

# STUDY

**ON EQUALITY PERCEPTIONS  
AND ATTITUDES**  
**in the Republic of Moldova**



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Chişinău 2015

This study was prepared by the Council on the prevention and elimination of discrimination and ensuring equality and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme in Moldova (UNDP Moldova), under the joint project "Supporting National Human Rights Institutions as per International Treaty Bodies and UPR Recommendations". The Council on the prevention and elimination of discrimination and ensuring equality, OHCHR and UNDP Moldova shall not be responsible for correctness and fullness of the contents or for any loss or damage that may be caused directly or indirectly due to use of the information or reliance on the contents of this survey, either in the original language or translated versions.

This study was not officially edited.

The study is available in Romanian (original), Russian and English on web-pages [www.un.md](http://www.un.md), [www.egalitate.md](http://www.egalitate.md).



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## Abbreviations

Council – the Council on the prevention and elimination of discrimination and ensuring equality

SDI – Social Distance Index

OHCHR – The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

RM – Republic of Moldova

EU – European Union

HIV+ – Persons living with HIV

LGBT - Lesbians, Gay, Bisexuals, Transsexuals

NR – Non-response

DNK – Do not know



# Summary

This study measures the attitudes and perceptions of the population to different persons and vulnerable and marginalized groups in the Republic of Moldova, (RM) aiming to achieve two major objectives:

1. to measure the social distance expressed by the respondent to the representatives of the vulnerable and marginalized groups in the RM, measured via the Social Distance Index (SDI);
2. to point out and confirm, if needed, the stereotypes existing in the society in relation to the persons from vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The study reveals a number of important elements of the public perception related to the problem of equality and non-discrimination in the Republic of Moldova, the period of reference being the year 2015. One of the first findings of the study is that discrimination of certain groups of persons is not perceived by citizens as one of the most stringent problems in the RM, followed by the fact that the same citizens show a high level of intolerance to persons from vulnerable and marginalized groups. Besides the modest level of development and living, which have an impact on intolerance, the situation is amplified by a low level of confidence manifested by citizens for state institutions, other social stakeholders, and even lack of confidence for other people.

None of the 14 vulnerable and marginalized groups for which the social distance was measured registered SDI values, which would mean zero intolerance. The average value of the SDI accounts for 2.8 points, implying a social acceptance at the level of work colleague, meaning that more than half of respondents do not accept most of the groups analyzed in the study as neighbors, friends and family members. At the same time, the population manifests different levels of intolerance to the different studied groups. The SDI varies from 0.9 points (SDI referring to Russians and Russian speakers) to 5.2 points (referring to the LGBT community).

Even though there are notable statistical differences related to the expressed level of tolerance (e.g. increasing level of education, social-economic status, as well as residence in urban area reduce the social distance), in general the variation by social-demographic characteristics of the citizens is not cardinal, and this demonstrates that intolerance would not be a characteristic of any distinct social-demographic groups and it is not a characteristic at all for other groups. On the other hand, there was found a classical relation between knowledge (contact) and tolerance, the social distance being lower if the persons have networking experiences with the representatives of marginalized groups.

Alongside the high level of intolerance, a big number of mainly negative stereotypes are shared by citizens in relation to the marginalized groups. While the quantity and the negativism of the stereotypes correlate naturally with the social distance to the respective groups. The maximum social distance manifested to the LGBT community is determined by the perception of this group through such characteristics as “looseness”, “abnormal”, “foolery”, “sickness”. The critical level of intolerance manifested to the people living with HIV is determined by the perception of this people as bearers of viruses and sources of infection. A series of stereotypes spread about all detainees (dangerous, aggressive, thieves, killers, lost people) also determined a high level of intolerance to them, manifesting an increased social distance. Even though the ethnic and religious affiliation does not imply maximum social distance, at least in comparison to other above-mentioned groups, these groups are distinguished by increased social distance. Hence there is an incomparable high level of intolerance for Roma people as compared to other ethnic groups (SDI – 3.1 points), being associated with such stereotypes as “thieves, liars, beggars, lazy, dirty”. The persons of Muslim religion represent another group which is pointed out on the background of other religious minorities, with an SDI of 3.3 points and with such associations as “aggressive, fanatics, terrorists, and extremists”.

In spite of the multiple obvious manifestations, the issues of intolerance and discriminatory attitudes remain under the shadow of the public recognition, being not acknowledged by the general public.

## Study background

The sociological data regarding the inter-human attitudes or those related to groups of persons represent an irreplaceable empirical basis for understanding and tackling such phenomena as discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance to persons/groups, and other attitude-based networking forms as sources of social tensions.

The measurement of the perceptions and attitudes related to other groups represents an important tool for identifying problems in the area of human rights and equality, measuring the developments, and planning new strategic actions for combating potential violence. Such studies are very important, considering the existing controversies and the widely spread bias over the time.

The study **aims** to measure the attitudes and the perceptions of the population regarding different vulnerable and marginalized persons and groups from the RM, and namely:

1. Persons with mental and intellectual impairments;
2. Persons with physical impairments;
3. LGBT persons;
4. People living with HIV;
5. Roma people;
6. Russians living in the RM;
7. Russian-speaking persons;
8. Romanians living in the RM;
9. Jewish people;
10. Persons of African origin;
11. Foreigners living in the RM, but not holding RM citizenship;
12. Persons of Muslim religion;
13. Other religious minorities;
14. Ex-detainees.

Besides the representatives of these 14 categories of groups, this study has also measured the perceptions of the population regarding women in the society.

In parallel with measuring the attitudes and perceptions, the given study points out the stereotypes existing in the society in relation to the above-mentioned persons and groups.

Hence, the development of the respective study was guided by two major **objectives**:

1. to measure the social distance expressed by the respondent to the representatives of the vulnerable and marginalized groups in the RM, measured via the Social Distance Index (SDI);
2. to point out and confirm, if needed, the stereotypes existing in the society in relation to the persons from vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Thus, knowing the social distance in relation to certain groups of vulnerable and marginalized persons, as well as confirming the stereotypes contributing to the respective social distance - subsequently, all these data represent a valuable basis and source of information in developing national programs and strategies for preventing and eliminating discrimination and ensuring equality. As this study analyzes every group of persons separately – for all the 14 categories mentioned above, the results of the study may be easily used by the state institutions, as well as by the representatives of the civil society, including the groups which are directly tackled in the study.

## Methodology of the study

To fulfill the goal and the objectives of the respective study, the following research methods were applied:

- Analysis of the existing documents in the area;
- Qualitative study;
- Quantitative study.

The social distance measuring was carried out by applying the Social Distance Scale (Bogardus Scale) via a quantitative study.

The pointing out of the existing stereotypes represented the main challenge at the incipient stage of the study. The list of stereotypes included in the questionnaire of the quantitative study was developed based on the results of documents' analysis and subsequently it was completed with stereotypes identified within the quantitative study.

### *Qualitative study*

The main goal of the qualitative study was to identify/confirm the stereotypes existing in the society in relation to certain vulnerable and marginalized persons and groups. During the first stage of the study, **2 group discussions** were organized with the general population. One focus group was organized with young people (9 respondents), and the other one included persons over 30 years old (8 respondents). The group discussions helped to identify the characteristics associated to the different researched groups (stereotypes), which subsequently have facilitated the finalization of the questionnaire for the quantitative study. At the same time, the findings of the group discussions have been used for the present report so as to confirm and/or to explain the findings of the opinion poll.

The group discussions were organized on April 26, 2015. The respondents were selected based on the “*snow-ball*” method, taking into consideration the heterogeneity of the group by: sex, area of residence, level of education, and area of activity.

### *Quantitative study*

The goal of the quantitative study was to measure the indicators from two perspectives: social distance and stereotypes.

The study was carried out based on the following methodological parameters:

- **Sample volume:** 1013 persons aged 18 years old and over;
- **Sample:** stratified, probabilistic, two-staged;
- **Stratifying criteria:** 13 geographic regions, coinciding with the territorial administrative units before they re-became rayons, area of residence (urban-rural), size of urban localities (2 types), number of population in rural localities (3 types of rural localities).
- **Sampling:** the volumes of urban strata and the total by regions (former counties), as well as the volumes of rural strata were calculated proportionally to the number of population in line with the data communicated by the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova.

Taking into consideration the increased level of labor force migration among the population from the RM, the distribution of the population number by regions used for sample design was adjusted to the number of population which left abroad to work, based on the data provided by the Labor Force Survey carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics.

➤ **Randomization stages:**

I. Locality: the localities (78) selected within the adjusted strata were established in a random way, based on a table with random figures.

II. Family: the maximum number of interviews performed within a sampling unit accounted for 5. The families in which interviews were carried out were selected based on the random route method with a predetermined statistical step.

III. Person: if the selected families included more adult persons, the interviewed person was established based on the closest birthday date method.

- **Representativeness:** the sample is representative for the whole adult population of the Republic of Moldova, with a maximum error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ .

The period in which the data were collected was 19 – 28 June, 2015. The interviews were carried out at respondents' domicile. The questionnaire was developed in Romanian and Russian languages, providing the respondents the possibility to choose the language of communication during the process of data collection.

## Social-demographic characteristics of the respondents (sample distribution)

**Table 1. Sample structure**

		No.	%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1013</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Respondent's sex:</b>	<b>Man</b>	393	45.4%
	<b>Woman</b>	620	54.6%
<b>Respondent's age:</b>	<b>18-29 years old</b>	202	24.9%
	<b>30-44 years old</b>	245	26.5%
	<b>45-59 years old</b>	259	25.7%
	<b>60+ years old</b>	307	22.9%
<b>Level of education:</b>	<b>Secondary incomplete</b>	211	19.8%
	<b>Secondary, lyceum</b>	250	25.9%
	<b>Secondary vocational</b>	313	31.2%
	<b>Higher</b>	239	23.1%
<b>Social-economic status:</b>	<b>Low</b>	354	33.1%
	<b>Medium</b>	332	32.2%
	<b>High</b>	327	34.7%
<b>Ethnic affiliation:</b>	<b>Majority ethnic group</b>	816	81.6%
	<b>Minority ethnic group</b>	197	18.4%
<b>Area of residence:</b>	<b>Urban</b>	467	45.0%
	<b>Rural</b>	546	55.0%
<b>Social distance:</b>	<b>Small</b>	332	33.5%
	<b>Medium</b>	336	32.9%
	<b>Big</b>	345	33.5%

# Approaches in data analysis

## Social Distance Scale

The social distance scale (Bogardus Scale) was conceived for and widely applied in studying the inter-ethnic and inter-racial relations.

The Bogardus Scale includes 7 levels, each of them representing a degree of social closeness. The subject is suggested to express his/her acceptance or unacceptance of a person from the group, the distance to be measured in relation to different closeness degrees (kinship relations via marriage, as friend in my club, as neighbor on my street, as employee in my profession, as citizen in my country, only as a visitor in my country, I would expel him/her). The social distance index (SDI) represents an average of the points attributed to every position depending on the level of „rejection” (acceptance as family member shall be attributed 0 points – the smallest distance, the wish to expel the person from the country – 6 points). Hence, the index which equals to 0 means acceptance in all positions, while the index which equals to 6 means unacceptance in all positions.

In this study, the social distance scale was adjusted to measure the level of acceptance of the persons from the vulnerable and marginalized groups, and the attitudes towards these groups represented the research object of the respective study.

**Table 2. Social distance levels used in the study:**

Level	Corresponding value of the SDI IDS	Significance (The respondent accepts the person from group X ...)
To be a relative through marriage with a family member	0	for all positions, including family member
To be a friend	1	for all positions, except for family member
To be a neighbor	2	for all positions, except for family member and friend
To be work colleague	3	for all positions, except for family member, friend, and neighbor
To be citizen of my country	4	only as citizen of the RM, hence does not accept as family member, friend, neighbor and work colleague
To be visitor of my country	5	only as visitor of the RM, hence does not accept as family member, friend, neighbor, work colleague, and citizen
I would expel him/her from my country	6	the person from group X is not accepted by the respondent even as visitor of the RM

To interpret the values of the SDI, its average value for the entire sample is used, being calculated for every group separately. Additionally, to distinguish the extremely rejected groups, a comparison of the points registered for every group is used, with the average value of the SDI for all the 14 vulnerable and marginalized groups, which served as object of the respective study.

**Pointing out and measuring the existing stereotypes:** three types of questions were used for this purpose, meant to express the following:

- 1) **What are the existing stereotypes and how are they spread?** To this end, semi-open questions with spontaneous answers were used, containing list of stereotypes as characteristics identified via the documents’ analysis and focus groups. Additionally, there was ensured the possibility to register some other characteristics invoked by the respondents.

## EXAMPLE

**What words come first to your mind, when someone says “a person with mental and intellectual impairments”?**

*S1.1 Interviewer! Open-end question, do not read the response options. Note the first answer provided by the respondent.*

*S1.2 Interviewer! Open-end question, do not read the response options. Note the rest of provided spontaneous answers.*

	S1.1 Open question with spontaneous answer	S1.2 Open question
Excluded	1	1
Good-natured	2	2
Mental problems / mentally sick	3	3
Willing to help	4	4
Retarded	5	5
Observing the law	6	6
Should be isolated	7	7
Needing help from the state / other persons	8	8
Disabled	9	9
Distressed	10	10
Optimists	11	11
Cannot take care of themselves	12	12
Tolerant to other people	13	13
Dangerous	14	14
Faithful	15	15
Respectful	16	16
Despised	17	17
Hard-working	18	18
Discriminated	19	19
Other _____	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
_____	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
_____	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
_____	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
_____	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
_____	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

2) **What are the trends in the respondents’ attitudes towards the characterized group?** To this end, there questions were used to suggest choosing one out of three groups of characteristics. The three groups of characteristics differ by presence of positive, neutral, or negative characteristics:

- the first group includes three positive characteristics and it was interpreted as expressing “absolutely positive” characteristics;
- the second group contains two positive and one neutral characteristics, meant to express more neutral trends in attitudes – “neutral group”;
- the third group contains two (or one) positive characteristics and one (or two) negative characteristics – “group of negative connotation”, being interpreted as respondent’s acceptance of some negative perceptions of the group, as well;

### EXAMPLE

Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the persons with mental and intellectual impairments?

1	Good-natured	Respectful	Optimistic
2	Respectful	Optimistic	Disabled
3	Optimistic	Willing to help	Dangerous

- 3) **The third type of questions implies a choice between two opposed affirmations related to the marginalized group.** This type of questions refers to respondents' position: being for or against some of the main stereotypes.

### EXAMPLE

I will read now some pairs of statements and for each of them please tell me which is the closest to your point of view.

<i>Which is closest to your point of view – the first or the second affirmation?</i>	More the first one	Rather the first one	More the second one	Rather the second one	(rotate the order of the pairs of statements; as well alternate the order of affirmations within each pair)	Both of them equally	None	DNK/NR
<b>HIV positive people</b>								
1.1 The children with HIV should study in separate classes/groups from the rest of the children/students	1	2	3	4	1.2 The children with HIV should study in the same classes/groups with the rest of children/students	5	6	7
2.1 The people with HIV should benefit from adequate social protection from the State	1	2	3	4	2.2 The State should not provide social protection to these persons	5	6	7
3.1 The people with HIV should not use the common transportation means	1	2	3	4	3.2 The risk to get infected in the transportation means is minimum if there no personal contact	5	6	7
4.1 The people with HIV should go to separate doctors so as to avoid the contact with other persons	1	2	3	4	4.2 The people with HIV should go to doctors for public institutions, and the doctors should respect confidentiality	5	6	7

# CHAPTER 1.

## Level of acceptance of some groups of persons. Social distance.

The studies carried out at the international level reveal a direct correlation between the development level of a country/region and the level of tolerance. According to the SOCIAL PROGRESS INDEX 2015, there is a strong correlation between the GDP per capita and the level of tolerance and inclusion manifested by the population to a number of marginalized groups (immigrants, LGBT, ethnic minorities, religious minorities)<sup>1</sup>.

The same survey estimates that the tolerance and inclusion index for Moldova accounts for 41.65 points, the country being ranked on place 119 out of 155 countries. Beyond the cause and effect principle, as it is not clear which of the factors are determinant and which of them are effect-factors, the estimation for the RM of a medium towards low tolerance level fits the very modest economic development of the country.

During this study, the respondents were asked to classify a series of problems depending on their stringency for the RM at the current moment. Based on the collected answers, it may be concluded that the issue of discrimination of some distinct groups of population is almost invisible in the public perception, as it is was mentioned only by 3% of respondents as being among the 3 most stringent problems, hence placed at the end of the ranking. The most perceived problems are the ones related to the material resources for living – prices, salary /pension levels, and jobs.

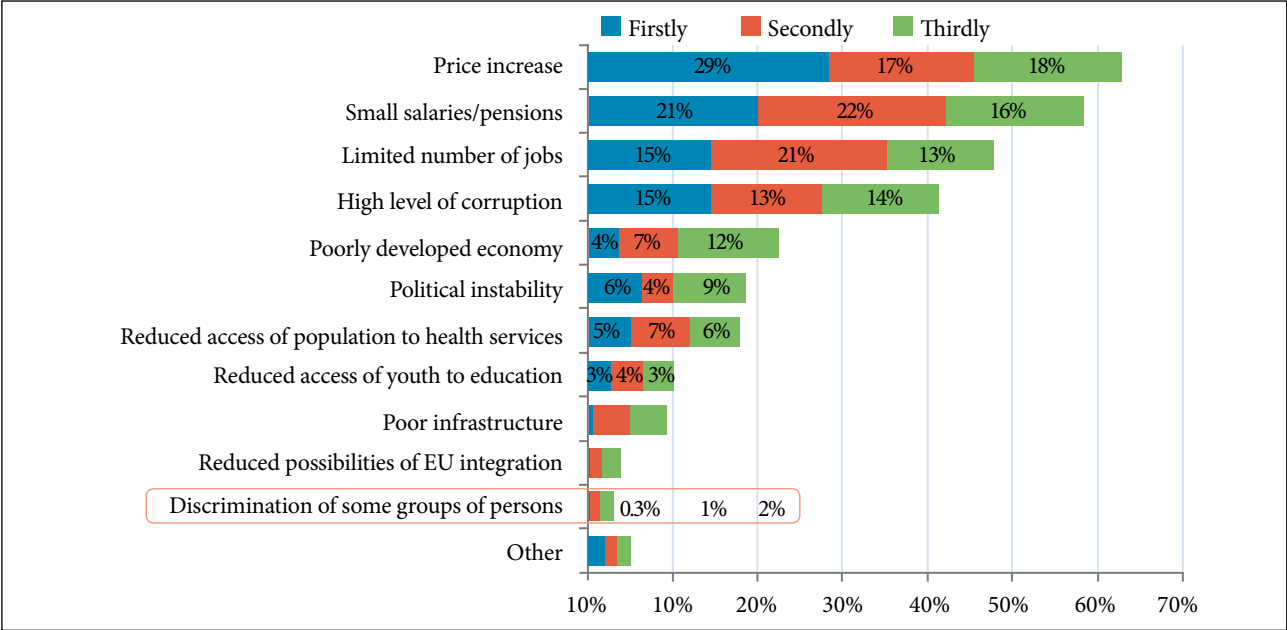


Figure 1. Top stringent problems of the Republic of Moldova in respondents' perception

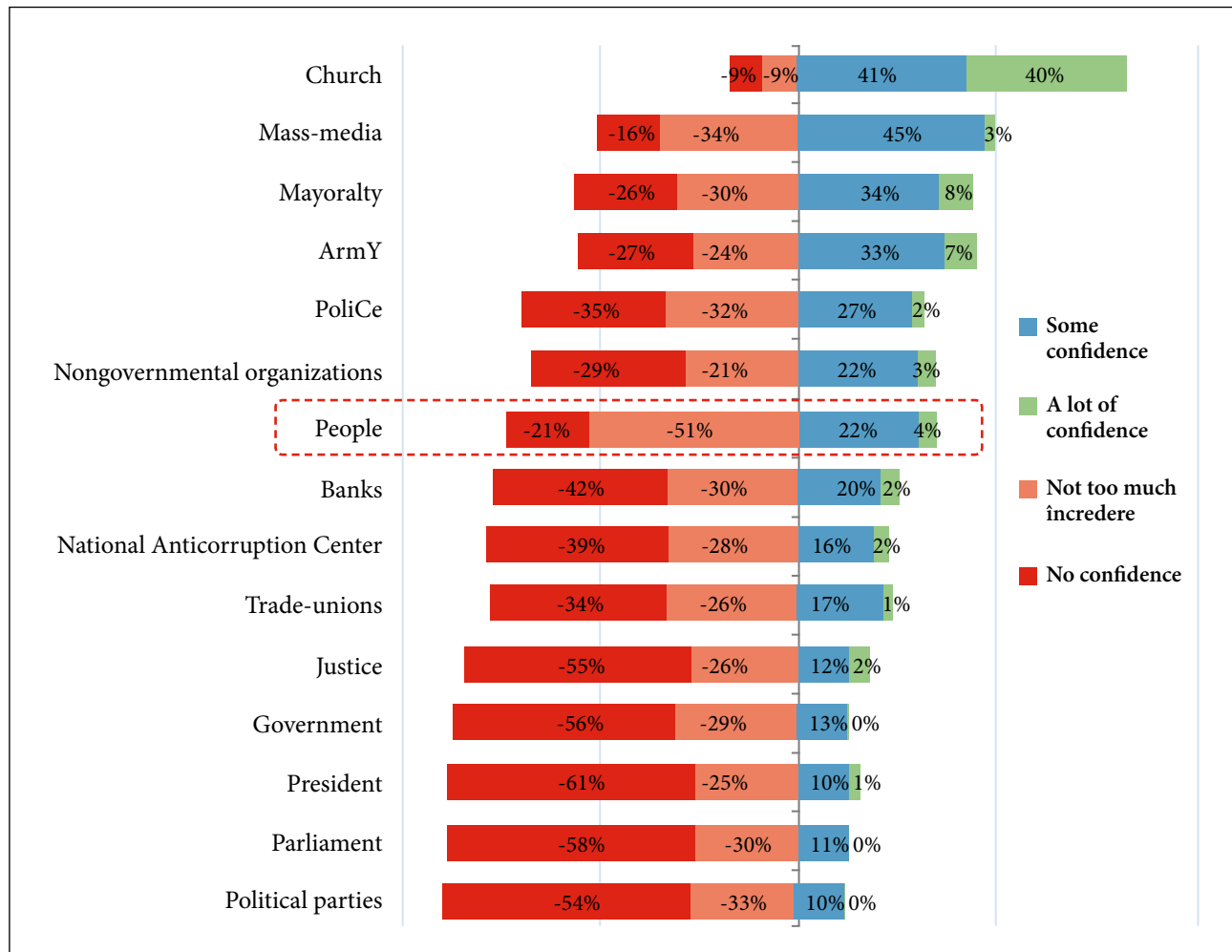
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/blog/posts/components-4-personal-rights-personal-freedom-and-choice-and-tolerance-and-inclusion-little-to-no-theoretical-correlation-to-gdp>



Thus, at the first glance we have a rather paradoxical situation: the issue of discrimination is not perceived as the most stringent challenge by the society in a country with low level of tolerance and inclusion. Some possible explanations may be derived from the analogy with the well-known hierarchy (pyramid) of Abraham Maslow<sup>2</sup>, the principles of which in certain instances may be generalized at the level of groups of people. In the poor societies, the current challenges are related to meeting the primary needs of surviving (physiological), while such values as tolerance get mainly the level 4, associated to such values as esteem, respect, responsibility.

Another characteristic of the RM at the current moment refers to the crisis of confidence, manifested via a deep lack of confidence for the State, some specific institutions, as well as lack of interpersonal confidence. The only institution enjoying the confidence of the majority of population is the church. In case of the other institutions, especially the political and governmental ones – the level of confidence is very low.

One of the hypotheses raised in this study was the fact that there is a causal link between the low level of confidence among people and the intolerance to different groups. For this purpose, the respondents were asked to appreciate the extent of their confidence for other people, as even at the interpersonal level, the population is characterized by a pronounced lack of confidence (only one quarter of respondents have mentioned that they have a lot or some confidence in people).



**Figure 2. Level of confidence in people and different institutions**

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/conation/maslow.html>

Data regarding the confidence level are taken from the Public Opinion Barometer, April 2015 except for confidence in people, which was measured within the given study.

Coming back to the finding that discrimination is not among the top perceived problems, the existence of this phenomenon is not unobserved. During the group discussions, the respondents were asked to give their opinions regarding the advantaged and disadvantaged groups in the RM, pointing out a number of characteristics/affiliations, which served as a source for eventual discrimination (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Advantaged and disadvantaged groups in the Republic of Moldova (opinion of group discussions' participants)**

Category	Advantaged	Disadvantaged
Economic status	The rich	The poor
Employment status	Employees	Unemployed, inactive / state-insured persons
Social status	Politicians, public officials	Simple citizens – „without influence”
Health status	Healthy persons	Persons with certain health deficiencies / problems
Age	Adults	Young and elderly
Area of residence	Urban area inhabitants; Persons residing at small distances from the capital city	Rural area inhabitants
Ethnic belonging, spoken language	Minority ethnic groups (Russians, Gagausians)	Majority ethnic group
Religion	Orthodox	Religious minorities
(contradictory opinions)	Religious minorities	Orthodox

In both focus groups, the participants pointed out that in the context of the RM, the access to different services is an advantage for persons with higher social and/or financial status. In respondents' opinion, these persons are provided services of higher quality and in a friendlier environment.

*“Even in the same hospital, the better-off persons from financial point of view, many times enjoy a better attitude towards them than the persons without money.” (F, 23 years old, student)*

There are also categories of population, whose access to services is limited by different subjective and objective factors. The persons with mobility impairments have difficulties in accessing the public institutions, because these spaces are not adjusted accordingly. At the same time, the inclusion of children with disabilities in the educational institutions and of persons with disabilities on the labor market is perceived with reticence in the society. In the respondents' opinion, the opportunities for studying, employment, spending free time are even more reduced in rural areas.

*“Making a parallel with the European level, where the persons with disabilities have all the conditions for entering and exiting a shop for instance, while here this aspect is ignored.” (F, 23 years old, student)*

*“Children with disabilities are not accepted by many teachers, although there is a law that any child with disabilities has the same rights as a normal child.” (M, 32 years old, psychologist)*

*“The persons with disabilities are marginalized in the majority of cases. Even though when employed, they cannot fulfill the same volume of work as a perfectly healthy person. Even for their inclusion in the educational institutions, many times it is necessary and it is insisted for them to be educated in special schools and not in normal schools, alongside normal kids.” (F, 26 years old, housewife)*

*“The persons living around the capital city are in a bigger advantage, as compared to those who live in remote villages and for whom it is very difficult to get to cities, to have a well-paid job ... as they spend more money for transportation. Or even the schools from rural area are less equipped ...there are no teachers, or one and same teacher teaches mathematics, informatics and possibly physics.” (M, 18 years old, pupil)*

The participants of the group discussions consider that the ethnic minorities should respect the culture and the language of the majority ethnic group. When referring to religion, some respondents consider that the religious minorities are disadvantaged in our society, including through policies and actions supported by the state institutions. An example in this respect is teaching religion in school, which refers to the concepts of orthodox religion and not just an introduction in the topic of religion through academic knowledge about different religious trends and history of different religious groups. Other respondents consider that religious minorities are imposed in the Republic of Moldova, and having financial and material resources they use resourceful tactics to attract new adepts.

*“If religion is introduced in schools as a subject, they do not talk about other religions, but only by orthodoxy, while in schools we have children who are part of different religious groups. All religions and their history should be studies in schools, for our children to know who they are.” (F, 66 years old, librarian)*

*“I think that all the other religions are more advantaged, because they have beautiful and rich castles, they even cannot be compared with our churches. We have several churches in Chisinau, and the religious houses are very big and there are plenty of them. I think that all the values we are talking about are lost in our country. It is more frequent when the Witnesses of Jehovah come to our houses than the priest.” (M, 59 years old, person with disability)*

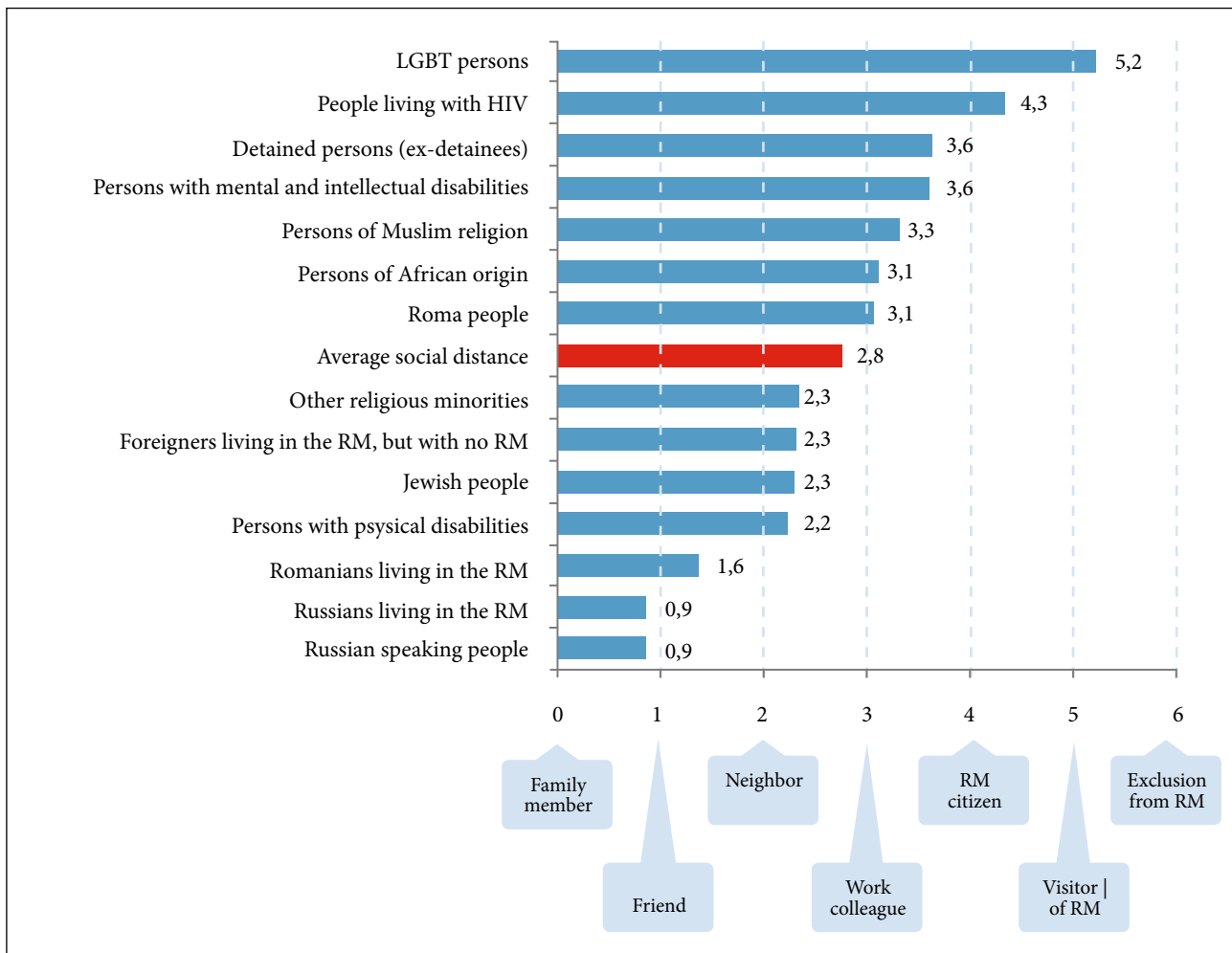
The measuring of the acceptance level for the marginalized groups is one of the main objectives of this research project. The social distance concept was used to express the level of acceptance, being quantified in the social science by Social Distance Scale of Bogardus, named after the author (*for more details see the methodology of the study*).

