

# PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY REPORT ON CITIZENS' SATISFACTION FROM LOCAL SERVICES

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## 1. Introduction and objectives of the research

The public opinion survey on citizens' satisfaction with local services was primarily aimed at providing current data on the degree of citizen satisfaction with local services that are primarily provided by municipalities in the country. Through this, the secondary objective was to obtain comprehensive information on the citizens' satisfaction with the functioning of the decentralized system of local self-government in the Republic of North Macedonia.

There is municipal local self-government in our country. With the Law on Territorial organization of local self-government in the Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, local self-government in the country is organized in 80 municipalities and the City of Skopje, as a separate unit of local self-government. 34 local self-government units are based in the city areas and the remaining 46 are based in the village areas. Almost all municipalities are established for more populated areas. Municipalities carry out their responsibilities through authorities elected directly by citizens for a period of four years. The municipal authorities are: the council and the mayor and the following forms of local self-government can be established: in cities - urban communities, and in villages - local communities.

In this regard, the survey also examined the perception of the citizens regarding the work of the municipality and their information about it. The mechanisms of citizens' participation in the decision-making process in the municipalities are also discussed vis-a-vis the real participation and activism of the citizens and the forms of association as an opportunity to directly influence the solution of the problems faced by the municipalities. Research of this kind was conducted in 2014, 2017 and 2018, and the report presents comparative data from previous years.

The research topics and questionnaire structure cover the following areas:

1. Overall satisfaction with the quality of life in the municipality
2. Satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality
3. Mechanisms for citizen participation and participation in the decision-making process in the municipalities
4. Informing about the work and services of the municipality
5. E-services and other innovative services of the municipality
6. NGOs – Civil Society Associations

The following outlines the themes of the overall results obtained from the total national sample of respondents in 2019, as well as comparisons with previous surveys where data are available.

The results of the survey are expressed in percentage.

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<sup>1</sup> („Службен весник на РМ “бр.55/04;12/05;98/08;106/08;149/14;)

## 2. Research methodology

A quantitative research methodology with stratified representative sample was used for the purpose of this research. The technique used to administer the questionnaire was a face-to-face interview in the respondent's home.

As part of this quantitative research, the following activities were undertaken:

- 1) Questionnaire design and pilot test questionnaire
- 2) Design of national representative sample
- 5) Planning the field work and logistics
- 3) Fieldwork and data collection
- 4) Supervision and quality control
- 5) Analysis, results and research report

A questionnaire of approximately 100 questions was used to identify the aims of the research.

The questionnaire included citizens aged 18 years and older living in households on the territory of the Republic of Northern Macedonia. Household respondent selection is based on the principle of "first next birthday".

The number of households is distributed proportionally in 80 municipalities throughout the country, urban (34) and rural (64) settlements in all 8 regions of Macedonia: Skopje, Pelagonija, Polog, Vardarski, East, Southwest, Southeast and Northeast.



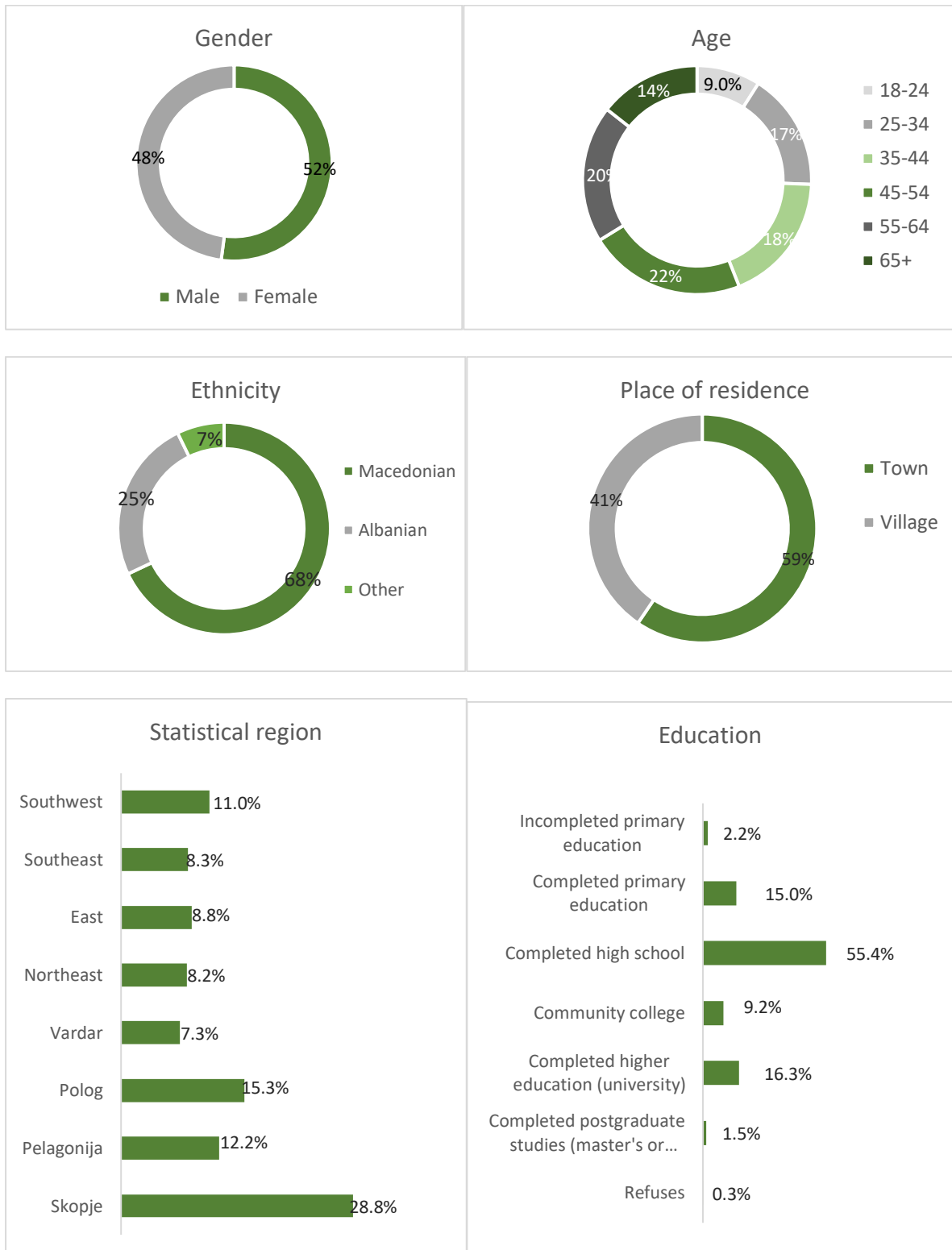
The sample included respondents from a total of 1200 households, each represented by one respondent of 18+ years.

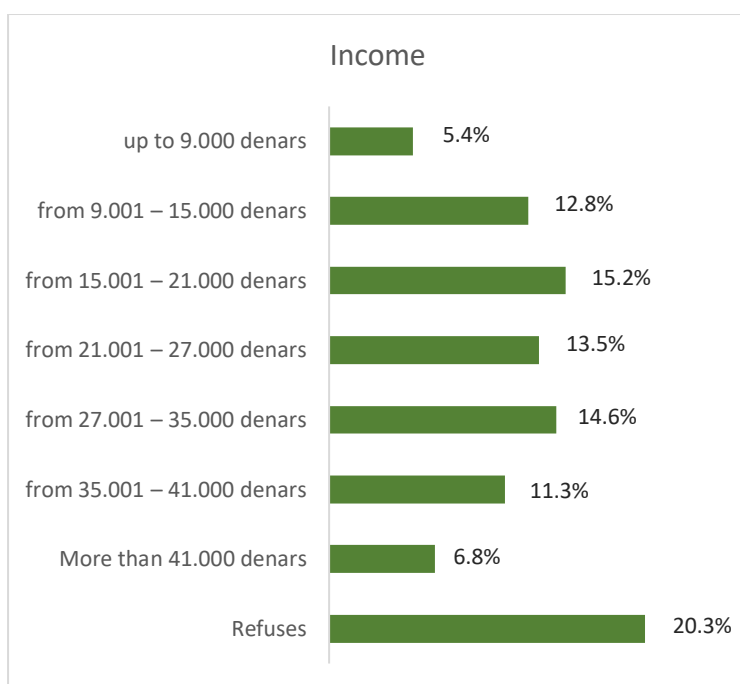
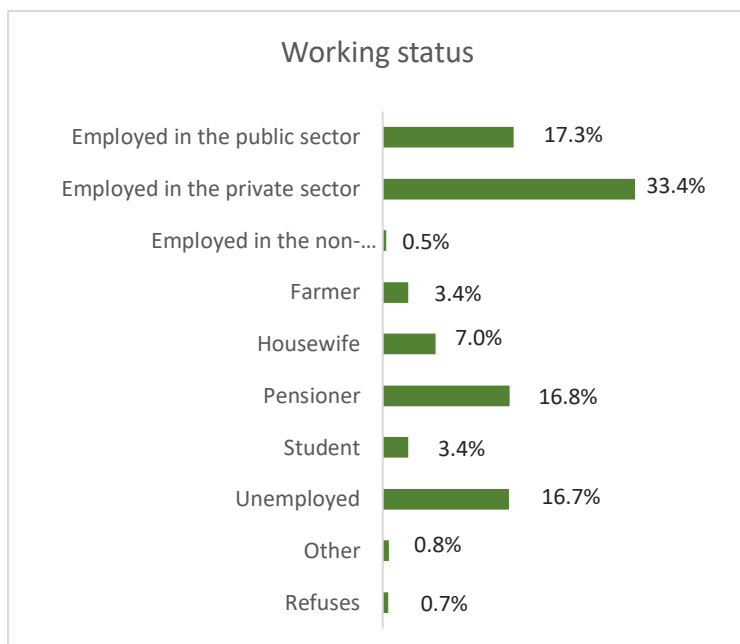
The statistical error of this type of research is +/- 2.83%, which is a normal deviation of a representative sample of this kind.

The field research was conducted from 8th to 20th October 2019.

The research was conducted by a developed and experienced network of interviewers (field assistants) in Macedonian and Albanian. A total of 40 experienced interviewers and 10 regional supervisors worked on this project.

### 3. Demographic structure of the respondents



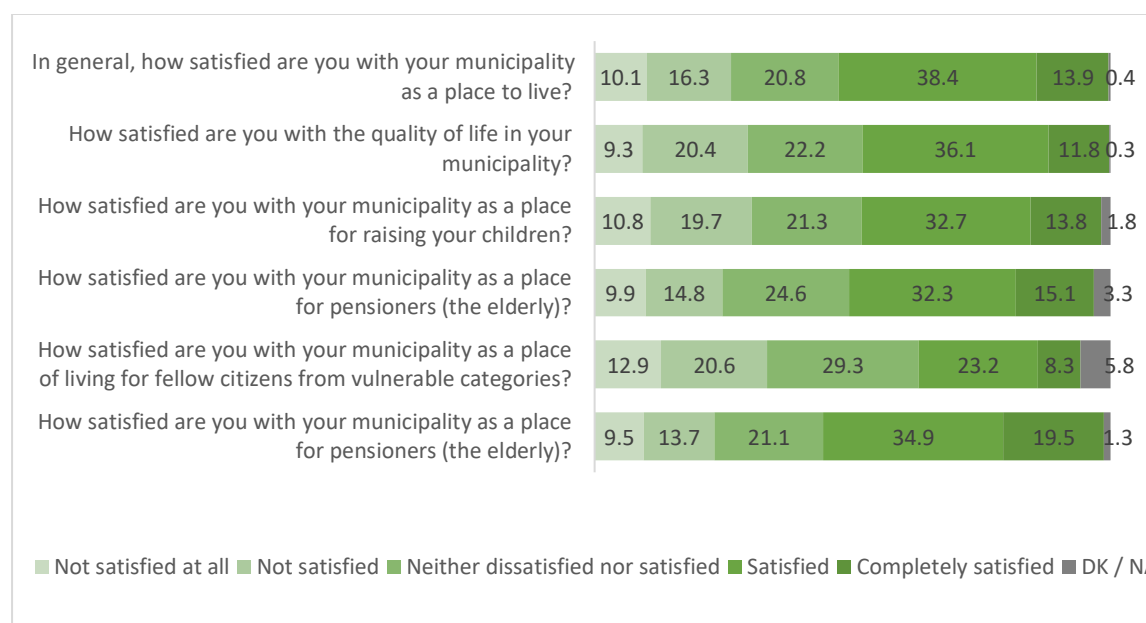


## 4. Results

### 4.1. Overall satisfaction with life in the municipality

One of the main goals of this research is to detect the degree of satisfaction of citizens in the municipalities in which they live, as well as the detection of (dis)satisfaction from several different segments related to community safety and quality of life in general, supplemented by conditions for the care and growth of children and young people, as well as the living conditions for older persons and vulnerable categories of citizens.

*Chart 1. Degree of satisfaction with the quality of life*



The greater part of the citizens are satisfied with their life in their municipality in general, or slightly more than half of the citizens (52%) stated that they were completely satisfied or satisfied with their municipality as a place of residence.

Nearly as the percentage above, 48% were fully or just satisfied with the quality of the life in their municipality.

At the same time, about 47% of the citizens stated that they were completely satisfied or satisfied with their municipalities as a place for retirees and for growing up and growing up of young people.

More than half of the citizens are satisfied with the safety of the community in their municipality.

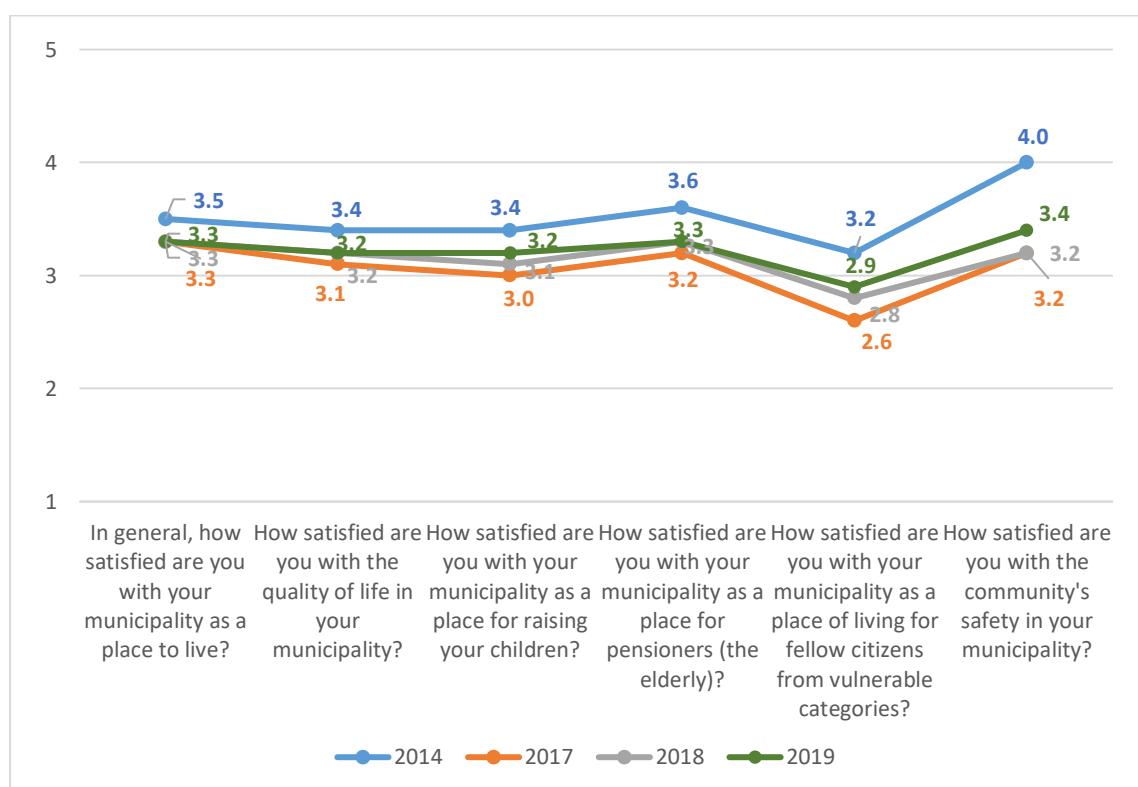
Citizens express least satisfaction with the municipality as a place of residence for vulnerable categories of citizens (31.5%).



The comparison of the average satisfaction ratings indicates that there is no significant change in the level of citizens' satisfaction with respect to different aspects of living in their municipality during the last three surveys from 2017 to 2019.

As in the 2014 survey, the lowest score again has been the satisfaction of the municipalities as a place of residence for vulnerable categories of citizens and the safety of the community in the municipality.

Chart 2. Comparing the average grades of satisfaction with the life in the municipality from the 2014, 2017, 2018 and 2019 waves.



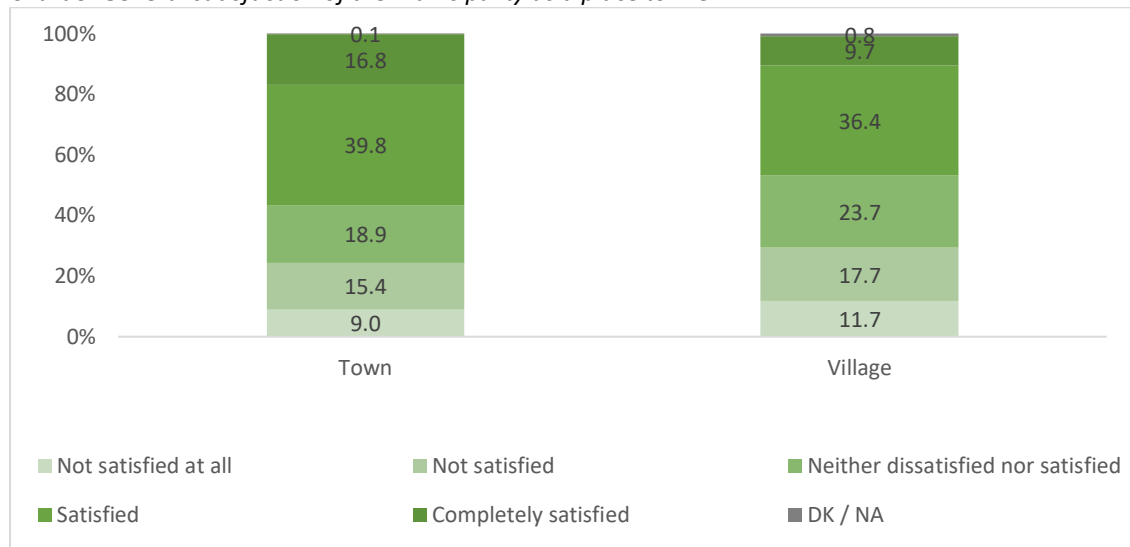
The average satisfaction grade for the life in the municipality in the current survey is 3.2 and is equal to the satisfaction of the survey conducted in 2018, where the average satisfaction grade for the municipality was also 3.2

Table 1. Average grade for satisfaction of life in the municipality

Year	2014	2017	2018	2019
Average grade for satisfaction of life in the municipality	3,5	3,1	3,2	3,2

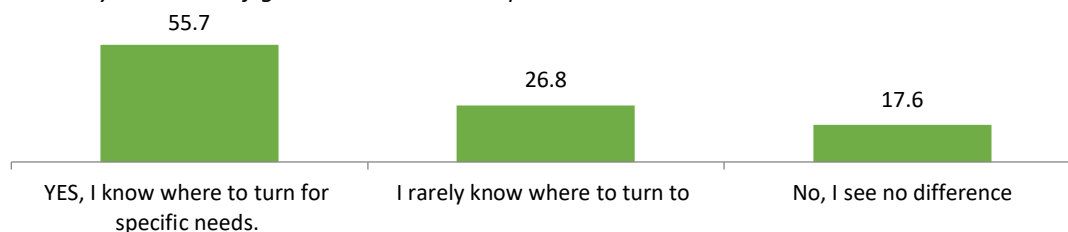
Analyzing the responses from rural and urban variable through prism of general satisfaction with the municipalities as a place of residence (Chart 3), they indicate statistically significant differences in dissatisfaction with the municipalities as a place of residence, which is 5 % more at citizens from rural than urban areas.

