



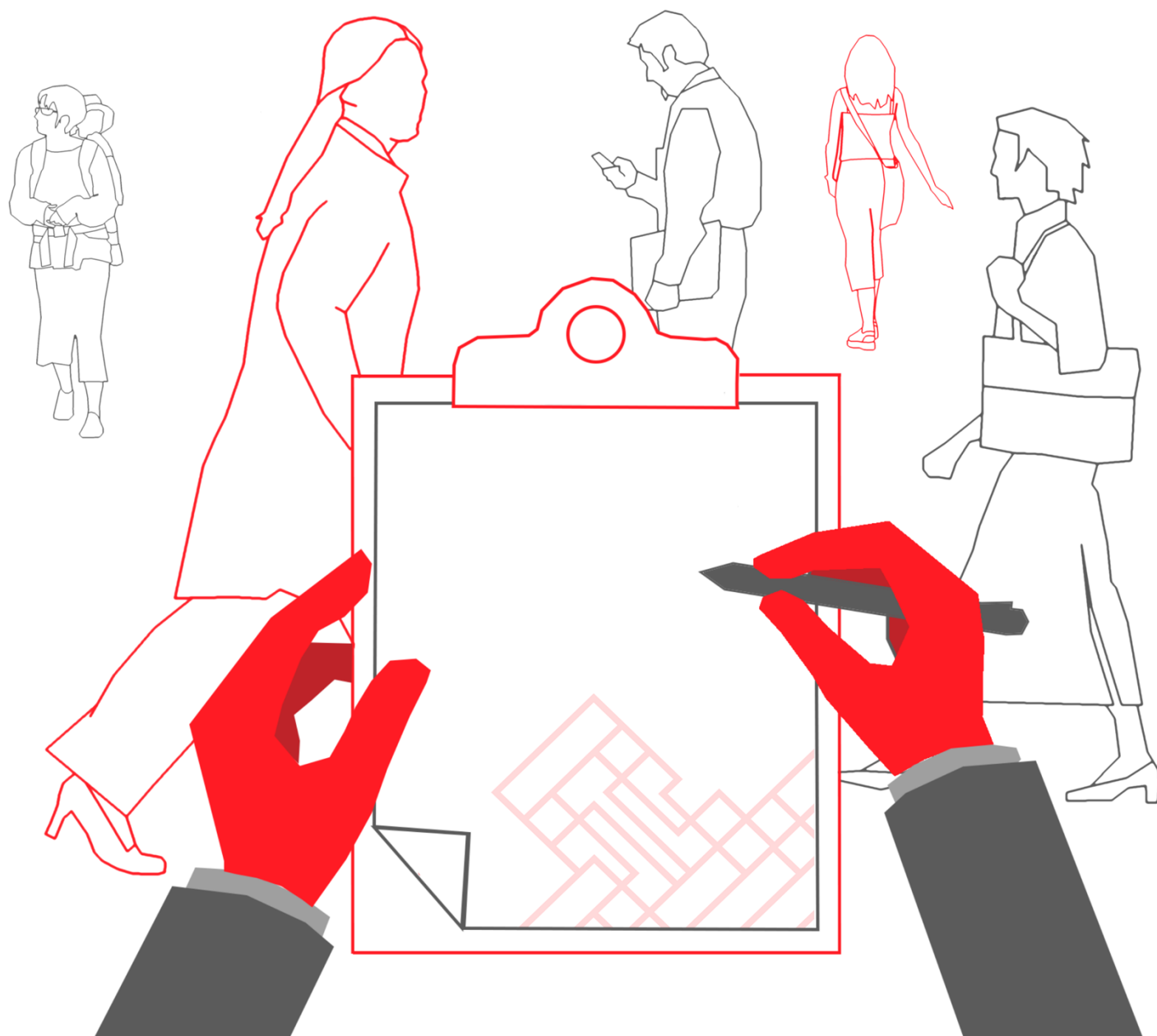
ПРОГРАМА ЗА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНА ПОДДРШКА  
PROGRAMI PËR MBËSHETJETE PARLAMENTARE  
PARLIAMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
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Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

# RESEARCH ON CITIZENS' PERCEPTION REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS BY MPs





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СОБРАНИЕ НА РЕПУБЛИКА СЕВЕРНА МАКЕДОНИЈА



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## IMPRESSUM:

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Author: The CCM Team

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## Summary of key findings

- 42.5% of respondents declared that they are not familiar with the work of MPs, while 25.3% declared that they are familiar with the work of the MPs.
- Only 12% of respondents believe that MPs adhere to ethical standards and codes of conduct (from the aggregated answers, 1.8% of respondents believe that MPs fully adhere to them while 10.5% adhere to them to a certain degree). This indicates the need for MPs to enhance trust-building efforts towards citizens through a conscientious and thorough performance of their parliamentary function and representation of public interests.
- About 63% of respondents believe that MPs respect neither ethical standards nor the code of conduct.
- 50% of respondents pointed out that keeping the promises made by the MPs to the citizens should be the primary focus/top priority of MP's.
- Most respondents believe that the most important thing for an MP is to be incorruptible, while approximately 31% of citizens think that more frequent communication with citizens can increase the efficiency of the MP's work.
- 42% of citizens believe that one of the most significant challenges faced by MPs in the performance of their duties is pressure from their respective political parties pressure.
- Another significant challenge for MPs is to convince the public that they respect ethical standards and the codes of conduct.
- According to the respondents, MPs rarely admit their mistakes and rarely take responsibility for their actions, and elected/appointed officials care least about responsible and cost-effective spending of public funds and resources.
- 64% of the surveyed citizens would like to see more drastic measures taken in dealing with offenders of moral standards (27 % consider that MPs should be removed from office, 27 % consider they should face criminal prosecution and 10 % believe that MPs should face imprisonment)



## Introduction

In recent decades, there has been increasing pressure on parliamentarians and elected officials worldwide, to demonstrate high moral standards and strengthen their ethical credibility. This is largely the result of numerous scandals that have undermined public confidence in political institutions and politicians. In March 2011, the British newspaper *"The Guardian"* conducted a survey on 5,000 voters from five European countries (France, Germany, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom) which posed, among other, the following question: "To what extent do you trust politicians, regardless of their political affiliations, to behave with honesty and integrity?" The results of the survey revealed that only 9% of respondents answered that they "completely", i.e., "sufficiently" trust politicians, while a high 89% said "not much" or they don't trust them "at all".<sup>1</sup> The responses reflected similar responses in all five countries.

Voters expect their elected officials to be as law-abiding as anyone else, and to lead by example when it comes to professional ethics and integrity. In that respect, parliament has tried to meet voters' expectations, realizing that ignoring them would only serve to further undermine the public's trust in the state, institutions and politicians. Mechanisms for achieving this generally consist of: holding individuals accountable within existing rules and adopting 'codes of ethics' or 'codes of conduct'. These codes attempt to not only provide guidance and direction, but also to establish standards of behavior and action for situations that exist within the "gray zone" between the law and acceptable behavior. Of course, most politicians don't need codes of conduct to compel them to act morally - but as is often the case, the *majority* pays the price for the behavior of the *minority*. Codes help in directing and interpreting specific obligations when dealing with insufficiently defined or more complex circumstances such as bribery, conflict of interest and financial transparency.

Of course, the codes cannot be a safeguard for everything that is considered unethical in politics, but they serve as a guide and support system for the principles of good governance. Codes are most effective when they are built on a political culture in which integrity, transparency and accountability are highly valued. No law or codes of conduct can prevent individual intent to "cheat the system" or break the rules, but they provide guidelines for acting with honesty and integrity in line with voters' expectations.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/mar/14/europe-poll-icm?intcmp=239#data>



## Context

Good governance, in terms of managing state institutions, implies leading processes, monitoring and supervising the realization of the strategic commitments, but also efficient and effective management of public funds and resources. Governance is exercised following agreed principles, in terms of regulatory framework, and with respect to the complex network of values, standards and practices. Governance is supported by a common system of ethics, which covers a wide range of subjects in the institutions of the state, but also in society as a whole. This necessitates establishing and maintaining certain values and a culture of proper behavior, as well as a certain transformation in the direction of achieving higher standards and ethical behavior. Additionally, the system of ethics in the context of good governance is a soft measure, which seeks to complement the formal regulation system. Ethical norms and standards indicate expected behavior from elected officials, including MPs, in cases where actions are not regulated by law, but it represents a significant aspect of governance.

Credibility is particularly important when it comes to the governance in the public sector. Gaining the trust of citizens is vital to good governance. Public opinion is the most powerful force in a democratic society and it can aid in achieving higher standards of moral behavior among politicians as well as foster better decision making.

The implementation of ethical standards for elected and appointed officials, as a soft tool, also has a strong role in the fight against corruption. Taking into account that MPs reflect the priorities of their constituencies, the importance of their behavior and actions greatly influence the attitude of all other officials towards political functions as well as towards the state property, public funds and resources.

This survey on public perception of the degree of respect for ethical standards among MPs was prepared in correlation with the proposed tools for improving the system of parliamentary ethics. This research examines the values system on which citizens' expectations are based on, in relation to the actions and behavior of their representatives. This survey intends to verify whether the basic moral values and principles according to which citizens value their representatives, correspond to international principles and standards of good governance.



The 7 principles of public life<sup>2</sup>, also known as the Nolan principles, guided the survey questions fielded for this research project. The Nolan principles establish the framework on which most ethical codes or codes of conduct for public officials are based on. These principles are: working for the public interest, integrity, objectivity, accountability and responsibility, transparency, honesty and leadership. The survey questions were conceptualized according to those key areas, but the content of the existing Code of Ethical Behavior of the MPs in the Assembly of Republic of North Macedonia was also taken into account.

The results of this research intend to demonstrate the level of trust held by citizens in their elected officials, explore the values that should guide and govern MPs' behavior, and serve as an argument for the further improvement of good governance mechanisms on all levels of government, including the legislative branch.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>



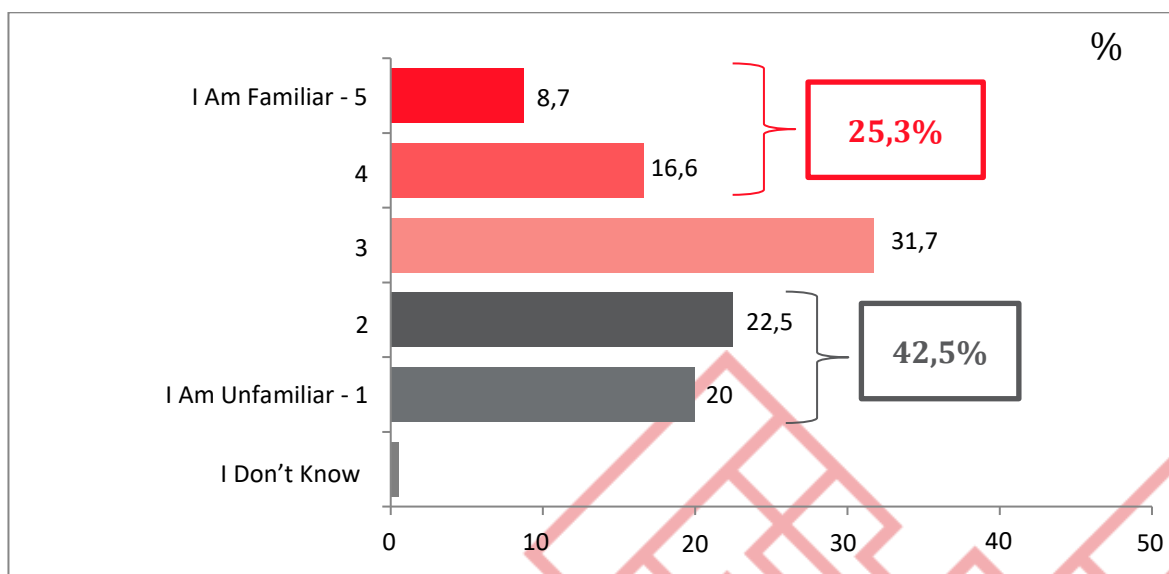
## Research findings

### I. Citizens' perception of MPs behavior

The first question refers to the degree to which respondents are familiar with the work of the Parliament and MPs. Responses to this question are detailed in the graph below (Graph 1). 25.3% of the respondents stated that they are familiar with the work of MPs (aggregated answers for grades 4 - I am somewhat familiar and 5 - I am completely familiar were taken into account), while 42.5% of the respondents stated that they are not familiar with the work of MPs, (aggregated answers for grades 1 - I am unfamiliar at all and 2 - I am somewhat unfamiliar were taken into account). Approximately 32% of the respondents gave a rating of 3, claiming that they are neither familiar or unfamiliar with the work of the MP's. There are no statistically significant differences in the respondent's answers according to their place of residence (urban 26%; rural 25%).

