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GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVE

# OPINION POLL REPORT: CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS IN SERBIA 2020 (III Cycle)

NOVEMBER 2020

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## I. METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

<b>Survey carried out by</b>	<b>The survey was conducted by CeSID doo and Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc.</b>
<b>Fieldwork</b>	<b>In the period between November 01 and 21, 2020</b>
<b>Sample type and size</b>	<b>Random, representative sample of 1175 adult citizens of Serbia</b>
<b>Sample frame</b>	<b>Polling station territory as the most reliable statistical unit</b>
<b>Household selection</b>	<b>Random causation without replacement - within the polling station, every other household address from the starting point</b>
<b>Selection of respondents by household</b>	<b>By date of first birthday in relation to survey date</b>
<b>Survey method</b>	<b>Face to face at home</b>
<b>Survey instrument</b>	<b>116-item questionnaire</b>

The public opinion poll, implemented by CeSID doo, a public research agency, and Checchi and Company Consulting Inc., was conducted in the period between November 1 and 21, 2020 in the territory of the Republic of Serbia without Kosovo and Metohija.

The survey was conducted on a representative sample of 1175 adult citizens of Serbia. A questionnaire formed in cooperation with the client, which consisted of 116 questions, was used as a research instrument.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face, in direct contact with respondents. In enumerator training, instructors insisted on adherence to two important rules that, in addition to how the sample is constructed, have a major impact on the representativeness of the survey – the sequence of steps and the ‘first birthday’ rule. Adherence to the sequence of steps ensures that an enumerator can comprehensively cover each survey point, whilst the first birthday rule prevents responses only from members of the public who first answer the door when interviewers visit. Instead, enumerators were required to interview the household member aged 18 or above whose birthday came soonest after the date of the enumerator’s visit. This also ensured the representativeness of respondents by gender, education and age.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

Based on the methodology established during the implementation of this research, the following categories of respondents are included:

**Gender structure of respondents:** 47% men and 53% women.

**Age of respondents:** 18 to 29 years 14%; 30 to 39 years 20%; 40 to 49 years 22%, 50 to 59 years 17%, 60 to 69 years 17%, over 70 years 10%.

**The average age of the respondents is 48 years (18 - 89)**

**Educational structure of the respondents:** primary school and lower 11% of the respondents, secondary vocational school 9%, four-year high school 52% of the respondents, high school /university 25% of the respondents, pupil/student 3% the respondents.

**Region in which the respondent lives:** Vojvodina 27%, Belgrade 22%, Central Serbia 51%

**Place of residence:** urban settlement 61%; suburban settlement 9%; village 30%

**Ethnicity of respondents:** Serb 89%, Hungarian 3%, Bosnian 3%, Roma 1%, others 4%.

### 3. SUMMARY

Corruption is constantly at the very top of the list of problems of the citizens of Serbia. Similar to previous research cycles, this time **we find 12% of citizens who consider corruption to be the primary problem that directly affects them and their families' lives.**

**More than one half of the respondents (54%),** predominantly young and highly educated, **believe that corruption is widespread in Serbia.** More than half of the respondents (53%) recognize its malignant impact on society as a whole, half (50%) recognize its influence in politics, every third (34%) in the business environment, but only every fifth (19%) in their personal and family life.

The prevalence of corruption is directly related to the fact that citizens are under the impression that **nothing has changed in the past twelve months in terms of its level in Serbia.** At the moment, 37% of the respondents believe that the level of corruption is the same as it was in November 2019, while a slightly higher number of citizens are convinced that the situation is worse than it was, compared to those who believe that it has improved - 31% vs. 23 %.

The main culprits for the increased corruption, and those responsible to address it, are the three institutions: the **president, the government and the police.** If we analyze the efforts of the institutions against the index that represents the difference between the responsibility for addressing corruption and the responsibility for its increase in the previous year, the **President is the only institution in Serbia where this index is positive and amounts to 9.** All other institutions, in the eyes of the citizens, are more to blame for the increase of corruption in Serbian society than they deserve credit for its reduction.

The extent to which citizens are skeptical about the performance of institutions the job description of which includes the fight against corruption is best evidenced by the fact that the average ratings of their work range between 2.1 and 2.3 out of five (5) . **The general conclusion is that citizens' trust in all institutions, including the president, and their ability and will to oppose corruption has declined over the last three years.**

Citizens of Serbia in this research cycle show **low satisfaction with the work of local governments.** Compared to previous cycles of research, there is an increase in the percentage of citizens who state that they are mostly or completely **dissatisfied** with the way their local government manages the budget. A total of 41% of the respondents state that they have a negative perception of this question (the sum of answers - mostly and completely dissatisfied). Compared to the 2019 findings, we find five percentage points more citizens who have a negative perception.

Most citizens have not heard of or are not aware of **LAPs**, or they do not understand what they are for (94% in total), while 6% of respondents know about this mechanism and understand its purpose (which is an increase of two percentage points compared to 2019).

The results of the survey related to **satisfaction with the work of local institutions** tell us that citizens are still dissatisfied with the level of responsibility, consciousness and responsiveness of local authorities to their interests and needs. Compared to last year there is a slight increase in the percentage of citizens who give negative evaluation of these institutions, while when it comes to mayors we see a positive trend, and decrease in the percentage of Serbian citizens who expressed dissatisfaction with them.

Citizens' attitude is that **corruption is very widespread phenomenon** even with those institutions that should be the champions of the fight against it. Namely, for most of the institutions that were examined in this research, more than two thirds of the citizens stated that they were at least a little corrupt. The institution of the President is the only one that has been perceived as a corrupt by less than two-thirds of respondents. Almost half of the respondents stated that **healthcare institutions (47%) and inspectorates (46%) are heavily corrupt.**

When asked to single out **only one institution that they consider the most corrupt** in Serbia, the respondents, as in the previous two surveys, answered - health care.

Citizens mostly perceive **corruption as extremely widespread, both in Serbia and in their immediate surroundings.** On the national level, perception of IO indicated corrupt activities goes from 84% to 93% among citizens. At the same time, perception of the same activities in the nearest surrounding is significantly lower among respondents. The number of those who consider these corrupt activities present in their nearest surrounding varies from 73% to 86%. When it comes to **choosing one of the most common forms of corruption in the country,** the perception of the most widespread corrupt activities in Serbia is the same as in the previous two research cycles. Most respondents single out the *use of office to employ relatives or friends (19%)* and the *use of friendly ties with persons employed in public institutions for easier and faster access to public services (18%).* However, the percentage of respondents who agree with these statements is lower than in previous years, by 3 and 4 percentage points, respectively. As regards the **most widespread form of corruption in the immediate social circles,** the largest number of citizens experience the *use of friendly ties with persons employed in public institutions for easier and faster access to public services.*

46% of Serbian citizens identified *severe penalties, including imprisonment, for those who either offer or accept a bribe* as the **most effective measure aimed at preventing and fighting corruption.** This finding is unchanged compared to 2018 and 2019, when the same measure also ranked first, but with greater support - 46 and 48%, respectively.

The largest percentage of citizens **still perceive corruption as a way for some individuals to get rich at the expense of the public funds.** 70% of citizens agree with this view. More than half of the respondents (52%) agreed with the statement that **corruption is the usual behavior, or an integral part of the culture and habits of our society,** while the level of agreement with the statement that **corruption in Serbia is a way for some people to exercise their basic rights and address their problems** is somewhat smaller and accounts for 44% of the respondents.

According to the subjective forecasts of the largest number of Serbian citizens (43%), the **prevalence of corruption in the next year will remain at the same level as it is now.** There is a slightly higher percentage of respondents who are inclined to believe that its volume will increase compared to those who have the opposite belief: 25% vs. 21%.

Should they find themselves **in a situation where a civil servant or employee asks them for a bribe,** 33% of the respondents would not pay, 18% would ask someone to help them and would not pay, and compared to last year, the number of respondents who would report it to the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption or the media slightly decreased. **The most common reasons why citizens would not report a civil servant for bribery** is the belief that it would not change anything (20%), that it is very difficult to prove such actions (19%), but also the attitude that society does not appreciate those who report corruption

(12%). A total of 9% of respondents do not know the ways in which it is possible to report corruption, and every twentieth respondent is completely passive.

When it comes to the **factors that hinder the fight against corruption**, 35% of the respondents recognize *widespread corruption in law enforcement authorities* as the most important one, which is six percentage points below the result of the previous survey. *Passivity of citizens comes second*, or *their fear of reporting corruption*, which is the answer chosen by 33% of respondents.

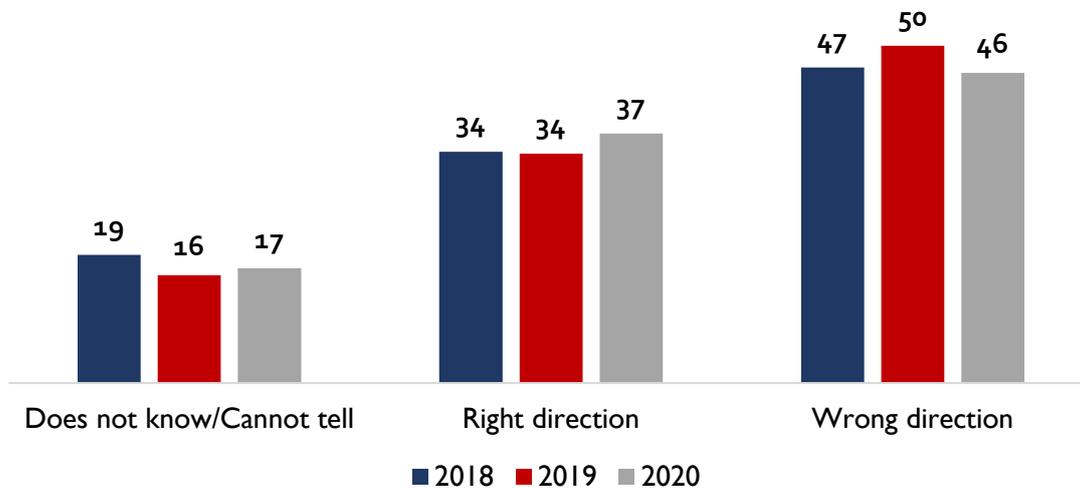
**The direct contact with corruption** was also examined in this research cycle. Despite the widespread attitude of citizens that corruption is present in many institutions in Serbia, the vast majority of citizens have never been in contact with any of these institutions (78% of them) in the last 12 months. Asked whether they had to offer a bribe, a gift or return a favor in one of the institutions they came in contact with in order to be provided a service, with the exception of health care institutions, more than four fifths of the citizens answered “No”. Of those who had to pay bribes, most **did so in order to speed up the delivery a service to which they would otherwise be entitled**.

Finally, the opinion of citizens that the **medical profession is most susceptible to corruption** is not too surprising if we compare this attitude (shared by 23% of respondents) with the fact that health is most often perceived as an area where corruption is present to a large extent.

#### 4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY - PROBLEMS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE CITIZENS OF SERBIA

In this year's research cycle, less than one half of the citizens think that their country is moving in the wrong direction - 46%. This year's result is slightly better than it was in the previous two years. **The number of optimists, those citizens who believe that their country is moving in the right direction, increased by 3 percentage points, while the number of pessimists decreased by 4 percentage points compared to the same period in 2019.**

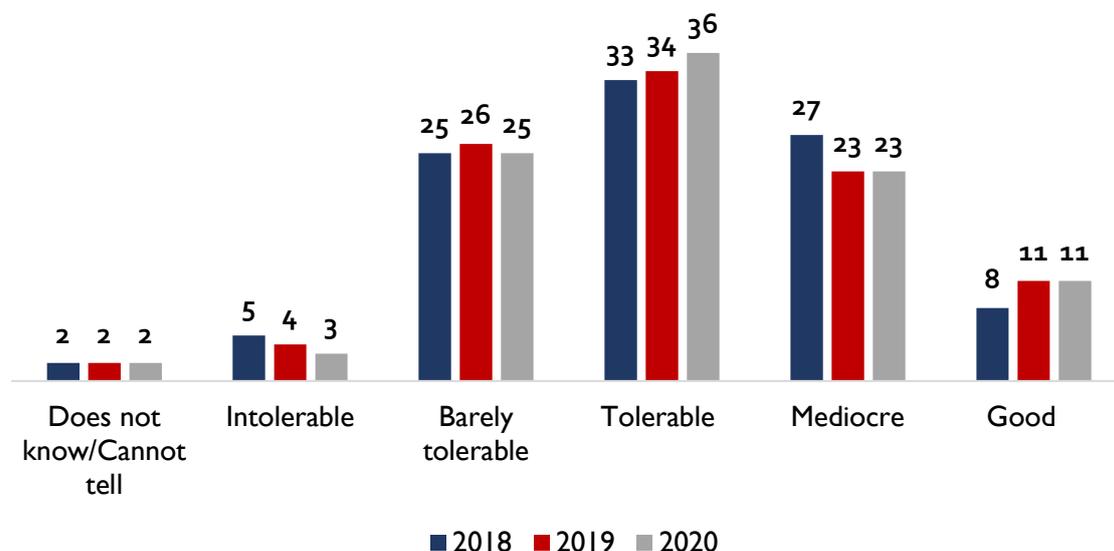
Chart 4.1. In general, do you feel Serbia is moving in the right or the in wrong direction? Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %



The assessment of the direction in which the country is going, as in last year's survey, is directly dependent on the perception of the quality of life of the respondents, as well as on objective demographic indicators such as: **education, age and place of residence of the respondents**. Respondents living below the tolerable limit (intolerable or barely tolerable) believe that Serbia is moving in the wrong direction. Among the respondents who think that life is barely tolerable, two thirds (66%) think that Serbia is moving in the wrong direction, while 81% of those who think that they live in intolerable conditions think the same. On the other hand, among respondents who rate their lives as good, 56% are convinced that their country is moving in the right direction. The difference in the perception of the direction the country is headed to is even more visible when we look at the findings through the prism of demography. **We find optimists within the older and less educated population of rural areas, while pessimists are mostly younger citizens, with a higher or high level of education, living in urban areas.**

More than half of the respondents with a two-year college degree or university degree (52%) believe that Serbia is going in the wrong direction, and 63% of students think the same. When it comes to the respondents who have completed primary school and a secondary vocational school, more than half (54%) express optimism when it comes to the future of Serbia.

Chart 4.2. **What are the circumstances in which you and your family live right now like?** Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %



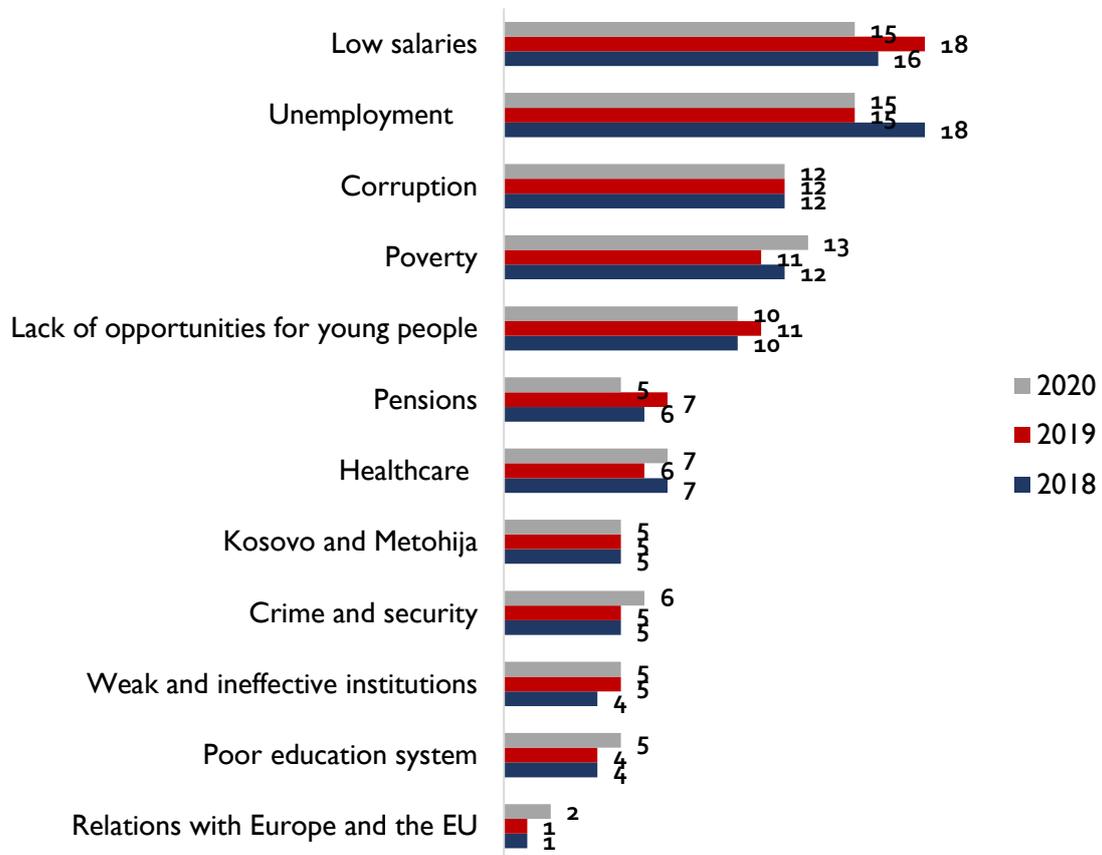
The subjective perception of the quality of life in Serbia has not changed significantly compared to the previous two years. In 2020, the number of those who say that their own and their family's lives are intolerable or barely tolerable dropped by 2 percentage points. One third of the respondents (34%) believe that their life is mediocre and good, while most of them still consider the quality of their life to be tolerable. Citizens who have a university degree, as well as pupils and students living in urban areas in Serbia, think their life is mediocre or good.