**Chart 3. General satisfaction of the municipality as a place to live**



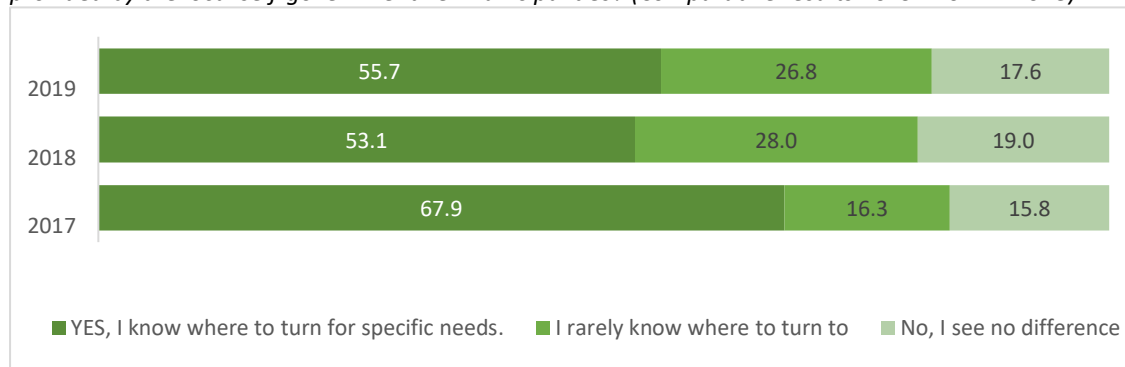
To the question “Do you make a difference between the services provided by the central government and the services provided by the local – self government?”, more than half of the surveyed citizens stated that they were clear where to go, and whom to ask for the services they needed (55.7%), more than a quarter said they did not clearly and seldom know where to go (26.8%), while the remaining 17.6% of citizens did not make a difference at all between the services provided by local and central government.

**Chart 4. Can you make a difference between the services provided by the central government and the services provided by the local self-government i.e. municipalities?**



A comparative analysis of the survey between 2018 and 2019 indicates an increase of 53% to 56% of citizens who are clearly aware of the services offered by local and central government.

Chart 5. Can you make a difference between the services provided by the central government and the services provided by the local self-government i.e. municipalities? (Comparative results 2019 - 2017 – 2018)

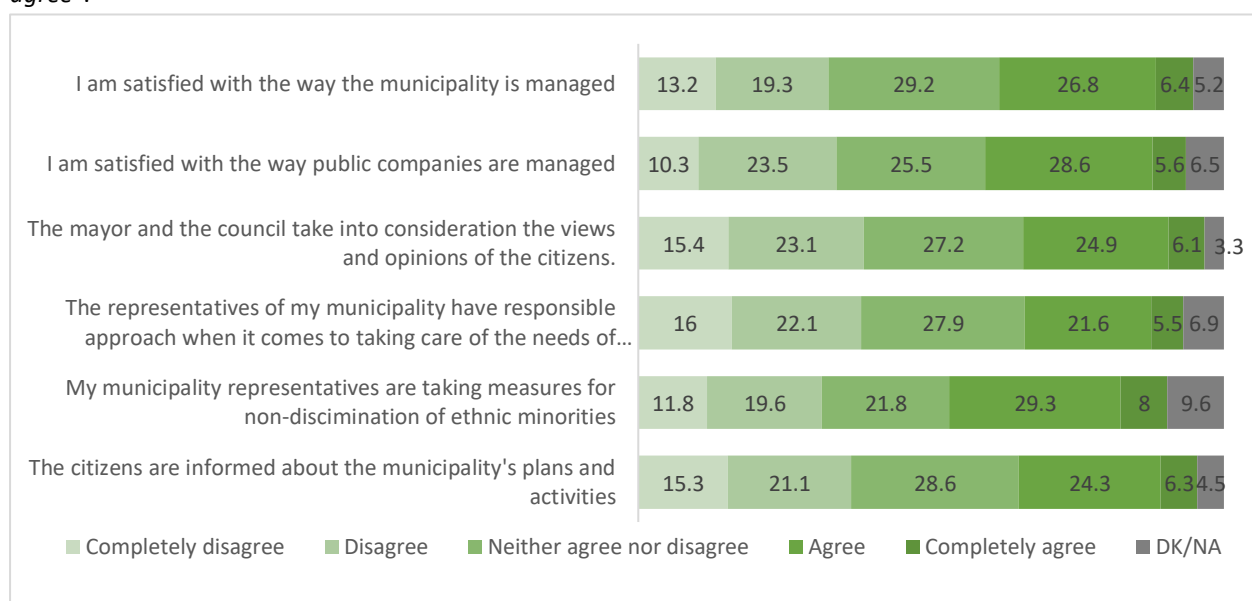


The following set of questions addresses several aspects of local government work and examines citizens' perceptions and information about them.

The analysis of the results obtained from this set of questions shows a similar distribution of responses to agreement and disagreement with the most of the aspects of work by the local government. There was a general division of opinion and position of the citizens in relation to all the questions related to the work of their municipalities.

More than one-third of the citizens (33.2%) said they agree or fully agree with the statement “I’m satisfied with the way the municipality is managed”. At the same time, 32.5% of the citizens stated that they disagree or totally disagree with this statement

Chart 6. Please rate to what extent you agree with the following statements and rate the number that is closest to your opinion and to your position on a scale of 1 to 5 when 1 means "disagree at all" and 5 means "fully agree".





In terms of the perception of the way public companies are managed, the percentage of citizens who agree or completely agree (34.2%) with those who disagree or completely disagree is again almost equal (33.8%) with the statement "I am satisfied with the way public companies are managed".

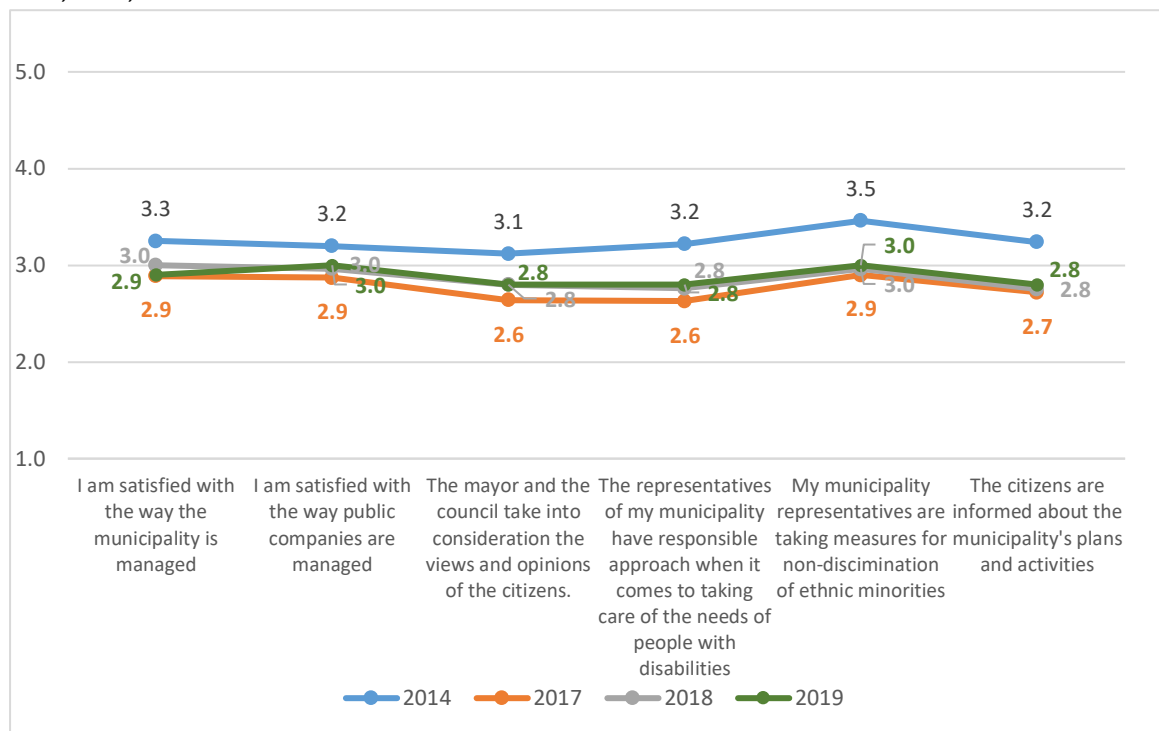
Citizens' awareness of the municipality's activities and plans is also divided. More than a third of the citizens (36.4%) stated that they disagree or completely disagree with the statement "Citizens of the municipality are informed about the activities and plans of the municipality", while 38.5% of the citizens disagree or completely disagree agree with the statement "The mayor and the council take into consideration the views and opinions of the citizens".

The poor flow of information on the activities of the municipality to the citizens is the link that contributes to a significant reduction in the probability that citizens will be involved with their views and opinions on certain decisions or plans of the municipality in which they live.

37.3% of the citizens agree or completely agree with the statement "Representatives of my municipality take measures to non-discrimination of non-majority ethnic communities", while 31.4% stated that they disagree or completely disagree with this statement. A total of 38.1% of the citizens surveyed disagreed or completely disagreed with the statement that "representatives of their municipalities have a responsible approach to persons with disabilities".

The comparative analysis with the surveys of 2018 and 2019 shows that there is no shift in the average grades given by the respondents regarding the examined aspects of the work of the local self-government.

Chart 7. Comparative overview of the average grades for the management of municipalities with surveys from 2014, 2017, 2018 and 2019



## 4.2. Satisfaction with services provided by the municipality

The second topic of the research concerns the general satisfaction of citizens with the services provided by the municipalities, as well as the level of citizens' satisfaction with the specific services provided or offered by the municipality. Several specific services and aspects of local government work are covered:

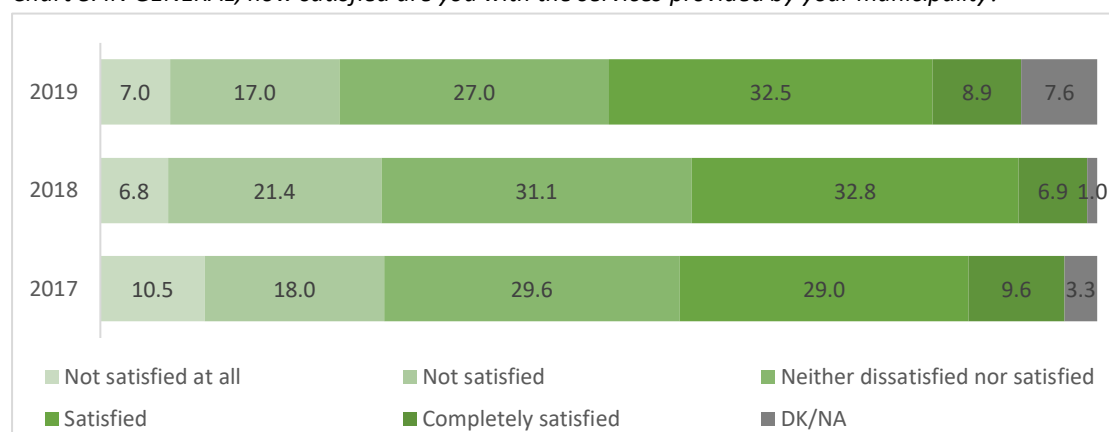
- Education, culture, sport and recreation
- Urbanism and urban planning
- Local economic development
- Utilities
- Social protection
- Fire protection
- Health care
- Environmental protection
- Democracy, transparency and accountability

### 4.2.1. General satisfaction with services provided by the municipality

Satisfaction for each service was measured on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "Not satisfied at all" and 5 being "Completely satisfied".

When asked "How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality in general?" 4 out of 10 citizens responded that they were generally satisfied with them. In other words, 8.9% of the respondents are completely satisfied and 32.5% are satisfied with the services provided by the municipality. 27% of those surveyed stated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 17% responded that they were not satisfied, and 7% were not satisfied with the services provided by the municipality.

Chart 8. IN GENERAL, how satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality?



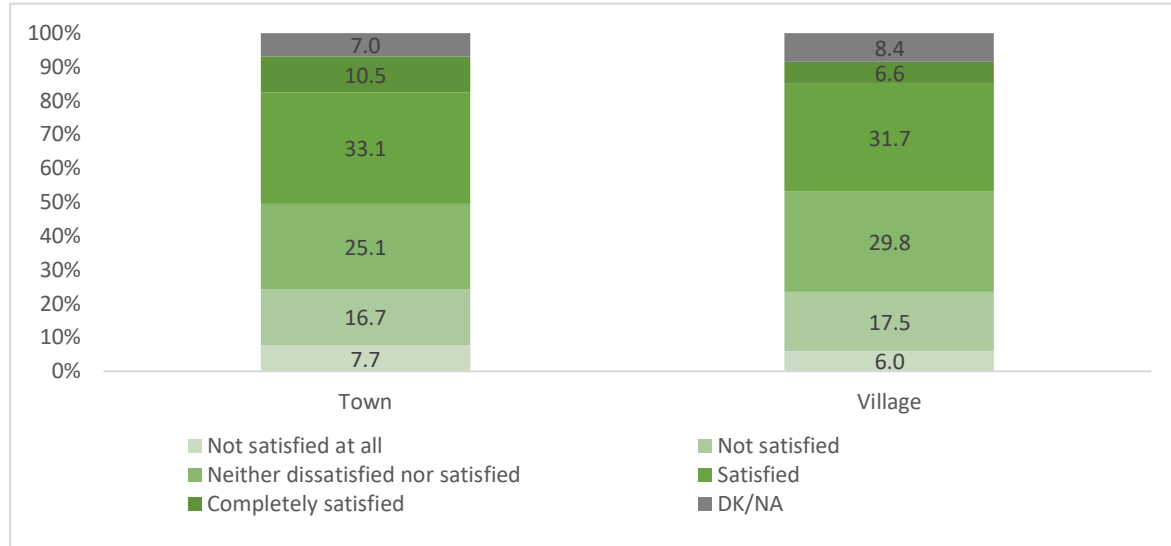
The average grade of the general satisfaction of the citizens with the services provided by the municipality in 2019 is 3.21, which is comparatively higher than in 2018 and 2017, which is 3.12 and 3.09 respectively, approaching a score of 3,34 measured in 2014, as the highest average rating for service satisfaction.

Table 2. Average grade of the general satisfaction of the citizens with the services provided by the municipality

Year	2014	2017	2018	2019
Average grade of the general satisfaction of the citizens with the services provided by the municipality	3,34	3,09	3,12	3,21

If we observe these data with the place of residence of the respondents, the distribution of the answers indicates that 44% of the citizens of the urban municipalities are satisfied with the services provided by the municipality in relation to the citizens of the rural municipalities, where 38% stated that they are satisfied with the services provided / offered by their municipalities.

Chart 9. IN GENERAL, how satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality? Town/Village



#### 4.2.2. Satisfaction with specific services provided by municipalities

The highest level of satisfaction within all specific services provided by municipalities is observed in fire protection (3.36) and education, culture, sport and recreation (3.20) and health care (3.01).

The lowest level of satisfaction was expressed for local economic development (2.46) and social protection (2.58).

Comparatively from Table 3, it can be observed that the mean scores for the highest and lowest satisfaction aspects were the same for 2018.

The table also presents the mean scores for all services comparatively from all four waves.

Compared to 2018, there is an increase in citizens' satisfaction in terms of social protection, environmental protection and democracy, transparency and accountability. Despite this data, there is a decline in citizen satisfaction with fire protection (3.36), which despite having the highest average grade this year, was 3.50 in 2018.

The general satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality in 2019 is slightly higher than in the previous two surveys in 2018 and 2017.

In terms of comparative results with last year's survey, the slight increase in the average grades is as follows: local economic development, social protection, utilities, education, culture, sports and recreation, environmental protection and democracy, transparency and accountability.

Citizens' satisfaction is reduced in terms of: health care, urban planning and fire protection.

Table 3. Average grades - general satisfaction with municipal services and satisfaction in specific areas - comparison (2014-2017-2018-2019)

Year	2014	2017	2018	2019
General satisfaction with services provided by the municipality	3,34	3,09	3,12	3,21
Education, culture, sport and recreation	3,58	3,16	3,15	3,20
Urbanism and urban planning	3,26	2,67	2,78	2,73
Local economic development	2,90	2,44	2,43	2,46
Utilities	3,3	2,89	2,94	2,99
Social protection	2,99	2,33	2,32	2,58
Fire protection	3,80	3,5	3,50	3,36
Health care	3,25	3,08	3,07	3,01
Environmental protection	3,22	2,52	2,48	2,68
Democracy, transparency and accountability	3,04	2,54	2,61	2,70
Average grades	3,27	2,82	2,84	2,89

#### 4.2.2.1. Education, Culture, Sports and Recreation

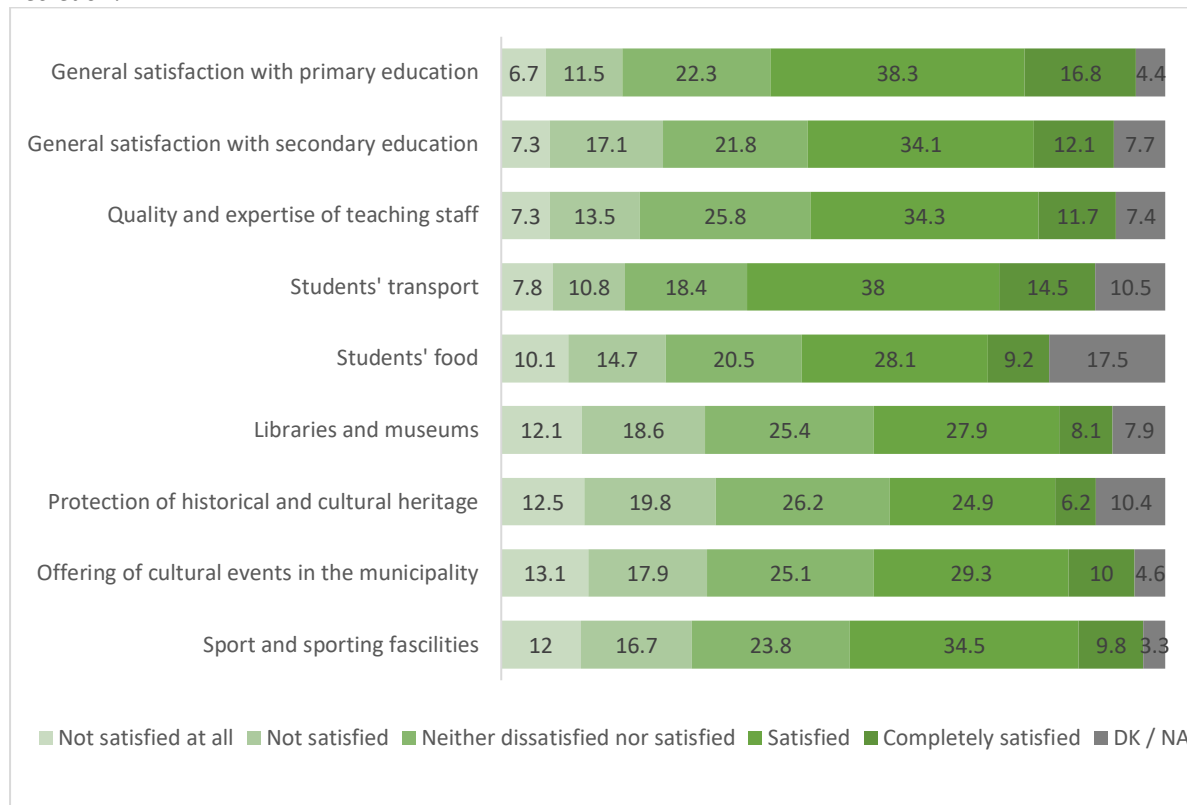
The average grade of citizens' satisfaction with services in the field of education, culture, sport and recreation is 3.20.

