

PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH REPORT

May 2013

"Attitude of Citizens Regarding the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (NARS)"

Belgrade, Serbia

CONTENTS

1. Methodology.....	3
2. Sample description	5
3. Summary	6
4. Index of citizens' attitudes regarding the NARS	12
5. Citizens' attitudes regarding "internal dynamics" of the NARS.....	16
6. Recognisability and evaluation of independent institutions elected by the NARS	20
7. Citizens' influence on the work of the NARS	22
8. Citizens' activism	25
9. Trust in institutions.....	26
10. Recognisability of the President/Speaker of the NARS	31
11. Citizens' attitudes regarding the work and functioning of the NARS.....	33
12. Information about the work of the NARS	35
12.1. How are citizens informed about the work of the NARS?.....	35
12.2. Attitudes of citizens regarding the introduction of an NARS TV channel, preparation of mobile phone application and publication of print media supplements.....	39
12.3. Areas of the work of the NARS that citizens would like to know more about.....	41
12.4. Information on the work of MPs.....	42
13. Media reporting on the NARS.....	44

** All terms used in this report in masculine gender comprise similar terms in feminine gender.*

*** Opinions expressed in this report represent the authors' opinions and do not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (NARS) or the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).*

1. Methodology

Research realised by	CeSID Belgrade
Field work	Period between May 15 and May 23, 2013
Type and sample size	Random, representative sample of 1,108 citizens aged over 15 in the Republic of Serbia, excluding Kosovo
Sample frame	Polling station territory, as the most reliable unit of registry
Household selection	Random sampling with no right to change – from the starting point, one in two home addresses within the polling station
Selection of interviewees within households	Random sampling with no right to change – selection of interviewees by the method of first birthday in relation to the survey day
Research technique	Face-to-face (F2F) interviews, within households
Research instrument	Questionnaire with 102 questions

This public opinion research was conducted by CeSID in the period between May 15 and 23, 2013, on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, excluding Kosovo.

The research was carried out on a representative sample comprising 1,108 citizens of the Republic of Serbia, excluding Kosovo, of both genders, aged over 15.

The research instrument used in the survey was a questionnaire, designed in cooperation with the UNDP and the NARS, consisting of 102 questions.

The research represents part of the project "Strengthening the Oversight Function and Transparency of the Parliament", financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Interviews with citizens were carried out utilising the "face to face" technique, i.e. in direct contact with interviewees. In the course of the training of interviewers, trainers insisted on implementation and respect of two vital rules that, apart from the sample itself, significantly influence the representativeness of the research: *respect of steps* and *first birthday rule*.

Respect of steps provides overall coverage of complete research points by the interviewer, while *the first birthday rule* excludes the possibility of the questionnaire only being answered by individuals who were the first to open the household door. This means that the interviewers were asked to question the member of the household aged over 15 whose birthday was closest to the day of the interviewer's visit. In such a manner, interviewers ensured the gender, education and age representativeness of interviewees.

2. Sample description

Based on methodology established for the realisation of the research, the following categories of interviewees in the Republic of Serbia, excluding Kosovo, were encompassed:

Gender: male (47%), female (53%)

Age: 15-18 (3%); 19-24 (8%); 30-39 (12%); 40-49 (15%); 50-59 (16%); 60-69 (22%); 70 and over (18%).

Average interviewees' age: 50.89

Education: primary education completed or less (42%), two or three years of vocational training (12%); four years of secondary education completed (28%); higher school or faculty graduated (10%); pupil/student (8%).

Profession: farmer (11%), housewife (22%), non-qualified/semi-qualified worker (12%), qualified/highly qualified worker (18%), technician (12%), pupil/student (10%), clerk (7%), expert (8%).

Average income***: up to 10,000 (22%); 10,000-20,000 (23%); 20,000-40,000 (18%); 40,000-60,000 (7%); 60,000-80,000 (3%); more than 80,000 (2%); unknown/declined to answer (25%).

*** Income is expressed in dinars and in the amounts quoted personally by interviewees.

3. Summary

*Regardless of the fact that the NARS, its composition, work and functions, are present publicly on an almost daily basis, surveys seriously and systematically researching citizens' attitudes regarding this institution are rare. **Accordingly, this research represents one of the first of its type in Serbia and is aimed at comprehensively examining the attitudes of citizens regarding the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia.***

The research was carried out on a representative sample of 1,108 Serbian citizens aged over 15, in the period between May 15 and May 23; it was realised by CeSID, with the assistance and support of UNDP Serbia and the NARS. This report presents the most important results, divided into 10 chapters: 1) index of citizens' attitudes regarding the NARS; 2) citizens' attitudes regarding the "internal dynamics" of the NARS; 3) recognisability and evaluation of independent state bodies elected in the NARS; 4) citizens' influence on the work of the NARS; 5) citizen activism; 6) trust in institutions; 7) recognisability of the NARS President/Speaker; 8) citizens' attitudes regarding the work and functioning of NARS; information on the work of the NARS and 10) media reporting on the work of the NARS. The summary will present all key research results.

❖ MORE CITIZENS HAVE A NEGATIVE OR SLIGHTLY NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF THE NARS, THAN THOSE WHO HAVE SLIGHTLY OR COMPLETELY POSITIVE VIEWS.

The index of citizens' attitudes regarding the NARS intends to express the attitudes of citizens in depth, which do not depend on frequent superficial changes in party orientation. The attitudes are in-depth, rather unlikely to change and show more realistic and true attitudes regarding the role of the NARS.¹ The index shows citizens' attitudes regarding the role of the NARS within the political system of Serbia, but also towards the society as a whole. Firstly, we establish that with indexes formed in such a manner a majority of citizens fall into the category of those who are neutral. This is why it is decisive, in the analysis, to monitor the relationship between the views of citizens with positive attitudes and those with negative attitudes. Negative views of the NARS stem from the fact that the percentage of those who have slightly negative or negative opinions regarding the role of the NARS in Serbia stands at 39%; this is three times greater than the percentage of those who have slightly positive or positive opinions regarding the role of the NARS. It is precisely the prevalence of those with a negative opinion of the NARS that shapes the general attitude of public opinion regarding this institution.

¹ In this research, we formed the relation as a complex indicator, based upon sets of questions/stances that we posed to citizens and the answers obtained from them. *Chapter 4* of this report provides further description of this matter.

❖ ACCORDING TO CITIZENS' OPINIONS, THE NARS MOST DISCUSSES EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND KOSOVO. THE CITIZENS' PRIORITY LIST DIFFERS, PRIORITISING ECONOMIC ISSUES, STATUS OF YOUTH AND SOCIAL POLICY.

In the opinion of citizens, the most discussed topics within the NARS are European integration and Kosovo – in both cases, more than half of respondents say that these issues are frequently or very greatly discussed in the NARS. At the same time, these issues (in particular European integration) often are not found at the top of the list of priorities named by citizens (i.e. the issues citizens would prefer to see debated within the NARS), which are: economic issues, status of youth and social policy. European integration represents a priority for NARS discussions among only 2% of interviewees.

❖ "DIVIDED OPINION" ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF GREATER PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE WORK OF THE NARS.

Citizens' opinions are divided regarding the issue of greater participation of women in the work of the NARS. **A total of 31% of interviewees believe that such changes have not contributed at all or only a little; on the other hand, 35% of interviewees believe that they have somewhat or largely contributed to the work of the NARS.**

❖ CITIZENS GIVE TOP PRIORITY TO THE LEGISLATIVE FUNCTION OF THE NARS.

❖ Of the four functions of the NARS, citizens regard the legislative function as the most important. This is the opinion of 61% of respondents. By priority rating, the remaining functions are ranked as follows: oversight (second place); electoral (third place) and representative function (fourth place). **THE ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY HAS THE HIGHEST RECOGNISABILITY LEVEL AMONG THE INDEPENDENT BODIES OF STATE THAT ARE ESTABLISHED BY THE NARS.**

Among independent state bodies established by the NARS, **the highest level of recognisability goes to the Anti-Corruption Agency, followed by: the ombudsman, RRA and the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and the Protection of Personal Data.** Apart from the undisputed role and importance of the Anti-Corruption Agency, its high level of recognisability is influenced by another two elements: 1) the name itself carries the term "*fight against corruption*", which is frequently used and 2) the institution is being confused with the Council for the fight against corruption.

❖ ALMOST A THIRD OF THE POPULATION OF SERBIA EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO HAVE GREATER INFLUENCE ON THE WORK OF THE NARS.

The largest number of interviewees (44%) would not like to have greater influence on the NARS work, with 26% of them not sure or not interested in this issue. However, 30% of those questioned

expressed a desire to have greater influence on the work of the NARS. Who are these citizens? Mostly experts and clerks, with above average income, aged over 19 and under 60.

❖ AMONG THE CITIZENS WHO EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO HAVE GREATER INFLUENCE ON THE WORK OF THE NARS, THE MAJORITY WOULD DO SO THROUGH THE DIRECT ELECTION OF PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES.

When asked about the modality for achieving greater influence on the work of the NARS, 12.5% of respondents said they would like to do so through direct elections of MPs who represent them in the NARS. Those with higher education and better and highly paid professions represent the group that would prefer direct elections of MPs above the average number. The section of the population aged under 30 does not show an interest in such a form of influence on the work of the NARS.

❖ A QUARTER OF THE POPULATION IS AWARE THAT A PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVE WHO LIVES IN THEIR CITY/MUNICIPALITY IS WITHIN THE NARS, BUT THEY DO NOT KNOW WHO THAT IS; 13% KNOWS THE NAME OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVE, WHILE 4% QUOTED THE WRONG NAMES.

A third of interviewees (34%) doesn't know the answer to the question of whether someone from their city/municipality is an MP; one in five citizens say that their city has no MP, while 24% say that there is someone in the NARS from their city/municipality, but they don't know his/her name. Only 13% of citizens know the identity of the MP representing their place of residence, while 4% quote the wrong names. The Republic of Serbia has a proportional representation electoral system, with a single electoral unit, so we cannot say that an MP (in the full sense of the term's meaning) represents the city/municipality he/she hails from.

❖ THE GREATEST CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL OR PUBLIC LIFE COMES FROM VISITS TO LOCAL MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLIES. THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC HEARINGS IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY RECOGNISED BY THE PUBLIC.

In Serbia 24% of citizens questioned visited their local municipal assembly as a citizen; 20% were or still are members of some parties in Serbia, while 17% participated in the work of their local community. One in 10 citizens had contact with an MP or some other representative of the NARS. **Only 3% of citizens participated in public hearings, which tells us that the concept is not sufficiently recognised by the public.**

❖ ONLY THREE INSTITUTIONS – THE ARMY, THE CHURCH AND THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC – ENJOY TRUST LEVEL HIGHER THAN 50%. AFTER MANY YEARS, THE CHURCH NO LONGER REPRESENTS THE INSTITUTION THAT CITIZENS TRUST THE MOST.

Three institutions enjoy the trust of more than half of citizens: the army, the church and the President of the Republic of Serbia. They are followed by three institutions with a slightly lower

level of trust; where trust in them significantly prevails over distrust. These are the police, the education system and the Government of the Republic of Serbia. Health care is positioned with an equal number of those who trust and distrust it. **The NARS is interesting, as the number of those who trust it prevails over those who distrust it; however, a very high number of interviewees define their attitude as neutral. As such, it stands below the health care system in terms of trustworthiness.**

❖ CONTINUED TRUST IN THE ARMY AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS – THE PRESIDENT, THE GOVERNMENT AND NARS, WITH CONSTANT FALL IN THE LEVEL OF TRUST IN THE CHURCH.

The army has experienced a trend of rising trust for a number of years now. At the same time, trust in the church has been falling since 2011, which means that this institution no longer tops the list of the most trusted institutions. However, there is an important rise of trust in three political institutions: the President of the RS, the Government of the RS and the NARS. Trust in all three institutions has doubled in comparison to the years 2011 and 2012.

❖ ALMOST A THIRD OF INTERVIEWEES (30%) KNOW EXACTLY THE NAME OF THE CURRENT SPEAKER OF THE NARS. THE MAJORITY (61%) HAS NO IDEA AS TO THIS INDIVIDUAL'S IDENTITY.

The largest number of interviewees was honest and said that they didn't know who the president/speaker of the highest representative body in Serbia is. Their number stands at 61%; apart from them, another 9% said that they knew who the president/speaker of the NARS was, but subsequently named the wrong person. Such results are understandable, due to the fact that a large section of the public mostly link their political aspirations to the key political actors, with longer political past. The NARS Speaker has been in this function for less than a year. The remaining 30% of interviewees were able to name the person currently holding this function. The average grade of his performance is 3.5, which is quite satisfactory.

❖ FOR THE MAJORITY OF SERBIAN CITIZENS, THE WORK AND FUNCTION OF THE NARS IS CLEAR. AN EQUAL NUMBER OF CITIZENS SAY THAT THE WORK OF THE NARS IS TRANSPARENT AS THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE OPPOSITE.

When attitude of citizens regarding the work and functioning of the NARS is concerned, **the number of those who say that the work and functioning of the NARS are clear to them exceeds the number of those who say it's not clear to them, 58% vs. 33%.** It is interesting to note that the work and functioning of the NARS are, above average, not clear to poorly qualified workers, school children and students.