The reasons for the somewhat poorer perception of quality of life and living standards are primarily related to the economy. **The list of the biggest problems of the citizens of Serbia continues to be dominated by those directly related to the economy.**

As in the previous two cycles, the citizens clearly indicate that their priority is to solve the economic problems in the country. If we compare this result with 2019, we see the number of citizens who singled out economic problems as those that primarily endanger them and their families is only 3 percentage points lower. **Almost half of the respondents (48%) single out low salaries (15%), unemployment (15%), poverty (13%), pensions (5%), as burning problems that reduce the quality of their lives.**

The dominance of the economic problems from one cycle to another is "spoiled" by corruption, which is continuously mentioned as a problem by 12% of the respondents. Corruption is a problem that is noticed above-average by older highly educated citizens, living in urban areas. It is in this group of respondents that we find a stronghold of those who are aware of the damage that corruption causes to the quality of their lives. As in previous cycles, the only problem besides corruption that is not directly related to the economy, mentioned by every tenth respondent, is the lack of opportunities for young people.

Chart 4.3. **Could you please list the key THREE social, economic, or political problems Serbia is facing today?** Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %



## 5. CORRUPTION PERCEPTION IN SERBIA

In addition to the fact that 12% of the respondents perceive corruption as their primary problem in life, **more than half of the citizens (54%) believe that this phenomenon is greatly and extremely widespread in Serbia.**<sup>1</sup> This finding is in line with that of last year, when 55% of Serbian citizens claimed the same. The finding concerning the number of those who believe that there is little or no corruption in Serbia is a bit better, and the number of respondents who believe that this phenomenon is not widespread in the country increased by 2 percentage points (12%).

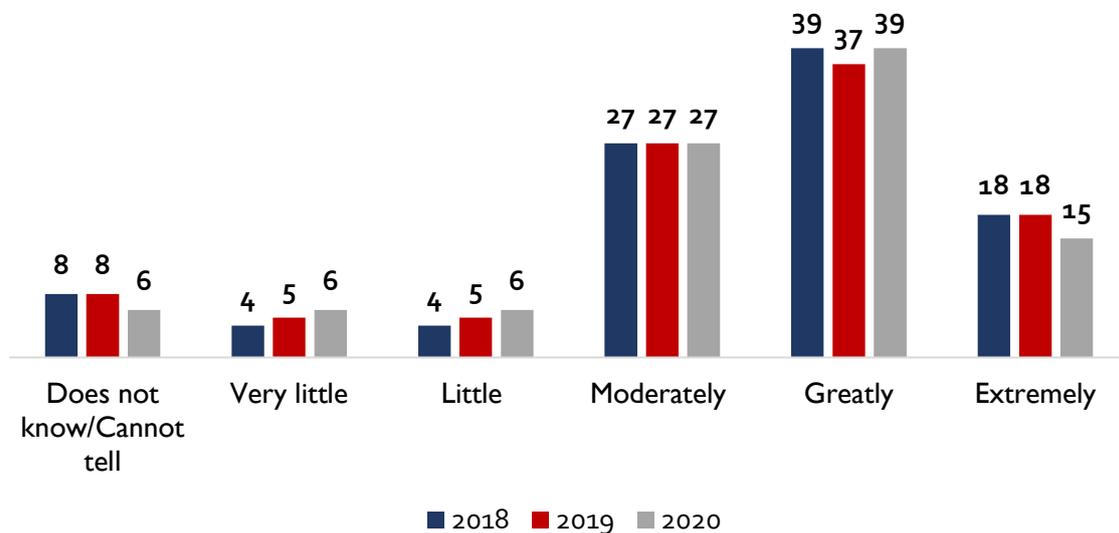
*Who are the citizens who perceive the increased level of corruption in Serbia?*

**The perception of the prevalence of corruption is most pronounced among respondents with a higher and high level of education, as well as among students, mostly younger citizens of Serbia.** In this group, almost two thirds of the respondents believe that corruption is widespread in Serbia.

In addition, the perception of corruption is more widespread among citizens living in Belgrade and Vojvodina than in the rest of Serbia. In these two regions, 65% of the respondents believe in the prevalence of corruption.

**Those citizens who have completed primary school, living in rural and suburban settlements, believe the least in the prevalence of corruption.**

Chart 5.1 **In your opinion and based on your experience, how widespread is corruption in Serbia? Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %**



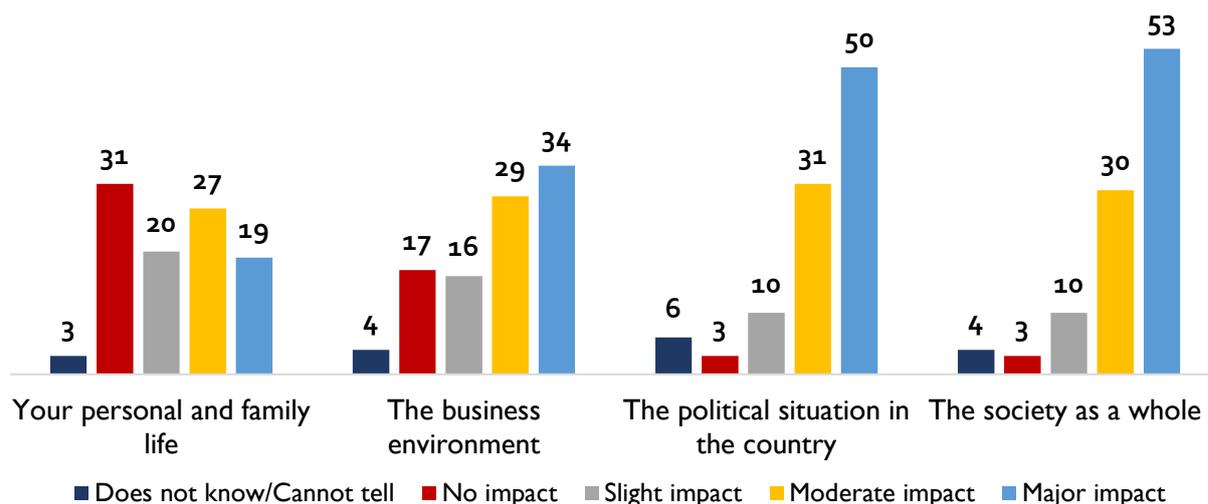
This is repeatedly found from one cycle to another, and leads to the conclusion that **the perception of the prevalence of this phenomenon in Serbia is far below average among citizens who have completed primary or secondary vocational school, and**

<sup>1</sup> The data obtained is a simple sum of respondents who believe that corruption is greatly or extremely widespread in Serbia.

**who are the biggest victims of the transition in which corruption has played its infamous role.**

The pronounced perception of the prevalence of corruption among citizens produces a feeling of a very large impact that this phenomenon has on various aspects of life in Serbia.

**Chart 5.2. In your opinion, does corruption have no impact, or a slight, moderate, or major impact on...? (in %)**



Slightly more than one half of the respondents (53%) believe that corruption has a great impact on Serbian society as a whole, which is 2 percentage points above the result of November’s survey in 2019. The number of the respondents who believe that corruption greatly affects the political situation in the country increased by 5 percentage points, so that currently half of the respondents believe that politics in Serbia is strongly influenced by this phenomenon (50%).

The percentage of those who think that corruption has a lot of impact on the business environment and their personal life remained at last year’s level. Citizens are aware of the strong impact of corruption on all aspects of their lives, however, the smallest percentage of citizens are still concerned about the impact of this phenomenon on their personal and family lives.

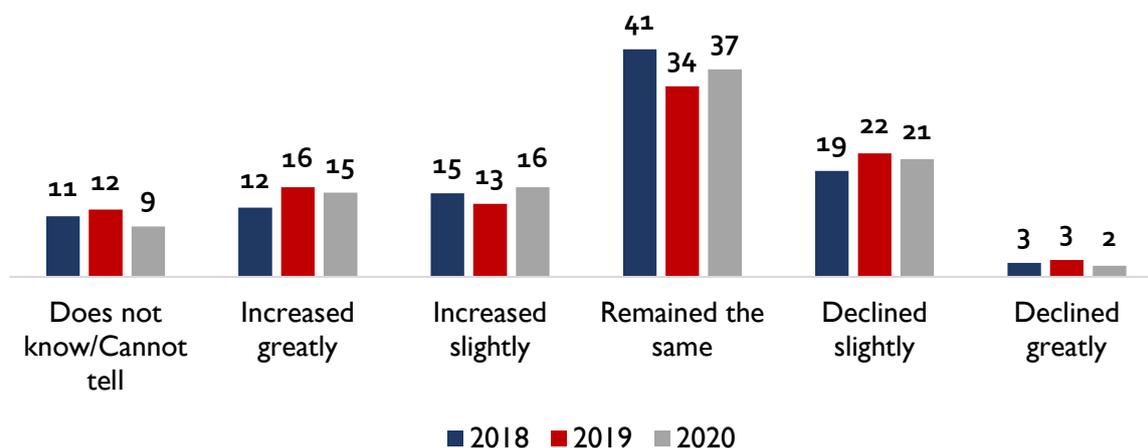
The strong influence of corruption on the political life of Serbia is recognized above-average by highly educated citizens and students (58% of them), as well as 61% of the respondents from Vojvodina. It is interesting that this time the respondents who have completed primary school and who live in rural areas, especially in Vojvodina, above-average believe that corruption has a great impact on society as a whole.

In the last three years we have seen minimal changes of the level of corruption in Serbia either for better or for worse. The largest percentage of citizens is still convinced that there are no major changes in the level of corruption in our country (37%), that is, that corruption has remained at the same level this year.

The number of the respondents who claim that there has been a decrease in the level of corruption in the previous 12 months (23%) dropped by 2 percentage points, while the

number of the respondents who claim that the level of corruption has increased in the said period (31%) increased by 2 percentage points.

**Chart 5.3. If you were to compare the situation one year ago with the current state of affairs in Serbia, has the extent of corruption declined or increased over the past 12 months? Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %**



The increase in the level of corruption is noticed by highly educated citizens, primarily those living in Vojvodina. The increase in corruption below the average is noticed by respondents with a lower level of education, older than 70 years, as well as those who live in Central Serbia.

Respondents were asked to indicate which institution, or individual is responsible for reducing the level of corruption, or to be blamed for its increase, in the previous 12 months. We looked for "deserving and guilty" within two separate categories of respondents:

- a) among those who say that the level of corruption decreased in the previous year and
- b) among those who believe that it has increased.

\* The question presented to the citizens was open and the citizens themselves could answer it without being offered predefined answers.

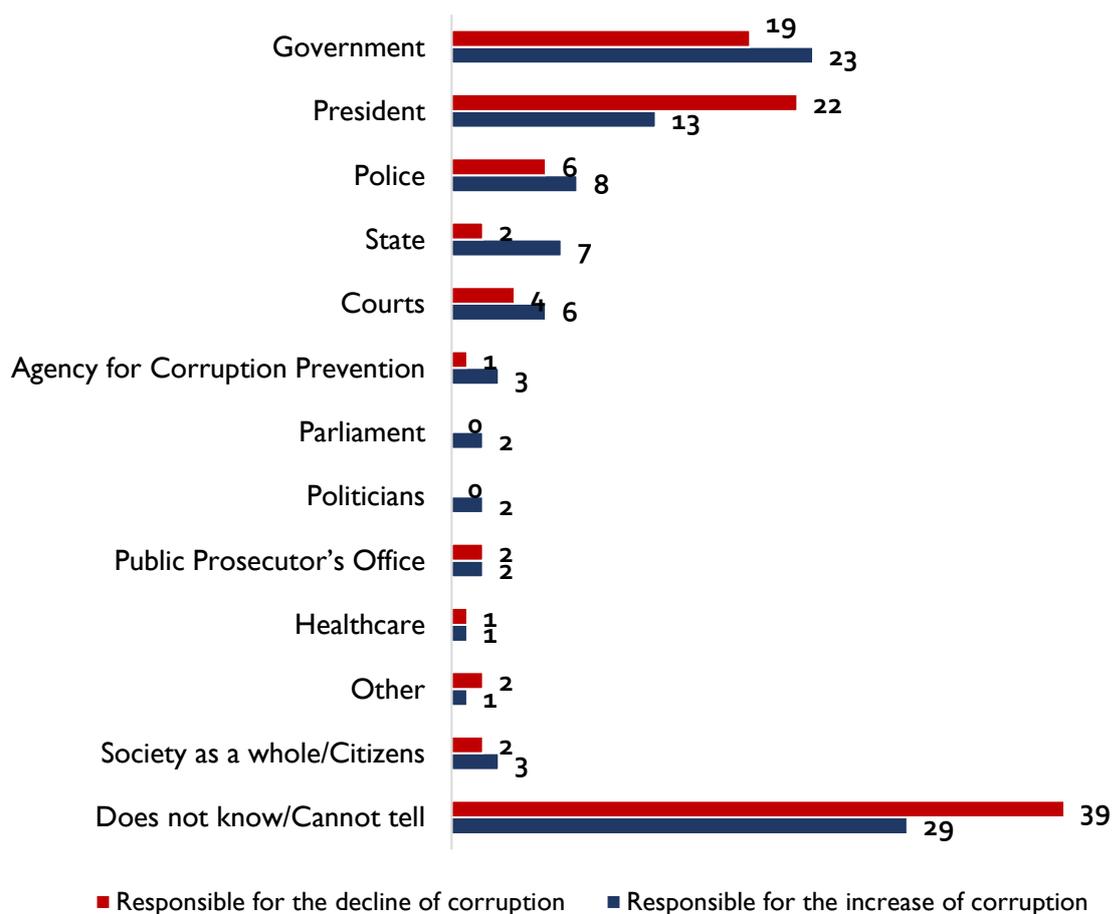
At first glance, it can be seen that the number of the respondents who do not know or cannot assess which institution is responsible for reducing the level of corruption increased by 10 percentage points compared to those who cannot assess which institution is responsible for its increase.

Almost two-fifths of the respondents (39%) were unable to name any institution or individual responsible for reducing corruption in Serbia. At the same time, 29% of the respondents could not name the institution or individual responsible for its increase. This shows that it is much easier for citizens to see those who are deemed to be guilty of increasing the level of corruption, than those who fight it.

The three institutions clearly stand out as key fighters against corruption and at the same time as those most responsible for its strengthening: the president, the government and the police.

In this year's research, there have been changes when it comes to the order on the list of institutions that have influenced the reduction of corruption levels. The president is perceived by slightly more than one fifth of citizens (22%) as an institution responsible for reducing corruption, followed by the government with 19% and the police with 6%.

Chart 5.4. **Who is responsible for increasing and who is responsible for reducing corruption in Serbia? In %**



According to the index that represents the difference between the responsibility for reducing and increasing the level of corruption in the previous year, the President is the only institution in Serbia where this index is positive and amounts to 9. As regards all other institutions we find more citizens who believe that they are responsible for increasing levels of corruption than those who believe that they are responsible for reducing it.

The efforts of government institutions in the fight against corruption were assessed by the respondents through a special set of questions about the institutional commitment to fighting this phenomenon.

**Table 5.1. To what extent are these institutions/organizations committed to addressing corruption in Serbia? In %**

	Cannot tell	Not committed at all	Somewhat committed	Moderately committed	Very committed	Extremely committed
Police	4	20	26	30	13	7
Public Prosecutors' Office	6	24	29	29	10	2
Courts	6	24	28	28	11	3
Agency for the Prevention of Corruption	13	17	21	29	15	5
Government of Serbia	6	21	24	26	15	8
Parliament	6	25	24	26	13	6
President	6	24	19	21	16	14
Ombudsman	20	19	23	24	11	3
State Audit Institution	21	19	21	26	10	3
Anti-Corruption Council	17	18	20	27	13	5
Information Commissioner	20	18	21	27	10	4
Local self-government unit where you live	9	27	25	26	9	4

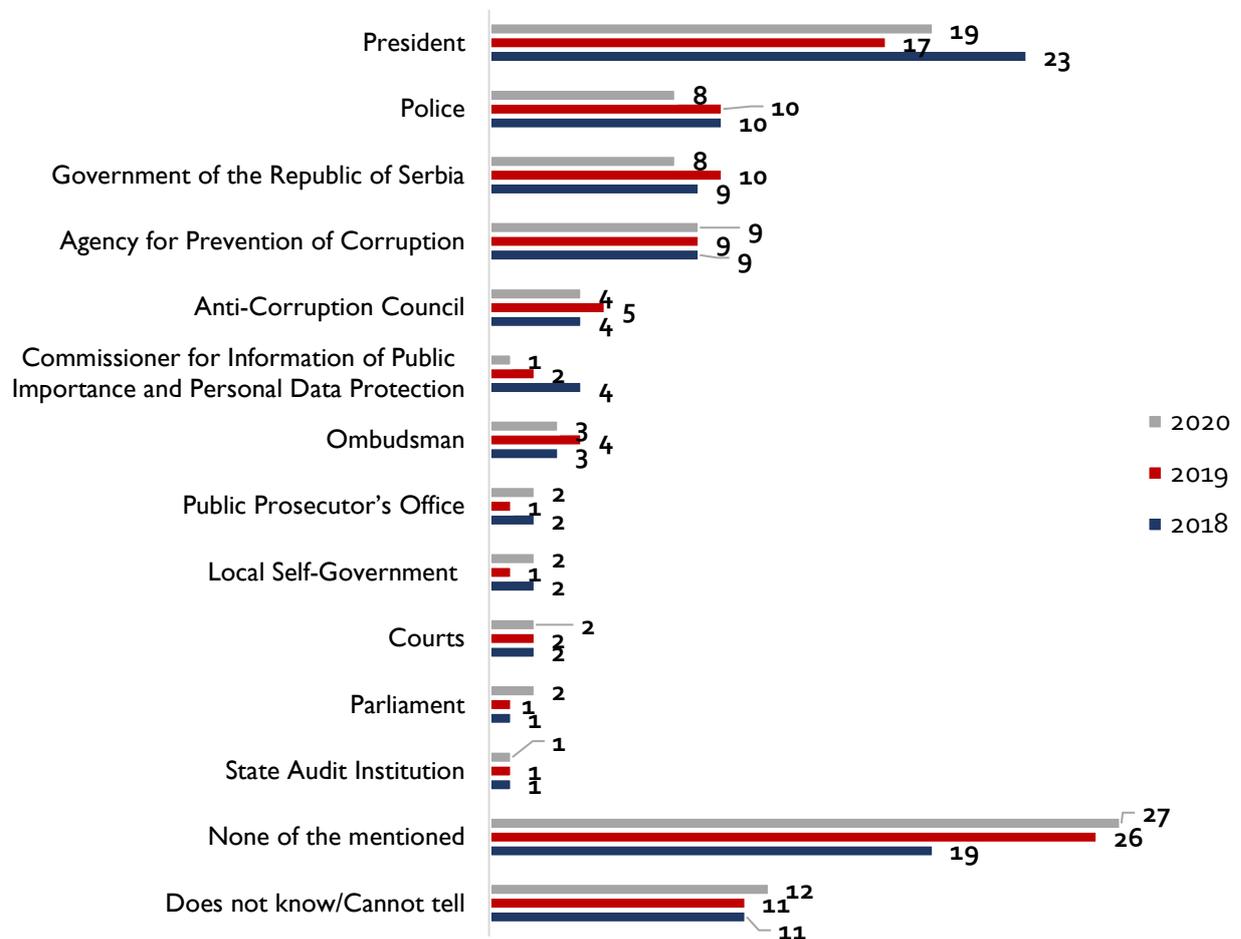
With respect to all these institutions, whether they fight corruption directly or indirectly, the percentage of those who believe that they are not at all or are very little committed to fighting corruption is higher than those who see them as being greatly or extremely committed to fighting this phenomenon.

