

Soros Foundation-Moldova

**Perceptions of the Population
of the Republic of Moldova
on Discrimination:
Sociological Study**

This study was carried out under the Equality and Civic Engagement Program of the Soros Foundation -Moldova.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary	5
Introduction	10
1. Perceptions of the population on the groups of people frequently discriminated in Moldova	12
2. Social contexts in which various groups of people are discriminated ..	19
3. Social distance between respondents and groups of people exposed to discrimination	27
4. Stereotypes most frequently used in relation to certain groups of people	51
5. Personal experiences of respondents in the field of discrimination	53
6. Perceptions of respondents concerning the coverage of various groups of people by the media	61
Conclusions and recommendations	70

Summary

1. Perceptions of the population on the groups of people frequently discriminated in Moldova

- Even if discrimination of some groups of people is considered an important problem by more than 2/3 of respondents, in the agenda of important issues it is ranked second last, following the issues related to unemployment, price rise, underdeveloped economy, low pensions, reduced access to healthcare services, underdeveloped infrastructure, political instability and even low access of youth to education.
- Every third respondent considers that, in the recent 5 years, the discrimination increased. The share of people who believe that discrimination increased is larger among women, respondents of Russian ethnicity and wealthy people.
- While 89% of respondents mentioned that tolerance is a very important value, this was ranked the sixth among values, following such values as faith in God, respect for other people, respect for the law, freedom and equality. The share of respondents that consider tolerance a very important value is higher among persons with higher education (92%) and those of 18-34 years of age (92%).
- While 80% of interviewed individuals consider tolerance and respect for culture of other nations a very important and important value, only quite over 20% of respondents stated that these are respected to a large and to a very large extent in the country. The smallest discrepancy was found in case of the value 'faith in God': 94% consider this an important value and the same percentage considers that it is respected to a large and very large extent.
- While over 80% of respondents named the trust in people a very important and important value and over 50% mentioned that this value is respected in our country, on the level of individual perception, only every third respondent mentioned that he/she has very much and much trust in people. The respondents show a higher trust in members of their families (95%), followed, at a quite long distance, by the priest (58%), neighbors (50%), the head of the center of family doctors (46%) and the school director (44%). Over 2/3 of respondents mentioned that they have no trust in the mayor and police officers.
- On perception level, the respondents consider that most frequently discriminated people in the Republic of Moldova are persons with mental and physical disabilities (68% and 66%), followed by the poor (59%), HIV-positive persons (56%), the elderly (50%), representatives of gay and lesbian community (49%), the Roma (48%) and women (32%).

2. Social contexts in which various groups of people are discriminated

- In accordance with the Dominant Personal Opinion Index (DPOI)¹ the persons with disabilities are discriminated most frequently at employment (-63), in the workplace (-51) and in education institutions (-31). The poor are discriminated more frequently in hospitals/health centers (-40), in education institutions (-36) and at employment (-32). The HIV+ persons are discriminated most frequently at employment (-42), in the workplace (-38), in relation with authorities (-25) and in hospitals and health centers (-19). The elderly are discriminated more frequently at employment (-51), in the workplace (-37) and in relations with authorities (-22). The representatives of lesbian and gay community are discriminated more frequently in the workplace (-18), at employment (-17) and in education institutions (-15). Roma people are discriminated more frequently at employment (-6) and in the workplace (-1). Women are discriminated more frequently at employment (24), in the workplace (29) and in political life (19).

¹ The Dominant Personal Opinion Index (DPOI) was calculated using the formula $(p-n) \times (100 - ne) : 100$, where p is the frequency of positive opinions, n – frequency of negative opinions, ne – frequency of neutral opinions. The index ranges on a scale from -100 to 100. The closer to 100 the index is, the lower the level of discrimination is.

3. Social distance between respondents and the groups of people exposed to discrimination

Persons with disabilities

- The persons with physical disabilities are accepted by 70% of respondents as neighbors, by 66% of respondents as work colleagues, by 63% as friend, and only by 27% as a future member of the family. The integrated acceptance indicator² of persons with physical disabilities is 23%. The level of acceptance of persons with physical disabilities varies, depending on the diversity of cultural relations of respondents. Thus, the respondents who have friends, relatives or even acquaintances with physical disabilities showed a higher indicator of acceptance towards persons with disabilities, compared to persons who have no relations with this disadvantaged group.
- Persons with mental disabilities are accepted by 40% of respondents as neighbors, by 35% of respondents as work colleagues, by 31% as friends, and only by 8% as a future member of the family. The integrated acceptance indicator of persons with mental disabilities is 7%. As in the case of persons with physical disabilities, the level of acceptance varies, depending on the diversity of cultural relations of the respondents. Thus, the respondents who have friends, relatives or even acquaintances with mental disabilities accept to a higher extent the persons with mental disabilities, compared to those who have no such relations with this group.
- The low level of acceptance of persons with both physical and mental disabilities is determined greatly by the existing prejudices in the society with regard to these persons. Thus, 2/3 of respondents continue to state that children with disabilities are not like all children and they should be educated in special schools, 40% believe that the persons with disabilities are unable to work, 39% consider that persons with mental disabilities are dangerous and should be isolated, and 28% consider that persons with disabilities can have no family.

Representatives of gay and lesbian community

- While on perception level the respondents expressed their opinion that representatives of gay and lesbian community are not as frequently discriminated as poor people and persons with disabilities or HIV+ persons, on the level of individual attitudes, they proved to be much more marginalized. Thus, the representatives of gay and lesbian community are accepted as neighbors only by 14% of respondents, as work colleagues by 13%, as friends by 10%, and as a future member of the family by 4%. The integrated acceptance indicator of representatives of gay and lesbian community is 2%. The level of acceptance varies depending on the cultural relation of respondents. Thus, the respondents who communicate frequently with representatives of gay and lesbian community, visit them, and have such persons as work colleagues are more tolerant than those who have no relations with this group of people.
- The marginalization of representatives of gay and lesbian community is determined by the existing prejudices in the society with regard to the respective group of people. Thus, over 2/3 of respondents expressed their opinion that representatives of gay and lesbian community are dissolute, immoral, perverse and sick. Almost every second respondent considers that representatives of gay and lesbian community are HIV+.
- The big social distance and the fear of representatives of gay and lesbian community formed the opinion about the need of imposing some social restrictions on this social group. Thus, 2/3 of respondents believe that representatives of gay and lesbian community should be limited in such rights as marriage, child adoption, use of public transportation means, organization of public events, and appearance in television programs.

² The integrated acceptance indicator represents the share of respondents that accept the disadvantaged persons as their neighbors, co-workers, friends, and family members.

- Every second respondent thinks that homosexual relations should be punished by forbidding some rights (46%), fine (24%), and imprisonment (23%).

HIV-positive persons

- The level of acceptance of HIV-positive persons is almost as low as in case of representatives of gay and lesbian community. Thus, only every third respondent would accept an HIV+ person as a neighbor or work colleague. 26% would accept an HIV+ person as a friend and only 4% would agree that a family member marries an HIV+ person. The integrated tolerance indicator with regard to HIV+ persons calculated in accordance with UNAIDS methodological requirements is 5%.
- The level of acceptance of HIV-positive persons varies most depending on the diversity of cultural relations of respondents. Thus, the acceptance indicator is much higher in the group of respondents that often talk to HIV-positive persons (50% versus 3%), sometimes ask for the assistance of an HIV-positive person (41% versus 3%), and visit HIV-positive persons (17% versus 3%).
- The marginalization of HIV-positive persons is also shown by the respondents stating the need to isolate these persons. Thus, 2/3 of interviewed individuals consider that children with HIV should study in separate classes, 41% – that people with HIV should not use public transportation means, 79% – that HIV-positive persons should report their status, including every fifth who believed that the HIV+ status should be reported at the workplace, to the employer, in school, to colleagues etc.

Equity between women and men

- Every second respondent considers that the situation of women and men in the Republic of Moldova is equitable in the same manner, 33% that the situation of men in the Republic of Moldova is better than that of women, and 15% that the situation of women is better than that of men.
- According to the respondents, equal opportunities for women and men would mean equal rights (92%), joint decision-making (91%), presence of understanding in the couple (90%), equal family duties (89%), and employment of both partners (83%). 57% consider that in the Republic of Moldova there are equal opportunities for women and men, 38% that these are absent, and 5% did not provide an answer. The respondents who mentioned that there are no equal opportunities in the Republic of Moldova argued that women frequently have a double task, to support the family and to raise the children; the women may not be employed in many professions and often they are paid less than men; women are not promoted in high offices.
- While over a half of respondents mentioned that in the Republic of Moldova there are equal opportunities, the research shows that the country remains traditionalist and conservative when it comes to the distribution of roles in the family and society among women and men. Thus, 80% of respondents continue to agree with the statements that the man is the head of the household and that it is more the women's task to take care of the household. 84% of interviewed individuals state that it is more the men's task to bring money, and 91% that specifically men should perform hard physical works. Every third respondent expressed his opinion that women are less capable and may not hold leadership functions and that there is no place for women in politics. This is greatly the opinion of men and persons with a low education level.

Persons of Roma ethnicity

- Over 40% of respondents would accept to have a person of Roma ethnicity as their neighbor, friend or work colleague. At the same time, every fourth respondent would accept that a family member marries a person of Roma ethnicity. The integrated acceptance indicator of Roma people is 21%. As in case of above mentioned groups, the acceptance indicator varies depending on the diversity of cultural relations and is higher in the group of respondents who ask for the assistance of a Roma person (55% versus 18%), consult often with a Roma person (52% versus 19%), have Roma relatives (50% versus 20%), etc.

- The social distance between the respondents and Roma people is fed to a great extent by the existent prejudices concerning Roma. Thus, over 2/3 of interviewees consider that most Roma are liars and ready to cheat other people, most Roma children are beggars and pickpockets, most Roma are used to live on somebody else's account, most Roma violate the law, most Roma women are fortune tellers and can put a spell on you if you do not give them money. Every second respondent believes that Roma sell drugs and traffic human beings, every fourth person believes that Roma should be forced to live separately, i.e. to be isolated from the community.

The poor

- While according to the dominant personal opinion indicator, the poor are perceived by the respondents as socially most discriminated (DPOI of -22), the marginalization of these persons on individual level is quite low. Thus, over 80% of respondents would accept to have a poor person as a neighbor and friend, and over 70% would agree to a member of their family to marry a poor person. The integrated acceptance indicator of the poor is 69%.
- While the acceptance indicator of the poor is quite high, in the society there are certain prejudices with regard to the poor, which may negatively influence the acceptance indicator in the near future. Thus, over 40% of respondents believe that most of the poor are lazy and do not want to work, that in case of most of the poor, it is their fault that they are in that condition, and that most of the poor are drunkards. Over 30% consider that most of the poor have a low IQ and are aggressive.

The elderly

- Every second respondent believes that the elderly are frequently discriminated in the Republic of Moldova. The social contexts in which these persons are more frequently discriminated are employment, workplace, hospitals, health centers and relations with authorities.
- As in case of poor persons, the social distance to the elderly is fed by a range of prejudices: the elderly may not face a complex task (65%), the elderly are helpless (58%), the elderly have an old-fashioned mentality (57%), the elderly have reduced mental abilities (34%), etc.

4. Personal experiences of respondents in the field of discrimination

- 37% of respondents mentioned that in the last 3 years their rights have been violated at least once, 61% that their rights were never violated and 2% did not provide an answer. When asked about the specific rights that have been violated, 36% indicated the right to work, 31% the right to a remuneration proportioned with the work, 31% the right to health, 23% the right to social protection, 18% the right to justice, etc.
- Every ninth respondent mentioned that there are certain places that are avoided by them or their relatives, because they are afraid to be discriminated. When asked about the specific places, 40% of those afraid to go to some places indicated the health centers, 34% the police, 26% the mayor's office, 16% the street. In most cases of discrimination, the respondents indicated the lack of money as the main cause.
- 24% of respondents indicated that during the last year they felt discriminated, and 76% that they did not feel discriminated. Those who felt discriminated have been verbally insulted (68%), thrown out (10%) or threatened and intimidated (8%). Most persons indicated the lack of money as the main cause.
- With regard to the last case of discrimination, over 2/3 persons that have discriminated were men, and every second represented an institution. Most persons have been discriminated by the employers, during employment or during work (35%), by representatives of the mayor's office (25%), by the doctors in the health centers (22%), by police (11%), by vendors in shops (9%), and in school (8%).
- About 16% of respondents discriminated in the last year mentioned that they have been discriminated based on sex: persons of opposite sex made insulting jokes in their address. 7% indicated that in the last year they received sexual proposals in an inadequate context and 5% mentioned than in the last year someone tried to abuse them sexually.

- Almost every third respondent witnessed in the last two years at least one case of discrimination, which took the form of verbal insult of the person (66%), the person was thrown out (10%), the person was threatened (10%), or the person was victim of physical violence (12%).
- Every third person mentioned that the last case of discrimination happened on the street, every fifth in the workplace, 22% in school or health center, and 8% in the shop. 38% of eye witnesses of a discrimination case indicated that persons were discriminated because they had no money, 24% because of age, 16% because of ethnicity, 15% because it was a woman, and 11% because of health.
- Every third person that witnessed a discrimination incident tried not to be involved in any manner in the incident (they had no reaction, turned around and left, proved that they have not seen anything), more than 30% encouraged the discriminated person, showing compassion and encouraging the person to go to court, and only 26% showed disapproval of the person who discriminated.
- Over 2/3 of the interviewed persons think that discriminators should be punished with fines (28%), criminal sanctions (16%), compensations (13%), community labor (12%), and even imprisonment (4%).

5. Perceptions of respondents concerning the coverage of various groups of people by the media

- The great majority of respondents use TV as primary information source (92% watch TV at least once a week), followed by the radio (71% listen to the radio at least once a week) and the printed press (33% read newspapers at least once a week).
- To inform themselves, the respondents use more frequent the following TV channels: Prime TV (54%), Moldova 1 (45%), Pro TV (29%), NIT (20%), TV7 (8%), and Jurnal TV (7%).
- The interviewed persons that have at least a weekly contact with media consider that generally media is quite equidistant and neutral with regard to various groups of vulnerable persons, excepting the persons with risky behavior, which enjoy a less discriminatory attitude.
- The perception of respondents concerning the attitude of media towards the vulnerable groups varies significantly, depending on the television channel they use more frequently to inform themselves, which makes us conclude that the respondents' views are based to a great extent on the experience obtained during watching their favorite TV channels. Thus, most persons who have more frequent contacts with PRO TV and TV 7 believe that media covers the events related to various groups of people in a quite equidistant manner. The prevailing opinion indicator of the audience of these TV channels was calculated at +5.7 and +4.9. The respondents who frequently watch NIT consider that media has a positive attitude towards persons with risky behavior, representatives of gay and lesbian community, detainees, persons with physical disabilities, men; less positive towards women, poor people, Roma; and not positive towards elderly and HIV+ persons. The prevailing opinion indicator of the NIT audience regarding the manner of media coverage of disadvantaged is +1.8. The respondents that inform themselves more frequently from Prime TV believe that media has a positive attitude towards youth, men, women, elderly; less positive towards poor people and detainees; and not positive or rather discriminatory towards representatives of gay and lesbian community, HIV+ individuals, persons with disabilities. The prevailing opinion indicator of Prime TV audience is estimated at 0.4. The respondents that inform themselves more frequently from Moldova 1 consider that media has a positive non-discriminatory attitude towards Roma; less positive towards persons with risky behavior, representatives of gay and lesbian community and former detainees; and not positive or even discriminatory towards the other groups of people: youth, men, women, HIV+ persons, poor people, elderly, persons with physical or mental disabilities. The prevailing opinion indicator of Moldova 1 audience concerning the manner of media coverage of disadvantaged groups is (-0.6).

Introduction

The concept of stigma and discrimination. As stated in the specialized literature, stigma is a social label, a form of prejudice that discredits or rejects a person or a group of people that are deemed to be different from others. When people act on the basis of prejudice, stigma turns into discrimination. Stigma and discrimination go hand in hand and evolve as a spiral. Thus, stigma causes discriminatory attitudes towards certain groups of people depending on their age, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, health status, etc. Attitudes translate into discriminatory behaviors towards these groups of people, which, in their turn, contribute to increased stigma. The effects of stigma and discrimination are very negative for those groups and are expressed through their social, political and economic exclusion.

Relevance of research. In Moldova, the phenomenon of stigma and discrimination was studied mainly in terms of ethnic relations and public health, or in the context of other studies. Thus, the Institute for Public Policy, with the support of the Soros Foundation-Moldova, conducted a survey on interethnic relations in Moldova and studied the attitudes and behavior of different ethnic groups in relation to other ethnic groups³. In recent years, a number of sociological surveys were conducted on stigma and discrimination of HIV+ people and people infected with hepatitis B and C⁴. All these surveys revealed that the level of tolerance of different groups of people towards their peers of other ethnicities or with other health status is quite low, which indicates the potential availability of discrimination in other areas, which, unfortunately, were less studied if at all. In this context, there is an obvious need to conduct a comprehensive study on stigma and discrimination in order to diagnose the existing social problems and develop practical recommendations aimed at reducing these phenomena in Moldova.

Objectives of research. The goal of the research derives from one of the main objectives of the Equality and Civic Engagement Program of the Soros Foundation-Moldova, and namely: promoting values and practices underlying the fight against discrimination in the Republic of Moldova and is to study the phenomenon of discrimination and develop practical recommendations to mitigate its effects.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives were developed:

- Identify categories of people perceived as most frequent victims of discrimination,
- Identify categories of people exposed to constant discrimination
- Identify categories of people exposed to discrimination in certain social contexts (at the place of work, at the place of education, in public institutions),
- Study discrimination as a direct, indirect and representational experience,
- Study respondents' attitudes towards certain groups of people
- Identify the ways of coverage by the media of different categories of people
- Develop practical recommendations to reduce discrimination in the Republic of Moldova.

Research methodology

Research methods. Research methods applied in this study are as follows: Delphi research technique, face-to-face standardized interview and focus group.

Research stages. The study was conducted in three stages:

Stage I – research on experts using the Delphi research method.

Stage II – research on general population.

Stage III – conducting focus groups with experts

³ Ethnobarometer in the Republic of Moldova. Chisinau, 2006.

⁴ Impact Assessment. Knowledge, attitudes and practices of the population about hepatitis B and C. Chisinau, 2008.

Stage I - application of Delphi research technique. Delphi research technique was applied to define key indicators of the survey and develop the toolkit for the study on population. Thus, by applying the Delphi technique, indicators were defined for the following aspects: the main forms of discrimination in the Republic of Moldova, groups of people perceived as victims of discrimination, contexts of discrimination of different groups of people, stereotypes most frequently used in relation to different groups of people, institutions and policies that contribute to either reducing or increasing the degree of discrimination of various groups of people in Moldova, measures to be taken.

The Delphi study included the following steps:

1. Developing a list of open questions based on objectives of the research. Selection of 20 experts. The list of experts included people from the Non-discrimination Coalition, NGO leaders, and scholars. Experts did not know who was included in this list, which allowed anonymity.
2. Conducting the first round of expert interviews (interviews were conducted in writing and sent by electronic mail).
3. Summarizing the results obtained after the first round of interviews.
4. Developing a questionnaire with standardized questions as a result of the first round of research.
5. Presentation of the results obtained after the first round of expert interviews and the standardized questionnaire to be completed.
6. Conducting the second round of interviews.
7. Analyzing the resulting data.

A research toolkit, i.e. a standardized questionnaire, was developed based on the Delphi study.

Stage II - research on general population. The field survey of general population was carried out by CBS AXA Centre for Sociological Research on a sample of 1200 respondents. The sample was stratified, probabilistic, and multistage. The survey was conducted in 25 urban areas and 63 rural areas. The field survey was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the questionnaire was piloted in the field. In the second stage, after improving the piloted questionnaire, the survey itself was carried out.

Stage III - organization of focus groups. Three focus groups were conducted with experts, representatives of various NGOs and institutions specialized in protecting the rights of gay and lesbian community, HIV+ persons and persons with mental and physical disabilities. The main objective of the focus groups was to discuss the results of the field survey with experts and to develop practical recommendations to reduce discrimination of disadvantaged groups. The application of the focus group method included the following steps: 1) developing guidelines for focus group, 2) selecting participants to focus group, 3) conducting the focus group and recording discussions, 4) transcribing discussions, 5) analyzing the results of focus group discussions and drafting the report.

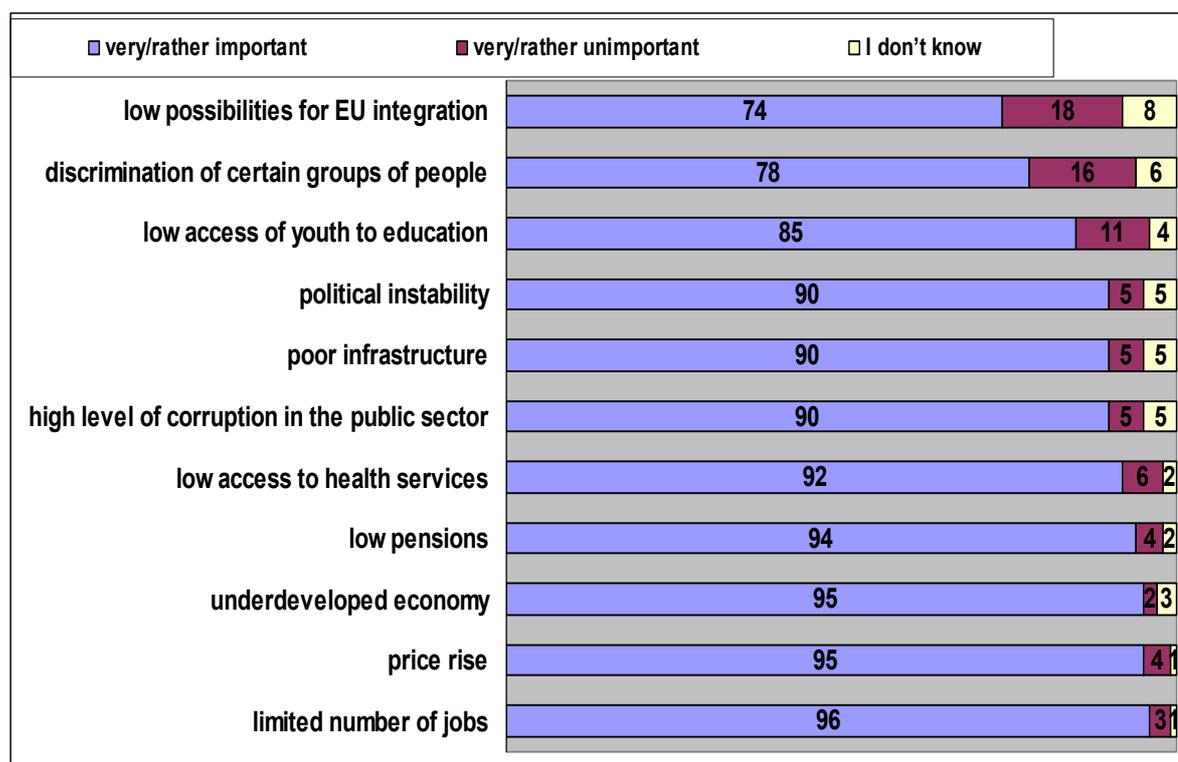
The study was conducted from March to September 2010 and includes the results of the research on population and experts.

1. Perceptions of the population on the groups of people frequently discriminated in Moldova

Discrimination in the context of other problems

According to the results of the Study, over 90% of the respondents consider that the most important problems for Moldova are the following: limited number of jobs, price rise, underdeveloped economy, low retirement pensions, low access to healthcare services, high level of corruption in the public sector and political instability. The problem of discrimination of certain groups of people, though considered important by over 2/3 of the respondents, has been listed last but one in the list of problems, ahead of the issue of low possibilities for EU integration (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. Respondents' perceptions on the level of importance of various problems for the Republic of Moldova, %

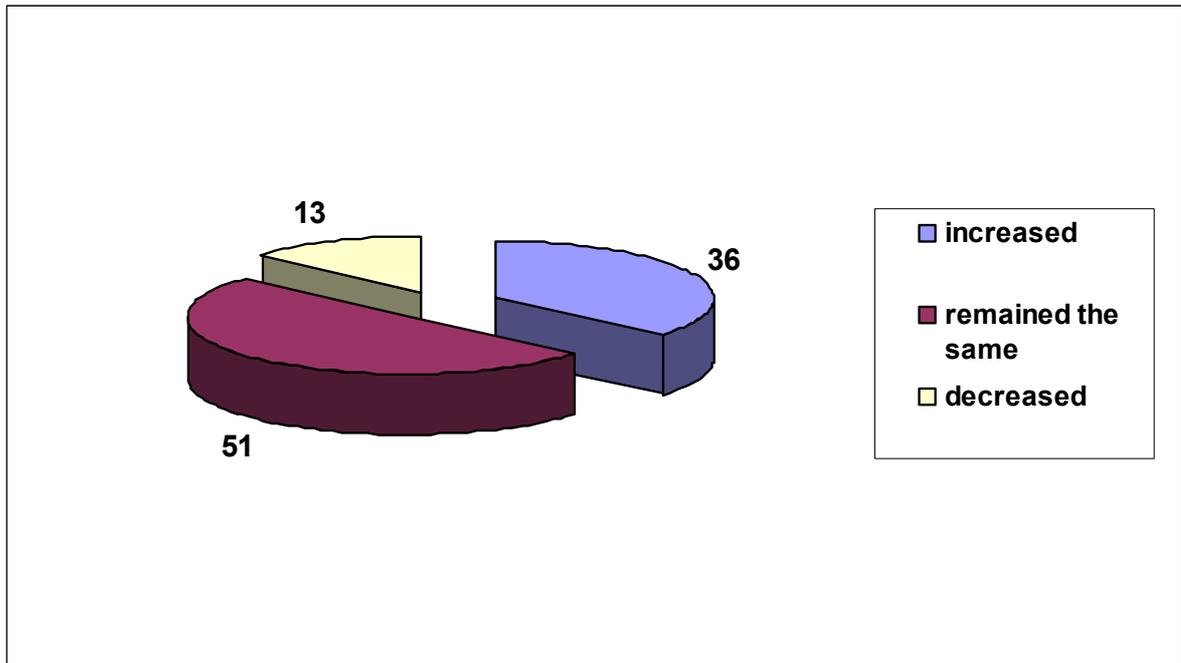


The share of people who consider discrimination as being an important problem for Moldova is higher in the urban area (80%), among women (80%), the age groups 18 – 34 (81%) and 50 – 64 (81%), people with primary and junior high school education (82%), school and university students (84%).

Dynamics of discrimination

Referring to the dynamics of discrimination during the past 5 years, one in three respondents mentioned that the level of discrimination increased, one in two said that it remained the same and 13% - that it reduced (see Chart 2).

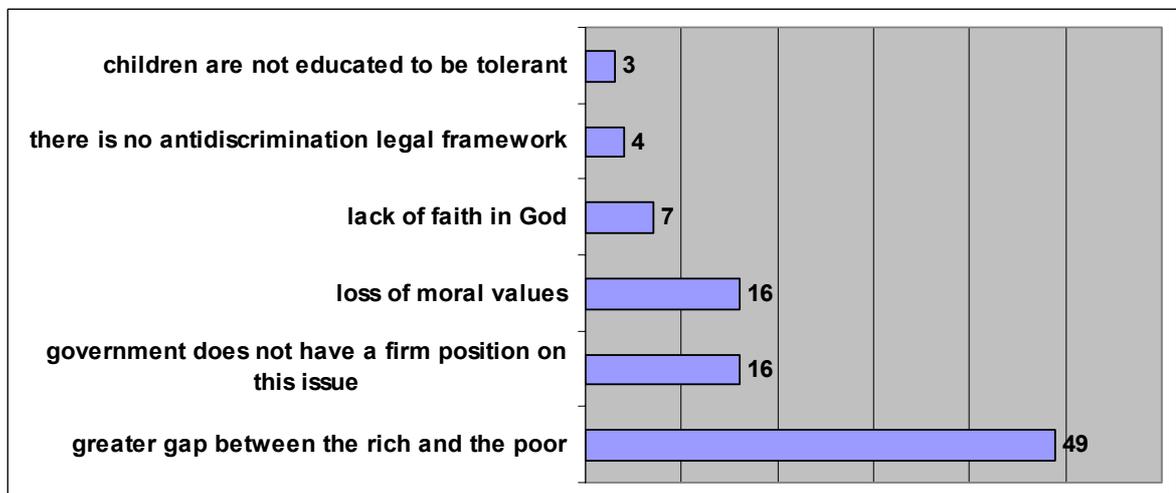
Chart 2. Perceptions of the population on the dynamics of discrimination during the past 5 years, %



The share of surveyed people who consider that the level of discrimination as a phenomenon increased is higher among women (42% compared to 30% among men), respondents of Russian ethnicity (41%) and persons with a high level of well-being (46%).

According to the respondents, there are a series of factors that have contributed to a higher level of discrimination, the major ones being the increase of the gap between the rich and the poor (49%), the loss of some moral values (16%) and the fact that the Government does not have a sound position on this (16%) (see Chart 3).

Chart 3. Factors that led to a higher level of discrimination, %



The share of people who consider the increase of the gap between the rich and the poor as being a main factor that has led to a higher level of discrimination is higher in the urban area (56% compared to the rural one - 43%), in the age group of 65 years (56%), among respondents looking for a job (55%) and among respondents of Russian ethnicity (57%).

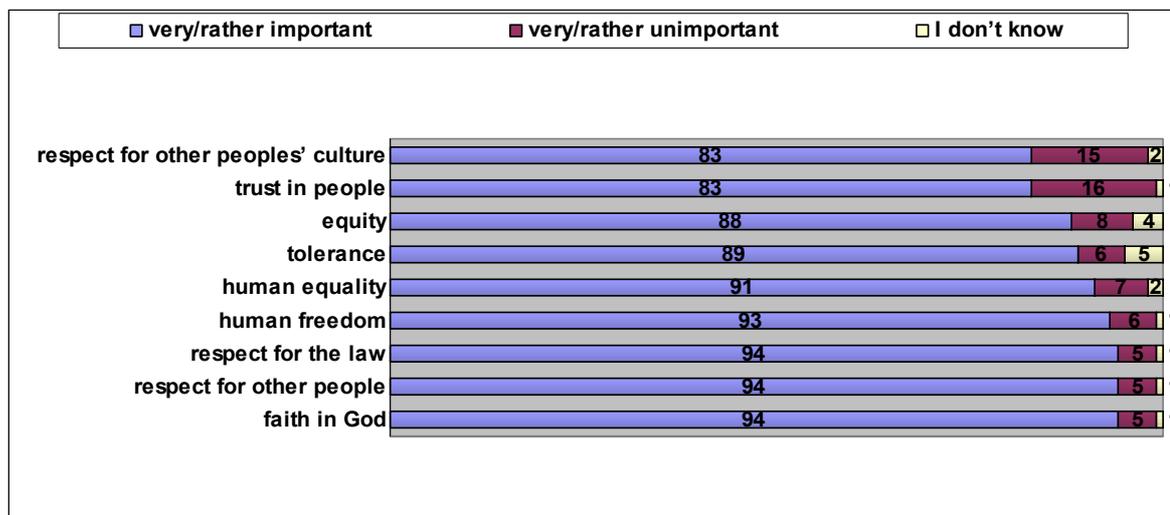
The share of persons who believe the loss of moral values has led to a higher level of discrimination in Moldova is higher among school and university students (34%) and the persons of Gagauz ethnicity (26%).

Tolerance and respect for other peoples' culture in terms of moral values

In this survey, we have tried to establish the importance of tolerance and respect to other peoples' culture for the respondents, in terms of moral values, and to what extent such values are respected in Moldova.

The Study has revealed that, although 89% of the respondents consider tolerance as a very important or rather important moral value, it is positioned as far as the sixth place in the list of values, after the faith in God (94%), respect for other people (94%), respect for the law (94%), human freedom (93%) and human equality (91%) (see Chart 4).

Chart 4. Level of importance of moral values for respondents, %



Only 83% of the respondents consider faith in people and respect for other peoples' culture as being rather important or very important to them.

The share of those who consider tolerance as a rather important or very important value gets higher as the respondents' age goes down (from 82% in the age group 65+ up to 92% in the age group 18-34) and as the level of education goes up (from 81% among the persons with primary and junior high school education up to 92% in the group of people with graduate and postgraduate studies).

