

# Citizens' perceptions, experiences and opinions of elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina





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**July 2022**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter: the Mission) commissioned a state-wide survey on the electoral process in Bosnia and Herzegovina in summer 2021. The aim of the survey was to identify citizens' perceptions, experiences and understanding of elections, their views on the importance of voting, their perceived role in the electoral process, and how they participate in politics in general.

Many different surveys and polls have looked at elections in BiH. Most attempted to collect data on technical aspects of the process and aimed to extrapolate voting patterns and voter preference. These research initiatives provide very useful factual data on voting trends and rates of electoral participation in BiH. Rarely, however, have these surveys sought to examine citizens' perceptions of the electoral process or to present a broader understanding of elections and political life.

Based on the survey findings, the Mission prepared this report and distilled the more notable details from the data meant for both relevant authorities and the general public. The report has the potential to inform on-going efforts aimed at reforming electoral legislation and practice, as well as to raise awareness on citizens' views of key aspects of the electoral process in BiH.

Research was conducted by PRIME Communications from 11 to 21 August, 2021, using a sample of 1,009 adult residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina via face-to-face interviews. The survey was conducted in 29 municipalities in the Federation of BiH, in the Brčko District of BiH, and in 21 municipalities in Republika Srpska.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For details on methodology please see the last section of this report.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### 1. Democracy and political participation in BiH

Almost half of respondents surveyed are interested in politics (**44.1 per cent**), while **31.6 per cent** are not interested at all.

**47.7 per cent** are not satisfied with the state of democracy in BiH.

### 2. Participation in elections and voting

Over half of respondents (**52.7 per cent**) reported turning out to vote at most elections, while every fourth person (**25.8 per cent**) votes sometimes.

Among respondents who vote regularly or sometimes, most consider it their civic duty (**62 per cent**), while **46.8 per cent** go to the polls to prevent their vote from being stolen or abused.

Half of respondents think that their vote matters and contributes to change, while a fifth consider their vote irrelevant.

Two-thirds of respondents do not care whether they are represented by men or women in politics, while one in five stressed that they prefer female representatives. One in six prefers male representatives.

### 3. Citizens' perceptions of electoral misconduct

BiH citizens do not trust the institutions involved in the electoral process. No institution mentioned was trusted by more than **16 per cent** of respondents. **59.6 per cent** of respondents do not trust the Central Election Commission, **64.4 per cent** do not trust polling station committees, and **64.6 per cent** of respondents do not trust municipal election commissions.

**42 per cent** of respondents are of the opinion that elections are not fair, and only **23 per cent** believe that elections are fair. Over two thirds of those surveyed believe that electoral fraud occurs.

Every fourth respondent was offered money to vote for a party or a candidate. Over a fifth experienced someone telling them who to vote for at the polling station.

Those surveyed consider the counting of votes at polling stations (**43 per cent**) and the tallying of votes at municipal and central levels (**22.2 per cent**) as the most frequent points at which fraud occurs in the election process.

#### 4. Understanding of the BiH electoral system

**41.2 per cent** of respondents consider themselves to have a good or very good understanding of the BiH electoral system. Almost two-thirds of respondents would like to see less complicated electoral rules.

**41 per cent** of respondents consider the BiH electoral system to not enable a genuine reflection of citizens' will.

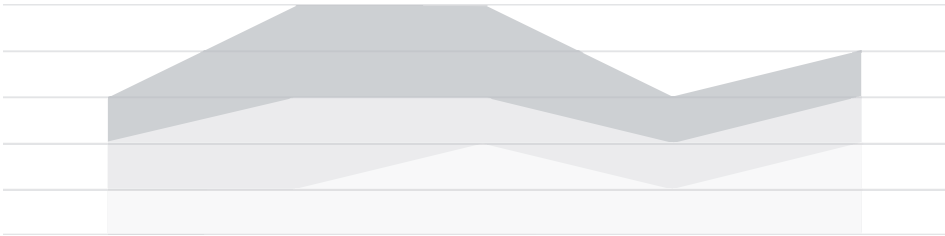
Around two-thirds of those surveyed fully or partially support amending the BiH Election Law (**64.6 per cent**).

#### 5. Citizens' views on political campaigns

**30 per cent** of respondents report having decided for whom to vote long before election day, while every fourth citizen always votes for the same party.

Electoral campaigns only help every tenth respondent decide for whom to vote. Over half are of the opinion that campaigns have no impact on their voting preference.

Electoral campaigns in BiH are considered unethical and unfair by **42.7 per cent** of respondents.

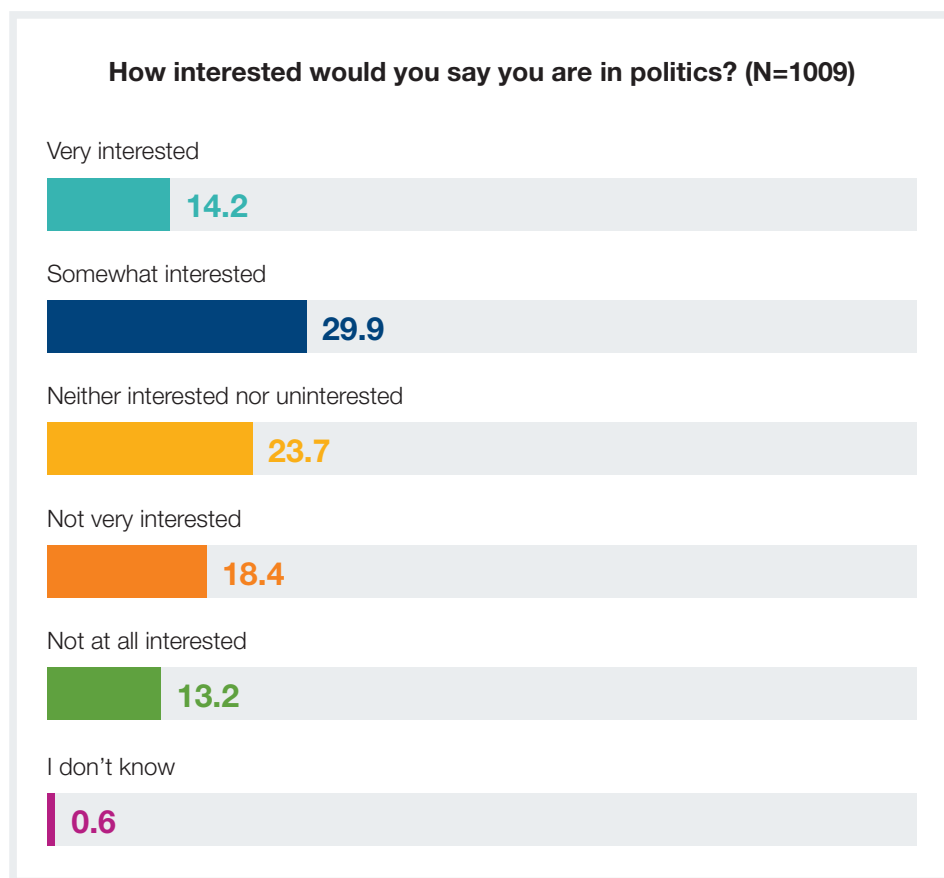


### 3. BIH CITIZENS' UNDERSTANDING OF ELECTIONS: PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESULTS

#### 3.1. Views of BiH citizens on democracy and political participation

Figure 1, below, shows 44 per cent of respondents indicating some degree of interest in politics. A majority expressed apathy or active disinterest.

Figure 1.

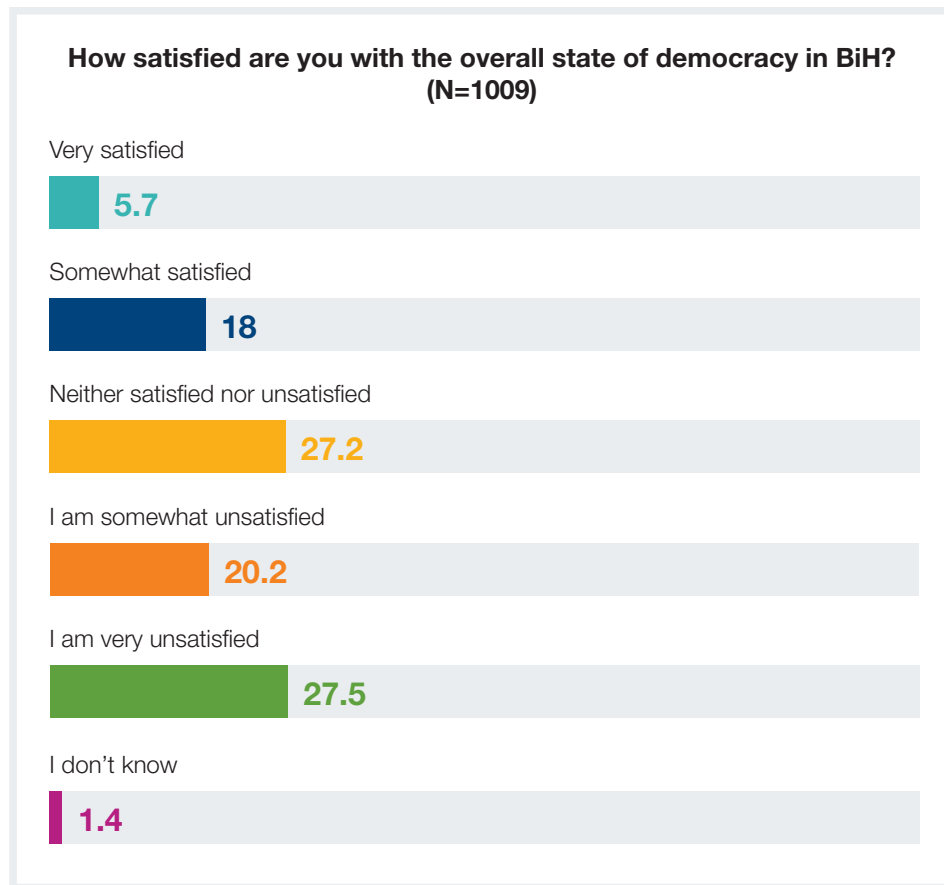


**Gender.** Interest in politics is significantly higher among men than among women. Almost half of men (48.6 per cent) are very or somewhat interested in politics, as opposed to 39.5 per cent of women. **Age.** Respondents between 30 and 59 (about 48.5 per cent) showed the most interest in political participation, while those younger than 29 years of age (33.4 per cent) showed the least interest. **Ethnicity.** Interest in politics is highest among Bosniak respondents (51.9 per cent), followed by Croats (42.3 per cent) and Serbs (36.1 per cent).



47.7 per cent are dissatisfied with the state of democracy in BiH, while 23.7 per cent are satisfied. 27.2 per cent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the state of BiH democracy (Figure 2).

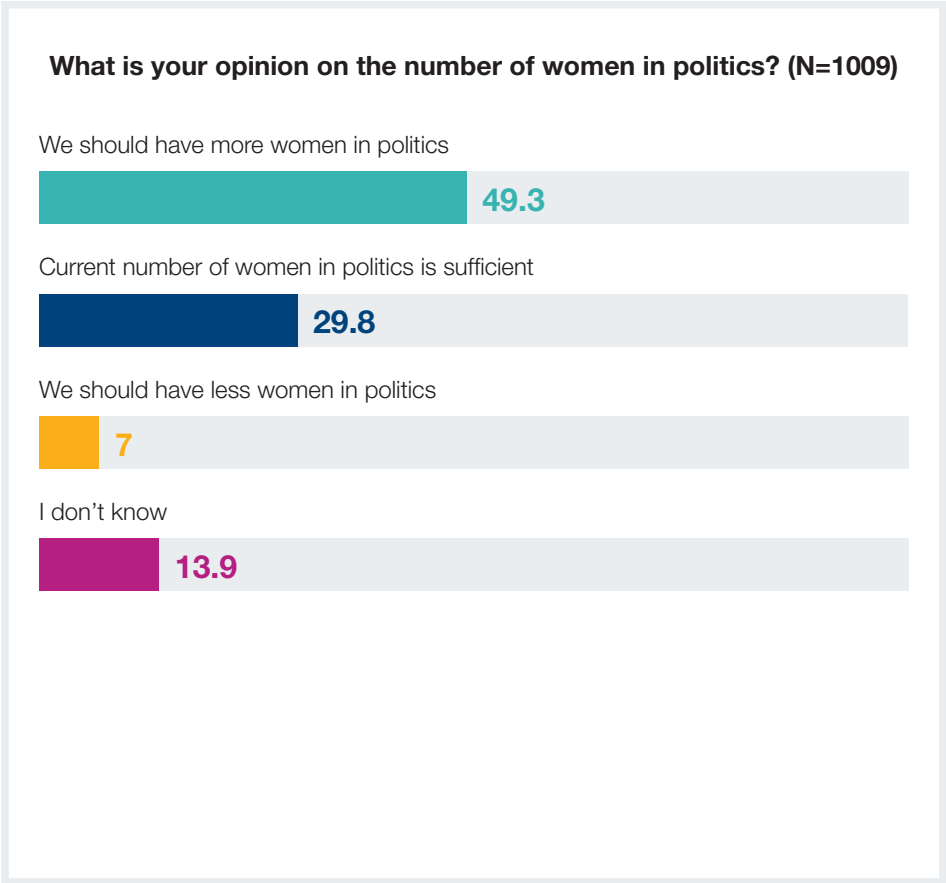
Figure 2



**Education.** Satisfaction with democracy varies significantly among BiH citizens depending on their education level, with dissatisfaction highest among the most educated respondents. **Ethnicity.** Among the respondents, Serbs are the least satisfied with the state of democracy (56.1 per cent of respondents reporting dissatisfaction), followed by Bosniaks (44.3 per cent) and Croats (35.3 per cent).

According to the BiH Election Law, 40 per cent of electoral list candidates should be women. However, the number of women elected to office in BiH is far below this number. Almost half of respondents (49.3 per cent) are of the opinion that there should be more women in politics.

