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Sustainable, intelligent and inclusive
regional and city models

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC POLICIES IN VESZPRÉM COUNTY AND THE BALATON REGION

MILENA GALETIN

SZÉCHENYI  **2020**



HUNGARIAN
GOVERNMENT

European Union
European Social
Fund



INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE

GOALS OF THE RESEARCH

- 1) analysis of the normative and institutional framework for citizen participation in the process of creating public policies in Hungary;
- 2) an analysis of the practice of citizen participation in the creation of public policies in Veszprém county/Balaton region (according to its competence).

GOALS OF THE RESEARCH

- * The long-term socio-economic impact of the project is reflected in the fact that its results will contribute to strengthening social cohesion and creating sustainable public policies in related areas.
- * defined objectives of the research are compatible with this EFOP project (II.5)- sustainable development of local values in Veszprém county and the Balaton region: indentifying main problems of the producers/settlements and supporting future local economic developments.

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

- combination of theoretical analysis and empirical research
- theoretical analysis, a linguistic, targeted and comparative method of research
- Empirical research is based on indicative methods of sample: anonymous survey concerning the topic of the research. The traditional method (questionnaire) was used for the survey data collection.
- 75 local producers and 11 representatives of the local government of Veszprém county/Balaton region filled in the surveys (including mayor and vice-mayor of Veszprém)



RESEARCH PERIOD

- 15/11/2018 - 15/02/2019
- research in Hungary included interviews with citizens/local producers and representative of local government as well as analysis of Hungarian legislation concerning the subject of the research
- research out of Hungary referred to analysis of obtained data and preparation for publishing the result of the research

Citizen participation implies various activities that citizens are involved in during the decision-making process of public importance and thus directly affect the quality of their lives (within a narrow or wider community they live in).

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION

Article 2

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, **democracy**, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.

CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION

TITLE II

PROVISIONS ON DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

Article 10

1. The functioning of the Union shall be founded on **representative democracy**.
2. Citizens are directly represented at Union level in the European Parliament. Member States are represented in the European Council by their Heads of State or Government and in the Council by their governments, themselves democratically accountable either to their national Parliaments, or to their citizens.
3. Every citizen shall have **the right to participate in the democratic life** of the Union. Decisions shall be taken as **openly and as closely as possible to the citizen**.
4. Political parties at European level contribute to forming European political awareness and to expressing the will of citizens of the Union.

CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION

Article 11

1. The institutions shall, by appropriate means, **give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views** in all areas of Union action.
2. The institutions shall maintain an **open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society**.
3. The European Commission shall carry out **broad consultations with parties** concerned in order to ensure that the Union's actions are **coherent and transparent**.
4. Not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the **initiative of inviting the European Commission**, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.

CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Article 20

....

2. Citizens of the Union shall enjoy the rights and be subject to the duties provided for in the Treaties. They shall have, inter alia:

....(b) **the right to vote and to stand as candidates** in elections to the European Parliament and in **municipal elections** in their Member State of residence, under the same conditions as nationals of that State;

....(d) **the right to petition the European Parliament**, to apply to the European Ombudsman, and to address the institutions and advisory bodies of the Union in any of the Treaty languages and to obtain a reply in the same language.

CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Article 24 (ex Article 21 TEC)

The European Parliament and the Council, acting by means of regulations in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall adopt the provisions for the procedures and conditions required for a citizens' initiative within the meaning of Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union, including the minimum number of Member States from which such citizens must come.

Every citizen of the Union shall have **the right to petition** the European Parliament in accordance with Article 227.

Every citizen of the Union **may apply to the Ombudsman** established in accordance with Article 228.

Every citizen of the Union **may write to any of the institutions, bodies, offices or agencies** referred to in this Article or in Article 13 of the Treaty on European Union in one of the languages mentioned in Article 55(1) of the Treaty on European Union and have an answer in the same language.

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of citizens in local public life (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 March 2018 at the 1311th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).
- Congress of local and regional authorities- Council of Europe Resolution no. 326/11- Citizen participation at local and regional level in Europe.

HUNGARY - CONSTITUTION, 2011

Article XXIII

7. Every person entitled to vote in elections of Members of Parliament shall have the right to participate in national referenda. **Every person entitled to vote in elections of local representatives and mayors shall have the right to participate in local referenda.**

Local Governments

Article 31

- (1) In Hungary local governments shall function to manage local public affairs and exercise local public power.
- (2) Local referendums may be held on any matter within the functions and powers of the local government, as provided for by an Act.
- (3) The rules relating to local governments shall be laid down in a cardinal Act.

HUNGARY - CONSTITUTION, 2011

Article 32

1. In administering public affairs at a local level, local governments shall, to **the extent permitted by law**:

- a. adopt ordinances,
- b. **make decisions**,
- c. perform autonomous administration,
- d. determine their regime of organisation and operation,
- e. exercise their rights as owners of local government properties,
- f. determine their budgets and perform independent financial management accordingly...
- h. decide on the types and rates of local taxes,
- ...k. be free to associate with other local governments, establish alliances for the representation of interests, cooperate with the local governments of other countries within their competences, and be free to affiliate with organisations of international local governments...

