

Montenegro

*Navigating uncertainty amidst
traditional constraints*

2024








About the author

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About FES Youth Studies

What are young people afraid of or hopeful about? In a rapidly changing world that is challenged by the climate crisis and inequalities, and in many parts aging societies and democratic decline, **FES Youth Studies** investigate how young generations perceive the development of their societies and their personal future. Our aim is to foster informed debate about young people's views on politics and democracy against the background of their life circumstances and values. This includes key issues such as education, employment and mobility, family and friends, and their overall attitudes and perceptions. We focus on young people aged 14 to 29 to understand their perspectives on these critical topics.

FES has conducted numerous youth studies around the world since 2009. In 2024, young people in Montenegro were surveyed along with youth in other Southeastern Europe and Central Eastern Europe countries.

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Executive Summary

The Youth Study Montenegro 2024 investigated the attitudes, beliefs, socio-economic conditions, and political participation of Montenegro's youth, with a view to informing the policy-making and addressing the challenges and aspirations of this significant demographic group. The study utilised a quantitative research method, through a national opinion poll conducted by IPSOS, surveying 501 respondents aged 14 to 29, selected via non-probability quota sampling.

Regarding socio-economic conditions, the majority of young people report having sufficient financial resources for basic needs, though many of them lack the means for a better standard of living. A significant portion of young people are engaged in education, but there is widespread dissatisfaction with its quality and concerns about corruption within the system, indicating a need for reforms of the educational system.

Young people face diverse employment challenges, with a notable portion of them being unemployed, but actively seeking jobs. Skills and social connections are seen as crucial for securing employment. Many young people express a desire to emigrate, driven by the pursuit of better living standards and employment opportunities, highlighting socio-economic motivations for migration. Relationships with parents are generally positive, with most respondents expressing a desire to have children in the future. Family approval and religious beliefs are very significant factors in choosing a partner.

Unemployment, the quality of public services, and the healthcare system are the major concerns among youth. There is a strong fear of future unemployment and inadequate public services. Environmental concerns are prominent, with many advocating for government action to limit consumption and protect the environment. Interest in politics is generally low, with significant dissatisfaction regarding the representation of young people. However, there is strong support for greater youth participation in political discourse.

Views on democracy vary. Some young people express a preference for a strong leader over democratic processes, which indicates various perspectives on governance and points to an environment with undeveloped democratic political culture. There is a notable prevalence of conspiracy theories regarding public health and secret societies, reflecting a mistrust in science and official narratives.

Many young people believe in protecting their culture from external influences, support traditional gender roles, and hold conservative views on LGBTQIA+ rights and abortion, which also reflects social distance among different groups. The findings suggest a need for targeted policy interventions to address the educational dissatisfaction and employment challenges faced by young people in Montenegro. There is also a clear call for better public services and greater opportunities for political engagement. The prevalence of conservative social attitudes and conspiracy beliefs indicates areas where better education is needed to secure more informed perspectives among youth.

This study provided insights into the priorities and concerns of the Montenegrin youth, offering guidance for policymakers on how to create a supportive environment for the next generations.

Key Facts



Motivations for emigration

Economic and social factors drive emigration desires, with 32% of the respondents seeking a better standard of living, 18% citing employment opportunities, 15% pursuing economic advancement, and 11% aiming for a better education.



55% of young people in Montenegro completely or mostly agree that grades and exams can be "purchased" in their country

Emigration desire

46% of young people express at least a moderate desire to emigrate for a period longer than six months. 36% of them have no desire to leave.

Protection of culture and gender roles

54% of the respondents agree that their culture should be protected from external influences, and 20% of them believe men are better political leaders than women.

38%
feel very or rather optimistic about achieving permanent peace in the region of former Yugoslavia

Top concerns

The most common concerns include poor health-care, unemployment, pollution, climate change, and serious illness.

43%
of young people who pursue a Master's/PhD think climate change will be the biggest issue in the next decade

49%
of young people in Montenegro would not accept a political position

ACT NOW

Optimism about the future

81% of the respondents believe their personal future will improve.

Impact of the war in the 1990s

80% of the respondents believe that the war in the 1990s still significantly affects young people in the former Yugoslavia region.

1 ■ Introduction

In Montenegro, all people between the age of 15 and 30 are considered young people, as defined by the Montenegrin Law on Youth (*Official Gazette of Montenegro* 025/19, 2019). According to the last available census data from 2011, every fifth individual in Montenegro falls within this age group. This means that young people comprise a significant portion of the population, and, therefore, relevant research needs to be conducted in order to study and better understand this group. Based on such studies, policymakers and stakeholders can develop meaningful policies and recommendations for improvement of the current situation for young people in the country.

Over time, the concept of youth became a complex social construct that has developed numerous social meanings (Jones, 2009) that are never a constant, but rather continuously serve as a foundation for more analysis and research. Thus, following and analysing societal trends and challenges among the youth is highly important.

In Montenegro, previous research indicated that young people lived in a society overwhelmed by corruption, clientelism and other anti-meritocratic principles that hinder equality of opportunity (Đukanović, 2019). They are also influenced by societal polarisation (UNICEF, 2023), which can be further investigated by examining their preferences and perceptions of differences among people. Montenegro's society is generally characterised by its unique cultural and historical context, with a diverse ethnic composition and a rich cultural heritage. However, it has been faced with serious polarisation issues, especially after the collapse of the long ruling Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) in 2020. The rise of the conservative right has been noticed, accompanied by a strong influence of religious institutions. The country also faces significant socio-economic challenges, including a high unemployment rate which had been declining over the years, but still stood high at 13.1% in 2023 (Monstat, 2024). The unemployment rate is particularly high among young people, where it influences their perceptions of fairness in the country. Data shows that young people are also more prone to falling into poverty than other age groups, with 25.8% of those aged 18–24 having been at risk of poverty in 2022 (Monstat, 2023).

These factors contribute to a sense of uncertainty and instability, which can impact aspirations of the youth. Additionally, Montenegro's path towards European integration and its efforts to align with EU standards present both opportunities and challenges for young people, influencing their perspectives on governance, democracy and social values. Furthermore, the rise in disinformation tends to confuse young people, especially when it comes to their perception of history and transitional justice, which influence contemporary politics in the country.

This study investigated attitudes, beliefs, status and needs of young people in Montenegro. The data includes various aspects of youth's everyday life, ranging from their everyday habits to perceptions on significant global political trends. Specifically, the research comprises youth demographic characteristics, their education as well as their perception of education quality, their employment and mobility practices and perceptions, future plans and personal preferences. Furthermore, the research also focuses on important aspects of young people's participation in politics, political beliefs, as well as perceptions of democracy and their views on tolerance and diversity.

The structure of this study is organised into several chapters. The first chapter explains the methodologies used for data collection and analysis, along with justifications for the selected approaches. The subsequent chapter presents a demographic overview of the sample. The ensuing chapters are dedicated to specific thematic sections derived from the findings, with each chapter focusing on the analysis of particular questions. These thematic groups include education; employment and mobility; family and future plans; general values, attitudes, and perceptions; political attitudes and participation; and attitudes towards democracy and perceptions of "Others."

By providing this comprehensive understanding of Montenegro's youth, the study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge in this field. The insights found will serve not only as a foundation for future research, but also as a basis for decision-making in this field.

2. Methodology

A quantitative research method was employed to ensure numerical conclusions and accurate distribution of opinions. This research was based on a comprehensive national opinion poll conducted by IPSOS, encompassing not only Montenegro, but also other South European countries including Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. Separate youth studies are conducted in each of the mentioned countries, while this one focuses on Montenegro's youth.

The Montenegrin sample consisted of 501 respondents, selected through non-probability quota sampling. This approach allowed for the inclusion of specific demographic segments, ensuring representation across age, gender and region, in accordance with the latest census data. The sample was drawn from the population of Montenegrin youth, aged between 14 and 29 years.

Data was collected using Computer Assisted Online Interviewing (CAWI). The CAWI method is particularly suitable for obtaining high-quality data from younger demographics, who are generally more tech-savvy and comfortable with online platforms.



3 Basic demographic characteristics and trends

A total of 501 participants were surveyed for this study. Among them, the age distribution is as follows: 30.2% belong to the youngest cohort, aged between 14 and 18; 37.6% fall within the 19 to 24 age group; and 32.2% are between 25 and 29 years of age. Regarding regional distribution, 26.8% of the respondents are from the north of Montenegro, 50.0% are from the central region, and 23.3% reside in the south of Montenegro. Gender distribution is nearly equal, with males constituting 51.0% and females 49.0% of the sample.

The majority of the respondents, 58.8% to be exact, reside in urban areas, while 14.1% live in rural areas. The rest of the respondents describe their living conditions as being "somewhere in between rural and urban", or "more or less urban/rural."

Participants were asked to evaluate the financial situation of their families. Of the total of all the respondents, 90.8% reported having at least sufficient financial resources for essential needs, such as food, clothing and shoes, while 40.4% indicated that they could afford some expensive items, excluding cars or apartments, and 20.9% reported that they could purchase everything necessary for a good standard of living.

A significant majority of the respondents, 70.2% of them, live with at least one parent. Additionally, 17.8% live with their partner or spouse, 8.0% live with their children, and 6.5% live alone. A small proportion (3.2%) of the respondents lives with their friends. Among those not living alone, 56.5% stated that living with their parents was the simplest and most comfortable option at present. Over one-third of the respondents (36.5%) indicate that they would prefer to live independently but could not afford it, while a small percentage (4.9%) of them mentioned that they would live alone if their parents allowed it. Previous research indicated that young people in Montenegro tend to leave their parental household very late, with the average age of leaving the parents' household being 33.3 years (Eurostat, 2022).

Regarding marital status, 53.3% of the respondents reported being single, 12.8% were married, and 26.9% were in a relationship, but not married.

In terms of education attainment, 31.7% of the respondents are currently pursuing primary or secondary education, 20.6% are undergraduate students, and 13.8% are graduate students, either pursuing a Master's degree or PhD. Additionally, 27.2% of the respondents are not involved in any form of education or training.



4. Young people and education

Educational pursuits play an important role in shaping the aspirations and opportunities of Montenegro's youth. Research shows that educational institutions and especially schools, besides having a role in providing basic academic skills for young people, have also been increasingly called upon to play a primary role in helping to solve a variety of social problems among youth (Battistich, 2005).

55 % completely or mostly agree that grades and exams can be "purchased" in Montenegro

When examining the levels of satisfaction with the quality of education among the respondents, it was observed that a cumulative 37.4% of them express either complete dissatisfaction or general dissatisfaction. Additionally, 35.2% of the respondents reported a neutral stance, indicating they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the quality of education (Figure 1). This distribution might imply that a significant portion of the respondents perceives the quality of education as lacking, while some remain ambivalent, potentially reflecting varied experiences and expectations regarding educational standards.

Young people are concerned about corruption in education. Cumulatively, 55% of the respondents completely or mostly agree that there are cases where grades and exams are "purchased" in institutions and universities in Montenegro, while 18.6% of them are indecisive on the question (Figure 2). This data indicates a high level of perceived corruption in the education system, which could potentially undermine the trust in the principles of equality of opportunity and socio-economic mobility. A Chi Square test shows that there is a patterned relationship between views on corruption in education and current education status, where those with higher education tend to agree more often that corruption in education does exist.

Previous research implied that the existence of corruption in Montenegro's educational institutions caused negative consequences on the economy and citizens alike, and also prompted harmful patterns of behaviour among young people, motivating perpetuation and regeneration of corruption (Selić & Vujović, 2010). This suggests that Montenegro must work on creating a fair and meritocratic environment that supports the merit-based educational aspirations and development of its youth.