The average value of the SDI accounts for 2.8 points, meaning social acceptance at the level of work colleagues, thus more than half of respondents do not accept most of the groups as neighbors, friends and family members. (*see figure 3*)

At the same time, the value of the SDI equal with 0 for all the groups was registered only in case of 0.4% respondents – these would be the respondents who accept the representatives of all those 14 groups up to the level of family member. At the other pole we have the respondents with a maximum level of rejection (“would expel from the country”) for all the groups with no exceptions. Such respondents accounted for 1.0% of the sample.

At the same time, the significance and the interpretation of the average value of the SDI is undermined by the huge variation of the SDI for those 14 groups. The smallest social distance is manifested for the following groups: *Russian speaking persons* (0.9 points) and *Russians living in the RM* (0.9 points), hence meaning acceptance under the level of friend.

At the opposed pole we have the *LGBT persons*, the most rejected group, with a social distance of 5.2 points, meaning acceptance over the level of visitor in the country. It is the only group with a median value of 6 points, meaning that over half of respondents opted for excluding the representatives of this group from the country (see table 4).



**Figure 3. Social Distance Index**

Relating this to the average value of the SDI for all the groups, besides the groups of *Russian speakers* and *Russians living in the RM*, there was noted a reduced rejection level for *Romanians living in the RM*, *persons with physical impairments*, *Jewish people*, *foreigners living in the RM, but not holding RM citizenship* and *representatives of religious minorities* (except for *persons of Muslim religion*). All these groups register values of the SDI of 2.3 points and less, with median values of the SDI of 2 and less, hence half of respondents opt for accepting them at friend level.

SDI moderate values are registered for *Roma people*, *persons of African origin*, and *persons of Muslim religion*.

And finally, the most rejected groups, besides LGBT are the *people living with HIV*, *ex-detainees* and *persons with mental impairments*. The last two groups register median SDI values of 4 points – accepting up to the position of citizen of the country, hence over half of respondents do not accept them in closer positions. In average, the *people living with HIV* are accepted not closer than simple visitor of RM (the median SDI value being 5 points).

As percentage distribution of acceptances, only in case of three ethnical-linguistic groups – *Russian speakers, Russians and Romanians living in the RM* – over half of respondents accept them up to the level of family member. On the other hand, the *persons with mental impairments, ex-detainees, people living with HIV, and LGBT persons* are the groups opted by the respondents for being expelled from the country, and they prevail over those who show a maximum level of acceptance up to the family member.

**Table 4. Social Distance Index**

	Average value	Median value	Percentage distribution by levels of acceptance (% cumulatively, expresses the share of respondents accepting the persons from group X up to the respective position) <sup>3</sup>						
			Family member	Friend	Neighbor	Work colleagues	Citizen	Visitor of RM	Not even visitor of RM
<i>Average social distance</i>	2,8	2,8							
Russian speakers	0,9	0,0	78%	82%	84%	85%	90%	96%	
Russians living in the RM	0,9	0,0	76%	81%	83%	85%	91%	97%	
Romanians living in the RM	1,6	0,0	60%	66%	70%	72%	83%	94%	
Persons with physical impairments	2,2	1,0	28%	52%	61%	63%	83%	89%	
Jewish people	2,3	2,0	37%	49%	57%	60%	77%	90%	
Foreigners living in the RM, but not holding RM citizenship	2,3	2,0	40%	49%	56%	59%	74%	92%	
Other religious minorities	2,3	2,0	36%	48%	58%	61%	78%	91%	
Roma people	3,1	4,0	21%	32%	41%	47%	73%	85%	
Persons of African origin	3,1	4,0	19%	33%	42%	45%	63%	86%	
Persons of Muslim origin	3,3	4,0	20%	30%	38%	40%	58%	79%	
Persons with mental impairments	3,6	4,0	11%	23%	32%	33%	66%	76%	
Detained persons (ex-detainees)	3,6	4,0	15%	24%	31%	34%	60%	72%	
People living with HIV	4,3	5,0	4%	13%	20%	22%	46%	60%	
LGBT persons	5,2	6,0	1%	3%	8%	10%	18%	38%	

The social distance indexes vary rather modestly by groups of social-demographic indicators (only some tenth of points), a fact that shows that intolerance is not a characteristic for some distinct social-demographic groups and it is not characteristic at all for other groups.

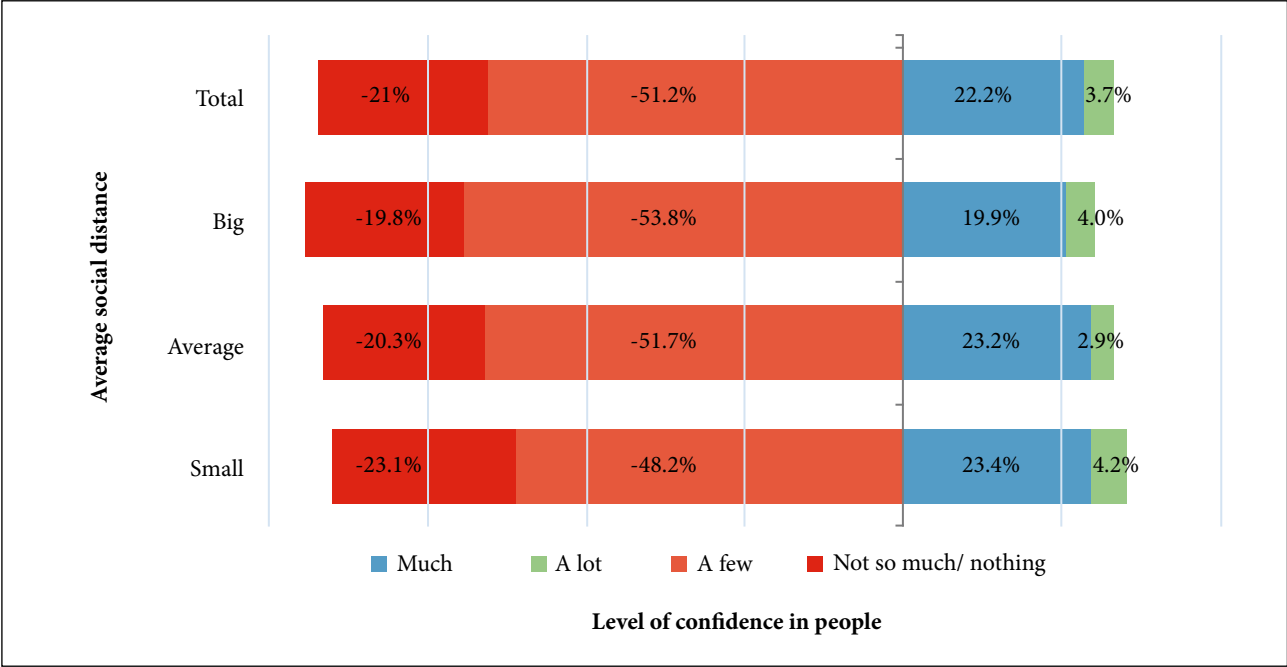
Nevertheless, there are significant statistical relations between the level of education, social-economic level and areas of residence, when the levels of education/social-economic status are associated with smaller social distance and the inhabitants from rural area manifesting a bigger social distance (*see table 5*).

<sup>3</sup> Interpretation example: 78% of respondents accept the Russian speakers in all positions, including as family members. 82% accept the Russian speakers in all positions including as friends, but not necessarily as family member. The differences in accepting as family member (78%) and friend (82%) represent the persons who noted that they would accept as friends, but not as family members.

Table 5. Values of the social distance indexes by social-demographic categories

Average social distance		Russian speakers	Russians	Romanians	Persons with physical impairments	Jewish people	Foreigners	Other religious minorities	Roma people	Africans	Muslims	Persons with mental impairments	Ex-detainees	HIV+	LGBT
Respondent's sex:	Total:	2,8	0,9	0,9	1,6	2,2	2,3	2,3	3,1	3,1	3,3	3,6	3,6	4,3	5,2
	Man	2,7	0,8	0,8	1,6	2,2	2,3	2,2	2,8	3,0	3,2	3,5	3,4	4,2	5,3
	Woman	2,9	0,9	1,0	1,7	2,3	2,4	2,5	3,2	3,3	3,4	3,7	3,8	4,4	5,2
Respondent's age :	18-29 years old	2,8	0,9	1,0	1,4	2,2	2,7	2,3	3,2	3,0	3,3	3,5	3,6	4,1	5,0
	30-44 years old	2,6	0,7	0,6	1,5	2,1	2,1	2,1	2,9	2,9	3,2	3,5	3,5	4,2	5,0
	45-59 years old	2,9	0,9	1,1	1,8	2,4	2,3	2,4	3,1	3,3	3,5	3,7	3,7	4,5	5,4
	60+ years old	2,9	1,0	0,9	1,8	2,3	2,1	2,6	3,0	3,4	3,4	3,7	3,7	4,6	5,5
Level of education:	Secondary incomplete	3,1	1,1	1,0	2,1	2,5	2,9	2,8	3,4	3,7	3,8	3,8	3,9	4,7	5,5
	Secondary, lyceums	2,9	0,6	0,9	1,8	2,4	2,5	2,4	3,1	3,1	3,5	3,7	3,6	4,4	5,4
	Secondary vocational	2,7	0,9	0,9	1,6	2,1	2,2	2,4	3,0	3,1	3,3	3,5	3,5	4,4	5,3
	Higher	2,4	0,9	0,8	1,0	1,9	1,7	1,8	2,8	2,7	2,8	3,4	3,5	3,8	4,7
Social-economic status:	Low	3,1	1,0	1,1	2,2	2,4	2,7	2,7	3,3	3,5	3,8	3,8	3,9	4,7	5,6
	Medium	2,7	0,8	0,9	1,6	2,2	2,2	2,4	3,0	3,0	3,2	3,5	3,6	4,4	5,2
	High	2,5	0,7	0,7	1,1	2,0	2,0	1,9	2,9	2,9	3,0	3,4	3,4	3,9	4,9
Ethnic affiliation:	Ethnic majority	2,8	0,9	0,9	1,4	2,2	2,4	2,4	3,1	3,1	3,4	3,6	3,6	4,3	5,2
	Ethnic minority	2,8	0,5	0,9	2,4	2,4	2,1	2,1	2,8	3,2	3,0	3,6	3,8	4,4	5,3
Area of residence:	Urban	2,6	0,8	0,8	1,3	2,2	1,9	2,2	3,0	3,0	3,1	3,5	3,5	3,9	4,9
	Rural	2,9	0,9	1,0	1,8	2,3	2,6	2,4	3,1	3,2	3,5	3,7	3,7	4,7	5,4

Coming back to the relation between the level of confidence in people and tolerance, it may be noted that the hypothesis that the persons manifesting a higher level of tolerance are also the ones with a higher level of confidence in people does not confirm. The respondents were grouped in three groups according to the SDI value in general and the correlation is made with the level of confidence in people, expressed by them. As it may be noted (*figure 4*), the level of confidence in people does not differ substantially between the persons manifesting a big social distance and those with small social distance.



**Figure 4. Relation between the level of confidence in people and average SDI**

And finally, another assumed hypothesis refers to the dependency between social distance and respondent’s communication experience with the persons belonging to the studied groups. It was registered in four levels:

1. The respondent communicates on daily basis with the representatives of the respective group (e.g. LGBT persons, Roma people, persons with mental impairments);
2. The respondent has among his/her friends/acquaintances persons from the respective groups;
3. The respondent knows by sight some persons from the respective groups;
4. The respondent does not know persons from the respective groups

Correlated with the SDI value, there might be noted a strong dependency of the social distance on level of networking with persons from the respective groups, the social distance being significantly smaller if the person has networking experience.

Calculated as an average for all the 14 groups, it may be noted that the respondents who know by sight the representatives of the studied groups register SDI values which are in average 6% lower as compared to the persons who do not know representatives of these groups (the SDI value of 3.17 points decreases down to 2.91 points, resulting in a drop of 6% of the SDI).

The intensification of networking reduces even more the social distance. From the level of “knowing by sight” (SDI equal to 2.91) to the level “friends/colleagues” (SDI equal to 1.99) there is an average decrease of 25%; and respectively from the level of “friends/colleagues” (SDI equal to 1.99) to the level “communicate daily” (SDI equal to 1.37) the social distance drops by 32%.

The respondents who do not know representatives of the studied groups register SDI values which are two times higher (57%) as compared to the respondents who communicate on daily basis with such persons, meaning SDI of 3.17 versus the SDI of 1.37 (table 6).

**Table 6. SDI variation depending on the fact if the respondent knows persons from the respective groups**

	SDI depending on knowing people from the group				The SDI decrease rate depending on knowing people from the group			
	Communicates on daily basis	Friends/colleagues	Knowing by sight	Do not know	Communicate daily VS Friends/colleagues	Friends/colleagues VS Knowing by sight	Knowing by sight VS do not know	Communicate daily VS do not know
<b>Total (average)</b>	<b>1,37</b>	<b>1,99</b>	<b>2,91</b>	<b>3,17</b>	<b>-32%</b>	<b>-25%</b>	<b>-8%</b>	<b>-57%</b>
Russian speakers	0,65	1,03	1,49	1,49	-31%	-31%	0%	-56%
Russians living in the RM	0,66	1,05	1,37	1,37	-23%	-23%	0%	-52%
Romanians living in the RM	0,53	1,15	2,27	2,27	-49%	-49%	0%	-77%
Persons with physical impairments	1,66	2,11	2,45	2,53	-14%	-14%	-3%	-34%
Jewish people	1,01	1,57	2,59	2,59	-39%	-39%	0%	-61%
Foreigners living in the RM but not holding RM citizenship	1,17	1,61	1,85	2,60	-13%	-13%	-29%	-55%
Other religious minorities	1,04	1,55	2,74	2,74	-43%	-43%	0%	-62%
Roma people	1,76	2,62	3,21	3,44	-18%	-18%	-7%	-49%
Persons of African origin	2,07	2,65	2,96	3,48	-10%	-11%	-15%	-41%
Persons of Muslim origin	1,52	2,17	3,31	3,65	-34%	-34%	-9%	-58%
Persons with mental disabilities	2,66	3,30	3,61	3,97	-9%	-8%	-9%	-33%
Detained persons (ex-detainees)	2,07	3,08	3,88	3,88	-21%	-21%	0%	-47%
People living with HIV	-	-	3,77	4,35	-	-	-13%	-
LGBT persons	-	-	5,14	5,23	-	-	-2%	-

During the group discussions it was noted that the most rejected groups of persons are: *LGBT*, *ex-detainees* and *persons with mental disabilities*, the respondents considering that they are the most dangerous for their security; the data were confirmed by the SDI (see Figure 3). The participants from both focus groups would not like to have as neighbors - *persons with mental* impairments. The young reject the *ex-detainees*, and the persons over 30 years old are more concerned with the “possible influence” of the *LGBT* group over children. Parents have fears regarding their children's interaction with the *representatives of religious cults*, invoking as a reason the methods and techniques used by them for attracting new adepts.

Both group discussions mentioned the “*heavy-drinkers*” and “*drug users/ex-users*” as groups whom they would not like to see as neighbors. But these groups were not surveyed in the present study, but it results that they are discriminated groups.



## CHAPTER 2.

### Perceptions and attitudes to some groups of persons.

The respective chapter refers to the interviewed people's perceptions and attitudes to groups of persons, which are the subject of this study. The positive, neutral and negative perceptions and attitudes are studied, presented below and specified depending on the analyzed group of persons.

The following sub-chapters present the analysis of the respondents' perceptions, in a separate way, referring to every group of persons included in the given study. The data desegregated based on respondents' profile and used in the analytical text are taken over from a separate set of bivariate tables – 169 tables – which may be provided upon request to those who are interested in them.

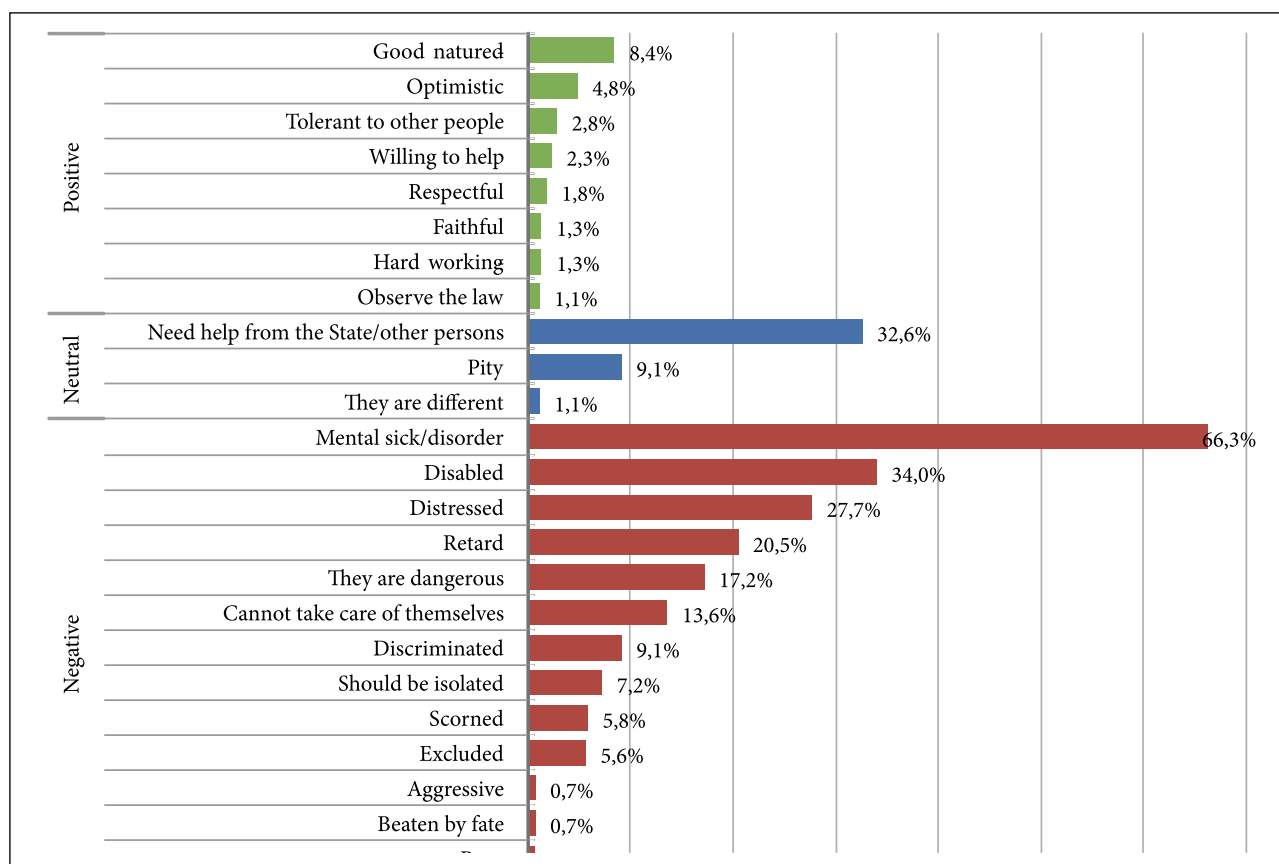
#### 2.1. Persons with mental and intellectual impairments

In case of the respective group of persons, eight perceptions are considered to be positive out of the qualifications provided by the respondents, and namely: *good-natured, optimistic, tolerant to other people, willing to help, respectful, faithful, hard-working, observing the law*. Three answers were mentioned as neutral qualifications: *need help for the State / from other persons, pity, are different / of any type*. The qualifications considered to be negative cumulate a bigger number, but they also cumulate a bigger share of answers (Figure 5).

Hence, the persons with mental and intellectual impairments are perceived by the respondents mainly negatively in the society. This fact is confirmed by this study as well. It may be noted that about 2/3 associated this group of persons with *persons mentally / psychologically ill*, 1/3 consider that they are *invalids*, 27.7% perceive them as *distressful*. As well 20.5% of the respondents perceive them with *persons with mental retardation*, and also there are respondents who consider that this type of persons are *dangerous* – 17.2% answers, 7.2% - *should be isolated*, and about 6% of answers perceive these persons as *excluded* or *disregarded*. The opinions of the respondents interviewed during the discussions in group fit the same context. The majority of the respondents have remarked that the persons with mental impairments should be avoided as they are considered to be “*dangerous*”.

“The persons with psychological disabilities, we try our best not to contact them, they even may provoke death, they may kill even a child, and not be punished.” (M, 25 years old, unemployed)

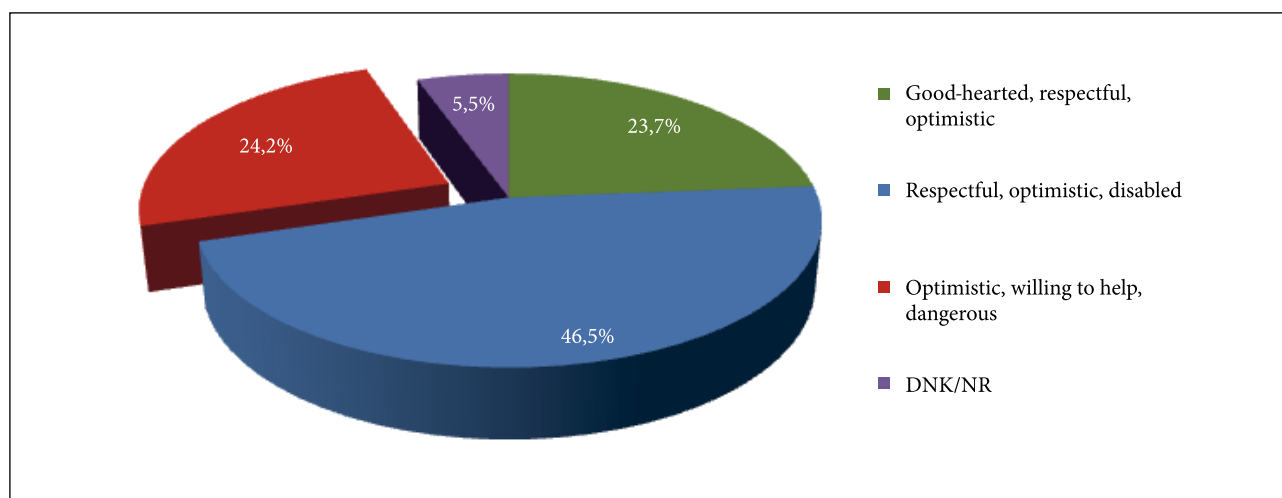
Rather small shares of respondents perceive positively the persons with mental and intellectual impairments, a more significant share of 8.4% respondents consider that they are *good-natured*, and almost 5% perceive them as *optimistic*, the other options considered positive have cumulated less than 3% of answers (Figure 5).



**Figure 5. What words come first to your mind when we say persons with mental and intellectual impairments?**

Respondents were asked to characterize the studied groups of persons through three groups of statements: positive, neutral, and negative. As an absolutely positive group is considered the one composed of three positive statements, that the persons with mental impairments are *good-natured*, *respectful*, *optimistic*; the group with neutral connotation (neutral group) is considered to be the one composed of the following three statements: *respectful*, *optimistic*, and *disabled*; and the group with negative connotation is considered to be the group with the following statements: *optimistic*, *willing to help*, and *dangerous*.

Almost  $\frac{1}{4}$  of respondents opted for the group of characteristics including absolutely positive statements and another  $\frac{1}{4}$  of respondents opted for the group of negative connotation characteristics. About half of respondents (46.5%) mentioned the group of neutral connotation characteristics (Figure 6). Less tolerant are the respondents of minority ethnic groups, as well as the persons with secondary education, lyceum, who opted for the negative connotation group - 30%, and a smaller share for absolutely positive connotation characteristics - 20%.



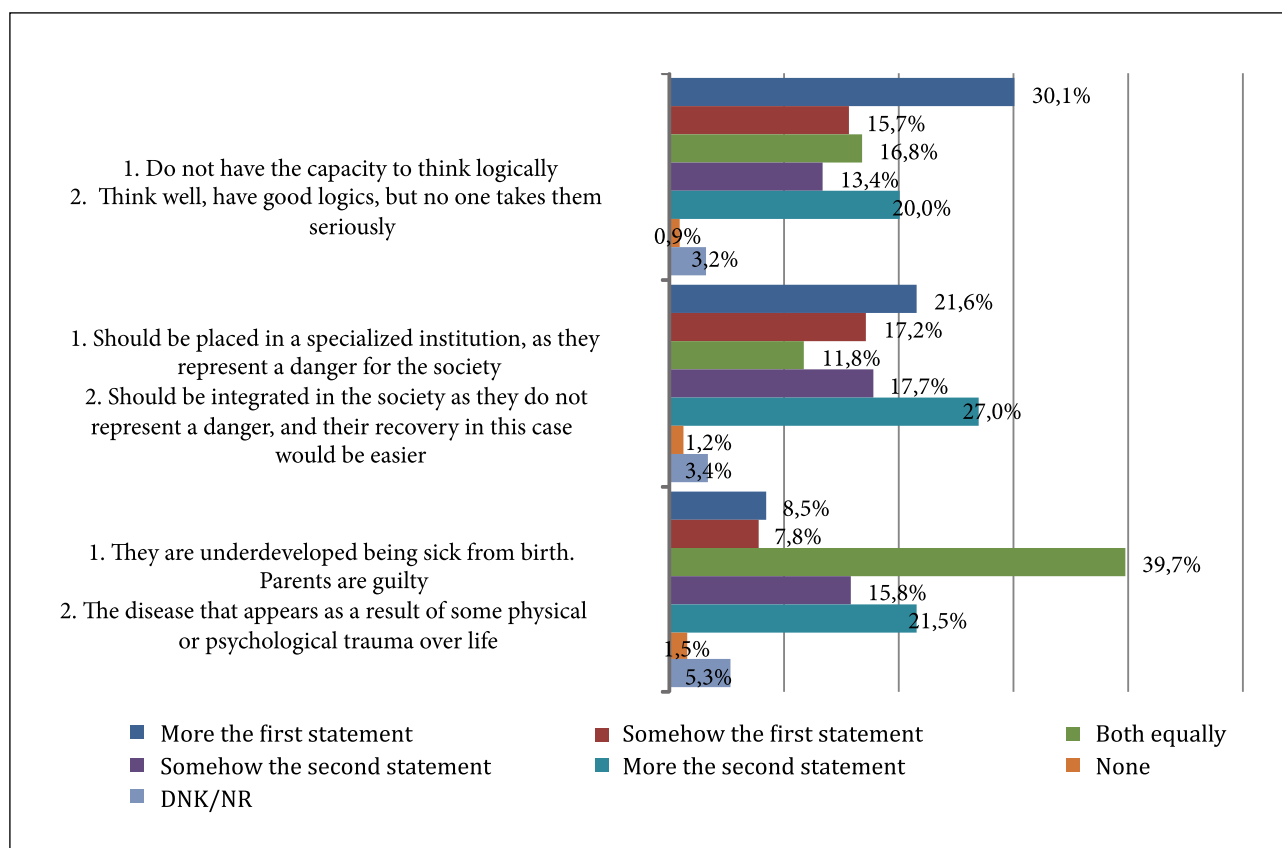
**Figure 6. Which of the following groups of statements characterize the best the persons with mental and intellectual impairments?**

Three pairs of statements were suggested to the respondents to analyze their opinions regarding the persons with mental and intellectual impairments, which also reflect, to a certain extent, the attitude in the society towards the respective group, the need / possibility to integrate them in the society, as well as the opinion regarding the impairments causes (Figure 7).

A cumulated share of 45.8% consider that the respective persons *do not have the capacity to think logically* and only 33.4% consider that they *think well, have good logics, but no one treats them seriously*. A neutral position was expressed by 16.8% who consider that both statements are true in equal manner. A rather categorical appreciation is expressed by the persons from the age group of 30-44 years old – half of the respondents from this group (50.4%) stated that *they do not have the capacity to think logically*. As for the second statement, *think well, have good logics, but no one takes them seriously* – it may be noted that big shares of respondents who have selected this option are more pronounced among the persons with high social-economic status (37.7%) and the respondents from the age group of 45-59 years old (37%).

It may be also noted that integration in the society is acknowledged by the population, thus the statement *should be integrated in the society as they do not present a danger, and their recovery in this case will be easier* – was selected by 44/7%. The fact that the persons from this group *should be place in a special institution, because they represent a danger for the society* – was expressed by 38.8% of the respondents, and uncertainty was manifested by over 15% of the respondents (11.8% - stated that both statements are equally valid, and 3.4% could not / did not want to pronounce themselves). The statement *should be placed in a special institution because they represent a danger for the society* was mainly opted for by women (41.4%), persons aged 18-29 years (41.7%), and those with secondary education, lyceum (46.5%); while the statement *should be integrated in the society because they do not represent a danger, and their recovery in this case would be easier* was opted for mainly by men (48.6%), persons with secondary incomplete education (49.8%), and those with high social-economic status (48.6%).

As for the statements related to the causes of mental and intellectual impairments, the respondents' opinions that they *are underdeveloped, sick from their birth and the parents being guilty* have cumulated 16.3%. The fact that the reason is the *disease that appears as a result of some physical or psychological trauma over life* is considered by 37.3% respondents, and 39.7% stated that both statements could be equally true. When analyzing by social-demographic groups, the statement *are underdeveloped, sick from their birth and the parents being guilty* was opted for by over 20% of respondents aged 45-59 years old, those with incomplete secondary education, as well as the persons with low social-economic status. The statement *disease that appears as a result of some physical or psychological trauma over life* was expressed by big shares of persons aged 30-44 years old (43.2%), those with secondary education, lyceum (41.2%), with high social-economic status (40.3%), and urban respondents (40%).