In terms of ethnicity, the share of respondents who consider tolerance as a rather important or very important value is higher among Bulgarians (97%), Gagauz people (92%) and Moldovans/Romanians (92%) and lower among persons of Russian (86%) and Ukrainian (85%) ethnicity (85%).

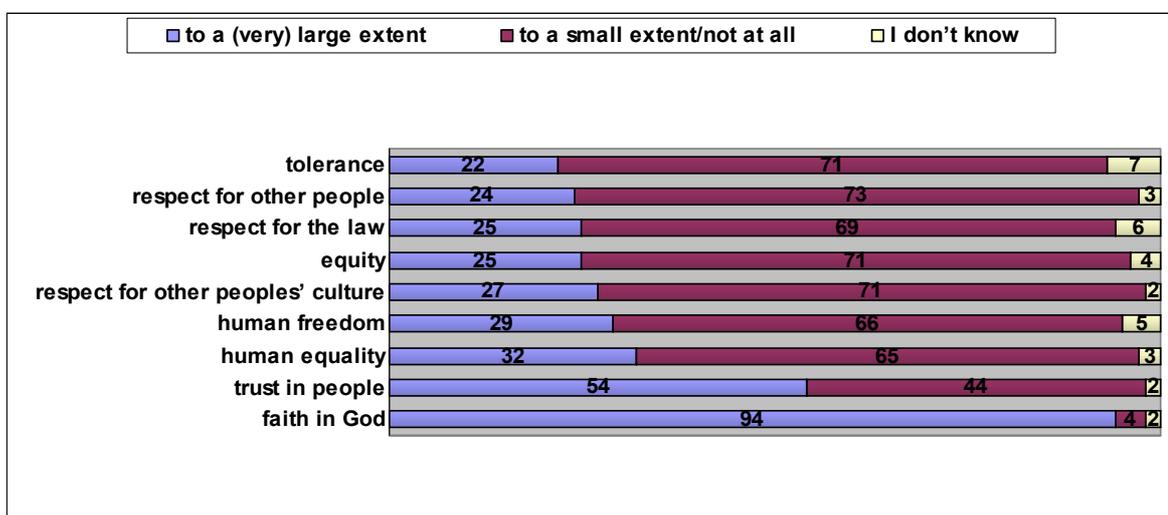
The value assigned to tolerance by the respondents also depends on the extent to which they value other moral principles such as the faith in God, trust in people, respect for other people. Thus, according to the survey, the share of those who consider tolerance as very important is higher among the respondents for whom faith in God is very important or rather important (90%) than among those for whom faith in God is rather or totally unimportant (75%). At the same time, the share of respondents who deem tolerance very important or rather important is higher in the group of respondents for whom trust in people is very important or rather important than in the group of those for whom this does not represent a value (90% compared to 81%). 91% of the respondents who regard the respect for people as a rather important or very important principle value tolerance in the same way, as compared to 61% - in the group of people for which the respect for other people is rather or totally unimportant.

Concerning the respect for other peoples' culture, as in the case of tolerance, the share of respondents who consider this value as rather important or very important is higher among people with higher education (89%), Bulgarians (97%), Ukrainians (95%), Gagauz people (94%), Moldovans/Romanians (90%) and the persons who value highly the faith in God (87%), the trust in people (89%), and the respect for others (88%).

Although 89% of the respondents have mentioned that tolerance is very important or rather important for them, only one in five believe that this value is respected in Moldova to a large or very large extent. Concerning the respect for other peoples' culture, one in three respondents has mentioned that this value is observed in Moldova to a large or very large extent.

In the respondents' opinion, the most respected value in Moldova is faith in God (94%), followed by trust in people (54%). Only one third of the surveyed people consider that equality and freedom are respected in Moldova to a large or very large extent, while only one in four respondents think that equity, law and other people are respected to a large or very large extent (see Chart 5)

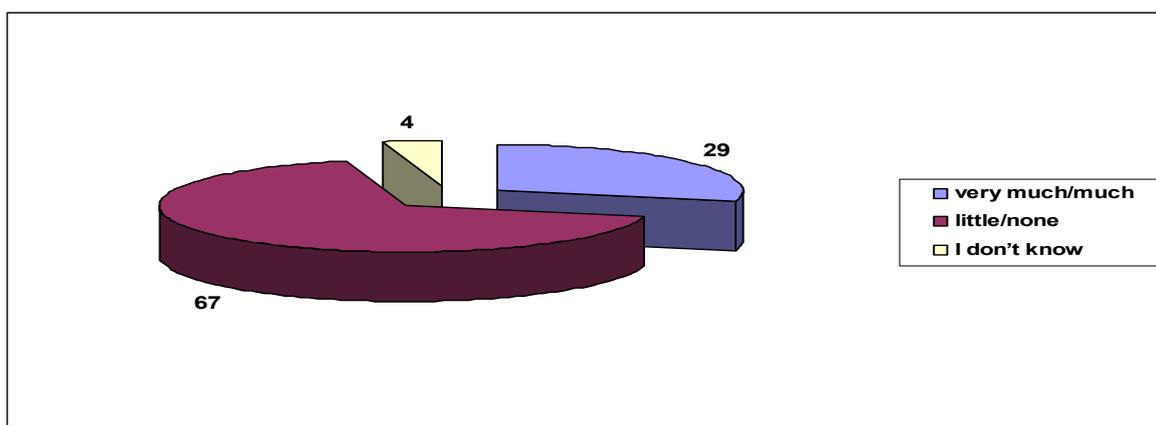
Chart 5. Respondents' perceptions on the level of respect for moral values in Moldova, %



Respondents' trust in people.

Even though 83% of the respondents indicated trust in people as being important and very important and one in two indicated that this value is respected in Moldova to a large and very large extent, when asked individually how much they trust people, about two thirds of the surveyed persons reported they had very little or no trust in people, while only 29% said they trusted people much or very much (see Chart 6).

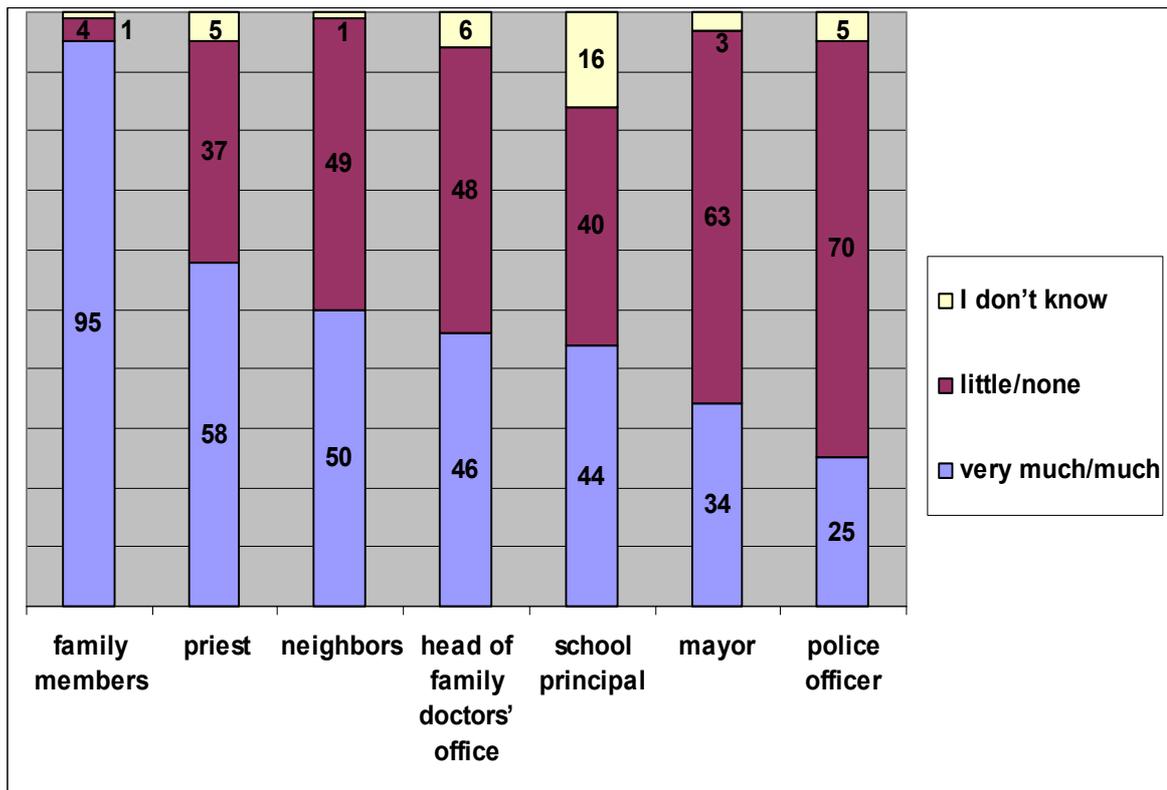
Chart 6. Level of respondents' trust in people, %



The percentage of respondents who trust people much or very much is higher among persons aged over 50 (36%), with primary and junior high school education (38%), the retired persons, persons with disabilities (39%), Gagauz people (46%), Bulgarians (45%), Russians (40%) and Ukrainians (39%), being lower among the group of people aged 35-49 (23%), those looking for a job (23%), the Moldovans/Romanians (27%), and the persons with a low level of well-being (26%).

The low level of respondents' trust in people is quite obvious in the answers to the question "How much do you trust the following persons?.. Thus, the results of the study have revealed that the population shows most trust to their family members (95%), followed, far down in the top, by the priest (58%), the neighbors (50%), the head of the family doctors unit (46%) and the school principal (44%). More than 2/3 of the population mentioned that they have little or no trust at all in the mayor and the police (see Chart 7).

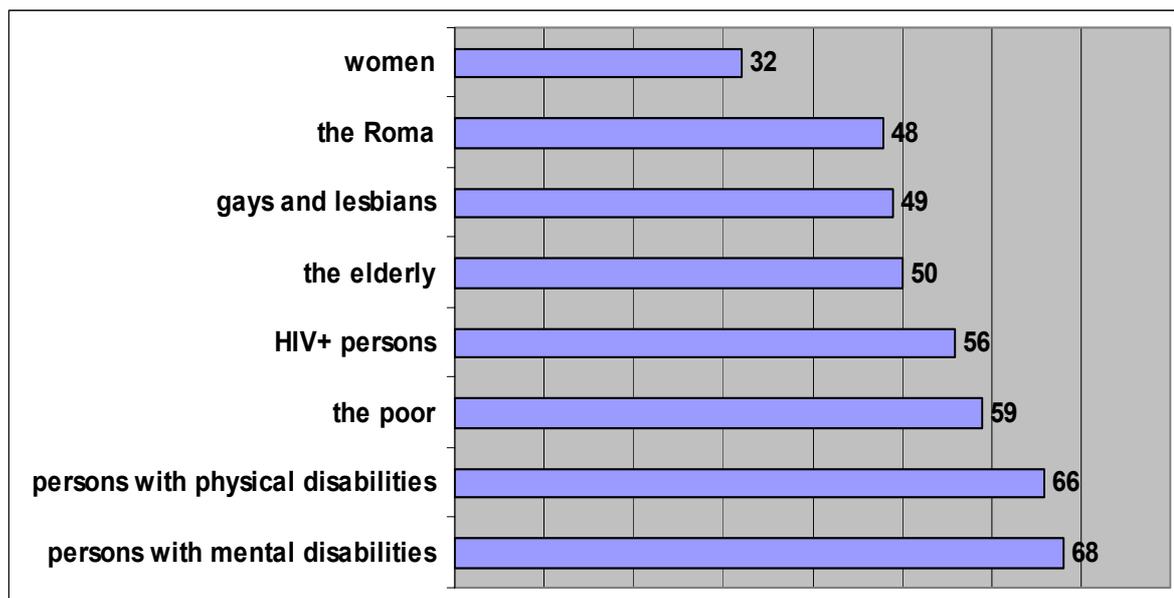
Chart 7. Level of respondents' trust in different persons within the community, %



Groups of people most frequently discriminated in Moldova

When asked what groups of people are most frequently discriminated in Moldova, 2/3 of the respondents answered that these are people with mental and physical disabilities; over 50% – the poor and the HIV-positive persons, and one in two respondents – the elderly, the representatives of the gay and lesbian community and the Roma, while one in three respondents said – women (see Chart 8).

Chart 8. Respondents' perceptions on the most frequently discriminated persons in Moldova, %



Respondents' perceptions as regards the persons most frequently discriminated in Moldova differ by residence area, age and education. Therefore, a general trend has been noticed about all the abovementioned groups: the share of respondents who consider that these groups of people are frequently discriminated is higher in the urban area, in the age group 18–34 and among respondents with a high level of education. The perceptions regarding the discrimination of the elderly are an exception to this tendency. Thus, the percentage of surveyed persons who consider that the elderly are frequently or very frequently discriminated is higher in the age group of over 65 (54%), and among people with a low level of education (50%) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents' perceptions on the groups of people most frequently discriminated in Moldova, by residence area, age and education, %

	total	urban	rural	18-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	65 and more years	high level of education	middle level of education	low level of education
persons with mental disabilities	68	75	63	73	69	63	59	73	65	56
persons with physical disabilities	66	73	61	73	66	58	58	70	61	58
the poor	59	64	51	66	56	54	57	60	55	59
HIV+ persons	56	61	52	60	55	55	44	56	54	49
the elderly	50	54	47	50	46	50	54	48	49	50
gays and lesbians	49	55	44	58	48	41	38	51	49	37
the Roma	48	56	42	55	48	41	36	50	44	44
women	32	35	30	34	28	33	32	34	29	29

Therefore, following an analysis of population's perceptions on the frequently discriminated groups of people in Moldova, we can conclude that, though discrimination of certain groups of people is considered an important problem by over 2/3 of the respondents, it comes last in the list of problems, much further than the problems related to unemployment, price rise, underdeveloped economy, low pensions, low access to healthcare service, underdeveloped infrastructure, political instability, and even low access of the youth to education.

One in three respondents considers that the level of discrimination increased during the past five years, while half of them think it remained the same, and 13% believe that it reduced. The share of respondents who think the level of discrimination increased is higher among women, people of Russian ethnicity, and persons with a high level of well-being. Most respondents believe that the level of discrimination has increased because of the greater gap between the rich and the poor, the fact that the Government has no clear position on this issue, and due to the loss of certain moral values.

Despite the fact that 89% of the respondents consider tolerance as being a very important moral value, this was placed as far as the sixth place in the list of values. The percentage of respondents who consider tolerance as an important value is higher among persons with higher education (92%) and in the age group 18-34 (92%).

The study has revealed a quite significant gap between the importance assigned by respondents to values such as the freedom, equality, tolerance and respect for other peoples' culture, as well as the level of observance of such values in Moldova. Thus, although more than 90% deem equality and freedom as important values, only one in three respondents have stated that these values are respected to a large extent in Moldova. The tolerance and the respect for other peoples' culture have been reported as important values by over 80% of the surveyed persons, while only slightly over 20% consider that these values are respected in Moldova to a large and very large extent.

At the same time, the Study has established that there is no gap between the importance and the respect of the faith in God (94% of the surveyed persons have mentioned that this is a very important value and the same number said that it is respected in our country to a large and very large extent).

Although over 80% of the respondents reported trust in people as an important and very important value and more than 50% have mentioned that it is respected in our country, only one in three respondents stated that they trust people much and very much. Most of the surveyed persons show the highest level of confidence only to their family members, followed far down in the top by the priest, the neighbors, the head of the family doctors unit and the school principal. Over 2/3 of the surveyed persons have mentioned that they do not trust the mayor and the police at all.

At perception level, the respondents consider that the groups most frequently discriminated in Moldova are the persons with mental and physical disabilities (68% and 66% respectively), followed by the poor (59%), the HIV-positive persons (56%), the elderly (50%), the representatives of the gay and lesbian community (49%), the Roma (48%) and the women (32%).

2. Social contexts in which various groups of people are discriminated

During the research, the perceptions of the general public as well as experts have been identified on the social contexts in which different groups are most frequently exposed to discrimination. As regards the general public, the respondents have been asked how frequently in their opinion the following groups are being discriminated – disabled people, the poor, HIV-positive persons, the elderly, representatives of gay and lesbian community, Roma people and women – in the following contexts: employment, workplace, relations with public authorities, education institutions, hospital/clinic, political life, social assistance/protection and family. For each social group the Dominant Personal Opinion Index (DPOI)⁵ has been computed in different contexts, which can vary between -100 and +100. The more DPOI is closer to -100, the higher the level of discrimination is and vice-versa.

The experts' opinions on the disadvantaged social groups and the contexts in which these are exposed to discrimination have been identified in the framework of the Delphi study and focus groups carried out.

Persons with disabilities

According to the DPOI of the general public, the persons with disabilities are exposed to discrimination most often upon employment (-63), at workplace (-51), in education institutions (-31), in relations with public authorities (-30) and in political life (-22) and least often in family (+19) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents' perceptions on the frequency of discrimination of various groups of people in various contexts (DPOI)

	employment	workplace	relations with authorities	education institutions	hospital/clinic	political life	social assistance/protection	family	average DPOI
persons with disabilities	-63	-51	-30	-31	-13	-22	-7	19	-25
the poor	-32	-29	-28	-36	-40	-21	-8	18	-22
HIV+ persons	-42	-38	-25	-30	-19	-15	-8	4	-22
the elderly	-51	-37	-22	-7	-16	-3	4	23	-13
gays and lesbians	-17	-18	-10	-15	-5	-8	-2	3	-9
the Roma	-6	-1	6	9	15	9	16	35	10
women	24	29	30	43	43	19	40	40	34

The high level of discrimination of the persons with disabilities was confirmed by the results of the expert research. Thus, in the experts' opinion, the discrimination of the disabled people upon employment is due to the lack of effective policies in the field which would encourage companies to hire disabled people, the fact that workplaces are not adjusted to the needs of the disabled people, the limited access of the disabled people to professional training courses offered by the employment agencies, and sometimes the fear of employers that the disabled people will not meet the requirements.

⁵ The Dominant Personal Opinion Index (DPOI) was calculated using the formula $(p-n) \times (100 - ne) : 100$, where p is the frequency of positive opinions, n – frequency of negative opinions, ne – frequency of neutral opinions. The index ranges on a scale from -100 to 100. The closer to 100 the index is, the lower the level of discrimination is.

„After graduating I applied for a position of secretary at an embassy. I passed the selection stage based on personal files. But during the interview, although my qualifications had been appreciated, I was not selected. Somebody on the selection panel whispered to the employer not to hire me because I will not be able to fix and bring a coffee. The terms of reference did not include such a requirement. And they said this thing in my presence. I also know whom they hired. They invent different things just not to hire you.”

The experts mentioned that sometimes, even though employers are open and offer employment opportunities to disabled people, they cannot be hired because of the limited access to premises. In fact, the experts mentioned the lack of access ramps as one of the major obstacles for disabled people both upon employment and access to other community services.

„The existing infrastructure is not adjusted and not accessible and still we continue to build buildings with no access ramps. Most shops, government buildings, public institutions do not have access ramps. Not a single town hall in rural areas of Moldova has access ramps.

Sometimes the authorities explain the lack of access ramps by the fact that there are no disabled people. Sometimes there are ramps but they are built with a high angle and therefore cannot be used by people in wheelchairs.

Even the Department of Psychology and Pedagogy of the “Ion Creanga” Pedagogical University, which is the department training social assistants and psychologists, has neither access ramps nor classrooms adjusted to the needs of the disabled people.”

In the experts' opinion the disabled people are discriminated in the education system by the limited physical access of such children to the education institutions' infrastructure (most education institutions do not have access ramps, doors are narrow and preclude the access of wheelchairs), limited mobility access within the premises (classroom system, lessons on different floors, doorsteps, lack of adjusted restrooms etc.), an unadjusted learning environment (lack of a national curriculum adjusted to the needs of disabled children and of a mechanism to evaluate their knowledge, lack of adjusted textbooks, untrained teachers), the lack of support services (underdeveloped legal framework on employment of support teachers, personal assistants etc.), as well as the discriminatory attitude of schoolmates and their parents.

„In school the discrimination of disabled children starts with the fact that, according to the national curriculum which is very rigid, they are forced to have the same level of performance and to achieve the same objectives as other pupils. Nobody is taking into account their individual needs and skills. Obviously, in such conditions, the disabled children cannot achieve the same level of performance as ordinary children and, consequently, they are reproached of being stupid and unfit.

The teachers also have a discriminatory attitude towards these children. Some of them seem to be open and wish for a change but being forced at the end of the day to report on the level of graduation, they do not have time to take special care of the disabled children. In this situation, it is necessary to amend the current legislation with a view of making mandatory for these teachers to pay more attention to children with special needs in order to achieve their full school inclusion.,,

Most experts mentioned that, even though in the last year the concept of inclusive schooling is back in the spotlight and the Ministry of Education issued a decree regarding school inclusion of the disabled children, there are no effective mechanisms to implement the said decree and no financial resources necessary to support the disabled children in education institutions. In these conditions, each education institution is doing whatever it can. One solution would be the enforcement of a new Education Code, which would provide a mechanism of school inclusion for disabled people, namely: developing adjusted curricula, hiring support teaching personnel for disabled children, developing a mechanism for assessing knowledge of such children etc.

The experts also mentioned the limited access of the disabled people to health services which is underlined by the fact that their needs regarding health services are much greater than their opportunities. The insurance policy covers only the guaranteed minimum, just like in the case of other categories. Often the list of compensated medicines includes only cheap and less effective medicines, and the people concerned are forced to buy themselves the medicines they need. Sometimes there are no compensated medicines in pharmacies for months and in order not to disrupt their cures the disabled people are forced to buy them from their pension which is very low and does not cover even the subsistence minimum.

As regards people with mental disabilities, the experts on the focus groups pointed out the limited access of such people and their relatives to their medical files. Medical personnel do not inform people with

mental disabilities and their families on how to monitor their health status in order to prevent the worsening of their condition and to avoid health crises which often lead to the devaluation and discrimination of the people in question. The limited access to information on their diagnostic impedes people with mental disabilities from accessing complementary services.

“Such people and their relatives do not have access to their medical files and are not informed on their disease and on how they should live in the community and control the situation. People with mental problems are not taught to control the situation, and do not know that they must take medication in order to avoid difficult situations and to avoid being mocked at.”

During the discussions in focus groups, it was mentioned that disabled people have limited access to information. Thus, in the experts' opinion, people with hearing difficulties are not able to listen in news bulletins on TV since these are not translated into the sign language. Intellectually-challenged people cannot follow news bulletins on TV because these are conveyed in a language which is not accessible to such people and there is no opportunity to adapt the texts in question to the needs of such people.

The experts also agreed that people with physical and mental disabilities are not enabled to cast their vote. Thus, people with sight disabilities cannot read ballots and are forced to be accompanied by somebody. People with physical disabilities do not have access to the polling stations or polling booths because of their wheelchairs. Intellectually-challenged people can neither read ballots, nor sign in the constituents' lists, and need support in both cases. In such conditions, a solution would be to type ballots in the Braille system for blind people and opening of polling stations in premises with access ramps.

“We are now in an election campaign and we can tell that many persons with disabilities, particularly sight disabilities are precluded from voting. They can be accompanied to the polling booth by another person, but cannot be sure that the said person will fully respect their voting preference. Perhaps, 9000 ballots should be typed in the Braille system.”

“At my polling station there are many stairs. The last time, when I went to vote on the referendum, we went with the bus from our centre which is equipped with a ramp. We installed the ramp right there on the stairs and I was able to go in. Every time I have to ask my neighbors to accompany me.”

In the experts' opinion, the disabled people often start themselves their discrimination, by not having confidence in their own forces, by isolating themselves, by trying to justify their failures by their disabilities. Often they view the surrounding world through the lens of their rights, but not that of their responsibilities.

“Disabled people self discriminate. They believe that nobody understands them and do not have any desire to move on. Right now we invited for training 10 young disabled people, but they are very passive and irresponsible, they do not want to go to classes, they do not want to learn.”

Obviously, in this situation, a complex approach is needed in respect of the disabled people, which should focus on both their rights and the necessity to promote the respect of such rights, but also on their responsibilities and an active involvement in solving own problems. The limited access of disabled people to social protection is underlined, in the experts' opinion, by the low pension which does not cover even the subsistence minimum, as well as by a limited access to community-based social services.

The poor

According to the general public DPOI, the poor are discriminated most often in hospital/clinic (-40), in education institutions (-36), upon employment (-32), at workplace (-29), in relations with authorities (-28) (see Table 2).

According to the expert research, the discrimination of the poor in the health care field is expressed by their limited access to medical care. Most of the poor are unemployed and do not have medical insurance. Medicines are very expensive and they cannot afford buying them. Even when they have medical insurance, but do not have money to pay for some medical services, doctors treat them distantly and very badly.

The discrimination of the poor in the education field is manifested by the limited access of children from vulnerable families to education. Thus, children from poor families often drop school because they do not have means to buy clothes, footwear and school supplies. They are also discriminated and teased by schoolmates and parents of the latter for not contributing to the school fund.

The discrimination of the poor in relations with the authorities is manifested by the limited access of these people to the decision-making process at the local level. Thus, they are not involved in the community activities and in the decision-making process and nobody cares about their opinions.

HIV-positive persons

According to the general public DPOI, HIV-positive persons are discriminated most upon employment (-42), at workplace (-38), in education institutions (-30), in relations with authorities (-25), in hospital/clinic (-19) (see Table 2).

The experts also mentioned during the conducted Delphi study and focus group discussions the high level of discrimination of HIV-positive persons in the labor, education and health fields. Thus, in respect of discrimination in the labor field, the experts noted that even though under the Moldovan legislation there is no requirement to submit a HIV status certificate upon employment, many companies ask for such a document and consequently HIV-positive persons are instantly prevented from getting a job.

"I know a case when a person applying for an administrative position with a territorial medical institution was requested to take all medical tests, including the HIV test. It was really ridiculous, since that person was of pre-retirement age."

In the experts' opinion, even when the employer does not ask for a HIV-status certificate, there are other ways to determine whether a person is HIV-positive. One situation would be the requirement to submit the military service record, which includes, under the existing legislation, the HIV status of the person in question. An indirect way to ascertain the HIV status of a person is the requirement to submit a medical certificate when the person in question took a sick leave. The medical certificate will usually specify the disease.

"The Ministry of Health issued two decrees regarding the manner of indicating the disease suffered in the medical certificate and none of these prevents the chance of disclosing the HIV status. Thus, pursuant to one decree issued in March 2010, all medical certificates shall specify the disease from which the person concerned suffered, and under the decree issued in July, the medical certificate can include only the code assigned to the disease in question under the international medical classification. The simultaneous existence of two contradicting decrees leaves room for interpretations and inconsistent application by the medical personnel. Another negative factor is the limited access of doctors to the decrees and regulations issued by the Ministry of Health, which are not collected in a single database."

"In the Republic of Moldova, if you have to submit a sick leave medical certificate, it will include the diagnosis and that is a problem for people infected with HIV, hepatitis or tuberculosis. Such a diagnosis can be reason for discrimination. When you submit a medical certificate indicating that you suffer from diabetes, everybody would show compassion, but if the certificate shows that you have a sexually-transmitted disease it is obvious that everybody will think that you are an immoral person and will change their attitude towards you. There is too much personal, intimate information which in my opinion should not be disclosed to other people."

In the experts' opinion, although trade unions should take consistent measures to protect the rights of HIV-positive persons, the decree on HIV testing for people practicing certain professions was approved with the trade unions' consent. Likewise, there is a list of professions compiled under the law, which cannot be practiced by HIV-positive persons.

As regards the discrimination in the health field, the experts mentioned that there is still a practice of writing in red ink the code of HIV on medical records of the HIV-positive persons. This code is well-known by all medical workers and not only.

In the same context, the experts mentioned the existing discriminatory practice regarding the HIV-positive pregnant women who are forced to give birth only in specially designated hospitals.

"Even in these hospitals the doctors who received extensive training in the area refuse to make planned birth-related surgeries, maintaining that women in question can give birth naturally. Such an attitude can be explained most of the times by the fear to come in direct contact with the blood of HIV-positive women."

The experts mentioned during the discussions that the level of tolerance of doctors towards the HIV-positive persons is even lower than that of the general public, standing at only 2% according to some recent sociological surveys. Medical personnel often refuse to treat HIV-positive persons or perform certain procedures, particularly those which involve direct contact with blood; refuse to admit HIV-positive persons

to hospitals; use additional safety measures (put on two pairs of gloves, mask etc.) when have suspicions that patients are HIV-infected; do not respect the confidential nature of the HIV-related medical information. Some patients suspected of being HIV-infected are forced to take HIV tests (without their written consent). Such facts can be largely explained by a greater exposure risk faced by the medical personnel and by the limited access of medical workers to effective protection means.

"In many wards, in particular gynecological ones, there are no sufficient gloves and instruments for urgent disinfection measures in case of accidents. Given the lack of necessary measures to ensure an effective control, the fear of doctors to get infected with HIV or other contagious diseases grows and, consequently the discrimination of people under consideration is also higher."

As regards discrimination in the education field, the experts expressed their opinion that there are higher education institutions, such as the Medical University and Police Academy, where submitting the HIV status certificate is mandatory upon enrolling. Likewise, foreign students are forced to take the HIV test every year and submit such certificates to the education institutions they are enrolled at. In the experts' opinion, in the last years there have been cases where children of HIV-positive persons were expelled from kindergartens and schools at the request of teachers and parents of other children.

"Foreign students submit annually HIV status certificates. Both the Police Academy and the Medical University request such certificates upon enrolment. There is no express requirement to indicate the HIV status in the customary medical certificate which is necessary for enrolment at any university, but there is a high likelihood that doctors will mention it."

The elderly

According to the perception of the general public, the elderly are discriminated most upon employment (-51), at workplace (-37), and in relations with authorities (-22) (see Table 2).

As regards the discrimination upon employment and at workplace, the experts mentioned that the elderly are often forced to leave their positions, even though they would be able to work well after reaching the retirement age. They find with difficulty jobs appropriate to their physical capabilities. At workplace the elderly are discriminated by being often considered obsolete, and their views and opinions being disregarded, since younger people wish to prove their superiority.

Representatives of gay and lesbian community

According to the general public DPOI, representatives of gay and lesbian community are discriminated most at workplace (-18), upon employment (-17) and in education institutions (-15) (see Table 2).

Although representatives of gay and lesbian community in the general public's opinion are discriminated to a lesser extent than other disadvantaged groups, the experts in the field have a different opinion. Thus, according to the Delphi study and focus group discussions, the experts share the opinion that representatives of gay and lesbian community are one of the most discriminated groups in the Republic of Moldova. In their view, the general public perception that representatives of gay and lesbian community are not discriminated is explained by the fact that these people are one of the so-called hidden groups.

"These persons are most of the time invisible. And if most respondents do not know any representatives of gay and lesbian community, it is understandable that they are not aware of any violations of such people's rights."

Compared to other disadvantaged groups, representatives of gay and lesbian community are discriminated both in the health care, labor, and education fields, as well as in their own family. Thus, the experts mentioned that they would often see cases when representatives of gay and lesbian community are banished from home by their own parents (including people that are under 18 years of age) or are refused to rent a flat because of their sexual orientation.

Representatives of gay and lesbian community are, in the experts' opinion, discriminated to a great extent by the medical personnel. If, for example, they approach an urologist with some health problems,

they are forced to hide the truth about their sexual relations and their partner. If they tell the truth, they are forced by doctors to take tests for HIV and venereal diseases, being treated from the onset as pervert people with a deviant behavior. A representative of gay and lesbian community cannot donate blood.

“At the blood collection centre up to this day they use a questionnaire which includes a question on same-sex relations. If somebody indicates that they had such relations, they are forbidden to donate blood, they are asked to present an ID, a picture is taken of them and they are introduced in a database. The medical system is repressive and pathologizing.”

In the experts' opinion, representatives of gay and lesbian community are discriminated at workplace when their status is known. Thus, very often when the employer learns about a person's status, he/she will try to find various legal grounds to dismiss that person, on the rationale of not ruining the reputation of his/her organization. The discrimination in the labor field was associated by the experts with the violation of the right to identity of the representatives of gay and lesbian community.

“If upon employment representatives of gay and lesbian community are asked whether they are married, they are forced to hide this fact. When preparing a CV for employment at the section “sex”, a transgender will find it difficult to indicate a sex that is different from the one mentioned in the birth certificate. Representatives of gay and lesbian community cannot attend corporate parties accompanied by their partner.”

Gay people, in the experts' opinion, are blackmailed by police officers who try to extort money by threatening them with disclosing their sexual orientation to their family and co-workers.

