



Satisfaction with the situation at the country level and with personal circumstances

15 and 14 per cent of Bulgarian respondents believe that the economic and political situation in their country was better in 2016 than four years prior to the survey, in line with the averages for south-eastern Europe (SEE), both at 17 per cent, but below the corresponding figures for the transition region (24 and 28 per cent, respectively). Only 1 in 5 Bulgarians believe that their household was better off in 2016 compared with four years prior to the survey and only 1 in 4 is satisfied with their personal financial situation.

As little as 9 per cent of interviewed individuals think that corruption levels improved over the four years preceding the survey. Additional statistical analysis of the LiTS III data shows that about 10 per cent of Bulgarian respondents report that either they or another member of their household made unofficial payments or gifts when accessing public services in the 12 months before the survey.

Life satisfaction slightly increased by 4 percentage points compared with 2010, particularly for the middle income group. Still, only 37 per cent of Bulgarian respondents were satisfied with their life in 2016, a percentage which is considerably lower than the SEE and the transition region averages (39 and 43 per cent, respectively). 42 per cent of Bulgarian respondents think that children born now will have a better life than the current generation, a 10 percentage point decline relative to 2010 levels and a figure below the transition region average of 50 per cent.

Attitudes towards democracy and the market economy

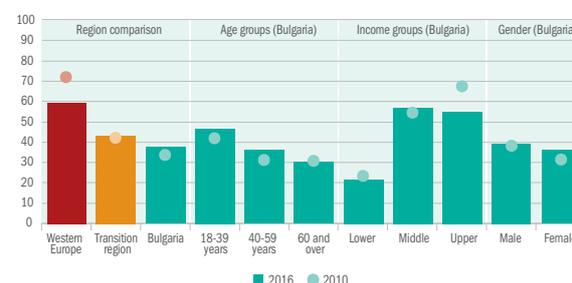
Some 49 and 40 per cent of Bulgarian respondents prefer democracy and a market economy over any other form of political or economic system respectively, while around 21 and 24 per cent report that an authoritarian system and a planned economy may be better solutions under some circumstances. Compared with the rest of the SEE region and with Germany, Bulgarians appear slightly less supportive of democracy and the market economy. However, when contrasting these values with the transition region as a whole and with Italy, Bulgarian respondents seem to favour the market economy more than their counterparts.

When asked which democratic institutions exist in the country, a substantial 65 per cent of respondents reported that gender equality is in place in Bulgaria. This figure is higher than the corresponding averages for the SEE and the transition regions (53 and 56 per cent, respectively), as well as the one for Italy (42 per cent). 49 per cent of the interviewed population believes that peace and stability exist in the country while 44 per cent thinks that freedom of speech is guaranteed. However, the values for the remaining institutions (free elections, law and order, an independent press, a strong political opposition and a fair judicial system) are among the lowest in the transition region.

Priorities for government spending

Among Bulgarian respondents, 44 per cent would prefer extra government funding to be spent on health care, a figure above the average for the transition countries (34 per cent). This is followed by pensions, helping the poor and investments in education, at 17, 15 and 14 per cent, respectively. Other options for extra spending, such as public infrastructure or environment, attract little support. Additional results from LiTS III show that over 50 per cent of Bulgarian respondents would be willing to contribute more to improve the quality of the public health system, and 43 per cent would be willing to contribute to improvements to public education.

CHART 1. Life satisfaction: percentage of respondents who are satisfied with life, all things considered



Sources of information

The main daily sources of information for Bulgarian respondents are the television and the radio (67 per cent), followed by discussions with family, friends or colleagues (39 per cent) and the internet and social media (29 per cent). As of 2016, there remains an urban and rural divide in utilisation of the internet as the main source of information, with 34 per cent of respondents from urban areas reporting daily internet usage, in contrast to a much lower 14 per cent among those in rural areas. Newspapers are read on a daily basis by 11 per cent of Bulgarian respondents, a figure slightly above the average for the transition region (9 per cent) but lower than those of SEE, Germany and Italy (14, 31 and 21 per cent, respectively).