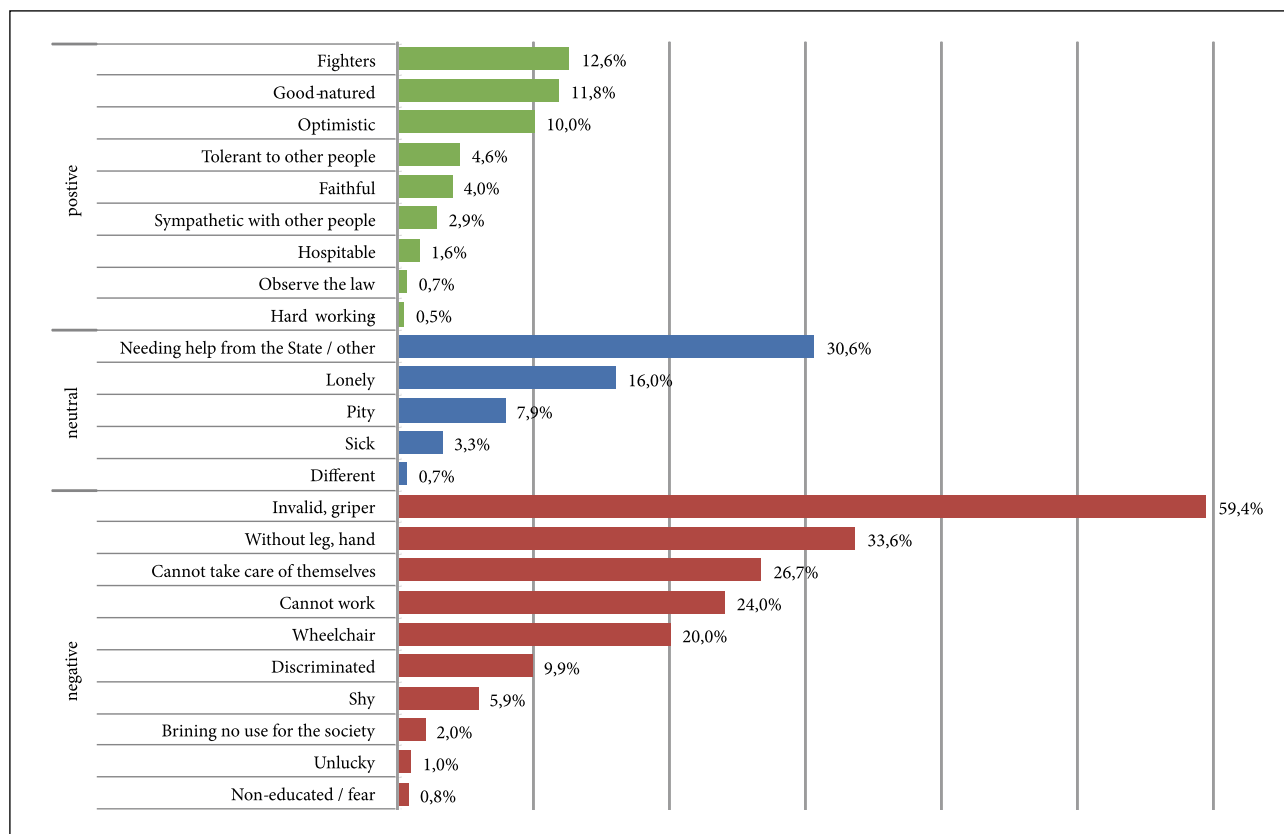


**Figure 7. Pairs of statements that show respondents' viewpoint about the persons with mental and intellectual impairments**

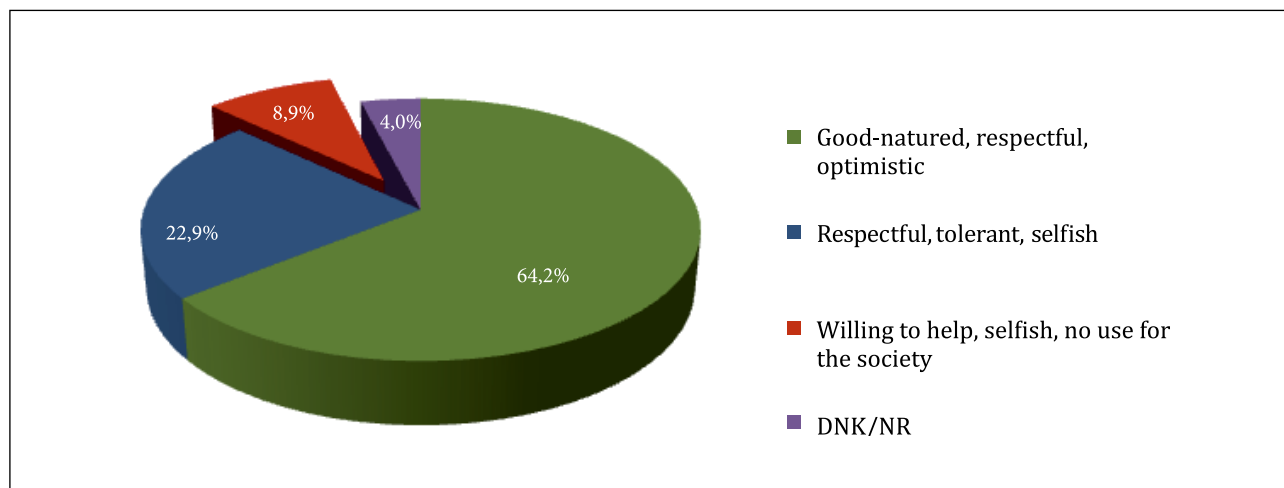
## 2.2. Persons with physical impairments

The persons with physical impairments, as compared to the previous group, are perceived by the respondents more neutrally towards positive. Nevertheless, negative perceptions prevail in relation to this group as well. About 60% of respondents associate them with *invalid*, *griper*, followed by *without a leg, hand* – with 33.6%; about ¼ of respondents agree with the perception that they *cannot take care of themselves*, *cannot work*, and the first thing that comes to the mind of 20% of respondents is *the wheelchair*. The biggest share among the neutral perceptions is registered by the option *need the help of the State / other persons* (30.6%) and the fact that they are *lonely* (16%). Significant shares were registered among the positive perceptions for: 12.6% *fighters*, 11.8% *good-natured*, 10% *optimistic*. (Figure 8).

When asked about the statements which characterize the best this group of persons, 64.2% of respondents selected the group of absolutely positive characteristics (*good-natured*, *respectful*, *optimistic*), 22.9% - with neutral connotation, including two positive and one neutral qualifications (*respectful*, *tolerant*, *selfish*) and only 8.9% selected the option with negative connotation, including a positive, a neutral, and a negative qualification (*willing to help*, *selfish*, *no use for the society*) (Figure 9). For the group of absolutely positive statements, the biggest shares were noted for the respondents with higher education (73%), urban area respondents (70.7%), and persons from the age group of 18-29 years old (70.1%). The group considered with statements of negative connotation (including a statement of every type) has cumulated the biggest shares among the respondents of minority ethnic groups (11.7%), with secondary education, lyceum (11.0%), with medium social-economic status, and aged 30-44 years old – accounting for 10.7% answers each.



**Figure 8. What words come first to your mind when we say a person with physical disability?**



**Figure 9. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the persons with physical impairments?**

The respondents were provided four pairs of statements with opposed affirmations, to assess their opinion about the different aspects related to the persons with physical impairments. The positive opinions prevail in all the four pairs of statements (Figure 10).

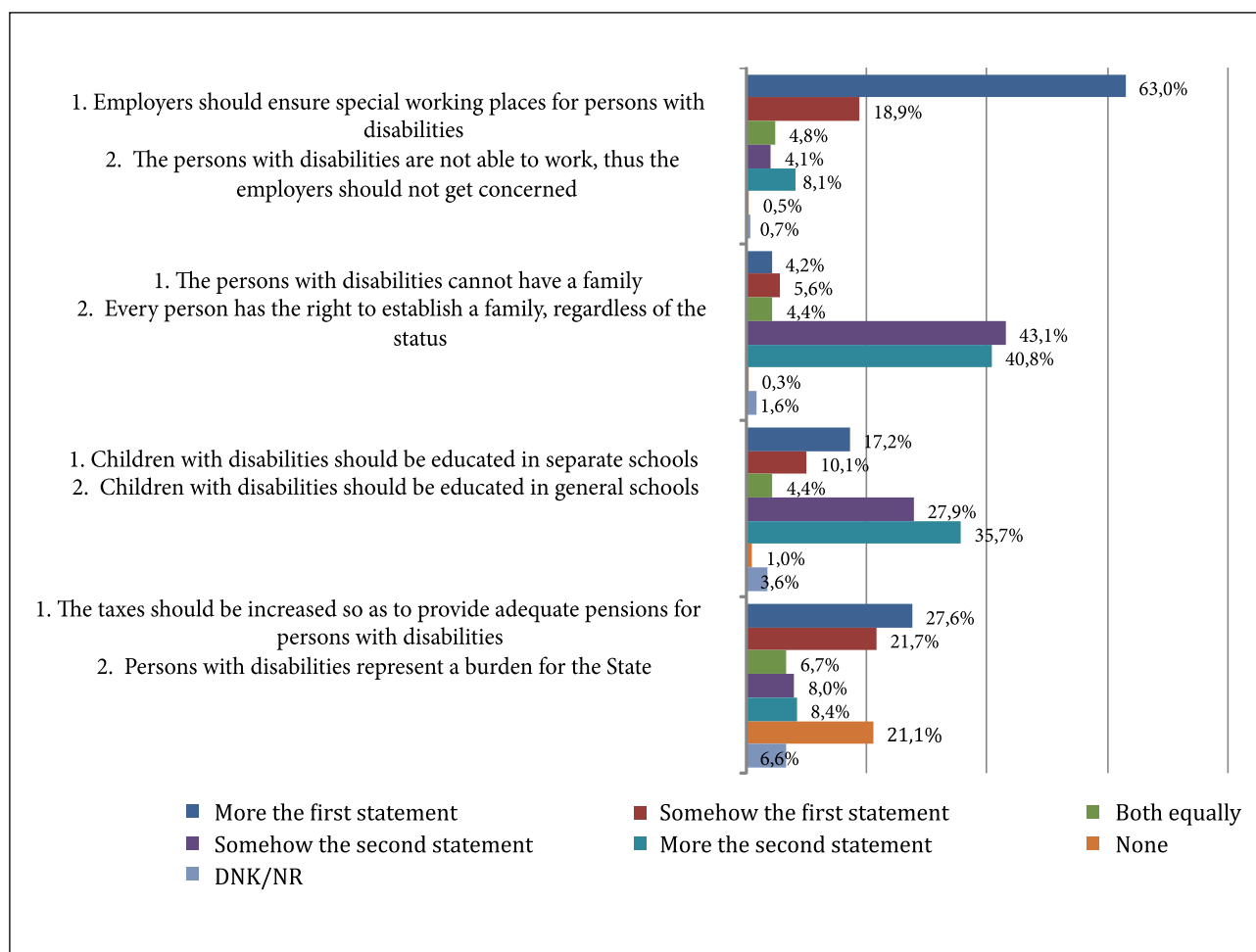
Hence, referring to recruitment of persons with physical disabilities, it may be noted that 81.9% of respondents consider that they can work, thus the *employers should ensure special working places for people with disabilities* and only 12.2% consider that the *persons with disabilities are not able to work, thus employers should not get concerned with this*. Provision of special working places for persons with physical impairments was mainly mentioned by the respondents with higher education (86%), followed by those with secondary education (84.8%), and the representatives of the majority ethnic group (84%). The second option related to lack of workability of the persons with physical impairments was mainly mentioned by the representatives of the minority ethnic group (19.5%), as well as by the persons with secondary, lyceum education, with medium social-economic status, and elderly 60+ years old people (each of them by 15%).

As for the statements related to the possibility of establishing a family by the persons with physical impairments, the respondents' opinions got divided according to the level of education, social-economic status, respondents' sex, as well as their area of residence. The statement *every person has the right to establish a family regardless of his/her status* was mainly opted for by the respondents with high social-economic status (89.4%), those with higher education level (89.2%), respondents from urban area (86.4%), men (86.2). The statement *persons with disabilities cannot have families* was opted mainly by the respondents with low social-economic level (13.5%) and those with incomplete secondary education (12.9%).

The acknowledgement of integrating the children with disabilities in general schools leaves a great deal to be desired in this respect. About 63.6% of the total number of respondents consider that *children with disabilities should be educated in general schools*, while over ¼ of the respondents (27.3%) consider that *children with disabilities should be educated in separate schools* (Figure 6). Depending on the social-demographic status, it may be noted that most of the respondents considering that these children should go to general schools are among the minority ethnic groups (73.9%) and those aged 45-59 years old (70.5%). At the same time, about 30% of respondents from the groups of 60+ and 30-44 years old, representatives of the majority ethnic group, respondents with incomplete secondary education, women, and urban respondents consider that *children with disabilities should be educated in separate schools*.

Another pair of statements has assessed the respondents' opinion regarding the need of providing adequate pensions to persons from the respective group. Hence, per total, almost half (49.3%) of respondents selected the option *taxes should be increased so as to provide adequate pensions to persons with disabilities*, and 16.4% stated that the *persons with disabilities represent a burden for the State*. It should be mentioned that an important share – 21.1% stated that none of the options reflect their viewpoint in this context. The biggest shares of respondents who would opt for increasing the taxes so as to provide better pensions for persons with physical disabilities were registered among the respondents aged 18-29 years old (56.9%) and persons with higher education (55.3%). The biggest shares of respondents considering that the *persons with disabilities represent a burden for the State* were registered among the elderly persons 60+ years old (22.6%) and minority ethnic groups (21.6%).

The group discussion participants consider that the persons with physical impairments are excluded from the society, as there are no conditions adjusted for them, that's why many of them are "sad". The respondents have manifested "compassion", "pity" for them, noting that the persons with certain physical deficiencies are "more affectionate", "better-natured".



**Figure 10. Pairs of statements reflecting the respondents' viewpoint about the persons with physical impairments**

### 2.3. LGBT persons (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals)

The Moldovan society seems to be very categorical in relation to the perceptions and attitudes to persons from the LGBT group. The negative qualifications prevail over the positive and neutral ones, both as number and quantity. Hence over 40% of answers have cumulated such qualifications as *immoral*, *abnormal*, *foolery*; 33.4% of answers qualified them as *sick person*; about 16-18% of answers registered such qualifications as *prostitution*, *dangerous*, *pedophiles*, *perverse*, *not understood*, and all the other 13 qualifications account for less than 4%.

The share of answers with positive perceptions (none of them) is very small and does not exceed 2% and only about 10% of respondents mentioned positive associations (Figure 11).

Regarding the question *Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the homosexuals/lesbians (LGBT)?* – a share of 67.4% of respondents opted for the group of statements with negative connotation, including a positive, neutral, and negative affirmation (*trustful*, *not understood*, *immoral*), while the group of absolutely positive affirmations (*neat*, *ambitious*, *tolerant*) were mentioned only by 6.7% respondents; the neutral statement (*loyal*, *hard-working*, *abnormal*) – was mentioned by 16.8% (Figure 12). The respondents with higher education and high social-economic status are more tolerant and they registered the biggest shares of almost 11% for each group of absolutely positive statements and almost 20% for the group with neutral connotation. The persons with medium social-economic status, representatives of minority

ethnic groups, and those with secondary education, lyceum are less tolerant, opting for overt 70% for the group considered to be of negative connotation.

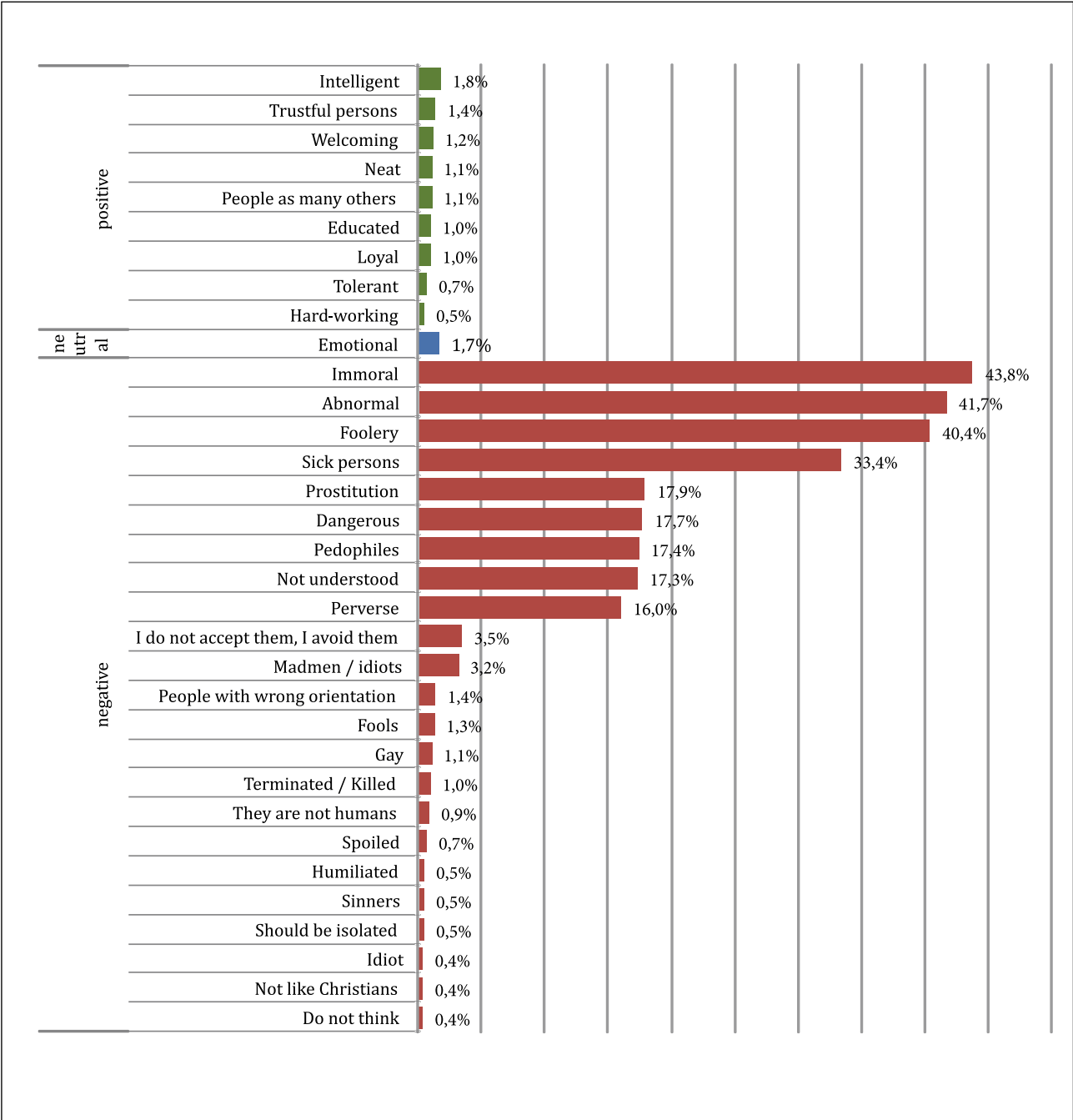
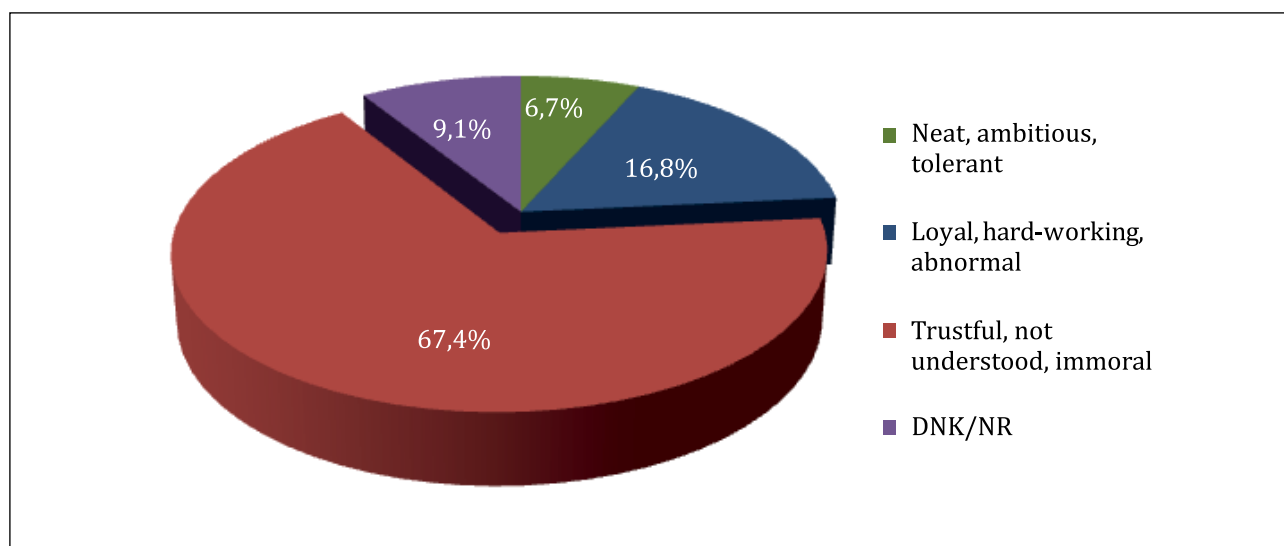


Figure 11. What words come first to your mind when we say homosexual/lesbian (LGBT)?





**Figure 12. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the homosexuals/lesbians (LGBT)?**

The opinions expressed during the group discussions confirm that the LGBT group is rejected by the majority of the population. The participants of the focus groups manifest an aggressive and revolting attitude to the LGBT. Both group discussions had respondents who have associated the LGBT with adoption of the Law on Equality of Chances<sup>4</sup>, condemning the conditioning of the EU joining with the acceptance of this law, perceived in a wrong way as the “law of sexual minorities”.

*“I am ready to go even to the Parliament to tell that all the MPs who have voted for this law are considered to be part of this group. They say that we cannot join Europe if we do not respect the laws of sexual minorities... I consider that these persons are not healthy, they should be treated. Maybe I would accept something like this, but for them to be far away from us. These people should be ashamed and they should hide from all others.” (M, 52 years old, unemployed)*

The majority of participants in the group discussions are categorically against accepting the LGBT in the society, they consider that this thing contravenes the principles of the [orthodox] religion, the institution of family, the psycho-emotional and behavioral status of children.

*“I do not accept them. First of all we believe in God, and God says that the family should develop the children and educate them. How can a child call a man mother and another man a father?” (F, 38 years old, housewife)*

*“These are persons who do not want to reproduce themselves. Well, men with men, and women with women. Where for them to take children from, from the orphanage? They would take a boy or a girl from the orphanage, and the child sees that the father kisses the father. And what does the boy see in this family, he would follow the example of the parents.” (M, 18 years old, pupil)*

*“From social point of view, we got used for the biological family to be composed of him and her” (M, 24 years old, civil servant)*

*“For instance I would have a child, and how will I explain him/her that they go hand in hand and kiss each other. How can I explain a child why two persons of the same sex stay together” (F, 23 years old, student)*

<sup>4</sup> Law No. 121 dated 25.05.2012 on Ensuring Equality

Several respondents interviewed during the focus groups mentioned that as long as the LGBT persons are discreet and have no public promotion manifestation, such as LGBT parades, and if they do not bother other citizens – they accept them just like they are. The majority of participants in the group discussions tried to convince the respondents manifesting a higher degree of tolerance to LGBT – at the level *“as long as they do not violate the law, let them do what they want”*, that they should take an attitude, reasoning that LGBT acceptance makes them also guilty of *“degradation of the society”*.

*“If you keep silence, it means that you are like them.” (F, 34 years old, housewife)*

*“If we accept them it means that the society will get destroyed.” (F, 45 years old, farmer)*

*“I think that if there will be time when men will live with men, and women will live with women, the end of the world will come and the Earth will wash all the bad things so as to come up with a new world, as the Bible says.” (M, 52 years old, unemployed)*

The group discussions point out that there is a higher level of acceptance for lesbians, as compared to gays/homosexuals – for whom the attitude is rather aggressive. The respondents have specified that heterosexual women are physically more similar to each other, and the society got used to this aspect, hence the lesbians do not stand out as compared to gay people.

*“Imagine that you go to a wedding party and a woman dances with another woman there and this is ok, and afterwards a man dances with another man – and people react immediately different.” (M, 59 years old, person with disability)*

*“A boy with a boy – that’s so gross ... We are used to see a girl holding hands with another girl, since their childhood up to 19-20 years old, they kiss each other when they meet, and this is just a welcome gesture, just friendly gesture.” (M, 24 years old, civil servant)*

Some respondents associated the LGBT persons with the sexually deflative groups, such as *“zoophiles”* and *“pedophiles”*. They are revolted that the society does not get involved more to counteract *“this phenomenon”*. It should be noted that the respondents’ knowledge about the LGBT persons is reduced, and adequate information may diminish the aggression towards this group.

*“My relatives came from abroad and I was so against such groups of persons ... And a relative explained that if a mayor of a city is gay, and in your family a child with such orientation is born, you cannot do anything, you just have to accept. Let them go and manifest their preferences in some hidden places, and not in the society.” (M, 59 years old, person with disability)*

To express the viewpoint regarding the LGBT persons, the respondents were asked to select a statement out of the seven pairs of suggested options, referring to social aspects (Figure 13).

As for acknowledging the lifestyle of the LGBT persons, the respondents’ opinions were divided according to the following: a share of 35.7% of respondents consider that they are *sick persons – they do not understand what they do, they need medical assistance*, while half of the respondents (49.5%) consider them to be *persons who are aware of what they do and do it from their own initiative*, and a share over 55% of such respondents are registered among those with higher education, from urban area, and young persons aged 18-29 years old.

Almost half of respondents (49.5%) consider that when *RM joins the EU the number of LGBT persons will increase substantially*. This opinion is supported by an important share of respondents – 61.3% from national minorities’ representatives and 55.5% from rural area inhabitants. About 1/3 (33.5%) consider that the *increase in number of such persons does not depend in RM joining the EU*. This statement is opted for by a considerable number of respondents with

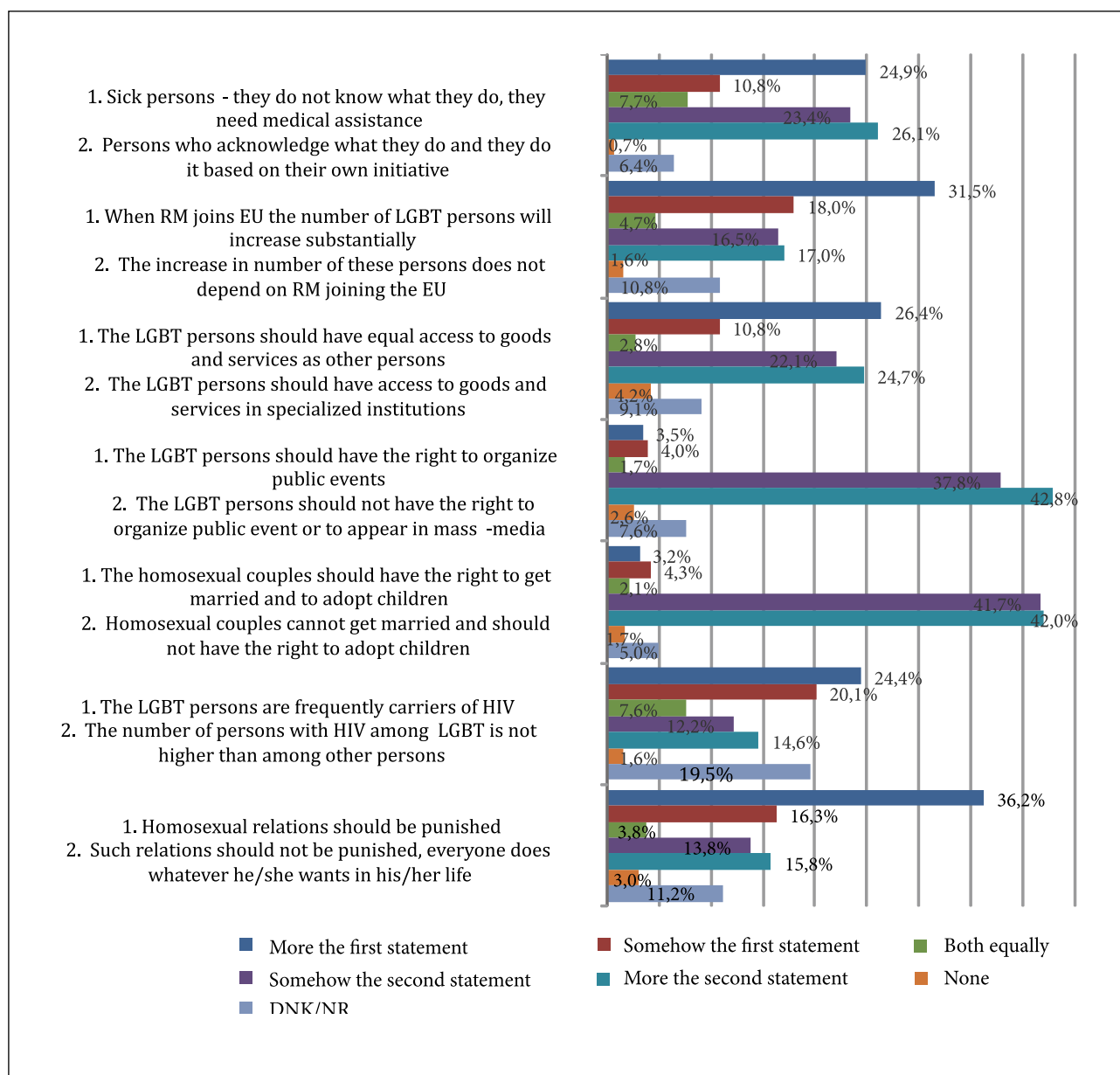
high social-economic status (46.6%), urban population (43.7%) and respondents with higher education (40.8%). A share of about 17% of elderly respondents, as well as those with incomplete secondary education and low social-economic status could not express themselves in this context.

The opinions regarding the access to goods and services for LGBT persons got divided. A share of 37.2% of respondents consider that the *LGBT persons should have access to goods and services just like other persons* and this opinion is more pronounced among the respondents with higher education (47.8%) and those from rural area (47.8%). At the same time, the share of those who consider that the *LGBT persons should have access to goods and services in specialized institutions* is higher by almost 10 percentage points, accounting for 46.8% of the total number of respondents. The same opinion is supported more by men (51.6%), respondents with secondary, lyceum education (50.7%) and respondents from rural area (49%).

The organization of public events by the LGBT persons, the marriage of homosexual couples and adoption of children by such couples is not accepted by the majority of respondents, with a share over 80% allocated to the negative answer options. In both cases, positive opinions were reflected only by 7.5% of the interviewed persons. Less tolerant regarding the marriage and adoption of children (opted for *homosexual couples should not get married and should not have the right to adopt children*) were the persons aged 45-59 years old (89.6%), respondents with secondary vocational education (88.2%), with high social-economic status (86.8%) and men (86.7%).

The opinion that the *LGBT persons are frequently carriers of HIV* is shared by 44.5% respondents, with higher shares among the persons with secondary vocational education (49.6%) and urban inhabitants (48.3%). About 26.8% of respondents consider that the *number of people with HIV among LGBT is not higher than among other persons*, and this statement is opted for mainly by the representatives of ethnic minorities (33.6%), as well as persons aged 30-44 years old, with higher education, high social-economic status (30% each). It should be mentioned that almost 1/5 of respondents could not / did not wish to express themselves regarding this pair of statements, and bigger shares - over 25% - were noted among the elderly people and persons with low social-economic level.

