

**National Democratic Institute for International Affairs  
Montenegro**

**Key Findings  
Tracking Poll – May 2004**

**May 31, 2004**

## INTRODUCTION

The following report is a presentation and analysis of key findings from NDI's third tracking survey. It follows a baseline survey conducted in April 2003 and tracking surveys conducted in September 2003 and February 2004. The report represents the fourth in a series of NDI political research in Montenegro in 2003 and 2004. The project will continue with the conduct of additional quarterly tracking polls throughout the coming year.

This series of public opinion surveys follows on from a series of eight polls conducted by NDI between March 2001 and April 2002. The baseline questionnaire for this new series that began in April 2003 was changed substantially to reflect current issues of the day. Since then, the basic framework of the questionnaire has been maintained. Therefore, when possible and relevant, this analysis will make comparisons with results from the April 2003 baseline and September 2003 and February 2004 tracking polls.

The current research is the property of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and is supported financially by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Its primary purpose is to assist NDI's partners – the political parties in Montenegro – to improve their ability to represent the interests of and communicate with the people of Montenegro. The research project is part of a political party assistance program conducted by NDI whose goal is to support the development of a democratic multi-party political system.

Between 13 and 19 May, 1,236 residents in Montenegro participated in face-to-face interviews designed to measure their attitudes about current government institutions, reform initiatives, the state union of Serbia and Montenegro, the political parties and other issues of importance to voters. The interviews were conducted in each of Montenegro's 21 municipalities. Prism Research, a polling firm established in Australia with offices throughout the former Yugoslavia, conducted the fieldwork.

The margin of error on a sample of 1,200 is +/- 3 percent.

In the United States, Canada and Western Europe, political parties conduct public opinion surveys in order to test the public attitudes regarding topical issues of the day. Results are then used to develop plans to communicate with the public. If the planning is done effectively and implemented properly, a political party can successfully compete in elections. In this context, public opinion surveys are not used as a means of predicting the outcome of upcoming elections. **This report should equally be viewed as an assessment of public attitudes in Montenegro at the moment and not as a predictor of the outcome of any future elections.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Most Important Concern: Living Standards and Jobs**

In May 2004, four-fifths of respondents (80 percent) described their current economic situation in Montenegro as bad or very bad, which is unchanged from September 2003 and February 2004. When asked to identify the most important and second most important issues when deciding for which party to vote, 83 percent identified “improved living standards.” This priority was ahead of all other choices by 32 percent. When asked which of the government’s economic reform goals respondents considered most important, 49 percent identified job creation. Meanwhile, 17 percent of respondents identified lower unemployment as the most significant government achievement in 2003. These results are relatively unchanged from February 2004 but continue to demonstrate the ongoing concern of voters about their economic situation, especially with regard to employment.

### **Governing Institutions and Reforms**

After 16 months of governing, 66 percent of respondents are dissatisfied with the current government. Asked to explain why they are dissatisfied, 47 percent say that the current government had done practically nothing and another 28 percent think that the government’s initiatives do not address the key problems in society. Of the 34 percent who are satisfied with the current government, 39 percent believe that the government has laid a good foundation for future reforms, while 26 percent believe the government has made significant progress in reviving the economy and another 24 percent believe that the government does a good job protecting Montenegro’s position within the state union. The Ministry of Agriculture (28 percent) and Ministry of Health (13 percent) continue to be considered the most successful ministries.

Since April 2003, trust in the *elected* republic and union institutions has fallen about 11 percent to an average of 44 percent trust, which represents a small increase in trust since February 2004. Dissatisfaction with municipal governments has increased in the last three months, especially in the municipalities of Niksic, Pljevlja, Pluzine, Savnik and Zabljak.

In the coming year, respondents identify attracting foreign investment and provision of affordable credit as the most important priorities. When fully implemented, 13 percent believe that the tourism law, the labor law and the Value Added Tax law will yield the most significant results for Montenegro’s future development.

## **Opposition Boycott**

Two-thirds of respondents (66 percent) believe that the opposition's year-long boycott of the parliament has not been effective in helping it achieve its goal of ousting the current government. Another 62 percent of respondents support the idea offered by some opposition parties and nongovernmental organizations of creating an expert government; and, 65 percent of those supporters believe that the best way to bring about an expert government is to return to parliament, while only 23 percent think that street protests might achieve the goal.

## **Vote Intention**

Among decided voters, 31 percent of respondents said they would vote for the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), 14 percent for the Socialist People's Party (SNP) and 8 percent for Liberal Alliance (LSCG). In the event that Group for Changes (GZP), a nongovernmental organization that has advocated repeatedly and publicly for alternative reform measures, were to register as a political party, 29 percent of respondents said that they would probably vote for it.

