

# Citizens' Participation

## **MONTENEGRO**

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# Voting Rights

- Voting right at national level
  - Montenegrin nationals
  - 2 years residence in Montenegro
  - 18+ years old
- Voting right at local level
  - Montenegrin nationals
  - 2 years residence in Montenegro
  - residence in municipality
  - 18+ years old

# Election Right (I)

- National level

- 81 member of national parliament – Skupština Crne Gore
  - four-year term
  - Proportional election system with closed list
  - At-large (one constituency)
  - 3 per cent threshold of all party votes at national level to be admitted to attribution of mandates, except for parties that represent ethnic minorities
    - 0.7% for all ethnic parties (less than 15% of the population)
    - 0.35% for Croat ethnic parties
- President nominates the prime minister (party list that received most votes), the Parliament elects the PM and the Government

# Election Right (II)

- Regional level
  - No regional level in place

# Election Right (III)

- Local level

- Election of Mayor of the municipality

- Local parliament elects the mayor among the councillors (until the end of 2009 it was direct election)

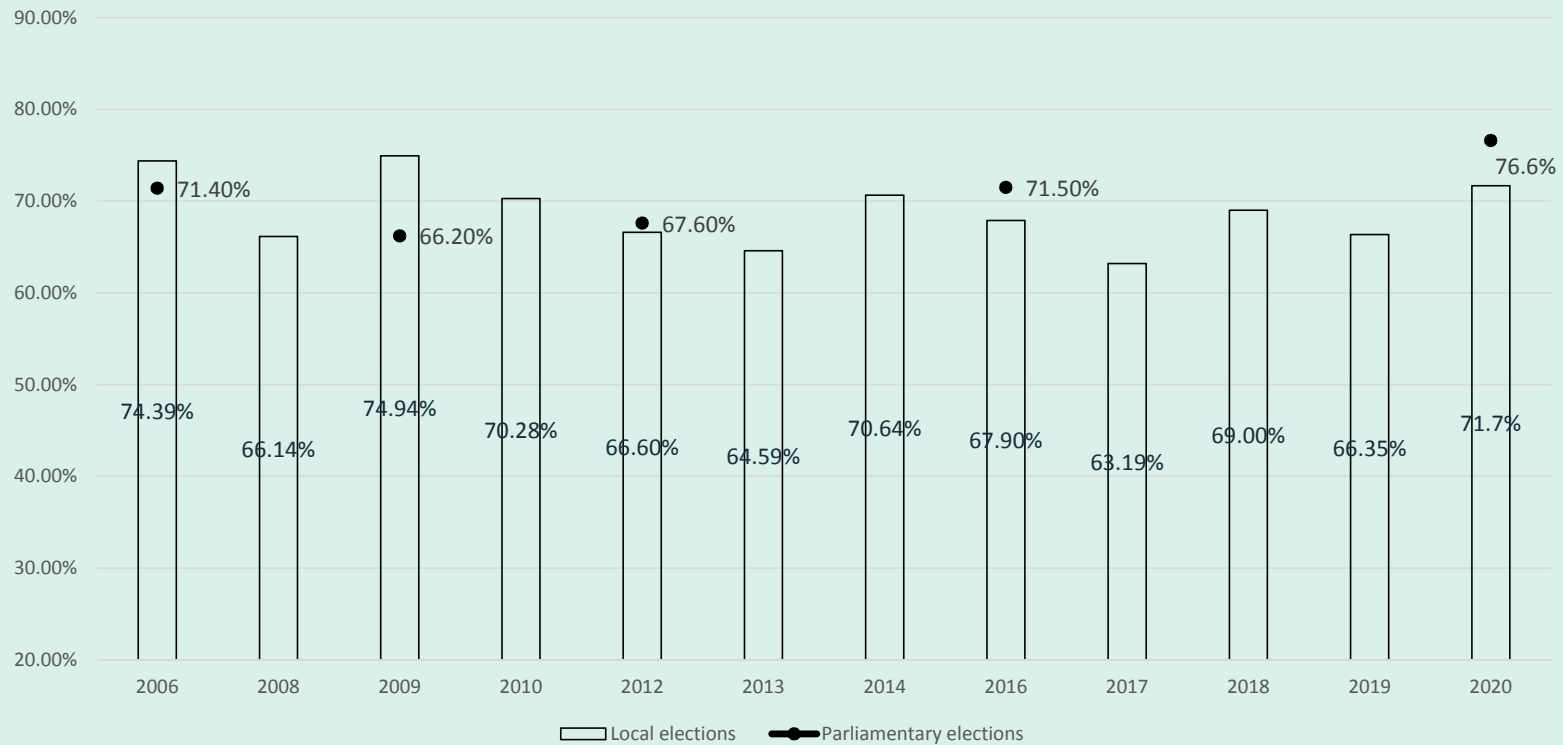
- Once elected, a mayor ceases to be member of the local council.

