

**National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
Montenegro**

**Key Findings
Baseline Poll – February 2007**

March 9, 2007

INTRODUCTION

The following report is a presentation and analysis of key findings from NDI's 2007 baseline poll. The report represents the first in a series of NDI political research in Montenegro in 2007. The project will continue with the conduct of additional tracking polls throughout the coming year.

This series of public opinion surveys follows on from a series of 12 polls conducted by NDI between March 2001 and May 2004. The baseline questionnaire for this new series was changed substantially to reflect current issues of the day. When possible and relevant, this analysis will make comparisons with results from polls conducted in the 2001-2004 period.

The current research is the property of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and is supported financially by the U.S.-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED). 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 in new political circumstances resulting from the referendum on state status and the recent parliamentary elections. 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 15 and 26 February, 1,232 residents in Montenegro participated in face-to-face interviews designed to measure their attitudes about current government institutions, the political situation, reform initiatives, Montenegro's European future, and other issues of importance to voters. The interviews were conducted in 16 of Montenegro's 21 municipalities. Excluded from the sample were the municipalities of Andrijevica, Mojkovac, Plužine, Šavnik, and Žabljak. 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

After 100 Days, Montenegrin Citizens are Divided on Government Performance

After 100 days of a new government led by Prime Minister Željko Šturanović, 51 percent of respondents express dissatisfaction with the government's performance. Still, some 72 percent of respondents can identify an achievement of the current government that they consider to be significant – and, one-quarter (26 percent) say it is membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace, while 17 percent identify membership in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and another 17 percent the successful conclusion of negotiations over the minimal price of labor. Compared with government at the state level, 59 percent of respondents express satisfaction with the work of their current municipal government, which is significantly higher than the May 2004 NDI poll in which only 24 percent of respondents said they were satisfied.

When respondents are asked to recommend to the government what its highest government economic priority should be, two-thirds (66 percent) identify reducing unemployment and creating new jobs. Additionally, one-third of respondents want the current government to set as a high priority the task of ensuring equality for everyone in front of the law. The current public opinion research also demonstrates that organized crime and corruption is a concern for one-quarter to one-third of respondents. Separating the issue of crime from the issue of corruption reveals that there greater concern about crime and efforts to combat crime. Finally, almost two-thirds (64 percent) say that it is more important for Montenegro to apply European standards than to become a member of the European Union (EU).

More than half of respondents (53 percent) believe that the Montenegrin government wants to provide citizens with a European quality of life, but less than half (42 percent) believe that it is capable of providing that quality of life and 48 percent believe that the government is capable of building strong state institutions. Respondents identify the key obstacles to the development of Montenegro's administrative capacity as 'unskilled people in important positions through family, friendship, or party connections' (45 percent) and corruption (37 percent).

Trust in State Institutions

The University of Montenegro, municipal governments and the presidency enjoy the confidence of more than 50 percent of voters, while the parliament, government and courts enjoy less than 50 percent confidence. In addition, more than half of respondents distrust the state institutions with responsibility to address the problem of corruption, such as, the state prosecutor, courts, and the Commission for Determining Conflicts of Interest. Of those institutions, the ones created in the last six years – such as the Money Laundering Agency and the Public Procurement Commission – clearly confuse people as there are high levels of 'don't know' and 'no answer' responses with regard to most of

these bodies. In addressing the problem of corruption, respondents believe that citizens and NGOs can do a lot more to solve the issue than can the police, the state prosecutor and the courts.

Political Situation, Consensus and the Opposition

Respondents are divided about whether the current government has made enough effort to establish wide consensus on issues of importance to citizens as it promised in the September election campaign. Forty-eight (48) percent believe that it has tried quite a bit or somewhat, while another 48 percent believe that it has done very little or almost nothing. Likewise, some 51 percent of respondents judge the opposition to be making a concerted effort to cooperate with the government when it comes to questions of importance to the citizens. Still, some 36 percent do not think that the opposition expresses sufficient readiness. That 36 percent includes more self-identified Montenegrins, more women than men, more urban dwellers than rural dwellers, and those with higher education. Almost one-half of respondents (49 percent) judged the new governing coalition in Kolašin between the former branch of the Socialist People's Party (SNP) and Democratic Socialist Party (DPS) to be a positive move.

If elections would have been held in mid-February, 32 percent of respondents said they would vote for the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), 17 percent for the Movement for Changes (PzP), 9 percent for Serbian List (SL), and 8 percent for the Socialist People's Party (SNP). Twelve (12) percent of respondents did not intend to vote.

The Defining Divisions

The defining division in Montenegro continues to be one's ethnic identification, which has been the case since NDI began to conduct public opinion research in Montenegro in 2001. 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 appears to be an emergence of a division between traditional and reform-minded people. Thus, on a number of issues, students, young people, those with higher educations, and those living in urban areas are more eager to plunge ahead with change, while those living in rural areas, pensioners, housewives, and those older than 50 are more comfortable with the 'old ways.' The former group is supportive of the reforms associated with EU membership and of privatization, while the latter group is less supportive, more suspicious, and more uninformed about the issues. There is also a tendency for men and those living on the coast to be more sceptical than women and those living in the north regarding government initiatives.

