



Europe
for Citizens

Study on active citizenship 04. – 06. 2014.

Public Opinion Research





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About the project:

The European project “Active Communities for Europe” was developed in co-operation of the Foundation for Partnership and Civil Society Development and its partner organizations from Bulgaria, Monte Negro, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, and United Kingdom.

The Project is funded by the Europe for Citizens programme, and it has a total value of 310.633,00 EUR.

Duration of the project is from 3/2014 to 3/2015.

The aim of the project is to support active participation of citizens to the EU democratic life and through the innovative and non-formal education method, the Theatre of the oppressed, public discussions, media promotion and educational brochures. It focused on partners from countries with the lowest turnout for EU elections.

www.civilnodrustvo-istra.hr



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PROJECT PARTNERS:

CROATIA:

THE FOUNDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP AND CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

The Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote international cooperation, philanthropy, volunteerism and overall development of a democratic society, paying particular attention to constant improvement of life in local communities. The Foundation promotes community development and active citizenship by providing financial support, information, consulting and development of cross-sectoral cooperation and other forms of support to civil society organizations. The Foundation was established on 4th October 2006, by the County of Istria.

www.civilnodrustvo-istra.hr / zaklada@civilnodrustvo-istra.hr

THE REGION OF ISTRIA

The Region of Istria is a unit of regional self-government in Croatia, governed by the president and 3 vice-presidents; the representative body is regional Assembly with 41 councillors. Administrative bodies of the Region of Istria are administrative departments and services established for the works in the self-governing domain of the Region.

www.istra-istria.hr

BULGARIA:

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY FOUNDATION - CSF

CSF is a non-profit organization, registered in 2003 in Botevgrad. It operates in the municipalities of Botevgrad, Pravets, Etropole, Teteven and Yablanitsa in synergy with municipal administrations, schools, government and public institutions and the media. Its efforts are concentrated on increasing organizational and resource capacity of municipal administration, work with small and medium business to get acquainted with European policies and promoting entrepreneurship in the region, building of partnership networks for assistance and support of workers in the social sphere.

www.eurocenter-bg.org / info@eurocenter-bg.org



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MONTENEGRO:

NGO SVETIONIK

Was founded in 2001 in Bar.

Vision : Montenegro as a democratic society which respects the rights of children and youth, respects diversity and offers creative and encouraging possibilities for improvement of their life quality.

Mission: Improvement of the life quality of youth through public advocacy programs, education, organizing youth events, raising awareness of the rights of youth and developing programs that contribute to quality, organized and creative life of youth.

www.svetionik.me / svetionikbar@cg.yu

ITALY:

COSMO COOPERATIVA SOCIALE

Cosmo is an social cooperative based in Vicenza (Italy). Cosmo plans, organizes and evaluates actions in favour of civil society paying specific attention to the improvement of citizens's quality of life. Cosmo pays special attention to minors, youth and adults living in poverty situations and social exclusion. In this way Cosmo contributes not only to increase the quality of life but offering adequate answers to remove the causes of social exclusion. The cooperative works on promotion, prevention, education and territorial improvement with different services like Youth Centers, training courses for parents, adults, youngsters and social workers.

cosmo@cosmosociale.it / www.cosmosociale.it

POLAND:

FUNDACIJA PROMOCJI NAUKI I KREATYWNOŚCI - FPiNK

FPNiK aims at education, promoting science, helping in developing scientific interest and creativity among children and youngsters, creating democratic society, free from intolerance and discrimination. It work on creating a scientific centre in Nowy Sacz with the aim of popularizing science , organizes workshops that develop the technical interest in children, carried out projects that promote multiculturalism and fight against aggression and intolerance by using modern technology .

www.fpink.pl



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SLOVENIA:

THE ASSOCIATION FOR CULTURE AND EDUCATION PiNA

PiNA is for more than 15 years offering quality educational, cultural, artistic and research activities in order to promote social development based on individual responsibility, collective power and critical thinking. Their key activities include workshops and training courses, that use multimedia as a methodology base; creating and providing publications for citizens; multimedia production; and intermedia events and performances.

www.pina.si / info@pina.si

UNITED KINGDOM:

COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS - CSV

CSV's vision is of a society where everyone can participate in building strong and inclusive communities. We enable people to take an active role in their communities. CSV is underpinned by the values of inclusion, quality, learning, flexibility and respect for human rights. CSV has a specific focus people from all walks of life, with whom it has been engaging with over the 50 years of its existence, creating opportunities for learning through volunteering and participation. CSV has been active at a European level since 1987, leading a major European network on volunteering, Volonteuropa.

