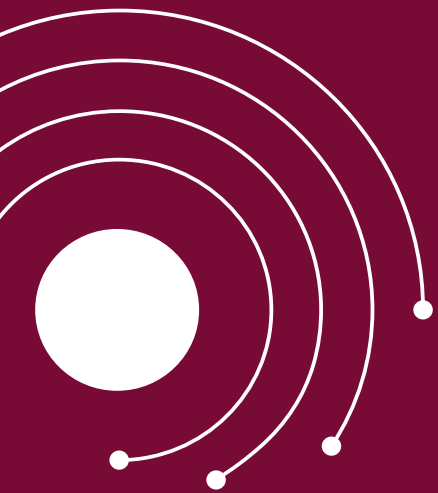
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Mission to Montenegro

DEFACTO CONSULTANCY

Perception of the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro

October, 2023



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Key research findings

• The 2023 research study shows that nearly one-third of the respondents (32.5%) hold a positive or somewhat positive general attitude towards the State Prosecutor's Office, while just over one third (36%) have a somewhat negative or very negative attitude. There is a trend of declining numbers of respondents with a very positive or somewhat positive attitude towards the State Prosecutor's Office.

• The research results indicate that just over one-third of the respondents (37.6%) fully or partially support the work of the Acting Supreme State Prosecutor, Tatjana Begović. Interestingly, slightly more than one quarter of the respondents (27.8%) couldn't assess whether they support or do not support the work of Act-ing Supreme State Prosecutor Begović. The majority of respondents support the work of the Chief Special Prosecutor, Vladimir Novović (54.8%), which is an increase compared to the previous year (2022 - 44.1%).

• Respondents were asked to what extent they consider the State Prosecutor's Office to be efficient in its operation. It was noted that 46.2% of the respondents believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is very or somewhat efficient.

• Trust in the specific state prosecutor's offices has increased compared to 2022. The Special State Prosecutor's Office enjoys the highest level of trust among citizens, with 55.1% of respondents having some or complete trust (2022 - 42.7%). Nearly half of the respondents (49.6%) have some or complete trust in the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office (2022 - 42.6%). For the High State Prosecutor's Office in Podgorica, 46.6% of respondents have some or complete trust (2022 - 38.2%), while in the High State Prosecutor's Office in Bijelo Polje, the trust stands at 41.4% (2022 - 34.3%). For the Basic State Prosecutor's offices, 45.6% of respondents have some or complete trust (2022 - 39.6%).

• In the last 12 months, 38.9% of the respondents have noticed significant or some improvements in the work of the State Prosecutor's Office. Of those, 6.2% observed significant improvements, while nearly a third (32.7%) noticed some improvements. About half (45.2%) did not notice any changes, while 10% ob-served changes for the worse. Respondents from northern Montenegro more of-ten noticed significant improvements in the work of the State Prosecutor's Office (45.2%).

• Data from this year's research shows a significant increase compared to the previous wave in 2022. In 2022, less than a quarter of respondents (21.5%) stated that they were informed about the work of the State Prosecutor's Office, while in 2023, almost half of the respondents (44.6%) report the same.

• The Prosecutorial Council plays a crucial role in ensuring the independence of the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro and deals with important organizational and status related issues of state prosecutors. It was observed that 40.8% of the respondents are aware that the Prosecutorial Council selects prosecutors, which represents an increase compared to the previous year.

• A high percentage of respondents (94.7%) believe that corruption is a problem in Montenegro, while even more (96.3%) say the same regarding organized crime. These results indicate a broad perception of these issues among citizens. Cumulatively, 41.2% of respondents believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is successfully combating these phenomena, while just over half of the respondents (54.6%) claim otherwise.

• The perception of the State Prosecutor's Office shows that 40.8% of respondents believe that the work of the State Prosecutor's Office is transparent. Additionally, only approximately half of the respondents (around 47.7%) are familiar with the jurisdiction of the State Prosecutor's Office, indicating the need for improved communication between the institution and citizens.

• Furthermore, it is important to note that 41.3% of respondents believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is accessible and open to the public, which represents an increase of 11.4% compared to the previous year (2022 - 29.9%).

• Half of the respondents (50.1%) have heard of the TV show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office," of which only 16.4% have watched the show. Interestingly, respondents from northern Montenegro were more likely to have watched the show. Although it cannot be definitively stated that watching the show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office" directly leads to a more positive attitude towards the State Prosecutor's Office, there is an interesting correlation between watching the show and having a positive attitude.

• Furthermore, it is interesting to note that respondents who have heard and watched the TV show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office" are more inclined to believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is efficient in its operation.

• Respondents who have visited the official website of the State Prosecutor's Office believe that they are better informed about the work of the institution and are more likely to have a positive attitude towards the State Prosecutor's Office.

• It can be concluded that the public presence of the State Prosecutor's Office, both through television and the internet, holds significant importance for the perception of Montenegrin citizens regarding this institution.

• The dominant majority of respondents who have visited the website agree that the site is user-friendly (81.8%). Three quarters of respondents (74.3%) find the website easy to navigate, more than two-thirds think it looks visually appealing (69.1%), and that it contains enough information (65.8%). Nearly two thirds of respondents believe the website is not outdated (61.7%).

• Respondents believe that citizens (60.6%) and civil society (50.6%) have a posi-tive influence on the work of the State Prosecutor's Office, while criminal groups (82.4%) and politicians at both the local (68.3%) and national level (66%) have a negative influence.

• The majority of respondents (54.2%) believe that something needs to change in the State Prosecutor's Office, with most of these respondents coming from the central region of Montenegro. Reasons for the need for changes in the work of the State Prosecutor's Office include concerns about corruption and criminal connections, political influence, unprofessionalism, lack of transparency, the need for legislative reform, and the protection of prosecutors and officials.

• Citizens express the need for a serious reform of the State Prosecutor's Office, including stringent diploma verification, control mechanisms, independence from political influence, and stronger protection for prosecutors.

Introduction

The State Prosecutor's Office is of essential importance for the functioning of any democratic society because it plays a crucial role in upholding the rule of law and ensuring justice for all citizens. In Montenegro, the perception of the State Prosecutor's Office by Montenegrin citizens serves as a critical barometer of the country's progress in establishing a strong legal framework and building public trust in its institutions.

This report has an aim of analysing the opinions of the citizens of Montenegro on the topic of the State Prosecutor's Office as an institution, its officials and activities which it undertakes. Results of this research allow insights into the attitudes towards the State Prosecutor's Office at the time of this study, in 2023. The additional value of this study lies in its longitudinal nature as it presents the results of the fourth consecutive wave of the study. Previous waves were conducted in 2020, 2021, and 2022, enabling a com-parison of results and tracking changes in the attitudes of Montenegrin citizens regarding the perception and performance of the Prosecutor's Office in the previous period.

The report emphasizes various aspects of the perceptions of Montenegrin citizens regarding the State Prosecutor's Office. Through the research, the following key aspects are analysed:

- General opinions on the State Prosecutor's Office: The focus has been placed on examining how citizens perceive the role and significance of the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegrin society and how they view its contribution to the rule of law.
- Perceptions on the work of the State Prosecutor's Office: A detailed analysis of how citizens perceive the efficiency, impartiality, and transparency of the State Prosecutor's Office in the prosecution of criminal offenses, as well as their level of trust in its ability to ensure justice.
- Citizen's perception on the Prosecutorial Council: Citizens' attitudes towards the Prosecutorial Council were also examined The Prosecutorial Council has the role of overseeing and evaluating the work of prosecutors, in order to assess the public perception of the oversight of the Prosecutor's Office's activities.
- Corruption and organized crime: The research assessed citizens' perceptions of the State Prosecutor's Office's capacity to combat two critical threats to the rule of law, namely corruption and organized crime.
- Citizen's awareness of the State Prosecutor's Office: Data on how informed citizens are about the role, jurisdiction, and functions of the State Prosecutor's Office have been analysed. Additionally, the level of awareness regarding the work of the Prosecutor's Office, the channels most commonly used by citizens for information on this topic, and the recognition of specific communication channels are presented.
- Attitudes towards the presence of the state prosecutors in the public sphere: The report also presents how citizens perceive the presence of state prosecutors in the media and the public sphere, which can influence the perception of the transparency and accountability of the Prosecutor's Office.

By analysing these aspects, the research will contribute to a better understanding of how citizens perceive and evaluate the role of the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegrin society and the judicial system.

Research methodology

The public opinion survey on the perception of the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro was conducted on a sample of 1002 adult respondents, representative of the adult population of Montenegro. The sample structure was defined using a multistage random sampling selection method, which guarantees a standard statistical error of +/- 3.1% with a 95% confidence interval for a 50% distribution.

The stratification during the sample definition process was carried out in two steps. In the first step, the general population of Montenegro was divided into three strata corresponding to the geoeconomic regions in Montenegro (north, central, and south). In the second step, the sampling units within the strata were divided into three groups: large, medium, and small, with households where the research was conducted being selected at this level. The selection of households within the sampling unit was done using the random walk method. The number of completed questionnaires within each stratum was determined in accordance with the results of the last official census conducted in 2011.

The questionnaire used in the research was prepared in collaboration with the State Prosecutor's Office and the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, which supported this project. The questionnaire covered the following topics:

- **Awareness and understanding of the State Prosecutor's Office**
- **Trust and security**
- **Impartiality and fairness**
- **Effectiveness and efficiency**
- **Transparency and accountability**

Data collection was carried out from September 7 to September 25, 2023. The data was collected using the Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technique, which involves direct interviews between the respondents and interviewers (face-to-face), with the questionnaire programmed on tablets used by the agency for this purpose. After data collection, post-stratification was performed based on key demographic characteristics of the population: gender and age, to further ensure the representativeness of the responses.

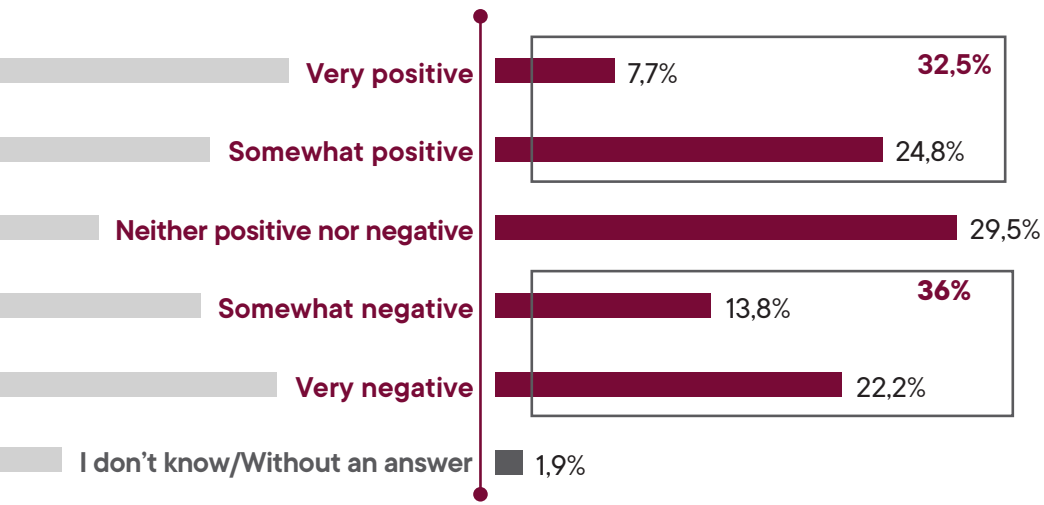
In the preparation of this report, an analysis of the results of the research conducted in 2020, 2021, and 2022 was also applied, and compared with this year's research, in cases where such comparisons were possible and added value to the data.

It is important to note that during the data collection period, there was news about the discovery of a thirty meter tunnel leading to the depot of the Higher Court in Podgorica. Given the nature of this information, it can be assumed that this news could potentially have an impact on the general public's perception of the State Prosecutor's Office.

General Opinions on the State Prosecutor's Office

General attitudes toward the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro represent a crucial aspect of the judicial system and reflect deep social and political dynamics within the country. The State Prosecutor's Office plays a key role in the pursuit of justice, the fight against crime, and the preservation of the rule of law. The attitudes of citizens, institutions, and political actors towards this body impact its efficiency, transparency, and integrity. The analysis of the results of this research begins with an investigation of general attitudes towards the State Prosecutor's Office. By taking into account various viewpoints and perspectives, an examination is conducted to assess how the State Prosecutor's Office is situated within Montenegrin society and how these perspectives may impact its future and the reforms designed to enhance justice and the rule of law.

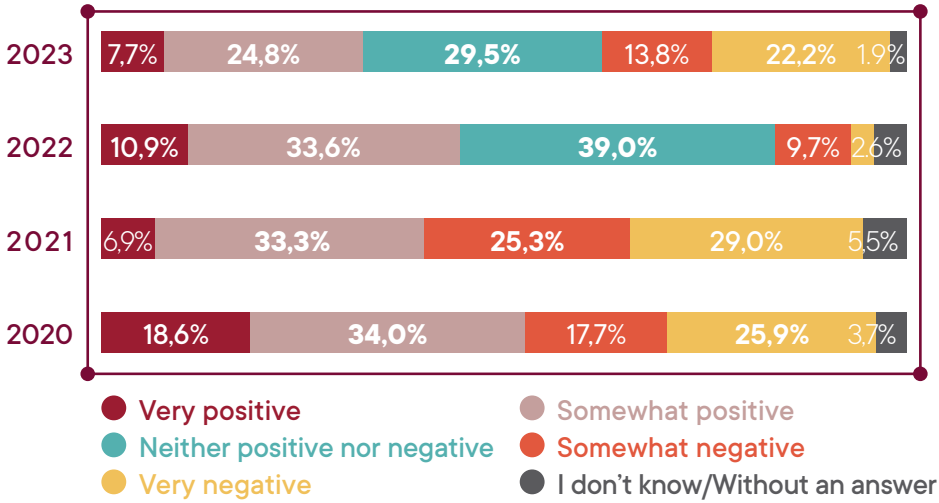
Graph 1 What is your general opinion of the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro?



The results from this wave indicate that nearly one third of respondents (32.5%) report having a very positive or somewhat positive general attitude towards the State Prosecutor's Office, while slightly over one third mention having a somewhat negative or very negative attitude (36%).

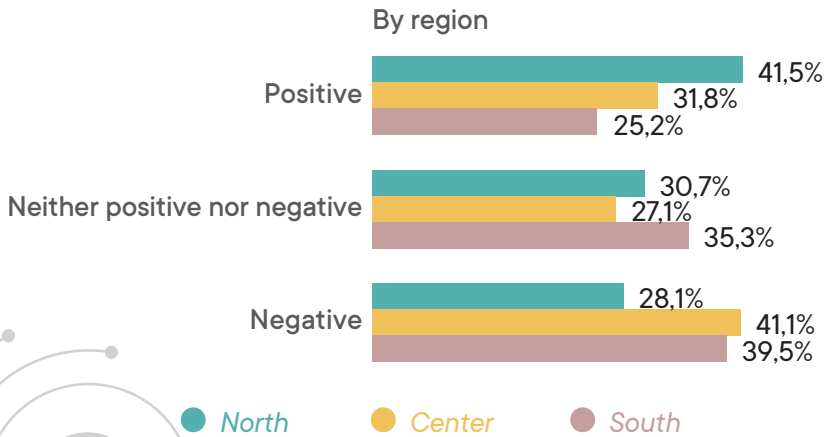
When we compare data across the years, a trend emerges that suggests a decline in the number of respondents with a very positive or somewhat positive general attitude towards the State Prosecutor's Office; in 2020 (52.6%), 2021 (40.2%), 2022 (44.5%), and 2023 (32.5%).

Graph 2 Data through time: What is your general opinion of the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro?