There is an equal number of citizens who say that the work of the NARS is transparent as those who do not. A total of 45% of citizens say that people do have an insight into all activities of the NARS, with the same number stating that they have no insight into what is

happening in the NARS. We can also note that 27% of citizens are fairly or extremely interested in obtaining concrete information regarding the work of the NARS; 18% are indifferent; 31% of citizens are slightly interested in gaining such information, while one in four are completely not interested in gaining detailed insight into the work of the NARS.

❖ TELEVISION REPRESENTS THE MOST FREQUENT SOURCE OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE WORK OF THE NARS. PRINT MEDIA AND INTERNET PORTALS FOLLOW TV.

How do the citizens of Serbia get information on the work of the NARS? **Television represents for the most influential medium of political communication in Serbia; this research, dealing with the work of the NARS, confirms such a view. That is to say that 25% of citizens are regularly informed about the work of the NARS from television, while another 35% are informed occasionally. Print media takes second place; representing the regular source of information on the work of the NARS for one in ten citizens.** Internet portals represent a regular or occasional source of information for only 14% of citizens.

❖ THE MAJORITY OF CITIZENS, SOME 70%, FOLLOW ASSEMBLY SESSIONS. AMONG THEM, THE LARGEST NUMBER FOLLOW ONLY THOSE SESSIONS THAT DISCUSS SUBJECTS OF PERSONAL INTEREST TO THEM.

The largest number (almost a third) follows the assembly sessions that discuss issues they are personally interested in; 29% do so when issues of crucial importance for Serbia are concerned; one in 11 interviewees follows all the sessions, regardless of the subject. The youth represent an above average number in the group of those who do not watch live broadcasts of NARS sessions; farmers represent the group that follows all sessions above the average number, regardless of the subject.

❖ THIS RESEARCH SHOWS ENCOURAGING RESULTS WHEN MOBILE APPLICATION PREPARATION IS CONCERNED, IN TERMS OF IT BEING A CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION FOR INTERESTED CITIZENS.

One in nine interviewees are interested in being informed about the work of the NARS via mobile phone applications that could be updated regularly. That would represent a completely new type of communication between this institution and interested citizens. Bearing in mind the nature of our sample, where elderly and less educated sections of the population prevail, we can say that 11% being interested in the introduction of a mobile application represents a solid basis to consider this idea.

❖ THE MAJORITY OF CITIZENS BELIEVE THAT THERE IS SPACE FOR PUBLISHING SUB-EDITIONS IN PRINT MEDIA. AT THE SAME TIME, A THIRD OF THE POPULATION BELIEVES THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF AN NARS TV CHANNEL WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROMOTION OF THE WORK OF THE NARS AMONG CITIZENS.

Slightly over two fifths (42%) of citizens say that there is space for the NARS to publish a sub-edition or supplement in print media; 31% say that this could apply to all national media, while 11% name specific media outlets. Among the specific media outlets named, the only one singled out is the daily *Politika*. Bearing in mind the sample structure, where the age of the average interviewee is over 50, such results are more than understandable.

At the same time, more than a third of interviewees are in favour of the introduction of a separate NARS TV channel, as it would significantly contribute to the promotion of the work of the NARS among citizens. Almost two fifths say that the sessions currently broadcast by the RTS is sufficient, while 13% have the somewhat "radical" view that the NARS sessions should not be broadcast on TV. Such a result is mostly influenced by the answers of respondents aged between 19 and 49 and those with medium to high monthly income.

❖ CITIZENS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN HAVING MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S WORK BY THE NARS.

What areas of the work of the NARS would citizens like to know more about? From those who named an area, three became clear: control of work of the Government of the RS (17.7%), procedures for the adoption of legislation (16.3%) and the work of people's representatives (13.8%). Distribution of answers concerning control of the work of the national government is above average influenced by interviewees with four years of secondary schooling, aged between 40 and 59, with average income.

❖ SERBIAN CITIZENS ARE OF THE OPINION THAT MEDIA REPORT ON MPs MORE NEGATIVELY, IN COMPARISON TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS OR INDIVIDUALS.

Citizens believe that media report on people's representatives more negatively/pejoratively compared to other institutions/officials; 12% of interviewees agree with this statement. On the other hand, only 10% of interviewees say that media report completely clearly about the work of the NARS, in contrast to the 23% who have a completely different view and another 53% who say that media report clearly up to a point about the work of the NARS. At the same time, respondents believe that representatives are not sufficiently open to the public when communicating with the media.

Regardless of the fact that the NARS, its composition, work and functioning are present publicly on an almost daily basis, surveys that seriously and systematically research the attitudes of citizens regarding this institution are rare. That is why this research represents one of the first of its type in Serbia and aims to comprehensively examine the attitudes of citizens regarding the NARS (and parliamentarism in Serbia in general), how much they understand its work and function, how informed they are about its work and to what extent citizens influence the functioning of this institution. This research deals with a survey of trust in the institutions, citizens' attitudes regarding people's representatives, but also topics that the NARS should take into consideration.

4. Index of citizens' attitudes regarding the NARS

Based upon sets of questions and the answers we obtained, we formed a complex indicator that shows citizens' relations towards the role of the NARS in the political system of Serbia, but also towards the society as a whole. We entitled the ratio "the index of citizens' attitudes regarding the NARS". The questions we asked were dichotomies, whereby views on specific issues are defined via positive or negative stances. Agreement or disagreement with those standpoints forms the attitude of an interviewee regarding an issue; the summary indicator was formed after adding the individual responses. The issues deal with attitudes towards democracy (statement: *Democracy has its deficiencies, but it is better than other forms of rule; in some cases, non-democratic authority can be better than democratic forms*); **the role of the NARS in the process of adopting legislation** (statement: *the National Assembly represents the place where the interests of all citizens are protected in the best manner; Laws in this country are adopted at some other place; the National Assembly exists just like that*); and the relationship between the NARS and political parties (statement: *MPs are chosen by their party leaders, so that they serve leaders' interests and not the interests of the people; MPs are independent in their work and exclusively serve the interests of those who elected them*).

Chart 4.1: Index of attitudes regarding the NARS (in %)

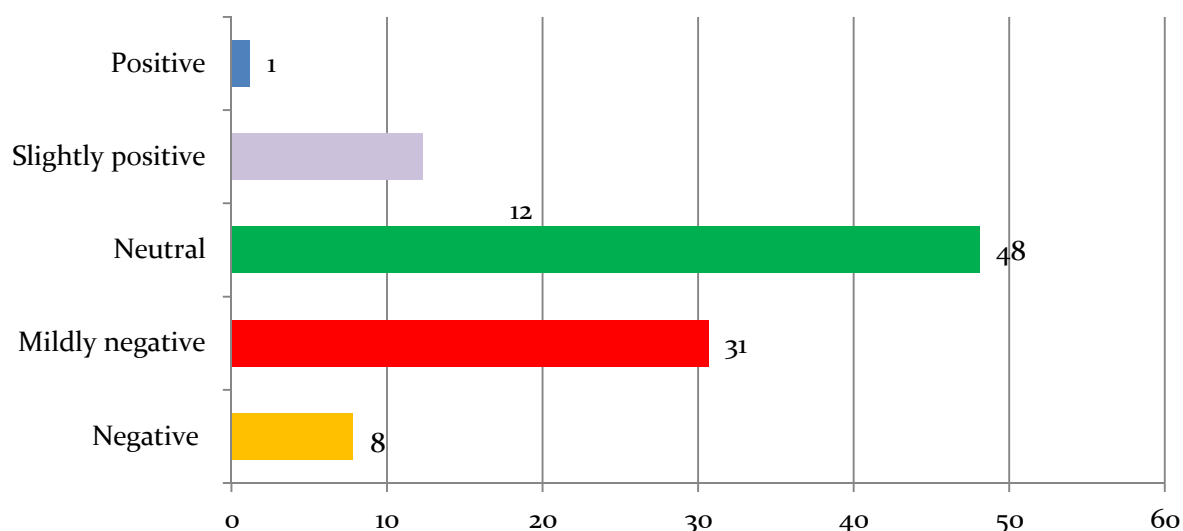


Table 4.1: Statements that form the citizens' attitude index regarding the NARS (in %)

	I disagree	I Neither agree nor disagree	I agree	Total
Democracy has its deficiencies, but it is better than other forms of rule	21	26	53	100
In some cases, non-democratic authority can be better than democratic forms	30	31	39	100
The National Assembly represents the place where the interests of all citizens are protected in the best manner	32	32	36	100
Laws in this country are adopted at some other place; the National Assembly exists only for its own sake	22	33	45	100
MPs are chosen by their party leaders and so they serve leaders' interests and not those of the people	9	28	63	100
MPs are independent in their work and exclusively serve the interests of those who elected them	52	31	17	100

The citizens' attitude index regarding the NARS shows that the assembly is perceived as the central institution of the multi-party system. In that sense, one should bear in mind that this index is a more precise and in-depth indicator of trust in the NARS than a classical questionnaire addressing the subject. The reason is based on the fact that the attitudes of citizens concerning trust in institutions are defined by their party-political choices. If the parties that comprise the actual composition have broader support of citizens (in the parties' ratings), then support for the NARS

will grow. On the other hand, the loss of such support inevitably leads to the decline of trust in the assembly.

The citizens' attitude index regarding the NARS tends to express in-depth attitudes of citizens, which are not related to the frequent superficial changes of party orientation. The attitudes are in-depth, hardly changeable, and show more realistic and truthful relations to the role of the NARS. Firstly, with the creation of such indexes, the majority of citizens fall into the category of those who are neutral. This is why it is decisive, in the analysis, to monitor relations between the views of respondents with positive attitudes and those with negative attitudes. **Negative notions of the NARS stem from the fact that the percentage of respondents with slightly negative or negative opinions regarding the assembly's role in Serbia stands at 39%; this figure is three times greater than the percentage of those who have slightly positive or positive opinions regarding the NARS. It is precisely the prevalence of those with a negative view of the NARS that shapes the general attitude of public opinion regarding this institution.**

When considering key characteristics of those who positively or negatively evaluate the NARS, as the central institution of Serbia's political system, the more significant differences occur in the demographic categories of **professions** and **income levels**.

Profession is in direct correlation with education, so that both demographic characteristics show similar deviation in relation to attitudes regarding the NARS. Our description uses the category of profession, as it is more explanatory (has more potential answers) and partially comprises both education and job positions. As expected, a high level of distrust of the NARS, more than other groups, is found among non-qualified or semi-qualified workers.² What was not expected is the fact that the most educated respondents, with professions at the top of the pyramid, have the most negative attitude towards the NARS, in comparison to all other categories of professions. According to these results, the less educated part of the population displays the greatest trust in the parliamentary system in Serbia. Meanwhile, interviewees who are more educated and work in the most desired areas largely disapprove of this model of community organization.

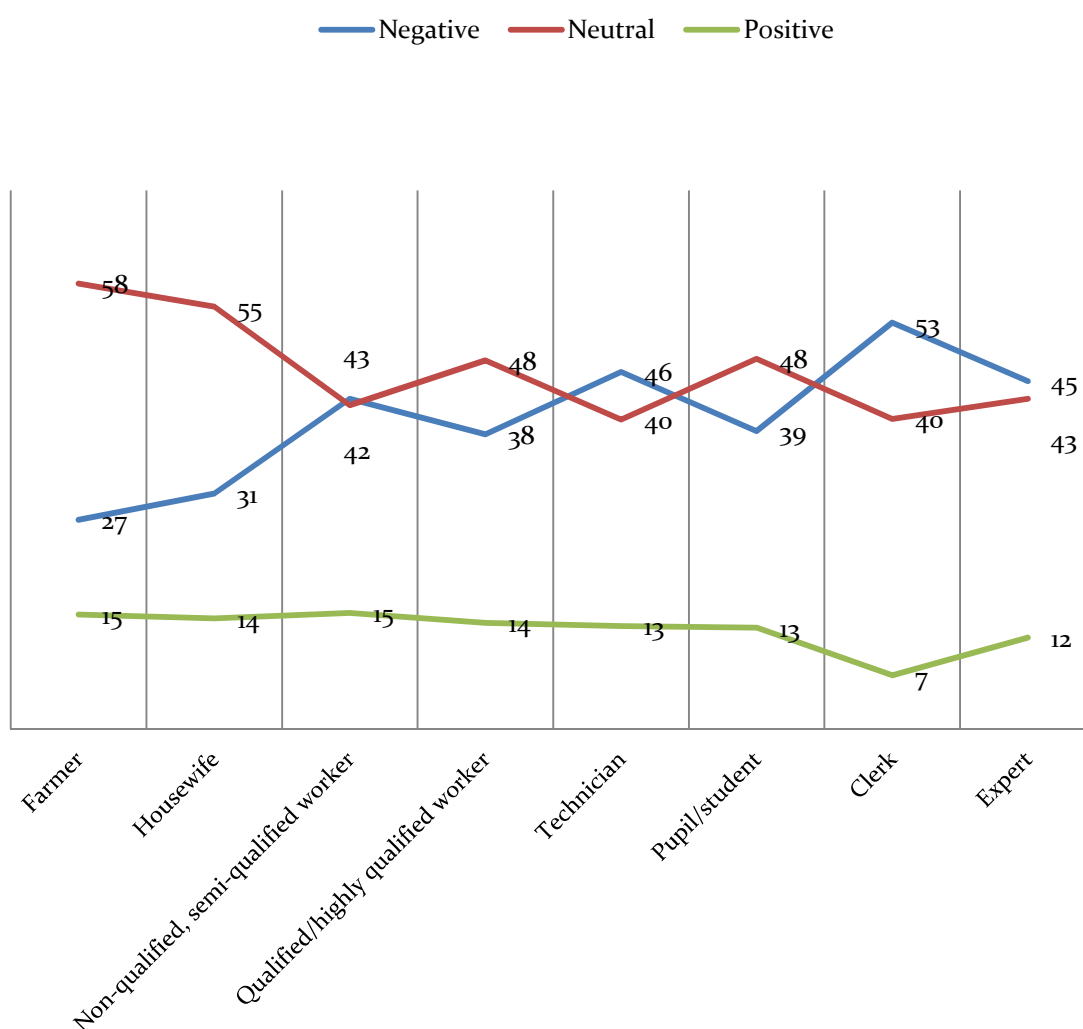
In a similar manner, there are differences in views regarding the role of the NARS in Serbia by different groups, in accordance with the level of income per family member. **Categories of the population with lower income have more trust in the NARS compared to the categories of the population with higher income.** Any interpretation of these results should consider that the attitude towards the role of the NARS in Serbia reflects the experience of citizens with the

² Low or semi-qualified workers

institution over the previous two decades of a reconstructed multiparty system, but also the circumstances that surrounded its re-introduction. These circumstances are the wars of the 1990s, international sanctions, the significant impoverishment of all population groups, loss of state identities, the privatisation process, the lack of a value system etc.