This finding applies even to the president, whose efforts in the fight against corruption are considered insufficient by 33% of the respondents, while 30% of the respondents believe in his commitment to the fight against this phenomenon.

However, the president is still the only institution who gained trust of 30% of the respondents that he is making some effort in this fight. Less than a quarter of respondents (23%), believe in the government's commitment and the police and the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption are trusted by every fifth respondent (20%), the Anti-Corruption Council by 18%.

When we asked the respondents to name one institution among the above which is the most dedicated to the fight against corruption, more than one quarter or 27% chose the option "none of the above".

Chart 5.5. **Please select one institution that you believe is the most committed to addressing corruption?** Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %



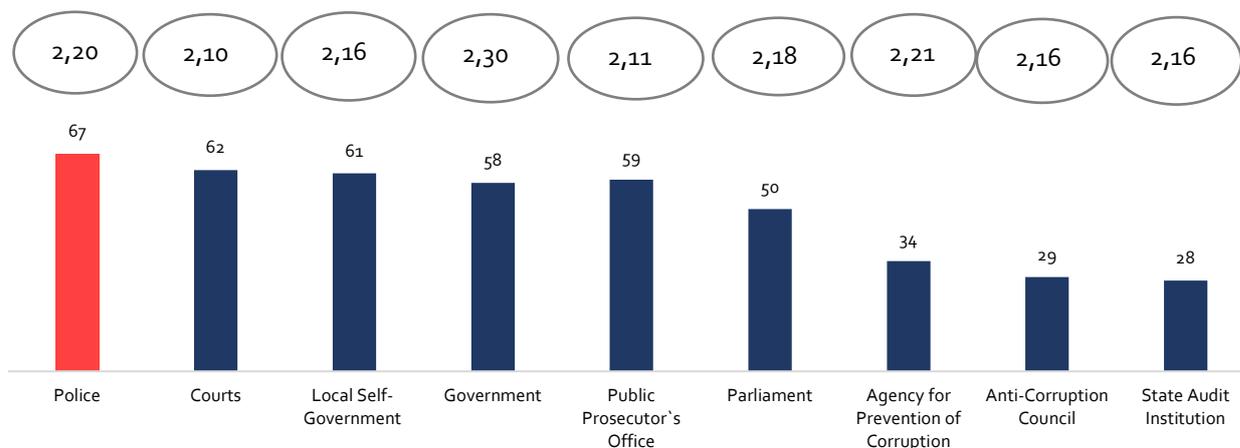
At the same time, compared to the previous research cycle, we note that fewer percentage points were assigned to all of the above institutions on the list of those that citizens consider the most committed in the fight against corruption.

The president is the only institution in regard to which the perception of commitment is higher than the 2019 result, 2 percentage points, and every fifth respondent believes that he is committed to the fight against corruption. The Agency for the Prevention of Corruption's results were not worse compared to 2019, and the percentage of those who believe in its commitment to anti-corruption activities remained at the same level.

The president's commitment to fighting corruption is recognized by respondents aged 50 and over, who have completed primary school and live in rural areas.

When we single out those institutions whose job description, either directly or indirectly, includes the fight against corruption, it can be noticed that the visibility of their prevention efforts remained at last year's level.

**Chart 5.6. Visibility and performance scores of anti-corruption institutions, in %**



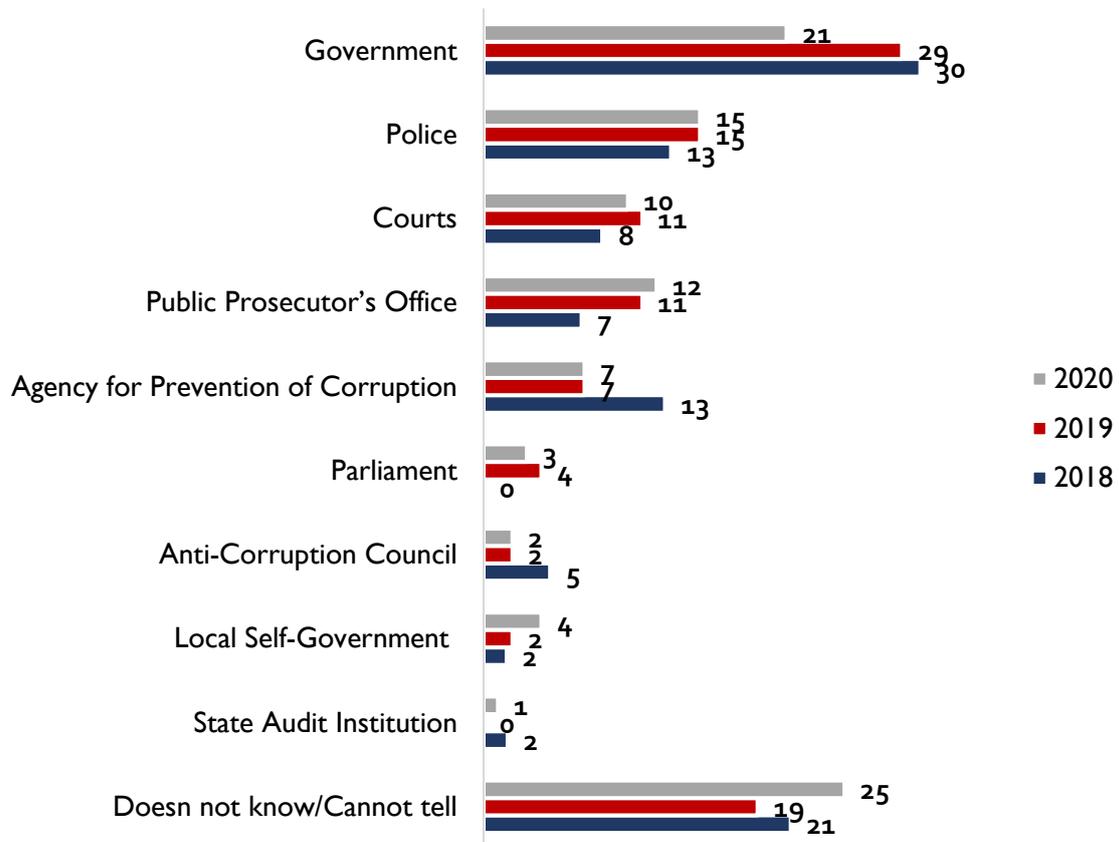
The fight against corruption by the police, the judiciary and local governments is recognized by more than 60% of the surveyed citizens, while the efforts of institutions who are directly responsible for it and even named after it are recognized by one third of the respondents (Agency for the Prevention of Corruption) or 29% of the respondents (Anti-Corruption Council).

There have been no major changes when it comes to the average scores these institutions earned, in this cycle they range between 2.1 and 2.3. The highest score was earned by the Government (2.3), while the courts earned the lowest (2.1).

The institution that is expected to lead the fight against corruption is still the Republic Government, with the number of those who would assign that role to it is 8 percentage points below 2019 result and 9 percentage points below that of 2018. In this way, the declining trend in the number of citizens who believe in the Government's ability to fight corruption has been once again confirmed.

15% of the respondents still see the police as a leader in the fight against corruption, which is a result at the level of last year's survey. Apart from the police, other institutions kept almost identical percentages as they had in the previous period.

Chart 5.7. **Which of these institutions ought to lead anti-corruption efforts in Serbia?** Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %



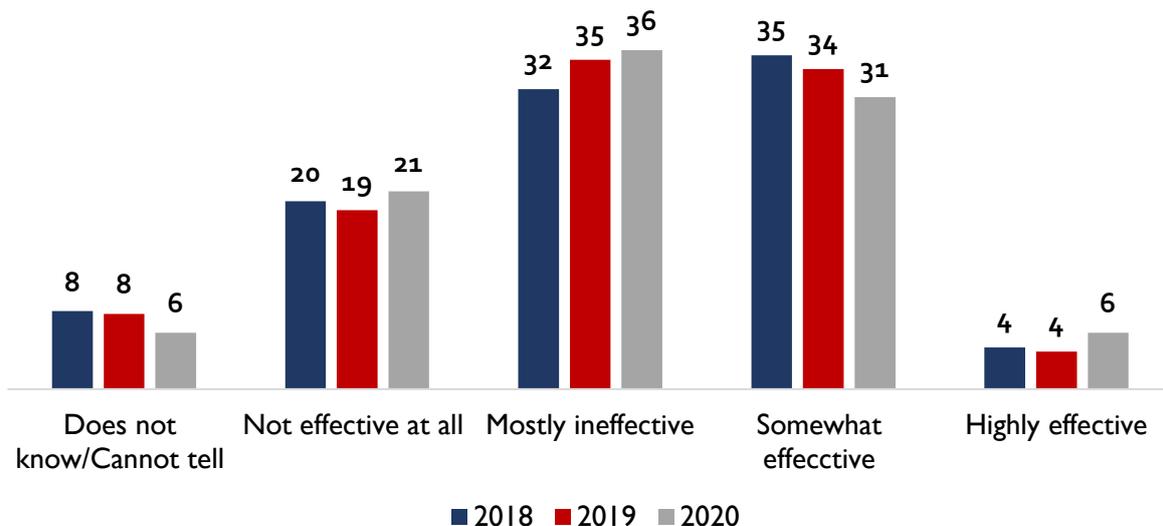
## 6. THE ROLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA'S GOVERNMENT IN PREVENTING CORRUPTION

There are no major changes when it comes to the perception of the role of the Government in preventing corruption in Serbia. As in previous research cycles, respondents are mostly skeptical and argue that the Government is mostly (in)effective in its efforts to reduce or prevent corruption in the state.

If we add up the percentage of citizens who think that the Government is ineffective and somewhat ineffective and the percentage of those who believe that this institution is somewhat and highly effective, in the end there is a significantly higher percentage of those citizens who doubt its effectiveness. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the respondents believe that the Government is not effective enough, while 37% of them believe otherwise.

Compared to the previous cycle, the number of the respondents who believe that the Government is not effective enough increased by 3 percentage points, while the number those who think that this institution was effective decreased by 1 percentage point.

Chart 6.1. **How effective is the Government of Serbia in addressing corruption?**  
*Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %*

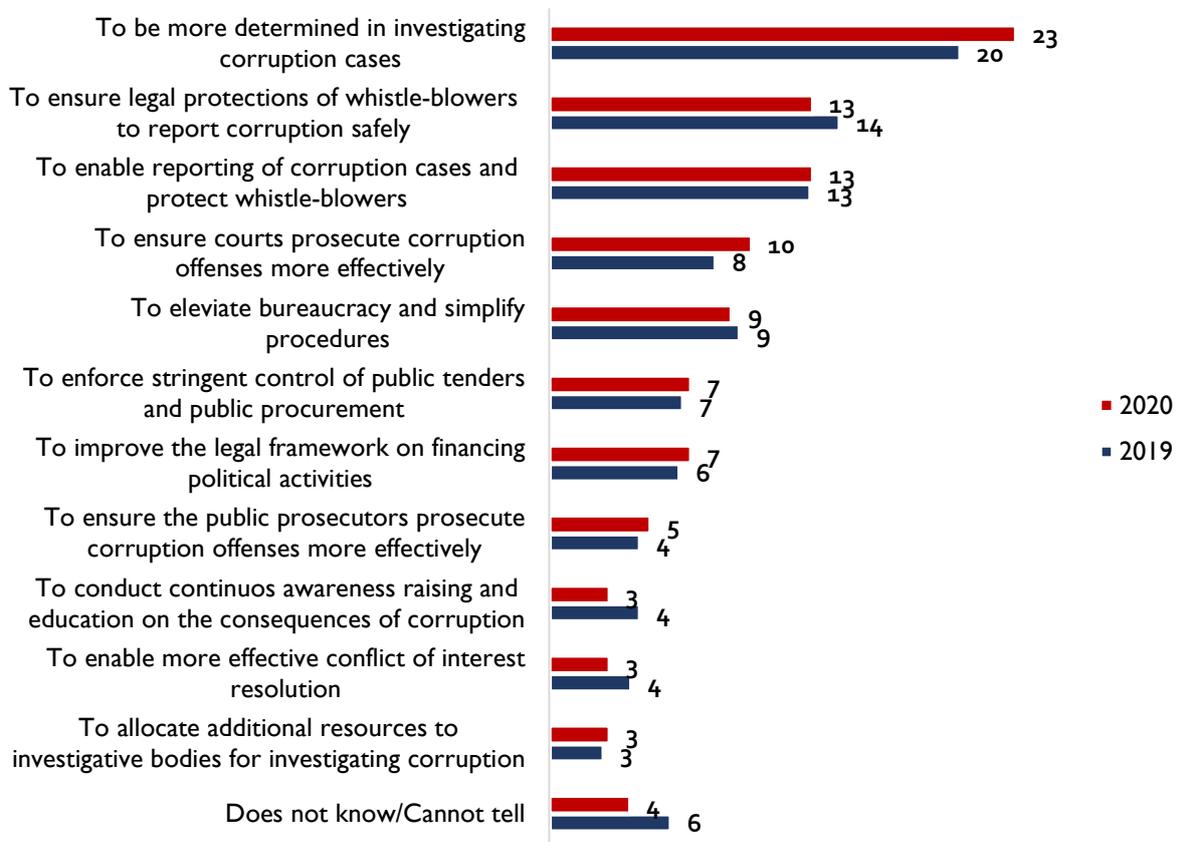


The effectiveness of the Government in the fight against corruption is questioned primarily by respondents with college and higher education as well as pupils /students.

In order for the Government to be more effective in the fight against corruption, it must be more decisive in resolving the investigation of corruption cases, but above all to provide adequate protection to those citizens who are ready to report corruption in Serbia.

The Government's determination to investigate corruption is supported by 23% of respondents, while the protection of whistleblowers (not only through the adoption of laws and regulations, but also in general) is supported by a total of 26% of the respondents. One in ten respondents believes that the government would be more effective in preventing corruption if it allowed courts to prosecute corruption offenses more effectively.

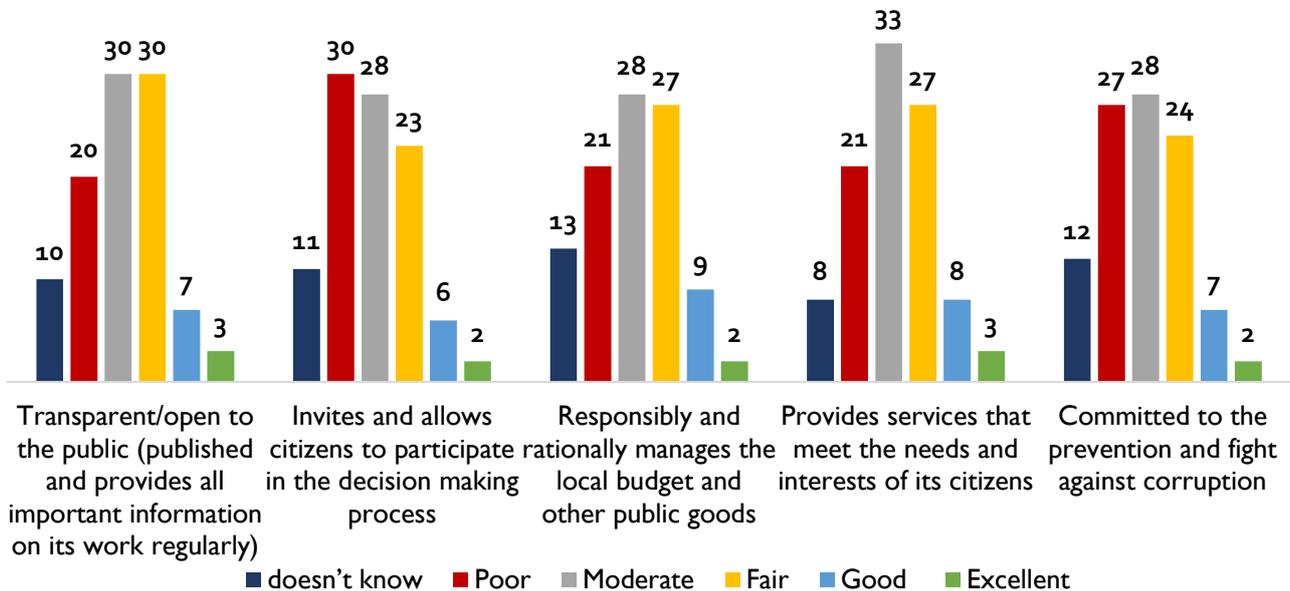
Chart 6.2. **What should the Government do first to tackle corruption effectively?**  
*Comparison of 2019 and 2020, In %*



## 7. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The next area concerns the respondents' satisfaction with transparency and accountability of local government units. In this cycle of research, as well as in 2019 and 2018, the area was examined through five different statements. The percentage of citizens who say that their municipalities or cities are *transparent to a great extent* this year is 10% (which is the same as in last year's survey, and one percentage point above the result of the 2018 survey). As opposed to previous cycles of research, for the first time we come across a case where more than a ten percent of citizens positively evaluate the efforts of local government in some of the offered statements (good, excellent). 11% of the respondents think that local governments *rationally and responsibly manage the local budget* (9% - in 2019, 7% - in 2018), as well as *provide adequate services to citizens* (9% - in 2019, 7% - in 2018). A total of 9% of respondents say that they are satisfied with the way in which local governments are *committed to the fight against corruption* (8% - in 2019, 6% - in 2018). Finally, the lowest percentage of the respondents is of the opinion that local governments *allow citizens to participate in the decision-making process* - 8%. Compared to last year's survey, the number of the respondents who share this opinion dropped by one percentage point (6% - 2018). In all five statements that were rated above the average, we find those who have a positive attitude among citizens from Vojvodina, older than 70, citizens who have completed primary school or are without it and business owners.