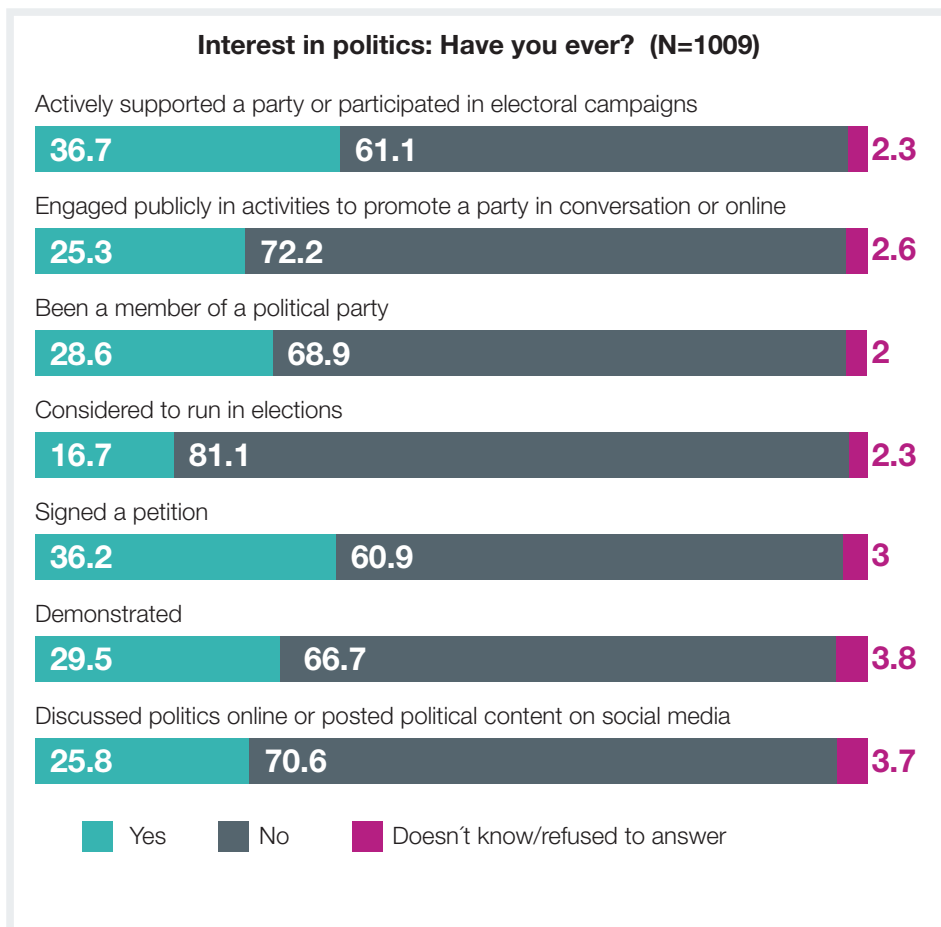
Figure 3.



**Gender.** More than half of women among the respondents (56.7 per cent) think that BiH needs more women in politics, followed by 41.9 per cent of men. Every third man (34.8 per cent) thinks that the existing number of women in politics is sufficient, and every fourth woman (24.9 per cent) agrees. **Ethnicity.** Among the respondents, 59 per cent of Croats, 49.9 per cent of Bosniaks and 41.7 per cent of Serbs are of the opinion that more women are needed in politics.

As mentioned in the first question above, almost half of BiH citizens are very or somewhat interested in politics. However, when it comes to actively participating in political processes, these numbers start to go down. 36.7 per cent of respondents have participated in election campaigns in some capacity. Almost 30 per cent have participated in a protest and 28.6 per cent are or have been members of a political party. 16.7 per cent considered standing for election (Figure 4).

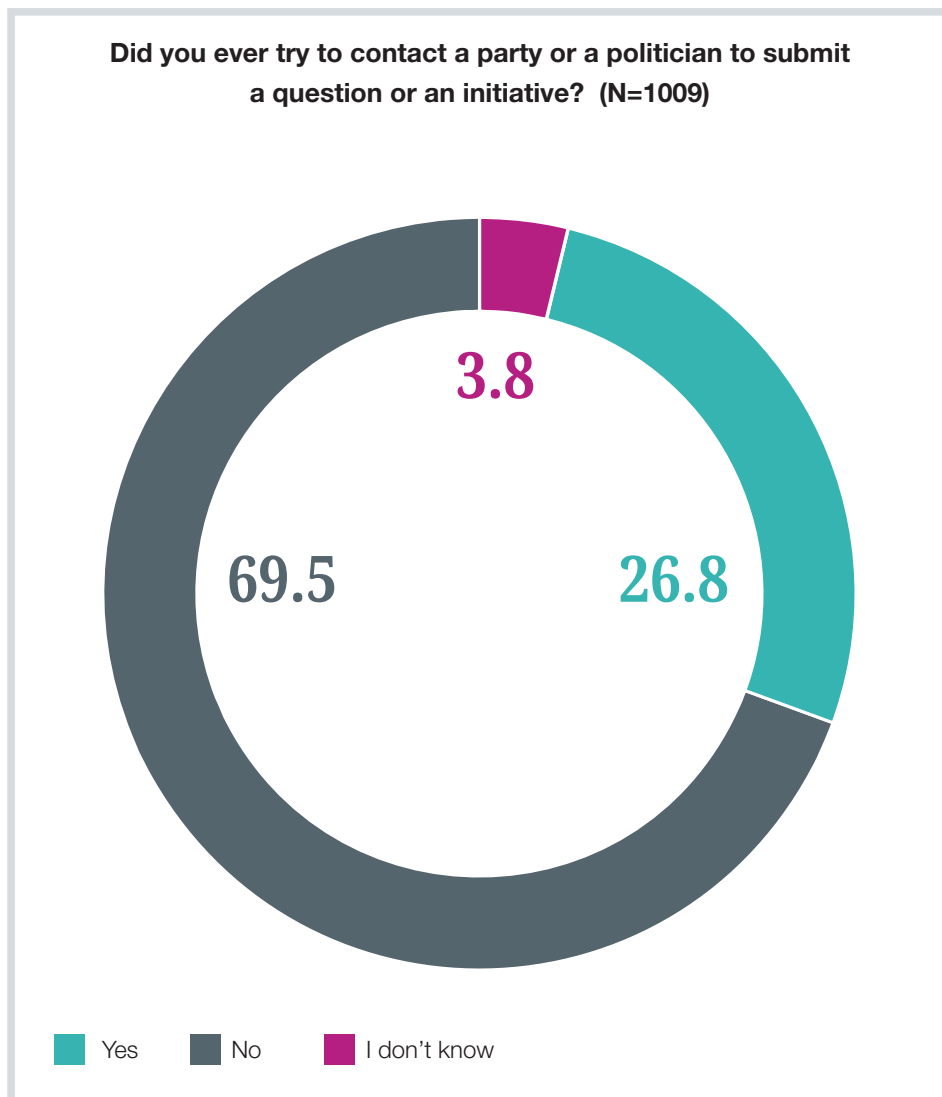
Figure 4.



**Education.** There is a general correlation between higher education level and increased political involvement. **Urban/rural.** Rural residents participate more than urban residents in campaign rallies and stand more often for election. On the other hand, urban residents more often signed petitions and participated in protests. **Income.** The higher the income of the respondents, the higher their political engagement. **Ethnicity.** Among respondents, 43.9 per cent of Serbs, 38.1 per cent of Bosniaks and 27.6 per cent of Croats actively supported a political party or participated in campaigns.

More than two thirds of respondents have not tried to personally contact a party or a politician, or to submit a citizens' initiative.

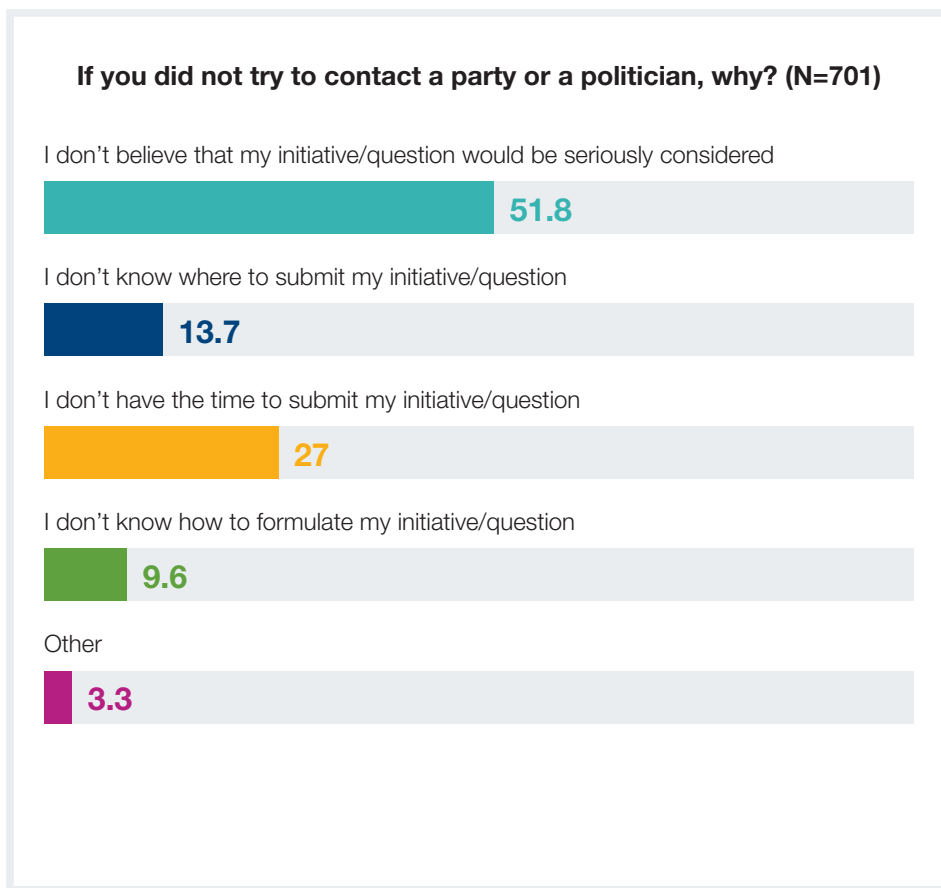
Figure 5.



**Age.** About 30 per cent of respondents aged 30 to 59 tried to contact a party or a politician. Respondents over the age of 60 were the least likely to do so (16.2 per cent).

The majority of respondents have not tried to contact a politician or a party, generally because of a belief that the proposal or initiative would not be seriously considered (51.8 per cent). Not knowing where to submit an initiative (13.7 per cent) and not knowing how to formulate an initiative in the right way (9.6 per cent) were additional reasons for not contacting political representatives.

Figure 6.<sup>2</sup>

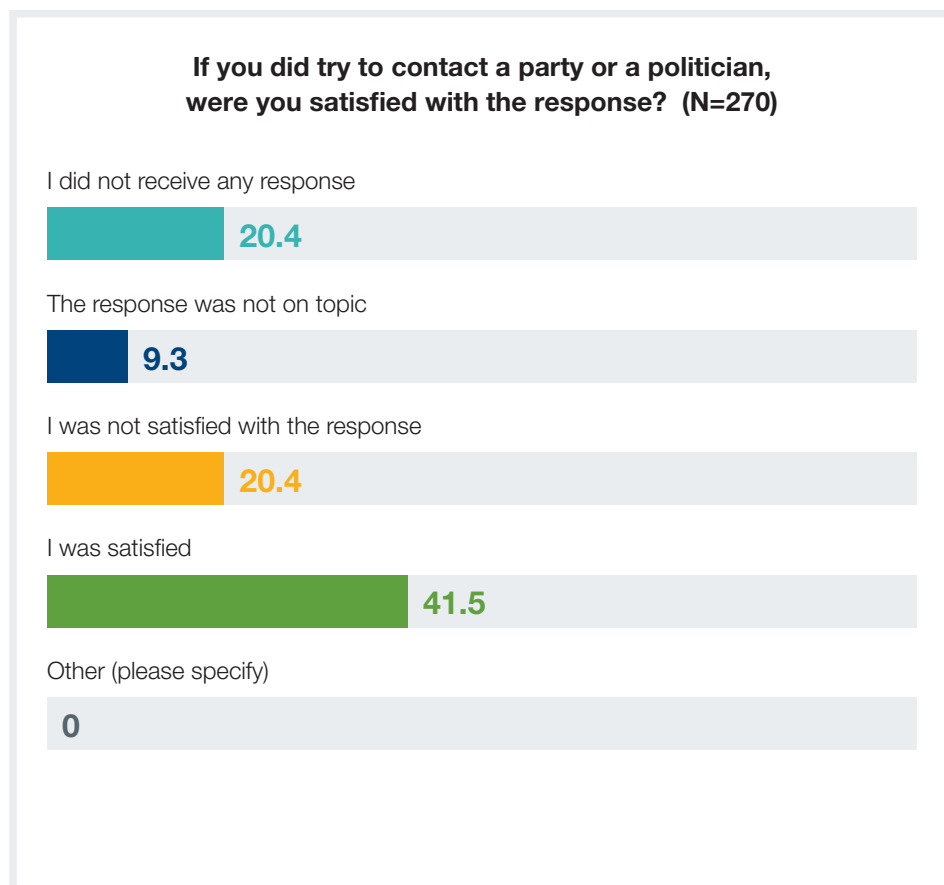


**Age.** The older the respondents, the less likely they are to know how to submit an initiative.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents could choose more than one answer to the questions presented in Figures 6 and 7 which is why the total percentage of answers is higher than 100 per cent.

Figure 7 presents the reported outcomes for those who did contact a politician or a party. 20 per cent of respondents never received an answer to their initiative or question, and an additional 20 per cent of respondents were not satisfied with the answer they received from politicians or parties. One in ten respondents (9.3 per cent) felt that the answers they received did not relate to the question they asked. 41.5 per cent were satisfied with the answer they received.