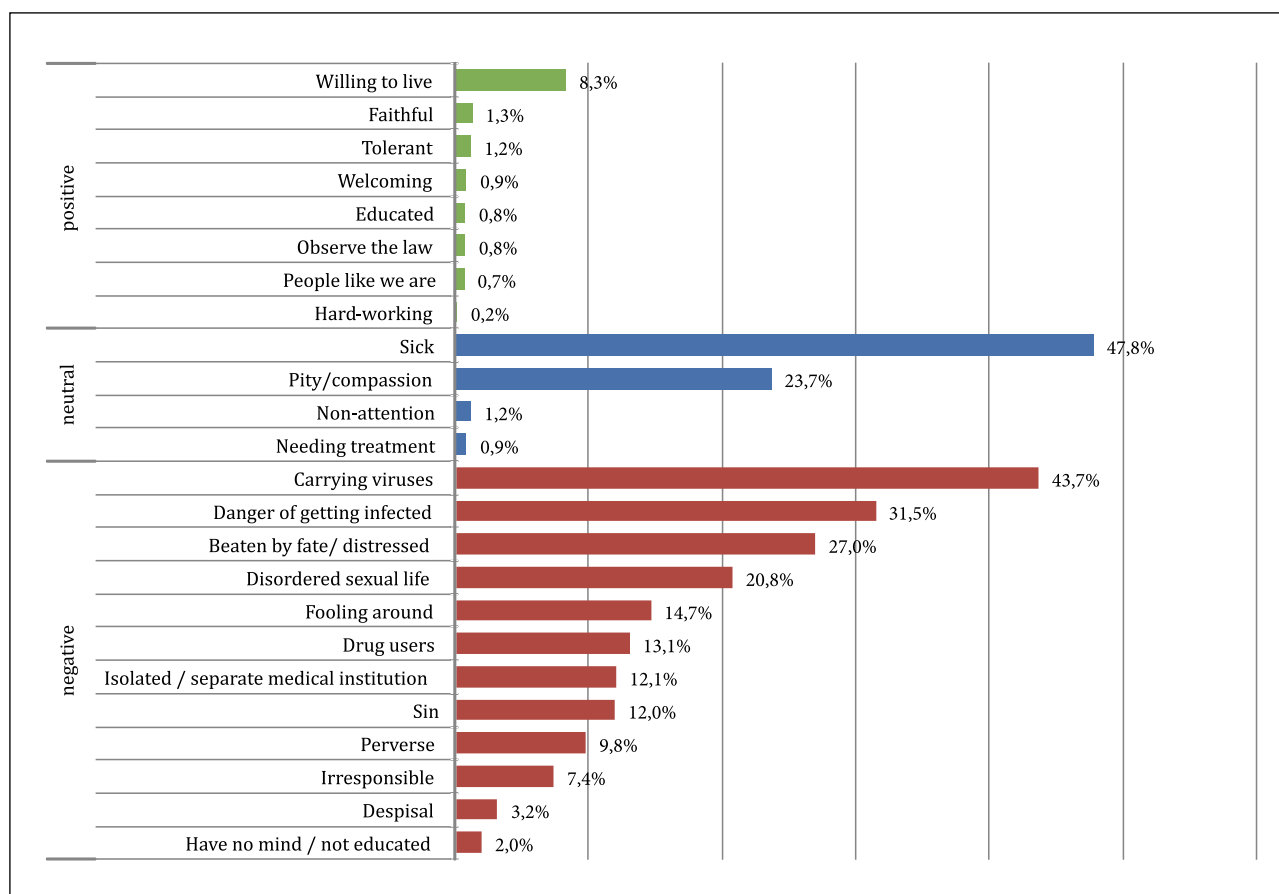
The homosexual relations are perceived by 52.5% of respondents as an offence, they consider that *homosexual relations should be punished* – bigger shares of those opting for this option are noted among those with low social-economic status (61.9%), with incomplete secondary education (60.1%), and rural respondents (58.5%). Other 29.6% consider that *such relation should not be punished, everyone is doing whatever he/she want in his/her life* – and this statement is mainly opted for by those with higher education (40.4%), high social-economic status (39.7%) and urban inhabitants (39.1%).



**Figure 13. Pairs of statements reflecting the viewpoint of the respondents regarding homosexuals/lesbians (LGBT)**

## 2.4. People living with HIV

The people living with HIV were perceived by the respondents mainly with negative connotations. In a share of 43.7% - they are associated with *people carrying viruses*, 31.5% - *danger to be infected*, 27% - *beaten by fate / distressed*, 20.8% - *disordered sexual life*. The neutral perceptions were mentioned by 47.8% of respondents as being *sick*, and 23.7% of respondents have *pity/compassion for them*. The positive perceptions include the option *willing to live with* 8.3%, and other categories cumulating less than 2% (Figure 14).

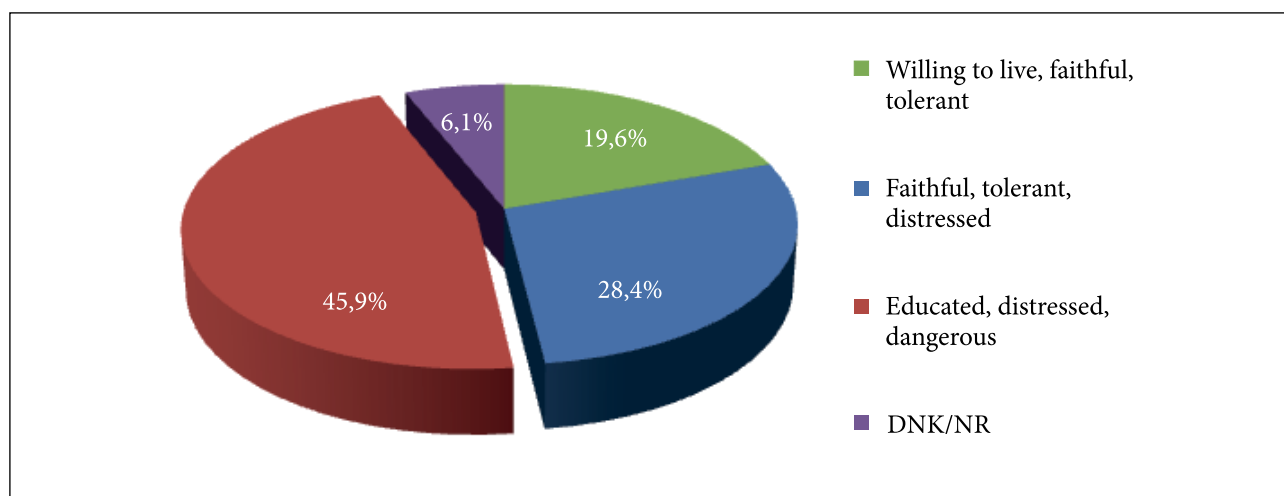


**Figure 14. What words come first to your mind when we say HIV positive person?**

The distribution of respondents depending on the three groups of statements (positive, including all positive affirmations, respectively *willing to live, faithful, tolerant*, with neutral connotation with two positive affirmations, respectively *faithful, tolerant* and one neutral – *distressed*, with negative connotation, including one of each type, respectively *educated, distressed, dangerous*) is the following: almost half (45.9%) of respondents opted for the group of statements considered with negative connotation, with higher shares of answers registered in case of persons with incomplete secondary education or secondary vocational education (52.5% and respectively 53.9%), and low social status (51.7%). The persons with higher education and the young aged 18-29 years old registered higher shares of answers referring to the group of absolutely positive affirmations (27.3% and respectively 24.4%).

Seven pairs of statements were considered to analyze the acceptance of people living with HIV (Figure 12).

Acceptance/isolation in the society of the people living with HIV is analyzed through two groups of statements; the shares of respondents considering that they should be isolated account for almost 1/3 of the their total (31.3% consider that the people living with HIV should be isolated from the rest of the society to prevent the spreading of the infection, and 34.2% - the people living with HIV are a danger of infection for other persons, thus they should be isolated). At the same time, almost half of respondents consider that the people living with HIV should be accepted, only thus we would increase their life expectancy (51.6%) and the danger for getting infected is for everyone, all the persons should be more responsible for their actions (53.5%). More tolerance is noted among the same groups of respondents, as well as in the above-analyzed groups, meaning the young, those with high economic status, with higher education, urban inhabitants, and less tolerant are those with lower level of education and lower economic status.



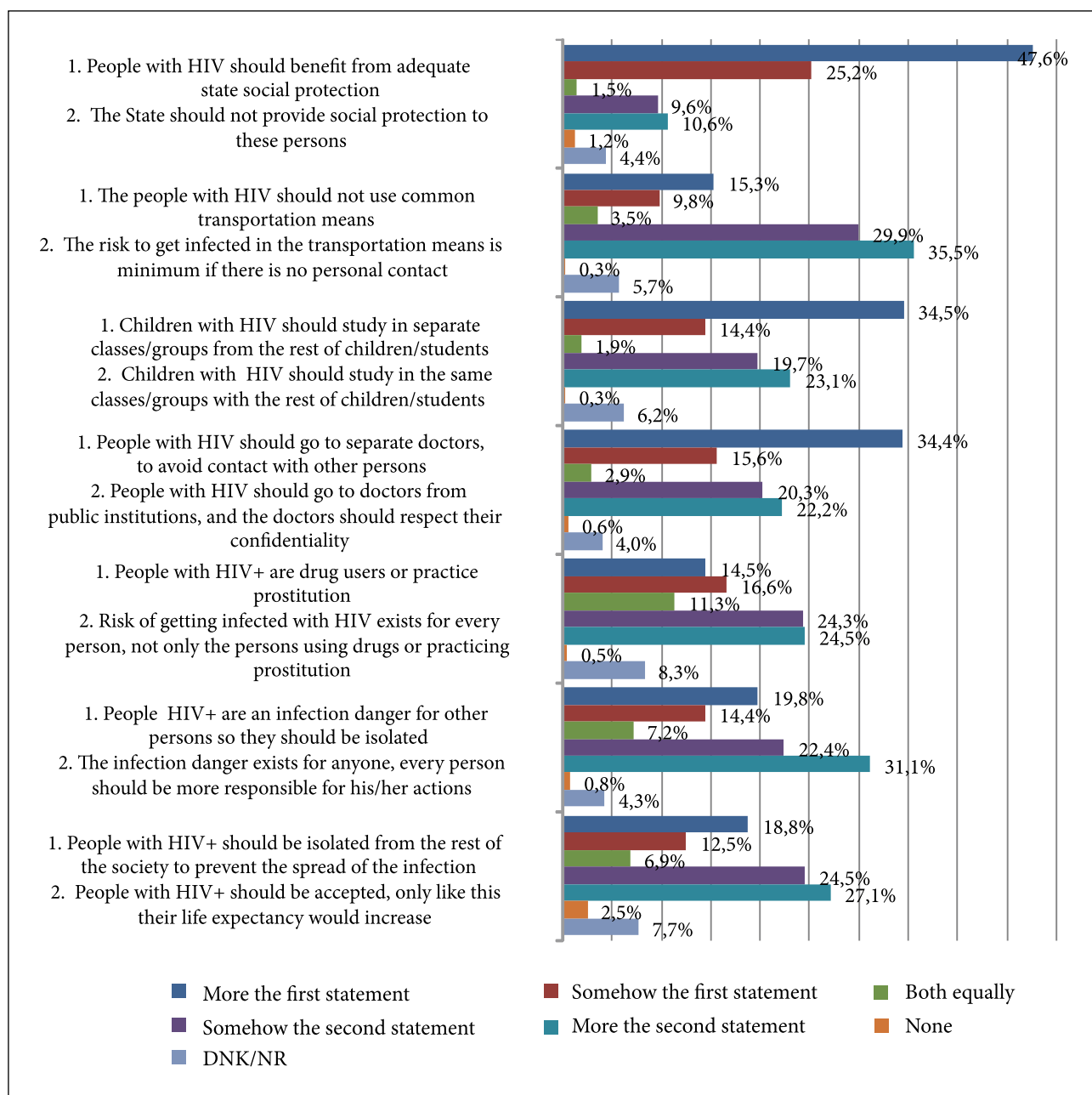
**Figure 15. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the HIV positive people?**

Almost 1/3 of the respondents (31.1%) consider that the *people living with HIV are drug users or practice prostitution*, and almost half (48.8%) selected the option of the *risk to get infected with HIV exists for all the persons, but not all the persons use drugs or practice prostitution*.

Access to health and education, analyzed through the following two pairs of indicators shows approximatively the same trends. About 50% of the respondents mentioned that the *people with HIV should go to separate doctors, so as to avoid the contact with other persons*, and 42.5% stated that the *people with HIV should go to doctors from public institutions, and these doctors should respect their confidentiality*. Respectively, in case of access to education, it may be noted that a share of 48.9% consider that *children with HIV should study in separate classes/groups from the rest of children/students*, and 42.8% mentioned the option that *children with HIV should study in the same classes/groups with the rest of children/students*.

About 2/3 of respondents acknowledge that the risk of getting infected with HIV is minimum, 65.4% of respondents opted for the affirmation *risk of getting infected in the transportation means is minimum if it is not contacted personally* with shares of over 70% registered among respondents with higher education, from urban area, and high social-economic level. Nevertheless, about ¼ of the interviewed respondents (25.1%) consider that this risk exists, thus the *people with HIV should not use common transportation means*.

The state social protection for the respective group of persons is considered to be necessary by 72.8% respondents, who have selected the statements *the people with HIV should benefit from adequate social protection from the State*, with bigger shares registered among the persons with higher education (85.8%, of respondents from urban area (78.7%) and those with high social-economic status (78.5%). At the same time, it may be noted that there is a rather pronounced negativism from 20.2% of respondents, who have opted for the statement *the State should not provide social protection to these persons*.



**Figure 16. Pairs of statements reflecting the viewpoint of respondents regarding the HIV positive people**

“Fear” is the basic emotion when tackling the topic of HIV within the group discussions. In both group discussions, it was noted that these persons are “isolated”, “ignored”, “discriminated” in the society, “the reason is that you protect yourself”. Some respondents mentioned that they would avoid the people living with HIV.

*“If I would be a surgeon I would not like to work with them, so as not to get infected. These people (HIV positive) should work only if they are sure they will not infect anyone.” (M, 59 years old, person with disability)*

*“Although it is known that infection does not occur directly, many times these people are ignored when trying to be recruited, as employers try to avoid any conflict, even the persons who are already employed finding out about the a peer may ignore or make such conditions for such peers to leave.” (F, 26 years old, scientific researcher, internship)*

*“Our society is not informed correctly or enough so as to understand the risks. If I hold him nothing will happen, if I kiss him on the cheek, nothing will happen. Just because it is a disease for which no cure was found yet, the people are afraid not to get sick and isolate them.” (F, 18 years old, pupil)*

During the group discussions it was mentioned that the young tend to have an attitude with more compassion to the people living with HIV as compared to the persons aged 30 years old, who associate these persons with some behavior patterns *“there are many of them among drug users”* and *“they mainly get infected through sexual means”*. According to the young interviewed respondents, the people living with HIV live their lives more intensively and more altruistically.

*“The people living with HIV, when they find out about their diagnosis, in my opinion, they get mobilized more so as to help the others from outside, because they know that they don’t have much time to live and they use this time so as to help someone to bring some use, for someone to remember them later.” (M, 26 years old, civil servant)*

*“They want to inform the persons from around to be more cautious, for the same things not to happen to them, for them not to repeat the same story (infection) with HIV.” (F, 23 years old, student)*

## 2.5. Roma people

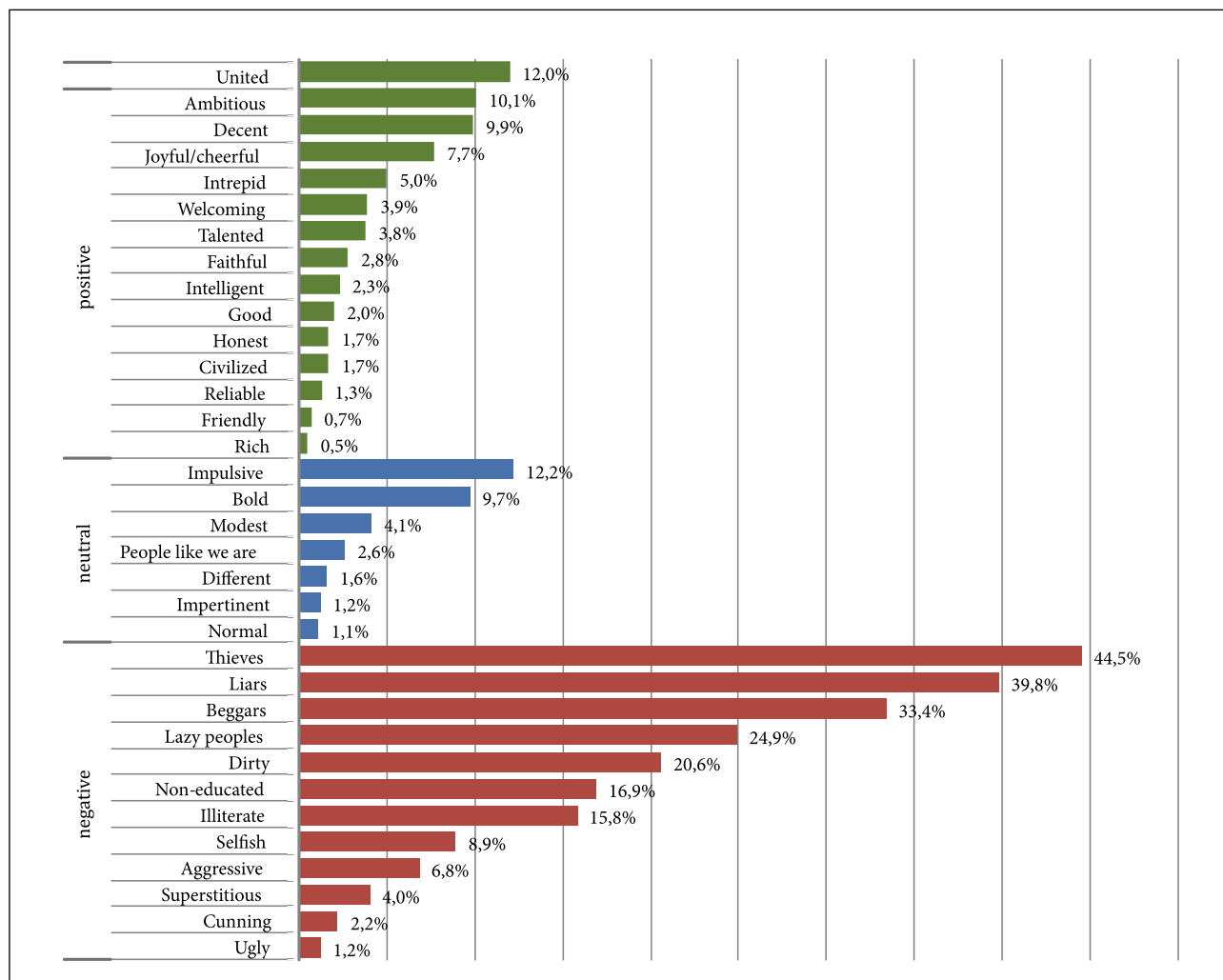
Mainly negative perceptions prevail as well in case of the Roma people living in the RM, and this denotes that the negative stereotypes related to the population of the respective ethnical group continue to persist. A number of 12 negative characteristics were mentioned, the shares of answers varying between 1.2% and 44.5%, with 44.5% of respondents considering that Roma people are *thieves*, 39.8% - *liars*, 33.4% - *beggars*. At the same time, more positive characteristics were mentioned (all I all 15), but the shares of answers are smaller and are covered between 0.5% and 12.0%, with 12.0% respondents considering that Roma people are *united*, 10.1% - *ambitious* and 9.9% - *decent*, 7.7% - *joyful/cheerful*. Most of the shares for neural perceptions were cumulated by the options of *impulsive* – 12% and *bold* – 9.7% (Figure 17).

The participants in the group discussions have appreciated the fact that *“Roma people represent a very united ethnic group”* and *“resistant from physical point of view and tempered”*. As well, it was noted that Roma people keep their traditions and learn more languages of communication.

The respondents were asked *which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the persons of Roma ethnicity*, based on three groups of statements: absolutely positive – only with positive affirmations (*intrepid, talented, ambitious*); with neutral connotation, including two positive and one neutral affirmations (*talented, ambitious, beggars*); and with negative connotation – including one positive, one neutral, and one negative affirmation (*faithful, beggars, lazy people*). It may be noted that almost half of the respondents (49.4%) opted for the group of statements with negative connotation, 34.9% - neutral and only 12.7% - absolutely positive (Figure 18). It seems that the respondents with higher education, urban population and the persons with high social-economic status are less tolerant, which is totally reversed if compared



with the previously studied groups. The respondents of these groups registered the highest shares opting for the first group of statements with negative connotation – 57.1%, 55.1% and respectively 52.3%.

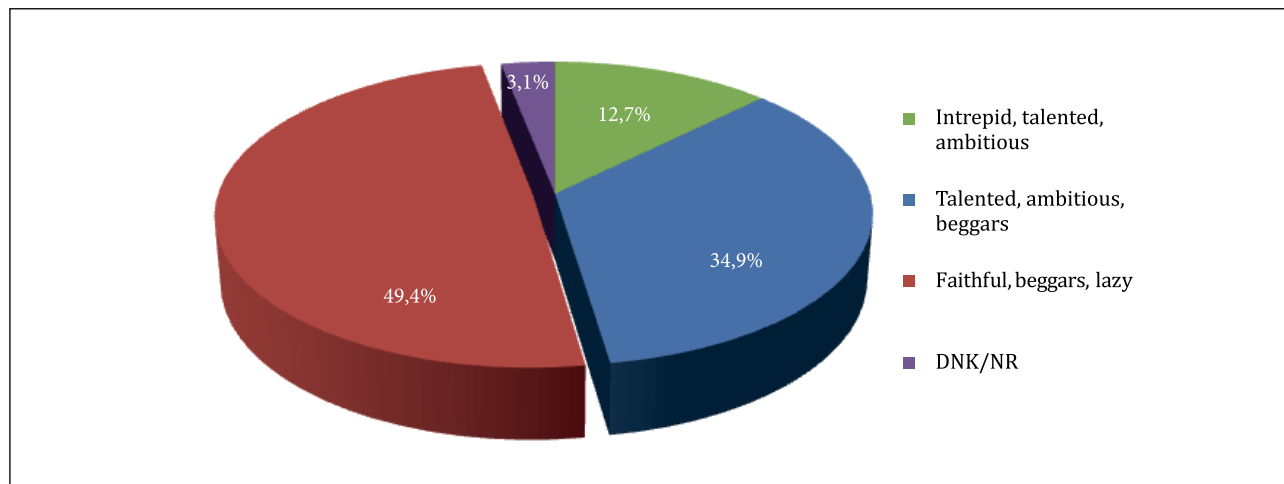


**Figure 17. What characteristics would describe the best the Roma people in the RM?**

A series of affirmation pairs assess the respondents' opinions about the situation of the Roma people under different aspects (Figure 15).

Based on several pairs of statements, the respondents' opinions were studied related to the isolation of this group of persons. It may be noted that the respondents do not consider that Roma people should be isolated from the society, on the contrary – 78.3% of respondents think that *Roma people are citizens of this State and they should be integrated in the society, respecting their identity*, with bigger shares noted among the persons aged over 45 years old (about 82%), 78.1% - *access of Roma people to public places should not be prohibited, for them not to feel discriminated and humiliated* – an option selected mainly by the respondents from urban area (82.3%), 79.6% - *for a successful integration in the society, it is necessary for the Roma children to study together with other children* – an opinion supported a lot by the elderly people (82.1%) and the persons with secondary vocational and higher education (over 81%). At the same time, some trends are mentioned regarding their self-exclusion, especially from education, with 54.9% respondents considering that *Roma people do not send their children to school as a matter of principle, because of their traditions*, higher shares are noted among the respondents

with high social-economic status (61%) and higher education level (60.2%), and 24.6% support that *Roma people do not send their children to school because of poverty or because they are discriminated by children of other ethnical groups* – an affirmation mainly supported by the persons with incomplete secondary education (31.8%), secondary, lyceum education (28.6%) and youth aged 18-29 years old (29.5%). In both focus groups, the respondents clarified that the majority of Roma parents do not send their children to school, because they have some other priorities for them.



**Figure 18. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the Roma people?**

*“A problem for Roma people is education, they do not insist for their children to be educated; they do not perceive it as necessary. They just focus on money, to go and make money.” (F, 26 years old, housewife)*

*“Roma people learn from each other. There are a few Roma people going to school.” (M, 59 years old, person with disability)*

*“As for the educational system, the majority of parents do not want their children to study, it is better for them to sell together with them.” (M, 32 years old, psychologist)*

The opinion that the *State should provide more subsidies and assistance to Roma people* is supported only by 1/5 of respondents (21.1%) with bigger shares registered among the urban respondents (25.8%) and those with higher education (25.4%), and 2/3 (66.6%) considering that the *State should not provide allocations and subsidies to Roma* – an affirmation selected mainly by the persons aged 45-59 years old (74.5%) and representatives of ethnic minorities (73.2%).

Several pairs of statements allow analyzing the opinions of respondents regarding Roma’s attitude to employment and obtaining subsistence means. A share of 66.8% of all respondents think that the *majority of Roma do not work, but earn money via illegal ways, as trafficking in drugs, trafficking in human beings, arms, etc.*, the same opinion was expressed by 75.2% of respondents with high social-economic status, about 72% of youth aged 18-29 years old. As well, a share of 61.7% of those interviewed opted for the statement that *Roma people never undertake physical efforts to perform heavy work*, and bigger shares of respondents selecting this option were registered among the persons with high social-economic status (70.1%) and urban inhabitants (68.6%).

The option that *Roma usually look for easy ways to earn money, through tricks and cheating* was selected by 77.7% respondents, mainly supported by 80% of persons from youth aged 18-44 years old. The fact that the *majority of Roma are lying and ready to cheat at any moment* was mentioned mainly by the young aged 18-29 years old (77.4%).

These opinions regarding Roma people’s attitude to work prevail among the population and the respondents from the

group discussions noted that “*Roma do not want to work*” and they go for begging, fortune telling, thefts and different commercial activities bringing earnings. In both group discussions, the respondents insisted on specific cases of their own or their relatives in interacting with Roma people, and these have backed up their attitudes of rejecting the representatives of this community, nurturing at the same time the stereotypes persisting in relation to Roma people.

*“Well you should never deal with gypsy ... My cousin had some deals with the gypsies from Soroca and it was so difficult to get him out of this group of thefts and robberies” (M, 20 years old, student)*

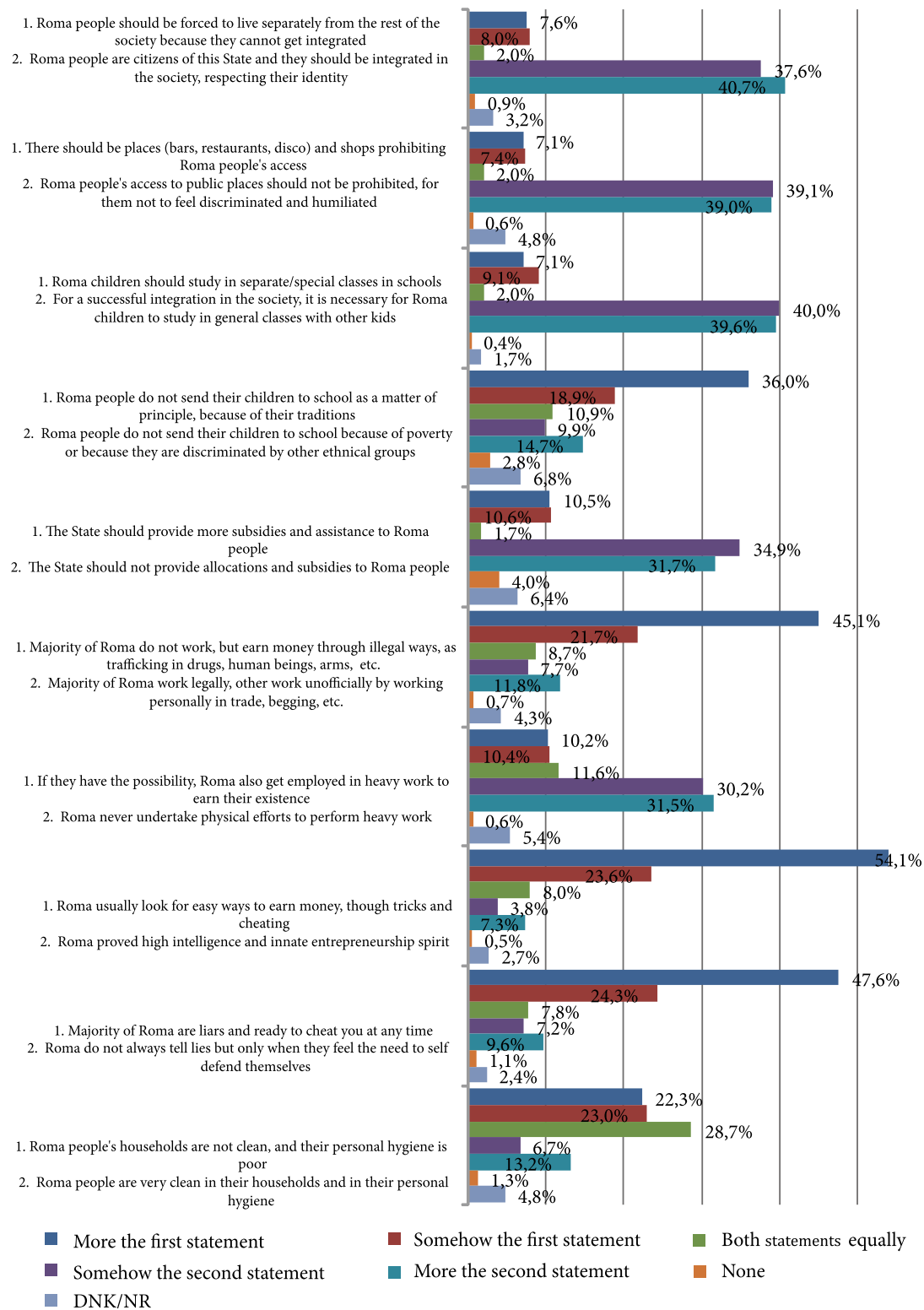
*“We have a park in the village, and there was a mother with her child on the bench. A gypsy approached her and started to hypnotize her. I saw how the woman gave her the earrings, the ring and so on. I approved them and gave the ring of the woman back. I called that woman telling her that someone is waiting for her just to get rid of the gypsy. Since then, I know that they have some supernatural powers.” (M, 53 years old, doctor)*

Some young participants were convinced that stigmatization and discrimination of Roma people by ethnic criterion determine them to have a specific behavior and create difficulties for integrating them in the society.