## **The Defining Division**

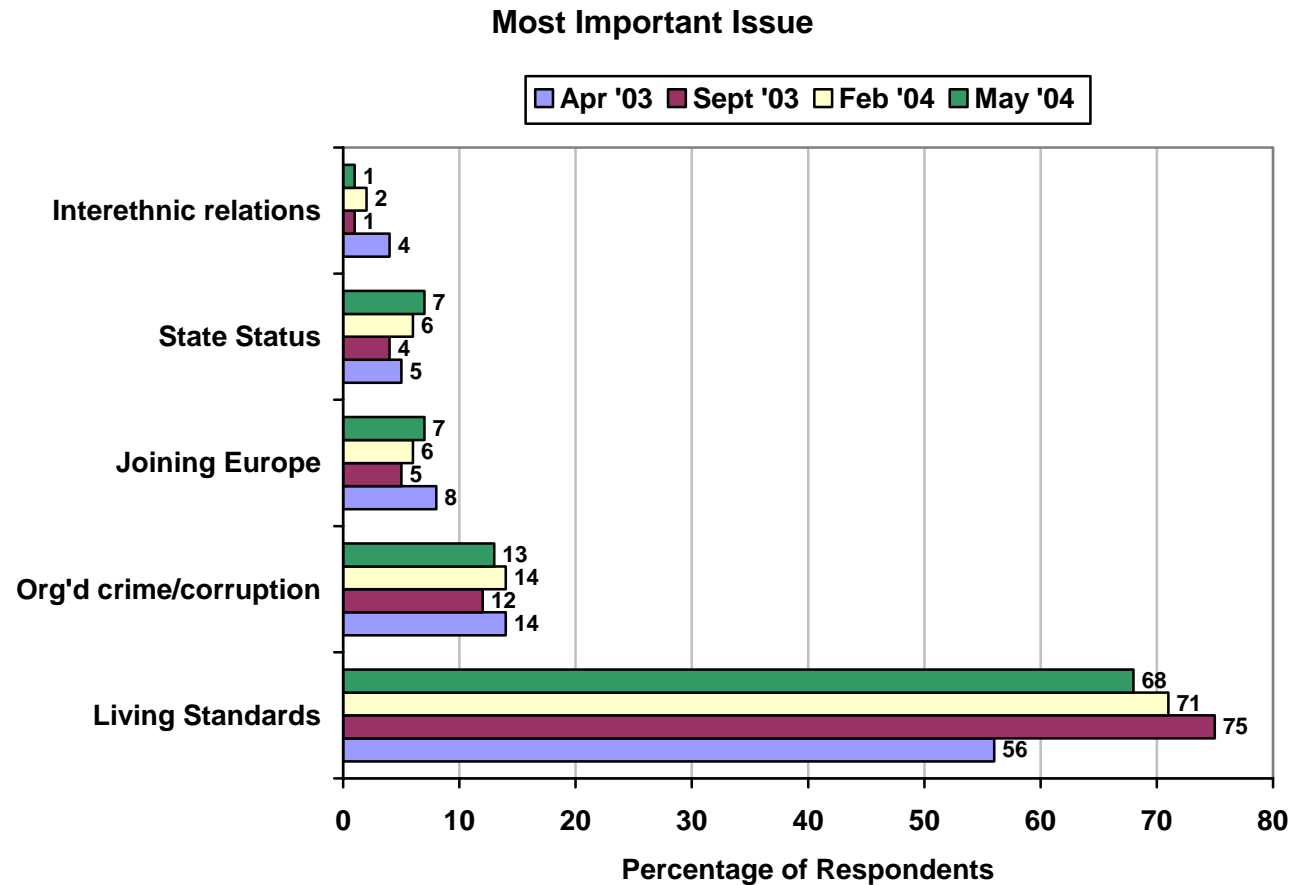
The defining division in Montenegro continues to be one's ethnic identification. Self-identified Montenegrins, Bosniaks and Muslims tend to trust the government, the parties that make up the government and its reform initiatives, while self-identified Serbs are distrustful of the ruling bodies and its initiatives.

In addition, there are increasing differences of opinion between men and women. Men tend to be more interested in politics and are more likely to be members of political parties. In terms of economic solutions, men are more interested in issues such as improving Montenegro's infrastructure, while they are less interested in 'improved living standards' or inflation. Thus, one could conclude that men are more emotional about the political situation, while women are more concerned about the basic issues that affect the living conditions of their families.

## MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE

From the following list, respondents were asked to name the issue they consider most important when deciding for which party to vote:

- Improved living standards (better and more regular salaries, more work places, etc.);
- Struggle against organized crime and corruption;
- Joining Europe;
- State status of Montenegro (independence or maintenance of state union with Serbia); and,
- Interethnic relations in Montenegro.