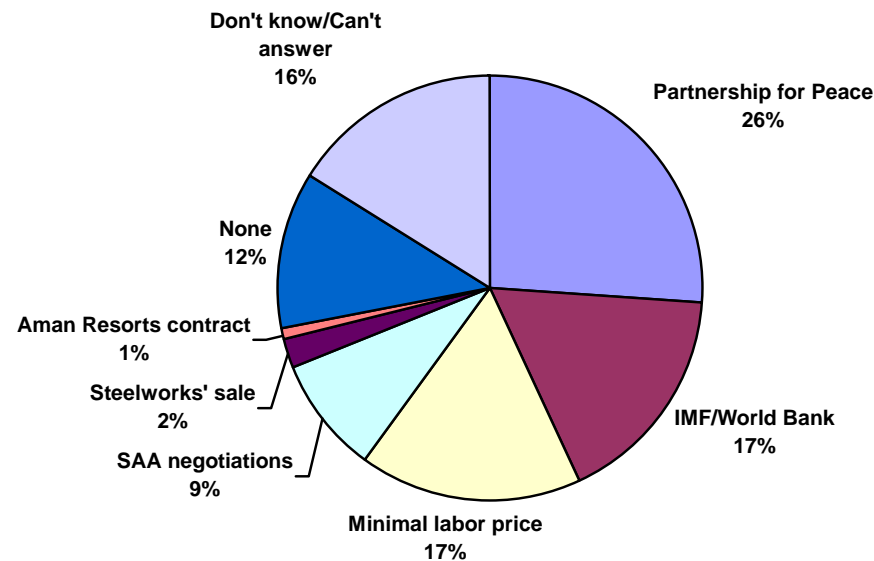
ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

The survey was in the field as the new government of Željko Šturanović celebrated its first 100 days in office, and 51 percent of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the government's work, of which some two-fifths were very dissatisfied. From the following list, respondents were asked to identify the most important government accomplishment of the last 100 days:

- Membership in Partnership for Peace;
- Membership in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank;
- Successful conclusion of negotiations over the minimal price of labor;
- Concluding negotiations on the Stabilization and Association Agreement;
- Signing the contract for the sale of Steelworks' shares; and,
- Signing the management contract with Aman Resorts.

Twenty-two (22) percent of respondents judged Vice Premier Gordana Đurović from a limited list of ministers to have accomplished the most in the first 100 days. Another 23 percent of respondents could identify no minister as having accomplished the most.¹

Most Important Government Accomplishment



¹ Other ministers were Predrag Nenežić, Milutin Simović, Igor Lukšić, Miodrag Radunović, Andrija Lompar, Milan Roćen, Branimir Gvozdenović, Boro Vučinić, and Predrag Sekulić.

THE VOTERS' CHOICE OF GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

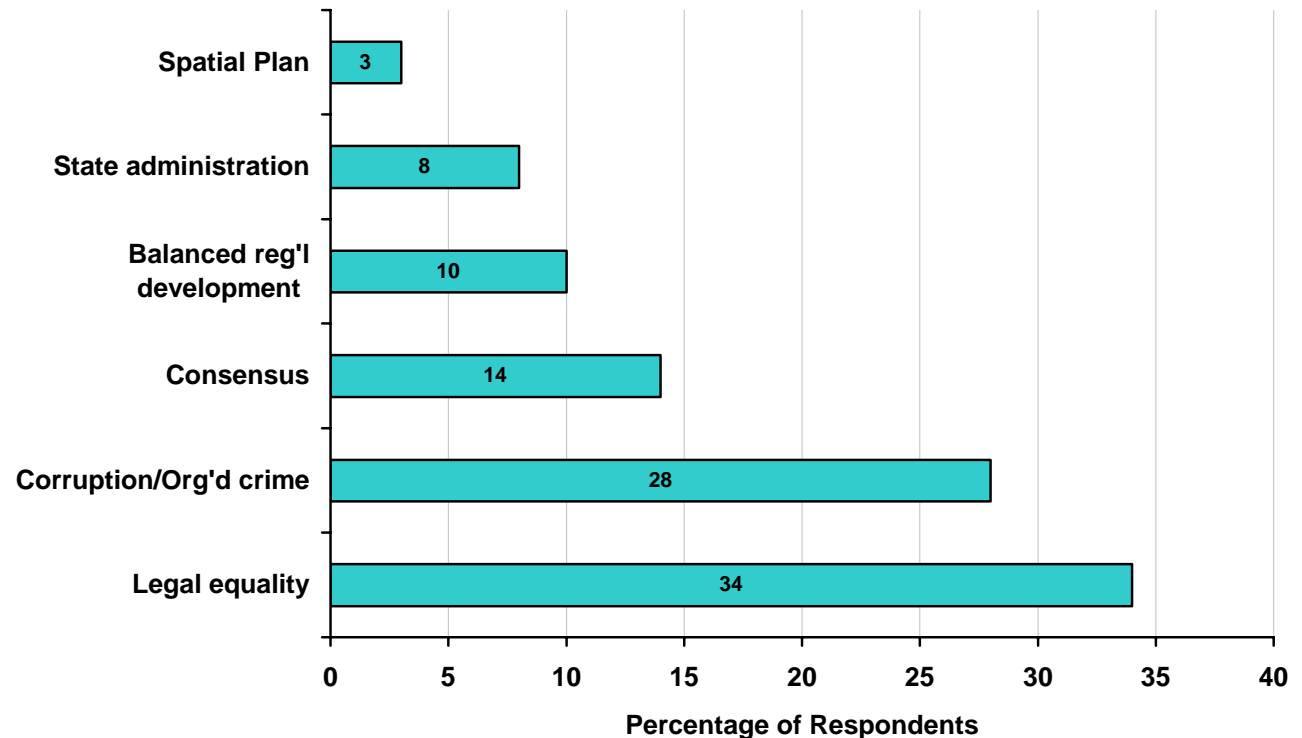
From two closed lists, respondents were asked to identify what they thought should be the highest government priority and the highest government economic priority.

