

# TNS Medium Gallup Attitudes towards the Impact of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Serbia's Municipalities

August 2017



# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Background Information</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Survey Results</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1. Living Standards in Municipalities	7
3.2. Attitudes towards Migrants in General	8
3.3. Local Self-government Effectiveness in Responding to the Migrant Crisis	13
3.4. Migrant Crisis Effects on the Functioning of Municipalities	15
3.5. What Kind of Help Should Migrants Receive?	19
3.6. International Aid Programs	21
3.7. Social Distance and Citizens' Attitude	22
<b>4. Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>5. Methodology</b>	<b>27</b>

# 1. Introduction

As part of the project entitled *Strengthening Coordination and Municipal Response to the Migrant Crisis*<sup>1</sup>, TNS Medium Gallup, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), conducted the third round of the survey of citizens' attitudes towards the impact of the migrant crisis on municipalities in Serbia. The objective of the survey was to identify the needs of local self-governments and communities most heavily exposed to the impact of the migrant crisis, in order for different donor support programs for the Republic of Serbia to take into account the local priorities for facing the crisis.

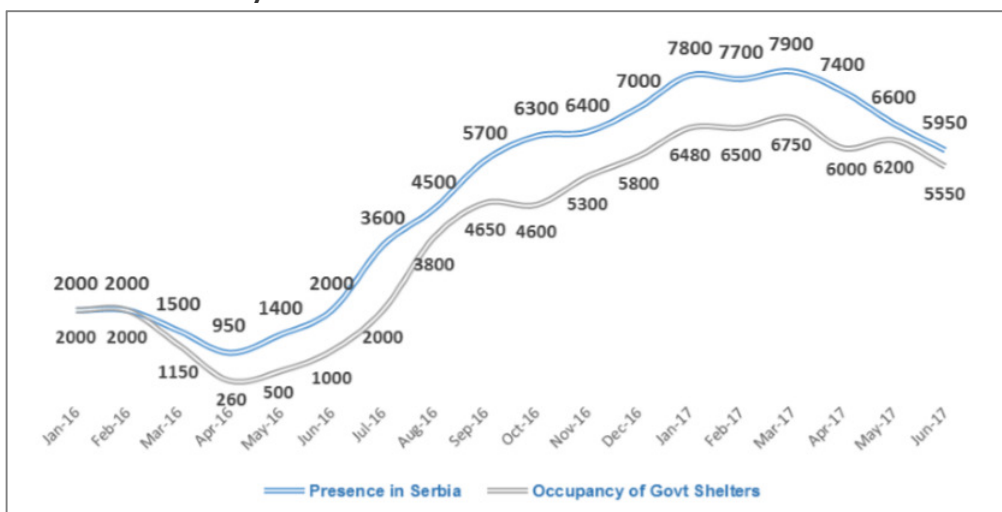
The survey was carried out in the territory of 19 municipalities in August 2017: Palilula, Savski venac, Obrenovac, Sombor, Subotica, Preševo, Šid, Loznica, Pirot, Kikinda, Vranje, Bujanovac, Sjenica, Lajkovac, Bela Palanka, Bosilegrad, Tutin, Kanjiža, Dimitrovgrad.

The municipalities of Loznica, Kikinda, Sjenica, Tutin, Lajkovac and Bela Palanka took part in the survey for the first time. On the other hand, the municipalities of Negotin, Zaječar, Surdulica, Vladičin Han, Smederevo and Aleksinac were not surveyed in this round, whereas they were included in the sample for the previous two surveys<sup>2</sup>.

In these municipalities, public opinion on the migrant crisis was surveyed, in order to determine the

citizens' perception and attitudes towards migrants, as well as perceptions regarding the resolution of the attendant problems and the response to the migrant crisis at the local level. A quantitative survey was conducted, by using the method of face-to-face interviews, on a representative random sample comprising around 800 adult citizens in the above-mentioned municipalities per round of survey. The third round of the survey was carried out in July-August 2017, whereas the previous two were carried out during the spring (February-March) and autumn (September-October) of 2016.

**Figure 1 – UNHCR, “Desperate Journeys” January-June 2017: number of migrants in Serbia from January 2016 to June 2017<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> The term “migrants” is used in a broader sense, and includes “refugees”, “migrants” and “asylum seekers”.

<sup>2</sup> Due to the differences regarding the municipalities that were surveyed in 2017 and in 2016, comparisons between rounds are tentative and have to be taken with reservations.

## 2. Background Information

The migrant crisis in Europe began in 2015, when a massive influx of migrants and refugees seeking asylum in the European Union took place. Most migrants travelling across the Mediterranean Sea and Southeast Europe were people from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. In the first half of 2017, over 105,000 refugees and migrants entered the territory of Europe, while over 2,290 people lost their lives on that journey<sup>3</sup>.

After more than two years, the steady and dramatic increase in the number of refugees has attracted criticism from the general European public, caused by the heavy burden on state budgets and a deteriorating security situation. According to the Eurobarometer survey<sup>4</sup>, in the spring of 2017 unemployment (29%) and migration (22%) were the most important problems faced by the European Union. In Serbia, the unemployment problem is even more pronounced (49%), while 8% of its citizens see migration as a problem.

From the beginning of the migrant crisis to mid-2017, according to UNHCR, Serbia provided assistance to roughly one million refugees, mostly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan<sup>5</sup>.

**Figure 2 – UNHCR, “Desperate Journeys” January-June 2017: a map presenting the Western Balkan route<sup>3</sup>**



Compared to the situation in 2015, when refugees and migrants were just transiting, in the course of 2016 and 2017 the situation has changed because they stay longer in Serbia. As a result, in addition to five permanent asylum centres (Krnjača, Banja Koviljača, Bogovađa, Sjenica and Tutin), since the beginning of

<sup>3</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/58838>

<sup>4</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2142>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unhcr.rs/en/dokumenti/saopstenja-za-mediije/unhcr-podrzavamo-izbeglice.html>

the increased influx of migrants quite a few new facilities have been opened: in Preševo, Bujanovac, Pirot, Bosilegrad, Dimitrovgrad, Kikinda, Šid, Sombor, Subotica, Bela Palanka, Vranje. By opening new transit and reception centres, capacities have been increased for accepting migrants and providing care to them while they are in the Republic of Serbia. According to a UNHCR report, by 25 August 2017 the total number of new refugees, asylum seekers and migrants had dropped to 4,200 people, accommodated in 18 government-run reception centres<sup>6</sup>.

In mid-2017, the municipalities of Preševo, Šid and Sombor were under the strongest pressure from the migrant crisis in Serbia, but other municipalities also faced many challenges in responding to the mass influx of migrants. In this round, the survey was conducted in 19 municipalities in Serbia. The analysis was made in relation to two groups of municipalities, with a view to assessing the current situation, the capacities and needs of the municipal administrations, and to identifying the greatest challenges when it comes to responding to the migrant crisis:

1. The municipalities intensely affected by the migrant crisis: Palilula, Obrenovac, Subotica, Sombor, Savski venac, Šid, Preševo.
2. The municipalities moderately affected by the migrant crisis: Loznica, Pirot, Kikinda, Vranje, Bujanovac, Sjenica, Lajkovac, Bosilegrad, Tutin, Kanjiža, Dimitrovgrad.

**Figure 3 – A map presenting the municipalities included in the sample (the red signs mark the municipalities severely affected by the crisis, orange and yellow signs mark the municipalities moderately affected by the crisis**



<sup>6</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/58187>

Also important for understanding the background and situation in Serbia, proceeding from the rightsizing of the public administration in late 2014 and a decree putting a ban on employment in the public sector, is the opening of the first chapters in the negotiations for Serbia's accession to the European Union in late 2015, as well as the opening of new chapters in early 2017.

Regarding the response to the migrant crisis, in February 2016 an agreement was reached between Serbia, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to profile and register refugees on the border between FYR Macedonia and Greece, together with a number of additional activities geared towards managing the situation.

In the meantime, the agreement between the European Union and Turkey on putting an end to the Western Balkan route for irregular migrations and on providing assistance to Greece in order to contain the further inflow of migrants<sup>7</sup> was confirmed in late March 2016. Despite the closure of the "Balkan route", the number of migrants has not been reduced.

In September 2016, the New York Declaration was adopted, expressing the political will of world leaders to protect the lives of people and their rights (of all migrants, regardless of their status, access to education for all migrant children, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, condemnation of xenophobia, etc.), and providing for a division of responsibilities at the global level. The New York Declaration invites all countries to protect the human rights of refugees and migrants, to provide reception, accommodation, better education and jobs for refugees. It also includes plans to combat xenophobia. The New York Declaration recognizes the specific needs of local communities that initially accept migrants. It also encourages providing support and safety assurance, not only in refugee centres and camps, but also at the local level<sup>8</sup>.

Also, pursuant to the Regulation of the European Commission, in October 2016 a new agency for the protection of borders started to operate, which has replaced the current Frontex and will have more people and equipment at its disposal, and the capacity for rapid intervention<sup>9</sup>. The task of the new agency will be to help the countries that are under the greatest pressure in case of mass migrant influxes, and to monitor the situation at the EU's external borders.