Examining the responses of the respondents through the prism of demographic characteristics, *men when compared to women, those with higher education when compared to those with lower level of education and those belonging to the age group "over 55 years old" when compared to other age groups, are more likely to declare or state that they are familiar with the work of MPs.* Taking into account the work status of the respondents, *employees in the non-governmental organizations and employees in the public sector are the most familiar with the work of the Parliament and the MPs.*

**Graph 1. (Q1). How familiar would say you are with the work of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM) and the MPs?**







The questions had five possible answers, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “I Am Unfamiliar” and 5 is “I Am Familiar”. Hence, the aggregation of answers 1 and 2 is shown, as not familiar with the work of MPs, 3 remains as neutral (neither familiar nor unfamiliar), while 4 and 5, are aggregated answers of familiar and knowledgeable of the work of MPs in the Assembly of RNM.

Determining the degree of familiarity the respondents have with the work of the MPs in Parliament is important for not only determining the reliability of the answers, but also for making a comparison between the views of the respondents who are familiar with the work of the MPs versus those who are not familiar. As expected, respondents who qualify themselves as neutral—that is, they are neither familiar or unfamiliar with the work of MPs—expressed the view that MPs neither respect nor disrespect ethical standards and rules of conduct to a significant degree. It is important to note that *one fifth (21%) of the respondents, who follow the work of MPs, point out that MPs respect ethical standards and rules of conduct* (aggregated answers— “fully respect them” at 5% and “somewhat respect them” at 16%). *This percentage is nearly 4 times lower among respondents who are not familiar with the work of MPs.* In general, the less citizens understand the work of the Parliament and MPs, the less trust they have in them to fulfill their parliamentary duties. This underlines the need to build trust by bringing the work and competences of Parliament and the MPs closer to the citizens.

Nearly 14% of respondents who do not know—i.e., they cannot assess whether they are familiar with the work of MPs—cannot confidently answer whether or not MPs respect ethical standards and codes of conduct. Additionally, regarding the respondents who answered that they are *not* familiar with the work of MPs, 6% of them also do not know whether MPs respect ethical standards.

The cross examination of data on the degree of familiarity with the work of MPs, as opposed to the opinion of the citizens on the degree of respect of ethical standards, is detailed in the second part of this report.

The second question examined perceptions of MPs’ respect for ethical standards and codes of conduct. The ethical principles, rules, and standards of behavior of MPs in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia are regulated within the Code of Ethical Behavior of MPs. The purpose of the code is to increase the trust of citizens and the public in the basic values and integrity of the MPs as individuals and the Assembly, as the representative body of the citizens of North Macedonia and authority over legislative power. Despite the fact that expected behavior of MPs is regulated by the aforementioned document, the MPs still struggle to reassure the public of their trustworthiness and professionalism.



As detailed in Graph 2, below, only 12% of respondents believe that the MPs in North Macedonia respect ethical standards and rules of conduct (the aggregated answers of “fully respect them” amount to 1.8% and “somewhat respect them” amount to 10.5% of respondents). About 21% of respondents have a neutral stance, that is, they pointed out that MPs neither respect nor disrespect ethical standards and codes of conduct to a significant degree<sup>3</sup>.

About 63% of respondents believe that MPs do not respect ethical standards and rules of conduct (aggregated answers of “somewhat disrespect” amount to 23.5% and “do not respect them at all” amount to 39.8%).

**Graph 2. (Q2) In general, how much do you think that MPs in our country respect ethical standards and rules of conduct?**



In reference to Graph 2, above, it is clear that *it is necessary to build and strengthen the trust of the citizens by defining and promoting ethical principles, standards of behavior and actions that are expected from the MPs in the performance of their duties.*

<sup>3</sup> Respondents express these views when they can neither fully nor partially agree with the positive or negative statement. This does not indicate that they do not know, or that they do not have an opinion related to the issue, but rather that they cannot give a positive rating because they do not agree with it, conversely, they cannot give a negative rating because they are not completely convinced.



The answers of the respondents considered through the prism of demographic characteristics show that those who affirmed that MPs *do not respect* standards and codes of conduct, are *more often men, ethnic Macedonians, with primary education and members of the age group “over 55 years old”*. On the contrary, despite the fact that the aggregated data shows that *only 12% of citizens believe that MPs respect the standards and codes of conduct, they more often belong to the youngest age group, from an urban place of residence (urban 14%; rural 10%) and with a higher education.*

**Table 1. In general, how much do you think that MPs in our country respect ethical standards and rules of conduct?**

	Sex		Age			Nationality		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	Over 55	Macedonians	Albanians	Other
<b>Do not respect</b>	66%	60%	57%	62%	70%	66%	56%	64%

	Education			Place of living	
	Elementary	Secondary	High	Urban	Rural
<b>Do not respect</b>	70%	62%	58%	62%	66%

	Sex		Age			Nationality		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	Over 55	Macedonians	Albanians	Other
<b>Respect</b>	13%	12%	17%	13%	9%	12%	16%	9%

	Education			Place of living	
	Elementary	Secondary	High	Urban	Rural
<b>Respect</b>	7%	11%	21%	14%	10%

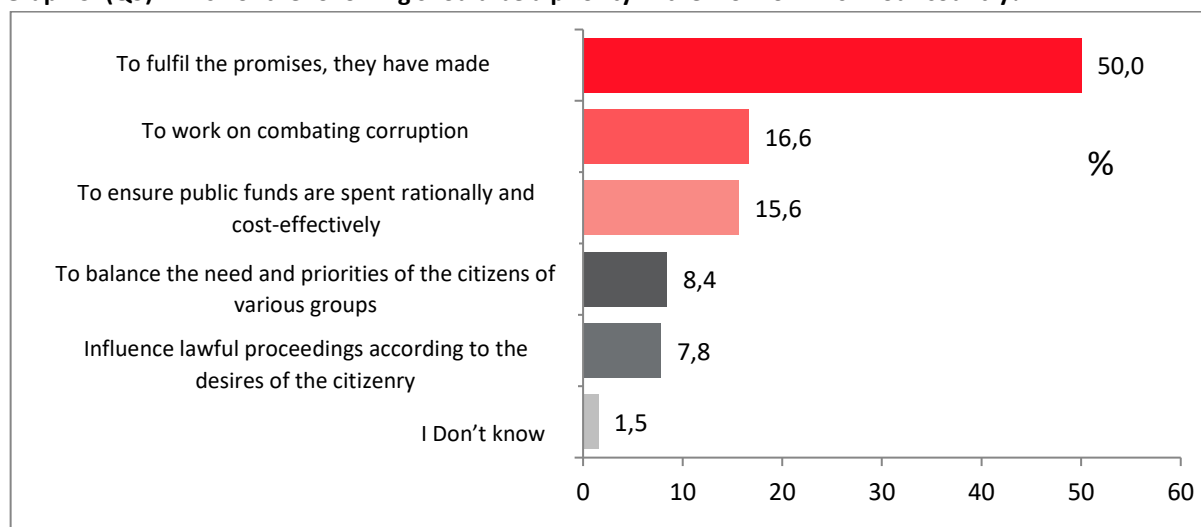
In the next question, citizens had the opportunity to single out one priority of the MPs, out of 5 options. As shown in Graph 3 below, 50% of respondents, emphasized that *keeping the promises made to citizens* should be MPs’ chief priority. Unemployed respondents and respondents with only primary education provided this response to a greater extent than respondents who are employed and/or have secondary or higher education. Examining the answers through the lens of gender, it is noted that this answer is chosen more often by women than men (men 47%; women 52%).



16% of respondents believe that MPs should prioritize the *suppression of corruption* and ensure that public money is spent rationally, responsibly and cost-effectively. *The concern about how public money is spent is mentioned more often by men than women (men 18%; women 13%), more often by residents from urban areas of residence (men 17%; women 13%), by those with higher education (18%) compared to elementary (12%) and secondary education (16%) and employees in the public sector (20%) compared to the private sector (16%).* The smallest margin of respondents (8%) declared that the first priority of the MPs should still be balancing the needs and priorities of the citizens from different social groups and influencing the legislative process according to the priorities of the citizens.

The answer that MPs should primarily ensure that public money is spent rationally and cost-effectively was more often expressed by men from urban areas of residence, as well as by those with higher education and who are employed in the public sector institutions.

**Graph 3. (Q3) Which of the following should be a priority in the work of MPs in our country?**



Given these findings, citizens believe that the values and standards that should determine the behavior of MPs and Parliamentarians are *commitment to the public interest, following the development goals of the country, as well as protecting the rights and interests of all citizens and subjects in the community*, which should always result from specific political programs and promises politicians give citizens. In fact, these areas are defined according to the objectives provided in the guidelines for reforming the parliamentary systems of ethics from the OSCE, ODIHR<sup>4</sup> as well as IPU 2022 indicators on Accountable and Transparent Parliament<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Background Study: Professional and Ethical Standards for Parliamentarians, Warsaw, 2012, n. 18, <https://www.osce.org/odihr/98924>

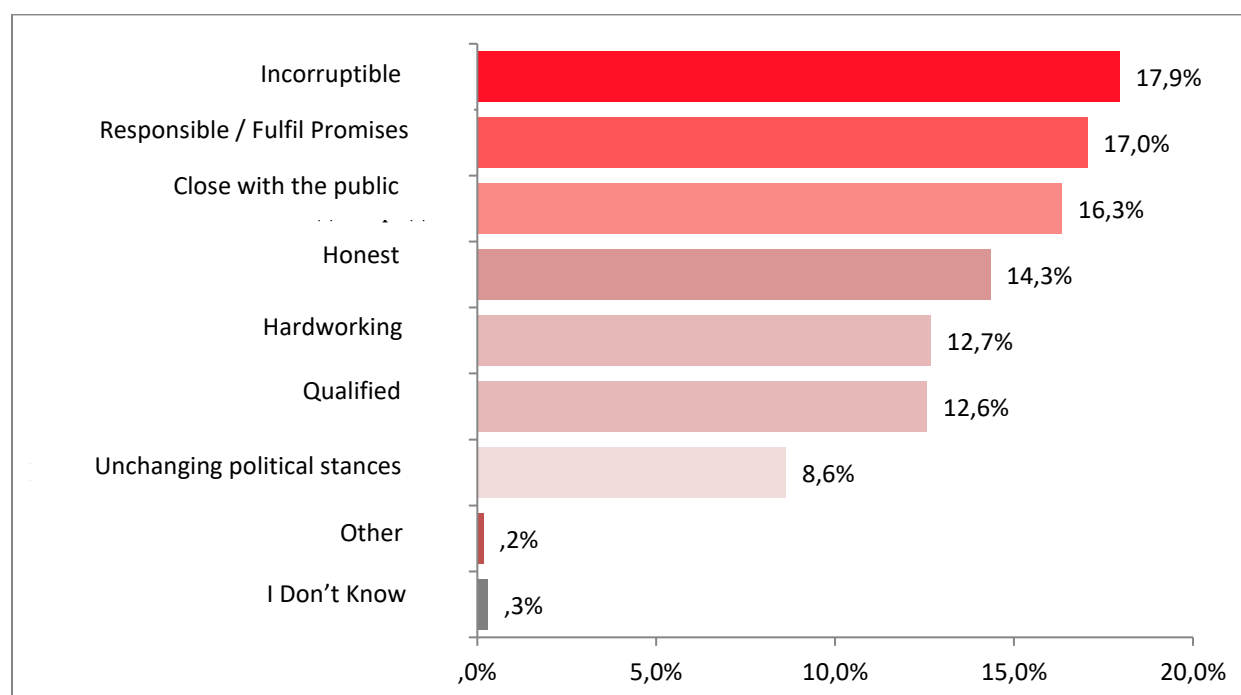
<sup>5</sup> Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7. Preliminary version, April 2022 by Inter-Parliamentary Union. <https://www.ipu.org/file/14426/download>



In the performance of their duties, MPs are expected to *respect the rules related to the prohibition of corruption and not use their position for gaining material and/or immaterial benefits*. Additionally, MPs are expected to *behave responsibly with the financial and material means, equipment and other resources of the institution, and to use the resources rationally and efficiently, and only for the needs of performing their parliamentary function*.