“Often police officers abuse their position when dealing with representatives of gay and lesbian community.”

Representatives of gay and lesbian community are often deprived of the right to public assembly, which is reasoned by the possibility of them violating the moral rules upheld by the majority of society members. Below are few examples of violation of the right of representatives of gay and lesbian community to public assembly:

“A striking example is the prohibition of the peaceful assembly which was planned by the “GenderDoc-M” Information Centre in support of the draft Law on preventing and combating discrimination in May 2008. In April 2008 our organization filed a statement to the Mayor's office of Chisinau to inform on the organization of the said peaceful assembly. Although according to the current legislation such a statement has a purely informative value, two officers of the Department for the protection of public morality of the General Police Commissariat handed over to our chairman a letter from the Mayor's office prohibiting our planned peaceful assembly.

Before the festival of sexual minorities in 2006, we received around 20 messages on the e-mail account of GenderDoc-M with threats from different individuals and religious organizations stating that GenderDoc-M promotes homosexuality and tries to destroy moral values of the Moldovan citizens. All these letters claimed that homosexuality is a sin, that representatives of gay and lesbian community are perverts and that the populace of Moldova do not want them inside the country.

On 3 May 2006, before the festival start, the chairman of the Association of Victims of Repressions phoned to the GenderDoc-M office and firmly demanded that our executive director do not go to lay flowers at the monument of the victims of repressions, since LGBT people do not have anything to do with the victims of repressions. She said, quote: “It is our monument and we will not let you lay flowers there.” In 2007 we planned again to lay flowers at the victims' monument. We were warned beforehand that we should not go there, because police will wait for us. When we approached the monument we found that it is surrounded by police officers and cars. When we asked them why we are not allowed to lay flowers, we did not get any answer.”

The violation of the right to assembly of the representatives of gay and lesbian community is often reasoned by an eventual indecent behavior of the latter, which could have a negative impact on children and young people.

“People perceive gays and lesbians as people who can behave in an indecent manner in public places: they will convene undressed, will kiss indecently, will touch each other etc. Homosexuality is associated with indecency and vulgarity. People's attitude is influenced to a great degree by media which, most of the times in search for hot news, present representatives of gay and lesbian community in indecent postures.”

The experts think that the negative attitude of the majority of population towards representatives of gay and lesbian community is shaped by the low level of information of population on the needs and values of the group in question, by the traditional patriarchal views in the society on the gender roles and sexual relations, as well as by the use by the Orthodox Church of discriminatory language towards these people.

In this context, the experts mentioned that in the Moldovan society the gender roles are rigidly defined, and when a person of a certain sex takes on a role "reserved" for the other sex, this is perceived as a serious violation of values and moral rules. The rigid distribution of the gender roles is supported to a great extent also by the Orthodox Church and the state.

"In our society the gender roles are rigidly defined. When opposite gender roles are taken on by people of the same sex, certain patriarchal, conservative traditions are violated, and this is condemned by the church, state and society."

The Orthodox Church often views homosexual relations as sinful, pervert, which go against the human nature and should be morally condemned.

The negative attitude towards homosexual relations is affected also by the society attitude towards sexual relations in general, which are viewed by the majority of population through the lens of religion and are perceived rather as a necessity and a condition for procreation than an expression of love.

"Tabooing sex and promoting the act of procreation as the essence of sexual relations lead to a discriminatory attitude towards representatives of gay and lesbian community."

The experts also expressed the opinion that representatives of gay and lesbian community are discriminated also because they are associated with pedophiles and HIV-positive persons, which in fact is not true.

"Not all pedophiles are representatives of gay and lesbian community. For a pedophile the sexual object is a child and often the sex of the child does not matter at all."

As regards the association of representatives of gay and lesbian community with HIV-positive persons, the experts noted that according to data hold by the AIDS Centre, the percentage of HIV-positive representatives of gay and lesbian community is very low.

"The perception that representatives of gay and lesbian community are HIV-positive comes from the past, when homosexual relations were one of the ways to contact HIV. Nowadays representatives of gay and lesbian community have a high degree of information on the ways of HIV transmission and on protection against it, they protect themselves efficiently and are not one of the risk groups. Within the HIV-positive group the number of migrant workers increased over the last years."

A reason for discrimination of representatives of gay and lesbian community is the low level of information of population on the people in question, on their values and life-style. As the experts mentioned, people often think that it is dangerous to even be in the same room with such people because they could invade your intimacy and sexually harass you.

"Often attention coming from a representative of gay and lesbian community is perceived as harassment, while attention coming from a person of the opposite sex is perceived as flirtation."

Persons of Roma ethnicity

In the general population's opinion, Roma people are most often discriminated upon employment (-6) and at workplace (-1).

The expert research revealed the fact that Roma people, in addition to discrimination at workplace, are also discriminated in the education and healthcare fields. Thus, in regard to the education field, the experts think that a large share of Roma children do not attend school both because they are poor and do not have proper clothes and footwear, but also because they are not properly prepared for school (they did not go to kindergarten) and because they have no opportunities to study in their mother tongue.

"Roma people are rejected and despised by the society, being looked at as second-class people. Roma pupils and students do not have opportunities to study in their mother tongue. People of Roma ethnicity are discriminated in the labor field, are not offered employment and are despised at workplace. They do not have full access to quality medical services."

The high competition on the labor market, the low level of education of Roma people or, sometimes, even the lack of any education result in their exclusion from the labor market.

"Children do not finish school; they do not have studies or specific qualifications to be able to access employment opportunities. Citizens of Moldova display little tolerance towards people who are different, and consequently it is very difficult for Roma people to integrate."

The attitude towards Roma is fuelled in the experts' opinion by a number of prejudices existing in the society regarding their deviant behavior. Because of such an attitude Roma people are deprived of their right to participate in the decision-making process at both local and national levels.

"There are a number of prejudices in the society regarding Roma. They are given as an example of bad conduct even by the highest-ranking public officials. Also, given such prejudices, they do not have full access to public offices, to health care and education services."

Women

According to the perception of the general public, women are discriminated most upon employment (+24), at workplace (+29) and in the political life (+19).

During the Delphi study, the experts shared a similar opinion. Discrimination at workplace in their opinion is expressed by the fact that women are hired to less valuable positions than men, are paid less than men and cannot advance in career similarly to men.

"In the Republic of Moldova women comprise 53% of population and still the condition of women in our society is rather difficult, being affected by the consequences of the economic crisis, but also by their status of mother and wife which they have often to combine with the status of family provider. In the Republic of Moldova women's wage is about 72% of that of men, women are discriminated in the labor field based on their matrimonial status and age, because of the supposed amount of time they dedicate to family life."

The experts think also that the discrimination of women in political sphere is manifested by the low percentage of women in high-ranking positions in the Government Parliament, as well as in local and district public administration.

Some experts expressed the view that the discrimination of women has its roots in the Christian church. Thus, they think that *"woman is discriminated by the Christian church, being viewed as a surplus, as an aid to man."*

Thus, after analyzing the perception of the general public, as well as the experts' opinions on the social contexts in which different groups are discriminated, we can conclude that most of the disadvantaged groups are exposed to discrimination in various contexts. Thus, disabled people frequently face discrimination upon employment, at workplace, in education and medical institutions and in relations with authorities. HIV-positive persons are discriminated upon employment, at workplace, in medical and education institutions, as well as in their own families. Representatives of gay and lesbian community are discriminated in family, in medical institutions, at workplace and in public life, being deprived of the right to assembly and public manifestations. Women are discriminated in particular at workplace and in political life, being insufficiently represented in the political process at both national and local levels. In the respondents' and experts' opinions, the poor is one of the most disadvantaged and discriminated groups in the Republic of Moldova. The chronic lack of financial resources limits their access to quality education and health services.

After computing the Average Dominant Personal Opinion Index (ADPOI) of the general public for each group, we can conclude that, depending on the seven analyzed social contexts, the most discriminated groups, in the respondents' opinion, are: disabled people (-25), the poor (-25), and HIV-positive persons (-22), and the least discriminated: women (+34) and the Roma people (+10).

3. Social distance between respondents and groups of people exposed to discrimination

Social distance between respondents and groups of people exposed to discrimination was measured using the scale created by E.S. Bogardus, according to which positive personal attitudes towards certain people in certain situations are indicators of social distance. Thus, social distance between respondents and groups of people exposed to discrimination was studied based on respondents' attitudes towards the potential hypotheses to have discriminated against people as neighbors, friends, co-workers, family members. The hypothesis tested while measuring social distance between respondents and discriminated groups was as follows: the degree of acceptance by the respondents of different discriminated groups decreases as they become closer to the respondents' family.

Next, we will analyze the degree of acceptance by the respondents of the following groups of people: persons with disabilities, representatives of gay and lesbian community, HIV-positive persons, the poor, elderly people, women and men.

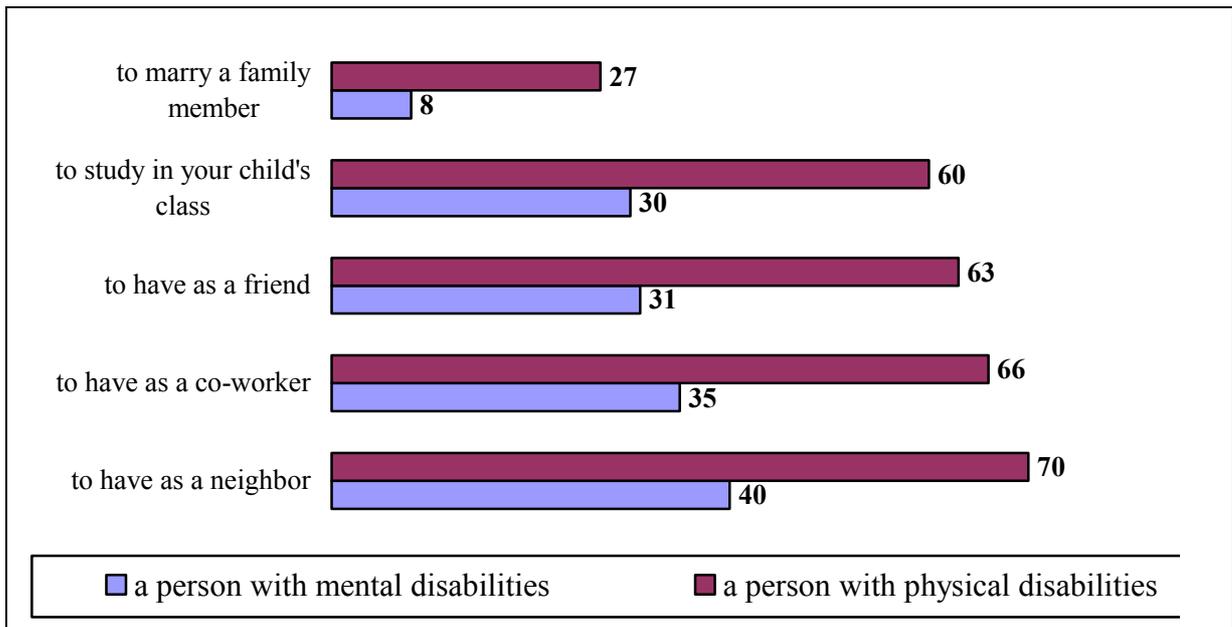
Social distance between the respondents and persons with disabilities

Analysis of social distance between the respondents and people with mental and physical disabilities confirmed the above hypothesis: the degree of acceptance by respondents of people with mental and physical disabilities is greater when such people are at a greater social distance from respondents and vice versa. Thus, it can be noted in the chart below that while 70% of respondents would personally accept to have a person with physical disabilities as a neighbor, 66% would accept to have a person with physical disabilities as a co-worker, 63% would accept to have a person with physical disabilities as a friend, 60% would accept to have a person with physical disabilities studying together with their child, only 27% stated that they would accept that a family member marries a person with physical disabilities (see Chart 9).

As to people with mental disabilities, the degree of their acceptance by respondents in various situations is much lower than that of people with physical disabilities. Thus, it can be noted in Chart 9 that only 40% of respondents would accept a person with mental disabilities as a neighbor, 35% – as a co-worker, 31% – as a friend, 30% – as a classmate of their child and 8% – as a future member of the family.

The share of people who would accept to have a person with physical disabilities as a neighbor is higher among people with higher education (75%), Moldovans/Romanians (81%), Ukrainians (77%). The share of people that would accept to have a person with physical disabilities as a friend is higher in rural areas (66%), among people with higher education (66%), Moldovans/Romanians (76%). The share of people who would accept that a family member marries a person with physical disabilities is higher among the group of 18-34 year-old people (31%) and people of Russian ethnicity (32%).

Chart 9. Level of acceptance of persons with disabilities, %

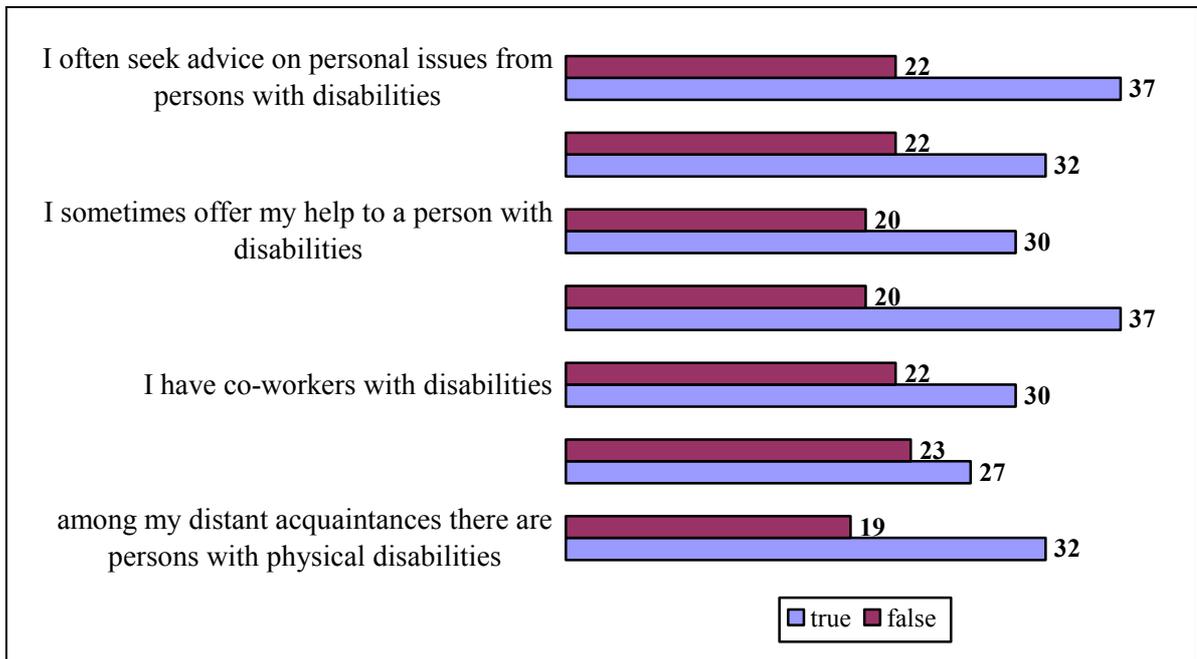


In the case of people with mental disabilities, no major differences were noticed between the opinions of different groups concerning the level of acceptance of people with mental disabilities as family members. As regards their acceptance as friend, co-worker and neighbor, a higher percentage can be noticed in the groups of people of Moldovan/Romanian and Russian ethnic origin. Thus, 38% of Moldovans/Romanians and 39% of Russians would agree to have as friend people with mental disabilities, 49% of Moldovans/Romanians and 49% of Russians – to have neighbors with mental disabilities, 43% of Moldovans/Romanians and 47% of Russians – to have co-workers with mental disabilities.

Based on the above five indices (acceptance as neighbor, co-worker, friend, child's classmate and family member), an integrated acceptance indicator was computed, which comprises people who answered positive to the entire set of questions. Thus, the acceptance indicator in respect of people with physical disabilities stands at 23%, and that in respect of people with mental disabilities is 7%. It means that only 23% would accept a person with physical disabilities as neighbor, co-worker, friend, child's classmate and family member. In the case of people with mental disabilities, only 7% would agree to have them as neighbor, co-worker, friend, child's classmate and family member.

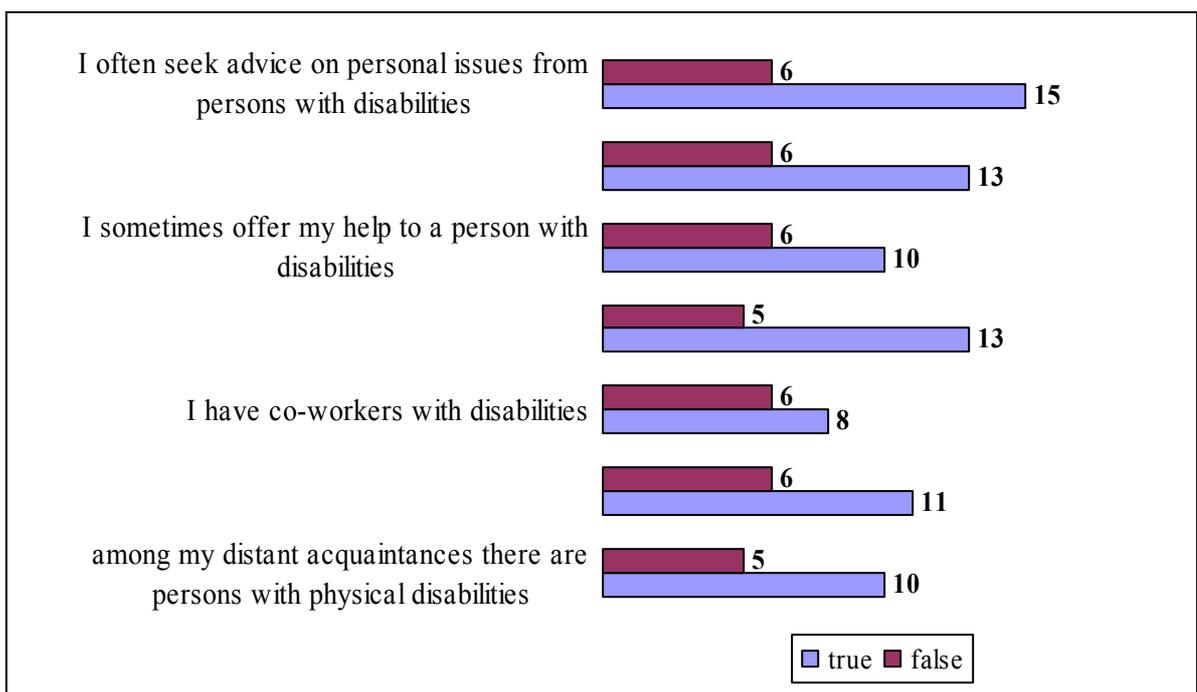
The study also revealed that the acceptance indicator vary significantly depending on the cultural diversity of respondents. Thus, the percentage of respondents accepting persons with disabilities is higher in the group of people having various relations with persons with disabilities. The chart below shows that the acceptance indicator in respect of people with physical disabilities is much higher in the groups of respondents who visit people with physical disabilities (37% versus 20%), often seek advice on personal issues from people with physical disabilities (37% versus 22%), have relatives with physical disabilities (32% versus 22%), have acquaintances with physical disabilities (32% versus 19%), have co-workers with physical disabilities (30% versus 22%), offer my help to a person with physical disabilities (30% versus 20%), have neighbors with physical disabilities whom they use to greet (27% versus 23%) (see Chart 10).

Chart 10. Level of acceptance of people with physical disabilities depending on diversity of cultural relations of respondents, %



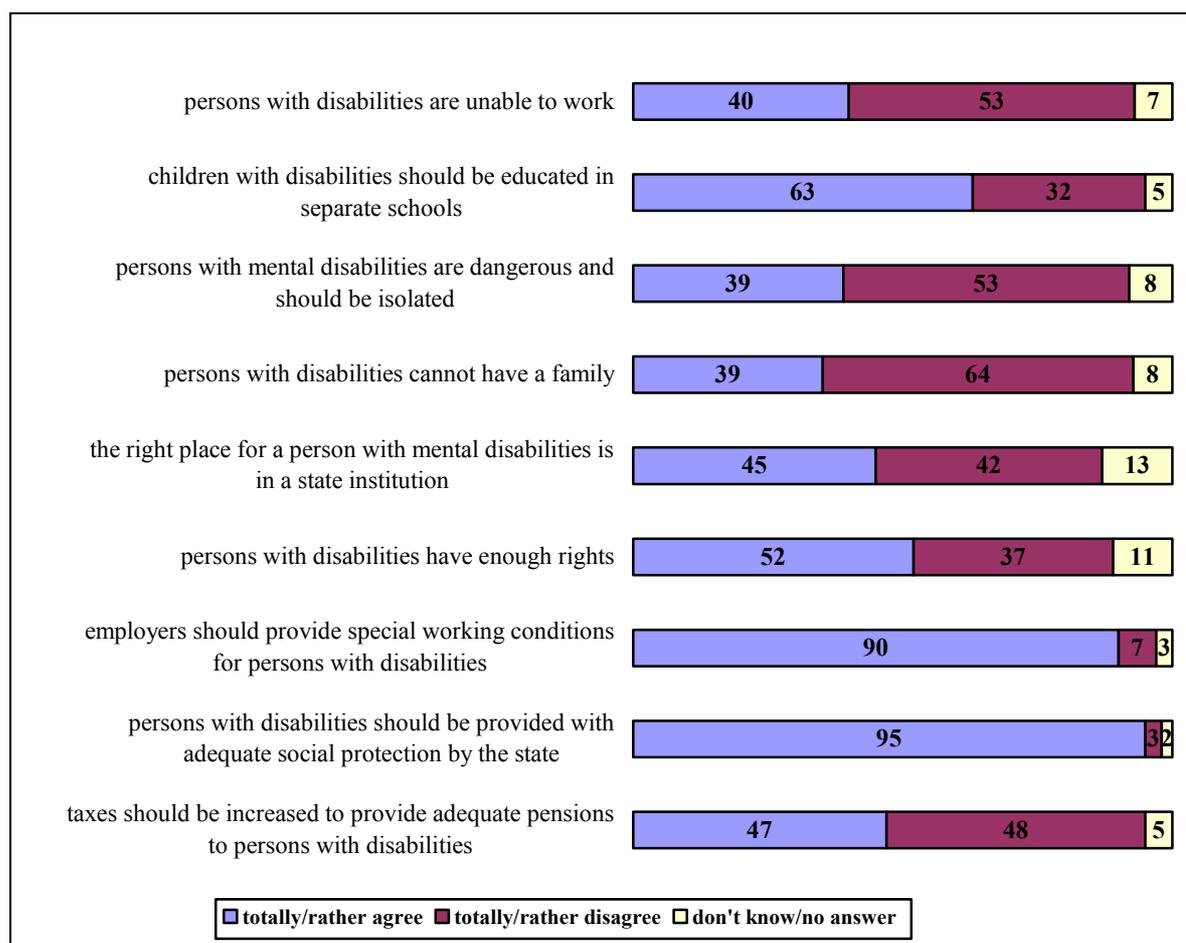
The same situation can be noticed in the case of people with mental disabilities. The acceptance indicator in respect of people with mental disabilities is much higher in the groups of respondents who often seek advice on personal issues from people with mental disabilities (15% versus 6%), visit people with mental disabilities (13% versus 5%), have relatives with mental disabilities (13% versus 6%), have neighbors with mental disabilities whom they use to greet (11% versus 6%), have acquaintances with mental disabilities (10% versus 5%), offer my help to a person with mental disabilities (10% versus 6%), have co-workers with mental disabilities (8% versus 6%) (see Chart 11).

Chart 11. Level of acceptance of people with mental disabilities depending on diversity of cultural relations of respondents, %



The low degree of acceptance by respondents of the persons with disabilities is due to a large extent to the prejudices existing in society in respect of such people. Thus, the study revealed that, even though over 90% of those interviewed think that persons with disabilities shall be provided with adequate social protection by the state and that employers should provide special working conditions for persons with disabilities, one in two respondents shares the opinion that persons with disabilities have enough rights, 63% of respondents think that children with disabilities should be educated in separate schools, 45% - that the right place of a person with mental disabilities is in a state institution, 40% - that persons with disabilities are unfit to work, 39% - that people with mental disabilities are dangerous and should be isolated, and 28% - that persons with disabilities cannot have family (see Chart 12).

Chart 12. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



The share of people who believe that the right place for people with mental disabilities is in a state institution is lower in the group of respondents aged 18-34 years (41%), among people of Bulgarian (18%), Gagauz (32%) and Ukrainian (32%) ethnic origin.

The percentage of respondents who share the opinion that persons with disabilities cannot have family is lower among those aged 18-34 years (22%), among people with a high education level (25%), among Bulgarians (21%) and Gagauz (25%).

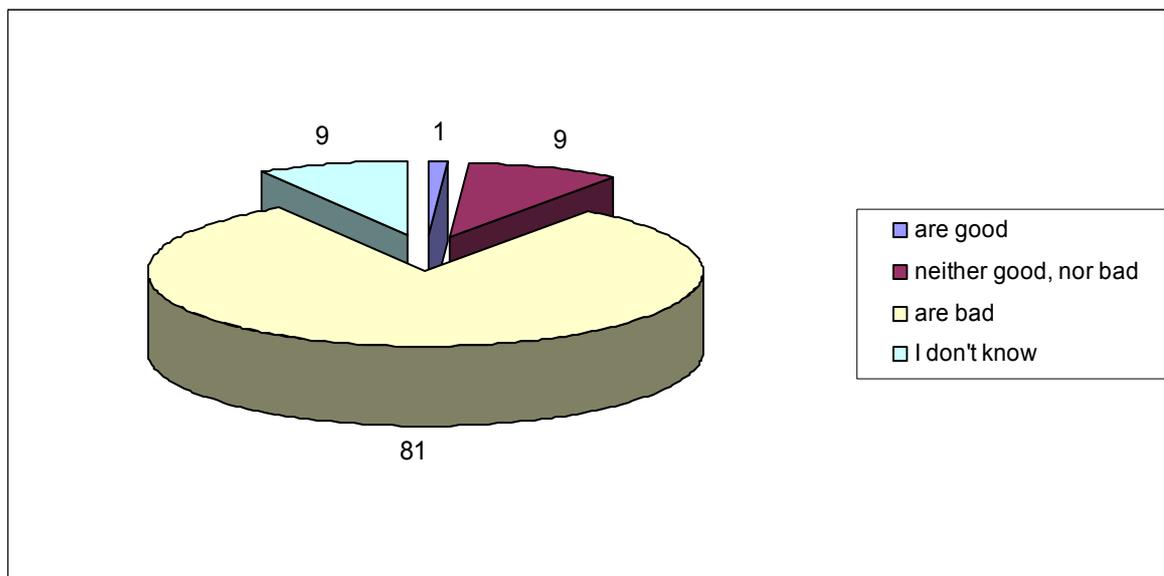
The share of people who believe that persons with disabilities are dangerous and should be isolated is lower among respondents aged 18-34 years (31%), people with a high level of education (35%), Gagauz (22%) and Bulgarians (14%).

The prejudice that children with disabilities should study in separate schools is quite common among all social-demographic groups and was observed at virtually same frequencies.

The percentage of those who share the opinion that persons with disabilities are unfit to work is lower in the group of respondents aged 18-38 years (36%), among people with a high level of education (36%), and people of Moldovan/Romanian ethnic origin (34%).

Social distance between respondents and representatives of gay and lesbian community. According to the study results, the perception of population on homosexual relations is very negative. Thus, over 80% of respondents think that these relations are bad, 9% - that they are neither bad, nor good, 9% don't know, and only 1% stated that these relations are good.

Chart 13. Perceptions of population on homosexual relations, %



Depending on residence, the share of people who believe that such relations are bad is higher in rural areas (84%) than in urban areas (76%), which fact indicates that respondents from urban areas are more loyal in respect of homosexual relations.

Depending on gender, women are less categorical than men. Thus, 79% of women compared to 83% of men stated that homosexual relations are bad.

Depending on age, the share of people who believe that homosexual relations are bad is lower in the age group of 18-34 years (75%) and over 65 years (74%), and is higher in the age group aged 35-49 years (86%) and 50-64 years (86%). In the case of the age group 18- 34 years, we suppose that their attitudes have changed due to communication activities conducted over the last years in the field of homosexual relations and to the promotion of principles of tolerance. As regards the age group of over 65 years, we consider that these people are more loyal because a good share of them does not really know what homosexual relations mean, while for others such relations are not a big problem, being a distant phenomenon for them.

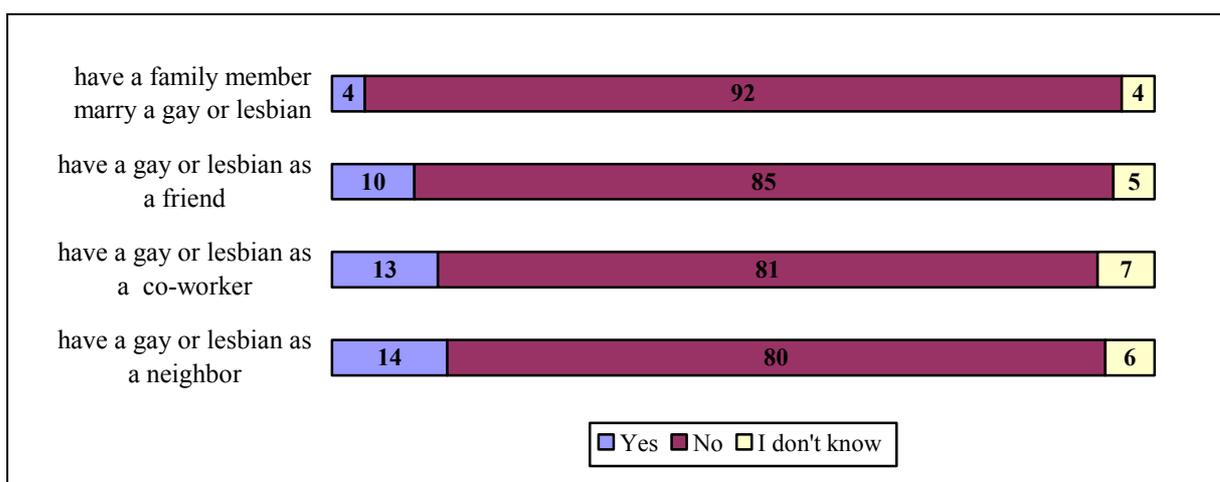
Depending on education level, people with a high level of education are more loyal in respect of homosexual relations than those with a low education level. Thus, 76% of respondents holding a university degree and 82% of respondents with primary or incomplete secondary education stated that homosexual relations are bad.

Depending on occupation, 68% of pupils and students believe that homosexual relations are bad, while 16% - that they are neither bad, nor good.

The study revealed also that people for whom faith in God is very important or rather important are less tolerant towards gays and lesbians than people for whom faith in God is rather unimportant or not important at all. Thus, 82% of respondents for whom faith in God is very important or rather important and 67% of respondents for whom faith in God is rather unimportant or not important at all think that homosexual relations are bad.

The study also revealed that, even though the respondents had the opinion that representatives of gay and lesbian community are less discriminated than persons with disabilities, the poor and HIV-positive persons, on the level of personal attitudes this particular group is more socially isolated than the others. Thus, the Chart below shows that only 14% would agree to have representatives of gay and lesbian community as neighbors, 13% - as co-workers, 10% - as friends and 4% - as family members (see Chart 14).

Chart 14. Level of acceptance of representatives of gay and lesbian community by respondents, %



Depending on residence, the share of people who would agree to have a representative of gay and lesbian community as neighbor, co-worker, friend and even family member is higher in urban areas than in rural areas. Thus, 19% of urban areas respondents and 10% in rural areas would agree to have a representative of gay and lesbian community as neighbor. 17% in urban areas and 10% in rural areas would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as co-worker. 13% in urban areas and 7% in rural areas would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as friend. 6% in urban areas and 3% in rural areas would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as family member.

Depending on age, the younger people are more tolerant as compared to the elder ones. Thus, representatives of gay and lesbian community are accepted as neighbor by 21% of people aged 18-34 years, by 20% of them - as co-worker, by 16% - as friend, and by 6% - as family member.

Depending on education level, we can notice that the higher is the education level, the higher is the degree of acceptance by respondents of representatives of gay and lesbian community. Thus, 18% of people with high education level and 3% of respondents with a low level of education would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as neighbor. 16% of people with high education level and 3% of respondents with a low level of education would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as co-worker. 13% of people with high education level and 2% of people with a low level of education would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as friend. 6% of people with high education level and 1% of those having a low education level would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as family member.