Fig. 1 Satisfaction among youth in Montenegro with the quality of education (in %)

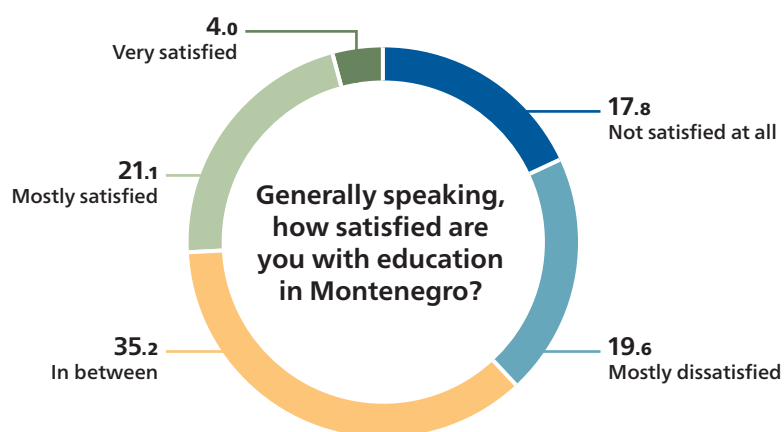
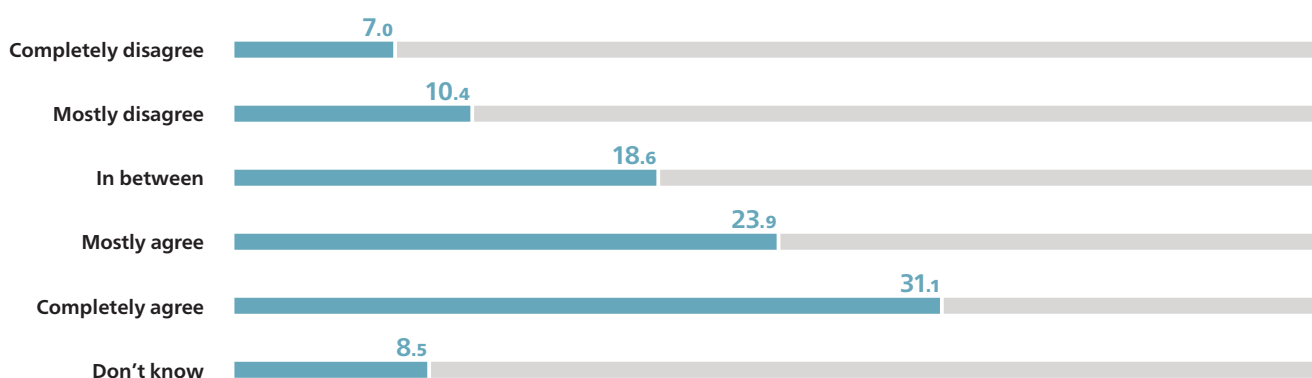


Fig. 2 Views among youth in Montenegro on corruption in the education sector (in %)

Do you agree that there are cases where grades and exams are 'bought' in institutes/universities in Montenegro?



Main takeaways

1. 37.4% of the respondents express either complete dissatisfaction or general dissatisfaction with the quality of education that Montenegro offers, with 35.2% of them being indecisive in their evaluation between satisfied and dissatisfied.

2. 55% of the respondents completely agree or mostly agree that cases in which grades and diplomas are "purchased" are prevalent in the country.

5. Employment and mobility

The survey results provide a comprehensive overview of the employment situation and job market perceptions in Montenegro. Among the respondents, 13.8% reported being unemployed and actively searching for a job, which indicates a notable segment of the youth population facing challenges in securing employment. Additionally, 41.5% of the respondents are at least in some way engaged in the labour market, ranging from those with occasional jobs to individuals holding fixed-term or permanent contracts. On the other hand, 32.7% of the respondents are unemployed but not actively looking for a job at the moment. This could imply the presence of discouraged young workers who have given up on their job search due to a perceived lack of opportunities or other barriers. It may also include individuals who are temporarily out of the labour force for other reasons, such as education.

When examining the factors perceived as important for finding a job in Montenegro, it is surprising that 61.6% of the respondents cumulatively consider expertise to be either very important or mostly important (Figure 3). This reflects a high level of confidence among the new generations in the value of skills and knowledge in the job market.

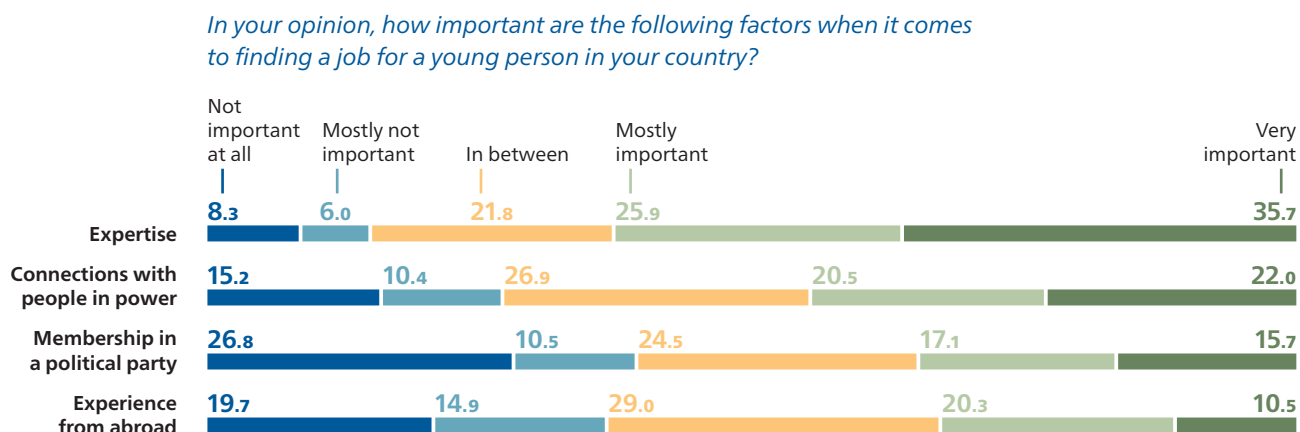
On the other hand, a significant portion of the respondents, 42.5% of them, also view connections with people in power as a very important or mostly important factor. This indicates that, despite valuing expertise, many believe that social capital and networking are crucial for employment opportunities. However, reliance on social capital can be linked to clientelism or cronyism, which are practices highly present in countries with significant corruption issues, such as Montenegro. This is also evident in the fact that about one-third (32.8%) of the respondents perceive membership in a political party to be an important factor in finding a job. Lastly, the least importance was given to expertise from abroad.

Overall, while there is a strong belief in the importance of skills and knowledge, the influence of networking and connections is also high. This suggests that both meritocratic and non-meritocratic factors play significant roles in shaping employment opportunities in the country.

The following findings deal with the mobility experiences and desires of young people. The experience gained from foreign institutions can improve young people's competencies and broaden their perspectives. Those who have studied abroad are likely to bring diverse skills, knowledge and cultural competencies that can improve the overall workforce of the country. When it comes to mobility of young Montenegrins, 11.5% of the respondents have been abroad as part of their higher education. This suggests that a relatively small portion of young Montenegrins seeks international exposure during their higher studies.



Fig. 3 Views among youth in Montenegro on important factors for finding a job (in %)



Only 3.6 % of the respondents have experienced secondary education abroad. This lower percentage indicates that fewer young people engage in international education at an earlier stage, possibly due to financial constraints, lack of opportunities or a preference for staying close to home during the youngest age. An additional 10.6 % of the respondents have been abroad for vocational education and training. This is an interesting figure, implying that vocational training is a significant pathway for gaining practical skills and experience internationally. Close to one-third of all

For instance, Montenegro scored 5.4 out of 10 on Human Flights and Brain Drain Index for the period from 2007 to 2023, which indicates somewhat high emigration from the country to more developed regions of the world, which negatively impacts the economic and political situation of the country (The Global Economy, 2024). There is a statistically significant relationship between education and desire to emigrate, where one-third of Master or PhD students (32.3 %) are prospective emigrants, who indicate that their desire to emigrate is strong or very strong.

46 % of young people in Montenegro have at least a moderate desire to emigrate

respondents (30.6 %) report that they have never been abroad for educational or training reasons and do not intend to do so in the future. The data suggests that while a portion of young people in Montenegro is using international educational opportunities, a large portion of them remains localised in their educational or training pursuits.

When it comes to the desire to emigrate to another country for a period longer than six months, we see that 45.8 % of young people have at least a moderate desire to emigrate, while 36.5 % have no desire to emigrate (Figure 4). Previous research showed that the desire to emigrate tended to be high in the country.

The decision to emigrate is often driven by a complex interplay of economic, social, and personal factors (Figure 5). The primary motivation is the desire to enhance one’s standard of living, cited by a significant portion of prospective emigrants (32.4 %). They also cite seeking better employment opportunities (18.2 %) and higher salaries (14.8 %), which shows prevalent desire for economic advancement. Beyond financial considerations, a notable proportion also identifies access to better education as a key reason to emigrate (11 %). These factors, among others, reveal a broader aspiration for personal development and improved socio-economic outcomes abroad.

Among those considering emigration, 22.2 % plan to remain abroad for at least a decade.

Fig. 4 **Desire to emigrate among youth in Montenegro (in %)**

How strong is your desire to move to another country for more than six months (emigrate)?

