

EMIGRATIONS OF THE "INDEPENDENT MACEDONIA" GENERATION

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November, 2020

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација
Национална и универзитетска библиотека "Св. Климент Охридски", Скопје

314.151.3-054.72(497.7:100)"1991/2020"(047.31)

RIZANKOSKA, Josipa

Emigrations of the "Independent Macedonia" generation [Електронски извор] / Josipa Rizankoska, Jasmina Trajkoska Naumoska. - Prilep : Center for Deliberative Democracy Dialogue, 2020

Начин на пристапување (URL): <https://cddd.org.mk/>. - Текст во PDF формат, содржи 75 стр., илустр. - Наслов преземен од екранот. - Опис на изворот на ден 26.11.2020. - Фусноти кон текстот

ISBN 978-608-66232-4-1

1. Trajkoska Naumoska, Jasmina [автор]

а) Македонска емиграција -- Иселување -- Свет -- 1991-2020 -- Истражувања

COBISS.MK-ID 52564485

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DIALOGUE Center for Deliberative Democracy, Prilep

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ISBN 978-608-66232-4-1

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SUMMARY

The mass emigration from North Macedonia and the phenomenon of the so-called "brain drain" have become a hallmark of the country in the last one to two decades. The National Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia for Cooperation with the Diaspora for the period 2019-2023, a first official document, aims to create legal, institutional and other preconditions for the development of a sustainable and comprehensive framework for cooperation between state institutions and the diaspora, improving its position in countries of residence and the facilitation of productive feedback mechanisms. At present, despite the lack of official statistical data, the Macedonian diaspora is estimated at over 700 000 people.

Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Slovenia, USA, Australia, are just a few of the many destinations in which the Macedonian young, highly educated, able-bodied and increasingly female population, emigrates.

This research is based on empirical data collected through an online survey of 915 Macedonian emigrants in at least 43 countries, (99% of which) emigrated in the last three decades (Independent Macedonia). The sample is deliberate, so respondents can be any emigrants from Macedonia, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, and regardless of the year of emigration. Respondents can be members of the same family if they form different households (or live independently) after emigrating. Thus, 915 represents not only the number of emigrants, but also the number of households. However, the views expressed in the survey are individual, and do not represent the views of other household members.

The main research question deals with the reasons for emigration of Macedonian emigrants, the conditions for improving the life standard and style in the new country of residence, the challenges faced/sacrifices made at the expense of the benefits and the lessons learned. The specific research question is: To what extent were the expatriates involved in the policy-making processes at the local and national level before leaving? What level of trust in the institutions, their knowledge and communication with them existed before the citizens decided to leave?

Contrary to the generally accepted opinion that Macedonian citizens emigrate due to poor economic conditions, we argue that the first reason for mass emigration in the last 15-20 years is actually the unfavourable political situation, which, for decades now, directly conditions the poor economic circumstances. Although political reasons outweigh in the final decision to leave, socio-economic opportunities define the destination. They are the most important aspect when choosing a new place of residence, followed by the offer of a wider range of opportunities for career development in the new environment, as well as knowledge of the language(s) in the new country of residence. Acquired habits like taking care of their own health through sports and recreation in nature is the biggest benefit for more than half of the emigrants. They are generally satisfied with their life after emigration, but leaving their family and culture behind is considered the greatest sacrifice they made. Macedonian emigrants did not participate in the policy-making processes before emigration due to distrust in or lack of familiarity with the institutions, and do not show a high degree of willingness to participate in the current political and economic processes in Macedonia.

The study concludes with recommendations (necessary steps) aimed at dealing with the mass emigration of the so-called "Independent Macedonia" generation.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION



For almost twenty years, the Republic of North Macedonia¹ has not had official statistics on the population, and this lack of demographic information, as a result of the failed 2011 census (Stankovikj 2011, DW 2020), left room for speculation regarding the number of people living in the country. This, in turn, has direct implications for policy-making in the country.

According to the State Statistics Office (2020), in the period from 2005 to 2019, a total of 11 273 citizens emigrated from the country and the trend is moving downwards. However, from various ancillary data we see that this does not correspond to the reality at all - on the contrary, in recent decades there is a trend of mass emigration of the Macedonian population, most often in Western developed countries. Although the number of citizens temporarily staying abroad due to education, temporary work, additional training, etc. is not included in this official data on emigrants, the number is much higher. Apart from not having statistical data (population census) since 2001, an added reason to why such emigrations remain unregistered, is that citizens do not report to the Ministry of Interior Affairs in Macedonia, nor to its diplomatic and consular missions in the country of immigration.

According to the World Bank, over 500 000 citizens left the country from the 1950s to 2013, and the United Nations migration report indicates that 534 720 Macedonian citizens live abroad (Filiposki, 2020). Eurostat estimates that over 100 000 Macedonians have become European citizens by passport, but according to Judah (2020) there are numerous problems with the calculations, including the large Macedonian population that is emigrating with a Bulgarian passport and is not listed in European statistical databases. Finally, in the National Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia for cooperation with the diaspora for the period 2019-2023, a rough calculation is made of Macedonian citizens living abroad today at more than 700 000 people, and the emigration rate - higher than 30%. (Government of RSM, 2019)

According to the State Statistics Office, compared to 1994 (when there was available data published), up until 2018, the birth rate is decreasing. In 1994, 31 421 children were born and in 2018, the number was 21 333. In contrast, mortality is increasing, with 15 649 deaths in 1994, compared to 19 727 in 2018. The data on enrolled students in primary and secondary school is an additional relevant indicator. In the academic year 2009/2010, a total of 208 908 students were enrolled in primary schools, and in the academic year 2018/2019, 188 102 students were enrolled. Additionally, in the high schools in the academic year 2009/2010, 94 284 students were enrolled compared to 71 650 students enrolled in the academic year 2018/2019. In both cases the difference is over 20 000 students. This shows that gradually, the population in the country is aging. Although this is a general European trend, one of the main reasons for this phenomenon in our country is the mass emigration.

An indirect indicator of mass emigration is also the Government's National Strategy for Networking, Cooperation and Prevention of Brain Drain of Young and High-Quality

¹ In this study, the name Macedonia will be used for the official name Republic of North Macedonia. This should not be understood as a protest, but a sign of respect for the respondents-expatriates who through their free comments clearly stated that they did not agree with this change of the name of the country.

Professionals 2013-2020 (MOE 2013), which through its objectives confirms the existence of the phenomenon of mass emigration, and the so-called "brain drain". The strategy states that there is a growing intellectual migration, with as many as 29% of highly educated people living abroad, and 85% of young people in their final years of study state that they see their future outside their homeland. The strategy also states that the number of citizens residing in a foreign country by 2010 is estimated at over 447 000 citizens (or 22% of the total population).

Low wages, economic instability and uncertainty, limited opportunities for career advancement, political pressure, and lack of financial resources and opportunities to start your own business are the reasons for this intellectual outflow detected in the preparation of this strategy.

The Resolution on migration policy for the period 2015-2020, adopted in 2015 by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia (2015) identified the problem with the "brain drain" focused on the emigration of medical and engineering professionals, which (although incompletely) addresses one a particularly important emigrant intellectual group. The National Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia for cooperation with the diaspora for the period 2019-2023 is the first official document that sets out the challenges and directions for action regarding the most important aspects of interest to the diaspora and the state. This strategy has the general goal of "creating legal, institutional and other preconditions for the development of a sustainable and comprehensive framework for cooperation between state institutions and the diaspora, based on trust, joint initiatives and mutual benefit, which refers to the improvement of its position in countries of residence and the facilitation of productive feedback options from the diaspora." (Government of RSM, 2019)

Several studies have in some way addressed the problem of mass emigration (especially with an emphasis on young people) in order to find out the reasons for such emigration. Such research was mostly based on analysis of existing documents (strategies and regulations), secondary data and empirical research on citizens still living in Macedonia. There is a lack of empirical data coming from the expatriates. Therefore, this research offers an overview of the reasons for emigration, emigrants' experiences, their plans for the future, and the gender aspect of emigration. However, the special research question of this study is related to the degree of civic participation of emigrants (before and after emigration). The aim is to go deeper into the level of engagement in policy making at the local and national level, trust in the institutions and information about their work before deciding to emigrate.

The method used in this study is an empirical analysis of a survey of 915 Macedonian expatriates from all ethnic communities and former residents of all planning regions in Macedonia. The study continues with the elaboration of the methodology, then gives a detailed picture of the profile of the respondents (demographic and socio-economic), the causes and consequences of emigration, gender and emigration, civic participation and mass migration, plans for the future of the respondents and finally offers conclusions and recommendations.

We claim that, contrary to the generally accepted opinion that Macedonian citizens emigrate due to poor economic conditions, the first reason for mass emigration in the last 15-20 years is

actually the unfavourable political situation, which, for decades now, directly conditions the poor economic conditions. The research, among other things, found that after emigrating, the women respondents felt a high degree of improvement in the quality of their lifestyle and their chances for gender equality in many spheres of life and career development. Emigrants were not particularly active in the processes of creating local and national policies before emigration, generally due to the high degree of distrust in (and lack of familiarity with) the institutions. The research, most importantly, indicates the high degree of citizens who do not plan on returning to Macedonia at all (even in the case of the country's integration into the EU) and the even higher degree of citizens who still plan on leaving due to (again) political and economic situation in the country.

METHODOLOGY



This study is based on empirical data from a survey of 915 Macedonian expatriates worldwide. The survey was conducted online, during September 2020. The initial approach to data collection was through intentional-direct contacts of the project team (in order to control the reliability of the answers), which was followed by a snowball dissemination method, with the respondents themselves proposing and/or sharing the survey with their expatriate acquaintances. The survey, even after reaching half of the total number of respondents, was additionally shared with expatriates' groups and was advertised (through paid advertising with the option "Boost") on Facebook. While we divided the sample to those who (conditionally speaking) we were able to control and those who responded to the survey as a result of its sharing on Facebook networks and pages, no significant deviations in the responses were observed. Thus, we conclude that increasing the sample in such a way only strengthens its impartiality.

Respondents can be any emigrants from Macedonia, regardless of gender, age, and ethnicity, and regardless of the year of emigration. An emigrant in this study is considered a person born in Macedonia, who has the current status of a resident in a foreign country, and may still be a citizen of Macedonia or has renounced Macedonian citizenship in order to obtain one in the new country. The study did not take into account the second generation of emigrants (persons born in a foreign country to one or two Macedonian parents). Respondents can be members of the same family if they have formed different households (or live independently) after emigrating.

This means that 915 is not only the number of emigrants, but also the number of households. However, the views expressed in the survey are individual, and do not represent the views of other household members.

The questionnaire (the full overview of which is included in Appendix I) is divided into four main sections: demographic data, questions about life before emigration (including questions about the respondents' civic participation), questions about life after emigration and questions regarding gender (equality) issues. The questions were closed-ended, and only question Q20 (Explain in your own words why did you decide to leave the country where you were born?) is open-ended, but will not be the subject of detailed analysis in this study.

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS



The questionnaire was answered by 915 emigrants from Macedonia. Most of the respondents before emigrating lived in Skopje region (36%), 23% in Pelagonija region, 19% in Polog, Southwestern and Northeastern Region, and 20% in Vardar, Eastern and Southeastern planning region.

Charts 1 and 2, and Map 1 show that the respondents in the sample are largely immigrants to Western European developed countries (56%), followed by Mediterranean countries (9.3%), North America (9%), Eastern Europe (8.9%), and Scandinavia (8.3%). Map 2 shows in more detail the prevalent distribution of respondents at European level.

Chart 1. Region of residence before emigrating

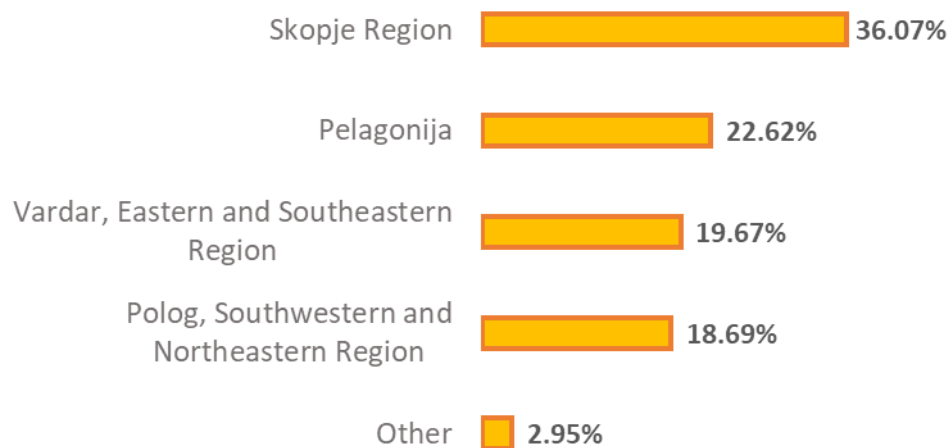
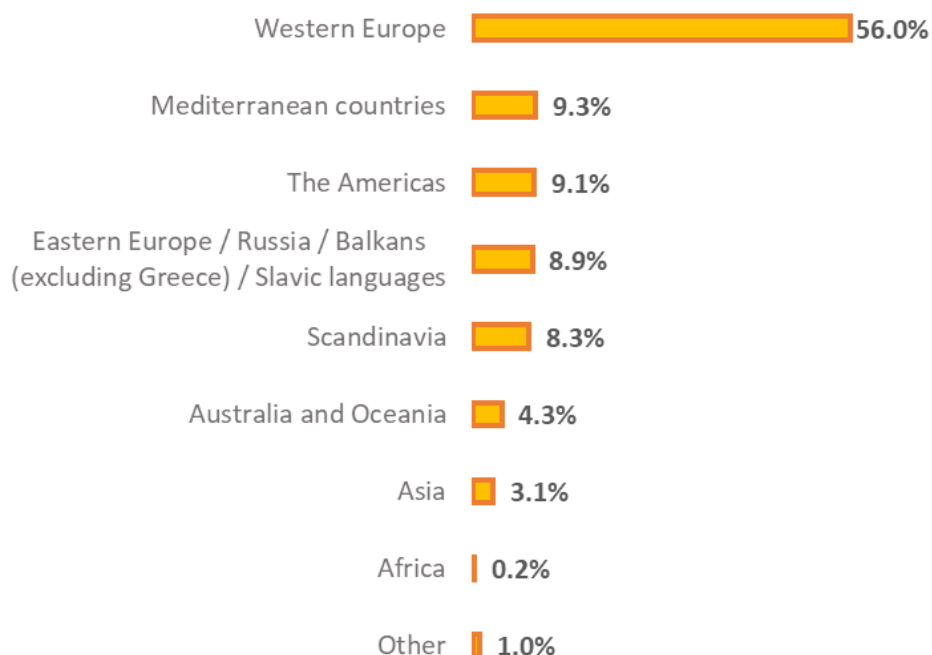
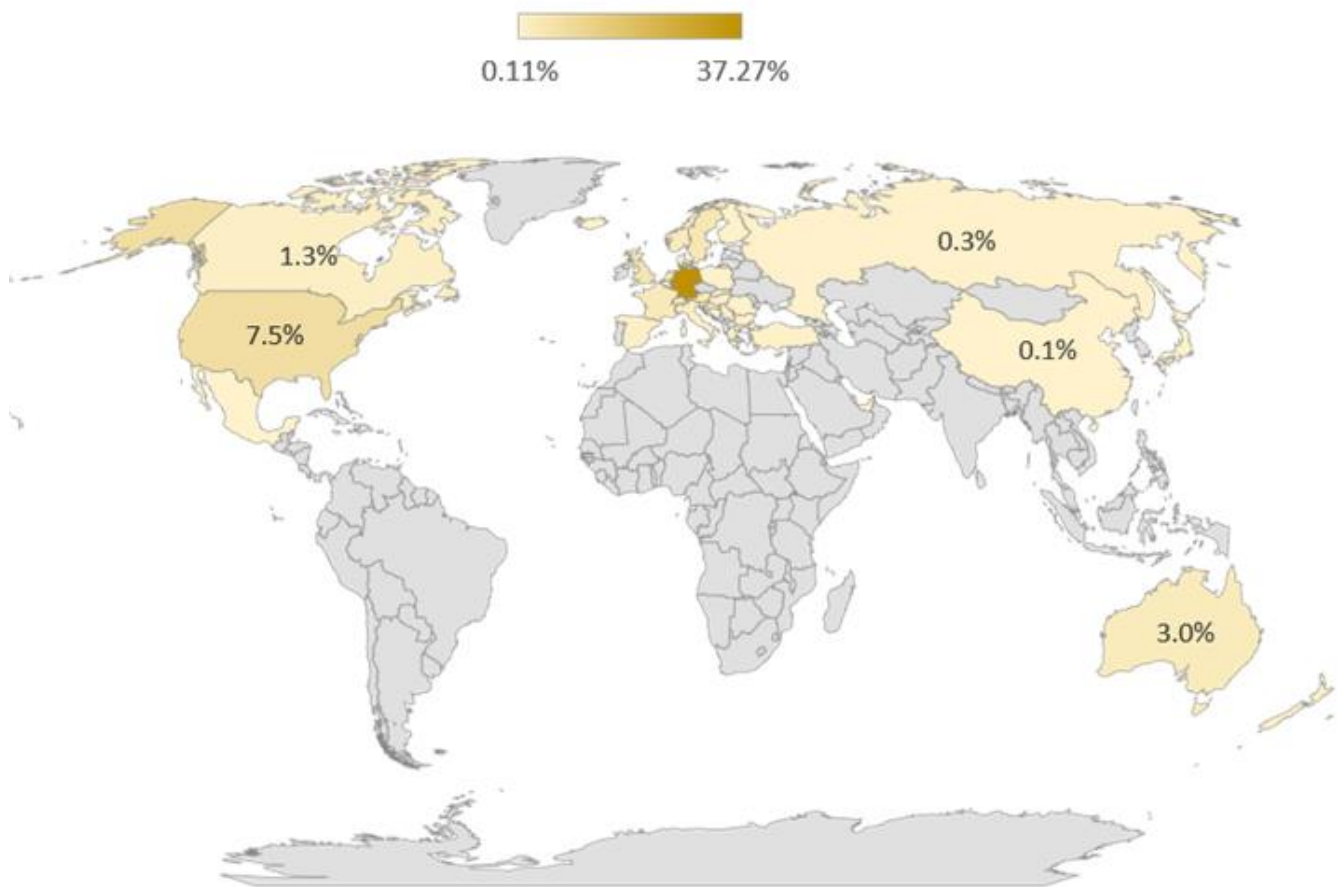


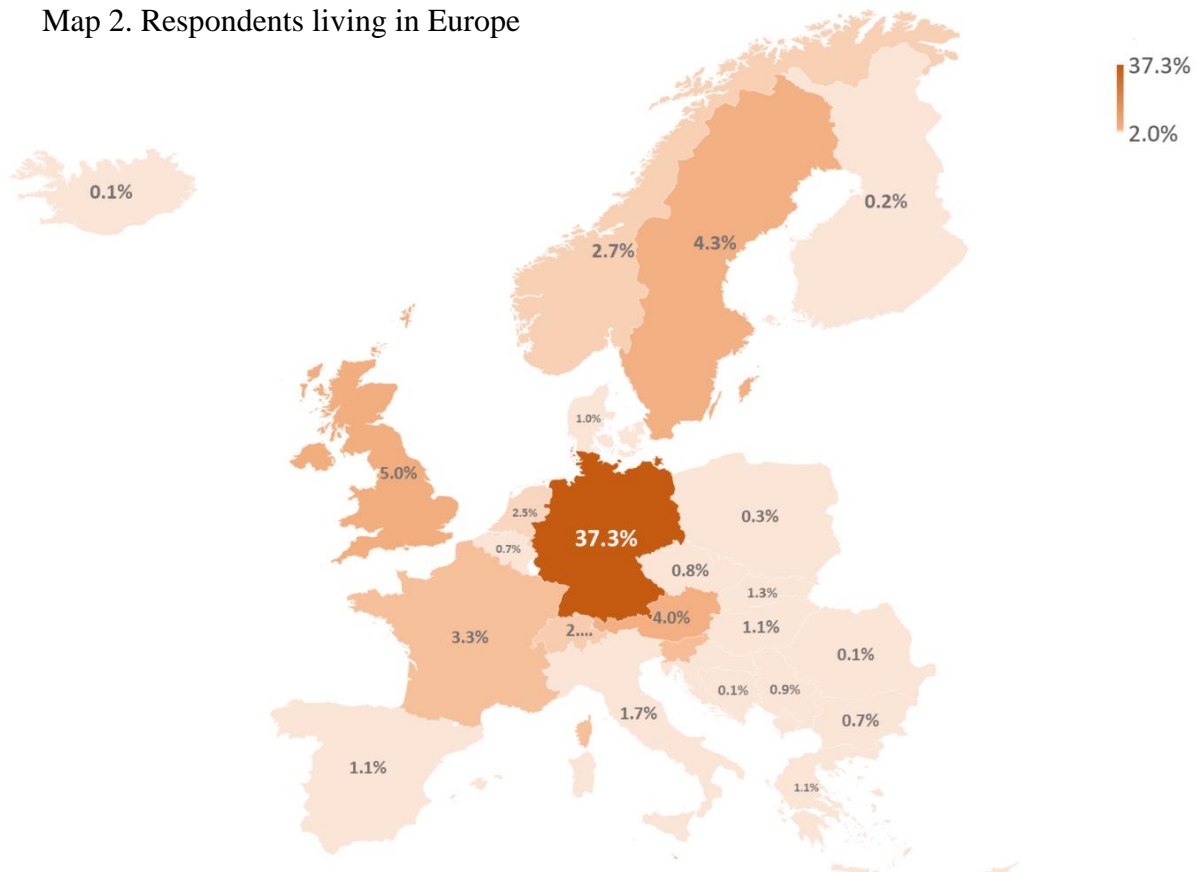
Chart 2. Geographical distribution of survey respondents



Map 1. Current country of residence



Map 2. Respondents living in Europe

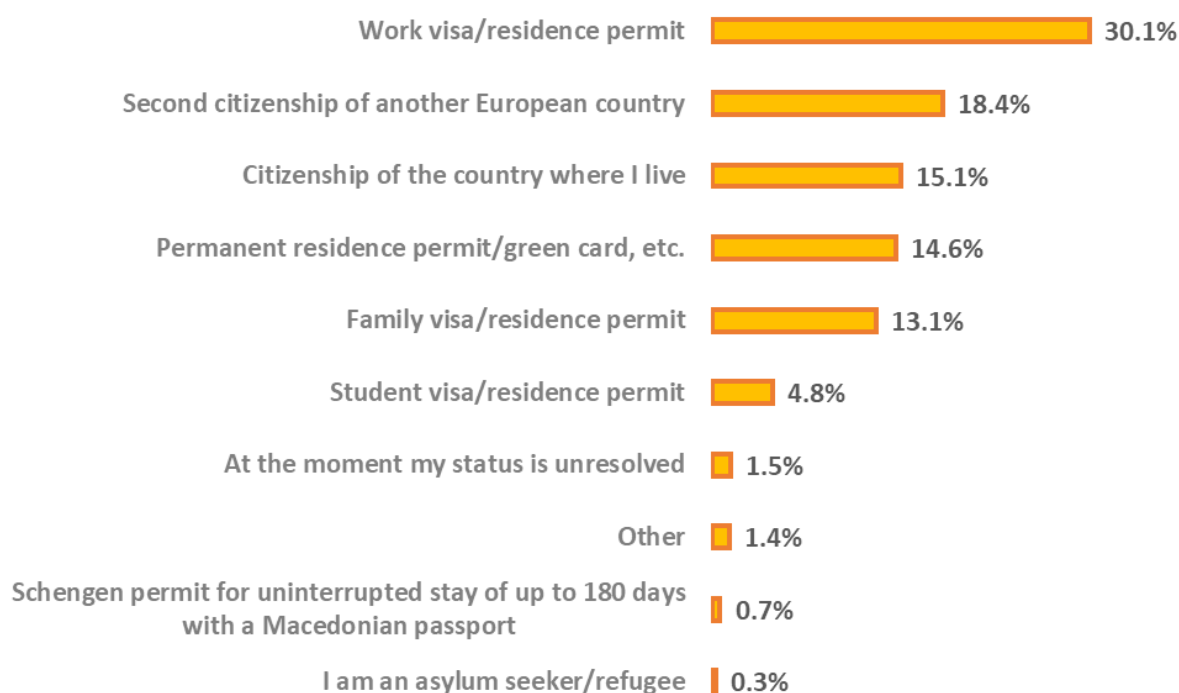


By far the largest number of respondents currently living in Europe come from Germany (37%), followed by the United Kingdom, Austria, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland. Countries with large numbers of expatriates are also Norway, France and the Netherlands.

