Public Opinion Poll: Blagoevgrad

February 2022
Methodology

• The survey was conducted on behalf of the International Republican Institute’s Center for Insights in Survey Research by research and consulting company ESTAT Ltd.

• Data was collected between February 14 – February 25, 2022 through CAPI administered face-to-face interviews.

• The sample for Blagoevgrad consisted of n=200 adults, aged 18 and older.

• The sample in the municipality was structured in a way to fully represent the official distribution for 2020, provided by the National Statistical Institute since no official data for 2021 was published at the time. Settlements and districts were the primary sampling units (PSU), each PSU within the municipality has been selected randomly but at the same time using probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling. PPS stratification by urban/rural was applied too and represented the distribution per municipality for 2020.

• After all sampling points within the municipality have been selected, a starting point within the sampling point (area) has been randomly selected. The selection of households was based on a random route method. In urban areas, every 3rd house was selected. In rural areas, every 5th house or block of flats and if a block of flats, every 5th apartment from only one entrance.

• The survey respondents in the study were selected within each household using the Kish grid method.

• The achieved sample was weighted for gender and type of settlement.

• The response rate was 62 percent.

• The margin of error for the sample for the municipality does not exceed ±6.9 points at 95 percent confidence level.

• Charts and graphs may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
In general, would you say that your municipality is heading in the right direction or in the wrong direction?

- 44% In the right direction
- 39% In the wrong direction
- 17% Don't know/Refused to answer
What is the most important problem facing your municipality today? And what is the second most important problem facing your municipality today?

(Up to two responses accepted; spontaneous response; top ten responses displayed)
How would you describe the current economic situation of your household?

- Very good: 39%
- Somewhat good: 8%
- Somewhat bad: 2%
- Very bad: 3%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 5%
How likely or unlikely are ordinary people able to influence decisions made in your municipality?

- Very likely: 38%
- Somewhat likely: 22%
- Somewhat unlikely: 36%
- Very unlikely: 3%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 1%

Blagoevgrad
To what extent do civil society organizations (CSOs) impact municipal government policy in your municipality?

- Very impactful: 25%
- Somewhat impactful: 34%
- Somewhat unimpactful: 16%
- Very unimpactful: 2%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 23%
Did you vote in the November 14 parliamentary elections?

- Yes: 78%
- No: 19%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 3%
For which party, did you vote in the November 14 parliamentary elections?

(Among respondents from Blagoevgrad who voted in the November 14, 2021 parliamentary elections: n=156; spontaneous response)

- Bulgarian Socialist Party: 24%
- We Continue the Change: 24%
- Citizens for European Development (GERB): 20%
- There is Such a People: 15%
- Democratic Bulgaria: 4%
- VMRO - Bulgarian National Movement: 3%
- Vazrazhdane: 3%
- Stand Up BG! We are coming!: 2%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 6%
How do you view the recent change in national government as a result of the November 14 parliamentary elections?

- 43% Very positive
- 29% Somewhat positive
- 13% Somewhat negative
- 10% Very negative
- 5% Don’t know/Refused to answer
For the following issues, is the municipal government doing a very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad job?

- Providing education: 16% Very good, 52% Somewhat good, 9% Somewhat bad, 9% Very bad, 14% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Providing healthcare: 5% Very good, 48% Somewhat good, 26% Somewhat bad, 16% Very bad, 5% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Fighting crime: 4% Very good, 35% Somewhat good, 28% Somewhat bad, 17% Very bad, 16% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Fighting corruption: 3% Very good, 23% Somewhat good, 39% Somewhat bad, 20% Very bad, 15% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Engaging citizens in decision-making: 6% Very good, 19% Somewhat good, 32% Somewhat bad, 29% Very bad, 14% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Maintaining infrastructure like roads and public buildings: 3% Very good, 21% Somewhat good, 49% Somewhat bad, 25% Very bad, 3% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Attracting EU funds: 2% Very good, 18% Somewhat good, 20% Somewhat bad, 40% Very bad, 20% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Attracting private investments: 3% Very good, 12% Somewhat good, 32% Somewhat bad, 36% Very bad, 18% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Creating jobs: 3% Very good, 6% Somewhat good, 39% Somewhat bad, 48% Very bad, 4% Don't know/Refused to answer
How would you rate the performance of the municipal government in communicating with the public about the projects they are working on?

- Very good: 33%
- Somewhat good: 16%
- Somewhat bad: 8%
- Very bad: 13%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 30%
Do you believe that corruption in your municipality is a serious problem or not?

Prior to asking this question, the following introduction was read to the respondent: “I will now ask you a series of questions about corruption. When I say corruption, I mean abusing public office for personal gain, like when a government official solicits bribes or awards a contract in exchange for political support or money.”
On which source do you base your assessment of the level of corruption?