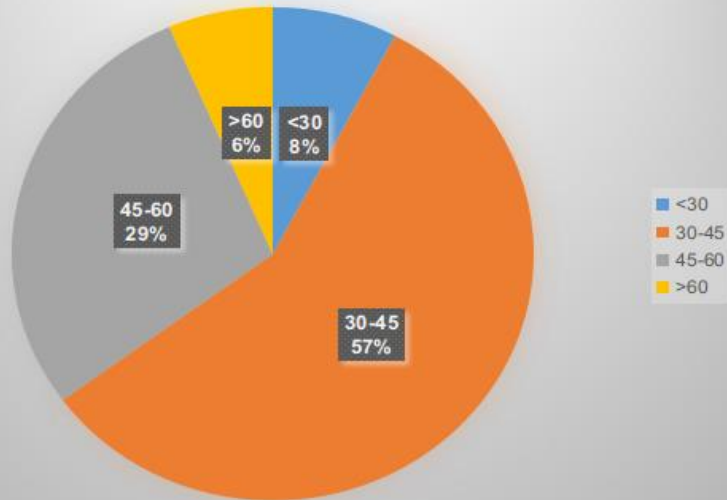
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- They may include forms in which citizens have **active roles** (when citizens through various forms of association and initiative enter into direct interaction with representatives of local government).
- **Passive forms** of participation- citizens only attend meetings or presentations to get information and get familiar with concrete decisions or programs.

