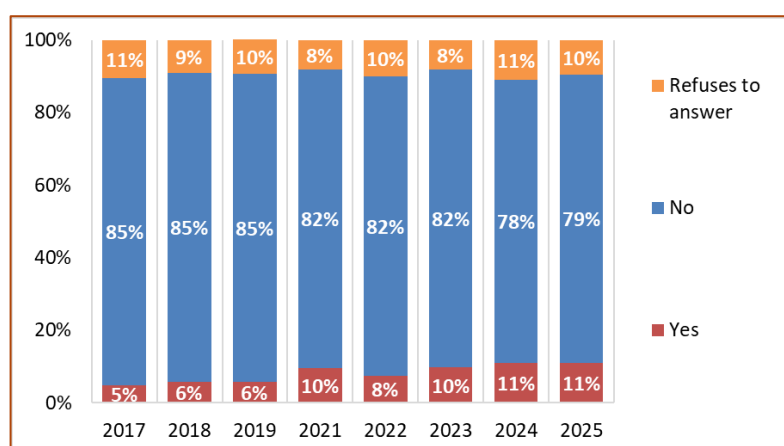


Chart 27 – Experience with corruption – % by years

Citizens' opinions on the level of corruption in municipalities today, compared to the period 12 months ago, have not changed significantly compared to previous years. Specifically, those who

believe that there is significantly less or somewhat less corruption in their municipalities today (16%) compared to 12 months ago remain at nearly the same level as before (Chart 28).

Similarly, the percentage of those who believe that there is somewhat or significantly more corruption in their municipality today is 22%. As in previous years, the largest share of respondents (45%) believes that there has been no change in the presence of corruption in municipalities compared to 12 months ago and that it remains at the same level. This, in itself, indicates that municipalities either do not take sufficient measures to fight against this phenomenon at the local level, or that the measures taken are not sufficiently effective.

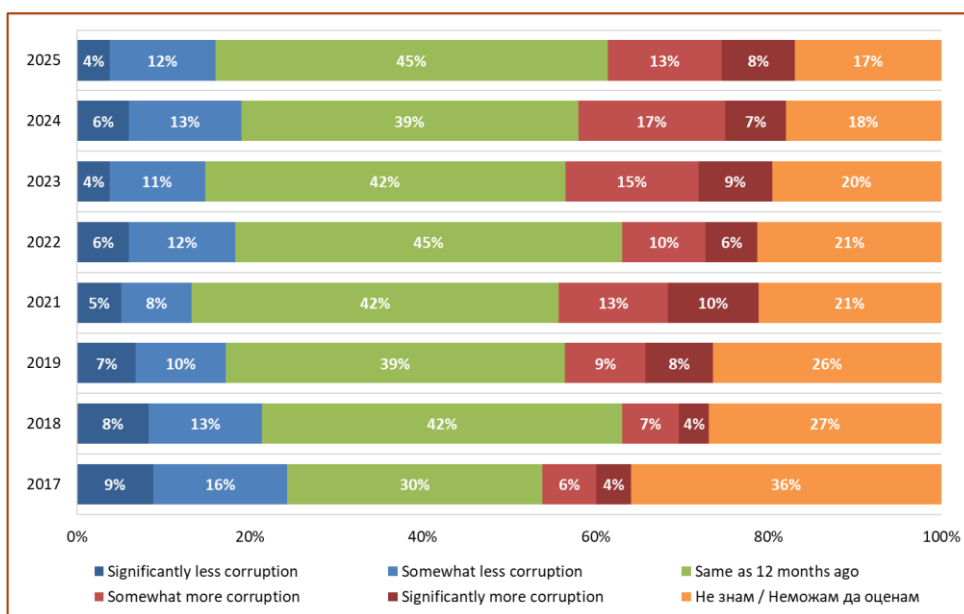


Chart 28 – Citizens' perception of the level of corruption in the municipalities compared to the period 12 months ago – % by years

4.4 Mechanisms for Citizen Participation in Decision-Making in the Municipality

The goal of this survey section was to provide information on citizens' assessment of whether the local self-government setup enables people to be involved in the decision-making process and influence the decisions at the local level. Also, this section was designed to assess the level of citizen participation in decision-making at the local level, the type of mechanisms used for participation, as well as the degree of interest of the citizens in the future use of these mechanisms. At the end of this section, respondents gave their opinion about whether women participate in the decision-making process by the local government equally as men, but also about the youth participation in the decision-making process at the local level.

Over half (51%) of respondents believe that the way the local self-government is organized either does not at all or to a very small extent enables citizens to participate in the local decision-making process (Chart 29). Those who are more positive and believe that people like them are indeed enabled to take part in local decision-making are significantly fewer than before (12%). Compared to the results from 2021–2024, the current percentage of those who believe that the municipality's organization does not at all or only minimally (to very small extent) enables citizen participation in local decision-making (51%) is lower than in 2021 (59%) and 2023 (56%), but higher than in 2022 (50%) and especially in 2024 (37%), which may indicate either fewer efforts by municipalities to

enable greater citizen participation at the local level during this year, or a lack of effective participation mechanisms.

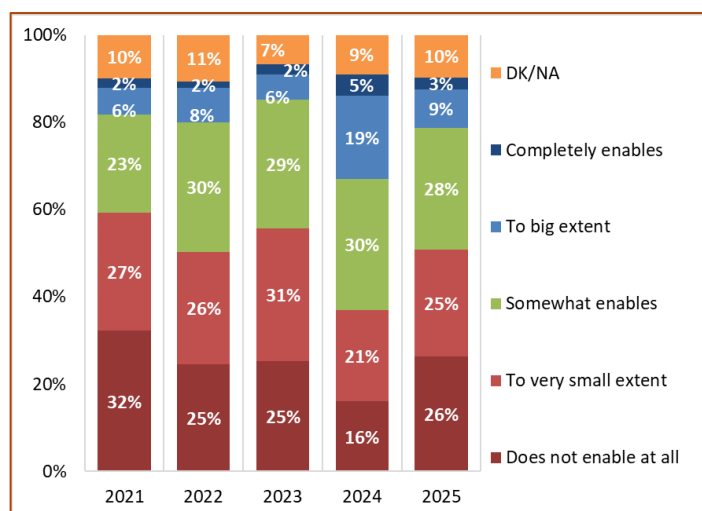


Chart 29 – Citizens' assessment of whether the way the local self-government is organized enables people to be involved in the decision-making process – % by years

Compared to last year, the latest survey results indicate certain changes in citizens' perceptions regarding whether the organization of local self-government enables people to influence decisions at the local level. Specifically, only 12% of citizens (22% in 2024) believe that their proposals are taken into account, while 26% (29% in 2024) feel that their participation is somewhat enabled through the way local self-governments are organized (Chart 30). On the other hand, compared to last year, the percentage of respondents who do not believe that the organization of local self-government enables people like them to influence local decisions has increased (from 42% to 53%). As in previous years, the latest results indicate that a large proportion of citizens continue to believe that municipalities do not enable them to influence local decision-making with their suggestions.