- Election of municipal council

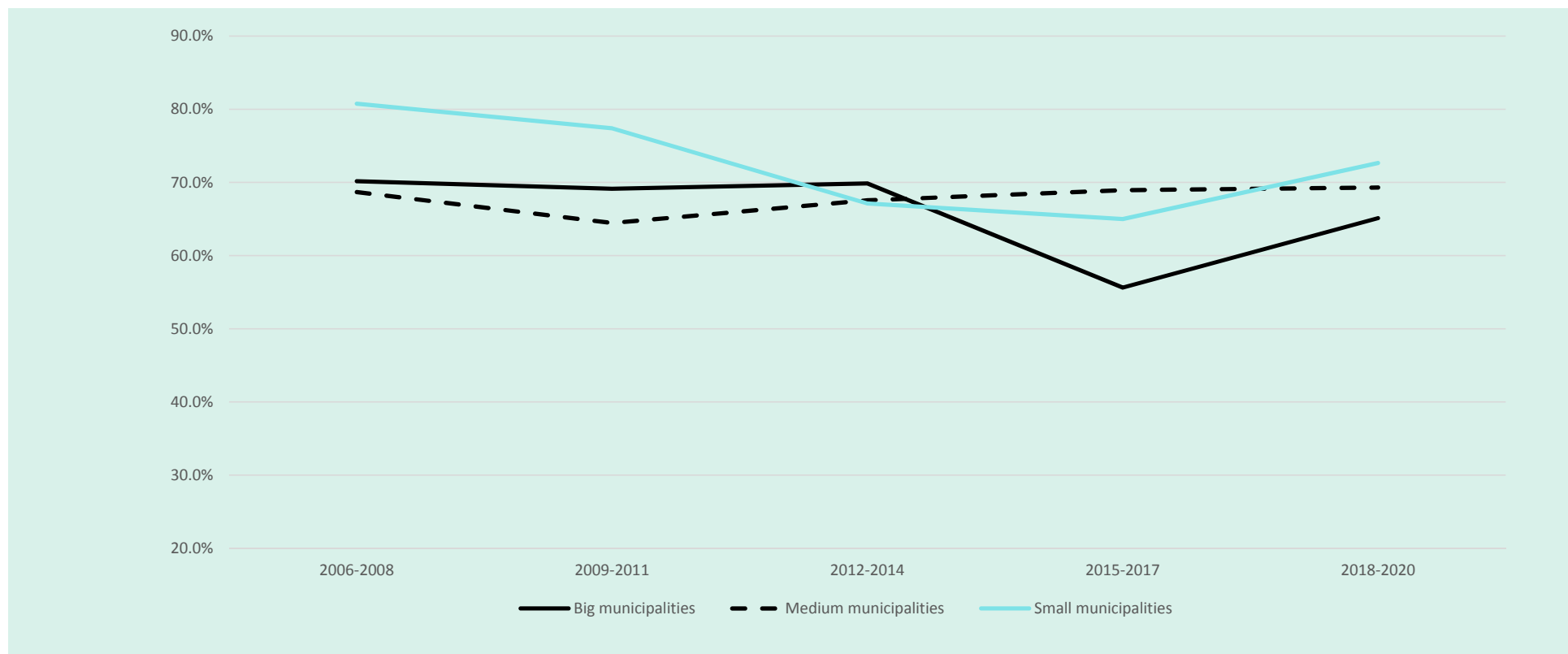
- Proportional election system

- The size of the council depends on the number of the registered voters. The minimal size of the council is 30 councillors with one additional per every 5.000 registered voters. Therefore, the smallest councils have 30 councillors, such is Šavnik, and the biggest is in Podgorica with 61 councillors.