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Volonteuropa: info@volonteuropa.eu / www.volonteuropa.eu



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INTRODUCTION

Public Opinion Research was implemented within the project A.C.E. –Active Communities for Europe. The aim is to study the existing practices in terms of unconventional methods or events for enhancing the citizenship participation among the young people. It analyzed opinion, attitudes and knowledge of citizens in Poland, UK, Slovenia, Italy, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Croatia on the issues related to active citizenship.

Data were collected from April 1st until June 30th 2014 and surveyed 210 citizens. Public Opinion Research was funded by European Commission, through Europe for Citizens programme.¹

The aim of the project is to support active participation of citizens to the EU democratic life and through the innovative and non-formal education method, the Theatre of the oppressed, public discussions, media promotion, involvement of kindergardens and other activities to young people in a creative and user-friendly way to explain the ways of active participation at all levels.

The overall objective is to study the existing practices in terms of unconventional methods or events for enhancing the citizenship participation among the young people. The objectives of this research is to identify the attitudes of public opinion on the knowledge of the rights and obligations of representatives of the EU Parliament, how to become a candidate for the elections at the local, national and EU level and the accessibility of information on the work of the EU institutions and citizens' rights.

Study of the attitudes of public opinion evaluated the quality of horizontal communication between citizens and institutions but also to lay the foundations for further development and improvement of the the activities of institutions, particularly at the local level in the field of active citizenship.

¹ EU Programme supporting a wide range of activities and organizations that promote "active European citizenship", especially the involvement of citizens and civil society organizations in the process of European integration. The program was established by the Decision of the European Parliament and Council. 1904/2006 / EC for the period 2007 - 2013 budget is 215 million euros. It is managed on the EU level, managed by the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture



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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey is conducted from April 1 to June 30, 2014

The research was conducted in three phases:

- 1) Development of concept research
- 2) Development of a research instrument, processing matrices collected data and collecting and entering data into the matrix
- 3) Data analysis

In the first phase is defined a topic of the research and concept. Precisely was determined what the study intends to get.

In the second phase was planned the online survey. In this way was enabled conduction of the research within ninety (90) days on a sample of 210 respondents in seven countries. The purpose of the test instrument, a pilot research conducted on a representative sample in order to choose the best method of research. Afterwords as the most effective method was shown online survey. Online survey was designed so that respondents did not have any difficulties in understanding certain questions and questionnaires.

In the third phase were checked collected responses, carried out the final stage of control surveys with entered data, and then the results are processed in software for statistical data processing. Based on the data, made analytical tables and figures, and interpretations on results. Since it took into account the representative sample was selected at random, the results are applicable to the entire population of the participating countries, with a high level of reliability.

INTERPRETING RESEARCH RESULTS

In this section will be presented research results through figures and interpretations of the same. As can be seen in Figure 1 knowledge of their rights as citizens of the European Union was stated by 83% of respondents, out of which 61% of respondents know their rights to a certain extent, as opposed to the 22% who know their rights fully. That do not know their rights, which have as a citizen of the European Union was stated by 17% of respondents. The prevailing positive attitude and knowledge of their rights, since the information on the rights of EU citizens are more accessible and understandable at all levels.