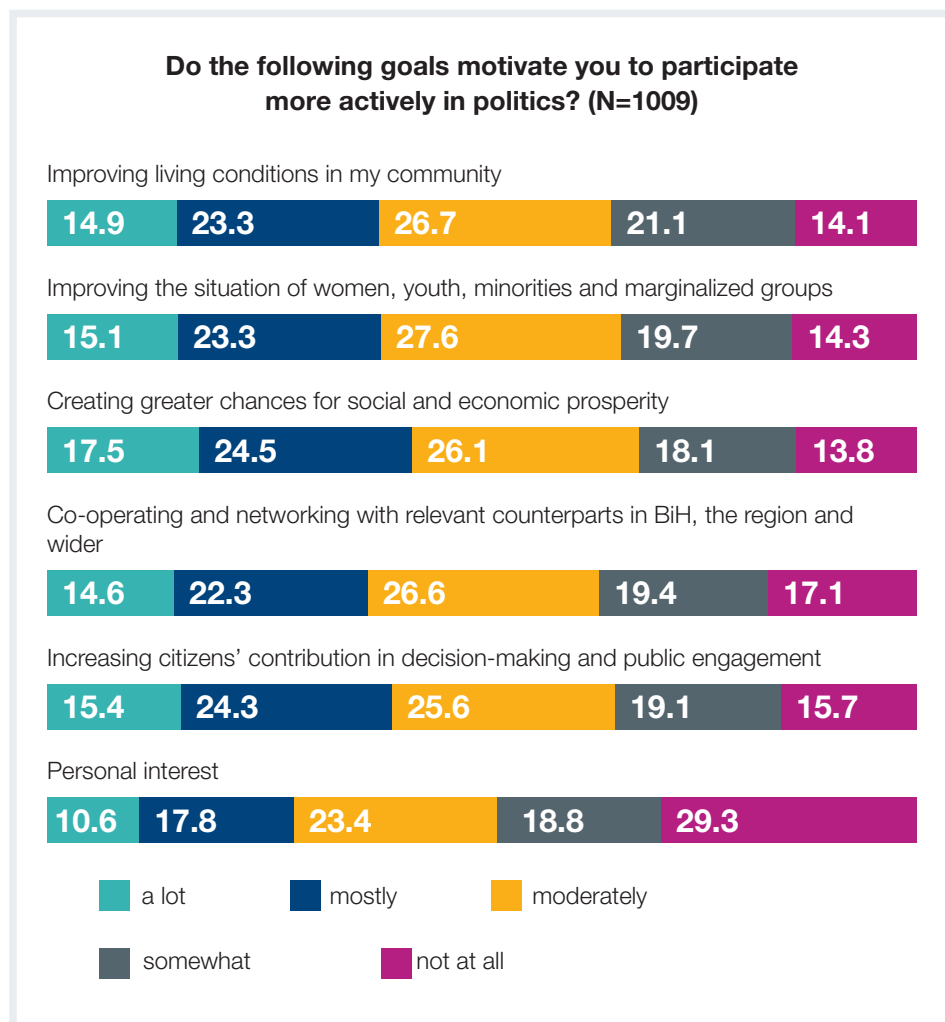
Figure 7.



**Gender.** Among the respondents who contacted a political party, we see significant differences between men and women only under the option “I was satisfied with the answer”. Half of men (48.1 per cent) were satisfied with the response and only one third of women (34.8 per cent).

According to the survey, highly educated adults between 30 and 44 years of age with relatively high incomes are the most motivated to actively participate in politics, especially in those activities that are outside the confines of political parties. Motivation for political participation varied.

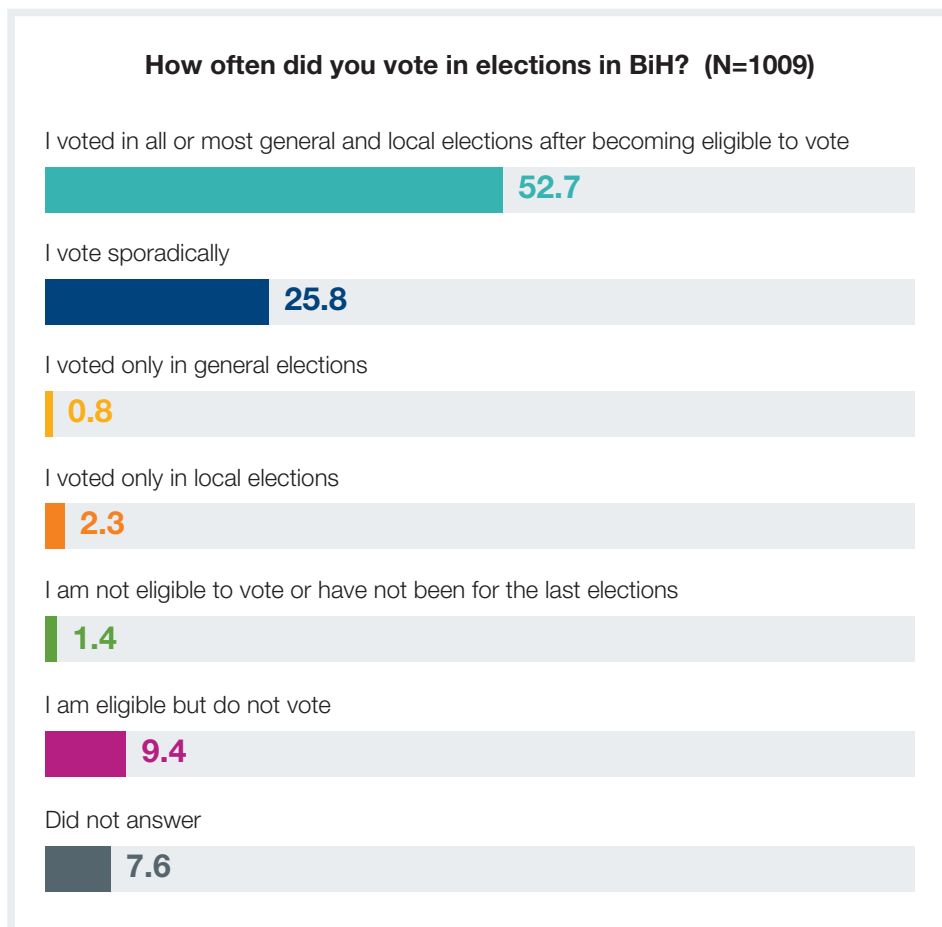
Figure 8.



### 3.2. Participation and voting in elections

Self-reported voter turnout in the sample is higher than official turnout figures suggest. Half of those surveyed (52.7 per cent) regularly go to the polls and vote, while every fourth (25.8 per cent) votes occasionally. One in ten respondents (9.4 per cent) have never voted.

Figure 9.

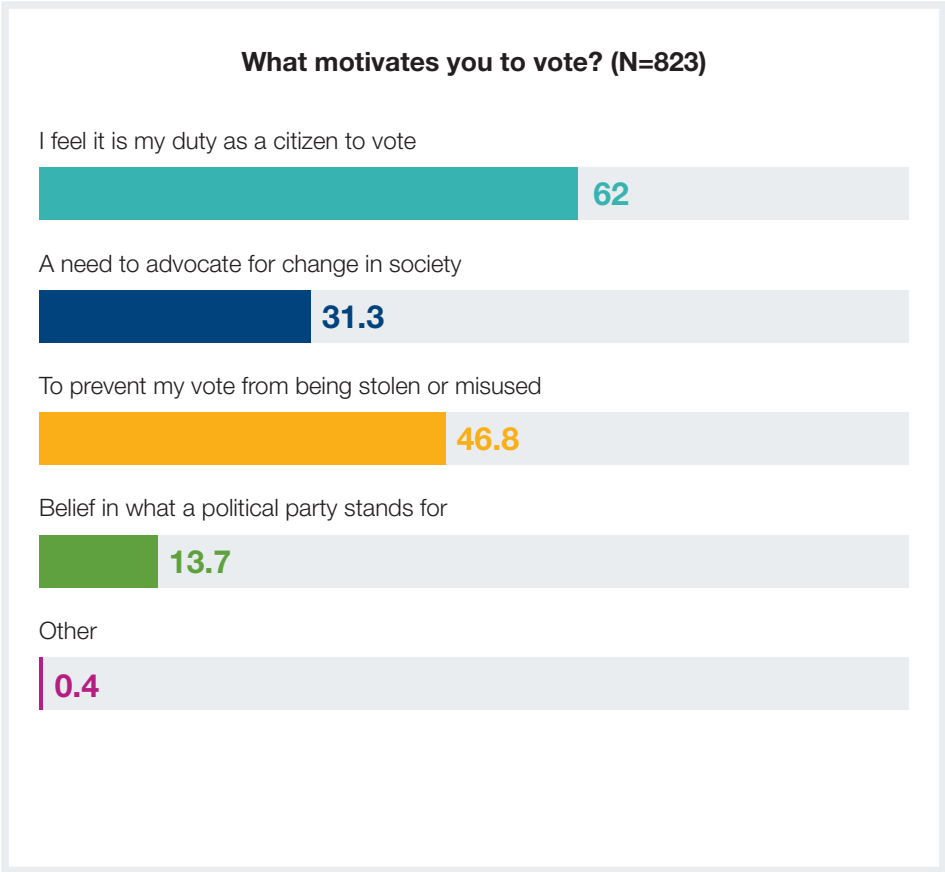


**Education.** Among the respondents who regularly vote in all elections, most are highly educated (61.3 per cent). **Age.** Respondents under the age of 29 are the least likely to vote in elections (37 per cent). **Urban/rural.** Rural (59.7 per cent) more than urban residents (46.9 per cent) regularly vote in all elections. **Religion.** More than half of firm believers (55.8 per cent) regularly go to the polls. Non-believers are the biggest abstainers from voting.



Among the respondents who vote, the prevailing opinion is that it is their civic duty (62 per cent), while 46.8 per cent of voters surveyed go to the polls to prevent their vote being stolen or abused. 31.3 per cent believe that voting can change society. 13.7 per cent go to the polls because they believe in what a party stands for (Figure 10).<sup>3</sup>

Figure 10.

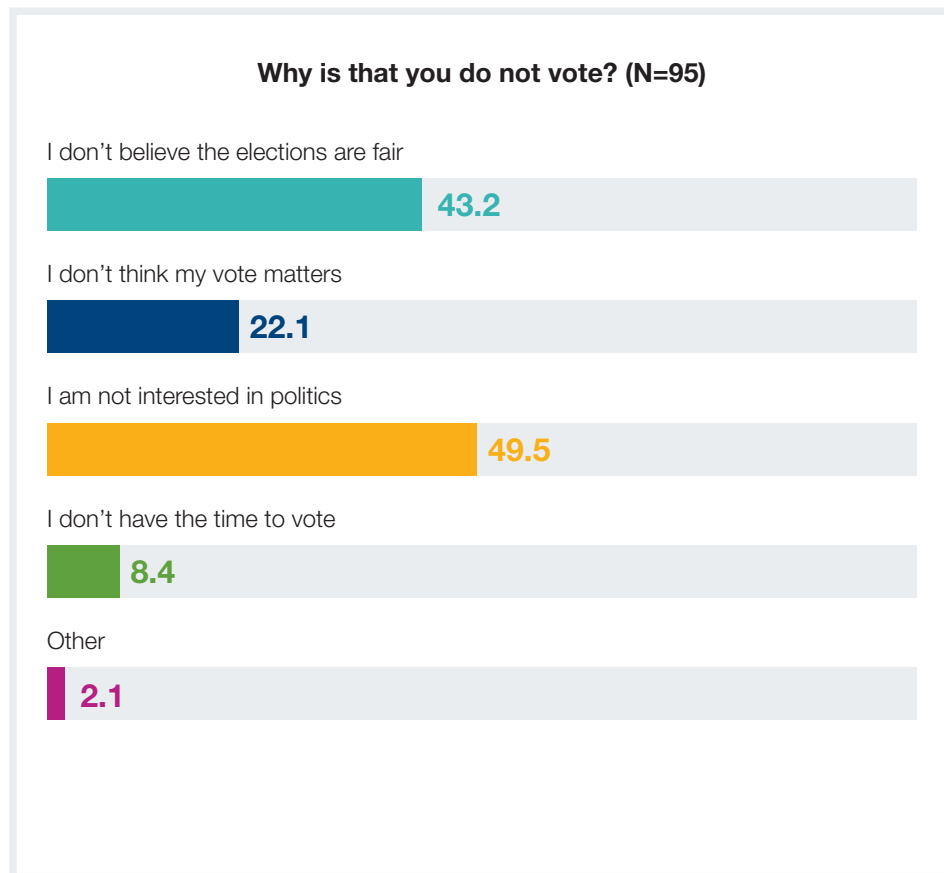


**Gender.** Two thirds of men (65.9 per cent) see voting as fulfilling a civic duty, compared to 58 per cent of women. A higher percentage of men (15.8 per cent) than women (11.7 per cent) vote because they believe in what a party they support stands for. **Ethnicity.** Half of Bosniaks (52.2 per cent) and about 39 per cent of both Serbs and Croats go to the polls to prevent their votes from being stolen. Going to the polls because they believe in the values that a certain political party represents is reported by 18.8 per cent of Croats, 16.4 per cent of Bosniaks and 8 per cent of Serbs.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents could choose more than one answer to the questions presented in Figures 10 and 11, which is why the total percentage of answers is higher than 100 per cent.

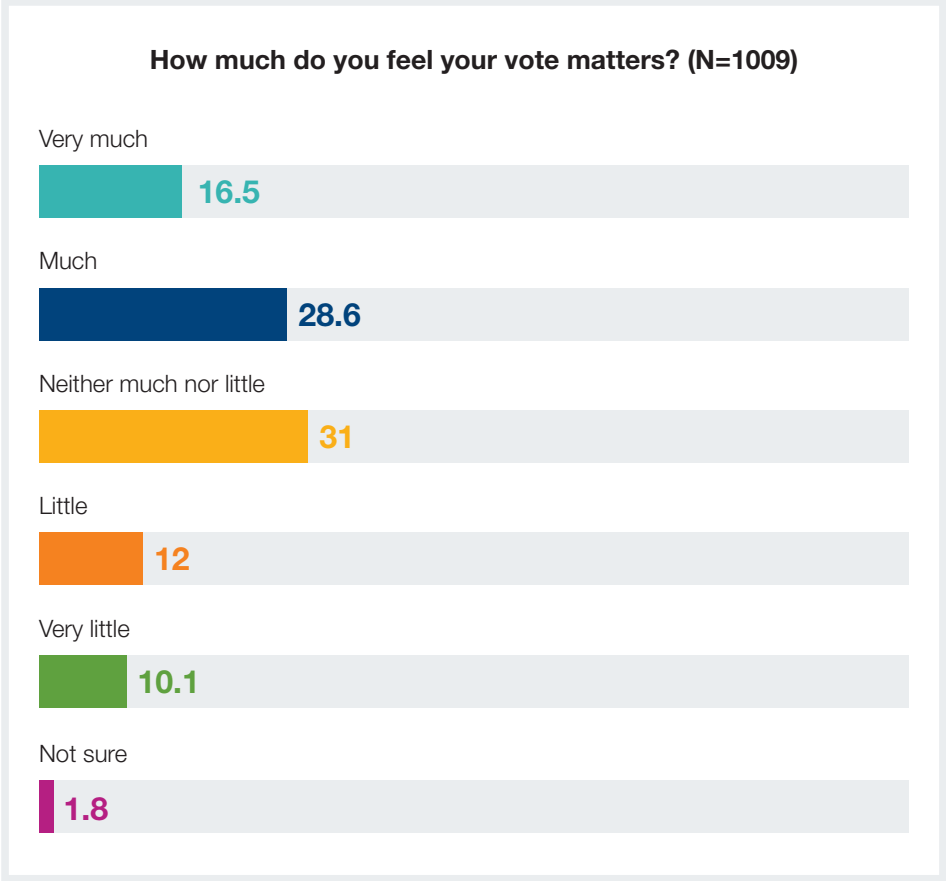
Note the small number of respondents who do not vote, with reason given below.

