



FINDINGS OF THE NATION-WIDE SURVEY OF OPINION
OF URBAN POPULATION OF UKRAINE AND CITY LOCAL GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROBLEM ISSUES
AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS DECENTRALISATION

SECTORAL MONITORING # 18

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DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE FOR ADVOCATING LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN UKRAINE (DIALOGUE PROJECT)



ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINIAN CITIES
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SECTORAL MONITORING # 18

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INTRODUCTION

The success of the decentralisation and local government reform policy proclaimed by the President of Ukraine and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine heavily depends on the public perception of this policy in general and some of its aspects.

On November 05 – 16, 2014, upon the request of the Association of Ukrainian Cities, the Democratic Initiatives Foundation in cooperation with the Ukrainian Sociology Service conducted a nation-wide survey of urban population in Ukraine.

The main tasks of the survey were:

- 1) identify the main social problem issues of urban population of Ukraine by the level of their significance and citizen satisfaction with the way these problem issues were resolved;
- 2) identify the level of city resident satisfaction with the activities of regional government authorities and local self-governance;
- 3) identify the level of citizen awareness about the activities of local governments and role of various sources of information and media outlets;
- 4) identify the opinion of city residents concerning decentralisation of power and local government reform;
- 5) identify the readiness of city residents for a wider participation in local self-governance and public activities; and,
- 6) identify the level of importance of local elections for citizens and public opinion concerning reforms of the system of elections to local authorities.

Along with the survey, there was a survey of local government officials on other issues.

The survey was conducted in cities in all oblasts of Ukraine and the city of Kyiv (except for the Luhansk oblast and some part of the Donetsk oblast due to the absence of possibilities to guarantee safety for interviewers and team members). The survey was not conducted in the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimean and in the city of Sevastopol. In general, 1,803 respondents representing urban population participated in the survey based on the nationality quota, which represents, by oblast, type of city, sex and age, the urban population of Ukraine.

The Association and the implementing partner for the survey believe that its findings and the way government authorities take into account these findings will help to make this reform less painful and more successful first of all at the local level.

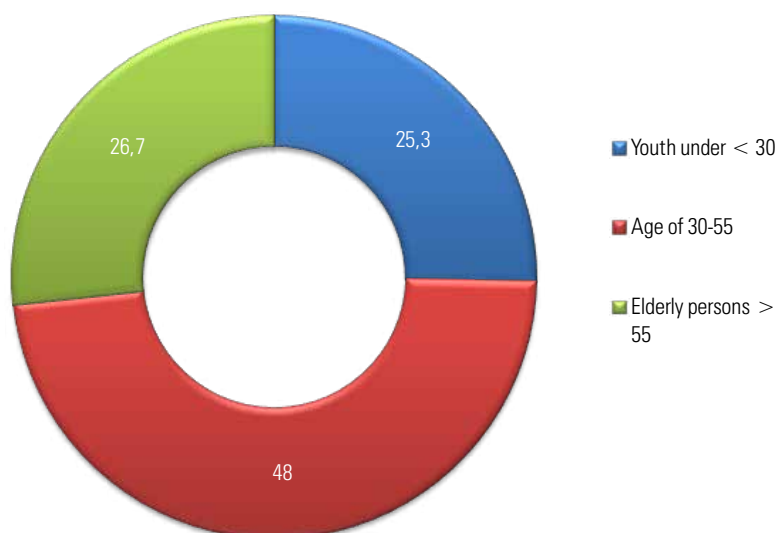
CITIZEN SURVEY AND ITS FINDINGS

Justification for the survey selection

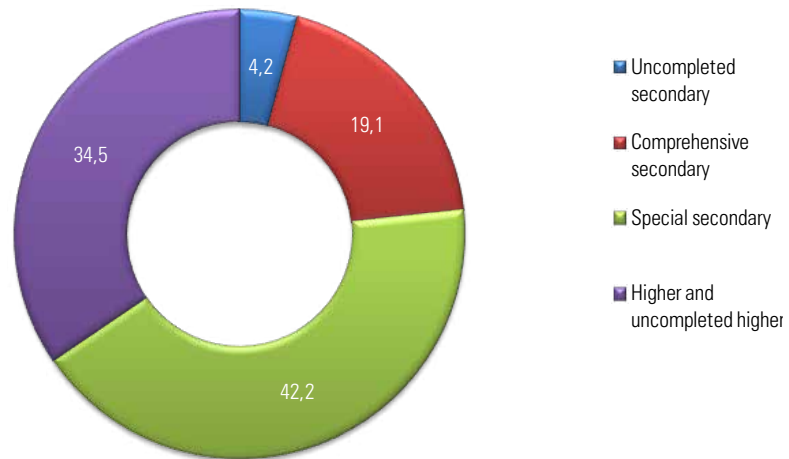
The quotas for the survey in various oblasts were calculated in accordance with the number of urban population in these regions. All in all, the survey was conducted in 60 populated areas (49 cities and 11 towns). These include: 6 citizens with the population over 500 thousand (Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv, and Zaporizhzhya), 11 cities with the population of 250 - 499 thousand (Vinnytsya, Zhytomyr, Kirovohrad, Mykolaiv, Poltava, Rivne, Sumy, Cherkasy, Khmelnytskyi, Kherson, and Chernihiv), 16 cities with the population of 50 - 249 thousand (Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi, Dniprodzerzhynsk, Drohobych, Korosten, Lutsk, Melitopol, Nizhyn, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Nova Kakhovka, Ivano-Frankivsk, Konotop, Smila, Ternopil, Uzhgorod, and Chernivtsi), 16 cities with the population under 50 thousand (Bolekhiv, Vasylivka, Volnovakha, Vyshhorod, Derhachi, Zboriv, Znamianka, Malyn, Mykolaiv (Lviv oblast), Nova Odesa, Svalyava, Synelnykove, Starokostyantyniv, Ostroh, Pyryatyn, and Chuhuiv), and 11 towns (Bilopillya (Sumy oblast), Zaliznychne (Vinnytsya oblast), Velyka Berezovytsya (Ternopil oblast), Novoselytsya (Chernivtsi oblast), Kozatske (Kherson oblast), Rozhysche (Volyn oblast), Rudno (Lviv oblast), and Taromske (Dnipropetrovsk oblast)).

At the same time, the maximum deviations from the planned indicators exceed 0.1% by oblast and 0.2% by the type of city. The maximum accidental error of the selection does not exceed 2.3% from the indicators ranging from 25 to 75%. With regard to the design effect, the error does not exceed 3.5%.

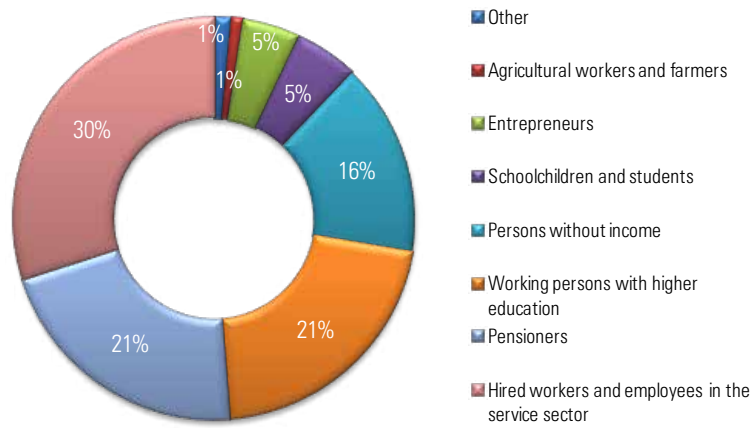
Social and demographic characteristics of citizens



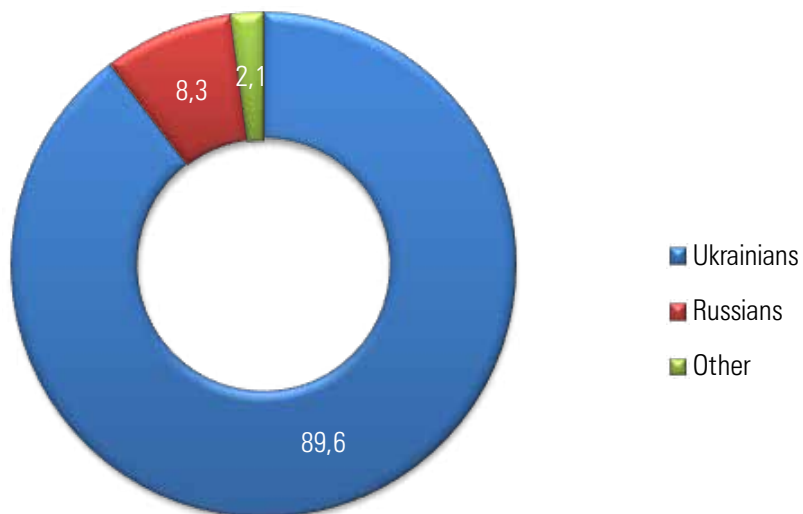
Picture 1. Age groups, %



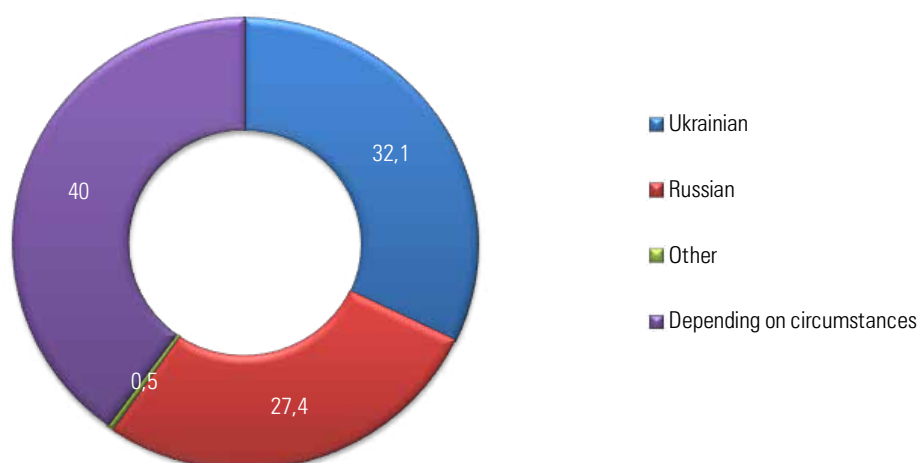
Picture 2. Level of education, %



Picture 3. Occupation, %



Picture 4. Nationality, %



Picture 5. Preferred language at home, %

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVIEWEES BY TYPE OF THE POPULATED AREA, %

City above 500 thousand	34.9
City of 250 – 499 thousand	12.9
City of 50 – 249 thousand	26.0
City under 50 thousand	19.1
Town	7.1

TABLE 2

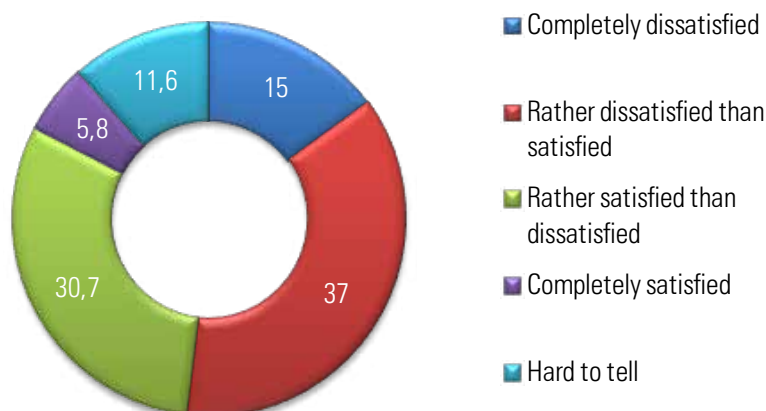
DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVIEWEES BY OBLAST, %

Vinnitsya	3,2	Odesa	6,3
Volyn	2,2	Poltava	3,7
Dnipropetrovsk	10,4	Rivne	2,1
Donetsk	4,2	Sumy	3,1
Zhytomyr	2,9	Ternopil	1,9
Zakarpattya	1,8	Kharkiv	10,7
Zaporizzhya	5,4	Kherson	2,7
Ivano-Frankivsk	2,4	Khmelnyskyi	2,8
Kyiv	4,3	Cherkasy	2,9
Kirovohrad	2,6	Chernivtsi	1,5
Lviv	6,0	Chernihiv	2,7
Mykolaiv	3,1	city of Kyiv	11,1

Survey findings

Main problems of cities

Most of city residents are not satisfied with the quality of life in their cities: 52% of interviewees (Picture 6). This number includes 15% who are not satisfied and 37% of those who are rather dissatisfied than satisfied. At the same time, 31% of interviewees are rather satisfied with the life in their city and only 5% are satisfied with it completely. Region wise, there are visible differences in responses. The highest level of satisfaction with the life in their city was demonstrated by residents in the south of Ukraine with 46% of such responses, while the number of those who are not satisfied in this region constitutes 43%. In other regions, the number of those who are not satisfied exceeds the number of those who are satisfied. The situation is close to the equal balance is in the east of the country with 41% of those who are satisfied and 45% who are not satisfied. In the western part of Ukraine, the share of those who are not satisfied constitutes 40%, with 53% of those who are not satisfied, whereas in the central part of the country there were only 30% who are satisfied and 58% who are not satisfied. The worst situation was observed in the territory of the Donetsk oblast the survey managed to cover: the share of those who are satisfied constitutes only 20%, with 59% of those who are not satisfied.