(Up to two responses accepted)

- **Information provided by the media, such as TV, radio, newspaper, internet, Facebook etc.**
  - First most important: 30%
  - Second most important: 22%
- **Talk with friends and people around**
  - First most important: 36%
  - Second most important: 23%
- **Personal experience, meaning you have had to provide cash, gifts, or favors**
  - First most important: 17%
  - Second most important: 8%
- **Talk with relatives or family**
  - First most important: 12%
  - Second most important: 15%
- **Information about corruption given by civil society organizations**
  - First most important: 7%
  - Second most important: 8%
- **Reports of politicians**
  - First most important: 4%
  - Second most important: 5%
- **Government reports**
  - First most important: 1%
  - Second most important: 2%
- **Don't know/Refused to answer**
  - First most important: 5%
  - Second most important: 5%
In your experience, what type of corruption is most common in our municipality?

- Making decisions based on connections as opposed to merit: 26%
- Acting in self-interest instead of interest of citizens: 24%
- Stealing or deliberately mismanaging funds: 17%
- Soliciting bribes or gifts: 10%
- Failure to investigate or prosecute wrongdoing: 9%
- Extortion: 4%
- None of these exist in our municipality: 5%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 5%
Do you believe that corruption in our country is a serious problem or not?

- 55% Very serious
- 38% Somewhat serious
- 6% Somewhat not serious
- 1% Not at all serious
- 1% Don't know/ Refused to answer
In your experience, what type of corruption is most common in our country?

- Acting in self-interest instead of interest of citizens: 27%
- Stealing or deliberately mismanaging funds: 21%
- Making decisions based on connections as opposed to merit: 20%
- Failure to investigate or prosecute wrongdoing: 17%
- Soliciting bribes or gifts: 7%
- Extortion: 4%
- None of these exist in our country: <1%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 5%
Over the past 12 months, has corruption among each of the following levels of government increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

**Local authorities**
- Increased: 12%
- Stayed the same: 47%
- Decreased: 29%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 12%

**National authorities**
- Increased: 18%
- Stayed the same: 52%
- Decreased: 16%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 13%
To what extent do you think corruption can be reduced in your municipality?

- 32%: Corruption can be reduced to a certain degree
- 31%: Corruption can be substantially reduced
- 15%: Corruption can be completely eradicated
- 3%: Corruption cannot be reduced at all
- 19%: Don't know/Refused to answer
Please tell me if there is a lot, some, little, or no corruption among each of the following providers of municipal government services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know/Refused to answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic police</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government inspection and control bodies</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public medical establishments</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax-collecting offices</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental record-keeping and licensing offices</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public education establishments</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At which level of government is corruption most prevalent?

- National authorities: 73%
- Local authorities: 14%
- There is no corruption: 3%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 10%
Who among national authorities is most corrupt?

(Among respondents from Blagoevgrad who think that corruption is most prevalent among national authorities: n=146; spontaneous response)
To what extent, if any, has corruption had a negative impact on you?

- It has had a lot of negative impact (22%)
- It has had some negative impact (25%)
- It has had little negative impact (17%)
- It has not had any negative impact (8%)
- Don’t know/Refused to answer (28%)
In the past two years, how often, if at all, have you witnessed or experienced corruption?

- Daily: 3%
- Weekly: 5%
- Monthly: 16%
- Less frequently: 29%
- Not at all: 35%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 13%
In which context did you witness or experience corruption. Did you experience or witness corruption....?

(Among respondents from Blagoevgrad who have witnessed corruption: n=104; only “yes” responses displayed)
In your dealings with the municipal government, how important are personal contacts and relationships to get things done?

- **Very important**: 34%
- **Somewhat important**: 31%
- **Somewhat unimportant**: 19%
- **Very unimportant**: 7%
- **Don't know/Refused to answer**: 9%

(Chart showing the distribution of responses.)
Are you aware of any anti-corruption initiatives by any of the following levels of government?

Local authorities:
- Yes: 24%
- No: 62%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 13%

National authorities:
- Yes: 33%
- No: 50%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 17%
How effective or ineffective is each of the following levels of government in addressing corruption?

Local authorities:
- Very effective: 4%
- Somewhat effective: 32%
- Somewhat ineffective: 32%
- Very ineffective: 16%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 16%

National authorities:
- Very effective: 2%
- Somewhat effective: 21%
- Somewhat ineffective: 34%
- Very ineffective: 26%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 17%
Based on your experience, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.