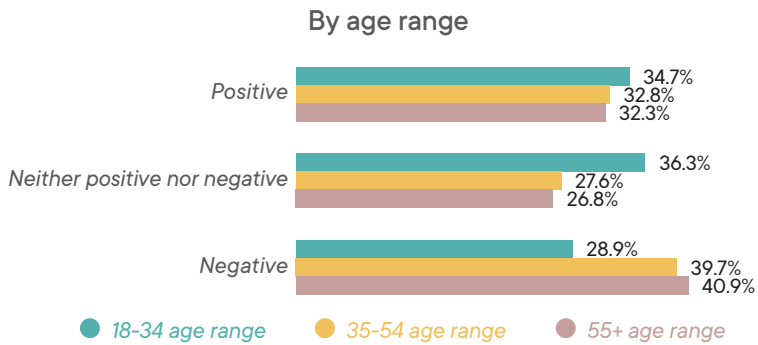
This data was further cross referenced with the gender of respondents, their age, the region in which respondents were located, and their level of education to analyse the potential for statistically significant differences between respondents. Differences by region have been observed, indicating that respondents in the northern part of Montenegro are more likely to report a positive attitude towards the State Prosecutor's Office compared to other regions.

Graph 3 What is your general opinion of the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro? By region



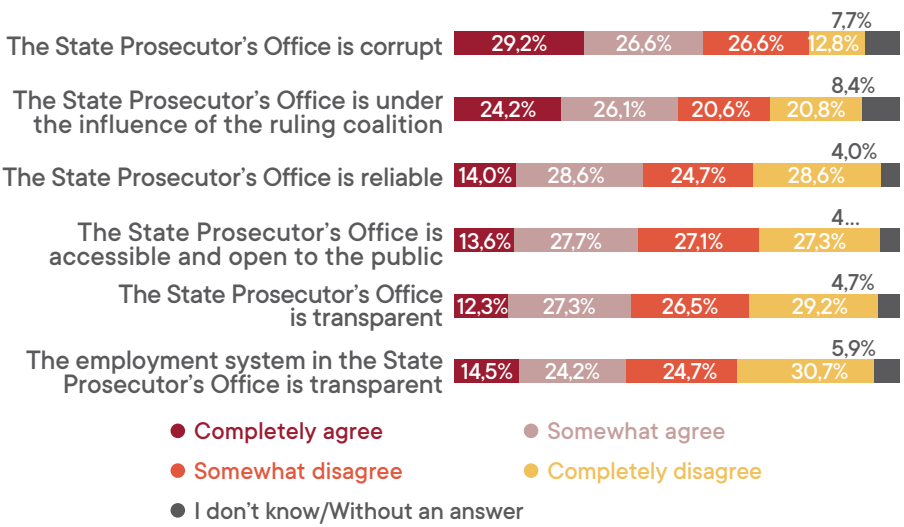
While respondents of all age groups report a similar number of positive attitudes towards the State Prosecutor's Office (approximately one third of respondents), it has been observed that slightly over one quarter (28.9%) of younger respondents (aged 18-34) express negative attitudes compared to middle aged respondents (aged 35-54 - 39.7%) and older respondents (aged 55+ - 40.9%). Younger respondents often exhibited fewer negative attitudes compared to the older population, suggesting that age may play a pivotal role in shaping these attitudes.

Graph 4 What is your general opinion of the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro? By age range



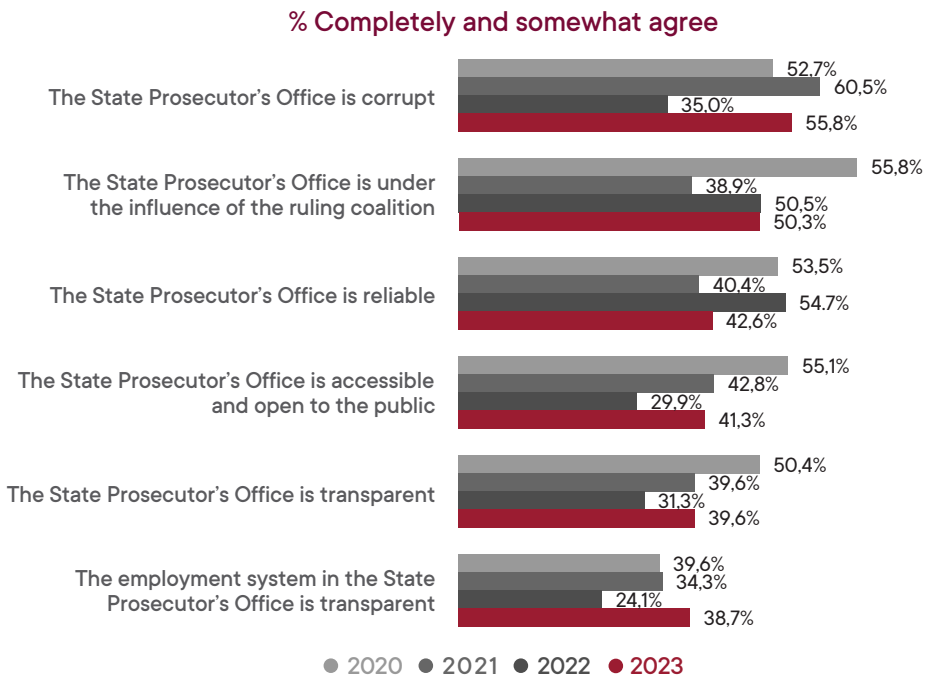
Respondents were asked to what extent they agree with the following statements:

Graph 5 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



Although the majority of respondents do not agree with positive views about the State Prosecutor's Office, the data show an increase in the number of citizens who believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is transparent compared to the previous wave in 2022 (2023 - 39.6%, 2022 - 31.3%). Likewise, there is a significant increase of 14.6% in the statement regarding transparency in the hiring system of the Prosecutor's Office (2023 - 38.7%, 2022 - 24.1%), as well as an 11.4% increase in the statement about accessibility and openness of the Prosecutor's Office (2023 - 41.3%, 2022 - 29.9%). These results provide a strong foundation for further efforts, especially those aimed at promoting transparency within the Prosecutor's Office.

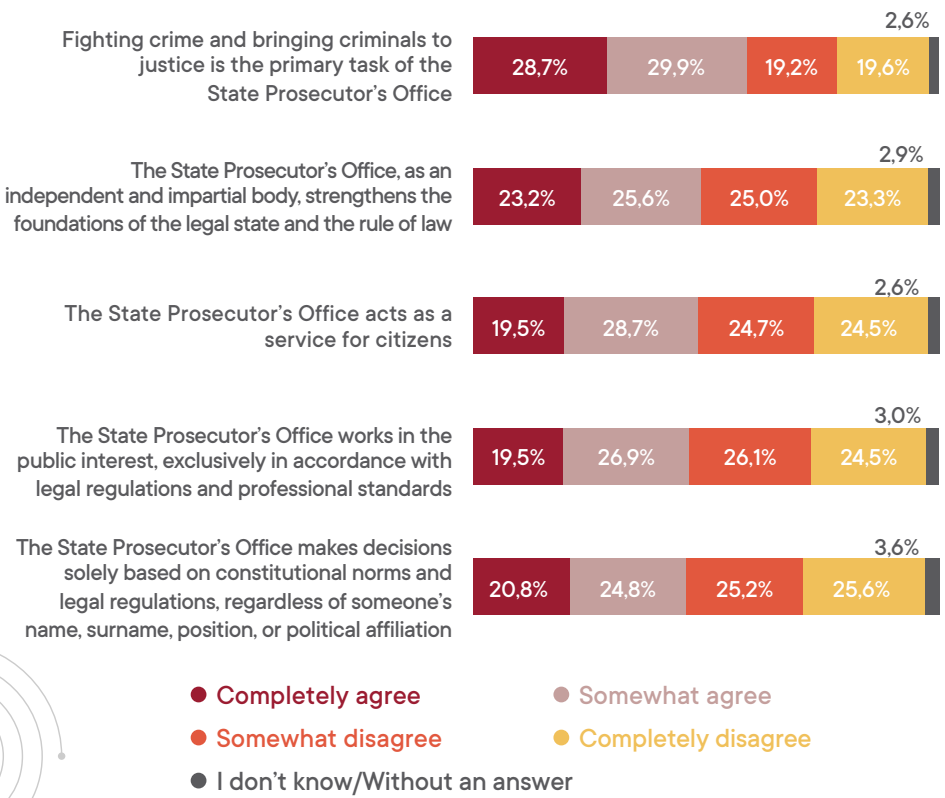
Graph 6 Data through time: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
% Completely and somewhat agree



The research team also sought to determine to what extent respondents agree that the statements related to the work of the State Prosecutor's Office are applicable to that institution. More than half of the respondents (58.6%) fully or partially agree that the statement that "Fighting crime and bringing offenders to justice is the primary task of the State Prosecutor's Office" can be applied to the State Prosecutor's Office.

Nearly half of the respondents (48.8%) agree with the statement that "The State Prosecutor's Office, as an independent and impartial body, strengthens the foundations of the legal state and the rule of law." Approximately the same percentage, 48.2% of respondents, agree with the statement that "The State Prosecutor's Office acts as a service to the citizens." Furthermore, 46.4% agree with the statement that "The State Prosecutor's Office operates in the public interest, solely in accordance with legal regulations and professional standards," and 45.6% agree with the statement that "The State Prosecutor's Office makes decisions solely based on constitutional norms and legal regulations, regardless of someone's name, position, or political affiliation."

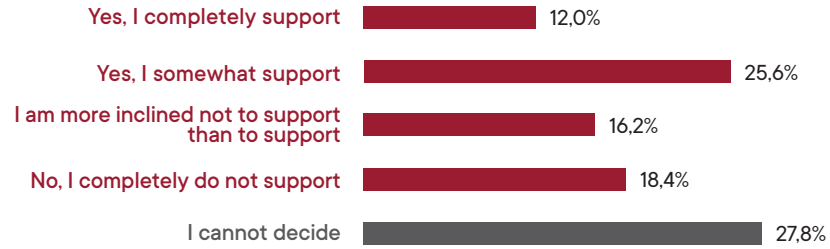
Graph 7 To what extent are the following attitudes applicable to the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro?



An important aspect of citizens' trust in institutions is also their trust in the individuals at the helm of those institutions. Therefore, the research included this aspect as well. Support for the work of Acting Supreme State Prosecutor Tatjana Begović and Chief Special Prosecutor Vladimir Novović was tested.

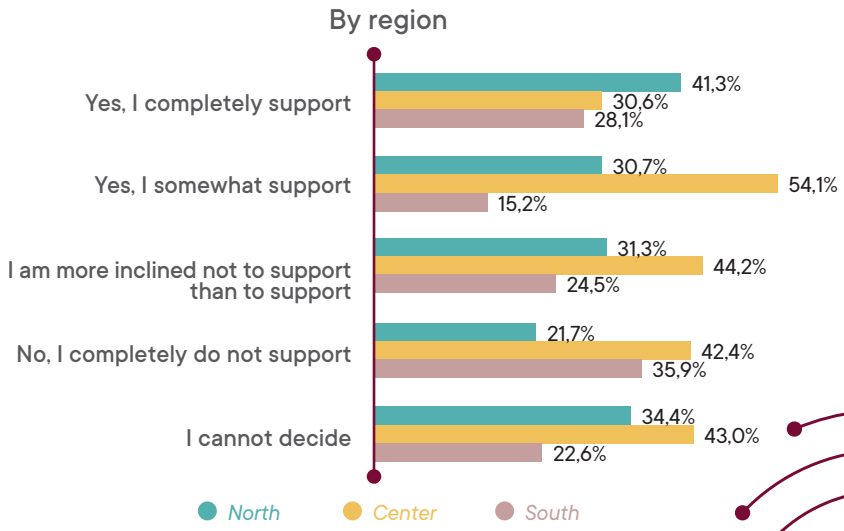
The research results show that just over one third of the respondents (37.6%) fully or partially support the work of Acting Supreme State Prosecutor Tatjana Begović. Interestingly, slightly more than one quarter of the respondents (27.8%) couldn't assess whether they support the work of Acting Supreme State Prosecutor Begović or not.

Graph 8 Do you support the work of the Acting Supreme State Prosecutor, Tatjana Begović?



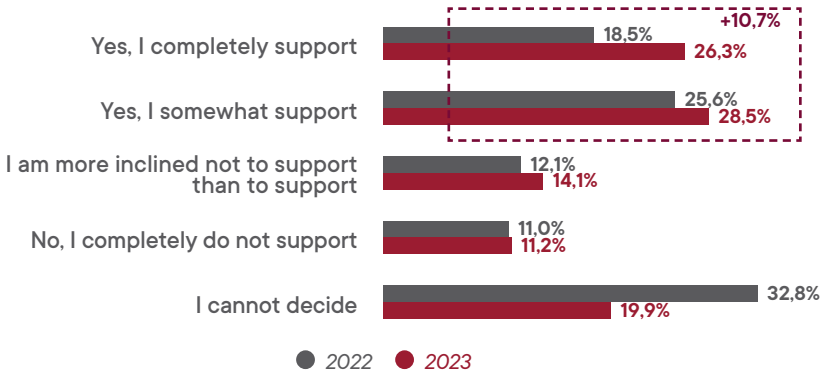
Among the respondents who state that they fully support the work of Acting Supreme State Prosecutor, a larger portion is from the northern region of Montenegro (41.3%), while those from the southern region are the least represented (28.1%).

Graph 9 Do you support the work of the Acting Supreme State Prosecutor, Tatjana Begović? By region



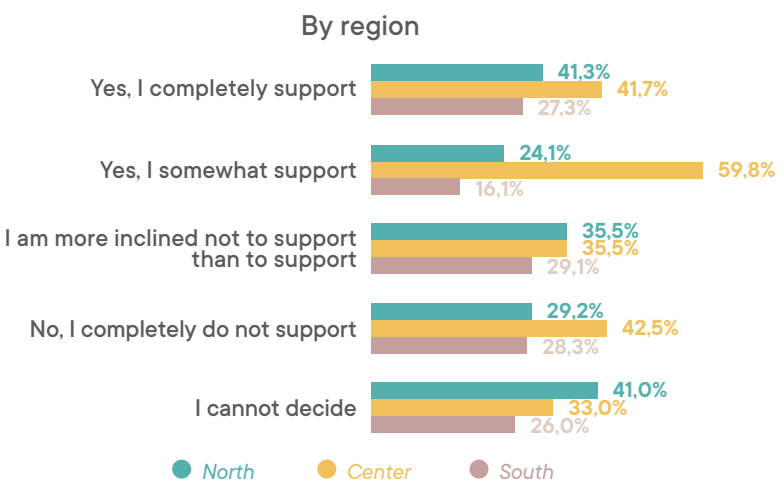
When it comes to support for the Chief Special Prosecutor, Vladimir Novović, 54.8% of the respondents expressed their support for his work, which represents an increase of 10.7% compared to the previous wave in 2022 (44.1%).

Graph 10 Data through time: Do you support the work of the Chief Special State Prosecutor Vladimir Novović?



Among the respondents who fully or partially support the work of the Chief Special Prosecutor Novović, the majority come from the central region of Montenegro. Respondents who indicate that they cannot evaluate the work of the Chief Special Prosecutor are more prevalent among those from the northern region (41%) compared to citizens from the central region (33%) and the southern region (26%).