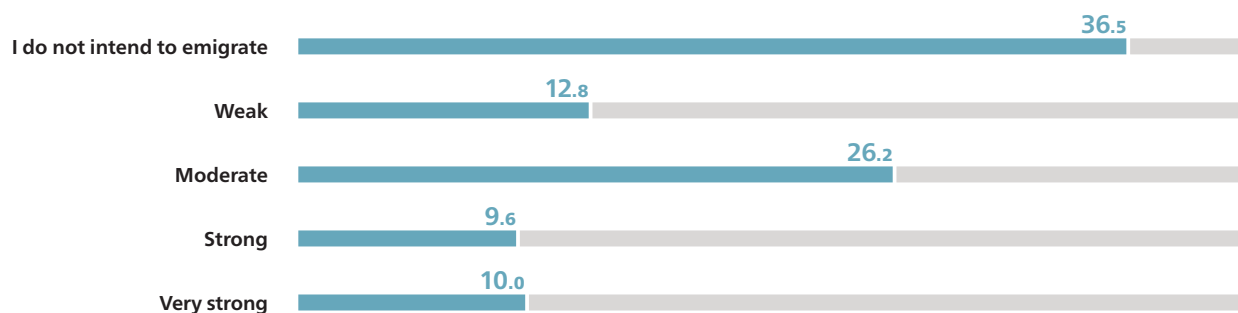
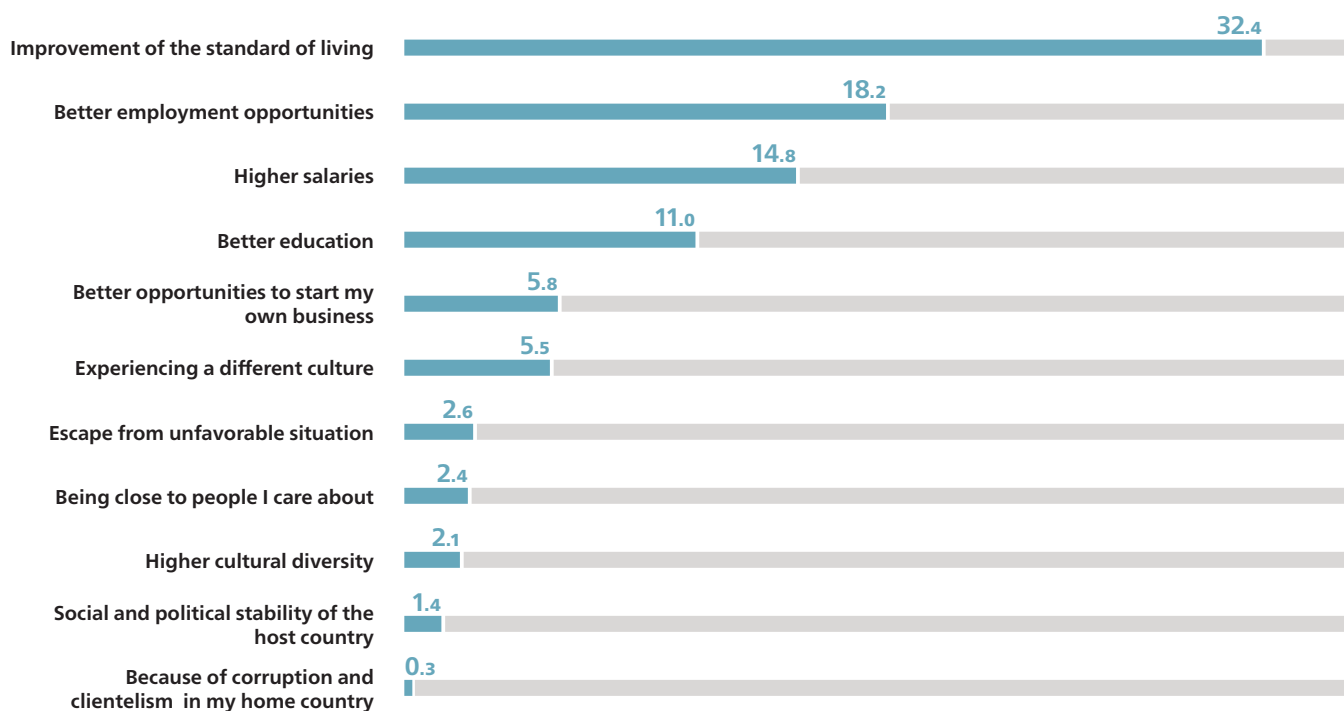


Fig. 5 **Main reasons for moving to another country for youth in Montenegro (in %)**

What is the main reason for which you would move to another country?



Main takeaways

- 1.** 41.5% of the respondents are at least in some way engaged in the labour market, ranging from those with occasional jobs to individuals holding fixed-term or permanent contracts.
- 2.** 13.8% of the respondents reported being unemployed and actively searching for a job, while 32.7% of them are unemployed but not actively seeking a job at the moment.
- 3.** 61.6% of the respondents cumulatively consider expertise to be either very important or mostly important when finding a job.
- 4.** 42.5% of the respondents also view connections with people in power as a very important or mostly important factor when finding a job, indicating acceptance of prevalent clientelism and cronyism practices in the country.
- 5.** 32.8% perceive membership in a political party as important factor for finding a job.
- 6.** 45.8% of young people have at least a moderate desire to emigrate to another country for a period longer than six months, while 36.5% have no desire to emigrate.
- 7.** Out of those who desire to emigrate, the motivations vary, but all are driven by economic and social factors, where 32.4% believe they will enhance their standard of living, 18.2% cite employment opportunities, 14.8% indicate pursuit of economic advancement, while 11% seek better education.

6 Family and plans for the future

Understanding the intersection of familial relationships, future plans and cultural values among young individuals is crucial for exploring their aspirations and life choices.

In terms of family relationships, nearly half of the respondents (49 %) reported a very positive relationship with their parents, while 45.6 % note occasional differences despite generally getting along well. A small proportion (4.3 %) report frequent disagreements with their parents.

24 % of young people in Montenegro find virginity very or pretty important when selecting a partner

A significant majority, comprising 69.2% of the respondents, expressed an intention or desire to have children at some point in their lives, while a minority of 3.8% definitively state they do not plan to have children. When asked about their preferred number of children, respondents indicate a median of 3, with responses ranging up to 11 children. The median age at which respondents envision having their first child is 28 years old.

The study also revealed that a significant majority of the respondents (72.4 %) consider family approval significant when choosing a partner, highlighting the importance of family expectations (Figure 6). Additionally, religious beliefs of a partner are also a crucial factor, with 56.4 % of the respondents indicating its importance in partner selection. This reveals significant level of conservativeness among the youth when it comes to multiculturalism and diversity, but also a lack of social closure among different ethnic groups. Additionally, ethnic origin has been highlighted by 39.5 % of the respondents, which further emphasises the social distance between different ethnic or religious groups.

Among other factors that were cited as important are education level, which is cited by 50.8 % of the respondents, as well as economic standing (36 %). About one in four respondents (24.5 %) reported that virginity was also important in partner selection, which reveals some persistence of traditional values and norms around expected sexual behaviour.

The respondents tended to show high levels of optimism about their future, where 81.0 % believe that their personal future will be better than the present, and will thus surpass their current circumstances, which indicates a shared belief among youth in personal growth and improvement.

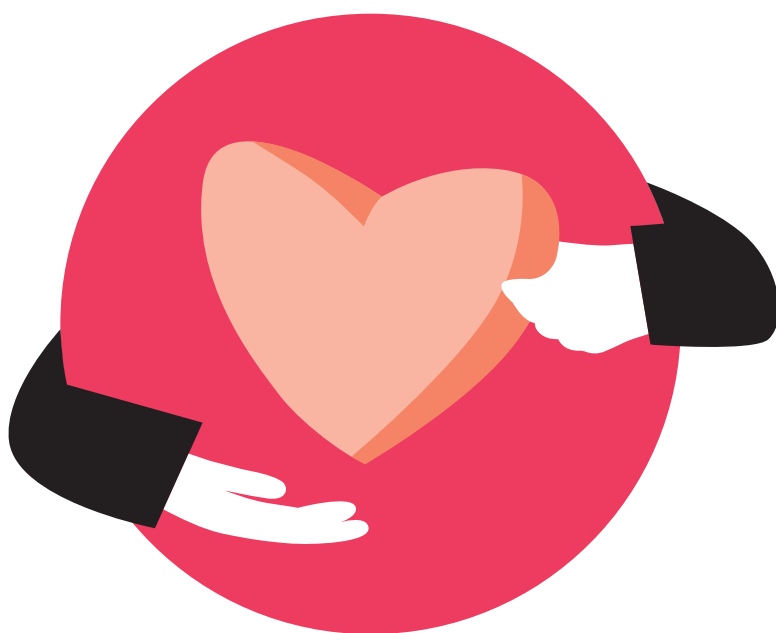
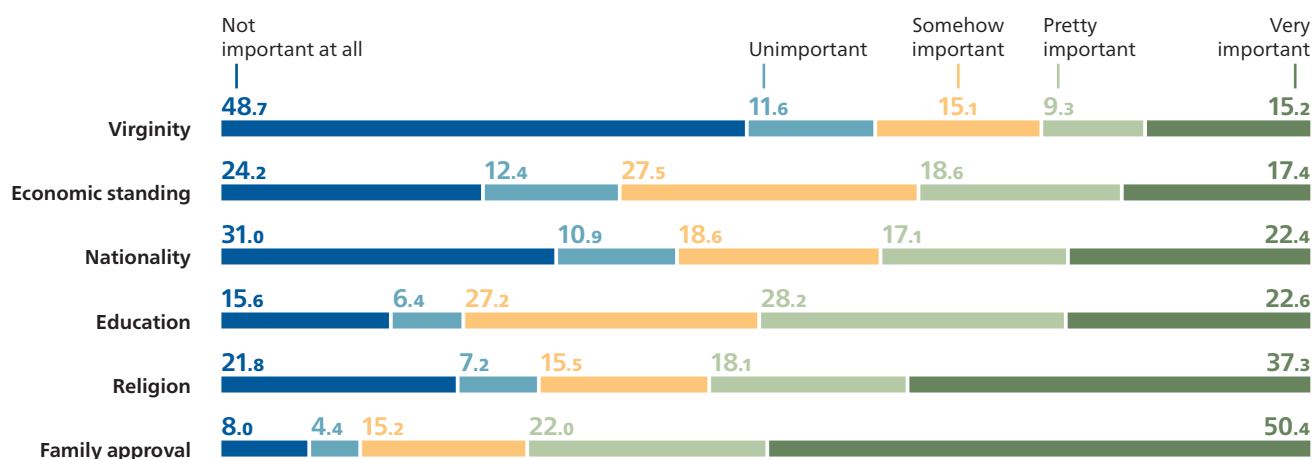


Fig. 6 Factors youth in Montenegro deem important when choosing a partner (in %)



Main takeaways

1. About one in two respondents (49%) reported a very positive relationship with their parents, while 45.6% note occasional differences despite generally getting along well, and 4.3% of them report frequent disagreements with their parents.
2. 69.2% of the respondents expressed an intention or desire to have children at some point in their lives, while a minority of 3.8% definitively state that they do not plan to have children.
3. 72.4% consider family approval important when choosing a partner.
4. 56.4% consider religious beliefs as an important factor in choosing a partner; 50.8% consider education an important factor when choosing a partner, 39.5% also see ethnic origin as an important factor; and finally 36% give importance to economic standing.
5. 81% see their personal future as better than their current situation.

7 General values, attitudes and perceptions

This chapter deals with a variety of questions from the survey, generally addressing young people's wellbeing, perceptions on social values or concepts they consider to be very important in their lives, as well as fears and concerns they face in regard to the socio-economic or political situation.

A significant majority of the respondents (70.8%) reported feeling happy, relaxed and motivated almost every day or most of the days, which indicates a generally positive emotional state among the respondents. On the other hand, a small minority of the respondents (4.6%) report feeling unwell almost every day, which indicates that a certain number of respondents might still require additional support in life. When faced with stress, coping mechanisms vary: 26.5% tend to isolate, 31.8% just wait for the situation to pass, while the remaining 31.2% prefer to talk to friends. These findings suggest a variety of approaches when it comes to stress management, with a significant reliance on social support and passive coping strategies.

The survey explored the life priorities of the respondents (Figure 7), revealing that a significant majority (83%) of them view independence as either very important or mostly important in their lives. Similarly, taking responsibility is highly valued by 80% of the respondents, indicating a strong emphasis on personal accountability among the respondents. Health consciousness is also interestingly prevalent, with 70% of youth considering eating healthy as very important or mostly important. This aligns with previous research, such as the study by Meixer *et al.* (2024), which found that Generation Z in Europe shows a marked preference for plant-based meat alternatives and holds a positive perception of organic production.