The next question in the survey highlighted the ideal personal characteristics of an MPs. Respondents primarily emphasized that the most important characteristic for a member of parliament is to be uncorrupted, but according to the range of answers (Graph 4) it seems that all prominent characteristics are mentioned as important for a member of parliament. Considering the answers regarding the most important characteristics of an MP and the demographics of the respondents, it is noted that the need to be “Incorruptible” was more often pointed by *ethnic Macedonians* in relation to other ethnic communities, and by those with a *higher education*.

**Graph 4. (Q4) According to you, what are the most important characteristics of an MP?**



This implies that MPs are expected to *report any act related to corruption, and not to take actions that may connect them to the existence of corruption (e.g., receiving gifts)*. MPs are expected to *be open and transparent toward citizens and always utilize and disseminate true, appropriate, timely and complete information*.



Below, in Graph 5, data shows that about 31% of the citizens think that “more frequent communication” with the public can increase MPs’ efficiency in their work. Namely, with regard to the question, “how could MPs do their job more efficiently?”, respondents most often answered “through more frequent communication with citizens”. These results from the data indicate the need for more frequent communication between MPs and citizens. “Thorough and informed debate in the parliament” stands out as the second-ranked avenue for *greater efficiency in the work of the MPs*. Approximately 18% of respondents believe that debates should be a frequent occurrence in the parliament.

Furthermore, the joint work of MPs with political parties on issues that are of *great importance to citizens is the third-ranked response* that can improve the efficiency of the MPs’ work (17%).

If we examine the answers through the prism of demographic characteristics (Table 2), the data supports the finding that those with *higher education* answer more prominently that, in order to do their job more efficiently, “MPs should participate in thorough and informative debates”, while those with *a lower education* point out more often that the *MPs should communicate with citizens*. The suggestion that, in order to increase efficiency in work, MPs should communicate more with citizens, is more often observed in the responses of the unemployed and retirees.

Additionally, ethnic Macedonians, in comparison to the members of the Albanian ethnic community, significantly more often prioritize MPs’ communication with the citizens.

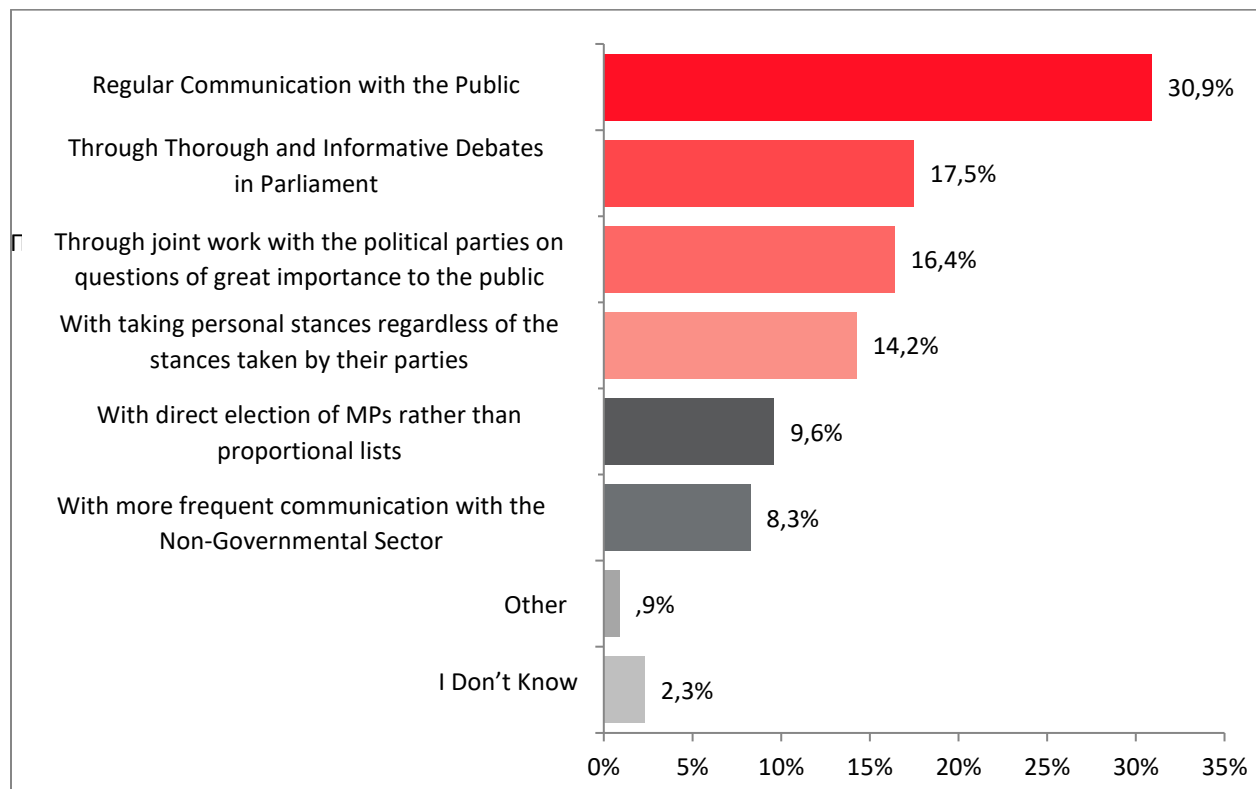
Men (39%) slightly more often than women (35%), as well members of the age group “over 55” and those with higher education, point out that through joint work with the political parties on issues that are of great importance to citizens, MPs could do their job more efficiently.

**Table 2. Through joint work with the parties, MPs could do their work more efficiently**

Sex		Age		
Male	Female	18-34	35-54	Above 55
39,0%	35,4%	31,6%	37,6%	40,9%

Education			Place of residence	
Elementary	Secondary	High	Urban	Rural
36,0%	36,2%	40,6%	35,3%	40,2%

Graph 5. (Q5) According to you, how could MPs do their job more efficiently?



Basic ethical values and principles<sup>6</sup>, among other obligations, indicate that MPs are expected to be *open in communication with voters and citizens in order to cultivate a work culture where citizens could easily have access to information and data about their work and that MPs should express their views and opinions openly, clearly, concisely and unambiguously.*

Citizens, when asked about the challenges that MPs face most often in the performance of their duties, most often point out (Graph 6) that they face “political party pressures”. A total of 42.3% of citizens believe that MPs face “political party pressure” in the performance of their duties. They are three times less likely to indicate the difficulties MPs encounter in their communication with citizens. In this respect, MPs are facing the need for additional efforts to achieve uninterrupted and more frequent communication with the citizens.

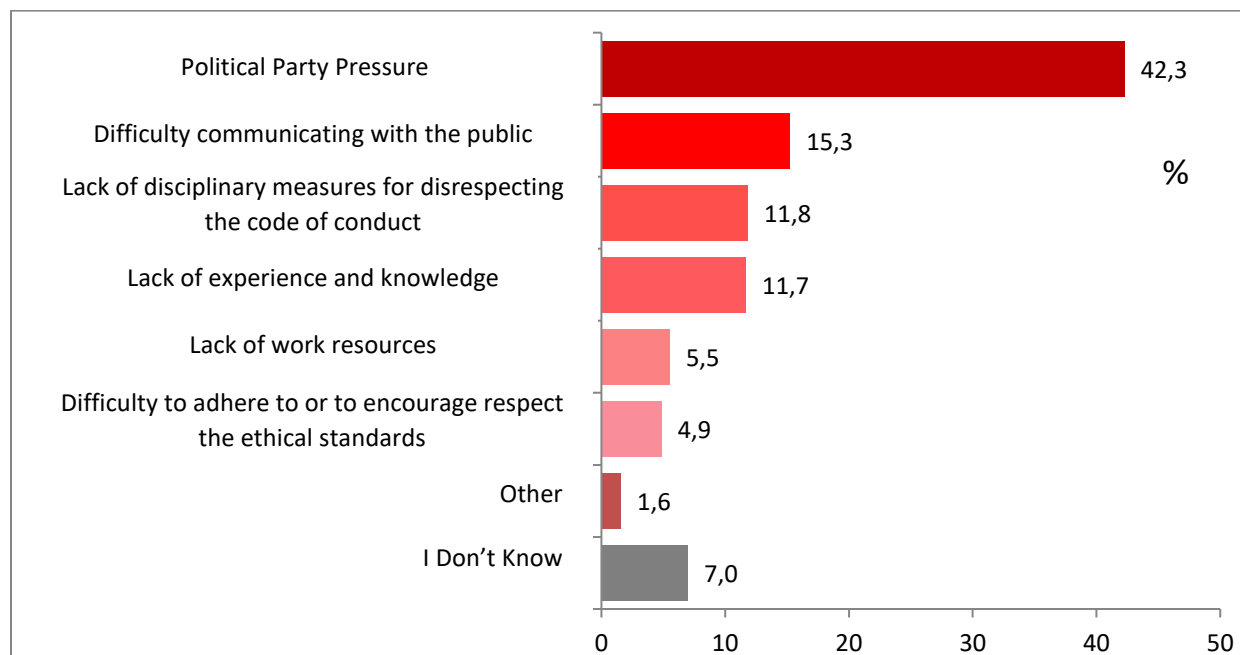
<sup>6</sup> Common Ethical Principles Members Of Parliament, NDI, [https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Common%20Ethical%20Principles%20ENGLISH%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Common%20Ethical%20Principles%20ENGLISH%20(1).pdf)



12% of respondents declared that there is no *practice in imposing disciplinary measures* for non-compliance with the codes of conduct and codes of ethics. The same percentage of respondents pointed out that the MPs' *lack of experience and knowledge* is a challenge that obstructs them in performing their duties. Only 5% of the respondents pointed out that MPs do not have sufficient resources for work and face difficulties adhering to or encouraging compliance with ethical standards. The responses of 4.9% of the citizens reveal that citizens are not informed about other difficulties MPs face in adhering to or complying with ethical standards.

Regarding the differences in responses in terms of demographic characteristics, men (46%) as opposed to women (39%) point out more often that “political party pressures” are the biggest challenge faced by MPs. Additionally, these answers are almost twice as frequent among ethnic Macedonians compared to members of the Albanian ethnic community. On the contrary, ethnic Albanians, more often than ethnic Macedonians, point out that “MPs have a lack of experience and knowledge in the performance of their duties”. Respondents with primary education, more often than those with higher education, indicated that MPs have difficulties in maintaining cooperation with citizens.

**Graph 6 (Q6) In your opinion, what challenges do MPs most often face in the performance of their duties?**







The framework for recommended and desirable behavior of MPs stipulates that they should *act impartially, without prejudice and without the intention of personal gain. While making decisions, MPs are expected to act solely on the basis of personal feelings, beliefs and convictions, not to exclude different points of view, but to take them into account and ensure that decisions are made based on facts.*

Citizens were asked to what extent they think that MPs occasionally behave outside of the standards that is, contrary to the norms and standards that are regulated in the Code of Ethics. Out of the 18 presented ways of behavior (Table 3), respondents primarily answered that "never" or "rarely" do MPs behave in line with ethics and conduct standards. Additionally, roughly 80% of respondents expressed their agreement that "never or rarely" do:

- MPs admit their mistakes and take responsibility for their actions;
- Make sure that public money is spent fairly and;
- Behave responsibly and cost-effectively with the means and resources that are placed at the disposal to them;
- Keep the promises made during the election campaign; and
- Represent a good example for other citizens.