Chart 7.1. To which extent is your local government..., in %



As many as 58% of the respondents state that local governments do little or nothing to involve citizens *in the decision-making process* (this area ranked first in 2019 as well). More than half of the respondents negatively assessed the *provision of adequate services to citizens* (54%), and 55% of the respondents are of the opinion that their local government is little or not at all *committed to*

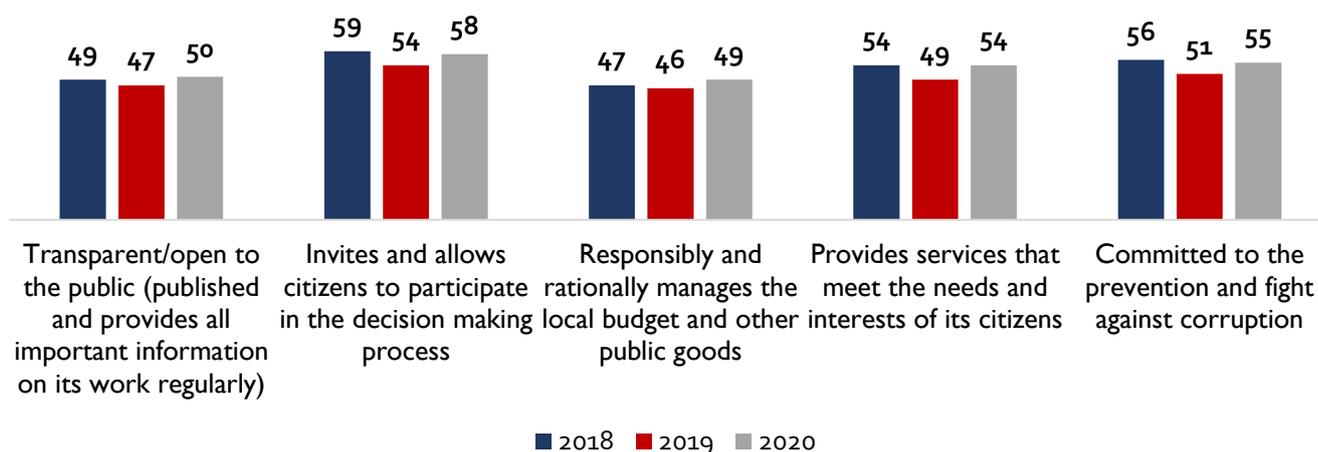
the fight against corruption - Chart 7.1. Half of the respondents in Serbia believe that their local governments do little or nothing at all to open up towards the public and 49% are of the opinion that local authorities *rationaly manage the budget*.

Chart 7.2 shows a comparison between three research cycles (2018, 2019 and 2020) of the respondents who negatively assessed the categories that were examined (sum of answers little and not at all). **Compared to the 2019 survey, we find a slightly higher percentage of citizens who have a negative perception of the efforts of local governments in three out of five statements.**

This year, 55% of the respondents think that *local government is not committed to the prevention and fight against corruption*, which is four percentage points above last year’s result, and one percentage point below 2018. Involvement of citizens *in the decision-making process* is negatively perceived by 58% of the respondents, which is an increase of four percentage points compared to last year. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the respondents say that *local government provides appropriate services and meets the needs and interests of citizens*, which is a result at the level of 2018, and five percentage points above that of 2019.

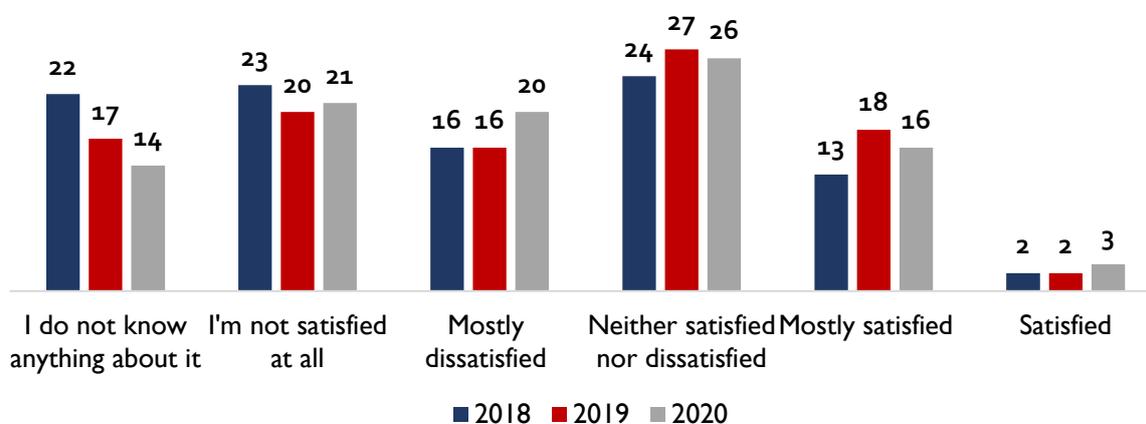
Half of the respondents say that local governments are little or not at all *open to the public* nor provide all necessary information. Compared to previous surveys, we see a slight increase in the number of citizens who provided this answer (47% in 2019 and 49% in 2018). Similarly, when it comes to the statement that local government responsibly and rationally manages the local budget, we found a slight increase in the percentage of Serbian respondents who assessed it negatively - 49% compared to 46% in 2019.

Chart 7.2. **To which extent is your local government ... (sum of answers ‘poor’ and ‘moderately’); Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %**



The next question examined whether the citizens were (dis)satisfied with the way in which the local government manages the budget (budget allocations, budget spending, the role of citizens in planning and spending the budget, etc.). Being mindful of the importance of this document for the functioning of the municipalities and cities themselves, we compared the results obtained with the findings from last year's survey.

Chart 7.3. **Satisfaction with the way your Municipality / City administers the budget, Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %**



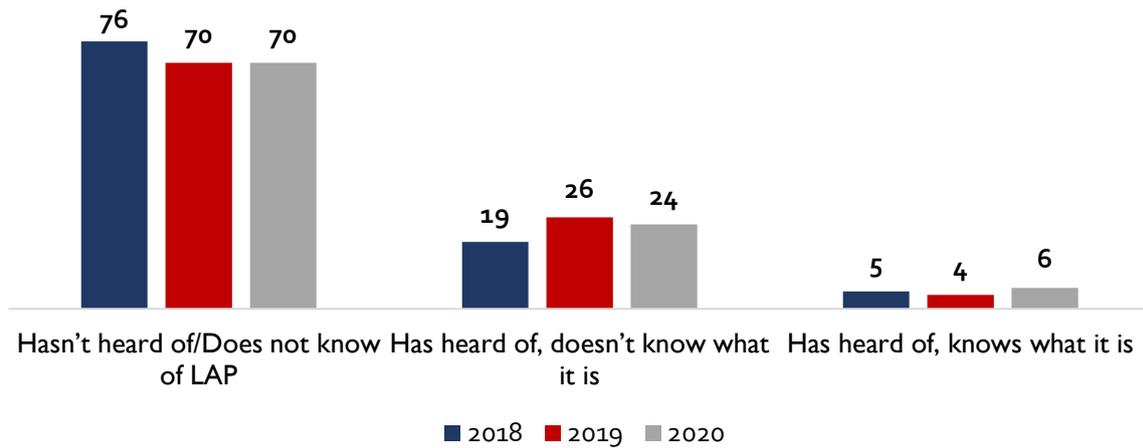
Compared to previous survey cycles, there is a clear increase in the percentage of the respondents who state that they are mostly or completely **dissatisfied** with the way their local government manages the budget. A total of 41% of the respondents state that they have a negative perception of this question (the sum of answers – mostly and completely dissatisfied), which is five percentage points above the result in 2019, and two percentage points above that in 2018. A quarter of the surveyed citizens say that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the way the budget is managed (this is the result at last year's level which is only by one percentage point higher, and three percentage points below that in 2018). Finally, a fifth (19%) of the respondents positively assessed the way local governments manage the budget (mostly satisfied and satisfied) - one percentage point below last year's result.

We see a correlation between this issue and the question asking citizens to assess how much their local government is committed to the fight against corruption. A total of 78% of citizens who are satisfied with the commitment of the municipality or city in which they live to the fight against corruption also state that they are satisfied with the way the local government manages the budget. Employees in public administrations in as many as 26% of the cases state that they are satisfied with the way the budget is distributed in their municipality or city, while 16% of those who are employed by private business owner think the same. The respondents between the ages of 60 and 69 express the lowest level of positive perception of the way local governments allocate the budget (only 11%).

The main goal of local anti-corruption action plans is to prescribe specific measures for the prevention and fight against corruption at the level of cities and municipalities. In addition, the adoption and implementation of these documents is an obligation of Serbia in the negotiations on accession to the European Union. Compared to last year's survey, we find the same percentage of respondents who say they are not familiar with the existence of a local anti-corruption plan (70%). The number of respondents who heard about this mechanism, but do not know exactly what it is about, decreased by about two percentage points (from 26% in 2019 to 24% this year), and the number of those who heard about it and understand what it is about increased by the same percentage (5% - 2018, 4% - 2019 and 6% - 2020).

In the group of respondents who are familiar with the LAP and understand its purpose we find above-average respondents from Vojvodina, respondents under the age of 39, public administration employees, residents of suburban settlements and men . In these categories, there are from 2 to 8 percentage points more knowledge about LAP than in the total sample average.

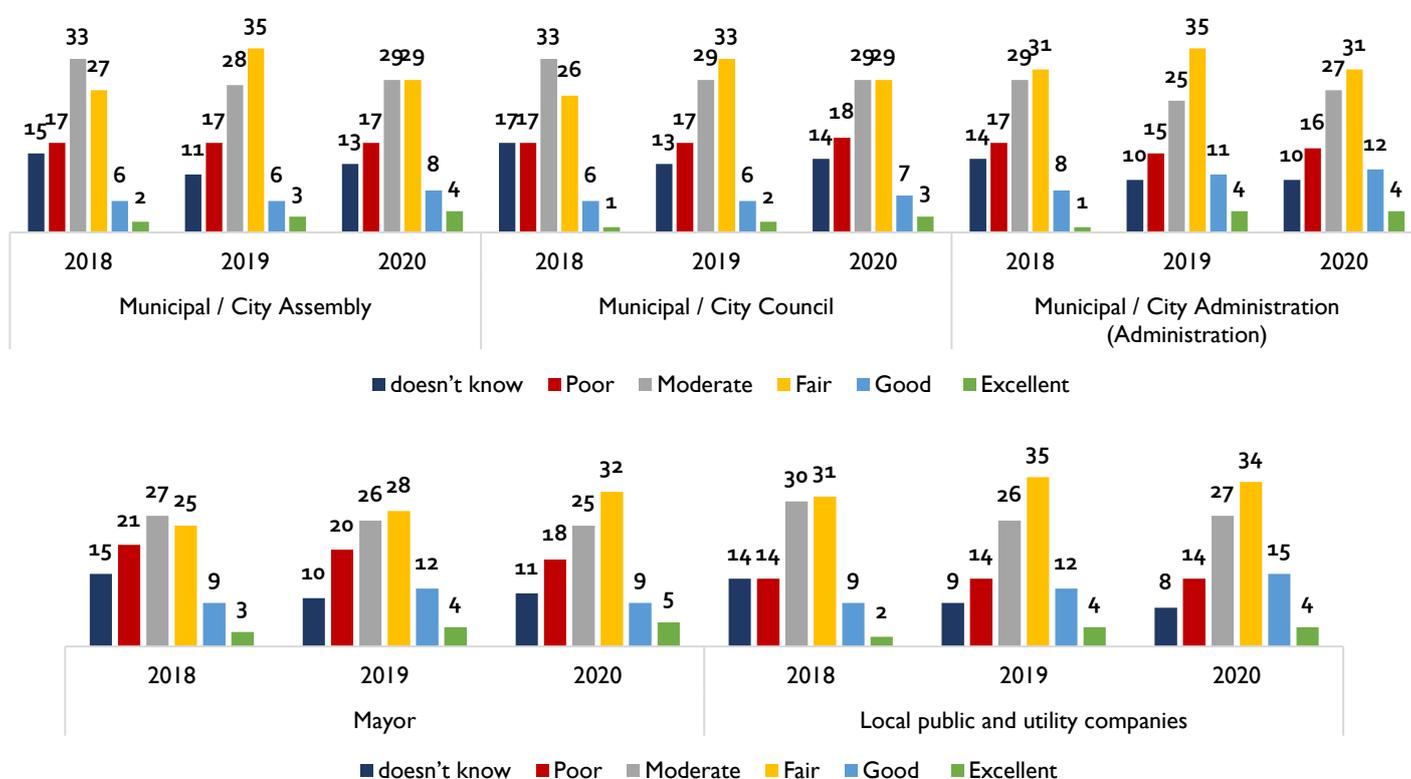
**Chart 7.4. Have you heard of the Local Anti-Corruption Plan (LAP)?**  
*Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %*



## 8. SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

When it comes to the level of responsibility, concern and responsiveness of local authorities to citizens' interests and needs in relation to the results in 2019, we see that in the case of city/municipal assemblies, city/municipal administration, city /municipal council and public companies, there was a slight increase in the percentage of citizens with negative attitude towards them, while as regards mayors, we see a positive trend and a decrease in the percentage of Serbian citizens who express dissatisfaction - see Chart 8.1

**Chart 8.1. To what extent are the following institutions of your local government doing their job responsibly, conscientiously, and in accordance with the interests and needs of citizens, Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, u %**



This year, the greatest dissatisfaction was observed in the case of the city/municipal assembly (46%) and the city/municipal council (47%). Compared to last year's survey there was an increase in dissatisfaction by one percentage point concerning both. As for mayors, 43% of the respondents are dissatisfied (three percentage points below last year's result). The same percentage of the respondents showed dissatisfaction with the municipal /city administration - 43% (an increase of three percentage points compared to the 2019 survey), while the lowest percentage of citizens (41%) say that local public and utility companies do little or nothing to work responsibly, to be concerned about and responsive to the interests and needs of citizens. On the other hand, 16% of citizens express satisfaction (answers: good and excellent) with

the responsibility, concern and responsiveness of local public and utility companies to their needs (11% –2018). **Regarding all of these institutions, except for the mayor, we see an increase in the percentage of citizens who believe that they do their job responsibly and that they are concerned about and responsive to the interests and needs of citizens (sum of answers good, excellent).** In the case of the municipal/city assembly, 12% of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the work of this local government body (in 2019 - 9%, in 2018 - 8%). Every tenth respondent says that they think that the municipal/city council is doing its job well (an increase of two percentage points compared to last year's survey). This attitude is shared by 16% of the respondents in the case of city/ municipal administration (15% - 2019), and 19% in the case of local public and utility companies (16% -2019, 11% - 2018). The percentage of citizens with a positive view of the work of the mayor is the only that dropped- 14% (16% - 2019, 12% - 2018).

The answers, similar to previous years, correlate with the respondents' attitudes about the commitment of their local government to fighting corruption - those respondents who are of the opinion that their local government is more committed to fighting corruption are more inclined to believe that local authorities do their job responsibly and responsively. The connection between the opinion that corruption is present in local governments and the extent to which local governments are concerned, responsible and responsive to citizens' interests and needs is also perceived. If we match the data with the demographic data, we will see that men, business owners, citizens aged between 30-39, as well as respondents with or without primary school are satisfied with the work of the municipal/city assembly. When we look at the correlation with the age of the population in the case of the municipal / city council, we will see that as many as 54% of those under 29 have a negative perception in the case of this body, while in the case of those over 70, 36% think the same. Men have an above-average positive attitude towards the work of the municipal council, 12% of them compared to 8% of women. Residents of rural areas above-average point out that the city / municipal administration and mayors are concerned, responsible and responsive to the interests and needs of citizens (23% - administration, 20% mayor / mayor). And in the case of these two institutions, we notice above-average values when it comes to satisfaction expressed by men.

## 9. PERCEPTION OF INSTITUTIONAL CORRUPTION

Similar to last year's survey, in the opinion of citizens, **inspectories and healthcare** are at the top of the list of corruption infested institutions. **However, unlike last year, when the customs was in the third place, now that place is taken by the courts.**

Healthcare remains at the top of the list of institutions where corruption is widespread. This time slightly less than half of the respondents share the opinion that there is a large amount of corruption in health care (47%), which is three percentage points lower than last year. Inspectorates are right behind it, as 46% of the respondents see them as a place where corruption is present to a large extent. However, compared to last year (when this institution was included for the first time), we notice a decrease of four percentage points. 44% of the surveyed citizens of Serbia state that there is corruption in the courts to a large extent. This institution recorded a growth compared to last year of five percentage points, and approached the findings in 2018, when as many as 45% of respondents stated that it is an institution in which corruption is present to a large extent.

In the case of the judiciary, we notice that as many as 57% of the respondents from Belgrade believe that corruption is present in this institution to a large extent, 35% of the respondents from Central Serbia share the same view. In the case of institutions which are perceived as highly corrupt, such as health care, we find a correlation with the place of residence, and in the group of rural residents 56% believe that corruption is widespread in health care. Respondents between the ages of 30 and 39 also state above-average that they perceive corruption in health care to a large extent - 53% of them have this attitude. As many as 63% of business owners are of the opinion that corruption exists to a large extent in inspectorates (communal, construction, labor inspection), and the citizens of Belgrade have a similar attitude. In addition, highly educated and high school students share the view that there is widespread corruption in the judiciary, health and inspections.