Highest Government Priority

The choices included:

- Equality of all before the law;
- Measures in the fight against corruption and organized crime;
- Consensus about important issues for citizens;
- Balanced regional development;
- Reform of state administration; and,
- Spatial Plan for Montenegro.

Voters' Choice for Highest Government Priority



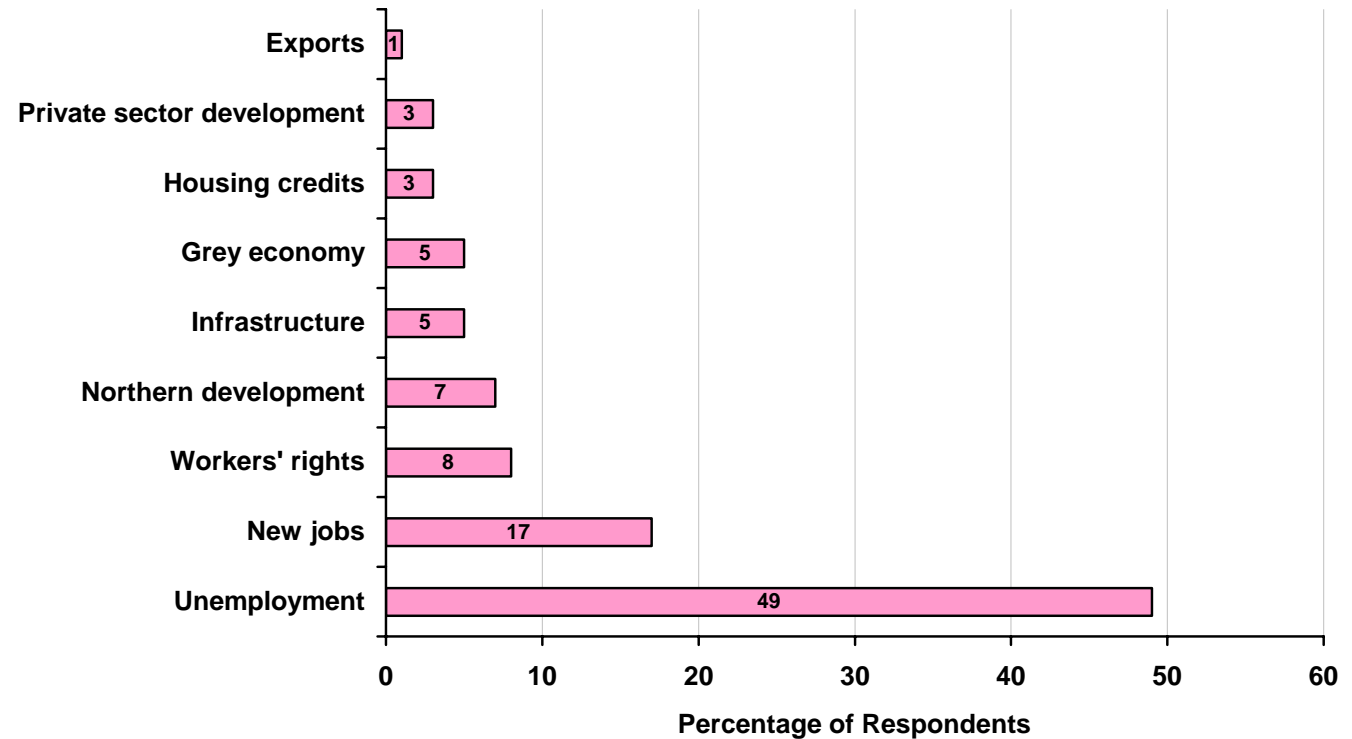
Those living in the coastal municipalities care much more about establishing consensus, while those living in northern municipalities and Bosniaks care more about balanced regional development. Those with basic education and no income care more about legal equality, while students care more about the intensification of the fight against organized crime and corruption.

Highest Government Economic Priority

The choices included:

- Reducing unemployment;
- Opening new work places;
- Protecting workers' rights;
- Intensifying development in the north;
- Investing in infrastructure;
- Reducing the grey economy;
- Providing affordable housing credits;
- Providing a favorable environment for private sector development; and,
- Stimulating exports.