Picture 6. Satisfaction with life in the city/town, %

The absolute majority city problem issues mentioned by the respondents are of the social nature and relate, first of all, to the living standards of the population (Table 3). In particular, 77% of interviewees mentioned the problem of raising prices, 65% – low salaries and pensions, 47% – high tariffs for housing and municipal utility tariffs, 45% – high unemployment level, and 26% – social inequality. The respondents also quite often complained about problems in such areas as condition of roads (37%), health care (26% of interviewees), provision of housing (24%), municipal utility services (20%), and law enforcement (20%). Somewhat smaller number of citizens were concerned with the sanitary condition of the city - 17% of interviewees, environmental pollution – 17% too, and activities of enterprises in the city – 14%. A separate problem was corruption, which was mentioned by 36% of interviewees, as well as new threats related to the military activities in the east of the country (28%).

TABLE 3

KEY PROBLEM ISSUES OF RESIDENTS OF CITIES AND TOWNS, %

Rising prices	76.6
Low income level	65.1
High municipal utility tariffs	46.5
Unemployment	45.0
Condition of roads	36.8
Corruption in the city government	35.7
Threats related to the military activities in the east	28.4
Social inequality	25.5
Issues with the health care	25.5
Provision of housing	23.6
Poor quality of housing and municipal services	20.1
Crime	19.7
Environmental pollution	16.5
Low sanitary condition in the city	16.7
Drug addiction, alcoholism	15.2
Closed nature of the city government	14.4
Problems with the work of companies	13.9
Homelessness	8.9
Decline of the historic environment	7.2
Squandering of city lands	7.2
Pressure on small and medium-sized businesses	6.6
Problems with the public education	6.6
Condition of the urban public transportation	5.8
Traffic jams	5.4
Lack of opportunities for physical training	4.7
City ungovernability	4.1
Problem in the cultural sector	3.4

Most of the problems in cities, their citizens believe the city governments fail to resolve also include issues related to the living standards (Table 4). For example, as many as 77% of citizens provided the negative evaluation of the availability of jobs in cities and the unemployment level. Positive evaluation of how the city governments resolve these issues were given by only 4% of respondents. A similar evaluation by citizens was given to the efforts of the local government to render assistance to low-income persons: 63% of respondents consider them to be ineffective and only 6% of interviewees think they are effective. Insufficient provision of housing to city residents is, in the opinion of citizens, another critical problem. 72% of respondents provided the negative evaluation of the city government policy in this area, while only 9% of interviewees provided positive responses. The citizens also demonstrated quite a high level of dissatisfaction with the ability of the city government to provide high quality services in other important spheres. Improvements in

how the city authorities care about socially vulnerable groups, in particular pensioners and disabled were mentioned only by 7% of interviewees, better activities to prevent crime – 8%, higher quality of medical services – 11%, and better quality of municipal utility services – 12%. The respondents provided negative evaluation of city government performance in these areas, namely 72% of interviewees - for medical services and 70% - for caring about socially vulnerable groups) and 66% - for performance of housing and municipal utility services.

A relatively negative evaluation was given to other activities of the local government in other, less sensitive areas for citizens. Absence of effective city government performance in improving the environmental situation was mentioned by 55% of interviewees, urban beautification – 52%, resolving problem issues with unlicensed construction – 40%, improvements with leisure facilities – 37%, and attraction of investments in the city – 35%. In all of the areas mentioned above, the number of those who are satisfied with the performance of the city government constitutes the absolute minority – from 4% to 27%. Increased opportunities for citizens to exercise influence on local decision making and reduced corruption was observed only by 4% of interviewees, whereas 69% and 61%, respectively, provided the negative evaluation of actions of local authorities in this direction. There are concerns about the fact that the majority of citizens do not feel their local government will protect them from potential terrorist threats: only 8% of interviewees are satisfied with the government performance in this sphere, with 50% providing a negative response.

The only two areas citizens characterised the activities of local governments from more or less positive side related to urban public transportation. City government activities aimed at improving the urban public transportation system received positive evaluation by 47% of interviewers and efforts to prevent traffic jams received 34%. The negative responses to these questions were provided by 32% and 31% of interviewees correspondingly. Thus, one can see a clear critical attitude of city residents to the efforts of their city governments to resolve basic city problem issues. These issues relate to all areas where citizens and government entities come together and the citizen dissatisfaction with the actions of the local government becomes the greatest when the government is incapable of providing decent living standards.

TABLE 4

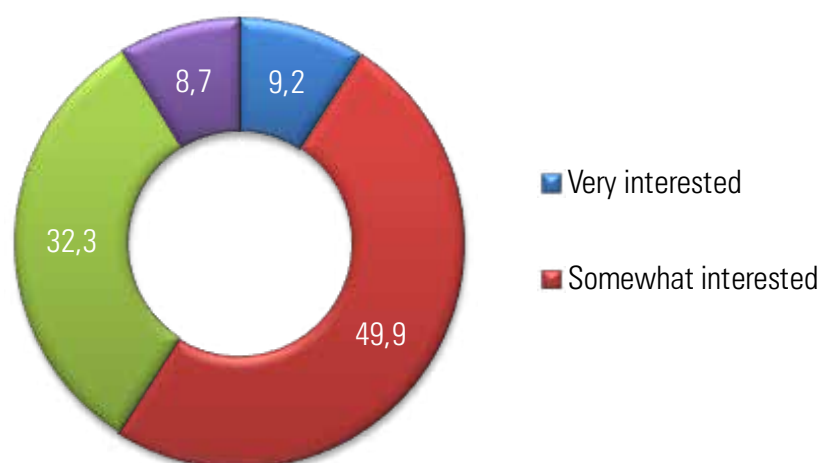
EVALUATION OF THE CITY (TOWN) ABILITY TO RESOLVE PROBLEM ISSUES, %

Problem issue	Very bad	In general, bad	Hard to tell	In general, good	Very good
Provision of housing	37,4	34,1	19,3	8,3	0,9
Material assistance to low income residents	28,4	35	30,2	5,7	0,7
Promoting conditions for small business development	21,2	22,6	47,9	7,7	0,6
Medical services	29,9	42,2	17,4	10,1	0,4
Fighting corruption and militia performance	28,8	35,4	27,8	7,2	0,8
Performance of the urban public transportation system	12,5	19,7	20,6	41,7	5,5
Fighting corruption in government entities	30,8	29,8	35,2	3,2	1
Environmental condition	21,7	33,2	34,6	9,6	0,9

Safety situation in the city	26,4	23,9	42,2	6,6	0,9
Improvements of school education	15,8	23,1	44,9	15,5	0,8
Traffic jams in the city streets	9,4	21,8	34,4	28	6,4
Availability of job vacancies and fighting unemployment	35,8	41,4	18,8	2,7	1,4
Caring about socially vulnerable groups	28,8	41,6	22,7	5,9	0,9
Performance of the housing and municipal utilities sector	27,3	39,1	21,8	10,3	1,6
Improving conditions for leisure	11,8	25,3	38,6	21,6	2,7
Problems with unsanctioned construction	15,4	24,3	47,7	11,2	1,4
Attraction of investments to the city	14,3	20,3	54,3	9,2	1,8
Urban beautifications, sanitary condition of territories adjacent to buildings	14,6	37,6	20	25,6	2,2
Availability of sports grounds	15,2	35,5	29,3	18,4	1,6
Problems with drug addicts, narcotics, AIDS	24,9	37,6	33,6	2,9	0,9
Possibility for citizens to influence government decision making	33	35,5	27,3	3,1	1,1

Citizen awareness about activities of local authorities

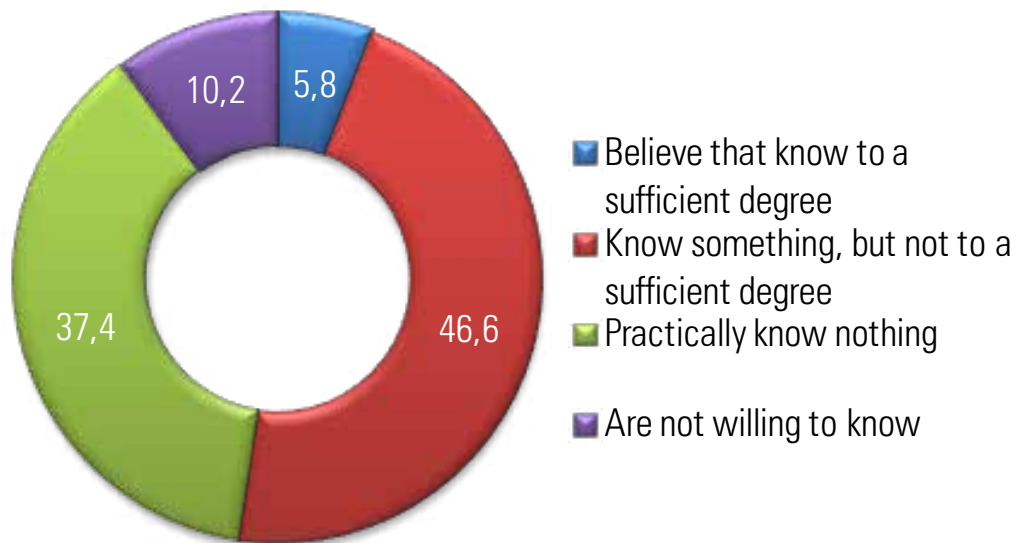
The majority of interviewees are interested, to a certain degree, in the activities of local governments (Picture 7): about 9% of interviewees are interested in this topic very much and 50% are a bit interested in this topic. Every third interviewee is not interested in the activities of government authorities at all (32%).



Picture 7. Interest in the activities of local governments of his/her city, %

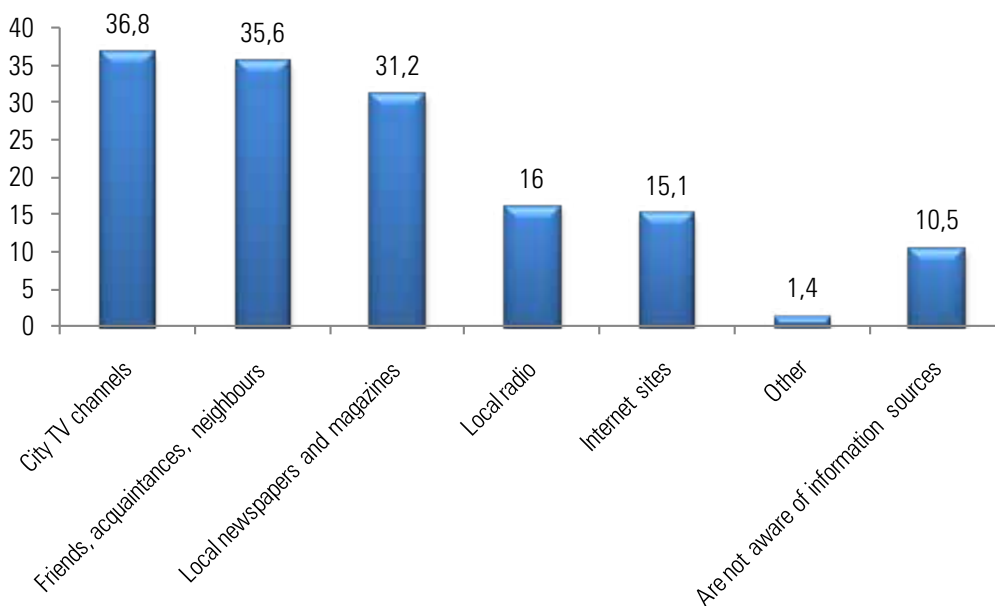
On the other side (Picture 8), the absolute majority of city residents share the opinion that they are not sufficiently aware about the activities of local authorities, with only 6% of interviewees share the opposite opinion. At the same time, 37% of interviewees informed

that they practically know nothing about it, with 47% saying they know something, but not to the sufficient degree.



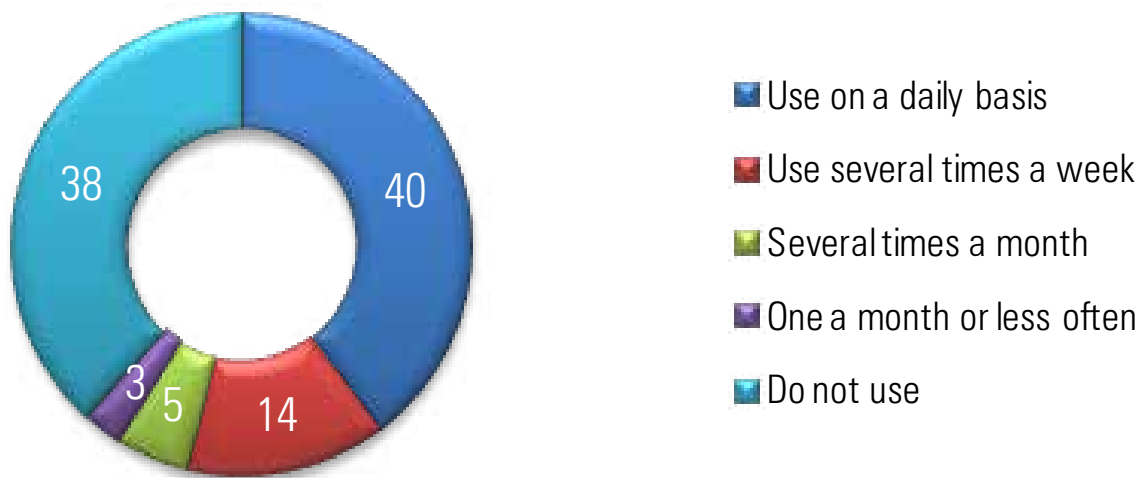
Picture 8. Awareness about activities of city authorities, %

The most popular sources of information for the respondents to learn about the activities of local authorities from include, first of all (Picture. 9) TV (37% of interviewees) and printed media (31%), as well as personal contacts with friends, acquaintances and neighbours (36%). A considerably lower number of citizens find this information from radio (16%) and in the Internet (15%).



