



NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTE

Public Perceptions of Politics and Government

*Findings from a June –July 2014 Survey of
1,577 adults over the age of 18 in
Moldova*

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Methodology

- This survey was designed by IMAS in consultation with Lake Research Partners, and administered by IMAS. The survey was conducted using in-person interviews with professional interviewers. The survey reached a total of 1,577 adults countrywide in Moldova, excluding the region of Transnistria, and was conducted June to July 2014. The margin of error for this poll is +/- 2.5%.
- In interpreting survey results, all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error—that is, the results of a survey may differ from those that would be obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of responses to a particular question. For example, if a response to a given question which all respondents answered was 50%, we could be 95% confident that the true percentage would fall within plus or minus 2.5% of this percentage, or between 47.5% and 52.5%. Of course, the sampling error is greater for subgroups.
- This survey was funded by a grant from USAID. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of either USAID or the United States Government.

Summary of Key Findings

Strategic Summary: The Political Context

- Despite improved perceptions of their country's European trajectory, Moldovans continue to be pessimistic about the perceived lack of positive change in their country.
 - Similar to the survey in February, only one-quarter of Moldovans believe the country is headed in the right direction and nearly three-quarters are dissatisfied with their quality of life.
 - Additionally, a majority believes their lives have not changed in the past year.
- Economic and political instability continue to dominate Moldovans' concerns for the future.
 - Fully three-quarters of Moldovans are dissatisfied with the country's current economic situation, an increase from February. Additionally, Moldovans' sense of concern regarding their personal economic situations is near-universal.
 - Unemployment, low standard of living, and low wages persist in voters' minds as major concerns facing the country.
 - Moldovans are critical of the government's efforts to influence economic growth.
 - Moldovans express dissatisfaction, by margins of 3:1, with the level of information they have regarding the country's economic situation and security.
 - They also have less confidence in national government than in local government, and tend to seek out help from local authorities and elected officials (mayor or councilors) rather than MPs.
- Compared to previous studies, interest in becoming more involved in politics has increased among younger people and women. Overall, however, these are two groups that tend to participate less in political life than their older, male counterparts.

Strategic Summary: Views of The Players and Parties

- As in February, Moldovans continue to express dissatisfaction with, and a general lack of confidence in, national political and governmental bodies, including political parties, parliament, and the presidency. They express limited confidence in mayors and local councilors.

Strategic Summary: The International Context

- As in February, a plurality of Moldovans believes the association agreement with the EU is a good thing for Moldova, even if they do not necessarily favor an outright alliance.
- On other fronts, however, impressions of the European Union have improved since February, as Moldovans are more open to the benefits of joining the EU.
 - Freedom of movement, respect for order and the rule of law, as well as individual freedoms are particularly appealing for Moldovans.
- At the same time as Moldovans increasingly favor a pro-European foreign policy, they have shifted away from a pro-Russian posture. However, opinions are divided and support has not solidified for one side or the other.
- If Moldovans had to vote today, they would split down the middle between joining the EU and the Eurasian Customs Union.
 - This is a shift from February when support for aligning with Russia was at nearly fifty percent.

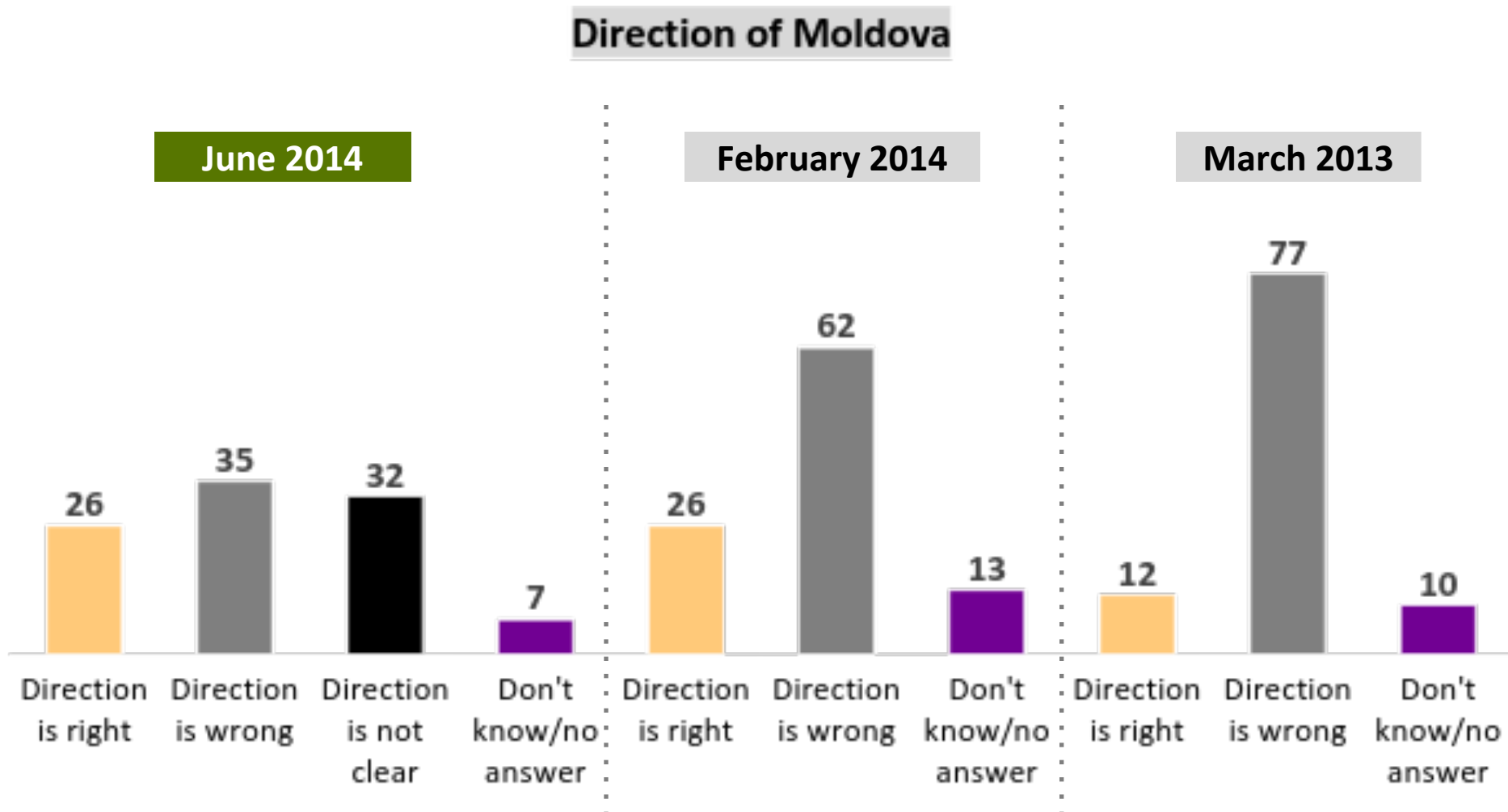
Strategic Summary: Engaging the Public

- Voters are split between favoring closer ties to the European Union and Russia. The issue has become more polarizing. It would be prudent for politicians to acknowledge multiple perspectives.
- Moldovans rely on friends and family members when they are discussing politics. Messages that hit all sections of the community are more likely to gain traction in the public consciousness and succeed.
- The individual is considered the most important factor when electing a candidate, perhaps in part due to the negative perceptions Moldovans have of their existing political parties. There is also a desire for more women and youth to participate in politics, but they are generally less enthusiastic about participating than older, male voters.
- When deciding their vote for Parliamentary elections, a plurality of Moldovans are undecided. Furthermore, less than one-third are firmly committed to voting for a particular political party. The dissatisfaction with the status quo means that any party that can credibly seize the mantle of change has the opportunity to make significant gains.

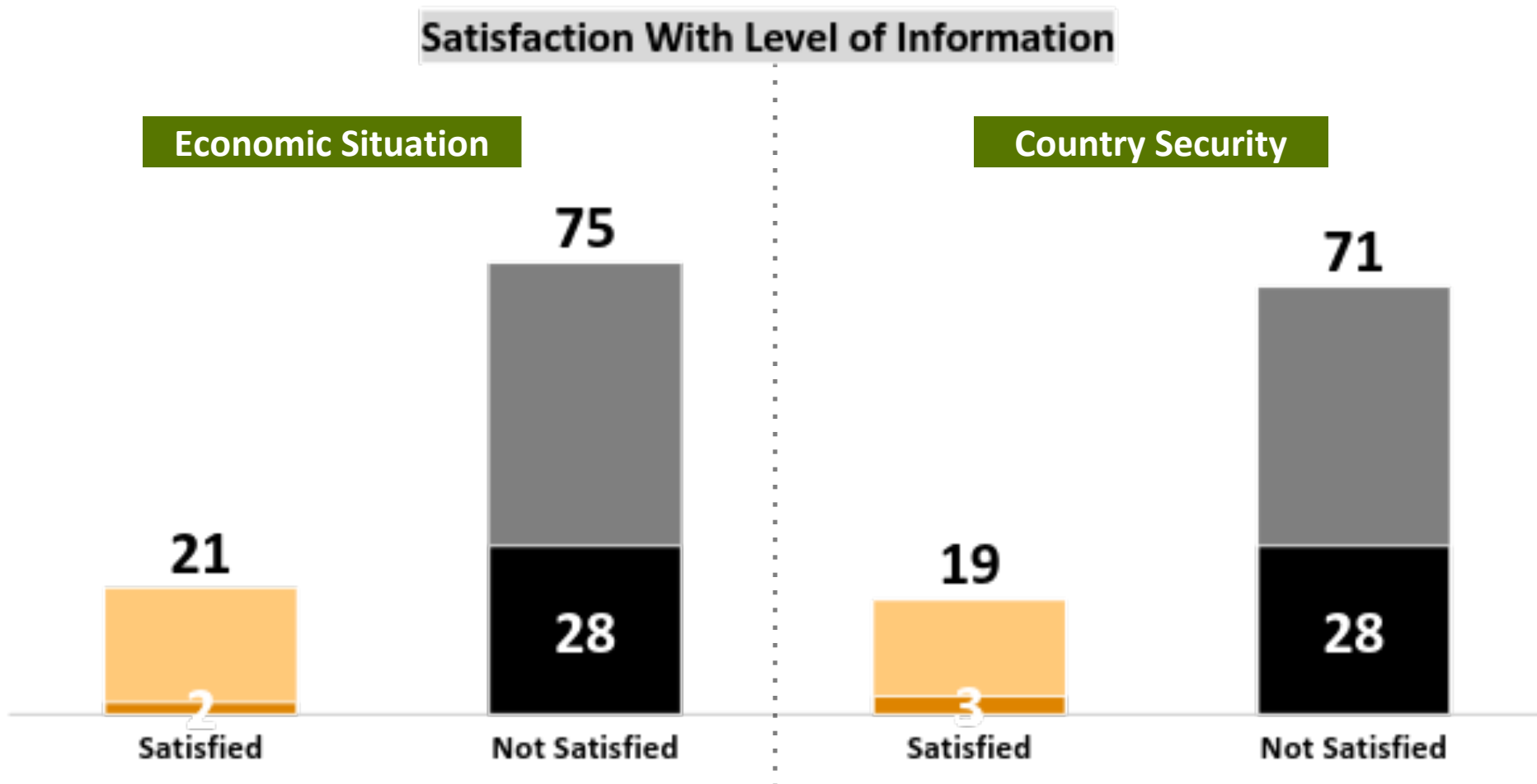
The Political Context

Attitudes on the Direction of the Country, Political Figures, and the National Issue Agenda

Moldovans continue to be more pessimistic than optimistic in their outlook on the future, but a significant number have mixed feelings.