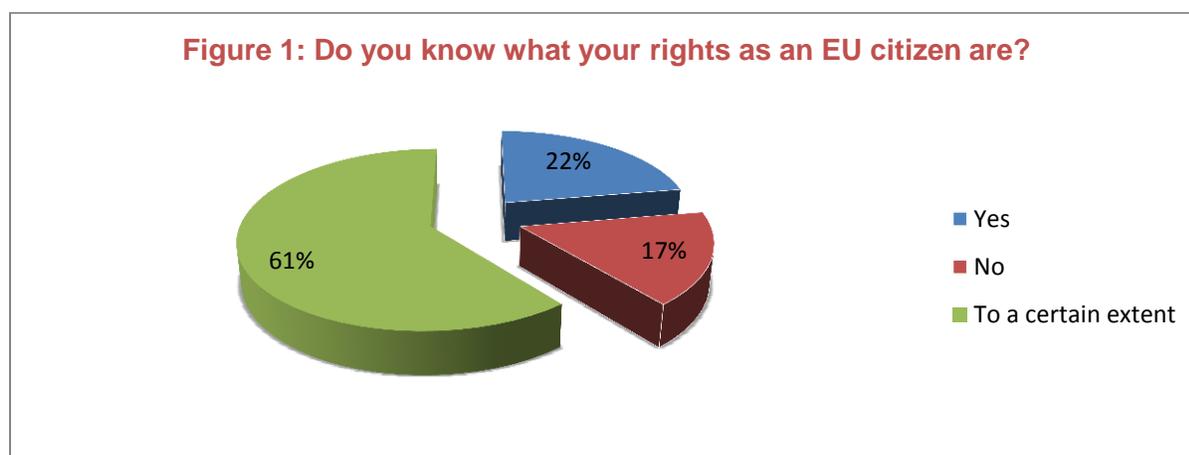


Figure 2 shows the knowledge of citizens on rights and obligations of representatives of the EU Parliament. 18% of respondents indicated they know what are the rights and obligations, while the 27% of those polled said they do not know what the rights and obligations of the of representatives. Most of them said that they do know what the rights and obligations only to a certain extent, as can be seen in the figure.

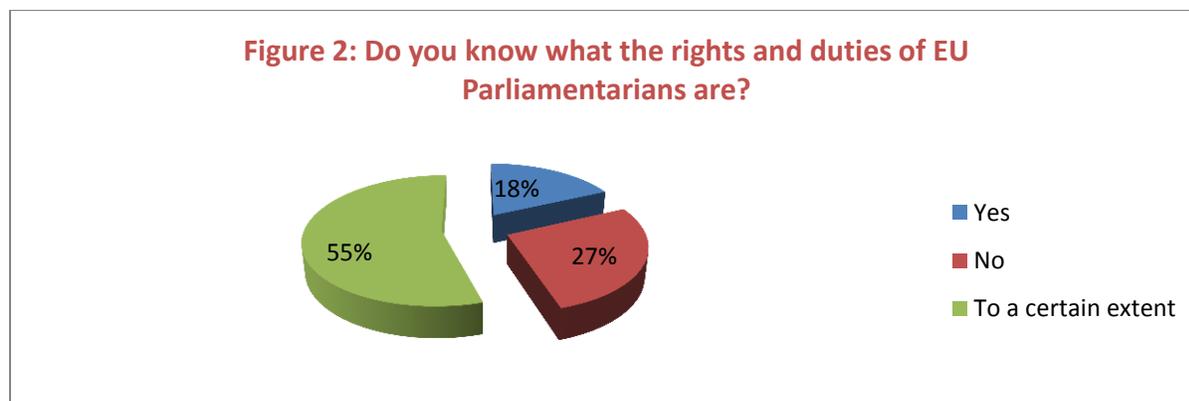
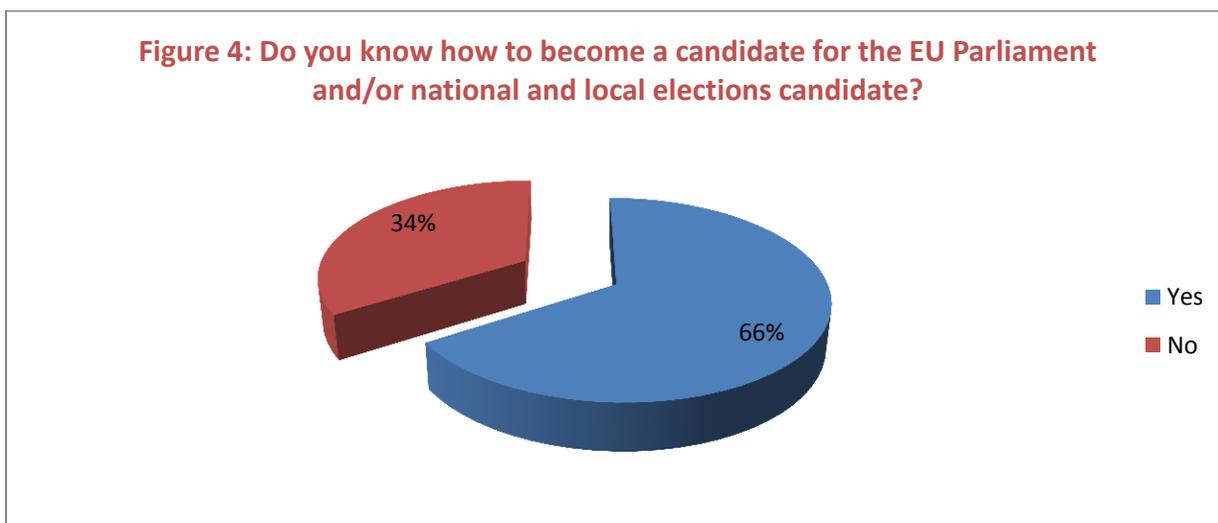