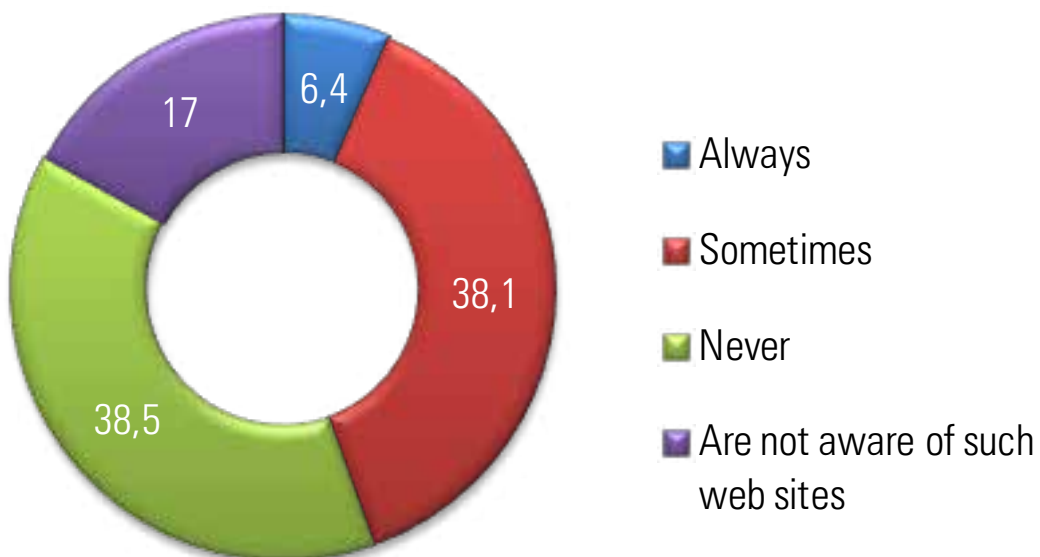
Picture 9. Sources of information about activities of city authorities, %

At the same time, the general level of Internet use is quite high (Picture 10): Internet users are 62% of city residents including 40% of those who use it every day.

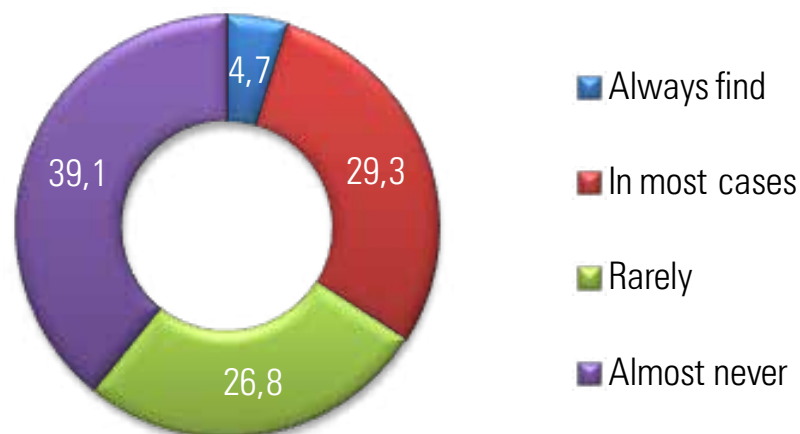


Picture 10. Use of the Internet by citizens, %

At the same time, the efficiency of the Internet use with regard to obtaining the useful information remains low. Although 45% of Internet users visit the sites of local government authorities (Picture. 11), only 34% always or in most cases find in the Internet the information they need, whereas 27% rarely find such information and 39% almost never find it (Picture. 12).



Picture 11. Visits on web sites by government authorities, %



Picture 12. Efficiency of visits on web sites of local authorities with the regard to the useful information found, % of those who use the Internet

Therefore, it is quite obvious that there are problems with the communication of local government authorities with their citizens. While the majority of citizens express at least some interest in the activities of local authorities, the latter are not in a position to provide them with all the necessary information. It is noticeable that the Internet is the most convenient channel of information between government and the population, however it does not yet properly perform its main function to deliver useful information to city residents. This speaks about serious gaps in the information policy of city governments.

Trust to government institutions

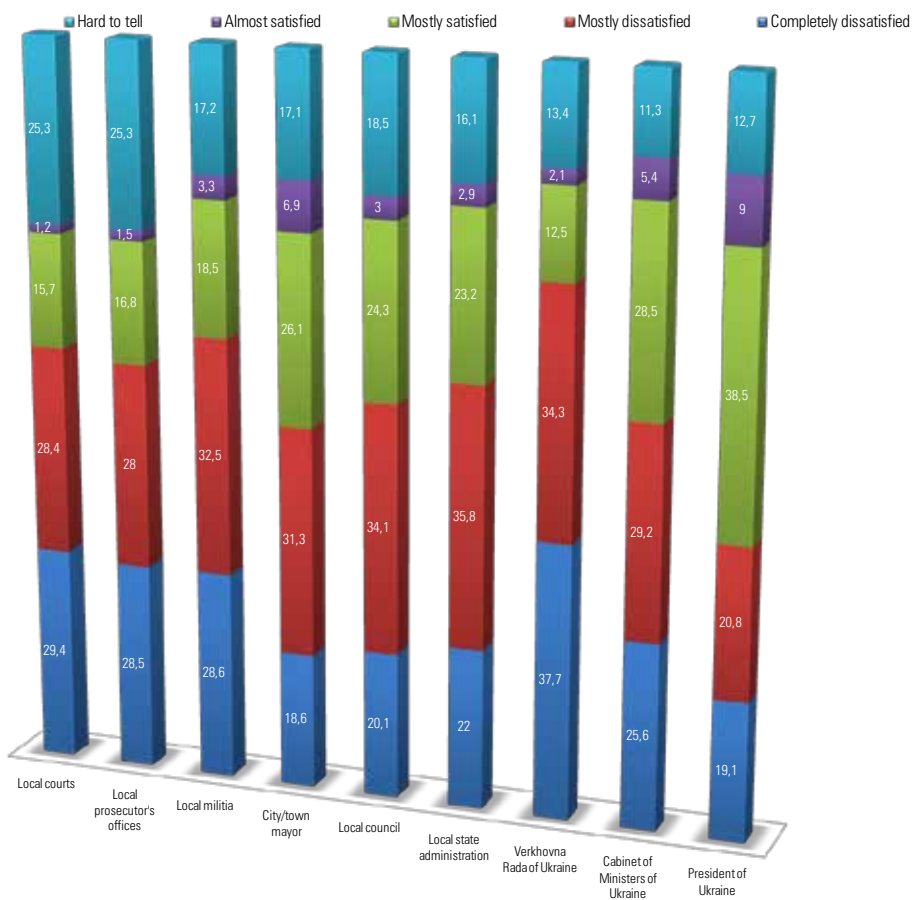
The only government institution city residents are predominantly satisfied with at the moment the survey was conducted is the President of Ukraine: 48% of interviewees of citizens are almost or completely satisfied with his performance, with 40% of those who are not satisfied (Picture. 13). A much lower level of satisfaction was expressed about the performance of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine: there were 34% of interviewees who were satisfied, whereas 55% expressed their dissatisfaction. The parliament remained traditionally the least popular government institution of all the three top government institutions in Ukraine. Only 15% of interviewees were satisfied with its performance, while as many as 72% were dissatisfied. At the same time one had to mention that such evaluation probably does not apply to the 8th convocation of the Verkhovna Rada elected on October 26, because at the time the survey was conducted it had not started its work. Instead, such numbers reflect a very negative attitude of citizens to the previous convocation of the parliament and, partially, the usual level of distrust of Ukrainian citizens towards the legislature as such.

A clear dissatisfaction was demonstrated by city residents towards all key government authorities at the local level. They demonstrated almost the same level of dissatisfaction with the performance of local state administrations and local councils: in both cases the share of those who were dissatisfied (58% and 54%, correspondingly) is almost twice

as much as the share of those who are satisfied (26% and 27%, correspondingly). The performance of city mayors received a somewhat better, but also negative evaluation with 33% of interviewees who are satisfied and 50% who were not.

Anyway, respondents expressed the lowest satisfaction with the performance of law enforcement agencies in their own cities. Most of the interviewees were dissatisfied with the performance of the militia (61%), while 58% and 57% expressed their dissatisfaction with the performance of local courts and local prosecutor’s offices, correspondingly. Only 17% of interviewees are satisfied with the performance of courts, 18% are satisfied with the activities of prosecutor’s offices, and 22% are satisfied with the performance of militia. The leading position of the militia is explained by the fact that citizens most often come across their representatives and therefore the share of those who found it difficult to express their attitude to this institution was the least (17%).

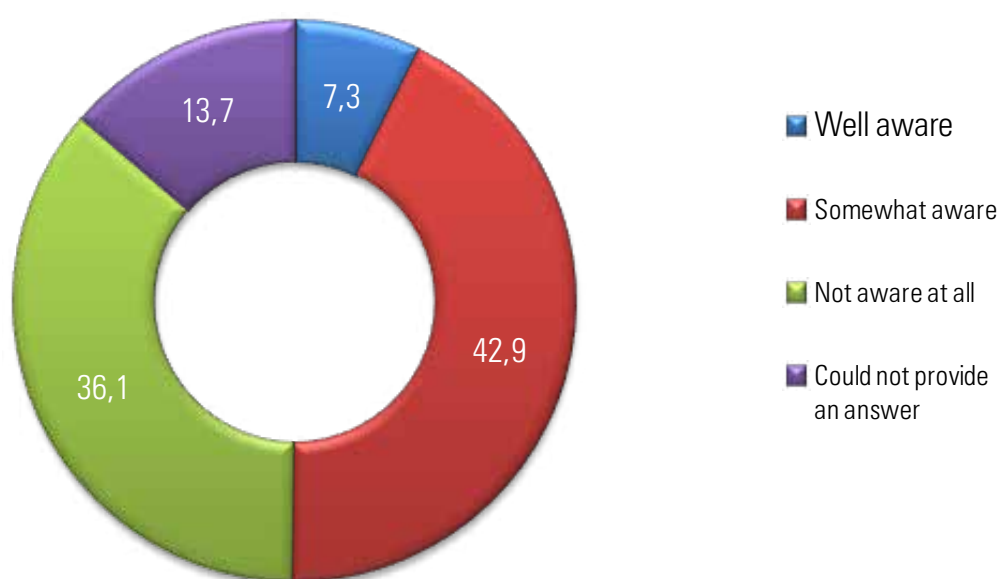
In general, the findings of the survey testify about the negative evaluation of citizens of activities of central and local government authorities. On the other side, the traditional low level of trust Ukrainians express to political institutions practically does not depend on specific political parties they are represented by. Correspondingly both central and local government authorities have to do a big scope of work to get rid of such negative image in the eyes of their citizens. A separate problem is the extremely negative attitude to law enforcement agencies, which testify to the immediate need for their substantial reforms.



Picture 13. Satisfaction with the performance of government institutions and law enforcement agencies, %

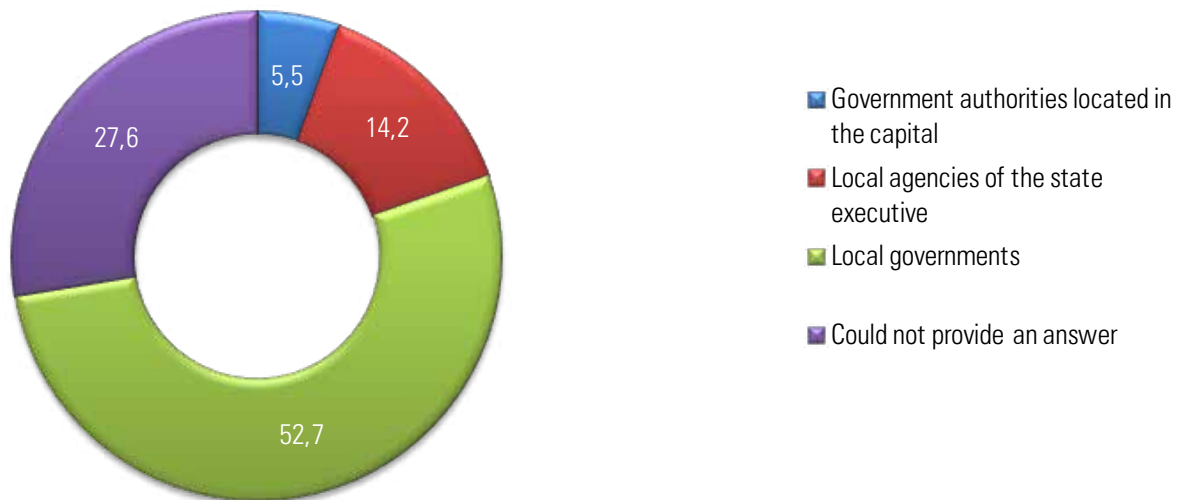
General attitude towards the idea of decentralisation

The opinion survey demonstrates poor awareness of city residents about the distribution of authority between the central and local government authorities in the area of city management (Picture. 14). Only 7% of the surveyed citizens demonstrated good understanding of this distribution, with additional 43% mentioning they are somewhat familiar with it. At the same time 36% of interviewees admitted they knew nothing about it and 14% found it difficult to provide an answer, which gives reasons render them to the category of those who know nothing about it as well.