The results show overall satisfaction with these services provided by the municipality. Cgart 10 below shows the responses of the citizens on all aspects related to this topic.

Respondents' responses to this topic indicate that the greatest dissatisfaction relates to the 'Offer of cultural events in the Municipality' but also to the 'Protection of historical and cultural heritage', 'Libraries and museums' and 'Sport and sports facilities'. Aggregated responses expressing dissatisfaction (not at all satisfied and dissatisfied) show that almost one third of the population is not satisfied with how municipalities manage these aspects of their work.



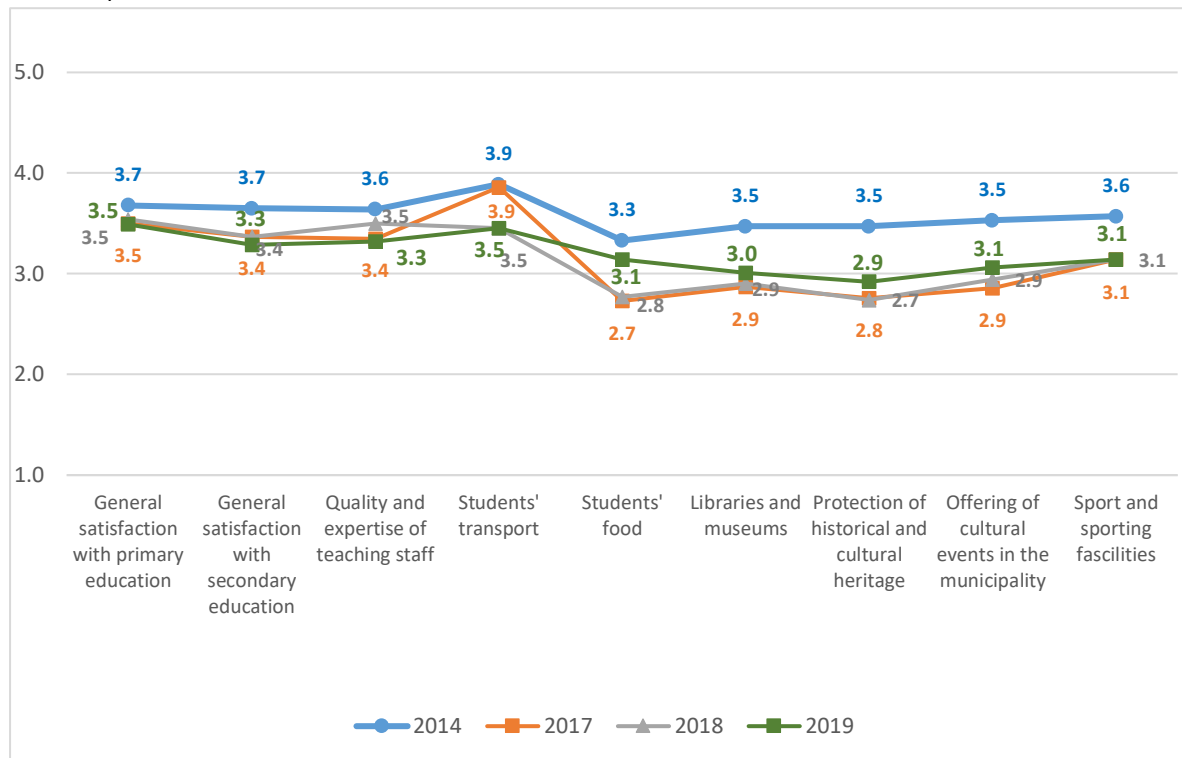
Chart 10. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality?: Education, Culture, Sports and Recreation?



In the area of education, culture, sport and recreation, citizens expressed the highest satisfaction (completely satisfied and satisfied) with general education and student transportation generally, and almost half of the respondents were generally satisfied with the state of secondary education and the quality and expertise of their teaching staff. There is lack of information about the nutrition status of students in schools and almost 18% of the respondents do not know how to evaluate this aspect.

The comparative data (Chart 11) show that there is no change ie there is a continuity of the situation regarding education, culture, sport and recreation compared to last year. Comparisons with those of 2017 and 2018 show no change and convergence to the 2014 initial values.

Chart 11. Average grades of citizens' satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality: Education, culture, sport and recreation



#### 4.2.2.2. Urbanism and urban planning

The overall average grade of citizens' satisfaction with the services in the field of Urbanism and Urban Planning is 2.73. This score is almost no different from the 2018 average grade (2.78).

Following are the citizens' assessments of the specific aspects of the municipality's work on the subject of Urbanism.

The survey results show that the greatest dissatisfaction of 43.3% of the citizens is related to the Supervision and control over the construction and / or reconstruction of buildings (17.5% are not satisfied at all and 25.8% are not satisfied). 4 out of 10 citizens are dissatisfied with this service provided by their municipality, but there is equal dissatisfaction with the urban planning of the municipality as well(41.2%).

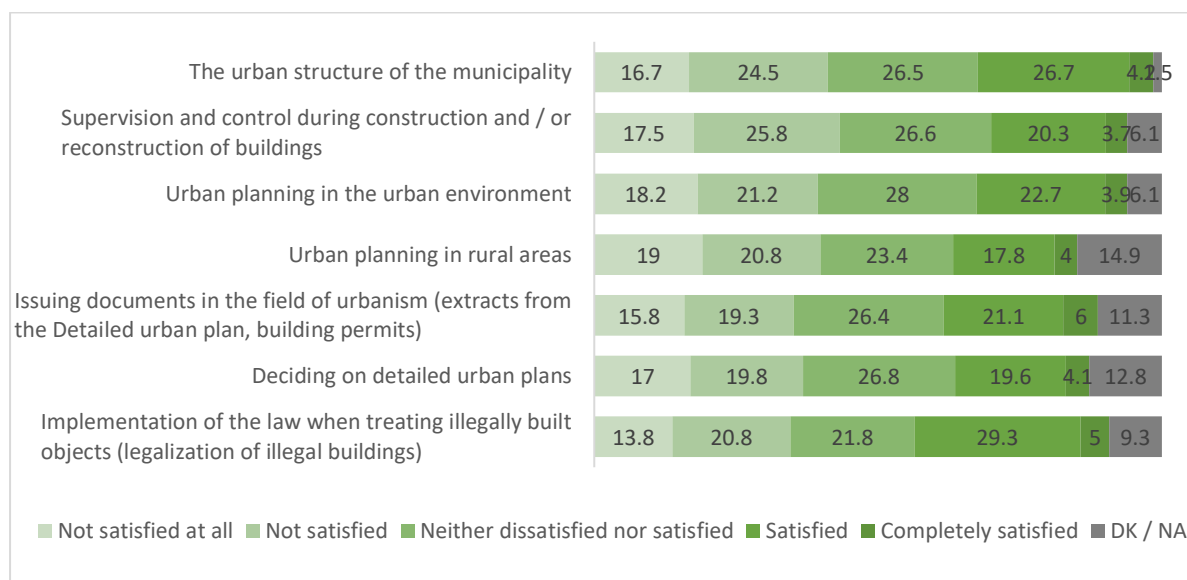
There is also considerable dissatisfaction with urban planning in urban and rural areas, with 39.4% and 39.8% respectively.

Over one third of the respondents are dissatisfied with the Implementation of the Law on Illegally constructed buildings (Legalization of Illegal Buildings), Issuance of urban planning documents (Extracts from the detailed urban plan, Building permits), and Adoption of detailed urban plans.

From the data obtained, there is the lack of information on urban planning in rural areas.

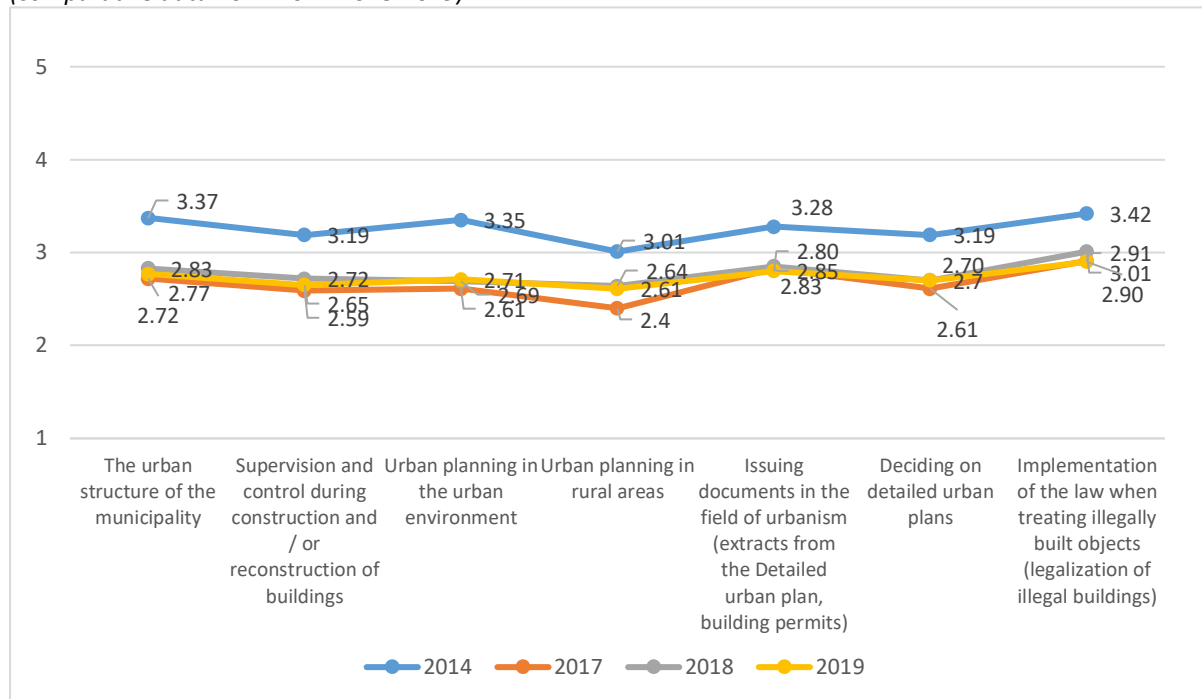
The citizens were most satisfied with the Implementation of the Law on treatment of Illegally constructed buildings (Legalization of Illegal Buildings) with 34.3%

Chart 12. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality: Urbanism



As indicated at the beginning of this section, the comparative data do not show significant changes in citizen satisfaction with the previous survey of 2018, and the situation is similar with 2017. It can be concluded that the aspects related to urban planning in the rural areas, continuously in all four surveys, have the lowest scores compared to the rest aspects of urbanism.

Chart 13. Average grades of citizens' satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality: Urbanism (comparative data 2014-2017-2018-2019)



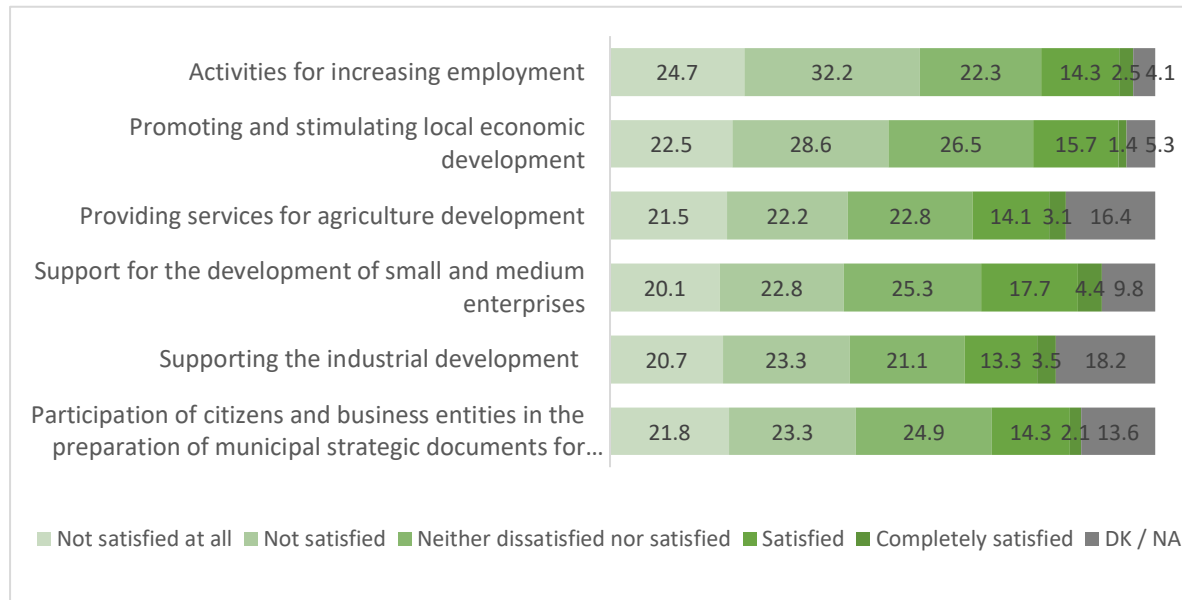
#### 4.2.2.3. Local economic development

The overall average rating of citizens' satisfaction with the services in the area of Local Economic Development is 2.46 (Table 3). Namely, this aspect of service has the lowest average grade of all others for 2019 and the results of the survey show that the citizens are largely dissatisfied with these services provided by the municipality.

Citizens are most dissatisfied with the actions taken to increase employment. Aggregated responses illustrating dissatisfaction with this aspect reach 57%.

Specifically, 24.7% of the interviewed citizens are completely dissatisfied with these services / activities provided by the municipality, 32.2% are not satisfied, 22.3% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 14.3% are satisfied, while 2.5% of the citizens stated that they are completely satisfied with the services provided by the municipality. The average level of satisfaction with all other examined aspects of local economic development is low, and the level of dissatisfaction is shared by 40% to 60% of respondents, depending on the aspect.

Chart 14. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality: Local Economic Development



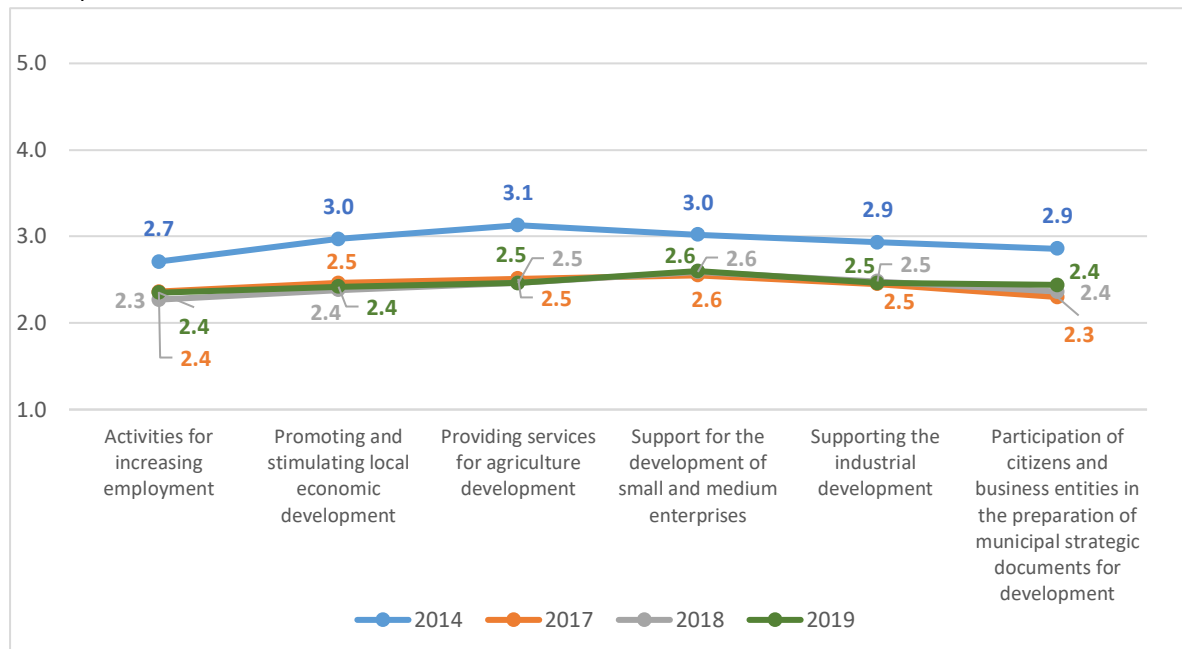
The comparative data indicate absolute stability / invariance in respondents' responses to aspects of local economic development.

Namely, from the first research wave conducted in 2014, in 2017 there was a great decline in the satisfaction of the citizens, which remains consistent in 2018 in terms of all aspects examined. However, in this year's survey as shown in Chart 15 below, we see grades that do not exceed the average grade 3, as in the survey of the previous two years.

The lowest grade in this section refers to activities related to employment growth which seems to be a really big challenge for local governments.

The data are consistent with previous indications that there is a real need to create effective measures to stimulate employment through local government mechanisms.

Chart 15. Average grades of citizens' satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality: Local economic development



#### 4.2.2.4. Utilities

Services of this kind provided by municipalities are of particular importance to the quality of life of citizens above all. As many as 13 aspects were examined within the communal services (utilities), which will be elaborated in this part as conclusions about the satisfaction that comes directly from the most affected - the citizens.

The citizens rate the implementation of this kind of competences by the municipality with an average grade of 2.99.

