

# THE CITIZENS' OPINION OF THE POLICE FORCE

**The Results of a Public Opinion  
Survey Conducted in Bosnia and  
Herzegovina**

**September 2016**



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Conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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# ABOUT THE SURVEY

The second round of the public opinion survey "The Citizens' Opinion of the Police Force" was conducted in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. The questionnaire based on which the public opinion survey was conducted was devised by the regional network POINTPULSE to provide answers concerning the citizens' opinion of the police. The questionnaire included six groups of questions:

1. The level of citizens' trust and confidence in institutions;
2. The perception of the police as an institution, but also of policemen and policewomen as individuals;
3. The perception of corruption in the society and the police force;
4. Opinions of citizens regarding the fight against corruption;
5. Opinions of citizens on the work of civil society organisations;
6. Demographics.

The field research in Bosnia and Herzegovina was conducted in April 2016 by IPSOS Strategic Marketing, on a representative sample of 1,049 adult persons, citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A questionnaire was used as a research instrument and interviews were conducted using the "face to face" technique, which involves direct contact with respondents.

The report was published as part of the project titled "Western Balkans Pulse for Police Integrity and Trust", which aims to contribute to increasing the trust and confidence in the police by promoting its accountability and strengthening its integrity. For this reason, the following seven civil society organisations from the region came together to form the POINTPULSE network: Analytica from Skopje, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP), Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) from Belgrade, Centre for Security Studies (CSS) from Sarajevo, Alternativa Institute (IA) from Podgorica, Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) from Tirana, and the Kosovo Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) from Pristina.

The project is supported by the European Union through the programme "Civil Society Facility" under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The content of this report is the sole responsibility of the Centre for Security Studies (CSS) and the views expressed in this document are not necessarily those of the European Union.

# SUMMARY

The police happens to be most trusted part of the system of Bosnia and Herzegovina – more than half of the population has confidence in this institution.

However, the image of the police among the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided – while the opinion of some is quite positive, others list corruption, lack of politeness and discomfort as things that first come to mind at the mention of police officers.

In the opinion of the population, one of the biggest problems with the police is the excessive influence of politicians on their work. The police officers are, thus, perceived as protectors of the interests of political parties instead of those who are there to serve the citizens.

Citizens believe that corruption in the police force is widespread, but when we look at individual parts of the institution we see that this assessment varies and pertains mostly to traffic police, border police (especially the customs officers) and the closest associates of ministers of interior affairs.

Citizens say that the process of employment in the police also happens to be problematic, i.e. that employment is gained through friends, family members, political connections and bribery.

The number of those who say that they would report cases of corruption in the police, if they had the opportunity, is quite small. Such an attitude best illustrates the image of the police in public, that is, its disappointment with their work and lack of interest in their affairs.

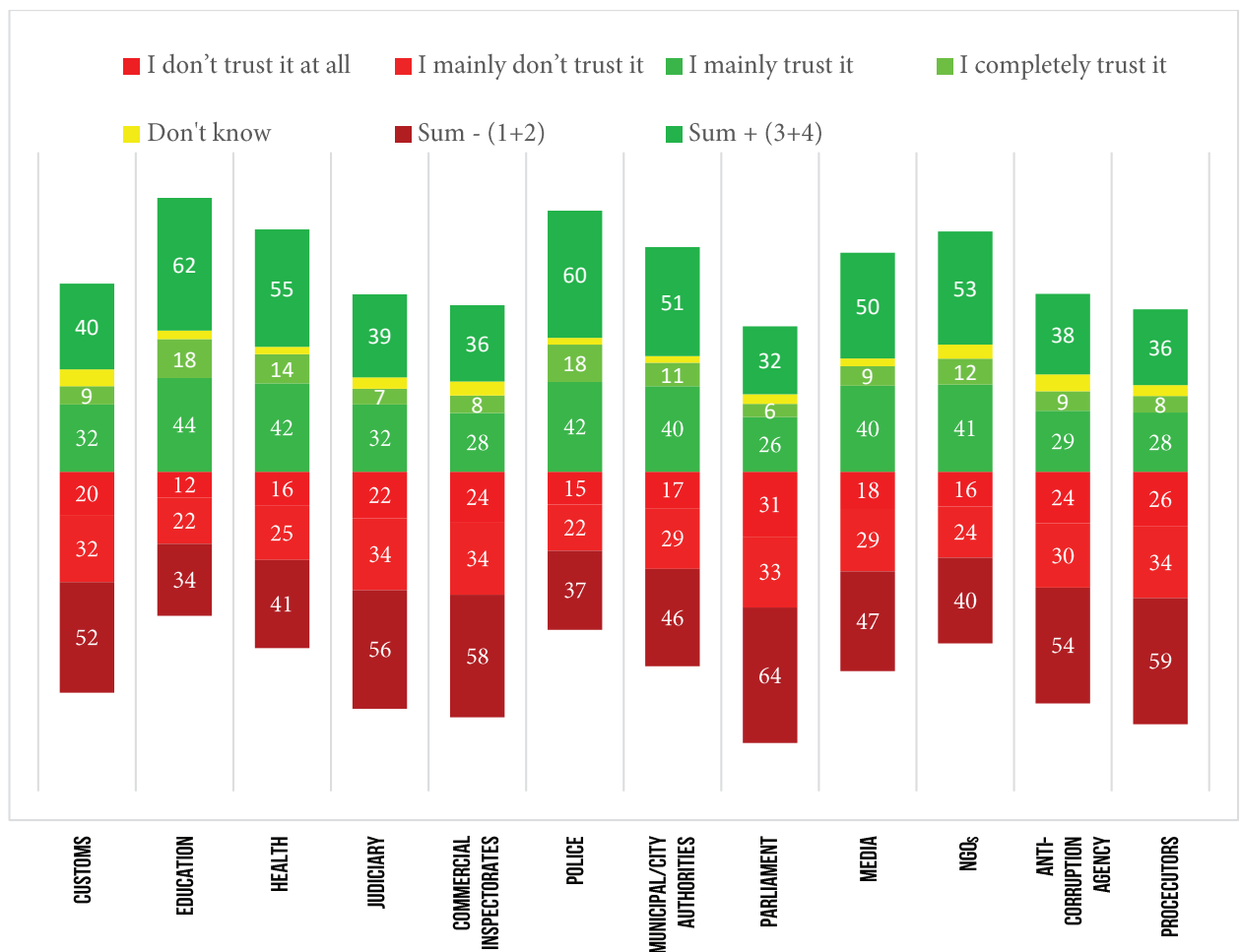
# TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

## The highest trust in education

The obtained results confirm that educational institutions and the police continue to enjoy a significant level of trust and confidence of citizens (62.3%; 59.7%). Moreover, the population's confidence in them has increased by 6% this year, compared to 2015. Based on these indicators, we can say that educational institutions and the police are the most trusted of the 12 institutions that have been surveyed in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). They are immediately followed by health care institutions (55.1%), while non-governmental organisations are fourth on the list (53.1%).

### CHART 1: THE TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Q: How much do you trust the following institutions in Serbia? Please answer using the scale from 1 to 4, where: 1 means that you do not trust the particular institution at all, 2 that you mainly do not trust it, 3 that you mainly trust it and 4 that you completely trust that institution.