Depending on the degree of importance of the faith in God, people for whom faith in God is rather unimportant or not important at all are more tolerant compared to those for whom faith is very important. Thus, 39% of people for whom faith in God is rather unimportant or not important at all would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as neighbor, 36% - as co-worker, 35% - as friend, and 12% - as family member.

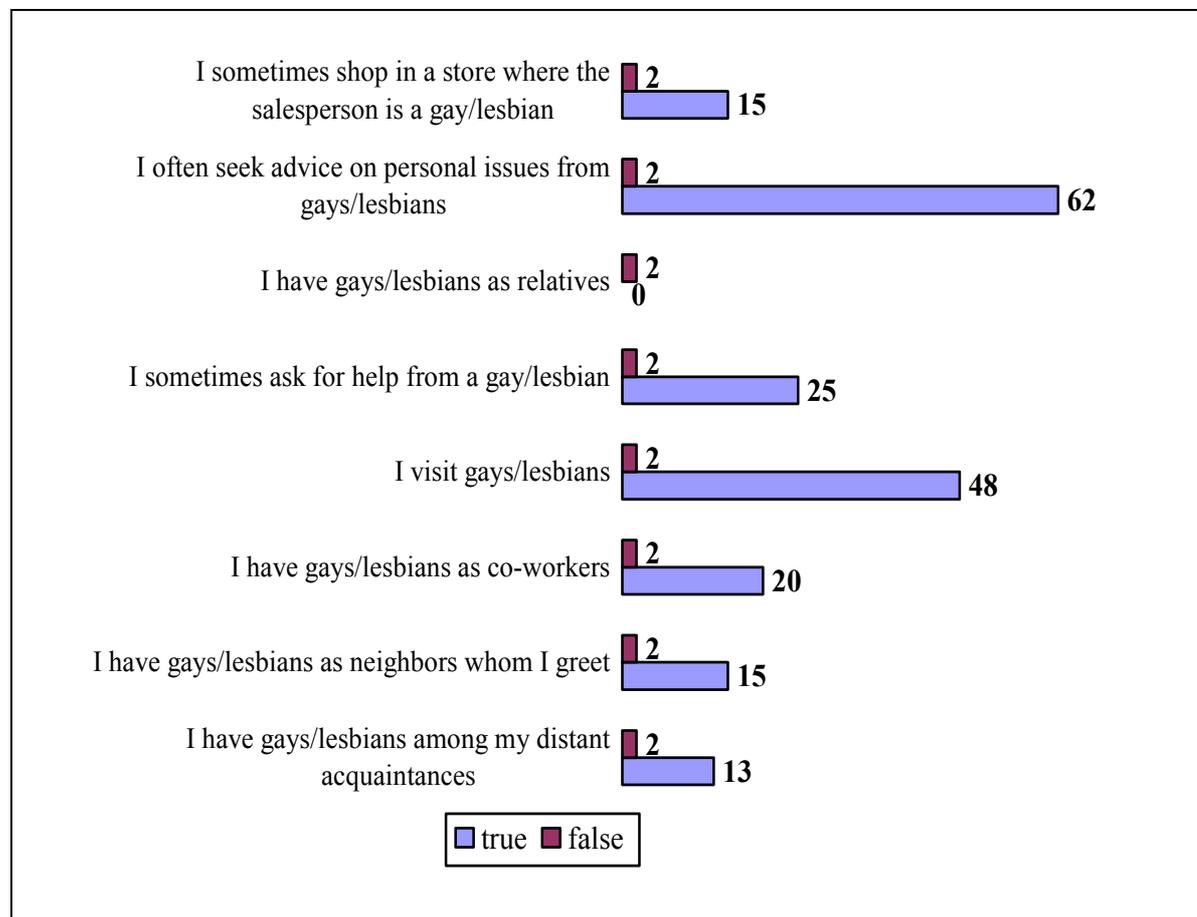
Depending on ethnic origin, people of Russian and Moldovan/Romanian origin are more tolerant towards representatives of gay and lesbian community than people of Gagauz and Bulgarian origin. Thus, 21% of Russians, 19% of Moldovans/Romanians, 4% of Gagauz and 0% of Bulgarians would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as neighbor. 20% of Russians, 16% of Moldovans/Romanians, 2% of Gagauz and 0% of Bulgarians would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as co-worker. 18% of Russians, 12% of Moldovans/Romanians, 5% of Gagauz and 0% of Bulgarians would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as friend. 9% of Russians, 7% of Moldovans/Romanians, 5% of Gagauz and 0% of Bulgarians would accept that a family member marry a representative of gay and lesbian community.

Based on the above indices (acceptance as neighbor, co-worker, friend, and family member) an integrated acceptance indicator was computed, which comprises the number of people who answered positively the entire set of questions. Thus, the integrated acceptance indicator in respect of representatives of gay and lesbian community is 2%. This means that only 2% of population would accept a representative of gay and lesbian community as neighbor, co-worker, friend and family member.

Similarly to persons with disabilities, the integrated acceptance indicator for representatives of gay and lesbian community varies significantly depending on the cultural diversity of respondents. Thus, the percentage of respondents who accept representatives of gay and lesbian community is higher when respondents have different relations with such people.

The Chart below shows that the acceptance indicator in respect of representatives of gay and lesbian community is higher in the group of respondents who often seek advice on personal issues from representatives of gay and lesbian community (62% versus 2%), who use to visit representatives of gay and lesbian community (48% versus 2%), who sometimes ask for help from a representative of gay and lesbian community (25% versus 2%), who have representatives of gay and lesbian community as co-workers (20% versus 2%), who have representatives of gay and lesbian community as neighbors whom they use to greet (15% versus 2%), who make their shopping in a store where salespersons are representatives of gay and lesbian community (15% versus 2%), who have representatives of gay and lesbian community among their distant acquaintances (13% versus 2%) (see Chart 15).

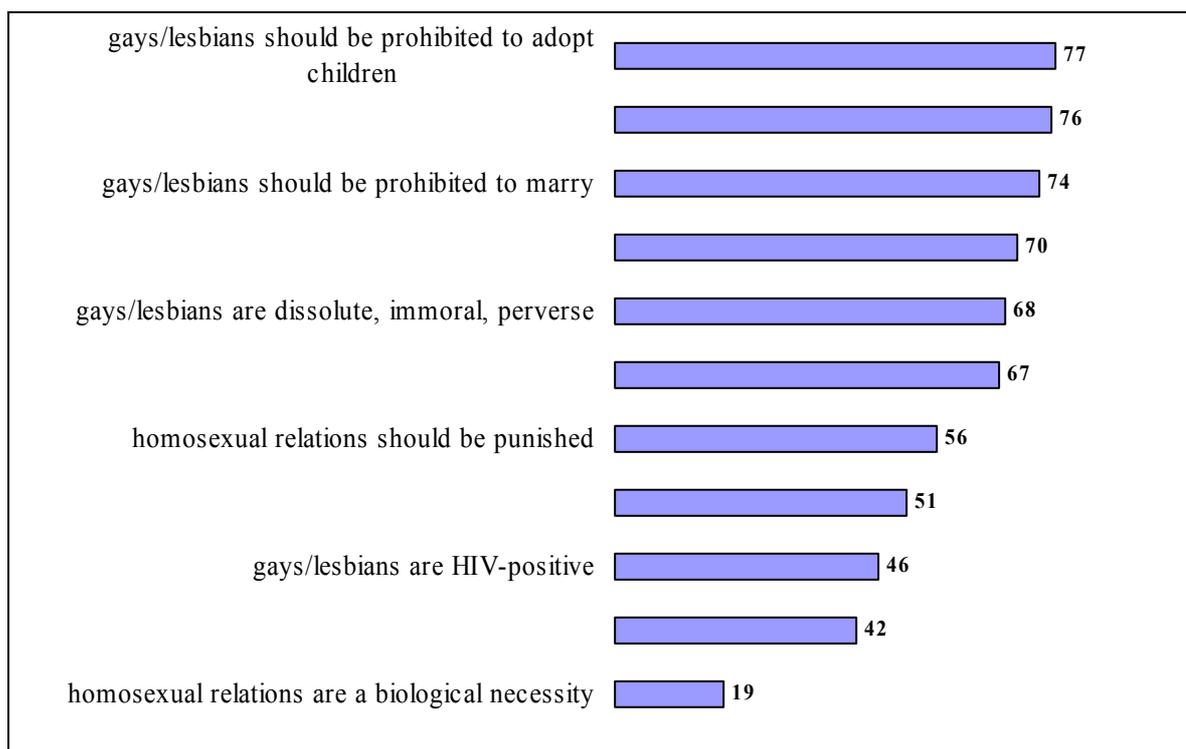
Chart 15. Level of acceptance of representatives of gay and lesbian community depending on diversity of cultural relations of respondents, %



The high degree of non-acceptance of representatives of gay and lesbian community is influenced to a large extent by the prejudices existing in society in respect of representatives of gay and lesbian community. Thus, Chart 16 shows that only 19% of respondents think that homosexual relations are a biological necessity. Around 2/3 of those interviewed share the opinion that representatives of gay and lesbian community are dissolute, immoral, pervert, are sick and should seek medical treatment. Almost one in two respondents thinks that representatives of gay and lesbian community are HIV-positive.

Based on such prejudices, more than 2/3 of those interviewed think that representatives of gay and lesbian community should have some of their rights curtailed, such as marrying, adopting children, using public transportation, organizing public events, appearing on TV (see Chart 16). The percentage of respondents who support most such prejudices is higher in rural areas, among people with a low education level and among men.

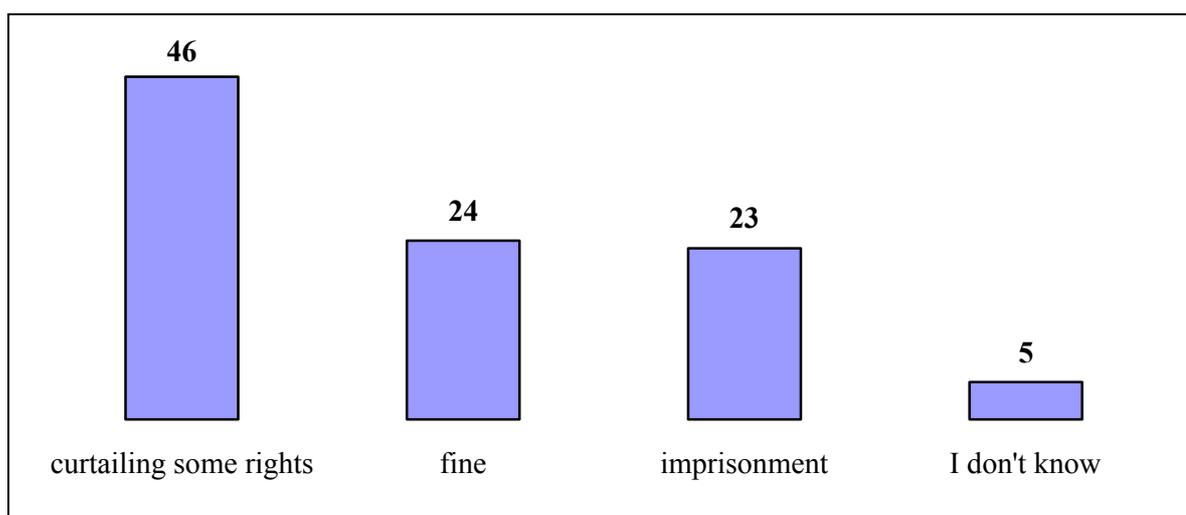
Chart 16. Prejudices of respondents towards representatives of gay and lesbian community (%)



Every second respondent shares the opinion that representatives of gay and lesbian community have sufficient rights and that homosexual relations should be punished (see Chart 16). This opinion is shared mostly by people in rural areas (62%), men (60%), people aged 50-64 years (60%), people with primary/incomplete secondary studies (69%), and Bulgarians (75%).

When asked what punishment should be given to representatives of gay and lesbian community, 46% mentioned curtailing some rights, each fourth – fine or imprisonment, and 5% did not give an answer (see Chart 17).

Chart 17. Opinions of respondents on punishment that should be given to representatives of gay and lesbian community, %

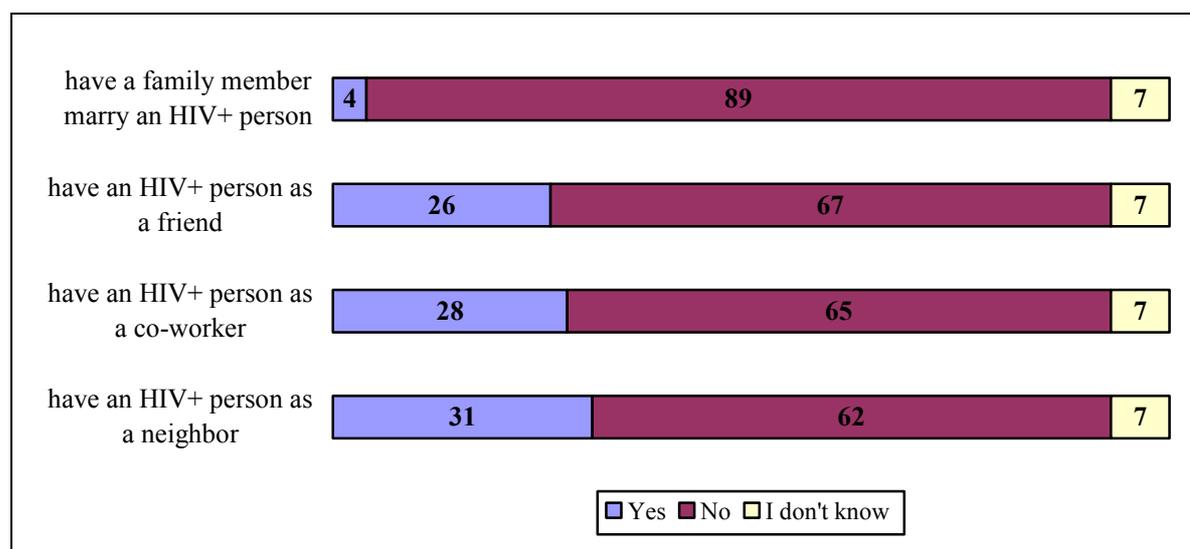


The percentage of respondents who expressed their support for imprisonment is higher in rural areas (23%) as compared to urban areas (17%), among men (25%) as compared to women (17%), in the group of respondents aged 35-49 years (29%), among those with a low education level (28%), among Gagauz (25%).

Social distance between respondents and HIV-positive persons

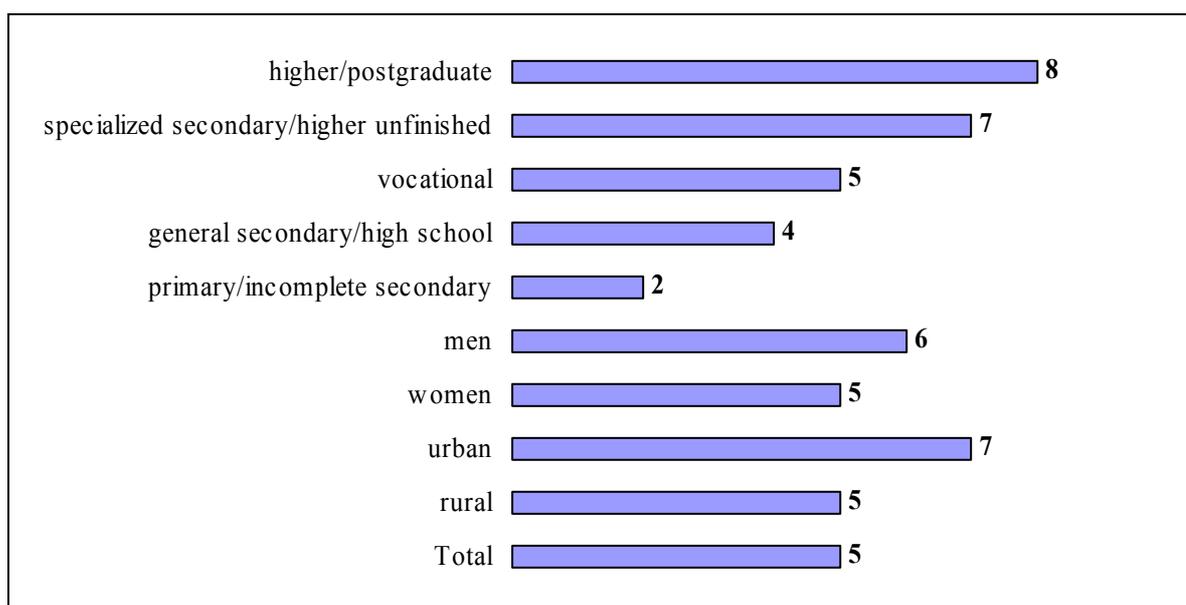
According to the study results, the level of acceptance of HIV-positive persons is almost as low as that of representatives of gay and lesbian community. Thus, only every third respondent would accept an HIV-positive person as a neighbor or co-worker. 26% would accept an HIV-positive person as a friend and only 4% would accept that a family member marry an HIV-positive person (see Chart 18).

Chart 18. Level of acceptance of HIV-positive persons by respondents, %

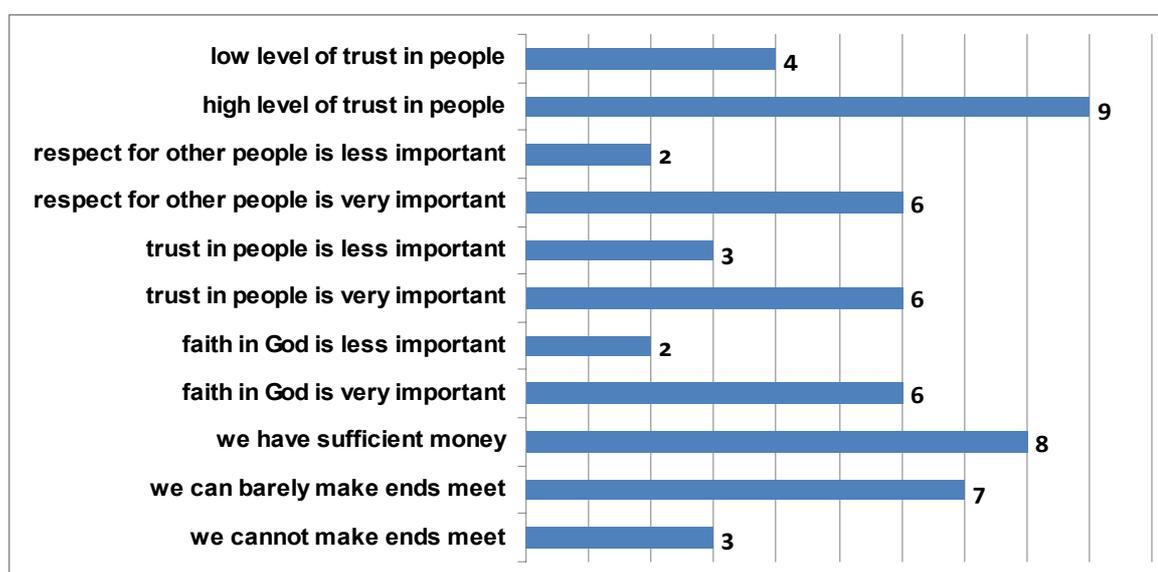


The acceptance indicator in respect of HIV-positive persons was computed using both the above criteria (percentage of respondents who would accept to have an HIV-positive person as neighbor, co-worker, friend, family member), and the UNAIDS recommendations (based on the share of people stating they would be ready to care for an HIV-positive person, buy food products from an HIV-positive person, accept that a HIV-positive teacher work at school, would not hide the fact that somebody in the family is HIV-positive). In both cases the acceptance indices are extremely low. Thus, in the first case, the acceptance indicator is 3%, while in the second (computed according to the UNAIDS recommendations) the acceptance indicator is 5%.

The integrated acceptance indicator (computed according to the UNAIDS recommendations) varies depending on residence, gender and education. Thus, depending on residence, the acceptance indicator is higher in urban areas (7%) than in rural areas (5%). Depending on gender, men are more tolerant (6%) than women (5%). Depending on education level, the following trend is to be noted: the acceptance indicator grows from 2% in the group of respondents with primary/incomplete secondary education to 8% in the group having higher/postgraduate degrees (see Chart 19).

Chart 19. Indicator of acceptance of HIV-positive persons⁶, by residence, gender and education, %

The study also revealed that the integrated acceptance indicator varies depending on the respondents' level of well-being, values and level of trust in people. Thus, the Chart below shows that the acceptance indicator grows as the income of respondents increases, from 3% in the group of people who stated they cannot make ends meet up to 8% in the group who indicated they have sufficient money.

Chart 20. Indicator of acceptance of HIV-positive persons⁷, by income, values and level of trust in people, %

The acceptance indicator is also higher in the group of people, for whom faith in God is very important or rather important (6%), in the environment of the respondents, for whom respecting other people is very important or rather important (6%). At the same time, the respondents who have a high level of trust in people (9%) have a more tolerant attitude than those who have a lower level of trust in people (4%).

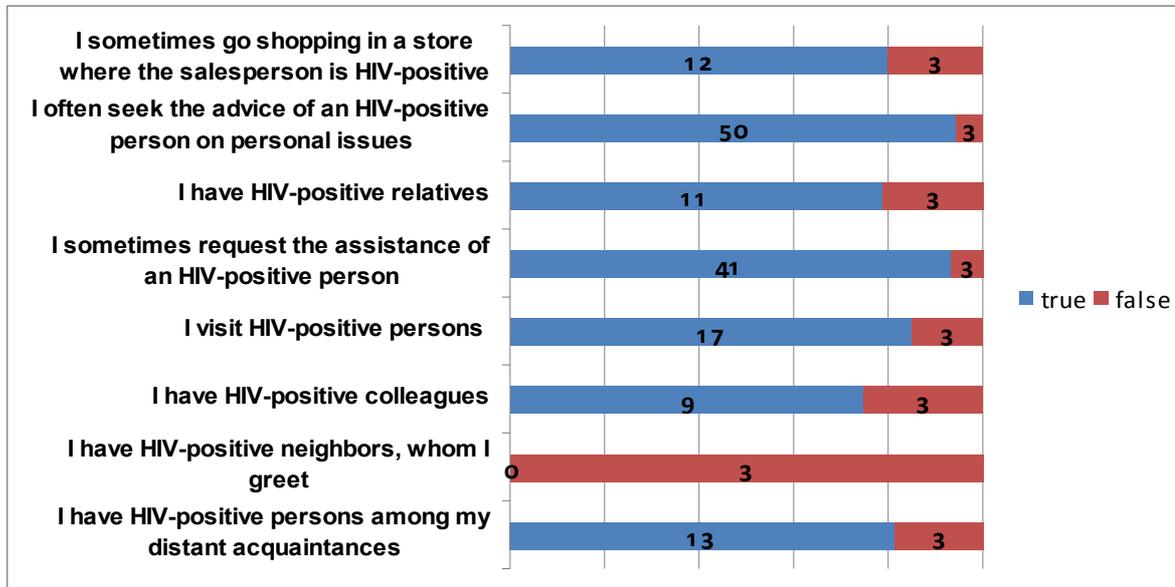
As in the case of other groups of marginalized persons, the survey revealed that the respondents, who have various relations with HIV-positive persons, are more tolerant towards the latter than those who do not have any relations at all. Thus, the chart below shows that the HIV+ persons' acceptance indicator is

⁶ The indicator was calculated according to UNAIDS requirements.

⁷ The indicator was calculated according to UNAIDS requirements.

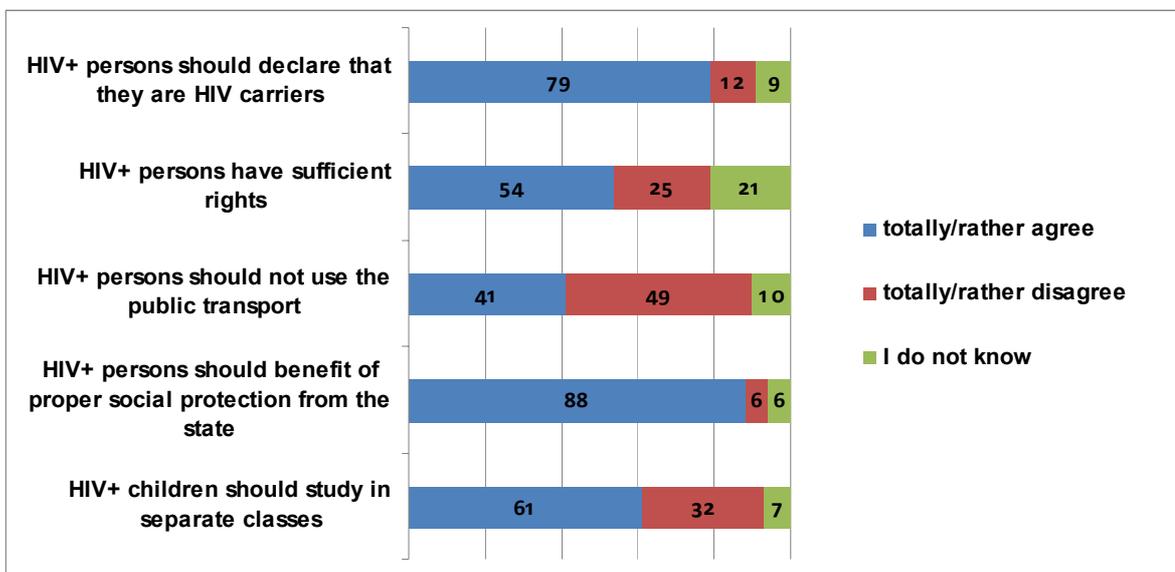
much higher in the group of respondents, who often seek the advice of HIV-positive persons on personal issues (50% vs. 3%), request the assistance of an HIV-positive person (41% vs. 3%), visit HIV-positive persons (17% vs. 3%), have an HIV-positive person among distant acquaintances (13% vs. 3%), go shopping in a store where the salesperson is HIV-positive (12% vs. 3%), have HIV-positive colleagues (9% vs. 3%) (see Chart 21).

Chart 21. Indicator of acceptance of HIV-positive persons by respondents, by diversity of their cultural relations, %



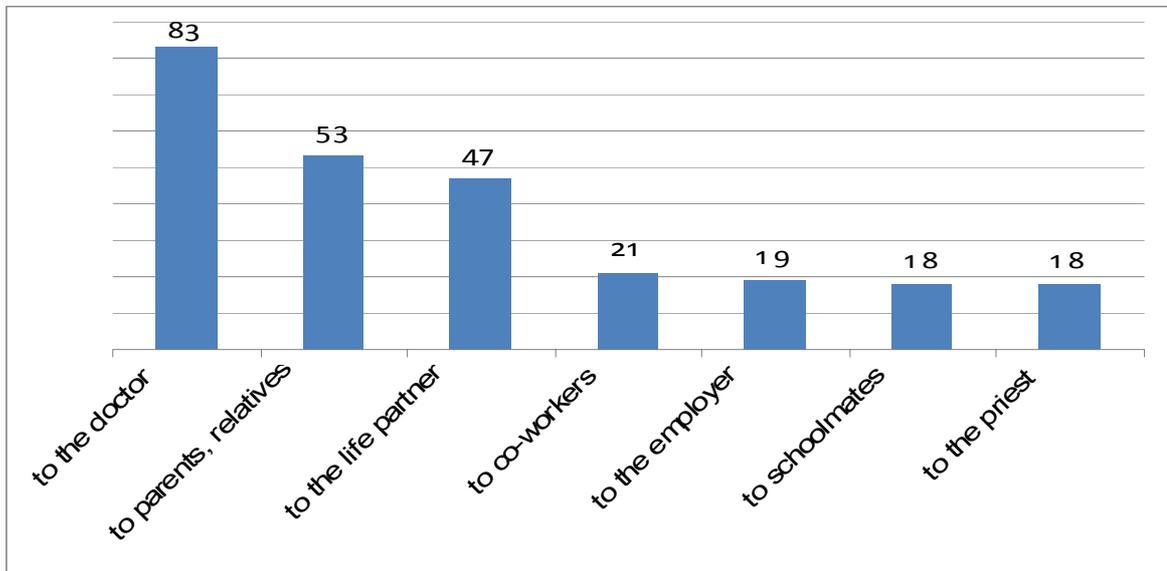
The low tolerance towards the HIV-positive persons is also reflected in the judgments and opinions about this group of people. Thus, though 88% of respondents mentioned that the HIV-positive persons should benefit of proper social protection from the State, one in two interviewed persons mentioned that the HIV-positive persons have sufficient rights, 2/3 believe that the HIV-positive children should study in separate classes and 41% believe that the HIV-positive persons should not use the public transport (see Chart 22). The HIV studies show that the attitude of segregation and isolation of HIV-positive persons is mainly determined by the existing prejudices towards these persons and the low awareness of the HIV transmission channels.

Chart 22. Respondents' opinions about the HIV-positive persons, %



79% of the respondents claim that the HIV-positive persons should report their status to other people. When asked to whom they should report their HIV+ status, 83% of respondents said to the doctor, 53% - to parents, relatives, 47% - to the life partner, 21% - to their co-workers, 19% - to the employer, 18% - to schoolmates, to the priest.

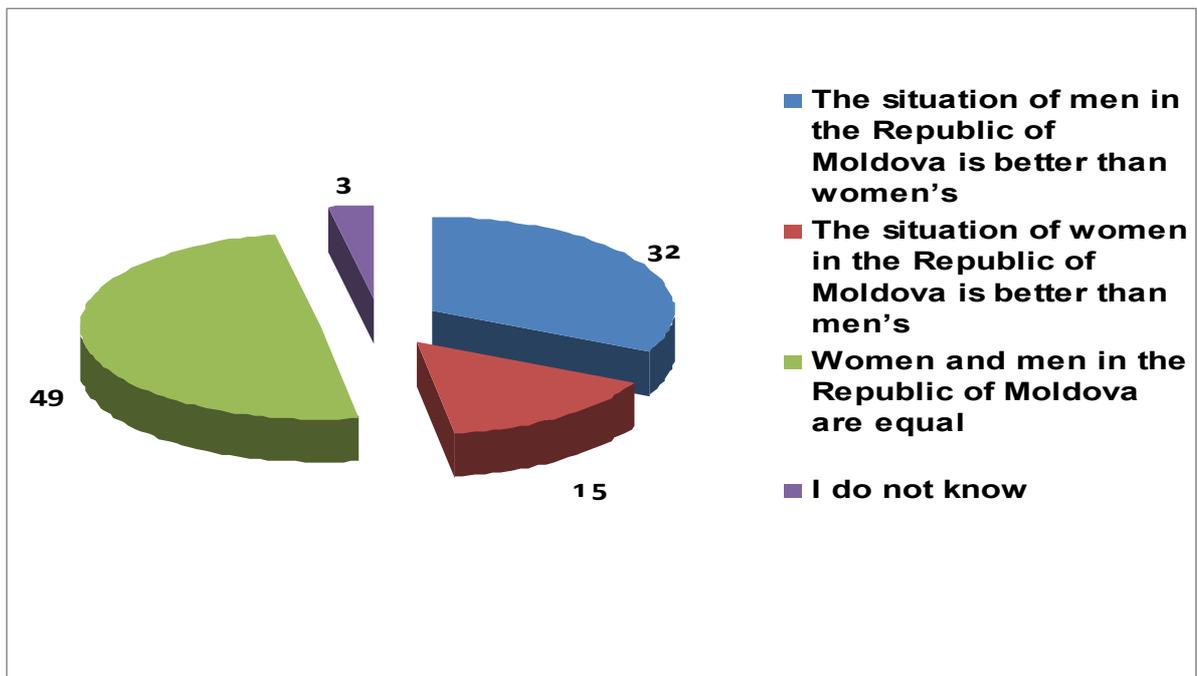
Chart 23. Respondents' opinions about the persons who should know the HIV+ status of people, %



The situation of men and women in the Republic of Moldova

According to the survey, almost one in two respondents believes that the situation of women in the Republic of Moldova is in principle equal to that of men. 33% of the interviewed believe that the situation of men in the Republic of Moldova is better than the women's, and 15% - that the situation of women in the Republic of Moldova is better than men's (see Chart 24).

Chart 24. Perceptions on the situation of men and women in the Republic of Moldova, %



The share of people who believe that the situation of men in the Republic of Moldova is better than the women's is higher among women (37%), persons over 65 years of age (35%), and persons with middle level of education (36%).