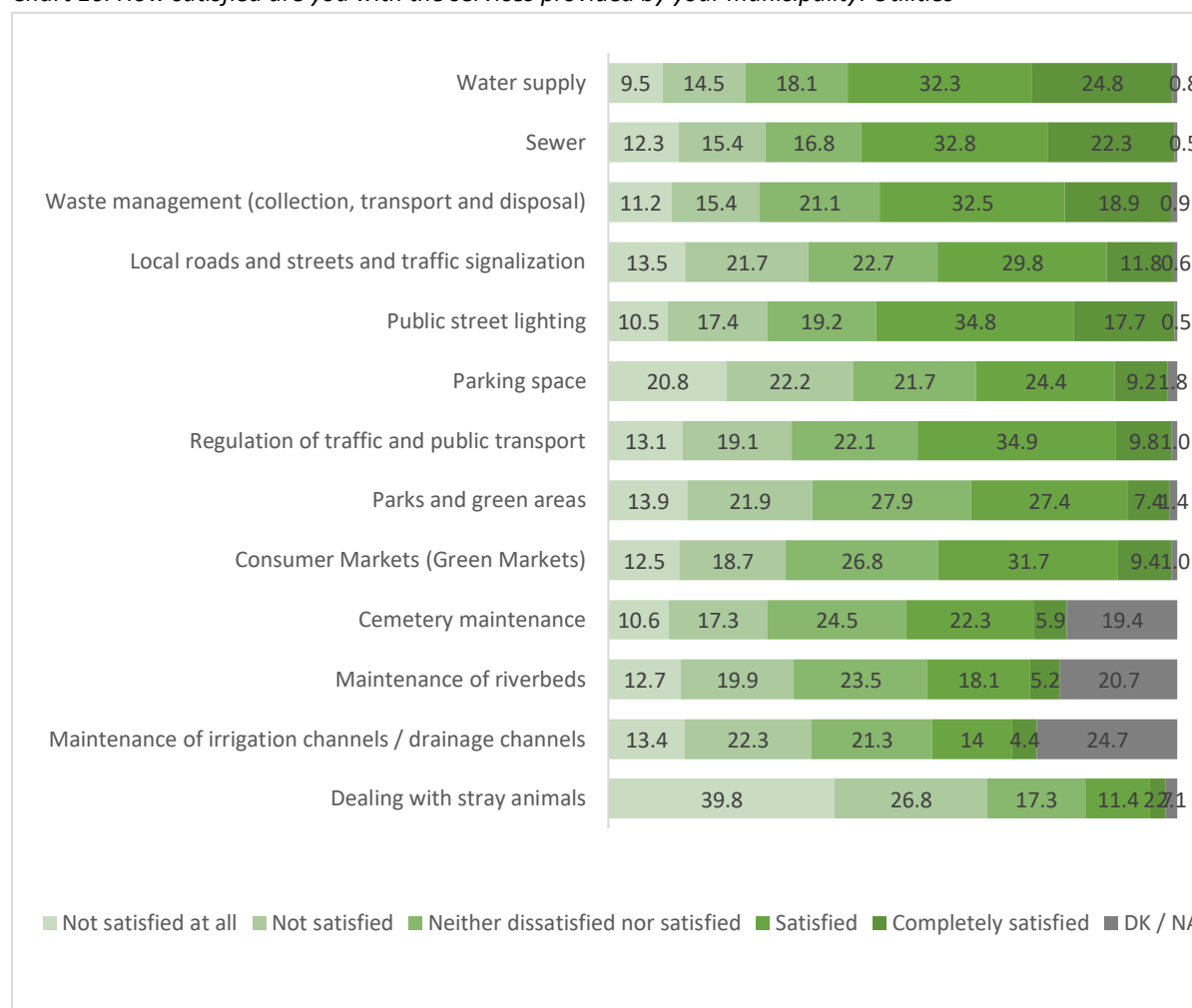
The greatest satisfaction of citizens is noted in the area of water supply and sewerage competences. Over half (57.1% and 55.1% of the respected aggregated responses completely satisfied and satisfied) of the respondents expressed their satisfaction with how the municipality provides these services.

Over half of the respondents also expressed their satisfaction with the services related to Public Street Lighting and Waste Management.

Regarding the dissatisfaction, also in the three surveys carried out with high 66.6%, it is expressed in terms of dealing with the wandering animals. This continuing problem that has been around for

years is still current because of the daily reports of stray dog attacks on citizens. Statistics show an increase in the number of complaints, but also fear among citizens.

Chart 16. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality: Utilities



The comparative grades shown in Table 4, which refer to all examined aspects of utilities, show that although the highest rating is allocated to Water Supply (four surveys in a row), it also declines slightly from previous research. However, it is important to note that while dealing with stray animals remains the biggest problem and cause of dissatisfaction among citizens, the average rating in this respect increased by 0.31 compared to last year.

Table 4. Average grades – Satisfaction of utilities (comparison 2014-2017-2018-2019)

Year	2014	2017	2018	2019
Water supply	3,74	3,43	3,67	3,49
Sewer	3,47	3,29	3,39	3,37

Waste management (collection, transport and disposal)	3,59	3,29	3,28	3,33
Local roads and streets and traffic signalization	3,33	2,88	2,89	3,05
Public street lighting	3,49	3,30	3,30	3,32
Parking space	2,96	2,59	2,66	2,79
Regulation of traffic and public transport	3,38	2,93	2,96	3,09
Parks and green areas	3,50	2,98	3,04	2,92
Consumer Markets (Green Markets)	3,47	3,24	3,24	3,07
Cemetery maintenance	3,25	2,83	2,86	2,95
Maintenance of riverbeds	3,25	2,48	2,57	2,79
Maintenance of irrigation channels / drainage channels	3,14	2,40	2,58	2,65
Dealing with stray animals	2,76	1,87	1,78	2,09

#### 4.2.2.5. Social Protection

One of the fundamental constitutional values in Republic of North Macedonia is social justice for its citizens. In particular, social protection is a system of measures, activities and policies to prevent and overcome the basic social risks a citizen is exposed to throughout his or her life, to reduce poverty and social exclusion and to strengthen self-protection capacities.

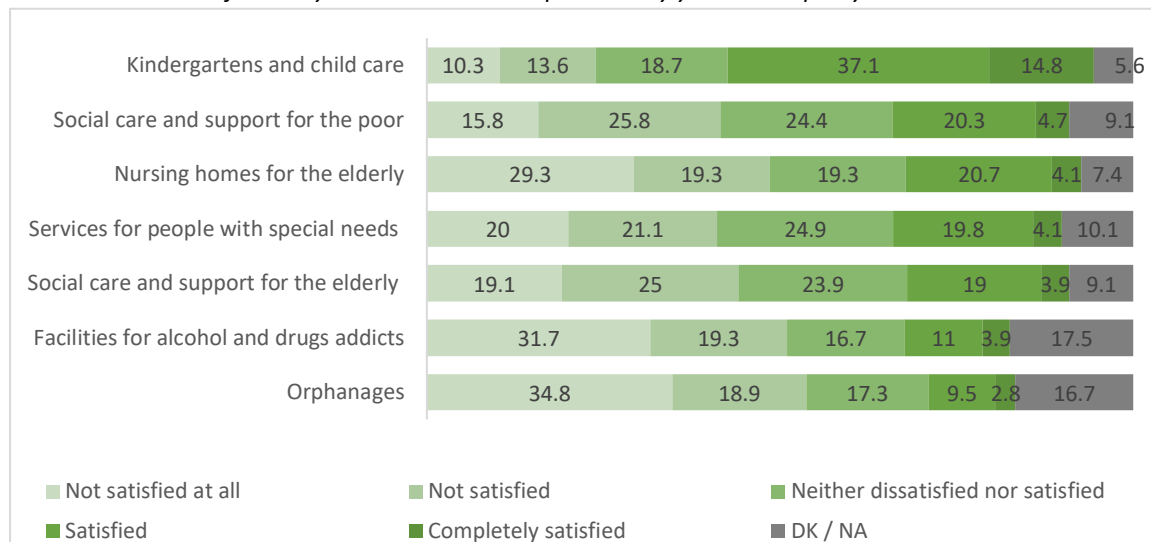
The survey results show greater dissatisfaction than satisfaction with the municipality's work in these aspects, except for kindergartens and child care. This difference is also evident in 2018. Over a quarter of the citizens surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with all aspects of social protection (except for kindergartens and child care where 23.9% were dissatisfied).

The average grade of citizens' satisfaction with Social Protection services is 2.58. After the Local Economic Development section, the second lowest grade given by respondents belongs to Social Protection services.

Citizens report the highest dissatisfaction in the area of Social Protection with services related to orphanages (53.7%), alcohol and drug addiction Institutions (51%) and homes for the elderly (48.6%).

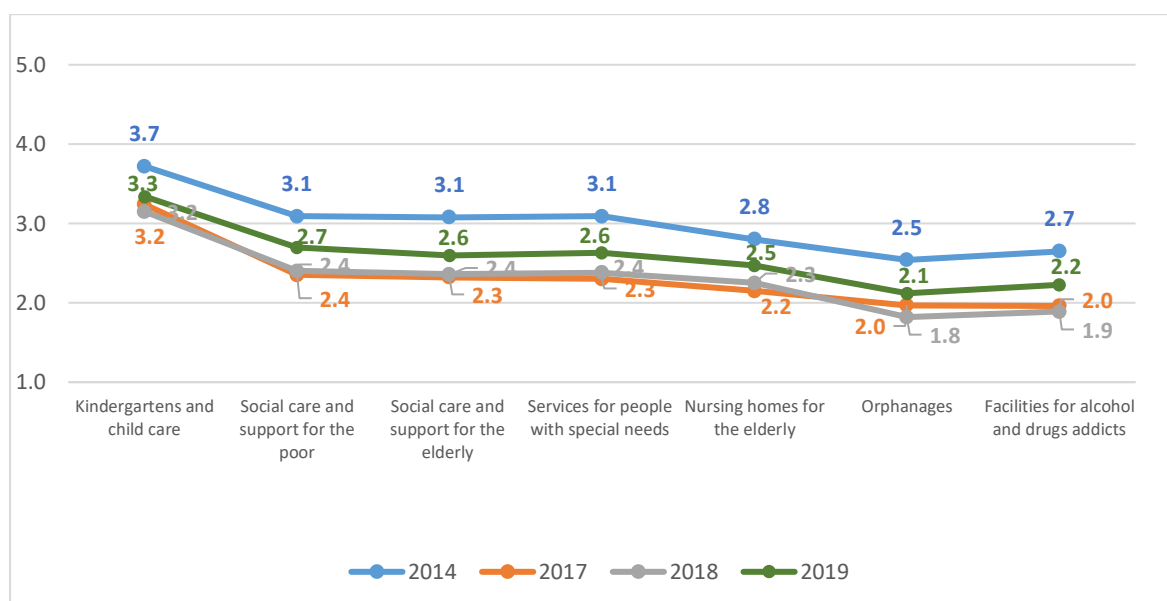


Chart 17. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality: Social Protection



The comparative overview of the surveys shown below (Chart 18) indicate a significant decline in satisfaction in all aspects of social protection examined from 2014 to 2018, but this 2019 survey shows an increase in the average grades in relation to the 2018 survey. The lowest grades given to orphanages and drug and alcohol dependent Institutions are repeated, indicating again the absence of such facilities in the municipalities.

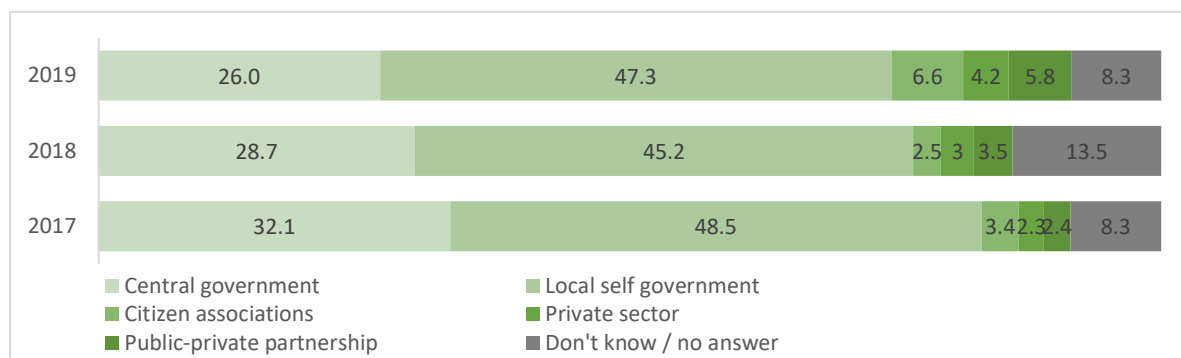
Chart 18. Average grades of citizens' satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality: Social protection



Regarding social protection services, citizens were further asked, "Who would be the most appropriate provider of these services". They identify precisely the Local Government as most

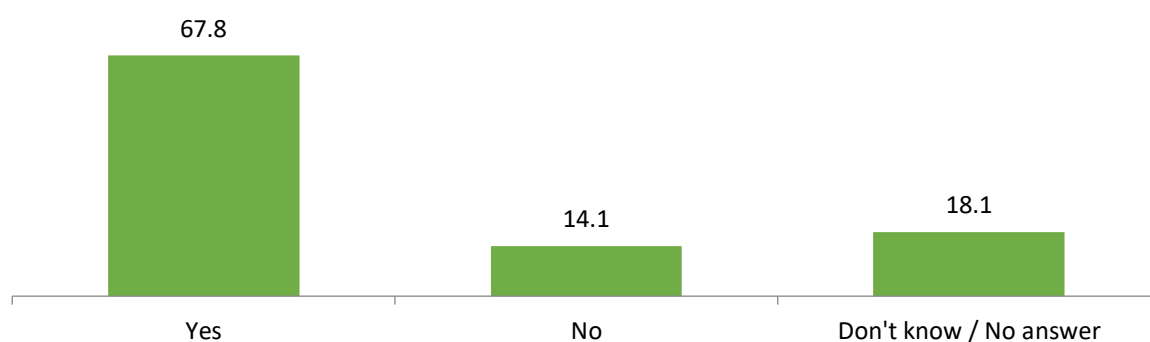
suitable for the delivery of all previously listed services. The distribution of responses listed below is consistent with the distribution of responses from the survey conducted in 2018 and 2017. There is decrease in Central Government percentages and increasing of Citizens' Association, Private Sector and Public Private Partnerships percentages, which may imply increasing citizen satisfaction with these subgroups as an option to manage services of this kind.

Chart 19. According to you, who would be the most appropriate provider of the aforementioned services:



Asked whether local communities should play a greater role in local government, nearly 7 out of 10 citizens responded positively. This distribution of responses is in line with responses from past research where respondents also feel that local communities should be more active and play a greater role in local government.

Chart 20. Do you think that the local communities should play a greater role in the local self-government?



#### 4.2.2.6. Environmental protection

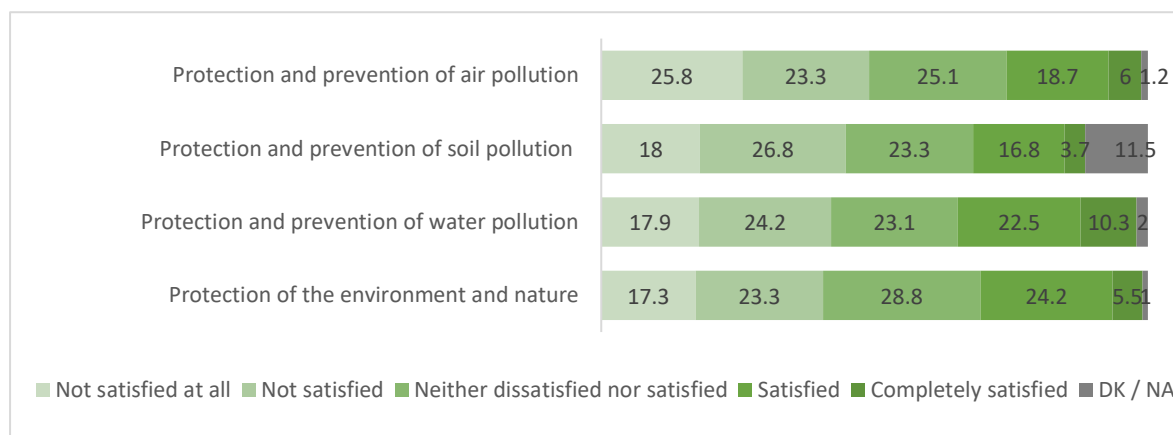
Continued air pollution in our country indicates the need for strategic and long-term solutions to this problem. The biggest air pollutants are industry, old vehicles, motor fuels and home heating, but

winter conditions are particularly alarming. This is also indicated by the measuring stations that almost daily record pollution that is often above the permitted, and which are alarmingly high in the colder periods of the year.

Regarding the satisfaction of the citizens with environmental protection, the overall average assessment of the survey conducted this year is 2.68 and it is a slight increase compared to last year's survey when the average assessment was 2.48.

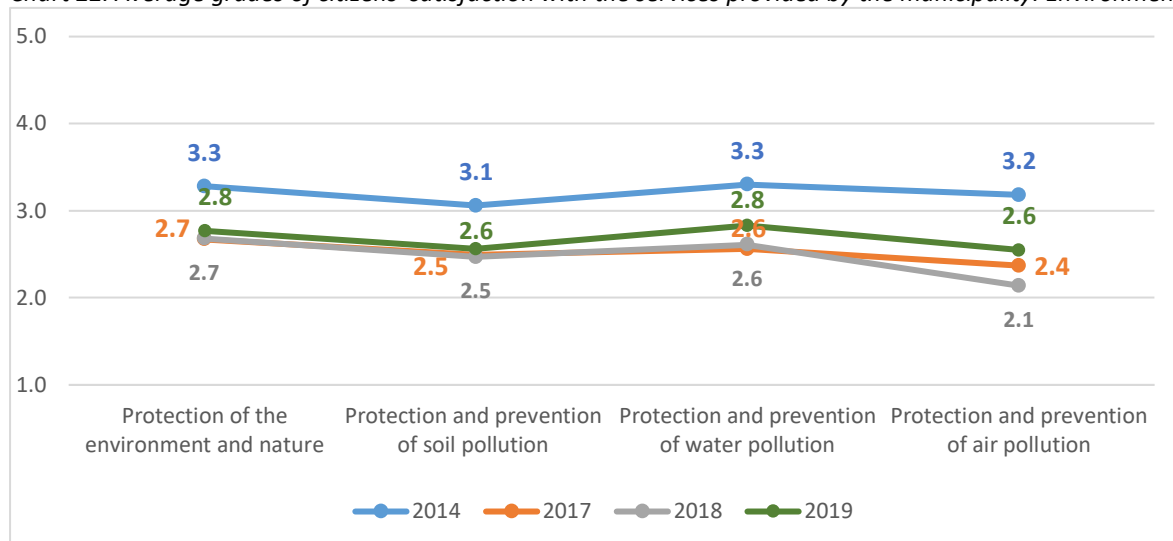
The greatest dissatisfaction of the citizens with the individual aspects related to the environment is, as expected, for the Protection and prevention of air pollution, with 49% of the respondents expressing dissatisfaction. Compared to 2018, this data is significantly improved by 21% (in 2018, 62% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with this problem).

Chart 21. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality: Environment



The comparative overview of the surveys shown below indicate a significant drop in satisfaction in all aspects of environmental protection from 2014 to 2018, but the current survey shows a significant increase in the average grades in relation to the 2018 Survey in Protection and prevention of water pollution and Protection and prevention of air pollution

Chart 22. Average grades of citizens' satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality: Environment



#### 4.2.2.7. Fire protection

The fire protection has the highest level of satisfaction with the citizens with an average grade of 3.36. As can be seen from the Chart 23 below, the aggregated responses of the respondents expressing satisfaction with this competence of the municipality are 51.5%. This distribution of responses is also observed in previous studies.