Voters' Choice for Highest Government Economic Priority

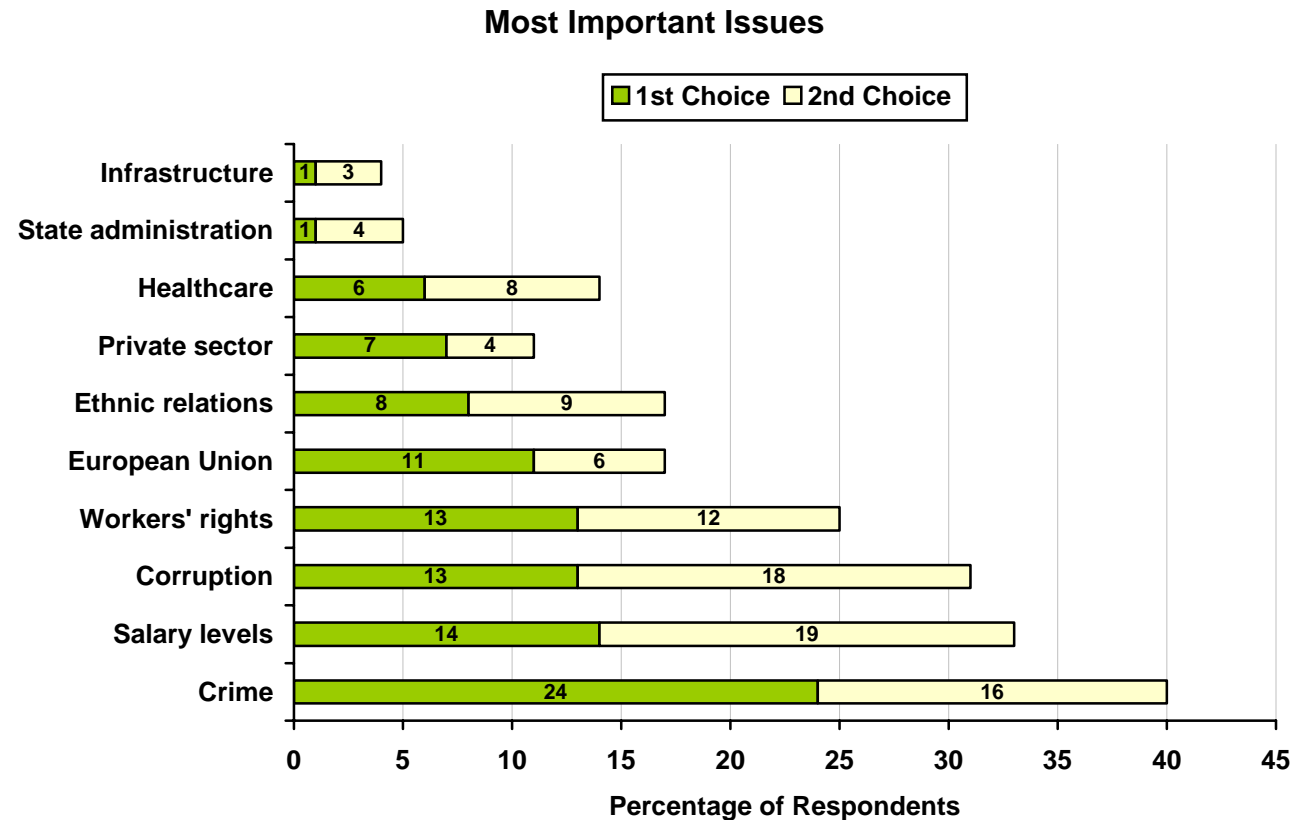


Two-thirds of respondents choose either reducing unemployment or opening new working places above all other topics. Only one-fourth of respondents prioritized issues that would support the development of a growing economy, i.e., intensification of development efforts in the north, investment in infrastructure, reducing the grey economy, supporting private sector development, and stimulating exports.

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:

- Fight against crime;
- Increase of salaries;
- Fight against corruption;
- Protect worker's rights;
- Joining the European Union;
- Position of my ethnic group in Montenegro;
- Improve the services for developing private enterprises;
- Improve health services;
- Advance the effectiveness of the state administration; and,
- Improve transportation infrastructure.

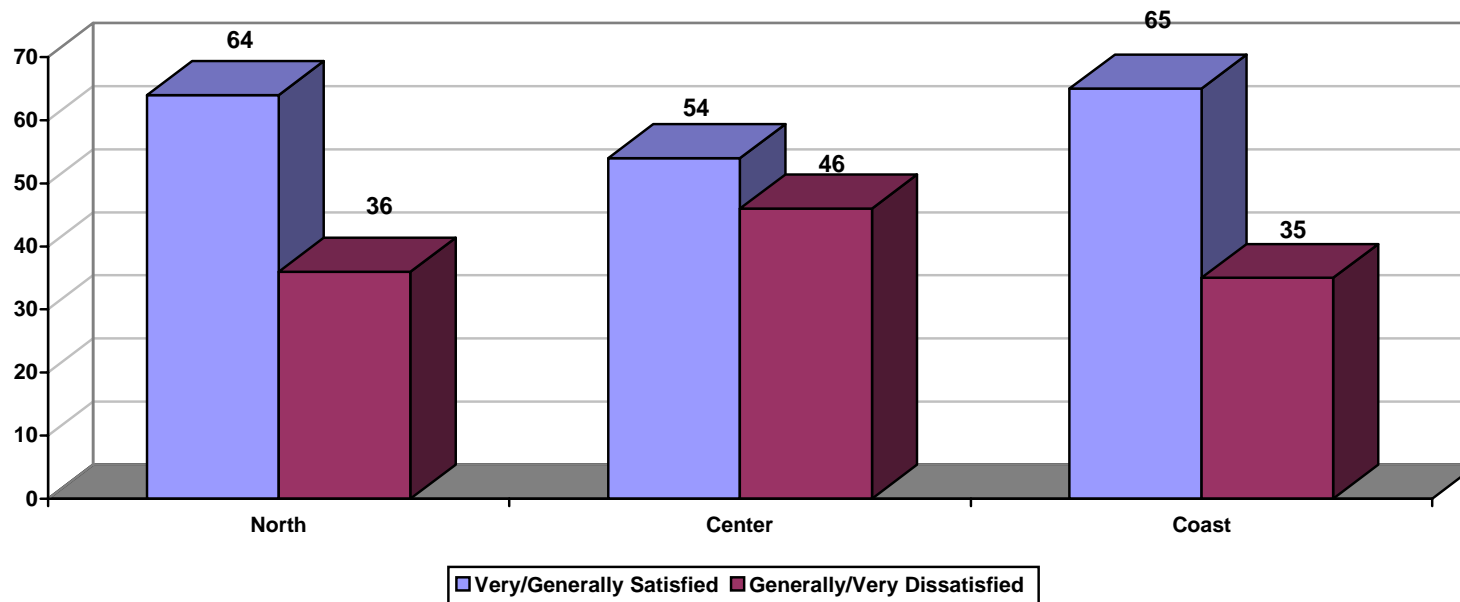


Respondents are most concerned about the fight against crime, while almost one-third also noted the importance of increasing salaries and combating corruption and another 25 percent considered protecting workers' rights to be important. When the issue of crime is separated from the issue of corruption, respondents give crime a higher priority as a first choice and corruption a higher priority as a second choice.