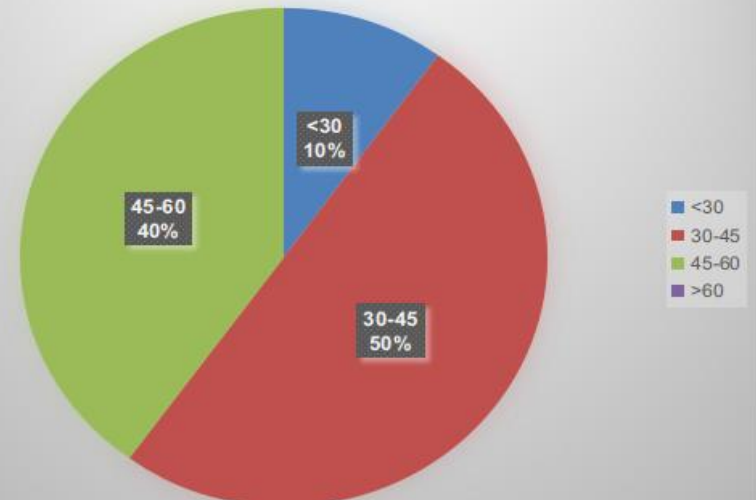
SURVEY- RESULTS

AGES

Local producers



Decision makers

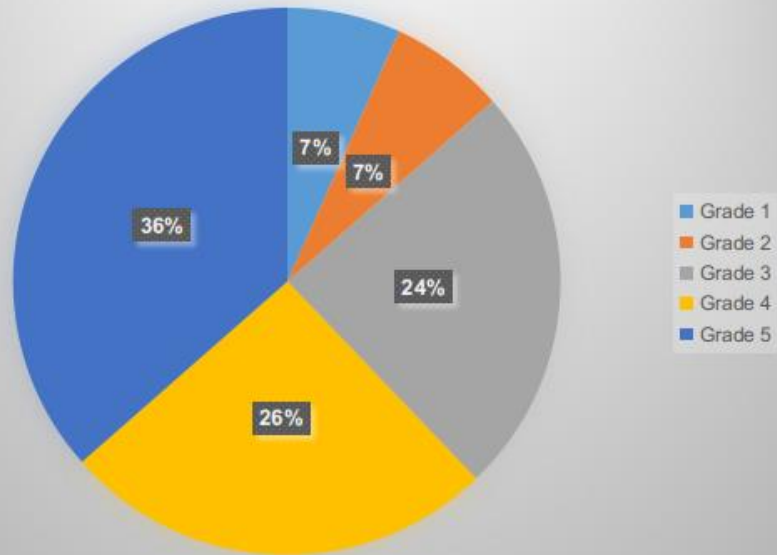


- in both cases the majority 30-45

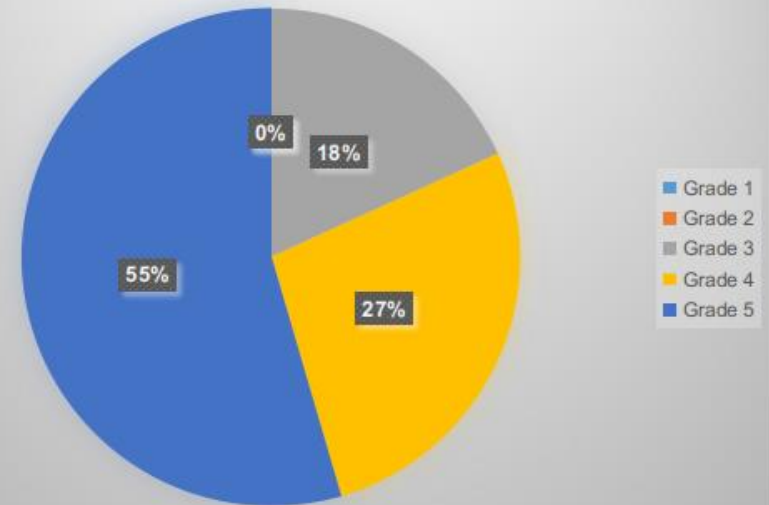
- the most common occupations/professions among local producers are **entrepreneurs** and **farmers**
- different occupations/professions were included in the research: beekeepers, butchers, confectioners, technologists, teachers, medical workers, administration workers, hairdressers, retirees, artisans, managers, students, workers in rural tourism, engineers...

Q3: DO YOU KNOW THAT THERE IS PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN PUBLIC LIFE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, AND THAT YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO MANAGE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?

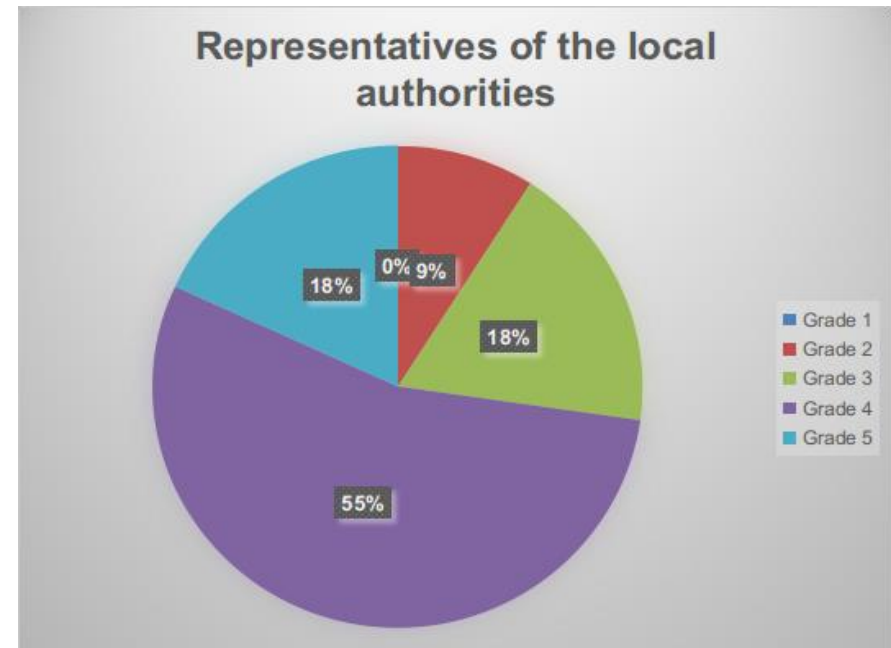
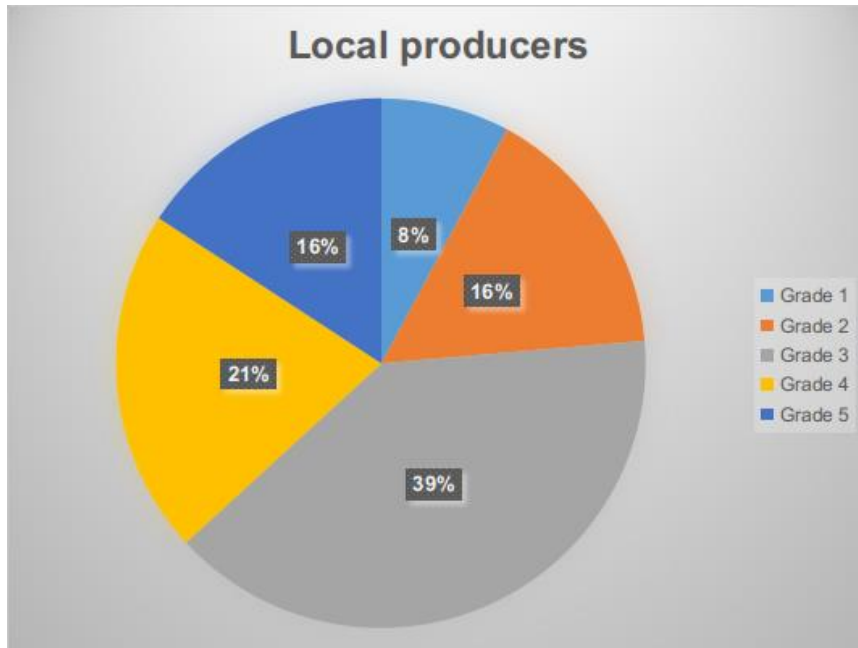
Local producers