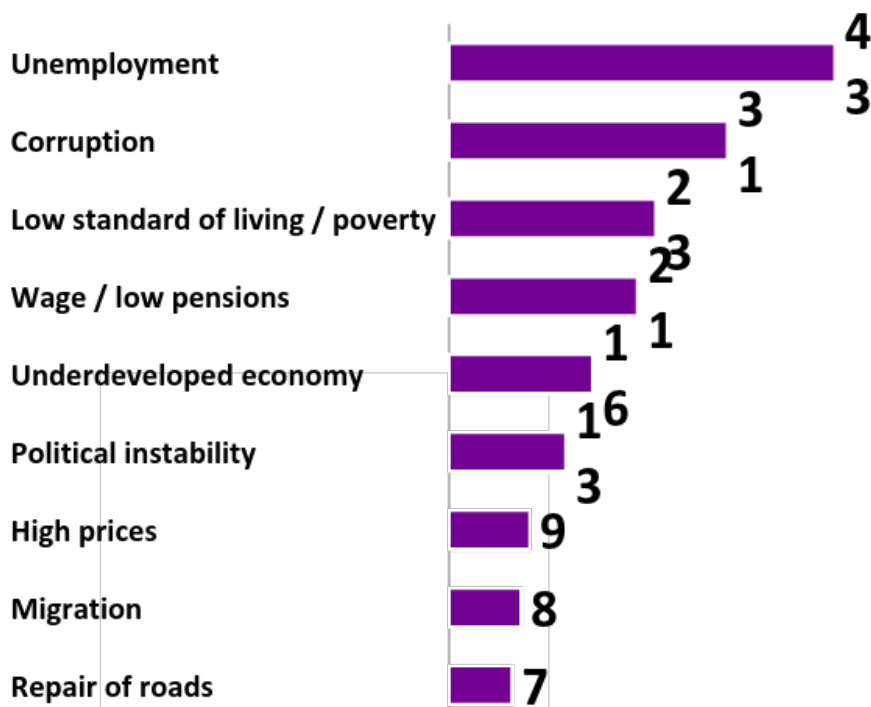


More than seven-in-ten continue to be dissatisfied with the level of information they have regarding Moldova's economy and national security.



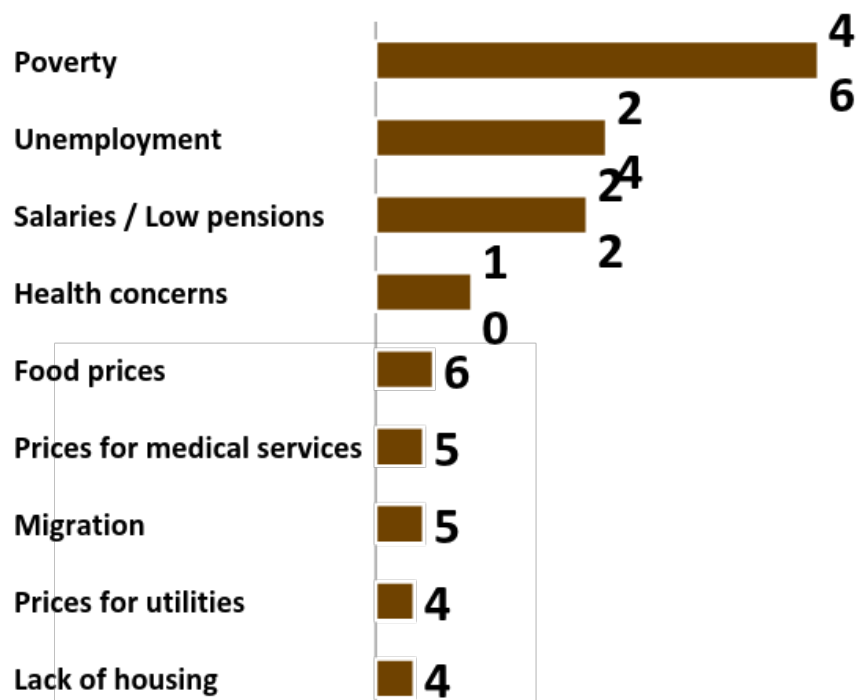
Official corruption shares the stage with a range of economic concerns when Moldovans are asked to name the top issues facing the country. When focusing on the challenges facing their families however, economic concerns predominate, especially surrounding poverty, unemployment, and the high cost of living. The top issues have not shifted that much over the last year.

Top Issues Facing the Country*



February 2014: Top Issues – 45% Unemployment, 34% Corruption, 31% Poverty, 28% Salaries/Pensions small
 March 2013: Top Issues – 43% Unemployment, 32% Political Instability, 27% Poverty, 27% Corruption

Top Issues Facing Your Family*



February 2014: Top Issues – 41% Poverty, 28% Salaries/Pensions small, 25% Unemployment, 11% High prices of services
 March 2013: Top Issues – 44% Poverty, 28% Unemployment, 21% Low Salaries and Pensions, 17% Health

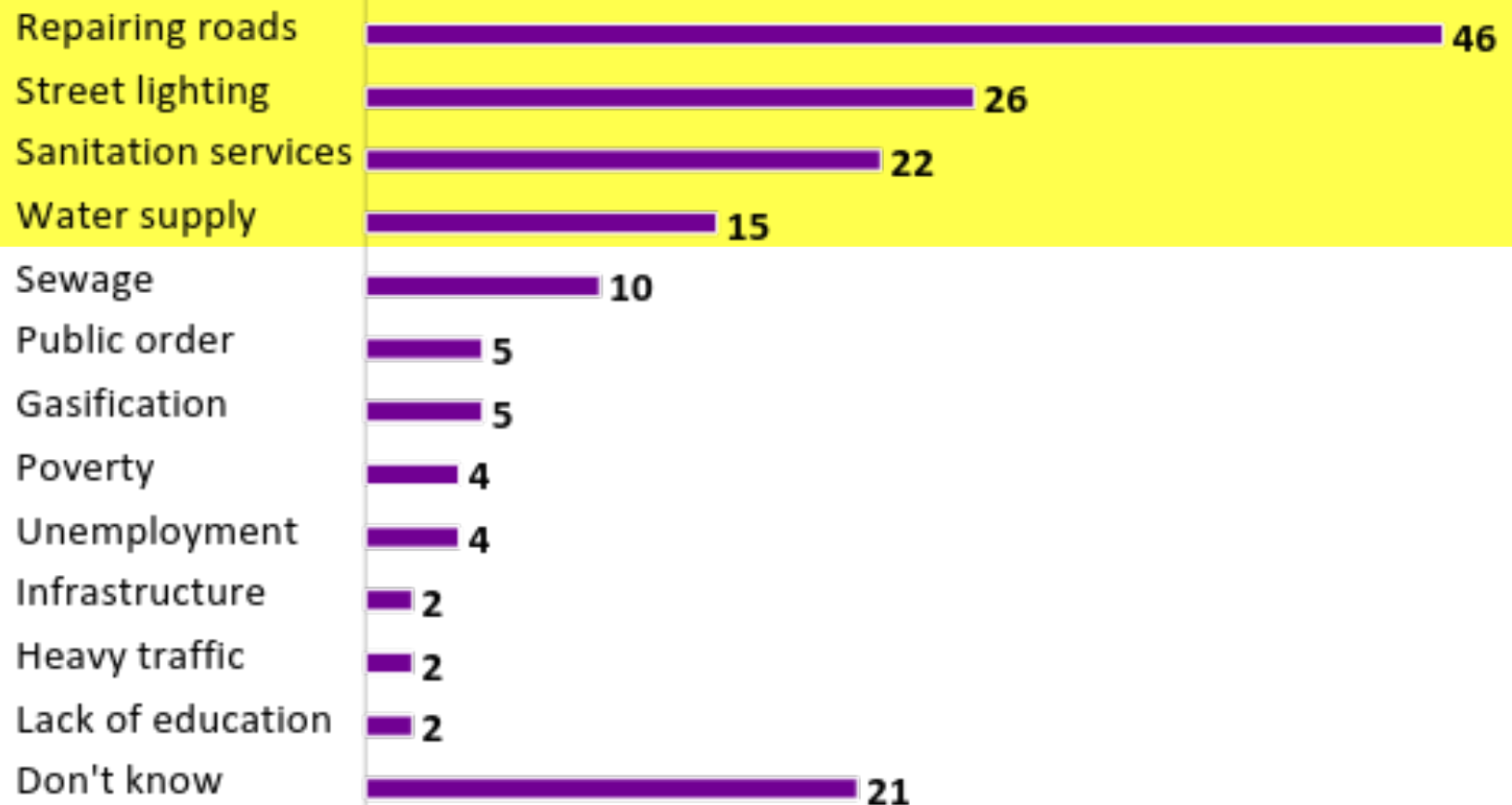
*Each respondent provided their top three choices (in no particular order), which we aggregated for the purposes of these graphs.

C3: What are the top three issues facing our country today?

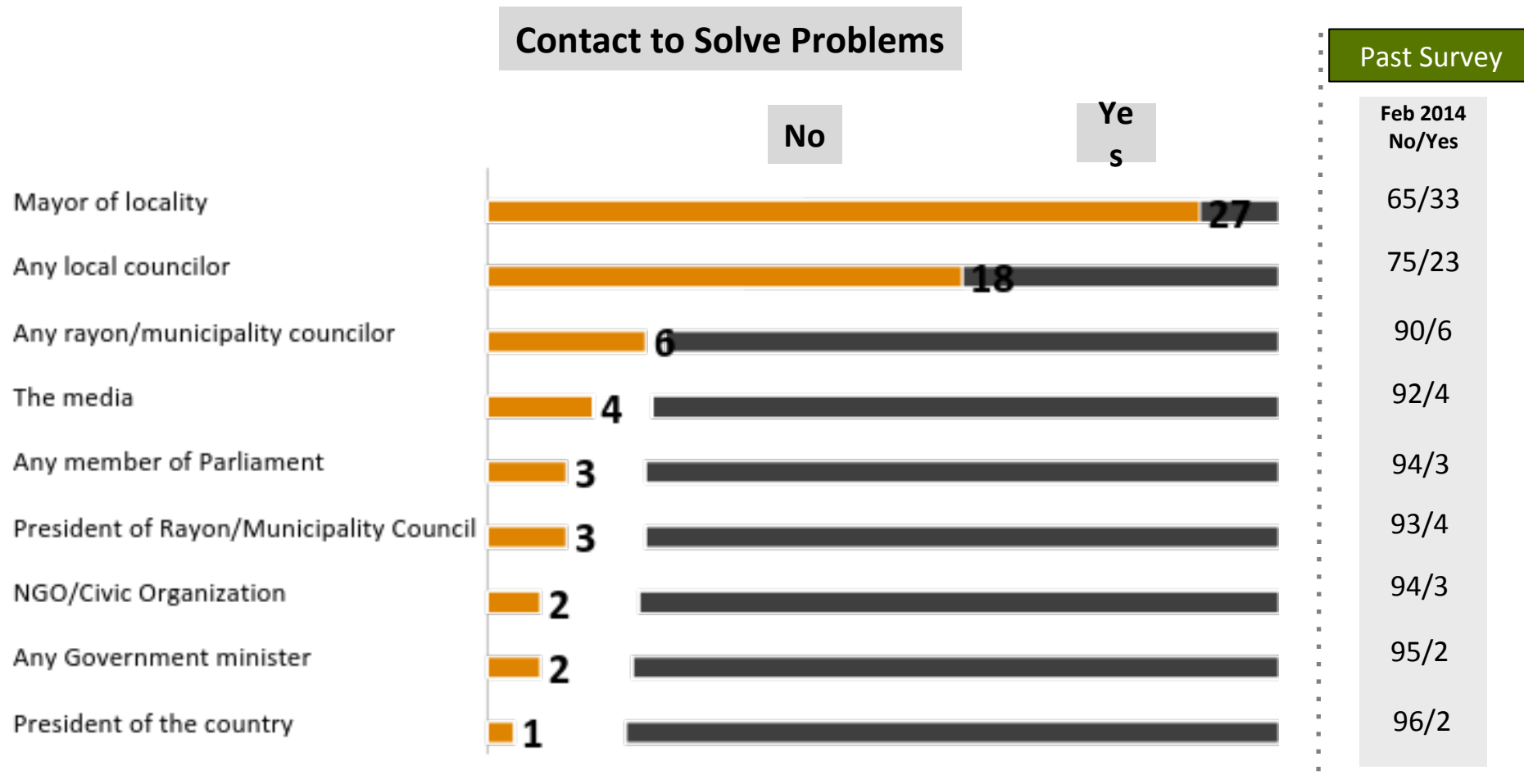
C4: What are the top three issues facing you family today?