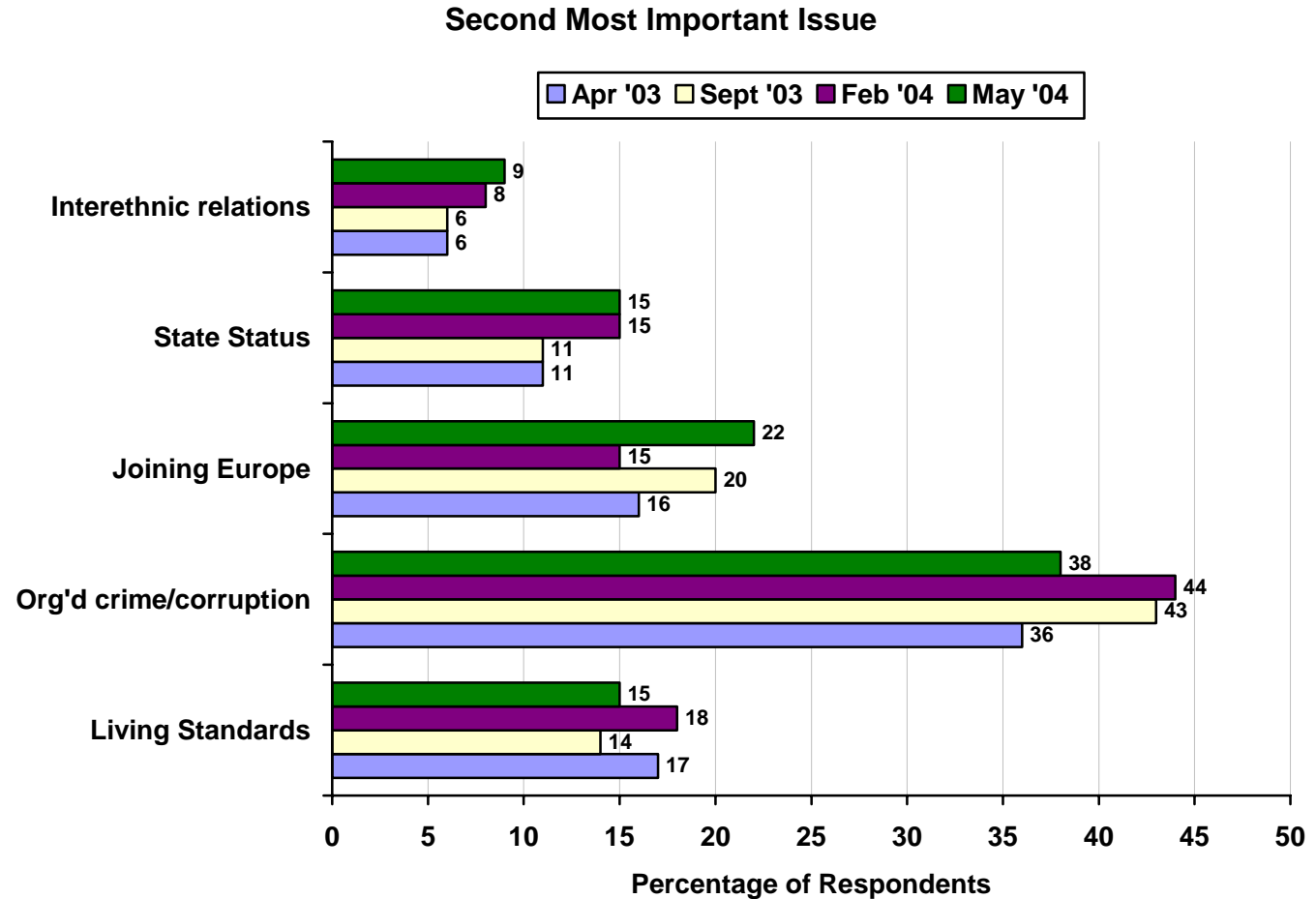


As a first choice, the importance to voters of a party's ability to *improve living standards* continues to be ahead of all other issues by 55 percent.

## SECOND MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE

Respondents were then asked to name the second most important issue in making their electoral choice. The options remained the same and were:

- Improved living standards (better and more regular salaries, more work places, etc.);
- Struggle against organized crime and corruption;
- Joining Europe;
- State status of Montenegro (independence or maintenance of state union with Serbia); and,
- Interethnic relations in Montenegro.

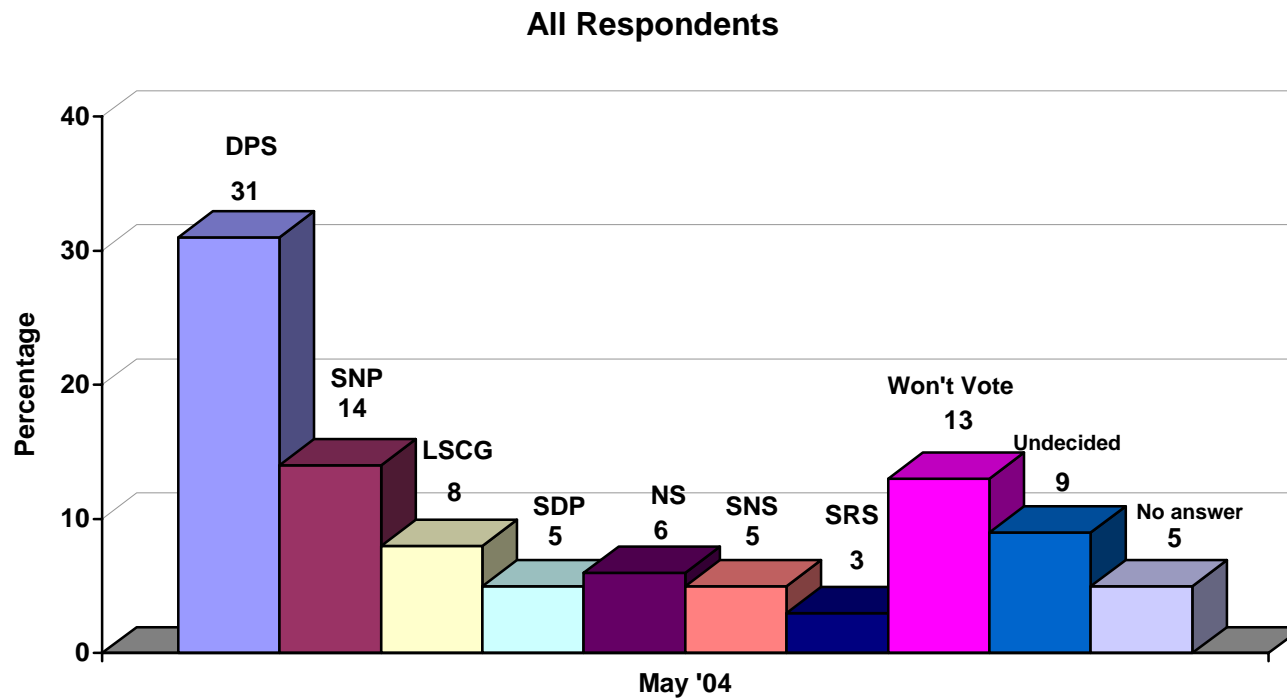


The *struggle against organized crime and corruption* continues to be the most dominant issue as a second choice, followed by *joining Europe*, *improved living standards*, and *state status*.