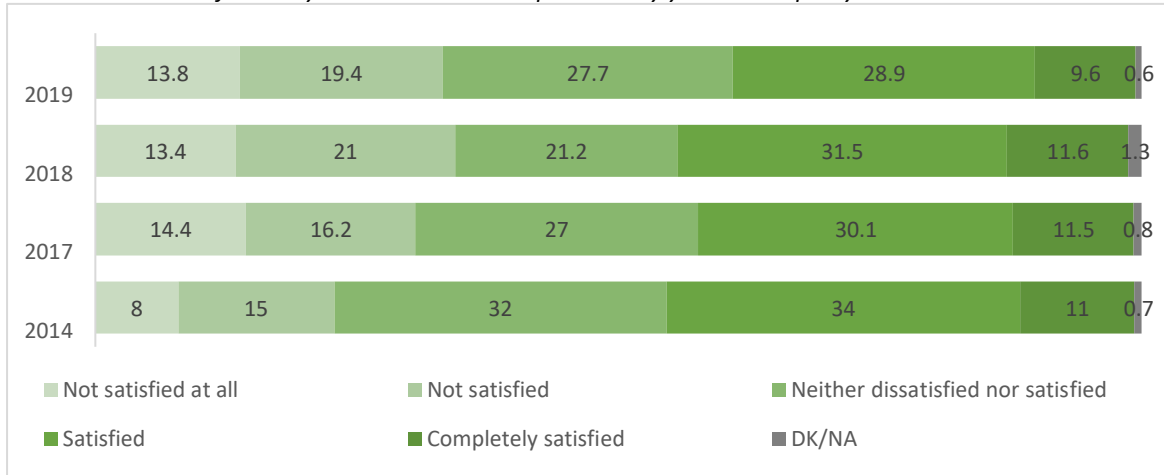
Chart 23. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality: Fire Protection



#### 4.2.2.8. Health care

The average grade of citizens' satisfaction with health care in this survey is 3.01 which is a drop from the survey in 2014 (3.25) but also a stability from the survey in 2017 (3.08) and 2018 (3.07). About 39% of the citizens expressed satisfaction (aggregated answers fully satisfied and satisfied) with the services provided by the municipality in the area of health care.

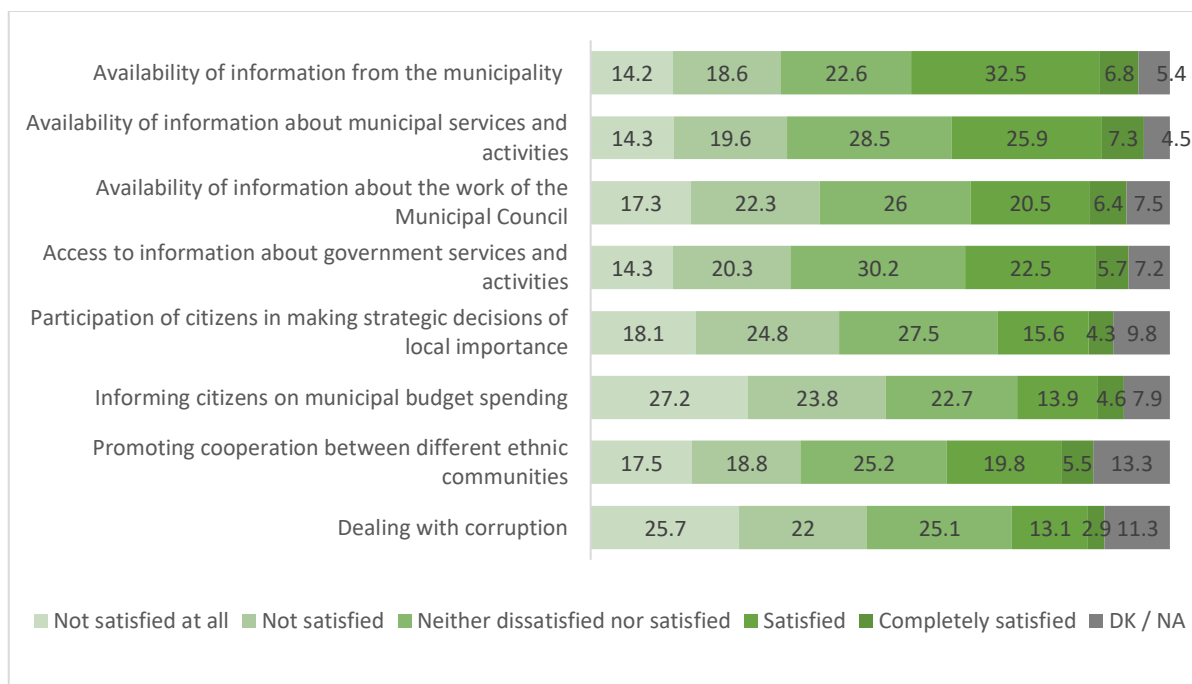
Chart 24. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality: Health Care



#### 4.2.2.9. Democracy, transparency and accountability

The average grade of citizens' satisfaction with services in the area of Democracy, Transparency and Accountability is 2.70, and represents a slight increase from the average grade of the same topic in the 2018 survey (2.61) and 2017 (2.54). The results of this 2019 survey show that Access to information from the municipality is the segment that citizens are most satisfied with. The biggest dissatisfaction among the citizens is with the Citizens' Acknowledgment of the Municipal Budget Spending, but also with Dealing with Corruption.

Chart 25. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality: Democracy, Transparency and Accountability





Citizens evaluate the performance of the local government for democratic governance, transparency and accountability with a score below 3, in all the above mentioned aspects.

Continuously the lowest ratings are reserved for Citizens' Knowledge of Municipal Budget Spending and Corruption Management.

The highest scores in this segment are: Availability of information from the municipality, Availability of information on municipal services and activities and Availability of information on state services and activities.

Access to information in general, but also in relation to Democracy, transparency and accountability in work are aspects that citizens rate with somewhat higher grades. This is important because these aspects are directly related to freedom of expression and access to information in our country.

*Table 5. Average grades - Satisfaction with Democracy, Transparency and Accountability in Work (Comparison 2014-2017-2018-2019)*

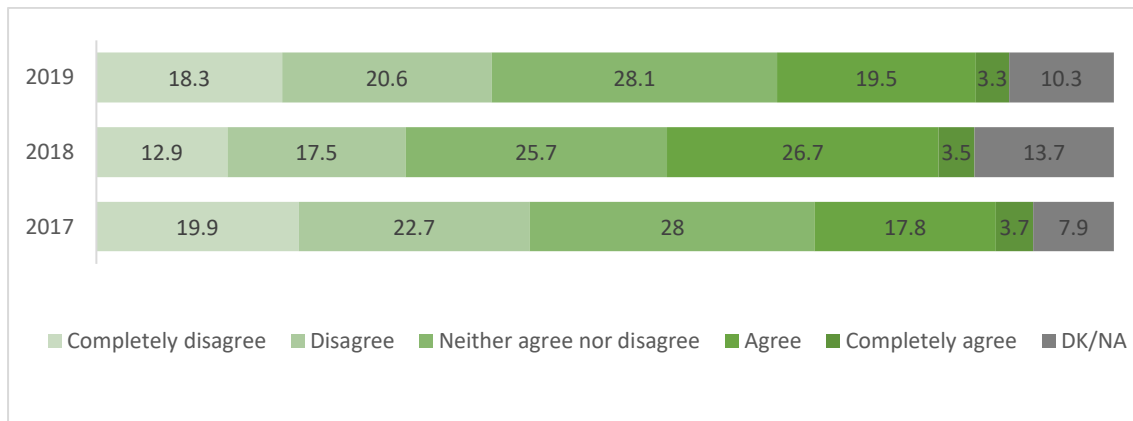
	2014	2017	2018	2019
Availability of information from the municipality	3,33	2,95	2,94	2,99
Availability of information about municipal services and activities	3,18	2,80	2,91	2,92
Availability of information about the work of the Municipal Council	3,05	2,65	2,79	2,75
Access to information about government services and activities	3,21	2,67	2,81	2,84
Participation of citizens in making strategic decisions of local importance	2,84	2,33	2,45	2,59
Informing citizens on municipal budget spending	2,75	2,22	2,24	2,4
Promoting cooperation between different ethnic communities	3,20	2,63	2,55	2,74
Dealing with corruption	2,75	2,08	2,23	2,39

#### 4.2.2.10. Minorities and Vulnerable Categories

Caring for minorities and vulnerable categories of citizens by municipalities, in the current survey, has decreased compared to the past conducted in 2018, and is roughly in line with 2017 results.

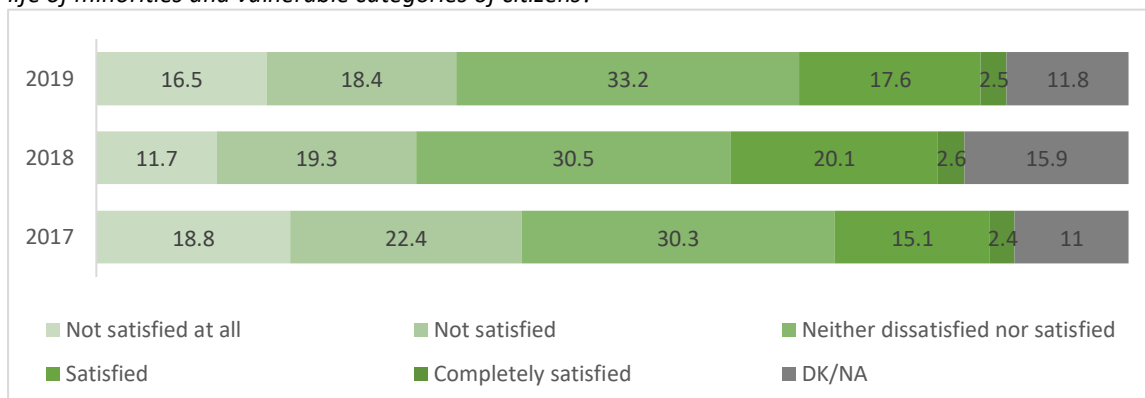
As can be seen below in Chart 26, in 2019 compared to last year, we have a decrease in the responses that the municipality cares for minorities and vulnerable categories of citizens and consequently an increase in the answers that the municipality does not care for these categories of citizens.

Chart 26. How much do you agree with the claim: The municipality takes care of minorities and vulnerable citizen categories (2017-2018-2019)



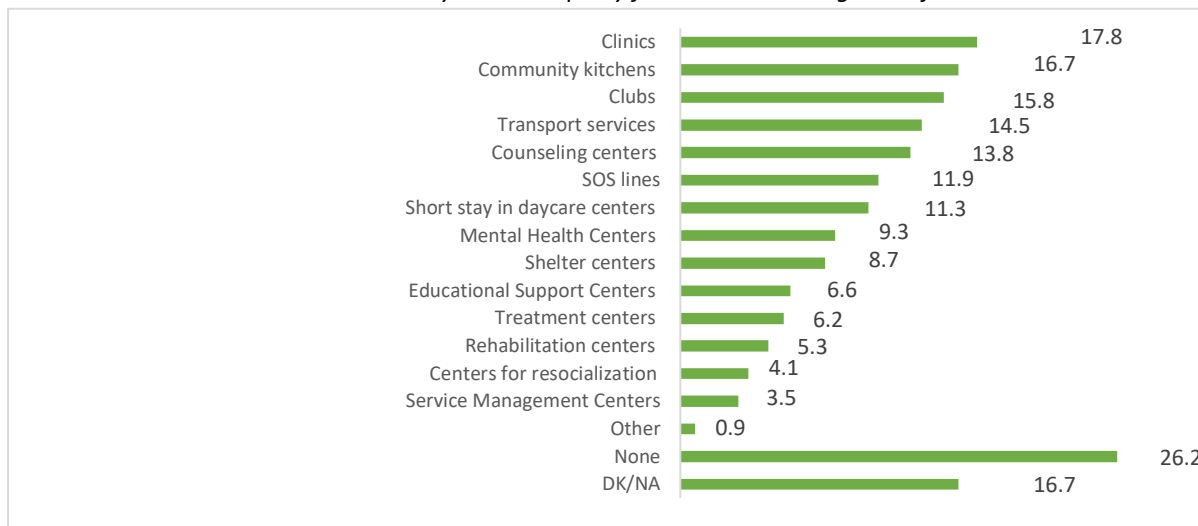
According to the possibility of the local government (including the social protection provided by the state), to jointly engage in activities and care for vulnerable groups at the municipal level, citizens do not notice that some efforts have been made and express greater dissatisfaction with last year's survey.

Chart 27. How satisfied are you with the activities that the municipality undertakes to improve the quality of life of minorities and vulnerable categories of citizens?



When asked "What services are available in your municipality for the vulnerable categories of citizens and minorities?", it is noted that day hospitals are the most widespread (17.8%), followed by public kitchens (16.7%) and clubs are third (15.8%). The centers with the lowest prevalence are Centers for Service Management and Rehabilitation Centers. This distribution of responses is a continuum in relation to the 2018 survey, where the position of answers is similar in the rankings of centers, institutions and services for minorities and vulnerable categories of citizens. The only exceptions are the Counseling Services which have moved a few places below.

Chart 28. What services are available in your municipality for vulnerable categories of citizens and minorities



#### 4.2.2.11. Corruption

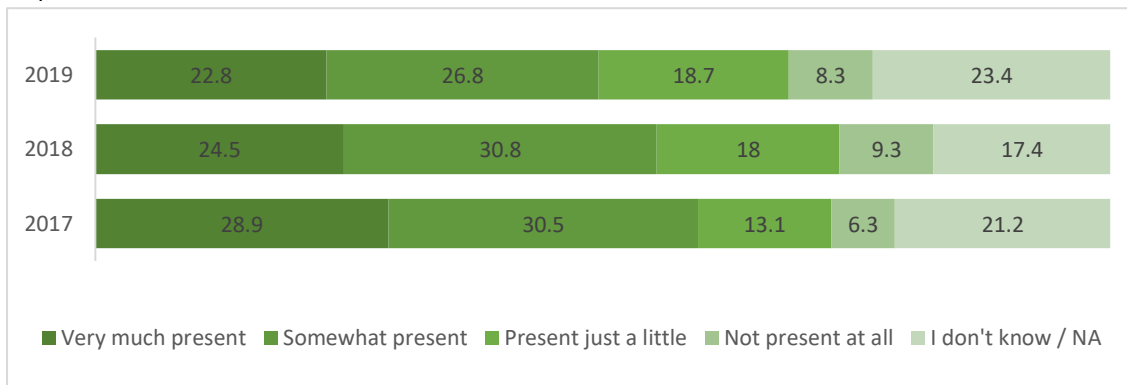
In this set of questions, we are analyzing the corruption, ie the presence and experience of citizens with corruption in local self-government. Corruption in the broadest sense is defined as the abuse of public office or position for the sake of personal gain. Corruption also means any form of abuse of power for personal or group gain, whether public or private.

In the answers of the respondents (compared to 2018), there is a decrease in the answers of the citizens who consider that corruption is very present 22.8% and to some extent present 26.8% in the municipality in the realization of their responsibilities.

18.7% of the respondents answered that corruption is low. Citizens' lack of information/opinion about the presence of corruption in the municipality this year is at the highest level of all previous surveys (23.4%).

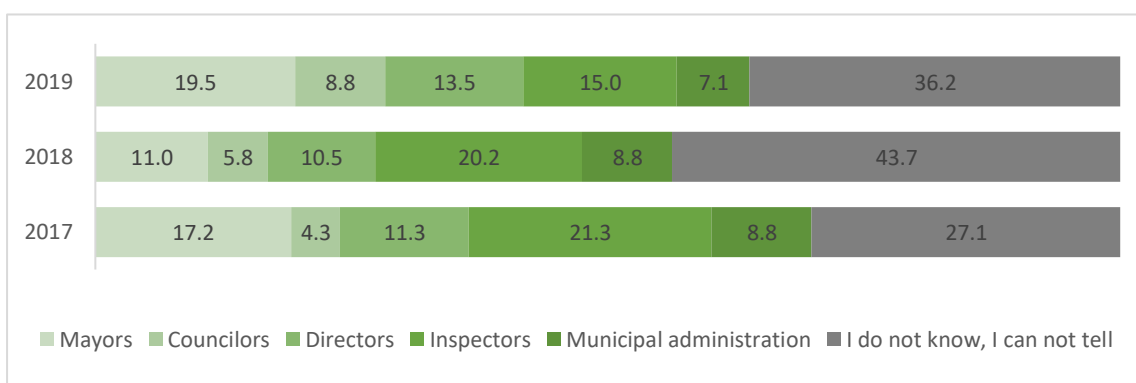


Chart 29. How much would you say that corruption is present in the municipality when its fulfilling its responsibilities?



Functions in the municipality most susceptible to abuse are: the mayor, directors and inspectors subsequently. The distribution of responses in the order differs from previous research. The mayor is a figure rated as the most susceptible to abuse. Viewed in parallel with the results and the social context, in the past year, several mayors (from past and present mandates) have been filed with criminal charges precisely for abuse of office and authority during their term. These events may have contributed to the increase in the percentage of mayors by 8.5% as most susceptible to corruption in the municipal governance structure. The municipal administration and councilors are constantly at the bottom of the pyramid of corruption.

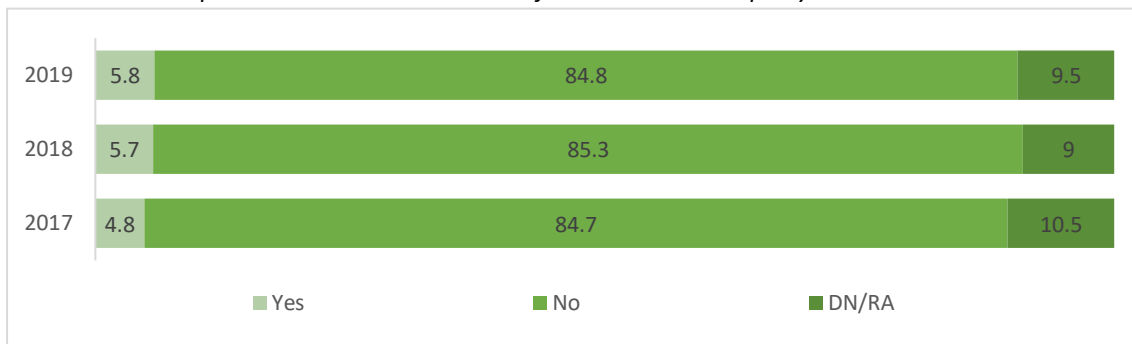
Chart 30. Which of the listed functions in the municipality is most susceptible to abuse:



Findings based on the actual experience of the citizens are much more reliable, as they are based solely on personal experience and exclude the influence of other factors.

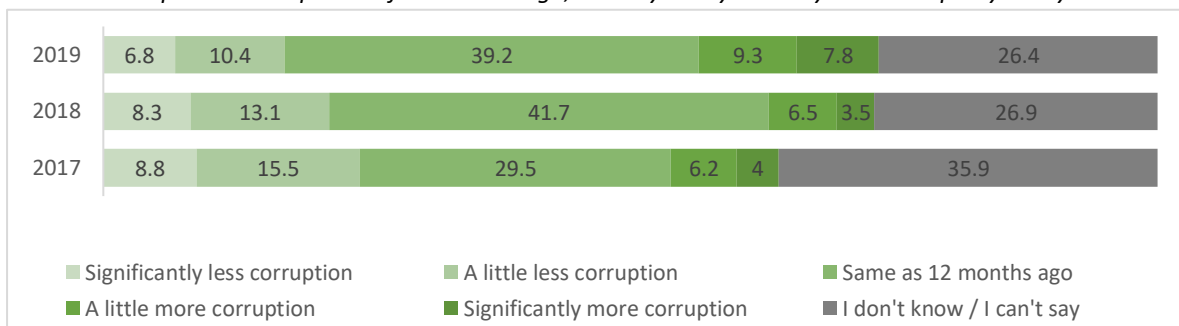
To the question "Have you personally or any member of your immediate family been asked for money, goods or services to complete or accelerate a job in the municipality in the past 12 months?" This year, as in the past two, there is a great deal of consistency in the answers of the respondents. The percentage of those citizens who were asked for money, goods or services is relatively low.

Chart 31. In the past 12 months, has anyone asked you or someone in your immediate family, for money, goods or services to complete or accelerate some kind of work in the municipality:



Compared to 12 months ago, most of the citizens think that the situation with corruption in the municipality is the same today (39.2%), and a high percentage of those who have expressed inability to assess whether the situation with corruption is moving in a better or worse direction (26.4%). However, there is an upward trend in the number of citizens who think there is little more or significantly more corruption than last year.