Graph 11 Do you support the work of the Chief Special State Prosecutor Vladimir Novović? By region

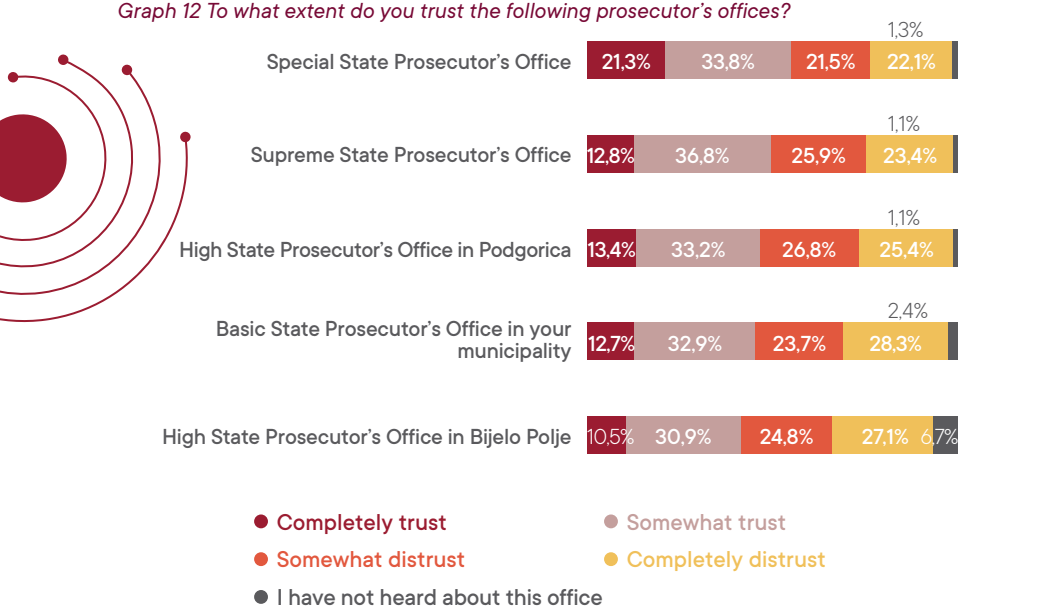


This survey also examined the level of trust among respondents in the following prosecutor's offices:

- **Supreme State Prosecutor's Office**
- **Special State Prosecutor's Office**
- **High State Prosecutor's Office in Podgorica**
- **High State Prosecutor's Office in Bijelo Polje**
- **Basic State Prosecutor's Office in respondents' municipality**

The Special State Prosecutor's Office enjoys the highest level of trust 55.1% of respondents report that they completely or partially trust this office, representing an increase of 12.4% compared to 2022 when 42.7% of respondents expressed trust in this institution. Half of the respondents (49.6%) indicate that they somewhat or fully trust the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, marking a 7% increase from 2022 (42.6% somewhat or fully trust). Increased trust is also observed in the High State Prosecutor's Office in Podgorica, with 46.6% of respondents reporting some or full trust, which is an 8.4% increase compared to 2022 (38.2% somewhat or fully trust). In the High State Prosecutor's Office in Bijelo Polje, 41.4% of respondents partially or fully trust, reflecting a 7.1% increase from 2022 (34.3%). As for the Basic State Prosecutor's Offices, 45.6% of respondents express trust, marking a 6% increase compared to the previous year's research (39.6%).

Graph 12 To what extent do you trust the following prosecutor's offices?



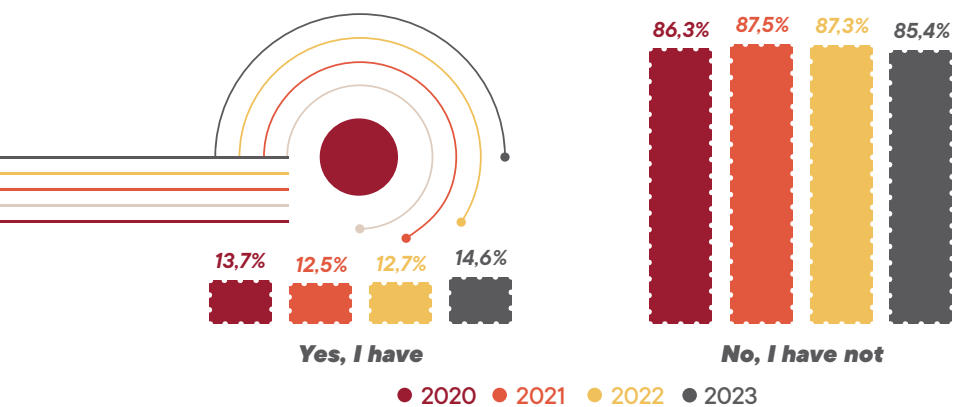
The following table provides a comparison with previous waves and measures the increase in relation to the 2022 research.

Table 1 To what extent do you trust the following prosecutor's offices? % Completely or somewhat trust

% Completely or somewhat trust					
To what extent do you trust the following prosecutor's offices?	2020	2021	2022	2023	% Difference between previous two waves
Supreme State Prosecutor's Office	43,7%	38,3%	42,6%	49,6%	+ 7.0%
Special State Prosecutor's Office	44,8%	34,7%	42,7%	55,1%	+ 12,4%
High State Prosecutor's Office in Podgorica	46,3%	37,4%	38,2%	46,6%	+ 8,4%
High State Prosecutor's Office in Bijelo Polje	38.0%	34,5%	34,3%	41,4%	+ 7,1%
Basic State Prosecutor's Office in your municipality	46,8%	41,4%	39,6%	45,6%	+ 6.0%

When we look at the data regarding whether the respondents had any experience with any of the prosecutor's offices in Montenegro over the waves, we can see a trend that maintains a similar level from 2020 to 2023.

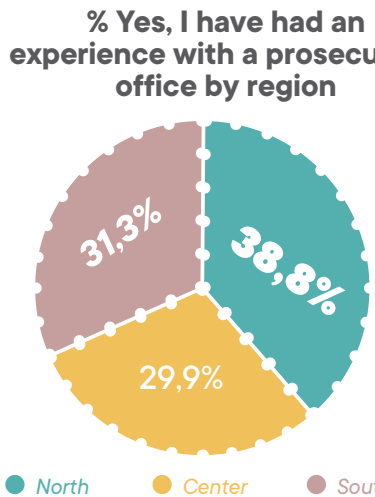
Graph 13 Have you had any experiences with any of the prosecutor's offices in Montenegro?



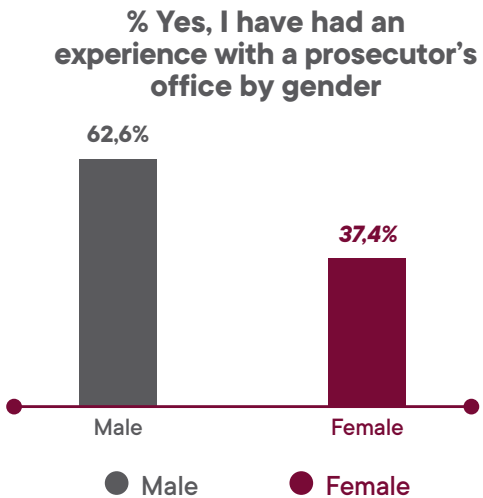
A more detailed look at those respondents who indicate they have had experience with the prosecutor's offices reveals statistically significant differences based on the region of the respondents and their gender. More than one third of respondents from the northern region of Montenegro report having had

experience with the prosecutor's offices (38.8%), while 31.3% from the southern region and 29.9% from the central region indicate the same. When examining differences by gender, slightly less than two thirds (62.6%) of respondents who report having had experience with prosecutor's offices are male.

Graph 14 % Yes, I have had an experience with a prosecutor's office by region (N=147)

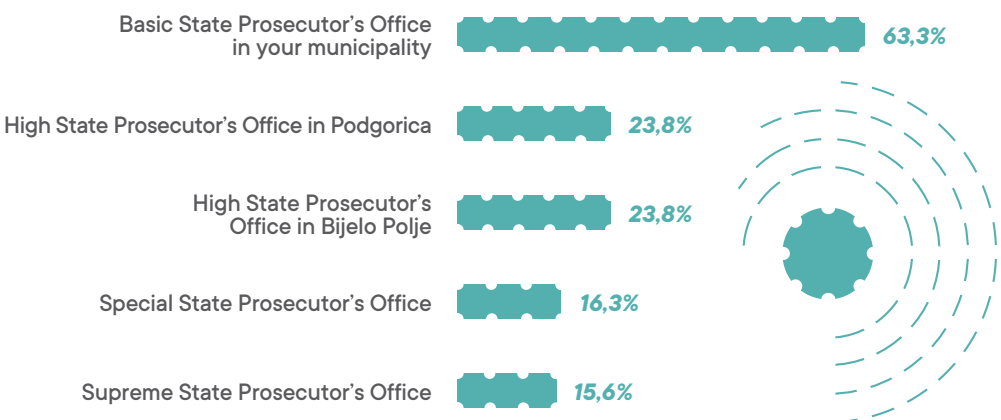


Graph 15 % Yes, I have had an experience with a prosecutor's office by gender (N=147)



Of the respondents who have encountered any of the prosecutor's offices in Montenegro (14.6%), the majority (63.3%) of them had such experiences with the Basic State Prosecutor's Offices situated in the municipalities of their residence.

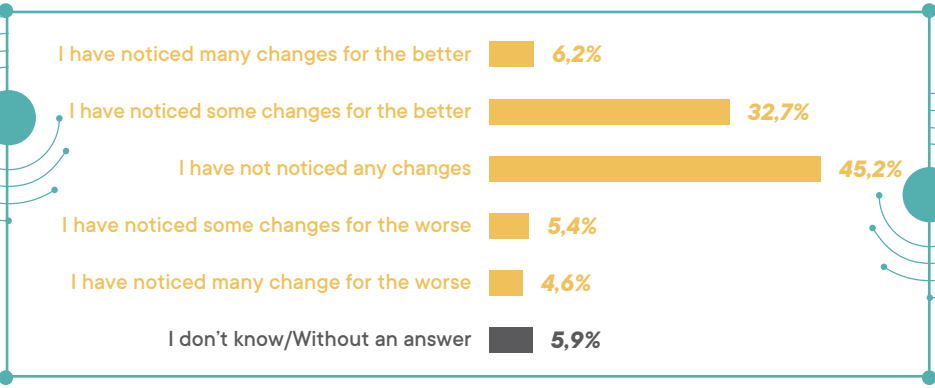
Graph 16 Which prosecutor's office have you had experience with? % Yes, I have had experience with a prosecutor's office



Perceptions on the work of the State Prosecutor's Office

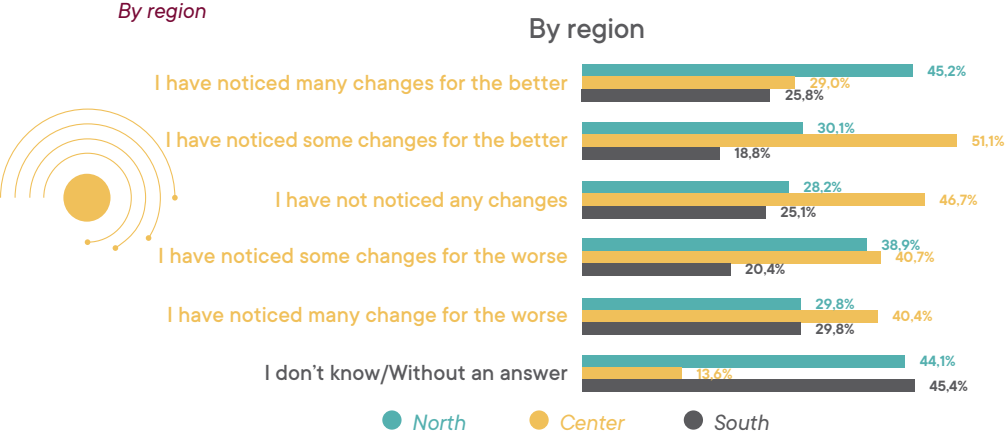
In this chapter, we examined citizens' perceptions of the State Prosecutor's Office's performance. Over the past 12 months, 38.9% of respondents noticed significant or some improvements in the work of the State Prosecutor's Office, with 6.2% noting significant improvements and nearly a third (32.7%) observing some positive changes. However, 45.2% of respondents did not notice any changes. Approximately one in ten individuals reported observing some or significant negative changes in the work of the State Prosecutor's Office.

Graph 17 Have you noticed some changes in State Prosecutor's Office's work over the past 12 months?



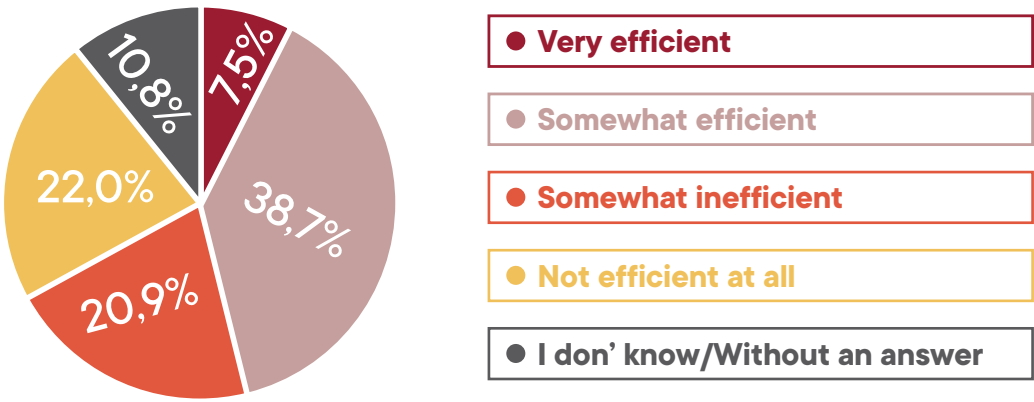
Moreover, a regional breakdown of the data showed that respondents who observed noteworthy enhancements in the functioning of the State Prosecutor's Office were most prevalent in the northern region of Montenegro, constituting 45.2% of this group.

Graph 18 Have you noticed some changes in State Prosecutor's Office's work over the past 12 months? By region



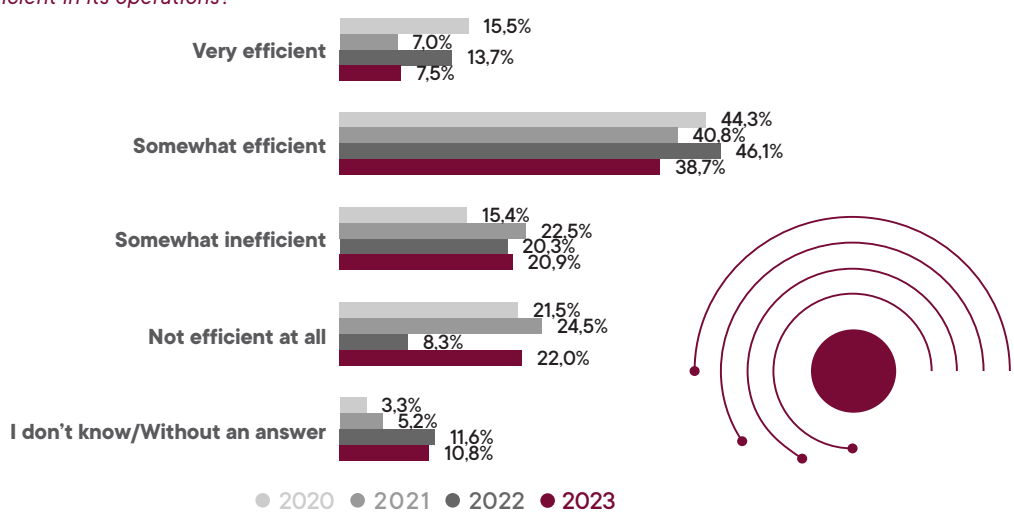
Respondents were asked to what extent they considered the State Prosecutor's Office to be efficient in its operations. It was observed that 46.2% of respondents believed that the State Prosecutor's Office is very or somewhat efficient, while 42.9% thought it was somewhat inefficient or not efficient at all in its operations.

Graph 19 To what extend do you believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is efficient in its operations?



It is interesting to examine this data across waves. When comparing these results, similar percentages can be observed regarding the efficiency of the State Prosecutor's Office.

Graph 20 Data through time: To what extend do you believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is efficient in its operations?