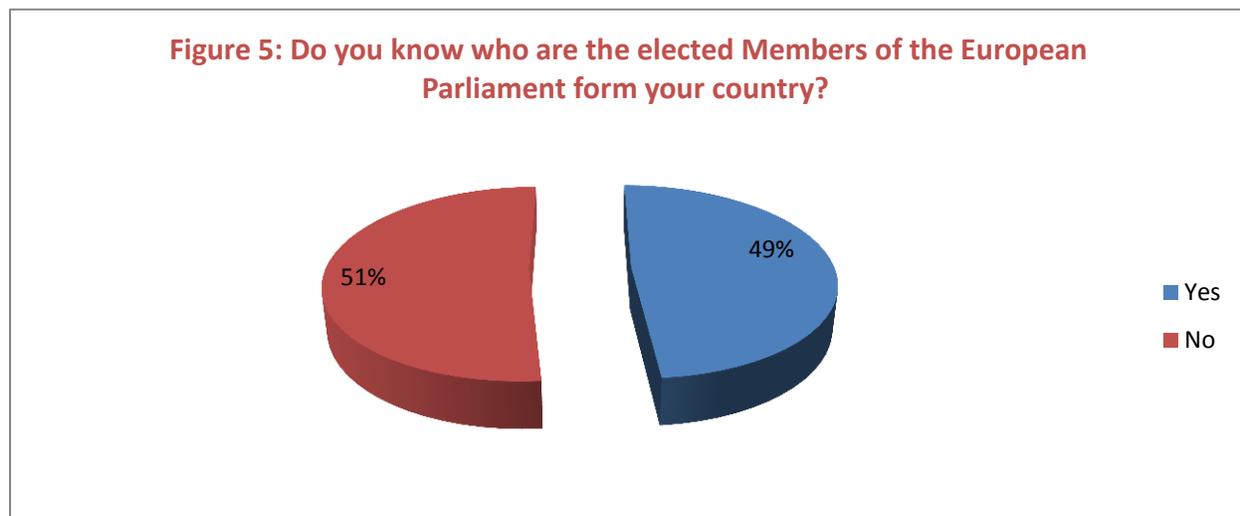
Figure 3 shows the responses to the question of whether they know what they should do if their rights are not respected. 37% of respondents do not know what should be done if their rights are respected, while the 34% knew only to a certain extent. The percentage that only to a certain extent they know what should be done if their rights are not complied. The answers given to this question has been correlated with the responses to the first question, but there is a certain disproportion.



When asked if you know how to become a candidate for the EU parliament and / or national and local elections, 69% of respondents answered negatively, which negatively tells on the participation of subjects in the democratic life of the community. As can be seen from the figures the percentage of respondents, only 34% are aware of how to become a candidate in elections at different levels.



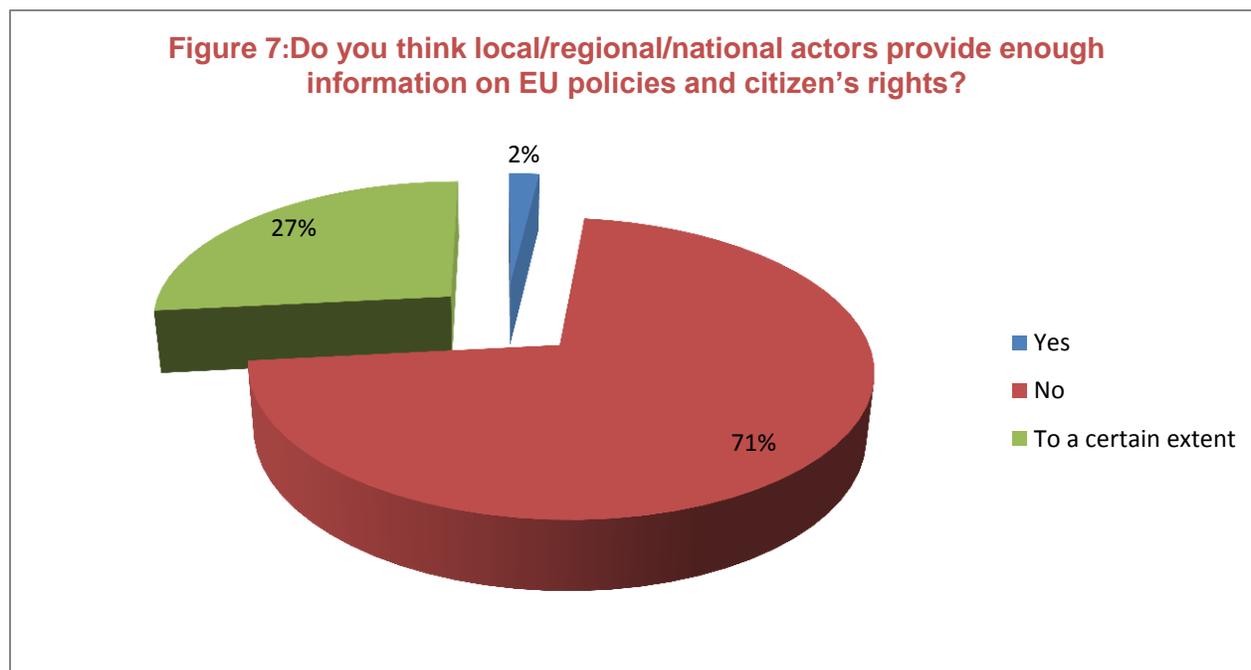
Percentage of respondents who know those who are representatives of their countries in the European Parliament and those who do not know is almost equable. Percentage of respondents who know who represents them in the EU parliament is 49%, while those who do not know is 51%.