The president of Bulgaria has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in our country
- Strongly agree: 26%
- Somewhat agree: 29%
- Somewhat disagree: 16%
- Strongly disagree: 15%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 14%

The prime minister of Bulgaria has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in our country
- Strongly agree: 20%
- Somewhat agree: 33%
- Somewhat disagree: 19%
- Strongly disagree: 15%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 13%

The mayor has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in your municipality
- Strongly agree: 20%
- Somewhat agree: 32%
- Somewhat disagree: 20%
- Strongly disagree: 15%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 14%

The municipal council has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in your municipality
- Strongly agree: 14%
- Somewhat agree: 17%
- Somewhat disagree: 30%
- Strongly disagree: 23%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 16%

The parliament of Bulgaria has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in our country
- Strongly agree: 14%
- Somewhat agree: 15%
- Somewhat disagree: 28%
- Strongly disagree: 33%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 10%

The judiciary of Bulgaria has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in our country
- Strongly agree: 12%
- Somewhat agree: 15%
- Somewhat disagree: 25%
- Strongly disagree: 33%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 15%
Which among the following groups is the most important and the second most important to effectively address corruption in your municipality?

(Up to two responses accepted)

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents who identified each group as the first or second most important. The chart includes political leadership (42%), citizens (18%), public sector employees (23%), domestic non-governmental organizations (8%), international non-governmental organizations (5%), media (9%), private sector (4%), no other group, and don't know/refused to answer (6%).]

*Domestic NGOs or CSOs are local, regional, or national groups that form around a common goal and are not associated with government.
**International NGOs or CSOs are international groups that form around a common goal and not associated with any government.
To what degree, if at all, is it the responsibility of citizens to address corruption?
Do you know where to report a corrupt act of an official?

- Yes: 67%
- No: 24%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 9%

[Pie chart showing the distribution of responses]
What channels would you contact to report a corrupt act or to file a complaint?

(Among respondents from Blagoevgrad who know where to report a corrupt act: n=133; spontaneous response; multiple responses accepted)

- The police: 41%
- The regional attorney: 27%
- A specific local news/media outlet: 17%
- Civil society organizations: 14%
- The municipal administration via forms for complaints and signals: 13%
- National media outlets: 12%
- The national anticorruption commission: 11%
- The anticorruption committee within the municipal council: 11%
- A municipal councilor: 4%
- A local member of parliament: 3%
- The local ombudsman: 3%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 2%

*Responses receiving <3% are collapsed into Other.*
During the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household reported a corrupt act by a public official?

(Among respondents from Blagoevgrad who know where to report a corrupt act: n=133)

- Yes: 84%
- No: 11%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 5%
Some people are unwilling to report corrupt actions because of various reasons. Please tell me which of the following you personally consider as the primary reason for not reporting corruption to the relevant authorities.

- No action will be taken even if corruption is reported: 26%
- Those who report corruption will be subject to retribution/revenge: 16%
- Lack of evidence to prove: 12%
- Our society does not reward those who report corruption: 10%
- Lack of clarity about corruption proceedings: 9%
- It’s not worth reporting corruption if I am not personally hurt by it: 8%
- There is no mechanism to report corruption anonymously: 6%
- Do not know the relevant institution responsible for corruption cases: 6%
- Most people who indulge in corruption only do so because of economic hardship: 4%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 3%
What do you think is the primary factor causing corruption in public institutions?

- Weak rule of law: 21%
- Culture of impunity: 17%
- Politicians and power holders interfere in the work of institutions: 12%
- Weak ethics or morals: 10%
- Leadership is corrupt: 8%
- Long or unclear procedures for services: 7%
- Need for money to make a living: 7%
- Employees are corrupt: 5%
- No effective external oversight: 4%
- Corruption is an accepted part of life: 4%
- Internal controls are weak: 3%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 2%
Which of the terms I will show you best reflects how a corrupt person is perceived in our society?

(Multiple responses accepted)

- Powerful: 46%
- Venal: 34%
- Selfish or self-centered: 20%
- Guilty: 17%
- Resourceful: 14%
- Clever or smart: 5%
- Poor: 3%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 3%
How transparent or untransparent is the work of the mayor and the municipal administration?

- Very transparent: 48%
- Somewhat transparent: 26%
- Somewhat untransparent: 14%
- Very untransparent: 6%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 6%
Do you find the information you need from the municipal administration easily or not?

- Very easily: 4%
- Somewhat easily: 18%
- Somewhat difficultly: 17%
- Very difficultly: 3%
- I don’t need information from the municipal administration: 19%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 39%
Are you aware of when municipal government public consultation meetings take place?

- Yes: 65%
- No: 19%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 16%
Have you ever attended a municipal government public consultation meeting?

- Yes: 90%
- No: 7%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 3%
How transparent or untransparent is the work of the municipal council?

- Very transparent: 36%
- Somewhat transparent: 7%
- Somewhat untransparent: 19%
- Very untransparent: 33%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 5%
Are you aware of when municipal council meetings take place?