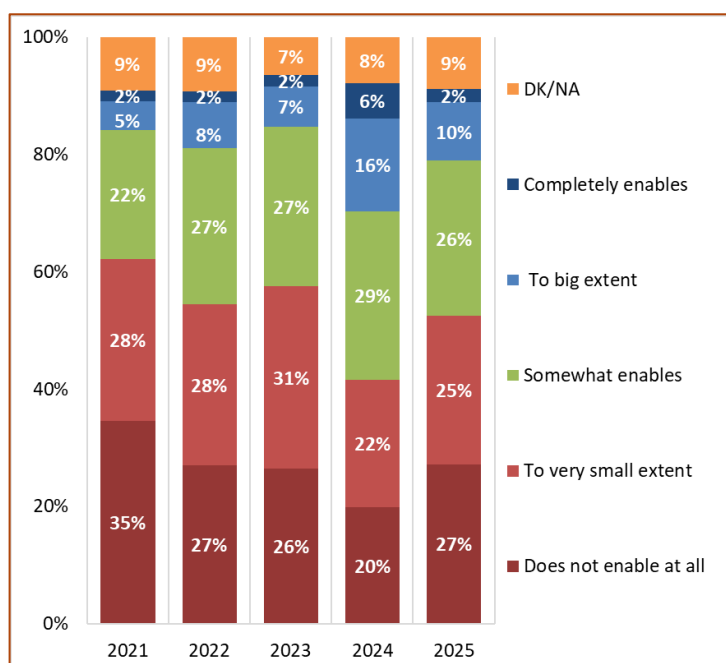


Chart 30 – Citizens' assessment of whether the way the local self-government is organized enables people to influence the decisions at the local level – % by years

Direct civic participation through municipal activities and mechanisms related to policymaking or local decision-making, as well as through submitting proposals or initiatives, continues to remain at a low level. Specifically, the majority of citizens (84% in 2021, 87% in 2022, 83% in 2023, 74% in 2024, and 79% this year) have neither participated in activities related to policymaking or local decision-making, nor submitted a proposal/initiative to address an issue within the municipal competence (Chart 31). As in previous years, a small percentage (11%) reported that they had participated in one or more municipal activities, and only 10% stated that they had submitted a proposal or initiative.

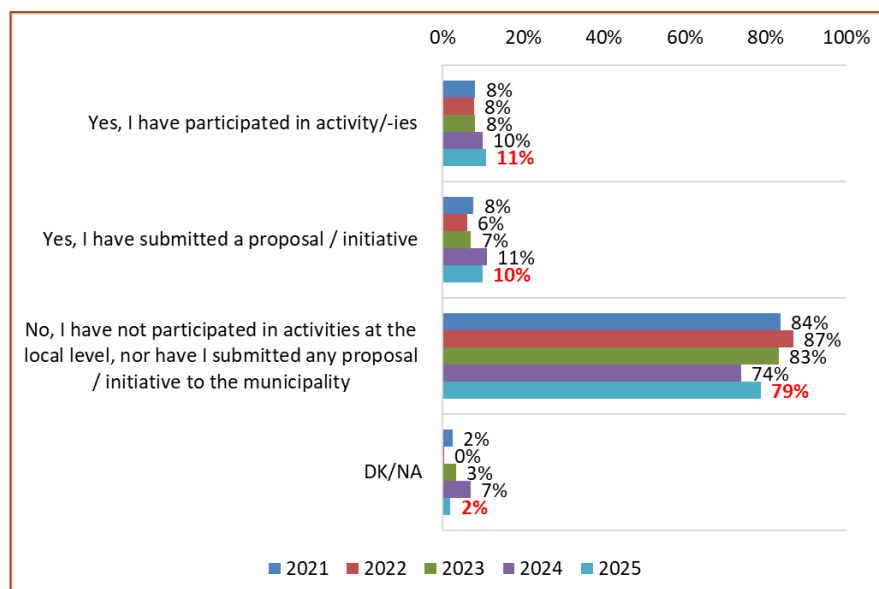


Chart 31 – Citizen participation in activities related to policies or decisions making at the local level or submitted proposals/initiatives – % by years

The largest percentage (62%) of respondents who confirmed that they had participated in activities related to policymaking or local decision-making reported that they had attended a citizens' gathering, followed by participation in a public hearing (33%), citizens' initiative (30%), public opinion surveys (26%), community forums (21%), the mayor's open days (18%), municipal council sessions (11%), or a referendum (9%) (Chart 32).

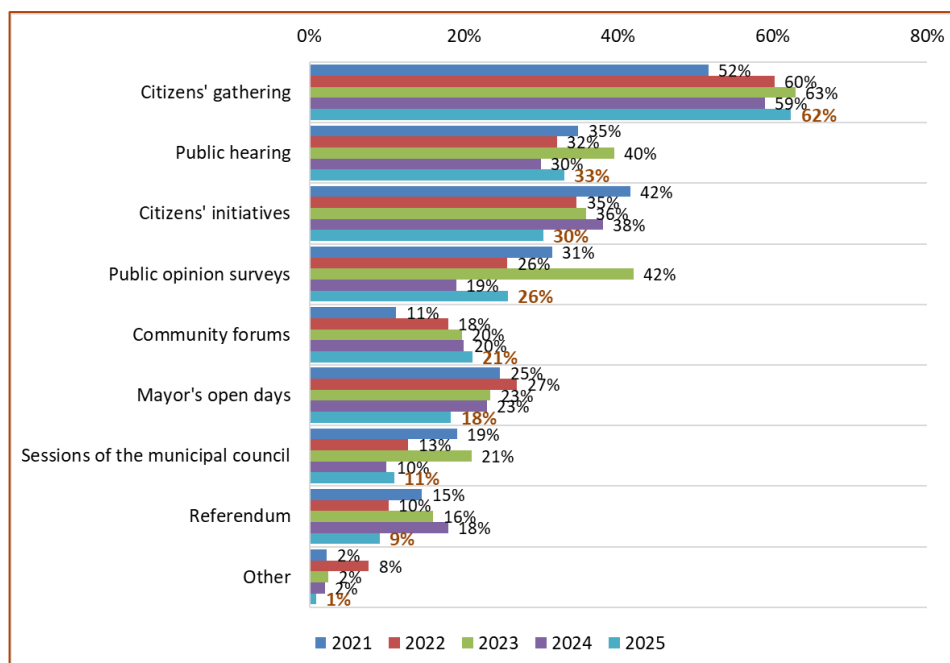


Chart 32 – Activities related to policies or decisions making at the local level in which citizens have been involved – % of n=89 respondents in 2021 and % of n=78 respondents in 2022 and % of n=81 respondents in 2023, % of n=104 in 2024 and % of n=109 respondents in 2025)

Of those who confirmed that they had submitted a proposal or initiative, the majority of these proposals or initiatives were again related to addressing public utility problems (27%), as well as to the areas of urban development and planning (17%), culture, and education (12% in both cases) (for other areas, see Chart 33).

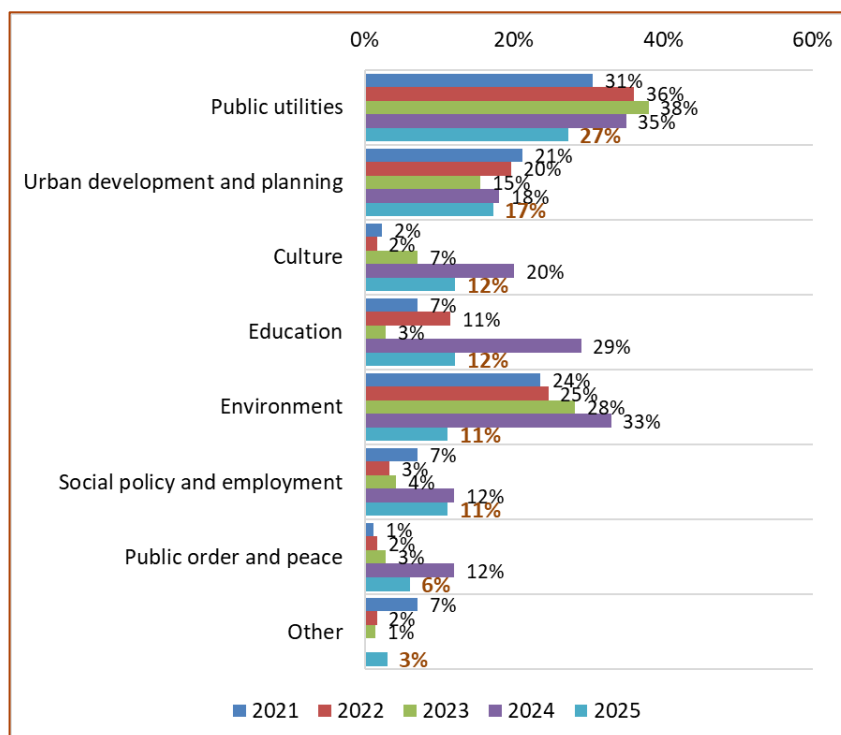


Chart 33 – Citizen proposals/initiatives by area of living – % of n=89 respondents in 2021, % of n=78 respondents in 2022 and % of n=71 respondents in 2023, % of n=130 respondents in 2024 and % of n=99 respondents in 2025

After a three-year increase in the percentage of respondents who stated that their proposals or initiatives had been accepted—from 22% in 2021, to 34% in 2022, and 42% in 2023 - this positive trend has been interrupted, with a noticeable decline to 30% in 2024 and a dramatic drop to only 17% this year (Chart 34). At the same time, the percentage of those who reported that their proposals were not accepted, after a continuous decrease from 49% in 2021 to 30% in 2022, 24% in 2023, and 27% in 2024, shows a significant increase this year, returning to a high of 42%.