A range of issues emerge when Moldovans focus on their immediate neighborhoods, including road repair, street lighting, sanitation, and water supply.

What are the top three issues facing your (street/block/mahala) today?



In order to find a solution to their problems, just over one-quarter of respondents say they have contacted their mayor, slightly fewer have reached out to a local councilor. Virtually no one reports having contacted officials at a higher level—or having contacted the media.



G2: In order to find a solution for your problems, to obtain an advice, have you contacted any of the following types of people, in the last 6 months ...?

Other than the church, and to a much lesser degree the media, most institutions inspire relatively little confidence. Moldovans are much more likely to place trust in their local government than other levels of government. Moldovans express the least confidence in political parties and parliament.

Confidence in Institutions

Little Confidence

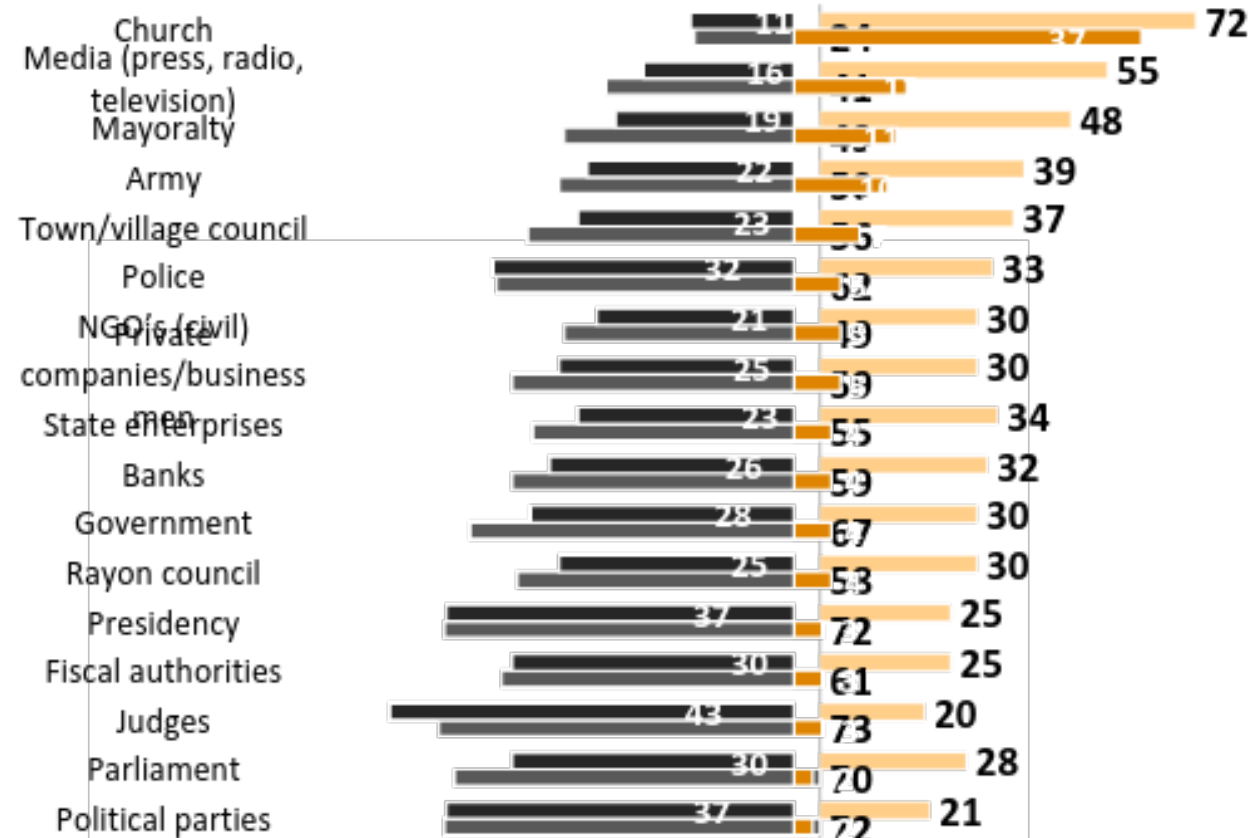
Much Confidence

Past Surveys

DK/NA

Feb 2014
Little/Much

March 2013
Little/Much



3

19/79

22/75

5

49/46

41/55

3

47/51

49/47

11

n/a

n/a

7

n/a

n/a

5

71/26

67/29

21

54/26

49/30

12

n/a

n/a

11

56/38

53/39

9

63/31

57/36

2

79/19

81/16

12

n/a

n/a

3

78/20

80/16

13

n/a

n/a

7

n/a

n/a

3

80/18

81/16

7

78/18

75/20

Moldovans tend to believe that most basic democratic and social principles are accorded little respect in their country, including access to a living wage, employment opportunities, the provision of basic needs, and the will of the majority. Access to education and the freedom to criticize the government are seen as commanding at least some respect. Only one-third of Moldovans believe free and fair elections are respected.

Respect for democratic and Social Principles

Past Surveys

A Small Extent

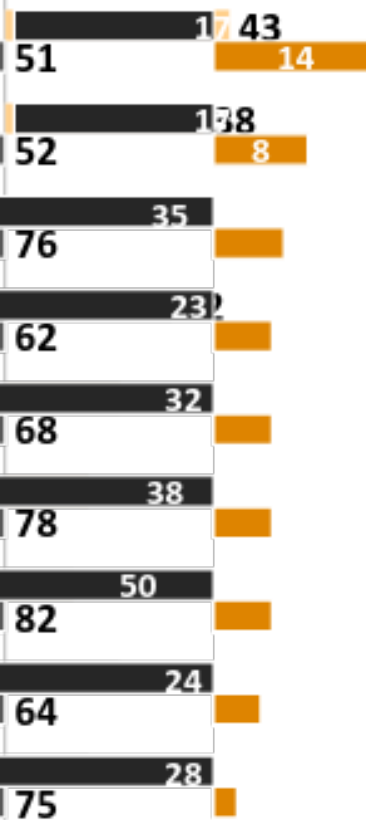
A Big Extent

DK/NA

Feb 2014
Small/Big

March 2013
Small/Big

Access to education
for everyone
Freedom for anyone
to criticize
Government
Providing basic
needs for everyone
(housing, food,
water, etc.)
Free and fair
elections
Freedom to
establish a business
Access to
employment for
everyone
Access to a living
wage
The rights of
minorities (ethnic,
sexual, etc.)
Will of majority