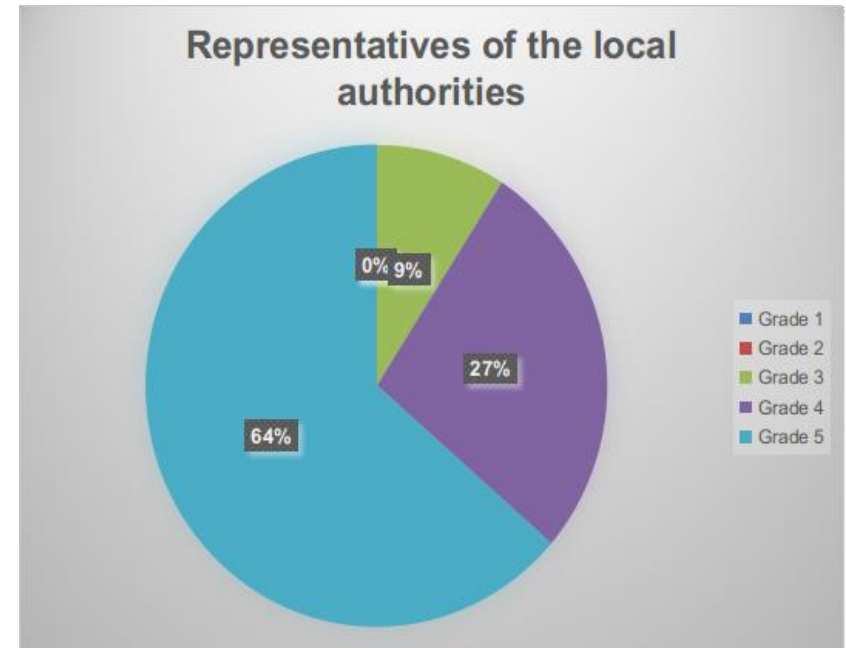
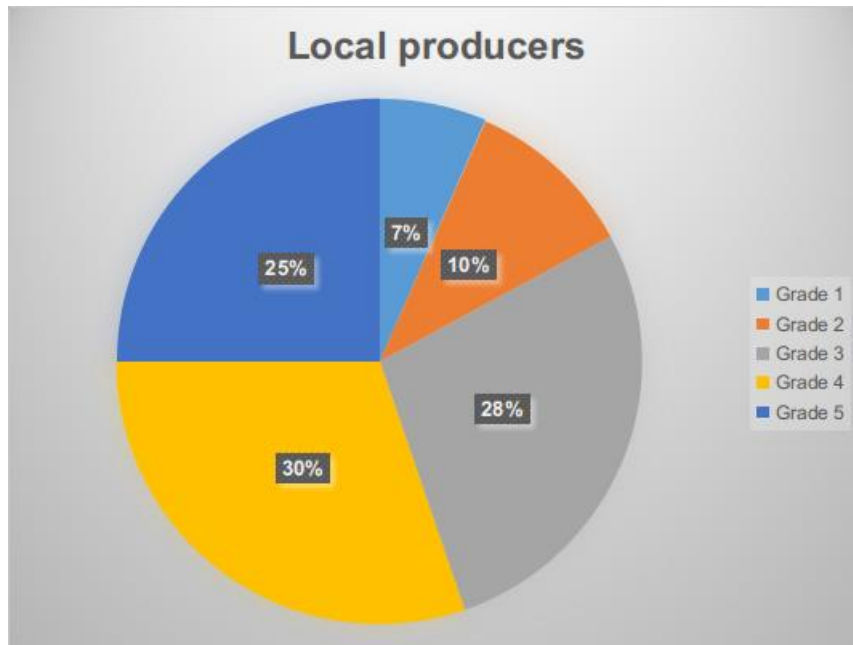
Representatives of the local government



Q4: ARE YOU CONTENT WITH THE QUALITY OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CITIZENS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES?

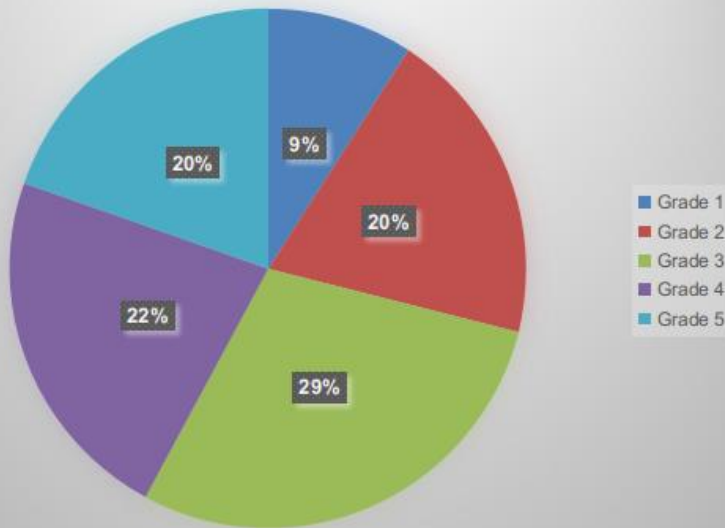


Q5: DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK AND PLANS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE SITUATION IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?