Although the period from 2021 to 2023 showed an encouraging trend of greater acceptance of submitted proposals and initiatives, the sharp decline in this percentage over the past two years—along with the considerable rise in the number of respondents whose proposals were not accepted—points to a potential crisis of trust or functionality in participatory processes. Such fluctuations may indicate that support for civic participation is not stable but rather dependent on short-term factors or political contexts, which undermines the consistency and long-term effectiveness of participation mechanisms.

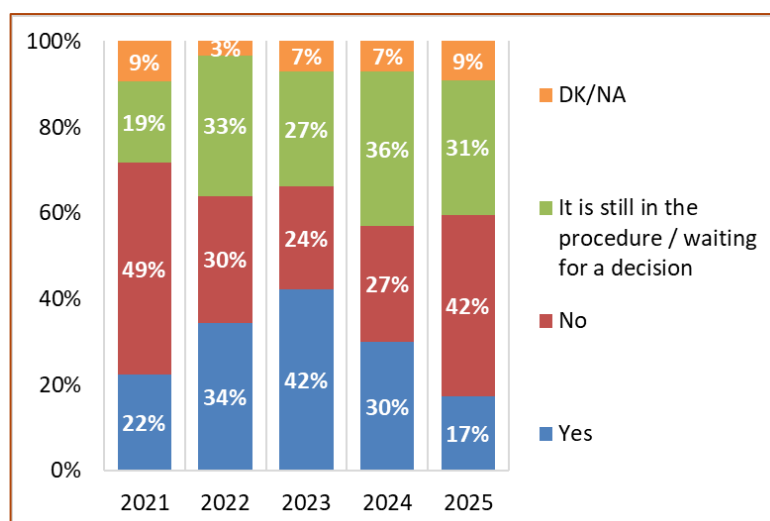


Chart 34 – Status of citizen proposals/initiatives – % of n=89 respondents in 2021 and % of n=78 respondents in 2022 and % of n=71 respondents in 2023, % of n=130 respondents in 2024 and % of n=99 respondents in 2025

As for the reasons why citizens do not participate in the decision-making process at the local level, there have been no major changes. As before, slightly more than one quarter (26%) of respondents do not have a specific reason why they have neither taken part in activities related to policymaking or decision-making at the local level, nor submitted a proposal/initiative to address an issue within the municipality's competence (Chart 35). On the other hand, 20% of respondents remain skeptical that their participation could make any difference, while 15% said they do not want get personally involved, and another 15% said they do not have time. According to 13% of respondents, the municipality would not be interested in their participation.

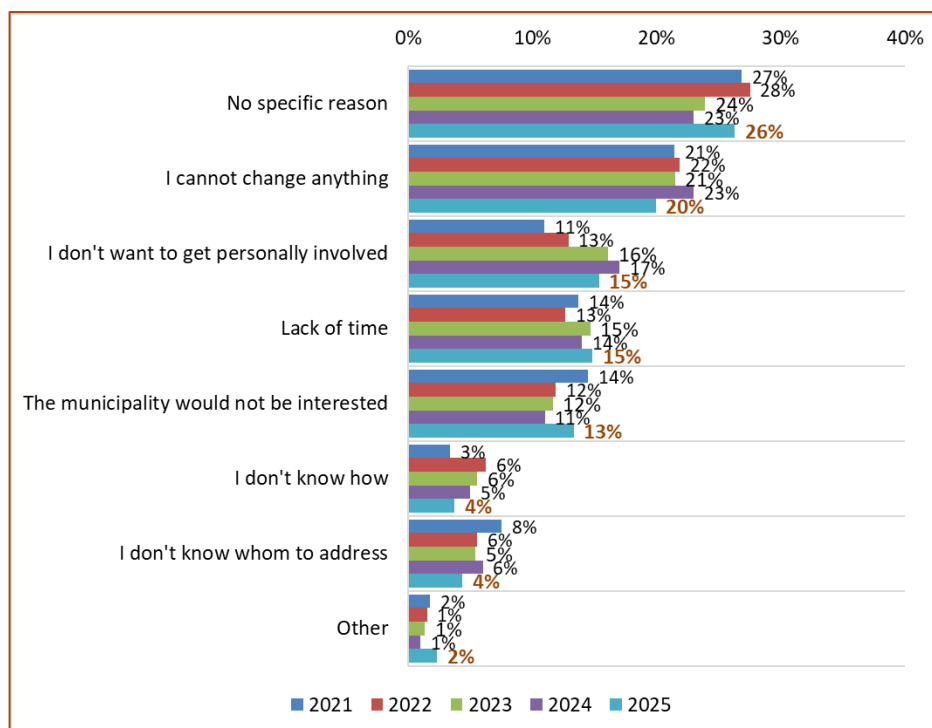


Chart 35 – Reasons for not participating in the decision-making process at the local level – % by years

The results of this latest survey once again confirm that there is still low interest among citizens in participating in the local decision-making process through the available mechanisms and activities organized by the municipalities. More than half of the respondents (56%) stated that they would not participate in municipal events or activities where certain issues within the municipal competence would be discussed or decided upon, compared to 32% of respondents who answered affirmatively to this question (Chart 36). Compared to previous years, the continuous downward trend in interest for citizens' participation at the local level observed from 2017 to 2022—after a slight improvement from 33% in 2022 to 35% in 2023, and then to 36% last year—shows a slight decline again to 32% this year. The conclusion remains that a large portion of citizens are generally uninterested in active involvement at the local level.

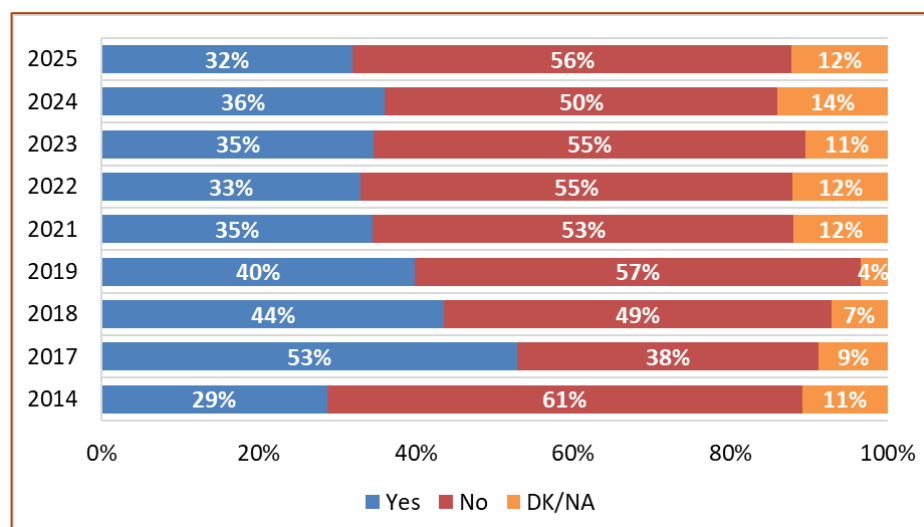


Chart 36 – Citizens' interest in participating in decision-making at the local level – % by years

Of the respondents who confirmed that they would participate in events and activities organized by the municipality (Chart 37), the largest percentage stated that they would participate in a citizens' gathering (64%), citizens' initiative (49%), public hearing (42%), mayor's open day (41%), public opinion surveys (34%), sessions of the municipal council (32%) and referendum (28%). The comparative analysis with last year's data indicates a trend toward increased interest in citizens' participation through most of the available mechanisms.

