Public Opinion Poll: Stara Zagora

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 15 – February 28, 2022 through CAPI administered face-to-face interviews.

• The sample for Stara Zagora 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 54 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?

- In the right direction: 79%
- In the wrong direction: 15%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 6%
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: 78%
- Somewhat good: 13%
- Somewhat bad: 6%
- Very bad: 2%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 1%
How likely or unlikely are ordinary people able to influence decisions made in your municipality?

- Very likely: 55%
- Somewhat likely: 21%
- Somewhat unlikely: 14%
- Very unlikely: 9%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 1%
To what extent do civil society organizations (CSOs) impact municipal government policy in your municipality?

- 52% Somewhat impactful
- 32% Very impactful
- 10% Somewhat unimpactful
- 5% Very unimpactful
- 1% Don't know/Refused to answer
Did you vote in the November 14 parliamentary elections?

- Yes: 85%
- No: 15%
- <1%
- Don't know/Refused to answer
For which party, did you vote in the November 14 parliamentary elections?

(Among respondents from Stara Zagora who voted in the November 14, 2021 parliamentary elections: n=170; spontaneous response)

- Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB): 27%
- We Continue the Change: 16%
- Bulgarian Socialist Party: 6%
- There is Such a People: 6%
- Democratic Bulgaria: 4%
- Vazrazhdane: 2%
- Stand Up BG! We are coming!: 2%
- The Movement for Rights and Freedoms: 1%
- Refused to answer: 36%
How do you view the recent change in national government as a result of the November 14 parliamentary elections?
For the following issues, is the municipal government doing a very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad job?

- Providing education: 2% very good, 68% somewhat good, 9% somewhat bad, 4% very bad, 18% don't know/refused to answer
- Maintaining infrastructure like roads and public buildings: 4% very good, 59% somewhat good, 21% somewhat bad, 3% very bad, 13% don't know/refused to answer
- Fighting crime: 1% very good, 60% somewhat good, 15% somewhat bad, 4% very bad, 20% don't know/refused to answer
- Providing healthcare: 1% very good, 61% somewhat good, 18% somewhat bad, 6% very bad, 15% don't know/refused to answer
- Attracting EU funds: 1% very good, 55% somewhat good, 14% somewhat bad, 2% very bad, 28% don't know/refused to answer
- Fighting corruption: 1% very good, 51% somewhat good, 18% somewhat bad, 3% very bad, 28% don't know/refused to answer
- Creating jobs: <1% very good, 48% somewhat good, 29% somewhat bad, 6% very bad, 16% don't know/refused to answer
- Engaging citizens in decision-making: 1% very good, 47% somewhat good, 21% somewhat bad, 3% very bad, 28% don't know/refused to answer
- Attracting private investments: 1% very good, 44% somewhat good, 17% somewhat bad, 7% very bad, 31% 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: 55%
- Somewhat good: 29%
- Somewhat bad: 12%
- Very bad: 2%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 2%
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)

- Talk with relatives or family: 41%
- Talk with friends and people around: 39%
- Information provided by the media, such as TV, radio, newspaper, internet, Facebook etc.: 22%
- Personal experience, meaning you have had to provide cash, gifts, or favors: 4%
- Information about corruption given by civil society organizations: 3%
- Government reports: 1%
- Reports of politicians: 1%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 7%
In your experience, what type of corruption is most common in our municipality?

- Acting in self-interest instead of interest of citizens: 17%
- Making decisions based on connections as opposed to merit: 16%
- Failure to investigate or prosecute wrongdoing: 11%
- Soliciting bribes or gifts: 6%
- Stealing or deliberately mismanaging funds: 5%
- Extortion: 1%
- None of these exist in our municipality: 8%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 37%
Do you believe that corruption in our country is a serious problem or not?

- 71% Very serious
- 25% Somewhat serious
- 4% Somewhat not serious
- 0% Not at all serious
In your experience, what type of corruption is most common in our country?

- Acting in self-interest instead of interest of citizens: 26%
- Stealing or deliberately mismanaging funds: 22%
- Failure to investigate or prosecute wrongdoing: 13%
- Making decisions based on connections as opposed to merit: 11%
- Soliciting bribes or gifts: 4%
- Extortion: 2%
- None of these exist in our country: 1%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 21%
Over the past 12 months, has corruption among each of the following levels of government increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Local authorities:
- Increased: 8%
- Stayed the same: 54%
- Decreased: 17%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 21%

National authorities:
- Increased: 19%
- Stayed the same: 50%
- Decreased: 13%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 18%
To what extent do you think corruption can be reduced in your municipality?

- 42%: Corruption can be completely eradicated
- 28%: Corruption can be substantially reduced
- 14%: Corruption can be reduced to a certain degree
- 9%: Corruption cannot be reduced at all
- 7%: 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.