All these circumstances were in parallel with the building of the NARS as the central representative institution and, as such, it can be assumed that they influenced the general attitude regarding the institution itself.

Chart 4.2: Attitude towards the NARS and interviewees' professions (in %)



5. Citizens' attitudes regarding the "internal dynamics" of the National Assembly

We sought to discover what citizens think about the actual work of the NARS, its internal existence and the dynamics occurring therein. Accordingly, we asked questions about topics discussed in the NARS, the participation of women and key functions performed by the institution.

Table 5.1: How much are the following topics discussed... (in %)

	Unkno wn	Not in the least	A little	Average	A lot	Greatly
European integration	11	3.8	6.5	25.1	29.5	24.1
Kosovo	11.6	3.5	9.8	22.2	28.9	24
The fight against corruption and crime	10.4	7.5	17.7	29.4	21.6	13.4
The work of the Prime Minister and other government ministers	13.2	6.2	15.5	34.6	19.9	10.5
Discriminated groups (LGBT and Roma)	13.3	10.5	17.8	31.2	16.2	11
Economic issues	10.8	11.4	28.4	24.6	15.5	9.2
Police, army	13.4	7.9	23.1	37.7	11.4	6.5
Judiciary	13.2	9.4	27.1	34.4	12.3	3.6
Health care	11	13.3	29.9	31.5	9.3	5.1
Education	11.5	12.9	30.2	32.5	9.5	3.4
Social policy	11.1	21.3	30.7	25.1	7.2	4.5
Status of youth in Serbia	11.2	23.6	34.4	22.6	4.8	3.3

Interviewees were offered 12 areas of public life and could decide – on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 means *not the least* and 5 *very much*) how much the areas were subject to discussion in the NARS. **For more than half of interviewees, two areas represented are largely or very much discussed in the highest representative body. The topics were related to European integration and Kosovo.** The percentage of interviewees who were of the opinion that these topics are largely or very much discussed is higher at multiple level in comparison to those who believe that the topics are little or not the least discussed (in the case of European integration the ratio is 53.6 to 10.3, while in the case of Kosovo the ratio is 52.9 to 13.3).

The next two topics – the fight against corruption and crime and the work of the Prime Minister and other ministers – are also highly present in NARS discussions, but there is no absolute majority. Accordingly, we found that 35% of respondents believe the issue of fighting corruption and crime is discussed a lot or greatly in the NARS, while the percentage of those who believe it is discussed a little or not in the least stands at 25.2%.

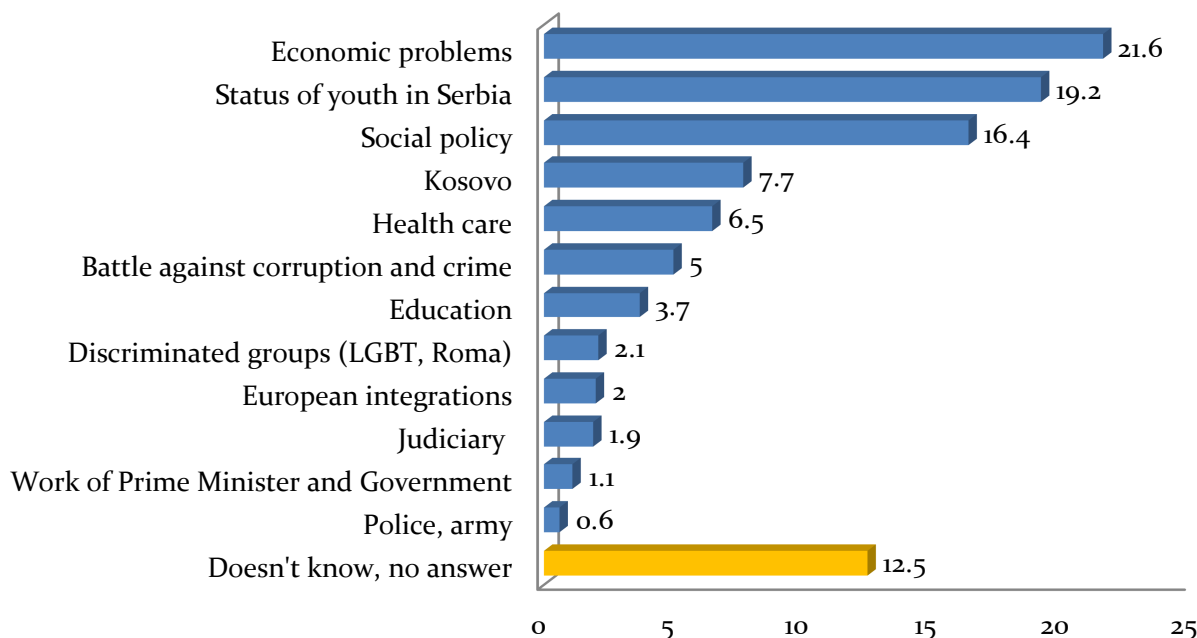
The topic of the work of the prime minister and the government is viewed as being discussed a lot by 30.4% of interviewees, while 21.7% describe it as rarely discussed.

When it comes to discussion about discriminated groups, there is a balance between those who believe that the issue is discussed too much or too little in the NARS. With all other issues the majority of interviewees believe they are rarely discussed or not discussed in the least compared to those who believe they are frequently discussed.

The distribution in *Table 5.1* shows that the percentage of interviewees who believe the issues are rarely discussed is on the rise in comparison to those who believe they are frequently discussed. There is the lowest imbalance when economic issues are concerned, while it grows with subjects such as police and army, judiciary, health care and education. Within these last two topics, the ratio between those who believe the issues are rarely discussed is several times higher than those who find they are very often discussed. When it comes to social policy, for example, the percentage of those who believe the issue is little or not in the least discussed in the NARS is 52%; the percentage of those who say it is greatly or frequently discussed is 11.7. In terms of topics related to the status of youth in Serbia, the ratio stands at 58% against 8.1%.

Interviewees were next asked to tell us if some of the topics should become the focus of the attention of the NARS. **There are notable differences between the issues citizens want to be discussed and what they see as central topics of the assembly's work. The three top rated issues are economic problems, status of youth in Serbia and social policy. Of the three topics named as priorities by citizens, two remain at the bottom of the list of issues discussed by the NARS, which means that citizens' perception is that these issues are very rarely discussed.** Economic issues appeared in the previous table as the issue insufficiently discussed by the NARS.

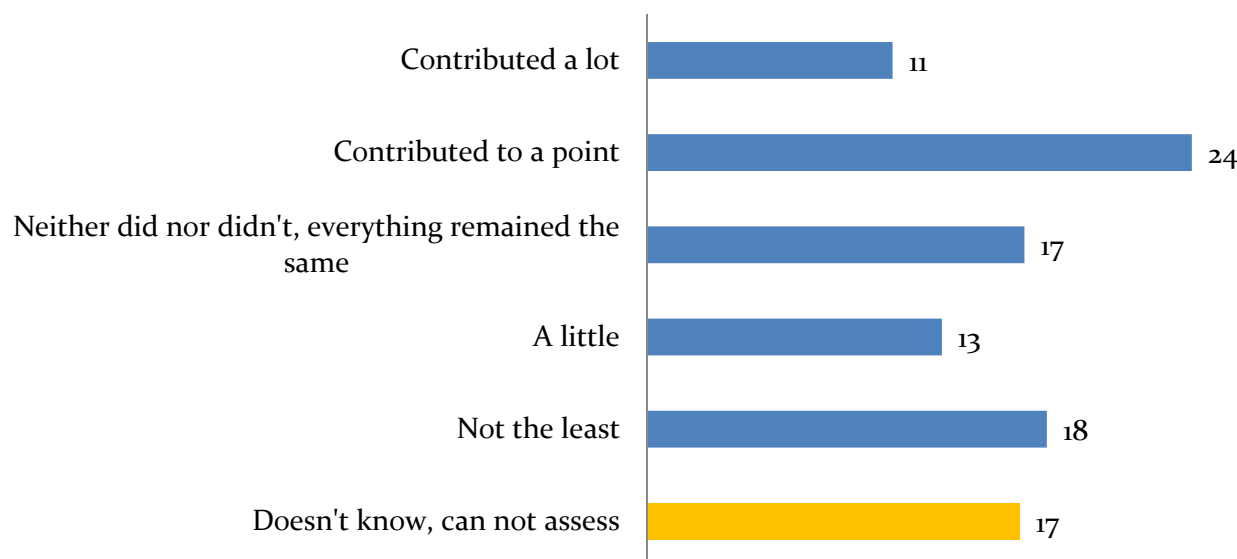
Chart 5.1: Issues that should be a priority of the work of the NARS (in %)



All other topics are listed as priorities in the work of the NARS by a far lower percentage; it is interesting to note that **the topic of European integration, being perceived as the top subject in themes that were discussed, represents a priority for only 2% of interviewees.** At least according to the expressed views of interviewees, European integration is the topic that is constantly being discussed by the NARS, but the practice should not be a priority.

In terms of changes of certain regulation of the less represented gender (women) in the composition of the NARS, together with their influence on the assembly's work, citizens' opinions are divided. A total of 31% of interviewees say the changes had little or no contribution, while 35% think they have contributed to the work of the NARS to a certain extent or significantly.

Chart 5.2: How much did the increased participation of women contribute to the work of the NARS? (in %)



Apart from topics being discussed and the role of female MPs in the work of the NARS, we wanted to find out if citizens recognise the basic functions of the institution and how they rank them in accordance with their importance. The interviewees were able to rank four NARS functions: legislative (adoption of laws), control (monitoring of Government's and Ministries' work), electoral (election of state officials: government, judges etc.) and representative (relations with citizens, representative body). First rank means the priority of function, while lower rank means decrease in importance of function performed by the NARS.

Table 5.2: What are the most important functions of the NARS? (in %)

	Legislative function	Control function	Electoral function	Representative function
Rank 1	61	18	11	10
Rank 2	21	42	22	16
Rank 3	12	28	38	22
Rank 4	6	13	29	52

Citizens consider the legislative function as the most important. It was ranked first by 61% of interviewees, followed by the control function, which was ranked first by 18%, although it represented the most dominant second ranked function. Third place went to the electoral function, which represented the most dominant in third rank with 38%, while fourth place went to the representative function, ranked fourth by 52% of interviewees.

6. Recognisability and evaluation of independent institutions elected by the NARS

The NARS elects bodies or individuals that govern the work of independent state bodies. The institutions are also called the *fourth branch of power*, due to the specific position they take in the legal and political system of Serbia. Interviewees were able to indicate knowledge of seven institutions and evaluate their work. What represents a methodological deficiency is the fact that there is no clear possibility to research the interviewees' real knowledge about each of the institutions. This is the same type of problem we faced when knowledge of the institution of the President/Speaker of the NARS was questioned, but the questions asked in that case could not be repeated in this one. This is why the responses by all were taken as valid and the evaluation of work of the above listed independent bodies was created based upon them.

Table 6.1: Recognisability and evaluation of independent institutions

	Recognisability of Institution (in %)	Average grade
Anti-Corruption Agency	54	3.19
Commissioner for information of public importance and personal data protection	32	3.13
Ombudsman	39	3.10
Commissioner for protection of equality	21	2.79
State audit institution	26	2.69
Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA)	39	2.51
Republic commission for the protection of rights in public procurement procedures	22	2.30

Recognisability and evaluation of the work of specific independent institutions varies significantly. **The highest level of recognisability goes to the Anti-Corruption Agency**, though one has to bear in mind two things in this case. Firstly, the name of the institution carries the term *fight against corruption*, which is frequently used, and that this institution is confused with the Anti-Corruption Council. Apart from that, there is **recognisability of the Ombudsman, RRA and the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection**. The remaining three institutions have recognisability at 25% or less, which is considered insufficient recognisability within the public domain.