6

10

6

6

10

6

6

14

9

55/38

57/34

81/13

63/29

72/18

81/13

85/8

65/22

78/14

54/41

47/46

80/16

61/33

66/24

80/16

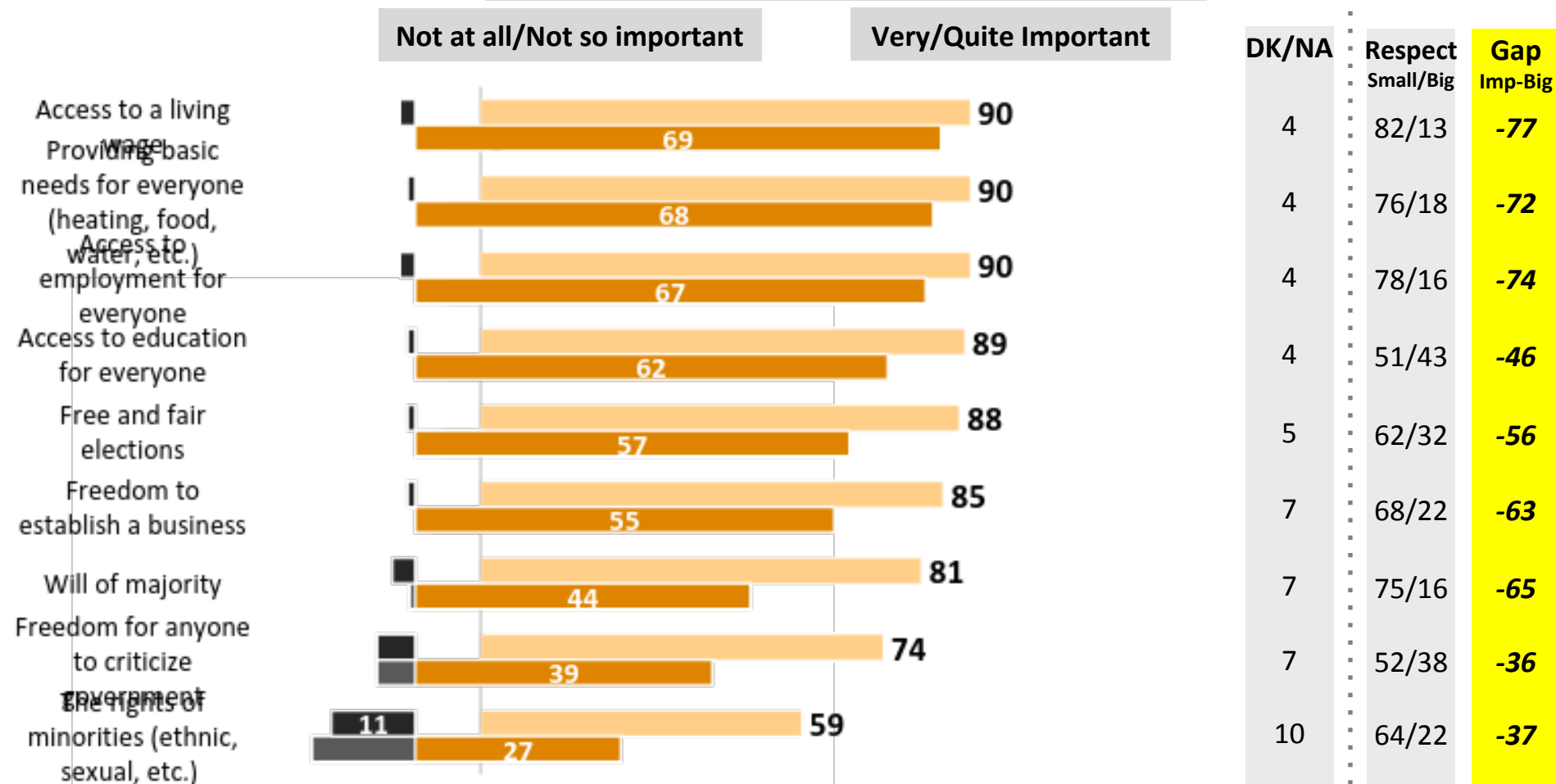
83/13

63/23

76/17

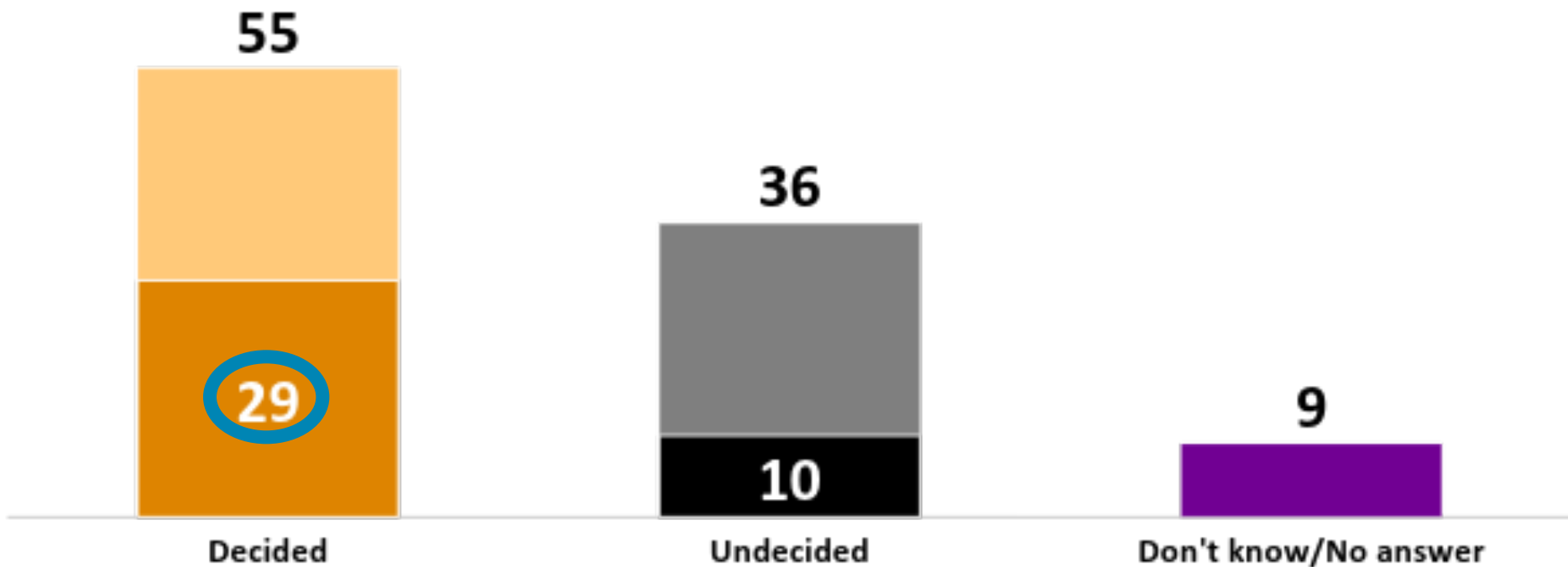
Three-quarters or more of Moldovans believe that all the democratic and social principles described are important, in contrast to the low level of respect accorded those principles. Access to a living wage, employment opportunities, the provision of basic needs, and access to education for all are the most highly prioritized principles.

Importance of democratic and Social Principles



Less than one-third of respondents are firmly committed to voting for a particular party. This dynamic underscores the potential for dramatic movement should a single leader or party seize the mantle of change.

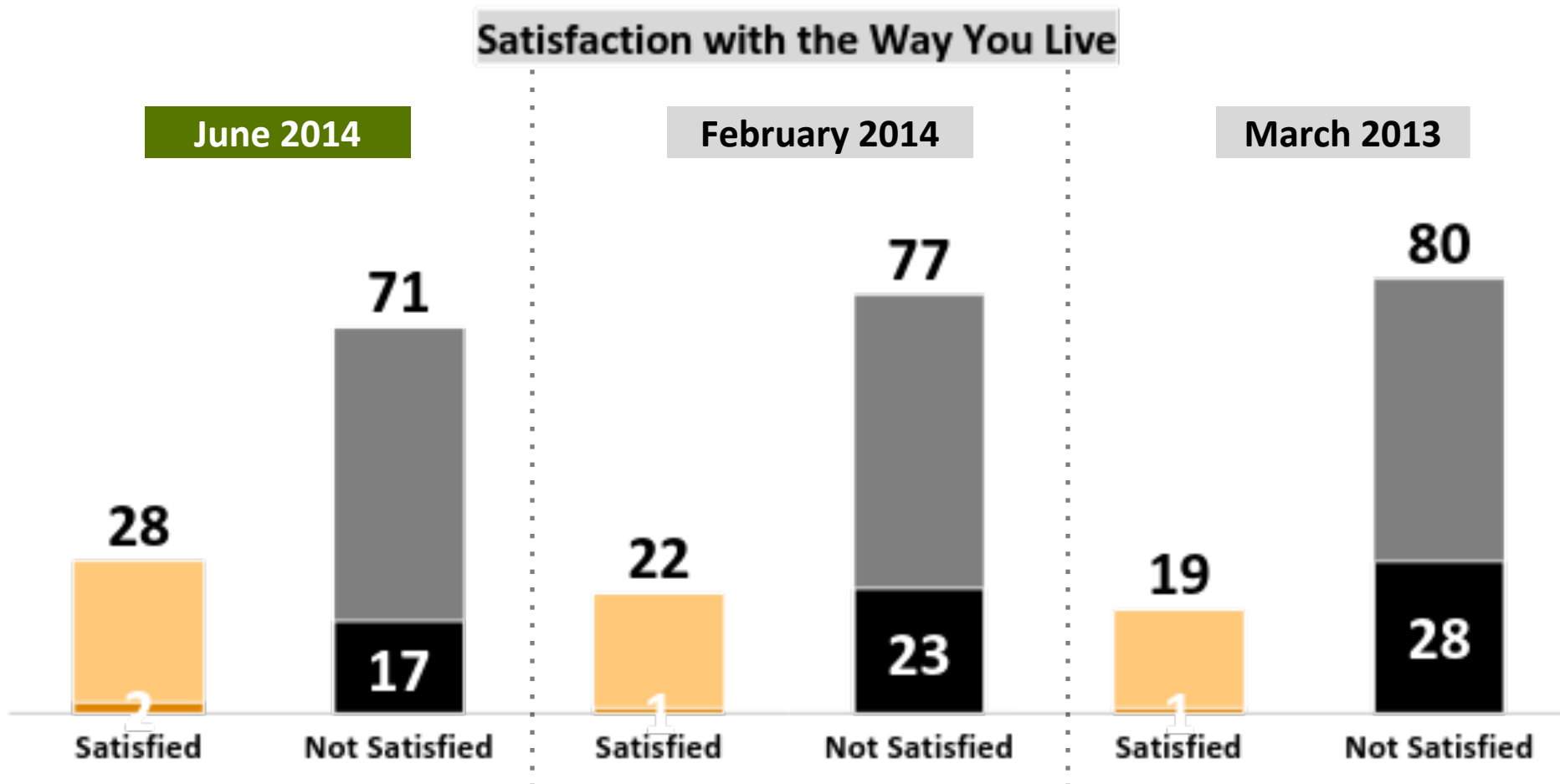
How decided are you to vote for particular political party?