The percentage of respondents who think that the information on the work of the EU institutions and the rights of citizens to a certain extent accessible at the local / regional and national level is 56%. Those who think that are not accessible is 24%, the percentage of respondents who think that they are fully accessible at all levels is 20%.



Only 2% of respondents to the question of whether you think that local, national and regional actors provide enough information about EU policies and civil rights responded positively. A high percentage of 71%, relates to subjects who responded to this question with NO, while 27% of respondents indicated that to a certain extent these actors provide enough information on EU policies and the rights of citizens.



On the question of who should provide information on EU policies and on citizen's rights and why, respondents answered in the following way:





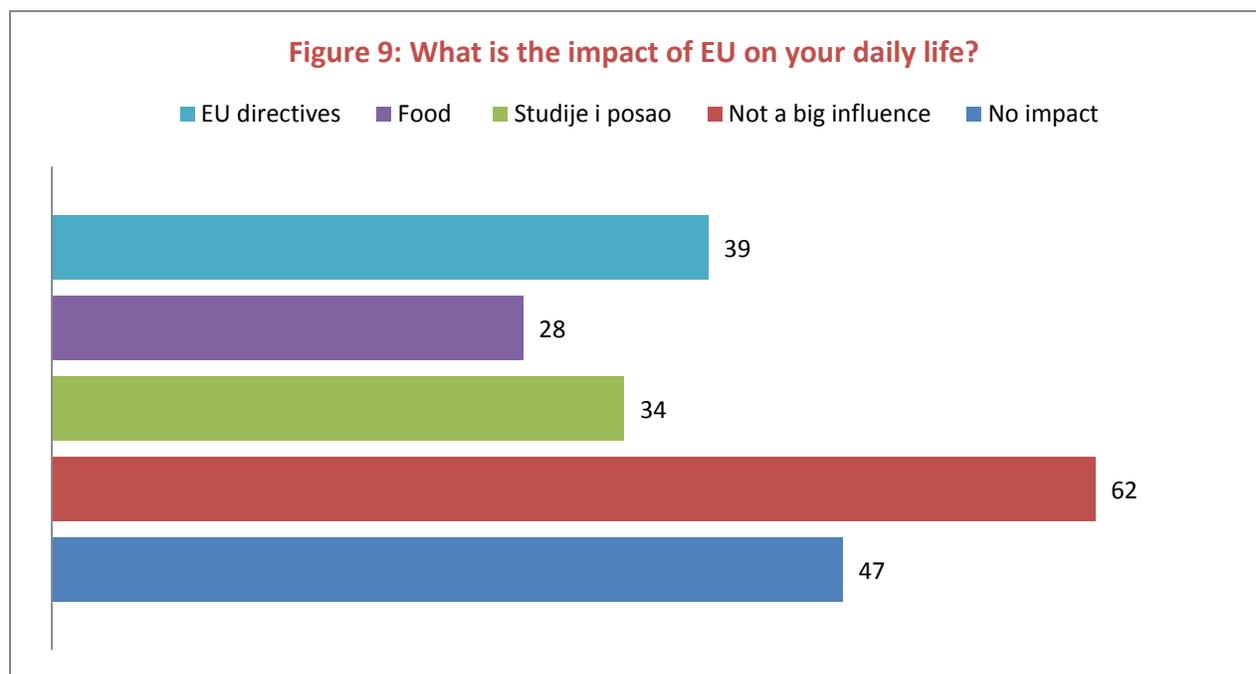
Respondents who say that local actors need to provide information about EU policies and citizen's rights, 88 of them, believe that local actors have direct contact with citizens and therefore they are closer to the population and the result will be better. Besides it, it would be more visible in everyday life and today it is possible only to those who seek information and information about this area.