It is clear from the results that citizens expect that *appropriate mechanisms that will enable the practical application of sanctions for non-compliance with laws or ethical principles and values are established*, something that is impossible given the current setup of the parliamentary ethics system—that it is not legally supported and enforceable.

The foundation of ethical principles<sup>7</sup> foresee *the openness, transparency and integrity of the MPs in order to strengthen trust among the citizens*. In addition, the activities related to running a campaign should not violate integrity standards, undermining the confidence of the citizens in the Parliament. *MPs are expected to demonstrate by personal example the ethical principles and standards in their own work and behavior and encourage moral behavior, advocate for valuing merit and competence and lead by example with their personal behavior.*

A large part of citizens, i.e., roughly 75%, believe that MPs "never or rarely":

- Disclose their conflicts of interest;
- Face the consequences of their unethical behavior;
- Tell the truth;
- Explain the reasons for their actions and decisions;
- Perform their work responsibly and with integrity; and
- Work on issues the public considers as important;

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



According to these statements, MPs are expected to *provide well-argued explanations for the reasons of their actions and commitments in the decisions making process in Parliament*. Additionally, the *ethical principles of openness and transparency imply actions and behaviors that demonstrate the MPs' responsibility toward citizens for their own actions, decisions and behavior*. MPs should avoid situations that could lead them into a conflict-of-interest situation, which could affect the impartial performance in the office. Also, MPs should be careful not to cause potential conflicts of interest and take all necessary measures to prevent the influence of private interests or the interests of third parties in their professional performance.

About 70% of citizens believe that MPs “never or rarely”:

- Disclose the data about their property;
- Work in the interest of the citizens and the community they represent;
- Support the public interest and inform about the needs of citizens through legislative action;
- Condemn any misconduct of their colleagues regardless of political affiliation; or
- Treat citizens with respect.

Although the number of citizens who believe that MPs do not disclose their assets is high, it also indicates that citizens are not familiar, or not fully familiar, with the work of MPs<sup>8</sup>. Further, *all MPs have published their assets status in accordance with the law, but the research shows that citizens are not familiar with this information*.

As for all enlisted ways of behavior, the answer "sometimes" is singled out to the greatest extent for "MPs treat citizens with respect" (24%). Also, nearly 25% of the respondents agree with this statement, which confirms that *MPs in practice have demonstrated behavior aimed at increasing citizens' trust in the basic values and integrity of the position of MP*.

In ethics, as a philosophical discipline that is applied in all spheres of social life, the key paradigm on the basis of which all ethical principles are defined, implies respect for the dignity of the human being, the recognition and treatment of man/woman as the highest goal, and never as a means to achieve other intermediate interests and goals. This implies a commitment for building and promoting the common dignity of all persons through mutual respect, solidarity and care. In the context of the research, part of the questions refers to the examination of citizens' perception of the MPs as responsible and positive persons, with shared common values, who represent and promote the good for the citizens and the society as a whole.

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<sup>8</sup> According to the Law on the Prevention of Corruption, all elected and appointed officials are obliged to submit a Property Status Form to the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption within 30 days upon getting into service/office. All MPs have already submitted their Property Status Forms, which are available to the public on the Commission's website. The survey showed that the citizens are not sufficiently familiar with these data and with the obligations of the MPs, nor are they sufficiently informed about the degree of compliance with the obligations by the MPs.



About 66% of respondents share the opinion that MPs “never or rarely”:

- Express commitment to representing different groups of citizens, including women and marginalized communities; or
- Refrain from taking bribes.

MPs are expected *to enable the realization of the constitutionally guaranteed rights to equality and non-discrimination, by creating equal opportunities and respecting diversity*. In their work and decision-making, MPs *should not create a situation in which one group of citizens is privileged over another*.

In contrast, the statement with which the citizens most often agreed (13%)—that is, in the aggregated answers “always” and “often”—is the statement “does not take bribes”. Although, in general, the percentage of agreement is relatively low in relation to the overall scale, this percentage represents *almost double the agreement level demonstrated for all other manners of behavior*. Despite the fact that these are small percentages in relation to all other statements where the percentage of agreement does not exceed 7%, 13% of respondents agree that MPs do not take bribes. This supports the claim that *Members of Parliament should not use their office, nor their constitutional and legal competences, in a way that may imply abuse of office for the purpose of obtaining a specific material or non-material benefit*.



**Table 3. (Q7-Q24) In general, how much do you think MPs behave in each of the following ways, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "Never" and 5 means "Always".**

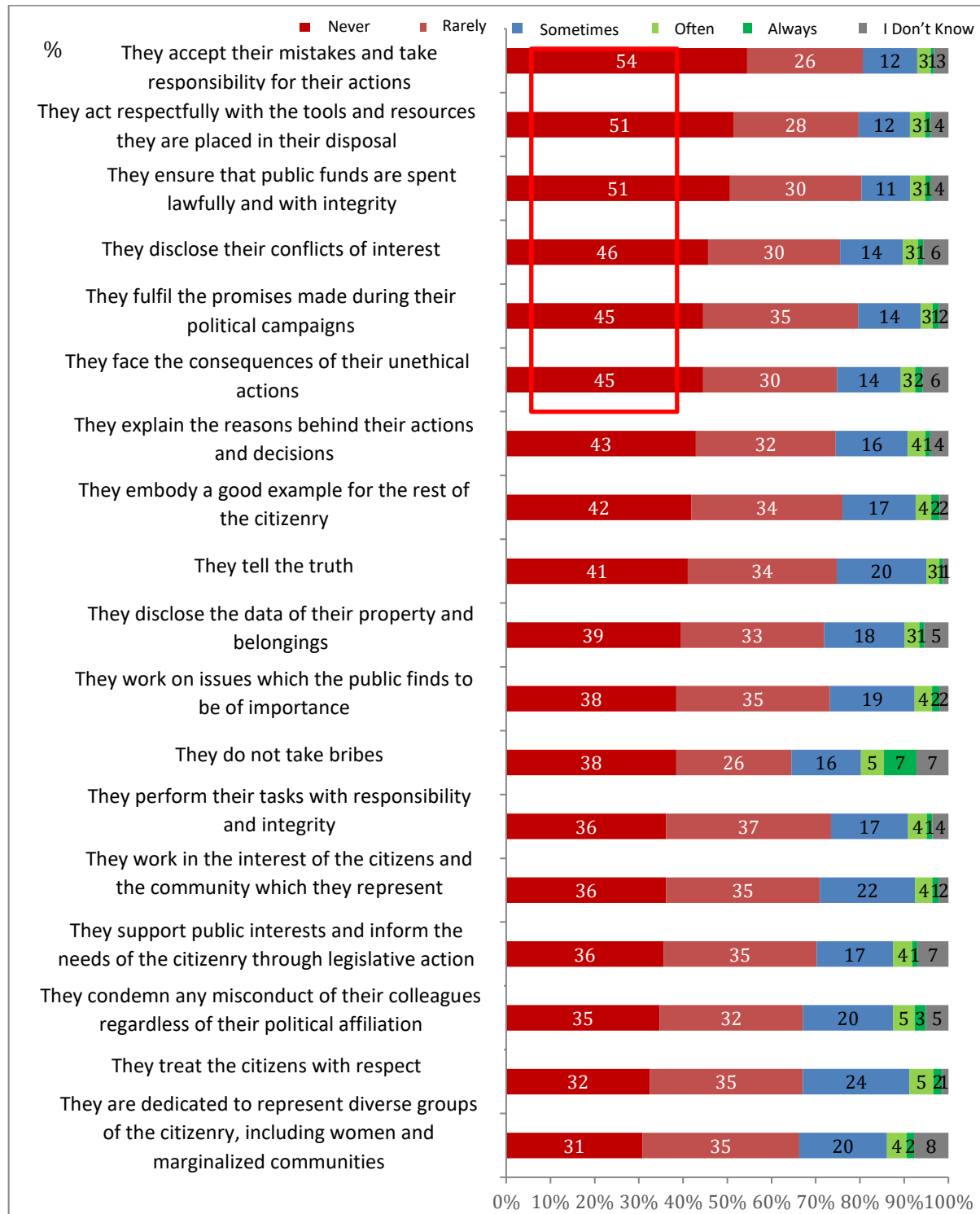
%	Never + rarely	Sometimes	Always + Often
They admit their mistakes and take responsibility for their actions	81	12	4
They make sure that public money is spent fairly and with integrity	80	11	5
They behave responsibly and cost-effectively with the means and resources that are placed at their disposal	80	12	5
They fulfill the promises made during the election campaign	80	14	4
They represent a good example for other citizens	76	17	5
They disclose their conflicts of interest	75	14	5
They face the consequences of their unethical behavior	75	14	5
They are telling the truth	75	20	4
They explain the reasons for their actions and decisions	75	16	5
They perform their work responsibly and with integrity	73	17	5
They work on issues the public thinks are important	73	19	6
They disclose the data about their property and assets	72	18	4
They work in the interest of the citizens and the community they represent	71	22	5
They support the public interest and inform about the needs of the citizens through legislative action	70	17	6
They condemn any misconduct of their colleagues regardless of political affiliation	67	20	7
They treat citizens with respect	67	24	7
They are committed to representing diverse groups of citizens, including women and marginalized communities	66	20	6
They don't take bribes	64	16	13

Graph 7 shows the respondents' answers separated according to the five possibilities assigned, on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "Never" and 5 means "Always". The order is the same as in the table where the aggregated responses were displayed. Again, the largest number of answers "never" (over 50%), are singled out for:

- Admitting mistakes and taking responsibility for actions;
- Responsible and cost-effective behavior with the given resources and funds; and
- Concern for public money



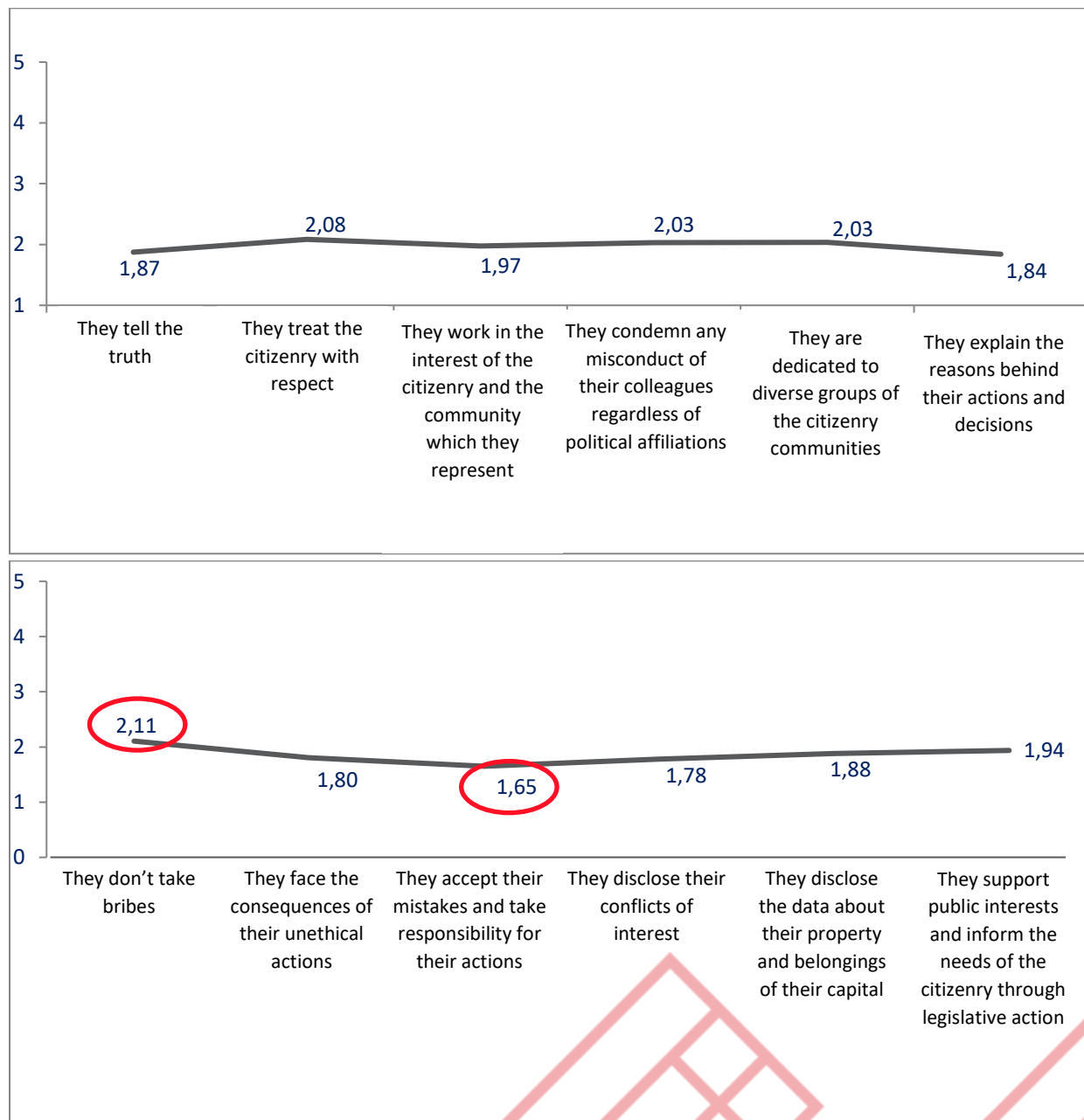
Graph 7. To what extent do you think that MPs behave in each of the following ways?