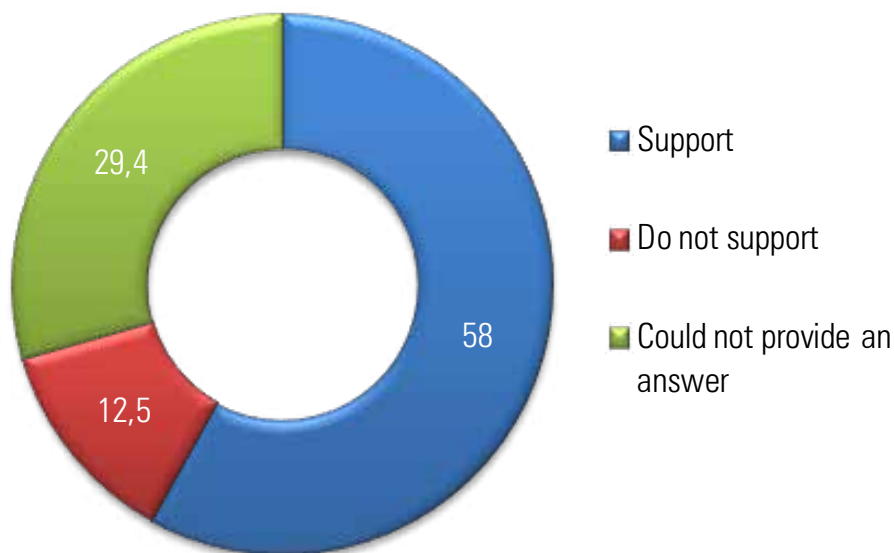
Picture 14. Awareness about the distribution of main types of authority between local governments and central government authorities, %

Most of city residents (52%) quite expectedly believe (Picture. 15) it should be local governments elected by them during elections, which should be vested with the lion's share of authority in managing their populated areas. The additional 14% would be willing to give this authority to local agencies of the state executive appointed by the President, and only 6% would give it to the central agencies of the state executive. These findings are quite understandable given the distance between central government agencies and citizens.



Picture 15. Vision of what government agencies should have the biggest authority in managing local issues in the city/town, %

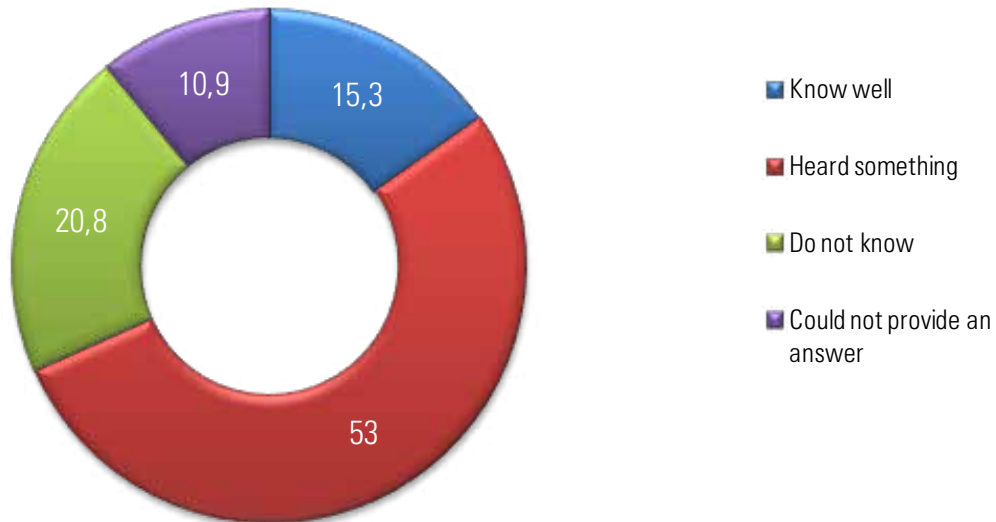
Similar answers were provided to the direct question about the expediency of increasing the authority of local governments in cities – this idea was supported by 58% of interviewees, with only 13% not supporting it (Picture. 16).



Picture 16. Support to the idea of increasing the authority of local governments in the city/town, %

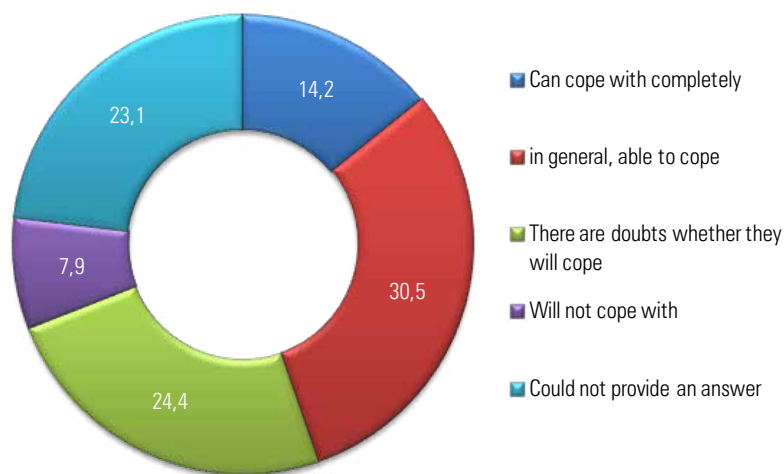
68% of respondents were aware about the decentralisation initiative of the Cabinet of Ministers, which corresponds, in general, with the desire of the interviewees to vest local government with more authority (Picture. 17): 15% of them are well aware about it, with

53% saying they heard something about it. 21% of interviewees heard nothing about it and 11% could not provide a clear answer, which also gives all reasons to believe that they are not aware about it.



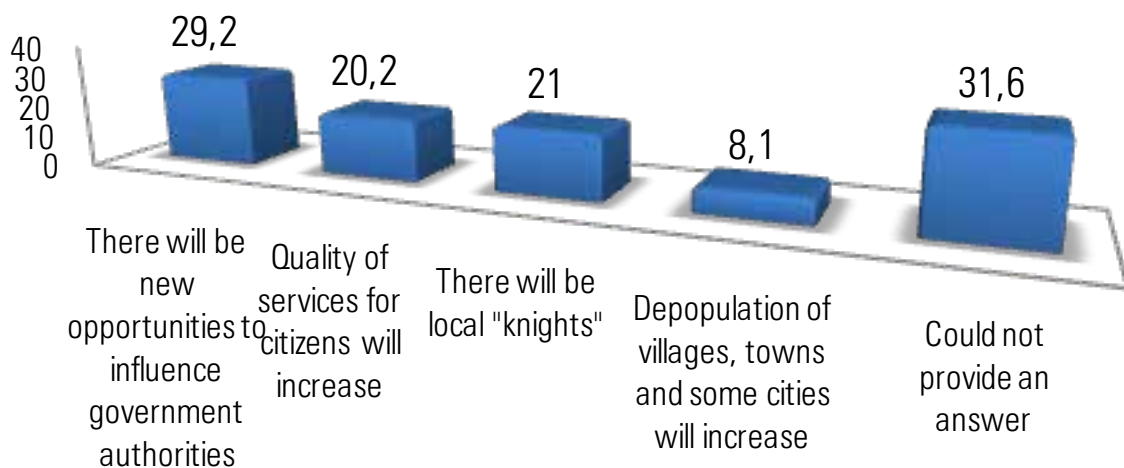
Picture 17. Awareness with initiatives of the President and Cabinet of Ministers to promote decentralisation in Ukraine, %

While answering the question about the potential risks of decentralisation, the respondents demonstrated a restrained optimism (Picture. 18). A considerable majority of city residents (45%) share the opinion that local government agencies, in general, are in a position to cope with the new scope of authority they can get as a result of decentralisation, whereas 32% share the opposite opinion.



Picture 18. Evaluation of the local government ability to cope with greater scope of authority and responsibility, %

In addition to this, citizens were able to see more benefits associated with the potential decentralisation (Picture. 19). 29% of them mentioned that in such a case they will be able to increase their influence on government authorities, whereas 20% informed that this may improve the provision of services in cities. Instead, 21% expressed their concern that decentralisation may lead to the emergence of local "kings", with 8% sharing the opinion that decentralisation will lead to the quick depopulation of villages, towns and some cities. It is noteworthy that every third (32%) interviewee found it difficult to express his or her attitude towards the potential consequences of decentralisation.



Picture 19. Expectations of decentralisation, %

In general, the findings presented above demonstrate a rather high level of citizen awareness about decentralisation initiatives, however, they also speak about substantial gaps in understanding of its peculiarities. At the same time, the attitude of citizens towards the increase of local government authority instead of increasing the authority of central executive authorities or even local agencies of the state executive is quite positive. This may become a serious factor for the implementation of this reform.

Attitude to selected aspects of decentralisation

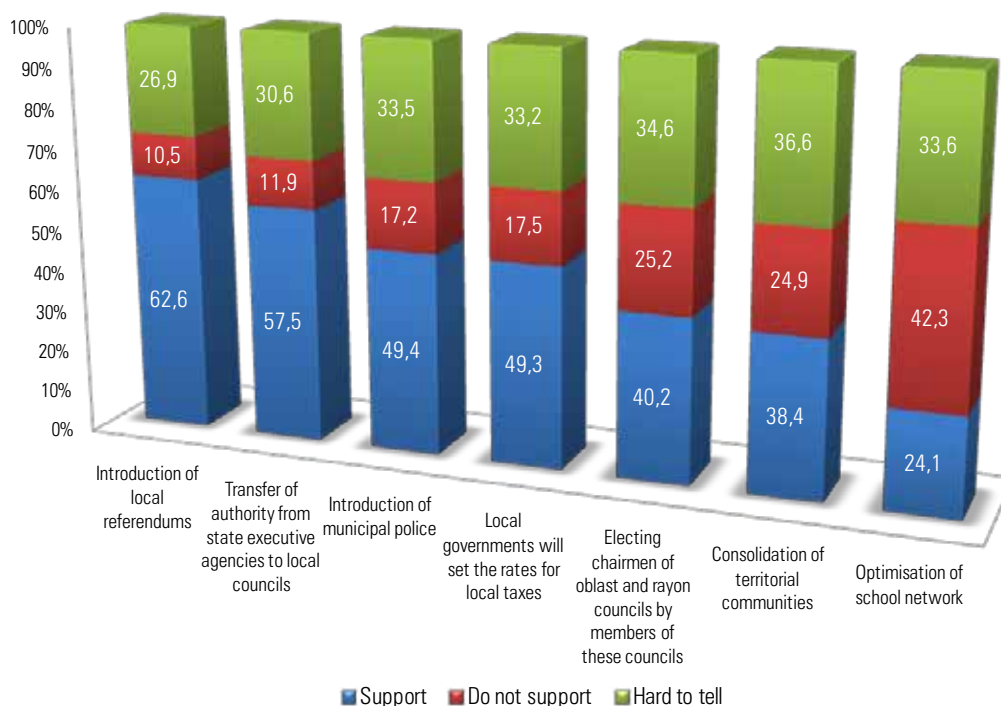
The overwhelming majority of city residents are supportive of a number of proposed steps within the framework of the proclaimed decentralisation (Picture. 20). The biggest support was given to the proposed idea of vesting citizens with the right to initiate the local referendum on issues of local importance – this idea was supported by 63% of interviewees, with only 11% not supporting it. The same positive evaluation was given to the initiative to transfer the authority from local agencies of the state executive to local governments: 58% of interviewees supported it, with 12% being against it.

Citizens also expressed supportive attitude to other proposals to increase the scope of local governments. In particular, 49% of interviewees expressed their support for the introduction

of the municipal police subordinate to the local council and the same number of interviewees supported the proposal to vest local governments with the right to determine the rates of local taxes and fees. 40% of respondents expressed their support of the idea to elect chairmen of rayon and oblast councils by the members of such councils. The number of those who did not support these proposals constituted, correspondingly, 17%, 18% and 25%.

Respondents also provided predominantly positive attitude to the potential consolidation of territorial communities to increase their efficiency: this idea was supported by 38% of interviewees, with 25% not supporting it. On the other hand, a relative majority of city residents (42%) did not accept the initiative to close schools with low numbers of schoolchildren and to send schoolchildren to the nearest full-size schools, with only 24% expressing their support to such intentions.

It is obvious that all such proposed steps, which will increase the scope of authority of territorial communities and their local governments, received support from city residents, because they will provide an opportunity to receive or at least feel the new instruments to impact local decision making in their populated areas. Therefore, the central government may count of the supportive attitude of citizens during the implementation of these steps. On the other hand, the government should pay a particular attention to such sensitive for ordinary citizens aspects of the proposed initiatives, which will not be easily supported, because they will be associated with certain hardships, whatever temporary they may be. For example, despite the fact that most of city residents support the idea of community consolidation, the optimisation of the school network is not supported by them to the same degree. This is why the explanation of the logical connection between the optimisation of the school network and increased quality of public education services is likely to become the key to help the central government to mitigate the potential dissatisfaction in the future.



Picture 20. Attitude to selected aspects of the local government reform, %

Responsibility of various levels of government for the provision of services to citizens

In the opinion of city residents, the lowest level of government in the country (i.e. city and town councils) is in the best position to provide public services (Table. 4). This idea was supported by citizens in the context of the services they encounter in their every-day life. In particular, 56% of interviewees share the opinion that it is the city government that has to be responsible for the provision of housing and municipal utility services, 50% support this idea in the context of medical services, 44% say local governments should engage in law enforcement, with 40% saying local governments should ensure fire-prevention. Moreover, the majority of city residents would be willing, with a somewhat lower enthusiasm though, to vest local governments with the authority to provide even more distant services. 38% of interviewees would be willing to have the city government responsible for the economic development of the territory and 37% would like to have it responsible for the secondary medical assistance. Questions related to the secondary school education caused most different responses: 28% of interviewees believe that this is the area of responsibility of the city government, 24% think this is the responsibility of the central government, 18% shift this responsibility to the oblast council, and 17% to the rayon government authorities.