In April 2017, the presidential election was held in Serbia, while at end of June the new Prime Minister of Serbia was appointed. According to the decision of the Government of Serbia, the Chairman of the Working Group for solving the issue of migration flows was re-elected, providing continuity in monitoring and proposing measures for managing the migrant crisis.

---

<sup>7</sup> According to [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-16-963\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-963_en.htm)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/28035441.html>

### 3. Survey Results

#### 3.1. Living Standards in Municipalities

During the summer of 2017, the views of citizens in municipalities in Serbia about their standard of living were split, with 47% of them stating that the current living standards of their families were mostly or very low, while 45% stated that they were good. Older respondents, those with lower education levels and lower income per household member, from rural areas, are more dissatisfied, while younger, better educated respondents with regular and higher income are more satisfied, as well as citizens in Belgrade and central-western Serbia.

**Graph 1 - The most urgent problems in their municipality according to the citizens' opinion**



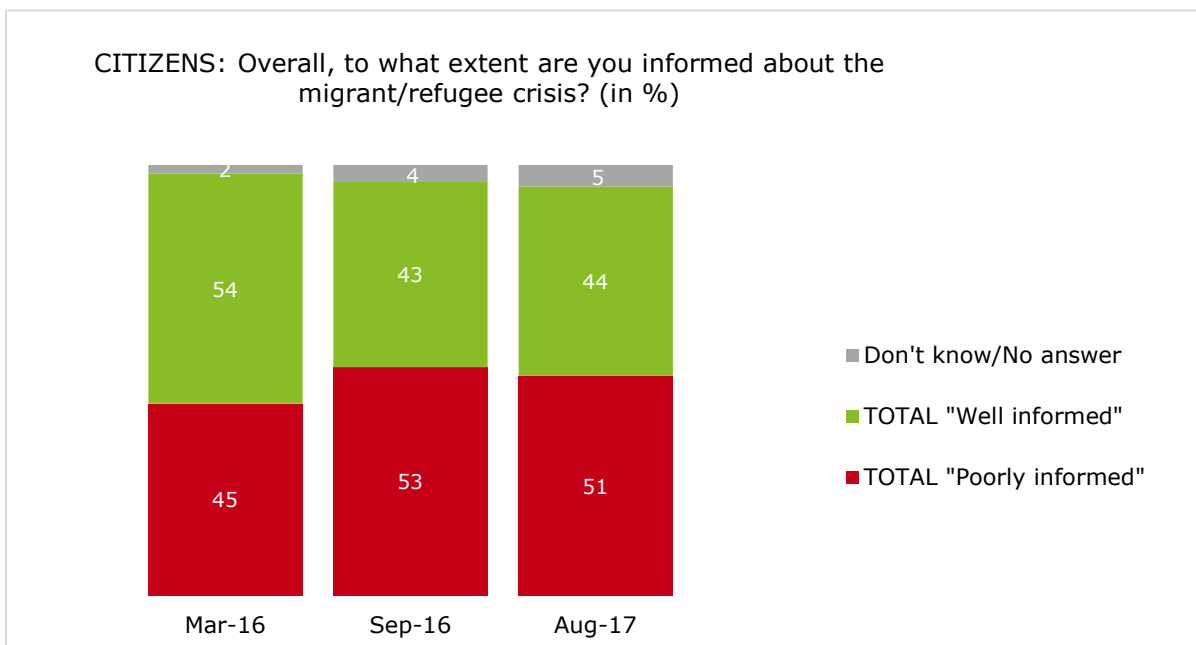
The majority of citizens believe that unemployment and the poor standard of living are the main problems faced by the municipalities in which they live. In the summer of 2017, two thirds of the respondents in municipalities indicated unemployment and a low standard of living as the biggest problems. Among the first-mentioned answers, in this round of the survey, migrants are the biggest/most urgent problem

according to the opinion of 8% of the respondents (against 4.7% in the autumn of 2016), while the percentage goes up to 21% when all the given answers are taken into consideration.

### 3.2. Attitudes towards Migrants in General

In August 2017, citizens said that they were poorly informed about the migrant crisis (44% of them said they were very or mostly well informed, comparable to 43% in September 2016), while 51% said they were poorly informed.

**Graph 2 – Citizens' awareness of the migrant crisis**



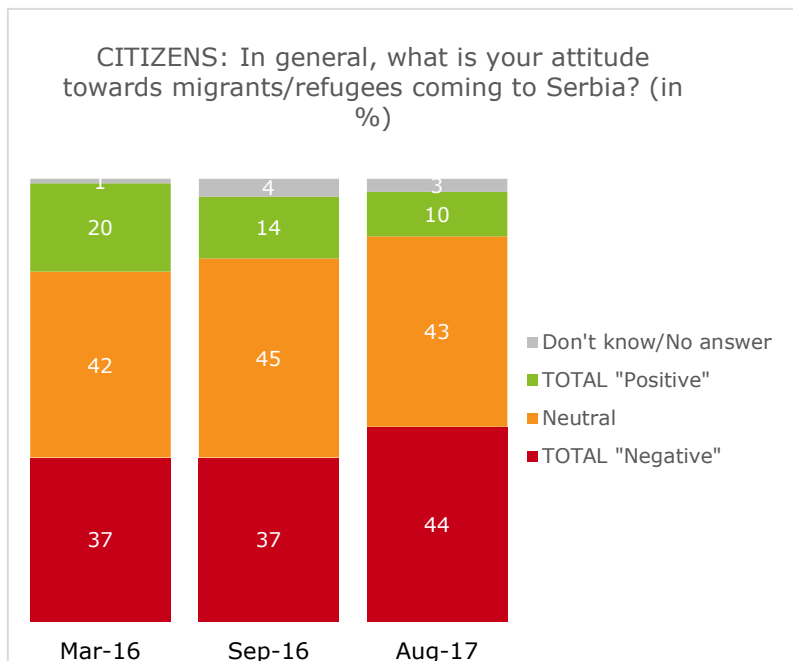
**Table 1 - Citizens' awareness of the migrant crisis**

CITIZENS: Overall, to what extent are you informed about the migrant/refugee crisis? (in %) August 2017	CITIZENS: Overall, to what extent are you informed about the migrant/refugee crisis? (in %) August 2017		
	Total	1st group of municipalities – intensely affected by the crisis	2nd group of municipalities – moderately affected by the crisis
<b>N</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>357</b>
Very poorly informed	12.9	14.3	11.0
Mostly poorly informed	38.1	44.4	29.7
Mostly well informed	41.0	33.0	51.4
Very well informed	3.2	3.1	3.3
Do not know/No answer	4.9	5.1	4.6

In the municipalities more intensely affected by the crisis, the level of information on the part of citizens is lower than in the municipalities that are moderately affected. Also, at the general level, women stated that they were less informed about the crisis than men, which is consistent with the greater reluctance of women concerning the majority of questions about migration, compared to the male population (a higher percentage of "don't know/no answer"). Those with lower education also report that they are less informed in comparison with the more educated population segments, as do citizens from central-western Serbia relative to other regions.



**Graph 3 – Trends of negative citizens' attitudes towards migrants**



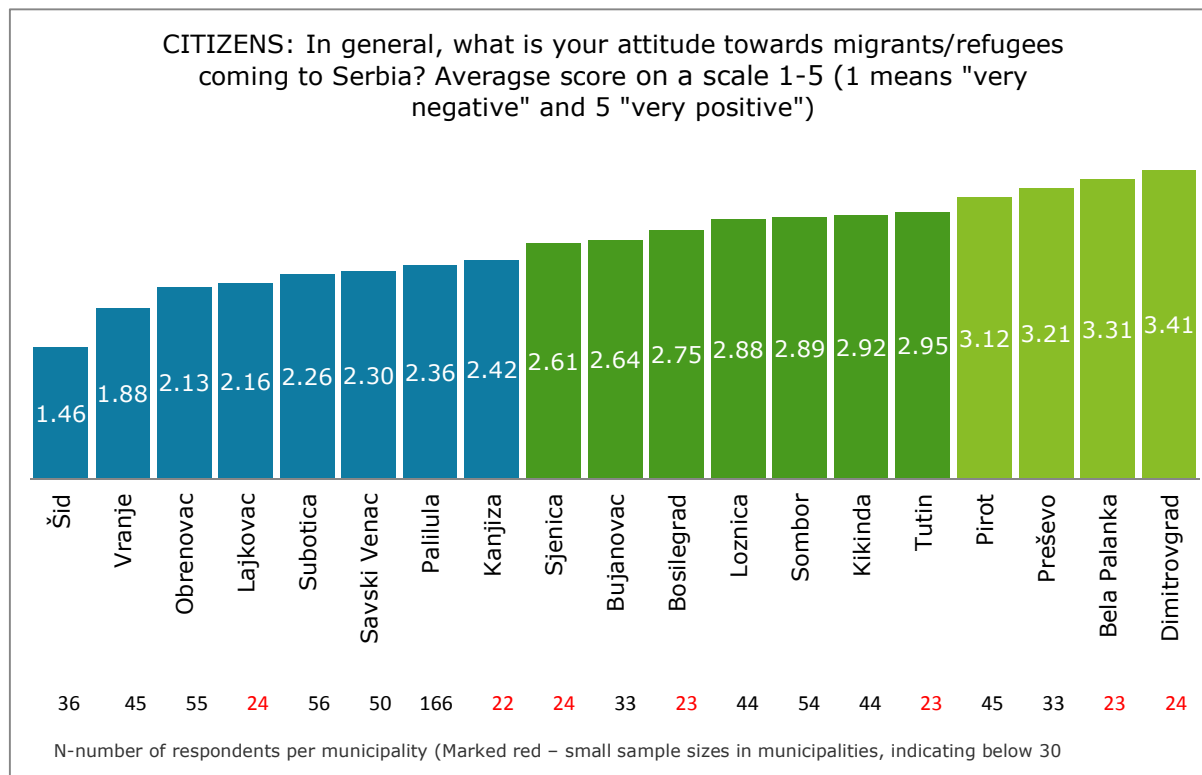
The opinions of the surveyed citizens were divided in August 2017, when 44% of them had a negative opinion, while 43% had neutral attitudes towards migrants. The percentage of citizens holding a positive opinion is lower, and in this round, 10% of the respondents reported a positive opinion (compared to 14% in the autumn of 2016). Citizens with lower and secondary levels of education, as well as those above the age of 55, have a more negative opinion. The same applies to citizens in Belgrade and in Vojvodina.