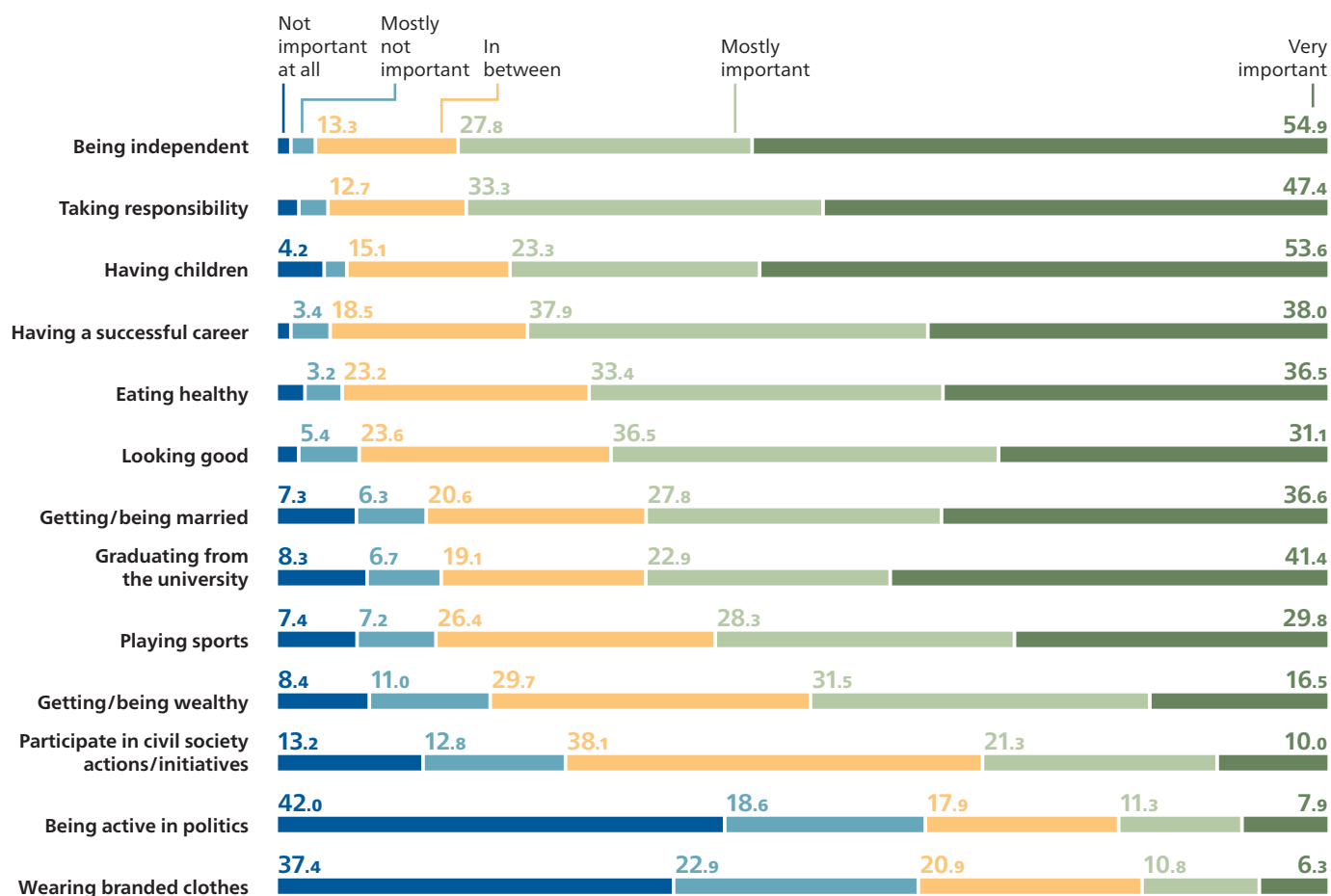
Educational attainment is another key priority, with 64% of the respondents viewing university graduation as very important or mostly important. On the other hand, political engagement and consumerism are less prioritised, as only 19% of the respondents consider being active in politics as very important or mostly important, while a mere 17% give similar importance to wearing designer clothes.

The respondents were asked to identify the issues they perceive as the most significant challenges Montenegro will face in the following decade. The findings indicate a strong concern for socio-economic issues, with unemployment being highlighted by 58.9% of the respondents as the most pressing future issue (Figure 8). An equal proportion of the respondents also identified emigration of skilled workers as a major concern, showing worries about the brain drain and its impact on the country's development.



Fig. 7 Opinions and attitudes among youth in Montenegro (in %)

How much are the following items important to you?

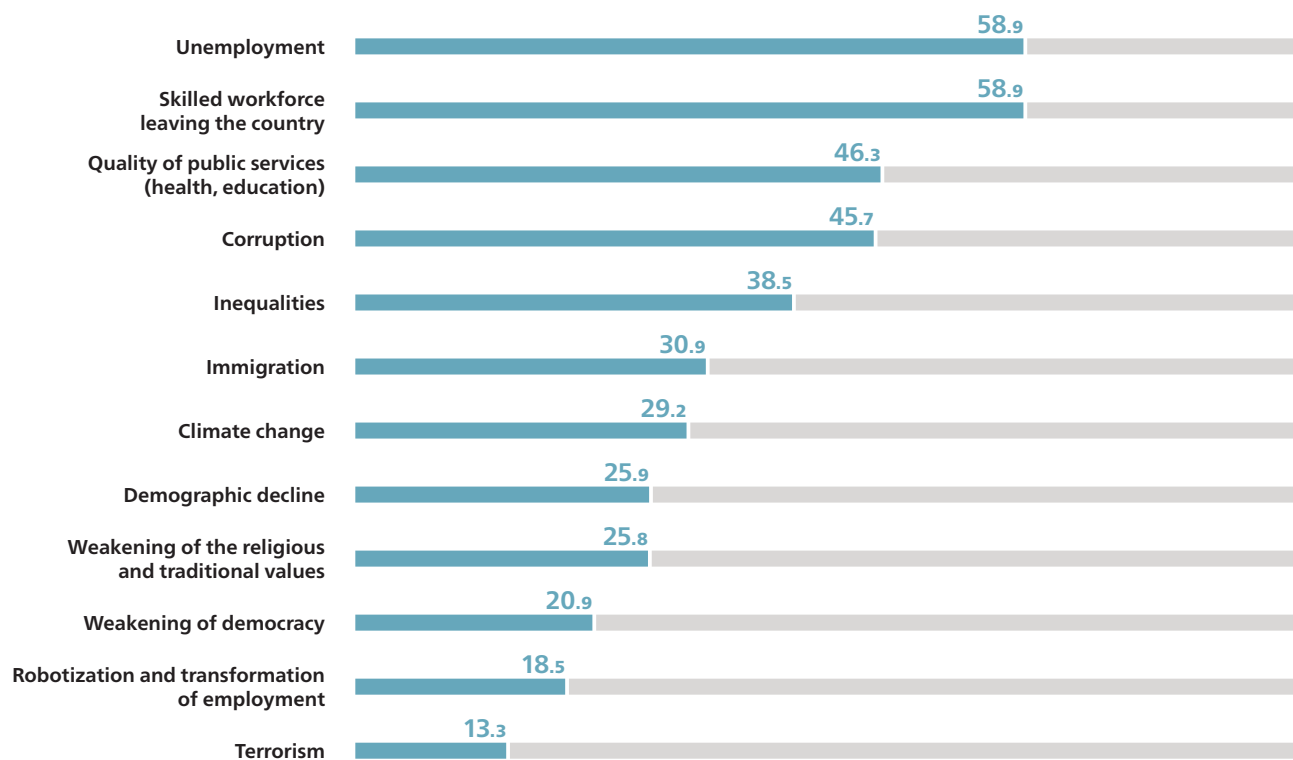


The quality of public services, particularly healthcare and education, is another significant concern, with 46.3% of the respondents citing it as a major issue. Corruption is also troubling, with 45.7% of the respondents recognising it as a critical challenge for the coming decade. Corruption is often reported to be an area of vulnerability for Montenegro (UNODC, 2011), with its high prevalence indicating a barrier to effective governance and public trust. There is a statistically significant relationship between attitude towards corruption as an issue and the current education status, where the respondents who are engaged in higher levels of education tend to see corruption as an issue more often.

The issues of inequality and immigration are also notable, with 38.5% and 30.9% of the respondents, respectively, viewing these as potential major issues. The recognition of inequalities and immigration as major issues indicates an awareness of social cohesion and demographic changes. Additionally, almost one-third (29.2%) of young people consider climate change to be one of the biggest challenges Montenegro will face in the future. The concern over climate change, though less pronounced than socio-economic issues, indicates a growing importance of environmental sustainability in the public discourse among younger generations.

Fig. 8 **Most important issues in the next decade according to youth in Montenegro (in %)**

Which of the following you think will be biggest issues in your country in the next decade?



For instance, previous research found that young people tended to be the key actors in raising awareness about climate change, supporting renewable energy, adopting environmentally-friendly practices and other environment related activities (UNFCC, 2023). There is a statisti-

The study also revealed several predominant fears and concerns among the respondents, shedding light on the key issues affecting their sense of security and wellbeing (Figure 9). 85.4% of the respondents reported that a bad healthcare system worries or scares them somewhat or a lot. The fear of not having a job is highly prevalent, with 80.3% of the respondents expressing a significant worry or fear about unemployment. This underlines the critical importance of job security in the lives of the respondents, which reflects broader economic anxieties.

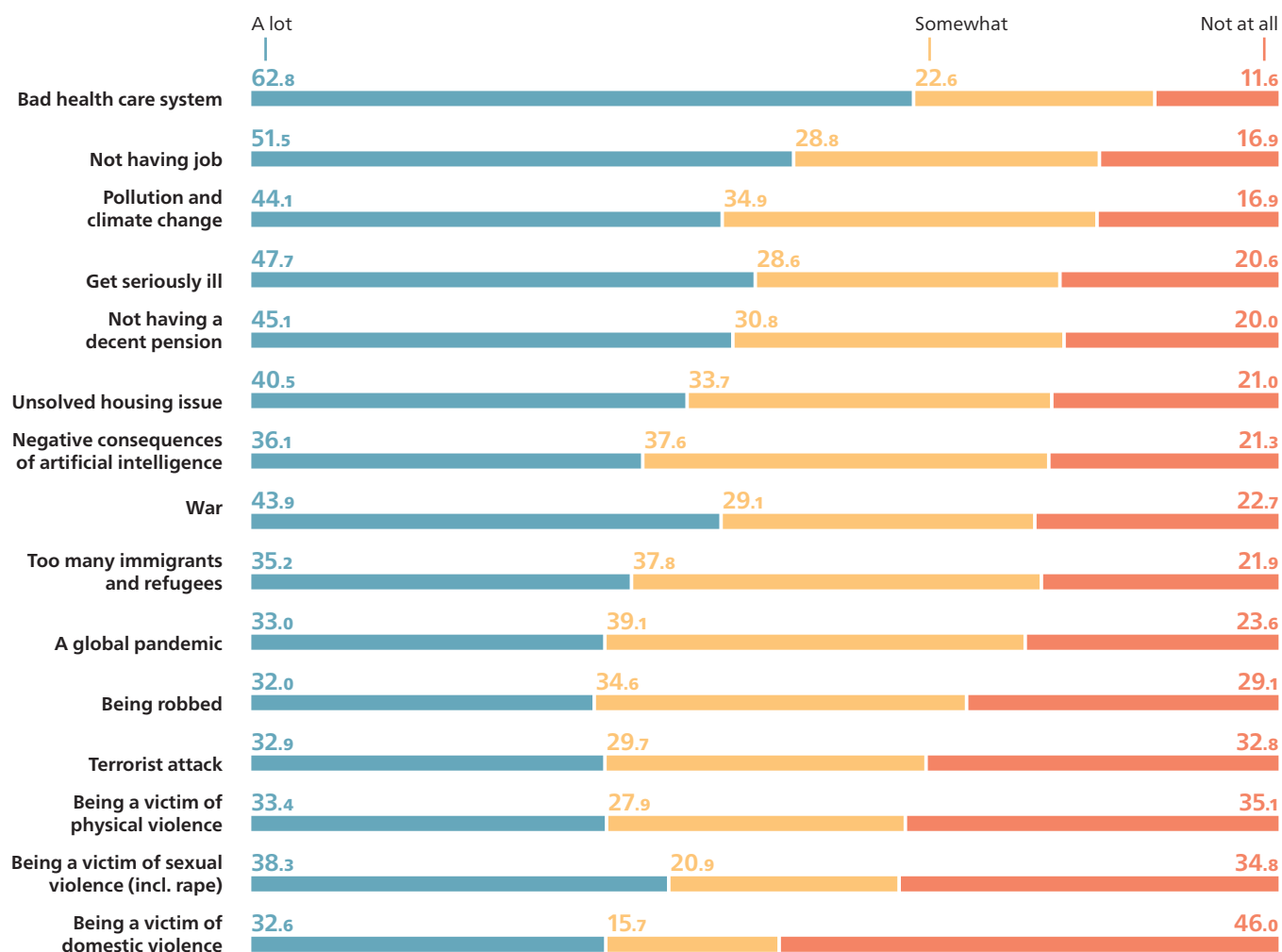
43% of those who pursue a Master's/PhD think climate change will be the biggest issue in the next decade

cally significant relationship between marking climate change as the biggest issue and the current education status. 42.9% of the respondents who currently pursue a Master's degree or PhD think that climate change will be the biggest issue in the coming decade, while 78.0% of those who are currently engaged in primary or secondary education do not see climate change as the biggest issue.