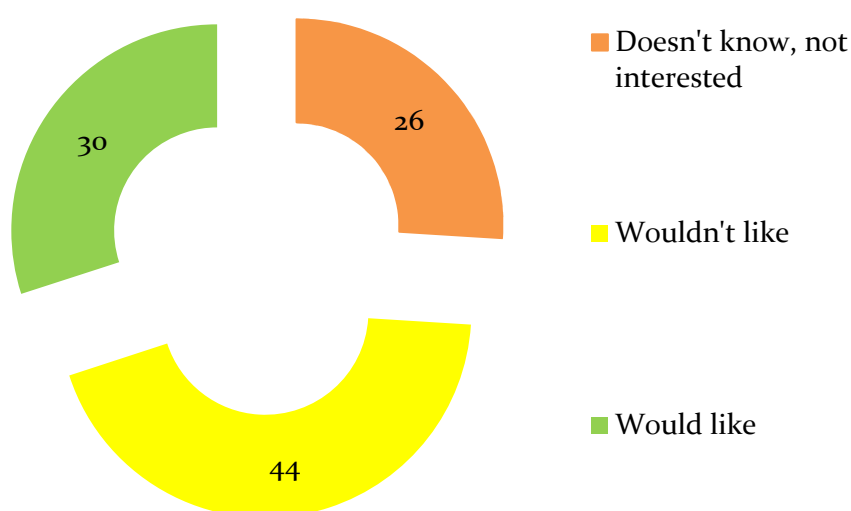
On the other hand, grades provided for these institutions are shown on a scale from 1 to 5 and *Table 6.1.* shows average values (*average values* column). Average grades above three can be considered favourable, which is the case with the three top ranked institutions. The grades they obtained are very close and stand in the span from 0.1 to the average grade. The remaining institutions are in the average grade zones, in the interval from 2.5 to 3, with the least recognisable institution having the lowest grade which is outside the interval and stands at only 2.3.

7. Citizens' influence on the work of the National Assembly

Bearing in mind the fact that one of four functions of the NARS is a representative function (discussing suggestions and petitions submitted by citizens, holding meetings with them) it is very important to research the perception of influence exerted by citizens over the work of the NARS. In general, in different areas previously surveyed for this research, citizens' assessment of their influence was negative. At the level of principle, the majority is declaratively ready to become more actively engaged, but there are very few who actually do so in practice.

In this research we asked citizens to say if they'd like to have a greater influence on the work of the NARS. We notice that the largest number of interviewees (44%) would not like to have greater influence on the work of the NARS, while 26% don't know or are not interested in this issue. However, **30% expressed a desire to have greater influence on the work of the NARS and they represent the group that any communication from the NARS should rely on.** Which citizens are they? Mostly experts and clerks, with income higher than average, aged over 19 and under 60.

Chart 7.1: Would you like to have greater influence on the work of the NARS? (in %)



The findings from *Chart 7.2* show that it is necessary to build stronger connections between elected representatives in the NARS and citizens. **Asked about the manner they'd prefer in order to exert greater influence on the work of the NARS, 12.5% of respondents said they'd like to realise that through the direct election of an MP who would represent them within the NARS.**

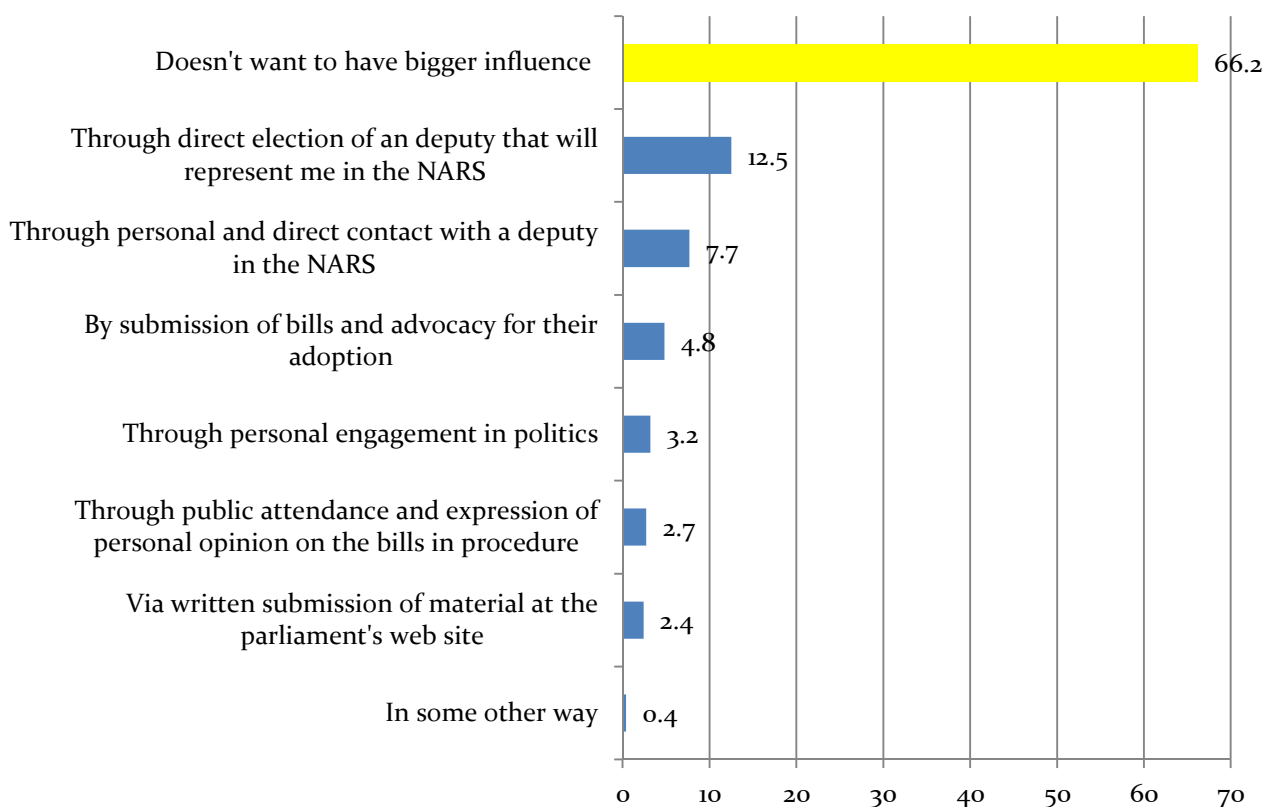
The fact that party lists have now been closed for years and citizens do not directly elect someone who would represent them (despite changes that led to the situation whereby party leaders cannot delegate persons who enters the NARS on their behalf) had a decisive influence on the presented distribution of answers.

Of the remaining modalities for citizens' influence on the work of the NARS, only personal, direct contact with MPs stood out, quoted by 7.7% of interviewees.

Of those who prefer direct elections of representatives, the interviewees with higher education and, accordingly, better and higher paid professions, comprise an above average number. It is indicative that all three groups of youth are under the average level: 9% of youth aged between 20 and 24 and 25-29 prefer direct election of MPs, while only 3% of high school pupils say that the direct election of an MP represents the best way to exert greater influence on the work of the NARS.

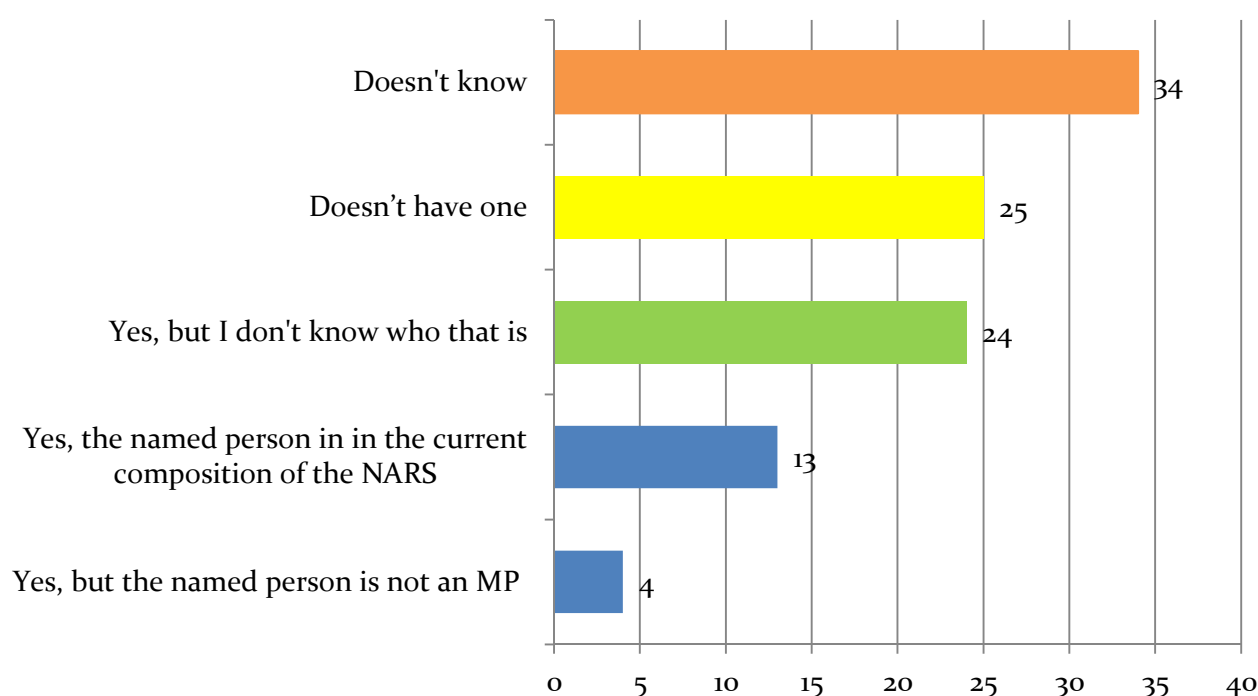
Chart 7.2: In what way would you like to have greater influence on the work of the NARS?

(in %)



Previous findings are best illustrated by responses to the following question: does the current composition of the NARS have at least one MP from your city/municipality (*chart 7.3*)? We see that 34% of interviewees didn't know the answer to the question; **one in five of them say there are no MPs from their city/municipality, while 24% say that there is an MP from their place of residence in the NARS, but doesn't know her/his name. Only 13% of citizens could name the MP, while 4% named the wrong individuals.** We remind you that these findings should be taken with a pinch of salt, as Serbia has a proportional electoral system, with one electoral unit. This is why we cannot conclusively say that one MP represents a certain city or municipality.

Chart 7.3: Does the current composition contain at least one MP who lives in your city/municipality?
(in %)



8. Citizens' activism

In this chapter we wanted to examine citizens' activism, i.e. their level of participation (or if they participated) in specific organizations and events. First of all, we selected the organizations and events close to the National Assembly that are helping us get better insight into the attitude of citizens regarding the NARS.

Citizens were offered a list of eight organizations/events; the first thing we notice is the small number of those who had no opinion - between 4% and 6%.

The greatest participation by citizens is seen at three opening levels: 24% of them visited their local assembly as citizens; 20% were, or still are, members of some Serbian party; 17% participated in the work of their local community.³ One in ten citizens did have contact with an MP or some other representative of the NARS. Less than 10% of interviewees visited the NARS as citizens (6%), participated in the work of their local assembly on behalf of a political party (4%), participated in public sessions of the NARS (3%), or participated in the work of the NARS as members of some political party (1%).

Table 8.1: Citizens' activism (in %)

	NA	No	Yes	Total
Participated in local community's work	5	78	17	100
Visited local (city or municipality) assembly as a citizen	4	72	24	100
Were or still are a member of a political party	6	74	20	100
Participated in local assembly's work as a representative of a political party	6	90	4	100
Visited the National Assembly as a Serbian citizen	5	89	6	100
Participated in public hearings in NARS	6	91	3	100
Participated in the work of the NARS as member of a party	6	93	1	100
Had contact with an MP or other NARS representative	6	84	10	100

Although public hearings represent one of the most important institutes of modern parliamentarism, this research shows that, among Serbian citizens, it hasn't been recognised and is not sufficiently used. Only 3% of interviewees have participated in public hearings to date.

³ Previous research conducted by CeSID showed that local communities represent an important framework where other types of direct participation of citizens are realised, as some needs and issues mostly occur at the local community level. For more details see: "Direct Participation of Citizens in Governing of Local Community - Problems, Challenges and Recommendations for Process Improvement" (2011), Belgrade, CeSID/USAID/OSCE Mission in Serbia.

9. Trust in institutions

The issue of trust in institutions represents one of the most important indicators of a system's legitimacy. In the past 23 years in Serbia there has been almost no time when we could boast about a high level of trust, particularly in so-called political institutions (government, NARS, political parties). We saw deviations only in cases of the church, army and police as institutions that regularly top the list of those most trusted by citizens. In this research, like in others, we examined how much trust the citizens of Serbia show towards a set of the most important institutions in the country.