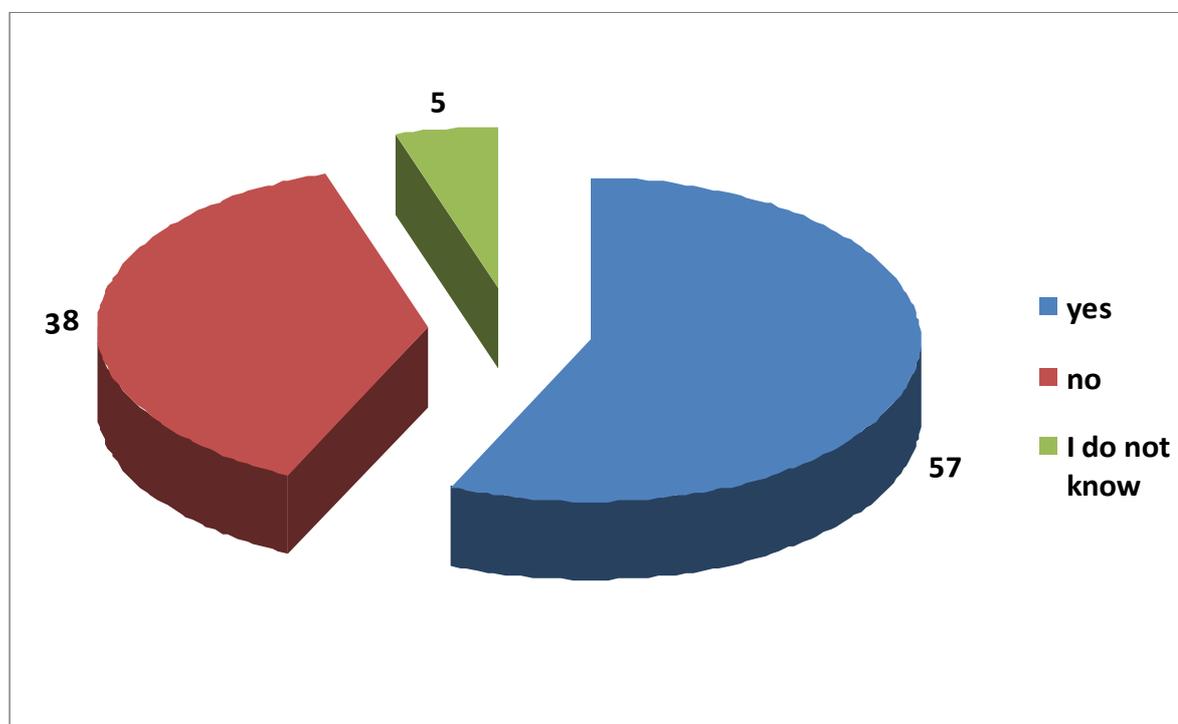
In the respondents' opinion, equal opportunities for women and men would mean equal rights (92%), taking decisions together (91%), good understanding between life partners (90%), equal family obligations (89%), both partners to be employed (83%) and have the same amount of free time (82%), equal access to the same professions (78%) (see Table 3).

Table 3. Respondent's perceptions on equal opportunities, %

	yes	no	I don't know
Equal opportunities mean equal rights	92	5	3
Equal opportunities mean access to the same professions	78	18	4
Equal opportunities mean equal family obligations	89	8	3
Equal opportunities mean taking decisions together	91	5	4
Equal opportunities mean good understanding between life partners	90	6	4
Equal opportunities mean that both partners should be employed	83	13	4
Equal opportunities mean that both partners should have the same amount of free time	82	13	5

When asked if there are equal opportunities for women and men in the Republic of Moldova, only 57% of respondents gave an affirmative answer. 38% believe that there are no equal opportunities for women and men and 5% did not answer this question (see Chart 25).

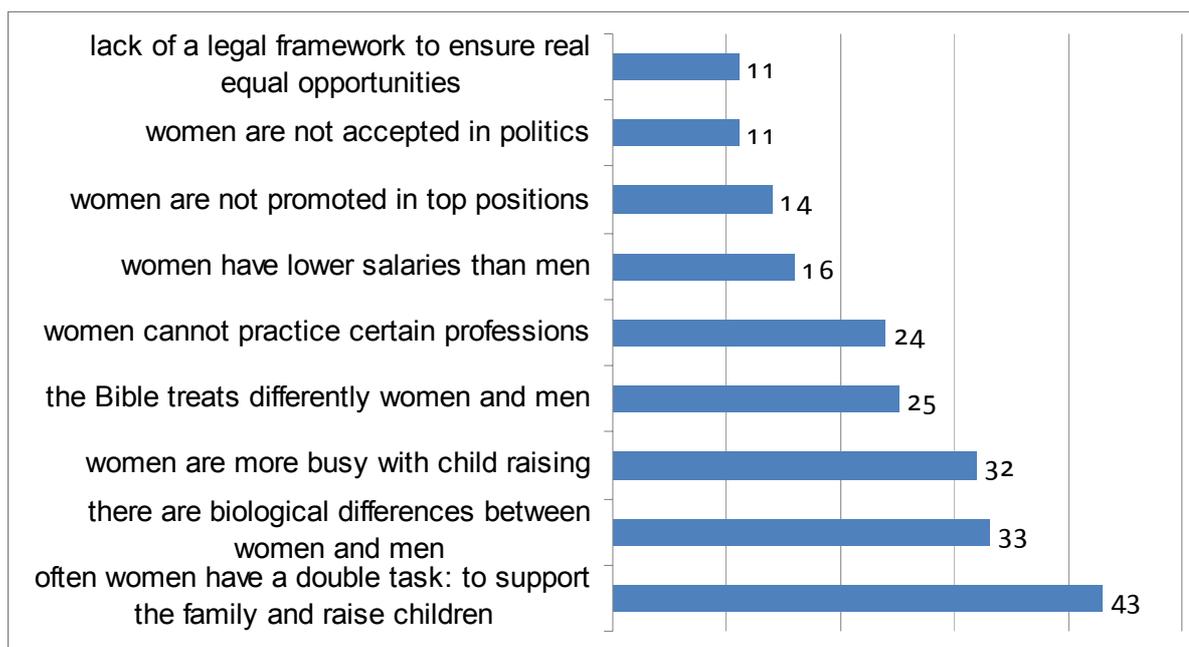
Chart 25. Respondents' perceptions on equal opportunities for women and men in the Republic of Moldova, %



The share of people, who believe that in the Republic of Moldova there are no real equal opportunities for women and men, is higher among women (41%, if compared with men - 35%), in the age group of 35-49 years (42%), among people with higher education (44%), and among Moldovan/Romanian ethnics (40%).

The respondents indicated different reasons for the lack of equal opportunities. Thus, according to their opinion, there are no equal opportunities in the Republic of Moldova because often women have a double task: to maintain the family and raise children (43%), there are biological differences between women and men (33%), women are more busy with child raising (32%), the Bible treats differently women and men (25%), women cannot practice certain professions (24%), women have lower salaries than men (16%), women are not promoted in top positions (14%), women are not accepted in politics (11%) and the lack of the needed legal framework for women to assert themselves (11%) (see Chart 26).

Chart 26. Respondents' perceptions on the causes for unequal opportunities for women and men in the Republic of Moldova, %



The share of people who believe that women often have a double task is higher in urban areas (47%), among women (47%), among persons over 65 years old (49%) and among persons with higher education (49%).

The share of people who believe that there are some biological differences between men and women is higher in urban areas (38%), among men (34%), persons over 65 years (42%) and persons with lower education (38%).

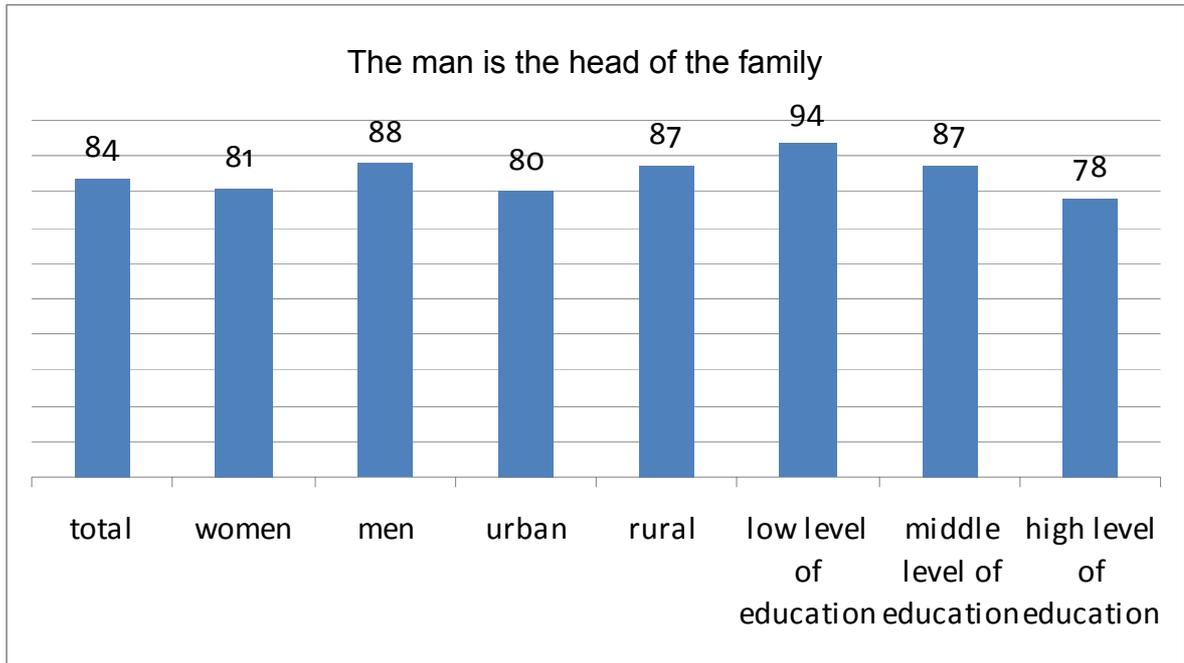
The share of people who believe that women are busier with child raising than men is higher among women (35%), persons from the age group of 18-34 years (37%) and persons with a high level of education (36%).

The share of people who believe that women are not accepted in politics is higher in urban areas (17%) and among persons with higher education (15%).

To make a more detailed analysis of the situation of women and men in the Republic of Moldova, the respondents were asked to confirm or deny certain prejudices, existing in the society, about the role of women and men, specifically: "the man is the head of the family", "household chores are mainly women's duty", "a woman is not fulfilled, unless she has a family and children", "to earn money is mainly men's duty", "men should do the difficult physical works", "men can raise children as well as women", "politics is not for women", "women are less intelligent and cannot hold managerial positions".

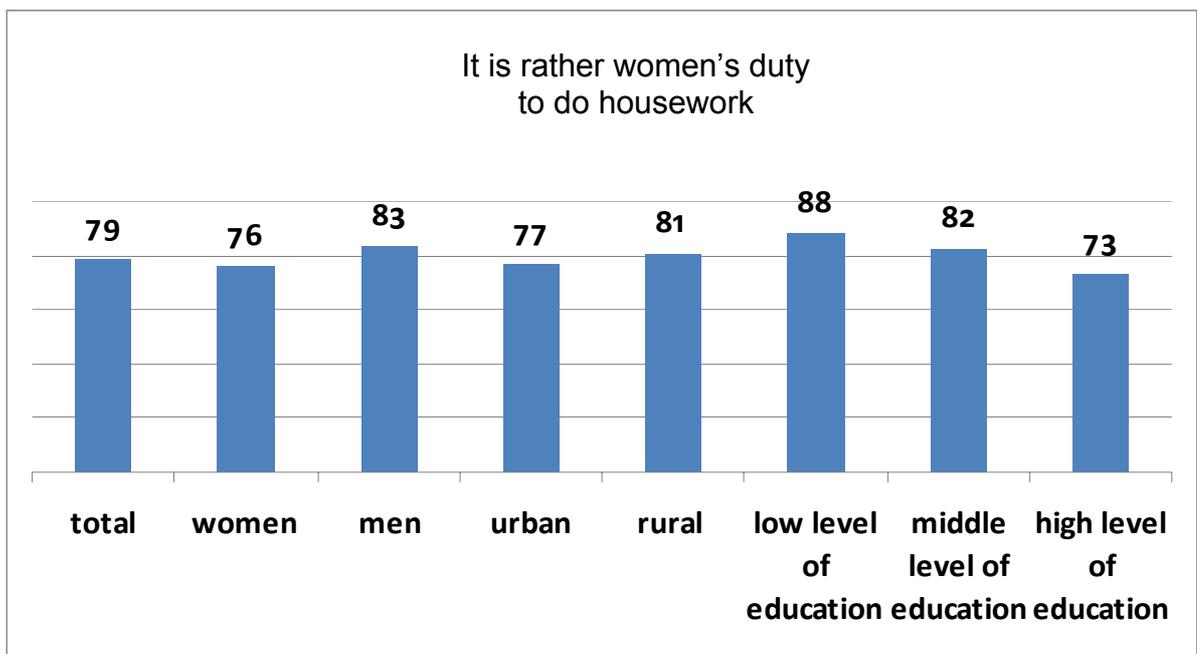
The analysis of answers reveals that the Moldovan society still has a traditional and conservative view on the distribution of women's and men's roles. Thus, more than 80% of respondents believe that the man is the head of the family. Though there are differences in answers by areas of residence and genders, they do not influence significantly the dominant of the answer. By the level of education, the share of respondents who believe that the man is the head of the family decreases with the increase in the level of education, from 94% in the group of respondents with a low level of education to 78% in the group of respondents with a high level of education (Chart 27).

Chart 27. Share of respondents who believe that the man is the head of the family, by gender, area of residence, level of education, %



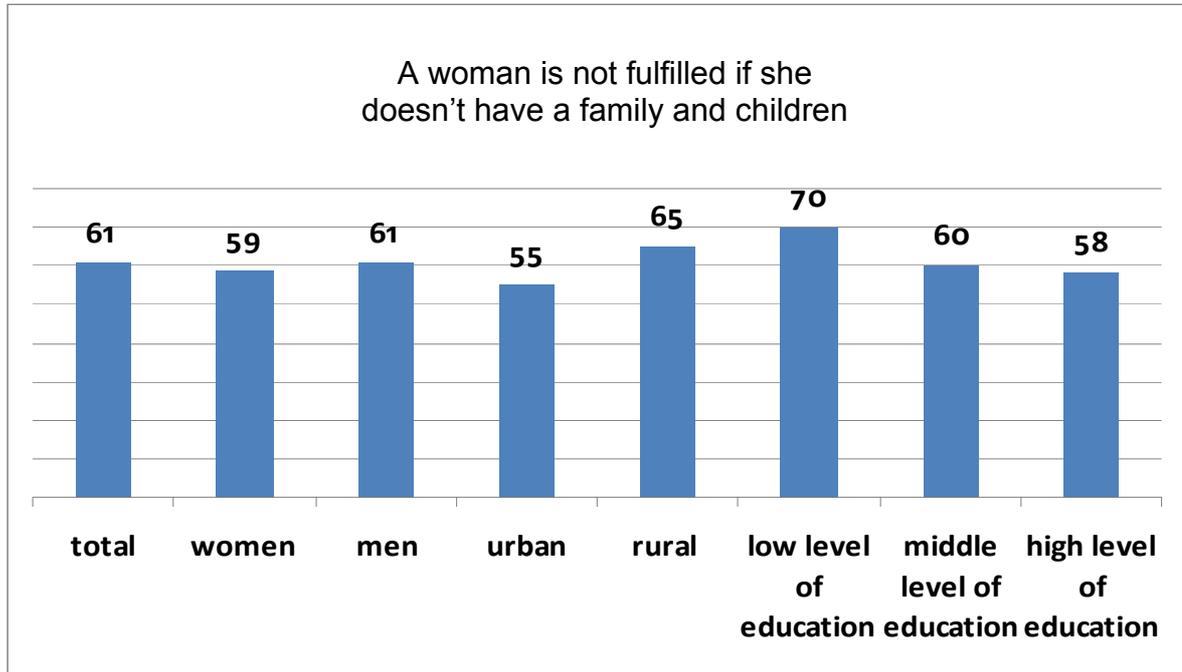
More than two thirds of respondents perceive the woman’s role in the family as a person who does the housework. The share of people who share this opinion is higher among men (83%), rural residents (81%), and people with a low level of education (88%).

Chart 28. Share of respondents who believe that it is rather women’s duty to do housework, by gender, area of residence, education level, %



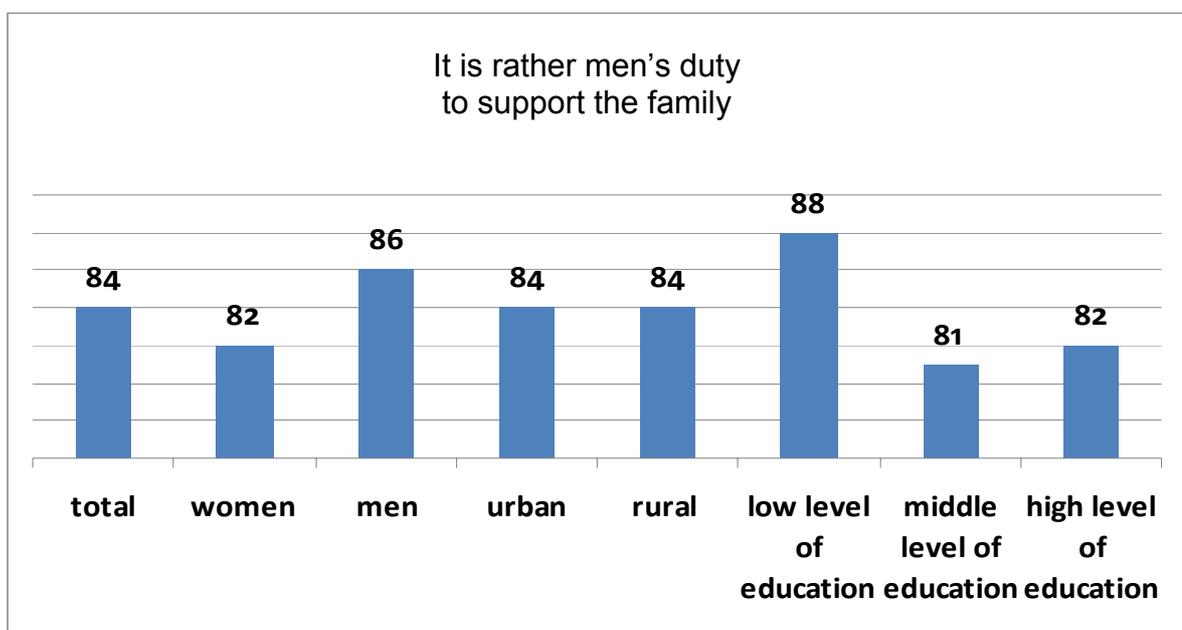
Over 60% of respondents believe that a woman is not fulfilled unless she has a family and children. The share of respondents who share this opinion is higher in rural areas (65%) and among people with a low level of education (70%) (see Chart 29).

Chart 29. Share of respondents who believe that a woman is not fulfilled if she doesn't have a family and children, by gender, area of residence, education level, %



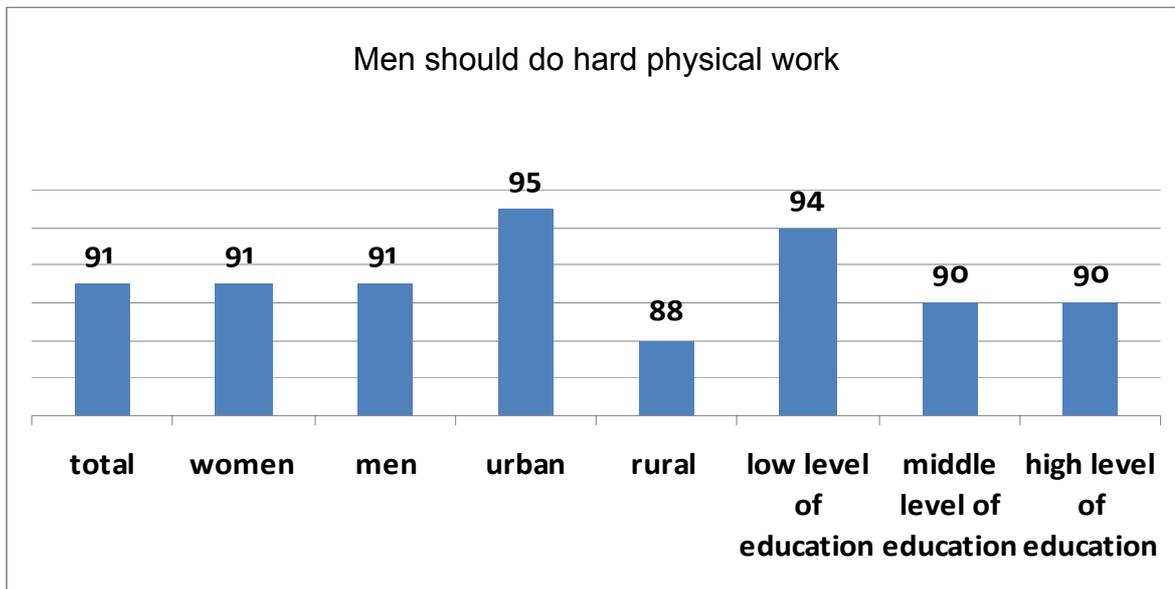
More than 80% of respondents believe that it is rather men's duty to support the family. The share of people who share this opinion is higher among men (86%) and people with a low level of education (88%) (see Chart 30).

Chart 30. Share of respondents who believe that it is rather men's duty to support the family, by gender, area of residence, education level, %



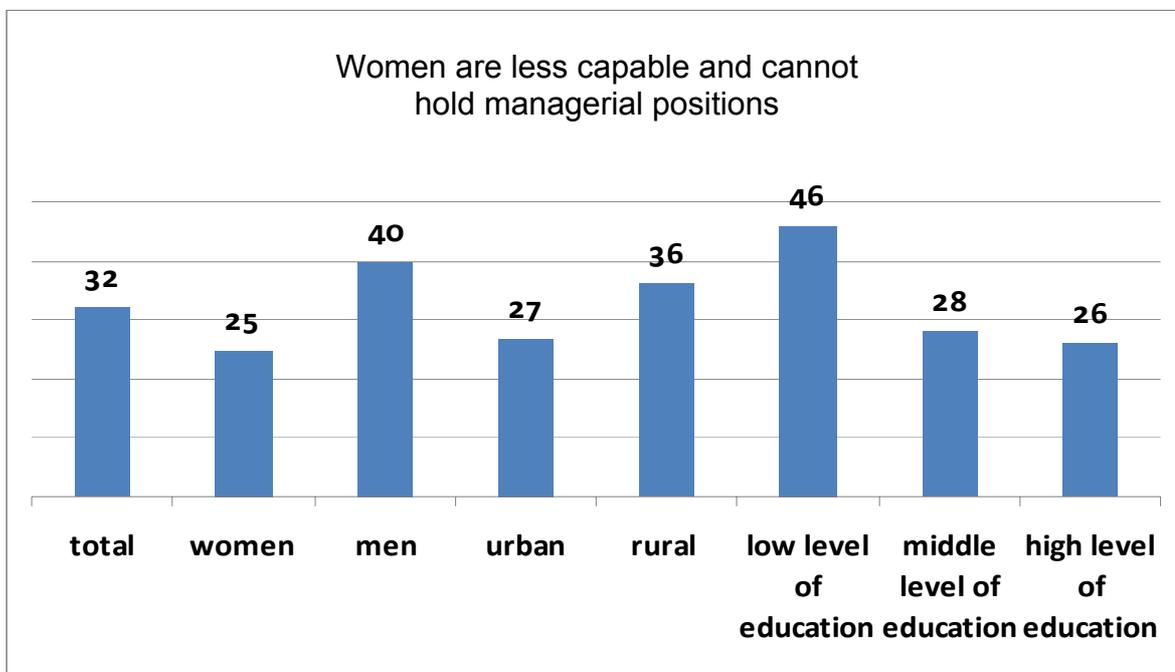
More than 90% of respondents believe that men should do hard physical work. The share of respondents who share this opinion is higher in urban areas (95%) and people with a low level of education (94%) (see Chart 31).

Chart 31. Share of respondents who believe that men should do hard physical work, by gender, area of residence, education level, %



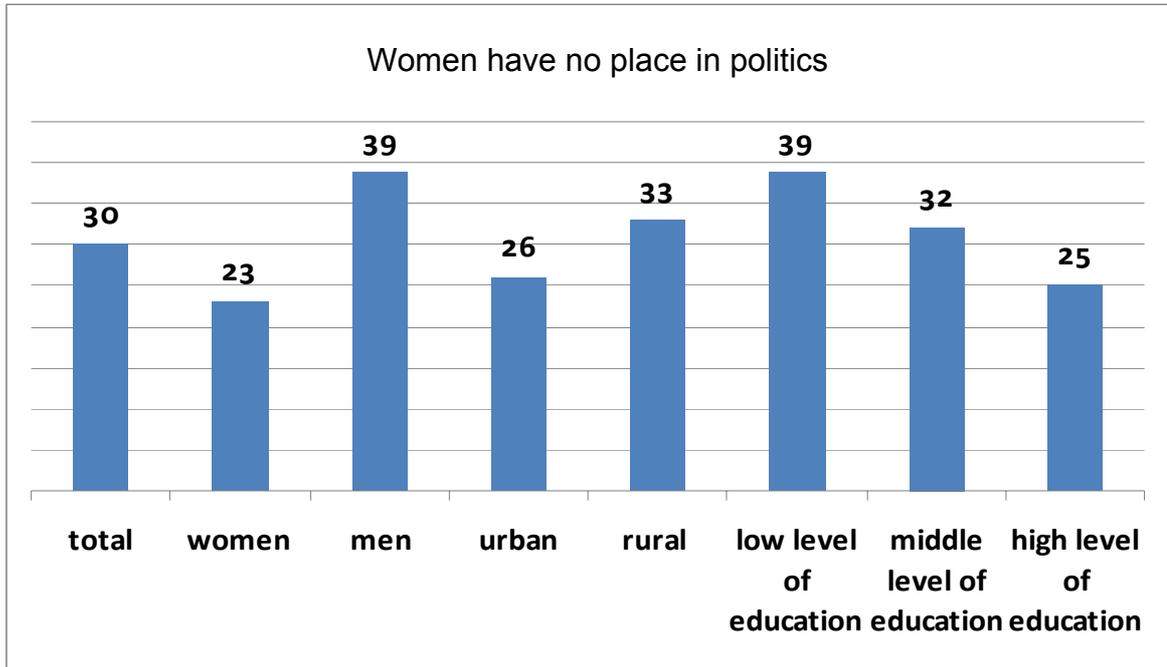
One third of respondents believe that women are less capable than men and cannot hold managerial positions. The share of people who share this opinion is higher among men (40%) and people with a low level of education (46%).

Chart 32. Share of respondents who believe that women are less capable and cannot hold managerial positions, by gender, area of residence, education level, %



About 30% of respondents believe that women have no place in politics. The share of respondents who share this opinion is higher among men (39%) and people with a low level of education (39%).

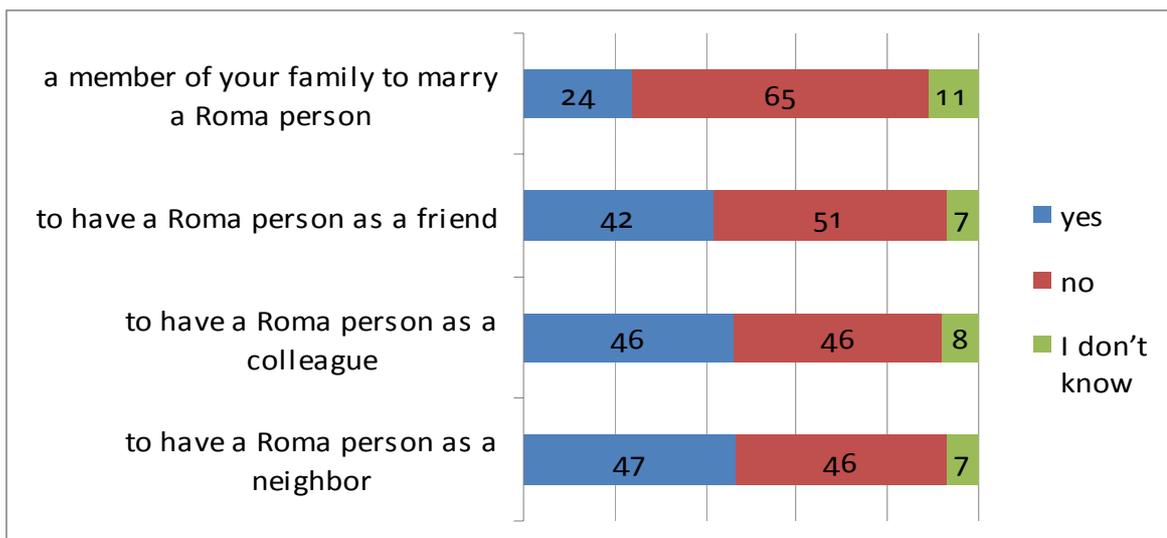
Chart 33. Share of respondents who believe that women have no place in politics, by gender, area of residence, education level, %



Social distance between respondents and the Roma

According to the results of the Study, over 40% of the respondents would accept to have a person of Roma ethnicity as their neighbor, colleague or friend. At the same time, only one in four respondents would agree that a member of their family marries a person of Roma ethnicity.

Chart 34. Level of acceptance of the persons of Roma ethnicity by respondents, %



According to the breakdown by residence area, the share of people in the urban area (26%) who would accept to have a person of Roma ethnicity in their family is higher than in the rural area (23%).

Based on the breakdown by gender, men would accept a person of Roma ethnicity as their neighbor (51%), job colleague (49%), friend (48%), or family member (28%) rather than women.

In terms of education, it can be observed that the higher the level of education, the higher the share of people who would accept a person of Roma ethnicity as their neighbor (from 40% among persons with a low level of education, up to 50% among respondents with a high level of education), their job colleague (from 39% among people with a low level of education, up to 50% among respondents with a high level of education), their friend (from 34% among people with a low level of education, up to 46% among respondents with a high level of education), and as a family member (from 18% among people with a low level of education, up to 27% among respondents with a high level of education).

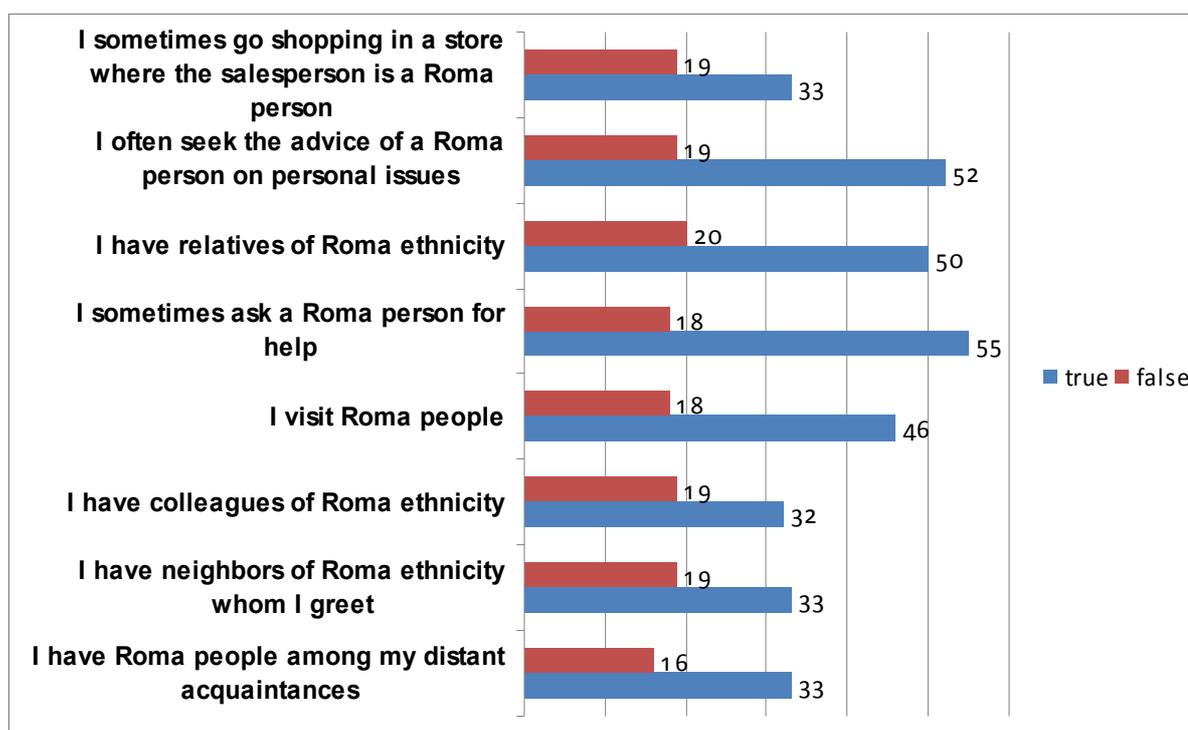
As regards the ethnicity, the share of people who would accept a Roma person as their neighbor, job colleague, friend or family member is higher among the Moldovans/Romanians and Russians. Therefore, 57% of the Moldovans/Romanians and 55% of the Russians would accept a person of Roma ethnicity as their neighbor. 61% of the Moldovans/Romanians and 57% of the Russians would accept a person of Roma ethnicity as a job colleague. 68% of the Moldovans and 52% of the Russians would accept a person of Roma ethnicity as their friend. 37% of the Russians, 35% of the Gagauz people and 31% of the Moldovans/Romanians would accept a person of Roma ethnicity as their family member.