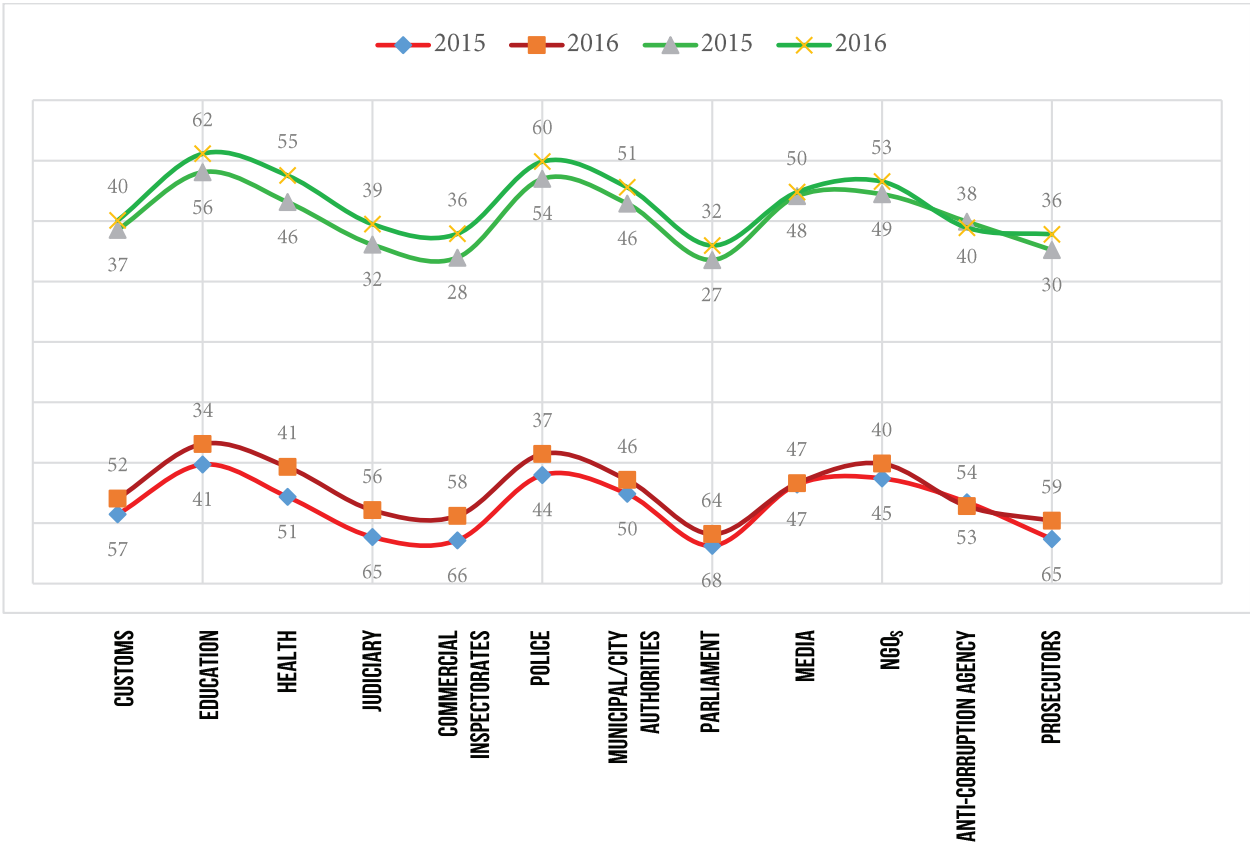
However, one should not ignore the fact that, in spite of the above, more than one third of the respondents (37.1%) have no confidence in the police at all. It is not easy to determine the reasons why respondents do not trust the police, since the objective of the survey did not include determining the reason for said mistrust. Therefore, we believe that it is necessary to further explore the reasons for the present lack of trust in the police.

In the group of those who lack confidence, respondents aged 31 to 64 years (39.5%) stand out, while those older than 65 (64%) trust the police the most. Respondents without a completed university degree have the least trust to the police, followed by those with a high school education (50% - 42%).

Differences in the level of mistrust towards the police are also noticeable, according to territorial distribution. Thus, citizens of the Posavina Canton and the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina trust the police the least (50%). They are followed by citizens of the Tuzla Canton (46.4%), the Central Bosnia and Livno Canton (45%) and by the Bosnia-Podrinje Canton (42.9%). Citizens of the northern part of the entity of the Republic of Srpska (69.2%), the Una-Sana Canton (68.4%) and the West Herzegovina Canton (65.2%) trust the police the most.

**CHART 2: COMPARISON OF TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS IN 2015 AND 2016**

Q: How much do you trust the following institutions in Serbia? Please answer using the scale from 1 to 4, where: 1 means that you do not trust the particular institution at all, 2 that you mainly do not trust it, 3 that you mainly trust it and 4 that you completely trust that institution.





Approximately half of the citizens also trust the municipal/city governments and the media. As in 2015, the Parliament is the institution least trusted by the citizens (31.9%). It is closely followed by the prosecutors' offices (35.6%), market inspectorates (35.8%) and the judiciary (39%).

## The growth of trust in the police

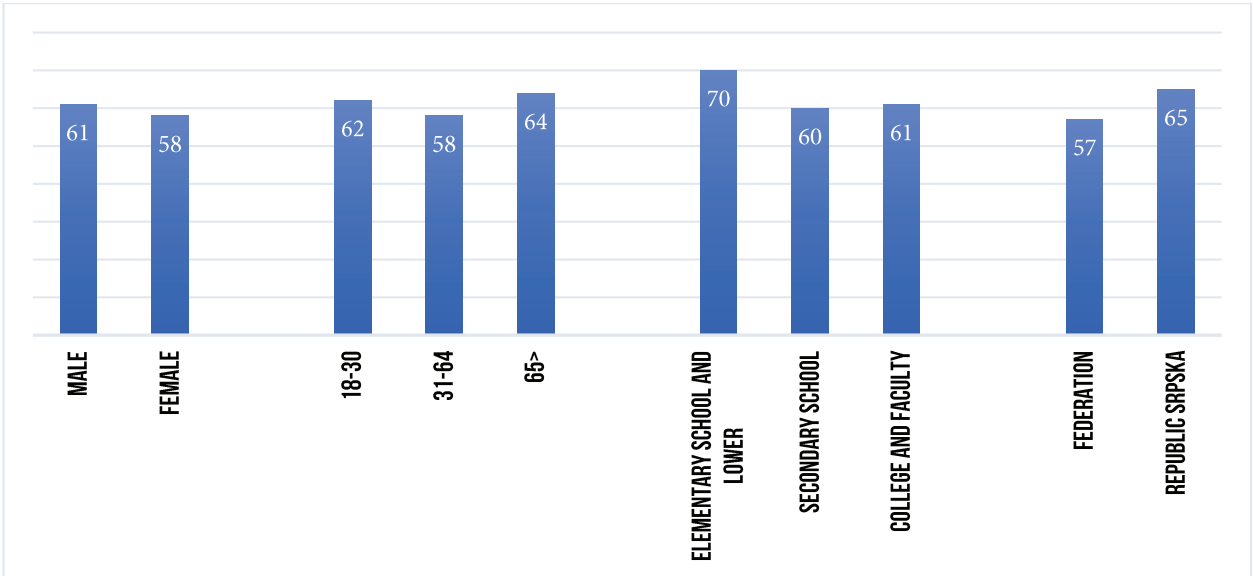
A comparative review of the results concerning trust and confidence in the police shows certain differences in 2016. Thus, the number of those who previously had no confidence in the police at all has decreased by 3%, while the number of those who predominantly did not trust them decreased by 4%. The number of respondents who trust the police completely grew by a significant 6%. This positive trend may be the result of the 2015 efforts of the governments in BiH to employ some of the police personnel and strengthen them with new equipment, as well as a series of actions aimed to combat organised crime and corruption.