Similarly, climate change is a major concern, with 79% of the respondents indicating that it worries or scares them. This high level of concern points to a growing awareness and anxiety about environmental issues and their potential impact on future generations. This environmental consciousness is further seen through their attitudes towards government limitations on consumption that has environmental protection as a goal.

Fig. 9 Fears and concerns among youth in Montenegro (in %)

To what extent are you frightened or concerned in relation to the following things?

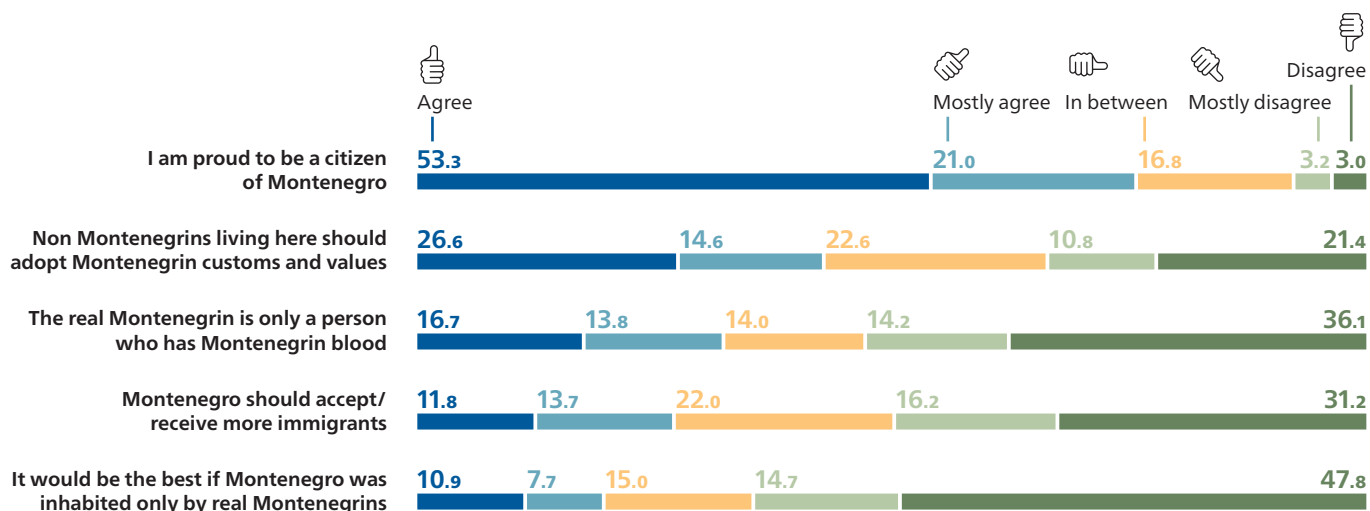


Thus, 41.9% agree that the government should limit consumption, such as a ban on usage of old vehicles, in order to protect the environment.

Additionally, the fear of getting seriously ill is widespread, with 76.3% of the respondents expressing significant concern about their health. This aligns with broader public health fears, particularly in the context of the recent global health crises. Having too many immigrants and refugees is worrying for 73% of the respondents, which might reflect a high level of anti-immigration sentiments among young people in the country. The study also investigated national feelings and identity of young people.

When it comes to national feelings towards Montenegro and the EU, the survey revealed that 63.3% of the respondents strongly or completely identified as Montenegrins (Figure 10). In contrast, a smaller percentage, 43.5%, see themselves as Europeans, and 15.4% of the respondents do not feel European at all. Additionally, the respondents were offered statements, for which they were asked to express a level of their agreement. Thus, 74.3% of the respondents feel mostly or totally proud to be citizens of Montenegro. Additionally, 25.5%, which is a one-quarter of all respondents, agree or mostly agree that Montenegro should accept more immigrants into the country.

Fig. 10 Nationalistic attitudes among youth in Montenegro (in %)



On the other hand, the statements “It would be best if Montenegro was inhabited only with Montenegrins” and “A real Montenegrin is only a person who has Montenegrin blood”, as well as “Non-Montenegrins living in Montenegro should adopt Montenegrin customs”, are particularly complex in a diverse country like Montenegro. According to the 2011 census, only 45% of the census respondents identified as Montenegrins, while 29% identified as Serbs, 8.6% as Bosniaks, and 4.9% as Albanians. Due to this diverse national composition, any quota sampling will also have different national identities distributed among them, thus the respondents who do not identify as Montenegrins look differently at these statements, which is why the values might be lower (Figure 10).

The survey revealed a notable prevalence of conspiracy beliefs among the respondents, with 41% of them completely or mostly agreeing that some diseases, such as COVID-19, have been created by secret societies influencing governments to use it as a weapon. This indicates that a significant portion of the young population believe in conspiracy theories regarding public health. Moreover, one-quarter (25.4%) of them remain undecided, positioning themselves “in between” complete agreement and disagreement, which suggests that there is also a considerable level of uncertainty towards such theories.

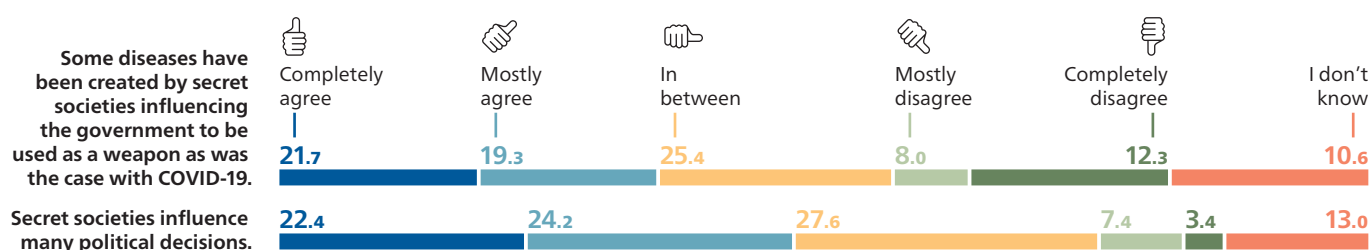
Only 20.3% of the respondents completely or mostly disagree with the notion, indicating a relatively small portion of the population that firmly rejects these conspiracy theories.

In addition to health-related conspiracies, 46.6% of the respondents completely or mostly agree that secret societies influence many political decisions. Similar to the previous statement, 27.6% of the respondents were undecided. Only 10.8% of the respondents completely or mostly disagree with this statement, highlighting a minority that firmly rejects such conspiracy beliefs (Figure 11).

These findings show a concerning trend of mistrust in science and official narratives among young people. Addressing these conspiracy beliefs is crucial for public health and political stability, as they can have negative consequences on efforts to manage health crises, but also influence political decision-making processes that could be based on high prevalence of disinformation. Efforts by the authorities to improve public education, transparency and communication may help mitigate the impact of such beliefs. Of those who completely believe in public health conspiracies, 43.1% are not involved in any kind of education or training at the moment, while 21.1% are in primary or secondary school.

Fig. 11 **Conspiracy beliefs among youth in Montenegro (in %)**

How much do you agree with the following statements?



40.2% of those who completely believe in secret societies conspiracies, are not involved in education or training, while 23.2% are currently pursuing a Bachelor’s degree and 15.2% are in primary or secondary education.

The survey also revealed patterns in religious service attendance among the respondents. A minority of 13.5% report that they never attend religious services, indicating a segment of the population that may be secular. On the other hand, a more substantial portion, 33.9%, attend religious services at least once a month, reflecting a significant level of regular religious engagement.

Main takeaways

- 70.8% of the respondents reported feeling happy, relaxed and motivated almost every day or most of the days.
- When faced with stress, coping mechanisms vary: 26.5% tend to isolate, 31.8% just wait for the situation to pass, while the remaining 31.2% prefer to talk to their friends.
- 83% of the respondents viewed independence as either very important or mostly important in their lives. Taking responsibility is highly valued by 80% of them, with 70% of youth considering eating healthy as very important or mostly important.

4. Among the issues that scare or worry the respondents, the most prevalent ones are bad healthcare system, not having a job, pollution, climate change and getting seriously ill.

5. The respondents tend to show environmental awareness, with 79% of them indicating that climate change worries or scares them, and 41.9% agree that the government should limit consumption, such as instant abolition of usage of old vehicles, in order to protect the environment.

6. Significant proportion of the respondents tend to believe in conspiracy theories regarding public health and secret societies. 46.6% of them completely or mostly agree that secret societies influence many political decisions, while 41% completely or mostly agree that some diseases, such as COVID-19, have been created by secret societies influencing governments to use it as a weapon.

7. When it comes to religious service attendance among the respondents, 13.5% of them reported that they never attend religious services, while 33.9%, attend religious services at least once a month.

8 Political attitudes and participation

In general, youth participation in society has shown to have a positive impact on social development and democracy (Checkoway, 2011). Our survey revealed a concerning trend regarding political engagement among young people in Montenegro. A significant 48.8% of the respondents reported being either not interested at all or mostly not interested in politics. In contrast, only 20.1% of the respondents claim to be very interested or mostly interested in politics. This lack of interest is further illustrated by additional survey responses. For instance, half of the respondents (48.8%) would not accept a political position, whereas only 32.9% state they would strongly accept such a role. Additionally, 69.1% of the respondents have never signed a political petition or supported an online political request. Furthermore, 44% have never participated in a protest, with an additional 22.9% indicating that they have not yet participated, but would be willing to do so in the future.

Despite this general disinterest, some respondents do engage in various forms of political and social activism. Approximately one-third of the respondents (30.8%) have participated in volunteer or civil society organisation activities.

Additionally, 14.2% of the respondents have stopped buying products for political or environmental reasons, 13.2% have participated in online political activities, and 14.6% have worked with a political party or group.

The self-assessment of political knowledge among the respondents revealed a moderate level of understanding. On a scale from 1 ("I know nothing at all about politics") to 5 ("I know a lot about politics"), the mode value was 3.