15 of respondents believe that schools are key actors for providing information on EU policies and citizen's rights due to the education and formation of personality, while the 27 of them believe that everyone should provide in compliance with its jurisdiction.

That national actors should provide this information, particularly Ministries and offices, is considered by 43 of respondents and 37 of respondents believe that it should be in the coordination of local and regional actors together with CSOs and info centers.

Also, besides mentioned, respondents said that celebrities like singers, actors and the media might have an important role.

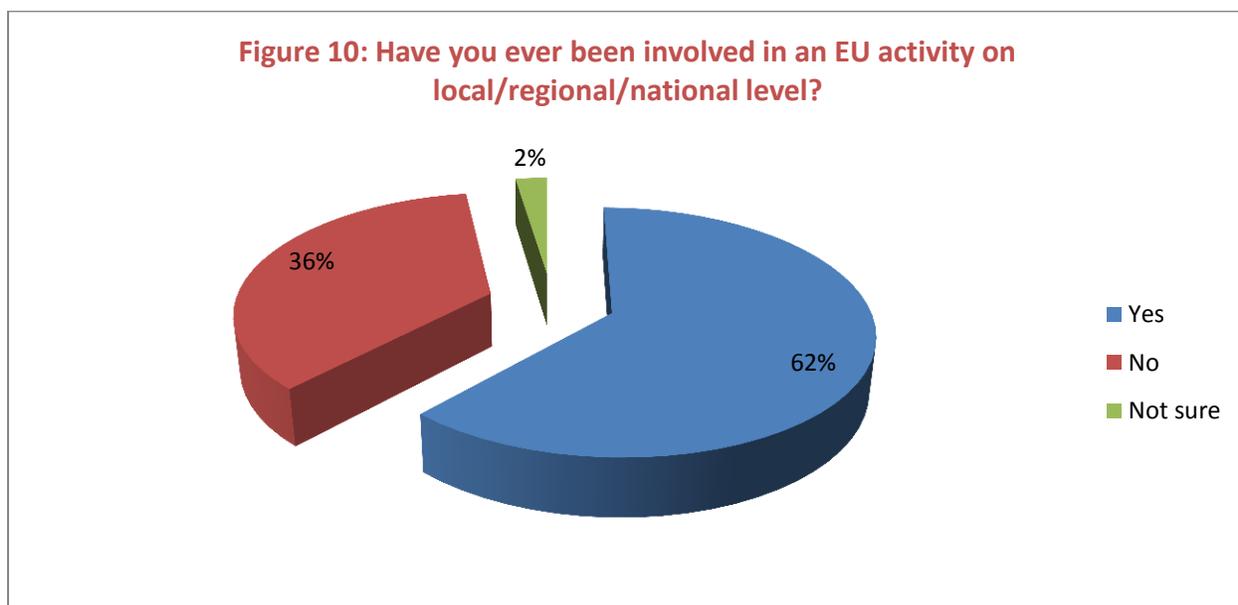
Answers to the question of the influence of the EU in your daily life, is presented through the following figure.



As you can see on a figure 9- 47 answered that there is no impact on their daily life. The reason for this is, as they say, lack of information, failure to recognize and ignoring the potential impact. The second group is 62 of them, who think that there is influence, but it's not big. 34 of them said they have a major influence on studies and work, and that the EU has enabled to participate in

projects and communicate with different people. 39 of respondents indicated that the EU's influence on daily life is reflected in the free movement and work regulations in various fields, rights and obligations. At the end, 28 of them stated that the impact is reflected in protecting them as consumers, the choice of food and similar.

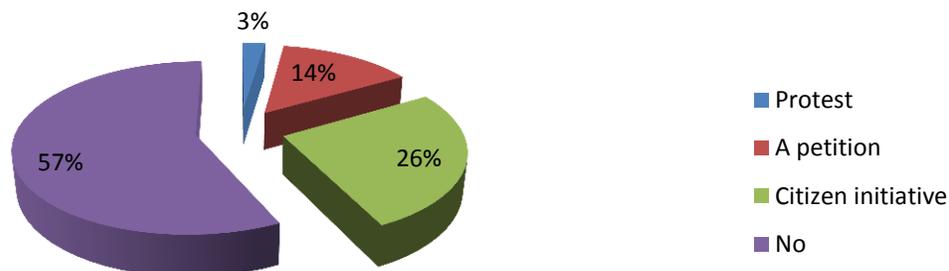
Figure 10 shows the participation of respondents in some of the EU activities. Below are descriptions of some of the EU's activities, where the respondents participated.