Chart 32. Compared to the period of 12 months ago, would you say that in your municipality today there is:

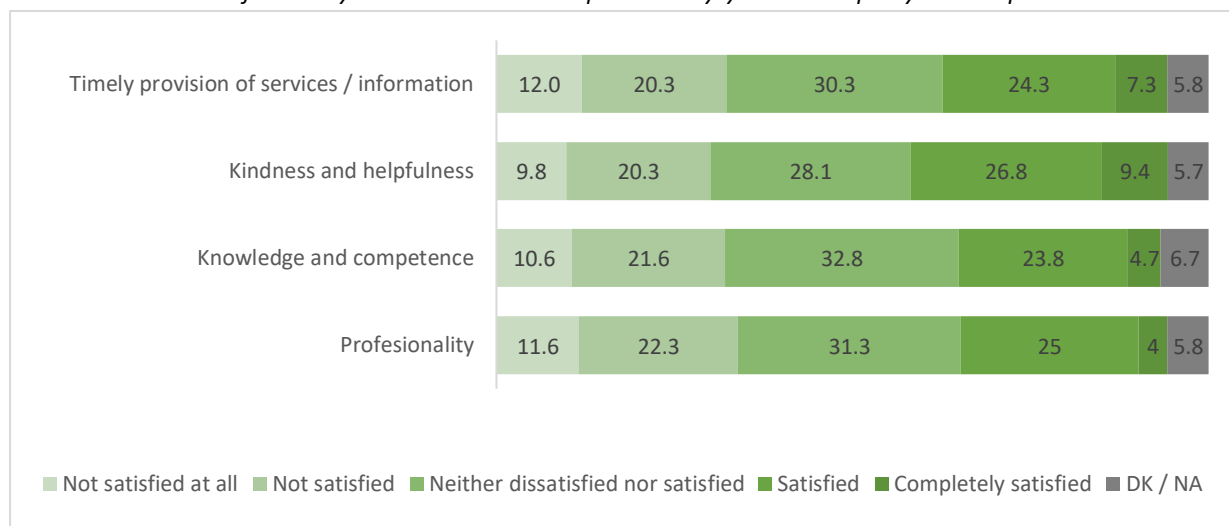


#### 4.2.2.12. Municipal administration

The following are issues that concern the citizens' satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality in terms of: professionalism, knowledge and competence, courtesy and serviceability and timely information provision.

As shown in the Chart 33 below, the distribution of responses is almost the same for all parameters, yet the highest dissatisfaction relates to professionalism (34% aggregated responses), while the highest satisfaction relates to kindness and helpfulness (36% aggregated responses).

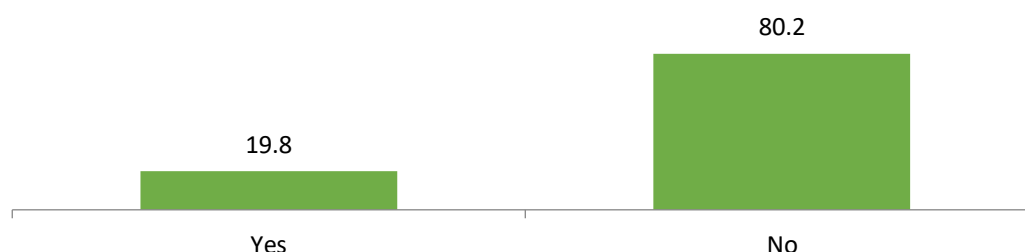
Chart 33. How satisfied are you with the services provided by your municipality: Municipal Administration



### 4.3. Mechanisms for citizen’s participation in the decision-making process

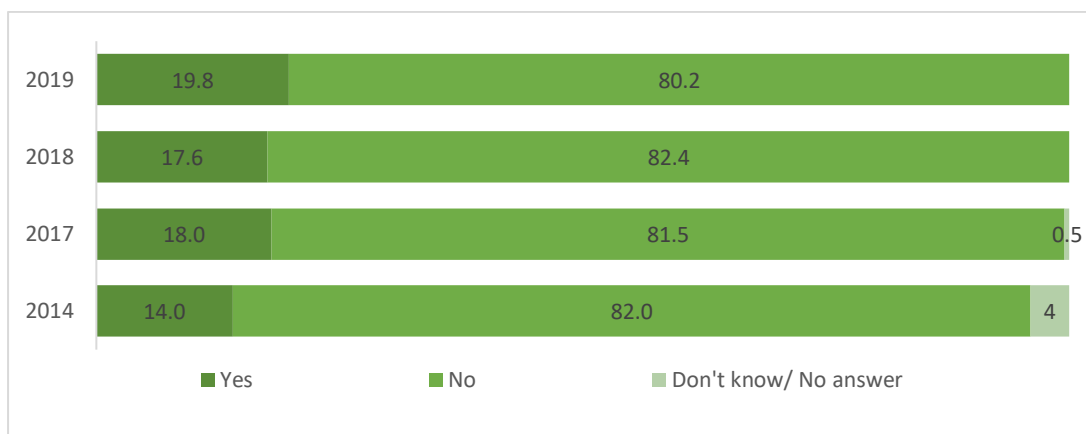
The following section deals with the willingness of citizens to engage in resolving problems that are in the competence of the municipality, as well as the ways in which they have engaged so far. The reasons why citizens are not involved in initiating solutions to problems that fall within the competence of the municipalities in which they live are also explored.

Chart 34. Have you personally ever proposed an initiative to solve a problem (matter) under the jurisdiction of the municipality?



Most of the citizens have never proposed an initiative to solve a problem in their municipality. The frequency of the answers shows that only one fifth (19.8%) of the citizens stated that they propose a problem / initiative in their municipality. Four fifths or 80.2% of the citizens stated that they have never proposed an initiative to the municipality.

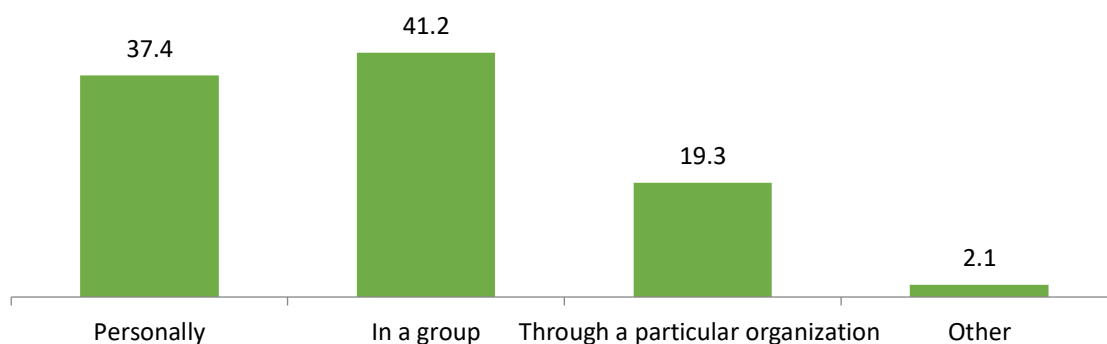
Chart 35. Have you personally ever proposed an initiative to solve a problem (matter) under the jurisdiction of the municipality? – comparative with previous waves



The comparative analysis with the surveys conducted in 2018, 2017 and 2014 shows that in the last three years there has been a slight increase in the citizens' willingness to initiate the solution of the problems / issues within their municipalities.

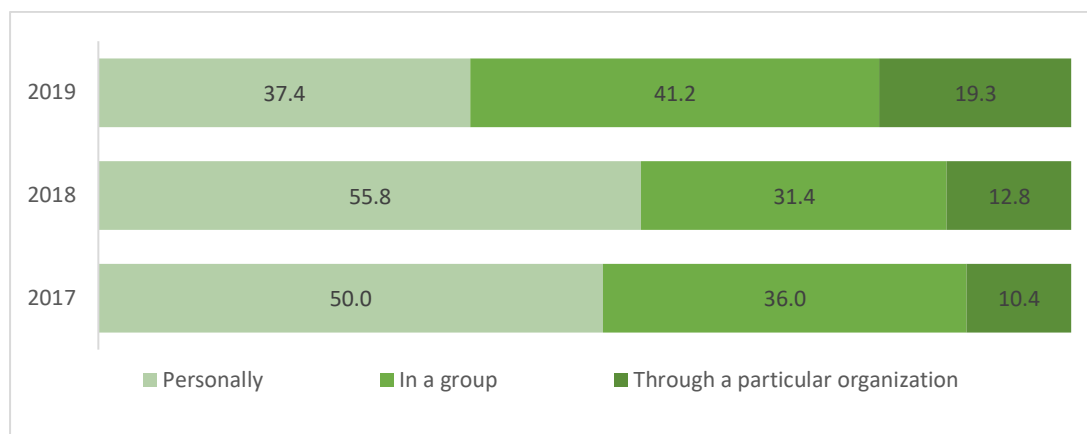
Citizens who said they had proposed an initiative to solve a problem were asked how they did it (Chart 36). Most of the citizens submitted group initiatives to solve some problem in the municipalities where they live (41%).

Chart 36. If yes, how have you done it:



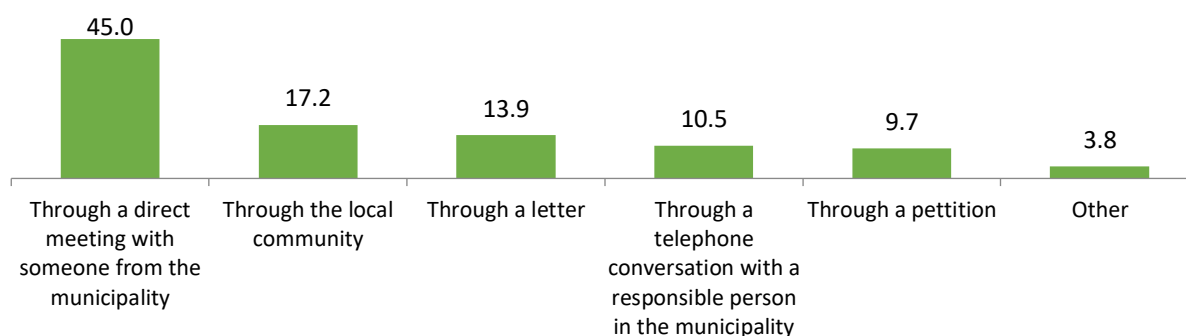
From the results of this year, compared to the past two years, it can be noticed that in order to solve the problems, the citizens today are much more determined to act in groups, ie. associated with their fellow citizens, or through organizations in a problem-solving initiative, at the expense of the individual's individual initiative. So this year the collective action as an opportunity for joint action for solving the problems within the competence of the municipality prevails.

Chart 37. If you propose an initiative to solve any problem or issue in the competence of the municipality, how did you do it? (Comparison with 2017-2018-2019 surveys)



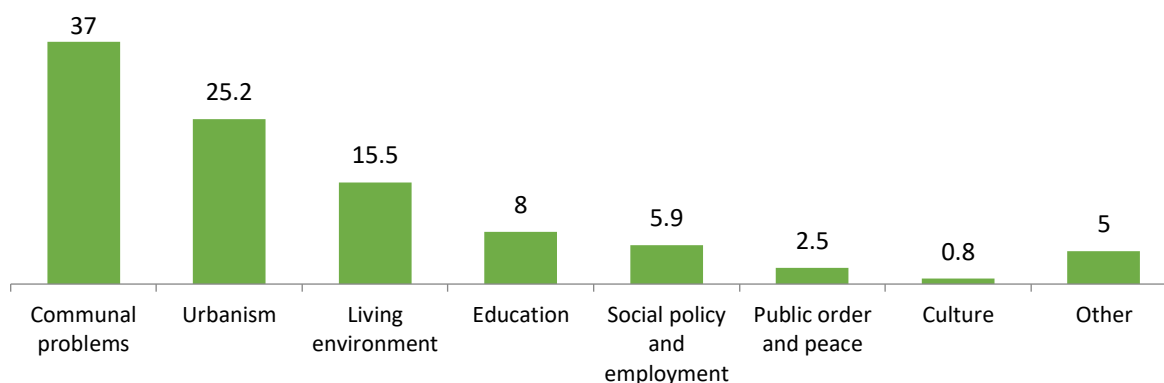
The highest percentage of citizens submitted the initiative or proposal to a direct meeting with someone from the municipality (45 %%), while a significantly smaller percentage did so through the neighborhood community (17.2%), by letter (13.9%), by telephone with a person in the municipality (10.5%) or through a petition (9.7%).

Chart 38. In what way did you submit your proposal (initiative) to the municipality?



Similar to the survey in 2018 and 2017, in this 2019 survey the highest percentage of respondents submitted initiatives for communal problems (37%), and initiatives in the field of urban planning (25.2%). Next are the environment (15.5%), education (8%) and social policy and employment (5.9%).

Chart 39. From what area of life was your proposal / initiative?



The survey also examined the reasons why citizens do not decide to submit initiatives to their municipalities to address specific issues and problems.

The largest percentage of citizens stated that they had no special reason to turn to the municipality with an initiative to resolve it (25.4%).

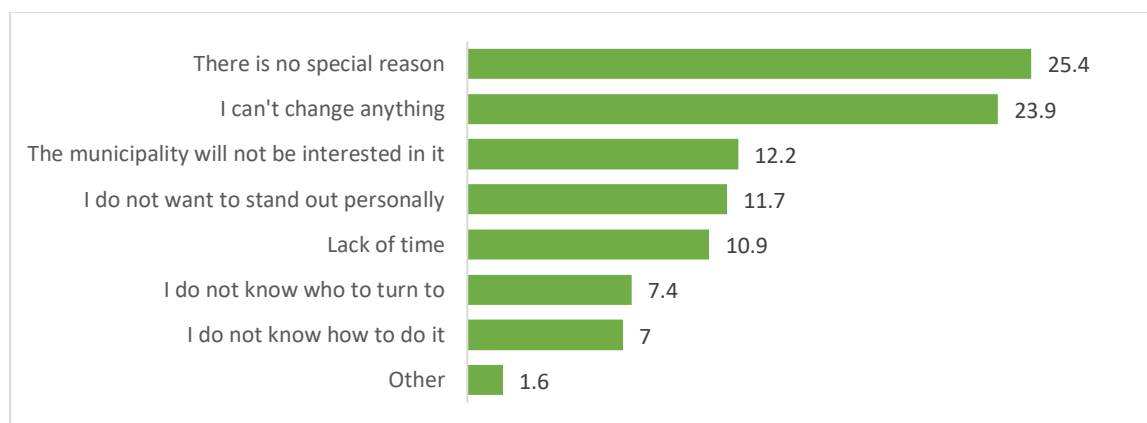
23.9% of the respondents stated that they believe that they do not have the power to make a change and that is why they did not take any initiative to address the problems affecting their municipality.

In this regard are also the responses of 12.2% of the citizens who think that if they submit an initiative, the municipality will not be interested in it.

This ranking data is consistent with 2017 and 2018 data.

The remaining 11.7% of the citizens stated that they did not want to show up personally, 10.9% stated that they did not have time, and 7.4% indicated that they did not know whom to turn to.

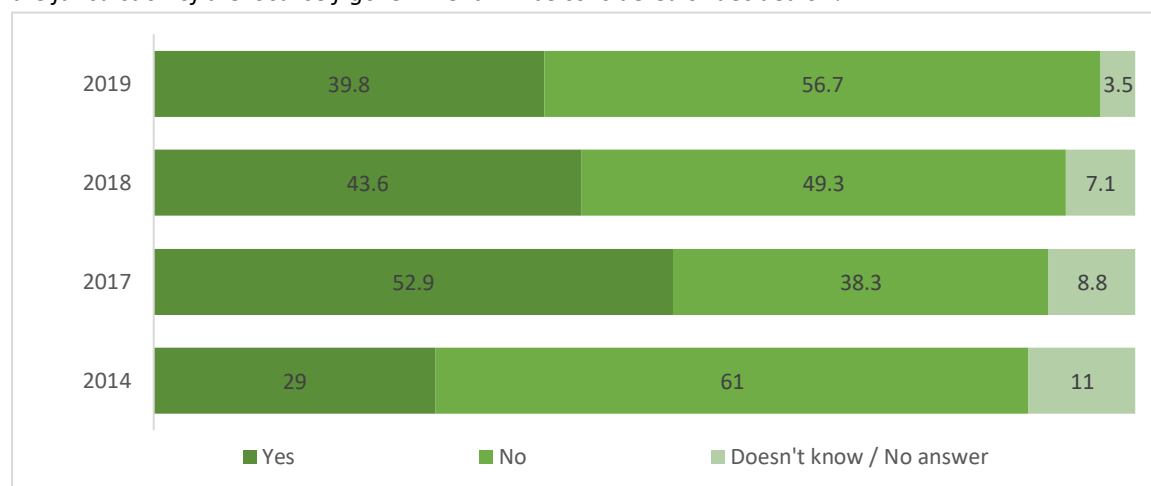
Chart 40. If you have never personally proposed an initiative, what is the reason for that?



The analysis of the received answers to the question "Would they participate in events and activities organized by the Municipality that would consider or decide on a particular issue of local self-government competence?" indicates that four out of ten citizens would participate in such events and activities.

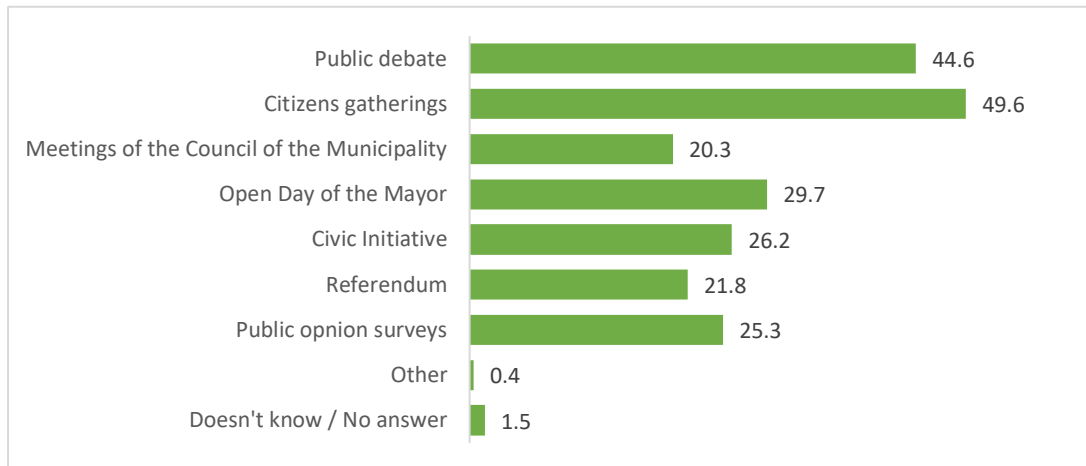
However, it is indicative that there is a growing number of citizens, six out of ten, who have stated in the negative that they would not want to participate in such events and activities.

*Chart 41. Would you participate in events and activities organized by the Municipality where a certain issue in the jurisdiction of the local self-government will be considered or decided on?*



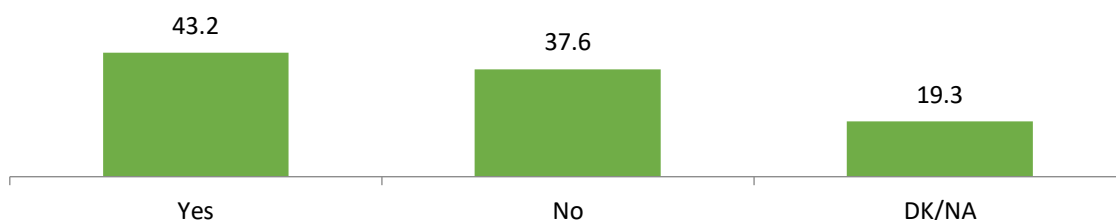
Regarding the events and activities organized by the municipality to discuss or decide on a particular issue of local self-government competence, the highest percentage of citizens stated that they would participate in Citizens' Meetings (49.6%) Public debates (44.6%) and Mayor's Open Day (29.7%).