Providing that the range of possibilities for answer choices were on a scale from one to five, the presentation of the respondents' answers through intermediate grades is worth further probing. Graph 8 presents the average evaluations for the 18 manners of behavior of the MPs. Given the high percentage of negative responses, the average grades are around grade 2.

**Graph 8. To what extent do you think that MPs behave in each of the following manners? (Average Grades)**

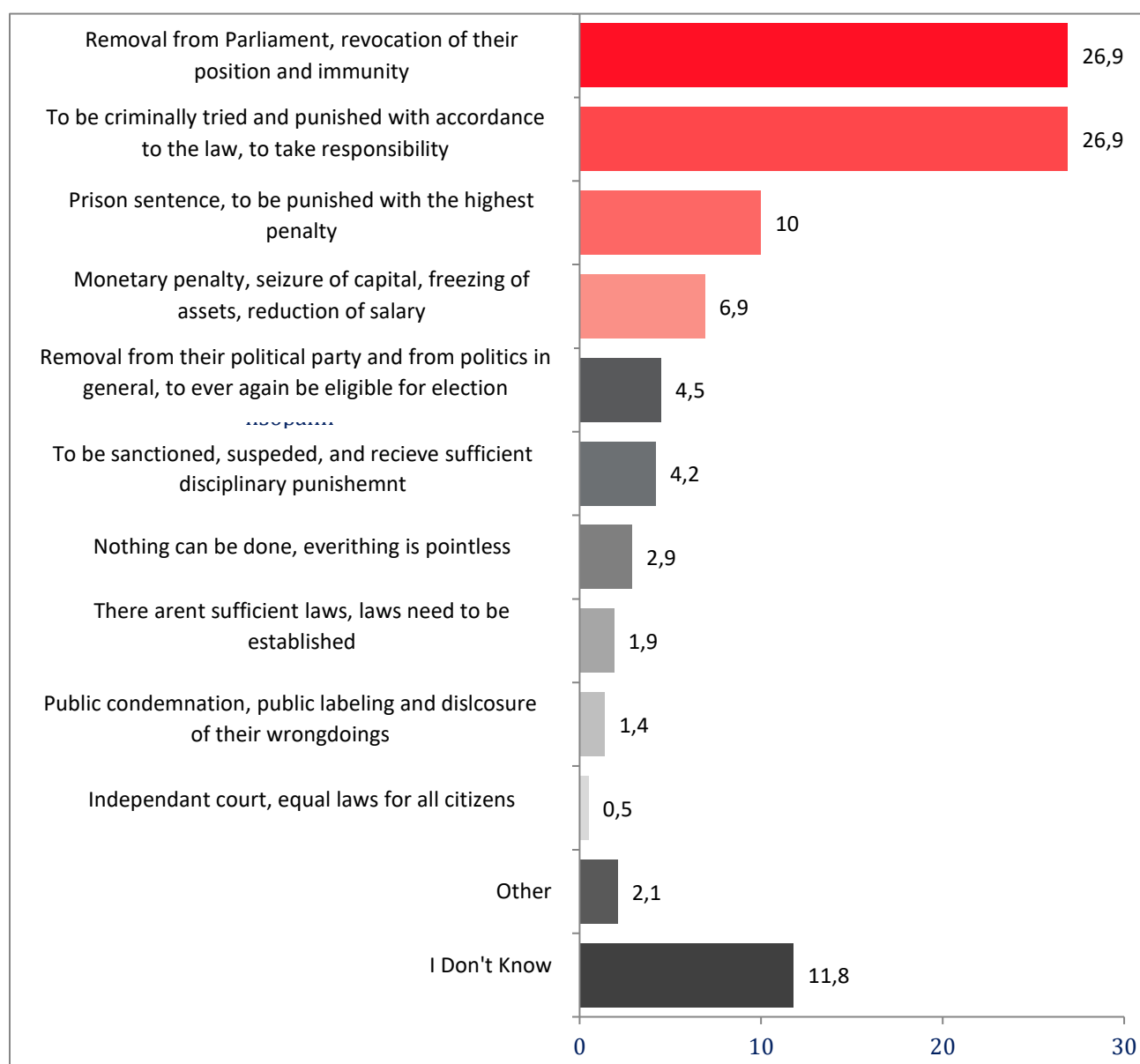


]



The last question referred to suggestions from citizens on the *consequences MPs should face* if they offend moral standards and behave unethically. The question was open-ended, and the results are shown in Graph 9 below. An equal number of respondents declared that the revocation of immunity (27%) and criminal prosecution (27%) are the consequences that must be borne by any MP who neglects or violates ethical standards. Additionally, 10% of respondents believe that the punishment should be the strictest, including imprisonment. This data shows that *64% of the surveyed citizens would definitely like to see radical steps in dealing with offenders of ethical standards.*

**Graph 9. (Q32) What do you think should be the consequences for MPs if they violate moral standards and behave unethically?**





ПРОГРАМА ЗА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНА ПОДДРШКА  
PROGRAMI PËR MBËSHITËTJE PARLAMENTARE  
PARLIAMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME



СОБРАНИЕ НА РЕПУБЛИКА СЕВЕРНА МАКЕДОНИЈА



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

The results of this survey indicate the low trust of the citizens towards their elected representatives in the Parliament. Therefore, the system of parliamentary ethics should *determine the principles and standards* of correct and expected behavior and conduct, *clarify the ways of acting in cases of neglecting and/or violation of these principles, clarify the functioning of the mechanisms for monitoring of their application*, as well as *give specific examples of what is considered desirable and acceptable behavior* and what is considered undesirable and unacceptable behavior.





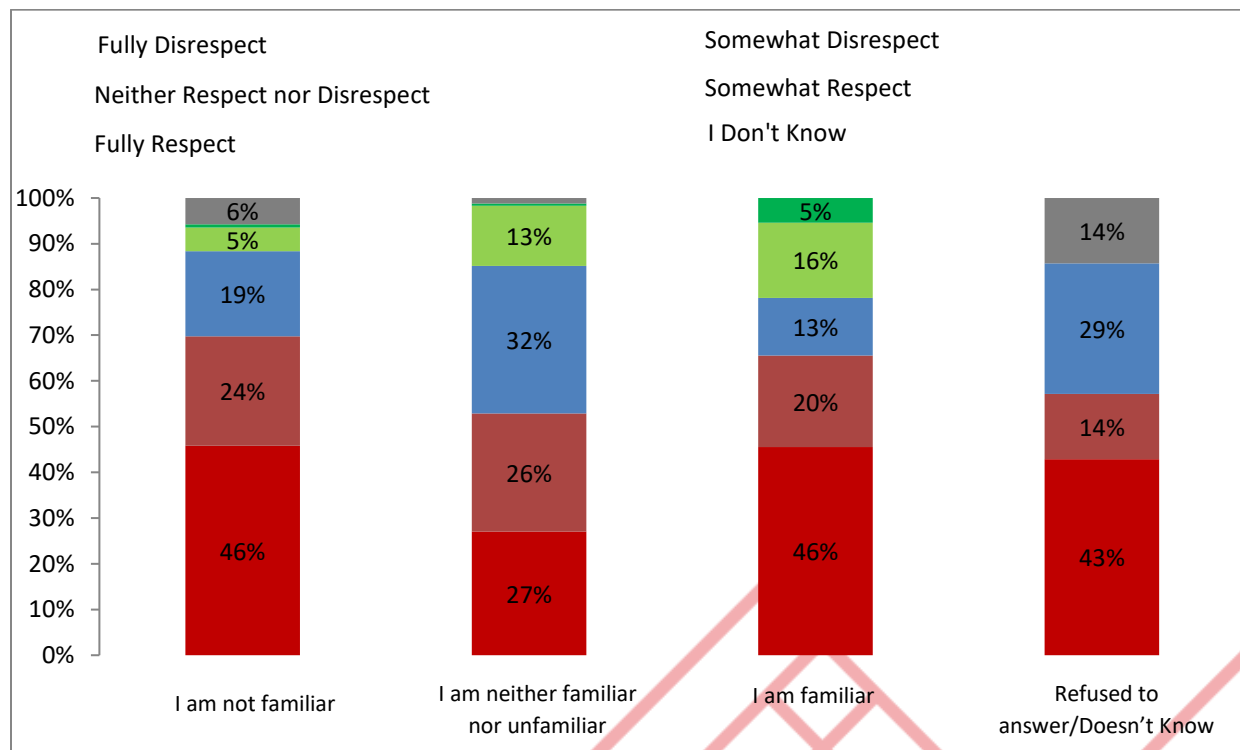
## II. Citizens' perception of the behavior of MPs in relation to the degree to which they are/are not familiar with the work of the Parliament and the MPs

In this part of the analysis, the responses of the citizens are examined from the aspect of their subjective assessments on how familiar or unfamiliar they are with the work of the Parliament and the MPs.

The answer to the first question identifies whether the respondent is knowledgeable regarding the work of the MPs in the Assembly of RNM. Additionally, the question had the possibility to choose among five answers, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “not familiar at all” and 5 is “completely familiar”. Graph 10 shows the aggregation of answers 1 and 2 as “not familiar with the work of MPs”, 3 remains as neutral or “neither familiar or unfamiliar”, while 4 and 5 are aggregated answers into “familiar and knowledgeable of the work of the MPs” in the Assembly of RNM.

Mentioned previously, one fifth (21%) of respondents who follow the work of MPs, believe that MPs respect ethical standards and rules of conduct (aggregated answers, “fully respect” 5% and “somewhat respect” at 16 %).