## VOTE INTENTION

Respondents were asked: “If parliamentary elections were held again this week, for which party would you probably vote?” The chart below displays the results for those parties chosen by more than 3 percent of respondents. There continues to be a relatively large percentage (28 percent) who will not vote, are undecided or choose not to answer this question.

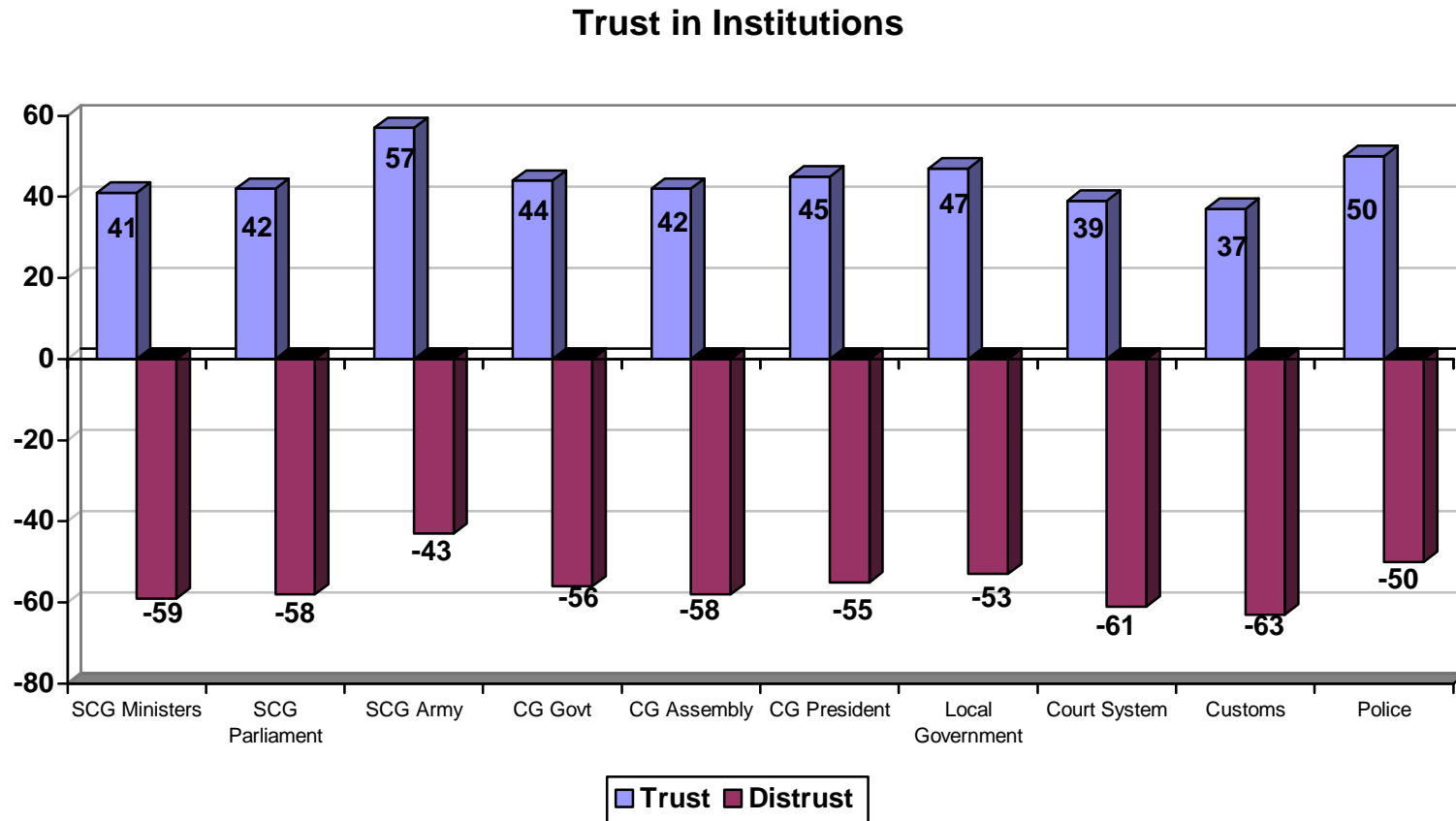
In a follow-up question, respondents were asked if they would consider voting for Group for Changes (GZP) if it transformed itself into a political party. Twenty-nine (29) percent responded that they would probably vote for GZP – compared to 24 percent in February 2004 and 30 percent in September 2003.



\* All other parties received less than 3 percent of support among respondents sampled.

## TRUST IN STATE INSTITUTIONS

Respondents were asked how much they trusted the following state institutions. Since February 2004, trust in the Council of Ministers of the state union and in the Police has increased 6 percent. Trust in state institutions averages 44 percent, and only the Army of Serbia and Montenegro enjoys more than 50 percent support.





## ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT AND ITS POLICIES

**Satisfaction with the Current Government:** Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the current Montenegrin government. Thirty-four (34) percent said they were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied, while 66 percent said they were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Satisfaction is highest among those who identify themselves as Montenegrin, Muslim and Bosniak, while dissatisfaction is highest among those who identify themselves as ethnic Serbs and Yugoslavs.

The 34 percent of respondents who are satisfied with the current government were asked which of the following statements best characterized their reason for satisfaction.

Reasons for Satisfaction	February 2004	May 2004
The government has made significant progress in reviving the economy.	18%	26%
The government has laid a good foundation for future reforms.	59%	39%
The government has done a good job of protecting Montenegro's position within the union.	18%	24%

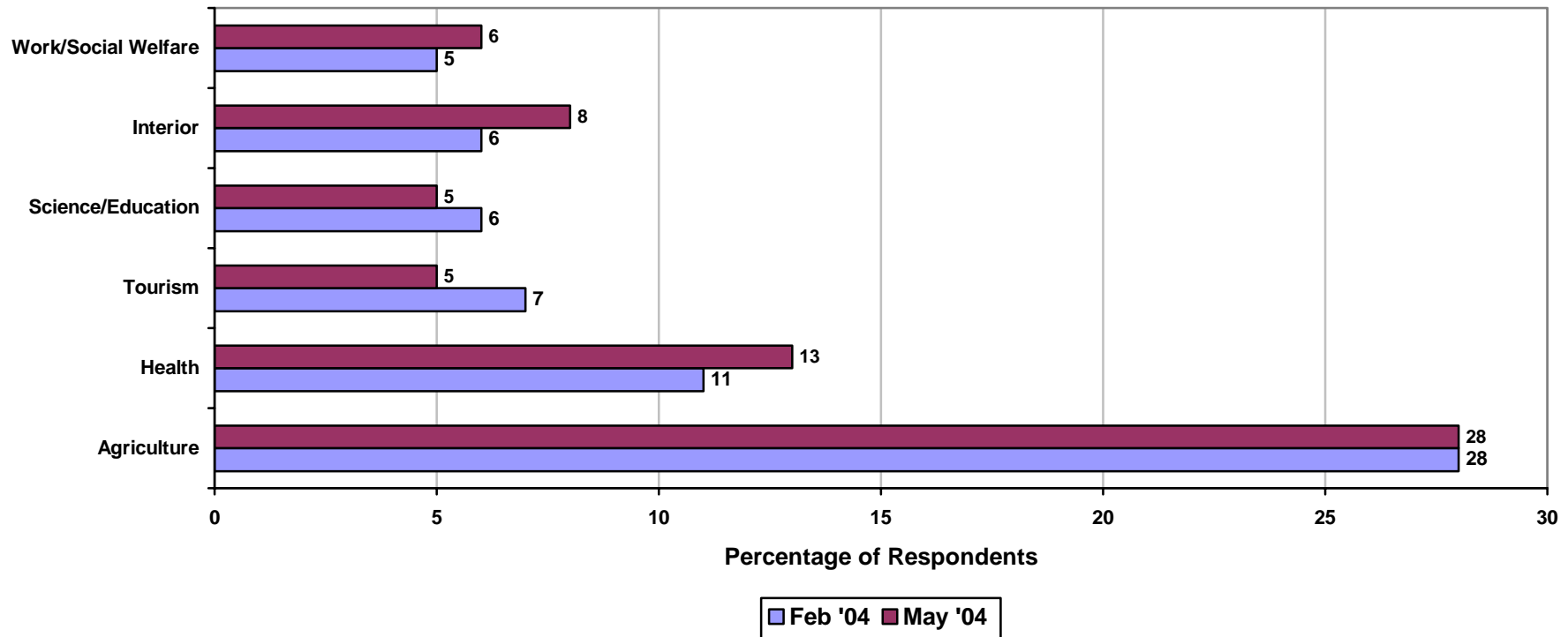
The 69 percent of respondents who were dissatisfied with the current government were asked which of the following statements best characterized their reason for dissatisfaction.

Reasons for Dissatisfaction	February 2004	May 2004
The government's initiatives do not address the key problems in Montenegrin society.	25%	28%
Because of the need to respond to scandals, the government is less effective than it could be.	21%	20%
The government has done practically nothing in the last year.	48%	47%