Chart 42. Activities in which citizens would actively participate in:



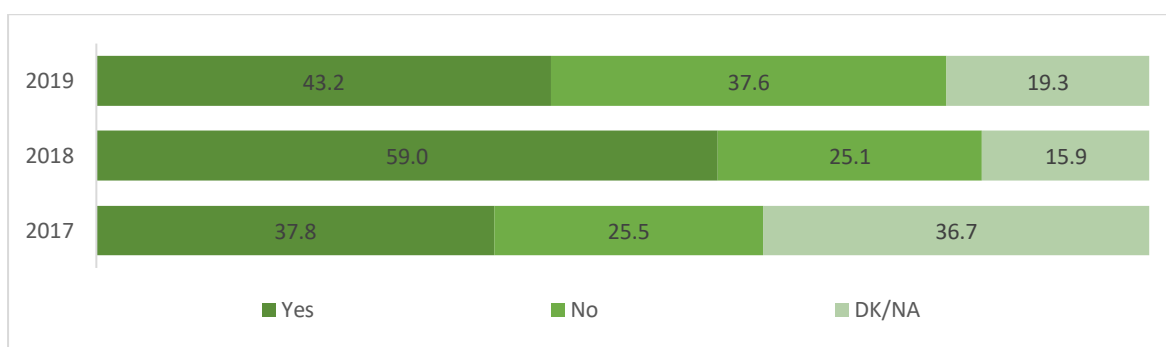
This section also examined citizens' perceptions of whether women participate equally in local government decision-making as men.

Chart 43. Do women equally participate in the decision-making process of the local government as much as men do?



43.2% of the citizens said yes to this issue, while 37.6% believe that women do not participate equally in the decision making process of the local government as men.

Chart 44. Do women equally participate in the decision-making process of the local government as much as men do? (comparative with 2017 and 2018)





The comparative review on this issue indicates a significant reduction in the percentage of citizens who believe that women participate equally in the decision-making process of local government as well as men, unlike last year's survey in which 59% of respondents favorably. At the same time, the percentage of citizens who think that women do not participate equally in the decision-making process as men increased to 37.6%, compared to 25.1% last year.

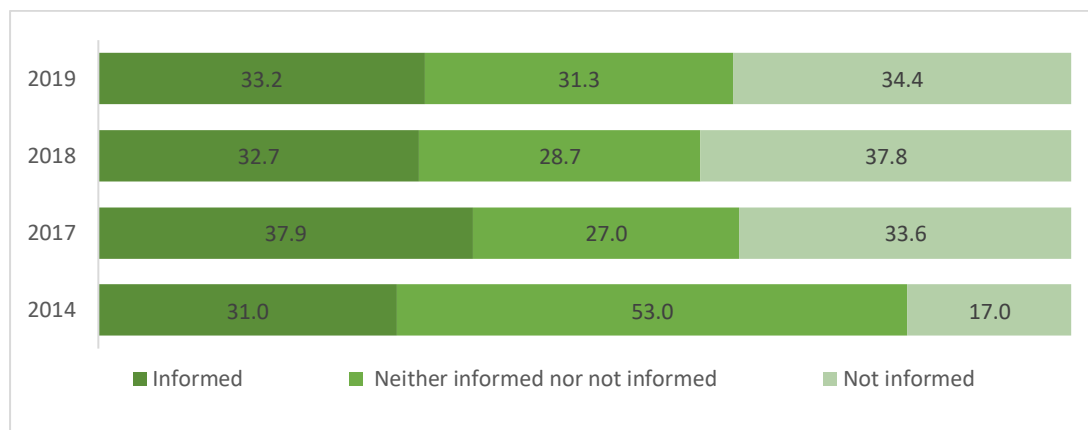
#### 4.4. Information on the work and services of the municipality

In this part of the research was to investigate the level of information of the citizens about the work and services of the municipalities, as well as the sources and channels through which the citizens receive information related to the work of the municipality.

The analysis of the responses indicates almost the same percentage of citizens who stated that they are informed about the work and services of the municipality (33.2%) and of the citizens who stated no to this question (34.4%). Three out of ten citizens are neither informed nor uninformed about the work and services of their municipality (31.3%).

The comparative results shows that this year's survey has almost the same percentage of citizens who stated that they are informed about the work and services of the municipality in (33.2%) compared to the 2018 survey when regarding this issue as informed about the work 32.7% of the citizens said that the municipality. In 2017, most of the citizens expressed information on this topic (37.9%).

*Chart 45. How well are you informed about the work and services of the municipality? (comparative with previous waves)*



The question "How do you get information about the work and services of the municipality?" on the Chart below shows the answers of the respondents. In this regard, the citizens are mostly informed by: the local media, followed by the municipal website and municipal newsletter. Public debates and rallies, the municipal bulletin board, the municipal newspaper, the bulletin boards of the local community are less represented sources of information on the work of the municipality with the citizens. These results are largely consistent with the results of 2017 and 2018.

Chart 46. How do you get information about the work and the services of the municipality?

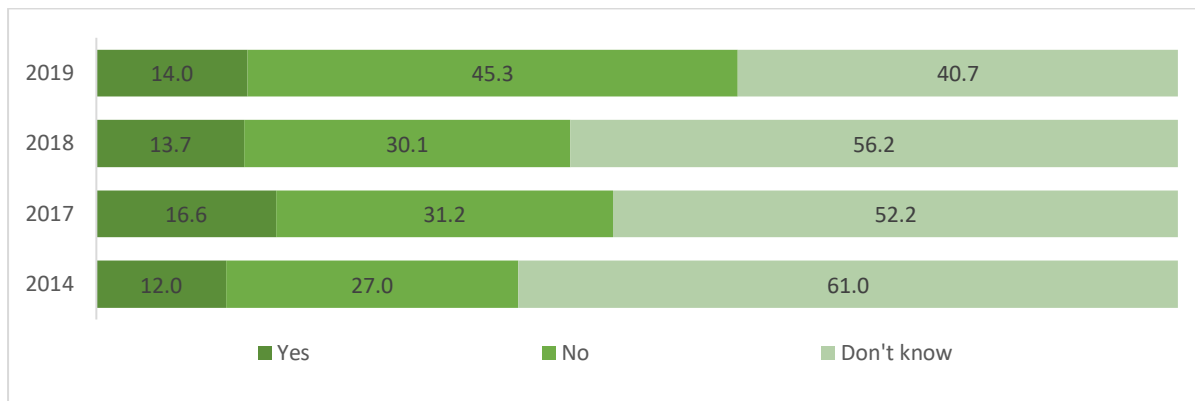


#### 4.5. E-services and other innovative services of the municipality

This part of the research examined the level of citizens' awareness of e-services and other innovative services that municipalities generally offer. Digitization of services is the driver of modern society that enables the realization of the needs on a much faster path. In this direction is the "Program for Sustainable Local Development and Decentralization in the Republic of Macedonia 2015-2020"<sup>2</sup> in which the development of the e-municipality and the encouragement of the use of digital technologies at local level (internet portals, dashboards, creating and updating electronic and publicly accessible data-generating catalogs of municipalities - big / open data concept, mobile services related to local services and utilizing social media for improved delivery of local services) are marked as priority areas of action.

<sup>2</sup> [http://mls.gov.mk/images/documents/lokalnasamouprava/MK\\_WEB/PROGRAMA\\_MK\\_WEB.pdf](http://mls.gov.mk/images/documents/lokalnasamouprava/MK_WEB/PROGRAMA_MK_WEB.pdf)

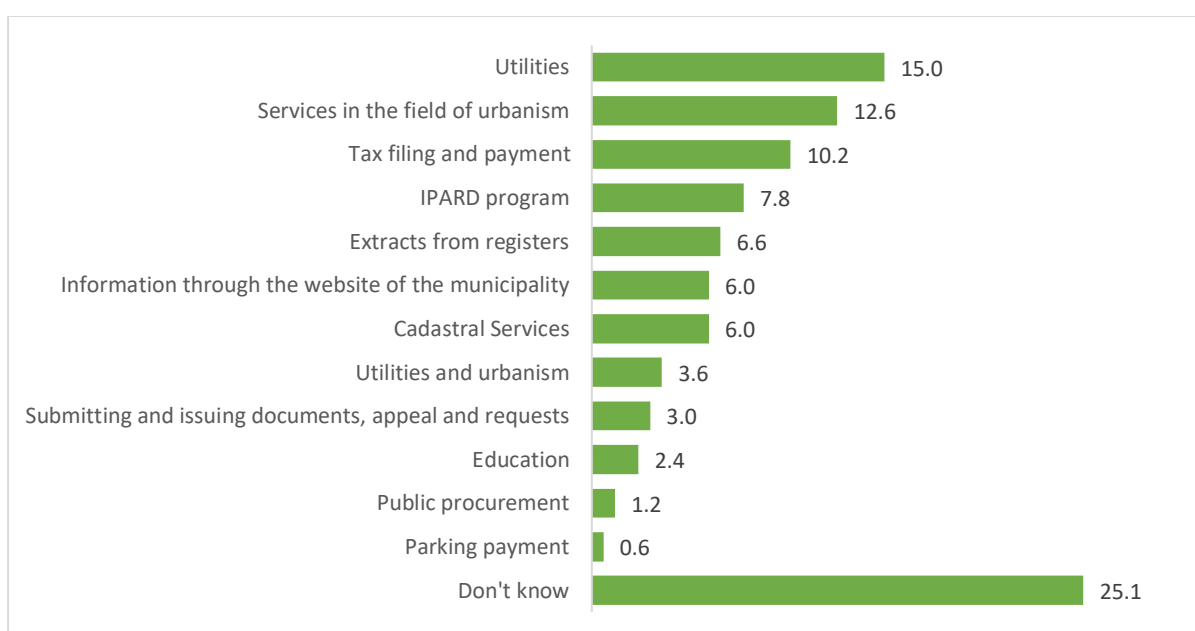
Chart 47. Does your municipality offer e-services? (comparative 2014, 2017 and 2018)



The analysis of the responses indicates a relatively low level of awareness and familiarity of citizens with the e-services offered by the municipalities. 40.7% of the citizens stated that they do not know about this type of services, while 45.3% of the citizens stated that their municipality does not provide this type of services. This year's survey has significantly increased the percentage of negative answers at the expense of "I don't know" answers and is a shift in awareness of the possibility of such services.

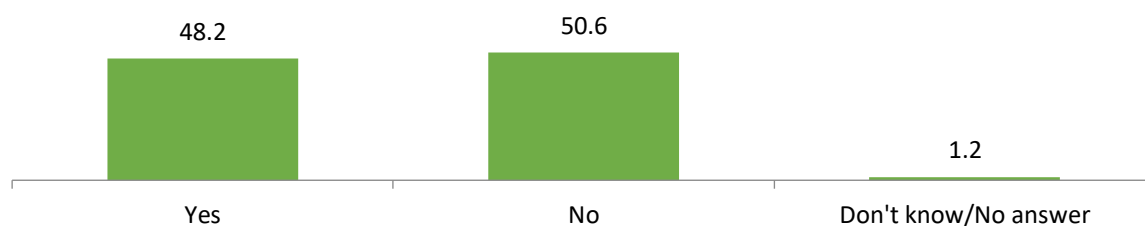
Respondents who answered 'yes' to the previous question (14% or 167 respondents) were asked what e-services your municipality provides. Utilities (payment of bills), services in the field of urban planning, as well as tax reporting and payment are the first three ranking answers that are often repeated in the responses of the citizens.

Chart 48. Which services?



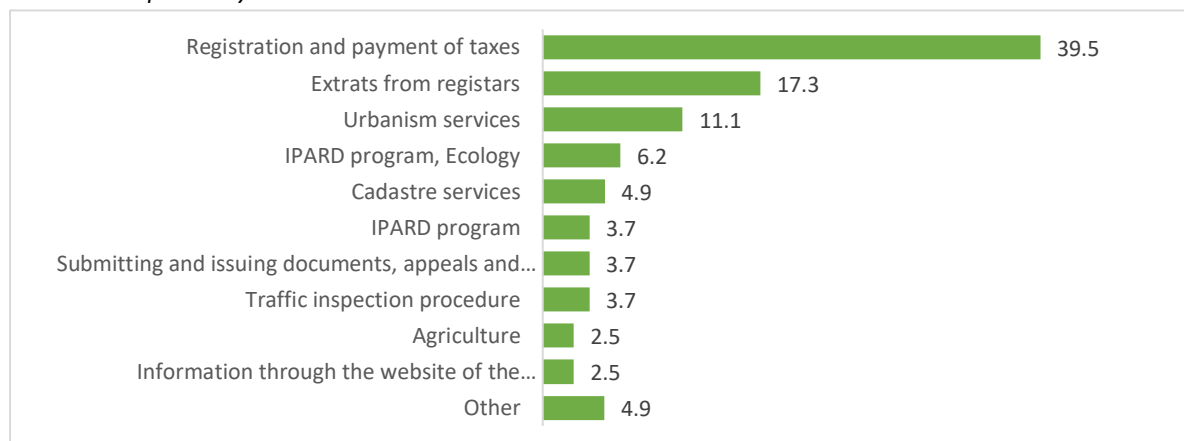
Almost half of the respondents who answered positively to the previous question answered that they personally use some of the e-services offered by their municipality (48.2%).

Chart 49. Do you personally use any of those e-services? N = 81 respondents that said their municipality offers e – services



The most frequently used e-services by the citizens in their municipalities are: Tax filing and payment 39.5%, Extracts from registers 17.3%, Urbanism services 11.1%, as well as information and services in the area of Ecology and the European Union's IPARD program.

Chart 50. Which services do you personally use? N = 39 respondents that said their municipality offers e – services and personally use them.



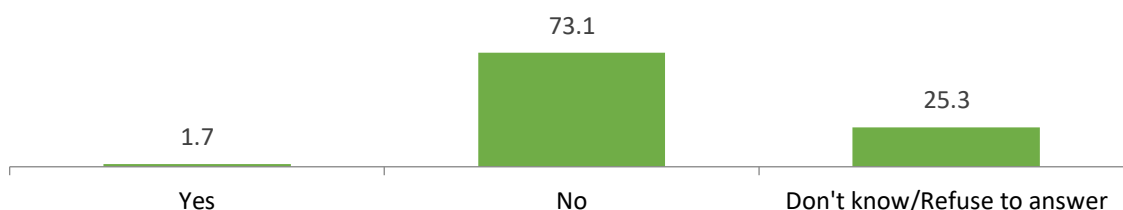
The graph below shows the preferences of the citizens regarding the services they want their municipality to provide for them in future. The most commonly desired services of this kind are: extracting of birth certificates, personal documents and construction licenses.

Chart 51. Which e-services would you like your municipality to provide that is not currently providing?



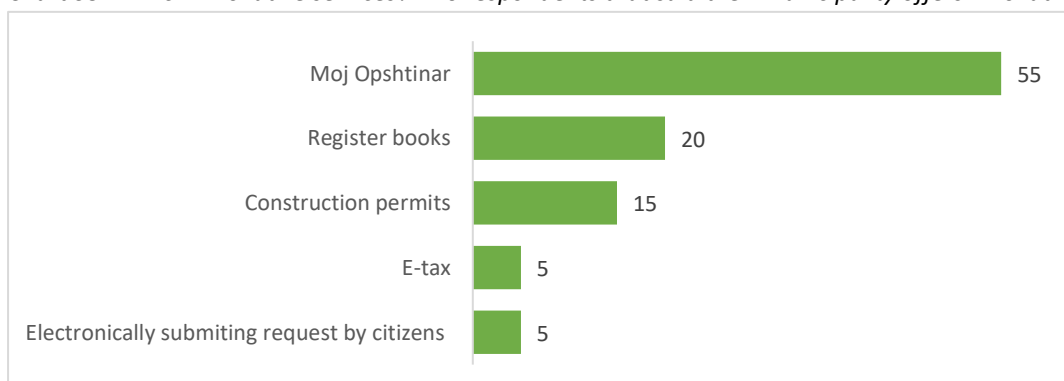
As for other innovative services provided by the municipalities, only 1.4% of the respondents were positively informed.

Chart 52. Do you know about other innovative services that your municipality provides?



Innovative services that citizens recognize are: “Moj Opštinar”, Register books, obtaining legalization permits, E-tax, as well as various forms or applications that can be completed electronically.

Chart 53. Which innovative services? N20 respondents that said their municipality offers innovative services



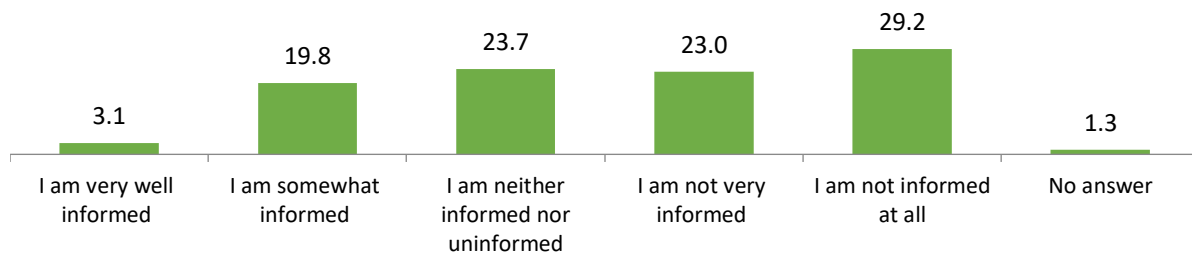
From the results obtained for this set of questions, the general perception is that citizens are not sufficiently informed about the e-services that municipalities offer to their citizens. The percentage of citizens who do not use e-services is also high.

These results are consistent with previous research, where the level of unawareness is also high. The general conclusion is that although the municipalities offer this type of services to a certain extent, the citizens as end users of the services are not sufficiently informed or do not know about their existence.

#### 4.6. Non – Governmental Organizations / Civil Society Associations

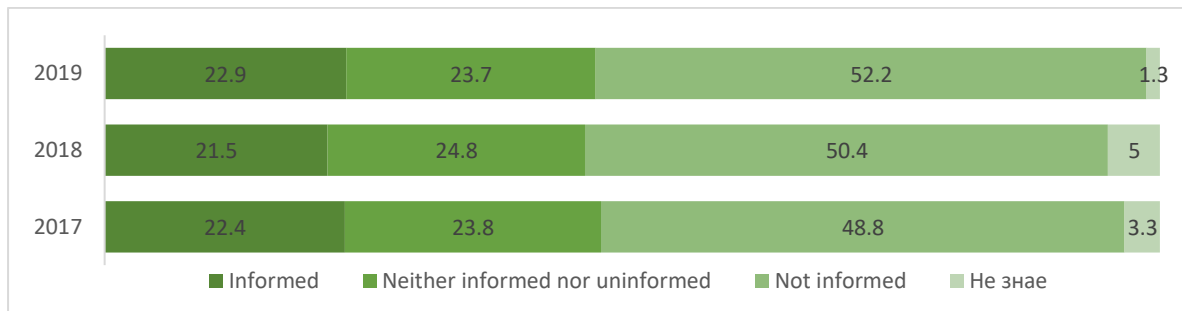
The level of citizens' familiarity with NGOs and Civil Associations is a central topic in this part of the research. The perceived level of cooperation between the municipality and the civil society is discussed, as well as the motivation of the citizens to be involved in the activities of the civil society on issues that are important in their community.