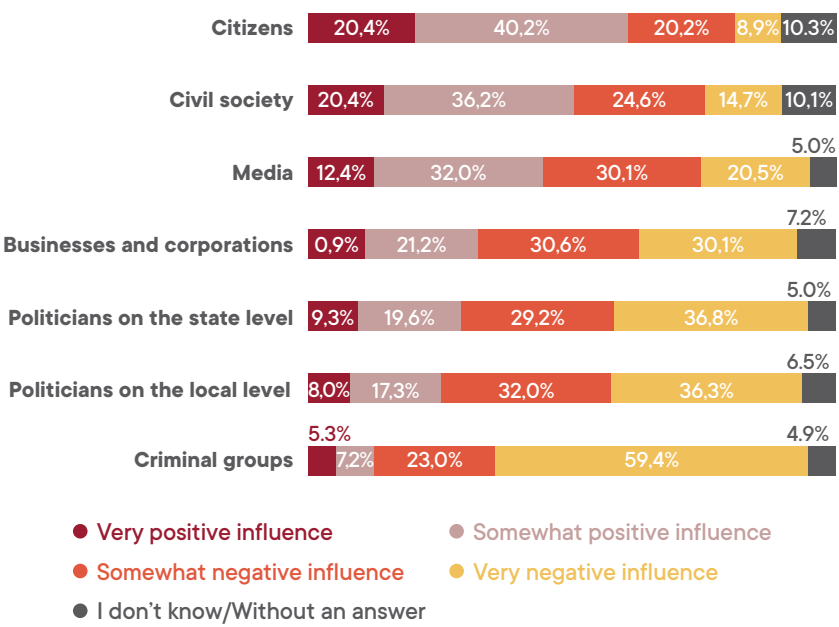
Respondents who have evaluated the State Prosecutor's Office as effective have also mentioned various reasons. The majority of them emphasize that they have observed positive changes in the prosecutor's office's work, and these impressions are supported by specific reasons.

Overall, the respondents believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is efficient due to a range of factors, including changes in leadership, the prosecution of criminals, achieved results, and a high number of arrests. These reasons indicate their confidence in the prosecutor's office and hope for an improvement in the judicial system in Montenegro.

How citizens perceive the influence of specific groups on the functioning of the State Prosecutor's Office is a highly intriguing data point. Specifically, respondents were provided with the option to assess the positive or negative impact of certain groups on the work of the State Prosecutor's Office.

The majority of respondents (60.6%) believe that citizens have a very positive or some-what positive influence on the functioning of the State Prosecutor's Office. Additionally, half of the respondents (50.6%) think that civil society has a positive impact. On the other hand, a significant number of respondents (82.4%) believe that criminal groups have a negative influence, with 68.3% pointing to local level politicians, 66% to politicians at the national level, 60.7% to businesses and large corporations, and 50.6% expressing the view that the media has a negative impact on the operation of the State Prosecutor's Office.

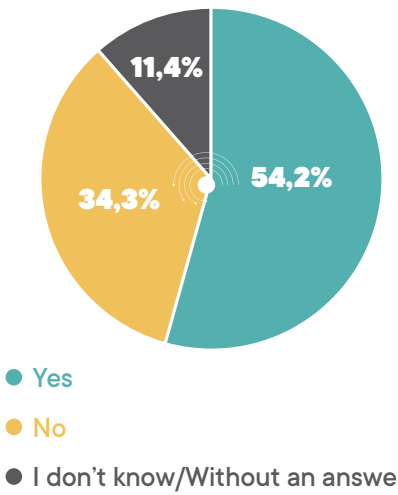
Graph 21 How do you perceive the influence of the following groups on the work of the State Prosecutor's Office?



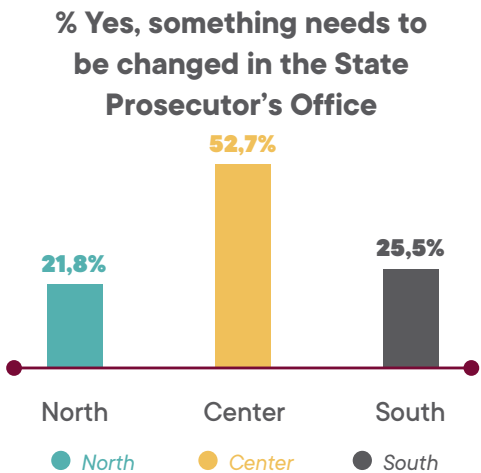
More than half of the respondents (54.2%) believe that something needs to be changed in the State Prosecutor's Office, just over one third (34.3%) think that no changes are necessary, while 11.4% are uncertain.

When further analysing the data according to regions in Montenegro, among the respondents who believe that something needs to be changed in the State Prosecutor's Office, the majority of respondents are from the central region of Montenegro, while in the north (21.8%) and south (25.5%), the percentages are similar.

Graph 22 Do you believe that something needs to be changed in the State Prosecutor's Office?



Graph 23 Do you believe that something needs to be changed in the State Prosecutor's Office? By region



Respondents were offered an openended question to state the reasons for which they believe changes are necessary in the operation of the State Prosecutor's Office. Based on the provided reasons, it is evident that there is a deep concern and dissatisfaction among the citizens of Montenegro regarding the state of the State Prosecutor's Office. In addition to numerous repetitions in the responses, the main issues that stand out include:

- **Corruption and criminal connections**
- **Nepotism and political influence**
- **Unprofessionalism and lack of transparency**
- **Legislative reform**
- **Protection of prosecutor's and officials**

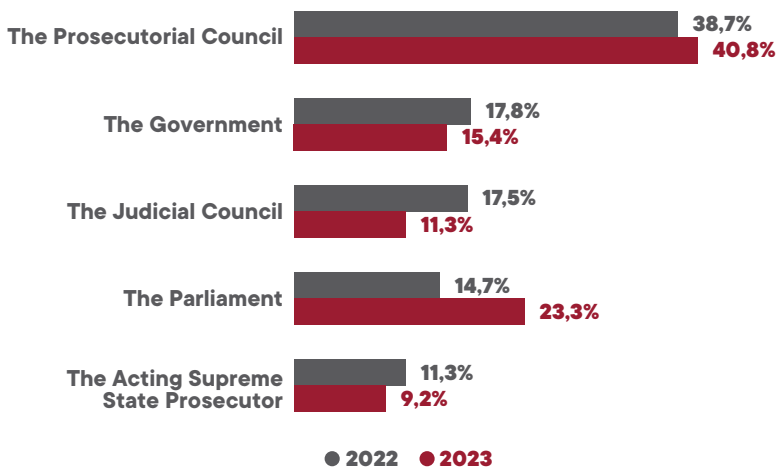
Given these challenges, it is imperative to take significant steps toward reforming the State Prosecutor's Office. This includes rigorous diploma verification, the implementation of strict control and oversight mechanisms, and ensuring the independence of prosecutors from political influences. Only through these measures can we increase citizens' trust in the judicial system and secure the rule of law in Montenegro.

Perception of the Prosecutorial Council

Citizens' attitudes towards the Prosecutorial Council have also been measured in this wave of research on citizens' perceptions of the State Prosecutor's Office. The Prosecutorial Council plays a crucial role in ensuring the independence of the State Prosecutor's Office and deals with the most important organizational and status related matters of state prosecutors in Montenegro. In accordance with the Constitution of Montenegro, the Prosecutorial Council holds various powers, including proposing candidates for the position of the Acting Supreme State Prosecutor, appointing and dismissing heads of state prosecutor's offices and state prosecutors, making decisions on the termination of functions of these heads, and suggesting the amount of funds for the State Prosecutor's Office to the Government. Furthermore, specific powers of the State Prosecutor's Office are further regulated by the Law on the State Prosecutor's Office, including decisions on the disciplinary accountability of state prosecutors, taking care of their education, and proposing the dismissal of the Acting Supreme State Prosecutor.

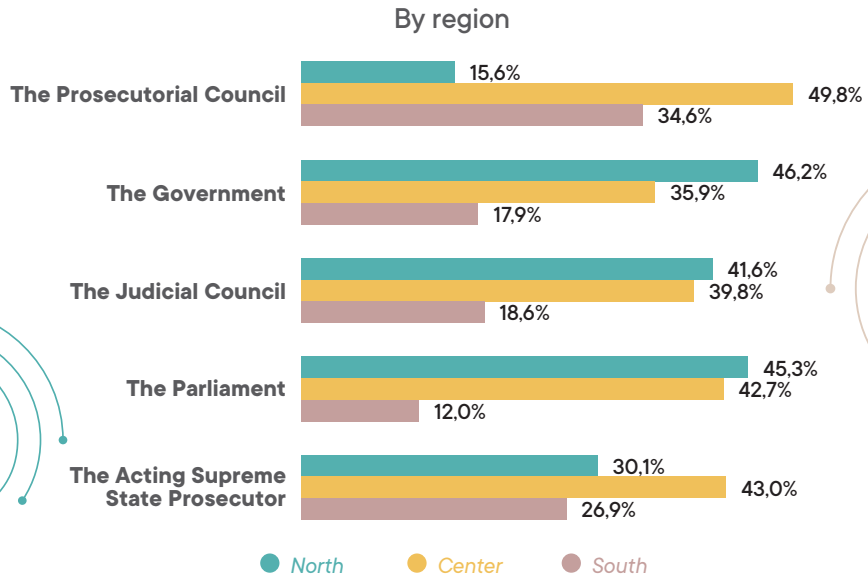
According to the research findings, 40.8% of respondents state that they are aware of the fact that the Prosecutorial Council selects prosecutors in Montenegro. This represents a slight increase compared to the previous wave in 2022, where 38.7% of respondents chose this option.

Graph 24 Data through time: In your opinion, who appoints prosecutors in Montenegro?



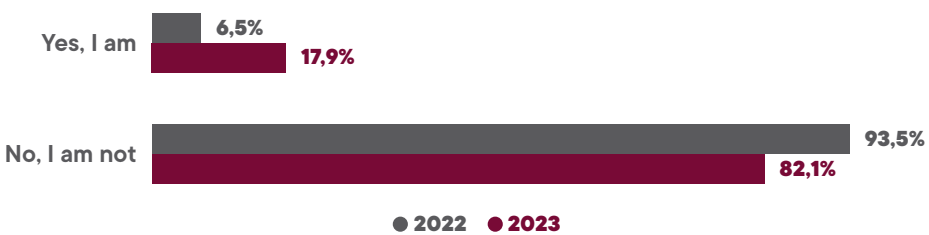
It is important to note that among the respondents who indicate that the Prosecutorial Council selects prosecutors, those from the northern region of Montenegro are the least represented (15.6%). In contrast, half of the respondents in this group are from the central region (49.8%), and just over one third of the respondents come from the southern region (34.6%).

Graph 25 In your opinion, who appoints prosecutors in Montenegro? By region



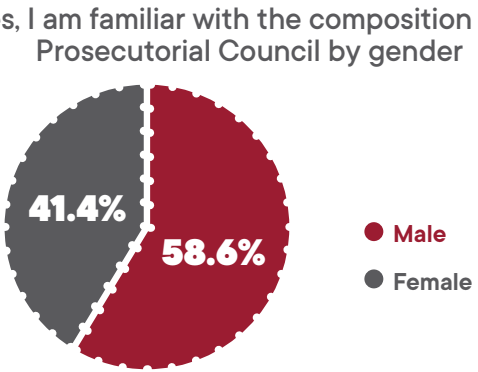
The research results indicate that in this year's wave of research, there is an increase in the number of respondents who state that they are familiar with the composition of the Prosecutorial Council. While that number was 6.5% in 2022, it has risen to 17.9% in this wave, representing an increase of 11.4%.

Graph 26 Data through time: Are you familiar with the composition of the Prosecutorial Council?



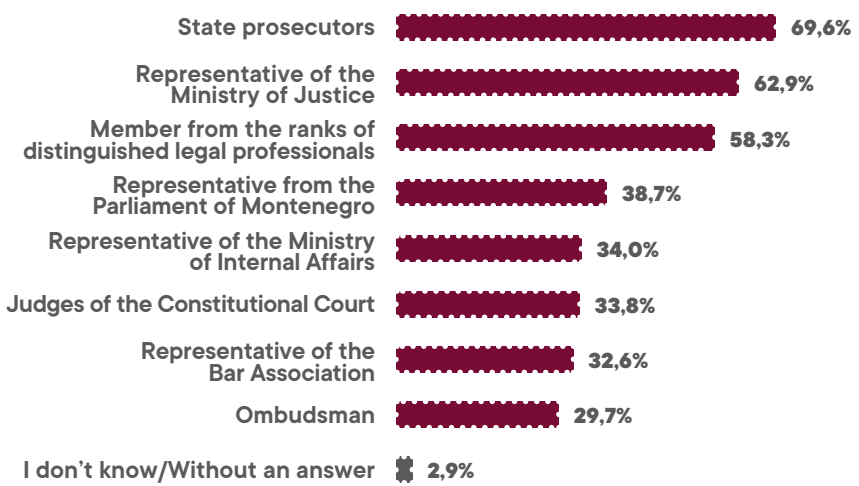
Further cross referencing this data in this wave with the gender of the respondents indicates that men report being more familiar with the composition of the Prosecutorial Council (58.6%) compared to women (41.4%).

Graph 27 % Yes, I am familiar with the composition of the Prosecutorial Council by gender



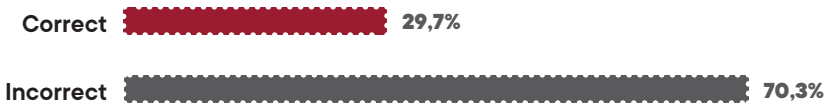
Respondents who indicate that they are familiar with the composition of the Prosecutorial Council were further asked to select who, from the provided list, are members of the Prosecutorial Council. Respondents were presented with a multiple choice question, meaning they had the option to choose more than one answer. The results show that 69.6% of respondents selected the option stating that state prosecutors are members of the Prosecutorial Council, while 29.7% believe it is the ombudsman.

Graph 28 Can you tell us who, from the provided list, is a member of the Prosecutorial Council? (N=180)



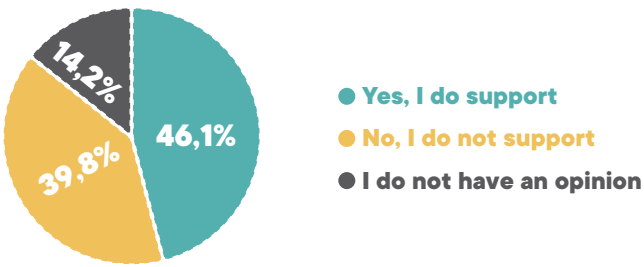
Among the respondents who stated that they are familiar with the composition of the Prosecutorial Council, 29.7% provided the correct answer, while 70.3% gave an incorrect answer.

Graph 29 Percentage of respondents who gave the correct answer compared to the percentage of respondents who gave an incorrect answer to the question about the composition of the Prosecutorial Council (N=180)



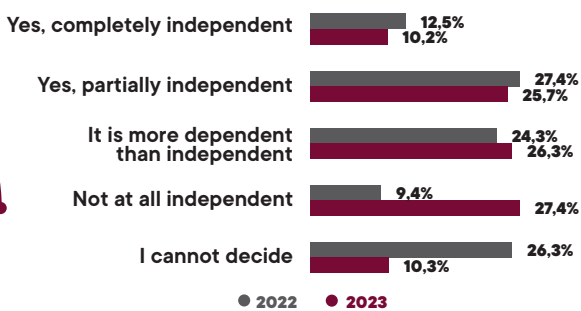
Among the same respondents, 46.1% support the composition of the Prosecutorial Council, 39.8% do not support it, and 14.2% do not have a clear stance.

Graph 30 Do you support the composition of the Prosecutorial Council? (N=180)



In this year's research, it is noticeable that more than one third of the respondents (35.9%) either fully or partially consider the Prosecutorial Council to be independent in its work. On the other hand, more than half of the respondents (53.7%) believe that the Prosecutorial Council is either less independent than it should be or not independent at all. However, one in ten individuals cannot make an assessment. It is important to note that there is a significant change between the previous wave and this year's wave. Specifically, there is an increase in the percentage of respondents in 2023 who believe that the Prosecutorial Council is not independent at all (27.4%), whereas in 2022, that percentage was 9.4%. It is also important to note that the proportion of respondents who cannot assess the independence of the Prosecutorial Council has decreased from 26.3% in 2022 to 10.3% in 2023.