In general, city residents would like to give the responsibility for most of complicated and integrated services to higher level government authorities. These areas include: vocational training with 27% of citizens thinking oblast government authorities should be responsible for this and with the same number of citizens giving it to the central government, 15% – to the rayon government, and 19% – to the city government. Citizens expressed a more unified opinion with regard to transferring specialised medical services to the oblast level with 30% of interviewees supporting this, although 24% support the transfer of this authority to the city government, 20% would give it to the central government, and 13% to the rayon government authorities.

There are clear regularities in how citizens see the distribution of authority between different levels of government. The more the services are associated with the every-day life, the more citizens are inclined to support the responsibility for them to the lower level. Instead, citizens would be willing to transfer more complicated and specialised services to the scope of authority of higher level governments. It is obvious that such a tendency directly corresponds with the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. transfer of authority to the lowest possible level, which is capable of exercising such authority. This approach underlies the decentralisation reform. Therefore, the steps of the central government to justify the transfer of authority to the lower level can find support from the majority of city residents.

TABLE 4
LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, WHICH SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES TO CITIZENS, %

Services	City/town council	Rayon government	Oblast government	Central government	Hard to tell

Pre-school education	37,4	15,3	15,1	19,5	12,7
Secondary education	28	17,9	16,9	24,2	12,9
Vocational education	18,6	14,7	27,4	26,8	12,4
Fire safety	39,8	19,5	18,9	9,6	12,2
Law enforcement	44,3	19,1	15	9,4	12,2
Economic development of the city/ town	37,7	15,4	23,2	11,2	12,5
Primary medical assistance	49,7	18,5	11,1	8,8	11,9
Secondary medical assistance	36,6	22,6	19,1	9,5	12,2
Specialised medical assistance	23,5	13,2	30,4	20,3	12,6
Housing and municipal utility services	55,8	16	8,7	6,9	12,5

Budget sufficiency of communities

The majority of city residents – 65% – support the idea of redistributing revenues from tax and fee collections from the National Budget to local budgets (Table. 5). Apparently, they hope that this will provide opportunities for local authorities to more effectively perform its duties and provide better services to citizens.

TABLE 5
SUPPORT TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF REVENUES FROM TAX AND FEE COLLECTIONS IN FAVOUR OF LOCAL BUDGETS

Support the idea	65,2
Do not support the idea	10,4
Hard to tell	24,4

On the other hand, citizens are not quite aware about the real state of things with local budgets (Table. 6): for example, 39% of interviewees believe that their oblast belongs to the list of donor oblasts, which transfer to the National Budget more funds than they get in return, whereas 41% does not know the answer to this question. At the same time, the

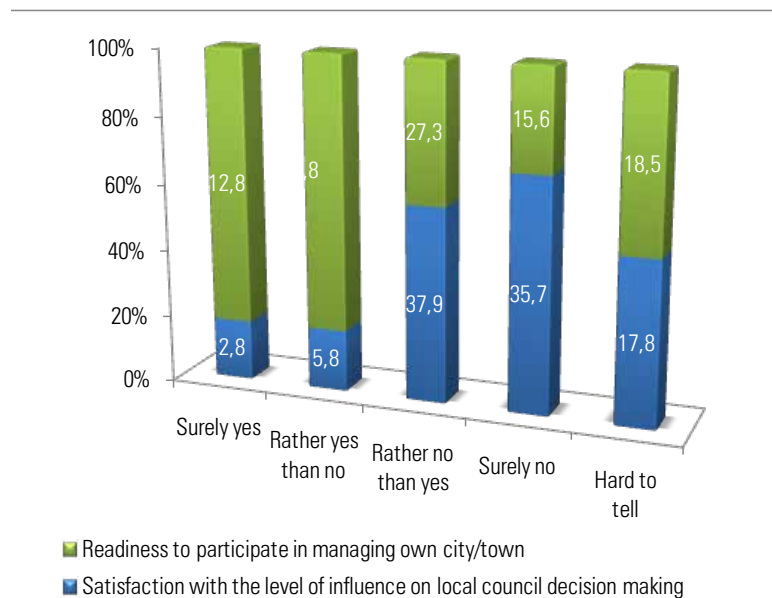
population of 5 oblasts, which really represent the donors of the National Budget (Poltava, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Sumy, and Chernihiv), is about 23% of the whole population of Ukraine. Consequently, the initiative to redistribute revenues from collections and fees in favour of local budgets should be coupled with informational campaign and explanations of the actual budget status in cities and oblasts.

TABLE. 6
PERCEPTION OF CITIZENS ABOUT WHETHER THEIR OBLAST IS A DONOR FOR THE NATIONAL BUDGET AND WHETHER IT RECEIVES SUBSIDIES, %

Oblast is a donor	38,9
Oblast receives subsidies	20,0
Hard to tell	41,1

Evaluation of the current status and opportunities to have influence on local authorities

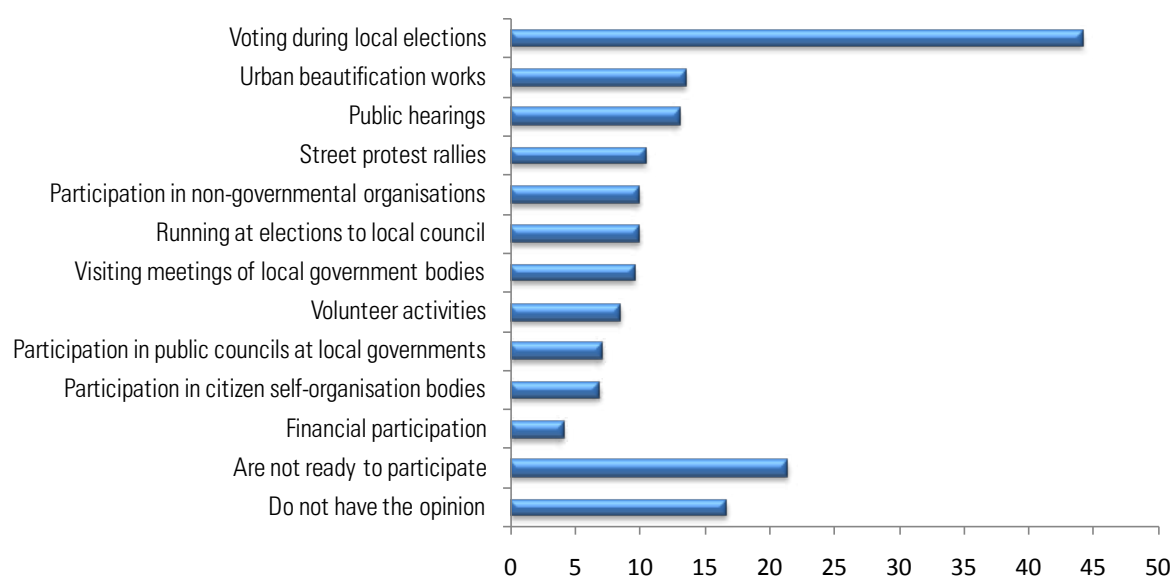
The absolute majority of city residents are not satisfied with the current level of their influence on government decisions in their populated areas (Picture. 21) – there were only 74% of such citizens. At the same time, only 9% of interviewees are completely or almost satisfied with such level influence. One should mention that not all citizens are willing to take part in management of their city in case their local government is vested with more authority: 39% are willing to participate and 43% are not.



Picture 21. Evaluation of influence on decision making of local authorities, %

In the opinion of interviewees, the potential ways of citizen participation in the city management include, quite expectedly, voting during elections to local governments (Picture. 22). 44% of interviewees chose this way of participation. Other options turned

out to be far less popular: only 14% of interviewees are ready to personally participate in urban beautifications of the territory where they live, 13% expressed their willingness to participate in public hearings, 10% said they would participate in street actions and rallies, nominate themselves to local governments, join local level non-governmental organisation, or participate in working sessions of local government agencies.



Picture 22. Acceptability of forms of public participation in management of their city/town, %

At the same time, 67% of city residents do not know a single local non-governmental organisation (Table. 7) and only 10% informed that they participated in the activities of at least one such organisation (Table. 8).

TABLE. 7

AWARENESS ABOUT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN THE CITY/TOWN, %

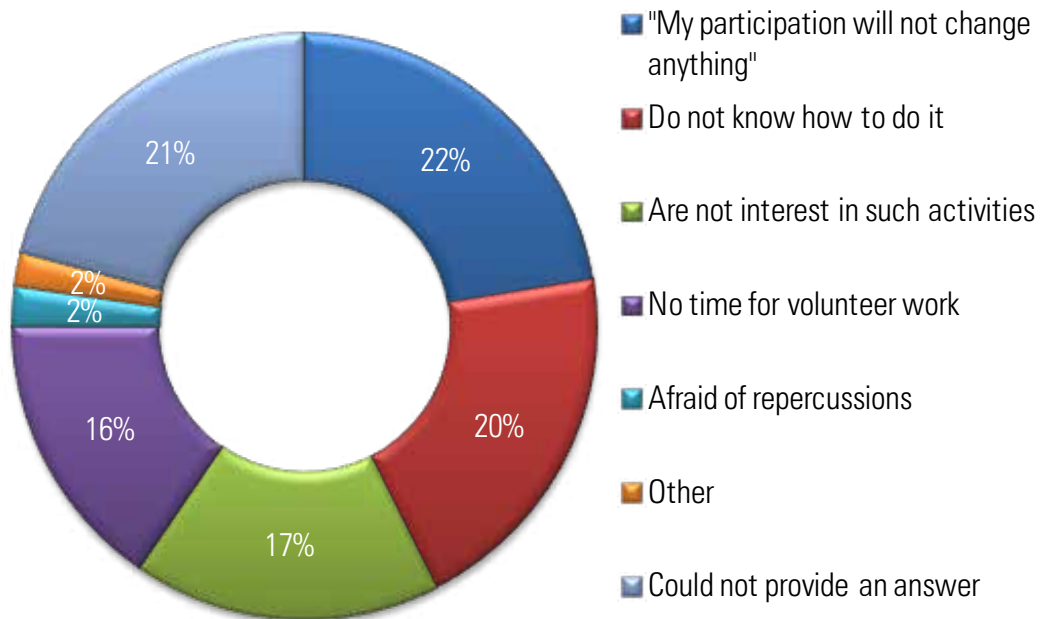
Aware	32,6
Not aware	67,4
Did not provide an answer	0,0

TABLE. 8

PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES OF AT LEAST ONE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, %

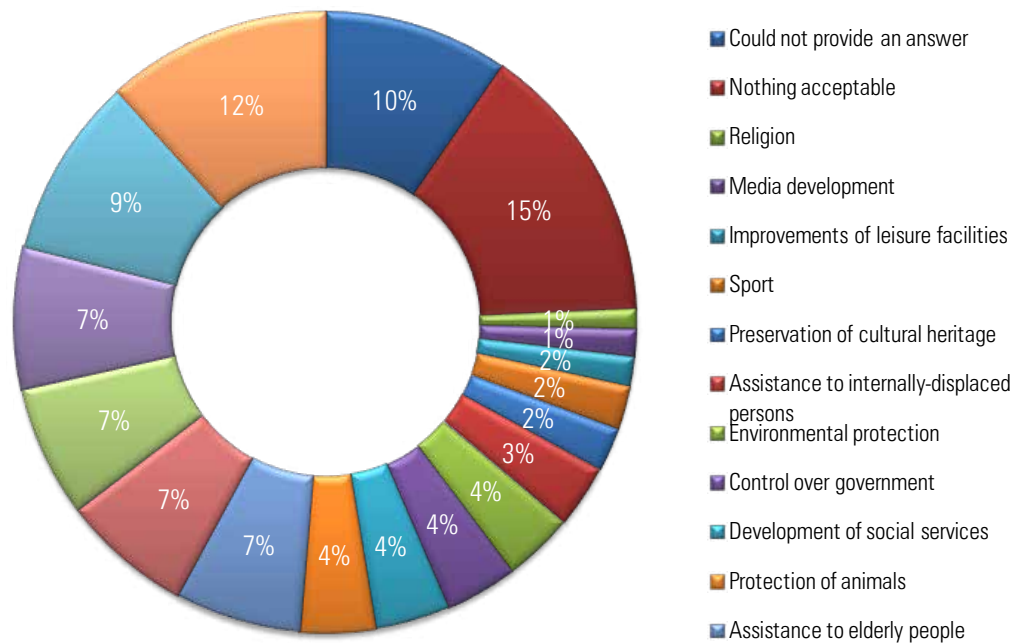
Participate	10,3
Do not participate	85,9
Hard to tell	3,8

The most popular reasons for the interviewees not to engage in the activities of non-governmental organisations (Picture. 23) included discouragement in the ability to change something through such participation (24%), lack of knowledge about how to do it (21%), absence of interest in such activities (18%), and lack of time (16%).