The "Migration" report by the State Statistics Office for 2017 (SSO 2017) lists Germany, USA and Switzerland as countries where Macedonian citizens most often immigrate to. Our sample largely reflects the real situation with the prevalent distribution of the Macedonian diaspora (temporary or permanent emigrants) despite the lack of accurate empiricism. For example, according to Nikoloski (2013, p. 63) the Macedonian diaspora is most numerous in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand from overseas countries, and Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway from Europe. Although, Judah (2020) warns of the impossibility of knowing the exact number, and that lately the trend of immigration to Italy at the expense of Germany is decreasing.

This picture of our sample largely overlaps with the top twenty countries receiving the highest percentage of immigrants in the world for 2000 and 2017. Namely, according to the International Migration Report 2017 (UN 2017), the United States, Russia, Germany, France, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United Arab Emirates, Italy, Spain and Turkey are among the twenty countries hosting the largest number of immigrants. High-income countries like these received 58% and 64% of all migrants in the world for 2000 and 2017 (respectively).²

Chart 3. Ways respondents regularized their stay in the current country of residence



² In Europe itself there is a movement of 41 million migrants, from Europe to North America - 8 million, and from Europe to Asia - 7 million migrants. 74% of migrants worldwide are of working age. (UN, 2017)

Most of the respondents answered that their stay in the country in which they currently live is regularized by a work visa/residence permit (30%), then by a second citizenship of another European country (18.4%), then citizenship of the country in which they live (15 %). Only 1% of the respondents are asylum seekers/refugees or stay under the Schengen regulation for uninterrupted stay of a total of 180 days a year with a Macedonian passport.

Regarding the year of emigration (Chart 4), the research covers the period from 1973 to 2020. However, less than 1% of the total number of respondents emigrated before the independence of Macedonia in 1991, and there is a significant increase in emigrants in the last decade. The fact that the 2020 curve is falling is directly related to COVID-19 travel restrictions from Macedonia. Therefore, we called this generation of emigrants mentioned in this study report - the "Independent Macedonia" generation.

Chart 4. Year of emigration

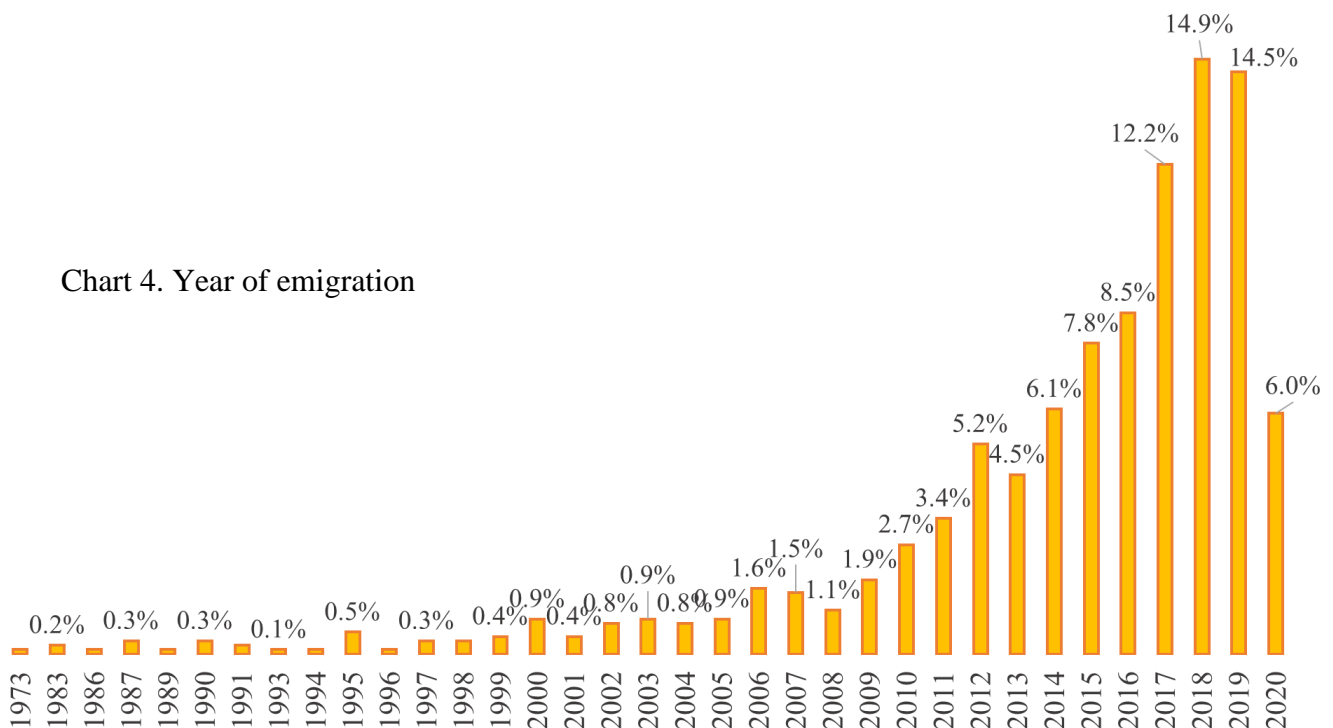
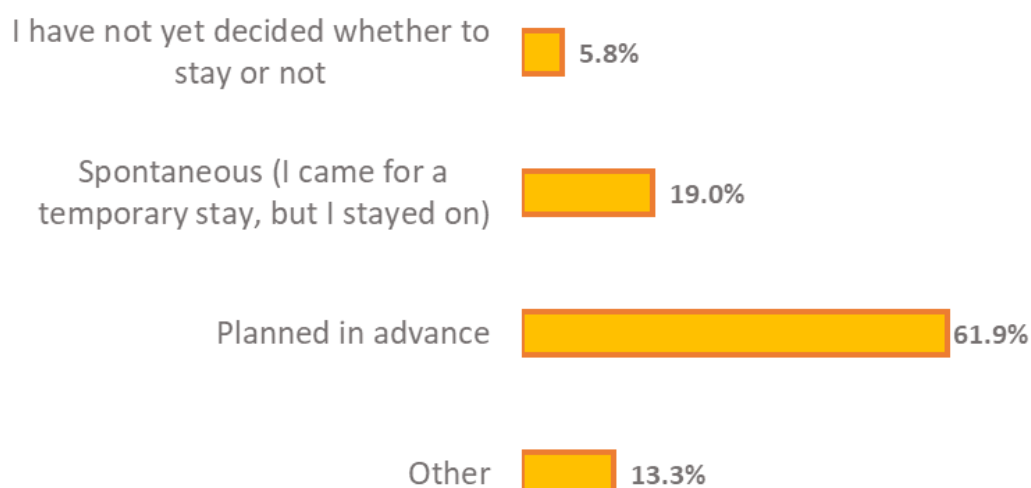
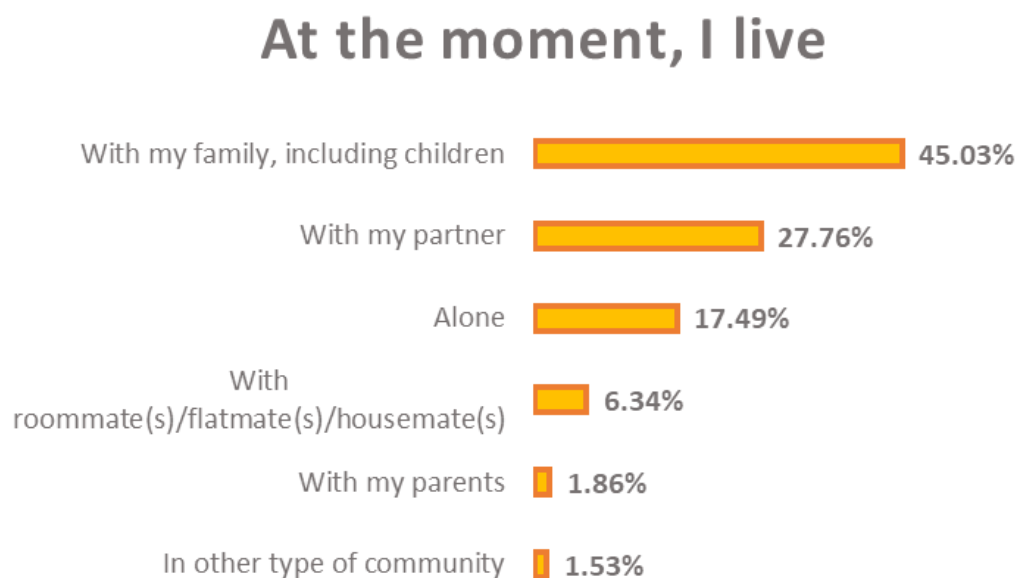


Chart 5. My decision to emigrate was



As many as 62% of the respondents stated that their decision to emigrate from Macedonia was planned in advance, while 19% came for temporary residence and stayed. Almost 6% have not yet decided whether to stay abroad or not. This is probably where students come in most. (Chart 5). As many as 45% of the respondents are part of a family with children, 28% live with a partner (spouse), and 18% live alone (Chart 6).

Chart 6. Type of household/family



About 30% stated that their immediate family (partner and/or children) live in Macedonia, or chose the option “Other”. This may have been more common in the past (especially before visa liberalization), but today families are more likely to emigrate together. (Chart 7)

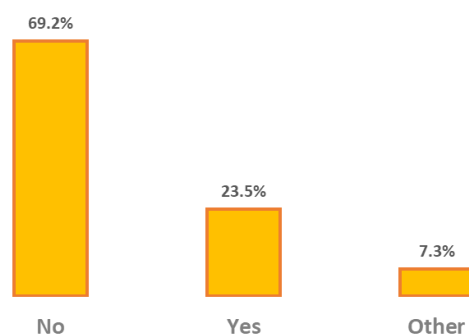


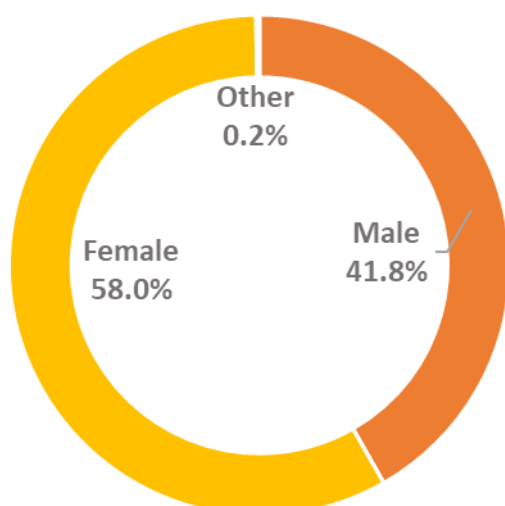
Chart 7. My immediate family (partner and/or children) lives in Macedonia.

However, this percentage shows that still in a significant part of the families there is a so-called “*pechalba*”³ type of emigration, where most often the man lives and works abroad and financially supports the family in Macedonia.

In terms of demographic characteristics, a balanced sample of respondents in all categories could not be provided due to the socio-economic specifics of the emigrants. Instead, the demographic data itself (on such a large sample) can be read as characteristics of the emigrant group as a whole.

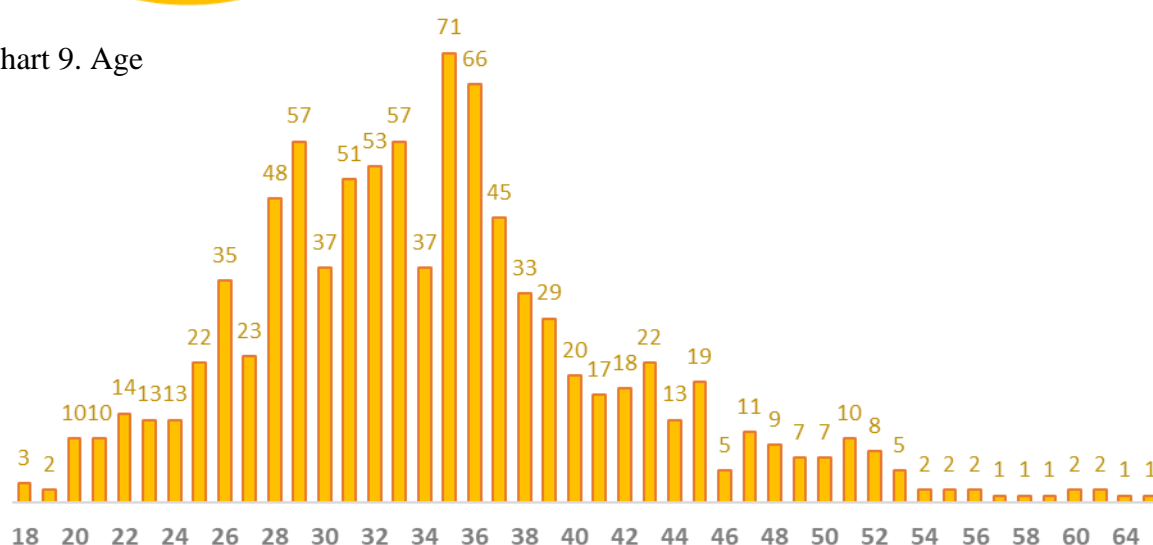
Out of 915 respondents - emigrants, 41.75% are men, 58.03% are women, and 0.22% identified as “Other”. (Chart 8)

Chart 8. Gender



The respondents are at age from 18 to 68 years (Chart 9). The median age is 34 years, while the standard deviation is 7.7 years. The concentration lies in the late thirties and forties (26 to 42 years), which largely corresponds to the data from the Strategy for Cooperation with the Diaspora (Government of RSM, 2019).

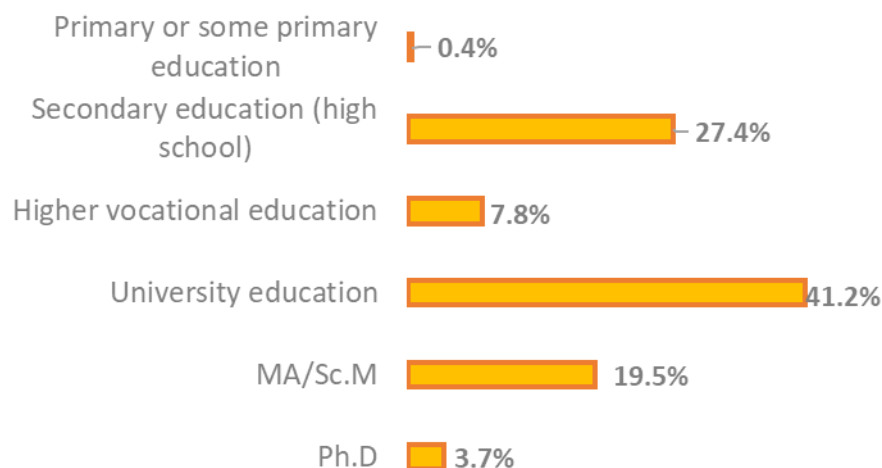
Chart 9. Age



³ “*Pechalba*” transliterated from the Macedonian word “*печалба*” meaning leaving the homeland for a better life abroad.

The highest percentage of the respondents have university education (41.2%) and then secondary education (27.4%). Masters or doctors of science are 23.2% of the respondents and the rest are with higher vocational education (7.8%) or with primary or some primary education (0.4%) (Chart 10).

Chart 10. Education

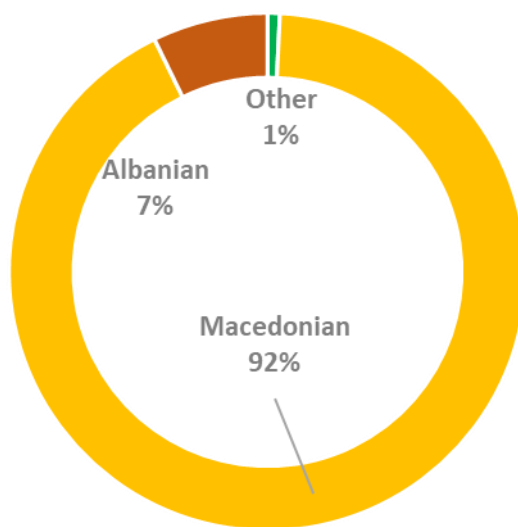


This characteristic of the "diaspora" is also addressed by Nikoloski (2013, p.64) who explains that in the past, Macedonian immigrants in the overseas countries were "mostly of rural origin, in a more difficult economic situation, with a lower level of education and low professional qualifications, unlike today's immigrants who are mostly with higher education and are professionally qualified."

He explains this through the existential main purpose of emigration to the past. The last few generations of emigrants, however, are "persons with higher education and higher cultural and social level, which conditions a new structural degree in the Macedonian emigration. Thus, among them there are intellectuals from different fields, affirmed not only in Macedonian but also in the world." (Ibid, p. 64).

The National Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia for Cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023 emphasizes the country's problem with the "scientific diaspora", produced due to overproduction of highly educated professionals and the alarm of the "brain drain" indicator of the World Economic Forum, according to which in 2009, 2010 and 2011 Macedonia is among the ten countries with the largest brain drain, and by 2015 among the top fifteen countries with low talent retention capacity and ability to attract talent.

Chart 11. Mother language



For 92% of the respondents Macedonian was listed as their mother language, for 7% Albanian and the remaining 1% speak either Turkish, Vlach, Romani, Serbian or other languages as their mother tongue (Chart 11). The issue of the mother language is a proxy-variable for ethnicity, which this research does not analyse separately. However, in the interpretation of the final results it is necessary to keep in mind that the opinions of Albanians emigrated from Macedonia may not be completely the same as the general conclusions in this analysis because the dynamics of socialization of ethnic Albanians is somewhat special (Nikoloski 2013).

Most of the respondents declared themselves as Orthodox Christians (77.9%), 8.1% are Muslims, 6.2% are atheists, and 3.9% are agnostics. (Chart 12)

Chart 12. Religion

Before emigration, 51.1% of the respondents were in full-time employment, and after the emigration there is an increase of 20%, or 72/9% are full-time employees (Chart 13). While in the categories of part-time employee and the self-employed there is no significant change (from 4.2% to 5.5%, from 5.5% remains 5.5% consequently), the number of unemployed decreases from 21.1% to 4.9%, and students are also declining from 16.5% to 9.1%.

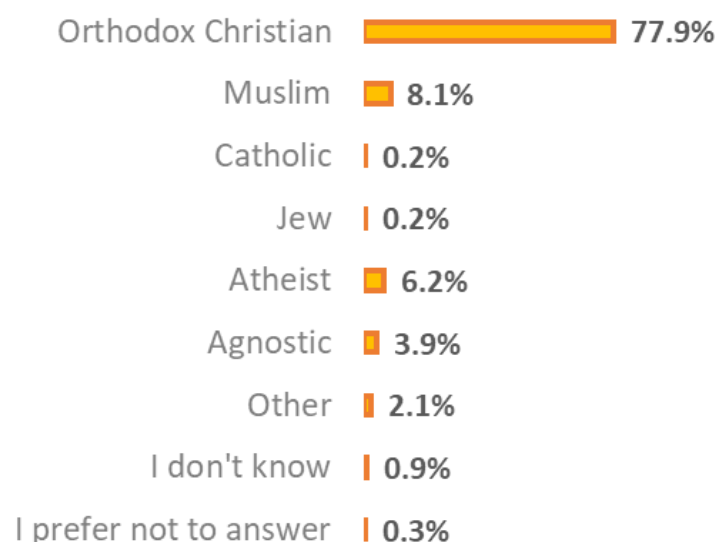
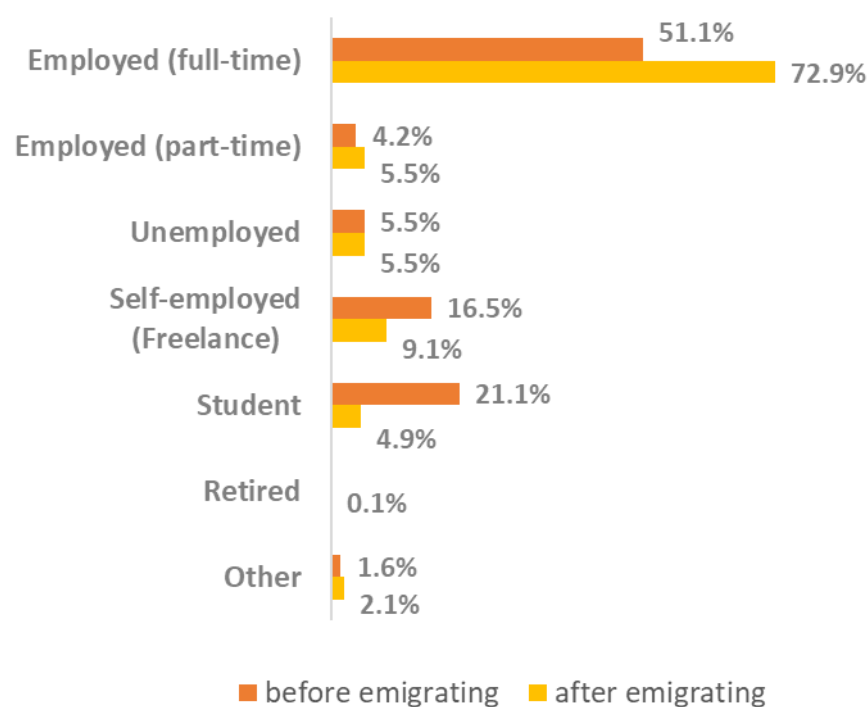


Chart 13. Employment status



Prior to emigration, most of Macedonian citizens belonged to the net income bracket from 9 001 to 18 000 MKD (27%), and from 18 001 to 36 000 MKD (26%). Only 9% had a monthly household income higher than 60 001 MKD (approximately 1 000 euros), and 10% did not want to comment on this issue (Chart 14).