Apart from this research, which provides us with the current rating of institutions, we introduced a comparison with the statistics of institutions' ratings in 2011 and 2012, in the research projects we conducted for the needs of the OSCE Mission in Serbia.⁴

Table 9.1: Trust in institutions (in %)

	I don't know	Have no trust	Neither yes nor no	Have trust
Army	7	15	24	54
Church, religious institution	7	20	21	52
President of the Republic of Serbia	4	21	23	52
Police	4	23	25	49
Education system (universities, schools)	7	25	23	45
Government of the Republic of Serbia	5	26	27	43
Health care system (hospitals, health care centres etc.)	3	36	25	37
National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia	7	27	32	34
Media	8	33	36	24
MPs	7	39	32	22
Judiciary	11	43	25	21
Prosecution	12	40	28	21
Trade unions	19	40	26	15
Non-governmental sector	8	53	26	13
Political parties	8	53	26	13
Employers or associations of employers	20	44	24	12

⁴ More at: http://www.mup.gov.rs/cms_lat/sadrzaj.nsf/Stav_gradjana_prema_radu_policije.pdf

When trust in the NARS is concerned, we see that the number of those who have trust in it prevails over the number of those who don't; still, there is a relatively high number of those who define their attitude as neutral.

After many years, the church no longer represents the most trusted institution, having been replaced by the army. Apart from these two institutions, there is above 50% trust in the institution of the President of the Republic of Serbia. They are followed by three institutions with a slightly lower level of trust, but where trust is significantly higher than distrust. They are the police, the education system and the Government of the Republic of Serbia. When the health care system is concerned, there is a balance between those who trust it and those who do not.

All the remaining institutions have higher levels of distrust than trust. In descending order, they are as follows: media, MPs, judiciary, prosecution, trade unions, non-governmental sector, political parties and employers.

We have now introduced statistics from two surveys (2011 and 2012) that tell us where the level of trust in institutions stood in the previous two years. The timeline series provides the best insight into changes happening at the social and political levels when trust in institutions, or the system of the most important public work, is concerned.⁵

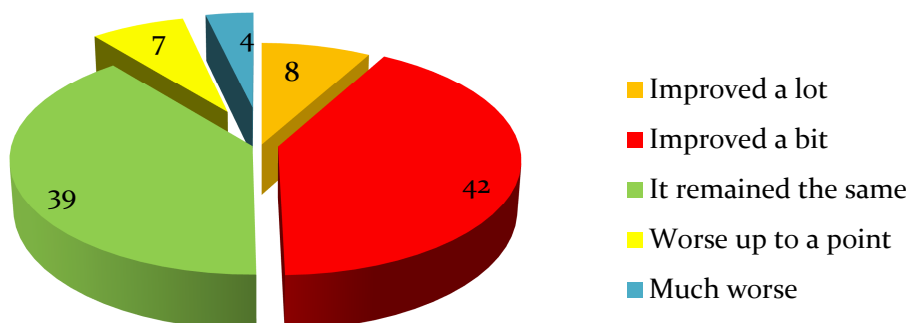
⁵ These are the cases of research realised on relatively large representative samples (1,500 interviewees in the Republic of Serbia, excluding Kosovo) and with the same methodology.

Table 9.2: Change of trust in institutions (in %)

		I don't know	No trust	Neither yes nor no	I have trust
National Government	2013	5	26	27	43
	2012	6	36	29	29
	2011	3	47	30	20
National Assembly	2013	7	27	32	34
	2012	6	41	30	23
	2011	3	53	28	16
Education system	2013	7	25	23	45
	2012	4	30	26	40
	2011	4	28	28	40
Health care system	2013	3	36	25	37
	2012	2	38	25	35
	2011	1	36	26	37
Judiciary system	2013	11	43	25	21
	2012	5	55	24	16
	2011	4	52	26	18
Army/soldiers	2013	7	15	24	54
	2012	10	15	27	48
	2011	7	21	28	44
Police/policemen	2013	4	23	25	49
	2012	4	26	29	41
	2011	2	25	28	45
Church	2013	7	20	21	52
	2012	5	20	20	55
	2011	4	19	18	59
Political parties	2013	8	53	26	13
	2012	6	60	24	10
	2011	4	66	21	9

When the NARS is concerned, the trust of citizens in this institution is more than twice as high in 2013 than in 2011; however, in absolute numbers, it is lower than the level of trust in the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

Chart 9.1: Evaluation of change in the work of the NARS (in %)



As such, the results show that citizens mostly perceive an improvement in the work of the NARS. Half of the citizens questioned share this opinion, - however - there is a larger percentage of those that see this improvement with a dose of reservation (42%), as opposed to those who do not (8%). On the other hand, only one in nine interviewees said that the work of the NARS is worse than it was earlier; together with those who say that things have remained the same, they comprise half of the population surveyed. When asked about the period during which NARS showed best performance since the re-introduction of the multiparty system, 30% of interviewees said that it is at present, with the current composition, while all others were represented by significantly lower percentages.

The highest level of trust is enjoyed by the army, which has enjoyed a constant rising trend of trust over the past several years. Even before the conducting of the 2011 research, the army enjoyed a rise in trust on an annual basis. One has good grounds to assume that the change of individuals who comprise the ruling authority has contributed to the positive trend to a certain extent. The incumbent defence minister, who is simultaneously the leader of the ruling SNS, currently enjoys the status of the most popular politician (in research conducted for the needs of the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy - BCBP⁶, 48% of interviewees said they trust this politician). It is highly likely that support for him as a leader contributes, to a certain extent, to support for the institution he is currently heading.

⁶ Available at: http://www.bezbednost.org/upload/document/graani_srbije_o_korupciji_u_policiji.pdf

On the other hand, the trend of declining trust in the Church continues this year as well. **For the first time in more than ten years of research, the Church has lost its aura as the most trusted institution in Serbia.** It is perhaps worth focusing attention on two possible reasons for such a trend. The primary reasons for falling trust should be sought in the current debate between executive authorities and the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC), which is the dominant religious community in Serbia, dealing with the issue of Kosovo. It is obvious that in the debate, at least part of the citizens, through motives reflected in party identification, sided with the executive authorities and, following such a trend, their perception of the SPC changed, with the result being a drop in trust in this institution. Another series of reasons could stem from negative media coverage related to some SPC individuals. Media coverage about negative events within the Church can, to a significant extent, crumble citizens' trust in this institution. In terms of educational institutions, the health care system and the police, one can conclude that there are no significant divergences compared to the previous two years. Citizens' trust in these institutions does fluctuate, but trends show stabilisation around the average values.

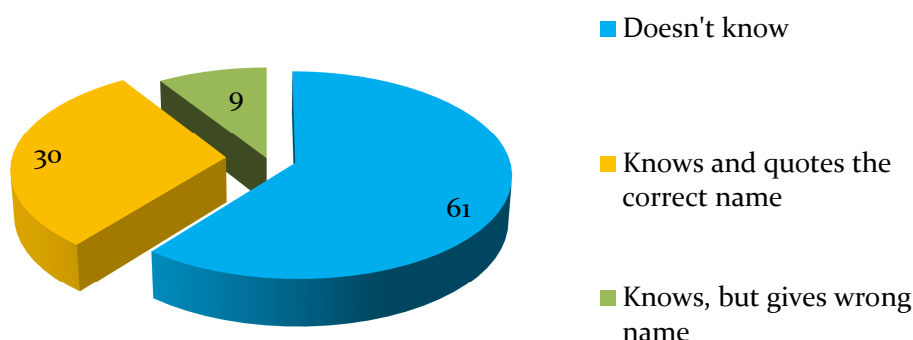
The most significant rise of trust was observed with "classic" state-political institutions. This mostly relates to the President of the Republic (there are no data in *Table 9.2.*, but the research carried out in September 2012 for the needs of the Centre for New Politics - CNP⁷ showed that the level of trust in the President of the Republic of Serbia was 23%), **but also for the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the NARS.** So, the level of trust in the government is more than two times higher than in 2011, rising from 20% to 43%. In relative proportions, there is a similar rise in trust in the NARS.

⁷ Public opinion research, conducted for the needs of the Centre for New Politics (CNP) in September 2012. The research is available via CeSID.

10. Recognisability of the President/ Speaker of the NARS

It is often expected that the majority of citizens recognise persons who perform the most important political functions in the country. However, statistics tell a different story for two types of reasons. Firstly, not all are equally interested in political issues and limit their political aspirations to recognition of several key political actors. On the other hand, the current President/Speaker of the NARS, Nebojsa Stefanovic, is a young politician who has held this position for less than a year.

Chart 10.1: Recognisability of the President of the NARS (in %)

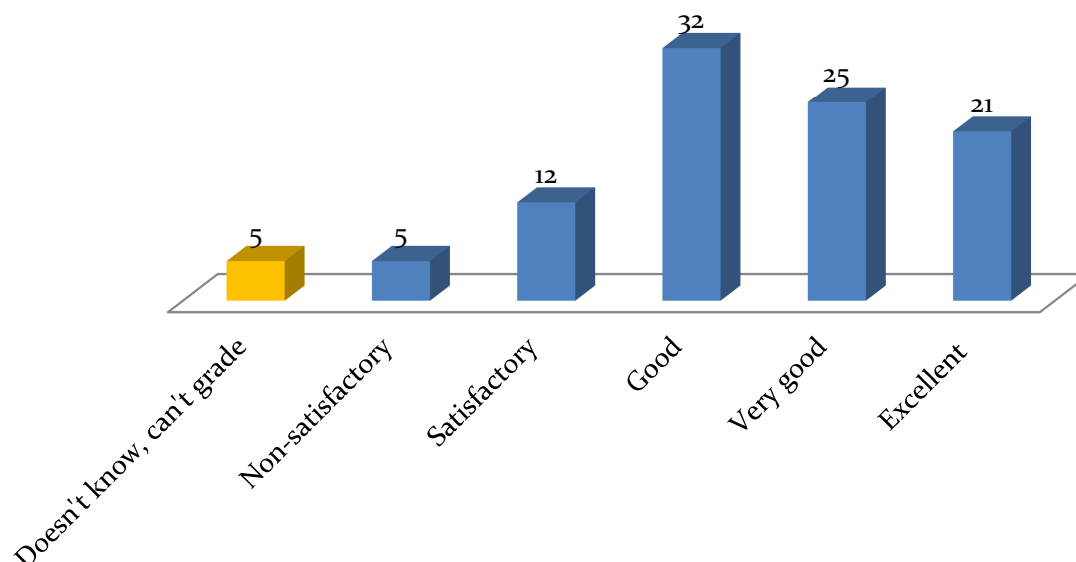


The greatest number of interviewees was honest and said that they didn't know who the president of the highest representative body in Serbia was. This is the answer given by 61% of interviewees; besides them, another 9% said they knew who the president of the NARS was, but subsequently named the wrong person. The remaining 30% of interviewees were able to correctly name the person that currently performs this duty.

We further asked interviewees to give school-like grades for President Stefanovic's work so far. Although 61% of interviewees said they didn't know the person performing the duty, 50% were ready to evaluate his work. This is why we only provide grades offered by interviewees who correctly named the person performing the duty of the NARS President, while other categories were omitted from the grading process, as their assessments were not relevant.

It is evident from the presented results that neutral and positive evaluations prevail over negative evaluations when Stefanovic's work is concerned. Some 46% of interviewees gave him very good or excellent grades, while 17% graded his work with 2 or 1. **The average grade of Stefanovic's work provides us with an index of 3.5.**

Chart 10.2: Evaluation of the work of the NARS President so far (in %)



For the purpose of better understanding the extent of the NARS President's recognisability in public, here are some indicators of other political individuals we measured in the same manner. Research on recognisability of Ivica Dacic was carried out in December 2012 (*realised for the needs of the OSCE Mission in Serbia*), while recognisability of Oliver Dulic was measured at the time of his ministerial mandate in March 2012 (*carried out for the needs of the Fund for Environmental Protection*).⁸

Table 10.1 Recognisability of certain political personalities (in %)

	Ivica Dacic	Oliver Dulic	Nebojsa Stefanovic
Doesn't know	7	47	61
Knows and gives correct name	92	52	30
Knows, but provides wrong name	1	1	9

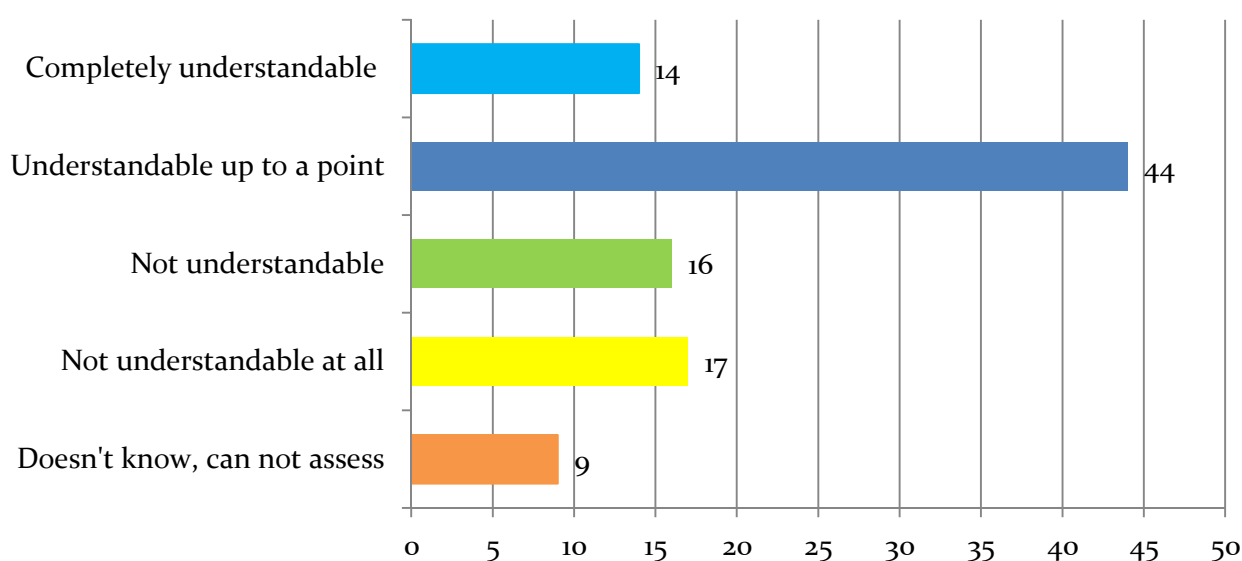
⁸ Both research projects were carried out on representative samples on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, excluding Kosovo, and are available via CeSID.