Negative views of migrants among citizens are on the rise in proportion to the impact of the migrant crisis on the municipalities. The total index of attitudes towards migrants is negative, and stands at -35 (after deducting the percentage of the total of positive attitudes from the total of negative ones), while in the municipalities strongly affected by the crisis negative attitudes are significantly more prevalent, and the index is -48. On the other hand, in the municipalities moderately affected by the crisis the index is -17, and the attitudes of the citizens are more moderate.

**Table 2 - Citizens' attitudes towards migrants**

All expressed in % In general, what is your attitude towards migrants/refugees coming to Serbia? August 2017	N							Sum negative (Very + Mostly negative)	Neutral	Sum positive (Highly + Mostly positive)	Index (positive - negative)
		--	-	/	+	++	DK/NA				
Total	824	13.5	30.9	43.0	9.4	0.1	3.0	44.5	43.0	9.5	-35.0
1st group of municipalities - intensely affected by the crisis	467	16.0	36.4	39.4	4.1	0.0	4.0	52.4	39.4	4.1	-48.3
2nd group of municipalities - moderately affected by the crisis	357	10.3	23.8	47.7	16.3	0.3	1.7	34.0	47.7	16.6	-17.4

**Graph 4 – Average score of citizens’ attitudes towards migrants in municipalities**



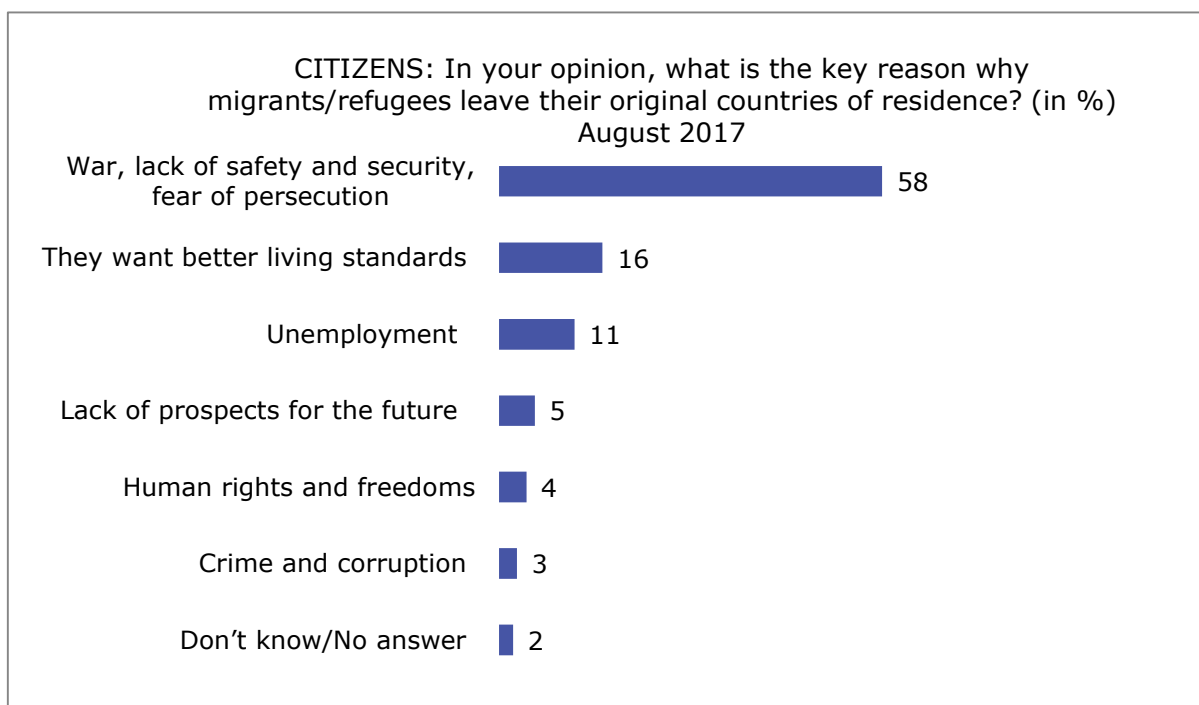
The average score of citizens' attitudes towards migrants coming to Serbia in the surveyed municipalities is 2.5 on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "very negative" and 5 "very positive". Taking into consideration the small sample size in the municipalities surveyed, the average scores of citizens' attitudes towards migrants show that the citizens of Šid and Vranje have the most negative opinion, while the citizens of Dimitrovgrad, Bela Palanka, Preševo and Pirot are more positive towards migrants (with an average score of above 3).

The level of information on the part of citizens about the migrant crisis strongly correlates with the citizens' opinions about migrants. The better informed the citizens are, the more positive their opinion on migrants is, while less informed individuals are more likely to have a negative or neutral opinion of migrants.

**Table 3 - Opinion of migrants and level of information on the migrant crisis**

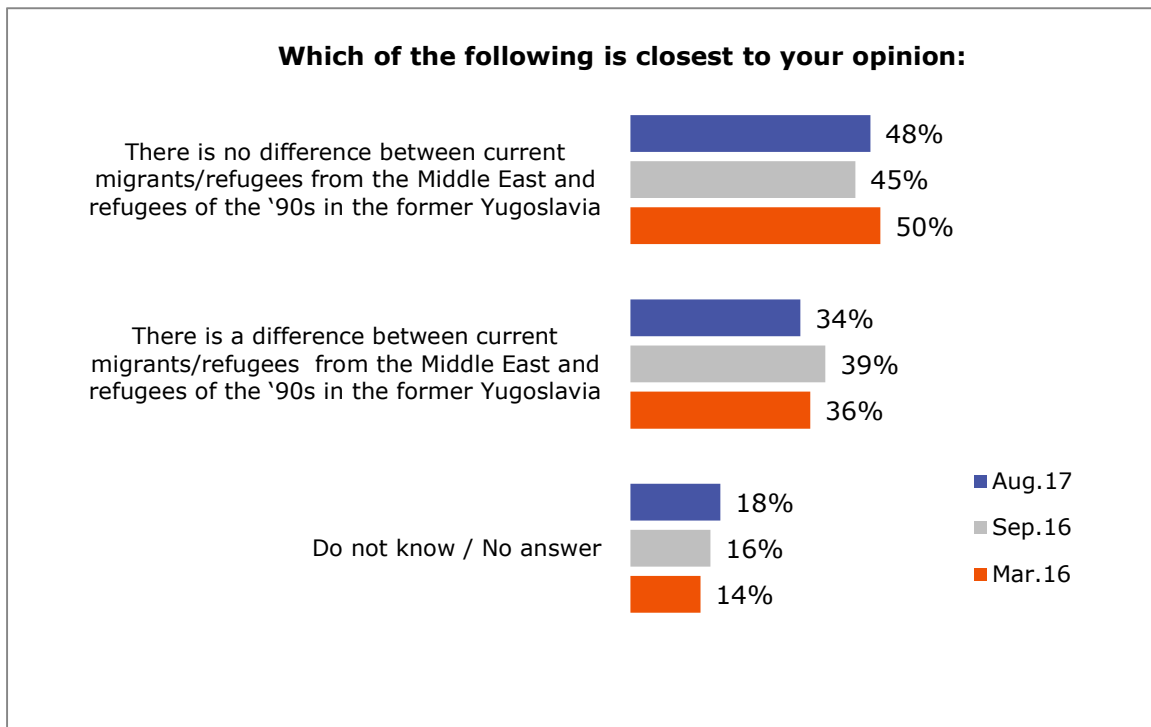
All expressed in %		
Attitude to migrants/Level of information August 2017	Poorly informed (very + mostly poorly)	Well informed (very + mostly well)
Negative opinion of migrants (very + mostly negative)	49.7	40.2
Neutral opinion of migrants	42.4	42.1
Positive opinion of migrants (highly + mostly positive)	3.9	16.5
Do not know/No answer	4.0	1.1

**Graph 5 – Citizens’ understanding of the reasons for migration**



Although the majority of citizens believe that migrants are leaving their countries because of wars and lack of safety in these areas (58%), socio-economic reasons are cited as the next reason – 16% of the respondents think that migrants are leaving their countries in pursuit of a better standard of living or due to a lack of jobs (11%). In addition to these reasons, citizens also say that migrants are motivated by a lack of prospects for the future (5%) and a lack of respect for human rights and freedoms (4%) in the countries of origin.