Age is only slightly correlated with the trust of respondents in the police. In the group of those who do trust it, citizens older than 65 years are the most numerous (63.8%), while those aged 31 to 64 trust the police the least (57.6%).

The level of education, however, creates a difference between the groups of respondents. The trend of the slight decrease of trust, i.e. increased mistrust rises with the level of education. The least educated [those with completed primary (70.1%) and secondary education (92.3%)] trusts the police the most. Unlike them, 40% of university graduates do not - for the most part or at all. When we look at confidence in the police according to gender, the results show that women (57.9%) trust them less than men (61.3%).

### CHART 3: TRUST IN POLICE

Q: How much do you trust the following institutions in Serbia? Please answer using the scale from 1 to 4, where: 1 means that you do not trust the particular institution at all, 2 that you mainly do not trust it, 3 that you mainly trust it and 4 that you completely trust that institution.



# PERCEPTION OF POLICE

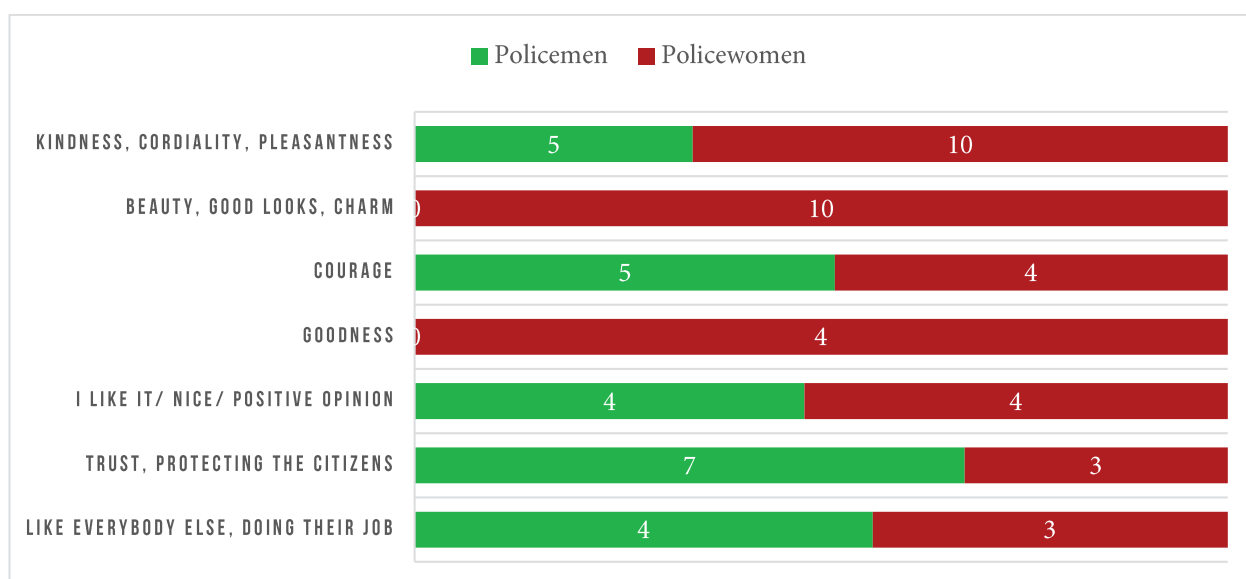
## Policewomen are preety, and the policemen are like all the other officials

In their work and contacts with the population, citizens of BiH perceive policewomen and policemen in different ways. Since the answers to this question were open, and those surveyed were allowed to list at least three attributes that describe police officers, at their own discretion, the replies were irregular and varied. However, there are answers that appear with greater frequency, which largely describe a policewoman and a policeman in BiH.

In assessing the best description of a policewoman working in direct contact with citizens, the majority of respondents described her using positive adjectives such as: polite, cordial, pleasant, pretty, good-looking and charming (10%). When it comes to the best description of a policeman, most respondents (7%) described a police officer in BiH as a protector of citizens, calming and confidential. Unlike in the case of women police officers, fewer respondents described policemen as polite and pleasant (5%).

### CHART 4: DESCRIPTION OF POLICEWOMEN AND POLICEMEN WHO ARE IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH CITIZENS

Q1: When you think of a female police officer, the one in direct contact with the citizens, how would you describe her? Please, state several characteristics (adjectives) that, in your opinion, best describe an average female police officer in Serbia. Q2: And when you think about a typical police officer in Serbia, police officer who is in direct contact with the citizens, how would you describe him? Please specify several attributes (adjectives, words) which, in your opinion, best describe the typical police officer in Serbia.



The same number of respondents – 4% – described policewomen and policemen the way they would any other employee, i.e. as people doing their jobs. When it comes to courage and determination, respondents did not distinguish between policewomen and policemen. However, there is a statistical difference between policewomen and policemen officers when it comes to politeness, where 4% of the respondents believe that police women are polite, while none of the respondents chose to describe policemen using this term.

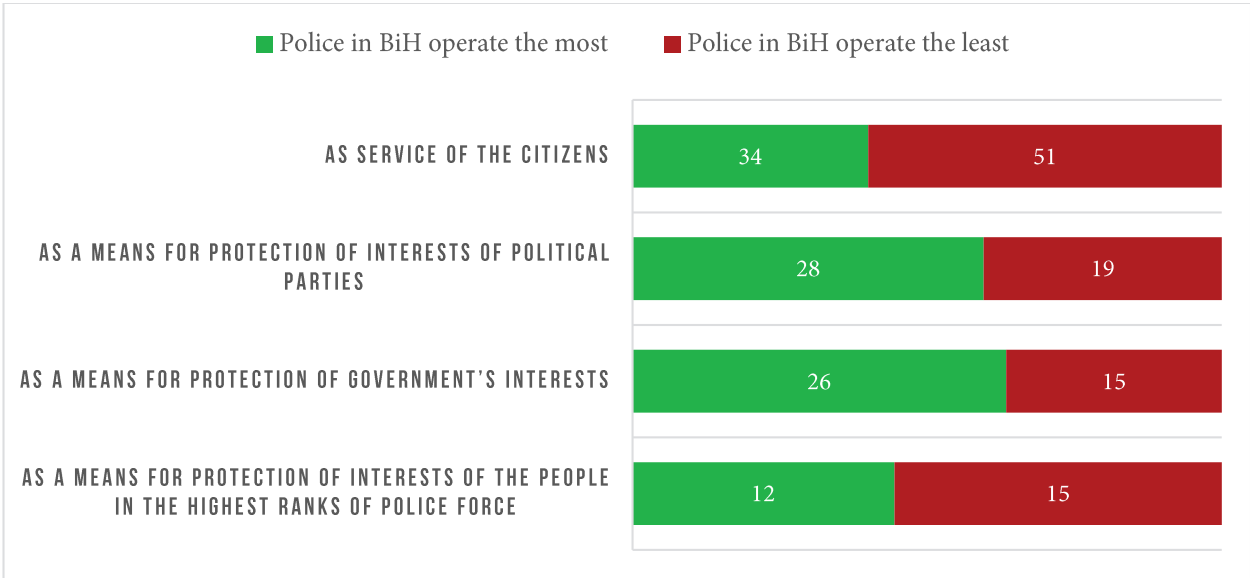
## Police works least as a service to citizens

The results of the survey show that the majority of respondents believe that the police in BiH operate least as a service to citizens. This is evidenced by the fact that slightly more than half of the respondents (51%) share this opinion - 16% less compared to the results of the survey conducted in 2015. One third of the respondents' beliefs are however completely opposite; they feel that the police in BiH acts primarily as a service to citizens, and this was the most often selected between the offered responses.