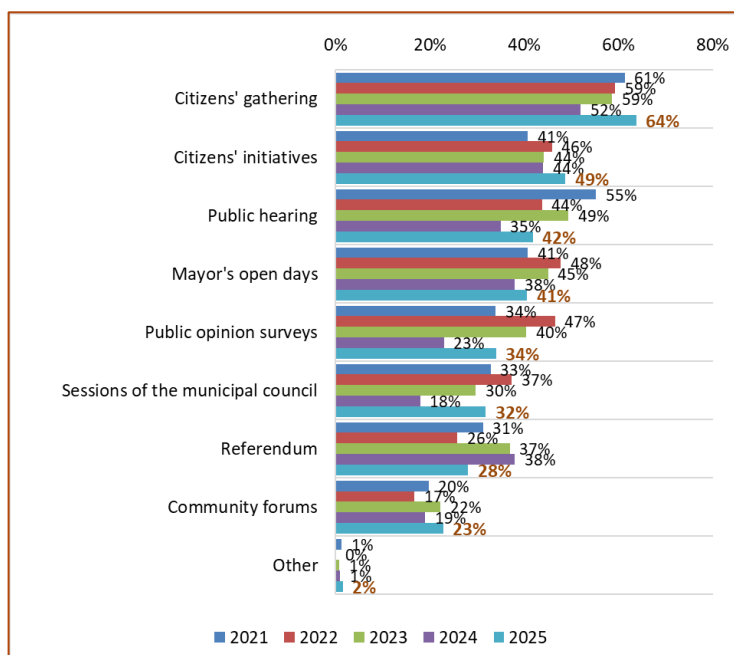


Chart 37 – Activities in which the citizens would participate at the local level – % by years

Fewer surveyed citizens (44%) compared to last year (49%) (Chart 38), but the same as in 2023, agree that women participate equally as men in the local government's decision-making process. Those who do not share this opinion (40%) are more than in 2022 (36%), fewer than in 2023 (44%), but at the same level as last year (41%). Compared to previous years, this year's results are more negative than those from 2018, 2020, and 2022, at a similar level to 2019 and 2021, and more positive than in 2017. The results indicate stagnation in perceptions of gender equality in local decision-making. Although there has been no significant decline compared to 2023 and 2024, it is noticeable that support for equal participation of women and men remains relatively low (44%) and without a positive trend. At the same time, the percentage of citizens who disagree with this view remains high, suggesting that perceptions of gender equality in local governance have not shown progress in recent years.

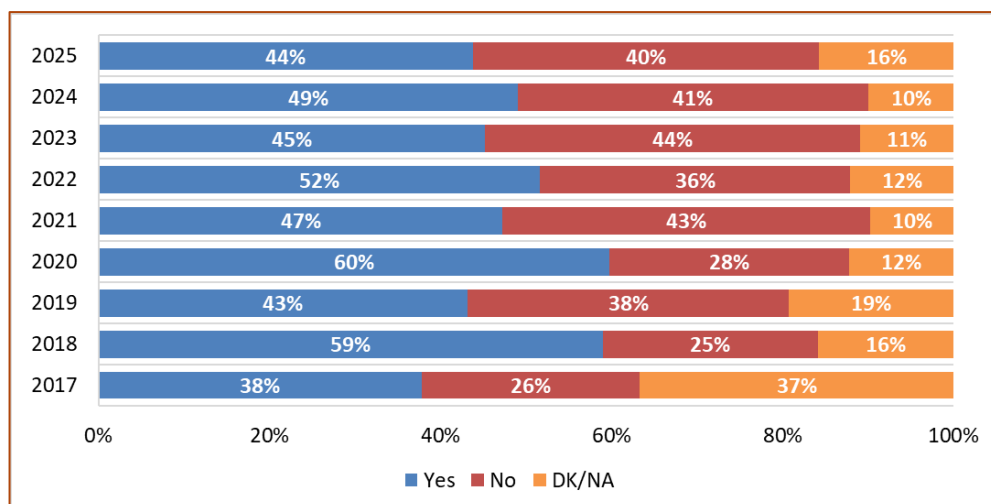


Chart 38 – Citizens' opinion on whether women participate in the decision-making process by the local government equally as men – % by years

The results for this question, when analyzed by the demographic characteristics of the respondents, indicate certain significant differences in their opinions. Namely, women (45%) are more likely than men (36%) to disagree that women participate equally as men in the decision-making processes of local government. Differences are also observed in relation to the respondents' ethnic background. Thus, respondents of Albanian (43%) and those of Macedonian ethnicity (40%) disagree with this statement more than respondents from other ethnic groups (35%) living in the country.

The analysis of data regarding youth participation in local-level decision-making shows that in 2025 there has been a significant decline in the perception that young people are involved in such processes. Only 27% of respondents answered "Yes" which is the lowest level in the past five years and represents a sharp decrease of 16 percentage points compared to 2024 (43%). At the same time, the percentage of those who believe that young people do not participate is 56%, which is again close to the high levels recorded in 2021 and 2022 (58% and 57%), following the brief improvement seen in 2024 (47%).

The latest survey indicates a deterioration in the perception of youth participation in local decision-making processes, representing a regression compared to the previous year and a potential signal of the need for greater efforts toward youth inclusion and awareness-raising.

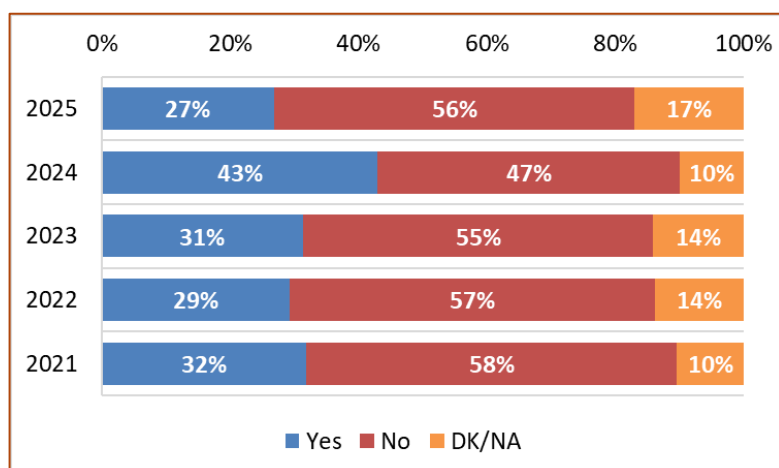


Chart 39 – Citizens' opinion on whether youth participate in the decision-making process by the local government – % by years

The analysis by demographic variables indicates that respondents of Macedonian (62%) and other ethnic groups (58%) disagree with this question significantly more than those of Albanian ethnicity (42%). Likewise, the youngest respondents in the sample, aged 18–24 (62%), are more likely than older respondents to disagree with the view that young people participate in the local government’s decision-making process.

4.5 Information about Municipal Operation and Services

The goal of this section of the survey was to obtain information on the citizens’ level of awareness about the municipal operation according to their self-assessed level of awareness, but also about the sources of information regarding municipal operations and services.

The results of this survey on citizens’ awareness of municipal operation indicate an even split in self-assessed levels of information. Specifically, the percentage of informed citizens (33%) is identical to those with neutral views (33%), which may point to insufficient transparency, ineffective communication channels, or a lack of interest among citizens. Additionally, nearly the same proportion (34%) of citizens reported that they are not informed, representing a significant portion of the population (Chart 40). Compared to previous years, no significant differences are observed in citizens’ awareness of municipal operation. Since higher levels of awareness are crucial for increasing trust, transparency, and active citizen participation at the local level, it is important to work on improving the accessibility and clarity of information provided by municipalities, developing more inclusive and diverse communication channels, and adopting a more proactive approach in communicating with citizens to enhance their involvement in local governance processes.