Figure 11.



Twice the percentage of respondents think their vote is important (45.1 per cent) compared to the 22.1 per cent who think their vote does not matter. (Figure 12).

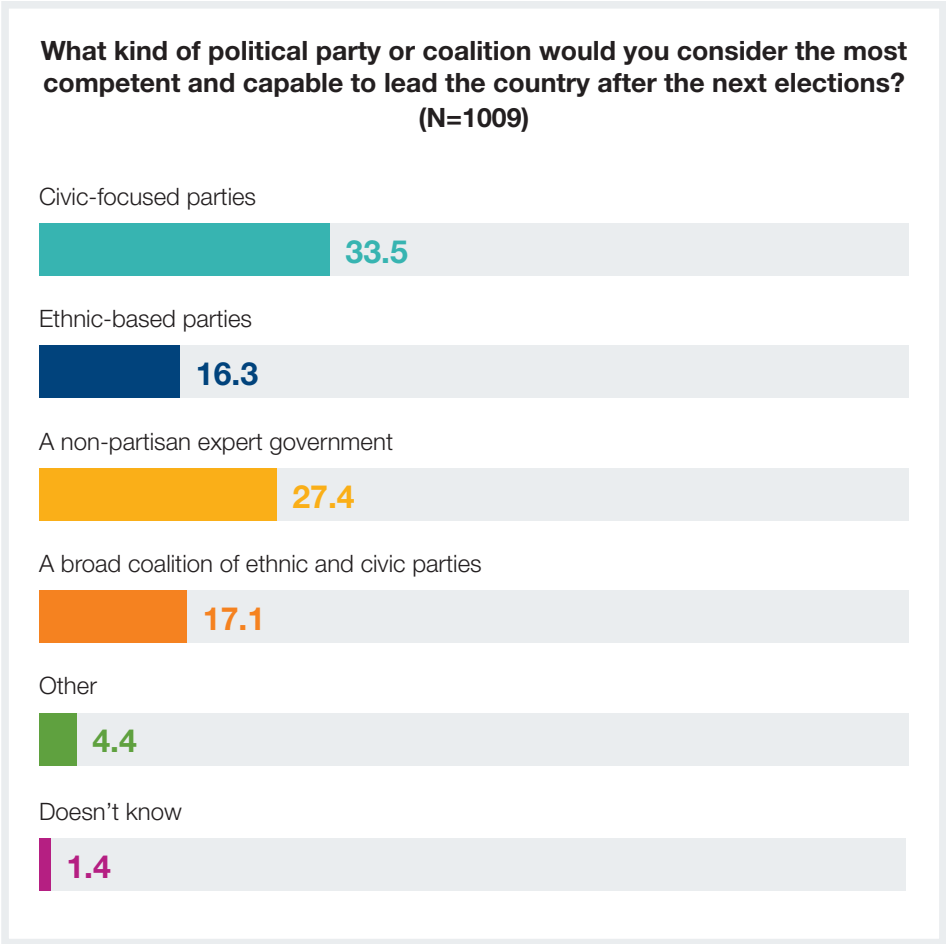
Figure 12.



**Age.** Respondents aged 30 to 59 (around 50 per cent of the category) consider their vote to be important, followed by those older than 60 (44 per cent) and those younger than 29 (31.8 per cent). **Urban/rural.** A higher percentage of rural residents (51.8 per cent) than urban residents (39.4 per cent) think that their vote is important. **Religion.** The stronger a respondent’s religious belief, the more they believe that their vote matters. Half (50.3 per cent) of firm believers say that their vote is important, compared to 34.1 per cent of those who do not believe. **Ethnicity.** 51.3 per cent of Croats, 50.8 per cent of Bosniaks and 37.3 per cent of Serbs think that their vote in elections is important.

33.5 per cent of those surveyed think that civic parties would be most capable of leading the country following the elections, whilst 27.4 per cent prefer a non-partisan expert government. The other two options, a broad coalition of ethnic and civic parties (17.1 per cent) and ethnic-based parties (16.3 per cent) are less appealing (Figure 13).

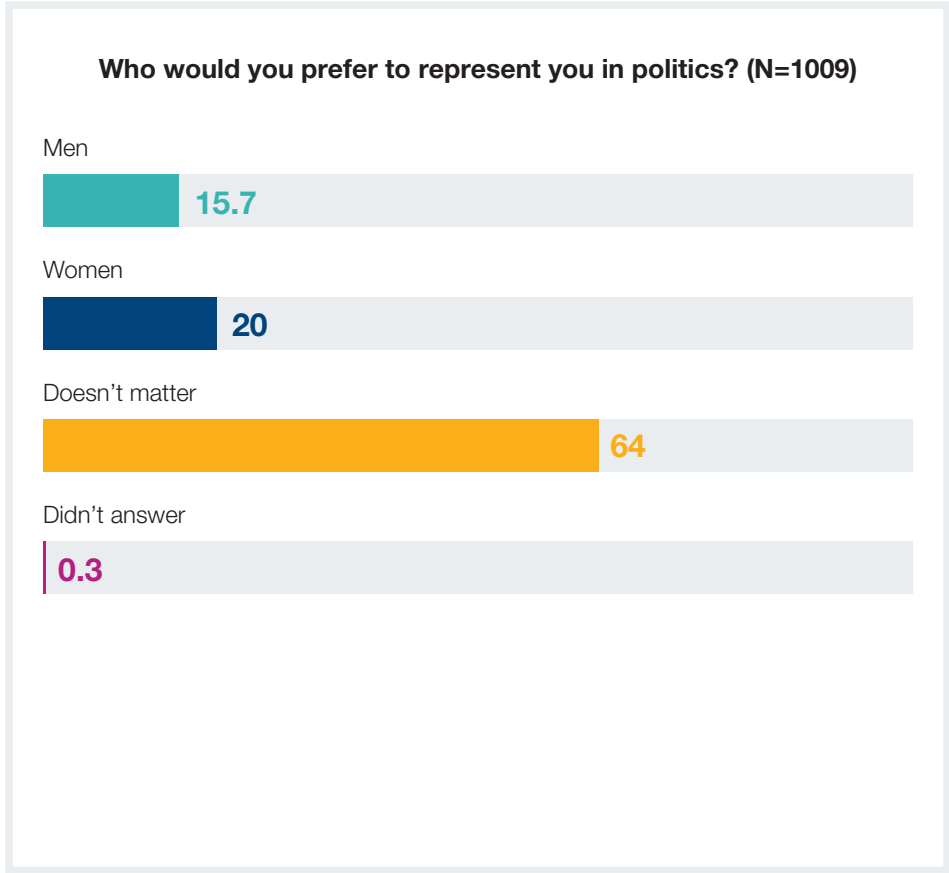
Figure 13.



**Religiosity.** The less religious the respondents are, the higher the percentage of those who see civic parties as the most capable of leading BiH after the next elections. The more religious the respondents are, the more attractive they find a government composed of ethnic and civic parties.

Two-thirds of respondents (64 per cent) do not have a preference as to whether they are represented by men or women, while one in five (20 per cent) said they prefer women. Male political representatives are preferred by 15.7 per cent of respondents (Figure 14).

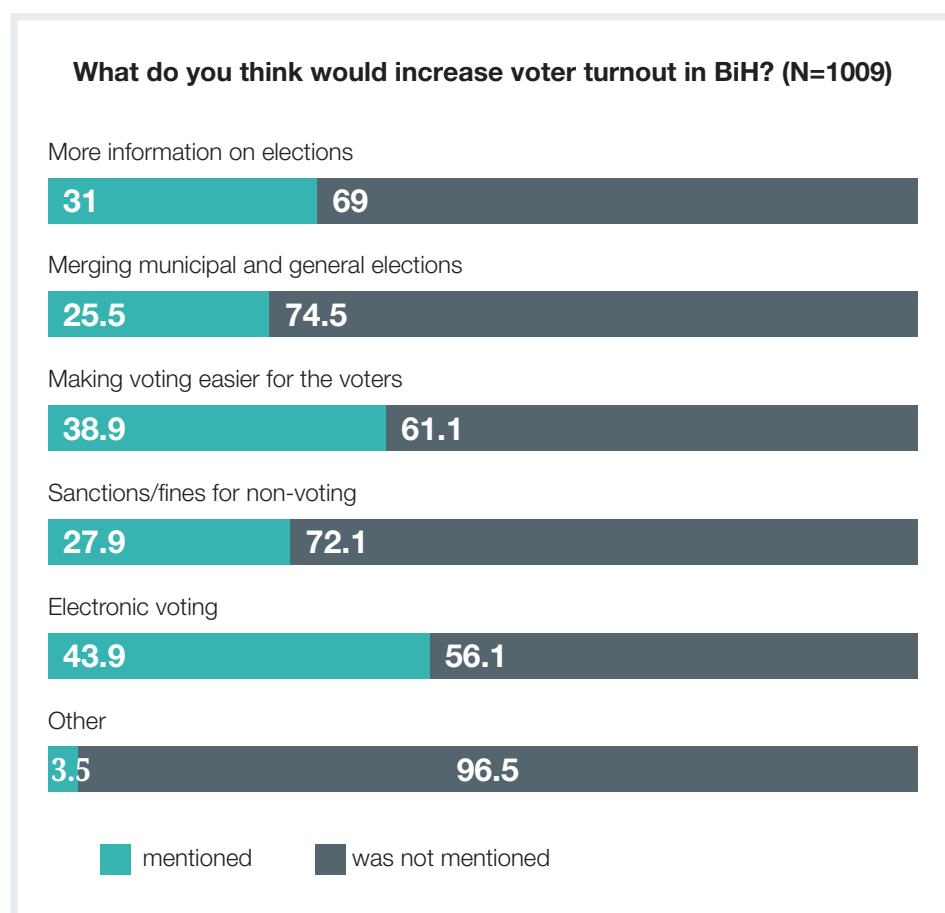
Figure 14.



**Gender.** Every fifth man (19.8 per cent) would like to be represented by a man, while every tenth woman (11.5 per cent) wants the same. At the same time, a quarter of female respondents would prefer to be represented by female politicians (25.4 per cent), while 14.6 per cent of male respondents would prefer to be represented by female politicians. **Age.** Generally speaking, the percentage of respondents who care about the gender of those who represent them in politics decreases with age. **Urban/rural.** Rural residents (24.9 per cent) are more interested in being represented by women than urban residents (15.9 per cent).

According to 43.9 per cent of respondents, voter turnout would increase with the introduction of electronic voting and by making it easier to vote (38.9 per cent). 27.9 per cent support the introduction of sanctions for not going to the polls (compulsory voting). Merging local and general elections would increase voter turnout according to only 25.5 per cent of respondents (Figure 15).

Figure 15.

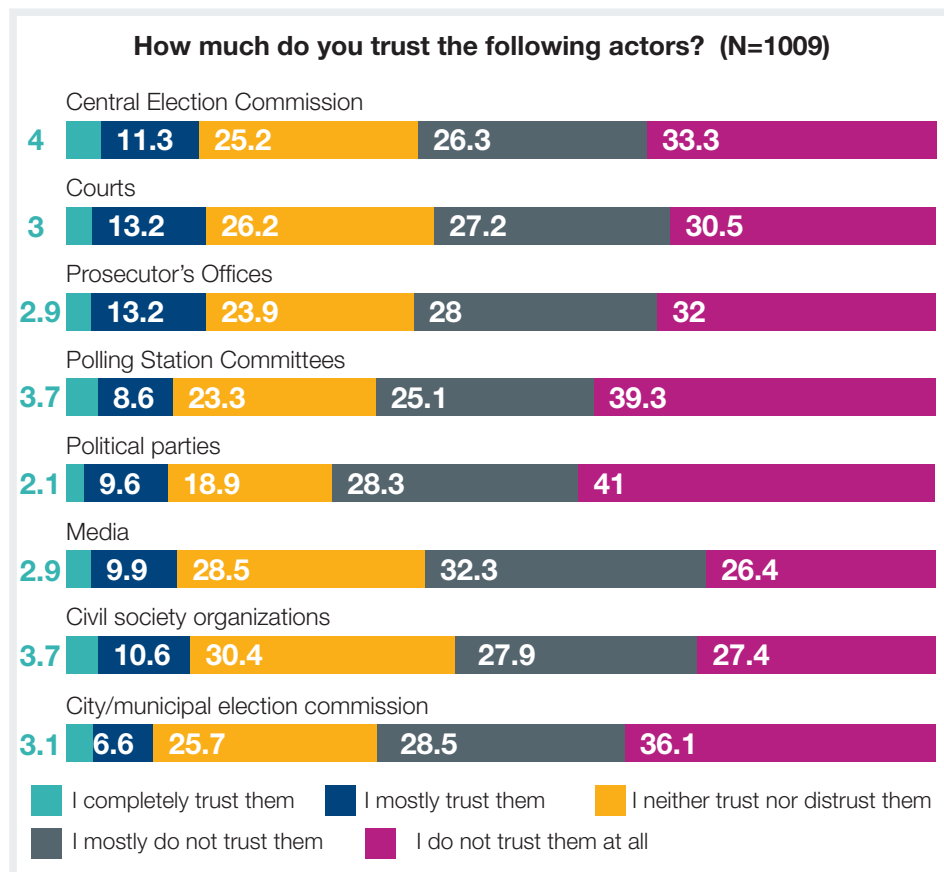


**Ethnicity.** 39.1 per cent of Croats, 29.3 per cent of Bosniaks and 22.9 per cent of Serbs believe that voter abstention should be sanctioned or fined. Combining local and parliamentary elections would increase turnout according to 31.9 per cent of Bosniaks, 21.2 per cent of Croats and 18.8 per cent of Serbs.

### 3.3. Perceptions and experience of electoral misconduct

In general, BiH citizens do not trust the majority of institutions involved in the electoral process. 60 per cent of respondents do not trust prosecutor's offices and 57.7 per cent do not trust the courts. The Central Election Commission is distrusted by 59.6 per cent of respondents. 64.6 per cent and 69.3 per cent of respondents distrust municipal elections commissions and political parties, respectively (Figure 16).