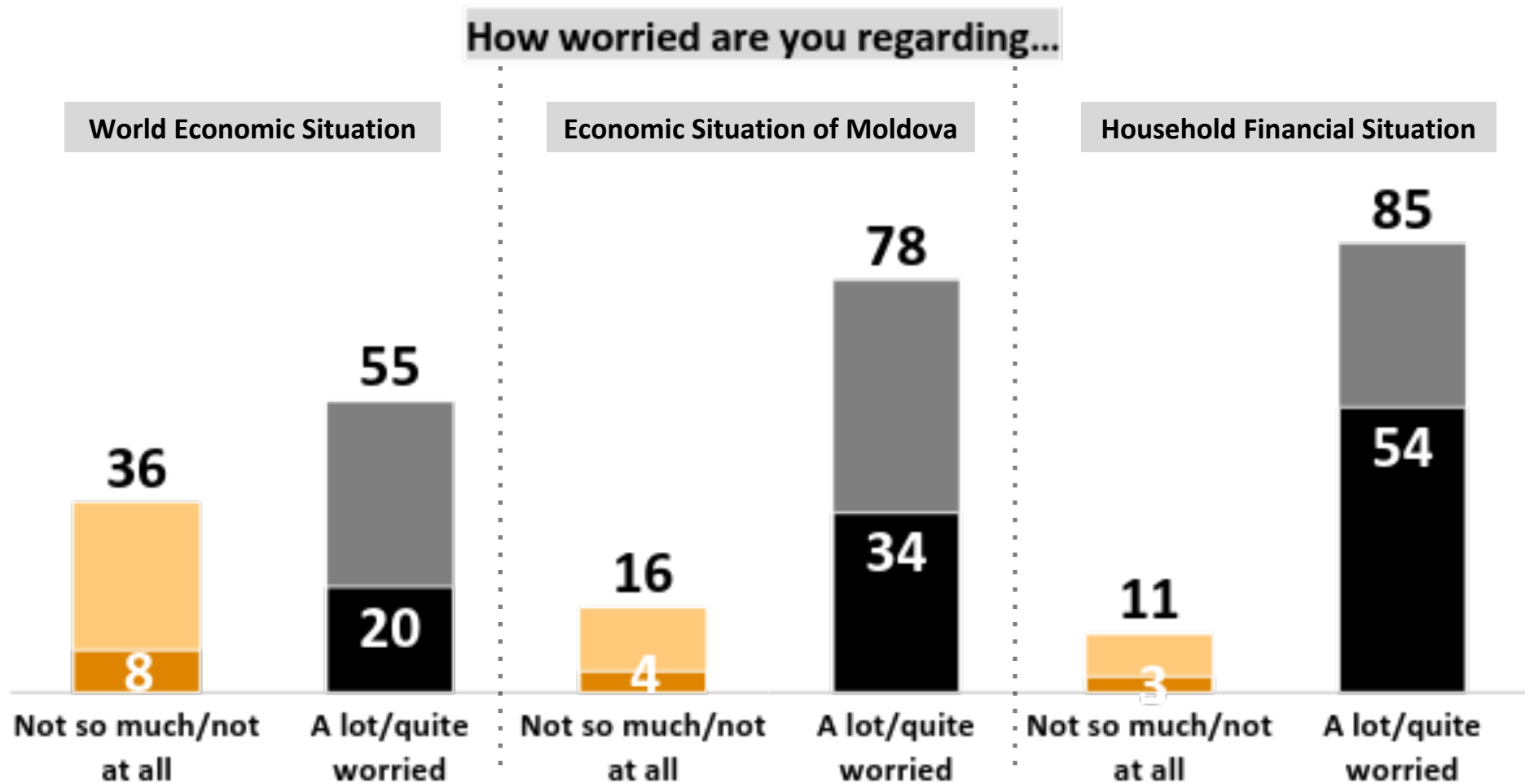
The Economic Context

Attitudes on Living Standards and Key Economic Figures

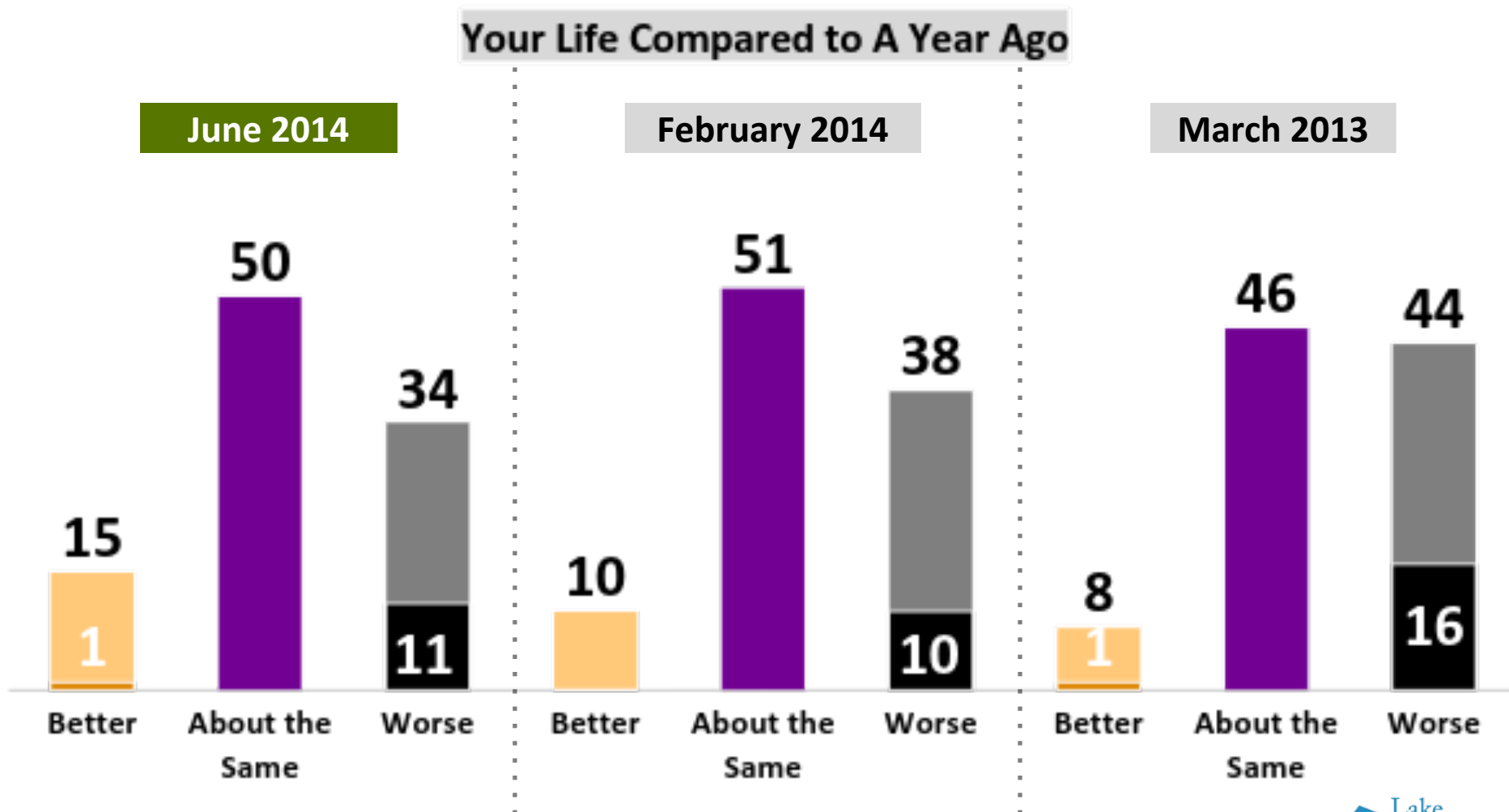
Moldovans' dissatisfaction with their standard of living remains pronounced, but has actually declined somewhat over the past year.



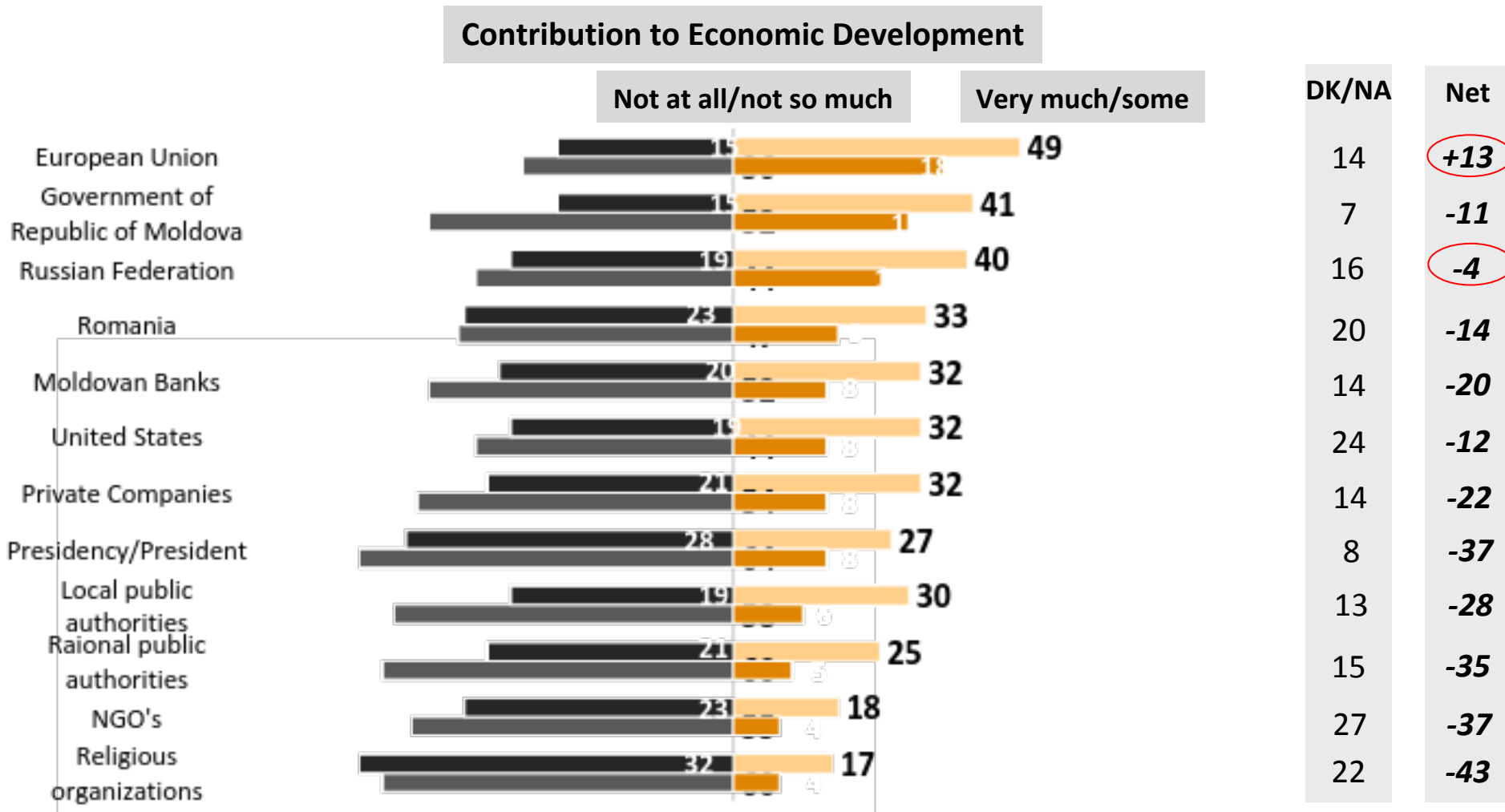
Economic anxiety is prominent and exists on multiple levels. Majorities of Moldovans are worried about the economic situation globally and nationally, but they are especially concerned about financial conditions within their own households.



Half of Moldovans believe that their lives are largely the same as they were a year ago. However, those who perceive a change say things have deteriorated rather than improved, and by more than a 2:1 margin.



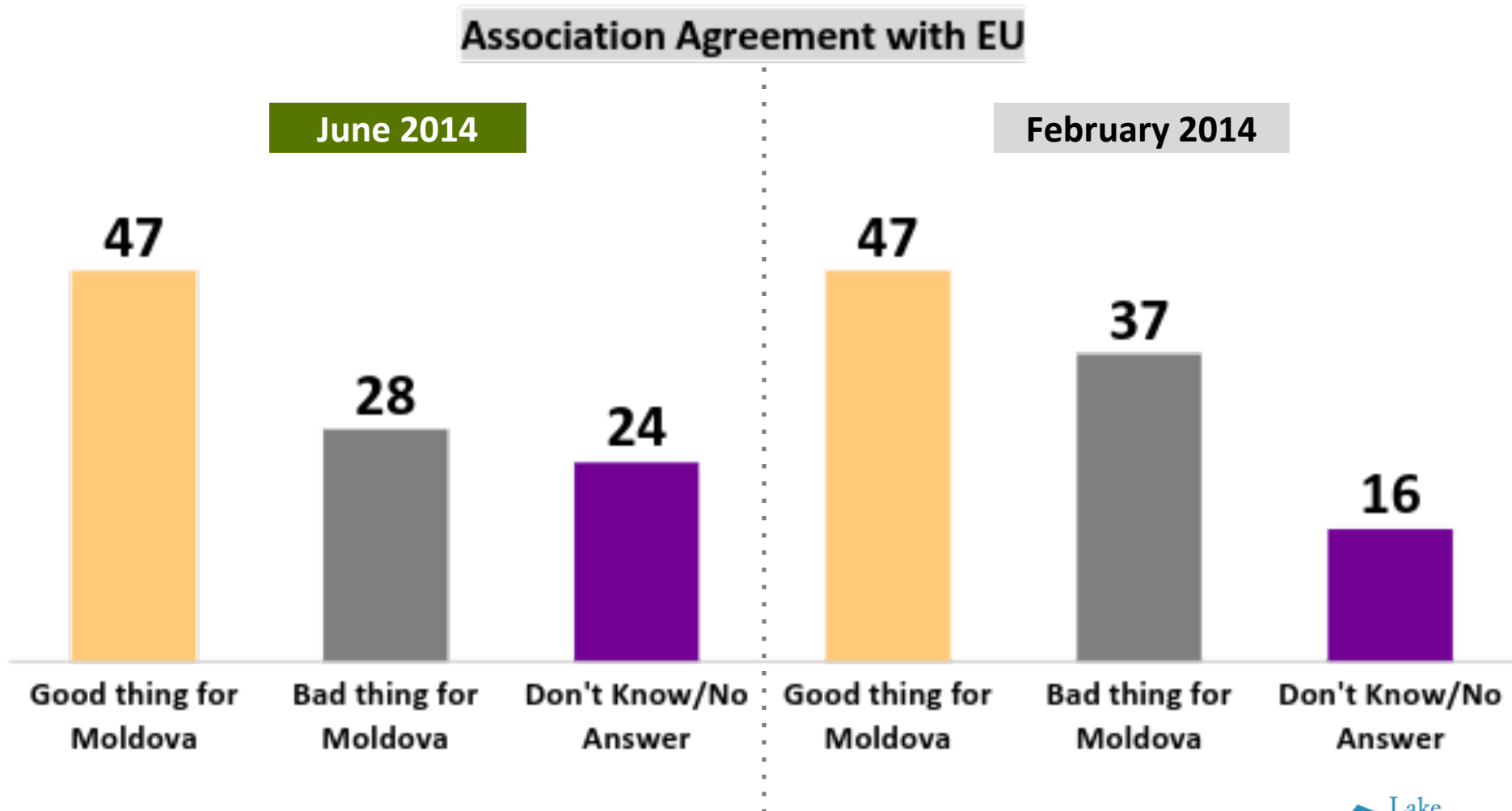
When reviewing institutions' perceived contributions to economic growth, nearly half of respondents believe the European Union contributes at least some degree to economic development in Moldova, the only institution to receive a net-positive rating on this issue. In comparison, a majority says the Moldovan government, Moldovan banks, and the President do not contribute significantly to the country's economic development. Respondents are more divided on the role played by the Russian Federation.