**Graph 6 – Citizens on the differences between the current migrants/refugees from the Middle East and refugees of the '90s in the former Yugoslavia**



The level of identification of migrants/refugees from the Middle East with refugees of the '90s in the former Yugoslavia is similar in August 2017 compared to September 2016.

The respondents who believe that there are differences cite different culture, origin and religion as the main differences, while suspicions exist that migrants/refugees from the Middle East are not fleeing the war, as was the case with the refugees of the '90s, but for economic reasons.

### 3.3. Local Self-government Effectiveness in Responding to the Migrant Crisis

Citizens have divided opinions on the fluctuations in the number of migrants in their municipality – about a third of them think that the number of migrants has fallen, has increased and has remained the same over the past six months. Nevertheless, in the municipalities that are more intensely exposed to the migrant crisis, citizens perceive a decline in the number of refugees significantly more often.

**Table 4 – Citizens on the number of migrants**

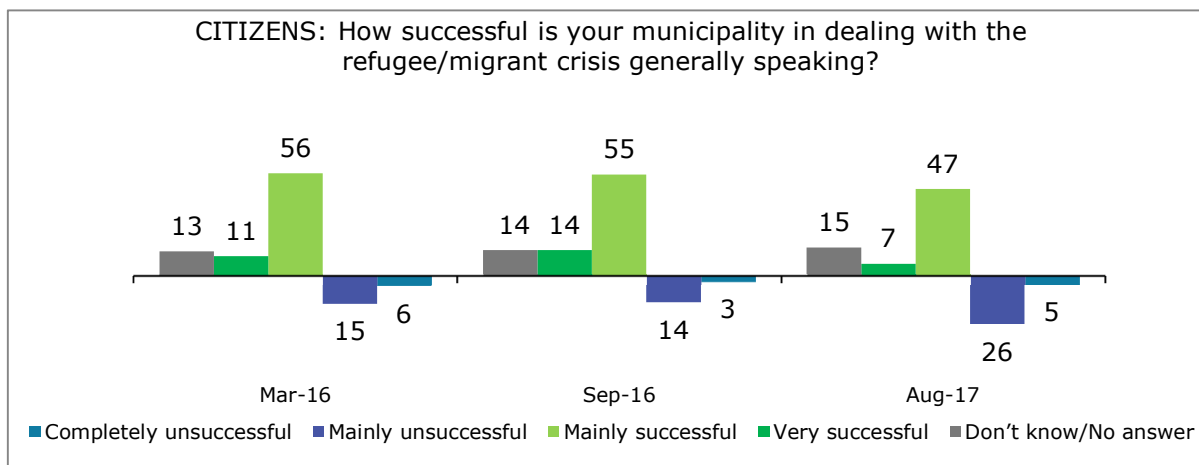
Based on your perception, has the number of migrants/refugees in your municipality gone up, dropped or remained the same in the past six months? (in %) August 2017	Total	1st group of municipalities – intensely affected by the crisis	2nd group of municipalities – moderately affected by the crisis
<b>N</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>357</b>
It has gone up.	29.0	27.6	30.9
It has remained the same.	31.7	30.3	33.5
It has dropped.	28.8	37.5	17.4
Do not know/No answer.	10.5	4.6	18.1

Also, the majority of citizens in these municipalities believe that the migrant crisis has not adversely affected the normal functioning of the municipalities and the provision of standard services to citizens.

**Table 5 – Citizens on the functioning of their municipality/town**

In general, to what extent has the migrant/refugee crisis affected the regular (normal) functioning of your municipality/town? August 2017	Total	1st group of municipalities – intensely affected by the crisis	2nd group of municipalities – moderately affected by the crisis
<b>N</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>357</b>
It has had no effect, everything has been functioning as usual.	40.6	32.1	51.8
It has had an adverse effect on the normal functioning/provision of standard services to citizens.	28.4	29.5	27.0
It has caused problems with the delivery of services to migrants/refugees, but has not had an adverse effect on the normal functioning/provision of standard services to citizens.	22.4	32.6	9.0
Don't know/No answer.	8.6	5.8	12.2

**Graph 7 – Citizens on how their municipality is dealing with the crisis**



About half of those surveyed in August 2017 are satisfied with the way in which their municipality is coping with the refugee crisis (54%), that is, they are of the opinion that it does not have a significant impact on the normal daily functioning of their municipality or town. Satisfaction in the municipalities surveyed in this round is, nevertheless, significantly lower than in the previous rounds (69% satisfied respondents in September 2016). As many as a third of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the municipality's activities in August 2017.

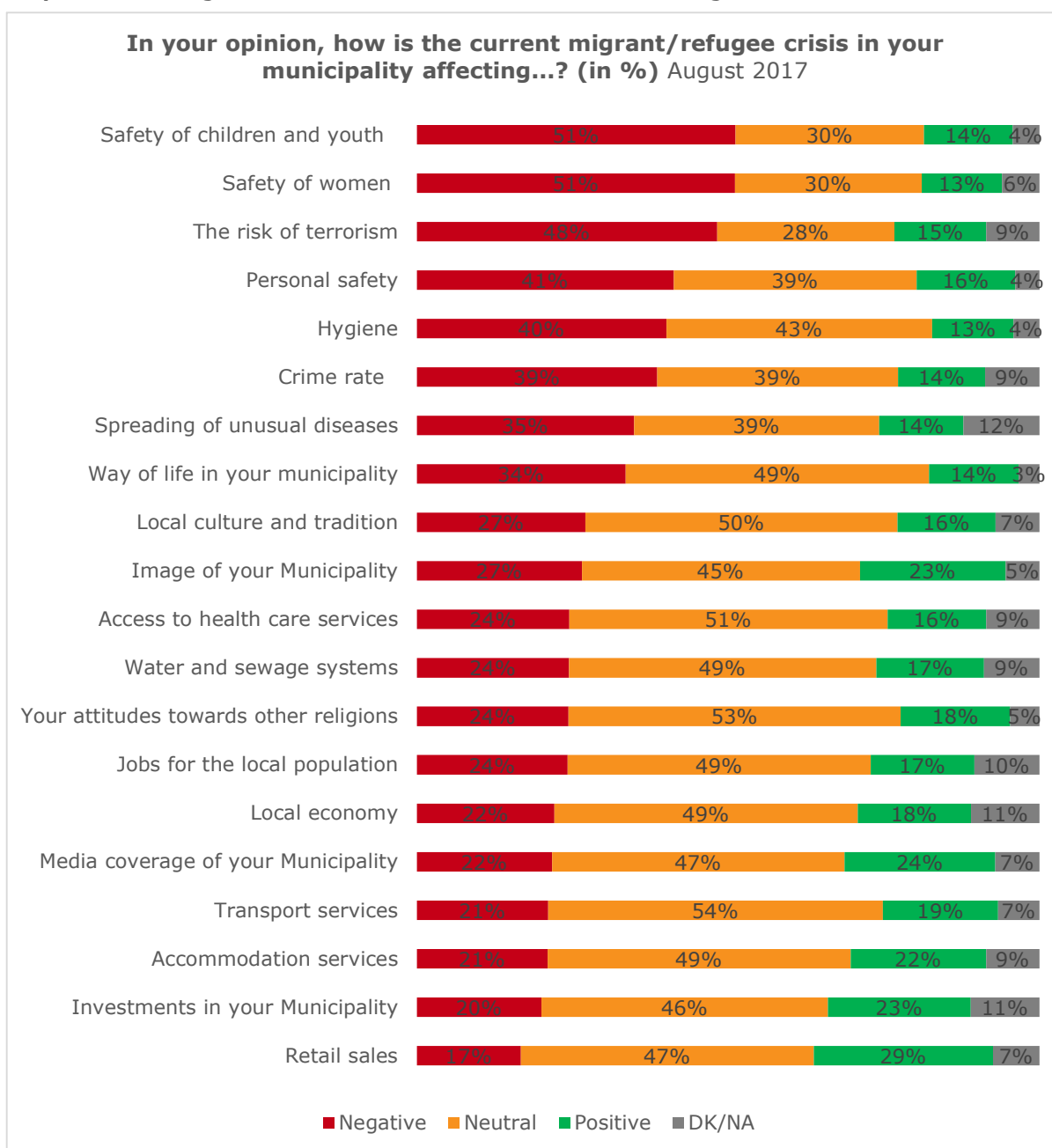
The respondents most dissatisfied with their municipality's activities are those in the municipalities intensely affected by the crisis, especially in Belgrade, followed by Vojvodina.