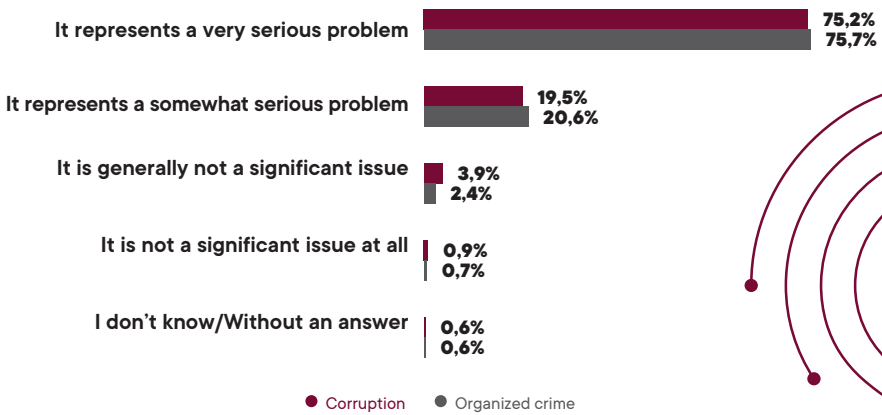
Graph 31 Data through time: Do you believe that the Prosecutorial Council is independent in its work?



Corruption and organized crime

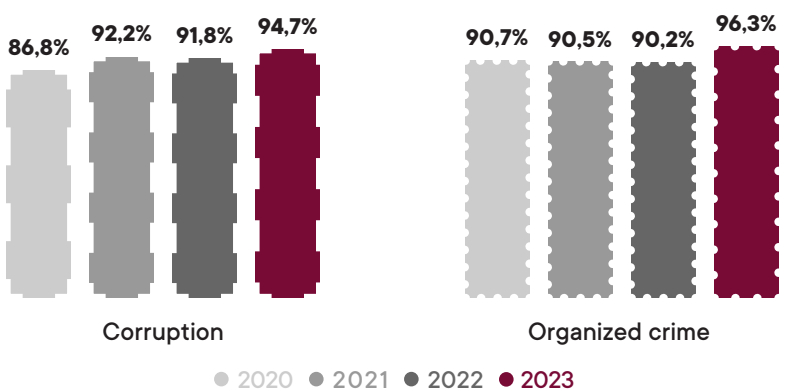
In this chapter, the analysis focused on the opinions of respondents regarding the State Prosecutor's Office's approach to corruption and organized crime, as well as its success in combating these issues. The first question aimed to determine citizens' perceptions of the prevalence of corruption and organized crime in Montenegro. Cumulatively, 94.7% of the respondents agree that corruption is a problem in Montenegro, while 96.3% hold the same view regarding organized crime.

Graph 32 To what extent are the following issues a problem in Montenegro?



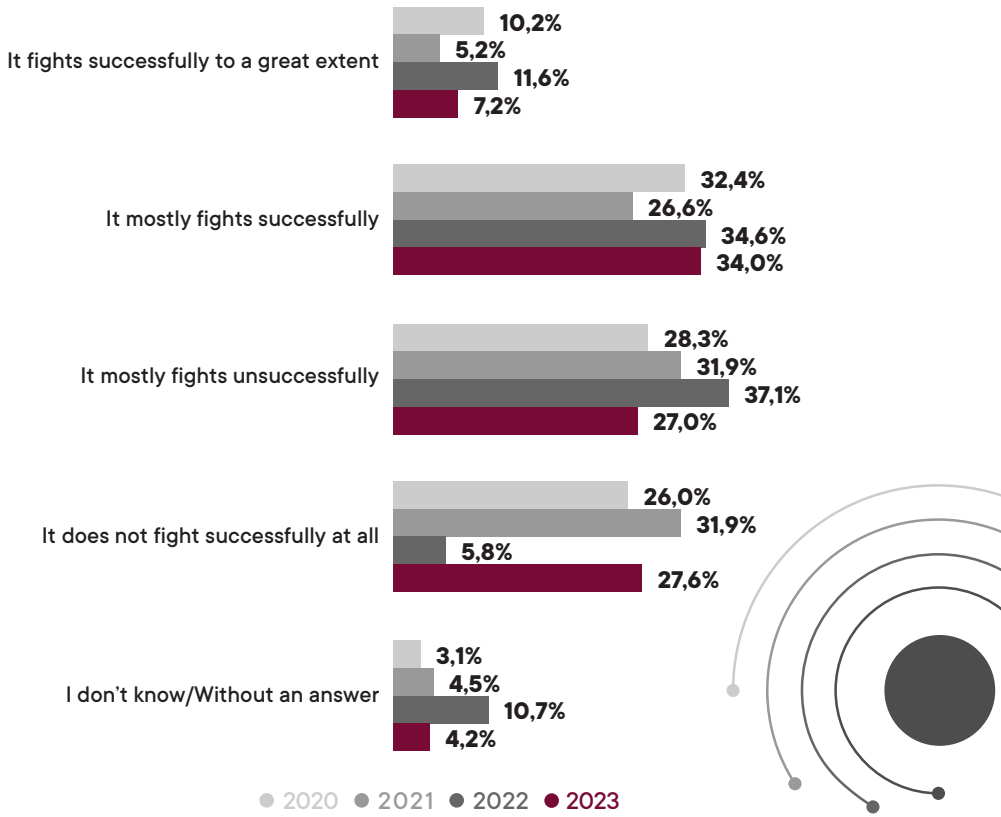
In comparison to the results from previous waves, we observe an increase in the number of respondents who consider corruption and organized crime to be problems.

Graph 33 Data through time: To what extent are the following issues a problem in Montenegro?



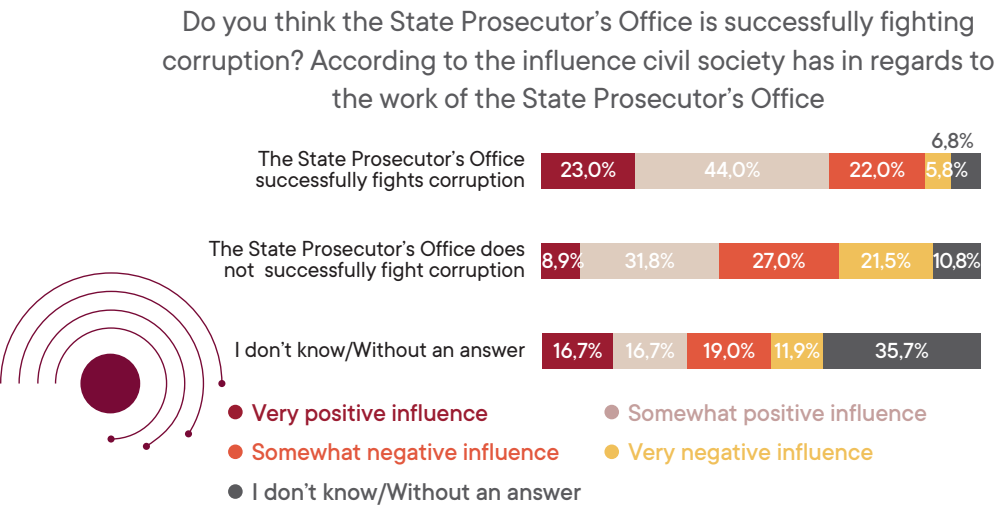
To determine how citizens perceive the State Prosecutor's Office's performance in this area, we asked them to evaluate the institution's effectiveness in combating corruption. Cumulatively, 41.2% of respondents believe that the Prosecutor's Office is successfully combating this issue, while slightly more than half of the respondents (54.6%) disagree. It is noticeable that the number of respondents who believe that the Prosecutor's Office is successfully combating corruption has slightly declined compared to the previous year's research.

Graph 34 Data through time: Do you think the State Prosecutor's Office is successfully fighting corruption?



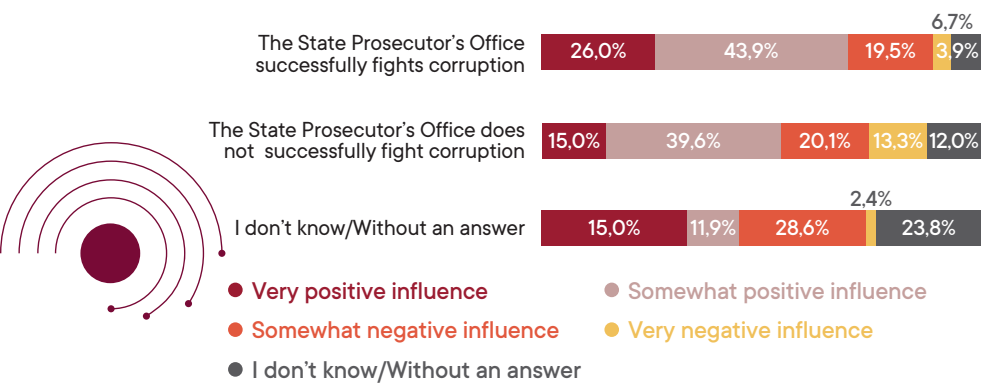
An analysis of this data has also been conducted based on how respondents perceive the influence of citizens and civil society on the work of the State Prosecutor's Office. The data shows that those who believe that the Prosecutor's Office is effectively combating corruption also believe (65.4%) that civil society has a very or somewhat positive influence on the Prosecutor's Office's work. In contrast, those who state that the Prosecutor's Office is not effectively combating corruption believe that civil society has a negative impact on the work of the prosecutorial institution.

Graph 35 Do you think the State Prosecutor's Office is successfully fighting corruption? According to the influence civil society has in regards to the work of the State Prosecutor's Office



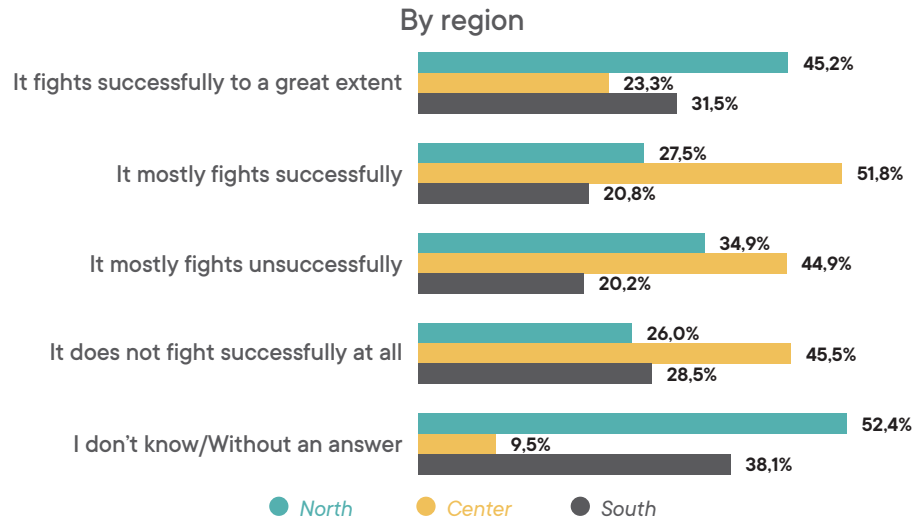
Similar results can be observed when analysing the influence of citizens of Montenegro.

Graph 36 Do you think the State Prosecutor's Office is successfully fighting corruption? According to the influence citizens have in regards to the work of the State Prosecutor's Office



Additionally, the data on the State Prosecutor's Office fight against corruption was analysed based on the region. The results indicate that among the respondents who believe that the Prosecutor's Office is largely successful in combating corruption, a higher percentage of respondents come from the northern region of Montenegro (45.2%) compared to the central (23.3%) and southern (31.5%) regions.

Graph 37 Do you think the State Prosecutor's Office is successfully fighting corruption? By region

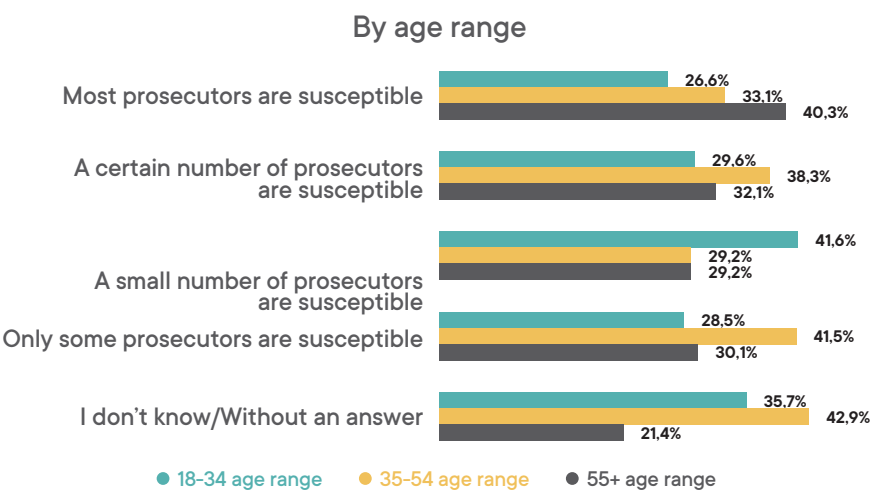


Moreover, respondents were also asked about their opinion regarding the number of prosecutors involved in corrupt activities. Just over a quarter (26.1%) believe that the majority of prosecutors are susceptible to corruption, while nearly one third (32.2%) think that a certain number are susceptible.

Graph 38 Do you believe that the state prosecutors are susceptible to corruption?

As the respondent gets older, they are more likely to believe that the majority of prosecutors are susceptible to corruption.

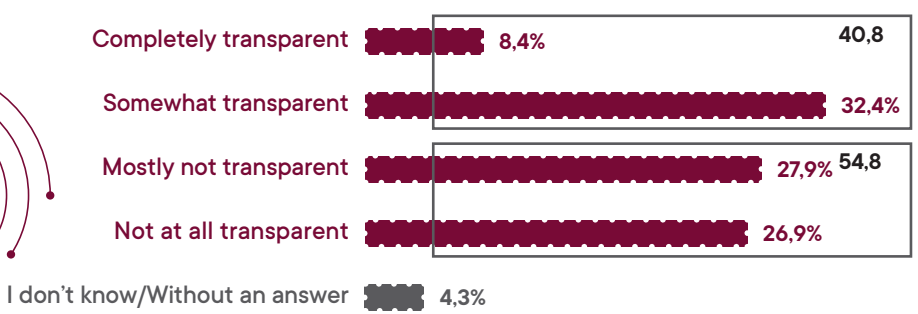
Graph 39 Do you believe that the state prosecutors are susceptible to corruption? By age range



Citizen's Awareness of the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office

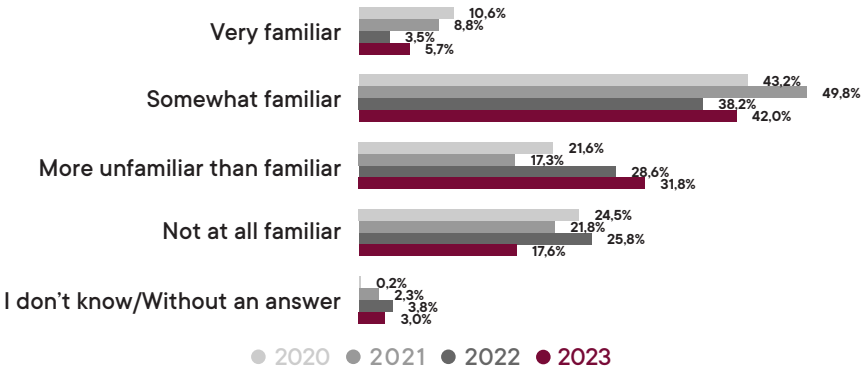
The next section of this report focuses on the topic of citizens' awareness of the State Prosecutor's Office. Understanding information and seeking sources of information play a crucial role in shaping opinions and attitudes, making this topic of paramount importance for effectively communicating future initiatives that the Prosecutor's Office will undertake. The analysis began with a question about the transparency of the State Prosecutor's Office. While 40.8% believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is entirely or somewhat transparent, more than half of the respondents (54.8%) think it is mostly or not transparent at all, with only 4.3% unable to assess.

Graph 40 Do you believe the work of the State Prosecutor's Office is transparent?