A large number of respondents, 62%, say that they have participated in at least one activity through various programs such as Youth in Action, Erasmus, various projects at the local level, but also internationally. Also, they participated in various campaigns in schools and Universities, as well as petitions. As opposed to them 36% said they have never participated and 2% are not sure that they took a part.

Asked whether he took part in the protests, citizen initiatives and petitions on EU issues, respondents gave the following answers.

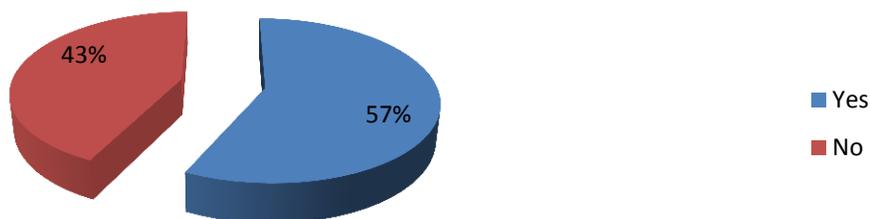
Figure 11: Have you ever taken part in a protest/citizen initiative/debate or signed a petition on an EU issue?



The largest number of respondents, as many as 57% had never participated in any form of protest, petition or citizen initiatives. As opposed to them 26% of respondents participated in citizen initiatives on topics of employment, wage reductions to politicians, issues of maternity, Concessions of Croatian roads, water issues, "South and Talk", "Stop Vivisection", "Against Monsanto", "Zuber report" etc. . Only 3% took part in a protest, and 14% have signed a petition on animal rights (particularly bees), against the Croatian accession to the EU, the Environmental Protection Act and similar.

Figure 12 shows the answers to question relating to participation in voluntary campaigns, actions, initiatives at a local and national level.

Figure 12: Have you ever been involved in volunteering campaigns/interest groups/initiatives on local or national level?



The percentage of respondents who took part in various voluntary campaigns or initiatives is 57%. The respondents participated in various initiatives and campaigns such as: projects at the local level, Anima & Couro event, the protection of animals, promote election for EU Parliament, the initiative for flood relief, in organizations, against privatization and



Environmental Devastation, the campaigns of LGBT organizations, environmental protection , concert and women's rights. The rest of the of respondents, 43%, did not participate voluntary initiatives, not campaigns.

Can you suggest any innovative activities for enhancing citizens active participation in your community? If yes, please specify.:

- Construction of a common garden, cooperative production, urban gardens, etc.
- More sub grants for small community projects and small organizations
- Educational visit to Brussels and Strasbourg
- Visit of representatives of the EU Parliament at the local level and communication with the local citizens about the EU institutions, their rights, obligations and priorities
- The organization of the music festival with the EU debates on EU issues
- Theatre through different method
- Info points and applications for smart phones
- Simulation of the decision-making process at the local level
- Common meals with the representatives of of the Parliament, where it would be talked about important issues in a nice atmosphere
- Public workshops with local people for culture, sport and awareness
- Showing ordinary people who have changed something, or contributed to the positive effect
- Cookery swap - different cultures and traditions
- Movies from different countries in public places once a month
- Outdoor activities, such pic - nic for children and youth
- Innovative campaign about awareness and impact
- Reducing red tape and simplifying procedures between EU representatives and local citizens
- Extra chapters for schools and the University on opportunities in the EU and at the local level
- Debate and discussion

When asked what respondents think how the EU to become more appealing to citizens, they gave the following answers:

- Less bureaucracy, less formal and more reforms



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- The positive side of the EU, to reduce the bad aspect of the media on this issue
- Possibility to work after studies and scholarships
- Clarification of the responsibilities of institutions and respect for them and reducing their salaries
- Further clarification about the benefits of citizens in the EU
- Raising awareness at the local level
- More transparent, open, accessible, less corruption and centralization
- Less talk, more action
- Organizing public scientific event in promoting EU innovation, technology would be very interesting as well as civic activities
- Promoting diversity, regardless of region, religion and nation in addition to promoting youth exchange
- Prohibition of producing unhealthy food
- Actions in the area of prevention of big business lobbies
- More interactive web sites
- Promoting the benefits, rights and obligations constantly, not only through elections
- Less discrimination between Member States
- Improvement of information, with simple vocabulary
- Joint concrete actions, not division on the left and right