### 3.4. Migrant Crisis Effects on the Functioning of Municipalities

The general impression of the citizens is that the crisis has had more negative than positive impacts on their municipality. Citizens are concerned the most about the safety of children, young people and women; they are worried about terrorism and their personal safety. They also believe that hygiene is compromised, and they are consequently worried about the possibility of outbreaks and spreading of unusual diseases.

Despite the fact that in August 2017 negative assessments prevailed, similarly to the results in 2016, citizens see the positive sides of the migrant crisis when it comes to retail sales, media coverage of their municipality and its image. However, the percentage of citizens who have given a neutral response to the question about the impact of the crisis is still high, which may indicate ambivalence or lack of information needed to draw conclusions.

**Graph 8 – Challenges and benefits for citizens related to the migrant crisis**



All the negative impacts of the migrant crisis, as well as the positive ones, are more frequently identified in the municipalities that are strongly affected by the crisis, as opposed to those which are moderately affected and where the statement that no significant changes have occurred under the influence of the crisis is most frequently mentioned.

**Table 6 – Citizens of the municipalities intensely affected by the crisis on challenges related to the migrant crisis**

<b>1st group of municipalities – intensely affected by the crisis</b> In your opinion, how is the current migrant/refugee crisis in your municipality affecting...? the mean value (average score on a scale 1-5, 1 means "very negative", and 5 "very positive")	Total – all municipalities	Obrenovac	Paliuła	Savski Venac	Preševo	Sombor	Subotica	Šid
1. the image of your municipality	2,99	2,77	2,56	2,26	3,84	3,20	3,08	1,47
2. water and sewage use	2,91	2,62	2,56	2,18	3,18	3,00	3,02	2,93
3. the crime rate	2,65	2,53	2,33	2,01	3,33	2,59	2,98	1,20
4. the local economy	2,96	2,67	2,59	2,33	3,76	2,96	3,03	1,38
5. the possibility for local people to find jobs	2,92	2,53	2,62	2,04	3,44	3,00	3,00	2,31
6. your personal safety	2,66	2,62	2,26	2,05	3,29	2,58	2,65	1,27
7. the safety of women	2,43	2,57	2,17	1,82	3,04	2,27	2,17	1,03
8. the safety of children and youth	2,47	2,37	2,14	1,91	3,34	2,26	2,26	1,11
9. hygiene	2,56	2,81	2,17	1,78	3,10	2,68	3,02	1,05
10. spreading of unusual diseases	2,69	2,58	2,37	2,20	3,50	2,73	3,00	1,42
11. the way of life in your municipality	2,78	2,52	2,51	2,35	3,31	2,98	2,97	1,45
12. the local culture and tradition	2,90	2,63	2,52	2,48	3,14	2,91	2,98	2,28
13. your attitudes towards other religions	2,97	2,48	2,69	2,51	3,36	3,00	2,98	2,45
14. the risk of terrorism	2,51	2,52	2,22	1,98	3,48	2,37	2,01	1,17
15. transport services	3,03	2,40	2,64	3,14	3,80	3,08	2,98	2,35
16. accommodation services	3,05	2,63	2,58	2,93	3,67	3,08	3,00	2,63
17. retail sales	3,18	2,67	2,75	2,34	3,75	3,30	3,04	3,28
18. the media coverage of your municipality	3,07	2,41	2,64	2,47	3,66	3,36	3,13	2,85
19. investments in your municipality	3,07	2,92	2,74	2,94	3,70	3,19	3,00	1,33
20. access to health care services	2,93	2,55	2,57	2,83	3,22	2,99	3,00	2,98
N – number of respondents	824	55	166	50	33	54	56	36

\* Small sample size in municipalities marked red, indicating less than 30 respondents

Mean value below 2

Mean value between 2 - 2.5

The way in which citizens perceive the impact of the migrant crisis is analysed at the municipal level, based on the average values of citizens' attitudes on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 means "very negative" and 5 "very positive"). The results must be taken with reservations, given the constraints concerning the size of the sample in some municipalities.

On the general level, the most negative impact of the migrant crisis is felt by the citizens of Šid. The citizens of Šid are concerned about the safety of women, children and young people, and are concerned about the negative impact of the crisis on hygiene. They are also worried about terrorism, as is the case with the citizens of the municipality of Savski venac. On the other hand, the citizens of Preševo are aware of the positive effects of the crisis, primarily on the image of their municipality, as well as on the traffic services.



**Table 7 – Citizens of the municipalities moderately affected by the crisis on challenges related to the migrant crisis**

2nd group of municipalities – moderately affected by the crisis In your opinion, how is the current migrant/refugee crisis in your municipality affecting...? The mean value (average score on a scale 1-5, 1 means "very negative", and 5 "very positive")	Total – all municipalities	Bela Palanka	Bosilegrad	Bujanovac	Vranje	Dimitrovgrad	Lajkovac	Loznica	Pirot	Sjenica	Tutin	Kanjiza	Kikinda
1. the image of your municipality	2,99	3,13	3,14	3,82	2,45	3,26	2,71	3,82	2,97	3,32	3,84	3,23	4,64
2. water and sewage use	2,91	3,00	2,69	2,57	1,55	3,00	3,00	3,87	2,97	3,43	3,53	2,96	4,86
3. the crime rate	2,65	2,91	2,79	3,37	1,38	3,00	2,55	3,61	2,72	3,08	3,78	2,59	4,55
4. the local economy	2,96	3,00	3,14	3,68	2,84	2,96	3,00	3,79	2,97	3,14	3,55	2,80	4,64
5. the possibility for local people to find jobs	2,92	3,08	2,78	2,73	2,69	3,13	2,78	3,40	3,05	2,89	3,46	2,82	4,67
6. your personal safety	2,66	3,00	2,85	2,75	1,71	2,96	2,15	3,79	2,81	3,17	3,87	2,80	4,80
7. the safety of women	2,43	3,00	2,83	2,82	1,13	2,93	1,59	3,64	2,73	2,81	4,02	2,55	4,48
8. the safety of children and youth	2,47	3,00	2,63	2,89	1,21	2,96	1,51	3,86	2,75	3,44	3,87	2,11	4,31
9. hygiene	2,56	2,96	3,06	2,68	1,23	3,04	1,51	3,73	2,87	3,18	3,46	2,86	4,24
10. spreading of unusual diseases	2,69	3,00	2,53	3,08	1,46	3,00	2,15	3,69	2,88	2,85	3,77	2,81	4,49
11. the way of life in your municipality	2,78	3,00	2,40	2,80	2,38	2,92	2,16	3,80	2,91	2,70	3,61	2,48	4,69
12. the local culture and tradition	2,90	3,00	2,86	3,16	2,72	2,96	2,19	3,62	2,91	2,87	3,44	2,66	4,72
13. your attitudes towards other religions	2,97	3,00	3,11	3,14	2,40	3,00	3,00	3,86	2,95	2,82	3,68	2,87	4,88
14. the risk of terrorism	2,51	3,00	2,53	3,46	1,20	2,92	1,80	3,71	2,81	2,91	3,79	2,72	4,39
15. transport services	3,03	3,00	2,85	3,77	2,93	3,00	2,93	3,64	3,00	2,73	3,40	2,89	4,98
16. accommodation services	3,05	3,00	2,95	3,52	2,76	3,00	2,73	3,90	3,00	3,18	3,40	2,99	4,92
17. retail sales	3,18	3,13	3,40	3,65	2,96	3,64	3,00	3,77	3,46	2,67	3,83	3,42	4,68
18. the media coverage of your municipality	3,07	3,08	2,81	3,42	2,81	3,25	3,41	3,88	3,11	3,14	3,40	2,99	4,73
19. investments in your municipality	3,07	3,13	3,21	3,56	2,82	3,09	2,40	3,84	3,04	3,33	3,80	2,89	4,78
20. access to health care services	2,93	3,00	2,98	2,79	2,27	3,03	1,85	3,48	2,97	3,18	3,81	3,08	4,82
N – number of respondents	824	23	23	33	45	24	24	44	45	24	23	22	44

\* Small sample size in municipalities marked red, indicating less than 30 respondents

Mean value below 2

Mean value between 2 - 2.5

Citizens in the municipalities moderately affected by the crisis are less likely to indicate the negative effects of the migrant crisis, as opposed to citizens in the intensely affected municipalities. Nevertheless, the most negative impact of the crisis on their municipality is felt by the citizens in Vranje, similarly to the citizens in Šid, who are concerned about security, hygiene and terrorism.

In line with the perception of the economic benefits from the migrant crisis in their municipality, in August 2017 citizens stated that a migrant/refugee was spending on average around 43 euros a day, while staying in their municipality, on food, accommodation, transportation and the like. Still, about a third of the respondents do not know how much an average migrant spends in their municipality, while 7% of them think that migrants do not spend anything.