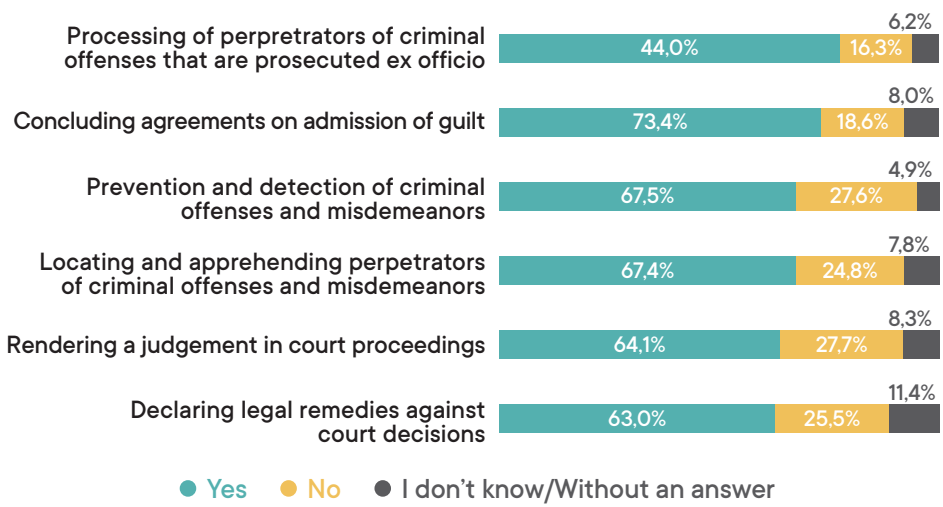
An additional objective within this research segment was to offer insight into the extent of citizen awareness regarding the competencies of the State Prosecutor's Office. An analysis of the data across multiple waves reveals a consistent trend suggesting that the understanding of the Prosecutor's Office's responsibilities is still prevalent in roughly half of Montenegro's citizenry.

Graph 41 Data through time: To what extent are you familiar with the competencies of the State Prosecutor's Office?



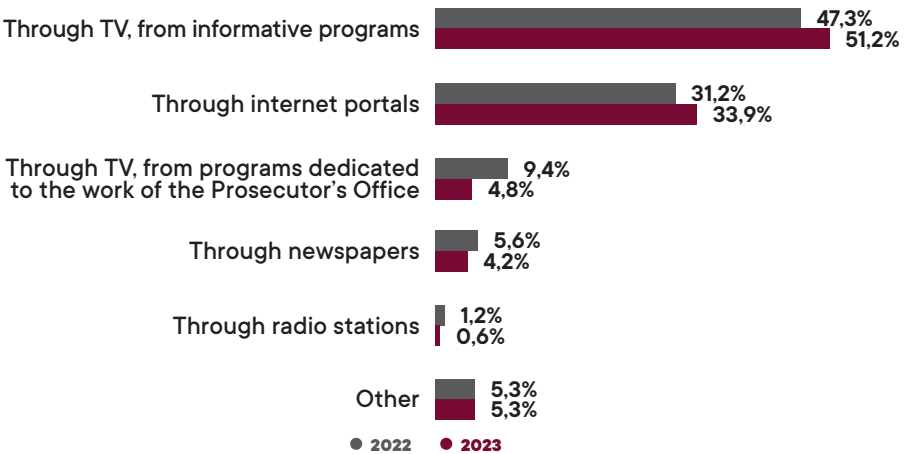
More than three quarters of the respondents (77.5%) are aware of the fact that the State Prosecutor's Office is responsible for prosecuting individuals who have committed criminal offenses that are prosecuted ex officio (i.e., prosecution without the request to prosecute). This data indicates a generally high level of public awareness regarding the fundamental societal role of the Prosecutor's Office.

Graph 42 What is the State Prosecutor's Office in charge of?



Half of the respondents (51.2%) acquire information about the work of the Prosecutor's Office through informative programs on television, followed by one third of respondents (33.9%) who report getting informed through internet portals. These percentages represent an increase compared to the previous wave conducted in 2022. There has been a decrease in the number of respondents who gather information about the work of the Prosecutor's Office through programs dedicated to the Prosecutor's Office (2022 - 9.4%, 2023 - 4.8%), as well as through newspapers (2022 - 5.2%, 2023 - 4.2%) and radio sta-tions (2022 - 1.2%, 2023 - 0.6%).

Graph 43 Data through time: Where do you inform yourself about the work of the State Prosecutor's Office?



A small percentage of respondents (5.3%) mentioned that they seek information about the Prosecutor's Office's activities from alternative sources. The most frequently cited sources for information about the Prosecutor's Office include:

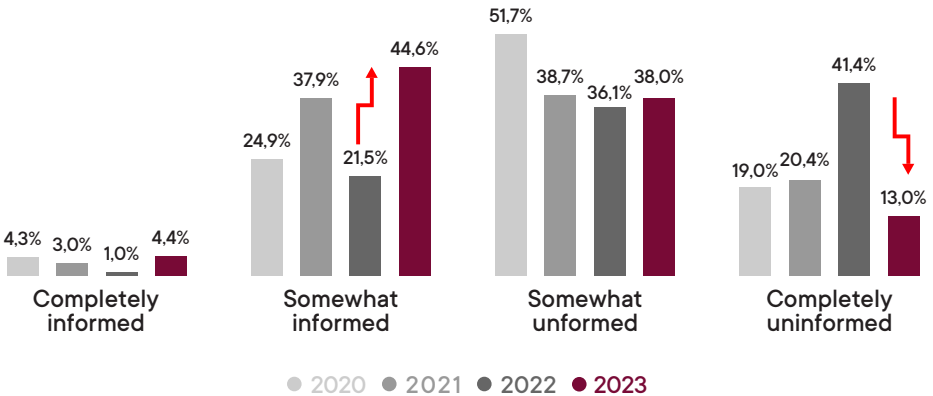
- **Oral communication**
- **Sources from within the Prosecutor's Office**
- **Personal experiences**
- **Non-governmental organizations**
- **Media and social networks**
- **Lack of interest or time**

These responses indicate diverse sources of information and varying perspectives on the Prosecutor's Office's activities among the respondents.

Respondents self assessed their level of personal knowledge about the State Prosecutor's Office. Data from this year's research indicate a significant increase compared to the previous wave in 2022, where less than one quarter of respondents (21.5%) stated that they are generally

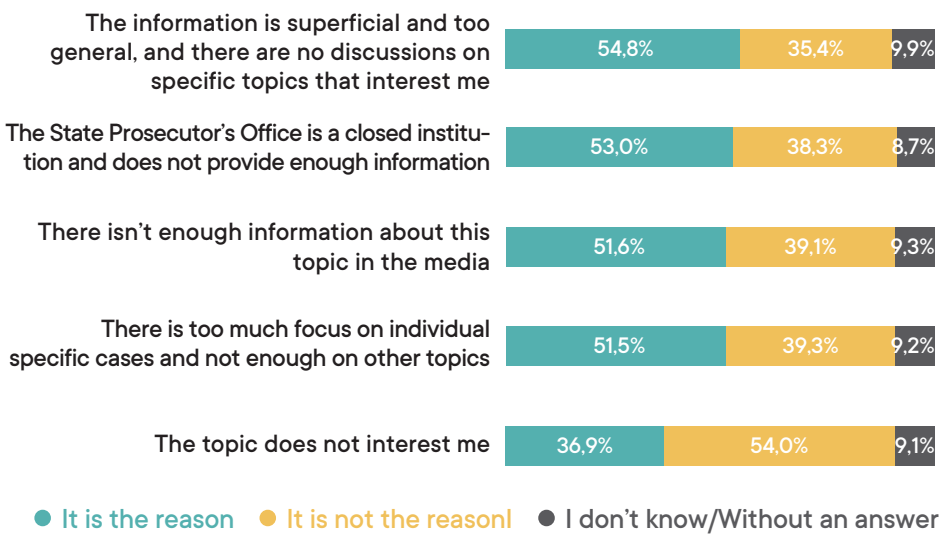
informed about the work of the Prosecutor's Office, while in 2023, this percentage has risen to almost half of the respondents (44.6%). On the other hand, the number of respondents who, in 2022, indicated having almost no information has dramatically decreased in 2023, from 41.4% to 13%.

Graph 44 Generally speaking, how well informed are you personally about the work of the State Prosecutor's Office?



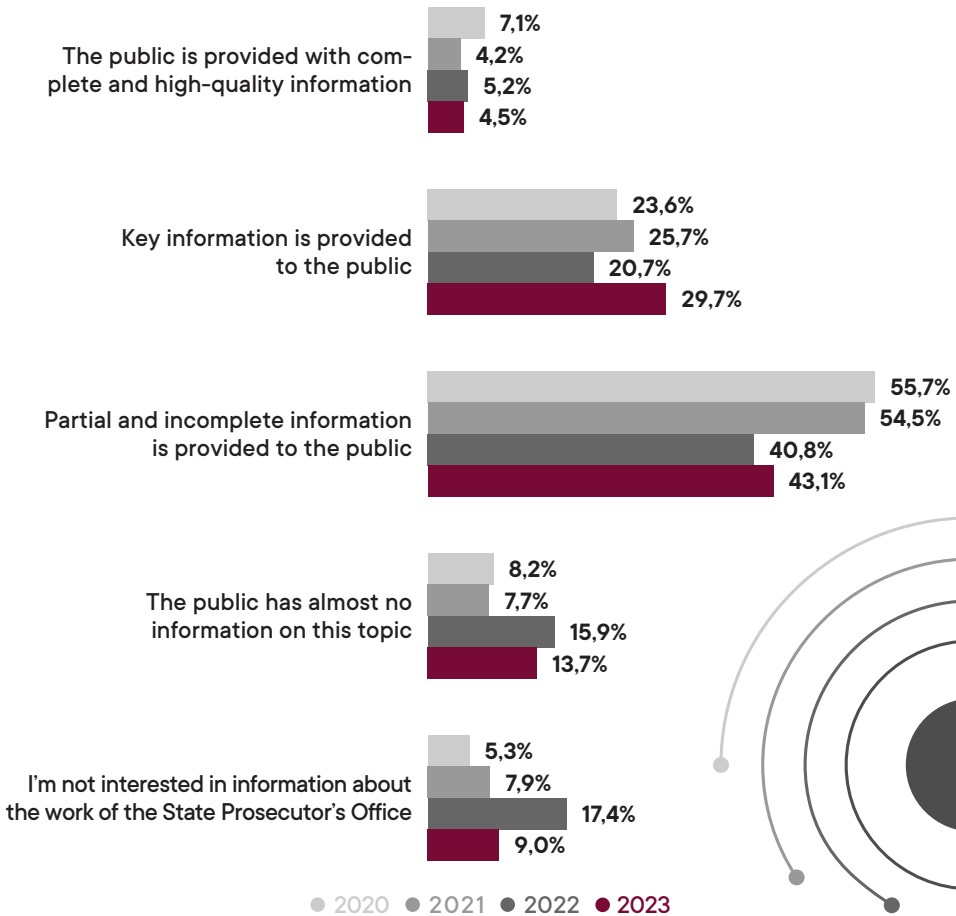
Those respondents who stated that they are not or only partially informed were further asked why they believe this is the case.

Graph 45 If you are not informed or only partially informed, why is that the case? (N=513)



The research results indicate that citizens are generally dissatisfied with the quantity and quality of information about the State Prosecutor's Office that is made available to the public. In fact, 43.1% of respondents believe that partial and incomplete information is provided to the public. This percentage has seen a slight increase from 2022 (40.8%).

Graph 46 Data through time: How would you rate the quantity and quality of information about the work of the State Prosecutor's Office that is intended for the public?

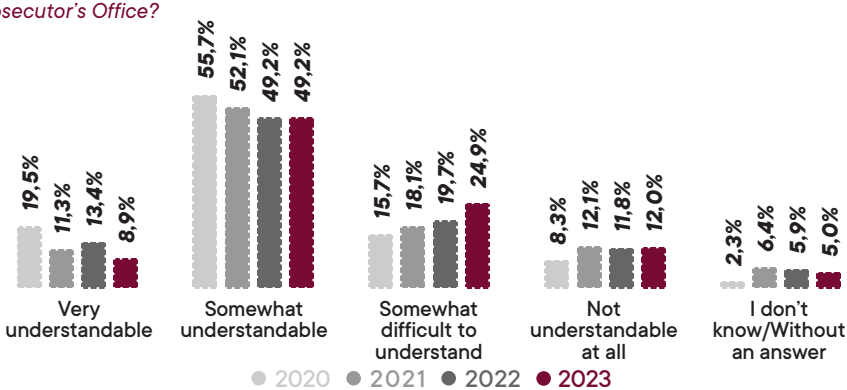


Nearly two thirds of the respondents (63.5%) express a desire to receive more information about the situations in which citizens can contact the Prosecutor's Office. The data, in general, reflects significant interest in various topics, demonstrating a keen interest in being informed about the State Prosecutor's Office.

Graph 47 Which topics related to the State Prosecutor's Office would you like to have more information about?

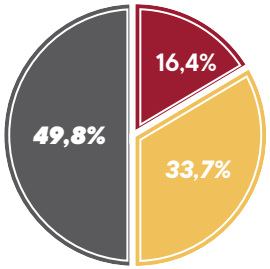
When it comes to announcements, which is the most common communication channel used by the State Prosecutor's Office, there is an observed decreasing trend in the comprehensibility of the Prosecutor's Office's announcements.

Graph 48 Data through time: To what extent do you understand the statements from the State Prosecutor's Office?

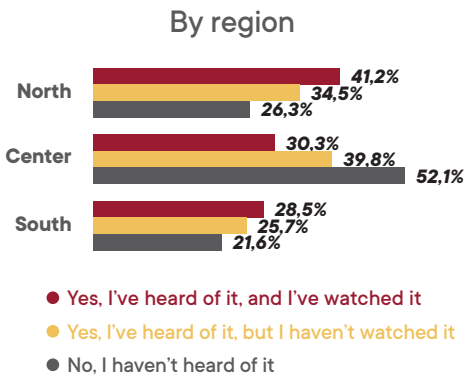


Half of the respondents (49.8%) state that they have never heard of the TV show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office," while one third (33.7%) mention that they have heard of the show but have not watched it, and 16.4% say that they have watched the show. Further analysis of this data by region shows that respondents from the northern region of Montenegro are the most frequent viewers of the TV show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office" (41.2%), compared to respondents from the central region (30.3%) and the southern region (28.5%).

Graph 49 Have you ever heard of the TV show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office"?

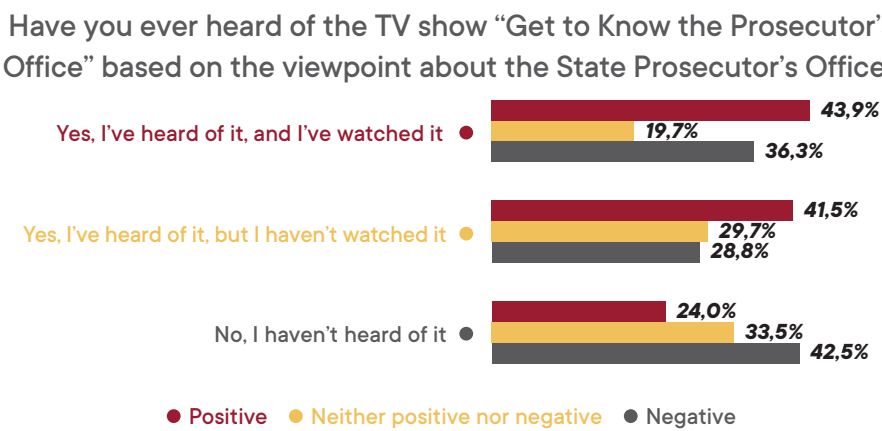


Graph 50 Have you ever heard of the TV show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office"? By region



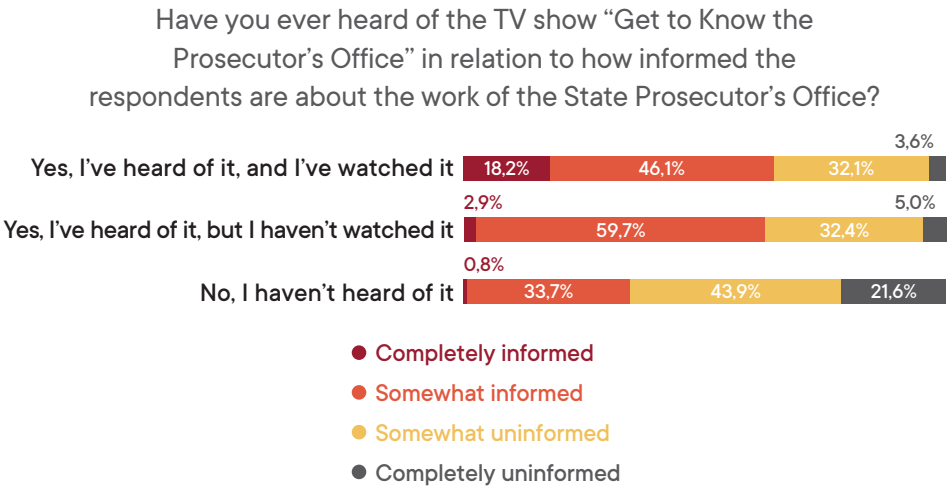
While we cannot definitively establish that watching the show led to a more positive attitude toward the State Prosecutor's Office, it is interesting to note that respondents from the northern region of Montenegro are also those who, to the greatest extent, hold a positive attitude toward the Prosecutor's Office and are the most frequent viewers of the "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office" show.