Based on the above-mentioned indicators (acceptance as a neighbor, colleague, friend, and family member), an aggregated acceptance indicator has been calculated, which includes the number of people who gave a positive answer to the entire set of questions. Thus, the indicator of acceptance of the persons of Roma ethnicity is 21%. This means that only 21% of the respondents would accept a person of Roma ethnicity as their neighbor, job colleague, friend and family member.

The Study has also revealed that the acceptance indicator varies significantly depending on the cultural diversity of the respondents. Thus, the share of those who accept persons of Roma ethnicity is higher among the respondents who have certain relations with such people.

The Chart below shows that the indicator of acceptance of the Roma people is much higher among the respondents who sometimes ask a Roma person for help (55% versus 18%), often seek the advice of a Roma person on personal issues (52% versus 19%), have relatives of Roma ethnicity (50% versus 20%), visit Roma people (46% versus 18%), have acquaintances of Roma ethnicity (33% versus 16%), have neighbors of Roma ethnicity whom they greet (33% versus 19%), have colleagues of Roma ethnicity (32% versus 19%) (see Chart 35).

Chart 35. Level of acceptance of the persons of Roma ethnicity by respondents based on the diversity of cultural relations, %



The social distance between the respondents and the Roma is primarily due to the prejudice against Roma, which exists in the society. Therefore, over 2/3 of the respondents think that: most of the Roma are liars and can cheat others at any time; most of the Roma children are beggars and pickpockets; most of the Roma live off the back of others; most of the Roma violate laws; most of the Roma women are fortune-tellers and can curse you if you don't give them money. One in two respondents thinks that most of the Roma are drug sellers and human traffickers. One in four respondents think that the Roma should be forced to live separately since they are not able to integrate, while one in four think that the access of Roma people to some establishments should be prohibited. At the same time, only one in four respondents said the Government should provide more subsidies to the Roma (see Table 4).

Table 4. Respondents' perceptions about the Roma, %

	Totally/r ather agree	Rather/to tally disagree	I don't know/It is hard to answer
The Roma should be forced to live separately since they are not able to integrate	24	70	6
The government should provide more subsidies to the Roma	28	64	8
Special places should exist for the Roma in the state-funded schools and colleges	37	54	9
Access of the Roma to some establishments and shops should be prohibited	20	71	9
Most of the Roma violate the laws	63	25	12
Most of the Roma are drug sellers	50	26	24
Most of the Roma are human traffickers	45	27	28
Most of the Roma women are fortune-tellers and can curse you if you don't give them money	60	19	21
Most of the Roma children are beggars and pickpockets	72	20	8
Most of the Roma are used to live off the back of others	71	20	9
Most of the Roma are liars and can cheat others at any time	73	19	8

Based on the ethnicity breakdown, the share of people who consider that the Roma should be forced to live separately from the rest of society is higher among Ukrainians (35%) and Gagauz people (32%). The share of people who think that access of the Roma to some establishments should be prohibited, most of the Roma violate the laws and are involved in human trafficking, is higher among the Ukrainians (32%, 66% and 55% respectively). The rate of respondents who consider that most of the Roma are drug sellers is higher among Moldovans/Romanians (55%), Russians (56%) and Ukrainians (59%). The share of those who believe that most of the Roma women are fortune-tellers who can curse you if you don't give them money is higher among the Gagauz people (79%), the Ukrainians (71%), the Russians and the Moldovans/Romanians (70%). The rate of those who consider that most of the Roma children are beggars and pickpockets is higher among Gagauz people (77%) (see Table 5).

Table 5. Respondents' perceptions about the Roma, by ethnicity, %

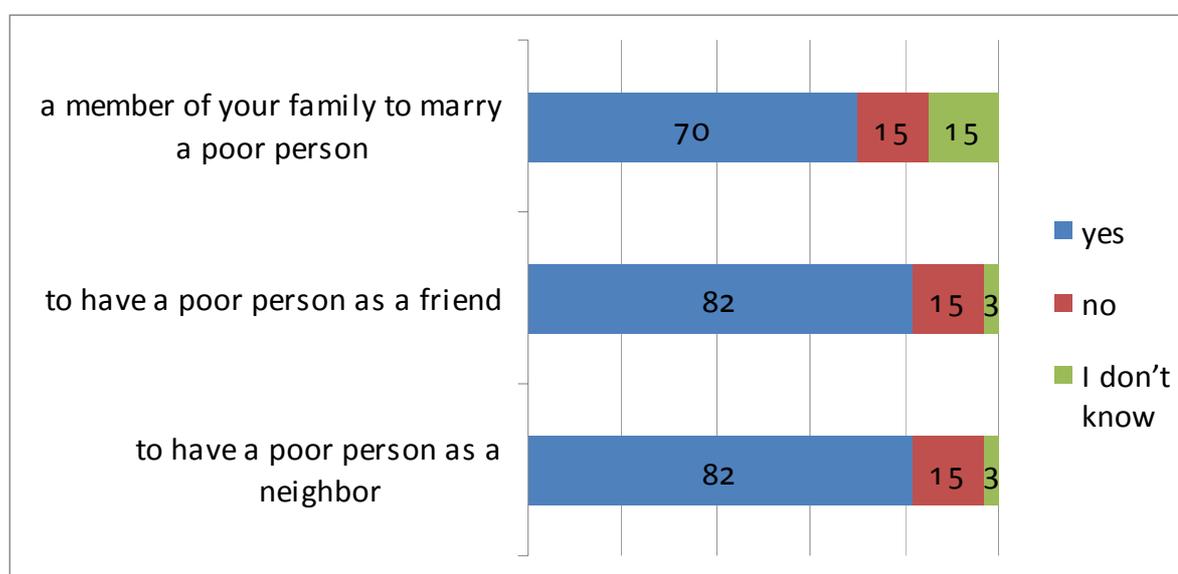
	Total	Moldovan/ Romanian	Russian	Ukrainian	Gagauz	Bulgarian
The Roma should be forced to live separately since they are not able to integrate	24	24	19	35	32	5
The government should provide more subsidies to the Roma	28	31	31	23	44	17

Special places should exist for the Roma in the state-funded schools and colleges	37	39	46	21	38	42
Access of the Roma to some establishments and shops should be prohibited	20	17	15	32	21	8
Most of the Roma violate the laws	63	56	56	66	63	37
Most of the Roma are drug sellers	50	55	56	59	45	46
Most of the Roma are human traffickers	45	40	43	55	30	36
Most of the Roma women are fortune-tellers and can curse you if you don't give them money	60	70	70	71	79	59
Most of the Roma children are beggars and pickpockets	72	66	69	66	77	59
Most of the Roma are used to live off the back of others	71	66	65	66	63	52
Most of the Roma are liars and can cheat others at any time	73	64	66	71	65	49

Social distance between respondents and the poor

This Study has revealed that, although the respondents mentioned the poor among the first three most discriminated groups in Moldova (DPOI is -22), the social distance in relation to this category of people is quite reduced. Thus, the Chart below shows that over 80% of the respondents would accept a poor person as a neighbor or a friend, while 70% agree that a member of their family marries a poor (see Chart 36). This may be generally explained by the fact that over 2/3 of Moldova's population have a quite low living standard.

Chart 36. Attitude to the poor



No specific trends in terms of the standard of living, gender, age or education have been identified while analyzing the level of acceptance by social and demographic groups.

As for other groups of discriminated people, the aggregated indicator of acceptance of the poor has been calculated, which includes the affirmative answers to all the questions. The indicator of acceptance of the poor is quite high - 69%. This means that 69% of the respondents would accept to have a poor person as their friend, neighbor and family member.

Although the indicator of acceptance of the poor is quite high, many of the respondents still have certain prejudice against the poor, which might increase the social distance between the population and

these groups if no action is undertaken to prevent it. Thus, over 40% of the respondents think that most of the poor are lazy and do not want to work, that they are in this situation by their own fault, and that they are drunkards. One in three respondents believes that most of the poor have a low intellect, are stupid and aggressive (see Table 6).

Table 6. Respondents' perceptions about the poor, %

	Totally/rather agree	Rather/total ly disagree	I don't know/It is hard to answer
Most of the poor are lazy and do not want to work	41	56	2
The government should provide more subsidies and assistance to the poor	71	26	3
The government should provide more economic support and job integration programs	91	8	1
The government should do its best for the children from poor families to attend school	93	6	2
Most of the poor are in this situation by their own fault	45	52	3
Most of the poor are drunkards	40	56	4
Most of the poor have a low intellect and are stupid	33	64	3
Most of the poor are aggressive	31	65	4

Although a part of the respondents agree with the prejudice against the poor, most of them consider that the government should provide more economic support and job integration programs to the poor (91%) and that it should do its best for the children from poor families to attend school (93%). At the same time, 2/3 of the surveyed persons think the government should provide more subsidies and assistance to the poor.

Social distance between respondents and the elderly

As mentioned above, almost one in two respondents think that the elderly are frequently discriminated in Moldova. Most often this category of people is discriminated when being employed (74%), at job (66%), in their relations with the authorities (57%), in hospitals and policlinics (55%).

Most frequently, discrimination against the elderly is due to prejudice against them. The study has established that, although over 80% of the respondents said that the elderly are very wise and we could benefit from their advice and that the elderly have a rich work experience, which they can share with the young, 65% of the surveyed persons consider that the elderly are not able to achieve complex tasks any more, 58% think the elderly are helpless, and 57% consider that the elderly have an old mindset. One in three respondents mentioned that the elderly have low mental capacities and are a burden to the society, while one in five said they are useless (see Table 7).

Table 7. Respondents' perceptions about the elderly, %

	Totally/rather agree	Rather/total ly disagree	I don't know/It is hard to answer
The government should pay higher retirement pensions to the elderly, so that they can live decently	94	5	1
The government should provide the elderly with jobs to fit their abilities	81	17	2

The government should provide social assistance and healthcare to the elderly, to meet their needs	92	6	2
Children are fully responsible for taking care of their elderly parents	86	12	2
The elderly are a burden to the society	27	69	4
The elderly are very wise and we can benefit from their advice	85	11	4
The elderly are not able to achieve complex tasks any more	65	31	4
The elderly have a rich work experience, which they can share with the young	87	10	3
The elderly have low mental capacities	34	61	5
The elderly have an old mindset	57	39	4
The elderly are helpless	58	39	3
The elderly are useless	20	77	3

However, the overwhelming majority of respondents has a positive attitude to the elderly and considers that the government and the children should do more to ensure a higher standard of living for them. Thus, over 90% of the respondents think the government should pay higher retirement pensions to the elder, so that they can live decently, as well as social assistance services to meet their needs. Over 80% think that the government should provide the elderly with jobs to fit their abilities and children are fully responsible for taking care of their elderly parents.

Thus, following an analysis of the social distance between respondents and various socially vulnerable groups, we can conclude that: although at the perception level, the respondents consider that the most discriminated social groups in Moldova are the persons with mental and physical disabilities and the poor, in terms of subjective attitudes, the most marginalized groups appeared to be the representatives of gay and lesbian community (aggregated acceptance indicator -2%), the HIV-positive (aggregated acceptance indicator - 5%) and the persons with mental disabilities (aggregated acceptance indicator - 7%). The aggregated acceptance indicator is higher for the poor (69%), the persons with physical disabilities (21%) and the Roma (21%).

The high marginalization of representatives of gay and lesbian community, the HIV-positive persons and persons with mental disabilities is due primarily to the prejudice existing in Moldova against these social groups. Thus, over 2/3 of the respondents think that the representatives of gay and lesbian community are dissolute, immoral, perverse, sick, and need treatment. Almost one in two respondents thinks the representatives of gay and lesbian community are HIV carriers. Most of the respondents consider that the HIV-positive persons are dissolute, immoral, gays/lesbians, use drugs and practice commercial sex. 40% believe that the persons with disabilities are unable to work, 39% think that the persons with mental disabilities are dangerous and should be isolated, 28% consider that the persons with disabilities are not able to have families.

The low level of acceptance and the fear of these groups of people have lead to the opinion about the need of imposing some social restrictions on them or isolating them from the society. Therefore, 2/3 of the respondents think that the representatives of gay and lesbian community should have no right to marriage, child adoption, use of public transport, organization of public events, and appearance on TV programs. Almost half of the respondents think that the gay and lesbian relationships should be sanctioned by deprivation of certain rights (46%), fine (24%), and imprisonment (23%). Two thirds of the surveyed persons consider that HIV children should study in separate classes, 41% think that the HIV people should not be allowed to use public transportation, 79% believe that the HIV-positive persons should make their status known, one in four respondents think the HIV + status should be made known at job, to the employer, at school, to colleagues, etc. 2/3 of the respondents still assert that children with disabilities are different than other children and that they should study in special schools.

In terms of equal opportunities for men and women, more than half of the respondents said such opportunities exist in Moldova, while 38% said they do not exist, arguing that: women have often a double task – to support their families and bring up their children; there are certain professions which women are not able to perform; women often get a lower remuneration than men; and that women are not promoted to higher positions.

Although more than half of the respondents said there are equal opportunities in Moldova, the findings of the Study show that our country continues to be traditionalist and conservative with regard to the roles of women and men. Thus, the overwhelming majority of respondents agree with the statements that the man is the head of the family, that it is rather women's duty to do housework, that it is rather men's duty to support the family, and that it is men who should do the hard physical work. One in three respondents said that women are less capable and cannot hold managerial positions and women have no place in politics. This is primarily the opinion of men and of people with a low level of education.

4. Stereotypes most frequently used in relation to certain groups of people

According to the respondents⁸, the following stereotypes are frequently applied to the discriminated groups of people:

1. Persons with mental disabilities: mentally retarded, lacking discernment, unable to work, dangerous person who has to be isolated, is not able to have a family, miserable, sick, poor, insane, handicapped, underdeveloped, psychically sick, infirm.

2. Persons with physical disabilities: handicapped, impaired, a burden, helpless, sick, unable to work, useless, incapable, infirm, lame, physical injury, punished by God.

3. Sexual minorities: perverse, pedophile, dissolute, disgusting, degraded, immoral, sick, AIDS-infected, miserable, useless, psychically sick, abnormal, disoriented, imbecile, fool, stupid, pederast, gay/lesbian.

4. HIV+ persons: dangerous, perverse, dissolute, unorganized lifestyle, it's their own fault, miserable, condemned to death, poor, fear, danger, infected, death, should be isolated from the society, virus, illness, AIDS, unprotected, non-guilty, drugs.

5. Women: mother, wife, householder, housewife, life, gentle, saint, warmth, love, esteem, respect, pride, balance, affectionate, smart, wise, tender, confident, tolerant, vigor, beauty, sensitiveness, cunning, caprice, wicked, dame, bondmaid, hardworking, worn out, sex.

6. The poor: indigent, moneyless, homeless, sorrow, pity, foodless, jobless, lazy, it's their own fault, poverty, vagrant, beggar, torture, fear, loneliness, humiliation, futureless, luckless, and without fate.

7. The elderly: old person, powerless, helpless, fulfilled life, experience, wise, retired, grandparents, parents, pity, sorrow, poor, depression, loneliness, useless, speak a lot, death, burden.

8. The Roma: gipsy, black, unwashed, uneducated, slippery, thief, do not trust them, beggar, united, tradition, dances, pleasant, friendly, hardworking, rich, resourceful, lazy, fear, filthy, hatred, wandering, indifferent, strange, noisy, witchcraft, mean, stingy.

Concerning the persons of Roma ethnicity, respondents had to also answer an open-ended question. Therefore, when asked what characteristics are specific particularly to the Roma, the respondents listed the following first five positive characteristics: united, enterprising, friendly, hospitable, religious, and the following first five negative characteristics – thief, beggar, liar, lazy and dirty.

Table 8. Respondents' perception of the characteristics specific particularly to the Roma, %

Positive characteristics		Negative characteristics	
United	54	Thieves	45
Enterprising	30	Beggars	39

⁸ The question was open-ended.

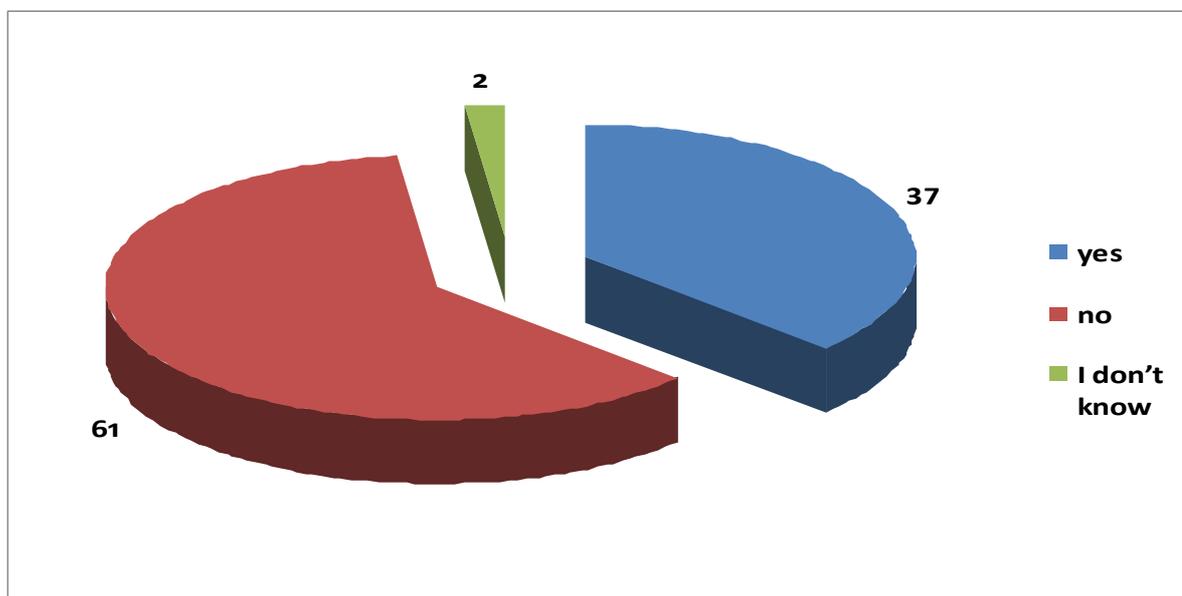
<i>Friendly</i>	30	<i>Liars</i>	35
<i>Hospitable</i>	22	<i>Lazy</i>	26
<i>Religious</i>	19	<i>Dirty</i>	24
<i>Hardworking</i>	15	<i>Illiterate</i>	21
<i>Nice</i>	11	<i>Aggressive</i>	19
<i>Modest</i>	6	<i>Uneducated</i>	18
<i>Honest</i>	4	<i>Selfish</i>	10
<i>Smart</i>	4	<i>Superstitious</i>	9
<i>Clean</i>	4	<i>Slow-witted</i>	8
<i>Reliable</i>	3	<i>Stupid</i>	6
<i>Civilized</i>	2	<i>Divided</i>	3

5. Personal experiences of respondents in the field of discrimination

Violation of rights and discrimination of respondents.

According to the results of the Study, 37% of the respondents said they felt that their rights were violated at least once during the past three years. 61% mentioned that their rights were never violated during the past 3 years, while 2% gave no answer (Chart 37).

Chart 37. Distribution of respondents based on whether or not their rights were violated during the past three years, %



The share of respondents who said their rights were violated during the past 3 years is higher in the urban area (39%), in the group of people with graduate studies (43%), and among those of Moldovan/Romanian ethnicity (44%).

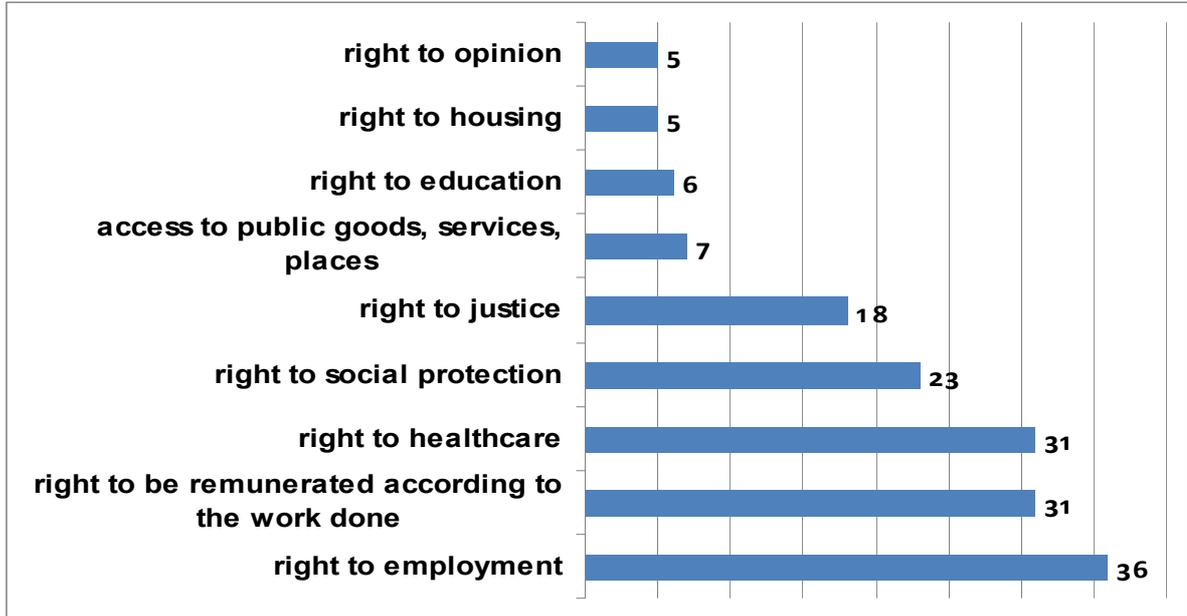
36% of those who consider their rights were violated said their employment rights were not observed, 31% – the right to be remunerated according to the work done, 31% – the right to healthcare, 23% – the right to social protection, 18% – the right to justice, 75% – the right to goods and services, and 6% – the right to education (see Chart 38).

The share of people who were subject to violation of their right to employment during the past 3 years is higher in the urban area (41%), among men (42%), and among people aged 49 or less (39%), among Bulgarians (72%), Russians (47%), and Gagauz people (43%).

The share of people who were subject to violation of their right to be remunerated according to the work done, during the past 3 years, is higher in the urban area (36%), among men (38%), and people with graduate and postgraduate studies (41%).

The share of people whose rights to healthcare were not observed during the past 3 years is higher among women (35%), people aged over 50 (40%), the retired persons and persons with disabilities (42%), and the persons with a low well-being (34%).

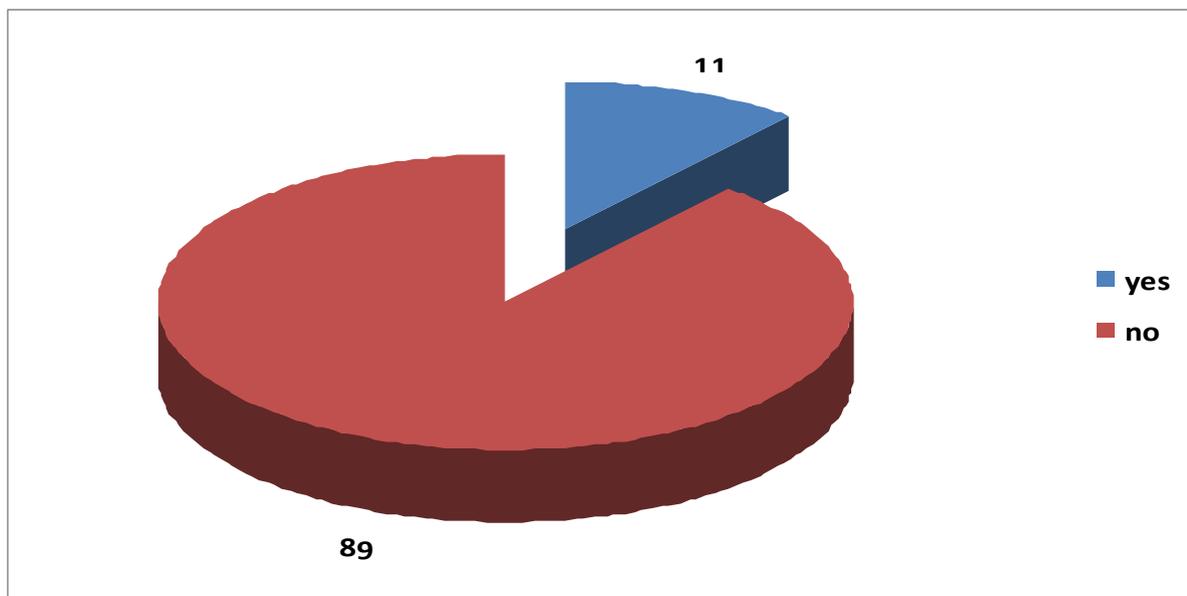
Chart 38. Share of people who were subject to violation of their following rights during the past 3 years, % of the total number of respondents whose rights were violated



The share of people whose right to social protection was violated during the past 3 years is higher among women (31%), and people aged over 65 (48%).

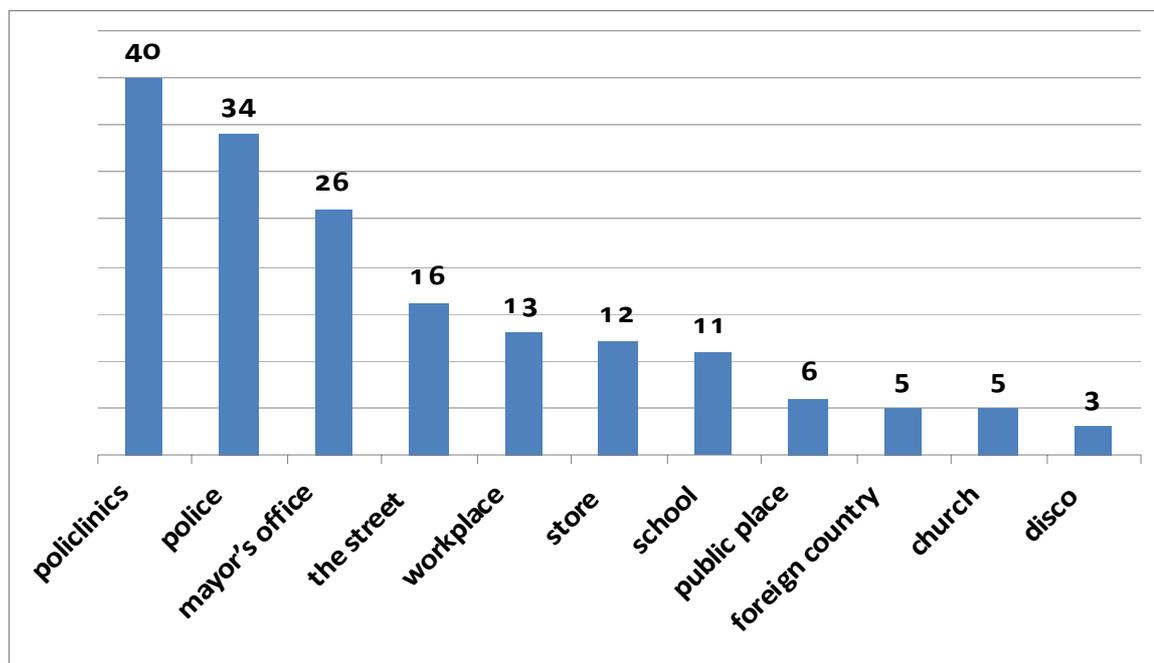
One in nine respondents said there are place where they and their relatives avoid going, or if they go, they have a fear because they are discriminated (see Chart 39)

Chart 39. Share of people who avoid or have a fear when going to certain places, because they are discriminated, % of the total sample



When asked to indicate such places, 40% of the respondents who feel discriminated indicated the policlinics, 34% – the police, 26% – the mayor’s office, 16% – the street, 13% – the workplace, 12% – the store, and 11% – the school.

Chart 40. Places where respondents feel discriminated, %



When asked about the reasons why they feel discriminated in policlinics, 82% of those who avoid or feel afraid when going to policlinics said was is because they had no money and 16% – because of their age. The share of people who said they felt discriminated because they had no money is higher in rural areas (98%), in the age group 35-49 (89%), and among the Moldovans/Romanians (94%). The share of respondents who feel discriminated because of their age is higher in the urban area (22%), in the age group over 65 (45%) and among Russians (60%).

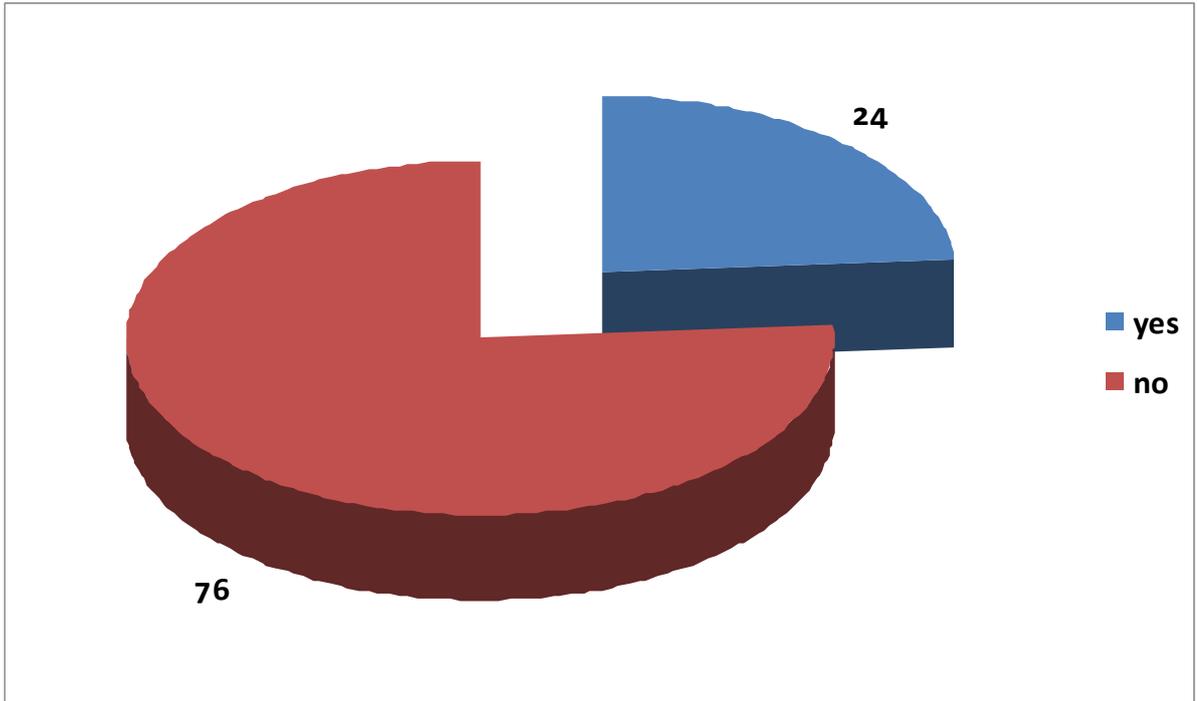
The respondents who reported that they felt discriminated at the police, motivated this by the fact that they had no money (63%), because of their age (20%) and because they were women (17%). The number of persons who felt discriminated because they had no money is higher among men (65%), in the age group 35-49 (73%). The share of persons who felt discriminated because of their age is higher in the urban area (29%), among women (24%), in the age group 50-64 (31%), among the persons with graduate studies (38%), among Russians (38%).