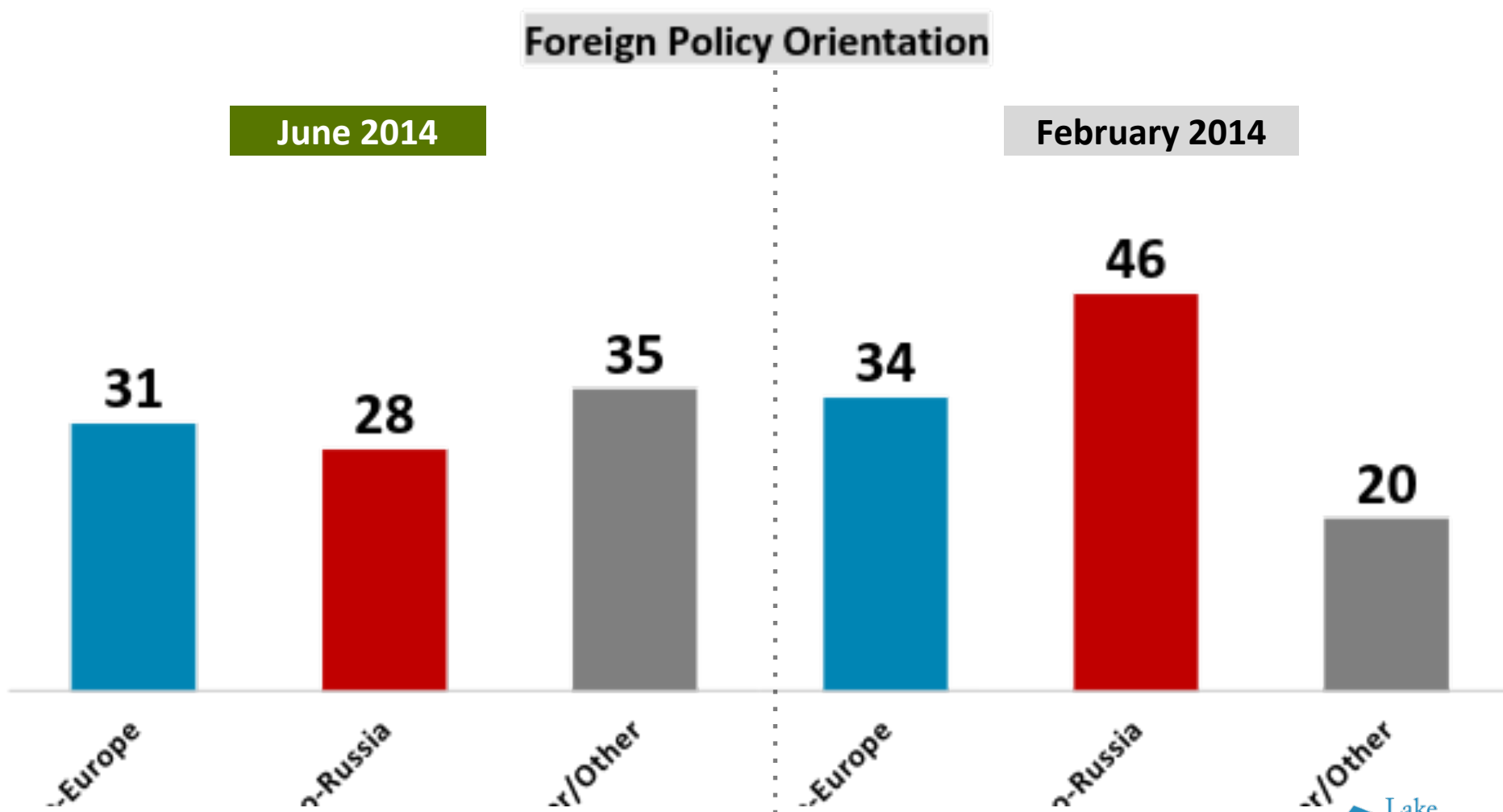
The International Environment

Moldovans' perceptions of the European Union,
Russia, and their place in the world

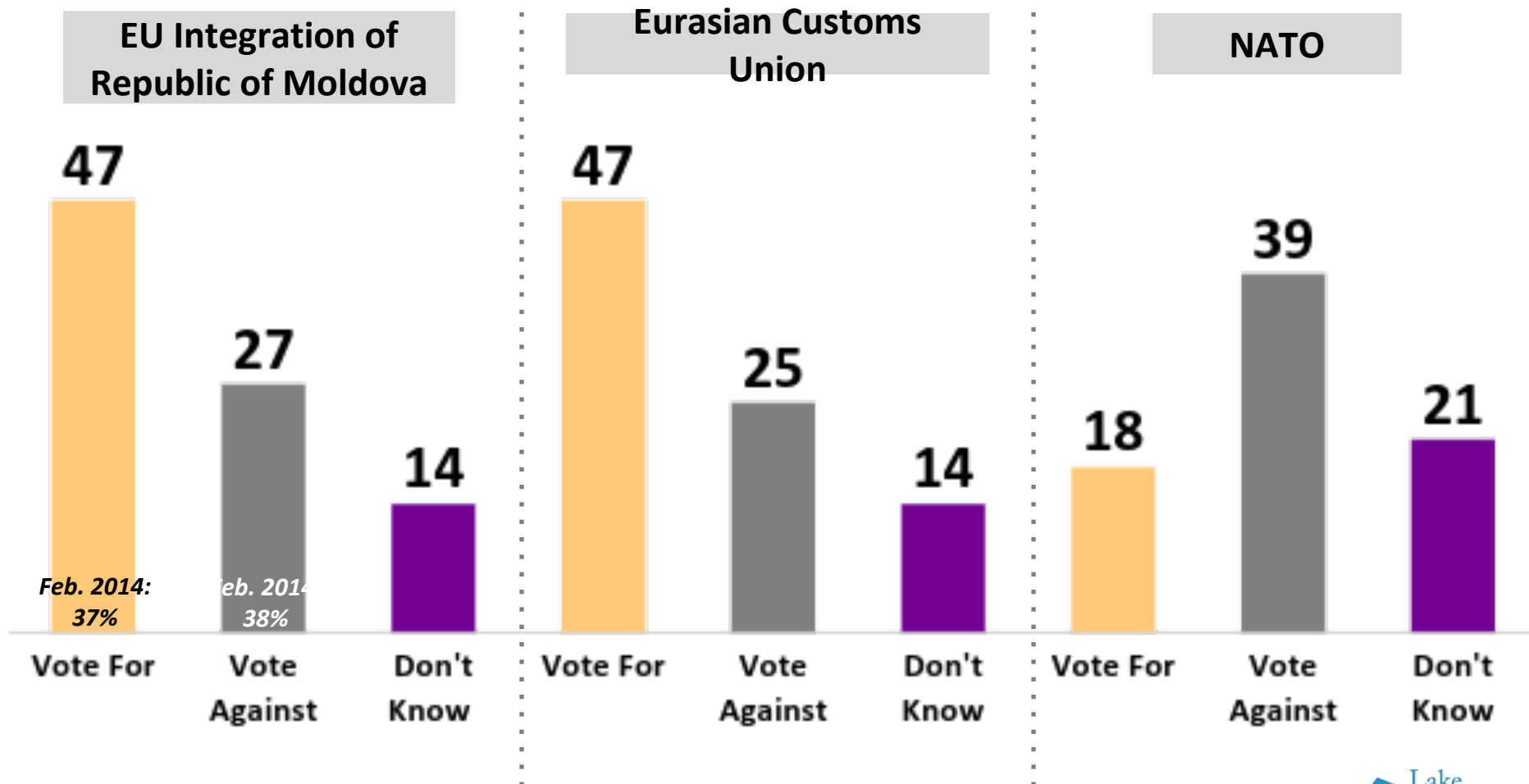
As in February of this year, nearly half of Moldovans believe the Association Agreement with the EU is beneficial for the country. Since that time the number who perceive it will have a negative outcome has declined by nearly ten points.



The pro-Europe sentiment has changed little over the past months while the pro-Russia sentiment has deteriorated noticeably. Across the board, regardless of gender or age, Moldovans have moved away from a pro-Russia foreign policy, but not necessarily toward a pro-Europe policy. They have shifted toward preferring a dual approach.



Similar pluralities of voters would support referendums for EU integration and for a Eurasian Customs Union. By a 2:1 margin, Moldovans oppose a NATO referendum.



Vote FOR – Key Subgroups

EU INTEGRATION (47%)

- Income 6,000+ lei (70%)
- College educated (59%)
- Municipality residents <45 (59%)
- Income 3,000-6,000 lei (56%)
- Employed (53%)
- Rural residents 45+ (52%)

EURASIAN CUSTOMS UNION (47%)

- City residents <14,000 inhabitants (57%)
- Under 45 earning <1,000 lei (56%)
- Men earning <1,000 lei (55%)
- High school or less education (53%)

NATO (18%)

- College educated men (31%)
- Income 6,000+ lei (29%)
- Municipality residents (27%)
- Never married (24%)
- Employed <45 (23%)

Vote AGAINST – Key Subgroups

EU INTEGRATION (27%)

- City residents 14,000+ inhabitants (37%)
- Municipality residents 45+ (37%)
- Divorced (35%) or Widowed (34%)
- Age 65+ (34%) or Men 45+ (34%)
- Unemployed men (33%)
- High school or less education (32%)

EURASIAN CUSTOMS UNIONS (25%)

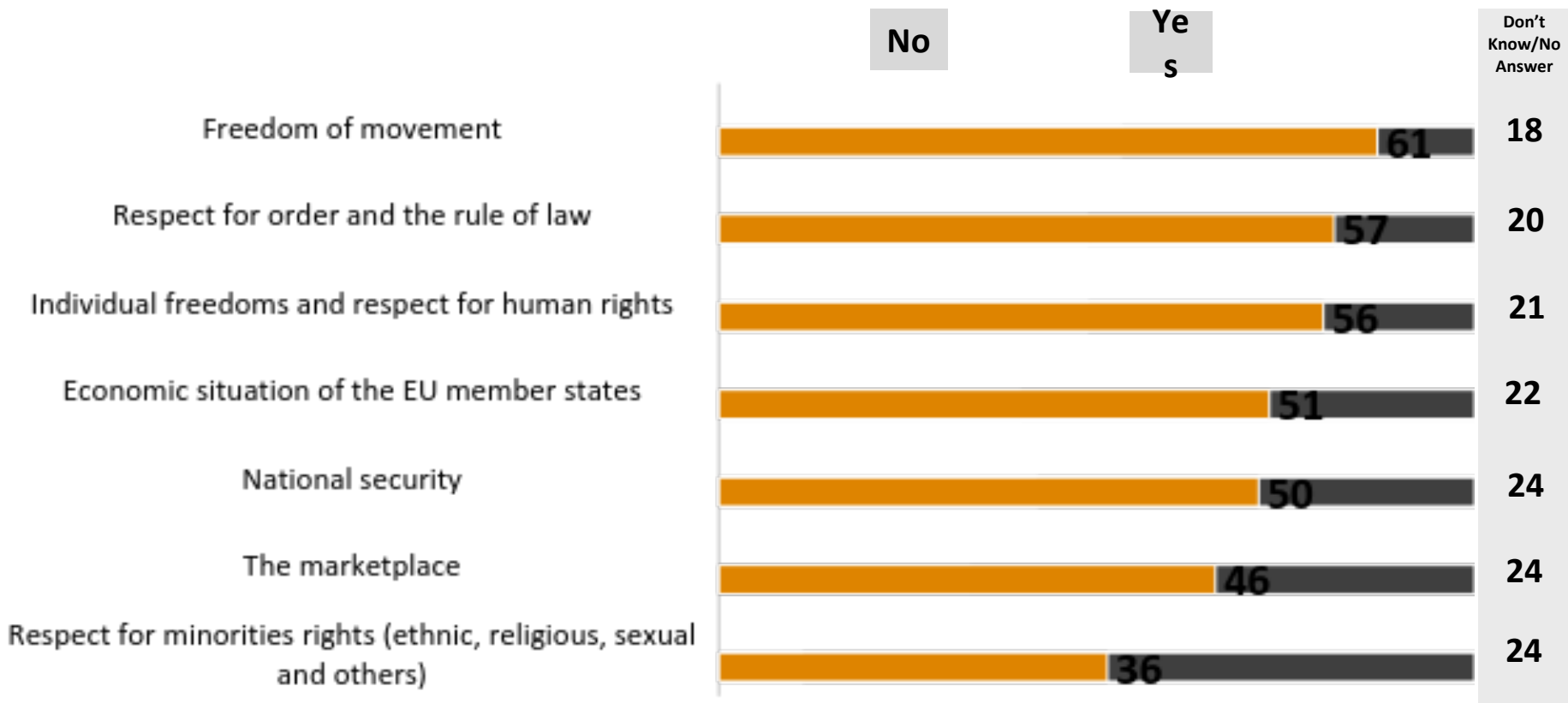
- Income 6,000+ lei (41%)
- Employed 45+ (33%)
- College educated (32%)
- Rural residents 45+ (31%)
- Married 45+ (30%) or Divorced (30%)