Graph 51 Have you ever heard of the TV show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office" based on the viewpoint about the State Prosecutor's Office?



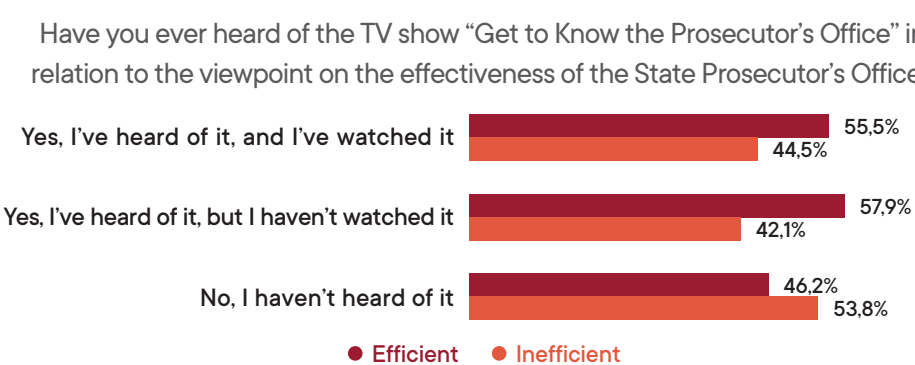
It's also worth examining the results obtained by cross-referencing with the question about how well informed respondents are personally about the State Prosecutor's Office. We can see that respondents who have watched the show believe that they are better informed about the Prosecutor's Office's work compared to those who have never heard of the show at all.

Graph 52 Have you ever heard of the TV show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office" in relation to how informed the respondents are about the work of the State Prosecutor's Office?



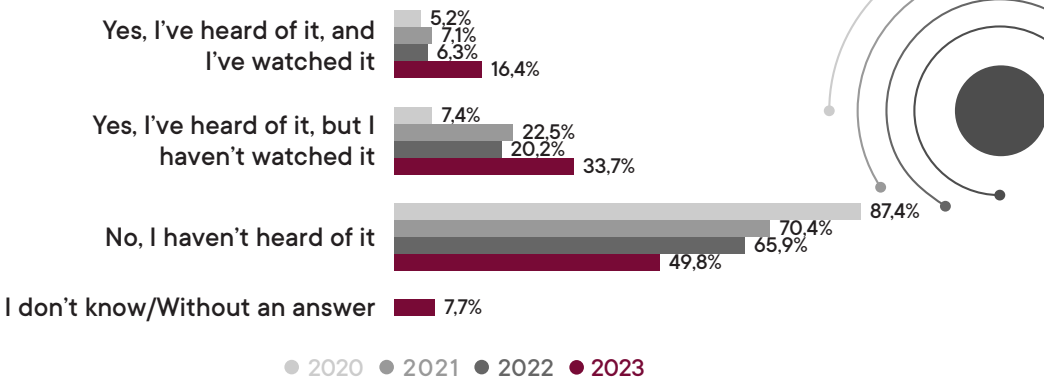
Furthermore, it is interesting to note that respondents who have heard of and watched the "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office" show are more inclined to believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is efficient in its operations.

Graph 53 Have you ever heard of the TV show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office" in relation to the viewpoint on the effectiveness of the State Prosecutor's Office?



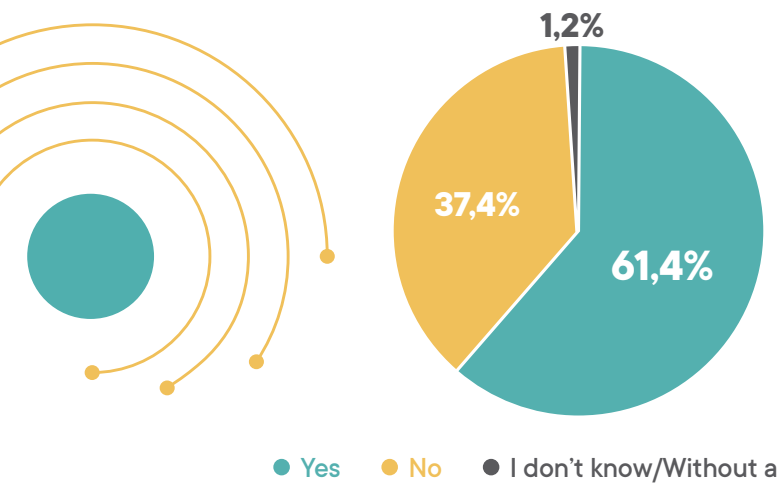
When we examine the data over time, a trend becomes apparent, indicating an increase in the number of citizens who have heard of and watched the show.

Graph 54 Data through time: Have you ever heard of the TV show "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office"?



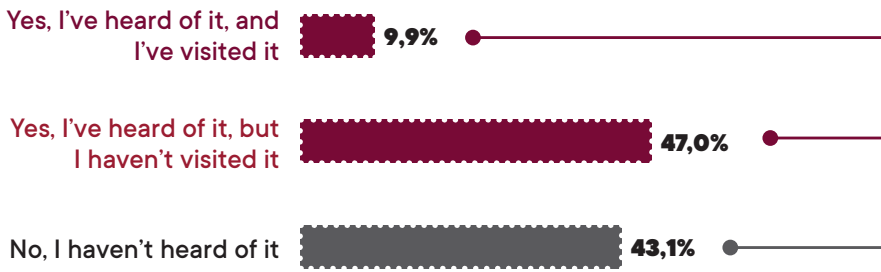
Nearly two thirds of the respondents (61.4%) who have watched the show state that the program has helped them understand the jurisdiction and operations of the Prosecutor's Office.

Graph 55 Did the show help you understand the responsibilities and work of the Prosecutor's Office? (N=165)



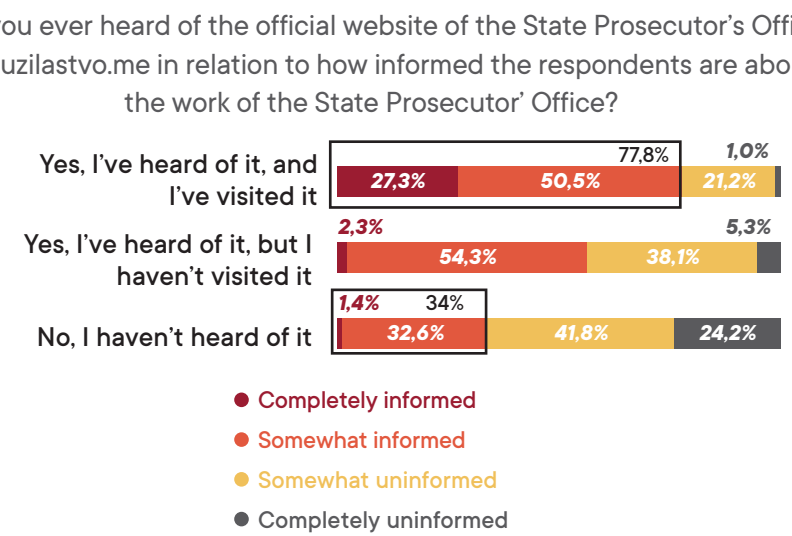
It has been observed that a majority of respondents have heard of the official website of the State Prosecutor's Office, www.tuzilastvo.me. Nearly one in ten individuals has visit-ed the website, while 47% have heard of it but have not visited it.

Graph 56 Have you ever heard of the official website of the State Prosecutor's Office www.tuzilastvo.me?



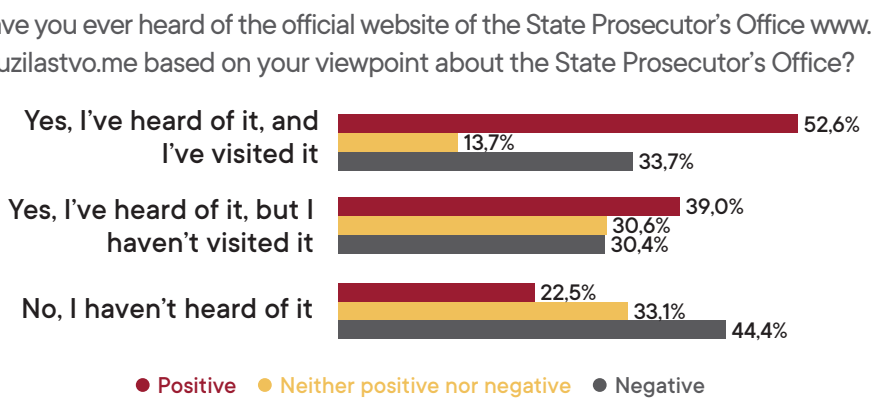
When we further analysed this data in conjunction with the question about how well informed respondents are personally about the State Prosecutor's Office, we can see interesting results indicating that citizens who have visited the Prosecutor's Office website believe they have more information about the institution's operations compared to those who have never heard of the website. Within the group of those who have heard of and visited the website, more than three quarters of respondents (77.8%) state that they are mainly or completely informed about the Prosecutor's Office's work. On the other hand, of all respondents who have never heard of the website, only one third (34%) say the same.

Graph 57 Have you ever heard of the official website of the State Prosecutor's Office www.tuzilastvo.me in relation to how informed the respondents are about the work of the State Prosecutor's Office?



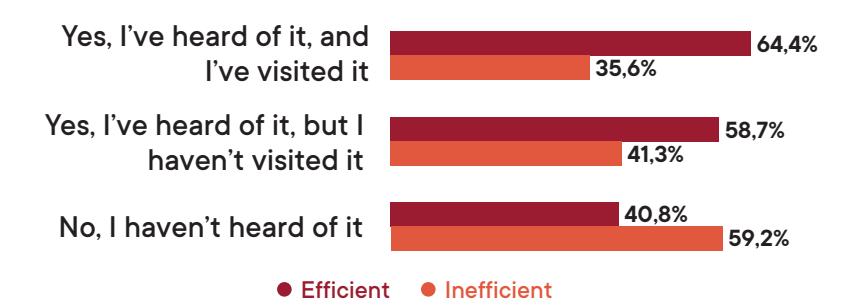
What's particularly interesting is that, just like with the viewership of the "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office" show, visiting the website can have a significant impact on a positive or negative attitude toward the State Prosecutor's Office. Respondents who have heard of and visited the website have a more positive attitude toward the Prosecutor's Office compared to those who have never heard of the website's existence.

Graph 58 Have you ever heard of the official website of the State Prosecutor's Office www.tuzilastvo.me based on your viewpoint about the State Prosecutor's Office?



Similar to the general attitude toward the State Prosecutor's Office, we obtain similar results when it comes to the perception of the Prosecutor's Office's efficiency. Respondents who have visited the website believe that the prosecutor's institution is efficient compared to those who have never heard of the website.

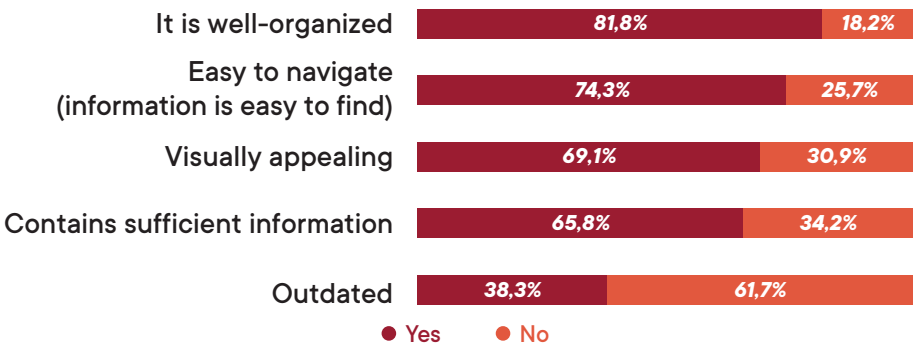
Graph 59 Have you ever heard of the official website of the State Prosecutor's Office www.tuzilastvo.me in relation to your viewpoint on the effectiveness of the State Prosecutor's Office?



From this data, it is evident that the public presence of the State Prosecutor's Office, whether through television shows or online presence, is of immense importance for the perception of the citizens of Montenegro regarding this institutional body.

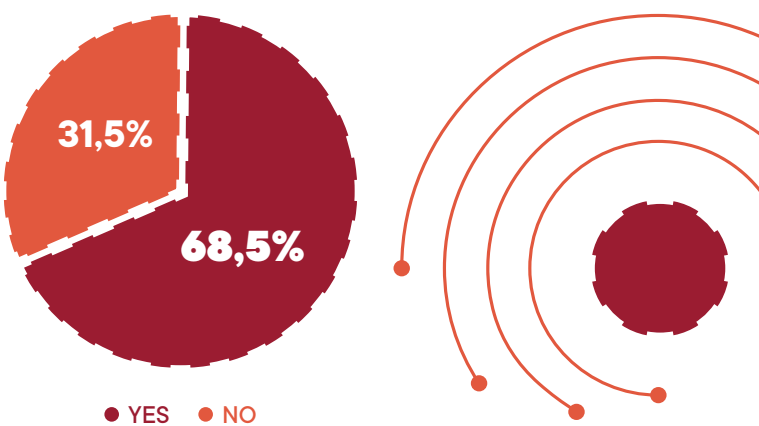
The overwhelming majority of respondents who visited the website agree that the web-site is user-friendly (81.8%). Three-quarters of the respondents (74.3%) find the website easy to navigate, and more than two-thirds believe it has an appealing visual design (69.1%) and contains an adequate amount of information (65.8%). Almost two-thirds of the respondents believe that the website is not outdated (61.7%).

Graph 60 Do the following statements describe the website of the State Prosecutor's Office www.tuzilastvo.me?(N=99)



More than two-thirds of respondents (68.5%) stated that they found all the information they were looking for on the website.

Graph 61 Did you find all the information you were looking for on the website? (N=99)

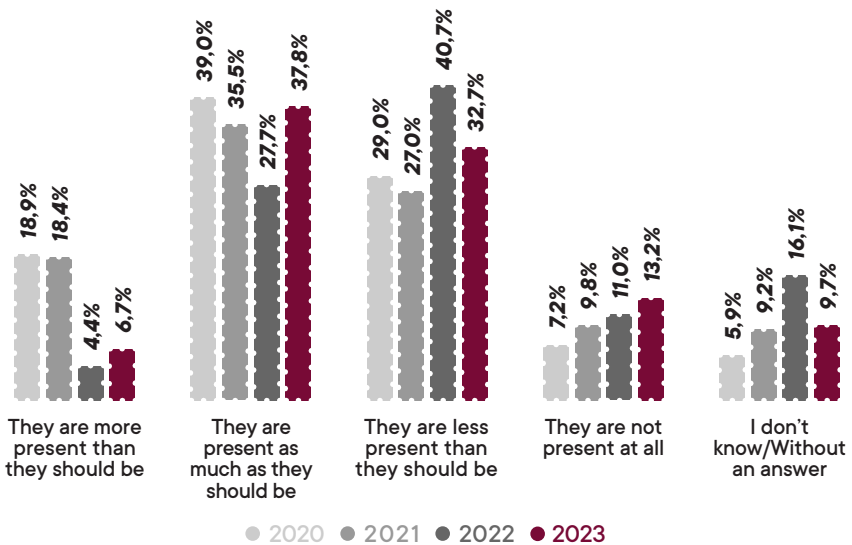


Citizen's attitudes about the presence of state prosecutors in public

The legal framework regulating the transparency of the State Prosecutor's Office obligates specific individuals to share information with the public. According to this law, the Acting Supreme State Prosecutor or authorized persons should provide information about the activities of the State Prosecutor's Office. On the other hand, the heads of state prosecutor's offices or individuals authorized by them are responsible for providing information about the work of these individual prosecutor's offices. Analysing citizens' attitudes towards the presence of state prosecutors in public can provide valuable insights into how the justice system is perceived and how the efficiency and transparency of its work are assessed. In the next section of the report, the results of the public opinion survey on how citizens perceive the presence of state prosecutors in public are analysed.