ATTITUDES TOWARD MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Nationwide, satisfaction with the work of the current municipal government stands at 59 percent, and all regions register more than 50 percent satisfaction. These numbers are considerably higher than attitudes toward local government in 2003 and 2004, when average satisfaction was about 26 percent. Most satisfied are self-identified Montenegrins and Muslims and those with higher educations and salaries of 300€ or more, while people with lower incomes, self-identified Serbs, Bosniaks, Albanians, and Croats are least satisfied.

Assessment of Current Municipal Government



- **North:** Berane, Bijelo Polje, Kolašin, Plav, Pljevlja, and Rožaje
- **Center:** Cetinje, Danilovgrade, Podgorica, Nikšić
- **Coast:** Bar, Budva, Herceg Novi, Kotor, Tivat, and Ulcinj

POLITICS, CONSENSUS AND THE OPPOSITION

At 45 percent, many respondents think that the political situation after the referendum and the recent elections is about the same as it was before. Another 27 percent think that it is worse, and 24 percent say it is better. Self-identified Montenegrins, those earning more than 300€ and those with higher educations judge the political situation as improved, while self-identified Serbs and those earning less than 100€ judge the situation to be worse. Students are most inclined to consider the political situation unchanged.

Respondents were asked to assess the government's efforts to establish wide consensus on issues important to citizens as promised in its recent election campaign. One-third of respondents thought the government *somewhat* tried to establish consensus, while another 30 percent thought the government *did nothing* to extend a hand of cooperation and 20 percent believed that the government tried *a little*. While self-identified Muslims and Bosniaks gave the government credit for trying, the government's actions most disappointed self-identified Serbs.

Asked to assess the newly formed coalition government in Kolašin between the former branch of the Socialist People's Party (SNP) and the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), a full 49 percent considered it to be a positive step, and only 28 percent judged it as a negative step. Those living in coastal municipalities are more likely to consider it a negative step, while those living in northern municipalities are much more likely not to be able to offer an assessment. Self-identified Bosniaks and those of other ethnic groups consider it a positive step, self-identified Serbs are more likely to consider it negative, and self-identified Muslims cannot offer an assessment.

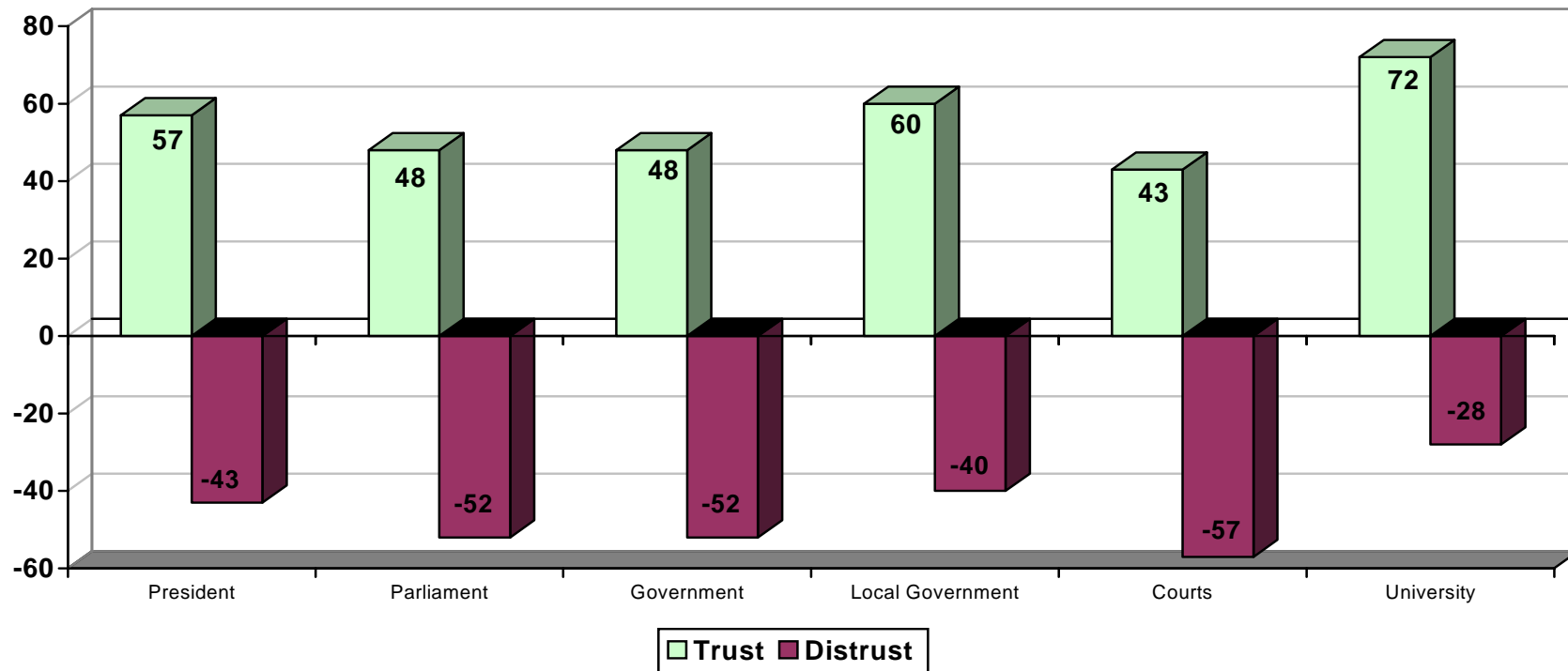
Regarding the opposition, respondents were asked whether united or independent action on the part of opposition parties was more likely to contribute to the success of their actions. Only one-fourth thought that independent appearances would be better, while 57 percent thought that united action would contribute to its success. Self-identified Serbs are much more likely to favor united action, while self-identified Montenegrins, Albanians and Croats are only 48 percent in favor of united action and self-identified Muslims and Bosniaks only 39 percent.