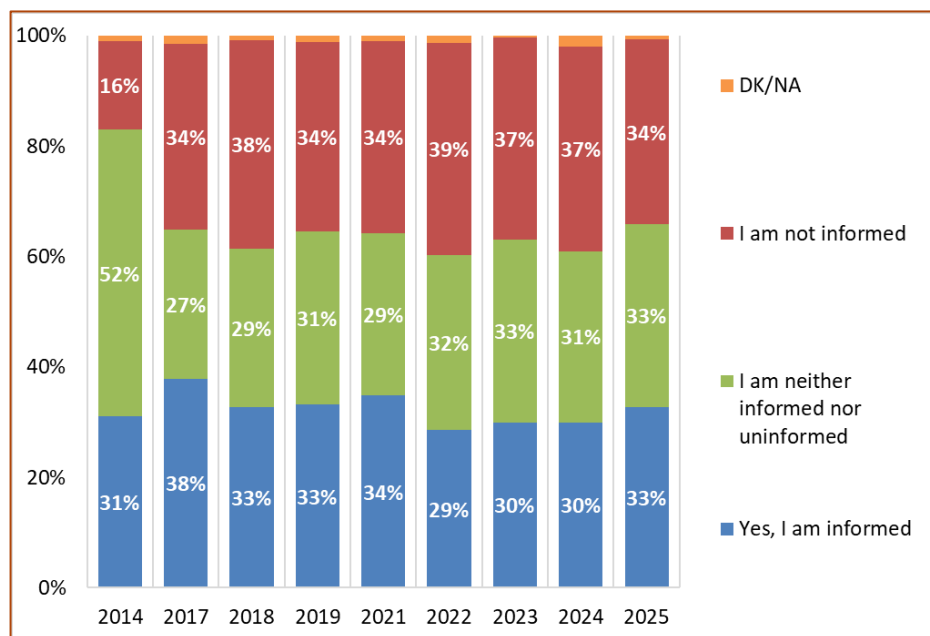


Chart 40 – Citizens’ information about municipal operation and services – % by years

Local media continue to be the main source of information about municipal operations and services for nearly half of the respondents—48% (Chart 41). Other sources mentioned include the municipal website (34%), public debates and gatherings (10%), as well as friends, colleagues, family, and relatives (9%). The trend of low levels of information from social media/Facebook, the municipal bulletin, municipal bulletin boards, and the municipal newspaper continues.

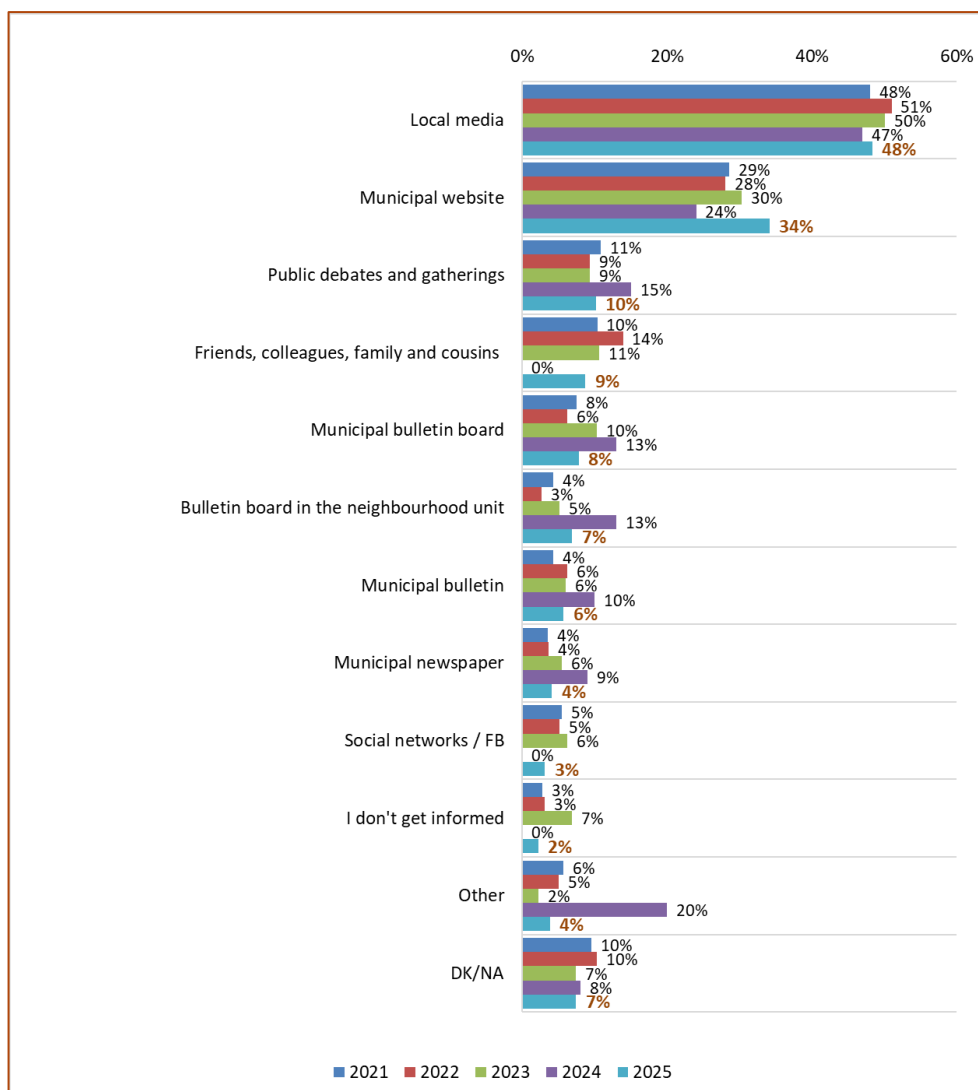


Chart 41 – Sources of information about municipal operation and services – % by years

4.6 E-services in the Municipality

This section of the survey is intended to provide information on the citizens' awareness and knowledge about e-services, as well as their preferences about these types of service.

The low level of citizens' awareness and knowledge about e-services in the municipality continues this year as well.

The largest percentage of respondents (58%) do not know if their municipality provides e-services (Chart 42), 29% answered that their municipality does not provide e-services, and only 13% answered affirmatively. Compared to the results from 2024, there is a lower level of citizen awareness of municipal e-services.

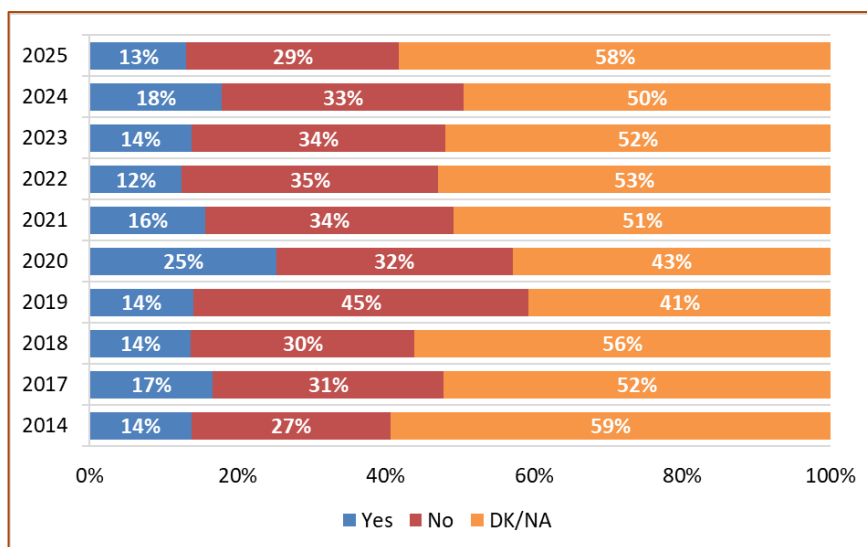


Chart 42 – Awareness of e-services in the municipality – % by years

Respondents who answered affirmatively that their municipality provides e-services reported the following services: personal documents (11%), municipal website/information about municipal activities (11%), urban planning (10%), cadaster and geodesic services (8%), and building permits/construction authorizations (7%) (Chart 43).