**Table 8 – Citizens on the average daily amount spent by migrants**

<b>Based on your opinion/knowledge, how much does an average migrant/refugee spend per day (on food, accommodation, transportation, etc.) while staying in your municipality? (in %), August 2017</b>	Total	1st group of municipalities – intensely affected by the crisis	2nd group of municipalities – moderately affected by the crisis
<b>N</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>357</b>
Up to 10 EUR	17.3	28.1	3.1
11-30 EUR	18.2	16.6	20.4
31-50 EUR	17.0	10.5	25.6
More than 51 EUR	8.0	5.0	11.9
They spend nothing	5.8	9.6	0.9
Do not know/No answer	33.7	30.3	38.1

Regarding the effect of the migrants' presence on the personal life of the respondents, 58% of the respondents are of the opinion that there is no effect at all, while around a quarter of them think that the effect is negative. A negative effect is more frequently perceived in the municipalities severely affected by the crisis, primarily in Belgrade and Vojvodina. A positive effect is perceived by 10% of the respondents, predominantly in central-western Serbia and in rural areas.

**Table 9 – Effect of the presence of migrants on citizens' personal lives**

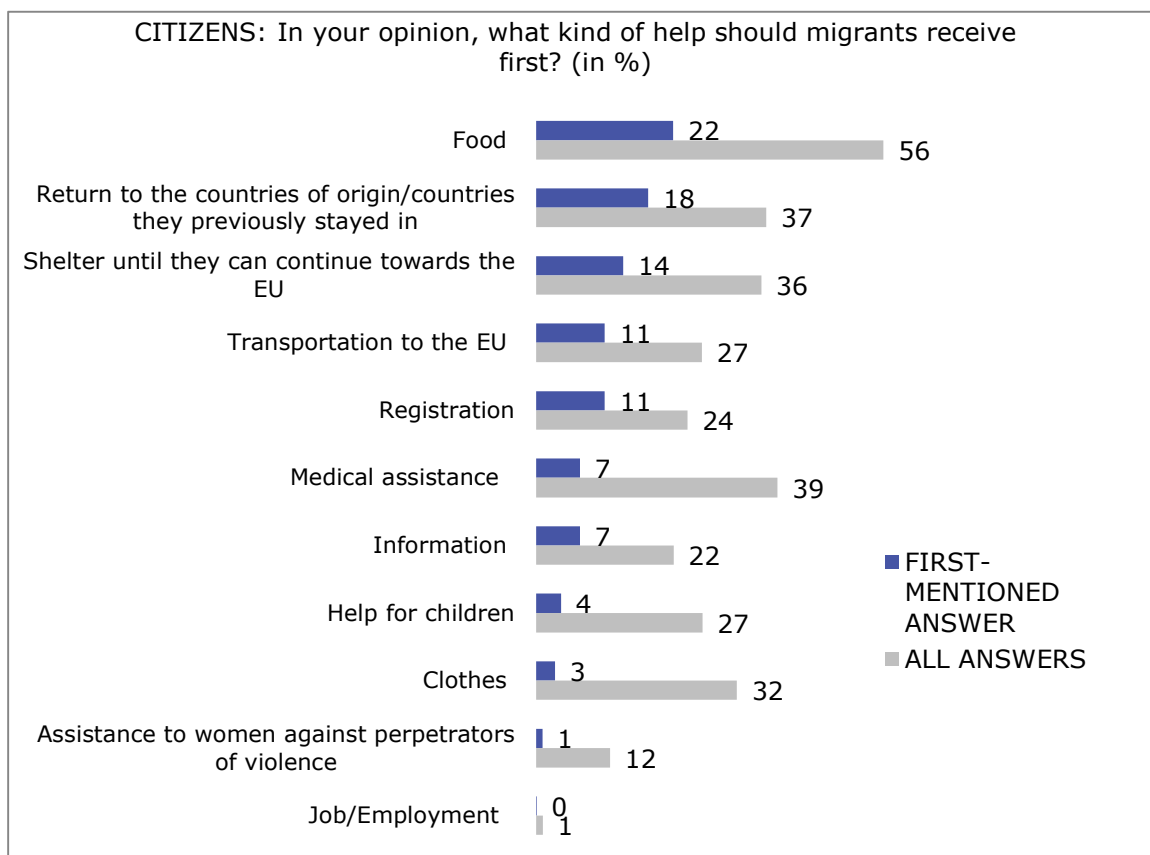
<b>Has the presence of migrants/refugees had any effect on your personal life and the lives of your family and your friends? (in %), August 2017</b>	Total	1st group of municipalities – intensely affected by the crisis	2nd group of municipalities – moderately affected by the crisis
<b>N</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>357</b>
It has had no effect	57.9	50.5	67.7
It has had a positive effect	10.3	8.3	12.8
It has had a negative effect	24.5	35.4	10.2
Do not know/No answer	7.3	5.8	9.3

Citizens have perceptions of a negative effect of migrants' presence on their personal life primarily because of their fear for safety and public security (85%), and slightly less because of the risk of infectious contagious diseases (11%). On the other hand, citizens who feel a positive effect have cited as reasons the donations of the international community (63%), and also the employment opportunities for the population in the provision of services to migrants/refugees (24%).

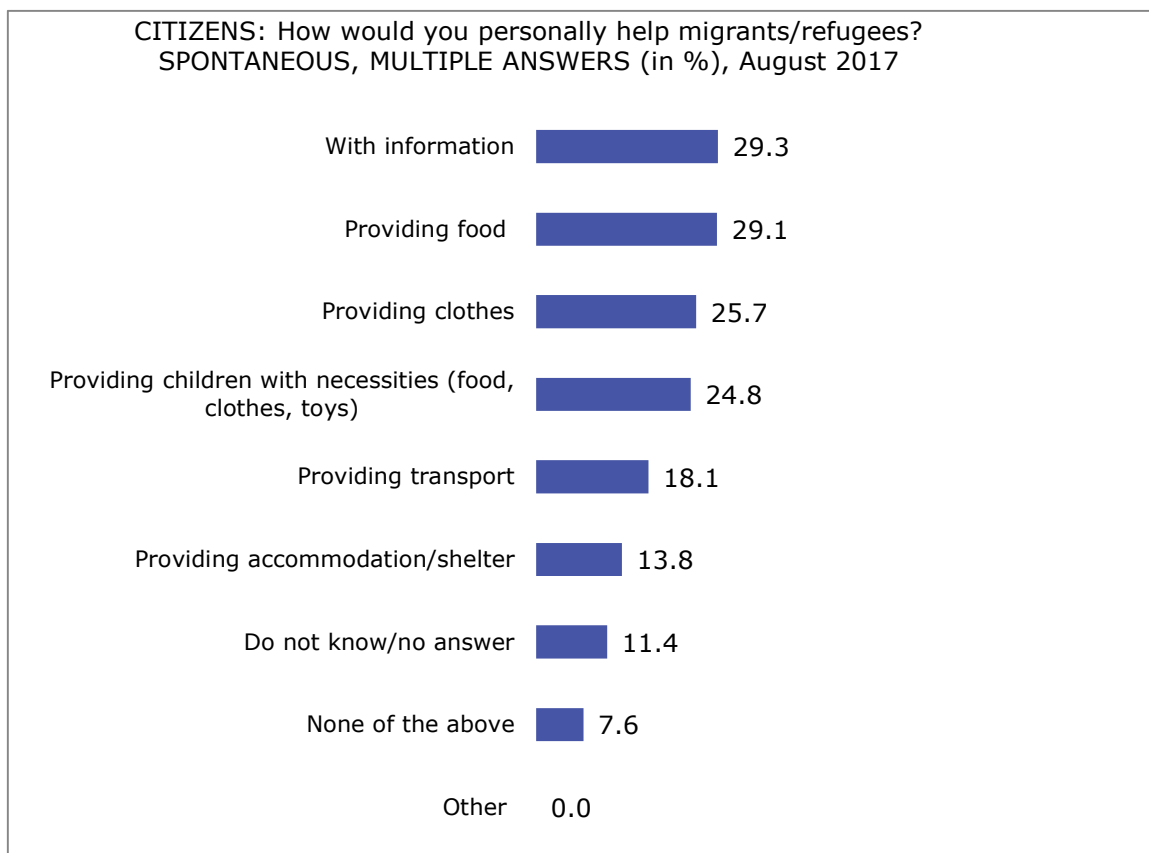
### 3.5. What Kind of Help Should Migrants Receive?

In general, citizens believe that migrants should be assisted primarily by meeting their basic needs, first and foremost by providing food. The next most frequently mentioned reason is the return of migrants to their countries of origin.

**Graph 9 – Citizens on the assistance needed by migrants**



**Graph 10 – Type of assistance to migrants that citizens would personally provide**



Citizens are also willing to personally help migrants by providing information (29%), food (29%), clothing (26%) and necessary items for children (25%).

Although citizens believe that migrants should be helped, and are willing to personally do so, most of them do not support the opening of centres for accommodation of migrants/refugees in the territory of their municipality (62%), and even fewer of them support the opening of such centres in their neighbourhood (72%). The results for these questions in August 2017 are unchanged relative to the previous year.