Asked whether they believe that the opposition has expressed a readiness to cooperate with the government when it comes to questions of importance to the citizens, 51 percent of respondents believed that the opposition is making an effort, while only 36 percent did not think so. Self-identified Montenegrins are more likely to deny that the opposition has expressed a readiness as are those who live in urban areas, women, and those with higher educations.

TRUST IN STATE INSTITUTIONS

Respondents were asked how much confidence they had in the following state institutions. The University of Montenegro, local governments, and the presidency enjoy more than 50 percent trust of respondents, whereas the government, parliament and courts have less than 50 percent confidence of respondents. Self-identified Serbs average 23 percent more distrust in all institutions except local governments, while, on average, self-identified Bosniaks are 24 percent and self-identified Muslims 20 percent more trusting in all state institutions including local governments.

Trust in Institutions



STRENGTHENING STATE INSTITUTIONS

Respondents are divided in their opinion about whether the government is capable of building strong state institutions in Montenegro. Some 48 percent believe that it is capable, while 43 percent believe that it is not capable. Self-identified Muslims, Bosniaks, and Montenegrins, as well as those with higher educations and earning more than 300€, judge this government to be capable.

Respondents identify the biggest obstacle to the development of Montenegro's state capacity as follows:

Obstacle to Development of Montenegro's State Capacity	Percentage of Respondents
Unskilled people in important positions through family, friendship or party connections.	45%
Corruption	37%
Lack of political will on the part of the governing coalition.	6%
A judiciary that is not sufficiently professional and effective.	5%

Women are more likely than men to identify unskilled people in important positions through connections as an

obstacle to development of Montenegro's state capacity, while men are more likely to choose corruption as the primary obstacle. Similarly, those living in urban areas are more likely to choose unskilled people as the principle obstacle, and those living in rural areas are more likely to choose corruption. It is also noticeable that those living in northern municipalities and self-identified Muslims are more likely than the average respondent to choose corruption.

Respondents believe that citizens and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can do the most to solve the problem of corruption.

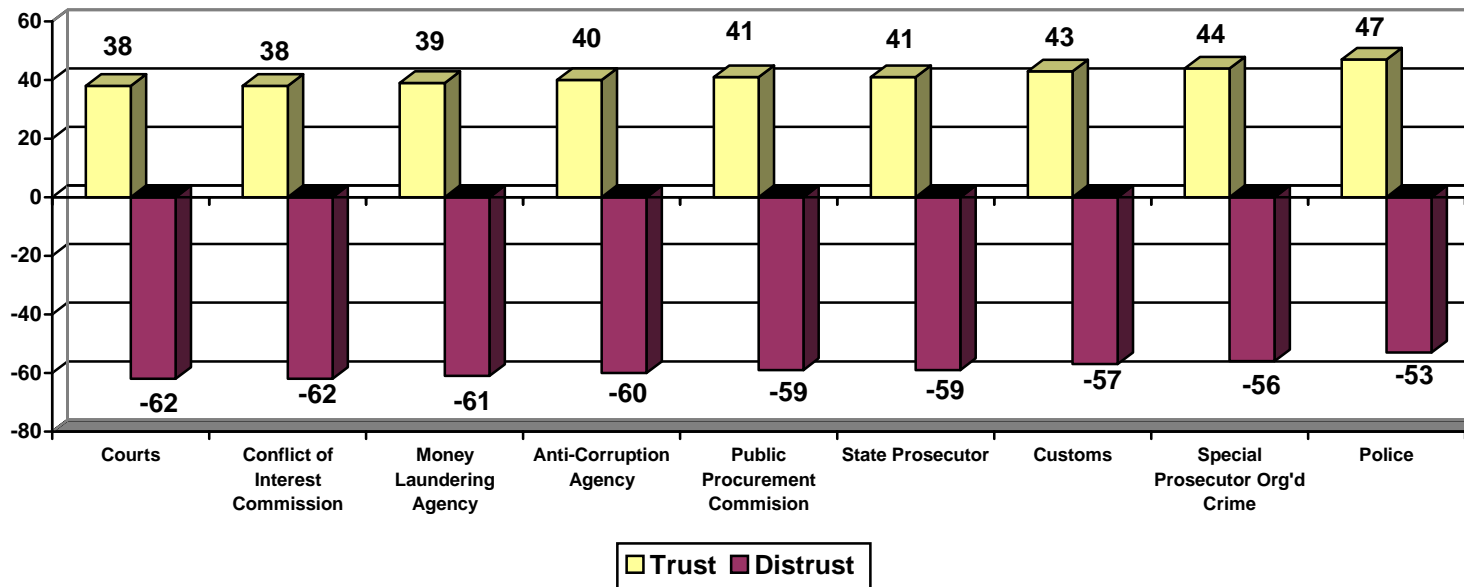
Who Can Do the Most to Solve Corruption?	Percentage of Respondents
Citizens	30%
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	23%
Police	11%
State Prosecutor	11%
Courts	10%
Don't Know/No Answer	14%