Forty-three percent (43%) of respondents believe that there is a lot of corruption within the customs and police authorities and among public enforcement officers. In the case of customs service, there is a decrease compared to 2019 of one percentage point. On the other hand, the result for the police and public enforcement officers increased by four percentage points. A slightly lower percentage of Serbian citizens, 42%, state that there is a lot of corruption in public prosecutor's offices. This finding is at the level of 2018 and is four percentage points higher than the findings in 2019.

**Table 9.1. Based on your direct experience or indirect knowledge, is corruption present in the following Serbian institutions/organizations, and, if so, to what extent... Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %**

	Does not know, Cannot tell			No corruption at all			Slightly			Greatly		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Healthcare	7	7	10	5	6	7	37	37	36	51	50	47
Inspections	-	11	11	-	6	7	-	33	36	-	50	46
Courts	13	12	13	6	8	7	36	41	36	45	39	44
Customs	17	14	16	4	6	6	31	36	35	48	44	43
Police	10	10	10	8	7	7	40	44	40	42	39	43
Public Enforcement Officers	17	16	15	10	6	7	38	39	40	35	39	43
Public Prosecutor's Office	15	14	13	6	7	7	37	41	38	42	38	42
Local Government mayors/ representatives	13	15	14	6	6	8	42	40	39	39	39	39
Ministries	17	18	16	10	10	9	38	39	38	35	33	37
Parliament	23	24	20	12	11	9	37	41	39	28	24	32
Education	12	12	13	13	10	13	42	44	45	33	34	29
Tax Administration	16	17	18	13	11	11	41	43	44	30	29	28
President	20	23	19	34	29	25	23	29	29	23	20	27
Cadasters	19	17	20	18	15	13	37	41	40	26	27	27
Notaries	23	18	18	19	19	16	34	38	40	24	25	26
Public Enterprises	17	14	15	15	13	13	44	45	47	24	28	25

In the cases of the judiciary and the prosecutor's office, it is important to mention the correlation with the question of how committed these institutions are to the fight against corruption. A total of 72% of those who believe that the Public Prosecutors' Office is not at all committed to fighting corruption believe that corruption is present in this institution to a large extent.

When it comes to the police, there is a correlation between those respondents who believe that corruption in the police is present to a large extent and those who believe that the police are not committed to fighting corruption (77% of those who say they are not committed to fighting corruption say that corruption is present within the police to a large extent).

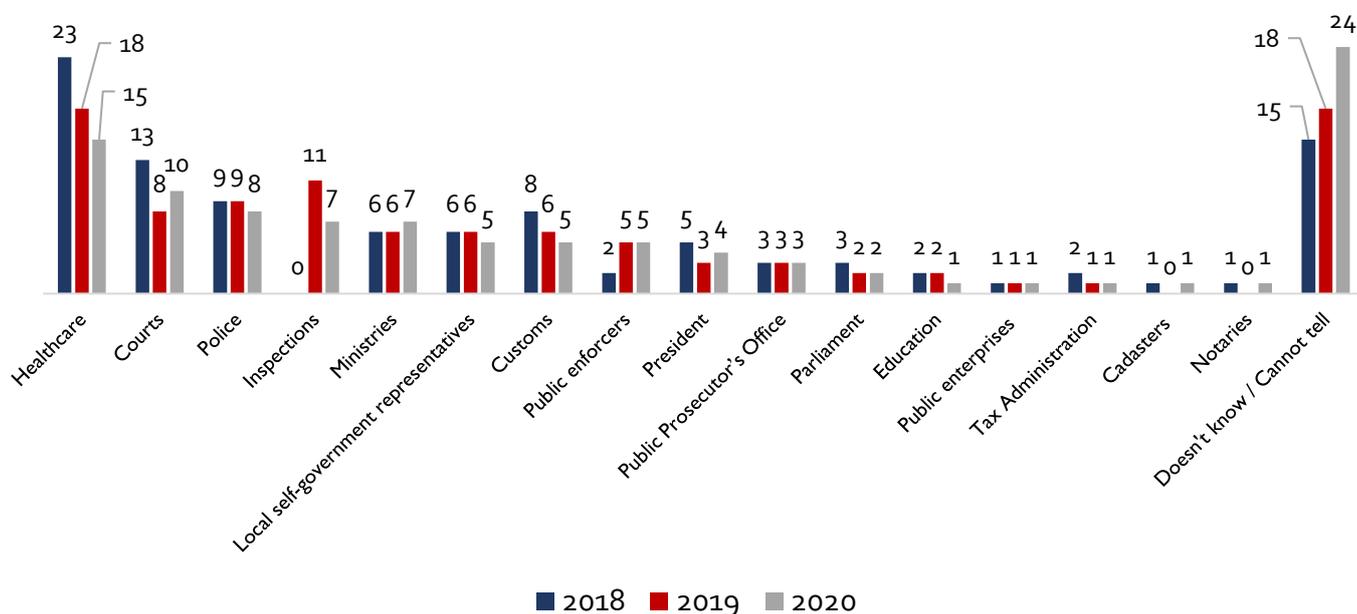
The biggest spike in the attitude that corruption is present in one institution to a large extent was noticed in relation to the ministries and the National Assembly. In the case of the National Assembly, now almost a third of the respondents are of the opinion that there is a lot of corruption in this institution, which is an increase of eight percentage points compared to 2019. A total of 37% of the surveyed citizens are of the opinion that ministries are highly corrupt. Compared to the survey from 2018, this is an increase of two percentage points, and compared to last year's survey of four percentage points. In both cases, this is the above-average attitude of the residents of Belgrade, urban areas, women and the highly educated.

In education, there is a drop of five percentage points when it comes to the attitude that corruption exists to a large extent. Compared to 2019, when 34% of respondents shared this view, the score is now 29%.

As for the **President of the Republic**, negative perception increased as citizens are of the opinion that corruption is present to a large extent within the President's Office. Compared to last year, when one fifth of the respondents thought that corruption was present in the President's Office to a large extent, now 27% of the respondents have this attitude. Looking at the last three cycles of surveys, this is also the highest percentage of those who believe that corruption is present in the president's office to a large extent. In the group of respondents who have a negative perception, we find a larger number of respondents from Belgrade (as many as 46% from Belgrade say that there is a lot of corruption in the president's office, while 15% of citizens from Central Serbia think the same) and a group of people with higher education (38% of highly educated respondents have this attitude). However, this still remains the only office in connection with which the respondents frequently expressed "free from corruption" opinion - 25% of the respondents share this attitude. Compared to the previous survey, a decline of 4 percentage points was observed (29% - 2019), and nine percentage points (34%) compared to the 2018 survey.

When asked to single out only one institution from the previous table, which they consider the most corrupt in Serbia, the respondents answered as follows: 15% put **healthcare** in the first place, which is 3 percentage points below previous year's result. This is certainly a finding that coincides with the results from the previous table (collectively, 83% of respondents believe that corruption is present in health care to a small or large extent (a total of four percentage points below the result obtained in 2019, and five below than in 2018).

Chart 9.1. **The most corrupt institution in Serbia, Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020,**  
%



This year, the courts are in the second place, as one tenth of the respondents say they are the most corrupt institutions in Serbia. In relation to last year's survey when this institution was in fourth place, there is a growth of two percentage points. The police is in third place with 8 %, while inspectorates, which took second place with 11% last year, are now singled out by 7% of Serbian citizens. In relation to last year's survey, we see an increase in the number of respondents who did not know or could not assess which institution is the most corrupt in Serbia. (2018) 15% of citizens gave this answer, and in 2019, 18%, whereas now almost a quarter of the respondents is undecided (24%).

Belgrade residents above-average state that the president (9%) and ministers (9%) are the most corrupt in Serbia, while in Vojvodina 13% of respondents say it is the police and 9% the customs service. In Central Serbia, 7% of citizens point to public enforcement officers, and 18% to healthcare.

## 10. PERCEPTION OF THE PREVALENCE OF CORRUPT ACTIVITIES IN SERBIA

The perception of the prevalence of corrupt activities was measured in two ways: in general, in Serbia (Table 10.1) and in the immediate social circles of the respondents (Table 10.2).

When it comes to the perception of the prevalence of corruption at the state level, the picture is still extremely negative in the case of all 10 surveyed corrupt activities. Namely, when collectively looking at the answers "somewhat present" and "present to a large extent", the percentages range from 84% in the case of *simultaneously holding public office and owning a private business when this is contrary to law*, to as much as 93% in the case *use of friendly ties with persons employed in public institutions for easier and faster access to public services*. This corrupt activity was perceived as the most prevalent in the previous research cycle, with a degree of agreement of 92%.

Table 10.1. **In your experience, are the following corrupt practices widespread in Serbia, and, if so, to what extent? Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %**

	Does not know, cannot tell			Not at all			Slightly			Greatly		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Using connections and friendships with persons working in public institutions to finalize issues quickly and with ease	4	5	4	4	3	3	26	30	29	66	62	64
Gift giving to public employees for performing activities that are part of their job	5	6	5	7	5	4	31	37	41	57	52	50
Giving money to public employees for performing activities that are part of their job	6	8	7	6	9	6	32	38	39	57	44	48
Doing a favor for a public employee for performing activities that are part of their job	5	7	6	7	8	7	35	43	43	53	42	44
Using a public function to employ relatives or friends	3	5	4	3	3	5	20	27	26	74	64	65
Using state/public resources to achieve personal goals (any kind of private benefit)	7	9	9	3	4	5	33	36	35	57	51	51
Using state/public resources to achieve political party goals and benefits	8	9	9	4	4	5	29	35	33	59	52	53
Using state/public resources to achieve private company goals and benefits	8	10	8	3	5	6	32	37	34	57	48	52
Simultaneous performance of several public functions, when in contravention of law	8	10	9	3	5	6	33	39	35	56	46	50
Simultaneous performance of a public function and owning a private business when in contravention of law	8	10	10	3	3	6	32	40	34	57	47	50

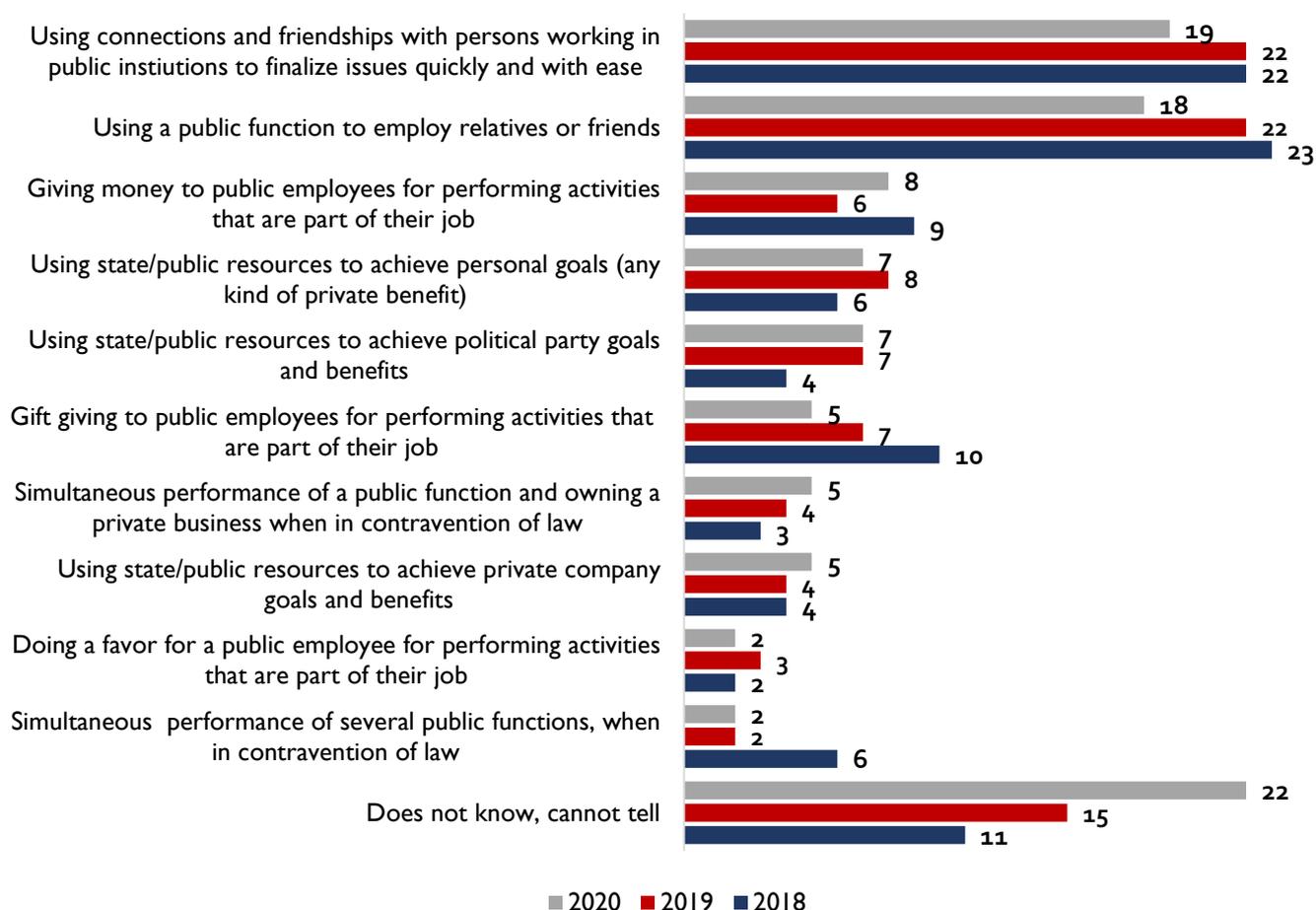
When looking at individual acts of corruption, the highest percentage of answers “yes to a large extent” again, as in 2019, was given in relation to *using the office to employ relatives or friends* - 65%. This is followed by the *use of friendly ties with persons employed in public institutions for easier and faster access to public services*, with 64%, while in third place (53%) is the statement that *state /public resources are used for the benefit of private business*. While in the previous research cycle, less than half of the answers "yes to a large extent" was given in five statements, we now find it in only two such statements: *offering money to a civil servant to do something that is otherwise his job* (44%) and *the use of state / public resources in order to achieve goals and provide benefits for private business* (48%).

In the case of seven activities, we see an increase in the percentage of the respondents who believe that they are present largely at the state level, and four percentage points in relation to three of them: *simultaneously holding several public offices when this is contrary to law* - by 46% to 50%, *giving money to a civil servant to do something that is otherwise his job* - from 44% to 48% and *using state / public resources to achieve goals and provide benefits for private business* - from 48% to 52%. Other corrupt practices show an increase of one to three percentage points, except in the *use of state / public resources for personal gain (any kind of profit)*, where the situation is unchanged, and in *giving gifts to a civil servant to do something that is otherwise his job*, which is the only activity in which we see a decline of two percentage points. However, in the latter case, we see an increase in the percentage of the respondents who believe that this type of corruption is somewhat present in the country.

Between 3% and 7% of the respondents believe that the corrupt activities listed in the table are not widespread in Serbia at all. Most of them, 7%, believe that this is the case with *doing favors to a civil servant in order for him to do something that is otherwise his job*, or *giving money to a civil servant with the same goal* (6%). A similar finding was observed in the previous research cycle, but the percentage of the respondents who shared this opinion was slightly higher - 8% in the case of the first and 9% in the case of the second type of corrupt practices. The inability to assess the prevalence of corrupt practices in Serbia (the answer "I don't know, I can't assess") is mostly connected with those activities related to conflict of interest, use of state resources and use of public office – and is recorded in 8% to 10% of the cases. These activities are less “tangible” compared to other listed activities and, by the nature of things, citizens are less informed about them.

Chart 10.1 presents the frequency of the responses when the respondents had to opt for only one type of corruption from the table above, which they consider to be most prevalent at the state level.

Chart 10.1. **Which one of these corrupt practices is the most widespread in Serbia?** Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %



The first important finding is that the perception of the most widespread corrupt activities in Serbia is the same as in the previous two research cycles, therefore most respondents single out the *use of office to employ relatives or friends* (19%) and the *use of friendly ties with people who are employees in public institutions for easier and faster access to public services* (18%). However, the percentage of the respondents who share this attitude is lower than in previous years, by 3 and 4 percentage points, respectively.

All other answers are significantly less represented: 8% of the respondents recognize *offering money to a civil servant to do something that is otherwise his job*, as the most common form of corruption in Serbia, 7% state the *use of state resources to achieve personal objectives or gain* and *offering gifts to a civil servant to do something that is otherwise his job*, and 5% believe that the most common are the *use of state resources in order to achieve political party goals and benefits for private business*, as well as *simultaneously holding public office and owning a private business when this is contrary to law*. We see an increase in the percentage of the respondents who single out a certain activity as the most frequent only in the case of *offering money to a civil servant to do something that is otherwise his job* (by two percentage points), *using state resources to achieve goals and provide benefits for private business* (by one percentage point) and *simultaneous holding of public office and owning a private business when this is contrary to the law* (by one percentage point). It is also noticed that a significantly higher number of the

respondents (by 7 percentage points compared to 2019, or twice as many as in 2018) could not assess which corrupt activity is the most widespread in Serbia.

By examining the perception of the scope of corruption in the immediate social circles of the surveyed citizens we come to a slightly different picture. In contrast to the opinion on the prevalence of corruption in Serbia, where 84% to 93% of the respondents believe that all of these acts of corruption are *widespread to some or to a large extent*, in the second case answers like these are provided by 73% to 86 % of the respondents, with only two corrupt activities perceived as very prevalent by more than half of the respondents (in the case of Serbia, there are eight such activities). These findings are practically the same as in the previous research cycle, with very small differences.

The largest number of citizens perceive the *use of friendly ties with persons employed in public institutions for easier and faster access to public services* (57%, two percentage points more than in 2019) as the most widespread form of corruption in their immediate social circles and then *use of office to employ relatives or friends* - 55%. In this case, as in both previous cycles, the third one is - *offering a gift to a civil servant to do something that is otherwise his job*, which is an activity that is perceived as very widespread in the immediate environment by 42% of citizens. Between 6% and 12% of the respondents believe that corrupt activities listed in the table are not widespread in their immediate environment - mostly in cases of offering money or doing a favor to a civil servant to do something that is his job, or in cases of conflict of interest and holding public office while owning a private business when this is against the law. Every ninth respondent believes that the misuse of state resources in order to benefit a political party or business does not occur in his/her immediate environment. The lowest frequency of answers "not at all" is observed in connection with- using friendly ties with people who are employed in public institutions for easier and faster access to public services - only 6% of the respondents believe that such actions do not exist in their immediate environment.