**Graph 10. (Q2) In general, how much do you think that MPs in our country respect ethical standards and rules of conduct?**

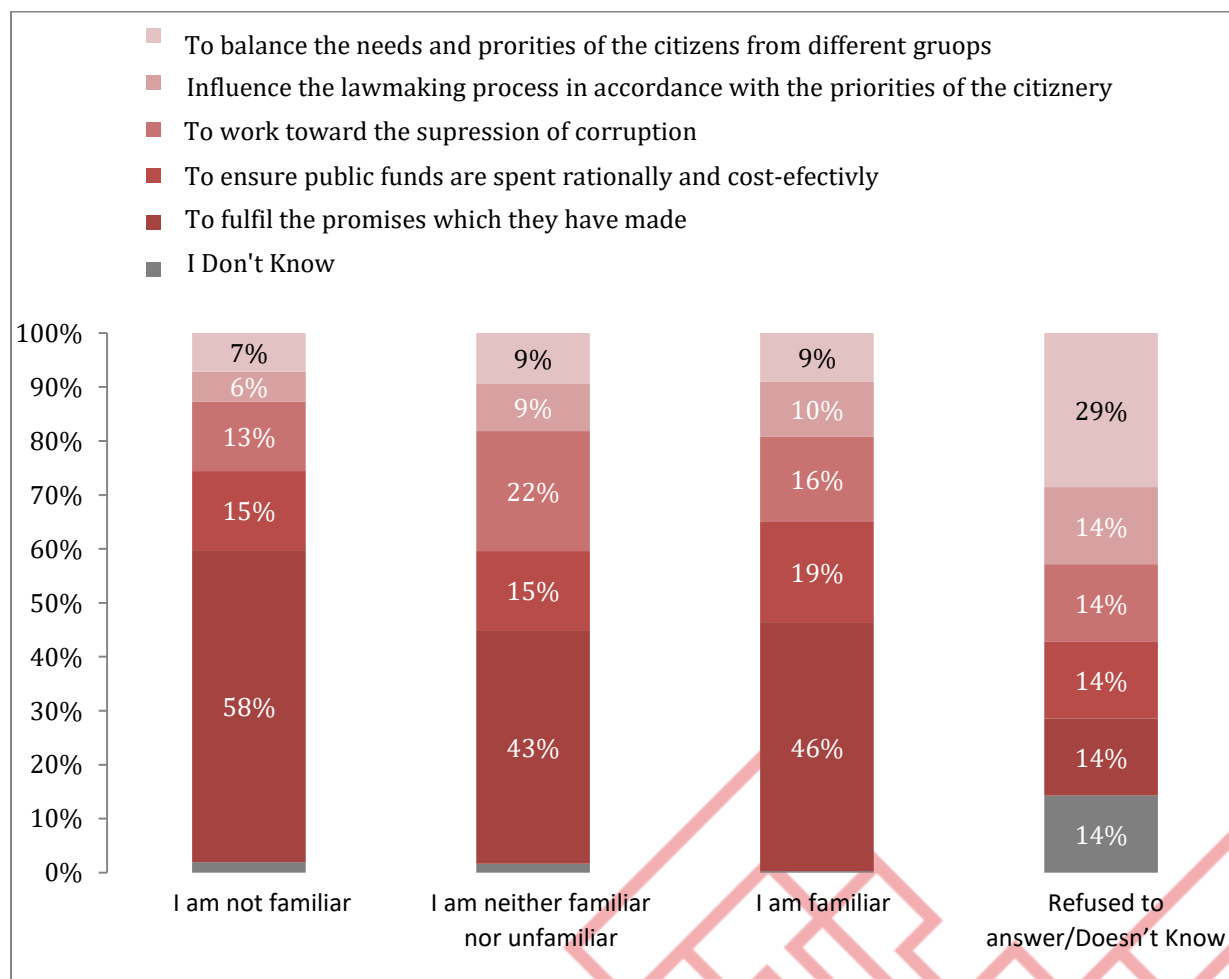




The priorities in the work of the MPs (Graph 11) are perceived differently between citizens who follow the work of the MPs and those who do not. Despite the fact that the order is the same for all citizens, it is primarily important to keep the promises made, the care for public money, and the suppression of corruption as top priorities. However, *those who are not familiar with the work of MPs emphasize more often (12%) that the keeping of promises is important*, compared with those who *are familiar with the work of the MPs*. This data shows that citizens who follow the work of the MPs *notice certain initiatives taken to fulfill promised programs*.

About 14% of the respondents who do not know—those who cannot assess whether or not they are familiar with the work of MPs—cannot answer, as they do not know what should be the priorities for the work of MPs in the country.

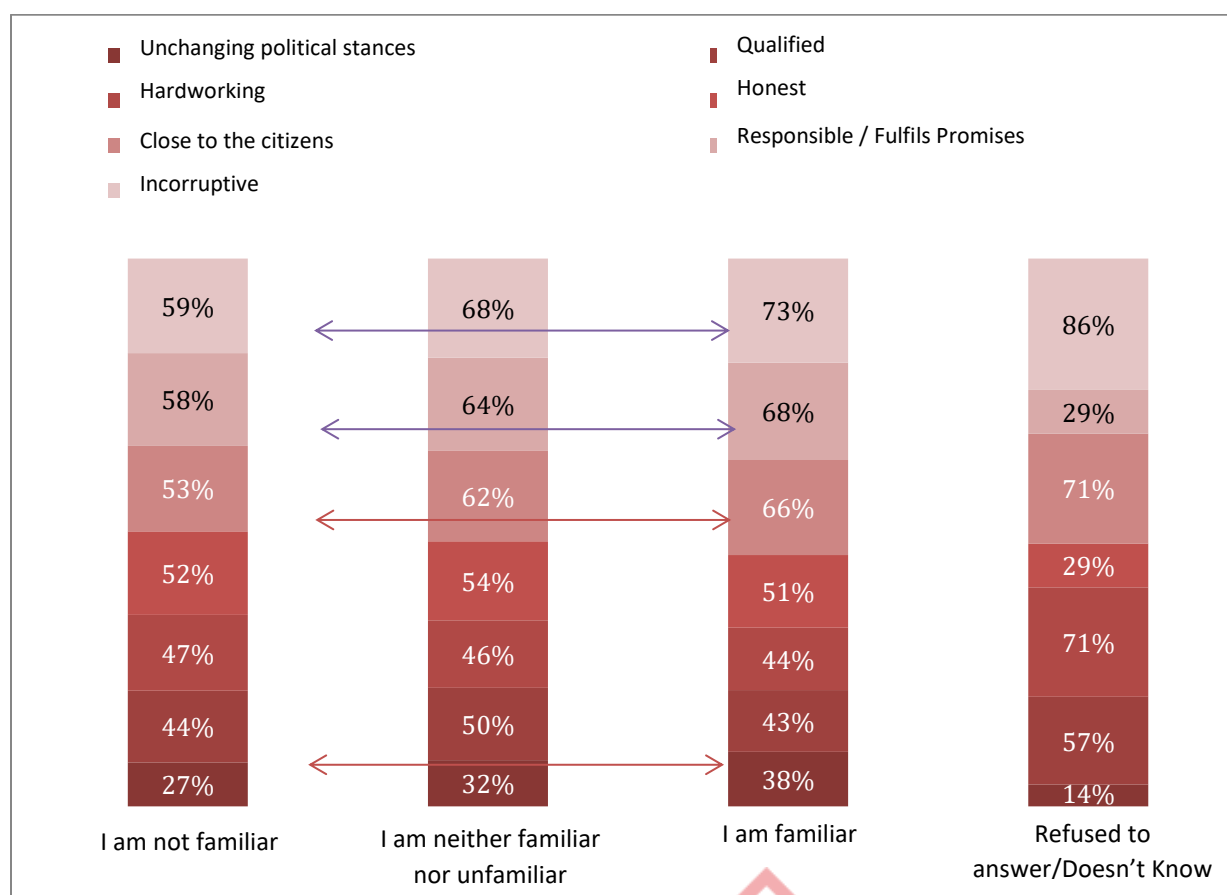
**Graph 11. (Q3) Which of the following should be a priority in the work of MPs in our country?**



The seven characteristics mentioned in Graph 12 as characteristics of an MP in the Parliament are referenced in large numbers by the respondents, but statistical differences are evident when we consider them through the prism of citizens who follow the work of the MPs, compared with those who do not. Namely, *those who are familiar with the work of MPs*, to a greater extent than those who are unfamiliar, emphasized the importance of the following characteristics:

- Incorruptible;
- Responsible;
- Close to the citizens; and
- With unchanging political stances.

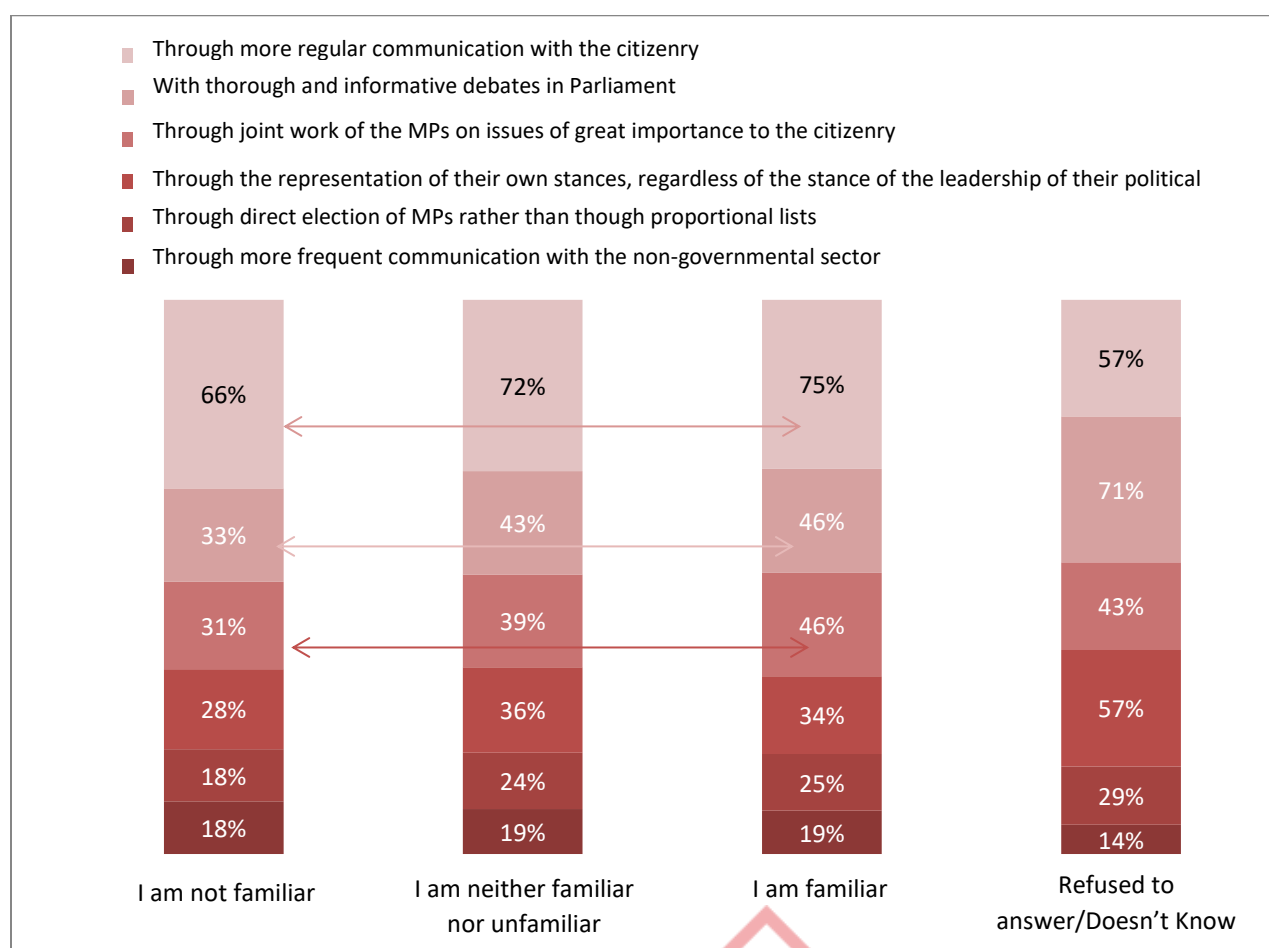
**Graph 12. (Q4) According to you, what are the most important characteristics of an MP? <sup>9</sup>**



<sup>9</sup> The question has the possibility of multiple answers, the sum of the % can exceed 100

In the interest of increasing the efficiency in the work of MPs, the respondents typically single out the need for more frequent communication with citizens (Graph 13). However, the mention of this activity is 9% higher among respondents who follow the work of MPs. Thorough and informed debate, as a powerful tool for increasing work efficiency, is mentioned 13% more often by respondents who follow the work of MPs than those who do not follow the work of MPs. *The biggest disparity between responses (15%) existed between those who are familiar and those who are not familiar with the work of the MPs.* This highlights the need for collaborative efforts *among the political parties on issues that are of greater importance to the citizens.*