Chart 14. Monthly net income in the household before emigration

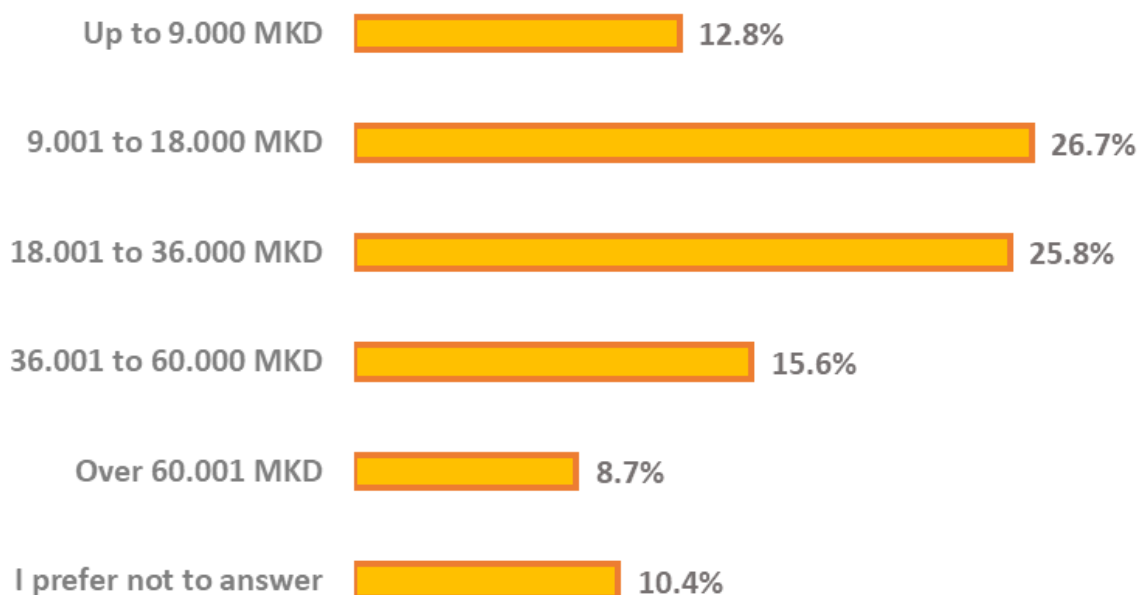
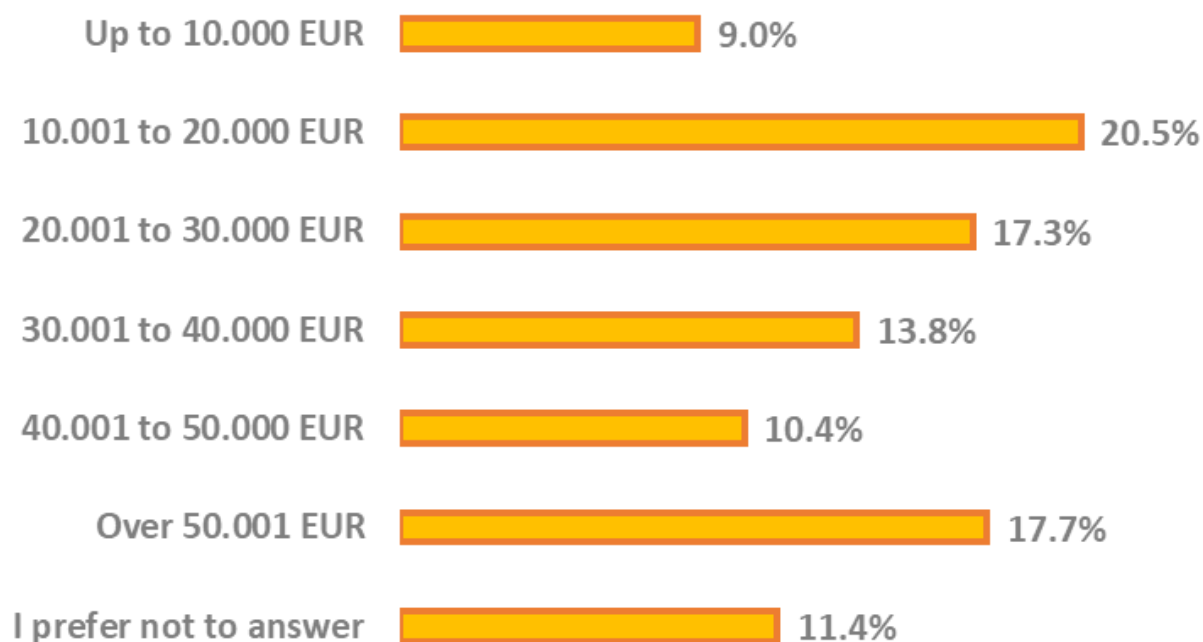


Chart 15. Yearly net income in the household after emigration



After emigration, the annual net income in the emigrants' households has absolutely improved, but again, the concentration is in the lower categories (21% up to 20 000 euros, and 17% up to 30 000 euros). However, in the highest category of over 50 001 euros net income belong 18% of the respondents, which indicates that after emigration (although non-linear) there is a significant increase in profits.

There is a small positive Pearsons correlation coefficient (0.25) between the variables household income before and household income after emigration.

From the cross-tabulation in Table 1 we can see that the emigrants who had lower incomes in the household before emigration, still remain in the groups of lower incomes in contrast to those respondents who had higher incomes before.

For example, in the lowest category of households with annual incomes up to 1 765 euros, the highest concentration of income after emigration is in the second category of 20 000 euros per year (30%). In the second category (income up to 3 529 euros per year) the two highest categories are in the second and third category of the variable "income after emigration" (20 000 and 30 000 euros per year). Already in the fourth category of income before emigration (up to 11 765 euros per year) the concentration after emigration is in higher categories (23% in the category up to 40 000 and the same in the category over 50 0001 euros per year). Finally, in the highest category (over 11 765 euros) before emigration we have by far the highest concentration (of 52%) in the highest category (over 50 001 euros) after emigration.

Table 1. Cross-tabulated annual household income before and after emigration (in euros)

Crosstabulation of yearly net income in the household before and after emigration (in EUR)							
	after emigration						
before emigration	Up to 10 000	Up to 20 000	Up to 30 000	Up to 40 000	Up to 50 000	Over 50 001	Total
Up to 1 765	9.17	30.28	15.6	13.76	13.76	17.43	100
Up to 3 529	11.21	31.84	24.22	13	8.97	10.76	100
Up to 7 059	12.5	21.88	21.43	13.84	11.16	19.2	100
Up to 11 765	8.7	15.94	15.94	23.19	13.04	23.19	100
Over 11 766	4	6.67	6.67	13.33	17.33	52	100
Total	10.14	23.41	18.99	15.21	11.83	20.42	100

An exception to this would be, for example, the intersection of income categories after emigration of the first category up to 1 765 euros and all income categories after emigration, where we see the greatest correlation with the second category, and then immediately there is a positive correlation with the highest income category after emigration - over 50 001 euros annual income. However, we can see that a very small percentage of emigrants are in the lowest category (up to 10 000 euros per year), which corresponds to almost the highest income category in Macedonia. Hence, we again notice financial improvement of the respondents in absolute measures.

In general, the financial situation of emigrants/households improves after emigration. This is supported by the previous data on the employment status of the respondents, where we noticed an increased percentage of employed and a reduced percentage of unemployed respondents after emigration. And here, one factor that can explain this positive trend of greater financial improvement of the already rich is the fact that most of the emigrants have higher education and were already employed before emigration. However, here we do not offer an analysis of the ratio of wages to their purchasing power in the country and abroad, so we have no answer for the degree of improvement of the standard of emigrants.

REASONS FOR AND CONSEQUENCES OF EMIGRATION



There are a plethora of motives for human migration - economic, social, cultural, health, political and so on. Macedonians (before and after Macedonia's independence) also migrated for various reasons, from socio-economic to political (such as wars and persecution). What this study *will* explore, however, are the modern reasons for the emigration of the generation that emigrates from independent Macedonia.

The National Democratic Institute (NDI 2020), in April 2020, published an analysis of a poll in which 7.4% of the respondents cited emigration as the third reason that led to a change in the lives of citizens in Macedonia for the worse (immediately after the bad economy and the judiciary/(lack of) rule of law). This logic can be interpreted through the demographic crisis, which has its implications for the economy in the long run and for many other policies in the country. However, the causal link can easily go in the opposite direction, i.e. the bad direction in which the country is moving being the logical direct factor for emigration. In addition, the report indicates that 42% of respondents in the survey had a family member who emigrated or planned to emigrate, and 9% do not have immigrants in the family, but have someone who plans to emigrate. A significant part of the young people planned to go to one of the European countries, and a smaller part actively sought work in the country. What would keep them in Macedonia, said the respondents, are adequate salary, employment opportunities according to their qualifications, improving the quality of education and employment without nepotism/party membership.

In the survey of the NGO Infocenter in 2016, in a similar direction, as many as 83.7% of the respondents/young people stated that they would emigrate from the country, of which 52.4% would emigrate to a Western European country, 12% to the USA Canada, and 10.3% in one of the Scandinavian countries. Unemployment (by 34.3%), social situation/partisanship and politics (by 33.5%), and financial stability (by 17%) are the three main reasons for such intentions. In Dokmanovikj's survey (2017) focused on academic workers and social science researchers, 70% of the respondents said they would emigrate if they had the opportunity (mostly in Europe or North America). Respondents in this study believe that the two biggest reasons for emigrating from Macedonia are the small number of opportunities at home and a better lifestyle abroad, and they would personally leave the country mostly because they feel that nothing is changing in the country, and again because of more opportunities and a better lifestyle.

In Topuzovska Latkovikj's research (2013) as many as half of the respondents/ young people, or 53% in total, would leave Macedonia (again in the countries of Western Europe, USA and/or Canada). For 65% of the young people, the main motive listed for leaving their home country was the financial reason and only the young people from the Polog region stated that they would leave for security reasons. In the research for 2018/19 (Topuzovska Latkovic et al. 2019) one third of the young people expressed a strong desire to leave their home country and one third expressed a medium desire to emigrate. In particular, youth unemployment and the poor quality of formal education are reasons for emigration among young people according to the analysis of Zinzirova and Vanchov (2017). Addressing the problem with the Macedonian demographic crisis, as a key element in the equation "to stay or to leave", Zafirov and Spasov

(2018) also highlight the impact of youth poverty, unemployment and low wages, while Blazheska (2018) highlights poor quality of life, poor education and low wages.

And the latest analysis of the Brain Drain Prevention Network (Karadafova and Andreevski, 2020) confirms these trends. Thus, 61% of young people still living in Macedonia would emigrate, and in addition to the economy, they cited the political situation in the country, the environment, health, career development and human rights as reasons. Among those who have already emigrated, the reasons are career development, the need for change, the political situation in the country, health and urban planning and development (Karadafova and Andreevski, 2020). This report further assesses that only 11% of the National Strategy for Cooperation and Prevention of Brain Drain of Young and High-Quality Professionals 2013-2020 (which was never adopted) has been realized, and of the four strategic goals, the fourth one is realized the most (16%) - increasing of intellectual exchange abroad by encouraging cooperation with educated individuals originating from the Republic of Macedonia who live and work abroad with Macedonian scientific research institutions and development companies. (Ibid)

From this brief review of recent literature and research dealing with the issue of migration, we set the main research hypothesis. Obviously, Macedonian citizens, especially young people, are leaving the country in search of economic prosperity and a wider range of career development opportunities in economically advanced countries in Western Europe, USA, Canada and the like. However, our hypothesis is that economic prosperity is no longer the number one reason for emigration.

We argue that the unfavourable political climate has taken precedence over the economy. Partisanship, nepotism, corruption, political instability, lack of rule of law and mistrust in the judiciary affect the mass emigration of Macedonians, especially the young, or as we call it here, the "Independent Macedonia" generation.

In addition, we will present the results of questions about the reasons for emigration of Macedonian emigrants. What did they run away from? What did they find?

WHAT THREE REASONS WERE CRUCIAL FOR YOUR EMIGRATION?

The basic question related to migration research is "why?" What are the motives of individuals and/or families to emigrate? Socio-economic reasons are the first association, followed by issues regarding personal safety and survival (conflict, war, etc.). As we have already announced, the initial hypothesis would be that the underdeveloped economy motivates citizens to leave the country and look for better opportunities in developed (mostly Western) countries. In the last decade, there has been constant talk about the "drain" not only of "brains", but also of professionals in fields where they are in deficit, especially among the health community in the country. However, through this research we refute that hypothesis and conclude that when asked "What were the three crucial reasons for your emigration from Macedonia?" the respondents, for the most part, cited another reason - politics. Thus, in the chart below we can see that almost 70% of respondents cited the unfavourable political climate in the country as one of the three most important reasons, which implies partisanship, nepotism, corruption, mistrust in electoral processes, clientelism, polluted media space and the like.

On the (optional) open-ended question regarding the reasons for emigrating, the citizens in their own words, once again, mostly point out to corruption, partisanship and nepotism (which lead to unfair and poor distribution of employees), distrust in the judiciary, and - as many expressed - the "feeling of second-class citizens" because of this political image.

Chart 16.1. Three crucial reasons in your decision to emigrate from Macedonia

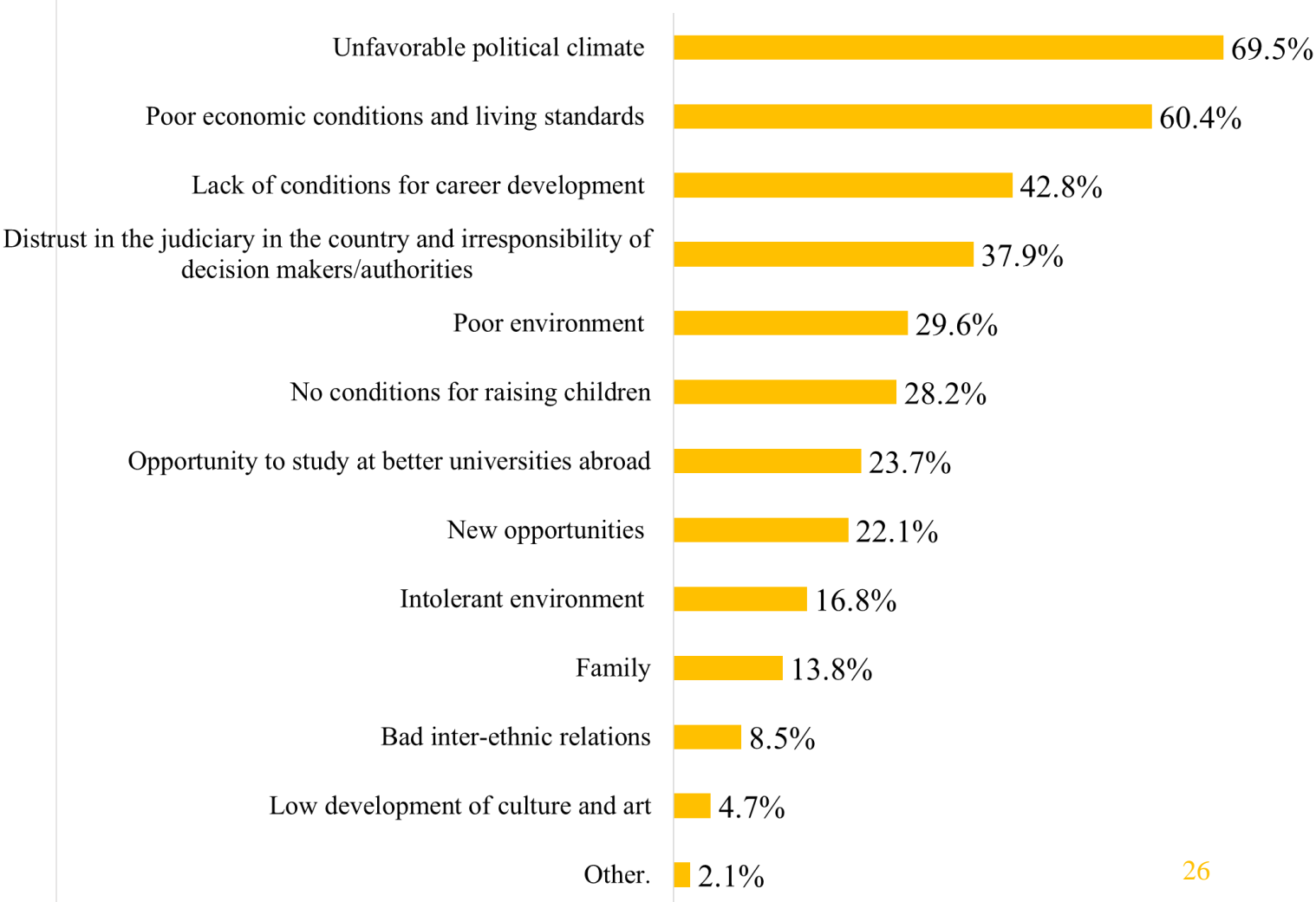
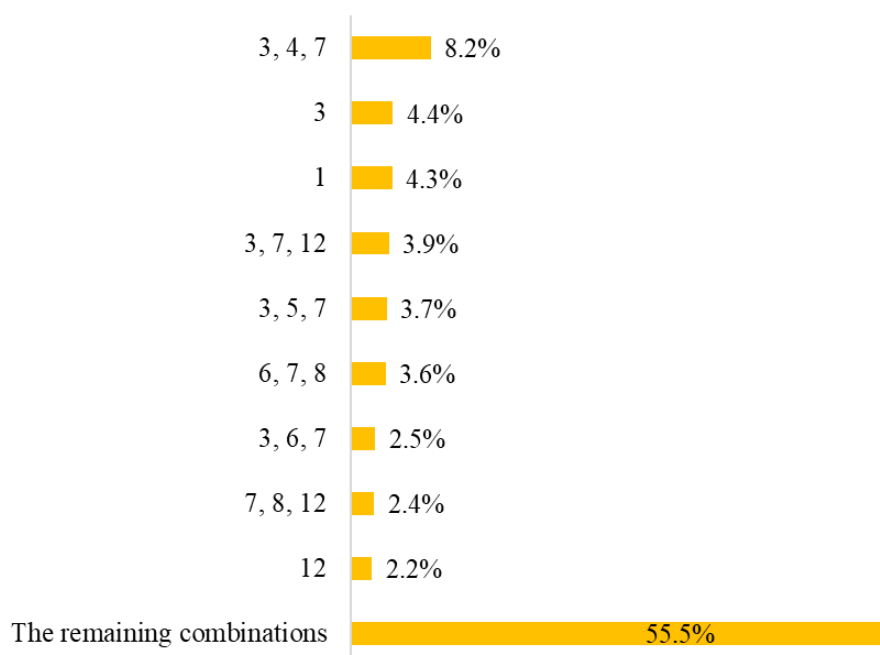


Chart 16.2. Ten most common combinations of three reasons listed as crucial in the respondents' decision to emigrate



The second reason chosen is "poor economic conditions and living standards", referring to unemployment, unpaid work and the like. Again, in the optional open part of the research, the citizens point out the unpaid working hours by the employers, the low salaries (or exploitation of the employee), not investing in education and upgrading of the employees (trainings) and so on. The third reason listed is "lack of conditions for career development", which refers to underdeveloped/poor education, science, and low level of research and innovation.

When it comes to the most common combinations of three reasons, from Chart 16.2 (see all possible answers in Appendix I, Q1) we notice that in the first combination (chosen by 9.3% of respondents) are poor economic conditions (3), mistrust in the judiciary in the country and the irresponsibility of decision makers/authorities (7) and the unfavourable political climate (8). The second combination (chosen by 8.2%) is a combination of the above-elaborated three most commonly chosen reasons - economic (3), political (7) and the lack of conditions for career development (4). Finally, in third place is only the economic variable (by 4.4%).

WHAT THREE ASPECTS OF LIVING WERE CRUCIAL IN DECIDING TO MOVE SPECIFICALLY TO THE COUNTRY IN WHICH YOU CURRENTLY LIVE?

Guided by the same general hypothesis, about the impact of socio-economic opportunities offered abroad (which lack at home) on the decision to emigrate, we ask “Which three aspects of living were crucial for you in deciding to move to the country in which you currently live?” This time the expected hypothesis is confirmed. Socio-economic opportunities, indeed, are the most important aspect when choosing a new place to live (for as many as 68% of expatriates). The second aspect is "the wider range of career development opportunities offered by the new environment (by 36%), and the third is language (by 29%). Culture and climate are among the last aspects that were decisive for the choice of place of emigration.