Self-identified Muslims put less faith in citizens and more in NGOs and police to solve the problem of corruption, while self-identified Bosniaks also put less faith in citizens, but more faith in both the police and the courts. Self-identified Serbs value citizens' abilities to solve corruption more than the police and the courts. They also have greater uncertainty about whether any of the listed organizations can solve the problem of corruption. Respondents living in cities, especially central

municipalities, have more faith in the abilities of citizens to solve the problem of corruption.

Respondents were asked how much they trusted the following state institutions to solve the problem of corruption. The newer institutions result in higher numbers of “Don’t Know” and “No Answer.” At 15 percent, the highest levels of uncertainty are for the Commission for Public Procurement and the Agency for Anti-Corruption Initiatives, followed by the Commission for Determining Conflict of Interests and the Agency for Preventing Money Laundering – both at 13 percent. None of these institutions enjoys more than 50 percent trust.

Trust in Anti-Corruption Institutions



A final set of questions on corruption explored why more people do not report corruption and respondents' attitudes toward debates about the Conflict of Interest Law.

Given the following reasons why more people do not report cases of corruption and given the chance to make three selections, respondents answered in the following manner:

Reason for Not Reporting Corruption	Percentage of Respondents (based on three answers)
Because of fear of social and economic repercussions (job loss, other family members or friends punished)	67%
Because they do not think it will make a difference (no one will do anything about it)	64%
Because of fear of violent repercussions (someone will come and physically attack them)	56%
Because they do not want to expose themselves publicly	54%
Because they have no proof, it is rumors and hearsay	42%

Self-identified Serbs and Bosniaks, those living in northern municipalities, housewives and those earning nothing are most likely to believe that there is no use reporting corruption since it will have no effect, while self-identified Muslims and other ethnic groups believe that people do not report because they have no proof. Those living in central municipalities believe that people fear exposing themselves publicly, those living in northern municipalities and those living in the coast say it is because people fear violent repercussions. Men and those living in rural areas are more likely than women and those living in urban areas to believe that people do not report corruption because it will have no effect.

Finally, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statements.

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
MPs should be allowed to be members of the management boards of public companies.	24%	65%	9%
Gathering data on the assets of public officials is a waste of time because none of them tell the truth.	70%	18%	9%
Because MPs enjoy immunity, the Law on Conflict of Interests should not apply to them.	24%	58%	14%

ATTITUDES ABOUT THE SPATIAL PLAN

While 47 percent of respondents express concern about the long-term effects of implementing the current draft of the Spatial Plan, another 37 percent are not concerned and 15 percent do not know what to think. Those living in the south seem to be more aware about the details of the plan. Concern about the plan increases with increasing levels of education, and there is less concern about the plan with increasing age levels.

Fifty (50) percent of respondents believe that the *Morsko Dobro* (Sea Goods) zone² should be expanded, while 31 percent disagree and 17 percent do not know. Students are most certain about the need to expand the zone, and those living in central municipalities are more likely to support the idea. Support also increases with salary levels. However, a full 61 percent of those living on the Coast are opposed to the expansion of the zone. Those living in the north are much less aware of the issue.

When asked which of the major highway projects is more important to Montenegro's economic development, 51 percent of respondents choose the Bar-Belgrade highway, while 45 percent choose the Adriatic-Ionian highway. Only 4 percent cannot answer this question. Those living in the northern municipalities exhibit a strong preference for the Bar-Belgrade highway, as do pensioners. Younger respondents between the ages of 18 and 30 and those living in the coastal municipalities favor the Adriatic-Ionian highway. Preference for the Adriatic-Ionian highway over the Bar-Belgrade highway increases with education and income levels.

A majority of respondents (52 percent) do not think that it is necessary to build mini-hydroelectric dams on the Morača and Tara rivers in order to solve Montenegro's electricity deficit. Another 41 percent think that it is necessary. Those more in favor of this idea live in coastal municipalities. Self-identified Bosniaks, Albanians, and Croats also favor the idea of hydroelectric dams, while students and self-identified Serbs tend to be more opposed to the idea.

² *Morsko Dobro* is a public company that manages, among other things, public land along Montenegro's coastline, including the beaches.