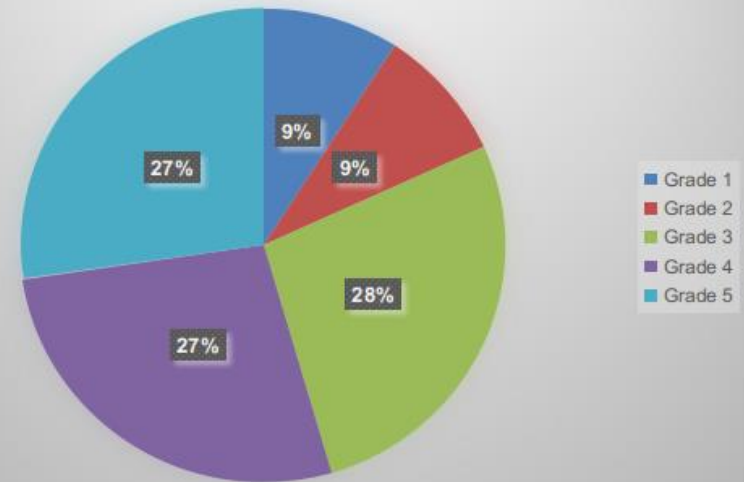


Q6: DO YOU THINK THAT YOUR SUGGESTIONS, REMARKS AND CRITICS CAN INFLUENCE DECISION-MAKING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL?

Local producers

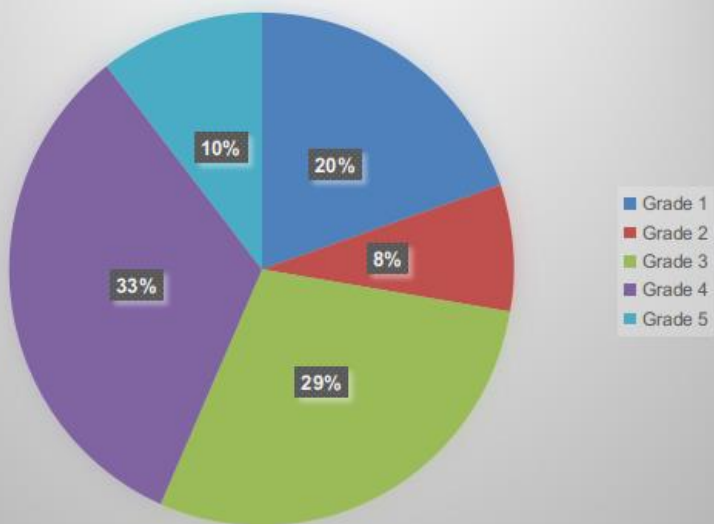


Representatives of the local authorities

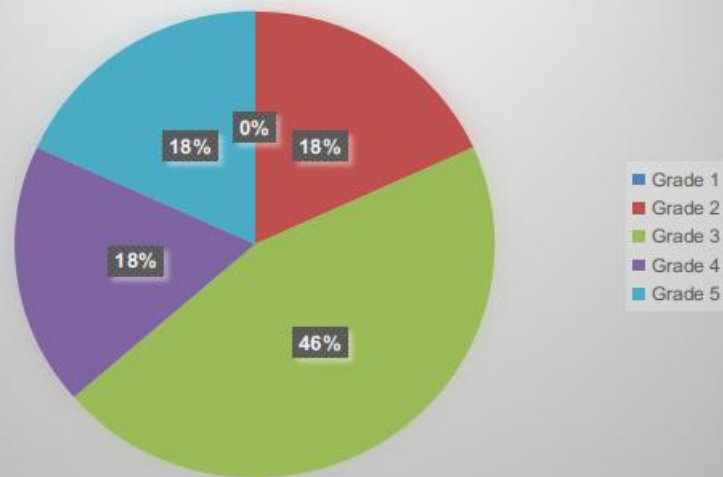


Q7: ARE YOU CONTENT WITH THE TAXATION SYSTEM THAT APPLIES TO YOUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES?