Table 10.2. **Based on your direct experience or indirect knowledge, are the following practices widespread in your immediate social circle, and, if so, to what extent? Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %**

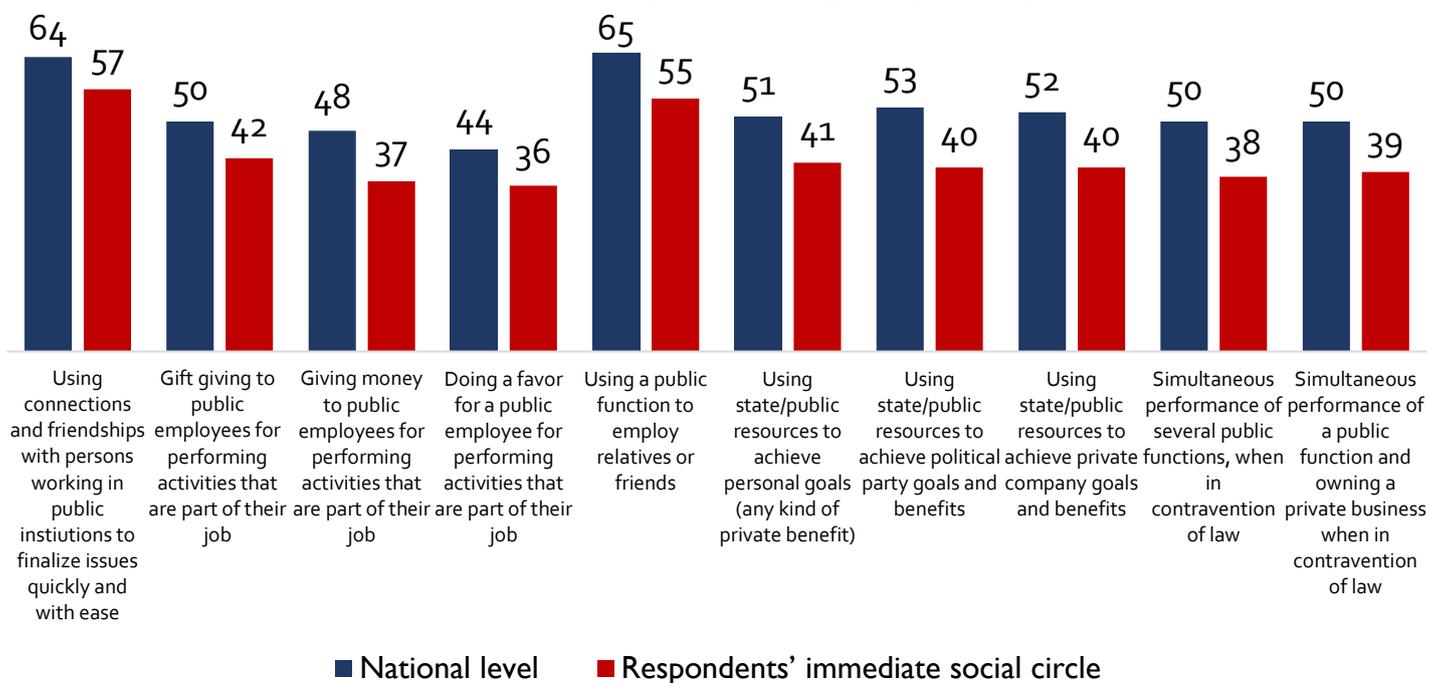
	Does not know, cannot tell			Not at all			Slightly			Greatly		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Using connections and friendships with persons working in public institutions to finalize issues quickly and with ease	9	10	8	4	5	6	32	30	29	55	55	57
Gift giving to public employees for performing activities that are part of their job	9	11	9	8	7	8	37	39	41	46	43	42
Giving money to public employees for performing activities that are part of their job	12	13	11	11	14	12	37	38	40	40	35	37
Doing a favor for a public employee for performing activities that are part of their job	10	12	11	9	13	12	43	42	41	38	33	36
Using a public function to employ relatives or friends	8	10	9	6	7	9	28	28	27	58	55	55
Using state/public resources to achieve personal goals (any kind of private benefit)	14	15	14	9	10	9	39	36	36	39	39	41
Using state/public resources to achieve political party goals and benefits	15	16	15	10	11	11	36	34	34	39	39	40
Using state/public resources to achieve private company goals and benefits	15	17	15	10	10	11	39	38	34	36	35	40
Simultaneous performance of several public functions, when in contravention of law	15	17	15	11	11	12	38	37	35	36	35	38
Simultaneous performance of a public function and owning a private business when in contravention of law	15	17	15	11	10	12	37	37	34	37	36	39

As in the case of the general level, the inability to assess the prevalence of corrupt practices in the immediate environment (the answer "I do not know, I can not assess") is expected to be most present in those activities related to the use of state resources and public office and is about 15%.

Differences in the perception of the prevalence of corruption in Serbia and in the immediate social circles are also shown in Chart 10.2. As in 2019, the largest difference, of 13%, is noticeable in the case of *using state / public resources in order to achieve party goals and benefits* (state level: 53%, level of immediate environment of the respondents: 40%). A very similar difference, of 12%, is observed in the case of *using state / public resources in order to achieve goals and benefits for private business* (state level: 52%, level of immediate environment of the

respondents: 40%) and in the case of *simultaneously holding multiple public functions when this is contrary to the law* (state level: 50%, level of immediate environment of the respondents: 38%).

**Chart 10.2. Perceived extent of corruption, national level and respondents' immediate social circle (only answers „greatly widespread“), in %**



Such differences may be due to the fact that citizens are informed about corruption through the media and other sources of information, and that they discuss these topics with different people around them, which can significantly affect their general perception of the prevalence of corruption at the state level, no matter of how they found out about the illegal actions and whether they were or weren't confirmed.

## II. PERCEPTION OF SERBIAN CITIZENS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES

Citizens assessed the importance of various measures and activities the implementation of which could lead to curbing corruption in the country - Table II.1.

At the very top of the list of seven measures, as in the previous two research cycles in 2018 and 2019, is the need to introduce *stricter penalties, including imprisonment, for those who offer and accept bribes* – this measure is important for every fifth respondent, and 62% of the respondents see it as a very important, which collectively makes up 83% of citizens who estimate that this is the best way to curb corruption in Serbia. Compared to previous surveys, this percentage has changed slightly – before there were 85%, or 86% of the respondents with this attitude. Second, as in previous years, is the need for *enhanced legal protection for those who report corruption (whistleblowers)*, with a collective agreement of 81% (20% believe this measure is important and 61% that it is very important). In the case of these two statements, although they are still most often represented by the answers of respondents, it is important to note that the measured values are the lowest in all three research cycles - the first statement shows a decrease of three percentage points compared to the previous year, and the second four percentage points. *The increase in the level of transparency of public institutions* is the third important item, with a cumulative percentage of 76%, which is a decrease of three percentage points compared to 2019, but this measured value is still higher than in 2018 - by five percentage points.

They are followed by a measure of *improving media freedoms and media transparency, or strengthening the supervisory and control role of independent state agencies*, considered important or very important by 75% of the respondents, which is practically the same finding as in the previous research cycle. In the last two places out of a total of seven examined measures, there are *improved exercising of the right to free access to information of public importance* (71%) and *education of civil servants and officials on the harmfulness of corruption* (63%). The last two statements show a drop in percentage points, so the values measured in this cycle are the same or similar to the 2018 survey.

Practically, the percentage of the respondents who believe that the implementation of all these measures is not important at all or that it is not important in the fight against corruption ranges from 5% to 7%. The only exception is the *education of civil servants and officials on the harmfulness of corruption* - 8% of the respondents believe that this is not important at all, and another 7% that it is not important - a total of 15%. At the same time, as stated above, this is a statement that, compared to others, shows the lowest number of respondents who believe in its (full) importance in all research cycles - 61% during 2018, 66% during 2019 and 63% in this research cycle.

When these findings are analyzed against the opinions of the respondents on corruption as a phenomenon, it is observed that 77% to 88% of the respondents who *perceive corruption as a way of behaving, culture and habits*, believe that these measures are of (great) importance for the fight against corruption. The exception, or the least agreement in this group of respondents is found about the education of civil servants and officials: 68% of the respondents who see corruption as a way of behaving believe that this measure would help to curb corruption in the future. The same pattern is followed by the respondents who predominantly agree with the statement that *corruption in Serbia is the way for some people to get rich at the expense of the public / state*, or with the statement that *corruption in Serbia is the way for some*

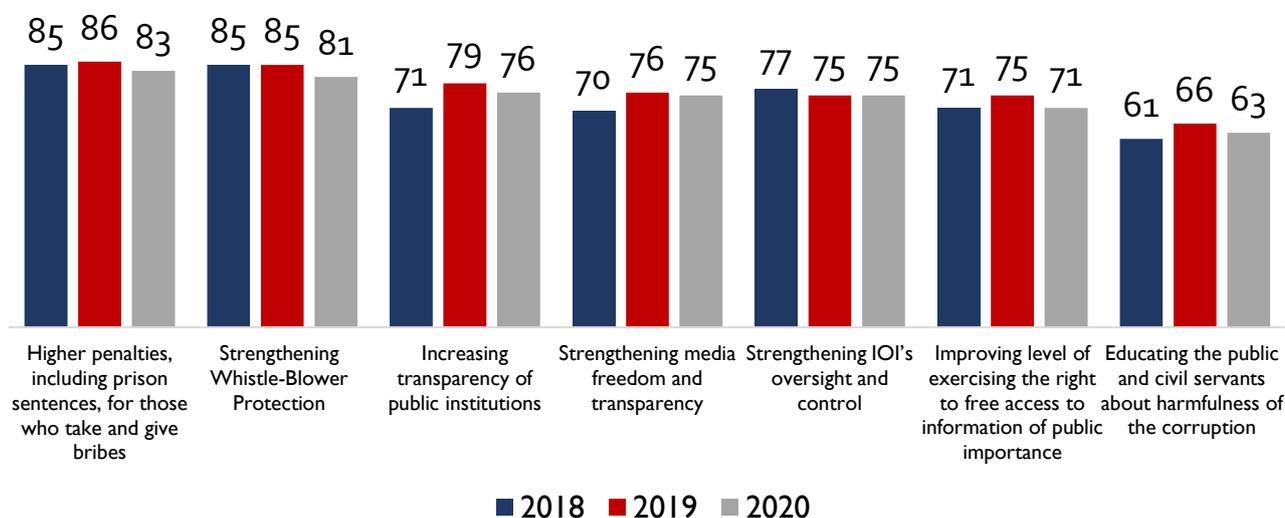
people to exercise their basic rights and needs: in both cases, the importance of all these measures, except for the education of officials, is recognized by between 80 and 89% of the respondents, while the importance of education is recognized by 66% and 72% of the respondents, respectively.

**Table 11.1. Could you please rate the importance of the following policies that could reduce corruption in Serbia? Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %**

Cycle → Activity ↓	Very important			Fairly important			Moderately important			Not so important			Not at all important			Cannot tell		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Higher penalties, including prison sentences, for those who take and give bribes	64	66	62	21	20	21	8	8	9	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	1	2
Educating the public and civil servants about harmfulness of the corruption	35	41	37	26	25	26	17	15	19	8	7	7	9	9	8	5	3	3
Increasing transparency of public institutions	42	50	50	29	29	26	18	14	15	5	3	4	2	1	2	4	3	3
Strengthening Whistle-Blower Protection	62	64	61	23	21	20	9	10	12	3	2	3	1	1	2	2	2	2
Strengthening IOI's oversight and control	50	49	50	27	26	25	14	15	15	3	3	4	1	2	2	5	5	4
Improving level of exercising the right to free access to information of public importance	42	44	43	29	31	28	17	16	18	4	3	4	2	1	2	6	5	5
Strengthening media freedom and transparency	45	49	50	25	27	25	17	14	14	6	4	5	2	2	2	5	4	4

It should be noted that the percentage of the respondents who believe that the implementation of these measures is important or very important dropped for six of the seven measures which is the opposite of 2019, when the percentage of those who believed that their implementation is important or very important in the fight against corruption increased for 5 out of 7, - Chart 11.1. Only in the case of *strengthening the supervisory and control role of independent state agencies*, the percentage has not changed.

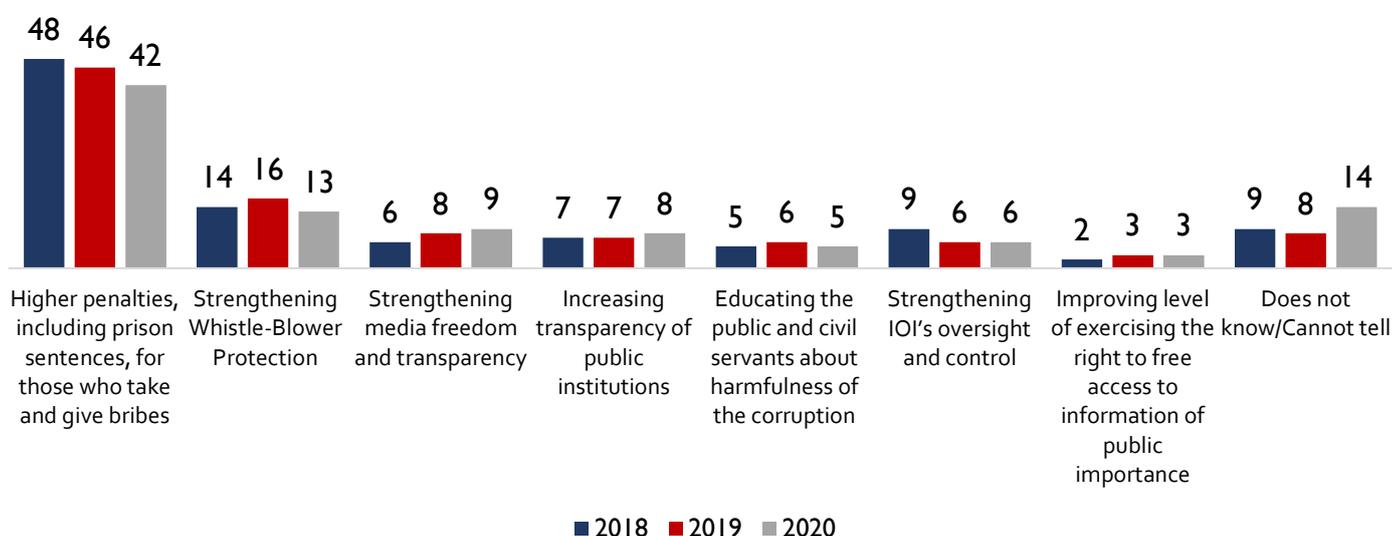
Chart 11.1. **Could you please rate the importance of the following policies that could reduce corruption in Serbia (answers „important“ and „very important“)**, Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %



46% of Serbian citizens, see severe penalties, including imprisonment, for those who offer or accept bribes as the most effective measure in preventing and fighting corruption- Chart 11.2. This finding remained the same compared to 2018 and 2019, when the same measure was also in the first place, but with greater support - 46 and 48%, respectively. In this group of the respondents, above-average are respondents in the age group between 30 to 50 and respondents from urban areas, i.e., from Belgrade and Central Serbia.

In this research cycle as well, increased legal protection of those who report corruption (whistleblowers) is perceived as the second most effective measure. Here, we see above-average respondents over 50, those from Central Serbia, especially from rural areas and with a secondary level of education. Even though it is the second most frequent response, this measure has three times less support than the first - 13%. This value is closer to the one measured during 2018 (14%), and it is lower by three percentage points compared to 2019. All other measures received significantly lower support than the second-ranked statement and range from 3% in the case of improved exercising of the right to free access to information of public importance, to 9% in the case of improving media freedoms and media transparency.

Chart 11.2. **Which policy of those listed above do you believe would be the most effective in addressing corruption in Serbia?** Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %



When it comes to the perception of corruption as a phenomenon (Table 11.2), the largest percentage of citizens still see corruption as a *means for some individuals to get rich at the expense of the public interest*. 70% of citizens agree with this view. It is important to note here that the percentage of the respondents who agree with this statement continues to drop - from 76% in 2018, to 74% in the previous research cycle, and to 70% in the current year. The number of the respondents who express disagreement with this attitude is growing proportionally and now amounts to 11%, which is an increase of four percentage points compared to 2019. More than half of the respondents 52% - believe that corruption is a *common way of behaving, or an integral part of culture and habits in society and there are 23% of those who do not agree with this statement*. As in the previous case, there is a shift in answers, so the number of citizens who agree with this attitude decreases (from 57% to 52%), and the number of those who disagree increases - from 18% to 23%. The prevalence of this opinion and considering corruption to be a normal state of affairs is a systemic problem, given that it is unlikely that citizens will protest against something they consider part of their culture and usual behavior. Finally, 44% of Serbian citizens believe that *corruption in Serbia is a way for some people to exercise their basic rights and address problems*, and the number of respondents who share this attitude continued to drop- from 50% in the first cycle, to 48% in the second and 44% in the last, third research cycle. Unlike previous cases, in which there was an increase in the percentage of respondents expressing disagreement, here, there is a proportional increase in the percentage of undecided citizens (from 21% to 26%).