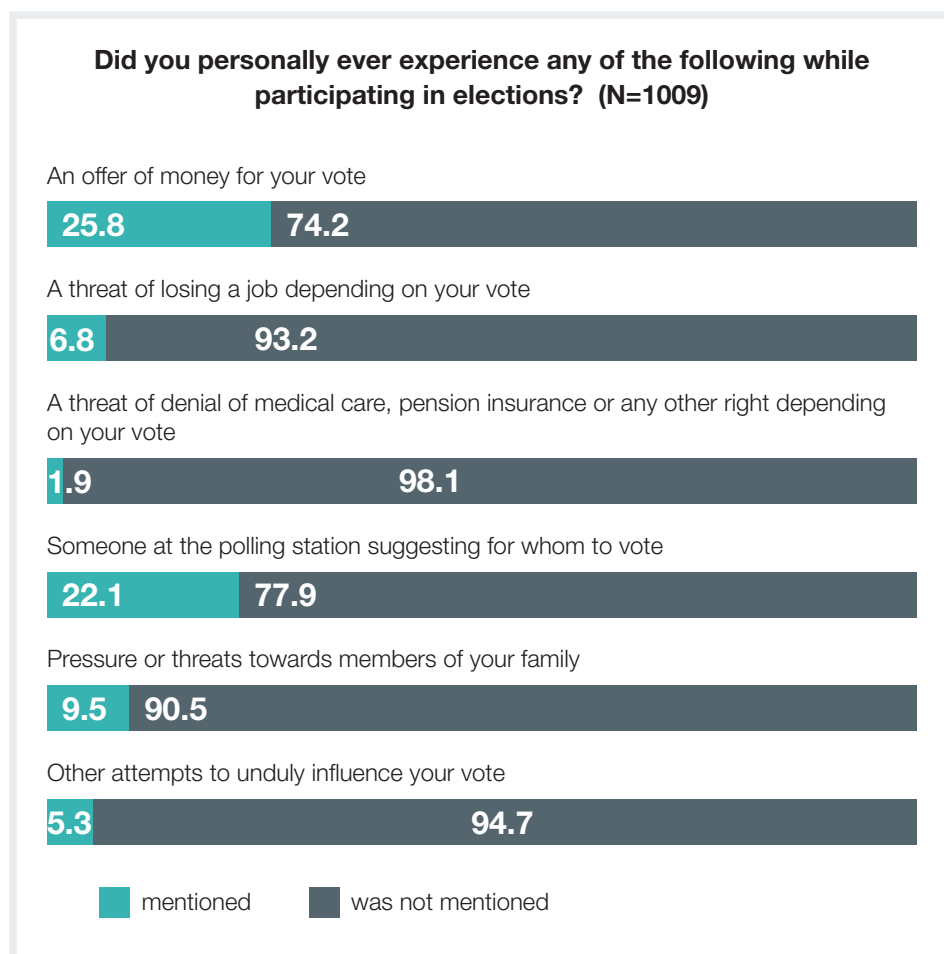
Figure 16.



**Age.** The greatest distrust in the work of the Central Election Commission is found among the youngest respondents (69.3 per cent). The situation is similar with political parties, as respondents under the age of 29 trust them the least (77.6 per cent). **Urban/rural.** 70.3 per cent of urban residents and 57.5 per cent of rural residents do not trust the polling station committees. 63.1 per cent of urban residents and 53.3 per cent of rural residents do not trust the media. 69.9 per cent of urban residents and 58.4 per cent of rural residents do not trust city and municipal election commissions. **Ethnicity.** Political parties are the least trusted by Serbs (72.7 per cent), followed by Bosniaks (67.1 per cent) and Croats (63.5 per cent).

Every fourth respondent (25.8 per cent) reported being offered money to vote for a party or a candidate, while 22.1 per cent of respondents experienced being suggested whom to vote for at the polling station. Every tenth respondent (9.5 per cent) experienced pressure on family members, while 6.8 per cent report that their jobs were threatened if they did not vote for a particular party or a candidate (Figure 17).

Figure 17.

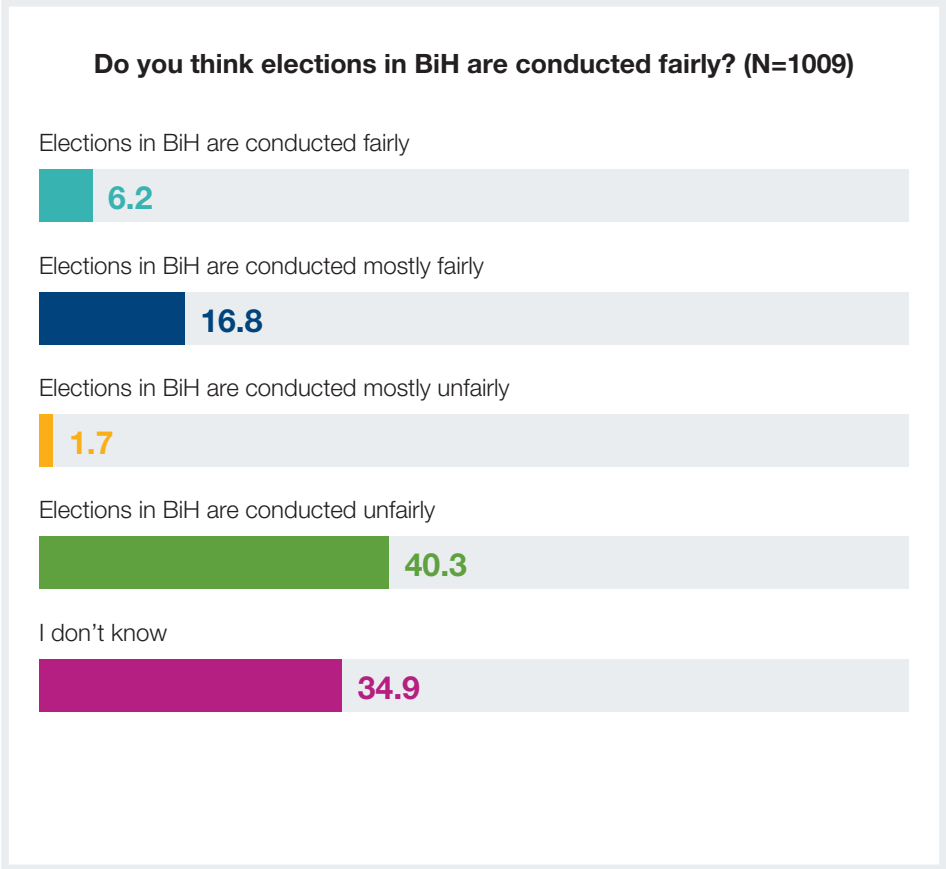


**Urban/rural.** Respondents from rural areas are more exposed to threats to health care or pensions. **Ethnicity.** Experience of electoral corruption is most reported by Bosniaks, as every third Bosniak respondent (30.8 per cent) was offered money to vote, while 22.3 per cent of Serbs and 18.6 per cent of Croats report a similar experience. 13.2 per cent of Serbs, 10.6 per cent of Bosniaks and 1.9 per cent of Croats experienced pressure on family members or threats related to voting.



A significant proportion of those surveyed (40.3 per cent) are of the opinion that elections in BiH are conducted unfairly. Only 23 per cent believe that elections are fair or mostly fair (Figure 18).

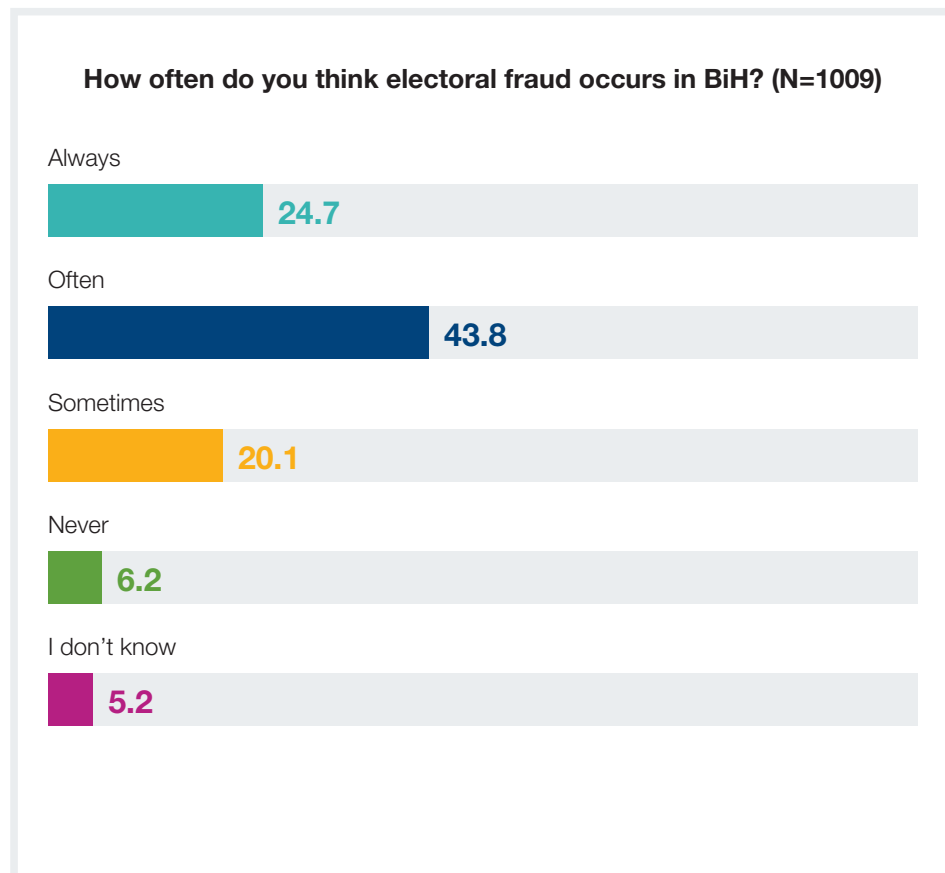
Figure 18.



**Urban/rural.** Urban respondents (47.3 per cent), more than rural respondents (35.8 per cent), believe that elections in BiH are not conducted fairly.

This is further confirmed by responses concerning the frequency of electoral fraud. 68.5 per cent of respondents believe that electoral fraud is a problem for BiH democracy. Only 6.2 per cent believe that electoral fraud never happens in BiH (Figure 19).

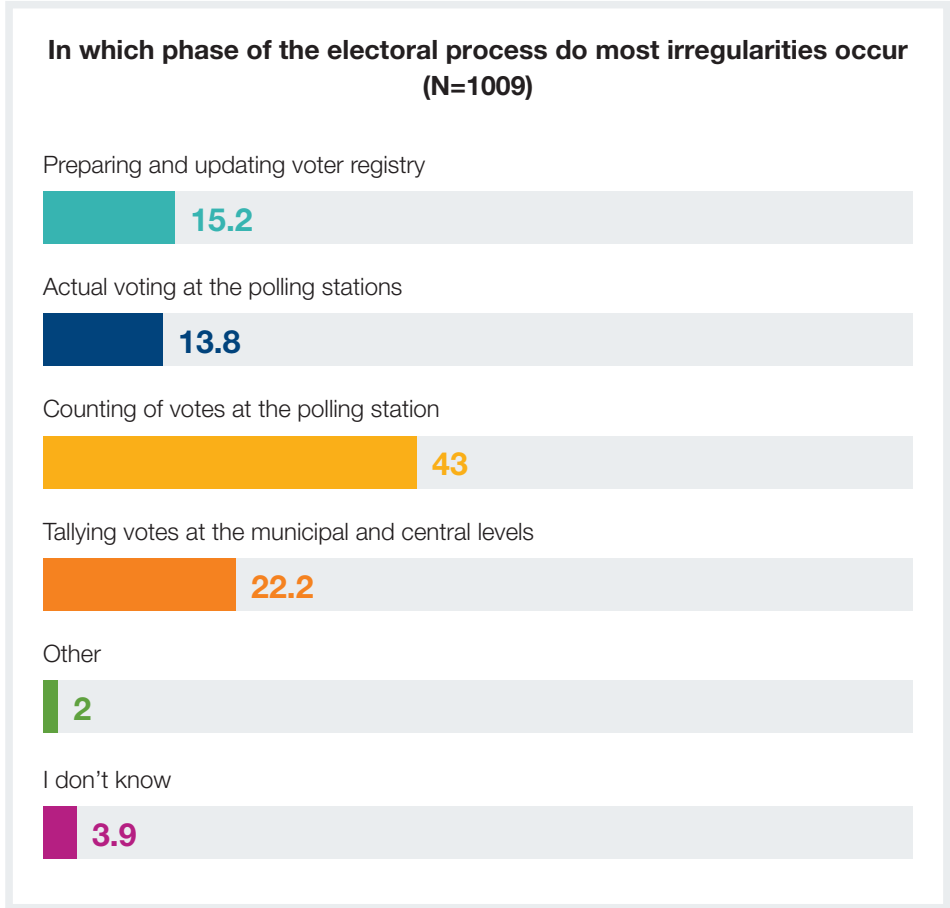
Figure 19.



**Education.** The more educated the respondents, the more they think that electoral fraud occurs frequently or always. **Urban/rural.** Almost three quarters of the urban population (73 per cent) believe that election fraud occurs often or always in BiH, while 63.1 per cent of the rural population agree. **Ethnicity.** According to 74.9 per cent of Serb respondents, election fraud happens often or always, and 68.1 per cent of Bosniaks and 53.8 per cent of Croats share that opinion.

According to 43 per cent of those surveyed, most irregularities occur when counting votes at the polling stations. 15.2 per cent of respondents believe that most irregularities occur during the preparation of the voters' registry (Figure 20).

Figure 20.