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CONCLUSION

The opinion poll on the perception of citizens of seven countries on knowledge of the rights of citizens of the EU, as well as the rights and obligations of representatives of the EU Parliament, and to become a candidate for the elections at the local, national and EU level and the accessibility of information on the work of the EU institutions and the rights of citizens from different levels, was conducted from April 1 to June 30, 2014. We examined 210 individuals, a total of 14 questions. Funding for public opinion research were provided by the EU program "Europe for Citizens"

Results of this analysis are important in shaping our efforts for further the development of horizontal, but also vertical communication institutions and citizens and the institutions themselves. During the implementation of the research held elections for the EU Parliament.

The study included questions that are supposed to present the knowledge and information:

- About their rights as EU citizens, use of mechanisms if these rights are not complied and participation in the life of their community, but also at other levels,
- Who are the national representatives in the EU Parliament, their rights and obligations and to to be a candidate at different levels,
- the accessibility of information on the work of the EU institutions and citizen's rights, as well as who should provide them from the actors, but also the impact of the EU on their daily lives.

Besides knowledge and information of the aforementioned, the research included the perception of public opinion on innovative methods to encourage active participation in the local community and how to make the EU more appealing to citizens.

Study of the attitudes of public opinion evaluated the quality of horizontal communication between citizens and institutions, but also lay the foundations for further development and improvement of the the activities of institutions, particularly at the local level in the field of active citizenship. Also are recommended a variety of innovative methods to encourage active citizenship and civic participation at different levels. That there is space for additional information to citizens and strengthen the positive impression of the citizen's rights, shown by the results which indicate that only 22% of respondents completely know their rights, or 61% to a certain extent, and 37% did not know what should be done if their rights are not respected while those who would know what to do a certain extent is 34%. Although half of respondents



know who are the national representatives in the EU Parliament, the percentage of respondents who know the rights and obligations of Members of the EU is 18%, which seems to cause the low turnout at elections for the European Parliament. In that regard, the quality of informing citizens about elections for the EU parliament has been more significant and effective. However, the percentage of respondents who know how to become a candidate in the local / national / EU elections is 66%.

The interest for additional information can be seen from the results of providing information on the work of the EU institutions and citizen's rights. Respondents believe that local actors do not provide enough information about citizen's rights and the work of the EU institutions (71%), because of what they find (88 respondents) to just local actors need to improve providing of such information to citizens. That the accessible of this information should be a significant extent by the fact that 56% of respondents believe that information is accessible only to a certain extent. Weak quality of information on European integration and EU policies, leading to the results of questions relating to the EU's influence on the daily lives of of the respondents. 163 respondents believe that there is an influence through regulation (39), food (28), study and work (34), while the rest believe that this effect is not big. However, 47 of them considered that there is no impact.

The percentage of respondents who participate in one of the EU's activities is 62%, where the respondents say that they were involved through various EU programs. This result suggests that informing by CSOs on various programs is more effective for encouraging and promoting active citizenship. In this regard, it is interesting that contrary to the previous results the percentage of respondents who did not participate in any protest, citizen initiative or a petition on EU issues is even 57%. However, this percentage (57%) refers to the participation on a voluntary citizens' initiative, protest or a petition, or those who did not participate is 43%.

The EU to become more attractive to citizens, respondents state that require a lesser degree of formality with more reforms, additional explanations about the obligations of institutions and respect for them, as well as the benefits of citizens in the EU, while raising awareness at the local level with a more transparent, open , available work of institutions with less corruption and centralization.



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The consequences of mobility, lifestyle changes, and the use of innovative technologies, the respondents believe that some of the methods that can encourage the active participation of community life following: construction of a common garden, cooperative production, urban gardens, more sub grants for small community projects and small organizations , the visit of representatives of the EU Parliament at the local level and communication with the local citizenry of the EU institutions, their rights, obligations and priorities, but also through the organization of the music festival with the EU debates on EU issues applications for smart phones, simulating the process of decision making at the local level, organizing shared meals with the representatives, where to talk about important issues in a nice atmosphere, cookery swap - different cultures and traditions.

The conclusion of this research shows that the need to focus efforts for further development of horizontal, but also vertical communication of institutions and citizens and the institutions in the field of information, knowledge and perception of civil rights and possibilities of active participation in community life, as well as improving the functioning of of institutions, especially at the local level in the field of active citizenship. Special emphasis is on on youth and new innovative methods of access to information that may have a significant impact on creating a positive perception of all citizens.



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