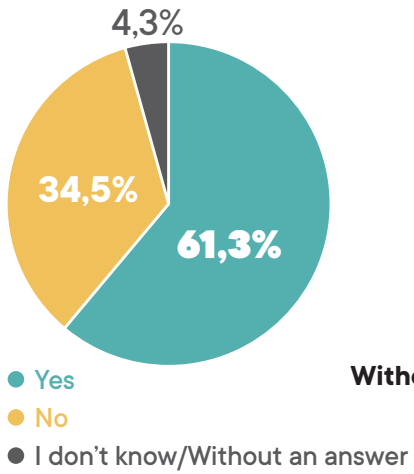
When it comes to the presence of prosecutors in public, 37.8% of respondents believe that prosecutors are as present in public as much as they should be, representing an increase of 10.1% compared to the previous survey conducted in 2022.

Graph 62 Data through time: In your opinion, are prosecutors present in the public eye to a sufficient extent?

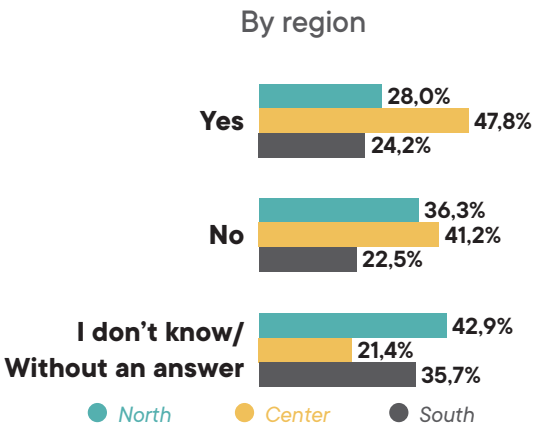


Respondents were also asked whether they believe that state prosecutors should inform the public about cases within their jurisdiction through press conferences. Nearly two thirds of the respondents (61.3%) believe they should, while 34.5% believe they should not. When further analysing the data by regions in Montenegro, it can be noticed that those respondents who believe that state prosecutors should inform the public about cases within their jurisdiction through press conferences are predominantly from the central region (47.8%), while they are less present in the northern (28%) and southern (24.2%) parts.

Graph 63 Should state prosecutor's offices inform the public about cases within their jurisdiction through press conferences?

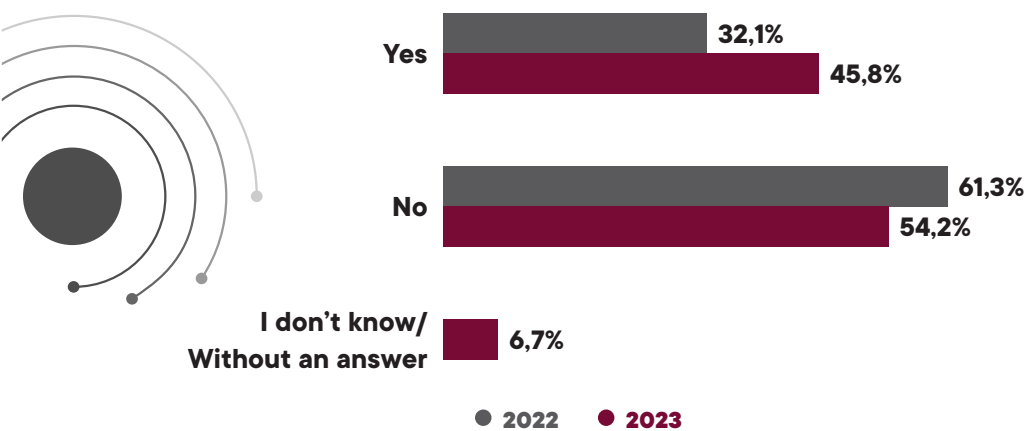


Graph 64 Should state prosecutor's offices inform the public about cases within their jurisdiction through press confer-ences? By region



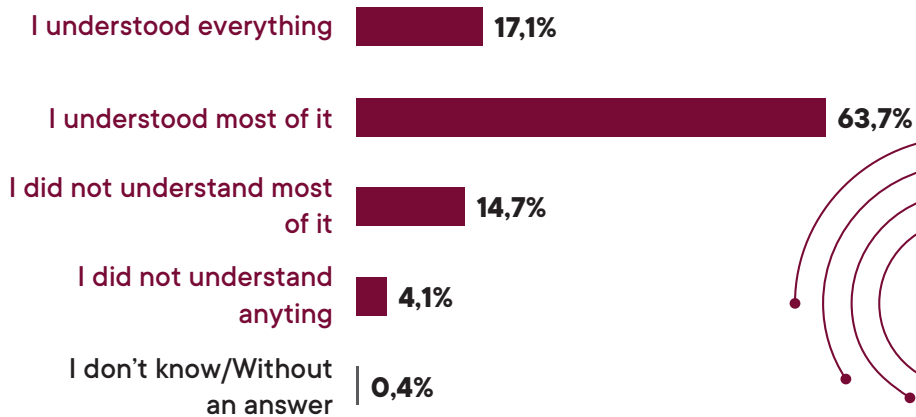
Nearly half of the respondents (45.8%) state that they have seen a state prosecutor appearing in public in the past 12 months. This represents an increase compared to the previous wave in 2022 (32.1%).

Graph 65 Data through time: Have you watched any appearances by a state prosecutor in the public eye in the past 12 months?



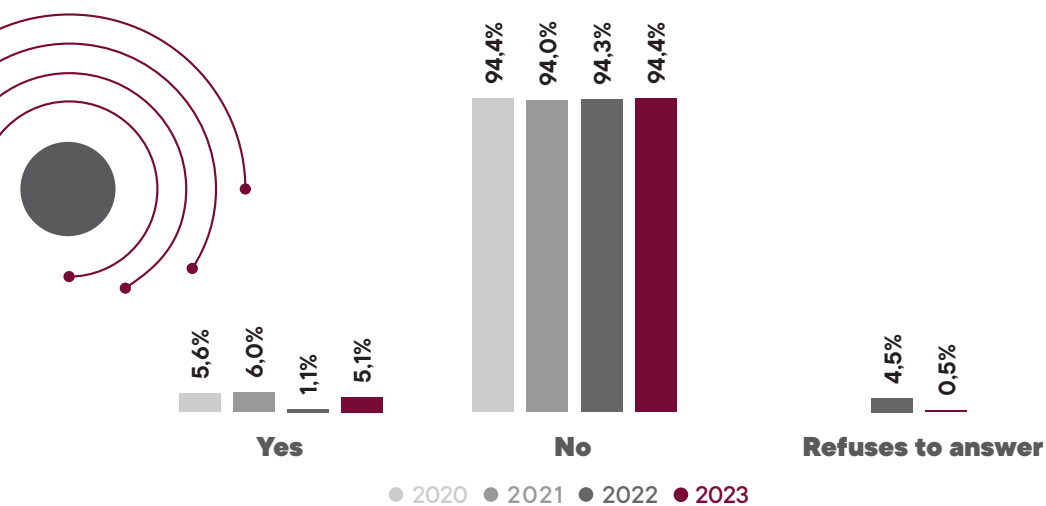
Among the respondents who have seen a state prosecutor appearing in public in the past 12 months, the vast majority (80.8%) state that they understood everything or most of what the prosecutor was saying.

Graph 66 How much were you able to understand from what the prosecutor was saying? (N=461)



The number of respondents who had the opportunity to talk to a prosecutor in the past 12 months increased from 1.1% in 2022 to 5.1% in 2023. It's important to note that the specific location of their contact with the prosecutor was not specified.

Graph 67 Data through time: Have you had the opportunity to talk to a prosecutor in the past 12 months?



Recommendations based on the research

Drawing from the research findings on public attitudes towards the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro, it is possible to propose several recommendations aimed at advancing the institution's work to enhance public perception and foster increased trust:

Enhancing Transparency: The State Prosecutor's Office should take concrete steps to improve its transparency. This includes regularly informing the public about its activities, disclosing information about court proceedings and investigation outcomes, as well as enhancing communication with the media and civil society. It is evident from the data that the public presence of the Prosecutor's Office significantly impacts the perception of Montenegro's citizens regarding this institutional body. The initial wave of this research in 2020 revealed that half of the citizens (50.4%) considered the State Prosecutor's Office to be transparent. However, this figure decreased to 39.6% in 2023. The results provide a solid foundation for further efforts, especially aimed at promoting transparency within the Prosecutor's Office.

Combatting Corruption: Considering the high percentage of citizens who view corruption as a problem in Montenegro, the State Prosecutor's Office should intensify its ef-forts to combat corruption. This includes the effective prosecution of corruption cases, collaboration with relevant institutions, and active participation in corruption prevention. The Prosecutor's Office can strive to emphasize positive changes in this area in its communications, making an effort to present the situation before and after, with a focus on the positive improvements. Engaging experts who can assist in formulating such PR messages could significantly contribute to building trust in the State Prosecutor's Office.

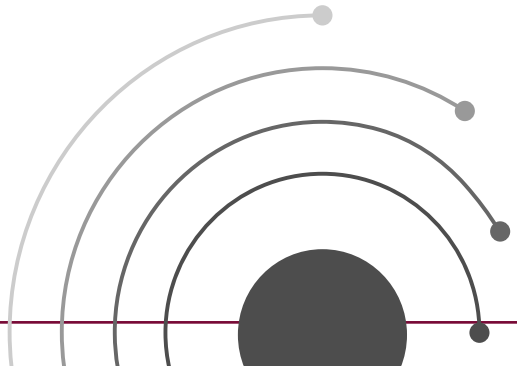
Independence and Professionalism: The State Prosecutor's Office should continue to advocate for its independence from political influence and maintain a high level of professionalism among its prosecutors and officials. This will contribute to building stronger trust among citizens in the institution. It is incumbent upon the institution to explain its independence and separation from other branches of government to a wider audience so that citizens clearly understand the State Prosecutor's Office's contribution and do not associate potential problems in political institutions (which receive the most media attention) with the work of the State Prosecutor's Office. In this regard, consideration can be given to potential training for journalists who convey information from the Prosecutor's Office to citizens, ensuring they inform the public as accurately as possible. Additionally, for those visiting the Prosecutor's Office's website, a dedicated webpage on this topic could provide a clear presentation of the Prosecutor's Office's independence from other branches of government.

Citizen Education and Information: Data across waves show that citizens' awareness of the State Prosecutor's Office's jurisdiction has remained relatively stagnant since 2020, with approximately half of them still believing they are very or somewhat familiar with its responsibilities. Therefore, the State Prosecutor's Office should invest more effort in educating citizens about its jurisdiction, role, and significance within the judicial system. This can be achieved through public campaigns, workshops, and other forms of information dissemination. In this context, it is crucial to mention the TV program "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office." The results of this research have shown that respondents who have watched the program feel better informed about the work of the Prosecutor's

Office compared to those who have never heard of the show. The data also indi-cate that 51.2% of respondents get their information from TV, through informative programs, and 33.9% through inter-net portals. Efforts should be made to further investigate which informative programs and internet portals are involved, in order to maximize these platforms for promoting both the TV program "Get to Know the Prosecutor's Office" and the work of the State Prosecutor's Office. The State Prosecu-tor's Office may consider organizing focus groups with a targeted audience with diverse views on the Prosecutor's Office's work to better understand the different audiences they are addressing. The research data show that there are certain demographic differences in how citizens perceive the work of the Prosecutor's Office. Focus groups would help the Prosecutor's Office gain a better understanding of these perspectives and, based on the focus group findings, create a targeted campaign to raise awareness among groups with the lowest current awareness. The data from the quantitative research provide a solid initial foundation for designing such focus groups.

Cooperation with Civil Society: Considering the research results indicating that citizens and civil society are perceived to have the highest positive impact on the State Prosecutor's Office, active collaboration with civil society organizations is essential to better understand citizens' needs and receive feedback on their work. This can be achieved by establishing a dialogue with civil society representatives and involving them in the processes of policy devel-opment and evaluation within the State Prosecutor's Office, where their expertise and external perspective can contribute to better decisionmaking. Furthermore, partnerships on projects and initiatives can be highly productive. This may involve joint research projects, training, public awareness campaigns, and other activities. Additionally, it is worth noting that the data show that those who believe the Prosecutor's Office is successfully fighting corruption also believe (65.4%) that civil society has a somewhat or very positive attitude toward the work of the Prosecu-tor's Office. In contrast, respondents who believe that the State Prosecutor's Office is not successfully combating corruption generally perceive civil society as having a somewhat or very negative influence on the institution's work. With this data, there is a clear correlation between the work of the Prosecutor's Office and civil society, emphasizing the importance of their collaboration.

These recommendations could assist the State Prosecutor's Office in Montenegro in building stronger public trust and achieving better results in the fight against corruption and organized crime, as well as in upholding the rule of law in the country.



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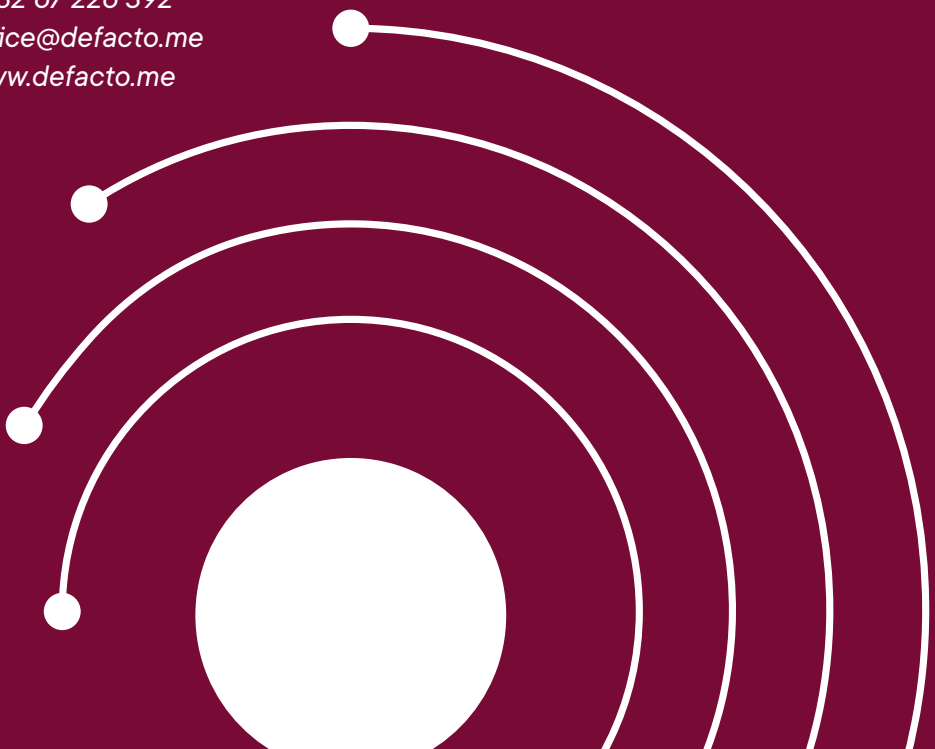

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