Picture 23. Main reasons not to participate in the activities of non-governmental organisations, %

While providing responses about the potential areas of the volunteer activity citizens would be willing to participate (Picture. 24), city residents mentioned assistance to orphaned children (22%), assistance to Ukrainian military men who are in Donbas (18%), assistance to people who are experiencing hardships (14%), assistance to disabled persons or those who have serious health problems, protection of human rights and assistance to elderly people (13% each). At the same time, a relative majority of the interviewees (29%) responded that they will never engage in volunteer activities. In addition, most of respondent informed that they provided volunteer assistance for certain purposes during the current year, with the number of such interviewees being 53% (Table. 9).



Picture 24. Acceptable areas of volunteer activities, %

TABLE 9
PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR TO PERSONS OR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS WHO RESOLVE SOCIALLY IMPORTANT ISSUES, %

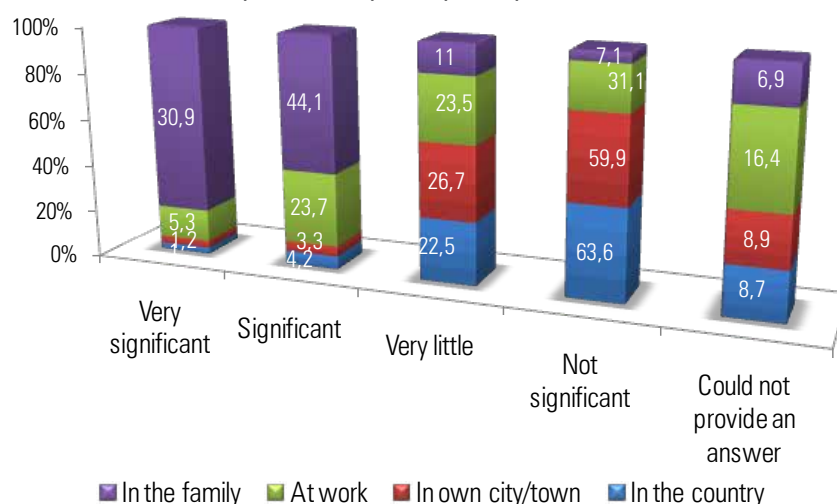
Participated	52,5
Did not participate	47,5

The findings obtained testify to controversial tendencies in opinions of city residents. On one side, they are not satisfied with the current level of influence on decision making of local authorities, however not all of them are ready to participate in the city management in case they have such an opportunity. At the same time citizens say the participation in local elections is the most popular form of their participation, while more cumbersome methods are acceptable for only a small share of citizens. Similarly, the overwhelming majority of city residents are not ready to participate in volunteer activities, although many of them are ready to support volunteers in a passive way through charity assistance and activities.

Evaluation of their own influence on and responsibility for the events in the society

Similarly to answers to the previous questions, the absolute majority of the population, or 64% do not feel like they have a considerable impact on the event taking place in the country (Picture. 25). Additional 23% of interviewees believe that their influence is quite insignificant on such developments, and only 5% support the opinion that their influence is significant or very significant. The citizen evaluation of their influence on events in their cities is almost the same: 60% of interviewees speak about the absence of such influence, 27% say such influence is quite small, with 5% saying it is significant or very significant.

A quite different picture emerges if one asks a similar question with regard to the professional work or families. 29% of interviewees believe that they have significant or very significant influence on what is happening in their work, with additional 24% saying such influence is not significant and 31% saying they have no influence at all. Anyway, 75% of respondents believe their influence on their families is significant or very significant, with 11% saying such influence is small, and only 7% completely deny it.



Picture 25. Evaluation of citizen influence on events, %

A similar situation was observed when city residents had to evaluate their feeling of responsibility for what is happening in these spheres. 47% of interviewees do feel any responsibility for events in Ukraine at all, 26% feel insignificant responsibility for this, and 13% fell significant or very significant responsibility. The distribution of responses of interviewees to the question about who is responsible for what is happening in their cities is the same: 46%, 28%, and 13%, respectively.

However, with regard to the place of work and family, the answers are significantly different again. Only 25% of city residents do not feel any responsibility for what is happening in their place of work, and only 5% – for what is happening in their families. At the same time, 37% of interviewees feel significant or very significant responsibility for what is happening in their place of work and 78% – for what is happening in their families.

Thus, city residents have provided a very pessimistic evaluation of their role in public affairs. It is worth mentioning the fact that they provided the same low evaluation for their influence on local affairs as they provided for the national scale affairs. Moreover, in such conditions most of citizens are not ready to assume responsibility for what is happening in the country in general or in their populated areas in particular. A partial explanation of this fact could be the following: with the absence of real mechanisms to influence government authorities it is difficult to feel any responsibility for what is happening in the society. However, this may also testify to the considerable level of passive attitude of citizens towards their participation in social life, which was revealed in their responses to previous questions.

Attitude towards elections

City residents tend to believe all elections they participate in are important: not national and local (Table. 10). In particular, 71% of interviewees believe that presidential elections are rather or very important, 72% think that elections to the Verkhovna Rada are important, while 71% give such important to elections of oblast councils, 72% - to city councils, 72% - to elections of city mayors, 68% - to elections of town councils, and 70% to elections of town mayors. Correspondingly, the absolute minority consider such elections not to be important: in case of the presidential elections there were 17% of interviewees supporting this idea, 17% sharing the same opinion with regard to parliamentary elections, 16% - with regard to elections of oblast councils, 15% - to elections of city councils, 14% - to elections of city mayors, 14% - to elections of town councils, and 13% - to elections of town mayors. The obtained findings look quite unexpected, given the differences in the turnout during the presidential, parliamentary and local elections. The traditionally high turnover during presidential elections with the lowest turnover during local elections testifies, according to the survey, to the fact that voters assign different degrees of importance to such elections.

TABLE. 10

EVALUATION OF IMPORTANCE OF ELECTIONS, %

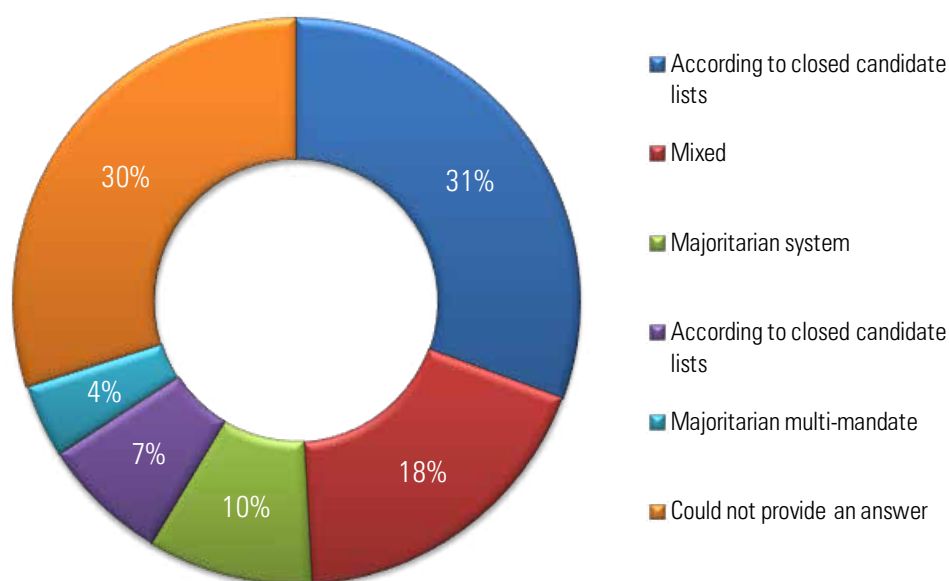
Type of elections	Very important	Rather important	Rather not important	Quite unimportant	Hard to tell
President of Ukraine	44,1	27,1	7,4	9,8	11,6

Verkhovna Rada	42,6	28,9	7,3	9,6	11,6
Oblast council	37,6	33,3	8,3	7,4	13,4
City council	38	33,9	8	6,8	13,3
City mayor	39,9	32,2	7,5	6,5	13,8
Town council	33,4	34,7	8,4	6	17,5
Town mayor	37,1	32,6	7,5	5,7	17,1

Attitude to electoral systems

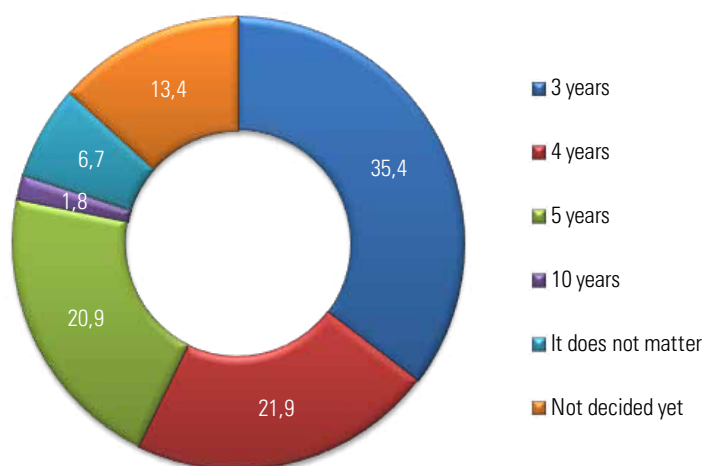
A relative majority of city residents (31%) prefer the elections system with the so-called open party lists used for electing local council members (Picture. 26), which strengthens their influence on the personal composition of such councils as compared to the proportional system they have got used to. Additionally, 19% of interviewees would like to preserve the existing mixed model, 10% would like to return to the single-mandate system, and 4% would like to introduce the multiple-mandate majoritarian system. Only 7.3% of interviewees support the proportional elections system with closed lists.

Thus, citizens prefer those elections system where they can influence the personal composition of the council membership representing specific electoral districts.



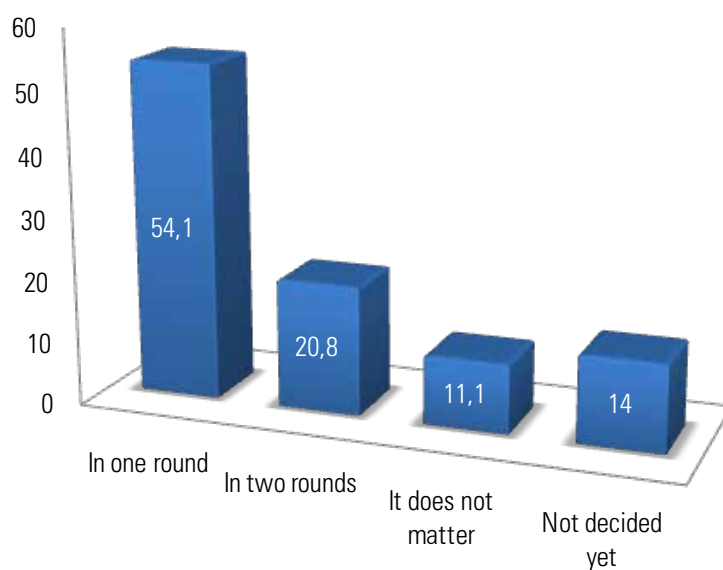
Picture 26. Vision of the optimal system of elections of local (oblast and city) councils, %

At the same time, the interviewees tend to support the decrease of the term of office of local councils (Picture. 27): 25% of respondents would like to shorten it to 3 years, 22% - to 4 years, and only 21% supported the existing constitutional term of office of local councils of 5 years.



Picture 27. Vision of the optimal term of office of local councils, %

However, the proposal to conduct elections of city mayors in two rounds was not supported by the majority of potential voters: 54% of interviewees would be willing to continue electing these officials in one round (Picture. 28).



Picture 28. Vision of the optimal system of electing city mayors, %

In addition to this, the majority of city residents (57%) support the idea to synchronise the timing of local and parliamentary elections, with only 23% of interviewees being against it (Table. 11).

TABLE . 11

SYNCHRONISING THE TIMING OF LOCAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, %

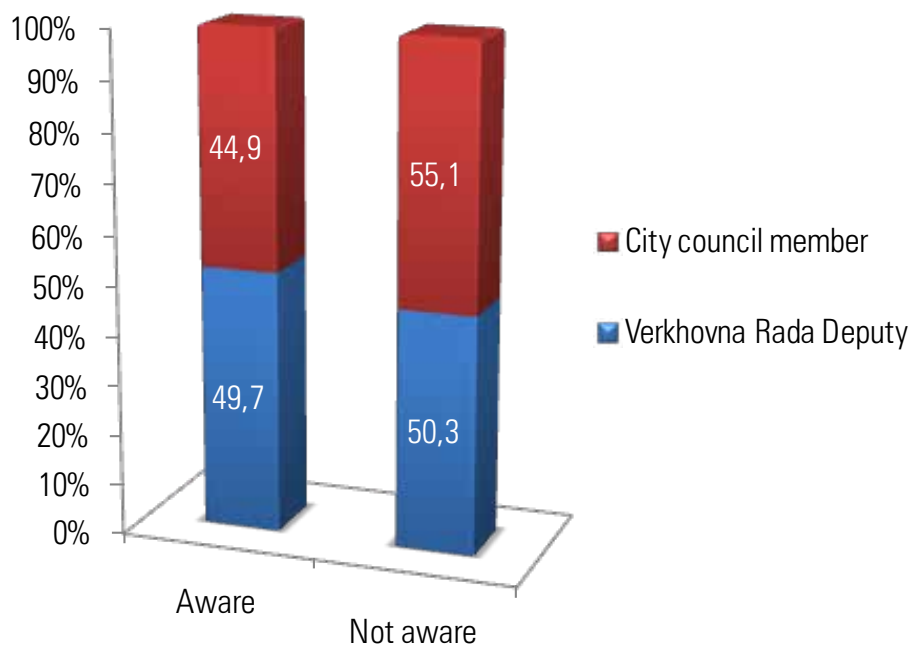
Elections of National Deputies of Ukraine and local elections should be conducted on the same day	57,3
Elections of National Deputies of Ukraine and local elections should be conducted separately	23,2
Hard to tell	19,5

In other words, city residents give more preferences to the system of elections with open lists event for local elections. In is worth mentioning that the introduction of this particular system has been envisioned in the Coalition Agreement signed by the representatives of the parliamentary majority in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the 8th convocation.