# Voter turnout in national and local elections



# Turnout by the size of municipality



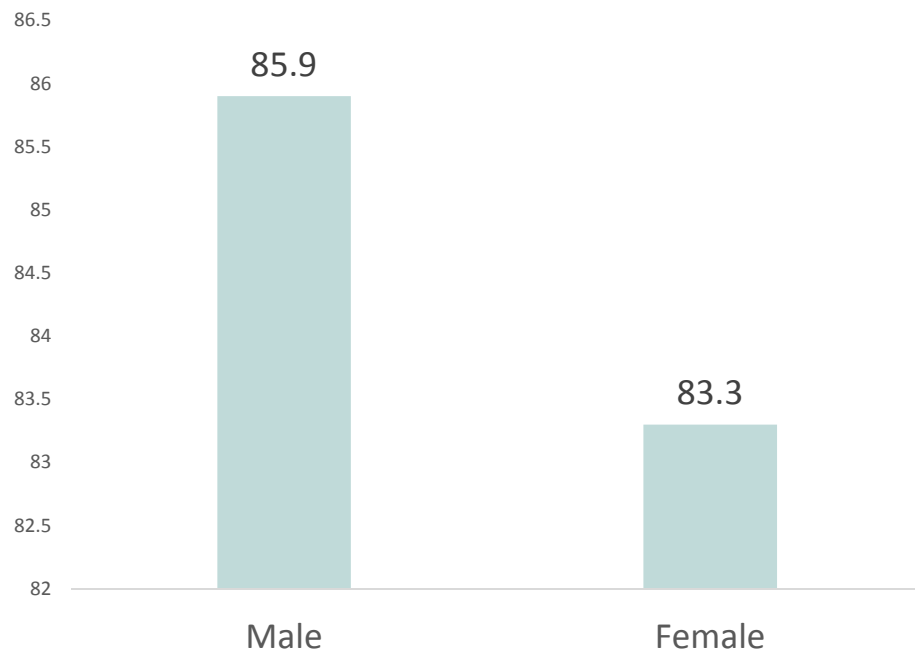
# Women in national and local parliaments

| Election year                             | 2007   | 2009   | 2012   | 2013  | 2014   | 2015   | 2017  | 2018   |
|---|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| <b>Councilors</b>                         | 11.37% | 12.70% | 14.26% |       | 24.80% | 26.24% |       | 30.03% |
| <b>Mayors</b>                             | 4.50%  | -      | 4.76%  |       | 4.76%  | 13.04% |       | 8.33%  |
| <b>Members of the National Parliament</b> | 11.1%  | 11.1%  | 13.5%  | 14.8% |        | 17.3%  | 23.5% |        |