With this type of response, we find interesting the opinion of respondents that the police in BiH operates more as a means to protect the interests of political parties (28%) than as a means to protect the interests of the government (26%). The answer that the police operates primarily as a means to protect the interests of the people at the top of the police force was selected in the fewest cases (12%).

### CHART 5: CITIZENS' OPINIONS ON THE POLICE FUNCTIONING IN BIH

Q: In your opinion how are the candidates for police force selected and employed?



The question concerning the capacity in which the police primarily operates clearly divided the respondents by age. The opinion that the police operate mostly as a service to citizens is present among the respondents over 65. The younger population, those under 30 years of age, are of the view that the police mostly acts as a means of protecting the interests of political parties (31%). Respondents aged 31 to 64 believe that the police acts as a service to citizens, but also as a means to protect the interests of political parties.

Significant differences between the opinions of the younger and older populations may be partly explained by the fact that the majority of people without work are young, and that it is difficult to find employment if one is not a member of a ruling political party. It is also possible that quite a few of them were able to obtain sufficient evidence for such opinion during a job search. The answers given by urban and rural populations are similarly grouped. Thus, the number of respondents who believe that the police acts mostly as a service to citizens and those who think that their activities are manifested as a means of protecting the interests of the government, political parties or the interests of the people at the top of the police force, is almost the same.

When respondents are viewed by region, differences in the opinions concerning the main activity of the police in BiH are quite noticeable. Thus, respondents from the Bosnia-Podrinje Canton and the West Herzegovina Canton (87.5% : 63.6%) believe that police mostly acts as a means of protecting the interests of political parties. The population of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (29%), followed by the citizens of the Central Bosnia Canton (18%), firmly believes that police officers mostly protect the interests of their top officials. Respondents from the Brčko District of BiH and the Sarajevo Canton (53.3%; 35.6%) believe that the police acts mostly as a means to protect the interests of the government, while citizens of the northern part of the entity of the Republic of Srpska and the Una-Sana Canton are of the opinion that it acts mostly as a service to citizens (54.2%; 52.6%).

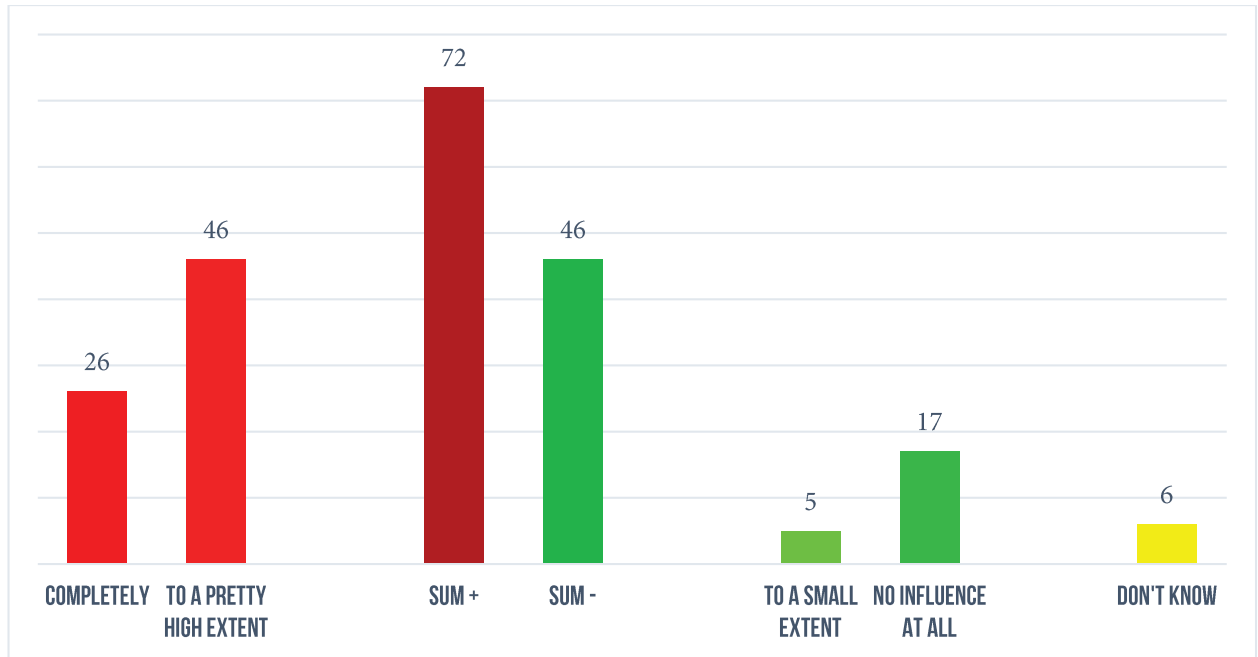
There are also some minor differences in the opinions of respondents based on their ethnicity. Bosniaks and Croats see police work as a means to protect the interests of political parties, while the citizens of Serbian nationality view it mostly as a service to citizens. When viewed according to gender, the response frequency is similar, with somewhat more women believing that the police mostly acts to protect the interests of the government.

## **Politicization of the police**

In line with the image of the police – as an institution that operates less as a service to the citizens or as means to protect the interests of the government, and more to protect the interests of political parties – the results of the survey show the existence of influence of politicians on their work. Thus, almost every second citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina (46%) points out that politicians considerably influence the work of the police, while a quarter of them (25.6%) believe that police work is completely under the influence of politicians. In contrast, a small number of respondents believe that politicians have no influence on the work of police - only 4.5% of them, while the number of those who believe that a small amount of influence does exist is slightly higher (17.5%).