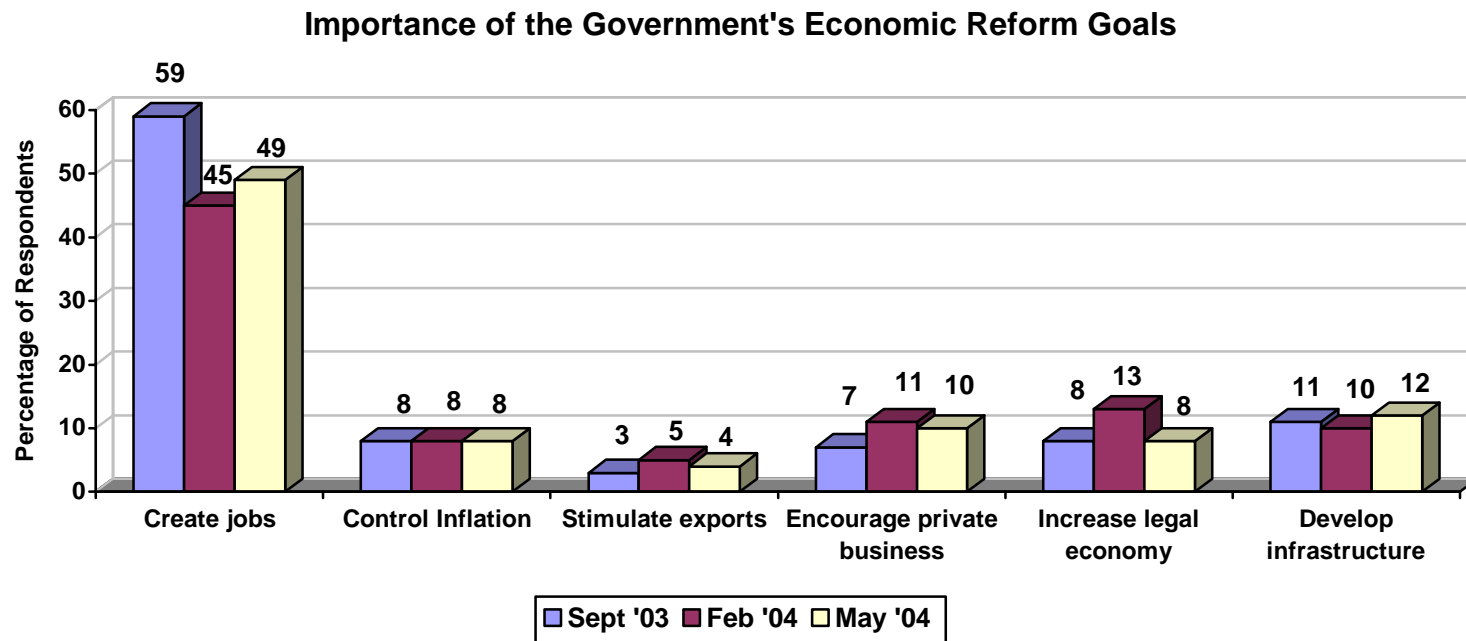
Of all the government's announced achievements during 2003, 17 percent of respondents considered lower unemployment to be the most significant result, followed by 10 percent who considered the results in the field of agriculture and the successful tourist season as significant. One-third of respondents (35 percent) – of which half identify themselves as Serb or Yugoslav and one-quarter identify themselves as Montenegrin – were unable to identify a most significant achievement.

**Assessment of Individual Ministries:** Respondents were asked to identify from a select list of ministries which one had achieved the most results in the past year. The chart below graphs the top responses. Other ministries were identified as most successful by 2 percent or less of respondents. At 2 percent, these included the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance; and, at 1 percent, the Ministry of Maritime and Transportation.