Although here we do not have such a clear concentration of combinations in terms of the selected aspects that motivated the respondents to choose specifically the country in which they currently live, ie. we have more diversity in the answers, the most common combination with 3.4% is 2-7-8, or socio-economic opportunities (jobs, better wages, appropriate job, better collectives and protection of workers, social assistance, etc.), opportunities for raising a family (kindergartens and schools, favourable conditions for maternity leave) and a favourable health and pension system. In second place with 3% is “something else”, and in third place with also 3% is the option "socio-economic opportunities". (Chart 17.2) For other possible answers to this question see Appendix I, Q6.

Chart 17.1. Three aspects of living that were crucial in deciding to move to the country in which you currently live?

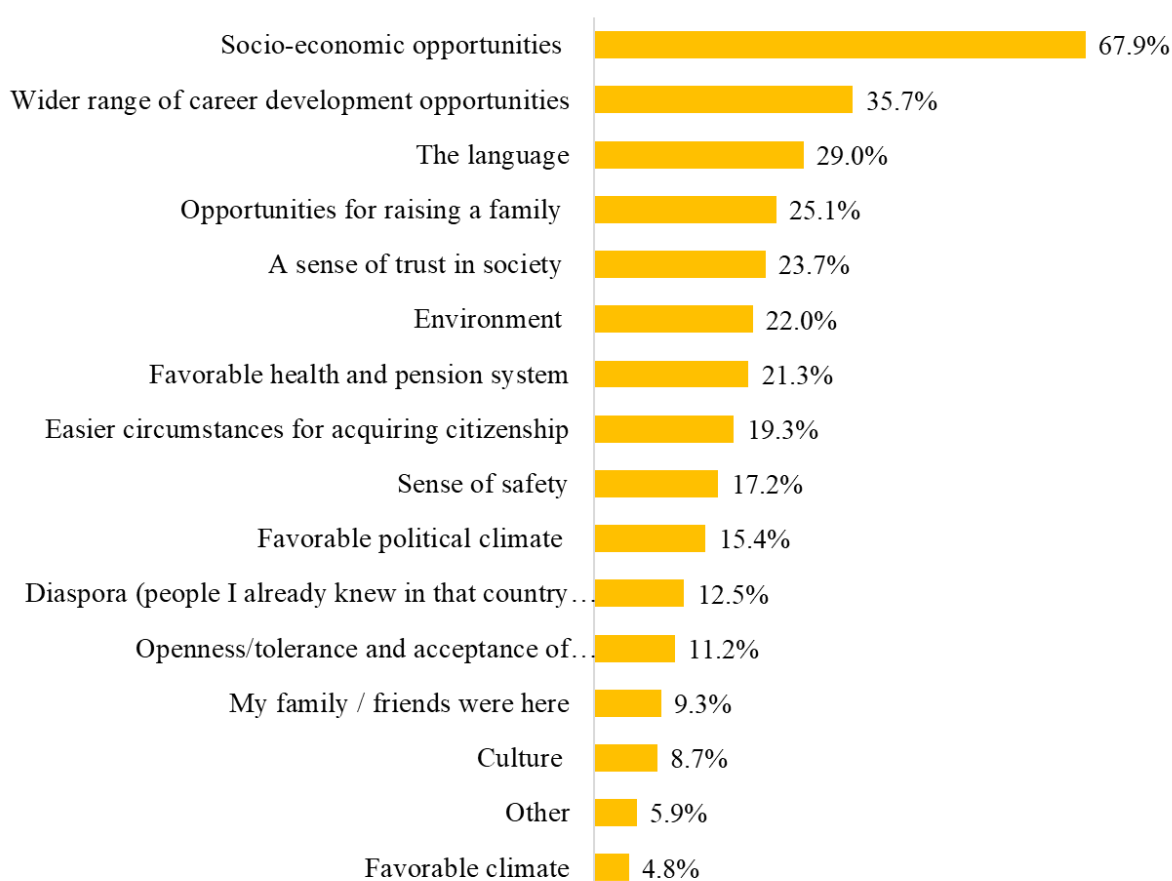
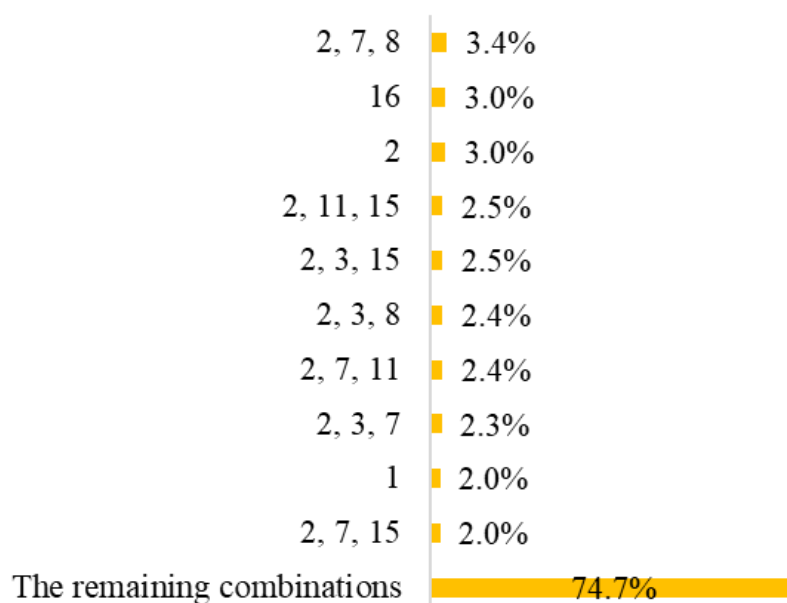


Chart 17.2. Ten most common combinations of three aspects of living listed as crucial in the respondents' decision to immigrate specifically to the current country of residence



WHAT ARE THE THREE MAIN POSITIVE HABITS YOU HAVE ACQUIRED WITH YOUR MOVE TO THE NEW COUNTRY?

The change of residence in a new country also means a change of lifestyle, getting used to and learning the political-administrative system, change of dietary habits and the like. It is to be expected that expatriates will willingly change certain old habits in order to distance themselves from what they have "run away" from, and will get used to new rules of the game that at first may seemed strange to them, or have even faced cultural shocks.

The three main benefits of Macedonian emigrants from moving to a new country are acquired habits for caring for their own health through sports and recreation in nature (54.4%), raised awareness of the importance of the rule of law and openness of institutions (50.4%) and learning a new language (37.5%) (Chart 18.1).

Chart 18.1. Three main positive habits acquired with moving to the new country.

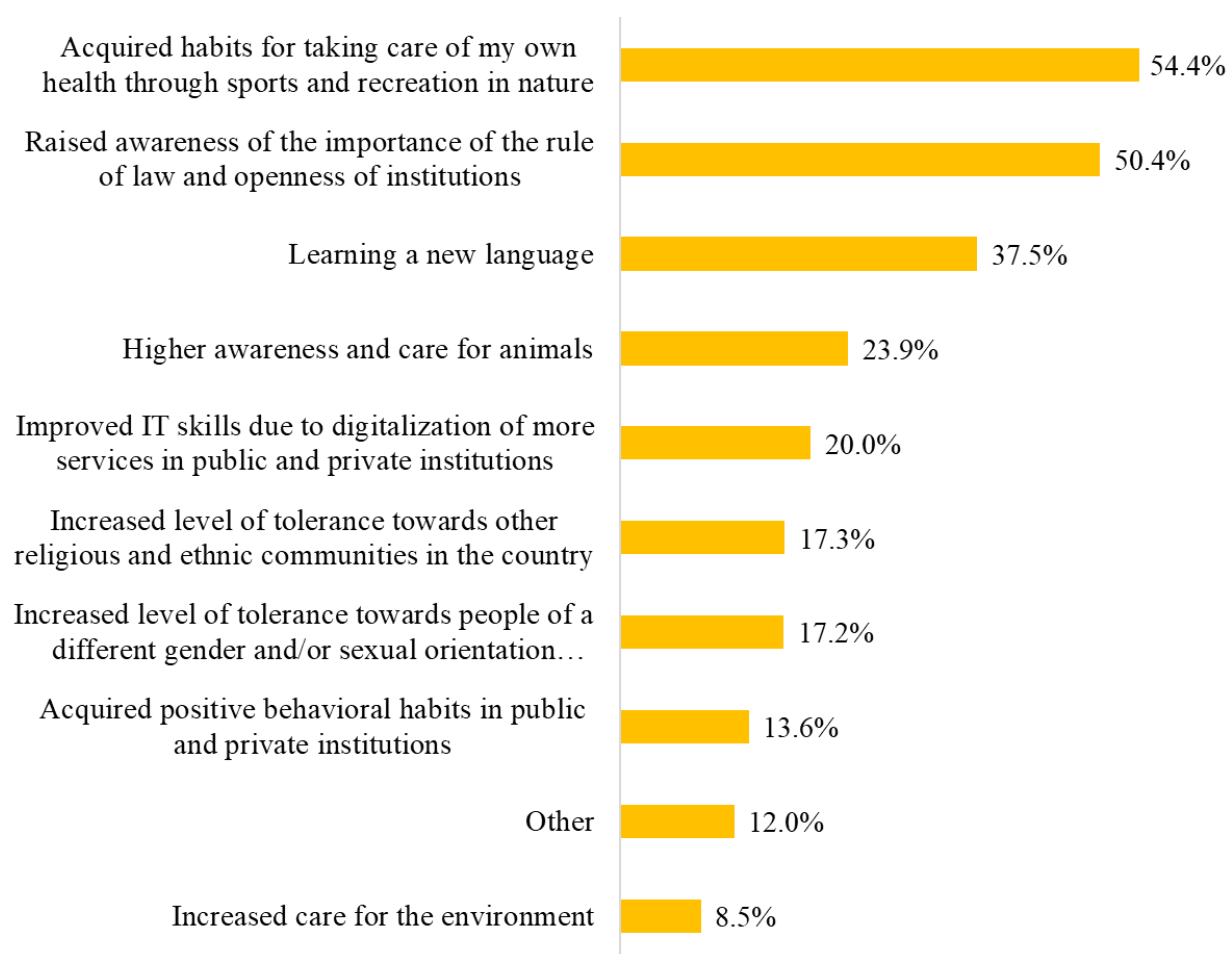
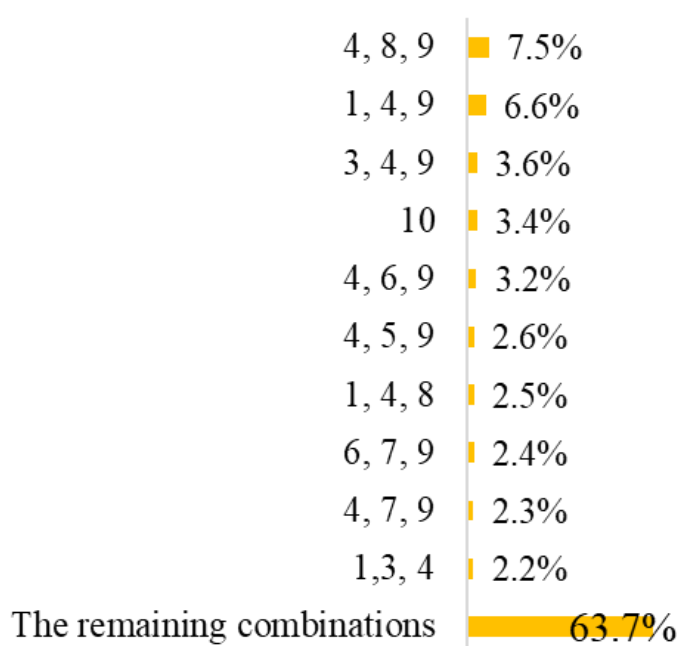


Chart 18.2. Ten most common combinations of three main positive habits acquired with moving to the new country.



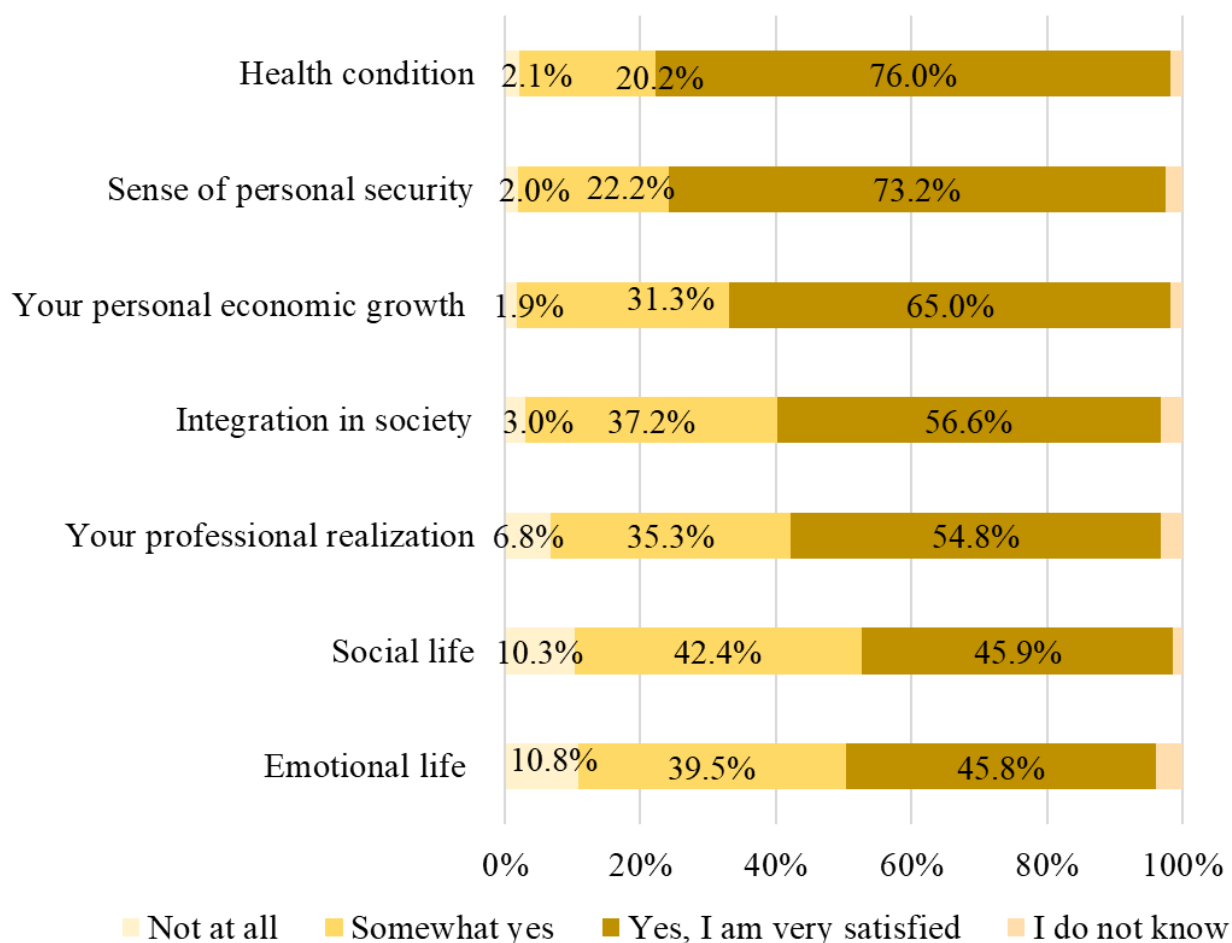
Respondents were least focused on caring for the environment and new behavioural habits in public and private institutions. This can be interpreted in two ways, one is that these two aspects of life remain unimportant for Macedonian emigrants or that they were already important before emigration and therefore are not listed among the priorities (i.e. they did not need to change habits). Further through the study we will have the opportunity to return to this aspect through comparison with answers to other questions.

The most common combination in this question (for the ordinal number of answers to this question see Annex I, Q7) for 7.9% of the respondents, is 4-8-9, acquired positive habits of behaviour in public and private institutions (waiting in line, polite attitude towards employees, respect for the rules of conduct, etc.), learning a new language and raising awareness of the importance of the rule of law and openness of institutions (functioning of the system, low level of corruption, nepotism, partisanship, clientelism, etc.) (For the ordinal number of the answers to this question see Appendix I, Q7)

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR LIFE IN THE NEW COUNTRY?

Not all aspects of life are easy for immigrants to accept in one country. Cultural, climatic, systemic and other types of gaps naturally exist between locals and foreigners. From Chart 19 you can see a high degree of satisfaction with the respondents from their own life on most of the stated grounds. The respondents are most satisfied (with 76% answering yes, and 20% somewhat yes) with their personal health condition and with their personal sense of security (with 73.2% answering yes and 22.2% somewhat yes). Personal economic growth (salary, savings), integration into society and personal professional realization all have more than 50% positive assessment (yes, I am very satisfied). On the other hand, the highest level of dissatisfaction (up to 11% stating strongly dissatisfied, and up to 42% to some extent dissatisfied) is with the social and emotional life (including love, a sense of belonging versus loneliness and nostalgia for home). Personal professional realization and integration in society remain among the aspects that are in the middle (assessed as both good and bad). This is to be expected given the language difficulty at the beginning of the stay in a new country (which automatically puts immigrants in the country in an unenviable position on the labour market, as well as Macedonian diplomas not being recognized and the need to retrain or study again/more).

Chart 19. How satisfied are you with your life in the new country?



WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL YOU ARE WELCOME IN THE COUNTRY WHERE YOU LIVE?

As the highest "qualities" that make Macedonian emigrants welcome immigrants in a certain country, the respondents listed "honest, hardworking and responsible workers" (66.8%), "adaptability/easy cultural integration in society" (46.5%) and "highly skilled workforce and/or their profession being in shortage". A small part of the respondents (2.4%) answered that they do not feel welcome in the new country. (Chart 20.1)

Chart 20.1. You feel that you (and/or your family member(s)) are welcome in the country where you live, most because (three possible answers)

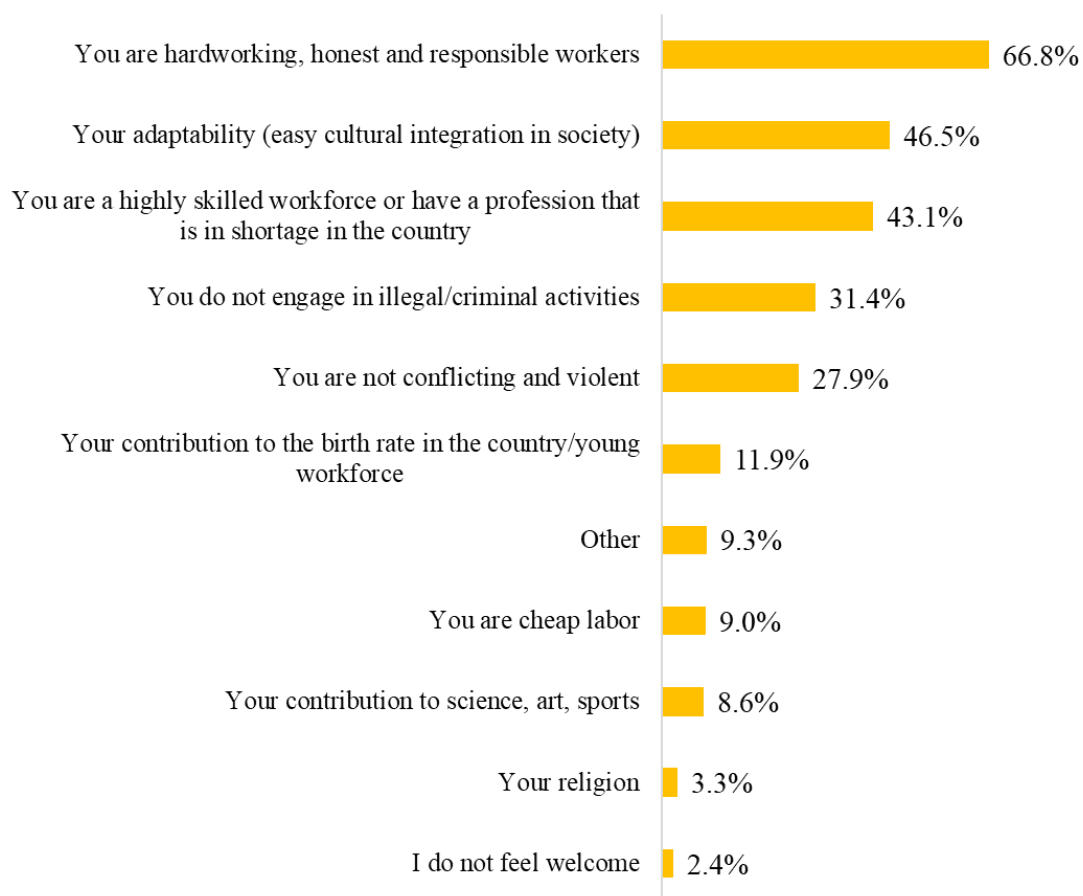
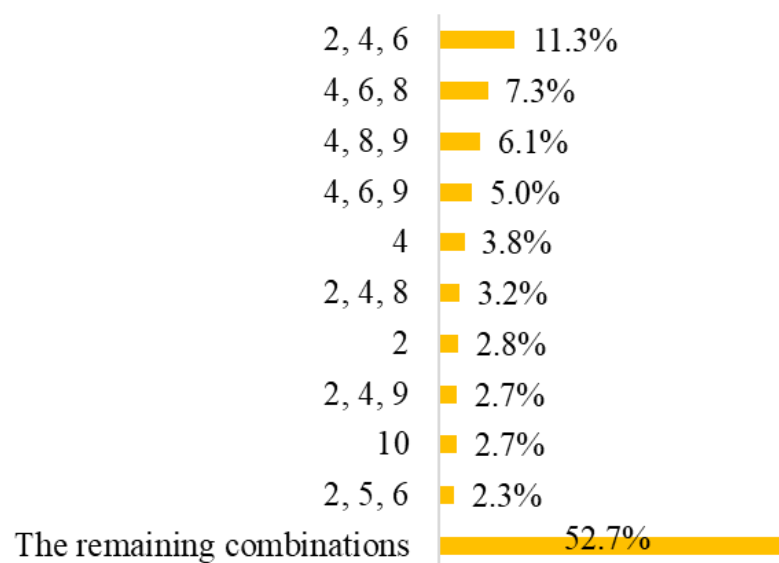


Chart 20.2. Ten most common combinations regarding the feeling that you (and/or your family member(s)) are welcome in the country where you live, most because (three possible answers)