The declared desire of citizens to reduce the term of office of local councils represents a clear, although indirect, indicator of the low level of confidence to their councils. On the other hand, this is not in line with the dissatisfaction of citizens with frequent elections, which points to their willingness to preserve one-round elections of city mayors and conduct national and local elections on the same day – in other words, according to the same cycle.

Citizen knowledge of National Deputies and local council members representing their districts

Every other city resident does not know who represents his or her district in the Verkhovna Rada. Almost the same number, or 55%, do not know who represents their district in the local council (Picture. 29). It is obvious that this testifies to significant gaps in citizen interest in political life in the country in general and in their populated areas in particular.



Picture 29. Citizen knowledge of National Deputies and local council members representing their districts, %

DECENTRALISATION: OPINION OF LOCAL COUNCIL OFFICIALS

The survey of officials was conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation upon the request of the Association of Ukrainian Cities on November – December 10, 2014.

357 local government officials from oblast and rayon significance cities from 24 oblasts of Ukraine provided their responses

Характеристики проведеного опитування службовців

TABLE. 12

THE OFFICIAL STATUS OF SURVEYED LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Status	Number of experts	%
Managerial position	226	63
Specialist	131	37

TABLE. 13

POPULATED AREAS WHERE THE SURVEY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TOOK PLACE

Type of the populated area	Number of experts	%
City with more than 500 thousand inhabitants	35	10
City of 100 – 499 thousand inhabitants	87	24
City of 50 – 99 thousand inhabitants	37	10
City of less than 50 thousand inhabitants	157	45
Town	41	11

TABLE. 14

OBLASTS WHERE THE SURVEY OF OFFICIALS TOOK PLACE

Name of oblasts	Number of experts	%
Vinnytsya	10	3
Volyn	6	2
Dnipropetrovsk	21	6
Donetsk	7	2
Zhytomyr	10	3
Zakarpattya	10	3
Zaporizzhya	57	16
Ivano-Frankivsk	10	3
Kyiv	15	4
Kirovohrad	13	4
Luhansk	19	5
Lviv	10	3
Mykolaiv	17	5
Odesa	5	2

Poltava	22	7
Rivne	10	3
Sumy	18	5
Ternopil	8	2
Kharkiv	20	5
Kherson	8	2
Khmelnyskyi	12	2
Cherkasy	10	3
Chernivtsi	20	5
Chernihiv	19	5

Findings of the survey of officials

The majority of officials (69%) are familiar in general terms with the Concept of the Local Government Reform and Reform of the Territorial Arrangement of Government Institutions in Ukraine approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on April 01, 2014. 27% of interviewees know all the details of the provision, with 4% being not aware about the Concept at all (Table.15).

TABLE. 15
AWARENESS ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM AND REFORM OF THE TERRITORIAL ARRANGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS IN UKRAINE APPROVED BY THE CABINET OF MINISTERS OF UKRAINE ON APRIL 01, 2014, %

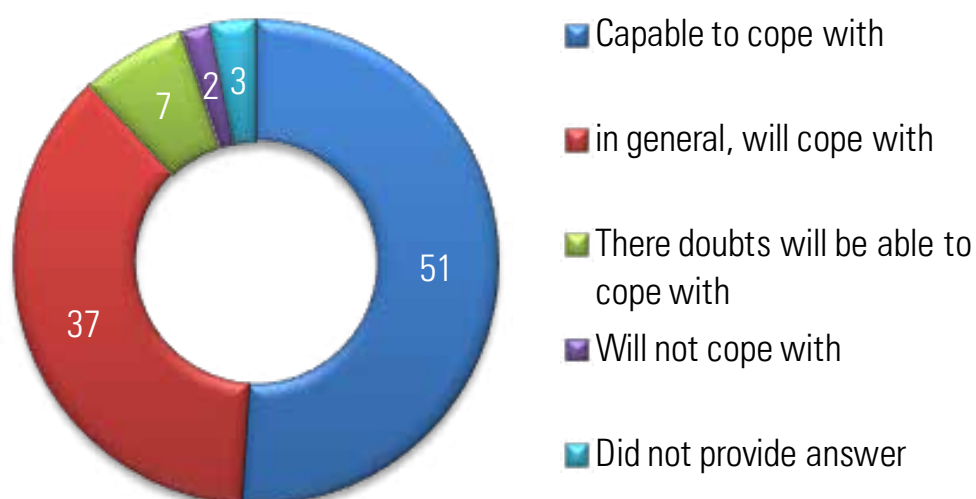
Level of awareness	Number of experts	%
Know its provisions in detail	98	27
Have general awareness about the document	245	69
Not aware	14	4

The absolute majority of the interviewees (90%) support the idea of increasing the scope of authority of local governments in their populated area (Table. 16). Only 4% do not support the idea to increase the scope of this authority.

TABLE. 16
ATTITUDE TOWARD INCREASING THE SCOPE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY, %

Level of support	Number of experts	%
Support	318	90
Do not support	16	4
Hard to tell	23	6

The respondents are confident that their local governments will cope with the increased scope of authority, which can be given to them as part of decentralisation (Picture. 30). Only 9% of interviewees believe that local governments will not cope with the increased scope of authority.



Picture 30. Evaluation of officials of the capacity of local governments to cope with the increased scope of authority, %

In the opinion of the majority of interviewees, the main consequences of decentralisation should be (Table. 17): improved conditions for citizens to receive managerial and other public services (66%), improved quality of such services (44%), and new opportunities for citizens to exercise influence of government authorities (44%).

TABLE. 17

OUTCOMES OF DECENTRALISATION AS EXPECTED BY OFFICIALS, %

Outcomes	Number of experts	%
Positive outcomes		
Conditions for citizens to receive public services will improve	235	66
The quality of such services will improve	158	44
There will be new opportunities for citizens to influence government authorities	157	44
Local government officials will be able to do more for the members of the whole community	110	31
There will be new opportunities for local government officials for career development	30	8
Negative outcomes		
There will be new local "princdoms" not independent of all	31	9
There will be more jobless local government officials	33	9
There will be more lawlessness at the local level	16	4
There will be new opportunities for local government officials for career development	30	8
Other	19	5
Hard to tell	14	4

The aspects of the local government reform receiving the highest level of support are (Table. 18): transfer of authority from state executive authorities to executive committees of local councils (82% of interviewees supporting it and 7% not supporting it); closing of rayon and oblast state administrations and establishing executive committees of rayon and oblast councils instead (82% of interviewees supporting it and 8% not supporting it), and vesting local governments with the right set rates for local taxes and fees (80% of interviewees supporting it and 10% not supporting it).

A high level of support was also given to: vesting citizens with the right to initiate the local referendum on issues of local importance (78% of interviewees supporting it and 10% not supporting it); introduction of the municipal police subordinate to local councils (74% of respondents supporting it and 13% not supporting it). 70% of interviewees support the idea of electing chairmen of oblast and rayon councils by members of the corresponding councils from their membership rather than directly by the whole population and 18% not supporting this idea. More than half of interviewees support the idea of consolidating smaller territorial communities into larger ones to improve their viability and capacity (58% of respondents support this idea and 22% do not support it) and changing local state administrations with representatives of the President or the Cabinet of Ministers in rayons and oblasts who will exercise oversight over the compliance of decisions of local councils with legislation (52% of interviewees supporting it and 28% not supporting it). The only proposal concerning the local government reform, which has the same level of supporters and those who do not support it (39%), is closing schools with low number of schoolchildren and transferring them to the nearest large school.

TABLE.18

ATTITUDE OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM, %

Aspects of the reform	supported	did not support	hard to tell
Consolidation of smaller territorial communities to increase their capacity	58	22	20
Transfer of authority from local authorities of the state executive to executive committees of local governments	82	7	11
Abolishment of rayon and oblast state administrations and establishing executive committees of rayon and oblast councils instead	82	8	10
Electing chairmen of oblast and rayon councils by members of these councils of their membership	70	18	12
Changing local state administrations with representatives of the President or the Cabinet of Ministers in rayons and oblasts who will exercise oversight over the compliance of decisions of local councils with legislation	52	28	20
Introduction of the municipal police subordinate to local councils	74	13	13
Closing schools with low number of schoolchildren and transferring them to the nearest large school	39	39	22
Vesting local governments with the right set rates for local taxes and fees	80	10	10
Vesting citizens with the right to initiate the local referendum on issues of local importance	78	10	12

The interviewees believe that city or town councils should be responsible from the provision of housing and municipal utility services (80%), economic development of the city/town (79%), pre-school education (73%), provision of administrative services (66%), provision of primary medical assistance (65%), and law enforcement (57%) (Table. 19). The rayon government should be responsible, first of all, for the secondary medical assistance (45%), whereas the oblast government should be responsible for the specialised medical assistance (46%) and vocational education (40%). The central government should be responsible for the social protection (42%).

TABLE 19

VISION OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC

Services	City/town government	Rayon government	Oblast government	Central government	Hard to tell
Pre-school education	73	11	2	13	1
Secondary education					
Vocational education	41	32	7	19	1
Fire prevention	9	15	40	31	5
Law enforcement	35	21	12	29	3
City economic development	57	16	8	17	2
Primary medical assistance	79	10	6	3	2
Secondary medical assistance	65	24	2	8	1
Specialised medical assistance	28	45	14	11	2
Housing and municipal utility services	13	13	46	26	2
Administrative services	80	8	6	5	1
Social protection	66	18	8	7	1
Соціальний захист населення	29	21	7	42	1

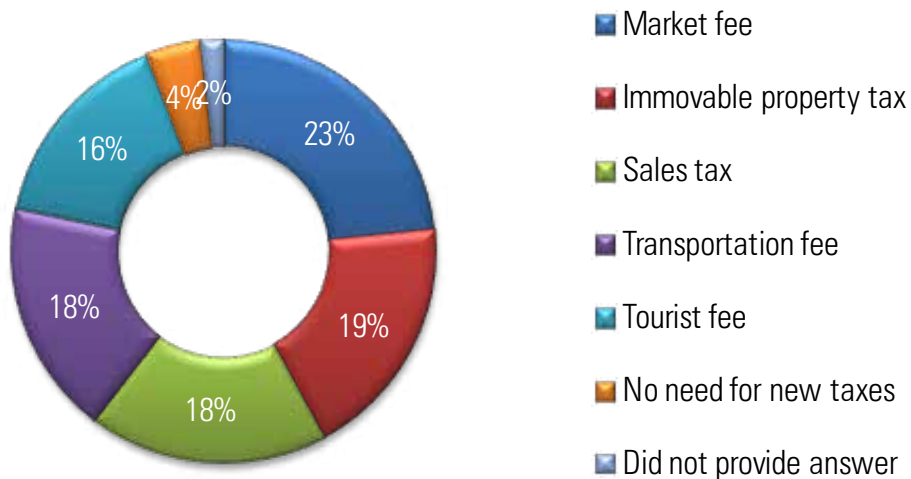
The absolute majority of interviewees (92%) support the distribution of collections from taxes and fees from the National Budget to local budgets (3% do not support this idea) (Table. 20).

TABLE 20.

ATTITUDE OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF COLLECTIONS FROM TAXES AND FEES FROM THE NATIONAL BUDGET TO LOCAL BUDGETS, %

Support	Number of experts	%
Supported	326	92
Did not support	11	3
Hard to tell	19	5

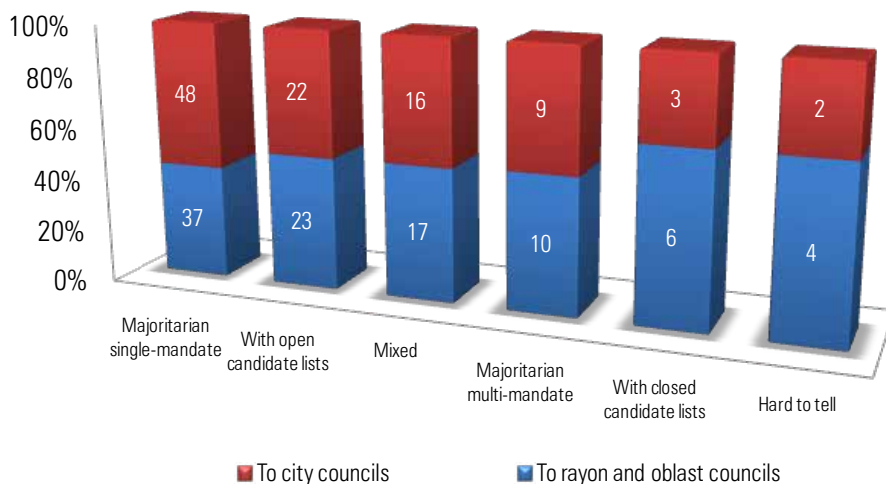
Of the suggested taxes, the interviewees would introduce in their cities the market fee (55%), sales tax (43%) and the tax on immovable property (44%), as well as the tax on transportation vehicles (42%) (Picture. 31).