Although a decreasing percentage of respondents who agree with these statements is encouraging, overall, it can be concluded that the findings are still negative, and that the citizens of the Republic of Serbia mostly perceive corruption as a common pattern of behavior, especially in the case of individuals who use corruption mechanisms to enrich themselves or benefit at the expense of the state or the general public. Also, the previously presented findings can be a significant indicator of the prevalence of corruption in Serbia, given that it shows that citizens have “come to terms” with such mechanisms and actions: if we take into account that as many as 52% of Serbian citizens are willing to accept corruption is a common

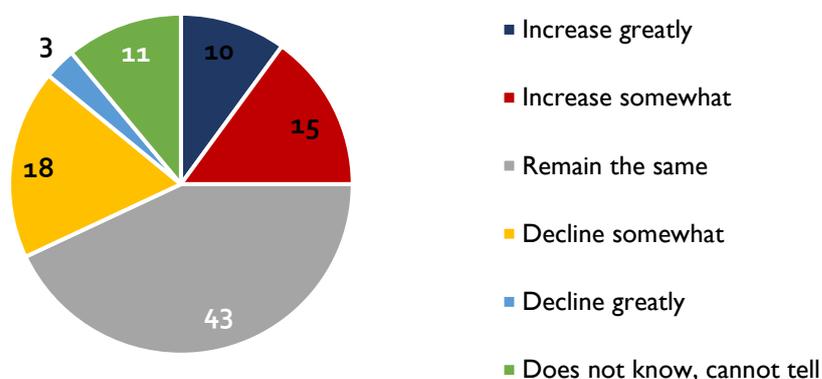
way of behaving, and especially the finding that the only solution for some people to satisfy their basic rights and obligations is corruption, it is clear that this phenomenon is widespread and poses a threat to normal functioning - both at the level of institutions and at the level of everyday life.

**Table 11.2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements in connection with corruption? Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, u %**

	Disagree			Neither agree nor disagree			Agree			Does not know		
	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Corruption is a matter of custom, culture, and habit in Serbia	18	18	23	19	22	21	59	57	52	4	3	4
Corruption is a means for some people in Serbia to get rich at the expense of the public	9	7	11	13	16	16	76	74	70	2	3	3
Corruption in Serbia is a means for some to access their basic rights and meet their basic needs	24	25	26	21	21	26	50	48	44	5	6	4

According to the subjective forecasts of the largest number of Serbian citizens (43%), the prevalence of corruption in the next year will remain at the same level as it is now. At the same time, there is a slightly higher percentage of respondents who are inclined to believe that its volume will increase compared to those who have the opposite belief: 25% versus 21%. However, when looking at the extreme values of the scale (it will greatly increase and decrease significantly), it is noticeable that the number of those who have a completely pessimistic attitude is the largest: 10% of citizens believe that corruption will increase, and only 3% believe that it will be significantly reduced. The remaining 11% of the respondents could not decide on this issue - Chart 11.3.

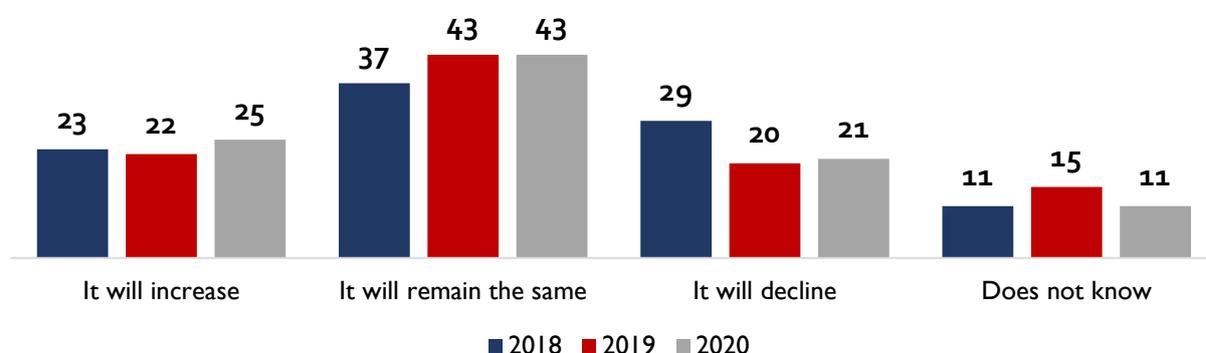
**Chart 11.3. In your opinion, the extent of corruption will in the coming year...? In %**



Residents of Belgrade and urban areas, women, respondents with the highest level of education and those up to 49 years of age constitute above-average the group of respondents who believe that the level of corruption will increase significantly in the coming period. Among those who believe that corruption will decrease in the next year, there are above-average respondents from Central Serbia, those with a secondary education, those from rural areas and over 60 years of age.

Compared to 2018 and 2019 (Chart 11.4), there is a slight increase in the number of respondents who believe that the level of corruption will increase in the next year - from 22% to 25%, and the number of those who have the opposite attitude increased by one percentage points - from 20% to 21%.

**Chart 11.4. In your opinion, the extent of corruption will in the coming year...?**  
Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in %

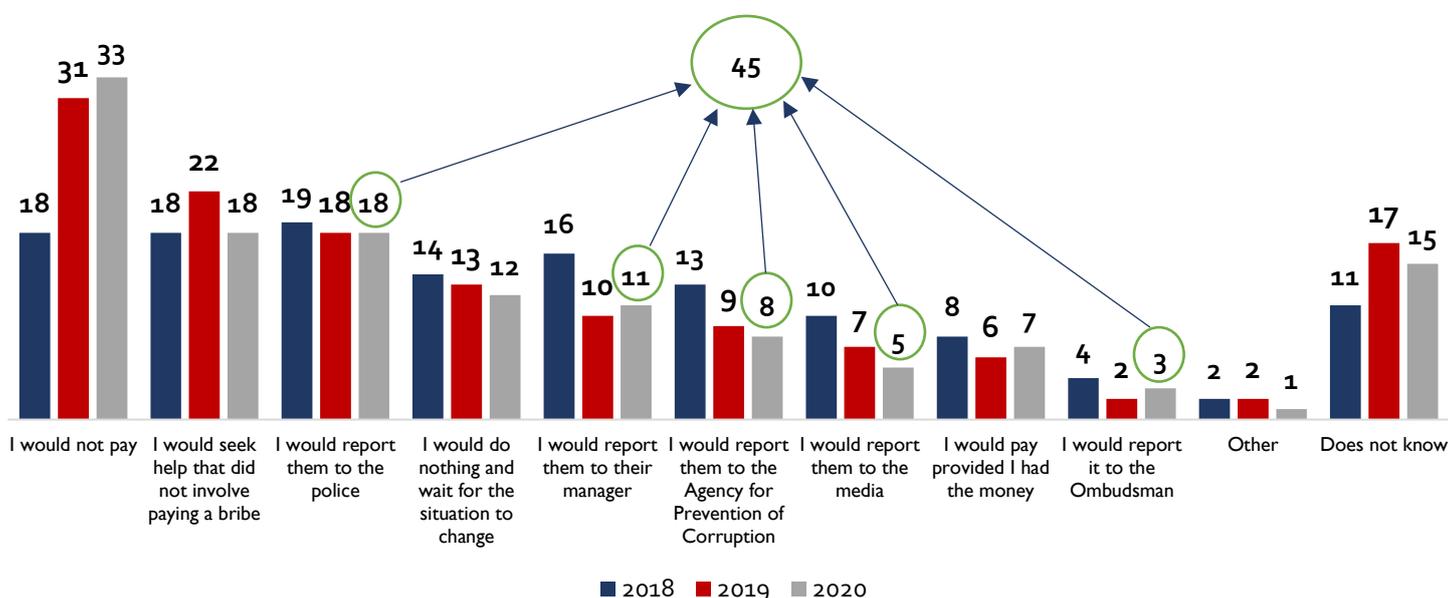


We asked the citizens of Serbia what they would do if they found themselves in a situation that a civil servant or employee in the public administration asks them for a bribe and came to the following results - Chart 11.5. Comparatively, the following important findings stand out: the number of the respondents who choose the answer: “I would not pay” continues to grow - from 18% in 2018 to 31% in 2019 and to 33% in this research cycle. In addition to this answer, we see a slight increase in the number of those who opted for *reporting to the manager* (by one percentage point, from 10% to 11%), *reporting to the Ombudsman* (from 2% to 3%) and *paying if they had the money* (from 6% to 7%). Among those who would not pay, there are women above the average, respondents from Belgrade and other urban areas, as well as senior citizens.

On the other hand, the share of the respondents who would *look for someone to help them without paying a bribe* is decreasing (from 22% to 18%, which is the same as in 2018), *report the case to the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption* (from 9% to 8%), *report the case to the media* (from 7% to 5%, where it is important to note that the number of respondents who would report corruption to the media is half that of 2018), as well as the number of the respondents who would remain passive or *would do nothing, they would wait for the situation to change* (from 13% to 12%). The number of the respondents who would *report corruption to the police* remains unchanged at 18%.

In general, women are more willing to report such cases to managers, the media, the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption and especially the Ombudsman than men, while in the case of reporting to the police, the situation is reversed.

Chart 11.5. **If you were asked for a bribe by a civil servant or public employee, what would you do?** Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, in % (multiple answers allowed)



Such findings point to several conclusions. First, compared to the previous cycle, the percentage of citizens who would report corruption/bribery to the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption and the media is slightly lower, while the number of those who would report corruption to the administration and the Ombudsman is slightly higher. Collectively, 45% of the respondents would report corruption, which is one percentage point lower than in 2019 and 17 percentage points lower than in 2018, which again speaks of the problem with considering corruption a normal state of affairs in society. Though the opinion of a majority is that corruption is a part of habits and customs, the need and obligation to react to such phenomena and to report corruption, and thus to suppress it, is practically stifled. On the other hand, the same finding may be an indicator of widespread ignorance or lack of awareness of the seriousness of corrupt practices and the need to report them. This is evidenced by the fact that 15% of respondents do not know what to do in such situations. In this context, a very important question arises about how much of the problem of the prevalence of corruption lies in the fact that a certain percentage of citizens do not know or do not have enough information about what to do if they find themselves in this or a similar situation.

We further asked the respondents *who would not report a civil servant for bribery* to state the reasons why they would not do so - Chart 11.6.

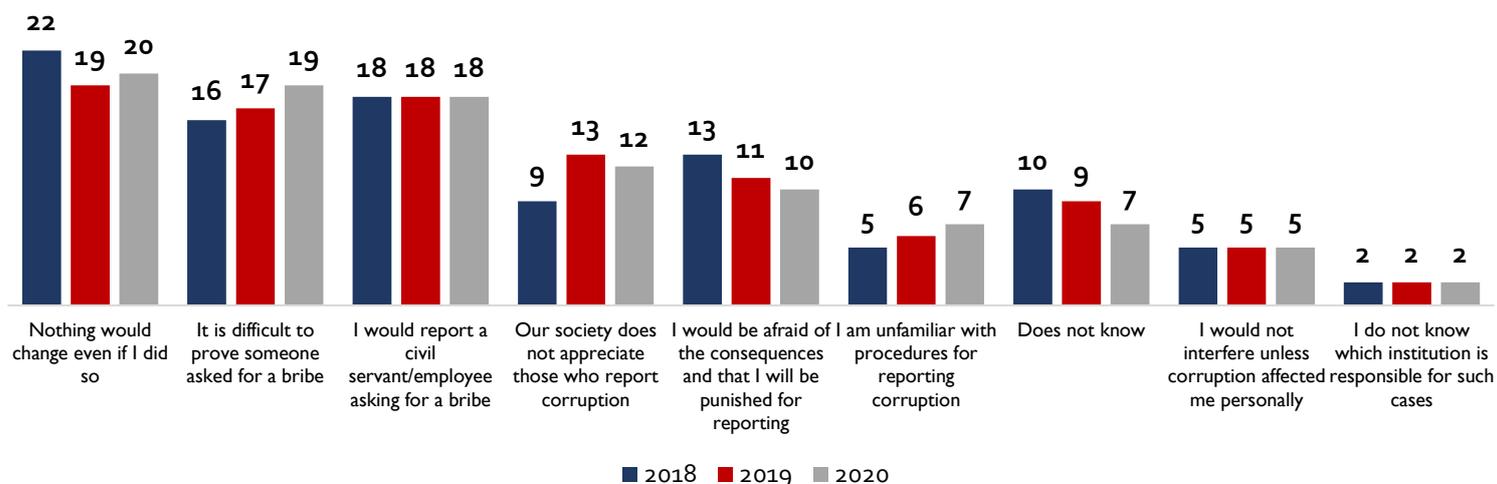
The three most common answers are *that nothing will change even if corruption is reported* (20%), *that it is difficult to prove that someone asked for a bribe* (19%) and *that in our society those who report corruption are not valued* (12%). In the previous research cycle, there were a total of 49% of citizens with such attitudes, and now there are 51%. It is important to note that there is a further increase in the number of respondents who give up reporting corruption because they think it is difficult to prove it - from 16% in 2018, to 17% in 2019 and to 19% in this research cycle. Also, a relatively high percentage of the respondents who choose the answer *our society does not appreciate those who report corruption*, which again indicates the

need for systematic treatment of corruption in society as a problem that is “common”. At the same time, every tenth respondent (10%) still expresses *fear of consequences / punishment* after reporting corruption.

The need for further education and communication with citizens is evidenced by the fact that a total of 9% of the respondents do not know in what ways they could report corruption (7% do not know the procedures, and 2% do not know which institution is responsible), which is two percentage points more than in 2019. Among the respondents who do not have enough information about the procedures and institutions that are relevant when it comes to reporting corrupt practices, there are above-average females, respondents from rural areas and those aged 50 and over. When 7% of the respondents who do not know how to behave are added to this, and also 19% of those who give up reporting because they think that these cases are very difficult to prove, there is a need for further communication with citizens especially through educational / informative campaigns explaining what the procedures look like and to whom cases of corruption are reported, what are its manifestations and so on.

Every twentieth citizen of Serbia expresses a completely passive attitude towards reporting corruption, or he/she would not report it - except in a situation where it directly affects him/her.

**Chart 11.6. If you would not be ready to report a civil servant/employee asking for a bribe, could you please give reasons for this? Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, u %**

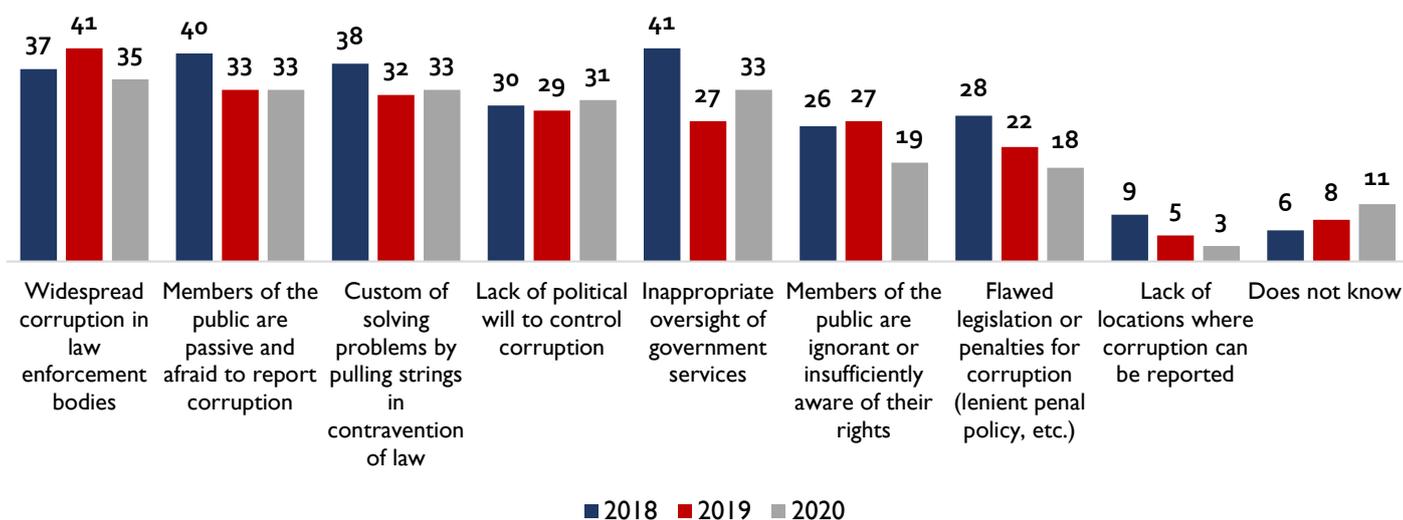


As regards the factors that hinder the fight against corruption most, 35% of the respondents recognize *widespread corruption in law enforcement agencies* as the most important one, which is six percentage points below the result of the previous survey, which was higher than that of 2018. This brings this year's findings closer to 2018 in terms of value. The *passivity of citizens, or their fear of reporting corruption* comes second, which is the answer that is now chosen by 33% of the respondents (the same value as in 2019, or 7 percentage points below that in 2018), followed by the *usual practice to solve problems by using connections outside the law*- 33% (7 percentage points below that in 2018) - Chart 11.7.

In addition to the above, compared to 2019, there is an increase in the share of the respondents who believe that the key factor hindering the fight against corruption is the *lack of will of political leaders to control corruption* (from 29% to 31%), or, *inadequate control of government services* (from 27% to 33%). On the other hand, an important finding is the fact

that the number of those who see *citizens' lack of knowledge or ignorance of rights* as the main reason dropped (from 27% to 19%), which is the lowest measured value in all three research cycles. Also, a fewer number of citizens perceive poor legislation as a problem - 18%.

**Chart 11.7. In your opinion, what are the key factors that adversely affect efforts to address corruption? Comparison of 2018, 2019 and 2020, u %**



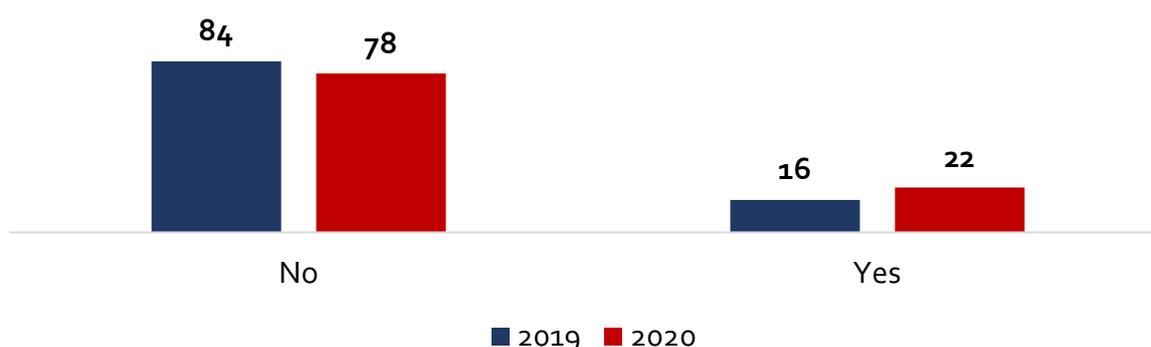
## 12. CITIZENS' DIRECT EXPERIENCE WITH CORRUPTION

This research, like last year, included a set of questions concerning the direct experience of citizens with corruption. Citizens' contact with the following institutions was examined: public educational institutions (schools, universities), health institutions (hospitals, health centers, clinical centers), public administration (municipal /city/state administration), public utility companies (EPS, Infostan...), the police, courts (commercial, appellate, misdemeanor...) and prosecutor's offices.