*“We knowing that they are gypsy, we created the stereotype that they are thieves, but it is obvious that there are normal people among them ... But because of this, some of them suffered, for instance were rejected from employment, and this makes them starting robberies, because they are ignored, they are not integrated in the society. Yes indeed there talented people among them, just like among us, people who can do things one thousand times better than us.” (F, 24 years old, in child care leave)*

*“When analyzing things we may see that it is also our guilt that they always are out-casted and thus they had to make two ends meet” (F, 18 years old, pupil)*

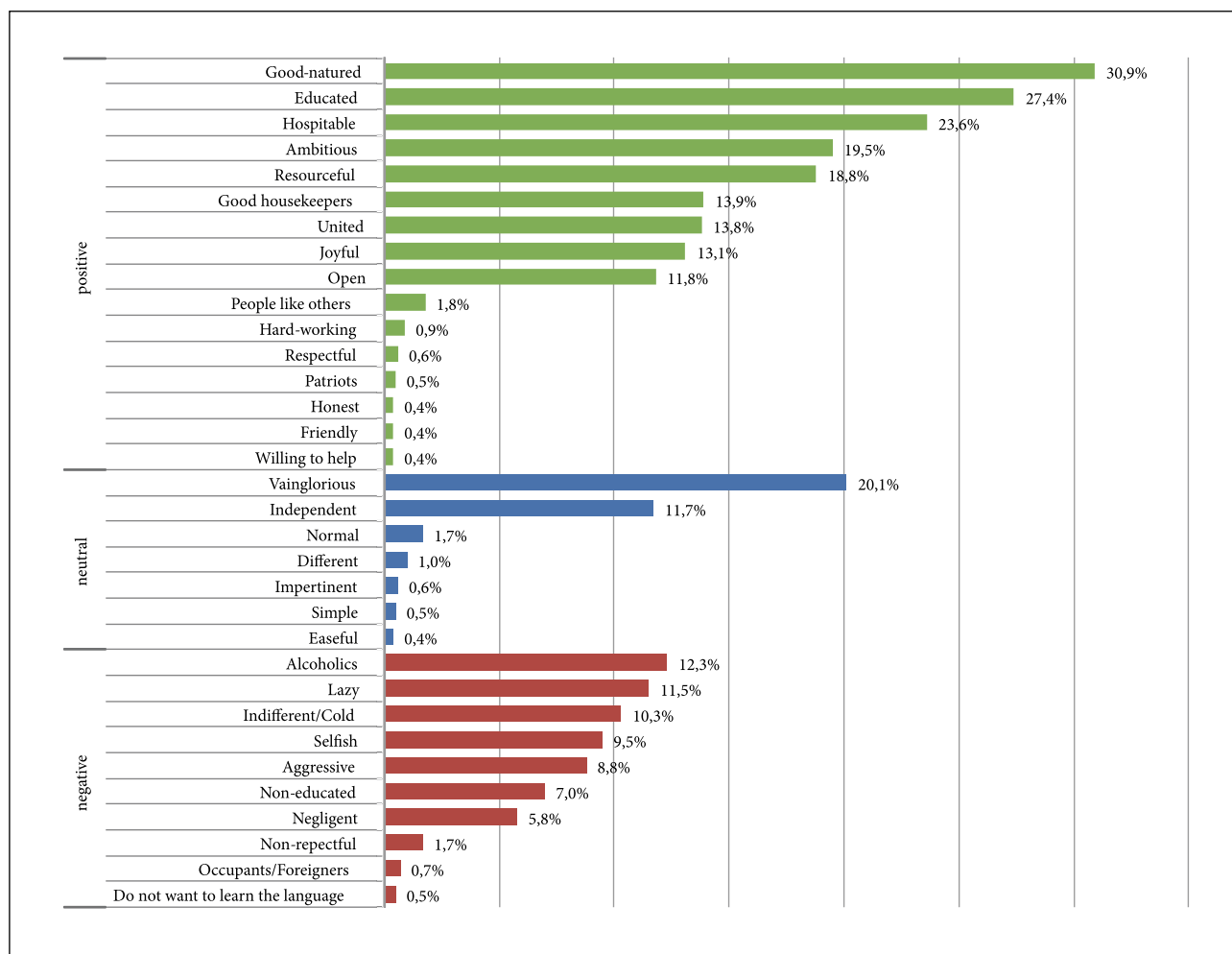
As for their hygiene – a negative attitude prevails in this respect as well. About 45.3% of all respondents selected the option that *Roma people households are not clean, and their personal hygiene is also bad*, with bigger shares among the respondents with high social-economic status (51%) and youth aged 18-29 years old (50.3%), and only 19.9% considering that *Roma are very clean in their households, and personally they take care of their hygiene*, and this opinion is mainly expressed by the representatives of minority ethnic groups. A considerable share of respondents (28.7%) selected the option that both affirmations are equally true.



**Figure 19. Pairs of statements reflecting respondents' views about Roma people in RM**

## 2.6. Russians living in the Republic of Moldova

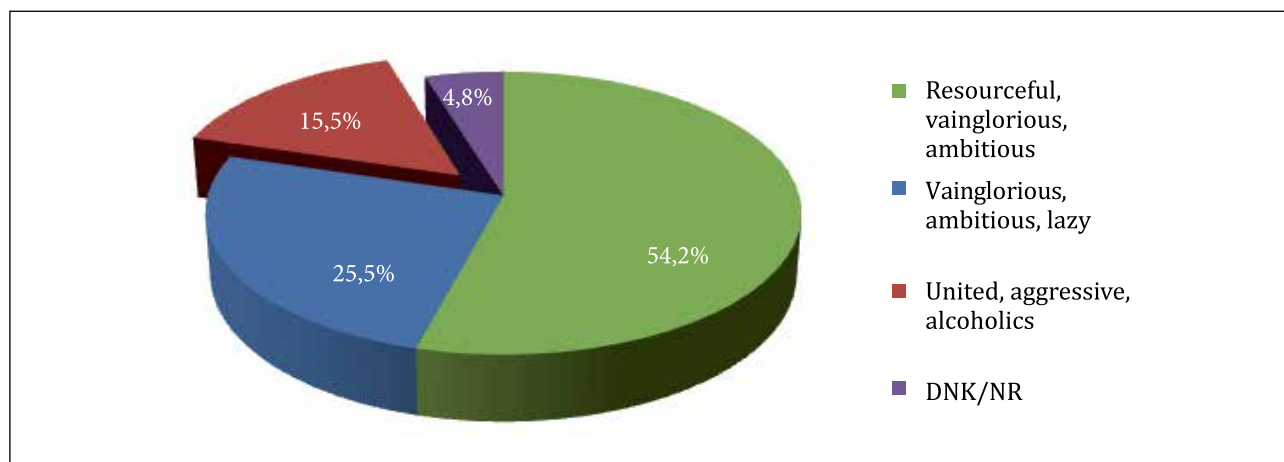
The perceptions of the respondents regarding the Russians living in the RM are mainly with positive connotation (Figure 20). About 30% of the interviewed people consider that Russians are characterized by being *good-natured and educated*, about 20% perceive them as *hospitable, ambitious and resourceful*, and over 10% of answers have cumulated such features as *good housekeepers, united, joyful, and receptive*. A number of other positive characteristics were mentioned, accounting for less than 2% of answers. Only two of the qualifications with neutral connotation have cumulated a representative share of answers: 20.1 – *vainglorious* and 11.7% - *independent*, all the other registered shares of less than 2%. The negative characteristics are less in number and share than the positive ones, seven of them accounting for 5.8% - 12.3% answers.



**Figure 20. What qualities do you think characterize the best the Russians living in the RM?**

The respondents' opinion regarding the three groups of statements characterizing the best the Russians living in the RM, most of preferences were registered for the positive affirmations (*resourceful, vainglorious, ambitious*) with 54.2%; the neutral statement including two positive affirmations and one neutral (*vainglorious, ambitious, lazy*) accounted for almost ¼ of answers (25.5%); and the statement with negative connotation (*united, aggressive, alcoholics*) was mentioned only by 15.5% (Figure 21). The biggest shares were cumulated by the group of positive connotation affirmations among the

representatives of minority ethnic groups (73.7%) and elderly people (59.9%), and less tolerant are the people for the age group of 18-29 years old – cumulating the biggest share of negative connotation affirmations – 18.6%.



**Figure 21. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the Russians living in the RM?**

The respondents were asked to express their viewpoints regarding the respective groups of persons via seven pairs of statements (Figure 22).

Hence, 38.4% of respondents consider that *Russians are not patriots of the RM* – with shares higher than 46% noted among the persons with higher education and youth aged 16-29 years old, while a more pronounced share - 48.9% stated that the *Russians living in the RM care about our country* – this statement was supported by 80% of the representatives of minority ethnic groups and over 55% of respondents with secondary and lyceum education, and elderly people of 60+ years old.

In case of the next pair of statements, the share of answers prevails towards the option *They are vainglorious and do not wish to study Romanian language* with 46.8% answers, with a bigger share (53.8%) noted among the respondents with higher education. At the same time, 41.4% of respondents consider that *Russians do not feel the need to study Romanian language as they may be understood everywhere* – this opinion being more pronounced (60.7% answers) among the representatives of ethnic minorities.

During both group discussions, the respondents tackled the issue that the Russians living in the RM do not know Romanian language. The majority of interviewed people consider that this represents lack of respect for the natives' language and traditions, and Russians consider themselves as being superior from ethnic and cultural points of view. Some respondents consider that the fact that the Russians living in the RM do not know Romanian language is actually a consequence of the majority population attitude.

*"If we leave to Russia we have to speak Russian, while here... if there are, for instance 5 Moldovans and 1 Russian speaker, our people would talk Russian. The Russians do not respect our country and our traditions."* (M, 59 years old, constructor)

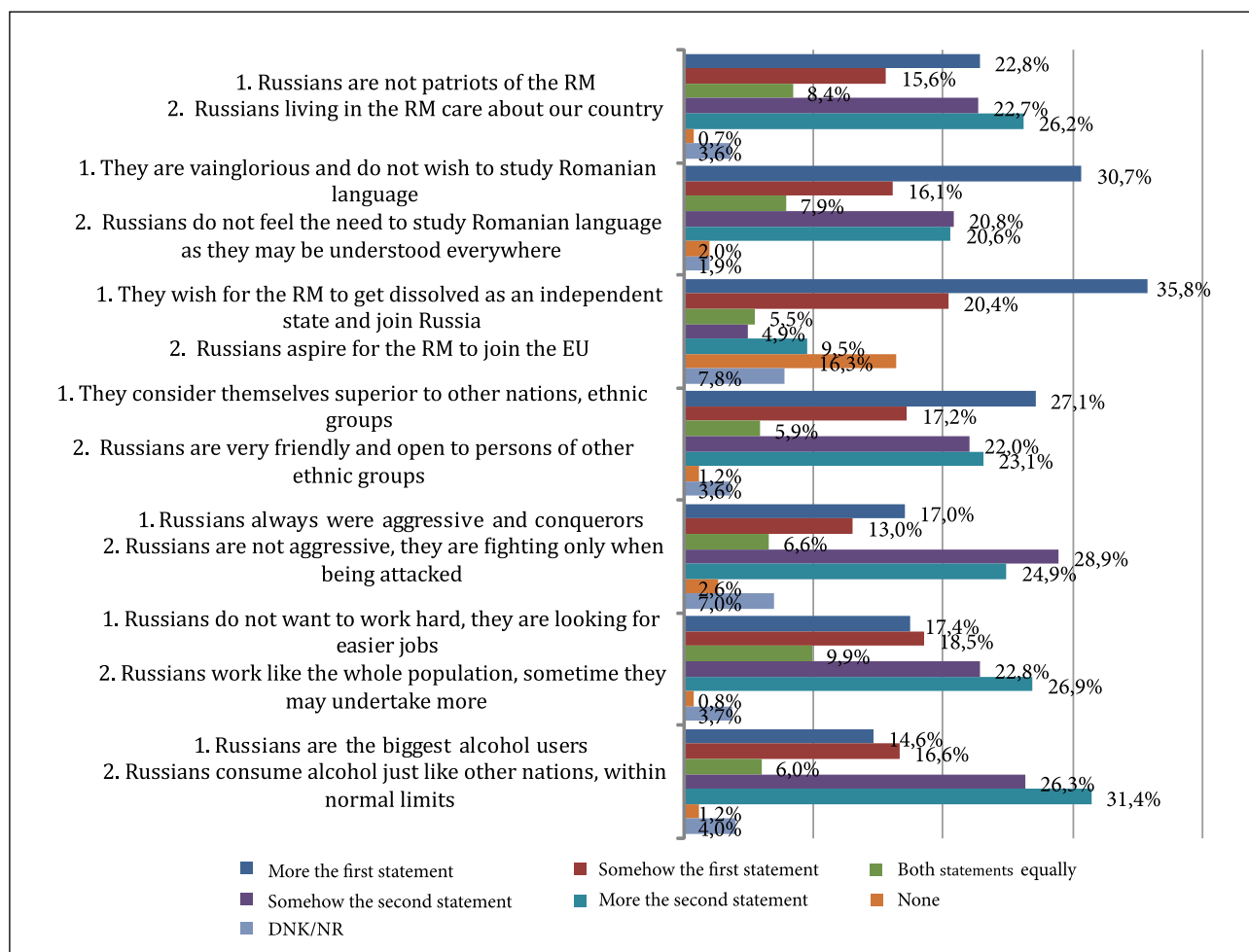
*"They think that if they learn our language, they will demean themselves. But the more languages the person knows the richer he/she is."* (M, 59 years old, person with disability)

*"Very authoritarian, with nationalist spirit, although they live on Moldovan territory, nevertheless they have too authoritarian spirit and too dignifying ... There is lack of respect from their behalf, we would not go to Russia to speak Romanian."* (F, 23 years old, student)

Over half of the interviewed persons, 56.2%, consider that Russians *wish for the RM to get dissolved as an independent state and join Russia* – rather big share of people stating this would be among the youth 18-29 years old (64.6%), the respondents with high social-economic status (62.1%), the representatives of ethnic majority and urban area respondents (about 60% of answers each). It should be mentioned that the option *Russians aspire for the RM to join the EU* cumulated a very small share of only 14.4% answers, and 16.3% respondents mentioned that no statement from the suggested pair is valid.

As for the opinion related to Russians' attitude towards other ethnic groups, almost the same share - 45% - was allocated to both opinions (44.3% - *they consider themselves superior to other nations, ethnic groups* and 45.1% - *Russians are very friendly and open to persons of other ethnic groups*). The first option has cumulated shares over 53% among the persons with higher education, with social-economic status and youth, while the second option – among the representatives of ethnic minorities, with 78.7% answers.

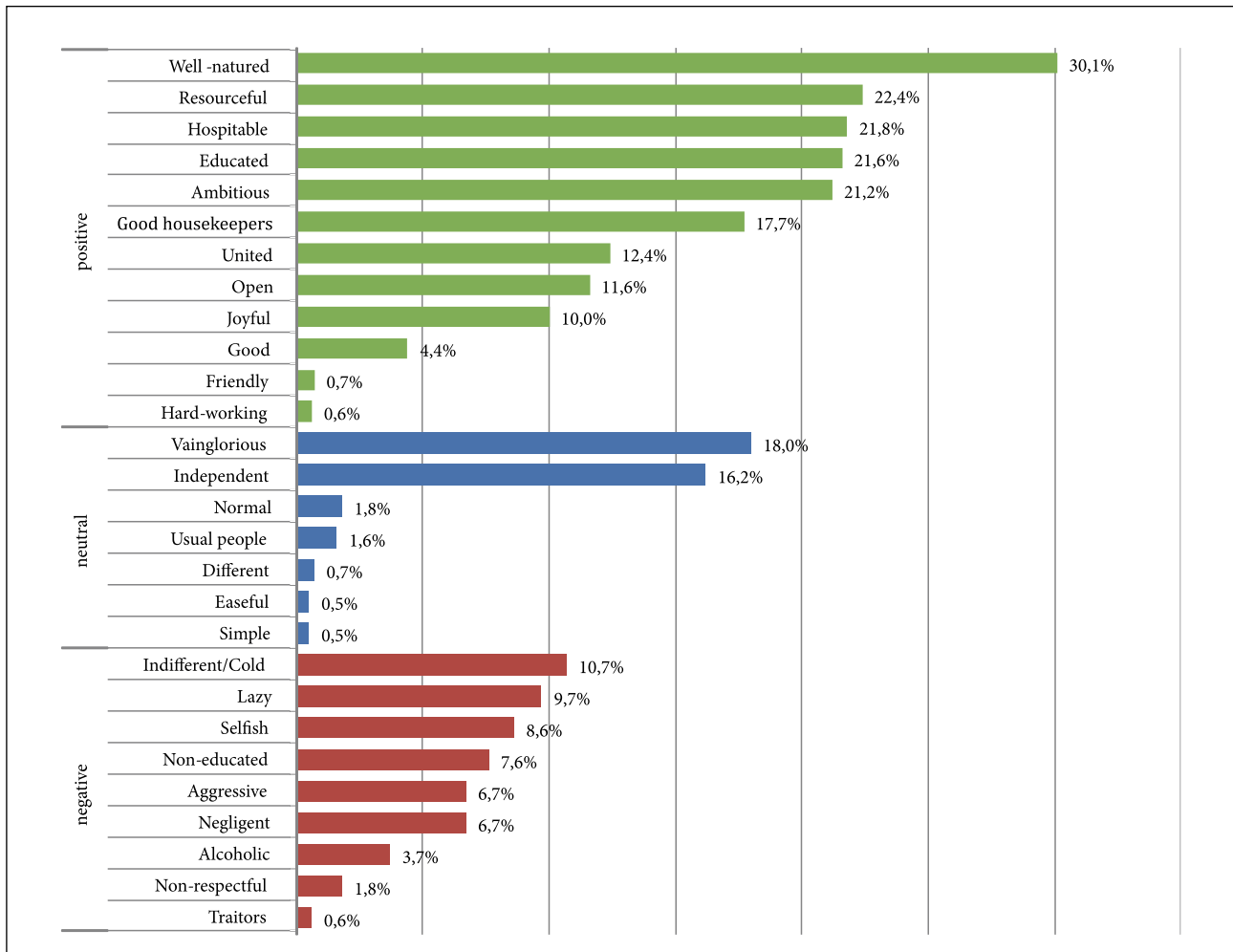
The following three pairs of statements (1. *Russians always were aggressive and conquerors*, 2. *Russians are not aggressive, they are fighting only when being attacked*; 1. *Russians do not want to work hard, they are looking for easier jobs*, 2. *Russians work like the whole population, sometime they may undertake more efforts so as to succeed on time*; 1. *Russians are the biggest alcohol users*, 2. *Russians consume alcohol just like other nations, within normal limits*), bigger shares of answers, over 50%, were registered for positive affirmations related to Russians living in the RM, the biggest shares being noted among the ethnic minorities and elderly people. The first affirmations, those with negative connotation have cumulated about 30% of answers, and bigger shares – about 40% were noted among the young respondents.



**Figure 22. Pairs of statements reflecting respondents' viewpoint regarding the Russians living in the RM**

## 2.7. Russian speaking people

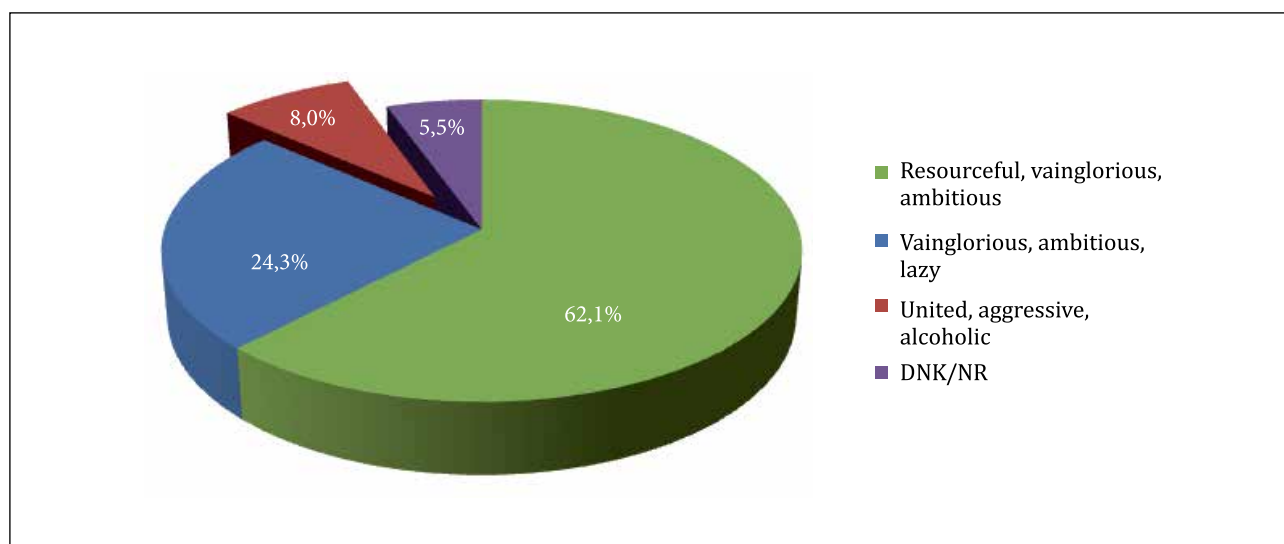
When asked about the Russian speakers in the RM, the respondents have attributed them less positive characteristics as compared to the previous group. Hence, 30.1% consider that they are *good-natured*, over 20% of answers were cumulated by the options *resourceful*, *hospitable*, *educated*, *ambitious*, 17.7% - *good housekeepers*, and about 10% - *united*, *open*, *joyful*. There were also mentioned such answers as *good*, *friendly*, *hard-working*, which have cumulated less than 5% answers. The respective group was attributed as well neutral connotation characteristics, two of which cumulated representative shares of 18% (*vainglorious*) and 16.2% (*independent*). The characteristics of negative connotation, attributed to Russian speakers cumulate less than 10% of answers, except for the fact that they are considered *indifferent/cold* in a share of 10.7% (Figure 23).



**Figure 23. What characteristics would characterize the best the Russian speakers in the RM?**

Thus, it may be noted that the respondents are more tolerant in relation to the Russian speakers in RM and this is confirmed by the answers to the three groups of statements, with 62.1% – for the group including only positive affirmations (*resourceful*, *vainglorious*, *ambitious*), 24.3% - for the group with neutral connotation (*vainglorious*, *ambitious*, *lazy*) and only 8% - for the group with negative connotation (*united*, *aggressive*, *alcoholics*) (Figure 24). These groups of respondents have cumulated the biggest shares referring to the statements with positive connotation: representatives of ethnic minorities and elderly people, with 77.7% and 65.7%, respectively.





**Figure 24. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the Russian speakers?**

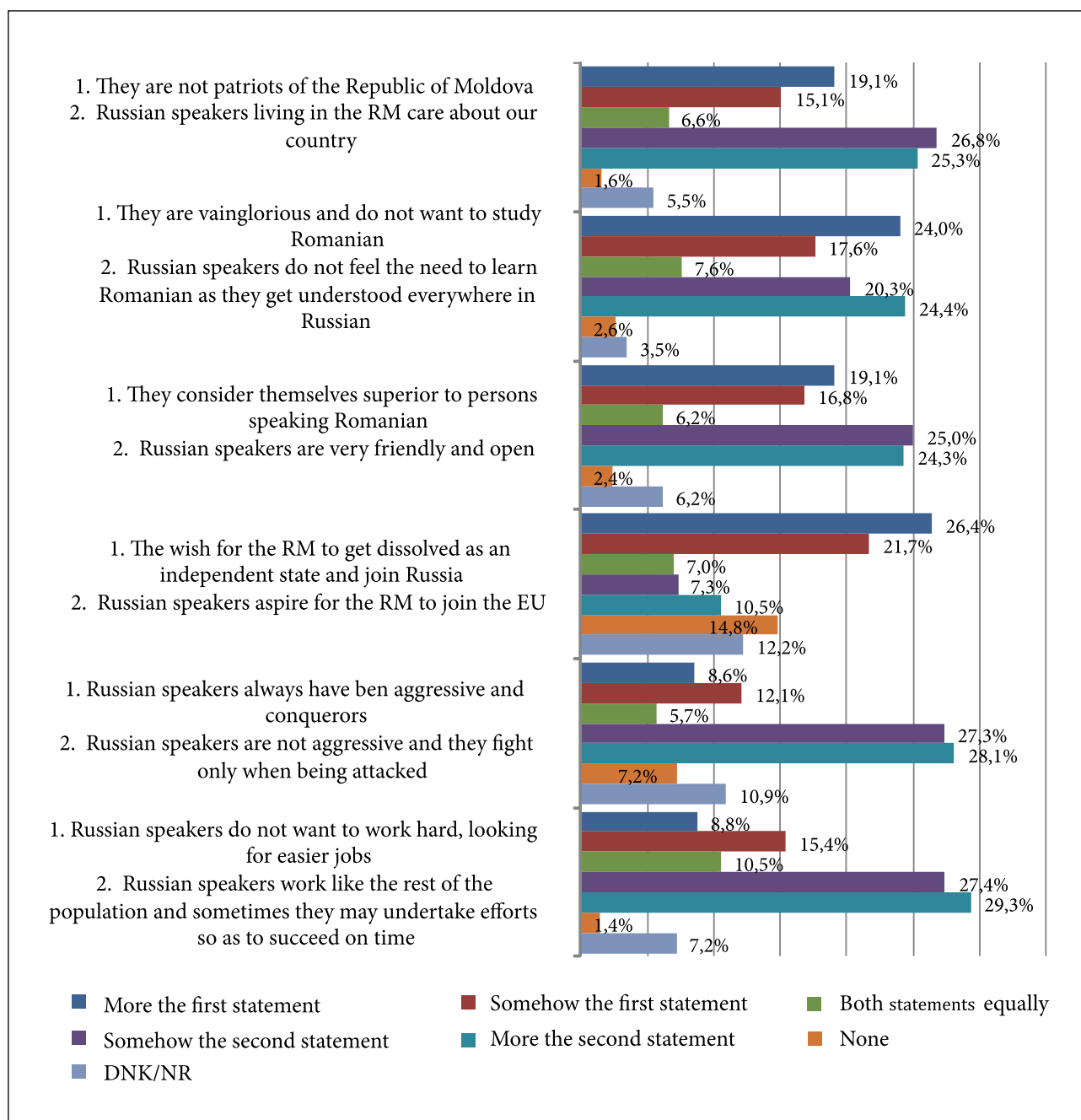
The analysis of the answers related to the pairs of contradictory statements reveal that positive answers persist, following the same trends as in the case of the previous group of population (Russians), but the shares are higher, meaning that the level of acceptance of the Russian speakers in the RM is higher (Figure 25).

Hence, over a half of respondents (52.1%) consider that the *Russian speakers living in the RM care about our country*, as compared to 34.2% stating that they *are not patriots of the RM*, 44.7% opted for the statement that *Russian speakers do not feel the need to study Romanian as they may get understood in Russian everywhere*, versus 41.6% who have selected the option that *they are vainglorious and do not want to study Romanian*, as well almost half (49.3%) consider that the *Russian speakers are very friendly and open* as related to 35.9% who have stated that *Russian speakers consider themselves more superior than the Romanian speakers*.

At the same time a considerable part, 48.1%, consider that the *Russian speakers from Moldova wish for the RM to get dissolved as an independent state and join Russia*, only 17.8% - that *Russian speakers aspire for the RM to join the EU*, and 14.8% think that none of the options is valid.

When analyzing the aggressiveness of the given group of persons, it may be noted that 55.4% of respondents consider that *the Russian speakers are not aggressive and fight only being attacked* and only 20.7% of respondents consider that the *Russian speakers always have been aggressive and conquerors*, and other 20% were not sure about their assessments.

Positive perceptions persist in relation to the workability level, with 56.7% of respondents stating that the *Russian speakers work like the whole population and sometimes may undertake more efforts to succeed on time*, almost 1/5 consider that the *Russian speakers do not want to work hard, looking for easier jobs*. Just like in the case of the previous group, the representatives of ethnic minorities are more tolerant and the youth of 18-29 years old are less tolerant.



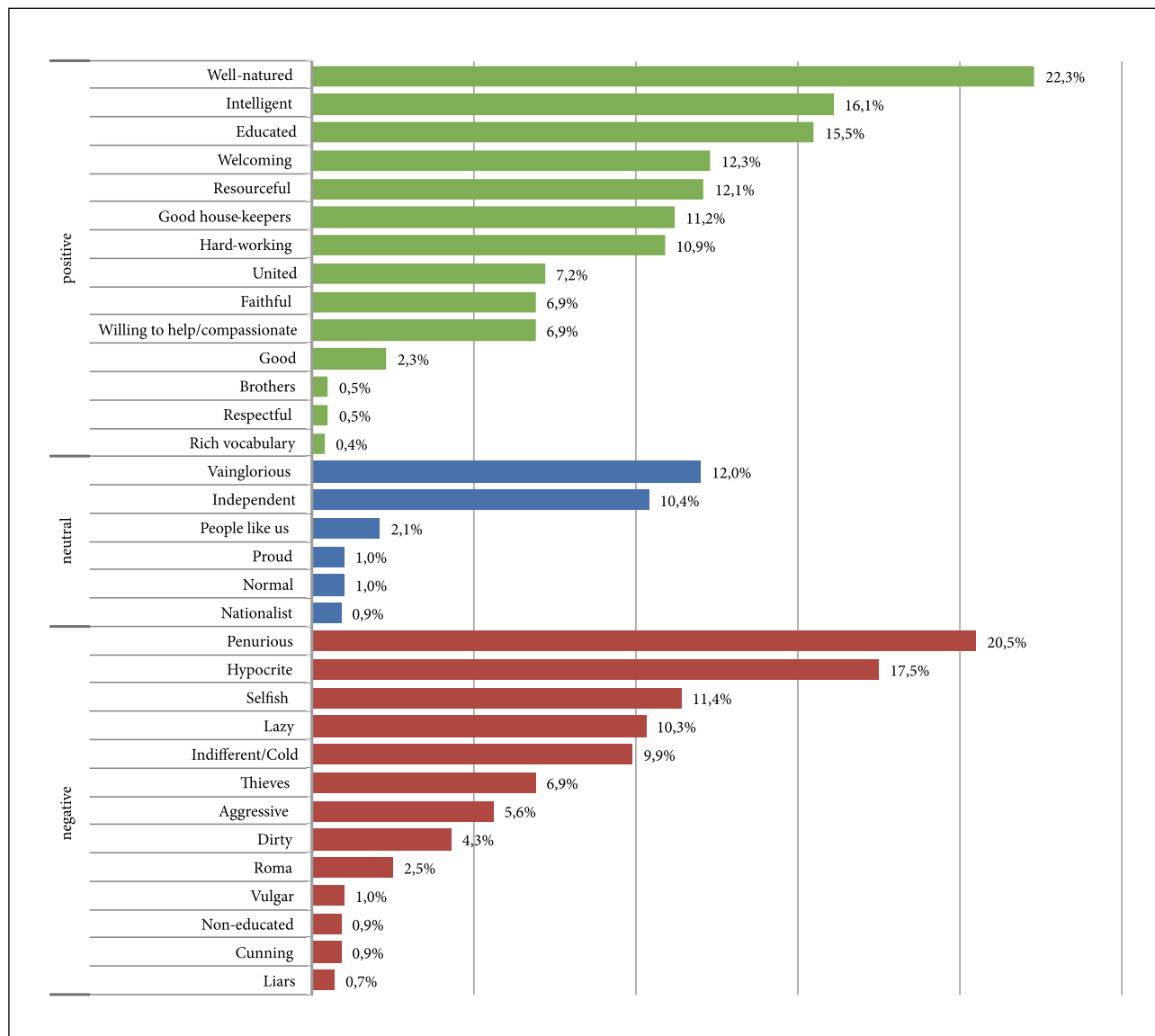
**Figure 25. Pairs of statements reflecting the respondents' viewpoint regarding the Russian speaking persons**

## 2.8. Romanians living in the Republic of Moldova

In regards to the qualities characterizing the best the Romanians living in the RM, the opinions got distributed almost equally between the positive and negative ones, with a light trend towards the characteristics with positive connotation (Figure 26).

Hence, 22.3% of respondents consider that they are *good-natured*, about 16% each – *intelligent*, *educated*, and about

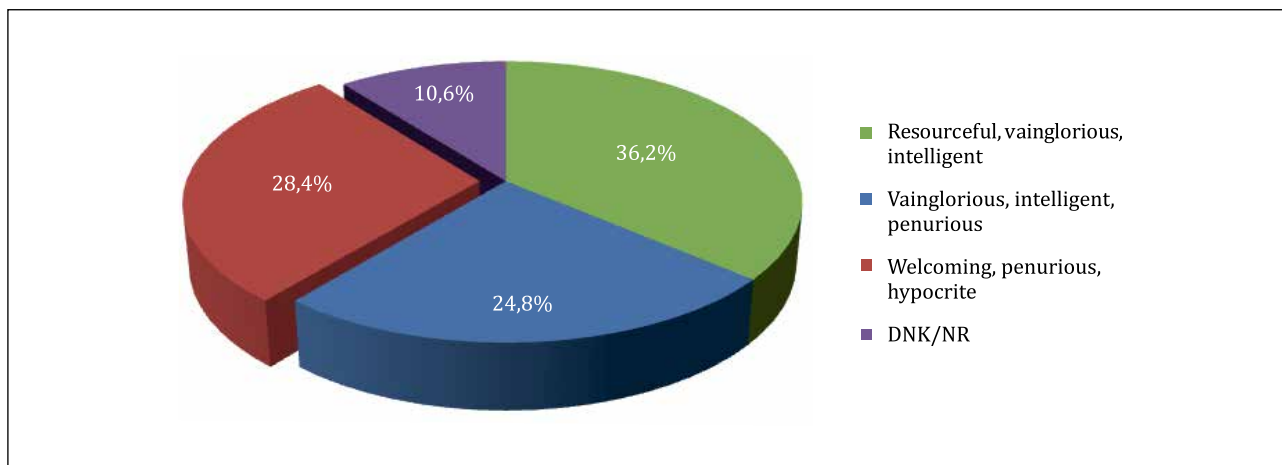
10% each – *welcoming, resourceful, good house-keepers, hard-working*, and 7% each – *united, faithful, willing to help/compassionate*. The same two neutral qualifications (*vainglorious, independent*) cumulated about 10% answers, each. The biggest share among the qualities with negative connotation, 20.5%, was registered by the *penurious*, followed by 17.5% for *hypocrite*, and 10% each were accumulated by *selfish, lazy, indifferent/cold*, about 6% - *thieves, aggressive*. Other characteristics accumulated less than 5%.