**Graph 13. (Q5) According to your opinion, how could MPs do their job more efficiently?<sup>10</sup>**



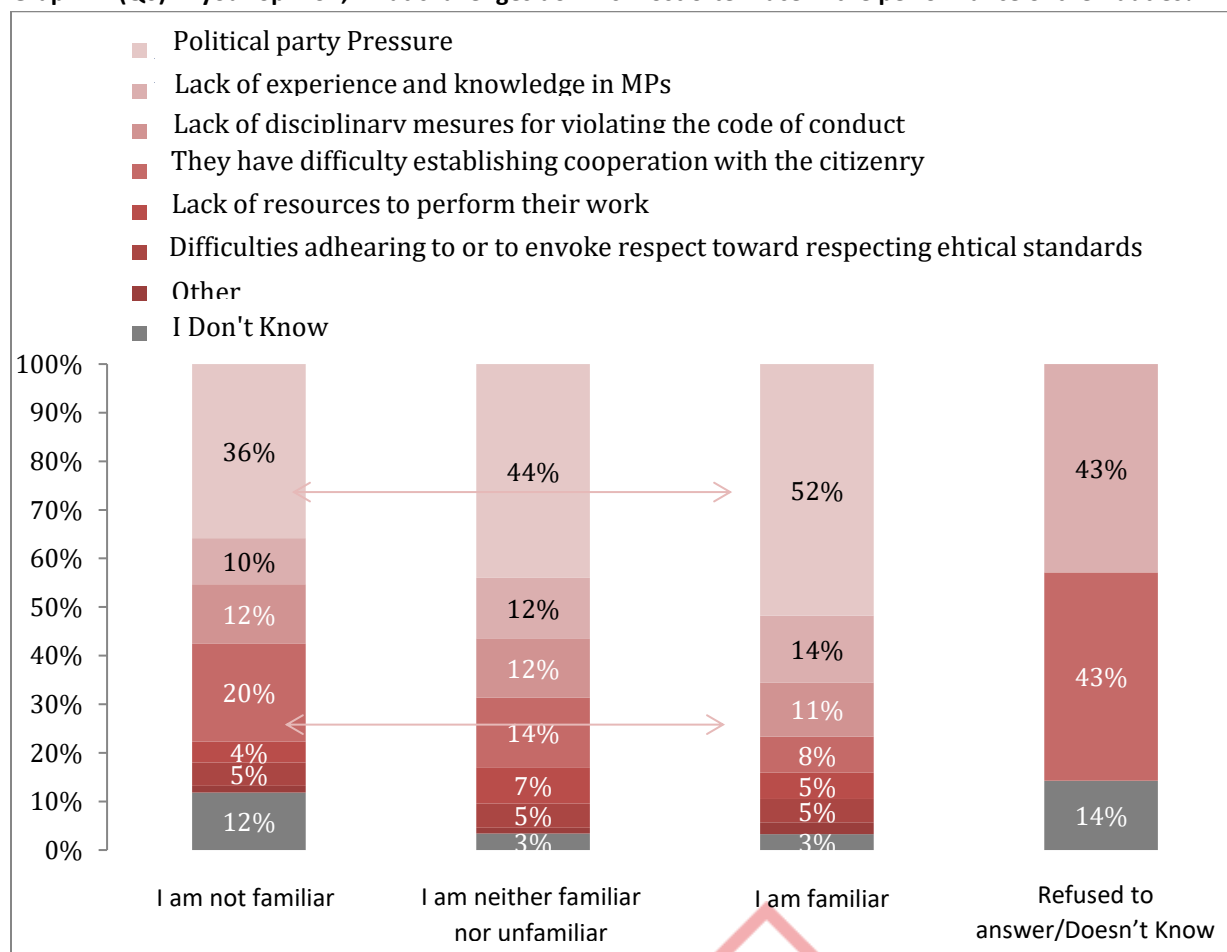
<sup>10</sup> The question has the possibility of multiple answers, the sum of the % can exceed 100



The most frequent answer by all respondents regarding the most often challenge faced by MPs in the performance of their duty is “political party pressure”. However, there is a statistically significant difference among those who follow and understand the work of MPs versus those who do not (Graph 14).

Those who are familiar with the work of MPs in the Parliament mention this challenge 16% more often than those who are not familiar with the work of MPs. Additionally, 20% of those who do not follow the work of the MPs highlighted the difficulty of sufficient cooperation with the citizens, a response rate two and a half times higher compared to those that follow the work of the MPs. This data shows that those who follow the work of the MPs do not single out the difficult cooperation with the citizens as a challenge.

Graph 14 (Q6) In your opinion, what challenges do MPs most often face in the performance of their duties?





Graph 15 presents the 18 different types of behavior of the MPs, expressed through an average rating derived from the five possible answers, on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "Never" and 5 means "Always".

The display shows the responses of the citizens who declared themselves to be "familiar with the work of MPs", and "unknown and neutral", that is, neither familiar nor unfamiliar.

Those who "are not familiar with the work of MPs", in terms of all the listed manners of behavior, *assign low ratings below 2*.

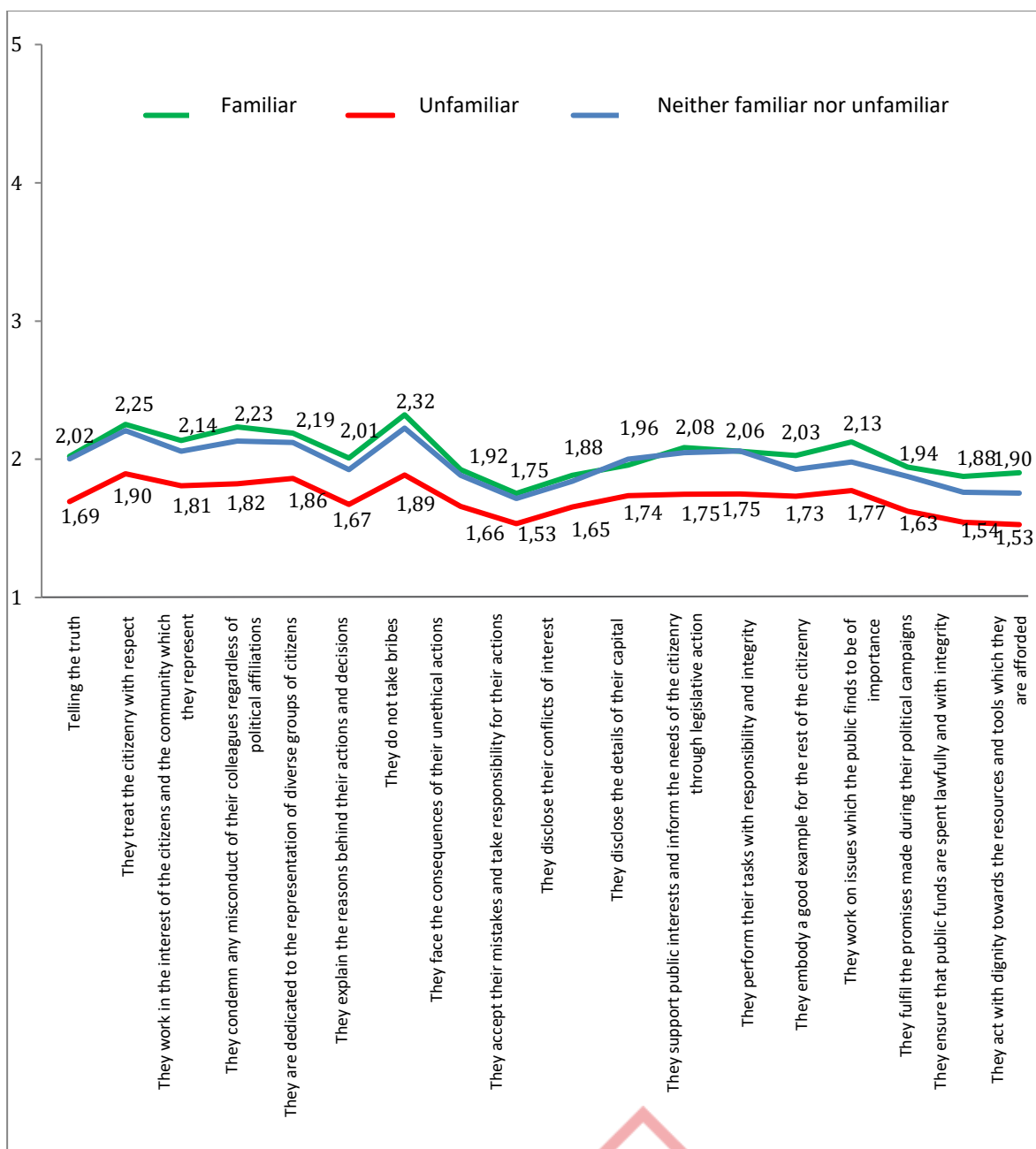
Those respondents who pointed out that they *are familiar* with the work of the MPs, in relation to the listed ways of behavior, *give higher ratings* than the rest of the respondents. They are distributed on a scale between 2 and 2.32, but they are still above the ratings assigned to them by the rest of the citizens.

Based on the data, the conclusion can be drawn that those who follow the work of MPs assess the behavior of the MPs based on the information they have, as opposed to those who do not follow the work of the MPs, whose perception is generally negative and evaluated without substantial knowledge of the work of the MPs.





Graph 15. (Q7-Q24) In general, how much do you think that MPs behave in each of the following manners, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "Never" and 5 means "Always".





*No statistically significant differences are observed* in citizens' perceptions of what MPs' consequences should be if they behave unethically. Graph 16 shows the answers of the respondents according to their familiarity with the work of their representatives in the Parliament.

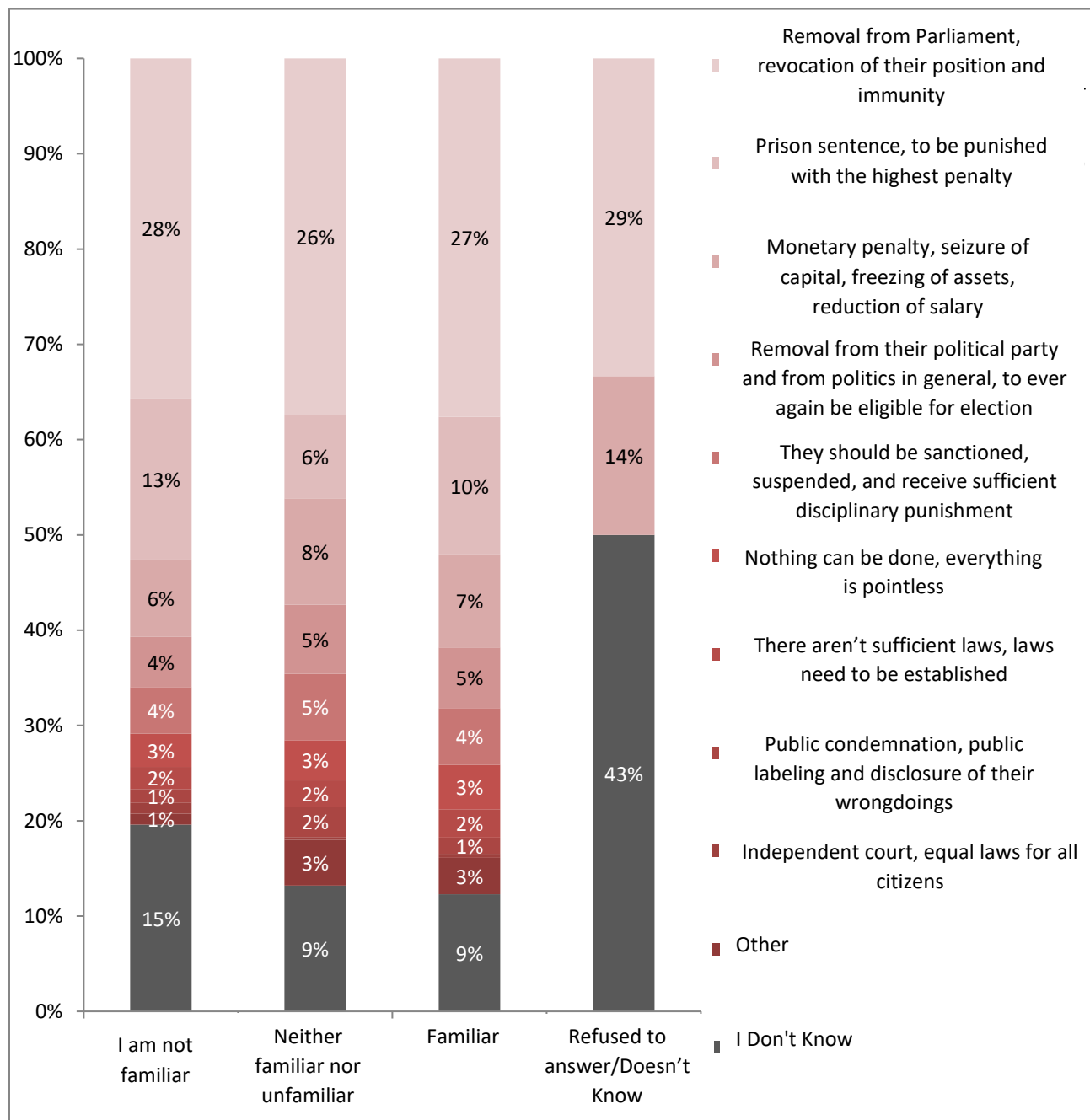
On the part of respondents who are familiar versus those who are unfamiliar with the work of MPs, the prevailing opinion is that it is necessary to introduce stricter sanctions on non-compliance with ethical standards—which do not exist at all in the opinion of citizens—or even if sanctions did exist, they are not sufficiently applied. The extreme answers are reflection not only of low trust in MPs, but also of the public's general evaluation of the work of the MPs in Parliament. The penalties for noncompliance of ethical standards proposed by citizens are in fact the key indicator that there is undoubtedly a need for revision, advancement and promotion of moral and ethical principles by their representatives in Parliament.