NATO (39%)

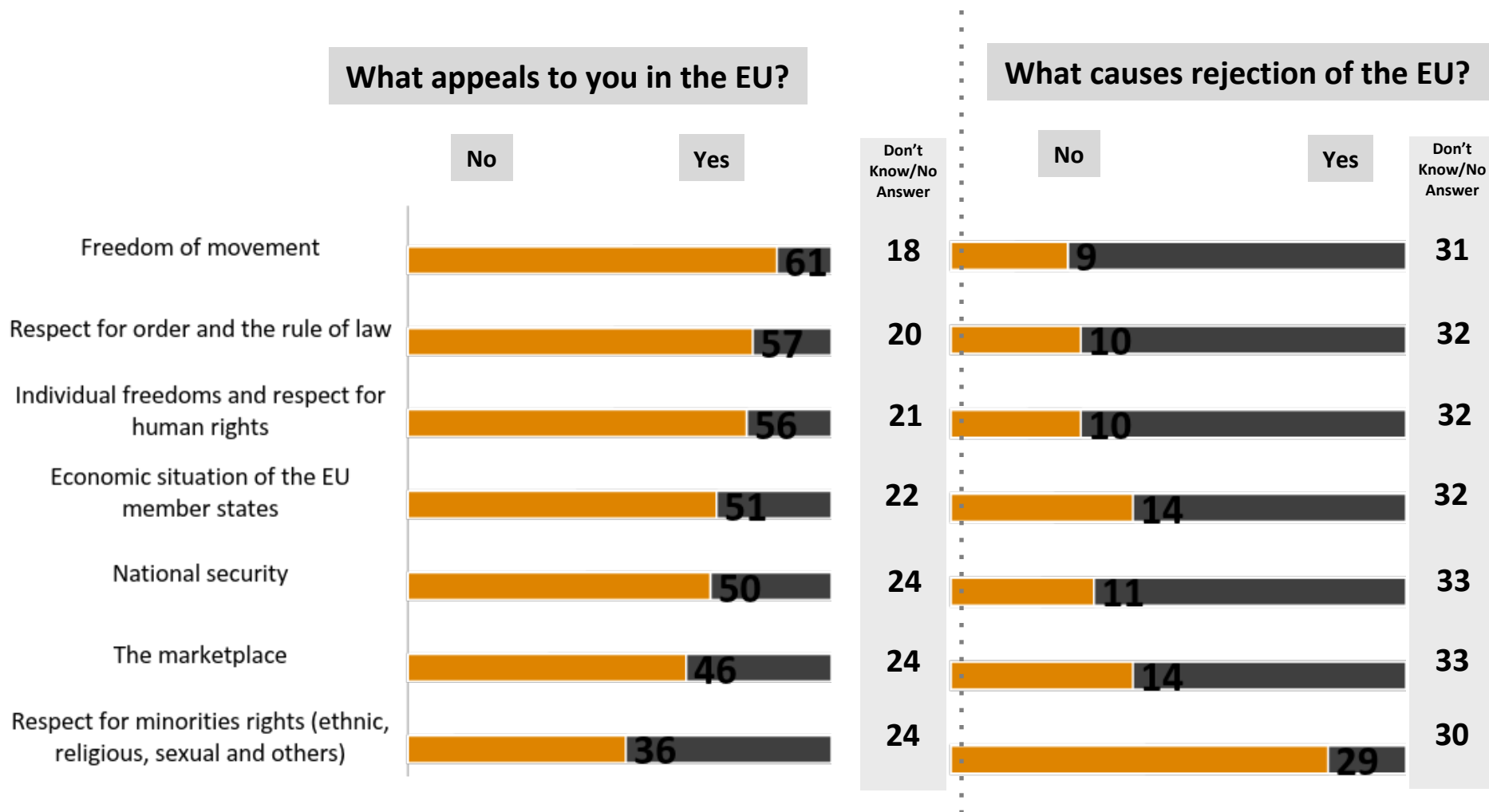
- City residents 14,000+ inhabitants (49%)
- Married men (45%) or Widowed (49%)
- Men 45+ (45%)
- Men earning <1,000 lei (44%) or 1,000-3,000 lei (44%)

Moldovans believe there are numerous positive associations with joining the EU. Freedom of movement, respect for order and the rule of law, as well as individual freedoms are reasons Moldovans favor the EU. Respect for minorities' rights is much less appealing.

What Appeals to you in the European Union?



Moldovans are less inclined to believe these characteristics are reasons to reject the EU. Although, respect for minorities rights does spike a more negative reaction.



A8. What appeals to you in the European Union?

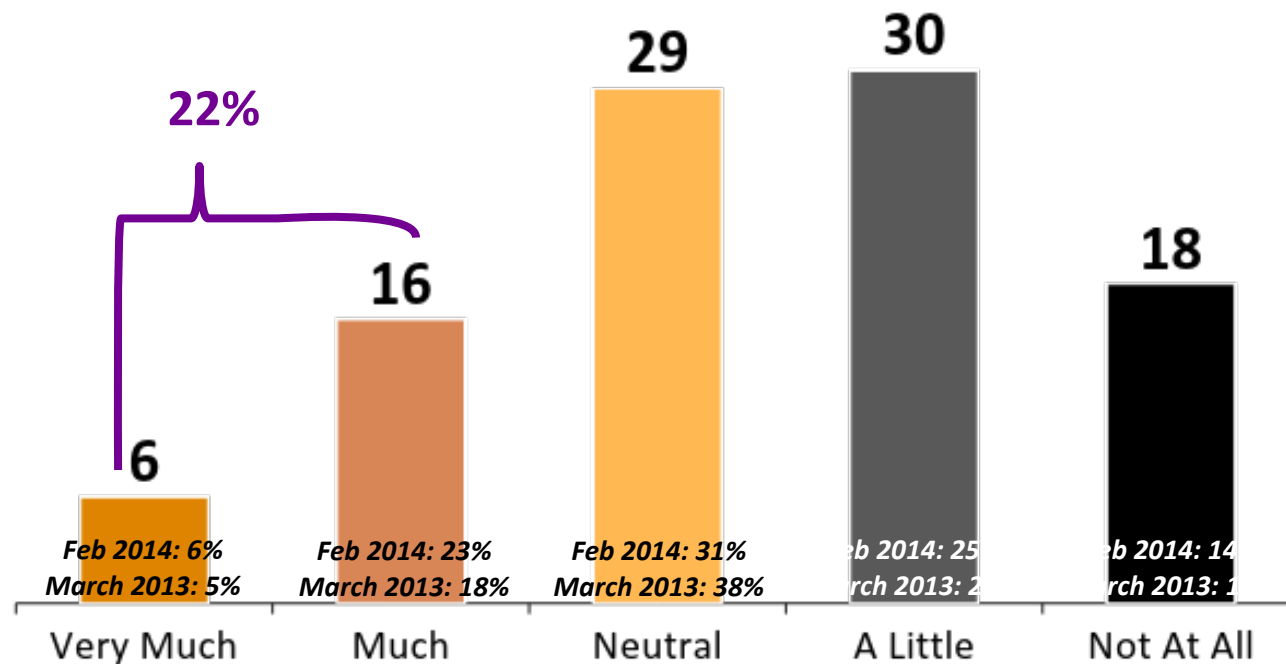
A9 What causes the rejection of the European Union?

Civic Participation

Moldovans' Perceptions of their Ability to Effect
Political Change

Interest in politics has slipped since the survey in February, with less than one-quarter expressing a desire to be involved. Although, Moldovans do indicate some interest in talking to a representative of a political party in the coming months.

Interest in Politics



Participated in Meeting?

Feb 2014: 12%	Feb 2014: 85%
March 2013: 12%	March 2013: 84%

Yes

No

Talk to Political Party?

Feb 2014:
41% Yes, 20% Maybe, 32% No

Yes

Maybe

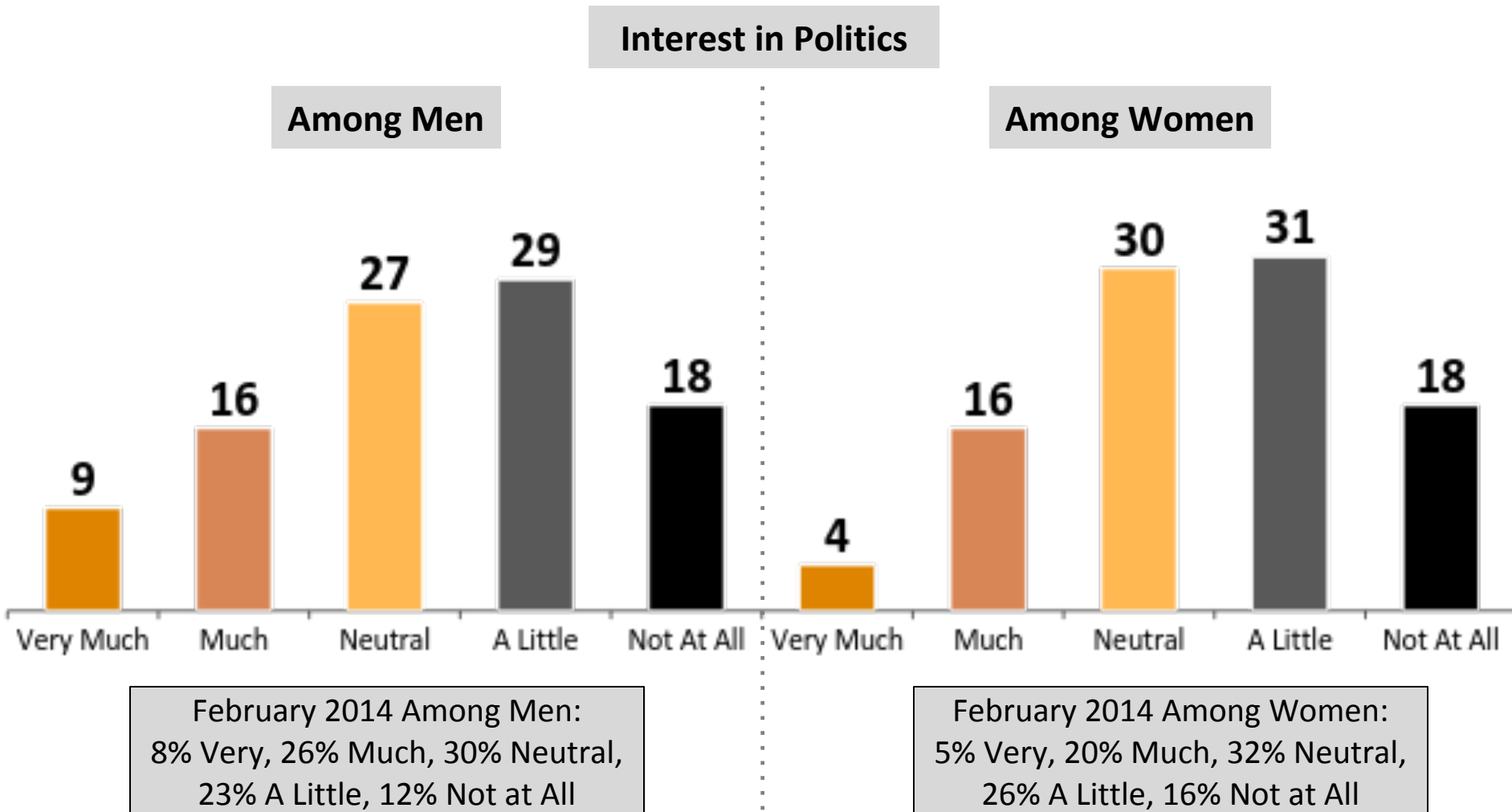
No

B1: Please indicate to what extent are you interested in politics?