Self-assessed health

63 per cent of Bulgarian respondents report a positive health self-assessment, which is in line with the averages for SEE and Germany (65 and 68 per cent, respectively) and higher than the values for the transition region and Italy (both at 54 per cent). Additional analysis shows that, compared with 2010, all demographic groups report better health conditions except for the upper income group, which reports a significant decrease of 28 percentage points. Surprisingly, health is not positively correlated with income levels in Bulgaria and the upper income group has a lower reported positive health status than both the middle- and lower-income brackets.

Quality of public services

The majority of Bulgarians believe that, overall, their country provides high quality public services, with the sole exception of local roads, whose quality is assessed as satisfactory by only 29 per cent of respondents. The remaining satisfaction rates are broadly in line with the averages for the transition region as well as for Germany and Italy.

Social and economic mobility

When respondents were asked from a list of options what they thought were the most important factors for success in life in their country, about 32 per cent of Bulgarians chose "effort and hard work" and another 32 per cent opted for "political connections". A quarter of Bulgarians believe that "intelligence and skills" are key to success while 12 per cent chose the response option "breaking the law", a figure substantially higher than in Germany (1 per cent) and Italy (4 per cent) and the third highest in the transition region.

Attitudes towards women

90 and 80 per cent of female and male respondents, respectively, think that women are as competent as men to be business executives and an overall 75 per cent believe that it is important that their daughter achieves a university education. However, a considerably higher proportion of men believe that men make better political leaders than women (58 per cent of men as opposed to 34 per cent of women) and that a woman should do the household chores, even if her husband is not working (44 per cent of men compared with 31 per cent of women). Lastly, 62 per cent of respondents favour a traditional family arrangement where the man works and the woman takes care of the house and children.

CHART 2. Optimism: percentage of respondents who are optimistic about the future of the younger generation

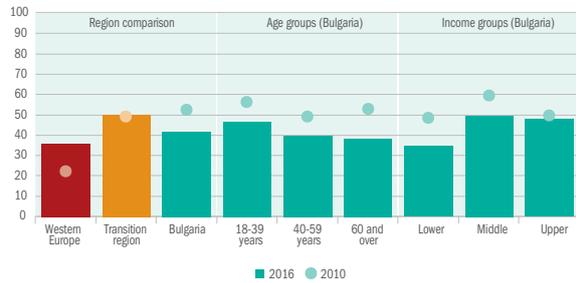


CHART 3. Market economy and democracy: percentage of respondents who prefer a market over a planned economy and democracy over an authoritarian government

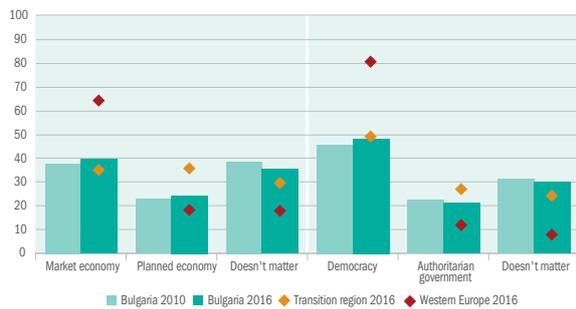


CHART 4. Basic democratic institutions: percentage of respondents who agree that the country has these basic democratic institutions

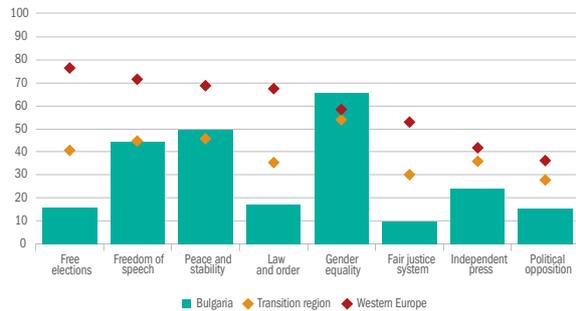
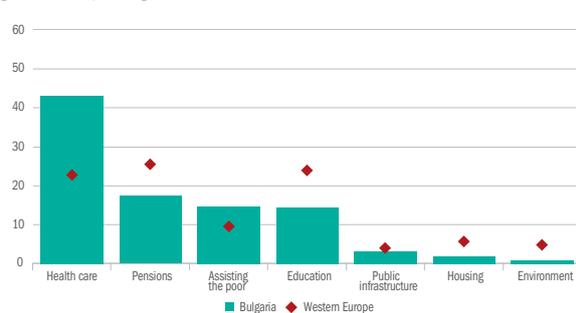