Local producers

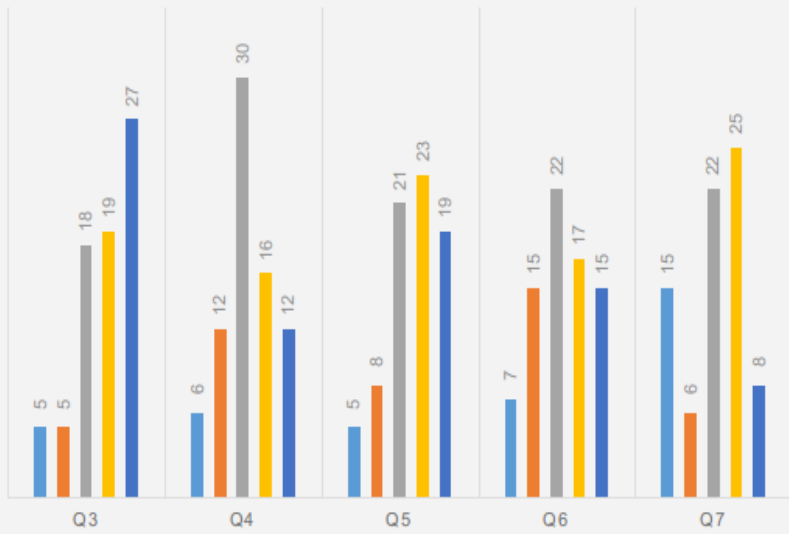


Representatives of the local authorities



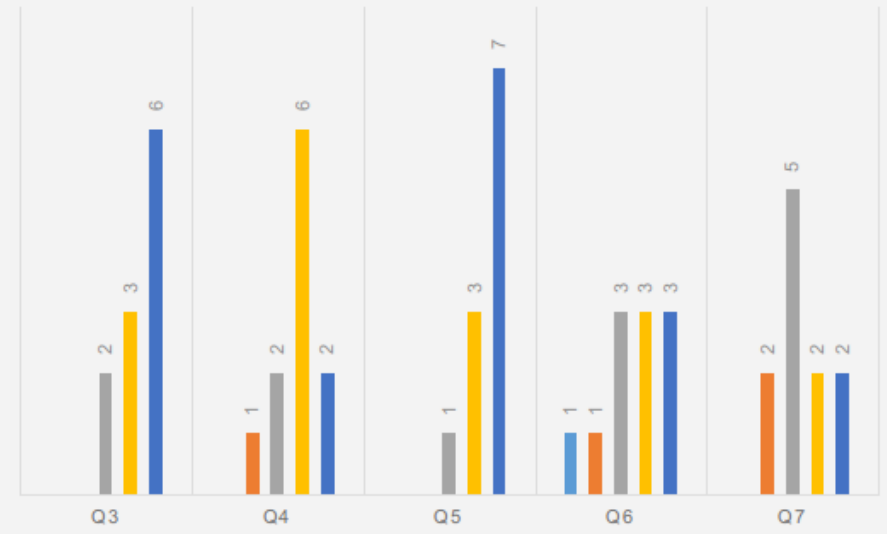
SURVEY- LOCAL PRODUCERS

Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 3 Grade 4 Grade 5



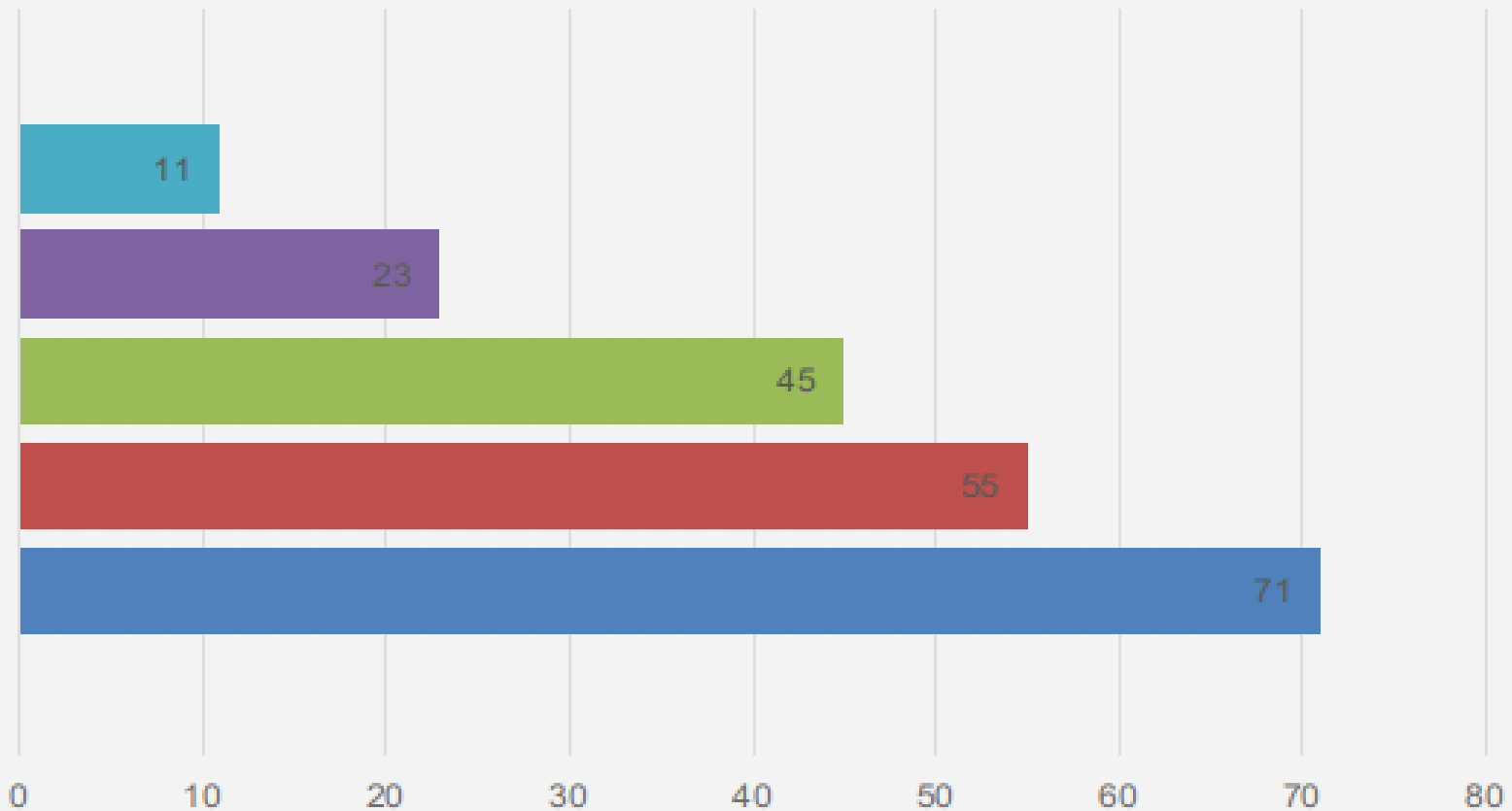
SURVEY- DECISION MAKERS

Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 3 Grade 4 Grade 5



Local producers

■ citizen panels ■ electronic debates ■ public meetings ■ citizen initiative ■ referendum

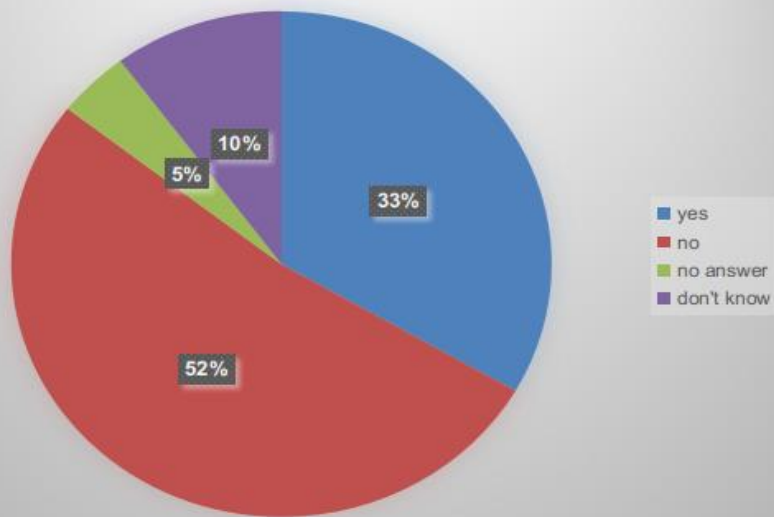


Q9: IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL?

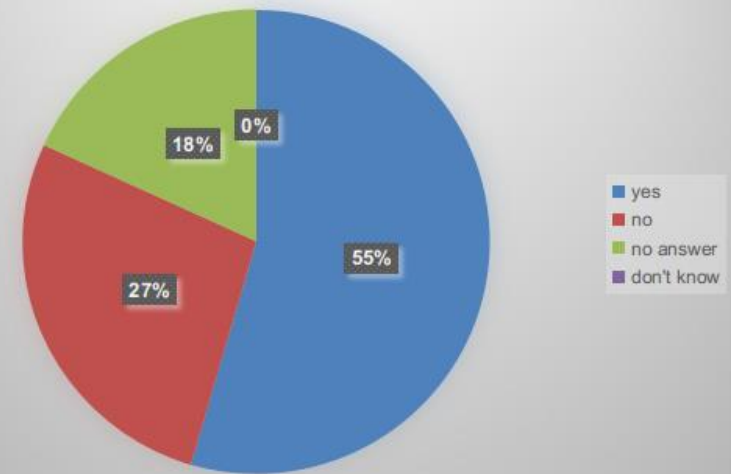
- **Local producers:** indifference, unconcern of the local citizens, lack of information, lack of time, laziness, lack of money at the local level, non-transparency, politics and corruption, decision makers at the local level do not deal with the problems of the citizens, State-level policies have a significant impact on decision-makers at the local level
- **Representatives of the local authorities:** lack of interest and lack of information among citizens, poor communication, politics, citizens do not think they can change anything

Q11: DO YOU THINK THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE TRUSTWORTHY?