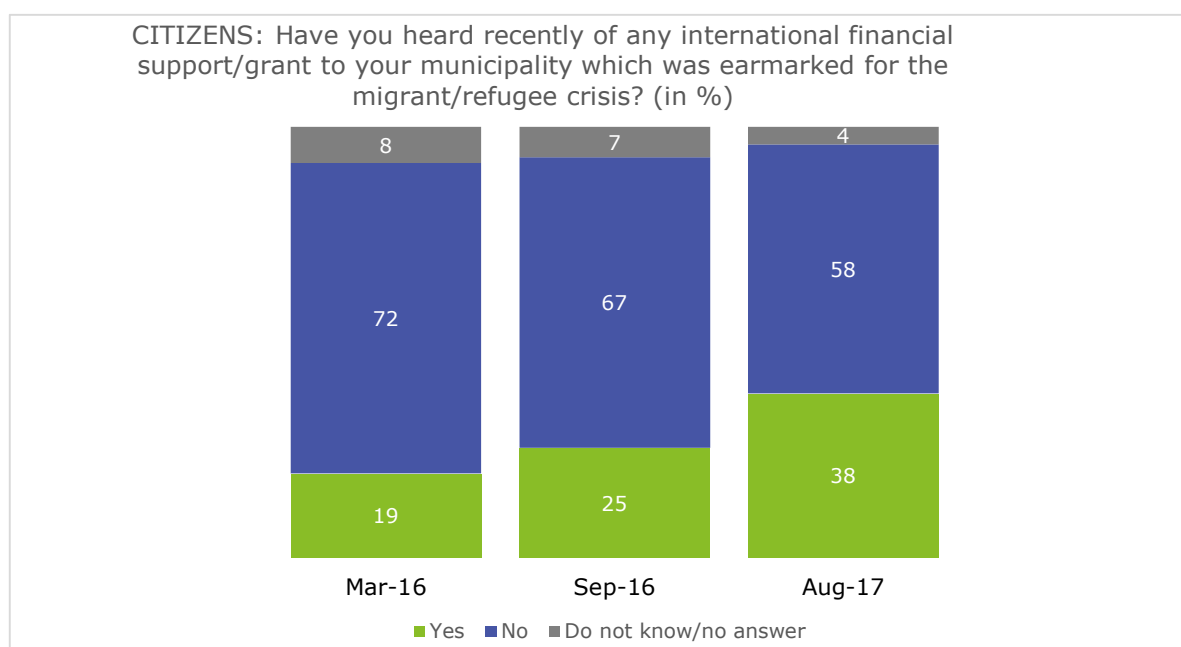
Similarly, in August 2017, about half of the respondents (52%) think that Serbia should not accept a permanent settlement of migrants, which is a significant increase relative to the municipalities surveyed in 2016, when 47% did not accept their settlement. About a third of the respondents in this round think that refugees should be accepted. In the municipalities more intensely affected by the crisis, citizens are more likely to believe that Serbia should not receive migrants on a permanent basis, which is particularly strongly expressed in the municipalities of Vojvodina. The reasons for their non-acceptance are mostly economic in nature, and apart from citizens considering Serbia to be poor and not having enough money, they cite cultural reasons, together with fears for security.

### 3.6. International Aid Programs

The international community has started to provide assistance geared to mitigating the impacts of the migrant crisis. Nevertheless, support is largely focused on providing humanitarian aid to migrants, while very few resources are channelled towards supporting communities providing care to migrants. The largest donors are the European Union, followed by Germany, Norway, Japan, Switzerland and other countries.

The visibility of international assistance programmes is not high among citizens, but it is going up with each round of the survey. In August 2017, more than a third of the respondents heard about international financial support or grants to their municipality (38%), compared to a quarter of them who had heard of it in September 2016. However, the number of citizens who have not heard of assistance at the general level is still prevalent (58%). Citizens of the municipalities in southeast Serbia have heard of the international assistance to the largest extent, while the number of citizens who have heard of it is the lowest in the municipalities of central-western Serbia.

**Graph 11 – Public visibility of international financial assistance/grants to municipalities**

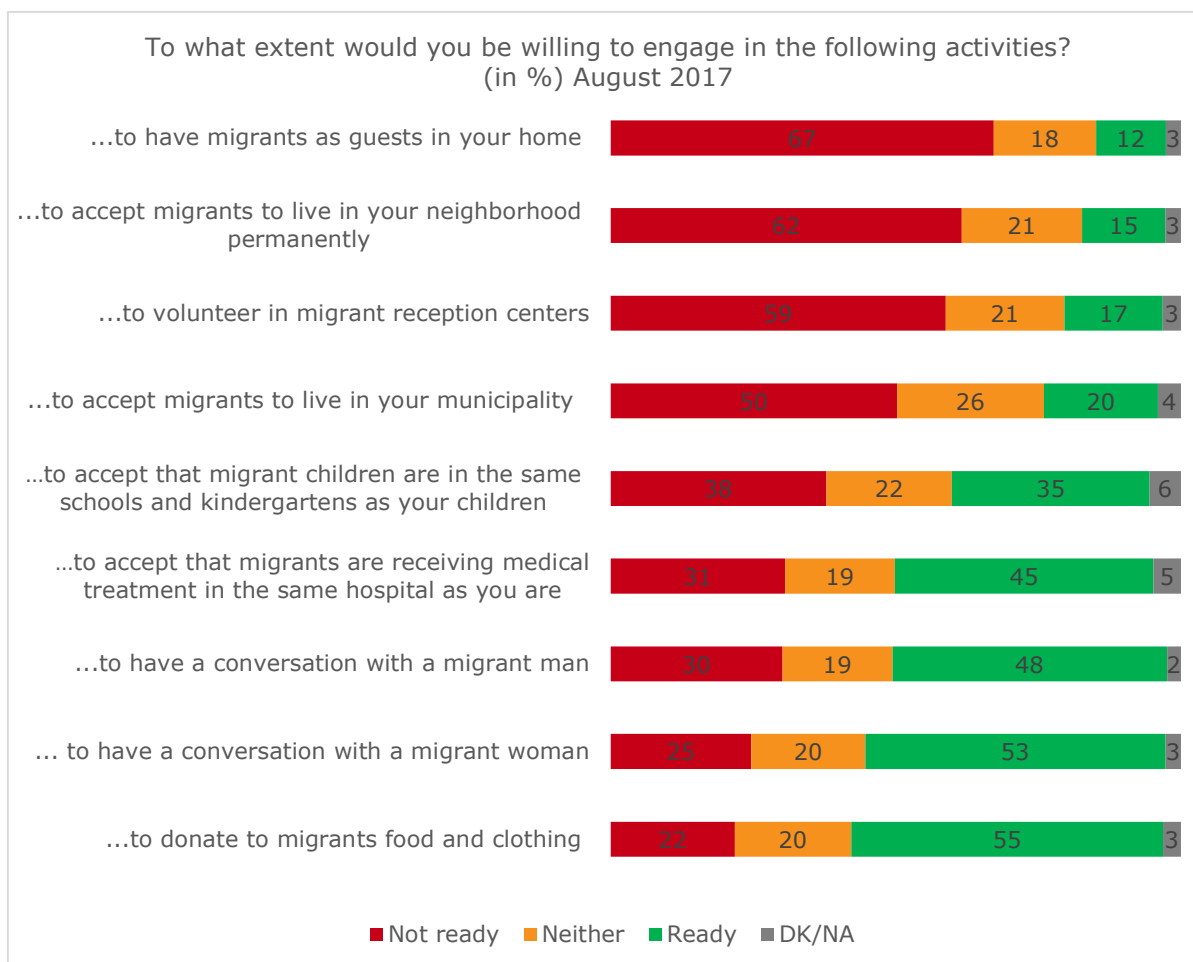


Citizens who have heard of international assistance believe that it is very useful (89%), while among the donors they overwhelmingly recognize the European Union (82%), and then considerably less the Russian Federation (6%).

### 3.7. Social Distance and Citizens' Attitude

For the purpose of getting a broader picture and a better understanding of citizens' attitudes towards migrants, we have examined the levels of acceptable interaction between citizens and migrants. The closer the expected interaction is, the lower the level of citizens' willingness to participate in this interaction. The August 2017 data are very similar to the 2016 findings.

**Graph 12 – Citizens' willingness to interact with migrants**



According to the August 2017 survey, citizens are mostly willing to donate food and clothing to migrants (55%); however, one has to bear in mind that donations constitute the lowest level of involvement. In the case of a more direct interaction, in the second place, citizens said that they would be willing to talk with a migrant woman (53%), while the willingness to communicate with the male migrant population comes third (48%) and is considerably lower.

Medical treatment in the same hospital with migrants is more acceptable for a slightly higher number of citizens (45%), relative to one third of them who do not accept it (31%). On the other hand, opinions are divided among citizens on accepting that children of migrants attend the same schools and kindergartens as their children (38% of them do not accept, 35% accept it).