### Most Successful Ministries

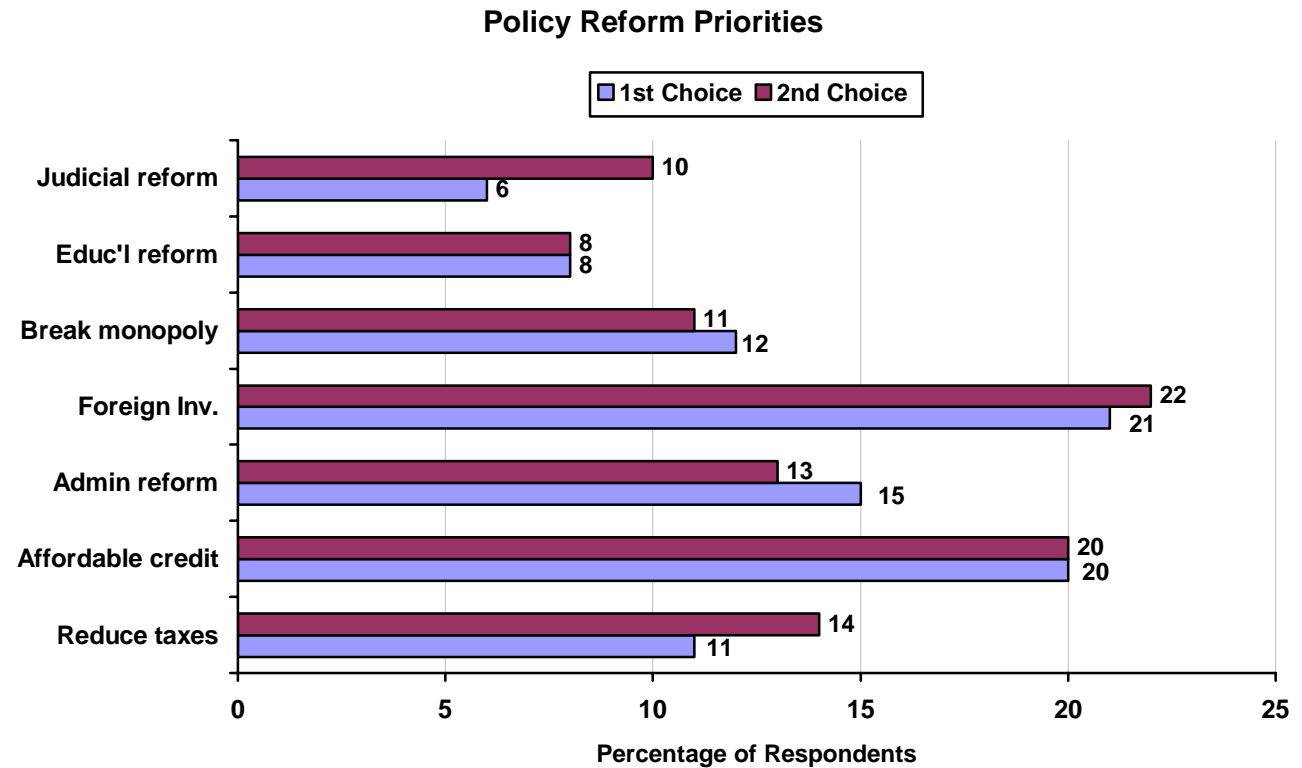


**Economic Reform Agenda:** In 2003, Prime Minister Djukanovic announced a four-year Economic Reform Agenda for Montenegro. The plan established a number of goals, and respondents were asked to choose the goal that was most important to them.



**Policy Reform Priorities:** Respondents were asked to choose two policy reforms from the list below that they would pursue as a priority in they coming year if they were Prime Minister.

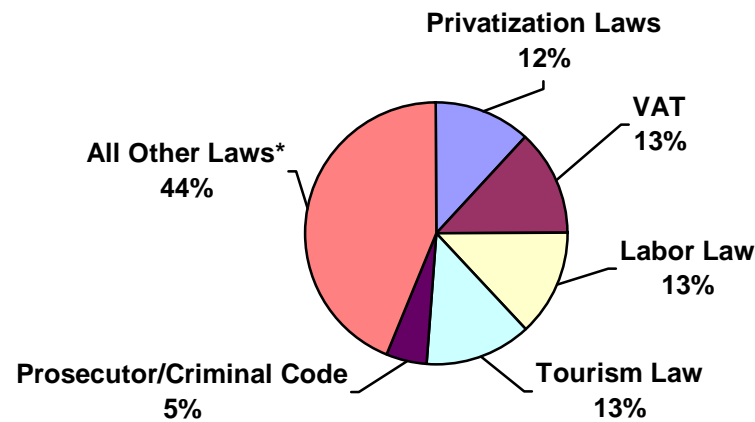
- Reform of the judiciary;
- Reform of the educational system;
- Breaking the power of monopoly businesses;
- Attracting foreign investment;
- Reform of state administration/public services;
- Providing credits at affordable interest rates; and,
- Reducing the tax burden.



When compared to February 2004, the importance of *attracting foreign investment* has increased as a policy priority.

**Already Adopted Laws:** From a select list of laws adopted in the last two years, respondents were asked to identify the one that they considered would yield the most significant results for Montenegro’s future development when implemented. It is interesting to note that those living at the coast consider the Tourism Law and the privatization laws as more significant, while those living in Niksic, Pljevlja, Pluzine, Savnik and Zabljak consider the Value Added Tax to be relatively more important for Montenegro’s future development. A higher proportion of those who identify themselves as Serbs continue to identify no law as able to achieve significant results.

**Reform Law Expected to Yield the Most Significant Results**



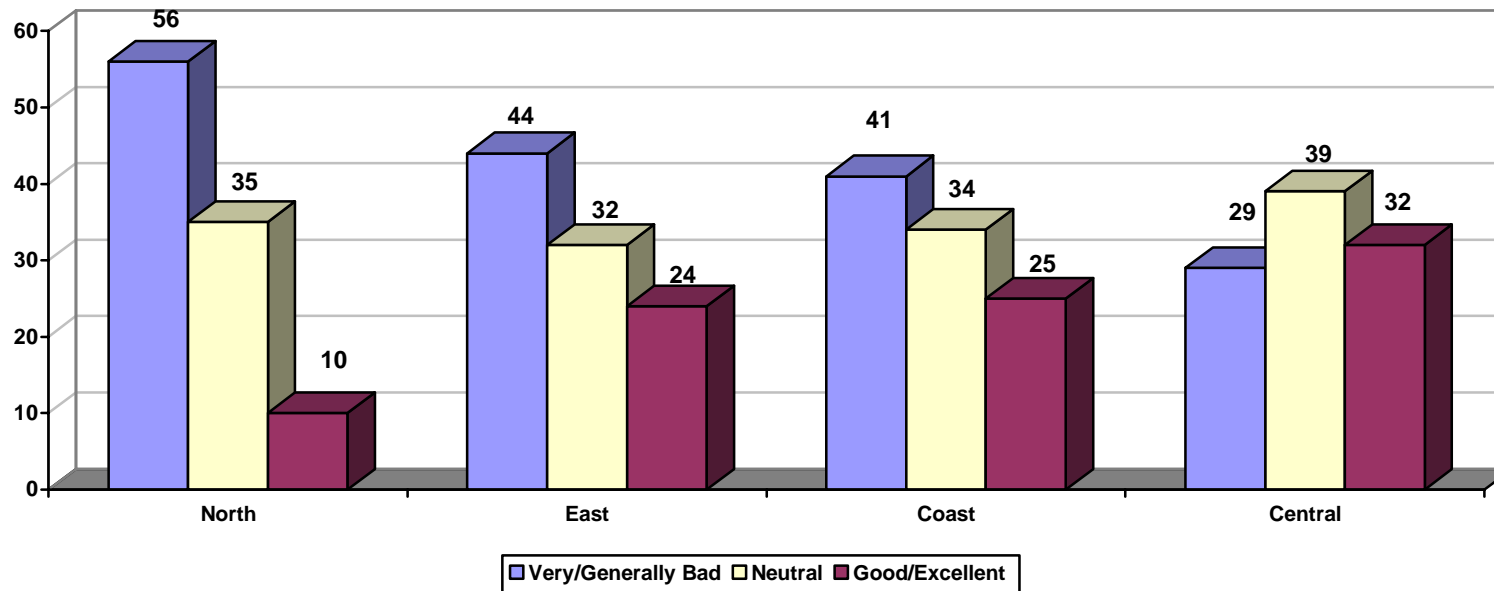
\* Other laws included:

- Law on Pension and Invalid Insurance (5 percent)
- Law on Courts (3 percent)
- Local Self-Government Laws (5 percent)
- Banking Laws (4 percent)
- Laws on Media Reform (4 percent)
- No law/No answer (23 percent)

## ATTITUDES TOWARD MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Respondents were asked to rate the work of their municipal government. Overall, dissatisfaction with local government has increased 6 percent since February and satisfaction has decreased 4 percent. The most significant change is a 19 percent increase in dissatisfaction with municipal governments in “northern” municipalities.

Assessment of Current Municipal Government



- **North:** Niksic, Pljevlja, Pluzine, Savnik and Zabljak
- **East:** Andrijevisa, Berane, Bijelo Polje, Kolasin, Mojkovac, Plav and Rozaje

- **Coast:** Bar, Budva, Herceg Novi, Kotor, Tivat and Ulcinj
- **Central:** Cetinje, Danilovgrad and Podgorica

## **ATTITUDES ABOUT THE POLITICAL SCENE IN MONTENEGRO**

Given last month's parliamentary debate over the Conflict of Interest law and the President's decision to return that law to the parliament for reconsideration, respondents were asked their opinion about the most contentious issue in that law.

First, respondents were asked to what degree they believe that public officials should be allowed to be members of administrative boards of businesses in which the state or local government had a controlling interest. Eighty (80) percent believed that public officials should not be allowed to be members of administrative boards. Then, the 20 percent who believed that they should be allowed membership on boards of state companies were asked whether public officials should receive remuneration for their service on public company boards. Fifty-four (54) percent believed that they should and 44 percent believed that they should not be compensated.

Regarding the opposition's year-long boycott of parliament, respondents were asked to what degree they thought that the boycott had been an effective way for the opposition to force the current government from power. Two-thirds (66 percent) did not believe that the boycott had been effective. Meanwhile, 62 percent of respondents support the idea of forming an expert government to replace the current government. And, 65 percent of those supporting the boycott believe that the best way to bring about the formation of such a government was for the opposition to return to parliament to point out the weaknesses of the current government. Only 23 percent believe that street protests will succeed in bringing about an expert government.

Finally, respondents were asked to what degree they believe that political parties in Montenegro place the prosperity and well-being of Montenegro, most of the time, above their own party interests. As was seen in February, two-thirds of respondents (66 percent) believe that parties place their own interests in front of the needs of Montenegro.

## UNION OF SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Fifteen months ago – on 4 February 2003 – the Federal parliament adopted the Constitutional Charter, establishing the state union of Serbia and Montenegro.

Respondents were asked, which of the following statements best represents their opinion about the state union and the Charter.

<b>STATEMENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</b>
The Charter establishes the foundation for preserving the state of Serbia and Montenegro. In three years time, there will be no interest in splitting.	28%
The Charter protects the interests of Montenegro and preserves the right of its citizens to decide in three years time on independence.	22%
The Charter does not represent a good solution for either member state.	23%
Member states need to develop a new Charter that would better regulate relations within the union.	17%
Do not know/No answer	9%

A number of deadlines established in the Constitutional Charter have been missed. Asked who was most responsible for the stalled implementation of the Charter, 41 percent of respondents identified the government in Montenegro and 20 percent the government in Serbia. The opposition in Serbia was blamed by 4 percent of respondents, and the opposition in Montenegro by 5 percent, while 29 percent could not answer. This result is relatively unchanged since February 2004.



## **THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE STATE UNION**

The EU Summit in Thessaloniki in June 2003 welcomed the future integration of the countries of the former Yugoslavia into the European Union based on their willingness to implement political and economic reforms. Respondents were asked several questions about this process and Montenegro's responsibility in that process.

First, respondents were asked whose responsibility it was to bring countries like Serbia and Montenegro into the European Union. More than half of respondents (62 percent) identify the state union and its member states as the responsible parties, while 32 percent identify the European Union.

Regarding the EU's relations toward Serbia and Montenegro, 53 percent believe that the demands that the EU makes on Serbia and Montenegro are to be expected and 40 percent believe that the EU puts a great deal of pressure on Serbia and Montenegro.

**Benefits of EU Membership:** Respondents were then asked to select among the following options the one that best reflected their understanding of the benefits of becoming a member of the EU. The table below compares the responses from April 2003, September 2003, February 2004 and May 2004. It is interesting to note that 9 percent fewer respondents identify *European salaries* as a benefit and relatively more identify the *ability to travel freely* and *adoption of European standards of work* as important benefits of EU membership.

The offered options were:

- Ability to Travel Freely;
- Access to a Larger Market;
- Use of a Common Currency;
- Access to European goods and investment;
- Adoption of European work standards; and,
- European salaries.