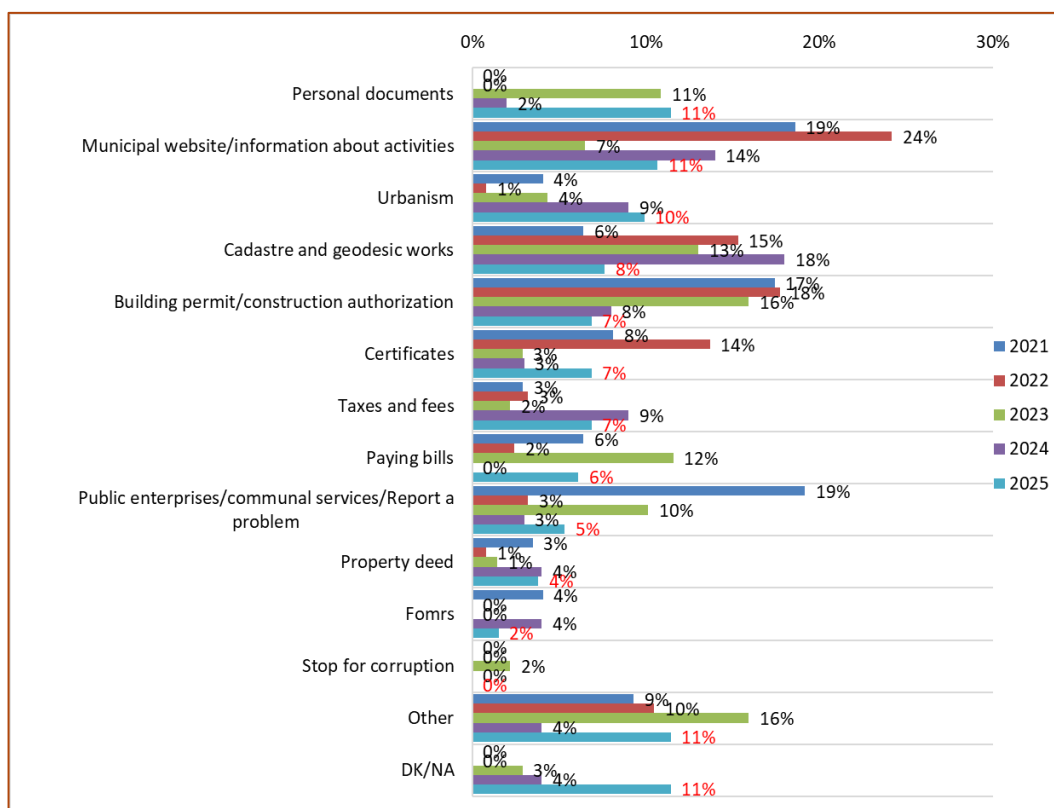


Chart 43 – Available e-services in the municipality – % (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025)

The majority (66%) of respondents who confirmed that their municipality provides e-services do not use them, while 27% stated that they do use them (Chart 44). Compared to previous years, a lower level of e-service usage by respondents is observed.

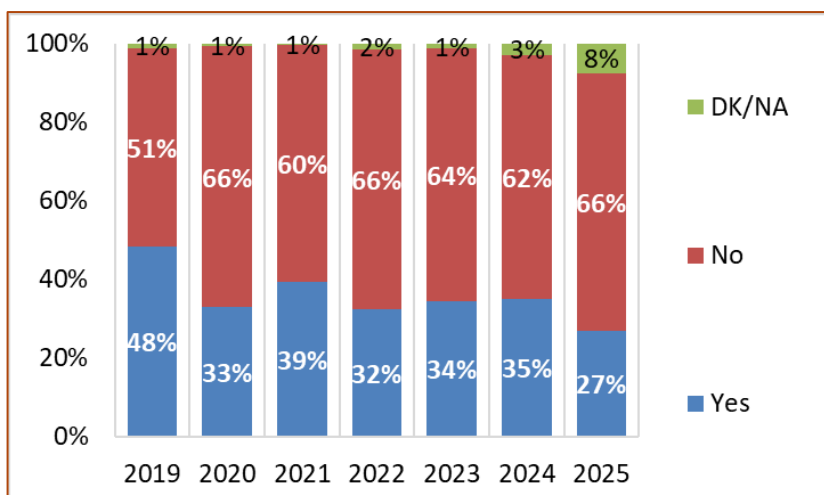


Chart 44 – Use of e-services in the municipality – % by years

Among the most used e-services, as reported by respondents who confirmed that they personally use municipal e-services, are building permits/construction authorization (19%), obtaining personal documents (19%), bill payments (10%), and obtaining certificates (8%) (Chart 42).

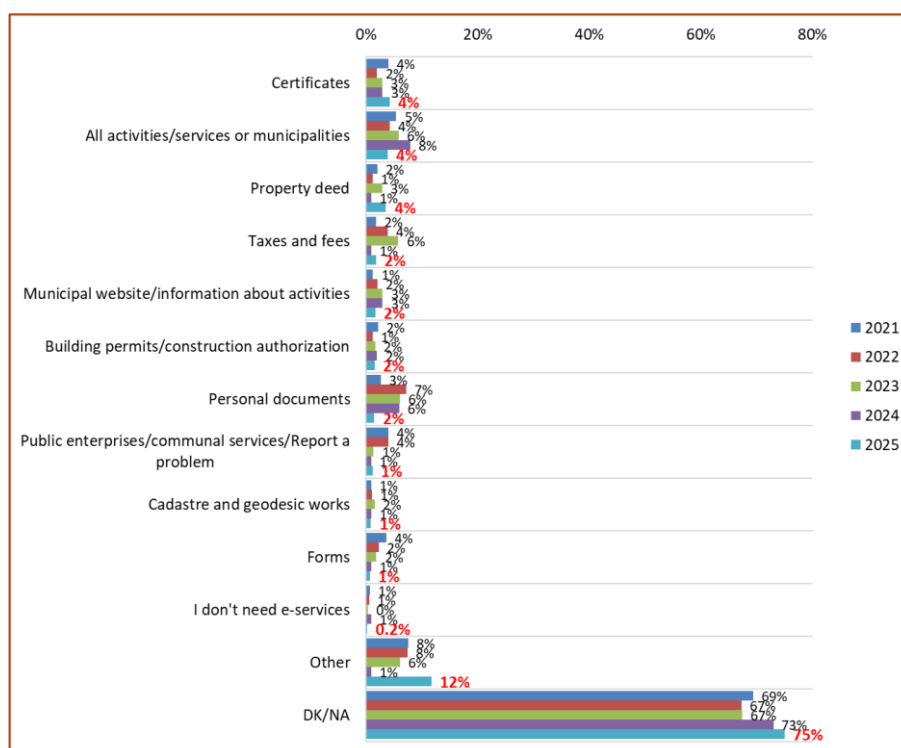


Chart 45 – Used e-services in the municipality– % (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025)

Despite increased digitalization, 75% of citizens still do not have a clear idea of what e-services they expect from municipalities, indicating a potential gap between supply and expectations. Among those who do have an idea about these types of services, the largest percentage (4%) indicated that they would like them to include certificates, all municipal activities/services, as well as property deeds, and taxes and fees (2%) (other responses are shown in Chart 46).