Even though previous data revealed some disinterest in politics, the following data showed that political concerns still exist among youth. They express dissatisfaction with the representation of young people's interests in politics. More than a half (57.3%) of them believe that young people's interests are not at all or poorly represented in politics, while only 8.4% believe their interests are very well or quite well represented. Despite this, slightly over one half of the respondents (56.8%) reported voting in the last election. Of those who did not vote, 31.1% were ineligible at the time, and 10.1% chose not to vote despite having the right to do so.

Nearly one-quarter of the respondents who did not vote in the last election, felt that their vote would not change anything, 18% reported that there was no party they wanted to vote for, and another 18% cited a lack of interest in politics. Furthermore, 8% indicated that not voting was a matter of principle in their life (Figure 13).

The findings above suggest a need to engage young people in the political process and address their concerns. Improving political education, promoting civic engagement, and ensuring that young people's voices are heard in political discourse are some of the possible steps in this process.

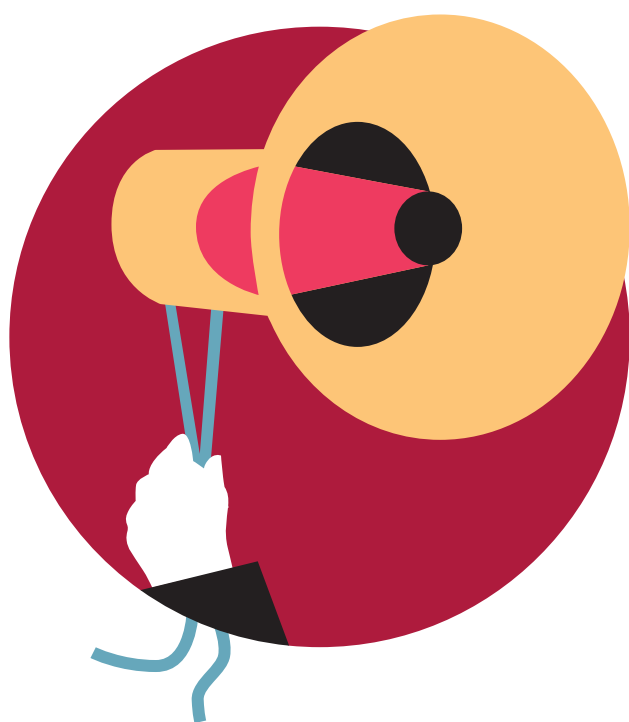
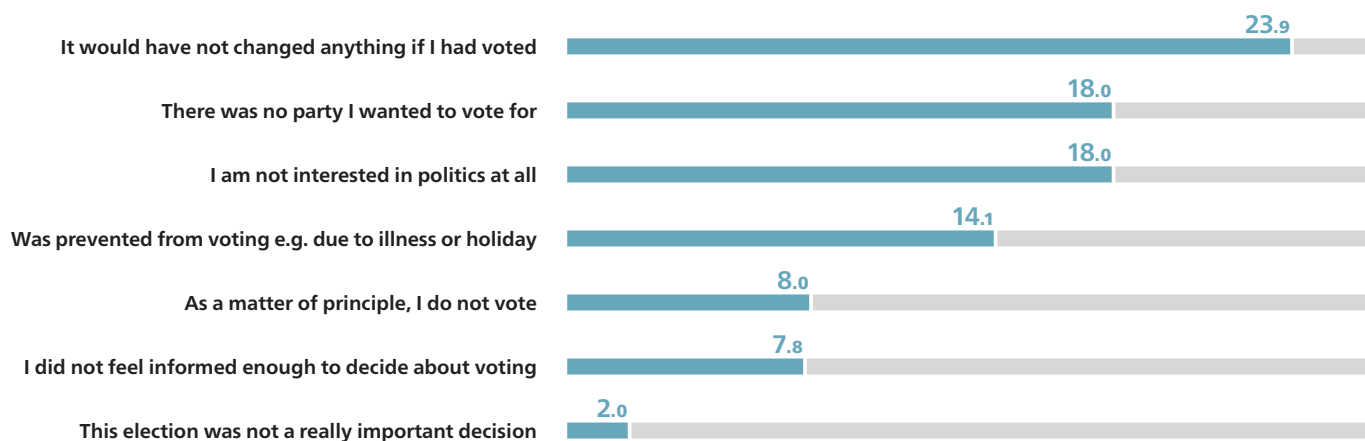


Fig. 12 Reasons for non-voting among youth in Montenegro in the last election (in %)



The respondents were asked about their perception of power held by churches and religious institutions using a Likert scale ranging from “far

On the opposite side, the responses that express the opinion that the power of religious institutions is appropriate or insufficient point to a trend of support for stronger religious involvement in social affairs. This polarisation in perceptions may reflect underlying tensions between secular and religious values within Montenegrin society.

49 % of young people in Montenegro would not accept a political position

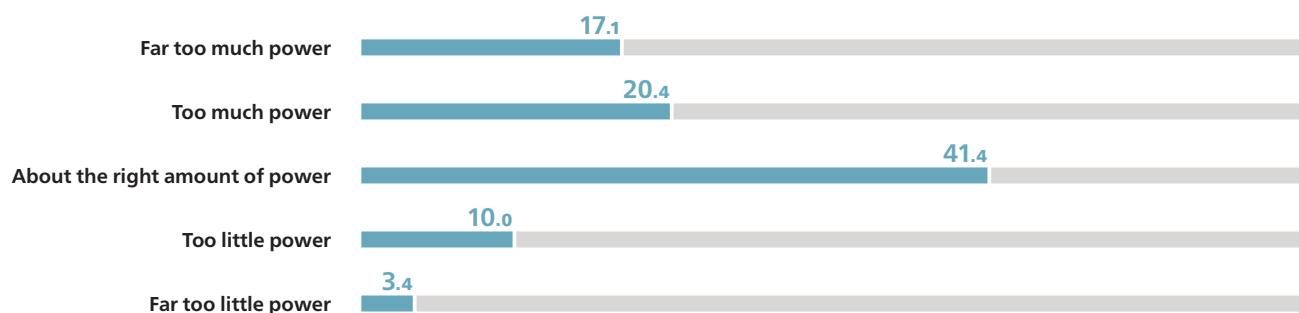
too much power” to “far too little power.” The results indicate diverse opinions on this issue (Figure 13). Cumulatively, more than one-third of the respondents (37.5 %) believe that churches and religious organisations hold far too much or too much power. In contrast, 41.4 % of the respondents feel that these institutions have about the right amount of power. Meanwhile, 13.4 % of the respondents think that these institutions do not have enough power. These findings show a significant divide in public opinion regarding the secularity of the country. For instance, the perception that churches hold excessive power suggests concerns about the potential overreach of religious influence in public and political life.

There is a strong preference for state interventionism in addressing social welfare. A significant majority of the respondents, 77.4 %, believe that the government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone’s basic needs are met.

In terms of trust in different organisations, young people generally have low trust in public institutions, but show considerable trust in their religious organisations (Figure 14). Specifically, 58.7 % of the respondents trust their religious organisations fully or quite a lot. Among public institutions, the military is the most trusted, with 37.7 % of the respondents expressing full or substantial trust. In contrast, political parties and the media receive the least trust, with only 13.9 % and 15.8 % of the respondents, respectively, trusting them fully or quite a lot.

Fig. 13 Views on the power of religious institutions among youth in Montenegro (in %)

Do you think that churches and religious institutions have too much or too little power in Montenegro?



We see that trust in international organisations varies, with 22.4 % of young people expressing full or substantial trust in NATO, and 37.3 % indicating a similar level of trust in the European Union (EU). This survey had an aim to investigate youth's perception of European Union more comprehensively, so we offered several different values within the EU and Montenegro as a contrast, where the respondents marked how good or bad these values were in the EU or Montenegro.

For instance, almost half of all the respondents (48.0 %) believe that employment is either very bad or bad in Montenegro, while only 7.8 % believe the same for the EU. Here we see that young people might perceive the EU as a region with more opportunities, which they lack in their own country, as indicated by several other questions. 43.5 % of the respondents think that rule of law is either bad or very bad in Montenegro, while

A substantial majority of the respondents, 71.1 %, believe that Montenegro should join the European Union (EU), while 17.5 % oppose this idea, and around 10 % did not express a stance on the question (Figure 16). This strong support for EU membership indicates a significant inclination towards European integration among the youth. The belief that joining the EU could bring economic, political, and social benefits to Montenegro may drive this positive sentiment.

Ten percent of the respondents who did not express their opinion on this issue highlight a segment of the population that is either undecided or indifferent about EU membership, possibly due to the lack of information or engagement with the topic.

A cumulative 80.3 % of the respondents believe that the state of war from the 1990s continues to significantly influence the situation and perspectives of young people in the former Yugoslavia region (Figure 17). This substantial majority indicates that the legacy of the conflicts highly impacts contemporary social, economic, and political conditions for the youth.

48 % of young people believe employment is either very bad or bad in Montenegro

15.6 % believe the same for the EU, which indicates that the EU is perceived as more fair and equal. Some other values that a significant number of the respondents perceive as either very bad or bad in Montenegro are economic welfare of citizens, personal freedoms, gender equality and security.

Fig. 14 Trust in institutions among youth in Montenegro (in %)

On the whole, how far do you trust the entities listed below?

| | Not at all | A little | Somewhat | Quite a lot | Fully | I don't know |
|---|------------|----------|----------|-------------|-------|--------------|
| The religious institution you belong to | 12.5 | 4.5 | 14.3 | 20.4 | 38.3 | 3.6 |
| Army | 14.0 | 10.9 | 32.6 | 24.2 | 13.5 | 3.7 |
| European Union | 18.0 | 13.3 | 25.4 | 22.9 | 14.4 | 4.6 |
| Police | 15.6 | 17.8 | 33.1 | 20.4 | 10.0 | 2.0 |
| Civil Society Organizations | 12.8 | 17.3 | 34.7 | 20.9 | 5.7 | 7.2 |
| Judiciary (courts) | 20.3 | 22.3 | 31.0 | 17.4 | 5.5 | 2.8 |
| National Government | 20.2 | 21.5 | 30.5 | 17.7 | 5.0 | 4.0 |
| National Parliament | 20.8 | 21.6 | 28.5 | 16.8 | 5.7 | 4.6 |
| NATO | 36.8 | 13.2 | 20.2 | 12.3 | 10.1 | 5.2 |
| Local government | 26.0 | 19.0 | 28.8 | 13.5 | 8.3 | 3.2 |
| Trade unions | 20.3 | 19.8 | 28.9 | 14.6 | 5.7 | 9.2 |
| Media in your country | 21.4 | 22.0 | 37.6 | 11.9 | 3.9 | 2.2 |
| Political parties | 32.0 | 24.4 | 24.9 | 10.2 | 3.7 | 3.4 |

The respondents also reported on their optimism regarding the possibility of permanent peace in the region of the former Yugoslavia. Slightly over one-third (37.6 %) of them feel very optimistic or rather optimistic about achieving permanent peace, indicating a notable segment of the youth who have faith in the potential for long-term stability and harmony in the region. On the other hand, 22.2 % are firmly not at all optimistic or rather not optimistic, reflecting also a significant level of scepticism and concern about the future.

38 % feel very or rather optimistic about achieving permanent peace in the region of former Yugoslavia

To ensure peace, more than one-third (36.0 %) of the respondents believe that all sides involved in the war must take responsibility first, suggesting that acknowledgment and accountability are seen as crucial steps towards reconciliation and lasting peace. This highlights the importance of addressing historical grievances and fostering a culture of responsibility.