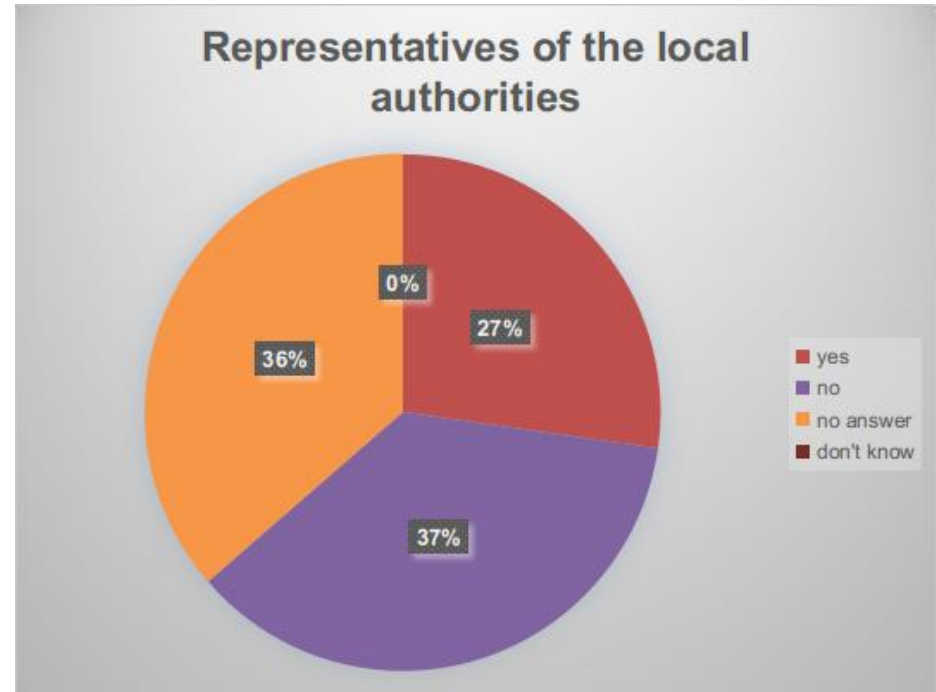
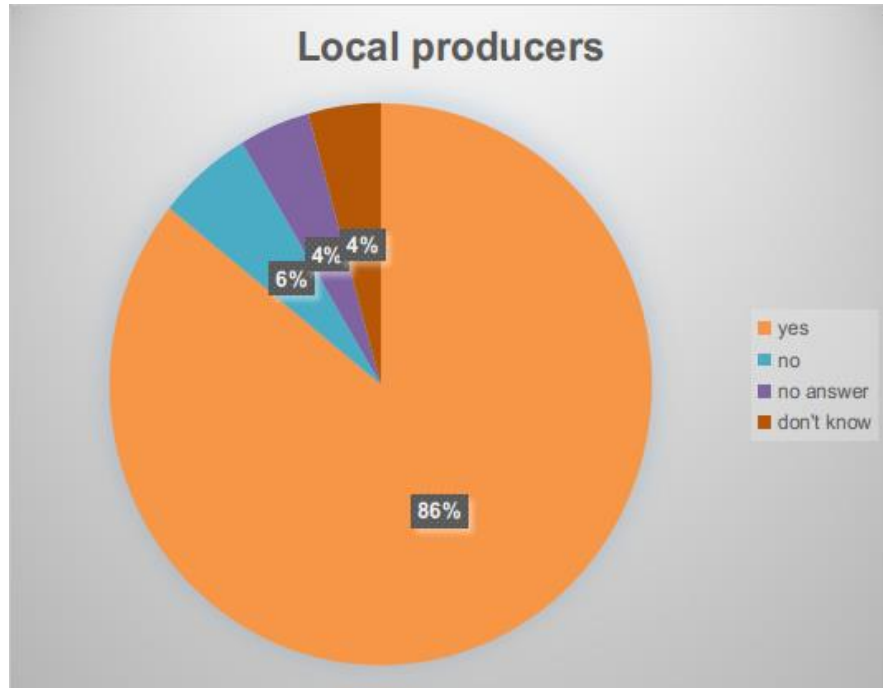
Local producers




Representatives of the local authorities



Q12: DO YOU THINK THAT YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL IN WORKING WITH PEOPLE?



MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- the level of knowledge that there is participation of citizens in public life in the local community is average
- 38% (grade 1,2 and 3)  this part should be improved
- concerning the quality of the relations between citizens and local authorities- citizens are much more dissatisfied

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- information: 17%- grade 1 and 2
28%- grade 3



should be improved

- influence on decision-making process: almost 30% of citizens think they don't have (grade 1 and 2)

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- **PROBLEM:** indifference, unconcern of the local citizens, lack of information, lack of time, laziness, lack of money at the local level, non-transparency, politics..
- legal and institutional frameworks- a modern democratic European society

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. raising awareness of citizens that their participation is necessary and desirable



- organization of workshops, seminars and other relevant activities, including providing information about connection with the NGO
- publication brochures, posters, flyers
- tv, radio, internet

2. raising awareness of local authorities that citizens participation is necessary and desirable



local government employees should be informed and educated about the importance of the local citizens participation

APPLICABILITY

- share the results with the local authorities
- article in the academic journal
- plans for future cooperation

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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