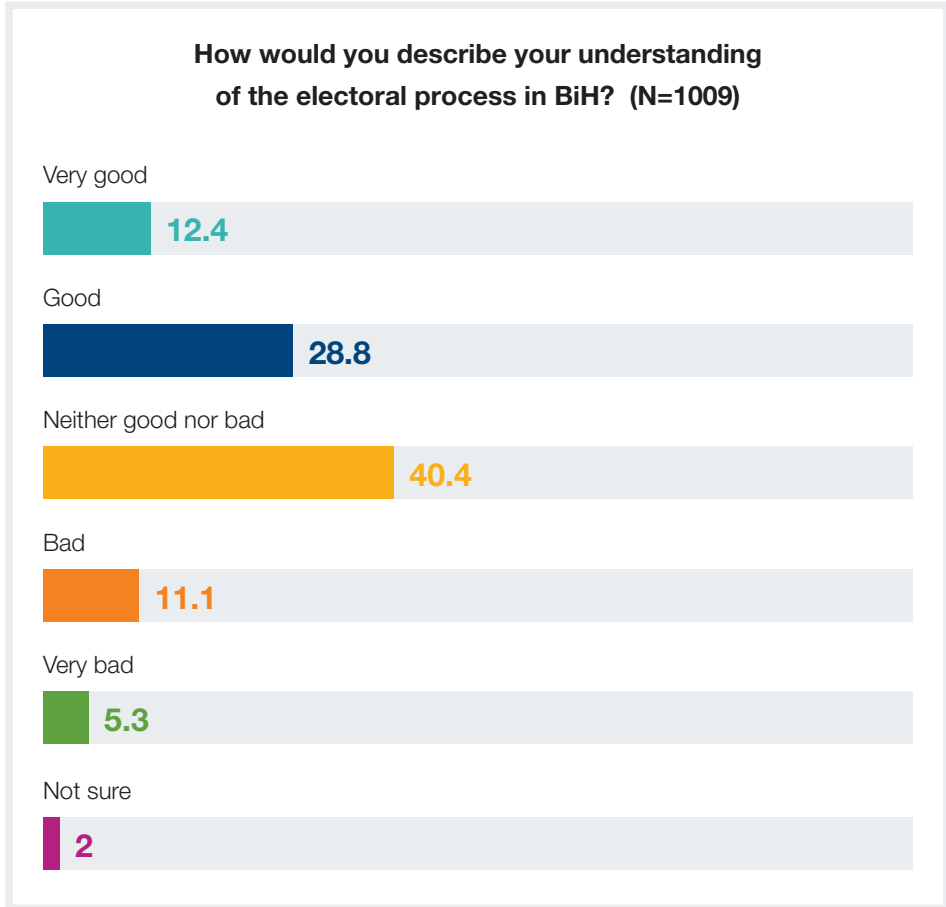


**Ethnicity.** The counting of votes at the polling stations is perceived as the biggest problem of the electoral process for 53.3 per cent of Serbs, 37.2 per cent of Croats and 35.3 per cent of Bosniaks.

### 3.4. Understanding of the BiH electoral system

41.2 per cent of those surveyed believe they have a good or very good understanding of the electoral process, compared to 16.4 per cent who consider their knowledge as poor. 40.4 per cent describe their knowledge of the electoral process as “neither good nor bad” (Figure 21).

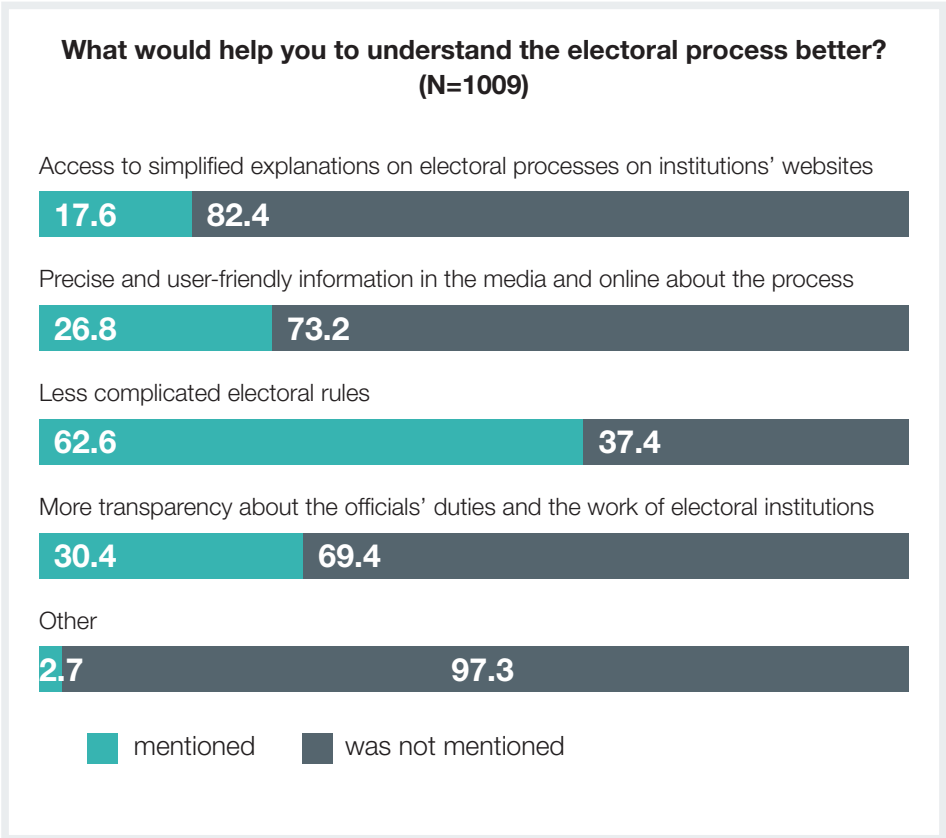
Figure 21.



**Age.** Self-reported knowledge of the electoral process grows until the age of 59, and then drops sharply. 30.9 per cent of those over 60 understand the electoral process.  
**Income.** The higher the income of the respondents, the better their understanding of the electoral process. 55.3 per cent of respondents with an income over 1,500 BAM stated an understanding of the electoral process, compared to 35.1 per cent of respondents with income below 999 BAM.

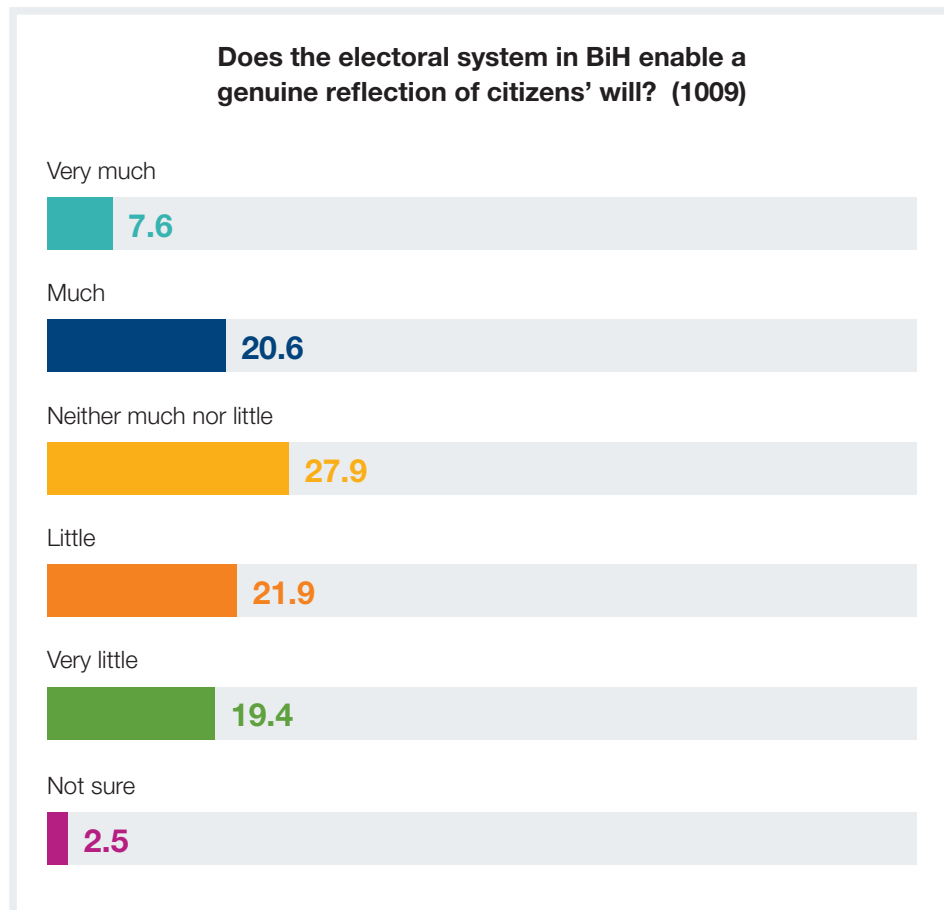
Two-thirds of respondents (62.6 per cent) believe that election rules should be simplified. Every fourth respondent (26.8 per cent) considers it necessary to provide citizens with accurate information about the electoral process through the media and the Internet (Figure 22).

Figure 22.



According to 41.3 per cent of respondents, the electoral system in BiH does not allow for the full expression of citizens' will (Figure 23).

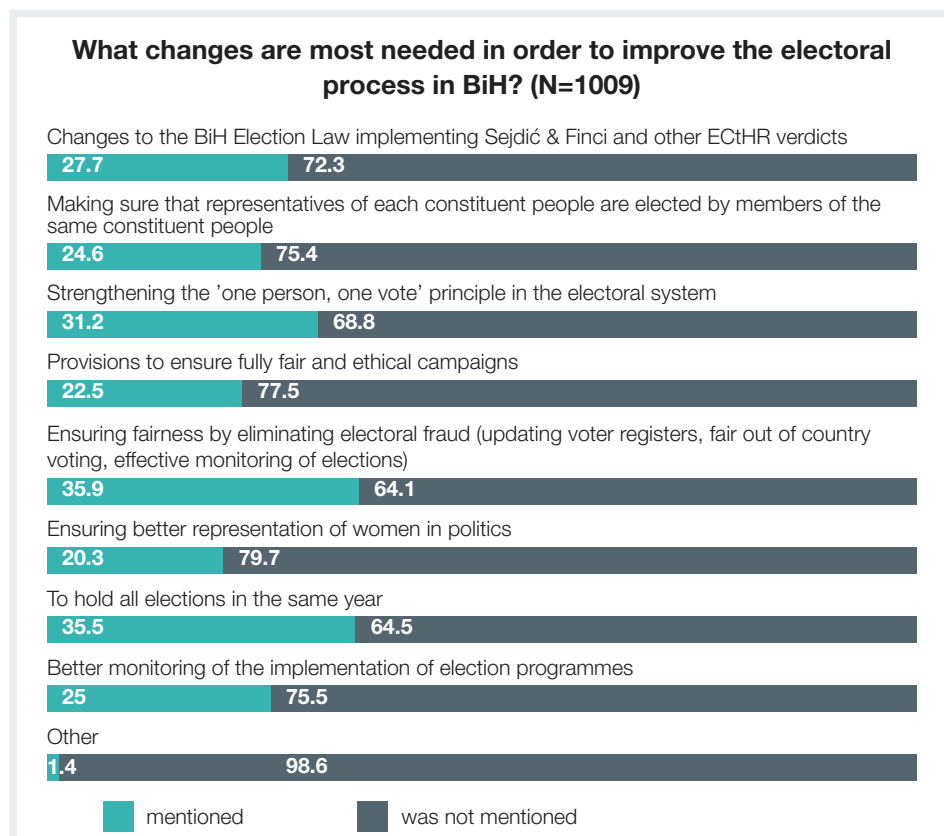
Figure 23.



**Gender.** 23.5 per cent of women and 15.4 per cent of men believe that the electoral system enables very little expression of the will of citizens. **Urban/rural.** A higher percentage of urban residents (46.9 per cent) than rural residents (34.7 per cent) believes that the electoral system in BiH does not express the will of citizens. **Ethnicity.** 36.8 per cent of Bosniak respondents, 30.1 per cent of Croats and 18.4 per cent of Serbs believe the electoral system expresses the will of citizens.

35.9 per cent of respondents consider it important to ensure a fair electoral process by eliminating the possibility of electoral fraud. 35.5 per cent of respondents think that the electoral process would benefit if all elections were conducted in the same year. A third priority is related to strengthening the principle of “one person, one vote” in the electoral system (31.2 per cent). (Figure 24).

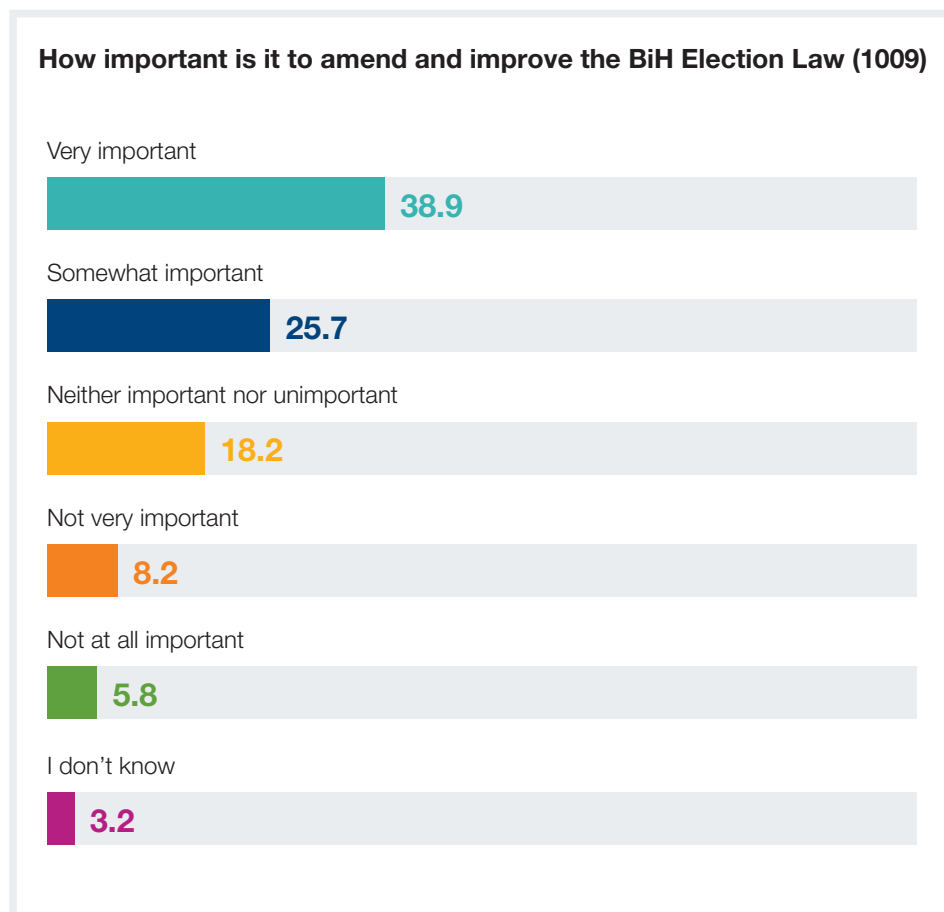
Figure 24.