**Figure 26. What qualities characterize the best the Romanians living in the RM?**

The same distribution of answers, approximatively uniform, is noted as well among the groups of statements, considered as an absolutely positive group (*resourceful, vainglorious, intelligent*) with 36.2%; a neutral connotation group (*vainglorious, intelligent, penurious*) accounting for 24.8% and the negative connotation group (*welcoming, penurious, hypocrite*) with 28.4% (Figure 27). It was noted that the group of positive affirmations is mainly selected by the persons with higher education (46.2%), youth aged 18-29 years old (42.3%), people with high social-economic status (41.4%), and the

group of negative affirmations registered high shares among the persons with secondary, lyceum education (34.5%) and representatives of ethnic minorities (34.3%).



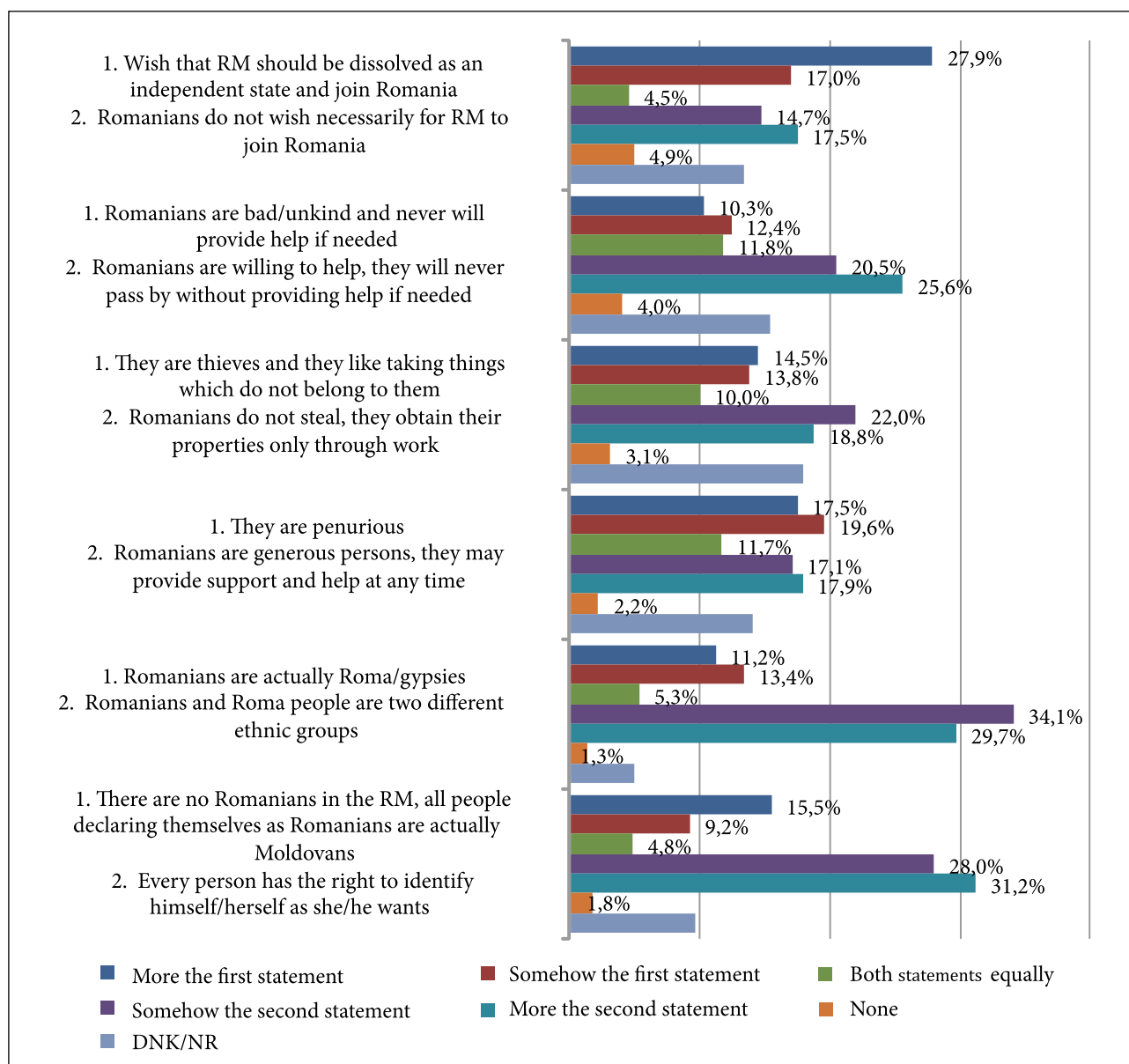
**Figure 27. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the Romanians living in the RM?**

Respondents were also asked to provide their opinions about six pairs of statements about Romanians living in the RM (Figure 28).

Almost 45% of respondents consider that the Romanians living in the RM *wish the RM dissolves as an independent state and joins Romania*. This viewpoint is expressed by 55.8% representatives of ethnic minorities, 49.1% respondents with secondary/lyceum education, about 48% (each) persons aged 18-29 years old, men, and urban inhabitants. Other 32.2% of respondents consider that *Romanians do not wish necessarily for the RM to join Romania*, and the biggest share of answers – 38.3% was noted among the persons aged 30-44 years old.

Other three pairs of statements refer to the spiritual capacities of the Romanians living in the RM. Hence, about 46% of respondents consider that *Romanians are willing to help, they will never pass by without providing help if needed*. Almost half of the persons with high social-economic status and urban inhabitants agree with this affirmation. At the same time 22.7% consider that *Romanians are bad/unkind and never provide help if needed*, and this is registered for more than 36.3% of ethnic minorities' representatives. A share of 40.8% of the total number of respondents consider that *Romanians do not steal, they earn their properties only through work*, and the same groups of respondents cumulate bigger shares of answers referring to the respective affirmation (49% of the persons with high social-economic status, 44.4% respondents with higher education and 42,6% of urban inhabitants). 28.3% of respondents stated that *Romanians living in the RM are thieves and like taking things that do not belong to them* – a statement supported mainly by the ethnic minorities with 38.1% answers. The answers regarding the third group of statements do not register big differences, with 37.1% for the option that *Romanians living in the RM are penurious*, with a bigger share of 42.7% of ethnic minorities stating this, and 35% support that *Romanians are generous persons, they can provide support and assistance at any moment* – an opinion supported by almost 40% of the persons with medium social-economic status and elderly people aged 60+.

It should be mentioned, that the persisting opinion that *Romanians are actually Roma/gypsies* is supported by almost ¼ of respondents and over 1/3 of representatives of ethnic minorities; at the same time, other 63.8% agree with the fact that *Romanians and Roma are two different ethnic groups*, and this thing is acknowledged by 75% of persons with higher education and 73.3% of urban respondents.



**Figure 28. Pairs of statements reflecting viewpoints about the Romanians living in the RM**

As well, there was noted a share of 24.7% of the total number of respondents who stated that *there are no Romanians in the RM, the people declaring themselves as Romanians are actually Moldovans*, and 59.2% consider that *every persons has the right to identify himself/herself as he/she wants*.

During the group discussions, the respondents usually referred to characterizing the Romanians based on their experiences of visiting Romania or based on their relatives' narrations. As for the Romanians from RM, discussions focused on Romanians born in the RM, those who reacquired their citizenship and the Romanian citizens who live in the RM. Hence, the Romanian citizens born in Romania are assessed as being more „open”, „free to express their opinions”, but they are also considered to be „hypocrites” and „boasters”. According to some respondents, the Romanians from RM who do not know Russian encounter difficulties in getting employed on the labor market.

“Many times, when employing they ask for Romanian language, but also Russian, which the second spoken language and they may encounter difficulties if they do not know Russian language.” (F, 23 years old, student)

## 2.9. Jewish people

The positive qualifications regarding the Jews living in the RM persist among the respondents (Figure 29).

About 50% of respondents stated that the Jews are *smart*, over ¼ (26.4%) mentioned that they are *united*, and 1/5 (20.6%) consider that the Jews are *intrepid*. In between 15% and 8% answers were cumulated for *hard-working*, *humane/good-hearted*, *faithful*, *willing to help*, *respectful*. About 1/3 of respondents have mentioned that the Jews are *cunning/catchy*, 12.9% - *peaceful*, these being considered as characteristics with neutral connotation. Among the characteristics with negative connotation, the biggest share of 24.3% was cumulated by *penurious*, other four– in between 10% and 8% answers.

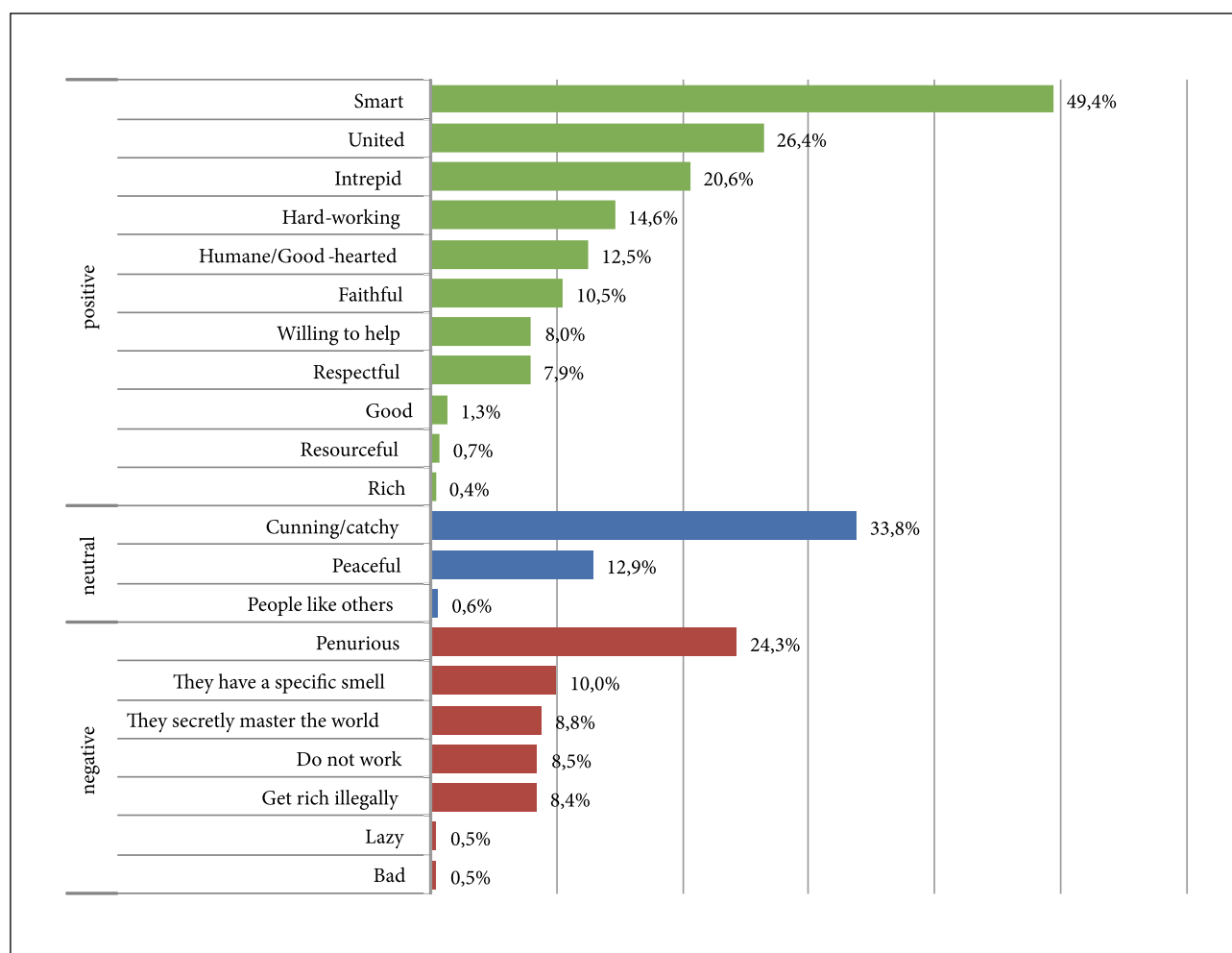
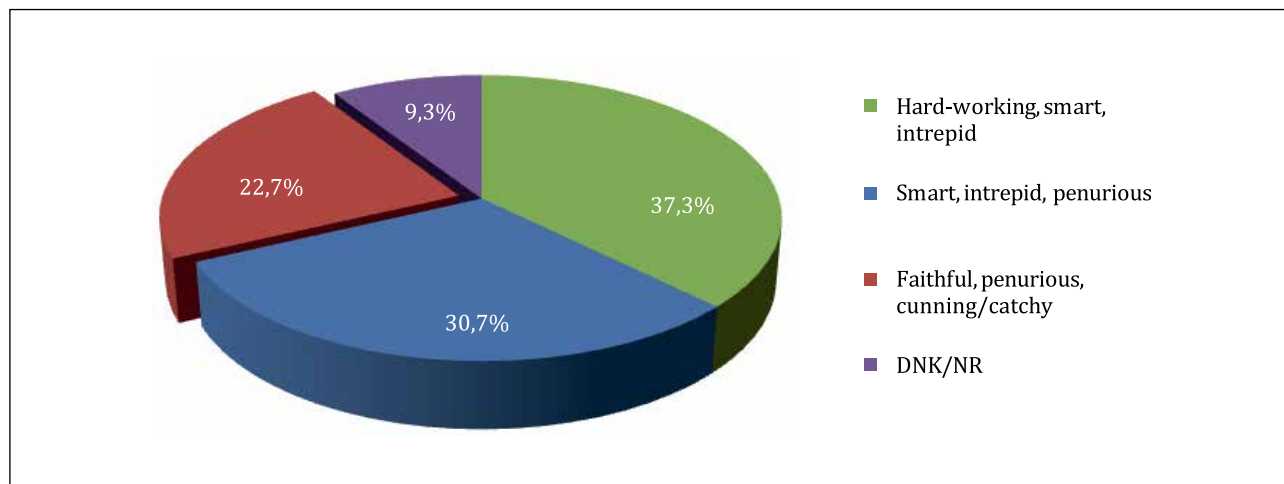


Figure 29. What qualities characterize the best the Jews living in RM?

As well, there is also a more even distribution of the answers for the three groups of statements (with positive, neutral, and negative connotation) in case of the Jews living in the RM. Thus, 37.3% of respondents preferred the absolutely positive

group, including the qualifications *hard-working, smart, intrepid*, with shares over 40% noted among the persons with higher education, those aged over 45 years old, ethnic minorities, urban inhabitants. About 30.7% of the total number of respondents opted for the group of neutral connotation (*smart, intrepid, penurious*), the biggest share – 34.8% being noted among the persons aged 30-44 years old. The group of statements with negative connotation (*faithful, penurious, cunning/catchy*) has cumulated 22.7% of answers, the biggest share -29.7% being registered among the young persons aged 18-29 years old.



**Figure 30. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the Jews living in the RM?**

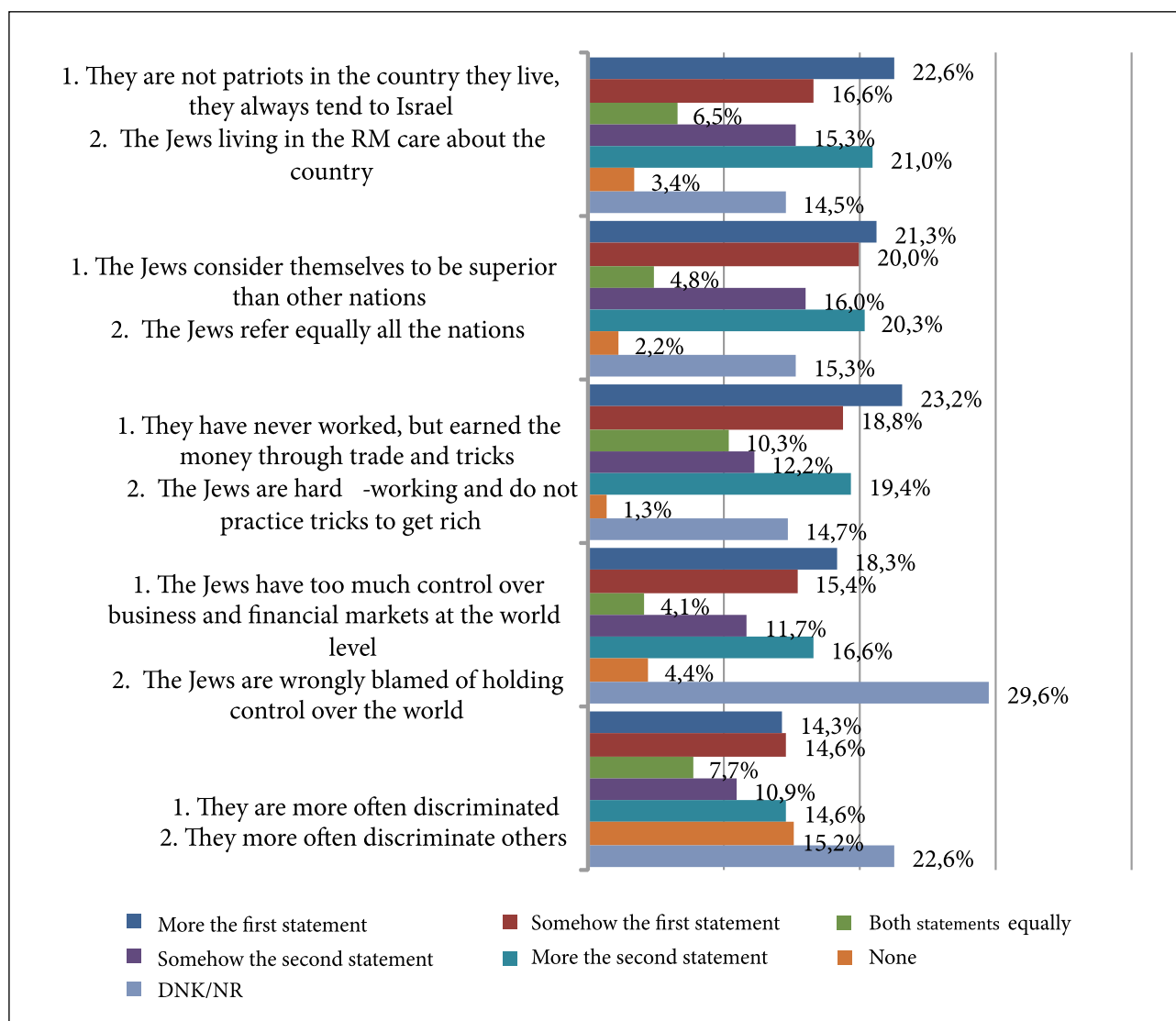
Five pairs of statements with opposed meaning have assessed the respondents' perception regarding the Jews in the RM (figure 31).

About 40% of respondents consider that the Jews in the RM *are not patriots in the country they live, and they always tend to Israel*, about 45% of persons aged 30-44 years old support this idea, as well as the fact that the *Jews consider themselves more superior than other nations* – a statement supported by over 45% of respondents with higher, medium, and lyceum education. About 36% have stated the opposite of these affirmations, respectively that the *Jews living in the RM care about our country*, and that the *Jews refer equally to other nations*.

As well 42% of respondents support the idea that the *Jews never worked, but earned money through trade and tricks*, the biggest share was noted among the persons aged 45-59 years old, and 31.6% support the idea that the *Jews are hard-working and do not practice tricks to get rich*, this opinion being shared by almost 40% of urban respondents.

One third of those interviewed stated that the *Jews have too much control over business and financial markets at the world level*, and the biggest share - de 41.3% of those who support this idea is registered among the respondents with high social-economic status. As well, 28.3% of the respondents have expressed the opinion that the *Jews are wrongly blamed for holding control over the world*, and about 30% did not express themselves in this context.

As for the discrimination, the opinions got divided approximatively equally, respectively: 28.9% of respondents selected the option that the *Jews are more often discriminated* – this statement being affirmed by 37.2% urban respondents. Other 25.5% stated that they *are those who discriminate others more often*, and over 1/3 did not agree with any of the statements or did not want to express themselves in this context.



**Figure 31. Pair of statements reflecting the respondents' viewpoint regarding the Jews living in the RM**

Mainly positive attitudes towards the Jews were pointed out during the group discussions. The respondents mainly think that they are good entrepreneurs and traders, “with an acute spirit for managing financial resources”, ingenious and modest. The Jews have specific strategies and tactics for negotiations and communication focused on achieving the goals. In both group discussions, it was revealed that the Jews are very united and they support each other.

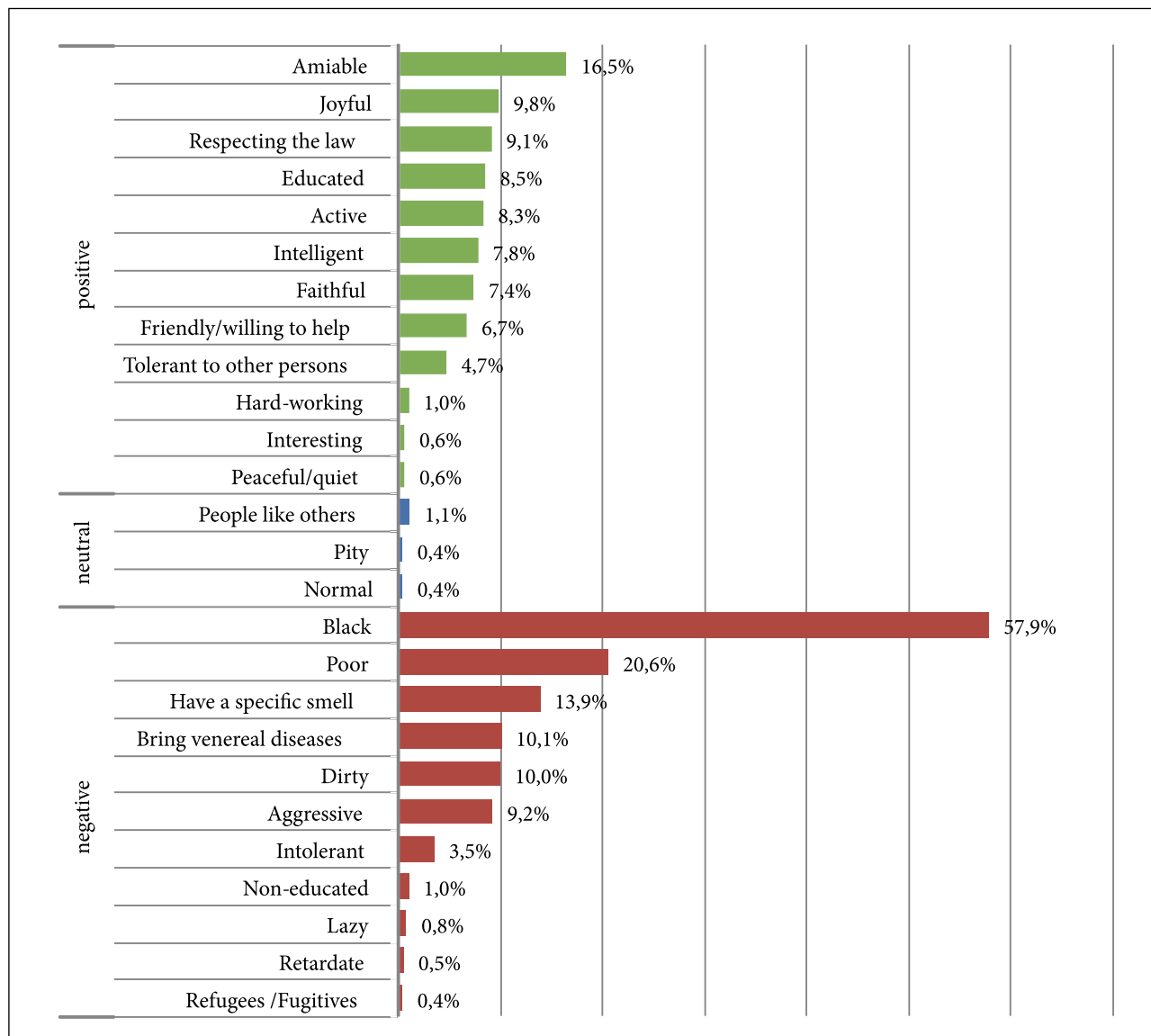
*“They are united, intelligent, very friendly nation, they are persons who focus on revenues. It is not by chance that the Germans had Jewish accountants. Their State is very prosperous. They do not provide too many facilities to other ethnic groups living with them.” (M, 32 years old, psychologist)*

*“They are courtly, they know how to find the way to any person, they always achieve their goals ... And also they never answer your question directly. If you ask a question, they would answer with another question. And if you ask a question, and they will not answer with yes or no, you will get a longer discussion and you will never get a direct answer but a more veiled one.” (F, 24 years old, child care leave)*



## 2.10. Persons of African origin

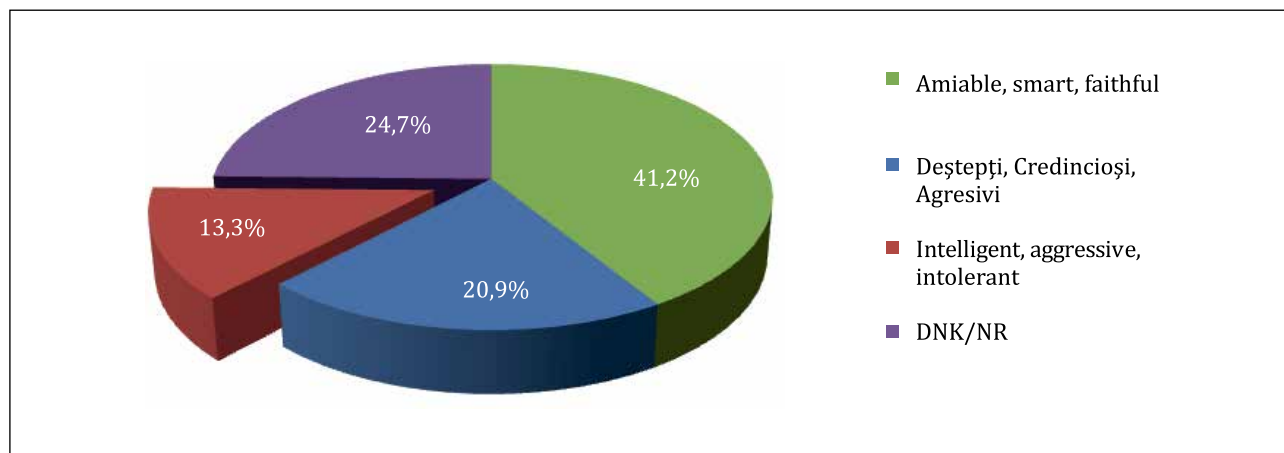
An important share – 57.9% of the interviewed people consider that the persons of African origin living in the RM are *black*, 20.6% - *poor*, and other characteristics with negative connotation (*they have a specific smell, they bring venereal diseases, they are dirty, aggressive*) registered about 10% of answers each. As for the positive characteristics, the biggest share – 16.5% was registered for the qualification *amiable*, about 10%-7% was cumulated by *joyful, respecting the law, educated, active, intelligent, faithful, friendly/willing to help* (Figure 32). The group discussions have pointed “*their physical resistance*” and “*closeness to nature*”.



**Figure 32. What qualities characterize de the best the persons of African origin living in the RM?**

When asked about which groups of statements (with positive, neutral, and negative connotation) characterize the best the *persons of African origin living in the RM*, 41.2% opted for the group of positive statements (*amiable, smart, faithful*), and the biggest shares were noted among the respondents from urban area (51.3%), youth aged 18-29 years old (49.8%)

and persons with higher education (49%). The group with neutral connotation (*smart, faithful, aggressive*) was chosen by 20.9% respondents, with bigger shares among the representatives of ethnic minorities (25.7%) and women (24.1%); the group of negative connotation (*intelligent, aggressive, intolerant*) cumulated 13.3% of answers, the less tolerant being the respondents from the group with high social-economic status (15.2%) (Figure 33).



**Figure 33. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the persons of African origin living in the RM?**

Even though almost 60% of the respondents consider that the *color of the skin should not be a barrier for contacting persons*, nevertheless about ¼ support the statement that *Africans are very different from the Europeans and it is impossible to integrate them in such countries as Moldova*. The opinions of the participants attending the group discussions are divided. On one hand, some participants consider that they are very different (physical and intellectual aspect) and the best would be to maintain some distance, denoting even some repulsion towards them because of their physical appearance.

*“They are terrifying. Black skin and white teeth, when they smile I am afraid of them ... I would say they have poor hygienic conditions.” (F, 18 years old, pupil)*

*“Every nation should establish families with persons of the same nationality. As it is not the same blood, but when there is a mixture of genes and blood, it seems like an experiment. I saw many black children speaking Romanian (note – it seems something abnormal for him). (M, 52 years old, unemployed)*

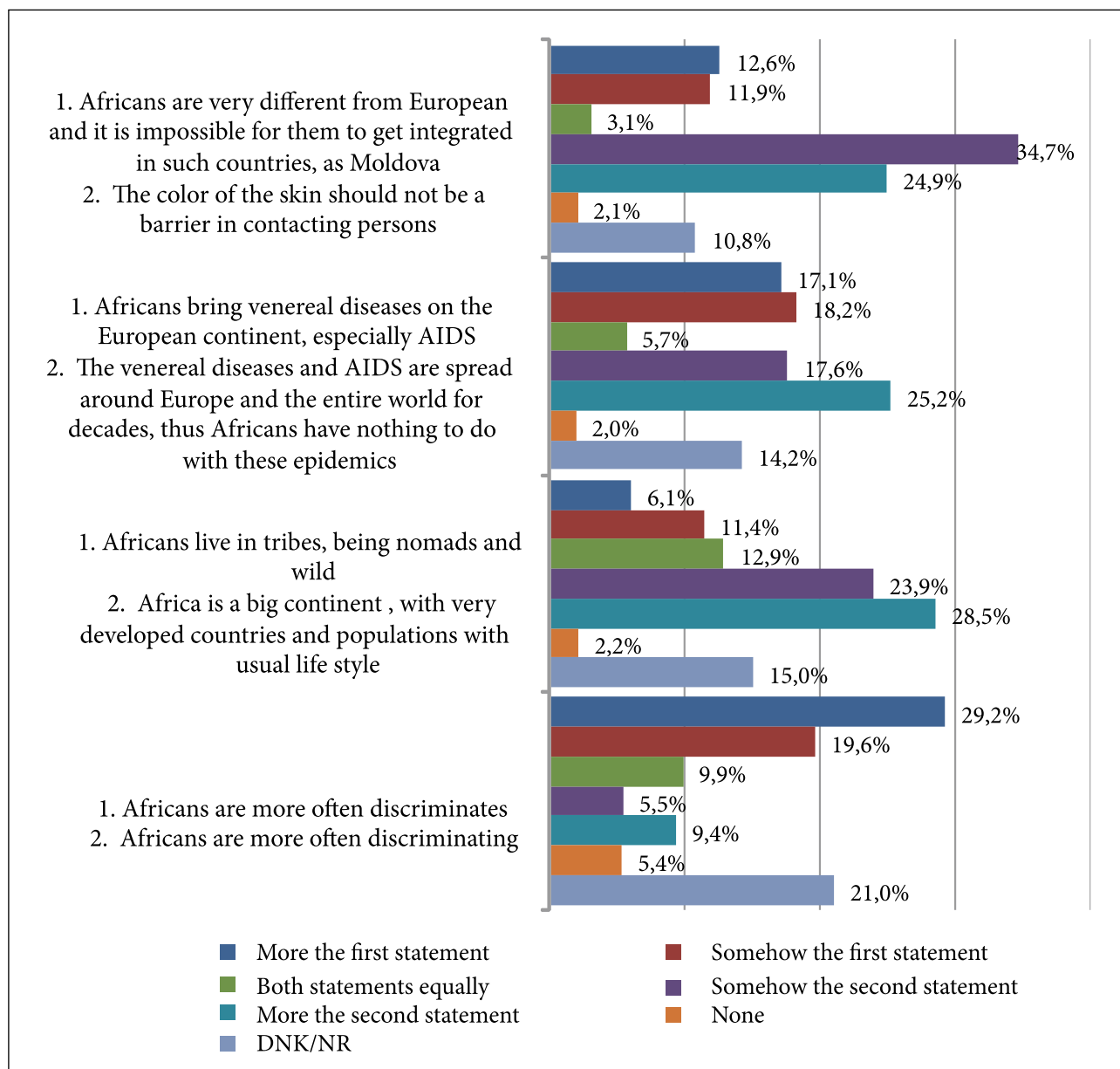
In both group discussions, a number of respondents referred to the actions undertaken by Mr. John Onoje, his behavior having an appreciative nature.