11. Citizens' attitude towards the work and functioning of the NARS

We begin this chapter with questions aimed at establishing how much citizens understand the work and functioning of the National Assembly. **There are two most important findings: first, there is a small number who don't know or have no opinion (one in 11 interviewees) and, second, there is a higher number of those for whom the work and functioning of the NARS are understandable than those who find it incomprehensible, 58% and 33% respectively.** Among the 58% who said that the work and functioning of the NARS are understandable to them, there are 44% who described it as "understandable to a point" and 14% who said it was "completely understandable".

It is interesting to note that the work and functioning of the NARS are, above average, not understandable for low qualified workers, school pupils and students - who should be observed here in accordance with their age - as the NARS is an insufficiently recognisable institution among high school pupils.

Chart 11.1: How understandable are the work and functioning of the NARS to you, as a citizen (in %)

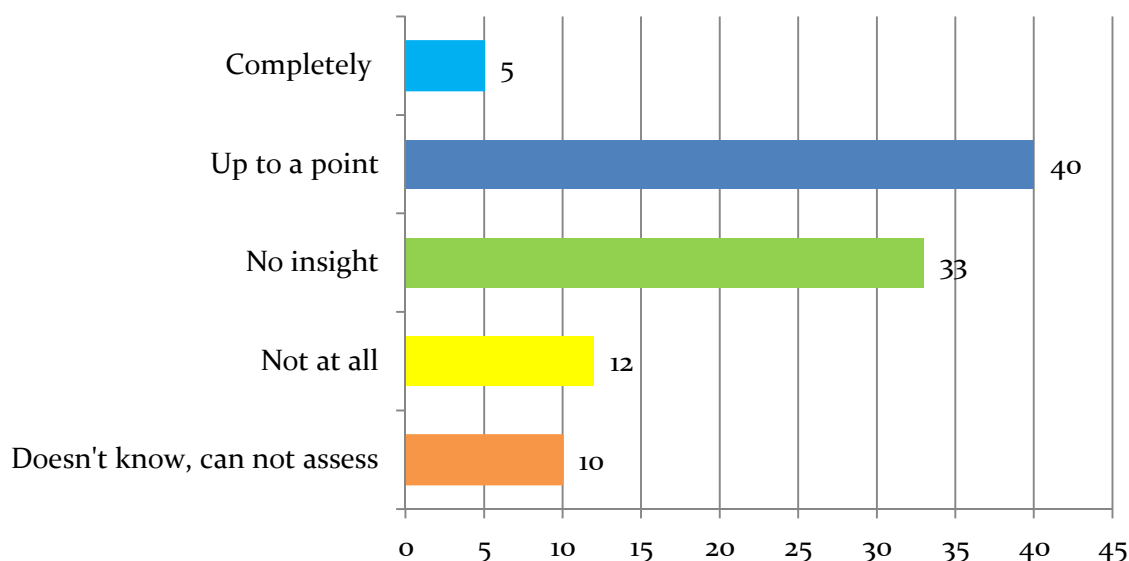


The number of citizens who say that the work of the NARS is transparent and those who doubt it is almost equal. That is to say that **45% of citizens say people have insight into all events within the NARS, while the same number said they have no insight into everything happening in the NARS.**

Similar to the previous question, we found a relatively small number of undecided (one in five); they most likely make a group of apolitical citizens who can be found at a certain level in all societies.

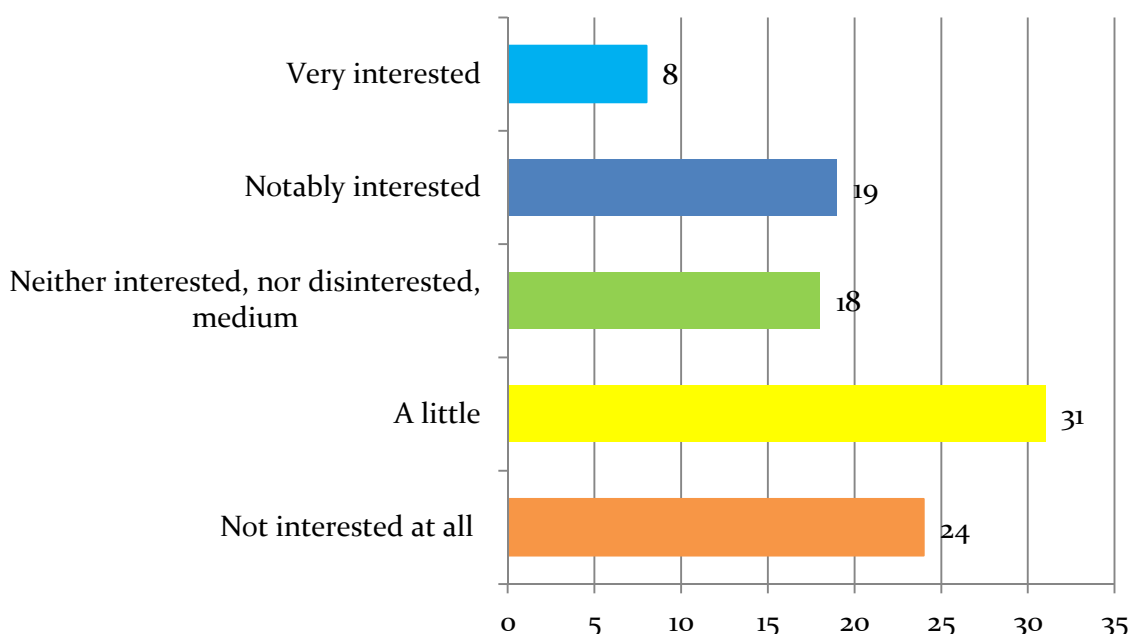
The highest decline is noted in the population aged 15-18, where almost 30% of interviewees were not able to assess if there's transparency in the work of the NARS, or to what extent they are familiar with events in the NARS.

Chart 11.2: Do you believe citizens have insight into all events within the NARS? (in %)



Finally, we asked citizens to tell us how much they are personally interested in tangible and clear information regarding the work of the NARS, bearing in mind the fact that its activities include the adoption of legislation, that the NARS elects individuals who will hold some of the most important functions in the country, that it controls the work of the national government and that the NARS represents all the citizens of the Republic of Serbia. It is evident at this level that **27% of citizens are notably or very interested in the provision of tangible and clear information about the work of the NARS; 18% are indifferent; 31% of citizens are interested a little in obtaining such information, while one in four is completely disinterested in detailed insight into the work of the NARS.** It is expected that upper social strata are more interested in obtaining clearer information about the work of the NARS.

Chart 11.3: How interested are you personally in obtaining tangible and clear information about the work of the NARS? (in %)



12. Information about the work of the NARS

12.1. How are citizens informed about the work of the NARS?

Questions about how citizens receive information about the work of the NARS and could the NARS improve its communication with the public and how, represent only some of the questions addressed in this chapter.

Television represents the most influential medium of political communication in Serbia and these findings are confirmed in this research dealing with the work of the NARS. So, **25% are regularly informed about the work of the NARS via TV and another 35% occasionally. Second place is taken by print media, which represent a regular source of information for one in ten citizens.** One in five sometimes discusses the work of the NARS with family/friends, while 8% regularly discuss the subject with those closest to them.

Only 14% obtain information from web portals: 8% occasionally and 6% regularly. Regardless of the fact that internet penetration is on the rise in Serbia, our representative sample still

comprised a large number of respondents who have no access to it, so the results should not come as a surprise.⁹

A small number of interviewees get information about the work of the NARS through direct contacts or via the official NARS website.

The group of more educated interviewees, with higher income, who belong to the circle of people with better social status, more regularly get information about the work of the NARS via information portals.

Table 12.1.1: Information about the work of the NARS (in %)

	Doesn't follow the work of the NARS	Very rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Regularly	Total
Television	16	11	13	35	25	100
Radio	57	19	10	11	3	100
Information, internet portals and sites	63	16	7	8	6	100
Print media, newspapers and magazines	38	16	14	22	10	100
Discussions with friends/family	39	17	16	20	8	100
Direct contact, visits to the NARS	81	16	2	1	0	100
NARS website - www.parlament.rs	80	15	2	2	1	100

Table 12.1.1 shows the answers about how often citizens are being informed of the work of the NARS by different types of media. At another level, we asked citizens to single out only one, *most frequent*, source of information about the work of the NARS (so-called **differentiating question**).

This question more clearly shows how much television represents the dominant information source in Serbia (not only in the area of political communication), as almost **two thirds of interviewees say they get information about the work of the NARS most frequently via the TV**. All other information sources are below 10%: print media (7%), internet portals (5.5 %) and discussions with friends (3.3%). Other sources remain at the level of statistical error margin.

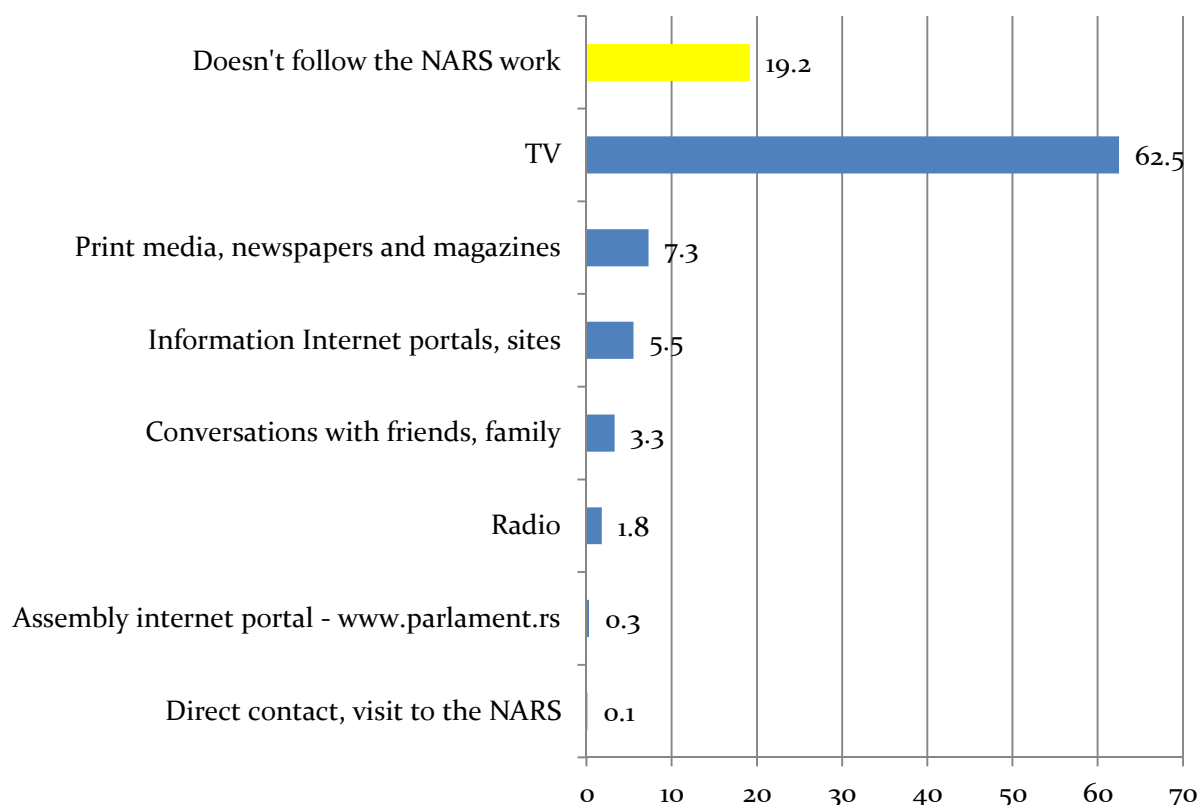
The dominance of TV as the most frequent channel of information about the work of the NARS is related to the sample, where the majority belongs to the elderly population, with lower level of

⁹ According to Gallup research, internet penetration in Serbia stands at 50%.