*Chart 54. Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge about non-governmental organizations or citizens associations in your community?*



The aggregated responses show relatively low awareness of citizens with NGOs or civil society organizations in their municipality. Half of the citizens (52.2%) stated that they are not familiar with the CSOs that operate in their community. Almost twice as low (22.9%) respondents said that they are informed with this aspect.

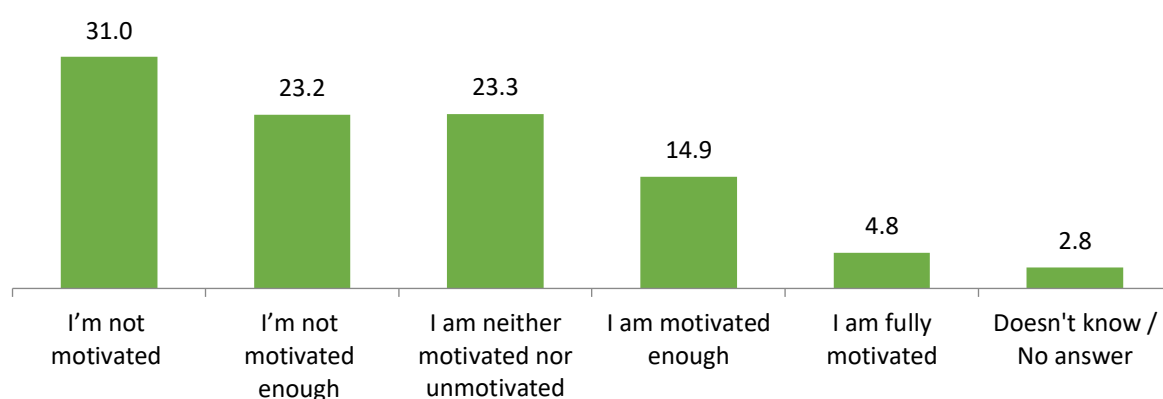
Chart 55. Which of the following statements best describes your knowledge about non-governmental organizations or citizens associations in your community? (Comparative with 2017 and 2018)



The comparative results of the survey conducted in 2018 and 2017 show that there are no significant changes in the level of awareness of citizens with NGOs and CSOs in their municipalities.

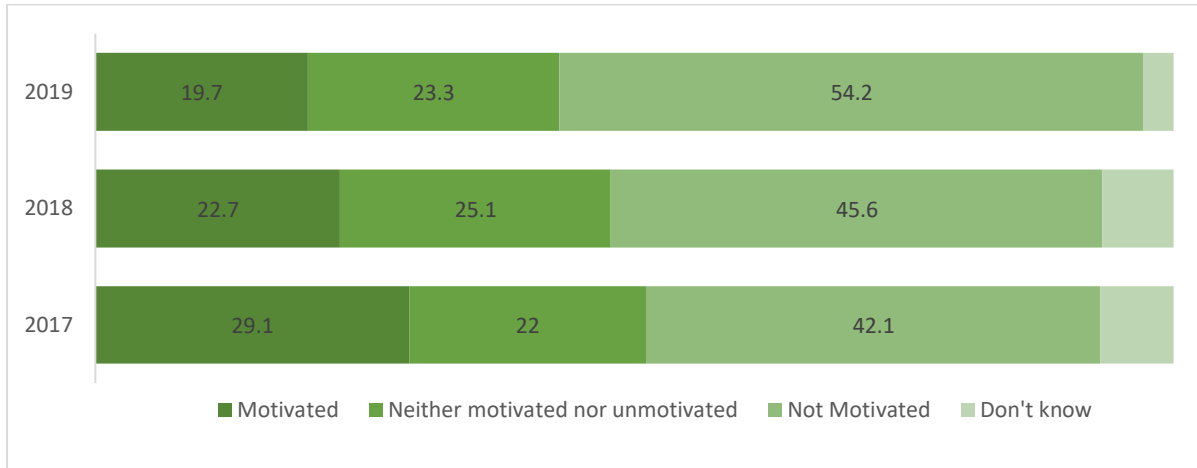
The analysis of the responses shows that approximately the same percentage of citizens who are familiar with CSOs and NGOs in their municipality (23%) are at the same time motivated to engage in activities for resolving an issue that matter in their municipality ( 20%).

Chart 56. To what degree are you motivated to engage in activities of citizens associations on issues you consider to be of social importance?



Half of the citizens said that they were not motivated to participate in such activities (54.2%), which is a percentage that in 2018 and 2017 is continuously increasing at the expense of the motivation of the citizens for such activities.

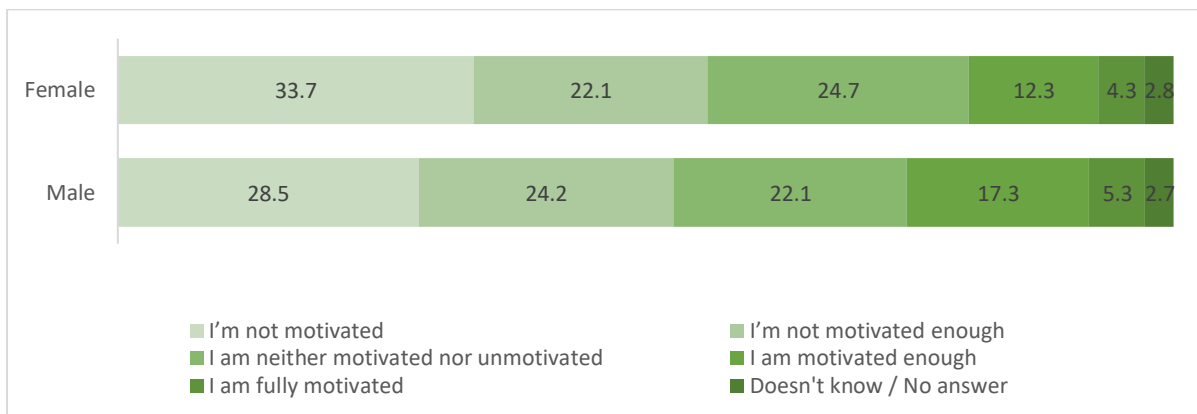
Chart 57. To what degree are you motivated to engage in activities of citizens associations on issues you consider to be of social importance? (Comparative with 2017 and 2018)



The cross-tabulation results by gender of the respondents do not indicate statistically significant differences regarding the readiness for engagement in the activities of the CSOs.

Female respondents express less motivation for CSO activities (17%) against male respondents (23%).

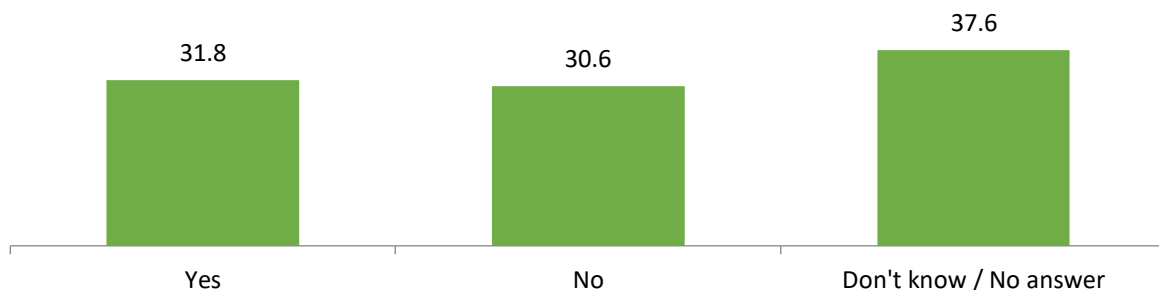
Графикон 58. To what degree are you motivated to engage in activities of citizens associations on issues you consider to be of social importance? (cross-tabulation: gender)



Regarding the question "Is there cooperation between the municipality and the CSOs on issues of interest to the citizens?", shown in the chart below, one third of the citizens (34.1%) said 'yes', and just as much (30.6%) stated 'no', indicating a split in the answers to this question.

Chart 59. Do the municipality and the citizen associations/NGOs cooperate on issues of interest to the citizens?

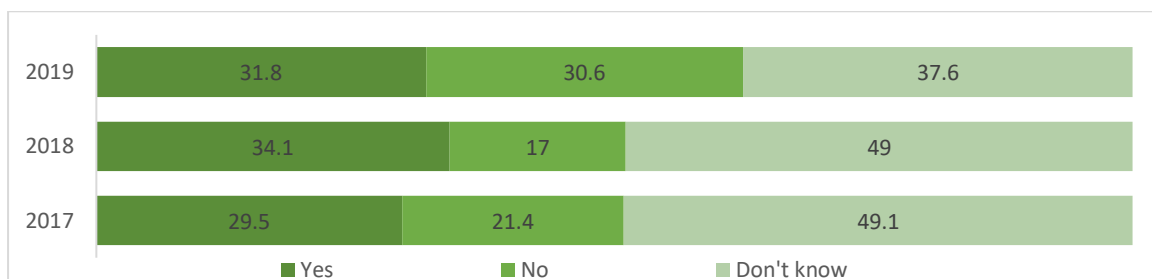




There is also a large increase in the number of citizens who have said no to this issue (30.6%), compared to previous years.

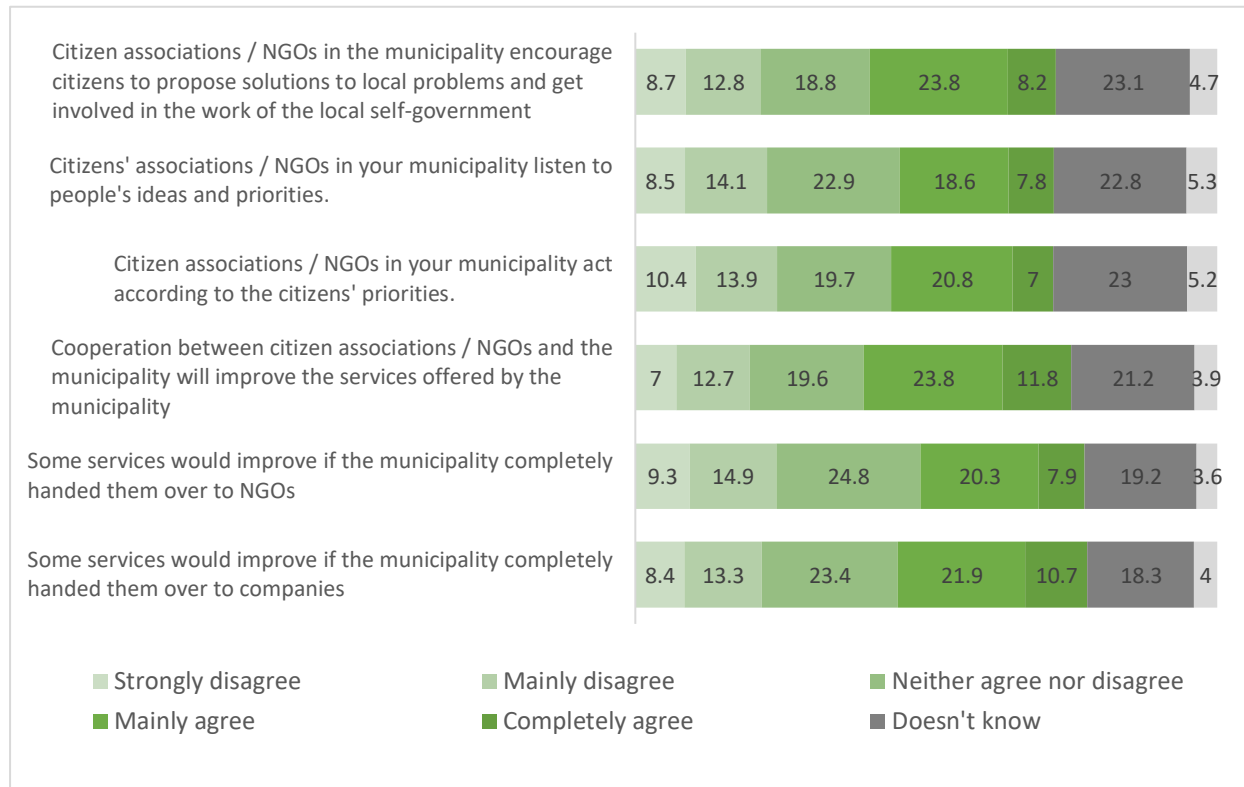
Almost 37.6% of the respondents did not give an answer to this question. Comparative analysis with the 2018 survey indicates a slight decline of 2.3% of citizens who consider that there is cooperation between the municipality and CSOs on issues of interest to citizens.

*Chart 60. Do the municipality and the citizen associations/NGOs cooperate on issues of interest to the citizens? (comparative with 2017 and 2018)*



In the final part of this survey, respondents were asked to express the degree of agreement with several attitudes/views related to the work of NGOs and CSOs. The chart 61 below shows the results. A total of 35.6% of the citizens only agree or fully agree with the statement "Cooperation between CSOs / NGOs and the municipality will improve the services offered by the municipality". One third of the respondents believe that "Some services would be improved if the municipality fully surrendered them to the companies" and almost as much as "Citizens' associations / NGOs encourage citizens to propose solutions to local problems and get involved in the work of local government". From the respondents' answers, it can be concluded that there is a lack of information and / or indifference regarding the work in the non-governmental sector in our country

Chart 61. To what extent you agree with these views?



## 5. Key findings

### 1. Overall satisfaction with the quality of life in the municipality

- **Every second citizen is satisfied with their municipality as a place to live, the quality of life it has, and the safety of the community in their municipality.**
- Citizens express a high level of satisfaction with the municipality as a place for retirees (the elderly) and as a place for raising children (47% of the citizens are satisfied with these aspects).
- Citizens express the least satisfaction with the municipality as a place to live for the vulnerable categories of citizens (32% satisfied citizens). However, satisfaction with this aspect has increased compared to 2018 when it was only 23%.
- **The overall average grade** for life satisfaction in the municipality in the current survey is 3.2 and equals the satisfaction in the survey conducted in 2018 when the average grade for this aspect was also 3.2 and in 2017 it was 3,1.
- Almost one fifth of citizens (18%) do not differentiate between services provided by local and central government, a trend that remains at the same level as in 2017.
- One third of the citizens (33%) stated that they agree or completely agree with the statement "I am satisfied with the way the municipality is managed".



- From this section, the lowest level of consent is given by the citizens in terms of "responsible approach to persons with disabilities (27%)," awareness of the activities and plans of the municipality (31%) and "consideration of the views of the citizens by the Mayor / city council (31%)."
- The comparative analysis with the 2018 survey shows that there is almost no shift in the average grades that the respondents gave regarding the examined aspects of the work of the local self-government.

## 2. Satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality

- 4 out of 10 citizens are generally satisfied with the services provided by their municipality. Consistent result from 2017 to 2019.
- Residents in urban areas (43%) express a higher level of satisfaction than residents of rural municipalities (38%).
- The highest level of satisfaction with all municipal services surveyed was reported in fire protection (3.4), followed by education (3.2) and health care (3.0).
- On the other hand, the overall average satisfaction grade of citizens with services in the area of Local Economic Development is 2.46. This is the lowest average grade given by the respondents compared to all other surveyed areas in the questionnaire that are under the competence of the municipality.
- Almost half of the respondents are generally satisfied with the conditions in primary and secondary education, as well as the transportation for students and the quality and expertise of the teaching staff.
- Regarding urban planning, only 27% of the citizens are satisfied with it in urban areas, while 22% are satisfied with urban planning in rural areas.
- Local Economic Development is a service the citizens are least satisfied with. The biggest dissatisfaction with the increase of employment is the dissatisfied activities which show that 57% of the citizens are not satisfied with this aspect.
- Regarding the utilities, the highest satisfaction of the citizens is continuously and unchanged in the area of water supply competencies of which 57% of the citizens are satisfied (aggregated responses fully satisfied and satisfied). In contrast to water supply, stray dog/animals management is the service that citizens are most dissatisfied with in the three surveys conducted (67% aggregated dissatisfaction data in 2019).
- The highest satisfaction with the services related to social protection under the competence of the local self-government exists in kindergartens and child care, of which 52% of the citizens are satisfied. Most dissatisfied with the social protection sphere, citizens report services related to orphanages (54%) and institutions for alcohol and drug addicts (51%).



- The greatest dissatisfaction of the citizens with the individual aspects related to the environment is for the protection and prevention of air pollution, where over 49% of the respondents express dissatisfaction.
- Regarding the availability of centers or services in municipalities for minorities and vulnerable categories of citizens, it is noted that day hospitals (18%) and public kitchens (17%) are the most prevalent.
- 50% of the citizens think that corruption is present in the municipalities, but only 6% of the respondents report that they have had direct experience with corruption in the municipality (personal or family member).
- Comparison of results with last year's survey shows almost unchanged assessments regarding 2 aspects of municipal administration's work: urbanism and urban planning and local economic development. There has been a slight improvement in: education, culture, sports and recreation, utilities and democracy, transparency and accountability. There has been significant improvement in social and environmental services. Overall satisfaction with the services provided by the municipality in relation to last year's survey also registered a slight increase.

### 3. Mechanisms for citizen participation and participation in the decision-making process in the municipalities

- One in five surveyed citizens (20%) stated that they had proposed an initiative to solve a problem / issue in their municipality. **Four out of five citizens (80%) said they had never proposed an initiative.**
- **The comparative analysis on this issue** shows a slight but continuous increase from 2017 in the number of citizens who have submitted an initiative to solve a problem in the municipality (2017-14.0%; 2017-18%; 2018-17.6% and 2019 -19.8%).
- About a quarter of the citizens (24%) believe that they do not have the power to make a change to address the problems affecting their municipality.
- 40% of the citizens would take part in events and activities organized by the municipality to discuss or decide on a particular issue of local self-government competence, which compared to 2018 dropped by 4% when this result was 44%.
- As in 2018, every fourth citizen thinks that women do not participate equally in the decision-making process of local government as men do.



#### 4. Informing about the work and services of the municipality

- **One third of the citizens stated that they were informed about the work and services of the municipality.**
- Comparative analysis shows almost unchanged percentage of citizens who stated that they are informed about the work and services of the municipality. In 2019, that percentage is 33.2%, and in 2018 it was 32.7%. Compared to the 2017 survey when this number was 37.9%, these two years mark a decline in the number of citizens who consider themselves informed about the operation of the municipality.
- The most frequently used sources of information on the operation and services of the municipality are the local media and the municipal website.

#### 5. E-services and other innovative services of the municipality

- The number of citizens who do not know if their municipality is offering E - services this year is 41% and is significantly reduced compared to 2018 when it was 56%. 45% think that their municipality does not provide such services, and 14% think that the municipality where they live offers such services.
- **Low 3% of the citizens use an e-service of the municipality.**
- Comparative analysis shows that awareness of municipalities' e-services has not changed significantly over the past few years.

#### 6. Non Governmental organizations – Civil Society Organizations

- **Half of the citizens stated that they are not familiar with the CSOs that operate in their community.**
- 54% of the citizens stated that they are not motivated to participate and activities for issues that are important in their municipality, **which is a significant increase** compared to 2018 when 46% of the citizens had the same attitude.
- Comparative analyzes show an increase in the number of unmotivated citizens, as opposed to those who are motivated from 2017 to this year.
- Regard the cooperation between the municipality and civil society / NGOs on issues of citizens' interest, one third of the citizens think that it exists/it is present.