### CHART 6: THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICIANS ON THE POLICE

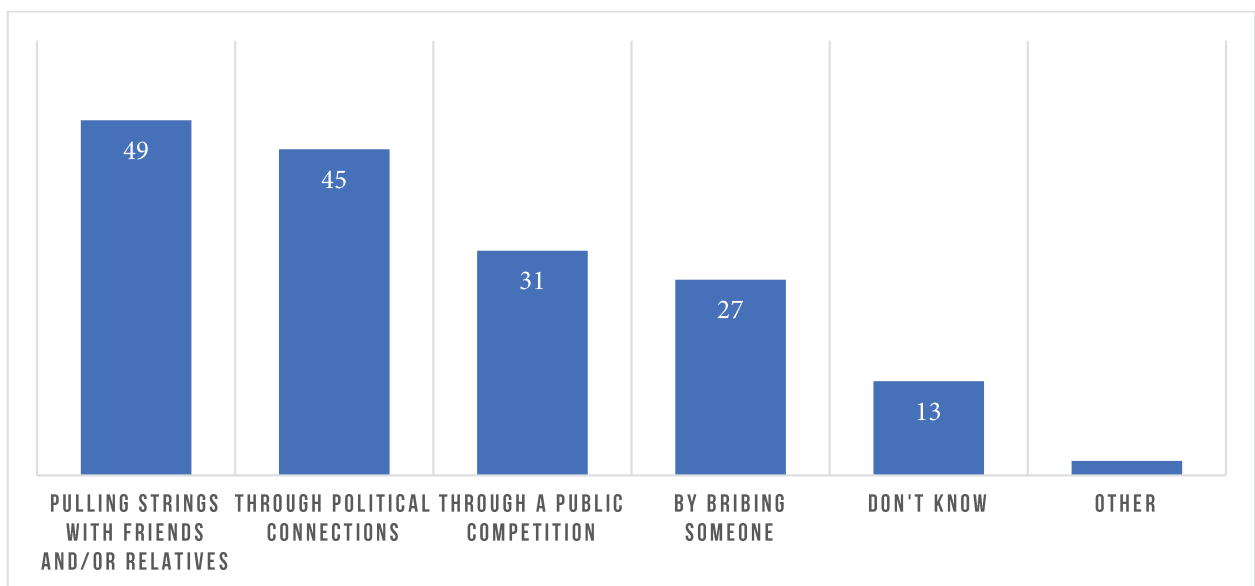
Q: In your opinion, to what extent do politicians have influence on operating work of police force?



As regards the selection of candidates and hiring in the police force, the respondents' opinions from 2015 have remained unchanged. Almost a third of the respondents (31%) still believe that employment in the police is obtained legally, through open competitions. The majority of respondents, however, believe that the selection of candidates and employment in the police is conducted illegally, either through friends or family members (49%), political connections (45%), or with the use of bribery (27%).

### CHART 7: EMPLOYMENT IN THE POLICE

Q: In your opinion how are the candidates for police force selected and employed?



# PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION

## Corruption is most widespread in the judiciary

Of the twelve institutions reviewed in BiH, non-governmental organisations are the only ones perceived by more than half of the respondents as not involving in corruption (53.4%). The media, the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption, and other educational institutions are also listed as least corrupt institutions (44%). As in 2015, the highest percentage of respondents believe that corruption is widespread in the judiciary, the prosecutors' offices, police and the market inspectorates. Thus, more than one-fifth of those surveyed believe that corruption is widespread in these institutions all the way to the top, whereas more than one-third believe that corruption exists to a certain extent.

**CHART 8: THE LEVEL OF CORRUPTION IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF BIH**

Q: How widespread is the corruption in the following institutions? Please answer using the scale from 1 to 4, where 1 means that it is not widespread at all, 2 means that widespread to a little extent, 3 means that it is somewhat widespread, and 4 means that it is widespread to the highest extent.



Six out of 10 citizens of BiH (62%) believe that corruption in the police is widespread. Specifically, slightly more than a fifth of the population (21%) believes that corruption in the police reaches all the way to the top echelons, and 4 out of 10 citizens believe that corruption exists to a certain extent. Almost one third of the respondents (31.8%) believe that police corruption is not widespread, while only 7.3% of them are convinced that it does not exist at all. The highest number of positive responses concerning the extent of corruption was recorded regarding the judiciary (65%), the Parliament and the prosecutor's offices (63%).

In 8.3% of the cases, the youngest respondents (18 to 30 years of age) believe that corruption in the police is widespread all the way to the top, while in the oldest group (65 and older) this percentage rises to 12.1%. The majority of respondents aged 31 to 64 are of the opinion that there is some corruption in the police.

As regards the education of respondents, there is an irregular growth trend of negative responses as the level of education rises. Thus, the largest number of respondents without a university degree believe that corruption in the police is present all the way to the highest levels (57.1%), while 7.7% of the population without a completed high school education share their opinion. Respondents with no school education and those who have not completed high school are the most numerous in the group that believes that there is no corruption in the police whatsoever. When it comes to police corruption, there are no significant statistical differences between the responses provided by men and women.

## **Traffic and border police are the most corrupt**

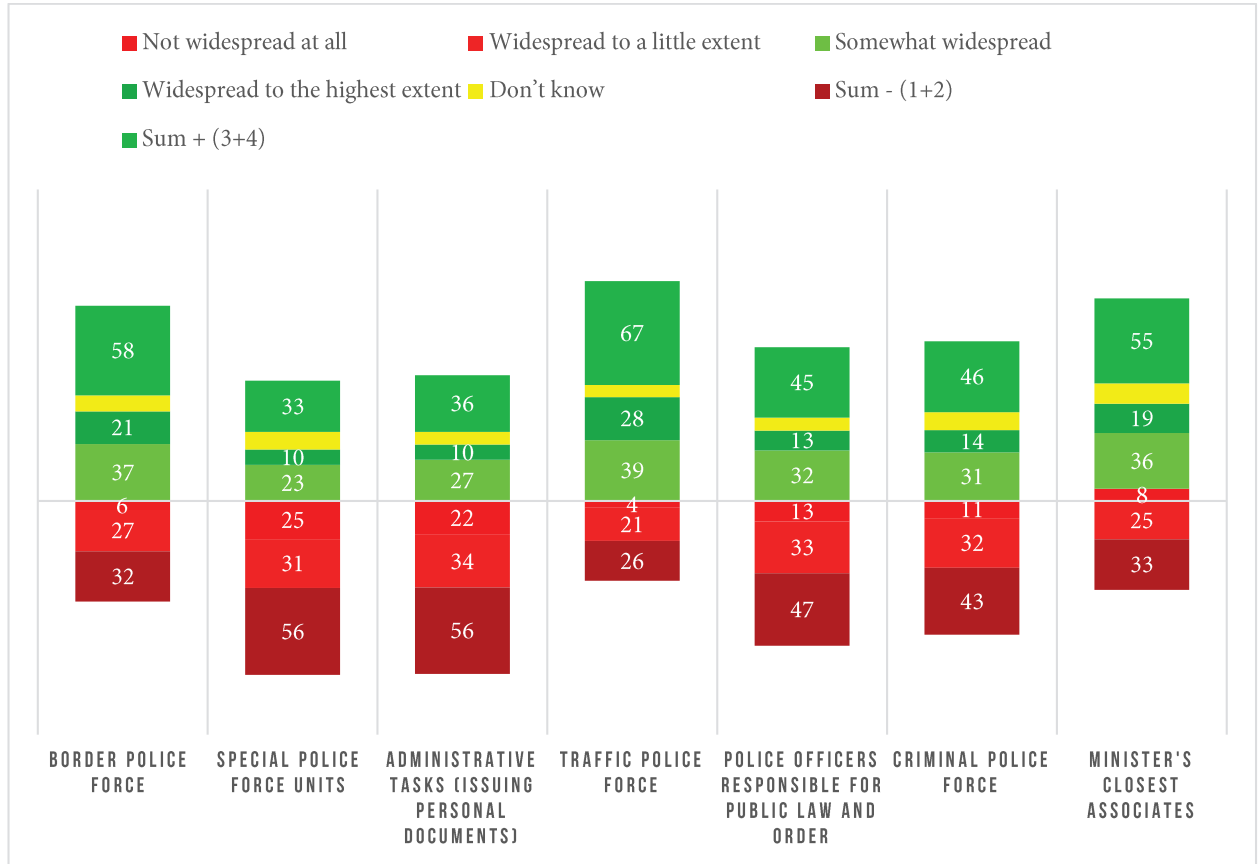
The assessment of police corruption is based on the perception of the extent of corruption within specific organisational units. Thus, respondents perceive the traffic police (66.6%) and the border police (57.5%) as the most corrupt organisational units within the force.