Those who reported that they felt discriminated at the mayor's office motivated it by the fact that they had no money (55%) and because of their age (27%). The share of people who reported they felt discriminated because of the lack of money is higher in the rural area, in the age group 50-64 (59%), among people with graduate studies (86%), and among Moldovans/Romanians (62%). The share of those who felt discriminated because of their age is higher in the urban area (43%), among men (35%), people over 65 years old (36%), and people with graduate studies (71%).

The respondents who said they felt discriminated at school motivated this by the lack of money (78%), age (34%) and health (35%). The share of respondents who reported they felt discriminated because they lacked money is higher in the rural area (82%), and among men (83%). The number of those who were discriminated because of their age is higher in urban areas (55%), and among men (58%).

When asked if they felt discriminated in any way during the past year, one in four respondents gave an affirmative answer, while 76% reported they did not feel discriminated in any way (see Chart 41).

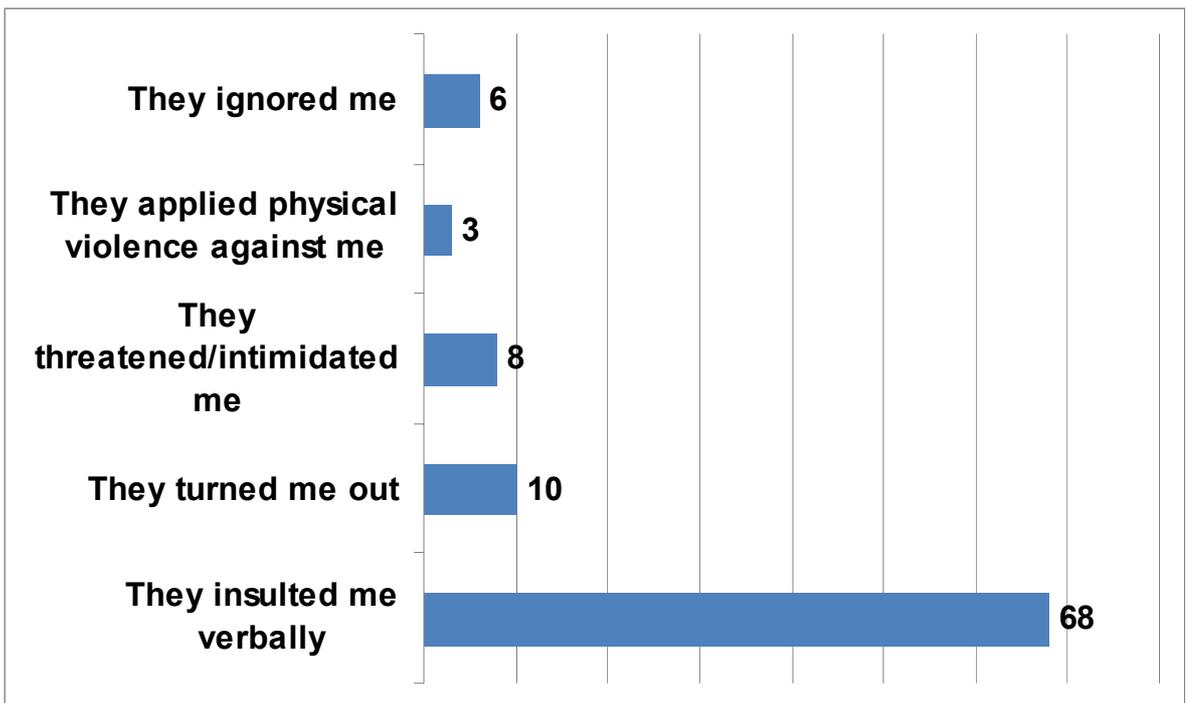
Chart 41. Distribution of respondents based on whether or not they were discriminated during the past year, %



The share of respondents who felt discriminated is higher in the urban area (26%), in the age group 50-64 (26%), among people with graduate and postgraduate studies (27%), among Moldovans/Romanians (33%).

When asked how exactly they were discriminated in the last incident, 68% of the respondents reported that they were insulted verbally, 10% were turned out, 6% were ignored, and 3% were physically abused.

Chart 42. The way the respondents were discriminated, % of the total number of victims

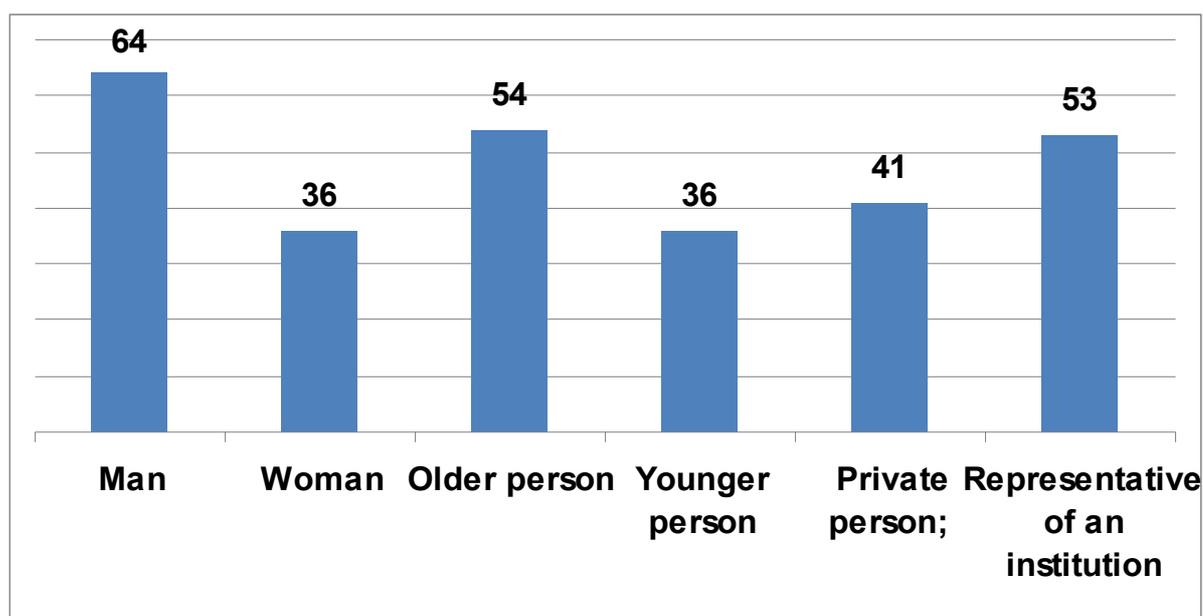


The share of respondents who said they were verbally insulted is higher in the rural area (78%), among women (73%), among retired persons, persons with disabilities (80%), and among school and university students (77%). The share of those who were turned out is higher among the persons looking for a job (20%), the share of those who were threatened – among the persons with a high level of well-being (22%), and the share of those who were ignored – among the elderly (12%).

When asked “What were the reasons for such a behavior”, 33% of those who were discriminated answered that they lacked money, 21% – because of their age, 14% – because they were women, 12% – because they had different opinions, 11% – because of their health status, 5% – because of their ethnicity. The share of respondents who reported they were discriminated because they lacked money is higher in the urban area (36%), in the age group 18-34 (37%), among respondents looking for a job (39%), among persons working in the household (38%), and among Gagauz people (65%). The share of respondents who said they were discriminated because of their age is higher among men (26%), persons over 65 years old (54%), persons with high school education (32%), and retired persons/persons with disabilities (51%).

The persons who committed discrimination had the following characteristics: 64% – men, 36% – women, 54% – older than the discriminated person, 36% – younger than the discriminated person. In 41% of the cases the discriminator was an individual and in 53% of the cases – a legal entity or institution/organization (see Chart 43).

Chart 43. Characteristics of the discriminator in the last incident, % of victims



The share of persons who reported they were discriminated by men is higher in the rural area (69%), in the age group 35-49 (70%), among those looking for a job (75%), and those who said they had a good financial situation (74%).

The share of respondents discriminated by women is higher in the urban area (39%), in the age group of 50 years and more (41%), among the retired persons or the persons with disabilities (51%), as well as among those with a low level of income (44%).

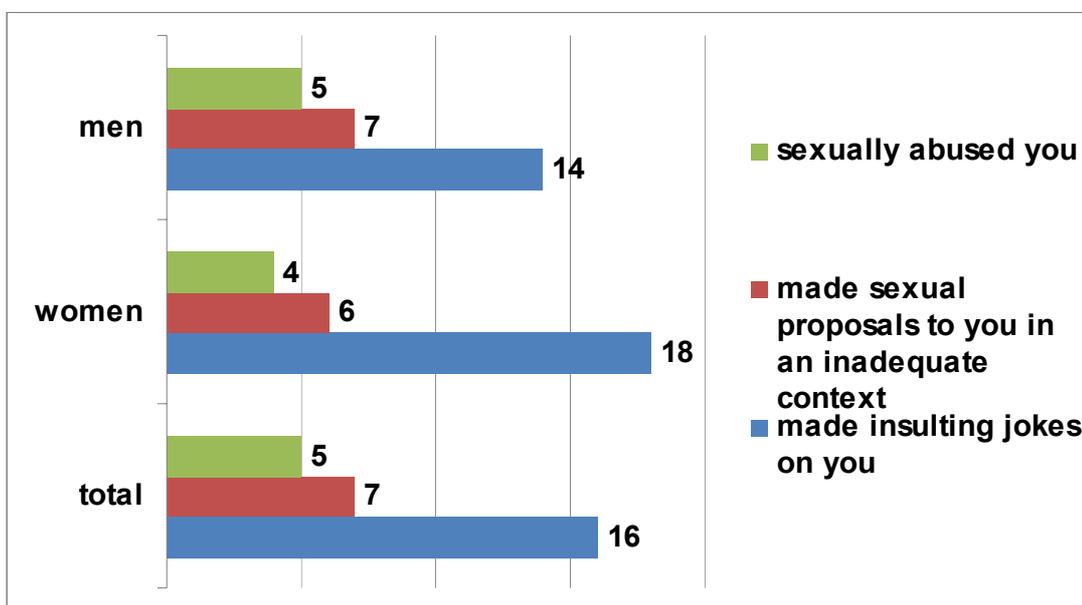
The share of respondents who reported they were discriminated by persons older than them is higher in the age group 18-34 (72%), among those with junior and senior high school education (61%), high school or university students, (70%), people looking for a job (60%).

The share of respondents who reported that they were discriminated by people younger than them is higher among people aged over 65 (84%), the retired persons and the persons with disabilities (72%).

The rate of respondents discriminated by individuals is higher in the rural area (50%), among women (48%), in the age group of 65 (47%); and the rate of respondents discriminated by people representing an institution is higher in the rural area (61%), among men (60%), in the age group 35-49 (70%), and among people with graduate studies (61%). Regarding the persons discriminated by the representatives of an institution, the Study has revealed that 35% of the victims were discriminated by the representatives of the institution where they work or where they applied for a job, 25% – by the representatives of the mayor’s office, 22% – by doctors in policlinics, 11% – by the police, 9% – by salespersons, and 8% – at school.

The study has also addressed the cases of sexual discrimination. Thus, 16% of the respondents reported that it occurred to them, during the past year, that a person of opposite sex made insulting jokes on them. 7% stated that sexual proposals were made to them in an inadequate context, during the past year, and 5% mentioned that somebody attempted to abuse them sexually during the past year (see Chart 44).

Chart 44. Share of respondents who were subject to sexual discrimination during the past year, %



In terms of gender, women had to suffer more frequently than men from insulting jokes made on them. Men had to suffer more frequently than women from sexual proposals or sexual abuse (see Chart 44). More than 2/3 of the respondents did not answer the question “Who attempted to make sexual proposals to you or sexually abuse you?”, while 7% said their neighbor, friend, girlfriend/boyfriend (at that time) attempted to make sexual proposals to them and 5% reported that their neighbor, job colleague, girlfriend/boyfriend (at that time) attempted to sexually abuse them.

Attitudes and behaviors of the respondents who witnessed discrimination cases

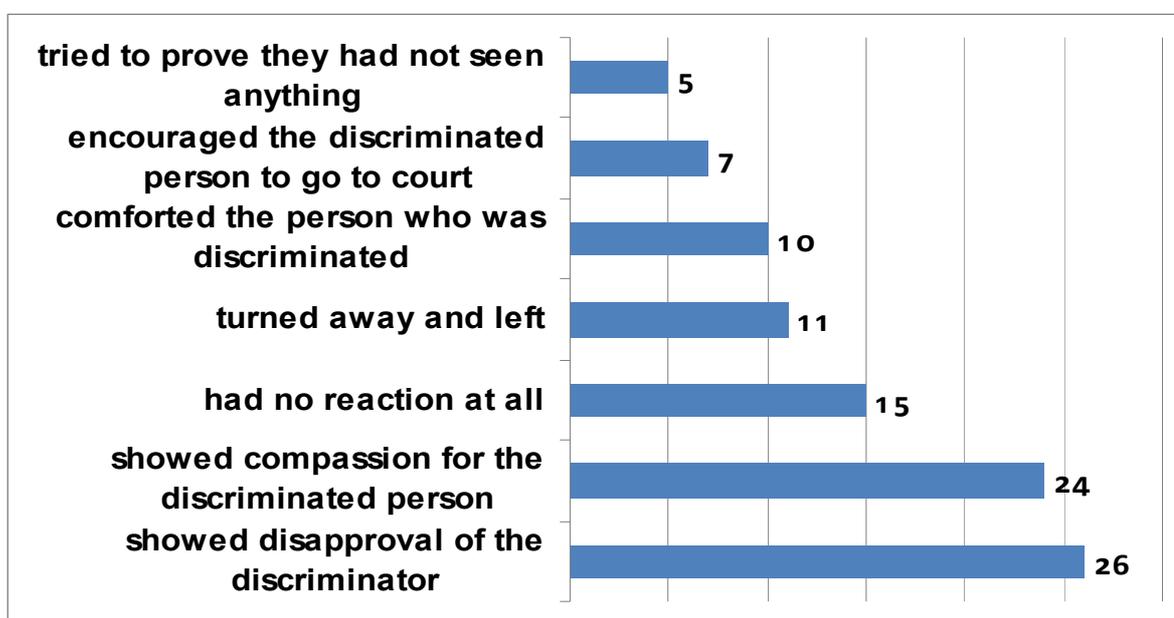
The Study has analyzed the attitudes and behaviors of the respondents in relation to other discrimination cases which they witnessed during the past two years. According to the survey, virtually one in three respondents witnessed at least one discrimination case during the past two years. When asked how discrimination was expressed in the last incident, 66% of the witnesses said the respective person was verbally insulted, 10% – the person was dismissed, 10% – the person was threatened, 12% – the person was subject to physical violence.

32% of the respondents who witnessed a case of discrimination reported that the last incident occurred in the street, 20% – at job, 11% – at school, 11% – at policlinics, 8% – at the store, 5% – in public areas, 5% – at the police, 4% – at the mayor's office.

38% of the respondents who witnessed a case of discrimination mentioned that, during the last incident, the persons had been discriminated because they were poor, 24% – because of their age, 16% – because of their ethnicity, 15% - because they were women, 11% – because of their health status, 6% – because of their religion, 3% – because of their sexual orientation.

One in three witnesses of discrimination cases tried to not get involved in any way in the incident. Thus, 15% said they had no reaction at all, 11% - turned away and left the place and 5% tried to prove that they had not seen anything. About 24% showed sympathy to the discriminated persons, one in two respondents comforted them, and 7% encouraged them to go to court, and only 26% showed disapproval of the discriminator.

Chart 45. Respondents' reaction to the last case of discrimination, % of witnesses



The share of people who showed disapproval is higher in the urban area (32%), among women (29%), in the age group 18-34 (30%), among school and university students (31%), among persons of Gagauz ethnicity (53%) and Bulgarian ethnicity (32%). The rate of people who showed compassion is higher among persons aged 50-64 (30%), and among those with junior high school education (31%) or vocational education (35%). The rate of respondents who had no reaction at all is higher among people aged 35-49 (20%), with junior high school education (22%), and with a low level of well-being (24%). The share of respondents who turned away and left the place is higher among people aged over 65 (29%), and Ukrainians (24%).

Respondents' attitudes regarding the punishment of discriminators

75% of the surveyed persons consider that discriminators have to be punished. The number of those who share this opinion is higher in the urban area (78%), in the age group 18-34 (79%).

According to the respondents, the most appropriate punishments for those who commit discrimination would be the following: fine (28%), warning (18%), criminal sanctions (16%), damages (13%), community service (12%), and imprisonment (4%).

Therefore, after having analyzed the personal experience of the respondents in the field of discrimination, we established that virtually one in three respondents felt their rights were violated during the past three years, particularly the right to employment, the right to be remunerated according to the level of work performed, the right to healthcare, the right to social protection, the right to justice, etc. One in nine respondents avoid going to certain organizations or institutions, such as polyclinics (40%), police (34%), and mayor's office (26%), fearing discrimination. In most cases, respondents mentioned the lack of money as the main reason for discrimination.

One in four respondents felt discriminated during the past year, and one in three – witnessed a case of discrimination. Most of the persons were discriminated by employers, while being employed or during service, by representatives of the mayor's office, by doctors at the polyclinics, by police, by salespersons and at school.

One in three persons who witnessed discrimination tried not to get involved in the incident in any way (had no reaction at all, turned away and left the place, proved that they had not seen anything), more than 30% comforted the discriminated persons, showing sympathy to them or encouraging them to go to court and only 26% showed disapproval of the person who committed discrimination.

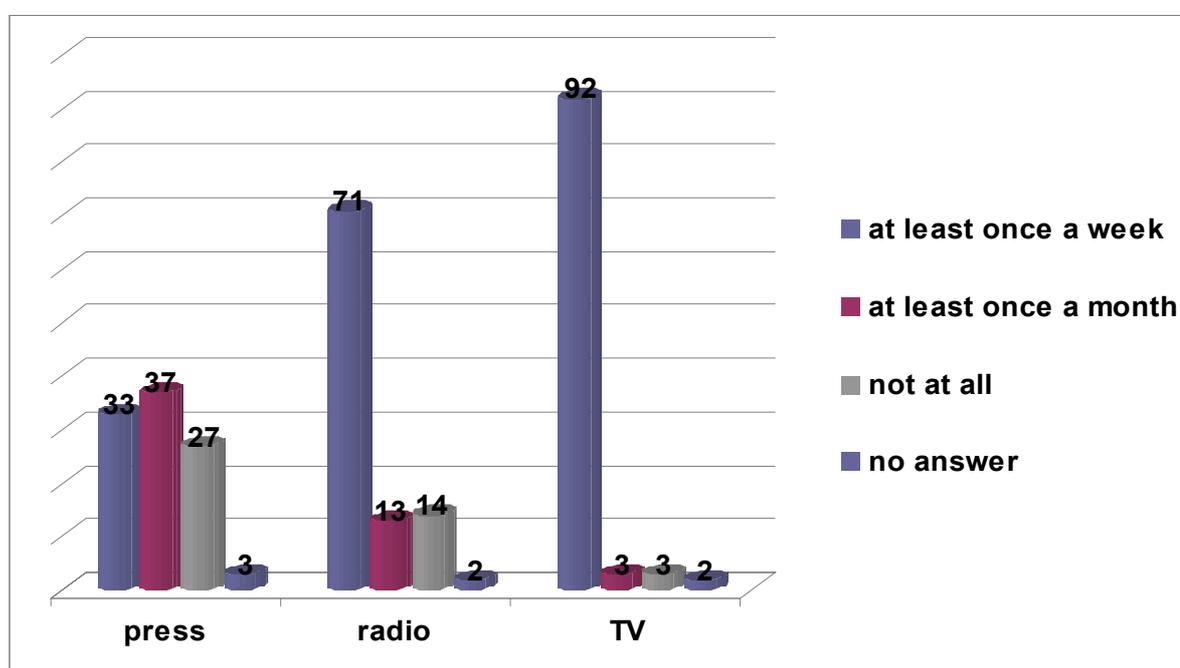
Over 2/3 of the interviewed persons think that discriminators should be punished by fines, criminal sanctions, compensations, community service and even imprisonment.

6. Perceptions of respondents concerning the coverage of various groups of people by the media

Frequency of respondents' contacts with mass-media

According to the results of the survey, 33% of respondents read the periodical press at least once a week, 37% - at least once a month, 27% - didn't read at all during the last three months and 3% didn't answer (see Chart 46). The share of respondents who read the press at least once a week is bigger among the age group of 50-64 years (39%) and among people with higher and graduate education (48%).

Chart 46. Frequency of respondents' contacts with mass-media, %



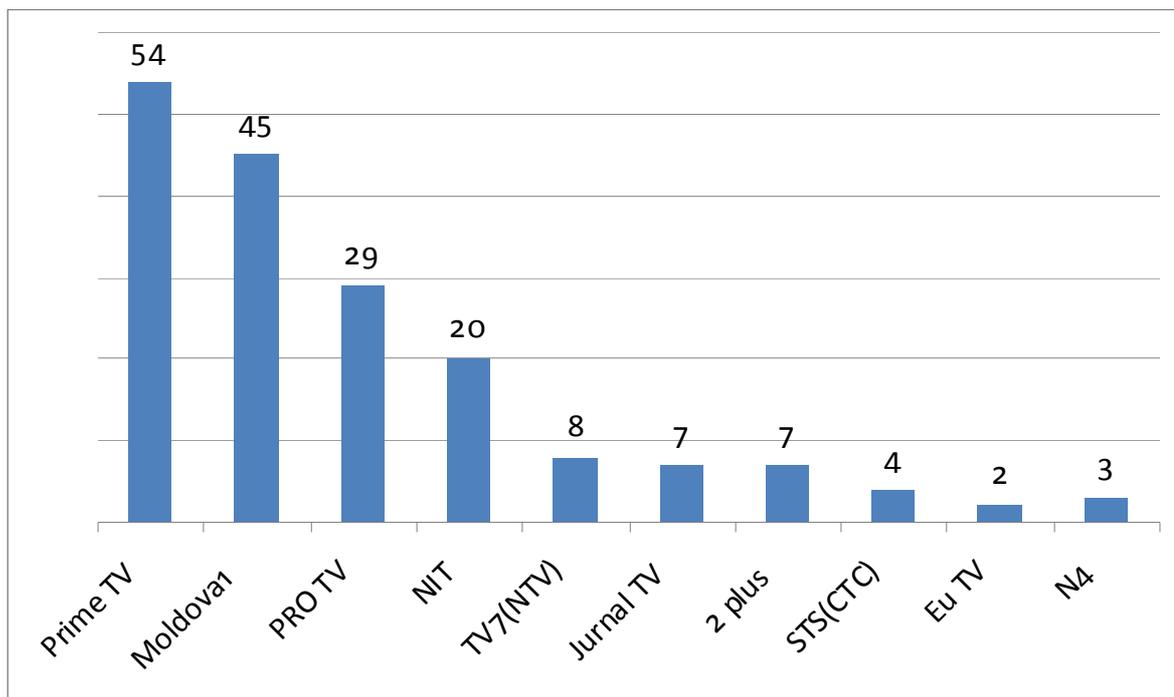
71% of respondents mentioned that they listened to the radio at least once a week, 13% - at least once a month, 14% - at all during the last 3 months and 2% didn't answer. The share of persons who listen to the radio at least once a week is bigger among persons from rural areas (76%), in the age group of 35-49 years (76%), respondents with general secondary, upper secondary (76%) or vocation education (78%).

92% of respondents mentioned that they watched TV at least once a week, 3% - at least once a month, 3% - at all during the last 3 months and 2% didn't answer. The share of respondents who watch TV at least once a week is bigger among the age group of 35-49 years (96%) and among people with specialized secondary and college education (96%).

When asked about the TV channels they watch more often for informational purposes, one in two respondents indicated Prime TV/ORT, 45% - Moldova 1, 29% - Pro TV, 20% - NIT, 8% - TV7, 7% - Jurnal TV, 7% - 2 Plus, 4% - CTC, 2% - Euro TV and 3% - N4 (see Chart 47⁹).

⁹ The percentage represents the total number of persons who indicated that, in the first and the second place, they watch this TV channel for informational purposes.

Chart 47. Share of respondents who watch more frequently the following TV channels for informational purposes, %



The share of people who watch more often Prime TV for informational purposes is bigger in rural areas (56%), among women (56%), persons older than 35 years (59%), persons with a low (56%) and middle level of education, persons with Russian (68%), Gagauz (80%), Bulgarian (95%) and Ukrainian ethnicity (81%).

The share of persons who watch more often Moldova 1 for informational purposes is bigger in rural areas (57%), among persons older than 50 years (60%), respondents with a low (53%) or middle level of education (50%).

The share of persons who watch more often Pro TV for informational purposes is bigger in urban areas (37%), among persons of 18-34 years (40%), persons with a high level of education (38%), Moldovans/Romanians (46%).

The share of respondents who watch more often NIT for informational purposes is bigger among people of Russian (40%), Gagauz (38%), Bulgarian (36%) and Ukrainian ethnicity (38%).

The share of persons who watch more often TV 7 for informational purposes is bigger among people from urban areas (11%), with higher and graduate education (11%) and persons of Russian ethnicity (19%).

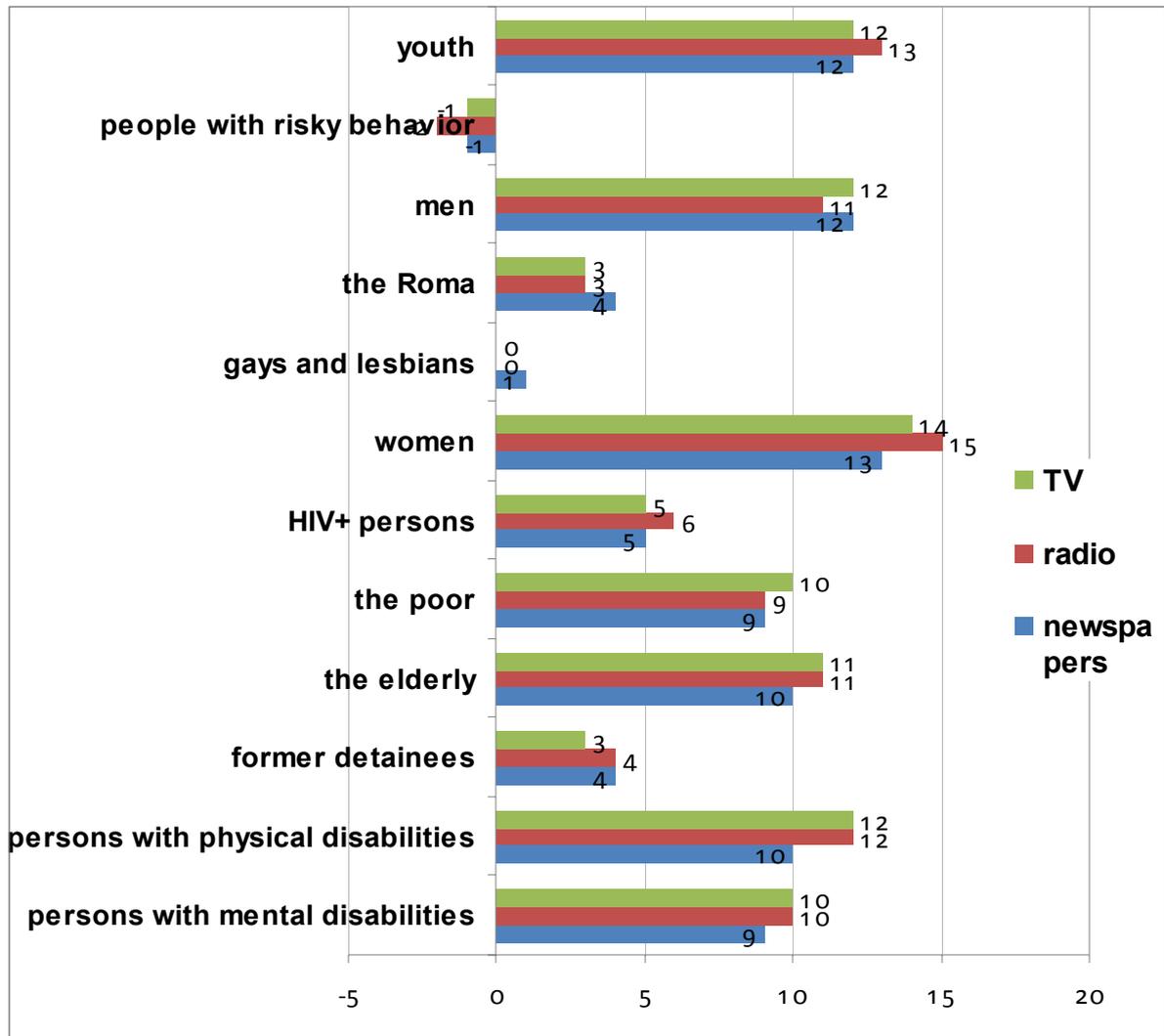
Respondents' perception about the attitude of mass-media towards the discriminated groups of people

During the survey we tried to determine how respondents perceive the attitude of mass-media towards the discriminated groups of people. Following the analysis of data and estimation of the Dominant Personal Opinion Index (DPOI¹⁰), we can conclude that in general most of the persons who have contacts with mass-media (written press, radio, TV) at least once a week have the opinion that mass-media reflects the issues related to discriminated groups of people in a neutral and equidistant manner. Thus, the Chart below reveals that, according to the respondents' perception, mass-media has a quite positive attitude towards young people, men, women, elderly, persons with disabilities. The attitude towards Roma, gays and lesbians, HIV-positive persons, former detainees is perceived as less positive than towards the groups

¹⁰ The Dominant Personal Opinion Index (DPOI) was calculated using the formula $(p-n) \times (100-ne) : 100$, where p is the frequency of positive opinions, n – frequency of negative opinions, ne – frequency of neutral opinions. The index ranges on a scale from -100 to 100. The closer to 100 the index is, the more equidistant and less discriminatory the

mentioned above, but nevertheless the Dominant Personal Opinion Index is above 0. Regarding persons with a risky behavior, the respondents believe that mass-media has a quite discriminatory attitude, the DPOI having a negative value.

Chart 48. Perception of respondents who have contacts with mass-media at least once a week about their attitude towards different groups of people (DPOI), %

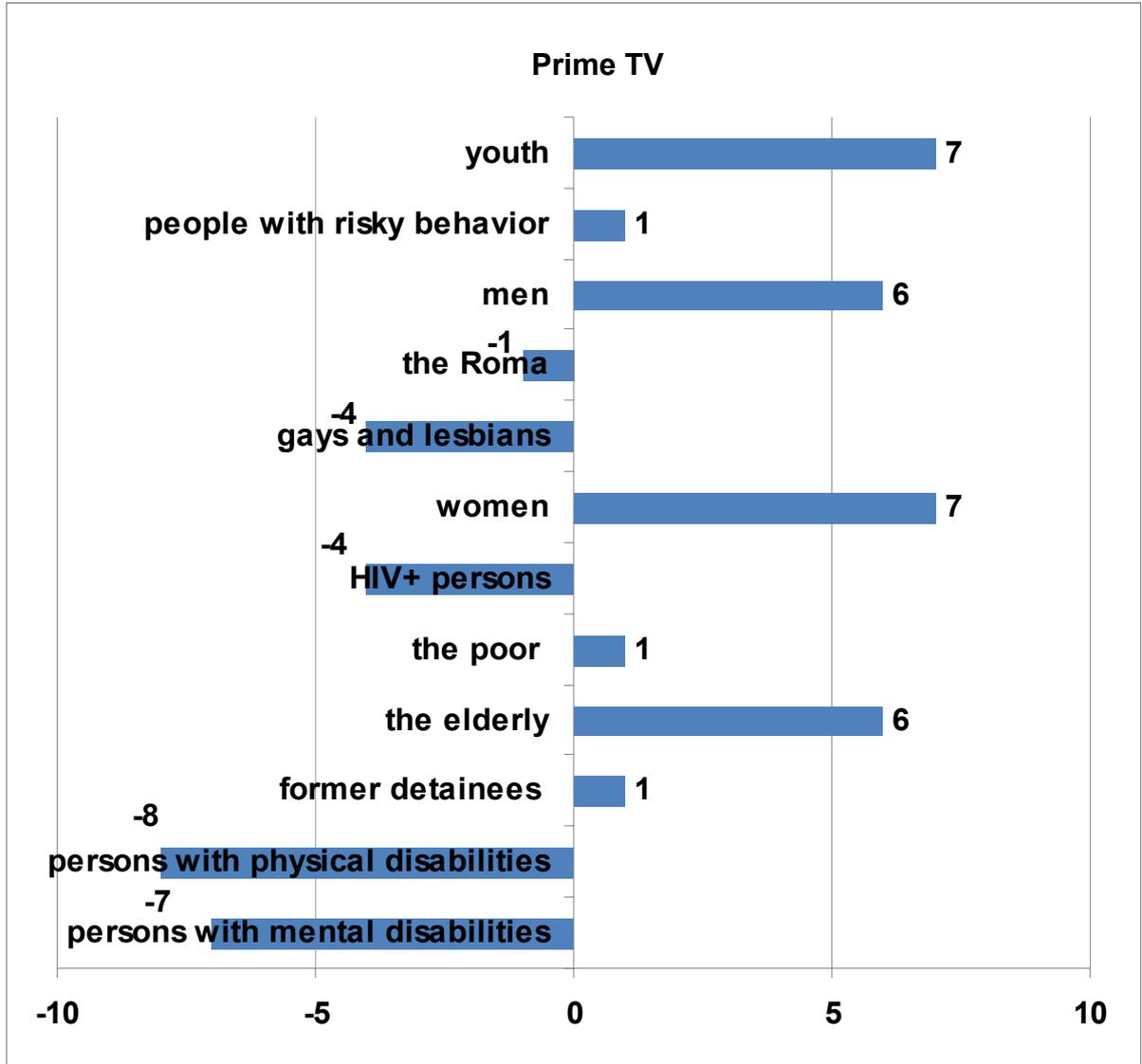


The survey also reveals that the respondents' perception on how the mass-media reflects issues related to discriminated persons varies depending on the TV channel watched more frequently for informational purposes. This makes us believe that the respondents' perception refer rather to the specific TV station. Nevertheless, we believe that the respondents' perception about the attitude of mass-media towards certain groups of people is not enough to draw a final conclusion and it is necessary to analyze the content of the broadcast programs.