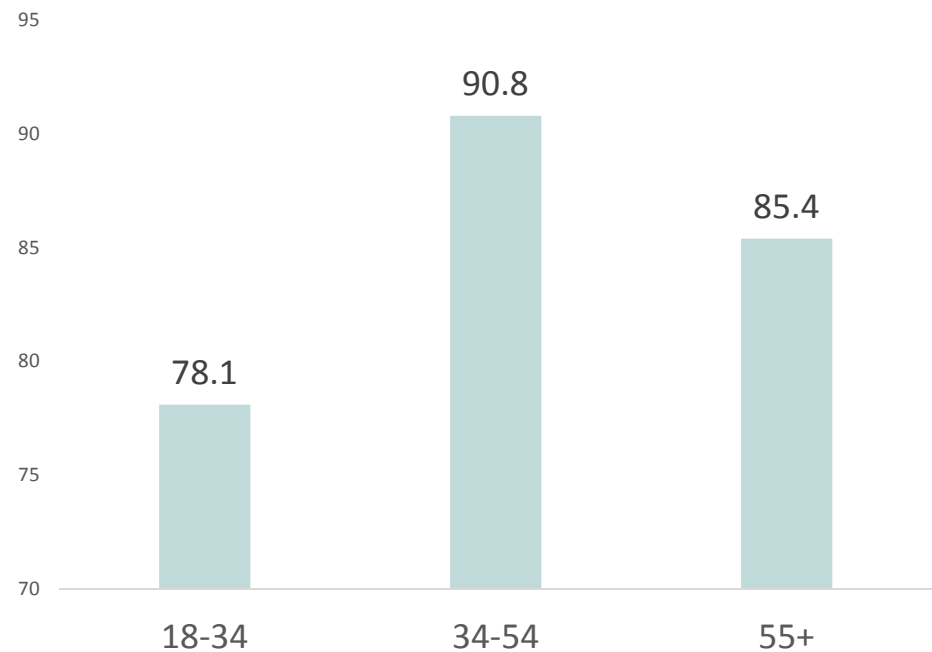


# Participation by social demographics

## Sex



## Age



Source: CSES, 2016,  
statistically significant difference

# Direct Democracy (I)

- Instruments of DD at national level

- Referendum

- The proposal for Referendum to the Parliament can be submitted by 25 MPs, president of Montenegro, The Government or at least 10% of voters.
    - Referendum can be called by the majority of the all members of the Parliament
    - Referendum is obligatory if articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 15, 45 and 157 are to be changed. Than, **three fifths** of all the voters need to confirm the change.
      - Article 1 – independence and nature of the country (civic, democratic, ecological, social justice and rule of law)
      - Article 2 - sovereignty
      - Article 3 - territory
      - Article 4 – anthem, flag and coat of arms
      - Article 12 - citizenship
      - Article 13 - language
      - Article 15 – international organisations and prohibition of alliance that includes lost of sovereignty
      - Article 45 – voting rights
      - Article 157 – for which articles' change the referendum is needed

# Direct Democracy (II)

- Instruments of DD at local level
  - Initiative
    - Any local matter,
    - The local authority has to respond in 30 days
  - Civic initiative
    - passing or changing legislation for which local self-government is in charge
    - Every municipality decides the number of petitioners needed to initiate the civic initiative
  - Gathering of the citizens
    - Majority of the present citizens can initiate suggestions to the local authorities
    - They have 60 days to respond
  - Referendum
    - Locally regulated

# Practice of Direct Democracy

- Referendum, 1992
  - The question was: "Do you agree that Montenegro as a sovereign republic continues to live together in joint state – Yugoslavia, completely equally with other republics that wish the same?"
  - Turnout – 66%
  - "Yes" – 96.7%
  - "No" - 3.2%
  - Boycotted by some oppositional parties, part of Muslims and Albanian population
  - No international observers

# Practice of Direct Democracy

- Referendum, 2006
  - The question was: "Do you want Republic of Montenegro to be independent state with full international legal subjectivity"
  - Turnout – 86.4%
  - "Yes" – 55.5%
  - "No" - 44.5%
  - Strong presence of international community – Head of the State electoral commission EC envoy with the "golden vote"
  - Controversial supermajority – EU condition: 55% in favor for referendum to be successful + at least 50% turnout

# Other forms of citizens' participation

- NGOs
  - Huge number of NGOs
  - Mostly top-down
  - Funded by international donors
  - Controversial transfer to government after the fall of DPS

# Other forms of citizens' participation

**Protest rallies 2018**



**Patriotic protests 2020**



# Media (I)

- Main media in the country

- Print

- Several outlets – Vijesti, Dan, Pobjeda, Dnevne novine

- Reflection of the cleavage – Vijesti and Dan pro Government, Pobjeda and Dnevne novine pro opposition