Of the total number, 78% of the respondents said that neither they nor members of their households had ever been in contact with the mentioned institutions. On the other hand, 22% of the surveyed citizens and members of their household had had contact with the mentioned institutions in the previous 12 months. Compared to the findings from 2019, we notice that a slightly higher percentage of citizens were in contact with institutions (six percentage points more than in 2019). Citizens who had more frequent contacts with institutions come from Vojvodina (30%). The oldest respondents also stated more often that they were in contact with institutions.

In correlation with the question about the prevalence of corruption in institutions in Serbia, it is interesting that as many as 87% of respondents who answered that corruption in the police is present to a large extent have never been in contact with the police. The situation is similar with healthcare and education, where 86% of citizens who state that corruption is present in these institutions have never been in contact with these institutions in the previous 12 months.

Chart 12.1 – **Have you or a member of your household been in contact with any of the following institutions/organizations in the previous 12 months?** Comparison 2019 and 2020, in % (Public educational institutions, healthcare institutions, public administration, public utility companies, police, court, prosecutor's office)

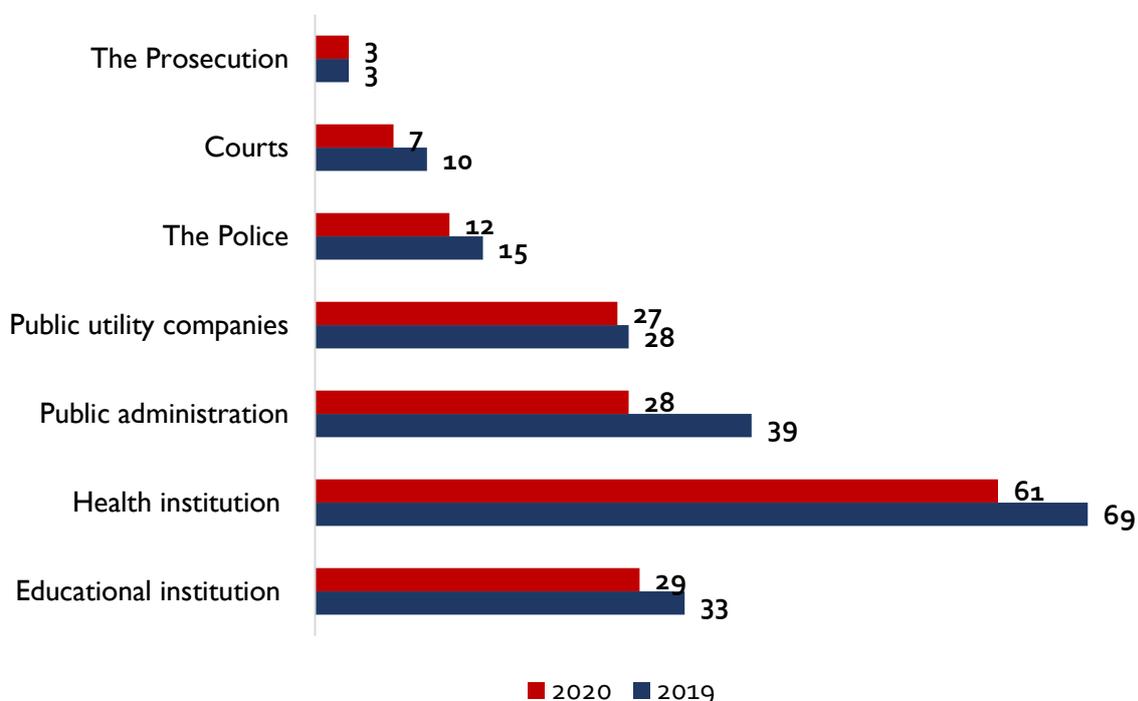


Of the citizens who affirmatively answered when asked about contacts with the above-mentioned institutions, the largest percentage of citizens singled out health institutions (61%), followed by education institutions -29%, public administration (municipal / city / state administration) -28% and public utility companies - 27%. As expected, the youngest respondents, younger than 29 (pupils and students), came into contact with education institutions most often. A total of 50% of the respondents in this category state that they were in contract with educational institutions. Respondents between the ages of 60 and 69 were in contact with health institutions in 62% of the cases, and those over the age of 70 in

as many as 73% of the cases. Also, women reported above average that they came into contact with health institutions (64% compared to 58% of men), 12% of respondents came into contact with the police, most often those below age 40 (17% of them gave this answer).

As last year, citizens rarely came into contact with the prosecutor's offices and courts. A total of 7% of the respondents had contact with the courts, and only 3% had contact with the prosecutor's office. Respondents between the ages of 30 and 49, as well as residents of urban areas, came into contact with the judiciary above average. As regards the prosecutor's office, the highest percentage of those who were in contact with this institution accounts for the youngest population (up to 29 years of age).

**Chart 12.2. Have you or a household member been in contact with any of the following institutions / organizations in the previous 12 months? – Affirmative response, Comparison of 2019 and 2020, in %**



However, when asked if they had to offer bribes, gifts or favors in any of the institutions they came in contact with, more than four-fifths of the surveyed citizens said they would not do it.

When it comes to *public education institutions*, 95% of the respondents never had to give a bribe (90% - 2019), while 4% had to give some kind of a gift (7% - 2019), 1% to return a favor, while none of the respondents mentioned cash bribe.

In the case of *public administration* (municipal / city / state administration) and *prosecutor's office*, 91% of the respondents state that they did not have to pay bribes. In the case of administration, this is the same percentage as last year, while 6% of the respondents said that they had to give some kind of a gift, 2% to return a favor, and 1% said they had to give a cash bribe. As regards the prosecutor's office, 6% of the respondents had to give some kind of a gift (six percentage points above last year's result), 3% returned a favor (two percentage points below the last year's result), while there were no respondents who gave cash bribes.

For *public utility companies*, 98% of the respondents state that they did not have to give bribes, and 2% of Serbian citizens had to provide some kind of a gift.

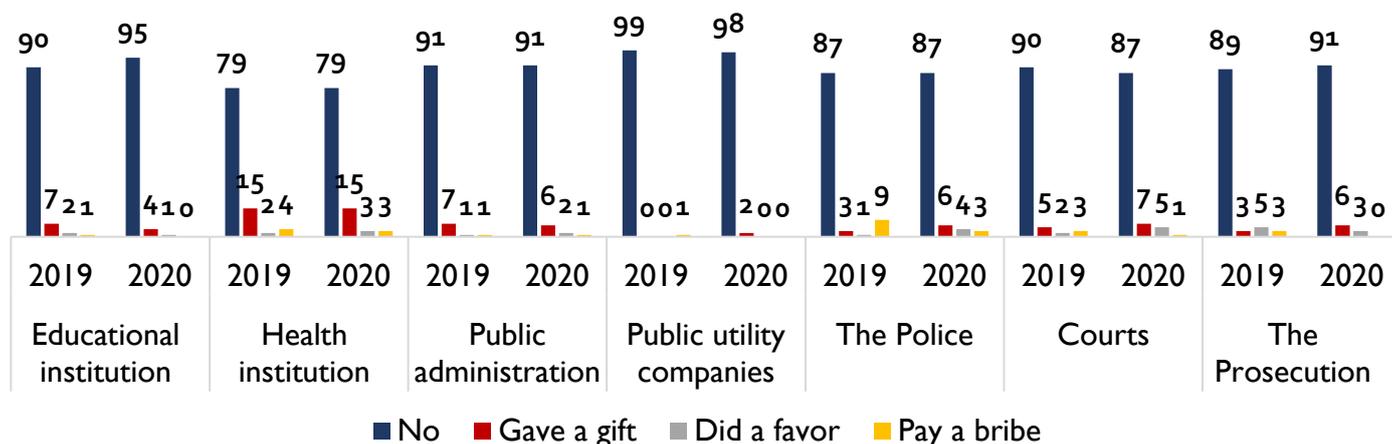
The same percentage as last year states that no bribes were offered to the *police* - 87%, 6% gave a gift (6% - 2019), 4% returned a favor (1% - 2019), while 3% said that had to give a cash bribe, which is six percentage points below last year's result.

With respect to the *courts*, 87% of the respondents did not have to give a bribe (90% - 2019), while 7% stated that they had to give a gift (5% -2019), 5% to return a favor, and 1% stated that had to offer cash bribes. The percentage of citizens who state that they did not have to offer a bribe to the court is (along with public utility companies) dropping. This finding is in line with the finding that there has been an increase in the number of citizens who believe that the courts are the most corrupt institution in Serbia.

In the end, this time as well, the only institution where a slightly lower percentage of citizens said that they did not have to offer bribes was *health care*. Here, 79% of citizens did not have to give a bribe (the same as last year), while 15% of them had to give a gift (15% - in 2019, and 3% to return a favor. A total of 3% of the respondents said that they had to offer a cash bribe in order to access services of health care institutions. It should be noted that most citizens stated the exact amount of money given as a bribe, and that it is a sum of 10 euro to 500 euro.

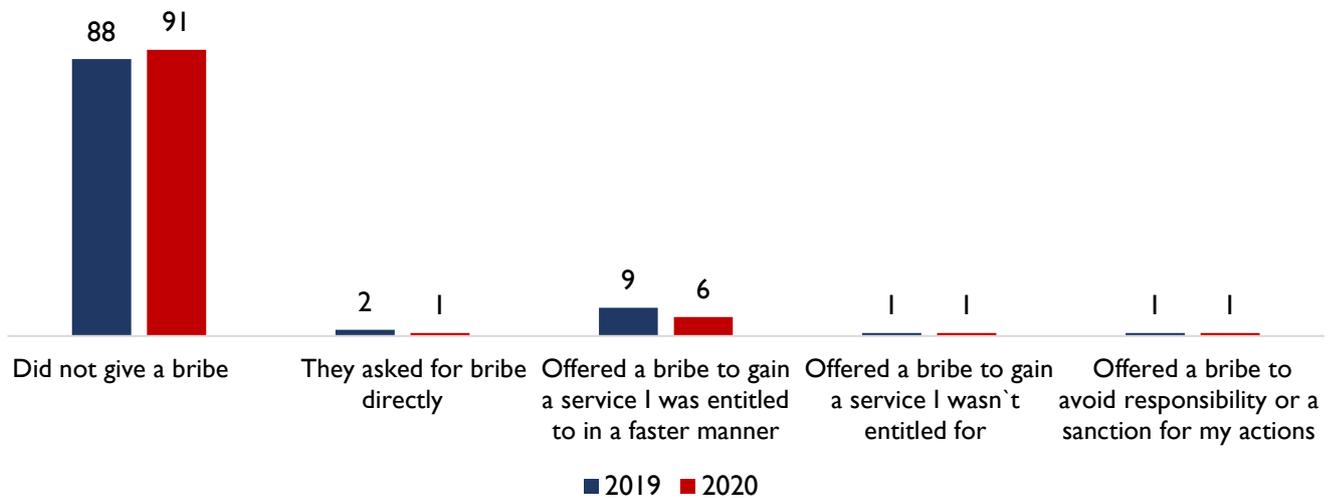
If we compare these results with demographic data we notice that the inhabitants of urban areas more often bribed health care providers, as well as men and citizens who come from Central Serbia.

**Chart 12.3. If you were in any of these institutions, did you have to give bribe, a gift, or return a favor to get what you came for done? In %**



We asked Serbian citizens for the reasons why they offered a bribe, if they did so- Chart 12.4.

Chart 12.4. **If you have given a bribe, why did you do it?** Comparison of 2019 and 2020,%



91% of the respondents said that they had never given a bribe (which is a decrease of three percentage points compared to the findings from 2019), while among those who did, most offered bribes to quickly access a service to which they were entitled (6%). And in the case of this finding, there is a decrease of three percentage points compared to the 2019 finding. A total of 1% of the respondents said that they were in a situation where they were directly asked for a bribe. The same percentage, 1%, did so in order to avoid liability, punishment or sanction and to exercise the right to a service to which they would not otherwise be entitled. In correlation with the demographic data, it is interesting to note that none of the surveyed citizens who completed the secondary vocational school ever gave a bribe, and 96% of the respondents with or without primary school diploma give the same answer.

In this research, the citizens of Serbia are of the opinion that the medical profession is most susceptible to corruption - 23% give this answer (28% - in 2019). This result is not too surprising if we compare this attitude with the fact that health care is most often perceived as an area where corruption is present to a large extent. A total of 65% of those who say that health care is the most corrupt in Serbia, also state that doctors are the most susceptible to corruption. Residents of rural areas in 30% of the cases state that the medical profession is most susceptible to corruption, and similarly we find this attitude above-average among those citizens aged between 60-69 (who also came in contact with doctors) and respondents from Central Serbia (28%). In the second place, citizens pointed out politicians, 21% of them said that this profession is most susceptible to corruption, which is an increase of two percentage points compared to the 2019 survey, followed by police officers and judges with 10%, and 9%. With inspectors, we notice a decrease compared to last year, so now 8% of the respondents state that they are most susceptible to corruption, while this attitude was shared by one tenth of the respondents last year.

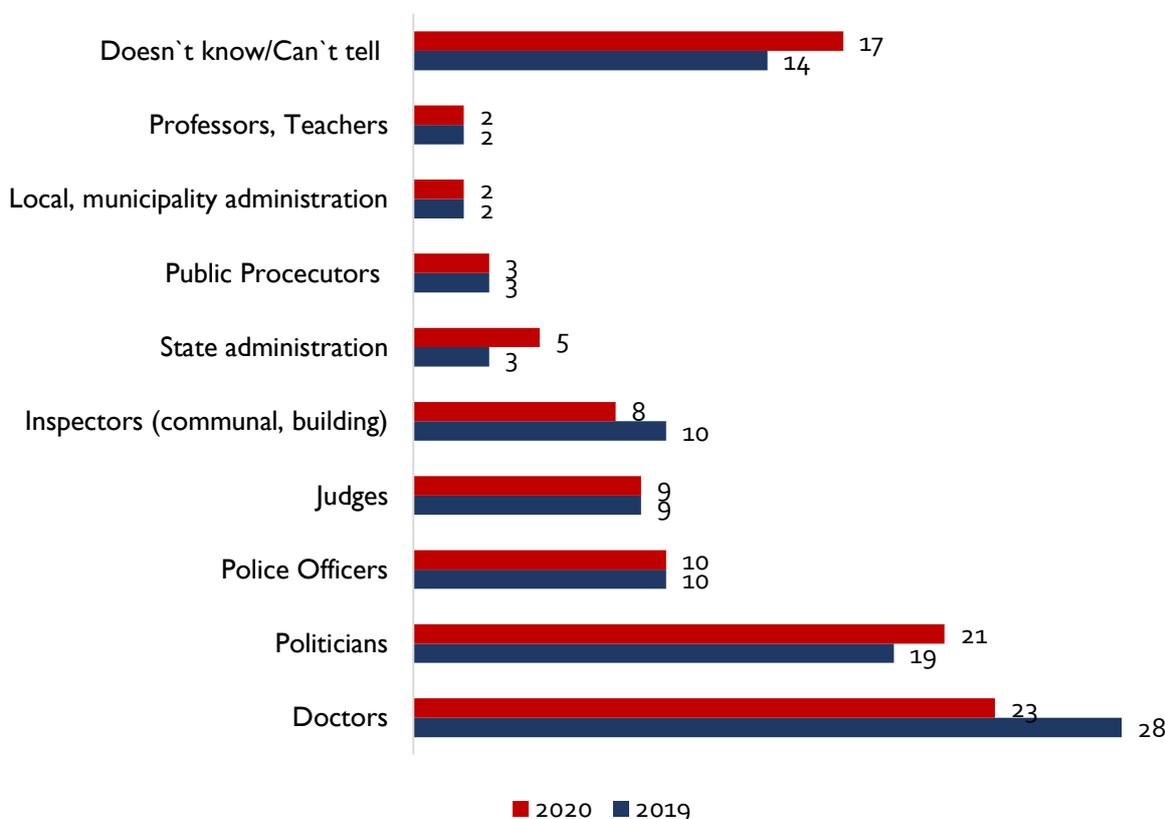
This time, every twentieth respondent mentions the state administration, which is an increase of three percentage points. Professions that citizens nationwide perceive as the least corrupt are prosecutors - 3%, local administration 2% and professors /teachers - 2%. When we match these results with demographic data, we will notice that inspectors are listed above-average by employees in the public administration - 11%, while police officers are singled out by

company owners. When looking at the place of residence, the inhabitants of Vojvodina believe police officers and judges are most susceptible to corruption (14% - police officers, 16% - judges), while residents of Belgrade believe that politicians and inspectors are susceptible to corruption.

In correlation with gender, men above-average mention police officers (11%) while women in 22% of the cases say that politicians are practitioners most susceptible to corruption. Residents of urban areas also state that politicians are most susceptible to corruption, slightly above average (23%), while in suburban settlements we find above-average those citizens who believe that educators are most susceptible to corruption. The youngest respondents single out police officers above-average - 18%, and politicians - 24%, while citizens aged 50 to 59 in 12% of the cases mention judges.

If we analyze this issue together with the question about the most corrupt institution, we will not be surprised at the result. As already mentioned, 65% of those who believe that health care as an institution is the most corrupt in Serbia also believe that the medical profession is most susceptible to corruption. Also, citizens who pointed out police officers as a profession susceptible to corruption in 52% of the cases said that the police are the most corrupt in Serbia. Citizens who say that politicians are most susceptible to corruption, mention ministries, the president, but also representatives of local governments as the most corrupt.

**Chart 12.5. In your opinion, which profession is most vulnerable to corruption in Serbia? Comparison of 2019 and 2020, in %**



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