One in five respondents (20.0 %) think that economic prosperity would be a critical factor in ensuring peace in the Western Balkans, pointing at the role of economic stability and growth in mitigating conflict. Additionally, 17.4 % emphasise the importance of strengthening educational approaches in dealing with the past, highlighting the need for comprehensive education that fosters understanding and prevents the recurrence of conflict. A smaller proportion, 10.8 %, believe that EU integration of Western Balkan societies will ensure permanent peace, reflecting confidence in the stabilising influence of European institutions and the benefits of closer political and economic alignment with the EU.

Fig. 15 **Views among youth in Montenegro on the respect for values in their country and the EU (in %)**

How good or bad, in your opinion, is the respect for the values listed below in your country and in the EU?

| | Very bad | Bad | In between | Good | Very good | I don't know |
|--|----------|------|------------|------|-----------|--------------|
| Democracy → Montenegro | 7.1 | 14.3 | 39.9 | 25.3 | 7.1 | 4.1 |
| European Union | 6.0 | 4.0 | 17.4 | 38.7 | 23.5 | 7.1 |
| Rule of law → Montenegro | 14.0 | 29.5 | 35.6 | 13.8 | 6.2 | 0.8 |
| European Union | 8.6 | 7.0 | 21.8 | 38.6 | 16.3 | 6.1 |
| Human rights → Montenegro | 8.8 | 18.5 | 39.2 | 19.9 | 7.8 | 4.8 |
| European Union | 5.7 | 7.5 | 25.7 | 27.3 | 23.0 | 8.2 |
| Economic welfare of citizens → Montenegro | 18.8 | 22.5 | 33.0 | 13.1 | 6.6 | 5.0 |
| European Union | 5.0 | 4.1 | 21.4 | 33.7 | 25.2 | 8.0 |
| Employment → Montenegro | 19.7 | 28.3 | 30.8 | 11.7 | 5.2 | 4.3 |
| European Union | 3.4 | 4.4 | 20.9 | 36.5 | 25.7 | 8.2 |
| Social Equality → Montenegro | 6.8 | 20.8 | 38.4 | 22.9 | 6.9 | 4.2 |
| European Union | 3.4 | 11.2 | 25.0 | 35.9 | 13.5 | 11.0 |
| Gender Equality → Montenegro | 11.4 | 23.0 | 34.0 | 21.6 | 7.8 | 2.3 |
| European Union | 6.7 | 8.1 | 27.3 | 36.4 | 18.1 | 3.4 |
| Security → Montenegro | 10.6 | 19.8 | 31.5 | 24.0 | 9.6 | 2.9 |
| European Union | 4.8 | 9.2 | 26.2 | 32.8 | 17.8 | 7.7 |
| Personal freedoms → Montenegro | 9.0 | 26.1 | 31.3 | 21.6 | 10.3 | 1.7 |
| European Union | 9.6 | 10.5 | 23.9 | 31.5 | 18.0 | 6.5 |

Fig. 16 Young people in Montenegro's opinion on joining the EU (in %)

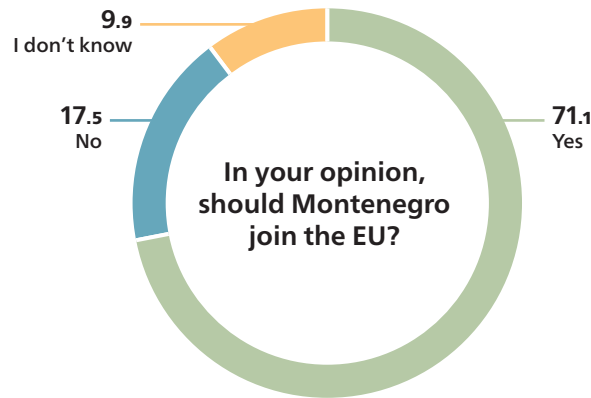
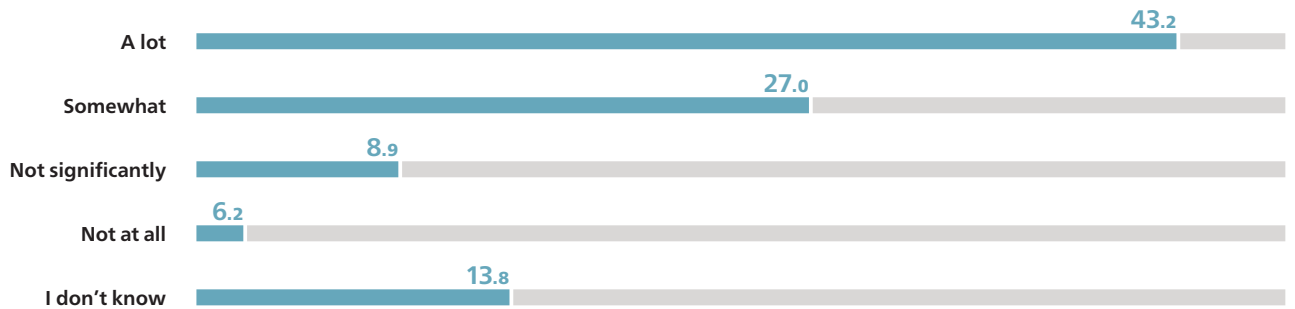


Fig. 17 Views among youth in Montenegro on the influence of the war in the 90's on young people (in %)

How much, in your assessment, did the state of war in the 90's influence the situation and perspective of young people in the countries which were established after the breakup of the common state?



When it comes to regional mobility of young people, 61.8% travel within the region often or sometimes, indicating a level of regional mobility that could facilitate intercultural exchange and understanding, potentially contributing to peace-building efforts.

Regarding the future of Montenegro's society, about one half of the respondents (50.9%) see it as better than now, demonstrating a cautiously optimistic outlook among the youth. This optimism could be leveraged to engage young people in proactive efforts to improve their society and contribute to regional stability.

Main takeaways

- 1.** 48.8 % of the respondents reported being either not interested at all or mostly not interested in politics. In contrast, only 20.1 % of them claim to be very interested or mostly interested in politics. 48.8 % would not accept a political position, whereas only 32.9 % state they would strongly accept such a role.
- 2.** 69.1 % of the respondents have never signed a political petition or supported an online political request. Furthermore, 44 % of them have never participated in a protest, with an additional 22.9 % indicating that they have not yet participated, but would be willing to do so in the future.
- 3.** Slightly over one half of the respondents (56.8 %) reported voting in the last election. Of those who did not vote, 31.1 % were ineligible at the time, and 10.1 % chose not to vote despite having the right to do so. Nearly one-quarter of the respondents who did not vote in the last election but could have done so, felt that their vote would not change anything, 18 % reported that there was no party they wanted to vote for, and another 18 % cited a lack of interest in politics. Furthermore, 8 % of them indicated that not voting was a matter of principle in their life.
- 4.** Cumulatively, more than one-third of the respondents (37.5 %) believe that churches and religious organisations hold far too much or too much power. 41.4 % of the respondents feel that these institutions have about the right amount of power, while 13.4 % think that these institutions do not have enough power.
- 5.** 58.7 % of the respondents trust their religious organisations fully or quite a lot. Among public institutions, the military is the most trusted, with 37.7 % of the respondents expressing full or substantial trust. In contrast, political parties and the media receive the least trust, with only 13.9 % and 15.8 % of the respondents, respectively, trusting them fully or quite a lot.
- 6.** A significant majority, 77.4 %, believe that the government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone's basic needs are met.
- 7.** A substantial majority of the respondents, 71.1 %, believe that Montenegro should join the European Union (EU), while 17.5 % oppose this idea, and around 10 % did not express a stance on the question.
- 8.** A cumulative 80.3 % of the respondents believe that the state of war from the 1990s continues to significantly influence the situation and perspective of young people in the former Yugoslavia region.
- 9.** To ensure permanent peace in the region, more than one-third (36 %) of the respondents believe that all sides involved in the war must take responsibility first, 20 % think that economic prosperity would be a critical factor in ensuring peace in the Western Balkans, 17.4 % emphasise the importance of strengthening of educational approaches in dealing with the past, and 10.8 %, believe that EU integration of Western Balkan societies will ensure permanent peace.
- 10.** About one half of the respondents (50.9 %) see Montenegro's future as better than now.

9 Attitudes towards democracy and perception of “Others”

This chapter reveals how young people perceive democratic systems as well as some core democratic values, such as tolerance and diversity.

A substantial majority of the respondents, amounting to 69.3%, either completely or predominantly agree with the statement that young people should be afforded more opportunities to participate in political discourse. This highlights a strong consensus on the importance of involving youth in the political process, recognising their potential contributions to shaping policies and decisions that affect their future.

While we see a clear demand for greater political engagement here, there is also a significant minority open to alternative forms of government under certain conditions. For example, a notable portion of the respondents, precisely 20%, express a preference for dictatorship over democracy as a more effective form of governance under specific circumstances (Figure 18).

There are some other concerning trends that highlight youth’s willingness to give up on democracy in order to ensure some other values and prosperity. For instance, 45.2% of the respondents completely or mostly agree that there should be a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections. T

here is a statistically significant relationship between the attitude towards a strong leader with strong power and the current education status of the respondent. Out of those who completely agree, one-third (32.7%) are in primary or secondary education, while more than one-third (38.6%) are not engaged in any kind of education or training.

The issue of social distance is further reflected in Figure 19, which reveals how tolerant young people are when it comes to different minorities. To be more specific, the respondents were asked to report on how would they feel if different people would move into their neighbourhood.

The data revealed significant levels of intolerance among young people towards several minority groups. The highest degree of social distance is directed towards drug addicts, with a substantial 78.3% of the respondents expressing that they would feel very bad or bad if drug addicts moved into their neighbourhood. This suggests a profound stigma and rejection towards individuals struggling with addiction, reflecting deep-seated prejudices.

Following drug addicts, LGBTQIA+ individuals also face considerable social distance, with 42.7% of young people expressing discomfort with having LGBTQIA+ neighbours. This highlights ongoing challenges and discrimination faced by sexual minorities, despite increased visibility and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights.

Roma people, a historically marginalised ethnic group, also encounter significant social distance, as evident from the 29.7% of the respondents who would feel very bad or bad about Roma individuals moving into their neighbourhood. This reflects enduring prejudices and stereotypes that have long plagued Roma communities.



Fig. 18 **Attitudes towards Democracy among youth in Montenegro (in %)**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

| | Completely agree | Mostly agree | In between | Mostly disagree | Completely disagree | I don't know |
|---|------------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Young people should have more possibilities to speak out in politics | 43.8 | 25.5 | 19.6 | 3.0 | 3.8 | 3.6 |
| Democracy is a good form of government in general | 23.2 | 33.9 | 24.8 | 7.0 | 5.6 | 4.4 |
| Democracy is always and under all circumstances preferable to any other kind of government | 23.4 | 30.7 | 26.7 | 6.2 | 6.7 | 4.8 |
| Democracy is the best possible system of government only when it can deliver economic security for people | 26.4 | 25.3 | 28.0 | 5.6 | 7.6 | 5.8 |
| Sometimes civil liberties should be restricted to better protect citizens from terrorism or other threats | 20.6 | 25.6 | 29.7 | 9.2 | 5.2 | 8.0 |
| We should have a strong leader who does not have to bother with Parliament or elections | 20.1 | 25.1 | 25.5 | 9.4 | 12.4 | 6.0 |
| I would sacrifice some civil liberties to secure higher standards of living | 14.3 | 27.3 | 29.8 | 10.1 | 10.5 | 6.2 |
| Under certain circumstances dictatorship is a better form of government than democracy | 7.8 | 11.3 | 23.2 | 17.9 | 30.9 | 6.1 |

Similarly, one-quarter (25 %) of the respondents expressing discomfort with having Jewish neighbours indicates a lingering presence of antisemitism. Despite efforts to combat such prejudices, the data suggests that discriminatory attitudes towards Jewish people still persist among a significant portion of youth.