Half of the respondents do not accept migrants permanently living in the territory of their municipality (50%), while the level of acceptance of migrants permanently living in the neighbourhood of the respondents is even lower (62%). Citizens' volunteering in reception centres for migrants is less acceptable (59%), while the lowest level of willingness among citizens is manifested when it comes to accepting migrants in their homes as guests (67%).

**Table 10 – Level of citizens' agreement with statements on migrants**

	March 2016	September 2016	August 2017				Agreement index (Agreement-Disagreement)
	Agreement index (Agreement-Disagreement)	Agreement index (Agreement-Disagreement)	SUM Disagreement	Neutral	SUM Agreement	DK/NA	
Citizens would fear for their safety and security, especially for the safety of women, in case refugees/migrants are permanently accepted	<b>63</b>	<b>62</b>	8	20	68	3	<b>60</b>
Migrants/refugees would not be able to fit in our society because they are too different (different traditions, customs, religion, etc.)	<b>61</b>	<b>56</b>	10	16	69	5	<b>59</b>
There are potential terrorists among migrants and refugees	<b>85</b>	<b>63</b>	7	23	64	7	<b>57</b>
Migrants and refugees would not embark on this trip without a grave need. Therefore, we as humans need to show compassion and help them in any way we can	<b>54</b>	<b>48</b>	17	27	51	5	<b>35</b>
We should not feel sorry for them. They have money for this trip and they expect benefits in the EU	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	19	29	45	6	<b>26</b>
We should show more compassion for migrants of our religion than for those belonging to other religions	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	26	32	35	7	<b>10</b>
We should accept only those migrants and refugees whom we assess as able to fit in well in Serbia	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	33	25	32	10	<b>-1</b>
Serbia is losing population and refugees and migrants could help us populate some regions of our country	<b>-40</b>	<b>-42</b>	56	19	19	6	<b>-37</b>

A deeper analysis of the attitudes and opinions of citizens shows that emotions prevail over rational reasons for citizens' opinions on migrants.

The opinion prevails that citizens would fear for their security and especially for the safety of women if migrants were accepted on a permanent basis (agreement index of 60%). Citizens also believe that there are potential terrorists among migrants and refugees (agreement index of 57%), but this view is partially mitigated in August 2017 compared to 2016. Although fears of potential terrorists are declining, the compassion that is prevalent among half of the respondents is nevertheless falling from one round of survey to another (the agreement index of 48 in September 2016 against the index of 35 in August 2017).

The perception that migrants are different also greatly contributes to the non-acceptance of migrants. With an agreement index of 59, citizens believe that migrants would not fit in with our society because they are

too different, have a different tradition, customs and religion. The fact that religion is a significant factor is also corroborated by the agreement with the need to express more sympathy for migrants and refugees who are of the same faith than for those belonging to other religions (26% of disagreement relative to 35% of agreement), similar to the results obtained in 2016.

Opinions have remained divided on whether only those migrants and refugees should be accepted who are assessed as able to adapt to life in Serbia and fit in well (33% of the respondents disagree, as opposed to 32% who agree).

The position regarding the repopulation of Serbia due to a decline of its population by means of settling down refugees and migrants gives rise to a very negative opinion among citizens, as 56% of them disagree with that statement, compared to the 19% who agree with the statement.



## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The migrant crisis is one of the secondary problems in the municipalities of Serbia, which does not directly affect citizens, who are very concerned about unemployment and low living standards. Also, citizens do not identify themselves with the current profile of refugees, although they had previous experience from the former Yugoslavia with the refugee crisis during the '90s and internally displaced persons from Kosovo in '99 and '04. The perception of being different from migrants is prevalent primarily because of culture, religion and customs.

In addition to the widespread ambivalence on the part of citizens towards migrants, in August 2017 a negative tendency in their attitudes can be identified, particularly in the municipalities more intensely affected by the crisis. The cause of the negative attitudes is a lack of information on the basis of which to draw conclusions, as well as rather pervasive fears among citizens for their security.

Although citizens negatively perceive the impact of the migrant crisis on their municipality, they largely believe that the normal functioning of the municipality and the town has not been significantly impeded. The perception of the situation is worse in the municipalities under the intensive influx of migrants (Palilula, Obrenovac, Subotica, Sombor, Savski venac, Šid and Preševo), where satisfaction levels are significantly lower. In addition to the prevailing negative and neutral assessments of the impact of the migrant crisis on their municipality, citizens see a positive side when it comes to retail sales, media coverage of the municipality and its image. In addition, there is an awareness of the need to help migrants, together with a willingness to personally provide assistance by donating food and equipment. On the other hand, the level of readiness for closer interaction is lower and falling commensurately with the increase in the expected degree of interaction.

Integration of migrants into society, immediate neighbourhood or at least the municipality, migrant children's attendance of a school or kindergarten together with local children, are far from being accepted by citizens. Acceptance only reaches the level of creating conditions for the survival of migrants and refugees – food, accommodation, health services – the expectation being that migrants will be assisted to continue their journey to more distant and prosperous countries.

### **Recommended directions for municipal action in relation to the migrant crisis include:**

What approach should be adopted with regard to the fears expressed by citizens?

- Allocation of resources to increase citizens' safety and intensify crime prevention.
- Improvement of citizens' information about migrants/refugees through the media.
- Overcoming of fears and prejudices, development of compassion by making the human destinies of migrants/refugees (especially women and children) closer to citizens.
- The potential leaders of change in opinions about migrants are the more educated people.

How to develop solidarity?

- By encouraging personal donations, organizing drives for collecting aid (food and clothing) in citizens' immediate environments.
- By promoting interaction with migrants, promoting volunteering, through education, public forums and the like.

What are the priority needs of municipalities?

- Provision of humanitarian aid to migrants (accommodation, food, clothing, medical care), with an emphasis on vulnerable groups (women and children).
- Allocation of funds to health care (human resources and equipment), and a higher level of hygiene. Maintenance and improvement of the functioning of the municipalities where the influx of migrants is higher.

## 5. Methodology

The survey covered adult population in targeted Serbian municipalities.

Period	1st round: February-March 2016. 2nd round: September–October 2016. 3rd round: August 2017.
Sample	General population of adult Serbian citizens, N=800 per round Total number of interviewed persons in August 2017: N=824.
Territory	The survey covered 19 municipalities in Serbia which are affected by the migrant crisis.
Technique and instruments	Instruments: structured interviews with mostly close-ended questions, a questionnaire for the general population, developed in cooperation with UNDP Serbia. Technique: face-to-face interviews (TAPI – Tablet Assisted Personal Interviewing)
Survey duration	~ 30 minutes for the general population
Data weighting	Taking into account the relevant shares of municipalities in the total population, the sample design has been adjusted for the purpose of enabling an analysis.  In order to achieve representativeness for the entire territory, the data were weighted on the basis of the 2011 Census, taking into account information on gender, age, settlement type and the size of the municipality.

**Table 11 - Demography, citizens – August 2017**

		<b>%</b>
Gender	Male	48.3
	Female	51.7
Age	18-34	28.5
	35-54	33.9
	55+	37.6
Education	Primary school and less	24.5
	Secondary school	56.3
	Junior college and university degree	19.3
	No answer	0.0
Employment status	Employed (full-time, permanent employment, including self-employed persons, farmers)	35.8
	Temporarily employed (part-time, on a fee basis)	11.0
	Unemployed, active (looking for a job)	16.4
	Unemployed, inactive (pupils, students)	6.9
	Unemployed, inactive (housewives, retired...)	29.8
	No answer	0.2
Nationality	Serbian	75.3
	Montenegrin	1.5
	Croatian	2.7
	Hungarian	6.3
	Bosnian	5.4
	Albanian	3.6
	Other	4.0
	Undecided	0.3
Religion	Orthodox	76.9
	Roman Catholic	9.3
	Muslim	8.9
	Other	2.6
	No answer	2.2
Groups of municipalities	Group 1 - Municipalities more intensely affected by the crisis	54.6
	Group 2 - Municipalities moderately affected by the crisis	45.4
Type of settlement	Urban	61.5
	Rural	38.5
Region	Belgrade	33.9
	Vojvodina	26.6
	Central West Serbia	14.2
	South East Serbia	25.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

**Table 12 - Citizens, the sample by municipality – August 2017**

	<i>N</i>	%	
Group 1	Palilula	166	20.1%
	Subotica	56	6.8%
	Obrenovac	55	6.7%
	Sombor	54	6.6%
	Savski venac	50	6.1%
	Šid	36	4.4%
	Preševo	33	4.0%
	<b>Group 1 - subtotal</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>54.6%</b>
Group 2	Vranje	45	5.5%
	Pirot	45	5.5%
	Loznica	44	5.3%
	Kikinda	44	5.3%
	Bujanovac	33	4.0%
	Lajkovac	24	2.9%
	Sjenica	24	2.9%
	Bela Palanka	23	2.8%
	Dimitrovgrad	24	2.9%
	Bosilegrad	23	2.8%
	Tutin	23	2.8%
	Kanjiža	22	2.7%
	<b>Group 2 - subtotal</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>45.4%</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>100%</b>