**Education.** Elimination of electoral fraud is important for 45.2 per cent of highly educated, 35.1 per cent of respondents who completed four years of secondary school (35.1 per cent), 31.1 per cent of those with primary education and 18.1 per cent of those with vocational education. **Age.** The principle of “one person, one vote” is most favored by the youngest respondents (39.1 per cent), followed by the respondents aged 30 to 44 (32.3 per cent), 45 to 59 (29.5 per cent) and those older than 60 (24.2 per cent). **Religiosity.** 29.7 per cent of firm believers believe that representatives of each constituent people should only be elected by members of that constituent people, compared to 14 per cent of non-believers. **Ethnicity.** Bosniaks see the implementation of relevant decisions of the European Court of Human Rights as important (36.4 per cent), compared to about 17 per cent of both Croats and Serbs. 61.5 per cent of Croats surveyed believe that it is important to ensure that each constituent people elect their representatives while about 17 per cent of both Bosniaks and Serbs support this view.

38.9 per cent of those surveyed believe that it is very important to amend and improve the BiH Election Law. An additional quarter (25.7 per cent) think that this issue is somewhat important. Only 14 per cent of respondents consider amending the BiH Election Law to be not very important or not important at all (Figure 25).

Figure 25.

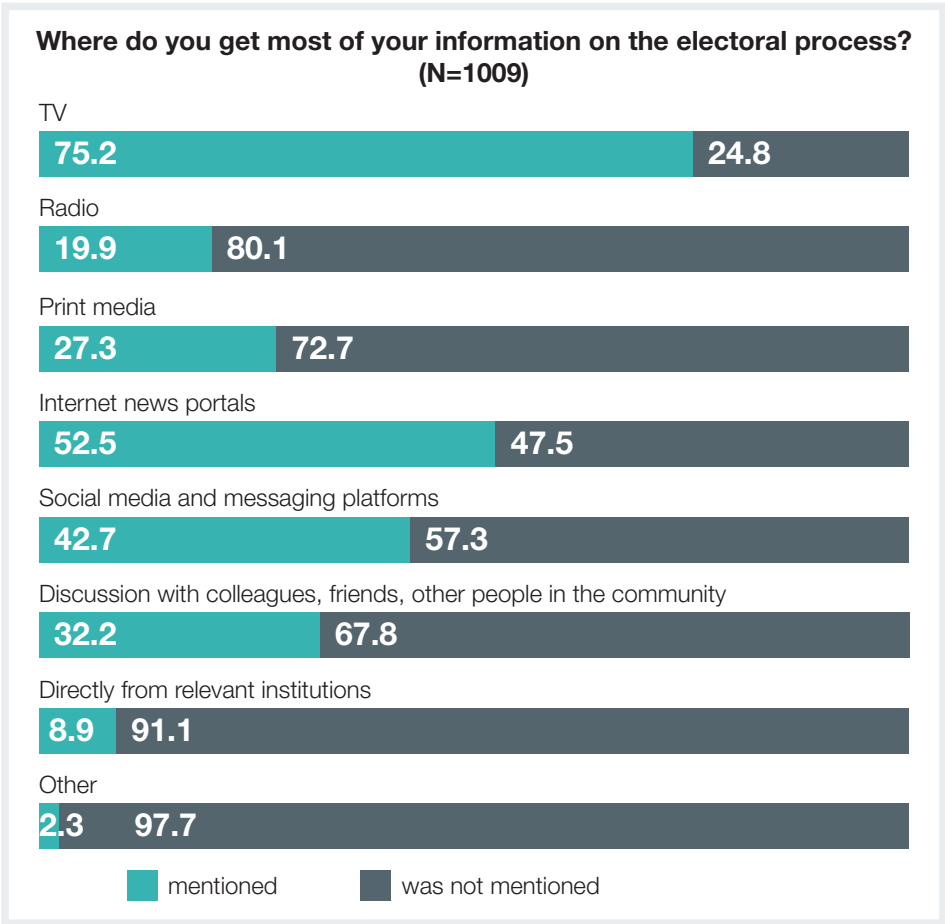




### 3.5. Views on political campaigns and information about politics

Television is still the dominant medium (75.2 per cent of respondents) as a source of information about the electoral process. This is followed by online news portals (52.5 per cent of respondents) and social media (42.7 per cent of respondents). One third of respondents are informed of the electoral process through direct conversations with colleagues, friends, etc., while 27.3 per cent receive that information from the press (Figure 26).

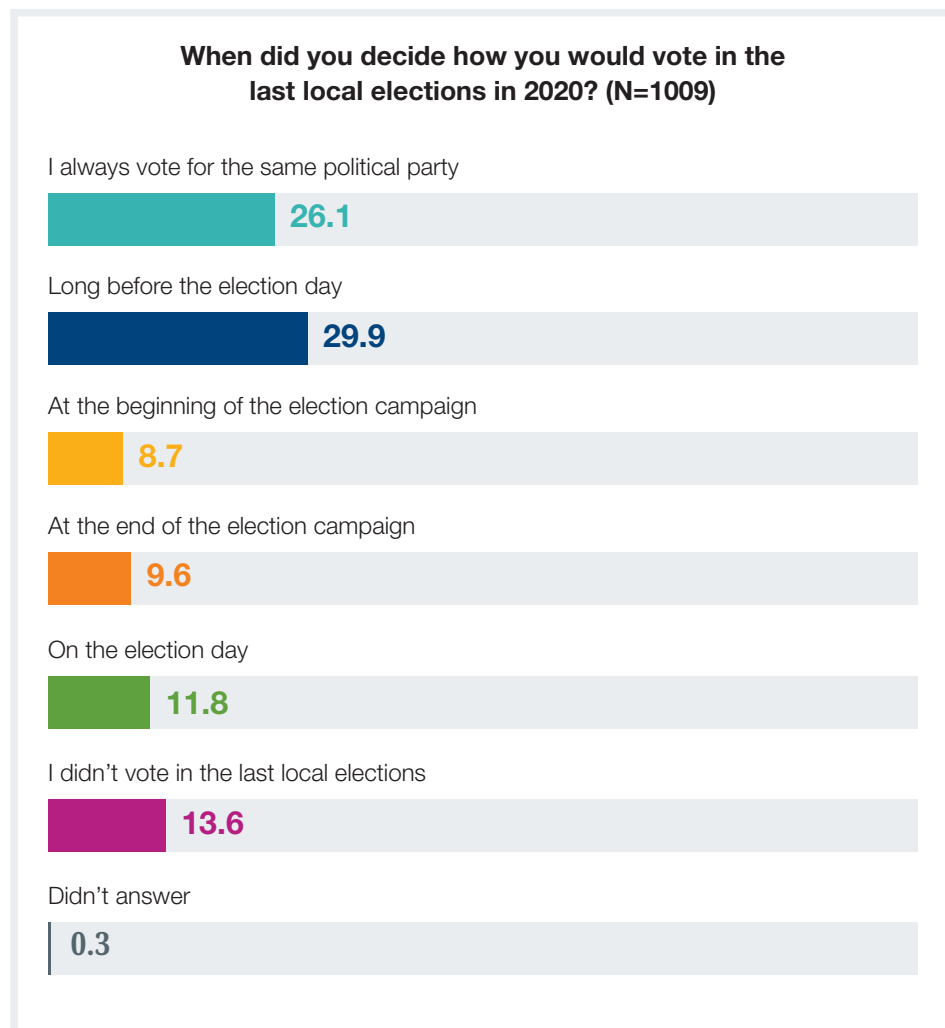
Figure 26.



**Education.** The higher the education of the respondents, the less they rely on TV. **Age.** A high percentage of people over the age of 60 (84.3 per cent) and those aged 44 to 59 (80 per cent) gather information from television. About 47 per cent of respondents under the age of 59 consume information about politics through social networks, compared to 22.7 per cent of those over 60.

Almost a third of respondents (29.9 per cent) decided who to vote for in the 2020 local elections long before election day. Every fourth citizen (26.1 per cent) indicated that they always vote for the same party (Figure 27).

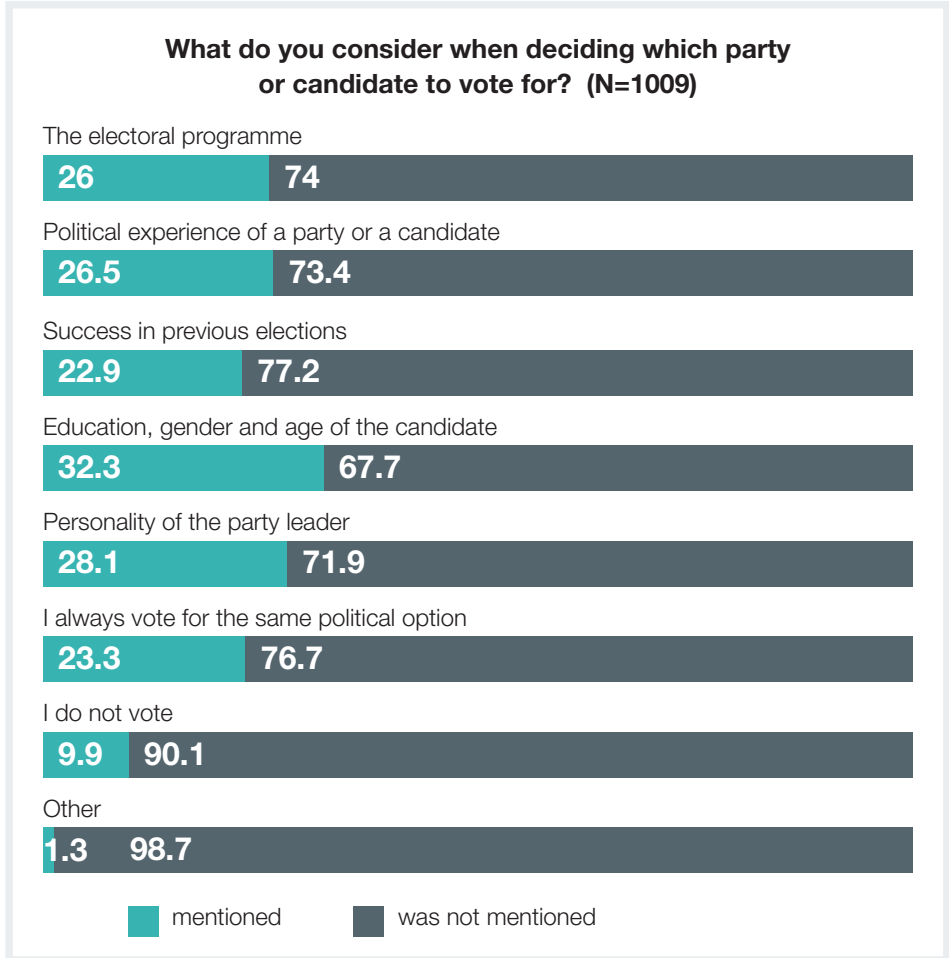
Figure 27.



**Age.** The older the respondent, the more likely they are to always vote for the same political party. **Urban/rural.** Rural residents (30.6 per cent) always vote for the same political party in higher percentage than the urban population (22.3 per cent).

The decision to vote is not heavily influenced by electoral programmes, but is also not decisively influenced by other common factors. Each option was mentioned by between a quarter and a third of respondents (Figure 28).

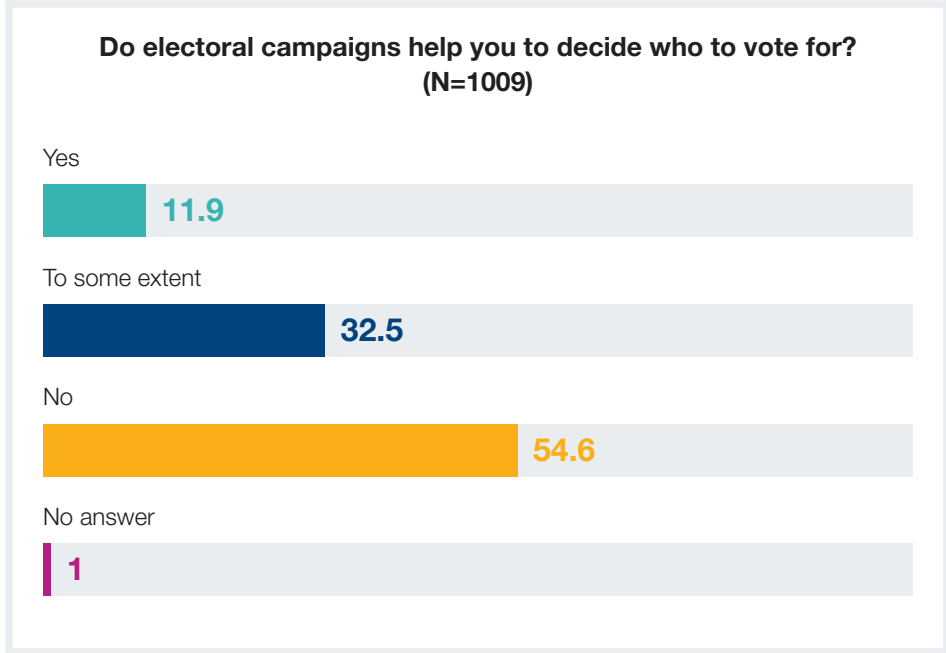
Figure 28.



**Urban/rural.** A higher percentage of rural residents (26.9 per cent) than urban residents (19.3 per cent) take success in previous elections into account when deciding who to vote for. **Ethnicity.** The election programme is important for 37.8 per cent of Croats, 26.6 per cent of Bosniaks and 16.9 per cent of Serbs. Success in previous elections is important for 35.9 per cent of Bosniaks, 16.7 per cent of Croats and 10.7 per cent of Serbs. Gender, education and age are important for 36.8 per cent of Bosniaks, 30.1 per cent of Serbs and 24.4 per cent of Croats. For 32.7 per cent of Croats, 29.3 per cent of Bosniaks and 22.3 per cent of Serbs, leaders’ personal characteristics are important factors when deciding for whom to vote.

54.6 per cent of respondents said the political campaigns do not help them at all in deciding whom to vote for. (Figure 29).