- Some other print media (weekly, monthly) with minor influence

- Online portals of the print outlets dominate news

- Vijesti, Dan, Pobjeda, CDM and others

- Radio, TV

- Number of stations but very limited influence

- Television

- State broadcast RTCG,

- Private - Vijesti

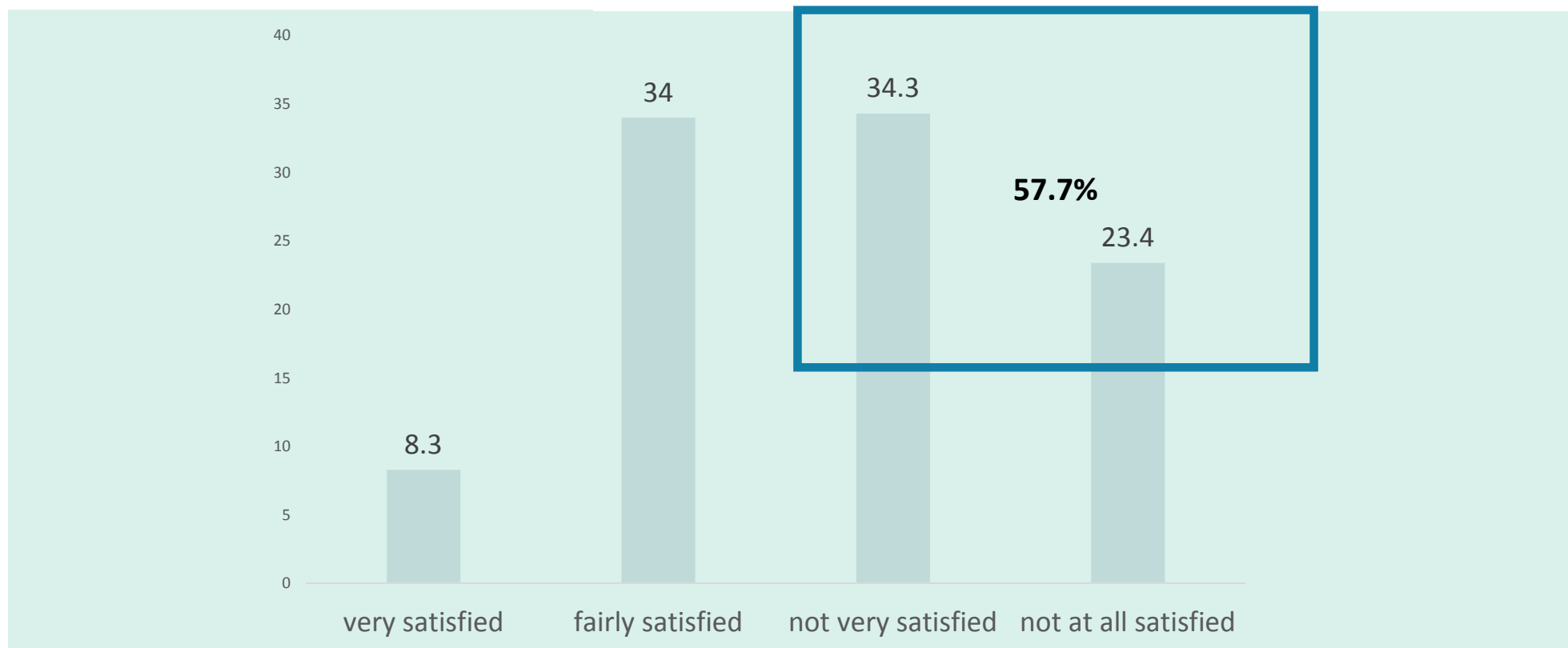


## Media (II)

- Reporters without borders 2021 World Press Freedom Index (<https://rsf.org/en/ranking>)
  - Montenegro ranks 104<sup>th</sup>