Thus, the Chart below shows that the respondents that watch more frequently Prime TV for informational purposes believe that mass-media has quite a positive and equidistant attitude towards young people, men, women, elderly, less positive attitude towards the poor and detainees and rather negative or discriminatory attitude towards the Roma, gays and lesbians, HIV-positive persons, persons with physical and mental disabilities.

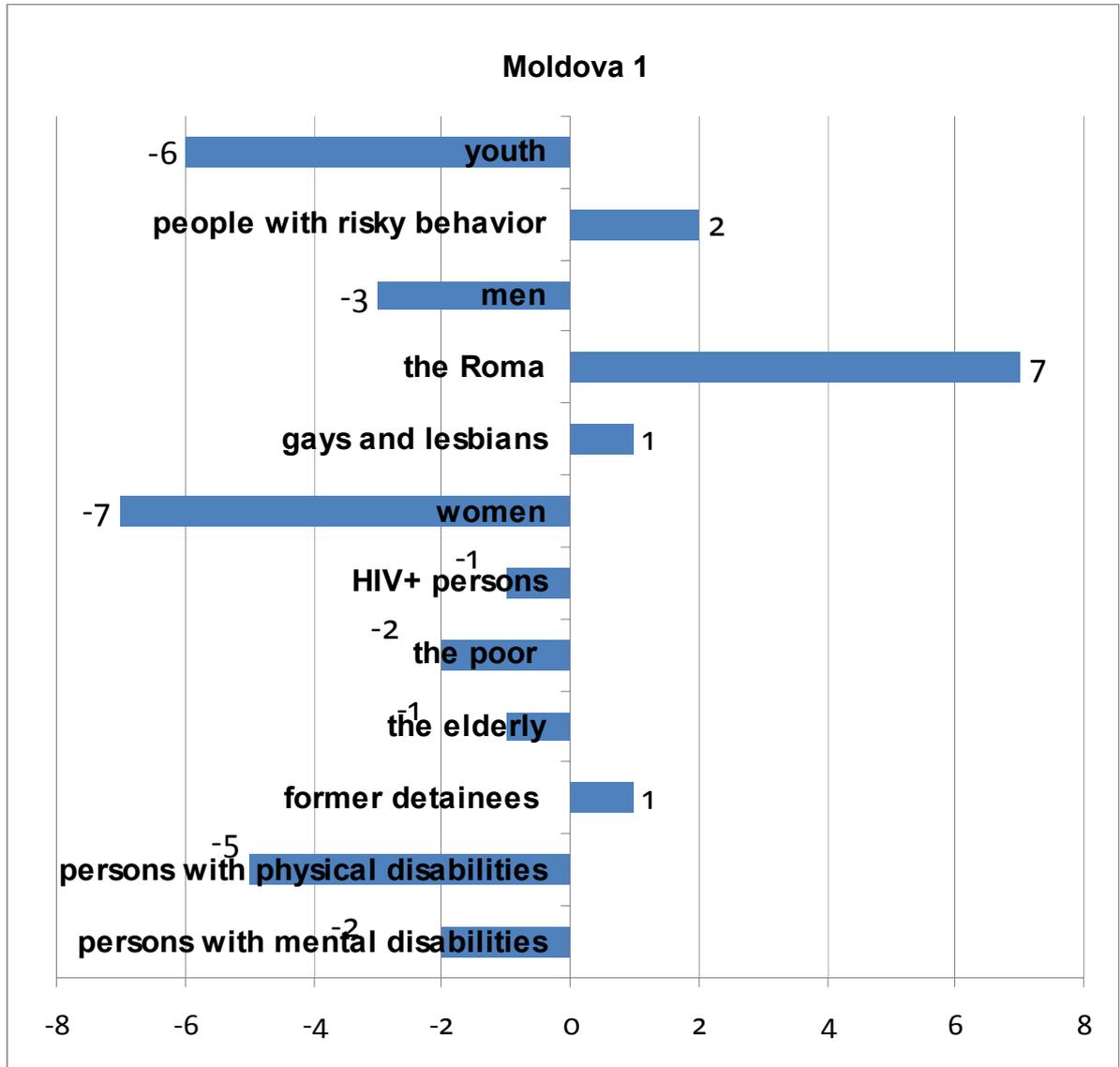
attitude of mass-media towards these groups is, and vice-versa.

Chart 49. Respondents' perception about the attitude of mass-media towards different groups of people (DPOI) by the TV channel watched more often for informational purposes, %



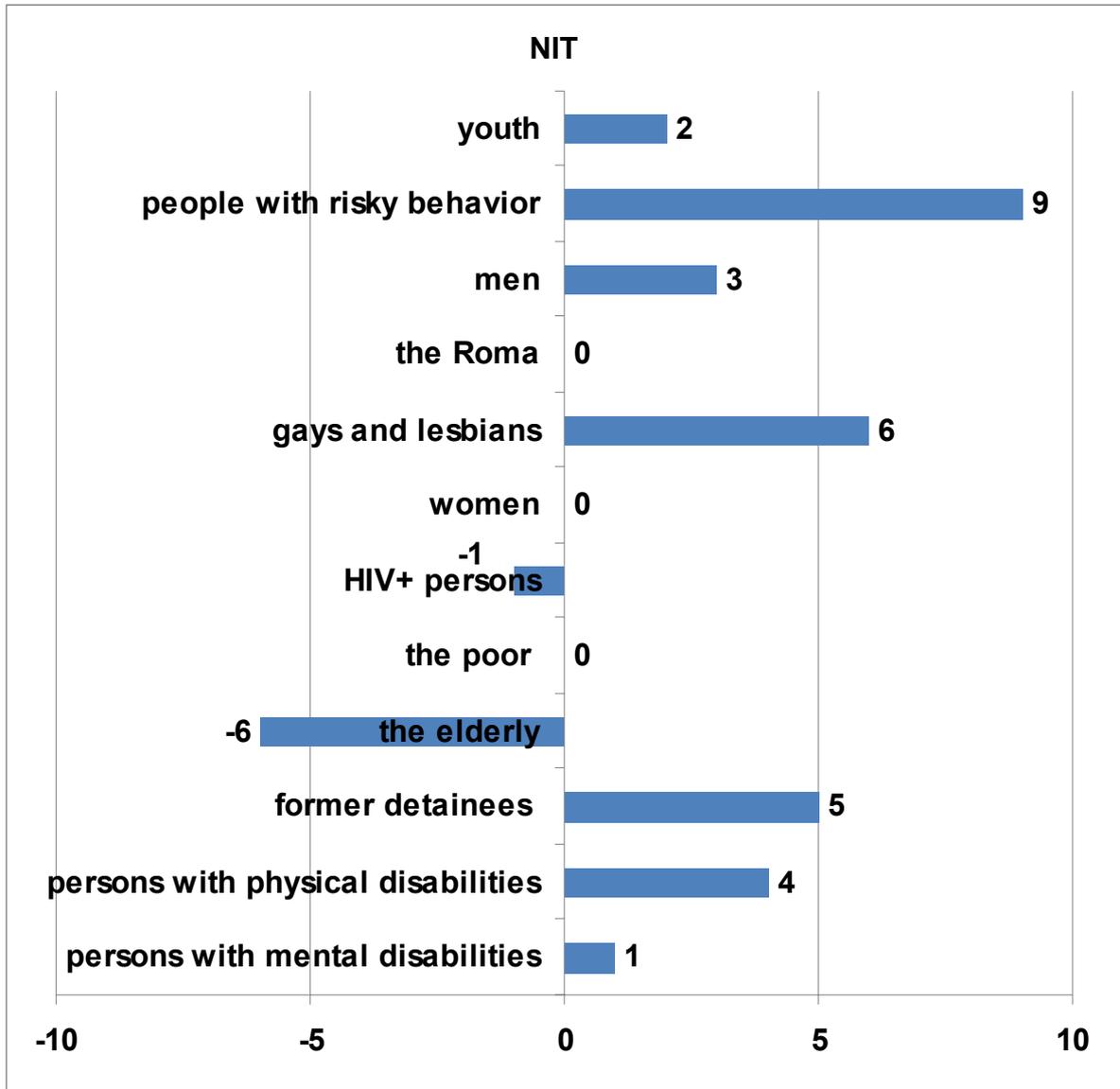
The respondents who mentioned that they watched more frequent Moldova 1 for informational purposes believe that mass-media has a positive and non-discriminatory attitude towards Roma, less positive attitude towards persons with risky behavior, gays and lesbians and former detainees, and not positive at all, even a little discriminatory attitude towards the other groups of people: young people, men, women, HIV-positive persons, the poor, elderly, persons with physical or mental disabilities (see Chart 50).

Chart 50. Respondents' perception about the attitude of mass-media towards different groups of people (DPOI) by the TV channel watched more often for informational purposes (Moldova 1), %



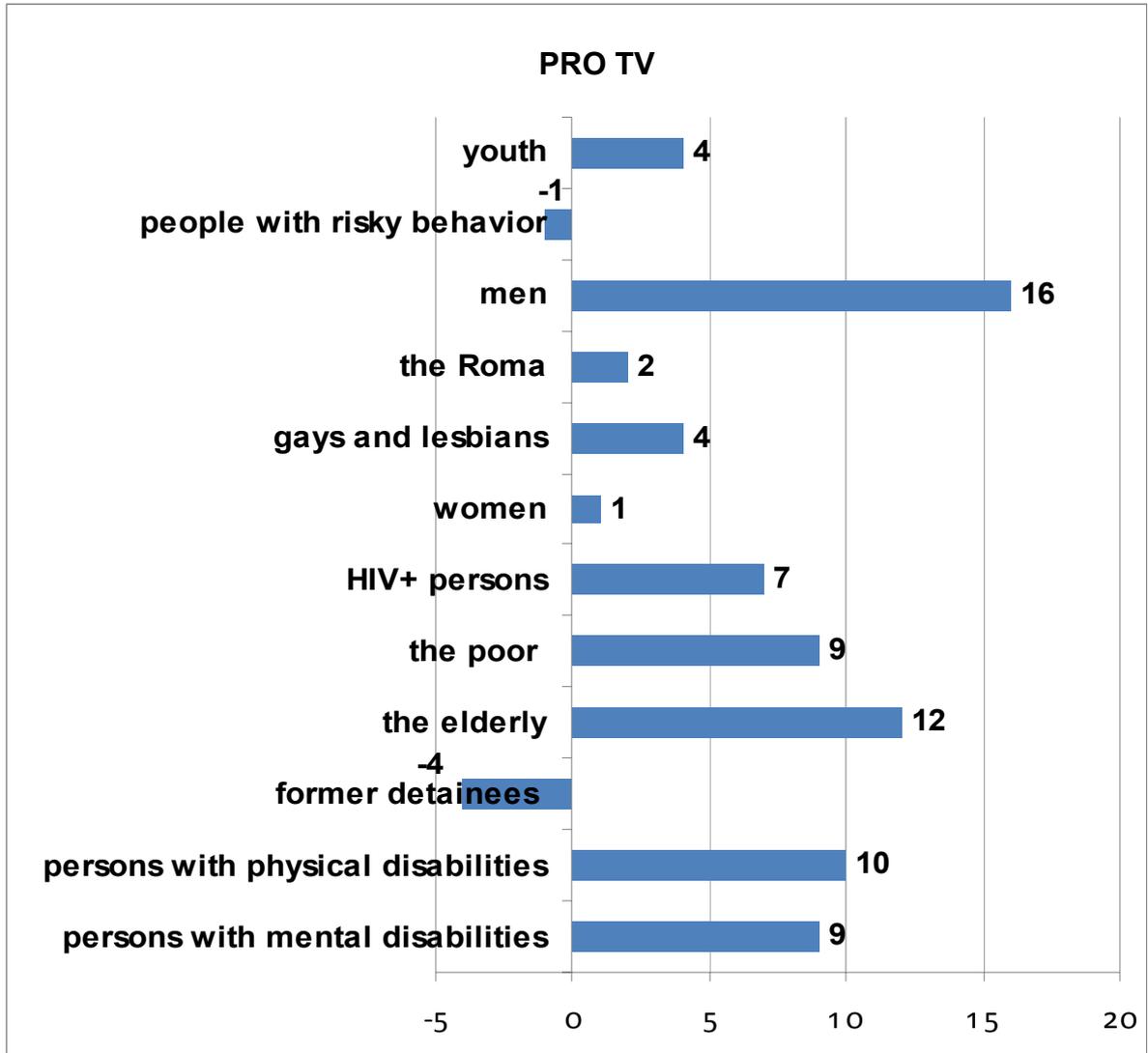
The persons who indicated that they watch NIT more frequently for informational purposes believe that mass-media has a positive attitude towards persons with a risky behavior, gays and lesbians, former detainees, persons with physical disabilities, men, and less positive attitude towards women, the poor, Roma and not positive at all or rather negative attitude towards the elderly and HIV-positive persons (see Chart 51).

Chart 51. Respondents' perception about the attitude of mass-media towards different groups of people (DPOI) by the TV channel watched more often for informational purposes (NIT), %



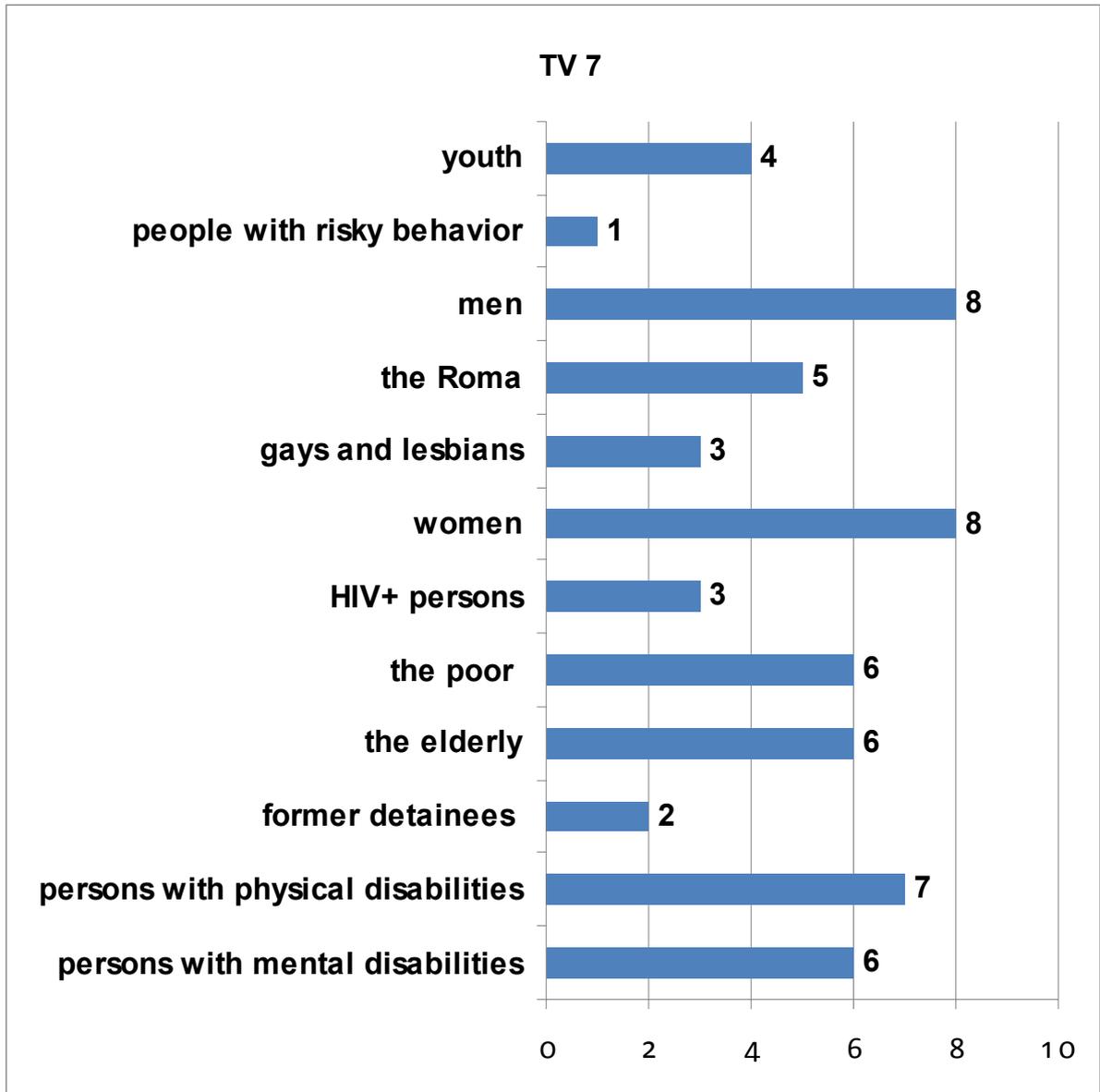
The respondents who watch more frequently PRO TV for informational purposes believe that mass-media has a more positive attitude towards men, elderly, persons with disabilities, the poor, HIV-positive persons, less positive attitude towards women, Roma, gays and lesbians, young people and rather negative towards the former detainees and persons with a risky behavior (see Chart 52).

Chart 52. Respondents' perception about the attitude of mass-media towards different groups of people (DPOI) by the TV channel watched more often for informational purposes (PRO TV), %



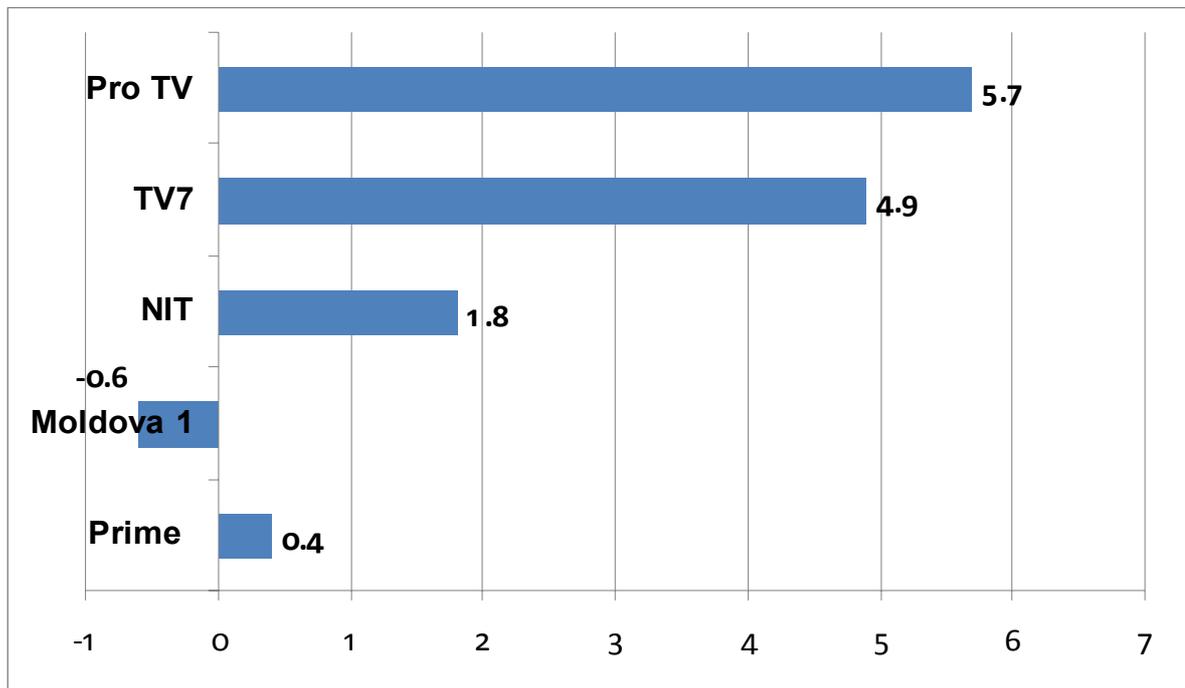
The respondents who watch more frequently TV7 for informational purposes indicated that in general mass-media has a positive attitude towards all disadvantaged groups of people (see Chart 53).

Chart 53. Respondents' perception about the attitude of mass-media towards different groups of people (DPOI) by the TV channel watched more often for informational purposes (TV7), %



The estimation of an average Dominant Personal Opinion Index for each group of loyal respondents of a certain TV station reveals the following picture: PRO TV -5,7, TV7- 4,9, NIT - 1,8, Prime TV - 0,4 and Moldova 1 - (-0,6).

Chart 54. Average Dominant Personal Opinion Index of the respondents loyal to certain TV channel regarding the attitude of mass-media towards discriminated groups of people



The analysis of the frequency of respondents' contacts with mass-media and their perception about how mass-media reflects different groups of socially discriminated persons shows the following: most respondents mainly watch the television for purposes of information, with radio ranking the second and written press the third. The respondents watch the following TV channels more often for informational purposes: Prime TV (54%), Moldova 1 (45%), Pro TV (29%), NIT (20%), TV7 (8%), Jurnal TV (7%).

The respondents who have contact with mass-media at least once a week believe that in general the mass-media is quite equidistant and neutral towards different groups of vulnerable persons, except for persons with risky behavior, where the attitude is more discriminatory.

The respondents' perception about the attitude of mass-media towards vulnerable groups varies significantly depending on the TV channel watched more often for informational purposes, which makes us conclude that the respondents' opinions is mainly based on the experience obtained while watching their preferred TV channels. Thus, the persons who have more frequent contacts with PRO TV and TV7 believe that mass-media reflects quite equidistantly the events related to different groups of people. The respondents who watch NIT more frequently believe that mass-media has a positive attitude towards persons with a risky behavior, gays and lesbians, detainees, persons with physical disabilities, men, and less positive attitude towards women, the poor, the Roma and not positive at all or rather negative attitude towards the elderly and HIV-positive persons. The respondents who watch more often Prime TV for informational purposes believe that mass-media has a positive attitude towards young people, men, elderly, less positive attitude towards the poor and detainees and not at all positive or rather discriminatory attitude towards gays and lesbians, HIV-positive persons, persons with disabilities. The respondents who watch more frequent Moldova 1 for informational purposes believe that mass-media has a positive and non-discriminatory attitude towards Roma, less positive attitude towards persons with risky behavior, gays and lesbians and former detainees, and not positive at all, even a little discriminatory attitude towards the other groups of people: young people, men, women, HIV-positive persons, the poor, the elderly, persons with physical or mental disabilities. To confirm or infirm these opinions additional researches are needed to analyze the content of messages broadcasted by these TV channels.

Conclusions and recommendations

The results of the research revealed the fact that the discrimination and the marginalization of certain groups of people are real issues in the Republic of Moldova, which have increased over the last years. Thus, over 30% of respondents expressed the opinion that in the recent 5 years discrimination has increased. According to population and experts, the most discriminated social groups are the persons with mental and physical disabilities, the poor, HIV-positive persons, representatives of gay and lesbian community, persons of Roma ethnicity and women.

The social contexts of discrimination of these groups vary, but most of them face the discrimination problem during employment, at their workplace, in education and medical institutions. While in case of employment and workplace the basic factors that start the discrimination are the health condition, sexual orientation, age or sex, in case of education and medical institutions the basic factor of discrimination for most social groups is the lack of financial resources.

The analysis of social distance between the respondents and the disadvantaged groups of people highlighted a low level of tolerance by the population in particular towards representatives of gay and lesbian community, HIV-positive persons, and individuals with mental disability. The reduced level of acceptance of the population in relation with these persons is fed to a great extent by the existing prejudices in the society regarding marginalized groups. At the same time, the research confirms our hypothesis that the diversification of cultural and social relations of respondents with the representatives of marginalized groups increases the level of tolerance towards them.

In accordance with the research results, more than 1/3 of respondents have been victims of discrimination in the last three years or have witnessed discrimination of other persons. In both cases, the prevailing social contexts of discrimination were the workplace, the domain of healthcare and education. The individuals were discriminated in various ways, but most frequently they have been verbally insulted, thrown out of the office, threatened, intimidated or even physically abused. As abusers, most frequently were indicated males that hold an office in public or private institutions. Even the majority of respondents consider that the abusers should be punished, over 2/3 of persons witness of a discrimination case took no action against the, which shows the importance and need of educating the population in this regard in order to change attitudes and behavior.

The expert research highlighted also some practical recommendations directed to diminishing the discrimination phenomenon among disfavored groups. Thus, in the experts' view, in order to enhance the level of equity of all groups of people exposed to discrimination, following actions are needed:

- Harmonization of legislation of the Republic of Moldova with the European norms in the field of equal opportunities and combating of discrimination; adoption of the Law on Preventing and Combating Discrimination; adjusting the existent legal framework to the respective law and development of its implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanism.
- Active involvement of the community sector, in particular of active NGOs in the monitoring of the implementation of the Law on Preventing and Combating Discrimination in view of making the central government and the local public administration accountable for the application of the provisions of this law.
- Establishment of an efficient, proportionate and deterrent sanction mechanism for acts of discrimination and its implementation by bringing charges in court to persons that discriminate, in particular in public institutions, and broad information of the society about these cases and their negative effects.
- Establishment of an independent institution on national level with comprehensive competence that will have the objective to provide assistance to victims of discrimination in an independent manner, so that the latter may exercise general petitions generated by acts of discrimination, and to conduct independent assessment studies about the discrimination phenomenon in the country.
- Fostering of human rights as a value, on national and local level, in order to build a democratic mentality and to empower and build the capacities of the groups vulnerable to discrimination, in view of their more active involvement in the promotion and protection of their own rights.
- Involvement of national and local mass media, in particular of TV channels, in the elimination of stereotypes and combating of discrimination by promoting a positive image of disadvantaged

groups and informing the population about the discrimination phenomenon and the negative effects it has on the entire society.

At the same time, the experts came with specific proposals directed to preventing the discrimination of certain groups of disadvantaged people. Hence, ***in order to reduce discrimination of representatives of gay and lesbian community***, the experts propose the following actions:

- Education of the population by (a) organization of information campaigns about gay and lesbian community (in particular, by applying outreach methods and by using the internet, in order to avoid the accusations of propagating homosexual relations. The information program should include debate programs that would invite to participation open persons, who would promote diversity and tolerance, or even public persons that have a different sexual orientation; (b) introduction of some courses of sexual education, diversity and tolerance in secondary and higher education institutions; and (c) organization of trainings for doctors, teachers, police officers, politicians about sexual orientation/sexuality.
- Promotion of small changes on the level of institutions that throughout the time would lead to big changes. Thus, in higher education institutions, in particular in the departments of medicine, psychology, the method of approaching the homosexuality as a pathology and disease should be changed. In case of the Blood Transfusion Center, the questions referring to having homosexual relations shall be excluded from the form and the database of homosexual individuals should be deleted.
- Changing the attitude of mass media towards gay and lesbian community by amending the legal framework concerning mass media in accordance with the Law on Preventing and Combating Discrimination and training of journalists.

In order to diminish the discrimination of HIV-positive persons, the experts proposed the following actions:

- Ensuring the implementation of the Law on HIV Infection by making the national government and the local public administration accountable and by actively involving the relevant NGOs in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process. Establishment of some legal mechanisms to guarantee and protect fundamental rights of HIV-positive persons, in particular the right to observe the confidentiality of the HIV-positive status.
- Promotion of a system approach in the field of education of tolerance towards the HIV-positive persons, which would include both communication campaigns for various groups of people focused on promoting tolerance and social inclusion of HIV-positive persons and training sessions promoting a healthy lifestyle and tolerance in schools, high schools, other secondary education institutions and universities. Lifelong education of teachers and medical doctors are also included here. The communication campaigns will actively involve the representatives of the Orthodox Church that enjoy a great level trust among the population.
- Reducing the discrimination of HIV-positive persons in medical institutions by providing continuous training to medical personnel about standard precaution measures, stigma and discrimination, HIV legislation, and on the other side – about a sufficient and timely provision of medical institutions with gloves, masks, special medication and equipment, ARV kits and substances needed to launch the treatments. At the same time, it is necessary to develop and implement a mechanism to monitor and evaluate the compliance with standard precaution measures in medical institutions in the country.
- Preventing the discrimination of HIV-positive persons in the workplace by developing policies on the level of companies, focused on informing the employees about the HIV/AIDS problem, promoting and guaranteeing the rights of HIV-positive employees in the workplace, informing all employees about their rights in case of infection with HIV, ensuring confidentiality of information about the HIV status of employed persons.

In order to reduce the discrimination of persons with mental and physical disabilities, the experts made the following recommendations:

- Information and broad training of persons with disabilities about their rights and duties, in order to involve them more actively in the promotion of their own rights and to make them assume some responsibilities to change their own lives.
- Providing the access of persons with disabilities to education by developing the regulatory framework in the field of inclusive education (approval of the concept on inclusive education, development and implementation of the action plan, approval of the new Education Code) and creating the learning environment (physical access to the premises of education institutions, adapting the physical environment in the classrooms to the needs of the children with disabilities, development of new curricula and course support, training of teachers, employment of support didactic staff, etc.).
- Provision of access of persons with disabilities to labor by improving the tax legislation and establishing facilities for employers, provision of necessary support to enter the labor market, changing the attitude of employers towards the persons with disabilities (they must see in particular the abilities, and not the disabilities of the person),
- More active involvement of persons with disabilities in the decision-making process by appointing them as local counselors, rayon counselors, members of the parliament.
- Role-valORIZING promotion by mass media of persons with disabilities. The TV programs should not provoke pity, but rather respect of these persons.

With regard to persons of Roma ethnicity, the experts consider that following actions are needed to prevent their discrimination:

- Providing access of Roma people to education by promoting some national schooling programs for Roma, with studies in the native language and provision of scholarships and quotas in professional, secondary and university education.
- Guaranteeing the right to work to persons of Roma ethnicity by promoting some economic empowerment and employment programs for Roma people.
- Promotion by means of mass media, especially TV channels, of cultural values of Roma people and of role-valORIZING images of the representatives of this ethnicity in order to eliminate the existing stereotypes in the society, and, subsequently, their discrimination.

In order to guarantee equal opportunities for women and men and to eliminate discrimination, the experts consider the following actions as necessary:

- Supporting a more active participation of women in the decision-making process by introducing participation/mandate quotas for women in the local and central leadership bodies.
- Ensuring equal opportunities in the field of labor by (a) creating working conditions for women in case they want to work in hard conditions, night shifts, etc.; (b) appointing women in institutions considered so far only for men; (c) providing equal remuneration conditions.
- Organization of public awareness and popular education campaigns concerning the rights of women and men and equal opportunities.

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The research methodology and the analysis report were developed by Ludmila Malcoci, Habilitated Doctor of Sociology.

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