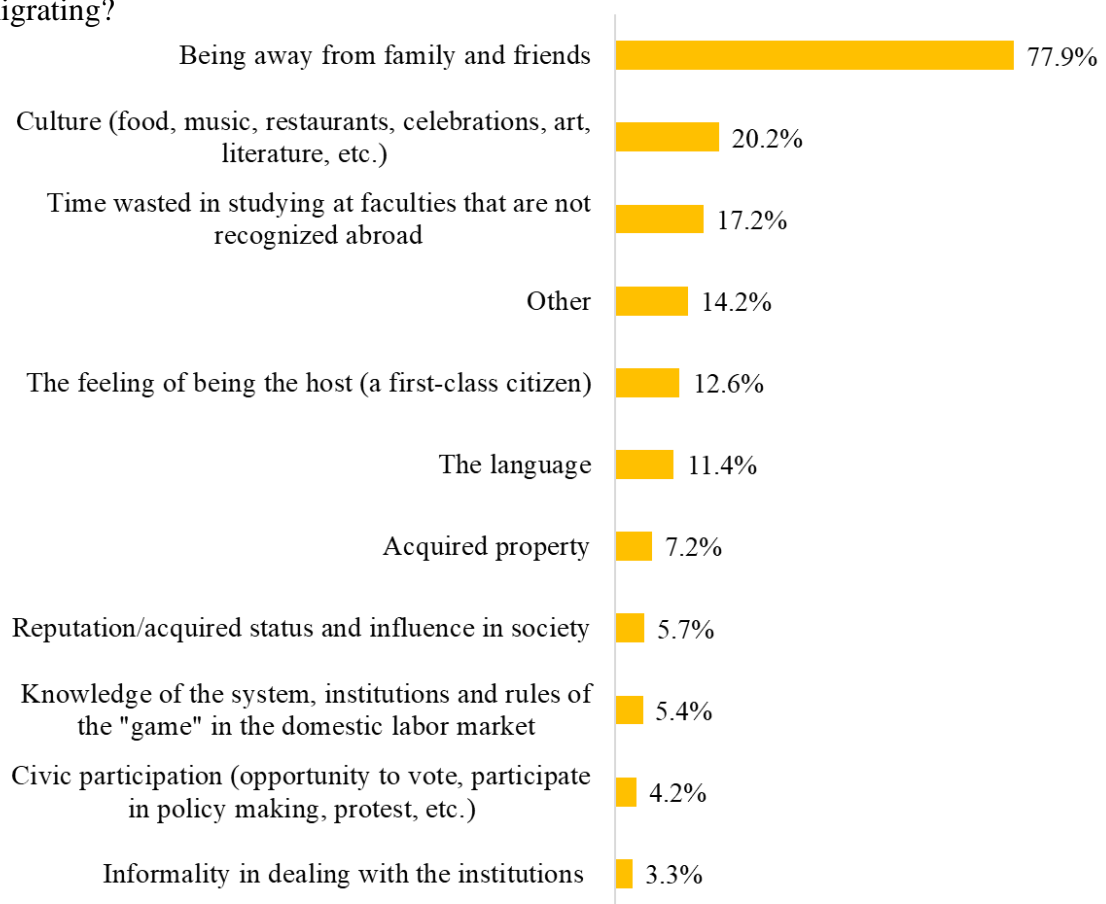


The combination with the highest percentage (11.3%) among the answers of the respondents is exactly the combination of the first three selected answers listed above (2-4-6), the second is 4-6-8, (for 7.3% of the respondents) or instead of "highly qualified workforce/profession in shortage", the combination of the answers "hardworking/honest/responsible workers", "easy adaptability/cultural integration" and "I do not engage in illegal/criminal activities". The third combination (by 6.1%) is 4-8-9, which includes "hardworking/honest/responsible workers", "I do not engage in illegal/criminal activities" and "I am not conflicting and violent". (Chart 20.2, and you can read the other possible combinations by using Appendix I, Q9)

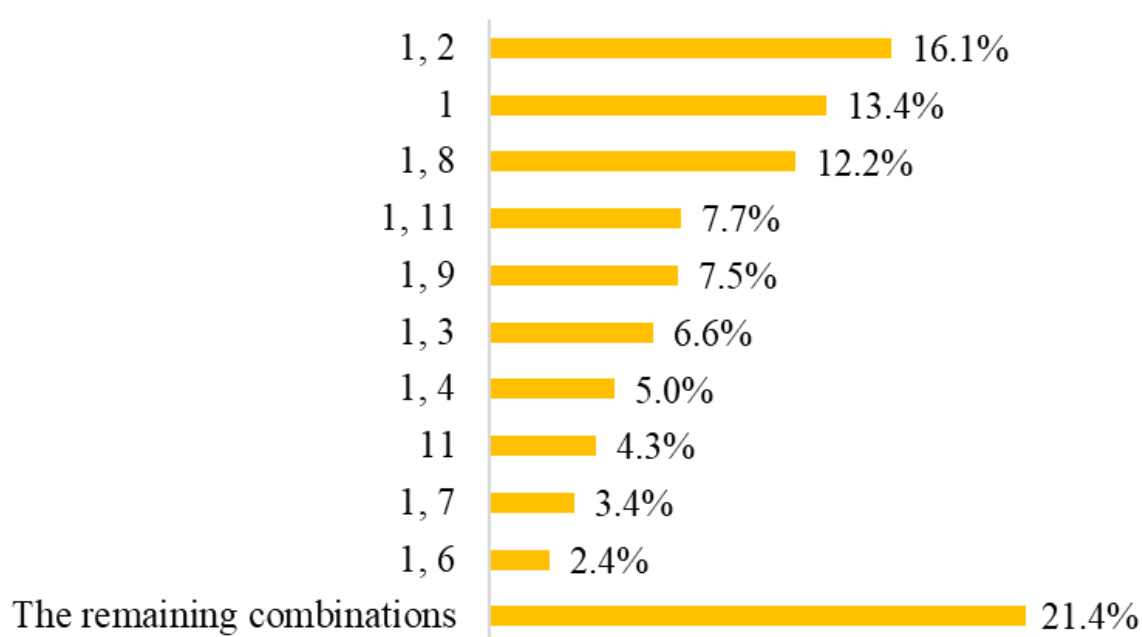
WHICH TWO THINGS DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE BIGGEST SACRIFICE AT THE EXPENSE OF WHAT YOU GOT BY EMIGRATING?

At the expense of what they gained by emigrating, migrants always lose something by leaving their homeland. Sometimes those are tangible things (property, friends, food), sometimes they are memories and feelings. The two things that the respondents consider as their biggest sacrifice at the expense of emigration are the distance/separation from family and friends (by 78%) and by 20% culture (which includes food, music, restaurants, celebrations, art, literature, etc.) (Chart 21.1)

Chart 21.1. Two things you consider to be the biggest sacrifice at the expense of what you got by emigrating?



While the first category "away from family and friends" is present in nine of the top ten combinations, and the first combination covers the most common categories (distance from family and friends and culture), the next category present among the top three combinations is "time wasted in studying at faculties that are not recognized abroad", followed by "the feeling of being the host (a first-class citizen)". A large percentage of respondents chose/listed another of the listed options (14%), which occurs in two of the top ten combinations. (Chart 21.2, and in more detail regarding the order of answers, see Appendix I, Q11) Ten most common combinations of two things you consider to be the biggest sacrifice at the expense of what you got by emigrating.

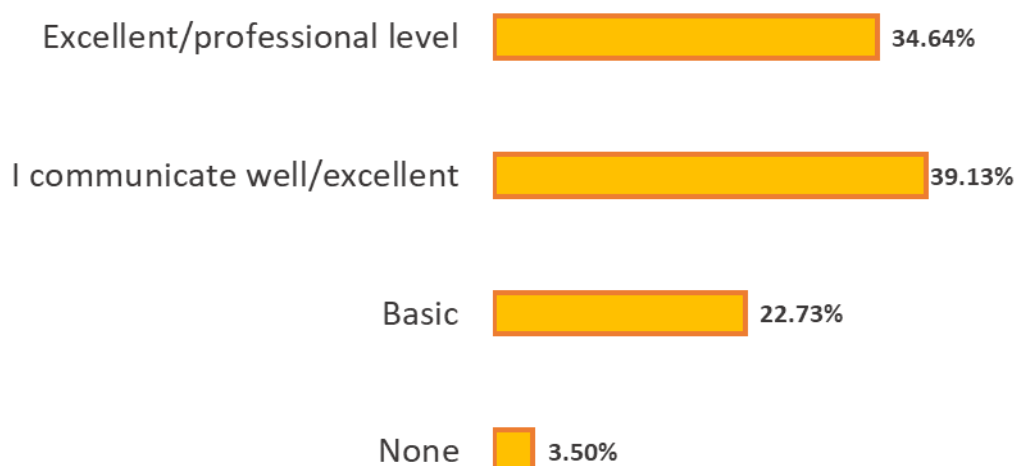


INTEGRATION

Apart from being included in the labour market, the integration of immigrants is largely reflected in the level of knowledge of the language (or languages) spoken in the country, their friends and their cultural and linguistic background. The sense of belonging, however, is something personal, so it may not correspond to the external image even in objectively solidly integrated newcomers (based on language, work and social circle).

From Chart 22 we can see that almost 40% of the respondents assessed their own knowledge of the language (one of the official languages) of the country in which they currently live as good/excellent for communication, and 35% assessed it as excellent on a professional level. Only 3.5% said they did not know the language at all, and almost 23% knew it at a basic level. This shows solid language integration of Macedonian immigrants in the host countries, and thus higher chances for professional advancement.

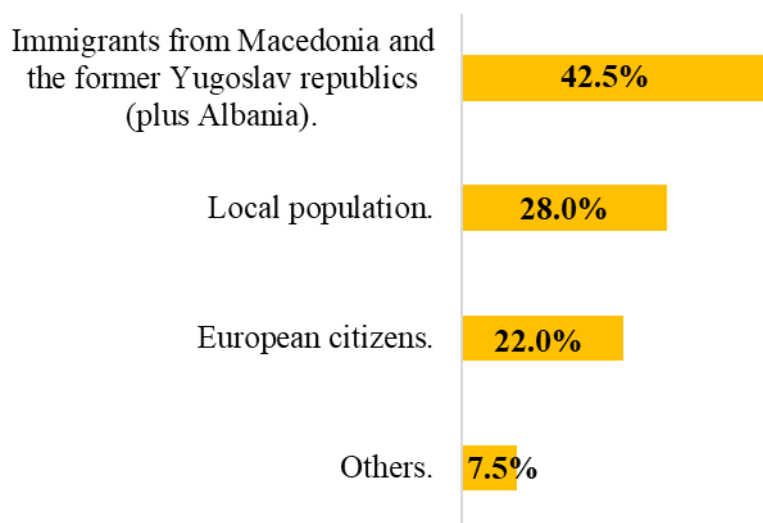
Chart 22. Assessment of the knowledge of the language of the country of immigration



Quite a large part of the Macedonian emigrants (43%) “choose” their friends after the emigration among the immigrants from Macedonia and the former Yugoslav republics (plus Albania), or among the local population (28%). European citizens are friends and contacts to 22% of the respondents, which is actually higher, considering that out of 28% of the local population, a large part is actually from Europe. (Chart 23)

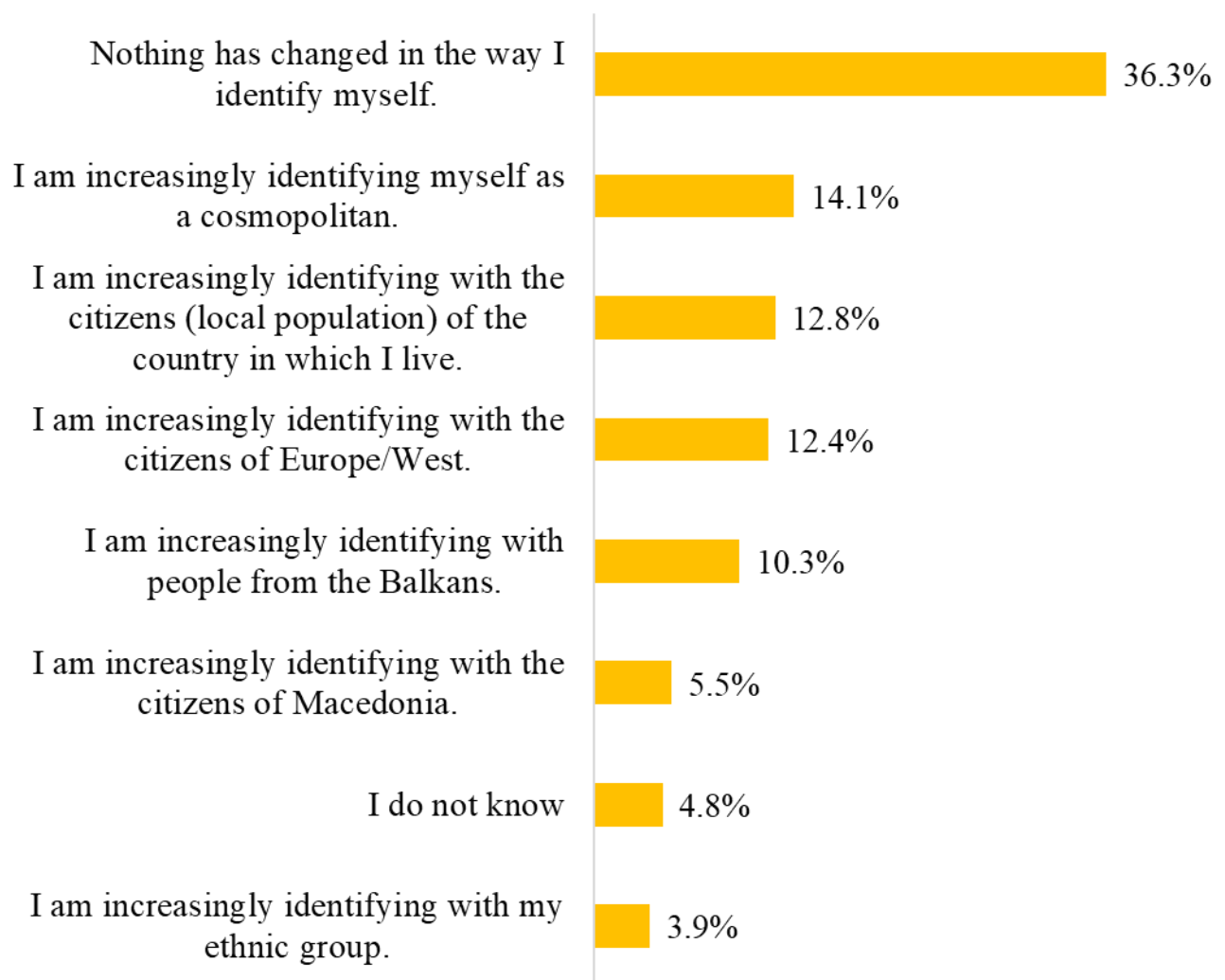
This is a particularly important indicator of language and culture as a connective tissue, which is often reflected in a kind of "ghettoization" of "our kind" as a concept absorbed by expatriates from the former Yugoslav republics.

Chart 23. Your friends and contacts in the new country are mainly (residents)



However, moving to a new country inevitably brings with it contacts with the local population and immigrants of other ethnicities and nationalities. We asked the emigrants "In what direction did their personal national feeling/identity change after emigrating?" Chart 24 shows that 36.3% answered that nothing has changed in the way they identify themselves, while 14.1% of the respondents increasingly identify as cosmopolitan. The least of the respondents increasingly identify with their ethnic group (3.9%), and with the citizens of Macedonia (5.5%). However, the question does not offer an answer to the degree of identification as Macedonians - citizens of Macedonia against their ethnic identities (Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Roma, etc.) among those 36% who answered that nothing has changed in the way they identify themselves.

Chart 24. Moving to a new country inevitably brings with it contacts with the local population and immigrants of other ethnicities and nationalities. In what direction has your personal national feeling/identity changed with emigrating? (one possible answer)



GENDER AND MIGRATION



The research by Rizankoska and Spaseska (2020, p.29) showed that patriarchal traditional social norms and existing stereotypes about biological differences between the sexes are the main reasons for the slow movement towards equality of women in Macedonia. The same research (ibid., Pp. 22-24) shows that citizens believe that there is gender equality before the law and religion, and most of them do not believe that there is factual equality in the work environment and economic equality, while there is much less equality when it comes to doing household chores and child rearing. Important fact that there is a so-called "gender loss in translation" in Macedonia is that men to a much greater extent than women assess the situation with equality in the country as positive.

Men and women respondents expatriates were also asked for their opinion on the impact of their emigration to another country on women's career development opportunities (for women and those declared otherwise under the category "gender" – personally for their life - and for the men, about the opportunities of the women in the family (wife/partner/girlfriend/mother/sister/daughter)).

The largest percentage of women (51%) answered that moving abroad has greatly improved their career development opportunities, 19.8% answered that they have improved to some extent, and 15% that it did not affect their career development opportunities. Of those who declared themselves as "other", 50% said that opportunities improved greatly and 50% that their career development opportunities had improved to some extent. Of the men, 34% answered that moving abroad greatly improved the career development opportunities of the women in their family, 22.5% answered that there was no impact, and 17.3% did not know whether moving abroad had an impact on the career opportunities of the women in the family. (Chart 25)

Women were specifically asked to rate the degree of improvement in gender equality in the new state, in various aspects of life. They generally responded that they (somewhat or completely) experienced an improvement in gender equality after emigration. Such improvement was mostly felt in the performance of domestic chores (for 57.3% of the respondents), the factual equality in the work environment (for 56.9%) and economic equality (56.7%). Where the women respondents least think that their gender equality has improved or do not know if it has improved is before their religion (25% answered negatively and 24% do not know) and in raising children (15% answered negatively and 19% do not know).

It is obvious that the state-dependent aspects of gender equality are improving for Macedonian women, and those who remain in the private sphere (children, and religion), although showing improvement, have a lower level of progress.

Chart 25. Did moving to another country improve the career development opportunities of the women in your family?

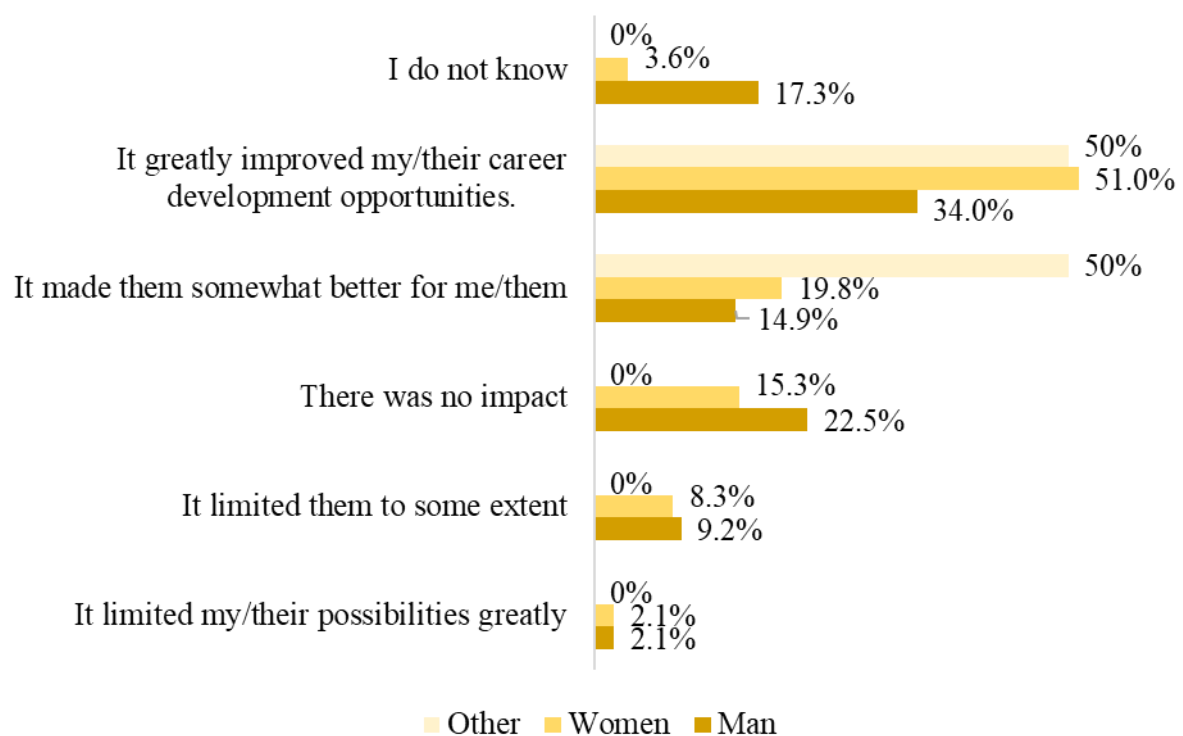
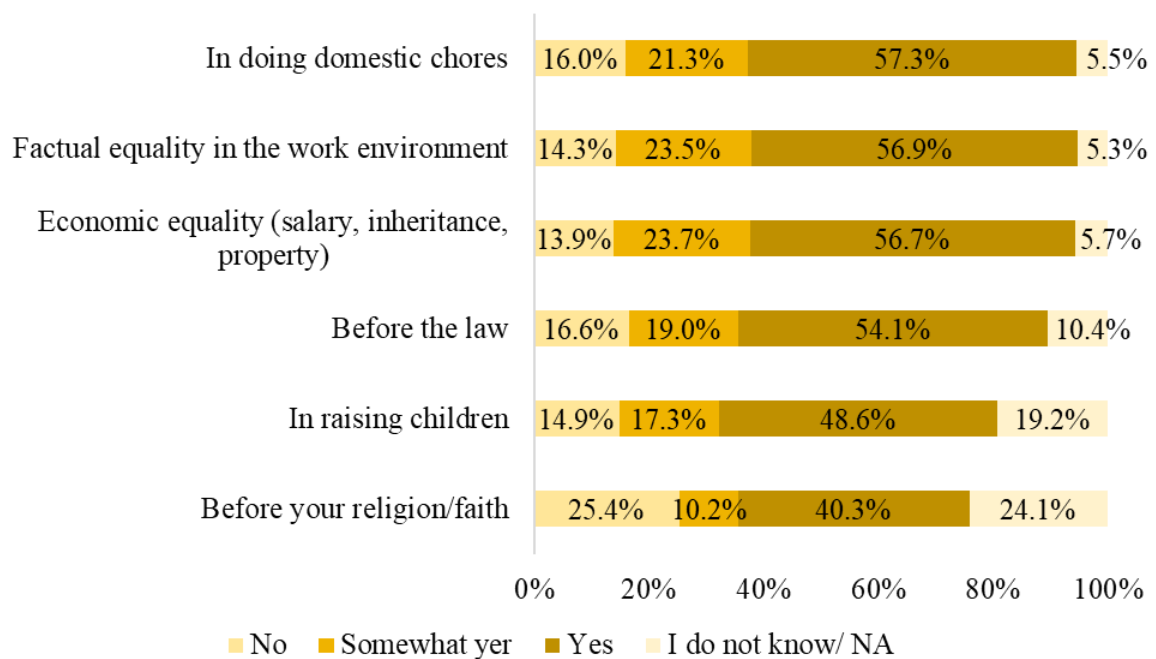


Chart 26. Have you personally felt an improvement in your gender equality by moving abroad? (WOMEN)



CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMIGRATION



From the previously elaborated results we notice that the insufficient democratic development in Macedonia (the political factor) is the main reason for the citizens to approach an essential life decision such as emigration from their country. The degree of democratic development in a country, on the other hand, largely depends on how much and how citizens participate politically, i.e. how much they are part of the decision-making process for public policies implemented at the local and central level. Citizens can participate directly and indirectly. Indirect participation determines the representative way of democracy, where citizens vote on who will decide for them and for the public policies that fully affect them. The direct way of participation, on the other hand, provides direct influence or decision-making by the citizens.⁴

There is a clear division in the literature regarding political and civic participation. Political participation according to Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995, p.38) is defined as "an activity that intends to influence or have some effect on the activities of government, such activities may be directly influenced by the creation or implementation of public policy, or indirectly by influencing people who make certain policy decisions." Exercising the right to vote is the most common and basic activity related to political participation, but there are a number of other activities that can influence public policies at the local and central level. Civic participation is defined as an organized volunteer activity focused on solving problems and helping others. Numerous authors believe that the "gold standard" for democratic governance is an equally developed civic and political participation that will be significantly spread within a political system. Also the "gold standard" for a democratic citizen is one who is willing to participate at both the political and civic level.