More at: <http://www.novimagazin.rs/opusteno/u-srbiji-50-odsto-domacinstava-ima-pristup-internetu>. Research by CeSID on media habits (realised at the beginning of March 2013) shows that penetration of the internet is approaching 60% of households. Available via CeSID.

education and qualifications; they represent citizens who often have little choice and, also, do not have enough money to buy newspapers or access the internet.

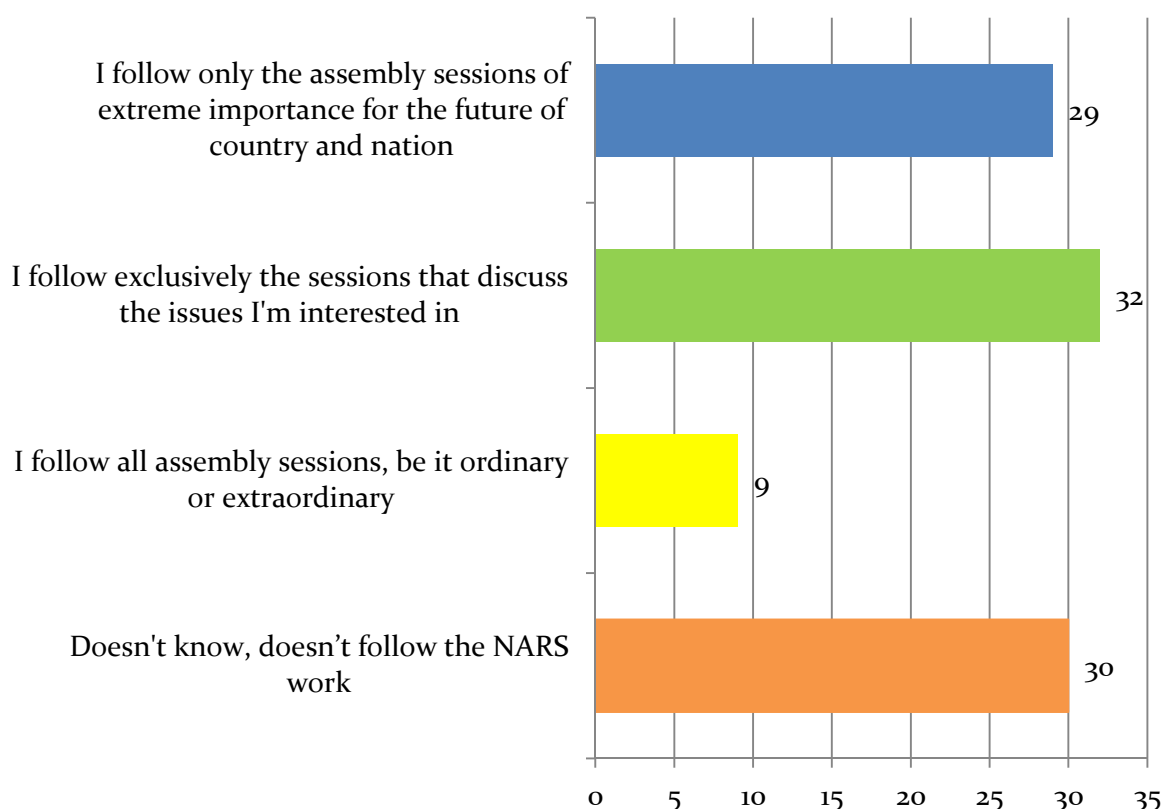
Chart 12.2.2: How are you most frequently informed about the work of the NARS (in %)



Further on in this chapter we will delve deeper into the analysis of all aspects of citizens' attitudes regarding the work of the NARS. Accordingly, we initially asked them to express the frequency of monitoring of the work of the NARS, regardless of the media type. As expected, **the largest number of respondents (almost a third) follow NARS sessions where topics of interest to them are discussed; 29% do so when there are sessions where topics of extreme importance for Serbia are concerned; one in 11 interviewees follow all sessions, regardless of the agenda.**

The youth belong, above average, to the group of interviewees who do not watch the live coverage of NARS sessions, while farmers represent the group of interviewees that follow, above average, all sessions, regardless of the agenda. Bearing in mind the fact that farmers mostly populate rural areas, following NARS sessions is often an issue of a lack of other possibilities, primarily technical possibilities (e.g. no cable operators nearby etc).

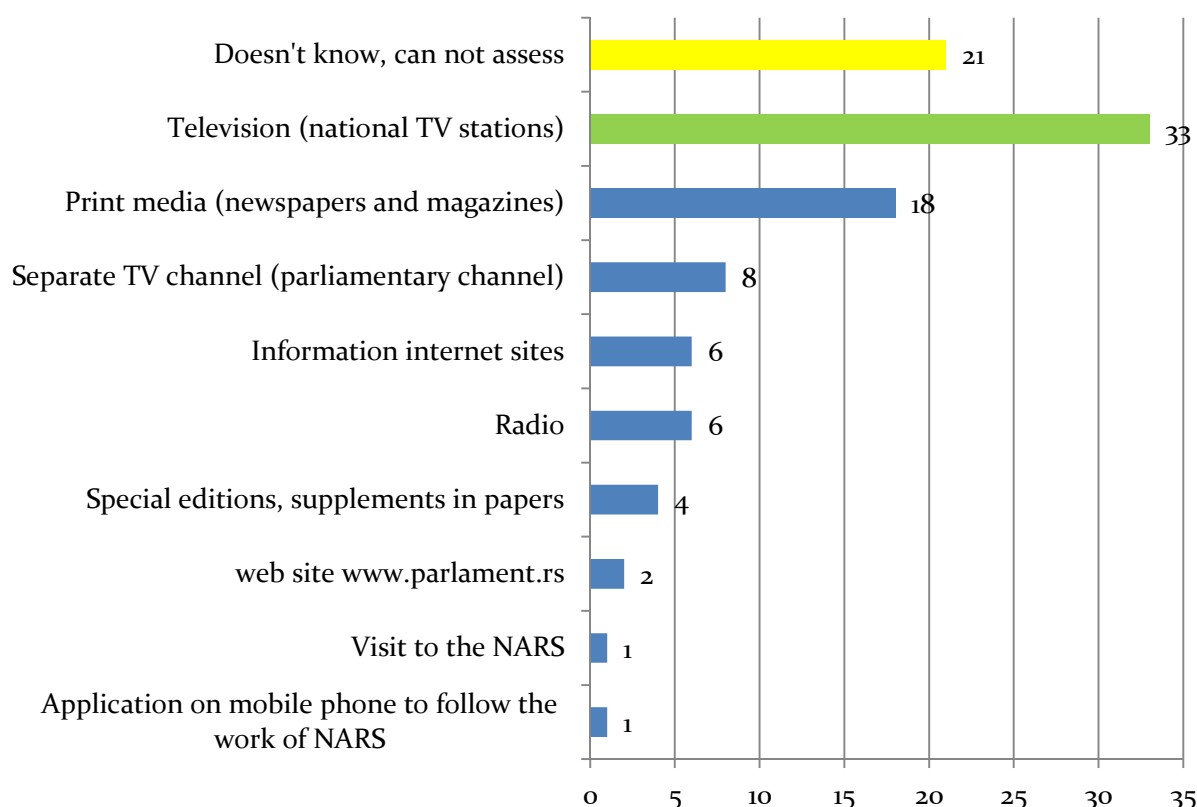
Chart 12.1.2: If you follow the work of the NARS, which of the following statements best describes the frequency of your following (in %)



We asked citizens to tell us the two ways of following the work of the NARS that would be **the most convenient** for them. Due to the fact that double answers were allowed, the results in *Chart 12.1.3* are presented in the following way: we added up all the answers and calculated the percentage from the total of number of answers provided.

There are two most important conclusions: firstly, citizens would still like TV to remain the primary source of information about the work of the NARS (a third of the population) and second, citizens believe, to a relatively large extent, that there is a need for the introduction of a separate TV channel dedicated to the NARS (8%). This is why the channel took third place as a source of information about the NARS, immediately after TV and print media, but ahead of internet portals or the official NARS website. It is precisely for this reason that we included a separate question about the introduction of an NARS channel (see *Chapter 12.2.*).

Chart 12.1.2: Please single out TWO ways you would most prefer for monitoring the work of the NARS (in %)

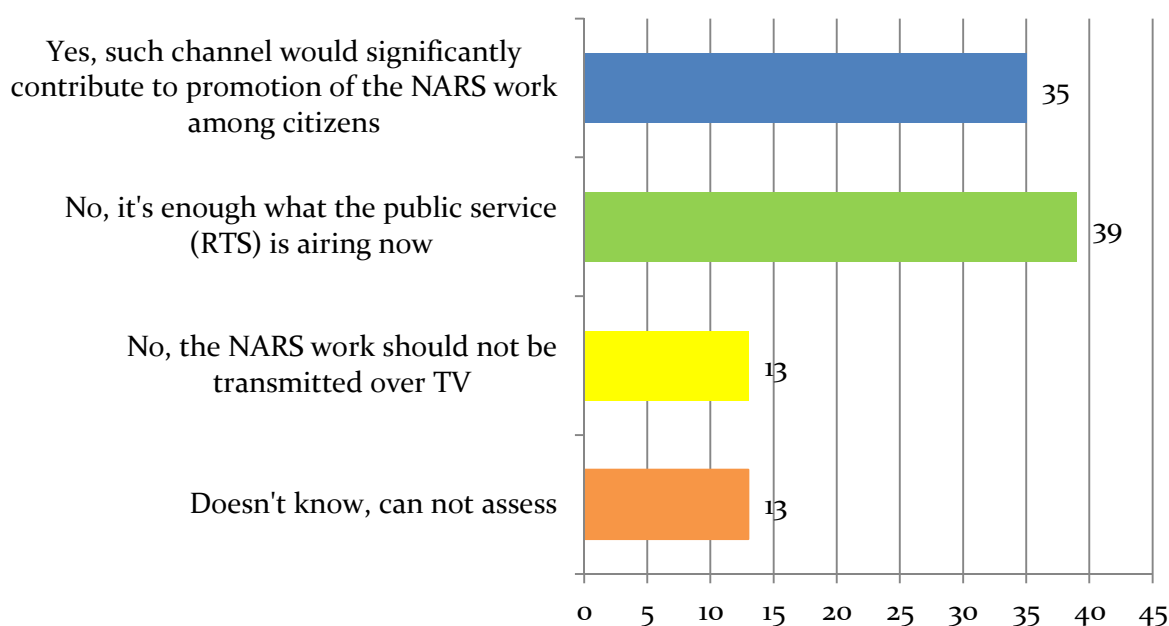


12.2. The attitude of citizens regarding the introduction of an NARS TV channel, preparation of mobile phone application and the publication of print media supplements

More than a third of interviewees are in favour of the introduction of a separate NARS TV channel, as this would significantly contribute to the promotion of the work of the NARS among citizens. Almost two fifths say that what is currently being reported by the Serbian Broadcasting Corporation (RTS) is sufficient, while 13% are of the "radical" view that the NARS sessions should not be broadcast live on TV. The result is mostly influenced by answers of the segment of the population aged between 19 and 49 and those who have medium monthly income.

This is why we conclude that there is space for considering the introduction of such a channel, provided technical and financial circumstances permit. In such a manner, the Public Service could dedicate itself to the creation of new content on its second channel.

Chart 12.2.1: Are you of the opinion that there should be a separate NARS TV channel providing Serbian citizens with complete insight into the work of MPs in the NARS (in %)

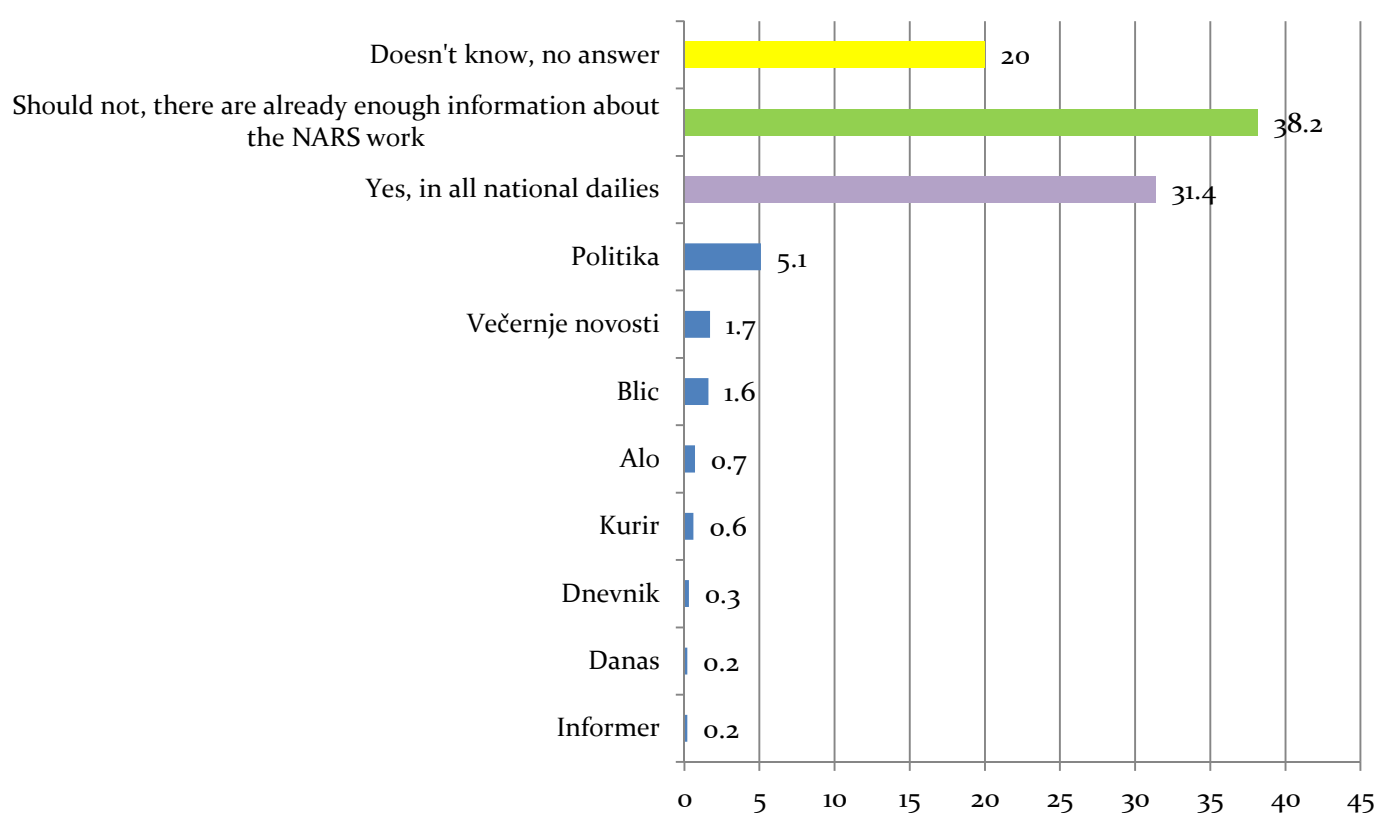


One in nine interviewees are interested in being informed about the work of the NARS via a mobile phone application that would be regularly updated. Bearing in mind the age and education structure of the sample, these findings are relatively positive and encouraging for future plans in the area of communication by the NARS.

