



Beogradska ul. 42
81000 Podgorica
Tel.: ++38181 623 132
Fax: ++38181 623 170

PRESS RELEASE

*Contact: NDI/Montenegro Phone: 081 623 132
Lisa C. McLean, Director, NDI, Montenegro Mobile: 069 052 747
Niamh O'Connor, Director, NDI, Montenegro Mobile: 069 323 173*

March 28, 2001

ECONOMY IS MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR PROSPECTIVE VOTERS IN MONTENEGRO

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) today released the key findings of its public opinion poll, conducted by the Sarajevo-based polling firm Prism, in advance of the Montenegrin parliamentary elections scheduled for April 22nd.

The interviews were conducted in each of Montenegro's 21 municipalities, between 15th and 19th March. The poll canvassed 1,265 residents in Montenegro. The margin of error on a sample of 1,200 is +/- 3%.

This research is part of a broader NDI program, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to assist the development of a democratic multi-party political system in Montenegro.

This baseline survey represents the first phase of NDI's public opinion research in Montenegro in 2001. The project will continue with additional tracking polls throughout the year. The poll results should be viewed as an assessment of current public attitudes in Montenegro and not as a predictor of the outcome of the upcoming elections.

SUMMARY

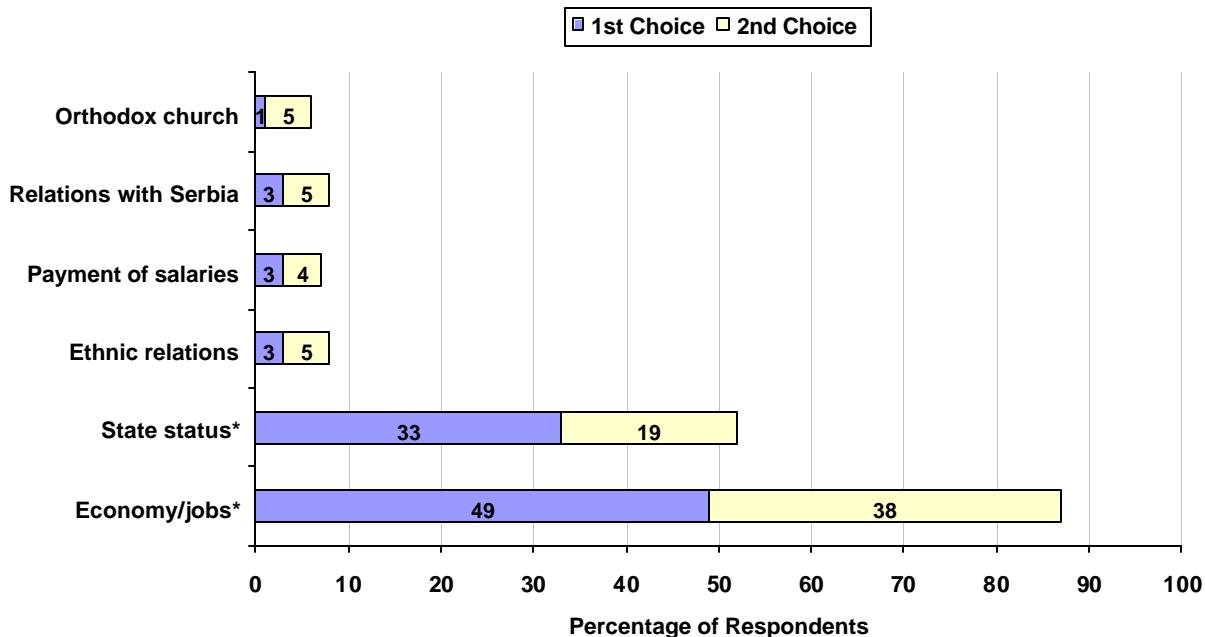
Based on the survey results, voters are fairly certain about their choices in the upcoming election and consistent in their opinions on state status and issues of importance in Montenegro. They also appear to have confidence in the electoral process and the potential to cast their vote without pressure from any political party.

The most important issues for voters at this time are:

- (1) The economic situation, start up of industry and unemployment, 49%;
- (2) The question of Montenegrin state status - independence of Montenegro or continued federation with Serbia, 33%.

All other issues tested were identified as 'most important' by less than 10% of respondents.

Most Important Issues



Respondents were asked to name their most important and second most important issue in the election from the following list: economic situation, international financial assistance, corruption, ethnic relations, non payment of salaries, unemployment, independence, relations with Serbia, remaining part of FRY, start up of industry, agriculture, the rights of people, Orthodox church, privatization, social security/health care, tourism or any other issue they felt important.