*“That John who was working at the market, was very amiable, good – if he were a Moldovan, he would have got angry with all the jokes around him, but he just smiled” (F, 24 years old, housewife)*

*“We have that guy, Mr. John Onoje, and he talks our language and he very bravo.” (M, 32 years old, civil servant)*

As well, 52.4% of the respondents think that *Africa is a big continent, with some very developed countries and with populations having usual living styles*, nevertheless 17.5% support the statements that *Africans live in tribes, being nomads and wild*, and a considerable share of 35.3% stated that *Africans bring venereal diseases on the European continent, especially AIDS*, other 42.8% consider that the *venereal diseases and AIDS are spread in Europe and the entire world for a number of decades*, and

*Africans have nothing to do with the epidemics.* These data allow invoking the assumption regarding the discriminatory stereotypes referring to this group of persons in the RM, and this thing is confirmed as well by the last pair of statements, according to which almost half of the respondents (48.8%) consider that the *Africans are more often discriminated* and only 14.9% support that the *Africans are more often discriminating others* (Figure 34).



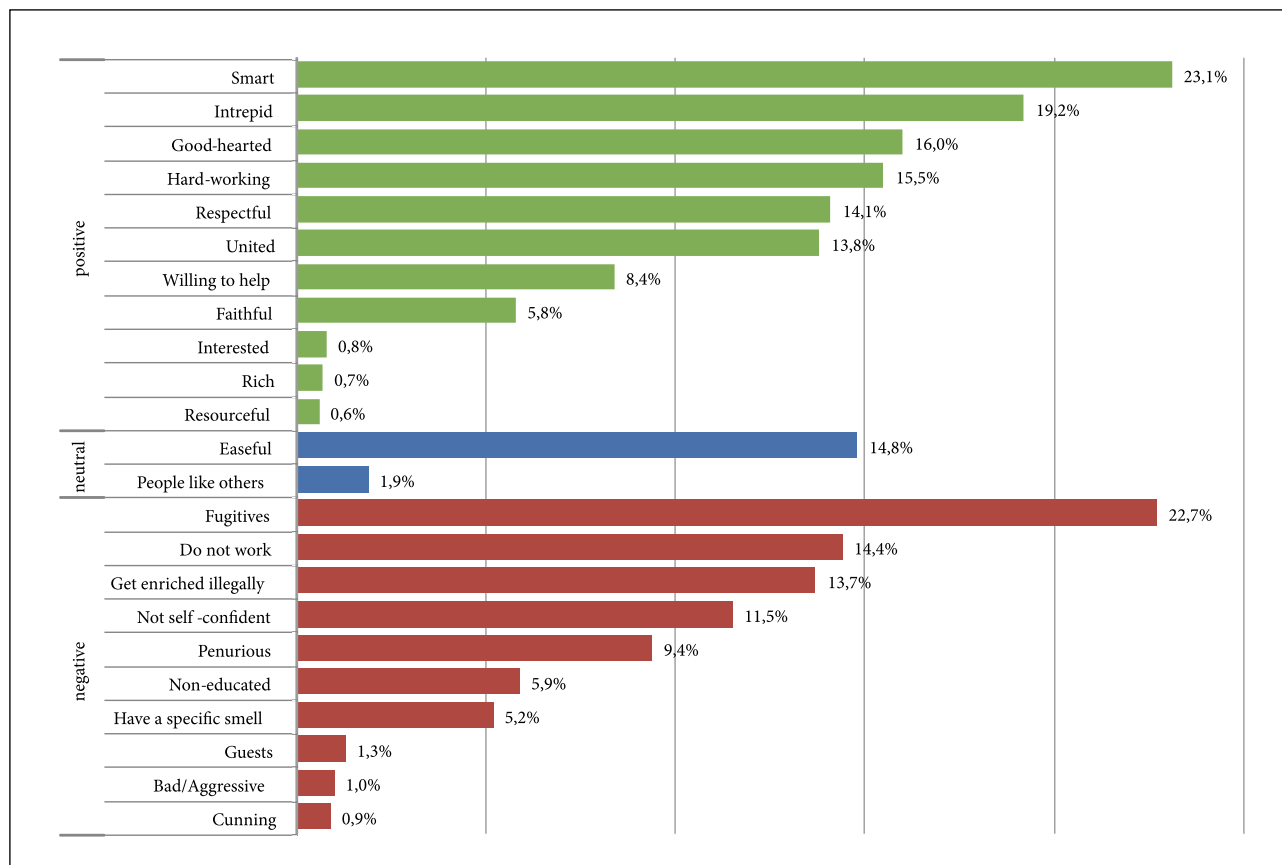
**Figure 34. Pairs of statements reflecting the respondents' viewpoint regarding the persons of African origin living in the RM**

## 2.11. Foreigners living in the Republic of Moldova but not holding RM citizenship

The foreigners living in the RM are associated with a multitude of positive and negative qualifications. The most frequently mentioned positive characteristics associated with foreigners are the following: *smart, intrepid, good-hearted, hard-working, respectful* and *united*. All these qualifications cumulated over 10% of answers.

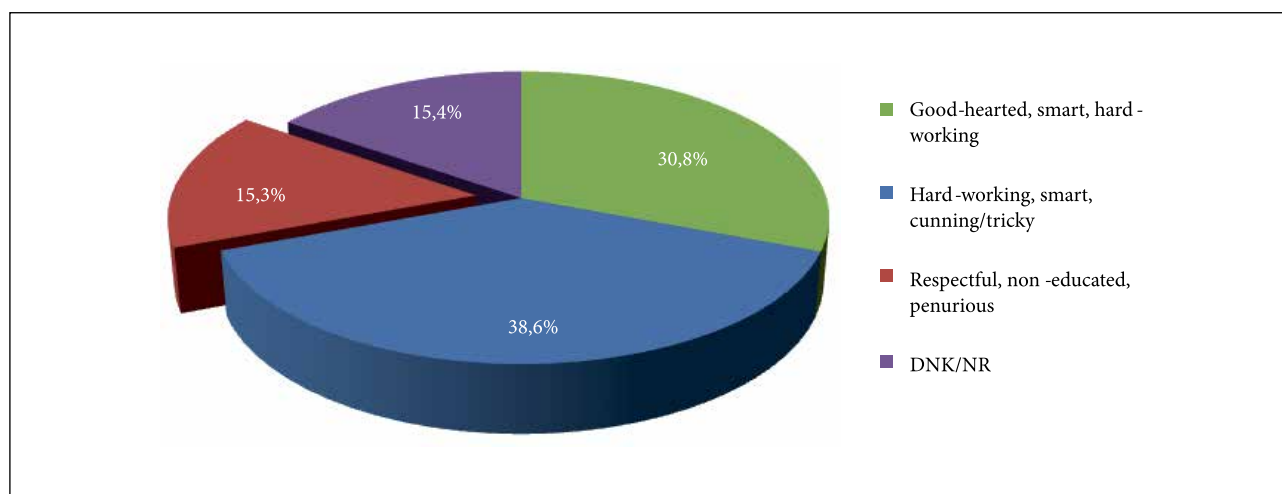
At the opposed pole would be the negative qualifications of *fugitives*, invoked by 22.7% of respondents. The qualifications *do not work, get enriched illegally* with almost 14% of answers, reflecting the perception of non-integration or inadequate integration of foreigners on the labor market.

The only neutral qualification pointed out via a bigger share of answers would be the fact that foreigners are *easeful* (14.8%).



**Figure 35. What qualities characterize the best the foreigners living in the RM, but not holding RM citizenship?**

The neutral connotation statement (*smart, hard-working, cunning/tricky*) prevail in the appreciation of the groups of statements with 38.6% of respondents opting for this affirmation. At the same time, the absolutely positive statements (*good-hearted, smart, hard-working*) accounted for a double score (30.8%) as compared to the group with negative connotation (*respectful, non-educated and penurious*). Hence, it may be noted that neutral to positive attitudes to foreigners prevail in the society.



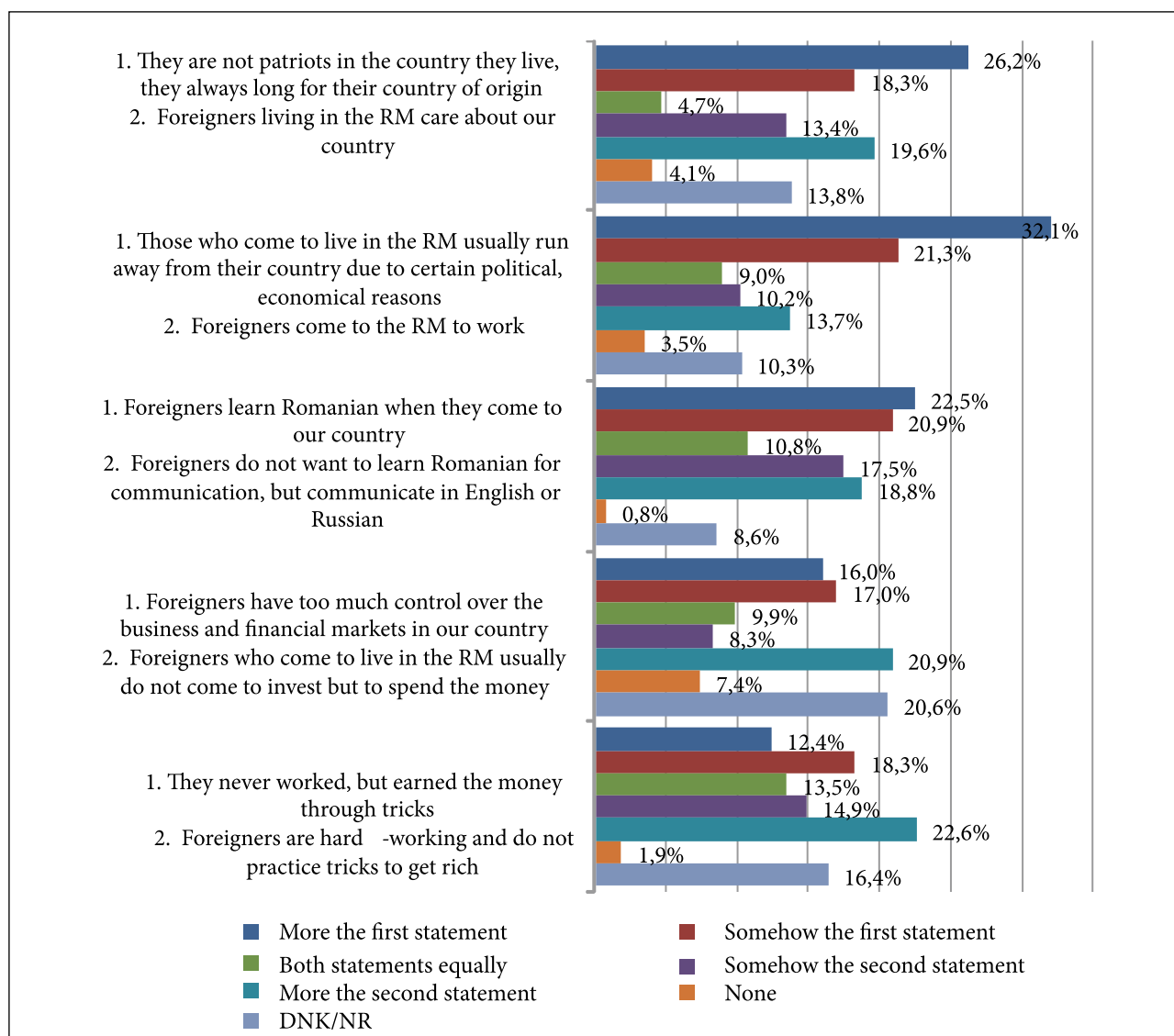
**Figure 36. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes best the foreigners living in the RM?**

The distribution of answers appreciating the pairs of statements indicates the persistence of suspicions that foreigners do not treat adequately the country they live in – the Republic of Moldova. Almost half of respondents have the perception that *foreigners always long for their country of origin, with no patriotism spirit towards the country they currently live in (RM)*. At the same time, one out of three respondents opted for the statement that *foreigners living in the RM care about our country*.

Another possible source of intolerance would be the perceptions that foreigners avoid to integrate linguistically. About 35% of respondents stated that *foreigners do not want to learn Romanian for communication, but they rather communicate in English or Russian*. However, from numerical point of view, those who opt for the statement that *foreigners learn the state language* prevails with 43%.

At the same time, there is a visible trend to associate this category fully with the refugees, as over half of respondents opted for the statement that *those who come to live in the RM usually ran away from their country due to certain political and economic reasons*, in the detriment of the statement that *foreigners come to the RM to work*, opted for by one out of four respondents.

As for the statements related to the correlation of foreigners to the labor market and incomes – the opinions are different. About one third of respondents are more inclined to negative perceptions that *they have too much control over the business and financial markets* and that *foreigners never work but earn money through tricks*. As well, about 1/3 of respondents opted for positive statements that *foreigners who come to live in the RM usually do not come with the goal to invest but to spend the money* and *foreigners are hard-working and to not use tricks to get rich*.



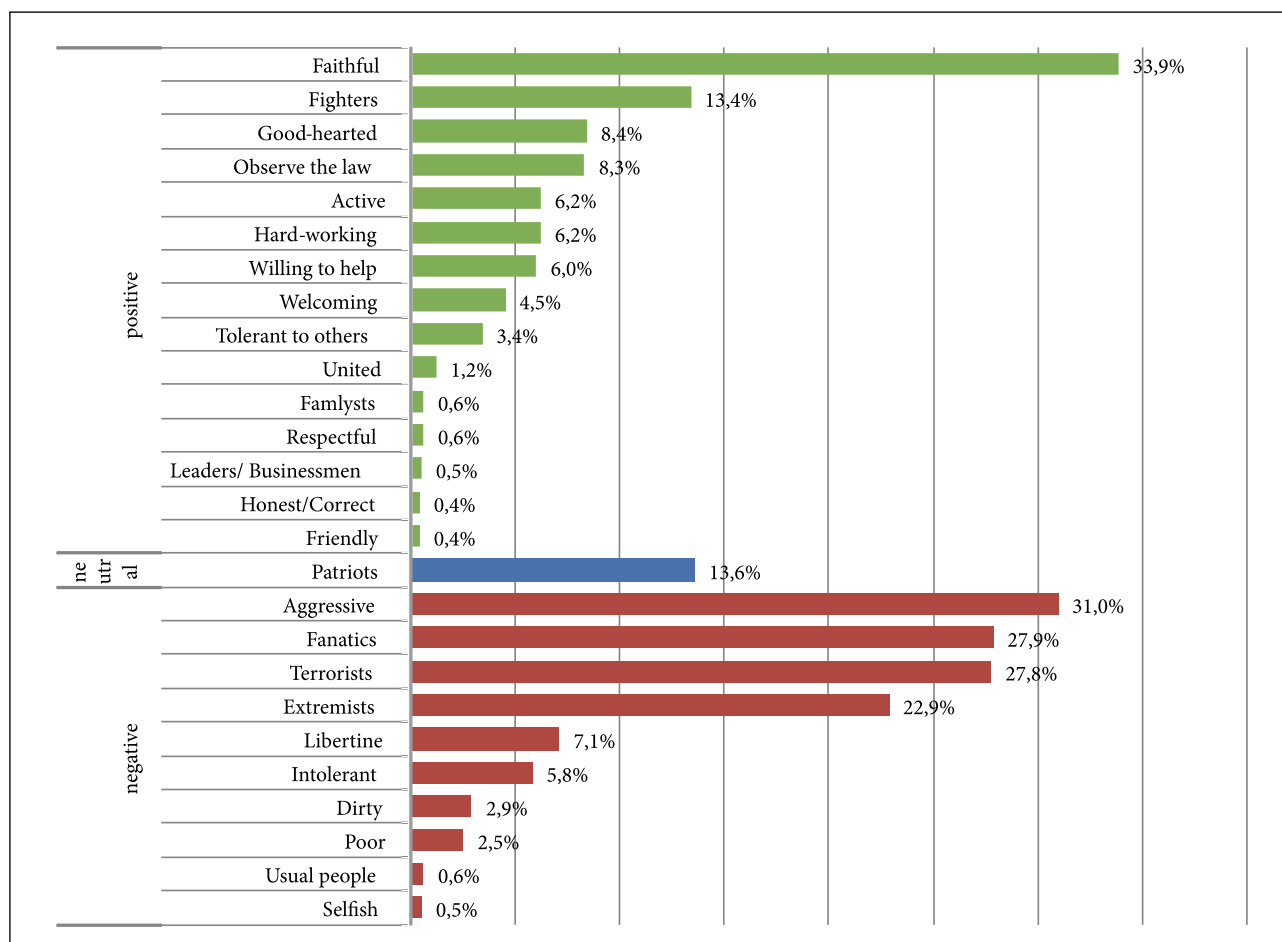
**Figure 37. Pairs of statements reflecting the respondents' viewpoint regarding the foreigners living in the RM, but not holding RM citizenship**

## 2.12. Persons of Muslim religion

The population practicing Islam is one of the most rejected groups by the respondents of the study. As it was mentioned above in relation to the social distance, this group is ranked on the fifth place with an average SDI of 3.3 points, which corresponds to an average level of acceptance higher than that for the work colleague.

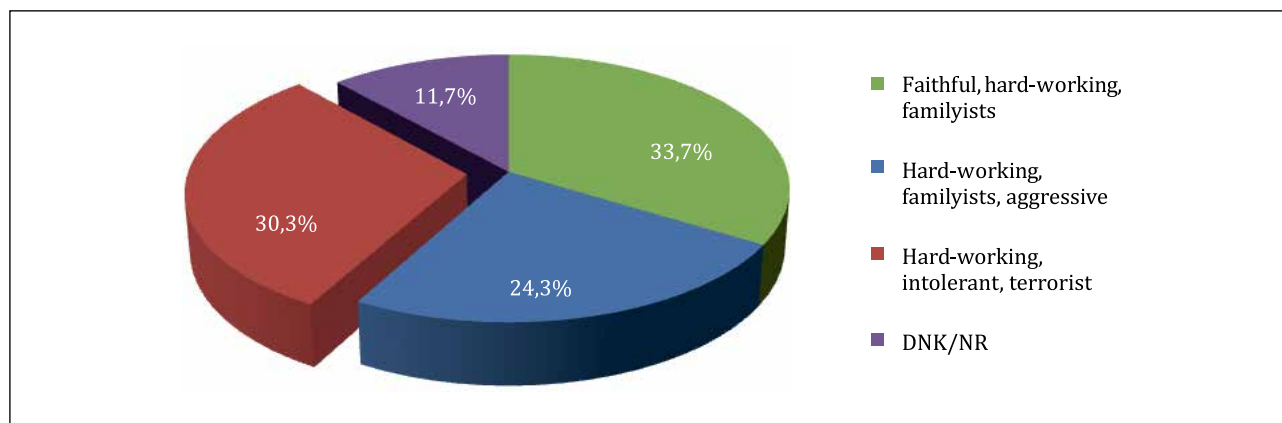
The study reveals that the big social distance for Muslims is fed by a number of tough stereotypes, shared by the RM population in relation to the representatives of this religious cult. There were identified four stereotypes with a high level of acceptance: *aggressive, fanatic, terrorist, extremist*. These qualifications attributed to the group were prevailing as well during the group discussions.

The positive associations would include the perception of Muslims as *faithful*, hence even the positive association deals with their belonging to a certain cult. A positive aspect mentioned in both group discussions was the fact that they do not consume alcohol.



**Figure 38. What qualities characterize the best the persons of Muslims living in the RM?**

According to the distribution by groups of characteristics, it may be noted that equal shares voted for the absolute positive group of statements – 33.7% (*faithful, hard-working, familyists*) and for the group containing negative characteristics – 30.3% (*hard-working, intolerant, terrorists*). The group of neutral statements (*hard-working, familyists, aggressive*) cumulated 24.3% answers (Figure 39).

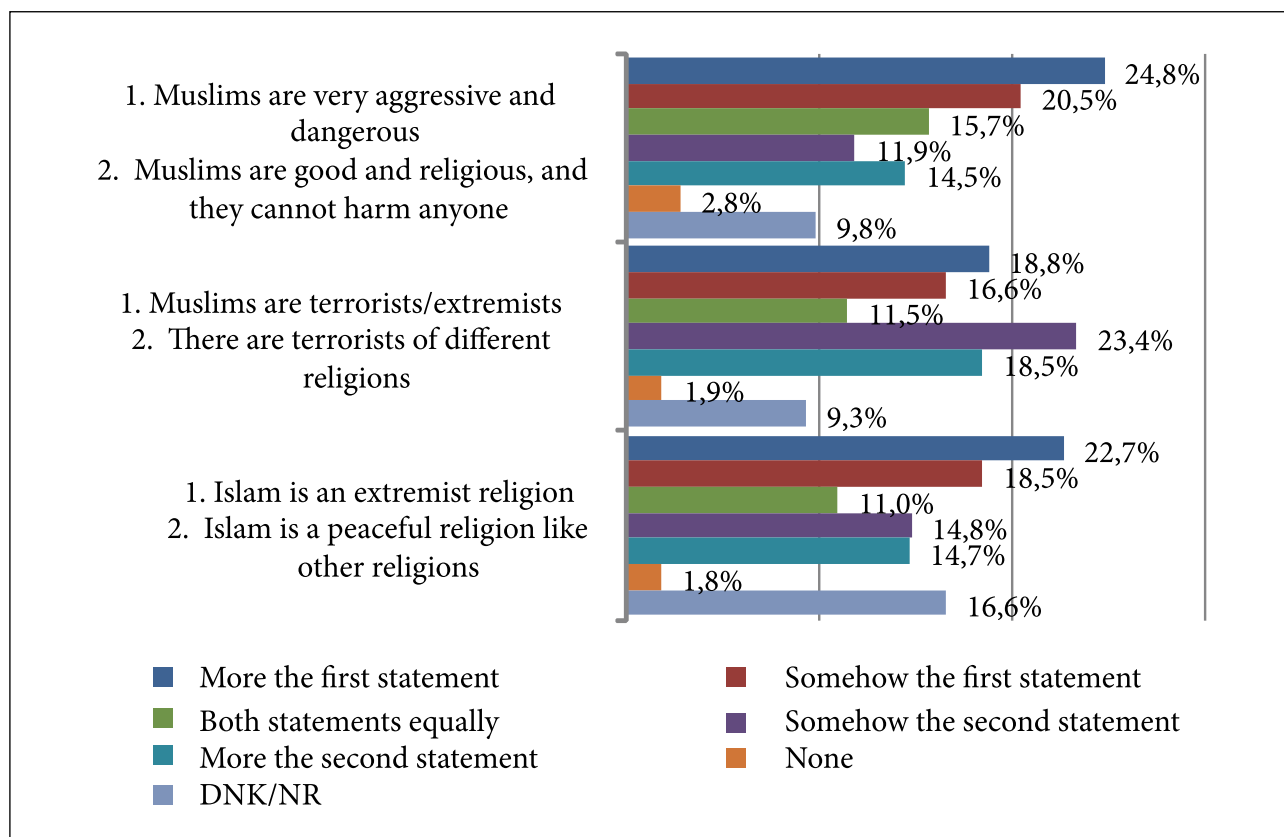


**Figure 39. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the Muslims living in the RM?**

The assessment of the pairs of statements tends to associate the persons of Muslim religion with aggressiveness and terrorism. Hence, from numerical point of view, the respondents associating the Muslims with *aggressive and dangerous* (about 45%) prevail over those who consider them *good and religious, who cannot harm anyone* (about 36%).

When associating with terrorism, one out of three respondents associate the Muslims directly with terrorism, opting mainly for the statement that *Muslims are terrorists/extremists* in the detriment of the statement that *there are terrorists with different religions*, for which 42% respondents opted.

And finally, the association with extremism is not fed by social factors/characteristics related to this group, including based on some of personal networking experiences. These associations are almost completely based on the perception towards Islamic religion as being an *extremist religion* (41% respondents as compared to 30% who opted for the statements that *Islam is a peaceful religion just like many other*).



**Figure 40. Pairs of statements reflecting the respondents' viewpoint about the persons of Muslim religion living in the RM**

The participants of the group discussions consider that Muslims are *intolerant to other religions*, and they are enabled by their religion to punish those who do not want to share other visions.

"The say the following sentence "Death to those wrongful". They consider us and other religions to be "wrongful". How should you hate other religions so as to talk like this? If you go to visit them, they would receive you like a president, but it is enough to get out of their state borders and it is a honor for them to kill you." (M, 52 years old, unemployed)

"They consider us to be unfaithful people" (M, 18 years old, student)



Another aspect pointed out during the group discussions refers to the status of Muslim women, starting with their clothes up to violation of the fundamental human rights. The Muslim women are perceived as being discriminated and the discussion participants manifested compassion for them.

*“The way the Muslims treat their women, I would not allow them to have women in their country. I know a lady who got married with a Muslim. She does not get out of the house without her husband or her husband’s sister. Let God help for no one to get into such slavery. Their women are used to such treatment, while our women would not cope with it.” (M, 52 years old, unemployed)*

*“If she goes to the seaside without clothes, she would be killed. The women do not have rights.” (F, 45 years old, unqualified worker)*

*“Women may be bought in their relations” (F, 59 years old, pensioner)*

*“Women are zero for them, they keep them just like cleaning personnel at home.” (F, 24 years old, housewife)*

*“We label them directly when we see Muslim women, you may see only their face, but sometimes they cover even half of the face and only the eyes are seen.” (M, 26 years old, civil servant)*

Several respondents pointed out that women in RM are not informed and protected; hence they end up to be victims of some different traditions where polygamy is accepted and is legal. That’s why the attitude of the interviewed people to Muslim men is reticent.

*“Muslims like our women. I have a friend who married a Muslim, they studied together at the Medical College ... but they have other women there and they take them as domestic workers, while here they were holding them in their hands.” (F, 23 years old, student)*

*“Muslim men come and make whatever they want out of our girls, and when our men got there, they do not have the right even to touch their girls. While here they do what they want.” (M, 52 years old, unemployed)*

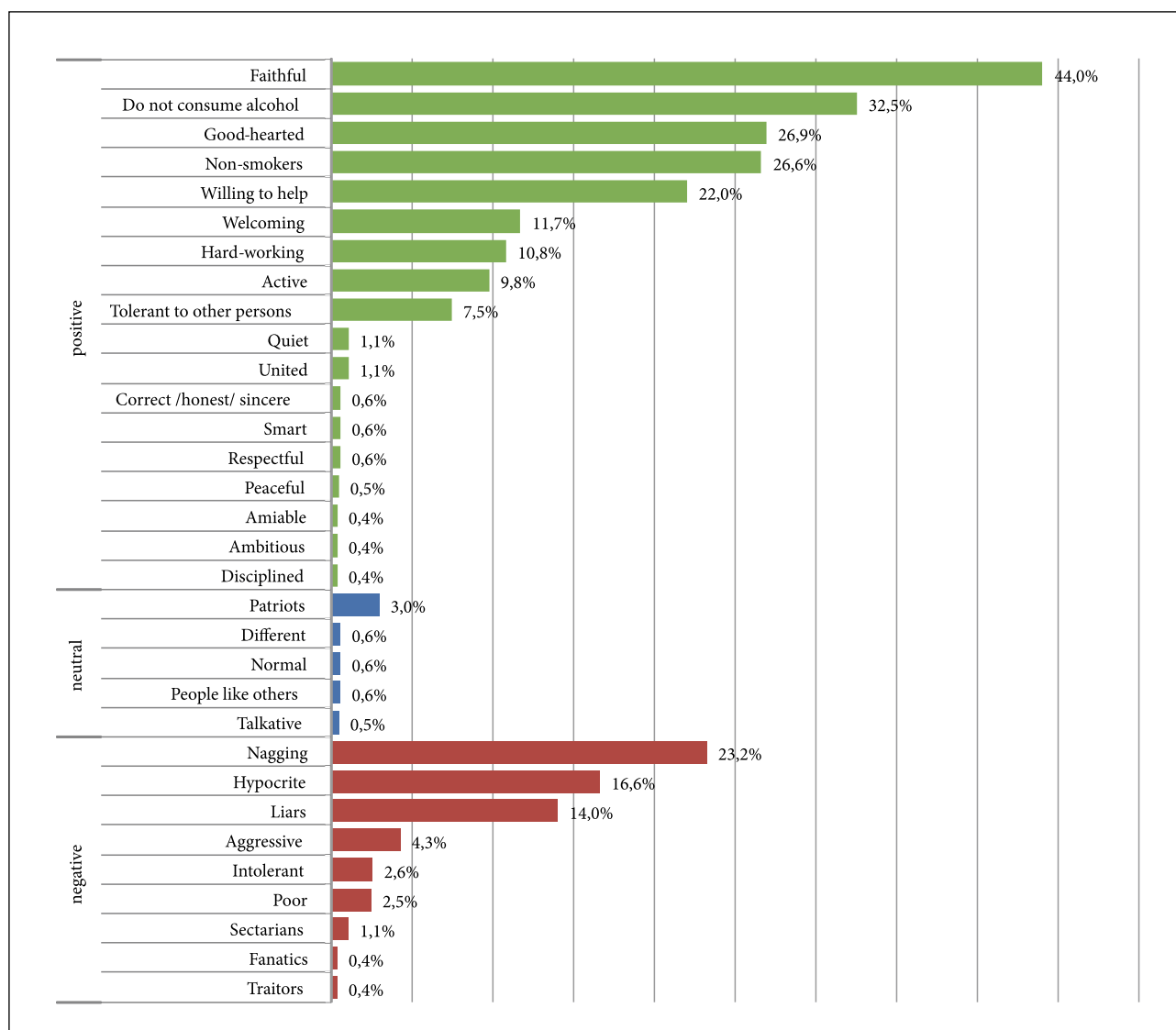
### 2.13. Other religious minorities

As compared to the perceptions regarding the Muslims, the other religious minorities from Moldova are perceived mainly positively. With an indicator of 2.3 points (between neighbor and work colleague), the religious minorities are associated with such characteristics as *faithful, not consuming alcohol, good-hearted, non-smokers* and *willing to help*. All these characteristics have accumulated over 20% of answers.