It is interesting to note that the respondents rank the closest associates of the ministers of the interior affairs third, with the highest corruption rate - 55%. The fact that more than one-third of the respondents believe that corruption is widespread in all seven examined parts of the police (border police, special police units, administrative affairs - issuance of personal documents, traffic police, police in charge of public peace and order, criminal police, and the closest associates of the Minister of Internal Affairs) is quite worrisome.

Respondents believe that the special police is the organizational unit with the highest integrity. It is closely followed by the organizational unit in charge of issuing personal documents. One-quarter of the respondents believe that corruption in the special police is not present at all, while almost one third of them feel that if it is indeed present, the extent is negligible. Slightly more than one-fifth of the respondents (22%) believe that there is no corruption in the departments in charge of issuing personal documents, and one third of them feel that if it is indeed present it is on a small scale. These two organisational levels are the only ones, of the seven examined, where 5 out of 10 respondents believe that corruption is not widespread.

### CHART 9: THE LEVEL OF CORRUPTION IN THE POLICE

Q: How widespread is the corruption in the following institutions? Please answer using the scale from 1 to 4, where 1 means that it is not widespread at all, 2 means that widespread to a little extent, 3 means that it is somewhat widespread, and 4 means that it is widespread to the highest extent.





# FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

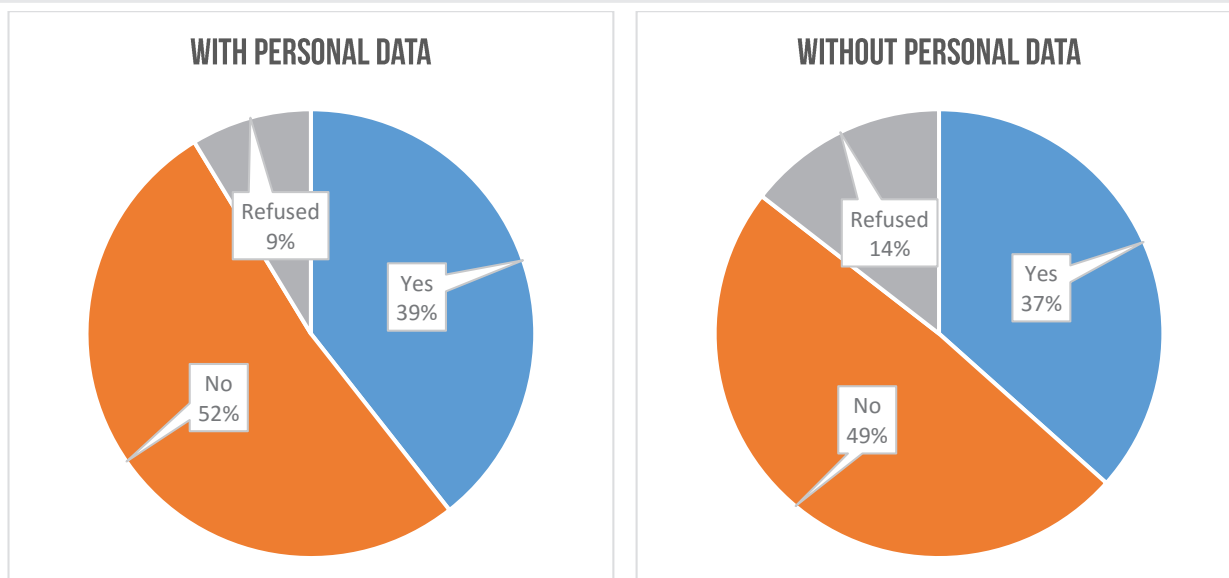
## Citizens are not ready to report corruption

As a precondition for a successful fight against corruption it is extremely important that citizens are willing to report the cases of corruption in the police. However, the fact that most of the respondents - 50.4%, that is, one out of two – are not prepared to report them regardless of whether or not they are required to provide their personal data while doing so (national personal identification number, address, etc.) is quite disturbing.

When it comes to positive responses of respondents regarding the reporting of cases of police corruption, the situation is almost identical. The existence of the obligation to provide personal data or lack thereof caused no significant statistical differences between the respondents who answered that they would report cases of corruption in the police. A little more than one-third of them (38%) would be willing to report such cases. This tells us that there has been no change in the positive opinion about reporting cases of corruption in the police in 2016, compared to 2015.

### CHART 10: REPORTING POLICE CORRUPTION

Q1: Would you report a case of corruption in the police force (being asked for bribe), if you were required to reveal your personal data (personal identification number, address etc.)? Q2: Would you report a case of corruption in the police force if you were not required to reveal your personal data?



The hesitant attitude of the respondents when it comes to reporting the cases of police corruption (14.5%) is best illustrated by the image present in the public relating to police activity, that is, the population's disenchantment and disinterest in their work.

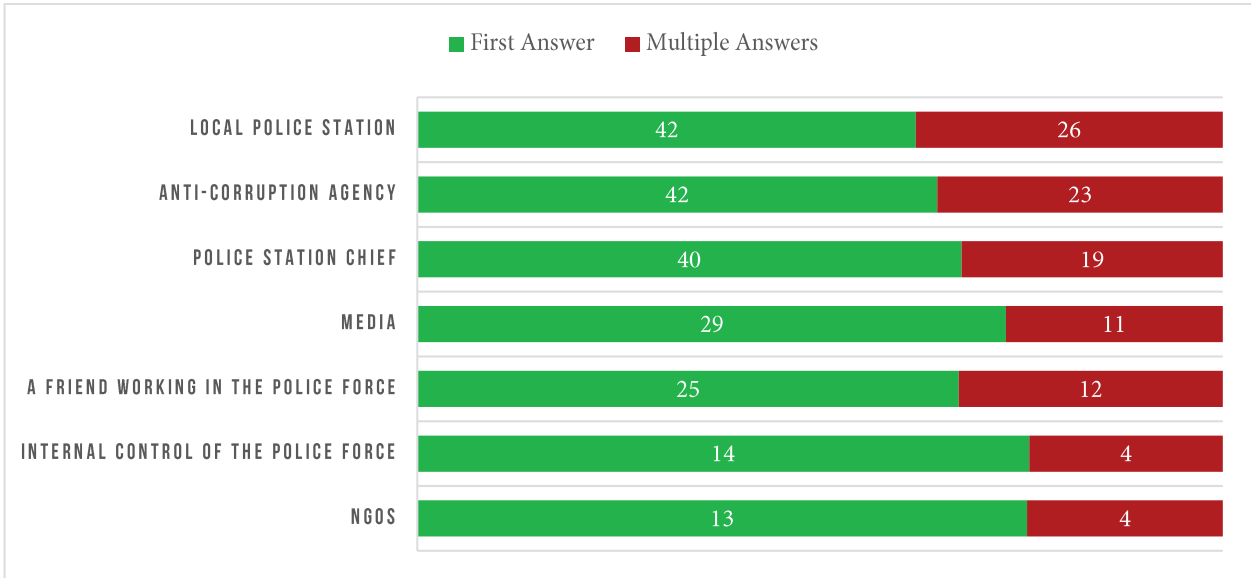
There is, to a certain extent, a clear picture among the citizens who have stated that they would report a case of corruption in the police force as to where such a case should be reported. In the opinion of the citizens, a case of corruption in the police should be reported to someone in the police, but a very small number of citizens see internal police control (to be more specific, the Professional Standards Unit) as the address where they would first report a case of police corruption if they experienced it. Non-governmental organisations, although recently very active concerning anti-corruption measures, are also not recognised by the public as contact points for reporting corruption.