One of the reasons for the negative trend in political and civic participation is the changes in the family structure, the pressure of limited time, the need and desire for material resources, suburbanization (relocation of certain upper social strata from the centre to the suburbs), immigration, controversial politicians (large number of abuses of position and scandals), new media, etc. (Putnam 2000).

Conventional forms of political participation are voting in elections, contact with one's constituents, and (growing in recent years) involvement and influence through social media. Unconventional forms are demonstrations, violations of a certain law, and even incitement to violence, as in the case of terrorist acts against the state.

The research of Rizankoska and Trajkoska (2018) shows that citizens do not know the basic tools for involvement in policy making in Macedonia, and civil society organizations (CSOs) do not have the capacity for it. For example, 60% of citizens have not heard of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) tool as a tool for creating evidence-based policies. For 46% of CSOs RIA is in their work focus, and 54% have the capacity to monitor or involve policy-making processes. More than half of CSOs believe that they are not regularly, continuously and timely involved and informed about the decision-making and policy-making processes.

⁴ Representative democracy is a consequence of the "voice of the citizens", who in elections elect government officials who will decide in the interest of the citizens. While direct democracy is the one that offers mechanisms within the democratic political systems through which the citizens directly decide on a certain issue from the public sphere.

However, in 2013 the civil (non-governmental) sector for the first time has the trust of the majority of citizens (54%), which is a jump of 6% points from 2010 and 2006 (Krzhalovski, 2013). In the same year, citizens showed the greatest trust in churches and religious buildings (67%) and civil society organizations (60%). In the former with somewhat reduced and in the latter with an increased tendency of trust (which can be seen in the increased Civicus index of trust in CSOs (2011)). Trust in trade unions, chambers of commerce and employers' organizations is significantly lower (up to 37%). Trust in the state, on the other hand, is 48%, and in the political parties only 28%. (Ibid, p.4). Although in 2013 the public opinion prevails that CSOs are genuine initiatives of the citizens with the goal to achieve their interests, and not funded by foreign countries and foundations to convey the interests of those countries (Nuredinoska, Krzhalovski, Stojanova 2013, p.10), before and during the so-called "Colorful Revolution" there was a serious campaign of a so-called "De-Sorosization" (Trpkovski et al. 2020, p.8) by the then government that shifted the beliefs of the citizens. In 2018 we again get similar results in terms of trust in CSOs, with even higher trust of citizens in churches and religious associations (73%) and civic organizations (60%) (Cekov 2018), but there is a confusing picture of how the citizens experience CSOs in relation to their cause. Cekov (2018, p.10) points out that citizens generally agree with the views that CSOs are organized primarily to achieve the goals of citizens (61%), but respondents also agree with the views that CSOs are funded by foreign countries and foundations and that they serve them (61.5%).

Finally, the latest NDI survey (2020, p.26) shows that citizens have a high degree of distrust in state institutions, at least in the courts, the public prosecutor's office and the state commission for prevention of corruption.

Therefore, the specific research question in this study touches on the problem of low trust, and thus a low degree of civic involvement in changing public policies that, by creating a sense of apathy, alienation and powerlessness to change the situation, pushes citizens into the wave of mass emigration.

Consequently, *we ask, To what extent were expatriates involved in local and national policy-making processes before leaving? What level of trust in the institutions, their knowledge and communication with them existed before the citizens decided to leave?*

From the above mentioned analysis of literature we expect the level of trust, knowledge and engagement in institutions and public policy making processes to be low. The answer from this research is clear. Due to distrust in the institutions, as many as 57% of the respondents did not participate in solving local problems before emigration, while almost 19% of the respondents communicated in writing, online, through social networks, and also almost 19% communicated personally with the institutions through meetings with representatives. Almost 14% communicated informally (through acquaintances) and almost 13% did not participate in any way due to lack of familiarity with the institutions. (Chart 27)

These findings confirm the expected direction of our hypothesis, as well as the answers to the next question. More than half of the respondents (52.6%) did not participate in any type of civic participation activities (on local or national level), and 26.5% participated in protest

and/or strike for that purpose. Participation in meetings, public debates, polls and proposals was stated by 22%, and boycott, referendum and civic initiatives were the tools used by less than 13%. Thus, we see that the citizens did not trust or were not familiarized with the institutions, and that as a basic tool for participation in policy making they used the tool "protest and/or strike", while very few used civic initiatives (for changes to the Constitution, draft law or referendum, issues within the competence of local self-government, etc.) (Chart 28)

Chart 27. How did you usually get involved in solving local problems before emigrating? (select at most TWO options)

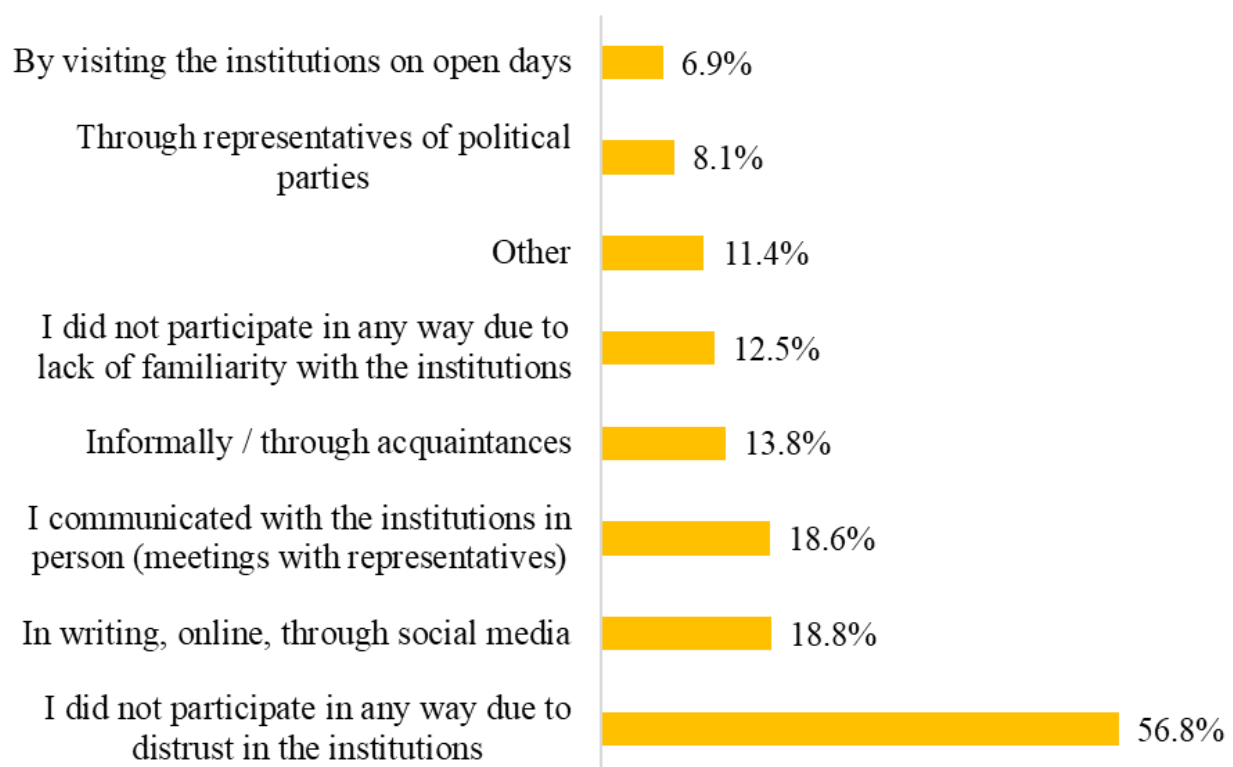


Chart 28. Before making the decision to emigrate, you have participated in activities (at local and/or central level) such as: (multiple answers possible)

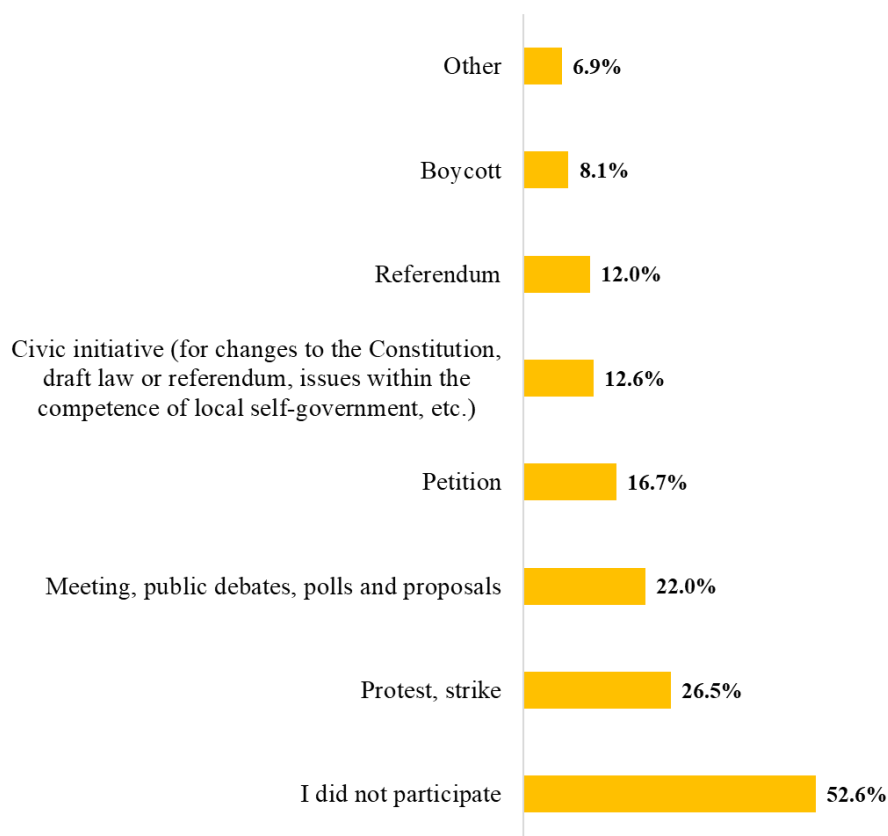
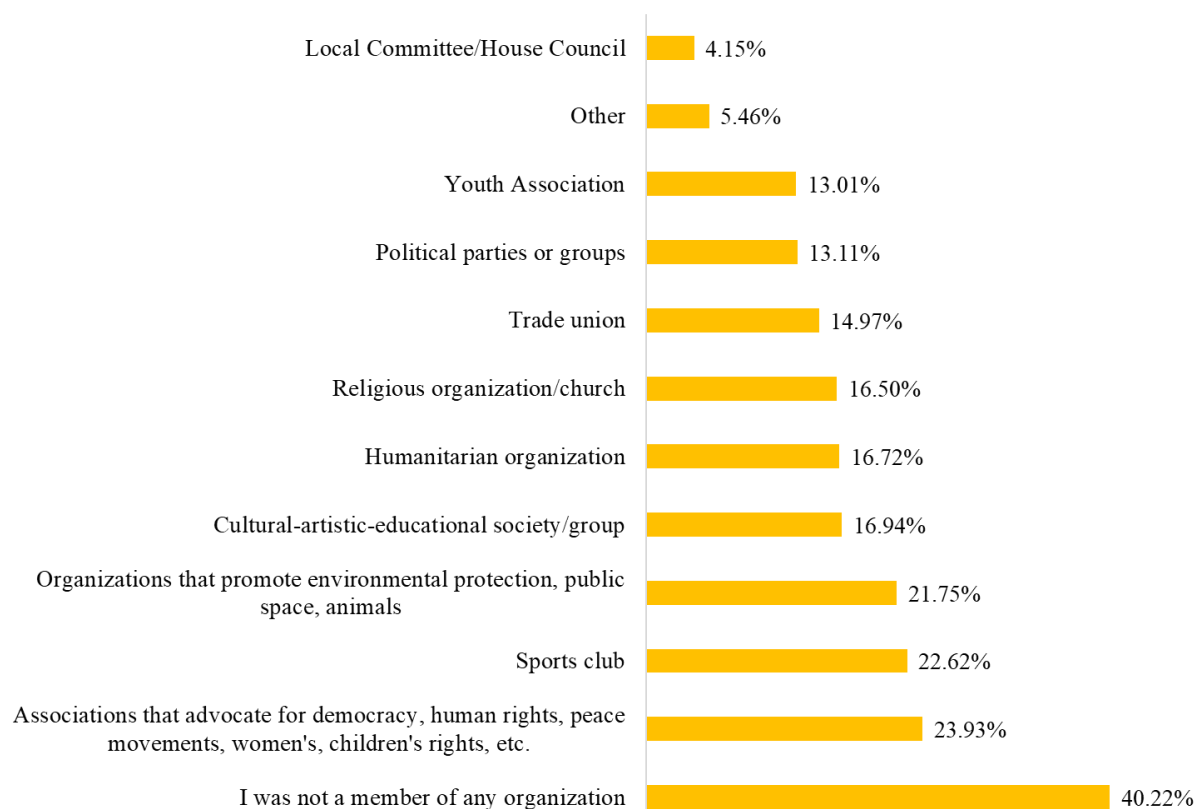


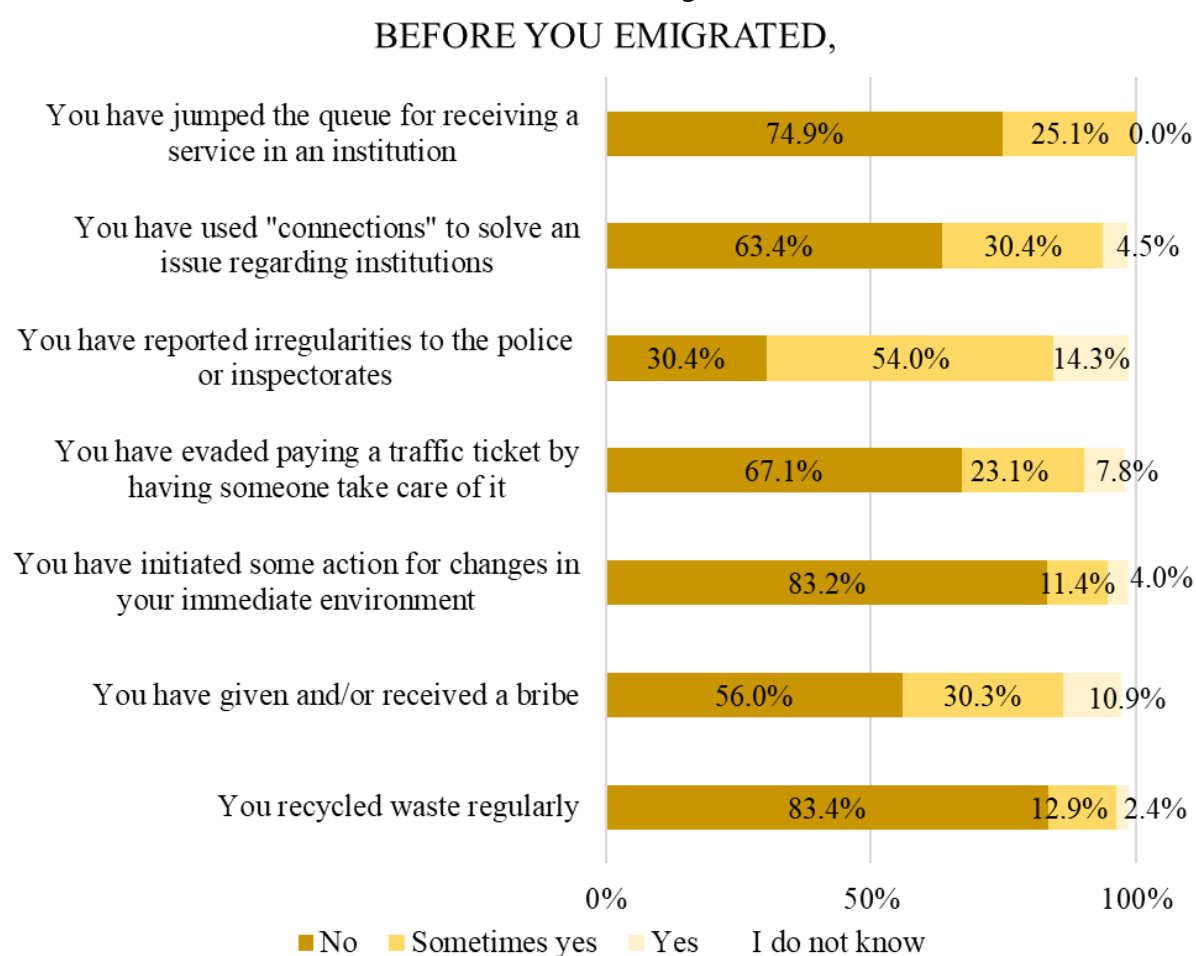
Chart 29. Before your emigration you actively participated in (multiple answers are possible)



This lack of trust in the institutions (mentioned in the introductory part of this chapter) is also reflected in the (non)involvement of emigrants in various NGOs/civil society organizations. Respondents to a large extent (40.22%) were not members of any organization before emigration, 24% were part of associations that advocate for democracy, human rights and the like, and 23% were members of sports clubs. In our sample, too, the difference in involvement (which would indirectly mean a level of trust) in civil society organizations versus political parties, is clear. Namely, apart from trust in churches and religious organizations (which in previous studies is of the highest degree, and in this study is somewhere in the middle), the trend of trust in organizations in existing research and involvement of expatriates from this sample is consistent. Thus, emigrants were mostly engaged in civil society organizations (of different profiles), and in lesser number in trade unions and political parties. (Chart 29)

Although a large part of the citizens (before emigrating) did not jump the queue for receiving a service in an institution (75%), a large part of them did not have their traffic ticket (67%) taken care of by someone, nor did they use connections to solve an issue regarding institutions (63%), also a large part did not recycle waste regularly (83%), nor initiated any action for changes in their immediate environment (83%). While 54% sometimes and 14.3% constantly reported irregularities to the police and inspectorates (e.g. for irregularities, illegal procedures and abuse of office by superiors, domestic violence, child exploitation, etc.), 41.2% sometimes or constantly received/gave bribes. (Chart 30)

Chart 30. Civic behavior in the institutions before emigration

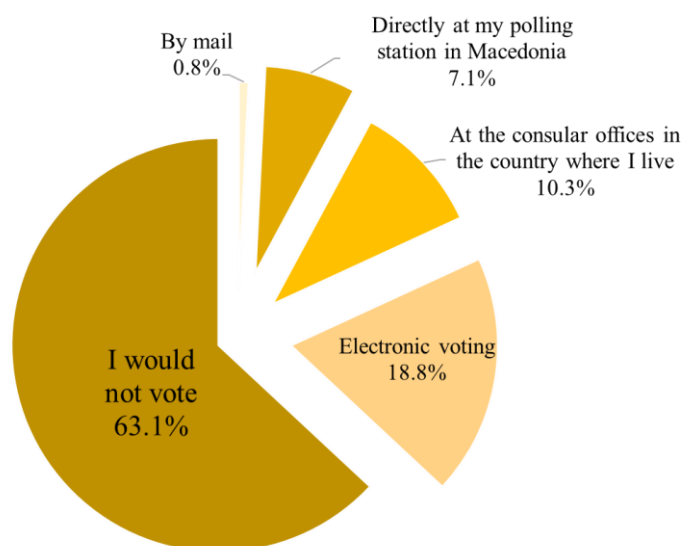


These findings again show, on one hand the reluctance of emigrants to be part of a society where there is no rule of law, but there is corruption or informality in the work of institutions; and on the other hand, that the respondents did not show a high degree of proactivity in changing their environment due to, as we said, distrust in or lack of familiarity with the institutions. They were unfamiliar with the mechanisms of direct democracy and how they should use them to participate in policy-making and decision-making at local and central level.

On the other hand, as an important note is that the Law on Referendum and other forms of direct expression of citizens is vaguely set in terms of mechanisms for direct democracy and it provides for a complex, lengthy and demotivating procedure for using these mechanisms.⁵ Hence, the dilemma that arose in the question of the three main benefits of emigrating, i.e. the low level of focus on care for the environment and new behavioural habits in public and private institutions, remains. Do these two aspects of living remain in the background for Macedonian expatriates due to the priority of necessary changes in terms of the functioning of the system?