- Public medical establishments: 21% A lot, 43% Some, 21% Little, 15% No, 1% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Courts: 17% A lot, 44% Some, 18% Little, 1% No, 21% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Government inspection and control bodies: 11% A lot, 45% Some, 21% Little, 2% No, 21% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Police: 8% A lot, 46% Some, 18% Little, 1% No, 28% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Traffic police: 4% A lot, 47% Some, 23% Little, 2% No, 25% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Public education establishments: 1% A lot, 47% Some, 22% Little, 7% No, 24% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Tax-collecting offices: 8% A lot, 39% Some, 20% Little, 3% No, 30% Don't know/Refused to answer
- Governmental record-keeping and licensing offices: 3% A lot, 29% Some, 18% Little, 5% No, 45% Don't know/Refused to answer
At which level of government is corruption most prevalent?

- National authorities: 67%
- Local authorities: 10%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 24%
Who among national authorities is most corrupt?

(Among respondents from Stara Zagora who think that corruption is most prevalent among national authorities: n=133)
To what extent, if any, has corruption had a negative impact on you?

- 31% It has had a lot of negative impact
- 26% It has had some negative impact
- 24% It has had little negative impact
- 17% It has not had any negative impact
- 2% Don’t know/Refused to answer
In the past two years, how often, if at all, have you witnessed or experienced corruption?

- Daily: 1%
- Monthly: 2%
- Less frequently: 38%
- Not at all: 34%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 25%
In which context did you witness or experience corruption. Did you experience or witness corruption….?

(Among respondents from Stara Zagora who have witnessed corruption: n=82; only “yes” responses displayed)

To receive medical services from public hospitals
To obtain employment
To avoid paying a fine
To receive a government service, like a birth certificate
To obtain a construction permit
To improve chances for a public contract
For education from public schools
To receive utilities like water or electricity
To avoid being arrested
To avoid being threatened
To secure a place for your child in a local public kindergarten
Other
In your dealings with the municipal government, how important are personal contacts and relationships to get things done?
Are you aware of any anti-corruption initiatives by any of the following levels of government?

- **Local authorities**
  - Yes: 13%
  - No: 72%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 16%

- **National authorities**
  - Yes: 14%
  - No: 73%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 14%
How effective or ineffective is each of the following levels of government in addressing corruption?

Local authorities:
- Very effective: 2%
- Somewhat effective: 50%
- Somewhat ineffective: 19%
- Very ineffective: 2%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 26%

National authorities:
- Very effective: 1%
- Somewhat effective: 44%
- Somewhat ineffective: 21%
- Very ineffective: 9%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 25%
Based on your experience, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.

The mayor has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in your municipality

- Strongly agree: 25%
- Somewhat agree: 41%
- Somewhat disagree: 8%
- Strongly disagree: 2%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 25%

The prime minister of Bulgaria has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in our country

- Strongly agree: 24%
- Somewhat agree: 38%
- Somewhat disagree: 6%
- Strongly disagree: 10%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 22%

The president of Bulgaria has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in our country

- Strongly agree: 24%
- Somewhat agree: 37%
- Somewhat disagree: 7%
- Strongly disagree: 7%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 25%

The municipal council has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in your municipality

- Strongly agree: 18%
- Somewhat agree: 37%
- Somewhat disagree: 11%
- Strongly disagree: 6%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 29%

The judiciary of Bulgaria has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in our country

- Strongly agree: 17%
- Somewhat agree: 33%
- Somewhat disagree: 18%
- Strongly disagree: 11%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 22%

The parliament of Bulgaria has a sincere desire and will to combat corruption in our country

- Strongly agree: 19%
- Somewhat agree: 26%
- Somewhat disagree: 15%
- Strongly disagree: 15%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 26%
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)
To what degree, if at all, is it the responsibility of citizens to address corruption?

- 22% To a very large degree
- 60% To a somewhat large degree
- 12% To a somewhat small degree
- 3% To a very small degree
- 3% Don't know/Refused to answer
Do you know where to report a corrupt act of an official?

- Yes: 68%
- No: 25%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 7%
What channels would you contact to report a corrupt act or to file a complaint?

(Among respondents from Stara Zagora who know where to report a corrupt act: n=137; spontaneous response; multiple responses accepted)
During the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household reported a corrupt act by a public official?

(Among respondents from Stara Zagora who know where to report a corrupt act: n=137)
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: 28%
- Those who report corruption will be subject to retribution/revenge: 13%
- Lack of evidence to prove: 9%
- There is no mechanism to report corruption anonymously: 5%
- Most people who indulge in corruption only do so because of economic hardship: 4%
- Lack of clarity about corruption proceedings: 4%
- It's not worth reporting corruption if I am not personally hurt by it: 4%
- Do not know the relevant institution responsible for corruption cases: 3%
- Our society does not reward those who report corruption: 3%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 26%
What do you think is the primary factor causing corruption in public institutions?

- Need for money to make a living: 15%
- Corruption is an accepted part of life: 15%
- Culture of impunity: 13%
- Weak ethics or morals: 10%
- Weak rule of law: 7%
- Long or unclear procedures for services: 6%
- Internal controls are weak: 5%
- Leadership is corrupt: 5%
- No effective external oversight: 5%
- Employees are corrupt: 4%
- Politicians and power holders interfere in the work of institutions: 3%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 13%
Which of the terms I will show you best reflects how a corrupt person is perceived in our society?