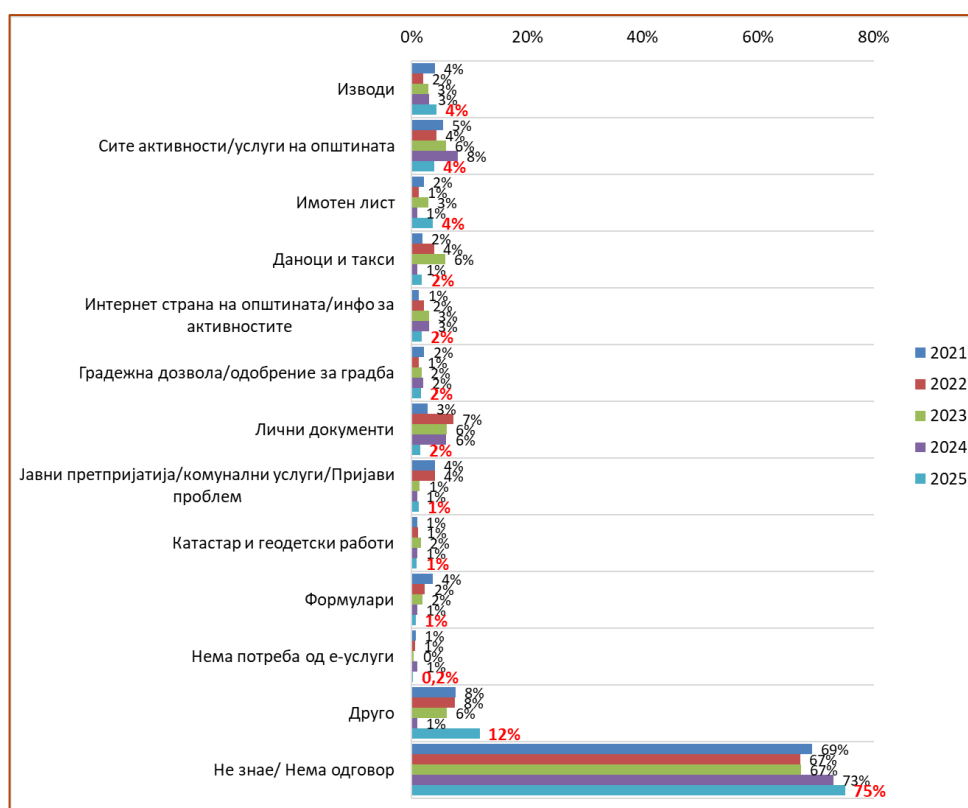


Chart 46 – Citizens' preferences about e-services in the municipality – % (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025)

4.7 Non-governmental Organizations – Citizens' Associations

The focus of this section of the survey was obtaining information about the level of citizens' familiarity with non-governmental organizations in their municipalities, the level of their motivation to get involved in the activities of these organizations, but also about how familiar they are with the cooperation of the non-governmental sector with the local self-government. This part was also used to get a clearer picture of citizens' attitudes toward citizens' associations.

The results of the latest survey do not indicate any significant changes in the level of self-assessed citizen awareness of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in their municipalities. Specifically, citizens' awareness of NGOs in their municipalities remains at nearly the same level as in previous years—only a small percentage (22%) of respondents stated that they are familiar with them, while almost half (47%) reported that they are not familiar (Chart 47).

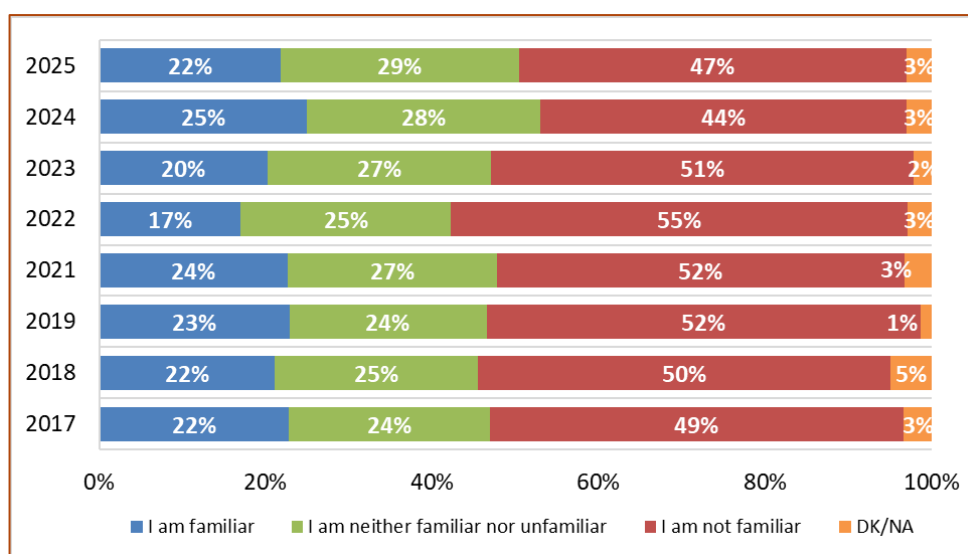


Chart 47 – Citizens' familiarity with non-governmental organizations in their municipalities – % by years

The situation is similar regarding motivation to participate in activities of citizens' associations. Unlike in 2020 and 2021, when motivation levels were at their highest, this year—as in the previous few years—a larger share of respondents stated that they are not motivated (47%), while a significantly smaller percentage (22%) reported that they are motivated (Chart 47).

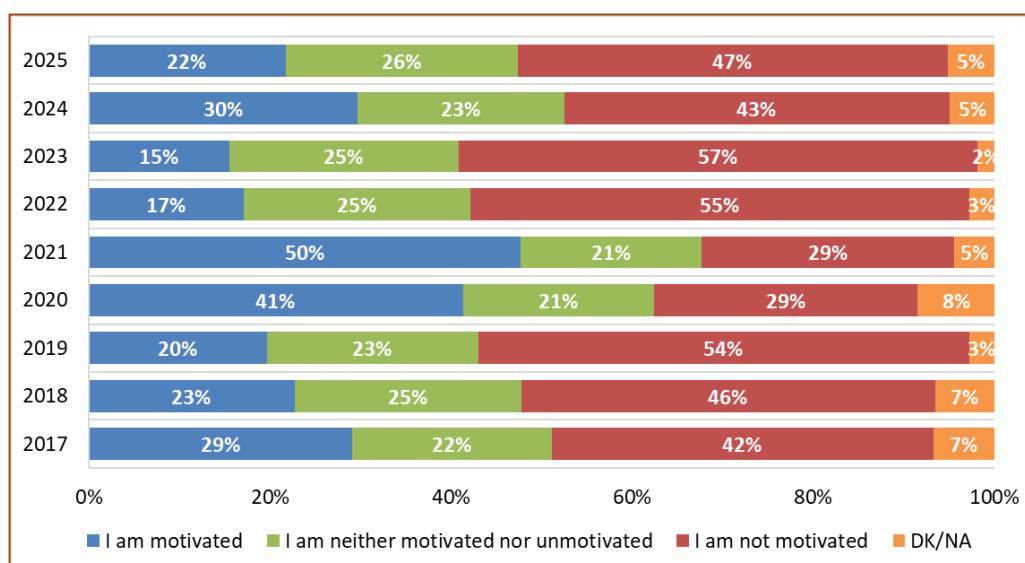


Chart 48 – Citizens' motivation to get involved in activities of non-governmental organizations in their municipalities – % by years

The analysis of citizens' motivation to participate in activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in their municipalities, based on demographic characteristics, reveals some significant differences. While gender and place of living do not influence citizens' motivation to engage with NGOs, ethnicity does have an impact. Specifically, respondents of Macedonian ethnicity (50%) and other ethnic groups living in the country (57%) are more unmotivated compared to ethnic Albanians (37%). The youngest respondents, aged 18–24 (30%), and those aged 36–44 (31%), respondents with higher education (29%) are more motivated than older individuals and those with lower levels of education. This clearly indicates that interest in this type of engagement decreases with age but increases with higher education levels. Analyzed by statistical regions, citizens from the East region

are the most motivated to participate in NGO activities in their municipalities (34%), while those from the Vardar (68%) and Pelagonia (65%) regions are the least motivated.

Regarding citizens' perception of whether there is cooperation between the municipality and the non-governmental sector, the percentage of those who believe this, after a three-year increase (from 28% in 2022, 35% in 2023, to 40% in 2024), has again declined to 31%. Those who do not think this is the case (29%) remain at roughly the same level as last year (28%) (Chart 49). However, as before, a significant proportion (40%) of respondents do not know whether such cooperation exists, which again highlights the need for better information dissemination by both NGOs and municipalities.