At the opposite pole, three negative characteristics were identified in relation to this group: *nagging, hypocrites, and liars*.

In the distribution by groups of statements, there is an obvious prevailing of the respondents who opted for completely positive affirmations – 55.0% (*faithful, hard-working, familyists*) and with neutral connotation – 26.8% (*respectful, faithful, hypocrite*). The group of affirmations including some negative connotation (*hard-working, intolerants, liars*) accumulated a relatively small share – 12.8%.

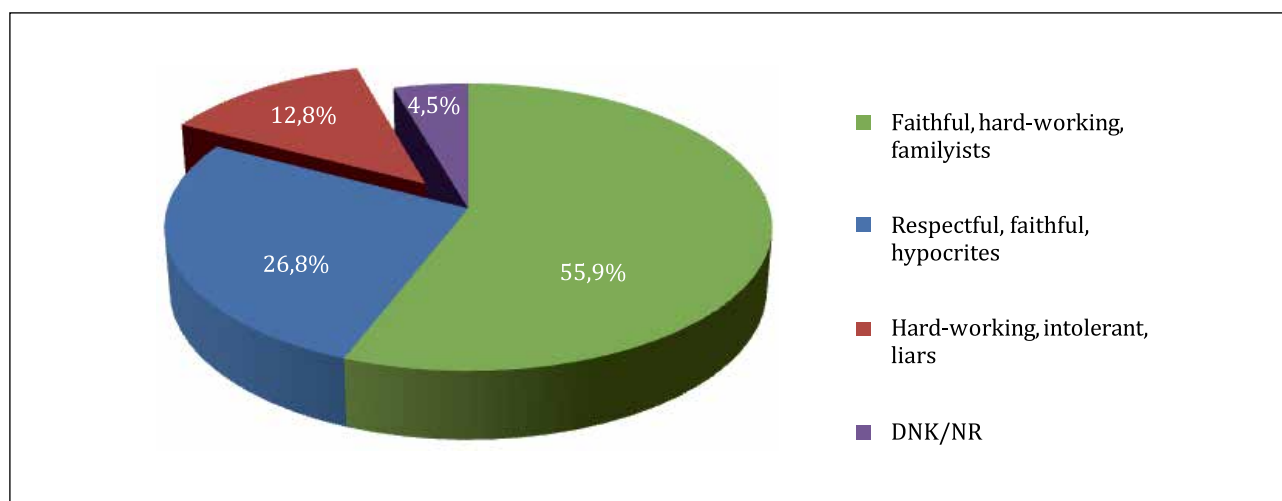
In the pairs of statements, the majority of respondents opted for affirmations presenting this group in a positive light. The statement that the *persons belonging to other religious minorities have a correct way of living* was chosen by 60% and only 19% tend to opt for *persons belonging to other religious minorities have a lusty way of living*.



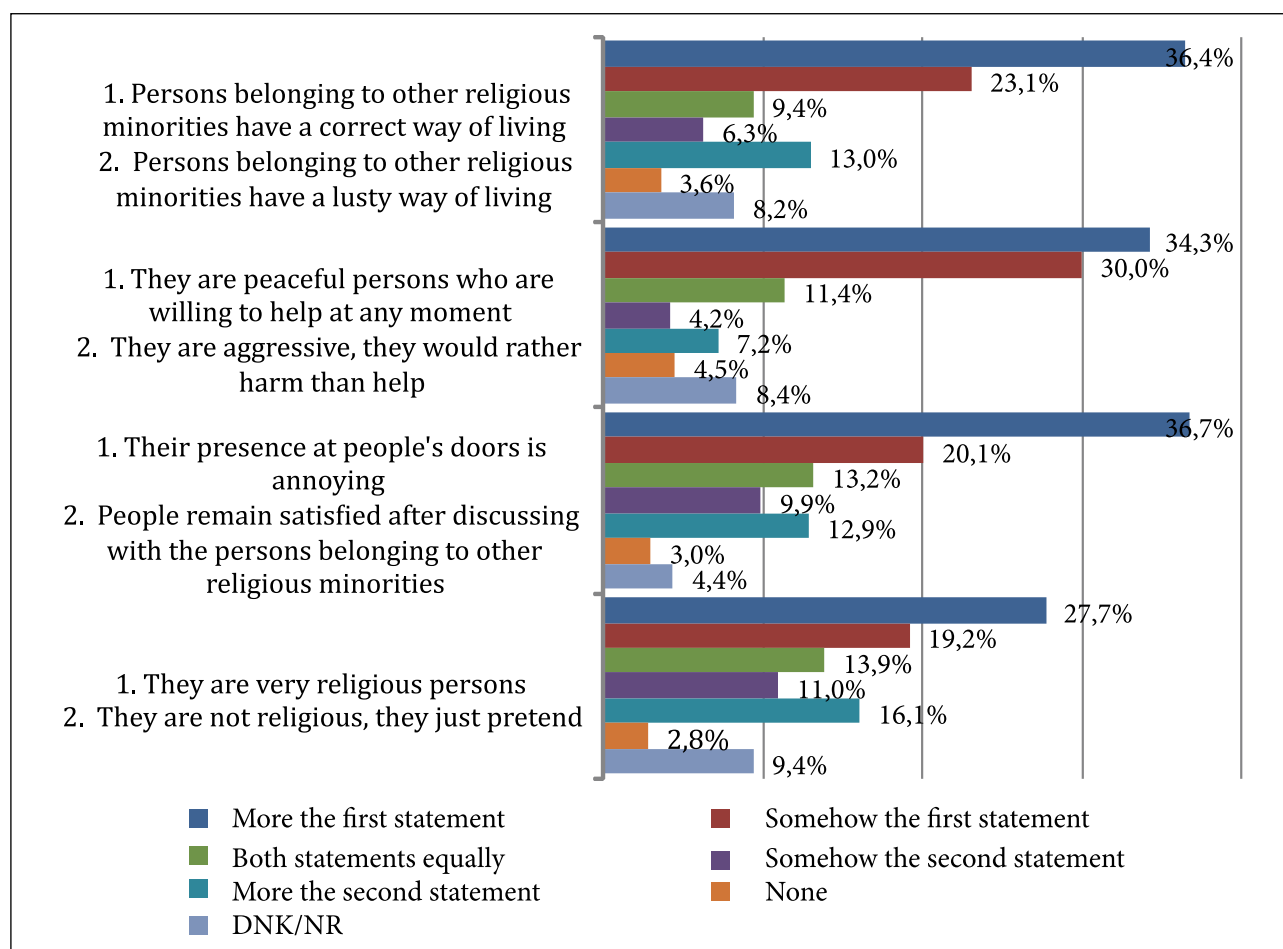
**Figure 41. What qualities characterize the best the persons belonging to other religious minorities living in the RM?**

Similar distributions of the answers were registered as well in the other cases of pairs of statements (see figure 43), maybe just with the exception of the statements related to frankness to seem religious, where 47% of respondents stated that religious minorities *are very religious persons*, but one out of four respondents (27%) stated that they are not religious *but they just pretend to be like this*.

At the same time, taking into account the relative homogeneity in the RM, from the perspective of religious affiliation of the population, the Population Census from 2004 revealed that about 93.3% of the country population belongs to Orthodox confession and 2.2% to other Christian rites/confessions. Hence, in selecting the affirmations for the group “religious minorities”, the citizens’ experiences inevitably direct them to perceiving this group through non-Orthodox, but nevertheless Cristian confessions and this would imply positive perception for the group, to a certain extent.



**Figure 42.** Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best other religious minorities living in the RM?



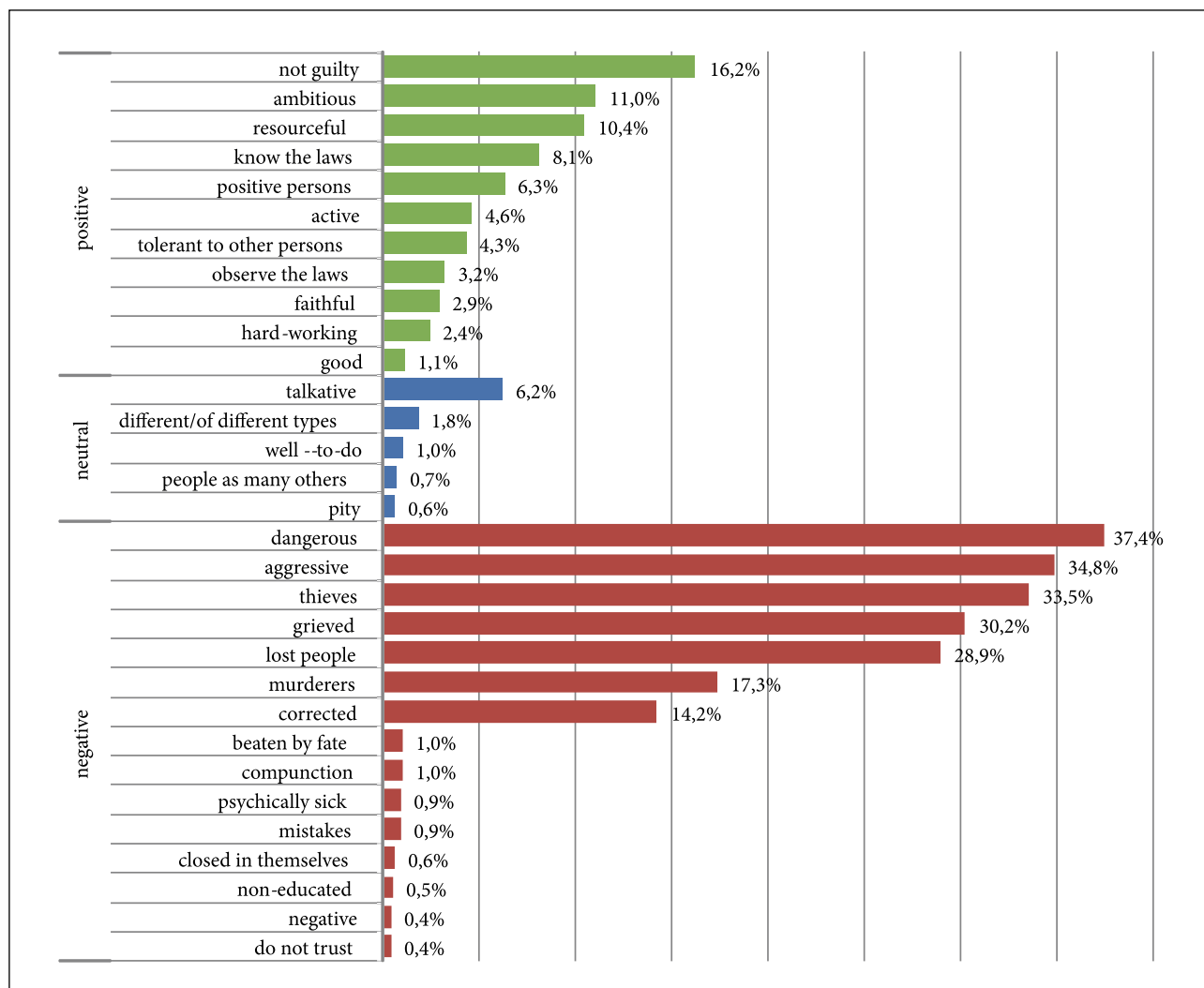
**Figure 43.** Pairs of statements reflecting the respondents' viewpoint regarding the persons belonging to religious minorities living in the RM

## 2.14. Persons who were detained (ex-detainees)

The study reveals negative perceptions of the population in relation to the ex-detainees, being ranked on the third place according to the SDI, after the most rejected groups, such as LGBT and people living with HIV.

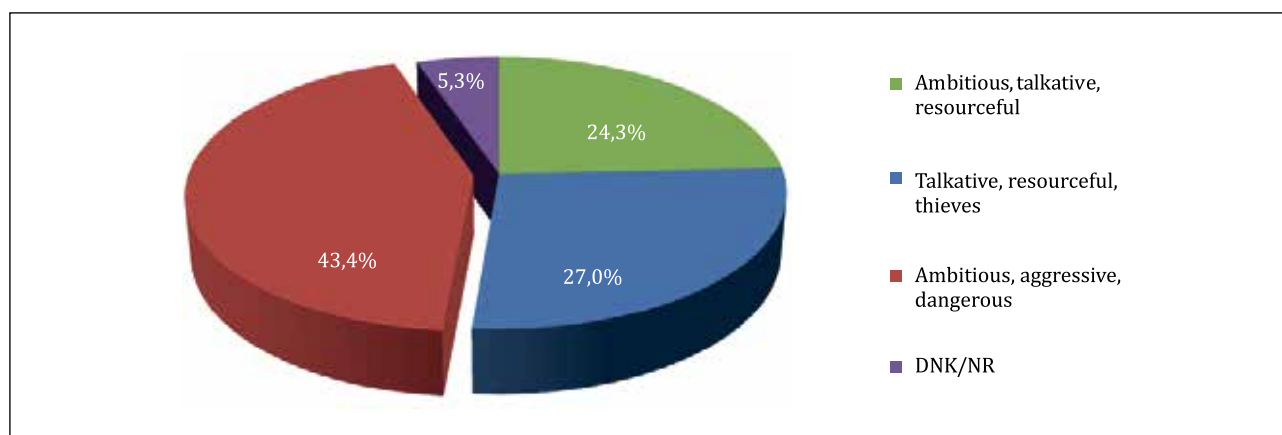
As for the stereotypes, the negative qualifications prevail numerically. Hence, these persons are most of the times associated with such qualifications as *dangerous*, *aggressive*, *thieves*, *grieved*, *lost people* – which have cumulated 28.9% - 37.4% answers. Another qualification, *killers*, registered as well a rather big share of answers – 17.3%.

In relation to the positive associations, the share of statements is rather modest. The maximum number of answers (16.2%) was cumulated by the perception that the ex-detainees are *not guilty*, followed by *ambitious and resourceful*.



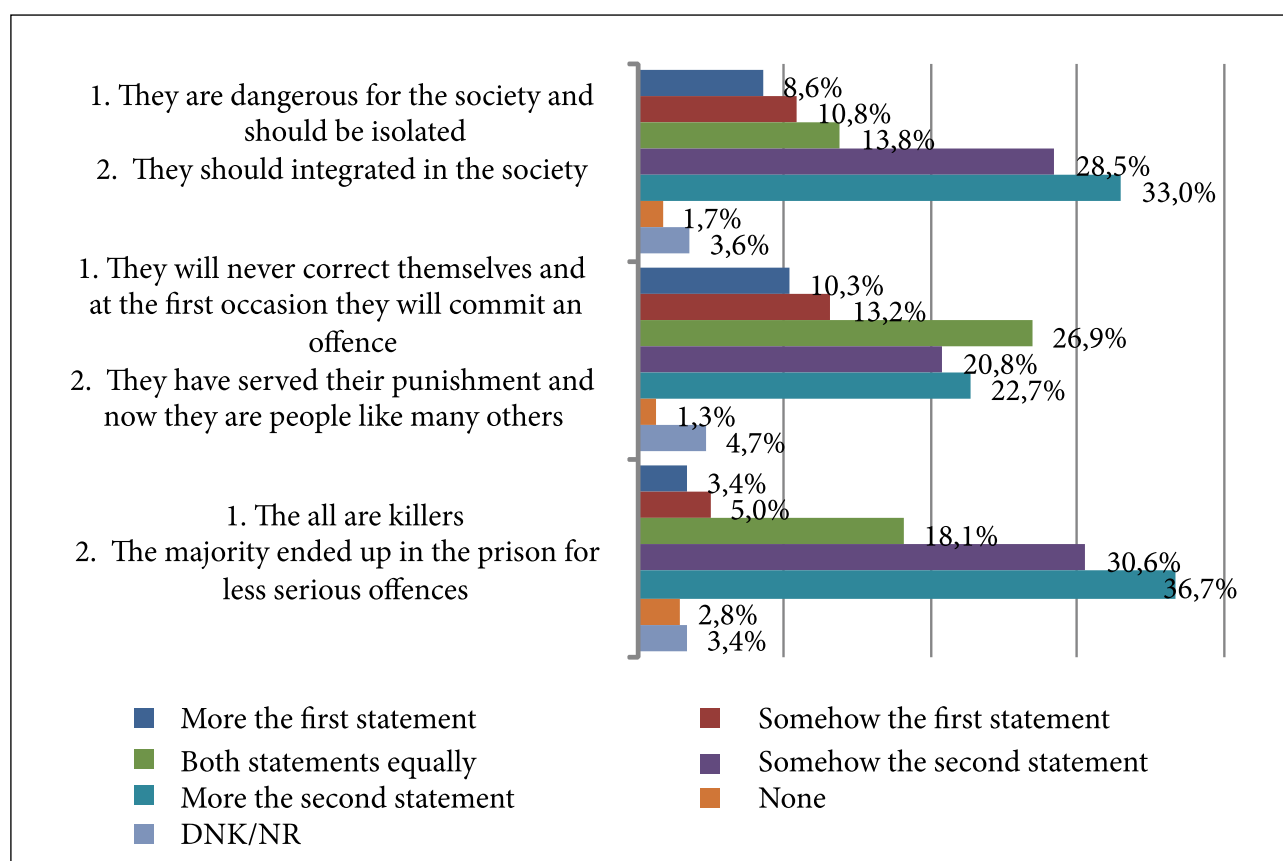
**Figure 44. What words comes first to your mind when we say a person who was detained in the prison (ex-detainees)?**

The groups containing negative characteristics (*ambitious*, *aggressive*, *dangerous*) were mentioned almost two times more often than the groups of absolutely positive qualifications (*ambitious*, *talkative*, *resourceful*) – 43.4% versus 24.3%.



**Figure 45. Which of the following groups of statements characterizes the best the persons who were detained in prisons (ex-detainees)?**

At the same time, alongside the mainly negative perceptions, the population seems to assume itself the responsibility for their reintegration in the society. When assessing the pairs of statements, such options as *should be integrated in the society, they have served their punishment so not they are persons like all others and the majority of them ended up in the prison for less serious offences* were mentioned more often than the statements expressing adverse positons.



**Figure 46. Pairs of statements reflecting the respondents' viewpoints about ex-detainees**

During the group discussions, the respondents insisted a lot on the need to reintegrate the ex-detainees in the society, pointing out the fact that they *need a chance* to rehabilitate. The respondents mentioned that the ex-detainees encounter difficulties to get employed on the labor market. At the same time, it was clarified that the non-integration of the ex-detainees in the society contributes significantly to recidivism among them.

*"I think that the majority of those who come back lose a lot of things, they lose a lot of the normal behavior to the society. The law limits them, but it should provide them better conditions. No investigations are made to help them get integrated in the society." (M, 52 years old, unemployed)*

*"The society does not accept them the way they are. They have no financial resources for food and hygienic products. They try to get employed and they want well-paid jobs, but the employers do not want them, they may employ them like doormen, sweepers or loaders." (M, 26 years old, civil servant)*

*"This makes them even worse than they were, because they want to get imposed in the society, to come back, to get adapted, as the world rejects them, and this makes them worse." (F, 23 years old, student)*

Some respondents pointed out the fact that before stigmatizing an ex-detainee, we should analyze the reason for which they were detained. The respondents are more tolerant to those who have committed economic frauds, thefts and are more categorical to those who have committed crimes, rapes.

*"I would be rather reserved in relation to them, nevertheless the ex-detainees are of different categories. They may have committed an administrative or financial offense and maybe they have an intellect working like this, they know the financial ways, how to take from one part and place in another part, to have things in the pocket. And it is something different when somebody has killed or raped, or stole – I would be really afraid of them. I would not even react to such a person, I would ignore him/her. It is better not to deal with such a person, so as not to have any consequences." (F, 26 years old, scientific researcher on internship)*

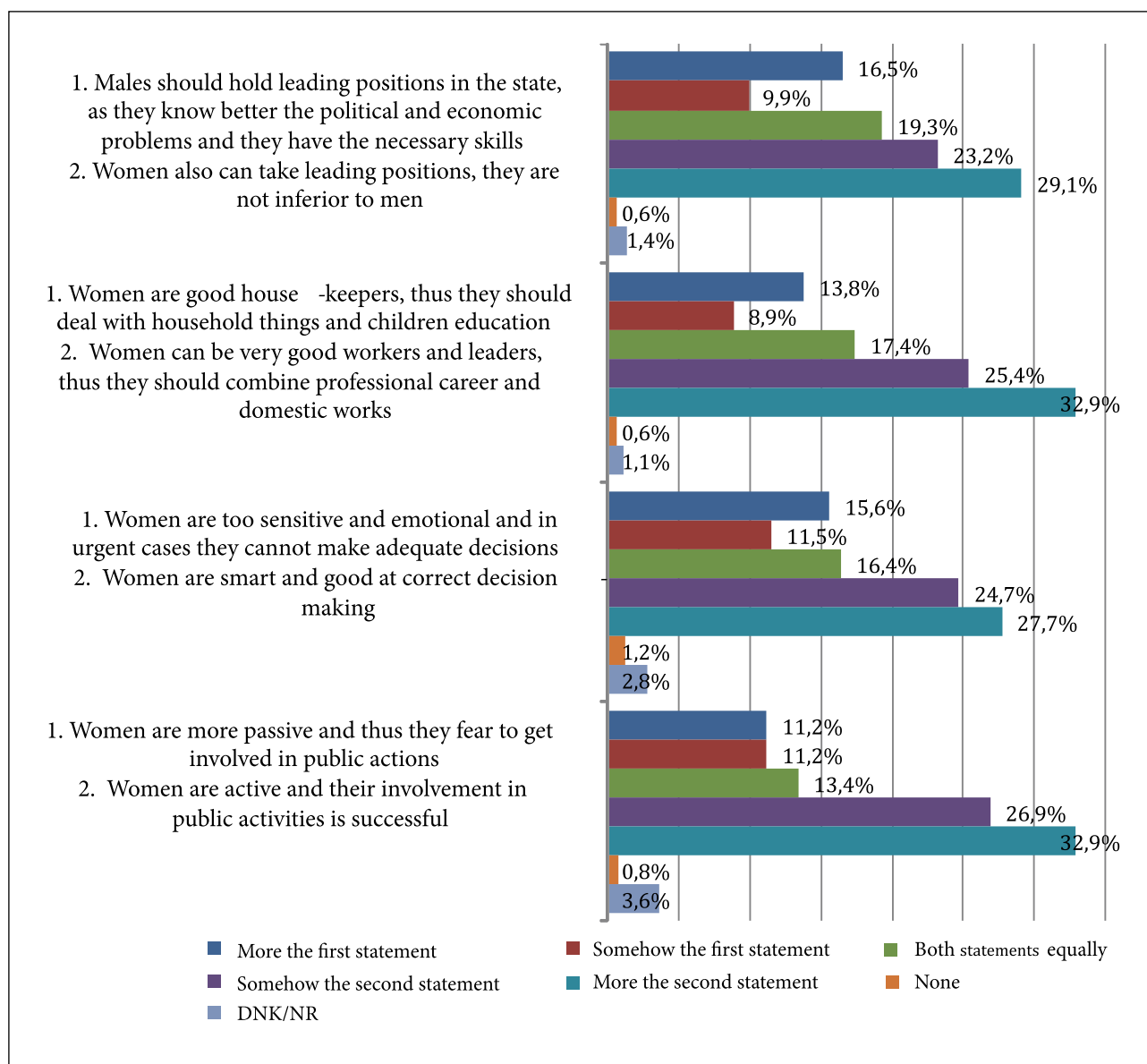
*"My daughter sang at a penitentiary and the detainees were all with tear in eyes. We do not know who and how they ended up there ... And they make beautiful things out of wood" (F, 45 years old, worker)*

On the other hand, according to some participants in the group discussions, there are some stereotypes that ex-detainees do not exist, sooner or later they will go back to prison, as this has become their way of living – *in detention they got accustomed to that environment, and it is difficult for them in the social environment.*

*"For instance, a citizen who was not in prison or had no conflicts with the law, is afraid of doing something wrong. But if the person was in the prison, especially for 5-10 years, he/she doesn't care." (F, 24 years old, housewife)*

## 2.15. Perceptions regarding women in the society

And finally, additionally to the marginalized groups, the study assessed also the attitudes related to women. The respondents expressed the perception related to four pairs of statements regarding women's involvement in leading the state, involvement in public life and building a career, women's capacities to take decision and their success in public activity. About one out of four respondents opted for discriminatory statements to women, while the non-discrimination statements cumulated between 50% and 75% of answers.



**Figure 47. Pairs of statements reflecting the respondents' viewpoints on women in society**

## CHAPTER 3.

### Conclusions and recommendations

#### 3.1. Conclusions

- 1) The study reveals a very limited inter-human level of confidence, as well as population confidence for institutions. This reality is overlapped with the correlation between tolerance and living level, manifested through the tendency of the less well-to-do population to manifest less tolerance to other persons. Moreover, currently the discrimination of some groups of persons is not perceived as a stringent problem of the country.
- 2) As a result, in spite of the huge variation of social distance depending on the groups in relation to which it was actually measured, the SDI reveals a high level of intolerance of the population to the marginalized groups. None of the marginalized groups enjoys total tolerance, with a SDI equal to zero. At the same time, a very pronounced intolerance level is manifested to some groups, which are rejected up to the position of citizen or even only visitor of the country.
- 3) The very small variation of the social distance by social-demographic groups of the population reveals that intolerance is characteristically manifested by all the categories of this population.
- 4) A rather pronounced factor with impact on social distance is the personal experience. The social distance to some of the marginalized groups is reduced significantly if the respondent knows personally and/or has in his/her social circus representatives from these groups.
- 5) There is a direct correlation between the level of living, social-economic status of the respondents and the level of perception regarding certain groups of persons, and namely: persons with higher education and those from urban area expressed more positive perceptions regarding the majority of groups of persons, while those from rural area and with secondary or incomplete education proved more negative perceptions.
- 6) The opinions expressed during the group discussions reveal the skeptical and even hostile attitude related to the adoption of the Law no. 121 on Ensuring Equality, which is wrongly perceived as the “law of sexual minorities”. The adoption of the law is associated with the LGBT groups, and this denotes a wrong understanding of the goal of this law. The denaturized perception may be explained by the influence of some political factors, the respondents appreciating the acceptance of this law as a condition for getting closer to the EU.
- 7) The lowest level of tolerance is manifested towards the LGBT group. The representatives of this group are the most blamed and rejected by the society. Two thirds of respondents think that they have to be expelled from the country and only 1% would accept them as family members (maxim tolerance level). The SDI registered a value of 5.2 (from possible maximum 6) and six out of ten respondents would opt for expelling them from the country. The group discussions revealed a perception difference for lesbians and gays, as there is a higher level of intolerance to the first ones as compared to lesbians.
- 8) The people living with HIV represent another highly stigmatized group in the RM. The SDI in relation to these persons accounts for 4.3. During the study, the HIV+ people were perceived by the respondents with mainly negative connotation, showing the fear of getting infected. These persons are labeled with “disordered sexual life” and are frequently associated with “drug users”.



- 9) The ex-detainees also represent a group excluded by the society, the SDI accounting for 3.6. The main qualifications attributed to this group are: “dangerous”, “aggressive”, “thieves”. At the same time, the quantitative and qualitative data show that the population is aware about the need to provide support to the ex-detainees for them to get reintegrated in the society.
- 10) There is a significant difference in the attitude of the population to the persons with mental and physical impairments. The society rejects the persons with mental and intellectual impairments, being mainly concerned about their own safety. The persons with physical impairments are mainly subject to pity feelings, as well as to stereotypes pointing out their impairments.
- 11) As for the children with disabilities, it is rather concerning the fact that our society still is reticent to the need of integrating them in the educational system in equal conditions as other children. Thus, although 63.6% of the total number of respondents consider that the children with disabilities should be educated in mainstream classes, nevertheless a significant share (27.3% - representing over ¼ of the respondents) of the interviewed persons consider that a child with disabilities should be educated in separate schools. This attitude reveals the presence of an incorrect perception regarding persons with disabilities, as well as the persistence of a stigmatized approach focused on segregation, an approach which contravenes the current concept of effective participation and full inclusion in society of persons with disabilities.
- 12) Out of the ethnic minority groups, the most reserved attitude is registered for Roma people. They are being associated with a number of negative qualifications, such as: “thieves”, “liars”, “beggars”. In a rather smaller share, the respondents appreciated the Roma people as being “united” and “ambitious”.
- 13) The smallest SDI (0.9) is registered for the Russians living in the RM, which are mainly perceived with positive qualifications. An aspect pointed out during the group discussions is the perception of lack of respect for the natives’ traditions and customs, especially by not knowing Romanian language. But this aspect seems not to disturb excessively the population, as the same SDI is registered for the group of Russian speakers.
- 14) The opinions of the study participants regarding the religious minorities in the RM are mainly with positive connotation, most frequently being associated with “faithful”, “good-hearted”. The respondents appreciated that they do not consume alcohol and tobacco. But when referring to the Muslims, the attitudes of the respondents are mainly negative, as they are perceived as “aggressive”, “terrorists”, “fanatics”. The group discussions pointed out Muslims’ lack of tolerance to other religions, and their discriminatory attitude towards women.
- 15) And finally, it can be noted that a multitude of stereotypes persist in the RM regarding different social groups. And this aspect influences the level of such groups’ social integration and cohesion. The labeling of this people by their appearance may be interpreted as a boomerang effect on their attitudes and behaviors in the society.

### 3.2. Recommendations

- 1) Undertake concerted and continuous efforts directed towards the elimination of stereotypes and prejudices of any type and diminish hostile attitudes and behavior.
- 2) Carry out public awareness campaigns with a view to creating a clear and correct perception about the purpose of Law no. 121 on ensuring equality, as well as to increase the visibility of the Council – the main public authority with duties in the field of prevention and elimination of discrimination.
- 3) Carry out some training activities (for different categories of subjects) in order to understand the essence of the discrimination phenomenon and raise awareness about its effects, as well as the objective appreciation of its scale in the society.

- 4) Consolidate the efforts of all actors, both state one as well as from the civil society, in carrying out activities and programs meant to enhance the degree of social inclusion and participation of persons that are part of marginalized groups.
- 5) Promote respect for difference and diversity, by bringing together different groups.
- 6) Encourage a respectful environment in places where people regularly communicate, such as workplaces and education institutions.
- 7) Carry out public awareness and promotion campaigns for a tolerant attitude of the population towards LGBT persons, education in the spirit of sexual diversity acceptance and recognition of equal rights of sexual minorities.
- 8) Conduct information campaigns on HIV and education of tolerance towards HIV+ people.
- 9) Promote formal and informal inclusive education in order to decrease deterrence to children with disabilities, their integration in the society and full participation in social life.
- 10) Support ethnic minorities in promoting their culture and traditions, conduct activities that would contribute to the facilitation and development of interethnic and intercultural dialogue.
- 11) Strengthen the active involvement capacities of vulnerable persons and groups of persons in the enjoyment and defense of recognized human rights.
- 12) Promote the positive image of the marginalized groups, by influencing journalists and radiobroadcasters with a view to enhancing the way in which they present them.

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