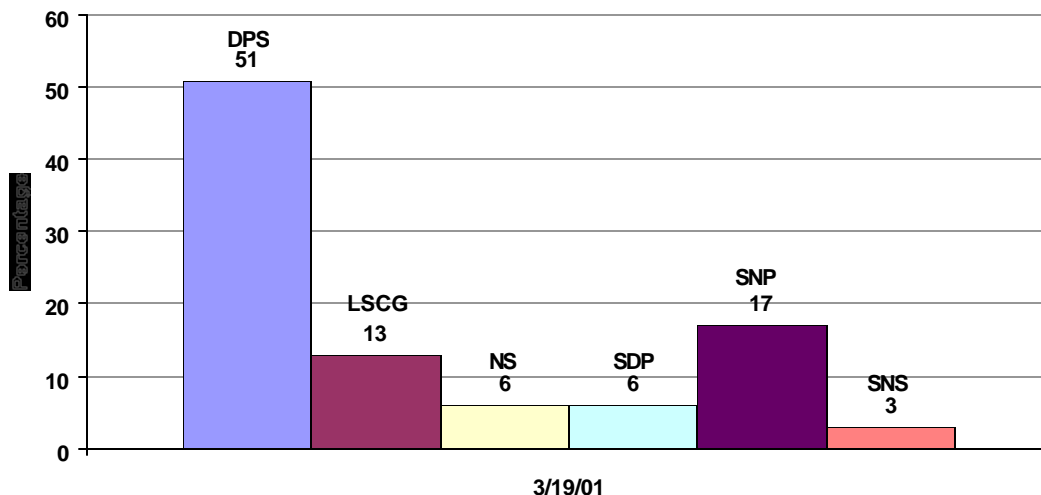
* Economy/jobs combines issues of economy, start up of industry and unemployment.

* State status combines issues of independence and sovereignty of Montenegro, and Montenegro remaining as part of FRY.

STANDING OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Had the election been held in mid-March, the DPS/SDP Coalition would have won a clear majority of seats in the Montenegrin Assembly. 51% of decided voters said that they would have voted for the Djukanovic-led DPS and another 6% would have voted for the SDP. The Liberal Alliance had 13% of decided voters; SNP had 17%, NS 6% and SNS, 3%.

Decided Voters Only *



*When the undecided respondents and respondents that did not answer are proportionately distributed among the parties.

STATE STATUS

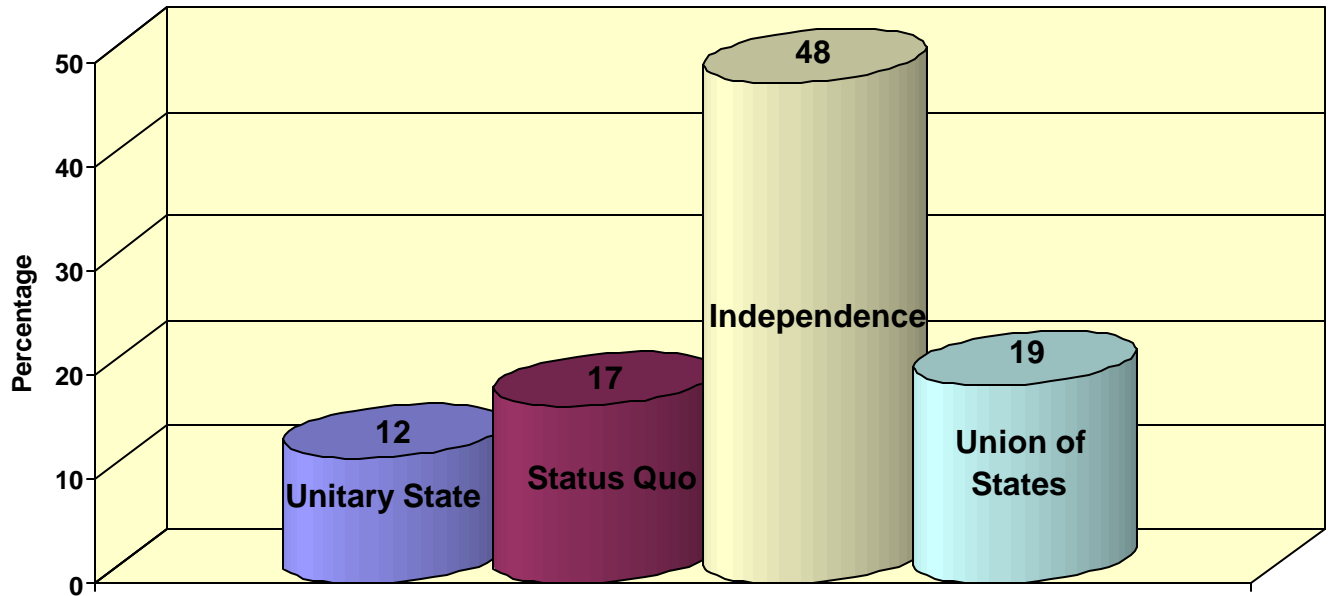
Respondents were overwhelmingly in favor, 75.1%, of holding a referendum, regardless of their opinion on the referendum.

In the last 18 months, there have been numerous proposed solutions for the future state status of Montenegro. Ongoing public opinion analyses have tested Montenegrin public support for a variety of arrangements for Montenegro, Serbia and Yugoslavia, which have included

- (1) ending the federation and establishing a unitary state;
- (2) a federation;
- (3) a confederal state; or,
- (4) an independent state.

More recently, the political debate on state status has narrowed to just two options – independence or a continued federation. A third possible option is based on the December 2000 Platform adopted by the DPS and SDP: a union of two internationally recognized, independent states based on negotiations with Serbia.

Solutions for Solving Relations Between Montenegro & Serbia



Given the multitude of possibilities, a number of questions on state status were posed to the interviewees in this public opinion survey. One of the questions asked the voters to give their opinion about the best solution for resolving relations.

NDI is a non-profit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and to promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

#####