- Yes: 62%
- No: 27%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 11%
Have you attended any municipal council meetings?

- Yes: 90%
- No: 4%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 6%
How closely do you follow the decisions and actions taken by each of the following institutions?

- **The mayor**
  - Very closely: 7%
  - Somewhat closely: 40%
  - A little: 28%
  - Not at all: 24%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 1%

- **The municipal administration**
  - Very closely: 3%
  - Somewhat closely: 31%
  - A little: 27%
  - Not at all: 38%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 1%

- **The municipal council**
  - Very closely: 5%
  - Somewhat closely: 23%
  - A little: 25%
  - Not at all: 45%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 2%
Is it easy or difficult to communicate with the following entities in your municipality?

The municipal administration
- Very easy: 14%
- Somewhat easy: 35%
- Somewhat difficult: 28%
- Very difficult: 8%
- I have never made an attempt to communicate: 11%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 5%

The municipal council
- Very easy: 4%
- Somewhat easy: 24%
- Somewhat difficult: 15%
- Very difficult: 13%
- I have never made an attempt to communicate: 34%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 10%
What are the primary sources you use to learn about the decisions and actions taken by the municipal administration and the council?

(Spontaneous response; multiple responses accepted)

- Local media outlets: 47%
- Social media (such as Facebook): 28%
- Friends or family: 23%
- The municipal website: 16%
- National media: 13%
- I do not learn about decisions and actions taken by my municipal government: 9%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 1%
Which of the following is your preferred channel of communication with the municipal administration and the council?

- Social media (such as Facebook etc.): 20%
- Meeting with a member of the administration: 13%
- Meeting with the mayor: 11%
- Official letters: 11%
- Official e-mail exchange: 8%
- Meeting with a municipal councilor: 6%
- An online platform provided or endorsed by the municipality: 6%
- Statement during a session of the council or a council working group: 4%
- Other: 8%
- I have never attempted to communicate with the municipal administration or the municipal council: 13%
To what extent are each of your municipal government entities influenced by wealthy people?

- **The mayor**
  - Very much: 33%
  - Somewhat: 26%
  - A little: 15%
  - Not at all: 6%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 21%

- **The municipal administration**
  - Very much: 26%
  - Somewhat: 34%
  - A little: 14%
  - Not at all: 6%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 21%

- **The municipal council**
  - Very much: 39%
  - Somewhat: 30%
  - A little: 11%
  - Not at all: 1%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 19%
Are you aware of any local NGOs, which means a local group that forms around a common goal and is not associated with the government, that work for more transparency in the municipal administration and the council?

- Yes: 38%
- No: 42%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 20%
Do you think municipal transparency has improved or worsened, or stayed the same over the last 10 years?

- Improved: 40%
- Stayed the same: 36%
- Worsened: 13%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 11%
Do you see political will for improvement of municipal transparency?

- **47%**: Yes
- **30%**: No
- **23%**: Don't know/Refused to answer
Which of the following do you think is the most important factor for getting a job in the municipal administration?

- Being a member of the political party in power: 42%
- Having a family member or friend in municipal government: 29%
- Education and experience: 15%
- Paying a bribe: 8%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 7%
Are you satisfied with the level of digital services offered by your municipality?

- Yes: 48%
- No: 13%
- I have no need for digital services: 28%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 11%
Do you think efforts are made to improve the digital services offered by your municipality?

(Among all respondents from Blagoevgrad except for those who stated they have no need for digital services: n=105)
How interested or uninterested are you in political news and information about your municipality?

- Very interested: 11%
- Somewhat interested: 12%
- Somewhat uninterested: 27%
- Very uninterested: 50%
- Don’t know/ Refused to answer: 0%
Are the media in your municipality free to independently cover any issue or not?

- Very free: 42%
- Somewhat free: 23%
- Somewhat not free: 16%
- Very not free: 13%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 6%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 6%
Which media platform do you use most frequently and second most frequently to gain political news and information about your municipality?

(Up to two responses accepted)

- **Television**: 31% most frequently, 25% second most frequently
- **Social media, such as Facebook, etc.**: 28% most frequently, 14% second most frequently
- **Internet, other than social media**: 27% most frequently, 25% second most frequently
- **Print media**: 8% most frequently, 14% second most frequently
- **Radio**: 3% most frequently, 11% second most frequently
- **None or no other**: 2% most frequently, 4% second most frequently
- **Don’t know/Refused to answer**: 1% most frequently, 0% second most frequently

Most frequently used
Second most frequently used
Do you perceive local and regional media as critical or not critical of the municipal administration and the council?

- Very critical: 37%
- Somewhat critical: 23%
- Somewhat not critical: 6%
- Very not critical: 22%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 12%