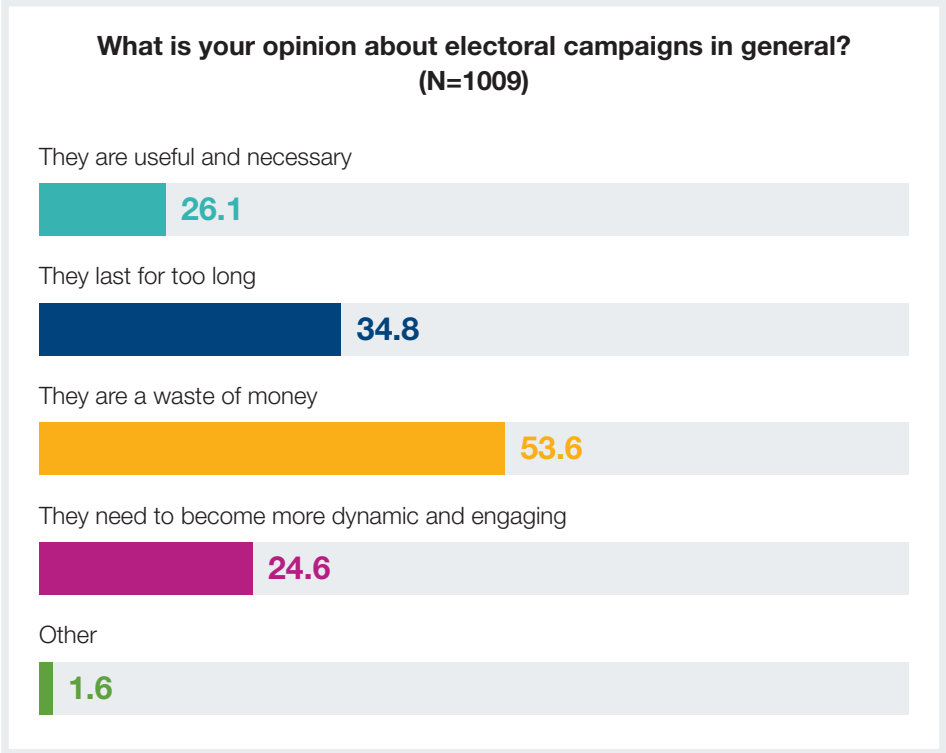
Figure 29.



**Gender.** The electoral campaigns are helpful to some extent for 36.8 per cent of women, compared to 28.3 per cent of men. **Urban/rural.** Electoral campaigns help rural residents decide for whom to vote (50.1 per cent) more than urban residents (39.6 per cent).

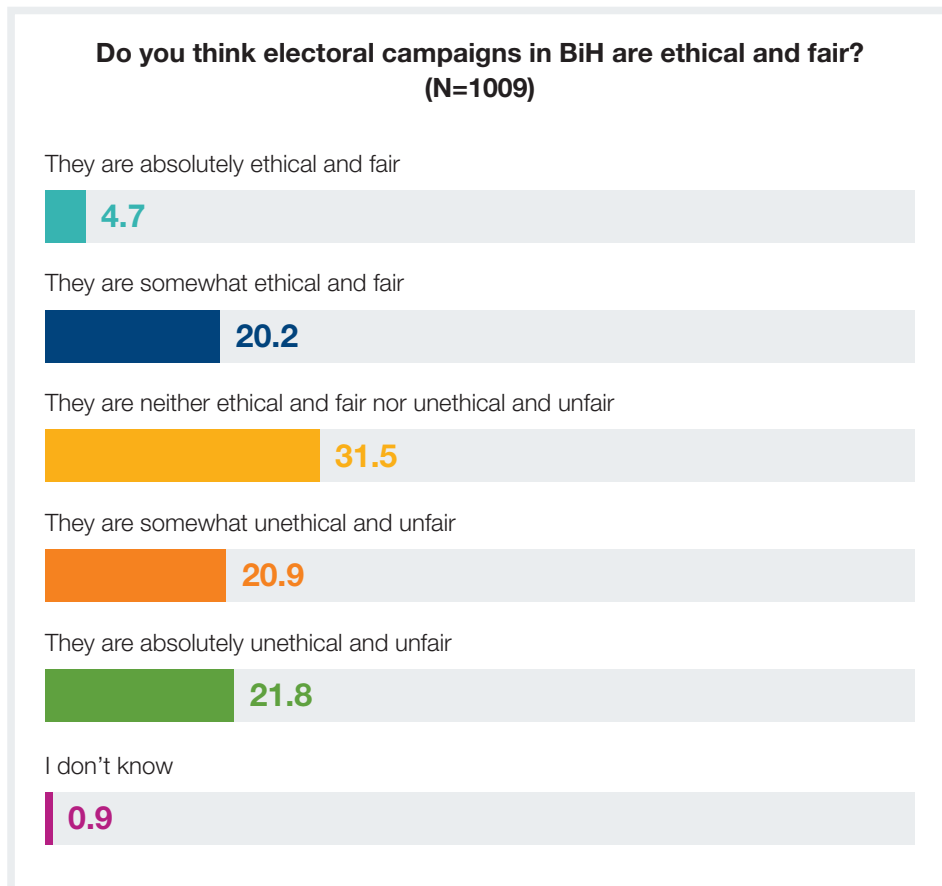
In general, respondents have a negative perception of election campaigns. 53.6 per cent consider them a waste of money whilst 34.8 per cent think the campaign period is too long. Only 14.6 per cent think that they are useful and necessary (Figure 30).

Figure 30.



Only 24.9 per cent of respondents perceive campaigns as ethical and fair. 31.5 per cent gave a neutral answer (Figure 31).

Figure 31.



## 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The picture of the electoral process and political participation of citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as outlined by the results of this survey, is dominantly negative. Respondents have expressed negative views on most aspects of elections in BiH. Moreover, their own reported experience of the electoral process generally agrees with that assessment. This concluding section points out and reflects on some of the most relevant findings.

Almost half of the respondents are not satisfied with the state of democracy in BiH. Only a third of citizens younger than 29 are interested in politics. The survey shows a broad perception that political elites are detached from citizens.

In general, the survey shows that political participation beyond elections is higher among those with higher education and income. This finding underscores the value of efforts aimed at improving political participation in BiH, especially by increasing emphasis on disadvantaged groups.

43 per cent of respondents believe that elections in BiH are not fair. These findings should also be considered in light of voter turnout in the last few electoral cycles in BiH, which was consistently around 50 per cent. Improving understanding of the electoral process, belief in the importance of one's vote, and the perception of fairness of elections are important factors in tackling considerable electoral absenteeism in BiH.

Negative motivation for voting is particularly indicative of low trust in the electoral system, given that almost half of respondents said that they vote in order to prevent their votes from being stolen or misused. Again, this should be understood in the context of generally low confidence in institutions in charge of elections and the widespread perception of electoral fraud.

Not a single actor in the field – from the Central Election Commission to political parties – enjoys support of more than 16 percent of respondents. Distrust in these actors is widely shared among respondents regardless of their ethnicity and social background.

The survey also confirms that electoral fraud is perceived as a significant problem. Two thirds of respondents believe that electoral fraud occurs always or frequently. Respondents also reported themselves or their families experiencing threats or pressure for whom to vote. These findings emphasize the need not only to enhance the prevention of electoral fraud, but also to secure a much stronger response of the judiciary to these manipulations.

Polling stations are particularly problematic in the perception of respondents. Respondents are of the opinion that most of the irregularities in elections occur during the counting of votes at polling stations (43 per cent), followed by during the tallying of votes at the local and central levels (22.2 per cent).

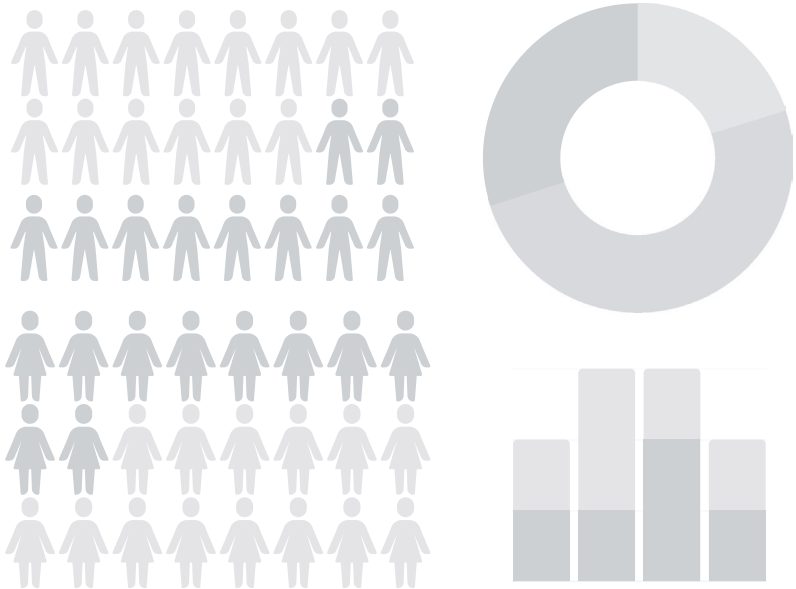
Almost half of respondents believe that there should be more women in political life.

Respondents suggest that electoral campaigns should be significantly improved, in terms of both their overall utility and their ethical dimension. More than half of respondents believe that campaigns are a waste of money.

Considering the above shortcomings in the electoral process, changes to relevant laws and regulations are evidently necessary to improve citizens' trust in the electoral process. This is reinforced by the fact that approximately two thirds of respondents believe that it is important (38.9 per cent) or somewhat important (25.7 per cent) to amend the BiH Election Law.

International actors, particularly the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission, have long been insisting that electoral regulations and practices in BiH should be significantly improved.

The OSCE Mission to BiH, in cooperation with ODIHR, will continue to support relevant institutions, particularly the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH and the BiH Central Election Commission, in their efforts to improve the electoral legislation and practices in accordance with international standards and in the best interest of citizens and democracy in BiH.





## 5. NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted by *Prime Communications Agency* from 11 to 21 August 2021, using a sample of 1,009 adult residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was conducted through face-to-face surveys. Respondents did not fill out the questionnaire on their own, but answered the questions read to them by the interviewer. Field work was evaluated by controllers.

The survey took place in 29 municipalities in the Federation of BiH, the Brčko District of BiH and 21 municipalities in Republika Srpska. The following demographic elements were considered during sampling: population of the Entities and the Brčko District of BiH; number of residents in specific regions and cantons; the ratio between urban and rural population; the size of settlements within the regions; gender balance. The following municipalities were included in the sample:

In **Republika Srpska**: Banja Luka, Gradiška, Laktaši, Srbac, Mrkonjić Grad, Prnjavor, Prijedor, Novi Grad, Doboj, Stanari, Teslić, Bijeljina, Ugljevik, Zvornik, Bratunac, Srebrenica, Istočno Sarajevo, Višegrad, Trebinje, Ljubinje, Bileća; in the **Brčko District of BiH**; in the **Federation of BiH**: Bihać, Cazin, Bosanska Krupa, Bužim (Una-Sana Canton), Tuzla, Srebrenik, Živinice, Banovići, Lukavac, Kalesija (Tuzla Canton), Zenica, Kakanj, Visoko (Zenica-Doboj Canton), Donji Vakuf, Travnik, Vitez, Novi Travnik (Central-Bosnia Canton), Mostar, Jablanica, Čitluk (Herzegovina-Neretva Canton), Široki Brijeg, Ljubuški (West Herzegovina Canton), Centar, Ilidža, Novi Grad, Novo Sarajevo, Vogošća (Sarajevo Canton), Livno, Tomislavgrad (Canton 10).

When working in the field, the interviewers followed several rules that allowed for random selection of respondents. The interviewers were given the name of the local community to go to, as well as instructions on how to choose a particular street, the house number from which to start working ), as well as the number of houses that must be skipped before the next interview. After entering the household, the interviewers would choose an adult with the closest upcoming birthday as the respondent. In this way, we avoided any possibility of interviewers influencing the selection of respondents. The interviewers had to examine an equal number of men and women.

The margin of error with a sample of 1009 respondents, with a probability of 95 per cent, is +/- 3.1 per cent when 50 per cent of respondents answered a given question.

A total of 20.1 per cent of the questionnaires were controlled, of these 2 per cent directly (in the presence of the controller), 1.5 per cent in the field (when the controller subsequently went into the field and found that the interviewer had interviewed the respondent) and 16.6 per cent over the telephone (when the controller would check by telephone whether the interviewer conducted an interview with the respondent).

## ANNEX

**Table 1. Socio- demographic data of respondents**

|                             |  | N   | %    |
|-----------------------------|--|-----|------|
| Gender                      | Male   | 506 | 50.1 |
|                             | Female   | 503 | 49.9 |
| Entity                      | Republika Srpska   | 326 | 32.3 |
|                             | Federation of BiH  | 663 | 65.7 |
|                             | Brčko District of BiH  | 20  | 2    |
| Place of residence          | Rural (up to 2000)   | 461 | 45.7 |
|                             | Smaller municipality (from 2001 to 10 000)                       | 69  | 6.8  |
|                             | Larger municipality (from 2001 to 10 000)                        | 103 | 10.2 |
|                             | City from 20 001 to 100 000 (from 10 001 to 100 000)             | 241 | 23.9 |
|                             | Major city (over 100 000)  | 135 | 13.4 |
| Age                         | 18 to 29   | 192 | 19   |
|                             | 30 to 44   | 322 | 31.9 |
|                             | 45 to 59   | 285 | 28.2 |
|                             | Over 60  | 198 | 19.6 |
|                             | Refused to answer  | 12  | 1.2  |
| Education                   | Only primary school  | 61  | 6    |
|                             | Vocational   | 116 | 11.5 |
|                             | Secondary school, four years                                     | 507 | 50.2 |
|                             | Associate and university level                                   | 305 | 30.2 |
|                             | Refused to answer  | 20  | 2    |
| Religious affiliation       | I am a firm believer and I accept everything my faith teaches    | 620 | 61.4 |
|                             | I am a believer, but I do not accept everything my faith teaches | 225 | 22.3 |
|                             | I'm not sure whether I believe or not                            | 55  | 5.5  |
|                             | I'm not religious, I don't mind others believing                 | 105 | 10.4 |
|                             | I am not religious, and I am an opponent of religion             | 4   | 0.4  |
| Family total monthly income | Up to 249 BAM  | 0   | 0    |
|                             | from 250 BAM to 499 BAM  | 85  | 8.4  |
|                             | from 500 BAM to 999 BAM  | 237 | 23.5 |
|                             | from 1000 BAM to 1499 BAM  | 194 | 19.2 |
|                             | from 1500 BAM to 1999 BAM  | 149 | 14.8 |
|                             | More than 2000 BAM   | 88  | 8.7  |
|                             | Refused to answer  | 221 | 21.9 |
|                             | Does not know  | 35  | 3.5  |
| Ethnicity                   | Croat  | 156 | 15.5 |
|                             | Bosniak  | 451 | 44.7 |
|                             | Serb   | 319 | 31.6 |
|                             | Roma   | 3   | 0.3  |
|                             | I do not identify with any ethnic group                          | 33  | 3.3  |
|                             | Refused to answer  | 32  | 3.2  |
|                             | Other  | 15  | 1.5  |