B2: In the last 12 months, have you participated in any political meeting? (congress party meeting, meeting organized by any party, etc.)?

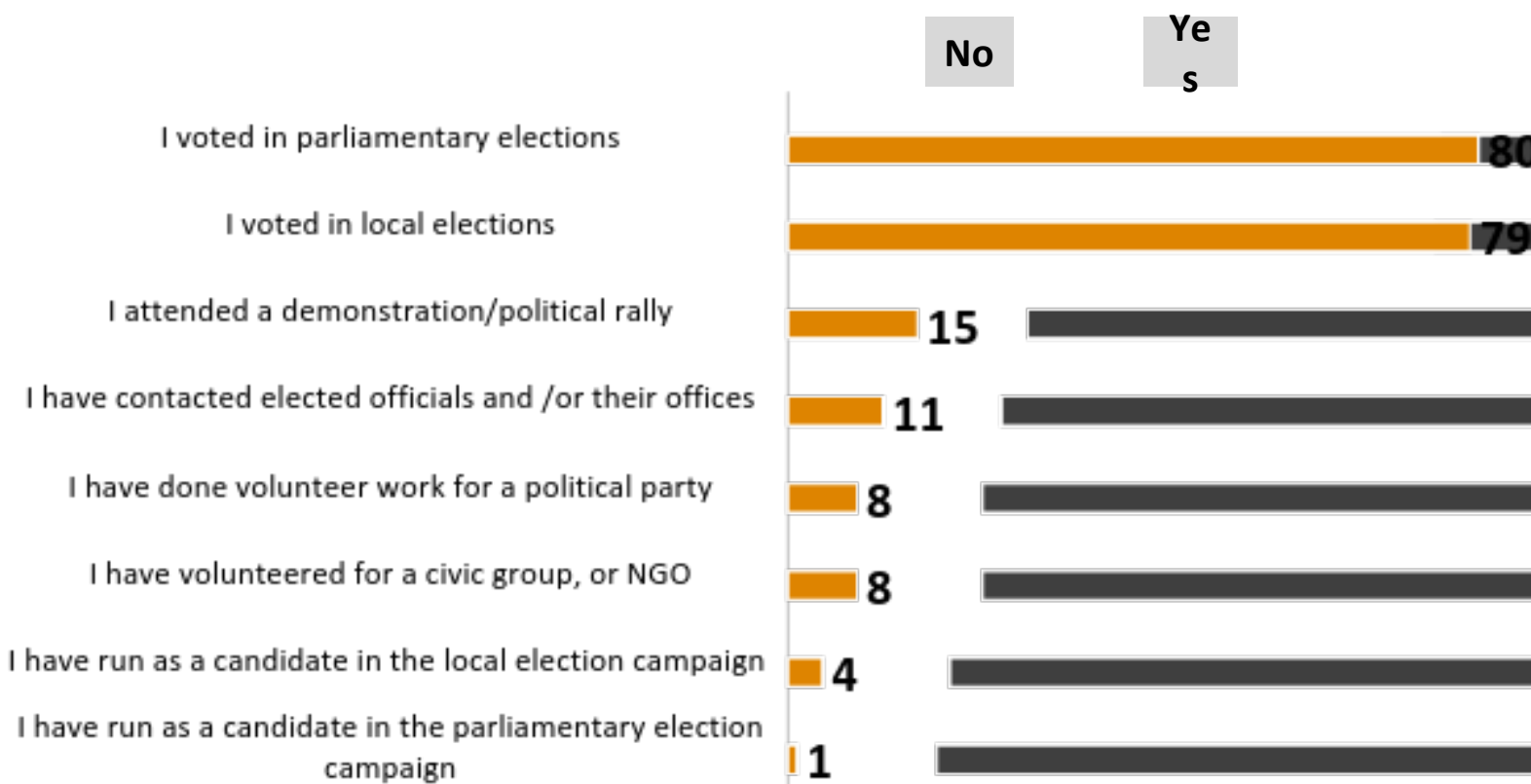
B3: In the next 6 months you want to talk to any representative of a political party?

Interest in politics has decreased among both men and women, with men more likely to have lost interest since the previous survey.



Similar to the previous surveys, Moldovans are more likely to vote in both local and parliamentary elections than they are to become more politically involved.

Political Involvement During Last 5 Years

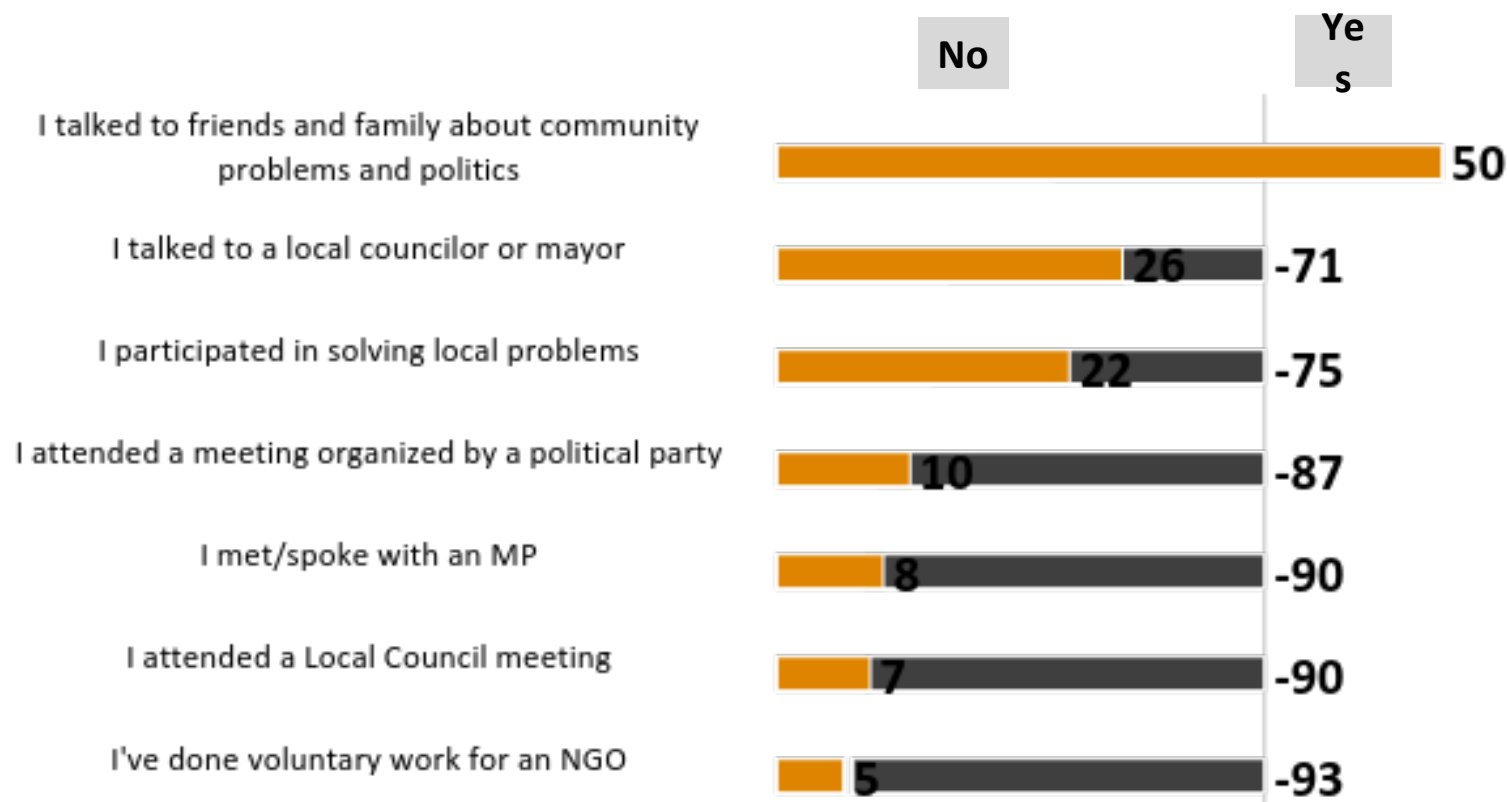


Past Surveys

Feb 2014 No/Yes	March 2013 No/Yes
15/83	20/79
14/84	15/84
85/11	83/15
86/10	n/a
89/6	n/a
91/4	n/a
92/4	n/a
n/a	n/a

By a margin of 2:1, Moldovans are more likely to speak to their friends and family about problems and politics than they are to a local councilor. They are far less likely to speak to an MP or attend meetings.

Political Involvement During Last 3 Months



Past Survey

Feb 2014
No/Yes

n/a

73/25

80/18

90/8

93/5

90/7

93/3

Moldovans continue to believe the most important factor in local elections is the individual candidate. Since February, there is an increased interest among the public for young people as well as women to become more involved in politics.

List of Statements on Political Life in Moldova

Disagree

Agree

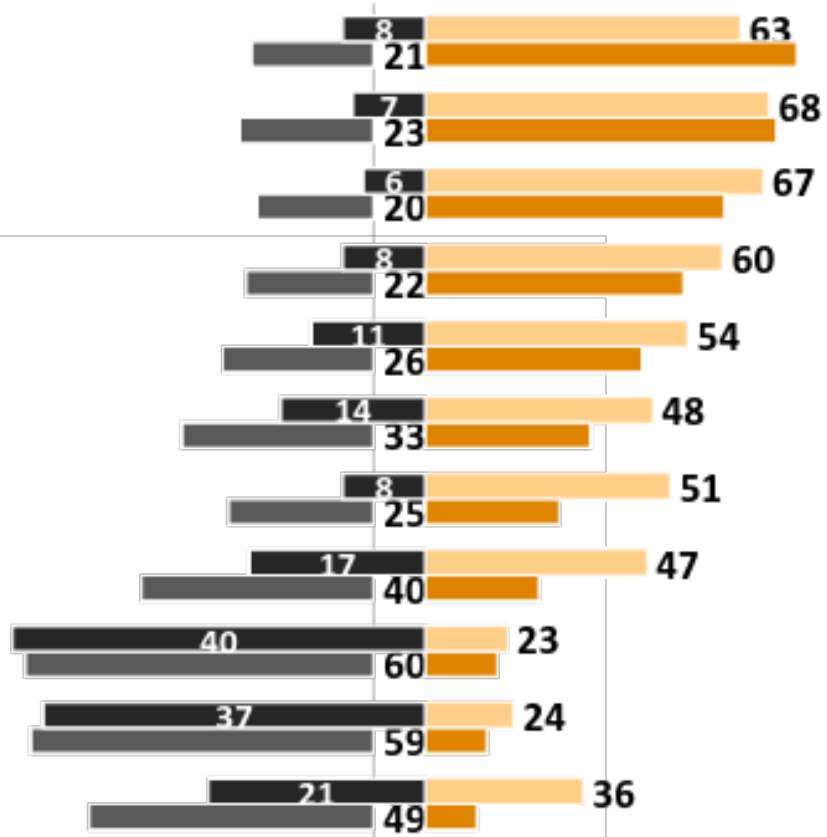
DK/NA

Past Surveys

Feb 2014
Dis/Agree

March 2013
Dis/Agree

The most important factor at local elections is the candidate (person)
There should be more young people in politics, even if they do not have the necessary experience
The party position matters most in Parliamentary elections
The list of candidates of each party matters
The most important factor in Parliamentary elections is the political party
Local Government is which the candidate supported by the represent central authorities
Local Government is focused on addressing citizen needs
It is acceptable for a member of Parliament to switchable for a local politician to switch from the party from which they are focused on addressing



16

10

13

18

20

18

24

12

17

17

15

24/64

31/59

33/55

28/57

34/52

40/48

33/42

48/40

59/28

61/26

n/a

24/64

30/60

n/a

23/63

30/56

34/52

33/48

49/42

54/33

51/35

n/a



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