

## **Survey of Public Opinion in Macedonia August 29 – September 5, 2014 Poll Highlights**

### **Citizens Want to See Improvements in the Standard of Living**

- A large majority of respondents (72 percent) believes that pocket-book issues are the most serious problems facing the country. Specifically, 44 percent of the respondents point to unemployment, 15 percent to the low standard of living and poverty, six percent to economic problems, four percent to low or non-payment of salaries and pensions and three percent to high prices and taxes.
- Although 54 percent of respondents said their family's economic situation was the same as it was one year ago, only 21 percent of respondents believe that Macedonia's economic situation would get better over the next two years, a decrease of five points over IRI's May 2014 poll.
- However, higher wages (33 percent), EU membership (23 percent) and lower prices (15 percent) are seen as factors which would directly improve the lives of a majority of the citizens.
- Respondents choose higher wages (33 percent), EU membership (23 percent) and lower prices (15 percent) as most relevant factors which would directly improve their lives.

### **Support for EU and NATO Membership Still Strong, but Weakening**

- A great majority (72 percent) favors joining the EU, and 77 percent support Macedonia's membership in NATO, yet these are the lowest support levels that have been measured. Support for EU and NATO membership has declined by about 10 percent since December 2012.

### **Increased Concerns about Freedom of Speech and Expression**

- Almost half of the population (49 percent) believes that free speech and the free expression of ideas do not exist in Macedonia today, compared with 42 percent who think the opposite. This is the first time that more people negatively assess their freedom to practice these civil rights since December 2010.

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