It is particularly important to point out that a very small number of citizens are aware and informed about the existence of moral and ethical standards that regulate the actions and behavior of MPs in order to indicate what is expected from them as representatives of citizens. Enhanced promotion of ethical standards will allow not only greater awareness among MPs regarding the standards of parliamentary ethics, but will also assist in building a model politician in the eyes of citizens, as well as increase trust among citizens in the Parliament and in the MPs.





**Graph 16. (Q32) What do you think should be the consequences for MPs if they violate moral standards and behave unethically?**





## Recommendations

- *Greater awareness of citizens regarding the work of MPs and greater promotion and awareness of the ethical standards that MPs should observe and abide by* - the results of the survey indicate that the less citizens know about the work of MPs, the worse they evaluate them and trust them. At the same time, the results show that a small percentage of citizens are familiar with the Code of Ethics for Members of Parliament and it is necessary to work on the promotion of this area.
- *Adoption and consistent application of a new and improved Code of Ethics* – the new code regulates areas that were not previously regulated, but also provides a more comprehensive and broader perspective on the principles, values and standards of conduct and behavior expected by the MPs. The results of the survey of the citizens' perception indicated the fact that the values and principles by which they evaluate the behavior and actions of the MPs are compatible with international standards of parliamentary ethics. However, some of the areas on which the research examined the perceptions of the citizens are not subject to the existing code, hence, its adjustment and improvement appears necessary.
- *Adoption of a new Guideline for the application of the Code of Ethics* – the new text of the Guideline provides a series of examples of the expected and recommended behavior and actions of MPs in situations in which they have a certain moral dilemma;
- *Amendments to regulations (Law on Members of Parliament, Rules of Procedure of the Parliament)* – through new amendments, the legal gaps in the effective application of the Code of Ethics will be overcome and solid mechanisms to perpetuate effective application can be established;
- *Establishing mechanisms for monitoring the application of the Code Of Ethics* - the monitoring of the application of the code and the notification regarding its application will greatly strengthen the confidence of the citizens in the work of the MPs due to the regular and reasoned monitoring of their behaviors and actions;
- *Establishing mechanisms for sanctioning the behavior that goes against standards and principles of the Code of Ethics* - holding MPs to account and ensuring that responsibility is taken for possible violations of the code; and
- *Continuous provision of support for the application of the Code of Ethics* - it is essential that MPs receive support for the application of the norms and standards within the code, through confidential counseling and continuous training.



## Appendix 1 – Research methodology

### *Methodological approach*

The survey was conducted by the TIM Institute following a previously-prepared questionnaire by the Center for Change Management (CCM). The analysis shown in this publication was conducted by CCM based on the received responses from the survey. Representatives from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) were also consulted on the preparation of the questionnaire. The survey used a representative sample of respondents in the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia, aged 18+. The survey was conducted on a total of 1318 respondents.

Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) were used for the purposes of the survey.

#### I. Sample design

Respondents were proportionally distributed in the urban and rural parts of all 8 regions of the Republic of North Macedonia, including ethnic Macedonians, ethnic Albanians, ethnic Roma, ethnic Turks, and other members of smaller ethnic communities living in the municipalities.

The sample is stratified on multiple degrees.

Each municipality in the sample is divided into 4 subgroups: ethnic Macedonians and other ethnic communities in urban and rural settlements and ethnic Albanians in urban and rural settlements.

The distribution of smaller ethnic communities (Turks, Roma, Serbs, Vlachs, etc.) in each municipality separately, were properly taken into account.

The number of interviews is proportionally distributed in the municipalities based on the stratification of the population and the number of residents in each municipality. The sample includes respondents from different age groups, different levels of education. Respondents from different genders are proportionally included.

The survey was conducted in Macedonian and Albanian.

Due to the reduced penetration of fixed landline telephones in households, TIM Institute used up to 70% mobile phones.

#### II. Sample frame

Census 2021, data published by the State Statistics Office.



### III. Selection of respondents

Each interviewer was required to make at least three attempts to contact the selected household. If contact with the household is not established after three attempts during the fieldwork, another household is contacted according to the household selection procedure.

The results of all contact attempts are recorded by the interviewers.

Fixed landline telephone number: the person who has the first next birthday in the household is surveyed from the household members who are present for the duration of the survey.

Mobile phone number: the person who calls the mobile phone, over the age of 18, who meets the necessary criteria, is surveyed.

If the selected person refuses the survey or another member of the household interferes with the survey, the interviewer politely ends the conversation and ends the contact.

### IV. Quality control system

30% of the conducted interviews were subject to control.

### V. Survey and supervisory network

The research was conducted by a developed and experienced network of interviewers (telephone operators) in Macedonian and Albanian.

40 experienced interviewers worked on this project.

### VI. Duration of the research

Before the start of the telephone survey, all interviewers received theoretical training on the methodology and work procedure, which includes an explanation of the meaning and implementation of the following procedures:

- ❖ Selection of the household
- ❖ Selection of respondents
- ❖ Explanation of the method for filling out the program questionnaire

The research was conducted from 02.11.2022 to 17.11.2022.

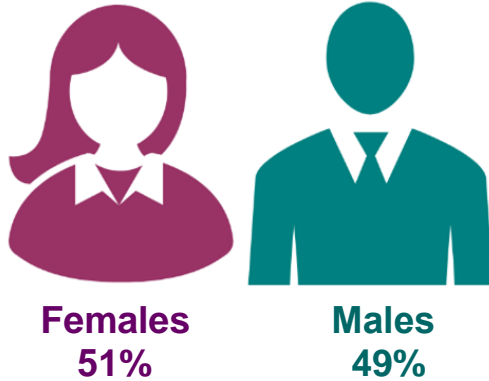
The professional statistical data processing software SPSS for Windows was used for processing and analysis of the received data by the TIM Institute.

SPSS for Windows and Microsoft Office for Windows (Word and Excel) were used to prepare the report, graphs and tables.

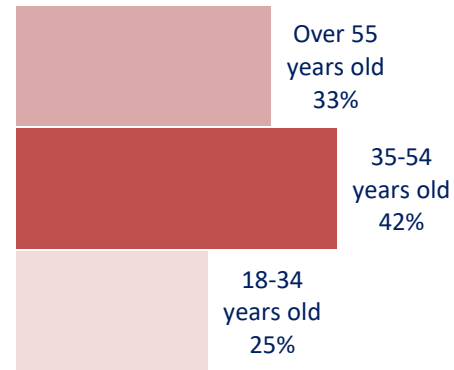


## Demographic structure of respondents

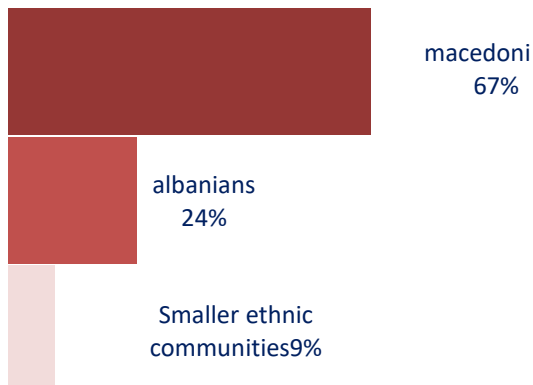
### SEX



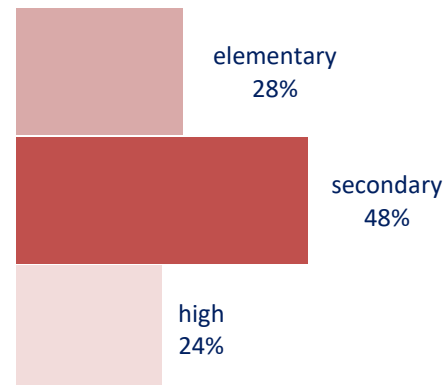
### AGE



### ETHNICITY

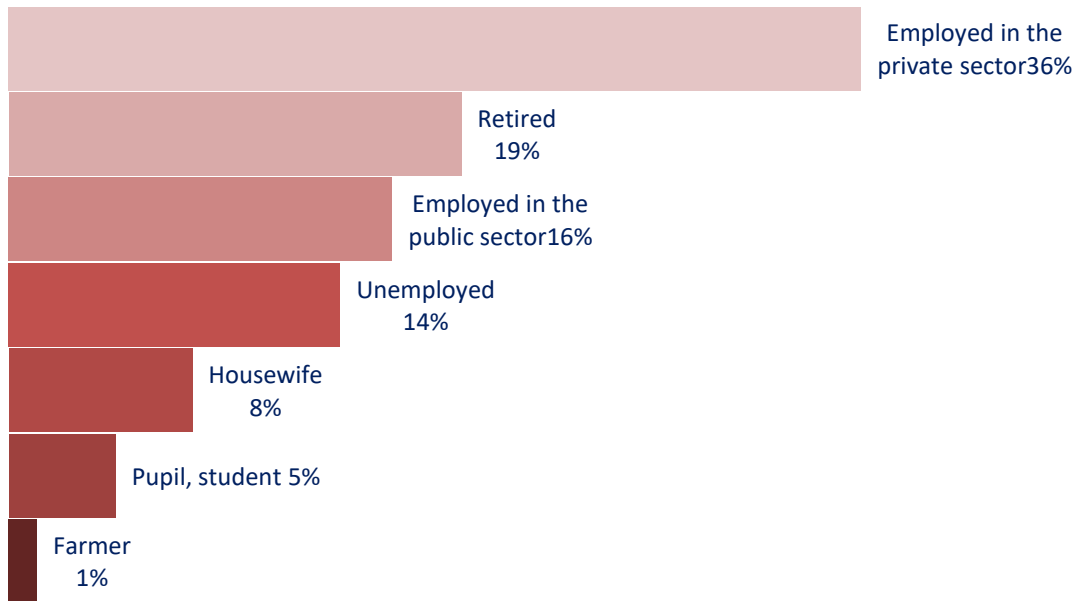


### EDUCATION





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