Different institutions and organizations often communicate with the public by publishing sub-editions or supplements in the print media. The National Assembly already has its information bulletin and we were interested in discovering citizens' attitudes about publishing supplements in the media where the presentation of the work of the NARS would go into greater detail. Similar to earlier questions, a certain number of interviewees do not know or have no views - in this case a fifth of the surveyed population. The number of those who believe this would be a good move and those who claim that there is already enough information about the work of the NARS is fairly equal. **Slightly over two fifths (42%) say there's space for publishing of such a supplement/sub-edition; 31% say that it should exist in all national media; 11% named a specific media outlet.** Among the specific media outlets, only the daily *Politika* stood out, with 5% of interviewees saying it should publish a supplement within the newspaper. The newspaper is named, above average, by school pupils/students and interviewees with higher vocational training, as well as clerks and experts.

In general, interviewees with higher income and young people over the age of 19 would prefer the supplement or sub-edition about the work of the NARS to be published in all national media. On the other hand, 38% of interviewees said there is currently sufficient information available about the work of the NARS.

Chart 12.2.2: Do you think that, apart from the regular information bulletin published by the NARS, its work should be available to citizens through the publication of sub-editions/supplements in the print media (in %)



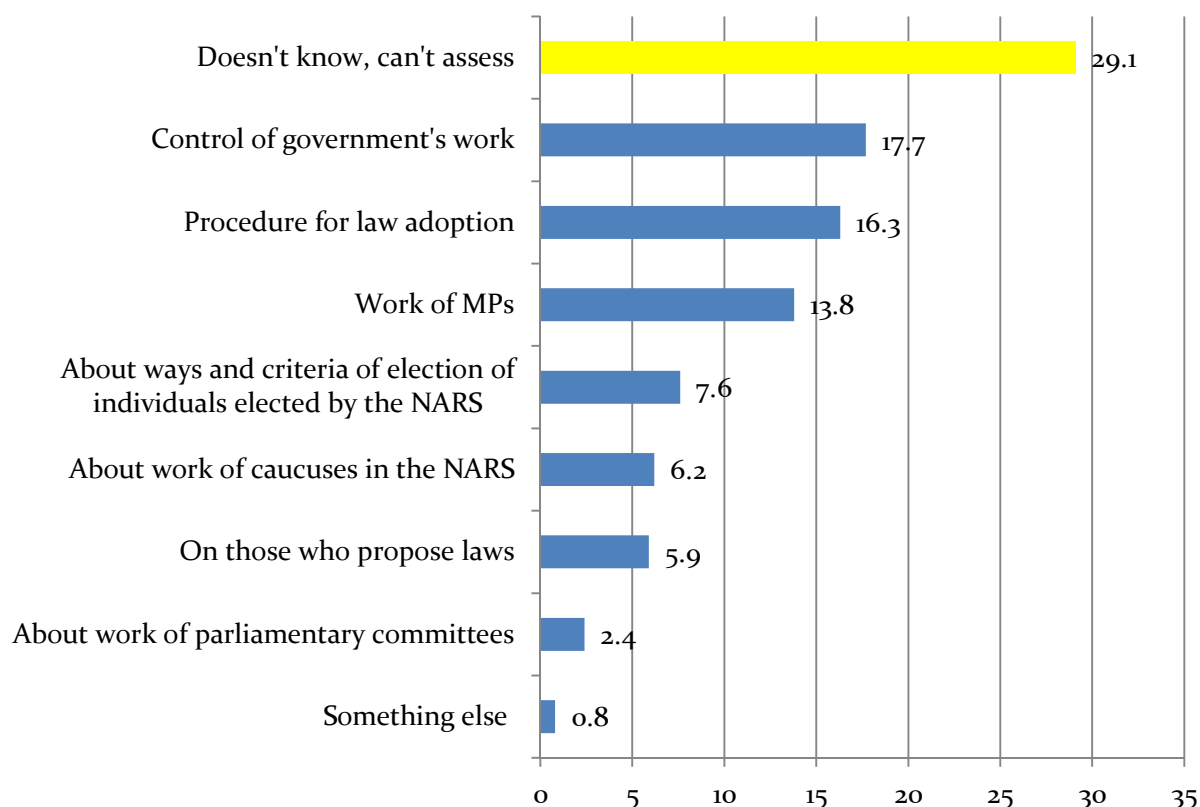
12.3. Areas of the work of the NARS citizens would like to know more about

What areas of the work of the NARS would citizens like to know more about? First, more than a quarter of interviewees (29%) cannot assess or has no view on the issue. **Of those who named a certain area, three stood out: control of the work of the Government of Serbia (17.7%), procedures for adopting legislation (16.3%) and the work of MPs (13.8%).**

As presented, citizens are very interested in seeing the NARS perform its control function, with almost one in five citizens naming it as an area they would like to know more about. Such

distribution of answers was influenced, above average, by interviewees with secondary school diploma, aged between 40 and 59, with average income.

Chart 12.3.1: What areas of the work of the NARS would you like to know more about? (in %)

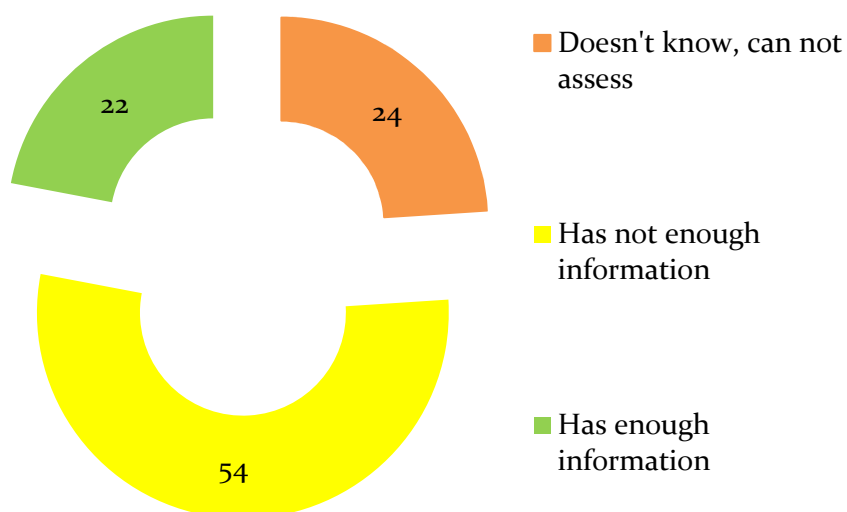


12.4. Information on MPs' work

We asked citizens to tell us if they had enough information about the work of MPs (not the NARS as an institution). **More than half of the surveyed population said they had insufficient information on the work of assembly members (54%); 22% said they had enough information, while 24% of interviewees have no opinion on the matter.**

If we compare this to the similar question at the level of NARS as an institution, we see a **slightly higher number of those who lack information about MPs in comparison to the Assembly as an institution.** These findings should be taken into consideration with potential planning of a communication strategy, as this is the manner to improve the transparency of MPs' work and indirectly increase trust in them.

Chart 12.4.1: Do you believe you have enough information on the work of MPs in the NARS? (in %)



13. Media reporting on the National Assembly

Media report on the work of National Assembly and its members on an almost daily basis. In order to obtain a complete picture about the citizens' evaluation of media reporting on the NARS, we compared the institution to other important state institutions and officials. The results are presented in *Table 13.1*.

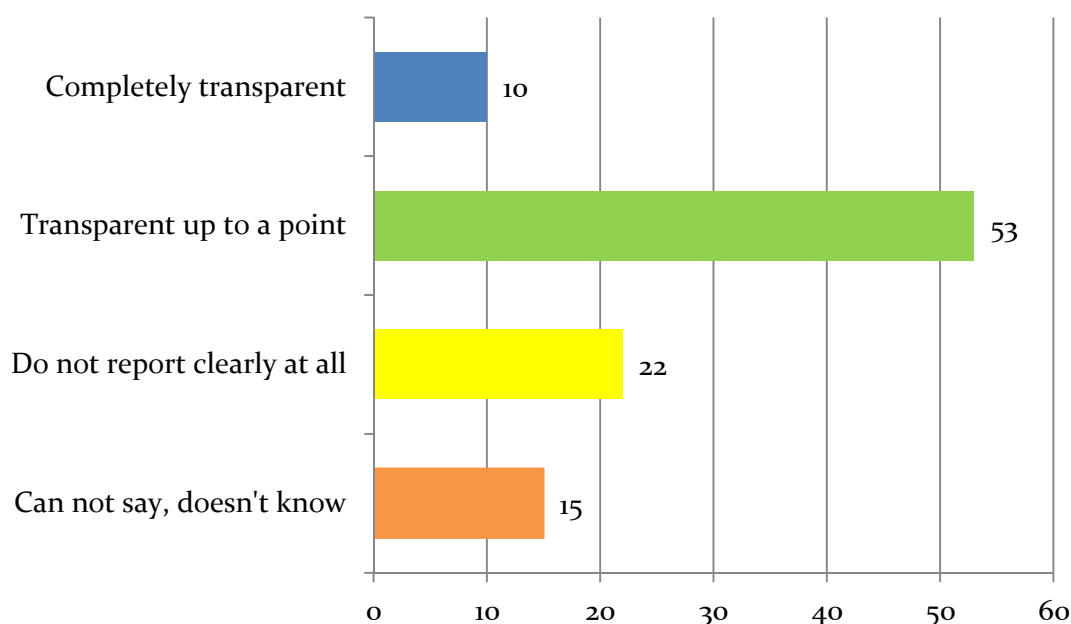
There are three groups of main conclusions regarding media relations towards the NARS. First, there is a relatively equal number of undecided and those without a view on named institutions/officials, between 16% and 22% (as well as for the current President/Speaker of the NARS). This suggests that there is a relatively constant number of interviewees who don't know or do not follow the work of most important political institutions. Second, **citizens believe that media report on MPs in more negative/worse manner in comparison to other institutions/officials - this is the view of 12% of interviewees. The third group of conclusions deals with assessments of citizens that media report more positively about the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and the President (40% and 38%) in comparison to other institutions/officials.** This result could be interpreted by the fact that these are the institutions recognised by the majority of citizens, led by the most prominent political personalities in Serbia.

Table 13.1: Media reporting on state institutions and officials (in %)

	Doesn't know, doesn't follow	Negative, worse than about others	Neutral, same as with others	Positive, better than about the others	Total
President of the Republic of Serbia	16	7	39	38	100
Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia	16	6	38	40	100
National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia	18	7	47	28	100
Government of the Republic of Serbia	17	6	44	33	100
President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia	22	7	43	28	100
Deputies	20	12	44	24	100

If one is to judge on the basis of the results of this research, citizens are not satisfied with the transparency of media when they report on the work of the NARS. Only 10% of interviewees say that media report on the work of the NARS completely clearly, as opposed to 23% who believe the complete opposite view and another 53% who say that the media are transparent to a certain extent in reporting about the work of the NARS.

Chart 13.1: Do you believe that media report on the work of the NARS with enough clarity? (in %)



At the same time, citizens say that the MPs themselves are not sufficiently open to the public when communicating via the media. A total of 23% of interviewees say they are open in communication with the public, while the opposite view is expressed by more than a third of the surveyed population (36%).

Chart 13.2: Are representatives of the National Assembly sufficiently open to the public when communicating with the public via the media? (in %)