The largest number of people (one in four - 26%) would first report a case of police corruption to the local police station, the second option – chosen by 23% of them - being the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption. Significant differences were observed in respondents who stated that they would report a case of corruption in the police to the Agency. The number of respondents who have chosen this option increased in 2016 by 9%, in comparison with 2015.

Every fifth respondent would report corruption cases to the commander of the police station, while one in ten respondents would do it through the media. In the aggregate sample, the number of those who would report police corruption cases to the Professional Standards Unit and non-governmental organisations is negligible (4%).

**CHART 11: REPORTING CORRUPTION**

Q: Who would be the first in the list that you would report a case of corruption in the police force to? Who else?



**Improvement of penal policy is most needed**

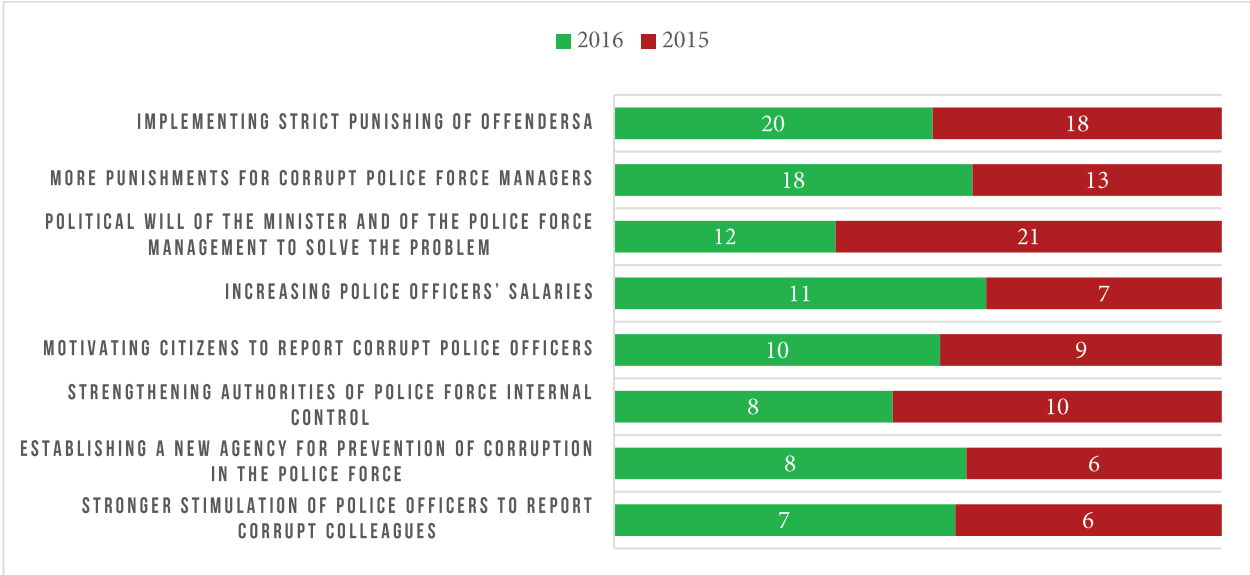
As regards the prevention of corruption in the police, in this study as well as in 2015, the citizens of BiH believed that amending the penal policy was the most needed anti-corruption mechanism. The

number of those interested in such an amendment is slowly increasing. Thus, almost one-fifth of the citizens (19.5%) - an increase of 1.5% compared to 2015 - chose stricter punishment of perpetrators of criminal offences as the most needed anti-corruption mechanism. The fact that almost as many citizens (18.4%) have identified stricter sanctions for corrupt police officials as the most needed anti-corruption mechanism happens to be an interesting coincidence.

Unlike in 2015, when the largest number of respondents recognised the political will of ministers and officials as the anti-corruption mechanism, in this study the number of respondents who chose this option dropped by 9%, pushing what used to be the first option in 2015 to its present third place (2015 - 21%, 2016 - 12%). It is important to point out that the citizens chose the increase in salaries of police officers as the fourth most needed factor for the prevention of corruption (11%). The smallest percentage of respondents chose the option of forming a new body to prevent police corruption as a necessary mechanism to prevent corruption in the police.

**CHART 12: MOST NEEDED TO PREVENT POLICE CORRUPTION IN 2015 AND 2016**

Q: What do you consider most necessary for preventing corruption in the police force?



**Government should fight police corruption**

When asked which of the 11 offered institutions should fight corruption in the police force, more than a fifth (22%) of the respondents replied that it is the job of the government. They listed the internal police control as their second choice - 17%, while as the third they chose – as they did with the first - a politically appointed person: Minister of Police.

Such ranking of institutions that should fight corruption in the police indicates that citizens believe that tackling police corruption should first be defined at the political level, only then to be followed by the activities within the police institution itself. Basically, the public has quite a realistic view of the institutions that should have priority when it comes to fighting corruption in the police. Also,

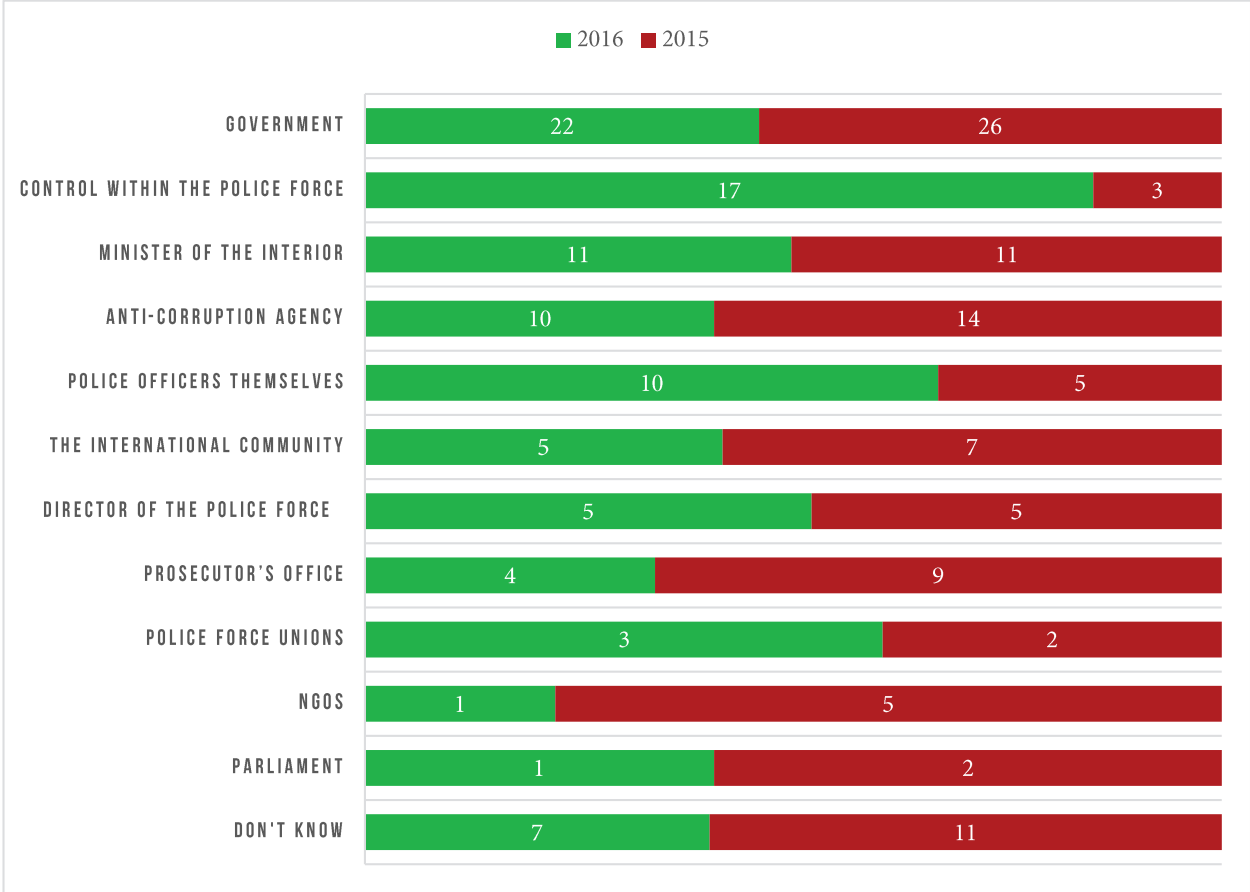
establishing more effective internal police control and limiting the powers of the police officials are emerging as priorities relating to the fight against corruption.