Picture 31. Attitude of government officials to the idea of the introduction of local taxes, %

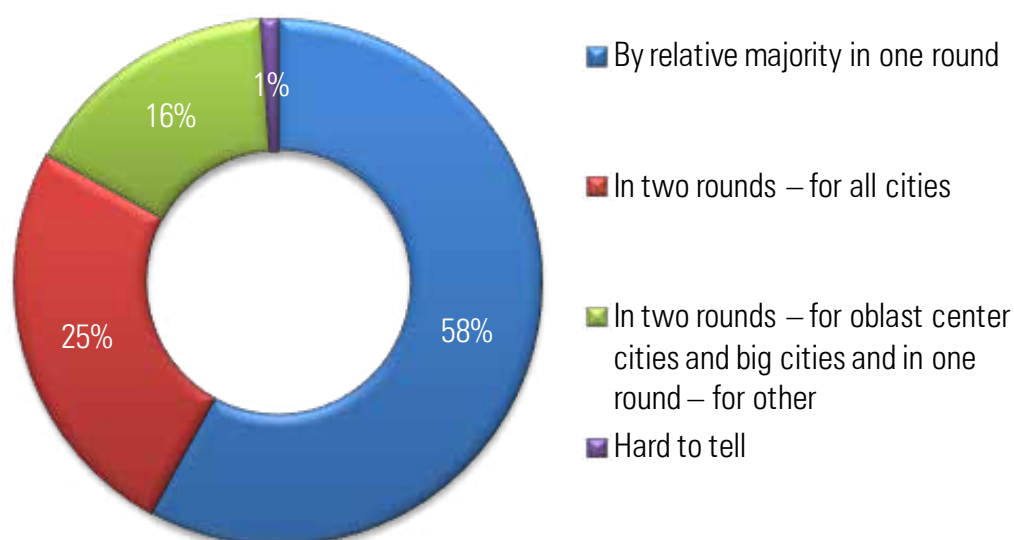
The majority of interviewees (48%) believe that the system of elections to local councils should be the majoritarian one based on single mandate electoral districts, whereby one council member is elected in each district (Picture. 32) who will advocate for the interests of voters in his or her district.

The system of elections to oblast and rayon councils should also be the majoritarian one based on single mandate electoral districts, whereby one council member is elected in each district. This idea is supported by 37% of interviewees. Some part of interviewees believe that elections should be conducted according to party lists, which should be open, thus providing the possibility for voters to choose their candidates from such lists (23%).



Picture 32. Vision of government officials of the system of elections of local councils, %

58% of interviewees believe that city mayors should be elected by the relative majority in one round of voting (Picture. 33). Only 25% of interviewees support the idea of electing city mayors by the absolute majority in two rounds of voting.



Picture 33. Vision of local government officials of the system of elections of city mayors, %

There were two equal groups of responses concerning the number of local council members: 44% of interviewees believe that this number should be lower than it currently is, with the other 44% thinking the number should not be changed (Table. 21).

TABLE 21

VISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF THE NUMBER OF LOCAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Number of council members	Number of experts	%
More than currently is	14	4
Lower than currently is	158	44
Should remain the same	158	44
Hard to tell	27	8

Most of interviewees (58%) believe that elections of National Deputies of Ukraine and local government elections should be conducted simultaneously (Table. 22).

TABLE 22

ATTITUDE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS AND ELECTIONS OF NATIONAL DEPUTIES OF UKRAINE

How elections should be conducted	Number of experts	%
Local government elections should be conducted simultaneously with elections of National Deputies of Ukraine	209	58
Local government elections and elections of National Deputies of Ukraine should be conducted in different times	135	38
Hard to tell	13	4

In the opinion of experts, the main problem cities fail to resolve in a proper manner is supply of housing (very bad - 39%, generally bad - 35%) (Table. 23). The lowest scores were also give by interviewees to fighting crime, performance of militia (very bad - 15%, generally bad - 42%), opening jobs, fighting unemployment (very bad - 16%, generally bad - 39%), and medical services (very bad - 11%, generally bad - 42%). Negative scores were also given to the way issues with unlicensed construction are resolved (very bad - 13%, generally bad - 35%), investment promotion (very bad - 18%, generally bad - 31%), and environmental improvements (very bad - 10%, generally bad - 36%).

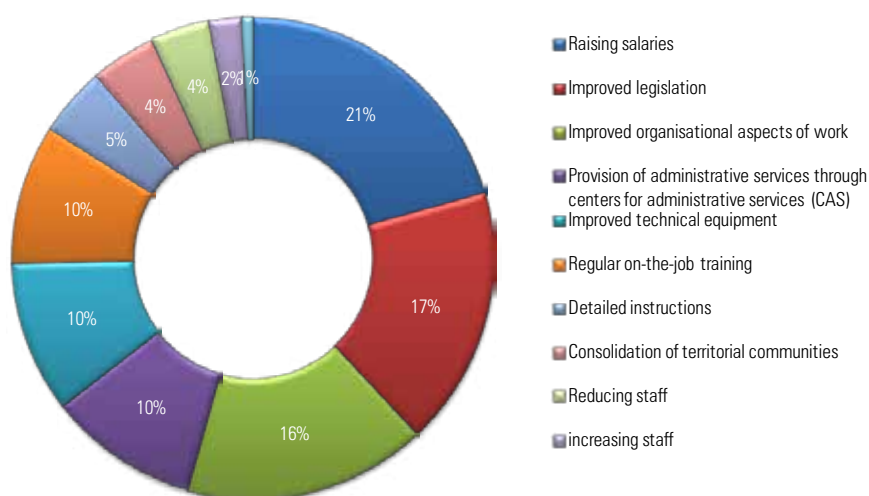
The experts provided positive evaluation of the way cities resolve issues related to urban improvements and sanitary condition of territories adjacent to buildings (very good - 3%, generally good - 55%), performance of the urban public transportation system (very good - 3%, generally good - 49%), dealing with traffic jams in the streets (very good - 9%, generally good - 45%), improvements of leisure facilities (very good - 5%, generally good - 44%), as well as the way cities care for socially vulnerable citizen groups (very good - 3%, generally good - 45%). The experts also provided quite positive evaluation of the possibility for citizens to exercise influence on the local government policy in their cities (very good - 3%, generally good - 43%).

TABLE 23
EVALUATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF THE WAY PROBLEM ISSUES ARE RESOLVED IN THEIR CITIES, %

Problem issue	Very bad	Generally bad	Hard to tell	Generally good	Very good
Opening new jobs and fighting unemployment	16	39	24	19	2
Attraction of investments in the city	18	31	23	26	2
Promoting conditions for small business development	8	28	22	41	1
Caring about socially vulnerable groups of citizens	6	25	21	45	3
Material assistance to low-income families	7	32	20	39	2
Alcoholism, drugs, AIDS	10	26	43	20	1
Supply of housing	39	35	14	11	1
Quality of housing and municipal utility services	8	29	18	43	2
Urban improvements and sanitary condition of territories adjacent to buildings	4	23	15	55	3
Performance of the urban public transportation system	12	21	15	49	3
Dealing with traffic jams in the streets	6	16	24	45	9
City safety	15	23	45	15	2
Fighting crime and performance of militia	15	42	27	16	0
Fighting corruption in the city government	10	20	38	28	4
Dealing with unlicensed construction	13	35	26	24	2
Medical services	11	42	17	29	1
Improving environmental conditions	10	36	23	29	2
Improving secondary education	2	25	28	42	3
Improving leisure facilities	5	26	20	44	5
Possibilities for citizens to influence government decision making	8	18	28	43	3

57% of interviewees believe that one can raise the effectiveness of local government operations by, first of all, raising salaries of local government officials (Picture. 34). They also consider improvements of the legislation framework regulating local government activities

(48%) and organisation of their work (45%) to be an affective means to achieve this goal.



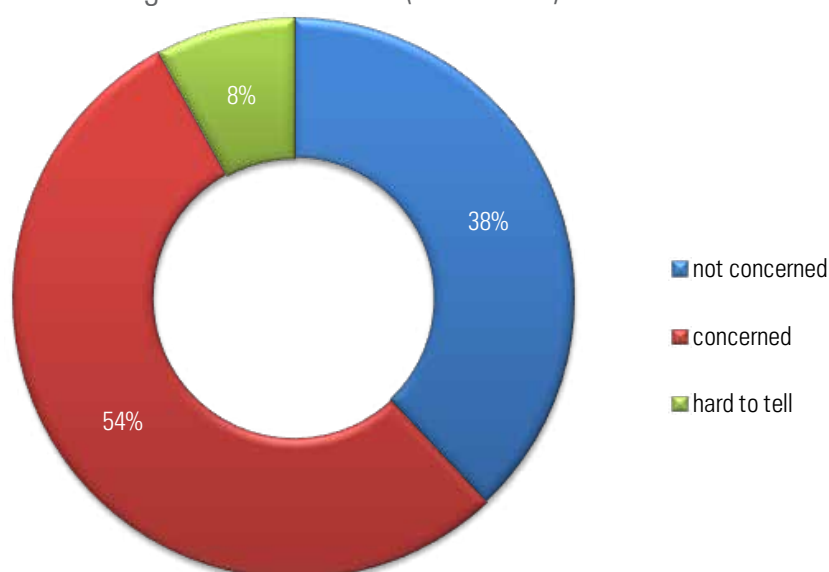
Picture 34. Vision of local government officials of the ways to increase the scope and quality of their work, %

Most of the interviewees (81%) are sure that their populated area will become the administrative center of the reformed community (Table. 24).

TABLE . 24
VISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF THE STATUS OF THEIR CITY AFTER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

City status	Number of experts	%
The city will become the administrative center of the reformed community	287	81
The city will not become the administrative center of the reformed community	15	4
Hard to tell	55	15

More than half of interviewees (54%) are concerned about their jobs in the course of the implementation of the local government reform (Picture. 35).



Picture 35. The level of concern of local government officials about their jobs in the course of the implementation of the local government reform, %

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

1. Every other city resident is not satisfied with the living standards in his populated area, which gives yet another set of arguments for the need to reform local self-governance. The problems city residents speak most often include social and economic issues, which have the direct influence on their lives, primarily high prices, low salaries and pensions, high municipal utility bills, unemployment, etc. The problems mentioned above represent the problems city governments fail to resolve. Urban public transportation is the only sphere where citizens are satisfied with the quality of services. As far as city council officials are concerned, their evaluation of how effectively they resolve problem issues was somewhat higher: while citizens gave low scores to the way issues are resolved, local government officials provided mostly mid-level scores.

The overall level of citizen satisfaction with the performance of local authorities is also low, both with regard to local offices of the state executive and local governments. They are most dissatisfied with the activities of law enforcement agencies and courts. Therefore, the high level of dissatisfaction with living standards in the cities is closely correlated with the high level of dissatisfaction with the performance of local authorities.

2. Most city residents are interested in the activities of local governments to a certain degree, although they admit they know little about it. The main channels for such information are TV, printed media and conversations with friends. At the same time, despite the high popularity of the Internet, most citizens consider this channel of communication with local government bodies to be ineffective. This speaks about the necessity to improve the administration of city council web sites.

3. Two thirds of citizens are aware about the intention of the central government to perform decentralisation, however the absolute majority of them have no understanding of this initiative. At the same time, more than one fourth of surveyed officials mentioned about their sound understanding of the Concept, while two thirds mentioned about their awareness about the document in general terms. In this context, most of surveyed persons from both categories support the key idea of decentralisation and expanding the authority of local governments, as well as giving them a leading role in managing issues at the local level. As to the potential outcomes of the decentralisation, most citizens provided positive responses, in particular with regard to the questions related to their influence on decision making in cities and better quality of services.

4. Certain planned steps towards decentralisation also receive predominantly positive comments. In particular, most of city residents, as well as government officials would support the idea of having the right to conduct local referendums. Both categories of interviewees support the ideas of transferring the authority from state executive agencies to local governments, introduction of the municipal police, and vesting local governments with the right to set the rates of local taxes and fees. At the same time both citizens and government officials did not support the idea of optimisation of the public education system by closing schools with few schoolchildren. In our opinion, this testifies to the fact that there

is a need to explain to citizens the correlation between the optimisation of school networks and increased quality of educational services.

5. Despite the fact that most of citizens are not satisfied with the level of their influence on decision making in their municipalities, not all of them will be willing and prepared to participate in managing city affairs if such new opportunities arise. At the same time, the participation in elections remains the most popular form for citizens to participate in the local government management, whereas more direct means to influence local decision making are not so popular. Moreover, the majority of citizens not only does not participate in the activities of local non-governmental organisations, but also do not know anything about them.

6. City residents highly evaluate the importance of local elections: they score them as high as the national elections. At the same time, more than every other citizen does not know what local council member was elected in his/her electoral district, which testifies to the low level of citizen interests in the political affairs in their own cities and to the weakening contacts between council members and citizens.

7. Citizens and local government officials expressed different attitudes to the optimal system of electing local council members. The relative majority of citizens consider the open list system to be the most optimal one as under this system they can have influence on choosing the composition of elected council members, whereas almost half of local government officials share the opinion that the best system is represented by single mandate districts where the influence of voters is the strongest. At the same time, a clear majority of citizens supported the idea of preserving the one-round system of local elections.

8. In general, the findings of the survey demonstrate that decentralisation of power is widely supported in Ukraine, given the fairly good attitude of both city residents and local government officials to it.

At the same time, there is a lack of understanding of separate aspects of decentralisation, which speaks about the urgent need to strengthen the communication aspect of the reform. This, in particular, applies to the optimisation of the system of social services provision, as well as issues related to employment opportunities for officials who were dismissed as part of the optimisation of the local government system. This will provide opportunities to diminish the risks of public dissatisfaction with reforms in the course of decentralisation.

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