Finally, we come to the main tool for political participation - elections and voting activity. Macedonia has on several occasions changed the system of inclusion of voters from the diaspora, which proved to be both inefficient and expensive. Therefore, an indelible question about the cost of voting for expatriates, is the question about how willing expatriates are for this type of political participation in the home country? Thus, according to our research, 63% of the respondents would not vote in the elections in Macedonia, and of the rest, 19% would use electronic voting, 10% would vote in the consular offices in the country where they live, 7% directly in their polling station and less than 1% by mail. This fact is important when it comes to electoral engineering in the future, given that we are talking about an expensive process that is not a priority for more than half of the emigrants.

Chart 31. You would vote in the elections in Macedonia



⁵ For example, the existing regulation states that a civic initiative at the central and local level is initiated by 100 citizens. A citizens' initiative for submitting a draft law needs to be initiated by 10,000 citizens, and for changing the Constitution or calling a referendum, the initiative needs to be supported by 150,000 citizens. On the other hand, for a civic initiative at the local level, although it can be initiated with 100 signatures, the civic initiative is considered initiated if it is supported by 10% of the citizens registered in the voter list. To form a political party it is necessary to collect 1 000 signatures, while for launching a civic initiative on a local level sometimes even more. For example, in the Prilep Municipality (where according to the last census there are 69 704 inhabitants) it is necessary to collect 6 970 signatures.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

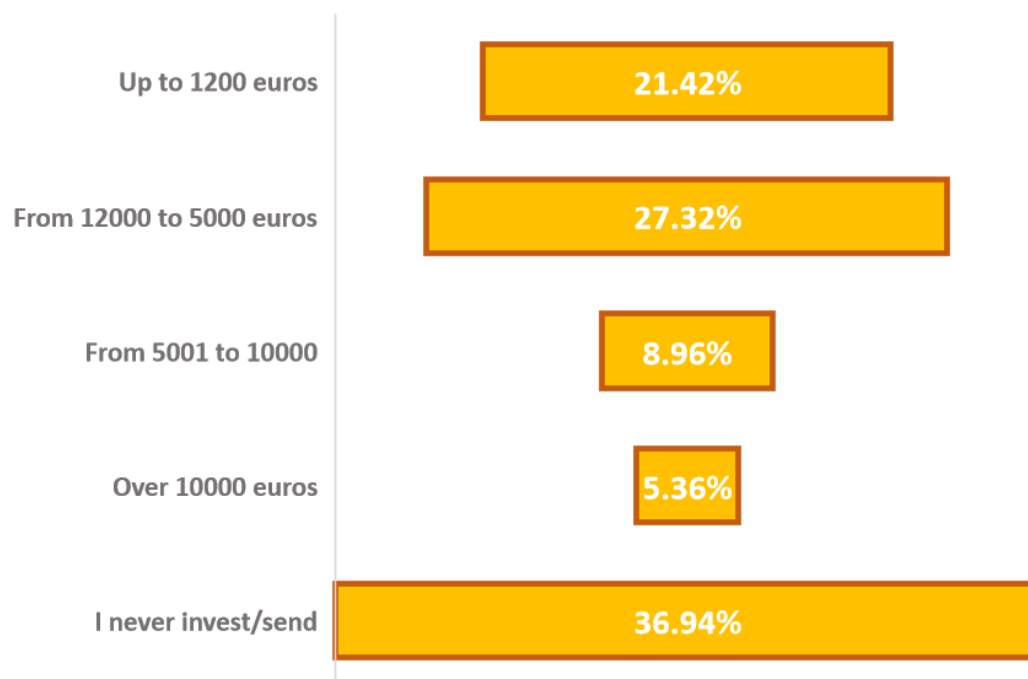


After discovering that political participation in the form of voting in the democratic elections in Macedonia is not a priority for its expatriates, we finally come to one of the most important issues related to the relations between emigrants and the home country - remittances and investment potential.

According to estimates made by the National Bank (Angelovska-Bezhoska, 2020), the amount of remittances from emigrants and persons temporarily working abroad, from 2009 onwards, averages about 16% of GDP (although the greater share of remittances in cash makes these estimates insufficiently accurate). The Governor of the National Bank notes that such remittances are especially important for the Macedonian macroeconomics and that the global shock caused by the pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020 will be transmitted to the domestic economy through them specifically. (Angelovska-Bezhoska, 2020) In the research of Nikoloski (2013) 75% of the respondents stated that they sent remittances to their closest relatives (father, mother, children), although irregularly and in most cases in the amount of 50 to 100 euros or dollars.

Our research showed a lower level of expatriates sending remittances than Nikoloski's (2013) - as many as 37% of respondents never send funds (do not invest) in Macedonia. However, of those 63% who send remittances are slightly higher, so 27% send up to 5 000 euros, 21% up to 1 200 euros per year, and almost 15% send more than 5 000 euros per year. (Chart 32)

Chart 32. Yearly financial/material investment to Macedonia



Nikoloski (2013) points out that the investment climate in Macedonia "is not built at the highest level because there is still distrust among expatriates towards the state administration, which is still slow in administrative correspondence and communication, i.e. the emphasized bureaucracy with them." Added to this is the security situation (up until the book was published - 2013), the postponed NATO membership, the unreformed judiciary, as well as the need for legal relief in the investment of expatriates.

While most of the respondents in this survey plan to either buy new or maintain their existing property in Macedonia in the future (42%), 46% of respondents do not plan to invest there, and only 14.5% plan to invest (Chart 33). The majority (almost 50%) of the respondents plan to live outside Macedonia forever, 13% plan to stay abroad until retirement, and 16% plan to live abroad in the long run (more than 5 years). 18% of the respondents do not know how long they will stay outside Macedonia, and almost 3% plan to live abroad in the medium or short term (less than 5 years). (Chart 34)

In future, You would like/ have plans to:

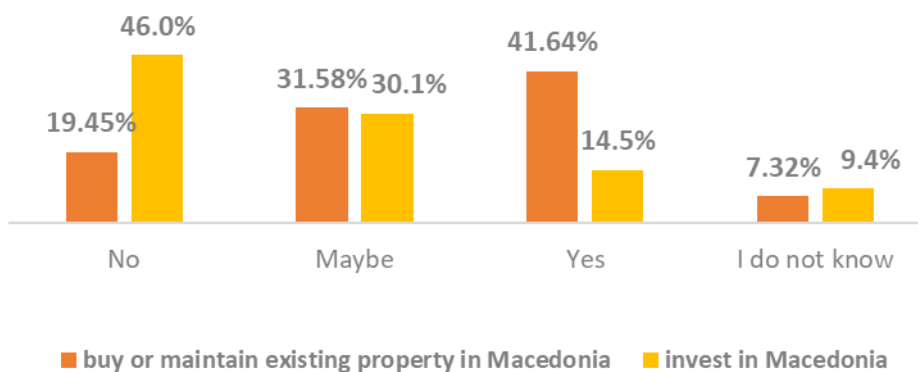
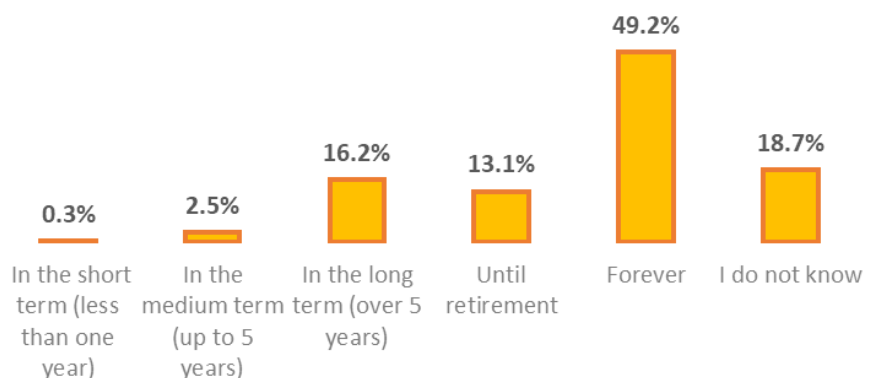


Chart 33. Future plans for investments in Macedonia

You plan to live outside Macedonia

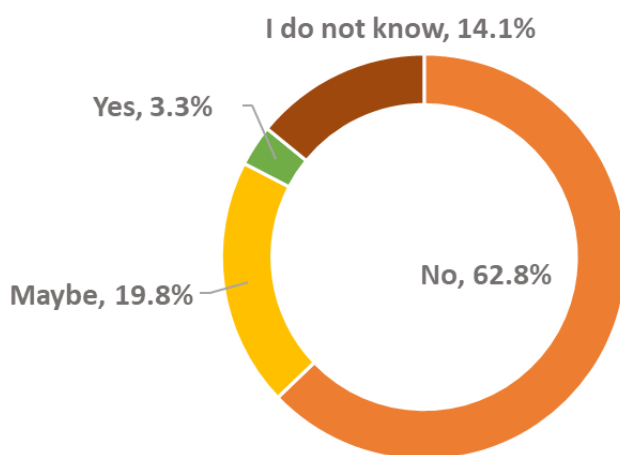
Chart 34. Plans to return to Macedonia



A convincing 62% of the respondents would not return to Macedonia due to its integration into the European Union, and almost 20% answered that they might return. While 14% do not know, only 3.3% answered positively to this question. Finally, as many as 87% of the respondents stated that they know someone who is either preparing or planning to emigrate from Macedonia in the foreseeable future (Chart 36).

Chart 35. The EU as motivation to return to Macedonia.

The eventual integration in the EU would motivate you to return to Macedonia.



I know someone who is preparing or planning to emigrate from Macedonia in the foreseeable future?

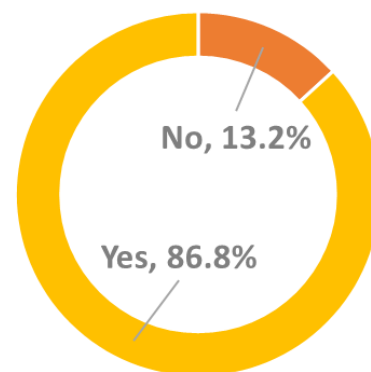


Chart 36. I know someone who is preparing or planning to emigrate from Macedonia in the foreseeable future

The above-mentioned data rings the alarm about the alienation of the Macedonian diaspora from the home country, at least in the once known (and previously mentioned) *"pechalba"* sense. Macedonian citizens, in search of happiness, decide to integrate more and more into the new environments, and to reduce the relations with the home country financially to "symbolic" or "sentimental" ties (through property). This will most likely have a positive impact on the personal perspective of the emigrants, but very negatively on that of Macedonia.

CONCLUSIONS



- **EMIGRATING IS EASIER THAN STAYING.**

To the question "In your experience, was it easier to emigrate than to stay in Macedonia?" 74% of respondents answered positively, and only 10% answered negatively.

- **BAD POLITICAL CLIMATE, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND LACK OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES - MAIN REASONS FOR EMIGRATION.**

We have shown that the economic factor is not the only factor behind the mass emigration. In fact, we conclude that emigrants are running away primarily from an unfavourable political climate, and then due to poor economic conditions, low living standards and lack of conditions for career development.

Corruption, clientelism, partisanship, nepotism, lack of rule of law, distrust in the electoral process, polluted media space, these are the main political motives for leaving the country. Citizens in recent decades have been exposed to party pressure on which their social and economic status depends, pressure that expatriates have defined through the need to have a party membership in order to be employed in state administration, pressure known as "racketeering" by governing structures over private companies (of which small and medium enterprises are especially vulnerable), fear of publicly expressing an opinion due to party revanchism and so on. The feeling of being a second-class citizens for some respondents is a direct consequence of social differences and this party polarization in Macedonian society in recent years.

Although we noticed a positive correlation between the citizens who previously lived in households with higher total income and their higher economic well-being after emigration, the general conclusion from the data is that the standard of living has improved for emigrants. Thus, the escape from unfair and poor distribution of workforce (a direct consequence of partisanship), unemployment (especially among young people), low wages and unpaid additional work (exploitation of the employee), not investing in education and upgrading of employees (courses/training) and the like are the detailed economic reasons for emigration. Finally, underdeveloped education and science, and a low level of research and innovation define the problem of unfavourable career development conditions, which is the third reason for leaving. However, mistrust in the judiciary and irresponsibility of the authorities, poor environment, and lack of conditions for raising children (especially for single mothers) are also important motives for emigration mentioned by the respondents.

- **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND LANGUAGE DEFINE THE IMMIGRATION DESTINATION.**

Although political reasons outweigh in the final decision to leave, socio-economic opportunities define the destination. They are the most important aspect in choosing the new

place of residence for as many as 68% of expatriates, followed by the offer of a wider range of career development opportunities in the new setting, as well as knowledge of the language in the new country. Possibilities for raising a family and a clean environment are listed immediately for these three reasons, and culture and climate are among the last aspects that were decisive in choosing the place to move.

- CARE FOR ONE'S OWN HEALTH AND RAISED AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RULE OF LAW AND OPENNESS OF THE INSTITUTIONS ARE THE BIGGEST BENEFITS FROM EMIGRATION.

Acquired habits of caring for one's own health through sports and recreation in nature is the greatest benefit for more than half of the emigrants. It is paradoxical that from a country with an abundance of natural resources, citizens had to emigrate in order to start taking care of their health. However, this data indicates the failure of Macedonia to provide the so-called enabling environment for healthy living of its citizens (often in the form of access to natural recreational locations, places and conditions for sports), insufficient attention to these aspects of life through education systems and working environments. While most companies in developed countries offer gyms and promote outdoor recreation activities, Macedonian workers do not even have the basic safety measures in the workplace (another aspect respondents listed in the reasons for emigration in the free comments section). Raising awareness of the importance of the rule of law and the openness of institutions is also an important benefit for expatriates coming out of an environment in which the informal always overcomes the formal ways of communicating with institutions. Citizens, obviously, see the benefits of the functioning and openness of institutions for all, which makes the citizen trust the system and the people around him and thus build a positive social capital/trust. Learning a new language, higher animal awareness and care, and improved IT skills due to the digitization of multiple services in public and private institutions are quite important for expatriates. The latter is particularly relevant in relation to the relation between the slow and closed administration in Macedonia and the culture of informality and corruption in the communication with the institutions. Digitalization is one of the ways to ensure openness and transparency of institutions, fast and efficient communication with the citizen and neutralizing the human factor in creating that so-called "culture of informality".

- MACEDONIAN EMIGRANTS BELIEVE THAT THEIR PROFILE OF HONEST, HARDWORKING AND RESPONSIBLE WORKERS MAKES THEM WELCOME TO THE NEW COUNTRY.

According to most respondents, Macedonian expatriates are honest, hardworking and responsible workers and that is the main reason why developed countries are open to them as immigrants. They also consider themselves to be highly skilled workers and/or have a profession that is in shortage in the country, which makes them more desirable to foreign

economies and societies. However, before this feature of the Macedonian worker, the respondents think that what makes them welcome in the new country is their adaptability/easy cultural integration in the new society. A very small part of the respondents (2.4%) answered that they do not feel welcome in the new country. This is a particularly good indicator of the rule of law in a democratic state where citizens, equal before the law, do not get a sense of discrimination and marginalization in their access and communication to basic institutions such as health, social affairs, education and the like.

- **MACEDONIAN EMIGRANTS FEEL SATISFIED WITH THEIR LIFE AFTER EMIGRATION, AND THE BIGGEST SACRIFICE AT THE EXPENCE OF IT, IS BEING AWAY FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS, AS WELL AS THE CULTURE IN MACEDONIA.**

Although the issue of feelings of discrimination (which is not part of this analysis) encompasses a broader analysis of formal and informal relations and systemic arrangements with immigrants in a particular country, Macedonian expatriates feel generally satisfied with their lives in the new state. They are most satisfied with their personal health and sense of personal security, and least with their social and emotional life. The (dis)satisfaction with the social and emotional life reflects the feeling of the respondents that they sacrificed family, friends and culture at the expense of the benefits of the relocation (which seems to be the least important thing for the immigration destination, and is considered the biggest sacrifice at the start of a person's emigration path). On the other hand, the least important of the things they sacrificed were the informality in dealing with the institutions and participation in policy making (voting opportunity, etc.). It is understandable that expatriates do not feel nostalgia for the informality of institutions in terms of communication with functional institutions in developed countries. On the other hand, they do not feel nostalgic even for the possibility of civic participation. This data, on the other hand, can be analysed through the prism of the factor of deep "partisanship" of the Macedonian society. Saturated by the role of politics in all spheres of life, Macedonian expatriates do not see political participation as a priority in life.

- **MACEDONIAN EMIGRANTS EASILY INTEGRATE INTO THE NEW ENVIRONMENT.**

Macedonian emigrants to a large extent speak the language spoken by the majority in the country of immigration at an excellent and professional level, and this is an important indicator of what the respondents themselves stated above - their ability to quickly adapt and integrate. Consequently, it gives them a higher chance of professional and economic advancement. Although 14% of respondents increasingly identify as cosmopolitan, 13% with locals and 12% with Europeans, more than 40% "choose" their friends after emigrating between immigrants from Macedonia and the former Yugoslav republics (plus Albania). This is reflected (although

not to an extreme degree) in the increased identification of Macedonian emigrants with people from The Balkans (by 10%), Macedonians (by 6%) and their ethnic group (by 4%).

- **EMIGRATION BRINGS BETTER CONDITIONS FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND CAREER PROSPERITY OF WOMEN.**

More than half of the women respondents answered that moving greatly improved their career development opportunities and that after having emigrated they personally (to some extent or completely) felt an improvement in gender equality. Such improvement was felt most in the performance of domestic duties, de facto equality in the work environment and economic equality, and least before their religion and in the upbringing of children. Of the men respondents, 34% answered that moving greatly improved the career development opportunities of the women in their family, and 22.5% answered that it had no impact.

- **MACEDONIAN EMIGRANTS DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN CREATING POLICIES BECAUSE OF DISTRUST IN AND LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH THE INSTITUTIONS.**

As many as 57% of the respondents did not participate in solving local problems before emigration due to distrust in the institutions, and almost 13% of them due to lack of familiarity with the same. Almost 19% of the respondents communicated in writing, online, through social networks, the same percentage of respondents communicated personally with the institutions through meetings with representatives and almost 14% of the respondents communicated informally (through acquaintances).

More than half of the respondents did not participate in any type of civic participation activities (local or national). For 26.5% the civic participation was realized in the form of protest and/or strike, 22% used meeting, public debates, polls and proposals, while boycott, referendum and civic initiatives are the tools used by less than 13% of the respondents. Thus, we see that the citizens who lacked familiarity with the institutions, do not know well the mechanisms for direct democracy or do not trust them, used the tool "protest and/or strike" as a basic tool for participation in policy making.

The lack of trust in the institutions is further reflected in the (non)involvement of emigrants in non-governmental/civil society organizations. As many as 44% of the respondents were not members of any organization before the emigration, and 24% were part of associations that advocate for democracy, human rights, etc. Engagement in trade unions and political parties remains at the bottom of the list.

Although as many as 75% of the citizens before emigration did not jump the queue for receiving a service in an institution, and over 60% did not evade paying a traffic ticket by having someone take care of it, or used "connections" to solve an issue regarding institutions, even more of

them (83%) didn't recycle waste regularly, nor initiated any action for changes in the immediate environment. While 54% sometimes reported irregularities to the police and inspectorates and 14.3% constantly did so, 41.2% of the citizens sometimes or constantly received/gave bribes.

This weak initiative and apathy among the emigrants is a reflection of the general distrust and ignorance of the institutions due to their non-transparency, inertia, inaccessibility to the citizens and largely lack of familiarity with good governance practices. And the "complicity" in the informal (sometimes illegal) practices of the functioning of the institutions by the respondents is a result of the high level of bribery and corruption practices in the state institutions with which no government has shown willingness to deal so far (shown by the ever lowering corruption perception index in recent years).

- **THERE IS NO HIGH LEVEL OF WILLINGNESS FOR IMMIGRANTS TO GET INVOLVED IN THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROCESSES IN MACEDONIA.**

Thus, 63% of the respondents would not vote in the Macedonian elections, and even 37% of the respondents never send funds to Macedonia. While 42% of respondents plan to buy new or maintain their existing property in the future, only 14.5% do not plan to invest there.

Almost 50% of the respondents plan to live outside Macedonia forever, and 16% plan to do so for more than 5 years. For 62% of the respondents, integration into the European Union would not be a motive to return to Macedonia, and only for 3.3% it would be. Finally, as many as 87% of the respondents stated that they know someone who is preparing or planning to emigrate from Macedonia in the foreseeable future.

These findings warn of the need for commitment to the Berlin Process and negotiations with the EU, as well as an urgent reform strategy aimed at fundamentally changing the way the system operates, in order to enable the rule of law and democratization. For Macedonian expatriates, EU integration without changing the political culture in the country is not enough. This means that partisanship, corruption, non-transparency of institutions and their non-functionality deter expatriates from the desire to return to Macedonia. The economic standard and the creation of fair conditions for competition in the labour market and the introduction of a merit-based system before any other system when employing people at state functions (at all levels of the hierarchy), is a basic condition for de-partisanship of the economy as well.

Deliberative democracy, on the other hand, depends on the constant debate and proactivity of the citizens (stakeholders) in the policy-making processes at national and local level. Citizen participation in individual or group form is the main means of changing the institutions that in this vicious circle of "being lost in translation" are responsible for the demotivation, apathy and alienation of the citizen from their environment, and the final decision to leave the country.

NECESSARY CHANGES TO PREVENT MASS EMIGRATION



• CENSUS

An urgent census is needed, which would enable the planning of effective (demographic, social and economic) policies in the country, and towards the emigrants.

• PUBLIC POLICIES

Public policies should be based solely on analysis and evidence and not on purely partisan and/or government interests. Establishment of a special body in the Parliament that will deal with active monitoring of analyses made by universities, institutes, civil society organizations and think tanks, would facilitate their direct application in the process of creating regulations and decision-making at local and central level.

• INSTITUTIONS OF THE STATE

De-partisanship of state institutions through the introduction of the merit-based system in employment in institutions at local and central level is a basic measure to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. It is also a necessary condition for raising the level of trust in them by the citizens (as a measure against nepotism and clientelism).

Impartial and non-selective implementation of anti-corruption measures and commitment to the application of the principles of the rule of law and human rights in the country.

Introduction of political education practices for members of political parties is necessary in order to raise their awareness and knowledge regarding the function of parties in the political system. This would raise awareness of the importance of the parties' struggle against "state capture", as opposed to the generally held view of Macedonian political parties as "employment bureaus". The parties from within should be democratized in order for the party echelons to vigilantly control each other and not allow the partisanship of the state to be the goal of the existence of the party itself, and clientelism the means of maintaining it.