(Multiple responses accepted)

- Venal: 41%
- Powerful: 21%
- Selfish or self-centered: 12%
- Guilty: 10%
- Poor: 10%
- Resourceful: 5%
- Clever or smart: 2%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 23%
How transparent or untransparent is the work of the mayor and the municipal administration?

- Very transparent: 38%
- Somewhat transparent: 37%
- Somewhat untransparent: 4%
- Very untransparent: 20%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 1%
Do you find the information you need from the municipal administration easily or not?

- Very easily: 57%
- Somewhat easily: 12%
- Somewhat difficultly: 13%
- Very difficultly: 4%
- I don’t need information from the municipal administration: 3%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 11%
Are you aware of when municipal government public consultation meetings take place?

- Yes: 70%
- No: 12%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 18%
Have you ever attended a municipal government public consultation meeting?

- **Yes**: 81%
- **No**: 5%
- **Don’t know/Refused to answer**: 14%
How transparent or untransparent is the work of the municipal council?

- Very transparent: 35%
- Somewhat transparent: 47%
- Somewhat untransparent: 13%
- Very untransparent: 4%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 1%
Are you aware of when municipal council meetings take place?

- Yes: 67%
- No: 16%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 17%
Have you attended any municipal council meetings?

- Yes: 82%
- No: 15%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 3%
How closely do you follow the decisions and actions taken by each of the following institutions?

- **The mayor**
  - Very closely: 51%
  - Somewhat closely: 14%
  - A little: 10%
  - Not at all: 26%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 5%

- **The municipal administration**
  - Very closely: 49%
  - Somewhat closely: 12%
  - A little: 32%
  - Not at all: 32%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 5%

- **The municipal council**
  - Very closely: 46%
  - Somewhat closely: 10%
  - A little: 35%
  - Not at all: 35%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 6%
Is it easy or difficult to communicate with the following entities in your municipality?

The municipal administration:
- Very easy: 3%
- Somewhat easy: 67%
- Somewhat difficult: 11%
- Very difficult: 2%
- I have never made an attempt to communicate: 7%
- Don't know/Refused: 11%

The municipal council:
- Very easy: 2%
- Somewhat easy: 44%
- Somewhat difficult: 10%
- Very difficult: 2%
- I have never made an attempt to communicate: 27%
- Don't know/Refused: 14%
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)

- Social media (such as Facebook): 37%
- Local media outlets: 32%
- Friends or family: 17%
- The municipal website: 14%
- National media: 6%
- I do not learn about decisions and actions taken by my municipal government: 13%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 4%
Which of the following is your preferred channel of communication with the municipal administration and the council?

- Social media (such as Facebook etc.): 39%
- Meeting with the mayor: 10%
- Meeting with a member of the administration: 7%
- An online platform provided or endorsed by the municipality: 6%
- Official e-mail exchange: 3%
- Official letters: 3%
- Meeting with a municipal councilor: 1%
- Other: 7%
- I have never attempted to communicate with the municipal administration or the municipal council: 19%
- Don’t know: 5%
To what extent are each of your municipal government entities influenced by wealthy people?

- The mayor:
  - Very much: 5%
  - Somewhat: 25%
  - A little: 8%
  - Not at all: 9%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 53%

- The municipal administration:
  - Very much: 7%
  - Somewhat: 25%
  - A little: 8%
  - Not at all: 8%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 53%

- The municipal council:
  - Very much: 8%
  - Somewhat: 26%
  - A little: 6%
  - Not at all: 5%
  - Don't know/Refused to answer: 54%
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: 58%
- No: 27%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 15%
Do you think municipal transparency has improved or worsened, or stayed the same over the last 10 years?

- 42% Stayed the same
- 29% Improved
- 19% Worsened
- 10% Don't know/Refused to answer
Do you see political will for improvement of municipal transparency?

- Yes: 40%
- No: 32%
- Don’t know/Refused to answer: 28%
Which of the following do you think is the most important factor for getting a job in the municipal administration?

- Education and experience: 46%
- Being a member of the political party in power: 22%
- Having a family member or friend in municipal government: 15%
- Paying a bribe: 2%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 15%
Are you satisfied with the level of digital services offered by your municipality?

- Yes: 56%
- No: 33%
- I have no need for digital services: 8%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 3%
Do you think efforts are made to improve the digital services offered by your municipality?

(Among all respondents from Stara Zagora except for those who stated they have no need for digital services: n=135)
How interested or uninterested are you in political news and information about your municipality?

- Very interested: 54%
- Somewhat interested: 27%
- Somewhat uninterested: 11%
- Very uninterested: 6%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 2%
Are the media in your municipality free to independently cover any issue or not?

- Very free: 63%
- Somewhat free: 23%
- Somewhat not free: 8%
- Very not free: 2%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 4%
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)
Do you perceive local and regional media as critical or not critical of the municipal administration and the council?

- Very critical: 24%
- Somewhat critical: 16%
- Somewhat not critical: 8%
- Very not critical: 52%
- Don't know/Refused to answer: 8%