CHART 5. Priorities for government spending

Panel A: Percentage of respondents who identify a given area as a priority in terms of government spending



Panel B: Breakdown of preferences for the top priority (health care)

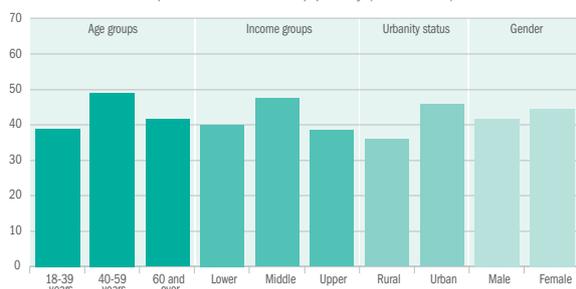


CHART 6. Sources of information: percentage of respondents who use these different sources of information

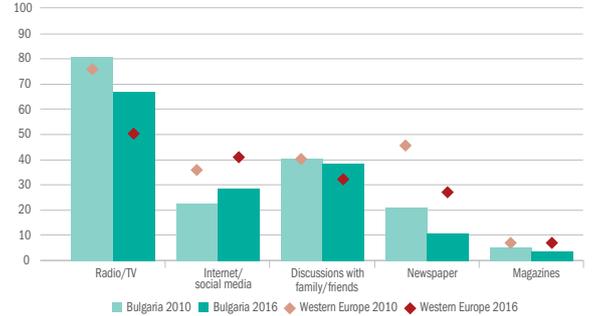


CHART 7. Health assessment: percentage of respondents who report themselves to be in good health (self-assessed)

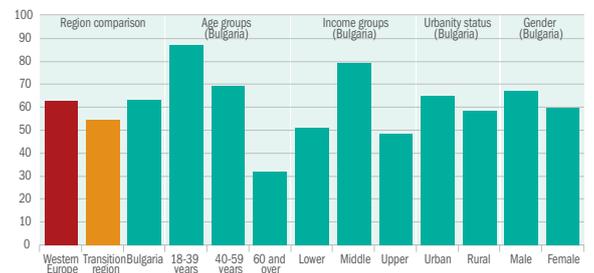


CHART 8. Quality of services: percentage of respondents who are satisfied with the quality of public services, by category

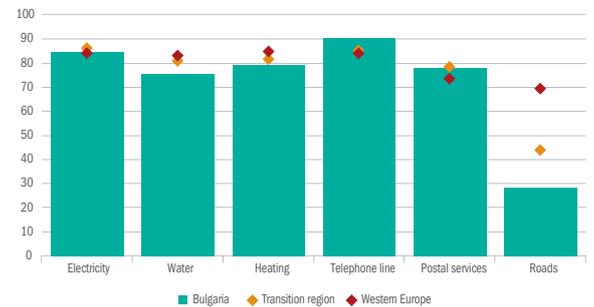


CHART 9. Factors for success: percentage of respondents who identify the given factor as the most important for success, by income level

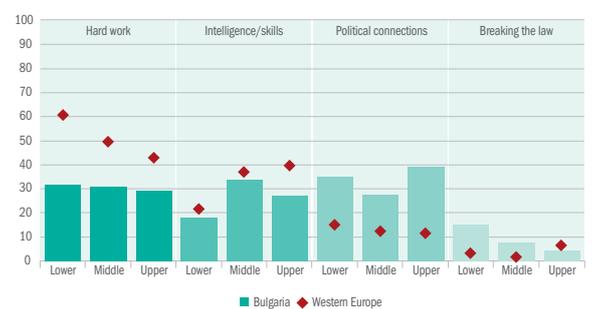


CHART 10. Attitudes towards women: percentage of respondents who agree with the statements below