20 % prefer dictatorship over democracy under specific circumstances

These findings collectively point to a concerning trend of intolerance and social distance among young people towards various minority groups. The data indicates that many young individuals have significant prejudices and are reluctant to accept those who are different from themselves into their social environments. This social distance can lead to social fragmentation, reduced cohesion, and perpetuation of stereotypes and discrimination.

There is a statistically significant relationship between the current educational status of the respondent and attitude towards LGBTQIA+ people as neighbours. For instance, among those who said they would feel very bad if an LGBTQIA+ person were their neighbour, close to one-third (31.8 %) are not in any kind of education or training, and another third (35.7 %) are still in primary or secondary school. Also, a statistically significant relationship exists between gender and attitude towards LGBTQIA+ neighbours, where the male respondents tend to feel worse than females towards an LGBTQIA+ neighbour.

Fig. 19 Opinions on marginalized groups among youth in Montenegro (in %)

How would you feel if these families or individuals moved into your neighbourhood?

| | Very bad | Bad | In between | Good | Very good | I don't know |
|------------------|----------|------|------------|------|-----------|--------------|
| Drug addicts | 53.1 | 25.2 | 10.4 | 6.2 | 2.0 | 2.8 |
| LGBTQIA+ people | 31.3 | 11.4 | 20.9 | 16.5 | 13.8 | 4.2 |
| Roma | 14.1 | 15.6 | 25.8 | 24.1 | 15.1 | 4.5 |
| Jewish people | 15.4 | 9.6 | 25.7 | 24.2 | 18.1 | 5.7 |
| Muslim people | 7.4 | 4.2 | 21.0 | 32.5 | 30.2 | 3.8 |
| Christian people | 1.4 | 2.2 | 10.3 | 33.6 | 49.3 | 2.2 |

To gain insights into how young people perceive themselves and their own culture in comparison to "Others", we presented them with various statements and asked them to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a Likert scale. The results revealed several significant trends that tend to show both conservative and regressive opinions, as well as those that are more progressive. Firstly, a substantial majority of the respondents, 54.2%, agree that their own culture must be protected from the influence of other cultures. This suggests a strong inclination towards cultural preservation and possibly a resistance to cultural

Thirdly, a cumulative 53.2% of the respondents disagrees with the statement that same-sex couples should have the right to marry, which shows a significant opposition to marriage equality among over one half of the respondents, pointing to prevailing conservative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ rights. Lastly, 16.1% of the respondents think there is a natural hierarchy between black and white people. Although a minority, this reflects the persistence of racial prejudices.

Regarding freedom of speech, 47.6% of the respondents believe that hate speech should not be considered a part of freedom of speech and that expressing intolerance towards certain groups and individuals should be excluded. This indicates a significant concern among the youth about protecting vulnerable groups from harmful speech and maintaining respectful public discourse. However, about one-third (31.4%) of the respondents are of the opinion that everyone should be able to express their thoughts without any limitations, reflecting a strong belief in absolute freedom of expression.

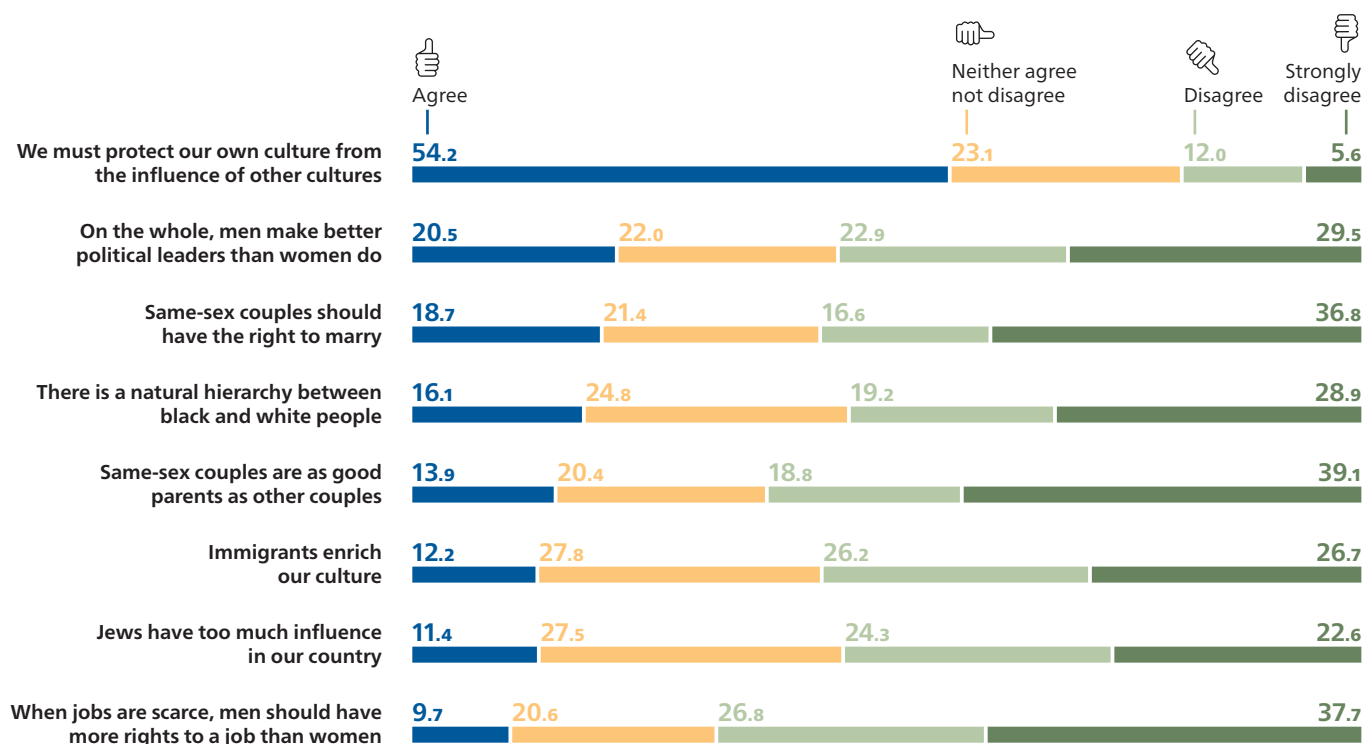
On social issues, 30.8% of the respondents say that abortion can never be justified, and 39.8% hold the same view regarding homosexuality. These figures suggest substantial conservative attitudes among the youth on these topics.

54% think their own culture must be protected from other cultures' influences

globalisation among the youth. Secondly, 20.5% of the respondents believe that men make better political leaders than women, indicating that a noteworthy segment of young people still endorses traditional gender roles and potentially patriarchal views on political leadership.

Fig. 20 Societal views among youth in Montenegro (in %)

How strongly do you agree with the following statements?



Moreover, about one half (48.8 %) of the respondents think that tax evasion and avoidance should never be justified, while 53.8 % believe that giving a bribe should never be justified. These views indicate a strong stance against corrupt practices and unethical behaviour in financial matters.

In terms of personal experiences with discrimination, the most reported characteristic was political beliefs, with 38.3 % of the respondents indicating they have often or sometimes faced discrimination based on their political views. This highlights that political alignment can significantly impact personal experiences and opportunities.

Regarding rights and social equity, 37.9 % of the respondents believe that the LGBTQIA+ community has too many rights, which points to a perception among a significant portion of the youth that the rights of this community are overly prioritised. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents believe that certain groups lack sufficient rights: 67.1 % feel that poor people do not have enough rights, and 53.8 % say the same for young people. These findings underscore concerns about socio-economic inequality and the perceived marginalisation of youth in society.

Main takeaways

- 1.** 69.3 % of the respondents either completely or predominantly agree with the statement that young people should be afforded more opportunities to participate in political discourse. However, a notable portion of the respondents, precisely 20 %, express a preference for dictatorship over democracy as a more effective form of governance under specific circumstances, while 45.2 % completely or mostly agree that there should be a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament or elections.
- 2.** Social distance towards minorities is prevalent with 78.3 % of the respondents who would feel very bad or bad if drug addicts moved into their neighbourhood. Another 42.7 % would feel the same if an LGBTQIA+ person moved into their neighbourhood.
- 3.** A substantial majority of the respondents, 54.2 %, agrees that their own culture must be protected from the influence of other cultures. 20.5 % support traditional gender roles by believing that men make better political leaders than women.
- 4.** 53.2 % of the respondents think that same-sex couples shouldn't have the right to marry, while 37.9 % of the respondents believe that the LGBTQIA+ community has too many rights, and 39.8 % think that homosexuality can never be justified.
- 5.** 30.8 % of the respondents think that abortion can never be justified.
- 6.** Regarding freedom of speech, 47.6 % of the respondents believe that hate speech should not be considered a part of freedom of speech and that expressing intolerance towards certain groups and individuals should be excluded. However, about one-third (31.4 %) of them think that everyone should be able to express their thoughts without any limitations.
- 7.** About one half of the respondents (48.8 %) think that tax evasion and avoidance should never be justified, while 53.8 % believe that giving a bribe should never be justified, indicating a strong stance against corrupt practices among youth.
- 8.** In terms of personal experiences with discrimination, the most reported characteristic is political beliefs, with 38.3 % of the respondents indicating they have often or sometimes faced discrimination based on their political views.
- 9.** 67.1 % of the respondents feel that poor people do not have enough rights, and 53.8 % say the same for young people.

Conclusion

The youth study Montenegro 2024 revealed a complex picture of young people's attitudes and perceptions within the dynamic context in which they are shaped.

Young people tend to express dissatisfaction with the quality of education and highlight the prevalence of corruption within the educational system. Engagement in the labour market is varied, with a notable proportion of the respondents being unemployed and a significant number of them emphasising the importance of expertise, connections, and political affiliations in securing employment.

Many young people show a desire to emigrate, driven by economic and social aspirations, indicating concerns about opportunities and living standards in Montenegro. Relationships with parents are generally positive, and there is a strong intention to have children and seek family approval in partner choices. Religious beliefs, education, national origin, and economic standing are important factors in choosing a partner, reflecting traditional and conservative values.

Personal future optimism is high, with many expressing happiness and motivation. Independence, responsibility, and healthy living are highly valued. However, there is substantial worry about issues such as healthcare, employment, pollution, and serious illness. Environmental awareness is evident, though belief in conspiracy theories is also notable.

Interest in politics is generally low, with significant distrust in political parties and the media. Despite this, many support greater youth participation in political discourse and express support for Montenegro joining the European Union (EU). Historical events, such as the wars of the 1990s, continue to influence young people's perspectives on regional peace and stability.

Social attitudes reveal both conservative and progressive elements. There is a strong inclination to protect cultural identity, with mixed views on gender roles, LGBTQIA+ rights, and abortion. Social distance is prevalent, especially towards minorities or marginalised communities. Freedom of speech is valued, but some believe that hate speech is also a freedom of expression. Corruption is widely condemned, and discrimination based on political beliefs is commonly experienced.

The data from this study could contribute to policy making in the youth field, but also serve as a quality source for future research in the area.



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