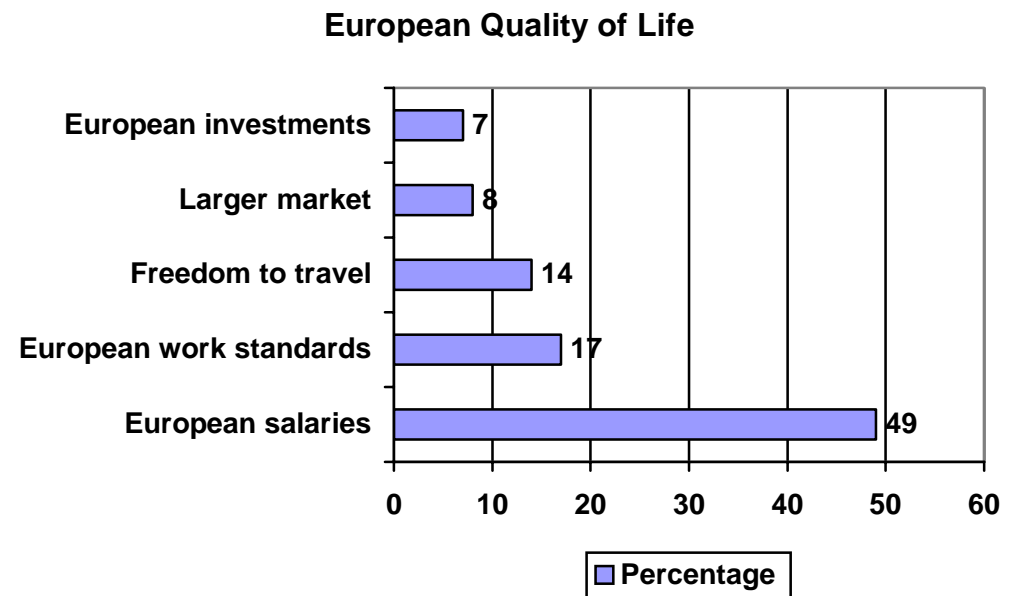
ATTITUDES TOWARD EUROPEAN UNION MEMBERSHIP

Almost two-thirds of respondents (64 percent) say that it is more important for Montenegro to apply European standards even if it does not become a member of the European Union. Only 28 percent want Montenegro to become an EU member as soon as possible. EU standards are especially important to those living in the coastal municipalities and those with higher education.

More than half of respondents (54 percent) believe that the implementation of the Bologna Declaration in Montenegro will give citizens the skills and education needed to be competitive in Europe. At 64 percent, students are fairly sure of this, as are respondents living in the coastal municipalities and self-identified Bosniaks, Muslims, Albanians, and Croats.

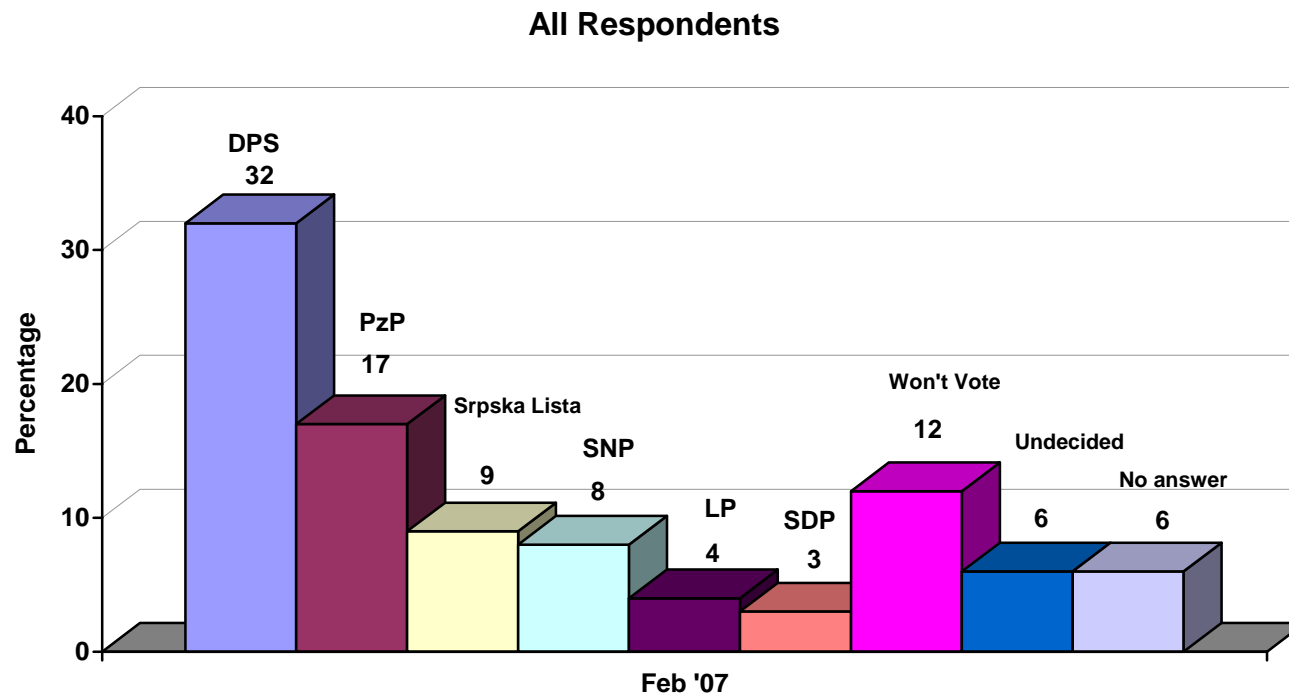
More than half of respondents (53 percent) believe that the Montenegrin government wants to provide citizens with a European quality of life, but less than half (42 percent) believe that it is capable of providing that quality of life.

The table at the right shows what respondents understand to be a European quality of life. An analysis of the responses shows no significant deviations among ethnic groups. European salaries are most important to those who earn the least, have the lowest levels of education and live in villages; those who are better off and better educated put more value on being able to travel freely.



VOTE INTENTION

Respondents were asked: “If parliamentary elections were held 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.



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