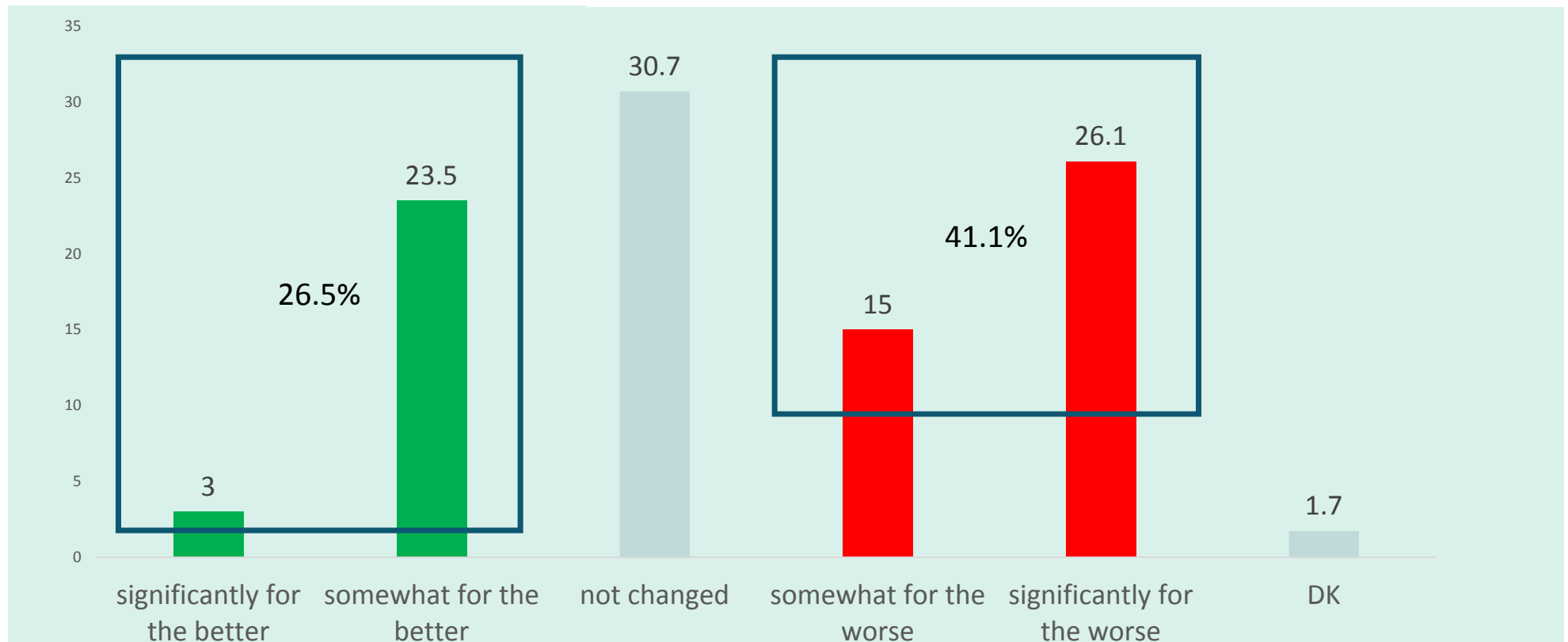
| Ranking | Country       |
|---------|---------------|
| 15      | Estonia       |
| 16      | Iceland       |
| 20      | Luxembourg    |
| 23      | Liechtenstein |
| 26      | Cyprus        |
| 39      | Andorra       |
| 81      | Malta         |
| 104     | Montenegro    |
| -       | San Marino    |

# Satisfaction with democracy in the country



Source: CSES, 2016,  
statistically significant difference

# After the 30th of August (change of Government) the situation changed...



Source: DeFacto, 2021

# Conclusion: Lessons and prospects

- Low satisfaction with democracy, high voter turnout, high polarisation
- Presence of international observers
- Top-down civil society, strongly dependent on foreign financial assistance
- Media highly aligned with political sides
- 30 years of DPS rule, corruption, clientelism and “captured state”
- However, long awaited change of government brought in more polarisation and opened doors for the return of the “90s” with strong Serbian influence on the Government of Montenegro through political parties and Serbian Orthodox Church