Respondents ranked the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption as fourth (10%), while the police officers themselves (9.5%) were listed fifth among the selected institutions that should fight corruption in the police.

The number of respondents who believe that the fight against corruption in the police is the job of the international community has decreased by 2% in comparison with 2015, while a more significant decrease was recorded among those who thought it was the job of non-governmental organisations (4%).

**CHART 13: INSTITUTIONS WHICH SHOULD FIGHT POLICE CORRUPTION**

Q: Please look at the following list of institutions and tell me which institution should be the first to fight corruption in the police force.



Compared to the survey conducted in 2015, a substantial increasing tendency (14%) was noted regarding the internal police control as the main institution that should be in charge of fighting corruption in the police. Consequently, citizens have listed this institution as the second important entity in the fight against corruption in police operations.

# Civil society should participate in the fight against corruption

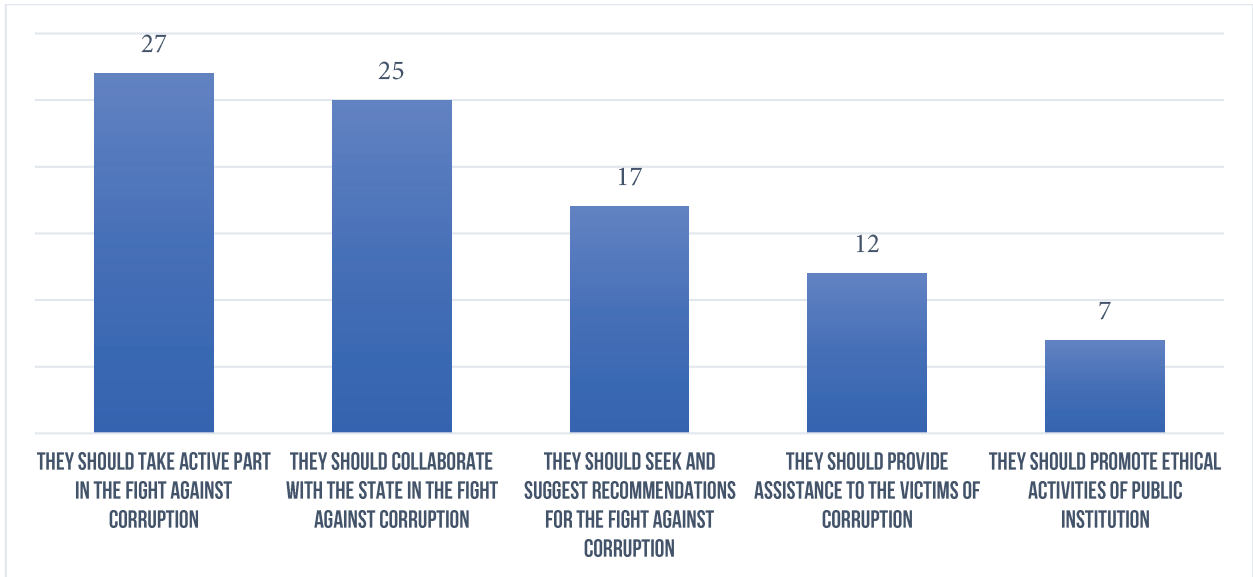
As mechanisms for combating corruption within the police, such as internal control, are somewhat ineffective, in the opinion of the citizens, or unknown to them, it is important to analyse in greater detail the role the citizens would assign to non-governmental organisations.

The results of the survey provide a clear picture of the role of non-governmental organisations in the fight against corruption. More than half of the respondents (52%) believe that they should indeed participate in the fight against corruption, either on their own or in cooperation with the state. However, the respondents' opinions are divided regarding their exact role.

Consequently, a quarter of those surveyed believe that non-governmental organisations should participate in the fight against corruption directly, while the same percentage are of the opinion that they should cooperate with the government. The percentage of respondents who believe that non-governmental organisations should play a role in promoting the ethical work of institutions is the smallest (7%). As regards this question, it should be noted that a slightly higher number of respondents were completely unable to decide what the role of non-governmental organisations in the fight against corruption should be (12%) .

### CHART 14: THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN FIGTING CORRUPTION

Q: People have different opinions on the role of NGOs in the fight against corruption. Bearing this in mind, what role do you think NGOs should have in the fight against corruption?



We find the correlation between the opinions on the role of non-governmental organisations in the fight against corruption in 2015 and 2016 quite interesting. In both studies, the majority of the respondents were of the opinion that non-governmental organisations should directly participate in the

fight against corruption (25% and 26%). However, there were some significant statistical differences concerning the second- and third-ranked opinions.

In 2015, the second-ranked opinion was that non-governmental organisations play a role in researching and proposing recommendations to fight corruption (20%), whereas in 2016 they believe that their role should be to cooperate with the state in the fight against corruption (25%). The third-ranked opinion in 2015 was the cooperation with the state in the fight against corruption (15%), while in 2016 it is researching and proposing recommendations to fight corruption (17%).

The highest growth concerning the role of non-governmental organisations was registered in the variable stating that non-governmental organisations should cooperate with the government in the fight against corruption - 10%. The percentage of those who believe that they should participate directly is stable, showing a slight growth trend.

# THE METHODOLOGY FRAMEWORK

<b>LOCATION</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>DATA COLLECTION METHOD</b>	Face-to-face, in the respondents' homes
<b>SAMPLING FRAME</b>	The citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who are 18 years of age and over, who permanently resided in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the time of the survey
<b>SIZE OF SAMPLE</b>	1,049
<b>TYPE OF SAMPLE</b>	Three-stage random representative stratified sample
<b>STRATIFICATION</b>	Performed by region, type of settlement, gender, age and level of education
<b>SAMPLING ERROR</b>	$\pm 3.31\%$

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