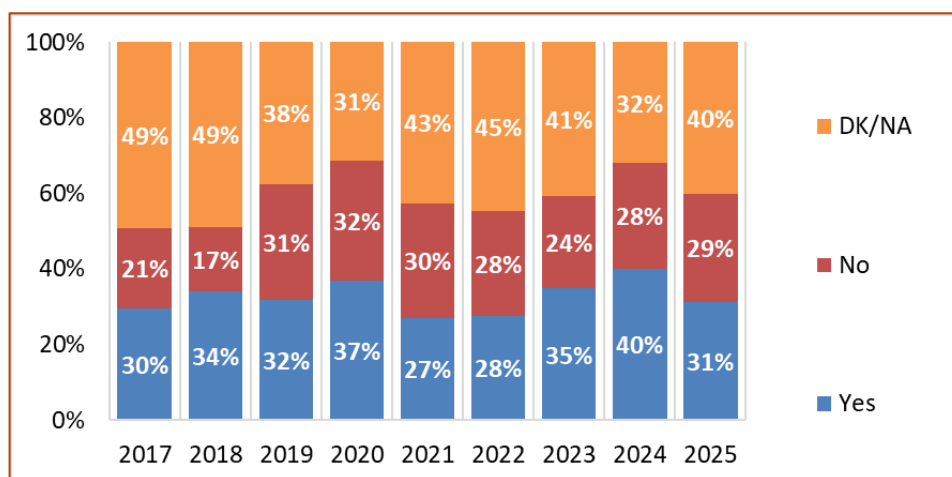


Chart 49 – Is there cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the municipalities? – % by years

The aim of the survey's last section was to examine the extent to which the respondents agreed with five (5) statements or attitudes related to the work of citizens' associations.

As in the previous two (2) surveys, this year the largest percentage of respondents (33% in 2021, 34% in 2022, 41% in 2023, 51% in 2024, and 43% this year) share the view (mostly or completely agree) that cooperation between citizens' associations/NGOs and the municipality will improve the services offered by the municipality (Chart 50). Unlike in 2021, when this was the only statement for which the majority of respondents agreed rather than disagreed, the results of the latest survey show that this is the case for all five (5) statements. This may indicate that citizens still perceive civic organizations as potential partners for local authorities, capable of acting according to citizens' priorities, which is at the core of their purpose.

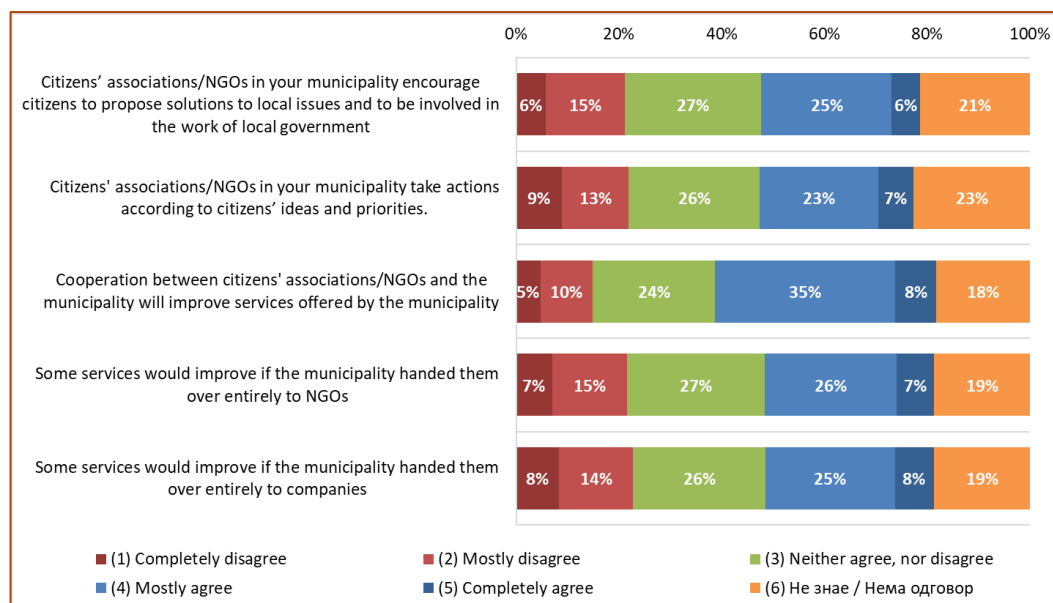


Chart 50 – Degree of citizens' agreement with statements related to cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the private sector with municipalities – % (2025)

However, the relatively low percentages of respondents agreeing with these statements (ranging from 30% to 40%) are likely a reflection of a lower level of awareness and knowledge among citizens about the opportunities offered by cooperation between NGOs, the private sector, and municipalities in improving local services.

Specifically, 30% share the view that citizens' associations/NGOs in their municipality take actions according to citizens' priorities, while 22% disagree. Similarly, regarding the statement, "Citizens' associations/NGOs in the municipality encourage citizens to propose solutions to local issues and to be involved in the work of local government" 31% agree, but 21% do not. These figures are likely a result of a lack of trust that citizens' associations represent citizens and work to fulfill their priorities.

At the same time, a larger share of citizens (33%) believe that some services would improve if the municipality fully handed them over or delegated them to NGOs, compared to 22% who do not share this view. A similar perception is observed regarding whether some services would improve if entirely delegated/handed over to companies—33% of respondents agree, while 23% do not believe that transferring certain services to companies would enhance their quality.

5 Demographic Data

Table 9 in continuation includes demographic data of the respondents who participated in this survey including gender, age, ethnicity, place of living, region, education, employment status and monthly household income.

Demographic variables	Categories of demographic variables	N.	%
		1000	100,0%
Gender	Male	510	51,0%
	Female	490	49,0%
Place of living	Urban	625	62,5%
	Rural	375	37,5%
Ethnicity ²	Macedonian	633	63,3%
	Albanian	257	25,7%
	Other	110	11,0%
Age category	18-24	101	10,1%
	25-34	164	16,4%
	35-44	175	17,5%
	45-54	172	17,2%
	55-64	172	17,2%
	65 and older	216	21,6%
Statistical region	Vardar	79	7,9%
	East	90	9,0%
	Southwest	80	8,0%
	Southeast	100	10,0%
	Pelagonia	120	12,0%
	Polog	130	13,0%
	Northeast	81	8,1%
Education	Skopje	320	32,0%
	Incomplete primary education	28	2,8%
	Primary education	123	12,3%
	Secondary education	514	51,4%
	Post-secondary non-university education	51	5,1%
	Higher education (university)	249	24,9%
	Postgraduate studies (Masters or PhD)	31	3,1%
Employment status	Refuses to answer	4	0,4%
	Employed in the public sector	209	20,9%
	Employed in the private sector	334	33,4%
	Employed in the NGO sector	12	1,2%

² The part of the sample referring to ethnicity was designed based on data from the 2021 Census for the total resident population, excluding the people for whom the data were taken from administrative sources.

Demographic variables	Categories of demographic variables	N.	%
		1000	100,0%
	Farmer	25	2,5%
	Housewife	56	5,6%
	Retired	217	21,7%
	Pupil, student	67	6,7%
	Unemployed	76	7,6%
	Other	0	0,0%
	Refuses to answer	4	0,4%
Household's total average monthly income	Up to MKD 9,000	8	0,8%
	From MKD 9,001 to MKD 15,000	6	0,6%
	From MKD 15,001 to MKD 21,000	40	4,0%
	From MKD 21,001 to MKD 27,000	77	7,7%
	From MKD 27,001 to MKD 35,000	65	6,5%
	From MKD 35,001 to MKD 41,000	71	7,1%
	Over MKD 41,000	499	49,9%
	Refuses to answer	234	23,4%

Table 9 – Demographic data