The digitalization of the institutions of the system would reduce the influence of the human factor in the problem of their inefficiency and the practices of corruption, bribery and other informal habits (culture) of communication with the institutions.

In order for local institutions to be open to citizens, systemic educational programs are needed for employees that would raise the level of professionalism, as well as improved perception of the importance of knowing the positive practices of good governance. The systemic reform of the administration should go hand in hand with a change in the mentality of the employees in the administration. Civil servants need to understand and practice the philosophy of "in the service of the citizen" as opposed to the philosophy of "position of power".

• CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

It is necessary to change the Law on Referendum and other forms of direct expression of the citizens due to its unclear position regarding the mechanisms for direct democracy, as well as the complex, long and demotivating procedure for their use. The change should be precisely in the direction of specifying the importance of the mechanisms for direct democracy, especially in the part of the citizens' initiative and facilitating their implementation. This would consequently affect the development of awareness among the citizen about the importance of participating in the processes of initiating and creating policies at the local and central level, as opposed to the prevailing apathy to participate in the political processes.

Increasing the state investments in the civil society organizations and their obligatory involvement in the decision-making processes. Through increased financial assistance to civil society organizations, the Government invests in its partner in the policy-making processes, especially in the Regulatory Impact Assessment processes. Creating evidence-based public policies is possible with the involvement of all stakeholders, which implies the need for civic participation.

Increased transparency of the government in financing CSOs. Distrust in CSOs is not only due to the foreign aid factor, but also due to non-transparent procedures of government funding of CSOs. The Government's Sector for Cooperation with Civil Society Organizations should be actively involved in the process of preparation of calls for grants for civil society organizations, evaluation and implementation of projects financed with taxpayers' money. This is a major tool for increasing citizens' trust in CSOs.

• JUDICIARY

Substantial reform of the judiciary is necessary in order to raise citizens' trust in the judiciary by punishing corruption, abuse of office and other illegal actions by senior government officials.

• POLICE

Reform of the police and inspectorates in order to prevent the practices of abuse of office, bribery and corruption, and police brutality. Their professionalization and training for communication with the citizens in order to place them in the service of the citizens. This is an important step in restoring trust in the police as a provider of security, eradicating crime and bringing peace, as opposed to the negative perception and mistrust that currently prevails.

• ECONOMY

A strategy for economic development policy is needed in order to continuously increase wages (including growth of the minimum wage and average wages) and to provide a favourable climate for starting a business by reducing costs (administrative and human capital) and bureaucratic procedures, as well as neutralizing the discouraging factor - corruption and organized crime.

Improving the status of the employee through their protection at the workplace and respect for their rights is a basic condition for keeping workers in the country. The employee should know, seek and promote his/her labour rights and not be afraid to report a violation to the authorities, and employers should encourage a positive work climate through rewards and providing diversity in opportunities for upgrading and advancement in work and provide support for the family and children. It is necessary to build an enabling environment for sports and recreation within the work collectives through bonuses/subsidies for sports equipment, organized events for team or individual sports and actions for cleaning and/or maintenance of public areas suitable for sports and recreation.

Adoption of a new (updated) National Strategy for Cooperation and Prevention of Brain Drain of Young and High-Quality Professionals (2020-2025) and its consistent implementation. This would help retain deficient workforce, medical professionals, engineers, and similar talents.

• EDUCATION

There is an urgent need for reform, monitoring and evaluation of the national Education Strategy for 2018-2025 and putting emphasis on the impact and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on education (emphasis on new technologies, digitalization and modernization of curricula and administration). Commitment to its fulfilment under the Action Plan is essential.

Reform in higher education in order to adapt the world research trends in order to raise the quality of the academy, as well as to improve the creation of evidence-based policies. This includes improving the conditions and resources for conducting scientific research (as a measure to improve career development opportunities) and continuously increasing the monthly income of academic and professional staff in the country. In addition, it is necessary to build mechanisms to attract permanent or temporary staff of top world scientists to universities and institutions in order to exchange knowledge and methodologies.

• YOUTH

Building mechanisms for stimulation of young people, professionals and research potential who are abroad for a long time (over 3 years), who would temporarily or in the long-term be

involved in the transfer of knowledge acquired abroad for the development of Macedonian science, education, innovation and the like.

Involving young people in creating policies that affect them (educational, youth, social and economic) will help find new effective and efficient measures to stimulate employment among young people that will be evidence-based and by involving young people as stakeholders in their creating. Providing conditions and strategy for connecting the private sector with universities in order to provide quality practical work to students, which would improve their opportunities for further engagement. At the same time, to work on raising awareness of the importance of volunteering of young people, but also the rights of volunteers (in order to prevent their abuse).

• HEALTHCARE

Substantial reform of the health system and restoration of the dignity of public health system is urgently needed. Professionalization and de-partisanship of staff, dealing with bribery and corruption in public health institutions, investing in public health (increased budget for equipment and human potential) and motivating graduate doctors to stay and work in the Macedonian health system through better material and financial subsidies, and work conditions (including personal career development). Eradicating corruption in healthcare by monitoring public procurement and demanding transparency from management.

• ENVIRONMENT

A strategy for caring for the environment and tackling climate change is one of the most urgent measures to be put on the Government's agenda. The part regarding waste management (radioactive, plastic and medical), as well as air and water pollution, cannot wait.

• ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Consistent implementation of the Law on Discrimination in practice, which will provide better conditions for career prosperity of marginalized groups and women, and a higher level of gender equality in the country.

It is necessary to revise the Law on Family in the area of child custody in case of divorce of two eligible parents in the direction of joint and responsible parenting. This change, contrary to the current practice of assigning children to one parent (usually the mother) will enable the improvement of a woman's conditions for economic independence and career development. Single parents should receive more financial, psychological and other material assistance in raising their children. And it is necessary to encourage men to use the right to maternity leave

in order to build healthy families and, through an equal distribution of homework and child-rearing tasks, will improve a woman's perspective on future re-incorporation into the workplace/career advancement, or entering the labour market for the first time.

It is necessary to include the "gender issue" in the curricula in the lowest grades in order to promote equality from an early age.

• DIASPORA

Consistent and dedicated implementation the National Strategy of the Republic of Northern Macedonia for cooperation with the Diaspora 2019-2023 and fulfilment of the Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy, which in scope and depth cover most of the problems and challenges related to the issue of the Diaspora. Particular attention should be paid to the need for a Law on Migration and a Law on Diaspora.

Finding an optimal model for attracting foreign investment from the diaspora and improving the investment climate through tax incentives and economic subsidies/incentives for returnees who would invest. This would motivate the Macedonian expatriates to invest themselves more in the prosperity of their homeland. Reducing the cost of remittances to banks and fast money transfer agencies, continuously improving the convenience and availability of remittance transfer online is an additional motivation to invest.

It is necessary to increase the number of diplomatic and consular missions of Macedonia in the world and their active records of Macedonian immigrants in the country in which they have a mandate. Mass registration through self-registration of expatriates is possible (not through fines) but through benefits for expatriates. Improving their services to expatriates, especially through their digitization (issuance of documents) is an essential link between immigrants and the home country. Active communication with expatriates by the DM through newsletters and open meetings, cultural events, etc. is a plus.

Finally, a revision of the Electoral Code is needed in order to find a cheap and effective model of diaspora voting in the elections and referendums in Macedonia.

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APPENDIX I

Table 2. Database - questions

MARK	QUESTION	VALUE
Number	Ordinal number	1-915
D1	Age (in years)	18-99
D2	Education	1. Primary or some primary education 2. Secondary education (high school) 3. Higher vocational education 4. University education 5. MA/Sc.M 6. Ph.D
D3	Religion	1. Orthodox Christian 2. Muslim 3. Catholic 4. Jew 5. Atheist 6. Agnostic 7. Other 8. I don't know 9. I prefer not to answer
D4.1.	Employment status before emigrating	1. Employed (full-time) 2. Employed (part-time) 3. Unemployed 4. Self-employed (Freelance) 5. Student 6. Retired 7. Other
D4.2.	Employment status after emigrating	1. Employed (full-time) 2. Employed (part-time) 3. Unemployed 4. Self-employed (Freelance) 5. Student 6. Retired 7. Other
D5.1.	According to your own estimate, before emigrating, the monthly net income in your household (if you lived alone, your income) was	1. Up to 9 000 MKD 2. 9 001 to 18 000 MKD 3. 18 001 to 36 000 MKD 4. 36 001 to 60 000 MKD 5. Over 60 001 MKD 6. I prefer not to answer
D5.2.	According to your own estimate, after emigrating, the yearly net income in your household (if you live alone, your income) is	1. Up to 10 000 EUR 2. 10 001 to 20 000 EUR 3. 20 001 to 30 000 EUR 4. 30 001 to 40 000 EUR 5. 40 001 to 50 000 EUR 6. Over 50 001 EUR 7. I prefer not to answer
D6.1.	Place of residence before emigrating (Municipality)	1. Arachinovo 2. Berovo 3. Bitola 4. Bogdanci 5. Valandovo 6. Veles 7. Vinica 8. Gevgelija

		9. Gostivar 10. Debar 11. Delchevo 12. Demir Kapija 13. Demir Hisar 14. Dolneni 15. Kavadarci 16. Kichevo 17. Kochani 18. Kratovo 19. Kriva Palanka 20. Krivogashtani 21. Krushevo 22. Kumanovo 23. Mavrovo and Rostuse 24. Negotino 25. Ohrid 26. Prilep 27. Probistip 28. Resen 29. Skopje 30. Struga 31. Strumica 32. Studenichani 33. Tetovo 34. Stip 35. Zrnovci 36. Radovish 37. Sveti Nikole 38. Gradsko 39. Petrovec 40. Other
D6.2.	Place of residence before emigrating (Region)	1. Skopje Region 2. Pelagonija 3. Polog, Southwestern and Northeastern Region 4. Vardar, Eastern and Southeastern Region 5. Other
D7.1.	Country where you currently reside	1. Australia 2. Austria 3. Belgium 4. Bosnia and Herzegovina 5. Brunei 6. Bulgaria 7. Germany 8. Greece 9. Denmark 10. Iceland 11. Italy 12. Jamaica 13. Japan 14. Canada 15. Qatar 16. China 17. Cyprus 18. Kosovo 19. Malta 20. Mexico 21. New Zealand 22. Norway

		23. United Arab Emirates 24. United Kingdom 25. Poland 26. Romania 27. Russia 28. USA 29. Seychelles / Mauritius 30. Singapore 31. Slovakia 32. Slovenia 33. Serbia 34. Turkey 35. Hungary 36. Finland 37. France 38. The Netherlands 39. Croatia 40. Czech Republic 41. Switzerland 42. Sweden 43. Spain 44. Other
D7.2.	Continent where you currently reside	1. Australia and Oceania 2. Europe 3. Asia 4. The Americas 5. Africa 6. Other
D7.3.	Region where you currently reside	1. Australia 2. Asia 3. The Americas 4. Africa 5. Western Europe 6. Eastern Europe / Russia / Balkans (excluding Greece) / Slavic languages 7. Mediterranean countries 8. Scandinavia 9. Other
D8.	Mother language	1. Macedonian 2. Albanian 3. Turkish 4. Romani 5. Serbian / Croatian / Bosnian 6. Vlach 7. Other
D9.	Assess your own knowledge of the language (one of the official languages) of the country in where you currently reside.	1. None 2. Basic 3. I communicate well/excellent 4. Excellent/professional level
D10.	Year when you emigrated from Macedonia (year)	
D11.	My decision to emigrate from Macedonia was	1. Planned in advance 2. Spontaneous (I came for a temporary stay, but I stayed on) 3. I have not yet decided whether to stay or not 4. Other
D12.	At the moment, I live	1. Alone 2. With my partner 3. With my family, including children

		4. With my parents 5. With roommate(s)/flatmate(s)/housemate(s) 6. In other type of community
D13.	My immediate family (partner and/or children) lives in Macedonia.	0- No 1- Yes 2- Other
D14.	My stay in the new state is currently regularized by	1. Schengen permit for uninterrupted stay of up to 180 days with a Macedonian passport 2. Student visa/residence permit 3. Work visa/residence permit 4. Family visa/residence permit 5. Permanent residence permit/green card, etc. 6. Citizenship of the country where I live 7. Second citizenship of another European country 8. I am an asylum seeker/refugee 9. At the moment my status is unresolved 10. Other
Q1.	Choose THREE of the reasons listed below that were crucial in your decision to emigrate from Macedonia.	1. Family (a family member has emigrated before you or your partner is a foreigner). 2. Opportunity to study at better universities abroad. 3. Poor economic conditions and living standards (unemployment, unpaid work, etc.). 4. Lack of conditions for career development (underdeveloped education, science, innovation). 5. No conditions for raising children. 6. Poor environment (polluted air, water and food). 7. Unfavourable political climate (partisanship, nepotism, corruption, distrust in the electoral process, clientelism, polluted media space, etc.). 8. Distrust in the judiciary in the country and irresponsibility of decision makers/authorities. 9. Intolerant environment (lack of acceptance due to sexual orientation, religion, gender, etc.). 10. Bad inter-ethnic relations (including conflict/violence). 11. Low development of culture and art. 12. New opportunities (different mentality/travel/exploration, curiosity about new worlds). 13. Other.
Q2.	Before making the decision to emigrate, you have participated in activities (at local and/or central level) such as: (multiple answers are possible)	1. Civic initiative (for changes to the Constitution, draft law or referendum, issues within the competence of local self-government, etc.) 2. Petition 3. Boycott

		4. Protest, strike 5. Meeting, public debates, polls and proposals 6. Referendum 7. I did not participate 8. Other O = NO 1 = YES
Q3.	How did you usually get involved in solving local problems before emigrating? (select at most TWO options)	1. I communicated with the institutions in person (meetings with representatives). 2. In writing, online, through social media. 3. By visiting the institutions on open days. 4. Informally / through acquaintances. 5. Through representatives of political parties. 6. I did not participate in any way due to lack of familiarity with the institutions. 7. I did not participate in any way due to distrust in the institutions. 8. Other. O = NO 1 = YES
Q4.	Before your emigration you actively participated in (multiple answers are possible)	1. Political parties or groups 2. Sports club 3. Humanitarian organization 4. Cultural-artistic-educational society/group 5. Youth Association 6. Religious organization/church 7. Associations that advocate for democracy, human rights, peace movements, women's, children's rights, etc. 8. Organizations that promote environmental protection, public space, animals 9. Trade union 10. Local Committee/House Council 11. I was not a member of any organization 12. Other O = NO 1 = YES
Q5.	Before you emigrated,	1. You recycled waste regularly 2. You have given and/or received a bribe 3. You have initiated some action for changes in your immediate environment (architectural, environmental, social) 4. You have evaded paying a traffic ticket by having someone take care of it 5. You have reported irregularities to the police or inspectorates (e.g. for irregularities, illegal procedures and abuse of office by superiors, domestic violence, child exploitation, etc.) 6. You have used "connections" to solve an issue regarding institutions. 7. You have jumped the queue for receiving a service in an institution.

		0 = No. 1 = Sometimes yes 2 = Yes 3 = I do not know
Q6.	Which THREE of the following aspects of living were crucial in deciding to move specifically to the country in which you currently live?	1. My family / friends were here. 2. Socio-economic opportunities (jobs, better wages, adequate jobs, better collectives and protection of workers, social assistance, etc.) 3. Wider range of career development opportunities (including studies). 4. Easier circumstances for acquiring citizenship. 5. The language. 6. Diaspora (people I already knew in that country who facilitated my integration process). 7. Opportunities for raising a family (kindergartens and schools, favourable conditions for maternity leave). 8. Favourable health and pension system. 9. Favourable climate. 10. Favourable political climate (peace, democracy, freedoms). 11. Environment (low pollution, waste management, clean streets, etc.) 12. Culture (food, social and night life, art, architecture, archaeology, etc.) 13. Openness/tolerance and acceptance of differences in terms of gender, religion, race, culture, sexual orientation, etc. 14. Sense of safety. 15. A sense of trust in society (people, institutions). 16. Other. O = NO 1 = YES
Q7.	What are the THREE main positive habits you have acquired with your move to the new country?	1. Increased care for the environment. 2. Higher awareness and care for animals. 3. Acquired habits for taking care of my own health through sports and recreation in nature. 4. Acquired positive behavioural habits in public and private institutions (waiting in line, polite attitude towards employees, respecting the rules of conduct, etc.) 5. Improved IT skills due to digitalization of more services in public and private institutions. 6. Increased level of tolerance towards other religious and ethnic communities in the country. 7. Increased level of tolerance towards people of a different gender and/or sexual orientation than mine. 8. Learning a new language. 9. Raised awareness of the importance of the rule of law and openness of institutions (functioning of the system, low level of corruption, nepotism, partisanship, clientelism, etc.)

		10. Other O = NO 1 = YES
Q8.	How satisfied are you with the following aspects of life in the new country? 1. Your personal economic growth (salary, savings) 2. Your professional realization 3. Integration in society 4. Health condition 5. Social life 6. Emotional life (love, feeling of belonging versus loneliness and nostalgia for home) 7. Sense of personal security.	1 = Not at all 2 = Somewhat yes 3 = Yes, I am very satisfied 4 = I do not know
Q9.	Do you feel that (you and/or your family member(s)) are welcome in the country where you live, most because of (THREE POSSIBLE ANSWERS)	Your religion You are a highly skilled workforce or have a profession that is in shortage in the country You are cheap labour You are hardworking, honest and responsible workers Your contribution to science, art, sports Your adaptability (easy cultural integration in society) Your contribution to the birth rate in the country/young workforce You do not engage in illegal/criminal activities You are not conflicting and violent Other I do not feel welcome O = NO 1 = YES
Q10.	Your friends and contacts in the new country are mainly	1. Immigrants from Macedonia and the former Yugoslav republics (plus Albania). 2. Local population. 3. European citizens. 4. Others.
Q11.	Which TWO things do you consider to be the biggest sacrifice at the expense of what you got by emigrating?	1. Being away from family and friends 2. Culture (food, music, restaurants, celebrations, art, literature, etc.) 3. The language 4. Acquired property 5. Informality in dealing with the institutions (having a person to do a job for me, to “take care” of a misdemeanour fine, etc.) 6. Civic participation (opportunity to vote, participate in policy making, protest, etc.) 7. Reputation/acquired status and influence in society 8. Time wasted in studying at faculties that are not recognized abroad 9. The feeling of being the host (a first-class citizen).

		<p>10. Knowledge of the system, institutions and rules of the "game" in the domestic labour market.</p> <p>11. Other</p> <p>O = NO 1 = YES</p>
Q12.	Moving to a new country brings with it contacts with the local population and immigrants of other ethnicities and nationalities. In what direction has your personal national feeling/identity changed with emigrating? (one answer possible)	<p>1. I am increasingly identifying with my ethnic group.</p> <p>2. I am increasingly identifying with the citizens of Macedonia.</p> <p>3. I am increasingly identifying with people from the Balkans.</p> <p>4. I am increasingly identifying with the citizens (local population) of the country in which I live.</p> <p>5. I am increasingly identifying with the citizens of Europe/West.</p> <p>6. I am increasingly identifying myself as a cosmopolitan.</p> <p>7. Nothing has changed in the way I identify myself.</p> <p>8. I do not know</p>
Q13.	You would vote in the elections in Macedonia	<p>1. Directly at my polling station in Macedonia</p> <p>2. At the consular offices in the country where I live</p> <p>3. By mail</p> <p>4. Electronic voting</p> <p>5. I would not vote</p>
Q14.	You plan to live outside Macedonia	<p>1. In the short term (less than one year)</p> <p>2. In the medium term (up to 5 years)</p> <p>3. In the long term (over 5 years)</p> <p>4. Until retirement</p> <p>5. Forever</p> <p>6. I do not know</p>
Q15.	The eventual integration of Macedonia in the European Union would motivate you to return to Macedonia.	<p>0 = No.</p> <p>1 = Maybe</p> <p>2 = Yes</p> <p>3 = I do not know</p>
Q16.	Do you know anyone who is preparing or planning to emigrate from Macedonia in the foreseeable future?	<p>0 = NO</p> <p>1 = YES</p>
Q17.	According to your free assessment, annually you financially/materially invest/send to Macedonia	<p>1. Up to 1 200 euros</p> <p>2. From 12 000 to 5 000 euros</p> <p>3. From 5 001 to 10 000</p> <p>4. Over 10 000 euros</p> <p>5. I never invest/send</p>
Q18.1.	In the future you plan to buy or maintain existing property in Macedonia	<p>0 = No</p> <p>1 = Maybe</p> <p>2 = Yes</p> <p>3 = I do not know</p>
Q18.2.	In the future you would like (plan) to invest in Macedonia	<p>0 = No</p> <p>1 = Maybe</p> <p>2 = Yes</p> <p>3 = I do not know</p>
Q19.	In your experience, was it easier to emigrate than to stay in Macedonia?	<p>0 = No</p> <p>1 = Yes</p> <p>2 = I do not know</p>

Q20.	(Optional) Explain in your own words (two to three sentences) why did you decide to leave the country where you were born?	
GENDER QUESTIONS		
	Gender	0 = Male 1 = Female 2 = Other
Q21. MEN.	How did your move to another country affect the career development opportunities of the women in your family (wife/partner/girlfriend/mother/sister/daughter) ?	1. It limited their opportunities greatly 2. It limited their possibilities to some extent 3. There was no impact 4. It improved their capabilities to some extent 5. It improved their career development opportunities greatly. 6. I do not know
Q21.WOMEN.	How has your move to another country affected your personal career development opportunities?	1. It limited my possibilities greatly 2. It limited them to some extent 3. There was no impact 4. It made them somewhat better for me 5. It greatly improved my career development opportunities. 6. I do not know
Q22.WOMEN	Have you personally felt an improvement in your gender equality by moving abroad?	1. Before the law 2. Factual equality in the work environment 3. Economic equality (salary, inheritance, property) 4. In doing domestic chores 5. In raising children 6. Before your religion/faith 0 = No. 1 = Somewhat yes 2 = Yes 3 = I do not know or N/A
Q21.OTHER.	How did your move to another country affect your personal and/or career development opportunities for the women in your family (partner/wife/girlfriend/mother/sister/daughter) ?	1. Limited my/their opportunities greatly 2. Limited my/their possibilities to some extent 3. There was no impact 4. Improved my/their capabilities to some extent 5. Improved my/their career development opportunities greatly. 6. I do not know



NOVEMBER 2020